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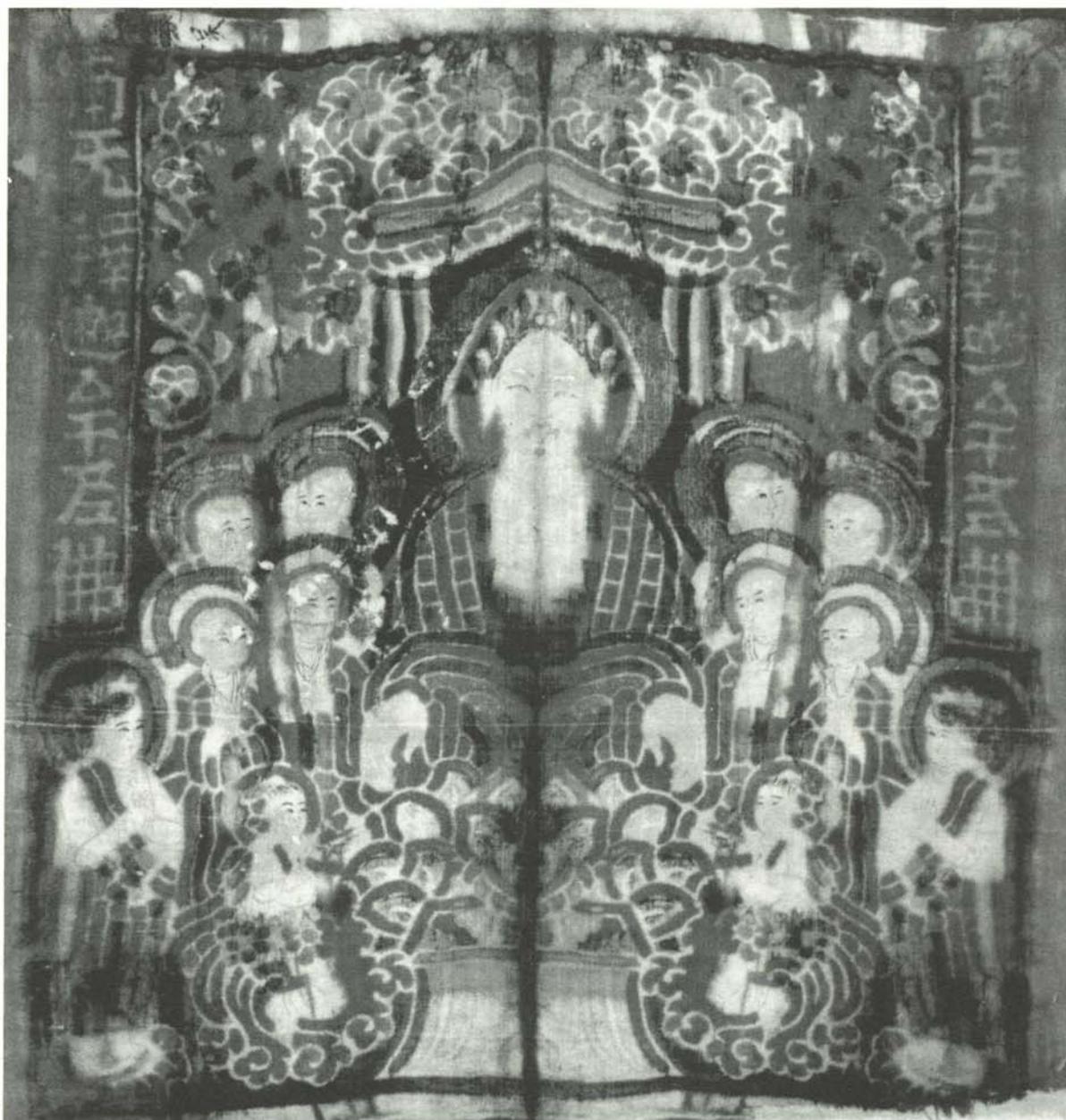
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1. Sakyamuni Buddha preaching the law (*Shijia shuofa xiang*), ink and colors on silk (66 x 61.5 cm.), from *Yingxian muta Liaodai mizang*.

Chinese Rare Books and Color Printing

SÖREN EDGREN

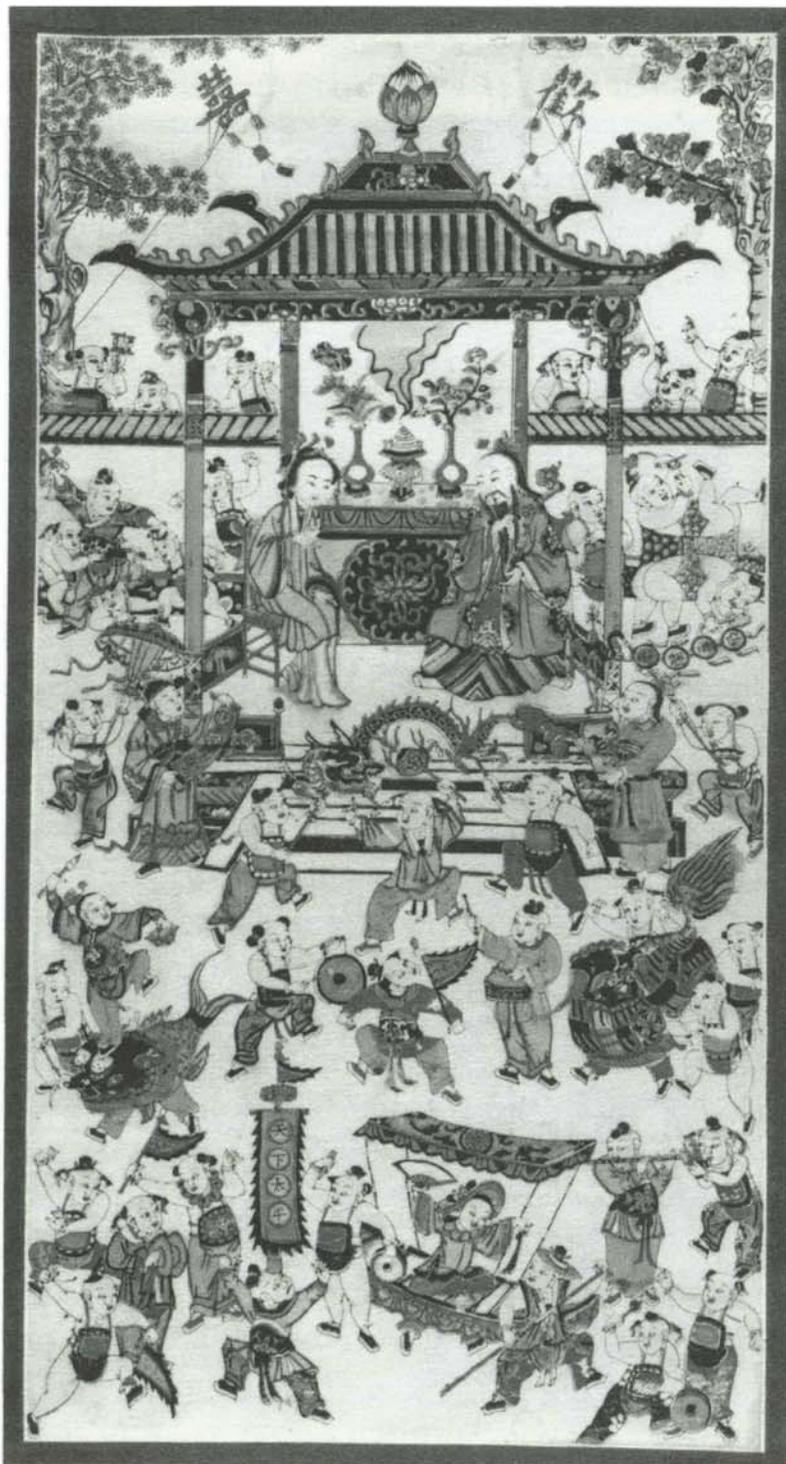
Color printing is a distinctive feature among Chinese rare books, and the innovation itself represents an important Chinese contribution to the history of printing. In fact, more than one-third (eight of twenty-one titles) of the Chinese printed books on display in the *Visible Traces* exhibition held recently at the Queens Library in New York are examples of some form of color printing.¹ We would do well, therefore, to begin by considering the history of color printing in China and by trying to understand what exactly is meant by the term color printing in the Chinese context.

One of the earliest examples of what I would call quasi-color printing was discovered in 1974 inside a Buddhist sculpture in the famous wooden pagoda, built in 1056, at Yingxian, Shanxi province.² The Liao-dynasty (907–1125) image (ca. eleventh century) of Sakyamuni Buddha preaching the law (*Shijia shuofa xiang*), surrounded by attendants, appears on a square sheet of silk (66 x 61.5 cm.) brightly colored in red, blue, and yellow, with some details, especially facial features, finished with thin strokes of brush and ink (see figure 1). Two other similar specimens were found together with this one. Although there is not a consensus of opinion regarding the precise method of production,³ it seems clear to me that the colors have been produced on the folded surface by some sort

of stenciling or dying technique, possibly by a silk-screen method, and not properly speaking by what can be called printing. Especially noteworthy is the crease in the center of the silk and the mirror image created by the right and left halves of the composition in figure 1, which represents a duplication in reverse of the half-image.

There are a few other isolated early examples reported of single-sheet prints in which one or more pigments in addition to ink has been applied to popular images, but there is nothing at an early date that unquestionably can be called color printing. One of the most important and interesting specimens is the large print attributed to the twelfth century depicting Dongfang Shuo (b. ca. 160 BCE), a character of popular folktales, reportedly printed in black and gray (that is, two tones of ink) as well as light green, and discovered in Xi'an in 1973.⁴ No doubt, some vague time in the recent past witnessed the emergence of the popular, decorative prints we have known quite well since the late-Ming (1368–1644) and early-Qing (1644–1911) dynasties as New Year pictures (*nianhua*). Besides pairs of elongated prints with auspicious words and images, there were also the familiar door gods (*menshen*), genre scenes, theatrical prints, and pictures symbolizing domestic bliss and tranquillity.⁵ The example shown in figure 2 is generally representative of the production of Hebei province in northern China about a century ago. After printing an outline in black (ink) from a key block, basic colors, in this case yellow, pink, dark red, dark blue, and dark green, were printed separately.⁶ These basic techniques, of course, are not unrelated to those used in Chinese color-printed books. Finally, additional colors were added by hand as part of a routine production line. In this print the bright orange, washes of light blue, light green, and flesh color for the faces of the happy parents have all been applied with a brush by hand. Human hair and patches of black have been added with brush and ink. As interesting as these prints are, they represent a special category of printing and are not treated in this paper. My aim is to focus attention on the specific subject of color printing and Chinese rare books.

The earliest extant specimen of color printing in the form of a bound book was produced in the middle of the fourteenth century in the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), at a time when Chinese woodblock printing had already reached full maturity (see figures 3 and 4). This is the famous



2. Happy parents seated outdoors on a covered dais and surrounded by a multitude of children, apparently all boys, playing and cavorting amid auspicious symbols and slogans. The two kites flown by boys at the top of the print represent Chinese characters meaning happiness. Polychrome print (84.6 x 43.5 cm.) from Hebei province, ca. 1910. Guanhaiou Collection.

Buddhist text of the *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing* (Diamond Sutra), with commentary, published in 1341 at Zifusi, a Buddhist temple in Huguang Zhongxinglu (modern Hubei province).⁷ The first thing one notices in figure 3 is that the main text, in large characters, is printed in red, and the smaller characters of the commentary are printed in black. As we shall see, this is contrary to publishing practice in the early-seventeenth century at the end of the Ming, when texts were commonly printed in black with commentaries in red, but it possibly reflects the relationship of these two levels of text from a much earlier manuscript tradition.⁸ In figure 4 we see a seated portrait of Sicong, that is, monk Wuwen, who wrote the commentary. The juxtaposition of the monk and his disciples surrounding the desk and table all printed in red with the pine tree and small cartouche in the upper left-hand corner printed in black raises the question of color registration. Registration depends on the precise alignment of the image matrix, including the possible use of one or more separate blocks for each color in the composition of a polychrome print, together with the sheet of paper or other support.⁹ Both figures can help us understand the technique of registration that was not employed in this red and black (that is, vermilion and ink) color print. Traces of black lines separated from and also overprinting the red text inform us that a single carved woodblock was used and that an inked impression of the large characters that had been brushed with vermilion (cinnabar) pigment probably was first taken, and then the block was wiped clean, to be followed by an inked impression from the commentary.¹⁰ Some modern Chinese bibliographers have begun to call this technique *shuangyin* or "twice printed" after a term found in an essay published in the late sixteenth century by the Ming bibliophile Hu Yinglin (1551–1602).¹¹ Hu says, "Whatever is printed [nowadays] is either in red, or in black, or in blue. There are twice-printed [books] and there are once-printed [books]. Twice-printed [books] use vermilion (that is, cinnabar) and should be regarded as precious."¹² Twice-printed books were probably considered precious because of the added labor needed in printing twice and the cost of cinnabar used for the pigment.

Recently, an article challenging the assumption that *shuangyin* technique was used to print the *Diamond Sutra* in 1341 was published in China.¹³ The author, Tuo Xiaotang, viewed the original edition in

之類但屬血氣心念多端雜形類質為之衆生也若卵生却是想成欲情厚也

若胎生胎因情有生死根本若濕生濕因感合愛見妄生若化

生化因離應無而忽有此四種生不出若有色梵天人得

於禪定無有欲心惟在身若無色無色界天人念慮虛

若微細念慮似起不起第七若無想戒根

慾想乾枯無想天中若非有想色空俱忘寂滅現前

非無想如存不存若盡非盡三界至極我皆令

入無餘涅槃而滅度之如是滅

度無量無數無邊衆生實無衆

生得滅度者衆生者是妄想心多生巧見故號衆生若斷煩惱除妄想去貪嗔修戒定

3. Diamond Sutra (Jin'gang bore boluomi jing), National Central Library facsimile edition (1970). Leaf 7:b-c, main text (red) in large characters, commentary (black) in small characters.



佛慧命稟吹毛利訣深奧妙明明不墜佛之使也雖末法中亦有能信者敲空作響喚醒在家出家四衆之流向道佛子故以宣明釋開法爾竟悟天魔不被所惑辯鑑邪正勿被過謬後學般若菩薩持堅固志具擇法眼等諸佛心同諸佛願者

伏願上祝

皇圖鞏固帝道遐昌

佛日增輝法輪常轉

四恩總報三有齊資法界寃親同圓種智者

夫優曇現瑞普獲馨香善逝應真皆蒙

4. Diamond Sutra (Jin'gang bore boluomi jing), National Central Library facsimile edition (1970). Leaf 38:b-c, seated portrait of Sicong, that is, monk Wuwen, with his disciples (red), adjoined by pine tree and text (black).

Taiwan in 1999, and he asserts that separate blocks were used to print the two colors of red and black. He claims to have observed two instances in the text where the small black characters of the commentary appear above and below one or more large red characters, and where overprinting occurs above and below simultaneously, which could only result from the use of movable blocks of text. Of course, overprinting can take place with imprints from a single block as well as from multiple blocks, because both techniques are susceptible to the misalignment of the paper when taking multiple impressions. In the only cases of overprinting in the *Diamond Sutra* I have observed, however, the entire section of black text has shifted uniformly in one direction, either up or down, or right or left. I have not found the kinds of examples suggested by Tuo.

I have only seen the original edition once and have worked primarily from the facsimile edition. The minor evidence to support my belief that a single woodblock was used includes the presence of cracks in the block that match up perfectly between the red and black text. There are, however, more instances where a crack begins and ends in the red or black text without continuing to the other, but I believe that this represents the presence of foreign matter (for example, fibers such as brush hairs) or the difference between superficial cracks and underlying cracks. The major evidence in favor of the *shuangyin* theory is not the presence of overprinting, but rather what I might call "underprinting." On numerous leaves we find careless inking of the block that results in portions of small characters bordering large characters that have left a slight red impression along with the printing of the main text, and conversely we find that the extremities of large characters have sometimes picked up black ink along with the printing of the commentary and left a corresponding mark. The two pages from leaf seven shown in figure 3 offer examples of the latter phenomenon. Circular reading marks (all from the same block) under the large characters *lei* (right page, column one, second character), *sheng* (right page, column two, third character), *xiang* (right page, column five, third character; left page, column two, third character), and *zhe* (left page, column five, fifth character) should be printed in red only, but here they have been printed twice, once in red and once in black. Horizontal marks from the bottoms of the three large characters, *sheng* and *xiang* (twice) have been inadvertently inked

and printed with the commentary in black. As can be deduced from the small character *zhong* overprinting the large character *ruo* (left page, column one), the black commentary has been printed a few millimeters too low. These results can only be brought about by faulty positioning of the paper on the second pull from the block, and not from the use of separate blocks. Figure 4 offers some additional proof. In the illustration, the diagonal space between the tree trunk and the cloud pattern behind the monk's chair shows that small bits of the trunk are attached to the outer curvature of the cloud and have been printed red, apparently the result of the trunk having been masked off with a straight line. Had the red part of the illustration been a separate block, it would have been easy to neatly sculpt the outline of the clouds. Furthermore, above the number thirty-eight, the number of the leaf printed black, there are two short strokes originally part of lines emanating from the clouds that have been printed black along with the commentary.

At this point, a simple survey of the terminology used for Chinese color printing and of the traditional understanding of the techniques employed may prove useful. The most general term for woodblock color printing is *caise taoyin*, "polychrome overlay printing," which refers to the use of black (that is, ink) and one or more colors together in the production of a printed sheet of paper. In its most primitive form, a single woodblock was carved and different colors were applied to different areas of the block as needed. The most common assumption is that different colors were brushed onto designated sections of the block and a single impression was taken, and this can also be called *fucai yinfa*, or the "applied-pigment printing method." An alternative procedure is the twice-printed method described above. The other *caise taoyin* method was first used in China in the early seventeenth century and is called *douban yinfa*, or "assembled-blocks printing method." This technique makes use of one or more wooden printing blocks for each color, with the blocks fastened to the work table with dabs of wax, thus employing registration in the production of printed color images. Registration is maintained by keeping the sheets of paper clamped in place for each sequential printing. In the case of textual printing, the composite blocks must be kept separate to produce well-defined, clearly legible elements. Contiguity of colors, overlapping, and overprinting are generally avoided. On the other hand, pictorial printing relies on the creation of color

gradation, contrast, and density caused by adjoining and overprinted colors.

I turn now to the simpler manifestations of the use of color in Ming printing. In the sixteenth century we begin to see single pages and even whole texts printed in light blue or pale red. For example, the 1579 edition of the historical work *Lüshi chunqiu* is completely printed in blue, and the 1575 edition of the collection of ancient seal impressions entitled *Jigu yinpu* is printed entirely in red, including all text and the facsimiles of prints from seals (figure 5). In the *Visible Traces* exhibition the *Zuoyin xiansheng jingding jiejing yipu* (Manual of Weiqi Strategies Carefully Edited by the Gentleman Zuoyin; number 10 in the *Visible Traces* catalogue), although printed throughout in black, has a cover page printed in red, which acted as an advertising medium somewhat akin to the modern book's dust jacket.¹⁴ Another copy of the same edition, with the cover page printed in blue, recently appeared at auction.¹⁵ Red and blue also came to be specially used for taking trial impressions from newly carved woodblocks for the purpose of proofreading, as in the *Duichuang yeyu*, a work of literary criticism, published in the late-nineteenth century (figure 6). All other copies of this edition known to me are printed with black ink and were intended for circulation. Of course, red and blue proof copies were printed in small numbers and are scarcely preserved today.

The printing of text in color naturally led to the printing of different levels of text in different colors. The Min and Ling families of Wucheng or Wuxing (modern Huzhou) in Zhejiang province monopolized this genre of publishing in the late Ming.¹⁶ Red and black printed editions (*zhumo taoyinben*) were most commonly produced, and item number 14 in the *Visible Traces* exhibition, *Tangshi yanyipin* (Exemplars of the Beautiful and the Refined in Tang Poetry), a classified anthology of Tang-dynasty poems, is a good example of such an edition.¹⁷ The catalogue illustration shows a typical page opening from this 1621 edition published by Min Yishi, with the main text printed in black and inter-linear and marginal notes printed in red, together with punctuation and reading marks also printed in red. *Caotang shiyu* (figure 7), a collection of *ci* poetry published by Min Yingbi in 1625, is a slightly more elegant edition by another member of the Min lineage. Here we should note that the marginal annotations are printed cursively in imitation of actual

集古印譜卷之一



太原王 常

延年編



武陵顧 從德 汝脩校

秦漢小璽



疾疾除永康休萬壽寧白玉盤螭鈕 國子博士文
壽承云璽以九字成文製作精妙其書乃李斯小篆
無毫髮失筆意非昆吾刀不能刻其文亦非漢已後
文字決為秦璽無疑舊藏沈石田先生家既歸陸叔
平後為袁尚之所得今藏顧光祿處居京師遭回祿
玉變黑色矣昔倪雲林有詩云匣藏數鈕秦朝印白
玉盤螭小篆文則此印又嘗入清閼閣也

集古印譜卷之一

顧氏共閣

5. *Jigu yinpu*, facsimiles of ancient seal impressions, collected and published in Suzhou in 1575 by Wang Chang and Gu Congde (1518-1587). Printed in red. Guanhaiou Collection.

對牀夜語卷之一

孤山人范晞文景文

羔羊之皮素絲五紵詩人美在位之辭也充耳琇瑩
會弁如星又駟馬既閑輶車鸞鑣之類皆借服御
以美其君也若楚詞高余冠之岌岌兮長余佩之
陸離是亦以服御自美也

古詩十九首有云冉冉孤生竹結根泰山阿與君爲
新婚兔絲附女蘿兔絲生有時夫婦會有宜千里
遠結婚悠悠隔山陂思君令人老軒車來何遲言
妻之於夫猶竹根之於山阿兔絲之於女蘿也豈
容使之獨處而久思乎詩云葛生蒙楚藟蔓于野

6. *Duichuang yeyu*, by Fan Xiwen (thirteenth century), published by Ding Bing (1832-1899) in 1896. Trial proof printed in light red. Guanhaiou Collection.

草堂詩餘卷三

西蜀升菴楊 慎批點

吳興文仲閔暎壁校訂

中調

一剪梅

離別

李易安

紅藕香殘玉簫秋。輕解羅裳。獨上蘭舟。雲中誰
寄錦書來。雁字回時。月滿樓。花自飄零水自

草堂詩餘卷三

離情欲淚
讀此始知高
則誠閩漢卿
語人又是劫

7. *Caotang shiyu*, anthology of *ci* poetry with annotations attributed to Yang Shen (1488-1559), published by Min Yingbi in 1625. Two-color printing. Guanhaiou Collection.

handwriting. *Dongpo chanxiji* (figure 8), published by Ling Mengchu (1580–1644) in 1621, is a collection of writings on Buddhism attributed to Su Shi (1037–1101) of the Song dynasty (960–1279), and represents the style of the Ling lineage.¹⁸ The late-Ming period also saw the development of three-color printing, using black, red, and blue; four-color printing, using black, red, yellow, and blue; and finally five-color printing, using black, red, yellow, blue, and light purple. Figure 9 shows a leaf of two pages from the famous work of literary criticism by Liu Xie (d. 473 CE), *Wenxin diaolong*, the sole unillustrated Ming edition printed in five colors.

One encounters varying terminology and differing opinions regarding which of the three methods was used to print the above category of editions.¹⁹ The first, the primitive *fucai yinfa* technique of spreading different colors on a single block from which a single impression was taken, seems to be an impossibility because of overlapping text and punctuation, which can be found in any of the editions of this genre, despite the great care that obviously was taken in printing. The phenomenon of overprinting can even be observed in virtually all of the editions. The second is the *shuangyin* method whereby multiple impressions, each producing a different color, were made from a single engraved woodblock. The third, which I believe to have been used without exception for these books, is a multiblock method, analogous to the *douban yinfa* used for pictorial color printing. My reasons for upholding the last method are the following: among these books there are no telltale marks of *shuangyin* printing as found in the fourteenth-century *Diamond Sutra* discussed above; overprinting and extreme crowding of annotations between the first line of text and the border of the woodblock, suggesting that the two lines of text could not have been carved on the same block, sometimes occur; and in books of this kind one often finds a red corner mark printed over the black border at one or both of the lower corners, implying some sort of guide to registration.²⁰ In such cases, the mark is always superimposed and cannot have been carved on the woodblock of the original text. An example of the L-shaped mark, printed in red and clearly separated from the border of the main block, can be seen in the lower left-hand corner of figure 9.

The tradition of texts printed with polychrome annotations con-

茅鹿門曰東坡
項此等文字轉
歐而不強為此等
見解韓歐所不
能及由蘇長少
悟禪宗及過南
海後過唐初
以此心性超朗乃
至于此可謂絕世
之文矣
王聖俞曰坡公
諸頌得意處無
然忘言

東坡禪喜集一

頌

釋迦文佛頌 并引

真寔居士馮夢禎批點
即空居士凌濛初輯增

端明殿學士兼翰林侍讀蘇軾爲亡妻
同安郡君王氏閨之請奉議郎李公麟
敬畫釋迦文佛及十大弟子。元祐八年
十一月十一日。設水陸道場供養。軾拜
手稽首而作頌曰。

8. *Dongpo chanxiji*, published by Ling Mengchu in 1621, with annotations attributed to Feng Mengzhen (1546-1605). Two-color printing. Guanhaiou Collection.

梅子度曰賦者
萬元仲娥
碑元作蘇陸改
夫元作天謝改
目元作星未改
孫樂說曰按
繪射鳥彈曰射
射也
惟元作爲未改
曹維始曰橫其
考經以發而知
惡之先和欲快
聖雅之初知此
疎音班
深聖說字四字
元畫二篇抄是
故聖說之成日
休辭聖詩也
方畫六以何
和承畫字明易
之云招聖編
而深聖招聖
秀而古朝
曹維始曰山水
得聲而得貌
深故文而見
與極真元也
深書批偶感

比與之義也。每一顧而淹涕。歎君門之九重。忠怨
 之辭也。觀茲四事。同於風雅者也。至於託雲龍。說
 迂怪。豐隆求宓妃。鳩鳥媒娥女。詭異之辭也。康回
 傾地。夷羿彈日。木夫九首。土伯三目。譎怪之談也。
 依彭咸之遺。則從子胥。以自適狷狹之志也。士女
 雜坐。亂而不分。指以爲樂。娛酒不廢。沈湎日夜。舉
 以爲懽。荒淫之意也。摘此四事。異乎經典者。故論
 其典詰。則如彼。語其夸誕。則如此。固知楚辭者。體
 慢於三代。而風雅於戰國。乃雅頌之博徒。而詞賦
 之英傑也。觀其骨鯁所樹。肌膚所樹。雖取鎔經意。
 亦自鑄偉辭。故騷經九章。朗麗以哀。志九歌九辯。
 綺靡以傷情。遠遊天問。瓌詭而惠巧。招蒐招隱。耀
 豔而深華。卜居標放言之志。漁父寄獨往之才。故
 能氣往轢古。辭來切今。驚采絕豔。難與並能矣。自
 九懷以下。遽躡其跡。而屈宋逸步。莫之能追。故其
 敘情怨。則鬱伊而易感。述離居。則愴怏而難懷。論
 山水。則循聲而得貌。言節候。則披文而見時。是以
 枚賈追風。以入麗馬。揚汾波而得奇。其衣被詞人。

9. *Wenxin diaolong*, published by Min Shengchun after 1612. Five-color printing. From *Guoli zhongyang tushuguan tecang xuanlu* (Taipei: Guoli zhongyang tushuguan, 1987).

tinued in the Qing dynasty, especially among palace editions, of which *Yuzhi guwen yuanjian* (Imperially Commissioned Profound Mirror of Ancient Essays), number 19 in the *Visible Traces* exhibition, is a renowned example.²¹ The illustration is from *juan* 10 of this 1710 edition, printed in five colors on fine white *kaihua* paper.²² A century later, in 1834, a private publisher in Guangzhou produced an edition of the collected literary works of the Tang-dynasty (618–907) poet Du Fu (712–770), using six colors (figure 10) in an unprecedented technical display. Black is used for the main text of Du Fu (and also for some of the text by the commentator who uses primarily red), and purple, blue, red, green, and yellow represent the critical comments of two Ming and three Qing scholars.²³ No doubt, more research still needs to be done to understand fully all the processes for producing these magnificent publications.

In the case of polychrome pictorial editions we are somewhat better informed thanks to traditions that have persisted right up to our own time. The earliest printed edition containing some polychrome illustrations of more than two colors is the *Chengshi moyuan* (Ink Garden of the Cheng Family; number 9 in the *Visible Traces* catalogue), a collection of decorative inkstick designs published in 1606.²⁴ As far as can be determined, each color plate in this work was printed by the tedious method of applying colors separately to parts of a single carved woodblock and by printing the colors successively. The second and third illustrations (pages 42–43 in the *Visible Traces* catalogue), depicting a dragon and phoenixes, display a range of color from vermilion red to golden yellow,²⁵ and the first illustration (page 39 in the catalogue) uses three different colors to decorate the components of four Chinese characters running horizontally across the top of the page. By comparing the same page in two different color-printed copies of this book,²⁶ we can understand that a liberal attitude was taken toward coloration of the four characters.

The next two decades witnessed the remarkable transition from *shuangyin* color printing, as we have seen in the red-black text of the *Diamond Sutra* and in the polychrome illustrations of the *Ink Garden of the Cheng Family*, to the use of *douban* printing and related technologies. The earliest dated editions of texts printed with two or more colors are from

杜工部集卷六

古詩五十三首

居雲安及夔州作

杜鵑

西川有杜鵑東川無杜鵑涪萬無杜鵑雲安有杜鵑
 我昔遊錦城結廬錦水邊有竹一頃餘喬木上參天
 杜鵑暮春至哀哀叫其間我見常再拜重是古帝魂
 生子百鳥巢百鳥不敢嗔一作喧仍為餒其子禮若奉
 至尊鴻鴈及羔羊有禮太古前行飛與跪乳識序如

善評正是突兀
 奇怪非此村朴
 老人能耳起語
 恍然有得
 典觀羣怨讀此
 參之何必拘韻斷不可為訓宋
 人諸家評款皆
 誕語也

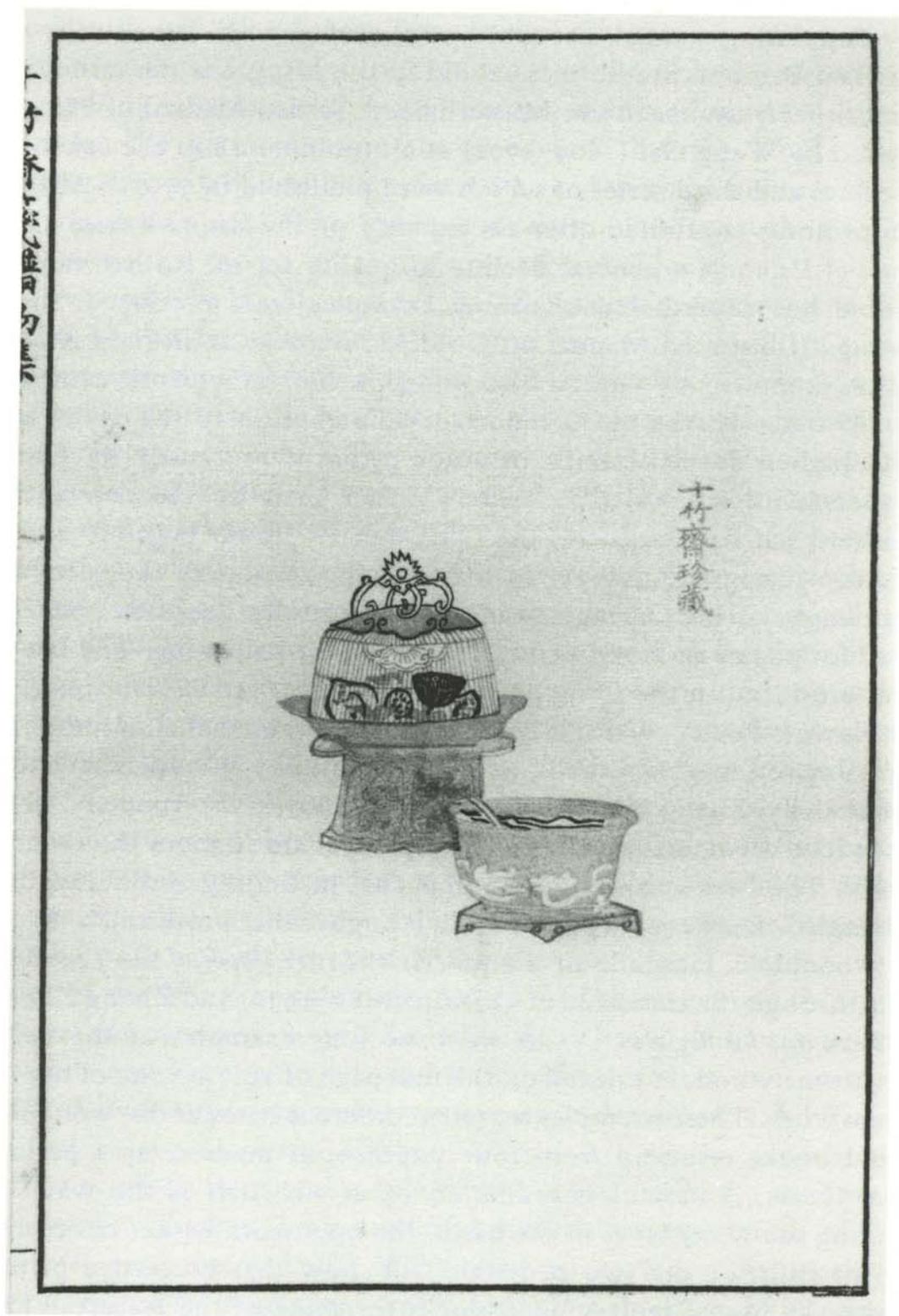
10. *Du gongbu ji*, published in Guangzhou in 1834 by Lu Kun (1772–1835). Six-color printing. Guanhaiou Collection.

around 1616, and one of them, the classical *Chunqiu zuozhuan* published by Min Qiji (b. 1580), offers further proof of the printing method used. In comparing later and earlier impressions of this edition we learn that blocks for the main text are the same but that the blocks for the commentary printed in red have been replaced, perhaps because they had been damaged or lost.²⁷ This example leaves no doubt that the two levels of text were not carved on a single set of woodblocks.

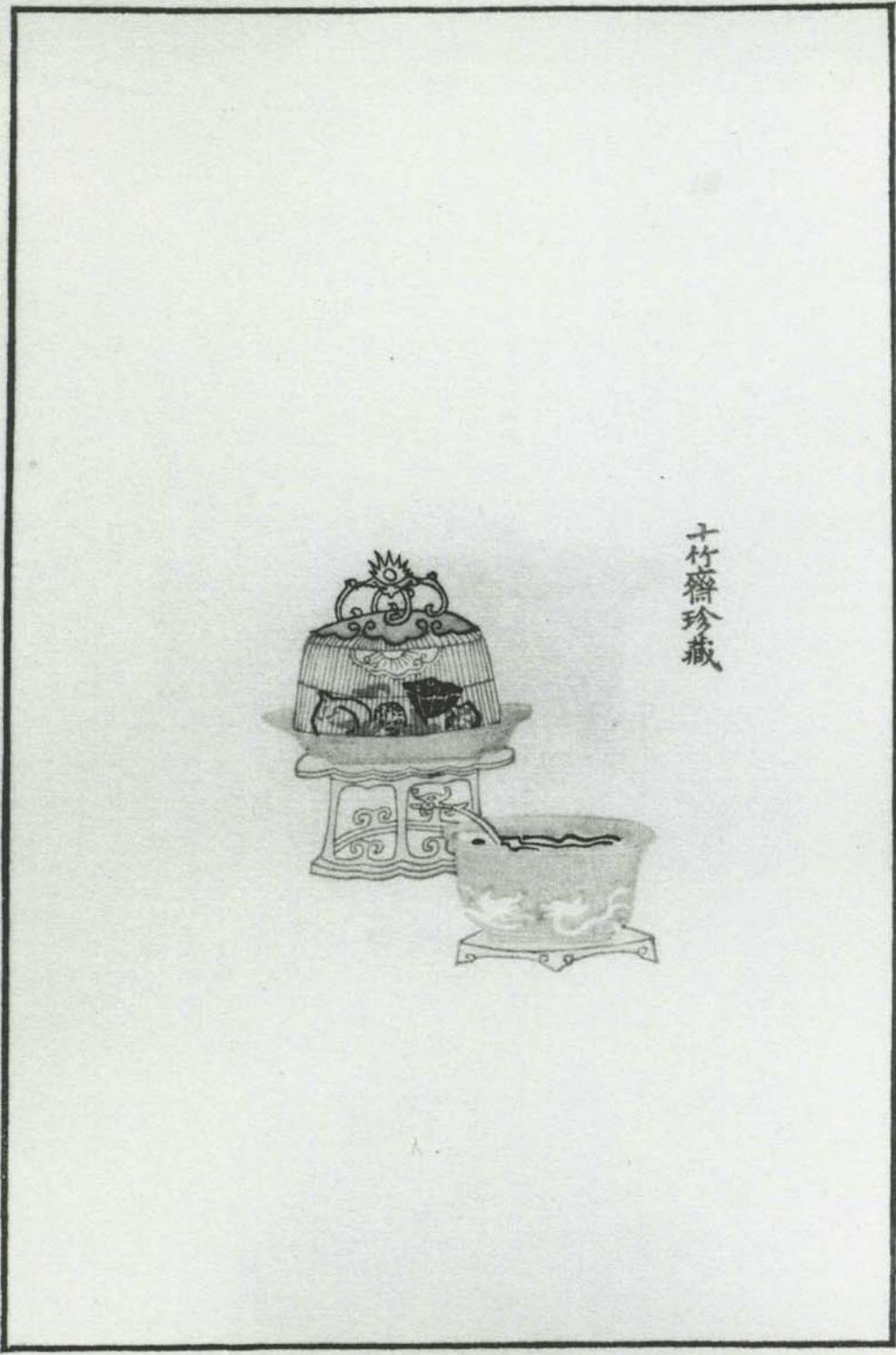
Around 1619 Hu Zhengyan (1582–1672) began to produce woodblocks for what was to become one of the most renowned works of pictorial color printing, the *Shizhuzhai shuhuapu* (Ten Bamboo Studio Manual of Calligraphy and Painting; number 15 in the catalogue), which took more than a decade to complete. For examples of the delicate color printing in imitation of Chinese album paintings, see the illustrations in the *Visible Traces* catalogue.²⁸ It is not known whether or when parts were published separately, but it appears that complete sets of the eight parts were first published between 1633 and 1644. In 1644 Hu also published *Shizhuzhai jianpu* (Models of Letter Paper of the Ten Bamboo Studio), in which the *douban* multiblock technique for color printing is mentioned for the first time by Li Kegong in a preface. Another pioneer in this field was Wu Faxiang (b. 1578) whose *Luoxuan biangu jianpu* (Models of Letter Paper of the Wisteria Studio) was published as early as 1626. All these publications are luxurious products with polychrome plates using as many as six or more colors as well as the refined technique of blind printing (*gonghua*) including a variety of embossed designs, sometimes combined with color, but most strikingly used alone. During the last decades of the Ming, roughly the first half of the seventeenth century, there was an apparent vogue for printing delicate albums with color plates, but few have survived, and those often exist as sole exemplars. Several of these surviving treasures have been described, exhibited, and published in recent years. *Hushan shenggai* is a poetic guidebook to Hangzhou, which borrows its title from a work attributed to Zhou Mi (1232–1308);²⁹ *Xixiang ji* is a masterful pictorial interpretation of Wang Dexin's (fl. 1295–1307) drama of the same name (West Chamber);³⁰ and *Jianxia ji*, edited by Shen Linqi (1603–1664),³¹ is an album of imaginative embroidery patterns, in which sense it reminds us of the *Chengshi moyuan* inkstick decorations.

A painting manual that achieved almost as much fame in the Qing as the Ten Bamboo Studio manual did in the Ming was the rather more technical *Jieziyuan huazhuan* (Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting), compiled by Wang Gai (1605–1701) et al. (number 18 in the catalogue), the second and third series of which were published in 1701.³² Although color printing continued after the success of the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting*, a general decline in quality set in. Rather carelessly executed but nevertheless charming examples were produced, such as *Jinyu tupu* (Illustrated Manual on Goldfish; number 21 in the catalogue) of 1848, compiled by Gouqu Shannong (fl. mid-nineteenth century).³³

Ultimately, the most important contribution to the preservation of the highest level of skills in color printing was made by Chinese stationers with a scholarly clientele rather than by the conventional publishers, who by the end of the Qing dynasty slowly began to embrace western printing technology. In this way the stationery shops followed the example of Hu Zhengyan and his beautifully decorated paper intended for poetry or letter writing, and even for collecting. The last such album produced in the Qing period, *Wenmeizhai baihua shijianpu* (Hundred Flowers Poetry-Writing Paper from the Wenmeizhai; number 23 in the catalogue), was published in 1911 in Tianjin by Wenmeizhai and was illustrated by Zhang Zhaoxiang (fl. 1892–1907).³⁴ Fortunately, several studios like Wenmeizhai continued to prosper throughout the twentieth century. The best known are Rongbaozhai in Beijing and Duoyunxuan in Shanghai. Between 1934 and 1944 Rongbaozhai produced a magnificent woodblock facsimile of the *Models of Letter Paper of the Ten Bamboo Studio* through the initiative of Lu Xun (1881–1936) and Zheng Zhenduo (1898–1958). In figures 11A–D we have four examples of the delicate polychrome woodcut printed on the first page of volume one of the four-volume work. These examples represent different states of this woodblock-printed book, resulting from four impressions made over a period of twenty years. A careful examination of details such as the wavy lines depicting the water level in the basin, the openwork basket covering the bowl of fruit, or the two pedestals will show that successive printings could make use of replacement blocks for some of the features. This is one of the peculiar features of *douban* printing that can teach us something about Chinese rare books and color printing among the scarce



11A. *Models of Letter Paper of the Ten Bamboo Studio*, published and printed by Rongbaozhai in 1934. Volume one, page one. Guanhailou Collection.



十竹齋珍藏

11B. *Models of Letter Paper of the Ten Bamboo Studio*, printed by Rongbaozhai in 1942. Volume one, page one. Guan hailou Collection.

十竹齋珍藏



11C. *Models of Letter Paper of the Ten Bamboo Studio*, printed by Rongbaozhai in 1952. Volume one, page one. Collection of the Gest Library.

十竹齋箋譜

十竹齋珍藏



11D. *Models of Letter Paper of the Ten Bamboo Studio*, printed by Rongbaozhai after 1952. Volume one, page one. Collection of the Gest Library.

exemplars of older editions. This splendid book, from the first half of the twentieth century, displays the ingenious *douban* color technique as well as the exquisite *gonghua* embossing technique, both of which originated precisely three centuries earlier.³⁵

NOTES

1. The eight titles are described and illustrated in the exhibition catalogue of the same name. See Philip K. Hu, ed., *Visible Traces: Rare Books and Special Collections from the National Library of China* (New York: Queens Borough Public Library; Beijing: National Library of China, 2000), nos. 9 (*Chengshi moyuan*), 10 (*Zuoyin xiansheng jingding jiejing yipu*), 14 (*Tangshi yanyipin*), 15 (*Shizhuzhai shuhuapu*), 18 (*Jieziyuan huazhuan erji*), 19 (*Guwen yuanjian*), 21 (*Jinyu tupu*), and 23 (*Baihua shijianpu*). All exhibits were lent by the National Library of China in Beijing. This essay is a revised version of the paper presented at the *Visible Traces* symposium held at the Queens Library on February 19, 2000. I am grateful to Nancy Norton Tomasko for encouraging me to expand specific portions of the paper.
2. Volumes from the Liao Tripitaka and other important documents were found at the same time. The artifacts are reproduced and described in Shanxi sheng wenwuju and Zhongguo lishi bowuguan, comps., *Yingxian muta Liaodai mizang* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1991).
3. See the preface to *Yingxian muta Liaodai mizang*.
4. The discovery was reported in *Wenwu* (1979), 5, pp. 3-4, plate 2. It is also described by T. H. Tsien in Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China* (Paper and Printing) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), vol. 5.1, pp. 280-282, fig. 1188.
5. A good introduction to the genre is found in John Lust, *Chinese Popular Prints* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996).
6. Although I agree that woodblocks were often used in these instances, I suspect that some form of stenciling was also employed more often than is generally acknowledged in the literature.
7. Immediately after the Second World War in 1947, the National Central Library (Guoli zhongyang tushuguan) acquired this extraordinary rare book in Nanjing. I have used the superb photo-facsimile edition of *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing* (Taipei: Guoli zhongyang tushuguan, 1970). The volume, in sutra folded binding form, is about 32 cm. tall. The printed leaves are pasted end on end; each measures approximately 32 x 64 cm. and is folded four times to produce the equivalent of five pages. There are single-line borders above and below, and the printed area of each page is 28 x 12.5 cm. The text of each page is divided into five single columns of twelve large characters or five double columns of twenty-four small characters. The leaves are numbered in the middle of the block from three to thirty-nine, which is the number of the

final leaf. The leaf preceding the text contains an illustration of Sakyamuni Buddha preaching the law drawn by hand in red, and after the text the guardian figure Weituo is also drawn in red. The single illustration found in the text (figure 4) is printed.

8. Although there are obscure references to the existence of manuscripts from the early centuries of the Common Era with the main text written in red and commentaries written in black, it is difficult to find authentic examples. In the National Library of China (formerly Beijing tushuguan) we do find a manuscript of a rare commentary on the *Daodejing* of Laozi from the Tang period (618–907) in which the text of Laozi is written in red and the commentary is written in black. The work in scroll form, entitled *Laozi yishu*, is illustrated in *Dunhuang yishu jingpinxuan* (Beijing: Zhongguo guojia tushuguan, 2000), p. 21.
9. I wish to thank Brian Shure and Roger Keyes for discussing print-related terminology with me.
10. It is possible that the masking of sections of the block may have been used alternatively with the method of wiping sections of the block clean. Toward the end of the volume the order of printing red before black appears to be reversed. With no other examples of this edition to look at, some of these questions must remain moot. It is my opinion that the upper and lower red border lines were carefully drawn by hand to resemble printed lines after the printing of the text and commentary was completed, and possibly at the same time that the illuminations at the head and tail of the volume were produced. The appearance of thinner black lines parallel to the border lines (see top of figure 3) may have resulted from inadvertent contact with the edge of the carved block while printing the commentary. The lines do not seem to be printed from an actual border line carved on the block.
11. For example, see Chang Bide's foreword to *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing* (see note 7 above).
12. Hu Yinglin, *Shaoshi shanfang bicong* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), p. 58.
13. Tuo Xiaotang, *Jiade tongxun: qiuji 2000* (Beijing: Zhongguo Jiade guoji paimai youxian gongsi, 2000), p. 29.
14. See *Visible Traces*, pp. 44–45.
15. *Zhongguo Jiade: guji shanben* (Beijing: Zhongguo Jiade guoji paimai youxian gongsi, 1995), lot 455.
16. The modern bibliophile Tao Xiang (1871–1940) compiled a catalogue of the publications of the Min lineage known to him entitled “Ming Wuxing Minban shumu.” See Tao Xiang, *Shumu congkan* (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000), pp. 1–16.
17. See *Visible Traces*, p. 63.
18. It should not be surprising that differences in style are scarcely discernible, since the two families of printers shared a regional labor pool of blockcarvers. Nevertheless, it is my opinion that Min-family editions tend to be slightly more refined than those of the Lings, which may be the result of materials used, scribal calligraphy, and editorial supervision.
19. See, for example, Qiao Yanguan, “Taose yinben,” *Guji jian ding yu wei hu*

- yanxihui zhuanji* (Taipei: Zhongguo tushuguan xuehui, 1985), pp. 224–241, as well as entries in *Zhongguo guji banke zidian* (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1999), ed. Qu Mianliang.
20. The shape and position of this right-angled mark suggest it might possibly have been the inspiration for the famous *kentō* device of Japanese color printing. Those who suggest the *kentō* was independently developed in Japan may not be aware that Chinese books printed in red and black and employing the registration device described here were available in Japan at least sixteen years before the first color-printed book was published in Japan. See David Chibbett, *The History of Japanese Printing and Book Illustration* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1977), pp. 35–38, and *Nagoya-shi Hōsa Bunko Kanseki bunrui mokuroku* (Nagoya: Hōsa Bunko, 1975), p. 4.
 21. *Visible Traces*, p. 84.
 22. This fine white paper made from the bark of the paper-mulberry tree was produced in and near the village of Kaihua in Zhejiang province. Although the paper was well known and highly regarded as early as the late-Ming period, its reputation reached new heights after it was designated by the Qing imperial court to be used for printing the finest palace editions, especially during the eighteenth century.
 23. Color distribution is recorded on the cover page. Purple: Wang Shizhen (1526–1590); blue: Wang Shenzhong (1509–1559); red and black: Wang Shizhen (1634–1711); green: Shao Changheng (1637–1704); and yellow: Song Luo (1634–1713).
 24. See *Visible Traces*, pp. 39, 42–43. Most copies of this work were printed in black only, and the few polychrome copies that exist surely represent an exclusive and limited printing.
 25. By comparing these plates with the same ones in a copy of this edition printed in black only we can easily confirm that a single woodblock has been used. See Chang Bide, *Mingdai banhua xuan chujī* (Taipei: Guoli zhongyang tushuguan, 1969), pp. 43–44.
 26. The two copies are in the National Library of China, Beijing. I have a color slide from the library's other color-printed copy, which I was able to compare with the illustration in *Visible Traces*. I wish to thank Lin Li-chiang for making the slide available to me. Another color-printed copy is available in the library of the Percival David Foundation, London, and two copies are in Tokyo in the Sonkeikaku Bunko and in the National Diet Library.
 27. Both impressions are found in two copies in the collection of the Gest Library, Princeton University. See Qu Wanli, *Pulinsidun daxue Geside dongfang tushuguan zhongwen shanben shuzhi* (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1975), pp. 43–44.
 28. See *Visible Traces*, pp. 65–68.
 29. See Monique Cohen and Nathalie Monnet, *Impressions de Chine* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1992), pp. 152–153.
 30. The unique copy of this edition is preserved in the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst in Cologne. The museum has published a full-color facsimile edition

accompanied by a volume of research notes. See *Hsi-hsiang chi: Chinesische Farbholzschnitte von Min Ch'i-chi 1640* (Köln: Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst der Stadt Köln, 1977).

31. See Sören Edgren, ed., *Chinese Rare Books in American Collections* (New York: China Institute in America, 1984), pp. 112-113.
32. See *Visible Traces*, pp. 80-81, for illustrations from the second series.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-92.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98, 100.
35. The eminent Swiss typographer and book designer Jan Tschichold has praised the Rongbaozhai edition of the *Models of Letter Paper of the Ten Bamboo Studio* as "an incomparably perfect facsimile; the best printed book of modern times anywhere." See his *Chinese Colour Prints from the Ten Bamboo Studio* (London: Lund Humphries, 1972), p. 52.

GLOSSARY

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| <i>Baihua shijianpu</i> 百華詩箋譜 | <i>Gouqu Shannong</i> 句曲山農 |
| Beijing tushuguan 北京圖書館 | Guangzhou 廣州 |
| caise taoyin 彩色套印 | Guanhailou 觀海樓 |
| <i>Caotang shiyu</i> 草堂詩餘 | Gu Congde 顧從德 |
| <i>Chengshi moyuan</i> 程氏墨苑 | Guoli zhongyang tushuguan |
| <i>Chunqiu zuozhuan</i> 春秋左傳 | 國立中央圖書館 |
| ci 詞 | <i>Guwen yuanjian</i> 古文淵鑿 |
| <i>Daodejing</i> 道德經 | Huguang Zhongxinglu 湖廣中興路 |
| Ding Bing 丁丙 | <i>Hushan shenggai</i> 湖山勝概 |
| Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 | Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 |
| <i>Dongpo chanxiji</i> 東坡禪喜集 | Hu Zhengyan 胡正言 |
| douban 餛板 | Huzhou 湖州 |
| douban yinfa 餛板印法 | <i>Jianxia ji</i> 剪霞集 |
| Du Fu 杜甫 | <i>Jieziyuan huazhuan</i> 芥子園畫傳 |
| <i>Du Gongbu ji</i> 杜工部集 | <i>Jieziyuan huazhuan erji</i> 芥子園畫傳二集 |
| <i>Duichuang yeyu</i> 對床夜語 | <i>Jigu yinpu</i> 集古印譜 |
| Duoyunxuan 朵雲軒 | <i>Jin'gang bore boluomi jing</i> |
| Fan Xiwen 范晞文 | 金剛般若波羅蜜經 |
| Feng Mengzhen 馮蒙禎 | <i>Jinyu tupu</i> 金魚圖譜 |
| fucai yinfa 敷彩印法 | kaihua 開化 |
| gonghua 拱花 | kentō 見当 |

- Laozi yishu* 老子義疏
 lei 類
 Li Kegong 李克恭
 Ling 凌
 Ling Mengchu 凌濛初
 Liu Xie 劉勰
 Lu Kun 盧坤
Luoxuan biangu jianpu 羅軒變古箋譜
Lüshi chunqiu 呂氏春秋
 Lu Xun 魯迅
 menshen 門神
 Min 閔
 Min Qiji 閔齊伋
 Min Shengchu 閔繩初
 Min Yingbi 閔映璧
 Min Yishi 閔一栻
 nianhua 年畫
 Rongbaozhai 榮寶齋
 ruo 若
 Shao Changheng 邵長蘅
Shaoshi shanfang bicong 少室山房筆叢
 sheng 生
 Shen Linqi 沈遴奇
Shijia shuofa xiang 釋迦說法相
Shizhuzhai jianpu 十竹齋箋譜
Shizhuzhai shuhuapu 十竹齋書畫譜
 shuangyin 雙印
 Sicong 思聰
 Song Luo 宋榮
 Sonkeikaku Bunko 尊經閣文庫
 Su Shi 蘇軾
Tangshi yanyipin 唐詩豔逸品
 Tuo Xiaotang 拓曉堂
 Wang Chang 王常
 Wang Dexin 王德信
 Wang Gai 王概
 Wang Shenzhong 王慎中
 Wang Shizhen (1526–1590) 王世貞
 Wang Shizhen (1634–1711) 王士禛
 Weituo 韋陀
 Wenmeizhai 文美齋
Wenmeizhai baihua shijianpu
 文美齋百華詩箋譜
Wenxin diaolong 文心雕龍
 Wucheng 烏程
 Wu Faxiang 吳發祥
 Wuwen 無聞
 Wuxing 吳興
 xiang 想
Xixiang ji 西廂記
 Yang Shen 楊慎
 Yingxian 應縣
Yuzhi guwen yuanjian 御製古文淵鑒
 Zhang Zhaoxiang 張兆祥
 zhe 者
 Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸
 zhong 中
 Zhou Mi 周密
 zhumo taoyinben 朱墨套印本
 Zifusi 資福寺
Zuoyin xiansheng jingding jiejing yipu
 坐隱先生精訂捷徑奕譜