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4. NEW DIMENSIONS IN MING PRINTING

The Ming printing industry was characterized by a number of new dimensions. In addition to the traditional works of classics, history, religion, and literary collections, the Ming printers produced a large number of new works, including novels, essays, technical arts, accounts of foreign countries, scientific treatises, and scientific works from the West which had never before been printed in China. Significant advances were also made in printing of dramatic texts, medical literature, records of foreign countries, especially of south and east Asia, local gazetteers, and such large compilations as encyclopedias. In addition, the Ming printers introduced metal typography, improved the multi-colour process of block printing, refined the woodblock illustration, and used xylography for the large reproduction of old equines. Both the process and technology of printing in the Ming was advanced in every respect.

The Ming also described the great expansion of the printing industry and the increase in the numbers of printers and publishers. With quantity came an increase in quality; many books were clearly produced for a market. After 1400, with consequent peace and prosperity, the printing industry flourished. The steady increase in rich quality printing was reflected at the same time.

The Ming Collection and the Ming Library are particularly rich in the Ming printing industry. The Ming Collection, which covers more than 20,000 volumes from 1400 to 1644, is the largest and most complete collection of the Ming printing industry.

The Ming Collection is in the

T. H. Tsien has called a section of his recent book "New Dimensions in Ming Printing." He explains this very apt characterization as follows:

"Ming printing was distinguished by the extended scope of its subject-matter and by its technical innovations and artistic refinement. In contrast to that of previous periods, the printing under the Ming included not only the traditional works in classics, history, religion, and literary collections, but also such new subject-fields as popular novels, music, industrial arts, accounts of ocean voyages, shipbuilding, and scientific treatises from the West which had never before been seen in print in China. Significant increases were also noted in printing of dramatic texts, medical writings, records of foreign countries, especially of south and southeast Asia, local gazetteers, and such large compilations as collectanea and encyclopedias. In technique, the Ming printers introduced metal typography, improved the multi-colour process of block printing, refined the woodcut for book illustrations, and used xylography for facsimile reproductions of old editions. Both in content and technology, then, printing in the Ming was distinguished in many respects."¹

Tsien also describes the great expansion of the printing industry and the rapid growth in the numbers of private publishers. With quantity came an overall decline in quality; many books were cheaply produced for a mass market after 1500, with consequent poor editing, plagiarism and forgery, and falsely attributed authorship. Yet steady activity in high quality printing persisted at the same time.

The Gest Collection and the East Asian Library are particularly rich in their Ming editions, holding more than 25,000 volumes from that age. Here we draw on those holdings to illustrate various facets of the "new dimensions."

This entire section is by Chu.

SECTION FOUR

Woodcut pictorial illustrations are an important dimension in Ming printing. Not merely a form of graphic art, such woodcuts served purposes both utilitarian and aesthetic. Woodcut illustrations in books can be dated back at least to the ninth century; but it was, as Tsuen-hsuei Tsien writes, "during the Ming dynasty, especially in the latter part of the sixteenth century and early part of the seventeenth century [that they] reached their highest degree of excellence in Chinese history. In both quality and quantity, they not only surpassed anything in the past but have never since been equalled." The subject matter of such illustrations is rich. As Tsien also writes, "the books most frequently illustrated were fiction, drama, poetry and art albums, scientific works, and primers, as well as historical, geographic, and biographical writings."

Ch'ou-hai t'u-pien (nos. 71a-c) is an illustrated military type work on history and geography, basically an encyclopaedic reference book on coastal affairs, concerned not least with the strategy of coastal defense.² Its author, Cheng Jo-tseng, a native of K'un-shan in the prefecture of Soochow, was a distinguished geographer and one-time advisor to Hu Tsung-hsien (1511-1565), the supreme commander of the entire Southern Metropolitan area in the war against the *wo-k'ou* pirates in the mid-fifteenth century. This *magnum*

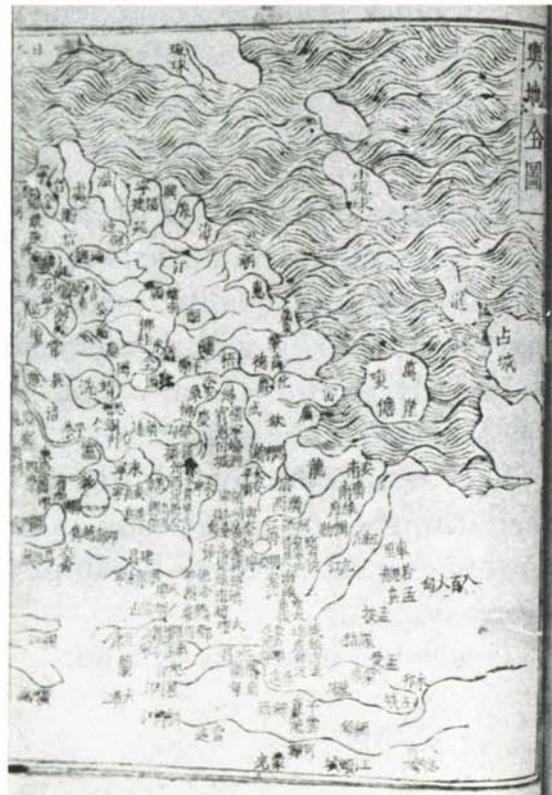
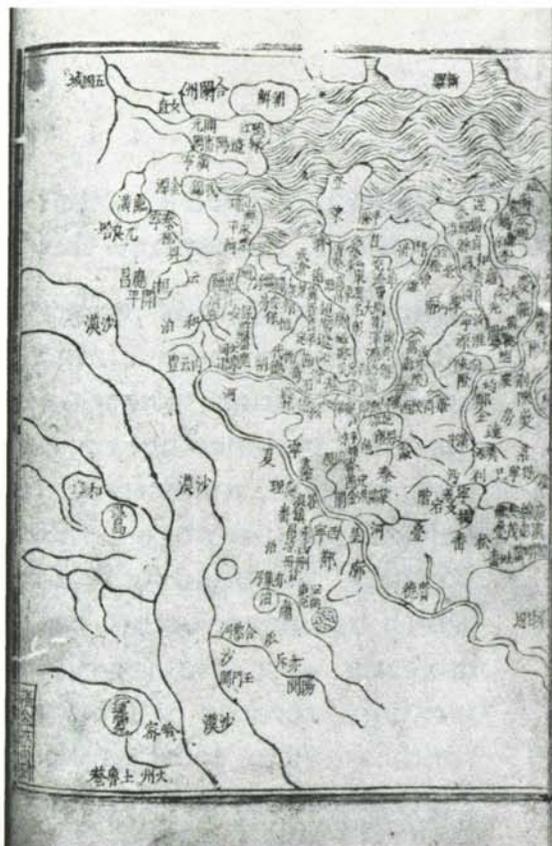
71a-c. *Ch'ou-hai t'u-pien*. 13 ch. (20 vols.).

Author: Cheng Jo-tseng (1505-1580).

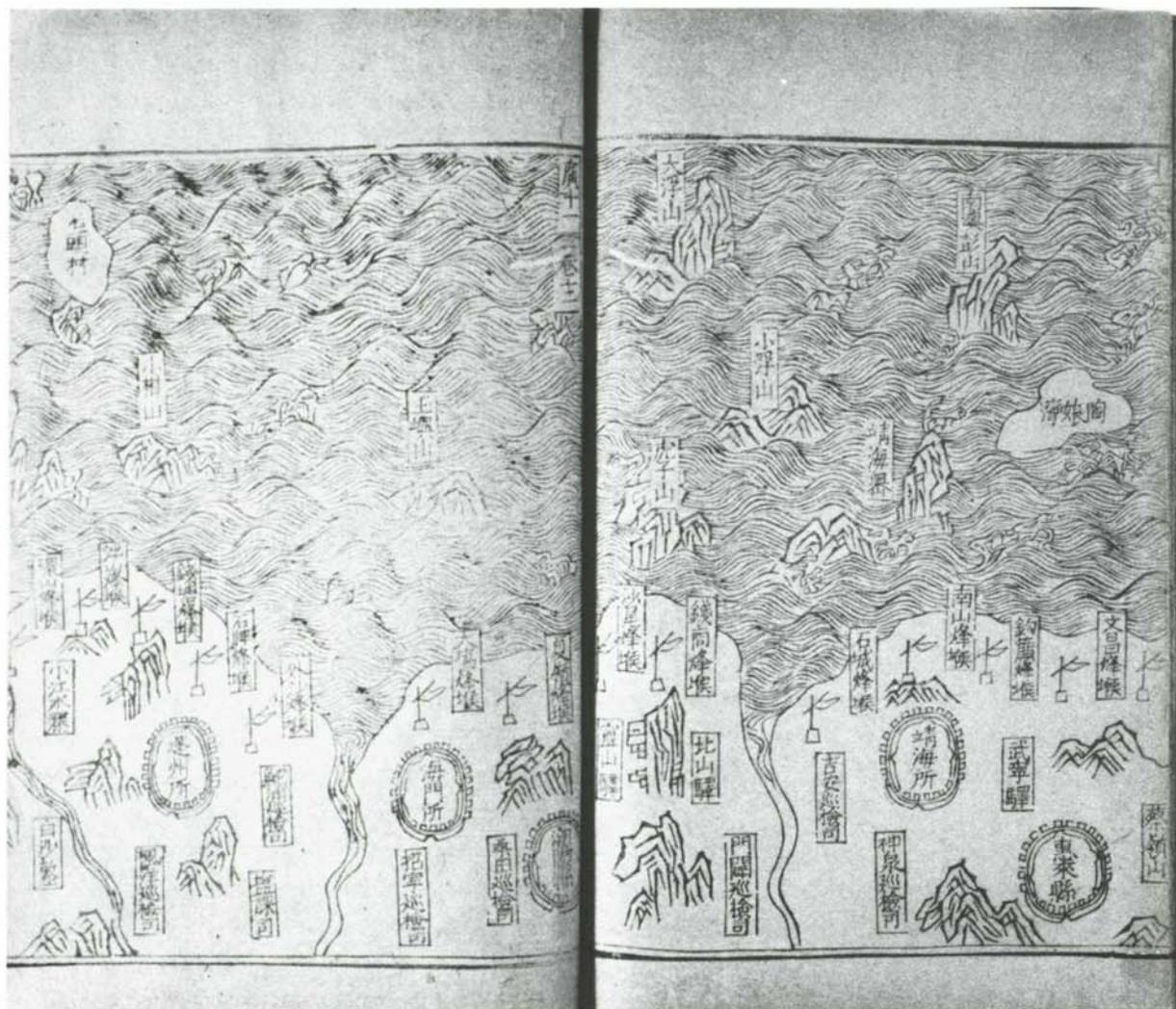
Date: 1562 (Hangchow).

Dimensions: 12 cols. of 22 chars.; block, 20.5 x 14.8 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.



71b.



71c.

opus was developed and enlarged from Cheng's earlier work, a strategic atlas of the coastal region ranging from the Liaotung Peninsula to southern Kwangtung. Remarkd as one of the most scholarly works in its field, it is a turning point in Chinese geography, shifting from the traditional attention on northern and north-western inland borders to the coastal area. Because it was compiled and financed on Hu Tsung-hsien's order, it has been formally attributed to Hu. And because Hu's grandsons and great-grandsons produced with the same blocks another edition dur-

ing the period 1621-27, adding Hu's name as the compiler, even the critical reviewers in the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* were misled to take Hu as the author. The present edition names Cheng as the compiler and his sons Ying-lung and I-luan as collators. As evidenced by Cheng's own preface in 1561 and other prefaces, as well as a list of personnel responsible for the publication, this edition was printed by the provincial government of Chekiang. The Gest copy belongs to this first edition and is noted for its rarity; only one other copy, now in the Academia Sinica (Taiwan), is known to

exist. As observed by Stanley Y.C. Huang, who studied this copy, "a few passages relating to Hu [Tsong-hsien] . . . were stained with black ink, probably to delete [them]." This phenomenon appears to have resulted from a deliberate act to distance the author's relationship with Hu, who three years after publication was so disgraced as to be ordered arrested and brought to the capital for trial of political misconduct.

The illustrations include the master atlas (nos. 71a-b) at the beginning of the book, representing the author's idea of and knowledge about the geographic situation of the entire Ming empire and its neighboring states. The other one (no. 71c) represents a portion of the coastal defense system in the eastern part of the southern province of Kwangtung. All these illustrations carry the names of the carvers.

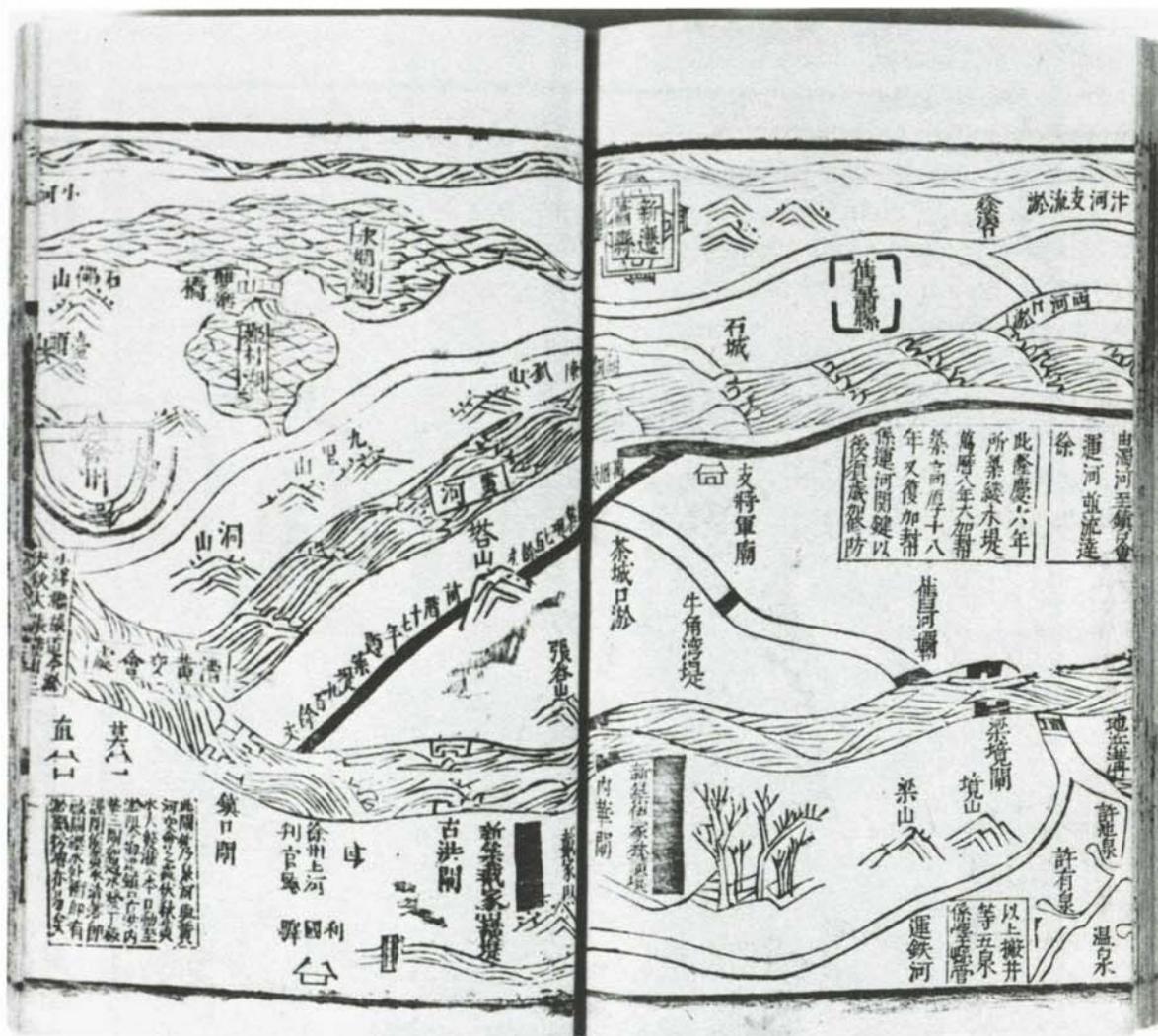
Ho-fang i-lan is a famous illustrated technical work about the waterworks of the Yellow River and the Grand Canal. Its author, P'an Chi-hsün, was a native of Wu-ch'eng, Chekiang, and a famous minister of Works. His twenty-seven-year experience in combatting the perennial problems of these two water networks made him the foremost hydraulic engineer of Ming times. He was remembered for the motto: "Build dikes to restrict the water, utilize the current to remove the silt." His "self-scour method" and "channel contraction theory" were not all subscribed to and applied by his contemporaries, but influential enough to be brought up frequently for discussion and debate.

The present edition (no. 72) was published in P'an's later years. It incorporates most of the contents of his three earlier works on the same subject and

contains maps, geographic and historical studies of the River, his essays on water control in the form of dialogues, and related official documents. Beside this first, complete edition, to which the present copy belongs, there were reprints in 1748 and 1936. There was also a slightly shortened version, abridged by P'an's son, Ta-fu, and published not long after the complete edition.³

The illustrations in this book cover the entire courses of both the Yellow River and the Grand Canal. In addition to depicting the topographical features along the water courses, they show the location, size, and nature of all sorts of water control constructions for the two networks. Descriptive texts are included along with the illustrations to provide historical background and sometimes exact measurements of such constructions. The portion illustrated represents the confluence of the Yellow River (the upper water course) and the Grand Canal (the lower water course) near the city of Hsü-chou. Hsü-chou was critical in P'an's actual plans to restore both water transportation to Peking and the main course of the entire Yellow River system.

The illustrated book *Fang-shih mo-p'u* (nos. 73a-b) is the famous compendium of decorative inkcakes manufactured by Fang Yü-lu, a native of She-hsien in the Hui-chou prefecture and a pioneer printer of woodcut illustrations. Fang was a keen competitor and adversary of another contemporary inkcake designer and manufacturer, his fellow townsman and one-time partner Ch'eng Ta-yüeh (1541-1616?), who produced another, equally famous, illustrated compendium called *Ch'eng-shih mo-yüan*. A combination of the skills of notable artists and woodblock carvers makes this compendium not only a signal



72. *Ho-fang i-lan*. 14 ch. (12 vols.).

Author: P'an Chi-hsün (1521-1595).

Date: 1590 (Wu-ch'eng, Chekiang).

Dimensions: 9 cols. of 20 chars.; block, 22.6 x 14.8 cm.

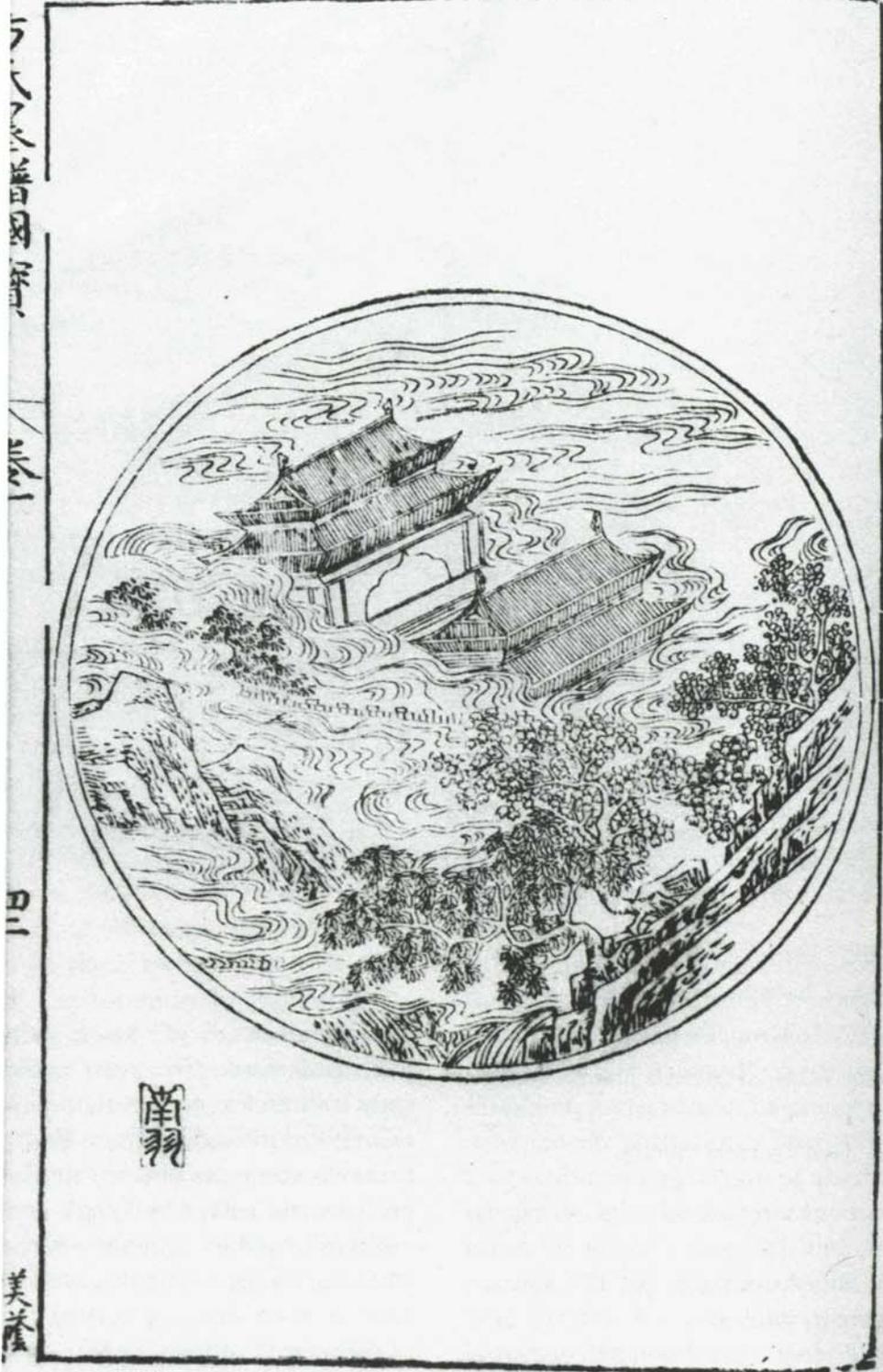
Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

record of inkcake designs, but also a piece of engaging graphic art.

Fang-shih mo-p'u has more than one edition. The Gest copy contains four prefaces, the latest date of the three dated ones being 1590.⁴ This shows that it is not a

printing of the first edition, which was published about two years earlier. This copy is bound in eight volumes. Like another copy studied by Sören Edgren, "the first two volumes contain complimentary prefaces and essays by Fang's contemporaries followed by six volumes with some 400 illustrations of ink-cake designs." Most of these designs, bearing the names of their artist authors, appear on one side of the inkcakes, while labels or notes or poetic descriptions of the designs, bearing Fang's signature, appear on the other. (See

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73a.



73a-b. *Fang-shih mo-p'u*. 6 + 1 ch. (8 vols.).

Author: Fang Yü-lu (fl. 1570-1619).

Date: ca. 1590 (She-hsien, Anhwei).

Dimensions: irregular cols. and chars.; block, 24.6 x 14.7 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

no. 73b.) For our purpose, the great interest of this book lies not just in the designs, but also in their accompanying texts and the writings preceding them. All these writings were carved from beautifully executed calligraphic works, many of which presumably done by the authors. This, together with the designs, gives the book a high degree of aesthetic value.

Liu hsüeh-hu mei-p'u is an illustrated painting manual devoted to plum flowers. It consists of one half-folio illustrating various styles used in painting plum flower petals, and another half-folio and twelve double-folios illustrating twenty-four model plum flower paintings (see nos. 74a and b, from different folios). The remaining portion, consisting of some three and a half volumes, contains for the most part complimentary writings by the author's friends and admirers: prefaces, postfaces, comments, poems, letters, the author's portrait and an encomium for it. From these writings it can be seen that the author, Liu Shih-ju of Shan-yin, Chekiang, was a well-connected artist and poet and was highly respected for his plum flower painting. Yet he is historically obscure.

The frontispiece of the painting manual contains a printer's colophon stating that the text was finalized by a Chung Wu-lin of Kuei-chi, Chekiang, and the blocks were stored at a place called Mo-miao shan-fang (Chung's residence?). Two postfaces appear at the end of the text: one by a Hsü Shih-hsing, dated 1578; the other by a Hsü Chih-jen, dated 1595. The book, however, must have been printed sometime after the last date. This can be seen from the undated preface to the book, written by Wang Ssu-jen, both an official and an artist, as well as fellow townsman of the author. Wang says, "[This manual] has been cut four times. Each time the blocks were carried away by well-intended busy-bodies and [Liu] is unable to cut a new edition because his family is poor. Now I cut it for him from an office in Soochow." The blocks must have been cut between 1595 and 1619, for characters which were considered taboo after 1619 are not altered. But the printing of this

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74a-b. *Liu Hsüeh-hu mei-p'u*. 2 ch. (4 vols.).

Author: Liu Shih-ju (fl. 1550-1600); Wang Ssu-jen (1575-1646), ed.

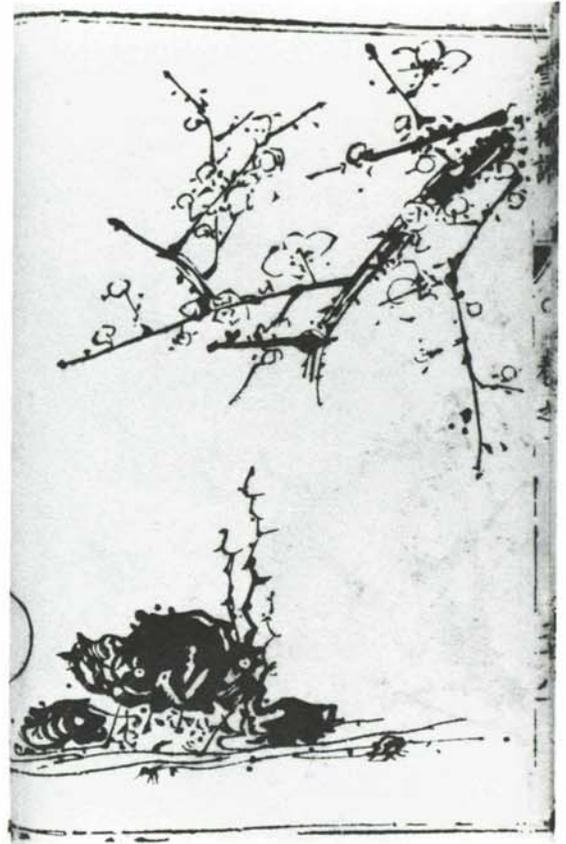
Date: 1595-1619.

Dimensions: 11 cols. of 20 chars.; block, 23 x 15.6 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

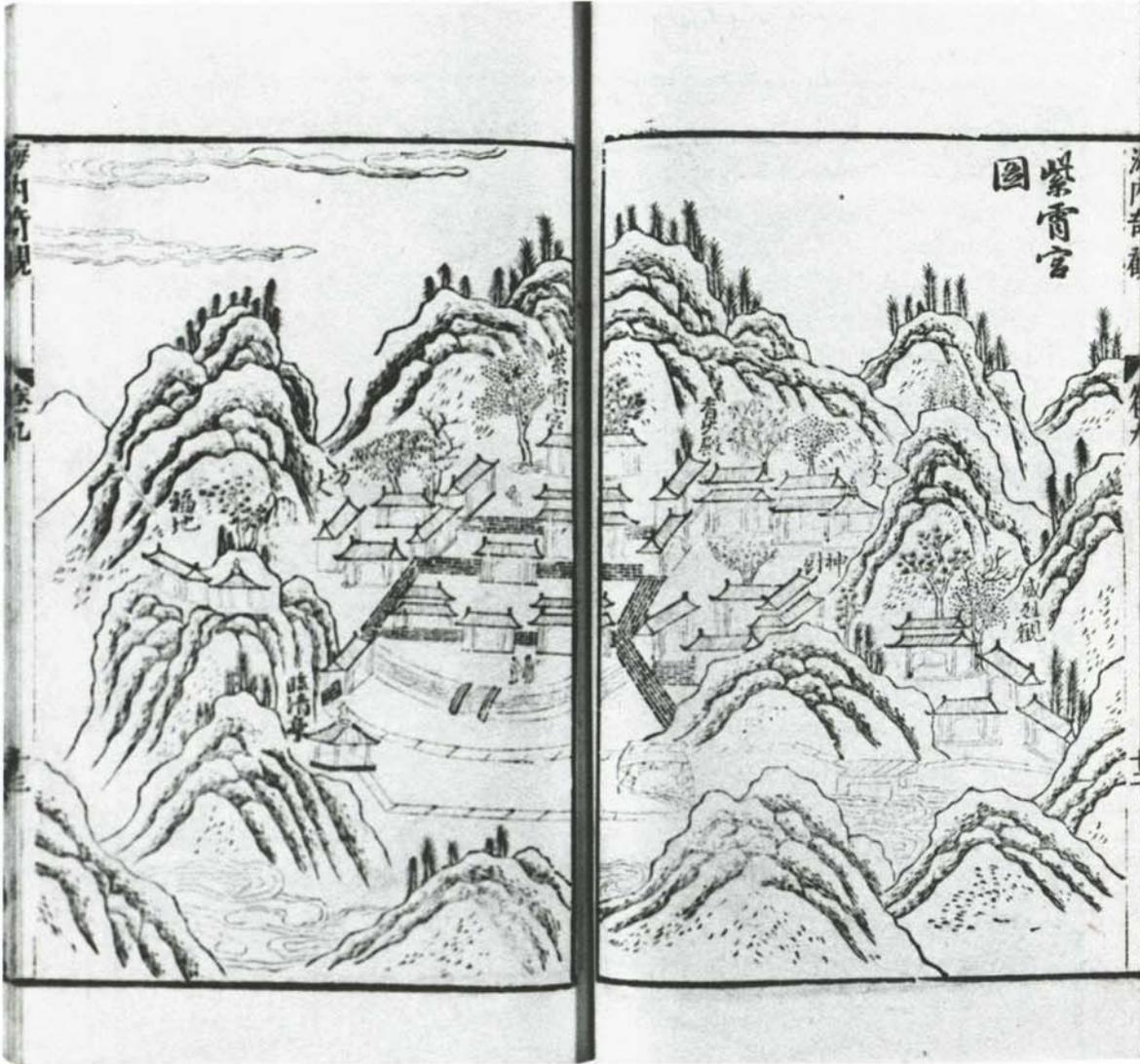
copy came still later. The last page of the first *chüan* is a later addition, because it contains a poem dated 1634. The Library of Congress holds another copy with the same frontispiece and a postface dated 1681. It is likely that the Gest copy was also printed thereabout, although all the other blocks were cut during late Ming.⁵

Both travelogues and illustrations of landscapes were popular in late Ming times. What distinguishes the travelogue



74a.

Hsin-chüan hai-nei ch'i-kuan (nos. 75a-c) is that it probably was the first to have been luxuriously illustrated, with landscapes and scenes of social life that might capture a traveler's attention. Its author, Yang Erh-tseng, was a native of Ch'ien-t'ang, Chekiang. Little is known about him except that he printed a number of books, including novels and stories. From his 1609 preface and other places in the book we know that his alias was Sheng-lu and his courtesy name, appropriately enough, Wo-yu tao-jen (Taoist priest who sight-sees by reading [travelogues] on the pillow). He had a studio named I-pai t'ang, which appears also to have been the name of his printing shop. The book lists Ch'en I-kuan of Ch'ien-t'ang as the illustrator and Wang Chung-hsin of Hsin-an (Hui-



75a.

75a-c. *Hsin-chüan hai-nei ch'i-kuan*. 10 ch. (10 vols.).

Author: Yang Erh-tseng (fl. 1600s).

Date: 1610 (Hangchow?).

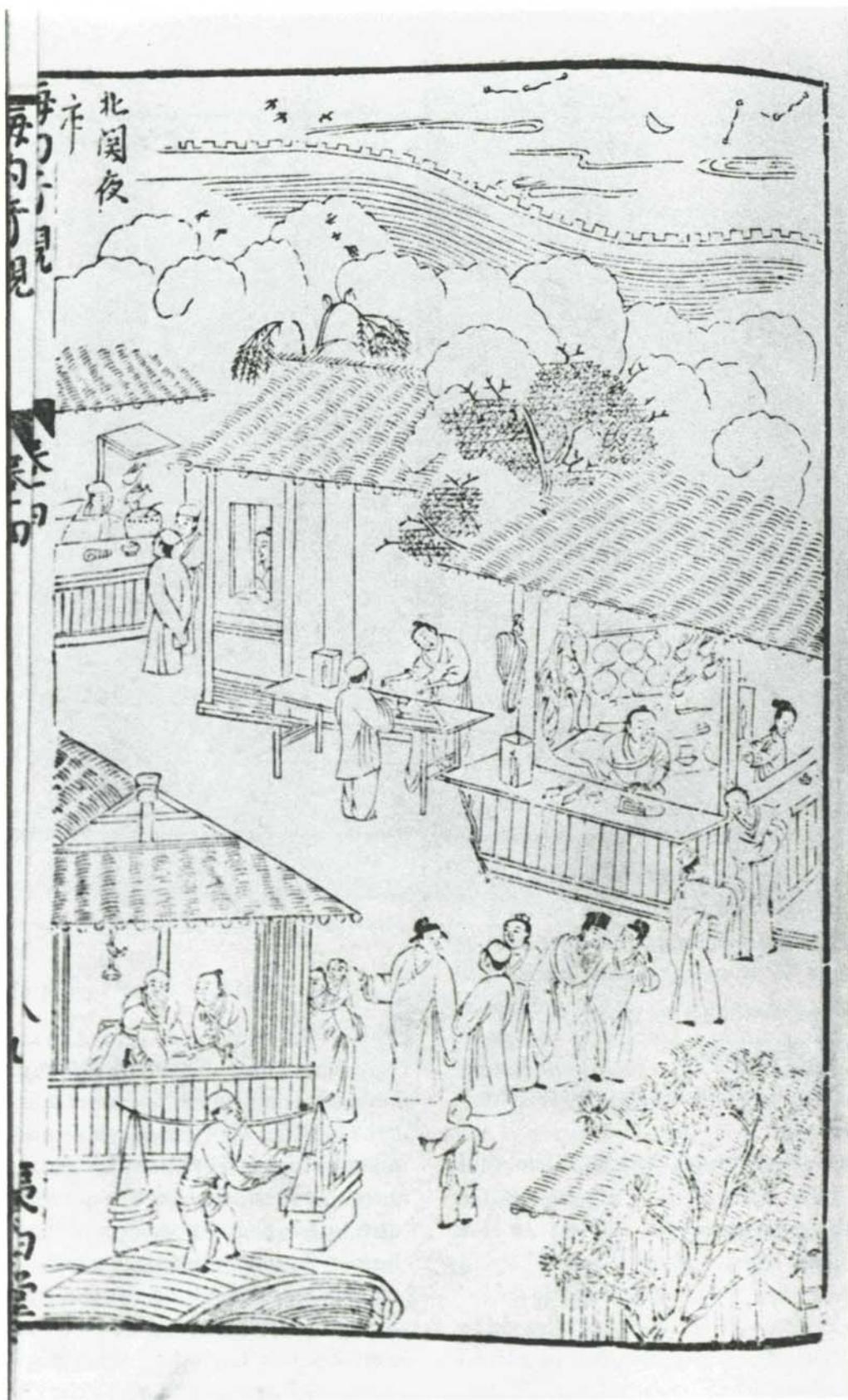
Dimensions: 10 cols. of 24 chars.; block, 22.6 x 14.7 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

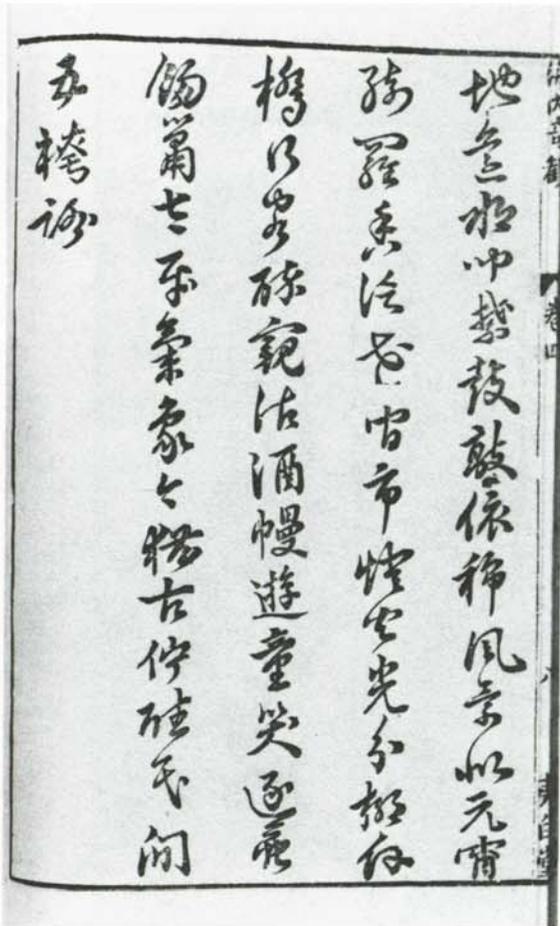
chou) as the woodblock carver. In another copy, examined by Wang Chung-min, there is a preface by a Fang Ch'ing-lai, dated 1610. In the Gest copy this preface is missing, which therefore may give rise to questions about the date of publication.⁶

Ming travelogues, especially those exclusively about mountains, had appeared earlier. By the time of this book, there were already three rather well-known ones. But, in fact, they were not illustrated. Thus, as Wang Chung-min

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75b.



75c.

pointed out, the uniqueness of the present one is its having illustrations to accompany the mountains described, thus setting a new course for the genre.

The temple complex illustrated, Tzu-hsiao kung (no. 75a), was the Taoist temple in T'ai-ho shan (Mount Wu-tang in Hupei) that was the most heavily endowed by the Ming imperial courts. The other illustration (no. 75b) depicts the evening market in the north gate of the city of Hangchow. It is one scene in a series entitled "Ten Choice Scenic Spots in Ch'ien-t'ang." Each is accompanied by a poem or some rhymed verses describing the scenery. The one selected here (no. 75c) describes the "evening market." The

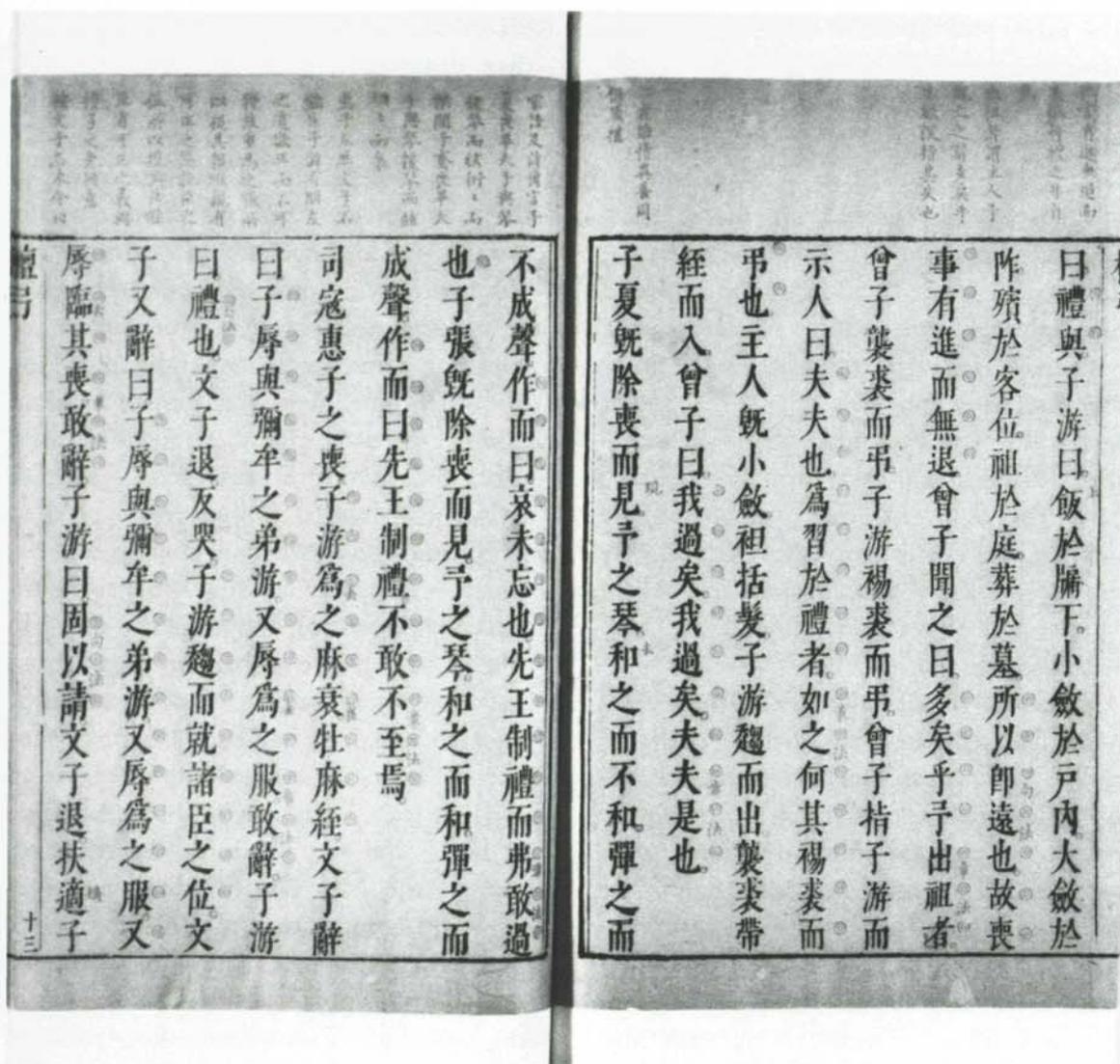
calligraphy of these descriptive texts varies in style, though it is possible that all were done by the same calligrapher. It goes without saying that the illustrations and the descriptions complement each other in order to help the reader. But the stylish calligraphy is an aesthetic touch.

The demand for illustrations for popular literature prompted the sophistication of figure portrayals. In 1640 Ch'en Hung-shou (1599-1652), the most noted artist-designer of woodcuts in the Ming, designed the famous *Shui-hu yeh-tzu*, which portrays on playing cards forty characters from the novel *Water Margin*. The forty portraits in the seventy-*chüan* illustrated version of the *Water Margin* printed around 1657 by the Kuan-hua t'ang (one of them is shown in no. 76) are obviously derived from Ch'en's designs, though not nearly as sophisticated. Such duplications are evidence of Ch'en's influence and the taste of late Ming readers. But in selecting this early Ch'ing book, which was badly cut and printed, our point is to show the burgeoning market of popular literature in late Ming times. We see (no. 76) that the blocks for this book had been heavily used, turning out many like copies. In general this shows the continuation of a late Ming tradition — cheap and low quality production for mass consumption.⁷

We have in *T'an-kung* (no. 77) an example of multi-color printing, itself yet another facet of Ming printing. Color printing from woodblocks may be dated at least to the early twelfth century. But, to quote Tsuen-hsuei Tsien again, "the multi-color technique was further developed toward the end of the sixteenth century and around the turn of the seventeenth, when the Min and Ling families and other printers of the Kiangsu-Chekiang region printed hundreds of classical

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77. *T'an-kung*. 2 ch. (2 vols.).

Date: 1616 (Wu-hsing, Chekiang).

Dimensions: 8 cols. of 18 chars.; block, 20.4 x 14.5 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

< 76. *P'ing-lun ch'u-hsiang shui-hu chuan*. 20 ch. (20 vols.).

Author: Shih Nai-an (ca. 1290 - ca. 1365).

Date: ca. 1657.

Dimensions: 11 cols. of 24 chars.; block, 20.6 x 14.9 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

works, illustrated novels, dramatic texts, and medical writings in two to five colors."⁸

T'an-kung, a two-color book, is the text of a chapter in the Confucian classic *Book of Rites*, and was printed by the famous Min family of Wu-hsing, particularly Min Ch'i-chi (1580-1661+), long well-known to collectors of Ming multi-color prints. It is one of the famous "three annotated Confucian Classics printed in red and black sets of blocks by the Min family."

The other two books in this series are the *Mencius* annotated by Su Hsün (1009-1066) and the "K'ao-kung chi" chapter of the *Chou-li* with the commentary of Kuo Cheng-yü (1554-1612).

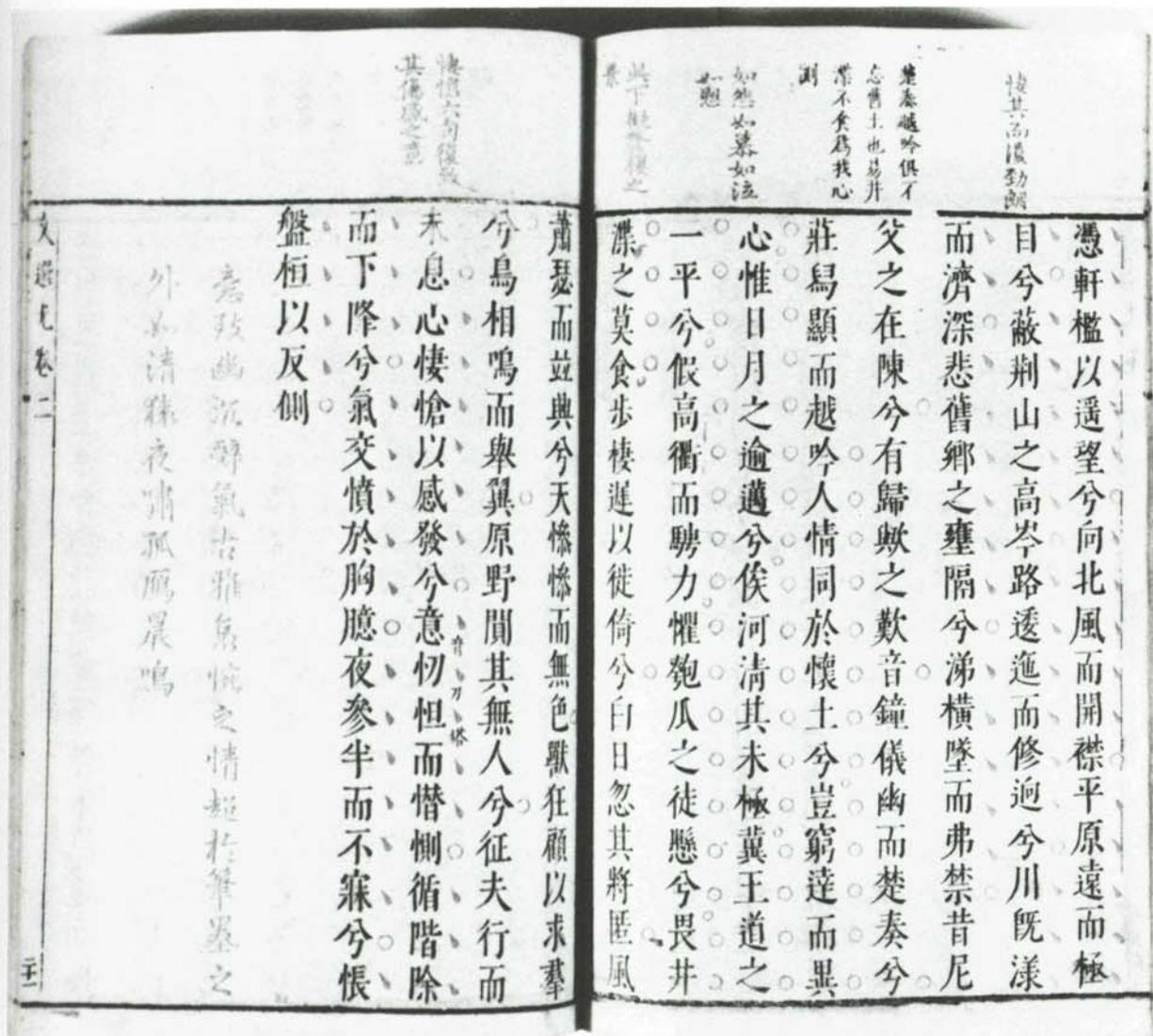
T'an-kung is printed with text in black and with commentaries on top of the folio, as well as small red double-line circles highlighting noteworthy passages. The commentaries were attributed to the Sung loyalist Hsieh Fang-te (1226-1289), but it seems that the symbols, which are intermingled with analytical terms for rhetorical purposes, were done by Min himself or by a scholar he employed. Comments on the book by the eminent mid-Ming scholar and writer Yang Shen (1488-1559) are also included.

The text is preceded by a preface by Min Ch'i-chi himself, dated 1616, in which he writes, "on this great accomplishment in the craftsmanship of block-cutting I cast a smile." He also autographed a short colophon at the end of the book signifying the autumn of 1616 as the date of publication. He seems to be highly satisfied with this early representative of his multi-color printings. He may also have found satisfaction in the beautiful, soft style of calligraphy that adds a pleasant visual touch to the commentaries.

Wen-hsüan yu (no. 78)⁹ is another fine multi-color printing by the Min family (introduced in the previous entry). The book is an abridgement of the famous literary anthology edited by Prince Chaoming, Hsiao T'ung (501-531) of the Liang dynasty (502-556). The abridgement was made by Tsou Ssu-ming, a native of Wuch'eng, Chekiang, who passed his provincial examination in 1564 and served twice as a county magistrate. Printed with text in black, summary commentary in red, and commentaries on top of folios in

black, red, and green, it represents a further development in the Min family's technique. Two types of symbol — small circles and oblique dots — are employed for textual criticism. The three colors in the commentaries each represent a specific category of annotation and criticism: red for summary comments on and phases of development in a piece of work, green for comments on choice lines and exploration of hidden meanings, black for pronunciation of words and annotation of phrases. Note that while the text shows a rigid, uniformly defined calligraphy typical of late Ming books, the commentaries in red and green display a calligraphic style unmistakably bearing the influence of Chao Meng-fu. A sense of realism is enhanced by this "cut as written" fashion of printing, as if the copy had been personally annotated by a learned reader.

Next (no. 79) is a woodblock printing in black and red produced by the Ling family, the Min family's fellow townsmen and competitors. The printer specified is Ling Yü-nan. The book is the literary anthology of Lo Pin-wang, one of the so-called "four outstanding poets of early T'ang." The attached commentaries are attributed to Wang Heng (*chin-shih* 1601), son of grand secretary Wang Hsi-chüeh (1534-1611), and other noted literary critics of late Ming times, such as Chung Hsing (1574-1624) and T'an Yüanch'un (1585-1637). The present copy bears a preface by Wang Tao-k'un (1525-1593), dated 1591, and a postface by Wang Heng, undated. Wang's preface mentions nothing of a coming issue by the Ling family nor any of the commentators. On the other hand, an obviously identical copy in the Peking Library bears an additional preface by T'ang Pin-yin (1568-1627), dated 1615. Since the commentators were



78. *Wen-hsüan yü*. 14 ch. (14 vols.).

Author: Tsou Ssu-ming (ca. 1543 - 1622+).

Date: 1622 (Wu-hsing, Chekiang).

Dimensions: 8 cols. of 18 chars.; block, 19.1 x 13.9 cm.

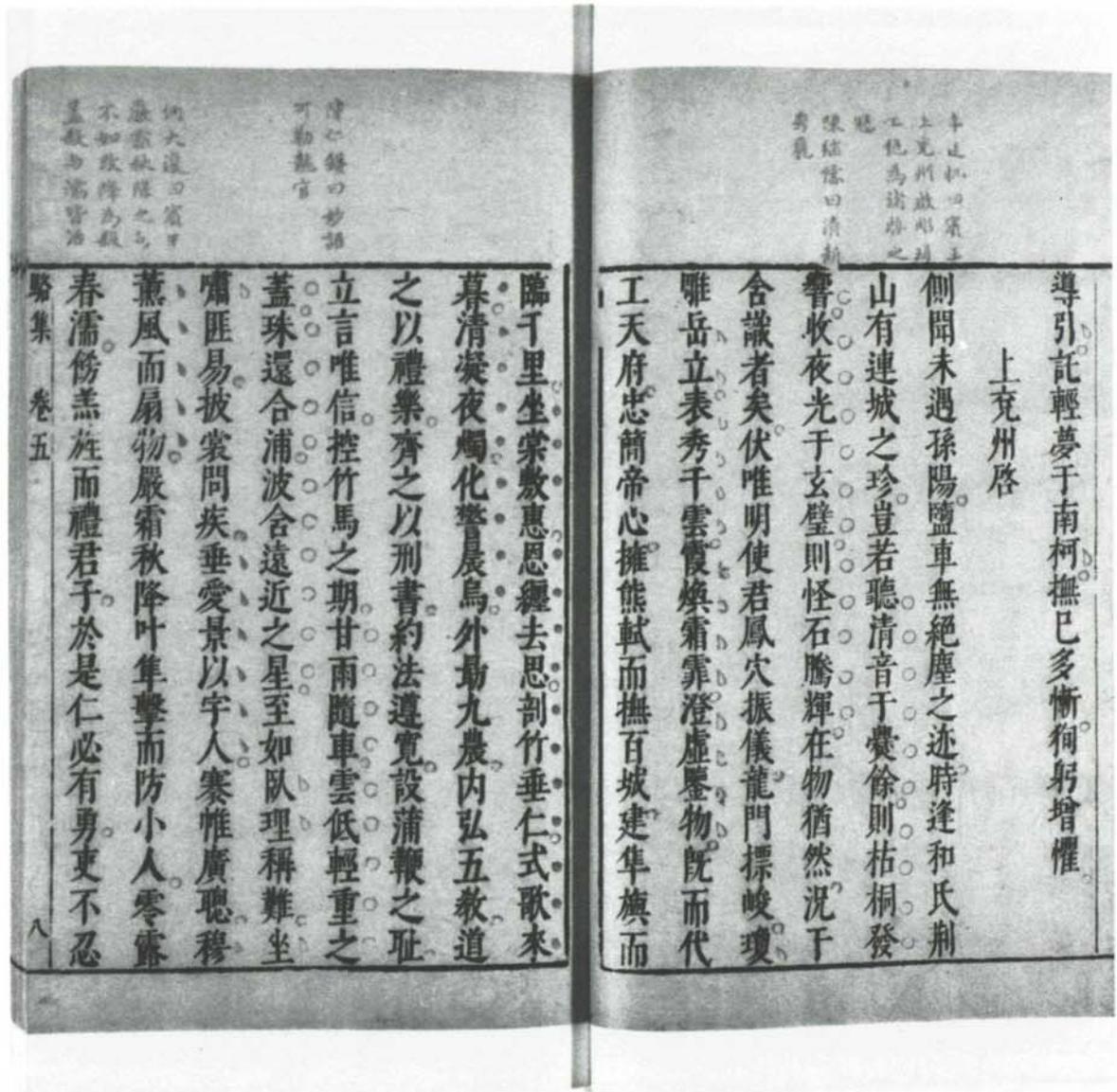
Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

more contemporary with T'ang than with Wang, the present copy ought to have been printed in or about 1615, not 1591.¹⁰

As is the rule in multi-color books of this kind, the commentary on top of the folio appears in red. Compared with the

two books printed by the Min family (nos. 77 and 78), the symbols used for textual criticism in this Ling family production appear to be more complicated and meticulous. Now four types of symbols — solid and hollow circles and oblique dots — were used. Still, all three books share some basic similarities: the calligraphy for the text assumed a rigid craft style, while that for the commentary a soft, elegant, artistic style.

Our last example of late Ming multi-



導引託輕夢于南柯。撫已多慚。狗躬增懼。

上兗州啓

側聞未遇孫陽。鹽車無絕塵之迹。時逢和氏荆
山。有連城之珍。豈若聽清音于費餘。則枯桐發
響。收夜光于玄璧。則怪石騰輝。在物猶然。況于
舍識者矣。伏唯明使君鳳穴振儀。龍門標峻。瓊
雕岳立。表秀千雲。霞煥霜霏。澄虛鑒物。既而代
工天府。忠簡帝心。擁熊軾而撫百城。建隼旗而

臨千里。坐棠敷惠。思經去思。剖竹垂仁。式歌來
暮。清凝夜燭。化警晨烏。外勗九農。內弘五教。道
之以禮樂。齊之以刑書。約法遵寬。設蒲鞭之耻。
立言唯信。控竹馬之期。甘雨隨車。雲低輕重之
蓋。珠還合浦。波合遠近之星。至如臥理。稱難坐
嘯。匪易披裳。問疾垂愛。景以宇人。寒帷廣聰。穆
薰風而扇物。嚴霜秋降。叶隼擊而防小人。零露
春濡。飭羔旌而禮君子。於是仁必有勇。吏不忍

駱集 卷五

79. *T'ang Lo hsien-sheng chi*. 8+1 ch. (4 vols.).

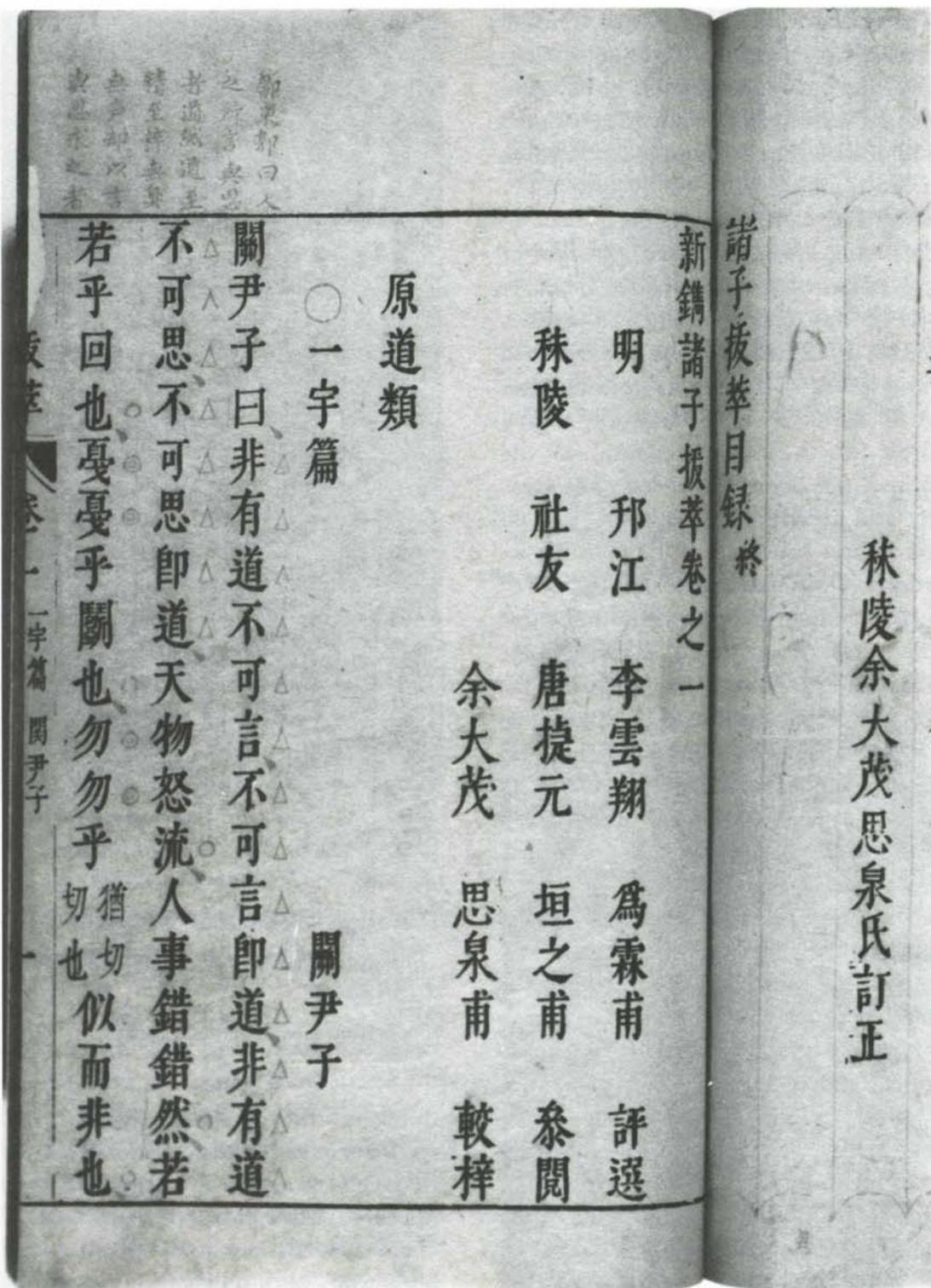
Author: Lo Pin-wang (d. 684).

Date: 1615 (Wu-hsing, Chekiang).

Dimensions: 8 cols. of 18 chars.; block, 19 x 14 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

color books (no. 80) is printed in Nanking by Yü Ta-mao, owner of the Yü-ch'ing t'ang printing shop. The book is a collection of philosophical essays, edited and commented on by Li Yün-hsiang of Chiang-tu (Yangchow). It contains an undated preface by Li. According to the critical review in the catalogue of the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu*, the book was printed in 1627.¹¹ This is corroborated by the taboo charac-



80. *Hsin-chüan chu-tzu pa-ts'ui*. 8 ch. (16 vols.).

Author: Li Yün-hsiang (fl. 1620s), ed.

Date: 1627 (Nanking).

Dimensions: 9 cols. of 18 chars.; block, 20 x 13.7 cm.

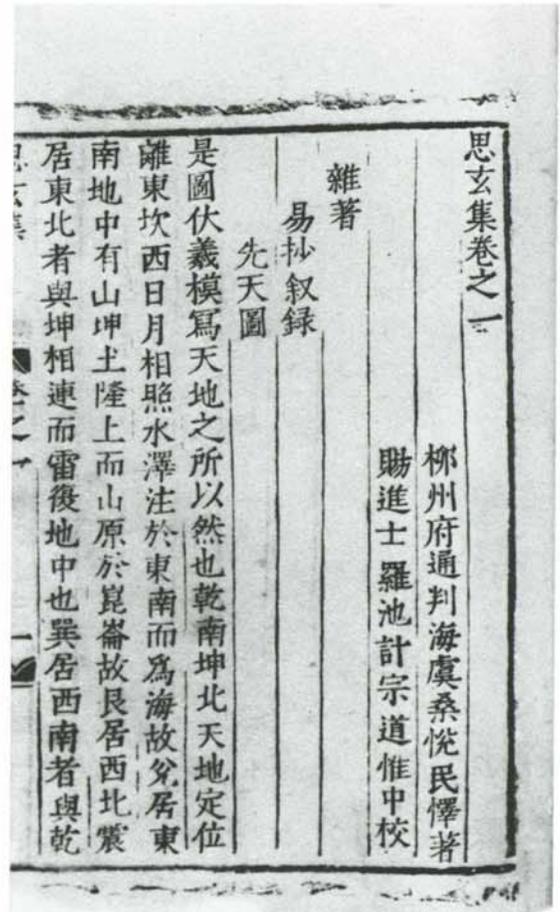
Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

ters observed in the text. A new symbol of textual criticism, the small hollow triangle, was introduced in this book. And again the red-inked commentary printed in soft and elegant calligraphy emerges as part of a trend.

The literary anthology of Sang Yüeh of Ch'ang-shu, Kiangsu, is an example of Ming era printing with wooden movable type. It was typeset using an earlier, woodblock edition of the text published around 1616. Sang was a talented but egoistic literatus, who boastfully styled himself as the "talent south of the Yangtze" (*Chiang-nan ts'ai-tzu*). His creativity and eccentricity, however, proved to be a great handicap to his political aspirations. Only because of the support of his literary patron, the famous senior scholar-statesman Ch'iu Chün (1421-1495), did he manage to overcome the crises he created for himself as a local official. Despite his contemporary reputation as an acute-minded writer, his poetry and prose were not considered good enough to merit copying into the official *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* collectanea.

The present edition of *Ssu-hsüan chi* was published by Sang Ta-hsieh, a later fellow townsman of the author. That it was published in 1574 is confirmed by Fu Tseng-hsiang, who saw a copy with two post-faces dated that year. The Gest copy (no. 81), however, has the preface and post-faces missing. It is also a *chin-hsiang-yü* ("gold inlaid with jade") copy: with long extra sheets of white paper inserted inside the folds of the yellowed double-leaves. This is an extremely rare edition; the Peking library has the only other known complete copy.

As Edgren noted of our copy, the "type style derives from a popular woodblock printing style of the first half of the six-



81. *Ssu-hsüan chi*. 16 ch. (8 vols.).

Author: Sang Yüeh (1447-1513).

Date: 1574 (Ch'ang-shu?, Kiangsu).

Dimensions: 10 cols. of 21 chars.; border, 19.5 x 12.4 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

teenth century."¹² But note that the types were not cut skillfully enough to allow the characters to appear in a regular shape and not set in consistently fixed positions. The "fish tails" do not join tightly with the bordering column line. And there are numerous misplaced characters. These are familiar features in Ming movable-type books; they show that the technique was still not widely practiced at the time — less advanced technology as a result of in-

adequate experience. As a matter of fact, there is no record of the Ming government's ever having ordered printing by movable type. And although in the Ming books from movable wooden type were more numerous than those of metal type, wooden typography was seen very little in popular commercial printing.

There is an excellent Korean example of printing with wooden movable type — *Huang-hua chi*. This title was a general one for poetry collections edited and published by Korean officials containing solely poems exchanged between special Ming envoys and their Korean hosts. As a rule, one such *Huang-hua chi* was issued not long after each diplomatic trip, almost routinely by the Koreans and only occasionally also by the Chinese. The present, expanded, edition (no. 82) includes works exchanged during the occasions of 1450, 1476, 1521, 1545, and 1546. Neither the editor nor the date of publication is recorded in this book. But it can be assumed that it was published after 1546 and probably before the end of the Chia-ching reign in 1566. No other copy of this edition is recorded in other major libraries of Chinese rare books, although a Wan-li period (1573-1620) edition published after 1574 in China, which covers the 1539 trip, is held by the Peking Library and three other editions, all edited by Koreans and published respectively in 1602, 1606, and 1626, are held by the National Central Library, Taiwan.¹³

Compared with our last item, *Ssu-hsüan chi*, one cannot but be impressed by the sophisticated technology Koreans had developed in wooden movable-type printing. The great clarity of the types and the regularity in which they were set reflect a long tradition of superb skill. The uniquely Korean "white hammered pa-

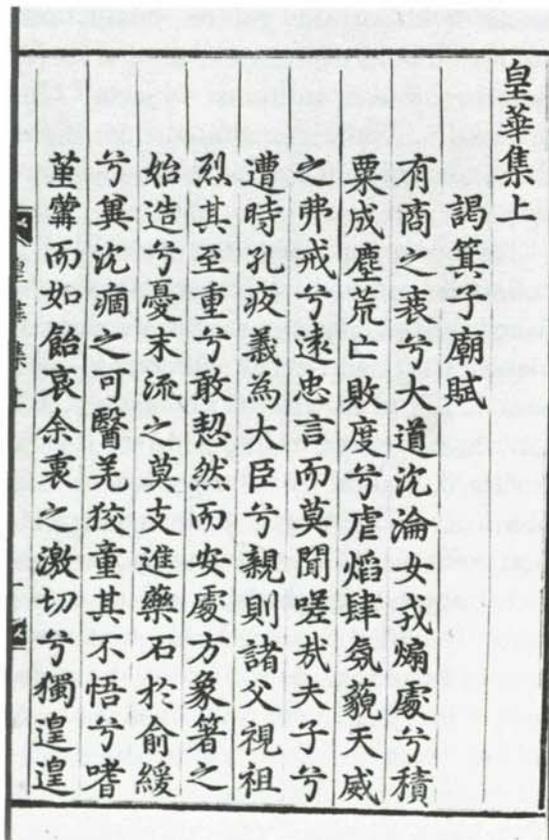
per" made of paper mulberry bark yields an additional attraction. No less noteworthy is the calligraphic style of the types. Unfailingly, it reflects the influence of Chao Meng-fu, which, in fact, also took hold in metal movable types. It is hard to say when Koreans became fascinated by the Chao style. It certainly would not be later than the first quarter of the fifteenth century, when that style was championed in the Chinese court circles. Many extant Korean books printed from both wooden and metal movable types in the early fif-

82. *Huang-hua chi*. 5 ch. (12 vols.).

Date: ca. 1546-1566.

Dimensions: 10 cols. of 17 chars.; border, 25.6 x 17.8 cm.

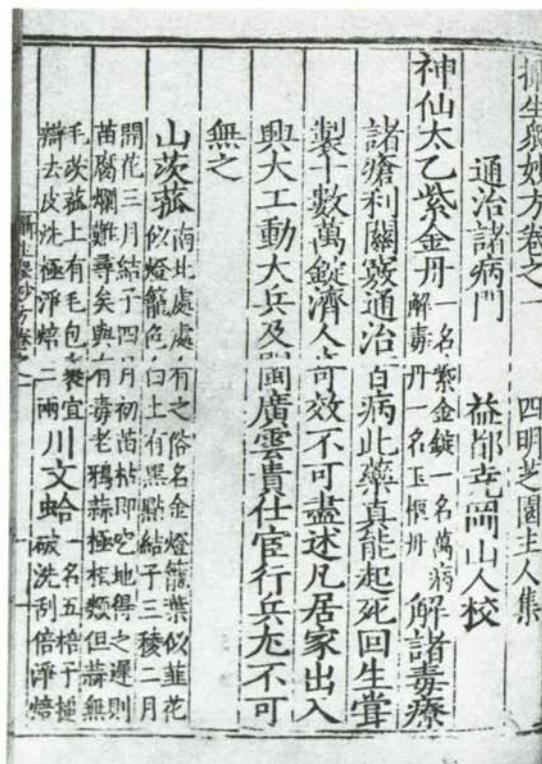
Collection: Gest Oriental Library.



teenth century bear a similar calligraphic style, which in fact remained popular there well into the eighteenth century.

Principality editions (*fan-fu pen*), that is, books published by enfeoffed princes in various localities, are a distinctive dimension of Ming printing. Throughout the dynasty more than thirty princes printed no less than 250 such titles. While not all of the princes were noted for their scholarship and literary accomplishment, many of them owned outstanding libraries which contained rare editions of previous dynasties. And they were rich enough to recruit scholar collators, skillful woodblock carvers, and pay for good printing. A few of them were good collators themselves. Many of the books they printed are thus of outstanding quality and considered textually reliable. Their publications, as observed by Tsuen-hsuei Tsien, "included works on medicine, longevity, amusement, music, games, instructions and conduct of princes, and textbooks for women, besides traditional subjects." Undoubtedly, "they constituted one of the distinguished features of Ming scholarship."

The book presented here (no. 83)¹⁴ is a collection of medical prescriptions published in I-tu, Shantung, by the Prince of Heng, Chu Hou-chiao (enfeoffed 1540, died 1572), who was the grandson of the Ch'eng-hua emperor (reigned 1465-1487). It was compiled by Chang Shih-ch'e of Yin-hsien, Chekiang, a senior scholar-official who cared about contemporary social problems, but had his official career abruptly ended due to the *wo-k'ou* invasion of Nanking. As shown on the plate, both Chang and Chu used their courtesy names for this book: Chang as Chih-yüan chu-jen (first line) and Chu as Yao-kang shan-jen (second line). Al-



83. *She-sheng chung-miao fang*. 11 + 1 + 2 ch. (12 vols.).

Author: Chang Shih-ch'e (1500-1577).

Date: 1569 (I-tu, Shantung).

Dimensions: 10 cols. of 20 chars.; block, 19.5 x 15.1 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

though Chu was named as collator, the actual collation or most of it was done by Ma Ch'ung-ju, the chief physician of the principality of Heng. The book contains a preface by Chu, undated; another by Chang, dated 1550; and a postface by Ma, dated 1569. According to them, Chang compiled the book in 1550 and got it published some time thereafter; the present edition was a reissue from blocks cut under the supervision of Li Yung-chung, the principality's chief official sacrificer. Two other titles, also compiled by Chang,

are attached to this edition. They are *Shang-han chin-ching lü* in one *chüan*, for the treatment of typhoid fever, and *Chi-chiu liang-fang* in two *chüan*, prescriptions for emergency cases intended for use by the uneducated villagers.

The principality of Heng was not among the most prominent in publishing. The fine cutting of the blocks, and the fine characters written in a style derived from Ou-yang Hsün, contribute to the distinctiveness of Ming principality editions.

Many Ming books were published inside the branches of state government. In the previous section, "The impact of Chao Meng-fu," we illustrated those published by the very productive National Academies at Nanking and Peking.

Wang Wen-ch'eng kung ch'üan-shu (the complete works of the great Ming statesman-philosopher Wang Shou-jen, always better known as Wang Yang-ming) is a good example of a publication by the provincial government of Chekiang. Although it was a local government enterprise, as a list of sponsoring officials (no. 84a) shows, one sponsor in particular was most responsible for the editing and publication, namely Wang's admirer, Hsieh T'ing-chieh (*chin-shih* 1559) of Hsin-chien, Kiangsi, regional inspector of Chekiang. A mistaken date, 1568, has been given for this edition; and another, 1572, for a reprint cut and printed in Nanking by Hsieh T'ing-chieh. Based on a biographical study of Hsieh and a scrutiny of the list of sponsoring officials in both editions, a recent study demonstrates that the present Hangchow edition was published in 1572 and the Nanking edition in 1573.¹⁵ Politics was involved in the issuing of identical texts in two nearby areas within just two years. The present edition lacks a preface, but the same study also

shows that the preface in the Nanking edition, written by retired grand secretary Hsü Chieh (1503-1583), was originally meant to be for this edition, although it was subsequently withdrawn.

While the Nanking edition has been reprinted in facsimile in the *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* series, the present edition is truly rare. Other than our copy, only the Central Library in Taiwan has another. The quality of books published by local governments was rather uneven because such books were often printed in parts of the empire with no established tradition of printing. Our copy shows excellence in both block cutting and printing, although the calligraphy unmistakably shows a flavor of the "craft style" (see no. 84b), perhaps the best government funds could buy at that time and area.

Ch'ang-li hsien-sheng chi, an annotated version of the literary works of Han Yü, that model writer of classical Chinese prose, is a prestigious example of "family-cut" books produced in the Ming. Being a faithful facsimile reproduction of a reputed version printed in late Southern Sung by the Shih-ts'ai t'ang of Liao Ying-chung (died 1275), this edition is well-known not only for its textual filiation, but also for block-cutting and printing excellence (no. 85). Consequently, connoisseurs pair it with the Chi-mei t'ang edition of Han Yü's friend Liu Tsung-yüan's *Hutung hsien-sheng chi*, published by Kuo Yün-p'eng of Ch'ang-chou in the mid-sixteenth century. The latter is also a facsimile reproduction of a Sung edition printed by the Shih-ts'ai t'ang. These books are the authoritative annotated versions of the works of Han and Liu.¹⁶

Reprints of earlier fine editions in the Ming were usually made by learned book collectors, often for the noble reason of

刻王文成公全書姓氏總目

欽差提督軍務巡撫浙江等處地方都察院右副都御史戶部侍郎文上郭朝賓

欽差提督軍務巡撫浙江等處地方都察院右副都御史新昌鄔璉

巡按浙江監察御史新建謝廷傑

欽差巡按浙江等處監察御史汾州張更化

欽差巡按浙江等處監察御史曹州馬應豪

浙江等處承宣布政使司左布政使新添姚世熙

封丘郭斗

蒲圻謝鵬舉

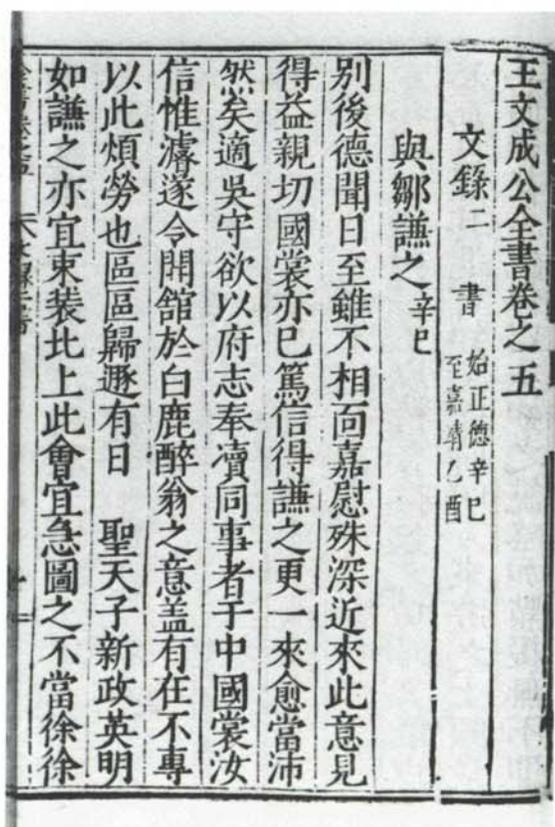
84a-b. Wang Wen-ch'eng kung ch'üan-shu.
38 ch. (24 vols.).

Author: Wang Shou-jen (1472-1529); Hsieh
T'ing-chieh (fl. 1559-1574), ed.

Date: 1572 (Hangchow).

Dimensions: 9 cols. of 19 chars.; block, 19.5 x
14.2 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.



84b.

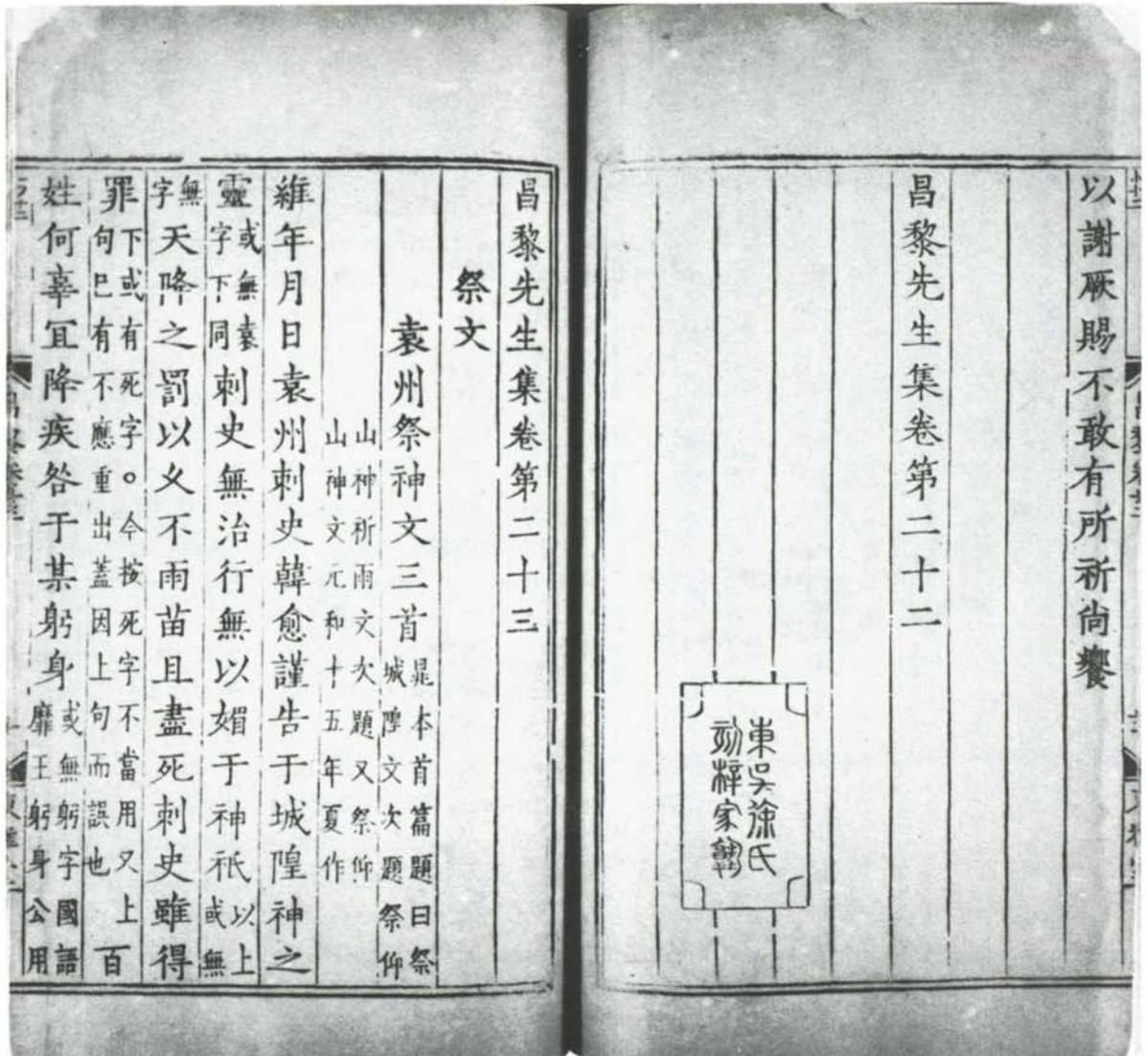
preserving and diffusing rare original editions. The sponsor of our edition was Hsü Shih-t'ai (*chin-shih* 1580), a native of Ch'ang-chou, Kiangsu, who ended his official career as a vice-minister of the Court of the Imperial Stud. As the printer's colophon at the end of each *chüan* shows (no. 85, the printed inset box in the right folio), the book was cut and printed in Hsü's family school. Although the block cutter is not specified, the beautiful characters demonstrate that he had done a superb job in preserving the calligraphic style of Ouyang Hsün. The woodblocks for this edition deteriorated as years went by, but in the 1730s or 1740s an effort was successfully made by another collector-printer, Hsi Ning-hui from the Lake Tai area, to restore them to working condition. Both

the fate of this edition and the noble tradition of cultural diffusion thus continued.

Another fine example of private printing in the "family-cut" tradition is the overwhelming anthology of Wang Shih-chen, the famous scholar-official and arguably most celebrated man of letters in the sixteenth century. It was printed in 1577 by the Wang family's Shih-ching t'ang. The Gest copy appears to be the only complete (180-*chüan*) copy of this work known to exist outside of China, and until recently thought to be a unique exemplar. Most other copies of this edition contain six *chüan* fewer than the original.¹⁷

Like other copies, the Gest's *Yen-chou shan-jen ssu-pu kao* begins with a 1577 preface by Wang Tao-k'un (1525-1593), but it is a handwritten replacement of the lost printed original. This copy contains also a long colophon autographed by a former reader (or even owner), Wang Hsieh-yin of Li-shui, Kiangsu, which discusses in detail the differences among the versions of this work. As shown by the numerous seals on the first page of the text (no. 86a), this copy was formerly owned by a Teng Ying, and possibly by some others.

At the end of the last page of the preface, three characters are inscribed showing the block cutter of the preface to be a T'ang Yin (no. 86a; see three small characters at bottom of right folio). Whether he was also the cutter of the rest of the book's blocks is not known. In any event, both the calligraphy and the cutting of this book (no. 86b) are excellent enough to make it a representative of Ming printed books cited by modern authorities. Particularly noteworthy is the well-executed calligraphy. It shows a marked difference between "family-cut" works and official



85. *Ch'ang-li hsien-sheng chi, wai-chi, i-wen, chi-chuan*. 40 + 10 + 1 + 1 ch. (30 vols.).

Author: Han Yü (768-824).

Date: late 16th century (Ch'ang-chou, Kiangsu).

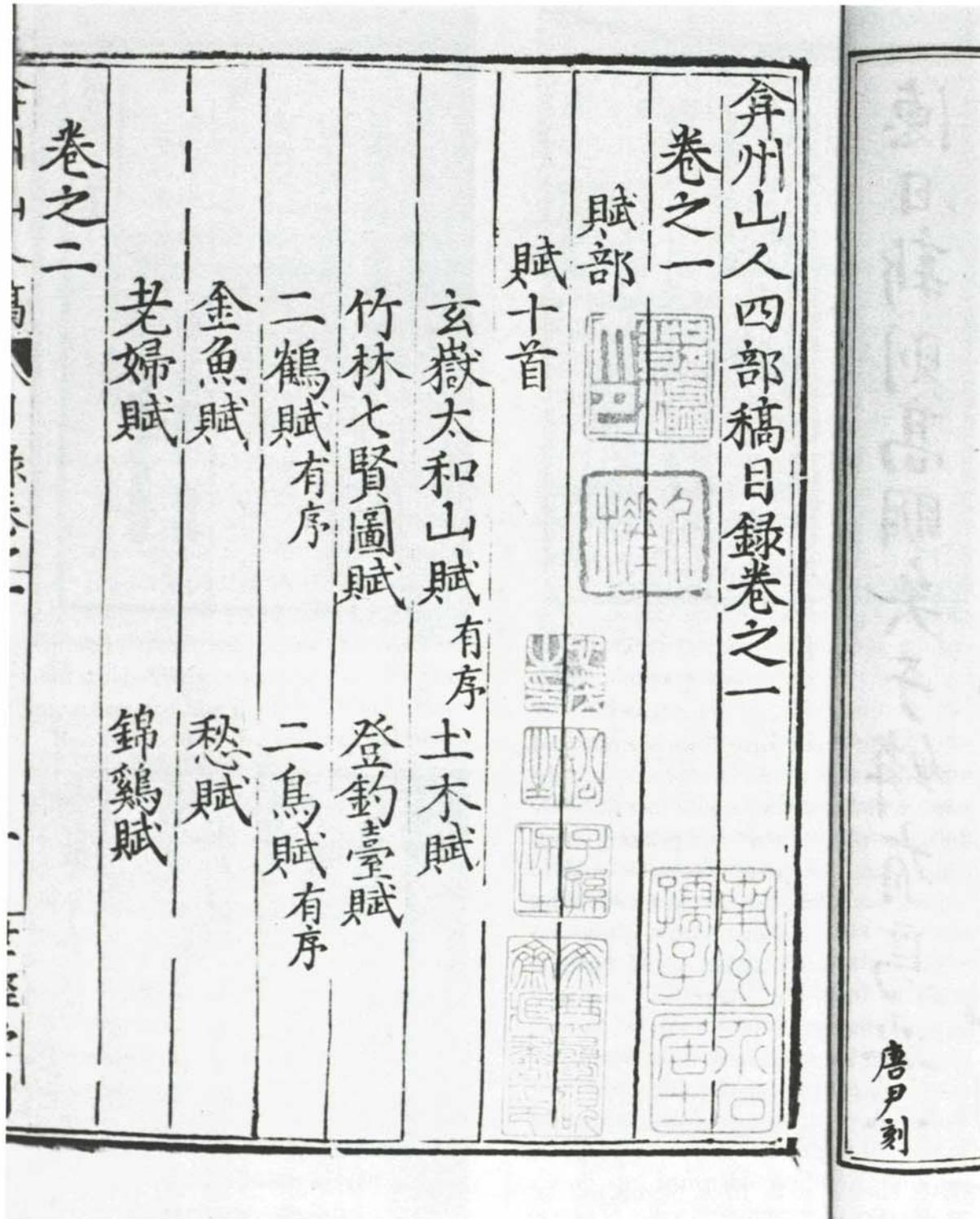
Dimensions: 9 cols. of 17 chars.; block, 20.1 x 12.9 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

or commercial printings, most of which are characterized by a standardized craft style.

Fa-shu yao-lu (nos. 87a-b) by Chang

Yen-yüan of late T'ang times contains passages on calligraphic theory from the first century A.D. to the early ninth century. The present copy comes from an edition published by the greatest of Ming collector-printers, Mao Chin (1599-1659) of Ch'ang-shu, Kiangsu, whose career as a publisher not only immensely contributed to late Ming and early Ch'ing scholarship, but also contributed to Ming printing itself. Owner of a library of 84,000 stitched volumes of both printed books and facsimile reproductions of rare



唐尹刻

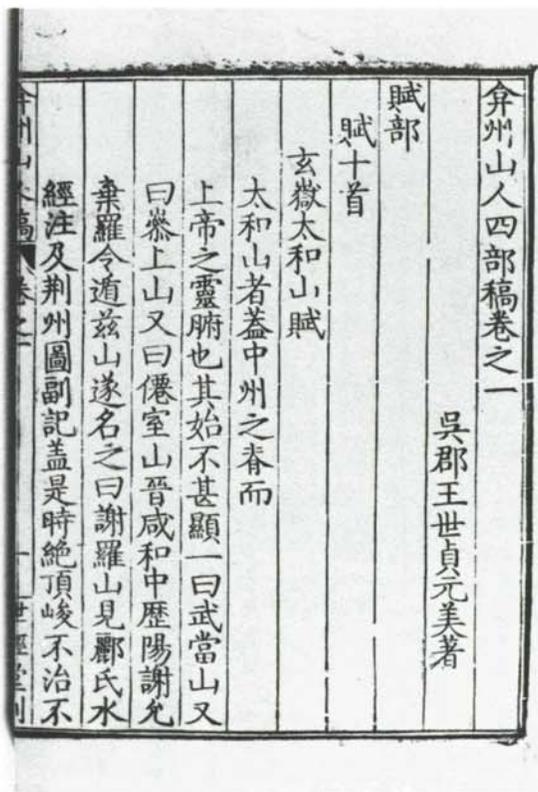
86a-b. *Yen-chou shan-jen ssu-pu kao*. 180 ch. (64 vols.).

Author: Wang Shih-chen (1526-1590).

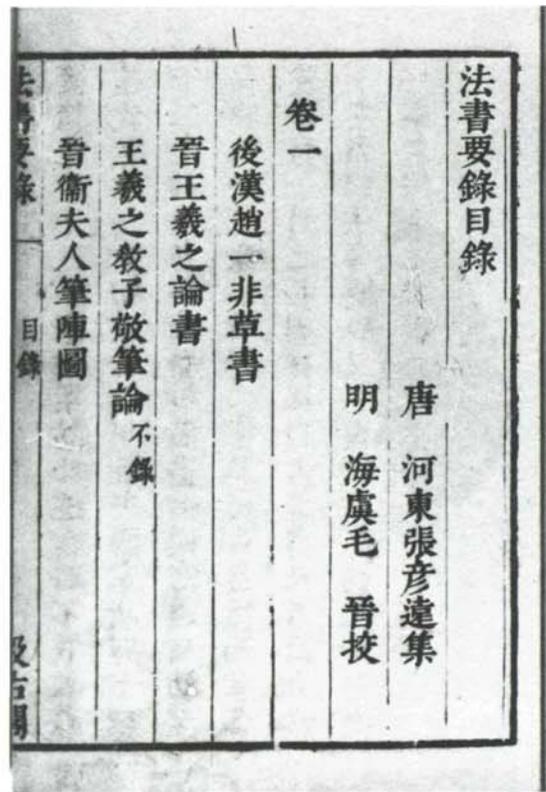
Date: 1577 (T'ai-ts'ang?, Kiangsu).

Dimensions: 10 cols. of 20 chars.; block, 20 x 15 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.



86b.



87a.

editions, in about forty years Mao printed more than 600 works on a variety of subjects, which are commonly identified by the name of his library and printing shop, Chi-ku ko. The present copy belongs to the famous *Ching-tai pi-shu*, a collectanea of about 140 titles that Mao's Chi-ku ko printed in fifteen installments, from 1630 to about 1642. Two large seals inscribed on the first page (not illustrated here) show that the copy was once owned by the famous Wang family of Kao-yu (near Yangchow), Kiangsu, probably that of

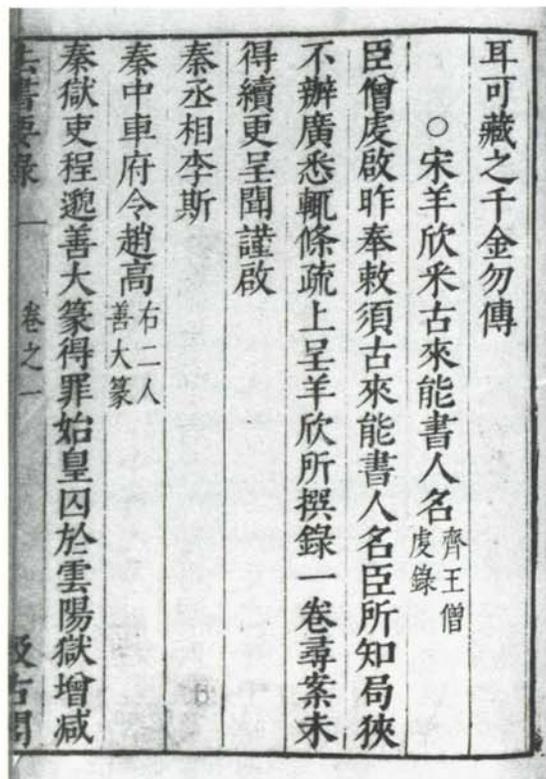
87a-b. *Fa-shu yao-lu*. 10 ch. (8 vols.).

Author: Chang Yen-yüan (fl. 860-70).

Date: 1630-1642 (Ch'ang-shu, Kiangsu).

Dimensions: 8 cols. of 19 chars.; block, 18.5 x 12.6 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.



87b.

the eminent Ch'ing scholars and philologists, Wang Nien-sun (1744-1832) and his son Wang Yin-chih (1766-1834).¹⁸

Chi-ku ko books are unique in that they are systematic, high-quality, semi-commercial reprints of earlier works. Besides printing books Mao edited, it also printed books on order. But in either case, its products were cut and printed with great refinement. They are further distinguished by their paper and the calligraphic style of their characters. The paper used for Chi-ku ko books was specially ordered by Mao Chin from Kiangsi. It consisted of two varieties: a heavy kind known as *mao-pien* and a thinner kind called *mao-t'ai*, both of strong quality. The calligraphic style is so unique as to be something like their printer's trademark. It appears in a standardized shape and structure that is different from the other standardized craft style. All these aspects formed a great impact on printing in early Ch'ing times.

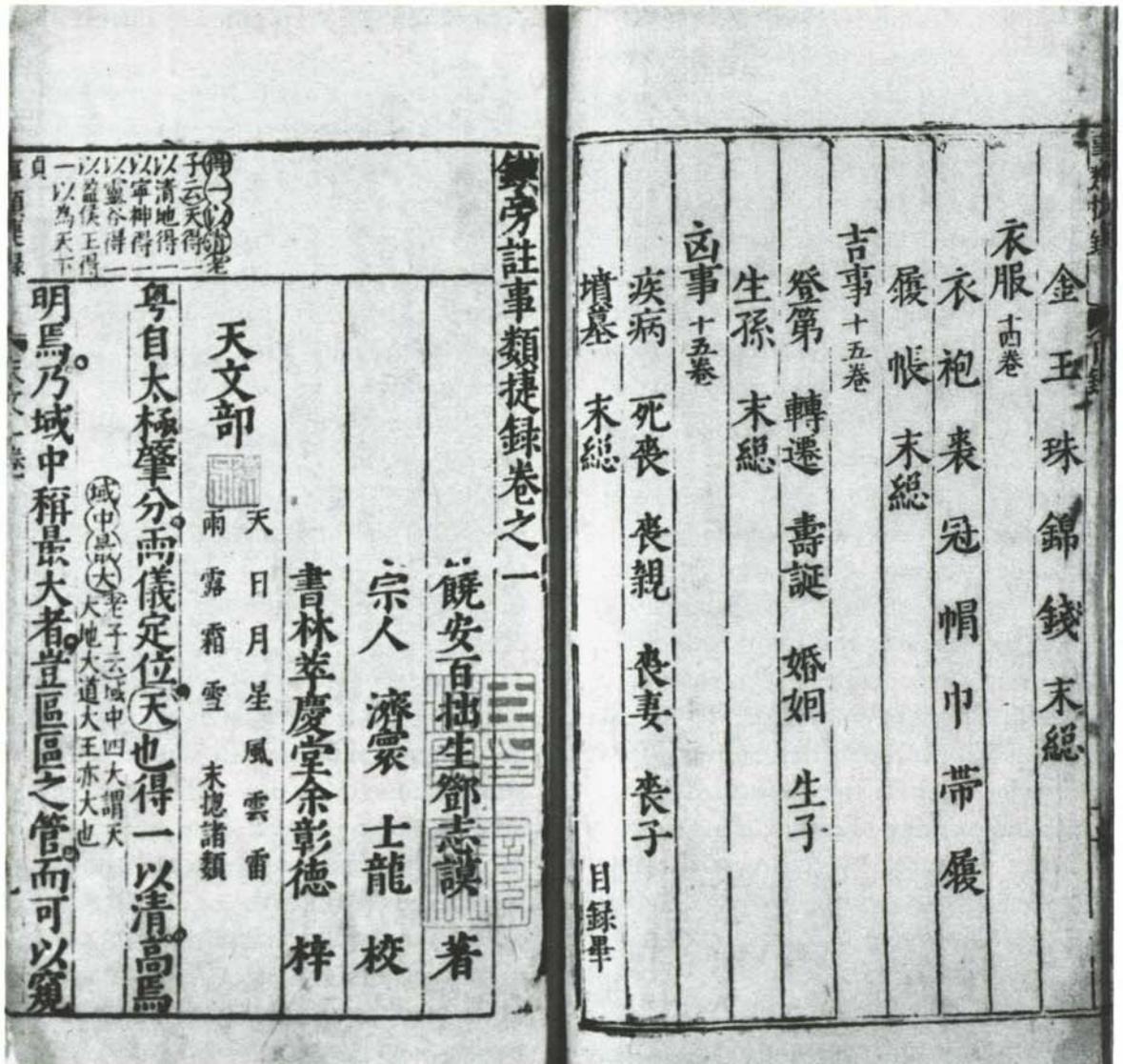
Books produced by commercial printers also constituted a huge aspect of Ming printing. Variation in quality notwithstanding, a substantial number of books produced in several centers of commercial book printing throughout the southeastern part of the empire reflect the urbanized culture that flourished since the early sixteenth century. One example, an annotated anthology of classified expressions and quotations named *Ch'ieh p'ang-chu shih-lei chieh-lu*,¹⁹ was printed by the Ts'ui-ch'ing t'ang in Shu-lin, Chienyang, Fukien, one of the most important centers of book printing in old China, where commercial printing dated back to the Sung period and was well regarded throughout the sixteenth century.

The book contains a preface by the author, dated 1603, and an undated postface by a certain Li Chih-hsün. The date of

publication is not specified in the preface, but a search of taboo characters commonly observed in late Ming times shows that it was printed before the end of the Wan-li reign in 1620. As printed on the first page of the text (no. 88), the printer of this book, Yü Chang-te, was the owner of the Ts'ui-ch'ing t'ang. The author, Teng Chih-mo, remains an obscure figure, although he also compiled another book published by the same printer. The collator appears to be a member of a Ming princely clan. As books like this were published for the pragmatic use of students and the literati class at large — or simply for profit's sake — their authors and editors often were allowed to remain obscure.

Although the Ts'ui-ch'ing t'ang was not among the oldest or most prestigious of commercial printers in Shu-lin, our example shows a quality still far excelling other Shu-lin books. The cutting and printing of this book both are rather refined. And although the rigid craft style of calligraphy unmistakably suggests a commercial origin, still there is good handling of the brush on the part of the professional scribe. A widened market of books for examination purposes and popular entertainment paradoxically did not benefit the printers in Shu-lin for long. The more they produced the worse was their quality. Eventually the control of the market would be passed to printers in the lower Yangtze cities. The present book, which may be regarded as standing at the end of a long and admirable tradition, thus appears the more revealing as an example of commercial printing.

The sixteenth century saw a gradual decline of Fukien as a major center of commercial printing. As the century matured, new centers arose in Chekiang and



88. *Ch'ieh p'ang-chu shih-lei chieh-lu*. 15 ch. (12 vols.).

Author: Teng Chih-mo (fl. 1600).

Date: 1603- 1619.

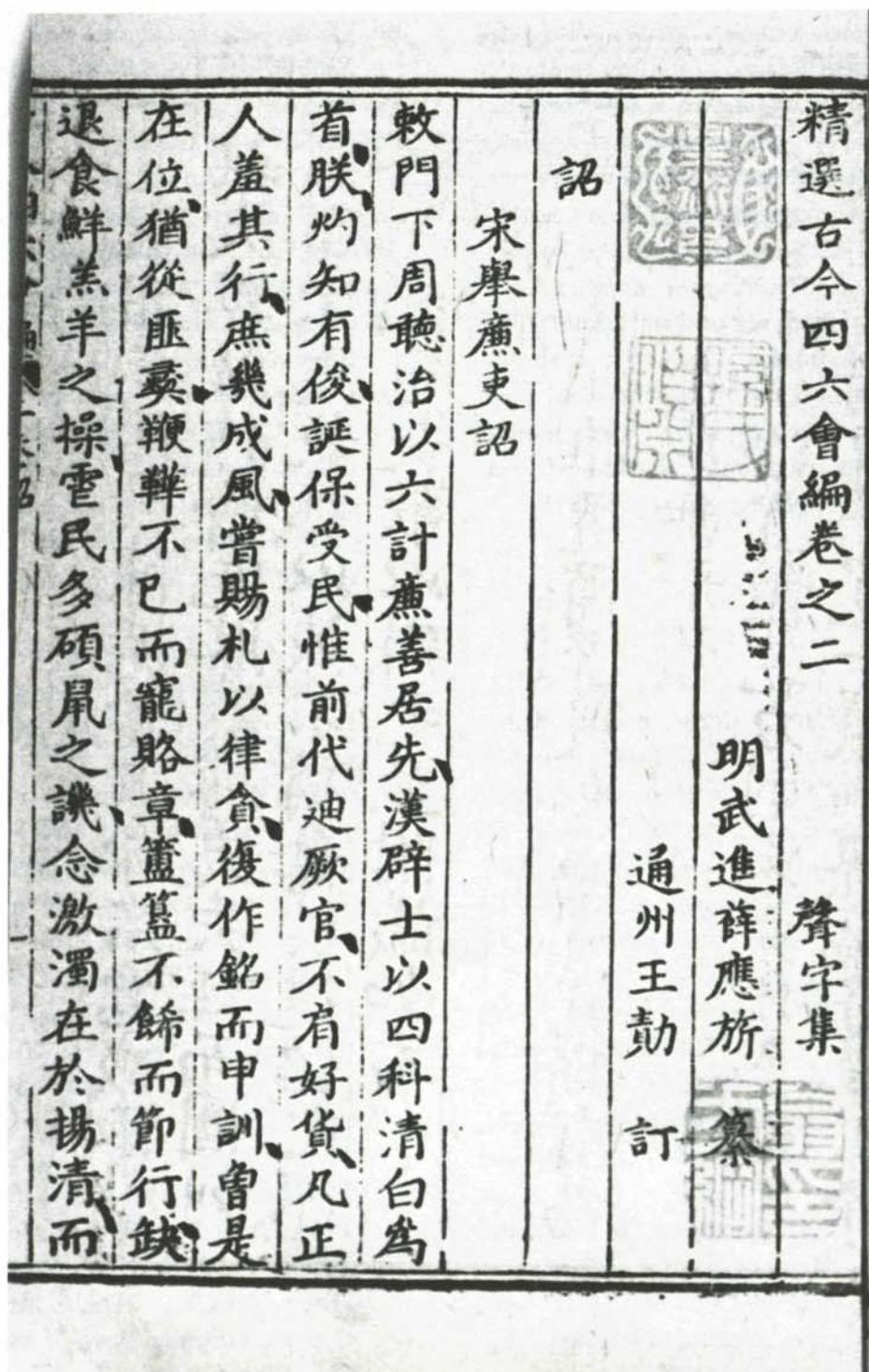
Dimensions: 10 cols. of 18 chars.; block, 16.8+3.2 x 12.2 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

Anhwei. First came Hangchow in Chekiang and then She-hsien in Anhwei. By the turn of the following century it was Nanking that became the busiest center, as skillful cutters flocked to new shops.

Ching-hsüan ku-chin ssu-liu hui-pien, a collection of parallel-style prose, was published in Nanking in 1569 by a commercial printer called Kung Pang, whose name, along with the date of publication, appears in a colophon at the end of the book.²⁰ The beautifully engraved characters, which bear a soft, individual, style of calligraphy, demonstrate the flavor of late Ming printing in Nanking.

The book contains a 1568 preface by a certain Yüan Sui, and has the famous



89. *Ching-hsüan ku-chin ssu-liu hui-pien.*
4+1 ch. (4 vols.).

Author: Hsüeh Ying-ch'i (1500-1573?), Wang
Chi (fl. 1500s), comps.

Date: 1569 (Nanking).

Dimensions: 10 cols. of 20 chars.; block, 18.4
x 13.1 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

SECTION FOUR

scholar Hsüeh Ying-ch'i of Wu-chin as its compiler and Wang Chi of T'ung-chou as its editor. According to Yüan Sui, the book actually was compiled by Wang Chi. Wang, however, remains obscure. Like our last example, this book is not recorded in the catalogue of the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu*; and neither is another copy known to exist in major libraries of Chinese rare books. This copy, as shown by the three seals on the illustrated page (no. 89), had been owned by two eminent Ch'ing scholars, Weng Fang-kang (1733-1818) and Sun Hsing-yen (1753-1818).

NOTES TO SECTION 4

1. Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, pp. 172-74.
2. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 176; Wang, *Shan-pen-shu*, p. 166; *DMB*, pp. 204-08, 631-38; Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, pp. 252-53, 262-63; *SKTY* 69, p. 7b; and *T'ai-wan shu-ming-so-yin*, p. 1786.
3. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 177; *SKTY* 69, p. 3a; Wang, *Shan-pen-shu*, p. 210; and *DMB*, pp. 1107-11.
4. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 274; *DMB*, pp. 438-39, 212-15; Edgren, *American Collections*, pp. 102-03.
5. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, pp. 270-71; Wang, *Shan-pen-shu*, p. 309; and *DMB*, pp. 1420-25.
6. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 179; and Wang, *Shan-pen-shu*, pp. 203-04.
7. Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, pp. 264-67; and Edgren, *American Collections*, pp. 116-17.
8. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 27; Wang, *Shan-pen-shu*, p. 20; Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, pp. 277-83; and Edgren, *American Collections*, p. 108.
9. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 490; and Wang, *Shan-pen-shu*, p. 431.
10. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 405; Wang, *Shan-pen-shu*, p. 496; and *Ming-jen*, p. 629.
11. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 303; and *SKTY* 132, p. 6b.
12. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 446; *SKTY* 175, p. 14b; *Ming-shih*, p. 7353; Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, p. 83; Edgren, *American Collections*, p. 100; *Ming-jen*, p. 420; Fu Tseng-hsiang, *Ts'ang-yüan ch'ün-shu ching-yen lu* (Peking: Chung-hua, 1983), p. 1404; and Chang Hsiu-min, "Yüan Ming liang-tai ti mu huo-tzu," in Liu Chia-pi, ed., *Chung-kuo t'u-shu shih tzu-liao chi* (Hong Kong: Lung-men, 1974), pp. 499-510.
13. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 572; Wang, *Shan-pen-shu*, pp. 474-75; *SKTY* 192, pp. 5b-6a; Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, pp. 320-21; Twitchett, *Printing and Publishing*, pp. 78-79; and Kuo-li chung-yang t'u-shu-kuan, comp., *Kuo-li chung-yang t'u-shu-kuan shan-pen shu-mu* (Taipei: Chung-hua ts'ung-shu wei-yüan-hui, 1958) 2, p. 314.
14. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 252; Wang, *Shan-pen-shu*, p. 265; *SKTY* 105, p. 6a; *Ming-shih*, p. 3641; *Ming-jen*, p. 535; P'an and Ku, *Ming-tai pan-k'o*, pp. 173-74; and Ch'ang Pi-te, "Ming fan k'o shu k'ao, I and II," *Hsüeh-shu chi-k'an* 3.3 (1955.3), pp. 146-62 and 3.4 (1955.6), pp. 139-47.
15. Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, p. 177; Hung-lam Chu, "The Colby Collection of Chinese Rare Books," *The Gest Library Journal* 1.1 (Winter 1986), pp. 8-10; and idem, "The Debate Over Recognition of Wang Yang-ming," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48.1 (forthcoming).
16. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 416; P'an and Ku, *Ming-tai pan-k'o*, pp. 231, 282-83;

NEW DIMENSIONS IN MING PRINTING

- Fu, *Ching-yen lu*, p. 1063; and Chu, "Colby Collection," pp. 15-16.
17. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 462; Wang, *Shan-pen-shu*, p. 628, *pu-i*, p. 9; *DMB*, pp. 1399-1405; and P'an and Ku, *Ming-tai pan-k'o*, pp. 75-76.
18. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 267; *ECCP*, pp. 565-66; *SKTY* 112, p. 2b; and Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, pp. 130-31.
19. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 344; Wang, *Shan-pen-shu*, p. 402; Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, p. 183; *ECCP*, p. 312; and Liu Kuo-chün, *Chung-kuo ku-tai shu-chi shih-hua* (Hong Kong: Chung-hua, 1972), pp. 94-116.
20. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 513; P'an and Ku, *Ming-tai pan-k'o*, p. 413; and Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, p. 183.

LATER MING PRINTING