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# The Identification of Woodblock-Printed Chinese Books: Five Case Studies

CUI JIAN-YING

Arranging and cataloguing traditional Chinese books involves the identification of these books. Scholars, modern and ancient, have put forth many ideas concerning the grounds and the focus of attention, as well as the methods to be adopted in identifying books. Their opinions, with the exception of a few that tend to be extreme and biased, are all based on their practical experience in identification, and are therefore instructive and useful to us. This article does not repeat these opinions in detail.

We are, however, often completely at a loss when trying to apply these methods, even when we are already quite familiar with them and have studied some traditional Chinese books. This situation can be properly described as “the easy part is to understand the principles; the real challenge is to authenticate a specific book.” Book identification, which requires practical skills and the accumulation of experience, also involves scientific examination of the book in question. A sound identification calls for comprehensive studies conducted from different angles and under different conditions. It would be a gross simplification to think of book identification as a judgment made by someone after his or her first glance at a book.

In the summer of 1989, while reading the Chinese rare books in the Gest Oriental Library, I found that some entries in the Gest Library catalogue contain incorrect information about the edition of certain Chinese rare books.<sup>1</sup> Using these entries as examples, I gave a lecture explaining the cor-

rect and incorrect ways to identify a book. My explanations covered such topics as how to authenticate a book from different angles by examining the different editions of the book; which matters must be paid attention to; and how to present evidence necessary for establishing the identification. Although it was not my original intention, these explanations did expose the audience to the practical procedures of book identification. I would like to introduce these examples to the readers of the *Gest Library Journal*, in the hope that they may come up with valuable comments on my opinions.

*HO WEN-TING KUNG WEN-CHI*

The *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi* of Ho T'ang (1474–1543), in eleven *chüan*, was engraved during the Chia-ching period (1522–1566; see illustration 1).<sup>2</sup> Its title consists of the author's family name and his posthumous title. Posthumous titles were used in traditional China to praise deceased emperors, nobles, and ministers. In principle, the career of the deceased would be assessed and a posthumous title be conferred on him right after his death. In certain cases, however, the title was granted a few years after a person's death. Sometimes, a revised posthumous title might replace the old one. The exact time a posthumous title was granted could therefore vary considerably, and this often necessitates further research on the posthumous title in question.

It happens that in the Gest Library version of the *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi* a biography of the author precedes the text. This biography was written by Chang Lu (1523–1598). It reads: "In 1522, the Emperor Su succeeded to the throne, and appointed him (Ho T'ang) vice censor of education-intendant (T'i-hsüeh fu-shih) of the Surveillance Commission in Shan-hsi" (Shan-hsi An-ch'a ssu).<sup>3</sup> The title "the Emperor Su" was the posthumous title of Chu Hou-tsung (1507–1566), who ruled China during the Chia-ching period. The use of this posthumous title in the biography immediately raises a question: since any posthumous title would be granted only after a person's death, how could the posthumous title for Chu Hou-tsung appear in a work that is alleged to have been engraved when Chu Hou-tsung himself was still alive? This already shows that the assertion that the *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi* was engraved during the Chia-ching period is incorrect. The biography of Ho T'ang goes on to say: "During the early years of the Lung-ch'ing period (1567–1572), an edict was issued, ordering

何文定公文集卷之一

講章

尚書講章

禹曰都帝慎乃在位。帝曰俞。禹曰安汝止。惟幾惟康。其  
茲直惟動。丕應後志。以昭受上帝。天其申命用休。

這是虞書益稷篇。史臣記大禹告舜的言語。都是歎  
美辭。帝是指帝舜。俞是然其言。止是事物之理。具於  
吾心。各有至善。所當依據而不可移易的意思。幾是  
事之發動處。康是事之安穩處。弼是指輔弼之臣。後  
是待。申是重。休是美。大禹將要告舜。先歎美曰都。又

1. From Ho T'ang (1474-1543), *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi*, 11 ch. (10 vols.), 1522-1566. Eight cols. of 21 chars.; block 19.8 x 12.1 cm. Collection of the Gest Oriental Library.

the 'speaking officials'<sup>4</sup> to list the deceased officials who had served during the previous reign, that is the reign of the Chia-ching emperor, and thus deserved posthumous titles. Chang Lu then had the honor of serving the emperor in the Remonstrance Bureau. He took the liberty of presenting a memorial to the throne, specifically asking the grant of a posthumous title to Ho T'ang. The emperor had always respected Ho T'ang for his reputation. As a special favor, the emperor granted Ho the posthumous title 'Wen-ting.' This record makes it quite clear that the posthumous title "Wen-ting" was conferred during the Lung-ch'ing period. To verify this date, we can refer to a record in the *Mu-tsung shih-lu* (The veritable records of the Emperor Mu-tsung), in which it says: "On the ninth day of the twelfth month, 1567, Wang Hao, the chief supervising secretary of the Office of Scrutiny for Personnel (Li-k'o Tu chi-shih-chung), and others memorialized: 'Ho T'ang, former vice minister of the Ministry of Rites, was a pure subject devoted to ethical teachings. It is therefore appropriate to grant him a laudatory posthumous title.' . . . An edict was handed down, granting Ho T'ang the posthumous title 'Wen-ting.'"<sup>5</sup>

The assertion that the *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi* was engraved during the Chia-ching period is therefore not tenable. But how was this identification established in the first place? Perhaps the identification was made under the influence of a generally accepted notion: "The dating of a book can be based on the time its preface was composed." In the *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi*, there are five prefaces. One was written by the author himself in 1525, another in 1549 by the prince of Cheng,<sup>6</sup> the third in 1558 by Hsü Tsung-lu, and the fourth and fifth in 1562 by K'ung T'ien-yin and Wu San-lo respectively. Since all the prefaces were drafted during the Chia-ching period, it would seem quite safe to suggest that this book was also engraved during that period. However, that possibility is absolutely ruled out by the appearance in the book title of the posthumous title "Wen-ting" for Ho-t'ang, since this title was granted during the Lung-ch'ing period. When, then, was this book engraved?

Examining the book in terms of the style of its characters, we notice that it has evolved beyond the "soft style" prevalent during the early years of the Ming dynasty. The dash stroke of these characters tends to become horizontal, and the down stroke vertical. But these characters have not yet taken on the so-called square and regular style, a new style that closely imitates the Sung-dynasty style. In the past, some scholars referred to this

new style as the "Chia-ching style." This, however, may have been a simplification. Characters in this style are seen not only in books engraved during the Chia-ching period, but also in those cut during the Lung-ch'ing and Wan-li (1573–1620) periods. The Gest Library catalogue lists this book as a "Chia-ching edition." This incorrect identification is perhaps based on the notion that only characters in books engraved during the Chia-ching period display the "Chia-ching style."

Having pointed out that characters in books engraved during the Chia-ching, the Lung-ch'ing, and the Wan-li periods may all display the same style, and that the *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi* preserved in the Gest Library is not a Chia-ching edition, we now face the question, During which period was this book engraved—the Lung-ch'ing or the Wan-li period? To answer this question, we need to refer to the relevant catalogues. One such catalogue, which contains detailed information on traditional Chinese books, is the *Chung-kuo ku-chi shan-pen shu-mu*, a work that is still being compiled in China.<sup>7</sup> This catalogue lists a copy of the *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi*, which is described as "an edition engraved in the fourth year of the Wan-li period (1576) under the auspices of Chia Tai-wen" (1533–1602). The major title of the book, the number of its columns, and the number of spaces in each column are identical with those in the Gest Library copy. Is the Gest Library copy then a "Wan-li edition"? My opinion is that the evidence available to us is still not sufficient to allow a sound identification.

It would be ideal if more detailed records concerning editions of traditional Chinese books were available, allowing us to check the Gest Library copy of the *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi*. Such records for Ming-period collected works do exist, and have been collected in the *Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih* (A monograph of the identification of Ming writers' collected works), which was compiled by the Library of the Academy of Social Sciences in China. Comparing the Gest Library copy of the *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi* with the one listed in the *Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih*, we find that the two books are identical in terms of their titles, the words printed in the *pan-hsin*, the leaf, the number of columns, the number of spaces in each column, and the general features of the printing woodblock format. The *Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih* lists the *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi* as "a book engraved in 1576 under the auspices of Chia Tai-wen." The evidence for this identification is a preface written by Chia Tai-wen, which is entitled "Preface for the Re-engraving of the Complete Works of the Ho Wen-ting kung." It reads:

“The compiling, editing, and engraving of this complete works were initiated by the prince of Cheng. Later, Mr. Ma of Wei-yüan County, the prefect of Ch’ih-chou, once again compiled and edited this book, and had it engraved. When I finish editing this book (and have it engraved), this book will have been engraved three times.” This preface also tells the names and titles of those who were involved in its editing and engraving. At the end of the preface, a sentence reads: “Engraved on the fifth day of summer the fifth month, the fourth year of the Wan-li reign (1576).” In contrast, the Gest Library copy of the *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi* does not have the preface by Chia Tai-wen, nor does it have the titles and names of those involved in the editing and engraving of the book. These are clear indications that attempts had been made to fake a Chia-ching edition of the *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi*. And this fakery has indeed deceived some people.

Therefore, the Gest Library version of the *Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi* is a copy of the 1576 edition. Since it shows many cracks in the printing wood blocks, it must be considered a copy printed when the blocks were no longer new.

#### PO-SHA TZU CH’ÜAN-CHI

The *Po-sha tzu ch’üan-chi* of Ch’en Hsien-chang (1428–1500)<sup>8</sup> was engraved in 1551 under the auspices of Hsiao Shih-yen of Nei-chiang County.<sup>9</sup> It is in eleven *chüan* with an appendix of one *chüan* (see illustration 2).

Close observation of the style of characters in books is one of the major principles for book identification handed down by scholars of previous times. If, however, we apply this principle unconditionally, believing that characters in books engraved during a specific period will display a distinctive style, we will inevitably misidentify books. This is so because the evolution of the style of characters in traditional Chinese books did not wholly accord with the changes of reign-period names. On the other hand, if examined in a broader perspective, characters in books engraved during a specific period do display some features unique to that period, whether those periods are defined as the late Yüan and early Ming period, the Cheng-te Chia-ching period (1506–1566), the Chia-ching Lung-ch’ing Wan-li period (1522–1620), the Wan-li period (1573–1620), the late Ming period, or the early Ch’ing period.

The *Po-sha tzu ch’üan-chi* in the Gest Library has been identified as “an

白沙子全集卷之一

奏疏 二首

乞終養疏

臣原籍廣東廣州府新會縣人由本縣儒學生員應正統十二年鄉試中式正統十三年會試禮部中副榜告入國子監讀書景泰二年會試下第成化二年本監撥送吏部文選清吏司歷事成化五年復會試下第告回原籍累染虛弱自汗等疾又有老母朝夕侍養

2. From Ch'en Hsien-chang (1428–1500), comp., *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi*, 9 ch., appendix 1 ch. (18 vols.), Nei-chiang County, 1551. Nine cols. of 18 chars.; block 19.1 x 13.6 cm. Collection of the Gest Oriental Library.

edition engraved in the thirtieth year of the Chia-ching period during the Ming dynasty (1551) under the auspices of Hsiao Shih-yen of Nei-chiang County." This identification is perhaps based on a postscript written by Hsiang Ch'iao in 1551, which is entitled "The Postscript for the Re-engraving of the Complete Works of Mr. Ch'en of Po-sha County." It reads: "When Mr. Lo Ch'iao of Chi-shui County (in Kiangsi) held the post of magistrate in Hsin-hui County (in Kwangtung), he once presided over the engraving of this book. Now, Mr. Hsiao Shih-yen of Nei-chiang County (in Szechwan), attendant censor, once again has it engraved."<sup>10</sup> This postscript specifically mentions some important facts: the re-engraving of the complete works, Hsiao Shih-yen from Nei-chiang County, and the thirtieth year of the Chia-ching period. These facts seem to have been taken into consideration when the identification of this book was made. The method by which the identification was established thus distinguishes itself from the conventional one which usually takes the year in which the latest preface or postscript was composed as the date at which the book was engraved. All of these considerations make it quite plausible that the Gest Library copy of the *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi* is a Chia-ching edition. Examining the copy in terms of the style of its characters, however, we notice that the strokes of these characters tend to be extended, displaying a handwriting style similar to that of Yen Chen-ch'ing (709-785). Since such a style is seldom seen in the characters in books engraved during the Chia-ching period, the Gest Library copy must have been engraved much later.

The appendixes in traditional Chinese complete works usually are biographical articles contributed by scholars of later periods in memory of the author of the complete works. These articles, which often provide us with the date of the contributors, are useful in tracing when the complete works were engraved.

In the appendixes to the *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi*, an article entitled "Yu Chiang-men chi" (Notes of the trip to Chiang-men) appears on page thirty-nine (see illustration 3). This article was contributed by Ou Ta-lun of Kao-ming County in Kwangtung. Its first sentence reads: "I recall that when I was the magistrate of Tung-ming County (in Hopei) in the year of Chia-wu,<sup>11</sup> in the night of the first day of the twelfth moon, I dreamed of the master (i.e., Ch'en Hsien-chang)." The article goes on to say: "Since then nineteen years have passed." A record in the *Ming-Ch'ing chin-shih t'i-ming pei-lu so-yin* tells us that Ou Ta-lun was granted the status of "pre-

遊江門記

高明區大倫著

予憶令東明歲在甲午正月甲辰夜夢先生角  
巾玄服儼如而予侍坐先生呼童子進筆楮書  
所為詩見贈予受而讀之至咫尺溪光谷口分  
谷聲傳語隔溪聞覺胷中洞如因復先生曰自  
孔孟以來談道者無如二語透徹此與一貫之  
旨何異先生頷之既覺而憮然竊歎先生啓予  
者至矣然求二語所為合於一貫而茫然也今  
去甲午十九年矣予又何能無慨然詳攷先生

3. From Ch'en Hsien-chang (1428-1500), comp., *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi*, 9 ch., appendix 1 ch. (18 vols.), Nei-chiang County, 1551. Nine cols. of 18 chars.; block 19.1 x 13.6 cm. Collection of the Gest Oriental Library.

sented scholar" (Chin-shih) in the seventeenth year of the Wan-li reign period (1589).<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the year of "Chia-wu" when Ou Ta-lun was the magistrate in Tung-ming County should be the twenty-second year of the Wan-li reign period (1594). And it should have been the forty-first year of the Wan-li reign period (1613) when he wrote: "Since then (i. e., 1594) nineteen years have passed."

Ou Ta-lun's article alone should serve as evidence sufficient to negate the assertion that the Gest Library copy of the *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi* was engraved in the thirtieth year of the Chia-ching period (1551). If we check various bibliographies, we find another edition of the *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi*, the engraving of which was sponsored by Ho Shang-hsin in the fortieth year of the Wan-li period (1612; see illustration 4).<sup>13</sup> As a matter of fact, the Gest Library also holds a copy of this edition, which is shelved right next to the alleged Chia-ching edition. If we compare the two, we find that the Wan-li edition was apparently engraved earlier than the alleged Chia-ching edition since its characters display a style typical of the Wan-li period (see illustration 4). The identifying features of the printing woodblock format, the number of vertical columns, and the number of spaces in each column, as well as the contents of the Wan-li edition, are identical with those of the alleged Chia-ching edition. At the end of the appendixes, the two books both have congratulatory postscripts written by Li Ch'eng-chi (1452-1505) on the birthday of Ch'en Hsien-chang. The appendixes in the Wan-li edition, however, are only thirty-eight pages long. It also does not include Ou Ta-lun's article "Yu Chiang-men chi." These factors all point to the possibility that the Gest Library copy of the *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi* is a re-engraved edition modeled on the Wan-li edition. This re-engraved edition also includes in its appendixes more commemorative articles written by scholars of the later period.

Then what edition is the Gest Library copy of the *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi*? It is quite difficult to answer this question, if there is no systematic record concerning the different editions of this book. Besides, the Gest Library does not hold any other copies of the *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi*, which would allow us to make further comparisons. We can make a rough identification, suggesting that this book was engraved during either late Ming or early Ch'ing times. Such an identification, however, lacks solid evidence, and therefore has to be subjected to further research.

In recent years, the compilers of the *Chung-kuo ku-chi shan-pen shu-mu*

白沙子全集卷之一

奏疏

二首

乞終養疏

臣原籍廣東廣州府新會縣人由本縣儒學生員應正統十二年鄉試中式正統十三年會試禮部中副榜告入國子監讀書景泰二年會試下第成化二年本監撥送吏部文選清吏司歷事成化五年復會試下第告回原籍累染虛弱自汗等疾又有老母朝夕侍養

4. From Ch'en Hsien-chang (1428-1500), comp., *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi*, 9 ch., appendix 1 ch. (18 vols.), 1612. Nine cols. of 18 chars.; block 19.5 x 12.2 cm. Collection of the Gest Oriental Library.

have often been confronted with the need to identify traditional Chinese books. This situation has forced them to establish records that will allow them to search for information about the different editions of a work. A book entitled *Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih* contains such records of forty-three hundred complete works by authors of the Ming dynasty. Comparing the alleged Chia-ching edition of the *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi* with the relevant records in the *Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih*, we notice that in the so-called Chia-ching edition the general features of the printing wood blocks, the number of vertical columns, and the number of spaces in each column are the same as those in the edition engraved under the auspices of Ho Shang-hsin. But the characters in the alleged Chia-ching edition display a handwriting style. Moreover, this edition also has more commemorative articles in its appendixes, indicating that the alleged Chia-ching edition was probably engraved in later times. Comparing these features of the alleged Chia-ching edition with the relevant records in the *Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih*, we may single out an early Ch'ing edition from the *Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih*. This edition was sponsored by Huang Chih-cheng in the twelfth year of the Shun-chih period (1655). In my opinion, the Gest Library copy of the *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi* is also a Huang Chih-cheng edition.

In China, three libraries hold the Huang Chih-cheng edition of the *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi*. The description of this edition in the *Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih* is based on the copy preserved in the Peking Library. In this copy, there are two prefaces, written by Huang Chih-cheng and Huang Shih-chün respectively. In his preface, Huang Shih-chün pointed out: "The year after he assumed the position of magistrate of Hsin-hui County, Mr. Huang (Chih-cheng), who was from a famous local family, managed to acquire a copy of the complete works of Ch'en Wen-kung<sup>14</sup> of Po-sha village and had it re-engraved." The preface by Huang Chih-cheng reads: "In 1653, I reported to the Ministry of Personnel. In the second month of 1654, I was assigned as magistrate of Hsin-hui County. . . . People in Hsin-hui County had long benefited tremendously from his (i.e., Ch'en Hsien-chang's) ethical teachings. One thing that I regretted the most was that a fire destroyed all the printing wood blocks of his works. This incident was the fault of those responsible for the preservation of (Ch'en Hsien-chang's) works and the printing wood blocks. I, as such a person, was unable to protect them from being destroyed in the fire. How could I ever atone for my fault if I also could not have these works re-engraved? . . . I therefore

consulted other ranking officials in the county about re-engraving the works. They all agreed." According to the *Kuang-chou fu-chih* (Gazetteer of Kuang-chou prefecture), Huang Chih-cheng was appointed magistrate of Hsin-hui County in 1654.<sup>15</sup> These records should establish that the Gest Library copy of the *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi* was engraved in 1655.

*HAN WEN-K'O KUNG WEN-CHI*

The *Han Wen-k'o kung wen-chi* of Han Jih-tsuan (1578–1635) dates from the Ch'ung-chen period (1628–1644). It is in twenty-one *chüan*, with one *chüan* of front matter, one *chüan* of back matter, and ten *chüan* of the author's poems. The copy held in the Gest Library has neither preface nor post-script. The Gest Library catalogue lists it as "an edition engraved during the Ch'ung-chen period of the Ming dynasty."<sup>16</sup> This identification is perhaps based on the year in which the latest poem and prose were composed, and on the date of the author's death.

The Gest Library copy is probably one of the few copies still extant, and it is not mentioned in any other bibliographical works. If the engraving date of this book had to be decided solely by examination of the Gest Library copy, and no other relevant record could be consulted, we would have no choice but to agree that the work was engraved during the Ch'ung-chen period. However, participation in the compiling of a union catalogue or a comprehensive catalogue of traditional Chinese books often provides us with the opportunity to come across some books that have been unknown to us. These books and the information they provide sometimes urge us to reconsider from a broader perspective the identification of a book that we made before.

According to the *Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih*, the Chung-shan Library in Kwangtung Province also holds a copy of the *Han Wen-k'o kung wen-chi*. This copy has a preface written by Hu Ta-ting in the eighth year of the K'ang-hsi period (1669). The preface, however, does not mention the engraving of the book. Since the common practice in book identification is to take the year the preface was written as the date of the engraving of the book, the *Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih* lists the Chung-shan Library copy as "a K'ang-hsi edition."

To consider the Gest Library copy a K'ang-hsi edition is not totally groundless. But I have second thoughts about the identification of this

book. While the compilation of the *Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih* was under way, compilers usually borrowed books held by various libraries and studied them twice before they established any identifications for those books. During this procedure, the compilers found many mistakes in their preliminary identifications. However, the *Han Wen-k'o kung wen-chi* held in the Chung-shan Library in Kwangtung Province was not then available to the compilers, and they did not physically examine and study it. Is it possible that this book originally had no preface at all, and that the preface written in the eighth year of the K'ang-hsi period (1669) was inserted into a later impression of the book? If the Gest and the Chung-shan libraries had cooperative relations, we would be able to acquire a photocopy of the 1669 preface from the Chung-shan Library and carry out a detailed study. Since this is not the case, we have to resort to other means to solve the problem. While looking for evidence that would help establish an identification for this book, I came across a local gazetteer entitled the *Po-lo hsien-chih*, which was engraved in the twenty-sixth year of the K'ang-hsi period (1687). The style of the characters and the technique used to engrave them in the *Po-lo hsien-chih* and in the *Han Wen-k'o kung wen-chi* are remarkably similar. Moreover, the engraver's name "Yü" also appears many times in both books (see illustrations 5 and 6).

If we suppose that these three books, namely the Gest Library and the Chung-shan Library copies of the *Han Wen-k'o kung wen-chi* and the *Po-lo hsien-chih*, were engraved by the same person "Yü," and if we further suggest that the Gest Library copy of the *Han Wen-k'o kung wen-chi* was engraved in the seventeenth year of the Ch'ung-chen period (1644), and the engraver "Yü" was at the time twenty years old, he would then have been sixty-three years old when he finished engraving the *Po-lo hsien-chih* in the twenty-sixth year of the K'ang-hsi period. Normally, people's eyesight begins to deteriorate after they reach forty, making it difficult for them to engage in work that requires good eyesight. It would have been almost impossible for a sixty-year-old engraver to remain in the engraving business since eyeglasses were not yet readily available to ordinary Chinese during the Ch'ing dynasty. It is therefore safe to suggest that the year 1669 when Hu Ta-ting wrote the preface for the *Han Wen-k'o kung wen-chi* should be when the Chung-shan Library version of the *Han Wen-k'o kung wen-chi* was engraved, and that the Gest Library copy may also have been engraved about this time.

中途告病疏

原任南京禮部右侍郎韓 奏為聞 命亟

中途患病不能前赴懇乞 聖慈俯容回籍

理事臣佐禮南都慙無寸効接得部咨吏部一本

缺官事該部同九卿衙門會推奉 聖旨韓

改禮部右侍郎兼翰林院侍讀學士臣不勝感

激恭設香案望 闕叩頭謝 恩訖因念臣

母在粵風燭頽齡倚門正切南都去家稍近便道

至家省母即叱馭之官未至稽遲雨雪載塗兼程

三頁大字

5. From Han Jih-tsuán (1578–1635), *Han wen-k'o kung wen-chi*, 21 ch., front matter 1 ch., back matter 1 ch., poems, 10 ch. (14 vols.), 1628–1644. Nine cols. of 19 chars.; block 20.3 x 14.1 cm. Collection of the Gest Oriental Library.

二十不學二作公

二石五斗歸學養士又邑民李吳塘角田租二石

十石仰掌村田租三十石亦歸學萬曆七年知

縣張守為請立籍歲辦糧差置循環簿報提學

道稽焉學校無田有之自日強始

萬曆二十一年分守嶺東道叅議羅萬程以光

孝寶積等寺田壹百畝歸學

社學

興賢社學在縣東提學魏較立

崇美社學在縣西城隍廟左知縣陳鴻漸以公

政紀 一四

6. From T'ao Ching, *Po-lo hsien-chih*, 7 ch., 1687. Nine cols. of 18 chars.; block unknown. Collection of the Naikaku Bunko, Japan.

In the *Han Wen-k'o kung wen-chi* preserved in the Chung-shan Library, the character "hsüan" does not have an omitted stroke.<sup>17</sup> In addition, this book contains many anti-Ch'ing articles. How should we interpret these interesting phenomena?

The character "hsüan" with one stroke omitted was in common use a few years after the Emperor Hsüan-yeh personally attended to court affairs. But this character was seldom used before the year 1676. The *Han Wen-k'o kung wen-chi* was engraved in Po-lo County, Kwangtung Province, which was within the territory of the fief granted to Shang K'o-hsi (1604–1676), who held the title "P'ing-nan wang" (prince who pacifies the South). During the Shun-chih and K'ang-hsi periods (1644–1722), a strong anti-Ch'ing resistance movement existed in the Kwangtung area, a movement in which Shang K'o-shi himself was involved. This special political situation enabled the engravers of the *Han Wen-k'o kung wen-chi* not only to include in the book anti-Ch'ing articles, but also to use the character "hsüan" without omitting one of the strokes, practices that would otherwise have been political taboos.

Because the compilers of the "complete works" section of the *Chung-kuo shan-pen shu-mu* did not have access to the *Han Wen-k'o kung wen-chi* held by the Chung-shan Library, and therefore did not know that the character "hsüan" appears in the book without any omitted strokes, it seems appropriate to suggest that the general principles for the composition of the *Chung-kuo shan-pen shu-mu* be revised. I am referring in particular to the principle that stipulates that any Ch'ing book that contains the character "hsüan" without omitted strokes can be regarded as a book engraved during the early years of the Ch'ing dynasty.

#### YÜ-T'AI HSIN-YUNG

The Gest Library's copy of Hsü Ling's *Yü-t'ai hsin-yung* is a re-engraving dating from 1633, and is one of the finest woodblock-printed books produced toward the end of the Ming dynasty. It was cut during the Ch'ung-chen reign (1628–1644) under the auspices of Mr. Chao of Han-shan (a place near the city of Soochow) at his Hsiao-wan t'ang Hall and was modeled on a Sung edition sponsored by Ch'en Yü-fu.<sup>18</sup> Over the years, this book has enjoyed great popularity, and the competition among book collectors to obtain a copy has been intense. For those who are serious about acquiring comprehensive collections, the possession of this work has become a must.

During the early years of the Republican era in China, a certain Mr. Hsü Nai-ch'ang from Nan-ling County, who was active in book collecting, compiling as well as engraving, surprised people by sponsoring the recutting of the *Yü-t'ai hsün-yung*. This edition is almost a replica of the Ch'ung-chen edition in terms of the distinctive features of its printing-block format, the style of the characters, and even the paper and the ink it used. Nevertheless, although this edition closely imitates the Ch'ung-chen edition, it is not a replica. Hsü Nai-ch'ang had some of the misprints in the Ch'ung-chen edition corrected. Moreover, he had no intention of cheating his readers. He wrote a preface, explaining to the readers the whole course of the re-engraving of the book.

It was, however, a totally different story when copies of this re-engraved edition of the *Yü-t'ai hsün-yung* fell into the hands of book dealers. They could easily fake a copy of the Ch'ung-chen edition simply by removing Hsü Nai-ch'ang's preface. About ten years ago, I found such a fakery in the collection of various libraries in the Peking area and in Hei-lung chiang, Chi-lin, and Liao-ning provinces while I was studying their rare books. And most of these libraries wrongly list this fakery as "a Ch'ung-chen period edition." Only the copy preserved in the Tsing-hua University in Peking is correctly catalogued and still retains the preface written by Hsü Nai-ch'ang. In fact, it is not difficult to tell the two apart. The Gest Library copy is a Hsü Nai-ch'ang edition, and the one shown in the *Chung-kuo pan-k'o t'u-lu* (Illustrations of woodblock-printed books in China) is a Ch'ung-chen edition (see illustrations 7 and 8). Moreover, in chapter four of the Ch'ung-chen edition, a poem entitled "Ch'iu-hu shih" has many misprints, making the poem difficult to read and to understand. In the Hsü Nai-ch'ang edition, these mistakes have all been corrected. In the past, book dealers used these wrong characters as their secret to tell whether or not a copy of the *Yü-t'ai hsün-yung* was a Ch'ung-chen edition.

It is also worth mentioning that the Gest Library copy bears the red impression of some seals, the most noticeable being the personal seal of Miao Ch'üan-sun (1844–1919) and the seal for his private collection. These impressions are all authentic. The Gest Library copy is tastefully designed. Its cover is of purple silk, and it is nicely bound by threads in six needle holes, with its slipcase covered in brocade. Miao Ch'üan-sun's seals, however, indicate that he failed to tell that this copy is in fact a Hsü Nai-ch'ang edition. A book collector as famous and experienced as Miao Ch'üan-sun can

王臺新詠卷第一

古詩八首

李延年歌詩一首并序

班婕妤怨詩一首并序

張衡同聲歌一首

蔡邕飲馬長城窟行一首

情詩一首

古詩八首

陳尚書左僕射李少傅東海徐陵字孝穆撰  
古樂府詩六首  
枝乘雜詩九首

蘇武詩一首

宋子侯董嬌饒詩一首

秦嘉贈婦詩一首并序 秦嘉妻徐淑答詩一首

陳琳飲馬長城窟行一首 徐幹詩一首 室思一首

繁欽定情詩一首 古詩無名爲焦仲卿妻作并

上山采蘼蕪下山逢故夫長跪問故夫新人復何如新人雖言好未若故人姝  
顏色類相似手爪不相如新人從門入故人從閤去新人工織練故人工織素  
織練日匹織素五大餘將練來比素新人不如故

獨宿累長夜癡想見容輝良人惟古歡枉駕惠前綰願得常巧笑攜手同車歸  
既來不須更又不處重闌諒無鷓鴣風翼焉得凌風飛眴眴以適意引領遥相瞻

7. From Hsü Ling, *Yü-t'ai hsün-yung*, 10 ch. (2 vols.), Republican era. Fifteen cols. of 30-33 chars.; block 20.8 x 13.5 cm. Collection of the Gest Oriental Library.

王臺新詠卷第一

古詩八首

李延年歌詩一首并序

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秦嘉贈婦詩一首并序 秦嘉妻徐淑答詩一首

陳琳飲馬長城窟行一首 徐幹詩一首 室思一首

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既來不須更又不處重闌諒無鷓鴣風翼焉得凌風飛眴眴以適意引領遥相瞻

8. From Hsü Ling, *Yü-t'ai hsün-yung*, 10 ch. (2 vols.), 1633. Fifteen cols. of 30-33 chars.; block 20.5 x 13.3 cm. Reprinted from *Chung-kuo pan-k'o t'u-lu* (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan-she, 1961).

sometimes also be deceived by a fakery. When it comes to the identification of traditional Chinese books, we should base our identification on objective evidence and should not be confused by the superficial features of the book in question.

*Ts'ang-ming hsien-sheng chi*

The *Ts'ang-ming hsien-sheng chi*, in thirty *chüan* with a one-*chüan* appendix, dates to 1572 (first impression)<sup>19</sup> and was written by Li P'an-lung (1514–1570). Famous for his literary talent, Li P'an-lung was one of the “Later Seven Masters” who led a late Ming literary movement that advocated the “return to the ancient style.”<sup>20</sup> The Gest Library catalogue describes its copy of the *Ts'ang-ming hsien-sheng chi* as “a copy of the first impression. It has a preface by Chang Chia-yin (1527–1588). It was compiled and put into engraving by Wang Shih-chen.”<sup>21</sup> Wang Shih-chen, another of the “Later Seven Masters,” was born into a rich and prominent family, and once exchanged one of his manor houses for a Sung-edition book. In my opinion, it is unlikely that a person as famous and rich as Wang Shih-chen, when engaged in the engraving of a famed literary figure's work, would have produced something as sloppy as the Gest Library copy of the *Ts'ang-ming hsien-sheng chi*. Characters in this copy display an awkward style of craftsmanship, and the general layout of the printing wood blocks is also poor (see illustration 9). As a matter of fact, when the first impression of the *Ts'ang-ming hsien-sheng chi* was completed, some people immediately involved themselves in the re-engraving of this book, often identifying themselves by their names and titles. The Gest Library copy, however, is an exception. It was re-engraved by bookstore owners, who intentionally attempted to fake the first impression of the book. The quality of this fakery is also among the poorest of the various re-engraved editions of the *Ts'ang-ming hsien-sheng chi*.

Re-engraving was a common practice in the book-printing business during the Ming dynasty, making it quite difficult to authenticate books produced during this period. However, careful comparison should enable us to tell the first impression of a book from its various re-engravings. If no copies of other editions are available for such a comparison, we should pay close attention to the quality of the printing wood blocks. It can be said for sure that a book as poorly produced as the Gest Library copy of the *Ts'ang-*

滄溟先生集卷之一

濟南李攀龍于鱗撰

古樂府

胡寬營新豐。士女老幼相攜路首。各知其室。放  
犬羊雞鶩於通塗。亦競識其家。此善用其擬者  
也。至伯樂論天下之馬。則若滅若沒。若亡若失。  
觀天機也。得其精而忘其麤。在其內而忘其外。  
色物牝牡。一弗敢知。斯又當其無有擬之用矣。  
古之為樂府者。無慮數百家。各與之爭片語之  
間。使雖復起。各厭其意。是故必有以當其無有。

9. From Li P'an-Lung (1514-1570), *Ts'ang-ming hsien-sheng chi*, 30 ch., appendix 1 ch. (16 vols.), 1572. Ten cols. of 20 chars.; block 22.3 x 14.2 cm. Collection of the Gest Oriental Library.

*ming hsien-sheng chi* was re-engraved for the profit-seeking bookstore owners. Further evidence to support this identification is found in the *Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih*. According to this work, copies of the first impression of the *Ts'ang-ming hsien-sheng chi* bear the personal and family names of the engravers. These names appear at the bottom of the block-heart at the center of the leaf. On pages ten to eleven in chapter one, there is a family name "Lu"; on pages fifteen and sixteen of the same chapter, a personal name "Pang"; and on the first page of chapter two, a full name "Ku Ju-chia."

## NOTES

This essay by the eminent scholar-bibliographer of the Library of the Academy of Sciences, Beijing, is based on a lecture presented in Princeton to a workshop for Chinese bibliographers during the summer of 1989. Another article by Mr. Cui, which is also related to the identification of traditional Chinese books, appeared in the *Gest Library Journal*, vol. 3, no. 3, Winter 1989-1990, under the title "The Scope of the Term 'Shan-pen,' the Identification of Woodblock Editions, and the Organization of Catalogues, in Relation to Traditional Chinese Books."

1. In this article, "the Gest Library catalogue" refers to Ch'ü Wan-li, "A Catalogue of the Chinese Rare Books in the Gest Collection of the Princeton University Library," in *Ch'ü Wan-li hsien-sheng ch'üan-chi*, vol. 13 (Taipei: Lien-Ching ch'u-pan shih-yeh kung-ssu, 1983).
2. Ch'ü Wan-li, "A Catalogue," p. 449.
3. The holder of this position was responsible for assisting the censor of education-intendant (T'i-hsüeh yü-shih) in approving students for admission to state schools, testing and classifying

them periodically, and certifying those considered qualified to undertake civil service recruitment examinations. See T'i-hsüeh yü-shih, in Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).

4. A term used to refer to the grand masters of remonstrance (chien-i ta-fu).
5. *Mu-tsung shih-lu* (Taipei: Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so, 1961), 15, pp. 3a-b.
6. This prince was Chu Hou-huan (1518-1591). He was granted the title "prince of Cheng" in 1527. In 1550, he was reduced to a commoner for criticizing the Chia-ching emperor. His title was restored when the Lung-ch'ing emperor ascended the throne in 1567. His biography in the *Ming shih* describes him as a person well versed in literature. He once studied under the guidance of Ho T'ang. See *Ming shih* (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1974), 103, pp. 2853-2854; 119, p. 3627. See also Ho T'ang in *Dictionary of Ming Biography (1368-1644)*, ed. L. Carrington Goodrich (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

7. The first section of this work, which deals with the Chinese classics, has been recently published as a separate book in China. See *Chung-kuo ku-chi shan-pen shu-mu* (Comprehensive catalogue of China's rare books), ed. Chung-kuo ku-chi shan-pen shu-mu pien-chi wei-yüan-hui (Shanghai: Shanghai ku-chi ch'u-pan-she, 1986).
8. Ch'en Hsien-chang's name was to become associated especially with the village of Po-sha in Hsin-hui County, Kwangtung Province. The family moved to this village some time during his life. He was therefore often referred to as "Po-sha tzu."
9. Ch'ü Wan-li, "A Catalogue," p. 444.
10. The *Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih* gives the following descriptions of the *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi*: engraved in 1551 under the auspices of Hsiao Shih-yen; 21 *chüan*; nine vertical columns on each page and twenty characters in each column; white folding line; single line margin; the title *Po-sha ch'üan-chi* appears under the fish tail. On pages one and two of *chüan* one, a name "Tseng Hsiu" appears at the bottom of the block-heart. And so does the name "Tseng Tzu-ch'ing" on pages three and four. At the beginning of *chüan* one, a remark reads: "Compiled and emended by Chang Hsü (1355-1541), a disciple (of Ch'en Hsien-chang) and assistant of the Office of Transmission; re-emended by Yü Chang, a disciple (of Ch'en Hsien-chang) and the instructor of Hsin-hui County."
11. A record in the *Tung-ming hsin-chih* indicates that Ou Ta-lun was the county magistrate from 1589 to 1594. See *Tung-ming hsin-chih*, ed. Mu Hsiang-chung, Chung-kuo fang-chih ts'ung-shu edn., no. 166; facsimile rpt. of 1933 edn. (Taipei: Ch'eng-wen ch'u-pan-she, 1968), 6, p. 5b.
12. Chu Pao-chiung et al., *Ming-Ch'ing chin-shih t'i-ming pei-lu so-yin* (Shanghai: Shanghai ku-chi ch'u-pan-she, 1980), p. 2571. The "presented scholar" status was granted to successful candidates in the highest-level civil service recruitment examinations. This status qualified them for appointment to government office.
13. A remark in Ch'ü Wan-li, "A Catalogue," p. 445, says: "The complete works (of Ch'en Hsien-chang) was first engraved during the Hung-chih period (1488-1505). But the Gest Library copy was re-engraved under the auspices of Ho Hsiung-hsiang (ca. 1592) and was based on a 1551 edition sponsored by Chan Jo-shui (1466-1560)." The suggestion that the engraving of the Gest Library copy was initiated by Ho Hsiung-hsiang may also be incorrect. Although Ho wrote a preface for the re-engraved complete works, he pointed out: "It is Mr. Lin of Kuang-wen County who acquired from the Directorate of Education in Nanking a fine edition (of the complete works) emended by Mr. Kan Ch'üan (the sobriquet for Chan Jo-shui). And he consulted with his friends about having the works re-engraved." On the other hand, a passage in the preface written by Huang Ch'un reads: "Ho Shang-hsin, who is in the same club of mine, and a few friends of his then had the works engraved." These records suggest that the Gest Library copy of the *Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi* should be considered a copy

- of the edition engraved under the auspices of Ho Shang-hsin.
14. "Wen-kung" was the posthumous title for Ch'en Hsien-chang.
15. *Kuang-chou fu-chih*, 1879 edn. reproduced in facsimile (Taipei: Ch'eng-wen ch'u-pan-she, 1966), 28, p. 20b.
16. Ch'ü Wan-li, "A Catalogue," p. 479.
17. In China, characters used in the names of emperors were taboo. Writers who had to use those characters had to omit the last stroke or two of the character. In this case, since the emperor's name is Hsüan-yeh, the last stroke of the char-

- acter *hsüan* should have been omitted.
18. Ch'ü Wan-li, "A Catalogue," p. 491.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 460.
20. These Seven Masters are: Li P'an-lung, Wang Shih-chen (1526-1590), Hsieh Chen (1495-1575), Tsung Ch'en (1525-1560), Liang Yu-yü (*fl.* ca. 1550), Hsü Chung-hsing (1517-1578), and Wu Kuo-lun (1524-1593). They advocated that prose follow the Ch'in (221-207 B.C.) and Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) style, and poems the style of the High T'ang (618-907).
21. Ch'ü Wan-li, "A Catalogue," p. 460.

GLOSSARY

Chan Jo-shui 湛若水  
 Chang Chia-yin 張佳胤  
 Chang Hsü 張翮  
 Chang Lu 張魯  
 Chao 趙  
 Ch'en 陳  
 Ch'en Hsien-chang 陳獻章  
 Ch'en Wen-kung 陳文恭  
 Ch'en Yü-fu 陳玉父  
 Cheng 鄭  
 Cheng-te 正德  
 Chia Tai-wen 賈待問  
 Chia-ching 嘉靖  
 Chia-wu 甲午  
 chien-i ta-fu 檢議大夫  
 Ch'ih-chou 池州  
 Chi-lin 吉林  
 Ch'in 秦  
 Chin-shih 進士  
 Chi-shui 吉水  
 "Ch'iu-hu shih" 秋胡詩  
 Chu Hou-huan 朱厚燁  
 Chu Hou-tsung 朱厚燄  
 chüan 卷  
 Ch'ung-chen 崇禎

*Chung-kuo ku-chi shan-pen shu-mu*  
 中國古籍善本書目  
*Chung-kuo pan-k'o t'u-lu*  
 中國版刻圖錄  
 Chung-shan 中山  
 Han 漢  
 Han Jih-tsun 韓日贊  
 Han-shan 寒山  
*Han Wen-k'o kung wen-chi*  
 韓文恪公文集  
 Hei-lung chiang 黑龍江  
 Ho Hsiung-hsiang 何熊祥  
 Ho Shang-hsin 何上馨  
 Ho T'ang 何瑋  
*Ho Wen-ting kung wen-chi*  
 何文定公文集  
 Hsiang Ch'iao 頂喬  
 Hsiao Shih-yen 蕭世延  
 Hsiao-wan t'ang 小宛堂  
 Hsieh Chen 謝榛  
 Hsin-hui 新會  
 Hsü Chung-hsing 徐中行  
 Hsü Ling 徐陵

- Hsü Nai-ch'ang 徐乃昌  
 Hsü Tsung-lu 許宗魯  
 hsüan 玄  
 Hsüan-yeh 玄燁  
 Hu Ta-ting 胡大定  
 Huang Chih-cheng 黃之正  
 Huang Ch'un 黃淳  
 Huang Shih-chün 黃士俊  
 Hung-chih 弘治  
 Kan Ch'üan 甘泉  
 K'ang-hsi 康熙  
 Kao-ming 高明  
 Kiangsi 江西  
 Ku Ju-chia 顧汝嘉  
 Kuang-chou fu-chih 廣州府志  
 Kuang-wen 廣文  
 K'ung T'ien-yin 孔天胤  
 Kwangtung 廣東  
 Li Ch'eng-chi 李承箕  
 Li P'an-lung 李攀龍  
 Liang Yu-yü 梁有譽  
 Liao-ning 遼寧  
 Li-k'o Tu chi-shih-chung  
 吏科都給事中  
 Lin 林  
 Lo Ch'iao 羅僑  
 Lu 陸  
 Lung-ch'ing 隆慶  
 Miao Ch'üan-sun 繆荃孫  
 Ming pieh-chi pan-pen chih  
 明別集版本志  
 Ming-Ch'ing chin-shih t'i-ming pei-lu so-yin  
 明清進士題名碑錄索引  
 Mu-tsung shih-lu 穆宗實錄  
 Nan-ling 南陵  
 Nei-chiang 內江  
 Ou Ta-lun 區大倫  
 Pang 邦  
 pan-hsin 版心  
 P'ing-nan wang 平南王  
 Po-lo 博羅  
 Po-lo hsien-chih 博羅縣志  
 Po-sha 白沙  
 Po-sha tzu 白沙子  
 Po-sha tzu ch'üan-chi 白沙子全集  
 Shang K'o-hsi 尚可喜  
 Shan-hsi An-ch'a ssu 山西按察司  
 Shun-chih 順治  
 Su 肅  
 T'ang 唐  
 T'i-hsüeh fu-shih 提學副使  
 T'i-hsüeh yü-shih 提學御使  
 Ts'ang-ming hsien-sheng chi  
 滄溟先生集  
 Tseng Hsiu 曾孝  
 Tseng Tzu-ch'ing 曾子卿  
 Tsing-hua (Ch'ing-hua) 清華  
 Tsung Ch'en 宗臣  
 Tung-ming 東明  
 Wang Hao 王浩  
 Wang Shih-chen 王世貞  
 Wan-li 萬曆  
 Wei-yüan 衛源  
 Wen-kung 文恭  
 Wen-ting 文定  
 Wu 吳  
 Wu Kuo-lun 吳國倫  
 Wu San-lo 吳三樂  
 Yen Chen-ch'ing 顏真卿  
 Yü 宇  
 Yü Chang 俞樾  
 "Yu Chiang-men chi" 遊江門記  
 Yü-t'ai hsün-yung 玉臺新詠