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Reflections on the First Complete Printing of the *Ssu-k'u Ch'üan-shu*

FREDERICK MOTE

On New Year's Day in 1772 the Ch'ien-lung Emperor, then in the thirty-seventh year of his sixty-year reign, looked about his realm in his usual mood of self-congratulation and announced a new project to enlarge his imperial library. An edict issued on that day ordered officials of the empire to seek out and submit to the throne all kinds of rare and valuable books. The edict reviewed his own reign's achievements in promoting classical and historical scholarship. It also invoked dynastic precedent by noting the impressive achievement of his grandfather's reign, especially the compilation of the 10,000-*chüan* encyclopedia, *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* (sometimes translated as "Grand Encyclopedia of Ancient and Modern Knowledge").[1] The glorious sixty-year reign of the K'ang-hsi Emperor seemed always uppermost in the Ch'ien-lung Emperor's mind. One may assume that with this new project he was attempting to exceed his grandfather in the sponsorship of learning. But like the two great Manchu emperors who had preceded him, his grandfather, who reigned from 1662 until 1722, and his father, the Yung-cheng Emperor, who reigned from 1723-35, the Ch'ien-lung Emperor had complex motives in all he did. "Sponsorship of learning" was part of the stance of the ideal Chinese ruler. For this fully-sinicized Manchu it was also a sure means of self-glorification. If overblown imperial pretensions and vanity were the only complications surrounding the enterprise that ensued from the emperor's edict in 1772, we could easily forgive him those excesses. In fact, however, darker elements entered the compilation of the vast *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu*, sometimes translated as "The Complete Library of the Four Treasuries."[2]

The emperor did not at first announce any grand plan for those rare and valuable books which he had ordered his officials throughout the realm to collect. Some scholar-officials responded to his edict with proposals for specific scholarly tasks. Subsequently, the emperor seemed stimulated to formulate a more concrete project.

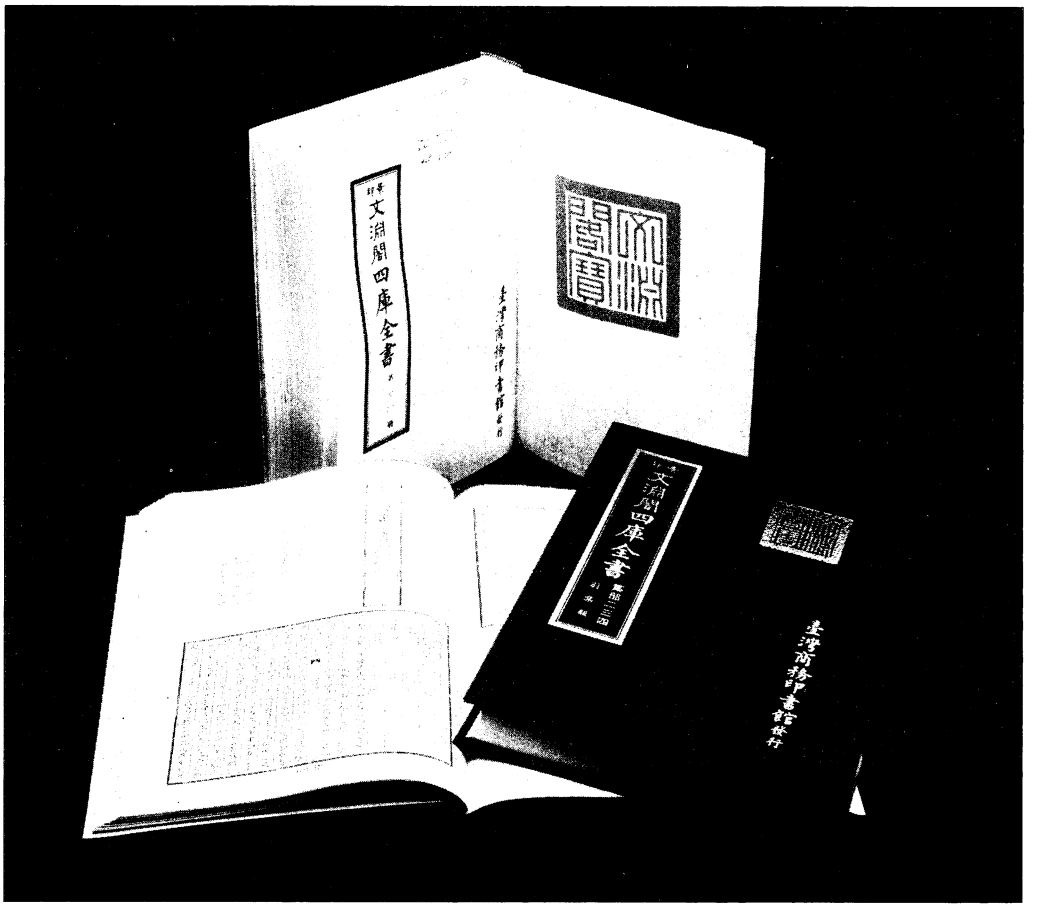
Rare books would be assiduously collected. Private collectors would be induced or intimidated into loaning their choicest items for copying. Some new works would be specially compiled. Fragments of lost ancient works would be reassembled from passages quoted in later writings, in particular by drawing from the imperial library's sole, but incomplete, set of the early fifteenth-century encyclopedic compendium, the *Yung-lo Ta-tien*. Salvaging those otherwise lost works from a great manuscript in danger of disappearing was one of the most stirring proposals by the scholars of the time, and one that may have moved the emperor to think about his still inchoate urge to achieve a grand effect.[3] All the books collected and assembled at the Han-lin Academy within the Palace City in Peking would be collated and emended, using the resources of the various imperial libraries. Altogether 360 Han-lin scholars and other scholar-officials specially selected for this highly prestigious assignment would produce new critical editings of all the works, and 3,826 expert scholar-calligraphers would transcribe manuscript copies in uniform format. The project soon out-grew the facilities of the Han-lin Academy, and a special bureau was established to house and manage the work. Moreover, a large library building, called the Wen-yuan Ko, was built within the palace precincts to hold the final product.

Thousands of works were reviewed by the scholars. One of their important assignments was to prepare critical abstracts giving information on the author, the work, and the transmission of each text. Such abstracts ultimately numbered 10,230. From among those works, 3,470 were selected for inclusion in the *Complete Library (Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu)*. The others were recorded by name only in the *General Table of Contents with Critical Abstracts*, or *Tsung-mu t'i-yao*, itself a hefty publication in 200 chapters (*chüan*). It became the cornerstone of Chinese scholarly bibliography.

The first manuscript of the *Complete Library* was presented to the throne in 1782. The 3,470 complete works comprising it have a combined total of 79,931 chapters, more than 360 million words, filling 36,000 large folio volumes. That is the set originally held at the Wen-yuan Ko within the palace precincts in Peking. Other copies were made for the summer palace, for the

palace in the secondary capital at Mukden, and for the imperial park at Ch'eng-te in Jehol Province; three additional copies were ordered in 1782, eventually placed in libraries at Yangchow, Chen-chiang and Hangchow in the lower Yangtze region, where authorized scholars were given access to them. The copying of those sets was completed by 1787. It was impossible, of course, that manuscript copies of so vast a compilation could be completely identical; scholars agree that the Wen-yuan Ko, or first set, was the most carefully produced. The Summer Palace set was destroyed when Lord Elgin burned the Summer Palace in 1861, in the course of the second opium war, to teach the Chinese that a superior civilization could enforce its demands on the Chinese government. The three sets in the Yangtze region were destroyed, two completely and one in major part, during the T'ai-p'ing Rebellion of the mid-nineteenth century. The Wen-yuan Ko set became part of the National Palace Museum after the fall of the Ch'ing dynasty in 1912. Along with other Palace Museum holdings it was transported back and forth during the years 1937-46, to keep China's treasures out of the hands of the invading Japanese. In 1949 those items were transported to Taiwan, and are now housed in the government museum and library buildings in the Taipei suburbs.

In some ways we are richer today than the Ch'ien-lung Emperor ever was in the late eighteenth century because large-scale duplication by printing did not become practical until our time. Plans to reproduce it got under way in the 1930s, encouraged by the Ministry of Education. Between 1935 and 1980 eleven series of more than one hundred titles each, called the *Ssu-k'u chen-pen* ("choice works") *Series*, were printed in facsimile by the Commercial Press of Shanghai, later Taipei. Finally in 1984, with the assistance of the National Palace Museum a new plan was developed to produce a uniform printing in photo-facsimile of the entire *Complete Library* using the Museum's Wen-yuan Ko set. This was offered for sale by subscriptions for complete sets of fifteen hundred large volumes, in a reduced format allowing four pages of the original on one page. The cost is about twenty dollars per volume, not an inconsiderable sum, but manageable by major research libraries.[4] The last volumes of the Gest Library's set have recently been catalogued and placed on the shelves. (See Illustration 1.) Occupying over 217 running feet of shelves and filling more than a full bay of the stacks, they indeed make a startling visual impression despite their prosaic plastic bindings. Visually they are less impressive than the K'ang-hsi Emperor's great



1. Three of the 1,500 volumes comprising the first complete printing of the Wen-yuan Ko set of the Ch'ien-lung period *Complete Library*, a manuscript collectanea produced between 1772 and 1782. The Gest Library accession stamp on the volume at the top is dated March 4, 1986.

encyclopedia of 1728, in its imperial yellow silk wrappers, filling 207 running feet of shelves in the Gest Library's Rare Book Room. In some ways, I believe, the grandfather won this contest with his grandiose grandson and his surrogates, the modern mass-production printers. This goes beyond all questions of format and beauty—for the original Wen-yuan Ko set from which the modern printing is made is truly a beautiful object, with its elegantly hand-written pages.

Naturally, the pre-publication subscription announcement for the mass-produced *Complete Library* in 1984 produced heated debate at a number of

centers for East Asian studies in Europe and North America, including the Gest Library. Many scholars doubted the justification for duplicating the entire collectanea. There were problems of cost and housing; but the ultimate proposal by some, that all libraries boycott the subscription offer in order to force its cancellation, was based on something deeper. All scholars know that virtually none of the *Complete Library* editions of 3,470 separate works is ever the "edition of choice" whenever another published version exists. Moreover, most do indeed exist in other editions, many of which are readily available in major libraries. Finally, many of the rarest and most useful items have already appeared in facsimile reproduction from the Wen-yuan Ko set, in the eleven installments of the *Ssu-k'u chen-pen Series*. The relatively small number of such items still not published could more usefully come out in a continuation of that series, it was argued. Was it, we asked, truly worth the acquisition price plus the costs of processing and shelving these fifteen hundred large volumes? East Asian faculty opinion at Princeton, including my own, was generally negative. However, now that the entire set is here and on the shelves, I am grateful to our librarians who made the decision to acquire it. Somewhat ironically, my change of view developed when I began to utilize several rare books in Gest Library which once were the property of the Ssu-k'u Kuan, the bureau for the compilation of the *Complete Library*. They bear evidence which, when checked against the versions in the *Complete Library*, reveal more than I had ever known about the non-scholarly aspects of the Ch'ien-lung Emperor's project.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century a growing scholarship has focused on the damage done to the literary and scholarly heritage of China by the so-called "literary inquisition" of the Ch'ien-lung reign. It has detailed the numbers of books destroyed in full or in part, printing blocks ordered burned, authors and owners of books intimidated or executed for sedition. The peak of the "inquisition" coincided with the years during which the Ssu-k'u Bureau was in existence, and the link between the search for old and rare editions on the one hand, and the ferreting out of sedition on the other is all too clear. The various *Chin-hui shu-mu*, or "lists of books ordered destroyed and prohibited" include a total in excess of 2,400 to be "totally suppressed," with another 400 ordered partly suppressed.[5] Nonetheless, one cannot conclude that the Ch'ien-lung Emperor had absolutely no interest in China's literary heritage, or that his Complete Library project was designed merely as a cover for his effort to police the mind of China. It would

be more accurate to say that a genuinely good idea, innocently developed by his Chinese scholar-officials once he had proposed it, came to be seen by him as the perfect vehicle for simultaneously accomplishing sinister as well as altruistic objectives. Other forms of political management under the Manchus, like the secret memorial system,[6] developed in much the same way. Nor had censorship to suppress dissidence been initiated by the Ch'ien-lung Emperor; that had occurred sporadically throughout the reigns of his three Manchu predecessors as well. What marks the literary inquisition in the middle and later years of his reign is the unpredictable vindictiveness of this mean-spirited, pompous ruler. He grandiosely over-did all things, and it is most difficult to separate his fatuous posturings and his unending quest for ego gratification from his cultural sensibilities and his political acumen. He possessed all those qualities in good measure.

Many historians, deploring the literary inquisition, have said that the *Complete Library* is flawed, that it cannot be trusted. Until recently such opinion has been based primarily on the scholars' sense of the links between the project to compile it and the evidence for suppression and censorship. Some have cited the text of instructions in which the emperor ordered his Ssu-k'u Bureau compilers to edit out such anti-Manchu sentiment as found, for example, in the defamatory language of Chinese statesmen discussing the late Ming defenses against Manchu incursion. It has been generally assumed that the primary concern of the inquisition was to protect the image of the Manchus, so that they would not appear to have been crude barbarians, ruthless conquerors, and rulers unworthy of the Mandate of Heaven. Thus the *Complete Library* could be expected to have serious weaknesses, both in the exclusion of entire works and in the editing and coverage of the writings of Ming loyalists. That opinion, although undoubtedly accurate, nonetheless has been based on the overall assessment of the era, not on close scrutiny of the works. There are two ways to test that opinion by closely scrutinizing the works themselves: by comparing editions that pre-date the compilation of the *Complete Library* with the version of the same work included there; and by examining the copies of works actually used by the Ssu-k'u Bureau editors as their working copies, on which they made their editorial changes before turning them over to the calligraphers for transcribing. It is not surprising that the second method has not been widely used, because it seems probable that not many marked-up working copies have survived. Some may have been intentionally destroyed; others may

have been returned to government libraries, from which they subsequently were lost. I know of no survey of library holdings in China or elsewhere to identify all existing books which bear the seals of the collections from which the Ssu-k'u compilers drew their working copies and which bear their editorial marks. It would be a highly desirable project for rare books librarians everywhere to identify all such books and to make a registry of them so that a more comprehensive study could be carried out. The Gest Collection has at least five such items, all identified by the late Professor Ch'ü Wan-li in his critical notes on the Gest rare books.[7] I shall refer to those below.

It is even more surprising that little use has been made of the former method, that of collating one or more earlier editions of a work, identified in the "Critical Notes" (*t'i-yao*) as the edition the editors used, with the text as it appears in the *Complete Library*. In some cases earlier copies of those works are extremely rare, and in a few may no longer be extant. But for most of the works included in the *Complete Library* there is no problem in assembling one or more copies of the earlier editions and making detailed comparisons with the *Complete Library* manuscript version. I suspect that has not been done because of the assumption that whatever editing which had been done was technical in nature, the exceptions being primarily politically censored works concerning Ming-Manchu relations. A recent pioneering study has shown, quite unexpectedly, that in addition to critical emendation for the improvement of the texts, political editing for censorship was carried out where we might not expect it. The study that has made this discovery, one of greatest importance for all users of the *Complete Library*, is Huang K'uan-ch'ung's detailed collation and critical analysis of Ch'eng Pi's poetry collection entitled *Ming-shui Chi*.[8] Ch'eng Pi was a thirteenth-century statesman and poet who observed the actions of the late Southern Sung court at a time when its enemy, the Jurchen enemy state which had conquered north China a century earlier, was now being conquered by the Mongol invaders. Thirteenth-century Sung statecraft turned importantly on policies of defense against these two alien invaders. The Manchus of Ch'ien-lung times looked upon the Jurchens as their tribal ancestors, and upon the Mongols as partners in their own domination over China. Their sensitivity to unflattering Chinese comments on themselves was extended, under the Ch'ien-lung Emperor, to protecting the image of Jurchens and Mongols of five hundred years earlier from deprecations of Chinese long dead. Huang's study shows that entire items from a literary

collection could be omitted, that a large number of standard vocabulary items could be arbitrarily replaced with different words, and that phrases and sentences could be significantly re-written, sometimes purposely and sometimes merely carelessly, in either case giving an unintended and erroneous meaning. He also notes that obvious errors in the earlier editions of *Ming-shui Chi*, usually explainable as scribal errors committed during preparations for printing, have been appropriately emended. But, in some cases such errors have not been noted and emended, and in others they have been incorrectly emended. Most interesting perhaps is his discovery that the censorship of Ch'eng Pi's poems varies considerably from the censorship inflicted on some of those same poems when they were included in an anthology of Sung poets, which was itself copied into the *Complete Library*. Were no uniform editorial procedures established? It is all the more disturbing to think that loose guidelines were applied quite differently by different staff editors. In order to come to terms with the *Complete Library* we must achieve a much clearer understanding of just how the editorial tasks were carried out. Dr. Huang has made an important first step toward achieving that understanding.[9]

By examining other books that were once in possession of the Ssu-k'u Bureau we should be able to extend Dr. Huang's findings. When we turn to the Ssu-k'u Bureau working copies held in the Gest Library we encounter a number of interesting problems; we can both corroborate and supplement Dr. Huang K'uan-ch'ung's pioneering study.

Of five such items in the Gest Collection, two reveal very little information on how the Ssu-k'u project was managed, for neither bears significant traces of editing. Nonetheless they are quite interesting in their own right. Both are part of the large and important collection on traditional Chinese medicine, a major component of the Gest Collection. Both bear the large square seal in Manchu and Chinese of the Han-lin Academy. Both are listed, accompanied by abstracts, in the *General Table of Contents with Critical Abstracts*. One, a sixteenth-century work on pediatrics, is in the "recorded by title" (*ts'un-mu*) category of works not chosen for inclusion; the other, a very early Ming work on acupuncture, was chosen.[10] The work on pediatrics merits a note; the critical abstract states that this copy came from the famous T'ien-i Ko library in Ning-po belonging to the Fan family, founded in the sixteenth century. That was one of four private libraries especially rewarded by the Ch'ien-lung emperor for having contributed more than five hundred

rare items to the *Complete Library* project; the T'ien-i Ko contributed 638 items, of which 97 were copied into the *Complete Library*. The building housing the T'ien-i Ko library was famous for its design, and the collection was known for its strict rules governing use and care of the books. The emperor sent people to study the building so that it could be used as a model for the Wen-yuan Ko, specially constructed in the palace precincts to house the Ssu-k'u project's first completed set, as well as buildings subsequently constructed elsewhere to house the other sets. The T'ien-i Ko building, a masonry structure more or less resistant to fire, still stands; it has housed the remnants of its once magnificent collection down to the present day. Bibliophiles find it worth a visit to Ning-po.

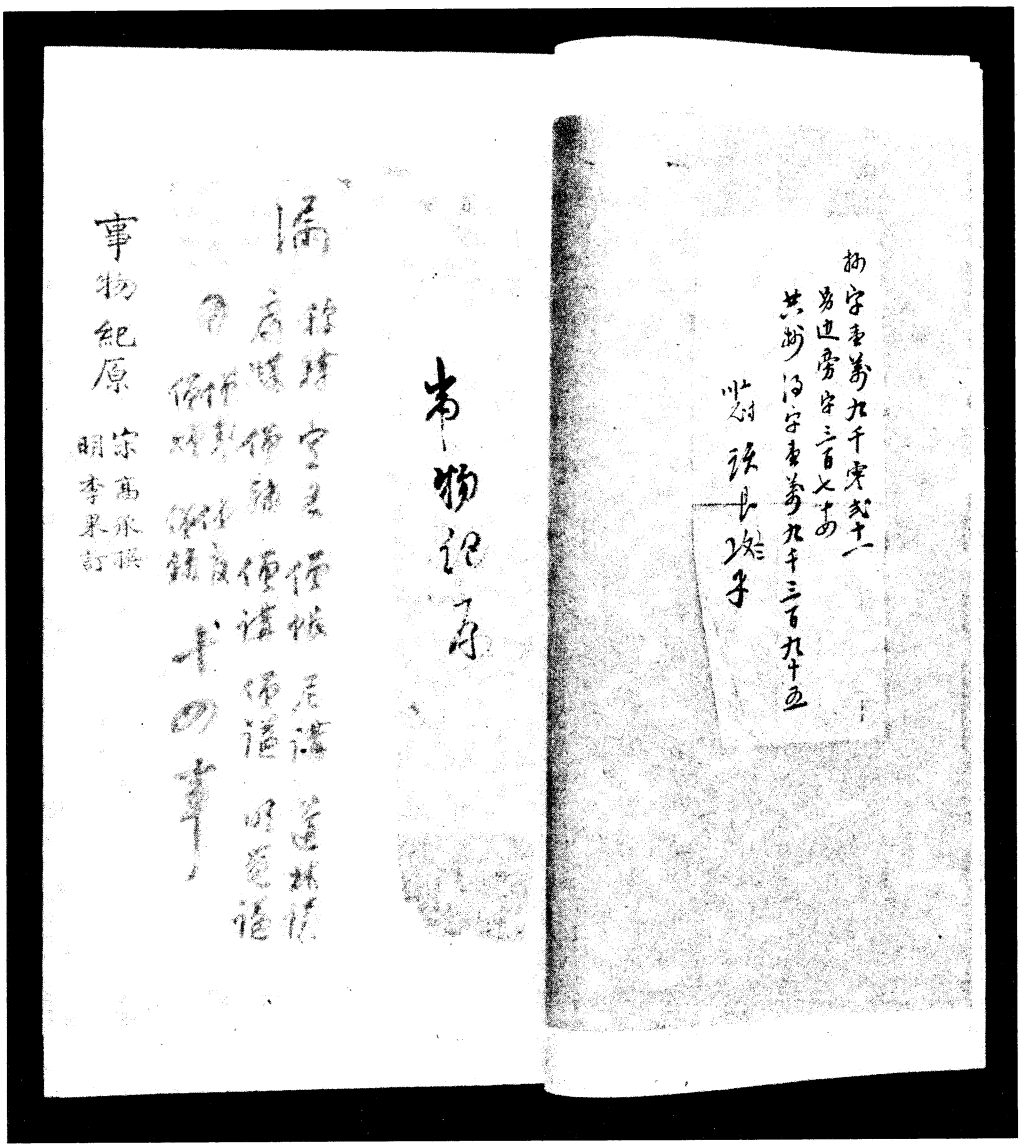
The third item is more important for the study of the *Complete Library* project. It is a Ming edition of a Sung dynasty work, called *Shih-wu Chi-yuan (Chi-lei)*, or *Accounts of the Origins of All Manner of Things*, by Kao Ch'eng.[11] This work had been reprinted a number of times. Why the *Complete Library* editors chose this edition of 1472, and this copy of this edition to serve as their master copy in preparing the work for inclusion, is not clear to me. It is clear that they did not have access to a copy of the original Sung edition, although at least one copy of that was still extant in the year 1900. For whatever reasons, the *Complete Library* editors expended great effort to restore this copy to completeness and legibility. It is poorly printed from well-worn blocks, and four pages are missing. Much over-writing by brush in red ink was necessary to restore the text so that it could be read, edited, and then copied into the *Complete Library*. For much of that labor it would have been necessary to refer to another copy. The critical abstracts however tell us that another copy, presumably that referred to as "the other copy" of the same edition, contributed from the family library of one of the Bureau's scholar-editors, ultimately superseded this copy on which so much labor had been spent. It became the second "working copy," and the one needed for copying the text into the *Complete Library*.

Perhaps this subsequently superseded copy merited extensive restoration because it was among 626 items loaned to the *Complete Library* project by Pao T'ing-po (1728–1814), owner of the famous Chih-pu-tsu Chai library in Hangchow. This too was one of the four libraries specially honored and rewarded by the Ch'ien-lung emperor for having offered more than five hundred items to the project.

The Gest copy is of special interest for a number of reasons. First, it bears

on the cover of the first volume the red-ink impression of a large wooden seal specially cut to mark books borrowed from Mr. Pao's library; this reads: "In the eleventh month of the thirty-eighth year (1773) of the Ch'ien-lung reign there is received from San-pao, the Governor of Chekiang, one copy of _____ in _____ volumes from the family collection of Pao Shih-kung." The name of the book and the number of volumes have been filled in by brush in red ink.[12] Second, this copy has interesting notes inside the cover of the first volume, written by staff members of the *Complete Library* project and by Yang Shou-ching (1839-1915).[13] (See Illustration 2.) On the right-hand page there, a note (probably from Yang Shou-ching's studio) tells how much was paid to copyists for copying a total of 19,395 missing characters. On the left-hand page, first item to the right is the "*fei-ch'ien*" or "loose slip" of paper used for identifying books in the process of editing at the *Complete Library* (Ssu-k'u) Bureau. This is now pasted to the page, but the top and bottom are misplaced. They once were joined at the torn edges and together formed the top of the slip. The seal impression reads: "Perused by the Office of General Management; proposed for inclusion." At the center of the slip, the title of the book has been handwritten (according to one expert opinion, by the Chief Compiler, Chi Yün, himself). The seal impression underneath reads, "Respectfully examined by servitor [Chi] Yün and servitor [Lu] Hsi-hsiung." (See the discussion of this slip, or "*fei-ch'ien*" in the article by Hung-lam Chu which follows.) The middle section of the left-hand page shows a pasted-on strip of paper with an editor's handwriting in red ink listing the titles of fourteen short essays known to be missing from this copy; they were restored from another copy of the same edition. The last item at the far left includes another handwritten title, the name of the author, and the name of the Ming period editor. They were written directly onto the page by a previous owner, perhaps by Pao T'ing-po.

The absence of fourteen items explains the fact that four pages are missing. Since the items have been restored in the *Complete Library*, it is clear that they were transcribed there from another copy. In the Gest copy, those four pages also exist in hand-written copies bound into the volumes, but by a copyist working for Yang Shou-ching a century later. Yang also has added, in the hand of a different copyist, four more items that apparently were originally missing from this edition and from all other Ming and subsequent editions of the work, which he had located in a Sung edition to which he



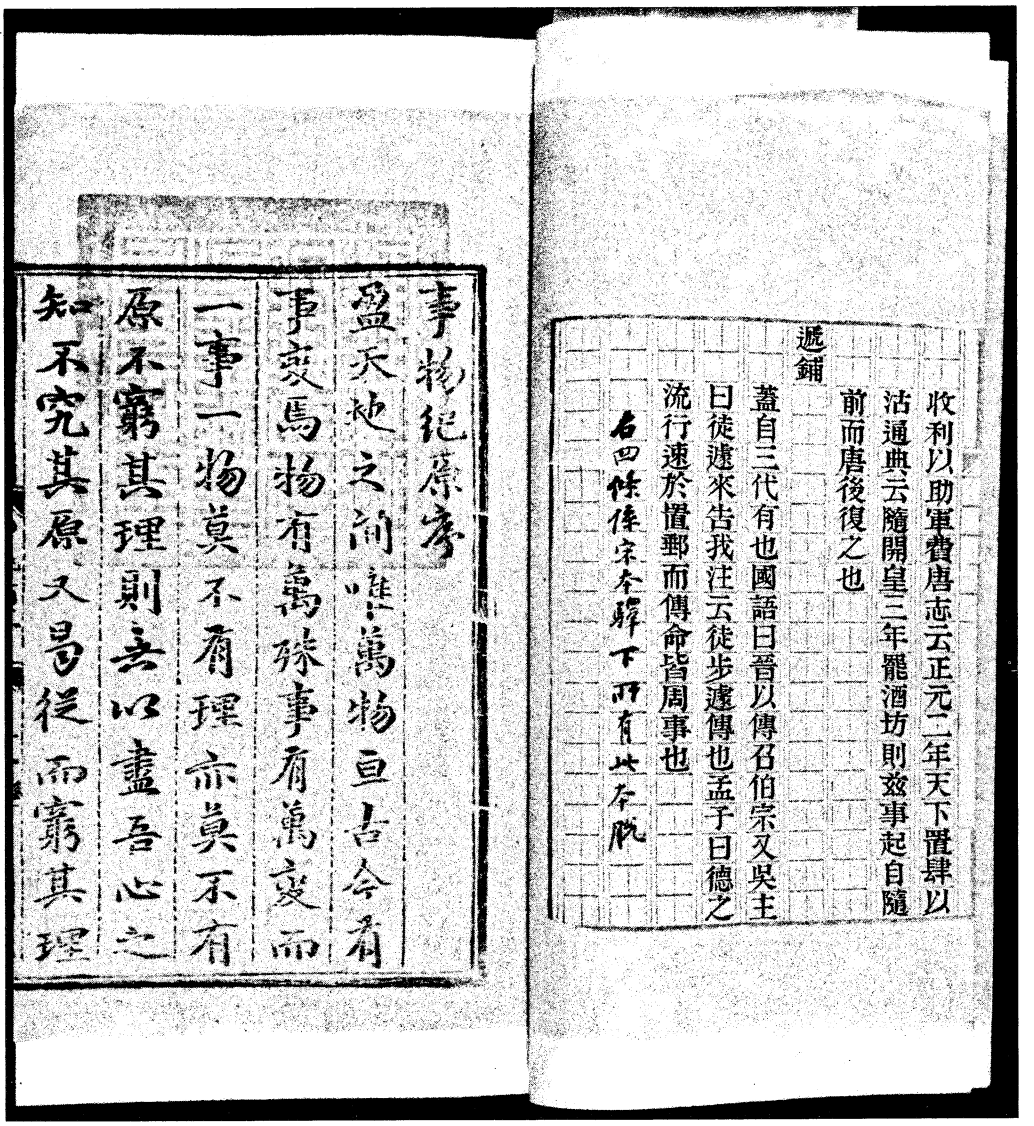
2. *Sih-wu chi-yüan (chi-lei)*, by Kao Ch'eng; edition of 1472. This copy was loaned by Pao T'ing-po (1728-1814) to the *Complete Library* Bureau. Sometime around 1900, missing pages were supplied from a Sung edition by the late Ch'ing bibliophile, Yang Shou-ching.

had access in 1900. This page of hand-copied text is pasted into the front of the book. (See Illustration 3.) After these added texts is a note written in a slightly cursive hand. It says, "The four preceding items, missing from this edition, are found in the Sung edition under the heading 'postal relays.' " Thus the Princeton copy is now more complete than when it was first printed in 1472,[14] and more complete than the *Complete Library* text. Moreover, because Yang Shou-ching was one of the most important bibliophiles of recent times, the presence in this book of his hand adds greatly to its interest and value.

As for the *Complete Library* editors' work on this book, it mostly is of the praiseworthy kind. That is, beyond their painstaking labors to restore a defective copy, the editors have subjected this book to very little of the routinely imposed changes in the text that afflicted so many of the *Complete Library* books.

The fourth item to be mentioned here is an anthology of model literary works compiled by the late Sung literatus, Lou Fang (*chin-shih* 1193), called *Ch'ung-ku Wen-chüeh*.[15] It is one of two different Ming editions of this influential anthology held by the Gest Library, both apparently published in the mid-sixteenth century. A third copy, identical with the edition under discussion here, was recently acquired as part of the Colby Collection.[16] Although the original Gest copy, like the newly-acquired one, lacks front matter that might have provided its publication date, the Ssu-k'u Bureau editors judged it to be from the Chia-ching reign period (1521-66), and that opinion has been accepted. Among other seal impressions, it bears one to be found at a number of points throughout the book which says, "*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chi-pu*," in other words, identifying it as having belonged to the section of the Ssu-k'u Bureau that was responsible for preparing the "*chi*" or "literary collections" division of the *Complete Library*. (See Illustration 4.) None of the books now at Princeton which had once been in the care of the Bureau's other three divisions, bears similar seals showing their divisional location. The management of the four divisions of the *Library* seems to have operated with differences in each case.

The Gest Library's copy of Lou Fang's anthology reveals extensive editing of several kinds, good and bad. First one must note that the Ssu-k'u Bureau editors in this and other instances observed a norm that is not always made explicit, and which led to questionable practices. They sought to

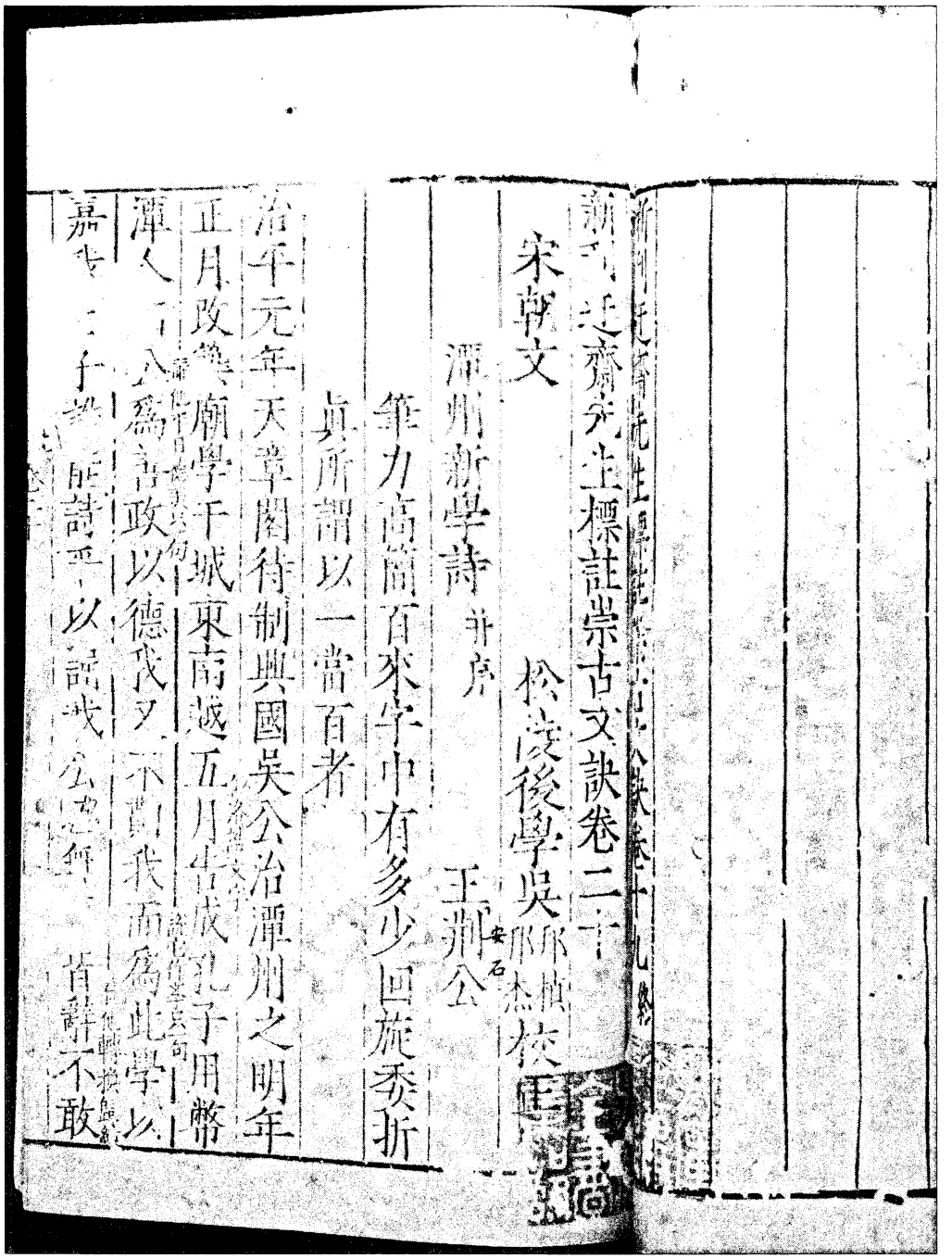


3. *Shih-wu chi-yüan (chi-lei)*. The last page of the frontmatter added by Yang Shou-ching about 1900, on the right. Visible here are part of the third item and all of the fourth, the latter entitled "courier stations." The page on the left is the first page of the Preface to the Ming edition. The large square seal impression is that of the Ch'ing dynasty Han-lin Academy, in Chinese (right) and Manchu (left).

make some of their new editions conform to their sense of what an earlier edition might have been like without having the prototype at hand to copy.

This mid-sixteenth-century Ming edition of Lou Fang's *Ch'ung-ku Wen-chüeh* has extensive commentary added by the Wu brothers;[17] their names and all evidence of their editing have been removed without any indication, and without the editors' having had access to the Sung original. Thus the later editors produced an unfounded simulation of an earlier edition and, most serious, they entered no record of the changes made in it. The reader of the *Complete Library*, whether emperor, Ch'ing official, or modern scholar using the new photo-facsimile printing, has no way of knowing what has been altered or omitted. That is entirely contrary to the best principles of traditional editing, long established and widely, if not universally, used in Chinese scholarship. The Wu brothers' interlinear commentary may have been judged to have no importance, but whatever their reasons for omitting it, along with their names and other obvious evidence of their editing, the Ssu-k'u editors are to be faulted for adopting the Wu brothers' edition as the *Complete Library*'s working copy and failing to tell the reader how the new edition was produced.

Second, the detailed table of contents has been omitted, as in almost all Ssu-k'u volumes. Third, words having possibly defamatory implications for sensitive Manchu alien rulers have been arbitrarily altered. In this book we see some such words rubbed off the paper and new characters inserted in those blank spaces; in other cases the offending characters are marked over by brush and new characters are written in at the side. In still other cases the changes have been written in the top margin. Moreover, in many places phrases, sentences, or longer passages have been marked for deletion. (See Illustration 5.) Close comparison of this copy with the *Complete Library* manuscript version of the same anthology shows still further word changes, not appearing here, as having been made in the transcribed version. Were the scholar-calligraphers under instructions to add further editorial changes? We cannot say. But it is clear that the censorship was done in more than one phase, for in this working copy some of the editing was done in one hand in red, some in another hand in black, and some, as we have noted, appears in the final version without showing in the working copy at all. These changes, particularly numerous in this anthology's writings from Sung period authors, seriously alter the original meaning. Ironically, the



新刊迂齋先生標註崇古文訣卷二十

宋朝文

松陵後學吳邦楨 邦杰 校正

潭州新學詩 并序

王荊公 安石

筆力高簡百來字中有多少回旋委折

眞所謂以一當百者

治平元年天章閣待制興國吳公治潭州之明年

正月改築廟學于城東南越五月告成孔子用幣

潭人而公爲善政以德我又不勤我而爲此學以

嘉我士子能詩平以詩我公恐無[illegible]皆辭不敢

critical abstract prepared for this work by the same editors praises it as one of the two or three best anthologies of model writings compiled in Sung times because of its closeness to the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy of Chu Hsi (1130-1200) and hence the purity of its thought.

It is all too clear that the four kinds of changes described in the foregoing paragraphs all were made for purposes of outrageously cynical, political censorship, not for scholarly reasons. All are made without inserting a note informing the reader that an alteration has been made. In short, the Ssu-k'u editors were required to conspire to keep the readers ignorant. Politically it of course would do no good to edit for such purposes were the editor to insert a note saying: "the words 'dog barbarians were trounced and sent fleeing by our nation's valiant defenders' are here changed to 'the enemy was routed by the imperial forces,' " or even to admit that the offending line had simply been excised.

Finally, because of the dilemma implicit in that kind of editing, neither could the editors indicate the points at which they made their quite justifiable, scholarly emendations. Yet such "good" changes lose an important dimension of their value and utility by being concealed from view, under the workings of a blanket policy requiring obfuscation. Modern scholars obviously will not wish to be subjected to such obfuscation, and will always try to use another edition.

The next Gest Library item to be discussed here corroborates and extends some of the foregoing observations. It is again a Sung dynasty work, by Chu Chang-wen (1039-98), in an edition of Ming times dated 1580. It is

4. *Ch'ung-ku wen-chüeh* by Lou Fang; Ming, Chia-ching period edition. On the right we see the end of the last page of *chüan* 19, and at the left the first page of *chüan* 20. The "*chi-pu*" seal impression is at the bottom of each page. The second line of *chüan* 20 shows the names of Wu Pang-chen and Wu Pang-chieh of the Ming period, but their names and their editorial additions were removed from the *Complete Library* manuscript version. The small characters inserted into the column lines of the last three columns are examples of their interlinear commentary on the text; all of those were expunged. The small brush-written characters at the bottom of the third column show "good" editing by the *Complete Library* editors; here, the courtesy name of the author of this anthology item has been changed to his formal name, in keeping with the standards of scholarly editing. Likewise, the second of the three characters at the top of the second column has been marked for deletion, and a missing stroke in the first character of the third column has been added.

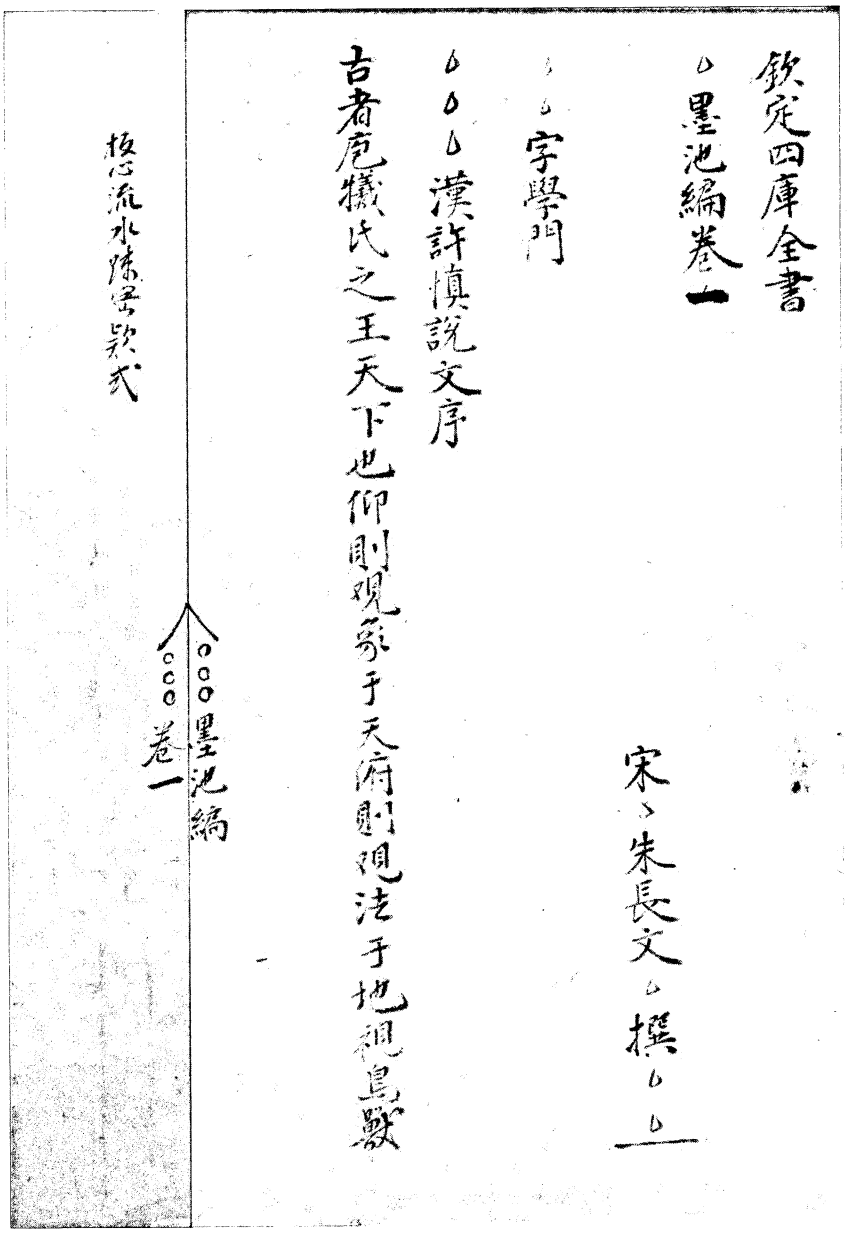
靦虜南面稱王自以爲子孫帝王萬世不拔之業一旦豺狼改慮梓而縛之父子爲虜商鞅不遠而倫又欲陛下效之夫天下者祖宗之天下也陛下所居之位祖宗之位也柰何以祖宗之天下爲大戎之天下以祖宗之位爲大戎藩臣之位陛下一屈膝則祖宗廟社之靈盡汗夷狄祖宗數百年之亦子盡爲左衽朝廷宰執盡爲陪臣天下士大夫皆當衆寇毀冕變爲胡服異時豺狼無厭之求安知不加我以無禮如劉豫者哉夫三尺童子至無也堂堂天朝相率而拜犬豕曾童孺之所羞而陛下忍爲之邪倫之議乃曰我一屈膝則梓宮可還太后可復淵聖可歸中原可得嗚呼自變故以來主和議者誰不以此說啗陛下哉而卒無一驗是彼之情僞已可知矣陛下尚不覺悟竭民膏血而不恤忘國大讐而不報含垢恐恥舉天下而臣之甘心焉就令虜決可和盡如倫議天下後世謂陛下何如主況靦虜變詐百出而倫又以姦邪濟之

called *Mo-ch'ih pien (ts'un)*,[18] a work on epigraphy and antiquities. (See Illustration 6.) It consists mostly of the texts of stele inscriptions from all periods, bronze vessel inscriptions, and the like.

In this copy the Ssu-k'u editors have indicated how the format of the page should be altered to conform to that of all the books transcribed into the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu*, an entirely expectable and reasonable change. Yet it is interesting to be able to see the manner in which that was indicated for the benefit of the calligraphers, in this case by diagramming the instructions on the first page inside the cover of volume one. The editing throughout this book is almost entirely indicated by writing notes on slips of paper pasted to the top margin nearest the column of characters to which the correction applies.

This copy now has only five chapters, whereas its table of contents shows that it originally had six. The sixth chapter apparently was made up entirely

5. *Ch'ung-ku wen-chüeh* (same edition as in previous illustration). Here we see pages 1b and 2a from *chüan* 35. These pages show heavy political censorship which appears to have been done in at least two, possibly three, phases. 1) Some offending characters have been overwritten in red ink, supplying standard substitutions for such words as "stinking caitiffs," here overwritten to read "enemy people." Examples are found in the first two characters in column one on the right, and the sixth and seventh characters in the last column of the second page, on the left. 2) In other cases a small replacement character has been written in black to the right of the offending character. An example of this is the sixth word from the bottom in the second column of the right-hand page. Here, the same word "caitiff" used as a verb meaning "to capture" has been replaced by a more neutral-sounding verb meaning "to take prisoner." Four other such changes are seen in columns four, five, and six. 3) That same editor, using black ink, reconsidered the passage, starting in column four, or a later editor decided that the small character substitutions were inadequate. He added a black stroke mark at the right of each character from the middle of column four to the eighth character from the bottom in the last column of the right-hand page, indicating that these lines were to be entirely deleted. In the *Complete Library*'s final manuscript version, no record of any of these substitutions and deletions is provided.


欽定四庫全書
墨池編卷一
宋朱長文撰
字學門
漢許慎說文序
古者庖犧氏之王天下也仰則觀象于天俯則觀法于地視鳥獸
墨池編
卷一
按心流水陳密款式

6. *Mo-ch'ih pien (ts'un)* by Chu Chang-wen, edition of 1580. This page added to the front of the first volume by an editor working in the *Complete Library* Bureau gives instructions to the calligraphers for copying the work. It shows the spacing to be used at the beginning of the first chapter, in headings and for entering the author's name, number of spaces to be indented, characters to be placed in the "fish-tail" on the center fold, as well as the author and title and first line of the first item included in this anthology of writings on epigraphy and the history of the Chinese script.

of items of post-eleventh-century provenance which were added to the eleventh-century work by the Ming editor. Here again the Ssu-k'u editors have excised what they took to be all of the later accretions, in the effort to restore the original Sung dynasty form of the book. The critical abstract prepared to accompany this item in the *Complete Library* declares that this was the intent, and the deletion may in fact be for that purpose only, and it may have been done correctly. Unfortunately, we must be suspicious of the Ssu-k'u editors, and this Gest Library copy of the book, their working copy, does not allow us to see what the sixth chapter contained. That chapter has been removed by someone unknown. In the table of contents the words "originally missing" have been inserted under the sub-headings of "Chapter Six" to conceal the fact that this copy is unnaturally incomplete. Moreover, some highly suspect seal impressions purporting to be those of a most eminent seventeenth-century bibliophile are found in the front pages. This all has nothing to do with the Ssu-k'u Bureau. Such alterations are typical of those made by unscrupulous book dealers to make defective or later copies look like perfect copies or earlier editions. This reminds us that even when examining books about which we must be suspicious, we must not assume that all the skullduggery was perpetrated by one villain. Yet neither does that subsequent tampering with the book exonerate the Ssu-k'u Bureau's editors for having omitted the final chapter. For it is possible that "restoring its Sung dynasty original form" was an easy way out of the problem of being forced otherwise to edit heavily any post-Sung inscriptions that contained defamatory language. Other copies of the Ming edition in six chapters are known to exist, permitting us to make a judgment when access to them can be gained.[19]

Finally, we may turn to another example, a literary collection of the fifteenth century. The rare book in question is not possessed by the Gest Library. When preparing a *Research Manual for Ming History*,[20] in which a research problem discussed the career of Li Shih-mien (1374-1450), an early Ming Chancellor of the National Academy (Kuo-tzu Chien) in Peking, I was unable to find a copy of Li's *Collected Writings*.[21] Such a book had been published after his death by his son and grandson, first in a ten-chapter edition, supplemented in a subsequent edition by two more chapters. When the Commercial Press in Taipei published in 1972 the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen ts'ung-shu*, Series Three, the Ssu-k'u edition of Li's collected works in twelve chapters was included. After reminding the reader that the

Complete Library's editors by their intrusive and inappropriate editing often produced versions that scholars should avoid, I wrote in the *Manual*: "In this case, we must be grateful to them for preserving an edition of Li's *Ku-lien Wen-chi* that would thereby become widely accessible." Otherwise Li's writings would be almost totally unknown.

My gratitude remains more-or-less intact, even though I have since acquired a microfilm copy of the first edition of Li's works in ten chapters from the National Central Library in Taipei, which holds the original. That copy also was once owned by the Ssu-k'u Bureau and was the working copy used by the editors. It is heavily marked up with changes, some written directly on the book, and a probably later round in another hand written on slips pasted to the top margins of the pages. This copy reveals much about the Ssu-k'u Bureau's editorial procedures. One must surmise that before this copy was completely edited and turned over to the calligraphers for transcribing, another copy of the work in the twelve-chapter version came into their hands. The latter became the working copy (*ti-pen*), leading to the twelve-chapter version as copied into the *Complete Library*. I have been unable to locate any twelve-chapter copy in a Ming or later printed edition, nor is the one used by the Ssu-k'u editors known to be still in existence.[22] Thus we have no way of determining whether the changes seen in the microfilm of the ten-chapter version were transferred to the working copy of the twelve-chapter edition, or whether both copies, each partly edited, were used by the calligraphers for transcribing the edited work. But it is clear that the copy we know in microfilm does not contain the final stage of the editing work. Evidence for that is seen in the celebratory ode Li Shih-mien wrote on some ceremonial occasion called "In Praise of the Barbarians' Defeat" ("P'ing Hu Sung," the last item in *chüan* one). The microfilm shows that this innocent and highly conventional ode posed grave problems for the censor-editor. He marked out many words and phrases, rewriting them according to the Ch'ing period formula, but leaving the sanitized ode to be included in the edited version of Li's book. The word "barbarian" in its title was changed to "the north" ("P'ing Pei Sung"). Turning to the corresponding place in the *Complete Library* version, however, we find that the entire item has been omitted, with no comment or explanation. Thus we must assume that the editing for political censorship went through successive stages. The microfilm shows two different hands in the editing. Was

the person who ultimately decided to omit the celebratory ode a third person working at a later time, or one of the two editors already involved who perhaps received new instructions, or changed his mind after re-thinking the matter? Were the editing for scholarly accuracy and the censor's editing done by different divisions of the staff, under different authority? We do not know, but we can see enough in the working copies of edited works to justify asking such questions.

To summarize, the editing of the works transcribed into the *Complete Library* is not consistent, being more thorough in some works than in others, and varying somewhat erratically in the thoroughness with which some general principles were applied. Much of the editing, from a scholarly (whether traditional or modern) point of view, is reprehensible. Yet some of it displays care and erudition, and could be of value. Sadly, by departing from traditional standards, these editors could not preserve the record of their emendations so that later readers might judge the correctness for themselves. Thus even the "good" editing is not made evident, and cannot fully be utilized. Even when we have access to other copies of the edition used by the editors, or other editions to consult, we often must undertake painstaking word-by-word collation in order to become aware of and utilize whatever scholarly improvement went into these texts.

A fuller study of as many working copies (*chu-lu ti-pen*) as can be found may make it possible to reconstruct the working procedures of the Ssu-k'u Bureau, but it is already clear that inconsistency in their work will complicate our tentative generalizations about the kinds of emendations for which we should be alert in using the *Complete Library*. Why then should our libraries acquire the recent photo-facsimile printing of the Wen-yuan Ko set of the entire work?

Some of the answers to that question may be apparent in the foregoing. There is much to be learned from this vast set of books; its information bears not only on bibliography, but also in a larger way on society and government in the eighteenth century. As bibliography, the *General Table of Contents with Critical Abstracts*, although originally designed to accompany the work, has long been regarded as not only the guide to that work, but more importantly as the starting point of all pre-1772 bibliographic problems and as a vast repository of broadly useful information. To use it fully we must be able to refer to the *Complete Library* itself. Despite its faults,

therefore, the Ch'ien-lung Emperor's grandiose collectanea is indispensable. Precisely because of its faults it is a collection of intriguing puzzles which have engaged, and should continued to engage, many minds. We must be grateful to the library that enables us to pursue the tasks involved.

NOTES

The glossary of Chinese terms used in this article has been included in that of the following article.

1. The K'ang-hsi emperor's great encyclopedia was printed from bronze movable type, the printing not completed until after his death. Only sixty-six sets, in 5,020 volumes, were printed before the type font was destroyed. The Gest Collection possesses one of those, as do East Asian collections at Harvard, Columbia, and the Library of Congress. See Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Volume V, Part One, *Paper and Printing*, by Tsien Tsuen-hsuin (1985), pp. 215-16.
2. "Four Treasuries," or four categories refers to the traditional four-fold classification of Chinese literature, i.e. *ching* "classics," *shih* "histories," *tzu* "philosophers" (broadly defined to mean specialists in many fields of knowledge), and *chi* "literary collections."
3. *The Yung-lo Ta-tien* was produced in two manuscript copies, and was felt to be too large to be printed. It totaled about fifty million words, was divided into 22,937 chapters, and was bound in 11,095 volumes. By Ch'ien-lung times only one of the two sets remained and it was not complete. Nonetheless 385 complete works were extracted from it for inclusion in the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu*, perhaps to be considered the most notable achievement of the Ssu-k'u project.
4. Some five or six libraries in North America are known to have acquired sets of the first complete printing. Recently it has been reported that individual volumes in the *chi* ("literary collections") division may be sold separately.
5. For a study of the lists of proscribed books see Wu Che-fu, *Ch'ing-tai Chin-hui shu-mu yen-chiu* (Taipei, 1969), and works cited by Hung-lam Chu in his accompanying article in this issue of *The Gest Library Journal*.
6. The secret memorial system, eventually the major instrument of political control, also developed somewhat adventitiously from a benign convention. See Silas Wu, *Communication and Imperial Control in China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), esp. Chapter Five.
7. Ch'ü Wan-li, *A Catalogue of the Chinese Rare Books in the Gest Collection of the Princeton University Library* (in Chinese), Taipei, 1974. Referred to hereafter as: Ch'ü, *Catalogue*.

8. Huang K'uan-ch'ung, "Ch'eng Pi yü *Ming-shui Chi* yen-chiu," revised and reprinted in Huang's *Nan-Sung shih yen-chiu chi (Studies in Southern Sung History)*, Taipei, 1985.
9. Huang K'uan-ch'ung, *op. cit.*, esp. Section Five, pp. 154-57, 174-80.
10. These medical works are: 1) *Hsiu-chen Hsiao-erh Fang*, 6 *chüan*, by Hsü Yung-hsüan, preface date 1403; second edition by Ch'ien Hung (c.s. 1508), publication dated in the *Critical Abstracts* to 1532; Ch'ü, *Catalogue*, p. 247.2) *Chen-chih Wen-tui* (or *Wen-ta*), by Wang Chi, whose preface is dated 1532; Ch'ü, *Catalogue*, pp. 249-50.
11. See Ch'ü, *Catalogue*, pp. 316-17.
12. Pao T'ing-po loaned his 636 rare books to the court in the name of his eldest son, Pao Shih-kung, no doubt hoping that any expression of imperial favor would accrue to the son's benefit. A slip of paper pasted inside the cover, presumably in Pao T'ing-po's own hand, says this book was added to his collection in 1757. The Pao's were a merchant family from Hui-chou (Hsin-an) in Anhwei. Many of the best works in their library were published in their collectanea called *Chih-pu-tsu Chai Ts'ung-shu*, noted for the excellence of its scholarly standards and careful printing. The red ink impression of the special wooden seal on the cover is too faint to permit reproducing it here. It suggests very systematic handling of borrowed works, but the work on pediatrics (identified in note #10, above) borrowed from the T'ien-i Ko library does not bear a similar seal impression, even though that library was within the jurisdiction of the same provincial governor. It may be that the Chih-pu-tsu Chai Library, famous for the strictness of its rules, requested this procedure, and that it was not done on the initiative of the Governor or of the Ssu-k'u Bureau. San-pao, an important Manchu official, served as Governor of Chekiang from the beginning of 1773 until promoted to the Governor Generalship of Hu-kuang in 1777.
13. On Yang Shou-ching, see Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (Washington, D.C., 1943-1944), p. 484, biography of Li Shu-ch'ang by Hiromu Momose, who describes Yang as "a well-qualified calligrapher, epigraphist, geographer, and bibliographer." Yang's manuscript essay bound into the first volume states that he used a copy of the Sung edition borrowed in 1900 from the famous scholar, Liang Ting-fen (1859-1919).
14. See the comment on this book in Ch'ü, *Catalogue*, pp. 316-17. Yang Shou-ching went to Japan in 1881 as secretary to Li Shu-ch'ang, the Chinese Minister to Japan. There he saw many rare Chinese books in Japanese collections, on which he wrote scholarly notes, eventually published in 1901 under the title *Jih-pen Fang-shu Chih (A Record of Books Seen in Japan)*. Those notes include comments on a seriously defective edition of *Shih-wu Chi-yüan* dated to 1444, but there is no evidence that he then knew of any extant Sung copy. See Li's biography in Hummel, cited in note #13.
15. Lou Fang's anthology, in this edition, is called *(Hsin-k'an Yü-chai Hsien-sheng Piao-chu) Ch'ung-ku Wen-chüeh*, 35 *chüan*. See Ch'ü, *Catalogue*, pp. 494-95.

16. The Colby Collection, recently acquired by the Gest Library, is described by Hung-lam Chu in *The Gest Library Journal*, 1.1 (December, 1986), pp. 7-33.
17. The Ming editors were brothers from Wu-chiang in Kiangsu, near modern Soochow, named Wu Pang-chen (*chin-shih* 1553) and Wu Pang-chieh. They were from a family long prominent in Ming scholar-officialdom.
18. See Ch'ü, *Catalogue*, pp. 268-69.
19. One copy is held by the Peking University Library, according to Wang Chung-min, *Chung-kuo shan-pen-shu t'i-yao* (Shanghai, 1983), p. 294, where it is listed under what must be the original title, *Mo-ch'ih pien*.
20. F.W. Mote and Howard L. Goodman, *A Research Manual for Ming History*, two volumes, Chinese Linguistics Project, Princeton University, 1985.
21. Li Shih-mien's literary works have been published under different titles, e.g. *Shih Chung-wen Ku-lien wen-chi* in 10 *chüan*, and, as seen in the *Complete Library, Ku-lien wen-chi* in 12 *chüan*.
22. *The Ssu-k'u ts'ai-chin shu-mu (Catalogue of Books Collected and Submitted to the Complete Library Office)*, rev. edn., Wu Wei-tsu, ed., Peking, 1960, shows that altogether four copies of twelve-*chüan* editions, called variously *Ku-lien Chi* and *Ku-lien wen-chi*, came into the possession of the Ssu-k'u Bureau. Oddly, the ten-*chüan* edition is not listed there, even though the copy now in the possession of the National Central Library in Taipei bears the seals and identifying marks showing that it undoubtedly once belonged to the Ssu-k'u Bureau and was extensively edited there.