

BOOK HISTORY IN PREMODERN CHINA



The State of the Discipline I

Cynthia Brokaw

Few cultures have enjoyed such a long tradition of literary production and scholarship as China. Writing, in the form of characters scratched on “oracle bones,” tortoise plastrons and oxen shoulder bones used to record communications with the ancestors of the ruling family, appeared in ancient China by the middle of the second millennium B.C. “Books,” in the form of writing on bamboo slats bound together into rolls, had become both a routine means of making bureaucratic records and a vehicle for the lively intellectual and political debates of the Warring States period (481–256 B.C.) and the voluminous works of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220). The rulers of this dynasty initiated the creation of a canon of sacred texts, eventually known as the Confucian Classics, to be revered as the carriers of the fundamental ethical and political values of Chinese culture. The invention of paper by the first century B.C. and the gradual spread of its use made writing much more accessible to the literate elite and encouraged the production of a broad range of texts. Manuscript book culture flourished.

By the eighth century (at the latest),¹ the Chinese had invented xylography, the method of reproducing text from characters cut in relief on wooden blocks. Developed first for the production of Buddhist works (the earliest extant book is a beautifully illustrated sutra), the technology was embraced quickly by commercial publishers, who turned out dictionaries, medical texts, almanacs, divination and geomancy manuals, and works on astrology; and later by the government, which used print to establish standard editions of the Confucian Classics in the tenth century. By the end of that century, with the establishment of a text-centered civil-service examination system as the primary means of official recruitment, literacy and mastery of

the classical canon became the gateways to political authority, social status, and economic security. Throughout the rest of the imperial period—that is, until 1911—possession of, or at least access to, books was essential to respectability in Chinese society. A household perfumed with “the scent of books” (*shuxiang*) had accumulated considerable cultural capital.

Books were also highly valued as aesthetic objects and emblems of culture. Book collecting was a common hobby not only for scholars and the imperial family but also, by the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), for wealthy merchants and landowners aspiring to improve their standing in society. Literati vied to purchase the rare, often beautifully cut works of the Song (960–1279), considered by aesthetes the “golden age” of Chinese printing. At this time the art of woodcut illustration reached its height in the hands of the artisan block-cutters of Huizhou, famous for producing the beautifully designed and finely cut pictures that embellish high-end editions of Ming novels and art albums. Even for those unable to read (or too poor to purchase a finely illustrated text), the written and printed word had a certain sacred quality or power: popular religious texts commonly listed the ritual burning of scraps of writing as a means of accumulating merit and earning supernatural reward. By the later imperial period, special “Sparing the Written Word Associations” had developed to organize the collection and ritual disposal of such scraps.

The expanding demand for books and the high cultural status of books in Chinese society from the Song on encouraged the development of new printing technologies: movable-type printing and color printing. As early as the eleventh century, Bi Sheng (990–1051) created movable earthenware type (fixed into a paste-lined iron frame for printing), and in the fourteenth century Wang Zhen (fl. 1290–1333) recorded the use of wooden movable type (fitted into a form with wooden plugs). By the late fifteenth century, movable type of bronze and other metals had also come into use. Primarily because of the large fonts needed to print Chinese (with more than fifty thousand characters), movable type was a practical option only for publishers able to make a significant capital investment. It was used usually either

Table 1. Chronology of Chinese Dynasties (Tang–Qing)

Tang		618–907
Five Dynasties Period		907–960
Song		960–1279
Northern Song	960–1127	
Southern Song	1127–1279	
Yuan		1279–1368
Ming		1368–1644
Qing		1644–1911

for large government-sponsored publications, like the great Qing (1644–1911) encyclopedia, the *Synthesis of Books and Illustrations Past and Present* (*Gujin tushu jicheng*), printed with bronze movable type in 1728; or for large projects funded by wealthy merchants. Until the nineteenth century, the dominant print technology remained xylography.

But block-cutters and publishers continued to experiment within this form. The publishing boom of the late Ming—when there was an explosion in both the numbers and different genres of texts printed—stimulated the development of several methods of multicolor printing and blind embossing. Hu Zhengyan's (c. 1582–1672) famous *Ten Bamboo Studio Manual of Calligraphy and Painting* (*Shizhu zhai shuhuapu*) illustrates the most sophisticated of woodblock color-printing techniques: “assembled blocks” (*douban*), or the use of separate blocks for each color. It is said that the subtle color gradations of the ink in the original cannot be reproduced even by modern photomechanical processes.² Works like this were accessible only to the very wealthy. But at the same time, commercial publishers targeting a humbler audience were producing texts cut in a new “craftsman’s” style (*jiangti*) calligraphy. This boxy, evenly spaced style was not as elegant or distinctive as the calligraphy reproduced in Song texts but, in its uniformity and regularity, was easier to read³—and thus more accessible to the growing population of literate merchants and traders, women, medical professionals, geomancers and other practitioners of the divining arts, and wealthy peasants. This population continued to grow through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and, with it, the numbers of woodblock publishers eager to profit through the production of inexpensive (although not necessarily well-produced) editions of standard primers, the Confucian Classics, medical and pharmaceutical handbooks, household encyclopedias, fortune-telling guides, popular fiction, and songbooks.

The Study of Books and Printing

Given the long and rich history of printing in China and the high status granted books and textual knowledge from a very early period, it is not surprising that there is a long tradition of scholarship on books in China.⁴ The modern scholar Cao Zhi, in his introductory text on the study of Chinese books, traces the origins of this tradition back to the first century B.C., to the bibliographical classifications developed by the Han imperial librarian Liu Xiang (c. 77–6 B.C.), in his *Seven Epitomes* (*Qilüe*).⁵ This early passion for books (and records about books) is reaffirmed in the rich store

of catalogues and bibliographies produced throughout the course of pre-modern Chinese history.

Many of these works were produced by government command, reflecting the strong interest the imperial state took in recording and defining text production. The “standard” or official histories, commissioned by each dynasty to be written about its predecessor, were supposed to include a bibliography of texts (“Literary Annals” or “Yiwen zhi”) produced during the relevant dynasty. Even toward the end of the imperial period—by which time the volume of texts produced had grown to unmanageable proportions—the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736–95) imagined that he might encompass all the important works of the Chinese tradition in one grand annotated catalogue. The result, the famous *Imperially Authorized Annotated General Catalogue of the Complete Library of the Four Treasuries* (*Qinding Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*) contains more than 10,000 entries and commanded the labor of more than 350 scholars.

But individual book collectors and bibliophiles also produced their own catalogues. At roughly the same time the Qianlong emperor ordered the compilation of his great catalogue, private scholars—doubtless influenced by the “evidential research” (*kaozheng*) scholarly movement of the day, which celebrated exacting philological analysis of ancient texts and careful study of textual transmission—compiled their own, necessarily much smaller, annotated catalogues. In addition, scholars often produced their own reading notes (often entitled “book discussions,” *shuhua*), observations about rare texts they had been able to examine in a variety of collections, or collections of colophons or postscripts (*tiba*) written in the books they studied.⁶

Collectors and bibliophiles also devoted considerable time and money to the preservation and dissemination of earlier rare editions, printing (when possible) facsimile editions of rare texts. Perhaps most notable are the efforts of Mao Jin (1599–1659), whose studio-printshop in Changshu (Jiangsu), the Jigu ge (“Drawing-inspiration-from-the-ancients Pavilion”), reproduced important Song and Yuan (1279–1368) editions.⁷ Very closely linked to this tradition of facsimile reproduction was the interest, shared by book collectors and scholars alike, with authentication—that is, the determination of the date and provenance of rare works (or fakes masquerading as rare editions). Over the centuries there developed a range of techniques—analysis of cutting styles, formatting and layout, binding, and paper quality—that, together with the careful study of textual filiations and histories of editions, formed the basis for the evaluation of texts. This interest in authentication—and the techniques developed to support it—helped, with the rich bibliographical tradition and the practice of publishing facsimiles of rare

texts, to lay the groundwork for the modern discipline of “edition study” (*banbenxue*) in the mid-twentieth century.⁸

The twentieth century witnessed not only the formal development of the discipline of *banbenxue*, but also the first systematic efforts at the study of Chinese printing and rare editions. The pioneering works, Shimada Kan’s *Studies of Old Chinese Books* (*Kobun kyūsho kyō*, 1905), Ye Dehui’s *Plain Talk about Books* (*Shulin qinghua*, 1911) and *Further Talk about Books* (*Shulin yuhua*, 1923), and Sun Yuxiu’s *Development of Chinese Printing* (*Zhongguo diaoban yuanliu kao*, 1916), though written in the form of notes or citations from primary sources, created the foundations for later studies on printing, paper, bookbinding, publishing, book dealing, and so forth. Through the next several decades, Chinese and Japanese scholars produced a host of studies on the origins of Chinese printing and its development from the Song through the Qing,⁹ woodblock illustrations,¹⁰ paper production,¹¹ and the physical evolution of Chinese books,¹² all signaling the growing maturity of the field.

Western scholars also began to make contributions to the study of Chinese printing. In the nineteenth century several Western observers had commented, often in illuminating detail, on the process of printing in China and the spread of books. Stanislas Julien published the first overview of Chinese printing in a Western language as early as 1847. But the 1920s and 1930s witnessed a new burst of interest in the subject. Inspired to a large extent by the exciting discovery around the turn of the century of a cache of early specimens of print and manuscripts dating from the fifth to the tenth centuries in Dunhuang, scholars such as Hermann Hülle, Thomas Carter, Berthold Laufer, and Paul Pelliot took up the study of the Chinese invention of paper and printing.¹³ In particular, Thomas Carter’s *Invention of Printing in China and Its Spread Westward* (1925; better known in the 1955 edition revised by L. Carrington Goodrich) traced the transmission of papermaking from China to India, Western Asia, Africa, and eventually Europe and provided some evidence for the westward transmission of printing as well. Few today would challenge the claim that papermaking spread to the West from China; Carter and Goodrich were less successful in persuading scholars that Chinese printing may have influenced the development of printing in the West.

Since the 1930s and until quite recently, the interest of Western scholars in the history of Chinese books and printing has been sporadic. The clear leader in the field has been Tsuen-hsuei Tsien, at one time the curator of the East Asian Collection at the University of Chicago. *Written on Bamboo and Silk: The Beginnings of Chinese Books and Inscriptions* (1962) is a landmark study of the development of the material “book” as a text carved on bones, shells, metals, clay, stone, and jade and written on bamboo,

wood, silk, and paper in early China. Tsien's *Paper and Printing* (1985) presents a brief history of Chinese printing from the late Tang through the Qing. In addition, J. Sören Edgren has introduced the principles of *banbenxue* and some of the finer examples of Chinese printing to the English-speaking public in a series of essays and the edited volume *Chinese Rare Books in American Collections* (1984). His work is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of the book or the authentication and collection of Chinese books.¹⁴

These scholars established the basic story line, terms, and concepts that are the necessary tools for the study of the Chinese book, a foundation that Chinese historians have strengthened and expanded. In the mid- to late 1980s, after an unsurprising lull during the Cultural Revolution, scholars in the People's Republic of China once again turned their attention to *banbenxue* and the history of publishing. Emblematic of this revival was the publication in 1989 of Zhang Xiumin's magisterial *History of Chinese Printing* (*Zhongguo yinshua shi*), the finest of the many secondary studies that appeared at this time, providing an impressive synthesis of previous Chinese scholarship and the author's own encyclopedic knowledge of Chinese publishing history. With Tsien's *Paper and Printing* and Nagasawa Kikuya's *History of Japanese and Chinese Printing* (*Wakansho no insatsu to sono rekishi*, 1952), this work provides a comprehensive overview of the whole history of Chinese printing to the late nineteenth century. The years since its publication have witnessed an outpouring of general histories of Chinese printing,¹⁵ reference works,¹⁶ journals devoted to the book,¹⁷ union catalogues and collection-specific and subject-specific bibliographies,¹⁸ focused studies of provincial publishing industries,¹⁹ and histories of printing technologies.²⁰ These works, though varying widely in quality, open up exciting new opportunities for detailed study (including the collection of oral histories and other on-site sources) of specific publishing operations.²¹ Such studies will eventually allow for the reconstruction of a more comprehensive and precise picture of late imperial Chinese publishing and book culture.

The considerable body of scholarship briefly outlined above provides fundamental information about the origins and technology of Chinese printing and essential bibliographical guides to and descriptions of rare books (*shanben*).²² But as important as this scholarship is, it does little to analyze the *culture* of books and the social history of print in China: the ways in which print technology and the structure of publishing concerns shaped book culture and the impact that books—as commodities, as sources of information, as guides to trade secrets, as entertainments, as art objects—had on intellectual life, social status and interaction, literary communication, and the dissemination of cultural, political, and scientific information and religious beliefs.

These concerns derive, of course, from an approach developed by the Annales school in France. Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin's *L'Apparition du livre* (1958) was the first call for serious scholarly consideration of the "social and cultural history of communication by print."²³ Since then, scholars of Europe and America have responded with exhaustive surveys of individual printing houses and publishing projects, claims for print as a vehicle for scientific revolution and religious reformation, studies of changing literacy levels and the interaction between oral and written traditions, efforts to identify the social constitution of certain reading publics, and research on varied reading habits, to mention just a few of the subjects treated. Within the past two decades a number of works, largely in Japanese and Western languages,²⁴ have applied Febvre and Martin's methodology to China. Scholars of the Chinese book ask questions similar to those posed by their colleagues in Western history, but they have also had to frame new and different questions specific to China's distinctive society and history and to the sources available to historians of the Chinese book. For however much these scholars may have been (and continue to be) inspired by the work of their colleagues in European and American history, they are inevitably writing a history that is quite divergent in content and approach from that of the Western book: the differences in the linguistic landscape, social structure, political organization, economic forms, and book technologies are simply too great.²⁵

The Search for China's Print Revolution

The general narrative of Chinese printing history is well known: the invention of woodblock printing in the seventh or eighth century and its exploitation by religious institutions, commercial publishers and, by the tenth century, the government; the increasing importance of books with the expansion of the examination system in the Song, the golden age of Chinese publishing; steady maintenance of the book industry through most of the Yuan, when China was part of the Mongol empire; a decline in the late Yuan and early Ming, due in part to an intellectual climate that encouraged introspection and intensive study over extensive reading and in part to a paper shortage; a spectacular boom in publishing in the late Ming that reflected a growth in literacy and a social expansion of the reading public; and the quantitative expansion and qualitative decline of publishing in the Qing until, in the nineteenth century, the introduction of Western technologies of print irrevocably changed the nature of Chinese publishing and book culture.

Although this basic outline is generally accepted, scholars disagree vigor-

ously over the location of the print “revolution”—that is, over the identification of the period when print had its greatest impact, transforming Chinese social, political, and intellectual life as the “Gutenberg revolution” ostensibly changed European life.²⁶ Scholars like Inoue Susumu argue that the impact of print was long delayed in China, that it was not until the sixteenth century, almost ten centuries after its invention, that printing made a significant mark on society. In his impressive overview, *A Cultural History of Chinese Publishing: Books and the Landscape of Knowledge* (*Chūgoku shuppan bunkashi: shomotsu to chi no fūkei*, 2002), he cites frequent complaints from students and officials of previous centuries about the difficulties of getting access to books and the financial impossibility of purchasing them. Hand copying of texts was still the normal mode of transmission. He provides evidence to suggest that most libraries—and even the imperial library in the Song—were largely manuscript collections and that most private collections were still very small.²⁷ Not until the publishing boom of the late Ming, Inoue concludes, is there solid evidence both of relatively easy access to texts among the elite and of the dissemination of imprints to people outside the highest ranks of scholar-officials. Joseph McDermott, embracing Inoue’s arguments in his recent essay collection on the social history of books in China,²⁸ further emphasizes that even the publishing boom of the late Ming did not entirely destroy the culture of manuscripts. Handwriting texts, even in the age of the imprint, was an important means for poor students to get access to books, for religious devotees to express their piety, for earnest readers of the Confucian Classics to learn their texts, for artisans to pass valuable formulas and trade secrets on to their apprentices, and secret-society leaders to transmit potentially dangerous beliefs to their followers. Inoue and McDermott agree that the impact of printing was long delayed in China; only in the sixteenth century did the economics of woodblock publishing make it cost-efficient to produce enough imprints to have a significant impact.²⁹ They also agree that manuscripts dominated book culture until the late Ming and remained an important part of book culture even after that.

Song scholars have taken issue with this position. They argue that this dynasty, considered by bibliophiles the aesthetic high point of Chinese printing because of the fine calligraphy of many Song imprints, was the site of what might be called the “woodblock revolution”: the lives of both elites and commoners were dramatically transformed by the invention of printing three centuries earlier. Lucille Chia, in a study of an important Song publishing site, Jiayang, insists that within three centuries the Song “went from a society with a very few printed books to many more printed books, all against a background of printed ephemera—broadsheets, private almanacs and calendars, thin divination texts, instruction manuals of all sorts.”³⁰ The

problem, Chia concedes, is that much of this ephemera has simply disappeared, so it is difficult to provide evidence of its existence or its volume. For Chia, the “woodblock revolution” is located at some point in the transition between the Northern Song (960–1127) and Southern Song (1127–1270) dynasties.

Other scholars suggest it may have occurred, at least among elite readers, during the Northern Song. Susan Cherniack (although she does not explicitly state this position) provides some solid support for it in a finely detailed study of ways in which the imprint shaped the textual studies of Song scholars. She argues that the printed page allowed for the introduction of editorial markings and alterations that encouraged critical reading and emendation—and even an attitude of some skepticism toward canonical works. Song scholars, in a break with the past, thus approached texts with a confident assumption that, with their new skills of textual criticism, they could improve upon the writings of the ancients.³¹

Taking a different perspective, Hilde de Weerdts argues that print had a profound impact on Song society by transforming the transmission of official information and news. Examining the bureaucracy established in the Song to handle the transmission of printed information throughout the empire and the responses of officials in different parts of the empire to official news and gossip, she concludes that the rise of print not only increased the efficiency of government communication but also knit the provincial and capital bureaucracies more tightly together. In this way, she explains, print changed the political landscape of the Song.³²

Ming historians like Kai-wing Chow, however, continue to assume that the publishing boom of the sixteenth century was a breakthrough, the Chinese “print revolution.” At the present stage of research, it seems most reasonable to conclude that there was in fact no single “revolutionary” moment in Chinese publishing history, but rather a series of important changes in book culture and society as a consequence of the introduction of print. In his 1994 survey of the many changes in the production, formats, and illustration of books that printing brought to the Song, Jean-Pierre Drège concludes that, although the introduction of print may not have had a sudden revolutionary impact, it was nonetheless a significant factor in the urbanization and commercialization of Song society: “The xylography of the Song was at once both a reflection and a cause of the changes that constituted that epoch. Even if the manuscript largely endured, xylographic man is certainly no longer the same as scribal man.”³³

Given the paucity of surviving imprints from the Song (and, for that matter, the Ming), the difficulty of evaluating anecdotal sources, the absence of any precise statistical information about quantities of texts produced in either period, and the intricacy of many of the arguments summarized above,

this debate about the existence and timing of a Chinese print revolution will probably rage for some time. Although it is unlikely that the question will ever be decisively resolved, the debate will turn up (and already has turned up) much interesting and useful material. The debate also offers scholars the opportunity to study the ongoing (and perhaps changing) relationship between manuscripts and imprints, for even the advocates of the Song print revolution acknowledge that hand copying and manuscripts remained an important element of Chinese book culture through the Qing. This is not surprising, given the high value placed on calligraphy in the cultural tradition; indeed, it seems that an early and continuing source of resistance to printed texts was the awareness that they could not fully reproduce the beauty of good calligraphy. Here scholarship on pre-tenth-century manuscript collections by Jean-Pierre Drège³⁴ and on the rich store of manuscripts from Dunhuang by scholars such as Drège, Fujieda Akira, H  l  ne Vetch, Christina Scherrer-Schaub, San van Schaik, and Jacob Dalton³⁵ provide the foundation for analysis of the continuing significance of handwritten texts and the contexts in which they were produced.

Patterns of Book Production and Distribution

One of the ways in which historians of the book can weigh in on, if not resolve, the debate about the existence and timing of the “Chinese print revolution” is through further research on the publishing industry from the Tang (618–907) through the Qing. Evidence of the spread of woodblock publishing in the Tang and Song would strengthen the argument that printing had a significant impact almost immediately after its invention. Unfortunately, materials for the study of printing in the Tang are limited. Seo Tatsuhiko has embarked on a careful study of the few texts that survive from that period (and they usually survive in later versions).³⁶ Glen Dudbridge, in *Lost Books of Medieval China*, suggests that the Tang enjoyed a lively book culture on the basis of references in Song writings to the no-longer-extant works of that dynasty (although these references often fail to distinguish between imprints and manuscripts).³⁷

Evidence becomes more plentiful in the Song dynasty. Lucille Chia, in *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th–17th Centuries)* (2002), provides the clearest material evidence to date of the significance of print in that period (and later). Relying on genealogies, gazetteers, and surviving Jianyang imprints, Chia traces the history of this industry from its origins in the eleventh century to its demise in the late seventeenth century. Jianyang, located in northern Fujian province, was far

removed from the major cities of the day (see map). But the availability of paper and skilled (and presumably cheap) block-cutters, as well as transport links to Jiangnan (the lower Yangzi delta area, the economic and cultural center of the empire from the early twelfth to the early twentieth century), gave it certain advantages as a publishing center. The Jianyang industry was household based, with certain families within the major lineages of the area devoting themselves to book production while other families focused on examination success and public office. Although the evidence is inconclusive, all aspects of book production—block cutting, printing, binding, collating, and proofreading—might have been handled within a printing household.

Chia persuasively argues that Jianyang was the premier publishing site of its day. It survived the Mongol conquest of the Southern Song in 1279, flourished through most of the Yuan dynasty, and, after a clear decline in the late Yuan and early Ming, recovered in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It produced a wide range of texts, including respectable scholarly collections, notoriously sloppy editions of the Confucian Classics, and illustrated popular fiction. Jianyang productions reflect the degree to which the functions of compiler, editor, and publisher were at times combined in the Chinese book trade: Yu Xiangdou (c. 1560–1637), probably the best known of all the Jianyang publishers, was also an active compiler-editor,



responsible for rearranging, editing, and adding to editions of popular Ming novels like *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo tongsu yanyi*) and *Journey to the North* (*Beiyou ji*).

The Jianyang industry rather mysteriously died in the late seventeenth century. Yet commercial woodblock printing continued to flourish (after a decline during the disorders of the last decades of the Ming dynasty and the Manchu conquest) and spread, so that by the eighteenth century, commercial publishing industries had been established in most of the major regions of the Qing empire. The Jianyang pattern was often repeated, although on a smaller scale: commercial publishing grew more quickly and spread more widely in the south; and industries were often situated in rural areas or market towns with easy access to supplies of paper and inexpensive block-cutting labor.

One of these industries, that of the Sibao basin, in western Fujian, is the subject of my *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (2007). Whereas Chia's study of the Jianyang trade is based necessarily on the analysis of genealogies and (most impressively) surviving Jianyang imprints, in treating a later publishing industry I have been able to rely on sources collected through extensive field work—account books, property-division documents, oral histories, and material artifacts of printing—as well as genealogies and extant imprints.³⁸ The Sibao industry, like that of Jianyang, was household-based within a lineage society: printshops were managed by household heads and relied on the labor of household members. Unlike their counterparts in Jianyang, however, Sibao publishers controlled the distribution and sale of their texts through a network of sojourning booksellers—that is, household members who carried Sibao texts to administrative centers, market towns, and even peasant villages throughout most of south China and sold them in periodic markets or in Sibao branch bookstores. The Sibao publishers chose to publish the most popular, the “safest,” texts of the literary tradition: primers and examination-study guides, annotated textbook editions of the Four Books and the Five Classics (the central texts of the educational system), “Golden Treasury”-style poetry collections, household encyclopedias, ritual and etiquette manuals, easy medical textbooks and diagnose-and-dose-it-yourself pharmaceutical handbooks, divination and fortune-telling guides, adventure and love stories, court-case fiction, and songbooks. Inexpensive and often poorly produced, Sibao imprints were designed for a largely non-elite audience. By disseminating such texts throughout the hinterland and frontier areas of the south, the Sibao publisher-booksellers acted as agents of cultural integration; as they proudly put it, they were “spreading culture.”

Both Jianyang and Sibao were rural handicraft industries.³⁹ What of the cities, where we would expect to find major publishing concerns? The slen-

der evidence that survives from the Tang indicates that cities—Chengdu, Chang’an, Kaifeng, Luoyang, and Nanjing—were the major sites of publishing. In the Southern Song, the capital, Hangzhou, offered the Jianyang publishers some competition. And the publishing boom of the late Ming was fueled not only by the Jianyang publishers, but also by a multitude of publishing concerns in the great cities of Jiangnan—Nanjing, Suzhou, Hangzhou, and Yangzhou—the wealthiest and culturally most advanced region of China. In the Qing, the dominant publishing center shifted to Beijing, the imperial capital.

Yet urban publishing remains under-researched. Sören Edgren, skillfully drawing on meager sources, has produced a comprehensive study of official and private publishing in Hangzhou in the Southern Song. This study makes a methodological contribution as well: by usefully tabulating information gleaned from surviving Song texts about bibliographical classifications, block-cutters’ names, and printers’ colophons, Edgren demonstrates how the history of Chinese publishing can be reconstructed through the painstaking analysis of imprints.⁴⁰

Studies of urban publishing in the late Ming have focused on the Jiangnan area. Ōki Yasushi, one of the first scholars of the social history of the Chinese book, provides a useful overview in his landmark “Study of the Publishing Culture of Late-Ming Jiangnan” (“Minmatsu Kōnan ni okeru shuppan bunka no kenkyū,” 1991).⁴¹ Ellen Widmer has written articles on the evolution of the Huanduzhai publishing house of Hangzhou and Suzhou in the seventeenth century and on the Juzhen tang, a publisher of both Manchu and Chinese texts, using both woodblocks and movable type, in Qing Beijing.⁴² Lucille Chia has also contributed an essay on publishing in Ming-dynasty Nanjing, famous for the publication of fiction and drama.⁴³

Following the lead of Edgren, Widmer and Chia rely heavily on the study of surviving imprints. This fact points up one of the difficulties of studying urban publishing before the late nineteenth century: perhaps because of the greater mobility of urban life, it is often even harder than it is in rural areas to find the sources—the genealogies, the account books, the business records, the property-division documents—necessary to an understanding of the social and economic histories of publishing houses. For this reason, it seems likely that future studies of urban publishing before the late nineteenth century will rely largely on the collection and analysis of imprints now scattered amongst the libraries of the People’s Republic of China. Clearly this work—and more research on the distribution of rural publishing sites, north and south, as well—needs to be done before we can make any believable generalizations about the pattern and organization of publishing in premodern China. Equally essential is more extensive study of book-marketing patterns and networks of textual transmission, both com-

mercial and official. In order to assess fully the impact of books on Chinese society, it is necessary to understand where they were sold, who had access to them, and which texts were sold in which regions.

The Impact of Print on Society

Scholars interested in the social impact of books have focused their research on the great publishing boom of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Inoue Susumu finds the stimulus for this boom in socioeconomic and intellectual factors. The commercialization of the economy, rapid urbanization, and the increasing importance and power of merchants created both the economic conditions for the expansion of commercial publishing and a greater demand for texts from new urbanites and a flourishing merchant class. At the same time, the teachings of Wang Yangming (1472–1529), the greatest Confucian thinker of the day, promoted greater text production and encouraged a larger reading audience. Wang’s insistence that moral knowledge was accessible to everyone—that “anyone can become a sage”—inspired his elite followers to produce works of popular education and created a greater demand for books among the population at large.⁴⁴

Kai-wing Chow argues that, at the highest levels of elite intellectual life, this publishing boom stimulated a critical attitude to long-accepted and state-sanctioned interpretations of the Confucian Classics. Certain editors, eager to attract as many readers as possible, listed in their editions of the Classics *all* the different interpretations of passages (instead of privileging the orthodox interpretation), making readers aware of alternative readings and leading them to question the state-approved orthodoxy. In investigating the classical commentaries of the past for different readings, Chow claims, late Ming scholars were foreshadowing the wholesale reexamination of the Classics, the “evidential research” movement that dominated Qing intellectual life.⁴⁵

Other scholars have argued that the proliferation of texts—and particularly the greater variety of texts published—in the late Ming created a broader definition of knowledge and learning. The Confucian Classics, to be sure, never lost their standing as the premier texts of the schools and of the examination system. But, along with editions of the Classics (and now editions of the Classics with vernacular commentary that made the texts accessible to a broader audience), commercial publishers were churning out examination-essay collections, household encyclopedias and ritual manuals, medical guides, divination manuals, and popular historical fiction—a vari-

ety that implied a new, broader understanding of what defined useful and valuable knowledge. Shang Wei, in a study of fiction writers' borrowings from popular encyclopedias, argues that, in their focus on "ordinary practices" and in their presentation as guides to "all that is necessary for daily use," these texts implicitly challenged the "official knowledge system" that emphasized the primacy of the Classics and "the elite's role as the embodiment of culture" to the exclusion of other social groups.⁴⁶

This expansion of the definition of knowledge had at least two effects: it transformed literati identity, and it created a new broader reading public that now included (many would argue) men and women previously excluded from Chinese book culture. The transformation in elite identity is seen most clearly in the cities of the Jiangnan region, the wealthiest and culturally most advanced area of the late Ming. Ōki's pathbreaking study of Jiangnan publishing culture shows how certain literati embraced new forms of writing and, through their connections with commercial publishers, were able to promote their new interests. Feng Menglong (1574–1646), for example, was a vigorous advocate of vernacular fiction, a genre heretofore scorned by the elite; while waiting for an official posting, he supported himself by editing and revising collections of colloquial short stories. Ōki presents Feng as a cultural entrepreneur who worked closely with commercial publishers (in defiance of the Confucian proscription against profit seeking) to promote popular fiction and his own literary image. And he is just one of many Jiangnan literati who turned to professional writing—of vernacular fiction, examination-essay collections, study guides, dramas, encyclopedias—as a means of livelihood.⁴⁷

The publishing boom in Jiangnan also encouraged the development of tight networks of literati editors and authors. Katherine Carlitz identifies a circle of elite late Ming dramatists and publishers, linked by ties of blood, patronage, friendship, and business, who not only produced many of the new dramas of the day but also established the dominant principles of playwriting. The relationship between writer and publisher was symbiotic: publication made literati authors into renowned connoisseurs of the dramatic art, and their identity as experts in turn became a commodity that promoted the sale of their works. As Carlitz nicely puts it, "print produced the self that wrote the plays."⁴⁸ Print could also be used as an entrée into such circles. The wealthy, socially ambitious publisher-dramatist Wang Tingna (1569–1618), a master of self-promotion, attempted to "print his way into the 'forest of the literati'" through the production and limited circulation of a beautifully illustrated work that presented him as a refined gentleman of exquisite taste.⁴⁹

As this example suggests, the publishing boom, in addition to commodifying literati identity, expanded the social scope of the reading public, at

least in the Jiangnan area. In fact, Ōki argues that by the seventeenth century, Jiangnan had become “an early mass communications society.” Literati societies took advantage of the many commercial printing houses in Suzhou, Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Yangzhou to publish their members’ writings and thus disseminate their ideas. The iconoclastic views of Li Zhi (1527–1602), one of the most vociferous critics of Confucian orthodoxy, became well known because of the reach of print. Gossip and news, too, circulated easily in print.⁵⁰ Inoue, Chow, and to some degree McDermott support this general vision of late Ming publishing culture from slightly different perspectives. Ōki emphasizes the broad circulation of print, while Inoue and Chow focus on the broader social base of the reading public. Inoue stresses the degree to which members of social groups up to this point excluded from the world of print were now, because of the wider accessibility of print and the greater opportunities to publish, able to join this world as both readers and writers. Merchants (the famous merchants of Shanxi province in particular) were avid readers of the new vernacular fiction of the day, and now they too began to publish their own poetry.⁵¹

This expansion in the reading-and-publishing public had political repercussions, Inoue argues, for it opened the realm of public discourse (*yulun*)—that is, discussion of imperial affairs and current events, up to this point the preserve of scholar-officials—to mere *tongsheng* (students preparing for examinations), *shengyuan* (holders of the lowest examination degree, not eligible to take office), and even merchants, traditionally the most despised socioeconomic group.⁵² Yin Yungong, in his study of the newsletters (*dibao*) that spread news of the imperial government (and some criticism of the government) throughout the empire, claims that the broad circulation of news and opinion also contributed to the creation of a field of public discourse that extended beyond the Jiangnan region.⁵³ Chow too argues that the late Ming witnessed the creation of a new “public space shared by the literate population” or an “alternative literary culture” peopled by the *shishang* (literati-merchants-businessmen). This “literary public sphere” (*gong*) provided a site for an exchange of opinions and criticisms of the government, particularly of the examination system.⁵⁴ *Shengyuan* began participating in political debates, often publishing pamphlets expressing their views of contemporary affairs—for example, the succession struggle that erupted in 1603.⁵⁵ The Restoration Society, a literary group devoted largely to promoting the examination success and official careers of its members, was able to establish an empire-wide presence in part through an active program of publication. And it demonstrated its power to some extent through its influence within the Jiangnan publishing world: it managed to suppress the publication of a play, *Green Peony* (*Lüdan chuanqi*, 1632), that satirized the society.⁵⁶

Studies of the intended audiences for late Ming texts have supported the general argument for the expansion of the reading public. Sakai Tadao argues, from a study of the prefaces and contents of popular “encyclopedias for daily use” (*riyong leishu*), that they were designed to appeal largely to non-elite readers: petty traders, students, landowning peasants, and even itinerant laborers. The information in these works, including basic moral maxims, instructions on letter writing, ritual conduct, and etiquette, and the claims in many of their prefaces that they were for “all the four classes of people” (*simin*) or for “commoners” (*shuren*), suggests that editors and publishers were deliberately targeting an audience of readers who wanted guidebooks for social mobility.⁵⁷ Anne McLaren has demonstrated that authors, editors, and publishers of the late Ming often advertised their works in their prefaces as designed for a broad readership, a marketing technique that would not have worked unless such a mass audience actually existed. Of course this strategy might also attract those elite readers, such as Feng Menglong and Yuan Hongdao (1568–1610), who celebrated popular literature and vernacular fiction. Yuan complained that Confucian Classics and histories made him sleepy: history was more effectively taught through entertaining works of historical fiction that would appeal to both the highest- and the lowest-status readers, “garbed [officials] and women.”⁵⁸ McLaren shows that often editors and publishers, by the addition of commentary and notes, carefully shaped different editions of the same work to attract different groups of readers. Yu Xiangdou, the famous Jianyang publisher, produced one edition of the great late Ming novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* that highlighted the battle strategies employed throughout the story (for aficionados of military affairs) and another edition that emphasized the moral “lessons of history” to be derived from the tale (for students and general readers).⁵⁹

Sakai and McLaren draw their conclusions about the late Ming audience for books largely through examination of prefaces and contents, assuming a congruence between implied and real readers. Robert Hegel, in *Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China* (1998), takes a different approach, using the production qualities of texts as a measure of their intended (and most likely real) audience. Finely printed late Ming editions of vernacular fiction, illustrated with the exquisite woodcuts of the famous Huizhou block-cutters, for example, represented “niche publishing” for a specific target audience, in this case the wealthy elites of the Jiangnan area. The growing popularity in the Qing of cheap editions, often lacking illustration or complex commentary, signals for Hegel the decline in the literary status of fiction after the fall of the Ming, when it came to be associated with indiscriminating readers interested in entertainment rather than edification.⁶⁰

Despite his focus on production qualities, Hegel has little to say about either production costs or the prices of the texts he describes, largely because so few records of costs and prices survive. Shen Jin (Chun Shum), on the basis of prices collected during a long career in *banbenxue*, concludes that books were quite expensive in the late Ming.⁶¹ One ninety-chapter imperial gazetteer would have cost a district magistrate (that is, the lowest ranking Chinese official) up to one-quarter of his monthly salary. Inoue and Chow, however, relying on speculative reconstructions of production costs and wages, argue the opposite point: “the price of books in the Ming was not high compared to other commodities.”⁶² Dorothy Ko takes a middle-ground position: books were more widely affordable than they had ever been before, but still mostly accessible only to a relatively privileged group. Although the “newly affluent group of book buyers” who could spend an ounce of silver on a book “might appear rustic to holders of metropolitan [examination] degrees, to the majority of the population they still lived in a world apart.”⁶³ It seems most likely that late Ming publishers offered texts at a range of prices, the lowest of which would make some books affordable to students, merchants and traders, landholding peasants, and prosperous artisans.

Most scholars perceive an increasing social depth of readership (and for some merchants and low-ranking scholars, authorship as well) in the late Ming. McLaren notes that editors and publishers now commonly included women (“ignorant men and women,” *yufu yufu*) in their description of the intended audience for popular works. The bitter complaints of male elites fearful of the social expansion of reading suggest that women in fact were noticeably active readers. Ye Sheng (1420–74), for example, worried about the popularity of printed colloquial stories, for “foolish, ignorant women are particularly addicted to them.” The male view of female reading tended to be dismissive and contemptuous: women read (*kan*, a verb that suggests light reading or viewing) storytellers’ tales and works that could be read out loud; men read (*du*, a verb that refers to deep reading or study) the Confucian Classics and the serious works of the tradition. Women’s writing too was discussed in gendered, often sexually charged terms. While men “ploughed with the pen,” women “sketched” or “embroidered” (*xiu*, a character also used to describe a woman in sexual intercourse).⁶⁴

But women’s writing was also granted a special high status within certain literary circles. In the late Ming some male writers had come to value writings (or oral literature) expressive of pure emotion or *qing* (also “passion”) rather than those that imitated the ossified literary styles of the past. It was believed that writers outside scholar-official circles—that is, people immune from the pressures of the examination system and the corruption of official

life—were best able to express *qing*. Women, who were assumed to be more emotional than men, and particularly literate elite women, who lived much of their adult lives in seclusion, far from worldly concerns, were seen as more likely than men to be talented writers of *qing*. Dorothy Ko, in *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (1994), demonstrates that, to some extent as a consequence of this cult of *qing*, there was an explosion in the publication of women's writing, mostly poetry, in the seventeenth century. Twelve major commercially published anthologies of women's work published between 1557 and 1773 included over four thousand poems and prose writings. The circulation of women's writing in turn stimulated the development of female literary circles (often, like women's publishing, encouraged by fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons) such as the Banana Garden poetry clubs of Hangzhou. Although the percentage of the female population engaged in these sorts of literary and publishing activities was tiny, the significance of their work and their contribution to late imperial literary culture far outweigh their numbers.⁶⁵

Scholars of the book have focused almost exclusively on the publishing boom of the late Ming and its impact, without exploring its fate or its long-term role in the social and intellectual history of the Qing, the last dynasty. To some extent this is not surprising: historians are naturally interested in periods marked by social and intellectual change. Moreover, for literary scholars and aesthetes, it must be said that the Qing offers little of striking interest. Most of the great vernacular fiction of the late imperial period was a product of the Ming—although surely the *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou meng*; also known as *The Story of the Stone* or *Shitou ji*, first published in 1791) and *The Scholars* (*Rulin waishi*, 1803) must be admitted as exceptions. But as Hegel points out, the beautifully illustrated fiction of the late Ming disappears in the Qing; the aesthetics of Qing printing pale before the glories of Song texts and Ming woodcut illustrations.

Yet in many ways Qing publishing and book culture are important topics. Printing shaped the major scholarly movement of the day, the empirical research movement; and this movement in turn produced new methods of analyzing, collating, and anthologizing texts. The sheer volume of Qing publishing engages interest. As Tsien Tsuen-hsuei explains, "The combined efforts of the [Qing] printers resulted in such a surge of printing in several major categories that the products of no previous period can be compared with it for quantity and the magnitude of the works produced."⁶⁶ During this last dynasty, commercial woodblock printing spread to all regions of the empire. The extension of book culture socially, to lower-status groups and to women, continued. And the government played a major role in both

the promotion of scholarly works and censorship of publications deemed threatening to Manchu control.⁶⁷

The evidential research movement, which evolved out of a distrust of Ming interpretations of the Confucian Classics and a determination to penetrate the true meaning of ancient texts through careful philological analysis, was to a large degree dependent on the existence of both large book collections and a lively publishing industry.⁶⁸ Both, of course, had existed in the late Ming (and earlier), although some scholars have questioned the degree to which book collectors made their treasures available to readers before the eighteenth century.⁶⁹ But in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a small group of elite scholars, working under the patronage of wealthy Jiangnan families or the emperor himself, necessarily relied on these collections for their research. Benjamin Elman, in *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (1984, 2001), his study of the evidential research movement, argues that the great private collections of the Jiangnan region (the Tianyi ge in Ningbo and the collections of Bao Tingbo, Wang Qishu, and Wu Zhuo in Hangzhou) were crucial to the movement. Scholars met at these collections and exchanged views on methods of textual criticism, borrowed and exchanged manuscripts and imprints, and might even gain permission to hand copy rare texts necessary to their researches. Literati publishing also supplied the *kaozheng* scholars with useful texts; the Jigu ge, operated by the Jiangnan book-collector and scholar Mao Jin, produced, along with editions of the Classics and histories, facsimile editions of rare Song and Yuan texts that made earlier textual studies more accessible to scholars. Liulichang, the famous book market in the imperial capital, was also a source of rare editions and a gathering place for evidential researchers. The craving for rare books and aids to textual criticism in turn encouraged the publication of collectanea (*congshu*) of rare texts and new reference works—annotated bibliographies, descriptive catalogues, and collections of colophons. The *kaozheng* researchers also developed new classifications of knowledge and introduced refinements to the “four treasures” (*siku*) method of bibliographical categorization.⁷⁰

At the same time that literati publishers and the government were producing reference tools and rarefied works of textual criticism for a small scholarly elite, commercial publishing was spreading throughout the empire, bringing the standard educational texts, practical how-to manuals, and popular fiction and songbooks to hinterland and frontier regions that had previously had little access to texts. Evelyn Rawski, in *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China* (1979), argues that the simplicity, portability, and low production costs of woodblock printing made textbooks for at least elementary education widely available.⁷¹ My own detailed case study

confirms Rawski's conclusions: Sibao book merchants were able to sell inexpensive editions of perennially useful and popular texts—what I call the universal common core of texts—in rural market towns and peasant villages in underdeveloped regions of south China.⁷²

Opinions differ widely on both the accessibility of texts and the impact of the spread of texts on literacy rates in the Qing. Rawski, arguing from the low production costs of cheap publications, suggests that, perhaps for the first time, it was possible for peasants, artisans, shopkeepers, and laborers to buy texts.⁷³ Relying on two account books and oral reports from former Sibao booksellers, I too maintain that the cheapest of Sibao's texts would be within the purchasing power of peasants and laborers, at least in south China.⁷⁴ James Hayes, however, drawing on field work in the New Territories of Hong Kong, concludes that peasants rarely owned books; more commonly they would rely on village specialists (who did own books) to instruct them in proper ritual practice, to provide medical assistance, and to tell fortunes and arrange geomantically successful burials.⁷⁵ Wilt Idema, too, insists that most peasants were so poor that even a cheap book would be beyond reach.⁷⁶

A similar division of opinion characterizes assessments of literacy. Rawski, not surprisingly, has proposed the highest literacy rate for Qing China: 30 to 45 percent for males and 2 to 10 percent for females. But Rawski bases her highest figures on a very generous definition of literacy, the mastery of just a few hundred characters. She also includes within her definition "specialized literacies"—for example, the limited literacy of a shopkeeper who knew how to read figures, keep accounts, and read and write business letters, but was unable to read a simple story or other nonspecialized text. Her greatest contribution to the debate is her thoughtful analysis of such specialized literacies and how literacy has to be redefined in a society that uses a nonalphabetic language.⁷⁷

Needless to say, other scholars have challenged Rawski's high estimates of Qing literacy. Frederick Mote,⁷⁸ David Johnson,⁷⁹ and Wilt Idema have all argued, largely on the basis of analyses of the statistics of examination participation and the structure and texts of the educational system, for considerably lower figures. Idema proposes a three-tiered definition of literacy—basic or moderate literacy, the ability to read simple books; full literacy, the ability to read the Classics and write a set essay; and high literacy, the mastery of the literary tradition—and a total male literacy rate of no more than 20 to 25 percent.⁸⁰ It seems clear, as Alexander Woodside has pointed out, that politically meaningful literacy—enough to ensure success in the examinations and appointment to an official post—was quite limited even in nineteenth-century China.⁸¹

Given the paucity of solid evidence, it is likely that this debate will remain

unresolved. Particularly difficult to assess are literacy rates for women, although all scholars would agree that they were significantly lower than those for men. But there is evidence to suggest that women's engagement in reading and writing continued and even expanded geographically over the course of the Qing dynasty. In her study of elite women in eighteenth-century Jiangnan, Susan Mann emphasizes their passionate dedication to writing, particularly poetry writing. She also highlights the editing and publishing activities of women like Yun Zhu (1771–1833), the compiler of the large anthology *Correct Beginnings: Women's Poetry of Our August Dynasty* (*Guochao guixiu zhengshi ji*, 1831).⁸² Yun Zhu, from a prominent Jiangnan family, was married to a Manchu official and thus provided a link between the women writers of the south and the capital in the north. By the nineteenth century, according to Ellen Widmer, a Beijing-Hangzhou “axis” of women writers, conveniently based in two major north-south publishing centers, maintained a lively exchange of letters and publications. In *The Beauty and the Book: Women and Fiction in Nineteenth-Century China* (2005), Widmer demonstrates through a series of case studies that, although the Qing literary world remained overwhelmingly male, elite women did engage in literary debates with male authors and published not only poetry but also responses to novels like *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *Flowers in the Mirror* (*Jinghua yuan*, 1828) and their sequels. By then a new relationship between women and fiction had developed: some novels, in their plots, characters, and rhetoric, seem to have been written specifically for a female readership; and some women, violating a cultural taboo, began to write novels.⁸³

Publishing and the State

Most studies of Chinese publishing organize the industry into three parts: official (*guanke*), literati or private (*jiake* or *sike*), and commercial (*fangke*). Although this division is somewhat misleading (since both official publications and literati publications might be sold commercially), it does suggest the unusually important role that the imperial government played in Chinese book culture.⁸⁴ As early as the tenth century, officials recognized the usefulness of woodblock printing to the state. Feng Dao (882–954), a high official in several kingdoms of the Five Dynasties period, in order to standardize the texts of the Confucian Classics and thus exert greater centralized control over learning, initiated the first woodblock publication of the canon. And from the Song dynasty on, the state played an active role in publishing law codes and statutes, examination questions and records, and the ortho-

dox calendar; in printing up the forms, public notices, and registers necessary to the operation of the bureaucracy; and in establishing definitive editions of important texts. At the provincial and county levels as well, printing offices might produce standard editions of the Classics and histories, gazetteers, dictionaries like the *Viangxi Dictionary* (*Kangxi zidian*), imperially sponsored medical handbooks like the *Golden Mirror of Medical Orthodoxy* (*Yizong jinjian*), and even belles lettres and works of fiction. Many of these texts were distributed to local schools and private academies to ensure the study of government-approved editions of important works. Government publishing, then, encouraged the integration of local elites into an empire-wide textual culture—or, as some scholars would say, buttressed educational orthodoxy and state control.⁸⁵

The Qing dynasty in particular is noted for its sponsorship of large publication projects. The Imperial Printing Office at the Wuying Palace produced at least 382 different titles between 1644 and 1805; these “palace editions” included encyclopedias, collectanea, dictionaries, scientific compendia, and philosophical and literary works published with a variety of technologies—xylography, movable type, and hand copying. By far the most famous of the imperial projects was the *Complete Library of the Four Treasuries* (*Siku quanshu*), a manuscript collection of the best editions of the major works of the Chinese literary tradition. The Qing government, recognizing and indeed emphasizing the multiethnic nature of its empire, also sponsored the publication of works in non-Han languages. Manchu, the language of the conquerors, dominated this output, but the state also sponsored publications in Tibetan and Mongolian.⁸⁶

Scholars, however, have focused attention on the darker side of government publishing in the Qing: state censorship. The harshest literary inquisitions unfolded under the Kangxi (r. 1661–1722), the Yongzheng (r. 1723–36), and, most notoriously, the Qianlong emperors. This is not to say that early imperial governments had not attempted to control publishing. Hok-lam Chan, in a brief overview of the history of censorship in China, describes efforts by the Song, Yuan, and Ming rulers to prohibit the publication of certain types of texts (calendars, for example), to limit transmission of texts, and to require that all privately published manuscripts be vetted by local officials before publishing.⁸⁷ And we know that the Song attempted at least sporadically to oversee Jianyang publishing, to cut back on the number of poorly edited examination texts produced there.⁸⁸

But the campaigns of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, fueled in part by the Manchu rulers’ suspicion of their Chinese subjects, were notoriously brutal. Pierre-Henri Durand’s *Lettrés et pouvoirs* (1992) is a study of one of the most famous cases of literary prosecution: the execution of the official Dai Mingshi (1653–1713) for writing a history of the Ming that

allegedly challenged the legitimacy of the Manchu emperors.⁸⁹ Kent Guy shows how the Library of the Four Treasuries project was used in part as a means of rooting out undesirable texts—and how the Chinese population colluded to a considerable degree with the Qianlong emperor, using his literary inquisition to fight local battles and settle old scores.⁹⁰ Okamoto Sae, in a finely detailed study of the impact of the inquisition in one region, argues that it had a long-lasting impact not only on book culture but also on the Qing polity: by intimidating scholars and destroying or discouraging the production of certain works, it limited the range of information and intellectual choices available to scholars and thus severely hindered efforts at reform in the nineteenth century.⁹¹

Other scholars, however, have pointed out the limits of the Qing campaigns. The government was not able to restrict or control in any thoroughgoing way the publication of prognostication texts or “immoral and licentious popular novels.”⁹² Most effective at rooting out works deemed subversive of Manchu authority, Qing censorship of other types of texts was less effective, for, as Timothy Brook has indicated, the very size of China and the relatively diffuse and mobile nature of woodblock printing made internal control difficult.⁹³

Reading Practices

How did the Chinese read? Were different types of texts subject to different reading approaches? Was reading seen as gendered or contingent on social status? How was illustration “read”? These are questions that scholars are just beginning to grapple with. Certainly different types of reading were seen as suited to different types of books. Anne McLaren has identified a brief lexicon of reading from Ming texts: *du*, referring to serious, “deep” reading or study appropriate to the Classics, histories, and works of scholarship; *kan*, “looking at” or “viewing,” suitable for works of fiction and drama and other lighter texts; and *lan*, “surveying,” often used in reference to illustrations.⁹⁴ As noted above, this is to some degree a gendered lexicon, for *du* was applied only to male readers studying the ancients and *kan* to women (and men) reading material considered more trivial.

“Study,” as both McLaren and Daniel Gardner have emphasized, involved an intense and exhaustive process of memorization and recitation that allowed the student to make the text his own. This method of reading, which received its fullest description in the twelfth century at the hands of the philosopher Zhu Xi (1130–1200), was to be applied to the Confucian Classics, the sacred texts of the Chinese tradition. It formed a crucial stage

in Zhu's curriculum for moral self-cultivation, a major step to sagehood.⁹⁵ But Zhu knew that students needed aids to the comprehension of texts written in a Chinese that had become arcane even by the first and second centuries A.D. Like many scholars before him, he made extensive use of interlinear commentary to explain his understanding of the meaning of the texts. A little more than a century after his death, his commentaries were given state sanction, and thus for most of the rest of the late imperial period, students studied the Classics with Zhu's commentary. From a very early age, they learned to read texts "interrupted" and interpreted by commentaries. Gardner suggests that this method of reading encouraged an engagement or dialogue with the text, while at the same time closely guiding the reader's interpretation.⁹⁶

This kind of exegesis and reading had a profound impact on the Chinese system of education. Until the very last years of the Qing, most schoolboys were taught to memorize and recite the text of the Classics before they were taught the meaning, usually through memorization of Zhu Xi's commentaries. McLaren argues, however, that another rhetoric of reading developed in the late Ming, representing a shift away from the "intensive" reading of the Classics to "extensive, discontinuous reading of an accessible, attractive text with a clear practical or didactic message"—a work of vernacular fiction or a popular encyclopedia. In short, *kan* to a large extent replaced *du*.⁹⁷ At the same time, as David Rolston and others have explained, the exegetical form employed to explain the Classics was applied to fiction and drama. Aficionados of vernacular fiction like Jin Shengtian (1608–61) and Mao Zonggang (fl. seventeenth century) now wrote commentaries (some interlinear, some bunched at the end of chapters) on popular novels like *Water Margin* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*,⁹⁸ implying that these works had attained the status of classics.

Commentary was probably the most direct method by which editors, authors, and readers shaped and reshaped the meaning of texts. But other, subtler means might be used to similar effect. Xiaofei Tian, in a study of the great poet Tao Yuanming (365?–427) and the scribal transmission of his work, *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture: The Record of a Dusty Table* (2005), shows that, as his poetry was copied and recopied over the centuries, mistakes and even deliberate editorial changes produced a distorted image of the poet. In the process of reproducing his work, reader-editors amplified certain elements of Tao's self-image, making him into a model recluse who repudiated office holding for a simple life of poverty. Tian emphasizes the contrast between manuscript and imprint culture: the former is fluid and encourages an intimate relationship between reader and text; the latter creates texts that are "frozen, fixed, immutable, closed to outside intervention." Scholars of the Song recognized this difference and because of

it were wary of, in some cases hostile to, the spread of printing: they feared, with reason, that it posed a threat to true learning as they understood it.⁹⁹

By the seventeenth century, of course, print was well established as the primary medium of textual production. Although there were still some writers who considered print vulgar and who preferred to circulate their work in manuscript form among a small circle of cognoscenti,¹⁰⁰ most embraced the opportunities that print offered to disseminate their ideas. Tobie Meyer-Fong has studied the editorial activities of one such author, Deng Hanyi (1617–89), who carefully crafted an anthology of early Qing poetry as a means both of “knitting together . . . a generation that had been ripped apart by the traumatic events” of the Ming fall and the Manchu conquest and of coming to terms with the fact of Qing control. By involving as many members of his own community of Jiangnan scholars in the editorial process, by soliciting poetry from all over the empire and from Manchus as well as Chinese, and by skillful use of commentary, Deng created an anthology that functioned as a “vehicle of reconciliation” in the troubled decades that followed the Manchu conquest in 1644.¹⁰¹ Here the editorial principles that Deng adopted gave his collection a coherence and a political significance that distinguishes it from other contemporary anthologies. Meyer-Fong’s analysis highlights the need to pay attention to editorial choices and omissions in interpreting Chinese writings.

Relevant to the subject of meanings and reading practices is the role of illustration in books and their relationship to text.¹⁰² Michela Bussotti, in *Gravures de Hui: Étude du livre illustré chinois de la fin du XVIIe siècle à la première moitié du XVIIIe siècle* (2001), a monumental study of the famous Huizhou block-cutters, approaches the topic from the perspective of the artisans who produced woodblock culture’s most famous illustrations. She provides a careful analysis of the techniques and motifs employed by these artisans, as well as a discussion of the wealthy late Ming audience they were targeting.¹⁰³ Anne Burkus-Chasson focuses on a single woodcut album, *Lingyan Pavilion* (*Lingyan ge*, mid-1660s), and shows how the placement and style of illustrations and their integration into a text (and even the binding of the text) provided the reader with subtle hints about the layered significance of this work.¹⁰⁴

Other studies suggest that illustration played a somewhat ambiguous role in late imperial book culture. McLaren writes that, even in the late Ming, when book illustration reached its aesthetic height, elite literati were often contemptuous of illustrations in texts, seeing them as “vulgar and merely decorative” and thus offensive to refined readers.¹⁰⁵ Julia Murray neatly demonstrates the ambivalence many readers, at least among the elite, had toward printed illustrations. They were seen as aesthetically inferior to painted or stone-carved illustrations and for that reason appropriate for the

transmission of simple moral teachings to the common people. But illustration could also be dangerous, for visual images could easily become voyeuristic—as many would argue was the case in much late Ming illustrated fiction—and thus lead astray the very people it was supposed to instruct.¹⁰⁶

Finally, as both Robert Hegel and Lucille Chia point out, the relationship between text and illustration was not always a straightforward, mutually supportive one. Hegel argues that pictures in fiction might just as often hinder as promote comprehension and enjoyment of a novel or story, and he attributes the decline of book illustration after the Ming to a preference for texts uncluttered with illustrations among the broader reading audience of the Qing.¹⁰⁷ Chia too points out that even in some late Ming texts the illustrations point the reader away from the text. Publishers interested in attracting an elite readership, for example, might commission illustrations imitative of painting and, instead of placing these at the relevant places in the text, bind them together in a separate fascicle, disconnecting them entirely from the text. Pictures may illustrate text, she concludes, but they may also “subvert, and even on occasion sever their relationship with the text.”¹⁰⁸

Directions for Future Research

The study of the Chinese book is still in its infancy. We have just begun to understand the geographical and historical pattern of publishing operations from the Song through the Qing. In order to assess the social impact of print and the scope of Chinese book culture, more studies of specific publishing industries (in urban areas and in the north in particular) and the economies of print are necessary. Research on the transmission of writings and print technology (and the role of migrant block-cutters, publishers, and booksellers) will help us better understand the geography of print culture and the progress of cultural integration.¹⁰⁹ And identification of book markets and distribution networks will allow us to trace the integrative influence of Chinese book culture within both China and the Chinese diaspora in East and Southeast Asia.¹¹⁰

Whole categories of printing demand investigation. Publishing by religious institutions, generally acknowledged as playing a crucial role in the invention of printing, has received surprisingly little attention to date.¹¹¹ The long traditions of government publishing and government censorship have only been spottily researched. Book collecting and publishing by literati as well as the establishment of libraries are topics that merit research

for what they reveal about the circulation of elite texts and the impact of print on intellectual history.

Reading practices and readership, notoriously difficult to study without specific records about readers' use of and reactions to texts, might be explored through research in prefaces and colophons, in the changing paratextual formats of similar texts, and (most concretely) in the notes and punctuation marks often scrawled in texts. Writings about reading and visual depictions of reading can tell us much about how people read.¹¹² Literary scholars have already made useful suggestions about how the different levels of language used in texts might help us define readership. Patrick Hanan, Glen Dudbridge, and Wilt Idema have all treated the relationship between vernacular and literary Chinese (and the different registers within those two written languages) in the Ming and Qing.¹¹³ But more detailed studies of language levels in specific texts would allow for more precise assessments of the levels of literacy among readers. Equally important is the continuing study of the relationship between oral literature and written texts, both manuscript and imprint.¹¹⁴

The role of editors and authors in shaping texts and readings deserves more extensive study. Many Chinese texts are presented as highly collaborative works. Their title pages often include lists of contributors, not infrequently relatives or friends of the author and/or editor, identified as performing a variety of functions—*pingxuan* (to select critically), *jiaoding* (to proofread against an original), *zengshi* (to add explanation), *canyue* (to proofread), to name just a few. How was the function of the “author”—and all the other contributors to a text—understood?

We might ask, too, how “book” was understood. Many Chinese books, before the twentieth century, were essentially miscellanies, formed of collected (usually unattributed) excerpts from a range of other texts, any number of which might be deleted or exchanged for other excerpts in new editions of the same title. This cut-and-paste approach clearly has implications for the understanding of authorship. It also destabilizes the notion of what a book is.

Finally, enough work has been done on the Chinese book to merit some comparative study with other book cultures. Peter Kornicki's *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (1998), as well as an extensive literature in Japanese, provides a foundation for comparison with Japanese publishing and book culture. Sober and balanced comparisons with Western Europe—where economic, social, linguistic, and political conditions were so very different from those in China—would also be welcome.¹¹⁵ How did differences in technology shape differences in the economics of publishing and the spread of printing and books in Europe and China? How did structural differences in the two book

trades affect their social impact? How was knowledge categorized and organized? What roles did publishing and book culture play in state formation and cultural integration in the two regions? Western scholars have for a long time ignored the study of the book outside the West, but there are signs that some are now looking beyond the boundaries of Europe and America.¹¹⁶ Perhaps students of the Chinese book and students of the Western book are now positioned to collaborate productively on comparative projects.

Notes

1. T. H. Barrett argues that printing had already been invented by the late seventh century; see “The Rise and Spread of Printing: A New Account of Religious Factors,” *SOAS Working Papers in the Study of Religions* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2001).

2. Tsien Tsuen-hsüan, *Paper and Printing*, vol. 5, part 1 of *Science and Civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 278. For the types of color printing developed in China, see K. T. Wu, “Ming Printers and Printing,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 7, no. 3 (Feb. 1943): 203–60; and David Barker, *Traditional Techniques in Contemporary Chinese Printmaking* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005), 8–18.

3. Martin Heijdra, “A Tale of Two Aesthetics: Typography versus Calligraphy in the Pre-modern Chinese Book,” paper presented at “The Art of the Book” conference, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art Colloquy on Art and Archaeology No. 23, University of London, 13–15 June 2005.

4. This general characterization of studies of the premodern Chinese book cannot begin to do justice to a very rich and wide-ranging body of scholarship. I have tried to indicate the larger directions this scholarship has taken, listing in the notes only a fraction of the many names and works that would rightly be included in a fuller overview. Readers interested in a list of the major works should consult Bibliographies A and B in Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, 389–430; and Tsien’s update to these bibliographies, “Zhongguo yinshua shi jianmu” [Brief bibliography of Chinese printing history], *Guoli Zhongyang tushuguan guankan*, n.s. 23 no. 1 (June 1990): 179–99. In this section I have drawn heavily on a previous essay, “On the History of the Book in China,” in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Cynthia J. Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 3–5.

5. Cao Zhi, *Zhongguo guji banbenxue* [Study of editions of ancient Chinese texts] (Wuhan: Wuhan Daxue chubanshe: 1993), 52.

6. Examples of privately produced catalogues and notes on books are the *Huang Pilie shumu tiba* [Bibliographic Colophons of Huang Pilie], which collects the colophons of the important book dealer and collector of Song editions, Huang Pilie (1763–1825); and the *Wanjuan Jinghua Lou cangshu ji* [Record of the Wanjuan Jinghua Lou Book Collection], a catalogue by the late Qing bibliophile Geng Wenguang (1833–1908). These two titles, and eight others, have recently been reprinted in the *Qingren shumu tiba congkan* series produced by the Zhonghua shuju (Beijing, 1990–95). For a modern version of *shuhua*, see Zheng Zhenduo’s *Xidi shuhua* [Xidi book talk] (Beijing: Shenghuo, dushu, xinzhi sanlian shudian, 1998).

7. The work of facsimile reproduction has continued to the present, though in a slightly different form, one that serves the needs of scholars interested largely in the physical form of

texts. To facilitate close study of the calligraphy and format of rare editions, book experts began, in the early twentieth century, to publish collections of samples of such editions in facsimile—for example, Yang Shoujing's *Liu zhen pu* [Facsimile of rare woodcut editions], 1901–17, Pan Chengbi's and Gu Tinglong's *Mingdai banben tulu chubian* [Facsimile specimens of Ming editions], 1941, and *Zhongguo banke tulu* [Collection of facsimile specimens of Chinese printing], 1961, compiled by the National Library (formerly the Beijing Library). The Jiangsu Guangling guji keyinshe in Yangzhou and the Jinling kejing chu in Nanjing, both employing block-cutters and printing texts in the traditional fashion, are perhaps the most prolific contemporary producers of facsimile reprints.

8. Chang Bide's *Banben muluxue luncong* [Collection of essays on Chinese printing and bibliography], 2 volumes (Taipei: Hsueh-hai, 1977), establishes the basic principles of *banbenxue*. See also Chen Guoqing, *Guji banben qianshuo* [Introduction to old Chinese editions] (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1957); and Ma Chunxiang, *Gushu banben changtan* [Talks on old Chinese books] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962).

9. See, for example, Wang Guowei, “Wudai Liang Song jianben kao” [Texts printed by the government during the Five Dynasties and the Song] and “Liang Zhe gukanben kao” [Early editions of printed books in the Jiangsu-Zhejiang area], both in *Haining Wang Jing'an xiansheng yishu* [Collected works of Wang Guowei] (n.p., n.d.) fascicles 33 and 34–35 respectively; Nagasawa Kikuya's *Wakansho no insatsu to sono rekishi* [History of Japanese and Chinese printing] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1952) and *Mindai sozubon zuroku* [An illustrated catalogue of books of the Ming period] (Tokyo: Nihon Shoshigakukai, 1962); and Zhang Xiumin, *Zhongguo yinshuashu de faming ji qi yingxiang* [The invention of printing in China and its influence] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin chubanshe, 1958). For a fuller bibliography of the writings of these scholars, see Bibliography B in Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, 406–30.

10. For example, Zheng Zhenduo, ed., *Zhongguo banhuashi tulu* [Illustrations to the history of Chinese woodcuts], in 24 volumes (Shanghai, 1940–47); Zhou Wu, *Zhongguo gudai banhua baitu* [One hundred illustrations of ancient Chinese woodcuts] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988) and *Huipai banhuashi lunji* [Collected essays on the history of Huizhou woodcuts] (Hefei: Anhui meishu chubanshe, 1985).

11. The most comprehensive work on this topic is Pan Jixing's *Zhongguo zaozhi jishu shigao* [Draft history of Chinese papermaking technology] (Beijing: Wenwu, 1979). Nancy Norton Tomasko has also contributed very useful on-site reports on papermaking; see her “Chinese Handmade Paper—A Richly Varied Thing.” *Hand Papermaking* 19, no. 1 (summer 2004): 20–32.

12. For example: Ma Heng, “Zhongguo shuji zhidu bianqian zhi yanjiu” [Study of the evolution of the Chinese book], *Tushuguanxue jikan* [Library Science Quarterly] 1, no. 2 (1926): 199–213; and Li Yaonan, “Zhongguo shuzhuang kao” [Bookbinding in China], *Tushuguanxue jikan* 4, no. 2 (1930): 207–16. More recently, the Zhongguo shuji chubanshe has produced a volume on the history of bookbinding, *Zhuangding yuanliu he buyi* [The development of bookbinding, with addendum] (Beijing: Zhongguo shuji chubanshe, 1993), volume 4 in its series on the history of Chinese printing, *Zhongguo yinshuashilibiao xuanji*.

13. Hermann Hülle, *Über den alten chinesischen Typendruck und seine Entwicklung in den Ländern des Fernen Ostens* (Berlin: Gedruckt auf veranlassung der H. Berthold messinglinienfabrik und schriftgiesserei a.g., 1923). Berthold Laufer, *Paper and Printing in Ancient China* (Chicago: Caxton Club, 1931). Paul Pelliot, *Les débuts de l'imprimerie en Chine* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1953).

14. J. Sören Edgren, *Chinese Rare Books in American Collections* (New York: China Institute in America, 1984). K. T. Wu published several specialized articles on Chinese printing that are also important; see in particular his “Ming Printing and Printers.” Denis Twitchett's

Printing and Publishing in Medieval China (New York: Frederic C. Beil, 1983) summarizes briefly the growth of printing in the Tang and Song.

15. To name just a few: Yan Wenyu, *Zhongguo shuji jianshi* [A brief history of Chinese books] (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1992); Luo Shubao, *Zhongguo gudai yinshuashi* [History of ancient printing in China] (Beijing: Yinshua gongye chubanshe, 1993); and Zheng Rusi and Xiao Dongfa, *Zhongguo shushi* (History of Chinese books) (Beijing: Beijing Tushuguan chubanshe, 1998).

16. See, for example, Wang Qingyuan's, Mou Renlong's, and Han Xiduo's compilation of printshops that published late Ming fiction, *Xiaoshuo shufang lu* [Record of printshops of fiction] (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2002). This reference is particularly useful in conjunction with such catalogues as Sun Kaidi's *Zhongguo tongshu xiaoshuo shumumu* [Catalogue of popular Chinese fiction, 1932] and Otsuka Hidetaka's (*Zoho*) *Chūgoku zōfu shōsetsu shomoku* [Catalogue of Chinese popular fiction, supplementary edition, 1987] for mapping the pattern of fiction publication. Lists of names of block-cutters are also very useful for analyses of the production of woodblock texts. See, for example, Zhang Zhenduo, ed., *Guji kegong minglu* [Name list of block-cutters of old books] (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 1996); Wang Zhaowen, *Guji Song-Yuan kangong xingming suoyin* [Index to the names of block-cutters of Song and Yuan texts] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990); and Li Guoqing, *Mingdai kangong xingming suoyin* [Index to the names of Ming-era block-cutters] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998). This work builds on earlier contributions by Nagasawa Kikuya, e.g., "Sokanbon kokukō meihyo shokō" [Table of block-cutters' names in Song printed editions, a preliminary draft] and "Genkanbon kokukō meihyo shokō" [Table of block-cutters' names in Yuan printed editions, a preliminary draft], in *Shoshigaku* 2, no. 2 (1934): 1–25, and 2, no. 4 (1934): 35–46, respectively. All of the above greatly facilitate study of the overall structure of publishing networks and the authentication of texts.

17. The well-established *Wenxian* [Documents, 1979–], produced by the National Library of China, is perhaps the best known of these journals. The recent appearance of new periodicals—like *Chubanshi yanjiu* [Studies in Publishing History, 1993–], edited by Ye Zaisheng, and *Beijing chuban shizhi* [Chronicles of Beijing Publishing History, 1994–]—provides evidence of the continuing interest in the study of books in contemporary China.

18. Much of the renewed interest in books has been expressed through the production of important new bibliographies and catalogues of rare books. The Shanghai guji chubanshe has, between 1986 and 1994, published four sets, one for each of the "four treasury" (*siku*) divisions of traditional Chinese bibliography, of a comprehensive catalogue of extant Chinese rare books, the *Zhongguo guji shanben shumumu* [Chinese union catalogue of rare books] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989–98), 10 volumes. Supplemented (and in some cases corrected) by other site-specific bibliographies, this work provides an essential foundation for the study of Chinese rare books. Happily, most of the major collections in China are now engaged in the compilation of catalogues by computer, projects that will allow for continuing refinement of our knowledge of Chinese manuscripts and imprints published before the nineteenth century—and make searches by author, title, publisher, and date much easier. Very useful period-specific and topical catalogues have also been produced, such as Du Xinfu's *Mingdai banke zonglu* [Comprehensive catalogue of Ming woodblock editions] (Yangzhou: Jiangsu Guangling guji keyinshe, 1983), *Quanguo Zhongyi tushu lianhe mulu* [Union catalogue of works in Chinese medicine] (Beijing: Zhongyi guji chubanshe, 1991), and *Zhongguo jiapu zonghe mulu* [Union catalogue of Chinese genealogies] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997). Though it is not China-based, the Chinese Rare Books Project directed by J. Sören Edgren must be mentioned here because it promises to transform research on Chinese publishing and book culture. Established now at Princeton University, the project is devoted to the compilation of an online union

catalogue that provides detailed bibliographical information—often not available in other sources—for extant rare books in collections in China, North America, and England.

19. Responding to a directive from the central Xinwen Chubanju [Bureau of news publication], provincial bureaus have begun to produce histories of provincial publishing, either as serials (e.g., the *Jiangxi chubanshi zhi* [Record of Jiangxi publishing history]), sections of provincial gazetteers (e.g., the *Chuban zhi* [Records of publishing]; a volume in the recent *Guangdong shengzhi* [Guangdong provincial gazetteer] (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1997), or independent texts (e.g., the series of texts on Jiangsu publishing history including Jiang Chengbo, Du Xinfu, and Du Yongkang, *Jiangsu keshu* [Jiangsu publishing] (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1993). Some provinces have also printed bibliographies of local publications; see, for example, Chang Shuzhi and Li Longru, eds., *Hunansheng guji shanben shumu* [Catalogue of old and rare books in Hunan province] (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1998), or the extensive fifteen-volume bibliography of Jiangsu texts, *Jiangsu yuwen zhi* [Literary annals of Jiangsu], edited by Qiu Yu (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1994–96). Although the quality of the works produced thus far is uneven, this venture will help scholars refine understanding of regional differences in the development of printing and publishing tastes.

Local scholars, working independently, have also produced a range of useful materials, from reminiscences of early twentieth-century printing industries and bookshops published in county *Wenshi ziliao* [Sources in culture and history], to careful studies of publishing genealogies, to full-scale histories of provincial industries. See, for examples in each of these categories, Zou Risheng, “Zhongguo sida diaoban yinshua jidi zhi yi—Sibao: Qiantan Sibao diaoban yinshuaye de shengshuai” [One of the four great Chinese printing bases—Sibao: Introduction to the rise and decline of the Sibao publishing industry], *Liancheng wenshi ziliao* [Sources in Liancheng culture and history], 5 (1985): 102–15; the series of articles by Fang Yanshou on the Jianyang printers: “Minbei Zhan Yu Xiong Cai Huang wuxing shisanwei keshujia shengping kaolüe” [The lives of thirteen Minbei publishers from the Zhan, Yu, Xiong, Cai and Huang families], *Wenxian* 41 (1989): 228–43; “Minbei shisi wei keshujia shengping kaolüe” [The lives of fourteen Minbei publishers], *Wenxian* 55 (1993): 210–19, to give just two titles; and Xie Shuishun and Li Ting, *Fujian gudai keshu* [Fujian publishing in the premodern era] (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1997). Many period-specific studies are also very useful; see, for example, Miao Yonghe, *Mingdai chubanshi* [History of publishing in the Ming] (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 2000).

20. See the collection *Huozi yinshua yuanliu* [Origins of movable-type printing] (Beijing: Yinshua gongye chubanshe, 1990) and Zhang Xiumin and Han Qi, *Zhongguo huozhi yinshuashi* [History of movable-type printing in China] (Beijing: Zhongguo shuji chubanshe, 1998).

21. The Henry Luce Foundation has funded a project, “Mapping the Book Trade: The Expansion of Print Culture in Late Imperial China” (Professor Hou Zhenping of Xiamen University and I are the principal investigators), designed to create a bibliography of this new literature as well as to identify possible publishing sites for future field and archival research.

22. For a discussion of the different criteria that might be considered in a definition of *shanben*, see Mao Chunxiang, *Gushu banben changtan* [Talks on old editions] (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 3–7.

23. Robert Darnton, “What Is the History of Books?” *Daedalus* (summer 1982): 65.

24. There is a large recent scholarship in Chinese on publishing history and editions (some of which I mention in notes 15–20), but for the most part there is as yet little interest among scholars in China in the history of the book as the field was defined by Febvre and Martin.

25. For a fuller discussion of some of these differences and the impact they have on the study of the Chinese book, see Brokaw, “On the History of the Book in China,” 8–23. For the various methodologies used in the study of the Chinese book, consult the *East Asian Library*

Journal 10, no. 2 (autumn 2001) for a series of essays that discuss different approaches: Cynthia J. Brokaw, "Fieldwork on the Social and Economic History of Chinese Print Culture: A Survey of Sources" (6–59); Lucille Chia, "Counting and Recounting Chinese Imprints" (60–103); and Anne McLaren, "Investigating Readerships in Late-Imperial China: A Reflection on Methodologies" (104–59). For an explanation of what imprints reveal about book history, see J. Sören Edgren, "The Chinese Book as a Source for the History of the Chinese Book," *East Asian Library Journal*, forthcoming.

26. Some scholars would suggest that there was no print revolution in China. Tsien, for example, argues that the introduction of print simply served to reinforce and intensify the already bookish nature of Chinese culture. It strengthened government control by encouraging conformity to state orthodoxy. See his *Paper and Printing*, 367–69, 377–83.

27. Inoue Susumu, *Chōgoku shuppan bunka shi: shomotsu to chi no fūkei* [A cultural history of Chinese publishing: books and the landscape of knowledge] (Nagoya: Nagoya University Press, 2002), 166–75. See also my review article on Inoue's work: Cynthia J. Brokaw, "Publishing, Society and Culture in Pre-modern China: The Evolution of Print Culture," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2005): 135–65.

28. Joseph P. McDermott, *The Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), 43–81.

29. Inoue, *Chōgoku shuppan bunkashi*, 215–26; McDermott, *Social History of the Chinese Book*, 25–31.

30. Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th–17th Centuries)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 145.

31. Susan Cherniack, "Book Culture and Textual Transmission in Sung China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54, no. 1 (June 1994): 5–125.

32. Hilde de Weerd, "Byways in the Imperial Chinese Information Order: The Dissemination and Commercial Publication of State Documents," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 66, no. 1 (2006): 145–88.

33. Jean-Pierre Drège, "Des effets de l'imprimerie en Chine sous la dynastie des Song," *Journal Asiatique* 282, no. 2 (1994): 409–42.

34. Jean-Pierre Drège, *Les bibliothèques en Chine au temps des manuscrits (Jusqu'au Xe siècle)* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1991).

35. See, for example, Jean-Pierre Drège, "Papiers de Dunhuang, essais d'analyse morphologique des manuscrits chinois datés," *T'oung Pao* 67 (1981): 305–60; Fujieda, "Chronological Classification of Dunhuang Buddhist Manuscripts," in *Dunhuang Manuscript Forgeries*, ed. Susan Whitfield, British Library Studies in Conservation and Science 3, 103–14 (London: British Library, 2001); Christina Scherrer-Schaub and George Bonani, "Establishing a Typology of the Old Tibetan Manuscripts: A Multidisciplinary Approach," in *Dunhuang Manuscript Forgeries*, 184–215; and San van Schaik and Jacob Dalton, "Where Chan and Tantra Meet: Tibetan Syncretism in Dunhuang," in *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith*, 63–71 (London: British Library, 2004).

36. Seo Tatsuhiko, "The Printing Industry in Chang'an's Eastern Market in the Tang Dynasty," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* no. 61 (2003): 1–42.

37. Glen Dudbridge, *Lost Books of Medieval China* (London: British Library, 2000).

38. For a discussion of the nature and value of this kind of fieldwork, see Brokaw, "Fieldwork on the Social and Economic History of Chinese Print Culture."

39. For a brief overview of other Qing-dynasty publishing sites, see Cynthia Brokaw, "Woodblock Printing and the Diffusion of Print in Qing China," in *Higashi Ajia shuppan bunka kenkyū—Niwatazumi*, ed. Isobe Akira (Tokyo: Nigensha, 2004), 183–97.

40. Sören Edgren, "Southern Song Printing at Hangzhou," *Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* (Stockholm) Bulletin no. 61 (1989): 4–212. For an explanation of Edgren's methodology

and of what Chinese imprints can reveal about book history, see Edgren, “Chinese Book as a Source.”

41. Originally published as a long article in *Hiroshima daigaku bungakubu kiyo* [*Bulletin of the literature department of Hiroshima University*] 50, special issue (1991): 1–176, this work has now been published as a book, *Minmatsu Kōnan no shuppan bunka* [Publishing Culture in Late Ming Jiangnan] (Tokyo: Kenbun Shuppan, 2004).

42. Ellen Widmer, “The Huanduzhai of Hangzhou and Suzhou: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Publishing,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 56, no. 1 (June 1996): 77–122; and “*Honglou meng ying* and Its Publisher, Juzhen Tang of Beijing,” *Late Imperial China* 23, no. 2 (December 2002): 33–52.

43. Lucille Chia, “Of Three Mountains Street: The Commercial Publishers of Ming Nanjing,” in *Publishing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Brokaw and Chow, 107–51.

44. Inoue, *Chūgoku shuppan bunkashi*, 226–46, 255–61, 269–77, 281–86. In his understanding of the causes of the Ming publishing boom, Inoue is drawing on the work of earlier scholars like Sakai Tadao; see Sakai, “Confucianism and Popular Educational Works,” in *Self and Society in Ming Thought*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary, 331–66 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).

45. Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 172, 213–16; and “Writing for Success: Printing, Examinations, and Intellectual Change in Late Ming China,” *Late Imperial China* 17, no. 1 (1996): 120–57.

46. Shang Wei, “The Making of the Everyday World: *Jin Ping Mei cibua* and Encyclopedias for Daily Use,” in *Dynastic Crisis and Cultural Innovation From the Late Ming to the Late Qing and Beyond*, ed. David Der-wei Wang and Shang Wei (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 68. See also his essay “*Jin Ping Mei* and Late Ming Print Culture,” in *Writing and Materiality in China: Essays in Honor of Patrick Hanan*, ed. Judith T. Zeitlin and Lydia H. Liu, with Ellen Widmer, 187–238 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003).

47. Ōki Yasushi, “Minmatsu Kōnan ni okeru shuppan bunka no kenkyū,” 142–58. See also Kathryn Lowry’s penetrating analysis of Feng Menglong’s songbooks: *Tapestry of Popular Songs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century China: Reading, Imitation, and Desire* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005).

48. Katherine Carlitz, “Printing as Performance: Literati Playwright-Publishers of the Late Ming,” in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Brokaw and Chow, 297.

49. *Ibid.*, 288–89.

50. Ōki Yasushi, “Minmatsu Kōnan ni okeru shuppan bunka no kenkyū,” 109–16.

51. Inoue, *Chūgoku shuppan bunkashi*, 324–27.

52. *Ibid.*, 320–31. Joseph McDermott emphasizes in particular the dominance of lower-degree holders, *shengyuan*, in the Jiangnan book world. He argues that in the late Ming *jinsi* book culture (that is, the book culture of the highest-degree holders, the top levels of the scholar-official elite) was replaced by *shengyuan* book culture; see “The Ascendance of the Imprint in China,” in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Brokaw and Chow, 86.

53. Yin Yungong, *Zhongguo Mingdai xinwen chuanboshi* (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1990), 200–269.

54. Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, 2.

55. Inoue, *Chūgoku shuppan bunkashi*, 321.

56. Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, 236; Inoue, *Chūgoku shuppan bunkashi*, 322–24. In a review article on Inoue’s *Chūgoku shuppan bunkashi*, I mistakenly state that *Green Peony* was a satire on an opponent of the Restoration Society. It was, rather, written by an

opponent of the society, a man who had been denied admission to the Society (“Publishing, Society and Culture in Pre-modern China,” 154).

57. Sakai Tadao, “Mindai no nichiyō ruisho to shomin kyōiku” [Daily Life Encyclopedias and Popular Education in the Ming], in *Kinsei Chūgoku kyōikushi kenkyū*, ed. Hayashi Tomoharu, 25–154 (Tokyo: Kokudoshā, 1958). See also his “Confucianism and Popular Educational Works.”

58. Anne McLaren, “Constructing New Reading Publics in Late Ming China,” in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Brokaw and Chow, 157.

59. Anne McLaren, “Popularizing *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*: A Study of Two Early Editions,” *Journal of Oriental Studies* 33, no. 2 (1995): 165–85.

60. Robert E. Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 325–36.

61. Shen Jin (Chun Shum), “Mingdai fangke tushu zhi liutong yu jiage” [Circulation and prices of Ming commercial publications], *Guoli Gugong bowuguan guankan* 1 (June 1996), 110–11, 116–17.

62. Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, 55.

63. Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 36–37.

64. McLaren, “Constructing New Reading Publics,” 161–63, 173.

65. Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, 59–65, 78–89, 232–42, 246–47.

66. Tsieng, *Paper and Printing*, 190.

67. For a fuller discussion of the interest of Qing book culture, see Brokaw, “Publishing, Society and Culture in Pre-modern China,” 157–60.

68. Book collecting had of course a long history in China. See Joseph McDermott’s essays on Ming collecting in *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, 83–170. McDermott identifies the late Ming as the time when sizable book collections were for the first time formed outside the imperial family or the highest circles of the scholar-official elite.

69. *Ibid.*, 115–48. McDermott emphasizes that access to most book collections, at least through the Ming, was very restricted; books were shared, at best, only among small coteries of collectors. It was not until the eighteenth century that, pressed to a large extent by the imperial government, collectors gradually began to permit broader scholarly access and a real “community of learning” developed.

70. Benjamin A. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series, University of California, Los Angeles, 2001), 177–208.

71. Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch’ing China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979), 109–24.

72. Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), chapter 13.

73. Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch’ing China*, 123.

74. Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, chapter 14.

75. James Hayes, “Specialists and Written Materials in the Village World,” in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 92–103, 107–8.

76. Idema, Review of Evelyn Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch’ing China*, *T’oung Pao* 66, no. 4–5 (1980): 322.

77. Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch’ing China*, 1–5, 140.

78. F. W. Mote, “China’s Past in the Study of China Today—Some Comments on the Recent Work of Richard Solomon.” *Journal of Asian Studies* 32, no. 1 (1972): 107–20.

79. David Johnson, "Communication, Class, and Consciousness in Late Imperial China." In *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Johnson, Nathan, and Rawski, 56–67.
80. Here I am conflating arguments made by Idema in two different texts. For the three different levels of literacy, see Wilt Idema, *Chinese Vernacular Fiction: The Formative Period* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), xlvi–lii. Contra Rawski's criterion, he argues that knowledge of only a few hundred characters made one "scarcely literate": a rate of 30 percent (not 45 percent) literacy for males is plausible only "if one would adopt Evelyn Rawski's minimal definition of literacy" (Idema, Review of Rawski, 321–22).
81. Alexander Woodside, "Real and Imagined Continuities in the Chinese Struggle for Literacy," in *Education and Modernization, The Chinese Experience*, ed. Ruth Hayhoe (Oxford: Pergamon, 1992), 35–36.
82. Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 76–120, 95–108, 112–17, 214–18.
83. Ellen Widmer, *The Beauty and the Book: Women and Fiction in Nineteenth-Century China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 23. See also Widmer, "Considering a Coincidence: The 'Female Reading Public' Circa 1828," in *Reading and Materiality in China: Essays in Honor of Patrick Hanan*, ed. Judith T. Zeitlin and Lydia H. Liu, 273–314 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003).
84. Peter Kornicki, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 11–17, 320–62.
85. Zhang Xiumin, *Zhongguo yinshuashi* [A history of Chinese printing] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1989), 559. Timothy Brook treats official efforts to encourage library collections for local schools in the Ming as part of the government interest in supervising and controlling education and the spread of knowledge; see his "Edifying Knowledge: The Building of School Libraries in Ming China," *Late Imperial China* 17, no. 1 (June 1996): 93–119.
86. Rawski, "Qing Publishing in Non-Han Languages," in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Brokaw and Chow, 306–9.
87. Hok-lam Chan, *Control of Publishing in China, Past and Present* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1983), 4–23.
88. Chia, *Printing for Profit*, 120–26.
89. Pierre-Henri Durand, *Lettrés et pouvoirs: Un procès littéraire dans la Chine impériale* (Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1992).
90. R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-lung Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1987), 157–200.
91. Okamoto Sae, *Shindai kinsho no kenkyū* [Study of Qing-period censorship] (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo, 1996).
92. Chan, *Control of Publishing in China*, 24. For a discussion of prohibited fiction, see Ma Tai-loi, "Novels Prohibited in the Literary Inquisition of Emperor Ch'ien-lung, 1722–1788," in *Critical Essays on Chinese Fiction*, ed. Winston L. Y. Yang and Curtis P. Adkins, 201–12 (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1980).
93. Timothy Brook, "Censorship in Eighteenth-Century China: A View from the Book Trade," *Canadian Journal of History* 22 (August 1988): 191–93.
94. McLaren, "Constructing New Reading Publics," 173.
95. Zhu Xi, *Learning to Be a Sage: Selections from the Conversations of Master Chu, Arranged Topically*, trans. Daniel K. Gardner (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 128–62.
96. Daniel K. Gardner, "Confucian Commentary and Chinese Intellectual History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 2 (May 1998): 397–422. See also McLaren, "Constructing New

Reading Publics,” 154–56. For an illustration of how commentary shaped the interpretation of texts, see Daniel K. Gardner, *Zhu Xi's Reading of the Analects: Canon, Commentary, and the Classical Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

97. Kathryn Lowry, in *Tapestry of Popular Songs*, chapters 5 and 6, suggests that many readers, particularly non-elite readers, avidly turned to fiction, ritual manuals, and letter-writing guides for a kind of “imitative reading,” new in the late Ming, that would allow them to copy the phrases and attitudes reproduced in these texts.

98. David Rolston, ed., *How to Read the Chinese Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 4–10, 17–29; and *Traditional Chinese Fiction and Fiction Commentary: Reading and Writing between the Lines* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

99. Xiaofei Tian, *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture: The Record of a Dusty Table* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 224. On Song scholars' fears that print might undermine true learning, see Lucille Chia, “Remembering Impressions: The Impact of Print on Memory and Learning among the Song Literati,” in *Higashi Ajia shuppan bunka kenkyū—Niwatazumi*, ed. Isobe Akira, 271–82.

100. Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction*, 327–36.

101. Tobie Meyer-Fong, “Packaging the Men of Our Times: Literary Anthologies, Friendship Networks, and Political Accommodation in the Early Qing,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 64, no. 1 (2004): 5–56.

102. There is a considerable literature on Chinese manuscript and woodblock illustration that it is impossible to review fully here. I have selected just a few writings that have particular relevance for the study of the book.

103. Michela Bussotti, *Gravures de Hui: Étude du livre illustré chinois de la fin du XVIe siècle à la première moitié du XVIIe siècle* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2001).

104. Anne Burkus-Chasson, “Visual Hermeneutics and the Act of Turning the Leaf: A Genealogy of Liu Yuan's *Lingyan ge*,” in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Brokaw and Chow, 371–416.

105. McLaren, “Constructing New Reading Publics,” 170–71.

106. Julia K. Murray, “Didactic Illustrations in Printed Books,” in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Brokaw and Chow, 441–44. Murray has also written extensively on illustrations in biographies of Confucius; see, for example, her “Varied Views of the Sage: Illustrated Narratives of the Life of Confucius,” in *On Sacred Grounds: Culture, Society, Politics, and the Formation of the Cult of Confucius*, ed. Thomas A. Wilson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 222–64.

107. Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction*, 325–26.

108. Chia, “Text and *Tu* in Context: Reading the Illustrated Page in Chinese Blockprinted Books,” *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 89 (2002): 252, 258.

109. Some of the essays in *Writing and Materiality in China*, ed. Judith T. Zeitlin and Lydia H. Liu (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), demonstrate that texts might be transmitted via several different media: not only manuscripts and imprints, but walls and rubbings.

110. Some work has been done on the transmission of Chinese texts to Japan; see, for example, Ōba Osamu, *Edo jidai ni okeru Chugoku bunka juyō no kenkyū* [Study of the reception of Chinese culture in the Edo period] (Tokyo: Dōbōsha, 1984).

111. An exception is Catherine Bell, “‘A Precious Raft to Save the World’: The Interaction of Scriptural Traditions and Printing in a Chinese Morality Book,” *Late Imperial China* 17, no. 1 (June 1996): 158–200. Evelyn Rawski also discusses the publication of Buddhist texts in Tibetan in “Qing Publishing in Non-Han Languages,” 318–19. And Julia Murray has written on illustration in Buddhist narratives: “The Evolution of Buddhist Narrative Illustration in China after 850,” in *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism*, ed. Marsha

Weidner, 125–49 (Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, in association with the University of Hawai'i Press, 1994).

112. Some progress has already been made on this topic: see Yu Li, “A History of Reading in Late Imperial China, 1000–1800” (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 2003).

113. Patrick Hanan, *The Chinese Vernacular Story* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 1–16; Glen Dudbridge, *China's Vernacular Cultures* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996); and Wilt Idema, *Chinese Vernacular Fiction*, liii–liv. Hanan and Dudbridge both discuss the importance of “official speech” (*guanhua*) or what Dudbridge calls the “metropolitan language culture” in shaping the language of late imperial fiction. Idema argues that works written in the lively and complex vernacular language were not necessarily more accessible to the poorly educated, who may have found it easier to read simple literary Chinese of the sort they had studied in school. Indeed, the widely popular “chapbook” fiction of the Ming and Qing was written in a simple literary Chinese, quite different from the rich vernacular of a literary masterpiece like *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan*). See also Stephen Owen, “The End of the Past: Rewriting Chinese Literary History in the Early Republic,” in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China's May Fourth Project*, ed. Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and Oldřich Král, 171–72 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001); and Lianyan Ge, *Out of the Margins: The Rise of Chinese Vernacular Fiction* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001).

114. Here the model study is Anne McLaren's excellent *Chinese Popular Culture and Ming Chantefables* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998).

115. A few China scholars have ventured some comparisons. Evelyn Rawski initiated this kind of comparative work in both her *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China* and “Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial Culture,” in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski, 17–22. Anne McLaren also draws some interesting contrasts between the linguistic contexts of publishing in Europe and China in *Chinese Popular Culture and Ming Chantefables*, 1–8. See Brokaw, “On the History of the Book in China,” 8–20, for other possible comparative topics. Kai-wing Chow introduces some comparisons of magnitude between Chinese and European book culture in his *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, 1–18.

116. I would point here to “Gutenberg Revisited from the East,” the introduction by Roger Chartier to the special issue called “Publishing and Print Culture in Late Imperial China” of *Late Imperial China* 17, no. 1 (June 1996): 1–9; and the conference proceedings *Zhongguo he Ouzhou: Yinshuashu he shujishi (ba shiji/shiwu shiji–ershi shiji)/Chine-Europe: Histoires de Livres (VIIIe/XXe–XXe s.)* (Beijing: Colloque franco-chinois, Département des livres rares et des collections spéciales, Bibliothèque nationale de Chine, Pékin, 2005), which collects papers from a French-Chinese colloquium organized by Michela Bussotti of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient in Beijing, 15–16 October 2005. This colloquium involved scholars of both the French and the Chinese book.