

## WEEK 8: PRINT CULTURE

This week there are three big relationships that might guide our readings and discussions, and you should ask yourself about them at the end of each text we study:

1. **What is the relationship between the medium and the audience of discourse?** That is, are there any assumptions about the qualities of the medium (bronze vessel, stone stelae, painting, woodblock text, woodblock illustration) and the audience receiving that medium (elitist, *belles-lettres*, illiterate)?
2. **What is the relationship between innovation and usage?** That is, there is a difference between technological inception and reception. Can we prioritize the elements of technological development, propagation and use?
3. **What is the relationship between print culture and Song humanities?** That is, what cultural thoughts are different in the Song than, for example, in the Han because of the former's possession of print culture?

Finally, you may have noticed by now our gradual transition to the Southern Song, and a relevant image of that transition would be Li Qingzhao's efforts to keep her family's book collection – her own “print culture” – together in the face of the Jin onslaught. Before beginning the week's texts, I suggest reading Owen's translation of her brief story:

"Interlude: Li Qing-zhao's epilogue to *Records on metal and stone*." Pp. 591-596 in *An anthology of Chinese literature: Beginnings to 1911*. Stephen Owen, trans. New York: Norton, 1996. (Text)

After reading it, take a moment to look around you and ponder what it would mean to you to have all your own texts – whether stored in notebooks, paperbacks or computers – permanently removed with no chance of recovery.

### Monday – Weighing the impact of print culture

Before commencing the readings, please take a few minutes to survey actual examples of what was printed. We will study the image archive on Friday (after we've learned what to look for), but as you read, it would be useful to have a general vision of our new media for ideas:

Image archive: Book illustrations, printing technology, etc. (<http://academic.reed.edu/chinese/chin-hum/materials/>)

Wednesday's readings will provide many more examples of print culture that survive from the Song.

For our main text today, we will take a rare digression from the syllabus's required readings and focus on a recommended one, namely the following:

Cherniack, Susan. “Book culture and textual transmission in Sung China.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54, i (1994): 5-125.

Fortunately it's on JSTOR, and it's not as long as it might first appear, her footnotes on each page often taking up more space than her main text.

While reading Cherniack, be thinking about how the mass production of texts affects scholastic discourse, the propagation of religion and even narrative culture – all topics of weeks yet to come. Speculate as to how historical mindedness may have been changed, and indeed consider how the psyche in general is greatly affected when you can rely on an abundance of printed texts. Are there any significant changes between the Han and the Song that one can attribute to Song print culture? Are there any useful Western parallels? How might Joe Literati have been impacted by this technological development?

Unfortunately there are a few things that Cherniack doesn't handle in her piece – she tends to treat the Song as a whole and doesn't disentangle the various technological developments, nor does she distinguish between technology and the management of technology. Even so, she offers a useful overview of print culture's impact. Besides thinking about the

above questions, the only preparation I would have you do is separating the pros and cons of the new print culture. To develop robust lists (with page-numbered evidence and fully considered implications), let's divide up the task:

<b>The advantages of print culture</b>	<b>The disadvantages of print culture</b>
<b>James</b>	<b>Jeremy</b>
<b>Rex</b>	<b>Martin</b>
<b>Evelyn</b>	<b>Rebekah</b>
<b>Kyle</b>	<b>Matt</b>
<b>Liz</b>	<b>Eli</b>
	<b>Ming</b>

At the beginning of conference, I'll give you fifteen minutes to merge your lists, but come fully prepared (and by all means think outside the box, drawing in materials from other weeks).

### **Wednesday – The elements that go into a printed manuscript**

Today we're going to study three (actually two-and-a-half) short secondary texts that deconstruct print culture into its components – from the necessary prerequisites of paper and ink to the elements of the end product such as illustrations and colophons.

First I suggest reading Lucille Chia's description of the physical elements that went into producing the book:

Chia, Lucille. "The physical appearance of Jianyang woodblock imprints," in *Printing for profit: The commercial publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> centuries)*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 24-39, 327-34. (E-Reserves)

Please note the pages – today we're only studying part of the reading as listed on the syllabus. (The section on book design is more appropriate for Friday when we look at the image archive.) As this is the second chapter of Chia's book, let me take a moment to contextualize Jianyang for you. According to *The Indiana companion to traditional Chinese literature*'s description of "The growth of the publishing 'Industry'":

During the Sung period Szechwan was joined as an important center of book printing by Fukien. The latter was well suited for the development of the trade: bamboo and other raw materials were in ample supply; so, too, was labor as the area became more culturally developed, especially during the Southern Sung. Fukien quickly took the lead in producing commercial editions, their lower prices – produced in part by shortcuts in production quality and physical appearance of the books – bringing them success in book markets throughout the realm. The collected works of well-known writers, *lei-shu* for practical needs, and school primers made up the bulk of early Fukien editions. Yet as they became more numerous, the reputation of privately produced Fukien editions suffered because of their shoddy materials and workmanship, their many wrong or miswritten characters, and the possibility that the text had been truncated to reduce costs further. Even so, Fukien printers were enormously successful as family enterprises; the Yü 余 family of Chienyang 建陽 were prominent for over 700 years.

Chia focuses on Jianyang ("Chienyang"), and in one of her other publications ("The development of the Jianyang book trade, Song-Yuan") introduces that city as follows:

The commercial publishers of Jianyang in northern Fujian (Minbei) occupy a conspicuous if not highly respectable position in the history of Chinese books. The Jianyang area, already noted for its flourishing paper industry, rapidly became one of the most important centers of the book trade in the country as printing burgeoned during the Song. From the start, Jianyang publishers had the reputation (not fully deserved) of producing shoddy editions on cheap paper with blurred impressions, which nevertheless sold throughout China and other East Asian countries, especially Japan and Korea. These works included the Classics, dictionaries, histories, geographies, medical texts, encyclopedias,

school primers, collections of anecdotes, poetry anthologies, historical novels, and drama, and were produced for over five hundred years, from the Song to the early Qing.

Her list of the book types produced at Jianyang in itself demonstrates the potential impact of print culture on Song humanities.

Second, please read how the printers described their own industry as they appended small bibliographic notes at the end of their products:

Poon, M.S. "The printer's colophon in Sung China, 960-1279." *The Library Quarterly* 43, i (1973):39-52. (E-Reserves)

These notes reveal a great deal about the printing process and at times can be quite funny.

Finally, please note that publications aren't limited to texts alone; they also include illustrations. The Song biographer Zheng Qiao (1104-1162) once wrote (here translated by Maggie Bickford):

To see text without seeing illustrations is to hear a person's voice without seeing his body. To see illustrations without seeing text is to see a person but not hear his voice. Illustrations are very condensed; but text is very ample. Therefore, it is easy to find something in an illustration; but difficult to find it in a text. The ancient scholars captured the essence of how to study. They placed an illustration to the left and the text to the right, seeking the image in the illustration and seeking the principle in the text. Therefore, it was easy for people to study, and easy for them to apply what they had learned. And so they raised them up and set them forth as if grasping the left portion of the tally. But latter scholars abandoned illustrations for the text, honouring words and striving for discourse. Therefore, learning became hard for people and it was hard to apply what was learned. So, even though every day you may have 10,000 *juan* in your breast, when you apply that learning to the everyday world, you will be confused and not know which way to turn.

That being the case, we better not ignore the role of illustrations within print culture, and so please wrap up your readings with Wu's brief summary in the following:

Wu, K.T. "Illustrations in Sung printing." *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* 28, iii (July 1971):173-195. (E-Reserves)

All three of these readings are relatively short and include many illustrations themselves. Please take the time to look at those illustrations closely.

Now that the reading preparation is done, let's turn to the thinking preparation. In conference **I want us first to synthesize our readings by schematizing the production process.** Using our white boards, I want us to trace out the inputs, processes, obstacles and outputs as best we can in a single flow chart. I'd suggest sketching out your own in advance so that we can make a master chart relatively quickly.

Second, please take some time to consider the following three questions:

1. Wu will describe various types of works now being consigned to woodblock printing, and it seems very few subjects are being left out. There's a major mindset shift that accompanies a culture in which texts become readily available. As a thought experiment, first imagine yourself in a culture without printed texts readily available and then imagine yourself surrounded by texts. Using Wu, the image archive and Prof. Ditters's lecture, **list the advantages and disadvantages of each in an attempt to uncover this major transformation in psychology.** Please think through each of these advantages and disadvantages and the eventual implications hidden behind each.
2. Related to this question, now read the following quote from the French historian Jacques LeGoff (*History and memory*, 81):

Printing revolutionized Western memory, but slowly. It revolutionized memory even more slowly in China, where, even though printing had been invented in the ninth century A.D., printers did not discover movable type (typography), and thus remained content with xylography (printing by means of plates engraved in relief), up until the nineteenth century, when Western mechanical techniques were introduced. Printing did not therefore have a massive impact on China, but its effects on memories, at least in the cultivated strata of society, was significant, for it was primarily

scientific and technical works that were printed, and these accelerated and extended the memorization of knowledge. Things happened differently in the West. Leroi-Gourhan has described the revolution in memory brought about by printing:

Up until the appearance of printing ... it was difficult to separate oral from written transmission. Most of the known was buried in oral practices and techniques; the peak of the known, whose framework remained unchanged since Antiquity, was given fixed form in the manuscript in order to be learned by heart.... With the advent of printing ... not only was the reader faced with an enormous collective memory whose subject matter he could no longer assimilate *in toto*, but he was frequently put in a position to exploit new works. We then witness a progressive exteriorization of individual memory; the work of orientation in a written text is accomplished from the outside.

Based on your knowledge of the Song Dynasty generally and of print culture specifically, please assess this statement.

**First, is he right? Second, what would be the concrete manifestations of this memory shift?**

3. Finally, take time to examine the woodblock pictures offered by Wu, but please note that some of the images are in fact facsimile copies of Song illustrations done after the Song. Cull them out. **Is Wu's high praise of the Song artisans' engraving work a compelling argument?** For example, if I were to compare the landscape woodblock on p. 81 to an actual (monochrome) landscape painting, how would I describe the difference? How does text and illustration complement one another?

### Friday – The appearance of Song print culture

Let us conclude our foray into print culture by examining the evidence directly (or at least visually). Please start by finishing Lucille Chia's chapter:

Chia, Lucille. "The physical appearance of Jianyang woodblock imprints," in *Printing for profit: The commercial publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> centuries)*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 39-62, 334-39. (E-Reserves)

Now armed with the vocabulary and the history, it's time to return to the image archive and analyze in detail what you only surveyed on Monday.

Image archive: Book illustrations, printing technology, etc. (<http://academic.reed.edu/chinese/chin-hum/materials/>)

As for our discussion forum, let us once again use the image-oriented style now familiar to us. That is, please include the following three elements in your exploratory:

- **The star.** Choose a particular manuscript image that interests you, and develop an understanding of it by comparing it to the other images in this collection. Look for the same theme or similar forms.
- **The constellation.** Next, I want you to link your chosen manuscript image to one other on the website. Perhaps this other image explicates something that wasn't clear in yours, or maybe it offers a contrasting perspective. In some way, please "constellate" this second painting to your star image. (By doing this, you may be linking your star image with someone else's, and so conference discourse should thereby become interconnected.)
- **The Milky Way.** After fully understanding your star image and linking it to one other, you should finally reach beyond to Chia, Wu, Poon, Cherniack and Ditter. Please be able to make at least one solid reference to the larger context.

Your exploratories—which should also be posted to the class blog no later than 9 a.m. Friday morning—should give us a good chance to further our understanding of what print culture can do to the idea of humanities.