清代圖書館發展史

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE LIBRARIES UNDER THE CH'ING DYNASTY, 1644–1911

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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A BRIEF SUMMARY

OF

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE LIBRARIES UNDER THE CH'ING DYNASTY

This work aims to give a comprehensive account of the development of Chinese libraries under the Ch'ing dynasty. In the first chapter, the author tries to convey to the reader the Chinese conceptions of a scholar, a book and a library. He then goes on to trace the legacy of the Ming dynasty in the matter of literary treasures and enumerate the different factors leading up to the intellectual development of the Ch'ing period. The second chapter deals with the Imperial Library under various emperors. He particularly praises Kang Hsi and Chien Lung for their great effort in building up the imperial collection. The compilation of the *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu* by the latter forms the main theme of discussion though other book treasures in the imperial palaces are duly touched upon. The third chapter outlines the different types of book collectors and gives their general characteristics and common practices. To link up the outstanding collections of the period, the development of the four great libraries after the Taiping Rebellion is fully traced. The fourth chapter explains the great contributions made by the book collectors to scholastic achievement; namely, contribution to methods of study, contribution to the increase of source materials, contribution to bibliographical aids, etc. The last chapter, after a brief account on academy libraries, gives a summary of the general tendency of library development of the entire period

stressing its good features as well as weaknesses. The author also discloses three events of significance in the development of Chinese libraries; namely, the discovery of documents and manuscripts by Sir Aurel Stein, the recovery of ancient Chinese books in Japan by Yang Shou Chin and the salvaging of the manuscripts in the library of the Imperial Cabinet by Lo Chen Yu.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the classification of the various groups of people in old China, the literati were first of the four main classes.[1] The important position which this group had enjoyed for ages was not due to superiority in intelligence or achievement but rather to the fact that the literati constituted a large portion of the governing class. Mencius states this idea by saying "those who labor with their minds govern others."[2] It was by this tradition that the literati could command the respect of the populace, for the latter believed that the fate of the empire depended upon this body of learned men. They were considered the nucleus of the race, and without them the nation would fall to pieces.

Although it is true that the literati commanded respect because of their superior position as governors, it is equally true that they were the ones who could understand and interpret the sayings of the sages. Only through them could the truth be transmitted from the past to the present and likwise from the present to the future. This unique position made them supreme among men.

[1] Literati, farmers, laborers and merchants.
[2] *The Four Books*, p. 125.

Yet not all scholars could become officials, for some might be good in one thing and poor in another. In general, the literary examinations were very trying and rigid. Many persons tried but only a few succeeded. There was always a group who hated politics and who were disinclined to mingle with officialdom. Their toil with books, day in and day out, was not a stepping-stone to something of worldly praise, but rather a quest of knowledge for its own sake. To these also, society gave unreserved honor and due respect. Students from far and near came together to pay these men homage. A scholar of fame was the pride of the clan, the shining star of the locality. Even after his death, the succeeding generation would erect a temple to honor and worship him. It may seem strange to-day, but such traditions had a great influence in molding the ambition of the youth of that time.

Parallel with respect for the literati, there was a prevailing reverence for literature, because they were the very words of the saints and sages. To deface them was to act irreverently to their authors. Even a fragmentary leaf was saved from being trodden on, to say nothing of using it for unworthy purposes. It was not unusual to see persons in the streets picking up waste paper which contained characters in the belief that they were performing a sacred act. People preferred to burn them rather than expose them to degradation. This sentiment certainly created an atmosphere which tended to increase the intrinsic value of a book.

It is strange to note, however, that the Chinese people did not value manuscripts as highly as did the Occidentals. With few exceptions[1] the former generally preferred a book to a manuscript. The reasons are not far to seek. In the first place, China has paid a great deal of attention to calligraphy. Penmanship is generally considered as an index to one's

[1] Manuscripts by emperors and famous calligraphers.

cultural background; and in school, even to-day, students must devote a large portion of their time to achieving its perfection. If one wanted to obtain a degree in the literary examination, the preliminary requirement was a good handwriting. It is safe to say that people who received the Han-lin degree[1] were generally noted calligraphers. For centuries, there have been developed in China various schools of calligraphic styles.[2] Writings by a famous calligrapher, therefore, would be valued and treated like old paintings. The leaves, after being carefully trimmed with silk and satin, some are framed, are generally used as ornaments for interior decorations. It is clear, then, that a piece of writing is prized on account of its physical appearance rather than for the thought which it contains or for the important events with which it was associated. When such conceptions prevail, manuscripts would possess value only if they came from the hands of a noted calligrapher.

In the second place, Chinese scholars feel a certain modesty about their own manuscripts. They consider that one's writings should not be shown unless they are in a presentable form. Thus the younger members in a family, or professional copyists, are employed to recopy the author's manuscript. After this is done, the originals are generally destroyed. When the final copies appear, they no longer contain the corrections through which the choice of words and formation of the thoughts of the author might be traced.

Lastly, there are so many professional copyists in the market that one may easily be employed to do copying at very little cost.[3] In fact, it is sometimes cheaper to have a manuscript copied than to purchase a printed book. In the older schools,

[1] A degree won by one who had already obtained the Chu-Jen (舉人) degree and also passed the court examination.

[2] The Chao style in smooth strokes, the Yen style in round strokes, the Liu style in pointed strokes, etc.

[3] About four or five coppers per hundred characters.

students are still encouraged to copy the literary essays themselves instead of buying them from a bookstore. This serves a double purpose. On the one hand, it affords the student an opportunity to perfect his penmanship and to deepen his memory of the essay he is reading. On the other, it is a measure of economy. When such practices prevail, it is apparent that people will value printed books more than they do manuscripts.

Only recently the Chinese attitude toward manuscripts has undergone a change. This is due to the influence of the West. Chinese book collectors have begun to seek the manuscripts of celebrated authors, and librarians are alert to the importance of preserving both the published and the unpublished manuscripts of reputed writers.

In the past, the Chinese looked upon the library as, to some extent, a great treasure of the empire and an ornament of the nobles and wealthy. As libraries increased in number among the literati, they came to be considered indispensable to scholarship. Without them, the accumulated knowledge of the past would seem to have lost a center. The burning of books by the Great Emperor of Ch'in in the year 249 B. C. has been condemned by later generations as a destruction of all the cultural assets which China then possessed. The people mourned the loss as if they themselves had been the owners. Whether those collections existed for them or not, they did not care. But as long as they existed they were satisfied. The possession of a library would bring some pride to the family, and at the same time would add a glamour to the region in which the collection was located. From this it is evident why respect for books goes hand in hand with veneration for libraries.

The library as a cultural institution has had a long history in China. It is probably almost as old as Chinese civilization itself. But the period of the Ch'ing dynasty is undoubtedly

the one in which the library achieved its greatest importance. The amazing development of libraries during these two hundred and sixty-seven years had overshadowed the library achievements of all the previous dynasties combined. Not only was the literary heritage of the past carefully preserved, but it was also greatly augmented. The library activities thus became an invisible force behind the intellectual movement, and thus rendered to the literary world an invaluable service.

It would be interesting to trace here some of the factors to which have been attributed the development of libraries during this period. There are two great channels from which the Ch'ing dynasty drew its inspiration for building up its book collections; the legacy of the Ming dynasty and the stimulation of the emperor, Chien Lung. In order to understand fully the significant contribution made by these factors, a historical sketch of each must be given.

After the expulsion of the Mongols, the emperor, Hung Wu, the founder of the Ming dynasty, ordered his general to gather all the books and documents in the Yuan imperial library and to move the entire collection to Nanking. Edicts were issued all over the country to secure books to add to the imperial collection. Nothing striking was accomplished until the year 1403, when his son, Ch'eng Tsu (成祖) ordered the compilation of the great encyclopædia. Hsieh Chin (解縉) was appointed general editor with a staff of 147 assistants. The work was completed the following year and laid before His Majesty who bestowed upon it the title, *Wên Hsien Ta Ch'eng* (文獻大成). On account of its limitations in material and in scope, the emperor issued a second edict ordering Yao Kuang Hsiao (姚廣孝) and Liu Chi Chih (劉季篪) to associate with Hsieh Chin for the revision of the encyclopædia. The staff was enlarged to a total of 2,180 men,[1] mostly eminent scholars of

[1] O. T. Sun, *Ch'un Ming Meng Yu Lu*, chüan 12, p. 4.

the period. The work was finally finished in 1407, consisting of 22,211 chüans in 1,095 folio volumes. The title was then changed to *Yung Lo Ta Tien* (永樂大典).

There were three transcriptions of this work, two of which were made in the year 1562. The original was kept in Nanking, while the other two were preserved in Peking, one in the Wên Yuan Pavilion (文淵閣) and the other in the Library of Imperial Historiography (皇史宬). At the downfall of the Ming dynasty, two copies perished in the fire. The third imperfect set, with 2,422 chüans missing, remained intact in the Han-lin college until the troops of the allied nations invaded the capital in 1900. Then the whole collection was broken and stolen in the midst of looting, murder and fire.[1]

Just how and to what extent this encyclopædia has benefited the literary world is not of immediate concern. We need only note that it laid the foundation-stone for another great work, the *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu* (四庫全書), in the Ch'ing dynasty, which resulted from the revision of the earlier work.

After all, the compilation of the *Yung Lo Ta Tien* was not an innovation. The emperor, Tai Tsung, of the Sung dynasty, had initiated the idea in his compilation of the three celebrated works in the tenth century; namely, the *Ch'ai Fu Yuan Kuei* (册府元龜), the *Tai Ping Yü Lan* (太平御覽), and the *Wên Yuan Ying Hua* (文苑英華). But the significant fact is that the emperors of the Ming dynasty by their keen interest in books had a great effect on the early Ch'ing monarchs, who were considered by the Chinese people as barbarians.

While the *Yung Lo Ta Tien* was in process, the emperor, Ch'eng Tsu, sent agents to all parts of the country to purchase books, partly to assist in the compilation and partly to fill up

[1] Quotation by I. S. Siao, in his *General History of the Manchu Dynasty*, Vol. 2, p. 40.

what was wanting in the Imperial Library. According to Sun Ch'eng Tse (孫承澤),[1] the Wên Yuan Pavilion contained the book treasures of the three dynasties from the tenth century on. When Ch'eng Tsu moved his capital back to Peking, he also transported a hundred cases of books to be housed in the same Pavilion. In order to facilitate the use of this collection, a catalogue was ordered to be made in the year 1441, under the supervision of Yang Shih Chi (楊士奇). The total number of volumes amounted to 42,600.[2] In the year 1605, Sun Neng Chuan (孫能傳) and others were appointed to take another inventory and to compile a second catalogue for this collection.[3]

In the matter of book collecting, however, the private collectors were hardly less influential. When the emperor, Ch'eng Tsu, heard about the gaps in his Imperial Library, he remarked: "When even the literati desire to collect books for their homes, how can the imperial court fail to do the same?"[4] Accordingly he proceeded with his acquisition. At the end of the Ming dynasty, book collecting had become a vogue among the intelligensia. The most noted collections were the Tien I Ko (天一閣) of the Fan family at Ningpo, the Hsi Ku Ko (汲古閣) of the Mao family at Changsu, the Tan Sheng T'ang (澹生堂) of the Ch'i family at Shangyin, the Tê Yueh Lou (得月樓) of the Li family at Kiangyin and the Mo Wang Kuan (脈望館) of the Chao family at Changshu. To trace the development of any one of these private collections would form a study in itself, but in passing, we must touch upon some of their outstanding characteristics, for these had a direct effect on the founding of libraries in the succeeding centuries.

[1] C. T. Sun., *op. cit.*, chüan 12, p. 5.
[2] *Wên Yuan Ko Shu Mu*: Preface.
[3] *Nei Ko Tsang Shu Mu Lu.*
[4] C. T. Sun., *op. cit.*, chüan 12, p. 3.

Among the private libraries in the Ming dynasty, the Tien I Ko collection is the most prominent. Though this library was founded by Fan Yao Ch'ing (范堯卿) in the early part of the sixteenth century, the history of the collection goes back to the Yuan dynasty. A large portion of the book treasures came from the Wan Chüan Lou (萬卷樓) of the Feng family, whose collection was commenced as early as 1086.[1] As a great book lover himself, Fan Yao Ch'ing befriended a descendant of the Feng family and thus got access to the collection from which he copied a considerable number of rare editions. By negligence and mismanagement, a large number of the most valuable books were stolen, and Fan Yao Ch'ing succeeded in purchasing what could still be found. Coming from an official family, Yao Ch'ing was rich enough to get whatever he wanted. It was told while he was visiting Changan, the capital of Shensi, he employed more than twenty copyists to reproduce manuscript books for him. In a period of twenty years, he had established a collection of fifty-three thousand chüans, chiefly rare editions before 1621.

A catalogue of this collection was compiled in the year 1808, listing 4,094 different works under four main divisions; namely, classics, history, philosophy and belles-lettres. Its specialties, as they are known to the literary world, lie chiefly in five categories: (1) rare editions of both classics and literary collections; (2) manuscript copies; (3) varieties of editions; (4) regional and provincial topographies; (5) stone inscriptions.

Perhaps one or two illustrations will suffice to demonstrate the importance of this collection. When the Ssu Ku Commission[2] was formed in 1772, the Fan family was approached for some of the long-lost copies of classics which were needed for

[1] Chuan Wang Tsu, *Chi Ch'i Ting Chi Wai P'ien*, chüan 17, p. 8.

[2] The Commission appointed by Chien Lung for the compilation of the *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu* or the 'Four-treasure Library.'

the compilation of the 'Four-treasure Library.' Its editions were employed as standard copies for textual corrections. Had this collection not existed, the Commission would probably have faced a great handicap in solving some of its critical problems. The manuscript copies from which the scholars and historians of the early Ch'ing period derived their source materials have always been looked upon by the literati as an unexploited mine. It is no wonder that scholars of that period considered themselves highly favored when they could be admitted as readers in the library.

In regard to archæological inscriptions—chiefly from stone tablets—the Fan's collection was unprecedently rich and thus far is unrivaled. According to Ch'ien Ta Hsin (錢大昕),[1] an expert on stone inscriptions and the compiler of the catalogue for this special collection, the inscriptions of this library number more than 580 items, covering a period from the earliest time to the end of the Yuan dynasty (the 14th century). Although Yao Ch'ing's interest in inscriptions was largely influenced by the collection which he got from the Feng family, his sound judgment together with his indefatigable pursuit made him a very worthy owner of such treasure. Some of the items, we are told, were the only copies that had ever existed, and they could undoubtedly supply answers to some of the unsolved problems in Chinese history.

Another recognizable contribution which the Tien I Ko made to the library world is its building. The valuable collection of the Fan family was lodged in a secluded and picturesque surrounding, a place decorated with artificial ponds and shady woods. In the construction of the building, only bricks and tiles were used, without the employment of any timber. It was so constructed that the collection could be safely protected

[1] T. H. Chien, *Chien Yen T'ang Wen Chi.*

from fire. According to Ch'en Teng Yuan,[1] who paid a visit to the library recently, the arrangement of the interior is by no means intricate. There are twenty-eight sections of bookshelves, purporting to represent the twenty-eight stars in the celestial firmament, encircling the 1,000 volumes of the *Tu Shu Ch'i Ch'eng* (圖書集成) which the family received from the emperor, Chien Lung, as a reward for the books they had sent to the Ssu Ku Commission. Both the style and the construction were so attractive and so substantial that Chien Lung used the plan as a model in the erection of his imperial libraries.

Perhaps one may wonder how this noble collection could be maintained intact for nearly four hundred years.[2] Certainly the building itself is partially responsible. But above all, the rigid rules[3] which the descendants of the Fan family are required to keep with regard to the preservation of their ancestral treasure are very effective. Some of them may seem rather naive, but they served their purpose very well.

As the Tien I Ko is celebrated for its rare editions and stone inscriptions, the Hsi Ku Ko of the same period is generally esteemed for its beautiful private printing and its Sung editions. The development of the Hsi Ku Ko began in the early part

[1] T. Y. Ch'en, *Tien I Ko Ts'ang Shu Kao*, p. 70.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 83, gives an account of its dispersion in various periods.

[3] The following rules are found in the Preface of the *Tien I Ko Ts'ang Shu Tsung Mu*:

(*a*) Keys of this library are distributed to the male members of the family.
(*b*) Removal of any book from the building is prohibited.
(*c*) Unless all the representative male members are present, no single person is allowed to open the library.
(*d*) If one member is found to have entered it secretly, he will be punished by losing his participation in the ancestral worship.
(*e*) If one is found to have brought friends and relatives to the library secretly and have opened the bookcases, the same punishment will be given him for a period of one year.
(*f*) If one is found to have lent books out, the same punishment will be given him for a period of three years.
(*g*) If one is found to have sold some books, he will be banished from the family and never be allowed to participate in the ancestral worship.

of the seventeenth century. Its founder was Mao Chin (毛晉), an eminent poet, an accomplished scholar and a thorough bibliophile. We know very little about him except that he was a man of wealth, owning a large farm and a great number of servants. He loved books more than anything else. In trying to compete with other book collectors, he hung a sign at his door bearing these words:[1]

> For a printed Sung edition, the owner of this house will be willing to give as much as 200 cash per leaf; for a manuscript copy, as much as 40 cash per leaf. For one good modern edition, if others offer 1,000, the owner here will be willing to pay 1,200 (cash).

Consequently, all bookdealers frequented his door and his holdings were increased to 84,000 volumes. His collection was famous for its editions of the Sung and Yuan dynasties, which were sometimes called the Chinese incunabula. Books which he was unable to get in original editions, he employed skilful copyists to reproduce in the exact form and style, with admirable success. In these manuscript copies, special paper with three Chinese characters 吸古閣 in pink color was used, and the title-page was usually covered with seals of various shapes.

Yet Hsi Ku Ko is better known for its private printing than for the contents of its collection. The *Thirteen Classics* (十三經), the *History of the Seventeen Dynasties* (十七史), and the *Ching Tai Pi Shu* (津逮祕書) are the most notable productions of the Mao family. Whether the motive for printing of books by these private collectors was altruistic or a mere show of family vanity, we do not know, but the effect upon the literary world, especially on the research

[1] T. H. Yeh, *Shu Lin Ch'ing Hua*, chüan 7, p. 20.

work of the scholars, was unquestionably great. In speaking of the reprints of the Hsi Ku Ko, Yeh Tê Hui (葉德輝), an outstanding bibliophile of the later Ch'ing period, said:[1] "The printing of the *Book of Chinese Philology* (說文解字) has unearthed what had been buried through the two previous dynasties and there is no other greater contribution to the study of Chinese philology than this."

Next to Tien I Ko and Hsi Ku Ko, though by no means less important, the Chiang Yun Lou (絳雲樓) of the Ch'ien family and the Ch'ien Ching T'ang (千頃堂) of the Huang family are the best known. It is true that the collection of the former is celebrated for its rare Sung and Yuan editions, but its textual value, which has been overlooked by scholars both of that time and of the later period, lies in the great quantity of historical materials concerning the Ming dynasty. The owner himself had a reputation as a historian, but unfortunately all of his manuscripts on the History of Ming were destroyed when the whole library caught fire. The Ch'ien Ching T'ang, whose collection contained more than 60,000 chüans, is noted for its treasure of prose and poetry by Ming authors.[2] Its printed catalogue, which is said to have recorded more than what the library actually possessed, had served later as the official list of all publications under the Ming dynasty.

In an able summary of the library conditions of the Ming period, Huang Tsung Hsi (黃宗羲), an eminent scholar of the early Ch'ing period who had witnessed the dispersion of some of these private collections, said:[3]

> . . .The sad fate of the modern book collection is not due solely to the destruction of war and fire. People without means cannot collect books and those who can collect are generally forced to disperse them because they lack the

[1] T. H. Yeh, *Shu Lin Ch'ing Hua*, Chüan 7, p. 16.
[2] C. C. Yeh, *Ts'ang Shu Chi Shih Shih*, chüan 3, p. 40.
[3] T. H. Huang, Tien I Ko Ts'ang Shi Chi, in *Nan Lei Wen Ting*.

means for keeping them. What exists to-day may disappear to-morrow. South of the Great River (the Yangtze), there used to be innumerable great book collections. But how many of them are still in existence? Only three or four.

Yet through these three or four, the torch has been passing on, not to the few who might have allowed the fire to die, but to a much larger group who have made it a vital force in the development of scholarship for the next three hundred years.

In spite of the intellectual habits and treasures of knowledge which the Ming scholars handed down to those of the Ch'ing period, there was one quality which the latter did not retain. This was the habit of abstract speculation. The Ming scholars were notorious non-book-users. They emphasized subjective rationalization rather than objective knowledge. So with the defeat of China by the Manchus in 1644, a strong reaction set in against the rationalists who were held responsible for the downfall of the Ming dynasty. The students of the early Ch'ing period swung the other way, and instead of mere 'talking' all day long as their predecessors did, they spent their days with books, seeking whatever truth they could find. Consequently, book knowledge constituted a large portion of the contribution which the Ch'ing scholars made to the intellectual accomplishment of the entire period.

When the last emperor of the Ming dynasty was overthrown, there was a group of scholars who clung to the traditional virtue of loyalty. According to the teaching of the sages, it is a disgrace for a courtier to serve two masters, especially when one of them belongs to an alien tribe. So when the new conquerors came to the throne, what could these scholars do? The very purpose of their literary training was to prepare them to enter officialdom and to serve the country. But then the mere fact of being an official under a foreign ruler contradicted the most essential principle which they were taught

to cherish. The natural outcome was non-coöperation, and their slogan was 'No participation in the literary examination.' Then they attempted to get away from the political world, and sought refuge in the high mountains and deep woods. Books became their sole companions and the classics were their supreme favorites. Representatives of this group were Ku Yen Wu (顧炎武), Huang Tsung Hsi (黃宗羲) and Wang Fu Chih (王夫之).

There was another group, more ambitious but less tactful, who tried to connect their studies with political affairs and social problems. They began to analyze the governmental system and to offer frank criticism. No doubt they were sincere in trying to bring peace and prosperity to the country. But this was a mere illusion—an illusion that cost some of them their lives. Through bitter experience, some became wiser. When they saw that there was little hope of achieving their objectives in the way they contemplated, they turned back and followed the footsteps of the non-coöperationalists.

Among the intellectual pursuits of the early Ch'ing scholars, historical writing was perhaps one of the most difficult. Partly due to the encouragement of the emperor, Kang Hsi,[1] and partly to the accessible materials at hand, the history of the Ming dynasty became the subject of unusual interest. Obviously, in such historical writing, it was necessary to report the true facts. So, as the historians came to the last part of the period, their reports antagonized the conquerors, and thus what is known as the 'literary persecution' (文字獄) was originated. It is true that such persecution took place because the early Manchu emperors were afraid of revolutions, but it was conducted on a large scale because many officials wanted to obtain promotions through secret reports. The

[1] In the year 1678, Kang Hsi ordered to compile the *History of the Ming Dynasty*.

Chuang T'ing Lung case (莊廷鑨案)[1] alone cost the lives of more than seventy people. The publication of the book *Tien Chien Chi Wen* (滇黔紀聞) in the *Nan Shan Chi* (南山集) nearly involved the slaughtering of more than three hundred people. This would have resulted, had not the emperor, Kang Hsi, been sympathetic in the case and acted wisely. Still the author could not escape capital punishment, which was then considered a milder form of penalty than that which at times involved others in addition to the perpetrator of the crime. Even in the literary examinations, the use of a word or two which might be considered as reflecting upon the emperor or government, to say nothing of an open attack on the government, was sufficient to send the candidate to jail. Speaking of persecution in connection with literary examinations, the late scholar, Mr. Liang Ch'i Chao said:[2] "A single case might sometimes imperil the lives of as many as 13,000 people."

In addition to the literary persecution, a rigid censoring of books was no less oppressive. Within the years from 1774 to 1782, the burning of prohibited books took place twenty-four times and more than 13,000 volumes were destroyed. Under such circumstances, in which individual opinion was not free, the literati simply had to guard themselves from entanglement in any of the literary webs. Little by little, they had learned caution from experience and in their choice of intellectual pursuit they were quite discreet.

As a result of literary persecution, the scholars of the Chien Lung and Chia Ch'ing period (1736–1820) started an influential movement known as 'scientific study of the Classics' which was somewhat similar to the Renaissance in Europe during the fifteenth century. In spirit, it corresponds to our modern

[1] I. S. Siao, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 745–751.
[2] C. C. Liang, *Chung Kuo Chin San Pai Nien Hsueh Shu Shih*, p. 23.

idea of research. In this movement, there were numerous activities undertaken by the scholars.[1] They sought to bring to a higher degree of perfection classical philology (經學) and textual criticism (校勘). They attempted to reconstitute the texts of lost authors by whatever fragments they could find in the encyclopædias and other works. They made thoroughly scientific investigation of the forms and the meanings of characters (小學), and of the evolution of Chinese phonetics (音韻). Because of their persistent effort in collecting data and their minuteness in description, their contribution to the development of the subject of topography has been hailed by the western world as of unparalleled significance to the study of regional history. Through their careful preservation of and diligent research on stone inscriptions, archæology (金石學) was made a distinct field of study. Their work—especially in the fields of classics and history—was so thoroughly and exhaustively done that the scholars of the Kuang Hsi period (1875–1909) found it impossible to add anything new. In short, this particular movement represents the pinnacle of intellectual achievement of the whole Ch'ing period. It is true that the learning of this sort, by monopolizing the attention and intellectual energy of its scholars for over two hundred years, hampered China from developing into a modern nation. Yet this practical result should not discredit the outstanding contribution made by these scholars.

In the movement of scientific classical study, the libraries had a large part to play. Though it is difficult to present a clear-out statement to show cause and effect, there undoubtedly exists a mutual relationship between the two. The compilation of the 'Four-treasure Library' in the year 1773 was intrinsically more important than people have generally

[1] C. C. Liang, *Chung Kuo Chin San Pai Nien Hsueh Shu Shih*, pp. 36, 37. A full acount of all the activities of the Ch'ing scholars is given.

realized. The physical magnitude of the undertaking, the establishment of seven libraries and the completion of 36,275 volumes, have been duly recognized. But its significant contribution to the literary world goes much farther than that. The mere act of assembling more than three hundred outstanding scholars, mostly experts in their own fields, to assist in such a gigantic task, is itself a great achievement. This group, who were looked upon as the most learned, certainly had a very extensive influence upon the literati. In fact, they were the very leaders of the School of Han Learning[1] and through association as members of the Ssu Ku Commission and the utilization of its facilities, they were able to lead the country into a contagion of enthusiasm for the classics.

Perhaps the most influential piece of work produced by the Ssu Ku Commission was its annotated catalogue.[2] The invaluable notes furnish not only adequate information concerning each work and its author, but also reflect the prevailing thought of the period. It represent what Liang Ch'i Chao called 'the crystallized thought of the School of Han Learning.' Ever since the catalogue was printed, all scholars have looked upon it as the most indispensable bibliographical guide to Chinese literature. Furthermore, its fourfold classification has been highly praised. In fact, private and public libraries alike have employed it as a model scheme for their book classification.

When the 'Four-treasure Library' was completed, the emperor, Chien Lung, ordered the erection of three additional

[1] During the reign of Kang Hsi and Yung Ch'eng, there was a struggle for domination between two schools; namely the Han School and the Sung School. The former emphasized the study of classics, while the latter advocated the study of metaphysics. As the Ssu Ku Commission was formed, the Han School won the championship.

[2] This is a descriptive catalogue of the imperial library drawn up in the years 1773–1790. The whole work is in 200 books. It gives the history of every work with a degree of minuteness, and also a critique, in which the excellencies and defects are pointed out. For details, see also pages 37–39.

libraries along the Yangtze Valley to house the collection. This farsighted act should offset many of the criticisms which have been aimed at the emperor. "These collections," he says in one of his edicts,[1] "are not intended for mere shelf decorations, they are for the actual use of the literati." Books that were considered lost to the world found their places in this collection and rare works once belonging to private collectors became accessible to students who desired them. It is true that only a minority could enjoy such privileges, but through that minority some of these valuable works were passed on to others.

Once the imperial court took the lead in building up libraries, the movement spread rapidly. In the Ch'ing period alone, there were more than five hundred famous private collections, a number surpassing that of all the previous dynasties combined. But after all, this is a natural outgrowth if we consider the tasks that the scholars were called upon to perform. In those days there were hardly any libraries that could be called 'public' in the modern sense. And private libraries were strictly private. So, in order to facilitate one's own study, the formation of a private book collection was inevitable. True enough, some of the book collectors were not scholars, but at least they had an extensive knowledge of books. A great many of the collectors took upon their shoulders the responsibility of spreading knowledge. However little they knew, they wanted to convey it to others. Such spirit was clearly exhibited in their work of reprinting books. The voluminous Ts'ung Shu (叢書)[2] which they printed have enlightened the literary world with material that had been lost. To them, students

[1] *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu Ts'ung Mu*: Edicts (hereafter called the *Descriptive Catalogue*).

[2] Ts'ung Shu is a name given to a collection of books which may vary in number and extent but are uniform in style. They generally represent the choice books of a collector and, in fact, repositories of many ancient and curious writings.

of the Ch'ing period as well as of to-day, owe an enormous debt.

It is clear then, that in the history of Chinese scholarship during the last three hundred years, the Ch'ing scholars made a very distinct contribution and in that contribution the library had a rôle. So as we try in the following pages to trace the history of the development of libraries under the Ch'ing dynasty, we must keep clearly in mind the scholarly activity of which it was a factor. Only in its historical setting can we see that the library as an institution does not merely exist but really lives.

CHAPTER II

THE IMPERIAL LIBRARIES

During the two hundred and sixty-seven years in which the Manchus ruled China, the most peaceful periods were those under the reign of Kang Hsi and Chien Lung. Each completed his full cycle of sixty years as occupant of the dragon throne and both exerted their utmost influence in stimulating literary studies and library activities. Though there were altogether ten successive emperors under the whole dynasty, none stood out so prominently as these two in their contribution to the development of the imperial libraries. Yet the other emperors were not personally responsible for their inactivity in this respect. In the first few decades, the imperial activities were more or less directed toward suppressing the surviving rebellious groups of the Ming Royalists. Beginning with the reign of Chia Ching (1796-1820), there were various religious complications and numerous mutinies around the borders of China. Tao Kuang (1821-1850) was greatly concerned over the Opium War, and Tan Feng (1851-1861) worried himself to death because of the Taiping Rebellion. When Kuang Hsu (1875-1908) came to the throne, the western nations threatened him constantly from without and the revolutionists plotted to overthrow the dynasty from within. The boy emperor, Hsun Tung, had to abdicate after only three years of reign. It is therefore no wonder that when the Old Palace Commission began to inventory the imperial collections in 1917, they found some of the book treasures piteously covered with dust, dirt, and cobwebs. Apparently they had not been touched for many years.

When the glories of the Ming dynasty departed in the year 1644, long before 1644 the invaluable book collection in the Imperial Library, together with many other treasures, was passed on to the hands of the Manchu conquerors. If the statement of Sun Ch'ing Tsê[1] is true, the Ming Imperial Library must have contained over a million books. But during the dynastic war many of them, including the two sets of the *Yung Lo Ta Tien*, were destroyed by fire. We are not certain of the exact number of volumes which the first Ch'ing emperor inherited. According to Wang Kuo Wei (王國維),[2] late professor of archæology and philology at the University of Peking, the Nei Ko (內閣) collection contains a tremendous quantity of manuscripts and a large number of Sung and Yuan editions. Some of these manuscripts include documents of various dynasties, such as red-ink edicts of emperors, memorials of officials and ministers, official correspondence with tributary states, etc. In fact, they include not the treasures of the Ming dynasty alone, but also valuable remnants from earlier dynasties.

The first increase of the Imperial Library during the Ch'ing period may be traced in the collection brought together by Kang Hsi (1662-1722), who in the year 1686 ordered the Han-lin Academy to formulate a scheme for collecting books. The suggestion offered was to urge the viceroys of Chihli and other provinces to undertake the buying of books for His Highness, which after their purchase should be sent directly to the Han-lin Academy. Concerning the books to be purchased, the edict says:[3]

> The chief value of the classics and history is to cultivate one's inner nature and to apply its best to government.

[1] C. T. Sun, *op. cit.*, chüan 12, p. 1.
[2] *Kuan Tang Chi Lin*, chüan 19.
[3] Kang Hsi edicts: 25th year.

> Only through careful and industrious study can the essence of human perfection and the secret of political success be obtained. By whatever books I read and whatever doctrine I study, I aim to guide myself in the right. The numerous theories preached by various philosophers would only hinder the constituted truth of the classics. So in the process of collecting books you should center your attention on both classics and history, for they alone can be utilized for the good of the government as well as for that of the individual. Books of peculiar doctrines and unfounded ideas should be totally eliminated.

Very little is known about the success of Kang Hsi's book campaign, but from the many new works published under his imperial patronage, we may safely conclude that he must have gathered a considerable quantity of material. It would not be wrong to assume that the nature of his acquisition is reflected in what he published. At least it is certain that during his reign the Imperial Library contained the volumes from which the published works drew their source material. According to *Kuo Chao Kung Shih* (國朝宮史),[1] the number of books published under Kang Hsi's patronage was more than 15,000, in all fields of learning.

Being a ruler from an alien tribe, Kang Hsi endeavored consciously to wipe out the lineal distinction between himself and his people. He put forth untiring effort to study Chinese literature, and worked with a tutor nearly every day. He soon mastered the classics and knew Chinese history thoroughly. In order to demonstrate to his people that he loved Chinese culture no less than they did, he advocated strongly the Sung School of Learning, which represents a rather conservative branch of speculative philosophy. He singled out, as his patron, the illustrious Chu Hê (朱熹), a great expounder of Confucius, an influential teacher and a profound scholar.

[1] Chüan 22 to 36 under the heading: Books.

Chu's exposition of the classics and his new theory of the universe molded national belief and gave a definite trend to many speculators who were groping after truth in the Sung period (eleventh century). In 1713, Kang Hsi ordered his officials to make a collection of Chu Hê's principal philosophical writings. It was completed in sixty-six books and called *Yu Tsuan Chu Tze Chuan Shu* (御纂朱子全書). The emperor also published the *Hsin Li Ching I* (性理精義), which embodies the views of all authors who had written on such subjects as cosmogony, metaphysics, etc. To eulogize the Sung School of Learning, Kang Hsi must have gathered a great deal of philosophical material of that period in the Imperial Library.

Among the works which Kang Hsi published under his patronage, his encyclopædias and dictionaries stand out most prominently. The *Ku Chin Tu Shu Chi Ch'eng* (古今圖書集成) is a celebrated example. It is a compendium "which differs from the western encyclopædia" as Lionel Giles says,[1] "in that it contains no original article on any subject but consists simply of grouped extracts from previously existing literature." This great compendium, numbering 6,109 volumes, was produced in the imperial printing office from movable types.[2] In praising this work, S. Julien writes,[3] "for elegance of form and beauty of impression, it rivals the finest works published in Europe." This compendium has six main headings subdivided into thirty-two sections covering the whole field of existing human knowledge. Similar to this work is the *Yuan Chien Lei Han* (淵鑑類函), an extensive cyclopædia recording all historical events from early times down to the reigning family. It consists of 450

[1] *An Alphabetical Index to the Chinese Encyclopædia*, p. V.
[2] Stanislas Julien suspected these types were cast by the Jesuit missionaries.
[3] W. F. Mayers, Bibliography of the Chinese Imperial Collection of Literature, in *China Review*, VI, p. 222.

books and was completed in 1710. The next year, the *Pei Wen Yun Fu* (佩文韻府) came from the Imperial Press. This is a most comprehensive work of a lexicographical character, arranged according to the usual system of 106 finals, divided among the five tones. However, the *Kang Hsi Dictionary* (康熙字典), is no less important. This, being the only one of its kind in existence, enjoyed a monopoly for nearly two hundred years in the book market. In order to facilitate these huge compilations, there must have been, in the Imperial Library, voluminous material on all the subjects treated.

Again, the imperial collection was very rich in poetry. During Kang Hsi's reign, more than two thousand anthologies had been printed at the government printing office. The *Chuan T'ang Shih* (全唐詩), issued in 1705, containing more than 48,900 poems in 900 books was merely a selection from the works of two thousand and two hundred poets in the Imperial Library.[1] The four hundred and eighty-two books of *Yung Wu Shih Hsuan* (咏物詩選), an anthology of 14,550 poems of various sorts, records what the emperor had caused to be read in the imperial court. In fact, the collection of poetry in the Imperial Library covered not only the most extensive scope of æsthetic literature, but also the best that had ever existed.

In addition to the old Chinese literary collections, the Imperial Library acquired works on western sciences. In describing Kang Hsi's scholarly interests, P. Du Halde, a celebrated French sinologist of the eighteenth century, writes:[2]

> He (the emperor) was not content with Chinese learning . . . but was desirous of being instructed in the European sciences, namely, geometry, algebra, natural philosophy, astronomy, physics, and anatomy. The Peres Gerbillon,

[1] *Chuan T'ang Shih:* Preface.
[2] *General History of China*, I, p. 496.

Bovett and Thomas employed several years in turning their lectures into the Tartar language.

Nor was the emperor content with the new knowledge which he had gotten for himself; he wanted to have it propagated among his people. In a letter to the home mission, Father Pereira reports[1] that the emperor "desired to have books of science and the like translated into Chinese, saying that his people would study them with great application." In fact, it was during Kang Hsi's reign that many of the Jesuit fathers served as prominent officials in the imperial court. Johannes Adam Schaal was private tutor to the emperor while Ferdinand Verbiest, who had helped to establish the astronomical instruments of the Peking Palace, acted as chief astronomer for the government. Many of the works on mathematics translated into Chinese by the Jesuit fathers, and Verbiest's work on astronomical instruments, were carefully preserved in the imperial collection. A series of maps on China drawn by Peres Bouvet, Regis and Jartoux, who were appointed by Kang Hsi in 1708 to survey the country, were great monuments added to the Library. They were really the first Chinese maps that had been produced according to the western fashion. In the year 1697, some of these fathers carried the gift of forty-nine volumes of Chinese books from Kang Hsi to Louis XIV, the King of France.[2]

The Imperial Library also possessed many other valuable works. Perhaps the volumes that were most often read were the *Veritable Records* (實錄) and the *Sacred Instructions* (聖訓) of the different emperors. The former deal with political events during each monarch's reign, arranged generally in chronological order, while the latter contain statements of method and experience in handling actual governmental

[1] A translation of Father Pereira's letter is found in the Appendix of P. J. D'Orlean's *History of the Two Tartar Conqueror of China*, p. 133.
[2] A. Franklin, *Les anciennes bibliothèques de Paris*, Vol. 2. p. 187.

affairs. These were meant to serve as aids to succeeding emperors. There were complete sets of genealogical and military records of the early Ch'ing emperors. Besides, the imperial collection contained all the ordinances and regulations concerning the whole governmental system and ceremonies of all occasions. The compilation of the *History of the Ming Dynasty* in 1707 caused the inflow of voluminous materials from all available sources to the Imperial Library, to say nothing of the large collection of manuscripts already in the archives.

In spite of all Kang Hsi did for the exaltation of literature, he made no special effort to build up a magnificent Imperial Library. Under his reign, he did not even try to set up a noble abode for the precious collection, to say nothing of classifying and cataloguing it. To him, the preservation of literature meant its propagation. His sincerity in giving to the people what he considered the best in literature is undoubted. Although it may seem presumptions for him to prescribe the reading of the populace, he merely acted on the principle that a good ruler should treat his people as if they were his own children. While the Cottonian collection was playing its part in the foundation of British Museum and J. B. Colbert was sending forth his agents to collect books and manuscripts to add to the Royal Library of France, Kang Hsi was contemplating from his throne the problem of disseminating knowledge among his people. Perhaps there was no more democratic treatment of books than his, though he might not have been fully conscious of it himself.

To the development of the Imperial Library, nothing very striking seems to have been done by Yung Cheng, who succeeded his father in 1723. His twelve years' reign was occupied by settling conflicts within his own household. Being a man of great suspicion, he did considerable injustice to the scholars of his period. Literary persecution was extensively practiced.

In spite of his great effort to honor the obscure genius by viceroyal recommendations in the various provinces, he failed utterly to induce them to enter the imperial court. It should be noted, however, that Yung Cheng had made a systematic compilation of the imperial edicts that were issued during his own reign. He also published tens of thousands of the official memorials which contained his personal notes in red ink. Generally speaking, however, he did no more than to complete the unfinished publications left by his father.

When we come to the period of Chien Lung's reign, we read a bright page in history. Immediately after he ascended the throne, he repeated what his forefathers had done to secure the most learned men in the country for his service. He had an insatiable thirst for knowledge and showed a keen interest in Chinese literature, poetry in particular. Wherever he went, he left behind him a few verses of his own. He had an excellent style of handwriting and hence his characters were greatly valued by his people. Being a patron of letters, Chien Lung exhibited an inclination to honor scholarship, and consequently he won the warm sympathy of the literary world. By mobilizing the most learned force in his domain, he began the gigantic literary production which made him an unprecedented example in all history.

It is true that in practically all Chien Lung's activities, he followed very closely the footsteps of his grandfather, Kang Hsi. But he was not satisfied with mere slavish imitation, for he strove to excel his predecessors. Whereas Kang Hsi made inspection trips outside of the palace, Chien Lung did the same thing at longer distances and with greater frequency. Whereas the former offered scholars more opportunities to show themselves, the latter continued this scheme and enlarged its scope. It was in this spirit that the compilation of the famous *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu*, the 'Four-treasure Library,' was initiated.

Various theories have been suggested to describe the purpose of such a monumental piece of work. Perhaps the most direct motive was, as the emperor stated in one of his decrees,[1] to preserve literature. He foresaw that if no special attempt was made to collect both modern and ancient literature, some of it would in all probability be lost. In order to fulfill this purpose, he carried his book campaign on such a vast extent that hardly any book would escape him. One author says[2] that the underlying purpose of the appointment of the Ssu Ku commission was to find an excuse for destroying all anti-dynastic works, and there is evidence that Chien Lung did burn a tremendous number of books[3] in connection with this compilation. Another hints that Chien Lung's idea in setting up the *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu* was to shift the attention of Chinese scholars from political activities to scholastic careers. In other words, he wanted to free the Manchu dynasty from Chinese antagonism. There was also a moral motive in this undertaking as expressed, though vaguely, by the emperor himself:[4]

> The reason why I collect books for this 'Four-treasure Library' is not so much to win myself a good name for preserving literature, but rather as the philosopher Chang has said, 'to institute the fundamental principles of the universe, to establish the truth for the people, to pass on the teachings of past sages and to bring peace to the everlasting generations.'

There may be some truth in each of the reasons given above, but careful examination of the facts indicates that personal glorification was probably a principal motive of Chien Lung. When the compilation of the *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu* was in process,

[1] *Descriptive Catalogue, op. cit.*, p. 2.
[2] S. Meng, *Ch'ing Chao Chuan Chi*, Preface.
[3] See page 41.
[4] Chien Lung, Record of the Wên Yuan Pavilion, in *Library Science Quarterly*, I, 153.

the emperor feared his life might not last long enough to see its completion and thus in the year 1773 he ordered Wang Chi Hua (王際華), Yu Min Chung (于敏中) and others to make two manuscript copies of the more important portions of the whole collection, called the *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu Wei Yao* (四庫全書薈要), the Essential Selection of the 'Four-treasure Library.' The first copy was finished in 1779 in 11,266 volumes and a second one was completed the following year. This unnecessary duplication suggests that Chien Lung wanted to have his name connected with the largest literary work ever produced, for he required that every volume should bear his own seal. This was merely one of the many examples of Chien Lung's aspiration for personal glorification.

It should be remembered, however, that the direct cause of the compilation of the *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu* was some new discoveries in the great encyclopædia, *Yung Lo Ta Tien.* The idea was supposedly originated by Chu Yun,[1] a literary chancellor of Anhwei province, who memorialized the throne calling to the attention of the emperor the fact that there were many invaluable works in that collection totally unknown to the literary world. He further proposed that a commission be appointed to make special investigations and recommendations. After some opposition, the project was ultimately adopted. But then the scope of the work was extended to a much larger field than originally proposed. In the year 1773, the Ssu Ku Commission was instituted and the compilation of the 'Four-treasure Library' launched.

The Commission consisted of 361 officials of various ranks,[2] chiefly specialists in every field of learning. Although the

[1] According to Liang Chi Chao, the discovery was made by Chuan Tsu Wang (全祖望), and Lee Mu Tang (李穆堂), but in *Chun Ping Shi Yeh Cheng*, Lee Meng Fu says that this idea was originated by Hsu Chien Hsüeh (徐乾學).

[2] In an unpublished thesis of W. T. Yen, called *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu . . . and Its Influence upon Chinese Culture*, he gives a detailed statement concerning the personnel, distribution of offices, and the function of each in pages 18–21.

high offices were entrusted to the Manchu nobles like Yung J'ung (永瑢), Yung Hsun (永璇), and others, practically all of the important functions of editorship were performed by Chinese scholars. At the head of the working committee was Chi Yün (紀昀), a scholar and official of high distinction. For a period of thirteen years, he labored uninterruptedly at this task. Being a student of extensive learning, he commanded the respect of all his staff. Almost single-handed he completed the celebrated descriptive catalogue of the 'Four-treasure Library.' Another learned member in the editorial committee was Tai Chen (戴震), a noted classicist and philologist who held membership on the imperial editorial board for forty years. His work of textual criticism, particularly on the *Li Chi* (禮記) and the *Shui Ching Chu* (水經注) was highly praised.[1] There were also other famous scholars, like Shao Chin Han (邵晉涵) and Chou Yung Nien (周永年) in the editorial committee. The former possessed an unrivaled knowledge of history and his restoration of the missing text of the *Wu Tai Shih* (五代史) marked him as a great genius in historiography.[2] The latter was known particularly for his extensive knowledge of the early Chinese theories concerning such sciences as astronomy, mathematics, agriculture, etc., but most of all he was recognized for his painstaking labor in unearthing many of the rare works of the Sung and Yuan dynasties in the *Yung Lo Ta Tien*. It was in fact due to the ingenuity and industriousness of these scholars that the 'Four-treasure Library' could really claim to have contained the outstanding examples of Chinese literature.

When the Commission was formed, the procedure of book-collecting commenced. An inventory was made of the great encyclopædia, *Yung Lo Ta Tien*, which had been locked up

[1] *Ch'ing Shih Kao:* Biography Section II, p. 20.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

in the library of the Han-lin Academy and had not been touched for several decades. It was found that many sections had been lost, so that what remained consisted of only a little more than nine thousand volumes.[1] At the same time, a list of all the books in the Imperial Library was drawn up and made known to responsible officials outside of the imperial court. Detailed instructions concerning methods of selection were sent to the governors of different provinces. This time, however, the book campaign was different from those of previous occasions. Instead of standard works alone, its scope covered all sorts of current publications; even unpublished manuscripts, maps, stone inscriptions, charts and other documents of historical value. But frivolous literary compositions, genealogical records of private families, complimentary addresses and fugitive essays were definitely excluded.[2] Before sending the actual materials to the Commission in Peking, the governors were required first to submit a list of the works that had been reported by their employees, with a careful description of each item concerning its author, its imprint and its contents. These lists were subsequently checked at the central office to avoid duplications.

Based as it was upon the edict[3] which Chien Lung issued in 1773, the book campaign was not very successful in its early stages. This was so, partly because some employees of the governors used oppressive measures to attain their goal and partly because the people themselves did not want to be involved in literary anti-dynastic entanglements. But Chien Lung was wise enough to perceive these difficulties, and he therefore, issued decrees to warn his officials to proceed with utmost discretion. At the same time, he assured his people

[1] *Chien Lung Official Memorials* (sixth day of the second month of his 38th year of reign).
[2] *Descriptive Catalogue, op. cit.*, chüan 1, p. 11.
[3] Shen Ch'u, *Chekiang Tsai Chi Wei Shu Tsung Mu:* Edict section.

of his good intentions, and even offered prizes for those who made the best response to his book campaign. The result was excellent. Though many so-called 'prohibited' books were later burned, Chien Lung kept his word very well and no life was sacrificed.

Immediately after receiving the list of books desired by the Commission, the governors of the different provinces had to act promptly in assembling the material. Books that could not be obtained free, they had to purchase for the Commission. For manuscripts which the owners refused to give up, they were to employ calligraphers to copy them and have the original copies returned to the owners as soon as possible.[1] There were certain private collectors who wished to send their valuable books separately, and the governors were required to record carefully the names and addresses of the donors, titles, and the total number of volumes. The result indicated that the two provinces, Kiangsu and Chekiang, sent in more works than did any other province. From 1772-1774, Chekiang province alone contributed 4,523 titles,[2] of which a special catalogue was carefully prepared.

The private donors who had sent in as high as 500 or 700 books to the Commission were Bau Shi Kung (鮑士恭), Fan Mo Che (范懋柱), Wang Chi Su (汪啓淑), and Ma Yü (馬裕). They were rewarded by the emperor with a set of the *Ku Chin Tu Shu Chi Ch'eng*. And persons who sent more than one hundred books received a set of the *Pei Wan Yun Fu* as compensation. In some of the most beautiful and rare editions, Chien Lung set his autograph and the imperial seal. Sometimes he wrote on them one or two of his own poems. This served as a great honor to the owners when they received back their original copies. This personal touch was indicative

[1] Chien Lung stressed this point particularly in many of his decrees.
[2] Shen Ch'u, *op. cit.*, Preface.

of the particular charm of Chien Lung, and it made so deep an impression upon his people that it must be regarded as one of the influences contributing to the success of the book campaign.

As the desired works came to the Ssu Ku Hall, they were grouped together under six categories: (1) the remaining volumes of the *Yung Lo Ta Tien* from the Han-lin Academy (永樂大典本); (2) works published under imperial patronage (勅撰本); (3) books from the shelves of the different palace buildings (內府本); (4) copies gathered by the provincial authorities chiefly through purchase and gift (各省採進本); (5) works sent in by private collectors (私人進獻本); and (6) ordinary editions from various sources (通行本). The works from the provincial authorities constituted the largest single group. However, from the standpoint of quality, nothing could rival the *Yung Lo Ta Tien.*

Confronted with this great quantity of material, the Commission had to adopt a definite policy for the treatment of each work. Thus all books were further distributed into three classes: those to be printed; those to be preserved in manuscript; and those to be merely recorded by title. In general, the important works that dealt with government and ethics were to be printed by wooden movable types so that they could be circulated. Of this class there were one hundred and forty works, and when the whole set was completed, the emperor bestowed upon it a name, *Tsu Chen Pan Ts'ung Shu* (聚珍版叢書), signifying 'assembled treasures.' For the less important works, the titles alone were recorded in the *Descriptive Catalogue.* But the greatest task of the imperial bibliophile was the transmission of certain valuable works into manuscript copies for the enlargement of the emperor's library according to the original design. To this class, most of the works belonged. The question may be raised, why did not the emperor order the whole collection printed? The

probable answer is that he wanted to make the collection as beautiful and as precious as possible. That his choice was excellent is evident from the magnificent manuscript copies in the library.

After the decision was made, the work was distributed among the different offices. The most laborious task was to get the correct text of each work, and the scholars had to use all their ingenuity to detect forgeries, to compare imprints, and to ascertain the correct authorship. In other words, textual criticism was their main task. In general, they chose the best texts from the noted *Yung Lo Ta Tien*,[1] which is predominently rich and trustworthy in rare works. It is true, as Yeh Tê Hui pointed out,[2] that they overlooked some important items, but on the whole they did excellently. For one serious mistake, however, the emperor, Chien Lung, must be held responsible, and that is the changing of words in some of the original texts which seemed to impair the honor of the dynasty. From the emperor's point of view, as stated in one of his edicts,[3] he did not want to omit a good piece of work because of one or two objectionable words or sentences. Fortunately, works of this sort are few and do not invalidate the collection as a whole.

The work was then passed on to the Copying Department, where more than a thousand scribes were employed. With a standard style of writing, these scribes performed a difficult task extremely well. The neatness of the strokes, the uniformity of characters, and the regularity of line and margins might lead one to assume that they all came from the same

[1] According to the unpublished manuscript of S. F. Hsu's *Chinese Bibliography* (p. 9), there were 385 original texts obtained from the *Yung Lo Ta Tien* distributed as follows: 66 in classics, 41 in history, 103 in philosophy, and 175 in belles-lettres.

[2] T. H. Yeh, *op. cit.*, Chüan 9, p. 11.

[3] *Descriptive Catalogue, op. cit.*, Edict section

press. Sometimes the pages were adorned with beautiful illustrations by accomplished artists. According to the report of the director-in-chief,[1] about 400,000 characters could be written in a day. The entire process was systematically managed and a definite record carefully kept.[2] But with such a large staff handling such a mass of material, mistakes were unavoidable. It was unfortunate, however, that some of the responsible staff members were later to be punished for errors and omissions in some volumes.[3] Some were deprived of their salaries for a half or a full year, and others had to pay the entire expense involved in recopying and rebinding. This, in one sense, shows the shrewdness of Chien Lung, but in another, it indicates how strictly the work was conducted.

After nearly ten years, in 1782, the first copy consisting of 36,275 volumes was completed. This set was housed in the Wên Yuan Ko (文淵閣) at the Imperial Palace in Peking, which was specially erected for this purpose. The plan of the building followed very closely that of Tien I Ko of the Fan family at Ningpo, except for the more elaborate decorations and better materials. According to the description of Shi Ting Yung (施廷鏞)[4] at the front of the building, which still stands in its pristine condition, there was an artificial pond with a little brook passing through it. Leading to the entrance of this pavilion, a stone bridge was built. At the east end of the building there was a stone tablet engraved with Chien Lung's Record of the Wên Yuan Pavilion on one side and his poems on the other. Along the sides of the library stood pine and cypress trees. At the back of the building, a

[1] *Chien Lung Official Memorials* (4th day of the tenth month of his 38th year of reign).
[2] Sample is given in T. H. Yeh, *op. cit.*, chüan 9, p. 11.
[3] *Chien Lung Official Memorials* (15th day of the second month of his 52nd year of reign).
[4] Books in the Imperial Palace (故宮圖書記), *Library Science Quarterly*, I, 53–60.

stone ornament was placed. The internal construction consisted of two stories with two flights of stairs. Various wood-carved tablets scrolls of Chien Lung's own writing were hung in the entrance hall. In addition to the *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu*, the library contained a set of the *Ku Chin Tu Shu Chi Cheng* prepared by Kang Hsi.

Because of the uniformity in the size of the volumes, the whole library had a military regularity and precision. To distinguish the four classes of works, different colors were used for binding; namely, green for classics, red for history, blue for philosophy, and gray for belles-lettres. For every six volumes, a folder of Persian cedar was provided, of the same color as the books. Upon entering this library, one encounters hardly a trace of a book, except for the various groups of silk packages marshalled on the shelves like the squads of regiment. A label is attached to the outside of each folder, containing the number of the folder and the titles of the books inside. In order to find a book, one must first consult the manuscript copy of the *Descriptive Catalogue* (bound in brown color) which is placed in a special wooden case, and then locate it in the diagram of shelving. The whole system of arrangement is based on the classification of the catalogue, and the diagram indicates the exact location.

Three other copies were finished later, and they were lodged in buildings specially erected for them. The new abodes for these copies were: Wên Yuan Ko (文源閣) at Yuan Ming Yuan, Wên Tsin Ko (文津閣) at Jehol, and Wên So Ko (文溯閣) at Mukden. To record this great achievement, the emperor wrote a short account for each library, to be engraved on stone tablets.[1] In order to show his appreciation of the contributions that the private collectors along the Yangtze

[1] The original texts are given in *Library Science Quarterly*, I, 153, 154.

Valley had made to the enlargement of the Imperial Library,[1] Chien Lung commanded the Commission to execute three more sets of the manuscript to be housed in three different places; Wên Hui Ko (文滙閣) at Yangchow, Wên Tsung Ko (文宗閣) at Chinkiang, and Wên Lan Ko (文瀾閣) at Hangchow. The scholars of the Kiangsu and Chekiang provinces were thereby enabled to consult the assembled literary treasures.

The largest class in the 'Four-treasure Library,' consists of literary works. According to the *Descriptive Catalogue* (四庫全書總目), the distributions of titles among the four classes are: 660 in classics, 570 in history, 930 in philosophy, and 1,280 in belles-lettres. It should be noted, however, that in this Ssu Ku collection, there are a number of works written by the Jesuit fathers in the seventeenth century.[2] They are chiefly treatises on natural and physical sciences such as mathematics, astronomy, cosmography, mechanics, etc. Even a few works written in the Manchuria and Mongolian languages are to be found here. For an accurate representation of the nature of the entire collection, nothing can take the place of the *Descriptive Catalogue* itself.

While the *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu* was in the process of compilation, Chien Lung ordered a descriptive catalogue made under the editorship of Chi Yün. As already noted, before any books were sent in to the Commission, the provincial authorities were required to make annotations for each work, including its source and owner. This greatly simplified the work of the editors of the descriptive catalogue, but it could by no means take the place of their own judgment. They had to consider carefully and express a final opinion on every item. In making clear the purpose of this catalogue, the editor writes:[3]

[1] Some said that the funds for making these copies were contributed by the rich salt merchants of these districts, but no trustworthy statement has been found to prove it.

[2] For a list of the works in question, see W. Y. Yen's thesis, *op. cit.*, pp. 40, 41.

[3] *Descriptive Catalogue, op. cit.*, Preface.

> This work which aims to compare the likenesses and differences in editions and to make discriminations between true and false texts, contains mostly argumentative statements. In dealing with cases of opposing opinions, we generally weigh the evidences carefully before expressing our choice. We endeavor to bring to light those valuable works that have been hidden from the world but for mention in such well-known works as Histories written by Sz-ma Chuan and Pan Ku, Poetry by Li Po and Tu Fu . . . we refrain from expressing a word, except merely to state the differences in editions and the arrangements in various texts. If there is a place for doubt, we refuse to make affirmations, but in cases where no argument is needed, we give none. What we aim at is to be fair and we try to do the utmost justice to our selection.

Simple as it is, this record contains the essential material for writing annotations and book reviews. In fact, it is a catalogue which combines the best qualities of four previous works.[1] All scholars look upon it as the principal bibliographical guide for their research, and its fourfold division formed the basis of classification for all private libraries of the Ch'ing period. Within each division the works are grouped in two classes, the first containing titles actually included in the imperial collection and the second designated as Tsun Mu (存目), or works merely recorded therein but not in the library. In general, the works under each division and subdivision are arranged in chronological order according to the original text, with the exception of works published under imperial patronage; these are listed at the beginning of their respective periods. As a rule, the original text comes before all commentaries. In each entry, the title comes first, then follows information concerning the source on which the copy is based, a biographical

[1] Wang Yao Shun, *Hsiung Wên Tsung Mu* (王堯臣: 崇文總目), Su Kung Wu's *Chin Chai Tu Shu Chi* (晁公武: 郡齋讀書志), Chen Chen Sun's *Shu Luh Chi Te* (陳振孫: 書錄解題), and Ma Tuan Lin's *Ching Chi Kao* (馬端臨: 經籍考).

account of the author, the contents of the work, and general bibliographical remarks.

Because of the bulk of the *Descriptive Catalogue* (two hundred books), it is very hard to locate what one wants. In order to facilitate reference, the emperor, in the year 1774, ordained that an abridgment of the full catalogue be prepared.[1] The new abridged catalogue, called *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu Chien Ming Mu Lu* (四庫全書簡明目錄), records only the title, the author, and the number of volumes of each work actually found in the Imperial Library. In this way the size was reduced to twenty books, only one-tenth of the full catalogue. Succeeding generations have been trying to make full use of the 'Four-treasure Library,' and many other catalogues have already been produced, with various methods of arrangement.[2] Finally, to furnish information to western sinologists, A. Wylie in 1867 produced a bibliographical treatise (in English) on Chinese literature which is principally based upon the contents of the *Descriptive Catalogue*.[3] In discussing the great

[1] *Descriptive Catalogue, op. cit.*, Edict section.

[2.a] Wang Tai-yao, *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu Kao Ch'ing* (王太岳: 四庫全書考證), 1783. 100 books. (Emphasizing textual criticism.)

b. Shao Chin Han, *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu Te Yao Fen Tsuen Kao* (邵晉涵: 四庫全書提要分纂稿). (Dealing chiefly with historical works.)

c. Wu Chang Shou, *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu Wei Yao Mu Lu* (吳昌綬: 四庫全書薈要目錄). (Catalogue of the choicest selection.)

d. Yüan Yüan, *Ssu Ku Wei Shou Shu Mu* (阮元: 四庫未收書目). (Items not included in the *Descriptive Catalogue*.)

e. Hu Lo, *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu Tsun Mu* (胡虩: 四庫全書存目). (A catalogue of those merely recorded items.)

f. Fei Mo Wên Chang, *Ssu Ku Shu Mu Lueh* (費莫文昌: 四庫書目略), 1870. (A catalogue which combines the *Abridged Catalogue* and No. e.)

g. Shao I Ch'en, *Ssu Ku Chin Ming Mu Lu Piao Chu* (邵懿辰: 四庫簡明目錄標注), 20 books. (Emphasizing discrimination of editions.)

h. Fan Chi Hsi, *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu Tsung Mu Yun Pien* (范志熙: 四庫全書總目韻篇), 5. Vol. in MSS. (A *Rhyming Index* of all items.)

i. Hsü Sung, *Ssu Ku Ch'ueh Shu Mu* (徐松: 四庫闕書目), in MSS.

j. Li Tsu Jan, *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu Shu Mu Piao* (李滋然: 四庫全書書目表), 1910. 4 Vols. (Simplification of No. f.)

k. Chen Yuan, *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu Kao I* (陳垣: 四庫全書考異), 40 books.

[3] *Notes on Chinese Literature*, p. XI.

difficulty of practical use of the *Descriptive Catalogue* in 1878, Mr. W. F. Mayer writes:[1]

> No other clue to the discovery of any individual title is afforded. To trace out a work is consequently not always an easy matter; and the preparation of a radical (if not an alphabetical) index to the catalogue is an obvious desideratum.

Though Fan Chi Hsi (范志熙) finished his laborious *Rhyming Index* for the 'Four-treasure Library' in 1871, it is still in manuscript form, but even if it had been published, it could not be of much use because of the intricate arrangement of the tones. However, two scientific indexes are now being prepared for the Ssu Ku collection by two outstanding organizations.[2]

Nearly one hundred years after Chien Lung's book campaign, the 'Index Expurgatorius' began to appear. The emperor gave warnings in one of his decrees in 1773[3] that people should not hide books that might attack the ruling family, for if they should be detected in such an act, heavy punishment would follow. As a result, Hai Cheng (海成), the viceroy of Kiangsi province, memorialized the throne in 1776 about his success of gathering more than 6,000 volumes of prohibited books which came either from purchases or from voluntary surrender by the people. His Highness was greatly pleased and urged other viceroys in different provinces to similar action. In order to gain favor of the emperor and to attain promotion, many officials carried this measure to an extreme. Chien Lung's original idea was to weed out the objectionable accounts, stated chiefly in the writings of those

[1] Bibliography of the Chinese Imperial Collections of Literature, in *China Review*, VI, 297.

[2] Yenching University Library at Peiping and Boone Library School at Wuchang. Cf. *Bulletin of the Library Association of China*, VII, 4, p. 18.

[3] Shen Ch'u, *op. cit.*, Edict section.

who lived at the end of the Ming dynasty, but the officials enlarged the scope and included in the list all writings against alien government. This wiped out a large portion of the writings published from 1567 to 1644. Under Chien Lung's reign more than two thousand titles were destroyed. According to the *Index Expurgatorius* (清代禁書總目四種), 756 titles are recorded as offending (違礙書目), 1,531 as prohibited (禁書總目), 146 to be burned in entirety (全燬書目), and 182 to be burned in parts (抽燬書目). They were chiefly historical writings which record cruel events and memoirs or official memorials which contain bitter attacks. Undoubtedly, a great many of them were unreasonably destroyed and, in mourning over this great loss of literary China, the noted scholar, Chang Ping Lin (章炳麟) has written a lamentable and indignant account.[1] But little by little some of these lost works have been recovered. According to the report of the National Library of Peiping, more than one hundred titles have been collected from various private libraries within two years.[2]

The story of the 'Four-treasure Library' would not be complete without reporting what happened to the various sets in succeeding ages. Of the seven manuscript copies, only three complete sets are still in existence and one of these is now located in Manchuria. The Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) swept away the two entire sets at Chinkiang and Yangchow, and would have destroyed the entire copy at Hangchow had not the book lover, Ting Ping (丁丙) succeeded in saving half of it. The one preserved at Wên Yuan Ko shared the fate of all the artistic treasures in the Summer Palace when the allied force of Great Britain and France captured Peking in 1860 and set Yuan Ming Yuan on fire. The Mukden set

[1] Ai Fen Shu (哀焚書). In the collection of *Chang She Ts'ung Shu* (章氏叢書).

[2] *The National Library of Peiping and Its Activities*, p. 10.

was moved down to Peking two years after the establishment of the Chinese Republic, but at the special request of the educational circle at Mukden, it was returned to its original place in 1926. After the Japanese army occupied Mukden in September, 1931, this set was reported to have formed part of the so-called Manchukuo National Library.[1] Luckily the Jehol set was moved down and has been in the custody of the National Library of Peiping for many years, otherwise it might have shared the same fate. The Wên Yuan Ko copy, with a few titles missing,[2] is still preserved in its original abode under the care of the Old Palace Commission. The set at Hangchow, which was partially destroyed during the Taiping Rebellion, was recompleted in 1924 by sending special scribes to copy the volumes lacking from the Wên Yuan Ko copy at Peiping. This set and the one at the National Library of Peiping are the only complete sets in China.

Various attempts have been made to print the 'Four-treasure Library' but none has materialized. In 1921 the Chinese government wanted to print it, but certain obstacles arose and the plan was dropped. In 1924 the Commercial Press of Shanghai negotiated with the Imperial House to print the set in Peking, but the scheme was abandoned when the government intervened. Again, the government itself took the matter up in 1925 with the Commercial Press for the printing of the Jehol set. Everything was well arranged and in fact the books were already packed for shipment to Shanghai, when civil war broke out and put an end to the whole project. Later, 1929, the Mukden government made known its decision to print the set preserved there. A careful estimate had been made and the form for subscription had actually been sent out, but nothing further was heard. After all, however, the

[1] Chang Mu Hsin, Wei Manchukuo Kuo Li Tu Shu Kuan Chi Wen. In *Chekiang Tu Shu Kuan Quarterly*, II. No. 4.
[2] T. Y. Shih, *op. cit.*, pp. 56, 57.

publication of the whole collection is not a matter of great importance, for most of the important works have been issued in separate form by various publishing houses.

Aside from the sets of the 'Four-treasure Library' which were housed in special buildings, there were a few other places in which collections were stored. The first of these was Chao Jen Tien (昭仁殿), where the famous set of the *Tien Lu Lin Lang* (天祿琳琅) was kept. In the year 1744, Chien Lung ordered that the best editions of books that could be found in all the palace buildings should be assembled in this hall and bestowed upon the collection the name of *Tien Lu Lin Lang*. Ten years later some effort was made to systematize the whole collection, and a catalogue was compiled. In this catalogue, as stated in the *Kuo Ch'ao Kung Shih*,[1] there were 429 titles, distributed as follows: 71 of Sung editions (11th century), 1 of Kin edition (12th century), 20 tracings of Sung editions, 85 of Yuan editions (13th-14th centuries), and 253 of Ming editions (14th-17th centuries). The most celebrated items were the *History of the Former Han Dynasty* (前漢書), Sze-ma Kuang's *General History of China* (資治通鑑) and *Poems of Tu Fu* (九家注杜詩). In the year 1797, under the reign of Chia Ch'ing (嘉慶), a second series of this Catalogue was prepared, containing 663 new titles. The additions comprise some of the best Chinese incunabula published during the five previous dynasties, including one printed edition and a manuscript copy of the early Tartar period (A.D. 907-1168). The whole collection of the *Tien Lu Lin Lang*, therefore, formed a little library of 12,258 volumes.[2]

At the back of this building, there was a separate section called Wu Ching Sui Shih (五經萃室) which was specially

[1] Second series, chüan 79.
[2] *Ibid.*, chüan 80.

used to house the noted *Five Classics*[1] printed by the celebrated printer Yao Ko (岳珂), of the Sung dynasty. It consisted of ninety books, and was considered the best edition of these classics. But this set had disappeared entirely when an inventory was taken by a special committee (清室善後委員會) in 1925.[2] As to the *Lien Lu Lin Lang* collection, the 429 titles in the first collection are believed to have been destroyed by fire in 1797. Of the 663 titles in the second acquisition, 311 were found on the shelves.[3] The rest have apparently been dispersed either by theft or by the last boy emperor, Henry Pui-yi, who gave a large portion of it to his brother, Pui-chieh (溥傑) as a personal gift.[4]

The next place to establish a special collection was the Li Tsao T'ang (摛藻堂), in which the *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu Wei Yao* was kept. This set, as already mentioned, contains the choicest items from the 'Four-treasure Library' in manuscript form, prepared in the same manner and at the same time as the Ssu Ku collection, except that it was finished four years earlier. Originally there were two sets, the other being housed at Wei Yü Shu Shih (味腴書室) in Chang Chun Yuan. But the latter, sharing the same fate as the Ssu Ku collection in Yuan Ming Yuan, was destroyed by the allied force in 1860. The remaining set, which had supposedly been lost long ago, is still in perfect condition under the care of the Old Palace Commission.[5] According to the catalogue of this collection (四庫全書薈要目錄), the distribution

[1] *Book of Changes* (易經), the *Book of History* (尙書), the *Book of Odes* (詩經), the *Book of Rites* (禮記), and the *Chun Chiu* (春秋).

[2] For detailed statement, see the *Library Science Quarterly*, I, 400.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 397–403.

[4] Lists of presents to his brother by Pui-yi recording 175 Sung printed editions, 10 manuscript copies of Sung editions, 17 Yuan editions and 1 manuscript copy of Ming edition.

[5] C. I. Chen, Account on the Ssu Ku Chuan Shu Wei Yao in *Bulletin of the Library Association of China*, I, 2, p. 19.

of titles is: 173 in classics, 70 in history, 82 in philosophy, and 139 in belles-lettres.

Perhaps the great contribution that the emperor, Chia Ching, made in the enlargement of the Imperial Library was the setting up of the *Wan Wei Pieh Ts'ang* (宛委別藏) in Yang Hsin Tien (養心殿). This collection, embracing 167 titles in three series, comprises works that are not included in the *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu.* This enrichment of the Imperial Library was, however, brought about by a noted scholar, Yüan Yüan (阮元), who memorialized the throne concerning the importance of its preservation. The content of this collection can be traced in the catalogue drawn up by Yüan Yüan.[1] Fortunately, this set had been kept intact in the old palace for a century and is now preserved under the care of the Palace Commission.

There were a great many books kept in various buildings such as Wei Yü Chai (位育齋), Mou Ch'in Tien (懋勤殿), Ch'ing Yang Kung (景陽宮), etc., but they had been assembled and were carefully listed.[2] Among the exhibitions that the Old Palace Commission displayed on November 5, 1925, the most illustrious items were as follows: celebrated for rarity is the printed copy of *Chun Chai Tu Shu Chih* (郡齋讀書志); an annotated catalogue of a private library of the Sung dynasty by Chu Chao Tê (衢昭德); the manuscript copy of *Ch'ieh Yün* (切韻) by the noted woman calligrapher, Wu Tsai Luan (吳彩鸞) of the T'ang dynasty; the *Buddhist Texts* by Hsü Tao Kuan (許道琯) of the Sung dynasty; and the *Hsin Ching* (心經) by the famous calligrapher, Chao Meng Fu (趙孟頫) of the Yuan dynasty. Distinguished for its rare beauty is the *Collection of Literary Essays* (昭明文選) which the emperor, Chien Lung, ordered the twenty-one best calligraphers in the Han-lin Academy to put in manuscript form.

[1] *Ssu Ku Wei Shou Shu Mu* (四庫未收書目).
[2] *Report of the Old Palace Commission:* The book section.

In spite of fires and wars, a large portion of the imperial book treasures has been handed on to the present generation. For this great contribution to literary China, we are chiefly indebted to the two emperors, Kang Hsi and Chien Lung. It is true that the comparatively peaceful atmosphere under their reign gave them special opportunity to assemble the book treasures of the country, but their personal interest in literature played no less important a part. The books which they collected served not merely to decorate the shelves of the imperial household; they were actually read by both of these emperors. It should be noted that at the early stage after the Ssu Ku collection had been completed, Chien Lung, following the system of the Sung dynasty, appointed special officials in charge of the Imperial Library, but almost immediately these offices were automatically cancelled, for there was no need of them. However, the officials retained their titles, even though they were deprived of all function. Instead, the eunuchs were employed to do the janitors' work. Because the whole officialdom was chiefly composed of men of letters, the creation of an office of librarianship was somewhat out of place. For the same reason, in Chien Lung's book campaign there was no single outstanding personage responsible for its ultimate success such as Isaac Vossius who worked for Queen Christina of Sweden or J. B. Colbert for Louis XIV of France. Both Kang Hsi and Chien Lung lived long and they accomplished much. The succeeding emperors could easily find excuses for their inability to increase the imperial collection; nevertheless, they were, in fact, not of literary inclination. But in maintaining these treasures that had been handed down to them by their forefathers, they are to be commended for their custodianship.

CHAPTER III

PRIVATE LIBRARIES

Although there were more than five hundred private libraries existing during the Ch'ing period, over half of them were located within the provinces Chekiang and Kiangsu. During the period, the Chekiang province alone had 267 individual book collectors.[1] And during the book campaign of Chien Lung in 1772, it made the largest contribution of all the provinces to the formation of the Ssu Ku collection.[2] It might be said that the favorable position of these two provinces as the center of communication between the various parts of the country might facilitate book accumulation there, but, on the contrary, most of the famous book shops were in Peking. The Liu Li Ch'ang (琉璃廠), the booksellers' quarters, monopolized the book market for many centuries. Possibly because of their wealth through commercial profit, the people in these provinces could afford to spend more money for books. But wealth alone can not be taken as the chief or sole factor in such a result, because far down in the south, there were also very prosperous provinces which did not collect books on a similar scale. Still the two factors suggested did form a background favorable to the development of private libraries. Because they lived in the commercial center of the country, the people were wealthier than those in other places, and they could afford good education and better facilities for study. In fact, most of the scholars who obtained high degrees in the literary examinations came from

[1] Ch'en Pai, Sketches of Book Collectors of the Chekiang Province, in the *Ch'ing Hua Weekly*, Vol. 37, p. 1190.

[2] See pages 31, 32.

these two provinces. Thus, Chekiang and Kiangsu became the literary center of old Cathay. Even early in the Ming dynasty, many of the celebrated private libraries were established there. By the time of the Ch'ing dynasty, a well-established tradition had been formed and the entire country looked upon that area as the center of the book world.

In discussing the book collectors of the Ch'ing period, Hung Liang Chi (洪亮吉)[1] classified them under five categories: the research workers; the textual critics; the hoarders; the bibliophiles; and the book dealers. Such a division, however, is quite arbitrary, and in many cases the categories overlapped. But for the purpose of the present discussion, it serves to illustrate the types of book collectors of the period.

The first group, composed mostly of authors and writers, formed their collections to facilitate their own studies. They were for the greater part excellent and celebrated scholars. Having definite objects in view, they tended to specialize in their collections. Noted examples were Chu I Tsun (朱彝尊) and Ch'ien Ta Hsin (錢大昕). Chu (1629-1709) was a distinguished scholar and was once appointed by the emperor, Kang Hsi, as an editor in the compilation of the *History of the Ming Dynasty*. He thus had access to the valuable works in the Library of the Imperial Historiography. To take full advantage of this opportunity, he employed a noted calligrapher, Wang Lun, to copy for him the rare works in that library. His early collection contained much material concerning the history of the later part of the Ming dynasty, but it was all burned in his absence by his family for fear of being involved in the 'literary persecution.'[2]

While Chu was traveling through the country, he devoted most of his time to book collecting. His first acquisitions

[1] *Peh Kiang Shih Hua*, chüan 3.
[2] I. T. Chu, *Pao Shu Ting Chi*, chüan 35.

came from the remaining volumes of the famous Wan Chüan Lou (萬卷樓) of the Hsiang family. It was then a custom among book collectors to exchange the privilege of making manuscript copies of rare works with each other, and Chu's collection contained quite a number of these. The main growth of his library took place after he retired from official life. One of his friends later gave him 2,500 books and his library was then increased to more than 80,000 chüans. To house this collection he set apart two special rooms; one called Pao Shu Ting (曝書亭), meaning a portico for sunning books, and the other called Chien Tsai T'ang (潛采堂), signifying a hall of hidden treasures. The second contained the chief literary works of Sung and Yuan writers, while the first held books of all kinds, mostly the classics. In addition to the *Catalogue* (潛采堂宋元人集書目) which he made for the second collection, he compiled the well-known *Bibliography of the Classics* (經義考), a pioneer work in Chinese special bibliography.

Ch'ien Ta Hsin (1728-1804) was a historian, an archæologist and a scholar of extensive learning. While a member of the imperial board in the Han-lin Academy in 1757, he frequented the book shops at Liu Li Ch'ang in Peking. There he acquired more than 300 specimens of stone inscriptions of the Han and T'ang dynasties. This aroused his interest in forming a great collection of such materials for his historical studies. In order to develop such a collection, he solicited his friends in the official service to collect for him inscriptions of all sorts. Realizing that the great monuments were to be found in historical places, he made many trips to old temples and monasteries throughout the empire, seeking rare treasures. Many times he had to wash the accumulated dirt from the surfaces of the tablets and make the rubbings himself. After thirty years of untiring search, he possessed a collection of more than 2,000 items. With this library he held the key to many unsolved problems

in history. For each inscription he stated very carefully its locality, date, style of writing and the name of the calligrapher. In 1767 he won great fame by publishing his great work, *Researches on the Twenty-two Histories* (廿二史考異). Naturally he became the outstanding authority on inscription, and was often asked to identify unknown titles for his contemporaries. In speaking of the importance of inscriptions, he writes:[1]

> The study of inscriptions is really an indispensable tool for advanced work in classics and history. . . . Because of their perishability, many of the early writings on bamboo and silk are lost to us forever. Printed books and manuscript copies which had to go through so many hands in the process of transmission are likely to contain errors. Only stone inscriptions which might have been carved thousands of years ago retain their originality, and thus they are the only trustworthy documents.

In addition to his library of inscriptions, Ch'ien had a collection of books of which he made a descriptive catalogue called *Chu Ting Jih Chi Chao* (竹汀日記鈔). This collection, which contained chiefly works of history and archæology, was rather insignificant as compared with his library of inscriptions.

The second group of collectors consisted of those interested in securing the best texts of standard works. The collection of such texts became necessary because many books printed in the Ming dynasty contained serious mistakes, such as alteration of words and omissions from the text.[2] In order to point out mistakes, these collectors had to secure the best editions. The famous classicist, Lu Wen Chao (盧文弨, 1717–1795), made textual corrections one of his favorite avocations. Whenever he heard of a good edition, he endeavored

[1] *Chien Yen T'ang Wên Chi*, chüan 25, p. 3.
[2] A list of examples is given in T. H. Yeh, *op. cit.*, chüan 7, pp. 9–12.

to make a manuscript copy of it. He would then industriously examine the details of the text, and compare the copy with other editions. For his own satisfaction he used red ink to correct the mistakes he detected. He also used his brush patiently to fill out any indistinct strokes in the printed characters. Most of his collection, numbering a few tens of thousands of books, was carefully read and marked by him. He was greatly honored for his accomplishment in the textual criticism of the *Yih Chou Shu* (逸周書), a record of the Chou dynasty, which appears to be a relic of the pre-Christian era. A great portion of this work seems to have been lost at an early date and the remaining part contains lacunæ.

Another typical example of this group was Sun Hsing Yen (孫星衍, 1753–1823), a brilliant scholar and a noted book collector. He had made many manuscript copies, both at the Han-lin Academy in Peking and at Wên Lan Ko in Hangchow. Being associated with the governor of Shensi, Pi Yuan (畢沅), a great archæologist, he acquired an unusual knowledge of inscriptions and collected a large number of them himself. His collection, numbering 30,000 books, contained mostly excellent editions. The celebrated copy of the *Peh T'ang Shih Ch'ao* (北堂詩鈔) was one of his most valuable possessions. Among the texts he turned out, those of *Sun Tzu* (孫子) and *Wu Tzu* (吳子), on the Chinese military art of the pre-Christian era, were perhaps the best known. Unlike other book collectors, he lodged his library in his ancestral temple in order to make it accessible to all members of his own clan.

The third group of collectors were the book hoarders, those who looked upon their book collections in the sense of private property. The best representative of this class was Hsü Chien Hsüeh (徐乾學, 1631–1694). Being a rich official, Hsü could gather whatever books he wanted. And with the intention of building up a great library, he kept himself well

informed about the book world. In the description of Hsü's library, Huang Tsung Hsi, one of the great contemporary scholars who made a special attempt to save the dwindling book treasures, writes:[1]

> At the downfall of the Ming dynasty, many of the book collectors could not retain their precious possessions. Rare editions and valuable manuscript copies which had been buried in dust and dirt or locked up in cases and bags for hundreds of years all appeared in the market at the same time. Owing to the fact that he (Hsü) had so many friends and students throughout the empire, he was able to collect all sorts of valuable material. In fact, most of the great collections in the North and South were acquired for the adornment of his shelves.

To lodge the new acquisition, Hsü erected a library, consisting of seven sections, behind his own house. Here many hundreds of thousands of books were kept, and they were well arranged under the fourfold division. His library was also noted for its silk bindings and richly embroidered folders. Once Hsü took his sons to the library and told them of various things parents were wont to bequeath to their children, and said that generally the latter did not know how to value them or keep them. Pointing to the books on the shelves with a smile, he said, "This is what I shall pass on to you." And thus he named his library, Ch'uan Shih Lou (傳是樓), meaning passing on this.[2] It was said that the source material for drafting the ceremonial rites and governmental systems in the early Ch'ing period were obtained from this library, and this offers some indication of the extensive fields Hsü's collection must have covered.

The fourth group consists of persons who were really book lovers, to them, possession of a rare edition was the supreme

[1] T. H. Huang, *Ch'uan Shih Lou Ts'ang Shu Chi.*
[2] Y. Wang, *Ch'uan Shih Lou Chi.*

good fortune of life. Once they had acquired it, they would idolize it or sometimes even worship it. The best example is Huang P'ei Lieh (黃丕烈, 1765–1825), the most noted bibliophile of the whole Ch'ing period. He must have been a great lover of names also, for he gave himself twenty-six. After obtaining a hundred titles of Sung editions, he named his room Pai Sung I Ch'an (百宋一廛), meaning a lodge of a hundred Sung copies. At the same time he called himself 'Ning Sung Chu Jen' (佞宋主人), a great worshiper of Sung. When he secured from the Mao family a copy of the early Sung edition (960–1127) of *T'ao Chien's Poetry* (陶詩) and later a copy of the Southern Sung editions (1127–1279) of the same work with explanatory notes, he called his lodge 'T'ao T'ao Shih' (陶陶室). It was said that during the years 1801–1811 he performed sacrificial ceremonies to his books. On obtaining a rare work, he often made a fanciful picture to represent the idea of the book and solicited his friends to contribute verses to it. He compiled two catalogues of his library:[1] one for the Sung editions and the other an annotated list of his general collection with a very detailed account of the history of each item.

The last group contained collectors who handled books for the sake of commercial profit. Of this group there were two distinct types; the second-hand book dealers and the private traders. On the first there is an interesting work called *Liu Li Ch'ang Shih Ssu Chi* (琉璃廠市肆記), written by Li Wên Chien (李文潤) in 1769. In it the author describes the various characteristics of the different dealers and their specialties. Just as books were sold in the early fairs in Germany, so did book dealers take full advantage of the great festivals and exhibited their goods in front of the temples and

[1] *Chiu Ku Chu Sung Pen Shu Mu* (求古居宋本書目), and *Shih Li Chü Ts'ang Shu T'i Po Chi* (士禮居藏書題跋記).

monasteries in Peking.[1] Once a year these book dealers came down to the provinces Chekiang and Kiangsu to collect books. They were well acquainted with the historical background of the various collections, and what rare editions each of them possessed. Because Peking was the spot where most of the high officials and celebrated scholars met, these booksellers could make a better profit there than elsewhere. When T. H. Yeh visited the Liu Li Ch'ang in 1885, more than a hundred years after Li's book was written, he was still greatly impressed by the scene of officials and scholars frequenting this place after office hours and on holidays, taking back with them the few volumes they had bought and driving home peacefully and happily at sunset. In reflecting on this beautiful memory, he composed a long epic, as a supplement to Li's work, in which he describes the various activities in the book market.[2] The second type of this group consisted of men who were real book collectors but who, on account of their extensive knowledge of books, could at the same time make a good living by trading books. The best examples were Li Ko Ch'i (李柯溪) and T'ung Pei (童佩).

The above examples are cited to illustrate the different types of book collectors rather than the general characteristics of the whole group. In order to have a clear view of the common practice among the book collectors of the period, it is necessary to examine the influential book written by Sun Tsung T'ien (孫從添) on library economy. Though there had been one work published in the Ming dynasty on the same subject,[3] its presentation was far less complete and detailed than the one by Sun. The latter was a great book collector who lived during the later part of the eighteenth century. In

[1] W. C. Li, *Liu Li Ch'ang Shih Ssu Chi.*

[2] For the full text of the epic, see T. H. Yeh, *op. cit.*, chüan 9, pp. 30, 31.

[3] Chi Ch'eng Yeh's *Tan Sheng T'ang Ts'ang Shu Yo* (澹生堂藏書約) gives four discussions on books: reading, collecting, acquiring and discriminating.

his famous work called *Ts'ang Shu Chi Yao* (藏書紀要), a little manual for book collectors, he presents eight discussions on different phases of library economy. The first deals with acquisition, in which he tells the difficulty of securing books, the joy of obtaining the best editions, the pleasure of sharing experience with other collectors and the satisfaction of owning a rich collection. His treatment is more general and idealistic than specific and practical. "Whenever one discovers a rare edition in an unfrequented shop," he writes,[1]

> he should exert all his effort to obtain it. If the price is too much for him, he might have to pawn his clothes. When it has been acquired, he should value it like jewels. A good binder should be sought for its rebinding. Before one opens it for reading, he should burn some incense on the table and sip some bitter tea. This is a high taste that one should aim to cultivate.

The second discussion is on the subject of discrimination between editions. In order to be a worthy collector, one must know the history of each work, such matters as its author, date of printing, the number of manuscript copies in existence, its original text and owner. The best way to obtain this information is to examine the official list of publications of each dynasty, the catalogues of private collections, book reviews and all sorts of bibliographies. Sun indicates the various places in which the great collections are to be found and goes on to discuss the best editions for the standard works, such as the *Thirteen Classics* (十三經), the *Twenty-two Histories* (廿二史), etc. In general, he praises highly the excellent printing of the Sung editions which he differentiates into twelve kinds. Among them the choicest ones are the Shu Pên (蜀本), works printed in Szechwan province, the Lin An Pên (臨安本), works printed at Lin An, and the Yü K'e Pên (御刻本), those

[1] T. T. Sun, *Ts'ang Shu Chi Yao*, Part I.

printed under the imperial patronage. "In judging a real Sung edition," he explains,[1]

> it is necessary to examine carefully the color and material of the paper, the kind of ink, the style of characters, the number of words and lines, the method of printing the prohibited names and the indication of the number of chüans (volumes). . . . In a genuine Sung edition, the paper is smooth; it shows good taste and an antique style in the characters and printing; the ink is light black in color and the paper is light blue.

In the same manner he goes on to describe the different kinds of Yuan and Ming editions. As a whole the treatment is rather full and all book collectors would profit by the information he supplies.

The manuscript copy is his third topic of discussion. He starts with the tradition of copying books by students and how it developed into a profession. Generally the most rare works are done by famous calligraphers. As in judging a Sung edition, one must use great care in examining the paper, ink, style of writing and seals used. He states that very few manuscript copies of the Sung and Yuan dynasties are still in existence, but that a considerable number produced by the Ming scribes are in the market. Then he goes on to name the noted scribes in the different localities, such as Ningpo, Nanking, Soochow, etc. Of the manuscript copies, he particularly praises the traced Sung manuscripts produced by the Hsi Ku Ko. For certain works, such as *Wên Yuan Ying Hua* (文苑英華) and *Tai Ping Yü Lan* (太平御覽), he prefers those that were made in the Chia Lung period (1522–1572). He also indicates the variations in colored linings used by the scribes for their paper. Formerly yellow paper was used for manuscript copies, but since the imperial mandates were in

[1] T. T. Sun, *op. cit.*, Part I.

that color, the scribes used white instead. After a thorough discussion on the style of various writings, he ends with a brief review of some traced copies of pictorial works.

The fourth discussion is on textual correction. He says this work can be performed only by those who are industrious readers themselves and have extensive knowledge of various fields of learning. One must go through a text three or four times in order to ascertain its accuracy. In rare editions, corrections should be made on a slip of paper and carefully pasted on the top of the line (which runs vertically). Of course one must employ either a Sung or Yuan edition for the model. In case of doubt, one should seek the aid of philologists or experts in inscriptions. Sometimes it will help if a group of scholars can be assembled to express their opinions. The author then illustrates the technique of erasing characters, including the materials to be used. He asserts that "unless one can get scholars who really know how to make textual corrections, he simply wastes his money and time in trying to bring out reprints which will probably do more harm than good to future generations."

The fifth discussion concerns binding. The whole process of binding is systematically presented, including the materials to be used, the seasons favorable to bookworms, methods of preventing them, and the technique of mending books. In short, he emphasizes durability and good taste, and the particularly discourages the use of cloth folders.

The sixth discussion deals with cataloguing. The author thinks that only persons who have an extensive knowledge of books can perform this duty well. A successful cataloguer should have a thorough understanding of the book, a logical mind and a systematic classification. According to Sun's scheme, there should be four kinds of records. In the first place, there should be a main list of all books in the library arranged under the fourfold division; classics, history,

philosophy, and belles-lettres, or some other classification which had been employed by former collectors. Under each division or subdivision, blank spaces should be left for new entries. And at the end of each class, the number of items and volumes are to be given. In other words, it is a combination of an accession record and a classified list. Under each entry, the following information is to be recorded: the title, number of the book, the author (name and dynasty), compiler, editor, etc. For rare works, it is necessary to indicate the person who made the textual correction. The second record is to list separately both the printed and manuscript copies of the Sung and Yuan editions. They should be classified and recorded in the same manner as stated above, but with additional information concerning colophons, seals of former owners, and statements of completeness. For manuscript copies the name of the scribe should also be recorded. The third record is a shelf list. Every bookcase should bear a special number and a list by titles of the books which the case contains. If some one wants to borrow a book, his name should be recorded over the title on the list, together with the dates of issue and return. And lastly, there should be a record of bindings and incomplete volumes so that the owner can always know which titles are being bound, which are to be bound, and which manuscript copies are to be completed. For a private library these records should be sufficient, though the lack of an author index is serious.

The last two discussions deal with the preservation and sunning of books. In order to keep the books in good condition, frequent inspection is necessary. The author specifies the kind of wood that should be used for making bookcases. To elevate the poetic sense of the owner, he insists that the doors of the bookcases be carved with some famous verses of the T'ang poets. Good ventilation is strongly urged, and stone walls are much preferred. He thinks that it is better to house

the printed works and the manuscript copies separately. In addition to his description of the process of sunning books, its appropriate season and technique, he offers recipes for the prevention of bookworms, white ants and rats.

Sun's manual, brief as it is, was the only reference book on library economy for private book collectors during the entire nineteenth century. It is surprising how closely the suggestions given in it have been followed by book collectors, and even to-day it still has some influence in the shaping of modern Chinese libraries. Most of the library terminology and the methods of editing catalogues for rare works owe their origin to this little book, to say nothing of the criteria he provides for judging a genuine Sung or Yuan editions. In spite of all the new publications on library science that have been issued during the last few decades, no work which aims to give instructions for private collectors has yet appeared. Unless some work comes out to take its place, Chinese book collectors will have to depend on Sun's for various kinds of information.

Among the general characteristics of the book collectors of the Ch'ing period, the owning of special editions—especially Sung and Yuan editions—was outstanding. The reason why these editions were valued so highly is partly that they are rare and partly that they contain very accurate texts. According to T. H. Yeh,[1] the differentiation of editions can be traced to the *Catalogue of Sui Ch'u T'ang* (遂初堂書目) of Yu Mou (尤袤) in the Sung dynasty, while the specification of Sung editions originated in the later part of the Ming period when the Mao family drew up for its sale a list of the rare works of the famous library, Hsi Ku Ko. This list indicates the various Sung and Yuan editions so the purchaser could identify them. Thus, early in the Ch'ing period, the Hsi Ku

[1] T. H. Yeh, *op. cit.*, chüan 1, p. 5.

Ko of the Mao family and the Chiang Yün Lou of the Chien family took the lead in creating the vogue for the Sung and Yuan editions. After the latter collection had been destroyed by fire, the number of available rare editions rapidly decreased. In fact, the value of a collection was measured by the number of such editions which it contained, and it was not unusual to find many collectors boasting of their Sung editions. This vogue had become so popular that when the catalogue of the imperial collection, *Tien Lu Lin Lang*, was prepared, the differentiation of editions was carefully noted. Private collectors sometimes created special names for their collections based upon the number of Sung editions they had,[1] and persons who possessed these treasures generally made special catalogues for them. The vogue for Sung editions spread even to Japan, and in the catalogue, *Ku Wen Chiu Sho Kao* (古文舊書考) by Mr. Kan Shimada (島田翰), and *Ching Chi Fang Ku Chi* (經籍訪古志) by Dr. Tatsuyuki Mori (森立之), the authors give minute descriptions of the Sung and Yuan editions.

Although book collectors of the period exhibited great interest in owning Sung and Yuan editions, they were equally interested in possessing manuscript copies. The reason is obvious; in the first place, the supply of the Sung and Yuan editions was very limited and they could be acquired only by the wealthy collectors. Secondly, the work of the scribes had been developed into a highly skilful profession in the Ming dynasty, and their productions were no less attractive than the early printed books themselves. Before the invention of printing in China, all early works were in manuscript form, but as more copies could be produced by block printing, the hand written copies gradually disappeared. There are

[1] Huang P'ei Lieh named his special collection 'Pai Sung I Chien,' meaning a room of one hundred Sung copies, and Lu Hsin Yuan called his 'Pai Sung Lou' signifying a tower of two hundred Sung editions.

manuscript copies of the T'ang, Sung and Yuan dynasties still to be found in the old imperial library,[1] but they are few in number. Most of the manuscript copies that the collectors of the Ch'ing dynasty possessed unusually came from the Ming period. The ones which they valued most were copies produced by the famous scribes, Wu Pao An (吳匏安), Yeh Kun Shan (葉崑山), Wên Hêng Shan (文衡山) and others.[2] These works were written in beautiful hands and their price was high.[3] Each of these scribes had his own style, including a particular color of linings, a definite number of lines to a page, and special designs. The leading private libraries which were rich in manuscript copies were the Hsi Ku Ko, Chiang Yün Lou, Shu Ku T'ang and Ch'uan Shih Lou.

In addition to acquiring copies produced by professional scribes, many collectors employed skilful calligraphers to make manuscript copies for them. A noted example was Chu I Tsun.[4] These collectors competed with one another not only in the quality of paper and ink used for such purpose, but also in beauty of bindings. Since rare works could be obtained in the early days only by copying from one another, many collectors did the copying themselves. These copies were very carefully done, and exactly in the form that the owners wanted.

Just as occidentals have a liking for book plates of fine design, so Chinese book collectors cultivated a taste for seals. Like the book plates, the seal is an attempt to indicate the ownership of the book in an artistic manner. In general, Chinese seals intended for this purpose were written in the Chuan (篆) or the Li (隸) style. The former, sometimes called the 'seal character,' consists of thin, smooth strokes; the latter

[1] See page 45.
[2] T. H. Yeh, *op. cit.*, chüan 10, pp. 13–20.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[4] See pages 48, 49.

of heavy, square strokes. These seals designed in various shapes were usually made of fine stone and cut by skilful engravers. Books often bore five or six different seals, some signifying the various names of the owner, such as his poetic taste of his official title, and some, the name of the collection or of the library. Frequently one finds seals containing short verses composed by the collectors themselves. In the library seal of Wu Chien (吳騫), these words were written: "Cold can be endured without clothes or hunger without food, but books are indispensable to life." And in that of Chen Shan (陳鱣): "This book was obtained with great difficulty. Let my posterity not forget it."

The book collectors of the period are further characterized by the fantastic names which they gave their special collections and by the catalogues of their libraries which they compiled. Most of the library names were better known than the names of the collectors themselves. But after all, these names were nothing but a mere show of elegance. As a rule, most of the printed catalogues of these private collections employed the system of the fourfold division, and in their entries of rare editions they gave very detailed accounts of the imprints and a long history of previous ownership. It is through these catalogues that the history of the outstanding collections has been traced.

In reviewing the most important private collections of the period, it is interesting to find that in a period of three hundred years during which as many as five hundred book collectors carried on their work, the chain of possession of a celebrated library was unbroken. At one time the rare editions were scattered and at another they came together again in the possession of one individual.

The beginning of this long line of libraries can be traced back to the collection gathered by Ch'ien Ch'ien I (錢謙益),[1]

[1] See page 12.

who lived in the transitional period between the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties. He obtained practically all the volumes of four great Ming collections; namely, the Ch'i Kuei Shan Fang (七檜山房) of the Yang family, the Hsuan Ching Shih (懸罄室) of the Chien family, the Fei Tsai Ko (匪載閣) of the Liu family and the Mo Wang Kuan (脈望館) of the Chao family. Ch'ien's specialties were Sung and Yuan editions, and before his collection was destroyed by fire, he had accumulated more than 3,000 titles. What remained at the time of his death—mostly fine editions of the Mo Wang Kuan—he gave to his kinsman, Ch'ien Ts'ang (錢曾). The latter was a great book lover and edited a catalogue of his own collection called *Shu Ku T'ang Shu Mu* (述古堂書目). In 1666-1667, Ch'ien Ts'ang sold all his duplicate Sung editions to Chi Chen I (季振宜). Just before the fire Hsu Chien Hsüeh (徐乾學)[1] had acquired some valuable copies from the Chiang Yün Lou. When Prince I Ch'in Wang (怡親王), son of the emperor, Kang Hsi, began to build up a library, through an agent, he acquired most of the best editions from these two families. But the royal family could not long retain the collection, and it was dispersed when the son was executed for rebellious crime. Huang P'ei Lieh (黃丕烈),[2] the bibliophile, bought the finest part of this prince's collection for his own library. After Huang's death, most of his collection went to Wang Shih Chung (汪士鐘), a great lover of rare editions, who also obtained some valuable collections of the early nineteenth century. But his activities were in vain, for before 1860 some of his treasures went to Yu Sung Nien (郁松年) of Shanghai, and after the Taiping Rebellion, the rest were acquired by Yang I Tseng of Shantung. In describing library conditions after the Taiping Rebellion, T. H. Yeh writes:[3]

[1] See pages 51, 52.
[2] See pages 52, 53.
[3] T. H. Yeh, *op. cit.* chüan 9, pp. 25, 26.

> Since the revolt of Hung (Hsiu Chuan) and Yang (Hsiu Ch'ing), only ashes and ruins could be found in the vicinity of the Great River to the north and south. The best book collections that had been accumulated in Kiangsu for the last two or three hundred years were mercilessly swept away. Fortunately the T'ieh Chin T'ung Chien Lou (鐵琴銅劍樓) of the Ch'u family at Changshu could still preserve its integrity and the Yang family at Liao Ch'eng made a special attempt to rescue the dwindling treasures. . . . Most of the good editions and noted manuscript copies were then assembled in the Pai Sung Lou of the Lu family at Kuei An and in the Pa Ch'ien Chuan Lou of the Ting family at Jenhou.

Thus during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, these four collections stood out most prominently. It is interesting to note, however, that with the possible exception of the last, these libraries contained most of the rare editions once possessed by Wang Shih Chung. The founder of the first collection was Ch'u Shao Chi, a retired official who had a deep interest in books. After ten years of collecting, he formed a library of more than a hundred thousand books which he read assiduously. When his contemporaries, the owners of the Ai Yih Lou (憂日樓) and Chi Jui Lou (稽瑞樓), ruined themselves by competing with one another in purchasing rare works, Ch'u bought over from them most of their Sung and Yuan editions. His son, Ch'u Jung, was a worthy successor, and rapidly enlarged his father's collection. He also compiled a descriptive catalogue of the Sung and Yuan editions. During the Taiping Rebellion, the two grandsons of the family saved the whole library by moving it to an isolated place north of the Great River. When the collection was returned to its original home, the family had a special painting made to celebrate this great event. This library has been well preserved and become a source of great pride to that locality.

The Hai Yuan Ko at Liao Ch'eng was originated by Yang I

Tseng (楊以增, 1787–1855) once chief supervisor of the Yangtze River during Tao Kuang's reign. He had collected several tens of thousands of books. When he secured the Sung edition of the *Book of Odes* (詩經), the *Three Books of Rites* (三禮), the *General History* (史記), the *Two Histories of Han* (兩漢書) and the *History of the Three Kingdoms* (三國志), he named the hall that housed them 'A room of four classics and four histories.' Most of his books were acquired in Kiangsu and many of them once belonged to the library of Huang P'ei Lieh. According to the catalogue, *Ying Shu Yü Lu* (楹書隅錄), compiled by his son, there are at least four or five hundred titles in excellent editions.[1] This collection was twice threatened with dispersal in 1925 and 1928,[2] but the worst fate it encountered was in 1929 when the library was occupied by the notorious bandit, Wang Kuan Chun (王冠軍) and his associates. Some of the books were carried away and sold, but many were burned as fuel for cooking or used as waste paper. Had not the governmental troops quickly arrived with a general who knew the great importance of this collection, the whole library would have been reduced to nothing. Part of this collection was sold by Yang Chin Fu (楊敬夫), one of the descendants of the family, who obtained $85,000 (Mex.) for 23 titles. The *Liu Liu Chou Chi* (柳柳州集) printed by Shih Tsai T'ang of the Sung dynasty was sold for $10,000 and the Sung edition of *Ch'ü Ts'u* (楚辭) for $7,500. The rest of the collection is still preserved in its old abode at Shantung.

The third outstanding collection, the Pai Sung Lou (百宋樓), belonged to Lu Hsin Yuan (陸心源, 1834–1894), once salt commissioner in Fukien province. His largest acquisition,

[1] A recent inventory indicates that there are more than 50 titles of rare editions that are not included in this catalogue.

[2] A very detailed account is given in the *Bulletin of the Library Association of China*, Vol. 4, pp. 12, 13.

consisting of 48,000 volumes, was purchased from Yu Sung Nien for $3,200 (Mex.). He obtained a large quantity of rare editions and beautiful manuscript copies during the confusion which followed the Taiping Rebellion. In ten years he was able to accumulate 150,000 books which he housed in two different places. The first was divided into two sections, one called Pai Sung Lou, for keeping the Sung and Yuan editions, and the other, Shih Wan Chüan Lou (十萬卷樓), for storing the rare editions of the Ming dynasty and the valuable manuscript copies. The second place was called Shou Hsin Ko (守先閣), in which he lodged all the ordinary editions and manuscript copies. In 1907, thirteen years after Hsin Yuan's death, his son, Lu Shun Pai (陸純伯) sold this famous library to Baron Iwasaki of Japan for $100,000. According to Shimada Hikosada,[1] the chief negotiator of the sale, there were in the collection only 110 titles of Sung editions and 155 of Yuan editions, together making a total of more than 4,000 volumes. This library is now in Tokyo.

The last celebrated collection belonged to the brothers of the Ting family at Hangchow. From their grandfather, Ting Ping (丁丙) and Ting Shen (丁申) inherited a collection of valuable books, but unfortunately it was destroyed during the Rebellion.[2] After their escape from the terror, they found that many of the books from the Wên Lan Ko[3] were scattered and being trampled on the road. Being very anxious to save this great library, the brothers went to Wên Lan Ko secretly at night and were able to remove more than 10,000 volumes which they hid in an isolated school building. After the Rebellion had been suppressed, the brothers reported the case immediately to the governor, who was greatly impressed by

[1] Pai Sung Lou Ts'ang Shu Yuan Liu Kao, in *Kuo Sui Hsueh Pao*, Vol. 4, p. 4.

[2] It was said that only one copy of the *Chou I Pen I* (周易本義) escaped the destruction.

[3] See page 37.

their act. When the rebuilding of Wên Lan Ko was completed in 1879, they returned all the volumes saved to their original shelves. As the two brothers saw the fate of the contemporary collections, they decided to gather what they could for the sake of preserving good literature. Through their thirty years of indefatigable effort, they were able to acquire nearly 10,000 separate titles, numbering 400,000 volumes. They erected separate buildings for this collection. The Shan Pen Shu Shih (善本書室) contained mostly works of Ming authors and of writers of their own locality, while the Hsiao Pa Ch'ien Chüan Lou (小八千卷樓) embraced more than two thousand titles in Sung and Yuan editions and some good manuscript copies of the Ming dynasty. In the Pa Ch'ien Chüan Lou, there were over 8,000 titles that were not included in the Ssu Ku collection and they were chiefly books of Buddhism, Taoism, fiction and drama. When the family was forced to sell the library to meet its debts, the governor, Tuan Fang (端方), fearing that it might follow the fate of the Pai Sung Lou, purchased it and turned it into a public library in 1910. This library was reorganized in 1927 and its name was changed to 'National Central Sinological Library' (中央大學國學圖書館).

In spite of all the destructive forces working together to bring misfortune to these different libraries, there was one thing that Chinese book collectors of the Ch'ing period had learned, to counteract these misfortunes; and that was the constant practice of reprinting the best works in their own collections. It was through that practice, or rather by their great benevolence, that most of the so-called lost books have survived. This will be one of the subjects of our discussion in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY SOME OF THESE BOOK COLLECTORS TO SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

In an able summary of the total achievement of the Ch'ing scholars, Liang Chi Chao[1] enumerated three contributions made by them to old learning; namely, the preparation of accurate texts of standard works, the detection of forgeries, and the recovery of long-lost books. It is interesting to note that all three contributions were of a scholarly nature and that some of the noted collectors made more than one of them. Textual restoration had become necessary because many of the old works were particularly difficult to read. Sometimes they contained so many obsolete words that they were incomprehensible to persons other than scholars; generally they had no punctuation or division of paragraphs. In order to make these works legible and understandable, the scholars had to furnish many explanatory notes. But to do this, they had to know first of all whether or not the text used was original. They employed various means to establish the original reading, such as comparison of editions and checking against other sources. To appraise an ordinary printed edition, they usually used a Sung copy as a standard, and to determine the precise meaning of obsolete words, they had to seek the help of competent philologists. The task was by no means easy, and sometimes it took a long while before they could come to a definite conclusion. It is also true that the printing done in the Ming dynasty was notoriously defective, and in order to obtain an accurate text, the process of textual

[1] C. C. Liang, *Chung Kuo . . . op. cit.*, p. 361.

correction was essential. In the early period of the Ch'ing dynasty, Ch'ien Ts'ang[1] and Ho Cho (何焯) were the outstanding personalities in this field, and they were succeeded by Lu Wen Chao,[2] Huang P'ei Lieh,[3] Lu Hsin Yuan,[4] Wang Nien Sun (王念孫) and many others. Most of these scholars were celebrated collectors of the period. As we review the texts on which they labored, we find that most of them were works of early philosophers of the Chou dynasty (Pre-Christian era).[5] It must be remembered that after the emperor Wu Ti (漢武帝) of the Han dynasty suppressed all philosophical doctrines of the early period in favor of the teaching of Mencius, many works of these free thinkers had been entirely forgotten. Through laborious research, these scholars made possible a resurrection of their works from an oblivion of nearly fifteen hundred years. Once brought to light, they were treated, at the middle of the Ch'ing period, as equal in importance to the classics.

Detection of forgeries was the second important achievement of the Ch'ing scholars. It became an independent field of research from the time that Hu Ying Lin (胡應麟) of the Ming dynasty issued his great work, *Ssu Pu Cheng Wei* (四部正譌). This study was fully developed in the Ch'ing period when the celebrated work, *Ku Chin Wei Shu Kao* (古今僞書考), began to appear. This erudite investigation of ancient and modern forgeries was written by the collector Yao Chi Heng (姚際恆). He enumerated a number of works which he suspected to be forgeries. Because the Ch'ing scholars gave too much weight to the classics, nobody dared to utter anything against them unless he had strong grounds for questioning them and had plenty of evidence to support his opinion

[1] See page 63.
[2] See page 50.
[3] See page 53.
[4] See page 65.
[5] C. C. Liang, *Writers of the Ch'ing Dynasty*, p. 97.

Although Yao's work contained many excellent and well-founded arguments, some of them were merely dogmatic and radical assertions. After all, it is not always precision of statement that counts, but the provocative spirit in which it is written. Who dared to doubt the very words of the sages? The classics were then considered as infallible as was the Bible by the early Protestants. Yet Yao challenged them and questioned their authenticity. This was a bold innovation, and established a new method in scholarship. For this reason his book had a momentous influence on the minds of the students of that period.

The third achievement was the recovery of long-lost works. The compilation of the *Ssu Ku Chuan Shu* initiated this movement by revelation of certain lost works in the *Yung Lo Ta Tien*. From that time on, various attempts were made to recover important works which were recorded in the official lists of publications of previous dynasties. Many scholars devoted their whole lives to the search for such missing treasures. As a result, many valuable works which had been hidden for centuries came to light again. Among the more noted were the dialogues and treaties by ancient philosophers of the Chou and Chin dynasties, explanatory notes on the classics by writers of the Han period, and official historical records of the Wei Chin era (third to fifth centuries). For the most part, these scholars obtained their source materials from the great works of the T'ang and Sung dynasties, such as the *I Wên Lei Chu* (藝文類聚), the *Ch'u Hsüeh Chi* (初學記), and the *Tai Ping Yü Lan* (太平御覽). It is true that what they found here often consisted of only a few fragments, but through them a glimpse of the masterpieces of ancient writers could be had. Yu Hsia K'o (余蕭客), a noted pupil of the great teacher, Wei Tung (惠棟), inaugurated this movement in his brilliant work

called *Ku Ching Chieh Kou Chen* (古經解鉤沉). Ma Kuo Han (馬國翰) in his *Yu Han Shan Fang Chi I Shu* (玉函山房輯佚書), a collection of several hundred titles of recovered works, completed the task. This re-discovery of ancient books furnished a quantity of new materials to students of many fields.

Yet after all, these contributions of the scholars were essentially in method. If we examine them carefully, we find that they represent what is called to-day the historical method. It is interesting to note, however, that although the fundamental principles of historical criticism were developed independently both in China and in Europe, their conclusion closely coincide. In a letter to a friend discussing the difficulty of textual criticism, Tuan Yu Ts'ai (段玉裁), a noted philologist, writes:[1]

> There are two difficulties in the process of criticism: the determination of the genuineness of the text and the evaluation of the validity of its interpretation. The former should precede the latter. By text we mean the original copy drafted by the author himself, and by interpretation we mean the exact meaning which the writer intends to give. . . . If one mistakes the first he may misrepresent what the author wrote, and if he fails in the second, he may give an erroneous opinion of the author's original meaning.

Thus we may understand how, in the movement for the 'Scientific study of the Classics' under the Ch'ing dynasty, the book collectors played an important part, although that part was limited to the field of books. But without their contribution there would probably have no Chinese 'Renaissance;' their contribution constitutes the very essence of Chinese scholarship of that period. Although there were many others who were not book collectors who participated in the

[1] Y. T. Tuan, *Ching Yun Lou Chi.*

development of the historical method, the book collectors could rightly claim that their contribution was probably the greatest.

There was one eminent and unique contribution which the book collectors could call their own, and that was the reprinting of books. According to Wang Ming Ch'ing (王明清)[1] of the Sung dynasty, this practice was originated by Wu Chao Yu (毋昭裔) in the tenth century, when he reprinted the famous Wên Hsuan (文選), a collection of literary essays. Since then the idea of reprinting valuable works spread, and it was considered one of the noble benefactions which could be bequeathed to society.

It is interesting to observe that among the early Sung reprints, aside from the standard works of the classics, medical books were specially emphasized. Popular titles were *Mo Ching* (脈經), a treatise on the pulse; *Ch'ien Chin I Fang* (千金翼方), a collection of medical recipes; and *Pen Ts'ao* (本草), on herbal. To spread medical knowledge by printing was considered the performance of a good deed for all humanity. With a similar idea, T. H. Yeh has said:[2]

> Accumulating wealth is not as good as accumulating books, and accumulating books is not as good as accumulating good deeds.... But there is one process whereby the possessor of wealth and a library can perform a good deed, and that is to reprint his literary treasure.

When this practice of reprinting was passed on to the period between the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, it received great amplification through the example of Mao Chin,[3] owner of the celebrated library of Hsi Ku Ko. Because he possessed a

[1] In the *Fei Chu I Hua* (揮麈餘話) the story runs as follows: When Wu was young and poor, he used to borrow this work from his friends, but the latter always showed a great reluctance in letting him have it. Hence he resolved that if he ever had a chance he would reprint the whole work to aid students in their studies. Later he became governor of Szechwan and carried out his resolution.

[2] T. H. Yeh, *op. cit.*, chüan 1, p. 1.

[3] See pages 10, 11.

great number of good editions, he was able to reprint, in addition to the standard works of the classics and histories, a collection of rare books called the *Ching Tai Pi Shu* (津逮祕書). His reprints cover chiefly good texts of poetry, drama, Taoism and the individual writings of the T'ang, Sung, and Yuan authors. In a colophon of a manuscript copy of the *Wu Ching Wên Tzu* (五經文字), his son, Mao I (毛扆), writes:[1]

> We used to have in our house twenty workmen who did the block engraving and printing. One day when I went in to see how the work was done, my father came in and said to me, 'I have been trying to save from our expenses for food and clothing funds to hasten this important task of reprinting, and now our blocks amount to more than a hundred thousand pieces which should be considered quite numerous. Yet I am afraid that the number is not even one-tenth of the rare works that should be preserved and propagated.'

Judging from the statement quoted above, we may safely conclude that book collectors were interested in the spreading of knowledge. After the two outstanding emperors, Kang Hsi and Chien Lung, issued the massive publications under the imperial patronage, reprinting books became popular among the great book collectors. The talented young Manchu, Nei Lan Cheng Tê (納蘭成德), a noted book collector, took the lead among the nobles. His great contribution was the printing of the famous *Tung Chi T'ang Ching Chieh* (通志堂經解), a collection of interpretations of the classics since the Sung dynasty. This work, consisting of 1,200 books, was sometimes considered somewhat biased, because it contained only the opinions of scholars belonging to the Sung School of Learning. But its great effect on the scholarship of that period is undeniable. On the one hand, it attempted to preserve the great works of the Sung and Yuan writers and on the other, it

[1] S. C. Yang, *Ying Shi I Lu*.

endeavored to systematize the mass of materials on the classics. Later generations can hardly realize and appreciate what this work meant to the scholars of its own period who, before it appeared, had to work without any assistance from indexes and bibliographical guides. Aside from its merit as a saver of time and expense, this synthetic study provided a comprehensive survey of the ways in which opinion of the classics had changed. It was at first suspected that this work was really done by Hsü Chien Hsüeh,[1] the noted book collector who wanted to assist Cheng Tê to fame. But Cheng Tê showed such great talent in his later publication that the critics gradually ceased to deny his share in this great work.

Among the high officials in the Chien Chia period, the most zealous promoters of learning and reprinting were Pi Yuan (1730–1799) and Yüan Yüan (1764–1849). Yüan was a literary chancellor of Shantung and Chekiang provinces and also governor of the Two-Hu and Two-Kwang provinces. It was due to his memorial that the emperor Chia Ching made a special effort to preserve a collection of important works omitted from the 'Four-treasure Library.' When Yüan took up his official duty in Chekiang, he initiated the idea that important works should be kept in isolated places, such as temples and monasteries in distant mountains. His theory was based on the fact that the important work, *Ku Wên Yuan* (古文苑), a collection of various classes of literature, was found by Sun Chu of the Sung dynasty in the bookcase of a Buddhist temple, where it had been deposited during the T'ang period. Accordingly, he selected the Ling Yin Monastery (靈隱寺) at Hangchow and the Chiao Shan Monastery (焦山寺) at the outlet of the Yangtze River for housing two collections of important books, and left the custodianship to his monk friends. Being a leading figure in literary circles, he had written and edited more

[1] See pages 51, 52.

than thirty books himself. Wherever he went, he paid special attention to the literary production and local history of that region. Among the books he printed, the most outstanding were *Explanatory Works on the Thirteen Classics* (十三經注疏), *Huang Ching Ching Chieh* (皇清經解), and *Wên Hsuan Lou Ts'ung Shu* (文選樓叢書). Pi was once a governor of Shensi and Hunan, and edited a large number of works on geography and history. His most celebrated productions were the *Extension of the Tzu Chih Tung Chien* (續資治通鑑) and the *Ching Hsun T'ang Ts'ung Shu* (經訓堂叢書). Both Pi and Yuan possessed very rich collections of their own, and owing to the eminent positions they occupied, they were able to secure outstanding scholars to assist them in their reprinting of books. Although their productions were generally praised for the rare works on which they were based and the excellent texts they provided, they emphasized chiefly the superficial quality of excellent printing rather than the intrinsic quality of the texts. Both of them, however, set very good examples for subsequent governors.

In the later part of the Ch'ing dynasty, the most ardent promoter of reprinting was Chang Chih-tung (張之洞), a noted scholar, a high official, and a great reformer. Among Chinese students, he was remembered by his famous work, *Shu Mu Ta Wen* (書目答問), a comprehensive guide to Chinese literature.[1] This book discusses more than 2,000 titles arranged under the fourfold division. The selection includes only the finest editions with explanatory notes. At the end of this popular work is a special article written by the Viceroy himself to induce people to reprint books. Part of it reads as follows:[2]

[1] It was said that the great book collector, Mao Chuan Sun, was collaborator in this work.

[2] C. T. Chang, *Shu Mu Ta Wen*, Appendix.

> If a person can afford to do something worth while, but lacks prestige and scholarship, the best way for him to win a lasting reputation is to reprint old works. Unless all copies of these were destroyed, his name will always remain. Such men as Pao (鮑廷博), Huang (黃丕烈), Wu (伍崇曜), and Ch'ien (錢熙祚) will surely be remembered for five hundred years. This certainly is better than to write books or to print one's own works. Furthermore, to reprint books is to pass on the essential ideas of the ancient sages, to prevent ignorance in future generations, and at the same time, it is an important work of immediate benefit and a fine method of accumulating good deeds.

The Viceroy, however, did not only theorized on the everlasting blessing of reprinting books, but he also put it into practice himself. When he became Viceroy of Kwangtung province, he established the Academy, Kuang Ya Shu Yuan (廣雅書院), to promote learning. During his office he reprinted more than a hundred excellent works. Because of his eminence his example was contagious: all book collectors quickly became interested in the practice of reprinting books, and society at large encouraged it. As the movement spread through the country, we find that not only book collectors were anxious to do their share, but even the rich salt merchants, influenced by the vogue, participated in this activity. Consequently, the number of reproductions of old works under the reign of Kuang Hsu was almost twice as great as that of the Chien-Chia period.

It is impossible to enumerate here all the works which the book collectors produced, but a general description can be given. The prevalent custom was to print choice works in a collection under the name of Ts'ung Shu (叢書) or 'Repositories.' These collections may vary in the number of works included and in their scope, but they remain uniform in style. Such works, in Wylie's words,[1] are "analogous in some respect

[1] A. Wylie, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

to Constable's Miscellany, Bohn's series and others of the kind in England, but differ from them in that, instead of being published periodically, the complete series is issued at once as an indivisible whole." But we must not assume that this kind of production was initiated by the book collectors of the Ch'ing period. According to T. H. Yeh,[1] the publication of Ts'ung Shu commenced in the Sung dynasty and the earliest examples were the *Ju Hsueh Ching Wu* (儒學警悟) and the *Pai Chuan Hsueh Hai* (百川學海). The former appeared in 1202 and the latter in 1371. Although 'collections of reprints' were repeatedly produced in the Yuan and Ming dynasties, the process reached its ultimate form in the reproduction of trivialities during the last decades of the Manchu rule.

In order thoroughly to understand the 'repositories,' in terms both of quantity and of quality, a review of the special bibliographies dealing with them is necessary.[2] These bibliographies contain references to collections concerning works written in a special period or dynasty such as the *Han Wei Ts'ung Shu* (漢魏叢書) and the *T'ang Sung Ts'ung Shu* (唐宋叢書), some deal with writings of certain locality or authors of a particular region such as the *Chi Fu Ts'ung Shu* (畿輔叢書) and the *Ling Nan Wei Shu* (嶺南遺書), others with special subjects such as the *Sung Pai Kia Shih Ts'ung* (宋百家詩存) and the *Ku I Ts'ung Shu* (古佚叢書), which consist respectively of poetry and of ancient lost books. But most of the productions issued by book collectors consist of ancient and curious works selected from their own libraries. Celebrated examples were the *Shih Li Chu Ts'ung Shu* (士禮居叢書)

[1] T. H. Yeh, *op. cit.*, chüan 8, p. 20.

[2] There are several bibliographies of the Ts'ung Shu. The earliest one, called *Hui K'e Shu Mu* (彙刻書目), was compiled by Ku Hsu (顧修) in 1799 and later revised and enlarged successively by Chu Hsiu Jung (朱修榮) and Wang I Jung (王懿榮), and later supplemented by Lo Chen Yü (羅振玉). In 1902 Yang Shou Chin (楊守敬) published a more detailed work called *Ts'ung Shu Chu Yao* (叢書舉要), which was supplemented by Li Chih Ting (李之鼎).

by Huang P'ei Lieh, the *Chih Pu Tsu Chai Ts'ung Shu* (知不足齋叢書) by Pao Ting Po, and the *Shih Wan Chüan Lou Ts'ung Shu* (十萬卷樓叢書) by Lu Hsin Yuan. To indicate the nature of the contents of some of these collections, Mr. Wylie has provided excellent samples in the appendix to his work.[1]

Although these 'collections of reprints' follow no logical order and can be used only with a good index, which was then lacking, their very existence has meant much to scholars. In the first place, they represent the choicest works of practically all the celebrated private collections of the Ch'ing period which generally were not accessible even to intimate friends. With the coming of these reprints, a student could afford to possess a set at comparatively small cost. Secondly, these 'repositories' safeguard and guarantee their texts against total destruction or removal to other lands. It is true that the Pai Sung Lou and the Shih Wan Chüan Lou were removed to Tokyo in 1907[2] and the Han Fen Lou (涵芬樓) was burned during the Japanese invasion in 1932[3], but their choicest content has been preserved by thousands, and they are still accessible nearly everywhere in China. Perhaps this will explain partly, if not wholly, why the Ch'ing scholars could accomplish so much without the existence of public libraries. Thirdly, most of the fugitive material which formerly had not seemed worth publishing separately found its way into these collections. For this reason, the 'repositories' are sometimes the only source for obscure publications. This is particularly true of the regional collections in which the works of many of the less known authors are included. As a whole, the production of Ts'ung Shu has become essential to the preservation of literature.

[1] A. Wylie, *op. cit.*, Appendix.
[2] See page 66.
[3] K. M. Chiu, The Destruction of the Commercial Press Library, in *Library Journal*, 57 (1932), 649–51.

Yet preservation is not the only service to scholarship which these collections rendered. They also made available extensive new source material for the use of scholars. Undoubtedly they shed new light upon many problems of the classicists and philologists, and at the same time broadened the horizon of their learning. The classics and history soon ceased to be the only themes for life-long study. Adventures into new fields of learning were undertaken, and archæology, geography, astronomy, etc., were studied by many. As the bulk of material increased, the nature of literary production gradually changed in the later period. On the one hand, specialization was highly developed, and on the other, the method of synthesis came more and more to supplant that of analysis. After centuries of research dealing with fragmentary facts, now came a period of generalization, the final stage of the inductive method. And this phase of scholastic achievement could be reached only after assembling a vast quantity of material and information. For this, the Ts'ung Shu rightly deserve much credit, for it was by the instrumentality of these collective productions that the 'Scientific study of the Classics' movement really attained its goal at the end of the Ch'ing dynasty.

In addition to providing methods and materials, book collectors in this period made another important contribution to scholarship through the development of bibliographical tools. It was earlier pointed out that nearly all the great collectors published catalogues of their own collections. It is true that the books themselves were generally not accessible to the public, but through these catalogues, which are mostly in the form of classified lists, students could find out what works were extant in their own fields of study. Somehow or other, they ultimately obtained what they wanted.

Undoubtedly, the *Descriptive Catalogue of the 'Four-treasure Library'*[1] could furnish valuable information, but since it was an early publication, it had its limitations. The *Shu Mu Ta Wen*[2] prepared by Chang Chih-tung is an excellent work in itself, but it lacks both variety and extensiveness. So to students who were doing advanced research work, the catalogue of private collections[3] served as an important source of bibliographical information. Had a union list of all such catalogue been compiled, it would have saved many students the unnecessary toil of tedious search.

A second group of publications issued by many collectors consisted of 'Reading Notes' (讀書志). Such works record chiefly personal opinions concerning the books which the collector had read. In content, they resemble collections of book reviews, except that each one is the work of a single author. But on account of their style, students generally prefer them to the enumerative catalogues. Noted examples are *Yu Yang Shu Po* (漁洋書跋) by Wang Shih Chen and *Chu Ting Jih Chi Chao* (竹汀日記鈔) by Chuen Ta Hsin.

In addition to the general catalogues and the 'reading notes,' special bibliographies were issued by certain book collectors. Among these the best known were *Bibliography of the Classics* (經義考) by Chu I Tsun; *A General List of Inscriptions* (金石書目) by Huang Lap Yao; and the *Bibliography of the Book of Changes* (讀易別錄) by Chuan Wang Tsu. Although publications of this sort are few in number, they represent the only special bibliographies that China then possessed. These works gave the specialist a summary of what had been done in the field, and thus suggested possibilities for his future plan of study. In other words, they serve as the starting

[1] See pages 37–39.
[2] See page 75.
[3] S. F. Hsu, *op. cit.*, (pp. 14–18) gives an extensive selected list of these catalogues.

point of research. Because of their great usefulness, many other special bibliographies were compiled in later periods.

Another field of bibliography in which some collectors worked during this period was the study of book-making, printing and libraries. This sort of writing had not been attempted systematically by authors of the previous dynasties except for the two brief works produced at the end of the Ming period. One was called *Tan Sheng T'ang Ts'ang Shu Yo* (淡生堂藏書約) written by Chi Ch'eng Yeh (祁承㸁), a great book collector of Chekiang. It is a sort of contract or agreement which Chi had left for his children to keep. Attached to this contract, he left four instructive essays concerning reading, collecting, purchasing, and evaluating books. The other work was called *Liu Tung Ku Shu Yo* (流通古書約) by Ts'ao Jung, a noted collector of the literary works of Sung and Yuan authors. In this work, he discusses a scheme for circulating old books. These two treatises and the one by T. T. Sun which we have already mentioned[1] deal chiefly with the variety of editions, the technicalities of manuscripts, the methods of discrimination, and the histories of some rare works.

During the later part of Kuang Hsu's reign, Yeh Ch'ang Chih (葉昌熾), another noted book collector, published a work called *Ts'ang Shu Chi Shih Shih* (藏書紀事詩), an anthology for book collectors, in seven books. For each individual collector, he composed four verses describing either the special characteristics of the person or the peculiarity of his collection. But the most important part of this work lies in the quoted passages which Yeh gathered from various sources. Yeh often expresses his personal opinion at the end of these quotations, which sometimes run as long as eight pages. The book is, in fact, a biographical dictionary of book collectors. Because of its indication of sources, it serves, where

[1] See pages 54–59.

it does not directly furnish information itself, as a key to references. In regard to its limitations, his clansman, Yeh Tê Hui, criticized it for failing to give a historical treatment of printing itself and a systematic presentation of the important phases of textual criticism. This, however, was not due to the author's ignorance of these matters but to the particular literary form which he set out to produce. The critic, therefore, resolved to produce one of his own.[1]

The result of T. H. Yeh's resolution was the *Shu Lin Ch'ing Hua* (書林清話), the foremost authoritative treatise on books. Yeh was a great book collector and a noted bibliophile of the later Ch'ing period. Equipped with an unrivaled knowledge of books, he had been able to acquire the rarest works and most excellent editions that appeared in the book market. Basing his studies on his own collection and those of his contemporaries, he succeeded in tracing the historical development of the book, the quality of printing in the different dynasties, and numerous facts concerning books and manuscripts. Judging from his footnotes and illustrations, he must have consulted, if he did not possess, almost a complete set of catalogues, both those issued by the imperial press and those of private libraries. By a careful examination and comparison of the individual items, he made many discoveries and refuted many of the conclusions made by former scholars concerning the invention of printing. Though this work consists of five small volumes, he must have spent quite a lot of his time completing it. Had this book been written with fewer citations and in a more coherent style, it would be more widely read than it now is. Still, in any attempt to write the history of Chinese books and printing, Yeh's book will undoubtedly be an outstanding guide.

The discussion in this chapter up to this point has dealt

[1] T. H. Yeh, *op. cit.*, Preface.

with the direct contribution of book collectors during the Ch'ing period to the development of scholarship. There still remains to be considered another contribution made by them which is far more important but less tangible than this; namely, their own writings on non-bibliographical subjects. There are innumerable examples of such writing, but for our purpose one illustration will suffice. Perhaps one of the most influential figures in the shaping of the Chinese scholarship under the Ch'ing dynasty was Huang Tsung Hsi[1] (黃宗羲, 1610–1695), a noted thinker, a learned scholar and an outstanding book collector. According to Chuan Tsu Wang,[2] Huang obtained most of his books from the Tan Sheng T'ang of the Chi family and the Chuan Shih Lou of the Hsu family. He had in his library 30,000 books, most of which he had read. "The purpose of collecting books," he explains, "is to enable one to see and understand, and an unbridled indulgence in collecting itself will defeat this purpose." When he was in need of material for his studies, he usually went to copy it from private libraries.[3] While the dispersion of famous collections took place at the downfall of the Ming dynasty, he tried to save as many of them as possible. In this, he closely resembled Archbishop Matthew Parker of England, who played a similar important part in rescuing the dispersed monastic libraries in the sixteenth century. Huang wrote and edited more than sixty works, among which the *Ming Ju Hsüeh An* (明儒學案), the *Sung Yuan Hsüeh An* (宋元學案) and the *Ming I Tai Fang Lu* (明夷待訪錄) are the most eminent. The first work is a comprehensive history of the writers of the Ming dynasty and was the first book on the

[1] See pages 14, 52.

[2] T. W. Chuan, *Chi Chi Ting Chi Wei P'ien*, chüan 17.

[3] The private libraries he frequented were: the Shih Hsüeh Lou (世學樓) of the Niu family, the Ch'ien Ch'ing T'ang (千頃堂) of the Huang family, the Chiang Yun Lou of the Ch'ien family, the Tin I Ko of the Fan family.

history of Chinese scholarship. The second was of the same nature except that it deals with writers of the Sung and Yuan dynasties. This work was left unfinished at his death and was later completed by his son and Chuan Tsu Wang. The third work, consisting of a number of essays, was very instrumental in bringing about the establishment of the Chinese Republic. Because of his radical ideas and strong opposition to monarchical rule, it was reprinted for propaganda purposes by the reformers in thousands of copies on the eve of the Chinese Revolution.[1] Speaking of the scholastic achievement of Huang Tsung Hsi, Chuan Tsu Wang again writes, "For all his great learning and scholarship, he was largely dependent on his rich collection of books."[2]

There were other influential works written by book collectors of the period, such as the *Tu Li Tung Kao* (讀禮通考) by Hsü Chien Hsüeh, the *Han Hsüeh Shih Ch'eng Chi* (漢學師承記) by Kiang Fan, and others. But as a whole, their contributions to historical and topographical writings were far more numerous. By all these literary accomplishments, these book collectors demonstrated to students of their own time and later the important relationships which exist between scholarship and the possession of books. Even though it is an accident that some great scholars were also book collectors, that accident certainly had its effect in creating a tradition which linked books and scholarship.

[1] C. C. Liang, *Writers*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[2] T. W. Chuan, *op. cit.*, chüan 17.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

To complete the story of the development of libraries under the Ch'ing dynasty, it seems proper to present some of the facts concerning the Shu Yuan or academy libraries. These libraries were quite numerous, and although their collections were generally small and insignificant, they are worth describing because of the great influence which they exerted on Chinese scholarship. The Shu Yuan (書院) as an institution originated in the T'ang dynasty when the emperor, Tai Tsung, first instituted the Chi Yuan Shu Yuan (集賢書院) for the storing of important documents and books. But soon its character changed; instead of being an imperial archive, it became an institution of higher learning. These academies attained their highest development, however, in the Sung period when the four celebrated Shu Yuans[1] were established. These latter institutions, according to Dr. Hu Shih,[2] were usually created by private individuals who were interested in propagating certain doctrines and philosophies of particular teachers. They often employed an outstanding scholar to teach, and students were admitted without fee. These academies, as a rule, were located in beautiful places near mountains and woods, where solitude and tranquillity promoted concentration and study. To encourage independent research, the early Shu Yuan provided a large collection of books for reference purposes and the teacher acted more or less as an

[1] Shih Ku Shu Yuan (石鼓書院), Yao Lu Shu Yuan (嶽麓書院), Ying Tien Shu Yuan (應天書院) and Pai Lu Shu Yuan (白鹿書院).

[2] Shu Yuan Chih Shih Lueh, in the *Eastern Miscellaneous Magazine*, Vol. 21, No. 3, p. 142.

adviser or counsellor. So, in these academies, intensive study in specific subjects was emphasized. Their standard of learning, as Dr. Hu says,[1] corresponds to that of the graduate schools of the occidental universities, and the quality of their publications compares favorably with that of the latter's doctoral dissertations.

At the downfall of the Ming dynasty, many of the academies were destroyed, and the first attempt to restore them was made by the emperor, Shun Chih (順治), who, in the year 1657, rebuilt the Shih Ku Shu Yuan (石鼓書院) at Hengyang in response to the memorial of Yuan Kuo Yu (袁廓宇).[2] His purpose in reëstablishing this academy was to promote the worship of such ancient scholars as Han Yu (韓愈) and Chu Hê (朱熹). Later, in 1733, the emperor, Yung Ching, made special effort to establish such institutions as teaching or educational centers of the country. In order to encourage such activity, the imperial government offered a subsidy of one thousand taels[3] to the capital city in each province for such an institution. Students attending these academies received free room and board, and were exempt from payment of fees. Thus, the Shu Yuan was definitely made a governmental enterprise. When Chien Lung inherited the throne in 1736, he ordered these academies to be conducted according to the Sung model, especially that of the Pai Lu Shu Yuan. After visiting the provinces in the South, the emperor gave each of the academies visited a set of the *Thirteen Classics* and the *Twenty-two Histories*. These gifts really constituted the beginning of some of the book collections of the Shu Yuan.

On account of financial difficulties, some of the academies found it very hard to maintain themselves in later years. The government had neither a system nor a policy for the

[1] Shu Yuan Chih Shih Lueh, in the *Eastern Miscellaneous Magazine*, Vol. 21, No. 3, p. 142.

[2] *Huang Chao Chang Ku*, chüan 41, p. 19.

[3] One tael equals a little less than $1.40 (Mex.).

administration of these institutions, and their existence often depended upon the disposition of the governors, whose duration of office was also uncertain. In the memorial which Viceroy Chang Chih-tung presented to the emperor in the year 1887 for the establishment of the Kuang Ya Shu Yuan,[1] he mentioned the dilapidated condition of the Shu Yuans and how students left them on account of their inadequate support by the government. In spite of the fact that he was remarkably successful in the conduct of the Kuang Ya Shu Yuan and secured for it an annual income of 17,150 taels, the academy was not long maintained after his death. In the year 1898, by an imperial edict, all Shu Yuans were ordered to be turned into modern schools.

As we know, the early purpose in establishing these academies was to store documents and books. This had been very well carried out in the Sung dynasty. According to Pan Shu Ko (班書閣),[2] the Hê Shan Shu Yuan (鶴山書院) then contained more than 100,000 chüans. But because of poor management in later years, these collections were greatly reduced. During the Ch'ing period, as far as we know, the book supply of the Shu Yuan libraries came from four sources. First, as mentioned above, many books were given by the emperors. This practice was especially characteristic of Kang Hsi and Chien Lung.[3] Sometimes their gifts were made in response to request of officials of various provinces. But generally they allowed the officials to use the 'public money' for purchasing books, which were then considered as gifts from the throne.

[1] *Chang Wen Hsiang Chuan Chi*, chüan 22, pp. 8, 9.

[2] Shu Yuan Ts'ang Shu Kao, in *Kuo Li Peiping Tu Shu Kuan Yueh Kan*, 5, 72.

[3] In 1685 Kang Hsi bestowed upon the academies, Pai Lu and Yao Lu, many sets of the classics and histories, and in 1751 Chien Lung did the same to Chung Shan, Tzu Yang and Fu Wen academies.

Secondly, some academies, particularly the Chin T'ai Shu Yuan (金臺書院), obtained their books as depository copies from the government printing offices in various provinces. In the year 1879, Pi Tao Yuan (畢道遠) and Chou Chia Mei (周家楣) memorialized the throne in these words:[1]

> The government presses which are located in various provinces have recently produced a great many good books. We think Peking, as the capital of the country, should by all means possess such publications in order to centralize the literary productions of various places. Would it not be a good plan to notify the governors of various provinces . . . to send in one copy of each work which they have printed in the government press to be kept here in the Chin T'ai Academy? . . . These books shall be accessioned, catalogued for the benefit of students who are studying in that academy.

They then describe how the books should be gathered first in one place and then transferred to Peking. It was quite a remarkable scheme, but unfortunately it has not been strictly enforced.

Thirdly, many books in the academies were received from officials as gifts. As a good example for the people, the high officials generally contributed for the initial collection either books or funds for purchasing them. We find noted examples in Chang Chih-tung and Wu Jung Kuang. The former gave a large part of his salary to purchase books for the Kuang Ya Shu Yuan in Canton, and the latter donated more than 2,000 volumes to Feng Chih Shu Yuan at Foochow.

The last means by which academies acquired books was private gifts. When officials took the lead in making donations, their example was quickly followed by the people, and many volumes possessed by the public found their way into the academies.

[1] *Chi Fu Tung Chi*, chüan 114.

For the administration of these academies, the regulations provided by the Pai Lu Shu Yuan were employed, and the library was no exception. According to the rules of the Pai Lu Academy,[1] books could not be taken out of the building, and their use was strictly limited to the teacher and students in the academy. One person was placed in charge of the whole library, and he had to do the recording and issuing of books.

The contents of the collections varied according to the type of learning each of the academies sought to emphasize. It is safe to say that the collections were likely to contain the works of the scholars whom the institution worshiped.[2] But in general they all possessed the standard works of the classics and histories. It is interesting to observe, however, that the Pai Lu collection at Kiangsi, which had a history of nearly a thousand years, contained only a collection of one hundred titles, and the richest one, the Chin Fu Shu Yuan (敬敷書院), included a little more than two hundred titles.

Besides serving as places for the storing of books, these Shu Yuans usually published books and served also as receiving houses for all blocks used by the government in the printing of books. By printing books, they maintained a high position as one of the chief agents in spreading knowledge. In fact, their productions were of the highest quality and were greatly valued by scholars. When the 'Four-treasure Library' was being compiled, the writings of Wang Fu Chih (王夫之), noted scholar of the early Ch'ing period, were particularly singled out for praise. When Chu Yu (朱逌) erected an academy to propagate Wang's teaching, Tsang Kuo Chuan (曾國荃), an outstanding official, presented the academy the complete set of blocks from which he had printed the entire works of the scholar, consisting of 322 books. Many such blocks were

[1] *Pai Lu Shu Yuan Chih*, chüan 10, 11.

[2] The Sung academies generally worshiped Chang Tsai (張載), Chou Lien Ch'i (周濂溪), Cheng I (程頤) and Cheng Hao (程灝); the Ming academies worshiped Wang Yang Ming (王陽明); and the Ch'ing academies worshiped Cheng Hsuan (鄭玄) and Hsu Shen (許愼).

to be found in nearly all large academies.[1] When these institutions could not maintain themselves for financial reasons, some of the blocks were burned for fuel, and now practically all of them have disappeared.

From these facts, it is clear that the academies and their libraries underwent considerable disintegration during this period. Although efforts were made to revive them in later years, as has been indicated in the case of Chang Chih-tung in 1887, the lack of a permanent policy rendered these attempts ineffective and merely postponed their complete disintegration to a later date. When the imperial edict for their abolishment came in 1898, their libraries were converted into school libraries and these long-established institutions were brought to an end.

As we review the library development in China under the Ch'ing dynasty, we are conscious of certain outstanding characteristics. Perhaps the most prominent is the printing of books. This practice followed by each of the three groups of libraries discussed was always evident, although no rules were promulgated, nor was any mutual agreement entered into by them to obligate them to do so. Ordinarily only commercial houses undertook such activity for profit-making, but as far as we know, none of the libraries had this purpose in mind; indeed, they knew very well that publishing then was financially unprofitable. Hence, this practice may be attributed to China's long-founded tradition, and during the Ch'ing period it was converted into a prevailing fashion. By printing books, the emperors, Kang Hsi and Chien Lung, and most of the private book collectors won for themselves good names and the reputation of being men of refined taste. Whether or not their descendants reaped the results of their good deeds—obviously not the heirs of the throne—we do not know, but students of this generation have certainly profited as a result

[1] S. K. Pan, *op. cit.*, pp. 66, 67.

of their devotion to the production and preservation of scholarly works.

In addition to the printing of books, another contribution of the libraries is the compilation of catalogues of their collections. To say nothing of their immediate usefulness as bibliographical tools to scholars, these catalogues serve as an essential means through which the literary treasures once possessed by China may be located and recovered. A comprehensive plan of compiling a complete bibliography of China's national literature was begun by the National Library at Peiping a few years ago.[1] But on account of the death of its editor-in-chief, Mr. Liang Ch'i Chao, the whole project was temporarily discontinued.

From time to time, the library in China has been given promise of developing into an important institution, but unfortunately this promise has not yet been fulfilled. With the completion of the 'Four-treasure Library' in 1782, China had an excellent foundation for a great national library, but the whole project came to an end when the scribes finished copying the last page of the proposed collection. Even the special edifices erected for housing the libraries were so constructed that each could accommodate only the collections specified, with no possibility of an increase. The emperor assumed that all the best literature had been included in the 'Four-treasure Library,' and there was no need of planning for the future. So, during the next two centuries, these collections remained practically the same, and in later years when they suffered from destruction by war and fire, the number of volumes actually declined.

Another great opportunity for library development was lost in 1879 when the emperor failed to carry out the proposal of Pi Tao and Chou Chia Mei to establish a depository center

[1] *Bulletin of the Library Association of China*, Vol. 2, No. 6, p. 14.

for all government publication. Such a center could have been effectively employed in building up a great national collection of contemporary literature, as it has, in fact, been employed by occidental countries to obtain materials for their national libraries. The proposal received insufficient support and no special effort was made to adopt it.

In spite of the fact that the emperor, Kang Hsi, was greatly interested in science and maintained close contact with the Jesuit fathers, he made no attempt to secure books in the occidental languages for his imperial library. Throughout almost the entire period, no eminent Chinese book collectors attempted to possess books in European languages. On the other hand, early European missionaries continually brought Chinese books to their native countries. An examination of the early catalogues of Chinese books in the Bibliothèque nationale and the British Museum reveals a considerable number. The collection of Chinese books held by Robert Morrison, an early Protestant missionary in China who was responsible for the translation of the Bible into Chinese, was acquired by the British Museum in 1847. Later on, Chinese collections were formed in Germany, Russia and the United States. This indicates that China, during the last three centuries, has not been so eager to learn from the West as the West has been to learn from her.

If the government had exerted sufficient effort to regulate and systematize the academy libraries, they might have been made great depositories of provincial and regional publications. But the government followed a *laissez-faire* policy and allowed the Shu Yuan to pursue their own course. This simply led to their own destruction.

Private libraries of the period, although they were excellent in many ways, similarly failed to make the greatest contribution to library development of which they were capable, and for two reasons. In the first instance they placed too

much emphasis on the Sung and Yuan editions. They made little effort to secure books dealing with special subjects. In the second instance private collectors were lacking in civic spirit. Their collections were treated more or less as private property to be handed down to their descendants. For this reason, they were seldom accessible to the public and in some cases were not even accessible to intimate friends. Although a few collections were donated by collectors to academy libraries, no great collections were made available in this way to the public. Examples of gifts such as those of Sir Thomas Bodley, of England, who bequeathed his whole collection for founding the Oxford Library, and of Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin of France, who opened their libraries for the use of the public, are entirely lacking in this period. This fact must not be emphasized too greatly, however, as China had not developed a tradition for such action at that time. In later years this spirit was fully exhibited in many generous gifts.[1]

The whole development of Chinese libraries during the Ch'ing period was greatly affected by tradition and social and political conditions. Even its good features, such as printing and the compiling of catalogues, were merely an inheritance from the Sung dynasty. Various factors, such as the conception of preserving literature, the idea of owning books, the system of the literary examinations and the insecurity of the government itself tended to make the libraries what they were. Since the library is a social institution, it follows that the Chinese library was what Chinese society caused it to be.

In connection with the development of Chinese libraries, there are three important events which should be mentioned. The first was the discovery of a collection of Chinese documents and manuscripts by Sir Aurel Stein in the western part of

[1] Liang Ting Fan gave his whole collection for the founding of the Kwangtung Provincial Library, and Liang Ch'i Chao left all his books to the National Library of Peiping.

China, especially at Tun-Huang.[1] These discoveries were made during his two exploration in Chinese Turkestan in 1901 and 1907. His finds consisted chiefly of 2,000 pieces of bamboo 'slips' bearing Chinese characters, about 9,000 manuscripts in silk rolls and a few manuscript in paper. The first group, which date back to the Han and Chin dynasties (1*st* century B.C. to 2*nd* century A.D.), contain historical information concerning the life of the Chinese garrisons in the distant posts of Central Asia. Some of them are daily accounts, food supplies, and medical recipes. The second group consists of Chinese translations of the Buddhist Sutras written at the time of the T'ang dynasty (7th–9th centuries). A few fragments in paper which were studied microscopically by J. V. Wiesner were found to date back to the second century A.D., and are recognized as being the most ancient specimens of paper that exist.[2]

After Sir Aurel secretly removed these ancient documents from China to England and deposited them in the British Museum, the French savant, Professor Paul Pelliot, a celebrated sinologist, visited Tun-Huang in 1908 and took back to France several thousand more of these manuscripts. When these two incidents became known to the Chinese imperial court, an order was issued by the central government directing the prompt transmission of the whole library at Tun-Huang to Peking. The number of the remaining manuscripts amounted to 8,000, and they are now preserved in the National Library of Peiping.[3]

This discovery of Chinese documents and manuscripts has shed light on the early development of the Chinese book, to

[1] For a detailed statement of this event, see Sir Aurel Stein's *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, Vol. I, pp. 393–401; Vol. II, pp. 171–194; and also his later work, *Serindia* (1921), Vol. II, Chapter XXII; Edouard Chavannes, *Les Documents chinois*, Oxford, 1913.

[2] Edouard Chavannes, *Les documents chinois*, p. III.

[3] In its *Annual Report* for the year ending June 1930, p. 2.

say nothing of its great contribution to Chinese history. These specimens have furnished concrete evidence of the use of bamboo and silk as writing materials before the invention of paper in China. For such first-hand knowledge on this subject, we are indebted to Sir Aurel and his colleagues.

The second event to be noted was the attempt made by Yang Shou Chin (楊守敬, 1839–1915), a noted Chinese scholar in geography and archæology, to recover ancient Chinese books in Japan. Yang went to Japan in 1880 as an attaché in the Chinese legation. After office hours, he spent his time frequenting the old book shops. As he was greatly attracted by the ancient Chinese works which came into Japan probably during the period between the Yuan and Ming dynasties, he determined to recover whatever books he could. He established friendly relations with Dr. Tasuyuki Mori (森立之), a Japanese physician, who was the author of the *Ching Chi Fang Ku Chi*, a record of ancient works. Using the latter's work as his guide, Yang was able to obtain a collection of more than 30,000 chüans within a year. The next Chinese minister to Japan was Li Shu Ch'ang (黎庶昌), who desired to print the *Ku I Ts'ung Shu* (古逸叢書), a collection of ancient works. He was very much interested in Yang's attempt, and greatly encouraged him. For some valuable works which Yang was not able to obtain from the Japanese private collectors, he exchanged old inscriptions which he possessed. In this manner, he acquired a large collection, of which he compiled a catalogue called *Records of Ancient Chinese Books Found in Japan* (日本訪書志). When Yang returned to China in 1884 bringing back with him the newly acquired collection, the price for old Chinese books in Japan suddenly rose. According to H. L. Yuan,[1] Yang's collection contains mostly medical books and a great many early works printed in Korea. After

[1] Biography of Yang Hsing Wu, in *Library Science Quarterly*, I, 641.

Yang's death in 1915, his entire library was purchased by the Chinese government; part of it later formed the foundation collection of Sung P'o Memorial Library (松坡圖書館) and the remainder was kept in the Library of the Palace Museum (故宮博物院圖書分館).

Perhaps the most thrilling event in the literary world during the first two decades of the present century was the salvaging of manuscripts in the Chinese imperial archives by Lo Chen Yu (羅振玉), an erudite Chinese scholar. He won for himself the reputation of being a distinguished philologist by deciphering inscriptions on oracle bones excavated in Honan province in 1899. When the Nei Ko building[1] was on the point of falling down through decay in 1909, Chancellor Chang Chih-tung memorialized the throne, asking that the books stored in it be used to form a national Peking library; and also that the old 'useless' documents accumulated in it during three centuries be burned. The imperial sanction was obtained and the whole program was ready to be carried out. Lo Chen Yu, who was then a councillor in the Board of Education, happened to go to the Imperial Cabinet on business and saw the tremendous quantity of manuscripts destined to be burned. On picking up one or two manuscripts, he noticed they were important documents concerning reports of generals who had been engaged in suppressing rebels during the early years of the Ch'ing period. Immediately he wrote to the Chancellor, begging him not to burn the materials. Lo's request was granted and part of this collection was stored in the Nan Hsüeh and part of it in the Board of Education building.

[1] The Nei Ko, or the Imperial Cabinet, is a place where all governmental documents were kept. Its Library was, in fact, the national archive. According to Wang Kuo Wei, books which were left over from the Wên Yuan Ko of the Ming dynasty constituted thirty per cent of the material in it. Documents (in MSS form) from both the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties constituted the remaining seventy per cent.

After the founding of the Chinese Republic, these important documents were moved to the Historical Museum at Wu Men (午門) where they remained undisturbed for ten years. When the Museum was in need of funds for its maintenance, the administrator in charge sold three-fourths of these documents to a paper merchant[1] for $4,000 (Mex.). According to Wang Kuo Wei, they were packed in hempen bags and they weighted about 150,000 catties.[2] This took place in the winter of 1921, but Lo Chen Yu, whose home was in Tientsin, went to Peking on business in February of the following year. While sauntering around the bookshops there, he saw a document of Hung Wên Hsiang (洪文襄揭帖) and a list of materials sent as tribute by the King of Korea. He at once recognized the documents as being the property of the Imperial Cabinet Library and began to inquire from what source they had been secured. Upon finding that the collection had been secured from the Historical Museum and that it was destined to be converted into incense paper to be used for the purpose of worship, he purchased it from the paper merchant for $13,000 —three times as much as it cost the latter.[3] After erecting a new library to house it, Lo began to sort the material and published ten volumes of it in the *Shih Liao Ts'ung Kan Ch'u P'ien* (史料叢刊初編). When he experienced financial difficulties in the following year, he was tempted to sell the whole collection to a foreign agent who offered him a large sum of money for it. Had not Li Sheng To (李盛鐸), a great book collector at Tientsin, acted promptly and sent him $16,000 for the entire library, this collection of important documents would have gone to foreign lands. In 1929 the

[1] Wang Kuo Wei, Fu Shu Lou Chi, in *Kuan T'ang Ch'i Lin*, chüan 19.
[2] One catty equals 1 1/3 pounds.
[3] Cf. Hsu Chung Shu's detailed statement in *Ming Ch'ing Shih Liao*, I, 2.

Chinese Institute of History and Philology bought the whole library from Li for $18,000.[1]

In referring to the contents of this collection of manuscripts, Mr. Hsü Chung Shu (徐中舒)[2] places them in five categories: (1) edicts and royal proclamations of various emperors; (2) official memorials with all sorts of accounts, charts and tables; (3) correspondence and diplomatic documents of all tributary states and foreign countries; (4) papers of the imperial literary examinations; (5) all documents belonging to the Imperial Cabinet. Under the supervision of the Institute of History and Philology, most of these documents have been systematically sorted and periodically published. Since 1924, more than seventy volumes of these materials have appeared in printed form,[3] and almost all of the large libraries in China have been able to secure sets at very little cost. This extensive body of material will undoubtedly supply historians with first-hand information concerning the history of the Ch'ing dynasty. For the great service rendered it by Lo Chen Yu, China still owes him an unusual debt of appreciation.

Through these discoveries, recoveries and the salvaging of books and manuscripts, Chinese libraries have been gradually brought into a new stage of development. In less than two decades after the downfall of the Ch'ing dynasty, the nucleus of a national library has been established. The activities of the National Library of Peiping during the last few years cover a wide range.[4] The library has strived not only to preserve literature, but also to propagate learning. Its collection contains the valuable literary treasures of China and

[1] The amounts which Lo and Li received are not to be considered as profit. They merely covered rent and transportation.

[2] C. C. Hsu, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

[3] *Shih Liao Ts'ung Kan Ch'u P'ien* (史料叢刊初編), *Chang Ku Ts'ung P'ien* (掌故叢編), *Wen Hsien Ts'ung P'ien* (文獻叢編), *Ming Ch'ing Shih Liao* (明清史料), and *Shih Liao Hsun Kan* (史料旬刊).

[4] Cf. *The National Library of Peiping and Its Activities*, and also its *Annual Report* for the various years.

the standard works and up-to-date publications of the world. Its preparation of union lists[1] exhibits its readiness to cooperate with other libraries in making materials available to all readers, its compilation of special bibliographies and indexes indicates its desire to facilitate study. In all such activities, the National Library is not acting alone; many other libraries, especially university libraries, are coöperating with it in building up a national library system. All reveal a new library spirit. Whatever virtues the Ch'ing period transmitted to the present, this generation desires to maintain; whatever mistakes it made, this generation intends to avoid; and whatever works it left undone, this generation is determined to carry to completion. It is in the same spirit that the foregoing pages are written.

[1] The *Metropolitan Library Record* and the *Union Catalogue of Occidental Books in Peiping Libraries.*

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