

Yang Hu
Xiao Yang

CHINESE PUBLISHING

Homeland of Printing

Translated by Zha Xiaoyun & Lei Jing



CHINA
INTERCONTINENTAL
PRESS

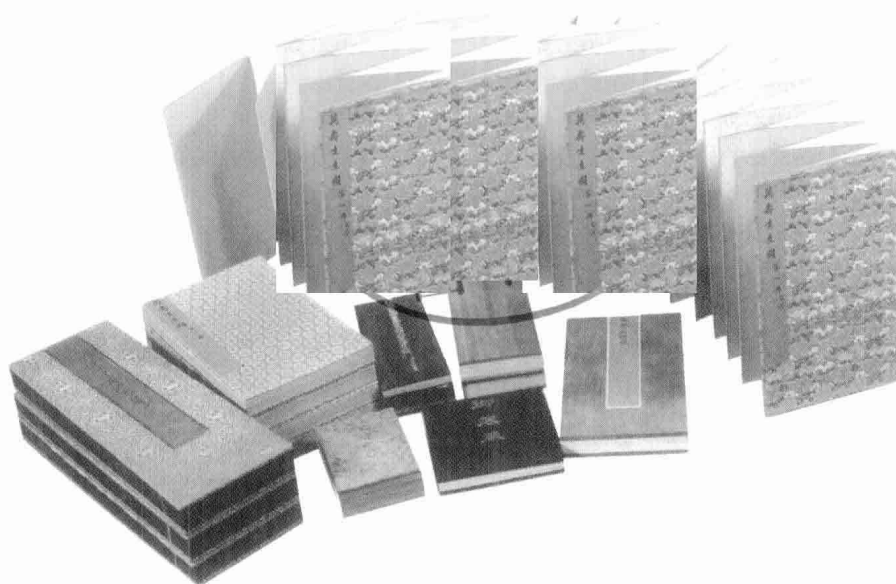
© Cultural China Series

Yang Hu
Xiao Yang

CHINESE PUBLISHING

Homeland of Printing

Translated by Zha Xiaoyun & Lei Jing



CHINA
INTERCONTINENTAL
PRESS

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

中国书业; 英文 / 杨虎; 肖阳著; 查晓云; 雷静译: —北京: 五洲传
播出版社, 2010.1

ISBN 978-7-5085-1315-7

I. 中... II. ①杨... ②肖... ③查... ④雷... III. 出版工作—文化史—中
国—英文 IV. G239.29

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字 (2008) 第058087号

CHINESE PUBLISHING

Homeland of Printing

Author: Yang Hu & Xiao Yang

Translator: Zha Xiaoyun & Lei Jing

Pictures Editor: Zhou Jing

Executive Editor: Gao Lei

Art Director: Tian Lin

Publisher: China Intercontinental Press (6 Beixiaomachang, Lianhuachi
Donglu, Haidian District, Beijing 100038, China)

Tel: 86-10-58891281

Website: www.cicc.org.cn

Printer: C&C Joint Printing Co., (Beijing) Ltd.

Format: 720×965mm 1/16

Edition: Jan. 2010, 1st edition, 1st print run

Price: RMB 99.00 (yuan)

目 录

Preface: Three-thousand-year History of Books in China 1

A Long-standing and Well-established History 15

The Origin of Chinese Characters 16

The Appearance of Books and Compilations 20

From Oracle Bone to Paper: Media of Ancient Books 23

The Evolution of Publishing 35

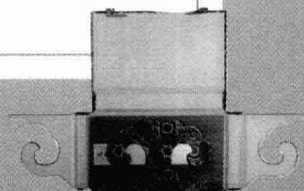
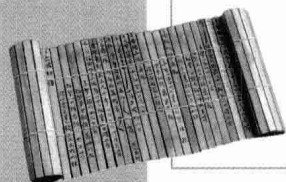
Classical Ancient Books 45

Selected Content and Editing Format of Ancient Books 46

Printing and Transcription: Reproduction of Ancient Publications 51

Common Development and Prosperity—Five Major Publishing Systems 60

From Bamboo Strips to Stitched Binding: The Ancient Art of Bookbinding and Layout 71





The Course of Inheritance 83

Bibliophiles and Book-collecting House 85

Effective Ways to Protect Books 93

The Circulation of the Ancient Books 98

Crystallization of Chinese Culture 105

The Thirteen Confucian Classics 107

The History of the Twenty-five Dynasties 111

Yongle Encyclopedia 113

The Compendium of Works of the Past and the Present 116

Siku Quanshu and *Revised Continuation of Siku*

Quanshu 117

Poetry Anthologies of People from the Tang Dynasty:

Complete Collection of Tang Poetry and *Three Hundred*

Tang Poems 121

Anthology of Ci of People from the Song Dynasty: *Complete*

Collection of Song Ci 125

Collections of Yuan Qu: *The Complete Collection of Yuan*

Sanqu and *The Anthology of Yuan Qu* 127

Novels in the Ming and Qing Dynasty: *"Four Great Classical*

Novels" and *"Three Collections and Short Stories"* 129

Encyclopedia of China 133





The Progressive Vicissitude 135

The Introduction and Application of Mechanical
Printing 137

The Rise of New Publishing Houses 140

The Emergence of New Publications 147

The Social Transition Promoted by New Publishing 149

Carrying forward the Cause and Forging into the Future 155

The Scale of Publication has Enlarged Yearly and Publishing
Strength Increased Quickly 156

Publishing Technology Advances and the Rapid Development
of Digital Publishing. 161

The Commercialization of Publishing System Speeds up in
an Improving Legal Environment. 164

Publication Talent Groups have Enlarged with Remarkable
Accomplishments in Professional Education and
Research 168

Publishing Industries in Mainland of China, Taiwan, Hong
Kong and Macao have Bloomed, Forming the Pattern of
Diversity in Unity for Chinese-language Publishing 170



Road of Books 173

The Spread of Papermaking Technique 174

The Spread of Printing in Other Countries 179

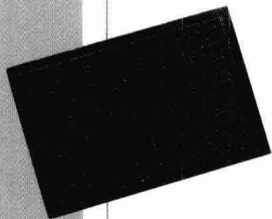
Exchanges between Domestic and Foreign Books 187

Intensive Exchange of Publishing between Home and Abroad
in Modern Times 192

Copyright Trade and International Exchange in Publishing
Industry in Contemporary Times 196

Appendix I: A Brief Chronicle of China's Publishing Events 203

Appendix II: Chronological Table of the Chinese Dynasties 206



Preface: Three-thousand-year History of Books in China

Publishing activities are significant to human civilization. Different civilizations breed distinct publishing activities, whereas publishing activities advance civilizations.

The time-honored Chinese civilization has nurtured the distinctive Chinese publishing industry. To some extent, its formulation and development mimics that of Chinese civilization. Featured with long historical standing, plenty of connotations, unity of styles, extensive influences and constant innovation, Chinese civilization is unique in the world in its continuity.

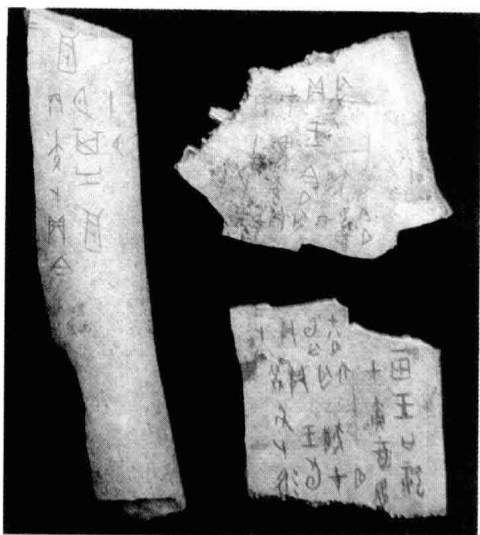
Ancient China not only produced brilliant achievements for human civilization, but also has been showed a tendency towards strong development and flourishing prospects through almost a hundred years of reform and development. As the old Chinese saying notes: "Although Zhou was an ancient state, it had undertaken a mission to reform."

This tendency has partly determined the unique characteristics of the development of China's publishing industry's. At the same time, publishing, as a significant activity of knowledge accumulation and cultural inheritance, has contributed greatly to the spread and inheritance of Chinese civilization. From a broader view, as one of the earliest countries with the most advanced publishing industry, ancient China played an important role in

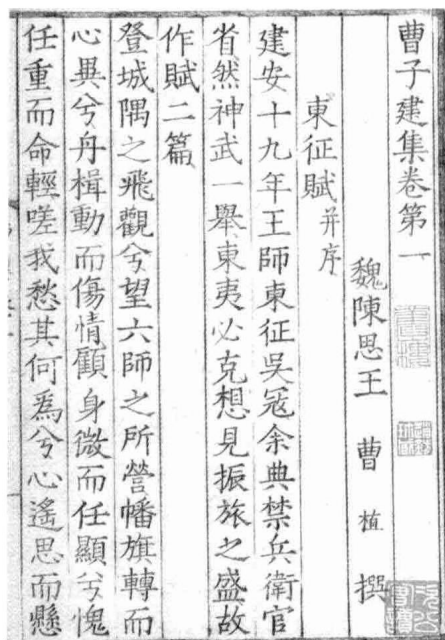


the history of world publishing. In the past thousands of years, Chinese civilization has spread all over the world with books as carriers and has taken a significant part in the development of world culture by constructing the Asian Confucianism civilization circle. Especially, the invention and spread of papermaking and printing techniques have contributed to human civilization and have profoundly influenced the development of human society.

The written language, a foremost recording tool of knowledge and culture, is the prerequisite for a publishing industry. China is a country that has had many different nationalities and languages since ancient times. Among the numerous character systems, Chinese characters are the mainstay for the spread and inheritance of Chinese civilization. Among all the written languages of the Four Great Ancient Civilizations, the Chinese written language had a stable character outline, explicit meaning and good continuity. Because of Chinese written language, today's people can both understand different kinds of books written in the past thousands



Oracle bone pieces with inscriptions



Bronze movable-type print from the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) —Cao Zijian's Collection



years and depict fluently today's changing and fast developing world. Thanks to Chinese characters, Chinese civilization has been extended for thousands of years without any interruption.

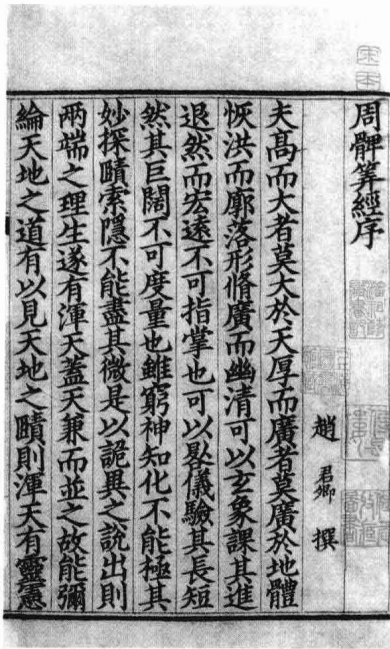
After the appearance of the written language as a carrier of knowledge, the pressing problem plaguing the development of the publishing industry was to find the appropriate recording material for the written language. After trying bamboo, wood, oracle bone, bronze, stone and silk, Chinese people invented paper to write and paint around the 2nd century B.C. This was an epoch-making invention because paper is the best writing material that has been ever found on earth.

In 105 A.D., the gradual spread of papermaking technique, innovated by Cai Lun, enormously promoted the development of the publishing industry and society. Inspired by the rubbing and sealing techniques, Chinese people invented printing technique in the 7th century B.C. That led to new progress on the quality and quantity of book publishing and brought the history of human communication and civilization to a new stage. During 1041–1049 A.D., the civilian Bi Sheng invented typography, the printing-type material which transferred from plaster to wood to metal such as copper, tin and others. In the 11st century, registration printing came into being on the basis of engraving, which made printed matter more attractive and plentiful.

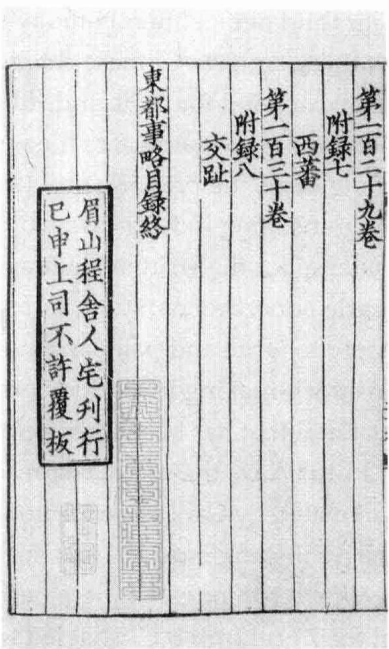
Well connected with the constant innovation of the character carrier and replica technique, the Chinese publishing industry enjoyed continuous development. From the 21st century B.C. to 16th century B.C., Chinese publishing was burgeoning and it experienced a historical transformation from the written language to primary publication. Then primary editions and classical collections appeared, as well as the appearance of some initial elements of publication. It is conservatively estimated that the Chinese publishing industry has a history of over 3000 years.

The early compilation activities followed, in which Chinese





Jianyang copy of *Zhou Bi Suan Jing*, during the Song Dynasty (960–1279).

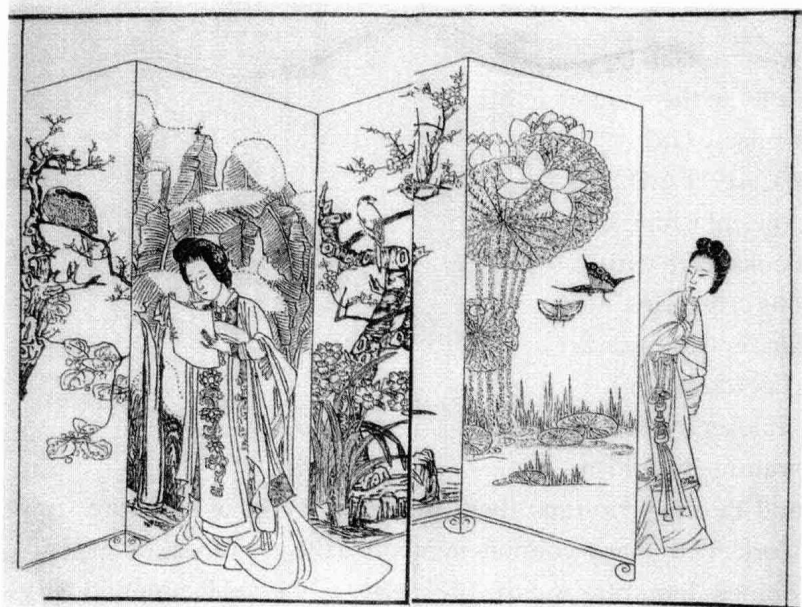


Brand mark of *The Kai Feng Story* during the Song Dynasty

people accumulated rich compiling experience and developed their own compiling methods. The invention of papermaking technique, that later become a major category in ancient Chinese handicrafts, fundamentally changed the media of the written language.

Five major publishing systems were gradually established after the appearance of printing technique. They were official publications from government publishing houses; bookshop publications from private publishing houses; personal publications; academy publications from academy publishing houses and temple and monastery publications. The boom of the publishing industry promoted book circulation and trade. In the 2nd century B.C., Shu Si (書肆)—the early book marketplace, came to existence in Chang'an and other economically and culturally developed cities. Book businesses gradually flourished during





An illustration of A Secret Copy of *Bei Xi Xiang* published in the 13th year of Emperor Chong Zhen in the Ming Dynasty (1639)

the Tang and Song dynasties (618–1279) and various business methods including advertising were used. During the Southern Song Dynasty (127–1279), the idea and practice of copyright entered the Chinese book industry. The earliest copyright mark was in the brand mark of the book *The Kai Feng Story* (《东都事略》) (published in 1190–1194), on which 15 characters were written, reading “first published by Cheng from Mt. MeiShan, registered already, no unauthorized copy is allowed.”

The significant achievement of ancient Chinese publishing is that publications are large in number and rich in connotation, with various forms and far-reaching influence. Hence, it has become one of the remarkable symbols of Chinese civilization.

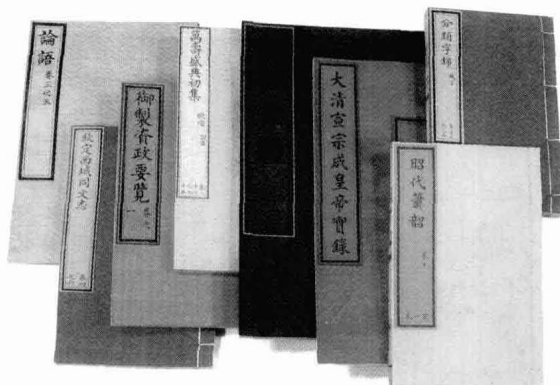
China has a fine tradition of “valuing knowledge and honoring writing.” Since ancient times, Chinese intellectuals have devoted themselves to writing to express faith, attain pride and earn fame. Statistics show that there are some 2.3 million volumes of 180,000



CHINESE PUBLISHING

kinds from the Western Han Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty (202 B.C.–1911 A.D.).

Ancient Chinese books have various categories. Under Confucian classics, history, philosophy, literature, Buddhism



Books of different layouts published by the governmental organizations in the Qing Dynasty

and Taoism scriptures, there are diverse types of literature. Giant works with many volumes symbolize the grandness of ancient Chinese literature and the prosperity of the publishing industry. For instance, great works like the *Yongle Encyclopedia* of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 with 370 million words), *The Compendium of Works of Past and Present* of the Qing Dynasty (1616–1911), the *Imperial Collection of Four* (nearly 1 billion words) were the classics. Chinese books, particular about beauty in form, have bamboo and wooden slips, scrolls and album book systems with various bookbinding forms consisting of folding forms, whirlwind binding, dragon-scale binding, butterfly-like binding, wrapped-ridge binding and traditional thread binding. In addition, Chinese books have elegant regard for paper and ink, style, and format.

Cherishing books and old scriptures is one of fine traditions in Chinese culture. But owing to both human and natural factors, all the ancient Chinese books have experienced a tough time, and suffered heavy losses in the historic process, which have stirred even greater efforts in collecting and protecting books.

As an important part of Chinese publishing, collections in China started early and developed deeply. Collecting systems evolved among feudal officials, private persons, Buddhist and



Taoist temples and academies of classical learning. In ancient China, there were millions of private libraries and bibliophiles contributed brilliantly to book maintenance, repairing and protection. As a result, a distinct book-keeping culture has developed.

Ancient Chinese have accumulated rich experience in writing, publishing, maintaining and reading books. Through research on books, "a study of publishing" has formed which is focusing on making printing blocks; distinguishing authentic writings from imitations; collecting; emendating; table of contents; and so on. The numerous researches on these fields have increased the academic value of ancient publishing.

China, historically, has stressed communication with other countries. Publication exchanges are an important means of communication. "The Book Road" was been built across Asia and Europe during long periods of cross-country communication.



Library of Yue Lu Academy in Hunan Province: the Yu Shu Building



As a result, China spread its advanced publishing technique together with its science and culture, and also learned a lot from other countries and areas, which has promoted the progress of Chinese civilization. China and the rest of the world influenced each other and achieved harmonious development.

Although ancient Chinese publishing took the leading position in the world for a long time and exerted widespread influence especially in the publishing industries of countries in the Confucianism Civilization circle, the influence of Chinese publishing decreased in modern times, even below the advanced world level for a while.

From the 19th century onwards, with western learning spreading to the east, the Chinese publishing industry realized a successful transition through learning from and drawing lessons from western-developed publishing.

Founded in 1897 and 1912 respectively, the Commercial Press and Zhonghua Book Company have become the new publishing companies keeping abreast of the times by actively improving technology and adopting the operation and management style of capitalism. In the first half of 20th century, the Chinese publishing industry achieved a revolution from traditional to modernized and merged into the development trend of world publishing industry with brand-new outlook. From then on, modern publishing has become the main form of Chinese publishing and it has entered into a splendid development period.

After the founding of People's Republic of China in 1949, modern publishing has achieved greater accomplishments. With 60 years of development, China has become a power in the global publishing industry.

First, the scale of the publishing industry is

Book Disaster

Book disaster means man-made damages to official collecting books in ancient China. As early as in Sui Dynasty, Niu Hong had the view of "Five Disasters": the first was "Burning books" by Qin Shihuang in the Qin Dynasty; the second "Chimei" rebellion army entering the Central Plains at the end of West Han Dynasty; the third "Dongzhuo shifting capital" in Three Kingdoms Period, the fourth Liu (Liu Yuan) and Shi (Shi Le)'s Rebellion in Northern and Southern Dynasties; the fifth "Burning books" in Jiangling by Emperor Yuan of Liang in the Sothern Dynasty. Later, in the Ming Dynasty, Hu Yinglin added another five on to it, and they were: the sixth was "Burning books" in Jiangdu at the end of the Sui Dynasty; the seventh "the An Lushan Rebellion" in Tang Dynasty; the eight "Huangchao entering Chang'an" at the end of the Tang Dynasty; the ninth "the Humiliation of Jingkang" in North Song Dynasty; the tenth the destruction of the Song Dynasty by Mongolia. These ten are called "Ten Disasters."





An edition of *An Outline Treatise of Medical Herbs* (《本草綱目》), published in Japan at the turn of 17th century.

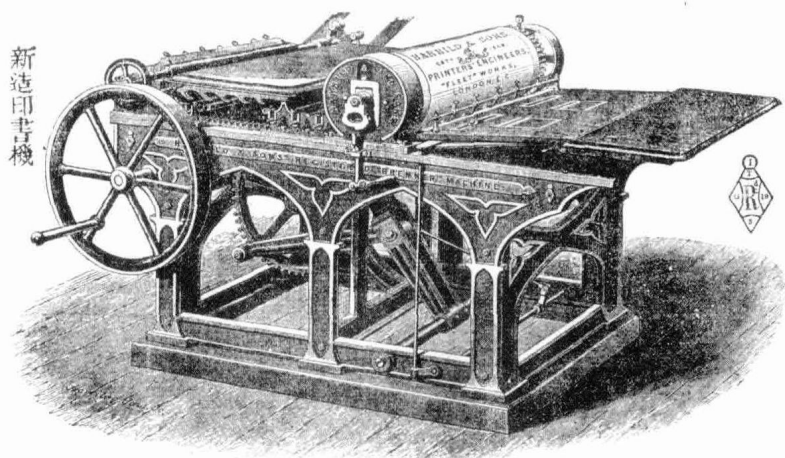
enlarging with the great enhancement of publishing strength. In 1950, there were 211 publishing houses in China and 12,153 kinds of books with the total printing runs of 275 million volumes in the same year. However, in 2007, there were 578 publishing houses and 248,283 kinds of books with the total runs of 6.293 billion volumes.

According to predictions in *A study on the system of development index of publishing industry in a well-*

off society by the China Institute of Publishing Science, the added value of the Chinese publishing industry would reach RMB800 billion by 2020, accounting to 1.9–2.0% of GDP, and the types of books would be 300,000 with total press runs of 8.198 billion volumes.

Second, publishing technology is developing daily and digital publishing is booming. Combining computer technology with Chinese character printing, Chinese character laser phototypesetting technique helps the Chinese printing industry end its history of lead and fire and step into a period of light and electricity. Meanwhile, featured by single volume as the minimal number and the goal to meet personalized requirements, printing on demand (POD) has become a new starting point. The development of digital technology is influencing the Chinese





Hand flatbed press, applied by Shanghai Newspaper Press (Shenbaoguan) in 1872.

publishing industry profoundly. Today's Chinese publishing market mainly consists of paper, online and mobile phone publication forms.

Third, the transition of commercialization in publishing system speeds up and the law system of publishing improves. The development of new technology and the Chinese market going global are changing the development model of Chinese publishing. Due to the changes taking place in the news and publishing, most publishing institutions are becoming modern companies consistent with the development of modern company culture.

In the field of circulation, publishing channels such as non-state-operated bookshops, online bookshops and reader clubs are rising. In the field of publishing educational research, higher education for and research on edition and publication in China have developed from nil and from small to large. With constant improvement of the legal system affecting the press and publications, the legal system framework centering on the Copyright Law has preliminarily taken shape and the

