

(英文版)



Libraries and Society in Shanghai 1840-1949

图书馆与社会：上海1840-1949

by Wu Jianzhong

吴建中 著

上海大学出版社

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

图书馆与社会：上海 1840～1949 = Libraries and Society in Shanghai 1840～1949：英文/吴建中著.
—上海：上海大学出版社，2010.1
ISBN 978-7-81118-557-7

I. ①图… II. ①吴… III. ①图书馆事业—文化史—
上海市—1840～1949—英文 IV. ①G259.275.1

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2009)第 213681 号

责任编辑 焦贵平 吴雪梅 封面设计 柯国富

Libraries and Society in Shanghai 1840 - 1949

图书馆与社会：上海 1840 - 1949(英文版)

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上海大学出版社出版发行

(上海市上大路 99 号 邮政编码 200444)

(<http://www.shangdapress.com> 发行热线 66135110)

出版人：姚铁军

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南京展望文化发展有限公司排版

上海叶大印务发展有限公司印刷 各地新华书店经销

开本 890×1240 1/32 印张 11.5 字数 273000

2010 年 1 月第 1 版 2010 年 1 月第 1 次印刷

印数 1~2100

ISBN 978-7-81118-557-7/G·524 定价：48.00 元

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Introductory

The Bibliophiles and Their Library Activity in the Early History of Shanghai




Shanghai stands at the middle of the country's long coast line and at the entrance of the Yangtze River. Although serving over the years as the country's window to the outside world, the physical advantages of Shanghai's location were not fully exploited until the advent of the modern industrial period.

However, the history of Shanghai, beginning as an administrative district of the government, can be traced back to the late Song Dynasty (960 - 1279). Shanghai became a Zhen (town) in 1267. A decade later, a special agency called Shibosi was set up by the government to deal with foreign trade. In 1292 Shanghai was further upgraded to Xian (county). Its geographical and economic advantages gave rise to the growth of a shipping and textile industry. From then on Shanghai became more and more important to the economic development of the country.

The original fishing settlement became busy and wealthy, attracting people from all over the country, so that in 1391 its population numbered 532,803, twice as much as that during the

Zhizheng period (1341 - 1368).^[1] As well as businessmen, scholars came into the area, bringing with them their ideas and cultural practices.

The cangshulou and the bibliophiles

 s the name cangshulou (a book storehouse) suggests, book collecting and conservation feature as an activity in ancient China. The national atmosphere of learning favoured library development. Book collecting became the common practice among scholars, who by definition were bibliophiles.

Zhuang Su, a librarian in the Mishuyuan (the government library) in the late Song Dynasty, was widely known for his personal 80,000-juan collection.^[2] He returned to Shanghai when the Song Dynasty was conquered by the Yuan (1271 - 1368) Dynasty. His career as a librarian habituated him to book collecting. Zhuang gained his reputation from the variety of his collection, which ranged from the classics to contemporary novels, and which necessitated a bibliography in 10 sections. Consequently, he ranked as one of the three greatest bibliophiles in the Jiangnan area. Unfortunately his descendants neglected their inheritance. Zhuang's books were stolen, sold, and used as wrappers. To make things worse, when the Yuan Court, seeking books to compile the histories of the Song, Liao, and Jin Dynasties, sent officials to Zhuang's residence, his descendants mistook them for censors and burned the collection. Nevertheless, there were still 500 juan left for the projected history.^[3] In the Song Dynasty, Li Jia and Dong Yiyang were also significant collectors

although the former was more renowned for his painting and the latter for his historical writing.^[4] Du Yuanfang, an official scholar of the Yuan Dynasty, built a house called Feicui biyunlou, storing a collection of some 10,000 juan after his resignation from office.^[5]

Unlike the modern library, the cangshulou was generally designed for private use. The bibliophiles' favoured pursuits were authorship or bibliographic study. Tao Zongyi, a Ming scholar, collected comprehensively local novels, arranging them into a series entitled *Shuo Fu*. Later Yu Wenbo, the owner of Wanjuanlou (a cangshulou with 10,000 juan), made a careful textual study of them.^[6] Lu Shen, a prolific author, was also a well-known bibliophile. His son, Lu Ji, compiled *Gujin shuohai*, a selection of ancient novels in 142 juan. However, they both got much assistance from Lu Shen's nephew, Huang Biao, who helped them with textual research into these publications.^[7]

Dong Chuanxing also specialised in textual study and was said to have spared no expense in buying rare editions. Once in his hands, they became objects of scrutiny.^[8]

Wang Xin, a Ming historian, spent his later years editing and compiling historical works at his Taohuayuan (a private park named the Land of Peach Blossoms). The *Xu wenxian tongkao* (254 juan), a continuation of Ma Duanlin's *Wenxian tongxikao*, was prized by later generations for its careful historical research.^[9] Many other bibliophiles and their cangshulou in the Ming period also deserve commendation, including Shi Dajing's Huoge, Pan Yunduan's Tianran tuhualou, Gu Congyi's Yuhongguan, Zhang Jin's Baoqiang and Wu Zhongxiu's Tianxiangge.^[10] Coming finally to the Qing Dynasty



(1644 - 1911), the style of learning over that long period was shrouded in scholasticism. Naturally, the bibliophiles bore the imprint of the age. Their study narrowed down to painstaking textual exegesis and copious quotation from the classics, and it can broadly be characterized as archaeological.^[11]

Some time after 1798, Li Junjia, a Qing bibliophile, bought a house called Ciyunlou where he stored 6,000 or more books. He made a record of his book collection, *Cangshuzhi*, with many critical notes on the texts of the classics, and in 1826 a catalogue of the Ciyunlou collection was published. The Qing scholar Gong Zizhen praised this collection, together with four other famous Chinese cangshulou: namely, Fan's Tianyige, Wang's Zenqitang, Wu's Pinghuazhai and Bao's Zhibuzuzhai.^[12]

Mei Yizheng, another scholar-editor, spent many years compiling the *Deyige cangshuzhi* (42 juan). But his descendants neglected the collection on which it was based, more than half of which came to be badly damaged by insects.^[13]

In the late Qing period, the unstable political situation seriously affected library activity. Books could not escape the general turmoil. They were often removed and scattered here and there. Yu Songnian, an owner of a cangshulou called Yijiatang, collected a large number of rare older books, many rescued from the disbanded libraries. But soon his collection also met misfortune. Some volumes were gathered by Ding Richang, who served as Shanghai daotai (the governor of Shanghai) in 1864,^[14] and the bulk (about 48,000 juan) by Lu Xinyuan, one of the China's four most celebrated bibliophiles at the close of the Qing period.^[15]

Xu Weiren, of the same generation as Yu, was an expert in epigraphy, being praised as juyan (the great eye). He paid much attention to local documents. For instance, the only existing copies of the *Shanghai County Annals* covering the Jiajing and Wanli periods were well preserved in his cangshulou. The single volume of Wanli records is now kept in the Shanghai Library.^[16]

Yao Wendong, born in 1852, was a prolific author with 120 titles to his credit. His collection reached 160,000 juan in Changming wenshe of Nanxiang, and was later destroyed during the Japanese invasion in 1930s. Yao was one of the initiators of a scheme, put before the circuit of Susongtai (the higher administrative body for Shanghai) for building a library in the town.

According to Shi Likang, there were nearly a hundred bibliophiles in the Shanghai area during the Ming and Qing Dynasties.^[17] Apart from these private collections, there were also some institutional libraries in ancient Shanghai. The library of the Shanghai County Academy (Zunjingge), founded in 1484, stored mainly the Confucian classics. In the Qing Dynasty, three academies of classical learning, Jingye shuyuan (1748), Longmen shuyuan (1865), and Qiuzhi shuyuan (1876), were established, each having a library or room for preserving books.

Characteristics of the cangshulou

A book-oriented system



he difference between the traditional and the modern library in China is, in a word, that the former was book-oriented

and the latter is user-oriented. Consequently, the acquisition, storage and exploitation of books for scholarly purposes is well developed in the long history of Chinese librarianship. The early invention of paper and printing in China provided favourable conditions for library development in the country. The increasing amount of printed literature and the popularity of *cangshulou* was then followed by an upsurge in the field of book study, i.e. bibliographical and textual research.

The classification and cataloguing of books was practised in China over a long period. A scheme called *Qilue* (seven epitomes), devised by Liu Xin in the Han Dynasty (206 BC–200 AD), marked the origins of Chinese classification. Subsequently several different schemes were used before the *Siku* classification scheme, with its four main classes, was developed in the Qing Dynasty. It had been modified and adopted by most libraries until the advent of modern classification systems.

Work on the organization of libraries was paralleled by the study of the physical form of books. This arose from the tradition of private publishing in ancient China. Seeking an active market, the bibliophiles often took a positive part in this publishing activity,^[18] but owing to the flood of publications, they had carefully to distinguish different editions and check for printing errors. Consequently textual criticism came into being and soon became a specialised field in book studies. Entering the Qing period, textual research was further emphasized as scholasticism became dominant in the field of learning. As a result, library activity was led up to a narrow lane. Nevertheless, it was a

productive one and the book study carried out by these bibliographical pioneers is an indelible contribution to the library science of today.

The individual approach

There is a red-ink stamp belonging to the collection of Shi's Huoge which states:

This is the Huoge collection. It is against our ancestor's will to sell or lend. The collection should be kept as treasure by later generations. ^[19]

The idea inherent here is above criticism in the context of the age, as the purpose of the cangshulou was collecting and preserving books. As a closed, bibliographically-oriented system, it was in effect an extension of the private study. (In this it hardly differed from government or institutional libraries, for single library paradigm was universal at that time.) The bibliophile's preferences decide everything. There is no necessity to set up regulations for management as the selection policy, the shelving method and everything else reflected an individual's wishes. Since the books are not for general use, there is no social pressure on their owners, though some cangshulou were, in fact, opened to public as a charitable gesture. Its social contribution was realized indirectly through efforts to preserve human records.

The existing pattern of librarianship is always a reflection of the cultural and economic level of a given society. Accordingly,