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Cover calligraphy    Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿, Tang calligrapher and statesman

Cover illustration    Detail from Chinese *Anti-opium poster*, c. 1895. “*Quan shi jieshi dayan wen*” [Essay Urging the World to Give Up Opium]



West Lake from Wang Villa (Wang Zhuang), Lois Conner, 2008

The editor and editorial board of *East Asian History* would like to acknowledge the contribution made to the journal by Professor Geremie Barmé.

Geremie has been editor of *East Asian History* since it began under this title in 1991, and was editor of its predecessor *Papers on Far Eastern History* from 1989. In this period, he has sustained and promoted the importance of the journal as a forum for rigorous and original historical scholarship on China, Korea and Japan. Encouraging and exacting in equal measures, he has been generous to scholars taking their first steps in learned publication. During Geremie's tenure, *East Asian History* has become a major journal in the field, noted for its consistently high standards of scholarship and the care taken in its production. His editorship stands as an example and a challenge to the new editorial team.

Sometimes words flow easily  
As soon as he grasps the brush;  
Sometimes he sits vacantly,  
Nibbling at it.

Lu Ji, from *Literature: A Rhapsody*

Translated by Achilles Fang, "Rhymeprose on Literature: The Wen-Fu of Lu Chi (A.D. 261–303)", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 14, 3/4 (Dec., 1951): 527–66, p.534

或操觚以率爾或含毫而邈然  
陸機文賦

The editor and editorial board of *East Asian History* would like to acknowledge the contribution made to the journal by Marion Weeks.

Marion joined what was then the Department of Far Eastern History in 1977. From that time, she was involved in various capacities with, first, *Papers on Far Eastern History*, and then *East Asian History*, for which she served as business manager from its inception. By the time of her retirement from the Division of Pacific and Asian History in November 2007, Marion had become the heart and soul of the journal.

Over the years she worked with many editors—Andrew Fraser, John Fincher, Sydney Crawcour, Ian McComas Taylor, Jennifer Holmgren, Geremie Barmé, Benjamin Penny—as well as numerous associate editors, copy editors, printers and, of course, countless authors and manuscript readers. All owe her an immense debt of gratitude.

*East Asian History* would certainly not have been the same without Marion—at times, without her, *East Asian History* may not have been at all.



Imperial Summer Retreat, Chengde, Lois Conner, 2000

# THE MORAL STATUS OF THE BOOK: HUANG ZONGXI IN THE PRIVATE LIBRARIES OF LATE-IMPERIAL CHINA

 *Duncan M. Campbell*

If it is indeed true that “taking pleasure in objects will serve to undermine [my] purpose”, then what purpose is undermined if one takes pleasure in things that are not objects? Books, I say, are not objects.

Guo Zizhang, “Preface to Qi Chenghan’s Injunction and Covenant Governing the Usage of the Tranquillity Hall Book Collection”  
[Qi Erguang Danshengtang cangshu xunyue xu]<sup>1</sup>

What my father began, so I continue. In poverty I neglect not their buying, in chaos I neglect not the keeping of them in hand, and in old age I neglect not their reading. For my sons and grandsons to come, herein will be mirrored the contours of my heart.

Huang Zongxi’s “Collector’s Seal”<sup>2</sup>

Only the copied text thus commands the soul of him who is occupied with it, whereas the mere reader never discovers the new aspects of his inner self that are opened by the text, that road cut through the interior jungle forever closing behind it: because the reader follows the movement of his mind in the free flight of day-dreaming, whereas the copier submits it to command. The Chinese practice of copying books was thus an incomparable guarantee of literary culture, and the transcript a key to China’s enigmas.

Walter Benjamin, “One-Way Street”<sup>3</sup>

A preliminary version of this paper was presented at “New Word Order: Emerging Histories of the Book (A SHARP Regional Conference)”, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, 30 January – 1 February 2006, and this paper is itself intended as the introductory section of a fuller treatment of the topic of the private library in late-imperial China. Unless otherwise noted, all translations found in this paper are my own. As in the past, I am grateful for the care with which my colleagues Brian Moloughney, Michael Radich, Stephen McDowall, Malcolm McKinnon and Ben Yong have read earlier versions of this paper; their many comments have served to sharpen its focus considerably, as have those of John Makeham. I am indebted also to the helpful suggestions and corrections on the part of the two anonymous readers of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> For which, see Wang Lan and Chen Xiaolan, eds, *Jingji huitong wai sizhong* [The Circulation of the Classics and Other Books: Along with Four Other Related Works] (Beijing: Yanshan chubanshe, 1999), p.63. For a brief English-language biography /OVER

/of Guo Zizhang (1543–1618), see L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds, *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970) (hereafter *DMB*), Vol.1, pp.775–77. Guo attributes the internal quotation in the epigraph (*wanwu sangzhi* 玩物喪志) to the Song dynasty Neo-Confucian scholar Cheng Hao (1030–85); in fact it derives initially from the “Lü ao” [Hounds of Lü] chapter of the “Zhoushu” [Book of Zhou] section of the *Shangshu* [Book of Documents], for which see James Legge, trans. *The Chinese Classics: Volume III: The Shoo King* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), p.348 and his translation: “... by finding his amusement in things he ruins his aims”. As Wai-ye Li illustrates in her article “The Collector, the Connoisseur, and Late-Ming Sensibility,” *T’oung Pao* 81.4/5 (1995): 269–302, at p.273, the context of the phrase is a memorial to the Zhou ruler that makes the distinction between “unusual objects” (*yiwu* 異物) and “useable objects” (*yongwu* 用物) and the “baleful consequences of enjoying the former”.

<sup>2</sup> ShenShanhong and Wu Guang, eds, *Huang Zongxi quanji* [The Complete Works of Huang Zongxi] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2005), Vol.11, p.82 (*cangshuyin* 藏書印).

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter, trans, *One-Way Street and Other Writings* (London: Verso, 1985), p.50.

<sup>4</sup> For a short English-language biography of whom, see *DMB*, Vol.1, pp.826–30.

<sup>5</sup> This passage occurs in Li Rihua’s *Zitaoxuan zazhui* [Miscellanea from the Purple Peach Studio] (1617), as cited by James C.Y. Watt, “The Literati Environment,” in *The Chinese Scholar’s Studio: Artistic Life in the Late Ming Period*, eds Chu-tsing Li and James C.Y. Watt (London: Thames & Hudson, 1987), p.6.

<sup>6</sup> Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), pp.12–13. In a brief earlier treatment of the topic, Clunas argued: “Clearly books formed part of the cocoon of material possessions which were one of the defining marks of élite status”, for which see his chapter “Books and Things: Ming Literary Culture and

Sometime early in the seventeenth century, the eminent Chinese painter, art critic and influential arbiter of good taste Li Rihua 李日華 (1565–1635)<sup>4</sup> essayed the following sketch of that most sacred of traditional Chinese spaces, the scholar’s studio:

The library/study should be situated where the brook twists and bends between the hills. The total structure should not exceed two or three buildings, with an upper story to observe the clouds and the mists. On the four sides there should be a hundred slender bamboo plants—to welcome the fresh wind. To the south a tall pine tree [on which] to hang [the] bright moon. A gnarled old prunus with low, twisting branches to come in through the window. Fragrant herbs and thick moss surround the stone foundation. The east building houses the Daoist and the Buddhist sutras, and the west building the Confucian classics. In the centre, a bed and a desk with a scattering of fine calligraphy and paintings. In the morning and evening, white rice and fish stew, fine wine and tea; a strong man at the gate to reject social callers.<sup>5</sup>

The description seems consciously idealised; it also masks the extent to which the book, as physical object, here so neatly deployed to East and West, embodied a somewhat ambivalent moral status within the late-imperial Chinese world of objects and their consumption.

On the one hand, nobody intent upon “entering the search for ways of transforming economic power into cultural power”<sup>6</sup> during this period could afford not to be known to possess a large collection of them, preferably, as above, housed in an elegant building set within some fine Jiangnan 江南 garden. Indeed, contrary to the claim made by Guo Zizhang in the first epigraph to this paper that books were not “objects” (*wu* 物) as such, one of the most influential of contemporary guidebooks to elegant living, the *Desultory Remarks on Furnishing the Abode of the Retired Scholar* (Kaopan yushi 考槃餘事) attributed to Tu Long 屠隆 (1542–1605),<sup>7</sup> first published in 1606, begins with a section “Notes on Books” (Shu jian 書箋) that treats books as if they are simply that—objects of connoisseurship to be collected and cared for, occasionally to be shown to friends. We are tutored in the means for distinguishing (by smell) between Song (960–1279) and Yuan (1260–1368) imprints, told where the best imprints are produced and the reasons for price differentials between various books,

/Material Culture,” in Francis Wood, ed., *Chinese Studies* (London: The British Library, 1988), p.136.

<sup>7</sup> On whom, see *DMB*, Vol.2, pp.1324–27. In this biography, Chaoying Fang suggests that this work may well have been written by the noted collector Xiang Yuanbian (1525–90), on whom see *DMB*, Vol.1, pp.539–44. In his

/ *Superfluous Things*, pp.28–35, Craig Clunas provides an altogether convincing discussion of the tangled textual relationship between this work and other examples of the genre, along with the circumstances of its first publication. The translated title of the work as given above is that suggested by Clunas.



and the extent to which the appearance in the marketplace of an imprint immediately renders the handwritten copies of that book no longer saleable. Even in a note that deals with what happens when, eventually, we take hold of a book and open it up, significantly entitled “Viewing Books” (Guanshu 觀書) rather than “Reading Books”, we are simply given a list of instructions pertaining to the care of the book itself, as object, distantly attributed to the Yuan-dynasty painter and calligrapher Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254–1322):

Your books will not suffer injury if you do not bend them back along their spines, do not turn down the corners of the pages, do not try to scratch out characters with your fingernails, do not blow the pages open, do not insert bamboo bookmarks, always repair them as soon as they are damaged and remember also to close them as soon as you have finished with them.<sup>8</sup>

It is almost as if books serve the needs of the “retired scholar” best when they are left flat upon his shelves, admired but unread.

Once the book was regarded as simply an object in this manner, however, any engagement in the processes of collecting them ran the danger of becoming subject to the moralistic strictures that the scholarly and cultural élite deployed to buttress its position in the face of the commodification of all the many other traditional accoutrements of their status (paintings and calligraphy, gardens and their rockery, antiques and so on).<sup>9</sup>

The troubling and equivocal status of the book as, in Timothy Brook’s terms, at once both “objects through which information is stored and communicated” and “social objects, bearing and transmitting messages about status”<sup>10</sup> can be illustrated by reference to the manner of the disposal of the books that had formed part of the vast collection of objects assembled by the Grand Secretary Yan Song 嚴嵩 (1480–1565), as stipulated in the inventory taken of his possessions once he had been dismissed from office in disgrace, accused, along with his son Shifan 世蕃 (1513–65), of excessive greed.<sup>11</sup> In the first section of this remarkable document, entitled *A Record of the Waters of Heaven Melting the Iceberg* (Tianshui bingshan lu 天水冰山錄), the titles of 88 books (*bu* 部) in 2,613 volumes (*ben* 本) are listed as eligible to be taken into the imperial collection,<sup>12</sup> along with all the other objects deemed worthy of this honour. Another 5,852 unspecified Confucian (*ruxue* 儒學) books and 914, again unspecified, Taoist or Buddhist books are consigned to the second section of this document, a

/Compendium of Pure Garden](prefacedated 1613): “After Mi Fu gave his mountain-shaped inkstone to a friend, he never got to see it again, so he let his brush imagine it and made a picture of it. Now I have gathered all the amazing rocks in the world into a single collection, so surely it is not only one inkstone that seems to be before my eyes! From now on, everybody can have the refined atmosphere rocks bring to the scholar’s study”. See Judith T. Zeitlin, “The Secret Life of Rocks: Objects and Collectors in the Ming and Qing Imagination,” *Orientalisms* 30.5 (1999): 40–7, at p.45.

<sup>10</sup> Timothy Brook, “Communications and Commerce,” in *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part 2*, eds Dennis Twitchett and Frederick Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.666.

<sup>11</sup> For a short English-language biography of this much-maligned figure by Kwan-wai So, see *DMB*, Vol.2, pp.1586–91. The inventory, first published only as late as 1737, may well have been somewhat exaggerated, as So suggests. I agree with Clunas, however, that it remains an “important and under-utilized text” (*Superfluous Things*, p.46). Clunas himself, in a subsequent book, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), makes use of this inventory in an attempt to judge the size of private libraries in China during this period (pp. 37–8). Again, the translated title given above is that suggested by Clunas.

<sup>12</sup> These books are categorised as being “Veritable Records, along with works from the Canon, the Histories, the Philosophers, and Belles-lettres and so on” (*shilu bing jing shi zi ji dengshu* 實錄並經史子集等書). Multiple copies of only two titles are to be retained. Of all the titles listed, almost half are recorded as being Song-dynasty imprints, another thirteen as Yuan-dynasty imprints, seven as being in manuscript, and five as being either “Early Ming” (*guochu* 國初) or “Newly Published” (*xinban* 新板) imprints, for which, see Cheng Yansheng, ed., *Ming Wuzong waiji* [Unofficial Records of the Reign of the Zhengde Emperor of the Ming Dynasty] (Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguangshe, 1941), p.134.

<sup>8</sup> In Huang Binhong and Deng Shi, eds, *Meishu congshu* [Collected Works on Art] (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1986), Vol.1, p.335.

<sup>9</sup> Books were themselves, of course, also

/powerful agents in these processes of commodification. Judith Zeitlin cites a particularly amusing illustration of this point, taken from Lin Youlin’s *Suyuan shipu* [Stone

<sup>13</sup> *Ming Wuzong waiji*, p.33. For the internal quotation, see D.C. Lau, trans., *Tao Te Ching* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1989), pp.64–5.

<sup>14</sup> On which, briefly, see Craig Clunas, “Regulation of Consumption and the Institution of Correct Morality by the Ming State,” in *Norms and the State in China*, eds Chun-chieh Huang and Erik Zürcher (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), pp.39–49.

<sup>15</sup> On the intimate connection between both print culture and book collecting and the imperial examination system, see particularly Chow Kai-wing, “Writing for Success: Printing, Examinations, and Intellectual Change in Ming China,” *Late Imperial China* 17.1 (1996): 120–57; Chow Kai-wing’s subsequent book, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); and also Timothy Brook, “Edifying Knowledge: The Building of School Libraries in Ming China,” *Late Imperial China* 17.1 (1996): 93–119. This last reference contains useful, if preliminary, discussion of some of the financial and architectural issues involved in the construction of a library during the late imperial period. A revised version of this article has been published in Timothy Brook, *The Chinese State in Ming Society* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), pp.101–7.

<sup>16</sup> Wai-yee Li, “The Collector, the Connoisseur, and Late-Ming Sensibility,” p.279.

<sup>17</sup> Sophie Volpp, “The Gift of a Python Robe: The Circulation of Objects in *Jin Ping Mei*,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 65.1 (2005): 133–58, at p.135 (footnote 5). Both Volpp and Clunas follow Arjun Appadurai in emphasising the extent to which objects acquire value through the processes and circumstances of their circulation, for which, see his “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.3–63. Of particular relevance to the topic of this paper is Appadurai’s suggestion, on page 38, that luxury be regarded as a special “register” of consumption, the signs of which would be: “(1) restriction, either by price or by law, to elites; (2) complexity of

section that comprised of a listing of objects not to be retained but to be converted into their monetary value. Exceptionally in the case of these books, however, such was the status of the book, even in such invidious circumstances it appears, that they were not to be sold but rather to be dispatched to schools throughout the empire, in the case of the former category, and to temples and monasteries in the case of the latter. “When you give rein to your desires,” writes Yan Yan 嚴言 in his 1728 preface to the inventory, in echo of a passage from the *Laozi* 老子, “you will seek for ‘too much store’ (*duocang* 多藏), and too much store leads, inevitably, to ‘immense loss’ (*houwang* 厚亡), this being the eternal and reasonable working out of the laws of reciprocity.”<sup>13</sup> If it had been both the size and the quality of Yan Song’s collection that had betokened his moral failings, the moralised discourse represented by the inventory of his property needed, however, to resist the implied commodification of the books involved, were they to have been made over to the marketplace. Books after all, were not subject to the elaborate, if increasingly transgressed, Ming-dynasty sumptuary legislation, nor did they constitute taxable property. Dismantling the collection in such a public and monitory manner but making the books it had included available to students, scholars and religious communities throughout the empire, whilst at the same time sequestering for the imperial collection the rarest (and, presumably, most expensive) volumes it had contained, would seem to serve simultaneously the practical and the discursive purposes of both state and élite.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, just as it was the ownership and consumption of books that both differentiated and enabled this élite,<sup>15</sup> at the same time for that élite, of books, above all, it can also be said that: “... the object becomes the agent for both the assertion of individuality and integration into the élite culture; both withdrawal from and participation in the socio-political realm”.<sup>16</sup> In a recent article in which she develops an insight suggested by Clunas, Sophie Volpp argues that: “... late-imperial objects did not have a value in and of themselves but rather acquired value from the conditions of their circulation”.<sup>17</sup> In the case of books, in particular, however, if they were fully to perform their various practical and symbolic functions, then they needed to both “circulate in the world” (*xingshi* 行世) and to be “collected at home” (*cangjia* 藏家), and a book that was known to have once been part of an earlier collection and which carried the “Collector’s Seal” (*yinji* 印記) of its previous owner or his library, was freighted with layers of

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/acquisition, which may or may not be a function of real ‘scarcity’; (3) semiotic virtuosity, that is, the capacity to signal fairly complex social messages (as do pepper in cuisine, silk in dress, jewels in adornment, and relics in

/worship); (4) specialized knowledge as a prerequisite for the ‘appropriate’ consumption, that is regulation by fashion; and (5) a high degree of linkage of their consumption to body, person and personality.”

cultural significance in addition to those embodied in the book itself and its specific properties. In the item on this aspect of book collecting in his *Conversations about the Forest of Books* (Shulin qinghua 書林清話), Ye Dehui 葉德輝 (1864–1927), for instance, argues that: “Collecting books is not the same as collecting calligraphy or famous paintings. If one’s sons and grandsons are able to read, then one can bequeath one’s books to them; if they are not able to do so, then one disperses them in one’s own lifetime, doing so constituting, in fact, one of life’s great pleasures (*rensheng da kuaiyi shi* 人生大快意事), a view that I have maintained all my life”.<sup>18</sup> The pre-eminent Qing-dynasty (1644–1911) collector Huang Pilie 黃丕烈 (1763–1825),<sup>19</sup> for his part, when discussing a Yuan-dynasty imprint once owned by the eminent epigraphist He Yuanxi 何元錫 (1766–1829) of Hangzhou<sup>20</sup> but which bore the seals also of both Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582–1664) and Liu Shi 柳是 (1618–64), to whom I shall return in this paper, claimed that: “In essence, then, a book that has once been part of the collection of a famous person and which carries both his seal and his handwriting seems to have a much enhanced ancient fragrance about it (*bei jue gu xiang* 倍覺古香)”.<sup>21</sup>

The book, then, in late-imperial China, seems forever suspended between the contradictory need to assume both “material presence”, within a private collection for instance, and “symbolic visibility” throughout the scholarly community.<sup>22</sup> The increasingly sophisticated paratextual apparatus that developed during this period (the prefaces, colophons, commentaries and so on),<sup>23</sup> occasioned by particular readings of specific books either in one’s own collection or that of another, but de-linked from that book and circulated separately in collections of one sort or another, served this purpose well. Critical too, in this connection as well as in other respects, was the role of the catalogue, as eye of the library, for those with access to its shelves, as voyeuristic eye into the holdings of the libraries of others, and as one particularly refined means of self-promotion.<sup>24</sup>

/Emotion calls to emotion. A strange meeting of feeling that will not submit to ordinary analysis”, for which, see her essay of this title in *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery* (London: Vintage, 1995), p.131.

<sup>22</sup> For these terms, see Patricia Sieber, “Corporeality and Canonicity: A Study of Technologies of Reading in Early Modern Chinese *Zaju* Drama,” *Graven Images* 2 (1995): 171–82.

<sup>23</sup> For a useful inventory of the apparatus made available to a late-imperial Chinese scholar in part through contemporary developments in xylography, see David L. Rolston, ed., *How to Read the Chinese Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp.42–66.

<sup>24</sup> In his discussion of the deployment of cultural capital in the pursuit of maintaining local status, Timothy Brook argues that: “By passing on the appropriate cultural orientation from generation to generation, a family steeped in gentry traditions was better positioned to train its young men to acquire and hone skills essential for succeeding in both serving the state and maintaining status at home. Culture should thus be thought of as providing a repertoire of activities by which the gentry could create and maintain networks of personal ties with each other and set themselves apart from those who had not mastered the nuanced language of elite life”. See Timothy Brook, “Family Continuity and Cultural Hegemony: The Gentry of Ningbo, 1368–1911,” in *Chinese Local Elites and Patterns of Dominance*, eds Joseph W. Esherick and Mary Backus Rankin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p.41. In this context, books can be understood as embodiments of the culture to be deployed, and catalogues of one’s holdings as one means for such deployment. In the “Book Catalogues” (*shumulei* 書目類) section of the catalogue of the books in his collection, Qian Qianyi, for instance, perhaps the most discriminating collector of his age, lists the catalogues of thirty other libraries, imperial and private, ancient and contemporary, for which, see *Jiangyunlou cangshu mu* [Catalogue of the Tower of the Crimson Clouds Book Collection], in *Xuxiu Siku quanshu* [Books of the Four Treasuries, /OVER

<sup>18</sup> Ye Dehui, “Cangshujia yinji zhi yu” [The Legends of the Seals of Book Collectors], *Shulin qinghua* (Beijing: Guji chubanshe, 1957), p.288.

<sup>19</sup> On whom, see A.W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing Period (1644–1912)* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943) (hereafter *ECCP*), pp.340–1.

<sup>20</sup> For a short note about this man, see *ECCP*, p.36. In his *Wulin cangshu lu* [Record of the Book Collections of Hangzhou] (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957), Ding

/Shen provides a delightful portrait of a man who “so loved antiquity that it became an obsession” (*shi gu cheng pi* 嗜古成癖).

<sup>21</sup> For which, see Gu Huizhi, ed., *Liu Rusbi shiwen ji* [Collection of the Prose and Poems of Liu Shi] (Beijing: Xinhua shudian, 1996), p.243. Huang Peilie here identifies a dimension of book collecting that Jeanette Winterson has labelled “the psychometry of books”: “Books have isotopic qualities and the excitement a collector feels is not simply biographical, archival, historical, it is emotional.

/Supplemented and Corrected] (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 2002), Vol.920, pp.343–44. Interestingly, one seventeenth-century source claims that this catalogue was only produced once most of the books that it lists had been lost: “When Qian Qianyi’s Tower of the Crimson Clouds was destroyed by fire, all his exquisitely printed Song and Yuan dynasty editions were reduced to ashes. The *Catalogue of the Tower of the Crimson Clouds Book Collection* that presently circulates under his name was in fact compiled after that event, as, one volume at a time, he lovingly recalled to memory the books he had once possessed. In it, he fails to list at least three out of every ten titles his library had contained, however”, for which, see *Muzhai yishi* [Anecdotes Concerning Qian Qianyi], as cited in Jian Xiujuan, *Qian Qianyi cangshu yanjiu* [Research into Qian Qianyi’s Book Collections] (Taipei: Hanmei tushu, 1991), p.263.

<sup>25</sup> On this most dramatic of dynastic transitions, see Lynn A. Struve, *The Southern Ming, 1644–1662* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); and her similarly entitled chapter in *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part 1*, eds Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.641–725.

<sup>26</sup> For short biographies of Zhang Dai in English, see *ECCP*, pp.53–4; and W.H. Nienhauser, ed., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp.220–21. See also, Jonathan Spence, “Presidential Address: Cliffhanger Days: A Chinese Family in the Seventeenth Century,” *The American Historical Review* 110.1 (2005): 1–10; and Robert Hegel, “Dreaming the Past: Memory and Continuity Beyond the Ming Fall,” in *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature*, eds Wilt L. Idema, Wai-yee Li and Ellen Widmer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp.345–74. For translated selections from his most famous work, *Taoan mengyi* [Dream Memories of Taoan], see Duncan Campbell, trans., “The Gardens of His Youth: Extracts from Zhang Dai’s *Dream Memories of Taoan*,” in *A Birthday Book for Brother Stone: For David Hawkes at Eighty*, eds Rachel May and John Minford (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2003), pp.229–46. On the fate of the family’s library,

Once the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) had replaced the Ming (1368–1644) and, in the minds of many contemporaries, “Heaven had collapsed and the Earth split asunder” (*tian beng di jie* 天崩地解),<sup>25</sup> the discourse on collecting acquired a heightened intensity, as Wai-yee Li has argued, either nostalgic in the hands of a man like Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597–c.1689) as he attempted to reassemble in words a world he eventually knew to have been irretrievably lost,<sup>26</sup> or rancorous as with the loyalist historian Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–82)<sup>27</sup> when he sought to understand the moral causes of the collapse of the Ming: “The other variety of discourse on things which cultivated personal uniqueness through intense, intimate relations with the world of things, was regarded as the symptom as well as the cause of the individual’s problem in a disintegrating society and therefore blamed for undermining the equilibrium of the self and the polity”.<sup>28</sup> The late-imperial Chinese book collector seems thus vulnerable to accusations of either bibliomania or philistinism, or both, and, once the Ming had fallen, either of these failings at the expense of the welfare of the dynastic house to which he was expected to remain loyal.

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/see David Pollard and Soh Yong Kian, trans, “Zhang Dai: Six Essays,” *Renditions* 33 and 34 (1990): 155–66, at pp.165–66.

<sup>27</sup> For a short English-language biography (by Chaoying Fang) of this important figure, see *ECCP*, pp.421–26; for a more extensive study, see Willard Peterson, “The Life of Ku Yen-wu (1613–1682),” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 28 (1968): 114–56 and 29 (1969): 201–47. Gu Yanwu seems to have viewed the late-Ming proliferation of books with particular animus, as he makes clear in a discussion of the issue of plagiarism (*qieshu* 竊書): “But in this present age of ours people who write books seem to fill the empire, amongst whom there are those who steal the books of men of an earlier age and claim them as their own. Therefore, to obtain a single volume by a man of the Song dynasty is far better than getting hold of 100 volumes by men of the Ming”. See Huang Rucheng ed., *Rizhi lu jishi* [Record of Knowledge Daily Acquired, with Collected Explanations] (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1994), p.670.

<sup>28</sup> Wai-yee Li, “The Collector, the Connoisseur, and Late-Ming Sensibility,” p.299. Alberto Manguel, speaking about the impact of the French Revolution upon private libraries, has this to say: “Books

/were among the most copious remains left behind by the revolution. The private libraries of eighteenth-century France were family treasures, preserved and expanded from generation to generation among the nobility, and the books they contained were as much symbols of social standing as finery and deportment. One imagines the Count d’Hoym, one of the most celebrated bibliophiles of his time (he died at the age of forty in 1736), drawing from one of his overpopulated shelves a volume of Cicero’s *Orations*, which he would regard not as one among many hundreds or thousands of identical printed copies dispersed through numerous libraries but a unique object, bound according to his specifications, annotated by his hand and bearing his family arms embossed in gold”. See his *A History of Reading* (London: Flamingo, p.1997), p.239. This present essay in Chinese book lore was occasioned, in part, by my reading of Manguel’s beautifully crafted book; sadly, his references to China are sparing and, in the case of the biblioclasm of the First Emperor of Qin, almost certainly wrong, on which topic see Martin Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch’in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2000), to whom is attributed the coinage of this evocative term.

The prolific Ming scholar Huang Zongxi (1610–95),<sup>29</sup> an acquaintance of Gu Yanwu and himself eventually the owner of a large collection of books, grappled with these paradoxes for much of his life, both before and after the fall of the dynasty to which he chose to remain loyal. His lifelong preoccupation with books and libraries, the seedbed of his enormous scholarly output, serves to highlight issues of the transmissibility or loss of collections and the complex emotional ties that bound the collector to his books and, in turn, reader to collector.<sup>30</sup> Equally, I argue below, his polemical deployment of an idealised concept of the “true reader” (*dushuzhe* 讀者) offers also one particular resolution to the discourse on the moral dimensions of book collecting. Huang’s proposed reader is one who, in resistance to the prevailing social usages of text, despite the best efforts of the selfish collector of books, and, finally, in the face of the inevitable destruction of all book collections, struggles heroically against the “difficulties” (*nan* 難) of the sacred, if self-appointed, task of turning his reading into yet more and useful books (*duo zhu shiyong zhi shu* 多著實用之書).<sup>31</sup> This paper will consider Huang Zongxi’s engagement in the discourse on books and book collecting with reference to his writings about a number of the private libraries (*cangshulou* 藏書樓)<sup>32</sup> of the Jiangnan region that he visited during the course of his lifetime.

Sometime in the 1680s and despite his adamantly loyalist stance, Huang Zongxi made extensive use of the library of the influential Qing-dynasty official Xu Qianxue 徐乾學 (1631–94)—the Tower for Transmitting This (Chuan shilou 傳是樓) in Kunshan 崑山.<sup>33</sup> In a record of his visit to this library that seems at once both sycophantic and self-serving but the promise of which probably helped gain him access to its vast collection,<sup>34</sup>

/(PhD diss., University of Western Sydney, 2004). Patricia Herbert, too, although never explicitly addressing the term *cangshulou* itself, concludes that: “... the library in imperial China was primarily a repository of traditional learning and culture” (“From *Shukuto Tushuguan*: An Historical Overview of the Organisation and Function of Libraries in China”, *Papers on Far Eastern History* 22 (1980): 93–121, at p.120).

<sup>33</sup> On Xu Qianxue, see *ECCP*, pp.310–12; and Lynn A. Struve, “The Hsü Brothers and Semiofficial Patronage of Scholars in the K’ang-hsi Period,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.1 (1982): 231–66.

<sup>34</sup> The compilers of the *Siku quanshu tiyao* [Digest of the Books of the Four Treasuries] entry on Huang’s massive (480 *juan*) collection of Ming-dynasty writing, the *Ming wen hai* [Ocean of Ming Prose], note that it was on the basis of access to the holdings of Xu Qianxue’s library that Huang was able to expand his much smaller earlier anthology, the *Ming wen an* [Cases in Ming Prose], for which see Yongrong (1744–90) et al., comp., *Siku quanshu zongmu* [Complete Catalogue of the Four Treasuries] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), Vol.2, p.1729. The compilers go on to argue that in his desire that his anthology be as complete as possible, Huang: “... selected and included even entertainment and novelistic writings (*youxi xiaoshuo jia yan*), thus deliberately running the risk of allowing his anthology to become somewhat prolix. But the collection that he has brought together is wonderfully rich and in the process of its compilation Huang has reviewed more than 2000 collections of the writings of the men of the Ming dynasty. Even Zhu Yizun [1629–1709], in his *Rixia jiuwen* [Old Anecdotes about the Capital], fails to include Sang Yue’s [fl. 1465] two rhapsodies on the Northern and the Southern Capitals, but Huang here places them at the very beginning of his anthology. Many are the other texts, once lost, whose continued circulation depends upon their inclusion in this work. Thus can it be called a true refuge (*yuansou* 淵藪) for the texts (*wenzhang* 文章) of that single dynasty, and anyone wishing to investigate the bibliographical circumstances of the Ming will, by necessity, regard this anthology as the most complete” (p.1730).

<sup>29</sup> For a brief English-language biography of this man (by Tu Lien-che), see *ECCP*, pp.351–54. For insightful discussion of Huang Zongxi’s various scholarly contributions, see Lynn A. Struve, “Huang Zongxi in Context: A Reappraisal of His Major Writings,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 47.3 (1988): 474–502; and her “The Early Ch’ing Legacy of Huang Tsung-hsi: A Reexamination,” *Asian Major*, 3rd Series 1.1 (1988): 83–122.

<sup>30</sup> In his remarkable essay, “Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Book Collecting”, Walter Benjamin argues: “Would it not be presumptuous of me if, in order to appear convincingly objective and down-to-earth, I enumerated for you the main sections or prize pieces of a library, if I presented you with their history or even their usefulness to a writer? I, for one, have in mind some-

/thing less obscure, something more palpable than that; what I am really concerned with is giving you some insight into the relationship of a book collector to his possessions, into collecting rather than a collection”. See Hannah Arendt, ed., Harry Zohn, trans., *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), pp.59–60.

<sup>31</sup> Huang Zongxi, “Xu Shiqi,” *Siji lu* [Record of My Thoughts of Friends of Former Years], in *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.1, p.351.

<sup>32</sup> I adopt this translation of the term in resistance to a prevailing tendency to understand these institutions merely as “book repositories”, the translation employed in, for example, Jinhong Tang, “Educational Reform and the Emergence of Modern Libraries in China with Special Reference to the Metropolitan Library of Beijing, 1909–1937”

<sup>35</sup> "Chuanshilou cangshu ji" [A Record of the Book Collection of the Tower for Transmitting This], *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.10, p.135. Ouyang Xiu's comment comes from his "ji gu lumu xu" [Preface to the Catalogue of Collected Ancient Inscriptions], in *Ouyang wenzhong gong wenji* [Collected Writings of Ouyang Xiu], SBCK Edition (1st Series) (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1965), Vol.2, p.310. For a translation of this important preface in its entirety, see Sir Percival David, trans. and ed., *Chinese Connoisseurship: The Ko Ku Yao Lun: The Essential Criteria of Antiquities* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), pp.169–70.

<sup>36</sup> For a short bibliographical note on the *Huangshi richao*, see E. Balazs, ed., *A Sung Bibliography (Bibliographie des Sung)* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1978), p.232. On the importance of copying in the late imperial-Chinese intellectual world generally, see Sun Congtian, *Cangshu jiyao* [Bookman's Manual] as translated by Achilles Fang, "Bookman's Manual," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 14 (1951): 215–60.

<sup>37</sup> Huang Baijia, "Xuchaotang cangshu mu xu" [Preface to the Catalogue of the Collection of the Hall for Continued Copying], as cited in Fan Fengshu, *Zhongguo sijia cangshu shi* [A History of Private Book Collecting in China] (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2001), pp.321–22.

<sup>38</sup> See "XuYuanpu," *Sijiulu*, in *HuangZongxi quanji*, Vol.1, p.392.

Huang offers an implied characterisation of himself as a representative of this ideal "true reader". He begins by citing the great Song-dynasty historian Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–72):

Ouyang Xiu once claimed that: "Although objects often accumulate around those who have a desire to possess them, they revert permanently only to those who possess, powerfully, the wherewithal to acquire them". These two attributes [desire and wealth] are seldom found together. Understood simply as objects, however, books tend to accumulate around and be collected by men who either cannot read them or, if they can read them, prove incapable of themselves producing text (*wenzhang* 文章). Few are those throughout history, both ancient and modern, from whom one can expect all three conditions [books, the ability to read, and the ability to write].

Huang then addresses the particular context of his visit to this library, that of the post-conquest world:

After the chaos of the downfall of the Ming dynasty, very few book collecting families proved able to hold on to their collections. But then, all of a sudden, they reappeared, those books of another age that had been sealed by dust and lain untouched, buried for several hundred years within leather trunks housed in jasper pavilions, all of the collections of the grand book collecting families of both north and south then to revert to this gentleman.<sup>35</sup>

Huang Zongxi's understanding of the importance of the private library in a scholarly circuit whereby, when all three of his conditions were fulfilled, books, once read as they were being copied, served in turn to produce yet more books is encapsulated in the name that he chose to give the site of his own book collection, a collection largely comprising copies of books he had made in the libraries of others over the course of his long and peripatetic life. In distant homage to his Song-dynasty ancestor Huang Zhen's 黃震 (1213–80) lifework, the *Master Huang's Daily Copies* (Huangshi richao 黃氏日鈔), Huang Zongxi called his library the Hall for Continued Copying (Xuchaotang 續鈔堂).<sup>36</sup> According to Huang's youngest son, Huang Baijia 黃百家 (b. 1643), his father's library served to ensure that copies (at least) of books that had hitherto languished for hundreds of years in the private collections of rich non-readers and which had not therefore been accessible to scholars were both preserved and made available to posterity.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, during the 1630s, Huang Zongxi had been involved in the establishment of a Book Copying Society (Chaoshushe 鈔書社), about which he notes: "Along with Liu Cheng 劉城, Xu Yuanpu 許元溥 and I agreed to set up a Book Copying Society. In those days, book-collecting families had not yet been reduced to penury and so they would not lightly open up their libraries to outsiders. Whenever a Song-dynasty tome or two appeared, they would all compete to acquire them".<sup>38</sup> In an otherwise brilliant recent overview of aspects of late-imperial Chinese

print culture, Joseph McDermott cites this note as an illustration of the continued inaccessibility of books to scholars of the period. Understood contextually, however, the point that Huang seems to be making is the opposite to that suggested by McDermott—as had certainly been Huang's own experience, after the chaos of the dynastic transition, books had become all too readily available in the marketplace.<sup>39</sup> Gu Yanwu, in his remarkable discussion of the role of books and copying in the course of his own schooling, makes a tangentially related point when he cites with approbation his grandfather's injunction that: "It is better to copy a book than to write one" (*zhu shu buru chao shu* 著書不如鈔書).<sup>40</sup>

Huang Zongxi's single most sustained treatment of the issues associated with book collecting, however, is his celebrated library record of the most famous private Chinese library of his and subsequent ages—the Pavilion of Heaven's Oneness (Tianyige 天一閣) in Ningbo 寧波. Entitled "Record of the Book Collection of the Pavilion of Heaven's Oneness" (Tianyige cangshu ji 天一閣藏書記) (hereafter, "Record"), it is a melancholic if dramatic catalogue of loss and destruction: "... if reading itself is difficult, of especial difficulty is the collecting of books; most difficult of all however is the maintenance of a book collection over a long period of time without its suffering dispersal".<sup>41</sup> "The true reader (*dushuzhe* 讀書者)," he continues, in contrast to those who read simply in the hope of winning success at the examinations, "devotes a lifetime's energy (*jingli* 精力) to burying himself amidst piles of discarded paper and spilt ink; one always finds the rare examples of such men encircled by their poverty and their suffering".

Having thus introduced his themes, Huang Zongxi turns to enumerating instances of the dangers that book collections had faced over the course of his own lifetime:

In recent years the perils faced by books have not just been those of fire and warfare; if those without the wherewithal necessary have been unable to assemble collections, those who have managed to assemble collections have been without the wherewithal to prevent their collections from dispersing, and thus have they all disappeared into nothingness.<sup>42</sup>

/fate of collections, Huang Zongxi's older contemporary, the Fujianese scholar Xie Zhaozhe (1567–1624; *DMB*, Vol.1, pp.546–50) wrote: "It is generally the case that when objects of extraordinary beauty (*youwu* 尤物) are gathered together in large numbers, such objects must then be dispersed. This law applies not just to commodities and wealth, for, in the end, even books and paintings and other *objet d'art*, however difficult they may have been to collect, will fall prey to the perils of flooding or of fire, or they will be caught up in the ravages of warfare or destroyed in the hands of unfilial sons or grandsons, or they will be seized by rich and powerful tyrants. The books of the Jiaze Library of the Sui dynasty [581–618], the antiquities of the Xuanhe Palace of the Song, the trees and the rocks of Li Deyu's 李德裕 [787–849] Peaceful Springs garden, and the engravings and epitaphs examined by Zhao Mingcheng 趙明誠 [1081–1129], all of which collections required the wherewithal of the entire empire and the energy and spirit of a lifetime to assemble, disappeared completely in the course of a single morning, leaving not a single object behind. How could the formation and destruction of collections not be a matter of fate, and are not such things those which the Creator of All Things (*zaowu* 造物) hates above all else! A thousand years later one is still consumed by regret at the loss of these collections; how much worse the suffering of those involved at the time!". See *Wenhai picbao* [Manuscripts from the Sea of Writing], as cited in Xu Yan and Wang Yanjun, eds, *Zhongguolishi cangshu lunzhu duben* [A Reader of Historical Materials on Chinese Book Collecting] (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 1990), Vol.1, p.63. The *locus classicus* for the expression "object of extraordinary beauty" (*youwu*) is a passage in the *Zuo zhuan* [Zuo Commentary] (28th Year of the reign of Duke Zhao 昭公) wherein a minister is warned off marrying a woman who has already "proved the death of three husbands, one ruler, and her son, and ruined a state, and two of its ministers" by his mother. In accordance with the traditional gloss of the expression as referring to a woman of great beauty, James Legge translates the relevant passage thus: "Those Strange Beings are sufficient to move men [from their principles]; and if virtue and righteousness are not maintained, calamity is sure to come" (夫有尤物足以移人苟非德義則必/ OVER

<sup>39</sup> "The Ascendancy of the Imprint in China," in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, eds Cynthia J. Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p.92. In a similar way, in Europe during the early nineteenth century, the chaos of the Napoleonic Wars offered book collectors unprecedented opportunities to acquire books. A.N.L. Munby estimates that of the thirteen million volumes then in the private libraries of France, ten million were either destroyed or changed hands over the

/course of a short five years, for which, see his *Portrait of An Obsession* (London: Constable, 1967), p.15.

<sup>40</sup> "Chao shu zixu" [Preface to Copied Books], *Tinglin shiwen ji* [Collected Prose and Poetry of Gu Yanwu], SBCK Edition (1st Series) (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1965) Vol.339, p.87.

<sup>41</sup> *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.10, p.117.

<sup>42</sup> *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.10, p.119. Reflecting more generally upon the melancholy

/有禍), for which, see his *The Chinese Classics: Volume V: The Ch'un Ts'ew with The Tso Chuen* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), p.727. For a discussion of the most celebrated later occurrence of this expression in Chinese literature in Yuan Zhen's "Yingying zhuan" [Biography of Yingying], see Wai-ye Li, "Mixture of Genres and Motives for Fiction in 'Yingying's Story,'" in *Ways with Words: Writing about Reading Texts from Early China*, eds Pauline Yu, Peter Bol, Stephen Owen, and Willard Peterson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp.185–92.

<sup>43</sup> On Qi Chenghan, see his biography (by Lienche Tu Fang) in *DMB*, Vol.1, pp.216–20; on his book collections and writings about book collecting, see Huang Shang (Rong Dingchang), "Guanyu Qi Chenghan" [On Qi Chenghan] in *Yuxia zashuo* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), pp.1–9; and Xu Xin, "Shilun Qi Chenghan de cangshu lilun yu shijian" [A Preliminary Discussion of Qi Chenghan's Theory and Practice of Book Collecting], in *Zhongguo gudai cangshulou yanjiu* [Research into Ancient Chinese Private Libraries], eds Huang Jianguo and Gao Yuexin (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), pp.246–57. Please note that in her biography, Lienche Tu Fang argues that this man's name, often read as Qi Chengye, as given, for instance, in *ECCP*, should read Qi Chenghan.

<sup>44</sup> Qi Chenghan speaks of this catastrophe in his "Danshengtang cangshu yue" [Covenant Governing the Usage of the Tranquillity Hall Book Collection]: "One winter's evening during the *Dingyou* year [1597], a young servant was careless with fire and not a single page remained of the books that I had both inherited from my father and those that I had devoted half a lifetime to buying. I sighed at the creator's (zaowuzhe 造物者) apparently insatiable liking for trickery and illusion and the extent that such circumstances are designed simply to temper our characters", in *Jingji huitong wai sizhong*, p.65.

<sup>45</sup> *Jingji huitong wai sizhong*, p.65.

<sup>46</sup> On this eminent figure, also himself a noted bibliophile, see both *DMB*, Vol.1, pp.216–20 and *ECCP*, p.126. For a complete translation of his account of this garden (Yushan 禺山), see Duncan Campbell, trans.,

Of the thirteen private libraries or major book collections that Huang names in his "Record", all of which were within the Jiangnan region, three libraries in particular seem to have embodied Huang's ideal of the juxtaposition of owner, book collection, and reader, if only briefly: the first was a library the breakup of which was to involve Huang Zongxi in an acrimonious dispute with a close friend; the second a library which burnt down just months after he had paid its owner a visit, and the last of which offered him privileged access to its collection.

### One: Tranquillity Hall (Danshengtang 澹生堂)

Of all the private libraries established during the late-imperial period, that assembled by Qi Chenghan 祁承爨 (1568–1628) in his Tranquillity Hall within his Carefree Garden (Kuangyuan 曠園) just out of Shanyin 山陰 in Zhejiang Province was perhaps the largest, comprising some 9,000 titles in approximately 100,000 fascicles (*juan* 卷).<sup>43</sup> Remarkably, the Tranquillity Hall collection, largely in place by 1613, replaced an earlier and, by all accounts, equally large collection housed in Qi's Carried on a Wing Hall (Zaiyutang 載羽堂) that had been completely lost in a fire during the winter of 1597.<sup>44</sup>

Understandably, then, as a collector, Qi Chenghan seems to have been particularly obsessed with the issue of acquisition, his love for books, by his own account, predating even his ability to understand them ("Although I could not at the time point out their meaning as I browsed them, I would nonetheless fondle them, one volume after another").<sup>45</sup> The building that his son Qi Biaoja 祁彪佳 (1602–45)<sup>46</sup> built in the mid 1630s to house the collection as part of his famous garden was very deliberately named to reflect this preoccupation—Tower of the Eight Principles of Book Acquisition (Baqiulou 八求樓)—and of the two sections of Qi Chenghan's "Summary Injunctions on the Collecting of Books" (Cangshu xunlue 藏書訓略), one (entitled "Buying Books" [Goushu 購書]) is devoted entirely to the attributes necessary to this task: "... a broad outlook, a focused spirit, and a quick intelligence".<sup>47</sup> In his celebrated "Covenant Governing the Usage of the Tranquillity Hall Book Collection" (Danshengtang cangshu yue 澹生堂藏書約), written in his Studio for Joyful Reading (Kuaiduzhai

/"Qi Biaoja's 'Footnotes to Allegory Mountain': Introduction and Translation," *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*, 19.3/4 (1999): 263–64. For an excellent discussion of this garden in the context of contemporary anxieties about consumption,

/see Joanna F. Handlin Smith, "Gardens in Ch'i Piao-chia's Social World: Wealth and Values in Late-Ming Kiangnan," *Journal of Asian Studies* 51.1 (1992): 55–81.

<sup>47</sup> *Jingji huitong wai sizhong*, p.76.



快讀齋) and wherein he labels his books his “Ink Soldiers” (*mobing* 墨兵), after discussing his own lifetime’s obsession with books, he turns to his expectations for his descendants:<sup>48</sup>

And so, I make this covenant with you all, in the following terms: In my lifetime, I will add to this collection on a monthly basis; your generation should add to it annually. Any son or grandson who shows himself able to read should be given sole possession of the collection; if none such can be found, then it should be transmitted and safeguarded collectively. No book that has been added to the shelves should ever again leave the library, and those that have been damaged by mice or bookworms should be repaired immediately. Any book that is picked up by a son or a grandson must be consulted and browsed (*jianyue* 檢閱) within the Hall itself and then returned promptly to the shelves. No book may be taken away to private quarters. Requests from friends or relatives to borrow books to look through can only be satisfied if a duplicate of the book exists, refused if not. In no circumstances are original volumes to leave the confines of Secret Garden. Depending upon the rate of increase in the size of the collection, the catalogue needs to be revised (*bianci* 編次) once every five years, if the rate has been rapid, every ten years if the rate of increase has been slow. The collection is never to be divided and never to be used to cover sauce jars,<sup>49</sup> never to revert to the clutches of a merchant – this is all that I wish.<sup>50</sup>

Huang Zongxi made use of this library both before and after the fall of the dynasty, as he makes clear in his discussion of it in his “Record”:

Initially, the books that formed part of Master Qi Chenghan’s Carefree Garden collection were stored (*ji* 度) at his home and were not often opened up for others to view (*fashi* 發視). Whenever I borrowed a book to look through, it would only be Master Qi’s son Fengjia 鳳佳 who would know where to find all the scattered volumes of the work in question (*zhi qi shouwei* 知其首尾), seeking them out through reference to the catalogue (*mulu* 目錄) and producing what was needed in a moment’s time. After the chaos, the collection was removed to the Monastery of the Deer Avatar (Hualusi 化鹿寺)<sup>51</sup> but items from the collection were forever turning up in the marketplace. In the *Bingwu* year [1666] I entered the temple in the company of a book merchant (*shugu* 書賈)

/torture yourself in vain! Present scholars have salary and profit but still do not understand the *Book of Changes*. What about the *Xuan*? I am afraid that later people will use it to cover sauce jars”, for which, see David R. Knechtges, “Uncovering the Sauce Jar: A Literary Interpretation of Yang Hsiung’s ‘Chu Ch’in mei Hsin,’” in *Ancient China: Studies in Early Civilization*, eds David T. Roy and Tsuen-hsuei Tsien (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1978), p.252, (romanization altered). I am grateful to John Makeham for alerting me to this last reference.

<sup>50</sup> *Jingji huitong wai sizhong*, p.66. Towards the end of his covenant, Qi responds to a comment once made by the eminent literary figure Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526–90; *DMB*, Vol.2, pp.1399–1405, “The book collections of those in the world who are assiduous in collecting but sparing in their reading seem pointless, even when they have collected all the books under heaven, just as does the reading of those in the world who are extravagant with their reading but sparing of the text they produce, even when they have read all the books under heaven”, pp.66–7) in the following manner: “How could I possibly insist that you all become good at reading, and that this reading will in turn enrich your writing?” A sense of the extent to which it was the collection itself that obsessed Qi, rather than the use to which the books it contained could be put, is also suggested by his “Book Collecting Motto” (*cangshuming* 藏書銘) which, according to a colophon provided by Miao Quansun 繆荃孫 (1844–1919), reads: “The books here stored within Tranquillity Hall will have all been examined and collated by the Master himself, as he labours day and night. So delighted do I become when reading them that I forget entirely the need to eat and drink, and even pawning my clothes in order to buy yet more books never satisfies my needs. Those who follow me will do well to remember this obsession of mine, and my sons and grandsons should strive to add to the collection, and certainly never allow it to suffer loss” (pp.90–91).

<sup>51</sup> For advice about a possible translation of the name of this temple, I am particularly grateful to my colleague Michael Radich.

<sup>48</sup> According to Xu Yan, this covenant (some versions of which are dated 1613) was first appended to the “Danshengtang cangshu mu” [Catalogue of the Tranquillity Hall Book Collection] but was issued separately in 1616 and was later combined with Qi Chenghan’s “Gengshen zhengshu xiaojì” [A Brief Record of the Rearrangement of My Books in the

/Year 1620], for which see Wang Yuguang, ed., *Cangshu siji* [Four Records of Book Collecting] (Wuhan: Hubei chubanshe, 1998), p.359.

<sup>49</sup> An allusion to a remark that the Han-dynasty librarian Liu Xin 劉歆 (46–23BC) made about the *Taixuan jing* 太玄經, as recorded in the *Han shu* [History of the Han Dynasty]: “You

<sup>52</sup> Huang Zongxi *quanji*, Vol.10, p.118.

and browsed through (*fanyue* 翻閱) the collection for three days and three nights continuously. I departed with ten bundles (*kun* 捆) of books, including almost 100 examples (*zhong* 種) of canonical exegesis (*jingxue* 經學) and 100 books (*ce* 冊) of fiction (*baiguan* 稗官) for none of the Song and Yuan dynasty collections once in the collection remained. On my way home, moreover, I was robbed by the book merchant of both Wei Shi's 衛湜 *Collected Explanations of the Book of Rites* (*Li ji jishuo* 禮記集說) and Wang Cheng's 王偁 *Digest of Events of the Eastern Capital* (*Dongdu shilie* 東都事略). All that remains of the collection now are two large book cabinets (*chu* 櫥) full of examination related material (*juye* 舉業講章) and various provincial gazetteers.<sup>52</sup>

What is not readily understood from Huang Zongxi's "Record" is the fact that after Qi Chenghan's death in 1628 but before the "chaos", this book collection had formed the core of the library assembled by his son Qi Biaoja. In his "Footnotes to Allegory Mountain" (*Yushan zhu* 寓山注), Qi Biaoja provides us with this description of (and justification for) his library:

### *Tower of the Eight Principles of Book Acquisition*

<sup>53</sup> On Zheng Qiao (1104–1162) and his contributions to Chinese bibliographical methods, see K.T. Wu, "Chêng Ch'iao, A Pioneer in Library Methods," *T'ien Hsia Monthly* 10.2 (1940): 129–41. More recently, see Glen Dudbridge, *Lost Books of Medieval China* (London: The British Library, 2000), pp.9–12.

<sup>54</sup> Fearing that his many rare books might be lost, Cao Zeng of the Han constructed a stone vault to ensure their survival. Ren Mo, also of the Han, carved into the trunks of the trees of his garden the texts of rare commentaries to the Confucian Canon. Anecdotes about both these men can be found in Wang Jia's *Shiyi ji* [A Gathering of Lost Records], in Cheng Rong, *Han Wei congsbu* [Collected Works from the Han and Wei Dynasties] (Changchun: Jilin daxue chubanshe, 1992), p.723.

<sup>55</sup> Shentu Zhiyuan, an official during the Yuan dynasty, collected a library of over ten thousand volumes.

<sup>56</sup> Having wasted his time playing chess, Zhen Chen turned back to his books when derided by his servants.

Long ago, the great Song dynasty bibliophile Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 stipulated that there were eight principles to the Way of book collecting.<sup>53</sup> Firstly, one sought books according to category; secondly, by related category; thirdly, by region and fourthly by family; fifthly one sought books from collections in the public domain; sixthly, books in private hands; seventhly, one acquired books in terms of their authorship; and lastly, by dynastic provenance.

My esteemed father cleaved true to these precepts throughout his life and through exhaustive searching and comprehensive acquisition he eventually assembled a library of over a 100,000 volumes. For the edification of his sons and grandsons, he composed a covenant in which he gave a complete account of the methods of book buying, book collecting, book connoisseurship and the art of reading. In so doing, he approximated the achievements of Cao Zeng 曹曾 and his Stone Vault, Ren Mo 任末 and his Garden of the Classics<sup>54</sup> and Shentu Zhiyuan 申屠致遠 with his Ink Village.<sup>55</sup>

Although I too, for my part, harbour a love of books, most regrettably I happen also to be plagued by an atrocious memory. I cannot pretend to be like Wang Chong 王充 of the Han who could remember everything he ever read, even if he had done so leaning against a doorpost in the middle of the marketplace, nor can I ever hope to emulate that Flourishing Talent of the Northern Wei, Zhen Chen 甄深, who attacked his studies with such a vengeance and who took such copious notes of what he had read.<sup>56</sup> When I took leave of my post in Suzhou to return here, I calculated that I had accumulated 31,500 volumes. These I had

placed within the hindmost tower of my Farm of Abundance and there I would fondle them all day long. But even this collection is a mere semblance of that bought and assembled by my esteemed father.

I have heard it said that Li Mi 李泌, Duke of Ye during the Tang, collected on his shelves more than 30,000 scrolls and that later his son Fan 繁 too was given a hereditary fiefdom in Ye and served as censor of Suizhou. It is also said that Ouyang Xiu, who owned a book collection of over ten thousand volumes, had a son named Fei 斐 who was a fluent writer and who became an official famed for his incorruptibility. Somewhat inferior to this was Zhao Kuo 趙括 who people made fun of for only reading books written by his father, and yet he at least knew how to read.<sup>57</sup> How much superior were the men of old to those of this present age! Ding Yi 丁顗 of the Song once said: "So many are the books that I have collected that my sons and grandsons are bound to be good scholars!" My father toiled painstakingly all his life and the scholarly efforts of the one generation ought to be continued by the next. As I dare not believe that the future will see me able to much improve my efforts in this respect, I can only hope that my descendants will make up for my own neglect!<sup>58</sup>

We know that Huang Zongxi visited Qi Biaojia in his new library building from a note on the man in Huang's "Record of My Thoughts of Friends of Former Years" (Sijiu lu 思舊錄) where he provides the following description of the interior of this library:

I once paid Qi Biaojia a visit at Mei's Market, accompanied by Feng Yuanyang 馮元颺 and Feng Yuanbiao 馮元標. We entered the Master's bookroom to find arrayed there ten small vermilion couches upon which a variety of books had been laid out. Each volume had been given an ivory bookmark and the slightest draught would set these bookmarks jangling away delightfully. The Master, knowing of my love for books, asked me my opinion of his collection, to which I responded: 'You could find all these books in the stalls of Suzhou, and with a purse of 100 *taels* one could become a great collector overnight. Only those books collected by your father are at all rare and precious'. Once the Feng brothers had departed, Biaojia had me stay behind and we proceeded to converse deep into the night.<sup>59</sup>

If Huang Zongxi's "Record", as cited above, tells of the melancholy fate of this collection, he is somewhat less than explicit about his own role in its demise, for he only alludes to one of the most celebrated book disputes of the age; that between himself and one of his closest friends, Lü Liuliang 呂留良 (1629–83).<sup>60</sup> In his highly partisan account of this incident, the historian Quan Zuwang 全祖望 (1705–55), Huang's self-appointed follower, claims that the two books mentioned by Huang were stolen from him at the explicit instructions of Lü Liuliang and that in any case the funds used to buy the collection had not been provided by Lü but by Wu Zhizhen 吳之振 (1640–1717) with whom Lü had also fallen out over the

<sup>57</sup> This anecdote is found in the "Biography of Lian Po and Lin Xiangru" in Sima Qian's *Shi ji* [Records of the Grand Historian]. When the King of Zhao made Zhao Kuo commander, Li Xiangru said: "Your Majesty is sending Kuo because of his reputation; this is like gluing the tuning bridges to strum a zither. Kuo can only recite his father's writings and instructions; he knows nothing about adapting to the changes of battle". See William H. Nienhauser, Jr., ed., *The Grand Scribe's Records* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), Vol. 7, p. 269; romanization altered.

<sup>58</sup> Qi Biaojia, "Yushan zhu," [Footnotes to Allegory Mountain] in *Qi Biaojia ji* [Collected Works of Qi Biaojia] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), pp. 169–70.

<sup>59</sup> *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol. 1, pp. 347–48.

<sup>60</sup> For a biography of this man, see *ECCP*, pp. 551–52; for a discussion of the dispute over the disposition of the books from this collection, see Tom Fisher, "Loyalist Alternatives in the Early Ch'ing," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 44.1 (1984): 83–122.

<sup>61</sup> See Quan Zuwang, "Xiaoshantang Qishi yishu ji" [Record of the Books from the Qi Family Library Found in the Small Mountain Hall], in *Quan Zuwang ji huijiao jizhu* [Complete Works of Quan Zuwang: Collated and Annotated] ed. Zhu Zhuyu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), Vol.2, pp.1074–75.

<sup>62</sup> See Quan Zuwang, "Xiaoshantang cang-shu ji" [A Record of the Book Collection of the Small Mountain Hall], in *Quan Zuwang ji huijiao jizhu*, Vol.2, pp.1066. On Zhao Yu, see *ECCP*, pp.76–7; on his book collection, see Nancy Lee Swann, "Seven Intimate Library Owners," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 1 (1936): 363–90. The biblioclasm referred to above was associated with the posthumous persecution of Lü Liuliang's family at the hands of the Qianlong emperor in 1773, for which see Tom Fisher, "Accommodation and Loyalism: The Life of Lü Liuliang (1629–1683): Part 1: Dissident Intellectuals and the Early Ch'ing State," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 15 (1977): 102–3; and Jonathan D. Spence, *Treason By the Book* (New York: Penguin, 2001).

<sup>63</sup> On the important role that Qi Biaojia played in attempting to pacify the countryside around the Southern Capital, see Jerry Dennerline, "Hsü Tu and the Lesson of Nanking: Political Integration and the Local Defense in Chiang-nan, 1634–1645," in *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquest, Region, and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century China*, eds Jonathan D. Spence and John E. Wills, Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), pp.89–132.

<sup>64</sup> *Ming shi* [History of the Ming] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), Vol.23, p.7054.

<sup>65</sup> For which, see "Appendix", in *Yusbanzhu* [Footnotes to Allegory Mountain], Anyuetang edition (Guangxu, [1875]), 5b. Both his sons, Lisun 理孫 (b. 1627) and Bansun 班孫 (b. 1632), were arrested shortly after their father's suicide and in connection with their own loyalist activities; although Lisun was quickly released, he died soon after his return home, whereas Bansun was exiled to Liaodong, escaping home to become a monk only in the late 1660s. In a moving series of colophons, the contemporary book collector and scholar Huang Shang 黃裳 notes his own acquisition of a number of books that had

transaction.<sup>61</sup> As has been noted by Tom Fisher in his biography of Lü Liuliang, however, Quan somewhat contradicts himself on this point in another account he wrote of the Small Mountain Hall (Xiaoshantang 小山堂) book collection, owned by Zhao Yu 趙昱 (1689–1747), where he states that:

Alas! The real treasures (*jinghua* 精華) from the Carefree Garden Collection reverted to Huang Zongxi, the dregs (*qiling* 奇零) to Lü Liuliang. Later on, Huang's books endured a fire and a flood (*yi huo yi shui* 一火一水) and the remaining volumes reverted to Zheng Xing 鄭性 [1666–1743], whereas those once owned by Lü suffered a total biblioclasm (*cuibui dai jin* 摧毀殆盡). Whenever I find myself passing through Mei's Village I never fail to mourn the passing of this age of splendour (*fengliu* 風流).<sup>62</sup>

What of Qi Biaojia and his attempt to maintain his father's library? Having retired to Shanyin to care for his mother, to build his garden and to devote himself to his books, Qi soon found that the circumstances of the times conspired against him, as events elsewhere soon breached the walls of his garden. In 1644, he took up office again, briefly, and, after the fall of Beijing and the suicide of the Chongzhen emperor, news of which reached Qi as he made his way to the Southern Capital, he was appointed governor of Suzhou.<sup>63</sup> Recognising the hopelessness of the circumstances, however, he soon returned home to his garden and his books. Believing himself to be under duress to accept office under the new dynasty, Qi Biaojia decided that he would prefer to end his life as a martyr to the Ming. The official history of the period provides this record of his suicide:

In the 5th month of the next year [1645] the Southern Capital was lost, and by the 6th month, Hangzhou too, in turn, had fallen. [Qi] Biaojia thereupon began his fast. On the 4th day of the succeeding intercalary month, having told his family that he was going to repair early to his bedchamber, he proceeded to his lake wherein he sat bolt upright and awaited his death. He was in his forty-fourth year.<sup>64</sup>

Qi was buried within his garden. Sadly, family circumstances were such that the provision in his will wherein he in turn enjoined his sons to care for the family book collection proved quite beyond them.<sup>65</sup>

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/once formed part of the Qi collection, for which see *Laiyanxie dusbu ji* [Reading Notes from the Laiyan Studio] (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), Vol.1, pp.181–252. In an earlier work, *Qingdai banke yi yu* [A Glimpse of Qing Dynasty Printing] (Jinan: Qi lu shushe, 1992), pp.16–17, Huang Shang

/reproduces a page from a work entitled *Wu Yue shixuan* [A Selection of the Poetry of the Wu and Yue Regions] and dated 1654 that contains some poems by Bansun and which, Huang believes, was printed within Qi Biaojia's garden.

*Two: Tower of the Crimson Clouds* (Jiangyunlou 絳雲樓)

If Qi Chenghan's Tranquillity Hall book collection had been a large and somewhat eclectic one with distinct strengths in the less highly regarded categories of fiction and drama but one nonetheless that inspired its owner to produce what has been described as the first general and systematic Chinese treatment of book collecting,<sup>66</sup> that of the Tower of the Crimson Clouds at Yushan 虞山 in Jiangsu 江蘇 Province, also visited by Huang Zongxi, was, by contrast, small and select. Assembled by Qian Qianyi,<sup>67</sup> the library was eventually housed in a building which, by his own account, was financed through the sale of a single book and which was dedicated, upon its completion in 1643, to his new wife, the remarkable Liu Shi, formerly a "singsong girl of Wujiang".<sup>68</sup> Liu had been in her 23rd year when, during the winter of 1640, she had paid a call upon Qian at his Half-Rustic Hall (Banyetang 半野堂); he had been 58. By the sixth month of the succeeding year, the two were living together.

The book sold in order to build Crimson Clouds for Liu Shi was a Song-dynasty imprint of the two histories of the Han dynasty that had once belonged to the eminent scholar and man of letters Wang Shizhen,<sup>69</sup> and which Qian had finally acquired after much effort some twenty years previously for 1200 *taels*. As Qian himself tells us in his "Note Appended to the Song Dynasty Imprint of the History of the Two Han Dynasties Which I Once Owned" (Shu jiu cang Song diao liang Han shu hou 書舊藏宋雕兩漢書後), Wang Shizhen had obtained this book in exchange for an estate; Qian was to sell it at a loss of 200 *taels* to his student Xie Sanbin 謝三賓 in 1643.<sup>70</sup>

"Not all book collections are the same," Qian Qianyi's great-great-nephew Qian Zeng 錢曾 (1629–c. 1699), himself an important book collector and inheritor of those books that remained of the Crimson Clouds collection, was to say: "There are readers' book collections and then there are collectors' book collections."<sup>71</sup> In these terms, his great-great-uncle's collection was most emphatically that of a reader (*dushuzhe zhi jushu*

/see Chen Yinke, *Liu Rushi biezhuàn* [An Alternative Biography of Liu Rushi] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2001), 3 vols, surely the most difficult, troubling and remarkable product of contemporary Chinese historiography. The secondary literature on this work and its author is now voluminous; for a recent English-language discussion, see Wen-hsin Yeh, "Historian and Courtesan: Chen Yinke and the Writing of *Liu Rushi biezhuàn*," *East Asian History* 27 (2004): 57–70. For Chen Yinke's discussion of aspects of the library (its site, design, and fate), see *Liu Rushi biezhuàn*, Vol.2, pp.820–32.

<sup>69</sup> On whom, see *DMB*, Vol.2, pp.1399–1405.

<sup>70</sup> Qian Zhonglian, ed., *Qian Muzhai quanji* [Complete Works of Qian Qianyi] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2003), Vol.6, pp.1529–30. After recounting this book's provenance and the occasion when he later came across it again in the collection of Zhao Wuxing in Hangzhou, he continues: "Alas! If the chaos of the Ming–Qing dynastic transition of the year 1644 can be regarded as a major catastrophe for books, ancient and modern, then the fire of the year 1650 should be regarded as a minor catastrophe for books left of the Yangtze River. The impoverished collections of the one or two book collectors now to be found in the Wu Region do not add up to the merest fraction of my former collection . . . Not only has this book reverted to its proper owner, but this circumstance is enough to bring a wry smile to the lips of the Old Man of Crimson Clouds. After the catastrophic fire, I reverted to my belief in the Buddha".

<sup>71</sup> For a short English-language biography of this man, see *ECCP*, pp.157–58. Famously, Hong Liangji (1746–1809; *ECCP*, pp.373–75) was later to suggest a hierarchical five-fold typology of the book collector (*cangshubujia* 藏書家): the researcher (*kaodingjia* 考訂家), the textualist (*jiaochoujia* 校讎家), the collector (*shoucangjia* 收藏家), the connoisseur (*shangjianjia* 賞鑒家), and, finally, the trafficker (*liefanjia* 掠販家), for which, see his *Beijiang shibua* [Hong Liangji's Discussions of Poetry] (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1983), p.46.

<sup>66</sup> See Xu Yan, "Zhongguo lishi cangshu changshi lu" [Chinese Book Collecting Down Through the Ages: Critical Vocabulary] in *Cangshu siji*, pp.358–89.

<sup>67</sup> For a short biographical account of this seminal figure, see *ECCP*, pp.148–50. For a discussion of the intellectual and literary dimension of the relationship between Huang and Qian, see Struve, "Huang Zongxi in Context: A Reappraisal of His Major Writings." For a mono-

graph on Qian's book collecting activities, see Jian Xiujian, *Qian Qianyi cangshu yanjiu*. For an excellent recent discussion of aspects of the regional tradition of book collecting, and Qian Qianyi's role in establishing this tradition, see Cao Peigen, *Shuxiang manlu* [Notes on Book Town] (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004).

<sup>68</sup> For a brief biography in English (by Chao-ying Fang), see *ECCP*, pp.529–30; in Chinese,

<sup>72</sup> Cheuk-woon Taam, *The Development of Chinese Libraries under the Ch'ing Dynasty, 1644-1911* (Shanghai, 1935; San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1997 reprint), pp.62-3), notes the following about Qian's collection: "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 Qian Qianyi, who lived in the transitional period between the Ming and Qing dynasties. He obtained practically all the volumes of four great Ming collections; namely, the Qigui shanfang (七槿山房) of the Yang family, the Xuanqingshi (縣罄室) of the Qian family, the Feizaige (匪載閣) of the Liu family and the Mowangguan (臥望館) of the Zhao family. Qian's specialties were Song 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 Mowangguan—he gave to his kinsman, Qian Zeng" (romanization altered).

<sup>73</sup> On whom, see *ECCP*, p.740. Xie Zheng-guang (Andrew C.K. Hsieh) discusses the network of relationships that this man established with scholars who chose, by contrast to his own actions, to remain loyal to the memory of the Ming dynasty in his *Qingchu shiwen yu shiren jiaoyou kao* [Studies of Early Qing Prose and Poetry and of Scholarly Friendships] (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2001), especially pp.182-339.

<sup>74</sup> According to the chronological biography of Qian Qianyi compiled by Jin Hechong 金鶴沖 (dated 1932), Qian was arrested on the last day of the 3rd month of 1647 under suspicion of having provided aid and assistance to anti-Manchu activities and was imprisoned in Jiangning (Nanjing); he was released in the spring of the following year, at which point he returned home, for which see "Qian Muzhai xiansheng nianpu" [Chronological Biography of Qian Qianyi] in *Qian Muzhai quanji*, Vol.8, pp.940-41.

<sup>75</sup> "Jiangyunlou cangshu mu tici" [Inscription

讀書者之聚書), comprising as it did almost exclusively of rare Song-and Yuan-dynasty imprints.<sup>72</sup> In his "Inscription to the Catalogue of the Crimson Clouds Collection", written some years after Qian's death, the influential Qing-dynasty scholar and official Cao Rong 曹溶 (1613-85)<sup>73</sup> had this to say about Qian Qianyi and his knowledge of, and obsession with, books:

During the *Dingbai* [1647] and the *Wuzi* [1648] years, when we both happened to be living back in the Wu region, he would often visit me.<sup>74</sup> Whenever we discussed a book, he was able to speak in detail about both the old and new editions of the work, and the various differences between them; when we looked out the books themselves to test the veracity of what he had said, we would invariably find that he had been correct to the smallest detail. There was not a book that he seemed not to have read; how very different he was from those who claim to love books but who leave them sitting on the highest shelves!<sup>75</sup>

For Huang Zongxi, a visit to Qian Qianyi's library seems to have represented the emotional and intellectual climax of his lifelong pursuit of books, as he notes in his "Record":

In the 3rd month of the *Gengyin* year [1650], I paid a visit upon Qian Qianyi and took up residence downstairs in his Tower of the Crimson Clouds. In this way I was able to leaf (*fan* 緝) my way through his books, discovering that it contained all those books that I most wanted to see. Qian Qianyi agreed for me to become his reading companion (*dushu banli* 讀書伴侶) so that we could shut ourselves away (*biguan* 閉關) for three years together. My delight at this prospect exceeded all my fondest expectations but just when I was about to take him up on his offer, Crimson Clouds caught fire and almost his entire collection reverted to the Eastern Wall Constellation (*gui Dongbi* 歸東壁).<sup>76</sup>

In his entry on Qian Qianyi in his "Record of My Thoughts of Friends of Former Years", Huang Zongxi adds some further details to this sad tale of loss and intellectual frustration:

I visited Changshu on a number of occasions, staying initially in the Mountain Hut that Brushes the Water (Fushui shanfang 拂水山房)<sup>77</sup> and later on downstairs in the Tower of the Crimson Clouds of the Half-Rustic

/to the Catalogue of the Crimson Clouds Collection] in *Xuxiu Siku quanshu*, Vol.920, p.322.

<sup>76</sup> *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.10, p.118. "The two stars that comprise the Eastern Wall Constellation control the destinies of all writing and constitute thereby a secret mausoleum (*mifu* 祕府) for all the books to be found under Heaven", for which see the "Astronomy Treatise" (Tianwen zhi) of the *Jin*

/*shu* [History of the Jin] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), Vol.2, p.301.

<sup>77</sup> According to Wu Weiye (1609-72; *ECCP*, pp.882-83), this garden was designed for Qian by the noted landscape architect Zhang Lian (b. 1587; *ECCP*, p.46), for which, see his "Zhang Nanyuan zhuan" [Biography of Zhang Lian], in *Wu Meicun quanji* [Complete Works of Wu Weiye] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990), Vol.3, pp.1059-63.

Hall. Later on still, once the Master and his son Sunyi 孫貽<sup>78</sup> had begun to live together, I took up residence again in his home in Brushes the Water. At that time, the Master argued that the writings of Han Yu 韓愈 [768-824] and Ouyang Xiu constituted the Sixth Canon (*liujing* 六經) of writing. Taking a look at his shelves, I observed that the Master had categorized (*fenlei* 分類) the writings of the Eight Masters of the Tang and Song Dynasties (Bajia 八家) in terms of their technique (*zuofa* 作法), such as “Direct Narrative” (*zhixu* 直敘), “Argument” (*yilun* 議論), “Exclusive Narration of a Single Event” (*dan xu yishi* 單序一事) and “Digest” (*tiwang* 提綱) and that his categorization in this manner extended to more than ten different categories. The collection of the Tower of the Crimson Clouds included all those books that I most wanted to see and the Master agreed for me to become the reading companion of his old age, undertaking to look after the care of my mother in order that I not be distracted from this task. One evening, just as I was about to fall asleep, the Master appeared at my bedside with a lamp in hand. Taking seven *taels* of silver from his sleeve he presented me with them, saying: “This is my wife’s idea”. In the 10th month of that year, however, Crimson Clouds burnt to the ground—another proof that I am not destined to be a reader (*wu dushu yuan* 無讀書緣).<sup>79</sup>

Cao Rong’s “Inscription”, too, further serves to enhance our understanding of the loss of this extraordinary library:

Not long after he had traveled north [to take up office] he returned home on the pretext of ill health, taking up residence in Red Bean Mountain Estate (Hongdou shanzhuang 紅豆山莊). Turning to his book collection, he began again to bring order to it (*shanzhi* 膳治), mending those books that needed repair, making copies of those that needed copying, at the same time sorting the collection into various categories (*qufen leiju* 區分類聚). He then had the whole collection housed upstairs in the Tower of the Crimson Clouds, in seventy-three large book cases. With evident joy, he would survey his collection, exclaiming: “I may well have been reduced to poverty in my old age but I’m certainly rich in terms of my books!” Ten or so days later his young daughter was playing upstairs in the tower with her wet-nurse in the middle of the night when, as the wick of the lamp was being trimmed, it fell amidst a pile of papers and caught fire. Downstairs, Qian Qianyi arose with a start, but by that time the flames already lit up the sky and the tower was beyond saving. He fled outside. Before long, both the tower itself and the books that it had once housed had been reduced to ashes. Shocked at the news, I visited him to offer my condolences. “I’ve lost all my ancient books”, he told me, “but several hundred biographical records of official of the Ming dynasty that I cobbled together (*gecheng* 割成) from other sources remain intact, however, a pile of papers more than four *cun* thick; this pile happened to be away from my library on the night of the fire so have fortunately survived. Some time ago, when I intended to work on a history of the dynasty, I was going to base myself on this collection of material. I’ve lost all desire to undertake this task now, so why don’t you take this bundle

<sup>78</sup> Chen Yinke notes that here (and elsewhere) Huang Zongxi makes a mistake with the name of Qian Qianyi’s son, which should read either Sun’ai 孫愛 or Ruyi 孺貽, for which see, *Liu Rusbi biezhuang*, Vol.2, p.826.

<sup>79</sup> For which see *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.1, p.378. Jin Hechong’s chronological biography of Qian Qianyi suggests that Huang’s visit to see Qian was occasioned by the attempt to enlist his help for various Ming loyalist activities that Huang was then engaged in, for which see “Qian Muzhai xiansheng nianpu,” pp.942–43. We know from Huang’s own chronological biography, compiled by Huang Binghou 黃炳堃 (dated 1873), that at the time of this visit, Huang Zongxi’s younger brother Huang Zongyan 黃宗炎 (1616–86) (on whom see *ECCP*, pp.354–55), was under arrest and had been sentenced to death for his anti-Manchu activities, for which see “Huang Lizhou xiansheng nianpu,” [Chronological Biography of Huang Zongxi] in *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.12, pp.34–5. Qian Qianyi’s practice of splitting collections up and cobbling text together in terms of certain principles, as described here by Huang, proved to have some considerable influence upon Huang’s own work as an anthologist.

<sup>80</sup> Cao Rong, "Jiangyunlou shumu tici" [Inscription to the Catalogue of the Crimson Clouds Collection] in *Xuxiu Siku quanshu*, Vol. 920, p. 321.

away with you?" I very much wished to do as he suggested but at the same time felt it inappropriate that I haggle over the price of the material with an elder, so all I did was mumble in reply: "Yes, yes". Immediately I had taken my leave of him, however, I rushed off to see Ye Shengye 葉聖野 to prevail upon him to negotiate the purchase of the material on my behalf. To my lifelong regret, he delayed doing so and ten days later the material had been bought up by Master Pan 潘 of Songling.<sup>80</sup>

As has been noted above, one early source claims that the book catalogue to which this inscription was attached was compiled by Qian Qianyi from memory, once his library had been lost; other sources suggest that the name itself given the library, Crimson Clouds, presaged the colour the sky was to turn as the flames consumed the books.

### *Three: Pavilion of Heaven's Oneness (Tianyige 天一閣)*

<sup>81</sup> For an account of the search for what remains of the private libraries of southern China, conducted during the period 1997–2004, see the noted contemporary book collector Wei Li's *Shulou xunzong* [In Search of Traces of the Private Libraries of Old] (Zhengzhou: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004). For a discussion of the remaining traces of the private libraries of Suzhou, see Chen Jianzhong and Sun Yingqing, "Suzhou sijia cangshulou xunzong" [In Search of the Former Private Libraries of Suzhou]; and of Ningbo, see Yu Haoxu, "Ningbo shiqu xiancun cangshulou qiangkuang diaocha", both in *Tianyige wencong* [Collected Articles on the Tianyige] (Ningbo: Ningbo chubanshe, 2004), pp. 155–61 and 162–64, respectively.

<sup>82</sup> For a short English-language account of the Fan family and their book collection, see the biography of Fan Qin's descendant Fan Mouzhu (1721–80) (by Tu Lien-che) in *ECCP*, pp. 230–31. For a recent compilation of extant Chinese-language historical and biographical materials, see Luo Zhaoping, ed., *Tianyige cangshu shizhi* [Historical Materials Related to the Book Collection of the Pavilion of Heaven's Oneness] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2005); see also Cai Peiling, *Fanshi Tianyige yanjiu* [Research on the Fan Family's Pavilion of Heaven's Oneness] (Taipei: Hanmei tushu, 1991); and Ulrich Stackmann, *Die Geschichte der chinesischen Bibliothek Tian Yi Ge von 16. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner

Of the private libraries noted by Huang Zongxi in his "Record", physically, only the one that occasioned it remains today, almost four hundred and fifty years after it was established: the Pavilion of Heaven's Oneness, which Huang visited in 1673.<sup>81</sup> In introducing his discussion of this library, Huang seeks to establish a contrast between it and all the other libraries he mentions in his "Record":

From all these examples cited above, one can observe that it is books that appear to be that which the Creator of All Things (*zaowu* 造物) hates above all else; not only are they never afforded any protection, but they suffer harm in all the various ways described above. It is for this reason that I claim that most difficult of all is the maintenance of a book collection over a long period of time without its suffering dispersal.

The books housed in the Pavilion of Heaven's Oneness were collected by the Vice Prefect Fan Qin 范欽 [1506–85] and, calculating back to the reign of the Jiajing Emperor [1522–66] when it was first assembled, the collection has already lasted a hundred and fifty years.<sup>82</sup> After the Vice Prefect's death, his library remained tightly sealed (*fengbi shen yan* 封閉甚嚴). In the *Guichou* year [1673] when I travelled to Ningbo, his descendant Fan Guangxie 范光燮 [1613–98] broke with all precedent (*pojie* 破戒) and allowed me to accompany him upstairs into the stacks, opening up to me the books that the library contained. I proceeded to draft a catalogue of all the books held here that did not circulate widely, excluding from this catalogue all copies of works in the categories of

/Verlag, 1990). The name given to the library has occasioned some considerable discussion, for which see, in brief, Luo Zhaoping, *Tianyige congkan* [On Tianyige] (Beijing: Zhonghua

/shuju, 1993), pp. 17–18; and K.T. Wu, "Ming Printing and Printers," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 7 (1942–3): 203–60, at p. 246.



canon, history, geographical gazetteer and encyclopedia, all of which can be easily acquired from commercial booksellers, along with the collected writings of contemporaries and the three categories of fortune-telling (*san shi zhi shu* 三式之書). My own lack of the wherewithal to acquire books approximates that of Yang Pu<sup>83</sup> as a young man and so I expressed the hope that when time allowed I would be permitted to return to the library with my brush and lead in order to make copies of a select number of the shorter and less bulky works (*juanxiao shuduan* 卷小書短) it contained. To this request Guangxie responded: “Of course”, but seven years have now passed by and I have been unable to take him up on his offer. And yet various aficionados then subsequently circulated the catalogue that I had prepared, Master Xu Qianxue of Kunshan having had his students make and distribute very many copies of it. Meanwhile, Guangxie’s son Tingfu 廷輔 supplemented my catalogue with a list of all the books that the library contained but which I had excluded from my catalogue and produced a revised (*chongding* 重定) catalogue, asking my friend Wang Wensan 王文三 to prevail upon me to write this record of the collection.<sup>84</sup>

Huang Zongxi’s catalogue of the holdings of this library, no longer extant, was not the first one compiled; a one *juan* catalogue entitled *Master Fan’s Book List* (Fanshi dongming shumu 范氏東明書目) had been produced during the lifetime of the library’s founder and is listed, for instance, in the catalogue of the holdings of Qi Chenghan’s library. Nor was it to be the last—more catalogues of the holdings of this library (present, lost or recovered) have been produced than for any other private library in China, the earliest extant one dating from the early Qing dynasty.<sup>85</sup>

In contemporary scholarship, the Pavilion of Heaven’s Oneness has often been regarded as being both typical and representative of the traditional Chinese private library, their weaknesses as much as their strengths. As is made clear in Huang’s “Record”, however, this library’s longevity seems more to have been an exception than the rule, few other traditional private libraries having outlived the death of either its founder or his immediate descendants. In Cheuk-woon Taam’s view, it was above all the rigid rules that governed access to the library’s collection that ensured that the library building (if not entirely its book collection) of Heaven’s Oneness lasted so long, and he provides a translation of these rules, as found in the “Preface” to the catalogue of the library’s holdings compiled by the Qing scholar Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849)<sup>86</sup> and dated 1808:

- (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;

<sup>83</sup> Earlier in his “Record”, Huang Zongxi had written: “As a young man, Yang Pu 楊璞 of the Song dynasty was too poor to buy books. When in the marketplace one day he came across copies of *Historical Digests* [Shilüe 史略], *Textual Explications* [Shiwen 釋文], and *Phonetical Guide to Ten Works* [Shishu zhiyin 十書直音], all books that he sorely wanted and none of which cost more than 100 cash, he was unable to acquire them. His mother, however, obtained them for him, in exchange for the hens that she had been raising. Yang Pu later made note of this circumstance in colophons inscribed in the books concerned. If this is an example of the true love for books, one should also reflect that as he was himself without the wherewithal to acquire even ordinary works such as those listed above, how much more inaccessible to him were other and rarer books!” (*Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.10, p.117).

<sup>84</sup> *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.10, p.119.

<sup>85</sup> For an excellent discussion of this aspect of the library, see Luo, *Tianyige congkan*, pp.41–52. Luo Zhaoping has himself produced a series of useful catalogues of one sort or another, published together under the title *Xinbian Tianyige shumu* [Catalogue of the Tianyige Collection: Newly Compiled] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996).

<sup>86</sup> On whom, see *ECCP*, pp.399–402.

<sup>87</sup> See, Cheuk-woon Taam, *The Development of Chinese Libraries*, p.10. For a copy of the original "Preface", see "Ningbo Fanshi Tianyige shumu xu," [Preface to the Catalogue of the Tianyige of the Fan Family of Ningbo], in Luo, *Tianyige cangshu shi-zhi*, pp.41–2.

<sup>88</sup> For a readable account of the famous visitors to the library, see Yu Haoxu, *Lidai mingren yu Tianyige* [Famous Visitors to the Pavilion of Heaven's Oneness] (Ningbo: Ningbo chubanshe, 2001).

<sup>89</sup> See, for instance, "Yongshang qijiu shi: Fan Qin zhuan" [Poems of the Elders of Ningbo: Biography of Fan Qin]: "[Fan Qin's] book collection, housed in his Pavilion of Heaven's Oneness, was a most orderly one and still today, more than a hundred years later, all the volumes remain intact. In the course of preparing this collection of the poems of the elders of this town, [Fan Qin's] grandson Fan Guangxie had the pavilion swept clean and opened up all four categories of the books it contains, allowing us to browse whenever we wished. Thus have we managed to get hold of the poetry collections of [a number of local luminaries of former years] and add some of their poems to this collection, none of these poems having been sighted by previous anthologists. How great the contribution made by this man to the world of letters of this town", for which, see Luo, *Tianyige cangshu shi-zhi*, p.278.

<sup>90</sup> Quan Zuwang, "Tianyige cangshu ji" [Record of the Book Collection of the Pavilion of Heaven's Oneness], in Luo, *Tianyige cangshu shizhi*, p.324.

<sup>91</sup> On this project, see R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-lung Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

<sup>92</sup> See the emperor's "Record of the Pavilion of Literary Origins" ("Wenyuange ji"), in Luo, *Tianyige cangshu shizhi*, p.326.

- (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.<sup>87</sup>

As Huang's "Record" also seems to suggest, the inaccessibility of the books contained in this library was also somewhat atypical. Furthermore, even this much-vaunted aspect of the working of the library seems both to have been a late development that occurred sometime after the collection had already suffered considerable loss and which was, in any case, always subject to exceptions of one sort or another being made as had been the case when Huang sought access to its holdings. We know the names of a long line of scholars who visited the library both before and after Huang Zongxi was permitted into its stacks, for instance;<sup>88</sup> doubtless many others did so without leaving any record. Local gazetteers too make a point of noting the extent of their indebtedness to the Pavilion for access to its holdings for one purpose or another.<sup>89</sup> Quan Zuwang, after all, ends his celebration of the library with the comment that: "Enthusiasts from all four quarters would come often to borrow books in order to make copies of them".<sup>90</sup> Most importantly, perhaps, the library's greatest claim to immortality was not the private and inaccessible nature of the books it contained, but rather its enormous contribution of over 500 titles to the Qianlong emperor's "Four Treasuries" project (*Siku quanshu* 四庫全書),<sup>91</sup> and the extent to which, architecturally, the seven pavilions, built to house the copies of that collection once it had been compiled, were modelled on the design (*geshi* 閣式) of the Pavilion of Heaven's Oneness.<sup>92</sup> If this library was inaccessible, it seems also however to have been highly visible, and Huang's "Record", dated 1679 but recording a visit that Huang had made to the library six years earlier, was one aspect of this visibility, intended as it was to accompany a revised version of the catalogue of the library's holding that he had drafted on that earlier occasion.

With the loss of that catalogue, Huang Zongxi's "Record" became attached to later catalogues and its continued circulation in this respect served to lend the library that occasioned it an additional claim to everlasting fame. At the same time, it presents Huang's reflections on a lifetime's engagement in the print cultural aspects of the processes of scholarship in late-imperial China, a world of scholarship that was overwhelmingly text based and which was always both facilitated and constrained by networks of book owners and book readers that were defined by region, by family, or by bureaucratic affiliation. Although, as we have seen, Huang's "true reader" faced difficulties of one sort or another, none of these difficulties

necessarily proved insurmountable to a scholar either determined or well connected. If the book itself embodied a variety of intensely felt anxieties and assembling a library in the late imperial period proved problematical from a number of different perspectives, both physical and moral, at the same time there was, nonetheless, in Huang's view, a sure and certain compass with which to navigate one's way through this empire of books: the extent to which one's consumption of a book—as one read and copied it—served towards the advancement of morally charged and useful knowledge.

In the case of Huang Zongxi himself and quite apart from his various other scholarly outputs, the visits to the libraries and book collections of others noted in his “Record” resulted in the production of a number of innovative and important anthologies, of both prose and of philosophical writing. In the paratextual material attached to these anthologies, Huang seems at pains to emphasise both the specific textual conditions of his scholarship and the precarious existence of all text, both read and produced.<sup>93</sup> In the “Preface” to his *Cases in Ming Dynasty Scholarship* (Ming ruxue an 明儒學案), dictated to his son Huang Baijia in 1693, for instance, he states:

I finished the book some time after 1676. Xu Sanli 許三禮 of Henan and Wan Yan 萬言 each printed several *juan* without finishing the whole task. But many hand-copied versions are now circulating and have received the approval of serious scholars. In the past Tang Bin 湯斌 once said, “The records of the various schools of thought are very complex, but if you know how to read them, you will find that they are not without some unifying thread (*yiguan* 一貫).” This was also the report passed down by Chen Xigu 陳錫嘏. In August, 1692, I was sick to the point of dying and had to give up all writing and related work. I received a letter from Chou Zhaoan 仇兆鰲 written from the capital, telling me that a hermit in the north named Jia Run 賈潤 had copied the whole book by hand and had said with a sigh, “This book gives us the development of learning of the several centuries that make up the Ming dynasty. How can we allow it to become lost and buried?” Shortly afterwards, Jia Run died, but his son Jia Pu 賈樸 followed his wishes and had the book printed.<sup>94</sup>

As Huang makes clear in the “Principles of Compilation” (Fafan 發凡) section of this same work, engagement in the processes of reading and writing was fraught with difficulties:

Item Four: Whenever I see the various lines from the dialogues of former scholars brought together (*buicuo* 薈撮) by earlier copyists, I have no real feeling for the criteria they worked to in the selections they have made (*qu qu zhi yi* 去取之意). If the spirit of a man's lifetime (*yisheng zhi jingshen* 一生之精神) is not made transparent, then how can his scholarship be made visible? This present compilation has been extracted and digested (*cuanyan gouxuan* 纂要鉤玄) from their complete collections; in no case

<sup>93</sup> On the often complicated circumstances of the circulation and preservation of Huang Zongxi's own work, see Wu Guang, *Huang Zongxi zhuzuo buikao* [Collected Researches into Huang Zongxi's Bibliographic Work] (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1990).

<sup>94</sup> Julia Ching, trans., *The Records of Ming Scholars* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), p.42 (romanization altered; Chinese characters added). For the original, see *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.7, p.4.

<sup>95</sup> *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.7, p.6.

<sup>96</sup> *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.7, p.7.

<sup>97</sup> *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.10, p19.

have I been content merely to take material from older anthologies by previous scholars.<sup>95</sup>

It was also a never-ending process:

Item Eight: I have searched high and low for material for this book, but that which one man can see and hear is invariably limited and further searches need to be made on a continuous basis. I myself, for instance, have seen material that I subsequently lost...and which I cannot now include here. I ask, therefore, that scholars throughout the empire who both possess [the works mentioned above] and who are actuated by a sense of duty do not keep them to themselves but rather allow me access to such works. This task before me, after all, is not one that can be completed by a single inadequate scholar such as myself.<sup>96</sup>

Writing in 1675 in the "First Part" (*shang* 上) of his "Preface" to his anthology of Ming-dynasty prose writing, the *Cases in Ming Prose* (Ming wen an 明文案), a work that was itself partially lost soon after its compilation, Huang both highlights his intense concern for the continued circulation of texts and then strikes a remarkable note:

When one contemplates the past 300 years, one becomes aware that the collected writings which either circulate in the world or which are stored at home number no less than 1000. How could it be that any one of these collections does not contain one or two sublime expressions of emotion (*yier qingzhi zhi yu* 一二情至之語), buried amidst writing that is either socially obliged or erroneous and confused, piled so high upon the desk that who would ever be able to bring such gems to light (*fashi* 發視)? Even were someone to come across such phases, because they are surrounded by hackney and cliché, soon they too would be discarded, for having cleansed such sublime phrases of the dross that hides them, they would stand lone and completely isolated, like a man just rescued from drowning. With this anthology of mine in hand, that huge pile that constitutes the writings of a thousand men becomes as if non-existent and even were I to cast them into the river or into the flames I would have no cause for regret. And when one reflects that the writings of the ancients that have been drowned in this manner are uncountable, can one fail to be confirmed in one's fearlessness?<sup>97</sup>

Books, in and of themselves as physical objects, had little intrinsic value, it seems. If, as objects, books were remarked upon only when static, once they had become part of a particular collection, they earned moral status only as they were digested by readers and then circulated for future generations.

In his record of the Pavilion of the Two Gentlemen (*Erlaoge* 二老閣) established by Zheng Xing on the basis of both Huang Zongxi's collection and that of his own grandfather, Zheng Zhen 鄭榛 (d. 1697), Huang's devoted biographer, the fellow Zhejiang historian Quan Zuwang,

cites Huang as explicitly addressing the issues of the moral status of the book and the usages of libraries. He begins by highlighting the extent of Huang Zongxi's lifelong intellectual and emotional commitment to seeking out and copying books:

Above all else, Huang Zongxi loved collecting books and he trawled through the libraries of all the great collectors south of the Yangtze. Initially, the bulk of his collection derived from the Tranquillity Hall collection of the Qi family but later on many books came from the Tower for Transmitting This of the Xu family. Sadly he never got around to completing a catalogue of his own collection however, and in his old age the collection suffered from a flood and all its volumes and scrolls were damaged.<sup>98</sup> After his death, his books also suffered from a fire in which more than half the collection was lost. My friend Zheng Xing worked hard to sort the collection out, restoring those books that had been split up (*sanluan* 散亂) and repairing those that had been damaged (*posun* 破損), managing in the process to save about 30,000 fascicles.<sup>99</sup>

Quan then turns to address the purpose that underpinned Huang Zongxi's activities as reader, as copyist and as collector:

Master Huang Zongxi's books were not simply regarded by him as an extensive collection of things designed to crow about its own size. Ever since the Ming scholarship (*xueshu* 學術) has gone from bad to worse ... and it was the Master's contribution to make scholars understand that, from a context of the Nine Classes of Literature and the Hundred Schools of Thought, they can nonetheless return to the Unifying Thread (*yiguan*). And it was upon his book collection alone that the Master's scholarship depended ... Tang Bin 湯斌 [1627–87] of Suiyang<sup>100</sup> said of him that his contribution was akin to that of Yu the Great in directing the floodwaters and the mountains and revealing the veins of the earth, this hardly constituting an exaggeration ... Men who in the past have made records of the various book collections have simply warned against those who accumulate books but who do not read them; in his conversations with other scholars, however, the Master was insistent that books should serve to bring clarity to the mind (*dang yi shu ming xin* 當以書明心) and that one must not “undermine one's purpose” by “taking pleasure in objects” (*buke wan wu sang zhi* 不可玩物喪志), this constituting the ultimate truth about book collecting (*cangshu zhi zhijiao ye* 藏書之至教也).<sup>101</sup>

In his *The Order of Books*, Roger Chartier argues that: “Thanks to the circulation of the catalogues, the closed world of individual libraries could be transformed into an infinite universe of books noted, reviewed, visited, consulted and, eventually, borrowed”.<sup>102</sup> Later in the same chapter (“Libraries Without Walls”), he concludes:

A universal library (or at least universal in one order of knowledge) could not be other than fictive, reduced to the dimensions of a catalogue, a nomenclature, or a survey. Conversely, any library that is actually

<sup>98</sup> As noted earlier, however, Huang Baijia, Huang's son, did manage to complete a catalogue of the somewhat less than half of the library that remained to him. In his “Preface” to this catalogue, he discusses the vicissitudes experienced by the collection: during the period 1646–62, for instance, it was boxed up and moved on at least ten separate occasions, for which, see Huang Baijia, “Xuchaotang cangshu mu xu,” in Fan Fengshu, *Zhongguo sijia cangshu shi*, pp.321–22.

<sup>99</sup> Quan Zuwang, “Erlaoge cangshu ji” [A Record of the Book Collection of the Pavilion of the Two Gentlemen], in *Quan Zuwang ji huijiao jizhu*, Vol.2, p.1063.

<sup>100</sup> For whom, see *ECCP*, pp.709–10. Comment is made in a letter Tang Bin wrote to Huang Zongxi (dated 1681) which he later included in the “Jiaoyou chidu” [Letters from Friends] section of a supplement to his collected works (*Nanlei shiwen ji fulu*), for which, see *Huang Zongxi quanji*, Vol.11, pp.385–86.

<sup>101</sup> Quan, “Erlaoge cangshu ji”, p.1064.

<sup>102</sup> Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Lydia G. Cochrane, trans. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), p.70. In the case of China at least, of course, as we have seen above, one would need to add “copied” to this list of engagements with the book. For a fascinating recent discussion of the reasons for the persistence of the scribal traditions of Japan as well, see Peter F. Kornicki, “Manuscript, not Print: Scribal Culture in the Edo Period,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 32.1 (2006): 23–52.

<sup>103</sup> Chartier, *The Order of Books*, p.88.

installed in a specific place and that is made up of real works available for consultation and reading, no matter how rich it might be, gives only a truncated image of all accumulable knowledge. The irreducible gap between ideally exhaustive inventories and necessarily incomplete collections was experienced with intense frustration.<sup>103</sup>

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It was into this irreducible gap that Huang Zongxi interposes his “true reader”. It is a postulate that constitutes what Huang’s own biographer labels “the ultimate truth about book collecting” and which Jorge Luis Borges, perhaps, in a different context, once called the “fundamental law of the Library”.