

THE BOOK IN IMPERIAL CHINA

An Exhibition from  
Princeton's Gest Oriental Library

May 16, 1987 - July 19, 1987

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The earliest examples of Chinese books, dating to the fifth century B.C., were written on thin strips of bamboo lashed together with twine. Inscriptions on bone and shell, carvings on stone and bronze castings, which predate even the bamboo strips, are said to have originated in the Shang dynasty (16th-11th century B.C.). Somewhat later, books were also written on silk, but it was the inventions of paper and printing that heralded the appearance of the book as we know it today. The book on paper as it developed over the past 1,300 years is the subject of this exhibit.

The Gest Oriental Library has one of the world's finest collections of Chinese books from the imperial era. In total Gest Library holds over 400,000 volumes, one-tenth of which were printed before the beginning of the Ch'ing dynasty in 1644 and therefore are considered rare; its earliest holdings are scrolls and fragments from as far back as the T'ang dynasty. The 40,000 volumes which are housed in Gest's Rare Book Room cover all areas of traditional learning, with special emphasis on Buddhism and medicine.

Among the outstanding items in this exhibit are books printed during the Ming, imperial printings and manuscripts. About 24,500 volumes in Gest date from the Ming, making Gest's the largest collection of works from that period outside China and Japan; many of the books displayed here date from this period. Imperial printings are those books executed through commission of the emperor. One such book is the Wu ying tien chu chen pan ts'ung shu, the Imperial Printing Press and Bindery Collection in Movable Type, which was produced in the 18th century with movable metal type. Although movable type was invented at least by the eleventh century, it was usually considered too costly and inefficient for printing works in the Chinese language with its 10,000s of characters. The procurer of Gest books, I.V. Gillis, was able, by much hunting, to put together a complete copy in 800 volumes of the Collection in Movable Type from various copies of the original movable type edition. This he accomplished despite the fact that at the beginning of this century, no complete set was known to exist. Another very unusual title in the Library is the Chi sha ta tsang ching, which was printed in the 13th and 14th century but believed lost until the 1930s when the Gest copy and another surfaced. It is a translation of the Buddhist canon in over 5,000 volumes. The palace or imperial editions are perhaps the most beautiful in the collection, being produced with the finest materials by the best artisans. The imperial manuscripts, for example, are on superior paper and copied by government officials in an especially handsome hand. These showpieces do not constitute the entire Gest collection. There are also many books for practical and leisure reading, represented here by such books as the works on medicine and the collections of prose and poetry.

The works on display exhibit a variety of binding techniques, paper, print types and calligraphic styles as used in Chinese books from the T'ang dynasty to the Ch'ing. The works here written in Mongolian and Manchu reflect the existence of the Yuan and Ch'ing dynasties, which were established by peoples who spoke those languages and the absorption of these peoples into the mainstream of Chinese culture. Although the works on display offer but a small sampling of the splendors of Gest Library, they cover a wide range of Gest rarities from the Classics to martial arts and from official documents to painting manuals.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF  
CHINESE DYNASTIES

HSIA 2205 B.C. - 1765 B.C.	SUI 581 A.D. - 618 A.D.
SHANG 1766 B.C. - 1121 B.C.	T'ANG 618 A.D. - 907 A.D.
CHOU 1122 B.C. - 221 B.C.	FIVE DYNASTIES 907 A.D. - 960 A.D.
CH'IN 221 B.C. - 207 B.C.	SUNG 960 A.D. - 1279 A.D.
HAN 206 B.C. - 220 A.D.	YUAN 1271 A.D. - 1368 A.D.
THREE KINGDOMS 220 A.D. - 280 A.D.	MING 1368 A.D. - 1644 A.D.
CHIN 265 A.D. - 420 A.D.	CH'ING 1644 A.D. - 1911 A.D.
NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN DYNASTIES 420 A.D. - 581 A.D.	

## Cases for Chinese Books

Chinese books, which are traditionally bound by stitching paper covers to the pages, need cases to protect and reinforce them when they are placed on bookshelves. Everyday cases are generally board covered with dark blue cloth, but the cases displayed here show the case at its most elaborate and elegant.

石賁砂大藏經

Chi sha Tripitaka. Chi sha, Kiangsu: 1231-1322.

One of only two extant copies of this Chinese version of the Buddhist canon which had long been considered lost until the 1930s, this work consists of 5,348 volumes in "sutra" or accordian binding, about 700 of which were printed in the Sung dynasty, 1,600 printed in the Yüan dynasty and the remainder printed or handcopied during the early Ming. This volume is opened to the Candra-dipa-samadhi.

The printer's name, Yang Te-ch'un, appears in the lower right corner of the frontispiece with his address in the left hand corner; the name of the carver of the woodblocks is under the title on the first page of the text, which was printed in 1238. Each volume is bound in silk or brocade and contains an elaborate woodcut frontispiece of the Buddha and attendants. Sakyamuni sits on a vajra throne preaching to beings of the seven worlds while Amanda and Kasyapa attend him at his right and left respectively; the woodcut displays a strong Tibeto-Nepalese influence on Chinese Buddhist iconography.

Album leaf. Tunhuang. Late 10th to early  
11th century.

This painting of a weeping figure is done with  
ink and color on silk. In the left center of  
the painting is an indistinct gray figure,  
perhaps a ghost or demon.

From the Collection of James C. and Lucy L. Lo

Fang kuang po jo po lo mi ching. Panca  
vimsatisahasrika prajna paramita sutra. Ms.,  
7th century.

This handwritten scroll of three chapters of a Buddhist sutra was found in Tunhuang where it was sealed in a cave until the beginning of this century. Also of great interest and more rarity is the wrapping cloth made of hemp and fastened with a button which bears the date 685 A.D. The cloth may have been intended originally to wrap some other object than this scroll.

Mongolian kanjur. 1721.

This kanjur, the translation into Mongolian of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, does bear titles and pagination in Chinese and was most likely printed through imperial sponsorship. The elaborate fore-edge design, found in all 109 volumes, the fine printing, yellow silk-covered woodboards and polychrome illustrations attest to the superiority of this book which imitates the physical format of Tibetan books. The only other copy in this country is held at Harvard University.



毗盧大藏經

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P'i-lu ta tsang ching. The P'i-lu Tripitaka,  
Foochow, Fukien, 1112-1172.

One of the five editions of the Buddhist canon printed during the Sung dynasty. Originally composed of 6,117 volumes, only a fraction remain today. This single volume contains part of the Prajna paramita sutra and is dated A.D. 1117. It is a blockprint edition on heavy yellow paper labelled in gold letters. It was printed by Ch'en Ho through the support of various officials.

Scheide Library

諸佛世尊如來菩薩尊者名稱歌曲

Chu fo shih tsun Ju-lai p'u-sa tsun che ming  
ch'eng ko ch'ü. Chants to Buddhist  
 deities. Imperial printing, 1420.

This work is opened to two pages of a three-page triptych frontispiece representing Sakyamuni Buddha attended by various arhats, bodhisattvas, etc., with Amanda and Kasyapa at his right and left. Arranged by the deity to which chants are addressed, the book was commissioned by the Yung-lo emperor.

## The Book Repository at Tunhuang

The entrance to the interior cave in Tunhuang where tens of thousands of scrolls were found in the early years of this century. The north wall of the repository cave is decorated with a wall painting.

Among those who acquired many of the scrolls were Aurel Stein, whose acquisitions are now in the British Museum, and Paul Pelliot (pictured in the cave surrounded by scrolls), whose find is housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

Fragments of handwritten documents. From Mo-kao k'u, the Tunhuang caves, Kansu. T'ang dynasty.

These fragments were among the 30,000 paper rolls dating from the 4th to 10th century which had been sealed in a cave in Tunhuang since perhaps the 11th century until the beginning of this century. The priceless documents were mainly Buddhist sutras, but also included texts on Taoism, Confucianism and government documents, contracts, models of letter-writing and composition.

Fragments cut in shoe patterns. (ca. 9th century).

These fragments, part of which contain bits of the Confucian classics such as the Analects, have been cut in the shape of patterns used to make cloth shoes. They contain the word "correct" superimposed in several places as a teacher might write on a student's paper. The long pointed fragments, cut from the middle of the pattern, were not used.

From the Collection of James C. and Lucy L. Lo

Part of a document. A.D. 749

Dated 2nd month 749 and signed by a man named Ling-hu, this is an official document about provisions for the military in the T'ien shan region, modern day Sinkiang.

From the Collection of James C.  
and Lucy L. Lo

Part of a sutra. (T'ang)

The paper on which this sutra is written is typical of that found in the cave which can be dated to the 7th to 8th century. It is thin, of an unvarying thickness, well sized and stained brownish. The calligraphy is especially even and handsome.

From the Collection of James C.  
and Lucy L. Lo

通鑑總類

T'ung chien tsung lei. Précis of the Comprehensive mirror to aid in governing. By Shen Shu. (13th century).

This is an outstanding example of Sung printing, the period of the highest development of woodblock printing that became a standard for later printing. Though this volume (the only held in the Scheide Library) is undated, it may be from the original early 13th century edition. This volume deals with ministers of state from the Warring States period to the T'ang dynasty.

Scheide Library



詩地理考

Shih ti li k'ao. Study of geographical locations in  
the Book of Odes. By Wang Ying-lin. Yüan.

The publishing history of this book is an interesting one. The book was written in the Sung, and the blocks for this edition cut in 1337. The Nanking National Academy took them over and repaired them in order to continue to print from them; they did so in 1508, 1554, 1558, 1584, 1588-90. By checking the dates of the blocks for each page given at the upper edge of the left-hand page one sees that the original Yüan blocks constitute at most 1/20 of those used to produce this edition.

新編事文類聚翰墨大全

Hsin pien shih wen lei chü han mo ta  
ch'uan. Classified compendium on  
various subjects. By Liu Ying-li. Yüan.

An outstanding example of a work  
printed in the Yüan dynasty; the  
characters are elegantly written and  
the printing clear.

Woman and Attendants. Ink and color on silk. Ch'ing.

This painting, showing a woman at a dressing table along with two attendants, relates to an earlier type of refined Chinese figure painting originated by the eighth-century high T'ang artists Chang Hsüan and Chou Fang. In actual fact, the composition seen here is a late, modified version of a painting traditionally attributed to the tenth-century painter Chou Wen-chü, a follower of Chou Fang. The painter has amplified his model, extending the composition to left and right and adding a garden-like setting. Objects found in the scene, including books and paintings, testify to the woman's refinement and contribute to this intimate view of her time at leisure.

The seal script signature at the lower right, Han-ch'en, refers to the early twelfth-century academy painter Su Han-ch'en; it is spurious. Beneath this signature and at the lower left are seals of the great sixteenth-century collector Hsiang Yüan-pien (1525-1590). A painting of this subject is known to have been in his collection. The two large seals in the upper portion of the painting are Ch'ing imperial seals, the one in the center designating the Emperor Hsüan-tsung (reigned 1821-1849).

永樂大典

Yung-lo ta tien. Great encyclopedia of the Yung-lo reign. Hsieh Chin, ed. Ms., Early 15th century.

An encyclopedic dictionary with illustrative passages or entire works in all areas of learning hand copied into more than 11,000 volumes by some 3,000 scholars from 1403 to 1408. Though the manuscript set was all but destroyed, about 370 volumes survive today in libraries throughout the world, two of them at Princeton. The book is arranged by subject, then by rhyme, and is an example of the highest quality of paper and calligraphy.

欽定國史大臣列傳

Ch'in ting kuo shih ta ch'en lieh chuan. Official biographies of officials. Mu Chang-a et al., comp. Ms., 1847.

An especially fine specimen of a book produced through imperial aegis. It makes use of the best paper, striking red frame lines and excellent calligraphy. Each volume is bound in imperial yellow silk.

大清世祖章皇帝實錄

Ta Ch'ing Shih-tsu chang huang ti shih lu. Veritable record of Emperor Shih-tsung of the Ch'ing. Ms., (Ch'ing).

大清高宗純皇帝實錄

Ta Ch'ing Kao-tsung ch'un huang ti shih lu. Veritable record of Emperor Kao-tsung of the Ch'ing. Ms., (Ch'ing).

These exquisite manuscripts are the day-by-day records of everything that took place at the imperial court. The volumes are noteworthy for the outstanding calligraphy, broad margins and fine workmanship in general. The title, barely visible, is written in the gutter of the book rather than the outer edge as usual. The open volume records one month's activities of the Shun-chih emperor in 1646. The closed volume on the 15th year of Ch'ien-lung's reign shows the binding which is wrapped rather than done in the more common stitched style; it is covered in red silk with a phoenix pattern.

Department of Rare Books and Special Collections

武備圖

Wu pei t'u. Pictures of military equipment.  
Drawn by Ch'en Hsing-yüan. Ms., Ch'ing.

This collection of extremely detailed pen-and-ink drawings illustrates arms, armor, encampments and other matériel used in warfare. Shown here are two cannons, that on the right drawn to 1/20th its size, that on the left to 1/40th.

天元三曆祥異錄

T'ien yüan yü li hsiang i lu. Historical record of celestial anomaly. Ms., Ming.

There is a preface of 1425 stating that this work was done by imperial commission. It interprets and illustrates meteorological phenomena. The outline frame on each page is printed in blue rather than the usual black, and the illustrations are painted not printed. Both rainbows shown here predict bloodshed and distress in battle.



麻叔棍譜

Ma ch'a kun p'u. Manual of pole-fighting techniques. By the Man of Mountain Leisure. Ms., 1679.

Through pen-and-ink illustrations and explanations this book introduces the techniques used in the art of fighting with the long pole. The text is written in an unrefined style, possible evidence that the author may have been a teacher of martial arts.

佩文韻府

P'ei wen vün fu. Rhyming dictionary with quotations. By Chang Yü-shu et al. Handwritten draft, early eighteenth century.

This is the draft edition of the great rhyming dictionary first printed in 1711 by order of the K'ang-hsi emperor. It is a dictionary of phrases with copious illustrative quotations given. A close inspection reveals corrected characters and areas pasted over with strips of blank paper.

外交始末記

Wai chiao shih mo chi. Documents relating to foreign affairs. Official compilation. Ms., 1915-25.

Although this copy was made after the imperial era ended in 1911, it is quite rare and deals with foreign relations in the years 1837 to 1850. These pages expound on the opium problem which was severe then. The attitude toward foreigners is reflected in the replacement of a neutral character for foreign (yang) with a more pejorative word (i) in lines 3, 6 and 8 on the left-hand page.

大明實錄

Ta Ming shih lu. Veritable record of the Great Ming dynasty. Tung Lun et al., comp. Handwritten draft, (17th century).

A draft copy of this official record of the Ming court in 173 volumes. Only three other copies of the draft exist, and each varies from the other. It is enclosed in double boxes, the inner one covered with brocade.

Woodblock illustrations from the Wu ying tien chü chen pan ch'eng shih (Wu ying Palace printing manual) written by Chin Chien to describe the process of producing wooden movable type to print the Wu ying tien chü chen p'an ts'ung shu (no. 23). Depicted is every step in the production of the type from sawing the jujube wood boards to setting the type. Since the Chinese language, consisting of about 50,000 characters (ideographs) which are combined in binomes to form most words, requires enormous type fonts to print books with movable type, usually only by imperial decree were such fonts produced; for this reason woodblock printing dominated till the modern age.

## 古今圖書集成

Ku chin t'u shu chi ch'eng. The Imperial encyclopedia. Ch'en Meng-lei et al., comp. Imperial printing, 1728.

The largest and most useful Chinese collection of source materials, this work contains the texts of some 6,000 works. Its table of contents alone is 40 chapters long, while the entire work contains 100 million characters filling over 5,000 volumes. This is a very clear metal movable type edition which required a project of such magnitude that it could be accomplished only through imperial commission.

武英殿聚珍版叢書

Wu ying tien chü chen pan ts'ung shu.  
Imperial Printing Press and Bindery collection  
in movable type. Chi Yun, comp. Peking: Wu  
ying tien, 1773-94.

Only the Imperial Printing Press (Wu ying tien) could undertake the massive project necessary to print this collection of 134 books in wooden movable type. It required a font of over 253,000 type, all of which were produced at imperial behest in the year 1733. The work displayed is Yeh chung chi written by Lu Hui of the Chin dynasty.

思玄集

Ssu hsüan chi. Collection of poetry and prose.  
By Sang Yüeh. (Early 16th century).

A wooden movable type edition produced privately and therefore quite rare. Due to the enormous type font needed to print books in movable type, almost all of private and commercial printing was done using the blockprint method.



選賦

Hsüan fu. Selected rhyme prose. By Hsiao T'ung.  
Wu-hsing: Lin Family, Ming.

A two-color printed edition of the 6th century work by a prince of the Liang dynasty with annotations by Kuo Cheng-yü of the Ming dynasty. The punctuation and emphasis marks as well as the marginal notes, which are in a handwritten style, are printed in red.

文選尤

Wen hsüan yu. Rarities from the Anthology of Literature. Hsiao T'ung, ed. 1622.

A fine example of three-color printing in black, blue and red, with various styles of writing used in the text itself and in the marginal and other notes.

史記鈔

Shih chi ch'ao. Commentary on Records of the Grand Historian.  
Mao K'un, ed. Min Chen-yeh, 1620.

鹿門先生史記鈔

Lu-men hsien sheng Shih chi ch'ao. Commentary on Records of the  
Grand Historian by Mao Lu-men. Mao K'un, ed. 1621.

Two examples of commentary on the eminent historical work Shih chi by Ssu-ma Ch'ien (1st century B.C.) who added biographical and institutional coverage to the existing annalistic style of Chinese historical writing. These two books are both open to the same passage to show the variations in commentary and annotating.

三才圖會

San ts'ai t'u hui. Illustrated encyclopedia of heaven, earth and man. Wang Ch'i, comp. Sung-chiang prefecture: Wang Family, 1609.

This illustrated encyclopedia was compiled by wang Ch'i of Shanghai, with the help of his son. Depicted here is Ts'ang Chieh, the legendary inventor of the Chinese writing system, and people at play on a swing and an acrobatic climbing pole.

The San ts'ai t'u hui consists predominantly of illustrations, maps, charts, tables, etc., which are followed by brief explanations, often derived from earlier sources. Though often crude, the illustrations were used by many succeeding works, for example the Ku chin t'u shu chi ch'eng, no. 22.

六經圖

Liu ching t'u. Illustrations of the Six Classics.  
By Yang Chia. Hsin-tu, Szechuan: Wu Family, 1617.

Originally printed in Fukien in 1166, this is a fine Ming edition which shows 309 objects referred to in the Six Classics, i.e. The Book of Changes, The Book of History, The Book of Odes, The Rites of Chou, The Book of Ritual and the Spring and Autumn Annals. These illustrations, found in the Rites of Chou section, depict caps and clothing for princes, nobles, officials on the right page, and clothing for empresses on the left.

劉雪湖梅譜

Liu Hsüeh-hu mei p'u. Manual of plum painting  
by Liu Shih-ju. By Lin Shih-ju; Wang Ssu-jen,  
ed. Late 16th to early 17th century.

An instruction book on how to paint the plum  
tree and blossoms with commentary and poetry.

御製避暑山莊詩

Yü chih pi shu shan chuang shih. Poems by the  
Kang-hsi emperor on the Summer Palace. Peking:  
wu ying tien, 1712.

A lushly illustrated, finely printed collection  
of thirty-six scenes of the Ch'ing imperial villa  
in Jehol built in 1703, with accompanying poems  
printed in red and black with commentary. The  
woodblocks for this work and Keng chih t'u  
(no. 32 ) were both cut by Chu Kuei, a  
distinguished artisan.

御製耕織圖詩

Yü chih keng chih t'u shih. Pictures of tilling and weaving with verse. By Lou Shou. Palace edition, 1696.

This work, first produced in the twelfth century, was reissued in 1696 at the order of the K'ang-hsi emperor who wrote new poems to compliment the newly drawn illustrations for this edition. It is devoted equally to twenty-three pictures on rice production and twenty-three on sericulture drawn by Chiao Ping-chen, a court painter. The poetry at the top of each page is written by the emperor and printed in a facsimile of his calligraphy. The scenes here show silkworms being distributed on frames, and mulberry leaves being picked to feed the worms.



# 宣和博古圖錄

Hsüan-ho po ku t'u lu. Antiquities held in the Hsüan-ho reign. Wang Fu et al. Yüan blocks printed in the Ming.

A catalog of 600 bronzes from the Chou to Han dynasties held during the Hsüan-ho reign (1119-1125); descriptions accompany each of the illustrations which give information about the size, designs and inscriptions. A reliable source for the study of bronzes prior to the advent of modern photography.

芥子園畫傳

Chieh-tzu yüan hua chuan. The Mustard Seed  
Garden Painting Manual. By Wang Kai.  
Nanking: Mustard Seed Garden, 1679 - 1701.

Very influential and prestigious in the area of color printing, the work has been reprinted scores of times. Shown is a landscape printed in four colors, with shading.

## 方氏墨譜

Fang shih mo p'u. Fang's album of inks. By Fang Yü-lu. Late 16th century.

Illustrations of fancy ink-cakes made of pine soot and glue for decorative purposes. Made in wooden molds, the ink may be painted to bring out the raised design or left plain black. Elaborately ornate inks are collected as objects for their aesthetic value rather than as writing tools.

## Inksticks and Ink-cakes in Various Forms

Common Chinese ink is made in stick form. The stick is rubbed in a little water on a special stone to make liquid ink. The objects in this case are made of ink though they are for decorative purposes only.

## 昌黎文式

Ch'ang-li wen shih. Collected works of Han Yü. Ch'eng  
Tuan-li, comp. Ms., Ch'ing.

This handwritten compilation of Han Yü's works, the famous 8th century essayist and poet, contains comments in the top margin, sidelinings and other critical marks in red, yellow and blue. Although the work is dated 1597, it is probably a forgery as evidenced by the style of calligraphy; the darkish, very evenly browned paper (probably accomplished by brushing the pages with tea); the "worm" holes, which do not penetrate through all pages uniformly; and the fact that a person mentioned in the preface could not possibly have been alive at the time of its composition.

文章類選

Wen chang lei hsuan. Classified collection of literature. Chu Chan. Ms., Ming.

Compiled by the sixteenth son of Ming T'ai-tsu, first emperor of the dynasty, this book arranges into fifty-eight topics works by famous authors found in earlier collections. A blockprint edition of this work is known to be held at the National Library of China, but it does not include the author's preface dated 1398 shown here.

## 資治通鑑

Tzu chih t'ung chien. Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Governing.  
By Ssu-ma Kuang. Hangchou: K'ung T'ien-yin et al., 1544.

This Ming edition of the original 11th century chronicle of the history of Chinese government from the 5th century B.C. to the 10th century A.D. used the Sung edition as its basis. Though now almost 450 years old, this edition maintains its clarity and the paper its whiteness. The large red chop shows that this book once was in the possession of the Shaohsing Prefect in Chekiang province.

陸狀元增節音注精議資治通鑑

Lu Chuang yüan tseng chieh yin chu ching i Tzu chih t'ung chien. Lu's commentary on the Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Governing. Lu T'ang-lao, ed. Ch'angshu, Kiangsu: Chi ku ko, early 17th century.

An example of block printing from Mao Chin's Chi ku ko studio and printing house. The left-hand page shows a map of China during the former Han dynasty, the right-hand page a genealogical chart of the rulers of the later Han dynasty.



通志

T'ung chih. Comprehensive history of institutions.  
By Cheng Ch'iao. Fukien: 1322; reprinted, Nanking:  
1474.

During the Ming dynasty the original Yüan dynasty blocks were taken over by the National Academy in Nanking, one of the government's major printers. There the blocks were repaired and this edition produced. On the edge of the pages is found such information as the number of characters on the recto and verso of the page, the title of the book and chapter and often the name of the official from the Academy who collated and emended that page.

資治通鑑綱目

Tzu chih t'ung chien kang mu. Summary of  
the Comprehensive mirror to aid in governing.  
By Chu Hsi. Palace edition, 1473.

During the Ming, through imperial auspices, the government reissued this revised and corrected edition of Chu Hsi's 12th century condensation of the important annalistic history Tzu chih t'ung chien (11th century) in this large character format with commentary in half-sized character.

"Cribbing" Garment. (Ch'ing).

This shirt, designed to be worn by a candidate in the civil service examination as an undergarment or sewn as the inner lining of another garment, contains over 520,000 characters which make up 722 compositions in the "eight-legged essay" style, that prescribed for the examinations. A wealthy candidate who needed a crib to pass and who could afford to rent such a garment could easily consult this silk cribsheet once he was locked into his one-man examination cell. The bars in red and black separate one essay from the next.

## Examination cells

From the T'ang dynasty China had a sophisticated, centralized civil service examination system. By the time the Gest cribbing garment was in use, passing the highest level exam would qualify the successful candidate for the equivalent of a modern doctorate.

The candidates were sealed for three days in cells like the ones in the photo, which were not wide enough for a man to extend his arms in. The importance placed on passing the exam and the efforts to keep the examinees solitary led to elaborate cheating schemes such as this shirt.

## 西廂記

Hsi hsiang chi. Romance of the western chamber.  
By Wang Shih-fu. (Ch'ing dynasty).

An example of a bilingual Chinese-Manchu text from the Ch'ing dynasty when the rulers, who were Manchu, printed many translations of Chinese works into their native tongue. The binding, while stitched in traditional Chinese style, opens from the right since the Manchu language reads from left to right, not the reverse as with Chinese. The Romance, written in the thirteenth century, is one of the most popular dramas in China.

趙氏孤兒大報讐雜劇

Chao shih ku erh ta pao ch'ou tsa chü.  
Orphan Chao's revenge. By Chi Chün-hsiang.  
1615.

This Ming dynasty edition of a Yüan play shows how operatic dramas were printed. The large characters were sung, the smaller ones spoken.

琴譜合璧

Ch'in p'u ho pi. Paired jewels of music  
For the lute. By Yang Lun. Early 17th  
century.

This book contains two separate works on  
music by the author. This page shows a  
tune's musical notation which is an adaptation  
of standard written Chinese characters.

## 大明集禮

Ta Ming chi li. Collected ceremonies of the Ming dynasty.  
By Hsu I-k'uei, et al. Palace edition, 1530.

First compiled by imperial order in the 14th century, this work was later revised, enlarged and published with a preface by the emperor in 1530. It lists regulations for official ceremonies with illustrations of ceremonial utensils, instruments and arrangements. This copy is printed with blocks from the Palace edition and from an edition done by Wu Shan and others in Honan. The illustration shows the layout for the Alter to Earth where sacrifices were made on the summer solstice.



聯新事備詩學大成

Lien hsin shih pei shih hsueh ta ch'eng.  
Topical guide to poetry. Lin Chen, ed.  
Directorate of Ceremonial, Ming.

An example of official Ming printing, this shows many of the features of government printing: fancy edge design, large format, crisp printing. This book, divided by subject, gives lines of poetry from numerous sources arranged by subjects.

# 大明一統志

Ta Ming i t'ung chih. Comprehensive Geography of the Ming Empire. Li Hsien, ed. Palace edition, 1461.

This map of China is found in an official geography of China dating from the first century of the Ming dynasty. It shows the names of the provinces and the two Ming capitals, Peking and Nanking, in white-on-black characters and also the countries of Japan, Korea, etc. Subsequently reprinted many times, not only in China but also in Korea and Japan.

孝順事實

Hsiao shun shih shih. Stories of filial piety. Yung-lo emperor. Palace edition, 1420.

This work, which records stories of filial piety, contains a preface by the Yung-lo emperor himself.

吳歛小草

Wu yü hsiao ts'ao. Drafts of songs of Wu.  
By Lou Chien. 1630. Revised in the Ch'ing.

A book banned during the Ch'ing whose existence is now quite rare. It contains a preface by Ch'ien Ch'ien-i all of whose writing, even such prefaces, the Ch'ien-lung emperor in the 18th century ordered to be destroyed.

徐文長文集

Hsü Wen-chang wen chi. Literary writings of Hsü Wei. Ch'ien-t'ang, Chekiang: Wu Family, 1614.

This collection of works by Hsü Wei, a prolific painter and writer, carries annotations by Yüan Hung-tao, the famous 16th-17th century official and essayist whose unorthodoxies and those of his two brothers were considered in part responsible for the decadence of the Ming.

汲古閣詞十種

Chi ku ko tz'u shih chung. Poetry by ten Sung writers. Mao Chin, comp. Ch'ang-shu, Kiangsu: Chi ku ko, early 17th century.

This work was both edited and printed by Mao Chin, perhaps the most famous late Ming book collector and printer, at his Chi ku ko printing shop and studio. Mao is known to have printed more than 600 works, including editions of the Thirteen Classics and the Seventeen Standard Histories. Through his efforts to preserve and distribute fine works from his own library, Mao was most influential in the printing world. The name Chi ku ko appears at the bottom edge of each page.

事物紀原集類

Shih wu chi yüan chi lei. Origins of all manner of things. Kao Ch'eng, comp. Annotations by Li Kuo. Ping-yang, Shan-hsi: 1472.

An encyclopedic work whose usefulness lies partially in the fact that it quotes many sources which are now lost. This copy was chosen by the Han-lin Academy (the highest academic organization in imperial China) as the source copy when compiling the Ssu k'u ch'uan shu (Complete Library in the Four Classifications) in the late 18th century. This copy is full of notes and individual words written in red ink which the Han-lin scholars added when collating this edition.

芥子園畫傳

Chieh-tzu yüan hua chuan. The Mustard Seed  
Garden Painting Manual. By Wang Kai. Nanking:  
Mustard Seed Garden, 1679 - 1701.

The preface to this famous instruction book  
on painting was written by Li Yü (1611-1680),  
the well-known writer and owner of the Mustard  
Seed Garden. Shown here is the title page  
to the second volume, printed on yellow paper,  
a common color for title pages, and the  
beginning of the preface.



北宮詞記

Pei kung tz'u chi. Lyric verse from the  
Northern Palace. Ch'en Suo-wen, ed. 1604.

This collection of pei ch'ü (northern-style lyric) is printed in a format which leaves space at the top of each page for printed commentary. This page shows comments and other marks added by one of the owners of the book.

## 苑洛集

Yüan-lo chi. Collected works of Han Yüan-lo. By Han  
Pang-chi. 1552.

This collection of the writings of an individual represents a type of publication that proliferated in the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties. In this collection are prefaces, poetry, epitaphs, etc. Among the poems shown here are ones written by Han on the occasion of being sent to prison and while he was in prison on unfair charges brought against him by eunuchs he tried to keep from oppressing the people.

說部續

Shuo fu hsü. Supplement to Collectanea. T'ao T'ing, ed. Yüan wei shan t'ang, 1647.

With the entrance into China of such missionaries as Matteo Ricci, the Jesuit who spent about three decades there from 1583-1610, translations of Western works and writing by westerners in Chinese began to appear in Chinese books. Shown here is Ricci's essay "On Friendship" (Yu lun) which first appeared in 1595 under Ricci's Chinese name, Li Ma-tou (of the Great Western Regions). This book continues the Shuo fu, a Yüan dynasty collection of literary works.

痘疹格致要論

Tou chen ko chih yao lun. Synopsis of studies on smallpox. By Wang Ch'üan. (Mid-16th century).

The author devoted his life to medicine after passing the first degree official examination, authoring several works on medicine during his lifetime. This is a well-used copy, annotated by an owner.

證類本草

Cheng lei pen ts'ao. Descriptions of material medica. By T'ang Shen-wei. Palace edition, 1587.

This comprehensive work, which was considered an authoritative text from its appearance in 1108 for the next 300 years, identifies minerals, plants and insects found in the Chinese pharmacopoeia, lists their properties and their efficacy in curing ailments. Shown here is the plant wild ginger (asarum). This work is still covered in its original blue silk wrapper.

痘疹傳心錄

Tou chen ch'uan hsin lu. Record of lessons on smallpox. By Chu Hui-ming. (Ch'ing reprint).

Written at the end of the sixteenth century, this work is noteworthy for its unusual series of pictures of a pediatrician's house call. Here the physician is taking the bedridden child's pulse. The book is a specialty work on smallpox, a major killer of children in Chu's day.

# 鍼灸大成

Chen chiu ta ch'eng. Treatise on acupuncture and  
moxibustion. By Yang Chi-chou. Shan-hsi: Chao  
Wen-ping, 1601.

Written by Yang Chi-chou, a well-known doctor of  
the Wan-li period (1573-1620), this work describes  
acupuncture and cauterization points and their  
uses. The two illustrations show points effective  
when treating chest pain, one on the foot and one on  
the hand where there are terminals of meridians that  
have bearing on the heart.

臨證指南醫案

Lin cheng chih nan i an. Case studies as a guide to clinical practice. By Yeh Kuei. (1766).

Edited by his followers, this authoritative work by one of the three great Ch'ing physicians, bears plentiful notes and annotations entered by a former owner, no doubt himself a doctor.



## The Gest Library

When Guion M. Gest, owner of a New York-based transportation engineering firm, began buying Chinese books in the 1920s, he knew no Chinese. Drawn to China because of his interests in religion, in international affairs and because he once had eye trouble treated with Chinese medicine, Gest amassed over 100,000 volumes before the Depression and poor eyesight caused him to stop building his Chinese library. He found a home for his library from 1926 until 1936 at McGill University in Montreal. He took an intense personal interest in the library and strove constantly to bring it to public attention.

Gest's collaborator in the library was Irvin V. Gillis, who was knowledgeable and enthusiastic about Chinese books. Gillis took direction of the growth of the library for it was he who had the expertise to build an outstanding collection. A retired American naval officer who settled in Peking with his Chinese wife, Gillis and his small staff selected books very carefully to make an outstanding collection for Gest. They looked at each page in each volume they acquired in order to indicate defects and missing pages; they had cases made for books in need of them, catalogued the books, classified and indexed them. Gillis was as indefatigable in building the collection as Gest was in sponsoring and promoting it.

The third person responsible for developing the library was Nancy Lee Swann, a Columbia Ph.D. in Chinese history who was curator of the collection from 1928-1948. As keeper of the books, she encouraged their use and dipped into the great resources they provided to answer questions from patrons and to conduct her own research. Swann was on hand when Gest sold his collection to the Institute for Advanced Study in 1936. She supervised the move to Princeton and continued as its custodian for the next twelve years when administration of the collection was transferred to Princeton University.

Now integrated into the Princeton University Library system, Gest Oriental Library and East Asian Collections has grown to over 420,000 volumes which are consulted heavily by scholars and students in East Asian Studies from Princeton and around the world. Founded on the core of rare Chinese books from which the works in this exhibit are chosen, the Library continues to develop as a working collection to support research on traditional and modern East Asia and as one of the eminent rare book collections outside China.

Guion Moore Gest, 1864-1948

Although he never learned Chinese, G. M. Gest, with the collaboration of I. V. Gillis, was able to amass one of the world's pre-eminent collections of Chinese books, especially those from the Ming dynasty. From his original interest in Buddhism and medicine, he expanded his collecting to include over 100,000 books from all fields of learning.

Irvin Van Gorder Gillis, 1875-1948

A commander in the U. S. Navy, Gillis, was posted as naval attaché to China where he married a Chinese woman and spent the rest of his life. The main force in shaping Gest's library, he selected most of the books for the collection and also cataloged them.

Nancy Lee Swann, 1881-1966

Curator of Gest Library from 1928 to her retirement in 1948, Nancy Lee Swann, the first curator of the collection to be trained in Chinese studies, followed the collection from its original home in Montreal to Princeton. Swann received a Ph.D. in Chinese from Columbia University in 1926; her thesis was developed into the book Pan Chao, foremost woman scholar of China, 1st century A.D. (New York: Century, 1932)