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Necessary Knowledge for Young Students and Commercial Publishing in 17th- to Early-20th-Century China

ABSTRACT:

Youxue gushi qionglin 幼學故事瓊林 (*Treasury of Allusions for Young Students*) was the most popular textbook for children in China during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Publishers attributed this book to a late-Ming school teacher, but, except for this, our knowledge of it is very limited. The present paper, based on the layouts and paratextual features found in numerous extant editions and reprints, traces the book's transformation across three hundred years by looking at the efforts expended by a stream of annotators, editors, block carvers, printers, and lithographers to turn a textbook compiled by an early, unknown author into a desirable product for contemporary readers. Moreover, having laid that foundation, the present work explores the strategies of commercial publishers and the factors that shaped the circulation of popular books generally in this period.

KEYWORDS:

Youxue gushi qionglin, *Youxue xuzhi*, *book history*, *commercial publishing*, *low-end book market*, *paratext*

In an essay recalling his childhood in Shaoxing 紹興, Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936) describes a hilarious school scene.¹ A group of students who were supposed to be studying by themselves sneaked into the garden behind their classroom while the schoolmaster was in his study. From the study, the schoolmaster yelled, “Where are you going?” The students responded by loudly reciting sentences they had memorized from their textbooks. They shouted the four sentences at the same time, however, one drawn from the *Analects*, one from the *Book of Changes*, one from the *Book of Documents*, and a humorous sentence that went, “To mock someone for losing a tooth is to leave ‘the dog-door wide open.’” The dog-door metaphor was to be found in a fifth century AD story that was cited in the famous medieval collection *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (*A New Account of the Tales of the World*). The story recounts a child's clever re-

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¹ Lu Xun, “Cong baicao yuan dao sanwei shuwu 從百草園到三味書屋,” in *Lu Xun quanji* 魯迅全集 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 2005) 2, pp. 287–93. This essay was first published in *Mangyuan* 莽原, a literary journal, in 1926 and included in Lu's essay collection, *Zhaohua xishi* 朝花夕拾 of 1932.

sponse to an adult who had mocked the look of his teeth; but the exact sentence that Lu quoted was from *Youxue gushi qionglin* 幼學故事瓊林 (*Treasury of Allusions for Young Students*; hereafter referred to as *Qionglin*), a popular study-book compiled by a Ming-era school teacher that introduced to students a large number of common allusions, idioms, and poetic phrases and explained their origins as well.²

This phrase was quite humorous then (and no doubt still is for most Chinese) because images of misaligned teeth, dogs, and a youngster's wisecracks are juxtaposed with phrases from the revered Confucian classics. Lu did not provide the source of the phrase used in the tooth-and-dog scene. He had probably memorized it during childhood, so it simply came to mind while he was composing his essay. His use of this phrase furthermore suggests that he assumed it would be familiar to his target readers, because they all studied *Qionglin* when they were young.

Lu Xun was not *Qionglin*'s only famous reader. Mao Zedong (1893–1976) studied *Qionglin* and the Four Books together, after learning the *Three-Character Classic* when he was nine, in his Hunan hometown. It is said that he memorized them very quickly, and his father wanted him to study the abacus next.³ In a memoir by Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962) we are told that his cousins in his Anhui hometown did not like to study because their teacher did not explain the meaning of texts but only had students memorize them. To memorize rhyming primers was not too difficult, but after that, to many students *Qionglin* and the Four Books were tortuous. Because his uncle had already taught him the meaning of many characters, Hu was able to help his classmates learn the “big characters,” that is the main text of *Qionglin*, but he preferred to read the “small characters,” the annotations, because they cited many “myths and stories” that were more interesting than the Confucian classics.⁴ These three famous readers all positioned *Qionglin*, as it were, as a standard textbook for relatively advanced students who needed to move from basic rhyming primers to the study of Confucian classics.

Qionglin was not only read by famous persons, it also had many everyday readers. During my 2008 fieldwork in the villages of northeastern Fujian I first became impressed by the popularity of *Qionglin* there;

² This story, from the sect. “Taunting and Teasing” (*Paitiao* 排調), is about a man who teases a child. He asked the child, “Why is there a dog-door wide open in your mouth?” The child replied, “So that a man like you can go through it.”

³ *Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiu shi* 中共中央文獻研究室, *Mao Zedong nianpu*, 1893–1949 毛澤東年譜 1893–1949 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1993), p. 2.

⁴ Hu Shi, *Sishi zishu* 四十自述 (Shanghai: Yadong tushuguan, 1933), pp. 43–44.

between two family collections I found four different editions: two versions of *Qionglin* proper, plus two other books that shared sources with *Qionglin*.⁵ Other than Confucian classics, this is the only book for which the families I investigated kept multiple copies. The books collected by James Hayes (1930-) in coastal Guangdong are similar. Another example is a certain school teacher, Weng Shichao 翁仕朝 (1874-1944) from Dapu 大埔, New Territories. He had five different editions of *Qionglin* in his book collection, no other books having that number of editions.⁶ These cases show that in both villages and towns, *Qionglin* was widely used to teach young students Chinese literature. It was one of the most popular textbooks in China in the late-nineteenth and the early-twentieth centuries, and perhaps one of China's most commonly printed titles in the long period under consideration here.

Qionglin was, as we just saw, published and read in the nineteenth century, but it was simply the most popular version of the much older *Youxue xuzhi* (幼學須知, *Necessary Knowledge for Young Students*, often referred to, below, as *Youxue*), composed by Ming-era Cheng Dengji 程登吉. There were many versions of *Youxue*, both regionally and nationwide, on through to the *Qionglin*. (See table 1.) Although *Qionglin* no longer serves as a textbook in today's elementary education, nonetheless, modern publishers reprint it repeatedly, since it is considered a practical reader for young students, a classic text of traditional literary education, and a component of "national learning." For example, in 2008, the renowned Shanghai Classics Publishing House published a hardcover edition as part of the series *Canonic Treasures of National Learning* (*Guoxue diancang* 國學典藏).⁷

Although *Youxue* and its various versions were ubiquitous and comprised an important source of literary knowledge for Chinese readers spanning several centuries, current scholars have yet to devote significant research to it.⁸ Traditionally, when concentrating on Chi-

⁵ Li Ren-Yuan, "Reading Household Encyclopedia: The Transmission of Textual Knowledge in Chinese Villages" (paper presented for the "Encyclopedias for Everyday Life (*Wanbao quanshu* 萬寶全書): Texts and Readers Workshop," Heidelberg University and York University, Heidelberg, April 29-30, 2016).

⁶ See James Hayes, "Specialists and Written Materials in the Village World," in David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds., *Popular Cultural in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1985), pp. 75-111. Weng's original collection is held at Hong Kong Central Library. I consulted photocopies of it that are kept at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, Tokyo University.

⁷ Cheng Dengji, *Youxue gushi qionglin* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008).

⁸ There are a few exceptions. Based on materials from Sibao, Cynthia Brokaw gives a succinct and useful description of this book. A master thesis in China discusses some of its early editions. When examining the circulation of *Youxue qionglin* in Taiwan, a Taiwanese book collector, see below, described some of its editions. See Cynthia Brokaw, *Commerce in Cul-*

nese books and publishing, they tend to study rare editions, books written by famous authors, and government publications. *Youxue* and its ilk have, on the other hand, been regarded as too commonplace to be treated seriously: the content is banal and the production quality low.⁹ Moreover, the authors and editors of books like *Youxue*, as well as those who were involved in their production and distribution, are often little known or even anonymous. Book collectors and bibliographers rarely kept records of them, and in a few occasions when these books were mentioned by readers, such as Lu Xun or Hu Shi, the descriptions are usually brief and fragmentary. Such lack of information makes it very difficult to trace the historical contexts. But simply because *Youxue* was once so essential for childhood education, it is worth exploring in greater detail. As part of that exploration, we should take up authorship: why this textbook by an unknown teacher become so popular and what the motives. Also take up the physical product: when did it begin to be printed, did so many versions; who participated in the marketplace of education texts; and finally, what strategies were adopted to promote the book.

To get hold of some answers, this paper carefully investigates paratext, layout, and physical appearance regarding numerous *Youxue* versions from the late-Ming to the early-Republican period. It does not, however, devote much to the work's contents. This does not mean that they are unimportant; on the contrary, the contents were the most important reason for such a long popularity. (A separate article would be necessary for a thorough analysis of the knowledge it organizes and summarizes.)¹⁰ Instead, as mentioned, we shall be looking at the work's paratexts, or the devices producers created to guide the readers in accessing its content. I take each edition as an attempt to optimize the book for its target readers, so that the paratext, layout, and physical appearance of each edition disclose publishers' strategies in the differ-

ture: *The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), pp. 349–53; Wang Dan 王丹, “*Youxue qionglin yanjiu*” “幼學瓊林”研究, M.A. thesis (Northeast Normal University, 2016); Yang Yung-chih 楊永智, “*Youxue Qionglin liuchuan Taiwan kao*” “幼學瓊林”流傳臺灣考, *Donghai daxue wenxueyuan xuebao* 東海大學文學院學報 47 (2006.7), pp. 83–116.

⁹ Concerning the scholarly neglect of Qing commercial publishing and popular books, see Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, pp. 5–6.

¹⁰ Another interesting approach *Youxue* and its variants is to put them into the context of children education (as the book title claims), and this is how most scholars contextualize *Youxue*. However, the present article focuses on aspects of commercial publication and book history that have not been fully examined. For primers in children's education, see Bai Limin, *Shaping the Ideal Child: Children and Their Primers in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong U.P., 2005).

ent time-periods. To maximize sales, various publishers modified the book to attract readers, in fact in some sense to create new groups of consumers. Therefore, studying how publishers transformed the work also reveals the image that publishers had of their readers. Because of its popularity and its multiple editions, *Youxue* provides a good case for drawing wider conclusions about three hundred years of China's publishing industry involving popular, everyday books.

This paper traces *Youxue*'s multiple editions in five stages. Although it focuses on one particular title, what I try to illustrate is those underlying social and economic changes that helped transform it, and the ways it was circulated. These changes, such as the expansion of the private sector in business, advances of technology, and education's approaches to literacy and reading all figured directly. Exploring these contexts not only helps us understand *Youxue*, but helps us understand as well the circulation of popular books, as well as the transmission of textual knowledge in general.

SELLING A TEXTBOOK: THE EARLY- TO MID-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Almost all versions of *Youxue* are attributed to the otherwise unknown Cheng Dengji, who at the beginning of each volume (or *juan* 卷) is called either "Xichang Cheng Yunsheng 西昌程允升" or "Xichang Cheng Dengji 西昌程登吉." This was usually printed next to the main title as a claim of its authorship together with the names of subsequent annotators and editors. However, although his name was given as that of the original creator of the titular series, his identity was nearly a total cipher. Some editions claim that he was a schoolteacher during the Ming. Other than that, the only information provided by any publisher is that he came from Xichang, the old name of Xinjian 新建 county, where the provincial capital of Jiangxi was located.

The section "Unknown Talents" in the *Gazetteer of Xinjian County* published in 1871 includes what is probably his only official biography:¹¹

Cheng Dengji, courtesy name Yunsheng, was active during the Chongzhen reign (1628–1644). He cultivated his inner virtue, led a peaceful life, and had a passion for old and exceptional books. His two older brothers both had official degrees, but he was content

¹¹ Cheng Pei 承霈, comp., *Tongzhi Xinjian xianzhi* 同治新建縣志 (rpt. *Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng* 中國地方志集成 [Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1996]), j. 50, p. 6.

with being a commoner. He did not study for the civil examinations and became a teacher in his hometown, where he named his studio the “House of Retreat.” After his death, his son Wenzai 文在, due to illness, became a Buddhist monk. [His son] was good at phonology and calligraphy and was particularly skilled at imitating the calligraphy of the *Preface to the Sacred Teachings* (*Shengjiao xu* 聖教序).¹² Initially, Cheng Dengji’s name was unknown to the world. During the Kangxi reign (1662–1772), the governor [of Jiangxi] Song Luo 宋輦 printed his *Youxue xuzhi ji* 幼學須知集 (*Collection of Necessary Knowledge For Young Students*), and more than ten thousand copies were circulated. Therefore, people came to know him as “Master Cheng 程先生.”

The above shows that Chen was a late-Ming local teacher who posthumously obtained reputation because a high official promoted his textbook. Song Luo was the governor of Jiangxi from 1688 to 1692, so if we rely on these data, *Youxue xuzhi ji* was likely printed and widely circulated during those years. However, this could not have been the first time that *Youxue* had circulated; otherwise, how could a provincial governor have obtained such an unknown text? In fact, we do find earlier printed editions of *Youxue*. The earliest one, by a commercial publisher, was prefaced more than fifty years before Song Luo was Jiangxi governor. That the biography found in the nineteenth-century gazetteer neglected the earlier commercial editions and only mentioned the reprint by the governor might be due to the biography’s own makeup. According to the gazetteer, it was based on the genealogy of the Cheng family of Xinjian.¹³ To glorify their ancestors, compilers of genealogies tended to embellish their ancestors’ virtues or accomplishments. Attributing the amplified reputation of a local teacher without an official degree to his recognition by a governor of their province sounds much better than describing him as an unknown author who compiled a children’s primer for commercial publication. The present article will present several cases of stating the purpose of a publication, especially

¹² The 1873 *Gazetteer of Nanchang Prefecture* has Cheng Wenzai’s biography under the name Shi Wenzai 釋文在 in the section “Literature.” (“Shi” would imply his having been a Buddhist monk.) This biog. states that Shi Wenzai, or Xinyuan 信願, was the son of Cheng Yunsheng of Qingshan 青山 (now Qingshan village, Wangcheng 望城 town, Xinjian district), and this was likely Cheng Dengji’s hometown. Cheng Wenzai was famous for poetry and his collected poems circulated among literary circles. His poems were mentioned in other parts of the *Gazetteer of Nanchang Prefecture* and the *Gazetteer of Xinjian County*. There are indications that Wenzai was more famous than his father when they were both living. *Tongzhi Nanchang fuzhi* 同治南昌府志, j. 62, p. 43a.

¹³ *Tongzhi Xinjian xianzhi*, j. 50, p. 6b.

where a literatus was concerned, in which the commercial factors were downplayed.

The Jianyang 建陽 Edition

More than one edition of Cheng's *Youxue* had already been printed several decades before Song Luo's tenure in Jiangxi. At present, the earliest extant printed copy of *Youxue* is *Jiantang chongding biandu gushi youxue xuzhi* 簡堂重訂便讀故事幼學須知 (*Necessary Knowledge for Young Students with Easy-to-Read Allusions Revised by the Bamboo Slip Studio*) held at Keiō University.¹⁴ This copy is valuable not only because it is the oldest one, but also because it contains Cheng Dengji's preface, which is not in any later edition.

In the preface, written in 1637, Cheng explains the purpose of his book. He claims that classical allusions (*gushi* 故事; defining that term broadly) are important in the composing of social communication, such as letters, invitations, birthday poems, and numerous other occasions. However, students spent much time learning how to compose eight-legged essays, and after turning fifteen they focused even more on composition required for the civil examinations. Because of this, students ordinarily did not learn enough about these allusions. Therefore, he argued, teachers should teach them when students were very young and just beginning their studies. He stressed that there were plenty of collections of allusions and stories published as *qingmei* 青眉, *baimei* 白眉, *shuyan* 書言, *leiju* 類聚, *shilei* 事類, *shishuo* 世說, *renwu kao* 人物考, and *gushi jing* 故事鏡 on the market, but that these were mostly very large collections that did not provide explanations for the items contained, thus making them unsuitable for students. Consequently, in order to compile his book, Cheng Dengji quit his teaching post and spent several months collecting materials from the classics and histories. The book that he eventually compiled consisted of rhymed couplets in thirty-three categories, each couplet containing an allusion or an idiom.¹⁵ By studying these texts, students built up a good reserve

¹⁴ I thank Bruce Rusk for telling me of this edition. *Jiantang chongding Biandu gushi youxue xuzhi* 簡堂重訂便讀故事幼學須知 is the title as it is printed on the title page. The title in the table of contents and in the first line of each *juan* is *Jiantang chongding Youxue xuzhi biandu gushi* 簡堂重訂幼學須知便讀故事.

¹⁵ The categories are: 1. astronomy; 2. geography; 3. seasons; 4. court; 5. civil officials; 6. military officials; 7. parents and children; 8. brothers; 9. husbands and wives; 10. uncles and nephews; 11. teachers and pupils; 12. friends, guests and hosts; 13. marriage; 14. women; 15. affinal relatives; 16. the elderly and the young; 17. the body; 18. buildings; 19. tools; 20. flowers and trees; 21. birds and beasts; 22. clothing; 23. food and drink; 24. precious things; 25. inventions; 26. literary matters; 27. the civil examinations; 28. Buddhism and Daoism, deities and ghosts; 29. crafts; 30. legal affairs; 31. poverty and wealth; 32. social relations; 33. disease and death. See also Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, p. 352.

of phrases for their written communications. In accordance with his purpose, the book was succinct, easy to memorize, and provided short explanations for selected couplets' allusions. Such a book might not necessarily have helped students compose exquisite essays, but mastering its contents would be useful for daily writing chores. He believed that the ability to write solid essays of this type was a basic skill that should be acquired early, so he titled this book *Necessary Knowledge for Young Students*.

In the preface, Cheng was writing as an educator, and so explained that his textbook was designed for young students to learn the literary basics. He knew there were plenty of literary reference books available on the market, but he had created a distinctive niche for his work – a simplified version for students under the age of fifteen. With the purpose of assisting readers in finding usable phrases from the vast sea of available texts, literary reference books appeared early in China and developed along with the evolution of techniques of textual duplication. Publishers sold printed literary reference books beginning in the late-twelfth century, when wood-block printing began to be widely used for literary works, and scholars, overwhelmed by countless printed texts, tried to find the best methods of reading and retaining information.¹⁶ In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the book market greatly expanded under a prosperous private economy, especially regarding book printing and marketing in the south and southeast, books of allusions and idioms achieved unprecedented popularity, and many were published with *gushi* 故事 or *gushi daquan* 故事大全 in their titles, as Cheng also noted.¹⁷ His preface implies that his work was inspired by this wide proliferation of reference books. But, since reference books were not used for the rote styles of juvenile and adolescent education – the compilers of reference books would not have expected readers to memorize the entirety of their contents – Cheng's succinct, rhymed, and annotated texts transformed this genre, turning the very large comprehensive writing aids into well-organized and laid-out advanced primers for students.

Cheng's preface also suggests that he compiled his work in the 1630s, but it is not certain that he printed or published it right after he completed its compilation. It explains Cheng's intentions and why he

¹⁶ Li Ren-Yuan, "Yuan-Ming kan *Jujia biyong yu jiating baike de dansheng*" 元明刊居家必用與家庭百科的誕生, *ZYY* 92.3 (2021), pp. 509–60.

¹⁷ Nagasawa Kikuya 長澤規矩也, "Jieti 解題," in idem, ed., *Hekeben leishu jicheng* 和刻本類書集成 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990) 3, p. 1. This collection includes nine books with "*gushi*" in their titles.

named the book “*Youxue xuzhi*,” but it does not provide any information on its publication. This copy in Japan does not provide a publication date, but since it uses “revised” (*chongding* 重訂) in the title, it is probably not the first edition or even the first printed edition.¹⁸ The title page, nevertheless, provides some other information about its publication. It states that this Jianyang printed book was “compiled and annotated 輯註” by Yuzhang Cheng Yunsheng 豫章程允升 and that the blocks were held by the Master of the House of the Rippling Stream (*Lianyi guan zhuren* 漣漪館主人). The identity of this Master is unknown, but at the end of Cheng’s preface discussed above, he stated that he wrote the preface in *Yilian guan* 挹漣館, a name which resembles *Lianyi guan*. After the main title, there is a line stating that the book was printed by Shulin Yang Xiaomin 書林楊小閩. Yang Xiaomin was from a family of publishers in late-Ming Jianyang, the most important center of commercial publishing in southeastern China for several centuries.¹⁹ The other two extant books printed under Yang Xiaomin’s name are related to the ancient works of Zhuangzi 莊子 and to Daoism generally.²⁰

Moreover, there is an advertisement for the book on the upper half of the title page:

There are numerous books of allusions and letter writing 故事柬札 on the market. However, with the release of this book, they can all be cast aside. The marvelous passages of this volume are akin to the golden words of Xie An 謝安. The beautiful couplets are nothing less than Xiahou Zhan 夏侯湛 and Pan An 潘安 appearing together.²¹ This book is helpful for childhood education. Please read the preface inside [to learn more].

Boastful advertisements of this type began to appear on title- or cover-pages in the fourteenth century. The purpose of a title page is to attract customers’ attention, and to have them open a book and buy it. The title page here shows this edition was not a textbook produced by a local schoolteacher or promoted by a local official, but a commodity published in a prosperous and competitive market for books. Although Cheng did not reveal his relationship to the Jianyang publisher in the

¹⁸ When a publisher put a ms. into print or reprinted an old edition, if they adjusted the contents it often would be labeled a “*chongding*” edition.

¹⁹ For the Jianyang publishing business, see Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th–17th Centuries)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Asia Center, 2002).

²⁰ Xie Shuishun 謝水順 and Li Ting 李珽, *Fujian gudai keshu* 福建古代刻書 (Fuzhou: Fujian remin chubanshe, 1997), p. 316.

²¹ Xiahou Zhan and Pan An were two famous male beauties of medieval China. As it was written for a book of allusions, this advertisement uses allusions in its couplets.

preface, it is very possible that he compiled the work for commercial publishing.

Cheng's preface, as we saw, announces an educational purpose, and this purpose is clearly reflected in the layout of the pages in the main body of the text (figure 1). Each page is divided into two horizontal sections. The larger, lower, register contains the main texts compiled by Cheng and short annotations placed between the lines. The smaller, upper, register contains longer annotations. The shorter annotations are definitions or pronunciations of the characters directly to the left. The longer annotations in the upper register provide brief explanations of the sentences below and sometimes the origins of allusions or idioms in the main text. The main texts are rhyming couplets and the annotations are written in simple sentences. For example, "There is a toad on the moon, who is the spirit of the moon" is one of the couplets in the chapter named "Astronomy." The character "*chu* 除" is printed to the right of "*chu* 蜍," which is the second character of the word "toad," so as to indicate the pronunciation. "It is said that Houyi's 后羿 wife transformed into this toad" is printed in the upper register, right above this passage, further explaining the meaning of this sentence. Moreover, while most reference books in the book market had crowded page layouts in order to include as much content as possible and save on the cost of paper, this edition of *Youxue* has more space between its lines and in the margins, which makes the overall layout look clearer. Readers could easily study the main text with its annotations and even make notes on the margins or between the lines. In addition to the content, the layout itself helped make it an effectively designed textbook for young students.

Youxue in addition provided an appendix on history that was placed directly after the last of Cheng's thirty-three chapters. The appendix can be divided into two parts. The first consists of four songs: "Song of Dynastic Successions" 歷代世統歌, "Song of Dynastic Names" 歷代國號歌, "Song of Successions of Our Dynasty" 昭代世統歌, and "Song of the Titles of the Emperors of Our Dynasty" 昭代徽號歌. The second part begins with a "Chart of Dynastic Successions" 歷代帝王傳授圖. After the chart, there is a list of emperors' titles by dynasty with a brief explanation at the end of each dynasty. Important events (or stories) concerning some of the emperors are attached in the upper register. This ends with a list of imperial titles, personal names, and reign-periods of "Our dynasty."

A short explanation for the presence of this two-part appendix is provided at the end of the table of contents: "Dynastic successions

and reign names are also an essential part of childhood education, so these songs and charts have been appended to the end.” Whether the appendix was added by Cheng, or by the publisher, or the editor (the “Bamboo Slip Studio”) is unknown. But it continued to be included in later editions, probably for its usefulness as a teaching aid. The last couplets of “Song of Successions in Our Dynasty” are “The Tianqi Emperor passed away in his seventh year of the reign; the Chongzhen Emperor was enthroned and his reign will last ten thousand years”; and at the end of “The Names of the Emperors of Our Dynasty” 昭代聖諱 the years of the Ming dynasty are counted from the first year of the Hongwu 洪武 reign to the last year of the Tianqi 天啓 reign, just before the Chongzhen emperor took the throne. This means that the appendix was compiled during the Chongzhen reign, the last reign-period of the Ming, since expressions venerating the Ming dynasty and its emperors were not amended, the overall edition was also probably a Ming-era product. If true, it would make the copy in question (that housed in Japan) the only extant Ming edition of *Youxue*.

The Suzhou Edition

Besides the above late-Ming edition, there is another early one held in Japan.²² The title page names it *Yuanben biandu Sizhi tang Youxue xuzhi zhijie* 原本便讀四知堂幼學須知直解 (*Original Edition of “Necessary Knowledge for Young Students”; [Made] Easy to Read by the Studio of the Four Knowings*), while the title printed at the beginning of each volume is *Youxue xuzhi biandu gushi* 幼學須知便讀書故事, which is the same as that of the late-Ming edition discussed above.²³ The indications “proofread and compiled by Xichang Cheng Dengji 西昌程登吉較著” and “distributed by Shulin Liu Ziwen 書林劉子文發兌” are also printed at the beginning of each volume, indicating that it was sold by a Jianyang publisher.²⁴ However, the title page states that this particular print run was “printed by Jinchang Yang Ruiqing 金閭楊瑞卿梓行.” *Sizhi tang* (Studio of the Four Knowings), which is stated to be the publisher on the title page, was a common name for studios owned by people surnamed Yang,²⁵ indicating thus that Yang Ruiqing might have had his own book busi-

²² The copy I consulted is held at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, Tokyo University. Another copy of the edn. is held in Kaminoyama 上山 City Library, Japan. See Isobe Akira 磯部彰, *Kaminoyama-han meishinkan bunko mokuroku to kenkyu* 上山藩明新館文庫目録と研究 (Sendai: Center for Northeast Asia Studies, Tohoku University, 2014), p. 124.

²³ See n. 14, above.

²⁴ The Liu family was one of the two important families of publishers in Jianyang, see Xie and Li, *Fujian gudai keshu*, pp. 262–84.

²⁵ The story of the “four knowings 四知” originated with Yang Zhen 楊震 (54–124 AD), a famous official of the Han.

ness. Jinchang was an abbreviation for the commercial area outside Jin Gate 金門 and Chang Gate 閘門 in Suzhou and is likely where Yang ran his business. In other words, the edition was originally sold in Jianyang, but this very copy was printed in Suzhou with a new title page. From these two copies, we know that *Youxue* was printed in Jianyang by at least two publishers (Yang Xiaomin and Liu Ziwen) and was subsequently reprinted in Suzhou.

This Suzhou edition does not include Cheng's preface, but its content and layout are almost identical to the edition printed by Yang Xiaomin. However, if we look more carefully, it is not difficult to observe that the quality of this Suzhou edition is lower than that of the Yang Xiaomin edition. Several characters in the annotations were printed incorrectly, which makes some sentences incomprehensible. The annotations in the upper register are not always directly above the sentences to which they refer, so readers must check nearby lines as well. Moreover, while the Yang Xiaomin edition uses regular script, which is similar to handwritten characters, and an artful semi-cursive script for Cheng's preface, the characters in the Suzhou edition were carved in craftsman's style, which was considered less artful but more cost effective.

Another difference between this edition and the Yang Xiaomin edition is its appendix. The Suzhou edition's appendix of historical information resembles that of the Yang Xiaomin edition, but was revised by Wu Xia 吳霞, probably a school teacher from Huizhou 徽州.²⁶ Some songs in this section are marked as being "corrected" or "expanded," probably by Wu Xia, and some corrections indicate that this book, or at least the corrections, were made after the fall of the Ming. For example, at the end of the list of the Ming emperors' reigns, a comment states that in the seventeenth year of the Chongzhen reign, the eunuch Cao 曹 opened the gates of Beijing for Li Zicheng 李自成 and that this was retribution for the Yongle emperor's earlier usurpation of the Ming throne.²⁷ However, this book did not alter the venerable tone used toward the Ming dynasty and did not mention anything related to the

²⁶ It states, "Compiled by Chichengzi, Wu Xia, Wenjufu, from Tiandu" (*Tiandu Chichengzi Wu Xia Wenju fu bianshu* 天都赤城子吳霞文舉父編述). Tiandu here might refer to Tiandu Mountain in She 歙 county, Huizhou. Huizhou was also a place famous for schoolteachers; many people from Huizhou went to Jiangnan to work.

²⁷ Cheng Dengji, *Yuanben biandu Sizhi tang Youxue xuzhi zhijie* 原本便讀四知堂幼學須知直解 (Suzhou: Sizhi tang, n.d.), j. 3, p. 3b, held at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, Tokyo University. In addition to updates to the section on history, the Suzhou edn. has other content that does not appear in the Yang Xiaomin edn., such as a song naming the disciples of Confucius and Mencius. Wu Xia also put different marks beside reign names, personal name, dynastic names, etc., so that readers could identify them more easily.

Manchus' new Qing regime. Therefore, we can infer that this edition was likely published during or right after the Ming-Qing transition.²⁸ It seems that the Suzhou publisher reprinted the edition previously printed in Jianyang, but carved at least some of the blocks, if not all of them, to produce at the beginning of the Qing a lower-quality edition. It used the edition from Liu Ziwen of Jianyang, which was an inferior reproduction of the edition from Yang Xiaomin.

The Kyoto Edition

In addition to our early-Qing Suzhou edition, there is yet another held in Japan that shares almost the same content and layout with the late-Ming Jianyang edition. This is *Youxue xuzhi bidu chengyu kao* 幼學須知必讀成語考 (*A Study of Necessary Idioms for Young Students*; hereafter referred to as *Chengyu kao*), with a second title, *Xinjuan xiangjie Qiu Qiongsan gushi bidu chengyu kao* 新鐫詳解丘瓊山故事必讀成語考 (*A Study of Qiu Qiongsan's Necessary Allusions and Idioms, Newly Carved and Extensively Annotated*), given at the beginning of each volume; it was printed in 1682 by a Kyoto publisher.²⁹ Although the title is different, the main text and the annotations are the same as Cheng's *Youxue*. Even though the main text was punctuated for Japanese readers by Nakajima Yoshikata 中島義方, the carver intentionally used the same layout as the late-Ming edition, including the positions of the characters in both the main text and the annotations. However, this edition does not include Cheng's preface or the appendices on Chinese history, and more importantly, it attributes its authorship to the famous Qiu Jun 丘濬 (1421–1495) instead of to Cheng Dengji.

Qiu was a prolific and influential Guangdong author of the mid-Ming. He came from the remote island of Hainan but became a high official and prominent scholar. His major work, *Daxue yanyi bu* 大學衍義補 (*Supplement to the Extended Meanings in the Great Learning*), which turned the *Great Learning* into a neo-Confucian guide to practical and military statecraft, earned the appreciation of the emperor, who even contributed a preface. A scholar of such greatness was apparently a more appealing author to be named on a book, than was any local teacher. Moreover, Qiu also compiled a guide of family ritual, which made him a reasonable choice of author for this textbook with its spe-

²⁸ While the catalogue of Tokyo University wrongly refers to this book as a Ming edition, Isobe Akira's 磯部彰 Kaminoyama City Library catalogue mentions it twice, once as an edn. dated to "Southern Ming/Qing," and another time as "carved in the Ming and printed in the Qing 明刻清刊本." See Isobe, *Kaminoyama-han meishinka*, pp. 84, 124.

²⁹ The blocks were carved by Mizutani Shigenobu 水谷重信 and the book published by Hangiya Kyūbei 板木屋九兵衛.

cial approach to teaching children within the family. To make *Youxue* a more desirable commodity and grant this textbook more authority, some editor or publisher must have changed the title and the author. In fact, this is not the only book falsely attributed to Qiu Jun: *Gushi diaolong* 故事雕龍, another collection of allusions, also claims Qiu Jun as its author.³⁰ Although *Gushi diaolong* is another thematic collection of allusions and idioms, its content is totally different from *Youxue*'s or *Chengyu kao*'s. It seems unlikely that a prominent scholar-official like Qiu Jun might have compiled two different collections of allusions; rather, this is likely the result of the publishers replacing the name of a less-known author with one of more fame to increase the authority of the publication, a very common practice at the time.

Chengyu kao, printed in Kyoto, claims that it was supplemented by Lu Yuanchang 盧元昌 (ca. 1620–1696) of Huating 華亭, today's Shanghai. Although not very well known to scholars now, Lu was very involved in the Jiangnan publishing business during the mid-seventeenth century. His most successful publication was *Tang-Song ba dajia wenxuan* 唐宋八大家文選 (*Selected Essays from the Eight Great Authors of the Tang and Song*), published in 1658. In the preface he states that from 1648 to 1658 he published ten collections of selected essays, primarily for civil examination preparation. In 1689 he proudly stated, "In the past, all the collections of essays I compiled and annotated were reprinted by publishers near and far. After that, my selection of essays from the Eight Great Authors of the Tang and Song was also reprinted everywhere." After he lost his official degree because of a political incident, he concentrated on scholarly and literary works.³¹

Although the Kyoto edition of *Chengyu kao* claims to be supplemented by Lu, its content, including both main text and annotations, is the same as *Youxue*'s. There was no "supplementation"; on the contrary, the appendix was left out. Because he was quite an active compiler, Lu might have been the one who altered the title and the author attribution of *Youxue* in the mid-seventeenth century, when it was already in circulation in Jiangnan. Then, said edition could have been imported to Japan and reprinted by the Kyoto publisher by 1682. According to its preface and postscript, the Japanese publisher seemed to believe that the book was compiled by Qiu Jun and regarded it as a useful textbook for studying Chinese literary allusions. The fact that this *Chengyu kao*

³⁰ This book's earliest extant edition is a 1725 Japanese reprint. *Gushi diaolong*, in Nagasawa, *Hekeben*, vol. 4.

³¹ For Lu's career, see Fu Qiong 付瓊, *Qingdai Tang-Song ba da jia sanwen xuanben kaolu* 清代唐宋八大家散文選本考錄 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuaguan, 2016), pp. 39–43.

edition was subsequently reprinted several times in Korea and Japan displays the interconnectedness of book production in East Asia.

The extant editions dated to late-Ming Jianyang and early-Qing Suzhou and Kyoto prove that before Jiangxi governor Song Luo's promotion of the book during the 1680s, described in the gazetteer, Cheng's *Youxue* had been sold by Jianyang publishers as a textbook for young students in the early-seventeenth century, and circulated further throughout Jiangnan and Kyoto in the mid-seventeenth. Jianyang publishers added a historical appendix to expand its content, the Suzhou publisher made an edition of lower quality, and the Kyoto publisher printed a version in which both the title and the author's name had been swapped for another's. However, even though the production quality was sometimes lowered, perhaps to reduce costs, and special punctuations were added for readers who did not speak Chinese, in all of these editions Cheng's original text, annotations, and page layout remained mostly intact.

ANNOTATING A TEXTBOOK: THE LATE-SEVENTEENTH TO MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

From roughly the 1680s to around the 1750s, at least two new versions of *Youxue* appeared. These did not change Cheng's main text greatly, but his annotations and the book's appearance were substantially altered. No copies of these versions from this period have survived, but through various paratext found in nineteenth-century reprints, we can partially trace their histories.

Zhijie in Jiangxi

Up to the present, no copies of the edition that the 1871 Xinjian county gazetteer claimed was printed by the Jiangxi governor in the late 1680s have been found, though we do have another edition produced by Jiangxi locals in the late-seventeenth century, namely, *Youxue xuzhi zhijie* 幼學須知直解 (*Fully Annotated Necessary Knowledge for Young Students*; hereafter, *Zhijie*), which claims to have been supplemented by Wang Xiang 王相 (z. Jinsheng 晉升, from Linchuan 臨川), and annotated by Tang Liangyu 唐良瑜 (z. Jimei 季美), and Tang Lianghu 唐良瑚 (z. Zhenzhi 珍之, from Xichang). As its title suggests, this version is fully annotated, while the previous editions of *Youxue* were only partially and briefly annotated by Cheng Dengji himself. We know nothing about the Tang brothers except that they came from the same place

as Cheng Dengji; Wang Xiang, on the other hand, was an important figure in the publishing scene during this period.

Wang Xiang was an active editor of textbooks and reference books. His *Sanzi jing xungu* 三字經訓詁 (*Annotated Three-Character Classic*) was one of the most popular annotated versions of *Sanzi jing*, and his *Baijia xing kaolue* 百家姓考略, an annotated version of the *One Hundred Surnames*, also circulated widely. He selected and annotated poems from *Qianjia shi* 千家詩 (*Poems by a Thousand Authors*) in order to make a popular reader for elementary education: it is still reprinted today. He also annotated *Nü sishu* 女四書 (*The Four Books for Women*) for female students. Moreover, a manual of letter-writing that he edited, *Chidu yingming ji* 尺牘鳴鳴集 (*A Collection of Sincere Letters*), was included in the 1782 Qing court-sponsored *Complete Library of the Four Treasuries*.³²

Wang's productive career and his relationships with publishers have not been carefully examined, but Linchuan was in the same prefecture as Xuwan 潯灣, which was an important publishing center for popular books in Jiangxi. The 1831 Japanese reprint of his *Sanzi jing xungu* preserved his preface dated 1666, which makes it one of his earliest well-known works. His manual of letter-writing was compiled over forty years later, in 1709. This interval likely represents the span of his career, so we might deduce that his annotated *Zhijie* was compiled during this period.³³

The earliest extant copy of *Zhijie* was printed by the Zhihe Tang 致和堂 in Nanjing in 1818.³⁴ Other, later, nineteenth-century copies of *Zhijie* that we can examine include one with an anonymous prefaced dated *jiaxu* 甲戌, which per the calendric cycle could be 1814, 1754, or 1694. If the preface was written during Wang's productive period, then that would make it 1694. But in some copies, the "Song of the Titles of the Emperors in History" in the appendix ends with the Yongzheng emperor and "Long Live Our (Qianlong) Emperor." If the preface was written for this reprint, then the date could refer to 1754. In this relatively short preface, the author stated that *Youxue* had been in circulation for a long time. One day, he read this book with his child, and found that because the current copy had been made from over-reprinted edi-

³² Ji Yun 紀昀 et al., comps., *Siku quanshu zongmu* 四庫全書總目, j. 194, pp. 34b-35a.

³³ Wang Dan mentions an edn. of *Youxue xuzhi zhijie* with a 1674 preface that says that it was annotated by two teachers, published by Tang Zhesheng 湯哲生, and prefaced by Xiong Jing 熊京 (*h.* Yisheng 乙生, from Yunxi 雲溪) in 1674. However, I could not locate this edition; Wang did not provide any further bibliographical information; see Wang, "*Youxue qionglin* yanjiu," p. 3.

³⁴ Ibid.

tions, its quality had deteriorated. A textbook with bad printing would be harmful to young students, so he corrected and recut the woodblocks and printed a better edition. This narrative makes its author sound like an amateur and strays far from the professional tone of Wang Xiang's other extant prefaces. Therefore, the preface in question could have been written by the less-known Tang brothers, or some other person who reprinted it during the mid-eighteenth century.

Jujie in Jiangnan

There are more versions from this period. We have noted that the Jiangxi version was fully annotated; and there is another fully annotated version, this one titled *Youxue xuzhi jujie* 幼學須知句解 (*Necessary Knowledge for Young Students Annotated Sentence by Sentence*; hereafter, *Jujie*). The annotation was made by, once again, an author of minor reputation, Huang Wangruo 黃汪若 from Wuxi 無錫. However, all known copies were a certain Qian Yuanlong's 錢元龍 reprint of Huang's annotated edition, carrying a preface by Qian dated 1757. Qian was then in his sixties and must have read *Youxue* when he was young. When he went to his family school and looked over his grandson's textbooks, he met his old friend – *Youxue*. However, he found that the copy had been repeatedly reprinted and thus seriously deteriorated. Therefore, based on Huang's version, he reprinted it with his own corrections. In a separate preface written by Qian's friend, Fan Chengxuan 范承宣, an education official in Yangzhou, he stated that the *Youxue* version "compiled by Cheng Yunsheng and annotated by Huang Wangruo, had been in circulation for a long time and repeatedly reprinted."³⁵ Fan's words imply that, at least in the Yangzhou area, Huang's annotated version had widely circulated before the 1750s. In Qian's preface, he mentions Huang's annotations and states that he read the book when he was a child. If the edition that Qian read when he was a child was the one annotated by Huang, then Huang's annotated version could have been in circulation in the late-seventeenth century or the early-eighteenth century.

According to a biography of Qian written by one Jin Zhaoyan 金兆燕 (1719–1791),³⁶ when Jin was teaching in the prefectural academy in Yangzhou, Qian was a wealthy Yangzhou merchant who had given up the pursuit of a civil examination degree, and as he grew older became

³⁵ Cheng Dengji, *Youxue xuzhi jujie* 幼學須知直解 (Tongzhou 通州: Lunxiu tang 掄秀堂, 1883), preface; Wang, *Youxue qionglin yanjiu*, pp. 5–6.

³⁶ Jin is known for printing Wu Jingzhi's 吳敬梓 (1701–1754) posthumous novel, *Rulin waishi* 儒林外史 (*The Scholars*).

enthusiastic about editing. After his son died, he stayed at home and taught his grandsons, and he eventually annotated Cheng's *Youxue*.³⁷

During this period, it was common for wealthy Yangzhou merchants to engage in literary activities to enhance their reputations. That a local education official contributed a preface and another education official wrote his biography suggests that Qian was quite active in educational or literary circles in Yangzhou. In Jin's flattering biography, it is stated that Qian "annotated" *Youxue* and made the book more valuable. However, in their own prefaces, Qian and Fan emphasized not Qian's work in annotating, but in correcting and reprinting the text. And, even though Jin's biography included several legends associated with Qian, such as fighting a tiger when he was young and encountering a mysterious old man, he could not provide additional details about Qian's literary talent. Although Qian Yuanlong's name appeared much more often as annotator in nineteenth-century copies of *Jujie*, it is more likely that Qian simply reprinted this book, made it more widely available, and made minor corrections, while most of the annotations were likely already made by Huang Wangruo in the late-seventeenth century.

Making Annotations

Both fully-annotated versions, *Zhijie* and *Jujie*, were originally produced in the late-seventeenth century, one in Jiangxi and one in Jiangnan, and both were then reprinted again in their respective regions in the mid-eighteenth century. Annotating (including its many aspects – various comments, lexic clarification, cross-references, and background information, and so forth) was an important academic tradition, particularly in the study of the Confucian classics. In the original version of *Youxue*, Cheng annotated allusions and idioms in the main text; and since his annotations were for educational purposes, they were relatively short and simple. Moreover, he did not annotate each sentence. However, both *Jujie* and *Zhijie* contain longer annotations with more details, and, as Qian's preface suggests, their annotations were made to "seek explanations for each sentence and trace the source of each word."³⁸ Both annotations not only provided explanations, but also quotations from other authoritative texts. For example, Huang's annotation to the sentence about the toad in the moon, mentioned above, provides a quotation from Wang Chong's 王充 (27–ca. 100 AD) *Lunheng*

³⁷ Jin Zhaoyan, "Qian Shuzhai xiansheng zhuan" 錢恕齋先生傳, in idem, *Zongting guwen chao* 棕亭古文抄 (Zhenyun xuan 贈雲軒 edn., 1837), j. 2, pp. 6b-8b.

³⁸ Cheng, *Youxue xuzhi jujie*, preface, p. 1b.

論衡 (*Balanced Inquiries*). It briefly states the story of the mythical Houyi's wife, Chang'er's 嫦娥, stealing the elixir of immortality, escaping to the moon, and transforming into a toad.³⁹

Because of the relatively longer annotations, both versions used “inserted double-column annotations 雙行夾註.” In these cases, the annotations were printed in a smaller font and inserted in a two-column format between the main-text's sentences, so that the latter became visually interrupted by blocks of this small-character annotation.⁴⁰ The layout of many late-Ming editions of the Jianyang print-lineage seems to have been more suited to the less-experienced readers because the words are less crowded and the sentences are not broken by long annotations. On the other hand, the layout of the later editions, with their increased annotations, provides more authoritative data, thus a scholarly tone, which to some degree might have appealed less to the younger students (figure 2).

Annotating a textbook for children reflects a certain contemporary trend among scholars in which texts would be drawn from various sources to illustrate the origins of crucial sentences or words. Although seeking the origin of words was not a new practice, Wang Xiang's numerous editorial and commentarial works show the expansion of this method into primers and texts for elementary education. To him and his readers, even elementary texts like *Sanzi jing* and *Baijia xing* were worthy of scholarly input. Huang Wangruo's attempts to trace the origin of each sentence shows an evidential attitude toward textual materials that was coeval with the rise of “evidential learning 考證學” in antiquarian, historiographical, and scientific endeavors. Telling stories was not enough; their textual sources had to be given. Both transformations in the range and method of annotation correspond to the expansion of textual studies that were evidential, and which were in a time and environment of better access to texts, that is, helped by a huge increase in scholarly printed works that could be produced and distributed broadly and cheaply.

³⁹ Ibid., j. 1, p. 1b. Actually, this quote cannot be found in any version of *Lunheng* but only in *Huainanzi* 淮南子 and other ancient texts. This mistake was also made by many later authors, who attributed this quote to *Lunheng*. They could have been influenced by *Jujie* or inherited this mistake from the same source. Some modern versions of *Lunheng* have put this quote into an appendix as a “sentence from an uncertified source.” See Huang Hui 黃暉, ed., *Lunheng jaoshi* 論衡校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1990), p. 1214.

⁴⁰ For the significance of the annot. format, see Li Ren-Yuan, “Placing Texts on Chinese Pages: From Bamboo Slips to Printed Paper,” in Ku-ming (Kevin) Chang, Anthony Grafton and Glenn Most, eds., *Impagination: Layout and Materiality of Writing and Publication: Interdisciplinary Approaches from East and West* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), pp. 301–22.

The two annotated versions *Zhijie* and *Jujie* appear to have quickly replaced Cheng's original one. Post-1800 editions with only Cheng's annotations are nonetheless extant in Japan and Korea. There is no information available on how these two were circulated in China during the eighteenth century; up to the present, the copies we have are all reprints from the nineteenth century and later. However, as mentioned earlier, the prefaces to both versions share a similar rhetoric. They state that *Youxue* had been in circulation for a long time and that their authors found the quality of their son's or grandson's copies very poor due to repeated reprinting from exhausted wood blocks, and therefore decided to reprint the book with new and corrected blocks so that children would not be misled. According to their prefaces, the books were not reprinted for commercial purposes, but for a social good, namely, the education of children and adolescents. This fits very well with the common practice then among officials and gentry to use their own resources to disseminate useful textual materials, such as medical treatises or books on moral teaching to the community. The role played by the Jiangxi governor can also be placed in this category, as can the actions of Qian Yuanlong, a wealthy merchant. *Youxue*, now newly annotated, was regarded as a book now even more beneficial to children's literary education. It is likely that such patrons of useful publishing were seen by peers as cultural benefactors for their communities.

Despite the beneficial role played by private, non-commercial, charitable actions, they should not be given too much due. In fact, all of our extant copies with the above-mentioned prefaces were printed by commercial publishers. They kept them in their new editions for commercial purposes. Thus when wealthy merchants like Qian carved new, corrected blocks and produced better editions, their products in some cases were duplicated by commercial firms and sold on the market. Just as they continued to attribute the authorship of the book to Cheng Dengji, publishers also continued using Qian Yuanlong's name, as well as his preface, to demonstrate the edition's quality.

COMPILING AN ENCYCLOPEDIA: THE MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The numerous editions and reprints of *Youxue* before the mid-eighteenth century either expanded the annotations or, in the case of *Chengyu kao*, effaced the true authorship. In some editions, the order of chapters was altered, and some characters were changed, but generally there were no fundamental changes made to Cheng's main text. The

appendix of historical information, first added in the Jianyang editions, was often kept, though modified, in later editions. Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, several elements were added to new editions of Cheng's primer, which greatly changed its nature.

Qionglin in Sibao

In the history of our book, the most influential changes were made by publishers in Sibao 四堡 towards the end of the eighteenth century.⁴¹ Zou Shengmai 鄒聖脈 (1692–1762), a productive publisher there, oversaw the compilation of *Youxue gushi qionglin* with the help of his son, Zou Keting 鄒可庭 (also known as Tingyou 廷猷, 1715–1803), and Zou Keting's father-in-law, Xie Meilin 謝梅林.⁴² It is difficult to determine the earliest edition of this title because it was printed many times by different publishers and most of them did not list the date of printing. However, Zou Shengmai's preface from 1760 provides some information, as we see next.

The preface starts by explaining the new government policy of 1757 that made poetry-writing a subject in the civil examinations and warns that if one does not memorize classical texts in advance, he will not be familiar with enough material to write adequate poetry. There were several reference books devoted to literary texts of different classifications to help readers, but most contained too much content to be memorized in their entirety. Because of its brevity, Cheng Dengji's *Youxue* was thus "the food to nourish hungry literati, the boat to cross the river of the civil examinations." However, it did not contain enough content for literati preparing for the exams, and the faulty supplements and annotations added by previous publishers would destroy a beginner's taste. Therefore, Zou added new content to Cheng's main texts, removed poor annotations added by other publishers, and composed his own annotations. He claimed this book would be a "treasury" for its readers, so he named this book "*Qionglin*," which literally means "forest of precious jades."⁴³

Both Cheng in the early-seventeenth and Zou in the mid-eighteenth century stated that there were many reference books on the market already and that they wanted to make their books easy to understand and memorize. But the purposes they claimed for studying their texts were different. Cheng aimed to make a textbook that would give young

⁴¹ For the development of Sibao publishing industry, see Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*.

⁴² Xie Feijiang 謝飛江, *Sibao yizhen* 四堡遺珍 (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue, 2014), pp. 256–57.

⁴³ Zou Shengmai 鄒聖脈, "Xu 序," in *Youxue gushi qionglin*.

students enough literary knowledge to write essays for use in their social networks. Zou wished to give his readers adequate knowledge to compose literary works, particularly poems for the civil examinations. Zou based his *Qionglin* on Cheng's advanced primer and kept "*youxue*" in the title, but Zou's target readers were apparently not only young students or children. Zou's edition apparently targeted a much wider readership: anyone who was interested in taking civil examinations or needed to compose a text in daily life would find this book useful.

To broaden the range of content, Zou added new couplets to all the chapters. For example, there were originally thirty-two couplets in the chapter on astronomy to which Zou added twelve. Zou also used what was termed, above, "inserted double-column annotation" for his long annotations, which included both explanations and quotations. This method was like that of Wang Xiang and Huang Wangruo. In some chapters, he emphasized that the annotations contained information from specific sources and listed those sources at the beginning of the chapter. In the chapter on geography, he stated that he included content from *Zhifang jilue* 職方紀略 (*A Brief Record of Imperial Territories*), and in the chapter on civil officials he quoted *Wenwu shilu xuzhi* 文武食祿須知 (*Necessary Knowledge Concerning the Stipends of Civil and Military Officials*). Generally speaking, his annotations are more detailed, more practical, and broader. A young student under fifteen might have no need to learn the stipends paid to different ranks of officials, but the older, zealous, examinees would likely have been very interested.

Zou's preface from 1760 only states that he added new couplets and annotations to the main texts, but all the editions of *Qionglin* we have from the late-eighteenth century and later have much more content than Cheng's *Youxue*. Because most editions do not provide the date of printing or block-carving, we do not know whether Zou had already added this content in the edition he compiled by 1760. Some editions include "*Ji'ao shanfang shuke xinzeng* 寄傲山房塾課新增" in their titles, claiming that new couplets or content had been added from lessons held at the Mountain Lodge of Pride, Zou Shengmai's studio and family school; however, publishers might have independently altered the book's content under this claim. One approach to determining publication dates is to examine the section on history. Though not necessarily telling us when the blocks were carved or the book was printed, the last mentioned reign or emperor could indicate the time that this specific section was last modified.

Here, I take a certain *Xinzeng Youxue gushi qionglin* 新增幼學故事瓊林 as an example of the kind of content added to *Qionglin* (figure 3). This “xinzeng” (“newly increased”) edition claims that content was added from the lessons of the Mountain Lodge of Pride, and the section *Lidai diwang zongji* 歷代帝王總記 (*Record of Emperors of Successive Dynasties*) in this book stops at the beginning of the Qianlong reign. The title page claims the blocks were stored by the Yunhai tang 雲海堂 shop, and that its layout and content are similar to many other woodblock-printed editions of *Qionglin*.

The pages in this Yunhai tang edition, as in almost all editions of *Qionglin*, are split into two horizontal registers. The lower, broader register contains the main text and annotations, and the upper, narrower register contains content from other sources. The thirty-three chapters are divided into four volumes, with an additional “head volume (*shoujuan* 首卷)” coming before them. The head volume is split into two registers, and the bottom register has two parts as well. The first part includes five illustrations: a celestial chart, a map, a diagram of the Luo River, a diagram of the Yellow River, and outlines of the shapes of the Five Sacred Mountains. The second part of the bottom register provides sample ceremonial texts: five for coming-of-age ceremonies, ten for weddings, fifteen for funerals, and thirty-seven for other ceremonies. The upper register contains a collection of eulogies for various occasions and a collection of idioms used in various ritual texts.

In the remaining four chapters, Cheng’s *Youxue* and Zou’s annotations are in the lower registers. The upper register of the first chapter contains the above-mentioned *Lidai diwang zongji* and also *Liubu liyan* 六部律眼 (*Legal Terms of the Six Ministries*)—a short dictionary of legal terms divided by the six parts of the legal code. The upper register of the second chapter contains *Jiaojie chenghu* 交接稱呼, a manual of social relationships with detailed explanations of how to address others according to mutual relationships and social status. The upper register of the third volume contains *Wulei bieming* 物類別名, a dictionary of things and their various names in twelve categories, and *Yingchou jiahua* 應酬佳話, a list of vocabulary used in correspondences and social exchange. The upper register of the fourth contains *Wanglai chidu* 往來尺牘, a manual of letter-writing with examples split into fourteen types. All these newly added materials make *Qionglin* a very practical and comprehensive writing aid, rather than just a young student’s primer.

An advertisement was printed on the title page in some editions summarizing these changes:⁴⁴

This book has been widely circulated for a long time. Not only do the literati need it; farmers, workers, and merchants also like to read it. In addition to adding more allusions, this edition also includes *Record of the Emperors of Each Dynasty*, *Legal Terms of the Six Ministries* ... for a total of ten kinds of new material. It covers numerous areas of knowledge and the information contained is comprehensive. Therefore, this book can be regarded as the “*Complete Book for Social Exchanges*” (*choushi quanshu* 酬世全書).

As Sibao publishers, Zou Shengmai and his son possessed abundant resources that allowed them to turn this textbook into a multi-purpose manual. Zou Shengmai had been involved in editing various books, including several *beizhi* 備旨 (full purport) for the Five Classics, which were reference books to Confucian classics for students and examinees. These books were also labeled as “*Ji’ao shanfang shuke*,” lessons from the Zou’s family school, on the title page, which seems to have been a brand for Zou Shengmai’s publications.⁴⁵ In addition to his son, Xie Meilin, Zou Keting’s father-in-law, also participated in several of the Zou family’s publishing projects. His name appears frequently as a col-lator in books edited by Zou Shengmai, and he edited Zou Shengmai’s collection of essays and poems after Zou Shengmai passed away.⁴⁶ After the success of *Qionglin*, through the work of Zou Keting and Xie Meiling, Zou Shengmai posthumously published another textbook, *Jianshi qionglin* 鑑史瓊林 (*Treasury of Histories*), using the same term “*qionglin*” in the title. *Jianshi qionglin*, with a preface dated 1776, consists of dynastic histories written in rhyming couplets with annotations and is similar to Cheng’s *Youxue* in its format. The pages were divided into two horizontal registers: the lower register contained the main texts and the upper register contained entries from *Dushu jianyao* 讀書簡要 (*Brief Guide for Study*) and *Gujin zhangzhe lu* 古今長者錄 (*Records of Respectable Figures from Ancient Times to the Present*). The preface claimed that Zou Shengmai used this book in his family school, claiming a niche in family education for this new textbook.⁴⁷

In addition to textbooks, the Zou family also published manuals and household encyclopedias. In 1771, Zou Shengmai’s son, Zou

⁴⁴ Cheng, *Xinzheng youxue gushi qionglin* (Yunhai tang edn., n.d.), cover.

⁴⁵ Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, pp. 388–90.

⁴⁶ Xie, *Sibao yizhen*, p. 257. Xie Meilin’s *hao*, Yanyong 硯備, “Inkstone Servant,” reveals him as the editor of this work.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 128–30. One reviewer informs me that held at the Harvard-Yenching Library

Keting, and his grandson, Zou Jingyang 鄒景揚 (1744–1809), together compiled *Choushi jinnang* 酬世錦囊 (*Precious Guide to Social Exchange*), which was another bestseller published in Sibao. This multi-volume collection included instructions for various ceremonies and sample texts for various social exchanges.⁴⁸ Being experienced in both editing and promoting popular publications, the access that the Zou family had to various kinds of texts allowed them to make *Qionglin* a cross-genre bestseller: it could act as an advanced primer needed by every young student, as well as a practical manual that held value for every aspiring literary person.

Other Encyclopedic-Style Editions from Sibao and Xuwan

Qionglin was not only reprinted, its form, too, was imitated by other publishers. After *Qionglin*, there were several other new encyclopedic editions of *Youxue* published from roughly 1750 to 1850. These followed the model of *Qionglin*, keeping Cheng's main texts in the lower register and placing various other materials in the upper ones.

Youxue gushi qunfang 幼學故事群芳 (*Garden of Allusions for Young Students*; hereafter, *Qunfang*) appeared several years after *Qionglin*. According to its preface, this edition was supplemented in 1778 by Zhou Dayong 周達用 from Tingzhou 汀州, whose publishing studio was named Yitao shushi 亦陶書室. Nothing is known of Zhou Dayong and his studio, but the book is similar in its format and content to the Zou family's *Qionglin*. The pages of *Qunfang* are also divided into two horizontal registers. *Qunfang*'s annotations to Cheng's original text are similar to *Qionglin*'s, though comparatively simpler. Zhou Dayong also added new couplets to every chapter as had Zou Shengmai. *Qunfang*'s new contents largely overlap with the content added in *Qionglin*, though *Qunfang* does not include the dictionary of legal terms, but instead has detailed ex-

is a 1743 edition of *Gujin zhangzhe lu* printed together with *Dushu jianyao* and *Bichou* 筆疇. Fortunately for my research, this was digitalized by the Harvard-Yenching Library. The same edition was also included in *Siku cunmu congshu* 四庫存目叢書, but the volume of *Dushu jianyao* and *Bichou* were excluded. This 1743 edition was printed by Zeng Zhou 曾洲 (1677–1758), who was a famous teacher in Ningdu 寧都 (southeast Jiangxi). According to the preface, he obtained a copy of *Gujin zhangzhe lu* from his uncle, who bought it in the market. This copy was commented by Peng Shiwang 彭士望 (1610–1683), who was a famous scholar and one of nine so-called hermits of Ningdu during the Ming-Qing transition. He admired the book and printed it together with *Bichou* (also commented by Peng) and *Dushu jianyao*. The geographical proximity between Ningdu and Sibao and the fact that *Gujin zhangzhe lu* and *Dushu jianyao* had been printed together offer a hint at how the Zou family compiled *Jianshi qionglin*.

⁴⁸ For texts edited by Zou Shengmai and his descendants, see Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, pp. 311–12. For *Choushi jinnang*, see *ibid.*, pp. 412–16, and Yang Hua 楊華, “*Choushi jinnang* yu minjian riyong lishu” “酬世錦囊”與民間日用禮書, *Zhongguo chubanshi yanjiu* 中國出版史研究 4 (2016), pp. 90–99.

planations of official ranks and a section of sample contracts and announcements. The structure of *Qunfang*'s preface is very similar to that of *Qionglin*: both use similar rhetoric and mention the policy that made poetry-writing a subject in the civil examinations. It was very common for publishers to reprint books without paying anything to the original publisher, but Zhou Dayong's Yitao shushi decided to publish a new version of *Qionglin* under its own name. This edition was popular and reprinted several times, mostly in Fujian during the nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century, Cheng's original texts and Zhou Dayong's supplements and annotations were printed in Japan with the title *Yasu gushi duben* 雅俗故事讀本, but this edition does not include the new knowledge added in *Qunfang*.⁴⁹

Youxue gushi zhuji 幼學故事珠璣 (*A Gem of Allusions for Young Students*; hereafter, *Zhuji*) was another popular encyclopedic version. According to the title pages of some *Zhuji* editions, *Zhuji* was annotated by Wu Jie 吳傑 from Yunlin 雲林. The preface printed in all the editions of *Zhuji* was written by Zhou Songling 周松齡, courtesy name Xipeng 希朋, in his Yunlin studio in 1778 or 1820.⁵⁰ In the preface, Zhou called Wu his friend, and attached his name to Xiugu 繡谷. Xiugu and Yunlin were in Xuwan, the important Jiangxi publishing place as mentioned, above. There is one more clue that shows that *Zhuji* was indeed published in Xuwan. An edition of *Zhuji*, collated by Zhou Jiayan 周嘉彥, claims to be "proofread by Lingde tang 令德堂" in its title. Lingde tang was a studio name used by the Zhou family, an important family of publishers in Xuwan, since the eighteenth century. It is possible that Wu Jie, called "Master Wu" in the preface, was hired by Zhou Songling to annotate Cheng's *Youxue xuzhi*.⁵¹

The reason for this new version, as given in the preface is the same as that for *Qionglin* and *Qunfang*: new requirements for poetry in the civil examinations meant that a succinct manual of literary allusions

⁴⁹ *Yasu gushi duben* 雅俗故事讀本, in *Hekeben leisu jicheng*, vol. 4.

⁵⁰ In some editions of *Zhuji*, the preface is dated 1778, and in others the date for the same preface is 1820. I do not have the evidence to determine which is correct.

⁵¹ For Xuwan publishers, see Mao Jing 毛靜, *Zaoli langhuan: Xuwan shufang banke tulu* 藻麗鄉媛, 濤灣書坊版刻圖錄 (Nanchang: Jiangxi gaoxiao, 2018). Wang Dan mistakes "Xiugu" for Wu Jie's courtesy name and believes he is a different Wu active during the Kangxi reign. Because of this, she wrongly claims *Zhuji* was compiled in the 17th c. Since the preface states that material was added in the upper register, she argues that prior to *Qionglin*, new content had been added to *Youxue* in *Zhuji* with its two-register layout. However, in the 1820 (or 1778) preface, the author, Zhou Songling, states that Master Wu was his friend, so Master Wu could not have been alive during the 17th c., and *Zhuji* could not be the first version of *Youxue* to add new contents and use the two-register layout. See Wang, "*Youxue qionglin* yanjiu," pp. 14–16.

was needed. However, while the prefaces to *Qionglin* and *Qunfang* only mention their publishers' efforts to supplement and annotate Cheng's original texts, *Zhuji*'s preface also states, "[the compiler Mr. Wu] also added the upper register, contributing example letters, ritual texts, couplets, seasonal terms and content about history, family names, mathematics, vocabulary, and social correspondences, for a total of almost one hundred items that are required in daily life, especially in social exchanges."⁵² This declares as well another purpose of the book – to be a reference tool for daily life, something only implied in previous editions. Even though Cheng's original texts in the lower register were not expanded in this version, the scope of information in the upper register is broader and more practical than in other versions.

Judging by both preface and title page, *Zhuji* was compiled in Xuwan, Jiangxi, and probably inspired by the editions made in Sibao. But in yet another *Zhuji* edition, one printed by a firm called Dacheng tang 大成堂, the preface and title page as expected indicate Xuwan as place of publication, but the annotator is Ma Hongsi 馬閔肆 from Tingzhou (fl. late-eighteenth century), the prefecture where Sibao was situated. Ma's name appears again at the end of the upper register as the editor of the new contents in the supper register. We should consider that he was a family member of the Mas who were crucial in the Sibao publishing trade. Finally, in addition to *Zhuji*, Ma also compiled *Qimeng quanjing* 啓蒙全鏡 (*Complete Mirror of Enlightenment*), a textbook for young students, and *Shixue huidian zhushi* 詩學彙典注釋 (*Annotated Encyclopedia of Poetry*), a literary reference book with a preface dated 1799.⁵³ These titles indicate Ma's wide experience in compiling similar reference books. If he had participated in compiling one edition of *Zhuji* in the late-eighteenth century, then Zhou Songling's preface, mentioned earlier, was probably written in 1778, which made the publication of *Zhuji* occur eighteen years after *Qionglin*.

The Ma family in Sibao was also involved in the production of various versions of *Youxue*. *Youxue gushi huilan* 幼學故事匯覽 (*Collected Reflections on Allusions for Young Students*), prefaced by Wu Maolin 吳茂林 in 1820, was edited by Ma Qiu 馬虬 and published by Juwen tang 聚文堂. This version is similar to other encyclopedic editions, but it includes *Zazi bianlan* 雜字便覽 in its upper section, which is an elementary primer with many illustrations suitable for younger students.⁵⁴

⁵² Cheng Dengji, *Xinding Youxue gushi zhuji* (Xuwan 潯灣: Dacheng tang 大成堂, n.d.), preface, p. 2a.

⁵³ For *Qimeng quanjing*, see Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, appendix G. A copy of *Shixue huidian zhushi* is held in the Library of Congress.

⁵⁴ Xie, *Sibao yizhen*, pp. 132–33.

The Zous and the Mas were the two families that ran the publishing business in Sibao. However, unlike the editions published by the Zou family, those published by the Ma family frequently appear with changed title or publication information. For example, another edition of *Huilan* does not mention Ma Qiu but names Ma Rongguang 馬容光 as the collator. An edition published by Wanjuan lou 萬卷樓 has the same preface by Wu Maolin and the same editor, Ma Qiu, but its title is *Youxue gushi jujin* 幼學故事聚錦.⁵⁵ Moreover, recently, a *Youxue gushi cuijin* 幼學故事粹錦 was discovered in Sibao. This edition was collated by Ma Hongsi, who was named as the annotator of an edition of *Zhuji* mentioned above, and corrected by Longwen tang 龍文堂. Its blocks were held by Jinji tang 經濟堂, and the book was sold by Yunjin tang 蘊經堂 in Chaozhou 潮州.⁵⁶

These various versions by the Ma family, with different titles edited by Ma Qiu or Ma Hongsi (perhaps the same person), were not as popular as the Zou family's *Qionglin* or even *Qunfang*, which was also likely published in the Sibao area. However, the Ma family kept publishing new editions, sometimes with new titles, in the nineteenth century. And, in the case of *Zhuji*, it seems that the Sibao publishers had some connection with publishers in Xuwan. This *Zhuji* could have been edited by the Xuwan publishers and then reprinted in Sibao or edited by the Sibao publishers and then printed in Xuwan. Such connections between publishers in the southeastern mountains merit further research.

Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, Cheng's advanced primer came to belong to a genre that combined textbook, writing aid, and household encyclopedia. This trend started with the Sibao publishers, who were adept at creating new products with existing resources and experienced in editing popular books for the mass market. While publishers before the mid-eighteenth century focused on making annotations, the Sibao publishers made this title a popular commodity by adding content that potential readers might find valuable. The fact that "poetry-writing" became an examination subject seems to be a sound reason for these additions. Numerous future examinees needed to adjust the direction of their studies. In addition to familiarity with the Confucian classics, they needed to develop the ability to write poetry embellished with literary allusions. In a society where literacy was not

⁵⁵ Yang, "Liuchuan Taiwan," pp. 92–93.

⁵⁶ Wu Dexiang 吳德祥, "Sibao zhen you faxian yizhong Qingdai Sibao canding de *Youxue qionglin banben*" 四堡鎮又發現一種清代四堡參訂的《幼學瓊林》版本, "People's Government of Liancheng County, January 2, 2020, <http://www.fjlylc.gov.cn/xwzx/bdyw/xzdt/202001/t20200102_1632426.htm> (accessed May 13th, 2021).

spread out widely, said examinees were in fact important consumers, and materials for civil examinations were always bestsellers.

At the same time, the development of the Sibao and other low-end publishing industries also helped to drive a bookselling trend towards this new genre. In the mid-eighteenth century, the Sibao publishers, sometimes with the help of their relatives, were equipped to create their own market-oriented products. After *Qionglin*'s success, imitators could soon publish their own encyclopedic editions and explore this new market.

THE SPREAD OF POPULAR BOOKS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Throughout the nineteenth century, both the two annotated versions *Zhijie* and *Fujie*, and the encyclopedic versions, such as *Qionglin* and *Qunfang*, were repeatedly reprinted by commercial publishers. The numerous extant copies published in different places suggest a rise of regional publishing centers in the nineteenth century. One might argue that books printed in this period of time had a larger chance to survive to the present than did books printed in previous periods. However, their quantity and their extensive distribution still imply a fundamental change. In the past, scholars did not grant enough attention to the publication of books printed for the mass market and the temporal-spatial transformations in the latter's publication and distribution throughout China. Using extant copies and local documents, Cynthia Brokaw has explored the emergence of Sibao publishers since the mid-eighteenth century.⁵⁷ In addition to this publisher-centered approach, the numerous copies of *Youxue* and its variations provide another title-centered approach to analyze the publishing industry's development in the nineteenth century.

However, a critical problem is that many woodblock-printed editions did not list publishing dates or locations. A "house," "studio" or person listed in a book could be its compiler, block carver, block holder, printer, or retailer. Many publishers and studios of different locations might share the same name, and sometimes multiple studios belonged to different branches of the same family business. Recently, many catalogues and bibliographies have been published or digitized, which is helpful for collecting information on old books, especially once-neglected cheap editions. But these aids often do not reliably dif-

⁵⁷ Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*.

ferentiate the date of the preface, the date of printing, and other information, so the dates and locations they provide are not always reliable. Although extant copies of various editions from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are numerous, because of a lack of precise information it is still difficult to make quantitative comparisons among them. Nevertheless, we can observe general trends based on those copies for which there does exist a bit of publication information.⁵⁸

Distribution of Annotated Editions

Zhijie and *Fujie* were widely printed in China throughout the 1800s. Jiangxi publishers had a historical connection with Nanjing. Many Nanjing publishers came from Jiangxi, most from Xuwan, which could be one reason that *Zhijie*, which was compiled, annotated, and promoted by publishers from Jiangxi, was printed by several publishers in Nanjing.

From among all extant copies, we can list some of the *Zhijie* publishers as follows:

1. Nanjing, 1818 (earliest extant edn.) (Zhihe tang)
2. Nanjing, date not determined (Huaide tang 懷德堂)
3. Perhaps Fujian or Zhejiang, in 1863 (Linglan tang 靈蘭堂)
4. Fuzhou 福州, 1873 (Jixin tang 集新堂)
5. Weifang 濰坊, Shandong (northeast China), 1895 (Baoshu tang 寶書堂)
6. Weifang, 1897 (Chengwenxin 成文信)

In the above nineteenth-century editions of *Zhijie*, its seventeenth-century annotator, Wang Xiang, was not always mentioned, but Tang Liangyu (mentioned earlier), possibly its eighteenth-century collator, was always listed. This suggests that to publishers of the 1800s it was Tang who brought *Zhijie* into wide circulation. In all these editions, apart from the songs of dynastic names and the lists of emperors' names, no new content was added.

Turning to *Fujie*, it was reprinted more times than *Zhijie* and probably had a different pattern of circulation. Annotated by a Wuxi annotator and reprinted in Yangzhou in the mid-eighteenth century, *Fujie* was printed in at least these following locales:

⁵⁸ The publication records here were collected from library catalogues and used-book websites. I only used information from used-book websites when the sellers uploaded clear pictures of books from which I could glean publication information. The descriptions provided by sellers were not used in this paper. Sometimes information from pictures of books is more accurate and reliable than library catalogues.

1. Wuxi (Sijin tang 賜錦堂 in 1802)
2. Yangzhou (Weiyang xuehai tang 維揚學海堂 in 1846, and Hailing huaide tang 海陵懷德堂)
3. Suzhou (Tongshi shanfang 桐石山房 in 1847, Luyin tang 綠蔭堂 in 1862, Saoye shanfang 掃葉山房 in 1863, and Wenrui lou 文瑞樓 in 1876)
4. Shanghai (Zhoupu baosu tang 周浦寶素堂 in 1861, Wenzheng tang 文正堂 in 1868, and Jiangzuo shulin 江左書林 in 1886)
5. Nanjing (Baowen shuju 寶文書局 in 1867, Li Guangming zhuang 李光明莊 in 1890, and Baoshan tang 寶善堂 in 1895)
6. Rugao 如皋 (Yilin tang 義林堂 in 1871)
7. Huzhou 湖州 (Wenguang zhai 文光齋 in 1879)
8. Tongzhou 通州 (Lunxiu tang 掄秀堂 in 1883 and Youde 酉德 in 1886)⁵⁹
9. Changshu 常熟 (Zhibuzu zhai 知不足齋 in 1891)
10. Changzhou 常州 (Jinsheng shanfang 晉升山房 in 1906 and Wenhui tang 文會堂)
11. Zhenjiang 鎮江 (Wencheng tang 文成堂 in 1918 and Wuzhou shuju 五洲書局 in 1925)

Although we do not know the locations of some of the publishers, the locations we do know include almost every large town and city in Jiangnan. In cities with flourishing publishing businesses, such as Suzhou, Shanghai, and Nanjing, *Jujie* was printed by more than one publisher. Yangzhou was also an important publishing center. The copy published there by Weiyang xuehai tang in 1846 (above) used blocks from two other publishers, Tongwen tang 同文堂 and Hengyou tang 恆有堂, which had both previously printed *Jujie* under their own names. Some larger publishers, such as Saoye shanfang in Suzhou, reprinted *Jujie* several times (refer above), and different copies were printed at different times with different blocks.⁶⁰

Jujie was not only printed in the Jiangnan area. Following the route of the Grand Canal, it was printed in 1883 by Yuan Dechang ji 元德昌記 in Dongchang 東昌, a publishing center in western Shandong, and in Tianjin by Wenhuan tang 文煥堂 in 1871. In Beijing, at least three publishers (Zhonggu zhai 中古齋, Longfu si baoshu tang 隆福寺寶書堂, and an anonymous “ben tang” 本堂) printed *Jujie* during the 1870s. Even

⁵⁹ There were two Tongzhou during the Qing. So far, I am not sure whether these two publishers were in south Tongzhou 南通州, which is in the Jiangnan area, or in north Tongzhou 北通州, on the route to and not far from Beijing.

⁶⁰ Many Jiangnan copies were printed in the late 1800s. This could have been due to the Taiping Rebellion, which perhaps destroyed many copies printed in earlier periods in this region.

though the records of publication here are far from complete, they still show that *Fujie* circulated widely in Jiangnan and northern China.

In these editions of *Fujie*, Huang Wangruo's name was rarely mentioned, but Qian Yuanlong's name was stated in almost every copy. These mid-eighteenth-century collators and publishers were the key to the transmission of *Fujie*. As with *Zhijie*, the publishers mentioned did not add new content to their reprints of *Fujie*. The publishers published both works as textbooks, not encyclopedias.

While *Fujie* and *Zhijie* were circulated in many parts of China, some other editions were concentrated in specific regions. *Chengyu kao* was almost exclusively printed in Guangzhou and Foshan from about 1800 to the early 1900s. It was published by at least the following shops:

Juxian tang 聚賢堂

Wuyun lou 五雲樓

Weijing tang 維經堂

Linshu ge 麟書閣

Zuijing tang 醉經堂

Wugui tang 五桂堂

Hanbao lou 翰寶樓;

All the above in Guangzhou, and below, all in Foshan 佛山,

Gaowen tang 高文堂

Zheng tongwen shuju 正同文書局

Wenguang lou 文光樓

Yingwen tang 英文堂

Hanxuan lou 翰選樓.

Some publishers noted that their blocks were carved by Feng Jishan 馮繼善 in Magang 馬岡, Shunde 順德. Feng also printed many other titles for publishers. "Publishers and retailers in the cities; carvers and printers in nearby towns" seems to have been the norm during this period. Magang became a center of block-carving during the nineteenth century. An 1853 gazetteer claims that in Magang, even women participated in block carving. According to this gazetteer, the blocks carved in Magang were not only made for publishers in Guangzhou and Foshan. When selling books in Guangzhou, Suzhou merchants would order blocks for popular books from Magang and take them back to Suzhou for printing there.⁶¹ Developments in transportation and interregional

⁶¹ Guo Rucheng 郭汝誠, comp., *Xianfeng Shunde xianzhi* 咸豐順德縣志 (rpt. Guangdong sheng difang shizhi bangong shi 廣東省地方志辦公室, ed., *Guangdong lidai difang zhi jicheng: Guangzhou fu bu* 廣東歷代地方志集成, 廣州府部 (Guangzhou: Lingnan meishu chubanshe, 2007), j. 3, p. 50a. For Magang and the female carvers there, see Huang Guosheng 黃國聲, "Guangzhou Magang nüzi keshu kaosuo" 廣州馬岡女子刻書考索, *Wenxian* 文獻 76 (1998.2), pp. 266-70, and also Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, pp. 545-46.

trade supported the block-carving industry in a small town like this, located outside of the urban environment.

All the above editions attribute authorship of *Chengyu kao* to Qiu Jun, as discussed, above. The announcement “Neige Qiu Wenzhuang Gong yuanben 內閣邱文莊公原本” (“original version by Venerable Qiu Wenzhuang of the Grand Secretariat”) was printed in every edition as a claim to authority. None of these editions included annotations, whether by Cheng Dengji or later annotators. Some editions listed Lin Defang 林德芳 of Qingyuan 清遠, a county north of Guangzhou, as proofreader. The historical significance of Qiu Jun as one of earliest influential scholar-officials in the imperial court from the Guangdong area, as well as his prolific output, are likely why this region awarded him pseudo-authorship. He symbolized the Lingnan region’s cultural integration with the north. However, there is a missing link between this title’s circulation in Jiangnan and Kyoto in the seventeenth century and its later popularity in the Pearl River Delta in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. *Chengyu kao* might have circulated on a smaller scale in China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as Qiu’s fame faded out during the Qing, but in the nineteenth century, as the publishing business flourished in the Pearl River Delta, publishers from Guangzhou and Foshan decided to promote this version by using the name of a great person of their region instead of some unknown schoolteacher of the Ming.

Because of the popularity of and easy access to *Chengyu kao* in the Pearl River Delta, *Youxue* was noticed and ultimately translated as *A Manual of Chinese Quotations* in 1893 by J. H. Stewart Lockhart, an English colonial official in Hong Kong.⁶² It was primarily translated from *Xinzeng Chengyu kao* 新增成語考, an edition published by Lianyuan ge 連元閣 in Foshan in 1887, which as expected attributed authorship to Qiu Jun.⁶³ According to Lockhart’s preface, he realized the importance of quotations and literary allusions in Chinese writing and therefore translated the book for foreigners learning Chinese, though he also hoped it would be useful for Chinese students learning English.⁶⁴ Lockhart’s *Manual* was published by Kelly & Walsh Limited, a publisher based in Shanghai with branches in Hong Kong, Yokohama, and Singapore. It was one of the companies that imported and printed English books for

⁶² *A Manual of Chinese Quotations, Being a Translation of the Ch’eng Yu K’ao, the Chinese Text, Notes, Explanations and an Index for Easy Reference*, trans. and comp. J. H. Stewart Lockhart (Hong Kong: Kelly & Walsh Limited, 1893).

⁶³ *Manual of Chinese Quotations*, p. ii.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

the growing community of Westerners in East Asia during the late-nineteenth century.⁶⁵

Most *Chengyu kao* editions published in Guangzhou and Foshan did not have annotations, thus too the situation of *Xinzeng Chengyu kao*, so Lockhart must have consulted some other edition with annotations for the “explanations” in his book. At the beginning of the book, he explains that this work was known under various titles. *Chengyu kao* was the most common, yet he mentioned other ones, such as *Youxue gushi qionglin* and *Gushi xunyuan* 故事尋源 (or *Youxue gushi xunyuan* 幼學故事尋源, *Seeking the Origins of Allusions for Young Students*, called *Xunyuan*, below). This shows that Lockhart knew that the main text of *Qionglin* and *Chengyu kao* were the same, and he might have consulted well-annotated editions of *Xunyuan* and *Qionglin*, while adopting *Chengyu kao*, more popular in the Pearl River Delta, as his main source. His introduction influenced some later scholars, who regarded him as an authoritative source and mistakenly attributed *Youxue* to Qiu Jun.

Youxue xuzhi xiangjie/zhujie 幼學須知詳解/註解 is another version of *Youxue* that was published only regionally, exclusively in Chaozhou 潮州. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it was printed by the shop Wanli chunji 萬利春記 in 1873, by Wu Ruiwen tang 吳瑞文堂 in 1883, Li Wanli hao 李萬利號 in 1912, Wangsheng ji 王生記 in 1913, and Chen Caili tang 陳財利堂, all publishers in the city of Chaozhou prefecture. The authorship of all these Chaozhou editions was attributed to Cheng Dengji. They all featured annotations but did not disclose an annotator’s name. Publishing shops like those just mentioned flourished in Chaozhou in the mid-nineteenth century, printing low-quality booklets, for example small printings of Chaozhou ballads, and their editions of *Youxue* were also poorly produced.

New Annotated Versions

In the nineteenth century, at least two new annotated versions of our Ming-era students’ book appeared: *Youxue gushi qiuyuan* 幼學故事求源 (*Searching for the Origins of Allusions for Young Students*, or *Qiuyuan*) and *Xunyuan*. Both followed the example set by *Zhijie* and *Fujie* but attempted to make the annotations even more comprehensive. *Qiuyuan*, prefaced in 1842, was annotated by Dong Cheng 董成. Its publication was closely connected to the scholarly community in Huizhou (southern Anhui province). Dong Cheng was from Wuyuan 婺源 and taught in the

⁶⁵ For the introduction of Kelly & Walsh, see Calvin H. T. Wong (黃海濤), “Qingmo Minchu Shanghai de xishudian Biefa yanghang” 清末民初上海的西書店別發洋行, *Wenshi zhishi* 文史知識 12 (2011.12), pp. 33-41.

capital of Huizhou prefecture. The blocks were carved by Tang Wenguang zhai 湯文光齋 in Huizhou, and on the first page of each volume, he listed the names of his seven students and his son as proofreaders. Many of them were active in local literary circles. It is possible that all eight proofread, but it seems more reasonable that the names were added to demonstrate Dong's capacity as teacher, as well as his broad social network.

In the preface, Dong said his grandfather and his father both used *Youxue* as a reference book for the writing of literary social exchanges and when he was young they made him study it. However, the annotations were terrible; the preface criticized the *Zhijie* annotations as being too simple and *Qionglin's* as having too many mistakes. Many annotations did not trace their references to the earliest source; they quoted improper materials; and altered original source texts. When young, Dong had already planned to make corrections. Then, as a schoolteacher he did, borrowing books from both the school and his friends for his corrections based on original sources that he could check into. Following the preface, he placed a long list of all the books he had consulted, and then in a section titled "Disclosing Mistakes from Old Annotations," he listed some of the most egregious errors in the annotations from *Zhijie* and *Qionglin*.

The book Dong Cheng compiled was no longer a textbook for children. Most sentences were followed by more than one quotation, and stated titles of the original sources. The quotations are so long that there are mostly only two sentences of main text on each page. The strong purpose of this new compilation, instead of being just for education, now was helping to demonstrate Dong's erudition. A biography listing the books compiled by the Dong family of Huizhou states that Dong Cheng also compiled *Dujing zhiyi* 讀經志疑 (*A Record of Doubts from Reading the Classics*), and he was described as "broadly read in the classics, histories, and all kinds of books, rigorous and self-restrained, and making his living by teaching young students."⁶⁶ Judging from *Qiuyuan* and the biographical materials, he was far from being a creative scholar or a famous author. Studying a children's textbook as a classic, displaying the long list of books he referenced, maintaining a critical attitude toward previous annotations, and then publishing his work together with the names of his students, might have been the way he attempted

⁶⁶ Hu Yunyu 胡蘊玉, "Dong Guixin zhuan" 董桂新傳, in Min Erchang 閔爾昌, ed., *Beizhuan ji bu* 碑傳集補 (Beijing: Yanjing daxue guoxue yanjiusuo 燕京大學國學研究所, 1923), j. 40, pp. 20b-21a.

to be recognized by his contemporaries and remembered by the world as a decent scholar.

Xunyuan, mentioned in Lockhart's translation, was a similar attempt, and it provides disproportionately long annotations with sources and quotations. In one edition, it provides extra materials at the end of chapters. Although *Xunyuan* was also widely distributed, its publication history is unclear. The annotator, Yang Yingxiang 楊應象, was from Chuhuan 楚濠, which is a literary name for Xiaogan 孝感 (in modern Hubei). Its earliest date of publication is unknown, its preface providing no date; but all extant copies seem to have been published in the nineteenth or twentieth century. Some copies attribute authorship to Cheng Dengji and some to Qiu Jun. Consider too that a bibliographic record of Chinese items held in Spain claims that a certain copy was based on Cheng Dengji's original text and augmented by Wang Xiang, who was associated with *Zhijie*.⁶⁷ Most copies whose publishing location can be determined were published in Guangdong and Fujian. The fact that many extant copies are in the libraries overseas implies that *Xunyuan* was once popular in eastern and southern coastal China, where Western traders did much business.⁶⁸

We now briefly turn to *Youxue xuzhi gushi daquan* 幼學須知故事大全 (*Complete Collection of Necessary Knowledge of Allusions for Young Students*), which is a somewhat mysterious annotated version whose publication history is unclear. Most of its title pages named the editors or annotators as Lei Zhaorui 雷兆瑞 (z. Ciwu 錫五), and his father Lei Shixing 雷時行 from Minning 閩寧. The earliest extant edition was printed in 1812. Minning probably refers to Ninghua 寧化, then a place not far from Sibao.⁶⁹ So far, I have found five editions bearing this title, but the information in them is inconsistent. Some editions claim that they were compiled by Cheng Dengji and edited by Qiu Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲 (1638–1717) from Ningpo, but a later edition claims, again per the older way pseudo-attribution, that it was compiled by Qiu Jun and annotated by Cheng Dengji. One edition claims it was supplemented by Lei Shixing and collated by Zhou Huaide 周懷德 from Xiugu, suggest-

⁶⁷ Inoue Taizan 井上泰山, "Supein kokuritsu toshokan shozō kanseki mokuroku (koten no bu)" スペイン国立図書館所蔵漢籍目録 (古典の部), *Kansai daigaku Chūgoku bungakukai kiyō* 関西大学中国文学会紀要 27 (2006), p. 19.

⁶⁸ Copies of *Xunyuan* are found in Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, the British Library, the Bodleian Library, Cornell University Library, John Rylands Library in Manchester and Thanh Hóa Provincial Library of Science in Vietnam.

⁶⁹ In the preface, Lei attached Cuihua 翠華 to his name, which is a literary name for the county seat of Ninghua.

ing that it might have been published by the Zhou family in Xuwan. But at the end of the volume, this same edition states that the book blocks were carved by the Yuansheng tang 元盛堂 of the Fu 傅 family in Jincheng 錦城, the literary name for big-city Chengdu. In the mid-eighteenth century, Fu Jinduo 傅金鐸 from Xuwan founded a publishing house in Chongqing, and his descendants and relatives opened branches in several different locations in Sichuan.⁷⁰ Yuansheng tang in Chengdu might be one of the branches established by Fu Jinduo's descendants. So, we can trace the journey quite possibly taken by the edition: it was first edited by the Lei family in Ninghua and printed by the Zhou family in Xuwan. Then it was reprinted by the Fu family in Chengdu, who originally from Xuwan, had once carved the blocks according to the Xuwan edition.

Distribution of Encyclopedic Editions

The editions mentioned above were newly annotated, but did not have much new content outside of the historical appendix. After Zou Shengmai of Sibao created the encyclopedic edition, *Qionglin*, many publishers in Sibao and Xuwan created their own encyclopedic editions, but Zou Shengmai's *Qionglin* remained the most popular.

Qionglin was quickly distributed throughout southern China by the Sibao publishers' retailing network.⁷¹ A 1779 official archive states that a man in Anfu 安福, Hunan, accused of and investigated for holding forbidden books, had a two-volume *Qionglin*, together with other books, such as *Wanbao quanshu* 萬寶全書. In the official report, *Qionglin* was described as "being the same as *Youxue xuzhi*, a collection of literary allusions by category, with illustrations about astrology and geography" and not at all a dangerous book. The man also wrote down the result of his divination practices on the margin of the pages, which were also regarded as harmless by the official.⁷² By today's standard, Anfu, situated in northern Hunan, is still quite remote and very distant from Sibao, but this man, who was an ordinary teacher and fortune-teller, was able to obtain the book, first published in 1760. The official's description matches the encyclopedic and illustrated *Qionglin* copies, and the way the man used the book, writing divination results on the pages,

⁷⁰ For Fu Jinduo and his career, see Xu Jin 許瑾, "Shancheng tang shufang keshu yanjiu" 善成堂書坊刻書研究, M.A. thesis (Qufu Normal University, 2020).

⁷¹ For the Sibao bookselling routes and branch shops, see Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, pp. 189–267.

⁷² "Chen Xisheng wugao Deng Hui shoucang jinshu an" 陳希聖誣告鄧謦收藏禁書案, in Shanghai shudian chubanshe 上海書店出版社, comp., *Qingdai wenzi yu dang* 清代文字獄檔 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuidan, 2007), pp. 236–38.

suggests that to him its publishing genre might not have been that of a children's primer.

Numerous extant copies and editions from the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries demonstrate the popularity of *Qionglin* and other encyclopedic editions. In an article, a Taiwanese book collector, Yang Yung-chih 楊永智, lists nine editions of woodblock-printed *Qionglin*, seven *Qunfang*, and some other editions he found.⁷³ Several were found in Taiwan, others in Fujian, and all printed in that period. The editions of *Qionglin* he listed all seem to have been published in Sibao, but the seven editions of *Qunfang* were published in Quanzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen, and Sibao in the 1880s and 1890s. In his collection, *Qunfang* seems to have been particularly popular in Taiwan and possibly coastal Fujian. All seven editions of *Qunfang* he collected were from Taiwan and were originally imported from coastal cities in Fujian. The master of Duowen zhai 多文齋 added a note after the preface of a 1893 edition of *Qunfang* printed in Xiamen:

There are several hundred households in our town. Except for some literati, farmers, and traveling merchants, all make their livings by carving printing blocks. This tradition began in the era of Zhu Xi during the Song. People who know this industry well regard us as the best carvers. If someone wishes to print Confucian classics, history, philosophy, or literature by famous authors, and wants their book to be known throughout the world, he will send it to our town to carve the blocks. Not only do publishers in Xiamen and Tong'an 同安 send books to us, publishers in Xinghua 興化, Yong'an 永安, Quanzhou, and Tingzhou all have their blocks, large or small, carved by us. However, each book might have more than ten thousand characters, so mistakes are hard to avoid. Our workshop was established during the Daoguang reign (1821–1850) long ago. In our workshop, each block is proofread carefully and examined by the master himself to ensure that there are no mistakes. We are also helped by the many who come to inspect our works to the point that not a single character is wrong. This is how we have earned our reputation.⁷⁴

This note might be exaggerating the reputation of the carvers, but it still reveals several aspects of publishing business in southeastern China during the nineteenth century. Like in Magang, a community specializing in block carving that emerged in Xiamen. Although the

⁷³ Yang, "Liuchuan Taiwan," pp. 87–93.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 90.

master attempted to trace their history to the Song,⁷⁵ his own business only began in the first half of the nineteenth century, which is likely the period that the publishing business started to flourish in this region, creating the need for block-carving. At least in the latter half of the nineteenth century, their block-carving industry served nearby publishers in Xiamen and Tong'an, as well as publishers in southern coastal Fujian (Quanzhou and Xinghua) and western inland Fujian (Yong'an and Tingzhou). The Jiulong River 九龍江, with its mouth near Xiamen, might have provided a trade route to transport blocks or books to and from western inland Fujian. While describing their clients, this note did not mention publishers in Fuzhou or publishers in Chaozhou. Both places, not far from Xiamen by the sea, also had flourishing publishing businesses during this period, but apparently their blocks were not carved here. There might have been other block-carving communities serving the publishers located in these two places.

The main purpose of the Duowen master's statement was to advertise that their team crafted blocks with no mistakes. It suggests that wrong characters and poor carving were serious problems, and because of this they had to distinguish themselves from other carvers by claiming that their blocks were inspected by the owner himself and that they hired people ("the many who come to inspect our works") to proofread. Although the note states that publishers sent them "Confucian classics, history, philosophy [and] literature by famous authors," this note was actually printed on the rather common *Qunfang*, which doesn't belong to any of these categories. In other words, although this note attempted to convey an image of a professional group with a long history of producing valuable books of the best quality, these carvers, in fact, might have mostly carved blocks for cheap and popular books, which likely made up the majority of demand from publishers during this period.

According to Yang's collection, it seems that *Qunfang* was popular along the southeastern coast and published in this region, but *Qionglin* was distributed more widely and printed in more places. Many copies of *Qionglin* were printed in or imported from Sibao in the nineteenth century, but some were printed in Xiamen and Fuzhou. Outside of Fujian, copies of *Qionglin* were found being printed in Guangzhou, Foshan, Suzhou, Shanghai, Nanjing, Zhenjiang, Ningbo, Tianjin, Beijing, Wuchang, Chengdu, and Chongqing. Almost all cities whose publishing industries reached a certain scale printed or published *Qionglin*.

⁷⁵ Zhu Xi was a clerk in Tong'an county. This local connection is likely the reason the preface stated that their block-carving tradition could be traced to "Zhu Xi's era."

Although *Qionglin* was circulated nationwide, it seems to have become distributed relatively more broadly in the south.

Qionglin editions were at the same time printed in less-known towns. For example, in Shaanxi, an edition was printed by Lailu tang 來鹿堂 in Ankang 安康. Lailu tang was founded by an Ankang local, Zhang Pengfei 張鵬飛 (1784–1857), who ran a publishing business in Chengdu from 1826 to 1837 and in Ankang from 1837 to 1856. After his death, his descendants took the business into the early-twentieth century. Their publications circulated in both Shaanxi and Sichuan.⁷⁶ In Anhui, an edition of *Qionglin* was printed by Sanyuan shuju 三元書局 at the “Fish Wharf” (Yubutou 魚埠頭) in Tunxi 屯溪, a commercial town in Huizhou. In Shandong, an edition of *Qionglin* was printed by Sanyi tang 三益堂 in Zhoucun 周村, a commercial town near Zishan 淄山. *Qionglin* was published in many areas of the Sichuan Basin: by Wenxin tang 文新堂 in Suining 遂寧,⁷⁷ Wenyuan ge 文淵閣 in Tongliang 銅梁, and another, using the blocks held in Shiqiao town 石橋鎮, was published by Quanshun tang 全順堂 in Jianyang 簡陽. Compared to the annotated editions and other encyclopedic editions, *Qionglin* was circulated more widely, and its production and distribution penetrated lower-tier towns and cities.

The far-reaching spread of *Qionglin* and other versions of *Youxue* was supported by the rise of local publishers all over China who rarely issued new titles, instead reprinting bestselling ones. Most simply duplicated existing books, changing only the name of the publisher on the blocks or carving a new title page. For example, an 1855 edition of *Qionglin* published by Wenlin tang 文林堂 in Haiyan 海鹽, Zhenjiang, copied everything, including the advertisement on the title page that was often seen on editions published in Sibao. Compared to movable type, or to offset printing machines, the initial investment and skills required for woodblock carving were much lower. If there was demand,

⁷⁶ For Lailu tang and Zhang Pengfei’s career, see Meng Wenqiang 孟文強, “Qing zhong-houqi Ankang Zhang shi Lailu tang keshu yanjiu” 清中後期安康張氏來鹿堂刻書研究, M.A. thesis (Shaanxi Normal University, 2018).

⁷⁷ One bibliographer argues that this Wenxin tang in Suining might have been established by a Xuwan migrant. If so, this case would be quite like that of Yuansheng tang in Chengdu, mentioned earlier. See Lan Liangyong 藍良永, “Jiangxi Jinxi shushang he Hongloulou Dong-guan ge xilie ben de fanke chuanbo” 江西金溪書商和紅樓夢東觀閣系列本的翻刻傳播, *Cao xueqin yanjiu* 曹雪芹研究 2 (2020), pp. 108–10. Researchers have discussed some individual cases of migrant publishers, but systematic research is still needed, especially for the Sichuan Basin, where migrants from Jiangxi, Hunan, and Hubei played an important role. Brokaw’s study of Sibao publishers discusses their “branches” in southern China, but the geographical expansion of Xuwan publishers and publishers from other publishing centers has not yet been examined. Migrants’s branch businesses could be a key to understanding the rise of local publishing in the nineteenth century.

it was not difficult for merchants in a commercial town to hire workers to carve blocks, especially when a community of carvers, such as that in Magang, was nearby. The publishers did not need an editor or a compiler if they just duplicated existing content. The quality of the product might be low, but it would still sell if it was good enough to meet the needs of consumers who could only afford cheap copies. Therefore, the same exact content, illustrations, and page layouts can be found in copies from Fujian and Beijing, to Sichuan and Shaanxi.

If publishers wanted to try something more creative, more than simply duplicating existing books, they also had an infrastructure to help them. Some publishers claimed they proofread the texts. This was important as consumers knew that many inexpensive, low-quality copies were in circulation. In a few cases, when duplicating existing texts, publishers might have done a little more and added some new content. One example is the edition of *Qunfang* published by Qiwen ju 綺文居, a publishing house in Quanzhou run by the Wang family. The owner complained that some publishers never proofread and even made mistakes when publishing the neo-Confucian *Four Books*. In the edition of *Qunfang* he published, he corrected mistakes and updated the facts. For example, he recompiled the section on official ranks by consulting *Jinshen lu* 縉紳錄 (*Records of Civil Officials*) and warned readers not to be surprised if they found the content of his edition different from others. Additionally, he added new content to the sections on letters and contracts. In the section “Couplets by Famous People,” he also added eight couplets from a Quanzhou temple.⁷⁸ If even more was desired, one could do as Dong Cheng, who compiled a new version of his own and had a local publisher print it. For those who were eager to write or compile texts, this was made easier when local publishers were accessible.

In the nineteenth century, two related trends seem to have followed the rise of local publishers. On the one hand, popular content could be transmitted quickly and widely. These texts could be duplicated by local publishers, so readers did not have to make their own copies or wait for imported books. On the other hand, as the transregional transmission of texts became easier, regional writers and publishers could also produce and distribute their own texts or compile and circulate texts for local contexts or certain groups of readers. For example, in the Pearl River Delta, both editions attributed to Cheng and to Qiu were produced and in circulation at the same time. The eru-

⁷⁸ Yang, “Liuchuan Taiwan,” p. 91.

dite Huizhou teacher could make his own scholarly edition. And, both annotated and encyclopedic editions were widely printed for common readers with different needs.

THE ADVENT OF LITHOGRAPHY IN A NEW ERA:
THE LATE-NINETEENTH AND EARLY-TWENTIETH CENTURIES

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the introduction into China of lithography was an important development generally, but particularly in the publication of popular books. Lithography perfectly suited the graphic nature of Chinese characters. Compared to xylography, lithographic printing could print smaller characters on a crowded page while maintaining legibility. Lithographers therefore could produce smaller editions at a lower price. One could now better duplicate images, so the quality of illustrations, as well as calligraphy, became quite high. After some small-scale attempts, lithography began to be used in commercial publications in Shanghai in the 1870s. Starting with pictorials, lithographers eventually used their technique to produce all kinds of bestsellers: books for the civil examinations, dictionaries, household encyclopedias, novels, precious volumes, and religious scriptures.⁷⁹ In 1889, an article in the *North China Herald* commented, “The printing of Chinese books in Shanghai by lithography is rapidly becoming an extensive branch of trade. ... The cheapness of the books thus produced is a great recommendation in a country where reading is a very common accomplishment.”⁸⁰

Before the advent of lithography in commercial publishing, whether an advanced primer, a writing aid, or a household encyclopedia, all the variations of *Youxue* had been popular. When lithographers were looking for potential titles to expand their market, at least three versions of *Youxue* were lithographed: *Fujie*, *Chengyu kao*, and *Qionglin*. Compared to the other two, the lithographed *Qionglin* was far more popular. It was so popular that it was regarded as the standard version of *Youxue* by later readers.

⁷⁹ For the development of lithography in China, see Christopher A. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876-1937* (Vancouver: UBC P., 2004); Yang Liying 楊麗瑩, *Qingmo-Minchu de shiyingshu yu shiyingben yanjiu: yi Shanghai diqu wei zhongxin* 清末民初的石印術與石印本研究, 以上海地區為中心 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2018).

⁸⁰ “Photo-Lithographic Printing in Shanghai,” *North China Herald*, May 25, 1889, p. 633.

The Kuizhao Lou Edition

Scholars who discuss the development of lithography in China typically focus on Shanghai. However, the first known lithographic edition of *Qionglin* was printed by Kuizhao lou 奎照樓 in 1897 in Shaoxing, Lu Xun's hometown. Kuizhao lou was founded during the 1860s. At its beginning, it printed popular books, such as books for civil examinations, textbooks, or medical books with woodblocks. Starting in the late 1890s, it began to employ lithography in its publications. *Qionglin* seems to have been one of its earliest attempts at lithographic printing. Prior to this, *Qionglin* had been printed with movable type by other publishers. No later than 1894, Rugu zhai 茹古齋 in Ningbo published an edition of *Qionglin* using movable-type printing, but this edition seems not to have been as successful as later lithographic editions.⁸¹

The Kuizhao lou edition basically duplicated *Qionglin's* content and layout inherited from Zou Shengmai's Sibao edition of the late-eighteenth century. In addition to better quality illustrations and calligraphy, Kuizhao lou hired Shi Yunyu 石韞玉 to proofread the text and add new content.⁸² The preface by the owner of Kuizhao lou claimed there were many mistakes in the previous woodblock and movable-type editions, so he invited an experienced scholar to revise the book. The head volume of *Qionglin* included various sample texts used in different ceremonies and social exchanges. Kuizhao lou asked Shi to replace outdated sample texts in the new edition according to current customs. This edition also added new content, such as *Kaozheng zhihui* 考正字彙, an updated glossary. The preface also emphasized that the publisher hired a skilled calligrapher to write the characters. Duplicated through lithography, the quality of its calligraphy was apparently much better than woodblock and movable-type printed copies.⁸³

⁸¹ Rugu zhai started to publish books printed with movable type no later than the 1870s. The Library of Ningbo City holds the earliest movable-type edition of *Qionglin* by Rugu zhai according to its catalog. In 1898, another publisher in Ningbo, Jigeng zhai 汲耕齋, also printed a movable-type edn.

⁸² Other than that he was a Shaoxing local, nothing is known about Shi. Yang mistook him for a different Shi Yunyu (1756–1837) of Suzhou. But *Qionglin's* editor was hired in 1897, and all the editions stated Shi's location as Shanyin 山陰, which was in Shaoxing, where Kuizhao lou was situated. So, he could not have been Shi Yunyu of Suzhou. See Yang, "Liuchuan Taiwan," p. 99.

⁸³ This preface was reprinted in different editions published at different times and by different publishers. In many cases, publishers simply changed its date to their publishing date, and sometimes made other changes. This occurred frequently, particularly with popular books. In one case, a woodblock edition of *Qionglin* also reprinted this preface, even though the latter's content discussed lithography. This preface has confused several bibliographers, who did not know that it first appeared in the Kuizhou lou edition, and they wrongly attributed it to other publishers.

Not only were the content of *Qionglin* and the technique of its production altered, its method of distribution also changed. Kuizhao lou's advertisement for *Qionglin* in *Shenbao* 申報 (*Shanghai News*) in 1897 stated that young apprentices and students in family schools should study this book thoroughly to learn how to write texts for social exchanges and that literati, merchants, farmers and craftsmen may also wish to own a copy. In addition to *Qionglin*'s original content, the advertisement emphasized that this new edition also contained the newest maps, celestial charts created according to Western science, sample texts for ceremonies and social exchanges, sample contracts and deeds, and various other documents. The publisher distributed copies to several bookstores in Shanghai, Suzhou, and Hangzhou; consumers in Jiangxi and Ningbo could also buy the book through its local agents, Dianshi-jie 點石介記 and Jigeng zhai 汲綆齋.⁸⁴

The publisher used new media to promote its edition of *Qionglin* and cooperated with bookstores in other locations to sell its book outside Shaoxing. This mode of distribution was possible because not that many publishers in China owned the hardware required for lithographic printing. Local publishers could easily duplicate the content of books printed with wooden blocks and make their own copies. This new threshold of technology allowed lithographers to keep their profits, but to sell their products to more consumers, they had to promote their books and broaden the geographic scope of their markets. Their attempts met with much success. The cover of the 1912 edition stated that since its first edition released in March of 1897, the publisher had revised the books four times and that this edition was the fiftieth run in six years. Through interregional transportation and cooperation with other businesses, this publisher was able to broaden its marketing area, so much so that even Weng Shichao in a small village of coastal Guangdong could own a 1905 edition of Kuizhao lou's *Qionglin*.

New Knowledge for the New Era

The success of Kuizhao lou's *Qionglin* soon drew other lithographers in Shaoxing and Shanghai, and later in Guangzhou and Foshan, into the market for this book. Morun tang 墨潤堂 in Shaoxing published its lithographic edition of *Qionglin* no later than 1900. According to a 1904 Shanghai Bookseller's Guild register of book titles, lithographic editions of *Qionglin* had been published by Qianqing tang 千頃堂, Jinghai lou 鏡海樓, Saoye shanfang 掃葉山房, Tongwen xinyi shuju 同文新

⁸⁴ "Xinchu zengbu huitu Youxue qionglin" 新出增補幼學瓊林, *Shenbao*, June 16, 1897.

譯書局, Renyu shuzhuang 仁餘書莊, and Kuizhao lou 奎照樓. Qianqing tang also published a movable-type edition of *Qionglin*.⁸⁵ However, this list is not complete. We know from extant copies that Hongbao zhai 鴻寶齋, Baoshan zhai 寶善齋, and Yuwen shuju 育文書局 also published lithographed editions of *Qionglin* in 1904. So, in total at least nine publishers issued this same title in Shanghai during this year. In addition, from this time to 1912, Shanghai publishers Guangyi shuju 廣益書局, Hongwen shuju 鴻文書局, Huanwen shuju 煥文書局, Wenxin shuju 文新書局, Zhangfu ji 章福記, and Wenrui lou 文瑞樓 all published lithographic editions of *Qionglin*.⁸⁶

These lithographic editions of *Qionglin* basically followed the model set by Kuizhao lou. These lithographers retained most of the content created by Cheng Dengji and Zou Shengmai while adding new content to their own editions. So, while the main text of most lithographic editions was very similar, the new content that each publisher added reflected contemporary trends, giving each edition unique traits. For example, because of recent advances in cartography, the section on geography was in the most need of an update. Many lithographic editions stressed that their maps, charts of administrative divisions in the government bureaucracy and lists of place names across the world were the latest. Moreover, after several political reforms, later editions included more information on the “New Learning.” The preface and the advertisement for the 1897 Kuizhao lou edition barely mentioned the New Learning, while later editions devoted much more space to it.

Much of the content added to *Qionglin*, as well as changes in its product positioning, reflected shifts in intellectual paradigms and the education reformation. When Zou Shengmai compiled *Qionglin*, he emphasized that this book would be very useful in civil examinations, but the preface of the Kuizhao lou edition in 1897 did not mention the civil examinations at all. During this period, more and more reformists wished to replace the civil examination system with a modern system of school education. This shift became even more apparent when the civil examinations were abolished in 1905. Kuizhao lou’s advertisement for *Qionglin* in 1897 claimed that this book should be bought by professionals of various careers, but its 1907 advertisement claimed “students from elementary and high school” as its primary readership.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Zhou Zhenhe 周振鶴, ed., *Wan Qing yingye shumu* 晚清營業書目 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 2005), pp. 623–42.

⁸⁶ Also, see Yang, “Liuchuan Taiwan,” pp. 93–105. He found 29 lithographic edns. of *Qionglin* from before the 1930’s.

⁸⁷ “Youxue gushi qionglin” 幼學故事瓊林, *Shenbao*, June 23, 1907.

The preface to Kuizhao lou's edition of the early 1910s highlights two newly added materials: *Chudeng xuetang chidu* 初等學堂尺牘 (*Letter-Writing for Elementary School*) and *Yingwen jieque* 英文捷訣 (*Mnemonic Chant for Studying English*). The pages of this edition were divided into three registers to contain even more content, and *Letter-Writing for Elementary School* was placed into the middle register. It is a textbook that was compiled for the new education system. Unlike the traditional letter-writing manuals, it was organized by "lesson 課," and it was expected that students learn them one by one. The content of the examples it provided also tried to suit current trends. For instance, lesson twelve is a letter from a student writing to his brother to ask him to buy a textbook for his geography class and send him a gymnastics textbook. The student also included a pair of couplets for a friend's new house in the letter: "The morning sun shines upon the pavilion of equality; The spring wind blows through the flowers of freedom." *Mnemonic Chant for Studying English* was placed in the upper margin of the book. This section contained English vocabulary with definitions and pronunciations transliterated into Chinese characters. Therefore, in one page, a reader could peruse four different kinds of material (figure 4): Cheng's primer of literary allusions with annotations in the bottom register, the content supplemented by eighteenth-century Sibao publishers in the upper register, the modern textbook on letter-writing in the middle register, and the list of English vocabulary on the upper margins. With new and old knowledge combined onto one page, only lithography could create legible prints.

While lithographers ordinarily tried to target new readers with new content, *Xintiyouxue qionglin* 新體幼學瓊林 (*Precious Collection [of Allusions] for Young Students in the New Format*) was an extreme case. This book was published by Zhongguo tushu gongsi 中國圖書公司 and Nanyang guanshu ju 南洋官書局 in 1908. It used the title and the framework of *Qionglin* but was actually a new book. The first chapter was on history and geography and included sample texts for ceremonies and social exchanges, making it similar to *Qionglin*'s head volume, but the rest of the old *Qionglin* was entirely replaced with chapters on modern subjects like chemistry, optics, finance, and railroads. Moreover, the texts of these chapters were written in plain language instead of couplets, which the compiler regarded as outdated. An advertisement for this *Qionglin in the New Format* claimed it was a necessary book for family education and students in today's elementary schools, half-day schools, advanced elementary schools, reformed family schools, and business

schools.⁸⁸ This ambitious publisher tried to promote its new *Qionglin* to all students in the old and new school systems.

This trend continued into the early-Republican Period. While the “old” *Qionglin* with only content from the Sibao publishers was still printed using woodblocks and lithography, several publishers attempted to make this traditional educational text relevant in the new era. When “making citizens” became a goal of education, as a popular textbook for children, *Qionglin* was expected to take on this task. One of the symbolic changes has to do with its cover. The earliest Kuizhao lou edition used the traditional image of a “*qilin* regurgitating a jade book 麟吐玉書.” It alludes to a story of Confucius’s birth in which a *qilin* (a propitious mythological beast) came to his home and regurgitated a jade plate to announce the sage’s birth. Kuizhao lou perhaps used the picture to demonstrate the high quality of its illustrations and a high value for this book. Later lithographers followed Kuizhao lou’s example, using this theme on their covers, so there were several different images of *qilins* regurgitating books on the covers of different lithographic editions of *Qionglin*. Beginning in the 1910s, publishers gradually gave up this symbol in favor of other themes on their covers. The cover of the edition by Wensheng shuju 文盛書局 in Shanghai, for example, depicted a group of uniformed students going to schools of different levels. The cover of the Hongwen shuju edition was an image of a world map with two uniformed students standing beside it raising national flags.

Inside the cover, a relatively more enlightened content was brought in. In the section on ceremonies, many editions included the principles of a “civilized wedding” with an illustration, and at the end of the chart of dynasties was “The Republic of China, Five Races under One Union to Last One Million Years.” Among the several new editions that attempted to give this old and traditional primer continued relevance, the Huiwen tang 會文堂 edition, revised by Cai Cheng 蔡邴 (1877–1945, commonly known as Cai Dongfan 蔡東藩), was one of the most popular. Cai Cheng was an editor at Huiwen tang and gained fame for compiling a series of novels about Chinese history, also published by Huiwen tang. The edition was branded as “specially improved 特別改良” and “necessary reading for young adults 青年必讀” in its advertisement of 1919. The advertisement regarded *Qionglin* as an excellent textbook but stated that it had to be updated to meet the needs of the new era. Therefore, a knowledgeable editor, Cai Sheng, was hired to revise the work.⁸⁹ Each chapter of Cheng’s main text was supplemented by new

⁸⁸ “*Xinti youxue qionglin*” 新體幼學瓊林, *Xinwenbao* 新聞報, May 20, 1908.

⁸⁹ “*Chong zeng youxue gushi qionglin*” 重增幼學故事瓊林, *Xinwenbao* 新聞報, Oct. 18, 1919.

couplets about recent events and modern knowledge. For example, in the chapter on “Earth,” the first two new couplets were: “Guan Zhong 管仲 wrote that the Earth is round; Deli 德黎 proposed the theory that the Earth moves.”⁹⁰ The shape of Earth is divided between Eastern and Western Hemispheres; The movements of the Earth are [its] rotation and revolution around the Sun.” Moreover, because the “morality of republican citizens” was to be cultivated through childhood education, Cai selected stories of “moral models” from China and the West, placed them in the upper margins of the book together with illustrations, and titled the section “Models for Young Adults 青年模範.” In the preface, he explained that he organized them in order “from near to far, from family to nation,” so that young students could systematically learn the morals of these stories.⁹¹ Such moral teachings ranged from “treat the servants well” and “do not gamble,” to “pay taxes early” and “defend the country.” The Huiwen tang edition was a commercial success. It was published several times from 1919 to 1935, and Cai revised the book at least twice.

Unlike *Xinti youxue qionglin* published in 1908, the Huiwen tang edition tried to bridge the old and the new. In the preface, Cai regards himself as following in the footsteps of Zou Shengmai by making the book relevant for contemporary readers.

CONCLUSION

Lu Xun, Hu Shi and Mao Zedong all studied *Qionglin* between the 1890s and 1900s. This was the period when the book began to be lithographed and circulated nationwide. Lower prices and better marketing networks brought it into a wider geographical area and allowed it to penetrate the lower levels of society. Although the authorship of *Qionglin* was attributed to Cheng Dengji, it had been modified by annotators, collators, and publishers for more than two hundred years.

The present paper has examined how *Youxue*'s text was transformed and transmitted from the late-Ming to the early-Republican Period. It started in the 1630s through its role as an advanced educational primer compiled by a local teacher in Jiangxi and commoditized by Jianyang publishers. It circulated in southeastern China, if not elsewhere as well, during the late Ming and the early Qing and even reached Japan

⁹⁰ The annotation stated that Deli was a Greek philosopher. It could be referring to Aristarchus of Samos or Heraclites.

⁹¹ Cai Cheng, “Qingnian mofan xuyan” 青年模範序言, in Cai Cheng 蔡鄰, ed., *Huitu chong-zeng youxue gushi qionglin* 繪圖重增幼學故事瓊林 (Shanghai: Huiwen tang, 1924), p. 1.

by 1682. In the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, it was annotated anew in Jiangnan and Jiangxi, and soon after that Cheng's original annotations were entirely replaced.

In the mid-eighteenth century, publishers in Sibao turned *Youxue* into a reference book by adding new literary content. In the nineteenth century, with the rise of local publishers, both annotated editions and encyclopedic editions were distributed more widely, and regional editions also began to appear. After lithography was adopted in commercial publishing in the late-nineteenth century, consumers were given even more choices. Lithographic editions printed in Shanghai and Shaoxing were now available nationwide, but local publishers still produced xylographic editions into the early-twentieth century. Lithographers tried to modify the book to meet contemporary goals of pedagogy, but at the same time, the older, late eighteenth-century, Sibao editions remained popular down into the first half of the twentieth century.

In addition to tracing the publication history of *Youxue*, this paper raised several general questions regarding the history of Chinese books. When studying a book, historians should not ignore the stages of compilation, editing, duplication, and marketing that preceded the acts of reading, discussing, and writing commentary. Using the transformation of *Youxue* to *Qionglin* over three centuries as an example, the article has shown how texts could be transformed through these processes. The original text was adjusted, corrected, and expanded multiple times, while various paratexts, such as annotations, prefaces, page layouts, and overall physical formats could influence how readers accessed the text.

Various factors were involved in creating a book's text and paratexts. Literary traditions were beginning to require that children study allusions; moreover, intellectual trends of different types were leading scholars to add long annotations and to display their learning. Commercial considerations influenced how the text and paratexts were organized, including page layout and the choice of new materials to be supplemented. Changes in the target readers' needs decided the type of materials to be supplemented, and these shifts were usually initiated by educational, social, or political changes. For example, the rise of lineage societies during the late-imperial period placed great value on proper ceremonies and social exchange; this created an incentive to include in *Qionglin* more contents related to ritual and letter-writing. Moreover, the late-Qing education reform and the establishment of the Republican regime influenced publishers to add contents regard-

ing the New Learning and some information about being a modern citizen. Because of these processes, *Youxue* was not a static text, and its relationships with producers and readers were dynamic.

The multiple faces of *Youxue* challenge our conception of book categories. Scholars tend to study a book as belonging to a certain genre or category, but the success of *Youxue* partly relied on its ability to test out and combine a variety of categories. For example, the significance of Cheng Dengji's work was his transformation of an encyclopedia of literary allusions into an advanced primer for children. Likewise, annotators can be seen as having attempted to enhance the value of a book, including of course *Youxue* and its descendants, by making it more "scholarly." Sibao and Xuwan publishers transformed the work into a literary reference book or even a household manual. In the early-twentieth century, some editors wanted the work to convey moral teachings. Although *Youxue* is often categorized as a textbook for children by modern researchers, its centuries-old line of publishers approached the work in quite a few other ways as well.

Part of the reason that *Youxue* is a suitable book with which to begin discussing these questions is because of its popularity: it was commercially successful for more than two hundred years. Publishers tried to enlarge its base of consumers, so various kinds of bookmen continuously modified its text and paratexts. Today's researchers must consider such publishing changes to capture readership as an important way to bring light to the problem of what made an premodern and early-modern book "popular" per se.

Looking at the case of *Youxue*, it seems that Sibao and Xuwan publishers in particular played a crucial role in making the book achieve a certain kind of popularity in the mid-eighteenth century. They were adept at integrating various elements into their product in order to create bestsellers and retailed them through an interregional network supported by lineage organizations. In the nineteenth century, there was an increase in the number of local publishers all over China, but so far these publishers per se have not been analyzed systematically. Many publishers were located in commercial towns, which flourished due to the development of interregional trade and transportation. Some of them might have done business in Sibao or Xuwan before migrating to other towns. Because of the relatively low investment required for woodblock printing (especially the low local-area wages), these publishers could easily duplicate bestsellers at a lower quality and sell them through regional markets, thus keeping down costs of shipping and delivery.

The advent of the new technology of lithography further lowered publishers' costs for each copy and allowed them to produce higher quality books. But the initial investment required for lithographic printing was higher, so publishers were concentrated in Shanghai and a few cities. It was difficult for local publishers to duplicate the quality of lithographic books by means of the woodblock process, so that the competition was among lithographers in Shanghai, who had to publish better editions of the same title by including attractive illustrations and popular content, and had to make smaller-sized and cheaper editions, or target specific groups of readers. While faced with this competition, lithographers also had to construct their national retailing networks. Most lithographers were based in Shanghai with several branches or agents in other large cities. The operation of these networks was certainly supported by the development of better transportation; many branches were situated on transportation hubs, such as Hankou, Changsha, or Tianjin. Consumers in this period could buy a standard-content lithographic edition of *Qionglin* nationwide; or they could buy a xylographed edition, as these were still produced by local publishers, probably with some local contents.

The case of *Youxue* as given in this study is something like a deep-context biography of a book. Although our knowledge of the basic infrastructure of the book business and its historical transformations in China is insufficient, investigating multiple editions of a single title and tracing their stories concerning both commerce and readers, might shed more light on the general history of books, bookmen, the worlds of books, and the popularity of books in Chinese history, and the ways that textual knowledge penetrated the lower level of society.

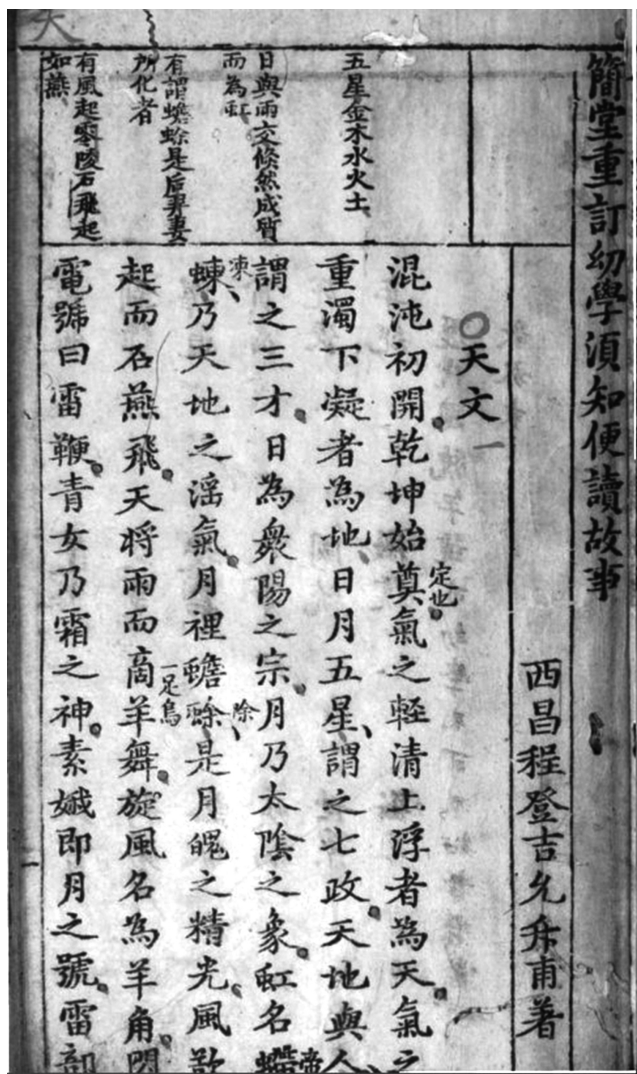


Figure 1. Juan 1, opening page; Jianyang Yang Xiaomin 建陽楊小閔 edn. of Jiantang chongding biandu gushi youxue xuzhi 簡堂重訂便讀故事幼學須知 (Necessary Knowledge for Young Students with Easy-to-Read Allusions Revised by the Bamboo Slip Studio); pref. 1637

Copy held at Keiō U. Library; here we see the digital copy via Google Books: <<https://books.google.com.tw/books?id=D30rYPcraEwC>>. This is perhaps the only extant Ming-period copy. Main text was briefly and partially annot. by author Cheng Dengji, the only contributor named on this page. Notes between lines are pronunciations or definitions of specific characters. Notes at upper register explain couplets seen at bottom register. Compared to contemporary reference books, the page-layout is spacious, leaving room for readers to make notes. This page shows red-ink punctuation marks made by a reader.

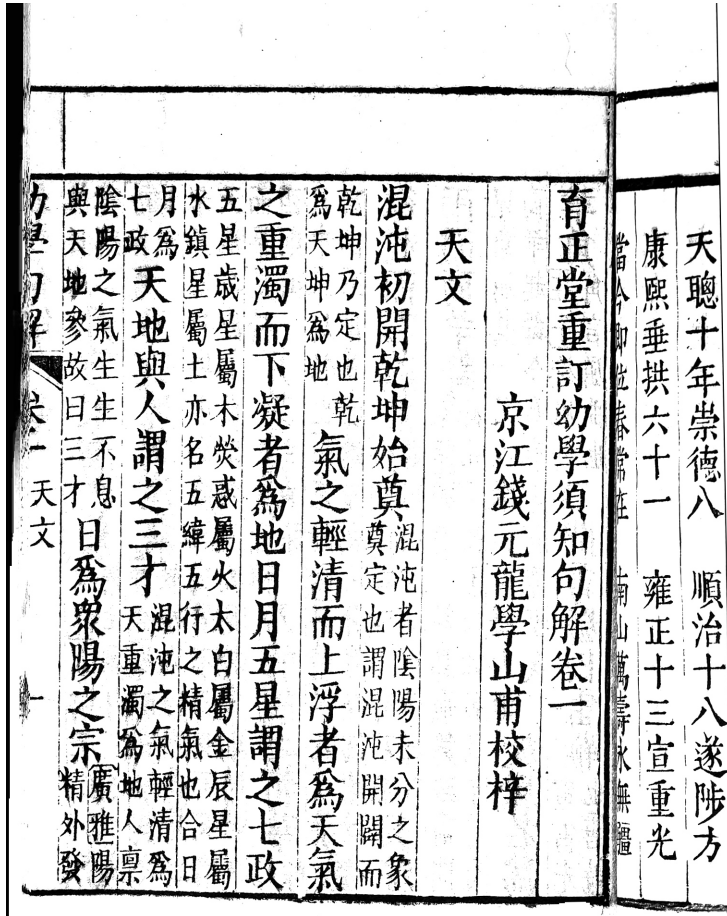


Figure 2. Juan 1, opening page; Yuzheng tang 育正堂 edn. of Youxue xuzhi jujie 幼學須知句解 (Necessary Knowledge for Young Students Annotated Sentence by Sentence); 1868

Copy held at Austrian National Library; here we see digital copy via Google Books: <<https://books.google.com.tw/books?id=bjRbAAAAcAAJ>>. (Each volume's page order is reversed.)

One of many 19th-c. edns. of Jujie. The names of author Cheng Dengji and annotator Huang Wangruo are not shown this page. Only contributor here is named Qian Yuanlong (a wealthy Yangzhou merchant who helped to promote this version in 1750s.) Although this edn. printed by a commercial publisher, Qian's pref. was attached and his name emphasized. This page used so-called "inserted double-column annotations" format, so as to hold longer annotations. Each sentence was annotated with more details than those given in Cheng's original notes. The annotator quoted original sources. For example, at end of last line, the title of a source, *Guangya* 廣雅 (an ancient dictionary), was circled to mark the start of a quotation from it.



Figure 3. Juan 1, opening page; Yunhai tang 雲海堂 edn. of Xinzheng Youxue gushi qionglin 新增幼學故事瓊林 (Newly Increased Treasury of Allusions for Young Students); pref. 1760

Copy held at Keiō U. Library; here we see the digital version via Google Books: <https://books.google.com.tw/books?id=QKV7t0dffj8C> (Each volume's page-order reversed.)

One of many 19th-c. woodblock-printed edns. of Qionglin. Contributors all listed (including Cheng Dengji, Zou Shengmai and two others). Although this edn. not printed by Zou and possibly not in Sibao, the title printed at beginning of this volume declares that the edn. was from Ji'ao shanfang shuke, which was Zou's studio – a type of brand-guarantee of quality. The page was divided into two registers. The upper contains “Lidai diwang zongji,” a historical record of China's emperors. Its title was printed at the beginning of the upper register. The bottom register gives Cheng's main text and Zou's annotations, which were relatively more detailed, with many quotations from original sources. Moreover, Zou added 11 new couplets to this chapter, as noted under the chapter title.

Copy held by Chen Zhiming 陳子命 in Longtan 龍潭 village, Pingnan 屏南 county, Fujian; photographed by the author, Oct. 20, 2008.

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Table 1. Selected Versions of Youxue xuzhi

TITLE	EARLIEST PUB. DATE	EARLIEST PUB. PLACE	PRIMARY ANNOTATOR
<i>Youxue xuzhi</i> 幼學須知	CA. 1630s	Jianyang	Cheng Dengji
<i>Youxue xuzhi chengyu kao</i> 幼學須知成語考	CA. mid-17th c.	Jiangnan	Qiu Jun (false attribution)
<i>Youxue xuzhi zhijie</i> 幼學須知直解	CA. late-17th c.	Jiangxi	Wang Xiang
<i>Youxue xuzhi jujie</i> 幼學須知句解	CA. late-17th c.	Yangzhou	Huang Wang- ruo
<i>Youxue gushi qionglin</i> 幼學故事瓊林	1760	Sibao	Zou Shengmai
<i>Youxue gushi qunfang</i> 幼學故事群芳	1778	Sibao	Zhou Dayong
<i>Youxue gushi zhuji</i> 幼 學故事珠璣	1778 or 1820	Xuwan or Sibao	Wu Jie
<i>Youxue xuzhi gushi daqian</i> 幼學須知故事大全	1812	probably Sibao	Lei Zhaorui
<i>Youxue gushi huilan</i> 幼學故事匯覽	1820	Sibao	Ma Qiu
<i>Youxue gushi qiuyuan</i> 幼學故事求源	1842	Huizhou	Dong Cheng
<i>Youxue gushi xun- yuan</i> 幼學故事尋源	CA. mid-19th c.	probably southeast coast	Yang Yingxiang
<i>Youxue xuzhi xiang- jie/zhuji</i> 幼學須知詳解/註解	1870s	Chaozhou	Unknown
<i>A Manual of Chinese Quotations</i>	1893	Shanghai/ Hong Kong	J.H. Stewart Lockhart, trans.
<i>Youxue gushi qionglin</i> 幼學故事瓊林 (lithograph)	1897	Shaoxing	Shi Yunyu, comp.

NOTE:

This article generally calls same-titled books printed from different blocks as separate “editions” of that title. In the case of two books’ main contents seen as more or less the same, but their title not the same, they are termed separate “versions.” A new version, in the case of *Youxue*, usually has new supplements, new annotations and sometimes new page layout. Thus, *Qionglin* is one version of *Youxue*, but there were several editions of *Qionglin*.