

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: THE FORMATION AND EVOLUTION OF BOOK
CENSORSHIP IN THE QING DYNASTY: A STUDY
OF THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY ON SIBAO

Liguan Wang, Master of Arts, 2024

Thesis directed by: Professor Ting Zhang, History Department

This thesis emphasizes the formation and evolution of book censorship in the Qing dynasty and the impact of censorship on the choice of publications made by publishers in different regions. Book censorship in the Qing dynasty emerged in the early 17th century and was institutionalized, reaching its peak in the mid-to-late 18th century. Along with the development of censorship, the publishing centers around the major cities declined, and publishing centers away from the major cities, represented by the Sibao, began to emerge. Legal cases on censorship and distinctions between publications in different regions reveal the close relationship between censorship and the publishing industry. By reconsidering the publishing history of Sibao within the censorship framework, this thesis reveals how Sibao grew and developed under the Qing Dynasty's strict censorship, especially during the Qianlong period. This thesis examines censorship and the publishing industry during the Qing dynasty and contributes insights into the causes of the changing trends that arose at the center of publishing during the Qing dynasty.

THE FORMATION AND EVOLUTION OF BOOK CENSORSHIP IN THE QING
DYNASTY: A STUDY OF THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY ON SIBAO

by

Liguan Wang

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
2024

Advisory Committee:
Professor Ting Zhang, Chair
Professor Yujie Li
Professor Deokhyo Choi

© Copyright by

Liguan Wang

2024

Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Chapter II: The Gradual Tightening of Cultural Policies: The Qing Censorship from the Shunzhi to the Qianlong Period	7
Censorship During the Early Qing Period	7
Censorship During the Kangxi Period	12
Censorship During the Yongzheng Period	17
Censorship During the Qianlong Period	19
Expanding the Meaning of Pornographic Novels	24
Chapter III: The Completion and Operation of Censorship in the late Qianlong Period	30
The Origin of the 1770s Book Censorship Campaign	30
The Book Collection for <i>Siku</i> and Beginning of the 1770s Censorship Campaign	33
The Completion and Operation of the 1770s Censorship Campaign	38
Chapter IV: Censorship and Publishing Industry in the High Qing Period.....	44
The Development of the Sibao Publishing Industry	44
A Case Study of Xiangshan Tang 湘山堂	46
Sibao's Book-selling and Novel Production in Suzhou.....	51
Sibao Under the Qing Censorship	57
Conclusion	63
Bibliography	65

Chapter I: Introduction

The publishing industry in the Qing Dynasty changed dramatically compared to the Ming Dynasty due to various factors, such as the change of dynasties and the capital. In the Ming Dynasty, publishing houses were concentrated mainly in the core of the Jiangnan area, such as Nanjing 南京, Hangzhou 杭州, Suzhou 苏州, as well as in Jianyang 建阳 of northern Fujian. According to Zhang Xiumin, during the Ming, there were 94 publishing houses in Nanjing 南京 and marked Jinling 金陵, Jingdu 京都, or Nanjing as the name of the publishing houses (*tangming* 堂名), both Jinling and Jingdu were old terms for Nanjing. In the early Qing dynasty, only seven remained. In the Ming, there were 25 publishing houses in Hangzhou. Wulin 武林 was also the term used to refer to Hangzhou. In the early Qing period, there were less than 10. There were 37 publishing houses in Suzhou during the Ming and only 21 during the Qianlong and Jiaqing reigns (1735-1820). However, as the political situation stabilized, the number of publishing houses in Suzhou grew to 57 in the late Qing Dynasty.¹ Jinchang 金阊, Wumen 吴门, and Gusu 姑苏 were also common terms referring to the Suzhou.

In addition to the publishing centers mentioned above, new publishing centers were also formed in the Qing Dynasty, represented by Sibao 四堡 in the mountainous area of western Fujian. In the Qing dynasty, Sibao was a township under Changting County 长汀县 of Tingzhou Prefecture 汀州府. In the Qing dynasty, the area of Sibao consisted of

¹ Zhang Xiumin 张秀民. *Zhongguo yinshua shi* 中国印刷史. (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1989), 241-273, 390-398.

more than seventy villages. The villages of Sibao were mainly situated in the narrow basin between the eastern side of the Wuyi 武夷 Mountain Range and the western side of the Daimao 玳瑁 Mountain Range. The villages in the Sibao area were spread out in a line due to the influence of the topography. Because Sibao Township is located at the crossroads of four counties, the villages in the Sibao area are also administratively divided into different counties based on their proximity to each county city. Although Sibao was under the jurisdiction of Changting County, there was only one mountain route from Sibao to Changting County city (which was also the capital of Tingzhou Prefecture), which was less than 35 miles but still took nearly a day of travel. The main route from the core of Sibao to other counties was a courier route, and there were also no accessible river links to other areas in the Sibao region. Overall, transportation in Sibao was quite inconvenient.

The topography of Sibao is only a microcosm of Minxi (Western Fujian 闽西). Minxi is located at the junction of Jiangxi, Fujian, and Guangdong provinces. Mountains also surround the entire Minxi; the only major river in the region, the Ting River (Tingjiang 汀江 or Tingshui 汀水, also known as Yinjiang 鄞江), is the only major river in Fujian in the north-south direction.² The Ting River originates from Ninghua and Changting County and converges with tributaries all the way south into Dapu 大浦, Guangdong Province, where it joins the Mei River 梅江 in Guangdong, and then enters the sea from Chaozhou 潮州 via the Han River 韩江.³ There is no direct navigable river connecting Minxi to the rest of

² [Minguo] *Changting xianzhi* 民国长汀县志, *shanchuan zhi* 山川志, vol3, 6b-7a.

³ John Lagerwey, and Weilun Tan, eds. *Zhongguo kejia difang shehui yanjiu: minxi kejia shehui(I)* 中国客家地方社会研究(一): 闽西客家社会——长汀(Research on Hakka Localities in China (I): Hakka Society

the province, which leads to a lack of cultural and economic links with other developed areas like North Fujian (Minbei 闽北) and South Fujian (Minnan 闽南). The Gan River system 赣江 and the Ting River through Jiangxi Province were the main routes for trade from outside Minxi. Benefiting from the region's unique river transportation network, the three regions of Gannan 赣南, Minxi, and Yuebei 粤北 formed the Min-Gan-Yue 闽-赣-粤 Economic and Cultural Zone.⁴ Because of the lack of arable land, the Minxi region also relies on food and salt imported from Jiangxi and Minbei. Limited by transportation and landscape as a whole, the economy of the Minxi, as stated in the prefectural gazetteer, is that "lands are barren and people are poor (*Diji minpin* 地瘠民贫),"⁵ and "there is no access to river transportation and thus commodities and wealth are few (*butong zhouji er caihuo shenshao* 不通舟楫而财货甚少)."⁶

The mountainous terrain did not always pose a drawback. While Minxi lacked arable land, the natural resources in the mountainous area provided a solid foundation for the development of the publishing industry in Sibao. The products of Tingzhou Prefecture in the Fujian Provincial Gazetteer included bamboo and lime, which were primary materials for papermaking, catalpa and nanmu for making woodblocks, and pine and tung oil for ink production - all crucial resources necessary for the publishing industry.⁷ Even before the flourishing of publishing in Sibao, wood and paper exported along the Ting River were the

in Minxi --Changting). (Beijing, Zhongguo Renmindaxue Chubanshe, 2017). 30-32.

⁴ Cynthia J. Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 38.

⁵ Chen Shouqi 陈寿祺, *Fujian tongzhi* 福建通志, fengsu zhi 风俗志, (Taiwan: Huawen shuju gufen youxian gongsi, 1968), vol57, 38.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Chen, *Fujian tongzhi*, vol 59,15,19-20.

primary commodities exported from Tingzhou.

The publishing houses in Sibao were mainly concentrated in the two villages, Wuge 雾阁 and Mawu 马屋, which were also in the core area of Sibao Township. Both villages were single-surname villages. The single-surname village is one in which most people come from the same lineage and have the same family name. The Zou 邹 of Wuge and the Ma 马 of Mawu were the two most prominent lineages in the publishing industry of Sibao. There are many different claims about the origins of the publishing industry in Sibao. However, Brokaw's study of the origins of the publishing industry in Sibao shows that members from the Zou and Ma families had been running publishing houses outside Sibao before the publishing industry in Sibao emerged. Those members returned to Sibao to continue the publishing industry, which is the most reliable claim for the origins of the publishing industry in Sibao. The publishing industry in Sibao started when Zou Mengchun 邹孟纯 (1619-72) established the Chongde Tang 崇德堂 and Ma Weihuan 马维瀚 (1639-1700) founded the Wanzhulou 万竹楼 from 1663 (Kangxi 2).⁸ By the end of the 17th century, there were at least 13 publishing houses in Sibao, eight in Wuge, and five in Mawu. During the Qianlong and early Jiaqing periods, 46 new publishing houses were established in Sibao, of which 31 were in Wuge and 15 in Mawu.⁹ If we narrow down the period of establishing new publishing houses in Sibao to the Qianlong period, the number of new publishing houses in Sibao during this period was 21.¹⁰ This shows that the publishing industry in Sibao developed rapidly during the Qianlong period. The numbers show that

⁸ Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, 81-83.

⁹ Ibid, 86.

¹⁰ Ibid, see "Appendix D."

the development of the publishing industry in Sibao was flourishing under strict censorship during the Qianlong period.

Brokaw's book, *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods*, is the only monograph in English that focuses on the Sibao publishing industry. In this book, Brokaw reconstructs the Sibao publishing industry based on preserved woodblocks and interviews with local people. Her detailed interpretation of the Sibao trade demonstrates the role of the Sibao publishing industry in Chinese culture and commerce. From the perspective of *Commerce in Culture*, the Sibao book trade played an essential role in disseminating culture and knowledge during the Qing dynasty. The circulation of large quantities of inexpensive books significantly reduced the difficulty of acquiring knowledge and contributed to developing a public textual culture during the Qing dynasty.

According to the Sibao imprints list compiled by Brokaw, over 50 titles belonged to banned books. However, Brokaw's study does not touch upon the mid-Qing censorship, which is one of the most important factors affecting the development of the Sibao publishing industry. Some evidence during my research indicates how censorship in the Qing Dynasty influenced publishers' decisions in publication selection. My research will take the remote publishing centers represented by Sibao and the publishing centers in the big cities represented by Suzhou as the primary research subjects.

The main argument of my thesis is to reconsider the publishing industry during the Qianlong period in the context of the social reality of censorship. Contrary to the conventional hypothesis that the high Qing censorship halted the development of the

publishing industry, I argue that censorship was one of the most important factors contributing to the development of the Sibao publishing industry in the Qianlong period. While other printing centers, especially those in the core regions, declined under strict censorship, Sibao publishing houses took the chance to develop and fill the gap.

This research will address a series of questions: How did censorship develop in the Qing Dynasty? What books were involved in censorship in the Qing Dynasty? What were the specific measures of censorship in the Qing Dynasty? How did censorship in the Qing Dynasty work? How did the publishing industry in Sibao escape the influence of Qing censorship?

This thesis consists of three chapters. Chapter II delves into the origins and development of censorship in chronological order through Palace memorials, Routine memorials, the Great Qing Legal Code, Imperial Edicts, and regulations from different Qing agencies. Chapter III focuses on the evolution and impact of the 1770s censorship campaign by using the *Qianlong shilu* 乾隆朝实录 (Veritable Records) and memorials. Chapter IV analyzes the Sibao publishing industry in the context of censorship based on sources from Brokaw's study.

Chapter II: The Gradual Tightening of Cultural Policies: The Qing Censorship from the Shunzhi to the Qianlong Period

Censorship During the Early Qing Period

As a conquest dynasty led by the Manchus, the Qing court interacted with Han Chinese culture in an evolving manner. Initially, there was a tendency towards absorption and integration of Han culture during the early Qing period. However, as the dynasty progressed, there was a shift towards stricter censorship, deletion, and even destruction of elements of Han culture later during the high Qing period.

At the beginning of the Qing, most Manchu officials were illiterate in Chinese, which was a severe challenge for ruling the vast empire.¹¹ Before the Qing troops entered China, Emperor Hung Taiji set up the Literary Institute (Wenguan 文馆)¹² to take charge of translating Confucian classics such as the General History for the Aid of Government (*Tongjian* 通鉴) and the Four Books (*Sishu* 四书),¹³ which were used and read by officials to learn how to rule the empire. During this period, popular novels such as the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo yanyi* 三国演义) were also translated into Manchu and used as a military handbook.¹⁴

¹¹ Bin Wang, *Qingdai jinshu zongshu* 清代禁书总述 (Beijing: Zhong guo shudian, 1999), 21.

¹² Predynastic antecedents of the Hanlin Academy (hanlin yuan 翰林院), staffed with Academicians (hsüeh-shih); in 1635 transformed into the Three Palace Academies (nei san yuan).

¹³ Yuan Wei 魏源, *shengwuji* 圣武记. From *Qingdai jinshu zongshu*, 21.

¹⁴ Songru Wang 王嵩儒, *zhanggu lingshi* 掌固零拾, From *ibid*.

While benefiting from the translated novels, the Qing court also began to select books for translation simultaneously. In the April of 1635 (Tiancong 9), Hung Taiji mentioned the following message to the officials in Wenguan:

I look at Chinese history books; they are wordy, and reading them from the beginning to the end is not beneficial. For the important parts, choose accurate history translations into books that are ready to view. As for books other than the Chinese version of Tongjian, what unauthorized history contained, such as fighting a few rounds and using magic spells, are all depictions of the absurdity. If it is transmitted to our country, I am afraid that ignorant people will believe it is the truth. We should stop its translation.¹⁵

朕观汉文史书，殊多饰词，虽全览无益也...有关紧要者，择实汇译成书，用备观览。至汉文通鉴之外，野史所载，如交战几合、逞施法术之语，皆系妄诞，传至国中，恐无知之人，信以为真，当停其翻译。

This imperial edict is the earliest available document on the censorship of books in the Qing dynasty. In contrast to the previous policy of unrestricted study of Chinese culture, the Qing rulers realized that the absurdity of the depictions in the unofficial histories (*yeshi* 野史) would also harm the rule of the country. It was, therefore, necessary to stop translating such books into Manchu. However, the imperial edict did not mention any penalties, so whether or not it worked in practice was in question. During the Chongde period, many versions of unofficial historical and pornographic novels, such as the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and the *Golden Lotus*, were translated into Manchu and widely circulated. This imperial edict did not primarily function as a law but rather as an expression of cultural policy by the Qing dynasty rulers.

The first mention of book censorship in the official regulations originated in the Shunzhi period. According to the “Regulations and Prohibitions of Publishing Houses (*Shufang jinli* 书坊禁例)” in the *Complete Book for Provincial Education Commissioner*

¹⁵ Wang. *Qingdai jinshu zongshu*, 22.

(*Qinding xuezheng quanshu* 钦定学政全书),¹⁶ there was an imperial edict issued in 1652 mentioning that:

The book publishers are only allowed to publish books about Confucianism, politics, and other books that are good for education; other books, like Trifling Anecdotes and Pornographic Lyrics, are strictly prohibited. Violators will be punished severely.¹⁷

坊间书贾, 止许刊行理学政治有益文业诸书;其他琐语淫词,及一切滥刻窗艺社稿,通行严禁.违者从重究治.

There were three significant differences in this edict compared to the 1635 edict.

First, the ban on books that began in the Shunzhi period was extended from official institutions to the entire book publishing industry. Private publishers were also included.

The prohibition of publication mentioned in this imperial edict also signaled that the Qing's control over the publication of books expanded from Manchu to Chinese as its rule extended from Manchuria to China proper, where the Han culture dominated.

Although the edict clearly mentioned "strictly prohibited" and "violators will be punished severely," there seemed to be no large-scale book ban during the Shunzhi period, potentially because the names of banned books were not clearly labeled, nor were substantial penalties imposed in the edict, which made the enforcement of the regulation difficult.

In the process of the Qing conquest and unification, the ethnic conflicts between Manchus and Han Chinese continued to intensify, the rule of the Qing court was not stable, and rebellions occurred from time to time.¹⁸ Many former Ming subjects did not acknowledge and accept the Manchurian rulers very well, especially former Ming

¹⁶ This book is an official academic guidebook compiled and issued in 1774 (Qianlong 39), which covers the regulations of the Academy, the examination, students, and the publishing industry...etc.

¹⁷ *Qinding xuezheng quanshu* 钦定学政全书, vol 7 shufang jinli 书坊禁例, 1a-1b.

¹⁸ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1990). 44-48.

officials and literati who had surrendered to the Qing during the conquest process but had yet to be reappointed by the Qing court. Therefore, they expressed their discontent with the Qing court through various channels. During the Shunzhi period, the Manchu rulers imposed a policy of cultural repression on the traditional Han Chinese areas, especially those newly integrated into the Manchu rule, such as Jiangnan. Although there were no large-scale Literary Inquisitions during the Shunzhi reign, some publications and private writings that violated the ruler's taboos were investigated and prosecuted.

The only novels included in the list of banned books during the Shunzhi period were Li Yu's *Silent Operas* (*Wushengxi* 无声戏). The ban on Li Yu's *Silent Operas* had nothing to do with the book itself. The main reason why the book became banned was that the publication of the book was funded by Zhang Jinyan 张缙彦 (1600-1672), who was involved in a case of the Literary Inquisition. Zhang Jinyan was the Minister of War of the Ming in the Chongzhen period and once led the military campaign against the Manchus in Anhui Province. After he surrendered to the Qing court in 1656, he was appointed as the Zhejiang Provincial Administrative Commissioner (*zuo buzhengshi* 左布政使, rank 2B). In June of the same year, Zhang Jinyan wrote a preface for Liu Zhengzong 刘正宗 (1594-1661)'s collection of poems. Liu was the Minister of the Ministry of Personnel at that time. In the preface, Zhang wrote that Liu "has the talent to be the general for the Ming dynasty (*Jiang Ming zhicai* 将明之才)" and thus was impeached by the Censor. At the same time, it was discovered that Zhang called himself "The Immortal Hero (*busi yingxiong* 不死英雄)" when he published the *Silent Operas*.¹⁹

¹⁹ Wang. *Qingdai jinshu zongshu*. 35-36.

Due to those two reasons, Zhang Jinyan was sentenced to dismissal, confiscation of property, and exile to Ningguta 宁古塔.²⁰

This case of the ban on *Silent Operas* was not unique in the Qing Dynasty. Although the book itself did not violate any of the ruler's taboos and the author himself did not commit any prohibited acts, it became a banned book merely because the author was involved in another case related to offending the emperor's taboos. Such indiscriminate association was a common phenomenon in later Literary Inquisition cases.

In the ending years of the Shunzhi period, only one other novel, *Sequel to The Golden Lotus* (*Xuxie jinpingmei* 续写金瓶梅) by Ding Yaokang 丁耀亢(1599-1669), was banned. Unlike the *Silent Operas*, this book was banned because Ding borrowed stories from the Song and the Jin Dynasties to satirize the Ming and the Qing. Even though Ding's books were judged to be banned and destroyed, Ding was released after four months of imprisonment. This was mainly because the Qing court in the Shunzhi period did not establish clear laws and punishments for the censorship of novels as it did in later times. Compared to the large-scale ban on novels in the High Qing period, the prohibition of novels in the early Qing period was only several isolated cases. At this stage, book censorship had yet to become a concrete cultural policy implemented by the government. With the strict censorship of books, almost all kinds of novels were banned during the high Qing period. The publishing industry, centered in Jiangnan, suffered from a strong impact, but it provided an opportunity for the rise of the publishing industry in Sibao.

²⁰ Today's eastern Heilongjiang and the southern part of Russia's Far East, because of the cold climate, was used as a place of exile in the Qing Dynasty.

Censorship During the Kangxi Period

During the unification of the Qing Dynasty, due to the initial weakness of the early Qing government in administering the vast empire, the Manchu rulers enlisted numerous former Ming officials to aid in governing the country. Emperor Shunzhi designated Guangdong, Fujian, and Yunnan as fiefdoms (*fanzhen* 藩镇) that were ruled by three turncoat Ming generals who helped the Qing conquest.²¹

After a prolonged period following the Manchu conquest of Beijing and the establishment of a new dynasty, in 1662 (Kangxi 2), the last emperor of the Southern Ming was captured and executed by Wu Sangui 吴三桂 (1612-1678),²² the lord of Yunnan, signifying the end of the Ming dynasty.

In the 1670s, Emperor Kangxi became dissatisfied with the autonomy of the three fiefdoms and initiated dissolving them to centralize the empire under the central government. However, this action provoked the opposition of the three lords. In 1673, Wu Sangui started the rebellion against the Qing court with the other two lords under the slogan "Restore the Ming and eliminate the barbarians" (*fu Ming taolu* 复明讨虏). This rebellion culminated in the eight-year-long Revolt of the Three Feudatories (*sanfanzhiluan* 三藩之乱).²³ The Kangxi Emperor quelled the rebellion in 1681 and regained control of Taiwan in 1683. From this time onward, the Qing court incorporated all the formal Ming territory into its governance, signifying the start of the High Qing

²¹ William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 21-25.

²² Southern Ming, was a continuation of the Ming regime established in Southern China by the remaining Ming imperial family and officials after Manchu occupation of Beijing and death of Chongzhen Emperor.

²³ Rowe, *China's Last Empire*, 21-25.

Period.

Since 1684 (Kangxi 23), China has experienced over a century of peace, particularly in former Ming territory. The introduction of New World crops led to the recovery and growth of agriculture and the economy from the recession during the Ming-Qing transition. Population growth also surged during this period. The Qing regime stabilized gradually, consolidating its centralized political power and tightening control over the cultural sphere. To maintain and strengthen its rule and to diminish the alienation of the Han Chinese and the idea of "anti-Qing and restitution Ming Dynasty (*fan Qing fu Ming* 反清复明),"²⁴ the Qing court implemented various high-handed policies to enhance control over ideology and culture, while also adopting a strategy of softening and engaging with literati.

Beginning in 1671, the Kangxi Emperor started cultivating good relationships with the Han literati class through a series of actions. For example, he instituted daily tuition classes (*jingyan rike* 经筵日课) on the Confucian classics. In 1676, the texts used in the lessons were published in a collection with the emperor's personal prefaces. Then, in 1677, the Southern Study (*nanshufang* 南书房) was established, where the emperor regularly met and consulted with Chinese scholars. In 1679, the emperor also held a special "Examination for Leading Scholars" (*boxue hongru shi* 博学鸿儒试).²⁵ This exam invited many famous Chinese scholars, and those who passed were appointed to compile the official history of the Ming dynasty. All these moves were meant to show the Han literati that the Qing rulers were no different from Chinese emperors in former

²⁴ Ibid, 66.

²⁵ R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-Lung Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 20.

dynasties and that the country would be governed with the same traditional Confucianism and bureaucratic system.

During his reign, the Kangxi Emperor adopted a series of cultural liberalization policies to attract Han Chinese literati to serve the Qing court. However, not all Han literati accepted the Qing rule. Some literati expressed dissatisfaction with the Manchu rule in their private writings, which led to the emergence of the Literary Inquisition, an essential element of the Qing cultural policy in the high Qing period.

During the reign of the Kangxi Emperor, there were no large-scale Literary Inquisitions to appease the literati class in the newly conquered regions of the south. However, there were several Literary Inquisitions in the mid-to-late Kangxi period. Compared with the case of Zhang Jinyan in the Shunzhi period, the punishments in Literary Inquisition cases in the Kangxi period were much harsher.

According to the statistics of Wang Bin 王斌,²⁶ there were four major Literary Inquisition cases during the Kangxi period. All primary offenders were sentenced to death, and their families were exiled. The punishment for Zhuang Tinglong's Ming history case (明史案) was particularly severe, with eleven out of the fourteen individuals involved in the book's revision being executed by slicing to death (*linchi* 凌迟). The carvers, printers, booksellers, and collectors associated with the book were also beheaded. Numerous officials were implicated and removed from their positions for failing to supervise the book.²⁷ The Literary Inquisitions of the Qing Dynasty originated in the Kangxi period and were primarily triggered by ethnic conflicts between the

²⁶ Wang, *Qingdai jinshu zongshu*, 36-38.

²⁷ Wang, *Qingdai jinshu zongshu*, 32.

Manchus and the Han. The Literary Inquisitions of the Kangxi and Yongzheng reigns mainly targeted scholars who opposed the Qing rule. The banned books in the Kangxi period include Dai Mingshi's 戴名世 (1653-1713) *Nanshan Collection* 南山集, Shen Tianfu's 沈天甫 (?-1667) *Zhongyilu Poetry Collection* 忠义录诗集, Zhu Fangdan's 朱方旦 (?-1682) *Zhongzhi Mishu* 中质秘书, and so on.²⁸ Banned books in the Kangxi period were similar to Zhuang Tinglong's Ming history case. They were banned because the Manchurian rulers were offended by the writings of the literati who expressed their nostalgia for the Ming Dynasty or wrote history for the Southern Ming Dynasty in their articles or books.

At the same time, the Qing Dynasty's prohibition of novels was also in progress. Since then, the emperors have issued several imperial edicts to clarify the banning of novels. During the Kangxi period, the ban on novels began at the local level. In 1686, Tang Bin 汤斌 (1627-1687), the Provincial Governor of Jiangsu Province (*Jiangsu xunfu* 江苏巡抚), issued a document titled "Strictly Prohibition on the Private Carving of Salacious and Immoral Novels and Plays," in which he argued that the novels published and sold in bookstores around Jiangsu "promoted obscenity and fraud" and "damaged social the harmony and corrupt the people's values." Therefore, it should be strictly prohibited for the bookstores in Jiangsu to compile, publish, and buy "Salacious and Immoral Novels." This campaign banning novels under the auspices of Tang Bin had a profound impact on the publishing industry in Jiangnan.

In 1687, Liu Kai 刘楷 (Kangxi 18, *jinshi* 进士), the Supervising Secretary of the

²⁸ Ibid

Board of Punishments(xingke jishizhong 刑科给事中), sent a memorial to the emperor and suggested to prohibit all pornographic novels and to destroy all related woodblocks to eliminate pornographic novels immediately. In the same year, the Kangxi Emperor approved Liu's suggestion and issued an imperial edict that mentioned:

There are more than 150 kinds of pornographic novels on sale in the market. The content of privately written pornographic novels is vulgar and easily corrupts people's minds. Therefore, they should be banned, and woodblocks should be destroyed. If anyone fails to comply with the order, they will be dealt with by the censors and the Wardens' Offices of the Five Wards in the Dynastic Capital City in the capital. The Governors-General and the Provincial Governors will deal with it in provinces. Prefectural and county officials are also ordered to investigate and report back strictly. Violators will be punished severely.²⁹

书肆淫词小说,刊刻出卖共一百五十余种,...至私行撰著淫词等书,鄙俗浅陋,易坏人心,亦应一体查禁,毁其刻板,如违禁不遵,内而科道五城御史,外而督抚,令府州县官,严行稽查题参,该部从重治罪.

This was the first time that the Qing court issued an explicit imperial edict prohibiting the publication and sale of pornographic novels and specifying officials in charge. The officials in charge were required to report back through a routine memorial.

In 1714, the Kangxi Emperor issued an imperial edict to the Board of Rites (*Libu* 礼部), further specifying the ban of pornographic novels in the 1687 imperial edict. This imperial edict clearly stated that those who violated the book ban would be punished according to their status and behavior. If the criminal who made pornographic novels was an official, he was to be dismissed from his post. Otherwise, soldiers and civilians who violated this regulation were to be beaten with 100 strokes of the heavy bamboo and be exiled to 3,000 *li*. Those who sold novels in the market were punished with 100 strokes of heavy strokes and forced labor for three years. In addition, this imperial edict also specified

²⁹ *Qinding xuezheng quanshu*, vol 7, 1a-2a.

that if the officials in charge were found to have failed to supervise the local failures of banned books, they would also face punishments. On the first two occasions when the officials were found to have failed to carry out this imperial edict, the punishment was a fine of six months or one year's salary. If there were a third failure, the punishment would be demotion by one rank and transfer from the official's current post.³⁰ While the previous imperial edicts had been used to guide administrative practices to promote the ban on novels, the edict of 1714 was incorporated into the *Da Qing huidian*, which formalized the prohibition of pornographic novels in the form of law to increase the strength and effectiveness in practice.

Censorship During the Yongzheng Period

In 1724, the Yongzheng Emperor issued an imperial edict that added a new penalty for holding forbidden books. "Anyone who buys or reads them shall be beaten with 100 heavy strokes (*Maikanzhe zhang yibai* 买看者杖一百)³¹." It indicated that not only publishing and selling "pornographic novels" were punishable, but buying and reading them also became a crime.

There are several records of pornographic novels being banned during the Kangxi period. Still, due to the initial implementation of the policy, the emperor and local officials gave publishers a period of grace, ordering them to turn in the previously existing woodblocks to the government to ban the circulation of pornographic novels. Therefore, these records only mention the seizure and destruction of woodblocks and pornographic

³⁰ *Qinding Daqing Huidian Zeli* 钦定大清会典则例, vol 20, 7a.

³¹ The relevant penalties mentioned below are referred to as the Buy and Read Substatus in *Qinding taigui* 钦定台规, Regulation of Imperial Censorate, vol 25, 6a.

novels, but no specific punishment for individuals was recorded. Another reason for not finding many relevant cases before the Yongzheng reign may be that many archives did not survive with time.³² Because beating with 100 strokes of the heavy bamboo and exile for 3,000 li were severe punishments in the Qing dynasty. Especially when it related to exile, it was usually necessary for the provincial governors to report to the Board of Punishment by the memorials. Then, the Board of Punishment would review and approve the sentence before it was carried out.

However, after the “Buy and Read Substatute” (*Maikanli*, 买看例) was promulgated in 1724, related cases started to appear in Qing legal records, such as Zhu Yiru’s case.

Zhu Yiru, the alias for Yao Changzheng, was a medicine merchant from Gao'an County, Jiangxi Province. While traveling to Fengyibei Xiang (奉邑北乡) to sell his medicine, he knew of an abandoned temple called Baiyun Temple. Then, he applied to the owner of the temple to lease it. When there was no response from the owner, he returned to his hometown to raise money by selling the land. However, due to his wife's strong opposition, he was unsuccessful. Ten days later, he went back to Baiyun Temple. Since the place was abandoned, the locals thought his behavior was suspicious and called a *yamen* runner to check it out. They found a wooden tablet and the forbidden book *An Illustrated Prophecy Book* (*Tuibeitu* 推背图) in his carrying package. He was sentenced to 100 heavy strokes and exile by the Buy and Read Substatus and a fine of 10 taels of silver as an informer's reward for concealing the forbidden book.³³

³² The reason for my deduction is that when I looked up the cases of pornographic novels in the Qing legal records, I found that there were a large number of cases of manufacturing gambling equipment that were also sentenced to exile, but the only case directly related to the production and sale of pornographic novels was that of Wu Yingyang in the Qianlong period.

³³ Memorial to the Board of Punishment, the title is “Memorial of affairs for the trial of the case of Zhu Yiru’s suspicious behavior and hiding banned books, intend to beating and fine according to the Code,

An Illustrated Prophecy Book was a famous ancient Chinese prophecy book. According to legend, the authors of this book were two renowned astronomers of the Tang Dynasty, Li Chunfeng 李淳风 and Yuan Tiangang 袁天罡. They deduced sixty trigrams (*guaxiang*, 卦象),³⁴ based on the *Classic of Changes* (*yijing*, 易经), to reveal the fate of the dynasty. According to Jin Shengtan's 金圣叹 (1608-1611) commentary version, each trigram included an illustration, a prophecy, and a short poem explaining the prophecy. *An Illustrated Prophecy Book* has been prohibited across different dynasties in Chinese history due to its unverifiable origins and potential for manipulation to create predictions that could challenge current rulers. In Jin's book preface, he remarked, "Understand its words and intentions, the Manchus ruling will not last long, we just need to wait for it to end. They should not think of themselves as heaven's offspring."³⁵ This statement might serve another reason for the Qing prohibition of the *An Illustrated Prophecy Book*.

At least Zhu Yiru's case has demonstrated that the Buy and Read Substatus is not only applied narrow down to pornographic novels in the course of judicial practice but also to the possession of other banned books, such as *An Illustrated Prophecy Book*, which may also be subject to the punishment as pornographic novels.

Censorship During the Qianlong Period

The Qing government implemented a series of reforms following the efforts of the

coinciding with amnesty from punishment” 刑科题本, 题为审理朱一如私藏禁书行踪诡秘一案依律拟杖追银充偿逢恩援免事.

³⁴ Some version suggest forty-eight .

³⁵ Jin Shengtan, ed. *Jin Shengtan zhu tuibeitu* 金圣叹注推背图(*An Illustrated Prophecy Book with Jin Shengtan's commentaries*). See "preface," 原文为 “玩其词, 参其意, 胡运不长, 可立而待, 毋以天之骄子自处也.

Kangxi and Yongzheng emperors. From an informational perspective, implementing the new Palace Memorial system strengthened the connection between local regions and the emperor. That led to an enhanced transmission speed of crucial local information to the emperor and an expansion of the emperor's understanding of regional affairs channels. Concurrently, information confidentiality was improved. The governmental reforms under the Yongzheng reign primarily involved establishing a new inner court organization, the Grand Council, to aid the emperor in handling the increasing number of memorials and offer counsel and advice on governing affairs.³⁶ The creation of the Grand Council allowed the emperor to bypass bureaucratic limitations in certain matters, further bolstering the emperor's authority. Toward the end of the Yongzheng period, a tax reform known as imposing the meltage fee and folding the head tax into the land tax (*tanding rumu* 摊丁入亩),³⁷ was introduced. The primary objective of this tax reform was to shift the focus of taxation from the population to the land, making it difficult for landowners to evade taxes and simultaneously easing the burden of taxes on small farmers. This tax law reform increased government revenue and contributed to population growth. Reforms in the government and the economy laid a solid foundation for the reign of the Qianlong Emperor. The favorable political situation in the empire allowed the Qianlong Emperor to devote more attention to the cultural aspects.

From the cultural perspective, the Qianlong Emperor increased the censorship of pornographic novels based on his predecessors. On the other hand, the Qianlong period also had the most significant literary inquisition cases in the history of the Qing, with a

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Rowe, *China's Last Empire*, 69.

wide range of punishments and many individuals penalized.

In 1738, shortly after the Qianlong Emperor succeeded to the throne, Guangshao Education Commissioner (*guangshao xuezheng* 广韶学政) Wang Pilie 王丕烈 (Yongzheng 5 *jinshi*) submitted a memorial to discuss the prohibition of pornographic novels, and the Qianlong Emperor added new content to the Yongzheng 1724 imperial edict based on this memorial. After the Board of Punishments had acknowledged the new phenomenon of the circulation of novels mentioned in the memorial. The new imperial edict emphasized:³⁸

Pornographic novels were strictly prohibited because they were the most harmful to people's minds and customs. However, the local officials should have implemented the policy and destroyed all the existing pornographic novels. Even the market was filled with all kinds of pornographic novels, and there were even bookstores that rented them. If the policy is not strictly enforced, not only old editions will still be printed, but new editions will also be issued. This is not the way to eliminate pornographic novels. The local officials should be instructed to ban the circulation of pornographic novels. In addition to following the existing laws, they should be required to collect and destroy all pornographic novels currently in circulation within a time limit of three months. Those who were found to have pornographic novels after three months were punished under the Buy and Read Substatute. Those who are in the business of renting will be punished by Selling in Public Substatute. If the officer in charge fails to stop the circulation of pornographic novels, he will be demoted two ranks and transferred out of his post according to the “Failing to Supervise and Prohibit the Cults Substatute.”³⁹

盖淫词秽说,最为风俗人心之害,故例禁綦严.但地方官奉行不力,致向存旧刻销毁不尽;甚至售卖各种,叠架盈箱,列诸市肆,租赁与人观看.若不严行禁绝,不但旧版仍然刷印,且新板接踵刊行,实非拔本塞源之道.应再通行直省督府,转饬地方官,凡民间一应淫词小说,除造作刻印,定例已严,均照旧遵行外;其有收存旧本,限文到三月,悉令销毁.如过期不行销毁者,照“买看例”治罪.其有开铺租赁者,照“市卖例”治罪.该管官员任其收存租赁,明知故纵者,照“禁止邪教不能察缉例”,降二级调用.

The 1738 imperial edict mentions a new way of circulating books—Leasing. This rental-

³⁸ At that there were two education commissioners in Guangdong Province. The other one is Zhaogao education commissioner(肇高学政).

³⁹ *Qinding xuezheng quanshu*, vol.7, p2b-3b.

based business was undoubtedly a product of the highly commercialized publishing industry of the Qing dynasty. The emergence of a new form of circulation noticed by officials also shows a great demand for novels and other entertainment literature in the high Qing period. However, this solid popular demand also attracted the attention of the ruling class, and cultural control measures were imposed on the novel rental business.

In the early years of his reign, the Qianlong Emperor relaxed cultural controls for a time on the Literary Inquisition. He also issued an edict to stop false charges in the name of the Literary Inquisition. However, 1751 (Qianlong 16) marked a significant turning point in the cultural policy of the high Qing period. In July of 1751, the Qianlong Emperor received a memorial from Shuose 硕色 (1687-1759), the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou (*Yungui zongdu*, 云贵总督). In it, Shuose reported to the emperor that he found in Guizhou a fake memorial criticizing the emperor under the name of Sun Jiagan 孙嘉淦 (1683-1753), the Provincial Governor of Fujian 福建巡抚, which even had forged the emperor's vermilion rescripts. According to Shuose's investigation, the memorial was copied by many people from Hubei to Guizhou.⁴⁰ Then, in August of the same year, the Qianlong Emperor ordered the governors-general and governors of Zhili, Henan, Shanxi, Hubei, Hunan, and Guizhou to investigate the source of the fake memorial.⁴¹ In August alone, there were fifteen memorials related to the fake memorials reported to the emperor.⁴²

⁴⁰ Memorial from Shuo Se, Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou, for detecting fake memorials coming from the Hubei matters. 云贵总督硕色等为报查明伪稿来自湖北事奏折.

⁴¹ Memorial from He Qizhong, surveillance commissioners of Shandong, Secret report on the dissemination of fake memorials and the provincial governor hasty handling it in Shandong. 山东按察使和其衷为密报山东曾有伪稿传播及抚臣草率处置情事奏折.

⁴² The First Historical Archives of China, Qianlong nianjian wei Sun Jiagan zougaoan shiliao xuan (2), Selected Historical Materials of Fake Sun Jiagan's Memorials Case in Qianlong period, 乾隆年间伪孙嘉淦奏稿案史料选(二), 1998.

During the two years of the investigation on the fake memorial case, many high-ranking officials, such as the Shandong Provincial Governor Juntai; Jiangxi Provincial Governor E'chang; and the Surveillance Commissioners (*an'chashi* 按察使), Ding Tingrang and He Qizhong,⁴³ were removed from their posts because of their ineffective work. According to the 2007 revised and enlarged version of the *Qindai wenziyu dang* 清代文字狱档 (Qing Literary Inquisition Archives), there was only one Literary Inquisition case before the false memorial case. However, there were 80 Literary Inquisition cases in the Qianlong period,⁴⁴ and most of the cases occurred after 1751. Since no significant event happened then, it can be deduced that the false memorial case triggered the Qianlong period Literary Inquisition. The Literary Inquisition cases in the Qianlong reign intensified from the false memorial case. It also led to the Qianlong reign, the strictest period in the entire Qing history in terms of cultural policy and censorship.

The increase in cultural prohibitions during the Qianlong period was reflected in the increase in the number of Literary Inquisition cases and the extension of the breadth of the cases' processing. Unlike in the previous period, the banned books from the Literary Inquisition cases were not limited to the specific book that offended taboos but also extended to all works made by the offender. The Lü Liuliang 吕留良 (1629-1683) case was the best example of this phenomenon.

Lü Liuliang's case was caused by Zeng Jing's 曾静 (1679-1736) case. In Zeng's case, Zeng Jing sent his student Zhang Xi 张熙 to try to convince Yue Zhongqi 岳钟琪 (1686-

⁴³ *DaQing Gaozong Chun Huangdi shilu* 大清高宗纯皇帝实录, vol 379-440.

⁴⁴ *Qindai wenziyu dang* 清代文字狱档 (Qing Literary Inquisition Archives), (Shanghai, Shanghai shudian Press, 2007).

1754), the Governor-General of Shanxi and Sichuan, to rebel against Manchu rule, because Zeng and Zhang thought Yue was the descendants of Yue Fei 岳飛 (1103-1142), who was general in Southern Song leading against Jurchen. With Yue's report, Zeng and Zhang were sent to trial by the central court. During the trial of Zeng, he said Lü's thoughts against Manchu rule had influenced him. Zeng expressed his repentance to the emperor. The Yongzheng emperor tolerated Zeng and did not punish Zeng, but he severely punished Lü. Although Lü was already dead by this time, the trial sentenced to destroy his body. Lü's son was sentenced to death, and other family members were exiled to Ningguta as slaves.

Both cases were tried and punished in the Yongzheng period. However, after the Qianlong emperor succeeded the throne, he reopened those two cases and resented Zeng Jing and his student Zhang Xi to slow slicing. At the same time, he determined to ban all works by Lü Liuliang and let all provincial governors destroy those books in their jurisdiction.

Expanding the Meaning of Pornographic Novels

From the early Shunzhi period, when "Trifling Anecdotes" and "Pornographic Lyrics" were first mentioned in the imperial edicts, to the Kangxi period, when the concept of pornographic novels was first introduced, to the early Qianlong period, when pornographic novels were mentioned in the imperial edicts, the reference to pornographic novels has always been to novels containing pornographic content. Although there were cases in the Yongzheng period in which Zhu Yiru showed that some banned books could also be criminalized by the "Buy and Read Substatute," there were relatively few cases in the current available historical records. While banned books of a political nature were often

involved in the Literary Inquisition, novels of other kinds, except for pornography, escaped censorship.

In addition to the pornographic novels of the Ming and Qing dynasties, several other significant types of novels were widely circulated, such as historical novels, court case fiction (*gongan xiaoshuo* 公案小说), and supernatural tales novels (*shenmo xiaoshuo* 神魔小说). Famous novels such as the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Water Margin* (*Shuihuzhuan* 水浒传), and the *Journey to the West* (*Xiyouji* 西游记) with the *Bao Gong An* (*Baogong'an* 包公案) have been widely circulated. Before the Qianlong reign, those novels did not fall into the banned book category.

A similar category of book to court case fiction was also popular during the Ming and Qing dynasties, and this category of book was known as the secret handbooks for the litigation masters (*songshimiben* 讼师秘本), unlike the court case fiction, which focused on the stories of detecting crime cases in the name of famous officials. The secret handbooks for the litigants focus on how to participate in the judicial practice and how to help them win the cases by teaching them how to draft accusations and counter-accusations. Thus, in the eyes of the officials, professional litigants were an extremely destabilizing factor in local government and were therefore scornfully referred to as "pettifogger (*songgun* 讼棍)." In a memorial in 1742, Li Rulan 李如兰 (?-1747), the Surveillance Commissioner of Sichuan, mentioned that to deal with the exaggerations and false testimonies of the litigation masters to win the cases, he asked the local officials to impose higher penalties for the crime in the process of examining the cases if accusations were fraudulent. Therefore, the secret books for litigation masters, which

were circulated in the marketplaces and served as instructional manuals for the litigants, should also be included in the category of banned books. Since then, the secret handbooks for litigants have also been included in the category of pornographic novels.⁴⁵

In addition to the previously mentioned *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, which was banned from being translated into the Manchu language during the reign of Hung Taiji, other popular historical novels were also prohibited during the Qianlong period. In 1753, the Qianlong Emperor's imperial edict prohibited the translation of *the Water Margin* (*Shuihu* 水浒) and *the Western Chamber* (*Xixiangji* 西厢记) into Manchu language. The emperor mentioned that the Manchus had only been exposed to books since the conquest when the Chinese classics were translated into Manchu.⁴⁶ However, in addition to the original translations of classics, many famous novels in Chinese, such as *The Water Margin* and *The West Chamber*, were translated into Manchu. "Those popular novels did not help, but rather, they deteriorated the purity and nature of the Manchus."⁴⁷ In the following year, at the suggestion of the Investigating Censor (*Jianchayushi* 监察御史) Hu Ding 胡定 (1709-1789), the scope of the ban on *the water Margin* was further expanded to "strict prohibition of *the Water Margin* as a whole."⁴⁸ That marked that *the Water Margin* and *the Western Chamber* in any language were banned books since 1754.

The background of historical novels is mainly based on the chaotic period of the dynastic change, and the content of historical novels is primarily related to wars and

⁴⁵Lai Bao, Memorial of Discussion for Li Rulan's memorial about the publication and sale of secret handbooks for litigants in the market should be prohibited and destroyed matter. 题为会议四川按察使李如兰奏称坊肆之中刊卖讼师秘本等书一体查禁销毁事.

⁴⁶ 原文为:"满洲等习俗纯朴.忠义禀乎天性.原不识所谓书籍.自我朝一统以来.始学汉文."

⁴⁷ *DaQing Gaozong Chun Huangdi shilu*, 大清高宗纯皇帝实录, vol 443.

⁴⁸ *Qinding xuezheng quanshu*, vol 7, p3b.

rebellions. In particular, the historical novels set in the Song and Yuan dynasties involved rebellions against the Mongol and Jin invasions, which the Qing rulers considered a sign of discontent with the Manchu rule. It touched on the most important taboo of the Qing court. Although only *The Water Margin* was explicitly banned because of the suspicion of inciting rebellion, in the actual censorship process, many historical novels, such as *the General Yue Fei* (*Shuoyue quanzhuan* 说岳全传), were banned for the same reasons.

Based on the available primary sources, it is difficult to assess the strength of the ban on pornographic novels during the High Qing period. In addition to the written laws and regulations, it is extremely rare to find legal cases penalizing the production of pornographic novels in the more than one hundred years of the formation of the written law on the prohibition of pornographic novels. However, confessions from the Literary Inquisition of Peng Jiaping 彭家屏 (?-1757) in the early Qianlong period provide clues to the policy of banning books during the Qianlong period. Peng Chuanwu 彭传笏, the son of Peng Jiaping, was arrested in 1757 after being involved in the Literary Inquisition case. In his confession, he specifically mentioned that while eliminating banned books, "Even one of my books, *Water Margin*, was burned in the stove because it was a banned book."⁴⁹ This happened three years after *Water Margin* became banned, suggesting that at least the officials and family members knew the policy regarding banned books. Had it not been for the intense official investigations in the Literary Inquisition cases, the possession of pornographic novels or books against the law would not have been so easy to detect. This may be one of the reasons why there were relatively few cases of punishment in the Qing Dynasty.

⁴⁹ *Qing Literary Inquisition Archive*, 1024-1025.

The newly discovered place memorial from Gao Jin 高晋(1706-1779), the Governor-General of Liangjiang 两江总督, in 1771 was the only legal case directly related to the production of pornographic novels.

A native of Danyang County, Zhejiang Province, Wu Deyang 吴德扬 began studying at an early age but had no outstanding literary achievement, as he did not pass any level of the imperial examinations. After his father's death, Wu Deyang relied heavily on his father's inheritance. As he grew up, he did not have the skills to make a living and depended on selling the family's inheritance to make a living. This led to the deterioration of his family's living conditions and conflict with his wife. Tan Yuan Yu 谭元裕, the brother of Wu De Yang's wife, also tried to persuade Wu De Yang to work to support the family. When this failed, Tan Yuanyu beat and insulted Wu Deyang at times. As a result, Wu Deyang began to write a *Military Art Memorial to His Majesty (Bingfa chenqingbiao 兵法陈情表)* based on *Military Classics (Wujing 武经)* and novels. He hoped to submit it to the governor to obtain an official position by recommendation.

After finishing the draft, Wu Deyang asked his son's teacher, Ma Suiliang 马遂良, to transcribe the whole work on red paper and bring it to Nanjing (the capital of Jiangning) because his hand was injured. But before his submission, the local yamen runner found Wu Deyang holding the red papers and looked suspicious as an outsider. Then, the runner brought Wu Deyang to the yamen for questioning. Although Wu Deyang was hoping to seek official positions through his works, the local officials had a different opinion of his works. After reviewing his works, the local officials found that Wu Deyang had not accomplished anything in his studies but dared to talk about military

art. They feared that Wu Deyang had other works to disseminate that might incite and confuse his readers. Because of the references to some novels, the local officials finally recognized Wu Deyang's *Military Art Memorial to His Majesty* as a pornographic novel. Local officials sentenced Wu Deyang to exile in Heilongjiang according to the relevant law prohibiting pornographic novels. Ma Suiliang, the author of Wu Deyang's transcription, was also sentenced to 80 strokes of the heavy bamboo and one month's public display with cangue.⁵⁰

The Zhu Yiru and Wu Deyang cases illustrate the high level of local government oversight of regional affairs in Jiangxi and Jiangsu during the High Qing period. Even in the county towns, outsiders were vulnerable to inspection. It can be assumed that publishing houses in areas such as Jiangnan, which were heavily monitored, would have been less engaged in publishing neither pornographic novels nor offensive books.

⁵⁰ Memorial for matters about reporting the capture of Wu Deyang who produced novel, the investigation and proposed punishment. 奏报拿获造作小说之吴德扬审明定拟缘由.

Chapter III: The Completion and Operation of Censorship in the late Qianlong Period

The Origin of the 1770s Book Censorship Campaign

Before understanding how the book censorship system operated in the late Qianlong period, the first question to be answered is who was locally responsible for book censorship. According to Qing statutes and substatutes about prohibiting pornographic novels, the Governors-General, the Provincial Governors, and the Education Commissioners handled the local banning of pornographic novels. Also, the imperial edict of 1741 (Qianlong 6) mentioned:

Let the Governors-Generals, the Provincial Governors, and the Education Commissioners pay attention to seeking rare books, whether in hand-copied or printed editions. They could submit books anytime to expand the Imperial Collection.⁵¹

着直省督抚学政,留心采访,不拘刊本抄本,随时进呈,以广石渠天禄之储。

This indicates that collecting precious books was also the responsibility of the governor-general, the provincial governor, and the education commissioner.

The books mentioned in the 1741 edict were mainly aimed at precious editions of classic Confucian studies outside the imperial collection. Censorship, however, was not involved in the collection of books during this period. Before the initiation of the *Siku* program, in 1747 the Qianlong Emperor set up a new institution for leading scholars to work on compiling *Supplement to Comprehensive Study of Historical Documents* (*Xu wenxian tongkao* 续文献通考) based on the books in the Imperial Collection. State-

⁵¹ *Qinding xuezheng quanshu*, vol3 p1a.

sponsored official revision programs during this period were centered on two main categories: Confucian classics and political cyclopedias. After the completion of the *Xuwenxian tongka*, the institution was not abolished as usual but was reorganized as Santong Compiling Office (*Santong guan* 三通馆) to continue the work of compiling the *General Treatises* (*Tongzhi* 通志) and *Comprehensive Institutions* (*Tongdian* 通典).

Subsequently, in the 1771 (Qianlong 36) edict, the emperor defined the range of the books to be collected by the provinces. He demanded that the provincial governors submit books excluding “editions of examination essays (*shiwen* 时文) prepared for sale by bookshops, genealogies uselessly among the people, collections of letters, and samples of calligraphy. Other than those, any preserved book which clarifies the essential methods of government or which concerns human nature ought to be purchased.”⁵² Qianlong Emperor also stated: “As for commentaries, explications, and booknotes, if they are of real benefit, they ought to be included.”⁵³

In the edict, the emperor also instructed how practiced the collection of books should be. He mentioned that the officials should take different approaches depending on the source of the books: “The books for sale in bookstores should be bought at the going rate. Prints of woodblocks stored in private homes should be made at government expense. Officials should order copyists to duplicate those books which have never been printed and exist only in manuscripts, being careful to return the originals to their owners.”⁵⁴

⁵² Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 36.

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ ibid

Considering the wide range of books mentioned in this edict, the emperor also asked the provincial governors to collect and catalog the books before reporting them to the central government through memorials to minimize the waste of administrative resources. The catalog should include the book titles, the author, the dynasty, and the book's main content. Although this adds the requirement of pre-censorship to the original task of collecting books, it showed that from reports before 1773, there was no censorship involved in the work of the book bureau before 1773.

In response to the emperor's edict and facing a steep increase in workload, the governors organized local elites in the book-rich Jiangnan region to participate in the operation by setting up book bureaus in the practical operation of the book collection.⁵⁵ By 1774, book bureaus were established in Henan, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Fujian Provinces. It is important to note that unlike the 19th-century book bureaus, which were official publishing organizations, the book bureaus of the Qianlong period were only temporary book collection organizations.

The main reason for the governors to set up book bureaus was to utilize the social networks of the local elites to help them collect books. Due to the rule of avoidance, when appointing officials in the Qing, officials always came from regions that had no connection with their place of service. The officials were unfamiliar with the local social and interpersonal networks. In a book bureau, local education officials often collected and censored books. Local education officials were usually appointed scholars who had *juren* 举人 degrees. In addition to this temporary position at the book bureau, the local education

⁵⁵ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 88.

officials were also the head (Instructor *jiaoyu* 教谕, rank 8a) of the state-sponsored Confucian Schools (*guanxi* 官学). Since the rule of avoidance did not apply to this position, local education officials were natives of the region they served.⁵⁶ Most students in the state-sponsored Confucian Schools were also natives of the area with a *shengyuan* 生员 degree. In other words, with the existing state-sponsored Confucian School system, the book bureau could organize a solid social network from the very beginning of its existence.

By the middle of the Qianlong dynasty, the Qing bureaucracy had absorbed many literati, including prominent scholars. The emphasis of Qianlong's cultural policy during this period was to use Han Chinese scholars to rewrite the historical narrative to suit the needs of Manchu rule. Collaboration with Han Chinese scholars minimized the alien nature of the Manchus to a certain extent. At the local level, cooperation with local elites also laid a solid foundation for further legitimizing Manchu rule in the mid-late Qianlong period.

The Book Collection for *Siku* and Beginning of the 1770s Censorship Campaign

The sign of the peak of book censorship in the Qing dynasty was the compilation of the *Complete Library of the Four Treasuries* (*Siku quanshu* 四库全书) from 1773-1782. In addition to the original book collection, book censorship became one of the main focuses of official work during this period.

After the 1771 imperial edict was sent to all the provincial governors, they responded to the emperor's call by submitting catalogs of book titles. However, in April 1772, the Qianlong Emperor criticized the governors for collecting books that were primarily recent

⁵⁶ Ibid

and did not include the works of famous scholars of the previous dynasty. He believed that the main reason for this was that the governors feared that the works of the former literati, because of their different positions from the present, might describe many things that are taboo nowadays. Therefore, they deliberately avoided these books when compiling their catalogs. Book owners also hid the books for fear of being implicated in the Literary Inquisition for book contents.⁵⁷ To dispel such concerns, the Qianlong Emperor specifically stated in his edict of 1773 (Qianlong 38) that:

Literati published scholarly works to expound the academic theories in which they specialize. There may inevitably be inconsistencies [in the book's contents], or things may not be accurate. However, if the book had some contributions, it was best to include them. Even if some statements touch on taboos, such as contradictions between dynasties, they were only due to past prejudices and had nothing to do with the present, so why worry about them?⁵⁸

文人著书立说。各抒所长。或传闻异辞。或纪载失实。固所不免。果其略有可观。原不妨兼收并蓄。即或字义触碍。如南北史之互相诋毁。此乃前人偏见。与近时无涉。又何必过于畏首畏尾耶。

He then added:

I am honorable enough to be trusted by the whole world. How could I issue an edict to seek out the precious books of the previous dynasty and simultaneously condemn the owners because of some minor flaws in the books?⁵⁹

朕办事光明正大。可以共信于天下。岂有下诏访求遗籍。顾于书中寻摘瑕疵。罪及收藏之人乎。

Despite his attempts to create an image of tolerance, the Qianlong Emperor tried to imply that he preferred the governors to make book censorship a work priority. The records of the 1774 March *Shilu* indicate that another secret edict on how to deal with offensive books was sent to both the governors of Jiangsu and Zhejiang as the 1772 edict. The

⁵⁷ *Qinding xuezheng quanshu*, vol3 3a-3b.

⁵⁸ Ibid 6b.

⁵⁹ Ibid 6b-7a.

emperor paid so much attention to the situation in Zhejiang and Jiangsu because the two provinces, as representatives of the Jiangnan region, were the most literate, had the largest literati class, and were the most wealthy region in China. The stability of the Jiangnan region was crucial to the empire. The Qianlong Emperor told the governors of those two provinces, "If a book contains any taboo or absurd words and phrases, it should not be left to confuse later scholars."⁶⁰ He reiterated that the owners of offensive books were not to be blamed, but the books should be destroyed, and informed the owners that they would not receive and keep such books. The governor should not be worried about just passing the books to the central government.

The Qianlong Emperor needed to repeatedly emphasize that officials would not be condemned for censoring offensive books because, after fake memorials cases, significant numbers of Literary Inquisition cases happened, where officials suffered for failing to supervise. Many High-ranking officials were often removed from their posts for failure to supervise or accidentally involved in Literary Inquisition, leading to punishment. This has led officials to be careful with related texts that could potentially trigger a Literary Inquisition.

In response to the Emperor's secret edit, the Governors of Zhejiang and Jiangsu did not respond positively. This caused the Qianlong Emperor to become especially angry. In 1774, he issued another edict to all governors, repeating his request to censor books. In the 1774 edict, he referred to the court letter sent to the governors of Zhejiang and Jiangsu in 1773, criticized them by name, and expressed dissatisfaction. He said: "When these

⁶⁰ *Daqing gaozong chunhuangdi shilu*, vol 964, 9-11

governors received the previous edict, they should have made a list of the books that could be selected and submitted to the Siku Institute. These books should have been identified and reported if they were offensive content. Those books should be sealed and destroyed by edict or burned on the spot and then reported the titles. That is the way to handle it with sincerity."⁶¹

The emperor then summarized the reactions to the 1773 edict and expressed his disappointment at the reactions of all the governors. He pointed out that:

The provinces reported catalogs of more than 10,000 book titles, but none of the memorials mentioned any offensive books. How is it possible to collect so many books without having any offensive content? Moreover, at the end of the Ming Dynasty, numerous people produced unofficial histories, and the slander and praise in those [unofficial histories] were not restricted at that time. They must have words that defamatory our dynasty... and must not be ignored.

乃各省进到书籍。不下万余种。并不见奏及稍有忌讳之书。岂有裒集如许遗书。竟无一违碍字迹之理。况明季末、造野史者甚多。其间毁誉任意。传闻异词必有诋触本朝之语...断不宜置之不办。

The Qianlong Emperor also assumed that:

There was a high probability that such books were found in Jiangsu and Zhejiang, but there was no exception in Jiangxi, Fujian, Guangdong, Hubei, and Hunan. How could they not be carefully checked?

此等笔墨妄议之事。大率江浙两省居多。其江西、闽、粤、湖广、亦或不免。岂可不细加查核。

He also named ten high-rank officials in the edict and queried them:

If [you] see books such as unofficial histories or articles defaming our dynasty, everyone should hate [them]. How can you allow such books to circulate secretly and mislead future generations? I did not know what your governors did in the process of collecting books.⁶²

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² *Daqing gaozong chunhuangdi shilu*, vol 964, 9-11.

若见有诋毁本朝之书。或系稗官私载。或系诗文专集。应无不共知切齿。岂有尚听其潜匿流传。貽惑后世。不知各该督抚等、查缴遗书。于此等作何办理。

The dramatic shift in tone and terminology of the emperor in the edict of 1774 suggests that the emperor was quite dissatisfied with the governors' censorship work, even though the emperor had not explicitly requested censorship beforehand. The questioning tone of the edict, which appears several times, as well as the description of the offensive books, ranges from "offensive 違礙" to "sedition 偽妄" and the description of the owners of the books ranges from "crime became greater 取戾转大" and "no escape from punishment 罪转不能逭." All indicate that the emperor's attitude towards anti-Manchu literature had changed to one of resolute banning in just two years.⁶³

Guy summarizes the response from the governors to the 1774 decree in *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*. After the promulgation of the 1774 edict, six governors reported finding no offensive books in the collection process. Guy argues that according to the governors' memorials, the 1774 edict initiated a new activity of collecting books for censorship. This new activity was to collect books for the Literary Inquisition and was completely independent of the *Siku* collection.⁶⁴

However, from the records in the *Qianlong shilu* and the Literary Inquisition archives of the Qing Dynasty, the new censorship activity can be recognized as a new project independent of the *Siku* book collection. However, this new censorship measure was not for the Literary Inquisition but was limited to the censorship and destruction of offensive

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 163.

books.

The Completion and Operation of the 1770s Censorship Campaign

The first memorial to the central to report the results of the collection of prohibited books came from Li Shiyao 李侍尧 (?-1788), who was then the Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi 两广总督. Li Shiyao first reported on his work in his memorial in response to the 1773 edict. Since he got the edict, he had already sent a catalog of valuable books to the Siku Institute. After receiving the 1774 order on September 3, Li realized he had neglected to examine and collect the offensive books in his previous work. Therefore, they immediately organized local officials to collect offensive books in their respective areas. Li's description in this section proves that the 1774 edict started a new process of censoring offensive books.⁶⁵

This operation had an immediate result. In Nanhai 南海 and Panyu 番禺 county, the original writings of Qu Dajun 屈大均 were seized from the relatives of Qu Dajun; the poems of Qu Dajun were received from the hen Shicheng 沈士成 who had a *tongsheng* 童生 degree; and the woodblocks and books of the *New Tale of Guangdong (Guangdong Xinyu* 广东新语) and the *Poetry Collection of the Three Lingnan Poet (linnan sanjia heke shiji* 岭南三家合刻诗集) were seized by local from a bookstore.⁶⁶ Li Shiyao dealt with three cases differently. In the case of Qu Dajun's relatives, Li argued that it had been long since Qu Dajun's works were recognized as banned books, and officials issued many

⁶⁵ Memorial from Li Shiyao and etc. report on seizur of Qudajun's Poems and Text. 李侍尧等奏据缴屈大均诗文折, *Qing Literary Inquisition Archive*, vol2, 130-132.

⁶⁶ Three Lingnan Poets are Qu Dajun 屈大均, Chen Gongyin 陈恭尹, and Liang Peilan.

official announcements about their prohibition. The collection of Qu Dajun works by Qu Dajun's relatives is a knowing offense and should be treated as a violation of the statute, which should result in the death penalty for them, their descendants, and the people who live with them. The other two should be exempted from punishment by handing over the offensive books according to the 1774 edict.⁶⁷

Li Shiyao's comments on the conviction of the Qu Dajun's relatives did not make the censorship and collection of books a Literary Inquisition case, as the Qianlong Emperor's response stated that only the seized banned books needed to be destroyed. He said, "Even the Qu Dajun's family members, whom the officials found kept banned books, were not guilty, let alone those who voluntarily surrendered their books." The Qianlong Emperor repeatedly emphasized that he would not punish those who kept unauthorized books, partly to project an image of tolerance and partly to show that the emperor's purpose in launching the book-banning campaign was to eliminate books that had anti-Manchu sentiments through relatively gentle measures rather than turned any cases into a Literary Inquisition case.⁶⁸

Most memorials on the new book censorship campaign from 1774-1776 have yet to be preserved. Guy believes that only one-third or one-half of the original documents have survived. But there are enough materials in the *Shilu* to help us reconstruct the campaign's early operations. There are eight imperial edicts relating to the campaign, before the memorials of Hai Cheng, governor of Jiangxi in 1775, and Sanbao, governor of Zhejiang in 1776, who proposed new measures to expand further and increase the campaign's

⁶⁷ Li, and etc., *Qing Literary Inquisition Archive*, 130-132.

⁶⁸ *Daqing gaozong chunhuangdi shilu*, vol 970, 16-17.

efficiency.⁶⁹

The general process of the book censorship campaign launched in 1774 was divided into the following steps. The first step was the collection of offensive books, and local officials handled this phase of the process. There were two main methods of collection. The first was notification, i.e., informing the residents about the type of content/title of a specific book that was considered an offense so those who had it could hand it over on their initiative. The second is the search of suspicious objects through investigation by officials. A preliminary examination of the book's content is also conducted in each province. When it was determined that the contents of a specific book violated the taboo, the officials were required to collect the book and the woodblocks in the local area. The governors then reported through memorials and submitted all relevant material evidence to the Grand Council. After the central review, the Grand Council would destroy all books with offensive content. Subsequently, the title of the banned books will be forwarded to the provincial governors, again to collect to achieve the destruction of the offensive books.

Although the operation pattern was perfected between 1774 and 1776, the available material suggests that the number of offensive books handed in from the provinces during this period must have been much lower than that after 1777. This is because the emperor's imperial edicts to provincial officials concerning the collection of offensive books in these two years emphasize procedural issues. None of the edicts suggests that the Qianlong Emperor was dissatisfied with the number of offensive books reported.

In December 1776, Haicheng's 海成 (?-1794), the Provincial Governor of Jiangxi

⁶⁹The number eight is based on the memorials in *Daqing gaozong chunhuangdi shilu*, vol 970-995.

Province 江西巡抚, reported a devastating amount, more than 8,000 scrolls/chapters of offensive books sent to the central government in his memorials.⁷⁰ The sharp increase in the number of seized books was because Haicheng had added a new measure to the existing operation: buying offensive books from book owners and booksellers at double the price. Based on Haicheng's report, the emperor forwarded Haicheng's memorial to the governors of Zhejiang and Jiangsu in January 1777 and again expressed dissatisfaction with their work. The emperor believed that the number of offensive books seized in Jiangxi was more significant than in Zhejiang and Jiangsu, which only showed that the officials in these two provinces were merely prevaricating and not carrying out his orders seriously.⁷¹

Under the emperor's pressure, the governors of Jiangnan reacted immediately. They also added new measures to collect offensive books in response to the emperor's expectations. First, Sanbao replied in February that he would expand the range of search to include remote areas of Zhejiang province in the collection of offensive books. In Yang Kui's 杨魁 (?-1782) reply, he mentioned that the lack of submissions was that many offensive books had been preserved since the late Ming, and descendants had forgotten them or could not read them. He would send out gentries to go door-to-door to inspect the books.⁷²

In the April report, Sanbao mentioned organizing a new team to collect offensive books.

Investigation showed alternates for local education officials available in the province. I will select hard-working and discreet alternates to assign to purchasing offensive books

⁷⁰ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 171.

⁷¹ *Daqing gaozong chunhuangdi shilu*, vol 1022, 20-21.

⁷² Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 172.

based on their place of origin. With their social networks, collecting offensive books should be a simple task. I will then evaluate their ability based on the number of books they turn in. The evaluation will be a reference to prioritize the selection to fill the vacancies of local education officials by the Board of Personnel.⁷³

查試用教職現有閑居在省者,擇其辦事勤慎,各按籍隸府分派.令前往面加諄囑,令其因親及友易于訪尋.并攜帶書價盡力購求.即以繳書多寡稽其勤惰為將來報部選補名次之先後

Sanbao's initiative had a significant effect. In the three months from April to July 1777, Zhejiang Province conducted nine offensive book collection campaigns and submitted a total of one thousand three hundred and nineteen books to the Grand Council.⁷⁴ Yang Kui used a similar approach in Jiangsu Province, where many offensive books were also reported during this period.

The number of offensive books reported in Jiangnan met the emperor's expectations, and the fact that the emperor specifically included Sanbao's initiative in the criteria for the 1770s book censorship meant that the censorship system of the Qianlong period was completely perfected and continued to be used. It means that the book censorship system of the Qing Dynasty reached its peak in the 1770s.

The Siku quanshu was finished in 1782 and consisted of two achievements. The first was an annotated catalog of the 10,680 titles that existed at that time, categorized according to the four traditional categories (classics, history, philosophy, and belles-lettres).⁷⁵ The second result was the re-copying and compilation of 36,000 volumes of the most valuable 3,593 types of books into one *Siku quanshu*.⁷⁶ The completion of the *Siku*

⁷³ Palace Memorial, no 故宮 056755.

⁷⁴ Ibid, no.故宮 056755, 故宮 057359, and 故宮 057643.

⁷⁵ The four traditional categories refer to the Chinese term *jing* 經, *shi* 史, *zi* 子, *ji* 集.

⁷⁶ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, p1.

quanshu also reflected the result of the 1770s censorship campaign. During the twenty-two years of the compilation, more than 2,400 titles were banned, and another 400-500 titles were required to be revised.⁷⁷

The 1770s censorship campaign was the most influential and wide-ranging form of book censorship in Qing history. While improving and developing the censorship campaign, the Qing court gradually institutionalized this censorship measure, which lasted until the end of the Qianlong period. The next chapter shifts the focus from Qing book censorship policies to the publishing industry itself, examining how publishers in different regions responded to official censorship.

⁷⁷ Ibid

Chapter IV: Censorship and Publishing Industry in the High Qing Period

The Development of the Sibao Publishing Industry

Ma Dafan (1629-1663) 马大蕃 was the earliest bookseller of the Sibao Ma lineage. His two sons, Ma Quanheng 马权亨 (1651-1710) and Ma Quanwen 马权文 (1663-1743), and most of his descendants were engaged in the printing business. The printing business of this family has lasted for at least 150 years. Ma Dafan passed away when Ma Quanheng was 13. With the start-up capital and business skills taught by his uncle, Ma Quanheng began his venture into the publishing business. For years later, Ma Quanheng had already brought considerable income to his family through the publishing business. As all brothers of Ma Qunheng reached adulthood, the first family division took place in 1685. With this family division, Ma Quanheng received three mu of land and 20 taels of silver,⁷⁸ In contrast, his younger brother, Ma Quanwen, received the woodblocks and the printing house, which were the family's property before the division. With the property he received, Ma Quanheng established Jinglun Tang 经纶堂, while his younger brother kept running the Benli Tang 本立堂.⁷⁹

In 1687 he handed over the business of the Jinglun Tang in Sibao to Ma Dingbang 马定邦 (1672-1743) and then went to Guangzhou to operate a branch. After his two younger brothers had come of age, Ma Dingbang left the business to his younger brothers, and he

⁷⁸ Brokaw, *Commerce in culture*, 165.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 166.

traveled to Guangdong and Guangxi to sell books. In 1722, the Jinglun Tang was divided. Ma Dingbang, founded Wencui Lou, and his third son, Ma Dingce 马定策 (1677-?), founded Xiangshan Tang, which was the first branch of the Jingluntang. The third son, Ma Dingce (1677-?), established Xiangshan Tang. The fourth and fifth sons jointly inherited the Jinglun Tang. The Xiangshan Tang founded by Ma Dingce was divided at least twice. In the first division, the second son, Ma Lie, inherited Xiangshan Tang. The second division took place in 1773, after which Ma Lie's six sons continued to run Xiangshan Tang cooperatively, but each of them received an equivalent number of woodblocks.

The publishing house's development and expansion pattern was characterized by the family's division and the continuance of the business. After the male offspring reached adulthood, the large family's woodblocks and printing houses, as an essential family property, were divided so that each son received an equal number of woodblocks to allow the new family to continue the publishing business. If a descendant did not want to continue publishing, he was usually given the equivalent in money and land. By the time the publishing business reached Ma Dingce's generation, the Ma Dapan family had become very wealthy. The genealogy describes the Ma Dapan family as "the blocks they accumulated reached to the ridgepole of the house, and they became as gloriously wealthy as an untitled noble."⁸⁰

The history of the Ma Dapan family is a typical example of the development of the printing industry in Sibao. Other publishing houses of the Zou and Ma lineage also followed the same pattern of expanding their publishing houses step by step, starting with

⁸⁰ Brokaw, *Commerce in culture*, 165.

the operation of the family's first publishing house - dividing up the family - continuing to grow the business - dividing up the family. The Zou and Ma lineages also established close cooperation through marriages, just like Ma Dingce's mother, who was from the Zou lineage. Marriage allowed the two lineages to control the printing industry in Sibao in a nearly monopolistic manner.⁸¹ There were about seventy villages in the Sibao area, and some other lineages were engaged in publishing. However, the Zou and Ma lineages had absolute advantages in terms of size and the number of publishing houses.

The first and most important source is the list of imprints in Sibao, which was summarized by Brokaw. This list contains 1301 titles of Sibao imprints from the late seventeenth to the late nineteenth centuries. Most of the contents are from the family division record of Xiangshan Tang, Cuiyun Tang, and the accounts of Wenhai Lou 文海楼 and Zou Weinan 邹位南 (1860-1933). Wen Hailou and Zou Weinan were mainly active after the Taiping Rebellion in 1850, when the Qing government's power declined dramatically due to rebellions and wars. The publishing industry in Sibao also declined during this period. Thus, I would eliminate the imprints from Wenhai Lou and Zou Weinan. In the next section, I will focus on titles from Xiangshan Tang, Cuiyun Tang, and Zaizi Tang to analyze how the book censorship system affects the publications of the three publication houses above.

A Case Study of Xiangshan Tang 湘山堂

⁸¹ Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, see Appendix C.

Table 4.1

Publications of Xiangshan Tang, Zaizi Tang, and Cuiyun Tang by Categories

Books Category	Tangming Founding date	Xiangshan Tang 湘山堂 (Late 17th c.)	Zaizi Tang 在兹堂 (late 18th-early 19th c.)	Cuiyun Tang 翠云堂 (1836)
Confucian Classics		21	32	159
Primer		2	17	77
Novels		11	13	119
Imperial Examination Guidebooks		5	10	89
Daily Life Guides and Geomancy Text		18	15	184
Anthologies		7	7	134
Military Arts		4	0	3
Legal Books		1	7	6
Others		8	2	75
Total		77	103	846

Source: Brokow, *Commerce in culture*, Appendix G

Book censorship in the Qing Dynasty was post-publication censorship. In other words, nothing would have happened to the bookseller and publisher if the officials had not noticed the book was banned. However, it likely led to severe punishment once the official found it. Therefore, the banned books I mention in this section are those whose publication and sale were explicitly prohibited up to the Qianlong period.

Table 4.1 shows that the percentage of novels in the total number of publications of the three publishing houses is 14.2% in Xiangshan Tang, 16.5% in Zaizi Tang, and 14% in Cuiyun Tang.

According to the division records of Xiangshan Tang, five kinds of history books were banned: *Gangjian zonglun* 纲鉴总论, *Gangjian huizhuan* 纲鉴会纂, *Easy to Know Mirror [of History]* (*Gangjian yizhi lu* 纲鉴易知录), *Writings of eight great Tang and Song authors* (*Tang Song badajia Wenchao* 唐宋八大家文抄), and *Jinming jueji* 今明觉斯; seven kinds of pornographic novels: *Guo gongan* 郭公案, *Sixth book of genius* (*Liucaizi, the Western Chamber*, 六才子), *Guose tianxian* 国色天香, *Chronicle of the Northern and Southern Song* (*Nanbei liangsong zhizhuan* 南北两宋志传)[2 editions], *Register of heroes* (*Yingxiong pu* 英雄谱[combined edition of *Narrative of the Three Kingdoms* and *Water Margin* with the title]).⁸² The total number of banned books published by the Xiangshan Tang is 12, accounting for 15.5% of the total publications. The banned books published in Zaizi Tang include three titles of Ming histories, two titles of secret

⁸² The 12 banned books published by Xiangshan Tan were confirmed by officials before 1773. If the Zaizi Tang (established in late Qianlong early Jiaqing) run by the grandson of the Ma Dingce family is also included, the number of banned books published by this family reached 25 titles. Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, Appendix G.

handbooks for the litigation masters, four titles of anthologies, and four titles of novels, totaling 13 titles of banned books and accounting for 12.6% of the total.⁸³

Zaizi Tang was a publishing house run by Ma Cuizhong 马萃仲 (1770-1848). He was a descendant of the founder of Xiangshantang, Ma Dingce, but genealogical records show that Ma Cuizhong's grandfather, Ma Guang 马光, was not involved in the publishing business. This means that Ma Guang did not inherit any publishing-related property from Xiangshan Tang when the family was divided. In other words, the banned book woodblocks of Zaizi Tang were likely newly produced.

Ma Kuanyu 马宽裕 (1670-1754) also operated a publishing house, Wenhui Lou 文汇楼, at the same time as Ma Dingce. However, there is no list of imprints from Wenhui Lou. There was one of Sibao's books preserved today was Ma Kuanyu edited *Mingji jianlue* 明紀鑑略. *Mingji jianlue* was a Ming history. This book needs to be mentioned in particular because, unlike other publications, it was compiled by Ma Kuanyu himself. The exact contents of this book were unknown, but it was based on the surviving historical books from the late Ming to early Qing dynasties. The *Mingji Jianlue* became a banned book in the early Qianlong period because it contained content that violated the ruler's taboos. The death penalty was the minimum sentence for people who made such kind of book, in the similar Literary Inquisition case of Zha Shizhu 查世柱.⁸⁴

The earliest involvement of the Zou lineage in the production of banned books can

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ *Daqing gaozong chunhuangdi shilu*, vol 904, 34-36.

be traced back to Zou Zhuoxue 邹倬学 (1816-1865), who ran Cuiyun Tang since 1836. Cuiyun Tang's banned books included three titles of Ming history, five titles of secret handbooks for the litigation masters, eleven titles of anthologies, and forty-five titles of novels. The titles of banned books made by Cuiyun Tang were 64. Zou Zhuoxue is the fifth generation of the Zou Shengmai 邹圣脉 (1692-1762), one of the most prominent families of the Zou lineage to engage in the publishing industry. According to the pattern of Sibao's division and expansion, We can infer that some woodblocks of the banned books from Cuiyun Tang may have been inherited from his family.

It can be inferred from the production of books by the three publishing houses that the production of banned books was an essential part of the printing industry. The production of banned books was a common practice in Sibao's printing industry. The decision to publish offensive books at Sibao in the late Qianlong period was most likely based on the new market demand brought about by the 1770s censorship campaign. In chapter three, I mentioned that in 1776, Heicheng introduced the measure of purchasing offensive books at double the market price. As a result, there was an explosion in the number of offensive books submitted by Jiangxi to the central government. Because of the high profits by reselling offensive books to book bureaus, the demand for offensive books in the market increased, facilitating the production of offensive books.

Xu Jingguo 徐京国 was a peddler of used goods from Xinhua County in Jiangsu province. When he learned that the government set up the book bureau to buy offensive books, he started to purchase offensive books from towns and villages. In 1779, he was investigated for reselling books related to the Literary Inquisition case. His experience

provides a real-life example of the 1770s censorship campaign. He handed over more than ten titles in this transaction with the bureau. A total of four titles, amounting to fifteen books, were purchased by the bureau, and he received 1.5 taels of silver for this transaction.⁸⁵ The case of Xu Jingguo suggests that since 1776, the resale of offensive books may have been an entirely new business arising from the 1770s censorship campaign.

Sibao's Book-selling and Novel Production in Suzhou

Early book sales in Sibao depended on the annual book wholesale market held at the Gandi Ba 官地壩 between Wuge and Mawu.⁸⁶ This market was held on the 15th day of the first month of every year, and in addition to local booksellers in Sibao, many booksellers from other provinces also came to trade. The book wholesale flourished from the Kangxi to the Yongzheng period, when the second generation of Sibao booksellers, Ma Dingbang and Ma Dince, were active. The book market at Sibao attracted booksellers from Jiangxi, Guangdong, Guangxi, and Zhejiang during the Kangxi and early Yongzheng periods. The phenomenon of the arrival of long-distance traders suggests the attractiveness of publications in Sibao. Although it was hard to find the specific time of the decline of the Sibao book wholesale market, the fact was that from the late Yongzheng period, the Sibao wholesale market disappeared.

When wholesale book sales declined, the distribution of Sibao books shifted to direct sales by Sibao merchants. The change in the mode of distribution of books in Sibao did not lead to a decline in the publishing industry. Instead, the publishing industry in Sibao still

⁸⁵ *Qing Literary Inquisition Archive*, 231-235.

⁸⁶ Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, 190.

maintained a rapid development trend, and the number of bookstores in Sibao doubled in the Qianlong period, with 22 new publishing houses established. From the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods, the sales and manufacturing of Sibao's publishing industry became separate parts. The publishing house in Sibao was responsible for printing books, while other family members traveled outside to open trade routes and sell books. Wherever they went to sell Sibao books, all books came from Sibao. The sale of books outside Sibao was carried out either by traveling merchants or by establishing branches. In either case, the model was to establish sales points or branches centered in counties and subsidiary cities.⁸⁷

What could attract outside merchants to travel long distances to buy books? Merchants seek profits. Profitable publications should have at least either low cost or high scarcity to be attractive to outside merchants. Thus, analyzing the cost and scarcity of Sibao publications can help us better understand the shift in the Sibao book sales model.

According to Kai-Wing Chow's research, in 1608, Hangzhou printed 580 books with 24 pages each, costing 6.72 taels (*liang*) silver. This cost averaged 0.011 taels per book, including the curving woodblocks and printing and binding. The cost of producing the woodblock, including the cost of wood, totaled two taels of silver, of which the production cost was 1.64 tael silver. The average cost per woodblock was 0.068 tale. The average cost of one woodblock produced in Nanjing between 1628 and 1630 was about 0.083 tale.⁸⁸

In 1685, Ma Quanheng received 20 taels of silver at the time of the division of the family was used to produce the woodblocks of *Four Books* (*sishu*, 四书); *Classic of Songs*

⁸⁷ Ibid, 192-215.

⁸⁸ Kai-Wing Chow, "A study of Prices, Cost, and Commercial Value of Imprints in Ming Qing China," *Journal of Zhejiang University(Humanities and Social Sciences)*, no.1, vol.40(January 2010), 10-13.

with commentary (*Shijing zhu*, 诗经注); and two primers, *Treasury of allusions for young students* (*Youxue gushi qionglin* 幼学故事琼林 and *Expanded words of wisdom* (*Zengguang xianwen* 增广贤文).⁸⁹ Based on the price and the titles, we can estimate the cost of woodblocks. The traditional book format consisted of nine columns on each page, with a maximum of 19 characters per column. Each woodblock had two pages, which means that each woodblock contained 342 characters. The total number of characters in those four titles was 117,585.⁹⁰ Calculations show that in 1685, the cost of each woodblock was 0.058 tale.

From the perspective of each woodblock cost alone, there was no significant difference between the price of 1685 Sibao and 1608 Hangzhou and between 1628 and 1630 in Nanjing. Such a comparison is not reasonable. A more reasonable comparison would be based on the purchasing power represented by the price of rice. The cost of making a woodblock could buy 5.015 kg of rice in 1608 Hangzhou, 5.391 kg in 1628-1630 Nanjing, and 3.717 kg in 1658 Sibao.⁹¹ From the purchasing power perspective, the cost of making woodblocks in Sibao is 25.9% to 31.1% lower than in the Jiangnan area.

Brokaw attributes the decline of the Sibao book wholesale market model to the fact that the transportation costs of books from Sibao were too high and that it was not economical for outside booksellers to transport books out of Sibao.⁹² The fact that the

⁸⁹ Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, 165.

⁹⁰ The characters in *Classic of Songs* were 39,234 without commentary. The number could be very different between the actual number of *Shijing Zhu*. In my calculation, I adopted 39,324 as the total characters for *Shijing Zhu*.

⁹¹ The rice price of different time period see: Jian He 贺建, "The Comparative Study about Grain Price of China and England from the Twelfth to the Nineteenth Century" (MA Thesis, Northeast Normal University, 2012), 56, 59.

⁹² Ibid, see "The Book Market in Sibao," 190-191.

geography and transportation modes of the Sibao did not change during the High Qing period suggests that transportation costs did not change significantly. However, this argument is not convincing; if the price factor caused the decline of the Sibao book wholesale market, how can the rapid increase of Sibao publishing houses in the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods be explained? If outside merchants stop coming to Sibao to purchase books because of high transportation costs, then the price may not be the main reason Sibao attracts outside merchants. We should review the other reasons for the shift in sales models at Sibao.

The decline of the Sibao wholesale book market was roughly between the Yongzheng and early Qianlong periods. The strict book censorship brought about by the Literary Inquisition and the laws against pornographic novels during this period may have been the main reasons why outside merchants eventually gave up the business of distributing books from Sibao.

The development of the Sibao publishing industry originated in the Kangxi period. The earliest Zou and Ma lineage publisher started their publishing business with one or two Confucian classics. The four major categories of publications in Sibao were novels, anthologies, daily life guides, and educational books, including Confucian classics, primers, and imperial examination guidebooks. Compared with the major publishing centers in Jiangnan, Sibao's educational books were not competitive when the price factor was excluded. Sibao's educational books lack market competitiveness primarily because the level of education in Sibao was vastly different from that of the literati-rich Jiangnan region. Whether the classics of Confucianism, guides to the imperial examinations, or anthologies, the most popular editions were books with commentaries by prominent literati. Early Sibao

published only a small number of anthologies and commentaries on Confucian classics by famous literati of the Ming Dynasty. Until the establishment of Cuiyun Tang in the Tongzhi era, books by the leading literati of the Qing Dynasty, Shen Deqian 沈德潜 and Ji Yun 纪昀, began to appear.

However, the novels in the Sibao publication presented the exact opposite situation. During the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods, the Xiangshan Tang and the Zaizi Tang published twenty-four different titles of novels, eleven of which belonged to the banned pornographic novels. Pornographic novels accounted for 46% of the total number of novels published. These data are from only two of the 59 publishing houses in Sibao during the same period. There were at least six publishing houses in Sibao with the equivalent scales, which were Wencui Lou 文萃楼, Meiyuan Tang 梅园堂, Jixian Tang 集贤堂, Longfeng Tang 隆丰堂, Dajing Tang 大经堂, and Hanbao Lou 翰宝楼.⁹³ The statistics of Chuiyun Tang were even more impressive. Cunyun Tang published 119 titles of novels.⁹⁴

Suzhou was the most significant publishing center in the Jiangnan area for novel production during the Qianlong to Jiaqing period. Many publishing houses have been in existence for hundreds of years since the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, such as Baohan House 宝瀚楼 and Xiaohua Xuan 嗽花轩.⁹⁵ During this period, there were also publishing houses specializing in novel publishing in Suzhou, such as Shuye Tang 书业堂, Tongwen Tang 同文堂, and Xiaohua Xuan. The three publishing houses produced 23 titles

⁹³ Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, Appendix D.

⁹⁴ Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, Appendix G.

⁹⁵ Gehong Wen, *QianJia shiqi xiaoshuo shufang yu tongshu xiaoshuo* 乾嘉时期小说书坊与通俗小说 (*Publishing Houses and Popular Fiction in the Qianjia Period*), (Guangzhou, Shijie tushu chubanshang 2015), 29.

of novels, 12 titles of novels, and 10 titles of novels, respectively.⁹⁶ In addition to the three publishing houses mentioned above, there were 45 publishing houses in Suzhou between the Qianlong and the Jiaqing periods that were clearly labeled with the *tangming* 堂名 in which the novels were published. However, most of them published only one or two novels.

Compared with Sibao, Xiangshan Tang, and Zaizi Tang, which did not specialize in publishing novels, the number of novels they published was close to that of the specialized publishing houses in Suzhou. It shows that the scale of novel publishing in Sibao was more significant than that in Jiangnan.

During the Qianlong period, the Sibao booksellers had become extremely rich and participated in a wide range of public affairs including, but not limited to, the construction of roads, docks, temples, ancestral shrines, and purchase of public lands for their lineage.⁹⁷ Three of the Zou merchants even purchased the *jiansheng* 监生 status, which, in the Qianlong period, required at least 100-200 *dan* 石 of rice, which cost at least 200 taels silver. This also proves that during the development of the publishing industry in Sibao, the booksellers in Sibao made huge profits by selling books.

Although there are no exact prices for books sold at Sibao between the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods, the Cuiyun Tang account books suggest that novels may be the most profitable type of book. The average price of the 119 novels published by Cuiyun Tang was 0.13 tale silver. Novels' prices were much higher than other types of books. Regarding sales, novels were close to educational books of the same price range. The most remarkable

⁹⁶Wen, *Publishing Houses and Popular Fiction in the Qianjia Period*, 12-14, 22-29.

⁹⁷Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, see "The Zou and Ma publishing Families as Local Gentry".

sales record in the accounts of Cuiyun Tang related to the *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* (*Liaozhai Zhiyi* 聊斋志异). *Liaozhai Zhiyi* was a famous collection of short stories, the Cuiyun Tang version priced at up to one tael of silver also sold ten copies. This illustrates the high demand for novels in the High Qing market.

Suzhou was under the highest level of supervision as the publishing center of the Jiangnan region, but the development of novel production under censorship shows us the flexibility of commercial publishing in the Qing dynasty, as well as the great demand for novels as a form of popular entertainment during the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods.

Sibao Under the Qing Censorship

In the early Qing dynasty, the central government, or the emperor, had limited sources of information about these remote regions and relied on the integrity and loyalty of local officials such as Prefects and Magistrates. However, introducing the palace memorial system during the Yongzheng dynasty made a big difference. From the memorials in the palace archives referring to the Tingzhou Prefecture, it appears that the Commander of Tingzhou was responsible for collecting local information and reporting it to the emperor. Although most reports were about the food price and the weather in Tingzhou, the commander could also be found reporting on important matters such as the banning of cults and other local affairs. In addition, several commanders had the opportunity to meet with the emperor. It is clear from the above that Tingzhou Prefecture and Changting County were much more closely connected to the central government than we might have imagined.

The list of publications in Sibao shows that at least one-tenth of the publications in Sibao were banned books. There were two categories of banned books published in Sibao:

pornographic novels, and offensive books. Pornographic novels published in Sibao during the Qianlong period included *Water Margin* and *the Western Chamber*. Besides pornographic novels, some publishers edited the history of the Ming Dynasty. For example, Ma Kuanyu and Ma Yuliang both edited *Mingji Jianlue*. Some anthologies related to the Literary Inquisition cases, such as Shen Deqian's works, were also published by Sibao.

Sibao was successful in escaping Qing censorship for more than a century, from the 1660s to the 1770s. There was no evidence showing that the Sibao publication industry was affected by Qing censorship. This phenomenon continued until the 1770s censorship campaign. According to the existing archives, the first report mentioning the banned books in Tingzhou came from Yang Kui in 1782, who was appointed as the provincial governor of Fujian in 1781. He mentioned that the former governor, Fugang 富綱 (1737-1800), had searched for 93 banned books and 34 woodblocks related to Yin Jiaquan 尹嘉铨 in Changting County during his investigation.⁹⁸ Although the writings of Yin Jiaquan mentioned in this memorial were not on the list of known Sibao publications, the location and history of the publication of banned books in Sibao make it clear that these books were also published by Sibao. Unfortunately there was no specific book title mentioned in this memorial. However, based on the Literary Inquisition archives of Yin Jiaquan's cases, those books should be educational books and anthologies that Yin Jiaquan had participated in editing.

Although the 1770s censorship campaign, as mentioned in the previous chapter, demanded that those who submitted books should not be punished, the situation in Sibao

⁹⁸ Palace Memorial, no. 故宫 065027.

was entirely different because they produced the books. The punishment for producing banned books is entirely different from owning them. Taking Ma Kuanyu who revised *Mingji Jianlue* as an example, the treatment of Zha Shizhu 查世柱, who revised the same type of book, was execution scheduled for after the autumn.⁹⁹

Previously, the banned book publications in Sibao could be attributed to its remote location, which meant that the authorities did not notice these publications. However, this report identifies the origin of the banned books, indicating that at least some officials responsible for submitting and reporting these books to the governors were aware of their sources. So, why did the publishing industry in Sibao not suffer any consequences before the 1770s censorship campaign?

As mentioned in Chapter III, the gentry and local elites played a pivotal role in the censorship campaign of the 1770s. The information regarding prohibited books that reached local officials primarily originated from those local elites. Therefore, understanding the relationship between the Zou and Ma lineage and their local communities offers the most insightful answer to this question.

During the Kangxi and early Qianlong eras, Zou Funan, Ma Quanwen, and Ma Dingbang were extended invitations to participate in the community wine ceremony (*xiangyin jiuli* 乡饮酒礼). This event, organized by the local government, was traditionally held biannually at the Academy on January 15th and October 1st (lunar calendar). The attendees comprised exclusively of the local gentry. A significant component of the

⁹⁹ *Daqing gaozong chunhuangdi shilu*, vol 904.

ceremony involved the local officials' presentation of legal statutes to the guests.¹⁰⁰ Zou Funan, Ma Quanwen, and Ma Dingbang were among the earliest booksellers in the publishing industry of Sibao and participated in the community wine ceremony as important local gentries.

If participation in the community wine ceremony did not sufficiently illustrate the prominence of the Zou and Ma lineages within local gentry circles, their genealogies offered an image of their influence and standing. By the year 1751, genealogies revealed that the Ma lineage had one member with the *jinshi* status and three members who achieved the *juren* 舉人 status. Moreover, there was one member who held the *wu juren* 武舉人 status. In comparison, the Zou lineage's achievements in the imperial examinations did not match those of the Ma lineage.¹⁰¹ However, the Zou lineage demonstrated considerable martial prowess and had eleven members who obtained *wu juren* status during this period. Notably, Zou Jing (1742-1804) ascended to the position of Commandant (*shoubei* 守備, rank 5A) in 1773, and by 1800, he was appointed Vice General (*taiwan shuishi xiezhen* 台灣水師協鎮, rank 2B) in charge of the Taiwan Naval Forces.

The above two examples prove that both the Zou and Ma lineages were influential local elites in Minxi. In the two lineages, they had 13 members with degrees of *juren* and above. This number is extremely rare even in the more educated Jiangnan region. A single scholar in a family was usually enough to make the family a member of the local elite. With such a large number of *juren*, the Zou and Ma lineages were the ones who were really

¹⁰⁰ *Qinding Daqing huidian* 欽定大清會典, vol32.

¹⁰¹ Minting Longzuxiang Zoushi zupu 閩汀龍足鄉鄒氏族譜. 23 juan.1994, and Fanyang Zoushi zupu 范陽鄒氏族譜. 13 vols. (juan shou, 29 juan). 1996.

responsible for the censorship at the operational level.

In terms of the internal structure of the publishing industry in Sibao, the publishing houses in Sibao were more like a huge family-run corporation, with each individual house being just a branch. In the development of the publishing industry, regulations have arisen in Sibao to protect small or new publishers and to ensure that every member of the community who engages in the publishing business can make a living from it.

Two important strategies employed by Sibao Publishing to minimize internal competition were the 岁一刷新 and *cangban suoyou* 藏板所有.

The *suiyi shua xin* means that at the end of each year, each publisher would post the new production plan for the new year on the door of the printing house in order to ensure that there was not too much overlap between the production plans of the publishing houses. For each publishing house, the annual plan is based on market research conducted by the booksellers. In addition, production plans were finalized in consultation with the other publishers.¹⁰²

The *cangban suoyou* is a regulation of copyright protection. When a publishing house has already published a book or made a woodblock, no other publisher was allowed to publish the same book. The main reason for this system was to ensure that publishing houses would not lose their investment in larger books by competing with each other. It was worth noting that the copyright protection did not include best-selling, low-priced books such as the Three Character Classic in order to prevent monopolization by the big

¹⁰² Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, 177-179.

publishing houses. This also explains why there was almost no overlap in the categories of novels published by the different Sibao publishing houses.¹⁰³

Sibao's escape from censorship and the continued production of banned books was largely due to the protection provided to the publishing industry by the power of their lineages. As well as the fact that some of the regulations of the publishing industry took into account the interests of both large and small publishers, the publishers as a whole became a huge community of interest. This sharing of interests and the protection of the interests of the different publishers brought about internal harmony and ensured that the production of banned books would not be exposed through internal conflicts. In contrast to other publishing centers, Sibao publishers did not have to face competition from within the region. This was the reason why the Sibao publishing industry was able to grow and develop into an important publishing center from Minxi during the Qing Dynasty.

¹⁰³ Ibid

Conclusion

The Qing Dynasty's strict censorship, rather than stifling the publishing industry, inadvertently nurtured its growth and diversification, particularly in the Sibao region. This thesis challenges the conventional view of censorship as a purely repressive force by demonstrating how Sibao's publishing industry thrived by navigating and exploiting the stringent censorship regime of the Qianlong period.

As central publishing centers in the Jiangnan region were affected by censorship and political shifts, Sibao emerged as a new hub for publishing. This was not just due to its geographical remoteness, which initially shielded it from the central government's scrutiny, but also because of the strategic agility of its publishers. These publishers turned censorship into an opportunity, combining the production and distribution of banned books and regular books thus earning objective profits.

The success of Sibao's publishing industry was also facilitated by the social standing and networks of the Zou and Ma lineages, who were deeply integrated into the local elite. This not only provided them with a degree of protection but also enabled them to maintain a complex relationship with the very mechanisms designed to control them. The 1770s censorship campaign, meant to tighten the state's grip on culture and ideology, inadvertently catalyzed the industry's resilience and complexity.

This thesis posits that the Qing Dynasty's cultural policies played a paradoxical role in the cultural economy of the period, driving innovation and adaptation within the Sibao

publishing industry. It illustrates the complex interplay between state control, cultural production, and economic interests, offering a nuanced perspective on the impact of censorship on the Qing Dynasty's literary and intellectual landscape.

Bibliography

Primary resources:

Chen Shouqi 陳壽祺. *Fujian tong zhi* 福建通志(Fujian Province gazetteers). Taipei: Huawen Shuju, 1968.

Cheng Yikun. and Deng Guangying. *Liancheng xian zhi: Fujian sheng* 連城縣志: 福建省(Liancheng county gazetteers). Taipei: Chengwen Chubanshe, 1975.

Qin Ding Tai Gui 钦定台规 (Regulation of Imperial Censorate).

Surne 索尔讷. *Qinding xuezheng quanshu* 钦定学政全书(*Complete Book for Provincial Education Commissioner*).

Qinding Daqing huidian 钦定大清会典(Imperially collected statutes of the Great Qing). In The First Historical Archives of China 中国第一历史档案馆.
https://fhac.com.cn/fulltext_book/1

Qinding Da Qing huidian Zeli 钦定大清会典则例(Imperially collected statutes of the Great Qing). In The First Historical Archives of China 中国第一历史档案馆, Beijing. https://fhac.com.cn/fulltext_book/1

Daqing Gaozong Chunhuangdi Shilu 大清高宗纯皇帝纯皇帝实录(The Veritable Records of Qianlong). In The First Historical Archives of China 中国第一历史档案馆, Beijing. https://fhac.com.cn/fulltext_book/2

Xinke tiben 刑科题本 (Routine Memorials to the Board of Punishment). In The First Historical Archives of China 中国第一历史档案馆, Beijing. [Cited by memorial's title]

Gongzhongdang Qianlongchao zouzhe 宮中檔奏摺 (Secret palace memorials). In National Palace Museum Digital Library of Qing Archive 國立故宮博物院清代檔案檢索系統, Taipei, Guoli Gugong Bowuyuan 國立故宮博物院. [Cited by memorial's serial number]. <https://qingarchives.npm.edu.tw/index.php>

The First Historical Archives of China 中国第一历史档案馆. *Qianlong nianjian wei Sun Jiagan zougaoan shiliaoxuan(II)* 乾隆年間偽孫嘉淦奏稿案史料選(二) (Selected Historical Materials of Fake Sun Jiagan's Memorials Case in Qianlong period), Beijing, 1998

Qingdai wenziyu dang 清代文字獄檔 (Qing Literary Inquisition Archives). Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian Chubanshe, 2007.

Secondary Sources:

- Brokaw, Cynthia Joanne. *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods*. Harvard East Asian Monographs; Harvard East Asian Monographs. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center : Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Brokaw, Cynthia Joanne, and Chow Kai-wing, eds. *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*. Studies on China 27. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Bartlett, Beatrice S. *Monarchs and Ministers : The Grand Council in Mid-Ch'ing China, 1723-1820*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Brook, Timothy. "Censorship in Eighteenth-Century China: A View from the Book Trade." *Canadian Journal of History* 23, no. 2 (1988): 177–96.
<https://doi.org/10.3138/cjh.23.2.177>.
- Chia, Lucille. *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th-17th Centuries)*. Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series 56. Cambridge, MA: Published by Harvard University Asia Center for Harvard-Yenching Institute : Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Chow, Kai-wing. *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004.
- Elman, Benjamin A. *Civil Examinations and Meritocracy in Late Imperial China*. Cambridge, Massachusetts; Harvard University Press, 2013.
- Elman, Benjamin A., and Alexander Woodside, eds. *Education and Society in Late Imperial China, 1600-1900*. Studies on China 19. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Goodrich, L. Carrington. *The Literary Inquisition of Ch'ien-Lung*. New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1966.
- Guy, R. Kent. *The Emperor's Four Treasures: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-Lung Era*. Harvard East Asian Monographs. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Ho, Ping-ti. *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911*. Studies of the East Asian Institute. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962.
- He Jian 贺健, "The Comparative Study about Grain Price of China and England from the Twelfth to the Nineteenth Century." MA Thesis. Northeast Normal University, 2012.

- Hucker, Charles O. *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1985.
- Jin Shengtan 金圣叹 ed. *Jin Shengtan zhu tuibeitu* 金圣叹注推背图 (An Illustrated Prophecy Book with Jin Shengtan's commentaries).
- Lagerwey, John, and Tan Weilun 谭伟伦, eds. *Zhongguo keja difang shehui yanjiu: minxi keja shehui(I)* 中国客家地方社会研究(一): 闽西客家社会——长汀 (Research on Hakka Localities in China (I): Hakka Society in Minxi --Changting). Beijing: Zhongguo Renmindaxue Chubanshe, 2017.
- Rowe, William T. *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing. History of Imperial China*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Spence, Jonathan D. *The Search for Modern China*. First Norton paperback edition. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991.
- Szonyi, Michael. *Practicing Kinship: Lineage and Descent in Late Imperial China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002.
- Wang Bin 王斌. *Qingdai jinshu zongshu* 清代禁书总述. Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1999.
- Zhang Xiumin 张秀民. *Zhongguo yinshua shi* 中国印刷史. Shanghai: shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1989.
- Zelin, Madeleine. *The Magistrate's Tael : Rationalizing Fiscal Reform in Eighteenth-Century Ch'ing China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984
- Zheng, Zhenman. *Family Lineage Organization and Social Change in Ming and Qing Fujian*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001.
- Wen Gehong 文革红. *Qianjia shiqi xiaoshuo shufang yu tongshu xiaoshuo* 乾嘉时期小说书坊与通俗小说 (Publishing Houses and Popular Fiction in the Qianjia Period). Guangzhou: Shijie tushu chubanshe guangdong youxian gongsi, 2015.