Chapter 9

THE PRINTING OF THE CONFUCIAN CLASSICS UNDER FÊNG TAO, 932–953

Up to the end of the T'ang dynasty, the Empress Shōtoku of Japan had printed a million charms to insure a lengthening of her days. Fêng Su had asked the emperor to suppress the printing of calendars up and down the Yangtze valley, Ho-kan Chi had scattered abroad thousands of copies of his biography of a certain Liu Hung, and Wang Chieh had ordered the printing of the Diamond Sûtra to honor his parents. Together with three other references in Chinese and Japanese literature and chance finds at Ts'un-huang, these constitute all that is known definitely of block printing up to the beginning of the tenth century. The next great name in this history is that of Fêng Tao, who as prime minister ordered the printing of the Confucian Classics.

It is necessary first to see the background of Fêng Tao's work, and for that background to turn again to West China, to the province of Szechuan. During the whole T'ang dynasty the cultural center of gravity in China was in the West rather than in the East as much of the greatness of the empire was due to its relations with peoples beyond the western border. The T'ang capital was at Chang-an or Si-an-fu in Shensi. The Chinese culture which entered Japan was the culture of Chang-an, for Japanese students, seeking to learn what China had to teach, passed by the eastern provinces and studied in the western capital.

As the T'ang dynasty neared its close, there was a tendency for this cultural center to move still farther west. In 881 the emperor, pursued by rebels, moved to Ichou, now Ch'êng-tu, the capital of Szechuan. Though he resided there only five years, his presence gave to the people a feeling that theirs was the imperial city—

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feeling strengthened by the fact that a new city wall, eight miles in circumference, had just been built, with the labor of a hundred thousand men. It was during the emperor's sojourn in I-chou that Liu P'ien saw printed books exposed for sale in that city, and described them—one of the first mentions of printing in Chinese literature. After the emperor's return to Ch'ang-an, one of the generals who had loyally received him in Szechuan gradually made himself more and more master of the western province, until in 907, when the T'ang empire fell, he was able to proclaim himself independent, and to call his state (which comprised the province of Szechuan and certain border districts of surrounding provinces) the "Empire of Shu."

The history of the rest of China during the next half century, known as the period of the Five Dynasties, is a story of constant civil war, one dynasty following another in rapid succession at K'ai-feng (or Pien) and Loyang, and each ruling over only a circumscribed area. During all this time—except for one short break from 925 to 934—the so-called Empire of Shu in the far west remained independent and was the most prosperous and possibly the most highly cultured part of China. For a number of reasons, the history of Szechuan or Shu through this period is important to the student of printing. It was at I-chou, according to certain of the earliest authorities, that printing began; it was probably in Shu that the first official printing took place, both the printing of books and the printing of paper money (see Chapter 11); and, finally, Feng Tao, though regarded by later generations as the inventor of printing, is recorded, together with his fellow minister Li Yu, as having based himself on the printed works sold in the market place by the people of Wu (lower Yangtze region) and Shu.

When the state of Shu—now called Hou (or Later) Shu—reached its independence in 934, one of the acts of its second ruler was to have the corrected text of the Classics engraved on stone in the new capital—in imitation of work done by the emperors of the Han, Wei, and T'ang dynasties. The rapid advance of printing from wooden blocks in the state of Shu during the middle years of the century is largely due to the efforts of a far-sighted statesman by
the name of Wu Chao-i. Wu’s early interest in printing is thus described by a writer of the Sung dynasty:

When Wu Chao-i was poor, he made the practice of borrowing the Wen huiian from his friends. When they showed their annoyance he made up his mind that, if at some future date he came into high office, he would then make a printing of the work from wood blocks, that it might be within the reach of scholars. In due course he became minister in Shu under the family Wang and was at last able to carry out his proposal and printed it. The printing of books begins at this point. After the emperor Ming-tsung [reigned 916–33] of the Later T’ang had subdued Shu, he ordered the academician Li E to write the text of the Five Classics. The latter followed the example [of Wu] in preparing blocks for printing in the Kuo-t’ou chien. This was the beginning of printing in the Kuo-t’ou chien.

Another writer tells of Wu’s interest in education: “From the end of the T’ang dynasty all schools had been in ruins. Wu Chao-i of Shu from his own private funds contributed a very large sum [lit., millions] to re-establish them. Besides this he petitioned the king to have the Nine Classics printed. The king granted his petition. From this time there was a literary renaissance in Shu.”

Meanwhile, back nearer the center of the country, with their capital at K’ai-fêng or Loyang, one dynasty was succeeding another on the ruins of the old T’ang empire. The second of these so-called Five Dynasties, known as Later T’ang, was able to gain considerable strength in Central China under the able administration of the prime minister Feng Tao—one of those strange figures in history who succeed in winning and retaining the good will of various persons in spite of the enmity of those persons to each other. Under four of the Five Dynasties and under ten emperors, Feng Tao (882–954) held his position, and thus a semblance at least of continuity was attained in the conduct of the empire, for each founder of a short-lived dynasty, though killing his predecessor, was wise enough to retain his predecessor’s chief adviser.

In the year 925, near the beginning of Feng Tao’s career, and near the beginning of the career of his rival, Wu Chao-i, the central empire in which Feng held authority conquered the state of Shu
and held it for nearly nine years. As the imperial authority was extended over that new territory, one thing was found in Chou, the Western Capital, that Feng Tao and Li Yu were quick to seize upon and adapt to the use of the growing empire—the new and as yet little-known process of block printing. That the prime minister and his associates quickly saw the necessity of the central empire taking over this work from its newly conquered province is indicated in the epoch-making memorial of 932, issued just seven years after Shu was added to the imperial domain and two years before it was again lost.

During the Han dynasty, Confucian scholars were honored and the Classics were cut in stone. In Tang times also stone inscriptions containing the text of the Classics were made in the Imperial School. Our dynasty has too many other things to do and cannot undertake such a task as to have stone inscriptions cut and erected. We have seen, however, men from Wu and Shu who sold books that were printed from blocks of wood. There were many different texts, but there were among them no orthodox Classics. If the Classics could be revised and thus cut in wood and published, it would be a very great boon to the study of literature.

Printing was evidently the last thing that Feng Tao and his associates were interested in. It came as a by-product. Their whole interest lay in fixing forever the canon and the correct text of the Classics, a prerogative that they felt belonged to them, as representations of the real empire, and not to the upstart "empire" of Shu. They believed that recent scholarship had thrown new light on certain questions of textual criticism which rendered the text current in Han and Tang times obsolete, that for this reason the whole text needed a thorough searching revision, and that their empire must be the one to set the standard. The material on which the revised text was to be cut was incidental. In fact, the cutting in wood instead of stone was regarded as a makeshift, the impoverished state having no money to cut the text in stone, as previous dynasties and as the rival state of Shu had done.

This emphasis on sound scholarship in getting at the correct text is brought out in the emperor's reply and in the arrangements that were made for the work. The Kuo-tzu chien, or National Academy, where leading scholars of the empire were gathered together, was ordered to select for each one of the Classics a commission of five or six specialists who were to revise the text. A government board headed by a scholar named Ma Kao was appointed to examine and revise the work of these commissions, "and since the establishment of the text of the Classics is of great importance," the decree ran, "an importance not to be compared with that of all other books, although I have already ordered the National Academy to appoint officers to edit the work, yet, because the work is so vast, and I still fear that errors may creep in, I order Ma Kao and the men with him (who are all great scholars and each one a specialist in the Classics), to make a final, exact examination in order that every part may be brought to absolute perfection." The Academy was then ordered to select skilled calligraphers to prepare the final copy which should be fixed to the blocks for cutting, and finally to select careful workmen to cut the blocks. At the head of the calligraphers, the famous writer Li Fei was chosen, while T'ien Min, as director of the National Academy, was appointed to be head of the whole undertaking.

The work of editing and of printing lasted for twenty-one years. They were years of civil war, during which ten states fought for survival and four dynasties, three of them founded by Turkish or Uigur adventurers, followed one another in rapid succession. But somehow or other Feng Tao retained his post as head of the civil administration, while T'ien Min and his associates worked steadily on at the task of editing and printing the Classics. To those who were acquainted with the China prior to World War II and saw government education steadily pushing forward in spite of governmental anarchy, it is not hard to understand how the National Academy and the various commissions appointed went their quiet way, unruffled by the storm that was beating about them.

Several state documents have been preserved which indicate the progress of the work and the difficulties met. None is of especial interest until the final statement made by T'ien Min in 953 in pre-
senting to the emperor the completed edition of the Classics and their Commentaries in one hundred thirty volumes:

From the third year of the period Chang-hsing (193), we have been at work on the revision and printing of the Nine Classics and their Commentaries. The Classics and their Commentaries are so voluminous and come from such an ancient time and so many errors have crept in through frequent copying that in many cases the original reading has been lost. Our function has been to superintend the work of the National Academy and to watch over the revision of the books. We have sought in all things to find the correct standpoint for fixing the text and to prepare everything perfectly for printing. Fortunately through the favor of your Majesty we have been able to bring the great work to completion. Through this work the virtues of peace will be spread abroad and the universal doctrine made eternal. We respectfully submit our finished task.

Meanwhile the printers of Szechuan were not inactive. Wu Chao-i’s initial work was followed by the printing of the whole of the Nine Classics. The records of this official printing of the state of Shu are meager, compared with the full records of the work of the central empire under Fêng Tao, but it is probable that the Classics were published in Shu at about the same time that they were published in the imperial capital—one authority says in the same year.

Yet with all this printing activity both in Shu and in the central empire, the old idea of authentication still clung to that word yin, that had meant seal and now meant print. The chief purpose of printing was not yet to make literature more accessible to the masses, but rather to authenticate the text. For more than a century after Fêng Tao—up to the year 1069—the private printing of the Classics was forbidden. All printing must be done by the government and must give the orthodox accepted text.

Of the Classics printed under Fêng Tao’s administration, nothing of undisputed genuineness has come down to us. There is an old edition of the Erh yu in Japan which is marked as “written by Li E,” the calligrapher who wrote the copy for Fêng Tao’s work. While this is probably a Sung dynasty reprint, it is likely that it reproduces fairly faithfully the original and gives an idea what the Classics printed by Fêng Tao looked like. It is in the form of a book...
with pages but each page conforms closely to the style of the pasted sheets of the T'ang manuscript rolls. Each half page contains eight columns, and each column either sixteen or twenty-one characters.

The printed matter found in the Tun-huang caves and described in Chapter 8 comes in the main from just the time that Fêng Tao was printing the Classics. Of the ten dated specimens at London and Paris, six (exclusive of duplicates) contain dates ranging from 947 to 950, and almost all the Tun-huang prints date from Fêng Tao’s century. But this is not Fêng Tao’s work. The work of the National Academy was Confucian—orthodox—whereas the Tun-huang finds are Buddhist. What the Tun-huang finds do reveal is that, side by side with the official Confucian printing of Fêng Tao, which so many literary men described, Buddhist printing continued to pursue its quiet course, ready to culminate in that great undertaking, the printing of the Tripitaka, which ushered in the Sung era, and which will be described in Chapter 10.

An additional proof of this came unexpectedly in September, 1924, with the collapse of the well-known Thunder Peak Pagoda, or Lei Fêng T’a, which for nearly a thousand years was a landmark of the West Lake region, at Hangchow. In the debris were discovered several tiny scrolls which had originally been inserted in holes bored in the bricks of the monument. These were printed sūtras, entitled Pao ch’ieh yin to lo ni ching, 24 and clearly dated Hsien-tê i-hao, eighth month, or the early autumn of A.D. 975. The first lines of the text report that the printing was done at the command of Ch’en Shu (or Hung-shu, 929-88), ruling prince of the state of Wu and Yüeh during the years 948-78 and a staunch supporter of Buddhism. 25 It is likewise mentioned that 84,000 rolls of the sūtra were printed and deposited. 26

This was exciting enough, but more was to come. Two or three years later two Chinese scholars, Wang Kuo-wei and Chuang Yen, announced that a short while previously there had come to light similar sūtras of even earlier date, Hsien-tê third year ping ch’ên, or A.D. 956. At least three copies of these precious scrolls are preserved in the United States, one dating from 956 27 and two from 975. 28 Another, dating from 975, is in the British Museum and others are
doubtless still treasured in China and Japan. Then in the spring of 1954 a significant discovery was made in Japan. When the Japanese Buddhist pilgrim Chōnen (d. 1016) was in China during the years 984–85 he acquired a statue which he took with him to Japan. For nearly a millennium this has been one of the treasures of the Seiryō-ji, a temple in Kyoto. A few months ago it was opened for the first time by Professor Zenryu Tsukamoto and found to contain a cache of documents and other relics. The documents include a *Diamond Sūtra* printed in 824 and three woodblock-printed paintings, which have been deposited in the Ueno National Museum, Tokyo.

The work of Fēng Tao and his associates for printing in China may be compared to the work of Gutenberg in Europe. There had been printing before Gutenberg—block printing certainly and very likely experimentation in typography also—but Gutenberg’s Bible heralded a new day in the civilization of Europe. In the same way there had been printing before Fēng Tao, but it was an obscure art that had little effect on the culture of the country. Fēng Tao’s Classics made printing a power that ushered in the renaissance of the Sung era. It is too much, however, to call Fēng Tao the inventor. Not only had printing existed before his day—and printing which differed very little in technique from that which took place under his administration—but also Fēng Tao had no part, so far as we know, in the technical work. He was the prime minister who saw the value of the new invention and gave the order to print on a large scale. His name has gone down in history as one of China’s great inventors, but his glory should be shared with others who did more than he to inaugurate the new invention.

### NOTES

1. The emperors of Shu during its first period of independence were Wang Chien (907–18), whose magnificent tomb was discovered in 1939 and opened under the direction of Fēng Hanyu; see Fēng Hanyu, 1944:1–11; and Wang Yen (919–25). During the second period, or Hou Shu, they were Mēng Chhi-hsing (934) and Mēng Ch’ang (934–65).

2. Li Yü was a native of Shantung. In 925 the prince of Wei took him to Szechuan at the time of the campaign of the Later T’ang. Being a Hanlin scholar, he must have seen printed matter there. During the reign of Ming-tung (926–35) he became tσš-huang or minister. He died in 935, with the result that Fēng Tao has received all the credit for the official development of printing.

3. The engraving of most of the Classics on stone in Later Shu took eight years, from 944 to 951, involving the 1, Shu, Shih, three Li, Hsiao ching, Luan yü, Erh ya, and part of the Ch’uan ch’iu and Tung ch’iu. The Ku-liang and Kung-yang texts of the Ch’uan ch’iu, the Mēng-tsa, and two other works were completed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. An astonishing feature of this work is that the Commentaries, as well as the official texts of the Classics, were cut in stone, making an enormous work, greater in size than any other stone reproduction of the canon in previous centuries—more than 1,000 slabs in all. Cf. Kuei Fu, *Li tai shih ching lieh* 2/56–73 and 295, and Pelliot, 1953:55–60.

It ought to be mentioned that the brief text of the Lao tzu, or T’ao t’ieh ch’ing, was also frequently cut on stone in many parts of the empire during the T’ang. One such cutting was done in 736 at Ch’eng-tu. This and nine others like it engraved about this decade carry the commentary on the text written by the Emperor Hsiian-tung (reigned 712–74). Cf. Wang Ch’ung-ming, 1927:310–13.

4. Possibly also the Western Ts’ao (269–317); cf. Pelliot, 1953:44.

5. Wu Chao-i was a native of Shansi province who first entered high official service in Shu in 935. Later he was detached to be superintendent of salt and iron—an important and probably lucrative post in Szechuan province. Around 944 he was back at the capital of Shu as minister, serving until 955. He died about 966–76. Cf. Pelliot, 1953:75–81.


8. As Wang Kuo-wei, 1933:144, points out, this is a blunder. The Wang family lost control of Shu in 925. Wu became a high official of Shu only in 935 when the Mēng family was in power.

9. The National or Imperial Academy. This text, while of interest, is not entirely accurate, as we shall see, for Li E’s work as chief calligrapher in the first imperial printing of the canon began in 933, at least a decade before the Shu edition was undertaken.

10. Sū-nu Kuang, *Ts’u chih t’ung chien* 314, under date of Kuang-shun 3, fifth month, t’ing-hui, or June 22, 953. Wu Chao-i’s work was probably undertaken about 944 and concluded in 953. Cf. Pelliot, 1953:79–81.
NOTES

1. The four dynasties were the Later T’ang, the Later Tsin, the Later Han, and the Later Chou.

2. Biographical notices of Fêng may be found in both the Old and the New Histories of the Five Dynasties: Chiu uii t’ai shih 126/1-12a and Hsin uii t’ai shih 54/2a-5b. Fêng Tao, long condemned for serving so many houses by orthodox Confucians, was vindicated by the “iconoclast” Li Chih (1527-1602); cf. K. K. Huang, 1938:338-40.

3. The Classics were cut in stone during the T’ang dynasty at Ch’ang-an between 836 and 841, and are still in part preserved. Photographs of them have been published in Chavannes, 1909: Plates 265-64. (On this work see Gardner, 1938:61.) It is these Stone Classics that in general served as a model for the wooden plates made under Fêng Tao’s direction. The original contribution of the National Academy was to incorporate commentary with the text. The manuscripts on which the Stone Classics of 836 to 841 were based contained both text and commentary. Of this only the text was copied on stone. Fêng Tao again included the commentary.

4. The only certain examples of printing in Wu (or Wu-Yüeh) date from some years later; they are the scrolls of 956 described below.

5. Tiê fu yüan kuei 608/308-312. This is obviously a condensation of the original memorial.

6. There are biographical notices of Mu Kao both in the Old and New Histories of the Five Dynasties: Chiu uii t’ai shih 71/5a and Hsin uii t’ai shih 85/8a. He flourished between 834 and 932. His ming is incorrectly written in Sung shih 431/26b and Yü hai 43/108.

7. For the biography of T’ien Min (879-971), see Sung shih 431/26a.

8. This account is abridged from the Tiê fu yüan kuei 608/30b-30a. This is the oldest and fullest account. For those who wish to compare different accounts of this event given by historians of the next three centuries, the following translations are appended:

   Official history of the Later T’ang dynasty 43/22: “In the third year of the period Ch’ang-hsing (932), on the day hsin-wai (March 28), in the second month, the official known as chung-shu, or secretary of a department, made a memorial to the emperor, proposing to take as a model the characters of the stone inscriptions and to cut plates for the printing of the Nine Classics.”

   Official history of the Later Han dynasty 101/10: “In the first year of the period Ch’ien-yü (948), in the fifth month, on the day chi-yu (June 10), the National Academy sent a memorial to the emperor, stating that there were still four Classics—the Chou li, the I li, the Kung yang chuan and the Ku chang chuan—of which no plates had been prepared; and requesting that scholars be called together to edit the text for the purpose of producing the plates. The petition was granted.”

   Official history of the Later Chou dynasty 126/42, in the biography of Fêng Tao: “In the time of Ming-tsung of the T’ang (i.e., Later T’ang) dynasty, because the Classics had in them many mistakes, Li Yü, the officer in charge of education, with T’ien Min and others, taking as models the Classics as cut in stone by Chêng Tan (‡ 896-91) at the Western Capital, cut blocks for printing and thus spread the Classics abroad in the world. All who followed them had the work of these men as their foundation.”

   Official history of the Sung dynasty, section entitled Ju lin chuan 431/ 270-27b: “In the beginning of the T’ien-ch’ang period (926-30), T’ien Min, a doctor of the National Academy, directed Mu Kao and others to work with him in the revision of the Nine Classics. . . . In the fourth year of the T’ien-fu period (939), T’ien Min was given the title of chê chiu (librarian). . . . Though T’ien Min’s scholarship in the Classics was based on solid ground, he loved forced interpretations of passages. In the Nine Classics which he edited, he frequently put forward his own subjective interpretation.”

   Tî ê fu yüan kuei 608/308-312: “Fêng Tao, the prime minister of the Later T’ang dynasty, and Li Yü, wished to do honor to the ancient classical learning. They said, ‘During the Han dynasty Confucian scholars were honored and the Classics were cut in stone in three different scripts. In T’ang times also stone inscriptions containing the text of the Classics were made in the Imperial School. Our dynasty has too many other things to do and cannot undertake such a task as to have stone inscriptions erected. We have seen, however, men from Wu and Shu who sold books that were printed from blocks of wood. There were many different texts, but there were among them no orthodox Classics. If the Classics could be revised and thus cut in wood and published, it would be a very great boon to the study of literature. ’ T’ien Min therefore made a memorial to the throne to this effect. The answer of the emperor was that T’ien Min and other scholars were to examine and revise the text of the Classics and of the Commentaries. The work was carried on with zeal, and included the Book of Poetry and the three commentaries of the Chun ch’iu. The text was corrected, and the blocks were revised. Proofs were added with regard to the exact reading of the text, and the work was brought together in books. The Classics were first in this way made exact, and then they were cut in blocks. Money was appropriated from the Chêng-shih office [des Rouetts, 1547-51, 11, calls this the “grande salle du gouvernement des affaires”], and also unappropriated money from various branches of the government was given out, as well as taxes from second degree graduates, in order to pay for the labor.”

   Tî ê fu yüan kuei 608/308-30a: “In the fourth month of the year 932, the following order was given by the emperor, ‘For the purpose of revising the stone inscriptions of the Classics, unite them with the Commentaries, and having them cut in plates for printing, it was recently ordered that from the National Academy specially qualified men be appointed, five or six for each of the Classics, to examine the text and to add to it the Commentaries; now it is ordered that there be appointed from the court officials five men to supervise the work. [Names of five officials including T’ien Min.]’ Since the establishment of the text of the Classics is of great importance, an importance not to be compared with that of all other books, although I have already
ordered the National Academy to appoint officers to edit the work, yet, because the work is so vast, and I still fear that errors may creep in, I order Ma Kao and the men with him (who are all great scholars and each one a specialist in the Classics), to make a final exact examination, in order that everything may be brought to absolute perfection." Parenthetically it may be explained that, during the last years of the T'ang, a half century earlier, there were on the staff of the Kuo-tzu chien five po-shih and three hundred students—sixty each for the study of the Five Classics (Chou, Li, Li, Li ch'i, Miao shih, and Ch'uan ch'un with the Tso commentary). Cf. des Ronleurs, 1947-48, 447-48.

Shih Kuo (1930-93) in Mung k'i yu ch'an 18/72: "Under the T'ang dynasty block printing, though carried on, was not fully developed. From the time of P'eng Ying-wang (P'eng Tao), first the Five Classics, and then in general all the ancient canonical works were printed."

Su-shu Kuang (1931-98), T'ai-chi t'ung chien 257/160, "In 933, in the second month on the day k'ao-wei, orders were first issued to edit the Nine Sacred Books and print them for sale. And at 291/90, under date of Kuang-hui third year, six months, Jen-t'ai (or July 17, 953): "Formerly in the time of Ming-tsung of the T'ang (Latter T'ang) dynasty, the ministers P'eng Tao and Li Yu prayed the emperor to command T'ien Min of the National College to correct the Nine Sacred Books, then to cut blocks for them and print them for sale, and the court assented. The present edition was printed and presented to His Majesty on the ting-t'ai day of the month (July 22, 953). From this time forth, even in periods of anarchy, the Nine Sacred Books were transcribed and diffused very widely."

Yeh Mung-k'ai (1927-47) in Shih k'un yen yu 8/74: "Before the T'ang dynasty all books were manuscripts, the art of printing not being in existence. . . . In the time of the Five Dynasties, P'eng Tao first memorialized his sovereign, praying that an official printing establishment might be put in operation."

Chu Hsi (1130-1200) in T'ang chien kung mu 56/52b: "In 953 the T'ang (Latter T'ang) dynasty for the first time cut blocks for the Nine Sacred Books, and had them printed for sale." (This quotation and the two preceding are from the translation of Thomas T. Meadows in Carzon, 1860:1-33. There is some question about the rendering of the word here translated "for sale.")

Wang Fu (922-98) in Wu tai hui yao (T'ien shu ch'i ch'eng edition No. 0830, 8/96): "In the second month of 953 the ch'ung-shih official wrote a memorial recommending that, with the Stone Classics as a basis, the Nine Classics be printed from plates. It was ordered by the emperor that the National Academy bring together leading Confucian scholars with their assistants, and that they should take copies [rublings?] of the Stone Classics from the Western Capital; and that, each according to the particular Classic that was his speciality, they should copy and annotate the text, and then read them through with the minutest care; that then workmen of ability in the printing of characters be employed; that each department, following the model prepared, should cut the plates, and that the books thus printed should be spread abroad in the world. If anyone should have a desire in the future to write a copy of the Classics, it should be forbidden to do so except in accordance with these printed copies; that it should not be allowed again to bring out miscellaneous editions. In the same year in the fourth month, the order was given by the emperor that the guest friend of the crown prince, Ma Kao, [and other officers, including T'ien Min and Chu Kuan, a po-shih or doctor according to the biography of T'ien Min in Sung shih 431] be appointed to have oversight of the work."

Wang Ying-lin (1123-96), Yu hui 43/108-118: "In 953 in the second month, the emperor ordered the National Academy to revise the text of the Nine Classics, and, using the books [rublings?] of the stone inscriptions from the Western Capital, to have them copied and cut on wooden plates, in order to have them spread abroad through all the empire. In the fourth month, Ma Kao, Chu Kuan, and T'ien Min were ordered to examine the work with the greatest care. In the sixth month of 955, on the day t'ing-yul, the plates of the eleven Classics, together with the Erh yu, the Wu ch'ing wen t'ai, and the Chu hsing t'ai yung were finished, and T'ien Min presented them to the emperor." This last sentence may also be found in the Wu tai hui yao 8/96, quoted above. The Erh yu is a dictionary, compiled about the third century B.C.; the second section, in three ch'uan, was written by Chang Ts'un (fl. 766-79) and carries his preface of 776; the last is a work of one ch'uan by T'ang Hsiao-tu (fl. 833-40).

19. In 947 the Liao army entered Pien, or K'ai-feng, and removed, among other things, the classics cut in stone to the Supreme Capital. Liao shih 4/104-105; also Wittfogel and P'eng, 1940:221, 256.

20. By piecing together the various accounts it would seem that the Nine Classics were: I ching, Shu ching, Shih ching, I li, Chou li, Li chi, and the Ch'uan ch'un and its three commentaries. At the same time the following were printed: Hsiao ching, Lun yu, Erh yu, Wu ch'ing wen t'ai, and Chu hsing t'ai yung.

The names of these two last, which were studies on the form of characters of the Five Classics and the Nine Classics respectively, may account for the fact that while most authorities speak of P'eng Tao as having printed the Nine Classics, Shih Kuo speaks of his work as the printing of the Five Classics. Both Five Classics and Nine Classics were conventional terms used at different times to refer to the Confucian canon. (Compare our use of the words "Pentateuch" and "Hexateuch.")

21. (Carter gave this as the account in the Wu tai hui yao, but I cannot find it there. L.C.G.) The T'ieh fu yuian kuei 608/30b-31a, gives additional details, including an account of the charge of embezzlement that was brought against T'ien Min in connection with his management of this printing project, and how it was hushed up.

According to the Yu hui 43/114 and the T'ieh fu yuian kuei 608/31b, two years after the publication of the Classics (in the second month of 955), another book was entrusted to T'ien Min for printing. It was the Ch'ing tien shih wen in thirty ch'uan by Lu Yüan-lang (5961-6077). Chang Chao, minister of war, was associated in the work. We read in the Yu hui 37/330b that
four years later (959) Kuo Chung-shu (918-977) was charged with preparing for the printer the Shang shu shih wen in two chüan, which is a section of the Ching tien shih wen. Cf. Pelliot, 1916-11, 169. It was revised in 972 and again in 999 and printed both times.

A large private publication which appeared about this time was the collected poetic and prose writings of a prime minister of the Later Chou, Hu Ning (808-855). Dr. Hu says of him (Hu Shih, 1904:123) that he copied his work “in his own fine calligraphy to be carved on blocks for printing. Several hundred complete sets of his collected works, each totaling 100 chüan in volume, were thus printed for presentation to friends as gifts.” See also his official biography in the Chu wei tai shih 127-9a-7a.

22. The Ta tzu chih t'ung chien 25a/8b. The engraving of the Classics on stone in Shu in 944-51 may also have had some effect on Shu printing. It is to be noted that both Tung-ma Kuang and Ch'ü Hsi, writing in the Sung dynasty, mention the early wide diffusion of printing in Shu and state that the Classics were printed there at the same time that they were being printed in the imperial capital.

23. This book was reprinted in Tokyo in 1884, in the collection Ku i t'ung-shu under the title Ying fu Sung shu ta tui pén Erh ya. It has been discussed by Pelliot, 1902:136-17, and by Wang Kuo-wei, 1923:143-45. Both Pelliot and Wang Kuo-wei come to the conclusion that this is a Sung reprint of the Li E original, and that it is probably a very exact reproduction of the original, but with the taboo changed.


27. It is in a private collection in New York. The first lines may be translated as follows: “The generalissimo of the empire and prince of the kingdom of Wu and Yüeh, Ch'ien Hung-chun, has printed the Pao ch'ing yü shih in 84,000 rolls and presented them for safekeeping in precious pagodas. Recorded in the third year of Hsien-erh, ping-ch'un.” It was found in a pagoda of the T'ien-nung monastery at Huchow (on which see Huchow fu chih, edition of 1874, 2/12b-21b).

It is remarkable that just a year earlier, in 955, eighty-four thousand miniature stūpas in bronze were ordered made by the same prince (cf. Chavannes, 1916:140-41), and several have been reported (cf. Maspero, 1914:62-63 and Figs. 26-28). The one pictured by Maspero was preserved in the Kuo-ch'ing monastery at the foot of the mountain famous in Chinese Buddhist history, T'ien-t'ai. The number 84,000 has its antecedent in the third century before our era when the Emperor Aōka is said to have built 84,000 stūpas in his domination for relics of the Buddha. See H. A. Giles, 1923:19-20; and
Chapter 10

THE HIGH TIDE OF CHINESE BLOCK PRINTING,
960–1368

Chao Kuang-yin, one of the generals who had been contending for authority during the anarchic period of the Five Dynasties, succeeded in the year 960 in placing himself on the throne and uniting the empire under his sway. This was the beginning of the Sung dynasty, a period which rivaled that of the T’ang in cultural achievement. The T’ang dynasty had been a time of rapidly extending frontiers and of contact with the lands of the West, a period of freshness and youth, an era of lyric poetry and religious faith. The Sung dynasty, shut out from the West by the steadily encroaching nomads, was a time of ripe maturity. Lyric poetry gave way to learned prose—great compendiums of history, works on natural science and political economy, of a character and quality such as neither China nor the West, except for a short period in Greece, had ever dreamed of. Religious faith gave way to philosophic speculation, and the great systems of thought were produced that have dominated China to the first years of the present century. In art the lofty tradition of the earlier period was carried on and brought to fruition, so that the greatest and best Chinese paintings that are now extant come from the period of the Sung.

In invention, what the T’ang period conceived, the Sung era put to practical use. The magnetic needle, used in the main in earlier times either as a toy or for the location of graves, was applied to navigation. Gunpowder, already known and used for fireworks, was applied to war during the Sung dynasty. Porcelain was so developed as to become an article of export to Syria and Egypt.

A similar development took place in printing. From an obscure art at the end of the T’ang dynasty, it was already making rapid strides forward during the half-century interregnum. But as Fêng Tao’s Classics were published only seven years before the first Sung emperor ascended to the throne, it was not until that dynasty had become established that his work bore fruit. The printing of the Classics was one of the forces that restored Confucian literature and teaching to the place in national and popular regard that it had held before the advent of Buddhism, and a classical renaissance followed that can be compared only to the Renaissance that came in Europe after the rediscovery of its classical literature and that there, too, was aided by the invention of printing. This is the reason why Fêng Tao’s work has been considered of such importance by Chinese historians. Another result of the publication of the Classics was an era of large-scale printing, both public and private, that characterized the whole of the Sung dynasty.

In quality the block printing of the Sung epoch has never been surpassed. The fine workmanship of these artist-craftsmen—beautiful calligraphy perfectly reproduced in print—sets a standard for all time. The importance of calligraphy to the booklovers of the day is shown by the fact that in almost all Sung editions the name of the calligrapher who prepared the copy is recorded in the colophon along with those of the author and the printer. This also was a time of improvements in the technique of printing of which the most noteworthy was the invention of movable type. But that new development must be reserved for discussion in Chapter 22.

The advent of the Sung dynasty caused little change in the printing administration that had been organized by Fêng Tao. The National Academy was still in charge of the work. The first books published by the government were further commentaries on the Classics, literary compendiums, and classical dictionaries. In the order for the printing of one of these earliest works it is expressly stated that the arrangements as to paper, ink, and expense should be the same as in the case of the Nine Classics. The printing of this work was in charge of a man from Szechuan. The next important work was a voluminous commentary on the Classics in a hundred eighty volumes. In 1014 the Nine Canons and their Elucidations were considered to have mistakes and deficiencies, so they were
revised and reprinted. A few years later (1030) the Elucidations of the *Odes* and *History* were printed once more.

The conquest of Szechuan (Shu) in 965 brought the printing of that province and of the central empire together. Wu Chao-i, who had been for years the patron of printing in Shu, and who, more than any other, had seen the possibilities of the new art for making literature available to the people, was found by the conquerors, an old man, living in retirement and obscurity. He was brought to the imperial capital, his printing blocks were searched out and again used, and from that day the printing that had circulated in Shu became current throughout the empire.6

By the end of the tenth century the printing of the great dynastic histories had started. This was a monumental work in many hundred volumes and its execution required nearly seventy years. Like the printing of the *Classics*, it was entrusted to the National Academy.7

From 1063 little is heard of the National Academy until after the conquest of North China by the Kin Tatars and the removal of the capital to Hangchow. This was a time of constant warfare and frequent invasion. In 1139, four years after the setting up of the capital at Hangchow, a new edition of the Nine *Classics* from the old plates was ordered by the emperor. Because some of the plates were lost, the work was still unfinished in 1157. An order was then issued for the preparation of new plates where needed, and the edition was soon complete. From one authority it seems that a part at least of the dynastic histories was printed at the same time.8

Meanwhile it is clear that private printing was gaining ground and spreading through the empire. Although the only records of this private printing are the title pages of the books that have been preserved, yet from these a certain amount of incidental and disconnected information can be gleaned, as for instance the fact that the poet Ch'ên Ch'i was also a publisher. Two hereditary publishing houses figure, century after century, in these title pages, the Yin family at Hangchow and the Yü family in Chien-an. This latter place was located in Fukien, very near the birthplace of the philosopher Chu Hsi. Here printers by the name of Yü were pub-

lishing books during the Sung, and continued down into Ming times, over four hundred years. In the year 1275, just a few years before the conquest of all China by Kublai, orders were issued for the collection of wood blocks in every district south of the Yangtze River.12 If this edict stopped printing, it could not have remained long in force, for books with the mark of the Chien-an printing house continued to appear for still another century.14

The question naturally arises what kind of books were printed in these private establishments. Classics, commentaries, and histories seem to have been the favorite subjects, just as they were in the government printing office. The feeling of sacredness that in China has always surrounded the written or printed page—the feeling that impels men as a pious act to gather and burn printed scraps of paper and thus save them from being defiled—prevented the printing of any books not considered of great worth and dignity. There is evidence, however, that the practice began early in the Sung dynasty of printing the winning essays in the great national examinations.19 Local histories—histories of provinces and of cities—were also printed, probably in great number, judging from the number of those still extant.18 Likewise, and especially later in the dynasty, the field of printed literature grew constantly wider, including works on medicine, botany, agriculture, collections of poetry, and belles-lettres.17

Sung editions are rare and consequently valuable, but there are a few in the possession of each of the great libraries of the United States and Europe as well as in the Far East. A monumental work in 2100 volumes, published in China shortly before the first edition of this book appeared, consists of photographic reproductions of rare old books from Chinese private libraries. A study of the three hundred and more volumes in this collection that are photographed from originals of the Sung and Mongol dynasties gives a good cross section view of the kinds of literature that were popular with Chinese publishers during the time when William the Conqueror was invading England and the barons were wrestling the Magna Charta from the unwilling King John, and while the Crusading princes were fighting with Saladin for the possession of the Holy Sepulcher.
Histories are in the lead. Next come the collected works of various noted essayists, commentators, poets, and philosophers—large collections, running to many volumes each. A number of contemporary works on agriculture also appear. As for the commercial side of this early publishing, a certain amount of light is thrown on the subject by an extract from an old account book, dated 1176:

Per book of 1300 pages, including 30 pages of extra heavy paper at the beginning and the same at the end:

Paid to printer for paper, paste, and labor. Per copy 1500 cash.
Rent of plates 1200 cash.
Selling price of books. Per copy 8000 cash.

In spite of its high culture, the Sung empire could not successfully compete in warfare with the steadily encroaching nomads of the north. First the Khitans or Liao swept over Manchuria and the northern edge of the empire and held their domain for more than two centuries. Then the Jin, ancestors of the Manchus, overthrew the Liao and advanced still further, occupying for a whole century all that part of China which lies north of the Yangtze, and forcing the Chinese dynasty of the South, now known as Southern Sung, to move its capital to Hangchow. Finally in 1235 the empire of the Jin, and half a century later the Sung domain itself, went down before the conquering Mongols. But "China is a sea that salts every river flowing into it." Each nomad people during its century or more of rule became thoroughly Chinese in culture and in ways of living—so much so that, first the Liao against the Jin, and later the Jin against the Mongols, stood as bulwarks of Chinese civilization attempting to hold back the new inundations of barbarians from the desert.

As for the printing of that part of North China that came under the Liao domain, very little is known. A statement in the Liao annals to the effect that in 1096 "a college was founded and all the Classics and their commentaries spread abroad," makes it possible that there was a Liao edition of the Confucian Classics. As to Buddhist literature we are on firmer ground. The _Tripitaka_, together with supplements, was printed between 1031 and 1062 (possibly 1068) in Khitan script. Under the Jurchen, who established the Jin empire, there was more interest in printing. Dr. K. T. Wu indicates that the official, or National, Academy published more than thirty works in Chinese and fifteen in Jurchen, and private concerns printed at least eleven. The center of this activity was at Ping-yang, in the northwestern province of Shansi, where the government printing office was established in 1130, only five years after driving the Khitans from North China. One of the major works of the dynasty was a Chinese edition of the _Tripitaka_, the blocks for which were cut over a twenty-five year period, in 1148–73. Of the complete set of nearly seven thousand rolls, 4,997 are extant today. Stored for centuries in a monastery in Chao-ch'eng, Shansi, they were rediscovered by the learned world about 1931 and were brought to Peking by the Communists with something of a flourish on April 30, 1949. Besides other printed books noticed by Dr. Wu it may be mentioned here that the Jin dynasty, like the Sung before it, printed paper money. This subject will be treated in the following chapter.

The coming of the Mongols, who finished the conquest of North China in 1234 and of South China in 1279, wrought little change within China. The policy of the conquerors was to accept the customs of the land as they found them. The printing of China under the Mongols was thus similar to that of the preceding dynasty, but the broadening of the scope of printed literature, already noticeable, became even more marked. Among the lines of printed literature recorded are a medical book, a large quantity of almanacs, and even a play. This last is of importance because fiction and the drama first became prominent in Chinese literature in Mongol times. They were both considered as very popular, almost vulgar, literature—if the word literature could be applied to them at all. The printing of a play marks a long step toward the popularization of printing. Another bit of popular printing that has been preserved is a woodcut entitled, "Beauties who from dynasty to dynasty have overturned empires."
From many sources we learn that quantity production became far greater during Mongol times than in the earlier period and that it became still greater during the century after the Mongols were overthrown—the century before Gutenberg. It was apparently during the early years of the fifteenth century, just about the time of Gutenberg’s birth and of the large-scale use of metal type in Korea, that Chinese block printing reached its highest point, so far as the annual number of books produced is concerned. But Chinese connoisseurs find in the printing of this time a corresponding deterioration in quality and technique.

There are many references to official printing in the annals of the Mongols and of the early Ming emperors. When Kublai captured Hangchow, the southern capital, he carried away with him to Cambaluc (Peking) all the blocks that had been used by the official printing office, as well as a large number of blocks from the province of Kiangsi. A government printing office having already in 1236 been opened in Cambaluc, the addition of all this material gave great impetus to its work. In 1293 this office was united with the Hanlin College and charged with printing certain books in the Mongol tongue as well as in Chinese. In 1329, a special office was opened for the translating and printing of Confucian literature in Mongol, and another office for printing the “sacred teachings of the imperial ancestors.”

Though many Chinese books of Mongol times are still extant, resembling in every way the books of the Sung era, very little in the Mongol tongue has been preserved. The Mongols were a totally unlettered people when they began their conquests. It was only after Jenghis’ career was well under way that he employed some Uigur scholars to reduce his language to writing. The Mongols, not being themselves a literary people, were content to patronize Chinese literature in the East and Arabic literature in the West. Inasmuch as the translation of books into Mongol was a matter of national pride rather than of utility, editions were small, and little of Mongol printing has survived. One survival that is of special interest is a Mongol poem, found by Pelliot at Tun-huang. This is apparently an original Mongol work and not translated from the
Chinese. The four fragments of Mongol sitras found in Turkestan and the Buddhist prints and paper money found in Mongolia itself will be described in Chapters 14 and 16, on Turfan and on the Mongol Empire.

So far, our description of the printing of the Sung era has taken account largely of Confucian printing, the printing of the Classics, and of those historical and literary works that followed in the wake of Feng Tao's great publication. In this we have followed the Chinese records. But the printing of the Buddhists, the Taoists, and two minor religious groups—the Manicheans and Moslems—went on side by side with the Confucian and the secular. Of these the Buddhist deserves priority, for it was Buddhist printing that spread to Japan and to Central Asia; and in China itself it was Buddhists who printed the greatest single work of which we have record.

During the years 972–83 there was published in Ch'eng-tu one of the most monumental works that history records. This was the whole Buddhist canon, usually called the Tripitaka, which contained both the sacred scriptures that had been translated from the Sanskrit and a smaller number that had been written independently in Chinese. This collection consisted of 540 volumes covering 130,000 pages. It therefore required the cutting of 130,000 blocks. This massive work, together with additions, was reprinted frequently during the Sung. The fact that the printing of the Tripitaka is ignored by the official historians, who describe in such detail the work of Feng Tao, speaks eloquently of the lack of regard in which Buddhism was held by the ruling and literary classes during the Confucian revival.

It was in Korea and Japan that the printing of the Tripitaka had its great effect. In 989 the king of Korea asked for and obtained a copy from the emperor of China. About the year 1011 his successor gave orders that it be revised and reprinted in his own dominions. The work occupied sixteen years. A copy of the Tripitaka now in Tokyo, of which only two of the 6,467 volumes are lacking, was
printed in Korea in 1498 and brought to Japan between 1499 and 1496, and is said to be a reprint made at that time by order of the king, from the thirteenth century wooden blocks that had been carefully preserved in the Hai-in monastery.  

Meanwhile, in 985, a printed copy of the Tripitaka was brought from China to Japan by the priest Chōnen. In describing this event there is used for the first time in Japanese literature the word sanshō, printed book. For two hundred years—since the famous million charms of 770—Japanese records had been silent on the subject of printing. Either the art died out and had to be reintroduced from the mainland, or else it was too obscure to find a place in the annals.

After the Buddhist canon was brought from China in 985, nearly a century more elapsed before the first mention of any book being actually printed in Japan. A Lotus Sūtra was printed before 1080 and at least ten other works before 1200, one of them being a ten-volume edition of the Vidyāmatrasiddhi, published in 1088. Another was the Diamond Sūtra, published in 1157—the favorite book with printers of China, Japan, and Central Asia. A portion of this edition is now housed in the British Museum. There are other sūtras extant dating from 1206 and 1223, and from that time on an ever-increasing number. One of the first original Japanese Buddhist works also appeared in these years—the Ōjō Yōshū, or Essentials of Salvation, by the learned monk Genshin (942-1017). It was printed in 1227, if not earlier, and was often reprinted.

The books printed in Japan during the time corresponding to the Sung and Mongol periods—in striking contrast to those of China—are all Buddhist. They are as a rule works of merit, printed in payment of a vow to succor a parent, relative, or friend in the next world—or else to obtain special merit for the one who bears the expense of the printing. They contain inscriptions of which the following is typical: “Mononafu on mature reflection sees that the faults of the present life are more than can be numbered, and to expiate the sins of boundless ages of past time is an impossibility. He has therefore undertaken the printing of this true doctrine, in order thereby to eradicate his accumulated guilt.”

With the inauguration of the Ashikaga régime in Japan (1336), and the expulsion of the Mongols from China (1368), there began the second great influx of Chinese culture into the island empire. For four hundred years, during all the cultural triumphs of the Sung period, China and Japan had scarcely met. Now all the stored-up energy of four centuries began to enter Japan like a flood, with the result that Japan was able to carry forward the great tradition of Sung culture during the long period of conservatism that set in on the continent during the Ming dynasty. This epoch is marked by the first printing of Chinese Classics in Japan. The earliest Confucian work found by Satow in his researches, a copy of the Analects, is dated 1364. Ten more such books bear dates between that and 1400. Up to this time Japan had printed nothing but Chinese translations from the Sanskrit. Now for two centuries it printed original Chinese works. It was not till the end of the sixteenth century, so far as is known, that the first original Japanese work of a secular character appeared in print—a copy of the Nihongi (Historical Records), printed with movable type.

Buddhist printing spread not only east but north and west. The great quantity of Buddhist fragments of this period found by the German expeditions in the region of Turfan, the Uigur center, is described in Chapter 14. A smaller number of printed sūtras of a similar character and in the same languages was found by Pelliot at Tun-huang, not in the sealed manuscript chamber that contained the Diamond Sūtra, but in one of the other caves.

A third source of Buddhist printing for this period is found in the discoveries of the Russian expedition of Koslov in Mongolia. The excavation of the buried city of Kharakhoto brought to light a considerable number of printed books, evidently Buddhist, in the language of the Tangut, a people of Tibetan origin, who occupied northwestern China and a part of Mongolia during the two centuries preceding the conquests of Genghis Khan. These Tangut texts have not yet been deciphered. With them, however, were found a dozen or more printed books in Chinese which are of special interest because, unlike the books of Turfan, they almost all contain dates.
The oldest of the Kharakhoto books is dated May 16, 1016. Of printed books that bear a clear date, it is therefore the fifth in age which has so far been brought to light. Like the Diamond Sutra of Tun-huang and the tiny scrolls from the T’ien-ning su pagoda at Huchow and the Leì Féng pagoda at Hangchow, this is in roll form, the sheets being pasted together end to end. And this is an abridged edition of that same Diamond Sutra that was found at Tun-huang, though in a different translation not hitherto known. Each sheet shows in the margin the name of the individual by whom the block was engraved, while a final note gives the name of the patron who supplied the funds. As the patron and at least two of the engravers have been identified as men whose names appear in local histories in the province of Shensi, this is evidently a book brought from that province, and a sample of the Buddhist printing that was going on in China proper near the old capital.

In contrast to that part of China which was under the dominion of the Sung emperors, and where all Buddhist printing was of more or less humble origin, a number of the Kharakhoto sūtras contain the statement that they were printed by order of the Tangut empress and at her expense. Among these is another Diamond Sutra, printed in 1189. One small but highly popular sūtra translated into Tangut, and also printed in 1189, was executed by order of the emperor, who caused a hundred thousand copies in Tangut and Chinese to be distributed.

Additional light on the Buddhist printing of the Tangut empire is shed by a note in the official records of the Yian dynasty. On November 29, 1294, it is stated, “orders were given to the Hsian-chêng-yüan to stop cutting the blocks for the Tripitaka in [the language of] Ho-si [Tangut].” But these orders seem to have been ineffective. The printing did not actually cease until 1302 when about thirty sets, in some 3,620 chian each, were completed. There must have been everywhere in eastern Asia a passion for printing this great work with its five to seven thousand volumes.

The special significance of the Kharakhoto printing, like that of the Uigur of Turfan, lies in the fact that Kharakhoto was on the direct route to the West, and that these printed books, spanning the period from 1016 to 1352, were found not far from the original center of the empire of Jenghis Khan in one of the first regions that he added to his growing domain.

Taoist books from the Sung dynasty are rare, and the progress of Taoist printing is more or less obscure. It has already been shown (Chapter 2) that the part played by the Taoists in the origin of printing, though obviously of great importance, is more difficult to trace than the Buddhist and Confucian contributions. Taoist activity in T’ang times is also suggested by the work of the Ho-kan Chi, in Liu Pien’s statement (Chapter 8), and in the beginnings of playing cards (Chapter 19).

As for the Taoist philosophers, during the T’ang dynasty the works of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu had been given a place in the Confucian canon on account of the Taoist affiliations of the dynasty. Though this position had been lost before Péng Tao published the Classics, yet in one of the commentaries that he published—a commentary written in T’ang times—the works of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu were included among the Classics; and, as we have noticed above, other Taoist classics were also printed by official order between 1003 and 1014. This is, so far as is known, the first printing of Taoist classical literature—works printed not by Taoists but as a part of the Confucian canon.

The publication of two editions of the Confucian Classics in 953 and of the Buddhist Tripitaka in 983 evidently spurred the Taoists to competition. The compiling of the full Taoist canon was completed in 1059—466 cases in 4,905 chian—and was forthwith presented to the throne. Nothing from this first edition survives although several reprints, made before the end of the dynasty, are still extant. Two such Taoist books are among Koslov’s finds at Kharakhoto, and one, a Sung edition of the Tao tê ching, appears in the Sūta pu t’ung k’an collection of photographic reproductions.

Curiously enough, two books of the Manichean scriptures, adopted and taken over by the Taoists as their own, were printed
along with the other Taoist books, either at this time or in one of the later editions of the Taoist canon. Further, there is evidence in the writings of Lu Yu (1125-1209) that Manichean treatises had been printed before the year 1000 in the province of Fukien, and possibly even a century earlier. That these sacred writings of a religion that made its way across northern Africa during the latter days of the Roman empire, and that until this century has been known to us almost wholly from the works of St. Augustine, should have found their way in the course of centuries into China, there to appear in print some two or three hundred years before the art of printing reached Europe, is one of the anomalies of history.

One reason why few Taoist books have survived is the determined attempt made by the Buddhists, often with imperial backing, to destroy them. In 1258 the Great Khan Mangu deputed his brother Kublai to represent him at a debate which was held in Kublai’s presence between Buddhist and Taoist representatives with regard to the authenticity of the tradition concerning Lao-tzu’s activities in Central Asia. The Taoists were defeated, and the result was an imperial order to the head of the Taoist religion that he should bring all Taoist books to the capital and burn them, and that all the blocks for printing such books should be burned at the same time. This order not being completely effective, Kublai, now emperor of all China, issued a second edict decreeing the further burning of Taoist works.

Moslems have never in any part of the world been fond of printing. Though Moslems entered China in great numbers during the Mongol period and of course brought the Koran with them, there is no record that the Koran or any part of it was ever printed in China. There are, however, records of printing on less sacred subjects. In the year 1328 there was a great issue of printed almanacs, 3,123,158 of them, in three different sizes, with special details about lucky and unlucky days for marrying, starting on a journey, making a garment, or buying goods. It is recorded that these almanacs were of two kinds, and that one kind was prepared specially for the use of Moslems. There are also books on doctrine and liturgy, the

Moslem calendar, history, and geography, the Arabic language, and even a biography of Mohammed published in 1775.

Of all the religions that flourished in China under the Mongols, there is just one that, so far as our records go, never printed. This is Christianity. Neither the Nestorians, whose churches Marco Polo found at Chinkiang and Hangchow and in Central Asia, nor the Roman Catholics, whose work flourished in Peking and Fukien soon after Marco’s departure, seem to have availed themselves of the new invention—at least, no Christian printing is recorded. However, it must be remembered that even Buddhist printing is almost never recorded except in Buddhist books. Only the finding of these books has revealed the great part which Buddhist printing played. The discovery at some time in the future of a printed New Testament from this period is not an impossibility and may throw light on the problem of how printing was transmitted.

This story of the development and spread of block printing in Eastern Asia during the time of its greatest advance—during the four centuries before the art first made its appearance in Europe—may well close with a summary written by Yeh Meng-tê about the year 1130. It is to be noted that the author wrote before quantity production really began, before most of the Sung books now in our libraries were printed, and before the speeding up that took place in Mongol and early Ming times.

Before the T’ang dynasty, all books were manuscripts, the art of printing not being in existence. People regarded the collecting of books as something honorable, and no one had them in large quantity. Those who collected them had great ability in collating and comparing, whence it frequently happened that people had fine copies, and students, as a consequence of the great labor of transcription, also acquired great ability and accuracy in reciting them. In the time of the Five Dynasties, Fêng Tao first memorialized his sovereign, praying that an official printing establishment might be put in operation. And again in those years of our reigning dynasty called Shun-hua (900-94) officers were commissioned to print the historical records and the annals of the first and second Han dynasties. From that time forth printed books became still more numerous; scholars and officers ceased to make the collection of books a chief object of attention; and,
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as students found it easy to obtain books, the practice of reciting was in consequence broken up.

It is idle to speculate why in the succession of later centuries China lost the progressive educational impulse the existence of which this conservative writer so laments. Suffice it to say that every record of the Sung dynasty that we possess enables us to see a country which in its progressive thinking shows the result of this new stimulus and reminds the reader strangely of the reawakened Europe of the century that followed Guinemberg.

NOTES

1. The T'ai p'ing kung chi, an encyclopedia in 500 ch'üan, was printed in 981; see Yü hsi 54:33a; the Shu wen chih t'ou, a dictionary compiled on January 29, a.d. 100, and presented to the throne in 121, appeared in print in 986.

2. Kou Chung-ch'eng (929-1002) of L-chou or Ch'eng-tu was a pupil of Wu Chao-i; see Sung shih 441:10b-11b. The one in charge of editing was Hui Hsuan (516-91), a native of Kiangsu; cf. Sung shih 441/6ff and Pelliot, 1923:18-19.

3. Wu ching ch'eng i, printed by Chao An-ju (958-1018), according to Sung shih 287/14b. This work deserves extended comment. It was compiled in over 100 p'ien, or sections, by K'ung Ying-ta (574-648) and others at the command of the second emperor of the Tang. (See biography of K'ung, Hsin T'ang shu 158a/6b.) The proposal to print was made in the third month of 981 by K'ung Wei (928-957). The then emperor put the task in the hands of the Kou-tse chien, and K'ung Wei and others undertook the work of editing, while Li Yüeh and five others proofread it. (See Yü hsi 43/192; in the biography of K'ung Wei the title is given as Wu ching su li.) Wooden blocks were ready by the tenth month of 990. On the day of the first month of 993, Liu K'o-ming proposed that the work be corrected. On the day kung-hiu of the following month this was done, and in 999 it was ready. (Yü hsi 43:15b-16b.) The Wu ching ch'eng i is usually cited in its several parts; viz., the 1 in fourteen chüan, the Shu in twenty, the Shih in forty, the Li chi in seventy, and the Ch'un ch'iu in thirty-seven, a total of 81 chüan. (Cf. Chiu T'ang shu 46/8a, 9b, 10a, 12a, and 16a.) The Hsin T'ang shu figures, given in 57/4b-12b, differ: it is in sixteen chüan and Ch'un ch'iu in thirty-six, the rest the same, making a total of 82. We cannot account for the difference between 81 and 82 chüan given in the section on bibliog-

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rally in the Histories of the Tang, and the figure of 80 mentioned in the Yü hsi 43/192. Wang Kuo-wei, 1904b:1/5a, has still another total, namely 179 chüan. His individual figures are the same as those of the Hsin T'ang shu, except that he gives to the I only thirteen chüan.


5. Shih shu shih wen.


7. The dates of the first printed edition of the dynastic histories are as follows (according to the Yü hsi 43/16ff):

Shih chi, former Han, and Later Han
Three Kingdoms, Tsin, and Old T'ang
Han chih
North and South Dynasties, and Sui
Liang, Ch'en, and New T'ang
994-1004
1000-1002
1022
1024-1027
1061-1065

The first three, together with the Nan shih, were corrected in 1034 and reprinted. A new revision of the Han shu was made in 1069. Cf. Yü hsi 43/17a-17b. The modern Po-ns edition of the last is that of 1043-38.

The dynastic histories that have come down from the period of Southern Sung (1127-1279) and have been reproduced in the Po-ns edition include the Shih chi (printing of 1195-1200), Hou Han shu (largely that of 1131-62), and San kuo chih (largely that of 1179-94). Several others, Sung Nan Chi, Chou shu, are based on an edition printed in large type in Szecuan about the year 1144. Cf. the notes of L. C. Goodrich in Yang, 1950:32-35.

The exactness with which the dynastic histories were printed is described, no doubt with some exaggeration, by the Persian historian, Rashid-eddin. (See Chapter 17.)

8. According to the Yü hsi 43/18b-19a, Five Classics were involved, not Nine. But another authority, an older contemporary of Wang Ying-lin (author of the Yü hsi)—namely, Li Hsin-ch'uan (1166-1243)—informs us that what was printed were the Six Classics without the Li chi, and the Dynastic Histories without the Han shu. (Chien yen i tai ch'io weh tsa chi, quoted by Wang Kuo-wei, 1904b:1/6b.) Later the "Eleven Classics" were printed and the blocks stored for use. Cf. remark of Yen Ch'en, dated 1905, quoted by Wu, 1950:56-66.

9. This is indicated by the list of missing blocks, one of which is from the Han shu.

10. For a full account of books published by Ch'en Chi and his son, see Yeh Tê-kui, Shu lin ch'ung hua 2/28-31. The National Central Library, Nanking, was (in 1947) the proud possessor of an original edition of Ch'en Chi's collection of Sung poets in 60 volumes as well as two anthologies also in the original edition. The director of the library, Ching Fu-sung, 1947:1-3, puts them in the first half of the thirteenth century.
11. Books printed by the Yin family are listed by Wang Kuo-wei, 1942b: 1.20a. Their shop was located on the main thoroughfare in front of the Tai
miào.

12. For a full account of the work of the Yü family at Chien-an, see Yeh
to the throne in 1775 of Chung-yin (d. 1775), then Manchu governor general
of Fukien and Chekiang, it is not certain whether the Yü family of Chien-an
were publishing books as early as the Northern Sung. (Yeh Teh-hui, op. cit.)
Wu, 1943:325 and 1950:483, informs us that the family continued their
activities in printing throughout the Yüan and Ming dynasties into the
seventeenth century.

13. The orders were issued on Sept. 29, 1275. See Yüan shih 8/27a.

14. The importance of the province of Fukien as a publishing center and
the sort of work done in that and other provinces is thus described by Yeh
Meng-tê in Shih lin yen yü 8/74: “At present, of all books printed throughout
the empire, those of Hangchow are considered the best, those of Szehchuan
are next, and those of Fukien are worst. Of late years the printing blocks
of the capital begin to stand but little after those of Hangchow, but the paper
used is not so fine. In Szehchuan and Fukien, soft wood is much used for
cutting into printing blocks, the object of which is their easy completion, with
a rapid sale for the books. Hence the workmanship is not good. Fukien edi-
tions are spread all over the empire, and that is on account of the ease with
which they are got ready.” Translation of Meadows in Carzon 1860:156, 16.

15. A curious story, preserved by Kao Wen-hui (chin shih 1160), in the
288d., 3-4, tells of two literary graduates from Shu, who, in the years 1088-
16, purchased the printed essays of the prize-winners in the examinations.

16. Chu Shih-chia indicates in the first chart of his Chuang-huo ti-lang chih
tsung lu that 28 Sung editions of various local histories exist today, and in
Shih hsii-chien pao 1938:240, he lists two more. In Sung times 177 titles
are reported, according to Sung shih 204:17b-.21a. See Chu Shih-chia, 1950:15.
“Histories” is perhaps a misnomer for these books. They are rather summaries
of the official archives, such as have been published from time to time by every
Chinese city.

17. An example in the first category is an early herbal, K'ai-pao k'ang
ting Jen-te'ao compiled by Li Fang (925-956), which was printed from blocks
in 973 or 974, and is unhappily no longer extant. Dr. A. W. Hummel (in a
letter to L.C.G. of July 16, 1952) says that this information is based on a
statement by T'ao Ho in H. hsüeh tu chih, published in 1851. Other printed
herbals appeared in 1061, 1108, 1159, and 1304. Cf. Sarton and Hummel,
possesses a work on medical prescriptions, entitled Wei t'ai pi yao fang,
25. Medical work of Sun Sui-miao (581–602), printed about 1300. Among the Koslov finds from Kharakhoto were chá 13 and 14 of Sun’s Ch’ien chin fang.

26. See Howorth, 1888,1, 274; and Yule, 1903, i, 447. See also Cordier, 1920:73–74.

27. Liu Chi-hsüan chuan, printed about 1300; in the Koslov collection from Kharakhoto. The last sections (6, 7, 8) only were found.

28. Opinions have changed during the last generation. Wu, 1950:496, writes regarding the drama: “Previously regarded as vulgar literature, it developed under the Mongols into a fine medium for creative writing.”

For more on printing under the Yuan see Wu, 1950:495–523.

29. In the Koslov collection from Kharakhoto.

30. In 1391, copies of the Classics and the dynastic histories were distributed among all the schools of North China. For additional particulars about early Ming printing, see Wu, 1947:203 ff.

31. Kiangni remained an important printing center during Mongol times. A list of Kiangni books of the period 1312–21 is given in Liu-an, 1916:20–21; see also Wu, 1950:479.

32. Known as pien hsiu sso. Another office known as ching chi sso was opened at Ping-yang.

33. The central government office for the printing of books was known by different names at different periods in the Mongol dynasty, corresponding probably with slightly different functions. In 1266, under Ogatai, it was pien hsiu sso; in 1273 under Kublai fsu chien; in 1279 hsiung wen fsu; in 1330 i wen chien.

34. The office for printing the “sacred teachings of the imperial ancestors,” opened in 1330, was the kung ch’ing ch’u.

35. In the eleventh to thirteenth centuries there were nine additional printings of the Chinese Tripitaka, the last one, made in the years 1277–94, numbering 7,182 rolls. Cf. Yeh Kung-ch’o, 1927; Demiéville, 1924 and 1935; Kenneth Ch’ien, 1951; Pelliot, 1953:88–91; and Goodrich, 1953:54. A large portion of the edition of 1232 is housed in the Gest Oriental Library of Princeton University. See the report of the curator, Dr. Hu Shih, June 30, 1951, and his description of the library, 1954.

There seem to have been other special printings of single sūtras. Ellery Sedgwick, 1946:9, in a whimsical account of the purchase of a statue made in Japan, tells the story of a find therein of a printed copy of the Lotus Sūtra (see Nanjo, A Catalogue of the Buddhist Tripitaka No. 134), printed about 1176, probably in Hangchow, which he presented to the Library of Congress.

36. The request was granted in 985 (Sung shih 887/59) and the work was received in Korea two years later. The Sung record is confirmed in the biography of the Korean envoy. Cf. Nak Cho'on Paik, 1951:64–65. (Demiéville, 1924:193–95, writes that in 1019 another copy was presented by China to Korea. Paik puts the event in 991.)

37. The plates for this edition of 5,000 rolls were destroyed in 1231 or 1232. (Another edition or part of one seems to have been printed in 1047–83, but its history is obscure.) In 1236 a new edition was begun; it was completed in 1251. The plates this time numbered 1,512. The Tripitaka now consisted of 1,512 separate works in 6,205 volumes. Each block—made of the pak tal tree wood—was about 9½ inches long, 2 feet 2 inches wide, 2½ inches thick, and weighed approximately 8.26 lbs. The corners are metal plated to prevent cracking, and each varnished to make it insect proof. Nak Cho'on Paik, 1951:69–70.

In addition to the Tripitaka itself, other books were published in Korea during the eleventh century. Tokujó Oya, 1950:197–203, informs us that Giten (d. 1101) traveled to Pien and elsewhere in China collecting books, which finally numbered approximately 4,000 and more fantastic. He established in the Tai-hsfn-p’ing a printing office to publish newly compiled Buddhist works by people of Korea (seventeen authors with thirty-eight works), of Liao (twelve authors with twenty-nine works), and of Sung (nine authors). On completion sets were presented to the emperors of Sung and Liao, and to Japan. Some of these works were reprinted in China and Japan.

38. It survived the earthquake and the bombing of World War II, and is now preserved in the Zōshō-ji, a temple in Tokyo.


40. Chüeneye received it in 984; Sung shih 491/88. See Tsunoda and Goodrich, 1951:56.


42. Sansom, 1941:283–38.

43. Satow, 1882:53.


45. Pelliot, 1914:501 ff. For further details the reader is referred to this article.

46. Wu, 1950:451–53, has also treated printing under the Hsi-hsia, or Tangut, empire which ruled in the west, with its capital at Ning-hsia, from 1042 to 1227. (Their state became autonomous earlier, in 982.) Translation and printing of the Buddhist canon into Tangut was begun in the eleventh century, but was not completed until 1302. Fragments of this huge work, in 3,630 ch’ián, have been found in the last fifty years in Ning-hsia and elsewhere. So too have other printed items, including two small glossaries, published in 1132 and 1190 respectively.

47. At Tun-huang dated fragments and single sheets earlier than 1005 were found and at least two undated books that are generally considered to have been earlier, but the Diamond Sūtra of 868 and 864 and the To lo ni ching of
Chapter 11

THE PRINTING OF PAPER MONEY

The form of early printing that was most widespread in China—the printing that touched all classes of the people, and also attracted the attention of Marco Polo and other European travelers—was paper money.

Some Chinese writers, in treating of paper money, consider it to have been a natural development from other forms of representative currency. They frequently refer to "white deerskin money" which the Han emperor Wu in 120 B.C. compelled all nobles to buy and then present to him as tribute; but, as Dr. Yang remarks, the deerskin was not intended for circulation, and so cannot properly be considered in this context.

A more likely beginning starts with the first years of the ninth century, when "flying money" or certificates were given to merchants depositing cash in government offices called chin-tsou yuan. These certificates guaranteed reimbursement in places designated by the merchant. Whether these certificates were made of paper or not is unknown. The official sources are silent on the point, but the assumption is not unlikely as both the Sui and T'ang histories record the use of paper for currency in the years just prior to 618. Paper money for use at funerals—probably an imitation of metallic currency—is also recorded in the biography of an eighth-century figure. "Flying money," later called "credit cash," was in use for some centuries, and so far as is known was not printed.

The first tentative steps taken in the direction of genuine paper money may be credited, like so much in the early history of printing, to the provincial capital known as I-chou (the Ch'eng-tu of today) in Szechuan. The record runs as follows: After the rebellion of Li Shun in 994 the offices in several districts of Szechuan, includ-