History 170A
Print Culture in the Late Ming
Printed Placard of Imperial Proclamation

This placard, intended for posting in public places like markets, announces the regulations for the use and circulation of paper money.

Issued by the Judicial Intendant for Shanxi in 1422
Diamond Sutra 金剛経
(dated 868)
Oldest dated printed book
Ming China

Major centers of publishing are shown in blue: Jianyang 建陽 in Fujian Province; Hangzhou 杭州; and Nanjing 南京 (first Ming capital)
Newly-Cut Edition in Large and Small Type of Master Feng’s Hand-Delivered Commentary on the Book of Odes

Text of the Confucian classic Book of Odes is given in the top register, while the commentary by a renowned scholar is appended below.
Illustrated Four-Character Glossary

- First published in 1371, this primer was reprinted many times.
- Column at right shows (top to bottom): censer, cabinet, window screen, standing screen, paper, ink, writing brush, inkstone.

This primer, published in Jianyang around 1570, includes illustrations of flora and fauna mentioned in the poems of the Book of Odes.
Publishers’ Self-Images

These two Jianyang commercial printers included their own “portraits” in their publications.
Completely Illustrated Vernacular Edition of “King Wu Smites Tyrant Zhou,” Newly-Issued by Monsieur Yu of Jianyang

- Published in 1330s
- The “illustration at top, text at bottom” style was widely used by commercial publishers
Newly-Cut Fully Illustrated Reprint of the Capital Edition of Journey to the West in One Hundred Chapters

- This inexpensive edition of Journey to the West was issued by a Jianyang printer c. 1610
- Illustrations show Sun Wukong being acknowledged as king of the monkeys
Treatment of Pediatric Disorders (c. 1600)
Newly-Reissued and Illustrated Digest of Physiognomy

- Published in Jianyang in 1585
- Xinkan tuxiang renxiang bian
  新刊圖像人像編
Legal Casebook

- Published c. 1600, this book explains legal statutes and rulings in a question-and-answer format
- Gujin lütiao gong’an 古今律條公案
Newly-Cut, Easy-to-Read for the Four Peoples of the Empire Correct Source for a Myriad Practical Uses

- Encyclopedia published in Jianyang in 1599
- Chapter on merchants begins with advice for traveling merchants at bottom, instructions for proper behavior in brothels at top
Newly Reprinted, Expanded and Corrected, Fully Illustrated, and Copiously Annotated Biographies of Admirable Women (1587)

Anthologies of virtuous women, intended for a female audience, were published in large numbers and fine editions in the 16th & 17th centuries.
Lü Kun, a renowned scholar and advocate of women’s education, wrote this book to provide positive role models for contemporary women.
Illustrated Lives of Virtuous Women

- Published by a notable lineage (successful as merchants and officials) c. 1610
- Illustration shows widow of Han dynasty who cut off her ear in order to avoid being forced to remarry
Illustrated Lives of Virtuous Women

Empress Wang (far right) hides her face with her fan when her debauched husband, Emperor Ming of Han, summons his dancing girls.
Story of the Western Wing

This luxury edition of the play, published in the 1620s, includes commentary by the editor printed in red above the top margin of the page.
Illustration to 1640 edition of Story of the Western Wing
Story of the Western Wing

- 18th century print
- below: Oriole & Crimson listen to Student Zhang play the zither
This calendar for the year 877 lists auspicious and inauspicious days for various tasks and activities, especially weddings, funerals, and house construction.

Center bottom: geomantic diagram for house-building (below which is a charm for protecting the home)
Almanac for the Year 1766

Illustration shows dragon spewing precious goods into “Treasure-Gathering Urn”
Chart of Fortunate and Unfortunate Marriages

The chart shows which zodiac signs make for ill-fated marriage matches.
Traveler’s Almanac

A handy guide to auspicious and ominous days for traveling
Mulan

This decorative print from the 18th century shows Mulan dressed in a man’s clothing with a bow and sword.
“Mulan Roams the Palace with a Sword”