

NETWORKS OF DISQUIET: CENSORSHIP AND THE PRODUCTION OF LITERATURE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY KOREA

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This article explores the transnational interaction of early modern Korean literature with special attention to the practice of “censorship.” By examining media control by the government authorities in both late Chosŏn Korea and late imperial China, this study aims to examine how the state and policymakers attempted to control the flow of unorthodox books and how the production of books epitomized the cultural values of the day. “What value system prompted the authorities to forbid a certain body of texts?” “What agencies were instrumental in the circulation of books?” By analyzing various travelogues to Beijing (*yŏnhaengnok*) and notes on poetry (*sibwa*), this article examines how the transnational interaction between China and Korea and changing textual environments influenced the production of literature in late Chosŏn. Using a specific case study of Yi Tŏng-mu (1741–1793), this article demonstrates that various “informal networks” outside of conventional channels functioned as the actual key drivers of book culture. In particular, a number of “book brokers” in the Qing and Chosŏn facilitated the distribution of forbidden books. My study on these circulatory dynamics reveals how negotiations between the control of media and the distributing of books influenced the textual environments and how the cultural value system shaped the production of literature.

Keywords: censorship, circulation of books, early modern Korea, informal networks, production of literature, Sino-Korean interaction, transnational, Yi Tŏng-mu, *yŏnhaengnok*

Censorship by King Yŏnjo (r. 1724–1776) in 1771 involved many dramatic expressions, including the defacing of forbidden books and the imprisonment and execution of more than one hundred people:

Among interpreters and peddlers, those who did not surrender *Cb'ongamjip* were stripped, tied up, and laid in the blazing sun. Nearly a hundred people almost died from this punishment.

商譯與冊僮之以不納青菴集，裸體反接，列伏於赫陽之下，危死者近百數。¹

It is also notable that his successor King Chǒngjo (r. 1776–1800) undertook a wide reformation of literary culture by distinguishing “orthodox” literature from improper examples. If that is the case, when they judged literature to be good or bad, what value systems prompted the authorities to forbid a certain body of texts? To understand the censorship imposed during the King Yǒnjo and King Chǒngjo periods, many scholars have presented a significant amount of important studies on various aspects of the government practices. A major trend of this scholarship focuses on the socio-political contexts of late Chosǒn.² This line of scholarly works established censorship as a form of literary enforcement motivated by factional struggles. On the other hand, many others have discussed the relationship between the changes of literary style and the possible influence of Western learning.³ Drawing on these two trends, most scholars have situated the practice of censorship of eighteenth-century Korea within the frame of “domestic circumstance,” either with respect to controversies over different literary styles or in terms of political disagreement among policymakers. This article does not intend to minimize the Chosǒn context; rather, in order to supplement and explicate the complexities of the historical events, this study starts from two different positions. Beyond a Korea-centered perspective, this study explores, first, how Sino-Korean interaction of the day brought changes in reading and writing in Chosǒn; and second, what main agencies were instrumental in the circulation of books.

In the pages below, this study attempts to elucidate the censorship practices in eighteenth-century Korea in the larger context of East Asian textual conditions

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¹ *Yǒnjo sillok* 116:35a [1772.6.2]

² For example, Chang Hyo-hyǒn has presented a seminal work about how Chǒngjo’s literary police was both motivated by factional struggles and applied for political purposes. See Chang Hyo-hyǒn, “18-segi munch’e panjǒng esǒ ūi sosǒl nonŭi” (Discourses on novel in the practice of censorship in eighteenth-century Korea), *Han’guk Hanmunhak yǒn’gu* 15 (1992): 351–73.

³ There has been a long tradition of scholarship for this trend. Yun Chae-min’s paper outlines the issues this work addresses. See Yun Chae-min, “Munch’e panjǒng ūi chaehaesǒk” (Revisit the censorship of late Chosǒn Korea), *Kojǒn munhak yǒn’gu* 21 (2002): 69–95.

and border-crossing intellectual networks. I submit that the transnational interactions brought fundamental shifts in the production of writings as well as in the reception of conventional canons among literati. Eventually, these changes caused considerable anxiety and disquiet to the authorities. During this period, a print industry flourished in the region south of the Yangzi River in China, particularly in Zhejiang (浙江). The books produced in this area were transferred to many parts of China, particularly to Beijing, where the biggest market existed.⁴ The bookshops in Liulichang (琉璃厂) played a central role in circulating these books within the capital city as well as in exporting them to foreign countries, including Korea. By looking at these textual dynamics, this study highlights that the circulation of books occurred relatively independently of “national” or “political” boundaries.⁵ From a transnational perspective, this study particularly focuses on the dynamic process of texts that can be collected and exchanged, bought and sold. In considering the relationship of writing to materiality in literary history, we can view literary texts as objects in constant motion and flux—transported from one place to another, one genre to another, and one person or group to another.⁶ By investigating the larger scope of textual situations, one can discover how transcultural contacts across borders and changing textual environments influenced intellectual circles and literary trends in late Chosŏn Korea.

MEDIA CONTROL AND THE INFORMAL NETWORKS

The practice of censorship reveals the way in which the value systems of a society change.⁷ The state and policymakers distinguish “orthodox” books from

⁴ About the print industry in the Jiangnan area during the late Ming period, see Ōki Yasushi, *Min-matsu Kōnan no shuppan bunka* (Print culture of Jiangnan during the late Ming period), (東京: 研文出版, 2004).

⁵ Many literary histories make the unconscious assumption that literary identities and practices are formed by political nations. In this period, however, it is hard to define the boundary of “Korean Literature” solely by its demarcation as a modern nation. To solve this problem, methods and perspectives in the field of world literature are worth consulting. For the problems of conventional literary histories, for example, see David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003); Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M. B. DeBevoise (Harvard University Press, 2007).

⁶ For the idea of texts as material objects, I am particularly indebted to D. F. McKenzie, Peter D. McDonald, and Michael F. Suarez, *Making Meaning: Printers of the Mind and Other Essays* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001) and Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe Between the 14th and 18th Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

⁷ In his work, Robert Darnton conducts a comparative study of three historical worlds, such as

“unorthodox” ones; in so doing, they try to keep unorthodox texts under control as a way to cope with the threat they might pose.⁸ Consequently, those who have produced books labeled improper constantly struggle to free themselves from the constraints the authorities have imposed. By understanding the push-and-pull between the orthodox and the unorthodox, we can understand how writing and the production of books epitomize the cultural values of particular societies.

While the authorities attempt to control unorthodox knowledge, producers and consumers of literary works negotiate with this order, or they engineer tactics to resist it. Within these tense dynamics, various agencies often operate their own distribution systems to break through the surveillance of the authorities. As they create elaborate networks to spread unorthodox books, the flow of information often takes place in one of two ways. One way is through the official channels the state establishes and imposes. The other is through informal and unconventional routes. The examination of these circulatory dynamics reveals not only how cultural value influences patterns of behavior such as the practice of censorship but also how tensions and negotiation eventually shape the production of culture.⁹

With respect to the textual dynamics of late Chosŏn Korea, this study particularly emphasizes the various “informal networks” that were at the center of book reception and consumption.¹⁰ For example, various book brokers in both Qing China and Chosŏn Korea facilitated the distribution of books; at the same time, the sharing of manuscripts in literary coteries was influential in shaping new literary tastes. Rather than the government-led distribution of imprints and literary inquisitions, these unconventional routes outside of established channels functioned as the actual key drivers of book culture in late Chosŏn. Focusing on these new hubs in the circulatory dynamics, this research places “unmeasured” and “less-regulated” agencies at the center of its analytical lens, and examines the

eighteenth-century France, the British Raj, and Communist East Germany, and demonstrates how censorship affected writing practices in distinctive ways. Please see Robert Darnton, *Censors at Work* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2015).

⁸ The criteria for making such judgments are different depending on the authorities and the periods. I will further discuss different cases and value standards in the later part of this article.

⁹ Ramon Lobato considers various distribution networks in the world film industries. His study encompasses not just the major studios but a wide variety of individuals, organizations, and virtual publics. Please see Ramon Lobato, *Shadow Economies of Cinema: Mapping Informal Film Distribution* (London: British Film Institute, 2012), 1–20.

¹⁰ The notion of informal networks, or “weak ties,” has been developed by many sociologists. I am particularly inspired by two seminal works: John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell, “Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400–1434,” *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 6 (May 1, 1993): 1259–1319 and Mark S. Granovetter, “The Strength of Weak Ties,” *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (May 1, 1973): 1360–80.

many ways in which these agencies interfaced with conventional book culture. As this study develops, it provides an in-depth examination of how books circulate across various sites and within social contexts, and shows how various informal distributors operated outside the formal sphere of book circulation and literature-making in the late Chosŏn period. In this context, informal circulation was a central rather than a marginal feature of eighteenth-century book culture and literary production.

This study explores these dynamics through a specific case study of Yi Tŏng-mu (李德懋, 1741–1793). It is notable that Yi was always in the “interlocking” spheres that bridge between private and public, elites and non-elites, and formal and informal realms of cultural practices. His social status as a *sŏil* (庶孽), meaning an illegitimate child, prevented his political advancement to a high rank in the government. This disadvantage enabled him to keep a distance from factional infighting and steered his interests to the relatively autonomous world of literature. Although his political career was frustrated from the beginning, as a second-rank elite who maintained partial lineage connections to the *yangban* class, he still benefited from the cultural capital of the politically and culturally elite class of late Chosŏn. Outside the court, he maintained various social networks that connected him with many of his contemporaries.

Particularly notable is that in 1778 he had a chance to travel to China as a companion of Sim Yŏm-jo (沈念祖, 1734–1783), who served as a *sŏjanggalwan* (書狀官), a secretary of the emissaries of Chosŏn. His travelogue, *Entering Beijing* (*Ibyŏn’gi*, 入燕記), and miscellaneous notes in his writing collection, *Ch’ŏngjanggwan chŏnsŏ* (靑莊館全書), vividly demonstrate the cultural dynamics he encountered in Beijing under the Qianlong emperor.¹¹ In my study, Yi’s various records serve as a

¹¹ In this research, I used the version in the *Han’guk munjip ch’onggan* series. Yi Tŏng-mu, *Ch’ŏngjanggwan chŏnsŏ* (The complete collection of Yi Tŏng-mu), 3 (Minjok munhwa ch’ujinhoe, 200), 197–236. The text is divided into two volumes, *sang* (上) and *ha* (下), and each volume is composed in chronological sequence for about five months. The first volume begins on the 17th day of the 3rd month in the 2nd year of King Chŏngjo (1778) and ends on the 14th day of the 5th month. The second volume begins on the following day and ends on the 14th day of the intercalary 6th month. *Ibyŏn’gi* (入燕記) belong to a large category of *yŏnhaengnok* (燕行錄, Travelogues to Beijing). “Yŏnhaeng” means Korean embassies traveling to the Qing capital Beijing and back in the late Chosŏn period. This term contrasts with the earlier term *choch’ŏn* (朝天), literally meaning “going to the Celestial Dynasty,” which was used during the Ming period. During the Yuan dynasty, this type of writing was called *pimwangnok* (賓王錄). The term *yŏnhaengnok* widely refers to the written testimony of a diplomatic journey to China in traditional Korea. According to the *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* (經國大典), a *yŏnhaeng* mission was typically made up of a *chŏngsa* (正使, head of mission), *pusa* (副使, assistant head), *sŏjanggalwan* (書狀官, recorder), *chongsagwan* (從事官, assistants) and *chongin* (從人, servants). The mission usually was composed of about forty individuals in early Chosŏn. The *chŏngsa* represented the embassy and was selected according to the status and

useful window for looking into how transcultural contacts across borders influenced the textual culture in late Chosŏn. In 1772, for example, the Qianlong emperor initiated the compilation of the *Siku Quanshu* (四庫全書). Over twenty-two years, an annotated catalogue was compiled of 10,680 books. During the process of collecting books, the government selected “inappropriate” books, which they did not include in the catalogue.¹² Around that time, King Yŏngjo and King Chŏngjo in Korea also undertook a wide reformation of policy concerning literary culture. By analyzing the travelogues of Yi, this study will demonstrate how the seemingly separate events interacted with each other and how the changing textual environments informed the new cultural tastes of early modern Korea.

1. PEDDLERS: CIRCULATORY DYNAMICS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CHOSŎN

Book peddlers are everywhere in Seoul. (...) Among them, those who bought *Mingji jilue* have to be punished. Eight peddlers will be exiled to *Hŭksando* and serve as slaves.

function of the mission. The *chŏngsa* represented the Chosŏn state as well as the other members of the embassy in the performance of rites. The *pusa*, as the assistant head of the embassy, was usually selected from among experts of China-related affairs. To enhance the symbolism of the *chŏngsa*, the *pusa* was usually selected from among those who had already accompanied a *yŏnhaeng* mission. About the scale and features of *yŏnhaeng* missions, see Jae-hoon Jung, “Meeting the World through Eighteenth-Century Yonhaeng,” *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 23, no.1 (June): 54-56; Im Ki-jung compiled names of *yŏnhaeng* missions from 1273 to 1893. See Im Ki-jung, *Yŏnhaengnok yŏn'gu* (A study of *yŏnhaengnok*, travelogues to Beijing), (Seoul: Ilchisa, 2002), 12–29.

¹² Although Korean envoys had frequented the Chinese capital since the Three Kingdoms period, *yŏnhaeng* in the late Chosŏn period assumed a new significance. As Chosŏn Korea was believed to have assumed a sort of self-sufficiency within the China-centered cultural sphere, the new world that Korean scholars saw through *yŏnhaeng* was startling. No longer traditionally “Chinese,” Qing culture featured a world culture that even embraced Western culture. About the changes in viewpoints of Chosŏn missions, see Fujitsuka Chikashi, *Shinchō bunka tōden no kenkyū: Kakai Dōkō Gakudan to Richō no Kin gendō* (Transmission of Qing culture to the east: Daoguang school of the Jiaqing period and Kim Chŏng-hŭi of Chosŏn), (Tōkyō: Kokusho Kankōkai, 50); Jung, “Meeting the World through Eighteenth-Century Yonhaeng”; Hyŏn-mi Kim, *18-segi yŏnhaengnok ūi chŏn'gae wa t'ŭksŏng* (Development of *yŏnhaengnok* writings in eighteenth-century Korea), (Seoul: Hyeon, 2007); Fuma Susumu, *Enkōroku, Shi-Chōsenroku O Tsujite Mita Chū-Chō Sogo Ninshiki no kenkyū* (Understanding of mutual perceptions between China and Korea in the travelogues to China and to Japan), (Kyōto-shi: Fuma Susumu, 2003).

冊僮滿於都中. (….)其中獨買朱璘明紀輯略者, 快施邦刑, 冊僮八人, 黑山島爲奴.¹³

The direct cause of the censorship by King Yǒngjo was the circulation of *Mingji jilue* by Zhu Lin (朱璘, fl. 1692), which raised questions about the founder of Chosŏn and, as a consequence, challenged the legitimacy of the dynasty. The king ordered the destruction of all copies of the book available in Chosŏn and the punishment of those who possessed, cited, and circulated this book. King Yǒngjo's censorship was triggered by a particular book that contained politically controversial issues, and the range of the punishment, albeit severe, was limited to those who were directly related to the circulation of the book.

In the actual execution of punishment, the authorities needed to know their ways around the “networks of the trade” in order to follow the leads and repress the forbidden books. It is interesting that the inspection of books began at the final point in their dissemination, and then worked its way upstream to peddlers, owners, and then readers. Censors investigated who had originally brought the book and then hunted them down. As seen in the examples above, the punishment initially targeted the “peddlers” who functioned as book brokers, rather than the authors, readers or owners of the banned books. A book peddler, named Pae Kyōng-do, for example, was beheaded and his body was hung by the Han River for three days. Over one hundred people were implicated in this incident and all were tortured and put to death.

The flourishing of peddlers during King Yǒngjo's reign demonstrates that the censoring power of the government had failed to reach outside of the court and that the circulation of forbidden books continued unabated. Books were distributed through the channels of underground markets, and book brokers functioned as a central point in the flow of texts. In Chosŏn, the role of “book brokers” was particularly crucial, since commercial bookshops did not flourish until the nineteenth century.¹⁴ From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, a few government officials recognized the necessity for commercial book markets and attempted to establish them:

In this country, the only place where books are produced is the Kyosōgwan. Although people may have their minds set on learning, there is no way for them to buy books. Therefore, this intention cannot be accomplished. If

¹³ *Yōnjo sillok*, 116:33a [1771.5.26.].

¹⁴ There are important scholarly works on the “lending library” that flourished in Chosŏn; for example, Yi Min-hŭi, *Chosŏn ūi pesūt'ūsellŏ: Chosŏn bugi sech'aegŏp ūi paldal kwa sosŏl ūi yubaeng* (Seoul: P'ūronesisŭ, 2007). However, about the commercial bookshops, based on my limited knowledge, there is no definitive evidence that they prospered before the nineteenth century.

we establish bookshops in the middle of the city, then people will be able to trade books among themselves and take advantage of this.

我國書籍所出，只校書一館耳。雖志於學者，無書籍可購，故志不能就。今於市中，若設書肆，則人皆得以質買，而資其利矣。¹⁵

A proposition made by Ŏ Tük-kang (魚得江, 1470–1550) in 1523 demonstrates that there were no commercial bookshops in Seoul until the mid-sixteenth century. He insisted on establishing bookshops in order to help people who wanted to study but encountered difficulties in obtaining books. At that time, the Kyosŏgwan (校書館), the Office of Editorial Review, superintended all the printing business of Chosŏn as well as controlling the import of foreign books. After presenting this petition, Ŏ repeatedly put forward this proposition, but it was not accepted during his lifetime. However, another record reveals that bookshops were established in the early nineteenth century in a motion led by the government, but trade was not realized as had been intended:

From 1829 to 1830, the government encouraged people to establish bookshops. Shops were opened in Poūndan-dong in Seoul; however, they were closed before long. I investigated the reason for this and found that many ruffians, impersonating *yangban*, broke in and stole books in broad daylight. The owners were not able to endure the frequent robberies and had to close down their shops.

歲己丑庚寅，自廟堂，勸民設施。開肆於都下報恩緞洞，旋即廢閣。問其故，則有無賴僞稱宰相家，推索見失，白晝勒奪。不可支吾，仍罷之云。¹⁶

Although there were several bookshops established in a certain area of Seoul, the owners had to close them down soon afterwards due to repeated robberies. There were no commercial book markets clustered in a particular place until the early nineteenth century. In this circumstance, the distribution of books was mainly through “private human agencies,” such as book peddlers. They formed distribution networks that were often undetected by the authorities; through this channel, they spread new or unorthodox books in response to their customers’ needs. The activities of peddlers were the unmeasured and unofficial realm of late

¹⁵ *Chungjong sillok*, 44:15b [1522. 3. 4].

¹⁶ Yi Kyugyŏng, *Oju yŏnmun changjŏn san’go* (Encyclopedic writing collections by Yi Kyugyŏng), accessed May 17, 2017, http://db.itkc.or.kr/index.jsp?bizName=KO&url=/itkcdb/text/bookListIframe.jsp?bizName=KO&seojiId=kc_ko_h010&gunchaId=&NodeId=&setid=3679017.

Chosŏn book culture. They played a very significant role in the transmission of new knowledge, but it was very hard for the censors to locate them and control the flow of information.¹⁷ These individual human agencies that functioned “outside” the formal distribution route were important in the circulation of books in late Chosŏn.

POPULAR RECEPTION OF FORBIDDEN BOOKS

Compared to King Yŏnjo’s censorship, King Chŏngjo’s book policing was more related to “cultural value and judgment” in a broader sense. Commonly called “Munch’e panjŏng” (文體反正), in 1796 King Chŏngjo attempted to undertake a wide reformation of literary culture by distinguishing “proper” literature and by rectifying improper styles and expressions. In the context of his cultural policy, what was considered “improper” or “unorthodox”? In the evaluation of literary works, who had the authority of interpretation?

Generally, prose from the Ming and the Qing contains a lot of distressed tones and eccentric expressions; as such they are unsuitable as the proper literature for the reign of peace. Yuan Hongdao is the worst of the lot.

大體明清之文，噉殺奇詭，實非治世之文。袁中郎集，爲其最矣。¹⁸

According to this statement made by King Chŏngjo, pressing sounds and eccentric expressions are not suitable literature for the reign of peace; prose works written by Ming and Qing writers tend to have this kind of fault, and the worst example is the work of Yuan Hongdao (袁宏道, 1568–1610). The implementation of his censorship policy did not take the form of physical punishment. Through the reformation, the king wanted to “discipline” writers to learn after literary canons, including the Six Classics (六經), and the king set up guidelines for evaluating good literature. For example, when he found

¹⁷ For example, Yu Hŭi-ch’un (柳希春, 1513–1577) mentioned how a peddler named Pak Ŭi-sŏk sold books to the literati in Seoul; Yu Man-ju (俞萬柱, 1882 *chinsi*) said that a number of book peddlers sold many vulgar books and were punished by the government; and Chŏng Yag-yong (丁若鏞, 1762–1836) penned a biography of a peddler, Cho Sin-sŏn, who was very famous in the late eighteenth century. For the details of these peddlers, see Yi Min-hŭi, *16-19-segi sŏjŏk chunggaesang kwa sosŏl, sŏjŏk yut’ong kwan’gye yŏn’gu* (Brokers, novels, and the book trades from sixteenth- to nineteenth-century Korea), (Seoul: Yŏngnak, 2007).

¹⁸ *Chŏngjo sillok*.33:55a [1791.11.7].

inappropriate expressions on an answer sheet for the government examination, King Chǒngjo identified the writings as being modeled on the style of late Ming prose and “contaminated” by the improper models; he then reproached the examinees and ordered them to present letters of self-reproach. Although no one was physically confined or executed, King Chǒngjo’s reformation policy imposed “correct” prototypes on writers and established proper literary canons according to measures set by the king.

Although the censorship exercised influence within the public realm, such as textbooks for the government examination, it does not seem to have successfully regulated reading and writing practices outside the court:

[...] I said, “It is truly great as if the real Yuan Hongdao were right in front of me. I heard that Pak Sang-hong was also reading the collection of Yuan Hongdao these days.” After finishing Yuan’s books together with Pyǒn Il-hyu, I composed a couple of poems with him. We found that our poems became much more tasteful and refined. Pyǒn’s poem goes:

Spring, too shy to reveal itself fully, first invades the willows.
The clouds, concerned about a lack of support, floated away over the pine trees.

I can see a certain transformation in his poetic spirit. Smiling, he said, “Do you want to establish a memorial hall for Yuan Hongdao and then enshrine me there? It would not be that harmful if we had a Chosǒn poet who followed Yuan Hongdao’s style. However, one hundred Yuan Hongdaos in Korea would obviously be excessive.”

[...]余曰, “故是袁中郎。近聞稚川觀中郎集。”仍與子欽作數篇, 頓進一格。有曰, “春嫌全露先侵柳, 雲悵無依竟度杉。”子欽不無存神之化也。子欽笑曰, “立中郎書院, 以吾爲配享耶。一中郎雖不可無近者, 散作百中郎, 無乃太濫耶。”¹⁹

In his *Book of Ears, Eyes, Mouth and Heart* (*Imokku simsǒ* 耳目口心書), Yi Tǒng-mu informs us of his own reading and writing practice as well as that of his contemporaries. The anecdote above vividly demonstrates how popular and influential Yuan Hongdao was in his literary circle. This story has many interesting implications. Pyǒn Il-hyu, Yi’s close friend, composed poems after the model of Yuan Hongdao and the reading of Yuan’s book significantly changed the aesthetic qualities of his poems. Yuan’s books were greatly favored among Yi’s

¹⁹ Yi Tǒng-mu, *Ch’ǒngjangwan chǒnsǒ*, vol. 2 (The complete collection of Yi Tǒng-mu) (Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe, 2000), 443b

contemporaries; Pak Sang-hong, one of Yi's cousins, read the books, and Yi and Pyŏn also shared the books together. There were many poets who tried to learn and imitate Yuan's poetic styles. Although both Yi and Pyŏn approved of Yuan's poetry, they were also concerned lest too many Korean poets should take up Yuan's style. Yi Tŏng-mu also made extensive notes about his own reading experiences in his late twenties. Below are the book titles by Ming and Qing writers that appear in Yi's *Imokku simsŏ*.

Book Titles	Authors/Editors
<i>Xianji ji</i> 獻吉集	Li Mengyang (李夢陽, 1472–1529)
<i>Kongtong ji</i> 空同子	
<i>Yulin ji</i> 于鱗集	Li Panlong (李攀龍, 1514–1570)
<i>Cangming ji</i> 滄溟集	
<i>Sibugao</i> 四部藁	Wang Shizhen (王世貞, 1526–1590)
<i>Wanweiyupian</i> 宛委餘篇	
<i>Yuanzhonglang ji</i> 袁中郎集	Yuan Hongdao (袁宏道, 1568–1610)
<i>Xu Wenchang ji</i> 徐文長集	Xu Wei (徐渭, 1521–1593)
<i>Gushi gui</i> 古詩歸	Zhong Xing (鍾惺, 1574–1625) and Tan Yuanchun (譚元春, 1586–1637)
<i>Tangshi gui</i> 唐詩歸	
<i>Muzhai ji</i> 牧齋集	Qian Qianyi (錢謙益, 1582–1664)

Table 1. Writings by Ming and Qing writers in Yi Tŏng-mu's *Imokku simsŏ*
(The book of ears, eyes, mouth and heart)

Before he made a trip to Beijing, in addition to Yuan Hongdao, Yi read many other Ming writers, including Li Mengyang (李夢陽, 1472–1529), Li Panlong (李攀龍, 1514–1570) and Wang Shizhen (王世貞, 1526–1590). Many literary histories list Yuan Hongdao as a member of the Gong'an (公安) group and describe the other three writers as members of the Early and Later Seven Masters (Qianhou qizi 前後七子). In his mid-twenties, Yi Tŏng-mu was well aware of major literary debates in late Ming and early Qing and propounded his opinions based on his own interpretations.

Yuan Hongdao was the most popular and influential writer from the Ming among late Chosŏn literati. Since Hŏ Kyun (許筠, 1569–1618) introduced writings by members of the Gong'an group, such as *Yuan zhonglang ji* (袁中郎集) by Yuan

Hongdao and *Fenshu* (焚書) by Li Zhi (李贄, 1527–1602),²⁰ Gong'an writers gradually gained popularity in late Chosŏn intellectual society. In the seventeenth century, books by Gong'an writers were received critically by a limited group of literati in Seoul, such as Kim Ch'ang-hyŏp (金昌協, 1651–1708) and Kim Ch'ang-hŭp (金昌翕, 1653–1722). When it came to the eighteenth century, these writings became extremely popular among Chosŏn literati as seen in the anecdote above. Yuan Hongdao and other Gong'an group writers were criticized as writers of forbidden books during the period of King Chŏngjo, but the censorship was not able to completely interrupt the circulation of the books.

2. BOOK SELLERS: BOOK TRADERS IN THE LIULICHANG MARKET

In traditional Korea, contacts with foreign books ran through two major routes. The first was by means of various materials introduced by Chinese envoys who visited Chosŏn. The second was via *yŏnhaeng* trips, following which Chosŏn travelers went to Beijing and purchased books at the local stores there. For example, Hŏ Kyun obtained books by Yuan Hongdao from a Chinese emissary in Chosŏn. Later in 1614, Hŏ went to China and purchased more than four thousand volumes of books at the Liulichang market. Upon returning to Seoul, he made his own anthology of late Ming writings, including Gong'an literature, titled *Hanjungnok* (閑中錄 Taking time off). By the eighteenth century, the number and variety of foreign books transmitted from China had reached unprecedented heights. There might have been many reasons for the change, but this study maintains the changing landscape of book culture was closely related to the government policies of the Qing, the publishing industry in the Zhejiang area, and the book trade on Liulichang in Beijing.

Contrary to the lack of a commercial book market in Chosŏn, the superfluous materials and splendors of the Liulichang market were enough to surprise and dazzle foreign travelers. In a vivid manner, Hong Tae-yong (洪大容, 1731–1783) illustrates his observations when he strolled down the market area, in particular, about the bookshops. He describes that the stores had so many books that his eyes got weary and his neck stiff even before he finished browsing the titles of books stacked in the bookshelves (量一肆之書, 已不下數萬卷, 仰面良久, 不能遍省其標號, 而眼已眩昏矣).²¹ It is notable that the development of bookshops

²⁰ About the book introduction by Hŏ Kyun, please see Shin Yang-sŏn, *Chosŏn bugi sŏjisa yŏn'gu* (Bibliography of late Chosŏn), (Seoul: Hyeon, 1996).

²¹ Hong, *Tambŏnsŏ*, 294b–c.

in Liulichang in the eighteenth century is closely related to the publication project carried out by the Qing government. In the winter of 1772, the Qianlong emperor initiated the compilation of the *Siku quanshu*. Over the course of the next twenty-two years, an annotated catalogue of 10,680 titles extant in the empire was compiled, of which 3,593 titles were included in the *Siku quanshu*. In 1773, the *Siku quanshu guan* (四庫全書館), *Siku* commission, was organized. The Qianlong emperor ordered local and provincial officials to search for, report on, and make copies of all rare and valuable manuscripts.²² During this process, the bookshops in the Liulichang district of Beijing functioned as “open libraries” or repositories of sorts, which Chinese government officials visited almost every day to find different editions or rare books. This made the area a focal center of book circulation not only in Beijing but also throughout China. Around the time when the *Siku* commission was formed in 1773, the Qianlong emperor also loosened many restrictions on book trading with foreigners. When many Korean travelers, including Yi Tǒng-mu, visited Beijing in the eighteenth century, they were able to encounter all these changes in the cultural climate of the day. As a “contact zone,” the market space enabled foreign visitors to interact with a variety of people, including the locals and from other areas in and outside China, and gain new knowledge and materials.²³

Among many encounters travelers expected to have during their excursions, building close relationships with “booksellers” would have been the most important and memorable aspect. Korean travelers frequented a few designated bookstores there and made a close relationship with the booksellers. During his stay in Beijing for about two months, for example, Yi Tǒng-mu visited twelve bookshops and made a list of the titles of the 135 volumes. Those books had either not been widely available or not even introduced to Chosŏn by the time he visited Beijing. It is remarkable that during their excursions to Liulichang, Korean travelers often frequented a few bookshops in particular and maintained unofficial but close relationships with the shop owners. For example, Mr. Tao (陶氏) in the House of Five Willows (Wuliuju 五柳居) was a great business partner as well as a close friend of Yi Tǒng-mu. He often provided inside information detailing the book business of the day, such as newly published books, government policies, or even the availability of forbidden books. As an intermediary between publishers

²² R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasures: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-Lung Era*, annotated edition (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1987).

²³ It is beyond the scope of this research, but the reception of new religious knowledge, including Jesuit books, influenced their worldview. See Pierre-Emmanuel Roux, “The Catholic Experience of Chosŏn Envoys in Beijing: A Contact Zone and the Circulation of Religious Knowledge in the Eighteenth Century,” *Acta Koreana* 19, no. 1 (June 2016): 9–44.

and customers, the bookseller actively facilitated the book trade as well as playing a role in opening doors for foreign customers to navigate the contemporary cultural climate of the Qing.

MR. TAO AND THE CIRCULATION OF GU YANWU

In the year of Musul when I traveled to Beijing, I found an imperial edict on yellow paper posted in the alley. It says, “The writings by Qian Qianyi, Qu Dajun and Jin Bao will be strictly prohibited. The woodblocks should be destroyed and burnt, so that not a single word from those books should be left. Those who possess the books will be punished. Qian Qianyi was a prime minister of Ming. Although he capitulated to the Qing government, he still left poetry and prose that criticized the current government. After the dynastic change, Qu Dajun and Jin Bao left the secular world and wandered around. This also meant that they defied the legitimacy of Qing. Among those who died during the Ming dynasty, such as Huang Daozhou and Liu Zongzhou, some people composed petitions that contained a few words that despised the Qing. These petitions were made during the Ming dynasty, so we will remove the parts that contained the disrespectful words and then copy the writings in order to insert them into the *Siku quanshu*.” This was the general point of the imperial edict. I asked Mr. Tao more questions about this edict at the bookshop in Liulichang and learned that the books that were supposed to be destroyed included as many as three hundred titles, including *Tinglinji* and *Sanweiji*.

戊戌遊燕時，見坊曲揭黃紙詔書。嚴禁錢謙益，屈大均金堡三人遺集，毀板焚燒，勿遺片言，藏者抵罪。蓋謙益則以明朝宰相，投降清朝，而其述詩文，侵斥不已。大均堡革世後，托跡編流，亦斥清朝故也。至若已死於明朝者，如黃道周，劉宗周輩，其於疏章間，或有凌侮清人之語，此係爲其本朝，只可抹去侵斥之句語，亦爲謄寫四庫全書中，其大畧如此。聞琉璃廠書四陶生，則以爲塗抹句語之書，如亭林集三魏集之類，可至三百餘種云。²⁴

A conversation between Yi Tǒng-mu and Mr. Tao provides important information about the censorship commissioned by the Qing government of the day. When Yi was in Beijing, the *Siku* commission was actively collecting books from the local provinces. The edict Yi saw on the street informed him that the commission prohibited certain books written by Ming loyalists and proclaimed that those who possessed the books would be punished. Yi also learned more details about the censorship from Mr. Tao; more than three hundred titles were

²⁴ Yi Tǒng-mu, *Ch'ǒngjangwan chǒnsǒ*, vol. 2 (Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhoe, 2000), 540d.

listed as prohibited books (*jinhuishu* 禁燬書), and the forbidden books included writings by Qian Qianyi (錢謙益, 1582–1664), Qu Dajun (屈大均, 1630–1696), Jin Bao (金堡, 1614–1680) and Gu Yanwu (顧炎武, 1613–1682). Their books and original woodblocks were to be destroyed and those who possessed any of those books were to be punished.

Despite the strict tone of the imperial edict, however, it does not seem that the censorship was thoroughly promulgated in a way that regulated book circulation in the Liulichang market. According to Yi Tōng-mu’s travelogue, many books listed as forbidden were still found in many bookshops.

Bookshops	Book Titles	Details
Chongxiutang 崇秀堂	<i>Shiguan</i> 史貫	History of Ming loyalists (遺民), compiled by Zhou Shiyi (周士儀). It was a forbidden book (<i>jinhuishu</i> 禁燬書) during the Qianlong reign.
	<i>Fu pingshu ji</i> 傅平叔集	Literary collection of Fu Zhanheng (傅占衡, 1608–1660). Fu stayed in hiding after the establishment of the Qing and devoted himself to his studies. This is a forbidden book.
	<i>Zhixinlu</i> 知新錄	Writings by Zeng Jung (曾靜, 1679–1735). Zeng defied the legitimacy of the Qing very severely in this book. This is a forbidden book.
Jingyutang 經映堂	<i>Yinxue wushu</i> 音學五書	Books on ancient rhymes, by Gu Yanwu (顧炎武, 1613–1682).

Table 2. Forbidden books listed in Yi Tōng-mu’s travelogue

Shiguan (史貫) was written by Zhou Shiyi (周士儀, ?–?) who withdrew from society after the establishment of the Qing and then spent the rest of his life only writing books. The author collected many stories of loyalists, “*yimin* (遺民),” of Yan (燕), Qi (齊), Wu (吳), and Yue (越), and also compiled anecdotes about Ming loyalists. *Fu pingshu ji* (傅平叔集) is the literary collection of Fu Zhanheng (傅占衡, 1608–1660). Fu also secluded himself after the collapse of the Ming and left many poems lamenting the loss of the dynasty. *Zhixinlu* (知新錄) was written by Zeng Jing (曾靜, 1679–1735). That book was never printed during the Qing dynasty due to its harsh criticism of the Qing; therefore, it is not certain which version of this title Yi found in the bookstore. According to *Dayi juemilu* (大義覺迷錄),²⁵ Zeng condemned the Qing dynasty and called for the overthrow of the Yongzheng

²⁵ The reprints of this book are currently available. See Dayijuemilu (The great illumination for the labyrinth), (Beijing: Zhongguo cheng shi chu ban she, 1999).

emperor.²⁶ The publication of the book was strictly prohibited, but as seen in the note of Yi Tǒng-mu, a copy was available in the local store.

In the anecdote above, Mr. Tao said that *Tinglinji* (亭林集) by Gu Yanwu (顧炎武, 1613–1682) was also one of the forbidden books by the government. Although it is not *Tinglingji*, another book by Gu Yanwu, *Yinxue wushu* (音學五書), was found in Liulichang, according to Yi's travelogue. Yi did not mention *Tinglinji* in his list.²⁷ Does this mean that *Tinglinji* was not available on the market? A conversation between Sim Yǒm-jo (沈念祖, 1734–1783) and Yi Tǒng-mu informs us of the accessibility of Gu Yanwu's writings in Beijing:

The chief secretary [Sim Yǒm-jo] told me, "People always say that Gu Yanwu was the man who showed the strictest integrity among the Ming loyalists. I was able to purchase his *Tinglingji* from Mr. Tao's at the Wuliuju store. Mr. Tao said that there were about three hundred titles prohibited by the government and *Tinglingji* was one of them. He made an earnest request that I should hide the collection from other people's eyes. On the way back home, I finished reading the books in the palanquin. Sure enough, he is the most admirable man among late Ming loyalists. [...]" I said, "Although Gu Yanwu remained a commoner who did not hold any government position, he never forgot his own dynasty. He did not go to take the exam of Boxue Hongci under the Kangxi emperor. He is a truly great official with integrity. The *Rizhiliu* he wrote can be considered a classic or official history. From this book, I could see how broad and erudite his knowledge was."

書狀謂余曰，左右嘗盛言顧亭林炎武之耿介，爲明末之第一人物。購其集於五柳居陶生。陶生以爲當今之禁書，三百餘種，亭林集，居其一。申申托其秘藏。歸來，余於轎中，盡讀之。果然明末遺民之第一流人也。[...] 余曰，亭林跡雖布衣，

²⁶ Jonathan D. Spence, *Treason by the Book* (New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 2002).

²⁷ It is interesting that Yi Tǒng-mu made a note of *Yinxue wushu* (Phonology in five books) in particular. It means that Yi had not had a chance to read this book before he visited Beijing. In *Yinxue wushu*, Gu Yanwu studied the old rhymes and inserted "rusheng" (入聲 K. *ipsǒng*). Its system was a very different system from the previous traditional ones. It is remarkable that Yi Tǒng-mu later published a Korean rhyme book, *Kyujangjǒnun* (The complete rhyme book of Kyujang), which also emphasizes the usage of *ipsǒng* in operating rhymes. It cannot be simply said that *Kyujangjǒnun* was influenced by *Yinxue wushu*, but there might have been a plausible relationship between those two books. I will examine the relationship between *Yinxue wushu* and *Kyujangjǒnun*. For the phonology of Gu Yanwu, please see Thomas Bartlett, "Phonology as Statecraft in Gu Yanwu's Thought," in *The Scholar's Mind: Essays in Honor of Frederick W. Mote*, ed. Perry Link (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2009), 181–206; and Dai Watanabe, "顧炎武にとっての古音研究 – 「音學五書敘」および「答李子德書」から (A study of Gu Yanwu's phonology: in terms of *Yinxue Xu* and *Da Li Zide Shu*)," *Bungakubu kiryō* 文学部紀要 20, no. 2 (March 2006): 100–178.

不忘本朝. 不赴康熙己未博學宏詞科, 此真大臣也. 其所著日知錄, 可以羽經翼史, 可見其淹博也.²⁸

This note reveals that *Tinglingji* was available in Liulichang. Sim Yŏm-jo who went to Beijing with Yi Tŏng-mu as a chief secretary was able to buy the whole collection from Mr. Tao. He was clearly aware that the book was forbidden; both Mr. Tao and Sim were cautious about the trade, but the book was accessible to general customers in the market. If this was the case, what could be the reason that Yi Tŏng-mu did not mention *Tinglingji* in his travelogue? As revealed in his answer in the conversation above, Yi had already read the book before he traveled to Beijing and was well aware of its contents. In his other writings, Yi confessed that Gu Yanwu was one of the most important writers who influenced Yi's own writings. The following example shows how much Yi loved Gu Yanwu's books, particularly *Rizhilu* (日知錄), and how the book was circulated among Chosŏn literati:

I had looked for *Rizhilu* for three years and finally acquired a copy from a collector who was secretly hiding the book. About the classics of Six Arts, the institutions of the ancient kings and the issues of these days, the author proposed brilliant ideas, which were based on his thorough evidential research. How great is this person, Gu Yanwu! He is a true scholar who had vast knowledge throughout history. If not you [Yi Sŏ-gu], who would be the only reader in the world who could read and appreciate this book? Other than me, who could copy this book? I am sending you the first four volumes for now. Why don't you enjoy reading them? I have finished copying the small books you sent me the other day. Please lend me the rest of them, so that I can finish making a duplicate of the whole collection.

日知錄苦心求之, 經營三年, 今始紬人之秘藏讀之. 六藝之文, 百王之典, 當世之務, 據明析. 嗟乎顧寧人, 眞振古之宏儒也. 顧今世匪足下, 誰可讀此, 匪不佞, 誰鈔此. 冊先爲持贈, 實玩如何. 前惠小冊, 寫已填滿, 願足下續惠之, 成我此鈔.²⁹

This letter to Yi Sŏ-gu (李書九, 1754–1825) was written around 1774 when Yi was thirty-four years old. Yi had heard about *Rizhilu* by Gu Yanwu around 1771 and had been looking for the book for three years. In 1774, he finally obtained the book and copied it by hand. In Beijing in 1778, he did not pay particular attention

²⁸ Yi, *Ch'ŏngjanggwŏn chŏnsŏ* 3, 231c.

²⁹ This letter is missing from the reprint version of *Ch'ŏngjanggwŏn chŏnsŏ* vol. 1, but found in the annotated translated version, Yi Tŏng-mu, *Ch'ŏngjanggwŏn chŏnsŏ*, (The complete collection of Yi Tŏng-mu) (Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhoe, 1989), 194.

to Gu Yanwu's books, except *Yinxue wushu* (音學五書). This means that Yi had access to almost all the books written by Gu Yanwu between 1774 and 1778. It is also evident that Gu Yanwu's books began to be circulated within close coteries around this time. As seen in the letter above, Yi obtained the book from a collector and then again lent it to Yi Sǒ-gu. It was circulated by means of personal connections and copied in manuscript.

BOOK CATALOGUES FROM ZHEJIANG

One of the best ways to locate books and determine the recent trends in publications would be to consult "book catalogues" compiled by publishers or book sellers. In Beijing, Yi Tǒng-mu obtained many kinds of "*shumu*" (書目) and had a comprehensive idea about what kinds of books had been published and were available in the market:

(Mr. Tao says,) "The ship carrying books has left Jiangnan (江南) to come up to Beijing. It is currently anchored in the gulf of Zhangjia at Tongzhou. It will come in tomorrow and the books will be transferred to the store. The number of books will be more than four thousand volumes." Upon hearing this information, I borrowed a catalogue of the new books and then came back to my place. The catalogue listed all the books I had been looking for all my life; moreover, a lot of rare and valuable books in the world were found in the catalogue. Now I realize that the Zhejiang (浙江) area was the place where all the books in the world were produced. Previously, I had obtained a catalogue of the books from Zhejiang, *Zhejiang shumu* and found books recently published. They were already splendid and bewildering. But the catalogue I got from Mr. Tao has more books that were missing in the *Zhejiang shumu*. Therefore I copied the list of books and handed it over to Pak Che-ga.

書船，從江南來，泊于通州張家灣。再明日，當輸來。凡四千餘卷云。因借其書目而來。不惟吾之一生所求者，盡在此，凡天下奇異之籍甚多。始知浙江為書籍之淵藪。來此後先得浙江書目，近日所刊者見之，已是瓌觀，陶氏書船之目，亦有浙江書目所未有者，故贍其目，與在先。³⁰

Mr. Tao of the House of Five Willows told Yi that the newly published books from the Zhejiang area would be delivered by the next day; he then added detailed information about where the ship carrying the books was currently located and

³⁰ Yi Tǒng-mu, *Ch'ǒngjangwan chǒnsǒ* 3, 223d–224a.

when the new books would be delivered to his store. Mr. Tao already had the list of the newly published books and knew exactly what kinds of books would be available in Beijing on a specific date. In the quote above, Yi mentioned two kinds of book catalogues. The first is the one Yi borrowed from Mr. Tao. This was a list that Mr. Tao compiled for himself in order to order new books from publishers in Jiangnan. The other catalogue is the *Zhejiang shummu* (浙江書目 A list of books from Zhejiang), which Yi had purchased from another bookshop in Liulichang. This *Zhejiang shummu*, according to Yi, included extensive information about the books from Jiangnan. Based on this catalogue, Mr. Tao added more books newly published in the Zhejiang area and made his own version. From these two catalogues, Yi learned about the major publications printed in the Jiangnan area and circulated to Beijing.³¹

As it happened, the *Zhejiang shummu*, (or *Zhejiang caiji yishu zonglu*, 浙江采集遺書總錄), was a very important source for many book collectors.³² As seen in Yi's travel notes, this book was made available to general customers as a commercial publication. This catalogue contained more than book titles; each title was followed by critical abstracts, “*tiyao*” (提要). Originally, it was compiled by Shen Chu (沈初, ?–1799), who was born in the Zhejiang area and later served on the commission of the *Suku quanshu* publication (四庫全書館). During the compilation of the *Suku quanshu*, local provinces presented a list of books they had collected to the *Suku* commission in the central government. In Zhejiang province, a bureau of books, “*shuju*” (書局), had been established, and Shen Chu was its chief director. Following the categorization system of *Siku quanshu*, the catalogue of the Zhejiang area listed 4,523 book titles in 56,955 volumes. The catalogue comprised twelve volumes and was published in Hangzhou (杭州) in 1774. This publication was considered one of the most essential indicators for navigating the most up-to-date publications of the day.³³

³¹ Yi Tōng-mu was not the only individual customer to consider book catalogues as one of the most important sources of information. Many Chosŏn envoys tried to obtain book catalogues available in Liulichang to copy. Similar to the case of the *Zhejiang caiji yishu zonglu*, the envoys also purchased catalogues when the books were published and available on the market. Yi Ki-gyōng (李基敬, 1713–?) used *Ch'aeksa sŏmok* (冊肆書目), Hong Tae-yong (洪大容, 1731–1783) consulted *Moyuanzhai cangshu* (墨緣齋藏書), and Pak Chi-wŏn (朴趾源, 1737–1805) frequently used *Mingshengtang sumu* (鳴盛堂書目). About the catalogues used in Chosŏn, see Pu Yu-sŏp, “Kŏllyung yŏngan Yŏnhaengnok ūl t'onghae pon Chungguk tosŏ yuip e taehayŏ (Import of books during the Jiaqing period: records from yŏnhaengnok), *Taedong Hanmunhak* 34 (2009): 164.

³² A modern reprint is available. See Chu Shen, ed., *Zhejiang caijiyishu zonglu* (The complete list of books circulated in the Zhejiang area), (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2011).

³³ Along with the catalogues made by bookshop owners, many literary collections written by famous book collectors provided rich information about books of the day; for example, *Liechao shiji* (Poems from Ming dynasty) compiled by Qian Qianyi (1582–1664), *Mingshibizong* (Compilation

3. GOVERNMENT BROKERS: CHANGES IN DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS

In his travelogue, Yi T'ong-mu does not mention any particular difficulty in visiting bookshops in person or in obtaining the books he wanted. He was allowed to wander around the Liulichang area without any particular restrictions and able to purchase whatever books he wanted. There was indeed censorship of certain titles; however despite the governmental restriction, he found many forbidden titles on the bookshelves and with help of book owners, he was able to buy almost every kind of book he saw in the catalogue and wanted to buy. In contrast to this unrestricted access to books in the market, many other travelers who had visited Beijing before Yi had quite different stories to tell. In many cases, they were not allowed to leave their designated quarters and had to go through a sort of intermediary, called “*xuban*” (序班) when they wanted to buy books.

People called “*xuban*” are low ranked clerks. When envoys arrive in Beijing, the Bureau of Ritual, Libu (禮部), selects ten people for the *xuban* position, and then installs them on night duty in the government office, so that they are prepared for all the chores of each bureau. Originally, they had been selected from local provinces and sent to Beijing. Their allowances were minuscule.

序班者，胥吏也。使行入京，禮部調序班十人，更番直宿于衙門，以備諸官役使。皆從外省選上，俸食清貧。³⁴

In his travelogue written in 1765, Hong Tae-yong talked about the low ranked clerks, titled “*xuban*.” Their primary responsibility was to provide assistance to foreign emissaries and to take care of all practical chores for them. During the

of Ming poetry) and *Jingyikao* (Reflections on the Classics), compiled by Zhu Yizun (1629–1709), and *Mingshi biecaiji* (Selected poems from Ming) by Shen Deqian (1673–1769) were widely used among late Chosŏn literati when they planned to purchase books in China; King Chŏngjo (1752–1800) also used various book catalogues in a very efficient manner when he purchased books and deposited them in the court library, Kyujanggak; The envoys who were sent to Beijing also presented newly published catalogues to the king. Two annotated catalogues for *Siku*, *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* (Annotated catalogues of Siku Quanshu) and *Siku quanshu jianming mulu* (Simplified catalogues of Siku Quanshu), were the most important sources. King Chŏngjo made his own list of books he planned to purchase in the future, titled *Naegakpangsŏrok* (Lists of book purchase of the government). He also made another catalogue of imported books for the court library *Kyujang chŏngmok* (The complete catalogue of Kyujang).

³⁴ Hong Taeyong, *Tambŏnsŏ* (Books of Hong Taeyong), (Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhoe, 2000), 250b–254a.

Ming dynasty, *xuban* officials did not have any rights or responsibilities for trading in the marketplace. In the early Qing, however, the role of the *xuban* as well as the boundary of activities of foreign envoys changed. Chosŏn travelers were not allowed to go outside their assigned quarters, and any personal requests were supposed to pass through intermediaries—mainly the *xuban*. Usually Chosŏn travelers first talked to their interpreters (*t'ongyŏkkwan* 通譯官) who came with the envoys from Chosŏn, and then the interpreters delivered the messages to *xuban* officials.³⁵ When they wanted to buy books and needed to connect with booksellers, *xuban* officials mediated the deals between the two parties. In this transaction, the *xuban* is the one who determined the final price of the books, not the booksellers:

Since yesterday morning, books have been delivered to me one by one. Normally [*xuban*] send only the first volume of each title, and never show complete sets unless I order the whole collection. Once they send the complete set, I should buy it for sure. Therefore, I am not able to peruse any entire collections beforehand as I want. This makes me feel anxious.

自昨朝書冊連入，而每書各送頭一卷，看品不買之前，不入全帙。入後不得不買。是以所欲見者，不得隨意得覽，可鬱。³⁶

The *xuban* official showed me the books and then said that the price of printing them on *fenzhi* papers went as high as three *quan*. And even printing on *taishilianzhi* papers is no less than eight or nine *fen*. It is much more expensive than before. Many pages of the books I got from him were worn and missing, so I had to collate and edit them. It makes me very tired.

序班輩持示書冊，而價紛紙所印一卷，至數三錢，太史連紙所印不下八九分，比前太高云矣。冊多剝漶落場處，故未免手自橋讐，頓覺疲神。³⁷

³⁵ Chŏng Min, *Pukkyŏng yurich'ang: 18, 19-segi Tong Asia ūi munhwa kŏjjŏm* (Beijing Liulichang: as a cultural center of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century East Asia) (Seoul: Minsogwŏn, 2013), 171.

³⁶ Kim Ch'ang-ŏp, *Yŏnbaeng ilgi* (Journals during the trip to Beijing), accessed May 17, 2017, http://db.itkc.or.kr/index.jsp?bizName=KO&url=/itkcdb/text/nodeViewIframe.jsp?bizName=KO&seojid=kc_ko_h046&gunchaid=av004&munchaid=01&finid=004&nodeid=&setid=1707937&pos=0&totalcount=1&searchurl=ok.

³⁷ Hong Ch'ang-han, *Yŏnbaeng ilgi* (Journals during the trip to Beijing), accessed May 17, 2017, <http://www.krpa.co.kr/product/main;jsessionid=B673FF0E42374CA7B341EAA246D40523?plctid=PLCT00004966¤tLocale=ko>.

The above description indicates how *xuban* officials mediated between Beijing booksellers Beijing and Chosŏn travelers, and how they controlled the prices to earn higher brokerage fees. The former record was written in 1713 by Kim Ch'ang-ŏp (金昌業, 1658–1721). It shows that the *xuban* transferred books from booksellers to customers; since the *xuban* officials only showed the first volume, the customers had to decide whether to buy the whole collection without checking the entire set. The second note, written in 1740 by Hong Ch'ang-han (洪昌漢, 1698–?), says that the *xuban* official said that the prices of printing depended on the quality of paper they used, such as *taishi lianzhi* (太史連紙) or *fenzhi* (粉紙). Despite the high price Hong had to pay, the quality of the books Hong bought from the *xuban* officials was very low, and he personally had to repair worn and missing pages. The two stories above reveal that Chosŏn envoys were not able to meet with booksellers directly, nor go to markets to look at books on their own. Since *xuban* officials were the ones who channeled the distribution route and determined the price, Chosŏn travelers had no choice but to pay for the books as requested by *xuban* officials. If true, then when was it that Chosŏn envoys began to be allowed to go directly to the market? If the market was open to foreign travelers, as seen in the case of Yi Tŏng-mu, how did the role of *xuban* officials change during the Qing dynasty?

Author	Title of Travelogue	Year
Hong Tae-yong 洪大容	<i>Tambŏnyŏn'gi</i> 湛軒燕記	1765
Yi Kap 李岬	<i>Yŏnbaenggisa</i> 燕行記事	1777
Yi Tŏk-mu 李德懋	<i>Ihyŏn'gi</i> 入燕記	1778
Pak Chi-wŏn 朴趾源	<i>Yŏrha ilgi</i> 熱河日記	1780
Yi Man-su 李晚秀	<i>Yugŏjip</i> 輜車集	1783
Sŏ Ho-su 徐浩修	<i>Yŏnbaenggi</i> 燕行記	1790
Yu Tŭk-kong 柳得恭	<i>Nanyangnok</i> 灤陽錄	1790
Yi Chae-hak 李在學	<i>Yŏnbaeng ilgi</i> 燕行日記	1793
Sŏ Yumun 徐有聞	<i>Muoyŏllok</i> 戊午燕錄	1798

Table 3. Travelogues that contain information about bookshops in the Liulichang area in Beijing

Hong Tae-yong's *Tambŏn yŏn'gi* (Hong Tae-yong's travelogue to Beijing), written in 1765, is the first travelogue that contains records concerning bookshops in

Liulichang.³⁸ Before Hong Tae-yong, travelers from Chosŏn had to completely rely on *xuban* officials to buy books. Hong Tae-yong, however, recorded that he was able to go out to the markets in Liulichang, but still had to deal with the high-handedness of *xuban*:

Over the decades, they [*xuban*] were permitted to take charge of trading, particularly of expensive luxurious stuff on the market and take in the profits. For example, for the trade of books, paintings, brushes and ink, fragrances or tea, no other merchants, except the *xuban*, were allowed to take part in these transactions. Therefore, the market prices increased year by year. Sometimes Chosŏn envoys felt pressed for money and tried to buy the goods through informal routes. But once the *xuban* found this out, they reprimanded the Chosŏn travelers and humiliated them. I once went out to Liulichang and Longfushi, but the *xuban* were concerned that I might buy books there secretly. Therefore, they always followed me to keep a close watch.

數十年以來，凡燕貨之稍雅者，皆令胥班主其貿易而食其剩餘。如書籍書畫筆墨香茶之屬，他商僧不敢與焉，以此物價逐年增高。東人苦其刁躄，或有潛買，詈辱備至。余往琉璃廠及隆福市，序班恐余潛買書籍，必跟隨伺察。³⁹

When Hong Tae-yong wrote this note in 1765, *xuban* officials were able to acquire the right to take charge of the trade of valuable goods in the market; they were able to control the market prices of many goods and also kept foreign travelers under surveillance and watched whether they observed all the restrictions placed upon their activities in Beijing. Since the margin of profit was solely determined by *xuban*, many travelers experienced difficulty in getting books they wanted when the government officials requested high brokerage fees. In his travelogue, Hong confessed that he even secretly bribed his *xuban* to get freer access to books.

By contrast, Yi Kap's record, *Yŏnhaenggisa*, written in 1777, did not mention any difficulties he might have experienced with *xuban*.⁴⁰ Yi Tŏng-mu, as discussed previously, was also able to have personal interactions with bookshop owners; Sim Yŏm-jo, the secretary who was accompanied by Yi Tŏng-mu in Beijing, even obtained forbidden books from the bookshop owner, Mr. Tao. After Yi Tŏng-mu's trip, some travelogues do mention *xuban* officials. But there is no mention in these records of officials prohibiting Chosŏn envoys from buying books in

³⁸ Chŏng Min, *ibid.*, 46.

³⁹ Hong Taeyong, *Tambŏnsŏ*, 250b–254a.

⁴⁰ Yi Kap, *Yŏnhaeng kisa* (Records during the trip to Beijing), accessed on May 17, 2017. <http://www.krpia.co.kr/product/main?plctId=PLCT00004966¤tLocale=ko>.

Beijing in a way that was as strict as it had been before. This indicates that the roles of book brokers had become significantly weakened. By comparing Hong Tae-yong's notes from 1765 with Yi Kap's from 1777, we can see some changes that Korean travelers experienced in gaining access to Chinese books. Sometime before 1777, Hong had to rely on two intermediaries. He made a list of books before his journey and was able to obtain only a part of the list from brokers. By contrast, Yi Kap was allowed to go to the markets directly and to interact with bookshop owners, browse bookshelves, and also place orders for books on his list. This unfiltered access to books in the market enabled Korean visitors to Beijing to gain unprecedented new knowledge in the late eighteenth century.

CONCLUSION

In his recent book, *Censors at Work*, Robert Darnton examines how the Bourbon monarchy, in eighteenth-century France developed an elaborate system for channeling the printed word.⁴¹ He argues that, through systems of legality and royal endorsement, censors and authors collaborated to produce literature. In a similar manner, many literary histories have suggested that eighteenth-century Korea also exercised strict censorship, commonly called "*munch'e panjŏng*." For instance, King Yŏngjo and King Chŏngjo forbade the circulation of certain kinds of unorthodox books and punished those who did not conform to their policies. My study, however, has discovered that, in both the Chosŏn and the Qing, censorship did not fully permeate the markets or literary coteries outside of the court. Government policies were not institutionalized enough to function as a system, and there were no literary police to monitor book circulation and enforce the law. In other words, censorship worked rather arbitrarily. As a political campaign, the government targeted certain kinds of book titles, but the implementation of policy fell within limited boundaries.

This study has specifically emphasized the various "informal networks" at the center of book reception and consumption in eighteenth-century Korean book culture. Domestically, for example, "peddlers" facilitated the distribution of books, including books the government had deemed forbidden. As seen in King Yŏngjo's literary inquisition in 1771, many of these peddlers were imprisoned and executed for selling politically problematic books. Nevertheless, despite government censorship, they continued to operate several underground routes outside established channels and untouched by governmental authority. On the other hand, when

⁴¹ Darnton, *Censors at Work*. 13–86.

Chosŏn people purchased books in the market in Beijing, buyers had to maintain a close relationship with the “bookshop owners.” Mr. Tao, the owner of the Wuliuju store in Liulichang, for instance, was a good friend as well as a valuable source of information for many Chosŏn travelers, such as Yi Tŏng-mu. This bookseller connected publishers in the Jiangnan area with many foreign customers, and they often traded books that had been censored by the Qing government.

Another remarkable fact about late imperial book circulation is that, prior to 1770, foreigners had not been allowed to interact with booksellers directly; they had had to go through particular intermediaries, or “*xuban*” officials. Situated between foreign customers and booksellers, these brokers mediated the trade of books to make a profit. Later on, the government’s publication project, *Siku quanshu*, which began in 1772, significantly influenced the dynamics of book circulation even further. The Qianlong emperor relaxed many restrictions on book trade with foreigners in Liulichang, and, as seen in the case of Yi Tŏng-mu, direct trade without middlemen became common. After that, the transmission of Chinese books to Chosŏn became much more active, and the publication project and book policies of Qing China eventually exercised a far-reaching influence on Chosŏn book culture.

The study of censorship practices in both late Chosŏn Korea and late imperial China is important because it reveals how policymakers and the state tried to control the flow of unorthodox books and how writing and the production of books epitomized the cultural values of the time. At the heart of the analytical lens, this study has situated unconventional and less-regulated distribution networks that occurred across state boundaries, such as market brokers and private traders. Throughout this article, my argument has been that informal circulation was a central, rather than a marginal, feature of eighteenth-century book culture and literary production in Korea. The examination of these circulatory dynamics can reveal how tension and negotiation in the making and distributing of books influenced changes in textual environments; it can also shed light on how the cultural value system shaped the production of literature in early modern East Asia.

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APPENDIX 1.

**Reception of Ming and Qing Prose in Late Chosŏn:
With Reference to Yi Tŏng-mu's Travelogue**

In the travelogue, Yi Tŏng-mu spared very limited space for Ming and Qing prose writers, such as the Gong'an (公安) group or the Early and Later Seven Masters.

Bookshop	Book Titles	Details
Chongxiutang 崇秀堂	<i>Taoshikuji</i> 陶石簣集	Literary collection of Tao Wangling 陶望齡 (1562–1609). He was considered one of the main figures of the Gong'an group.
Wenshengtang 文盛堂	<i>Shengming baijiashi</i> 盛明百家詩	Poetry anthology, compiled by Yu Xian (俞憲). Contains many works by the seven late masters of the Ming.
Shengjingtang 聖經堂	<i>Yanzhou bieji</i> 弇州別集	Literary collection of Wang Shizhen (王世貞, 1526–1590) of Ming. He was one of the seven late masters included with Li Panlong (李攀龍, 1514–1570).

Table 4. Books by the Gong'an group and the Seven Masters in Yi Tŏng-mu's travelogue

Yuan Hongdao's books were among the books censored by the Qing government. The complete absence of Yuan Hongdao's books from Yi's list, however, would not necessarily mean that those books were not available in the Liulichang market. According to *Zhejiang shumū*, books by Yuan Hongdao were still printed and sold in late imperial China. Yi's *Imokkusimsŏ*, which was made more than ten years before his travelogue, demonstrated the popularity of Yuan Hongdao in Chosŏn, and during his trip in Beijing Yi mostly paid attention to rare books. In light of these observations, it would be plausible to conclude that writers of the Gong'an school and the Early and Later Seven Masters had been already widely circulated in Chosŏn by the time Yi was in Beijing. By the same token, we could also presume that Tao Wangling (陶望齡) and Yu Xian (俞憲) were relatively unknown and the complete collection of Wang Shizhen (王世貞, 1526–1590), *Yanshantang bieji* (弇山堂別集), was not easily accessible.

Wang Shizhen (王士禎, 1634–1711) is the author to whom Yi Tŏng-mu paid the most attention in the bookshops. Yi introduced ten titles written by Wang found in five different bookstores. The long list of Wang Shizhen's books in his travelogue would also mean that Wang's collections had not been widely

introduced to Chosŏn until 1778. Yi's list includes Wang Shizhen's poetry collection, literary criticism, miscellaneous writings, and a poetry anthology that Wang selected from his friends' works. In addition, Yi also included two books of studies on Wang Shizhen's poetry, such as *Jinghua jianzhu* (精華箋註) and *Jinghua xuanzuan* (精華訓纂). These two books contained commentaries by Jin Rong (金榮) and Hui Dong (惠棟, 1697–1758) respectively.

Bookshops	Book Titles	Details
Chongxiutang 崇秀堂	<i>Yuyangshanren jinghualu</i> 漁洋山人 精華錄	Also called <i>Jinghualu</i> (精華錄). Poetry anthology of 1694 pieces from <i>Yuyangji</i> (漁洋集), <i>Yuyang xuji</i> (漁洋續集), <i>Canweiji</i> (蠶尾集), and <i>Canweixuji</i> (蠶尾續集). Influenced many Chosŏn writers; in particular many people composed poems following the “ <i>haurensbi?</i> ” (懷人詩) of Wang.
	<i>Huanghua jiven</i> 皇華紀聞	Miscellaneous notes (雜錄). Collected historical anecdotes and local traditions in Nanhai (南海) in 1684.
	<i>Chibei outan</i> 池北偶談	Also called 池北偶記. Miscellaneous notes (雜錄) on historical events.
	<i>Daijingtangji</i> 帶經堂集	Writing collection. Combined <i>Yuyangji</i> (漁洋集) and <i>Canweiji</i> (蠶尾集).
	<i>Juyilu</i> 居易錄	Miscellaneous writings (雜記). Notes on the events from 1689 to 1711.
Shengjingtang 聖經堂	<i>Ganjijji</i> 感舊集 (漁洋山人感舊集)	Collection of 2,572 pieces of poems by 333 poets who were all Wang's close friends and members of literary coteries. Although Wang collected the poems, the book was published posthumously by his friends. Poetry criticism by Lu Jianzeng (盧見曾, 1675–1759) in 1752. A Chosŏn poet, Kim Sang-hŏn (金尙憲, 1570–1652) has been included in the collection.
Mingshengtang 名盛堂	<i>Yuyang sanshiliuzhong</i> 漁洋三十六種	Complete writing collections of Wang Shizhen.
Wenshengtang 文盛堂	<i>Yuyang shihua</i> 漁洋詩話	Poetry criticism. Wang's idea of “ <i>shenyin?</i> ” (神韻) was widely received by many Chosŏn writers.
Daicaotang 帶草堂	<i>Jinghua jianzhu</i> 精華箋註 (漁洋山人精華錄箋註)	Commentaries on Wang's poetry by Jin Rong (金榮).
	<i>Jinghua xuanzuan</i> 精華訓纂 (漁洋山人精華錄訓纂)	Commentaries on Wang's poetry by Hui Dong (惠棟, 1697–1758).

Table 5. Writings by Wang Shizhen (王士禎) in Yi Tŏng-mu's travelogue

If Wang's books had not been widely available in Chosŏn until 1778, when was the first time Wang's collection was introduced to Chosŏn writers? Regarding the introduction of Wang Shizhen, Yi mentioned the details in his *Chŏngbirok* (清脾錄):

Canweiji by Wang Shizhen first appeared in the collection of Yi Ŭi-hyŏn (李宜顯, 1669–1745), but I did not know what his poetry looked like. Yi Pyŏng-yŏn (李秉淵, 1671–1751) has acquired three volumes anthologized by Shaozi and treasured them, keeping them in a hidden place. The reason that the poetry of Yi Pyŏng-yŏn was able to surpass vulgarity was that he was able to study Wang Shizhen. After Yi Pyŏng-yŏn died, the books were transmitted to many different people for several decades, and finally Yi Sŏ-gu (李書九, 1754–1825) was able to keep them. It has been barely more than twenty years since *Dajingtang ji* was introduced to Chosŏn. Those who have kept the collection are no more than two or three [persons]; and it has not been known who they are. I once borrowed the collection from an acquaintance. At the vast size of the collection, my eyes and mouth opened wide with surprise. It is truly regrettable that I got to know of this book so late.

陶谷李相國集，始現蚕尾集王士禎著，而不知其詩之如何。李槎川嘗得邵子相選本三冊，而爲帳中之秘。故槎川之詩，能脫凡陋之習，良有以也。槎川沒後數十年，其書流落，爲薑山所藏。帶經堂全集之來東，纔二十餘年，而藏之者，不過二三家，亦不識其爲何人。余嘗從人借讀，洋洋巨觀，目瞠舌咋，恨相見之苦晚。⁴²

Yi Ŭi-hyŏn (李宜顯, 1669–1745) was the first person to mention *Canweiji* (蚕尾集) written by Wang. His contemporary, Yi Pyŏng-yŏn (李秉淵, 1671–1751), had another copy of Wang Shizhen's writings but he was reluctant to share the book with others. After Yi Pyŏng-yŏn died in 1751, the books had been transmitted to some other people for several decades, and finally Yi Sŏ-gu (李書九, 1754–1825) was able to keep them. Yi Tŏng-mu adds that the complete collection of Wang Shizhen, the *Dajingtang ji* (帶經堂集), had been introduced to Chosŏn about twenty years earlier. Considering that the *Chŏngbirok* was written in around 1783, Wang's collection must have begun to be available among Chosŏn literati sometime around 1763. Even though Yi had seen the collection in the Liulichang bookshops in 1778 as mentioned in his book list, when he wrote the *Chŏngbirok* in 1783 he had not yet had the opportunity to read the whole collection.

The book titles Yi Tŏng-mu recorded in his travelogue provide limited information about actual literary circumstances in Beijing in 1788. Yi selected books that had a limited circulation in Chosŏn of the day. Therefore, his list does

⁴² Yi, *Ch'ŏngjangwan chŏnsŏ* 2, 47c–d.

not show the complete list of book titles in *Liulichang*; the list also does not reflect Yi's reading experience by itself. Careful examination of the list, however, enabled me to reconstruct a certain trajectory of Yi's reading experience throughout his life. First, the complete absence of Yuan Hongdao and a very limited note on other Gong'an writers and the Early and Later Seven Masters informs us that Yi already had enough knowledge of these groups of writers and also that the books were easily accessible in late Chosŏn intellectual circles. Second, around the time he visited Beijing in 1788, Yi had significant knowledge about Gu Yanwu and also tried to introduce Gu's works to his contemporaries. Finally, Yi expressed great interest in Wang Shizhen of the Qing in *Liulichang* and introduced many collections by Wang. In his writings written after his trip to Beijing, Yi actively adopted Wang Shizhen's ideas on poetry and literary criticism. Understanding how Yi read and interpreted the three literary groups is critical to understanding Yi Tŏng-mu's reading and writing practices. Interestingly enough, the reception of those three literary groups is helpful for understanding the complexity of various discourses and the policies on literary production and education in late Chosŏn. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century the main points of discussion in the literary history of Korea were: the contrasting positions in understanding the Early and Later Seven Masters and the Gong'an group, the popularity of Yuan Hongdao and government censorship, and the debates on the reception of Wang Shizhen. In light of this, Yi Tŏng-mu can be considered a representative intellectual who embodied the various literary situations of late Chosŏn and also led the intellectual shifts by adopting the new ideas and textual culture of early modern East Asia.

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