

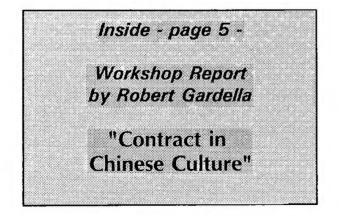
Commerce and Qing Xinjiang, 1759-1864

James Millward University of Arizona

While the commercial activities of Chinese throughout the South China Sea have long been a focus of scrutiny by scholars interested in Chinese business, less attention has been paid to mercantile activity along the inland frontier. However, as Paul Hyer's work-in-progress shows (see *China Business History* Vol. 3, No. 2), Chinese firms operated on a large scale in Mongolia. Likewise, Han and Hui (Chinese Muslim) merchants played a similarly important role in the Qing imperial endeavor in Altishahr and Zungharia, the two territories together known as Xinjiang.

From the time of the late-1750s campaigns against Amursana and the Makhdumzada Khojas, which brought Xinjiang under Qing control, the Qing court relied heavily upon state and private commerce both for logistical supply and for revenue to maintain new garrison communities in the conquered territory. Because the Xinjiang military government was chronically

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Sources on Commercial Publishing in Fujian in Late Imperial China

> Cynthia Brokaw University of Oregon

"The history of the book," a relatively new field of historical study first developed in the 1950's by European historians, is still very much in its infancy within the arena of Chinese studies. To be sure, in China there is a distinguished tradition of analytical bibliography, the study of rare editions and the compilation of the bibliographies of libraries and private collections; books as individual aesthetic objects as well as carriers of ideas have long been both valued and thoroughly studied. But little research has been done on what is now known as the social history of the book--that is, the study of "how ideas were transmitted through print and how exposure to the printed word affected human thought and behavior." Given the very considerable role that print culture has played in Chinese history during the late imperial period (in education, the civil service examination system, the spread of popular literature, to name just a few areas), this is a serious omission.

The history of the book is by nature an interdisplinary field, requiring research in a variety of historical sub-disciplines. It touches on the concerns of business historians in that the nature of the publishing industry and book trade in any given country naturally shapes the particular character of that national print culture: the structure of the industry and market affect relations between publishers, authors, and editors, publication choices, patterns of distribution, and audience. Therefore it is necessary for historians of the book in China to learn as much as possible about the business of book production.

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underfunded, entrepreneurial frontier officials used state funds to establish dry goods stores, tea shops, apothecaries and a network of pawnshops in each Xinjiang garrison town. The profits from these commissaries were then allocated to provide education and welfare services to Manchu garrison communities.

Private commerce, too, grew quickly after the late 1750s. Soon after the conquest, the Qing court issued proclamations encouraging merchants from the provinces "within the pass" to trade throughout Xinjiang, including the predominantly Muslim areas of Altishahr. Although their movements were restricted by a pass system and in Altishahr they were not allowed to bring dependents or marry locally, merchants answered the call in such numbers that by the 1770s long lines formed daily at the Jiayuguan (in the Gansu corridor), delaying their passage west. Neldi merchants soon became fixtures of the growing Xinjiang towns and cities; some even sold Chinese goods or loaned money in the Muslim villages and hilltowns of the southern Tarim basin. Others supplied the parrisons and state farms of the north and east with tools. silk and other Chinese manufactures. Each Xinjiang city soon contained its enclave of Chinese traders gathered outside the walls of the Manchu citadels. Many towns in eastern and northern Xinjiang took on the characteristics of north Chinese urban society. Visitors to Urumchi in the latter eighteenth century, for example, commented on its temples to the principle Chinese deities and the availability of silk garments, Chinese novels, doufu, Shaoxing wine and dried seafood; they noted the city's guildhalls, teahouses, wineshops, brothels, and talented local kunou opera troupe.

By the turn of the 19th century, rich Shanxi houses were well represented throughout Xinjiang, trading tea and luxuries via Inner Mongolia to Gucheng and Urumchi, whence these goods were transshipped throughout Xinjiang for export and local consumption. Some of these "north-bend traders" (*beitaoke*), as they were known, opened large retail stores in Xinjiang garrison towns, including the westernmost cities of Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan. These rich merchants profited from sales and interest on credit extended to their customers, all the while maintaining close ties to their firms' home offices thousands of *li* away in Shanxi and Shaanxi.

Another class of Chinese merchant in Xinjiang, the "west route traders" (*xiluke*), traveled along the Gansu corridor from the northwest provinces of *neidi* and either returned home after selling their goods or sojourned for extended periods. This diverse group of peddlers, journeymen, day-laborers, teamsters, cash-croppers, shop-keepers, smugglers and snack vendors included both poor Hui fleeing hard times in Gansu and Shaanxi and well-heeled silk dealers trading Jiangnan textiles for Khotanese raw jade.

Despite the numbers of *neidi* merchants operating in Xinijang, however, the region remained only minimally integrated with the regional systems of China. From a time soon after the 1759 conquest, two active long distance trade routes, one across Mongolia and the other via the Gansu corridor, linked Xinjiang to the northwest provinces and ultimately the Jiangnan cities. However, the articles of this long distance trade were limited to luxury items of high value relative to weight and bulk: tea, rhubarb, silks, china, medicines and silver moving westward, jade, silver and such specialty pastoral products as fine hides and furs returning towards the east. Moreover, the pattern of long-distance trade seems to a great extent to have been bifurcated, with the border cities of Suzhou (Gansu) and Gucheng acting as bulking centers where merchants based in the neidi sold goods that other Chinese merchants, based in Xinjiang, relayed to the interior of Zungharia and Altishahr.

Although Chinese merchants had not by the nineteenth century integrated Xinjiang into the an empire-wide economy, they nonetheless played a key role in the maintenance of Qing empire in the region. Commercial taxation, in the form of rents and property taxes assessed on Han and Hui merchants, provided another supplement to meager garrison budgets (in early nineteenth century Urumchi, commercial tax and rent revenue comprised a quarter of local operating funds). Moreover, Chinese merchants throughout Xinjiang were a ready source of grain, silver, transport and even manpower that the Manchu authorities drew upon increasingly frequently after the onset of the Khokand-sponsored Khoja invasions in 1826. In particular, during an 1830 attack on Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan, the Chinese merchant militia fought harder and more effectively than the regular Qing military, and despite perpetrating a race riot in which they massacred hundreds of loyal Uyghurs within the Kashgar city walls, the Chinese merchant community gained increasing political clout in Xinjiang after this episode. In a major shift of Qing ethnic policy, neidi merchants soon thereafter gained permission to reside permanently, with their dependents, in the cities of Altishahr. By 1860, the Chinese merchants of Kashgar had even taken up residence within the citadel, and had forced the Qing bannermen to live outside the walls. It was no longer merely the goods they shipped or the taxes they paid that justified Chinese merchants' activities "outside the pass": their presence in and of itself had taken on strategic importance to a dynasty now willing to grant Han Chinese greater freedom and influence in an Inner Asian territory in order to secure the frontier against foreign incursion.

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It is, however, very difficult to find sources that describe the organization of publishing businesses in China in the late imperial period: neither the book government presses, nor literati houses, nor commercial publishing concerns seem to have preserved, in any consistent, detailed fashion, records of their business operations. Certainly it appears that Chinese historians cannot expect to find the impressive collections of account books and price lists that European historians of the book have been able to draw on in their discussion of book production and sale.² But--as the work of scholars like Lucille Chia on the commercial publishers of Jianyang, Fujian, or Ellen Widmer on the Huanduzhai bookshop of Hangzhou and Suzhou demonstrates³--it is nonetheless possible, relying on other, often distinctively Chinese types of sources, to piece together an outline of the organization of some Chinese publishing concerns.

My own work in this area is research on two lineage-based commercial publishing firms, the Zou and the Ma, headquartered in Sibao, Fujian. During the peak of their prosperity in the Qianlong and Jiaqing eras, the Sibao publishers managed roughly thirty different printing shops, producing a wide range of texts, including editions of the Classics, belles-lettres, vernacular novels, reading and mathematical primers, medical handbooks, etiquette guides, and divination and geomantic manuals. Isolated in the mountains of western Fujian, the Zou and Ma lineages nonetheless managed to establish elaborate distribution networks (and in some cases branch bookshops) in Guangdong, Guangxi, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Hubei, and Sichuan, networks that gave them access to the major book markets of south China.

The Zou and Ma publishing industries are virtually ignored in both gazetteer accounts of Fujian commercial activities and secondary scholarship on Fujian publishing.⁴ Thus it was necessary to visit Sibao itself to collect information for my study of the two lineage firms. In the fall of 1993, I made my first trip to Sibao, and with the help of Professor Zeng Ling of the University of Xiamen and several-local leaders, was able to begin the collection of documents. We were stationed in the village of Wuge, the administrative center of Sibao township and the home of the Zou lineage, but divided our time between Wuge and Mawu, the neighboring village (about a 15 minute walk from Wuge) and the home of the Ma lineage.

The richest primary sources we found were Zou and Ma genealogies; we worked with four genealogies, two for each family, totalling 114 volumes. Though these texts do not contain detailed accounts of the operation of the Zou and Ma publishing businesses, they do yield a considerable amount of

information about the growth and management of the two "lineage-merchant" (zushang) houses. Many of the most successful family members were book merchants; their biographies usually describe their entry into business, the course of their commercial travels, and their relations with other family members, usually sons and/or nephews, whom they took on as merchant-apprentices. The genealogies also reveal much of the cultural context of publishing. Both the Zou and Ma publishers prided themselves on the scholarly nature of their businesses: their traffic in books lent them a respectability and cultural legitimacy that distinguished them from other types of merchants. Indeed, most claimed to be "Confucian merchants" (rushang)--that is, men forced, either by scholarly failure or economic necessity, to "abandon Confucian study for commerce."

Perhaps most importantly, the genealogies suggest the close interconnection between lineage organization and business operations. David Faure, in an earlier contribution to Chinese Business History, has already made this point, arguing that "the development of the lineage as an institution must be recognized as an intrinsic element in the history of Chinese business."5 The Zou and Ma genealogies, by outlining the roles various family members played in the management of the business, by revealing the contributions merchants made to the lineage and village economy, by setting forth some of the rules devised to ease intra-lineage business competition, reveal a considerable degree of merchant-lineage interdependence, allowing us to question common assertions about the restrictions the lineage form imposed on business success. Members of the Zou lineage, for example, establish a common "lineage market" (zu xu), lots in which were rented out to different Zou bookshops. Lineage connections were also exploited in the establishment of distribution networks and branch bookshops: the generational charts (shixi) that make up the bulk of the genealogies record extensive Zou and Ma business settlements in Guangdong (Xingning, Meixian, Chaozhou, Wengyuan, Heping, Nanxiong, etc.), Guangxi (Enping, Baise, Pingnan, Zhen'an, etc.), Hunan (Yiyang, Anhua, Luyang, Guiyang, etc.), Jiangxi (Xinfeng, Shanggao, Changning, etc.), Zhejiang (Suzhou, Hangzhou, Wenzhou), Sichuan (Qianyang), and other parts of Fujian (Fuzhou, Quanzhou, Zhangzhou, etc.).

Other family documents, most notably two property-division records and twenty-six land contracts, supplement much of the information in the genealogies. The land contracts record a boom in land purchases in the Qianlong era, the most prosperous period for the Sibao industries, supporting the claim made repeatedly in both genealogies that once a merchant became wealthy, he returned home, "purchased fertile land and built a fine house." The property-division records list, in addition to land and other forms of property, woodblocks that were to be divided among sons. One of these records divided titles among 6 heirs; we know that four of these heirs established their own bookshops, using their patrimony as a base.

The most obvious material evidence for the Sibao publishing business is, of course, surviving imprints and woodblocks. Though most of the imprints and woodblocks stored in Wuge and Mawu were destroyed in great bonfires during the Cultural Revolution, we were able to collect a few samples of each during our brief time in Sibao: 147 volumes, representing 70 titles, and 424 woodblocks, representing 51 titles. Examination of even this sample suggests something of the range in the quality of Sibao publications; they include large, rather handsomely presented editions of the Classics, as well as poorly produced, difficult-to-read, "pocket-book" editions of novels and collections of medical prescriptions. Most date from the Daoguang period or later; the earliest imprint was dated 1776.

Oral interviews provided another important source of information on the business practices of the Zou and Ma lineages. Since both lineages had continued their publishing business well into the twentieth century, through the 1930's and, in one case, to 1949, several of the older family members could remember how business had been conducted; indeed, many had themselves worked in the printing business. While their accounts have only a limited historical validity in that they tell us only about early twentieth-century publishing operations, they were nonetheless able to provide useful information about how the printing process was organized, how the necessary materials (paper, wood, ink, and so forth) were procured, how competition among different bookshops within each lineage was managed, and how Sibao texts were distributed.

Finally, there is in Sibao scattered physical evidence of its past as a publishing center. Some printing tools have been preserved: a wooden press and page cutter, several brushes, and two inkwells. Several of the old mansions, built in the Qianlong or Jiaqing era at the height of Sibao prosperity, still survive, though most are in rather poor repair. It is possible to visit the small rooms that were used as separate printing workshops (and that are now pigsties); in some cases, the large stone tubs used to hold ink are still in place in the courtyard outside the printing shops. And Mawu still preserves the "wind-and-fire wall" (*fenghuo qiang*) built to protect its printing shops and book warehouses from fire.

Since, to my knowledge, there are no archival holdings of Sibao materials either in China or elsewhere, the on-site collection of documents that I have described above is essential to any study of the Zou and Ma publishing industries. Our goal has been to collect as much material as possible for storage

and eventual display in the Sibao Cultural Center (at the moment located in the director's living room). Although some woodblocks and imprints had been deposited there before our arrival, a great deal more in the way of both collection and cataloguing needs to be done. Gathering primary sources in the field certainly has its appeal: my understanding of how the Sibao industries were run has been substantially enhanced by my own experience of life in Sibao; and it is clearly important to form such document collections before any more valuable local materials are destroyed or lost. But this work also entails much frustration. Even with considerable help from local leaders (from the Foreign Affairs Office and the Cultural Center in Liancheng, the county seat, as well as from the director of the Sibao Cultural Center), many residents of Wuge and Mawu were reluctant to show us their materials. While older family members were quite proud of their past, and thus were usually more eager to talk to us, they were also very suspicious of our motives. Many thought that we had come to Sibao to buy up their family treasures and resell them at great profit on the antiques market. (We did not in fact offer people money to show us their sources.) On the other hand, members of the younger generation, who generally did not care much about family history, were quite eager to sell us not only woodblocks and imprints, but also vases and whatever "antiques" their families possessed; they were quite puzzled when we explained that we were not interested in buying these objects. Though we held two meetings, one in Wuge and one in Mawu, to announce and explain our research, I am not sure that anyone really understood what we were doing there. I plan to return in the spring of 1995, to continue collecting imprints and woodblocks and interview material--1 hope that this evidence of sustained interest will help ease some local doubts and fears.

Endnotes

1. Robert Darnton, "What Is the History of Books," in *Books and Society in History*, edited by Kenneth E. Carpenter (New York and London: R.R. Bowker Company, 1983), p. 3.

2. See, for example, Martin Lowry, *The World of Ladus Manutius* (Ithaca: Comell University Press, 1979); Leon Voet, *The Golden Compasses: A History and Evaluation of the Printing and Publishing Activities of the Officina Plantiniana at Antwerp* (Amsterdam: Van Gend, 1969 and 1972; Clive Griffin, *The Crombergers of Seville: The History of a Printing and Merchant Dynasty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Alvin Kernan, *Printing Technology, Letters and Samuel Johnson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); and so forth. 3. See Lucille Chia, "Book Emporium: The Development of the Jianyang Book Trade, Song-Yuan," and Ellen Widmer, "The Huanduzhai of Hangzhou and Suzhou: A Study in Seventeenth Century Publishing," both papers presented at the meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, March 27, 1994.

4. An exception in the gazetteer literature is Yang Lan, *Lin Ting huikao* (Guangxu edition), 4.8a-b; and in the secondary literature, Chen Zhiping and Zheng Zhenman, "Oingdai Minxi Sibao zushang yanjiu," *Zhongguo jingjishi yanliu*, 1988.2, pp. 93-109.

5. See "A Note on the Lineage in Business," *Chinese Business History*, 1.2 (April 1991), p. 1.

Contributors to this issue

- **Cynthia Brokaw** is the author of *The Ledgers* of *Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China.* Her current research on commercial publishing in Fujian is described beginning on page one.
- Robert Gardelia's book Harvesting the Mountains: Fujian and the Tea Trade, 1747-1937 has just become available from the University of California Press, Berkeley. He is also the author of "Squaring Accounts, Commercial Bookkeeping Methods and Capitalist Rationalism in Late Qing and Republican China" Journal of Asian Studies, May 1992, pp. 317-339.
- James Millward is currently revising a book manuscript of the note on page 1 is an abstract. The book is entitled 'Beyond the Pass': Commerce, Ethnicity and Empire in Qing Xinjiang, 1759-1864. His most recent publication "A Uyghur Muslim in Qianlong's Court: The Meanings of the Fragrant Concubine," (Journal of Asian Studies 53.2, May 1994) considers the significance of Xinjiang from late Qing through the People's Republic as reflected in the stories about Xiang Fei.

Report

Workshop: Contract in Chinese Economic Culture

Robert Gardella U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

On September 23-25, 1994, the first in a series of Luce Foundation funded workshops on "Contract in Chinese Economic Culture" was held at the East Asian Institute of Columbia University, New York. This initial session concerned the historical context of contract in Chinese society and had two major focuses: (1) research currently being done by scholars of the ancient and middle periods as a foundation for studies on the early modern period and (2) central issues in the debates on the evolution of contract in non-Chinese societies, and particularly the West. The following is a summary of the workshop presentations.

The Ancient Period. Presenters: Karen Turner (Holy Cross College); Susan Weld (Harvard Law School).

Professor Weld discussed pre-Qin contracts on the basis of evidence from the state of Jin. Contracts took the form of covenant texts--formulaic texts in the form of tablets that represented elite agreements (political alliances) on a local level within the Zhou multi-state system. Lineages rather than individuals figure in these contracts; there is no specification of reciprocity in them, the agreements being upheld by supernatural sanctions (by deceased Jin lords) with the texts serving as mechanisms of enforcement. The concept of meng (covenant) initiated here had a long-term historical significance. Professor Turner's contribution dealt with the Zhanguo-Early Han era, a period that did exemplify a shift from "status" to "contract" in Chinese society, paradoxically coinciding with a cultural nostalgia for personalistic relations. (The availability of new sources, especially the Shuihudi and Jingfa legal texts, alters perceptions of this era). Turner directly confronts the Western misunderstandings of ancient Chinese law-it was linked to the Dao as a means of making universal, timeless standards into concrete guidelines to create a stable world and legitimize it. In China the "rule of law" (as opposed to personal decisions by rulers) did take precedence; rulers as well as subjects were under the law, and officials at the local level were particularly accountable for their behavior. New sources indicate an obsession with protecting the human and material resources of the state, and also a strong continuity between the Qin and Western Han legal codifications.

The Middle Period. Presenters: Hugh Scogin (Fordham Law School); Valerie Hansen (Yale University).

Scooin stated that the Song period was indeed the documentary antecedent of "modern times"--the framework for the late imperial era was set in the Song. Scogin also noted that there were numerous Song antecedents for the purportedly "unique" legal institutions celebrated in early modern Europe, yet China and the West went in very different institutional directions. Research on contractual materials stemming from this era present numerous problems, but the Northern Song Dynasty marked the highest level of Chinese legal reasoning. In contrast to the West's Roman law, which devolved from general legal principles to particular instances, Song law evolved from precedents (//) via the mediating stage of imperial edicts into the ultimate level of dynastic law codification. (Material for the primary level--the li--is scarce, while edicts and codes survive; this is not the case for the Ming-Qing periods.) Scogin also described a valuable new resource on Chinese contracts from Ming to the Republican period, a collection of some 1500-2000 items that will be published in the PRC in four volumes divided by subject matter and by region.

Professor Hansen gave a presentation based upon her most recent book (*Wegotiating Daily Life: The Concerns of Ordinary People as seen in Chinese Contracts 600-1400*, forthcoming, Yale University Press). She presented a sampling of tomb contracts and actual land contracts from the Song, and established that post-mortem transactions (such as the litigation procedures for tomb contracts) were in fact mirrors of real world contractual transactions. Her wide-ranging research displays the ubiquitous and vital socio-economic and cultural role occupied by these instruments to "negotiate" daily life down to the mid-Ming period.

The Early Modern and Modern Periods. Presenters: Jonathan Ocko (North Carolina State University); Madeleine Ze1in (Columbia University); Sucheta Mazhumdar (Duke University).

Professor Ocko, on the basis of extensive current surveys of PRC archival materials, discussed the data base for research on contracts from the Ming to the Republican era. Taking the Baxian (Sichuan) Archives as an example, Ocko noted the repeated incidents of mercantile fraud over time (some three to four thousand cases during the Qing period). He also stressed the need to create a dictionary of legal terminology for the late imperial era as a research aid-this would require a collective effort. Ocko finally discussed the need to combine local knowledge (given the current emphasis in the PRC on xian-level histories) with knowledge of the legal documents themselves. For the Republican era, he concluded, there is a wealth of contracts from the 1930's and 1940' in Hubei, and the Number Two Archives at Nanjing have complete collections of lawyers' briefs for the Guomindang period (good sources for the analysis of Republican courts and justice). Professor Zelin discussed the matter of Qing-Republican private law agreements as indicative of how Chinese overcame obstacles to business transactions. She raised a number of key issues:

First, the Qing state recognized the importance of the market, and at more-than-local-levels (i.e. in rules regarding fraud, fair pricing, brokers, curbing monopolies and hoarding, etc.).

Second, there was general support in the Qing code for private property, whether of individuals or groups (the Qing code serving as a general reference framework). The state was concerned with property ownership and its regulation through codification and standardization of customary practices. Its central concern was, however, resolution of contractual disputes rather than the detailed regulation of the content of agreements themselves.

Third, there was a strong tendency to have written agreements during the Qing, with lengthy, discursive historical sections often inserted into contracts as documentary supports (in the frequent absence of corroborating backup documents). Repudiations of liability and self-enforcement mechanisms were common features of these contracts. The Qing state was simply too small and resource poor to handle massive litigation. By contrast, during the Republican era there was a proliferation of agencies that could hear cases (local warlords, chambers of commerce, etc.).

Sucheta Mazhumdar raised two major questions in her presentation. First, how did the legally recognized servile status of a certain portion of the population (in the Pearl River Delta and South Anhui) affect economic development. Second, given the advance of commercial agriculture in the Qing, how alienable was land anyhow? Corporate property, distrust of extra-local investment meant that there were barriers to sales vs. rentals.

Discussants for the workshop presentations included Myron Cohen (Columbia University), William Kirby (Harvard University), Robert Hymes (Columbia University), Andrea McElderry (University of Louisville), and Robert Gardella, (U.S. Merchant Marine Academy).

Directory

- Chan Kai Yiu, Ph.D. student, St. Antony's College, Oxford University, Oxford, England. Completed M.A. thesis (U. of Hong Kong) on the financing of the Rong family enterprises.
- Hao, Yen-p'ing, Professor of History, University of Tennessee Knoxville, TN, 37996-0411. Current research: "China's Current commercial Development in Historical Perspective.
- Van Dyke, Paul A., Ph.D. student, History, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089. Proposed dissertation topic: differences and changes in Sino-Dutch trade in Taiwan in 1630's and the Canton trade of the 1780's.

Chinese Business History

is the bulletin of the Chinese Business History Research Group, an affiliate of the Association for Asian Studies. Executive Committee: Wellington Chan, Robert Gardella, and Andrea McElderry.

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Subscriptions

U.S. \$8.00 for 2 issues per year; U.S. \$9.00, overseas airmail.

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Editor's Note

As many of our readers know, *Chinese Business History* is a desktop publishing operation which 1 produce on computer equipment at the University of Louisville History Department. I also handle the financial aspects of the bulletin. This spring, I will be in Shanghai and am now making arrangements to produce a report on Chinese business history research in Shanghai and other cities for the spring 1995 issue. But the logistics are uncertain so I am asking readers to help in two ways. First, if you have received a renewal notice for fall or spring 1995 renewal, please renew before January 10 if possible. Second, be patient. Your spring 1995 bulletin will arrive but perhaps somewhat late. *Andrea McElderry*

Coming Issues ---

The next two issues will be dedicated to providing information about research on and archives for Chinese business history in Shanghai and Taipei.

Report from Shanghai

Spring 1995

Report from Taipei

Fall 1995

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