

Collecting Images for Illustration

A Case Study on the T'ien-chang-ke Edition of *The Story of The Western Wing*

This paper will examine the visualization of texts in late-Ming (1573-1644)

publications through a case study on the T'ien-chang-ke 天章閣 edition of *The Story of The Western Wing* 西廂記 printed in 1640.¹ (hereafter the TCK edition.)

The northern *tsa-chu* 雜劇 play *The Story of the Western Wing* narrates the romantic love story of Ts'ui Ying-ying 崔鶯鶯 and Student Chang 張生. It is recognized as the most often published play in the history of Chinese literature. There are more than sixty extant editions dating from the late Ming period.² Most of them are illustrated. Since the publishing market was highly competitive during late Ming, in order to distinguish their own edition from those of others, publishers were encouraged to attract readers' attention by providing further materials. These could be annotations or commentaries, various forms of appendices, as well as fresh styles of pictorial accompaniments. During this process of adding materials, the text, although the primary source, is not necessarily secure in its dominant role over the images.

From this angle of the relationship between image and text, the present study

¹ The complete title of this publication is *A Commentary on the Genuine Edition of the Story of the Western Wing* by Li Chuo-wu 李卓吾先生批點西廂記真本.

² Lin Tsung-yi 林宗毅, *Hsi-hsiang-ji erh-lun* 西廂記二論, (Taipei: Wen-shih-che ch'u-pan-she 文史哲出版社, 1988), pp.143—144; also see Yao Dajun, "The Pleasure of Reading Drama: Illustrations to the Hongzhi Edition of the Story of the Western Wing", appendix to Stephen West, *The Moon and the Zither: The Story of the Western Wing*, (Berkeley and L.A.: University of California Press, 1991), p. 437.

focuses on the “fragmentation of text” in the TCK edition.³ An analysis of the process of picture-making further reveals that the images are, in truth, a collection of images appropriated from other books. I wish to investigate the interaction between image, text, and other contemporary visual sources, in order to explore the dialogue between print culture and visual culture during this period.

The Image-Text Relationship in the TCK Edition

The TCK edition was published by the T'ien-chang-ke publishing house at Hsiling 西陵.⁴ Twenty-one images, including one portrait of Ying-ying (fig. 1) and twenty images dedicated to the text are grouped together and placed at the beginning, before the text. The images are arranged in facing, framed half-folios, constituting a single picture the height and width of the open book (fig. 2). This basically follows the most common format for illustrations accompanying *The Western Wing* used during this period.⁵ With this format, each image could be viewed as an album leaf.

³ There are several related editions of this system held in different collections, including the National Palace Museum at Taipei; The National Library at Taipei; Tenri Library in Japan, etc. They differ slightly in number of volumes, appendices, commentaries and so forth. The version studied here is primarily that in the rare book collection at the National Library, Taipei. See Chiang Hsing-yu's 蔣星煜 discussion in “Li Chuo-wu P'i-ben His-hsiang Ji te t'e-cheng, chen-wei, yu ying-hsiang 李卓吾批本西廂記的特徵、真偽與影響”, in *Hsi-hsiang Ji te Wen-hsian-hsueh Yen-chiu* 西廂記的文獻學研究, (Shanghai: Ku-ji Ch'u-pan-she 古籍出版社, 1997), pp. 85—100; and Lin Tsung-yi 林宗毅, *ibid.*, pp. 225—227, note 51.

⁴ According to the words on the frontispiece, this edition was printed by T'ien-chang-ke at Hsiling. Since the caption writer Ku-Ch'a-sheng 古侏生 was active in the Hangchou area, which was one of the important publishing centers at that time, Hsiling is most likely Hsiaoshan 蕭山, located in modern Chekiang province. See Chiang Hsing-yu 蔣星煜, *ibid.*, pp. 90--91. According to the preface by Tsui-hsiang Chu-jen 醉香主人 (“Drunken Fragrant Master”), this edition was printed in 1640.

⁵ For a list of the formats of illustrations in different editions of *The Western Wing*, see Ma Meng-ching 馬孟晶, “Looking Through the Frame: Visuality in Late-Ming Illustrations to *The Story of the Western*

The illustrations in this edition are quite different from other editions of *The Western Wing*, however, in that they are not meant to assist in telling the story. In addition to the portrait, the decorative plan comprises of ten images of beautiful women and ten non-figural images,⁶ arranged alternately. Each picture is inscribed with one line drawn from the script and written in a variety of calligraphic styles. To judge from the captions, unlike other editions of *The Western Wing*, the twenty images here do not correspond one-to-one to the twenty acts of the Yuan drama. There is almost no narrative element contained in the ten non-figural images. As for the ten images with figures, they are all representations of a single female enacting a variety of different activities. These range from walking in the garden (fig. 2), taking a nap in her bedroom (fig. 3), or fixing her hair beside the window, to looking into the far distance while reclining on a balustrade, and so forth. Most of the captions for these female images are either Student Chang's praises of Ying-ying, or Ying-ying's own expressions. These images may be meant as representations of the appearance and inner feelings of the heroine Ying-ying, therefore. An essay entitled *Appendix to Ten Images of Beautiful Women* and written by Ku-Ch'a-sheng of the West Lake 西湖古侘生 is included after the series

Wing” 耳目之玩 - 從西廂記版畫插圖論晚明出版文化對視覺性之關注 - , *Taida Journal of Art History* 美術史集刊No.13 (Taipei: National Taiwan University, 2002), pp. 251—257. For a discussion on the development and meaning of the formats of illustrations in various editions of *The Western Wing*, see Ma Meng-ching, *ibid.*, pp.213-216. Robert Hegel gives a more general picture of the formats of illustrations in Ming publications in his *Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 164--250.

⁶ The subjects of the ten non-figural images are of flowers, birds, rocks, orchids, and bamboos.

of images (fig. 4). This shows that the designer treats the ten female images as a complete set. While it may seem reasonable to take Ts'ui Ying-ying as the representative figure for the whole play, indeed, readers and commentators in the late Ming did tend to view her as the most important character in *The Western Wing*,⁷ it is only in this edition that Ying-ying becomes the sole figure shown in the illustrations.

With this in mind, it is worth investigating the relationship between image and text in this edition. For example, the caption for the seventh picture *Lying facedown on this fine silken pillow and drowse* 搭伏定鮫綃枕頭兒上盹⁸ (fig. 3), is drawn from the beginning of the fifth act *Riding White Horse to Relieve a Siege* 白馬解圍. The content of the complete aria is Ying-ying's own description of her yearnings for Student Chang's love, because of which she feels languid and sleepy. However, the main event in this act occurs when a rebel threatens to kill all the people at the monastery unless Ying-ying agrees to marry him. Ying-ying promises to marry anyone who can find a solution, so Student Chang proposes to ask a friend for help. For an illustrator interested in narrative scenes, this might have been presented as a violent scene of fighting, as in the Wen-hsiu-t'ang 文秀堂 edition (fig. 5). However, the illustrator of the TCK edition was so interested in Ying-ying's image that he chose to illustrate four lines from different paragraphs in this

⁷ In the prefaces or other materials attached to diverse editions of *The Western Wing*, late-Ming authors often called the play *The Biography of Ms. Ts'ui* 崔傳/崔氏春秋. Textual researches on the identity and real life of Ying-ying, as well as the portrait of Ying-ying are also common appendices.

⁸ In this paper, translation of the play *The Western Wing* mainly follows Stephen West, *The Moon and the Zither: The Story of the Western Wing*.

act (pictures 5-8).

The seventh picture depicts a female sitting with her arms resting on a pillow on a bench in her room. It matches the caption perfectly. Yet in the original script, Ying-ying sings this aria to her maiden, and so the image does not really attempt to depict the episode accurately. All of the figural images in this edition are of a single woman enacting various activities, rather than the depiction of specific episodes from the text. It seems more appropriate, therefore, to treat these images as purely “pictures of beauty”, instead of “illustrations” of the play.⁹

This also applies to the next image. The caption accompanying the eighth picture (fig. 6) reads, “*her lotus face engenders spring, just like a city- and state-toppling precious Consort*” *Yang* 蓮臉生春恰便似傾國傾城楊太真.” This is taken from Ying-ying’s mother citing the rebel’s praise of Ying-ying. The image shows a blossoming lotus flower, which is a symbol of Ying-ying. Again, the image is related to the aria, albeit in a looser way, yet has nothing to do with the narrative action. As with these two examples, the rest of the ten non-figural images contain hardly any narrative elements and, instead of interpreting the episodes of the play, merely depict the line inscribed on the page.

⁹ Hsiao Li-ling’s 蕭麗玲 research on this edition categorizes it as “link to the text through a line of poetry chosen to express the illustrator’s evaluation of the play or scene and the *dramatis personae*.” She argues that the illustrator comments on the text through the images, and thus plays a role similar to the textual commentator. The ten images of beauty are considered as presentation of an ideal beauty through the image of Ying-ying, and the ten non-figural pictures as pictorial allegories. This paper will look at whether this is indeed the case or whether there are other reasons behind the illustration plan. See Hsiao, “Images and the Text: Woodblock Illustrations in the Kuai Ge Edition of *Xixiang Ji* (1640)”, unpublished paper.

Analysis of the image-text relationship for each of the pictures reveals that they all relate to the script in a very literal sense of the words. The criterion used for choosing subject matter for illustration no longer that of representing a scene from the story, but of finding a line appropriate to creating a poetic picture. The text is thus treated as fragmented segments, and the narrative no longer occupies the paramount role in the plan of illustration.

This feature is not unique to the TCK edition but a phenomenon that developed in the late Ming-period. With this in mind, it is worth tracing these precedents, as well as exploring the larger context of print culture and stage performance.

Precedents for the Mode of Text Fragmentation

The format of displaying figural and non-figural images alternately to accompany texts may be traced to the mode of pairing a picture of a scene from a text and a matching one “of objects referred to in the text or imaginative extensions there from for which the reader will find no explanations in the narrative”.¹⁰ Each of the paired images usually occupied half of the folio, and they were arranged separately on the recto and verso folio. For example, in the edition of *The Story of the Western Wing* published by Li Kao-ch'en 李告辰 in the Hangchou area and dated 1631, there are twenty pairs of pictures to accompany the text (fig. 7). The first image of each pair is inscribed with the

¹⁰ Hegel, Robert, *op.cit.*, p.206.

title of each act and is meant to correspond to the narrative. The subjects of the images on the verso folio are rocks, flowers, animals, landscapes and so on, none of which is intended to be narrative. These images do not even have captions to connect them to the text. Furthermore, they do not seem to refer to the text in any allegoric or explanatory way. The narrative aspect of the illustration plan is thus reduced. Nevertheless, since half of the pictures still serve a narrative function and are placed in a more prominent position, the recto folio, the reader may get a rough impression of the story by viewing these narrative images. In the TCK edition, however, the size of each picture is extended to occupy the whole facing page, and the figural images are not narrative, thus taking it a step further than the Li Kao-ch'en edition.

Moreover, this trend of text fragmentation in the illustration plan did not start with the TCK edition. In the Jung-yu-t'ang 容與堂 edition of *The Story of the Western Wing* published in Hangchou and dated 1610, there are a total of twenty images at the front of the two volumes. Examination of the captions for each image reveals that they do not correspond to each of the twenty acts. Most of the images are depictions of either a gentleman walking in the countryside, or a lady strolling in the garden, rather than representations relating to the romantic plot of *The Western Wing*. There are even six pictures depicting landscape without any figures. The captions, however, are all drawn from the script and coordinate perfectly with the pictures. The caption for the seventh

picture (fig. 8), for example, reads, “Fine lines of verse, full of feeling, pitied the night moon; Fallen flowers, without a word, still resent the eastern wind 好句有情憐夜月，落花無語怨東風,” which is also drawn from the poem recited by Ying-ying in the fifth act. It is an expression of Ying-ying’s lovesickness toward Student Chang. However, the picture accompanying the couplet shows a scholar looking far into the distant mountains in the moonlight. Although it may still match the caption, it totally betrays the original event.

The illustrator did not ignore the text completely, yet there is a significant rupture between the narrative, the couplet, and the picture. It appears that the illustrator was not confined by the episodes of the play, and had no intention of trying to depict the dramatic scenes. Instead, he paid more attention to the things, feelings and atmosphere described by the caption, and sought an appropriate visual mode to express them. The caption, a fragmented segment of the text, thus becomes the key that relates the image to the text. For the illustrator, it is more important to find a key line and a matching scene from the visual repertoire than it is to expound the essence of the script. A similar relationship between image and text appears in other editions of *The Western Wing*, such as the 1611 edition with Hsu Wei’s 徐渭 commentaries (fig. 9), or the P’an-kuo-shuo-jen 槃邁碩人 edition published in 1621 (fig. 10).¹¹

¹¹ In her discussion on the way the illustrator of the Jung-yu-t’ang edition of *The Story of the Lute* 琵琶記 (dated 1612) adopts conventional compositional modes of pictures, Hsiao Li-ling argues that it is

The development of this mode of interpreting the fragmented segments rather than the narrative might have been related to the popular publications *A Collection of Pictures to Illustrate Ts'e Poetry* 詩餘畫譜 (printed in ca. 1612) and *A Collection of Pictures to Illustrate T'ang Poetry* 唐詩畫譜 (published in the early 17th century). In this genre of illustrated poems, the picture is usually representing a text of only a few lines in length with less narrative connotation than in dramatic texts.¹² For instance, one page in *A Collection of Pictures to Illustrate T'ang Poetry* illustrates the poem “Chu-li-kuan竹里館” by Wang Wei王維 (fig. 11). This depicts a man sitting among bamboos, playing a *ch'in* under the moonlight. The image faithfully represents the things described in the poem. The relationship between image and text is fairly close in this case, though the visual interpretation is strongly related to the literal meaning of the poem

It is also noteworthy that the image is marked as “in imitation of Li Ch'eng” 仿李成筆意, a famous tenth century landscape painter. While it is debatable whether it really resembles Li's style, it reveals that the illustrator consciously intended to imitate the style of a distinguished painter. The names of many noted painters from different periods are

the caption that connects the image and the text. *The Story of the Lute* and *The Story of the Western Wing* are both part of the series “Six Plays Published by Jung-yu-t'ang”, and the styles of their illustrations are very similar. They might be created by the same team. Therefore, the illustration plans for these two publications are quite similar. We might find more instances from this period, thus it appears to be a growing new trend in late Ming. See Hsiao Li-ling, *Wan-Ming pan-hua yu hsi-ch'u han hui-hua te guan-hsi: yi Pi-pa-ji wei-li* 晚明版畫與戲曲和繪畫的關係—以琵琶記為例 (Master's Thesis, Chinese Cultural University, 1991), pp.89—108.

¹² However, if we compare the poems included in these publications to other poems not selected, their narrative element is more apparent. See Wang Cheng-hua's 王正華 discussion in “Sheng-huo, chih-shih and she-hui kung-chien: wan Ming Fukien ban ji-yung lei-shu yu ch'i shu-hua men 生活、知識與社會空間：晚明福建版「日用類書」與其書畫門”, forthcoming.

found throughout the book. The illustrator intended not only to explore the picturesque aspects of the poem, therefore, but also to present it as a real painting. With this book, the reader is offered poems by various famous poets, and images in the styles of numerous important painters. From this point of view, it was meant as a collection of both exemplary poems and paintings. To judge by the variety of calligraphic styles used to write the poems, the book may also have been designed to attain the standards of the literati ideal of “three perfections of poetry, calligraphy, and painting.”¹³

On the other hand, while choosing the poems, the illustrator must have taken into consideration the need to find a suitable composition or theme to match the text. Although the images still closely follow the content of the text, a poem might be chosen simply only because of its aesthetic and painterly aspects. The text-image relationship in this genre is thus different from that in illustrations of traditional narratives, that is, of plays or novels. In selecting a poem, visual elements embedded in the poem were more important than its poetic quality. The emergence of this genre of publication might also have been related to the popularity of printing anthologies of T'ang poems, and painting “poetic pictures 詩意圖”¹⁴ (fig. 12). This is far beyond the scope of this paper, yet

¹³ In the prefaces for the three volumes of *The Collection of Pictures to Illustrate T'ang Poetry*, all of the authors emphasize that they should be treasured due to incorporation of the “three things of immortality: poetry, calligraphy and painting.”

¹⁴ For the popularity of printing anthologies of T'ang poems, see Ch'en Kuo-ch'iu 陳國球, *T'ang-shih te ch'uan-ch'eng* 唐詩的傳承, (Taipei: Hsueh-sheng Publishing Company 學生書局, 1990), pp. 217—291; for an examination on the relation between image and text in late Ming painting, see Liu Chiao-mei 劉巧楣, “Painting and Poetry of Soochow in the Late-Ming 晚明蘇州繪畫中的詩畫關係” in *The Study of the Arts* 藝術學no. 6, (1991, 9), pp. 33—73.

deserves further research later.

Changing Reading Habits

It seems likely, therefore, that the change of image-text relationship as seen in the illustrated editions of *The Story of the Western Wing* reflects a shift in contemporary reading habits. The readers gradually became accustomed to reading fragmented texts, probably due to emerging tendencies in stage performance, as well as through the textual structure and physical features of publications.

Since the story had long been widely known through the circulation of stage performances, oral transmission, or diverse forms of reading matters, late Ming-readers may well have had a clear idea of the plot. Their attention might then have shifted from the narrative to the characters in the play and the rhetoric of the text, as evidenced perhaps by the blossoming of commentaries and annotations.

Commentaries accompanying a text first appeared in printed books in the Southern Sung (1127-1279) and went through a number of developmental stages before the late Ming.¹⁵ The bookstores claimed to base their editions on ancient versions, with

¹⁵ Yeh Te-hui 葉德輝 points out that commentaries first accompanied Tang and Sung fiction and poetry. See Yeh, *Shu-lin ch'ing-hua* 書林清話 (Taipei: Wen-shih-che shu-chu 文史哲出版社, reprinted in 1988), *juan* 2, pp.4—5. There was a long tradition for scholars to punctuate and write marginalia while reading, yet it was not until the Sung dynasty that more scholars participated in it. See also Wu Ch'eng-hsueh 吳承學, "P'ing-tian chi hsing: Wen-hsueh p'ing-tien te hsing-ch'eng han nan-sung te shih-wen p'ing-tien 評點之興—文學評點的形成和南宋的詩文評點", *Wen-hsueh p'ing-lun* 1995:1, pp.24—33. Commercial publications gained great success and encouraged more followers. Publications of histories and classics also had commentaries from the Yuan dynasty onwards. This became more and more popular, and the contents became richer and more varied. By the late Ming,

punctuation and commentaries by famous contemporary critics such as Ch'en Chi-ju 陳繼儒, Li Chuo-wu 李卓吾, Hsu Wei 徐渭, and so on. Publication of *The Western Wing* also accorded with this trend (fig. 13).¹⁶ Since Ming critics could voice their opinions loudly in numerous editions, they themselves often became a major selling point. The original script thus lost its dominant role. For late-Ming readers, appreciation of specific arias might be as important as following the storyline.

Something similar was also occurring in stage performances. By at least the Chia-ching 嘉靖 era (1522-1566), performing a selection of acts from one or various plays instead of acting out one whole play had become common practice. The acts chosen were considered the essence of each play, and scripts were often modified accordingly. This kind of performance usually took place in the homes of literati.¹⁷ In

even novels and plays had commentaries attached, indeed, there was a prevalence of commentaries in publications of almost every literary genre. They were even printed in two or more colors to distinguish the commentators. Refer to Rolston, David, *How to Read the Chinese Novel* (Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 3—74.

¹⁶ In his study on the commentaries on *The Western Wing*, T'an Fan 譚帆 categorizes them into three types: a) Academic approach: commentators tried to recover the original text of the play, and help readers understand the meanings within. Examples include Wang Po-liang 王伯良 and Ling Meng-ch'ü 凌濛初. b) Artistic approach: commentators discussed the characters, plot structure, word usage, as well as other artistic aspects of the text. Examples include Hsu Wei 徐渭 and Li Chuo-wu 李卓吾. c) Theatrical approach: commentators focused on the theatrical effects on the stage. One example is P'an-kuo-shuo-jen 槃國碩人.

The category representative for the late-Ming trends is the second one, which was most common. There are at least fifteen editions falling within this group. See T'an Fan 譚帆, "Lun His-hsiang-ji te P'ing-tien his-t'ung 論西廂記的評點系統", *Hsi-chu Yi-shu* 戲劇藝術 43 (1988:1), pp.134—146.

¹⁷ Wang An-ch'i 王安祈, "Tsai-lun Ming-tai ch'e-tsu hsi 再論明代折子戲", in her *Ming-tai hsi-ch'u wu lun* 明代戲曲五論 (Taipei: Ta-an ch'u-pan-she 大安出版社, 1990), pp.1-47; and Wang, *Ming-tai ch'uan-ch'i chi chu'ch'ang chi ch'i yi-shu* 明代傳奇之劇場及其藝術, (Taipei: Hsueh-sheng shu-chu 學生書局, 1986), pp.204—210. Wang further analyzes the reasons why this happened. Firstly, the audience were already familiar with the plot, thus it was not necessary to act out the complete play. Secondly, audiences were not contented with merely following the story, preferring for exquisite performances by actors of highest quality. Wang's research mainly focuses on the southern *ch'uan-ch'i* 傳奇 plays, yet she also mentions instances of *The Western Wing* in northern *tsa-chu* style. *Tsa-chu* plays were mainly popular in the Yuan dynasty. After down to the Ming dynasty, they were

viewing such stage performances, spectators focused on fragmented sections.

Partly in response to the rise of this kind of “selected acts-play 折子戲”, perhaps, a great number of anthologies of abridged dramatic texts or highlights from dramas emerged from the Wan-li 萬曆 era (1573-1620) onwards.¹⁸ When intended as reading materials, the criterion used to choose segments from a play might be the individual values of arias.¹⁹ Selected acts of *The Western Wing* were occasionally included in this kind of dramatic miscellany.²⁰ In addition, there were quite a few adapted versions of *The Western Wing* printed in the late Ming.²¹ The original script was thus transformed in various ways, becoming increasingly distanced from the readers.

The physical features of these dramatic miscellanies led to further fragmentation of the text. Each folio was usually divided into two or three rows (fig. 14, 15). In addition

not frequently acted, but instead were more commonly used as reading matter. However, the shift in the ways spectators perceived plays in general might have affected readers’ attitude while reading the scripts.

¹⁸ Some were meant to be acted, but many were printed for reading or singing without the accompaniment of any musical instrument. Please refer to Wang Ku-lu’s 王古魯 preface of *Ming-tai Hui-tiao hsi-ch’u san-ch’u chi-yi*, 明代徽調戲曲散齣輯佚 (Shanghai: Ku-tien Wen-hsueh ch’u-ban-she 古典文學出版社, 1956); and Wang Ch’iu-kuei’s 王秋桂 editor’s explanations on the series of rare plays, included in *Yueh-fu ching-hua* 樂府菁華 (Taipei: Hsueh-sheng shu-chu 學生書局, 1984), pp.1-11. Also see Fu Yun-tsu’s 傅云子 introduction to several publications of this genre in his *Pai-ch’uan-chi* 白川集 (Tokyo, 1943).

¹⁹ For instance, the editor of *Yue-lu-yin* 月露音 (printed in 1616) states that an editor of drama anthologies is different from a playwright. For the playwright it is the context of the arias, that is the narrative and the genuine feelings it carries, which is important. Yet the arias have to be sophisticated and ornate to be chosen. They should not be treated as a script for stage acting, therefore. See “fan-li” 凡例, no.6 in *Yue-lu-yin* 月露音 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, reprint based on the 1616 edition, 1988), p.2a.

²⁰ See Chiang Hsing-yu’s 蔣星煜 analysis on the list of the plays in the nine publications of this genre in “Ming-mo shu-lin te hsi-ch’u hsuan-pen 明末書林的戲曲選本”, in his *Chung-huo hsi-ch’u-shih suo-yin* 中國戲曲史索隱, (Ch’i-lu shu-she 齊魯書社, 1988), pp.80-114. Plays included in these miscellanies are written in southern *ch’uan-ch’i* style. However, the readers of the *tza-chu* play might be used to reading fragmented text of *The Western Wing* since other plays were published in part.

²¹ See Lin Ts’ung-yi’s 林宗毅 research on the twenty-three adapted versions of *The Western Wing* in his *Hsi-hsiang-chi erh-lun* 西廂記二論, pp. 50—142.

to the main selected dramatic texts, miscellaneous short texts such as folk songs, riddles, jokes, and *chiu-ling* 酒令 (verses used in drinking games) are juxtaposed.²² Illustrations are inserted sporadically into the main row.²³ For example, the page in *Yu-ku hsin-huang* 玉谷新簧 (printed by Liu Ts'e-ch'uan of Fukien 福建劉次泉 in 1610) is divided into three rows. The arias printed on the upper row are drawn from *Yu-tsan-chi* 玉簪記, and on the bottom row is an act drawn from *The Western Wing*. Between these two rows is a popular song derived from *The Story of the Three Kingdoms*. Narrative illustrations appear irregularly on both the upper and the lower rows, and are inserted into the dramatic texts.

Since texts of different genres, lengths and forms are juxtaposed on the same page, a reader may glance his or her eye over the different texts with ease. These texts are not designed to be a system of interrelated parts, they merely proceed separately line by line.²⁴ Characters or episodes in the short texts often refer to *The Western Wing*, but they are not put beside the corresponding acts drawn from the play. Readers might be

²² For those with two rows, the larger bottom part is usually devoted to selected acts from southern *ch'uan-ch'i* plays, and the upper part is occupied by folk songs, riddles, jokes, verses used in drinking games, and so on. For those with three rows, both the upper and bottom rows are assigned to selected acts of plays, and the smaller middle part is printed with short texts aforementioned.

²³ The multiple-row layout was also used for anthologies of short stories or every-day encyclopedias, and became a new trend in the late-Ming period. See Shang Wei, "Jing Ping Mei Cihua and Late-Ming Print Culture", in Judith Zeitlin and Lydia Liu eds., *Writing and Materiality in China: Essays in Honor of Patrick Hanan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asian Center, 2003), pp. 187-138.

²⁴ While discussing the nature of late-Ming drama miscellany, Shang Wei demonstrates that an editor, "when adapting and compiling the dramatic and fictional texts, showed no concern for their authorship or their textual integrity and unity. He took a piece of text out of its context, imposed on it new significance by incorporating it into a new sequence of texts, and thus ended up creating a hybrid book out of miscellaneous, fragmented pieces." He points out the changes in reading habit—the needs for fast, extensive, and random readings—as seen in late-Ming publications. See Shang Wei, *ibid.* Also refer to Bai Qianshen's 白謙慎 discussion on the new trend in late-Ming calligraphy in relation to contemporary reading habit, see Bai, "Tsa-shu juan-ts'e han Wan-Ming wen-hua sheng-huo 雜書卷冊與晚明文化生活", in *2000 nien shu-fa lun-wen hsu-an-ji* 2000 年書法論文選集, (Taipei: Hui-feng T'ang 蕙風堂, 2000), pp. 129—152.

distracted from the main text since, although they were only added for fun, the short texts in subsidiary rows might continually attract the readers' attention. Such collections of diverse texts tended to be read for amusement. With the multiple-row layout, it seemed impossible to focus entirely on the main dramatic texts. The reader's experience of literary miscellanies is inevitably fragmented and less serious, therefore.²⁵

In conclusion, when watching stage performances or reading printed texts of the play, late-Ming audiences were not required to closely follow the plot. They could give more attention to how actors sang the arias, or the ways in which commentators interpreted the texts. The narrative aspects of the text were no longer the main focus of the play. Since the experience of watching a performance or reading a book was often fragmented, this paved the way for new approaches to matching images and texts.

The TCK Edition as a Collection of Poetic Pictures

After discussing image-text relationships in the TCK edition in the context of late-Ming print culture, it is worth taking a look at the process of image-making.

There are ten images of beautiful women and ten non-figural images in the TCK edition. A closer observation of the non-figural images reveals that at least eight were appropriated from different volumes of the *Ten Bamboo Studio Collection of Calligraphy and*

²⁵ Most of the dramatic miscellanies appear to have been published in the Fukien region, and tended to be publications for the public. Though the target readers of this genre might be different from those of the commented editions of *The Western Wing*, they all point to a common habit of reading fragmented texts.

Painting 十竹齋書畫譜 printed between 1619 and 1627.²⁶ The *Ten Bamboo Studio*

Collection of Calligraphy and Painting was printed in multiple colors with exquisite multiple-block technique in order to imitate the effects of paintings. In the TCK edition, they were transformed into black-and-white images, however. The eighth picture (fig. 6), for example, was borrowed from a volume of calligraphy and painting originally painted by Wei Chih-k'uei 魏之克 (fig. 16). The composition of both is identical, even the brushstrokes depicting the petals and the edge of the leaves that have been eaten by worms have been reproduced. In the later version, however, the designer has changed the colors, and added the inscription and the signature of another painter, Sun Chuang 孫狀.

The portrait of Ying-ying (fig. 1) was appropriated from the Chang Shen-chih 張深之 edition printed in the same area just one year earlier (fig. 17). Although, as yet, it has not been possible to find the direct sources for these “images of beauty,” it was common to see representations of females participating in various activities in printed books, such as *The Hundred Beauties in Nanking* 金陵百媚. It is most likely that the designer tried to match the segments of texts and the contemporary visual repertoire available to him. While organizing the pairings, the availability of images was perhaps more important than the significance of the quotations drawn from the dramatic texts.

²⁶ For the publication and nature of this book, please see Ma Meng-ching 馬孟晶, “Printing for the Literati: Hu Cheng-yen’s Publishing Strategies for a Specialized Market”, *New History* 10: 3, (1999, 9), pp. 1—54; Ma Meng-ching “Learning from Prints and Painting: The Multiple Characteristics of *The Ten Bamboo Studio Collection of Calligraphy and Painting*”, *The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly* 18: 1, (Autumn 2000), pp. 109—149.

Each image was reattributed to a contemporary painter such as Ch'en Hung-shou 陳洪綬(1599–1652), Lu Che 陸喆, and Chu Ying 朱英, *etc.*²⁷ The inscriptions on the pages were written in a variety of calligraphic styles. The format of these images looks like that of the “poetic pictures” mentioned above (fig. 11), therefore. They might even have been meant as reproductions of the paintings, just as in the *Ten Bamboo Studio Collection of Calligraphy and Painting*. The images can thus be viewed as a collection of “poetic pictures” appropriated from various visual sources, further modified to fit the segments of texts. It was the development of text fragmentation, and the growing interest in representing images in imitation of painterly quality that together led to the divorce of image from narrative as found in the TCK edition. It also reveals that the emphasis on visuality ultimately surpassed the need to illustrate the narrative in the late Ming.

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²⁷ Though the appearance of the main figure is not identical to the original pictures, there are not significant differences in the styles of images. All were engraved by the famous carver Hsiang Nan-chou 項南洲. It is possible that the styles were unified during the process of engraving and printing.

Illustrations:

Fig. 1



Fig. 2

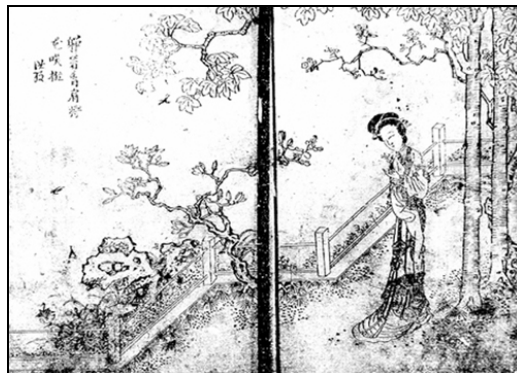


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

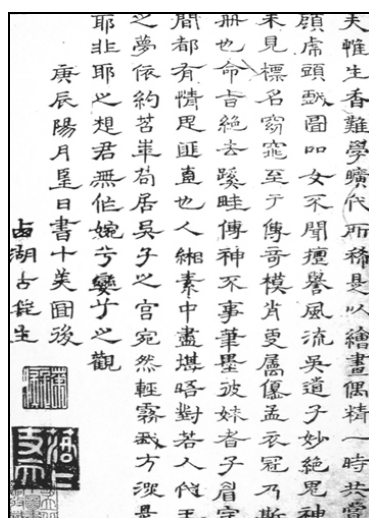


Fig. 5



Fig. 6

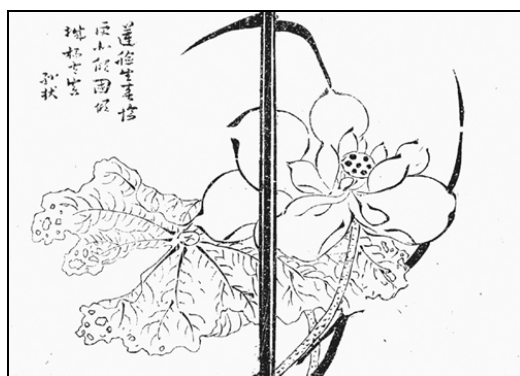


Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

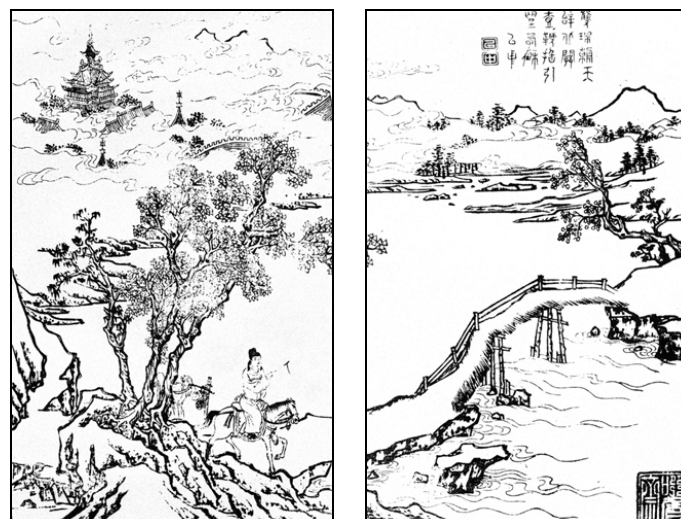


Fig. 10

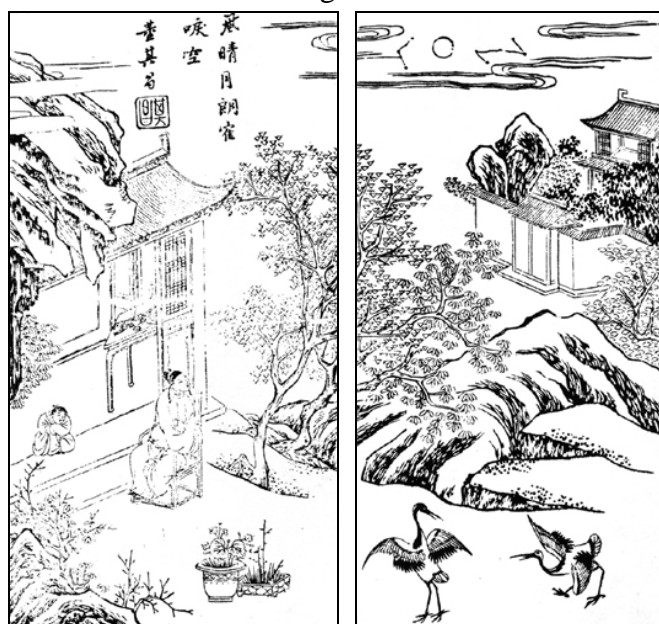


Fig. 11



Fig. 12

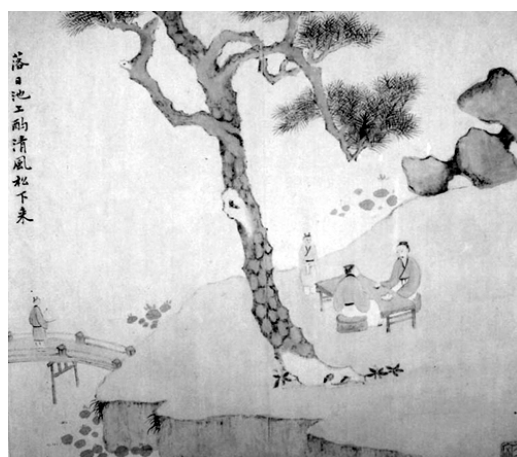


Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17

