

ILLUSTRATIONS OF "ROMANCE OF THE WESTERN CHAMBER" ON CHINESE PORCELAINS:
Iconography, Style, and Development

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ILLUSTRATIONS OF ROMANCE OF THE WESTERN CHAMBER ON CHINESE PORCELAINS

Iconography, Style, and Development

Abstract

Scenes from *Romance of the Western Chamber* have decorated Chinese porcelain from the thirteenth into the twenty-first century. This research compares and contrasts porcelain decoration with the formal and stylistic development of this romantic tale in literature, performances, and artistic media of paintings and woodblock prints. It identifies and explicates numerous subjects of porcelain decoration that previously have not been well understood. It also verifies some characteristic features of porcelain decoration from different periods and considers the dating of porcelains from the late Ming and into the early Qing dynasty. By examining selected scenes from *Romance of the Western Chamber*, this study offers a better understanding of the history of Chinese porcelain decoration as well as characteristics of Chinese narrative art as a whole.

LITERATURE HAS BEEN A VERY IMPORTANT SOURCE of inspiration for the creation of Chinese art since the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). Among the literary works that were influential in later Chinese art is *Romance of the Western Chamber* (*Xixiangji* 西廂記, also translated as *Story of the Western Wing*; hereafter cited as *Western Chamber*), a tale that originated in the Tang dynasty (618–907) and evolved into a popular drama in the thirteenth century. Frequently used as a subject in the visual arts, it has attracted the attention of painters and decorators in different schools and media since the Song dynasty (960–1279). The most well known works among these are the forty various editions of woodblock prints of the *Western Chamber* that were published in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) and contain some of the most innovative and exquisite illustrations produced in China.¹

Themes from this romance also became one of the most fascinating and popular sources of decorative motifs on Chinese porcelains in the Ming and into the Qing dynasty (1644–1911).² While most studies on this subject have focused on porcelains of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, those of other periods have been largely overlooked and neglected. Although many decorative scenes from the story have been recognized on porcelains, some motifs still remain unstudied. In addition, many questions and problems concerning the iconography of scenes with regard to their identification, interpretation, and chronology of appearance on porcelains also are unsolved and require further examination and clarification. The present study will focus on how this romance was illustrated on Chinese porcelain and will help to develop a better understanding of certain salient features of porcelain decoration and to serve as a reference for further research on Chinese narrative art.

Following a brief introduction to the *Western Chamber*, the discussion in the present study is divided into six parts.

- I. The emergence of new images of women in Chinese porcelain decoration, including their identification and styles.
- II. The shift in emphasis from “beautiful women” to “major scenes” in the Ming dynasty.
- III. The formation of new fashions in porcelain decoration from the Shunzhi 順治 (1644–1661) to Kangxi 康熙 (1661–1722) periods.
- IV. The influence of performances and local dramas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- V. The participation of professional painters in the creation of “art pottery” in the modern period.
- VI. Trading in forgeries and the phenomena of studio pottery.

The research compares and contrasts porcelain decoration to the development of this drama in literature, other performance media, woodblock prints, and paintings. The present study identifies and interprets major decorative scenes, analyzes the styles and sources of the images, and treats the problem of dating Chinese porcelains from the so-called Transitional Period. In other words, it uses the *Western Chamber* as the focal point of investigation and attempts to understand the impact of this literary work on the art of Chinese ceramic decoration. It looks at how the changing choices of artisans in scenes, themes, iconography, and style reveal a clear evolution paralleling that of the literary work itself as well as artistic fashions. Thus, the study explores the complicated phenomenon of how porcelain decoration reflected changing literary conditions and artistic styles, yet it also retained its own characteristics throughout the centuries.

Introduction to *Romance of the Western Chamber*

The *Romance of the Western Chamber* is considered to be “China’s most popular love comedy” and “at the same time highly popular as reading matter.”³ The content of the story was formulated over a long period of time, and its literary style evolved through many different forms before it was finally written down as a drama in the thirteenth century. This story originated from a piece of short prose fiction titled *Yingying zhuan* 鶯鶯傳 (The Story of Yingying [Little Oriole]) written by the Tang-dynasty poet Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779–831). It relates the tragic love affair between a young scholar, Zhang Sheng 張生 (“Student Zhang”), and the beautiful young lady Yingying 鶯鶯. Both characters reside at the Pujiu 普救 (“Universal Salvation”) Temple near the Tang-dynasty capital of Chang’an.⁴ In the

story, Zhang Sheng abandons his lover once he passes the official examinations in the capital.

The *Story of Yingying* is a complicated love story that provokes different ways of interpretation. Stephen Owen, for example, points out that it is difficult to read the story without taking sides, or at least without deciding which side the story really takes.⁵ Some scholars also accept that it is an autobiographical work of the author Yuan Zhen. Others, however, think that such an interpretation ignores the values inherent in Tang love stories, which were as or more powerful than the Confucian pieties by which Zhang excuses his actions at the end of the story. In any case, if it is not an actual biography, it is a recreation with psychological verisimilitude unparalleled in its time.

The story circulated widely during the Tang and Song dynasties, when it was a popular subject in poetry.⁶ Many of these poems were the lyrics to musicals and dance performances in public houses. During the Southern Song era (1127–1279) and the occupation of northern China under the Jin dynasty (1115–1234), Yingying's story was adapted for the stage in the form of *zaju* 雜劇 (“miscellaneous play”), a style of drama that further developed and reached its golden age in the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368).⁷ Song scholars, however, saw the story differently from their Tang predecessors; instead of articulating social mores, they held a sympathetic view of Yingying as a tragic victim of love.

During the Jin dynasty, a scholar by the name Dong Jieyuan 董解元 (“Master Dong”) enlarged and enriched the *Story of Yingying* into the popular “storytelling text” (*shuoshu huaben* 說書話本) format. His *Xixiangji zhugongdiao* 西廂記諸宮調 (*Medley of Romance of the Western Chamber*) was written in a mixture of vernacular dialogue, classical verse, and prose.⁸ Dong's version, also known as *Master Dong's Western Chamber Romance* (*Dong Xixiang* 董西廂), is the sole “storytelling text” that has survived in its entirety. In the book, Dong Jieyuan uses many literary devices and innovations of plot and character to create and enrich the *Story of Yingying*. More significantly, he also converted the tragic ending of the original story to a happy one with the marriage of Zhang Sheng and Yingying.

In the Yuan dynasty, Wang Shifu 王實甫 (active 1295–1307) expanded Dong's text into a play with five parts, each containing four acts. With a total of twenty acts (some editions divide the text into twenty-one or twenty-two acts), it forms the longest *zaju* of that period.⁹ In this play, Zhang Sheng is a poor but aspiring scholar, while Yingying is the daughter of a former Tang-dynasty prime minister. On his way to the capital to take the civil service examination, Zhang Sheng stops at the Pujiu Temple where Yingying and her mother also happen to be staying. There, he catches sight of Yingying and instantly loses his heart to her. During an incident in which the temple is attacked by a fierce local warlord known as “Sun, the Flying

Tiger” (Sun Feihu 孫飛虎), Zhang Sheng proves himself worthy by resolving the crisis and saving Yingying from being abducted by the warlord. To Zhang’s dismay, Madame Cui (Yingying’s mother) later breaks her original promise of giving Yingying’s hand to him in marriage as a reward for his heroism. Yingying’s maid Hongniang 紅娘 (“Crimson Maiden”) sympathizes with the two young lovers and acts as a go-between, sending letters and arranging a rendezvous for them. When Madame Cui discovers their secret love affair, she demands Zhang pass the government examination in the capital as a condition for her approval to marry Yingying. Eventually, all is well. Zhang Sheng passes the examination, is appointed to high office in the imperial government, and marries Yingying. The central message of this play thus became “Let all lovers in the world be united as husband and wife” (願天下有情人皆成眷屬), which is written as the last line in the text. This suggests the main concern of the play was the right of young people to choose their own mate, instead of being forced into arranged marriages.

Wang’s drama represents the final development of Yingying’s story and is the standard version of the romance that most people know today. In order to distinguish this Yuan version from the Dong Jieyuan one, it is sometimes called *Wang Xixiang* 王西廂 (Master Wang’s Western Chamber Romance). It is also called *Bei Xixiang ji* 北西廂記 (Northern Version of Romance of the Western Chamber), as it was written in the style of *beiqu* 北曲 (“Northern Drama”) popular during the Yuan dynasty, in contrast to what was popular in the southern part of China (*nanqu* 南曲, or “Southern Drama”) later in the Ming dynasty.

Even though the *Western Chamber* enjoyed tremendous popularity during the Ming and Qing dynasties, it was frequently banned from the stage and publishing houses by the government because of its provocative views and descriptions of physical love.¹⁰ Today, the *Western Chamber* is highly regarded as one of the best and most important literary works in Chinese history. Its dramatic content, vivid and lively use of dialogue, rational and well-structured composition, and use of elegant and descriptive poetry and prose make it a dramatic masterpiece surpassed by few others.

I. The Emergence of New Female Images on Porcelains: Identification and Styles

In the history of Chinese porcelain decoration, figural subjects developed significantly later than plant or animal motifs. Most figural images on early Chinese porcelains are of religious men, mythical characters, or children of auspicious connotation.¹¹ It was not until the Song dynasty that imagery with literary and historical content became more common and that images of women related to them began to appear, mainly on Cizhou 磁州 pillows. In the early development of Chinese figure

painting, moral and didactic values were emphasized, so most female figures were in the *lienü* 烈女 (“Exemplary Women”) category. During the mid-Tang period, an interest in daily life generated the new category of *shinü hua* 仕女畫 (“Paintings of Beautiful Women”).¹² This subject in painting had a substantial influence and was utilized as a decorative motif on all manners of Chinese art objects. The following shows how early representations of scenes from the *Western Chamber* developed into porcelain decoration. It began, for example, by focusing on the female figure type of *shinü* 仕女 (Beautiful Women), but instead of depicting women as submissive, demure, and unassertive, as commonly seen in Chinese paintings,¹³ the female images from this drama were depicted on porcelains as more independent and self-assertive. They are the heroines in literature where “love” is the sole subject and central theme.

In the history of disseminating the *Western Chamber*, the story was already widely known among scholars and entertainers in the Song dynasty. Furthermore, commoners became familiar with it through stage performances and poems written as lyrics intended for musical and dance performances in public playhouses. From existing titles of Song-dynasty *zaju*, we also know that *Romance of the Western Chamber* had already been adapted as a play based on the story.¹⁴

Similarly, in northern China during the Jin dynasty, Yingying’s story was also much enjoyed. This is verified by the discovery in the ruins of Pujiu Temple of a stone slab inscribed with a poem dedicated to the memory of Yingying.¹⁵ The poem was written by the Jin scholar-official Wang Zhongtong 王仲通 around 1170. This was thirty years before the stone slab was erected and about twenty years before Master Dong’s version of the *Western Chamber* was published (circa 1190–1208). This slab thus confirms the popularity of Yingying’s story before Wang Shifu wrote his *Western Chamber* in the Yuan dynasty.

During this era, the adaptation of scenes from the story into visual art forms was also popular. Records of Yingying’s “portrait” and illustrations of her story by Song and Yuan painters are found in texts and in woodblock prints of the Ming and Qing periods.¹⁶ Given these circumstances, it is not surprising to find that porcelains were also decorated with scenes from this story. “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense” and “Hongniang in the Dock,” for example, are two scenes that can be found on porcelains of the Jin and Yuan dynasties. Their iconography and evolution of styles deserve further attention and examination.

1. “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense”

The earliest example of a piece of porcelain decorated with a scene from this story is a Cizhou pillow dating to the thirteenth century during the Jin dynasty (fig. 1).¹⁷ The flat top of this oblong pillow, enclosed in a cloud-shaped frame, is painted with a scene that can be identified as Yingying burning nighttime incense in a garden.



1

1
Stoneware pillow decorated with “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense,” Jin dynasty (1115–1234), Cizhou ware, 13.7 x 17.4 x 29.8 cm. Shanghai Museum. From *Treasures from the Shanghai Museum: 6000 Years of Chinese Art* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1983), pl. 87.



2

2
“Yingying burning nighttime incense,” woodblock print illustration, from *Xinkan yaomu guanchang zhuoqi fengyue jinnang zhengza liangke quanji*, published in 1533, Ming dynasty. Real Bibliotheca de San Lorenzo del Escorial, Spain. From *Shangben xiqu congkan*, vol. IV (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1987).

According to *Master Dong’s Western Chamber*, one night Zhang Sheng secretly watches Yingying as she burns nighttime incense in the garden. He suddenly begins to chant verses to her, to which she promptly chants in response. In the verse, Zhang expresses his love for her, and she in turn implies her acceptance of him as a suitor. In the text is a prose section that vividly describes Yingying’s lovely appearance when she performs the ceremony of burning incense. She is described as wearing “a tight-fitting jacket setting her shapely figure to advantage. Again and again, she bowed to the moon.”¹⁸ On the pillow, in a simple and spacious composition, Yingying is seen dressed up and standing behind an incense table in the garden, accompanied by her maid Hongniang. This scene well fits the description in the text.

To confirm the identification of this subject,¹⁹ it is useful to compare it to the woodblock print illustration of the *Western Chamber* in the anthology of act-plays *Xinkan yaomu guanchang zhuoqi fengyue jinnang zhengza liangke quanji* 新刊耀目冠場擢奇風月錦囊正雜兩科全集 (Complete works of the newly printed, eye-catching, best, extracted marvels of wise counsel to amorous affairs), published in 1533 (fig. 2).²⁰ In this illustration and located in the upper register of the page (with the picture above and text below), Yingying stands in a garden that is surrounded by a brick wall. Posed in front of an incense table, she turns back to look at Hongniang. The four-character title *Yingying zhuxiang* 鶯鶯祝香 (“Yingying Burning Incense”) is printed in the top frame to indicate the subject. In addition, a seven-character couplet summarizing the contents appears on both sides of the picture frame. Although there is no inscription of a title for the thirteenth-century Cizhou pillow, similarities in overall composition to the sixteenth-century woodblock print help relate the two and identify the theme of the pillow.

Two works that emerged at a later date, showing Yingying burning nighttime incense, also include inscriptions that specify the theme, thereby helping to identify the subject. The first is the painting *Qianjiu jueyan tu* 千秋絕艷圖 (*Painting of Peerless Beauties in History*) from the late Ming dynasty (fig. 3).²¹ It depicts more than fifty-seven women in different poses or activities, such as standing, sitting, dancing, and playing musical instruments. These women are either histori-



3

3
Detail of *Qianjiu jueyan tu*, late Ming dynasty (1368–1644), handscroll, ink, and color on silk, 29.5 x 667.5 cm. Museum of Chinese History. From Meng-ching Ma, “Linking Poetry, Painting, and Prints: The Mode of Poetic Pictures in Late Ming Illustrations to the Story of the Western Wing,” *International Journal of Asian Studies* 5, no. 1 (2008).



4

4
Polychrome vase decorated with “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense,” Qing dynasty, ca. 19th century, 15 x 6 cm. From E. A. Strehlnee, *Guyuexuan mingci* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 1930; repr., 1998).



5

5
Blue-and-white vase decorated with “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense,” Yuan dynasty, 1320–50, H. 35.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, no. C8-1952. From Saitoku Tarō, “Genda sometsuki kō—Jūyon seiki nakaba no Genseika to Genkyoku,” part 2, *Ko bijutsu* 19 (1967).

cal figures or literary heroines renowned for their beauty as well as their talent. In the paintings, the name of each woman and a poem related to her life are written to one side. Among these figures, Yingying is shown wearing a red garment and standing next to a high incense table; she is preparing for the ceremony of praying to the moon, the same scene previously cited in the Cizhou pillow description.

The scene of Yingying burning incense in a garden, in a composition similar to the painting just mentioned, appears again on an enameled vase of a much later date (fig. 4). This vase is painted with four figural scenes of equal size around the sides; each is in an oblong cloud-shaped panel surrounded by dense, richly colored floral motifs in a Western style. One scene shows Yingying in the garden outside a house with a round window. She is leaning across an incense table and raising one hand in a gesture of praying under a full moon high above. A poem relating to the episode of “Yingying Praying to the Moon” from the romance is inscribed on the vase. This poem carries the signature of Liu Yong 劉壘, a celebrated figure of the Qianlong period (1736–1795).²² Judging from the decorative style and the shape of the vase, however, it is more likely to have been produced in a later period, perhaps in the nineteenth or early twentieth century. In both the above painting and the vase, Yingying appears alone without the company of Hongniang. Nevertheless, these motifs provide further evidence to identify the subject of decoration on the Cizhou piece, thus confirming the longstanding popularity of Yingying in this context.

As seen above, the image of Yingying burning incense in a garden achieved symbolic representation in Chinese art, and it can help identify ceramic decoration devoted to this subject that has been found from the Yuan and early Ming periods. Reflecting the interests of people in the Yuan dynasty, scenes from literature and drama suddenly became fashionable as decorative motifs on so-called Zhizheng type porcelain, the highest quality blue-and-white porcelain produced during the Zhizheng 至正 period (1341–1367).²³ In this type of porcelain are two pieces that depict Yingying burning incense in a garden. One is a bulging jar, and the other is a vase traditionally called a *meiping* 梅瓶 (“plum-blossom vase”) (fig. 5).²⁴ On both the jar and the vase, Yingying stands alone in the garden in front of an incense



6

Blue-and-white plate decorated with “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense,” Ming dynasty. Hongzhi period (1488–1505), H. 3 cm, D. 12 cm. Jingdezhen Ceramic Museum. From *Jingdezhen minjian qinghua ciqi* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988), pl. 76.

table. Opinions differ about the theme on this *meiping* vase. Saitoku Tarô 齋藤菊太郎, for example, identifies the theme with the *Western Chamber*, based on studies of the decorative motifs and the characters written on the vase.²⁵ Although Craig Clunas accepts this assertion, both Liu Liangyou 劉良佑 and Ni Yibin 倪亦斌 disagree with him.²⁶ Based on the comparison above, as well as further analysis of the decoration on the other side of the vase below, I am convinced that its decoration is indeed from the *Western Chamber* story.

In the mid-Ming period, after an apparent hiatus, the scene of Yingying burning incense reemerged as a form of decoration on porcelain, and this coincides with the increase in figural scenes on porcelains at the time. This could perhaps be due to the fact that cobalt blue was then of better quality and thus more suitable for painting figural subjects.²⁷ At that time, the Yingying scene seems to have become a favored motif and can be seen, for instance, on a drum-shaped blue-and-white censer of the Tianshun 天順 (1457–1464) to Chenghua 成化 (1465–1488) periods, as well as on two blue-and-white plates of the Jingtai 景泰 (1450–1457) and Hongzhi 弘治 (1488–1505) reigns, respectively (fig. 6).²⁸ Compared to porcelains of the Yuan dynasty, the quality of those produced in private kilns during the Ming dynasty deteriorated sharply. This was partly due to government restrictions as well as to the establishment of the imperial kiln in Jingdezhen 景德鎮, where most of the skilled potters would have been summoned to work.²⁹ These Ming pieces are in sharp contrast to the refined and vigorous style of the Yuan dynasty. The decorations on this group of porcelains appear simple and crude, yet the interpretation is still quite vivid and expressive. For example, on the Hongzhi plate, the decoration is free and spontaneous, with flowing lines comparable to those in cursive script calligraphy (fig. 6). Landscape elements in the decoration tend to be quite exaggerated, painted in an abstract, unrecognizable, and sometimes upside-down manner, yet exuding a sense of flow and freedom.

After the mid-Ming period, decorations on porcelains with the subject of “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense” seem to decline in popularity as new modes of representation emerged under the influence of contemporary wood-block print illustrations. Instead of depicting Yingying burning incense alone or being accompanied by Hongniang, these new scenes include Zhang Sheng in the composition, as the emphasis apparently shifted from the theme of “Yingying burning incense” to “Zhang Sheng chanting a poem and Yingying responding.”³⁰ Where similar motifs are found, the representations are so ambiguous that it is hard to attribute them to any particular story. I posit that they are more likely related to literary works other than the *Western Chamber*, since the theme of burning nighttime incense had become common in many new dramas of the late Ming period.³¹



7

Blue-and-white vase decorated with “Hongniang in the Dock” (other side of fig. 5), Yuan dynasty, 1320–50, H. 35.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, no. C8-1952. From Saitoku Tarô, “Genda sometsuki kô—Jûyon seiki nakaba no Genseika to Genkyoku,” part 2, *Ko bijutsu* 19 (1967).

During the Xuande 宣德 (1426–1435) and Chenghua (1465–1487) periods, many new scenes of women burning nighttime incense in a garden setting can be found on porcelains, but these may include the celestial lovers *niulang zhinü* 牛郎織女 (“Cowherd and Weaving Maiden”) of folklore.³² According to Chinese legend, these two lovers are separated by the Emperor of the Heavens, who allows them to meet only once a year on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month in what has popularly become known as Chinese Lovers’ Day. This kind of decoration, however, is not to be confused with “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense.” The former usually includes a number of ladies engaging in various activities in addition to burning incense, and it also features symbols of constellations in the sky. The imagery from both stories, however, carries the symbolic meaning of women praying to find a loving husband and nuptial bliss. The theme of Yingying burning nighttime incense, in fact, plays a key role in the development of the story of the *Western Chamber*. It happens twice in the text of Wang’s *Western Chamber*—in part I, act 3 (“A Poem and Its Response”) and in part III, act 3 (“Repudiation of the Billet-Doux”). The importance of this theme in the text, as well as its auspicious connotations, thus account for its popularity as a decorative motif on porcelains of the Yuan and Ming dynasties.

2. “Hongniang in the Dock”

A much more vigorous and dramatic scene than burning nighttime incense is found on the other side of the *meiping* vase mentioned above (fig. 7). This scene shows two women standing in a garden; the woman on the left holds a whip, while the other one covers her face with her sleeves in a gesture of weeping. The theme of this decoration can be accepted as “Hongniang in the Dock” from the *Western Chamber* (part IV, act 2). Of all the surviving Yuan dramas, the *Western Chamber* is probably the only one that highlights both a young lady burning incense and a maid being beaten by her old mistress (in separate acts). The difference in appearance between the woman who is elaborately dressed and the maid in much plainer clothing on the other side of the vase is sufficiently clear; they are not to be confused as the same person, as sometimes happens in other Yuan dramas with similar themes.³³

The act of “Hongniang in the Dock” also concerns Madame Cui, who becomes suspicious of her daughter’s behavior and one day strikes the maid Hongniang in order to secure a confession. Having confessed, Hongniang persuades Madame Cui to accept Zhang Sheng as her son-in-law, whereupon Madame Cui decides that Zhang Sheng must first take the imperial examinations and receive an official appointment before he may marry her daughter. Being witty, cunning, and righteous, Hongniang plays a key role in the *Western Chamber*. She not only delivers love letters between Zhang Sheng and Yingying and arranges a rendezvous for



8

8
Blue-and-white dish decorated with
“Hongniang in the Dock,” Diam. 17
cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford,
England, reg. no. EA1978.847. Photo:
Hsu Wen-Chin.



9

9
Woodblock print illustration of
“Hongniang in the Dock,” from *Gelin
shicui*, 1659, Qing dynasty. From Liu
Junxi, ed., *Shanben xiqu congkan*
(Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1984).

them, but she also argues their case to Madame Cui, thus influencing the outcome of the love affair and the ending of the story. For her conduct, Hongniang was later singled out and regarded as the heroine of the story. After the mid-Ming period, when dramatic performances took the form of selected acts from one or various plays instead of one entire play, the act “Hongniang in the Dock” became a favorite. Its popularity increased with time and is still often performed on stage.³⁴ In fact, the name Hongniang has become a synonym in Chinese for a go-between who mediates between men and women for a prospective marriage.

The scene “Hongniang in the Dock” remained a popular decorative theme on Chinese porcelain throughout the Qing dynasty. One such example is a plate that can be dated to the Shunzhi period (fig. 8). The composition is very different from that on the *meiping* vase of the Yuan dynasty and is more faithful to the text of the drama. Instead of placing the figures in a garden with a rock, plants, and a pavilion, this interior scene takes place in a room facing the garden. Madame Cui sits on a stool holding a stick with her son Huanglang 歡郎 standing beside her. Hongniang kneels on the floor in front of Madame Cui, while a hidden Yingying peeps out from behind the screen. A verse of four lines from the play is written on the screen to help identify the subject.

The style and composition of this illustration are comparable to those in the woodblock print of *Gelin shicui* 歌林拾翠 (Selected Examples of Songs and Lyrics), published in the sixteenth year of the Shunzhi period, or 1659 (fig. 9). This woodblock print focuses on a close-up view of the scene inside the building and omits the garden surroundings seen on the dish. Judging from their similarities, it is quite clear that the porcelain decoration is an imitation of the woodblock print, with their mirror-image visual relationship caused by the technique of applying designs on porcelain.³⁵ Their similarity in composition and style not only confirms that the plate was most likely produced around 1659, but it also suggests that its decorative pattern and that on the Yuan dynasty *meiping* vase derive from different sources: the former was copied from a woodblock print, while the latter was likely inspired directly from a stage performance. The former reflects in large part the print designer’s imagination and understanding of the story, while the latter is simple in background and symbolic in posture and gesture, demonstrating elements of Chinese drama.



10

10

"Painting of Meeting a Fairy,"
woodblock print, from *Xixiangji zalu*, 1569, Ming dynasty. From Zheng Zhenduo, ed., *Zhongguo gudai mukehua xuanji* (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1985).

3. Evolution of Styles

Before the late Ming period, the decoration of dramatic scenes on porcelains was mainly drawn from two sources—paintings on silk or paper and performances on stage. It is believed that paintings of popular stories originated in or were inspired by the ancient tradition whereby story narrators held up pictures to the audience during performances in order to enhance their interest.³⁶ Consequently, paintings of scenes from the *Western Chamber* must have been produced for storytellers in the Song and Jin periods, since this story was already very popular at that time. Although no actual paintings on this theme from the period have survived, textual evidence from later periods suggests their existence. One such example that helps to confirm this theory comes from a mid-Ming woodblock print illustration in *Xixiangji zalu* 西廂記雜錄 (*Anthology of Miscellaneous Poems from Romance of the Western Chamber*), published in 1569 (fig. 10).³⁷ The print shows the encounter of Zhang Sheng and Yingying in a garden from part I, act 1 ("Beauty's Enchantment") and is inscribed with the title *Songben huizhentu* 宋本會真圖 ("Song Painting of Meeting a Fairy"), thus attributing the origin of this illustration to a painting from the Song dynasty (when the story of Yingying was also known as *Huizhenji* 會真記, or Romance of Meeting a Fairy). In this print Zhang Sheng is accompanied by a monk and Yingying by Hongniang; the pairs are divided by a garden wall. Although this print is probably a reproduction of the original painting by a Ming painter, it features elements comparable to Song painting and to decoration on Cizhou ware. For example, the method of depicting the scene from an elevated angle, so that the viewer looks down from a higher position, was often used by painters illustrating narrative themes in the Song dynasty. The way figures are depicted in the middle of a wide-open space filled with landscape elements further suggests the importance of landscape in the painting, also an invention of the Song period. Although we cannot know whether this illustration was really executed after a Song-dynasty painting or not, at least it indicates the Ming tradition of attributing this kind of picture to the Song dynasty.

It has been common practice for decorators of Chinese pottery to emulate and copy motifs found in brush painting. This phenomenon is stated and explained by Chen Liu 陳瀏 (1863–1929) in *Taoya* 陶雅 (*Pottery Refinements*) as follows:

Craft decorators were venerated. In the past motifs for embroidery, jade, ceramics, and bronzes were copied from each other, sharing the same patterns.... Furthermore, in order to make their decorations more elaborate, (pottery) decorators carefully imitated [the motifs from] Song and Yuan silk narrative paintings [so that] almost every brush stroke has its source of origin.³⁸

美術尊重畫工，古人錦、玉、瓷、銅，四者迭互臨摹…。踵事增華，精仿宋元絹畫人物故實，幾於筆筆有來歷。

The decoration of the Cizhou pillow shows the characteristics of monochrome painting on paper by the singular use of black and the application of modulating lines of thickness as well as dark and light variations in the strokes themselves. It is therefore reasonable to believe that the pottery painter of the Cizhou pillow was originally inspired by a brush painting of the same subject and attempted to achieve a similar effect. He was thus more likely to have become acquainted with the narrative from a storytelling performance, rather than from a stage play, since the art of drama did not become popular or mature until the Yuan dynasty.

The painting on the Yuan-dynasty *meiping* vase (figs. 5 and 7), however, is markedly different from that on the Cizhou pillow. Figures were painted with pronounced size and more realism, with vivid facial expressions, hairstyles, and costumes presented in great detail. Landscape and architectural elements appear out of proportion and are scattered around the surface in order to fill the space. The drawing on the *meiping* vase is particularly refined and meticulous. The outlines of the images are crisp and clear, with the use of cobalt blue rendering a variety of tones similar to those found in brush painting.

The decorative effect of this vase has been compared to that of a woodblock print, leading to the speculation that a lost illustrated edition of the drama may have directly influenced its decoration.³⁹ Woodblock print illustrations of dramas were rare in the Yuan dynasty, however, and they did not become popular until the late Ming period.⁴⁰ Illustrated books from the Yuan dynasty, as is now known, belonged to the category of *pinghua* 平話, or “narrative fiction.” These are texts for storytelling in which similar compositions have been found between *pinghua* illustrations and blue-and-white porcelain decorations of the Yuan dynasty,⁴¹ but no comparable scenes from dramas between woodblock print illustrations and Yuan-dynasty porcelain decoration have been found.



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Stoneware pillow, Qingbai, Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), H. 15 cm, L. 22 cm. Fengcheng Museum collection. From *Zhongguo taoci quanji—Yuan*, vol. 2 (Taipei: Jingnian guoji gongsi, 2000), pl. 6.

Although the manner of handling rocks and plants is similar to those in the wood-block prints, the meticulous drawing of the figures is not. Therefore, I would suggest that the landscape elements and the figures were painted by different decorators. While the figures were executed by a decorator directly inspired by the stage performance, the landscape elements were done by a specialist in landscape decoration and were drawn from an existing repertoire. The division of labor, still in existence today, has been common practice in the Chinese porcelain industry since early times.⁴²

The Yuan dynasty witnessed the golden age of Chinese drama, during which plays were commonly performed throughout the country. The fact that potters in Jingdezhen were familiar with contemporary dramas can be determined from several pillows of *qingbai* 青白 (shadow-white) ware made in Jingdezhen at this time (fig. 11).⁴³ These pillows are in the shape of a theater with concave tops. They were produced in such a careful and detailed manner that not only are the graceful floral and scroll patterns of the theater windows, trellis, and stage curtains visible but so are the vivid expressions and gestures of the actors themselves. In the pillow illustrated here, four consecutive scenes, probably from *Baishezhuàn* 白蛇傳 (*The Story of White Snake*), are presented one on each side of the pillow, respectively, and were executed mainly by molding and carving techniques.⁴⁴

The presentation of multiple scenes from one story on a single piece of porcelain, side by side, was very likely a new device developed in the Yuan dynasty, and this kind of design can also be seen in the *meiping* vase decorated with “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense” and “Hongniang in the Dock.” On this vase, these two scenes are depicted in gardens full of plants, where architectural features are used as part of the setting and to separate the scenes. This presents a new Yuan decorative technique to display multiple scenes from a given drama on a single piece of porcelain. It is believed that this kind of design was very likely inspired and influenced by the newly popular style and technique of writing dramas in the Yuan dynasty, when dramas were divided into parts and acts that could be performed complete or as specific selected acts.⁴⁵

A Yuan-dynasty mural painting discovered in Yuncheng 運城, Shanxi province, is also a valuable document for understanding how plays were performed during



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Play performance, mural painting, Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), Yuncheng, Shanxi province. From Liu Yanjun, *Tushuo Zhongguo xiqushi* (Taipei: Yangzhi wenhua gongsi, 2003), p. 78.

that period (fig. 12).⁴⁶ This painting shows an outdoor performance with actors and an actress standing side by side, facing the audience. There is no background for this performance except in the far distance, where above the heads of the figures are simple drawings of plants and vase-shaped images. Similarities in the arrangement of figures in this mural painting and in the decoration of “Hongniang in the Dock” on the Yuan vase suggest that the latter emulates an outdoor performance. The frontal position of the figures and their articulated gestures link them to the theatricality of a stage performance.

An intriguing question is, Who painted these groups of porcelains decorated with dramatic scenes? The consensus is that they were not ordinary artisans but were well-trained painters who, owing to the social crisis and disturbances brought by Mongol rule in China, were forced to seek shelter in Jingdezhen and work there as porcelain decorators.⁴⁷ Furthermore, it is even possible that some were Southern Song court painters who were forced to work as professional artisans in the marketplace or in handicraft industries when the imperial Southern Song painting academy was dissolved during the Yuan dynasty. This theory becomes relevant when the refined and realistic style of porcelain drawings is compared to that on the Song-dynasty Cizhou pillow that shows the influence of Song court painting (fig. 13). Both are painted with delicate and refined lines as well as with a detailed and realistic drawing of the figures. The Cizhou pillow, however, is painted using the *baimiao* 白描 (line drawing) technique popular in Song literati painting, while the latter shows a gradation of pigment and tone. The posture and gesture of the boy holding a whip while looking to the right demonstrate similarities to those of Madame Cui on the *meiping* vase, therefore suggesting a connection in decoration between these two porcelains.

The style of painting changed in the early and middle Ming period. In the beginning was a revival of Southern Song court painting, but soon a loose and unrestrained style of drawing prevailed. This style pertains in particular to Zhe school paintings of the mid-Ming period, such as those by Wu Wei 吳偉 (1459–1508) and Jiang Song 蔣嵩 (circa after 1475–before 1565), who was active in Hangzhou 杭州, Zhejiang. The drawing on the Hongzhi dish (fig. 6) shows the rough and sketchy style of painting that was prevalent at the Zhe school during that time (fig. 14).

In the late Ming period, the industry of woodblock print illustrations reached its golden age; almost every literary work published contained illustrations. Well-known painters teamed up with skilled woodblock carving masters in Huizhou 徽州, Nanjing 南京, Suzhou 蘇州, Hangzhou, and Wuxing 吳興 (locations in the southern Yangzi River area) and produced many woodblock prints that have



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Pillow, Cizhou ware, 12th–13th century, late Northern Song–Jing dynasty (960–1234), H. 10.2 cm, L. 28.6 cm. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, Metropolitan Museum of Art collection (Image © Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resources, ART 400686).



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Zhang Lu (1464–1538), “A Fairy Playing Flute,” Ming dynasty, hanging scroll, monochrome ink on silk, 141.3 x 91.8 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. Photo: National Palace Museum, Beijing.

become distinguished as the most creative and exquisite in the history of this art-form.⁴⁸ Woodblock print illustrations were taken as models for porcelain decoration because of their general availability. This resulted in the similarity in subject and style between the two kinds of art in the late Ming and Shunzhi period. The plate “Hongniang in the Dock” mentioned earlier (fig. 8) is an example of such a phenomenon. The woodblock illustration of the same theme in *Gelin shicui* (fig. 9) is also based on *Bei Xixiangji* published by Wanhuxuan 玩虎軒 (Playful Tiger Studio) in Huizhou around 1597 (hereafter cited as the *Wanhuxuan* edition). Illustrations in this book were by a master painter in this profession, Wang Geng 汪耕 (circa 1572–1662). Therefore, the decoration on the Shunzhi plate imitating the *Wanhuxuan* illustration reflects the graceful style of woodblock prints in the Huizhou school (*Huipai* 徽派), which was popular in the late Ming period and had by that time reached unrivalled excellence in terms of quality.⁴⁹

II. From “Beautiful Women” to “Major Scenes” in the Ming Dynasty

After the fall of the Yuan dynasty in 1368, management of the porcelain industry in Jingdezhen and the development of Chinese drama changed significantly, and this affected the application of drama scenes on porcelain. In the early Ming dynasty, the government set up imperial kilns in Jingdezhen and implemented restrictive controls over the kinds of porcelain produced, whether for imperial or civilian use.⁵⁰ During the Jiajing period 嘉靖 (1522–1560), government restrictions eased, and as a result, the difference in decoration and quality between imperial and civilian wares became blurred. This situation was mainly due to the introduction of a new government system of manufacturing imperial wares in private kilns, called *guanda minshao* 官搭民燒 (private firing of official [wares]).⁵¹ Under this system, a number of civilian kilns were subcontracted by the Jingdezhen imperial kilns to assist in the production of official porcelains. Because the court often placed enormous rush orders, the official kilns had no choice but to allocate part of the workload to local civilian kilns as a way to fulfill

the demand. This system continued into the Qing dynasty and was an important factor in raising the status of private kilns and improving the quality of their products, which had a profound influence on the stylistic developments of both imperial and private wares.

During the Hongwu 洪武 (1368–1398) era, the government announced restrictions on the kinds of decoration and motifs that porcelain painters were allowed to use. The government simultaneously imposed censorship on plays, printed books, and paintings that were considered improper.⁵² As a result, few figural scenes appear on porcelains of the early Ming period (late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries). From the Jiajing period onward, however, representations of such scenes with narrative content on porcelains once again became popular, reaching a climax in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. This phenomenon was very likely caused by the easing of government controls, as well as the rising number of civilian kilns in Jingdezhen due to increased demand from both domestic and foreign markets. Narrative motifs were also popular mainly among commoners.

In the Ming dynasty, the Northern type of drama popular in the Yuan dynasty, *zaju*, declined as *chuanqi* 傳奇 (“Transmission of the Strange”), also called *nanqu* (Southern Drama)—a type of drama popular in southern China with humble origins and a coarser dramatic style—became fashionable. In the sixteenth century *chuanqi* was bolstered by the introduction of an innovative style of singing. This new type of *chuanqi*, called *kunqu* 崑曲 (Kunshan Opera), had attained full maturity by the second half of the sixteenth century and became the principal literary genre until the mid-Qing dynasty. *Zaju*, however, was far from forgotten. During the last fifty years of the Ming dynasty—from the Wanli 萬曆 (1573–1620), Tianqi 天啓 (1621–1627), and Chongzhen 崇禎 (1628–1644) periods—interest in *zaju* was revived, and many anthologies of Yuan *zaju* were reprinted between 1599 and 1632.

In the Ming dynasty, the *Western Chamber* was revised and adapted into Southern Drama and Kunshan Opera to suit contemporary taste and to promote its performance. Among numerous revisions of this drama was *Nan Xixiangji* 南西廂記 (Southern Version of *Romance of the Western Chamber*), written by Li Rihua 李日華 (active 1522) in the early sixteenth century. It was the most successful revision, and therefore it became the most popular one for performing on stage.⁵³ In the meantime, the *Western Chamber* became a reading text for the literate populace, resulting in 110 editions of the play being published (68 new editions, 39 republications, and 3 editions in the form of aria scripts, or *qupu* 曲譜). It became the undisputed best seller of the time, as verified in the saying, “Only the books of Confucius can rival it in the number of editions.”⁵⁴ Most of these editions contain woodblock print illustrations and were published in the late Ming dynasty from the Wanli to

Chongzhen eras, just as the thriving woodblock industry was reaching its golden age.⁵⁵ Due to woodblock prints being commonly used as models for other media, they had a tremendous impact on porcelain decoration both in terms of subject and style (with one example being “Hongniang in the Dock” on the Shunzhi plate [figs. 8 and 9]).

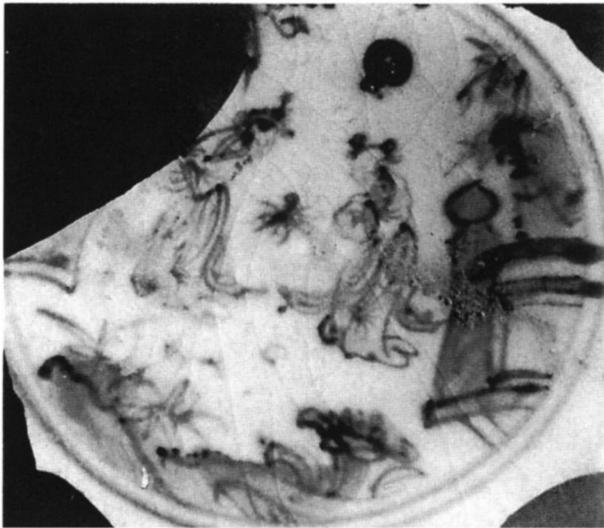
Early editions of the *Western Chamber* before the Wanli period are illustrated with the text above and the picture below. Therefore, the whole text is fully illustrated with pictures running through the top quarter of each page. Early in the Wanli period, however, a new mode of assigning one picture to each act became a standard practice. Illustrations were taken from the subtitle verses of each act and were printed on one full page or on two facing pages.⁵⁶ Therefore, ten- or twenty-picture formats became common in many instances. With this shift in focus on the climax of the episodes within each individual act, the subjects of the illustrations became fixed to selected moments of the play instead of covering the content of the whole text, as was possible to do with the method of text above and picture below. This change in illustration preference affected porcelain decoration as well and marked a division between porcelains produced before and after the Wanli period. Here, porcelains decorated with *Western Chamber* scenes are examined in two groups: those produced before the end of the Jiajing period, and those after the beginning of the Wanli period.

1. Scenes Related to “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense”

Before the sixteenth century, figures were not a favored decoration for porcelains, so pieces with *Western Chamber* subject matter are relatively rare. In my opinion, by that time only about three motifs can be attributed with certainty to this drama before the end of the Jiajing period. They are “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense,” “Yingying Calling Hongniang to Burn Nighttime Incense” (part III, act 3), and “Zhang Sheng Greeting Yingying and Hongniang in the Garden” (part I, act 3).⁵⁷ Coincidentally, all three relate to the theme of burning nighttime incense.

“Yingying Calling Hongniang to Burn Nighttime Incense”

The scene that could be identified as “Yingying Calling Hongniang to Burn Nighttime Incense” is found on several examples of blue-and-white porcelain of the Jingtai and Hongzhi periods (figs. 15 and 16), exemplifying its popularity as a decorative motif at that time. Comparing these to the woodblock print in *Xinkan qimiao quanxiang zhushi Xixiangji* 新刊奇妙全像註釋西廂記 (A Newly Cut, Deluxe, Completely Illustrated and Annotated *Romance of the Western Chamber*) published in 1498 during the Hongzhi period (hereafter cited as the 1498 edition)



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Blue-and-white porcelain fragment, Ming dynasty, 1450–57. From Xiong Liao, ed., *Zhongguo lidai qinghua huadian* (Hangzhou: Zhongguo meishu xueyuan, 1995).



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Blue-and-white plate, Ming dynasty, 1488–1505, D. 21 cm. From Lary Gotuaco et al., *Chinese and Vietnamese Blue and White Wares Found in the Philippines* (Makati City, Philippines: Bookmark, 1997), 139.



17
Woodblock print illustration of “Yingying Calling Hongniang to Burn Nighttime Incense in the Garden,” from *Xinkan qimiao quanxiang zhushi Xixiangji*, Ming dynasty, 1498. Beijing Library. From *Xixiangji zaju* (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1961).

helps to identify the subject as from part III, act 3 (“Repudiation of the Billet-Doux”).⁵⁸ In the previous act, Yingying sent a letter to Zhang Sheng in which she invites him to meet her at night in the garden. This act describes how, after nightfall, Zhang enters the garden and is unexpectedly reproached by Yingying for not behaving like a scholar. The scene in this woodblock print represents Yingying and Hongniang going to the garden in the very beginning of the act. Following the text, Yingying is dressed up for the occasion.

The composition and poses of the figures in this woodblock print bear a striking resemblance to the porcelain decorations, all of which have the same arrangement of two ladies in an open landscape—the one walking in front (Yingying) turns back to look at the other (Hongniang). The title of “Yingying Calling Hongniang to Burn Nighttime Incense in the Garden” (鶯喚紅花園燒夜香) is inscribed in the cartouche on the right side of the woodblock illustration and helps identify the porcelain decoration (fig. 17). The realistic and observant manner of representation in the woodblock print is closer to that in the fragment from the Jingtai period (fig. 15) than in the Hongzhi plate (fig. 16). The decoration of the latter is freer and more spontaneous, reflecting the style of painting associated with the Zhe school.

After this comparison, it is possible to conclude that the Hongzhi plate decoration is executed in imitation of the Jingtai fragment. The depiction in the latter is realistic and meticulous, while the landscape elements on the Hongzhi plate are distorted and all but unrecognizable. It is a common feature that the copied versions often lose the meaning of the original either by adding unnecessary elements or by being rendered in an abstract and sketchy manner, as seen here. The Jingtai piece was not copied from the 1498 edition, since it was produced at an earlier date. It is possible that a missing illustration produced in or before the Jingtai period might be the common source for both works, as they are almost identical in composition and similar in style.



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Interior of a bowl painted in enamels, Ming dynasty, mark and reign of Jiajing period (1522–66), D. 32.1 cm. Baur Foundation, Museum of Far Eastern Art, Geneva, no. inv. CB.CC.1993.356. From John Ayers, *Chinese Ceramics in the Baur Collection*, vol. 1 (Geneva: Baur Collection, 1999).



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“Zhang Sheng Greeting Yingying and Hongniang in the Garden,” woodblock print illustration in *Xinkan qimiao quanxiang zhushi Xixiangji*, Ming dynasty, 1498. Beijing Library. From *Xixiangji zaju* (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1961).

The above shows that during the Jingtai period, woodblock illustrations had not yet become a model for porcelain decoration. Instead, they may have been copied from the same source of the original pattern. Furthermore, a pattern could have been used repeatedly, each time slightly diverging from the original, so that in the end the original meaning of the pattern could have been lost completely, while the decoration became a general depiction without referring to any specific literary provenance. Therefore, like the generalization of “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense,” the scene of “Yingying Calling Hongniang to Burn Nighttime Incense” may also have become a generic depiction of *youchuntu* 游春圖 (“Women’s Spring-time Outing”), a genre of “Women of Beauty” in Chinese painting that also carried the auspicious meaning of prosperity and enjoyment in life.⁵⁹

“Zhang Sheng Greeting Yingying and Hongniang in the Garden”

The scene of Zhang Sheng greeting Yingying and Hongniang in the garden is depicted on the base of a polychrome bowl dated to the Jiajing period (fig. 18). This subject can be identified by comparing the woodblock print illustration on the same theme in the 1498 edition (fig. 19). Both the woodblock illustration and the porcelain decoration show Zhang Sheng greeting Yingying in the garden, and a ten-character caption for the title of the scene is inscribed on the woodblock print illustration. This scene comes from the same act as “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense” (part I, act 3), “A Poem and Its Response,” and relates how, after hearing Yingying’s response to the poem he had chanted to her, Zhang Sheng cheerfully comes out from hiding to greet her. Yingying retreats as soon as she sees him, however, in order to maintain her maidenly propriety.

Here, for the first time, the male character Zhang Sheng appears in porcelain decoration together with Yingying and Hongniang. This may suggest porcelain decoration was no longer restricted to the category of “Women of Beauty,” since narrative subjects of literary content are represented in an undisguised manner. During the Jiajing period, the number of porcelains decorated with dramatic scenes increased, reflecting the thriving business of civilian kilns in Jingdezhen that had led to the desirability of this type of decoration. The appearance of the new theme of “Zhang Sheng Greeting Yingying and Hongning in the Garden” illustrates this new development.



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Blue-and-white porcelain fragment, Ming dynasty, Wanli period (1573–1620). From Xiong Liao, *Zhongguo lidai qinghua huadian* (Hangzhou: Zhongguo meishu xueyuan, 1995).



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Blue-and-white vase decorated with "Beauty's Enchantment," Ming dynasty, Chongzhen period (1627–44), H. 30 cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, England, reg. no. EA1978. 2036. Photo: Hsu Wen-Chin.

2. Establishment of Archetypes: The Influence of Woodblock Print Illustrations

In the history of Chinese porcelain, the period between the end of the Wanli reign in 1620 during the Ming dynasty and the reinstallation of government supervisors in Jingdezhen by the Qing emperor Kangxi in 1683 is called the Transitional Period.⁶⁰ Imperial kiln production came to a standstill during this time. Private kilns, however, excelled in providing high-quality porcelains not only for domestic and foreign markets but also for the imperial household. Well-made porcelains of unprecedented shape and decoration were produced, and the ongoing popularity of narrative scenes from fiction and drama became one of the most important and interesting features of these Transitional porcelains.⁶¹

Due to the rarity of dated pieces and the lack of written materials, it is difficult to establish the chronology and a full picture of porcelain production during this period. The following study intends to challenge the problem of dating and to prove that the *Western Chamber* was indeed a popular subject for porcelain decoration during this era, particularly during the Tianqi and Chongzhen reigns, when imperial kiln production ceased and orders were carried out by private kilns. New forms of decoration replaced old ones, highlights from the play's twenty acts were thoroughly represented, and the style of decoration evolved into that of contemporary woodblock print illustrations.

1. Simultaneous Developments of Porcelain Decoration and Woodblock Print Illustrations

According to research published to the present, three scenes are unanimously accepted as being from the *Western Chamber*. They appear on decorated porcelains produced between the Wanli and Chongzhen periods.



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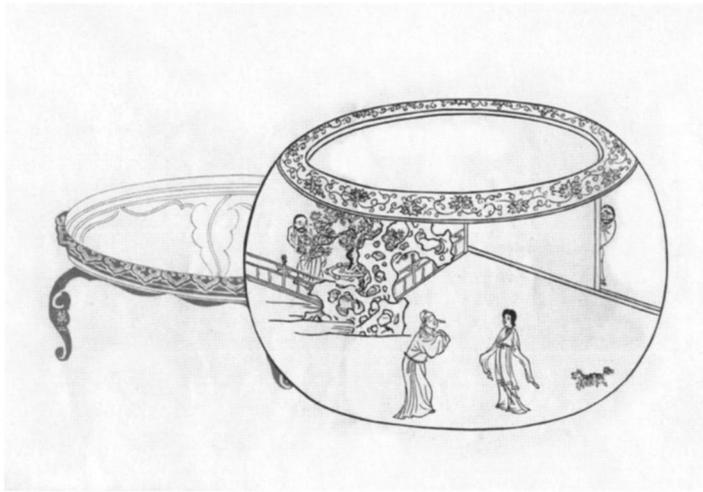
Woodblock print illustration to “Beauty’s Enchantment.” From *Chongke Yuanben tiping yinshi Xixiangji*, published by Zhongzhengtang, Ming dynasty, 1592. Naikaku bunko, Tokyo, collection. Photo: Zhou Wu.

- a. “Beauty’s Enchantment” (part I, act 1) on a fragment of blue-and-white porcelain of the Wanli period (fig. 20) and a Rolwagen vase in the Ashmolean Museum collection (fig. 21).
- b. “A Surprising Dream” (part IV, act 4) on a bottle vase in the Victoria and Albert Museum.
- c. “A Feast with Tears” (part IV, act 3) painted on a brush holder in the Butler Family Collection.⁶²

These scenes represent new themes in porcelain decoration, while those of the previous period seem to have fallen out of favor. In addition, they depict the highlights of different acts, and the images are copied from contemporary woodblock print illustrations.

The composition and style on the remaining scene from the fragment of the Wanli period, for example, are comparable to those in a woodblock print illustration to the scene of “Beauty’s Enchantment” in *Chongke Yuanben tiping yinshi Xixiangji* 重刻元本音釋西廂記 (Newly Cut Yuan Edition of the Annotated *Romance of the Western Chamber*), published in Fujian in 1592 (hereafter cited as the 1592 edition) (fig. 22). The highlight of this act describes how Zhang Sheng, during his visit to the Pujiu Temple, unexpectedly comes across Yingying taking a walk with Hongniang in the courtyard. In both works, the figures stand outdoors; Yingying, accompanied by Hongniang, looks at Zhang Sheng, who is depicted in profile. Although only the upper part of Zhang Sheng’s body is visible in the fragment, the theme of this piece is clearly recognizable. A four-character caption and a couplet referring to the scene are also inscribed on the print, thereby confirming the identity of the subject. The manner of drawing the figures in large size, with vigorous thick outlines and exaggerated expressions, is particularly similar to that in the woodblock print illustration of 1592. The latter, representing a bold and archaic image, can be categorized as a “stage-acting type of woodblock print illustration,” because both the expression and gestures of the figure emulate those of stage performances.⁶³

A similar scene depicted on the Rolwagen vase is represented in a very different manner from the above example. This vase, with a refined, solid body cobalt blue decoration tinted with delicate lavender hues, was produced in the Chongzhen period and belonged to the so-called High Transitional Porcelain, the group of top-quality porcelains produced during that period.⁶⁴ Instead of the carefree and bold manner of depiction in the Wanli fragment, the decoration here is carefully delineated in fluid, even lines, and figures with subtle and graceful expressions are dainty and diminished in size. The style and composition of the decoration on this vase are quite similar to those in the woodblock print illustrations of the same theme in the



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“Zhang Sheng Meets Hongniang,”
polychrome woodblock print
illustration to *Romance of the
Western Chamber* produced
by Min Qiji in 1640. Museum
für Ostasiatische Kunst, Köln,
Inv. – No. R62, 1 [No. 02]. Photo:
Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Köln.

Wanhuxuan edition, but the drawing of the landscape surroundings and the garment patterns here are more meticulous and elaborate.⁶⁵ This style is similar to and influenced by Huizhou-style woodblock prints that were popular in the late Ming dynasty. Since Huizhou is near Jingdezhen, woodblock illustrations produced in the Huizhou area were introduced to Jingdezhen porcelain painters via Huizhou merchants.⁶⁶ In the late Ming period, merchants controlled most of the porcelain trade in Huizhou, and the influence of Huizhou-style woodblock print designs on porcelain decoration is an outstanding feature of Transitional Porcelain. It is speculated, however, that the drawing on this vase was probably not imitated directly from the woodblock print illustration of the *Wanhuxuan* edition published around 1597, but rather it was from a later reprinted version of the work in circulation during the Chongzhen period and was available to the decorator of this vase.

Of all the examples of porcelain decorated with *Western Chamber* scenes listed above, only one piece belongs to the Wanli period; the others were produced in the Chongzhen era. This may indicate that the influence of woodblock print illustration on porcelain decoration emerged during the Wanli period and blossomed during the Chongzhen period. Even though only a small portion of the production remains extant or is recognized by scholars today, studies conducted on material and cultural life, in addition to a re-examination of the chronology based on archaeological discoveries and woodblock print illustrations, seem to support the assumption and expectations of the popularity of the *Western Chamber* on porcelain decoration at this time.

From the Wanli to the Chongzhen eras in the late Ming dynasty, cultural life flourished as the social and political order plunged into crisis; the wealthy in the Tianqi and Chongzhen periods became richer than ever and enjoyed extravagant lifestyles.⁶⁷ Such circumstances saw the production of the most sumptuous and luxurious objects for the upper echelons of society. The majority of this group lived south of the Yangzi River in the Jiangnan region of central China, the same geographical district as Jingdezhen. Some of these wealthy people were fans of the *Western Chamber*, and under their patronage, artworks related to this romance reached a pinnacle. The production of the twenty-leaf polychrome album of the *Western Chamber* published by Min Qiji 閔齊伋 of Wuxing in 1640 (hereafter the 1640 edition) is a fine example of the popularity of this play among the wealthy and



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Blue-and-white dish decorated with a woman seated beside a rock overhang, Ming dynasty, ca. 1643, D. 9 cm. From the cargo recovered by Captain Michael Hatcher. Photo: courtesy of Julia Curtis.



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Blue-and-white dish decorated with "Repudiation of the Billet-Doux," Ming dynasty, Chongzhen period (1627–44), D. 21.3 cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, England, reg. no. EA1978. 838. Photo: Hsu Wen-Chin.



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26
Blue-and-white dish decorated with "Repudiation of the Billet-Doux," Qing dynasty, early Kangxi period (before 1672), D. 15.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, reg. no. C587-1925. Photo: Hsu Wen-Chin.

of the high artistic standards that were achieved.⁶⁸ This album is not only the sole remaining colored woodblock print illustration of all of Chinese literature, but it is also considered the best executed of all woodblock print illustrations in China. Furthermore, it is very likely that this album was published independently and without text for the sheer visual pleasure of the wealthy class.

In this polychrome album, some of the scenes are represented in the forms of art objects, such as ceramics, bronze wares, a lantern, and so on; together they create some of the most complex and intriguing images in the history of Chinese design. The artist for this album was probably responding to the contemporary phenomenon of illustrations of famous dramas being used increasingly to decorate ceramic wares and other types of art objects.⁶⁹ Worthy of note is the third picture, which is depicted inside the form of a ceramic jar (fig. 23). The scene depicts Zhang Sheng introducing himself to Hongniang, whom he hopes will help send a message to Yingying (from part I, act 2, "Renting Quarters in the Monastery"). This scene is shown in *baimiao* style, the special technique of illustration whereby motifs are executed with pure outlines and without grading or shading. This style of decoration appeared in porcelains of the Wanli period and continued into the Qing dynasty. Both the technique of drawing and the elongated, graceful figure types in this image provide clues for the dating of porcelains produced around 1640.

2. A Re-examination of Chronology: The "Repudiation of the Billet-Doux" Dish and the Box Decorated with Twenty Scenes

The discovery of a shipwreck in the South China Sea by Michael Hatcher in the early 1980s provided much valuable material evidence about porcelain production in the 1640s.⁷⁰ The Hatcher wreck, as it became known, contained a large shipment of Chinese porcelain produced in Jingdezhen during the late Ming dynasty, specifically around 1643 (as evidenced by two pieces in the cargo bearing the cyclical date for that year). Among the cargo holdings was a group of fine dishes and saucers decorated with figures in fictional and romantic scenes. One of the decorative scenes depicts a young lady sitting under a grotesquely shaped towering rock in a garden (fig. 24). This motif is an abridged version of that on the blue-and-white dishes in the collections of the Ashmolean Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum (figs. 25 and 26). The decorations on the latter two pieces are identical in



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Woodblock print illustration to “Repudiation of the Billet-Doux,” *Xinke Wei Zhongxue xiansheng pidian Xixiangji*, published by Chen Changqing in the Tianqi (1605–27) or Chongzhen (1627–44) period, Ming dynasty. Beijing National Library. Photo: Beijing National Library.

composition but vary in style and details. By comparing the decoration with the woodblock print illustration of the *Western Chamber* published in the late Ming dynasty, as well as by reading the poem inscribed on the dish from the Victoria and Albert Museum, it becomes evident that the scene represents a highlighted moment from part III, act 3, “Repudiation of the Billet-Doux.”⁷¹

This scene is a continuation of “Yingying Calling Hongniang to Burn Night-time Incense” in the same act (figs. 15 and 16). In this specific episode, Hongniang advises Zhang Sheng to enter the garden by climbing the wall instead of coming through the door. As a result, Yingying reproaches him for not acting like a scholar, and she treats him as if he were a thief. The porcelain decorations show the moment when Zhang Sheng is on top of the wall, while Yingying is seated at the back of the rock, unaware of what is happening. Hongniang, who is behind this farce, stands between them, assuming a key role in the plot.

The decoration on the saucer from the Hatcher wreck, which shows only Yingying seated, therefore represents an incomplete scene from this episode. This example may suggest that “Repudiation of the Billet-Doux” was a popular subject for porcelain decoration in the late Ming dynasty. As a result, a simplified version may have been used as a decoration on export porcelains, for most foreign buyers would not know the story and therefore would not demand details.

In my previous study on Transitional Porcelains, I dated the Ashmolean Museum dish (fig. 25) to the early Kangxi period prior to 1672.⁷² Subsequent studies of its features, however, as well as comparisons with the Hatcher wreck discovery and contemporary woodblock prints now convince me that the dish was very likely produced even earlier, that is, in the Chongzhen period. The brown rim on this dish, for example, is a characteristic of porcelain produced somewhat earlier, between the Chongzhen and the Shunzhi periods.⁷³ In addition, the careful and delicate manner of depicting the willow trees, rocks, palm-leaf patterns, and tiny dots on the ground in this dish is very similar to that in the saucer from the late Ming dynasty. Moreover, the style of decoration is also quite different from that on the early Kangxi period dish in the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 26). The former is executed in a graceful and fluent manner comparable to the print image from the 1640 edition (fig. 23), while the latter shows characteristics of a copied version, which is stiffer in drawing, sluggish in appearance, and monotonous in texture.

On the Ashmolean Museum dish, the formation of the rocks, the way Yingying sits on the rock, and the pose of Zhang Sheng holding a willow branch in one hand while placing a foot on the roof of the garden wall are identical to the same subject depicted in the woodblock print illustration in *Xinke Wei Zhongxue xiansheng pidian Xixiangji* 新刻魏仲雪先生批點西廂記 (Newly Cut Romance of the West-



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Blue-and-white round box decorated with twenty scenes from *Romance of the Western Chamber*, Ming dynasty, Chongzhen period (1627–44), 23 x 42 cm. From Takushin Kushi, *Minsho toji zukan* (Tokyo: Hounsha, 1943), amendment pl. 6.



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Blue-and-white octagonal box, Ming dynasty, ca. 1643, D. 20 cm. From the cargo recovered by Captain Michael Hatcher. From Colin Sheaf and Richard Kilburn, *The Hatcher Porcelain Cargoes: The Complete Record* (Oxford: Phaidon-Christie's, 1988), pl. 64.

ern Chamber with Commentary by Mr. Wei Zhongxue; hereafter cited as the *Wei Zhongxue* edition) reprinted by Chen Changqing 陳長卿 in the Tianqi or Chongzhen period (fig. 27).⁷⁴ The dandy figures with swaying drapery and long fluttering sleeves, however, are closer to those of the 1640 edition. Therefore, I believe that this plate was very likely produced in the Chongzhen period around 1640.

In addition to the porcelain pieces mentioned above, the round box in trapezoid form decorated with a complete series of twenty episodes from this drama can also be dated to the Chongzhen period (fig. 28).⁷⁵ This dating is further confirmed by comparison with the octagonal box recovered from the Hatcher wreck (noting the shared features in quality, shape, and device of decoration) as well as the contemporary woodblock print (fig. 29). Both the trapezoid box and the box from the Hatcher wreck are of the highest quality porcelain made at the time, and the decoration is divided into multiple trapezoidal compartments along the edge of the cover and on the body of the box. Another striking similarity in the decoration of these two boxes is that both are drawn in *baimiao* style, the same technique seen in the third picture of the 1640 edition (fig. 23). A common feature in wares of the Chongzhen period is the decoration of geometric patterns around the joined borders of the cover and the body of the box, as seen here on both pieces.⁷⁶

Round boxes produced in the Shunzhi period, however, seem to be of inferior quality and without geometric motifs,⁷⁷ while round boxes of the early Kangxi period are also different from those of the Chongzhen period. Both the shape and the decorative schemes of the typical early Kangxi box is a round body and a round domed lid without sharp edges. Also, the decoration is simplified into two zones; one is painted on the lid, and the other is on the body.⁷⁸ These comparisons further suggest dating the box, with its twenty scenes from the *Western Chamber*, to the Chongzheng period.

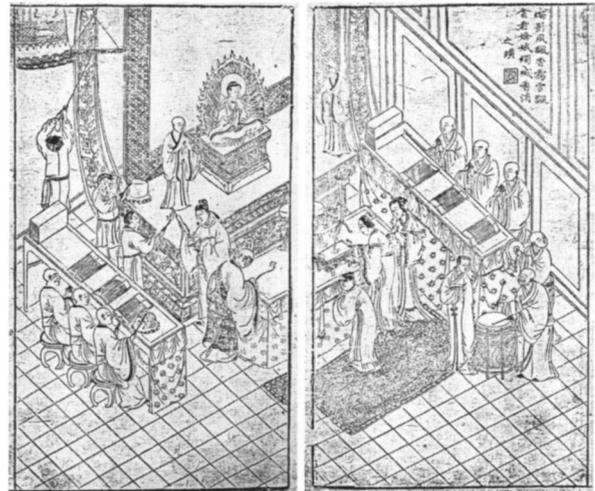
The twenty scenes from the *Western Chamber* on this trapezoid box coincide with the woodblock print illustration of twenty pictures, with one scene depicting the highlight of each act.⁷⁹ On this box the twenty scenes are arranged as follows: two each on the inside and outside roundels on top of the cover and base of the body; eight each on the two trapezoidal bands of the box; the scenes from “Interruption of the Consecration Service” (part I, act 4) and “The Glorious Homecoming” (part V, act 4) are painted in the top and inside roundels of the box; and scenes for “A Surprising Dream” (part IV, act 4) and “A Feast with Tears” (part



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“Interruption of the Consecration Service” on a blue-and-white round box, Ming dynasty, Chongzhen period (1627–44). From Takushin Kushi, *Minsho toji zukan*, amendment pl. 6.



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Woodblock print illustration to “Interruption of the Consecration Service,” Ming dynasty, Chongzhen period (1627–44). From *Xinke Wei Zhongxue xiansheng pidian Xixiangji*. National Central Library, Taipei. Photo: National Central Library, Taipei.

IV, act 3) are depicted on the inside and outside bases of the box. The remaining sixteen scenes from the play are painted in consecutive order along the exterior of the box.

In addition to the number of scenes and their content, the elegant and sinuous style of drawing on this box is reminiscent of the woodblock prints from the Chongzhen period. The porcelain painter evidently referred to different sources of woodblock prints, since each scene on the box can be compared to a print illustration from a different edition. No single edition of this drama contains illustrations similar to all of the scenes on the box. Even though some of the scenes are very close to woodblock illustrations, some slight differences in detail are more interesting and captivating than the woodblock prints. The representation of “Interruption of the Consecration Service” is a fine example of the exquisite imagery and proficient technical quality that was achieved in the decoration of this box (figs. 30 and 31).

The act “Interruption of the Consecration Service” is about the religious service for Yingying’s late father, a minister of the Tang dynasty. When Zhang Sheng learns that this activity is going to take place in the temple, he asks for the abbot’s permission to let him participate in the ceremony. In the text, the scene is depicted like a farce. The abbot stares unblinkingly at Yingying and raps the bald head of a young monk, mistaking it for a percussion instrument. The young monks likewise forget their duty to replace the burnt incense and candles, which results in the incense burning out and the smoke from the candles ceasing. All these events apparently have been caused by Yingying’s bewitching beauty.

The illustration of this scene on the box shows nothing of these humorous features from the text. Instead, it is painted in an elegant and formal manner similar to the woodblock illustrations. The composition and style of this scene are similar to the *Wei Zhongxue* edition published by the Chunchengtang 存誠堂 (Hall Embodying Honesty) in the Chongzhen period (fig. 31). Both the box and the woodblock print are set in a crowded Buddhist hall, with the abbot and the Cui family worshipping in front of a table placed before an altar that holds three Buddhist statues. Stand-

ing between the altar and the table, Zhang Sheng holds a candle that is being lit by a servant boy. On both sides of the hall monks chanting sutras are seated behind long tables. The novice striking the bell in the upper left corner of the print is missing from the composition on the box, but the triangle stand for the bell and the tassel hanging down from it remain visible. Since more monks play musical instruments in the foreground of the porcelain decoration than appear in the woodblock print illustration, that composition seems more compressed. It is thus clear that the porcelain painter took this woodblock print as a model, but instead of making a faithful copy, he tactfully altered the details and transformed it into a more meticulous and extravagant representation. As the elaborate and comprehensive decoration of this box reflects the social and intellectual climate as well as the artistic style of the Chongzhen period, it is reasonable to date it to that era.

The above discussion suggests that Jingdezhen porcelain painters took contemporary woodblock print illustrations as models or references. Not only do the porcelains follow the sequence and contents of woodblock print illustrations, but the styles are also closely imitated. This intimate relationship and simultaneous development among woodblock print illustrations and porcelain decoration help both in dating porcelains of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, and in estimating the scope and range of decorative motifs and subjects that could have been employed during this period.

III. The Formation of New Fashions in Porcelain Decoration: The Shunzhi and Kangxi Periods

Dramas from early in the Qing dynasty reveal continuity with those from the Ming dynasty, "but soon the influence of the ruler on drama becomes so marked as to indicate the use of them."⁸⁰ In 1652, for example, a decree announced that

only books on science, politics and literature of approved content may be published. Those containing indecent words and licentious prose ... are strictly banned from publication. People who violate the law are subject to the most severe punishment.⁸¹

只許刊行理學政治有益文業諸書，其它瑣語淫詞 ... 通行嚴禁，違者從重究治。

This law dealt a serious blow to the publication of dramas and consequently to the industry of woodblock print illustration, which went hand-in-hand in production. Thus, the latter declined sharply from the early Qing dynasty and eventually became extinct by the end of the era.⁸²

Although unable to compete with its peak of popularity in the Ming dynasty, the *Western Chamber* continued to be enjoyed during the Qing dynasty—no less than fifty-five annotated and amended editions of this drama were published.⁸³ Of all the different editions, the one annotated and commented by the unconventional scholar Jin Shengtān 金聖歎 (circa 1610–1661) was by far the most popular (hereafter cited as the Jin Shengtān edition).⁸⁴ This edition became a bestseller as soon as it was published in 1656, and even the Shunzhi Emperor (1638–1661) greatly admired it.⁸⁵ Contrary to the prevailing contemporary opinion of the time, Jin praised the achievements of the *Western Chamber*, comparing it to five other classics in Chinese history and grouping them as the *LiUCAIZI SHU* 六才子書 (Six Books by and for Talented Scholars). His annotated *Western Chamber* was known as *DILUCAIZI XIXIANGJI* 第六才子西廂記 (The Sixth Book by and for Talented Scholars, Xixiangji). In editing this book, he included many of his own lengthy commentaries and took the liberty of altering parts of the prose and dialogues. In addition, Jin also transposed and edited many verse passages and added his own dialogue and stage directions. The most daring change he made to the text was to end the story at part IV, when Zhang Sheng awakes from a dream on his way to the capital to take the government examination, dismissing the last part of the drama as an “appendix.”⁸⁶

Jingdezhen, the porcelain center in China, suffered from war and unrest during the early years of the Shunzhi period and from 1673 to 1676, when the rebellion of the Three Feudatory Princes against the Manchu government spread in Jiangnan and southwestern China.⁸⁷ Instead of being devastated by war, however, the industry regained momentum quickly and resumed operations as usual.⁸⁸ The biggest blow was to the imperial kilns, which did not fully recover until 1683, when the Kangxi Emperor appointed an officer to supervise the production of porcelain there. After that, Jingdezhen reached new heights in the history of Chinese porcelains.

During the Shunzhi and Kangxi periods, decoration of scenes from the *Western Chamber* on porcelain reached a peak of popularity. This type of porcelain has been praised in *Taoyao* as follows:

The pottery painters of the Kangxi period were very skillful. Porcelains produced in the private kilns (*kehuo* 客貨) are decorated with drama themes from the *Shuihuzhuan* 水滸傳 (*The Water Margin*) and *Western Chamber*. The brushwork on the drawing of private kiln porcelains is simple and full of rustic delight. This kind of effect is difficult to achieve.⁸⁹

康熙朝畫手佳矣。然客貨所畫類皆水滸、西廂之故實爲多。似此荒率野趣之筆，更不易觀也。

During these periods, scenes from the *Western Chamber* were used to decorate vases, jars, brush pots, furniture tiles, and even lanterns. By far the most popular wares were bowls and dishes of various shapes and sizes for domestic and foreign markets. Flatware was often decorated with a single episode, and three-dimensional ware (such as bowls, vases, and brush pots) was often rendered with two to four scenes. These were usually in sequence and in compartments frequently bordered with stylized rocks and clouds.⁹⁰ It is also probable that porcelain decorated with *Western Chamber* scenes were produced in pairs or sets, allowing a more complete rendering of the story. The vase depicting twenty-four scenes from this drama, in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, represents the pinnacle of this vogue during the Kangxi period (fig. 39). In addition to blue-and-white porcelain, wares decorated in polychrome, such as a combination of underglaze cobalt blue and copper red, as well as famille-verte, became increasingly popular at this time. The emphasis on color marks a difference in taste on porcelain made during the Qing dynasty and previous periods.⁹¹

During this era, the following four characteristics can be discerned in porcelain decorated with scenes from the *Western Chamber*:

1. The inscription of poems quoted from the text.
2. The distorted manner of drawing figures and the influence of Chen Hongshou's painting style.
3. The assimilation of imperial court styles on decoration in the Kangxi period.
4. The reflection of views on tragedy influenced by late Ming literary critics and the Jin Shengtan edition.

1. The Inscription of Poetry

Poems inscribed on porcelain first appear on Changsha 長沙 ware of the Tang dynasty⁹² and become a common feature late in the Ming dynasty, but scenes from the *Western Chamber* seem to have been started in the Shunzhi period of the Qing dynasty. A comparison between the Ashmolean Museum vase decorated with "Beauty's Enchantment" (fig. 21) and the polychrome vase with the same scene in the collection of the Beijing Palace Museum (fig. 32) illuminates this point.

The Ashmolean blue-and-white vase was produced during the Chongzhen period, as previously discussed, while the latter polychrome vase with a truncated neck and coffee-colored rim bears characteristics of the Shunzhi period (as indicated below) and therefore can be dated to that time. The compositions of these two decorations are nearly identical except for variations in detail and landscape background. The style of figures on the latter has been transformed from graceful,



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Polychrome vase decorated with "Beauty's Enchantment," Qing dynasty, Shunzhi period (1644–61), H. 37.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. Photo: Palace Museum, Beijing.

well-rounded forms into the flat and slightly deformed ones commonly seen in the Shunzhi period. The most distinctive new feature of this vase is the inscription of verse from the text written in seal-script characters. According to Feng Xianming 馮先銘, a historian of ceramics, inscriptions in seal-script calligraphy appeared between the tenth year of the Chongzhen reign (1632) and the fourteenth year of the Shunzhi reign (1658).⁹³ From the Shunzhi period onward, the "picture with poetry" type of decoration became increasingly common. The dish of "Hongniang in the Dock" discussed earlier is another example from the Shunzhi period (fig. 8).⁹⁴

In her study of education and popular literacy in Qing China, Evelyn Rawski writes, "Qing China inherited a means for cheaply reproducing and widely disseminating printed materials, along with a tradition of supporting elementary schools in both rural and urban areas."⁹⁵ Consequently, the literate population in the Qing dynasty was larger than in previous periods. Writing became a common form of communication, and the art of calligraphy was also more widely appreciated and practiced. For example, in the woodblock print illustration of the *Western Chamber* published in 1669, pictorial images occupy less than a quarter of the page, with the remaining area being inscribed with poetry and prose.⁹⁶ Reflecting this interest, the calligraphy of poems and inscriptions became increasingly fashionable in porcelain decoration as well.

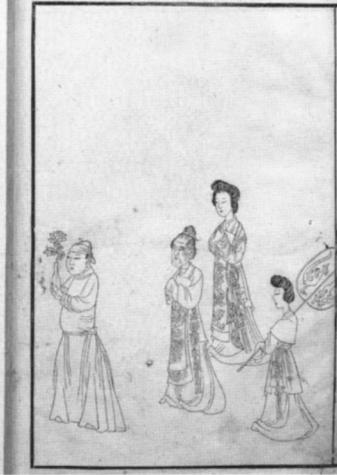
2. The Distortion of Figures on Porcelains and the Influence of Chen Hongshou's Painting

The grotesque and distorted manner of depicting figures is another distinguishing feature of early Qing porcelain decoration. Texts from the Qing dynasty, such as *Yinliuzhai shuoci* 飲流齋說瓷 (Elucidation on Porcelain at Yinliuzhai) by Xu Zhiheng 許之衡 and *Taoshuo* 陶說 (Elucidation on Pottery) by Zhu Yan 朱琰, assign this phenomenon to porcelain of the Kangxi period and relate the new style



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 “Fulfillment by Eye-sight,”
 woodblock print illustration to *Zhang
 Shenzhi xiansheng zhengbei Xixiang
 miben*, Ming dynasty, 1639. National
 Palace Museum, Taipei. Photo:
 National Palace Museum, Taipei.



34

34
 Blue-and-white plate decorated
 with “Invitation to the Feast,” Qing
 dynasty, 1668, 4.5 x 16 cm. Butler
 Family collection. From Sotheby’s
 sale catalogue *Fine Chinese Ceramics
 and Works of Art*, London (15
 December 1987), lot. no. 217.

to Chen Hongshou 陳洪綬 (1598–1652), a renowned painter in the late Ming to early Qing dynasties.⁹⁷ However, studies now show that these characteristics may have been initiated as early as the late Ming period and continued into the Kangxi reign, as discussed below.

The distortion of narrative decoration on porcelain can be observed as early as the Chongzhen period, such as in the Ashmolean Museum dish with “Repudiation of the Billet-Doux” mentioned above (fig. 25). On this dish, the figures are elongated, with their robes and long sleeves spread out and curled upwards in an elegant and decorative manner, and the baroque formation of the central rock echoes their swaying movement. The image on this dish of Zhang Sheng with a protruding belly is comparable to that in the second woodblock illustration in *Zhang Shenzhi xiansheng zhengbei Xixiang miben* 張深之先生正北西廂秘本 (Treasured Private Edition of the *Romance of the Western Chamber* Collated by Zhang Shenzhi) published in 1639 (hereafter cited as the 1639 edition), in which the illustrations were designed by Chen Hongshou (fig. 33).⁹⁸ In “Interruption of the Religious Service,” Zhang Sheng is shown holding a flower vase and standing between the monks and members of the Cui family during the Buddhist ceremony. Proportionately smaller in size than the squat and squarish monks standing before him, Zhang Sheng is portrayed with a protruding belly and hip. A nearly identical image of Zhang Sheng, with more expression and movement, can be found on a blue-and-white shallow bowl of the early Kangxi period (fig. 34).⁹⁹ This bowl, inscribed on the base with a four-character cyclical date equivalent to 1668, is an important example for recognizing the early Kangxi style. A couplet from “The Breach of Promise” (part II, act 3) was written in the bowl, relating the decoration to said episode. In this act, Zhang Sheng is invited by Madame Cui to attend the feast honoring his heroic resolution of the bandit crisis that had saved Yingying from abduction and a forced marriage. To Zhang’s dismay, however, Madame Cui breaks her promise of marriage to Yingying and instead seeks to console him with money. The decoration on the bowl illustrates the moment when Hongniang, who is sent by Madame Cui to bring Zhang Sheng to the feast, arrives at Zhang’s lodging. Self-conscious about his appearance, Zhang is seen holding a fan and adjusting his hat.



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Blue-and-white dish decorated with
“Beauty’s Enchantment,” Shunzhi
period (1644–61), D. 16.5 cm. From
Sotheby’s sale catalogue, London (3
July 1984), lot. no. 17.

The style of drawing is basically a continuation from the Shunzhi period, but there are subtle changes in the way figures are depicted. For example, Zhang Sheng’s distorted and deformed belly and hip are more articulated here than in porcelains of the Chongzhen and Shunzhi periods. This is evidence that by the early Kangxi period Chen Hongshou’s style had been fully established, and a distinct Qing style of porcelain decoration can be easily discerned.

A highly exaggerated manner of figural depiction in painting was already in vogue during the late Ming period, as seen in works of such painters as Wu Bin 吳彬 (active 1573–1620), Cui Zizhong 崔子忠 (circa 1590–1640), and above all, Chen Hongshou.¹⁰⁰ Distortion in the decoration of porcelain became extremely popular in the Kangxi period, with Chen Hongshou’s figural style being the dominant influence. This phenomenon is recorded in texts of the Qing dynasty and is evident in extant porcelains produced at the time.¹⁰¹ Chen Hongshou was actively engaged in making woodblock print designs for popular book illustrations, such as *Jiuge* 九歌 (Nine Songs) in 1616, *Water Margin* playing cards (between 1625 and 1630), and three editions of *Romance of the Western Chamber* in 1631, 1639, and 1640, respectively.¹⁰² Through these works, his distorted form of archaic painting was disseminated and reached porcelain painters in Jingdezhen. Among these books, the 1639 edition seems to have been quite popular during the Shunzhi and early Kangxi periods.

Besides the 1668 dish mentioned earlier, the blue-and-white dish with Zhang Sheng and Yingying’s first encounter from “Beauty’s Enchantment” also reflects influence from this edition (fig. 35). This dish can be dated back to the Shunzhi period judging from the appearance of similar features on other porcelains, such as the brown rim, the fine regular style of writing, a six-character mark denoting the Jiajing period on the base, and the application of tiny “plum blossom dots” (*meihua dian* 梅花點) on the dresses of ladies.¹⁰³ Figures on this dish are distorted, as seen in the elongation of Yingying and Hongniang, the round face and heavy body of the monk, and the curved, bending image of Zhang Sheng.

A two-character title of the episode “Qifeng” 奇逢 (An Unexpected Encounter) is written in the upper right corner. In the *Western Chamber*, each act has a title, which may differ in exact wording from one edition to another. The titles of each

act in most editions are in four characters, with only a few having two. The two-character title here is similar to that in *Bei Xixiangji* 北西廂記 (Northern *Western Chamber*) annotated by the poet He Bi 何璧 (published in 1616) and the 1639 edition.¹⁰⁴ Judging from similarities in the wording of the title and the style of illustration, it is possible to secure the 1639 edition as an important reference for this dish. Although there is no comparable composition for the porcelain decorators, the style and images of individual figures as well as the element of distortion were borrowed. The popularity and usage of the 1639 edition among ceramic painters in Jingdezhen could be regarded as an indication that the 1656 Jin Shengtian edition was not yet popular among Jingdezhen potters during the Shunzhi period. This situation remained so until the Kangxi period, as explained below.¹⁰⁵

It is believed that scenes from the *Western Chamber* played an important role in disseminating the Chen Hongshou style of porcelain decoration, as this romance was the most popular for such decoration in the early Qing dynasty. After the re-establishment of imperial kilns in Jingdezhen around 1680, the painter Liu Yuan 劉源 (circa 1641–1691) was employed by the government to make designs for porcelain production.¹⁰⁶ Liu Yuan was an admirer of Chen Hongshou and painted in his style, and it is very likely that under Liu Yuan's influence, porcelain decoration in the Chen Hongshou style continued and reached another peak in popularity. The vase decorated with twenty-four scenes from the *Western Chamber* in the Chen Hongshou style (fig. 39), discussed below, is thus perhaps related to Liu Yuan and his influence.

3. Assimilation of the Court Painting Style: Kangxi Period

Both the Shunzhi and Kangxi emperors were deeply interested in the *Western Chamber*, as Ni Yibin believes that “its pronounced popularity in the Shunzhi and early Kangxi reigns, and especially in the 1660s, may well stem from the Shunzhi Emperor's personal interest in this play”¹⁰⁷ Without solid evidence, however, the nature and extent of the Shunzhi Emperor's influence on porcelain décor remains to be verified. The Kangxi Emperor's patronage, however, is easier to establish, as several porcelain pieces decorated with scenes from the *Western Chamber* of imperial quality and with imperial marks can be found in various collections.¹⁰⁸

This group of refined porcelains comprises dishes of different shapes, all elaborately decorated with underglaze blue and underglaze red. On the base are eight-character marks assigning them to the Hall of Central Harmony (Zhonghetang 中和堂) in 1672 or 1673. Although the Hall of Central Harmony in the Summer Palace had not yet been built by the early 1670s, it is still commonly believed that this group of porcelains bearing these specific hallmarks was produced for the Imperial Household.¹⁰⁹ It is speculated that originally complete sets decorated with episodes



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36
Polychrome dish decorated with “Zhang Sheng Handing the Letter for Rescue to Monk Huiming,” early Kangxi period (1662–1720), D. 33 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, reg. no. C466. Photo: Hsu Wen-Chin.



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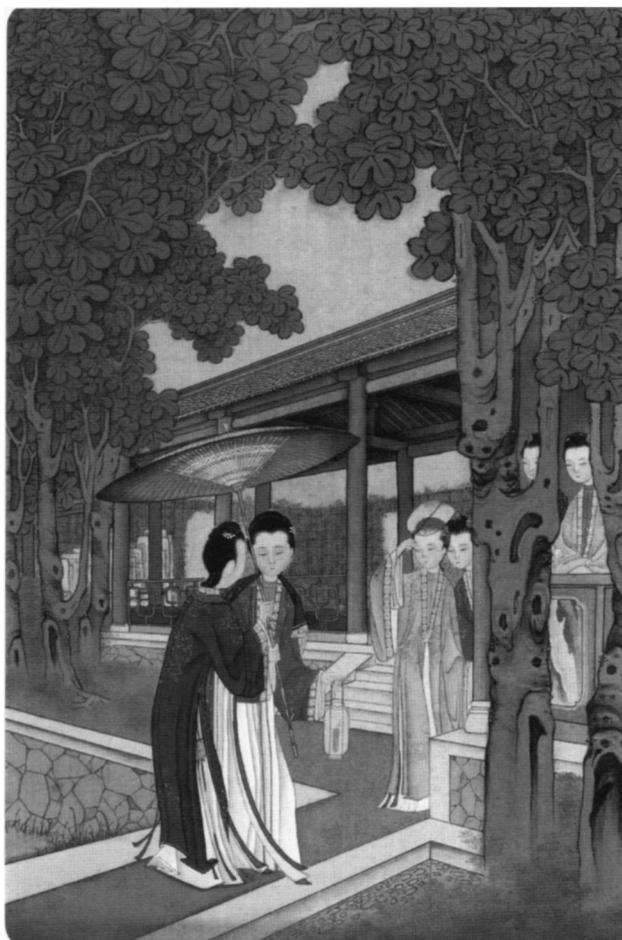
37
Plate decorated with “Love and the Lute,” Qing dynasty, ca. 1672, blue-and-white with copper red, D. 32.6 cm. From *China’s Jingdezhen Porcelain through the Ages: Qing Dynasty* (Beijing: Zhongguo sheying chubanshe, 1998), 95.

from the *Western Chamber* had been ordered and produced. Another group of large plates decorated with *Western Chamber* scenes in underglaze cobalt blue and copper red within the border of an eight-pointed star or flower shape is also of imperial quality and can be assigned to the imperial kiln production of this same date (figs. 36 and 37). Although not inscribed with marks, this group of porcelains shares the same refined quality, production technique, and decorative style as the previous group, indicating the two can be grouped together.

At this time, porcelain decoration with *Western Chamber* vignettes reveals innovation and transformation in both style and in content concurrent with the continuity of late Ming and Shunzhi fashions. In the early Kangxi period, however, a distinct Qing-dynasty style emerged, reflecting the following two characteristics: the application of Western perspective in landscape backgrounds; and the transformation of women’s clothing fashion and attire.

The Application of Western Perspective in Landscape Backgrounds

Jesuit priests introduced Western art to China in the late Ming dynasty.¹¹⁰ In the early Qing dynasty, the Kangxi, Yongzheng 雍正 (reigned 1723–35), and Qianlong emperors all expressed an interest in Western curiosities and crafts. This led to several European priests being summoned to the imperial court, where they would serve as artists under the emperors’ command. At the court, these Western priest-artists not only learned how to produce Chinese paintings, but they also taught European art techniques, including oil painting, to Chinese artists. In this way, an artistic style blending Chinese media and Western techniques of perspective and chiaroscuro appeared at court. In the initial stage during the Kanxi period, a typical type of “Women of Beauty” painting was established by the court painter Jiao Bingzhen 焦秉貞 (circa 1662–1720).¹¹¹ This style, imitated by junior court painters, had a major impact on Chinese arts of the eighteenth century. In Jiao Bingzhen’s paintings, women are shown playing in gardens with grand architectural settings in the background. In one of Jiao’s paintings, for example, the application of Western perspective techniques can be observed in the detailed drawing of the corridor erected across the middle section (fig. 38). The height of the corridor gradually diminishes from right to left, creating an illusion of spatial extension into the distance beyond the edge of the picture frame.



38

38

Jiao Bingzhen, *Painting of Ladies*.
Qing dynasty, Kangxi period (1661–
1722), album leaf, ink, and color on
silk, 30.9 x 20.4 cm. National Palace
Museum, Taipei. Photo: National
Palace Museum, Taipei.

The women in the garden appear flat and weightless, while their simple, ovoid faces reveal little individual physiognomy. Their style of overdress, called a *beizi* 背子, could have either long or short sleeves and featured close-fitting garments with skirts trailing on the ground. This type of garment was fashionable in the Ming dynasty and was commonly seen in court painting of the Qing dynasty. Although the Manchu government prohibited court women from wearing Han Chinese clothing, in paintings the representation of Han-style dress was accepted for aesthetic reasons.¹¹²

The application of perspective techniques can be recognized immediately in the large polychrome dish decorated with the scene “Zhang Sheng Handing the Letter of Rescue to Monk Huiming,” from the act “Alarm at the Monastery” (part II, act 1) (fig. 36). In this episode, Zhang Sheng writes a letter to his friend, General Du, after the Cui family had been threatened by the bandit Sun, who demands the hand of Yingying in marriage. During this crisis, the monk Huiming 惠明 bravely volunteers to deliver the letter to General Du. In this polychrome dish painted in underglaze cobalt blue and copper red enhanced by a rare powder blue in the border, Zhang Sheng and the abbot Facong 法聰 stand in front of the temple and bid farewell to Huiming, who holds an iron bar in his hands. This scene takes place in a landscape scenery with the inner courtyard and outer garden separated by a balustrade. The extension of space into the distance is suggested by placing the balustrade on a diagonal stretching across one side of the composition and also by

having the door of the building partially open, so that the interior of the hall is visible. The “open-door” form of perspective had been an active ingredient in Chinese painting since the Han dynasty, so the porcelain decorator in this piece appears to have combined the traditional Chinese perspective of general spatial extension and the newly absorbed European techniques of one-point perspective in producing this image.¹¹³

Executed in extremely refined straight lines and in eye-catching red, the balustrade extends from the foreground to background in steady diminution. Although slightly awkward in the zigzagging front section, the rest of the balustrade is rendered in logical perspective. The device of drawing the right side of the building with an open front door, from which part of the interior is exposed, is a traditional Chinese method of enticing the beholder’s gaze far into the depths of the picture. Placement of a winding balustrade alongside a building with an open front door or window became a common convention on porcelains with narrative scenes during the Kangxi period (figs. 34, 36, 37).

The Transformation of Women’s Clothing Fashion and Attire

The transformation of women’s clothing and attire can be best observed in the polychrome plate decorated with the theme of “Love and the Lute” (fig. 37).¹¹⁴ This episode, from part II, act 4, tells how Zhang Sheng plays music to express his love for Yingying, hoping to win her affection. Greatly despondent after Madame Cui breaks her previous promise to give him Yingying’s hand in marriage, Zhang now intends to commit suicide. Hongniang convinces him that to gain Yingying’s favor, he should play the lute for her. Therefore, at night, when Yingying has said her prayers and lit her incense in the garden, Zhang seizes the opportunity to play the lute and sing the love song “Phoenix Seeking Its Mate.” Yingying is deeply touched.

On this plate (fig. 37), Zhang Sheng plays the lute in a room with the door wide open while Yingying and Hongniang listen on the other side of the garden, separated by a wall. The appearance and attire of Yingying and Hongniang in this illustration are similar to those of Jiao Bingzhen’s “Women Playing in a Garden” (fig. 38). All the figures are slightly elongated and willowy, as if bodiless, and their attire of a long flowing skirt and a slim-fitting overdress (*beizi*) differs from the blouse-and-skirt type of clothing in the Ming dynasty. The clothes are plain and simple, and the old motif of tiny plum blossom dots commonly applied on women’s clothes in porcelain illustrations of the late Ming and Shunzhi periods has disappeared. In addition, Hongniang wears an upswept hair-do that reveals a new fashion of the Qing dynasty. (This type of hairstyle can also be seen in figs. 43 and 44.) Indeed, these new images of Yingying and Hongniang bring the Qing style to the medium of porcelain and can be regarded as criteria for dating porcelain produced after the early 1670s.



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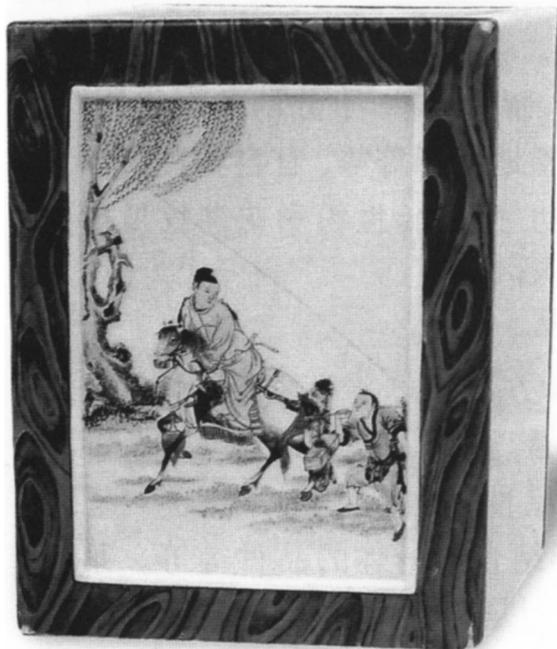
39
Blue-and-white vase decorated with twenty-four scenes from *Romance of the Western Chamber* (right: detail), Qing dynasty, ca. 1700, H. 91.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Photo: Hsu Wen-Chin.

4. The Return to Tragedy: Influence from Late Ming Literary Criticism and the Jin Shengtian Edition

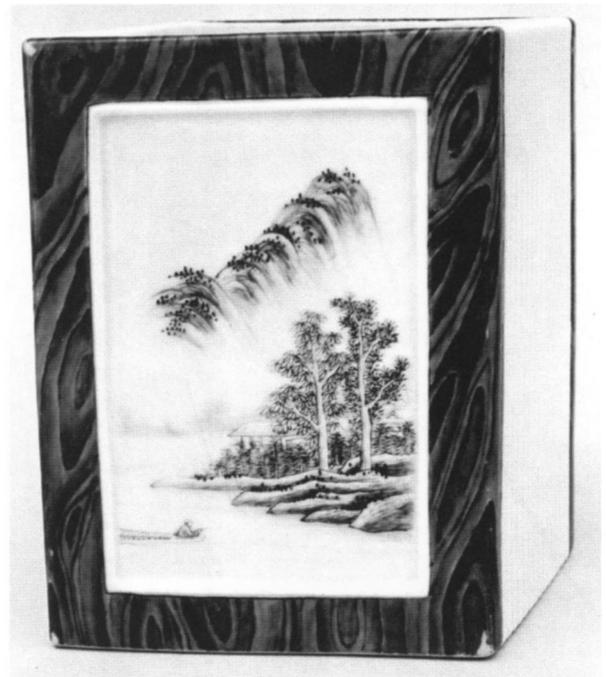
In the late Ming dynasty, studies on drama became popular among progressively minded scholars.¹¹⁵ Influenced by the pessimistic intellectual climate at that time, the theory of “tragedy” in literary criticism was in fashion, and some scholars criticized the “happy marriage” ending of *Western Chamber* as vulgar and deceptive. They advocated that the play would be improved if it concluded at the end of part IV, when the two lovers separated and Zhang Sheng dreamed of meeting Yingying on his way to the capital to take the government examination.¹¹⁶ They argued that since life is but a dream, what could be more proper than to end the romance in a dream sequence?

This tragic view was taken up by Jin Shengtian, who considered the last part redundant and in bad taste. As a consequence, he relegated it to the section of appendices in his edition. In fact, he believed that the last part of the text was aesthetically inferior and was written by a different playwright. This pessimistic and fatalistic view in literary criticism during the Qing dynasty also had an indirect influence on pottery painters in Jingdezhen, very likely through the dissemination of the Jin Shengtian edition, since it was virtually the sole edition being read at that time. The absence of the marriage scene in illustrations on porcelain during the late seventeenth and eighteenth century can be regarded as a reflection of this view among those who created Jingdezhen ceramics. Such examples can be seen on the tall cylindrical vase with twenty-four scenes from this romance (fig. 39) as well as on a square brush holder from the Yongzheng period (figs. 40 and 41).

On the blue-and-white cylindrical vase, twenty-four scenes from the *Western Chamber* were painted systematically to create an impressively unified form of decoration. These scenes, painted in oblong panels of equal size and shape, are



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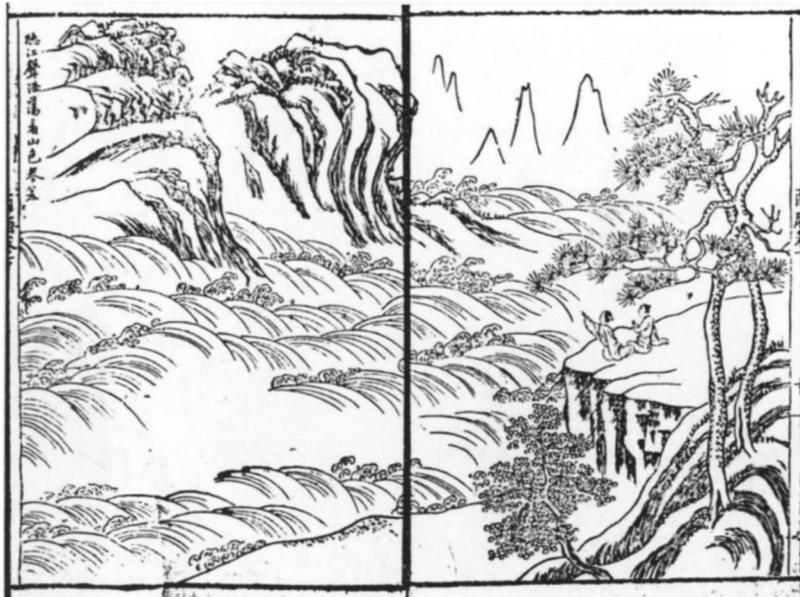
40, 41

Front and back of square brush pot, Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period (1723–35), polychrome ware, H. 14.2 cm. Shanghai Museum. From Shanghai Jinmin Bijutsu Shuppansha, ed., *Chūgoku tōji zenshū* (Kyoto: Binobi, 1981–86), vol. 21.

arranged in four registers over the entire body. The sequence runs from left to right and top to bottom, except in the bottom register, where the story begins from the middle section but the images are still arranged from left to right. The content of the twenty-four scenes are unevenly distributed between act 1 of part I to act 1 of part V in the play. Some acts are dismissed from representation altogether, while others, such as acts 1 and 2 in part I, and act 1 in part II, have more than one illustration each. Worth noting is that the sequence of the decoration on the vase ends with the scene in which Zhang Sheng asks his servant boy to send Yingying the message of his success in the capital examination. This scene is from part V, act 1, and it is the only illustration from the last part; even the marriage scene from act 4 of the same part is omitted. In the late Ming dynasty, pictorial representations of this romance usually conclude with the marriage of Zhang Sheng and Yingying, as seen in most woodblock illustrations of the time and in the trapezoidal box depicting twenty scenes discussed previously (fig. 28).

The unusual arrangement of content in this decorative scheme may be regarded as an indication of influence from the literary view of tragedy prevailing among early Qing scholars and propagated by the Jin Shentang edition. Furthermore, the uneven distribution of scenes on the porcelain also suggests that decorators no longer depended on woodblock print illustrations as their source. The practice of selecting one scene from each act and painting it in sequence, as seen on the trapezoidal box, was also abandoned.

The woodblock print industry had gradually fallen into disfavor during the Qing dynasty, and as a result, its output declined and deteriorated both in quality and in quantity. For this reason, decorators of Jingdezhen porcelain were apparently less inclined to utilize woodblock prints and instead turned directly to paintings. Judging from the distorted manner of delineating figures in the Chen Hongshou style, it is conceivable that the decorator of this Kangxi vase (fig. 39) was guided by fashionable painting styles. This trend was very likely supported and encouraged by Liu



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“Figures looking at scenery,”
 designed by Zhao Bi, carved by
 Huang Yingguang, woodblock print
 illustration to *Li Zhuowu xiansheng
 piping bei Xixiangji*, published by
 Rongyutang in 1610. Kunaichō
 Shoryōbu, Japan. Photo: Zhou Wu.

Yuan, the contemporary government-appointed porcelain designer in Jingdezhen. The classic, elegant appearance of decorations from the late Ming dynasty was thus perhaps out of date by this time.

The second example of omitting the marriage scene on porcelain decoration is found on a foursquare polychrome brush holder from the Yongzheng period (figs. 40 and 41). On this piece, two scenes are painted respectively on each side. “Zhang Sheng Traveling to Puzhou 蒲州” from the beginning of part I, act 1, is on one side (fig. 40). Riding a horse and followed on foot by his page, Zhang Sheng heads for Puzhou, in Shanxi province, to visit the Pujiu Temple, where a chance meeting with Yingying heralds the start of their romance. The composition of this illustration is similar to that on the top register of the cylindrical vase (fig. 39 right), and it is also comparable to woodblock illustrations in several editions of this drama from the late Ming dynasty,¹¹⁷ thus confirming the identity of the subject.

The theme of the decoration on the other side of the brush holder, however, is more obscure. Instead of depicting a highlight from the play, the monochrome painting shows a misty landscape in which a solitary man is seated in a small boat that drifts on the river (fig. 41). This desolate landscape scene compares well to the last page in the woodblock print illustrations of certain *Western Chamber* editions on which scholars commented, such as those of the 1610 *Li Zhuowu xiansheng piping bei Xixiangji* 李卓吾先生批評北西廂記 (*The Northern Style Romance of the Western Chamber Commented by Li Zhuowu*) (fig. 42) and the 1611 *Chongke piping huayi bei Xixiangji* 重刻批評畫意北西廂記 (*Recut, Commented and Illustrated Northern Style Romance of the Western Chamber*).¹¹⁸ Illustrations in these books exclude the marriage scene and replace it with landscape scenery, a dramatic change that could be considered an indication of the preference for a tragic ending to the romance. The decoration on this porcelain thus can be seen as a forlorn type of tragedy that late Ming intellectuals and Jin Shengtan preferred.

The base of this brush holder is inscribed with a six-character mark denoting Yongzheng imperial ware, and the decoration exhibits characteristics of imperial porcelain of that time. Such qualities as the subtle, delicate, and refined manner of

drawing, as well as the application of colors in the characteristic mixture of famille verte and monochrome ink are evident. These features relate the decoration of the brush holder to brush paintings of fine quality rather than to woodblock illustrations.

IV. The Influence of Performances and Local Dramas in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

From the Yuan dynasty onwards, the length of plays performed on stage underwent a gradual evolution. In the beginning, the entire play was acted out in one long performance that could span several days. By the Jiajing era in the Ming dynasty, however, the custom changed to performing only a selection of acts from one or more plays.¹¹⁹ This type of *zhezi xi* 折子戲 (theatrical selection) became increasingly popular and was commonly practiced during the Qing dynasty. Due to this change, subjects for performance became more selective and acting skills were stressed as a way to focus on the dramatic and entertaining aspects of the play. As a result, watching plays performed on stage replaced the habit of reading texts that had prevailed in the late Ming dynasty.

Furthermore, since the early Qing dynasty, popular local music and dramas flourished and became highly competitive nationwide. This situation became most acute in the eighteenth century, when the orthodox drama *Kunqu*, dominant since the sixteenth century, fell into decline and eventually gave way to other kinds of music and drama during the Qianlong period.¹²⁰ By the early nineteenth century, Anhui troupes were leaders of the theatrical world. In the capital city of Beijing, these troupes played a decisive role in the creation of one of the most powerful kinds of Chinese drama, namely, *Jingxi* 京戲 (Peking Opera). This conglomeration of different types of musical and performing techniques gathered from many local dramas and from *Kunqu* flourished after several decades of development. By the end of the nineteenth century it was an independent and widely popular form of drama. During the later decades of the Qing dynasty, Peking Opera also spread to other parts of China, including the middle and southern regions that were reached by the Shanghai troupes.¹²¹

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the government expressed disapproval of the *Western Chamber*. In 1735, for example, the Qianlong Emperor banned its translation into Manchu, and in 1867 the government placed it at the top of the list of “lewd books” to be censored. Consequently, copies of the romance were gathered and burned. The drama, however, continued to be very popular and “almost every household had a copy, and every person had a volume” (幾于家置一編，人懷一篋).¹²² It was also adapted into various kinds of local dramas, and it remains widely appreciated to this day.

Scenes from the *Western Chamber* appeared frequently in both domestic and export ware of the eighteenth century, at a time when the Chinese porcelain trade with Europe flourished, and it reached its climax in 1800.¹²³ Trade stopped abruptly after that year when Europeans successfully began producing their own porcelains. In the nineteenth century trade policies inevitably changed to coincide with the marked decline of the Chinese porcelain industry. This led to a severe drop in the quality and quantity of overall production. Nevertheless, novels and dramas continued to provide themes for porcelain decoration, and scenes from the *Western Chamber* continued to be reproduced but in far fewer numbers.¹²⁴

For the representation of *Western Chamber* themes on porcelain produced during this period, two new features are significant: the increased importance of Hongniang, and a sense of lighthearted humor. Based on the analysis of these two features, below is a discussion of how subject and style of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century porcelain illustrations were influenced both by orthodox plays performed on stage and by popular regional plays.

The Increasing Importance of Hongniang

Although not a main character, Hongniang has long been a popular figure among audiences of the *Western Chamber*. On stage, she plays a far more important role than is assigned to her in the text. According to a study by Jiang Xingyu 蒋星煜, Hongniang's role became increasingly important, from *The Story of Yingying to Wang's Western Chamber* and a variety of later revised versions of this play, and eventually she surpassed Zhang Sheng and Yingying to stand out as the protagonist in the one-act play "Hongniang."¹²⁵ A similar phenomenon also occurred in porcelain decoration. The increasing importance and popularity of Hongniang are emphasized by her more frequent appearance and the role she plays in compositions designed for porcelain. This is seen by the increase in the episodes in which Hongniang plays a key role, such as when she invites Zhang Sheng to the banquet in "Invitation to the Feast" (part II, act 2) (fig. 34), when she delivers Zhang Sheng's letter to Yingying in "Initial Expectations" (part III, act 1), "Further Expectations" (part III, act 4), and "Hongniang in the Dock" (figs. 7 and 8).¹²⁶ Even in scenes when Yingying and Hongniang appear together, the focus often shifts to Hongniang. One such example can be found in "Beauty's Enchantment" on the famille-verte jar of about 1700 (fig. 43). Contrary to the norm of depicting Hongniang standing beside Yingying with her back to the viewer (figs. 21, 32, and 35), here she is posed as if she is in the spotlight. Standing between Yingying and Zhang Sheng in the middle of a garden, she holds a fan and points to the abbot Facong, who is making a whimsical face at her. Yingying and Zhang Sheng are far apart at opposite sides of the scene. Their bodies bend inward as if forming a frame for Hongniang and echoing the bulging shape of the jar.



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43
Famille-verte jar decorated with
"Beauty's Enchantment," Qing
dynasty, ca. 1680, 32 x 25.5 cm. From
*Chinesisches Porzellan aus Beständen
des Museum für Kunsthandwerk
Frankfurt Am Main* (1992), pl. 276



44

44
Famille-rose plate decorated with
"Repudiation of the Billet-Doux,"
Qing dynasty, 1730–45, D. 22.5 cm.
Private collection. Photo: Hsu Wen-
Chin.

Later, in porcelains of the Yongzheng and Qianlong periods, Yingying is sometimes left out altogether and only Hongniang remains, as in the decoration of a famille-rose plate produced around 1730 to 1745 (fig. 44). This plate shows the scene of "Repudiation of the Billet-Doux," as in earlier pieces (figs. 24–26), but here Yingying is missing altogether. Only Hongniang appears in the garden holding a fan and pointing to Zhang Sheng, who is about to jump over the wall. She gestures with her other hand to her mistress, Yingying, who is hidden (and thus omitted) in the unrolled part of the picture scroll that forms the cartouche.

This famille-rose ware was intended for European export, and the decoration represents a combination of Chinese and Western styles. The central scene is Chinese, but the roses and lilies in the border as well as the rich, bright color and overcrowded composition reflect European tastes. The influence of Western art is one of the characteristics of Chinese porcelains produced since the seventeenth century. Originally confined to export wares, it was incorporated into domestic wares after the Yongzheng and Qianlong periods and became most prominent during the eighteenth century. The fashion of combining Western elements in Chinese porcelain decoration can be found on several works (figs. 45, 47, and 51), as discussed below.

Lighthearted Humor

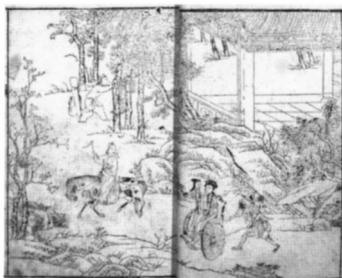
Contrary to the elegant and pellucid style of drawing on imperial wares, the decoration on folkwares of the eighteenth century was far more vigorous and ornamental. The designs were also sometimes crowded in composition and full of jest. One such example is a famille-rose vase of the Yongzheng period sold by Sotheby's, New York, in September 2000 (fig. 45). The body of this vase is painted in a distinct pink tone with three different scenes from the *Western Chamber* in the leaf-, fan- and peach-shaped cartouches reserved from the lotus- and peony-blossom background.



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A pair of identical famille-rose vases, Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period (1723–35). From Sotheby's sale catalogue *Fine Chinese Works of Art*, New York (20 September 2000), lot no. 125.



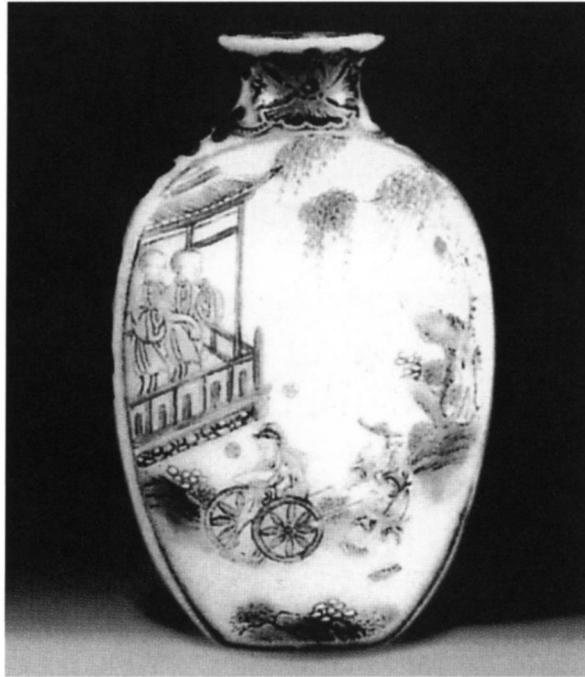
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Woodblock print illustration to "A Feast with Tears," from *Guanhuatang diliu caizi Xixiangji*, published by the Yingxiutang, early Qing period (1644–1911). National Palace Museum, Taipei. Photo: National Palace Museum, Taipei.

The scene in the fan-shaped frame represents the episode of the "Repudiation of the Billet-Doux," one of the most popular decorative motifs from this play during the Qing dynasty. It is the same scene depicted on plates in the Ashmolean Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum (figs. 25 and 26) but with reversed compositions and slight variations in detail. The image below this one, in the peach-shaped frame, represents a new scene not seen before. It shows a young scholar in a garden, kneeling to embrace the waist of a young woman. Apparently surprised and annoyed, the woman raises one hand over her head in a gesture to slap him. To the left, a young boy peeps from the window of the wall that encloses the garden. This new decorative motif probably depicts a scene from the beginning section of the episode of the "Repudiation of the Billet-Doux." In it Hongniang goes to the corner of the garden to see if Zhang has arrived. There, Zhang Sheng, who has just jumped over the wall of the garden, mistakes Hongniang for Yingying and embraces her.

The decoration enclosed within the large maple leaf is the most absurd and jocular of all. In this panel a young scholar is seated in a two-wheel carriage, a vehicle normally reserved for women and the disabled, while from a terrace high above ladies watch and bid him farewell. Judging from the context of the decoration on this vase, it is probably a comical representation of "A Feast with Tears" from part IV, act 3, of the *Western Chamber*. After Madame Cui forces Zhang Sheng to travel to the capital and take the examination as a condition for marrying Yingying, he makes the necessary preparations for his departure. He then goes with the Cui family and the abbot to the Pavilion of Farewell (*Shili changting* 十里長亭) for a parting feast arranged by Madame Cui. The decoration on this jar depicts the moment when the feast is over and Zhang Sheng is ready to take off for the capital.

The decoration here can be compared to the woodblock print illustration of the Jin Shengtian edition published in the early Kangxi period (fig. 46). In a different composition, this woodblock illustration shows Yingying accompanying Zhang Sheng beyond the Pavilion of Farewell in agony of their pending separation. The woodblock illustration of a person seated in a two-wheeled carriage pulled by a rickshaw driver is imitated on the vase, but the passenger has been comically switched from Yingying to Zhang Sheng.



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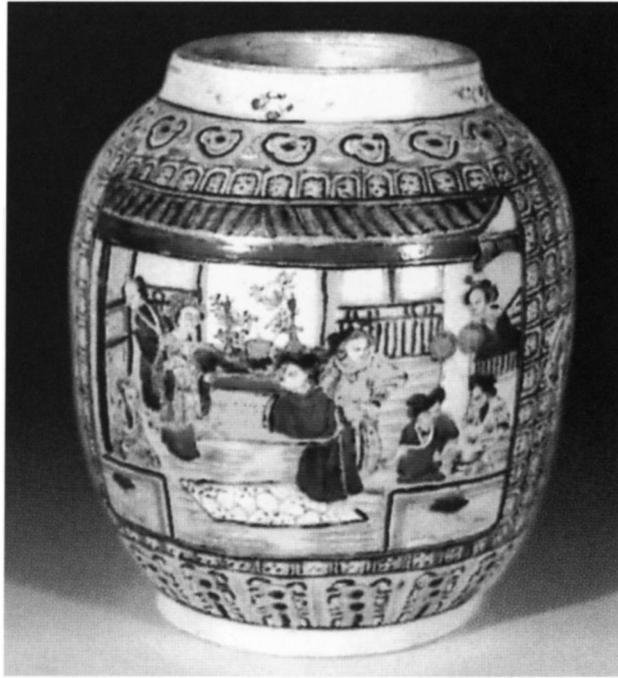
Snuff bottle, Qing dynasty, Qianlong period (1736–95), polychrome ware. From Tie Yuan, ed., *Ming Qing ciqu wenshi jiating—renwu wenshi juan* (Beijing: Hualing chubanshe, 2002), 202.

The humorous representation of dramatic scenes on this vase has converted the *Western Chamber* into something of a farce, and this phenomenon was most likely caused by the influence of local music and dramas popular at the time. Contrary to the elegant and graceful style of performance in orthodox dramas, local plays for peasants and common folk added extra jokes and jocular actions to the choreography in order to amuse rustic audiences. Since these plays were considered “unrefined” and vulgar by the upper classes, government edicts were issued prohibiting their performances, even though these proclamations were never totally effective.¹²⁷

What is interesting is that the unusual and jocular scene of Zhang Sheng seated in a wheeled carriage with Yingying and Hongniang watching from an upper terrace appears again, this time on a snuff bottle of imperial quality from the Qianlong reign (fig. 47). It is finely and elegantly crafted with innovative features characteristic of that period. The influence of European art can also be seen both in the design and color of the floral pattern at the neck of the bottle and in the logical perspective of the building in the landscape. The upper floor terrace is depicted on one side of the snuff bottle and is shown in a diagonal composition to indicate background perspective. This method differs markedly from the flat and shallow frontal view on the famille-rose vase (fig. 45). Another new feature in the Qianlong decoration is the contemporary appearance of Yingying and Hongniang. Wearing plain clothes of an eighteenth-century style, they seem unpretentious, as if they were drawn from real life. This decoration resembles brush painting in the way it shows a refinement of line drawing, a subtlety in color range, and an application of textured strokes.

It is recorded in *Yinliuzhai shuoci* that

figures painted on porcelains of the Qianlong period were incomparably refined. Fictional scenes were very popular and encyclopedic in content, including stories from the Han, Jin, and Tang periods as well as *Romance of*



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Famille-rose vase decorated with “The Glorious Homecoming,” Qing dynasty, Tongzhi period (1861–74). From Tie Yuan, *Ming Qing ciqu wenshi jianding—renwu wenshi juan* (Beijing: Hualing chubanshe, 2002), 206.

the Western Chamber, Romance of the Three Kingdoms, and The Water Margin, which were all considered superb.¹²⁸

乾隆人物工緻絕倫，故事則舉漢晉以來暨唐人小說，幾於應有盡有，下至西廂、三國、水滸之倫亦窮秀極妍，並稱佳妙。

The decoration of this snuff bottle of imperial quality is one of the finest examples among all such scenes.

In contrast to the decoration on the Qianlong snuff bottle, which was influenced by brush painting, the design on a vase of the Tongzhi 同治 period (1861–74) was probably taken directly from a stage performance (fig. 48). It shows the marriage scene from the last episode of “The Glorious Homecoming” (part V, act 4). In this scene, Zhang Sheng has been appointed to a top official position after passing the imperial examination, and he returns to the monastery. His rival in love, Zheng Heng 鄭恒, spread the rumor that Zhang was married in the capital. To clear his name, Zhang sent his old friend, General Du, to prove his innocence. Finally, with a joyful expression, the two lovers are brought together. As mentioned earlier, there was a tendency to dismiss the marriage scene in decoration during the early Qing dynasty due to the influence of the Jin Shengtian edition. In the performance of local plays, however, lighthearted and amusing programs were preferred; quite simply, general audiences did not appreciate or understand the theory of tragedy propagated by literary critics. Therefore, in the nineteenth century, when local plays were in vogue, porcelain decorators were influenced by popular taste, and the happy ending resurfaced as a welcome motif.

This marriage scene is depicted in a way that resembles a stage setting, with the roof, railings, and post represented realistically. A close-up view of the furnished hall shows figures wearing stage costumes with elaborate headdresses, garments, and make-up. Zhang Sheng, wearing a pink robe, bows to Madame Cui in front of



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“Xinhui diliu caizi Xixiangji” (second part), Taohuawu, Suzhou, Jiangsu province, Qing dynasty, ca. 1862–1908, woodblock print. From Yao Qian, *Taohuawu nianhua* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985).

the offering table with two red candles. The other figures, including General Du, stand around the hall. Each one is depicted convincingly and vividly, with different poses and gestures. The application of red, green, and yellow colors enhances the joyful atmosphere of the occasion.

The style of this decoration can be compared to that in a pair of New Year woodblock prints that were produced in the well-known center of Taohuawu 桃花塢 (Dock of Peach Flowers), located in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, during the Tongzhi and Guangxu (1875–1908) periods (fig. 49).¹²⁹ In this pair of woodblock prints, sixteen scenes from the drama (eight scenes in each print) are represented in sequence, with the titles and the names of the characters written in each compartment. Judging from the detailed depiction of props and settings, as well as the stage costumes and make-up, these scenes were likely based on actual performances of the Anhui Opera, which was popular in central China before it was absorbed into the Peking Opera.¹³⁰ The New Year woodblock prints shown here are characterized by detailed architectural features and inscriptions of scene titles and character names. Actors and actresses in this print wear costumes similar to those on the Tongzhi vase. In addition, the realistic interior setting is comparable to that seen on the vase. Based on these similarities, it is possible to assert that the Tongzhi vase decoration is related to Anhui Opera performances but not to those of the Peking Opera, which have different styles of costumes, props, and minimal stage sets as indicated primarily by the actors’ symbolic gestures.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Peking Opera was in vogue, scenes taken directly from stage performances were popular on porcelains, yet artists preferred action and military scenes, such as martial arts, fighting, or activities of soldiers and generals. The *Western Chamber*, categorized as a “non-military” drama, therefore, might have fallen into disuse, since none of its scenes as porcelain decoration has been identified with Peking Opera. This preference for military scenes also occurred in New Year woodblock prints of the late Qing dynasty, and decorations on porcelains might have been influenced by this phenomenon.¹³¹ Nevertheless, in the early twentieth century this drama continued to remain a favorite for porcelain decoration.¹³²

V. Professional Painters in the Making of “Art Pottery”: The Modern Period

In China during the twentieth century, socio-political events were closely reflected in art and strongly influenced developments in literature. Drama itself underwent immense change, chiefly with the introduction on a major scale of spoken drama in the European style and more recently of the almost wholesale rejection of traditional themes from Chinese drama.¹³³ The past, however, has not been completely forgotten. During the early twentieth century, scholars expressed renewed interest in China’s ancient drama, and their endeavors and research filtered back into live theater performances and into the creation of dramatic literature.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, the important role of traditional Chinese drama in society waned when the majority of audiences turned their interest towards Western types of performance and the cinema.

As a result of the general decline of interest in attending and performing traditional Chinese drama, combined with the deterioration of porcelain production in Jingdezhen during the 1930s and 1940s,¹³⁵ the number of porcelain wares decorated with traditional dramatic themes also decreased. Consequently, only sporadic examples of porcelain decorated with *Western Chamber* scenes can be identified.¹³⁶ Based on a study of these few examples, the specific feature in the development of porcelain decoration in this period can still be ascertained, that is, the role of professional painters in porcelain decoration and the emerging popularity of “art pottery.”

The involvement of professional painters in porcelain decoration can be traced to the Yongzheng period, when court painters were summoned to decorate enamelware for the emperor, and again in the Qianlong period, when they produced wares for both civilian and court use.¹³⁷ During the Qianlong period, polychrome ware became popular among commoners. In order to meet the demands of mass production, workshops were established that specialized in painting decorations on white porcelain bought from other Jingdezhen kilns. They operated until the government closures of the 1950s.¹³⁸ These workshops were called *Hongdian* 紅店 (red shops), because red or pink colors—the conventional symbols of happiness and auspiciousness—were the most commonly used pigments. All *Hongdian* were owned and operated by porcelain painters, and the larger ones hired apprentices for lower wages to run errands and do other menial tasks. From then on, painting on porcelain became an increasingly respected profession. Pottery painters also earned a higher salary than ordinary potters. Subsequently, this profession attracted talented artists from all over the country to Jingdezhen. As a consequence, the standard of porcelain decoration was elevated and in the early twentieth century reached a peak equaling the quality of brush paintings.¹³⁹ This type of porcelain with painted decoration by professionals became the major element of “art pottery” in modern China and has remained popular to the present.



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 Polychrome plate decorated with
 “Fulfillment of the Billet-Doux” by
 Jiang Zenglong, Qing dynasty, Jiaqing
 period (1796–1821), D. 16 cm. Photo:
 courtesy of the Oriental Ceramic
 Society of Hong Kong.

The refined and delicate decoration on the square brush holder (figs. 40 and 41) and the snuff bottle (fig. 47) of the Yongzheng and Qianlong periods was most likely executed by court painters of those respective times. In contrast, the enamel plate of the Jiaqing period (1796–1820) with “Fulfillment of the Billet-Doux” (part IV, act 1) was executed by *Hongdian* artists (fig. 50). This act describes how, after many torments and uncertainties, Yingying finally comes to Zhang Sheng’s room and fulfills her promise of spending the night with him. The main decoration on this plate shows Zhang Sheng embracing Yingying in his room, while Hongniang, who had encouraged Yingying to keep her promise, waits outside in the garden.

The reverse of this plate is inscribed with the four-character mark of its producer, *Jiang Zhenglong zhi* 江正隆製 (Made by Jiang Zhenglong), which can be regarded as an indication of the rising status and independence of porcelain makers in the eighteenth century. Judging from contemporary practices of that time, Jiang was most likely the owner of a workshop and the supervisor of its productions. The decoration might have been executed by one of his apprentices, but the porcelain piece would have been approved and given any final touches by Jiang himself before it was sold. Certain painters took up the practice of adding a signature on porcelain wares in the twentieth century, when this profession reached unrivaled prestige and proficiency.

The decoration here is not as exquisite and graceful as on the previous two wares, but it is still quite lively and explicit. The design of the plate as a whole is well conceived. For example, echoing the theme of the central motif, the shallow cavetto along the border of the plate is decorated with butterflies and flowers—symbols associated with seduction. Thus, the main scene in the center and the supporting border motifs match and form a cohesive whole.

The industry of book carving and woodblock print illustration faded in the mid-nineteenth century, when it was gradually superseded by machines as well as



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 Famille-rose plate decorated with “Repudiation of the Billet-Doux,” painted by Cheng Shuijin, 1946. From Hu Shangde, ed., *Jingyitang cangci* (Nanchang: Jiangxi meishu, 2001), pl. 130.



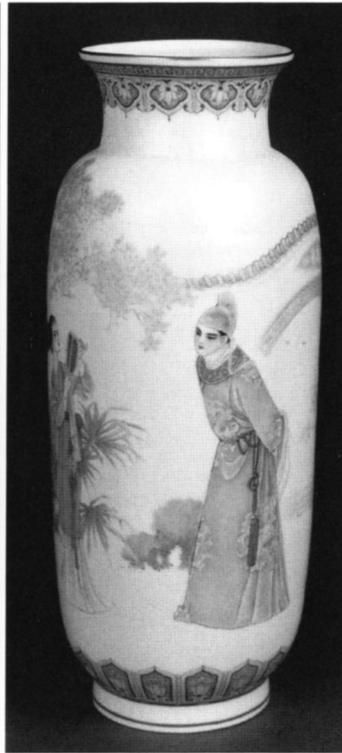
52
 “A Gaily Painted Pleasure Boat,” drapery trademark, product of Wanfong Machine Weaving and Print-dyeing Company, Shanghai, early 20th century. From Zuo Xuchu, ed., *Lao shangbiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai huabao chubanshe, 1999), 91.

by lithography and silkscreen printing introduced from the West.¹⁴⁰ Consequently, from the early twentieth century, similarities in style between porcelain decorations and new prints of European-style origin can be noted. The decoration of the polychrome plate by the renowned porcelain painter Cheng Shuijin 程水金 in 1946 is a fine example of this (fig. 51).¹⁴¹ The decoration shows a scene from “Repudiation of the Billet-Doux” and is painted in a composition different from the traditional designs seen on dishes (figs. 25 and 26). In the latter works, Zhang Sheng is shown at the moment he jumps over the garden wall. On this plate, however, Zhang is already in the garden, and Hongniang, standing between him and Yingying, mediates in this embarrassing situation. The four-character poem relevant to the scene, “Waiting for the Moon to Rise over the Western Chamber” (*Xixiang daiyue* 西厢待月), and the date and the name of the painter are inscribed on the plate. This same formula is used in traditional brush painting. The decoration on this plate, however, also shows Western influence in the inclusion of the acanthus leaf on the border and in the garden presented in perspective. The figures are also given a sense of three-dimensionality through the shading of their faces and clothes, which have photographic features similar to those in commercial posters of circa 1920 to 1949 (fig. 52).

Concomitant with the flourishing of foreign trade and commercial activities in Shanghai in the early twentieth century, Western aesthetics permeated and dominated popular art. Silkscreen-produced monthly calendars and commercial posters strongly reflect the realistic styles of Western painting.¹⁴² “Women of Beauty” continued to be the most popular genre for such commercial products, but scenes from traditional Chinese mythology, dramas, and novels were also represented.¹⁴³ The decoration of this 1946 plate reflects the art style that was popular in Shanghai at the time—a combination of Western decorative motifs and techniques allied with traditional Chinese subject matter.



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Polychrome vase decorated with “A Poem and Its Response,” painted by Fu Yaosheng, Jingdezhen, 1980–85. From *Xinhua yinghua—Ershi shiji Jingdezhen ciyi huigu* (Hong Kong: Jingdezhen Ceramic Museum; Art Museum, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2004), 251.

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Modern polychrome vase. From Zhang Ange, *Ming Qing youshang caici shizhen* (Nanchang: Jiangxi meishu chubanshe, 2002), 25.

The scene of Zhang Sheng greeting Yingying in the garden (from “A Poem and Its Response”) on a tall vase produced between 1980 and 1985 (fig. 53) demonstrates that the *Western Chamber* remained a well-liked theme. Figures were depicted in pseudo-Tang styles of clothes and hair fashions to give contemporary appeal to the scene. After 1949, with the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the application of Western techniques for classical figural scenes became the norm for Chinese painting.¹⁴⁴ This vase demonstrates the new orthodoxy in fashion. The seal of the porcelain painter Fu Yaosheng 傅堯笙 (1941–2003) is painted on the vase.¹⁴⁵ In addition, the mark for *Zhongguo Jingdezhen zhi* 中國景德鎮製 (Made in Jingdezhen, China) is carved on the base. This shows that the vase was produced in an officially designated kiln and was designed to meet the highest standards of this type of “art pottery.”

VI. Trading in Forgeries and the Enthusiasm for Studio Pottery: Contemporary Phenomena

After the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, Communist critics elaborated on political aspects of stage plays, giving special attention to their revolutionary implications. Henceforth, the *Western Chamber* was praised for its attitude toward social classes and its ability to fascinate the proletariat.¹⁴⁶ In the 1950s the *Western Chamber* was selected by leading Communist scholars as one of the ten great works of classical Chinese literature, and with the high esteem accorded this play, it once more became a popular subject for various types of artistic creation, including stage performances, illustrated picture books, and even stamps.¹⁴⁷ Interest in this story was similarly revived in the ceramic arts.

Since the early twentieth century, the Chinese government and private entrepreneurs have made efforts to introduce modern concepts and methods of industrial

design to the mechanical mass production of porcelain. Due to constant political turmoil, insufficient funds, and a lack of incentive and education, their efforts have met with setbacks and yielded limited results.¹⁴⁸ The situation has remained virtually the same until the present day, with porcelain production in Jingdezhen being mainly a handicraft industry. The utilization and practice of industrial design have been kept to a minimum, while the majority of quality products remain “art pottery” types painted with traditional techniques. The vase decorated by Fu Yaosheng is one such example (fig. 53).

Since the 1980s and after the much-criticized Cultural Revolution (1966–76), the Chinese government has adopted a more open policy towards certain aspects of social control. Consequently, current Western art and the trade in antique markets have begun operating again (being strictly banned from public view and operation before the 1980s). This situation, heralded by China’s economic improvement and a greater openness to foreign contacts and influences, has encouraged people to create artworks in imitation of contemporary Western fashions and once more to produce imitations of antique porcelains.

Under these circumstances, new polarized trends of development in the ceramic arts can be detected. Objects made in imitation of antiques, in addition to blatant forgeries and fakes, have come into vogue and have been mass-produced to maximize financial profit.¹⁴⁹ Another trend has been to create modern forms of studio pottery, in which practical function is not the main concern. This takes ceramics out of the codified confines of traditional vessel forms and brings it into the realm of pure artistic expression.¹⁵⁰ In both types of production, the *Western Chamber* has again captured the attention and imagination of potters.

On account of the popularity of the *Western Chamber*, fakes decorated with this theme in the styles of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century wares have been produced in a very skillful and deceptive manner. On closer examination, however, the typical traits of the forger can be discerned. One example is a polychrome vase decorated with the *Western Chamber* scene “Beauty’s Enchantment” (fig. 54), which is almost identical in shape and decoration to one in the Beijing Palace Museum dated to the Shunzhi period (fig. 32). Careful observation reveals it to be a recent forgery. Unlike the seventeenth-century work, the colors are gaudy and applied in thin layers, and the proportions of the vase profile are incorrect. In addition, other details reveal its recent production. For example, in the scene where the aged abbot Facong guides Zhang Sheng around the temple and points at the building, here he appears as a young man clothed in bright yellow, a pigment not used in the seventeenth century. The decoration of this modern vase thus fails to represent the original look and content of the scene by unconsciously altering details of the original, even though the porcelain painter earnestly tried to make an identical copy.

Contrary to the outright financial aim of blatant forgeries, the ceramic artist Li Guizhen 李貴鎮 (born 1964) has pursued the avant-garde artistic wave of studio pottery. He turned the *Western Chamber*, for example, into an installation work that set a world record for its length. Fascinated and inspired by the *Western Chamber* picture book by Wang Shuhui 王叔暉 (1912–1985),¹⁵¹ Li Guizhen fired 128 pieces of polychrome ceramic tiles (each tile measures 40 by 40 centimeters) from 1997 to 2004. Each tile is painted with one scene copied from the picture book and presents the romance in its pictorial entirety. In an exhibition Li placed the ceramic tiles on the floor and arranged them in the form of the Chinese title characters—*Xi* 西, *xiang* 廂, *ji* 記 (fig. 55). This impressive work attracted immediate attention and was accepted and listed in the *Guinness World Book of Records* as the longest tile in the world.¹⁵²

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that representations on porcelain of the story of the *Western Chamber* cannot be merely confined to a relationship with the thirteenth-century play by Wang Shifu. They also relate to earlier poems inspired by *The Story of Yingying* written in the Song dynasty as well as to dramas and storytelling performances from the Song and Jin dynasties. These early literary works clearly inspired painters and pottery decorators. The study also shows that the development of representations of *Western Chamber* themes on porcelains relates closely to the evolution of imagery and style in Chinese literature, drama, woodcut illustration, and painting.

To recap, the earliest representation of this story on the Cizhou pillow of the Jin dynasty (fig. 1) is probably inspired by *The Romance of the Western Chamber Medley*, the storytelling text that was popular at the time, while decorations on porcelains from the Yuan, Ming, and Shunzhi periods were inspired by Wang's *Western Chamber* written during the Yuan dynasty, as well as the Southern version of *Romance of the Western Chamber* written during the Jiajing period. Since the Kangxi period, local dramas and the new, modified edition by Jin Shengtian influenced porcelain design. This decorative theme remained in use in the twentieth and even now into the twenty-first century.

The iconography and styles of decoration in this group of porcelains show that Jingdezhen potters and porcelain painters sensitively reflected and responded to contemporary literature and dramatic developments as well as artistic fashions, and they were often inspired to create new products in addition to their conventional repertoire. This spontaneity and swiftness in production must be regarded as an important factor in the success of the Jingdezhen porcelain industry.

In researching this subject, it can also be observed that, although styles of porcelain decoration have long been closely related to contemporary artistic



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Li Guizhen, *Xi xiang ji* (“Romance of the Western Chamber”) installation, 1997–2004, consisting of 128 ceramic tiles, each 40 x 40 cm. Photo: CNS News Photo.

fashions, certain significant facets in their development are unique to the porcelain industry. For example, in the early Qing dynasty, when woodblock print illustrations for literary works suffered from severe decline due to highly restrictive government controls and manipulations, the application of narrative scenes from these very works on porcelain reached its golden age. Scenes from the *Western Chamber* were systematically used and porcelains were produced in sets to represent the complete story. In addition to the *Western Chamber* drama, other literary works banned by the government, such as *The Water Margin*, also enjoyed popularity as porcelain decoration. This kind of “counter-mainstream” phenomenon is an interesting topic worthy of further investigation, and I believe more studies on this theme will shed greater light on the porcelain industry in China as well as the complicated role and function it played in the cultural sphere.

The popularity of dramatic scenes as porcelain decoration for domestic markets seems to have been overlooked by modern scholars researching this subject, which led them to believe that scenes from this drama were mainly created for export wares and had disappeared from use by the nineteenth century.¹⁵³ This study shows, on the contrary, that narrative designs (with scenes from dramas, novels, and other kinds of literature) on Chinese porcelain originated with and was sustained primarily by domestic markets. This fashion has been most enduring in the case of *Romance of the Western Chamber*, from its establishment as a popular literary form in the Jin dynasty up to contemporary times. Although more popular during certain periods than others, the *Western Chamber* as a subject has never completely died out. While similar motifs from this romance were used and copied on porcelains from one generation to the next, new motifs were also created to reflect and satisfy contemporary interests and tastes. Unfortunately, only a fraction of the original productions remain for our contemplation and appreciation. This study demonstrates that as long as people are entertained by interesting plots in the story, graceful prose, and lyrical songs, and are moved by expressions of romantic love

and compassion for human suffering, the *Western Chamber* will remain in performances, publications, and porcelain decoration.

Thus, this romance has provided modern scholars with one of the richest sources of themes for Chinese porcelain decoration and for academic investigation and research. This study also identifies and interprets many subjects of porcelain decoration that have not been previously understood. It verifies some characteristic features of different periods, reconsiders the dating of porcelains from the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, and more fully presents the nature of the relationship between decorative arts and popular culture in China. The results of this study will hopefully be useful in future examinations of other kinds of narrative themes on Chinese porcelain. These themes may prove to be not only rich in content and vast in quantity but also just as fascinating and intriguing as *Romance of the Western Chamber*.

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NOTES

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1 Woodblock print illustrations of the *Western Chamber* have received much attention from modern scholars, and representative publications are as follows: Kobayashi Hiromitsu, “Kin Kôjû no hanga katsudô—Sutei 12 nen (1639) ‘Chô Shino sensei seihoku seshonibon’ no sasie o chuusin toshita ichi kosatsu (陳洪綬の版畫活動—崇禎12年(1639)刊「張深之先生正北西廂秘本」の插繪を中心とした一考察) (Chen Hongshou and woodblock prints—A study on the woodblock print illustration to the *Zhang Shenzhi xiansheng zhengbei Xixiang miben* published in 1639” (part 1), *Kokka* 1061 (1983), 25–39; (part 2), *Kokka* 1062 (1983), 35–51; Dawn Ho Delbanco, “The Romance of the Western Chamber—Min Qiji’s Album in Cologne,” *Orientalism* 14, no. 6 (1983), 12–23; Yao Dajuin, “The Pleasure of Reading Drama: Illustrations to the Hongzhi Edition of the Story of the Western Wing,” in Wang Shifu, edited and translated with an introduction by Stephen H. West and Wilt L. Idama, *The Moon and the Zither: The Story of the Western Wing* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), 437–68; Meng-ching Ma,

“Fragmentation and Framing of the Text: Visuality and Narrativity in Late-Ming Illustrations to The Story of the Western Wing” (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2006); Hsu Wen-Chin, “Zhuti di yiwei yu xingxiang zaisu—Qingchao Xixiangji banhua chatu yanjiu” 主題的易位與形象再塑—清朝西廂記版畫插圖研究 (Subject transformation and image reconstruction—Studies on woodblock print illustrations to *Romance of the Western Chamber* published in the Qing dynasty), *Meishu xuebao* 美術學報 (Art Journal) 2 (2008), 159–221. Hsu Wen-Chin, “Youqing zhihuan—Ming kanben Xixiangji banhua chatu tanjiu” 由「情」至「幻」—明刊本《西廂記》版畫插圖探究 (From Passion to Illusion—Studies of the Woodblock Print Illustration to Romance of the Western Chamber Published in the Ming Dynasty), *Yishuxue yanjiu* 藝術學研究 (*Art Studies*) 6 (2010), 63–160.

2 Since the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars have studied various decorative motifs in Chinese art, but it was not until the 1980s that narrative themes on Chinese porcelain and their deeper cultural meanings were recognized as subjects for serious study. Before about 1980, the West was virtually unaware of the narrative scenes from fiction on Chinese porcelain decoration. In many catalogues, they were simply described as “decoration with figures.” From December 1979 to January 1980, the exhibition *Romance Decoration on Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Chinese Porcelain* took place in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford University. This exhibition, in which I had the honor to serve as the guest curator, aroused awareness and interest in the rich literary content of Chinese ceramic decoration prior to the publication of an

- article by Craig Clunas, "The West Chamber: A Literary Theme in Chinese Porcelain," in *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* (London, 1981–82). Since the 1990s, further research into the iconography of narrative themes (and scenes) in the decoration of Chinese porcelain indicates an important advance in the study of Chinese art, in particular with regard to the field of Transitional Ware. Nowadays, many literary scenes in Chinese porcelain decoration previously ignored or misinterpreted are being identified and deciphered both in China and in the West. Some of the recently published books on Chinese porcelain decoration are as follows: Tie Yuan 鐵源, ed., *Ming Qing ciqi wenshi jian ding* 明清瓷器紋飾鑑定 (Authentication of the decorative patterns on porcelains of the Ming and Qing dynasties), (Beijing: Xinhua shudian, 2001); Kong Liuqing 孔六慶, *Zhongguo ciqi huihua yishushi* 中國瓷器繪畫藝術史 (History of the art of Chinese porcelain painting) (Nanjing: Dongnan daxue chubanshe, 2004); Lu Jun 陸軍, *Zhongguo gutaoci shiwen fazhanshi lungang* 中國古陶瓷飾紋發展史論綱 (A brief history of the development of ancient Chinese porcelain decoration) (Beijing: Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan, 2006).
- 3 Wang Shifu, *Moon and Zither*, 3.
 - 4 This piece of fiction is also known as *Huizhen ji* 會真記 (Story of an encounter with an immortal). It was translated by Arthur Waley in *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, compiled and edited by Cyril Birch (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 290–99; and Stephen Owen, ed., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1996), 540–49. Short fiction written in prose form was a genre of literature popular during the Tang dynasty and is called *chuanqi* 傳奇 ("transmission of the strange") in Chinese.
 - 5 Ibid., 540.
 - 6 Wu Guoqing 吳國欽, *Xixiangji yishu tan* 西廂記藝術談 (On the art of the *Romance of the Western Chamber*) (Guangdong: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1983), 7.
 - 7 Zhang Geng 張庚 and Guo Hancheng 郭漢城, *Zhongguo xiqu tongshi* 中國戲曲通史 (A history of Chinese drama) (Hong Kong: Shangwu Publishing, 1997), vol. 1, 180.
 - 8 *Medley of Romance of the Western Chamber* was introduced and translated by Ch'en Li-Li in *Master Tung's Western Chamber Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976). For further studies of this medley, refer to Kin Bunkyo 金文京, Akamazi Norihiko 赤松紀彦 et al., *Tō Kaiken Seisōki shokūchō (no) kenkyū* 董解元西廂記諸宮調研究 (Studies on the *Medley of Romance of the Western Chamber*) (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1998).
 - 9 There is some scholarly debate on the authorship of *Romance of the Western Chamber*. Wang Shifu is generally accepted as its author, but others believe the final part of the book was written either by Guan Hanqing 關漢卿, another celebrated playwright of the Yuan dynasty and senior to Wang, or under their co-authorship; see Duan Qiming 段啓明, *Xixiang lungao* 西廂論稿 (Draft on *Romance of the Western Chamber*) (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1982), 67. *Romance of the Western Chamber* by Wang Shifu has been translated into the following English editions: S. I. Hsiung, trans., *The Romance of the Western Chamber: A Chinese Play Written in the Thirteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1935; repr., 1969); Henry H. Hart, trans., *The West Chamber: A Medieval Drama* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1936); William Dolby, trans., *West Wing: China's Most Famous Play*, 1984; Wang Shifu, *Moon and the Zither*.
 - 10 For a study on the development of *Romance of the Western Chamber* in literature and its reception, see Wang Shifu, *Moon and Zither*, 3–27; Hsu Wen-Chin, "The *Romance of the Western Chamber*: Development in Literature and Its Reception in Society," *International Journal of Open University of Kaohsiung* 1, no. 1 (2003), 133–53.
 - 11 For a study and introduction to figural decoration on Chinese porcelain, see Liu Yi 劉毅, "Ciqi caishi renwu tuan qiyan chutan" 瓷器彩飾人物圖案起因初探 (A preliminary study on the cause of the emergence of figural decoration on porcelain), *Jingdezhen taoci* 景德鎮陶磁 (Jingdezhen ceramics), 1, no. 4 (1991), 40–47, 22; Tie Yuan, ed., *Ming Qing ciqi wenshi jian ding*, 1–7. For studies of Cizhou pillow decorations, see Roderick Whitfield, "Tz'u-chou Pillows with Painted Decoration," in Margaret Medley, ed., *Chinese Painting and the Decorative Style: Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia*, no. 5 (London: Percival David Foundation, London University, 1975), 74–94; Wang Congwei 王聰威, "Tang Song taoci zhuangshi fazhan di yanjiu—Yi Cizhou yao zhuangshi di yanjiu wei zhongxin" 唐宋陶瓷裝飾發展的研究—以磁州窯裝飾的研究為中心 (Studies on the development of pottery decoration in the Tang and Song dynasties focusing on Cizhou kilns) (master's thesis, Graduate School of Art History, National Taiwan University, Taipei, 1998).
 - 12 For a study of *shinü hua*, refer to Shan Guoqiang 單國強, "Gudai shinü hua gailun" 古代仕女畫概論 (On ancient paintings of beautiful women), *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊, 1995, 12.

- 13 Mary Fong pointed out that in Chinese painting, women are usually depicted as “beautiful but submissive, demure and agreeable, unassertive and pleasant,” and they are an “object of male gaze.” See Mary H. Fong, “Images of Women in Traditional Chinese Painting,” *Woman’s Art Journal* 17, no. 1 (1996), 22–27. Lora Blanchard also observed that “the elite women of the Song dynasty are generally depicted engaged in four types of feminine pastime: spending idle, reflective moments in gardens or bedrooms, playing musical instruments, dressing and adorning themselves, and working with cloth.” See Lora Blanchard, “Visualizing Love and Longing in Song Dynasty Paintings of Women” (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2001), 44.
- 14 The titles of these plays are “*Yingying liuyao* 鶯鶯六么” (Yingying’s dance), “*Hongniangzi* 紅娘子” (Crimson Maiden), and “*Zhang Gong Xixiangji* 張拱西廂記” (Zhang Gong’s *Romance of the Western Chamber*). See Zhang Geng and Guo Hancheng, *Zhongguo xiqu tongshi* 1, 180.
- 15 Tong Yi 仝毅, “Xixiangji xinzheng—Jindai ‘Pujiusi Yingying guju’ shiye di chutu he qianxi 「西廂記」新證—金代〈普救寺鶯鶯故居〉詩謁的出土和淺析” (A new discovery of the Western Chamber—The unearthing and analysis of the poem “Yingying’s Residence in Pujiu Temple”), in Han Sheng 寒聲, ed., *Xixiangji xinlun—Xixiangji yanjiu lunwenji* 西廂記新論—西廂記研究論文集 (New thoughts on *Romance of the Western Chamber*—An anthology of studies on *Romance of the Western Chamber*) (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 1992), 333–39.
- 16 According to the written records in *Daguan Lu* 大觀錄 (Record of wide spectacle), *Shuhua jianying* 書畫鑑影 (Connoisseurship of painting and calligraphy), and visual evidence from woodblock prints of the Ming dynasty, painters during the Song and Yuan dynasties, such as Chen Juzhong 陳居中, Wang Yi 王穉 (act. ca. 1279–1368), and Sheng Mao 盛懋 (act. ca. 1313–1362), reportedly did “portraits” of Yingying. See Dong Kang 董康, *Qianqiu jueyantu* 千秋絕艷圖 (Pictures of peerless beauties in history), vol. 2 (ca. 1900); Hsu Wen-Chin, “A Study on the Representation of *The Romance of the Western Chamber* in Chinese Painting,” *Zhenli daxue renwen xuebao* 真理大學人文學報 (Tamsui Oxford Journal of Arts) 3 (2005), 201–209.
- 17 The shape and style of this stoneware pillow is identical to another one decorated with a poem and an inscription dated 1204. Therefore, this pillow can be also dated to the thirteenth century, in the Jin dynasty. See *6000 Years of Chinese Art: Treasures from the Shanghai Museum* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1983), pl. 87. Archaeologists in China also discovered a group of Cizhou pillows, with a similar shape and decorative style, all painted with narrative scenes. Most are dated to the Jin dynasty, and others to the Yuan dynasty. See Zhang Ziyang 張子英 ed., *Cizhouyao cizhen* 磁州窯瓷枕 (Cizhou porcelain pillows) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 2000).
- 18 This translation is quoted from Chen Lili, *Master Tung’s Western Chamber Romance*, 26.
- 19 This scene was attributed to the story of Diao Shan 貂蟬 from the story of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* in *6000 Years of Chinese Art*, pl. 87.
- 20 The title of the *Western Chamber* in this anthology is *Xinkan zhaihui qimiao xishi chuanjia jinnang bei Xixiangji* 新刊摘匯奇妙戲式全家錦囊北西廂記 (Newly printed, selectively collected, marvelous, in stage performance style, *Romance of the Western Chamber*). This anthology was edited by Xu Wenzhou 徐文昭 and reprinted by the Zhan Family at Jinxiantang 進賢堂, Fujian, and is now in the collection of Real Bibliotheca de San Lorenzo del Escorial in Spain.
- 21 Paintings of beautiful women like this were particularly popular during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. A handscroll depicting sixty famous women is also in the collection of the Field Museum in Chicago. Another one, titled “One Hundred Beauties,” is in the National Palace Museum, Taipei; this one is inscribed with the spurious signature of the well-known Ming-dynasty painter Qiu Ying 仇英 (ca. 1494–1552).
- 22 This vase was collected by E. A. Strehlnee, a Latvian soldier who later opened an antique shop in Shanghai at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1930 he published the book *Guyuexuan mingci* 古月軒名瓷 (Illustrious wares of Guyuexuan) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 1930; repr. 1998). The vase is illustrated in this book with no date specified. “Guyuexuan” ware has been a matter of controversy. Most believe it is a collective term for enamel wares produced during the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods, which were imitated in later periods in great quantity. See E. A. Strehlnee, ed., *Guyuexuan mingci*, preface; and Sheila Yorke Hardy, “Ku Yueh-Hsuan: A New Hypothesis,” *Oriental Art* 2 (1949–50), 116–25.
- 23 There are about ten pieces of porcelain decorated with fictional and historical themes in this group of blue-and-white porcelains from the Yuan dynasty. They have been either excavated in China or are now held in private collections around the world. For illustrations of these porcelains, see Zhu Yuping 朱裕平,

- Yuandai qinghuaci* 元代青花瓷 (Blue-and-white porcelains of the Yuan dynasty) (Shanghai: Wenhui chubanshe, 2000), 228–31; Margaret Medley, *Yuan Porcelain and Stoneware* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), 13–31; Saitoku Tarô 齋藤菊太郎, “Genda sometsuki kô (1)—Jûyon seiki nakaba no Genseika to Genkyoku 元代染付考 (上) —十四世紀中葉の元青花と元曲” (Studies on ceramics of the Yuan dynasty—Mid-fourteenth century Yuan blue-and-white porcelain and Yuan drama, part 1), *Ko bijutsu* 18 (1967), 25–41; Saitoku Tarô, “Genda sometsuki kô (2)—Juyon seiki nakaba no Genseika to Genkyoku 元代染付考 (下) —十四世紀中葉の元青花と元曲,” *Ko bijutsu* 19 (1967), 59–74.
- 24 For an illustration of the jar, see Zhu Yuping, *Yuandai qinghuaci*, 229, pl. 8–58.
- 25 See Saitoku Tarô, “Genda sometsuki kô,” part 2, 59–74.
- 26 For Clunas’s confirmation, see Clunas, “West Chamber,” 71. Liu Liangyou 劉良佑 identifies the theme of decoration on this vase with the drama *Qingshanlei* 青衫淚 (Blue-shirt tears) by Ma Zhiyuan 馬致遠 of the Yuan dynasty. See Liu Liangyou, “Yuandai wanqi di zaju renwu qinghuaqi” 元代晚期的雜劇人物青花器 (Blue-and-white porcelain of the late Yuan period decorated with drama scenes), *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 故宮文物月刊 6, no. 4 (1988), 93. Ni Yibin agrees with this theory; see Ni Yibin, *Kantu shuoci* 看圖說瓷 (On narrative porcelain decorations) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), 95–106. Also see Yibin Ni, “The Shunzhi Emperor and the Popularity of Scenes from the Romance of the Western Wing on Porcelain,” in Michael Butler, Julia Curtis, Stephen Little, eds., *Treasures from an Unknown Reign: Shunzhi Porcelain, 1644–1661* (Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 2002), 71. His comparison of decoration on this vase with woodblock prints of a later period here does not seem to be an appropriate form of methodology.
- 27 Liu Lanhua 劉蘭華 and Zhang Bo 張柏, *Zhongguo gudai ciqi wenshi* 中國古代陶瓷紋飾 (Decorations on ancient Chinese pottery and ceramics) (Harbin: Harbin chubanshe, 1994), 211.
- 28 The drum-shaped censer is in the collection of the Jiangxi Provincial Museum and is illustrated in *Jiangxi Yuan Ming Qing qinghuaci* 江西元明清青花瓷 (Blue-and-white porcelain of the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties in Jiangxi province) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University and Jiangxi Provincial Museum, 2002), pl. 147. The Jingtai plate is illustrated in Hu Yanxi 胡雁溪, *Mingdai minyao qinghuaci daguan* 明代民窯青花瓷大觀 (Blue-and-white porcelain produced in private kilns during the Ming dynasty) (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 1993), pl. 71. Two ceramic fragments from the Hongzhi period painted with this drama are illustrated in Xiong Liao, ed., *Zhongguo lidai qinghua huadian* 中國歷代青花畫典, vol. 1, *Renwu dongwu juan* 人物動物卷 (Figure and animal section), 11, 13.
- 29 Margaret Medley, *The Chinese Potter: A Practical History of Chinese Ceramics* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1976); Feng Xianming 馮先銘, ed., *Zhongguo taoci* 中國陶瓷 (Chinese ceramics) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994), 467.
- 30 An example of such disparate decoration can be found on a bowl of the Kangxi period illustrated in Julie Emerson, *Porcelain Stories: From China to Europe* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum and University of Washington Press, 2000), 118.
- 31 The *Western Chamber* exerted a great influence on other works in Chinese literature. Both the structure and plot of the play were imitated by other playwrighters of the Yuan dynasty as soon as it was published. The *Western Chamber* became a paragon of Chinese drama of the *Caizi jiaren* 才子佳人 (talented scholar and beautiful woman) category and thus had a great impact on later literary works. See Zhao Chunqing 趙春寧, *Xixiangji chuanbo yanjiu* 西廂記傳播研究 (Studies on the dissemination of *Romance of the Western Chamber*) (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 2005), 222–37. The most famous drama of the Ming dynasty with the theme of “burning nighttime incense” is *Baiyue ting* 拜月亭 (Moon-worshipping pavilion). The content of this drama also may have been influenced by that of the *Western Chamber*. Examples of porcelain dishes of the late Ming period decorated with women burning nighttime incense in a garden can be found in the cargo of a sunken ship unearthed by Captain Michael Hatcher in 1981. For illustrations of and an introduction to these pieces, see Colin Sheaf and Richard Kilburn, *The Hatcher Porcelain Cargoes: The Complete Record* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1988), pl. 94; Julia Curtis, “Transitional Ware Made Plain: A Wreck from the South China Sea,” *Oriental Art* 31, no. 2 (1985), fig. 14, fig. 18b.
- 32 Examples of porcelain decorated with this theme are illustrated in the following publications: a blue-and-white round box of the Zhengde 正德 period (1505–1521) is in the Palace Museum, Beijing; see Kong Liuqing, *Zhongguo taoci huishua yishushi*, 154, pl. 5–16. For a blue-and-white bowl of the Xuande period, see Ma Xigui 馬希桂, *Zhongguo qinghuaci* 中國青花瓷 (Chinese blue-and-white) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999), pl. 181. For a *meiping* vase of the fifteenth century in the collection of the Tsui Museum of Art, see *The Tsui*

- Museum of Art* (徐氏藝術館) (Hong Kong: Tsui Museum of Art, 1991), pl. 71. For a blue-and-white jar of the fifteenth century, see the catalogue of a Sotheby's sale in *Fine Chinese Ceramics*, Hong Kong, 13 November 1990, pl. 133.
- 33 Liu Liangyou and Ni Yibin have different opinions about the subject of decoration on this vase. See note 26.
- 34 Jiang Xingyu 蔣星煜, "Hongniang di pengzhang, yuewei, huigui he bianzou" 紅娘的膨脹、越位、回歸和變奏 (The expansion, transcendence, regression and variation of Hongniang), *Xixiangji yanjiu yu xinshang* 西廂記的研究與欣賞 (Studies and appreciation of *Romance of the Western Chamber*) (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2004), 144–46 (originally published in *Hebei xuekan*, 1991, no. 3).
- 35 A traditional method of applying decoration on porcelain is to place a piece of painted paper face down on the porcelain, thus reproducing the design in reverse. For a study of this Shunzhi-period plate, see Hsu Wen-Chin, "Fictional Scenes on Chinese Transitional Porcelain (1620–ca. 1683) and Their Sources of Decoration," *Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 46 (1986), 21–22.
- 36 Victor Mair, *Painting and Performance: Chinese Picture Recitation and Its Indian Genesis* (Honolulu, 1988), 13; Hsu Wen-Chin, "A Study on the Representation of *The Romance of the Western Chamber* in Chinese Painting," 209–11.
- 37 Gu Xuanwei 顧玄緯, ed., *Xixiangji zalu* (Suzhou: Zhongfang shuzhai 眾芳書齋, 1569), compiled in Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 and Zhou Shuren 周樹人, eds., *Zhongguo banhuashi tulu* 中國版畫史圖錄 (Illustrated catalogue of the history of Chinese woodblock prints) (Shanghai: Zhongguo banhuashi she, 1940–42).
- 38 Chen Liu, *Taoya* (Taipei: Wuxing tushu chubanshe, 1995), 108. This book was translated by Geoffrey Sayer in *T'ao Ya; or Pottery Refinements* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1959).
- 39 Margaret Medley, "Sources of Decoration in Chinese Porcelain from the 14th to 16th Century," *Chinese Painting and the Decorative Style*, 65. Clunas, "West Chamber," 71.
- 40 Zhou Huixin 周心慧, ed., *Xinbian Zhongguo banhuashi tulu* 新編中國版畫史圖錄 (Newly compiled and illustrated catalogue on the history of Chinese woodblock prints) (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2000); Wang Bomin 王伯敏, *Zhongguo banhua tongshi* 中國版畫通史 (General history of Chinese woodblock prints) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei meishu chubanshe, 2002). The earliest extant woodblock print illustration to a dramatic work is the one-and-a-half pages of illustrations remaining in the incomplete imprint of the *Xinbian jiaozheng Xixiangji* 新編校正西廂記 (Newly annotated and commented *Romance of the Western Chamber*). This book can be dated to the late Yuan and early Ming dynasties. The remaining one-page illustration is on the theme of "Sun, the Flying Tiger, in His Camp" (孫飛虎昇帳) from part II, act 1 ("Alarm at the Monastery"); while the half-page illustration is perhaps from the scene of "Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense." For a discussion of this edition and the illustrations, see Duan Miheng 段涑恒, "Xinbian jiaozheng Xixiangji canye di faxian" 新編校正西廂記殘頁的發現 (The discovery of the remaining pages of the newly compiled and revised *Romance of the Western Chamber*), *Xiqu yanjiu* 戲曲研究, 7 (1982); Jiang Xingyu 蔣星煜, "Xin faxian zuizao di Xixiangji canye" 新發現最早的西廂記殘頁 (The remaining pages of the earliest edition of *Romance of the Western Chamber* recently discovered), *Xixiangji di wenxianxue yanjiu* 西廂記的文獻學研究 (Studies of the documentation of *Romance of the Western Chamber*) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997), 25–30.
- 41 For example, identical compositions can be found on a Yuan-dynasty blue-and-white jar decorated with the story of Guigu xiashan 鬼谷下山 (Guigu coming from his mountain retreat) and the woodblock print illustration of the same theme in *Xinkan quanxiang pinghua Leyi tu* 齊七國春秋 (Newly printed, fully illustrated, narrative fiction of how Leyi took over the state of Qi in the Spring and Autumn periods) of the same period. See Ni Yibin, *Kantu shuoci*, 89–91.
- 42 For the division of labor in the sixteenth century, see Margaret Medley, "Organization and Production at Jingdezhen in the Sixteenth Century," in *The Porcelain of Jingdezhen*, edited by R. Scott (London: Percival David Foundation, London University, 1993), *Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia*, no. 16, 69–82. My own study on the pottery production in the town of Yingge in Taiwan reveals that the system of labor division employed in decoration was still practiced in the twentieth century. See Hsu Wen-Chin, "Tonghua yu fanggu zhijian—1930–60 niandai Yingge wanpan shengchan ji qishang tuhui wenshi zhi yanjiu" 同化與倣古之間—1930–60年代鶯歌碗盤生產及其上圖繪紋飾之研究 (Between conformation and imitating antiquities—Production of ceramic bowls and plates in Yingge between the 1930s and 1960s), *Yingge zhitao liangbainian guoji yantaohui lunwenji* 鶯歌製陶兩百年國際研討會論文集 (International symposium for the bicentennial anniversary of pottery making in Yingge) (Yingge: Yingge taoci bowuguan, 2004), 162–96.

- 43 These theater pillows were unearthed in the provinces of Jiangxi, Anhui, Hubei, and Shanxi. For discussions on them, see Wang Qingzheng 汪慶正, *Jingdezhen di Yuandai ciqi* 景德鎮的元代瓷器 (Yuan dynasty porcelain produced in Jingdezhen), in *Zhongguo taoci quanji—Yuan* 中國陶瓷全集—元 (The complete collection of Chinese ceramics—Yuan dynasty) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 2002), vol. 2, pls. 6, 7, 8; and Chen Jiejun 陳階晉, “Gushi di zhenxiang yu yihan—Shitan Yuandai gongyi zuopin zhongdi jijian renwu tuxiang yu dangshi wenxue zhijian di guanlian” 故事的真相與意含—試談元代工藝作品中的幾件人物圖像與當時文學之間的關連 (Reality and connotation in stories—Analysis of the relationship between figural images in the arts and crafts of the Yuan dynasty and contemporary literature), part 2, *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 220–221 (2001), 69.
- 44 A study of this pillow can be found in Fengchengxian lishi wenwu chenglieshi 豐城縣歷史文物陳列室, “Jiangxi Fengcheng faxian Yuan yingqing diaosu xitaishi cizhen” 江西豐城發現元影青雕塑戲臺式瓷枕 (The shadow-white porcelain pillow in the form of a theater stage produced in the Yuan dynasty and discovered in Fengcheng, Jiangxi), *Wenwu* 文物, 8 (1984), 82–83. See also note 43.
- 45 The latter “selection” form of drama (*zhezhi xi* 折子戲) did not become popular until the Jiajing 嘉靖 period (1522–1566) in the Ming dynasty. For studies and a discussion of the nature and performance of *Zhezhi xi*, see Zhou Yude 周育德, *Zhongguo xiqu wenhua* 中國戲曲文化 (On the culture of Chinese drama) (Beijing: Zhongguo youyi chubanshe, 1996), 96, 97; Wang Anqi 王安祈, “Zailun Mingdai zhezhi xi” 再論明代折子戲 (Rethinking selected-act plays of the Ming dynasty), *Mingdai xiqu wulun* 明代戲曲五論 (Five discussions of Ming dramas) (Sanchong: Da’an chubanshe, 1990), 1–47. For an introduction to the dissemination of *Zhezhi xi* on the *Western Chamber*, see Zhao Chunling, *Xixiangji chuanbo yanjiu*, 114–23.
- 46 For studies of this mural painting, see Shanxisheng kaogu yanjiusuo 山西省考古研究所, “Shanxi Yuncheng Xilizhuang Yuandai bihuamu” 山西運城西里庄元代壁畫墓. (The Yuan dynasty tomb with mural paintings discovered in Xilizhuang, Yuncheng, Shanxi), *Wenwu* 4 (1988), 76–78, 90; Yang Fudou 楊富斗, “Yuncheng Xilizhuang Yuanmu xiju bihua zhouyi” 運城西里莊元墓戲劇壁畫繙議 (On the theatrical mural painting from the Yuan tomb discovered in Xilizhuang, Yuncheng), *Zhonghua xiqu* 中華戲曲 5, no. 1 (1988), 100–11.
- 47 Tang Suying 湯蘇嬰, “Renwu tcai tu’an di Yuan qinghua ji xiangguan wenti” 人物題材圖案的元青花及相關問題 (About blue-and-white porcelain decorated with figural scenes and some related issues), *Jingdezhen taoci* 5, no. 2 (cumulative issue no. 68), 44–46. Fang Lili 方李莉, *Jingdezhen minyao* 景德鎮民窯 (Folk kilns in Jingdezhen) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 2002).
- 48 Zhou Xinhui 周心慧, *Zhongguo gubanhua tongshi* 中國古版畫通史 (History of ancient Chinese woodblock printing) (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2000), 128–226. For introductions to Ming-dynasty woodblock print illustrations of this drama, see note 1.
- 49 For the illustration of the woodblock print illustration “Hongniang in the Dock” in this edition of the Northern story of the *Western Chamber*, see Zhou Wu 周蕪, *Huipai banhuashi lunji* 徽派版畫史論集 (Essays on the history of woodblock prints of the Hui school) (Anhui: Anhui renmin chubanshe, 1983), pl. 27. For a discussion of Huizhou woodblock prints, see Hiromitsu Kobayashi and Samantha Sabin, “The Great Age of Anhui Printing,” in James Cahill, ed., *Shadows of Mt. Huang: Chinese Painting and Printing of the Anhui School* (Berkeley: University Art Museum, 1981), 25–33; Zhou Wu, *Huipai banhuashi lunji*; Zhou Xinhui, *Zhongguo gubanhua tongshi*, 156–70. For a discussion of the woodblock print illustrations in the *Wanhuxuan* edition, see Hsu Wen-Chin, “Youqing zhihuan,” 86–88.
- 50 Medley, *Chinese Potter*, 192–95; Feng Xianming, ed., *Zhongguo taoci*, 476.
- 51 For an introduction to the “guanda minshao” system in the late Ming dynasty, see Yu Pei-Chin, “The Manufacture of Imperial Porcelain at Civilian Kilns and the Stylistic Impact on Late Ming Period Wares,” *Orientalism* (October 1995), 362–64. Also see Medley, “Organization and Production at Jingdezhen,” 69–82.
- 52 Chen Shou-yi, *Chinese Literature: A Historical Introduction* (New York: Ronald Press, 1961); William Dolby, *A History of Chinese Drama* (London: P. Elek Press, 1976). See also Cai Hebi 蔡和璧, “Youguan Hongwu Yongle guanyao di beijing” 有關洪武、永樂官窯的背景 (About the background of the imperial kilns in the Hongwu and Yongle reigns), *Hongxi wenwu* 鴻禧文物, inaugural issue (1996), 130, 131.
- 53 Chen Qinghuang 陳慶煌, *Xixiangji di xiqu yishu* 西廂記的戲曲藝術 (The art of *Xixiangji* drama) (Taipei: Liren shuju, 2003), 355–56. Zhao Chunling, *Xixiangji chuanbo yanjiu*, 63–159.
- 54 For a study of the bibliography of this drama, see Han Sheng 寒聲, “Xixiangji gujin banben mulu jiyao” 西廂記古今版本目錄輯要 (Selected catalogues of different editions of Romance of the Western Chamber), in *Xixiangji xinlun*.

- The most carefully annotated catalogue for Ming editions of the *Western Chamber* is Denda Akira 傳田章, ed., "'Zotei' Mingkan gen zatsugeki saisoki mokuroku (增訂) 明刊元雜劇西廂記目錄 (Bibliography of *Romance of the Western Chamber* published in the Ming dynasty)" (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1979, repr. of 1969 edition). For comments on its popularity, see S. I. Hsiung, trans., *Romance of the Western Chamber*, xviii.
- 55 Zhang Mangong 張滿弓, ed., *Gudian wenxue banhua* 古典文學版畫 (Woodblock print illustrations of classical literature) (Kaifeng: Henan daxue chubanshe, 2004), Xiqu 戲曲 (Drama) 1, Xuyan 序言 (Preface), 2; Shoudu Tushuguan 首都圖書館, ed., *Guben xiqu banhua tulu* 古本戲曲版畫圖錄 (Illustrated catalogue of ancient woodblock prints of dramas) (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 1997); Zhou Wu 周蕪, *Zhongguo guben xiqu chatuxuan* 中國古本戲曲插圖選 (Selected illustrations to classical Chinese dramas) (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 1985).
- 56 For a study of the changing format of woodblock print illustrations to the *Western Chamber* in the Ming dynasty, see Ma Mengjing 馬孟晶, "Ermu zhiwan—Cong Xixiangji banhua chatu lun wan Ming chuban wenhua dui shijuexing zhi guanzhu" 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 (Looking through the frame: Visuality in late-Ming illustrations to the Story of the Western Wing), *Meishushi yanjiu jikan* 美術史研究集刊, 13 (2002), 201–79; Hsu Wen-Chin, "Youqing zhihuan," 29–106.
- 57 A Jiajing-period bowl decorated with the scene of "Zhang Sheng Greeting Yingying and Hongniang in the Garden" is identified by Ni Yibin in his article "Shunzhi Emperor," in Butler et al., *Treasures from an Unknown Reign*, 72, fig. 6. In the same article Ni identifies two more scenes with the *Western Chamber*: "The Triumphant Homecoming of Zhang Sheng" 衣錦榮歸 and "Captive Bandit in Front of General Du" 杜將軍捉飛虎至帳跪問. However, I suspect the latter two attributions. For example, I do not agree with his attribution of the scene on the Foundation Baur bowl as "The Triumphant Homecoming of Zhang Sheng." The illustration depicts twelve figures proceeding towards a pavilion in which a sage is seated. It is my feeling that this scene is probably connected to a story with Daoist implications rather than to this romance. I also do not agree with his attribution of the polychrome dish decoration as "Captive Bandit in Front of General Du." In my studies, the scene of a general seated in front of a tent and interrogating a half-naked man kneeling before him is related to the woodblock print illustration to *Xinkan da Song yanyi zhongxing yingleizhuan* 新刊大宋演義中興英烈傳 (Newly printed biography of the heroic martyr in the revival of the Song dynasty). For the illustration of this woodblock print, see Zhou Xinhui 周心慧, *Guben xiaoshuo banhua tulu* 古本小說版畫圖錄 (Pictorial catalogue of woodblock illustrations of ancient fiction) (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2000), 141. This biography, compiled by Xiong Damu 熊大木 of the Ming dynasty and published in 1552 in Fujian, is of the well-known Southern Song general Yue Fei 岳飛 (1103–1142), who, despite defeating the enemy in battle, was betrayed by his comrade and wrongly beheaded by the government. Yue Fei thus became a national hero to later generations. The general in the Jiajing dish decoration is more likely to be Yue Fei than General Du of the *Western Chamber*.
- 58 For an introduction to the art of the woodblock print illustration of this edition, see Yao Dajun, "Pleasure of Reading Drama," in Wang Shifu, *Moon and Zither*, 437–68.
- 59 Feng Jikai 馮驥才, ed., *Zhongguo muban nianhua jicheng* 中國木版年畫集成 (Collection of Chinese New Year woodblock prints) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), no. 1, volume on Yangliuqing 楊柳青.
- 60 For discussions of wares from the Transitional Period, see Soame Jenyns, "The Wares of the Transitional Period Between the Ming and the Qing, 1620–1683," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* IX (1955); Richard Kilburn, *Transitional Wares and Their Forerunners* (Hong Kong: Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong, 1981); Stephen Little, *Chinese Ceramics of the Transitional Period: 1620–1683* (New York: China Institute in America, 1983); Margaret Medley, "The Ming-Qing Transition in Chinese Porcelain," *Arts Asiatiques* 42 (1987), 65–76; *Seventeenth Century Jingdezhen Porcelain from the Shanghai Museum and the Butler Collections: Beauty's Enchantment* (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2005).
- 61 Chinese scholars previously thought that the porcelain industry in Jingdezhen came to a complete halt during the Transitional Period, so very little research was conducted on the ceramic production of this era. Extensive studies in the West, however, have provided evidence to the contrary, leading to a new understanding of the Chinese porcelain industry during the seventeenth century. An introduction to this historical revision is in Butler et al., *Treasures from an Unknown Reign*, 12–23. Also see Hsu Wen-Chin, "Mingmo Qingchu Jingdezhen

- ciqizhong shimin quwei di xingqi 明末清初景德鎮瓷器中市民趣味的興起” (Reflections on civilian interest in Jingdezhen porcelain in the late Ming and early Qing period), *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 7, no. 4 (1990), 81–118.
- 62 The Rolwagen vase and the bottle vase are studied and illustrated in Hsu Wen-Chin, “Fictional Scenes,” pls. 22, 45. The third one is illustrated in Yibin Ni, “Shunzhi Emperor,” 73. This list is not comprehensive, however, as the decoration on the blue-and-white brush pot in the collection of Xiao Naiyue 蕭乃岳 (in Singapore) can also be identified with “The Glorious Homecoming” from part V, act 4, of the *Western Chamber*. Its composition is comparable to that of the same theme in the 1498 woodblock print illustration. For an illustration of this brush pot, see Fang Lili, *Jingdezhen minyao*, pl. 68. The graceful and delicate decoration on the blue-and-white brush pot in the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Köln, has also been identified with “A Feast with Tears” from this drama. See Adele Schlombs, *China und die Hoffnung auf Glück: Die Sammlung Peter und Irene Ludwig* (Heidelberg: Kehrer, 2000), pl. 31. Although its decoration represents a farewell scene between a young scholar and his lover, far too many attendants are present in the scene, which makes the attribution questionable; therefore, I do not accept it as a scene from the *Western Chamber*.
- 63 Hsiao Li-ling 蕭麗玲, “Banhua yu juchang—cong Shidetanben Pipaji kan Wanli chuqi xiqu banhuade tese 版畫與劇場—從世德堂本琵琶記看萬曆初期戲曲版畫的特色” (Woodblock prints and theater: Characteristics of the “drama illustrations” of the early Wanli period as revealed in the Shitang edition of the *Pipaji*), *Yishuxue* 藝術學 5 (1991), 133–84; Hsu Wen-Chin, “Youqing zhihuan,” 81–85.
- 64 See note 60. “High Transitional porcelain” also shows the application of V-shaped dots on the ground, mountain-tops surrounded by clouds to separate the beginning and end of scenes, and incised decorations around the mouth and base of the porcelain.
- 65 For a more detailed study of this vase and its comparison with the woodblock print in the *Wanhuxuan* edition, see Hsu Wen-Chin, “Fictional Scenes,” 12–14, pls. 22, 23.
- 66 Stephen Little, “Narrative Themes and Woodblock Prints in the Decoration of Seventeenth Century Chinese Porcelain,” in Sir Michael Butler et al., *Seventeenth Century Chinese Porcelain from the Butler Family Collection* (Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 1990), 22. Tie Yuan and Xi Ming, *Minguo ciqu jiangding—Taiyou, caihui, qixing* 民國瓷器鑑定—胎釉、彩繪、器型 (Inspections of porcelain from the Republican period—Glaze, polychrome painting, and form) (Beijing: Hualing chubanshe, 2004).
- 67 Hsu Wen-Chin, “Social and Economic Factors in the Chinese Porcelain Industry in Jingdezhen During the Late Ming and Early Qing Period, ca. 1620–1683,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (of Great Britain and Ireland) 1 (1988), 137; Evelyn S. Rawski, “China in Turmoil: Economy, Society and Politics During the Qing Conquest,” in *Treasures from an Unknown Reign*, 24–35. For studies of historical aspects of seventeenth-century China, see S.A.M. Adshad, “The Seventeenth-Century General Crisis in China,” *Asian Profile* 1, no. 2 (1973); Frederick E. Wakeman, “China and the 17th Century Crisis,” *Late Imperial China* 7, no. 1 (1986).
- 68 This album has been studied and published in the following articles: Edith Dittrich, “Hsi-hsiang Chi Chinesische Farbholzschnitt von Min Ch’i-chi 1640,” *Monographien des Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst*, vol. 1 (Köln: Museen der Stadt Köln, 1977); Dawn Ho Delbanco, “The Romance of the Western Chamber: Min Qiji’s Album in Cologne,” *Orientalia* 14, no. 6 (1983), 12–23; Kobayashi Hiromitsu, “Meidai hanga no seika—Ke-run shiritsu touga bijutsukan shoso Sutei 13 nen (1640) kan Min Qiji bon seishouki Hanga ni tsuite (明代版畫の精華—ケルン市立東亞美術館所藏崇禎十三年 [1640] 刊閔齊伋本西廂記版畫について),” *Ko bijutsu* 古美術 85 (1988), 32–50; Gu Bingxin 顧柄鑫, “Wuxing yuwuben Xixiangji chatu chutan” 吳興遇五本「西廂記」插圖初探 (A study on the woodblock print illustration to the Yuwu edition of *Romance of the Western Chamber* published in Wuxing), *Mingkan caise taoying Xixiangjitu* 明刊彩色套印西廂記圖 (Polychrome woodblock print illustration to *Romance of the Western Chamber* published in the Ming dynasty) (Tianjin: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1991); Dong Jie 董捷, *Mingqingkan Xixiangji banhua kaoxi* 明清刊西廂記版畫考析 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei meishu chubanshe, 2006), 107–42; Hsu Wen-Chin, “Youqing zhihuan,” 107–113.
- 69 Wu Hong, *The Double Screen* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 247.
- 70 For an introduction to and studies of the Hatcher wreck discovery, see Julia Curtis, “Transitional Ware Made Plain: A Wreck from the South China Sea,” *Oriental Art* 31, no. 2 (1985), 161–73. See Sheaf and Kilburn, *Hatcher Porcelain Cargoes*. Kilburn believes that the porcelains in the shipwreck were most likely manufactured between 1640 and 1645 (*ibid.*, 30).

- 71 For the identification and study of these two dishes, see Hsu Wen-Chin, "Fictional Scenes," 20–21.
- 72 Ibid., 20.
- 73 Feng Xianming, ed., *Zhongguo taoci*, 536, 544.
- 74 Denda Akira, "Zotei" Mingkan gen zatsugeki saisoki mokuroku," 107, 108. This edition was first published in the Chongzhen period by Chen Changqing in the Chunchengtang 存誠堂 and was reprinted several times in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. The late Ming edition of this book in the collection of the Beijing National Library is not recorded by Denda Akira or other scholars who have studied the *Western Chamber*.
- 75 This box is illustrated in Takushin Kushi 久志卓真, *Shina Minshuo toji zukan* 明初陶瓷圖鑑 (Illustrated catalogue of the pottery and porcelain published in early Ming period) (Tokyo: Hounsha showa, 1943), amendment, pl. 6. He dates this box to the Chenghua period. What is interesting is that the other porcelains he dated to the Chenghua period and illustrated in the same amendment as this box (e.g., 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14–16) all show characteristics of the Tianqi and Chongzhen periods but not of the Chenghua period. This box is also studied and illustrated in my article, "Fictional Scenes," 23–25, pls. 46–48, 50–51. In this article, the box is dated to the early Kangxi period.
- 76 The refined round box inscribed with the six-character Chongzhen reign mark, formerly in the E. T. Chou collection, is evidence of this decorative manner and is also useful for dating this kind of porcelain. (For an illustration of this box, see Little, *Chinese Ceramics of the Transitional Period*, 13, figs. 14, 15). Porcelains decorated with similar meandering border patterns can be seen in a holder dated 1635 (Kilburn, *Transitional Wares and Their Forerunners*, 132) and in Sheaf and Kilburn, *Hatcher Porcelain Cargoes*, pl. 81. This kind of pattern was particularly popular in porcelains made for the Japanese market during the Chongzhen period; see Saitoku Tarô, *Ko-sometsuke shôzui* 古染付祥瑞 (Chinese blue-and-white) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1972).
- 77 One such example inscribed with the Shunzhi reign mark is illustrated in Masahiko Satô, *Chinese Ceramics* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Heibonsha, 1981), 208, pl. 290.
- 78 Two examples of early Kangxi round boxes are introduced and illustrated in *Seventeenth Century Jingdezhen Porcelain*, pls. 86, 88. One of them is decorated with the scene "Beauty's Enchantment" on the lid.
- 79 The twenty acts of Wang Shifu's drama are: part I, act 1, "Beauty's Enchantment"; act 2, "Renting Quarters in the Monastery"; act 3, "A Poem and Its Response"; act 4, "Interruption of the Consecration Service": part II, act 1, "Alarm at the Monastery"; act 2, "Invitation to the Feast"; act 3, "The Breach of Promise"; act 4, "Love and the Lute": part III, act 1, "Initial Expectations"; act 2, "Fuss about the Billet-Doux"; act 3, "Repudiation of the Billet-Doux"; act 4, "Further Expectations": part IV, act 1, "Fulfillment of the Billet-Doux"; act 2, "Hongniang in the Dock"; act 3, "A Feast with Tears"; act 4, "A Surprising Dream": part V, act 1, "Report of Success at the Examination"; act 2, "Guessing the Meaning of the Gift"; act 3, "Contest for the Beauty"; act 4, "The Glorious Homecoming." The translation of these titles is adapted from S. I. Hsiung, *Romance of the Western Chamber*. Hsiung's translation is based on Jin Shengtian's edition published around 1656.
- 80 The Manchu emperors of the Qing dynasty were lovers of drama and patrons of traditional Chinese culture. The government, however, displayed a duality of attitudes towards dramas. While this duality had been so in previous dynasties, much sterner measures were now being taken. Statutes prohibiting and controlling dramas, plays, and actors abound in Qing regulations, and thousands of books were destroyed. See Dolby, *History of Chinese Drama*, 114, 134–41.
- 81 Wei Jinxi 魏晉錫, *Xuezheng quanshu* 學政全書 (Plenary book of government administration), chap. 7, "Shufang jinli" 書坊禁例 (Interdictions on book publication), Qing dynasty. Quoted from Wu Guoqin, *Xixiangji yishu tan*, 150.
- 82 Zhou Xinhui, *Zhongguo gubanhua tongshi*, 234–40.
- 83 Han Sheng, *Xixiangji gujin banben mulu jiyao*, 182. For a study of the woodblock print illustration of the *Western Chamber* with comments by Jin Shengtian, see Hsu Wen-Chin, "Zhuti di yiwei yu xingxiang zhaisu—Qingchao Xixiangji muke banhua chatu yanjiu," 159–221.
- 84 Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸, *Zhongguo wenxue yanjiu* 中國文學研究 (Studies on Chinese literature) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1990), vol. 1; Zhang Guoguang 張國光, annotator, *Jin Shengtian piben Xixiangji* 金聖歎批本西廂記 (*Romance of the Western Chamber* commented by Jin Shengtian) (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1986), preface.
- 85 Dolby, *History of Chinese Drama*, 131.
- 86 Some scholars argue that Jin's edition transformed the drama into a new work, with the emphasis on Confucian morality being quite different from the unpretentious and candid quality of the original, although he did make the drama acceptable to a wider audience. Modern scholars' studies on the Jin Shengtian edition are introduced in Lin Zongyi 林

- 宗毅, *Xixiangji erlun* 西廂記二論 (Further studies on *Romance of the Western Chamber*) (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1998), 19–22.
- 87 Hsu Wen-Chin, “Social and Economic Factors,” 140–41.
- 88 Stephen Little, “The Evolution of Shunzhi Porcelain,” in Butler et al., *Treasures from an Unknown Reign*, 36–41.
- 89 Chen Liu, *Taoya*, 19.
- 90 Some of the ceramics decorated with multiple scenes from the *Western Chamber* are illustrated in the following publications: Hsu Wen-Chin, “Fictional Scenes,” pl. 53; Little, *Chinese Ceramics of the Transitional Period*, pl. 55; Christian Jorg, *Chinese Ceramics in the Collection of the Rijks Museum, Amsterdam: The Ming and Qing Dynasties* (London: Philip Wilson in association with the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1977), pl. 105; Sheila Keppel, *China in 1700: Kangxi Porcelains at the Taft Museum* (Cincinnati: Taft Museum Press, 1988), pls. 42, 44.
- 91 Medley, *Chinese Potter*, 240–50; Rose Kerr, *Chinese Ceramics: Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911* (Chicago: Art Media Resources, 1998).
- 92 The inscription of poetry as decoration was an innovation of Changsha ware and reflects the popularity of writing and reading poems during the Tang dynasty. For an introduction to and studies on this aspect of Changsha ware, see Zhou Shirong 周世榮, ed., *Changsha yao cihui yishu* 長沙窯瓷繪藝術 (On the art of painting on Changsha ware) (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1994); Liao Wenhui 廖文蕙, “Tang Changsha yao cimian zhuangshi yanjiu” 唐長沙窯磁面裝飾研究 (A study on the decoration of Changsha ware of the Tang dynasty), in *Changsha yao* 長沙窯 (Changsha ware) (Taipei: National History Museum, 1996), 36–52.
- 93 See Feng Xianming, ed., *Zhongguo taoci*, 536.
- 94 Other examples include “The Interruption of the Religious Service” dish in the Mason Wang collection (see Hsu Wen-Chin, “Fictional Scenes,” pl. 29); a dish painted with the scene of General Du chasing after enemies (from “Alarm at the Monastery,” part III, act 1), sold by Sotheby’s on 31 March 1981 (lot no. 50); and a polychrome vase decorated with the scene of “A Feast with Tears” in the collection of the Shanghai Museum (see *Seventeenth Century Jingdezhen Porcelain*, 173). Two other dishes painted with scenes of “Zhang Sheng handing the letter of rescue to Monk Huiming” (from “Alarm at the Monastery”) and “Hongniang and Zhang Sheng walking down a bridge” (from “The Breach of Promise,” part II, act 3), respectively, are of inferior quality compared to the previously mentioned pieces but can also be dated to the Shunzhi period of about 1650 to 1660. For illustrations of these two dishes, see Hsu Wen-Chin, “Fictional Scenes,” pls. 32, 36.
- 95 Evelyn Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch’ing China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979), 22.
- 96 For a study of the woodblock print illustration of the *Western Chamber* published in the Qing dynasty, see Hsu Wen-Chin, “Zhuti di yiwei yu xingxiang zhaisu—Qingchao Xixiangji muke banhua chatu yanjiu,” 159–220.
- 97 For a full-scale study of Chen Hongshou, see Anne Burkas, “The Artifacts of Biography in Chèn Hung-shou’s ‘Pao-lun-t’ang chi’” (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1987), bibliographical references, 678–705. For an introduction to Chen Hongshou’s figural style, see James Cahill, “Chèn Hung-shou: Portraits of Real People and Others,” in *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 106–45.
- 98 This edition of the *Western Chamber* is in the collections of the National Palace Museum, Taipei; National Library, Taipei; and Beijing National Library. For studies on this edition, see Kobayashi Hiromitsu, “Kin Kôjû no hanga katsudô—Sutei 12 nen (1639) ‘Chô Shino sensei seihoku seshonibon’ no sasie o chuusin toshita ichi kousatsu”; Xu Wenmei 許文美, “Shengqin yumende nüxing—Lun Chen Hongshou Zhang Shenzhi xiansheng zhengbei Xixiang miben ban huazhongde shinü xingxiang” 深情鬱悶的女性—論陳洪綬「張深之先生正北西廂祕本」版畫中的仕女形象 (On the representation of female images in the woodblock print illustrations of the *Zhang Shenzhi xiansheng zhengbei Xixiang miben* designed by Chen Hongshou), *Gugong xueshu jikan* 18, no. 3 (2002), 154–55.
- 99 This bowl is in the Butler family collection and is introduced in *Seventeenth Century Jingdezhen Porcelain*, pl. 78.
- 100 For a study of painting in the late Ming dynasty, see James Cahill, *The Distant Mountains: Chinese Painting of the Late Ming Dynasty, 1570–1644* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill Press, 1982); Cahill, *Compelling Image*.
- 101 A passage from *Yinliuzai shuoci* states, “The painting on porcelain of the Kangxi period is the best in the Qing dynasty. The painting of figures resembles those of Chen Hongshou, Xiao Yuncong 蕭雲從 (1596–1673); landscape drawings resemble those of Wang Hui 王翬 (1632–1717) and Wu Li 吳歷 (1632–1718); and flower paintings, those of Hua Yan 華岳 (1682–1756)” 康熙畫筆為清代冠，人物似陳老蓮，蕭尺木；山水似王石谷，吳墨井；花卉似華秋岳。

- See Xu Zhiheng, *Yinliuzai shuoci*, in *Meishu congshu* 美術叢書, Huang Binhong and Deng Shi, eds. (Jiangsu: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1986), 3, no. 6: 207. A passage in *Taoya* also states that “decorative figures in Kangxi (porcelain) are as jocular and grotesque as those in Chen Hongshou’s paintings” 康熙人物恢詭似陳老蓮 (Chen Liu, *Taoya*, 57).
- 102 These three editions are: *Bei Xixiang ji*, published by Li Gaochen 李告辰 in 1631; the 1639 edition; and *Li Zhuowu xiansheng pidian Xixiangji zhenben* 李卓吾先生批點西廂記真本 (The genuine edition of *Romance of the Western Chamber* commented by Mr. Li Zhuowu) published by the Tianzhangge 天章閣 (Pavilion of heavenly notation) in 1640. For a study of Chen Hongshou and his woodblock print illustrations, see Kobayashi Hiromitsu, “Kin Kōjū no hanga katsudou—Sutei 12 nen (1639) ‘Choushino sensei seihoku seshonibon’ no sasie o chūshin toshite ichi kousatsu.” Chen Hongshou designed a portrait of Yingying for the 1631 edition, all of the six woodblock print illustrations in the 1639 edition, and one illustration in the 1640 edition.
- 103 *Meihua dian* is a decorative pattern on women’s clothes that started to appear on porcelain decoration of the Chongzhen period and became a common feature in the Shunzhi period (Tie Yuan, ed., *Ming Qing ciqu wenshi jiating*, 190). *Meihua dian* can be seen on the following two pieces mentioned in this article: the “Beauty’s Enchantment” Rolwagen vase of the Chongzhen period (fig. 21), and the “Hongniang in the Dock” dish of the Shunzhi period (fig. 8). A brush pot from the Shunzhi period decorated with the farewell scene from “A Feast with Tears” in this drama is also illustrated in Tie Yuan ed., *Mingqing ciqu wenshi jiating*, 190, pl. 10.
- 104 Zhang Guangguo, annotator, *Jin Shengtang piben Xixiangji*, 329. *Bei Xixiangji* is in the collection of the Shanghai Library.
- 105 Ni Yibin speculates that the Jin Shengtang edition triggered the popularity of *Western Chamber* decoration during the Shunzhi period. See Yibin Ni, “Shunzhi Emperor and the Popularity of Scenes from the *Romance of the Western Chamber*,” 68.
- 106 Liu Yuan is the painter and designer of the famous woodblock picture book *Lingyan ge gongchen tu* 凌煙閣功臣圖 (Portraits of meritorious officials in the Gallery Traversing Smoky Clouds), published in 1668. The twenty-four portraits of eminent warriors in this book are delineated in the distorted manner of Chen Hongshou. For studies of Liu Yuan’s life and works, see Anne Burkus-Chasson, “Visual Hermeneutics and the Act of Turning the Leaf: A Genealogy of Liu Yuan’s *Lingyan ge*,” in Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow, eds., *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 371–416; and Lin Yejiang 林業強, “Cangu yunxin—Liu Yuan sheji ciyang kao” 參古運新一劉源設計瓷樣考 (Assimilation of the old in creations of new—Studies of the porcelain patterns designed by Liu Yuan), *Gugong bowuyuan bashi huadan gutaoci guoji yantaohui lunwenji* 故宮博物院八十華誕古陶瓷國際研討會論文集 (Proceedings of the international symposium on ancient pottery and ceramics in celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Palace Museum) (Beijing: Zijincheng Press, 2007), 11–32.
- 107 Yibin Ni, “Shunzhi Emperor,” 68.
- 108 Among this group of porcelains are three plates decorated with the scenes of “Yingying Burning Nighttime Incense,” “Hongniang Visiting Zhang Sheng,” and “The Encounter of Yingying and Zhang Sheng” (from “Beauty’s Enchantment”) in the collection of the Fondation Custodia, Paris (see Jean Mudge, *Chinese Export Porcelain in North America* [New York: C. N. Potter Press, 1986], pl. 154) and the Butler family collection (see *Seventeenth Century Jingdezhen Porcelain*, pls. 73, 74). A plate with a deep body decorated with a portrait of Yingying is also in the Wunkworth collection; see Soame Jenyns, *Later Chinese Porcelain* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), pl. XVIII/1.
- 109 These pieces were part of the group of porcelains decorated in underglaze blue and underglaze red, inscribed with *Zhonghe tang* marks, and produced between 1671 and 1673. For a discussion of this group of porcelains, see *Seventeenth Century Jingdezhen Porcelain*, 206. At the International Conference on Seventeenth-Century Chinese Porcelain that took place at the Shanghai Museum at 2005, Zhou Lili 周麗麗 challenged the traditional attribution and reassigned them to the production of civilian kilns. See Ni Yibin, *Kantu shuoci*, 142.
- 110 For studies on the introduction of Western art to China in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, see Xiang Da 向達, “Ming Qing zhiji Zhongguo meishu suoshou xiyang zhi yingxiang” 明清之際中國美術所受西洋之影響 (Western influence on Chinese art during the late Ming and early Qing period), *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 27, no. 1 (1930), 19–38; Michael Sullivan, “Some Possible Sources of European Influence on Late Ming and Early Ching Paintings,” *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1972), 595–633; Mayching Kao, “European Influences in Chinese Art, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century,” in Thomas H. C. Lee, ed., *China and Europe: Images and Influences in Sixteenth to*

- Eighteenth Centuries* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1991), 251–304; Mo Xiaoye 莫小也, *Shiqi shiba shiji chuanjiaoshi yu xihua dongjian* 十七—十八世紀傳教士與西畫東漸 (Jesuit priests and the introduction of Western painting to China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) (Beijing: Zhongguo meishu xueyuan chubanshe, 2002).
- 111 For studies on Jiao Bingzhen, see Wang Yaoting 王耀庭, “Yi xiyang jifa huizhi Gengzhitu di Jiao Bingzhen” 以西洋技法繪製耕織圖的焦秉貞 (Jiao Bingzhen painting, weaving and farming with Western techniques), *Xungshi meishu* 雄獅美術 9 (1978), 30–34; Nie Chongzheng 聶崇正, “Jiao Bingzhen, Leng Mei ji qi zuopin” 焦秉貞、冷枚及其作品 (Jiao Bingzhen, Leng Mei and their works), in Nie Chongzheng, *Gongting yishu di guanghui—Qingdai gongting huihua luncong* 宮廷藝術的光輝—清代宮廷繪畫論叢 (Splendors of court art—Essays on Qing court painting) (Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1996), 51–58.
- 112 Shang Guoqiang, “Gentlewomen Painting of the Qing Palace Ateliers,” *Orientalism* 26, no. 7 (July–August 1995), 58; James Cahill, “The Three Zhangs, Yangzhou Beauties, and the Manchu Court,” *Orientalism* (October 1996), 59–68.
- 113 The author would like to thank Professor Joan Stanley-Baker for pointing this out.
- 114 Judging from its quality and decorative technique of painting in cobalt blue and copper red reserved in a flower shape of powder blue border, this plate is very likely to have been produced in the same factory and form the same set as the previous piece decorated with the scene of “Zhang Sheng Handing the Letter for Rescue to Monk Huiming.”
- 115 Ma Meixin 馬美信, *Wan Ming wenxue xintan* 晚明文學新探 (New studies on late Ming literature) (Taipei: Shenghuan tushu gongsi, 1994), 96.
- 116 Issei Tanaka 田中一成, “Min-matsu bunjin no gikyoku kan” 明末文人の戯曲觀 (Late Ming literati theory on drama), *Tokyo bunka Kenkyu-jo Kiyo* 97 (1985), 163–93.
- 117 Examples include the *Li Zhuowu xiansheng piping bei Xixiangji* 李卓吾先生批評北西廂記 (The northern style *Romance of the Western Chamber* commented by Li Zhuowu) published by the Rongyutang 容與堂 (Hall of tolerance and benevolence) in 1610 (now in the collection of the Beijing National Library); *Panguo shuoren zenggai dingben Xixiangji* 槃邁碩人增改定本西廂記 (*Romance of the Western Chamber* augmented and rectified by Panguo shuoren), published in 1621 (now in the collection of the National Library, Taipei).
- 118 For studies of the 1610 edition, see Hsu Wen-Chin, “Youqing zhihuan,” 97–101. The 1611 edition was commented on and annotated by the Ming scholar Xu Wei 徐渭 (1521–1593) and was reprinted several times in the Chongzhen period. For the illustrations, see Dong Kang, *Qianqiu jueyan tu*, vol. 1.
- 119 See note 45.
- 120 Dolby, *History of Chinese Drama*, 117–56; Wu Xinlei 吳新雷, Zhu Donglin 朱棟霖, ed., *Zhongguo kunqu yishu* 中國崑曲藝術 (The art of Chinese Kunqu) (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004), 129; Lin Heyi 林鶴宜, *Ming Qing xiquxue bianyi* 明清戲曲學辯疑 (Studies on drama in the Ming and Qing dynasties) (Taipei: Liren chubanshe, 2003), 197.
- 121 Dolby, *History of Chinese Drama*, 156. Colin Mackerras, *The Rise of Peking Opera, 1770–1870: Social Aspects of Theatre in Manchu China* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).
- 122 Dolby, *History of Chinese Drama*, 134–41. Quoted from Wang Liqi 王利器, *Yuan Ming Qing sandai jinshui xiaoshuo xiqu shiliao* 元明清三代禁毀小說戲曲史料 (Historical documents of fiction and dramas banned or destroyed during the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties) (Beijing: Zuoqia chubanshe, 1958).
- 123 According to documentation by the Dutch East India Company, it shipped 3.2 million pieces of Chinese porcelain from 1602 to 1682. From 1729 to 1734, the number exceeded the previous eighty years to reach a total of 4.5 million pieces. This number sharply increased to 42.5 million pieces from 1730 and 1789, and it came to a peak in 1800. See C.J.A. Jorg, *Porcelain and the Dutch China Trade* (De Hague: M. Nijhoff Press, 1982), 149; and T. Volker, *Porcelain and the Dutch East India Company* (Leiden: E. J. Brill Press, 1954), 59, 227.
- 124 Many examples of nineteenth-century porcelain decorated with scenes from novels and dramas are introduced and illustrated in Tie Yuan, *Ming Qing ciqi wenshi jiangding*, 204–208. Further examples are in Cha Liangfeng 查良峰, ed., *Zhongguo minjian fencaici* 中國民間粉彩瓷 (Chinese *famille rose* produced in civilian kilns) (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 1998), in *Zhongguo minjian meishu congshu* 中國民間美術叢書 (Collections of books on Chinese folk art).
- 125 See Jiang Xingyu, “Hongniang di pengzhang, yuewei, huigui he bianzou.” Also see Zhao Chunling, *Xixiangji chuanbo yanjiu*, 44.
- 126 Another example is Zhang Sheng introducing himself to Hongniang, from “Renting Quarters in the Monastery” (part I, act 2) on a blue-and-white plaque: see Hu Yanxi 胡雁溪 and Yang Xiaolian 楊小漣, eds., *Qingdai minyao caici 500 tu* 清代民窯彩瓷500圖 (500 pictures of polychrome ware produced in civilian kilns during the Qing

- dynasty) (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 1996), pl. 99. Scenes from "Invitation to the Feast" can also be seen in three blue-and-white plates illustrated in Little, *Chinese Ceramics of the Transitional Period*, pl. 29; *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, Sotheby's, London, 11 December 1990, pl. 314; and *Zhongguo gudong zhenwan* 中國古董珍玩 (Chinese antiques and curios) (Beijing: Hanhai yishupin baimai zhongxin, 1996), June, pl. 870. The same theme is found on a blue-and-white brush pot illustrated in *Zhongguo lidai qinghua huadian*, 18. Scenes of "Hongniang in the Dock" can be seen in a leaf-shaped polychrome plate in the Victoria and Albert Museum (no. 789-1883) and in the blue-and-white bowl illustrated in Ma Xigui 馬希桂, *Qinghua mingci* 青花名瓷 (Renowned blue-and-white wares) (Taipei: Yishu tushu gongsi, 1993), 147.
- 127 Dolby, *History of Chinese Drama*, 178.
- 128 Xu Zhiheng, *Yinliuzhai shuoci*, 215.
- 129 Wang Shucun 王樹村, *Zhongguo minjian nianhuashi tulu* 中國民間年畫史圖錄 (Illustrated catalogue of the history of Chinese New Year paintings) (Tianjin: Yangliuqing shuhuashe, 1991); Wang Shucun, ed., *Yangliuqing nianhua ziliaoji* 楊柳青年畫資料集 (Collection of New Year paintings produced in Yangliuqing) (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1959); Wang Shucun, ed., *Jingju banhua* 京劇版畫 (Woodblock prints of the Peking opera) (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1959).
- 130 Liao Ben 廖奔, *Zhongguo xiju tushi* 中國戲劇圖史 (Illustrated history of Chinese drama) (Zhengzhou: Henan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995), 400.
- 131 For an introduction to New Year woodblock prints of the late Qing dynasty, see Wang Shucun, *Zhongguo minjian nianhuashi tulu*, vol. 1, 24.
- 132 Tie Yuan and Xi Ming, *Minguo ciqi jianding—Wenshi, kuanshi, bianwei* 民國瓷器鑑定—紋飾、款識、辨偽 (Connoisseurship of porcelain of the Republican era—Patterns, inscriptions, and authenticity) (Beijing: Hualing chubanshe, 2004).
- 133 Dolby, *History of Chinese Drama*, 197.
- 134 Ibid., 230.
- 135 Deng Kuiyu 鄧葵玉, *Bainian Zhongguo taoci* 百年中國陶瓷 (A hundred years of Chinese ceramics) (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1995), 67.
- 136 Some examples include a famille-rose vase decorated with the scene "Love and the Lute," produced between 1930 and 1940; a famille-rose plate decorated with "The Repudiation of the Billet-Doux," painted by Chen Shuijin 程水金, 1946 (to be discussed in the following passages, pl. 51); and a polychrome vase decorated with two scenes from the *Western Chamber* painted by Zhou Xiangfu 周湘甫, 1945–49. These three porcelains are illustrated in Hu Shangde 胡尚德, ed., *Jingyitang cangci* 景藝堂藏瓷 (Chinese porcelain in the Jingyitang collection) (Nanchang: Jiangxi meishu chubanshe, 2001), pls. 130, 240, 246.
- 137 Li Zhiyan 李知晏, *Zhongguo taoci wenhuashi* 中國陶瓷文化史 (A cultural history of Chinese pottery and ceramics) (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1996), 321; Fujio Nakazawa 中澤富士雄, *Sin no kankama* 清の官窯 (Imperial wares of the Qing dynasty) (Tokyo: Heibonsha Press, 1996), in Heibonsha's "Chinese Ceramics" series of twelve volumes, vol. 11, 99.
- 138 Deng Kuiyu, *Bainian Zhongguo taoci*, 101.
- 139 For studies of twentieth-century porcelain produced in Jingdezhen, see Tie Yuan and Xi Ming, eds., *Minguo ciqi jianding—Wenshi, kuanshi, bianwei*, 11–120; Hu Shangde 胡尚德, "Ershi shiji Jingdezhen ciqi gaishu" 二十世紀景德鎮瓷器概述 (Introduction to porcelain produced in Jingdezhen during the twentieth century), in *Jingyitang cangci*; Simon Kwan (關善明), "Ershi shiji qianqi di Zhongguo ciqi" 二十世紀前期的中國瓷器 (Chinese porcelain of the early twentieth century), *Ciyi yu huayi—Ershi shiji qianqi di Zhongguo ciqi* 瓷藝與畫藝—二十世紀前期的中國瓷器 (Brush and clay—Chinese porcelain of the early twentieth century) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Museum of Art, 1990), 12–55; Cao Ganyuan 曹淦源, "Bainian huacai, liuyun qinghui—Ershi shiji Jingdezhen ciyi gaishu" 百年華彩，流韻清暉—二十世紀景德鎮瓷藝概述 (Introduction to the ceramic art of the twentieth century in Jingdezhen), *Xinhua yinghua—Ershi shiji Jingdezhen ciyi huigu* 薪火英華—二十世紀景德鎮瓷藝回顧 (Innovation and creation—A retrospect of twentieth century porcelain from Jingdezhen) (Hong Kong: Jingdezhen Ceramic Museum; Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2004), 19–20.
- 140 Fang Weibao 方維保 and Wang Yingze 汪應澤, *Huizhou guke shu* 徽州古刻書 (Ancient book carving in Huizhou) (Shengyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 2004), 178–79; Zhou Huixin, *Zhongguo gubanhua tongshi*, 295.
- 141 For an introduction on Chen Shuijin, see Tie Yuan and Xi Ming, eds., *Minguo ciqi jianding—Wenshi, kuanshi, bianwei*, 16.
- 142 Ruan Rongchun 阮榮春 and Hu Guanghua 胡光華, *Zhongguo jindai meishushi* 中國近代美術史 (History of modern Chinese art) (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1997), 65; Wang Bomin 王伯敏, *Zhongguo huihua tongshi* 中國繪畫通史 (General history of Chinese painting) (Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1997), vol. 2, 1293–1300.

- 143 Zuo Xuchu 左旭初, ed., *Lao shangbiao* 老商標 (Old trademarks) (Shanghai: Shanghai huabao chubanshe, 1999), 34.
- 144 After the Communist victory in China in 1949, a new type of painting, called *caimohua* 彩墨畫 (“color and ink painting”), was promoted by the government to “make the past serve the present.” This kind of new *guohua* 國畫 (“national painting”) was a synthesis of Western colors and Chinese ink, in which figures were the preferred subject and artists were ordered to paint from life. The decoration on this vase is a superb example of *caimohua*. See Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 139–44; Julia Andrews, “The Victory of Socialist Realism: Oil Painting and the New Guohua,” in Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, eds., *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1998), 228–77.
- 145 Fu Yaosheng’s biography is found in *Xinhua yinghua—Ershi shiji Jingdezhen ciyi huigu*, 251.
- 146 This form of ideology is revealed in eleven articles written on this play and compiled in *Yuan Ming Qing xiqu yanjiu lunwenji* 元明清戲曲研究論文集 (A collection of essays on drama in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties) (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1957), 125–222. Also see Ho Shang-Hsien, “A Study of the Western Chamber: A Thirteenth Century Chinese Play” (PhD dissertation, University of Texas, 1976), introduction, 108.
- 147 The ten great classical literary works are *The Red Chamber* 紅樓夢, *Romance of the Western Chamber*, *The Peony Pavilion* 牡丹亭, *The Plum in the Golden Vase* 金瓶梅, *The Water Margin*, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* 三國誌, *Journey to the West* 西遊記, *On Encountering Sorrow* 離騷, *Strange Tales from Make-do Studio* 聊齋誌異, and *The Scholars* 儒林外史. Two picture books of this play are *Xixiangji—Zhongguo shida gudian mingzhu huaji* 西廂記—中國十大古典名著畫集 (*Romance of the Western Chamber—Illustrations to the ten great works of Chinese classical literature*) (Taipei: Hanguang wenhua chubanshe, 1990); and Wang Shifu (revised by Wang Zengling 汪曾玲 and illustrated by Wang Shuhui 王叔暉), *The Romance of the Western Chamber* (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1958).
- 148 Deng Kuiyu, *Bainian Zhongguo taoci*, 69–79; “Lun jindai Jingdezhen ciye kunjingzhong cihua xingqi di biranxing” 論近代景德鎮瓷業困境中「瓷畫」興起的必然性 (On the inevitable outcome of the upsurge of “porcelain painting” in Jingdezhen during the hard times of the porcelain industry in the modern period), *Zhongguo taoci gongye* 中國陶瓷工業 14, no. 6 (December 2007), 18–24; Chen Songxian 陳淞賢, “Xiandai taoyi yu chuantong taoyi” 現代陶藝與傳統陶藝 (On the art of modern studio pottery and traditional pottery), *Zhongguo taoci gongye* (April 1995), 30–32.
- 149 From the 1960s through the 1980s, Taiwan was the world supplier of Chinese *fangu* 仿古 ware (porcelain made in imitation of the ancients). After the 1980s, this kind of production moved to China, and Taiwan’s porcelain industry thereafter swiftly declined. See Hsu Wen-Chin and Zhou Yixiong 周義雄, *Yingge taoci shi* 鶯歌陶瓷史 (History of Yingge pottery production) (Banciao, Taipei County: Taipei xianli wenhua zhongxin, 1993), 62–64, 76, 95, 96. See also Wang Shouyu 王守玉, “Taociye—Lijing shidai xili houdi duibian yu xianmao” 陶瓷業—歷經時代洗禮後的蛻變與現貌 (The pottery industry—Transformation and the current situation after successive hardships), *Lipin shijie zazhi* 禮品世界雜誌 (Giftware World Monthly) 9 (1998), 73–85. For the production of modern porcelain fakes in China, see Peter Wain, “Chinese Porcelain Fakes: Ming to Mao,” *Orientalisms* (May 2006), 89–90.
- 150 The practice of studio pottery became popular around 1920 in Europe. The first major proponent of this artistic movement was the English potter Bernard Leach (1897–1979), who spent years working with the celebrated Japanese folk potter Hamada Shōji. Leach brought back to the West the informal and more spontaneous hand-thrown wares that have since spread throughout Europe and North America. He is now known as the “father of modern ceramics.” In the 1950s Peter Voulkos (1924–2002) further synthesized ceramics with elements of abstract expressionism, thus transforming this art from the status of a traditional craft to a vehicle for pure artistic expression. See Oliver Watson, *British Studio Pottery* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1990); Kay Koeninger et al., *Revolution in Clay: The Marer Collection of Contemporary Ceramics* (Claremont, CA: Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery, Scripps College, 1994); Martha D. Lynn, “From Vessel to Vehicle: An Introduction,” in *Clay Today: Contemporary Ceramists and Their Works* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1990), 10–30. For the development of modern studio pottery in China, see Zhou Guozhen 周國楨, “Zhongguo minjian taoyi yu xiandai taoyi” 中國民間陶藝與現代陶藝 (The art of Chinese folk pottery and modern studio pottery), *Taoci yanjiu* 陶瓷研究 (Research on ceramics) 9, no. 1 (1994), 3–6; Xu Yake 許雅柯, “Xiandai taoyi di

kaifa yu tuizhan” 現代陶藝的開發與推展 (On the advancement and development of the art of modern studio pottery), *Shandong taoci* 山東陶瓷 20, no. 2 (June 1997), 39–42.

- 151 This fully illustrated picture book of the *Western Chamber* was first published in 1958 and reprinted in 1983. For other references, see note 147.
- 152 Zhang Yaohua 章耀華, “Shouwo jinisi, yuanmeng Xixiangji—Ji canjiren taoyijia liguizhen he tadi jingshi zhizuo ciban lianhuanhua Xixiangji” 握手「基尼斯」，圓夢《西廂記》—記殘疾人陶藝家李貴鎮和他的驚世之作瓷板連環畫《西廂記》 (Handicapped pottery artist Li Guizhen and his serialized pictures of *Romance of the Western Chamber* made of ceramic tiles), *Jingdezhen taoci* 17, no. 1 (2006), 44–45.
- 153 For example, Craig Clunas believes that by the late eighteenth century, scenes from dramas had disappeared from most ceramics produced for the domestic market (Clunas, “West Chamber,” 85). Ni Yibin states that after the 1660s and 1670s, “mass-produced copies of *Romance of the Western Wing* scenes were made mainly for export” (Yibin Ni, “Shunzhi Emperor,” 79).