

# Illustration as a Mode of Commentary

20-22 Nov 2024

Paris

France

# Table of contents

<b>20-20 Nov 2024</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>DIVERSITY AND AMBIGUITY OF TEXT ILLUSTRATION</b>	<b>4</b>
Illustration by Command: The Overhaul of Xiao Yuncong’s (1596-1673) Lisao with Illustrations Under the Qing Emperor Qianlong, Michael Schimmelpfennig .	5
Illustration as Commentary: Chen Shizeng (1876-1923)’s Innovation in Painted Poetry in 1912, Zi Wang . . . . .	6
Qing Illustrations of Li Yu’s Drama, Jing Shen . . . . .	8
<b>VISUAL SYSTEMS OF NARRATIVE COMMENTARY</b>	<b>9</b>
Tuipei tu (), the Chinese Tarot : Illustrations and Political Prophecy in Late Imperial China, Qijun Zheng . . . . .	10
Min Qiji’s ”Visual Commentary” of the Romance of the West Chamber and the Late-Ming Commentarial Culture, Zhuolun Xie . . . . .	12
<b>21-21 Nov 2024</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CONTEXTUALITY AND TEXT ENRICHMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
Recontextualizing Ming Dynasty Calligraphy: The Symbiotic Dynamics of Text and Illustration, Sarah Ng . . . . .	16
A Ming Manuscript of the Diamond Sutra: Illustrating Ritual and Miracles under Imperial Patronage, Cedric Laurent . . . . .	18
Erotic Gardens Running Wild: The Intertextual and Intervisual Relationships between Jin Ping Mei and Su’e Pian, Peng Liu . . . . .	19

<b>VISUALIZING BEYOND NARRATION</b>	<b>21</b>
Appropriating the Sanctified in a Secular Narrative: Religious Motifs as Visual Commentaries in the Illustrations of the Late Ming Novel <i>Yichun Xiangzhi</i> , Dankun Zhao . . . . .	22
Pictorial Self-Representations of a Nineteenth-Century Manchu: Transcultural Study of the Geese Tracks on the Snow, Yuting Zhang . . . . .	24
<b>22-22 Nov 2024</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>ILLUSTRATION AND KNOWLEDGE-BUILDING</b>	<b>27</b>
Depicting a Lost Land: Jia Dan's Textual and Illustrated Records of the Northwestern Frontier in the Late Tang Dynasty, Ruilin Chen . . . . .	28
Writing (State)craft with Illustrations: A Case Study of Agronomy Handbook <i>Binfeng Guangyi</i> , Yin Cai . . . . .	30
<b>THE INTERSEMIOTIC DISTANCE</b>	<b>31</b>
Qin Zither Repertoire from Lyrics to Tablatures: Musical Intersemioticism and Performance-oriented Commentaries in Pre-modern China, Simon Debierre . . . .	32
Hermeneutics of the <i>Shijing</i> : between analogy and narratives, Marie Bizais-Lillig	34
Rewriting history as storytelling: official life and its image in fictions of the Ming-Qing transition, Rainier Lanselle . . . . .	35
<b>Author Index</b>	<b>36</b>

**20-20 Nov 2024**

# DIVERSITY AND AMBIGUITY OF TEXT ILLUSTRATION

# Illustration by Command: The Overhaul of Xiao Yuncong's (1596-1673) *Lisao* with Illustrations Under the Qing Emperor Qianlong

Michael Schimmelpfennig \* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Australian National University, School of Culture, History, and Language – Australia

Illustration of poems in the *Songs of Chu* ( ) began, if not earlier, during the Song dynasty. Our knowledge of the existence of many illustrated works extends far beyond the surviving examples. In his famous bibliography *Five Kinds of Book Lists to the Songs of Chu* ( ), Jiang Liangfu (1902-1995) distinguishes between four groups of illustrated works. Firstly, works in fine calligraphy that were considered works of art rather than standard editions. Second, works that contain illustrations such as portraits of Qu Yuan or the contents of poems such as the "Nine Songs" or "Questions to Heaven". Third, works containing maps tracing Qu Yuan's wanderings. And fourthly, various illustrations like star constellations, fragrant plants, or celebrations. The present contribution proposes to compare the relations between text and illustrations of two works that fall under Jiang's second and possibly fourth groups, the *Lisao with Illustrations* ( ) by the late Ming scholar and famous landscape painter Xiao Yuncong (1596-1673) and the *Supplementary Illustrations to Lisao with Illustrations by Imperial Command* ( ) commissioned by emperor Qianlong (r. 1735-1799). The emperor admired Xiao's work, parts of which had already been lost before his reign. Xiao had made illustrations to several chapters of the *Chuci* and added explanations about their intent. Qianlong commissioned the court painter Men Yingzhao, of whom not much is known, to illustrate the missing chapters, including illustrations for the *Lisao*.

What sets both works apart for the exploration of illustration as a mode of commentary is their delicate relationship. Xiao's work is a late Ming compilation by a Ming loyalist described as diligent and succinct in preserving the poems' underlying grievance in his drawings, while Men Yingzhao's work walks the fine line between re-composition and interpretation under expectations and demands of emperor Qianlong and more broadly, Qing orthodoxy.

**Keywords:** Songs of Chu, *Chuci*, *Lisao tu*, Xiao Yuncong, Qian Long

---

\*Speaker

# Illustration as Commentary: Chen Shizeng (1876-1923)'s Innovation in Painted Poetry in 1912

Zi Wang \* 1,2

<sup>1</sup> Beijing Foreign Studies University – China

<sup>2</sup> University of Edinburgh – United Kingdom

This paper employs what I Lo-fen refers to as *Text and Image Studies* to delve into the intricate interplay and interrelations between text and image in Chinese painted poetry in the early 20th century. It explores how a dialogue is established between poetry and illustration. Additionally, it investigates how illustrations affect the reading or reception of the poetry, as well as its meaning.

At the dawn of the 20th century, Chinese classical poems served as a symbol of cross-cultural exchange in East Asia, often being interpreted visually through painted poetry, which signifies the artists' pictorial creation of poems. Meanwhile, Chinese *wenren hua* (scholarly painting) and Japanese *nanga* (southern painting), both traditions steeped in painted poetry, faced significant criticism due to their unprecedented decline.

Chen Shizeng (1876-1923), a distinguished figure in the realm of modern Chinese art, spent eight years studying arts in Tokyo. He endeavoured to rejuvenate scholarly painting by introducing an innovative approach to painted poetry. In 1912, he unveiled a novel style known as *manbi* (a form of monochromic ink painting produced casually with abbreviated brushwork). In this unique artistic form characterised by impromptu calligraphic strokes, Chen visually interpreted Chinese classical poems based on his personal interpretation of their themes and content, while meticulously inscribing the verses as well as his commentaries on scholarly painting adjacent to the illustrations.

During that era, these illustrations graced the pages of *The Pacific Times*, a prominent Shanghai newspaper. The publication played a crucial role in facilitating cooperation between contemporary artists and the world of print media in China. This collaboration was significant as it underscored the dynamic transformation of visual imagery across various media, spanning from traditional woodblock printing, scholarly painting to colotype printing.

*Manbi*, drawing upon Japanese artistic influences like the aesthetics of *manga* (comics) and *zuanga* (graphic design), as well as Koyama Shotaro (1857-1916)'s painted poetry featured in the prominent Tokyo magazine *Taiyo*, effectively bridged tradition and modernity. It intertwined the refined brushwork and poetic significance of scholarly painting with elements from popular culture, art and craft design, and the complexities of social realities. Consequently, painted poetry reached a wider audience, including individuals with differing levels of literacy. Chen's efforts transformed the painted poetry from a rigid, isolated elite practice into a dynamic form with practical relevance in the real world.

---

\*Speaker

**Keywords:** illustration, commentary, painted poetry, pictorial creation, Chen Shizeng, Chinese scholarly painting, early 20th century China



# Qing Illustrations of Li Yu's Drama

Jing Shen \* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eckerd College – United States

Drama illustration reached its peak in the Ming Wanli reign (1572–1620). In areas south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, flourishing economy and urban readers' desire for refined entertainments motivated illustrators to create high-quality work. During the late Ming, woodblock-printed pictures of "moon shape" emerged and broke down the convention of rectangular illustrations. The moon shape refers to the round illustration like a full moon. Due to the fall of the Ming regime, however, this mode did not become popularized until the early Qing period when many reprints of Ming plays and stories included moon-shaped images.

In the early Qing, one of the best drama woodcuts were those that accompanied the texts of ten *chuanqi* plays by a popular writer Li Yu (1610–1680). Among them, *Bimuyu* (A Couple of Soles; 1661), a fine romantic comedy, is furnished with six exquisite illustrations. These illustrations at the head of the text of the volume attract the reader with images of major characters and moments in the story. The popularity of Li Yu's works incurred many (unauthorized) reprints. As a result, a number of *Bimuyu* editions circulated with a diversity of illustrations varying in quality and layout.

In this paper, I will compare moon-shaped and rectangular types of illustrations for *Bimuyu* from the Qing dynasty with regard to composition, inscriptions, and calligraphy. While covering various sets of *Bimuyu* illustrations, this discussion centers on the versions in the two rare editions of *Liweng shizhong qu* (Liweng's Ten Plays) from the reign of the Kangxi emperor (1662–1722): one has the picture followed by words on a half-folio, and the other is in the form of text above and picture below. A major discrepancy between the two versions of illustrations lies in some of their accompanying texts. I will examine the way each of the texts matches with the paintings, and this examination will reveal an intriguing exchange of two inscriptions between these two Kangxi era prints. The ambiguity of the picture makes one ponder the agency and process of the illustration creation. Examining the similarities and differences among many editions of *Bimuyu* illustration seeks to throw some light on bookshops' reproduction and intended readerships. *Bimuyu* illustrations also provide valuable information about the theater at the time, as the dramatic piece tells a story about an opera troupe and two of the images portray audience watch the performance of a classic play in open theater.

**Keywords:** Li Yu, drama, Bimuyu, illustration, Qing dynasty

---

\*Speaker

# VISUAL SYSTEMS OF NARRATIVE COMMENTARY

# Tuibeitū (图), the Chinese Tarot : Illustrations and Political Prophecy in Late Imperial China

Qijun Zheng \* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> École pratique des hautes études – Université Paris sciences et lettres – France

This study explores *Tuibeitū* (图), an illustrated prophecy book attributed to authors in Tang China, as an example of how illustration serves as a mode of commentary within Chinese textual traditions. By examining the interplay between the sixty enigmatic illustrations and their accompanying poems, this study aims to uncover the layers of meaning and interpretation facilitated by these illustrations. I will analyze how these visual elements not only complement but also expand upon the textual prophecies, engaging in a form of intersemiotic translation that bridges the gap between textual and visual prophecies.

This investigation is thus divided into three levels: First, I aim to conduct a detailed analysis of the illustrations, mapping out their symbolic relationships with the text. The illustrations and poems of *Tuibeitū* are designed not just to predict but to evoke an intuitive understanding. Episodes of Chinese history and culture are transformed into vehicles of profound, unsettling prophecy. Analyzing the book's content through this lens involves deciphering the symbols and metaphors within the illustrations as expressions of collective memory and unconscious fears and hopes about the future. This research will combine philological and visual analysis to dissect the complex dynamics between its illustrations and texts.

Second, I will examine the illustrations' role in influencing the reception and interpretation of the book's prophecies among its readers. Illustrations can profoundly affect the interpretation of texts, serving not just as ornamentation but as dynamic components of narrative construction and meaning-making. The ambiguity and multiple meanings of these illustrations encourage readers to approach with a similar openness to an interpretative plurality. This interpretative flexibility enriches the discourse around its prophecies, allowing for a dynamic, evolving understanding of its contents.

Third, a comparative study of various editions will show how these illustrations have been altered or interpreted differently in their corresponding political, social, and cultural contexts. I aim to uncover how historical events and changing ideological climates have impacted the portrayal of the prophecies contained within *Tuibeitū*. Such an analysis not only highlights the dynamic nature of the text's reception but also sheds light on the broader cultural and historical forces at play in its reinterpretation. Through this lens, the illustrations of *Tuibeitū* become not just static images but vibrant, evolving expressions of the changing worldviews and political sentiments of common people throughout late imperial China.

This study will articulate how illustrations serve as interpretative constructs that engage with

---

\*Speaker

text to create a richer, more complex narrative experience. Illustrations in *Tuibeitu* are shown to be transformative elements that contribute to the prophetic discourse in ways that are interpretive, evocative, and reflective of shifting cultural landscapes, thereby asserting a distinct identity from mere representation.

**Keywords:** Tuibeitu (圖), illustrations, political prophecy, late Imperial China

# Min Qiji's "Visual Commentary" of the Romance of the West Chamber and the Late-Ming Commentarial Culture

Zhuolun Xie \* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Princeton University – United States

Printed in 1640 as an album of pictorial illustrations with no narrative text, the Min Qiji (1580–after 1661) edition of the Chinese drama *Xixiang ji* (*Romance of the West Chamber*) has been considered by art historians as a prime example showcasing illustrative images' potential to be read independent of textual prescriptions. This paper takes a different approach by situating the Min Qiji album in the late-Ming literary practice of supplementing commentaries to fiction and drama (*pingdian*). I argue that Min Qiji's illustrations function as a "visual *pingdian* commentary," that is, a composite product that incorporates in visual forms both content of the root text and new commentarial information derived from religious-philosophical knowledge exterior to the text.

After a brief review of previous scholarship, this paper will first consider the visual dimensions of the album with references to its content. I provide a close reading with particular attention to the relationships between different illustrated scenes and the significance of these relationships for understanding the design of the whole album. I identify specific visual elements that do not find direct support in the text of *Xixiang ji*, and discuss how they collectively point to the working of supernormal forces unseen in the humanly realm in facilitating the development of the storyline. The design of these scenes in the Min Qiji album is unique among extant illustrated editions of *Xixiang ji*, and I argue that this idiosyncrasy may have resulted from Min Qiji's efforts to comment on, rather than represent, the original narrative.

Second, I situate the Min Qiji album in the textual production of the same author by considering it in conjunction with a preface he composed elsewhere for a nineteen-juan collated edition of six versions of *Xixiang ji*, titled *Huizhen liuhuan* (*Six Illusions in Meeting an Immortal*). I read the preface as a textual commentary and a guide to understanding Min Qiji's religious-philosophical interpretation of the *Xixiang ji* stories. I demonstrate that the preface draws extensively from Buddhist doctrines of non-duality and tropes in Chan recorded sayings (*yulu*). I will bring in the Min Qiji album to show how the two "commentaries" work from the same mastermind in different mediums.

Lastly, I contextualize the Min Qiji album in the burgeoning late-Ming literary culture of *pingdian*. In particular, I bring in the *Dilu caizi shu Xixiang ji* (*Sixth Work of Genius: Romance of the West Chamber*) by Jin Shengtan (1608–1661). Jin Shengtan's commentary garnered widespread acclaim in the literati circles in Suzhou, a cultural hub in close proximity to Min Qiji's hometown Huzhou. This paper examines some aspects of the cultural milieu and religious backgrounds of Min Qiji that may have inspired him to create the *Xixiang ji* illustrations. With

---

\*Speaker

this paper, I hope to contribute to discussions on the interaction between art, drama, religion, and literary culture in the study of late-Ming commentarial literature and illustration, and reflect on how illustrations can function commentarily as sites of new knowledge production, rather than mere representations of root texts.

**Keywords:** Min Qiji, Romance of the West Chamber, Xixiang ji, Late Ming literary culture

**21-21 Nov 2024**

# CONTEXTUALITY AND TEXT ENRICHMENT



# Recontextualizing Ming Dynasty Calligraphy: The Symbiotic Dynamics of Text and Illustration

Sarah Ng \* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Chemistry, The University of Hong Kong – China

This paper aims to scrutinize the dynamic interplay between illustrated texts and their accompanying illustrations in the specific cultural milieu of the Ming Dynasty, focusing on calligraphy rubbing collections. The study will examine the transformative incorporation of illustrations in calligraphy albums, a significant breakthrough during the Ming period that denotes a change in the societal reception and consumption of calligraphy and calligraphy rubbing collections. The central thesis posits that the calligraphy rubbing, while traditionally revered for the text alone, evolves into a canonical form of art when paired with illustrations, thereby altering the interpretative process of the reader.

Calligraphy in Ming China was more than mere record of something or literature, etc; it was the embodiment of scholarly art as forms and personal expression through forms and calligraphy style. The inclusion of illustrations within these albums/ collections signifies a conceptual shift, merging visual commentary with textual content. This study will dissect the nuances of such blending, unveiling how illustrations amplify the meaning of the text, influence the reader's perception, and transform the conventional act of reading.

This paper will employ a multi-faceted approach by analyzing 3 compiled Ming calligraphy rubbing collections, it will interrogate the nature of illustration within these artworks. The illustrations will be examined not just as visual adornments but as a sophisticated form of commentary that extends beyond the graphic realm into the discursive, creating points of rupture and continuity within the text. This duality echoes the theoretical interests of this workshop, particularly the notions of commentary and the relevance of equating illustration with representation.

The investigation will unfold along several axes: the material and aesthetic properties of the calligraphy rubbings, the thematic and symbolic resonance of the illustrations with the calligraphic content, and the socio-cultural context that fostered the emergence of such artistic syntheses. The study will also explore the varied forms of rupture that illustrations introduce, such as shifts in language styles or transitions between words and images, and their implications for the reader's engagement with the text.

One of the pivotal inquiries of this research is to challenge and potentially redefine the relationship between illustration and representation. By examining how illustrations in the calligraphy rubbings serve as more than mere mimetic devices, this work will illuminate their role

---

\*Speaker

as vehicles of exemplification, commentary, and discursive acts that guide interpretation and knowledge dissemination.

The anticipated outcome of this research will offer substantial contributions to the fields of Chinese art history and textual history, shedding light on the complex interplay between text and image. It will provide an enriched understanding of the commentary's power to reorient text through the inclusion of illustration, and how this interplay between textual and visual narrative reconfigures the reader's approach to the text. This paper seeks to become a locus for cultural commentary and a mirror reflecting the evolving notions of art, text, and knowledge in Chinese society, and study the interrelation of art and text in the transmission of knowledge.

**Keywords:** Calligraphy Rubbing Collection

# A Ming Manuscript of the Diamond Sutra: Illustrating Ritual and Miracles under Imperial Patronage

Cedric Laurent \* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Université Rennes 2 – Université de Rennes II, ERIMIT – France

Guimet Museum (Paris) stores an imperial manuscript of the *Diamond Sutra* (MA 6954) that has never been published. It has been ordered by emperor Chenghua in 1477 both for his own private devotion and for the propagation of the faith, as written in the afterword. By the number (45) of colourful illustrated stories and the quality of the painting, the manuscript is one of a kind. It undertakes the traditional structure of the illustrated *Diamond Sutras*, including ritual, but it is not a simple adaption of old patterns to the painting style of Ming court, it definitely renews iconography of miracle. On one hand, the *Diamond Sutra*'s ritual of fast and recitation is known as a popular practice in medieval China, but Guimet's manuscript allows us to reconsider it in Ming court's context. On the other hand, woodcarving illustrated *Diamond Sutras* are also well studied, especially for Song times, but this exemplary reveals a desire for comprehensiveness, compelling a large part of the miracle stories from various sources.

**Keywords:** Ming, Manuscript, Diamond Sutra, Miracles

---

\*Speaker

# Erotic Gardens Running Wild: The Intertextual and Intervisual Relationships between Jin Ping Mei and Su'e Pian

Peng Liu \* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey [New Brunswick] – United States

This paper investigates the relationship between the Ming novel *Jin Ping Mei* (*JPM*) and an illustrated erotic novella titled *Su'e pian*, both originating from the late Ming period and witnessing the rise of commercial culture and wood-block printing technology at the time. Chapter 13 of *JPM* illustrates Ximen Qing sharing an erotic painting album with his concubine Pan Jinlian during an intimate moment. This episode not only offers insight into the consumption of erotic painting albums in late Ming society but also sparks interest in exploring the creation of such illustrated erotic stories during that period. The late Ming erotic painting album *Su'e pian* serves as a prime example in this context. While scholarly attention has been extensively devoted to *JPM* and its illustrations, *Su'e pian* has received comparatively little consideration among scholars. Created in 1612 and preserved in printed form at the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University, *Su'e pian* portrays the descent of a flower-moon spirit from heaven to impart forty-three types of sexual skills to a man. This work is characterized by its hybrid nature, seamlessly blending narrative, poetry, erotic painting, and calligraphy to create a multi-dimensional artistic expression. The illustrations in *Su'e Pian* serve as visual representations of the sexual skills described in the narrative, effectively functioning as pedagogical tools for viewers.

Readers of *Su'e pian* may raise the following questions: Is *Su'e pian* best classified as a novella, a poetic collection, a collection of erotic paintings, a work of calligraphy, or an illustrated sex manual? What intricate dynamics characterize the relationship between text and image within this work? How do texts and images in *Su'e pian* establish connections with some of the themes in *JPM*?

To answer these questions, I first discuss the creation of *Su'e pian* in my paper, demonstrating how late Ming literati authors collaborated with skilled craftsmen to produce illustrated erotic stories for their clientele. Then, I undertake a comparative examination of *Su'e pian* and *JPM*, emphasizing how specific narratives and illustrations in *Su'e pian* establish an intertextual and intervisual dialogue with both the text of *JPM* and the illustrations from the Chongzhen edition of that novel. More specifically, I look at how *Su'e pian* references *JPM* within its narrative; I show how certain *Su'e pian*'s illustrations serve as interpretive commentaries on *JPM* and highlight the erotic undertones of specific activities depicted in the novel; and I compare the illustrations in *Su'e pian* with those in *JPM*'s Chongzhen edition, revealing similarities and differences in how both works portray themes of eavesdropping and voyeurism. By investigating the intricate dimensions of text-text, image-text, and image-image relationships, I hope to illu-

---

\*Speaker

minate the nuanced connections and mutual influences between literary and visual arts in the late Ming.

**Keywords:** Jin Ping Mei, Su'e Pian, late Ming, text, image, print culture, eroticism

# VISUALIZING BEYOND NARRATION

# Appropriating the Sanctified in a Secular Narrative: Religious Motifs as Visual Commentaries in the Illustrations of the Late Ming Novel *Yichun Xiangzhi*

Dankun Zhao \* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Southeast University – China

*Yichun xiangzhi* (Fragrance of the Pleasant Spring) is an anthology of novellas published during the Chongzhen reign (1628-1644). It includes 16 pairs of illustrations (32 pages) prior to the fiction proper. In each pair, one illustration represents a scene in the narrative, and the other at the back (verso page) depicts an object, a flower, or an animal. All the non-narrative images, except for the first one in the Feng volume, are inscribed with literary quotes from poetry, fiction, or drama. These motifs on the verso pages, upon further observation, serve not only as decorations, but also convey overtones which are closely linked with the plots and themes of the stories. These non-narrative images, together with the poems inscribed around, construct a mutual interpretation that responds to the main text of the stories and provides a visual way for commenting on the stories' narrativity. They respond to the novel's narrative by infusing it with profound cultural undertones, demonstrating the circulation and reimagining of specific knowledge across different cultural contexts. A few studies have explored the function of non-narrative illustrations in other late Ming novels. Robert E. Hegel pointed out that the objects on the verso pages of illustrations in *Xiyou bu* (Supplement to Journey to the West) suggest ways of reading textual references and function as commentaries on the novel's philosophical dimensions. Ma Meng-ching analyzed the connection between the decorative frames on the verso pages and the main text in *Sui Yangdi yanshi* (The sensational history of Sui Emperor Yang) and traced the visual commentary in illustrations back to the practice of literary comment in the late Ming. These studies shed light on the relationship between non-narrative illustrations and narrative texts in the late Ming novels. Compared with *Xiyou bu* and *Sui Yangdi yanshi*, *Yichun xiangzhi* stands out with its unique theme, serving as cautionary tales about male homosexuality. Also, it is noticeable that nearly half motifs on the verso pages in *Yichun xiangzhi* show Buddhist and Taoist features. Therefore, this study explores the role of religious motifs in the interplay between the text-image system in *Yichun xiangzhi*, as well as their impact on readers' reading experience. The following questions are discussed: How are the visual and cultural traditions of Buddhism and Taoism appropriated into the new context of *Yichun xiangzhi* to interpret the novels' narrativity? How are the admonitions of the stories visualized through religious material objects? How does people's religious knowledge participate in the process of reading to offer readers a special reading experience? By answering these questions, this study will provide a better understanding of the relationship between text and image and reveal the interaction between religious culture and popular literature in the late Ming.

---

\*Speaker

**Keywords:** religious motif, illustrations, Buddhism, Taoism, Yichun xiangzhi



# Pictorial Self-Representations of a Nineteenth-Century Manchu: Transcultural Study of the Geese Tracks on the Snow

Yuting Zhang \* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Oriental and African Studies – United Kingdom

The paper explores a woodblock print, *Geese Tracks on the Snow*, as a case study of pictorial autobiography in premodern China. This three-volume book was produced by a Manchu official, Qing Lin, to commemorate his travels and experience. Lin belonged to the Eight Banners, but was raised and cultivated mostly by his mother, Zhu Yun, the granddaughter of the famous Han painter, Shouping Yun. He wrote 240 essays and commissioned contemporary painters to illustrate them. These texts, along with 240 images, describe the landscapes, gardens, cityscapes, and architecture in nineteenth-century China. They cover 55 years of Lin's life and spread from Beijing to the Jiangnan area and even the southwest.

Lin is not the first to use illustrations in an autobiography, and pictorial autobiography had been popular since the eighteenth century. However, the *Geese Tracks on the Snow* stands out because of Lin's dual identity. This book records not only what he saw and experienced, but also what he thought and believed. For example, facing the two significant events in the nineteenth century, The Opium War and the Miao revolt of the southwest, Lin elucidated his position and suggestions in his book, visually and literarily. His political standpoint and geographical knowledge are based primarily on his imperial kin, but his poetic and artistic tastes are Confucianist. Therefore, this paper focuses on the following core question: How do the illustrations in the *Geese Tracks on the Snow* help to build Lin's self-representation as a Manchu influenced by the Han culture?

The paper mainly uses visual analysis to probe the multiple functions of the illustrations. The images, largely, express in line with or beyond the words. The painters sometimes add extra pictorial elements to make the text more convincing, especially for those fantastic stories or dream scenes. In some cases, however, the images and texts are contradictory. The illustrations omit information mentioned in the text, and thus dissolving the content to some extent. This often happens when the traditional modes deriving from Chinese art come into play. In addition to the content interplay between images and texts, the layout of the illustrations deserves attention. The deliberate design of folded pages hides the illustrated pictures at first glance, but expands extra spaces and produces more implications after opening the folded illustrations. The influence of two cultures is implicit, and the introduction of illustrations can strengthen one cultural identity and weaken the other more easily and effectively.

Modern scholars have paid some attention to the *Geese Tracks on the Snow* and similar prints during this period, but most are textual research. While this paper also relies on an archival investigation of Lin's other books and historical documents, the emphasis is on its visual lan-

---

\*Speaker

guage. By juxtaposing Lin's essays and pictures and doing comparative study, the paper hopes to provide another visual perspective to interpret Lin's autobiography, which is a combined representation of the Manchu and Han cultures.

**Keywords:** pictorial autobiography, transcultural study, nineteenth century China

**22-22 Nov 2024**

# **ILLUSTRATION AND KNOWLEDGE-BUILDING**

# Depicting a Lost Land: Jia Dan's Textual and Illustrated Records of the Northwestern Frontier in the Late Tang Dynasty

Ruilin Chen \* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PhD, Peking University; International Scholar, KU Leuven – China

In October 798AD, Jia Dan(730-805), the prime minister of the Tang Empire, submitted a map picturing nine northwestern prefectures. These regions had slipped from Tang's control since 759AD due to the expansion of the Tibetan Empire. Along with *the Map of Nine prefectures*, two additional written accounts named *Bielu* and *Tonglu*, were also submitted to Emperor Dezong(742-805), offering more detailed information about the same region. The nine prefectures became a metonym, serving as a constant reminder of the incompleteness of the Tang's territory. Jia Dan rewrote the visual and textual records to clarify boundaries and lands because of the prolonged disconnection of these regions from central government. To facilitate the recovery of territories and recreation of administrative structure, Jia Dan emphasized the importance to collect essential information beyond locations and directions. This should include military forces, itineraries, population, as well as the beginnings, ends and branches of mountains and rivers, which were challenging to present on maps. Therefore, Jia Dan turned to texts. Besides the six volumes of *Bielu* containing detailed information, he also compiled the four volumes of *Tonglu* by excerpting from previous documents, providing a general historical introduction to the Yellow River and an ethnic group Rong. Although the Tang Empire didn't regain the control of these regions in later decades, they still were included in other nation gazetteers as a collective memory.

This paper aims to answer the following questions: How did Jia Dan make and use maps and texts, from what sources, especially at the situation that the Tang had lost related maps and records? How were different types of information described respectively in textual and illustrated records, and how did they cooperate to depict the lost land? What authority and power were conveyed through these textual and visual accounts?

Jia Dan's case widens further questions about the relationship between maps and text in medieval China, whether maps functioned as illustrations or text annotated maps. It was claimed that many regional maps were attached in local and national gazetteers, but the fact that neither of them survived made it difficult to understand. Counties and prefectures were regulated to submit maps every three years in the Tang dynasty, while the textual annotation was motivated to better serve as guidance to local governors, and became prevalent in the form of *Tujing*, several fragments of which have been preserved in Dunhuang's manuscripts, containing broader social, cultural and political textual descriptions. Li jifu, the writer of *Yuanhe Maps and Records of Prefectures and Counties*, stated in his preface that there were 47 regional maps in 40 volumes. *The Maps of Ten Districts* and *the Maps of Nine Divisions* were two series of national gazetteers compiled constantly from the Tang to Northern Song dynasties. Since they

---

\*Speaker

were called by "tu", it seems that regional maps were attached. However, one edition completed in 1080AD changed its name from "tu" to "zhi" as its authors emphasized that there were no actual maps in older editions since the early Song dynasty.

**Keywords:** Jia Dan, maps, gazetteers

# Writing (State)craft with Illustrations: A Case Study of Agronomy Handbook *Binfeng Guangyi*

Yin Cai \* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Chicago – United States

This paper examines the narrative strategies of late imperial Chinese writings addressing artisanal and/or technical issues. Using *Binfeng guangyi* as a case study, it asks why and how illustration played an imperative role in these texts as a means of knowledge transfer for diversified audiences. In his illustrated agronomy handbook *Binfeng guangyi* (Explication of the Customs of Bin State), the renowned scholar-official Yang Shen (1699 – 1794?) provided information on agricultural techniques for the morally correct farm household in the context of regional revival. I focus, in particular, on the section entitled "Illustrated Explanation of Loom," in which Yang Shen explicitly claimed an empirical approach in sericulture and an emphasis on detailed illustrations of loom structures with measurements. Despite his assertion on the importance of first-hand artisanal knowledge, this section also reinforced Yang Shen's intellectual and moral values that are deeply rooted in the two critical themes of his learning experience as a scholar-official – *quannong* (the political campaign to encourage agriculture) and *guanxue* (a regional school derived from Neo-Confucianism). In addition, illustrated agronomy handbooks as such were usually assumed to be part of a more comprehensive program that included person-to-person knowledge transmission, the circulation of tools and objects, perhaps public demonstrations, etc. – how illustration and text worked together for the larger program with both political/moral and technical/artisanal aims deserve further investigation. This case study shows an integration of both scholarly learning and practical knowledge that can be found in narrative strategies of many late imperial Chinese illustrated treatises and handbooks. It challenges the methodology of studying this body of "technical literature" with an inquiry that puts the "technological details", technical validity, or technological transformation at the center. Rather, it echoes and provides a great example of Francesca Bray's claim that agriculture constitutes the "intertwining of knowledge, practice, and power; of the production of ideas, materials goods, and social relations." Finally, this paper demonstrates the power of illustration in a single work, *Binfeng guangyi*, for example, which could engage diversified audiences: with its core values rooted in the statecraft and Neo-Confucianist epistemology, it also aimed to help disseminate practical knowledge of sericulture in local farm fields for a regional revival.

**Keywords:** Illustration and Text, Narrative Strategies, Technical Writing, Yang Shen, Agronomy Handbook, *Binfeng guangyi*, Craft and Statecraft, Knowledge Transfer, Sericulture and Loom.

---

\*Speaker

# THE INTERSEMIOTIC DISTANCE



# Qin Zither Repertoire from Lyrics to Tablatures: Musical Intersemioticism and Performance-oriented Commentaries in Pre-modern China

Simon Debierre \* 1,2,3,4

<sup>1</sup> École pratique des hautes études – Université Paris sciences et lettres – France

<sup>2</sup> Université d'Artois – Université d'Artois – France

<sup>3</sup> Centre de recherche sur les civilisations de l'Asie Orientale – Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes,  
Collège de France, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Université Paris Cité – France

<sup>4</sup> Textes et Cultures – Université d'Artois – France

This paper explores the two textual forms of *ci* and *jianzi pu*, lyric songs paired with tablatures, that pertain to the *qin* zither repertoire and its commentarial practices in pre-modern China (15th – 20th c.).

It considers the act of illustrating poetry through music as a form of translation. Indeed, if the source text and its illustration both remain in sinograms, they are also both aimed to be performed. However, the semantic system changes partially or even totally from verse to score, from a sung text to a text sung and plucked, or even only plucked. Such shift becomes an original form of genre hopping, where a discourse emancipates itself from its original lyrical structure to sometimes become exclusively instrumental. But the poetic narrative remains thanks to the programmatic nature of the music involved in this illustrative process.

The topic is addressed by using two complementary approaches.

On one hand, it returns to the well-preserved printed anthologies for *qin* music. This textual tradition was inaugurated in 1425 with the first the *qinpu* handbook sponsored by Prince Zhu Quan (1378–1448). It covers more than three hundred scores paired with lyrics and was passed down as a living practice until the beginning of the 20th century. This study shows how a source text and its illustration are organically interrelated by clarifying the different functions, registers and layers of these genre-dependent commentaries.

On the other hand, a second angle calls upon the latest studies on the *qupai* melodic models, but here specifically adapted to their counterpart, *i.e.* the reduced character notation for *qin* zither. In particular, the lyric songs are explored for their musicality, as the fingering techniques for their rhetorical dimension. This enriches the analytical approach of the genre through a study that brings to light the various aspects of the text-music relation: metrical and tonal patterns, rhetorical structures, pentatonic modes, monodic forms.

The analysis suggests that the *qin* repertoire creation process can be described today as a form of intersemiotic translation at the frontier of intralinguism, where illustrating lyrics through tab-

---

\*Speaker

latures plays on similar patterns and rhetorics. Put in historical perspective, the performance-oriented commentaries show that their authors were well aware of how such transfer reflected the everlasting tension between poetry and music, between scripture and performance.

**Keywords:** qin zither, musical intersemioticism, performance, oriented commentaries

# Hermeneutics of the Shijing : between analogy and narratives

Marie Bizais-Lillig \* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Université de Strasbourg (en délégation au CNRS) – Université de Strasbourg et CNRS- – France

In his subcommentary to the so-called Mao reading of the *Poems*, Kong Yingda (574-648) often establishes an analogy to justify the narrative attached to a poem in its preface. It is however difficult to tell which part of the hermeneutical apparatus came first. The Han tradition also uses both techniques of transposition, as is best illustrated in the many stories of the Hanshi waizhuan (possibly late 2nd century BC). In this paper, I will show how this double technique is quite unique in the exegetical tradition before the Song. The shift from description to story-telling is not a common tool for exegetes of the Wenxuan who seem to favor parallels. I will also show how both techniques support each other. Kong Yingda's commentary seems to use the rhetorics of xing (stirring images) as an authoritative tool to justify narratives that would otherwise look projected on the base text from the outside. I will finally examine the open potentialities offered by static metaphors, as opposed to the sense of closure imposed by narratives - and hopefully explain why illustration conquered most of the space in belletristic exegesis during the Medieval period.

**Keywords:** encore

---

\*Speaker

# Rewriting history as storytelling: official life and its image in fictions of the Ming-Qing transition

Rainier Lanselle \* 1,2

<sup>1</sup> CRCAO – CRCAO, CRCAO : Centre de recherches sur les civilisations de l – France

<sup>2</sup> Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (EPHE-PSL) – Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes – France

In his 1992 analysis of rewriting practices, translation studies scholar André Lefevere made constant use of the concept of 'image', explaining how authors of rewritten works created images of certain realities, and that these images always achieved a greater impact than the realities from which they originated and with which they inevitably competed. Produced within an ideological system that necessarily reorients their meaning, images always distort or give a new shape to their sources. This possibility of giving a new form to a reality is even what motivates their production.

Andre Lefevere focused his interest on questions of interlingual translation, where the issue of "faithfulness" is critical, in relation to language, texts or images. But it is also possible to take up this concept of "image" of a text in the field of intralingual translation and, more generally, in that of the writing of texts produced, in whole or in part, as rewritings of other texts.

This can be seen in premodern fiction and drama, particularly in what are known as "novels and plays on current events" (*shishi xiaoshuo*, *shishi qu*), a genre that generated a large number of works during the Ming-Qing transition. Numerous works then set out to give an account of contemporary events. In doing so, they competed with historians and constantly relied on the latter's work or on documented political and administrative sources. These novels and plays, which were highly popular with the public, did much to spread knowledge of the important events of the time, such as the abuses of Wei Zhongxian, the rebellion led by Li Zicheng and the expansion of the Manchus. This knowledge is resolutely romanticized and, as a result, distorts the reality it describes. But it is sometimes considered so faithful to the reality of the facts reported that some of these "fictions" have in turn served as sources for later historians. The "images" of the facts produced by these novels did indeed end up having a greater impact than their sources.

My contribution will look in particular at the way in which official, historical and actual documents, such as imperial decrees, memorials to the throne, information from administrative gazettes, etc., have been treated in these "fictions". We shall see how such documents, even if they are endowed with archival value, are not spared the fate of becoming "images" of their original version in the process of recontextualisation in which they are placed.

My contribution therefore aims to use the concept of image in a figurative, metaphorical sense, that of the projection of a reality onto something that is its double, its reproduction, but which nevertheless differs from it, thus creating an intersemiotic distance.

---

\*Speaker

**Keywords:** Intralingual translation, rewriting, novels and drama on current events, late Ming/early Qing, textual image

# Author Index

Bizais-Lillig, Marie, 34

Cai, Yin, 30  
CHEN, RUILIN, 28

Debierre, Simon, 32

Lanselle, Rainier, 35  
Laurent, Cedric, 18  
Liu, Peng, 19

Ng, Sarah, 16

Schimmelpfennig, Michael, 5  
Shen, Jing, 8

Wang, Zi, 6

Xie, Zhuolun, 12

ZHANG, Yuting, 24  
ZHAO, Dankun, 22  
Zheng, Qijun, 10

