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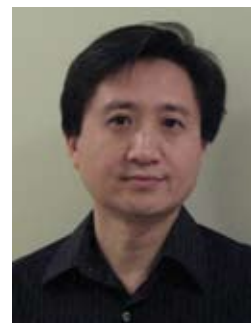
part of the ICS Cultures in Contact Series

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The Grand Prospect Garden and Its Visual Representations, 1791-1919



Friday, May 4, 2012
1:30 Hagerty Hall 0050



a lecture by

Wei SHANG

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Like many dramas and novels of the early modern era (1550-1919), *The Story of the Stone* was accompanied by wood-block illustrations when it first appeared in print in 1791. Almost immediately, though, *Stone* proved to be much more than an illustrated novel: during the centuries that followed, paintings, murals, peep shows, and decorative artifacts that feature the characters and scenes from *Stone* became part of the lived environment of Chinese men and women. Instead of being a mere textual phenomenon, *Stone* took on a new life through visual renditions at different levels of remove from the text. This paper explores the visual dimension of what might be called the "Stone phenomenon," with special attention to the pictorial representations of the Grand Prospect Garden, the main setting of *Stone*, in a variety of visual genres and forms facilitated by the social, cultural, and technological changes in the nineteenth-century. More specifically, it highlights the irrepressible fascination with the art of illusion-making best captured in a series of murals inside the Forbidden City. The visual renditions of the Garden that proliferated during this period provide a prism for examining the trends in visual culture as well as the evolving roles they themselves have played in shaping them.

Wei Shang received his B.A. (1982) and M.A. (1984) from Peking University, and his Ph.D. (1995) from Harvard. Professor Shang specializes in pre-modern Chinese literature and culture, especially fiction and drama of the Ming and Qing dynasties. His research interests also include print culture, book history and intellectual history of the same era. His book *"Rulin Waishi"* and *Cultural Transformation in Late Imperial China* addresses the role of Confucian ritualism and fiction in shaping the intellectual and cultural changes of the eighteenth-century. His other publications are concerned with Jin Ping Mei Cihua (*The Plum in the Golden Vase*), late Ming culture, fiction commentary, and medieval poetry. He is the coeditor of several volumes and a contributor to *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*.

In conjunction with the ICS Graduate Forum

The Fashioning of New Cultural Spaces: Between Performance, Print, and Visuality in Late Imperial and Republican China



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