

The Idealised Lives of Women: Visions of Beauty in Chinese Popular Prints of the Qing Dynasty

Popular prints provide unique and vivid insights into the lives of ordinary people in Chinese history. This article focuses on a type of popular print called a “beauty print.” Such prints were produced across China in the Qing dynasty, presenting idealised lives of women to a popular audience. Examples of prints from the beginning to the end of the Qing dynasty have been selected to emphasise the generally homogeneous nature of ideals relating to the beauty of women, their social status, and their roles in society. Historical and literary sources are used to elucidate the broader cultural context of the prints.

Keywords: beauty prints; Chinese prints; Qing dynasty; Chinese popular art; popular prints.