Beyond Categorization: Zhu Kerou’s Tapestry Painting Butterfly and Camellia

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Abstract: This paper introduces the technique of kesi or tapestry weave in China through one example, Butterfly and Camellia, attributed to Zhu Kerou, a woman artist of the twelfth century. This particular weaving is attributed to a time period when tapestry weavings began to imitate the visual language of painting. The relationship between kesi and painting is explored, examining the early use of kesi as wrappers for paintings. At the same time that the basic technology of kesi weaving is discussed, the gendered nature of weaving as work in Song-dynasty China as well as the techniques of connoisseurship of kesi during the Ming and Qing dynasties are also illuminated. The motives of such connoisseurs are examined, as their writing and collection practices framed this work for all future viewers and scholars. Sources used include inscriptions on works of art, most notably one inscription mounted next to Butterfly and Camellia by the eminent Ming painter, Wen Congjian; painting and textiles catalogues; as well as early writing on kesi weave; and the weavings themselves, which tell us most clearly the artisans’ intentions and concerns.

There are no extant paintings by women in China before the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368).1 Textual records attribute the beginning of painting to Lei 始, 

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the younger sister of the legendary ruler, Shun 舜 (c. 2200 BCE). As well, the first bamboo painting ever made is attributed to Lady Li 李夫人 of the Five Dynasties period (907-960 CE), who used ink to trace shadows of bamboo on the paper window of her pavilion. Despite these early attributions of important milestones in painting to women, painting in China has always been a masculine realm. Works by women painters were not widely treasured until the Ming period (1368-1644).

Besides Yang Meizi 杨妹子 (wife of Emperor Ningzong 聿宗, r. 1194-1224), whose measured and beautiful calligraphy we have on a number of paintings, and who was recorded as a painter herself, the most signed works from a woman artist in the Song dynasty (960-1279) come from Zhu Kerou 朱克柔, a woman of Songjiang 松江, noted for her silk kesi 纱丝 weaving. Although Zhu Kerou is a name one reads in any catalogue of Chinese kesi tapestry weave, hers is not a famous name today like those of painters during the Southern Song. And yet, her work was extremely popular during the Ming and Qing (1644-1912) periods, gaining mention in many famous catalogues. How does her work, in a fragile textile medium, survive in remarkable condition up through the twenty-first century?

In this paper, I will explore one specific work, *Butterfly and Camellia*, attributed to Zhu Kerou (Fig. 1). After introducing the work and artist, I will give a brief introduction to kesi and its origins in China. Next, I will describe the technology of weaving kesi. Thirdly, I will look at *Butterfly and Camellia* in relation to contemporaneous weavings and paintings. Then I will explore how kesi weavings were incorporated within the techniques for protecting and displaying paintings when they were used as decorative and protective wrappers. I will also examine the work as a product of a woman’s hands and how that affected its reception by elite men through the Ming and Qing periods. This work, as I will argue, straddles many boundaries in Chinese culture and becomes a flexible piece that was manipulated, interpreted, and claimed by collectors and connoisseurs in many different ways.

We know very little about the woman weaver, Zhu Kerou, but have a number of extant works attributed to her. It is recorded that she lived in

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1 Weidner, et al (1988), see pp. 17-21 for a brief, but thorough, history of women artists in China based on written records. See also Tang Souyu.

2 Weidner, et al (1988) p. 67, or Li Kan, p. 245. This painting is not extant.

3 For more on Yang Meizi, see Lee Hui-shu (2010), chapter 4.

4 Other works with Zhu Kerou’s seal woven into them are Peony, (Fig. 10), also in the collection of the Liaoning Provincial Museum; Ducks on a Lotus Pond, in the collection of the Shanghai Museum of Art; Pied Wagtail on a Blooming Polygonum,
Songjiang, outside of today’s Shanghai 上海, during the reign of Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 1127-1162) in the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). *Butterfly and Camellia* is not dated, but it has always been published as a work of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. It is now in the collection of the Liaoning Provincial Museum in Shenyang, China.

Why is it that works by Zhu Kerou emulate paintings? Why did she weave her designs when painting is a faster, easier way to produce such compositions? Lastly, how do we have a body of work attributed to a woman of the twelfth century, yet no biographical information about her until the fifteenth century? These questions may remain unanswered; however the work itself is the place to start searching.

*Butterfly and Camellia* is a silk tapestry-woven work of art, or *kesi* in Chinese. It depicts a butterfly and camellia blossoms on an indigo ground. The yellow butterfly is displayed with both wings spread, swooping in from the upper left towards camellia blossoms. Two little legs stretch out from behind the bottom wings, which are decorated with tiny brown dots. The camellia blossoms open toward the butterfly, toward the upper left, delicate pink petals revealing their yellow centers, the same yellow color as the butterfly that approaches them. Heavy, full blossoms are supported on thin branches. Lush green leaves surround the blossoms; they twist and turn in space, showing their lighter undersides to the viewer. Buds and new leaves unfold and curl, while the leaf in the foreground begins to wither and decay. Another leaf in the lower right corner echoes the foreground leaf with its yellowing tip and brown spots. Subtle gradations of color lend a sense of realism to the work. The branches are depicted with darker edges to give them a sense of three-dimensionality; the buds are colored with a darker, mottled green at the base of each calyx; and the decay on the two leaves is shown with thin lines of brown around delicate holes in the leaves.

This work is less than 26 cm square. It is a small, intimate work, called an album leaf in English (*ce* 册, in Chinese), meant to be viewed by one or

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Peach Blossom and Thrush, Bird and Flower, and Wagtail, all of which are in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei.

5 Zhao Feng dates a different work attributed to Zhu Kerou to the mid-twelfth century, Southern Song dynasty, then includes other works attributed to Zhu in his discussion, including *Camellia*, see Zhao (1999), cat. 7.01. He simply dates *Butterfly and Camellia* to the Southern Song dynasty in Sherman Lee (1998), cat 82. See also Hong Kong Museum of Art (1995), catalogue 106, where the work is dated to the Southern Song; *Tsuan-tsu-ying-hua*, plate II, p. 19, where it is dated Song dynasty; *Zhongguo zhixiu fushi quanji*, no. 291, where it is dated Southern Song; *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, no. 200, dated to Southern Song.
two people at a time. Album leaves were part of a series of works, by a single artist or multiple artists, collected in an album, which one would look through leisurely much like a book, stopping to look at details when one pleased. The artist’s seal, rather than signature, is placed near the lower left of the composition and reads 朱克柔印 (Zhu Kerou yin) or “the seal of Zhu Kerou”.

Due to its medium as a silk-woven tapestry, Zhu Kerou’s work has been classified as a textile and grouped with other textiles in modern catalogues, exhibitions, and collections in Western and Chinese scholarship. I hope to enlarge the field of Chinese art history by bringing objects like this into the fold to get a better understanding of how craft and painting were related and interacted. It seems that around the twelfth century, a shift occurred in the textile tradition that changed the course of the medium forever. Around this time tapestry weaving, previously used to weave symmetrically patterned textiles, was used to weave pictorial compositions (or painting-like compositions).

My argument is that in order to understand the history of painting (or any type of artwork) fully, we need to have a clear picture of the works of art circulating in artistic communities, what they meant to those viewers, connoisseurs, and artists. As I will prove, Butterfly and Camellia came in contact with numerous important players in the Ming and Qing art worlds. At the same time, this album leaf embodies a technical feat of weaving, gives the appearance of a Southern Song dynasty painting, and holds the charm of being attributed to the hand of a woman.

**Introduction to Kesi**

The origins of kesi in China are foggy at best. The earliest dated extant example of kesi comes from the Tang-dynasty (618-907) tomb of Zhang Xiong 張雄 (d. 633) and Lady Qu (d. 688) in Turfan. A wooden female figure, found with objects related to Lady Qu, is dressed in silk clothing and wears a kesi belt around her waist. Other Tang examples, mostly strips but some larger kesi fragments, are housed at the famous repository, the

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Craig Clunas (1997) p. 41, has already shown that there existed “iconic circuits” in Chinese visual culture where compositions and subject matter were used in painting as well as lacquer, textiles, jade, etc., therefore illustrating that the visual knowledge owned by the craftsperson was similar to that of the elite painter at the time. In fact, this visual knowledge permeated the culture in the Ming.

See Watt (2004), cat. 181, for a discussion and illustration of the figure.
Shōsōin in Nara, Japan. Amina Malagò, through examination of archaeological evidence, has proven that tapestry weave has been produced in China at least since the early Tang dynasty. The origins of the weave are commonly thought to have been initiated in the West. Schuyler Cammann, in his seminal article, argues that tapestry weave must have come from the Uighur culture to China. However, until there are more archaeological finds to definitively situate the origins of kesi, they will simply remain speculation.

The first written documentation to use the term ‘kesi’ is a text by Zhuang Chuo, a government official active during the late Northern Song dynasty (960-1127) and the early Southern Song. His text is dated to 1133, about four hundred and fifty years later than our earliest dated artifact, the silk-tapestry woven belt dated to the time of death of the tomb owners in 688. In this text, Zhuang gives us basic information on where and how kesi is produced:

At Dingzhou they weave kesi. They do not employ big looms, and they use boiled and colored silk. The warp is mounted on beams with wooden pins. They create pictures of flowers, plants, birds and animals according to their own desires. When they weave the weft, they begin by setting the areas on which they are to work with small shuttles; then, with different colored threads, they weave them on the warps. Along the weft direction, [the color blocks] combine to form a finished pattern, as if they were not connected. Looking [at it] against the light, there appear to be incisions, and it is therefore called kesi, ‘carved silk’. It takes a whole year to make a woman’s robe. Although ‘one hundred flowers’ [or such type of motif] are created, they are all different from one another,

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8 Shōsōin hōmotsu: Senshoku, illustrations 37-42.
9 Malagò (1988), Sheng (1995), and Cammann (1948), for earlier arguments on the date of tapestry weave and its origins in China.
10 Malagò (1988) puts forth three different theories for the origins of kesi in China, one of which is importation from the West, probably Uighur culture. Angela Sheng has theorized that during the sixth to eighth centuries, the Chinese and Sogdians living in Turfan freely exchanged weaving and artistic practices and information, learning from each other. See Sheng (1998), “Addendum”.
11 Cammann (1948). Cammann’s argument is, in part, based on the pronunciation of ‘tapestry weave’ in Uighur and that the Chinese word for it, ‘kesi’ sounds very similar.
12 For more information on Zhuang Chuo, see Balazs and Hervouet (1978), p. 335.
because the weft threads are not woven throughout the whole width of the cloth.\textsuperscript{13}

Zhuang’s text is the first of its kind to give us any idea of how \textit{kesi} was produced in the Song dynasty. Not only does he give the basics on how \textit{kesi} was woven and where, but through one simple example of a woman’s robe, he relays to the reader how labor- and time-intensive the weaving of \textit{kesi} was. The reader understands how expensive such a garment would be.\textsuperscript{14}

When it was first produced in China, \textit{kesi} was woven in strips and used for wrapping Buddhist sutras, as well as dressing tomb figures, such as those in Lady Qu’s tomb.\textsuperscript{15} In the Song dynasty, \textit{kesi} was used mainly for clothing and furniture coverings, as well as wrappers for painting or calligraphy scrolls. Until the medium was used to reproduce painterly compositions, \textit{kesi} was not mounted as an art object on its own. It was used as most pieces of cloth are—as a protective or decorative cover. Patterned \textit{kesi} was considered precious and a luxury commodity; therefore it was produced in long strips for use as garments and then recycled as smaller pieces that were used as painting wrappers, purses, etc.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{The Technology of Chinese Tapestry Weave}

In modern Chinese ‘\textit{kesi}’ 纖絲 is translated as ‘weft-woven silk’.\textsuperscript{17} The term \textit{kesi} is used for tapestry weave that is woven exclusively in silk. There are other tapestries woven with silk and wool which are called \textit{kemao} 纖毛

\textsuperscript{13} Zhuang Chuo, \textit{ji lei bian} 雞肋編 ("The Chicken’s Ribs", also translated as "Miscellany"). Translation by Malagò (1991), p. 228, with a number of alterations. See also Cammann’s (1948) translation, p. 90. See Malagò for a discussion of this text on \textit{kesi}. Zhuang’s text is also translated in \textit{Tsan-tsung-hua}, English section, p. 5. It is reproduced in Chinese in Zhu Qiqian, \textit{Sixiu biji}, juan 1.

\textsuperscript{14} Sheng (1990), pp. 53-4, using numerous sources, explores the amount of plain, tabby weave silk one woman could weave in a certain period of time. In the Ming, one woman could weave an estimated 60 bolts of fabric in a year. A Song-dynasty source states that one woman could weave one bolt in three days of hard work. A bolt is equivalent to 12 meters.

\textsuperscript{15} Zhao Feng (2009), p. 147.

\textsuperscript{16} Watt and Wardwell (1997), p. 54.

\textsuperscript{17} However, other characters have been used to write \textit{kesi} throughout history: 剃絲 (translated as “carved silk”) and 克絲 (a transliteration of ‘\textit{kesi}’). See Cammann for a thorough study of the origins of the word ‘\textit{kesi}’ in Chinese. He argues that there are so many different ways to write ‘\textit{kesi}’ because it is a transliteration of a word from the Uighur language.
weft-woven wool). A few very early kemao are extant in China, however the vast majority of Chinese tapestry weaves are kesi. The use of wool in pictorial tapestry weave is found early and then seems to fall out of fashion until it is imported from the West as a novelty in the eighteenth century. Craftsmen that used wool as a warp thread not only imported material use from the West, but many kemao also appear Western in style, for example incorporating blue as a color for the sky and using perspective.

Tapestry weave can be considered like plain weave or tabby weave in that only one weft thread goes over only one warp thread, and vice versa, at all times. In current practice of tapestry weave, a modern horizontal loom is used (Fig. 2). Although no twelfth-century looms are extant, the Zhuang Chuo text has been interpreted by Cammann to describe a small, vertical loom. The loom is strung with warp threads, or those threads that run vertically on the loom as well as in the finished textile. In Chinese tapestry weaving, the warp threads are almost always undyed silk threads, as preparing the thread to take dye weakens the structure of the fiber. Often the warp threads are twisted, which also increases their strength (Fig. 2).

20 Cammann (1948), p. 90, fn 3.

21 This is true of Chinese looms. On some Western tapestries, the warp runs horizontally on the finished product. For one interesting example of a European-inspired tapestry produced in China that also has warp threads running horizontally, see Brown (2000), cat. 16.
3). Once the warps are strung, a design is sketched onto the warp threads with brush and ink. Next the weft threads, or threads that run horizontally while on the loom as well as in the finished textile, are woven in between the warp threads over and under them, in even alteration. The weft thread is the only one visible once the tapestry is finished because these threads are battened down tightly, hiding the undyed warp threads. Therefore tapestry weave is called a weft-faced weave.

However, instead of running each weft color from one edge of the textile to the other, as in a weaving type such as brocading, tapestry weave contains each color thread only where it is used within the design of the textile. This is called the use of discontinuous wefts (in Chinese tongjing duanwei 通經斷緯 ‘continuous warp, discontinuous wefts’). Once the specific color is no longer used, the thread is cut, its end is left loose or tucked under another thread and another color weft thread is introduced. This creates clear boundaries between colors and sometimes a slit in the surface of the fabric where two color blocks meet. Unlike brocade or other weaves where extra thread might run along the back of the fabric, kesi is completely reversible and depends upon each color and each thread for the integrity of the textile.

Tapestry is woven from the bottom of the pictorial composition to the top. As one portion of the textile is completed, it is rolled up to allow the weaver access to the next portion of the design. This is also a protective measure, as the woven tapestry is then rolled up away from the oils of the weaver’s hands and other factors that could damage the delicate surface of the tapestry, such as light, water, etc. Tapestries are often woven from the back, so the weaver must check his or her progress on the front of the work (and the underside of the upright loom) with a mirror. This allows the weaver to leave loose threads on their side of the weaving for later alterations (Fig. 2).

22. Threads can be twisted ‘Z’ or ‘S’. The letter refers to the diagonal lines formed by the twisted thread.

23. No Song-dynasty texts, besides that of Zhuang Chuo, survive to describe the process of kesi weaving, therefore this description is based on contemporary weaving practices. However, the brief account given by Zhuang seems to concur on a basic level, at least, with contemporary practices. I am indebted to the master weaver Li Ronggen 李荣根 of the Suzhou Embroidery Institute who patiently answered my questions and enthusiastically showed me his work. For a basic description of tapestry weave in general, see Harris, pp. 24-27. See Zhao (2005), pp. 60-62, for a specific discussion of Chinese kesi technique.

24. If the weaving is done on a vertical loom, then the weaver must constantly check the reverse side.
A number of different techniques are used in tapestry weaving in order to deal with the transition between weft colors (see Figs. 4-8). Slit tapestry demonstrates the quickest way to transition between color blocks. In this type of tapestry weave, one color ends wrapped around one warp and the next color block begins at the next warp thread, thereby creating a small slit in the fabric between color blocks (Fig. 4). The weft threads can also be interlocked to each other rather than to the warp threads (Fig. 5, 6). This technique, however, is more time-consuming and gives a less clear delineation between colors. Dovetailing is a technique whereby the wefts of two different colors wrap around a common warp thread (Fig. 7). This technique strengthens the surface of the fabric, but requires that the wefts of different colors match up carefully, forcing the weaver to work in a number of colors at once. It is the slit tapestry technique that gives the weaver the most freedom to work on one section of the composition at a time and manipulate each weft as they desire without having to consider how the next color will fit into their work.

At the same time that slit tapestry gives the weaver creative freedom, it structurally weakens the fabric by leaving breaks on the surface between color blocks. This effect is common, and manipulated as a compositional element, in Chinese as well as Peruvian tapestry weave. In fact the Chinese term, kesi, is often translated as “slit tapestry weave,” which, however, is incorrect as some Chinese tapestry weave, most often of a Song-dynasty date, utilizes dovetailing as well as slits to transition between color blocks.

Because kesi is woven with thin silk threads, even a small composition can be extremely intricate and time-consuming. In Butterfly and Camellia, the artist uses a single thread to depict the antennae and hind legs of the butterfly swooping toward the blossom. A contemporary weaver in Suzhou who reproduces Zhu Kerou weavings for a living spends an entire year weaving a larger composition (about 100 cm square).

In contrast to European tapestries, a number of unusual techniques are used in kesi to depict pictorial subject matter. European tapestry artists often used hachure, or triangular areas of one color wedged into another.
color block, to create a sense of color blending and modeling. At the same time, this technique helped to minimize any slits in the surface of the fabric without time-consuming dovetailing of the wefts. This combination of pictorial and structural solution is remarkably inventive. Many of the Chinese tapestry weaving techniques focus solely on the pictorial or visual effect rather than the structural effect. One reason the Chinese did not have to focus on the structure of the fabric to the extent that European tapestry weavers did is the temporary nature of Chinese wall hangings. The tradition in China is to change wall hangings and paintings with the seasons, keeping a rotation of art throughout the year. No one painting, work of calligraphy, or textile would remain hanging for an entire year. Many, in fact, did not hang at all, such as Butterfly and Camellia. They were mounted as album leaves or handscrolls and kept, like books, in a flat position, brought out only at certain times to look through and enjoy. This puts considerably less stress on the structure of the fabric than hanging on the wall indefinitely.

One important technique found most often in Song-dynasty kesi is he hua xian 合花线, or ‘joined-pattern threads’. Although the weaver is producing a painting-like composition, any color-blending technique needs a completely different mindset when using thread versus paints. In this technique, the weaver splits two threads of different colors into thinner fibers and then twists them together to form a bi-color thread the exact same thickness as the other silk threads used in the tapestry. In the case of Butterfly and Camellia, she combines blue and light green threads. Then the weaver uses this thread in an area where she desires a color blending effect. However, since the new thread retains both original colors, it gives the woven area a mottled effect. One can see this effect used in Butterfly and Camellia on the green leaves at the base of each blossom and bud. When viewed at arm’s length, such a technique does give the effect of color blending, but when viewing the album leaf more intimately, which one is invited to do simply by the size of the object, the mottled effect is clear to the naked eye. This refined and expert technique gives an appearance of texture to the pictorial subject matter of the tapestry while still keeping the smooth consistency of the fabric. The precision required for this technique can be seen in the subtle effect it creates in the small calyxes of the camellia blossoms. A potentially uninteresting area of the composition—the leaves

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28 This technique can be seen throughout Northern European tapestries of the Renaissance, as one example. For a wonderful overview of Renaissance tapestries, see Campbell (2002).

29 I would like to thank Curator Piao Wenying 朴文英 of the Liaoning Provincial Museum for introducing me to this term.
protecting the base of the blossom—becomes textured, mottled, and intricate.

Another pictorial technique used in kesi is manipulating the slits in the fabric as part of the composition. While a weaver could easily sew up slits in the surface of a tapestry, Chinese tapestries were allowed to keep these breaks in the surfaces of the fabric. In fact, weavers used these breaks pictorially to help define shapes and contours without outlines.³⁰ The weaver often used these slits at the edge of a color block to function in a way that painted colors cannot. Instead of weaving in a “boneless” (mogu 没骨) method, a method treasured in Chinese painting, the weaver uses the technique of discontinuous wefts to create an actual break in the surface of the fabric, crafting a division between colors that is neither an outline nor a “boneless” line between colors, but instead a mode of pictorial definition that is specific to tapestry weaving.³¹ This can be seen most clearly in the leaves that curl, showing their lighter undersides. Although no woven line separates the underside from the darker leaf surface, the colorblock itself is physically separated from the rest of the leaf, creating a subtle line of empty space between the colors. The visual effect is emphasized as a textile ages: the surface contracts and pulls apart at such gaps.

Ming connoisseurs have written about this technique more as a function of the aging of the tapestry rather than the actions of the weaver. A Ming connoisseur, Zhang Yingwen 張應文, discusses Song kesi saying, “each outline is carved; as a result they have an animated vitality; they do not feel the limits imposed by the warp on the loom.”³² Ming connoisseurs lauded the “carved” (ke 刻) surface of Song kesi and marveled at the way the placement of colors, not the mechanical process, dictated the breaks in the surface. Gao Lian 高濂 (d. 1500) states that the kesi 刻絲 (‘carved silk’) of the Ming were actually zhisi 織絲 (‘woven silk’).³³ By calling Ming weavings ‘woven’ instead of ‘carved,’ he shows a bias for earlier works and their surfaces, pulled apart by time, use, and environment. Such a patina of

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³⁰ This technique can be seen clearly in some Qing-dynasty kesi. See Xu Huping (1999), no. 23, *Landscape of the Yingxinshi Studio*, where the boat sails are almost the same color as the water, therefore the slit between color blocks helps to define their shape and distinguish it from the water around them. It is unclear if this technique was consciously used in the Song, or if the age of the piece causes breaks in the surface to function as compositional elements.

³¹ The mogu or “boneless” style of painting in China was a technique that first began in the tenth century, using color washes placed next to each other, without any outline, to define shapes. See Silbergeld (1982), p. 25, for more information.


age and appreciation gives the piece a legitimacy that Ming kesi did not have for Gao. Cao Zhao 曹昭 (fl. 1387-1399) calls kesi ‘kese’ 刻色 or ‘carved colors.’ These techniques of connoisseurship, such as using new terms to define kesi based upon its appearance and perceived age, give the connoisseur ways to define kesi within their own, Ming-dynasty system of values.

The regulation imposed upon the weaver by working with only vertical and horizontal lines on a loom is manipulated in kesi weaving to give the work a more organic feel and appearance. The set-up of the loom makes it almost impossible to weave a curved line, yet the materials (thin, silk thread), allow the weaver to create such a detailed composition that the image appears organic and painterly, instead of mechanical and orderly. Interestingly, the final version, when viewed very closely, has a pixilated appearance, something to which the twenty-first-century viewer is quite accustomed. The color blocks, which follow the forms in the composition, and the freedom of the weaver, when only working on one color block at a time, allow the weaver to use a different number of threads per square centimeter in one area of the weaving than in another. Therefore, the weaver can create a denser area of threads in one area, or an area that naturally has a curve, despite the vertical/horizontal set-up. This is called “eccentric weaving.” The weaver as well, must have an intimate understanding of how each thread will interact in order to create such an intricate and painterly composition.

Part of the appeal of a kesi work is the technical feat of creating a work of art on a machine, with all of its technological advantages and limitations, that appears as refined as a painting done by hand. It is this denial of the technology that gives kesi “paintings” (kesi hua 繡絲畫 as they are called in Chinese) their aura. In fact, it is the layers of understanding one comes to when viewing this work of art that seems to create its allure. First, one views a painting-like composition and assumes it is a painting. Next, when close to the work, one realizes it is a weaving, which brings the viewer in closer to peer at the craftsmanship and marvel at the painting-like quality of the work. Lastly, once the knowledge that the work has been woven on a loom sinks in, one cannot help but marvel at the ways in which this loom technology was manipulated by the craftsman to make the weaving look as painterly as possible.

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34 Cao Zhao, Ge gu yao lun 格古要論, cited and translated in Malagò (1991), p. 239.
Tapestry Weave and Painting

As we begin to look at tapestry weaving of the eleventh through thirteenth centuries, we can see the stark difference between the work attributed to Zhu Kerou and that of other weavers. Most kesi of the Song dynasty appear patterned, as if imitating brocaded silks or other types of fabric where the decorative motifs repeat in the warp and weft, creating symmetric or mirroring images. An example of a type seen most often in the Song dynasty has a purple ground with birds and deer jumping amidst flowers and leaves laid out decoratively across the surface of the fabric (Fig. 8). This type of kesi, produced in the Northern and Southern Song dynasties, based on Central Asian textiles of similar, but less regular, patterns was most likely woven in long panels and used for decorative purposes (for furniture, clothing, pillows, etc.).

Despite a similar subject matter, many formal differences distinguish Butterfly and Camellia from the purple-ground tapestry. The intentions of the artist of each piece are quite different. The weaver of the purple-ground panel creates a beautiful pattern that spreads out over the surface of the fabric, emphasizing the surface and the two-dimensional aspect of the design. Outlines surround every shape, showing an interest in contrast of colors and forms. The composition in Butterfly and Camellia layers flowers and leaves, creating a sense of space for the viewer. The weaver can just as easily weave a symmetrical pattern as an asymmetrical composition. In fact, it might be more time-consuming to replicate a symmetrical pattern in kesi, because each row of each color is done by hand and chosen by the weaver. However, the conception to weave a completely asymmetrical and pictorial composition, such as a one-corner composition we see in painting at the time, could not have been clear to just any weaver. It would take a new way of thinking about loom-produced textiles to move from weaving patterned textiles to weaving painterly compositions.

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35 No brocade is known using this type of pattern. However, as Jean Mailey notes, earlier embroidery in a similar pattern does exist, see Mailey (1971), p. 17.


37 One kesi that could provide a stepping stone from patterned textiles to asymmetrical, painterly compositions is the Hall in the Mountains of Immortals, in the National Palace Museum, Taipei. This tapestry weaving, usually simply dated to the Song dynasty (960-1279), depicts a scene of immortals feasting in a palace in the clouds, surrounded by mountain peaks and cranes. Although the composition is arranged symmetrically, small details everywhere are different from one side to the
Butterfly and Camellia relates stylistically to paintings of the Southern Song dynasty, a time of lyrical introspection. After the humiliating and devastating loss of the Northern Song capital, Kaifeng 開封, to the Jurchens in 1127, what survived of the imperial family moved to Hangzhou 杭州 and established a new capital, Lin’an 臨安 (“Temporary Peace”). The general attitude reflected in painting, poetry, and other arts became one of carpe diem, seize the day. Many Southern Song paintings depict an image of a moment, a temporary, seasonal aspect of nature, such as falling plum blossoms, a goose in flight, an evening party. Temporal images and small, intimate, portable images were produced in large numbers.

An example from one of the most famous court artists of the period, Ma Yuan 馬遠 (floruit c. 1190-1225), Scholar Viewing Plum Blossoms by Moonlight (Fig. 9), can provide a comparison for Butterfly and Camellia. Scholar, originally a circular fan, depicts a moment, a beautiful coincidence, when a full moon coincides with the blooming of plum blossoms. The interest in depicting a moment in nature, in enjoying the instant when something beautiful happens (a butterfly flutters near a blossom) is a common theme in Southern Song painting. Ma Yuan was also known for his one-corner compositions, focusing the subject matter in one corner while leaving the other half of the painting almost blank silk. The composition of Butterfly and Camellia relates to Southern Song compositions showing an interest in solid and void, the lush camellia blossoms weighted to one corner.

Zhu Kerou did not single-handedly change the use of silk tapestry weave in China from one of patterned weaving for decorative purposes to one that served as a medium to approximate the compositions of paintings. A few other pictorial Song dynasty kesi exist, and they purport to be copies of paintings by Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1101-1126), the last Northern Song emperor who fostered and promoted the Chinese tradition of bird and flower painting. So, how did this new trend in tapestry weaving other. See National Palace Museum (2009), cat. 22, p. 89, for illustration, details, and description.

38 Court painting of the Southern Song dynasty was dominated by the styles of two artists: Ma Yuan and Xia Gui 夏珪 (floruit early thirteenth century), who were known for their intimate one-corner compositions, juxtaposition of solid and void, and interest in depicting the natural world around them. See Lee Hui-shu (2001) and Edwards (1989) for two sensitive studies of Southern Song painting.

39 At least three kesi that reproduce Huizong paintings are extant. See Zhongguo zhixiu fushi quanj (2004), Hibiscus, cat. 276, now in the Liaoning Provincial Museum; and Bird and Flower, cat. 286, in the Palace Museum, Beijing. A different kesi entitled Bird and Flower, also in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, is reproduced in Palace Museum (2005), no. 80.
come about? This question relates closely to another. How were kesi used during the Song dynasty and how did they relate to painting?

**Kesi Wrappers**

A tradition of using silk tapestry weavings to cover and wrap painting and calligraphy scrolls arose in the Tang dynasty around the time of the rise of tapestry weave in China. We have a few examples from Dunhuang of scrolls wrapped in tapestry pieces. However, it is during the Song dynasty that we see this tradition grow especially popular. It is believed that Emperor Huizong had many scrolls in the imperial collection “lavishly mounted” and then custom-made outer wrappers were fashioned from “precious silk kesi tapestries depicting auspicious flowers, dragons and buildings, a new luxury art of the twelfth century.” Therefore, tapestry woven silks were used to protect and stabilize painting scrolls by adding extra material to the outermost layer of the painting.

However their purpose was much more than protection. The luxurious silk tapestry adds value to the object and becomes part of the ritual of viewing the work of art as a whole. When a painting scroll is taken out of storage, the first thing the viewer sees is the lavish wrapper made for this work. Next, while untying the scroll, they have an opportunity to admire the kesi wrapper. The silk cord that holds the rolled scroll closed is wrapped around itself. The scroll is pulled open an arm’s length and, after a frontispiece, the viewing of the painting or calligraphy finally begins. After viewing the scroll, the whole process happens in reverse. Wu Hung has described and explored the visual effect of viewing a handscroll in person, as opposed to in reproduction. The visual language and rhythms of a work of art in such a specific format can only be understood through such an analysis. At the same time, he leaves out the sensual effect of touching, unrolling, viewing, and even smelling a work of art. These layers of sensory information work together when viewing any work of art in person, especially those meant to be touched, turned, and opened by the viewer. There are multiple experiences and works of art that frame the original work of art and the kesi wrapper is the first and last of those experiences, as well as the most lavish and most tactile. The purple-ground kesi of Figure 9 was a wrapper for a painting scroll attributed to the Northern Song painter Guo Xi 郭熙 (c. 1001-c. 1090) and now has been

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40 See Whitfield (1985), Figs. 6 and 23, for two examples.
41 McCausland (2003), p. 95.
42 See Wu (1996), pp. 57-68.
removed from its position as a protective and decorative wrapper to become a work of art in its own right.

Watt and Wardwell, in their catalogue, *When Silk Was Gold*, identify two classes of Song-dynasty kesi: Northern and Southern Song kesi. The Northern Song class consists of the Central-Asian inspired, decorative kesi, while the Southern Song class “faithfully reproduces court paintings of the period.” They note the interest Emperor Gaozong, the first emperor of the Southern Song dynasty, showed in continuing Northern Song traditions, such as having kesi wrappers woven for paintings of the time. Interestingly, famous landscapes and works of calligraphy are mounted with decorative kesi wrappers, providing a contrast between the patterned, colorful kesi and the more subtle painted work. Is it possible that the tradition of reproducing paintings (or painting-like compositions) in the tapestry medium arose because of the proximity of patterned kesi and paintings? I suspect that it was Emperor Huizong, again, who initiated this development in the tapestry medium, when tapestry weaves move from decorating a painting to adopting the visual language of painting. At any rate, either at the time of Huizong, around 1125 or a bit later, around the time Zhu Kerou is thought to have worked, the tapestry medium was greatly expanded to include pictorial compositions as well as decorative patterns.

It is clear that at this time, luxury weaves were becoming more popular and more in demand. The court of the Southern Song dynasty and those who wanted to emulate the court were consuming luxury textiles at a new level. In her dissertation, Angela Sheng proves that technological changes in textile production had a direct effect on the urban production of fancy silks. She brings together evidence of how increased production of mulberry leaves and silk cocoons, for example, allowed more silk to be produced during the Song dynasty, which allowed for the dramatic increase in textile consumption at the time. We can see the new interest in pictorial kesi as part of the larger interest in new, complicated weaves and consumption of textiles during the Song dynasty.

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44 Ibid, p. 57.
45 There is a trend of certain, talented emperors pushing the arts into uncharted territory. One example is the *Wenquan ming* 温泉銘 (Eulogy on the Warm Spring) inscription of Tang Taizong 太宗 (r. 626-649), where the emperor wrote a eulogy in his running script calligraphy and had it carved onto the surface of a stone stele, a medium that had been previously only inscribed with the more regular clerical, seal, or standard script.
Documentation

*Butterfly and Camellia* has been documented in writing since the late Ming dynasty. The first documentation for this weaving is a calligraphic inscription by a late Ming painter, Wen Congjian 文從簡 (1574-1648). He wrote a laudatory inscription about the weaving that is now mounted next to it. It is mounted in a “butterfly” mounting, painting on the right and inscription on the left facing it. His inscription gives us most of the biographical information known of Zhu Kerou today. Simply the fact that this weaving has been mounted like a painting, in the tradition of a painted album leaf with an inscription mounted next to it, is significant. The mounting alone moves this piece out of the traditional realm of textiles and into the realm of painting. This *kesi* is not meant to function as a wrapper for a painting, but as an aesthetic work of art, meant to be viewed, commented on, and enjoyed.

Wen Congjian’s inscription situates his viewing of the work in space and time and creates a shared experience for every viewer after him. He tells us:

> Zhu Kerou was a native of Yunjian 雲間 [(Songjiang)] and she lived during the Southern Song dynasty. She was famous for women’s work [weaving]. The exquisite skill shown in her works with figures, trees, rocks, flowers, and birds, is almost supernatural. She was highly esteemed during a certain period and her pieces that survive are very rare. This small picture is full of quiet elegance and expresses the taste and culture of a famous artist of the past. It has essential and natural beauty. Her skill is so extraordinary; she handled the silk as if handling a brush. Her technique was such that people today cannot even dream of seeing [such skill]. This work should be treasured. Written by Wen Congjian of Yanmen 雁門. 47

Wen Congjian came from a long line of painters, started by one of the most famous Chinese painters, Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470-1559).48 It is not surprising that he would be viewing works of art in a friend or an important collector’s collection and commenting on them. However, it is

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47 This inscription has only been transcribed, never reproduced. This translation is based on the translation in *Tsuan-tsu-ying-hua*, p. 19, and the slightly different translation in Malagò (1991), p. 224, with numerous small changes made by me.

48 See Clunas (2004), for a study of Wen Zhengming’s art and its function in social circles, as objects that create and strengthen social relationships, as well as objects that fulfill obligations and therefore sever connections.
very unusual to find a calligraphic inscription next to a tapestry weaving. Interestingly, Wen Congjian was father to a well-known woman painter, Wen Shu 文俶 (1595-1634). We know very little about Wen Shu’s career, but assume that she was taught the skill of painting by her father or other male family members, most of whom were painters. It seems fitting that a painter who fostered his daughter’s talent and career would also praise the skill of a woman who worked at her art hundreds of years earlier. Grace Fong, among others, has discussed the paratexts around women’s literary works and anthologies. The technique of framing a work with words, common in painting and literary circles, has been extended here to include a tapestry weaving.

Wen Congjian’s inscription uses certain words and phrases, such as “supernatural” describing her skill, “a famous artist of the past,” “people today cannot even dream of seeing [such skill]” that create an aura around Zhu Kerou and her work. He likens her to painters by stating that “she handled the silk as if handling a brush.” It is tempting to view Wen’s inscription as a wish to further public understanding of women’s artwork and women’s skills. As well, it is quite likely that Wen was asked by a friend to comment on this work and therefore stated without question that it is of a Song-dynasty date. As Craig Clunas has shown, the calligraphy of a well-known painter is valuable, so Wen’s writing mounted next to Butterfly and Camellia adds value to the work, and his assertion that the work dates to the Song does so even more.

Could it be possible that Wen Congjian is authenticating a work that might not be of Song date? Hundreds of paintings have been re-dated from Song to Ming in the past century as our connoisseurship has become more precise, thanks, in large part, to photographic reproduction. Tapestry weave has not been studied and examined in the same manner and the field could use a close examination to rethink the dating of many pieces. Whatever his motivations were, Wen Congjian helped to shift Zhu Kerou’s

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49 In fact, the only kesi album leaves I know of with calligraphic inscriptions mounted facing them are two leaves attributed to Zhu Kerou: Butterfly and Camellia and Peony (Fig. 10), also in the collection of the Liaoning Provincial Museum, and mounted next to an inscription dated 1496 by a certain Zhang Xizhi 張習志. See Zhu Qiqian (1935), Cunsutang sixiu lu, juan shang, p. I, and Malagò (1991), pp. 244-245, for an English translation of the inscription.

50 See Weidner (1988), pp. 31-35 and 88-91, for more information on Wen Shu, as well as pp. 31-39 for a study of gentry women painters and their study of art through their family members.

51 Fong and Widmer (2010), see Grace Fong’s Introduction.

52 Clunas (2004).
work from a tapestry weaving that reproduces a court style of painting into the world of literati painters and collectors. His inscription is the earliest biographical information we have for Zhu Kerou, and gave us what little we know about the weaver.⁵³

**Collection History**

In the early Qing dynasty, *Butterfly and Camellia* was in the collection of the famous connoisseur, Bian Yongyu 卞永譽 (1645-1712). (Bian’s daughter, Bian Shuyuan 卞淑媛 was also a painter.⁵⁴) In the early eighteenth century it passed hands to the notable Qing-dynasty collector An Qi 安岐 (ca. 1683-ca. 1744), who records the work in his collection.

An’s collection catalogue, *Moyuan huiguan 墨緣彙觀* (*Record of Works I was Destined to See*, dated to 1742), was not a comprehensive list of his collection. He excluded works that he found unfit to mention, works that he did not want to record for all of posterity. *Butterfly and Camellia* was not only included in his catalogue, letting us know this is a work he was proud to list in his collection, but also his catalogue notes how this work was mounted and used. It served as a frontispiece for an album of paintings, entitled *Collected Works of the Tang, Five Dynasties, and Northern and Southern Song* (*Tang Wudai Bei-Nan Song ji* 唐五代北南宋集). This clever nod to the fashion of wrapping paintings in patterned silk *kesi* and using textiles to serve as a frontispiece to an album of treasured paintings demonstrates the cultured erudition of An Qi. It shows the viewers of his collection and the future readers of his catalogue that he not only owned this beautiful work of art, but by mounting it at the front of an album, he knows how to “use” it. An Qi’s placement of *Butterfly and Camellia* is a clever way to incorporate the work into another album, providing more chances for its viewing, a visual surprise and play for his cultured friends, and an ingenious way to show his art historical knowledge through its placement at the front of an album, referencing the use of *kesi* for wrapping and prefacing paintings. At the same time, An Qi does not segregate Zhu Kerou’s work from painting—it is incorporated into an album of paintings, rather than being grouped with other textiles and it is included in a painting catalogue. This written record of An Qi’s collection is devoted to painting and calligraphy, not to all the media of arts he owned. *Butterfly and Camellia* is a flexible

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⁵³ Wen’s words are still used verbatim in some Chinese art catalogues when discussing works attributed to Zhu Kerou. See National Palace Museum (1989), pp. 94-95, catalogue 6.

⁵⁴ Fang Chao-ying in Hummel (1944), p. 626.
work, able to be praised as a painting, but used as a textile, and still straddling both media when included in a painting catalogue.

However, things changed when *Butterfly and Camellia* enters the Qing dynasty imperial collection. It was included in an album entitled *Song Kesi and Embroidery, Side by Side* (*Song kesi xiu xian hebi* 宋刻絹繡線合璧). In this album, Song-dynasty *kesi* and embroidery are arranged in alternating order and the only two works with inscriptions are *Butterfly and Camellia* and another *kesi* attributed to Zhu Kerou, *Peony* (Fig. 10).  

After the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, many textile works from the imperial collection made their way into the collection of Zhu Qiqian 朱啓鈐 (1872-1964), the foremost Chinese textile collector of the early twentieth century. Zhu records the work in his catalogue, *Cunsutang sixiu lu* 存素堂繡錄 (Catalogue of Silks and Embroideries from the White Repository). He notes the size and subject matter of *Butterfly and Camellia*, Wen Congjian’s inscription as well as An Qi’s use of the work. In Zhu’s collection, *Butterfly and Camellia* is the second page of an album, the first page being the above-mentioned *Peony*. The third work is listed as a *kesi* of a Huizong painting. The fourth, fifth, and sixth works are embroidered pictorial works. All supposedly date to the Song dynasty. It seems that this album is the exact same one recorded in the Qing imperial collection, except that Zhu Qiqian rearranged the textiles to group *kesi* together and embroideries together, instead of alternating them. Therefore once *Butterfly and Camellia* entered the imperial collection it was grouped with other pictorial textiles and categorized by time period and medium. This categorization has remained to the present day. Through careful categorization, this work has been denied its flexible status as a “tapestry painting.” Because of its rather unique status as a one-of-a-kind work (and because of our new museum culture), it remains in climate-controlled storage in the Liaoning Provincial Museum. *Butterfly and Camellia* truly cannot be grouped with costumes or chair covers, and yet is not included in a subset of painting studies, therefore the work remains under-studied, under-researched, and most publications rely on previous publications for their information. As well, because of textiles’ sensitivity to light, works such as this one are rarely

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55 Hong Kong Museum of Art (1995), p. 312. Zhu Qiqian (1963), p. 141, lists the album and each leaf in it. Zhu Kerou’s *Peony* appears first, then a Song embroidery piece, next Zhu’s *Butterfly and Camellia*, then another work of embroidery, a *kesi* of camellia with a gourd-shaped seal reading *yushu* 御書 or “imperial autograph,” seemingly a reference to a *kesi* of a work by Emperor Huizong, and, lastly, another work of embroidery.

displayed and difficult to access, therefore they remain rather mysterious to the Chinese art history world.

The Gender Difference
It is interesting to note the enthusiasm with which Zhu Kerou’s piece was collected. It was included in famous collections throughout the Qing dynasty at a time when the circulation of paintings by contemporary women was surrounded by a certain anxiety. At the same time that proper Confucian values placed women in the home, the literati culture of the Ming and Qing dynasties seemed to hunger for talented women and works by them. *Butterfly and Camellia*, assumed to be a work by a woman weaver of the great Song dynasty, fills a liminal space between painting and weaving, men’s art and women’s work. The work itself, as understood by these collectors, bridges the gap of space and time between the Ming and Qing periods and the Song dynasty.

The Ming dynasty saw an intense desire for all things old—genuinely old, antiqued, and even new objects made with reference to the antique were sought after. Catalogues were written on how to be a connoisseur, what kind of taste is acceptable, and what objects should be included in one’s collection. Most of these catalogues praised the “air” of ancient works and stated, regarding *kesi*, that Song dynasty was the height of the art. Therefore Ming and Qing collectors hungered for Song-dynasty works. Song objects were so popular, especially Song textiles, that in the famous manual of taste *Treatise on Superfluous Things* (*Zhangwu zhi* 長物志) by Wen Zhenheng 文震亨 (1585-1645), the entry on *kesi* refers only to Song-dynasty *kesi*.59

As well, in the Ming, as Craig Clunas has pointed out, a propensity for lists took hold of elite men, who wrote and took pleasure in this system of creating and ranking knowledge. In this system which, as Clunas notes, is far from thorough, the same artists’ names, for example, are mentioned

57 See Angela Sheng’s introduction to this issue for an in-depth discussion of gender roles, women’s work and space in traditional China.

58 Courtesans were trained in painting, poetry, calligraphy, and music to be more attractive to their literati clientele. Men who took a second or third wife often chose this wife for companionship rather than familial ties, the reason most first marriages took place. See Weidner (1988), Ko (1994), and Zeitlin (2003), for just a few of the studies in English on talented women, their work, and how it was treasured by men and women during the Ming and Qing periods.

again and again, while others are forgotten through time.\textsuperscript{60} Certain artists became canonical and ubiquitous as their names were used over and over again to the exclusion of many others. Zhu Kerou is one name that has been used this way since the Ming dynasty to mean pictorial tapestry weaving in the Song.

These connoisseurs have defined the height of \textit{kesi} weaving as the Song dynasty, a bias that has continued until the present day. As Clunas writes about the Ming dynasty itself being a "'present Ming', a Ming which answers present needs" meaning something different to each time period that studies it, \textit{Butterfly and Camellia} actually fills a space created by the desire of Ming and Qing collectors, connoisseurs, and artists.\textsuperscript{61} The work, as we read about it today, is the impressions and biases of the Ming and Qing connoisseurs who viewed it. How can we separate \textit{Butterfly and Camellia} from its textual roots in the Ming dynasty? Can we? Does this work reflect, too perfectly, the desire for Song dynasty objects and objects created by women? Could this work be a product of just this era, in the style of Zhu Kerou?

The subject matter of \textit{Butterfly and Camellia} can be read, as it has been above, as an interest in the temporality in nature. However, the depiction of a butterfly and a flower has sensual implications in Chinese culture as well. Women are often likened to flowers, fragrant and beautiful, and sometimes depicted surrounded by butterflies.\textsuperscript{62} A butterfly visiting a flower can have erotic implications as men are associated with the butterfly and women with the flower.

As Angela Sheng discusses in her contribution, weaving was a gendered occupation, considered a proper way for women to contribute to the income of the household. It was a productive task, done indoors at home, that kept women occupied and provided for their families and for the government.\textsuperscript{63} The fact that \textit{Butterfly and Camellia}, attributed to a woman, was also a weaving, might have played into the Confucian and social wish for women’s productivity at the loom. Yet, as women were

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{60} Clunas (2007), pp. 127-136.
\bibitem{62} See Weidner (1988), p. 134, for a discussion of beauties surrounded by butterflies. She cites a nineteenth-century album \textit{Pictures of One Hundred Beauties of the Past and Present}, which depicts a Tang courtesan, Chu Lianxiang 楚蓮香, who was fabled to have always been surrounded by butterflies when she went outside.
\bibitem{63} See Bray (1995), for a discussion of textile production and gender roles in China and how it shifted through time. Her argument stresses the usefulness of women in textile production during the Song period, citing anecdotes where women’s skill in textiles was praised (p. 129).
\end{thebibliography}
increasingly visible and supported as artists in their own right, male critics praised typically women’s work as art: embroidery and weaving. This gave women their own artistic space that did not invade the traditionally male spheres of painting and calligraphy. In this way, the combination of a beautiful object, a Song-dynasty composition, a woven album leaf attributed to a woman’s hand, and dated to the Song dynasty by a member of the preeminent artistic family of the Ming dynasty, would be irresistible to any serious collector.

Unfortunately we know nothing of Zhu Kerou—if she was a historic woman, and if she was indeed from the Song period. If she were a historic artisan, we do not know how she was trained—it has been theorized with no historical evidence, that she was trained as a painter and her compositions are original. Studies of contemporary weavers can help us access the inspirations and training of those who weave original composition in tapestry weave. Although such studies can help us access Zhu Kerou, they cannot provide the information we are currently lacking about her life. We do not know how she was inspired, nor how her work was received during her lifetime. We do have the work attributed to her hands and we do know how her work was treasured by later artists and collectors. This small, intimate work, *Butterfly and Camellia*, straddles many lines: between painting and textile, women’s work and men’s art, literati and court arts, proper behavior (weaving) and titillating imagery. The flexibility and liminality of *Butterfly and Camellia* allowed collectors and artists to be playful and witty with the work, yet the skill and beauty of the weaving contributed to the rigid categorization as well as the desire to claim ownership of it.

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65 Hareven, p. 90 and p. 125, has studied contemporary weavers in Nishijin, Kyoto, Japan. Her interviews have shown that women weavers are inspired by nature and strive to work on their own compositions, although those are not always desired in the workshops.
Figures

Figure 1. Attributed to Zhu Kerou (active late 12th to 13th centuries)

*Butterfly and Camellia*

China, silk tapestry mounted as an album leaf.

SOURCE: Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang.

For the picture in color see the attachment to this journal as well as the online edition of EASTM.
Figure 2. Modern upright *kesi* loom with partially woven *kesi* composition

SOURCE: Hangzhou Silk Museum, Hangzhou, China, 2005, photo by author. For the picture in color see the online edition of EASTM.
Figure 3. Warp threads twisted “Z”, detail of threads

*Immortal Holding a Peach*

China, Ming dynasty (1368-1644), silk tapestry (*kesi*)

For the picture in color see the online edition of EASTM.
Figure 4. Slit tapestry
Diagram by Dorothy K. Burnham

SOURCE: With permission of the Royal Ontario Museum © ROM.
Figure 5. Dovetailed tapestry
Diagram by Dorothy K. Burnham

SOURCE: With permission of the Royal Ontario Museum © ROM.
Figure 6. Single interlocking tapestry
Diagram by Dorothy K. Burnham

SOURCE: With permission of the Royal Ontario Museum © ROM.
Figure 7. Double interlocking tapestry
Diagram by Dorothy K. Burnham

SOURCE: With permission of the Royal Ontario Museum © ROM.
Figure 8. Scroll wrapper
China, Song dynasty (960-1279), 11th-12th century
Silk tapestry (kesi)

For the picture in color see the online edition of EASTM.
Figure 9. Ma Yuan (active ca. 1190-1225)
*Scholar Viewing Plum Blossoms by Moonlight*
China, Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279)
Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and colors on silk

For the picture in color see the online edition of EASTM.
Figure 10. Attributed to Zhu Kerou (active late twelfth to thirteenth centuries)
Peony
China, silk tapestry mounted as an album leaf

SOURCE: Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang.
For the picture in color see the online edition of EASTM.
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