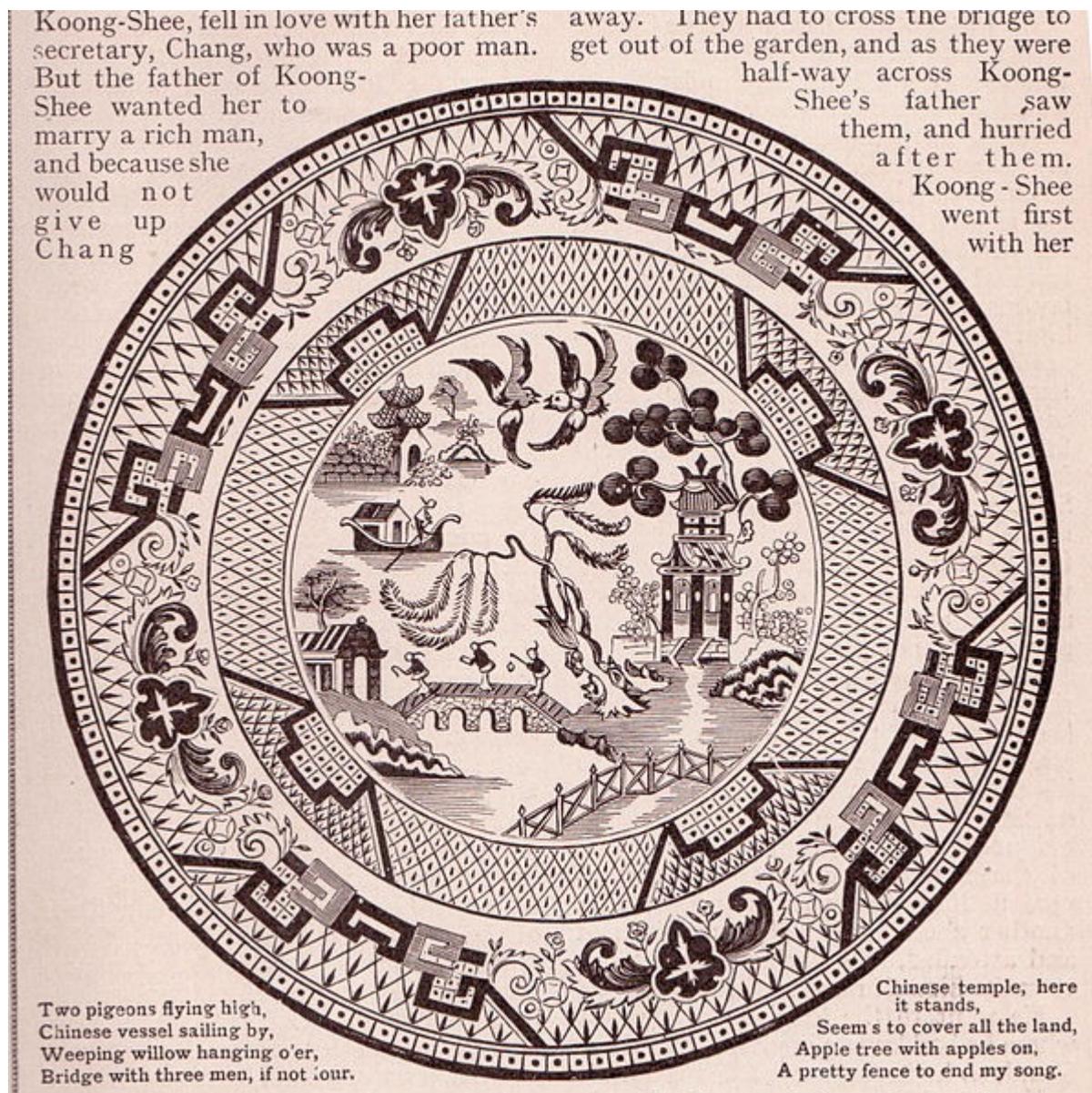


The Romantic Fable: Once there was a wealthy [Mandarin](#), who had a beautiful daughter (Koong-se). She had fallen in love with her father's humble accounting assistant (Chang), angering her father (it was inappropriate for them to marry due to their difference in social class). He dismissed the young man and built a high fence around his house to keep the lovers apart. The Mandarin was planning for his daughter to marry a powerful Duke. The Duke arrived by boat to claim his bride, bearing a box of jewels as a gift. The wedding was to take place on the day the blossom fell from the willow tree.

On the eve of the daughter's wedding to the Duke, the young accountant, disguised as a servant, slipped into the palace unnoticed. As the lovers escaped with the jewels, the alarm was raised. They ran over a bridge, chased by the Mandarin, whip in hand. They eventually escaped on the Duke's ship to the safety of a secluded island, where they lived happily for years. But one day, the Duke learned of their refuge. Hungry for revenge, he sent soldiers, who captured the lovers and put them to death. The gods, moved by their plight, transformed the lovers into a pair of doves (possibly a later addition to the tale, since the birds do not appear on the earliest willow pattern plates). [2]



Long ago in China, there lived a very wealthy mandarin. He had a beautiful daughter named Koong Shee. The beautiful, young girl was the promised bride of Ta-Jin, a very old but wealthy merchant. The young girl however, fell in love with her father's secretary, a young man named Chang. Koong Shee and Chang would meet in secret beneath a large Willow tree

and dream of their future together. Koong Shee was of noble descent and Chang was a mere commoner. So the young couple, no matter how great their love, would never be allowed to wed.

When the girl's father found out about their secret meetings, he was furious. He banished Chang and forbade his daughter from ever seeing Chang again. Koong Shee would sit beneath the Willow tree that had once been a place of joy and would quietly weep. Her heart was filled with pain. Not only had she lost Chang but Ta-Jin was a wicked man and a very difficult person to please. Koong Shee longed to see her handsome, young Chang and her thoughts would fill with the happiness they shared while sitting in this very same spot together.

As the day of the wedding drew near, Chang returned. He sent a message with Koong Shee's maid to meet him by the Willow tree. As Chang approached, he saw his beautiful Koong Shee sitting beneath the tree. Chang rushed to her side and once more held Koong Shee in his arms. They were so very much in love and did not want to be separated ever again. Chang and Koong Shee finally decided to elope and get married without her father's permission. As they were starting to leave together, Koong Shee's father saw them and chased after the pair. The young couple raced across the bridge to a waiting boat and sailed away.

A storm developed and the boat sank at sea. Suddenly from out of the storm flew two snow white doves. Seeing the young couple's love for one another, the gods transformed Koong Shee and Chang into two beautiful white doves. These two doves have lived on forever and can still be seen today flying high above the Willow Tree where Koong Shee and Chang first pledged their love.