



CONTRIBUTORS

Janet Baker
Curator of Asian Art
Phoenix Art Museum

Anne Kerlan-Stephens
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique,
Centre d'étude et de l'image, Paris

Chun-yi Lee
Ph.D. Student
Arizona State University

Marion S. Lee
Assistant Professor, Art History
School of Art, Ohio University

Xiaoping Lin
Associate Professor
Department of Art, Queens College,
Central University of New York

Chen Liu
Ph.D. Student
Arizona State University

MYRIAD POINTS OF VIEW

NEW RESEARCH ON MING AND QING PAINTINGS IN THE
ROY AND MARILYN PAPP COLLECTION

Edited by Claudia Brown

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From Narrative to Transformed Narrative: Visualizations of the Heavenly Maiden and the Maiden Magu

CHEN LIU

Scholars have noted that in traditional Chinese studies of painting, there is no category to designate narrative painting.¹ When further examining the field of Chinese painting, it has been found that to give a clear definition or boundary of Chinese narrative paintings is very difficult. In fact, whatever definition we are using to categorize Chinese narrative paintings, we can always find that there are some paintings sitting at the margin of the definition. In other words, it is very hard to tell whether or not these paintings belong to narrative paintings according to any standard definition.² In this paper, I will examine a pair of case studies, that I refer to as transformed narrative paintings.

My discussion will focus on two cases: visualizations of the Heavenly Maiden and the Maiden Magu.³ Two leaves in an album titled *Famous Women* by the Qing painter Gai Qi (1773-1829) in the Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection on loan to the Phoenix Art Museum will be discussed as representative examples (figures 1 and 2). The existence of these transformed narrative paintings shows the complexity of categorizing Chinese narrative paintings; there do exist some paintings that cannot be strictly classified as narrative paintings, but they may originate from and have close relationships to narrative paintings, and the boundary between them and the latter is vague.

In the following section of this paper, paintings on the Buddhist theme known as the *Tiannu sanhua* (the Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers) will be examined first. It will be seen that this theme comes from the recorded story of Vimalakirti's discussion with the Manjusri Bodhisattva (Wenshu pusa). There are some early narrative paintings depicting this story with Tiannu as a character in them. However, later



Figure 1. Gai Qi (1773-1829), *The Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers*. Leaf from *Album of Famous Women*, dated 1799. Album of 16 leaves of painting, 18 leaves of calligraphy, ink on paper, 25 x 17.4 cm. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.



Figure 2. Gai Qi, *Maiden Magu Selling Wine*. Leaf from *Album of Famous Women*, dated 1799. Ink on paper, 25 x 17.4 cm. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.

on more and more paintings only depict the Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers instead of the whole scene, so that *Tiannu sanhua* became an independent theme, which deviated from its original meaning and became a symbol of luck and happiness. Since paintings on this theme only depict a single character of the original story, they can no longer be classified as narrative paintings although they have strong relationships to the story. In fact, since *Tiannu sanhua* was depicted independently so often, few people know or care about the origin of it.

Similar situations exist in the Daoist theme *Magu xianshou* (Maiden Magu offering gifts for longevity), which will be analyzed in the second section of this paper. Although it sounds like a narrative topic, there are no actual paintings depicting Magu's presenting a toast for some specific person. Most paintings on this topic are depictions of Magu herself, at most with a servant girl beside her. I would argue that instead of being a character who acts in a story, Magu became a symbol for longevity. Thus, paintings about *Magu xianshou* do not belong to narrative paintings as defined by Julia Murray. They can be viewed as transformed narrative paintings instead.

From my discussion of these two cases, a clear notion of the relation of narrative painting to transformed narrative painting can be seen. In other words, I would suggest that there are many Chinese paintings that have some relationship to stories for this or that reason although they are not narrative paintings. They can be regarded as transformed narrative paintings as I propose in this paper.

Visualizations of the Heavenly Maiden

In the *Album of Famous Women* by Gai Qi in the Collection of Roy and Marilyn Papp, there is a leaf titled the *Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers* as seen in figure 1.⁴ In this painting, a beautiful woman is depicted scattering flowers. Her floating ribbon indicates that she is flying in the air. Some other paintings with the same title illustrate similar scenes. However, returning to the origin of the theme Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers, we can see that the leaf titled *Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers* is only a scene from the story of Manjusri Bodhisattva visiting Vimalakirti. There are actually some early paintings depicting the whole story, and it is not until very late that Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers is excerpted from the original story and forms an independent topic.

FROM NARRATIVE TO TRANSFORMED NARRATIVE

The original story of Manjusri Bodhisattva visiting Vimalakirti is recorded in the *Vimalakirti Sutra (Weimojie jing)*.⁵ The sutra basically shows the difference between Mahayana Buddhism and Hinayana Buddhism. The representative of the former, Vimalakirti, pretends to be sick at home. Buddha thus sends Manjusri Bodhisattva to visit him. Vimalakirti takes the opportunity to explain the Law of Mahayana Buddhism. During the discussion, the Heavenly Maiden at Vimalakirti's home is revealed.⁶ She scatters a basket of flowers, which symbolize secular life, into the sky. The flowers fall on everyone's body. When reaching the bodies of the Bodhisattvas, the flowers slide and fall on the ground.⁷ In comparison, the flowers stick to the bodies of the disciples although they try hard to get rid of them.

At that moment, by talking to one of Manjusri Bodhisattva's disciples, Shariputra (Shelifu), the Heavenly Maiden shows that the most important thing is the purity of one's mind. She explains that when you disregard the secular life (symbolized by the flowers), or are not obsessed with the secular life, secular issues will become something divine. On the contrary, the more the disciples are afraid that the flowers could damage the purity of their spirits, the more easily the flowers stick to them. If their spirits are pure, nothing can hurt their purity.

The English translation by Burton Watson is quoted in the following:

At that time there was a heavenly being, a goddess, in Vimalakirti's room who, seeing these great men and hearing them expound the Law, proceeded to make herself visible and, taking heavenly flowers, scattered them over the bodhisattvas and major disciples. When the flowers touched the bodhisattvas, they all fell to the floor at once, but when they touched the major disciples, they stuck to them and did not fall off. The disciples all tried to shake off the flowers through their supernatural powers, but they could not do so.

At that time the goddess said to Shariputra, "Why try to brush off the flowers?"

"Such flowers are not in accordance with the Law," he replied. "That's why I try to brush them off."

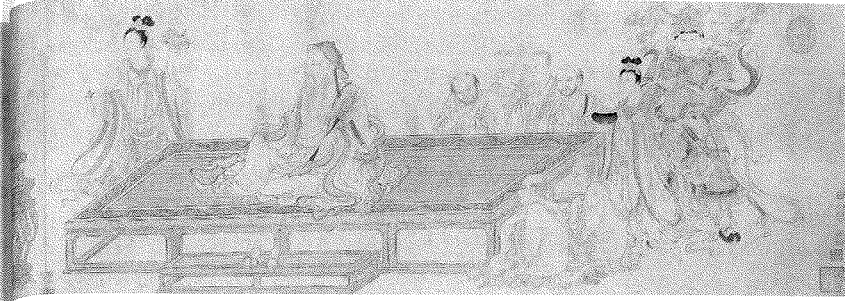
The goddess said, "Don't say these flowers are not in accordance



Figure 3. Anonymous, Southern Song Dynasty. *Vimalakirti Demonstrating the Law of Mahayana Buddhism*. Handscroll, ink on paper, 34.6 x 207.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

with the Law. Why? Because the flowers make no such distinctions. You in your thinking have made up these distinctions, that's all. If one who has left the household life to follow the Buddha's Law makes such distinctions, that is not in accordance with the Law. One must be without distinctions to be in accordance with the Law. Look at the bodhisattvas—the flowers do not stick to them because they have already cut off all thought of distinctions. Just as evil spirits are able to take advantage of a person who is beset by fear, so because you disciples are fearful of the cycle of birth and death, the senses of form, sound, smell, taste, and touch are able to take advantage of you. But once a person has done away with fear, then the five desires that arise from these senses will not be able to get at him. So long as one has not done away with all such entanglements, the flowers will stick to him. But they will not stick to someone who has eliminated them all."⁸

An outstanding visualization of this story is a painting by an anonymous Song painter now in the Palace Museum, Beijing (figure 3).⁹ In the painting, Vimalakirti is sitting on a day bed facing Manjusri Bodhisattva who is sitting on his special chair, *xumizuo*. Around them are their attendants and disciples. In the center of the painting are the Heavenly Maiden and one of Manjusri Bodhisattva's disciples, Shariputra. Between the two, a tower-shaped censer stands in the foreground, indicating the division of the two groups.



Another simpler visualization of the story is the Ming painter Li Ling's painting now in the Palace Museum, Beijing, as well (figure 4). Here one can see that only the three main characters of the story, Vimalakirti, Manjusri Bodhisattva and the Heavenly Maiden, are represented. Unlike figure 1, this painting does not show the scene of the two groups in a balanced way. Instead, the painter raised the status of the Heavenly Maiden so that her important position in the discussion is emphasized.

Paintings like figure 3 and figure 4 are usually titled *Vimalakirti Demonstrating the Law of the Mahayana Buddhism (Weimo yanjiao)* in which the Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers is an approach that Vimalakirti uses to display his opinions, just as recorded in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*.¹⁰ However, another kind of visualization of the story tends to emphasize the status of the Heavenly Maiden, the title of which is usually the *Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers*. Nevertheless, the paintings still depict the other characters of the story instead of just the Heavenly Maiden as in the *Album of Famous Women* in the Phoenix Art Museum. Two paintings of the Song Dynasty are representative ones of this type. One is an album leaf by the court painter Liu Songnian now in the Palace Museum, Taipei.¹¹ In the painting, Manjusri Bodhisattva is represented in the right part of the painting, surrounded by three attendants. To his left is his disciple who faces the Heavenly Maiden. The emphasis on the Heavenly Maiden is achieved by the application of the color red on her robe. In fact, this painting is sometimes titled the *Heavenly Maiden Offering Flowers (Tiannu xianhua tu)*. It is probably the absence of Vimalakirti that makes the scene look like the Heavenly Maiden is offering flowers to the Bodhisattva.¹² The other is a hanging scroll titled *Vimalakirti and the Heavenly Maiden* now in the Shofukuji



Figure 4. Li Ling
(1558-after 1636),
*Vimalakirti Demonstrating
the Law of Mahayana
Buddhism*, dated 1635.
Hanging scroll, ink on
paper, 141.7 x 59 cm.
Palace Museum, Beijing.

Temple, Fukuoka, Japan.¹³ Similar to Liu Songnian's painting, here the Heavenly Maiden is depicted along with only one of the two other major characters of the discussion. But this time she is standing beside Vimalakirti instead of Manjusri Bodhisattva.

Later on, it seems that people became more and more interested in the theme of the Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers instead of the whole story, Vimalakirti demonstrating the Law of the Mahayana Buddhism. The Qing painter Yu Ji (1738-1823 AD) painted a hanging scroll titled the *Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers*.¹⁴ In the painting, the Vimalakirti story is not represented at all. The Heavenly Maiden is shown flying in the sky while scattering flowers. In fact, if the title were not written in the upper right corner, the viewer could easily read it as any nymph. The leaf titled the *Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers* in the *Album of Famous Women* in the Collection of Roy and Marilyn Papp is also an obvious example of this type of painting (figure 1).¹⁵

FROM NARRATIVE TO TRANSFORMED NARRATIVE

Not only paintings but also popular art show a fondness for a separated and isolated image of the Heavenly Maiden.¹⁶ One example is a woodblock print also titled the *Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers*.¹⁷ In it, the artist even added a little girl beside the Heavenly Maiden. The scene is totally changed from a part of the Vimalakirti story into a propitious picture.

From the seven paintings discussed above, we can see how an integrated visualization of Vimalakirti's story with the Heavenly Maiden in it changes into an isolated image of the Heavenly Maiden herself. Figure 3 and 4 are undoubtedly narrative paintings in which a story is represented. Figure 5 and the painting in the Shofukuji Temple in Japan can also be counted as narrative paintings since they have shown relatively obvious relations to a story. In comparison, the figure by Yu Ji and figure 1 cannot be regarded as narrative paintings because their scenes do not suggest obvious relations to a story. However, the titles on or beside the paintings indicate their relation to the story.¹⁸ Moreover, similar scenes with the same title became a certain popular theme to be painted. I would like to suggest these paintings be categorized as transformed narrative paintings.

Figure 5. Chen Hongshou (1598-1652), *The Maiden Magu*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 172.5 x 95.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Visualizations of Maiden Magu

Unlike the Heavenly Maiden who is a Buddhist figure, Maiden Magu is a Daoist figure. The earliest record on Magu is in the *Shenxian zhuan* (*Traditions of Divine Transcendents*) by Ge Hong of the Jin Dynasty (217-420 AD). In a chapter called *Magu zhuan* (A Chapter on Magu), she appears when invited by another immortal, Wang Yuan, to visit a common person whose name is Cai Jing. Magu is said to be a beautiful young immortal, who lived for millions of years. She is described to have fingernails like birds' claws. As presents for Cai Jing, Maiden Magu turns some raw rice into pearls while Wang Yuan gives his family some heavenly wine to drink. When it turns out that the wine is not enough, Wang asks someone to buy some wine from an old woman in Yuhang. The English translation of part of the chapter by Robert Company follows:

Maid Ma declared: "Since I entered your service, I have seen the Eastern Sea turn to mulberry fields three times. As one proceeded across to Penglai, the water came only up to one's waist. I wonder whether it will turn to dry land once again." Wang answered with a sigh, "Oh, the sages all say that the Eastern Sea will once again become blowing dust."

Maid Ma wanted to meet Cai Jing's mother, wife, and other [female] members of the family. Now, at this time, Cai's younger brother's wife had given birth to a child only a few days earlier. As soon as Maid Ma saw the young woman, she said, "Whew! Stop there for a moment and don't come any closer!" Then she asked that a small amount of uncooked rice be brought to her. When she got the rice, she threw it on the floor, saying that she did so in order to dispel the unclean influences. When everyone looked down, the rice grains had all changed to pearls. Wang chuckled, "It's simply because the Maid is young and I'm old that I no longer enjoy these sorts of [monkeylike] transformation tricks anymore."

Wang Yuan then announced to Cai Jing's family, "I wish to present you all with a gift of fine liquor. This liquor has just been produced by the celestial kitchens. Its flavor is quite strong, so it is unfit for drinking by ordinary people; in fact, in some cases it has been known to burn people's intestines. You should mix it with water, and you should not regard this as inappropriate." With that, he added a *dou* of water to a *sheng* of liquor, stirred it, and

presented it to the members of Cai Jing's family. On drinking little more than a *sheng* of it each, they were all intoxicated. After a little while, the liquor was all gone. Wang dispatched attendants, saying, "There's not enough. Go get some more." He gave them a thousand in cash, instructing them to buy liquor from a certain old woman in Yuhang. In a short while, the attendants returned, saying, "We have secured one oilcloth bag's worth, about five *dou* of liquor." They also relayed a message from the old woman in Yuhang: "I fear that this earthly liquor is not fit to be drunk by such eminences."

Maid Ma's fingernails resembled bird claws. When Cai Jing noticed them, he thought to himself, "My back itches. Wouldn't it be great if I could get her to scratch my back with those nails?" Now, Wang Yuan knew what Cai was saying in his heart, so he ordered him bound and whipped, chiding, "Maid Ma is a divine personage. How dare you think that her nails could scratch your back!" The whip lashing Cai's back was the only thing visible; no one was seen wielding it. Wang added, "My whippings are not given without cause."¹⁹

A sentence uttered by Magu in this book showing her longevity became very famous. This sentence, as quoted above, reads, "Maid Ma declared: 'Since I entered your service, I have seen the Eastern Sea turn to mulberry fields three times (*Jiedai yilai, yijian donghai sanwei sangtian*).'" It was so well-known that it was transformed into an idiom as *Canghai sangtian* (literally, seas and mulberry fields, meaning a long period of time). Magu is therefore regarded as a symbol of longevity.

Later on, different short stories on Magu appeared in books such as *Yiyuan (Fantastic Garden)* by Liu Jingshu (circa 390-470) of the Southern Dynasties (420-589 AD) and later in the *Liexian quanzhuan (A Complete Memorial of Daoist Immortals)* first published in the Wanli period (1573-1620) of the Ming Dynasty. All these stories depicted Magu as an immortal, but no one described her offering presents to anyone. Oral folklore may be the major link between the long-lived Magu and her offering presents for someone's longevity. Folklore tells that once on the third day of the third lunar month, which is the birthday of the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu), Magu makes wine from *lingzhi* (fungus) for her as a present. This may be the most direct source for the *Magu xianshou* theme.

Although the stories are various, paintings about Magu are almost all related to only one thing, longevity, instead of telling the above stories. Magu is always depicted alone (or at most with a servant girl) with her gifts. The attributes of Maiden Magu are usually peaches or wine. Titles of these paintings are either the *Maiden Magu* or *Magu xianshou* (Maiden Magu offering gifts for longevity). A representative example of the former is a painting by Chen Hongshou (1598-1652) of the Ming Dynasty (figure 5). Examples of the latter are two paintings by two Qing Dynasty painters, Ren Xiong and Ren Xun, respectively.²⁰ Although the titles are different, in all the three paintings Magu is depicted standing by a servant girl with such longevity symbols as peaches, wine, and rock.

Although the three paintings above already seem to be repeated, numerous paintings on Magu's theme look almost the same.²¹ However, a unique painting of Magu titled the *Maiden Magu Selling Wine (Magu maijiu)* is in the *Album of Famous Women* by Gai Qi in the collection of Roy and Marilyn Papp (figure 2). It is different from most other paintings on Magu's theme in that Magu is "selling" the wine instead of offering it as a gift to someone. Apparently, the painting and the corresponding poem are based on the story of Magu in Ge Hong's *Magu zhuan*. The poem reads, "In Penglai her duty was to harvest mulberry. Scattering rice in the air, her bird-like claws reached far. Her cunning gone, she turned into an old woman. All she could do was to sell wine in Yuhang."²²

In fact, it seems that in this album leaf, the original story in Ge Hong's book is transformed; Maiden Magu is just a bystander when Wang Yuan asks a servant to buy wine from an old woman in Yuhang. Inexplicably, in the painting and poem, Magu turns out to be the old woman selling wine in Yuhang. As Ju-hsi Chou wrote in the catalog, "For reasons still unknown, Cao Zhenxiu's poem seems to equate Magu with the old woman of Yuhang."²³ This is another kind of transformation.

In a word, Maiden Magu, in the records, is only an immortal who has lived a long time. Later, she is regarded as a goddess of longevity although she does not actually have this title.²⁴ Her own longevity is transformed into bringing other people longevity. Correspondingly, paintings of Magu offering gifts symbolize good wishes of longevity, instead of telling an actual story.

Conclusion

As discussed above, the Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers is an excerpt from a Buddhist story on Vimalakirti, isolated and turned into a certain theme. Maiden Magu offering gifts for longevity is a mixture of folklore and a recorded immortal. Visualizations of Magu are transformed from the original story into something else: either becoming a goddess of longevity who can bring long-lived gifts for people, or being mixed with someone else in a story. In any case, we can see that they have some roots in the original story. However, they no longer depict a story and no longer are strict narrative paintings. Instead, they have been transformed into emblems.

In a word, judging from the scenes, some paintings on the Heavenly Maiden and Maiden Magu cannot be counted as narrative paintings because of the lack of specific characters in action and in a specific time and space. However, more or less, these paintings have something to do with a story, part of a story like that of the Heavenly Maiden, or a changed edition of a story like that of the Maiden Magu. I suggest that they can be classified as transformed narrative painting.²⁵

Notes

1. Julia Murray, "What Is 'Chinese Narrative Illustration?'" *Art Bulletin*, volume 80, number 4, December 1998, 602-615. Murray states that traditional Chinese paintings were categorized by subject matter so that narrative paintings were actually classified under headings of figure paintings. Definitions of Chinese narrative illustration have been given in the same article, too. Murray has done a series of researches in the field of Chinese narrative painting. For further readings, see Julia Murray, "Buddhism and Early Narrative Illustration in China," *Archives of Asian Art*, volume 48, 1995, 17-31; Julia Murray, "The Ladies' Classic of Filial Piety and Song Textual Illustration: Problems of Reconstruction and Artistic Context," *Ars Orientalis*, volume 18, 1988, 95-129; Julia Murray, *Ma Hezhi and the Illustration of the Book of Odes* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Julia K. Murray, *Representations of Hariti, the Mother of Demons, and the Theme of "Raising the Alms-bowl" in Chinese Painting* (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1982).
2. In fact, how to define "Chinese narrative" in the study of literature is still an unsolved problem. See Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1985); Andrew H. Plaks, editor, *Zhongguo xushixue (Chinese narrative)* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1996); Andrew H. Plaks, editor, *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977); Robert E. Scholes, *The Nature of Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966); Wolf Werner, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (London: New York: Routledge, 2005).
3. There are paintings on other themes that can be categorized as transformed narrative painting that I plan to study more comprehensively.
4. The album includes sixteen leaves of painting and eighteen leaves of calligraphy.
5. Chang Ping and Shunhe Yang. *Fojiao huazang, Jingbu: Weimojie jing, zhong (Illustrated Buddhist Sutras: Vimalakirti Sutra, the middle volume)* (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 1998, 254-280).
6. The origin of the Heavenly Maiden is vague in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. It is uncertain if this Heavenly Maiden lives in Vimalakirti's home, like a disciple or servant girl, or not.
7. In the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, although just the Manjusri Bodhisattva is specified, here the Bodhisattvas are referred to as plural.

8. Burton Watson, translated from the Chinese version by Kumarajiva, *The Vimalakirti Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 86-87.
9. There is a similar version of this painting titled *Vimalakirti and the One Doctrine* (*Weimo bu'er tu*) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art by the Yuan painter Wang Zhenpeng (fourteenth century). According to the postscript on the painting, Wang painted this handscroll based on the one by the Jin (1115-1234) painter Ma Yunqing. Because of this relationship and the similarity between Wang's painting and the one in the Palace Museum, Beijing, the scholar Jin Weinuo thinks that the latter is the one by Ma Yunqing. But recently, Xu Zhongling questions this hypothesis with some careful comparisons between the two paintings. See Xu Zhongling, "Weimo yanjiaotu jiqi xiangguan wenti taolun," *Palace Museum Journal*, number 4, 2004, 120-129.
10. Besides the paintings of Vimalakirti discussed in this paper, there are wall paintings on this theme in Dunhuang. See Nayi, "Fojiao meishu zhong de weimojie ticai shidu," *Palace Museum Journal*, number 4, 2004, 96-109.
11. Liu Songnian, *The Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers*, Song Dynasty, album, ink and color on silk, Palace Museum, Taipei. See Hua Liu and Tao Jin, editors, *Zhongguo renwuhua quanji*, I (Beijing: Jinghua chubanshe, 2001).
12. It is also possible that this album leaf is part of a painting on the theme of Vimalakirti demonstrating the law of the Mahayana Buddhism.
13. See Hua Lui and Tao Jin, editors, *Zhongguo renwuhua quanji*, volume 1 (Beijing: Jinghua chubanshe, 2001).
14. See *Zhongguo gudai shuhua jiandingzu*, editor, *Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu*, volume 17 (Beijing: Wen wu ch ban she, 1997).
15. Yu Ji and Gai Qi are two contemporary Qing painters both famous for their paintings of women. In fact, Gai Qi once painted a hanging scroll titled *Yuanji's Poems* right after he saw a painting of the same title by Yu Ji. Thus, it is not unexpected to find both their paintings on the Heavenly Maiden.
16. Popular art of the Qing Dynasty was always related to prosperity. Such a social trend may be the reason that the Heavenly Maiden is excerpted from the original story and becomes a separate theme about good luck and happiness.
17. Published on-line at <http://www.wfsq.gov.cn/nianhua/mb1.htm>.
18. As for the painting by Yu Ji, the title is written in the upper right corner of the painting as part of the inscription. As for the album leaf by Gai Qi, the title is written to the left of the painting as the title of the corresponding poem.

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19. Robert Ford Company, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 261-263.
20. Ren Xiong (1820-1857), *Fang Cui Chen Magu xianshou* (The Image of Magu after Cui Chen), Palace Museum, Beijing, and Ren Xun (1835-1893), *Magu Toasting for Longevity*, Changshu City Cultural Relics Committee Collection. It is well-known that Ren Xun was very interested in Chen Hongshou's painting skills, techniques, and styles. From the two paintings here on the same theme, we can also tell the relationship between the two painters. He Baoyin, editor, *Hai shang si Ren jing pin: Gugong bo wu yuan cang Ren Xiong, Ren Xun, Ren Yi, Ren Yu hu hua xuan ji*, Shijiazhuang shi: Hebei mei sha chubanshe (Xianggang: Yazhou yi shu chubanshe, 1992); Zhongguo meishu guanji bianji weiyuanhui. *Zhongguo meishu guanji, Huihua bian II, Qing dai hui hua* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988).
21. Again, the frequent depictions of the Magu theme not only reflect the commercialization of art in the last decades of the Qing Dynasty but also the social emphasis on prosperity.
22. This English translation is from Ju-hsi Chou, *Journeys on Paper and Silk: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese Painting* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1998), 138.
23. Chou, *Journeys*, 138.
24. In the Daoist system, only the Immortal Elder of the South Pole (Nanji xianweng) is titled the God of Longevity.
25. This paper is the first step of my study of the complexity of Chinese narrative painting.