

A Manchu Woman Artist: Gu Taiqing's Painting-Poetry in Qing China

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As a combination of the two most prestigious manifestations of classical Chinese literature and art, painting-poetry (or literally, “poems inscribed on paintings,” *tihua shi*) is a poetic subgenre primarily perpetuated by generations of male literati, while women’s contributions to the enduring tradition are largely neglected in previous research. This talk investigates the woman writer Gu Taiqing’s (1799–1877) painting-poems in the context of the rise of women’s literary and artistic culture in late imperial China (ca. 1500–1900). By examining the text-image interaction between her poems and paintings, this talk shows that Gu Taiqing utilized the inter-artistic nature of painting-poetry as a central channel for self-representation and social networking, which significantly transformed some of the major poetic conventions established by male literati and solidified her fame as one of the greatest female poets of the Qing (1644–1911). Her productivity and excellence in painting-poetry not only established her as a model of fusion between Manchu identity and Han culture but also demonstrated the maturation of women’s painting-poetry by the late Qing.

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