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Mrs. Anne Swann Goodrich and the Chinese Paper Gods Collection at Columbia University

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In December 2018, The Paper Gods at the C.V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University1 (hereinafter referred to as the “Zhonghua Catalogue”) was published by Zhonghua Book Company in Beijing. In collaboration with the C.V. Starr East Asian Library of Columbia University in the City of New York, the Zhonghua Book Company selected 231 well-preserved pieces from its Chinese Paper Gods Collection (hereinafter referred to as “CPGC”) and photocopied them in full-color. The collection was organized, restored, digitized, and made available as an online archive on the library’s website2 as early as 2007, noting that this collection was donated in 1991 by Mrs. Anne Swann Goodrich (hereinafter referred to as “Anne” or “Mrs. Goodrich”).

Mrs. Goodrich (1895–2005) was the wife of the American sinologist professor Luther Carrington Goodrich (1894–1986). She arrived in China in 1920 as a missionary and became interested in Chinese popular religion and collected a large number of paper gods for home worship; after returning to the United States in 1932, she devoted herself to the popularization of traditional Chinese folk culture and wrote three books on the subject. Her donation of the Chinese Paper Gods is a rare folklore relic and a valuable archive of popular religion and daily life in China (especially Beijing) during the first half of the last century. Unfortunately, there is no literature on Mrs. Goodrich and her donation in English, except a few reviews about her books in Chinese. I began my research by consulting archives and visiting her relatives and friends from 2017 to 2023. The life story of Mrs. Goodrich and the interdisciplinary value of the CPGC gradually emerged. My paper’s objective is to amplify the historic prints, help expose the potential value of this rare Chinese folk archive, and promote continuous cultural exchange between Chinese and American scholars, inspired by Mrs. Goodrich, this article attempts to give an overview of her life and this collection with first-hand materials.

Mrs. Goodrich and her trips to China

Teenage years
Mrs. Goodrich’s maiden name was Anne Perkins Swann. Born in Florida in 1895, she was born to a mother and father who died in 1907 and 1910 respectively. After being orphaned, Anne attended The Hartridge School in New Jersey, arranged by her aunt, and then enrolled in the American history school at Vassar College in 1913. The college at the time was closely associated with the elite families of Protestant American society. After graduating in 1917, Anne attended Columbia University’s School of Education in New York City, where she majored in physical therapy and social work and received her

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master's degree in 1919; she also attended part of the curriculum of Union Theological Seminary.

**Four trips to China**

After graduating from Columbia University in the summer of 1919, Anne worked at First Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, New York, where she had frequent contact with its pastor, Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878–1969). His neo-liberal theology had a profound impact on her life, as she was exposed to his writings while at Vassar and in the courses at Union Theological Seminary during her master's studies. In 1920, with a letter of recommendation from Pastor Fosdick, Anne was hired by the American Board for Congregational Foreign Missions as a missionary to China, thus determining the course of her life.³

In 1920, Anne traveled to China on an ocean liner named Empress of Asia. She studied Chinese briefly at The North China Union Language School in Beijing before joining the church’s handicraft workshop in the suburb of Beijing. On February 2, 1923, Anne was married to L. Carrington Goodrich in Beijing, then a member of the medical board of the Rockefeller Foundation (Figure 1).

![Figure 1. The wedding of Anne P. Swann and L. Carrington Goodrich, Beijing 1923. Image courtesy of Anne Goodrich Jones.](image)

In the fall of 1925, Mrs. Goodrich returned to the US with her oldest son when L. Carrington needed to return to study for a master’s degree in Oriental Languages at Columbia University. During her first five years in China, Anne gained an intuitive sense

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of Beijing's folk life, especially its popular religion, and her marriage to L. Carrington deepened her original interest in Chinese tradition and religious life in a more sustained and profound way. In the fall of 1930, Mrs. Goodrich returned to Beijing with her husband and three children. While L. Carrington was busy writing his doctoral dissertation *The Literary Inquisition of Ch'ien-Lung*, Mrs. Goodrich began her research on Beijing's popular religion.

When we were living in Peking I saw street doors decorated with large pictures of ancient Chinese warriors. I lay awake at night listening to the incessant exploding of firecrackers. I noticed women, riding homeward in rickshaws, holding small paper shrines in their laps. Asking what this was all about I heard of the paper gods. So in 1931 I went to the Jen Ho Chih Tien at Tung Ssu Pai-lou and asked for every print they had in stock. I received over a hundred prints. These I took home and asked my teacher to tell me what he could about their use, and the stories of the gods pictured. As he spoke I translated and wrote it all down.4

This extraordinary purchase nearly a century ago has resulted in the special value of the CPGC at Columbia University today. "When I was in Peking in 1930–32, I became interested in the Tung-yüeh Miao. It seemed to me more frequented by the populace of Peking than most of the other temples of the city, and to hold a special place in their hearts. I often visited it, both at the time of festival and at other times as well. I wandered through the courtyards."5 In addition to frequenting religious sites around Beijing, such as the Temple of Eastern Peak, she made a pilgrimage with her husband and friends to Miaofeng Mountain on the outskirts of the capital in 1931, which she recalled in an article6 at the age of 103. By the time her family returned to the United States in 1932, Mrs. Goodrich had not only brought with her a sizable collection of Chinese paper gods, as well as oral notes and photographs but also her new twins born in Beijing, which was a very rewarding experience. The seven years of intermittent life in Beijing became the cornerstone of Mrs. Goodrich's subsequent research on Chinese folk beliefs (Figure 2).

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In October 1981, Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich entered mainland China via Hong Kong with about twenty friends who loved Chinese culture and spent three weeks visiting Hangzhou, Suzhou, Beijing, Datong, Xi’an, Dunhuang, Lanzhou, and Guangzhou before returning to New York via San Francisco. It was during this trip that the couple discovered the destroyed graves of L. Carrington’s parents and older sisters in Beijing. In 1987, after the death of her husband, Mrs. Goodrich visited China with 11 members of the family, visiting Beijing and the Goodrich Girls School in Tongzhou founded by her parents-in-law in the 1900s. This was the fourth and last time that Mrs. Goodrich visited Beijing, the love of her life. With her last two visits, she expresses her cherished experience of Beijing and declares her flesh and blood connection with Beijing in terms of family identity, faith experience, and cultural interest.

**Three books**

In 1964, Mrs. Goodrich published her first book *The Peking Temple of the Eastern Peak*, in which she gave a detailed description of the layout of the various shrines inside the Temple, the major deities and their legends, the religious organizations including Flower Offering Society, Furnace Cleansing Society and Life Release Society, and many others. The book also includes an overview of the temple written by Janet R. Ten Broeck (1895–1992) and 39 photographs of the interior and exterior of the temple taken by her friends. The Temple of the Eighteen Hells was an auxiliary temple of the Temple of the Eastern Peak, of which the French sinologist Robert des Rotours (1891–1980) took a set of 32 photographs in the 1930s. After reading *The Peking Temple of the Eastern Peak*, Rotours requested Mrs. Goodrich accompany his set of photographs with a written introduction to this small but rather special temple, and in 1981, Mrs. Goodrich fulfilled this mandate.
with the publication of *Chinese Hells: The Peking Temple of Eighteen Hells and Chinese Conceptions of Hell*.\(^7\)

Mrs. Goodrich’s work in her later years was focused on the detailed explanations she wrote about the paper gods most often used by the Beijing public for family worship and ones necessary for Chinese New Year. She wrote down descriptions for each of the 146 samples that she found important in her memory, including the size of the images, their connotations, as well as related legends and their documentary sources, etc. The book was published in 1991 as *Peking Paper Gods: A Look at Home Worship*, and included 113 photocopies of the paper gods, 81 of which came from her own collection and 32 from three other publications, including *Les Images Populaires Chinoises*,\(^8\) published by Albert Nachbaur. It is noted that most of these 32 images were also collected by Mrs. Goodrich. After the publication of *Peking Paper Gods*, Mrs. Goodrich, then 96 years old, donated the majority of her collection to the East Asian Library at Columbia University, which is now the Chinese Paper God Collection archive.

The three books mentioned above, which are closely related to Chinese folk beliefs, were all published by Monumenta Serica, which specializes in cultural exchange between East and West. In addition, Mrs. Goodrich has completed a draft of the Index to *Research into Chinese Superstitions* by Henry Doré, which has not been published.

**Overview of the Chinese Paper Gods Collection**

Chinese engraving and printing techniques matured during the Song dynasty (960–1279) and reached their peak during the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing dynasties (1636–1912) when they were widely used to print scriptures, popular novels, and artistic images. However, in contrast to the limited circulation of these fine texts, perhaps its most important application was the printing of images of deities from popular religion, such as paper gods.

**Paper gods**

“Paper god” is a general term used in English to refer to all kinds of Chinese folk paper deities, which has no exact equivalent in Chinese, and is roughly equivalent to the so-called folk prints or ritual paper products related to deity worship and rituals in the broad concept of New Year prints, represented by menshen (door gods) and zhima (paper horses). The images and paper products among Chinese New Year prints such as female infant pictures, window flowers, table surrounds, paper cards, and wrapping paper, cannot be called “paper gods.” These paper gods are mostly hand-printed on paper in the form of traditional woodcut watermark prints, or partially traced or drawn on paper and silk. They are either images of gods for posting or hanging at the front door or indoors, such as the Door God, the All Gods, the Eight Immortals, the Goddess of Mercy, and the statue of Zhongkui, etc., for specific annual festivals or ceremonies, or for year-round users; or they are special paper images of gods and spirits for worship and/or incineration, the most popular being paper horses, such as the God of Kitchen, the God of

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Medicine, the Goddess of Sending Son, the Wind and Rain Master, etc., as well as paper money and meditation clothes. Compared with sculptures in the temples, paper gods are easy to print and carry, and their incinerable nature satisfies the imagination of human–god communication, making them an indispensable and important carrier of popular religion, and until the early years of the Republic of China, paper gods were a necessity in people’s daily worship activities and New Year’s customs nationwide, with a long and deep mass base.

However, in the Chinese conception, the gods were not to be desecrated and were burned after sacrifice; because they were available year-round and were not valuable, they were rarely preserved; collectors regarded them as folkloric objects, not to be considered serious art, and quality sets were rare; various social movements since the twentieth century have regarded paper gods as superstitious goods, and they were repeatedly banned. In contrast, around the twentieth century, overseas sinologists paid much attention to the collection and study of Chinese paper gods out of the interest of “the Other” perspectives, and many great scholars in the fields of religion, anthropology, art history, and folklore have produced far-reaching results and left a certain number of original archives around the world. The CPGC at Columbia University is one of the most unique representatives.

Classification criteria
Referring to the catalog of *Peking Paper Gods*, Mrs. Goodrich thinks that there are 16 categories, namely: New Year prints, gods of wealth, goddesses of birth and children, gods of medicine, exorcists, nature deities, sky powers, patron deities, household deities, Taoist gods, Buddhist deities, gods after death, gods of time, Guandi, miscellaneous gods, and pantheons. This is a more detailed classification according to the content of the paper gods, and their functions in each category are relatively clear and consistent. The Zhonghua Catalogue is similar but more general, divided into only three major categories: Buddhist deities, Taoist and folk belief deities, and New Year prints. The disadvantage of this division is that, in terms of results, it tends to be a mix of types, especially the concept of New Year prints, which is rather vague, for example, Zhongkui can be classified as a Taoist deity, an exorcist, and a New Year print. The Buddhist and Taoist deities in this collection have been essentially expropriated by popular religion and do not have the same significance as their institutional religious counterparts. Further, in terms of classification principles, it fails to highlight the customary production and sale of Beijing paper god stores, knowing that the rules of the trade are often a reflection of the reality of commercial traditions and folk customs.

According to Mrs. Goodrich, the donor: “The prints in my collection all come from the Jen Ho Chih Tien at K’ai Chang, Tung Szü P’ai Lou, Peking in 1931. But the more colorful of the prints that I bought there were probably printed in one of the famous print shops of Tientsin. Other prints must have come from various local printers which would account for the slight variations in prints of the same deity, each local printer having his own
printing block.” The first kind, as Mrs. Goodrich calls it, should be a collection of color-printed or color-printed-plus-painted door gods, while the “others” should be the paper horses printed in Beijing with ink lines. This coincides with the record in the book *Yanshi Jibi*, which is dedicated to the folk life of Beijing, where it is written in the article Paper Horse Shop:

The paper gods are divided into three kinds, with the five-color paper (big and small size) and yellow paper respectively. Five-colored paper gods are produced locally and considered a solo trade (only three or two shops), the colors used, dyeing the ink mostly. Before the Boxer Rebellion I had a subordinate, every October he went to paint the paper gods, he said, painting a thousand only to earn 800 coins. When it comes to the kitchen god, door gods, gods of the market, and so on, out in Fengrun County, the place name is also called Fengtai. Now the Republic of China, this business is greatly affected, if before November (far away from the New Year), who is willing to buy them?

The author of *Yanshi Jibi* was a newspaper writer from the late Qing dynasty to the late 1920s, Zhuang Yintang, who was almost contemporary with the purchase of the CPGC his record provides two pieces of supporting information. One, from the last sentence, it is clear that by the early years of the Republic of China, Beijing paper gods were already in poor business and few editions were in circulation, so the representativeness and scarcity of Columbia’s collection comes to the fore. The second is to specify the two types of products that Beijing paper horse stores used to make and sell, one is the ink line version of which to be “painted”; the other is the ones from Fengrun County like the God of kitchen, door gods, and so on. These two kinds have different themes and different origins. The sources of the Renhe Paper Shop may be different, but here is the historical basis for dividing the CPGC into two categories, represented by paper horses and door gods.

“New Year prints only appear before the New Year, while paper gods are available all year round. New Year prints are purchased by the masses for their newness, while paper gods are the opposite. The older the version, the more people believe it is ‘effective.’” Therefore, most of the paper gods are produced locally, so they do not need to be sought from afar and are made and sold all year round, while the New Year prints need to keep up with the times and the competition is fierce, so they need to buy the prints from famous stores and brands from other places. In Beijing, there was a saying that “East is rich and West is noble,” that is, most of the wealthy merchants lived in the East City, which is downtown where the wrapping paper of “Renhe Paper Shop” marked as being in “Dongsi Pailou.” It was also the first to install the telephone number “East Bureau 2913,” which shows that it was a famous store with strong strength and profound knowledge of business (see Figure 3).

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Figure 3. The wrapping paper of the Renhe Paper Shop with the address and telephone number on it. Ren he zhi dian, n.d., NYCP.GAC.0001.0171. Image courtesy of the C.V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University.

Paper horses
Beijing paper horses are simple in form, the basic model is the ink line version, also seen in the idol’s name, crown, face, or drapery, the practice of “coloring,” that is, brush paint to make it eye-catching, most choose pink and purple, green is rarely seen, the location and area of coloring are more arbitrary. It is one of the hallmarks of the Beijing paper horses. In addition to the upper end from right to left (very few are in the left side from top to bottom) engraved with the name, there are few other Chinese characters. Based on this, it is easy to separate the Beijing-made paper horses from the other paper gods in the CPGC.

In terms of size, the CPGC includes both full-panel and half-panel pieces. Of the 138 full panels, all are between 25 cm square and 55 cm square, except one small one which is 13.5 cm square. The half panel is the upper part of the full-panel idol with the head and name of the deity, and the omitted lower half is almost the same program as the hem of the dress and the offering table, etc. The absence does not prevent the deity from being identified. There are 14 half-panels in total, which are basically 18 cm high and 35 cm wide. The Zhonghua Catalogue refers to the half panels as “fragments,” which is probably inappropriate. A large number of Beijing paper horse halves are included in the Collection
of Religious Prints\textsuperscript{13} published in Taiwan. The Canadian publication \textit{Gods in My Home: Chinese Ancestor Portraits and Popular Prints}\textsuperscript{14} also contains 16 half-panels from the same period. All of these suggest that this phenomenon was a common practice. Calling them “fragments” implies that they are unfinished, but they are already finished products that have entered the market, which should be related to saving paper, reducing costs, and adapting to the needs of the cheap market (Figure 4).

![Figure 4. An example of half-panel pieces depicting the Five Star King. Wudou Xingjun, n.d., NYCP.GAC.0001.0067. Image courtesy of the C.V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University.](image)

Paper horses have a wide variety of functions, and there are two types in the CPGC. One is “paper money” for the deceased to use in the underworld, and the other is “divine portrait” corresponding to various deities. There are only four sheets of paper money, including two sheets of special meditation money, one sheet of meditation clothes, and one paper bag for paper money, which were used to pay tribute to the dead and ancestors, as well as for mourning festivals and rituals such as the Feast of All Souls (Figure 5).

\textsuperscript{13} Dihua Chen 陈迪华, \textit{Guancang Zongjiao Banhua} [馆藏宗教版画 Religious prints in the collection] (Taipei: Taiwan Shengli Bowuguan, 1993).

The largest quantity in the CPGC is the divine portrait, 143 of which were produced locally in Beijing, the more unusual one being “The Holy Statue of Guanyin in White (Baiyi Dashi Shengxiang),” marked in the lower left corner of the picture as “printed by Tonghe Printing Bureau.” The other 142 images of deities in the basic section have commonalities in composition, with the frontal image of the deity as the main body, showing the relationship between the main deity and the subordinate according to the size of the occupant and the difference in costume, with the main deity next to the attendant and the child, and with the offering table in front, with incense burners and offerings. There are three combinations of gods and goddesses on the screen, and according to the number of main gods, they can be divided into three categories: multi-god paper horses, double-god paper horses, and single-god paper horses, with 19, 14, and 109 sheets, respectively. There are also three paper gods associated with the worship of the star gods, but only the names of the stars are on the picture, and there is no idol (see Figure 6).
Figure 6. A paper god depicting Tianxian Niangniang. It is a full-panel piece and a single-god paper horse. Tianxian Niangniang, n.d., NYCP.GAC.0001.0005. Image courtesy of the C.V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University.

There are three special types of paper horses in the CPGC, which are not printed in Beijing. They are the God of Kitchen, Heaven and Earth, and Moon Paper, which correspond to the needs of major festivals such as the Chinese New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival. They are all Tianjin Yangliuqing editions, including 12 copies of the God of Kitchen, including “Da Zhonghua Minguo Zaojun zhi Shenwei (The God of Kitchen in the 8th Year of the Republic of China)” which confirms the year of Mrs. Goodrich’s purchase. The “Heaven and Earth” is a full image of all the gods set up on the family worship table at Chinese New Year, which is incinerated after the New Year. There are 5 pieces with “Gods” and “Tablet Pavilion” two models. There are 4 models and 5 sheets of moon papers, which are used to worship the moon in the Mid-Autumn Festival. The composition contains rich elements of faith, and the engraved plates are fine and well-made, such as “Guang Han Gong (moon palace),” which is printed in color, and the hare is cut and pasted on it with gold foil, which is laborious handwork (see Figure 7).
As can be seen from the collection, Renhe Paper Shop offers different forms of paper horses to suit the needs of customers at different levels. For example, for the God of Kitchen, “Jianzhai Shizhe (Emissary of the Supervisor)” is an ink line version of a half-
panel, “Siming zhi Shen (God of the Order)” is an ink line version of a full-panel, “Dongchu Siling (God of the East Kitchen)” is an overlay-color-print-plus-paint, and “Dingfu Gong (Dingfu Palace)” is an overlay-color-print.

**Door gods**

Paper horses are mainly used for folk rituals and subsequently need to be incinerated to honor, invite, beg, or reward the gods. However, the other major category of paper gods, represented by the door gods, are mainly used for hanging and posting, and for year-round worship, most of which are large-sized door gods and chandeliers, which put high demands on the appearance of the prints and make the process more difficult. Less than a quarter of the items in the CPGC are from three well-known origins of New Year prints outside of Beijing: Foshan, Guangdong; Zhuxian Zhen, Henan; and Yangliuqing, Tianjin. The ones from Foshan, Guangzhou, are 3 sheets of door god holding a machete, with the word “Zhichang” on them, which should be the name of the workshop. There are 8 pieces from Zhuxian Zhen, including 2 pieces of Zhongkui and 6 pieces of door god, all marked with the workshop’s name “Tianyi.”

Since the early Qing dynasty, Beijing has been an important sales area for Yangliuqing New Year prints, and judging from the style, 43 of the CPGC should be produced there, and they are the most representative works. Among them, there are 3 pairs of door gods of “Shentu Yulei” and 7 sheets of various Zhongkui to ward off evil spirits. For blessings, there are 11 sheets of God of Wealth (including 2 pairs of door gods, 4 unpaired single door gods, and 3 single portraits), 3 sheets of “Treasure Pot,” 1 sheet of “Guansheng Dadi,” and 2 sheets of “God of Blessing,” 1 sheet of “Blessing and Longevity,” 10 sheets of “Two Immortals of Harmony,” 1 sheet of “Unicorn Sending Son” and 1 sheet of “Eight Immortals,” which covers the demands of life such as seeking wealth, blessings and children (see Figure 8).
Foshan and Zhuxian Zhen use the process of overlay-color-print, while Yangliuqing uses overlay-color-print-plus-paint, which is based on the color-printing process, in which the eyebrows and cheeks of the gods are hand-painted and colored to make them look bright and lively, which is the signature process of Yangliuqing. The catalog refers to the two collectively as “color painting,” which is not clear enough.

**A preliminary study of the value of the Chinese Paper Gods Collection**

Compared with the collections of popular prints collected by museums and collectors in China and abroad, the CPGC is not very old, its types may not be complete, and its quality
is not satisfactory; however, the following four characteristics, which were formed by a special historical opportunity, make it a rare archive.

**A sample of popular religion in early Republican China**

Considering the ratio of paper horses to door gods in the CPGC and Mrs. Goodrich’s self-reported purchase during the Chinese New Year, it can be assumed that Renhe Paper Shop’s main product should be paper horses, but in order to meet the demand for the New Year, it added the most popular seasonal gods procured from well-known origins. The complete absence of decorative New Year prints such as infant and beauty pictures suggests that the store was supplying year-round, adapting to the needs of the people’s daily faith life.

Unlike ordinary collectors, Mrs. Goodrich bought all the paper gods in the store at once, not from art collectors or dealers, but were indeed the daily necessities of the local people back then. Therefore, they reflect the real state of popular religion in the Beijing area in the early years of the Republic of China and are in a sense a panoramic record.

The clear time, place, and people of the collection, and the collection method of buying out from the daily trading places without selection and omission, make the CPGC an authentic and relatively complete source of information on cultural relics, which is undoubtedly useful for the study of folk prints in a specific period of time and for the study of popular religion in the 1930s. I cite two examples. First, the pieces labeled “Tianyi Laodian (Tianyi Old Store)” not only prove the historical fact that Zhuxian Zhen New Year prints were sold to Beijing in the early Republic of China but also the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s collection of *Wu Zì Deng Ke* (Five Sons Passed the Exam), which can be found to belong to the same edition after comparing printing details (e.g., support shed, dirty spots). For the second example, the collection was purchased in Beijing in 1931, while in 1928 the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of China issued the “Criteria for the Existence and Abolition of Shrines” as the legal basis for cleaning up traditional shrines and temples in various places, what to make of these apparently conflicting historical facts? The CPGC provides pictorial evidence, a basis for discussion, and space for understanding the tension and balance between the will of the state and folk beliefs that China encountered at the beginning of the last century during its historical transition.\(^{15}\)

**Abundant field materials related to paper gods**

At present, a large number of original Chinese paper gods in China and abroad are basically well preserved, but most of them are difficult to verify in terms of information directly related to the collection itself, except for the name of the donor and the date of acquisition. In contrast, the CPGC has obvious advantages as a case study. Not only has the life story of the donor been unearthed, but the three books written by Mrs. Goodrich herself also provide abundant original field materials for this collection.

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Robert L. Chard from Oxford University has written a very pertinent review of Mrs. Goodrich’s third book, “Peking Paper Gods” is the last in a long tradition of books on nian hua (Chinese New Year prints) by foreign eyewitnesses in pre-1949 China. It is not at the forefront of current scholarship on Chinese religion, nor, apparently, is the author a sinologist with training in classical Chinese texts, and inevitably it suffers from certain errors and misconceptions. Still, it is a useful book, even for the specialist.”  

It is useful because she is not just walking around, but trying to make herself an observer, a recorder, and even a participant in Beijing’s folk life. William Watson, Professor of Chinese Art and Archaeology at the University of London, comments, “The use of the prints reflects much of the thought of temple goers, the whole a compendium of contemporary superstition form which sectarian boundaries are disarmingly absent. Dr. Goodrich is well based through her previous research, in accounting for functional belief at this level with an anthropological thoroughness.”  

Indeed, Mrs. Goodrich has consciously or unconsciously conducted a comprehensive participatory observation of Chinese popular religion and its related objects (such as paper horses, New Year prints, temples, idols, temple festivals, the concept of hell and legends), interviewed and dictated to possible informants, collected related physical evidence, and taken related photographs, so that her research on paper gods is not isolated, but in the “living” state. Even by today’s academic standards, it is not inferior to any successful anthropological “deep description,” which provides a solid foundation for revisiting this collection today (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Mrs. Goodrich’s research notes. Photo by author.

The large quantity and high quality of Beijing paper horses

Among the two categories of the CPGC, the door gods are representative of various regions and are therefore more common; the Beijing paper horses are relatively important and rare.

The first reason is that this set of paper horses covers both daily necessities and festival needs, and it is not often that an archive has both types of collections.

They were used in homes, in stores, in places of work. Only very rarely were they to be seen in a temple. The prints were very inexpensive. Anyone could afford the copper or two, that one would cost, and there was at least one in the home, though it may have been only the name of the deity written on paper. They were used not only by the peasants but also were found in the Imperial Palace, homes of high officials, of businessmen and in shops. They were in universal use, except possibly in the homes of scholars, but even scholars followed some of the customs such as that of sending the Kitchen God to heaven at New Years’ time.18

The locally produced ink paper horses are closely related to the daily people’s life, age, sickness, and death, while the colorful paper horses made from other places highlight the sacred status of specific festivals in the minds of Beijing people. By combining these two kinds, the customs, beliefs, and cultural practices of individuals, families, and societies during the recurring festival and life cycle can be revealed in a more comprehensive way through popular religions.

Second, in terms of ink paper gods alone, the CPGC contains the largest number of deities among the known archives of Beijing paper horses, 143 in total, and is therefore a more comprehensive case of their shape, style, and belief system. In contrast, the library of the Institute of Sinology of the Collège de France has 128 Beijing paper horses of all types, the Royal Ontario Museum of Canada has a set of 78, and the Aoki Masaru Collection of Nagoya University has only 23.

The CPGC was used for religious activities in Beijing in the 1930s, but now they can be used to explore almost all areas of local culture and society at that time. The premise is that the paper horses must have been collected in a real market environment, the variety must be complete, the supporting information must be adequate, and the CPGC meets three requirements, making it an appropriate pictorial document for studying issues related to specific historical practices and beliefs. Taking the beliefs of the goddesses in Beijing as an example, the CPGC contains a relatively complete set of paper goddesses. As markers of fertility rituals in the early Republic of China, these goddess paper gods, provide evidence for examining the related folk beliefs that flourished in daily life during this historic period. “By interpreting the well-defined and hierarchical system of paper goddesses, former local knowledge of fertility, family concepts, and neighborhood communities is revealed, providing strong evidence of the interdependent and isomorphic relationship between popular religion and everyday life in a particular historical period.”19 This study is difficult to accomplish with other collections, for

example, the Harvard Art Museum has a large number of Beijing paper horses in its collection, but only 2 pieces like Sister of the Pox and Bed Mother are related to fertility practices. The Nagoya University Library and the Royal Ontario Museum of Canada both have a complete collection of Beijing paper goddesses, but the information about the collection is closed.

Mrs. Goodrich’s strong connection to the academic community

Mrs. Goodrich is unique in that she has connected with a very strong scholarly community. Her three books are based on literature that encompasses almost the entire twentieth century in European and American sinology. To some extent, it can even be said that she synthesizes part of the consensus of the overseas Chinese popular religion research community at that time.

Mrs. Goodrich was married in Beijing in 1923. Her father-in-law is Chauncey Goodrich (1836–1925), an American Congregationalist missionary and moderator of the translation of the Holy Bible (Chinese Union Version); and her mother-in-law is Sarah Boardman Goodrich (1855–1923), an early missionary in China for the education of women. Her husband L. Carrington Goodrich spent several years in Beijing working for the Rockefeller Foundation to organize the Union Medical College. After returning to the United States, he served as Chair of the Chinese and Japanese Chinese Department (and later the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures) at Columbia University for a long time, and was Dean Lung Professor Emeritus of Chinese after his retirement in 1961. It was her family that gave her the opportunity to become lifelong friends with later leading Western sinologists such as Arthur Hummel (1884–1975) and Sidney Gamble (1890–1968), as well as with modern and contemporary historical figures such as Hu Shih, Li Jinghan and Meng Zhi, who had a significant impact on cultural exchange between China and the West. In a 1983 letter to Vassar College, Mr. Goodrich pointed out, from the perspective of an expert in Chinese history, “These two books (The Peking Temple of the Eastern Peak and Chinese Hells) have a certain importance for the historical record, if for no other reason, as both temples were eliminated during the time of Mao Tse-tung.”

Mrs. Goodrich dedicated The Peking Temple of the Eastern Peak to her husband, and in the acknowledgment section of Chinese Hells, she said: “To L. Carrington Goodrich I give thanks for his encouragement, advice, and help in more ways than can be mentioned.”

In addition to the above-mentioned Chinese Hells, which was done at the invitation of Robert des Rotours, her Peking Paper Gods was also done at the urging of the American sociologist Sidney Gamble, author of Peking, a Social Survey. “I had no idea of writing about these gods until late Sidney Gamble, author of a number of books on China, insisted that I share what I had learned with others.” Looking again at the pictures attached to The Peking Temple of the Eastern Peak as an example, the photographers of the pictures are not only Robert des Rotours and Sidney Gamble but also James R. Cash (1894–?) and

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22 Sidney Gamble, Peking, a Social Survey (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1921).
Hedda Morrison (1908–1991). Professor Cash, then head of the Department of Pathology at the Union Medical College, the chief surgeon for Sun Yat-sen’s autopsy, was asked by Janet, the wife of his colleague Professor Carl Ten Broeck (1885–1966), to take 67 photographs for her in 1927, which are now in the East Asian Library at Columbia University, with a pencil annotation by Mrs. Goodrich on the back. Janet studied the temples of Beijing, especially the inscriptions therein, and *The Peking Temple of the Eastern Peak* is followed by a detailed 1927 overview that she recorded. Mrs. Morrison, a German-born professional photographer based in Beijing from 1933 to 1946, knew and loved the city, and her 10,000 negatives and 6,000 photographs taken in those years are now in the Harvard-Yenching Library (Figure 10).

![Figure 10. Arthur Hummel, L. Carrington Goodrich, and Sidney Gamble (from left) at Miaofeng Mountain in 1925. Courtesy of the Sidney D. Gamble Photographs Collection at Duke University Library](image)

Using Mrs. Goodrich as a focal point would greatly activate the parts of mainstream Sinologists that have been obscured outside the main historical line; more meaningfully, it would be possible to explore how the intersection of Eastern and Western civilizations influenced and was influenced by the perceptions of women through the eyes of Western women like her who came to China alone or as spouses, one more case is Sally Hovey Wriggins (1922–2014), goddaughter of Mrs. Goodrich, who recorded the details of her
experience together with Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich in Beijing during their visit in 1981.\textsuperscript{24} She was the wife of American scholar and diplomat William Howard Wriggins (1918–2008), who also developed a keen interest in Asia as a result of her husband’s service as ambassador to and expert on Sri Lanka, and she was the first westerner and the first woman to retrace the Silk Road. Her book \textit{Xuanzang: A Buddhist Pilgrim on the Silk Road}\textsuperscript{25} is well known in academic circles. There are many examples around Mrs. Goodrich of seemingly “supporting actresses” who were deeply involved in the cultural exchange between China and the West. The reference and dialogue between “paradigmatic historiography” and “marginal historiography” can provide a special perspective for understanding Sino-American cultural exchanges in a particular historical period, especially the fate of Christianity in modern China, the contemporary changes in Sino-American relations, the rise of American sinology, etc.

\textbf{The inspirations of Mrs. Goodrich}

For most of her life, Mrs. Goodrich was seen as the wife of a famous sinologist, and her writings were seen as unsubstantial for this reason. But perhaps it was her non-academic background that allowed Mrs. Goodrich to view Chinese conceptual practices from the perspective of ordinary people, and to participate in the daily worship activities of the local Chinese as an ordinary person, which allowed her to be frank and honest about Chinese popular religion and to arrive at more realistic and pertinent observations.

Without evading the question, Mrs. Goodrich confessed her confusion and thoughts during her fieldwork:

It is not easy to pigeonhole Chinese religious conceptions; they are too fluid. What one reads in books does not always correspond with what one has heard on the street or seen in the temples. The term “god” meant one thing to one person and something else to another. The name an image was called also varies from one person to another, as I found out when asking questions in Peking of friends and of the attendants in the temples. Religion as presented in books for the educated could be quite different from the religion of the common folk. To gain a representation of the ideas of the man on the street, I consulted my language teacher, a Mr. Shih. He told his thoughts, what he had heard from parents and grandparents, and what he had read in such books as the \textit{Feng-shen Yen-i} (Canonization of the Gods). His accounts had all the earmarks of genuine folk stories—that is, tales handed down by word of mouth. In fact some of the stories he told, he said, had never been written down but were “wild tales.” He did not always agree with what was written in books, nor with others with whom I talked, but he did represent what an ordinary man living in Peking in 1932 thought about the gods, temples, etc.\textsuperscript{26}

This unprejudiced and unbiased respect for the local knowledge of the reporters reflects Mrs. Goodrich’s highly cautious anthropological attitude and very thorough folkloristic concern. It is not that she did not understand that her Chinese teacher’s

\textsuperscript{24} Sally Hobey Wriggins, \textit{Asia on My Mind: From Ceylon to the Silk Road—A Memoir} (Denver: Outskirts Press, 2008), 175–177.


statement might be wrong. “His stories contained many anachronisms which I have left. Folklore cannot be held to historical accuracy.”

Her approach back then was very honest and serious, but now it can give us a different kind of enlightenment: the mixes, conflicts, and omissions in folklore are often also a game of values. These are other ways of constructing the cultural memory of a community. These alternative details that construct the cultural memory of the community should have been faithfully recorded in time, but they are often deliberately erased in the name of “science.”

As a missionary, Mrs. Goodrich has a full understanding of the extraordinary significance of religious life in human history, and it is based on such an empathetic understanding that she, as an outsider, has been deeply involved with the ordinary people around her for a long time, until finally entering their spiritual world. In response to the misconceptions and even prejudices that “Chinese people have no faith,” she counters with the fact of paper gods, “There are those who say that the Chinese are not, were not religious, but from time immemorial the Chinese believed in the supernatural. There were forces in nature which they could not control but which controlled them. There were the ancestors, also supernatural powers. Their religion has been a practical one.”

She further explained,

The Chinese were conscious that the problems of life were too great for human beings to solve by themselves, so they turned to the spirits of the dead, who, having been human, would understand the problems, and being spirits, had supernatural power to help. They were conscious of the reality of spiritual, supernatural forces in everyday life, that influenced their own lives individually. Each person worshiped the god he thought would help him most. Belief in the supernatural is one of the foundations of Chinese culture. Without belief in the continuation of life after death, resulting in ancestor worship, China would have developed a different society.

In the English-speaking world, it is not often that one can explain Chinese folk beliefs in such a simple and appropriate manner, and it is even rarer that one can fully affirm the value of Chinese folk worship in the context of the continuity of Chinese civilization and even human development, instead of denouncing it as ignorant and backward. She argues that

Chinese religion is far older than the classics, far older than Confucius, Lao-tzu or the Buddha. It is one of the oldest living faiths. The gods of the Chinese, as old, or older, than the Greek. [...] It is this ancient faith of the Chinese, adopted by Confucianism, by Taoism, and by Buddhism, that has given them the unity known as The Triple Doctrine, San-chiao. It is this ancient faith that one sees in the religion of the people, represented in their temples. The early primitive beliefs have grown, become enlarged upon, systematized, and mixed until there is now a conglomerate of which it is not easy to separate the ingredients. Nature worship has been joined to legends, mixed with history, embroidered by imagination, and elaborated by and merged with outside influences. Legends and myths of one tribe have been kept alive and merged with the

29 Ibid., 17–18.
traditions of another, but with all the changes certain fundamentals have survived. One of the most basic of these is the belief on life, all life, connected, changeable, but indestructible. Not even the fires of Hell can destroy life.30

This moderate and peaceful comparative perspective and the scope of understanding, which transcends even her personal beliefs and doctrinal precepts to reach the height of the pursuit of universal human truths, is filled with warmth and respect that is deeply touching (Figure 11).

![Figure 11. Anne Swann Goodrich wearing the costume of the Manchu people, circa 1931, Beijing. Courtesy of Hubbard Carrington Goodrich.](image)

After returning to the United States in 1932, Mrs. Goodrich has been dedicated to the teaching of traditional Chinese culture, especially folk beliefs, as her children recall, “All her life, mother expressed her love of and interest in China, its history, and its people. Her published works were designed to expand the reader’s appreciation of Chinese culture. She also eagerly gave talks on China to any group expressing an interest: to school children, church groups, and separately to inquiring reporters and scholars.”31 Her writings and speeches, unlike the abstract and abstruse writings of professional scholars, are intimate and down-to-earth and are not only a rare and popular model in the English-speaking world but also provide a valuable popular “mirror image” for Chinese people to understand the insistent rhythm and great ancient layers of their own culture.


31 Hubbard Carrington Goodrich and Anne Goodrich Jones, Email to Mingjie Li, May 7, 2020.
On the one hand, Mrs. Goodrich's life story provides a case study of the contemporary overseas diffusion of Chinese popular religion, becoming a real experience of the interaction between the history and culture of China and the United States, witnessing the mutual appreciation of civilizations between different faiths as the other; on the other hand, in the process of research and interpretation around herself and her collection, the conflict and integration between the foreign cultural expressions of the believers and the local culture represented by Chinese folk beliefs are gradually revealed. The CPGC is undoubtedly an important case for the study of the history of religion, ideology, and Sino-foreign exchange in the Republic of China period, and for the revaluation of the large number of Chinese popular religion collections abroad. At the same time, the rational values and open-mindedness it embodies and exemplifies are precious inspirations that Mrs. Goodrich left us with in her legendary life.