## **Supporting Information**



Figure S1. The unit rotation scanning photoacoustic detection system.



**Figure S2.** Peak amplitude of the PA signals from Au NR@PEG at various concentrations (C1:10<sup>12</sup>/ mL, C2:10<sup>11</sup>/ mL, C3:10<sup>10</sup>/ mL, C4:10<sup>9</sup>/ mL) as a function of laser fluence, symbols and error bars are the mean values and standard deviations of the amplitude.



Figure S3. TGA curve of Au NR@PEG



**Figure S4.** The UV-Vis absorbance spectrum of Au NR@PEG (1 nM) solutions before (black) and after (red) under the 828 nm laser irradiation (15 mJ/cm<sup>2</sup>) for 30 min.



**Figure S5.** Optical microscopy images of MTT cells after being incubated with various concentrations of Au contrast agents for 24 h, scale bar: 50µm