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**The Modern Formulation of Chinese Art History and the Building of a Nation in Early
Twentieth-Century China**

A Thesis

**Presented to The Faculty of the Department of Art History of
The City College of New York, The City University of New York**

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by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the Chinese formulation of art history underwent dramatic changes. It moved away from traditional narratives that did not follow a strict chronology to adopt the Western linear model, which emphasizes progress and national identity. Prior to the new century, the various collections of writings comprised records of paintings and theories addressing aesthetic and literary concerns of each dynasty based on individual works and biographies of artists. The earliest records, which can be traced back to pre-Qin (before 221 BCE), show that from this time to the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE), the emphasis was on the nature of painting and individual artistic temperament. During the Six Dynasties (220-618), calligraphy and landscape painting became important topics. It was not until the Tang dynasty (618-907) that the first general history of art, *Records of Celebrated Paintings through the Ages* (*Lidai minghuaji* 歷代名畫記) by Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (815–877), appeared.¹ This book, along with two more produced during the Song dynasty (960-1279)—*Records of Paintings Seen or Heard of* (*Tuhua jianwen zhi* 圖畫見聞志) by Guo Ruoxu 郭若虛 (active 1050) and *Lineages of Painting* (*Huaji* 畫記) by Deng Chun 鄧椿 (active 1150)—became the foundational resource for one of the two art historians discussed in this thesis.² Based on this rich tradition, the modern formulations of Chinese art history began as a political strategy for nation building amid the political upheavals, including military attacks on China, that led to the end of Qing imperial rule and the beginning of the Republican era (1912-1949).

In 1842 China lost the first Opium War (1839-1842) to the British. Losing the war forced the country to sign away territories and agree to let foreign traders conduct their business freely

¹ Contemporary scholar Chen Pao-chen provides an extensive list of Chinese art history writing in the premodern period. The examples discussed in my work have a more direct impact on the modern formulation during the early twentieth century. Chen Pao-chen 陳葆真, “Chinese Painting Research: Past and Present 中國繪畫研究的過去與現在,” *Sinology Research Newsletter* 28, no.3 (2009): 1-7.

² Chen, “Chinese Painting Research”; also see chapter 3

along the coast in cities such as Canton and Shanghai. In 1860 the British started the second Opium War, which lasted for five years. China's second military defeat, in 1865, resulted in the signing of another treaty, known as the Treaty of Tianjin, which permitted more foreign trading in the coastal regions and the legalization of opium in China. Under these conditions, Chinese began to understand the need to learn Western methods of political strategy and modern technology to defy Western imperialism. As part of what was called the Self-Strengthening Movement (1871-1896), government officials sent a select group of young and brilliant youth to study abroad. In the proposal seeking financial support from the government, State Administrator and Confucian scholar Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811-1872) explained the benefit of this mission: "It is roughly estimated that after more than ten years their training will have been completed, and they will return to China so that the Chinese can learn thoroughly the new techniques in which the Westerners are particularly strong, and then we can gradually plan for self-strengthening."³ Zeng proposed that Chinese interpreters and instructors should accompany these young boys and teach them Chinese classics. The aim of this educational mission was to learn Western knowledge and integrate its advantages with Chinese principles.

While the Western-learning mission continued, China faced military attacks from Japan, its neighboring country. China's defeat in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the sense of loss felt in its aftermath rudely awakened China to the need to strengthen its reform efforts. The signing of yet another treaty, this one ceding Taiwan and the Liaodong Peninsula in addition to paying Japan war reparations, prompted Qing scholar official Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-

³ Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank, "The Proposal of Tseng and Li in 1871," in *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 91-97. Zeng Guofan (or Tseng Kuo Fan) was also a military leader responsible for suppressing the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) and thus averting the collapse of China's imperial regime.

1927) to beseech the emperor to further the country's efforts for social and political reforms. By then, the need to modernize the country in order to stand up and compete among other, more technologically advanced nations became undeniable. The series of military defeats also made clear to some officials that, in addition to Western learning, the country itself needed a new government administration.

In June 1895, two months after losing the war, Kang Youwei, as the senior scholar of the Qing court, pleaded to Emperor Guangxu 光緒 (reign 1885-1908) for political reform:

Since Your Majesty knows already that the conservatives have caused the disaster and failure, then unless we change the old institution entirely and make them new again, we cannot make ourselves strong. ... The prerequisites of reform are that all the laws and the political and social systems be changed and decided anew, before it can be called a reform. ... The trouble today lies in the non-cultivation of the people's wisdom, and the cause of the non-cultivation of the people's wisdom lies in the civil service examinations. ... The eight-legged essay writers do not read the books written since the Ch'in and the Han, nor do they investigate the facts about all the nations on the globe. Nevertheless, they can be enrolled as officials, and eventually reach high positions.⁴

To Kang, having people in high positions who did not seek to cultivate knowledge of a world outside of their own lives and to understand nations other than their own was a major obstacle to China's moving forward to become a recognized nation. Later his disciple Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929), in response to his mentor's advice, sought to advocate public education and to cultivate nationalistic sentiment as the foundational step for modernizing China.

Liang regarded the "cultivation of the people" as equivalent to cultivating the people's "awareness" of their own nationality and its position in relation to the rest of the world. Furthermore, he deemed that before China could become a recognized nation, its people must first be educated about what that meant. In this instance, Liang's idea of "awareness" implied

⁴ "Doc. 46, "K'ang Yu-wei's Conversation with the Emperor, June 1898," in Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923*, 177-78.

that the people of China should become proud of their own national heritage and unite together as *guomin* 國民 (national people or Chinese people) to compete with other nations. He wrote:

What does “awareness of the nation in relation to alien people” mean? The term “nation” appears in relation to the outside world. If the world consisted of just one nation, then the “nation” would not have been named. So “myself” appears when two selves stand side by side. ... What does “awareness of the nation in relation to the world” mean? ... Competition is the mother of civilization, and if competition ceased even for a single day, the progress of civilization would halt at once.”⁵

Liang aimed to call forth a collective consciousness of nationalist sentiment in the people. As he once wrote, “awareness of oneself leads to one’s survival.” This statement echoed the Western social Darwinian concept that Liang learned and embraced from Yan Fu 嚴復 (1854-1921), an interpreter of Western liberal thought whose translations included Thomas H. Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics* (1898), Herbert-Spencer’s *A Study of Sociology* (1903) and John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* (1903).⁶ To this end, Liang sought to write the first Western-style teleological history of China. He devised a tripartite periodization to show the evolution of Chinese civilization: the first stage consisted of chaotic jousting among a multitude of warlords and tribalism, the second stage involved a single ruler and his monarchy, and the third stage saw the movement toward a people’s democracy.⁷

This kind of historiography should reflect the accomplishments of the people as *guomin* rather than serving as a record of “the lives” of emperors and elites. Liang once wrote in a historical essay, “What is history? History is nothing but the account of the development and

⁵ Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, eds., “Liang Qichao: The Concept of the Nation,” in *Sources of Chinese Tradition from 1600 through the Twentieth Century*, vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 297.

⁶ de Bary and Lufrano, eds., “Yan Fu on Evolution and Progress,” 256.

⁷ Peter Zarrow, “Old Myth into New History: The Building Blocks of Liang Qichao’s ‘New History,’” *Historiography East & West* 1, no. 2 (2003): 218, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157018603774004502>.

strife of human races.”⁸ Furthermore, he claimed history should not be constructed out of hundreds of unrelated narratives; instead, “the more advanced scholarship is, the more refined specialization ought to be.”⁹ His “new historiography” would split the writing of Chinese history into two genres: general history (*pubien shi* 普遍史) and specialized histories (*zhuanmen shi* 專門史) composed of subjects like philosophy, literature, and art. Meanwhile, Liang also advocated for a theoretical and political underpinning for these writings.

In the early 1900s, while exiled in Japan, Liang published essays and brought ideas of “national spirit” and “civilization” into the consciousness of revolutionary intellectuals both abroad and in China.¹⁰ This, along with his ideas on “specialized history” and “linear progression,” went on to influence the formulation of Chinese art history in the first half of the twentieth century. The two main protagonists of this thesis, Chinese art historians Zheng Wuchang 鄭午昌 (1894-1952) and Teng Gu 滕固 (1901-1941), adopted these ideas proposed by Liang in their writings on Chinese art history. These two early twentieth-century art historians aimed not only to show progressive development in Chinese art but also to change the notion of antiquities from objects of bygone eras to treasures of national heritage.

Liang’s influence on the Chinese formulation of art history has been recognized by many contemporary scholars of Chinese art history.¹¹ Cheng-hua Wang, in his essay “Rediscovering

⁸ Harriet T. Zurndorfer, “China and ‘Modernity’: The Uses of the Study of Chinese History in the Past and the Present,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40, no. 4 (1997): 474, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3632404>.

⁹ Zurndorfer, “China and ‘Modernity,’” 475.

¹⁰ Liang was exiled to Japan along with his mentor Kang Youwei after the failure of the Hundred Days’ Reform (1898) ordered by Emperor Guangxu and led by Kang to modernize China through social reform.

¹¹ Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, “The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World: The Construction of Chinese Art as a Modern Field,” *Twentieth-Century China* 32, no. 1 (November 1, 2006): 4-25, <https://doi.org/10.1179/tcc.2006.32.1.4>. Also see Aida Yuen Wong, “Nationalism and the Writing of New Histories,” in *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), 35-42.

Song Painting for the Nation: Artistic Discursive Practices in Early Twentieth-Century China,”

wrote:

The neologisms of *minzu jingshen* (national spirit) and *wenming* (civilization) and the ideas they connoted became widespread and powerful in China in the early years of twentieth century. In fact, they were so pervasive that specific examples of their impact on Chinese intellectuals seem almost unnecessary. However, it should be noted that Liang Qichao (1873-1929) was seminal in promulgating these ideas, which other Chinese intellectuals rapidly recognized and found relevant to their re-evaluation of the Chinese art tradition. More specifically, Liang learned from Japan the Western historical approach, which focused on the evolution of a nation’s civilization and social progress—that is, the history of civilization.¹²

Liang and his fellow intellectuals embraced this Western framework not just because it affiliated China with the other “civilized” nations but, more important, because it would enable China to rival other nations in the global arena. Therefore the modern formulation of Chinese cultural history came as a result of concerns for the country’s future, that is, to become a nation recognized as equal to those that were technologically advanced.

With the nationalistic focus on “culture” and “national essence,” the Chinese revolutionary intellectuals began to reformulate how China understood its cultural past to render its heritage into history. In this process, the question of what constituted “authentic” Chinese culture became the central topic. The Chinese word for “culture,” *wenhua* 文化,¹³ has a close

¹² Cheng-hua Wang, “Rediscovering Song Painting for the Nation: Artistic Discursive Practices in Early Twentieth-Century China,” *Artibus Asiae* 71, no. 2 (2011): 231, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23350215>.

¹³ In premodern texts, *wenhua* is used in contrast to *wuhua*; *wu* denoted military prowess whereas *wen* denoted artistic and literary cultivation. Also in its premodern form, it denoted a way of governing and administering the state and the people. However, in the context of this modern debate, its ethnographic notion relates to the nineteenth-century Japanese word *bunka*, the *kanji* translation equivalent of “culture,” and was thereafter “borrowed back.” Lydia H. Liu, “Rethinking Culture and National Essence,” in *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900-1947* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 239; Fei Deng and Jianli Tang, “Introduction to the Non-symmetry of Word Derivation ‘Wenhua’ and ‘Culture,’” *International Journal of Linguistics and Communication* 3, no. 1 (2015):147, <http://ijlcnec.com/vol-3-no-1-june-2015-abstract-15-ijlc>.

etymological association with *wenxue* 文学 (literature). In the nascent phase of this new cultural and national essence movement, those involved were prominent literary figures. Using a modern printing technology, colotype, imported from Japan and Germany to publish literary and art journals provided these intellectuals with a new means for generating public consciousness of national cultural heritage.

Even before the collapse of the Qing, the revolutionary *Journal of National Essence* (*Guocui xuebao* 國粹學報), founded by Deng Shi in 1901, had begun to promote the “national essence.” To preserve a cultural heritage truly representative of a modern China, leading revolutionary intellectuals felt the need to start by drawing a distinct cultural divide between the different ruling races in China.

The previously unpublished writings by one of the leading anti-Manchu revolutionary scholars, Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692), now became a source of inspiration. During the mid-1600s this Confucian scholar had criticized the Manchu Qing regime on the grounds that its rulers were barbarians. After the Han-ruled Ming dynasty (1368-1644) ended when Wang’s anti-Manchu revolt failed to take off, he went into exile. During his exile he wrote *Huang shu* 黃書 (The Yellow Book), which contained the ideas that went on to inspire late-Qing scholars such as Liang Qichao. His perception of the barbarous Manchu rulers was based on moral and cultural differences rather than race. In the *Huang shu* he expressed his distaste for the current ruler and foresaw the collapse of the Qing:

If, however, a ruler fails to make long-term plans, neglects the integrity of his territory, esteems his own person more than the empire, antagonizes colleagues, creates divisions where none should exist, is driven by suspicion to exercise a repressive control, and weakens the central region, then, while he clings desperately to his privileged status and enjoys the advantages of his position without fulfilling its obligations, disaster strikes and he is incapable of overcoming it. ... So, with a mind full of grief and anger, and a heart full of

sorrow, I rectify what went wrong in order to restore the original divisions established by the Yellow Emperor. I look forward eagerly to the advent of an enlightened ruler, who will restore sovereignty to the country.¹⁴

Wang's critique of the barbarian Manchu rulers led him specifically to uphold Han values and culture and set the scene for later formulations of Chinese cultural history to be almost exclusively focused on the artistic production of the Han people and their exemplary dynasties. For the writers and editors of the *Journal of National Essence* who sympathized with Wang, the Ming loyalist, they saw an opportunity to focus on the preservation of Han heritage as authentic Chinese culture. This trend also appeared in the writings of art history. For example, Zheng Wuchang and Teng Gu both deemed the Song and Tang dynasties as the golden era of artistic production. It is no surprise that the rulers of both dynasties were Han.¹⁵

One of the earliest and the most ambitious projects launched by Deng Shi's *Journal of National Essence* was serializing Huang Jie's 黃節 *Huang shi* (Yellow History), a history centered on the Han race. In an essay titled "Between Myth and History: The Construction of a National Past in Modern East Asia," Edward Wang pointed out that the sources of the modern historiographic effort to define "true" Chinese national people and culture came from a combination of drawing on Chinese tradition and formulating a response to foreign racial perceptions of the Chinese. He wrote:

Many history essays appeared in the *National Essence Journal*, of which Huang Jie's (1873-1935) *Yellow History (Huangshi)* was of great significance, for it attempted to write the first national history of China and used the color yellow as a symbol for Han China. By referring to the Chinese people as a yellow people, Huang showed his familiarity with modern racist theories in the West. But Huang might also have drawn upon traditional resources ... yellow had also been the favorite color for centuries. The Yellow River in north China ... had long been regarded as the mother river of Chinese civilization. Chinese emperors also liked

¹⁴ De Bary and Lufrano, eds., "The Preservation of Chinese Political and Cultural Integrity," in *Sources of Chinese Tradition from 1600 through the Twentieth Century*, 35.

¹⁵ See the discussion of Zheng Wuchang and Teng Gu in chapter 3.

to don themselves with yellow gowns and decorate their palace roofs with golden tiles. In so far as history was concerned, the color yellow was important because it reminded people of the Yellow Emperor (*Huangdi*). ... Huang Jie intended not only to trace the evolution of Chinese history, an idea publicized by Kang Youwei, but also to establish the Yellow Emperor as the common ancestor of the modern Chinese people.¹⁶

The conviction that the Han were superior in moral excellence and cultural refinement to the Manchu continued with the formulation of art history, in which artistic production during dynasties of Han rulers, such as the Tang and Song, was canonized over that of the non-Han eras.

The debate on Chinese culture led intellectuals to discover the important value of “fine arts” or *meishu* 美術¹⁷ as integral to the national essence project. Seven years after founding the *Journal of National Essence*, in 1908, Deng founded *Chinese National Glory* (*Shenzhou guo guang ji* 神州國光集), a journal that contained a large number of illustrations of historical figures and objects perceived to represent Chinese national culture. Deng’s editorial preface to his second publication drew a thin and blurred line between the aesthetic and historical values of the objects that were considered *meishu*. At the time of the journal’s publication, the *meishu* objects featured in *Chinese National Glory* were also referred to as *guwu* 古物 (antiquities) and

¹⁶ Q. Edward Wang, “Between Myth and History: the Construction of a National Past in Modern East Asia,” in *Writing the Nation: A Global Perspective*, ed. Stefan Berger (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 137.

¹⁷ The emergence of *meishu* as a neologism for “fine arts” had its roots in Europe and its counterpart in Japan. The Japanese *bijutsu* was initially borrowed from the German word *Kunst* in 1872, when Japan participated in the universal exposition held in Vienna. This became seen by contemporary scholarship as the integration of Japanese and Western traditions of categorizing aesthetic and historical objects. As Cheng-hua Wang points out, “concepts associated with *bijutsu* played a key role in Japanese sociopolitical trends toward cultural preservation and art exhibitions.” In the early twentieth century, the Chinese adopted this in their debates on culture and nationalism. Cheng-hua Wang, “New Printing Technology and Heritage Preservation: Collotype Reproduction of Antiquities in Modern China, circa 1908-1917,” in *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 294.

wenwu (文物 cultural relics).¹⁸ This interchangeability between imported neologism such as *meishu* and existing vocabulary such as *guwu* and *wenwu* often appeared during the transitional time between the late Qing and early Republic. Through newspapers, journals, and scholarly writings, *meishu* made its appearance to a broad audience and into a collective consciousness.

The term *meishu* went through a series of transformations before it gained the commonly acknowledged meaning of “fine arts.” In his essay titled “New Printing Technology and Heritage Preservation,” Cheng-hua Wang wrote:

Generally speaking, as far as the early 1900s are concerned, for Chinese intellectuals interested in German philosophy as propounded by Kant and Schopenhauer, the term *meishu* included painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry, and was closely connected to aesthetics that emphasized the indispensability of art in life. This understanding coexisted with two other important definitions of *meishu*; first, the Western concept of “fine art”—painting, sculpture, and architecture—and second, a wide range of historical objects traditionally termed *guwu*.¹⁹

Chinese intellectuals studying abroad adopted these different definitions in order to apply social meanings to Chinese art. Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940) who studied in Germany, later expounded on the importance of aesthetic education as essential to the moral strengthening of the Chinese people. In his *Concise History of Chinese Art* (*Zhongguo meishu xiaoshi* 中國美術小史), Teng Gu, who received his Ph.D. degree in the study of Chinese art in Germany, included sculpture, architecture, and pottery along with painting and calligraphy in his writing on *meishu*.

The neologism *meishu* enabled a new discourse on the value and meaning of Chinese art to the nation. Meanwhile, the early twentieth-century European and Japanese admiring accounts of Chinese art also renewed enthusiasm among the Chinese for their visual arts. This excitement

¹⁸ Wang, “New Printing Technology and Heritage Preservation,” 293.

¹⁹ Wang, “New Printing Technology and Heritage Preservation,” 295.

to discover international respect for Chinese art is evident in the reports by Deng Shi. Lydia Liu's book *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China 1900-1937* includes descriptions of Deng's reports on foreign reactions to Chinese art. For example, Deng wrote about how a Danish sinologist, after becoming enamored by an ancient Buddhist inscription he saw in Xi'an, went to great lengths to have imitations of it made. Deng also described the profound reverence the Japanese had for Confucius and the elaborate ceremonies they held in honor of the ancient scholar. He mentioned the French collecting of ancient East Asian artifacts and their display at the Louvre.²⁰ Deng was proud of these observations that deemed Chinese art of equal superiority as those of the West.

The main impetus that launched the Chinese "national essence" project was the success of the Meiji Japan's (1868-1912) national essence (Kokusui 國粹) project. After Japan's military triumph in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), as the first Asian nation to gain a victory over a Western nation, Japan proclaimed itself to be the strongest nation in Asia. The country's political and imperialistic ambitions led intellectuals and art historians such as Okakura Tenshin 岡倉天心 (1863-1913) to claim Japan as the cultural repository of all Asia.²¹ Between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Japanese scholarship on Chinese art flourished.

The new scholarship partly came out of the desire to rival Western scholarship on Asia. Leading Japanese sinologists later commented retrospectively on this phenomenon during a series of roundtable discussions held during the 1960s and 1970s. Of these panel discussions, John T. Wixted, contemporary scholar and author of *Japanese Scholars of China*, wrote:

What is striking about these scholars' attitude toward Western scholarship on China is just how positive it was. In fact, more than simply being viewed

²⁰ Lydia H. Liu, "Rethinking Culture and National Essence," 246.

²¹ Kakuzo Okakura, "The Range of Ideas," in *Ideal of the East: The Spirit of Japanese Art* (1904; repr., Mineola: Dover Publications, 2005), 2.

positively, such scholarship was a spur to Japanese not only to write on East Asia, but also to—as they put it—“catch up with” Western studies of Asia. Enoki Kazuo (1912-1989) speaks of the period 1895-96 in these terms.²²

In this sense, Japan’s formulation of Chinese cultural history became a way to compete with the West. Furthermore, Japanese scholars such as Okakura, Naitō Konan 内藤湖南 (1866-1934), and Omura Seigai 大村西崖(1868-1927) saw it as an opportunity to triumph by authoring “oriental scholarship” from the perspective of an East Asian nation that had geographic and historic cultural connections with China for over fifteen thousand years.

Modern Japan’s formulation of Chinese cultural history, although respectful, still conveyed the sentiment of Japanese supremacy. As Joshua Fogel wrote in his book *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naitō Konan (1866-1934)*:

Several genres of Sinological literature appeared in Meiji period. Sinology began to blossom as a result of the impetus from the West and in reaction to it. Of course, Sinology, or the study of China, was as old in Japan as the contacts between the two nations. ... Another trend in Japanese sinology emerged at this time reflecting the increased desire to Westernize in other areas of life. This school, following the preponderant idea of escaping from the “backwardness” of Asia, was interested in the enlightenment of Japan, utilizing the tools of the “advanced” civilization of the West.²³

Rather than treating China as a nation, Japanese intellectuals in the Imperial Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto, such as Naitō Konan and Okakura Tenshin, treated China as a cultural region with a glorious past. The establishment of “oriental history” (*tōyōshi* 東洋史) in the academic curriculum of the Imperial University was a case in point.

²² John T. Wixted, “Some Sidelights on Japanese Sinologists of the Early Twentieth Century,” in *Crossing the Yellow Sea: Sino-Japanese Cultural Contacts 1600-1950*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Norwalk: Eastbridge 2007), 307.

²³ Joshua Fogel, “Meiji Sinology,” in *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naitō Konan (1866-1934)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 5.

Japan did not include itself in the definition of *Tōyō* 東洋, “the orient.” This exclusion points to what Fogel mentioned earlier as “escaping from the backwardness of Asia.” He added: “Code words developed in Japanese writings about China as Meiji period Sinology took form. The expression *Tōyō* (East Asia) came to mean China and her periphery, which sometimes included Japan and sometimes did not. Later historians would not subsume Japanese history under the history of *Tōyō* but referred to it as ‘national history’ (*kokushi*).”²⁴

Japan’s victories in both the first Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 spurred its ambition to become the most powerful nation in Asia. After the war with Russia, Japan gained official recognition as the strongest nation in Asia from the United States, which was the mediator between Japan and Europe. Chapter 2 of this thesis focuses on Japan’s formulation of Chinese art history after the two war victories. It begins with a look at the contribution of Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 (1866-1940), a Qing scholar who went to Japan after the first Sino-Japanese War, bringing with him collections of classical Chinese paintings in what later became known as the second wave of Chinese painting importation. It was based on this collection that Japanese scholarship on Chinese art began. This chapter focuses on modern Japan’s formulation of Chinese art history as integral to its political agenda of seeing itself as Asia’s superpower. In 1903 and 1904, respectively, art historian Okakura Tenshin published his *Ideals of the East* and *The Awakening of Japan*. Both books were written in English, and both put forward the lofty proclamation that Japan was the leader and cultural repository of Asia. Exploring the age-old cultural connection between China and Japan, Japanese scholars with a traditional *Kangaku* 漢學 (Chinese learning) background proposed Sinocentric cultural historiography. Naitō Konan received his early education in *Kangaku*, and later his studies of

²⁴ Fogel, “Meiji Sinology,” 5.

Chinese historiography and art history led to the conclusion that “modernity” arrived in China before the country encountered the West. Most influential was Naitō’s periodization theory presented in *Shinaron* (Chinese history), later adopted by Chinese art historians such as Zheng Wuchang, who used theories similar to Naitō’s human analogy of birth, maturity, and decline to historicize Chinese civilization on the model of historicism developed by European theorists in the eighteenth century. Although Naitō’s scholarship has not been associated in literature with Western thought, nonetheless his colleague Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥庫吉 (1865-1942), from the same university, is recognized to have embraced Western thought. Therefore Naitō’s argument for a Sinocentric view of Asian history could be seen as a response to Shiratori’s *Tōyōshi*. Chapter 2 concludes with a look at the scholarship on ancient Chinese Buddhist sculptures by Ōmura Seigai, a Japanese art historian who proposed a holistic view of East Asian history rather than focusing on the national. Despite his reverence toward his teacher Okakura, Ōmura’s intellectual and historical exploration of Chinese art veered away from rhetorical national ideology.

After the military defeats suffered during the Opium War and the first Sino-Japanese War, Chinese intellectuals realized the necessity for Western knowledge, and they looked to Japan and the West for ways to construct a new national identity. With the examination of the writings by two pioneering twentieth-century art historians, Zheng Wuchang and Teng Gu, chapter 3 looks at the connection between art historiography and nation building. Published in 1929, Zheng’s *A Complete History of Chinese Painting* (*Zhongguo huaxue quanshi* 中國畫學全史) made a substantial contribution to this new academic field, grouping together different dynastic eras to examine artistic production in the context of social changes in the meanings and functions of art. Meanwhile, dissatisfied with Western scholarship on Chinese art, such as

Chinese Art (L'art chinois) by Maurice Paléologue (1859-1944) and *Chinese Art* by the English scholar Stephen W. Bushell, Teng Gu set out to write a “more accurate version.”²⁵ His books *Concise History of Chinese Art (Zhongguo meishu xiaoshi 中國美術小史)* (1926) and *A History of Tang and Song Painting (Tang-Song huihua shi 唐宋繪畫史)* (1932) considered artistic production in tandem with Liang Qichao’s social evolution theory that designated the Tang and Song to be the most glorious periods. Using the visual analysis methodology pioneered by German art historian Heinrich Wöfflin (1864-1945), Teng’s art history focused on how works reflected the styles of their periods rather than reconfirming already canonized masterpieces.

Chapter 3 also examines the advent of print technology and its role in the transformation and institutionalization of ink painting (*shuimo hua 水墨畫*) into painting that represents the height of artistic achievement in China, which became known as “the emblem of national-style,” or Chinese painting (*guohua 國畫*). This imported technology allowed artworks to be faithfully reproduced in large quantities to be shared with a wide audience. Di Baoxian 狄葆賢 (1873-1941) founded China’s first art publishing house, which produced *Famous Chinese Paintings (Zhongguo minhua ji 中國名畫記)*, a journal that contained a large quantity of image reproductions. Its wide distribution allowed the appreciation of classical paintings to expand beyond elite connoisseurship into the public sphere. Di’s cultural heritage preservation mission via a published journal helped consolidate the knowledge of Chinese antiquity into a cohesive narrative. Also, he was able to create a new audience for antiquities (*guwu 古物*) and in turn

²⁵ Kuiyi Shen, “The Japanese Impact on the Construction of Chinese Art History as a Modern Field: A Case Study of Teng Gu and Fu Baoshi,” in *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 232.

generate a collective national consciousness for cultural preservation that became instrumental in nation building at the turn of the century.

Whereas Japan wished to be seen as the leader of Asia, China wanted to be seen as an autonomous nation-state capable of governing itself. Amid the political chaos and ideological struggles that resulted in military conflicts, these two nations looked to cultural heritage to help safeguard their own national identities. As this thesis will show, however, despite their different political agendas—imperial Japan’s expansionism and the new Republic of China’s need to self-strengthen as a nation—the formulation of Chinese art history was a bilateral exchange between the two countries during the early twentieth century and was not always competitive in spirit.

Chapter 2: The Writing of Chinese Art History in Modern Japan

In the sociopolitical climate of Japan's emergence as a world power during the late Meiji era (1868-1912), art historians, in order to establish "national essence" (*Kokusui* 國粹), sought to present their country as the repository of an unspoiled East Asian culture. Amid the country's rapid modernization, some feared a complete Western-style modernization meant the loss of "national essence." They sought the country's national heritage in its cultural traditions, and because these traditions had deep roots in Chinese culture, they began to think afresh about early Chinese history and arts. The legacies of ancient Chinese art in Japan held the promise of supporting Japan's imperial claim to being Asia's supreme nation, one with a cultural heritage to rival Europe's celebrated past. They identified China as a cultural region without recognizing it as an autonomous state. By treating China as *shina* 支那, an ancient country that was no longer considered the Middle Kingdom, they found the origin of Japan's cultural heritage.²⁶

The development of Chinese art history in Japan was also a response to the flourishing of oriental studies in European countries such as Germany in the early twentieth century. As Japanese scholars became aware of European oriental historiography, their perceived need to formulate an "oriental history" (*tōyōshi* 東洋史) privileging Japan as the cultural leader of Asia grew.²⁷ The Imperial University of Kyoto and Tokyo was the first to establish oriental studies as a formal academic discipline. With Chinese studies as their focus, *tōyōshi* academics, such as

²⁶ *Shina*, according to Fogel, appears in medieval and early modern Chinese Buddhist texts. In modern context its use betokens an effort to come up with a neutral term that both names the country and reflects a world in which China is no longer the Central Kingdom. Joshua A. Fogel, "Review: Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History by Stefan Tanaka," *Monumenta Nipponica* 49, no. 1 (1991): 109, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2385511>.

²⁷ According to Hisayuki Miyakawa, a scholar of Naitō Konan, the founder of *Tōyōshi* at the Imperial University of Kyoto, in his book of lectures given in 1921, Naitō defines "oriental history" (*tōyōshi*) as the history of the development of Chinese culture. Hisayuki Miyakawa, "An Outline of the Naitō Hypothesis and Its Effects on Japanese Studies of China," *Far Eastern Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (1955): 541. Also, according to Joshua Fogel, *tōyōshi*, as proposed by historian Naka Michiyo in 1894, was the history of all East Asian nations (except Japan), with China at the center. Joshua A. Fogel, "Meiji Sinology," *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naitō Konan (1866-1934)* (Cambridge: University of Harvard Press, 1984), 8.

Naitō Konan, Ōmura Seigai, and Okakura Tenshin, published books on Chinese cultural history during the early 1900s. These scholars began their intellectual and historical explorations of Chinese art via social interactions and visits to Chinese Buddhist temples. One of the most important social activities was the time-honored traditional tea ceremony that displayed imported classical Chinese paintings.

The First Wave of Importation: Chinese Paintings in Muromachi Japan

The importation of Chinese paintings into Japan began as early as the twelfth century. Referred to as “old crossing” (*kowatari* 古渡), this first wave included works generally termed “Song and Yuan paintings” (*sōgenga* 宋元畫). During the dynastic periods of Song (宋 960-1279) and Yuan (元 1279-1368), many Japanese Buddhist monks—especially Zen 禪 monks who studied in and journeyed to the monasteries of southern China—brought back paintings upon their return to Japan. Among these works were portraits of Zen masters and paintings of famous Buddhist and Daoist characters referred to as *chinsō* 頂相. In exchange, Japanese monasteries invited Chinese priests to teach in Japan. As gifts, the priests brought with them works by popular artists from the Jiangnan region of southern China. They included bird-flower and bird-insect paintings that had been created for personal enjoyment, not for connoisseurship and collecting.

Over the next two hundred years, the collecting of Chinese painting gradually went from pure aesthetic enjoyment to connoisseurship. In the Muromachi period (室町時代 1338-1573), historical records show that at least three generations of Ashikaga shoguns collected Chinese art and paintings for connoisseurship and collecting. The Ashikaga shogun collection became larger with each generation after the third shogun, Yoshimitsu 足利義満 (ruled 1368-1394), passed

down his collection to his son. Because few records of earlier shoguns' collecting activities survive today, there is a gap in the documentation of Chinese painting migrations to Japan between the third and fifth shoguns. Another reason for this gap could be the twenty-four-year halt in trading activity with China enforced by the fourth shogun. When the sixth shogun, Yoshinori 足利義教 (ruled 1429-1441), re-established trade in 1433, the collecting of Chinese paintings resumed. The only official records that exist today are ones created during the reigns of Yoshimitsu, Yoshinori, and Yoshimasa 足利義政 (ruled 1443-1473).

One way to determine when the works entered Japan is by examining the owner's seal found on these paintings. For example, *Pu Tai* 布袋 (ca. 13th century), a Zen painting signed by the Southern Song artist Liang Kai 梁楷 (1140-1210), bears a seal originally thought to be used by Yoshimasa, now confirmed to be the same one used by Yoshinori on several other works owned by the shogun. In 1437 Yoshinori appointed Nōami Nōa as his advisor and record keeper. In the late 1970s Carla Zainie discovered the *Muromachi Dono Gyōkō Ki*, a hanging scroll said to be created by Nōa, which Zainie identified as an inventory list of hundreds of artworks acquired by at least three generations of Ashikaga shoguns.²⁸ The scroll lists more than five hundred objects and paintings in the Muromachi Palace collection in Kyoto. In her essay, Zainie reveals a corresponding record made during Yoshimasa's rule, the *Gomatsu On'e Mokuraka*, which lists an entry for five sets of "Eight Views" 八景 by five different Zen masters. Of the eight, Yoshimitsu, the third shogun, owned the four sets done by Muqi 牧谿 (ca. 1210-1269), as indicated by the shogun's *Dōyū* seal. This demonstrates that the importation of Chinese paintings for collecting and connoisseurship began as early as the thirteenth century.

²⁸ Carla M. Zainie, "The Muromachi Dono Gyoko Okazari Ki. A Research Note," *Monuments Nipponica* 33, no. 1 (1978): 116, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2384257>.

During the Muromachi period, the tradition of tea ceremony entered its nascent stage. In these ceremonies, Chinese hanging scrolls and handscrolls were used as displays to harmonize the interior and showcase the host's refinement. In China, handscrolls are viewed by spreading the image slowly out on a table to be looked at intimately as narratives unfold. By contrast, the Japanese preferred to gaze at the entire image on the wall or from a distance. The horizontal cracks seen in some of the scrolls suggest that this was the case.²⁹ Also, depending on the size of tea room, the paintings were appreciated differently. For example, in a shogun's palace a handscroll would be fully opened and hung on the wall, whereas in a display alcove (*tokonoma* 床の間) of a normal household, a handscroll would be cut into parts to accommodate the space.³⁰

The revered Chinese art scholar James Cahill wrote about one such instance of how the Japanese made a handscroll painted by Muqi into a series of hanging scrolls by cutting and remounting. As a result, this work by the famous Song dynasty painter is known now as two separate works representing persimmons and chestnuts.³¹ Cahill also noted another case in which a painting was cut apart because the Zen-inspired owners deemed the entire composition too complex for viewing. The painting now famously known as *Mountaintops of Mt. Lu* by Yujian 玉潤 (act. second half of 13th century), a Southern Song painter known for his splash-ink landscapes, originally also represented a waterfall at the left. Such appropriations by the Japanese owners show that Chinese paintings were appreciated and admired based mainly on

²⁹ James Cahill, "Early Chinese Paintings in Japan: Differing Modes of Appreciation and Preservation." *The Writings of James Cahill*, 2011, <http://jamescahill.info/the-writings-of-james-cahill/cahill-lectures-and-papers/323--early-chinese-paintings-in-japan-an-outsiders->

³⁰ Cahill, "Early Chinese Paintings in Japan." The *tokonoma* in the tea rooms comprised a narrow and shelved recess space that seldom had sufficient width to accommodate a fully opened large scroll.

³¹ Cahill, "Early Chinese Paintings in Japan."

their capacity to aesthetically complement contemporary tastes and environments. All this was about to change in the second wave of importation of Chinese art into Japan.

The Second Wave of Importation: Chinese Paintings in Twentieth-Century Japan

By the early twentieth century, Chinese paintings began to attract new audiences. Among them, intellectuals and sinologists began formulating the history of Chinese art based on the works they encountered. The second wave of art migration from China into Japan happened during a period of tumultuous political upheaval in China. In 1912 the new Republic of China forced the last emperor out of his palace, thus ending the country's two thousand years of imperial rule. To prevent the complete disintegration of the imperial household's paintings and antiquities, court scholars such as Luo Zhenyu began using their connections to Japan to export classical paintings and seek refuge. Luo later exiled himself to live in Japan and avoid political persecution. There he also formed valuable connections with local art dealers and collectors. This wave of importation went on to play a pivotal role in the writing of Chinese art history in Japan.

Luo Zhenyu's role in the writing of Chinese art history did not begin as a scholarly venture. Contemporary scholarship often heralds Luo's accomplishment in preserving Chinese heritage during a time when the imperial collection faced imminent disintegration. According to the last emperor's autobiography, however, Luo had been viewed differently. Luo had been Aisin-Gioro Puyi's 愛新覺羅溥儀 (1906-1967) private tutor and was also assigned as the record keeper of palace treasures. Fearing persecution at the hands of the new government of the Republic of China, Luo began forming alliances with the Japanese.³² While his actions initiated a cultural exchange with Japan in the early twentieth century, and the export of Chinese artifacts of

³² Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi, "The Efforts of Lo Chen-yu," *From Emperor to Citizen: The Autobiography of Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi*, vol. 1 (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1964), 173-79.

antiquity revived Japan's Chinese art connoisseurship, his initial motive had been less than noble. In his autobiography, Emperor Puyi accused Luo of being a perfidious traitor. Reflecting on the aftermath of a mysterious fire that destroyed nearly half of the Imperial Household Collection of art and treasures, he wrote, "The inventory of paintings and calligraphy that was being made by Lo Chen-yü and others of my new batch of pigtailed advisers also came under fire: they were selling rubbings of bronzes and prints of pictures, and the originals themselves became fewer and fewer as the process went on."³³ Luo's actual plan and motive in forming the relationship with the Japanese has not been thoroughly studied, but scholars such as Tamaki Maeda, Cheng-hua Wang, and Zaixin Hong have claimed he was motivated by his adamant loyalty to the overthrown Qing court.³⁴ They have also lauded Luo as one of the most important Chinese scholars of cultural preservation. Yet his commercial dealings in Chinese antiquities also made him a proto-business entrepreneur.³⁵

Luo's connections to Japan and its world of Chinese art connoisseurship began in the late nineteenth century, when he oversaw the Office of Agricultural Information, or Nongbaoguan, in Shanghai. While there, he invited Fujita Toyochi 藤田 丰八 (1869-1929) to work as a translator.³⁶ Through him, Luo met other leading Japanese sinologists, such as Naitō Konan, who later wrote the introduction for one of Luo's print catalogs on Chinese paintings. Naitō Konan specialized in Chinese history and historiography and was also a poet and an amateur painter of Chinese-style ink paintings. Another scholar, Okakura Tenshin, was a regular attendee of

³³ Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi, "Reorganizing the Household Department," 142.

³⁴ See their essays in Joshua A. Fogel, ed., *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

³⁵ Shana J. Brown, "Luo Zhenyu and the Dilemmas of the Private Scholar," *Pastimes: From Art and Antiquarianism to Modern Chinese Historiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 116-20.

³⁶ Tamaki Maeda, "(Re-)Canonizing Literati Painting in the Early Twentieth Century: The Kyoto Circle," *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 222-23.

traditional tea ceremonies in which many classical Chinese paintings were used as displays. Soon Luo also met Harada Gorō 原田悟郎 (1893-1980), a respected art dealer and antique collector.³⁷ It was with Harada that Luo's commercial importing activities flourished. Luo began to acquire a complex reputation and was known as an important figure responsible for introducing a wide array of classical Chinese paintings to Japanese Sinophiles.

In addition to Zen and landscape paintings already familiar to Japanese audiences, a range of literati and court paintings from the Qing imperial collection were introduced. Song and Yuan painting now expanded to include the Chinese Southern School of scholarly amateur painting, known as *sōgenga*. This genre became popular especially among Japanese scholars. Through their encounter with these imported Chinese paintings, Japanese proto-art historians began formulating the history of Chinese art.

When Luo was in Japan, he actively involved himself in the business of art dealing. In 1916 he recounted to a friend a transaction that took place during an exchange of paintings between an important Japanese collector, Yamanaka Teijirō 山本悌二郎 (1870-1917), and a local Chinese seller. Gravely concerned with how it would affect his sales, Luo wrote a letter to another scholar, Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927), lamenting:

Yamanaka Teijirō recently went to Shanghai and spent 30,000 *yen* in purchasing *guhua*. Yesterday I was invited to see the paintings in his place. From the invoice of the transaction which he showed me, I was so surprised to learn the price of paintings, aside from three pieces by Wang, Wu, Tang, and Dai ... was extremely cheap coming directly from the market. On average I purchase paintings through the Shanghai dealers with a fair price, so the Japanese would pay me more. Now they pay less to the Shanghai dealers than I did. ... From now on, Japanese will ask for a lower price to buy *guhua* from me and our business in Japan is in jeopardy.³⁸

³⁷ Tamaki Maeda, "(Re-)Canonizing Literati Painting," 217.

³⁸ Zaixin Hong, "Moving onto a World Stage: The Modern Chinese Practice of Art Collecting and Its Connection to the Japanese Art Market," *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press: 2012), 121-22.

Luo's concerns, however, did not stop him from dealing with other prominent dealers in Japan. His work continued to focus on creating new audiences for Chinese art, positioning himself more and more as a cultural worker and tastemaker as opposed to simply a businessman.

Through a mutual friend, Luo met the well-established Kyoto dealer and collector of Chinese painting Harada Gorō. As an elder son, Harada had also inherited his family's Hakubundō 博文堂 Publishing Company. As they promoted paintings, they noticed that current buyers and collectors were more inclined to purchase works in styles already familiar to them, such as ones in the collection of mainly Chinese artifacts in the Ashikaga Shogunate collection. Consequently, Harada faced challenges in broadening buyers' tastes beyond works by Zen priests and Song and Yuan dynasty paintings. To attract these clients and potential collectors, he published catalogs of reproduced images of the works brought by Luo. Meanwhile, Luo sought venues to exhibit his paintings to academics in universities.

In 1919 the Special School of Painting in Kyoto held an exhibition of works and objects from Luo's collection. The accompanying exhibition catalog included comments by the university's director. He wrote:

Paintings owned by Luo Zhenyu, one of the best-known collectors in Beijing, China, have arrived at Kyoto Imperial University. More than one hundred superb works were selected from them and exhibited. The show was held in the middle of the last month, at the city's Special School of Painting, to be viewed by request. ... To display so many excellent Chinese paintings in this country is virtually unprecedented and its benefit for [Japanese] artists is substantial.³⁹

Luo's next exhibition during the following year gained an even bigger crowd, opening to a less specialized general public. Besides attracting academics, the show also brought in wealthy bankers and industrialists looking to cultivate themselves. To lay the groundwork for this new

³⁹ Tamaki Maeda, "(Re-)Canonizing Literati Painting," 221

audience, Luo wrote a series of commentaries on the historical significance of the works to accompany the collotype reproductions throughout.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, outside Kyoto, Chinese art in Japan continued to take on new meanings as it became further imbricated in the emergence of new Japanese cultural forms. A prominent Osaka antique shop, Yamanaka Shunkōdō 山中箒堂, introduced Chinese literati paintings by way of elaborate *sencha* tea ceremonies. The paintings were chosen and displayed based on their aesthetic value and their ability to complement the tea room's interior. Yu-chih Lai, a contemporary scholar of art history, recently discovered documentation of one such gathering in *Seiwan meienzushi* 青灣茶會圖誌 (Illustrated record of the tea banquet at Seiwan). Describing in detail the events that took place, Lai wrote:

On the eighth day of the eleventh lunar month of 1874, the famous antique shop in Osaka, Yamanaka Shunkōdō, run by the Yamanaka family, held a tea gathering in Seiwan in remembrance of the late father of the shop's owner in which Chinese painting, calligraphy, various kinds of antiquities, and flower arrangements were put on display. A grand gathering, it involved a total of thirteen *seki*, which meant thirteen tea banquets each held in a different place. In addition to Yamanaka Shunkōdō, which hosted the first *seki*, twelve other collectors or antique shops were also invited to bring their collections to participate in this banquet of tea and art.⁴¹

Yamanaka Sadajirō was the chief operator of both Yamanaka Shunkōdō and Yamanaka & Company, a shop devoted to importing Asian art into Japan as well as exporting it to the Western market. Since the late nineteenth century it had been based in Osaka, with branches in Kyoto and in major cities across the world. Clients included Okakura Tenshin, Ernest Francisco Fenollosa (1853-1908), and Charles Lang Freer (1854-1919), all of whom became important figures in the development of Asian art history. Freer later established the Asian Art Gallery in the

⁴⁰ Tamaki Maeda, "(Re-)Canonizing Literati Painting," 223.

⁴¹ Yu-chin Lai, "Tea and the Art Market in Sino-Japanese Exchanges of the Late Nineteenth Century: Sencha and the Seiwan meien zushi," in *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, edited by Joshua A. Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 43.

Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. Yamanaka Sadajirō, with his art-collector brother Yamanaka Teijirō 山本悌二郎 (1870-1937), produced catalogs of Chinese paintings in private collections as well as those owned by clients. However, it was the “way of tea” (*senchadō* 煎茶道) ceremonies that attracted more intellectual attention among Japan’s proto-Chinese art historians.⁴²

Though the paintings served primarily as decorative displays to complement the *senchadō* interior, hosts’ choices of the paintings exhibited in the sacred space revealed their deep reverence and widespread aspiration for knowledge of classical Chinese culture. Attendees included sinologists such as Naitō Konan, who wrote the most comprehensive Chinese cultural and political history book of his time, *Shina shigaku shi* 支那史學史, and Okakura Tenshin, the first-generation East Asian art historian who wrote *The Ideals of the East: The Spirit of Japanese Art* and other books about Japan’s cultural origins. According to Okakura, what lured him to the paintings was that their flavors and styles conveyed the “spirit” of *senchadō*. In his *The Book of Tea*, Okakura described the atmosphere:

All our great tea-masters were students of Zen and attempted to introduce Zennism into the actualities of life. Thus the room, like the other equipments [*sic*] of the tea-ceremony, reflects many of the Zen doctrines. The size of the orthodox tea-room, which is four mats and a half, or ten feet square, is determined by a passage in the Sutra of Vikramadytia. In that interesting work, Vikramadytia welcomes the Saint Manjushiri and eighty-four thousand disciples of Buddha in a room of this size--an allegory based on the theory of the non-existence of space to the truly enlightened.⁴³

He went on to describe other physical elements of the room, such as the flower arrangements and the “imperfect” *wabi* 侘び tea vessels, a style reflecting Chinese Southern Song dynastic

⁴² For full definition of *senchadō*, see Lai, “Tea and the Art Market,” 50-52.

⁴³ Okakura Tenshin, “The Tea Room,” in *The Book of Tea* (New York: Putnam, 1906), 22.

stoneware, all of which served as physical conduits attuning the human spirit and soul to a sense of enlightenment. On art appreciation, Okakura dedicated an entire section to the transcendental power of a masterpiece. He wrote:

The master calls forth notes we know not of. Memories long forgotten all come back to us with a new significance. Hopes stifled by fear, yearnings that we dare not recognize, stand forth in new glory. ... To the sympathetic a masterpiece becomes a living reality toward which we feel drawn in bonds of comradeship. The masters are immortal, for their loves and fears live in us over and over again. It is rather the soul than the hand, the man than the technique, which appeals to us.⁴⁴

Okakura embraced the way of tea as a form of self-cultivation and as an art form in itself. The broad political implications of Chinese art's role in such processes became evident, as the appreciation of classical Chinese paintings through *senchadō* formulated itself into a sophisticated connoisseurship imbued with Japanese nationalist sentiment.

Okakura Tenshin: “Asia Is One”

Okakura Tenshin was one of the first East Asian art historians in early twentieth-century Japan. His ultranationalistic approach and ideals of a unified Asia paved the way for a new art historiography. Informed by his early education and later travels to Europe, China, and India, his superior knowledge of world art and history influenced his later theories. As a young man at the Imperial University of Tokyo, he studied art in the literatures of China and Japan, graduating with honors in philosophy and English literature. In 1886, upon his return from Europe and the United States, he was appointed curator for the Imperial Household Museum. In 1904-1906 he traveled back to the United States and became the curator at the Museum of Fine Arts in

⁴⁴ Okakura Tenshin, “The Tea Room,” 29.

Boston.⁴⁵ During this time he wrote and published *Ideals of the East* (1904) and *The Awakening of Japan* (1905), both written in English. In these works Okakura aimed to position Japan's cultural superiority along with Western cultural heritage.

The need to assert that Japan's cultural heritage rivaled that of the West came at a time when a group of Japanese intellectuals, including Okakura, feared a complete Westernization amid the country's rapid modernization in the Meiji era. In line with Japan's great ambitions of becoming the leader of Asia, Okakura aimed to strengthen the country's national identity through the study and preservation of cultural heritage. In the early twentieth century he constructed a method of Asian art historiography with Japan as the leader.⁴⁶ This was a revolutionary idea when the writings of world art history centered on Europe and the Greco-Roman civilizations as the origin of all civilizations.

One of Okakura's most important books was *Ideals of the East: The Spirit of Japanese Art*. This book carried a strong nationalistic tone. He wrote:

It has been the great privilege of Japan to realize this unity-in-complexity with clearness. ... The unique blessing of unbroken sovereignty, the proud self-reliance of an unconquered race, and the insular isolation which protected ancestral ideas and instincts at the cost of expansion, made Japan the real repository of the trust of Asiatic thought and culture.⁴⁷

His theory presented Japan as the only modern heir capable of preserving Asian cultural history, and China as an ancient country in ruins and in need of a cultural heir. As Okakura wrote:

Dynastic upheavals, the inroads of Tartar horseman, the carnage and devastation of infuriated mobs—all these things, sweeping over her again and again, have left China no landmarks, save her literature and her ruins, to recall the glory of the Tang emperors or the refinement of Sung society. ... Thus Japan is a museum of Asiatic civilization; and more than a museum, because the singular genius of the

⁴⁵ John Clark, "Okakura Tenshin (Kakuzō) and Aesthetic Nationalism," in *Modernities of Japanese Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 126-27.

⁴⁶ Clark, "Okakura Tenshin," 124.

⁴⁷ Kakuzo Okakura, "The Range of Ideas," in *Ideal of the East: The Spirit of Japanese Art* (1904; Mineola: Dover Publications, 2005), 2.

race leads it to dwell on all phases of the ideals of the past. ... The Yamoto poetry, which reflect the Tang ideal under the regime of Fujiwara aristocracy, are a source of inspiration and delight to the present day, like the somber Zennism and Nō-dances, which were the product of Sung illumination. It is this tenacity that keeps Japan true to the Asiatic soul even while it raises her to the rank of a modern power.⁴⁸

Okakura thus depicted a historical continuity between ancient China's rich cultural history and contemporary Japan. Proposing the idea of a culturally synthesized Asia, he aimed to establish parity between the place of Greco-Roman culture and civilization in the development of the West and that of ancient Chinese heritage in the emergence of a Pan-Asian national-political order led by Japan.

To do so, Okakura sought to challenge the view of contemporary modern European historians who studied the Orient as a somehow secondary, nonuniversal cultural object. During the nineteenth century European Oriental scholarship flourished in France, England, and, later, Germany. Each national tradition presented different views on the cultural history of Asia. One example of such European scholarly portrayals of East Asia that Okakura noted was a study of Oriental culture by German philosopher G. F. W. Hegel (1770-1830). Hegel's approach to Oriental culture saw it as having developed not in isolation but in tandem with Greco-Roman antiquity, using the latter as a point of contrast to developments in classical Oriental culture. In *The Philosophy of History*, Hegel presented the idea that the development of world history was analogous to the stages of human life. Asia's historical stage of development was likened to a childhood stage, while Roman achievements were seen as akin to arriving at a true state of adulthood. According to Hegel:

The history of the World travels from East to West, for Europe is the absolute end of history, Asia the beginning. ... To understand this division we must remark that as the State is the universal spiritual life, to which individuals by birth sustain a relation of confidence and habit, and in which they have their existence and

⁴⁸ Kakuzo Okakura, "The Range of Ideas," 2-4.

reality—the first question is, whether their actual life is an unreflecting use and habit combining them to this unity, ... These laws need not concur with the desire of the individual, and the subjects are consequently like children, who obey their parents without will or insight of their own. ... In that immediate unreflected consciousness which characterizes the East, ... it is the childhood of History. ... It is the Roman state, the severe labors of the Manhood of History. For true manhood acts neither in accordance with the caprice of a despot, nor in obedience to a graceful caprice of its own.⁴⁹

In Hegel's opinion, Asia was in a perpetual stasis, forever obeying its emperors and absolute rulers. The implication was that Asia was never in a position to represent itself, and its historiography was never reflective of its human civilization insofar as it remained bound to the subjectivity of authoritarian rulers.

Since his student years at the Imperial University, Okakura had been well-versed in Western art and literature. Though he acknowledged that the modern West was superior in technological advancement, when it came to civilization and culture his opinion differed. In another book, *The Awakening of Japan*, he wrote:

With immense gratitude to the West for what she has taught us, we must still regard Asia as the true source of our inspiration. ... The children of the Hwang-ho and the Ganges had from early days evolved a culture comparable with that of the era of highest enlightenment in Greece and Rome, one of which even foreshadowed thought in modern Europe.⁵⁰

According to Okakura, modern European culture evolved after Asia, thus denying Eurocentric historiographies their accuracy and superiority. In this regard, the writing of Chinese art history in Japan became subject to imperial Japan's representational politics, while at the same time someone like Okakura was ambitiously embarking on a mission to rewrite a world art historiography that centered on Asia.

⁴⁹ G. W. F. Hegel, "Classification of Historic Data," *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Mineola, 1956), 103-7.

⁵⁰ Kakuzo Okakura, "The Night of Asia," in *The Awakening of Japan* (New York: Century Co., 1905), 6-8.

Okakura urged his nation not to overlook its own strength. On the impact of the West on modern Japan, he entreated with a great sense of dignity and pride, “The simple life of Asia need fear no shaming from that sharp contrast with Europe in which steam and electricity have placed it to-day.”⁵¹ In *The Awakening of Japan*, he reinforced this idea of national pride by encouraging the nation to awake from its past: “Great as was the difficulty involved in the struggle for a national awakening, a still harder task confronted Japan in her effort to bring an Oriental nation to face the terrible exigencies of modern existence.”⁵² Positioning Japan as the center of Asia, he called for the unity of Asian cultural heritage: “And it must be a renewal of the same self-consciousness that shall build up Asia again into her ancient steadfastness and strength.”⁵³ Okakura believed that Asia’s self-recognition in its own unique cultural heritage was the only way to rival the predominant Eurocentric conception of world history.

Ōmura Seigai: Historic Exploration of Ancient Chinese Buddhist Art

Unlike Okakura’s art history, Ōmura Seigai sought to present a holistic view of the development of Asian art with much less political rhetoric. In 1915 Ōmura published *Shina bijutsushi* 支那美術史 (Chinese art history), with arduously researched documentation of early Buddhist sculpture in China during its two thousand years of imperial rule, organized chronologically by subject matter and style. Ten years later, in 1925, after several visits to China, he published *Tōyō bijutsushi* 東洋美術史 (Oriental art history), in which he proposed a Sinocentric East Asian historiography. He based his theory on ancient Chinese textual records and historical artifacts.

⁵¹ Kakuzo Okakura, “The Vista,” in *Ideal of the East: The Spirit of Japanese Art* (1904; Mineola: Dover Publications, 2005), 103.

⁵² Kakuzo Okakura, “The Night of Asia,” 6-7.

⁵³ Kakuzo Okakura, “The Range of Ideas,” 105.

Compared to Okakura's *Ideal of the East*, published a decade earlier, in his *Tōyō bijutsushi* Ōmura did not expound on rhetorical national ideology. Instead, he presented an empirical knowledge of ancient visual iconography and scriptures. As a professor, he intended his book to be a textbook used not only during his professorship at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts but also by his successors.⁵⁴

A graduate of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1893, specializing in sculpture, Ōmura was not trained to become an art historian. It was his passionate pursuit of knowledge in art history and autodidactic learning about Chinese art that led him to compose a book of such epic scale.⁵⁵ After being appointed professor of Oriental art history by his alma mater in 1902, and with funding provided by the school's new director, he traveled to China and began his research. There he met Chen Shizeng 陳師曾 (1876-1923), a literati painter who in 1922 published his historically notable *Zhongguo wenrenhua zhi yanjiu* 中國文人畫之研究 (Research in Chinese literati painting), on the value of Chinese traditional painting. In it, he included Ōmura's essay, "Wenrenhua zi fuxing" 文人畫之復興 (The revival of literati painting), which the Chinese scholar had translated. This indicated the degree of scholarly trust between the Chinese and the Japanese scholars. Proposing a Sinocentric art history, Ōmura claimed that recent styles in European Impressionism originated from the literati tradition. He wrote:

Western paintings of recent times are not necessarily following nature blindly. Some depict impressions and are called Impressionism. Some express feelings themselves and are called Expressionism. Are these [Western art movements] not caused by exposure to the ideal of East Asian art?⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Krischer, "Ōmura Seigai's Conception of Oriental Art History and China," 268.

⁵⁵ Oliver Krischer, "Ōmura Seigai's Conception of Oriental Art History and China," 東洋美学と東洋的思惟を問う：植民地帝国下の葛藤するアジア像 38 (2011): 268, <http://doi.org/10.15055/00002435>.

⁵⁶ Lai, Kuo-Sheng, "Rescuing Literati Aesthetics: Chen Hengke (1876-1923) and the Debate on the Westernization of Chinese Art" (master's thesis, University of Maryland, 1999), 62, <https://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/handle/1903/17151/962842.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

The Japanese art historian was also a specialist in classical Chinese Buddhist art. Ōmura's scholarship was such that, for each detail, he emphasized its source and noted contradicting documentation in the original source versus later ones. For example, in a chapter titled "The Dynasties: East Han A.D. 23-220," he analyzed the meaning of "i" as mentioned by Wang Yen 王琰 (ca. 454-?) in his book *Ming Hsiang Chi* 冥祥記 (Records of miracle signs) in the late fifth century. An *i* image of Sākyamuni had been painted for King Udyāna—an image just like one that had appeared in the king's dream. Ōmura wrote:

The phrase "an *i* image" is a difficult one to render with absolute sureness. *I* has in ordinary usage such meanings as "to depend on" or "to lean on." In later Buddhist terminology it came to refer to a figure seated with legs down in European fashion (doubted-less by borrowing from the homophone *i*, ... that means "chair") I assume that the same sense was intended here; as it probably was in the Chin entry II, which characterizes two images by contrasting adjectives, on *i*, the other standard term for "squatting." If so its use casts a first doubt on the dream-and-embassy story, since such a pose became in India only in the fourth or fifth century. The question is complicated by the fact that in another version of the tale, included in the sixth century history Northern Wei dynasty, the figure is called a standing one. (The adjective *i*, inverted to describe an unfamiliar seated position and never widely used until its revival by modern Japanese scholars, seems to have been forgotten in the middle ages. Thus when the dream story was told once more in the *Fo Tsu T'ung Chi* of 1269, the author could explain *i* only by relying on the other, familiar adjective used in the Wei history; and so in a footnote advised that it meant "standing.")⁵⁷

In this passage Ōmura shows his knowledge of European culture while making connections between early Chinese examples of Buddhist sculpture and the research of modern Japanese scholars. Unlike Okakura's idea of Japan as the repository of all Asian culture, Ōmura's view of a unitary Asia did not give precedence to Japan. Instead, he positioned the country as a cultural intermediary between Asian and Western artistic traditions. Furthermore, he aimed to present a whole picture of a work's origins and significance by giving as much recognition to its original

⁵⁷ Alexander Coburn Soper, "Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China," *Artibus Asiae*, supplementum 19 (1959): 2, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1522597>.

context and meaning as to its place in contemporary Japanese historiography. In the introduction to his translation of *Shina bijutsushi*, Alexander Coburn Soper wrote:

This book remains unique, even so, as an anthology of source material on Chinese sculpture, an inexhaustible mine of quotations from text or inscriptions, usually contemporary with monuments themselves. The great number of sources cited bespeaks of an astonishing degree of familiarity with Chinese literature. Hardly less remarkable is the evidence given on every page of the author's tireless diligence and accuracy.⁵⁸

Using the information and data he gathered, Ōmura's idea that Chinese art history and Japanese art history were commensurate later formed the basis for his "Concise History of Oriental Art" course at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, in which he aimed to present a holistic view of Asian art history that took into account a combination of Japanese and Chinese history.

In *Shina bijutsushi*, Ōmura also used images of Chinese ancient texts as data to establish the transmission of Buddhism and its iconographic images from India to China. In one instance he found a record left by a Chinese monk, Sung Yün 宋雲 whose travels began around 518 CE and who returned to the capital Luoyang around 522 CE, about the healing power of gold-leafing on a Buddha sculpture the monk saw in India while on a pilgrimage. Ōmura described the finding:

Our source here is the Northern Wei pilgrim Sung Yün. In the kingdom of Khotan he saw a gilded image, *chin hsiang*, that worked miracles of healing. Its curative powers were stimulated by pasting the second *chin po*—here certainly gold leaf—to whatever parts of its body corresponded to the place where the suppliant felt pain. Again at the old Gandharan capital of Puruspura he found a temple of a great many stone images, "very beautifully adorned ... their bodies covered with *chin po*, so that they dazzled the observers' eyes."⁵⁹

What is interesting is that while writing about the transmission of Buddhism from India to China, Ōmura suggested in *Shina bijutsushi* that the Greco-Roman and the ancient Chinese might have

⁵⁸ Soper, "Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China," xi.

⁵⁹ Soper, "Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China," 254.

used the same techniques in their applications of *chin po*, gold-leaf, or shared very similar methods. In a chapter under the subtitle of “Materials,” he stated:

I don't know any textual evidence that show how the Chinese sculptors of the Six Dynasty applied their gold-leaf to a stone core; perhaps they had learned to use the same white of egg as an adhesive that is recommended in Pliny's “Natural History.” That they employed an amalgam of mercury in gilding their bronzes, in something like the way Pliny describes may be inferred from the methodical records kept by the Japanese in making their colossal Daibutsu at Nara, in the mid-eighth century; there mercury is listed along with copper, tin, and bronze, as the chief ingredients.⁶⁰

This shows not only Ōmura's extensive knowledge of Eastern and Western traditions but, more significantly, how he relates ancient China to Rome by way of Japan. Although he proposed a Sinocentric history because China's history is several thousand years older than Japan's, it was important to relate the ancient culture to scholarship outside the country. In this instance, the Japanese scholar established a nationalistic focus by placing Japan in the center of both traditions.

Naitō Konan: Finding “Modernity” in Literati Painting

In the early twentieth century Naitō Konan was one of the pioneering Sinologists of Oriental studies at a time when it was just becoming a formal academic discipline at Kyoto Imperial University. With an early education in Chinese learning (*kangaku* 漢學), he became a leading scholar who wrote several comprehensive books on the history of China before the Second World War.⁶¹ He also encouraged his peers to gain a broad understanding of Chinese cultural history and the country's complex societal changes during the dynastic eras. In his opinion,

⁶⁰ Soper, “Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China,” 254.

⁶¹ Joshua A. Fogel, “Preface,” in *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naitō Konan (1866-1934)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), xv.

China and Japan were linked culturally.⁶² Therefore, to establish a cohesive history of the two cultures required a deep study of China's past. As Hisayuki Miyakawa, a scholar of Naitō's work, pointed out, "Japan is two thousand years old, only half the age of China, and an historian who would divide history into ancient, medieval and modern ages must take this into account. Then the two corresponding periods in the histories of the two countries will be seen to have their own content, different in some respects and similar in others."⁶³

It was only around 1930 that Eastern art history (*Tōyō bijutsu shi* 東洋美術史) became an academic subject in major universities in Japan.⁶⁴ Naitō began his lectures and writings on Chinese art and paintings in the 1920s. A translation of the complete works remains unavailable, except for mentions and references of a partial text in Joshua Fogel's *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naitō Konan (1886-1934)*, discussed in relation to Naitō's influential periodization theory.⁶⁵ Another resource is "(Re-)Canonizing Literati Painting in the Early Twentieth Century: The Kyoto Circle," by Tamaki Maeda, which discusses Naitō's connection with Luo Zhenyu.⁶⁶ A book chapter by Aida Y. Wong on the topic of nationalism and the writing of new histories mentions Naitō; in addition, Wong's essay on Naitō's contribution to Chinese art history in Fogel's edited volume *Crossing the Yellow Sea: Sino Japanese Cultural Contacts 1600-1950* touches on a series of Chinese art lectures the sinologist gave during the 1920s.⁶⁷ Although most of these sources provide insightful information on the sinologist's works on Chinese art and art history, they lean more toward biographical descriptions than in-depth analysis.

⁶² Fogel, "Preface," xxii.

⁶³ Hisayuki Miyakawa, "An Outline of the Naitō Hypothesis and Its Effects on Japanese Studies of China," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (1955): 536.

⁶⁴ Aida Y. Wong, "The East, Nationalism, and Taishō Democracy: Naitō Konan's History of Chinese Painting," in *Crossing the Yellow Sea: Sino-Japanese Cultural Contacts 1600-1950*, ed. Joshua Fogel (Norwalk: EastBridge, 2007), 282.

⁶⁵ A brief section on art is included in Fogel, *Politics and Sinology*, 197-98.

⁶⁶ Tamaki Maeda, "(Re-)Canonizing Literati Painting," 223-27.

⁶⁷ Wong, "The East, Nationalism, and Taishō Democracy," 281-96.

According to Wong's essay "The East, Nationalism, and Taishō Democracy: Naitō Konan's History of Chinese Painting," in the 1920s Naitō lectured and wrote about Chinese paintings mostly based on Luo's second migration of paintings into Japan, with particular focus on the pre-Han, Tang, and Five Dynasties. Although this would appear to restrict Naitō's scope of study by overlooking the Chinese painting already in Japan, this new collection contained works by a large number of notable literati and canonical masters much valued in China. On Naitō's enthusiasm for these paintings Wong pointed out,

Naitō's zeal for the "new importation" did not simply evolve passively with the greater availability of Chinese works on the market. He was instrumental in raising the Japanese collectors' awareness of these works and in educating them about their value. Therefore, the "new importation," to some extent, were reflections of his own cultural clout.⁶⁸

In this regard, the sinologist associated the literati tradition of free expression without aspiring to realism and precision as the emergence of modern qualities in Chinese arts and culture. That he became so interested in the "new importation" while shunning the Chinese paintings already in Japan could be due to his scholarly interest in the cultural and historic link between the development of Chinese culture and Chinese civilization. In his "History of Chinese Painting" in 1928, he wrote: "Chinese culture underwent a thorough change from the Late-Tang and Five Dynasties. Social conditions particularly saw extraordinary change, remarkably consistent with changes in art. Changes in culture do not necessarily occur at the same time as all [social] transformations, but these social conditions and art were remarkably in unison."⁶⁹ Also, according to Naitō, from late Tang to early Sung, China saw the decline of aristocracy and the demand for decorative paintings. With this change emerged a new school of painting, literati

⁶⁸ Wong, "The East, Nationalism, and Taishō Democracy," 290.

⁶⁹ Joshua A. Fogel, "Further Perspectives on the T'ang-Sung Periodization," 197-98.

paintings. These works created by scholars and nonprofessional painters focused on the freedom of expression. Their often loose brushwork depicted mountainous landscapes as an abstract form evoking the mood of the artist.

According to his periodization theory, Naitō deemed the Song period (960-1279) the golden age of artistic development because this was when China entered its “modern age.” Posthumously published in 1949, *Shina shigaku shi* 支那史學史 (History of Chinese historiography), edited by his son Naitō Torajirō, included lectures his father gave during the 1920s and presented the sinologist’s reestablished definition of “modern” in terms of cultural growth and societal change.⁷⁰ This idea later influenced leading Chinese revolutionary scholars and art historians such as Liang Qichao⁷¹ and Zheng Wuchang.⁷² Naitō argued against the idea that the modern period began with the arrival of the Portuguese in sixteenth-century Asia. Furthermore, he insisted, it was not the exposure to Europeans that prompted modernization in China and Japan.⁷³ Naitō thus also denied that it was only after the First Opium War (1839-1842) that China began modernizing. Instead, he proposed that China’s modern period began during the Song dynasty. He pointed out that it was during the Song that scholars began to be unrestricted to traditional interpretations of Confucian thought, and amateur and literati paintings of landscapes with Confucian and Taoist morals painted in calligraphy became prevalent.⁷⁴

For Naitō, Chinese artistic development was closely tied to social change. According to Fogel’s analysis, “from the Five dynasties on, Naitō claimed, the individual artists laid greater

⁷⁰ Hisayuki Miyakawa, “An Outline of the Naitō Hypothesis,” 537.

⁷¹ Joshua Fogel, “Indigenous Reform,” 90-91.

⁷² Kuiyi Shen and Julia F. Andrews, “The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World: The Construction of Chinese Art History as a Modern Field,” *Twentieth-Century Asia* 32, no.1 (2006): 27, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233690204>.

⁷³ Hisayuki Miyakawa, “An Outline of the Naitō Hypothesis,” 533.

⁷⁴ Joshua Fogel, “Tang Sung Periodization,” 197-98.

emphasis on the free expression of ideas in art with less stress on received forms.”⁷⁵ In Naitō’s analysis of Chinese history, it was after the Tang dynasty (618-907) and the Five Dynasties (907-960) periods that the ruling class began to integrate people of humble origins into society. It was also the time of greater social mobility, when people outside the aristocratic lineage could rise and rule. His definition of “modern” was tied to his views on social equality and the formation of democracy versus autocracy. Hisayuki Miyakawa explained this theory in an essay titled “An Outline of the Naitō Hypothesis and Its Effects on Japanese Studies of China”:

In ancient times the monarch did not have absolute power of the aristocrats, even in the Ch’in-Han period, in which there are aspects of both monarchism and democracy. ... Emperor who rose from obscurity fabricated genealogies in order to claim the prestige of aristocratic descent. ... But respect of pedigree was swept away during the late T’ang and Five Dynasties when military leaders arose from the common soldiery. ... Even the position of emperor could be passed on to an adopted son. ... [B]y the absolute power of the emperor who regarded “all under heaven” as his patrimony, by the irresponsibility of officialdom, by the increase in commoners’ rights.⁷⁶

Furthermore, Naitō deemed “modern” as a form of cultural and societal change that occurred under the rule of a new emperor. This was based on his studies of China’s history. He observed that when new emperors moved the location of their capital, its local culture also flourished with unique characteristics reflective of its time. This “center-shifting” analysis was based on his extensive research of classical Chinese texts. Naitō devoted much of his life to studying the literature left by Chinese scholars such as Chao I 趙翼 (1727-1814). On the idea of moving cultural centers, Fogel wrote:

Naitō relied heavily on Chao I’s analysis of the reasons for the movement of the Chinese capital from Ch’ang-an, which according to Chao were caused by changes in the capital’s *ti-ch’i* (spirit of local conditions). When the *ti-ch’i* reached a peak, the capital had to move (*sheng chi pi pien*). By following Chao I’s analysis for the Chou and T’ang dynasties when the capital flourished at Ch’ang-

⁷⁵ Joshua Fogel, “Tang Sung Periodization,” 197.

⁷⁶ Hisayuki Miyakawa, “An Outline of the Naitō Hypothesis,” 537-38.

an, and carrying the analysis into Sung and Ming eras, Naitō demonstrated the divergence of political and cultural centers in China.⁷⁷

Naitō's "center-shifting" theory also proposed that modern Japanese historiography should raise the status and value of East Asian history by presenting this fact, precisely because it showed how cultural progress in ancient China was comparable to that of Europe.

Naitō likened the stages of a nation's cultural development to a human's lifetime, such as infancy, youth, maturity, and senescence.⁷⁸ In his view, China, since its cultural golden age during the Tang dynasty, had gradually grown old, and its historiography likewise met a stagnant period under despotism. He thus claimed that it was up to China's younger kin, Japan, to take on the mission of solidifying the scholarship of *tōyōshi*. However, he dismissed work by Japanese who traveled abroad and brought back with them Western understandings of cultural history. Instead, he argued for a Sinocentric view that discredited European knowledge production as European powers expanded their geopolitical influence into Asia. Boldly claiming that Japanese scholars were of Chinese origin, he called for "new thought" in ancient historiography.⁷⁹

Naitō was a nationalist. He believed in the political hierarchical order that placed Japan as the center of East Asian culture. In his scholarship, he treated China as a culture rather than a nation. He studied China as *Shina*, a name used before the Meiji Restoration.⁸⁰ Based on his own "center-shift" theory, Naitō argued that in the twentieth century China would no longer be the center of culture. As Wong wrote:

Naitō's morbid assessment sprang from his belief in Japan's rightful leadership in Asia. He saw Chinese resistance to Japan's expanding power as a battle against history. According to him, the center of Chinese culture was historically unstable; through the ages it had shifted from the central region to the south and to the east.

⁷⁷ Joshua A. Fogel, "To Reform China: Naitō Konan's Formative Years in the Meiji Press," *Modern Asia Studies* 16, no. 3 (1982): 359-60, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/312113>.

⁷⁸ Hisayuki Miyakawa, "An Outline of the Naitō Hypothesis," 536.

⁷⁹ Joshua A. Fogel, "To Reform China," 360-61.

⁸⁰ See note 26.

Naitō felt it would hardly be surprising that the next center should be Japan. His views were crystalized into a theory of “shifting center of Eastern culture,” propounded in his famous essay *Shin Shina ron* 新支那論 (On the new China) of 1924.⁸¹

Naitō’s then controversial theories defined modernity in terms of the societal change that gradually shifted from being under the stronghold of a single ruler to democracy in which one could rise to power based on meritocracy, thus rendering the so-called ancient period in East Asia modern in this new framework. The “modern” period of world history began during the Song era, according to Naitō. His *shina* thus existed in antiquity. Its culture had matured before Japan’s; as a younger country, Japan had a mission to formulate the modern representation of China’s cultural heritage. Thus Naitō, like the others profiled in this chapter, occupied an ambiguous position in the cultural politics of East Asia, simultaneously challenging European narratives about the place of Asia in world history and relegating the place of China in the contemporary world to that of a residually influential ancient culture, barely a modern state, lacking the agency to satisfactorily represent itself.

China as Japan’s Ideal Cultural Origin

The formulation of Chinese art history in twentieth-century Japan centered on the theme of nationalism. Ōmura positioned Japan as the cultural link between Eastern and Western traditions in his studies of early Chinese Buddhist art. With the example of *chin-po*, gold-leaf application, he drew a parallel in the development of the artistic technique with Japan as the intermediary between China and Europe. In *Ideal of the East*, Okakura proudly presented Japan as the repository of all Asian heritage. Deeming Japan as China’s cultural heir, he called for a unified

⁸¹ Wong, “The East, Nationalism, and Taishō Democracy,” 299.

Asia with Japan as its center. Based on Luo's second migration of Chinese paintings into Japan during the early twentieth century, Okakura and Naitō worked within a limited scope of works. In the case of Naitō, as contemporary scholars like Wong have pointed out, many of the works in his writing on Chinese painting were later identified as imitations and copies.⁸² Nonetheless, his periodization theory defining Sung as the beginning of China's modern era established parity between Chinese history and European history. By claiming that China modernized itself before its contact with the West, Naitō challenged Eurocentric historiography that deemed Asia to be inferior.

By looking to China's cultural past, Japanese scholars traced the origins of their own country's heritage. This became a way for Japanese intellectuals to develop ideological narratives about their own national history. On the cultural relationship of mid-Meiji Japan and China, Fogel wrote:

In seeking the correct path for Japan in the future, all thinkers, whatever their orientations, considered China's fate and the Chinese historical and cultural traditions to be serious issues in the present day. Because of the great cultural debt Japan owed to China, whether considered a boon or detriment in the early Meiji era, assessment of the Chinese cultural tradition, its influence on Japan, and the contemporary fate of the country that had produced it were all linked in a crucial way.⁸³

Yet Fogel also points out that during "the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 Japan's rapid and humiliating defeat of China revealed that, although China may have been a cultural giant, politically and militarily she was a dwarf."⁸⁴ Japanese intellectuals saw China as *shina*, opposed to *chūgoku*. In their view, China was no longer the "Middle Kingdom," as it once was the center of culture but was now a country to be treated as a region of antiquity rather than a modern state.

⁸² Wong, "The East, Nationalism, and Taishō Democracy," 299-300.

⁸³ Fogel, "Travelers to China and Reformers," 16.

⁸⁴ Fogel, "Travelers to China and Reformers," 16.

The way in which China became a culture rather than a nation can be seen to have been coproduced by the formulation of Japan's Chinese art history. Furthermore, their scholarship derived from a strange mix of genuine admiration for ancient Chinese culture, combined with Japan's nationalistic sentiments about the centrality of Japan in developing knowledge while preserving Asia's cultural heritage in the twentieth century.

Chapter 3: The Writing of Chinese Art History in the Republic of China

The demise of over two thousand years of imperial rule in China ended with the establishment of the Republic of China. This abrupt regime transition and the country's effort to eradicate foreign occupation began a period of intense and earnest self-examination that included the reexamination of China's cultural past. To establish a new national identity, scholars began to think about how best to represent the country's cultural heritage in competition with the West.

Intellectuals began to develop art history as an academic discipline to generate national sentiment and serve nation-building. Moving away from the long Chinese tradition of "annals-biography," based on a loose chronology of the works with descriptions of the "lives" of the artists, art historians such as Zheng Wuchang and Teng Gu adopted a methodology of writing art history by relating historical events to artistic production. No longer satisfied with just listing painters and their subject matter, Zheng took into account the social and political climates in which art production had flourished. Teng embarked on the mission to write a more accurate version of Chinese art history. He was dissatisfied with the Western scholarship on Chinese art he had encountered and believed that works such as *Chinese Art (L'art chinois)* by Maurice Paléologue (1859–1944) and *Chinese Art* by the English scholar Stephen W. Bushell simply offered generalizations that did not take into account the stylistic changes between Chinese dynastic eras. Teng also rejected the Eurocentric method of dividing Chinese art into periods defined by the absence or presence of foreign influence, as implemented by Friedrich Hirth (1845–1927) in his book *Chinese Art under Foreign Influence (Über fremde Einflüsse in der chinesischen Kunst, 1896)*.⁸⁵ Thereafter the writing of art history would become isomorphic to

⁸⁵ Kuiyi Shen, "The Japanese Impact on the Construction of Chinese Art History as a Modern Field: A Case Study of Teng Gu and Fu Baoshi," in *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 232.

broader efforts in postimperial China to produce a genealogy of the nation's values that would legitimize and be legitimized by the new Republic of China.

Because European art historians held the medium of painting to be the model and standard for other mediums, modern Chinese historians also focused on this medium in order to draw direct comparisons between European and Chinese painting, with which to assess China's artistic development. In his introduction, for example, Zheng used Italian Renaissance painting as the counterpart to Chinese classical painting.⁸⁶ He wrote: "There are two systems of painting in the world: Western painting, born on the Italian peninsula; and Eastern, originating in China, then absorbing West Asian, especially Indian elements, and then spreading to Japan and Korea. Italy is the mother of Occidental Painting (西畫) and China is the ancestor of Oriental Painting (東畫). This is the position of our nation's *guohua* (國畫) in world art history."⁸⁷ In this regard, Zheng compared the position of Chinese painting relative to the whole canon of Asian art with that of Italian painting relative to European art.

Key examples of the historical records of paintings that modern art scholars were able to consult were those of Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (815–877), a Tang-dynasty scholar-official who was also a prolific painter, calligrapher, and collector. Zhang had written the *Records of Celebrated Paintings through the Ages* (*Lidai minghuaji* 歷代名畫記), an inventory of paintings in his private collection. Consisting of ten volumes (*juan* 卷) and covering a period of roughly five hundred years before the Tang dynasty, this work contains profiles of roughly 370

⁸⁶ Zheng Wuchang, *Zhongguo huaxue quanshi* 中國畫學全史 (Complete history of Chinese painting) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1929; Shanghai: Shanghai Fine Arts Publisher, 2017), 1.

⁸⁷ Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, "The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World: The Construction of Chinese Art as a Modern Field," *Twentieth-Century China* 32, no. 1 (November 1, 2006): 25, <https://doi.org/10.1179/tcc.2006.32.1.4>. Also see Zheng Wuchang, *Zhongguo huaxue quanshi*, 1.

painters.⁸⁸ For each artist, Zhang gave a brief biographical description and ranked their works according to a three-tiered hierarchy of top, medium, and bottom. To this, Zhang dedicated six of the ten volumes, with the remaining four volumes focusing on subject matter, style, and collectors' seals.⁸⁹

This same tradition of writing about paintings according to style and subject matter, and in search of stylistic continuity and differences, continued into the Song dynasty (960-1279). Two notable works were *Records of Paintings Seen or Heard of* (*Tuhua jianwen zhi* 圖畫見聞志)⁹⁰ by Guo Ruoxu 郭若虛 (active 1050) in 1075 and *Lineages of Painting* (*Huaji* 畫記) by Deng Chun 鄧椿 (active 1150) in 1167. Upon realizing that no additional art history had been written since Zhang's *Records of Celebrated Paintings through the Ages*, Guo, who was born into a high official family, began his writing based on the works in his own private collection, later expanding to works held in collections by his inner circle of friends. His *Records of Paintings Seen or Heard of* covers works made between 841 and 1074. Deng's *Lineages of Painting* includes works from the twelfth century.⁹¹

Like Zhang Yanyuan's records produced during the Tang dynasty, these works by Guo Ruoxu and Deng Chun listed important artists and provided commentaries on their work, without following a defined chronological order or uniform categorization of paintings.⁹² Switching between categories of artists, locations, and subject matter, these records of famous Chinese paintings, though in search of stylistic continuity and differences, did not take into consideration

⁸⁸ Aida Yuen Wong, "The Survey Text as Nationalist Apparatus," in *Parting of the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National Style Painting in Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 36.

⁸⁹ Wong, "The Survey Text as Nationalist Apparatus," 37.

⁹⁰ Translations of this work's title vary. According to Oxford Art Online, it is *Experiences of Painting*. The version I chose is taken from Wong's *Parting of the Mists*, 36, in which Wong translates the title as *Records of Paintings Seen or Heard of*.

⁹¹ Wong, "The Survey Text as Nationalist Apparatus," 37-38.

⁹² Wong, "The Survey Text as Nationalist Apparatus," 38.

the social and cultural climates under which the works had been made. It was not until millennia later that scholars began to treat the history of art as national history. Early twentieth-century intellectuals in postimperial China thought that these traditional narratives impaired the ideal of the nation because they were ineffective in establishing the nation's continuous progress over time.

By the early twentieth century, after the demise of Qing dynasty, Chinese art scholars looked to Japan as a source of inspiration for rising up against Western domination because Japan had already established itself as one of the strongest nations in Asia. Despite the political and military battles between the two countries, on the artistic and literary scene scholars in China and Japan remained collegial, expressing mutual admiration for each other's cultures and exchanging knowledge. A core of Chinese reformers who were influential in the development of nationalist histories of Chinese art had studied abroad in Japan and in Germany. It was not until Japan's military invasion and occupation of Manchuria in 1935 and the start of the second Sino-Japanese War two years later that intellectuals stopped making public reference to Japanese scholarship. By then, the new generation of Chinese scholars saw in such scholarship that China was treated not as a separate country but as an early stage in Japan's own development as a modern world power.⁹³

But before the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War, China looked to Japan as a model for modernization. At this time, China's own scholarly traditions came under scrutiny as part of sweeping efforts at transformation based on the Japanese and Western models. Upon returning to China, scholars and intellectuals such as Liang Qichao, Cai Yuanpei, and Di

⁹³ Andrews and Shen, "The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World," 30-31. Also see chapter 2.

Baoxian, along with Teng Gu and Zheng Wuchang, began reexamining Chinese culture (*wenhua*) as an avenue toward the building of a new national identity.

Liang Qichao was among the first late-Qing scholars to look critically at the Chinese history texts produced before the establishment of the new Republic of China. Using ideas from social Darwinian theory, he advocated for the writing of history to evolve around the cultural and social achievements of the people rather than the emperors and elites.⁹⁴ In addition, Liang promoted public cultivation to strengthen the morals of the people. From 1902 to 1905 in Yokohama, he published a fortnightly journal called *Renewing of People* (*Xinmin congbao* 新民叢報).⁹⁵ He asserted that the modern rebirth of a nation depended on the unity of its people and the cultivation of a public consciousness based on nationalism.

The first minister of education during China's early Republican era, Cai Yuanpei, embraced the Kantian theory of aesthetics and emphasized its importance in raising public morale. When Cai studied philosophy in Leipzig, he wrote about Kant, and after returning in 1911 he used what he learned to challenge the traditional Confucian learning that placed society, government, and family over the individual; he instead proposed that the enlightenment of the individual should precede the enlightenment of society. As minister of education from 1912 to 1913, he published an essay that strongly favored public art and aesthetic education (*meiyu* 美育). He wrote:

Moral education is to make people work for mutual protection and mutual preservation, and all this is instrumental in breaking the habit of scheming for one's own interest and in eradicating the (sense of) difference between you and me. From this, people can progress to the promotion of education in the light of reality. ... The answer is, through aesthetic education [or, education for artistic appreciation, *mei-kan chih chiao-yü*]. *Mei-kan* is a

⁹⁴ Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, eds., "Liang Qichao," in *Sources of Chinese Tradition from 1600 through the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 287-88.

⁹⁵ de Bary and Lufrano, "Liang Qichao," 288-89.

conception of combining beauty and solemnity and its bridge between the phenomenal world and the world of reality. This concept was originated by Kant. ... As for the fine arts, such phenomena are used as sources of inspiration, [and] make those who look at representations of them have no other feeling than that of artistic appreciation.⁹⁶

While Cai promoted aesthetic education, another intellectual, Di Baoxian, sought to promote heritage preservation as a way of strengthening China's national identity. One of the nation-building strategies he learned from Japan was the idea of preserving "national essence." This notion was among the first objects of focus for a group of intellectuals like him preoccupied with the promotion of culture. Di's diaries are an example of this kind of thinking in relation to developments in the representation of Chinese art history. In 1931, on a trip to Japan and upon seeing that country's nationalistic efforts toward cultural preservation, Di wrote in his journal:

When it came to my failure (of my rebellious political activities) and my traveling east (to Japan), I examined how in Japan they preserved their national essence [*guocui*] for the present state of affairs. ... Consequently, I set forth in my mind to plan to take hold of famous artistic traces within the nation, searched them out and arranged them and photo-lithographically published them. It was nearly a matter of taking hidden treasures and making them public for the people of the nation.⁹⁷

Di was the founder of one of China's first publishing houses at the turn of the century, the Youzheng Press 有正書局, which in 1908 published a pioneering journal of Chinese painting and antiquity.

This view of cultural preservation became instrumental for carrying out Di's own nationalistic mission to modernize China. According to what Di saw in Japan, by preserving what was unique in Japanese and Asian culture, Japan's elites had transformed their country into

⁹⁶ Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank, "Doc. 57. Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei's Views on the Aims of Education, 1912," in *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 236-37.

⁹⁷ Richard Vinograd, "Patrimonies in Press: Art Publishing, Cultural Politics, and Canon Construction in the Career of Di Baoxian," in *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 256.

a modern nation with a rich cultural heritage comparable to those of its Western counterparts. Forging a public space for what was once seen as a pastime activity reserved for elite connoisseurs, Di used the printing technology he learned in Japan and through his own publishing company to reproduce classical Chinese paintings in books and periodicals for wide distribution and mass consumption.

Echoing Liang Qichao's idea of cultivating a public consciousness of nationalism, Teng Gu wrote two books on Chinese art history, *Concise History of Chinese Art* (*Zhongguo meishu xiaoshi* 中國美術小史) and *A History of Tang and Song Painting* (*Tang-Song huihua shi* 唐宋繪畫史), both aimed at a general readership. Rather than using the traditional Chinese style of writing accessible mainly to an orbit of educated scholars, Teng chose to write about classical painting in vernacular Chinese in a way that the general public could easily grasp. Both Liang Qichao and literary reformer Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962), a U.S.-educated professor at Peking University, also promoted the use of the modern vernacular. In 1917, on the impetus behind the literary reform, Hu wrote:

First, there is no distinction between “us” and “them” in this movement. The vernacular style not only is an instrument for “enlightening the people’s minds,” but also is the only instrument for the creation of Chinese literature. The vernacular style is not a bone fit only to feed the underdog, but a treasure which the people of the entire country should appreciate. Secondly, this movement honestly attacks the authority of the classical style, and regards it as “dead literature.”⁹⁸

Although Hu's statement called the classical style “dead,” this was not meant as a complete rejection of tradition. With the modern vernacular, Teng hoped to make literature and art

⁹⁸ Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank, “Doc. 63. Hu Shih, ‘On the Literary Revolution,’ 1922,” in *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 256.

accessible to a general public.⁹⁹ For him, vernacular Chinese was emblematic of the country's struggles and tensions between old and new worldviews. However, Teng did not seek to abandon the past but wanted to find ways to update the classics and thereby enable them to enter more effectively into the collective consciousness. Becoming the second minister of education just a year after Cai Yuanpei held the position from 1912 to 1913, Teng supported Cai's idea of broadening the appreciation for Chinese cultural heritage and art.

Finally, by making critiques of existing Chinese art historiography the basis for a new kind of art history writing in China, Zheng Wuchang sought to make correlations between art and society in the development of China from ancient civilization to modern nation-state. The Chinese art scholar began to formulate a new history of Chinese art to reflect the teleologies of a broader nationalist movement aimed at the development of a nativized Chinese national essence (*guocui* 國粹). Through examination of Japan's scholarship of Chinese art history, he formulated a modern art history aimed at reclaiming the country's own national identity.

Zheng Wuchang: Attributing Social Meaning to Production of Art

After spending five years working on the book, in 1929 Zheng Wuchang published *A Complete History of Chinese Painting* (*Zhongguo huaxue quanshi* 中國畫學全史). This work remains today one of the most significant early twentieth-century contributions to the study of Chinese art history. In the introduction Zheng adopted a strong nationalistic tone, advocating that his readers recognize the important position that Chinese painting occupies in world art history.¹⁰⁰ He urged

⁹⁹ Teng and Fairbank, "Doc. 63."

¹⁰⁰ Andrews and Shen, "The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World," 25. Also see Zheng, *Zhongguo huaxue quanshi*, 1.

his fellow citizens to take pride in China's high artistic achievements by reclaiming scholarly authority over the writing of Chinese art history. On his method and purpose, he stated:

Collect, synthesize, organize chronologically, and use scientific methods to distinguish the origins of the schools and their relationship between the rise and fall of politics and religion. When [Bertrand] Russell and [Rabindranath] Tagore visited China, they asked about Chinese art history and no one could answer. Recently, Japanese and foreign scholars have enthusiastically studied Chinese painting, and published their scholarships in books and periodicals, which is more than Chinese scholars have done. Fujioka Sakutarō's *Kinsei kaiga shi* (History of early modern painting) and Ōmura Seigai's *Bunjinga no Kenkyū* (Research on literati painting) are both well-organized and documented. Nakamura Fusetsu and Oga Seiun's *Shina kaigashi* (History of Chinese painting) was published in 1913.¹⁰¹

Zheng's nationalistic tone and his comparison of foreign scholarship on Chinese art history with the lack of Chinese scholarship on the subject was typical of scholars in his generation who witnessed the outbreak of the May Fourth Movement. May Fourth was an important cultural movement that took place in 1919, during which university students and intellectuals marched in the streets of Beijing to protest against the reactionary Republican government. The signing of the Versailles Treaty at the end of World War I agitated people's discontent with the government. The treaty granted Germany territorial rights over Shandong province, and after Germany's defeat the Germans handed over the territory to Japan.¹⁰² Outraged at the failure of the new government to protect China from foreign domination, revolutionary intellectuals began seeking emancipation from traditional Confucian thinking and sought to learn from intellectuals outside of China about education and social reform.

¹⁰¹ Andrews and Shen, "The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World," 26.

¹⁰² Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank, "The Search for New Principles," in *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 231-34. Also see Milena Doleželová and David Der-Wei Want, "Introduction," in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China's May Fourth Project* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 1-23.

In September 1920 Liang Qichao and Hu Shi founded the Lecture Society (Jiangxue she 講學社) and invited Western intellectuals such as Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, Paul Monroe, and Hans Driesch to speak to Peking University students.¹⁰³ The group was chaired by Liang, who later would reject Western ideas for their focus on materialism devoid of spiritualism after his visit to Europe in the aftermath of the First World War.¹⁰⁴ Bertrand Russell was among the first to be invited to China when the lecture series began in 1920, and Rabindranath Tagore was the final guest, in 1924, when the society dissolved owing to a political disagreement between Hu and Liang. This rift began because initially Hu considered Western ideas useful for the modernization of China, while Liang sought to shun the West for its overemphasis on science and its materialistic culture. The rift explains Liang's choice of Tagore as a speaker. A philosopher as well as a poet, Tagore was asked by his host to lecture on the cultivation of spiritual life and the importance of national cultural heritage as a form of self-strengthening against foreign insults.¹⁰⁵ It is also worth noting that Okakura Tenshin developed his Japanese nationalism in art in tandem with Tagore's philosophy through their friendship in the early 1900s.¹⁰⁶

Around this time, there was also a surge of new translations and books on Chinese art history by Japanese scholars. In 1922 Chen Shizeng published *Studies of Chinese Literati Painting (Zhongguo wen ren hua zhi yan jiu 中國文人畫之研究)*, in which he included his translation of Ōmura Seigai's essay "The Revival of Literati Painting" (Bunjiga no fukko 文人畫

¹⁰³ Li Young-qiang, "Liang Qichao and the Lecturing and Learning Society," *Journal of Heza University* (2006), http://en.cnki.com.cn/Article_en/CJFDTotat-HZSB200606022.htm.

¹⁰⁴ Teng and Fairbank, "The Search for New Principles," 232.

¹⁰⁵ Rabindranath Tagore, "To Students," in *Talks in China: Lectures Delivered in April and May, 1924* (Kolkata: Visva-Bharati Book-Shop, 1925; reprinted New Delhi: Rupa, 2002), 775.

¹⁰⁶ Pekka Korhonen, "Common Culture: Asia Rhetoric in the Beginning of the 20th Century," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 9, no. 3 (2008): 400, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649370802184460>.

之復興).¹⁰⁷ In 1925 Ōmura published *Oriental Art History* (*Tōyō bijutsushi* 東洋美術史), a Chinese translation of which, by Chen Binhe 陳彬龢 (1897–1945) in 1928, became popular among Chinese readers when it appeared in the journal *Japanese Studies* (*Riben yanjiu* 日本研究).¹⁰⁸

Although Zheng Wuchang's *Complete History of Chinese Painting* was a unique publication on Chinese art history of his time, it seems to have modeled its periodization on Japanese examples, several of which Zheng mentions in his introduction. Contemporary scholars have noted the commonalities between his and the Japanese methods of periodization. In “The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World: The Construction of Chinese Art History as a Modern Field,” for example, Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen drew a parallel between Zheng's table of contents, organized according to a chronological periodization, and that of Nakamura Fusetsu 中村不折 (1866–1943) and Oga Seiun's 小鹿青雲 (1876-?) *Shina kaigashi* 支那繪畫史 (History of Chinese painting).¹⁰⁹ They argued that Zheng's foundational periodization theory published in 1929 was similar to this example of Japanese scholarship from 1913, which divided the development of Chinese civilization into three major historical periods: “Early History,” comprising the pre-Han up to the Six Dynasties, “Medieval,” beginning with the Tang and lasting until the Yuan dynasty, and “Early Modern,” starting with the Ming and finishing with the Qing. Zheng's periodization listed the dynasties according to the same chronology, though it further divided the periods into four, according to the cultural functions of the objects, to

¹⁰⁷ Chen Shizeng, *Zhongguo wenren hua zhi yanjiu* 中國文人畫之研究 (Research in Chinese literati painting), Archive of York University, Toronto, <https://archive.org/details/zhongguowenrenhu00chen>; originally published in 1922.

¹⁰⁸ Aida Yuen Wong, “Nationalism and the Writing of New Histories,” in *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 39.

¹⁰⁹ Andrews and Shen, “The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World,” 26-27.

highlight societal progression. In this sense, Zheng used the Japanese periodization only as a foundation for its overall chronological order, adding his own theory about the objects' social meaning.¹¹⁰

According to Zheng, each dynastic period produced paintings that reflected the artistic and social value of their time. As China developed from an ancient civilization to a modern nation, each period represented a change in the social function of art. According to Zheng's mapping of these changes, the first phase, beginning in prehistory before the Xia (before ca. 2000 BCE), was the "functional period" (*shiyong* 實用); the second, the "ritual period" (*lijiao* 禮教), extended from the Xia to the Han (200 CE); the third, the "religious period" (*zongjiaohua* 宗教教化), encompassed the Six Dynasties (220–589 CE) through the Tang (618–906 CE); and finally, the "literary period" (*wenxuehua* 文學化) spanned from the Song (960–1279) through the Ming (1368–1644) to the end of the Qing (1644–1912).

By adopting the linear periodization method to show how the meaning and value of painting changed with each dynastic period, Zheng aimed to show the development of painting from something functional to a medium of self-expression. Designating the Song dynasty as the beginning of the "literary period," Zheng also marked it as the beginning of individual artistic expression freed from practical and functional concerns, which for him meant that it was the period of highest human achievement.¹¹¹ For him, it was during the Song dynasty that painting became associated with individual expressions of literary, poetic, and artistic freedom and that senses of self-cultivation and individual subjecthood emerged. The flourishing of "literati

¹¹⁰ Andrews and Shen, "The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World," 26-27.

¹¹¹ Zheng Wuchang 郑午昌, "Song zhi huaxue 宋之畫學" (Study of Song painting), in *Zhongguo huaxue quanshi* 中國畫學全史 (Complete history of Chinese painting) (Shanghai: Zhonghua Books, 1929; reprinted Shanghai: Shanghai Fine Arts Publishing, 2017), 190.

painting” was the height of Chinese cultural heritage, but the tradition withered under Manchu rule during the Qing dynasty. The Four Wangs tradition that came out of the late Ming and early Qing, named for the painters Wang Shimin 王時敏 (1592–1680), Wang Jian 王鑑 (1598–1677), Wang Hui 王翬 (1632-1717), and Wang Yuanqi 王原祁 (1642–1715), focused on realism and precision in technique with use of vivid colors. Compared to the literati painters who intentionally avoided realism and used only black ink to depict landscape as an expression of inner spiritual sentiment, the Four Wangs were seen as visual symbols of decadence by the modern art historian.

Zheng’s theory also echoed the periodization theory in Naitō Konan’s *Shina shigaku shi* 支那史學史 (History of Chinese historiography), which was a compilation of the Japanese sinologist’s lectures given in the 1920s. According to Naitō, it was during the Song period that scholars began to go beyond traditional interpretations of Confucian thought, and this new freedom from the past encouraged amateur and Literati paintings (*wenren hua* 文人畫) to flourish in China.¹¹² Also, to Naitō, the Song period was the golden age of artistic development because this was when China entered its “modern age.” He argued that “modern” began when there was social mobility for commoners rising into the ruling class and, in painting, when individuality became celebrated as freedom in artistic expression.¹¹³ It may not be entirely surprising that the Chinese and the Japanese both identified the Song as a period when traditionalism in the arts shifted to individualism. For Chinese revolutionary intellectuals, including Zheng, this view ran counter to the idea that the modern period began with the arrival

¹¹² Joshua Fogel, “Tang Sung Periodization,” in *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naitō Konan (1866-1934)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 197-98.

¹¹³ See chapter 2. Also see Hisayuki Miyakawa, “An Outline of the Naitō Hypothesis and Its Effects on Japanese Studies of China,” *Far Eastern Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (1955): 537-38.

of Europeans during the first Opium War (1839–1842). In any case, commonalities in Chinese and Japanese history of Chinese art also should be understood as the much broader effort to appropriate Japanese nation-building strategies in all areas of social reform.

Zheng's principles for his subcategories were a response to early publications, which he deemed disappointing. Criticizing such publications for their lack of organization and consideration of context, he wrote:

When you look over all the publications, and categorize them, some are limited to one place or one period, or one person, or one thing, or are biased toward one school or method. Or they just list [artists'] names and locations, and do not consider them in the context of their own times, or just list theories from all periods, without detailing their origins in particular schools of painting. ... There are many writings, each with its own limitations and value.¹¹⁴

Zheng outlined how he organized his research documents. He used three types of documentation—"artists' biography," "records of paintings," and "theory and criticism"—to construct four subcategories: "artists" (*hua jia* 畫家), "overview" (*gai kuang* 概況), "painting theory" (*hua lun* 畫論), and "collection" (*hua ji* 畫蹟).¹¹⁵ In doing so, he extended the scope of Chinese art history.

In his writing, Zheng referred to classical literati paintings as *guohua* (國畫 Chinese painting). This term literally means "national paintings," a conjunction of the abstract concepts of state and painting. Thus a key aim of *A Complete History of Chinese Painting* was to establish classical Chinese painting as a national treasure, an important part of China's national heritage in the context of its twentieth-century national politics of modernization, and thus an element of

¹¹⁴ Andrews and Shen, "The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World," 25.

¹¹⁵ Zheng, *Zhongguo huaxue quanshi*, 4-5.

statecraft itself. In other words, Zheng aimed to transform *guhua* (古畫 old painting or antique painting) into *guohua*.

Teng Gu: Valuing Paintings, Not Just the Masters

Although Zheng's *Complete History of Chinese Painting* has been considered one of the most comprehensive publications, it was not the first Chinese art history book authored in China. Published in 1926, Teng Gu's *Concise History of Chinese Art* (*Zhongguo meishu xiaoshi* 中國美術小史) is considered by contemporary scholars in both North America and China as "actually the first history of Chinese art authored in China."¹¹⁶ It presented a linear progression in a framework of dynastic periods that Teng organized into four main phases of development, from prehistory to modern. Six years later he published another book, *A History of Tang and Song Painting* (*Tang-Song huihua shi* 唐宋繪畫史), which became one of his best-known works. In this book he appropriated the method of analysis he had encountered from Germany to describe the changes in artistic style and subject matter of Tang and Song paintings. According to Guo Hui, a contemporary art scholar, Teng translated Heinrich Wölfflin's words on the Italian Renaissance from *Die Klassische Kunst* (Classic art) into Chinese:

Usually, when a new style appears, people think that various objects which compose a painting change. However, viewing carefully, [we find that] not only the architecture in the background or the decorations vary, but also the postures of figures are different from former times. Only the new expression reflected by the depiction of the human body and its movement is the core of a new style. Thus, the notion of style carrying this special connotation, compared with its usual usage, is more significant.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Kuiyi Shen, "Concept to Context: The Theoretical Transformation of Ink Painting into China's National Art in the 1920s and 1930s," in *Writing Modern Chinese Art: Historiographic Explorations* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 47.

¹¹⁷ Guo Hui, "From Japan to Europe: Teng Gu's Internationalization of Western Art Historical Ideas," PhD dissertation, Leiden University, 2010, 75, <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/15033/02.pdf?sequence=17>.

Teng's *Concise History of Chinese Art* divided artistic development into four phases: "birth and development" (*shengchang shidai* 生長時代), from prehistory to the Han; "interchange" (*hunjiao shidai* 混交時代), from the Han to the Six Dynasties; "efflorescence" (*changsheng shidai* 昌盛時代), from the Tang through the Song; and "decline" (*chenzhi shidai* 沉滯時代), from the Yuan through the Qing.¹¹⁸ Years later he discovered *Shina no kaiga* 支那の繪畫 (Chinese painting), a work by the Japanese scholar Ise Sen'ichirō 伊勢專一郎 (1891–1948), and was glad to see they shared a similar periodization. According to contemporary scholar Kuiyi Shen, Ise divided Chinese painting into three periods: antiquity (*kodai*), from prehistory to 712; the medieval period (*chūsei*), from 713 to 1320; and the early modern (*kinsei*), from 1321 to the present.¹¹⁹

Teng may have been influenced by the Japanese in his use of dynastic transitions to explain developments in Chinese art, but it was the revolutionary Qing scholar Liang Qichao who inspired him to formulate teleological art history. While in Japan, Teng was in frequent communication with his compatriot in exile as Liang self-exiled to Japan around the late 1890s. They met in the early 1910s, by which time Liang had already become a key figure of inspiration for Chinese students in Japan who were involved in reform activities abroad.

Well versed in Chinese classics but also knowledgeable about Western theories such as Herbert Spencer's social Darwinism,¹²⁰ Liang reformulated Chinese history to focus on the accomplishments of ordinary people and not just of rulers and elites. In a social Darwinian spirit, Liang periodized Chinese history according to three stages of social development.¹²¹ He

¹¹⁸ Shen, "The Japanese Impact on the Construction of Chinese Art History," 231.

¹¹⁹ Shen, "The Japanese Impact on the Construction of Chinese Art History," 233.

¹²⁰ de Bary and Lufano, "Liang Qichao," 300.

¹²¹ Peter Zarrow, "Old Myth into New History: The Building Blocks of Liang Qichao's 'New History,'" *Historiography East & West* 1, no. 2 (2003): 218, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157018603774004502>.

advocated and also highlighted sociocultural shifts to reflect progressive changes in the evolution of Chinese civilization. In her essay “China and ‘Modernity,’ ” Harriet T. Zurndorfer wrote:

By 1901 he [Liang Qichiao] was constructing a history of China as a historical nation among a modern world of nation states. Relying on the conventional schema of “ancient, medieval, modern” so as to overcome the traditional Chinese historiographical focus on the rise and fall of dynastic houses and emperors, Liang’s “Chung-kuo shih hsü-lun” [A Systematic Discussion of Chinese History] formulated another version of China’s path toward “modernity.” The ancient era included the period from the Yellow Emperor (2600 B.C.) through the unification of China by the Ch’in Dynasty in 221 B.C. It was at this time that the Han Chinese secured their borders over other nations (*min-tsu*) or ethnic minorities, such as the Miao. The medieval era extended from the Ch’in to the end of the eighteenth century and is distinguished by China establishing contact with other Asian nations, but often in competition with them over culture and material questions. Within China itself a centralized autocracy developed. In Liang’s schema, China’s modern history began after 1796 when the Ch’ien-lung Emperor died because from that time onward the Chinese “nation,” together with other Asian nations, competed with Western nations. During this last era China itself, the “nation,” would rid itself of this autocracy so that it could more easily contend with these foreign forces.¹²²

In his lifetime, Liang published only essays and never a book on Chinese history.¹²³

However, his theories and ideas, including periodization that marked social shifts, later influenced Teng Gu’s writings on Chinese art history. In the introduction to his *Concise History of Chinese Art*, Teng credited as inspirations Liang’s theory of evolution and his New Historiography that saw China’s history within the framework of a linear, progressive history.¹²⁴ It is possible that Teng wrote his Chinese art history in response to Liang’s focus on the people’s accomplishments, because he chose not to focus on the masters and elites.

¹²² Harriet T. Zurndorfer, “China and ‘Modernity’: The Uses of the Study of Chinese History in the Past and the Present,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40, no. 4 (1997): 473-74, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3632404>.

¹²³ de Bary and Lufrano, “Liang Qichao,” 300.

¹²⁴ Teng Gu, *Tenggu Meishushi lunzhu sanzho* 腾固美术史论着三种 (Teng Gu Chinese art history) (1926; Beijing: Commercial Press, 2011), 3. Also see chapter 1.

By 1929, just three years after publishing his book, Teng was expelled from the Nationalist Party for his ideological clashes with the Nanjing Republican government.¹²⁵ He spent the next few years studying in Germany, graduating from Berlin University (now Humboldt University) in 1935 with a PhD degree in the study of Tang and Song paintings. In the same decade, he published his most well-known work, *A History of Tang and Song Painting*.

To analyze the works included in this book, Teng differentiated formal elements in various paintings without focusing on the masters or relying on biographical anecdotes. As a student in Germany, he had encountered *Principles of Art History* by Heinrich Wöfflin (1864–1945). The Swiss art historian was teaching at Berlin University when Teng was a PhD student in the 1930s. Wöfflin dissected the formal elements in works of art according to five categories: “linear and painterly,” “plane and recession,” “closed and open form,” “multiplicity and unity,” and “clearness and unclearness.”¹²⁶ This methodology appealed to Teng, and thus he used it as the basis for his own analysis of classical Chinese painting. However, he interpreted “linear” and “painterly” in his own way:

The German art historian Wöfflin has pointed out the difference between art in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, [and] he has referred to it as a change from “the linear” to “the painterly.” The linear usually pursues the clarity in the edges of forms, while painterly dispenses with the boundaries and adopts blurred edges. Of course, my borrowing of these two terms here is not so strict. What I mean is that stressing the lines in order to represent the clarity of forms can be considered as “the linear,” [and] that emphasizing the colors and applying chiaroscuro in order to form the depth of objects can be considered as “the painterly.”¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Shen, “The Japanese Impact on the Construction of Chinese Art History,” 232.

¹²⁶ Heinrich Wöfflin, *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*, trans. M. D. Hottinger (New York: Dover, 1950), 14-16.

¹²⁷ Gao Hui, “From Japan to Europe: Teng Gu’s Internationalization of Western Art Historical Ideas,” PhD dissertation, Leiden University, 2010, 74, <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/15033/02.pdf?sequence=17>.

To elaborate, Teng referred to works by the Tang painter Wu Daozi 吳道子 (680–759) as an example. According to Teng, Wu’s style was linear because the application of lines was clean and clear, with defined edges and shapes. Meanwhile, some of Wu’s works also had a painterly quality because the various thicknesses of the lines gave the impression of three-dimensionality. For the painterly style, Teng mentioned another Tang painter, Li Sixun 李思訓 (651–716), for his use of vivid colors such as gold and green. When comparing the two artists, Teng deemed Li to be ornamental in his treatment of the subject matter, whereas Wu was bold in his mannerism. Supplementing his analysis, according to contemporary scholar Gao Hui, Teng consulted premodern Chinese texts on art by the Song calligrapher, painter, and connoisseur Mi Fu 米芾 (1052–1107) to help him reach this conclusion.¹²⁸ Teng’s use of Song-era visual analysis and Wöfflin’s method shows how he saw a parallel in these methods. Teng’s scholarship did not abandon the Chinese tradition; instead, he applied it to the modern formulation of Chinese art history.

As mentioned earlier, one aspect of Teng’s writings on the history of Chinese art that has not been discussed in contemporary scholarship is his use of the modern Chinese language, or modern vernacular, known as *baihua* 白話. Not all art historians in the early twentieth century used the modern vernacular in their scholarly writings. For example, in their writings on Chinese art history both Fu Baoshi 傅抱石 (1904–1965) and Pan Tianshou 潘天壽 (1897–1971) used classical Chinese and included many technical terms. Teng’s choice of the vernacular reflected his desire to modernize the public’s opinion on antiquity and allow the knowledge to be understood by people with different degrees of education. Furthermore, the accessibility of his

¹²⁸ Gao Hui, “From Japan to Europe.”

writings enabled future generations of art history scholars to share them widely without ambiguity.

Di Baoxian: Forging a Public Space for Antiquity

The effort to forge a public space for art and antiquity began when a modern photo-mechanical technology called collotype arrived in China from Germany in the early twentieth century. This relatively low-cost and convenient method of printing allowed for periodicals and journals to be reproduced in mass quantities. In turn, wide distribution of the multiple copies reached an expanded readership. The efflorescence of periodicals and journals allowed for public forums in the realm of cultural preservation among scholars and historians. Along with this, the art periodicals with collotype reproductions of Chinese paintings became an effective way of generating national consciousness and appreciation for cultural heritage and its preservation. Furthermore, Chinese art historians were now able to give visual examples to elaborate on the important achievements in the country's artistic past. The ability to study different periods and styles side by side enabled scholars to propound the idea of national essence through presentations of developments in art and culture as China evolved from being an ancient civilization to a modern nation-state. Both Teng Gu and Zheng Wuchang relied on this kind of mechanical image reproduction in their books to illustrate findings and elaborate analyses.¹²⁹ In this way they were able to showcase the glory of classical paintings to arouse public interest.

With this technology, Deng Shi 鄧實 (1877–1951) published the *Journal of National Essence* (*Guocui xuebao* 國粹學報) in 1901 and *Chinese National Glory* (*Shenzhou guo guang ji*

¹²⁹ Zheng, *Zhongguo huaxue quanshi*. Also see Teng, *Tenggu Meishushi lunzhu sanzhan*, 3.

神州國光集), which focused on art, beginning in 1908.¹³⁰ Also in 1908, Di Baoxian's bi-monthly journal *Famous Chinese Paintings* (*Zhongguo minhua ji* 中國名畫記), produced by his Youzheng Press, became popular.

Whereas Deng's work included literary and cultural issues, Di's concentrated on painting and antiquity. In 1910, just before the official demise of the Qing dynasty, Di claimed that art, together with literature, constituted the essence of China as a nation. He deemed those who did not appreciate art from their own nation's past as those who did not have a sense of national identity.¹³¹ This sentiment is likely derived from two experiences that furthered Di's own engagement with Chinese heritage preservation: one, as mentioned earlier, was his witnessing of Japan's national essence project by means of heritage preservation; the other was his experience of the foreign pillaging of Chinese Imperial Place Collection, discussed below.

Famous Chinese Paintings was not just the fruit of Di's passion about the knowledge of Chinese painting but, with its publication, the achievement of his political aim of strengthening China's national identity. By featuring a wealth of Chinese antiquity for a public readership, Di saw an avenue to build a collective consciousness for Chinese nationalism. These publications had helped to forge a new perspective on Chinese painting and antiquity as imperative to the survival of China as a modern nation. After the official demise of Qing dynasty in 1912, Di strongly supported the new political ideas about cultural reform. He lamented seeing foreign invaders destroying and looting antique artifacts and national treasures:

During the *gengzi* war (Boxer Uprising), the capital's accumulations of hundreds of thousands of years were completely acquired by foreigners. The Great Interior (Imperial Palace) was guarded by Japanese troops. Important objects from successive generations within the Palace could be obtained without indisposition.

¹³⁰ See chapter 1.

¹³¹ Cheng-hua Wang, "New Printing Technology and Heritage Preservation: Collotype Reproduction of Antiquities in Modern China, circa 1908-1917," in *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 286.

Of its small articles that could be easily carried away, each country's men who entered the palace to sightsee often stole them. I calculate that more than half (of the contents) were lost in this way.¹³²

Since his youth, Di had championed revolutionary causes against the maladministration of the imperial Qing dynasty, and he had later become an active reformer during the Republican era. Born into a scholar-official family in the Jiangsu area, as the son of a Qing scholar official, he witnessed his father give up his high official title upon refusing to hand over to the imperial court a treasured painting by the Ming painter Wang Shimin.¹³³ Although as an adult Di passed the civil service examination with the rank of *juren* 舉人, he harbored an indignant sentiment at the corruption among other court officials. His own scholarly status gained him access to the elite orbit in China, and his two periods of self-exile to Japan provided the chance to meet and form friendships with other Chinese scholars living in Japan, including Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Luo Zhenyu.¹³⁴ As an art collector with a circle of influential friends, Di started his journal by publishing works in his family's private collection. Later the periodical began to print works owned by his inner circle of friends, including contributions by other collectors. This became a mutually beneficial arrangement that increased the publication's readership by showcasing the value of the cultural heritage as well as promoting the prestige of the affluent art collectors.

Although *Famous Chinese Paintings* began with connoisseurship, it was also a means of public education for *guomin* 國民 (Chinese people or people of the nation) that echoed the universal education agenda of Hu and Cai: public education as indoctrination. The establishment

¹³² Vinograd, "Patrimones in Press," 257.

¹³³ Vinograd, "Patrimones in Press," 247-48.

¹³⁴ Vinograd, "Patrimones in Press," 254.

of Youzheng Press set in action Di's belief in cultural heritage preservation as the first step toward rebuilding the nation. By giving "old things" a new audience, Di urged the people of the Republic of China to reclaim their national culture. By now, literati ink paintings were seen as a national heritage to be preserved as China entered its modern era. Intellectuals such as Di Baoxian, Cai Yuanpei, Zheng Wuchang, and Teng Gu regarded the survival of such painting as crucial to China's national identity. Rather than a symbol of Confucian backwardness, such works became seen as a unique cultural heritage that defined China as a progressive nation equal to its Japanese and Western counterparts.

Writing Modern China Through Art History

To ensure the survival of classical Chinese painting heritage, intellectuals used various modern means to institutionalize it. The three most important means were the construction of Chinese art history using the new historiographical framework that conceptualized cultural shifts as the origins of evolution in Chinese art, the introduction of Chinese art history as an academic discipline in the reformed education curriculum, and the publication of art periodicals and journals. As a result, what was once known as literati painting (*wenren hua* 文人畫), a genre of traditional brush-and-ink painting (*maobi hua* 毛筆畫) was now referred to as national painting (*guohua* 國畫) or Chinese painting.

Facing the demise of the imperial regime and the rise of the new Republic of China, many Chinese revolutionary intellectuals realized that modernizing China did not mean a complete rejection of the country's past. Instead, they sought to establish a national identity through the modern formulation of Chinese art history. This need came out of the desire to combat and to catch up with the domineering imperial power that encroached on China and

threatened to deny the country as a nation-state. By looking to Japan, Zheng Wuchang developed his own periodization and formulated teleological narratives of progress in Chinese art history. Meanwhile, Teng Gu appropriated Wöfflin's visual analysis method to be used along with Song-era methods to understand Tang paintings. As a result, the modern formulation of Chinese art history transformed the perception of antiquities as being things from the past into an emblem of national heritage.

The survival of national heritage depended on its recognition by the Chinese people (*guomin* 國民) at large. To achieve this, art academies began to teach art and art history. No longer reserved for students from an elite background who could afford to hire a private painting master to teach one-on-one, through this reformed educational system art and art history became officially integrated into the curriculum. Zheng and Teng, besides making substantial contributions by penning Chinese art history books, also taught in art academies in the early twentieth century. In 1923 the Shanghai Art Academy (Shanghai Meishu Xiuxiao 上海美術學校) formally established a Chinese art department. One year later, as a graduate of the academy, Teng returned from his studies in Japan to begin teaching art history in his alma mater. Also in the early 1920s, before becoming an art historian, Zheng worked as head of the art division of the Zhonghua Publishing Company (Zhonghua chubanshe 中華出版社), which produced a number of textbooks, reproduction albums, and early art history books. The company also published the aforementioned book by Chen Shizeng, *Studies of Chinese Literati Painting*, which included an essay on the revival of literati painting by the Japanese art historian Ōmura Segai.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Shen, "Concept to Context," 47-48.

Based on his background as an art scholar and a teacher, Zheng was well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of various art history publications.

Driven by their nationalistic sentiment, intellectuals such as Liang Qichao, Cai Yuanpei, and Hu Shi expounded on the idea of reevaluating Chinese traditions while taking ideas from Japan and Europe to reposition China's age-old culture as one that evolved over time. Liang's theory on new historiography, influenced by social Darwinian notions of evolution, emphasized the importance of using a linear timeline to highlight growth and advancement in Chinese cultural and political history. While art historians such as Zheng Wuchang and Teng Gu looked to Japan for their art historiographic model, their own periodization theories took into consideration the formative events of each dynastic era, thus reclaiming from Japan the authority on the writing of Chinese art history. Nonetheless, the scholarly exchange between the two countries was no doubt valuable to both sides, for Japan found China as its cultural origin, while China found via Japan a way to modernize.

Conclusion

Although this thesis only looks at the early twentieth-century formulation of Chinese art history, even today a majority of schools in China still use the books written by scholars such as Zheng Wuchang and Teng Gu to teach students. Every few years, the 1920s and 1930s editions are reprinted and published with a new preface by a contemporary scholar. This attests to the enduring value of these books as rich resources for educating future generations. But what makes them so enduring, and why have there not been major changes in the way art history is written since then? Not only do these original books contain a wealth of information, the linear periodization of the thousands of years of artistic tradition that allowed Chinese art history to rival other nations' art histories is still in demand today because it puts Chinese cultural heritage in the global arena.

In recent decades, China has developed into one of the largest economies in the world. This era of rapid socioeconomic development raises a problem similar to the one that Chinese intellectuals faced a century ago: how to represent what it means to be Chinese in an international arena. The question of how to promote a national identity becomes all the more pressing as Chinese people immigrate in ever greater numbers across the globe and invest far from home. The Chinese past still matters because it continues to be emblematic of what China might uniquely bring to the present and future.

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