

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: CHANGING EVALUATIONS OF THE FOUR WANGS
 DURING 20TH-CENTURY CHINA

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This thesis examines the receptions of the Four Wangs during the Republican Period (1911 – 1949) and the People’s Republic Period (1949 – present). Twentieth century China has witnessed great changes in its cultural landscape. With new ideas and technologies from the West, traditional Chinese painting has been reevaluated, and sometimes rejected. The Four Wangs of the Early Qing dynasty, seen as the last great achievement of Chinese painting in the literati tradition before the twentieth century, are under fierce debate. Whether the Four Wangs have any genuine creative achievement or are they mere imitators of the ancient masters is one of the central issues. But the debate on the Four Wangs also concerns greater cultural issues, such as whether China should embrace the Western realistic style in art in order to revolutionize Chinese painting. This thesis examines the evaluations of the Four Wangs and pays close attention to the opinions of prominent figures such as Kang Youwei, Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, Teng Gu, Chen Shizeng, Fu Baoshi, Hu Peiheng, Yu Jianhua, Huang Binhong, Xu

Beihong, Tong Shuye, Wang Bomin, Nie Chongzheng, etc. By examining these figures' opinions of the Four Wangs, this thesis hopes to investigate the historical context of each argument, and identify the strategies each one employs to convince the opposing side.

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DURING 20TH-CENTURY CHINA

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
Disclaimer	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter I: Evaluations of the Four Wangs during the Republican Period (1911 – 1949)	2
Chapter II: Evaluations of the Four Wangs during the People’s Republic Period (1949 – present)	56
Chapter III: Conclusions	76
Illustrations	78
Appendix I: Chronological List of Books and Articles Published During the Republican Period (1911 – 1949)	79
Appendix II: Chronological List of Books and Articles Published During the People’s Republican Period (1949 – present)	84
Selected Bibliography	86

INTRODUCTION

The Republican Period (1911 - 1949) was a crucial time in China's history. All aspects of traditional culture went through a radical reevaluation in an unprecedented scale. In the field of art history, few books organizing the history of Chinese art with western ideas were written in the 1920s. The Four Wangs of the early Qing Dynasty, Wang Shimin 王时敏 (1592 - 1680), Wang Jian 王鉴 (1598 - 1677), Wang Hui 王翬 (1632 - 1717), and Wang Yuanqi 王原祁 (1642 - 1715) had become the symbol of the negative quality of traditional Chinese painting for the reformers, but the sign of the highest achievement in the eyes of those who were trying to defend the core traditional culture. The debate on the Four Wangs continued in the second half of the twentieth century when Marxism became the dominate ideology in the People's Republic Period. Art criticism did not escape political influence. Only from the late 1980s when the political environment turned warm did criticism of the Four Wangs become more about artistic and scholarly evaluation. How was one subjected to the then prevailing thought? And how was criticism of the Four Wangs affected by the social and political environment? By examining the reception of the Four Wangs during twentieth century China, this thesis hopes to offer some explanation.

CHAPTER I: EVALUATIONS OF THE FOUR WANGS DURING THE REPUBLICAN PERIOD (1911 – 1949)

KANG YOUWEI 康有为 (1858 – 1927)

During the early years of the Republican Period, China was in great turmoil, and revolutionary thought had been widespread. Traditional Chinese culture had been challenged by many thinkers. Kang Youwei 康有为 (1858 – 1927) was not only an influential politician and thinker in modern China, but also a scholar who wrote extensively on painting, calligraphy, and politics. After the failure of the 1898 Reform, Kang traveled throughout Europe and found himself struck by Western painters' ability to represent their subjects so vividly. Kang compared their paintings with Chinese paintings from the Tang and Song dynasties, but considered painting since the Yuan dynasty on a decline.¹ His *Wanmu Caotang Canghuamu* 万木草 藏画目 (*Wanmu Caotang Catalogue of Painting*), written in 1917, showed his general view on the history of Chinese painting. Kang advocated realistic art (Xieshi hua 写实画) while opposing literati painting (Xieyi hua 写意画), and quoted an ancient saying to support his view: “Nothing can better express things than word, and nothing can better describe things than

¹ For more on Kang's role in the reform of modern Chinese art, see Lawrence Wu, “Kang Youwei and the Westernization of Modern Chinese Art,” *Orientalism* 21, no. 3 (March 1990): 46-53.

painting.”² (宣物莫大于言，存形莫善于画。) Kang praised the realistic painting of the Tang and Song dynasties while downplaying the literati painting of the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. Kang saw the rise of literati painting with Su Shi 苏轼 (1036 – 1101) and Mi Fu 米芾 (1051 – 1107) in the Song dynasty as the beginning of the deteriorations of Chinese painting. Therefore Kang advocated restoration through learning from the ancients (yi fugu wei gexin 以复古为革新), and his sentiment was that “painting should capture the spirit of things through realism, not literati idealism; the colored architectural painting should be the major art style, while painting with heavy or simplified brushworks should be minor; though literati idealism is valuable, the court style should be the orthodox.”³ (以形神为主而不取写意，以着色界画为正，而以墨笔粗简者为别派；士气固可贵，而以院体为画正法。) Kang was the first prominent cultural figure who sharply criticized literati painting, including that of the Four Wangs.

The decline of Chinese painting has been lowest until now, and the Four Great Painters of Yuan dynasty should be held responsible for this . . . Chinese painting has reached its lowest point in our dynasty, to such a level that there are not even any painters left in the cities or in the countryside. The two or three painters left only copy the bad works of the Four Wangs and the Two Shis (Shitao 石涛 [1642 – 1707] and Kuncan 髡

² Kang Youwei 康有为, *Wanmucaotang Canghuamu 万木草 藏画目* [*Wanmucaotang Painting Collection Catalogue*], 1917. Reprinted in *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Meishu Wenxuan 二十世纪中国美术文选* [*Selected Works on Fine Arts in 20th Century*], edited by Lang Shaojun 郎绍君 and Shui Tianzhong 水天中 (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1999), 1: 21.

³ Kang Youwei, *Wanmucaotang Canghuamu*, 22.

残 [1612 – 1673]); their paintings are of simple, dry brushworks, tasteless as wax. How can these kinds of works be left for the later generations? And how can they compete with Europe, America and Japan? ... Only the works of Yun [Yun Shouping 恽寿平 (1633 – 1690)], Jiang [Jiang Tingxi 蒋廷锡 (1669 – 1732)], the Two Nans,⁴ are as delicate and fresh as the ancients.’ All the rest are of the same; there is nothing to learn from.⁵

盖中国画学之衰，至今为极矣，则不能不追源作俑，以归罪于元四家也。…… 中国画学至国朝而衰蔽极矣。岂止衰蔽，至今郡邑无闻画人者。其余二三名宿，摹写四王、二石之糟粕，枯笔数笔，味同嚼蜡，岂复能传后，以与今欧美、日本竞胜哉？…… 唯恽、蒋、二南，妙丽有古人意，其余则一邱之貉，无可取焉。

Kang’s view on art was in line with his political outlook. In a world of both social and cultural disorder, Kang was looking to the past to seek the assurance of Chinese culture. Moreover, as Kuo points out, Kang had considered traditional painting an indicator of national cultural power in international competition.⁶ For

⁴ In the text as reprinted in the *Selected Works on Fine Arts in 20th Century*, Kang listed the Two Nans after Yun and Jiang. Since Yun’s style name is Nantian 南田 and Jiang’s style name is Nansha 南沙, there should probably be no slight-pause mark after the word “Jiang,” and the Two Nans here were just referring to Yun and Jiang themselves.

⁵ Kang Youwei, *Wanmucaotang Canghuamu*, 24.

⁶ Guo Jisheng 郭继生 [Jason Kuo], “Jin Bainian Zhongguo Huihua de Kanfa” 近百年中国绘画的看法 [The View on Chinese Painting in the Last Hundred Years]. In *Wanqing Minchu Shuimo Huaji 晚清民初水墨画集 [Later Chinese Painting 1850 – 1950]*, edited by Guoli Lishi Bowuguan (Taipei: National Museum of History, 1997), 13.

Kang, who passionately sought to reform and preserve traditional Chinese values, it is understandable that he also stressed the importance of traditional culture in cultivating an awareness of a national identity.

CHEN DUXIU 陈独秀 (1879 – 1942)

Chen Duxiu 陈独秀 (1879 – 1942) was another cultural figure who shared Kang Youwei's view on Chinese painting, advocating realistic painting while severely criticizing literati painting, especially the Four Wangs. Chen's opinion is evident in his article "Meishu Geming" 美术革命 (Art Revolution) published in *Xin Qingnian* 新青年 (New Youth) in 1918. Chen wrote:

If we want to improve Chinese painting, we have to revolutionize the paintings of the Wangs. Because if we want to improve Chinese painting, we cannot afford to ignore the realism of Western art . . . Chinese painting during the Northern and Southern Song and early Yuan dynasties was closer to realism in its depiction of human figures, animals, buildings, and flowers. Yet the literati painters look down upon court painting, focusing on the literati ideal while ignoring the realistic representation of things. This tendency was promoted first by Ni [Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1306 – 1374)] and Huang [Huang Gongwang 黄公望 (1268 – 1354)] during the late Yuan dynasty, then by Wen [Wen Zhengming 文征明 (1470 – 1559)] and Shen [Shen Zhou 沈周 (1427 – 1509)] of the Ming dynasty, and then even more

by the Three Wangs [Wang Shimin, Wang Hui, and Wang Jian] of the Qing dynasty. Some people say that the work by Wang Shigu [Wang Hui] is the highest achievement of Chinese painting, but I say that Wang Hui's work is only the conclusion of a long line of bad Chinese painting including that of Ni, Huang, Wen, and Shen . . . The number of paintings by the Wangs I have collected or seen exceeds two hundred, yet those which possess a "subject matter" are less than one tenth. Most of the paintings are made through the four techniques of *Lin 临*, *Mo 摹*, *Fang 仿*, and *Fu 抚* to copy the ancient works; there seems to be no painting created by the painters themselves. This is the single most destructive influence of the School of Wangs. It is the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou (Yangzhou Baguai 扬州八怪) after them, however, who have the genius of free depiction, but they are looked down upon by society, and people take the School of Wangs as orthodox. In terms of the technique of depiction, the School of Wangs is not only far behind Song and Yuan painters, but also behind the contemporary Wu Mojing [Wu Li 吴历 (1632– 1718)]. Such an orthodox school as this, and this idol so blindly worshipped by society, if not eventually overthrown, would become the biggest obstacle to the presence of realism in, and resulting advancement of Chinese art.⁷

⁷ Chen Duxiu 陈独秀, "Meishu Geming" 美术革命 [Art Revolution], *Xin Qingnian 新青年* [New Youth] 6, no. 1 (1918). Reprinted in *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Meishu Wenxuan 二十世纪中国美术文选* [Selected Works on Fine Arts in 20th Century], edited by Lang Shaojun 郎绍君 and Shui Tianzhong 水天中 (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1999), 1:29-30.

若想把中国画改良，首先要革王画的命。因为要改良中国画，断不能不采用洋画的写实精神。…… 中国画在南北宋及元初时代，那描摹刻画人物禽兽楼台花木的功夫还有点和写实主义相近。自从学士派鄙薄院画，专重写意，不尚肖物。这种风气，一倡于元末的倪黄，再倡于明代的文沈，到了清朝的三王更是变本加厉。人家说王石谷的画是中国画的集大成，我说王石谷的画是倪黄文沈一派中国恶画的总结。…… 我家所藏和见过的王画，不下二百多件，内中有“画题”的不到十分之一，大概都用那“临”“摹”“仿”“抚”四大本领，复写古画，自家创作的，简直可以说没有，这就是王派留在画界最大的恶影响。倒是后来的扬州八怪，还有自由描写的天才，社会上却看不起他们，却要把王画当作画学正宗。说起描写的技能来，王派画不但远不及宋元，并赶不上同时的吴墨井…… 像这样的画学正宗，像这样社会上盲目崇拜的偶像，若不打倒，实是输入写实主义，改良中国画的最大障碍。

Chen was the major figure in the New Culture Movement of the May Fourth period, and chief editor of *New Youth*. In a time of reevaluation, Chen intended to start a movement through his advocacy of Art Revolution, and must have had some influence on general opinion and many young painters. Chen's ideas on the history of Chinese painting were similar to Kang's; he considered Chinese painting since Song dynasty to be on the decline because of the dominance of the literati ideal.

The most traditional literati painters normally have no interest in addressing any social problems in their art. They consider painting as a leisure activity meant to better oneself. The landscape of literati painting is all about the ideal life of leisure and cultural refinement. In early twentieth century China, when society was enduring great changes and the elite class was expected to contribute, literati painting could no longer serve the practical cause and became an easy target for criticism. For Chen, literati painting had been the symbol of political inactivity, confining oneself to one's own spiritual activities without care for society and its people. Chen, a revolutionary politician and one of the founders of the Communist Party of China, could not share the ideal of literati painters. Instead, Chen regarded realistic painting most relevant and best able to help improve Chinese society.

Chen was just one of many radical reformers during the May Fourth period who had forcefully challenged the past. However, in doing so their shortcomings also became apparent, as Chow Tse-tsung argued:

In criticizing the Chinese tradition, few of the reformers gave it a fair or sympathetic consideration. They felt that several thousand years of social stagnation had left a great many obstacles in the way of progress and reform. In order to sweep these away, excessive attacks on the whole tradition and an underestimation of its merits could hardly be avoided. Consequently, many excellent features of Confucianism and the national legacy were overlooked or left unmentioned. From a long range view, the criticism by the reformers seems in some respects shallow, indiscriminate,

and oversimplified. It, nevertheless, may have been necessary under circumstances of such national inertia.⁸

JIN CHENG 金城 (1878 – 1926)

Jin Cheng shared similar views with Kang and Chen on Chinese art. Jin Cheng 金城 (1878 – 1926) studied law in Britain, and served as the Secretary of the State Council under the Republic of China. In 1910 Jin organized Zhongguo Huaxue Yanjiuhui 中国画学研究会 (Institute for the Studies of Chinese Painting). Jin himself was a painter and was skilled at imitating ancient paintings. He shared his view on the history of Chinese art in his “Jin Gongbei Jiangyanlu” 金拱北讲演录 (Lectures of Jin Cheng) of 1919:

Even though the realistic style cannot exhaust everything in art, it should be considered the normal mode; though the literati style is one school in art, it is not worth being considered canonic. ... Ancient painters learned from nature, while painters at present only learn from works of the past.⁹

⁸ As cited in Chow Kai-Wing, et. al., eds., *Beyond the May Fourth Paradigm: In Search of Chinese Modernity* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 118.

⁹ Jin Cheng 金城, “Jin Gongbei Jiangyanlu” 金拱北讲演录 [Lectures of Jin Cheng], *Huixue Zazhi* 绘学杂志 [Magazine on Painting Studies], Peking University Huixue Zazhishe 北京大学绘学杂志社, 1920. Reprinted in *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Meishu Wenxuan* 二十世纪中国美术文选 [Selected Works on Fine Arts in 20th Century], edited by Lang Shaojun 郎绍君 and Shui Tianzhong 水天中 (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1999), 1:45.

工笔固未足以尽画之全能，而实足奉为常轨；写意虽亦画之别派，而不足视为正宗。……古之画者，以造化为师，后世以画为师。

Jin believed that because of the Ming painters' preference for literati painting over the realistic style, art in the Qing dynasty had declined to its lowest point. Jin criticized the lack of creativity in Qing painting. Even though Jin did not explicitly mention the Four Wangs, it is clear that he considered the Four Wangs mere imitators of Ming painting, lacking any genuine creativity. Jin's opinion was close to that of Kang Youwei, and he had the utmost faith in the ancient painting of China dating before the Yuan dynasty.

In his article, Jin proposed the three principles of art: “the first one is to examine the natural things; the second is to study the conventions of the ancient masters; and the third is to test one's own feeling and mind.”¹⁰ (学画有三要素。一考察天然之物品；二研究古人之成法；三试验一己之心得。) Unlike Chen who advocated the Western approach of realism while rejecting the tradition of Chinese art, Jin believed it necessary to learn from the conventions of past painters if one wanted to create anything new. Moreover, Jin put emphasis on the observation of the natural world for the creation of art; clearly he intended to criticize the lack of nature in the Four Wangs' imitation of the ancient masters.

In another article, “Huaxue Jiangyi” 画学讲义 (Lectures on Painting), of 1931 Jin tried to assert the value of traditional painting in a time of radical rejection of the

¹⁰ Jin Cheng, *Jin Gongbei Jiangyanlu*, 45.

traditions. Jin said that “some painters want to challenge the methods and spirit of ancient masters and present the world with something different. They believed they had created something new, but in fact they are merely fishing for fame and compliments.”¹¹ (习画而欲矫古人之意，惊眩世人，以为新创，此实沽名钓誉之徒。) Jin saw the continuity of the history of Chinese painting, and he maintained that whoever wanted to create something new must study the past thoroughly. In contrast to Kang and Chen, Jin’s criticism of Chinese art focused on the artistic rather than the political. Jin’s lecture, and its focus on tradition, must have given reassurance to those who found no direction to follow in a time of cultural confusion.

CAI YUANPEI 蔡元培 (1868 – 1940)

Cai Yuanpei was another important cultural figure in the May Fourth period who tried to influence the direction of Chinese art. Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868 – 1940) received a classical education in China and served as a member of the respected Hanlin Academy. Both before and after the 1911 Revolution, Cai studied philosophy in Germany. He served as the Director for Education in the Republic Government and later became the President of Beijing University. Cai was an influential figure in China’s cultural and educational affairs. Cai believed in the

¹¹ Jin Cheng 金城, “Huaxue Jiangyi” 画学讲义 [Lectures on Painting]. *Hushe Yuekan 湖社月 [Hushe Monthly]* July 1931, vol. 21. Reprinted in *Meishu Lunji 美术论集 [Essays on Art]*, vol. 4, *Zhongguohua Taolun Zhuanji 中国画论专辑 [Special Issue on Chinese Painting]*, edited by Shen Peng 沈鹏 and Chen Lüsheng 陈履生 (Beijing: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1986), 5.

instructional function of art to society and he advocated aesthetic education as a substitute for religion since China did not have a religion like the West.¹² For this purpose, Cai believed that the realistic approach in art clearly had an advantage since it was relevant to real life and it could be easily accepted and understood by the public. For art education, Cai said in his speech at the Research Institute of Painting Techniques of Beijing University, in 1919, that “students of art should practice sketching from life.”¹³ (多做实物的写生) While advocating for the new approach of realism, Cai did not reject traditional values of Chinese painting. Cai gave numerous lectures in China on Western thought¹⁴, but, perhaps because of his own classical education in China, he never fully rejected Chinese values. Because of Cai’s great social esteem, his thoughts on art surely gave confidence to some painters who were confused by competing social and artistic strategies.

TENG GU 滕固 (1901 – 1941)

¹² See Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, “Yi Meiyu Dai Zongjiao Shuo” 以美育代宗教说 [Aesthetic Education Replacing Religion], Speech at the Beijing Shenzhou Xuehui 北京神州学会 [Beijing China Society], 1917. First published in *Xin Qingnian* 新青年 [New Youth] 3, 6 (August 1917). Reprinted in *Cai Yuanpei Meixue Wenxuan* 蔡元培美学文选 [Cai Yuanpei’s Essays on Aesthetics] (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1983): 68-73.

¹³ Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, “Zai Beida Huafa Yanjiuhui zhi Yanshuoci” 在北大画法研究会之演说词 [Speech at the Research Institute of Painting Techniques of Beijing University]. *Beijing Daxue Rikan* 北京大学日 [Beijing University Daily], October 25 (1919). Reprinted in *Cai Yuanpei Meixue Wenxuan* 蔡元培美学文选 [Cai Yuanpei’s Essays on Aesthetics] (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1983), 80.

¹⁴ See Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, *Cai Yuanpei Meixue Wenxuan* 蔡元培美学文选 [Cai Yuanpei’s Essays on Aesthetics] (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1983).

Even though prominent cultural figures such as Kang Youwei and Chen Duxiu advocated modern and creative art as well as a scientific approach to the study of Chinese art, they could not create any concrete results since they were not art historians with a thorough understanding of art history, and their opinions in art were very much shaped by their political views. Only with the introduction of Western scholarship on art, introduced by certain scholars who studied abroad, did the study of Chinese art become scientific and modern. Teng Gu was one of the first to reflect this change. Teng Gu 滕固 (1901 – 1941) learned painting in Shanghai when he was young and then went to Japan to study painting at the age of 19. In 1929 Teng went to Berlin to study art history and got his PhD degree in 1932. After returning to China, Teng established Zhongguo Yishushi Xuehui 中国艺术史学会 (Association of the History of Chinese Art). Teng wrote *Zhongguo Meishu Xiaoshi* 中国美术小史 (*Short History of Chinese Art*) in 1925, which included not only painting, but also architecture and sculpture. In this book Teng criticized the Four Wangs of their prejudice regarding schools and their general narrow-mindedness. Teng insisted:

The prejudice of schools is not overcome but becomes even more serious during the Qing dynasty. Among the literati painters are the so-called Four Wangs north of the Yangtze River 江左四王. They are Wang Shimin, Wang Jian, Wang Hui, and Wang Yuanqi. Wang Yuanqi is the son of Wang Jian, who is the son of Wang Shimin.¹⁵ All three generations of the

¹⁵ Teng Gu's text on the biographies of the Four Wangs is not correct. Wang Jian was not the son of Wang Shimin, but belonged to the same family clan as Wang Shimin and was one generation

family can paint; because they live in the Loudong, they were called Loudong School 娄东派. Wang Hui is a native of Yushan and called Yushan School 虞山派. The Loudong School models on Huang Gongwang and considers all other schools heretic—only theirs are pure literati painting. The Yushan School learns from various painters from Song and Yuan dynasties, and they also have Song and Ming court style . . . So the prejudices regarding schools has become deeper and deeper, and they could not break away from the conventions of the ancients. As a result, the minds of the painters became narrower and narrower from the Yuan to the Qing dynasties, and they soon became unable to save themselves.¹⁶

到了清代，门户之见，不但不去打破它，而且分别得更厉害了。其间绍诉文人画的，所谓江左四王，就是王时敏，王鉴，王翬，王原祁四人。其中王原祁是王鉴的儿子，王鉴是王时敏的儿子，祖孙三代，都能画；家居娄东，所以称他们为娄东派。王翬虞山人，所以称他是虞山派。娄东派宗奉黄公望，斥他派为异端，这是纯粹的文人画。虞山派采宋元诸家的笔法，兼有宋明的院画风格。……于是门户之见，

senior to the latter, even though Wang Jian was born six years later. Wang Yuanqi was the grandson of Wang Shimin, and his father was Wang Kui 王揆.

¹⁶ Teng Gu 滕固, *Zhongguo Meishu Xiaoshi 中国美术小史 [Short History of Chinese Art]*. Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan (The Commercial Press), 1935. Reprinted in *Teng Gu Yishu Wenji 滕固艺术文集 [Teng Gu's Essays on Art]*, edited by Shen Ning 沈宁 (Shanghai: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 2003), 92-93.

愈趋愈深，其为古人所束缚愈难自解。所以自元至清，画家的艺术心境，日益浅狭，莫能自救，陷于死刑期了。

Teng studied art history in Berlin with the German philosopher Max Dessoir (1867 – 1947), during which time Heinrich Wölfflin's (1864 – 1945) stylistic analysis in art history was still quite popular. Teng had introduced Western methodology to the study of Chinese art, and his work is considered the first attempt to organize the history of Chinese art according to the Western approach.¹⁷ Because of the shortage of materials and artifacts, his work is rife with factual errors. (For example, Teng mistook Wang Jian as the son of Wang Shimin, the father of Wang Yuanqi.) Despite these inaccuracies, Teng's work offered a novel approach to this field. His work deviated significantly from the traditional approach of focusing on the biographies of literati painters and their techniques of brush and ink. Teng regarded the history of Chinese art as an organic whole and divided its development into four periods: Period of Growing (Shengzhang Shidai 生长时代, until to Han dynasty), Period of Mixing (Hunjiao Shidai 混交时代, Han to before Tang), Period of Prosperity (Changsheng Shidai 昌盛时代, Tang to Song), and Period of Stagnation (Chenzhi Shidai 沉滞时代, Yuan to Qing). Teng considered cultural openness as a necessary foundation for the creation of great art, and in this sense he criticized the prejudice and the bias of the Four Wangs.

¹⁷ Xue Yongnian 薛永年, preface, *Teng Gu Yishu Wenji 滕固艺术文集 [Teng Gu's Essays on Art]*, edited by Shen Ning 沈宁 (Shanghai: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 2003).

CHEN HENGKE 陈衡恪 (1876 - 1923)

Like many of his contemporaries, Chen Hengke was both a painter and scholar. Chen Hengke 陈衡恪 (1876 - 1923), who was also known as Chen Shizeng 陈师曾, studied in Japan, and after returning to China, taught art in Beijing. In 1919 Chen organized the Society for Research in Chinese Painting (Zhongguo Huaxue Yanjiu Hui 中国画学研究会) promoting the styles of Song and Yuan painters, where he was joined by Jin Cheng, Xiao Qianzhong (萧谦中 1883 – 1944) and others.¹⁸ In a time when the traditional value was questioned and western realism in art was believed to be superior to Chinese literati painting, Chen defended the traditional Chinese painting in his article “Wenrenhua zhi Jiazhi” 文人画之价值 (The Value of Literati Painting), which was first written in 1921 in vernacular language and then rewritten in 1922 in literary Chinese.¹⁹ What is literati painting? Chen argued that “it is painting bearing the nature and the taste of the literati. It is not particularly concerned with artistic techniques of painting. It must show the many amusements of the literati, which are elements not represented in the

¹⁸ Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 8.

¹⁹ Both versions of Chen’s essay were included in *Zhongguohua Taolunji 中国画论集 [Collected Essays on the Chinese Painting]*, edited by Yao Yuxiang 姚渔湘 (Beiping [Beijing]: Lida Shuju, 1932), 1-10.

painting itself.”²⁰ (何谓文人画？即画中带有文人之性质，含有文人之趣味，不在画中考究艺术上之功夫，必须于画外看出许多文人之感想，此之所谓文人画。) ²¹ In traditional art criticism of China, the authorship of a literati painting is more valued than its actual artistic quality, and literati painting is considered superior to painting done by professional painters. Chen’s argument also reflected such idea. Literati painting has become the symbol of Chinese culture, and Chen’s defense of literati painting was in fact a defense of Chinese culture when bombarded with Western challenges.

Chen wrote *Zhongguo Huihuashi* 中国绘画史 (*History of Chinese Painting*) in around 1919 and it was first published in 1925. It is not any surprise that Chen’s opinions on the Four Wangs were quite positive. Of Wang Shimin, for example, Chen said:

Wang Shimin ... has mastered the fine ink of Dachi [Huang Gongwang] in his composition, coloring, and delineating. Wang has learned the secret of art and during his later years his painting became mature and spiritual. ²²

²⁰ The English translation is adopted from Lai Kuo-Sheng, *Rescuing Literati Aesthetics: Chen Hengke (1876 – 1923) and the Debate on the Westernization of Chinese Art*. MA Thesis. University of Maryland, College Park, 1999, 57.

²¹ Chen Shizeng 陈师曾, “Wenrenhua zhi Jiazhi” 文人画之价值 [The Value of Literati Painting]. *Huixue Zazhi* 绘学杂志 [*Painting Study Magazine*], 1922. Reprinted in Chen Shizeng 陈师曾, *Zhongguo Huihuashi* 中国绘画史 [*History of Chinese Painting*], edited by Xu Shucheng 徐书城 (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, 2004), 177.

²² Chen Shizeng 陈师曾, *Zhongguo Huihuashi* 中国绘画史 [*History of Chinese Painting*], edited by Xu Shucheng 徐书城 (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, 2004), 154.

王时敏 布置设色，钩勒渲染，悉有根抵于大痴墨妙。早岁即穷
阃奥，晚年益臻神化。

On the reason why the paintings of the Four Wangs were so influential, Chen proclaimed, “the paintings of the Four Wangs are grandeur and majestic, and the charm is everlasting. They are truly the model of their time.”²³ (四王之画气魄沉雄，风韵悠远流长，承足楷模一代。) Chen’s criticism of the Four Wangs reflected his conviction of the value of literati painting and his words were not much different from traditional writings on art.

DENG YIZHE 邓以蜚 (1892 – 1973)

Deng Yizhe 邓以蜚 (1892 – 1973) was one of the many scholars in the first half of twentieth century China who studied Western philosophy. Deng was the descendent of Deng Shiru 邓石如, the great calligrapher and seal carver of Qing dynasty. Deng studied Japanese in Japan from 1907 to 1911 and later studied philosophy in the US from 1917 to 1923. After returning to China, Deng taught philosophy and art history at various schools. Deng wrote many articles not only on art, but also calligraphy, drama, literature, philosophy, and music.

²³ Chen Shizeng, *Zhongguo Huihuashi*, 196.

In his article “Yishujia de Nanguan” 艺术家的难关 (The Crisis of Artists) of 1928, Deng articulated what he saw as the fundamental difference between Chinese and Western landscape painting. In his view,

When the Western landscape painter begins to paint, he has nothing in his mind; all the images are derived from nature. Colors, distance, and volumes all become the elements for painting. Besides these elements he will have nothing to rely upon, and he thinks without these nobody can understand his art. The Western painter has nothing to offer from his inner self but only to copy nature anyway.²⁴

西洋风景画画师在临画之先，胸中一无所有，种种印象，都取自自然。颜色，距离，积量，都当作绘画的要素。他胸中除了这些要素，就失去了创作的凭借；他心念中以为除了这些要素，就无人看得懂。毕竟画师本人没有什么内在的东西可以表现的。

While the Western painting is “spiritless,” Deng implied, the Chinese painter about to paint a landscape already has the whole image in his mind, and when he paints, he paints with his heart. In contrast to their pride in Chinese art, the Chinese intellectuals’ bias against, or inability to appreciate, western oil painting is quite apparent. Nevertheless, in the article Deng suggested that the innermost

²⁴ Deng Yizhe 邓以蜚, “Guohua Luyan” 国画鲁言 [Casual Remarks on National Painting]. Originally in *Chenbao Fukan 报* [Supplementary to the Morning News] (May 31, 1926); included in Deng Yizhe 邓以蜚, *Yishujia de Nanguan 艺术家的难关* [The Crisis of Artists] (Beiping [Beijing]: Gucheng Shushe Chuban, 1928). Revised and published again in 1935. Reprinted in *Deng Yizhe QuANJI 邓以蜚全集* [Complete Works of Deng Yizhe] (Hefui: Anhui Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1998), 110.

feelings of the painter must be communicated effectively through visual means. Landscape painting is the expression of the painter's inner self, and the techniques of brushwork are only the means. Even though Deng endorsed literati painting as the expression of one's inner self, he had avoided focusing on the literati painter himself, who is normally extolled simply because of the painter's literary cultivation.

Deng's analysis of the history of Chinese painting focused on the concept of *qiyun* 气韵, a term that has been vaguely used to refer to the highest quality in Chinese painting. In Deng's writings, *qiyun* may be used to refer to the feeling or mood the artist felt and communicated through his art. Of the Four Wangs, Deng wrote:

[Since the Four Wangs] landscape painting has become the piling up of brushstrokes, and has lost its spirit; it is not worth seeing any more. If we look at the landscapes of Wang Shigu [Wang Hui] (some of his works are pure and vigorous—these are different from painters in his school), they seem to be similar to reading books: the scenes of stones or mountain rivers, whether thick or thin, realistic or suggestive, all are the results of the movements of brushstrokes, as if the viewers were reading the lines in a book. This kind of art does not have any spirit and this is the dead end of landscape painting.²⁵

²⁵ Deng Yizhe 邓以蜚, "Guohua Luyan" 国画鲁言 [Casual Remarks on National Painting], 112.

[四王以来] 山水画变成皴擦的堆砌，而失去气韵，于是山水画无足观。近吾人看王石谷的山水（石谷之作明秀与苍韵者俱有，不可与其派同日而语！）几与读书无二致，幅中疏密虚实，峦石林泉，全是皴笔的运动，令观者对画如对书本中字里行间了无气韵者相同，此诚山水画的绝命符。

The art of the Four Wangs, in Deng's opinion, had not captured any real feeling of nature, but instead was merely made up of blocks of patterns. Deng's criticism of the Four Wangs focused on style and artistic weaknesses, and Deng shied away from the debate on the Four Wangs from merely a cultural or political viewpoint.

Lin Fengmian 林风眠 (1900 – 1991), the great creative painter of the twentieth century who had successfully integrated positive traits from both the Eastern and Western approaches in art, wrote a short response to Deng's article, which was published together with Deng's. Lin said:

I think Western art is more objective in its formal construction. The spiritual thing is less significant because of the highly developed forms . . . Eastern art is more subjective in its forms. But because its forms are not fully developed, the expression of emotions has not been fully met, and art has degenerated into ink-playing. In fact the weakness of Western art is just the strength of Eastern art; and the weakness of Eastern art is just the

strength of Western art. Should the weakness and strength be complemented, the new art of the world will appear.²⁶

我觉得西方艺术，形式上之构成倾于客观一方面。常常因为形式过于发达，而缺少精神之表现。……东方艺术，于形式上之构成，倾于主观一方面，常常因为形式上过于不发达，反而不能表现情绪上之需要，把艺术陷于无聊消遣的戏笔。其实西方艺术之所短，正东方艺术之所长；东方艺术之所短，正西方艺术之所长。短长相辅，世界新艺术之产生，正在目前。

Lin's opinions are worth considering because of the innovation in his own work, where Lin successfully created new visual languages to communicate his feelings. For Lin, art is the unity of subjective feeling and objective visual means. This is precisely what the Four Wangs lack.

HU PEIHENG 胡佩衡 (1891 – 1962)

Hu Peiheng 胡佩衡 (1891 – 1962) was a painter who had practiced painting by learning from ancient masters from Wang Meng to Wang Hui. Hu also wrote many scholarly articles, mainly on Wang Hui. Despite the indiscriminating negations of the traditional culture during his time, Hu's writings were mainly scholarly, and devoid of any revolutionary tones.

²⁶ Deng Yizhe 邓以蜚, "Guohua Luyan" 国画鲁言 [Casual Remarks on National Painting], 115.

In the article “Zhongguo Shanshuihua Xiesheng de Wenti” 中国山水画写生的问题 (The Issue of Sketching in Chinese Landscape Painting) of 1920, Hu advocated “sketching from real life with the help of ancient techniques” (古法写生). He said, “If we want to improve the Chinese landscape painting, we have to pay attention to the issue of sketching from real life.”²⁷ (我们愿意改良中国山水, 当注重写生。) Hu criticized recent painters’ blind imitation of ancient masters without learning from nature: “The recent painters did not learn the essence [of ancient masters] . . . but only covered the canvas with all sorts of symbols; they had lost the ancient masters’ techniques of sketching from real life.”²⁸ (后人不求其本, 只知道用符号堆砌, 所以把古人写生的法子失传了。)

Hu’s *Wang Shigu Huafa Juwei* 王石谷画法 微 (*On the Painting of Wang Shigu [Wang Hui]*) was published in Beijing in 1938. In this book Hu examined the biographies of Wang Hui, Wang’s writings on painting, Wang’s learned techniques of ancient painters, comments on Wang by later scholars, schools that were derived from Wang, etc.

²⁷ Hu Peiheng 胡佩衡, “Zhongguo Shanshuihua Xiesheng de Wenti” 中国山水画写生的问题 [The Issue of Sketching in Chinese Landscape Painting], 1920. Reprinted in *Yihai Gouchen, Jindai Zhongguo Meishu Lunji* 艺海钩沉, 近代中国美术论集 [Collected Essays on Art in Modern China], edited by He Huaishuo 何怀硕 (Taipei: Yishujia Chubanshe, 1991), 3:51.

²⁸ Hu Peiheng, “Zhongguo Shanshuihua Xiesheng de Wenti,” 52.

On Wang Hui's learned techniques of ancient painters, Hu wrote: "Shigu was able to achieve resemblance in his imitation of Song and Yuan painters,"²⁹ (石谷仿临宋元，无微不肖。) and "[Wang Hui] had put his feeling of nature into his work and so his work was original. Nevertheless his work had the characters of ancient masters."³⁰ (融化自然，故能独具面貌。然亦不失古人之特征。) According to Hu, Wang Hui was not a blind imitator of the ancient painters; rather he achieved his originality through his own attunement with nature. Wang Hui had not focused on any particular painter, Hu wrote, because Wang Hui said: "So rich is the techniques and spirit of painting that no one painter or one school could exhaust them."³¹ (画学之博大如此，而非区区一家一派之所能尽也。)

Hu then analyzed Wang Hui's strengths and the weaknesses. Hu listed the strengths of Wang's work: "Shigu has truly mastered the art of painting . . . and his work is without the sense of stiffness and estranged-ness;" (石谷之画，功力甚深，……无板滞隔膜之病。) "Wang's work was original with new ideas;" (自创一格，有新意) "even though Wang's painting is said to be in the style of some painter, it still has its own character," (虽题曰仿某家笔法，仍存自己之面貌。) and is "true to the natural scene," (合于真景) etc.³² Of Wang's weaknesses, Hu wrote: "Wang's brushwork is not good. When executing painting, his brush

²⁹ Hu Peiheng 胡佩衡, *Wang Shigu Huafa Juwei* 王石谷画法 微 [On the Painting of Wang Hui] (Beiping [Beijing]: Liulichang Baowenzhai 北平琉璃厂豹文斋, 1938), 3.

³⁰ Hu Peiheng, *Wang Shigu Huafa Juwei*, 5.

³¹ Hu Peiheng, *Wang Shigu Huafa Juwei*, 6.

³² Hu Peiheng, *Wang Shigu Huafa Juwei*, 12.

goes too fast. The brushwork is tiny and wet, and the stroke is too short. It is all exposed and without the sense of reserve.” (用笔不佳。石谷作画，行笔太速。笔小而湿，笔画又太短，刻露而无含蓄。) “Wang Hui can paint thick works, but not loose ones. Shigu [Wang Hui] had adopted the fashionable trend of his time by drawing meticulous details and complicated landscapes. Wang had done this for a long time without innovation and it had become his habit,” (能密不能疏。石谷投时所好，细其笔画，而繁其丘壑。日久不知变通，致成习惯。) etc.³³

FU BAOSHI 傅抱石 (1904 – 1965)

Born into a poor peasant family in Jiangxi Province, Fu Baoshi 傅抱石 (1904 – 1965) had to support his family when he was a boy by working in a chinaware shop, which gave him the opportunity to see Chinese painting and seal engraving. Here Fu began to teach himself calligraphy, painting, and seal carving. Later Fu managed to attend art school and after graduation he taught in primary and middle schools. With the help of Xu Beihong, Fu went to Japan to study the history of Asian art for two years. Upon his return to China Fu taught art at various art schools. From 1957 Fu served as the vice chairman of the Chinese Artists' Association, and director of the Xiling Seal Society (Xiling Yinshe 西泠印社). Fu also wrote many scholarly works on art. In his *Zhongguo Huihua Bianqian Shigang* 中国绘画变 史纲 (*History of the Changes of the Chinese Painting*) of

³³ Hu Peiheng, *Wang Shigu Huafa Juwei*, 13.

1931, Fu gave a high appraisal of Qing culture, saying “the Qing culture was as the sun at its peak, and everything is good.”³⁴ (清代的文化，真是如日中天，无所不妙。) He commented that among the numerous painters, the Four Wangs and Wu [Wu Li] and Yun [Yun Shouping] “had the greatest influences, whose achievement was able to brighten the whole Qing dynasty.”³⁵ (他们足以光耀清的全时期) Fu’s comments on the Four Wangs were as follows:

Wang Shimin:

He is good at both brush and ink; he masters the dry and wet brushstrokes as if they were made instinctively. Such details as the grass and trees are rendered patiently and rich in gestures; Shimin is unique without comparison . . .³⁶

用笔以及用墨，都很有功侯，干湿互施，劲健天成！并且一草一木，沉着不苟，俯仰多姿，一时无两……

Wang Jian:

³⁴ Fu Baoshi 傅抱石, *Zhongguo Huihua Bianqian Shigang 中国绘画变 史纲 [History of the Changes of the Chinese Painting]*, introduction by Cheng Mingshi 承名世 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1998), 73.

³⁵ Fu Baoshi, *Zhongguo Huihua Bianqian Shigang*, 81.

³⁶ Fu Baoshi, *Zhongguo Huihua Bianqian Shigang*, 81.

The landscape he conceived in his mind is already unusual; his works, whether ink or colored, were meticulous and rich in varieties; the air of cultivated refinement is shown naturally.³⁷

胸中丘壑，原自不凡，无论水墨的或是着色的，都在谨严之中，呈极量之变化。那书卷之味，更是油然而生了。

Wang Hui:

Wang often exchanges the light-green for the ink. Besides his broken scenes we could not say Wang resembles any school. He might be better at imitating the ancient masters than originating his own school . . . “Wang Hui’s art is out of craftsmanship.” . . . I consider this as the ultimate judgment.³⁸

常拿墨色来换了青绿，我们除领略他的破破碎碎而外，实在说不上象哪一宗，所谓“独开门户”，远不及临摹古作之为是。……“终不免作家习气”，……我认为是石谷的定论。

Wang Yuanqi:

³⁷ Fu Baoshi, *Zhongguo Huihua Bianqian Shigang*, 81.

³⁸ Fu Baoshi, *Zhongguo Huihua Bianqian Shigang*, 82.

The scene is pure and serene, and his brushwork is vigorous. The composition is grand and elegant, and the brushwork is plain. This Wang Hui could not achieve.³⁹

境地清旷，笔墨遒拔，……雄壮庄凝的布局，和朴重无华的笔触，石谷是办不到的。

The early Fu had praised the Four Wangs warm-heartedly. During this time traditional Chinese painting was still highly valued and practiced by some painters such as Chen Shizeng and Fu Baoshi even though it was no longer the predominant style. In 1944 Fu published a short article on the history of Chinese landscape painting, “Zhongguo Shanshuihua Lun” 中国山水画论 (On the Chinese Landscape Painting), where he challenged the then popular view that “Chinese painting was in a state of decline since the Yuan dynasty.” Fu said that Chinese painting at the end of Ming and early Qing dynasties, especially the landscape painting with innovative brushworks, “had shined light as never before.”⁴⁰ (射出过去所未有过的光芒.)

Fu thought highly of Dong Qichang’s 董其昌 (1555 – 1636) painting, where “the clouds boundless, [and the picture] serene and sweet, his brushwork perfect” (云烟苍茫，恬淡秀润，用墨到了化境), and praised Dong’s landscape “for

³⁹ Fu Baoshi, *Zhongguo Huihua Bianqian Shigang*, 82-83.

⁴⁰ Fu Baoshi 傅抱石, “Zhongguo Shanshuihua lun” 中国山水画论 [Studies on the Chinese Landscape Painting]. *Wenshi Zazhi* 文史杂志 [Magazine of Literature and History] 3, no. 3 & 4 combined (1944). Reprinted in *Yihai Gouchen, Jindai Zhongguo Meishu Lunji* 艺海钩沉 近代中国美术论集 [Collected Essays on Art in Modern China], edited by He Huaishuo 何怀硕 (Taipei: Yishujia Chubanshe, 1991), 3:23.

inheriting the past and ushering in the future.”⁴¹ (在山水上有承先启后之大功)

Despite his positive view on Dong Qichang, the predecessor of the Four Wangs, Fu did not mention anything about the Four Wangs, whom he had praised before. He seemed to have changed his opinion of the Four Wangs in some respect.

Fu's late article “On the Chinese Landscape Painting” was written in 1944, when China was still fighting the war against Japan. The sense of nationalism and patriotism is very strong in Fu's narration of the history of Chinese painting, especially in his writing on the Yuan and Qing dynasties when China was under foreign rule. Fu praised those painters who maintained their integrity and remained loyal to the former imperial court. Fu did not mention the Four Wangs in his article, the reason seeming to be that, because of the Four Wangs' involvement in the Qing government, Fu might have considered them disloyal to the Chinese native ruler and therefore not worth the title of artist.

YU JIANHUA 俞剑华 (1895 – 1979)

Yu Jianhua 俞剑华 (1895 – 1979), a noted art historian, learned painting and calligraphy in Beijing when he was young, and later from Chen Shizeng. In one article Yu praised Chen for being able to take a new approach besides the Four Wangs.⁴² Yu wrote many articles on Chinese art and devoted his whole life to

⁴¹ Fu Baoshi, *Zhongguo Shanshuihua lun*, 22.

⁴² See Yu Jianhua 俞剑华, “Chen Shizeng Xiansheng de Shengping Ji Qi Yishu” 陈师曾先生的生平及其艺术 [The Life and Art of Chen Shizeng]. In *Yu Jianhua Meishu Lunwen Xuan* 俞建华

Chinese art education. Different from his teacher Chen Shizeng, Yu had a negative view of the Four Wangs. Yu criticized the lack of creativity of the Four Wangs in his *Zhongguo Huihuashi* 中国绘画史 (*History of Chinese Painting*) of 1936:

Wang Shimin . . . has not been out of Huang Gongwang and Dong Qichang's styles; he only knows of imitation, and no innovation. Therefore the Qing landscape painting has declined. In the past Wang was credited as the one who inherited the past and ushered in the future, but I consider him as the one who starts the bad art; this is no exaggeration.⁴³

王时敏 终身未能出黄公望、董其昌二家之范围，只知临摹，不知创造，遂使清朝山水画一蹶不振，昔人以时敏有承启之功，吾独以为有作俑之罪，岂过言哉！

Wang Jian ... only knows the ancient masters, not himself. He is only a copier of ancient paintings. What credit does he have?⁴⁴

王鉴 只知有古人，不知有自我，徒为古画之复印机耳。何足贵乎？

美术论文选 [*Yu Jianhua's Essays on Art*], edited by Zhou Jiyin 周积寅 (Jinan: Shandong Meishu Chubanshe, 1986), 343-354.

⁴³ Yu Jianhua 俞剑华, *Zhongguo Huihuashi* 中国绘画史 [*History of Chinese Painting*] (Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian, 1984), 176.

⁴⁴ Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo Huihuashi*, 177.

Wang Hui . . . is good at depicting the landscape in the style of the Northern School with his brushworks of the Southern School. His brushwork is neat and colorful; these are his advantages. But his brushwork is weak, without a sense of powerfulness. In his painting the scenes are trivial, not spectacular. He only appeals to popular taste through his complex brushwork and use of rich colors.⁴⁵

王翬 以南宗笔墨写北宗丘壑，工整艳丽，是所独擅，唯用笔纤弱，无挺拔之观，景物琐碎，乏雄厚之气，只以笔墨繁缛，颜色秀丽，取悦流俗。

Wang Yuanqi's compositions are always the same, and his brushwork is weak. His ink is not smooth, and his colors are without variation. He does not dare to take one step away from Huang Gongwang . . . I do not know how he could achieve the status of leading painter in his time, enjoying his fame among his contemporaries as well as receiving the acclaim of the generations after him.⁴⁶

王原祁 布置则千篇一律，用笔则枯弱少力，用墨则干涩凝滞，敷色则毫无变化，终身不敢出公望之门一步。..... 不知其何以能冠冕一时，领袖群伦，取荣于当代，享名于后世，如此之久且盛也。

⁴⁵ Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo Huihuashi*, 177-178.

⁴⁶ Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo Huihuashi*, 178-179.

While Yu looked down upon the Four Wangs, he praised the Four Monks [Shitao 石涛 (1642 – 1707), Kuncaan 髡残 (1612 – 1673), Bada Shanren 八大山人 (1626 – 1705), and Honren 弘仁 (1610 – 1664)] among others, who were contemporaries of the Four Wangs. Yu admired Shitao most, saying:

Shitao is able to create new forms out of the old traditions without incorporating any bad habits of his time. His art is unique without any negative influence of the two Schools of Zhe and Wu. Because of the marvelous composition, the elegant brushwork, the unconventional and graceful inscriptions, his art is truly immortal.⁴⁷

石涛 能熔铸千古，脱去时习，独出手眼，无一笔浙吴两派习气。至其构图之奇妙，笔墨之神化，题词之超逸，真足睥睨千古。

In his article “Qishiwu Nian Lai de Guohua” 七十五年来来的国画 (Chinese Painting in the Last Seventy-Five Years) of 1947, Yu “passionately advocated painting from real life in order to save the old style of imitation without content.”⁴⁸ (极力提倡写生，以救临摹空疏之弊。) Yu implicitly criticized the Four Wangs’ lack of creativity, and showed his disapproval of the trend started by the Four Wangs:

⁴⁷ Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo Huihuashi*, 119.

⁴⁸ Yu Jianhua 俞剑华, “Qishiwu Nian Lai de Guohua” 七十五年来来的国画 [The Chinese Painting in the Last Seventy-Five Years]. *Shen Bao* 报, 21 September 1947, Shanghai. Reprinted in *Yu Jianhua Meishu Lunwen Xuan* 俞建华美术论文选 [Yu Jianhua’s Essays on Art], edited by Zhou Jiyin 周积寅 (Jinan: Shandong Meishu Chubanshe, 1986), 62.

[Painters since the Four Wangs] just copied the heads and the feet [of human body] without any spirit, and without any vision. The brushwork was weak and the content empty. The movement has produced no great painters.⁴⁹

描头画脚，毫无生气，毫无进境。笔墨日渐软弱，内容日渐空虚，气魄日渐渺小，很少有伟大作家出现。

Yu's analysis of the Four Wangs during the 1930s and 1940s mainly focused on the brushwork. And we shall see later that after the 1950s Yu applied the Marxist theory of classes to analyze the history of art.

LIU SIXUN 刘思训

Liu Sixun 刘思训's *Zhongguo Meishu Fadashi* 中国美术发达史 (*The Development of Chinese Painting*) was written in 1937 and first published in 1946.

In his book Liu praised the Qing painting, and of the Four Wangs, Liu said:

Wang Shimin:

His control of the wrist is enviable, and the composition of the ink is elegant; his brushstrokes seem to be formed freely, the mountains created naturally. In his late years his art verged on sublime.

⁴⁹ Yu Jianhua, "Qishiwu Nian Lai de Guohua," 59.

他的作风是运腕虚灵，布墨神逸，点刷随意，丘壑浑成。到了晚年，他的艺术益臻神化。

Wang Jian:

His art is vigorous and archaic, and he is good at the brush methods of both *cun* 皴 and *ran* 染; even though his work is delicate, it does not impair the elegance in it. In either light green or ink painting, there is something of a cultivated refinement between the brushworks.⁵⁰

他的画法是沉雄古逸，皴染兼长；作风虽工细，仍能纤不伤雅，绰有馀妍。无论青绿重色，有一种书卷气，能盎然在纸墨间。

Liu seemed to have borrowed the common view from previous scholars on the Four Wangs in his book, and there seemed to be very little of his own contribution. Yet the views on the Four Wangs in Liu's work were representative of the then prevailing views on the Four Wangs. Liu's writing on the history of Chinese painting was the continuation of such a tradition in which the literati painting occupies the central theme in the narration of art history. (In his book Liu listed numerous painters, most of whom are literati painters.)

QING ZHONGWEN 秦仲文 (1895 – 1974)

⁵⁰ All the above four paragraphs are from Liu Sixun 刘思训, *Zhongguo Meishu Fadashi* 中国美术发达史 [The Development of Chinese Painting] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1946), 113.

Qin Zhongwen was another painter of traditional Chinese art who wrote *The history of Chinese painting (Zhongguo Huihua Xueshi 中国绘画学史)*. Qin Zhongwen 秦仲文 (1895 – 1974) learned painting from Chen Shizeng and other painters by imitating the Four Wangs and other painters up to the Four Great Painters of Yuan dynasty. In 1915 Qin joined the Painting Methods Research Society organized by Cai Yuanpei and directed by Chen Shizeng. Before 1937 Qin was a lecturer at the National Academy of Art in Beijing. After 1945 Qin taught Chinese painting history at the Beijing University.⁵¹ Qin's history of Chinese painting followed the typical, traditional approach of focusing on the biographies of painters. In his *History of Chinese Painting* of 1934, Qin gave a very positive assessment of the Four Wangs:

The above Four Wangs, Wu, and Yun are considered the Six Great Painters of Qing dynasty; they are either enjoying high social status or great scholarship, and they had lived a long life. They are very skillful painters, and their school of art is canonic. They had been the examples for the world for three hundred years.⁵²

以上四王吴恽，人称为清朝六大名家；或是位尊人显，或是学行卓绝，享年长久，工力深邃，画派纯正，为世楷模，三百年来声望不坠。

⁵¹ For a brief biography of Qin Zhongwen, see Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 312.

⁵² Qin Zhongwen 秦仲文, *Zhongguo Huihua Xueshi 中国绘画学史 [History of Chinese Painting]* (Beiping [Beijing]: Lida Shuju, 1934), 154.

Qin's book seemed to contain little, if any, original thought concerning the history of Chinese painting. Qin Zhongwen, described by Michael Sullivan as a "conservative old guohua specialist,"⁵³ was in fact defending the traditional Chinese painting and his own understanding of art history. This is reasonable since Qin himself learned painting through the Four Wangs and other masters. The traditional style of painting was still struggling to survive in a time of disbelief, and some artists defended the value of such a tradition.

PAN TIANSHOU 潘天寿 (1897 – 1971)

Pan Tianshou 潘天寿 (1897 – 1971) was another great painter of twentieth century, who studied painting under Wu Changshuo 吴昌硕 (1844 – 1927) and Western drawing and painting from Li Shutong 李叔同 (1880 – 1942). Since 1928 Pan had been professor of the National Art Academy in Hangzhou (Zhongguo Meishu Xueyuan 中国美术学院), and from 1944-47 Pan served as its director. Pan was also a scholar and wrote *Zhongguo Huihua Shilue* 中国绘画略史 (*Concise History of Chinese Art*) in 1928, and later he corrected and expanded his book and published *Zhongguo Huihuashi* 中国绘画史 (*History of Chinese Art*) in 1936. His analysis of the Four Wangs took early scholarship into consideration. Pan said of Wang Hui:

⁵³ *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 114.

Wang Hui . . . learns from the Two Wangs [Wang Shimin and Wang Jian] of his contemporary, as well as the Song and Yuan painters; Wang Hui values the delicate and gentleness in art. To judge positively, Wang is able to assimilate the various styles of Northern and Southern schools of Song and Yuan dynasties; to judge negatively, Wang inherits only the delicacy of the court painting style of Ming dynasty as well as the two schools of Wu, and this has made the Qing painting more occupied with imitating the forms than development. The reason is that there is no other way to convey the prosperity of that time; historically this is because of the political circumstances and the excess of authoritarianism.⁵⁴

石谷 近师二王，远追宋、元，以精致温穆为尚。美言之，能集宋、元南北宗诸家格法之全；毁言之，仅袭有明院、吴二派工能之长，使有清一代之绘画，陷于形式之摹拟，而少有所振展。其原因，固为当时非此不足以表现天下之承平；实则全因缘于政治方略与专制之过甚以致之。

Unlike Fu Baoshi who wrote from the point of view of painters, and who particularly valued the integrity of artists, Pan analyzed the history of painting during the early Qing dynasty from the perspective of the ruling class. Pan saw the political need for the ruling Manchu regime to culturally conquer the Chinese of Han ethnic majority after physically conquering them. The mood in the works

⁵⁴ Pan Tianshou 潘天寿, *Zhongguo Huihuashi 中国绘画史 [History of Chinese Painting]* (Shanghai: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1983), 228.

of the Four Wangs is that of peace and content, wrote Fu. The Four Wangs themselves are scholar-officials and their art is the expression of their world view. The ruling regime saw the positive effects of the works of the Four Wangs and promoted them, hoping to create a sense of order and peace, wrote Fu. The new approach of analyzing the history of Chinese art from social and political points of view was markedly different from the traditional scholarship of the May Fourth period, which focused on brush and ink.

YAO YUXIANG 姚渔湘

Yao Yuxiang 姚渔湘 edited *The Collected Essays on the Chinese Painting* (*Zhongguohua Taolunji 中国画 论集*) in the early 1930s, and had a positive view regarding the Four Wangs. Like Pan Tianshou, Yao also turned his focus to the social aspect of the Four Wangs. In his “Lun Siwang Yu Qingdai Huajie Zhi Guanxi” 论四王与清代画界之关系 (On the Relationship between the Four Wangs and the Art World in Qing Dynasty) Yao wrote:

The people in Qing dynasty all revered the Four Wangs . . . [Wang Shimin and Wang Jian] understood the spiritual essence of Dong Yuan 董源 (d. 962) and Juran 巨然 (c. 10th century) very well, and believed they deserved the name of great masters. When Shigu [Wang Hui] and Lutai [Wang Yuanqi] appeared, they followed Yanke [Wang Shimin] and Lianzhou [Wang Jian] . . . They happened to live in a peaceful and

prosperous time. Because the authority wanted to win the support of society, the Four Wangs were promoted to prominent status and served as the leaders for art . . . Those mediocre scholars who wanted to be promoted followed either Wang Shimin or Wang Yuanqi, and learned from either School of Yushan or Loudong. They boasted themselves as belonging to one school or another . . . while ordinary people and businessmen only knew Loudong and Yushan school painters by name, not truly knowing their art; The Four Wangs boasted as connoisseurs and made irresponsible judgment. As a result many painters imitated one school or another, and both good and bad paintings were created. Therefore art has been so low and this was the reason for the declining of art in Qing dynasty.⁵⁵

有清一代，对于绘画，莫不尊崇四王。…… [王时敏王鉴] 深得董巨之神髓，诚不愧一代大家也。待石谷麓台出，祖述烟客廉州，……又承国家承平之日，君主欲藉此以牢笼人心，而施其羁縻之政策，于是尊之为画圣，置之为书画总裁，……而一般士子不肖之徒，欲藉此为进身之路，不学于耕烟，则师于露台，不入于虞山则为娄东，立为门户互相标榜。……而一般俗子商人之流，只知虞山娄东派之人名，而不晓画为何物，即以能鉴赏自豪，信口雌黄，妄加评判。……

⁵⁵ Yao Yuxiang 姚渔湘, "Lun Siwang Yu Qingdai Huajie Zhi Guanxi" 论四王与清代画界之关系 [On the Relationship between the Four Wangs and the Art World in Qing Dynasty]. In *Zhongguohua Taolunji 中国画论集* [Collected Essays on the Chinese Painting], edited by Yao Yuxiang 姚渔湘 (Beiping [Beijing]: Lida Shuju, 1932), 319.

由是日日仿此拟彼，贗鼎百出，而艺术之扫地也极矣，此清代艺术之所以不振也。

In the preface to his book, Yao expressed his dissatisfaction with his contemporary painters whom he considered either the slaves of the ancient masters or the blind followers of Western painting. Yao also criticized the narrow-mindedness of his contemporary painters who buried themselves in their own specific field.⁵⁶ Yao admired the Four Wangs, but disparaged the thoughtless imitation of mediocre painters and the general public's blind worship of the Four Wangs.

WU HUFAN 吴湖帆 (1894 – 1968)

Even though the Four Wangs had generally been criticized, they still received positive reviews from art critics. Wu Hufan 吴湖帆 (1894 – 1968),⁵⁷ the famous art connoisseur, was himself a painter who once served at the Shanghai Zhongguo Huayuan 上海中国画院 (Shanghai Institute of Chinese Painting), and was a member of the Xiling Yinshe 西泠印社 (Xiling Seal Society). Wu's own landscapes were modeled after the Four Wangs and Wu had studied Dong Qichang. It is no surprise that Wu's comments on the Four Wangs were quite

⁵⁶ See preface, Yao Yuxiang 姚渔湘 (ed.), *Zhongguohua Taolunji 中国画论集 [Collected Essays on the Chinese Painting]* (Beiping [Beijing]: Lida Shuju, 1932).

⁵⁷ For more information concerning Wu Hufan's connoisseur work, see Clarissa Von Spee, *Wu Hufan: A Twentieth Century Art Connoisseur in Shanghai* (Berlin: Reimer, 2008).

favorable. In the colophon in 1938 to Wang Hui's "Fang Guan Tong Xishan Qing'ai" 仿关仝溪山晴霭 (Landscape after Guan Tong's 'Streams and Mountains Clearing after Mist'),⁵⁸ Wu wrote:

I have seen about forty-odd paintings by Shigu [Wang Hui] in the last twenty years. Among them seventeen or eighteen are very refined and detailed, and this handscroll modeled after Guan Tong's "Streams and Mountains Clearing after Mist" is the best. It is known that, after being instructed by Yanke [Wang Shimin] to copy the masterpieces of the Song and Yuan dynasties around the age of forty, Shigu achieved the Great Synthesis in his art. Therefore, the finest of Shigu's paintings were done between the ages of forty and fifty, and his works modeled after ancient masters are particularly good. He excelled in painting in the Song manner, but was less interested in imitating the Yuan masters. His skill is superior to his expression of spiritual resonance; his works in color are better than those in ink monochrome.

This scroll was executed in the brush manner of Guan Tong at forty-seven. Not only is it the greatest work of Shigu's whole life, but it also could not have been done by anyone else of the Ming and Qing periods or later. Judging from what I have seen, among the Song masters, Shigu's imitations of the styles of Guan Tong and Fan Kuan [ca. 960 – ca. 1030] are his most marvelous. Occasionally I have seen a couple of them in albums, but have not seen any long handscrolls or huge hanging scrolls.

⁵⁸ Handscroll, 1678, ink and color on paper, 29.3 x 353 cm, Shanghai Museum. See Fig. 1.

Then I saw this work twenty years ago. For years I could not forget it. Now I have it again. It is indeed like the line in the poem by Yan Yuanxian [Yan Shu, 991 – 1055], “As if they once knew me, swallows return.” In mid-autumn of the *wuyin* year [1938], I asked for the opinion of Sun Bangrui, my senior, on whether he agrees with me. Wu Hufan inscribed in the Plum Vista Studio.⁵⁹

余二十年来所见石谷画卷约四十余本，而精细之作有十七八本，惟以此卷仿关仝溪山晴霭图为第一。按石谷在四十岁左右经烟客指示临摹宋元名迹后，艺乃大成。故石谷画以四十至五十岁为最精，而摹古为尤工。且石谷长于画宋，而不尚摹元。盖石谷之功力胜于神韵，设色胜于水墨。此卷为四十七岁摹关仝笔法，不独为石谷生平第一合作，而明清以来无第二人能为之。就余所见石谷仿宋人笔，以关仝、范宽为最擅长亦最妙，见于册中偶然寓目一二，若长卷巨轴固未之或见也。此本在二十年前曾见之，心目不忘者累岁，今复获之，洵晏元献词曰似曾相识燕归来是也。戊寅中秋质之孙邦瑞兄以为然否。吴湖帆识于梅景书屋。⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Translation modified from Maxwell K. Hearn (ed.), *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632 - 1717)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 206.

⁶⁰ Maxwell K. Hearn (ed.), *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632 - 1717)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 206.

In another of Wang Hui's painting "Fang Juran Shanshui" 仿巨然山水 (Landscape in the Style of Juran),⁶¹ Wu Hufan wrote:

Light Transmitted from Huanghe [Wang Meng, 1308 – 1385]

This painting's brush method may be traced back to that of master Ju [Juran, active ca. 960-85] through that of Wang Shuming [Wang Meng], therefore, its "breath and soul" are heroic and full, and it may be reckoned a masterpiece by Qinghui [Wang Hui]. Wu Hufan inscribed.⁶²

黄鹤传灯

此图笔法自王叔明上溯巨师，故气魄雄厚，堪称清晖甲观。吴湖帆题

63

As an art critic, Wu has focused on the artistic merit of Wang Hui's work and emphasized on its stylistic connections with other painters.

GAO JIANFU 高剑父 (1879 – 1951)

The Gao Brothers of Gao Jianfu 高剑父 (1879 – 1951) and Gao Qifeng 高奇峰 (1889 – 1933) had been influential in Southern China. In modern China

⁶¹ Hanging scroll, 1664, ink on paper, 131 x 65.5 cm. See Fig. 2.

⁶² Translation by Shi-Yee Liu, in Maxwell K. Hearn, ed., *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632 - 1717)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 188.

⁶³ As cited in Maxwell K. Hearn, ed., *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632 - 1717)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 188.

Guangzhou had been most exposed to the Western culture, and the two brothers advocated the blending of both Eastern and Western approaches in art and established the Lingnan School (Lingnan Pai 岭南派). In his article “Wode Xiandai Guohuaguan” 我的现代国画观 (My View on Modern Chinese Art),⁶⁴ written during the War of Anti-Japanese Aggression, Gao Jianfu stated:

Since the Four Great Painters of Yuan, the court painting style had been ignored and the literati painting had been promoted. This had lasted since the beginning of Yuan through Ming and Qing dynasty till the Republican Period, which had been the dominant style of painting in the previous six hundred years. Even though there are some slight changes during the time, how many painters can have different styles during the six hundred years, where there may be hundreds of different schools . . . Unfortunately until the modern time of the revolutionary new Republic of China, the art style of all of China, except Western style painting, is the old traditional style.⁶⁵

自元四家出，一变宋院作风，而大倡其文人画。其画风自元初至明、清两代，逮至中华民国，六百年来都是这种作风支配着艺坛。其间虽不无少变，但六百年中总有百数十种画人，能变者几何？……可惜

⁶⁴ For the discussion on Gao's major text, see Ralph Croizier, *Art and Revolution in Modern China, The Lingnan (Cantonese) School of Painting, 1906 – 1951* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 110-114.

⁶⁵ Gao Jianfu 高剑父, “Wo de Xiandai Guohuaguan” 我的现代国画观 [My View on Modern Chinese Art]. Reprinted in *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Meishu Wenxuan 二十世纪中国美术文选 [Selected Works on Fine Arts in 20th Century]*, edited by Lang Shaojun 郎绍君 and Shui Tianzhong 水天中 (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1999), 1:502. According to the editor Yu Feng 于风, Gao's article was composed during the War of Anti-Japanese Aggression (1937-1945).

到了现代，到了革命的新中华民国，全国之画风除西画外，都是守住千百年来的作风！

Gao Jianfu expressed a similar attitude as Kang Youwei and Chen Duxiu. He said, “After I have followed Dr. Sun Yat-sen 孙逸仙 [1866 – 1925] for political revolution, I have found it necessary to revolutionize the art of China.”⁶⁶ (兄弟追随总理作政治革命以后，就感觉到我国艺术实有革新之必要。) Gao Jianfu advocated innovation and learning from nature, while opposing sticking to old conventions and blindly imitating the ancient masters. Gao did not want to abandon the tradition totally, and he wanted his new national Chinese painting to possess a distinctly Chinese character. Gao praised such qualities as spirit resonance (*Qiyun Shengdong* 气韵生动) of the old Chinese painting, and believed that certain scientific methods such as perspective were lacking.⁶⁷ In Gao’s text the words *Qiyun Shengdong* seems less a technical term than a reference to the essence of traditional Chinese painting. Gao’s concept of Guohua (national painting) must have some connection to Nihonga in Japan, where he studied from 1906 to 1908. The style in his painting seems closer to Nihonga than traditional Chinese painting. Gao’s vision was to make Chinese painting modern but still Chinese. Therefore Gao needed the support of the traditional style of Chinese art before the Four Wangs.

⁶⁶ Gao Jianfu, “Wo de Xiandai Guohuaguan,” 506.

⁶⁷ Gao Jianfu, “Wo de Xiandai Guohuaguan,” 510-11.

HUANG BINHONG 黄宾虹 (1865 – 1955)

Huang Binhong was a great painter of the literati tradition in the twentieth century, who wrote many articles on art. Huang Binhong 黄宾虹 (1865 – 1955) was born in Shexian, Anhui Province into a family of scholars and painters and received a classical education. In 1907 Huang left his hometown for Shanghai where he served as the editor of *Guocui Xuebao* 国粹学报 (*Journal of the Quintessence of National Culture*), director of the art department at the Commercial Press, and also taught art at several schools. In 1937 Huang worked in the Palace Museum in Beijing inspecting cultural artifacts. During the war with Japan Huang lived in Beijing and devoted his time to writing and painting. In 1948 Huang moved to Hangzhou and taught art at the Hangzhou National Art College and the Art Institute of Zhejiang until his death.

In a time when the traditional technique of brush and ink seemed incapable of further innovation, Huang still searched deep within the tradition. He had faith in the traditional Chinese painting of brush and ink. Both Huang's practices of painting and his theory of Chinese painting are deeply imbedded in the literati tradition.⁶⁸ As Huang himself was seeking innovation in the Chinese painting from brushwork, his analysis of the Four Wangs naturally focused on the methods of brushwork, style, and taste. This was the traditional Chinese scholarship on painting. In his *Guhua Wei* 古画微 (*On the Ancient Paintings*) of 1925, he wrote:

⁶⁸ Jason C. Kuo, *Transforming Traditions in Modern Chinese Painting, Huang Pin-hung's Late Work* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004) offers a good analysis of Huang's theory and his late style of painting.

Yuanzhao [Wang Jian]'s brushwork is more tangible than Yanke [Wang Shimin]'s. Shimin can grasp the spirit of landscape by his intangible brushwork, and his work is vigorous and graceful. In Wang Jian's work traces of strong brushwork can be seen, and his imitations capture the spirit as well. Both are surely belonging to the best.⁶⁹

特圆照所画，运笔之锋较烟客稍实。烟客用笔，在着力不着力之间，凭虚取神，苍润之中，更能绕秀。圆照总多笔锋靠实，临摹神似，或留迹象。然皆古意盎然，为画品上乘，无疑也。

Shigu [Wang Hui] has mastered the Six Methods, and his composition is balanced: there is no contemporary painter who has surpassed him. But he has left too apparent the traces of his brushworks which have been harmful to the charms of his painting . . . In the past two hundred years there are more and more people imitating Wang Hui. People only imitate Wang Hui but do not know what Wang Hui had learned from; this is the reason for the decline of painting in the Qing dynasty.⁷⁰

石谷六法到家，处处筋节，画学之能，当代无出其右；然笔法过于刻露，每易伤韵。……近二百年来，临摹石谷之画，日见其多。师石谷而不求石谷之所师，此清代画学日衰之由也。

⁶⁹ Huang Binhong 黄宾虹, "Guhua Wei" 古画微 [On Ancient Paintings]. *Xiaoshuo Shijie Congkan* 小说世界 [The World of Novels], 1925. Reprinted in *Huang Binhong Yishu Shuibi* 黄宾虹艺术随笔 [Essays on Art by Huang Binhong], edited by Lu Fusheng 卢辅圣 (Shanghai: Wenyi Chubanshe, 2001), 59.

⁷⁰ Huang Binhong, "Guhua Wei," 60.

Wang Yuanqi's works are mature while not sweet, simple while not rough, bland yet broad, hard yet pure, and the air of cultivated refinement is seen in the canvas . . . Wang's landscapes are as graceful as the flowing clouds, misty and luxuriant without end. His brushworks flow naturally without the sense of rigidness or being confined.⁷¹

熟而不甜，生而不涩，淡而弥厚，实而弥清，书卷之味，盎然楮墨之外。……麓台山石，妙如云气腾逸，模糊蓊郁，一望无际。用笔均极随意，绝无板滞束缚之态。

During his early career Huang had been imitating the old masters, and his favorable comments on the Four Wangs also revealed his sympathy to the old literati style. As Huang developed his own distinctive style during his later years, his opinion on the traditional literati painting, especially the Four Wangs, changed. In his “Jin Shushinian Huazhe Ping” 近数十年画者评 (Comments on Painters of Recent Decades) of 1930, Huang said:

It seems that painters from late Ming dynasty learned from Dong Qichang. They established Yunjian and Loudong Schools and called themselves the Southern School. Scholars had regarded Yanke [Wang Shimin], Yuanzhao [Wang Jian], Qinghui [Wang Hui] and Lutai [Wang Yuanqi] the “Four Wangs.” Those who had obtained paintings from the Four Wangs believed they no longer had to learn from ancient painters. Many fake paintings appeared among the genuine works and circulated from one hand to

⁷¹ Huang Binhong, “Guhua Wei,” 61.

another, which were imitated repeatedly and there were no literati families who did not possess such paintings. Therefore they had disregarded the artistic rules from the masters in Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties . . . There were numerous painters in the Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces who made their livings by imitating the paintings from the Four Wangs. Because of endless imitation, the genuine artistic values were not carried out.⁷²

盖自明季画家师法董玄宰，开云间娄东诸派，自称南宗。学者尊烟客圆照清晖露台为四王。得四王之画者，每谓可以前无古人。贗鼎杂处，辗转临摹，士夫之家，莫不有之。习非成是，遂置唐宋元人之矩约于不讲。……江浙之间，依赖传摹，以为衣食者，不可倭数。优孟衣冠，画事之真传，凌替极矣。

In the past when Huang Dachi [Gongwang] made comments on the painting, what he hated most was sweetness and mediocrity. No painters had been free from these faults since the School of Loudong. Painters from the School of Xin'an at the end of Ming dynasty learned from the great masters in the past, while since the Reign of Qianlong [1736 – 1796]

⁷² Huang Binhong 黄宾虹, "Jin Shushinian Huazhe Ping" 近数十年画者评 [Comments on the Painters in Recent Decades]. (Shanghai) *Dongfang Zazhi* 东方杂志 [*The Oriental Magazine*] 27, no. 1 (1930):155-157. Reprinted in *Yihai Gouchen, Jindai Zhongguo Meishu Lunji* 艺海钩沉, 近代中国美术论集 [*Collected Essays on Art in Modern China*], edited by He Huaishuo 何怀硕 (Taipei: Yishujia Chubanshe, 1991), 2:155.

and Jiaqing [1796 – 1821] most literati painters had acquired the poor habits of the Four Wangs. What a pity that painting had been declining.⁷³

昔黄大痴论画，最忌邪甜俗赖，自娄东派行，至于近今，中经递变，皆未免此。明季新安诸大家，力争上游，乾嘉而后，士夫多染四王习气，学术堕落，亦可慨矣。

Commenting on a painting by Wang Hui “Landscape after Wang Meng’s ‘Travelers amid Autumn Mountaints,’ 临王蒙秋山行旅 (Lin Wang Meng Qiushan Xinglü),⁷⁴ Huang said:

Wang Qinghui [Wang Hui] used the brushwork of Yuan painters to build mountains and valleys [in the style] of the Tang and Song periods. In this work, mountains and streams are round and full, while grass and trees are resplendent and lush. Though copied from Huanghe Shanqiao’s [Wang Meng’s] painting, it actually captures the spirit of Dong Beiyuan [Dong Yuan]. It was because, by studying a wide range of ancient masters, he was well grounded in the tradition. Those who examine this painting should treasure it with great care. In the early spring of the *yiyou* year [1945], Huang Binhong inscribed.⁷⁵

⁷³ Huang Binhong, “Jin Shushinian Huazhe Ping,” 159.

⁷⁴ Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 58.7 x 26.7 cm. See Fig. 3.

⁷⁵ Translation by Shi-Yee Liu, in Maxwell K. Hearn, ed., *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632 - 1717)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 214.

王清晖画以元人笔墨，运唐宋丘壑。此楨山川浑厚，草木华兹，虽临摹黄鹤山樵，其实得董北苑遗意，为多从古名家，渊源有自。监者宜什袭珍之。乙酉初春黄宾虹题⁷⁶

In the painting Wang Hui does seem to have successfully incorporated various styles from previous dynasties. In the painting between the high rising mountains is a river leading outside with several boats on it. A small village is located at the foot of the mountains and travelers are seen on the road. Huang, as the great literati painter, keeps the spirit of literati painting alive.

Huang's comments on the history of Chinese painting were more scholarly and showed less political influence. Yet, we must keep in mind that as he had created his own distinct style in his later years, he grew more critical of past painters. For Huang, the Four Wangs were no longer the painters he could learn from, but rather served as the background against which his own genius was made clear. Huang avoided the debate on whether realism should be introduced into Chinese painting, or social reality should become the subject matter for painting. Those debates seem irrelevant to him. Huang wanted people to know that his great innovation was within the literati tradition and his criticism of Chinese art history also focused on literati painting.

XU BEIHONG 徐悲鸿 (1895 – 1953)

⁷⁶ As cited in Maxwell K. Hearn, ed., *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632 - 1717)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 214.

In the early half of the twentieth century, many Chinese painters studied abroad, mainly in Japan and Paris. Some were intrigued by vividness of the realistic quality of Western painting. Therefore, they sought to revolutionize the literati tradition in Chinese art through the realistic art. Notable painters among these are Xu Beihong 徐悲鸿 (1895 – 1953) and Lin Fengmian 林风眠 (1900 – 1991), Xu being the more influential one. Xu studied Western Art in Paris and was fascinated by the realistic art found in Europe. As a student in Paris Xu only studied realist painting, and formed his aesthetic view of respecting only those paintings that were “true to life,” and applied this principle in judging all the works of art in history, both East and West. When he returned to China Xu helped establish various art schools and served as professor. After 1949 Xu served as the chairman of the Chinese Artists’ Association, president of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, and became one of the most influential authorities in the art world of China in the 1950s. Xu Beihong was passionate for socialist realism in art and used his position and fame to advocate for the realistic style. Xu intended to create a radical revolutionary discourse in art.

In his “Xin Yiyu Yundong zhi Huigu yu Qianzhan” 新艺术运动之回顾与前瞻 (Review and Prospect of the New Art Movement) of 1943, Xu Beihong said of Dong Qichang and the Four Wangs:

Because of his status as well as being a great collector, Dong Qichang created such an atmosphere that a painter may not be knowledgeable about nature and things, but he must be aware of the styles and schools of the

ancient masters, otherwise he would be a pitiful person. Dong was quite arrogant not only because of his fame, but also because of his wealth; this was very bad. Therefore there were the Four Wangs and the *Mustard Garden Painting Manuel*, which was only for fame and profit.⁷⁷

顾董其昌藉其名位，复是大收藏家，于是建立一种风气。乃画家可不解观察造物，却不可不识古作家作风与派别，否则便成鄙陋。此则不仅以声望地位傲人，兼以富厚自骄，恶劣极矣。于是遂有四王，遂有投机事业之《芥子园画谱》。

Xu expressed his opinions on the history of Chinese art in many of his writings. In his “Xin Guohua Jianli zhi Buzhou” 新国画建立之步骤 (The Procedures to Establish New National Painting) of 1947, for example, he used similar satirical tone calling the paintings by Dong Qichang and the Four Wangs “works of hypocritical cliché.”⁷⁸ (乡愿八股式滥调子的作品) Similar to the reformers during the May Fourth Movement such as Kang Youwei and Chen Duxiu, Xu may have thought it necessary to vehemently attack the old traditions if one wanted to incite any revolutionary change. Xu’s strong position spoke to his

⁷⁷ Xu Beihong 徐悲鸿, “Xin Yishu Yundong zhi Huigu yu Qianzhan” 新艺术运动之回顾与前瞻 [The Retrospect and Prospect of New Art Movement], Chongqing *Shishi Xinbao* 重庆实事新报 [New Times], 15 March 1943. Reprinted in *Xu Beihong Yishu Wenji* 徐悲鸿艺术文集 [Essays on Art by Xu Beihong], edited by Xu Boyang 徐伯阳 and Jin Shan 金山 (Taipei: Yishujia Chubanshe, 1987), 2:428.

⁷⁸ Xu Beihong 徐悲鸿, “Xin Guohua Jianli zhi Buzhou” 新国画建立之步骤 [Procedures to Establish the New National Painting]. Beijing 北平: *Shijie Ribao* 世界日报 World Daily, 16 October 1947. Reprinted in *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Meishu Wenxuan* 二十世纪中国美术文选 [Selected Works on Fine Arts in 20th Century], edited by Lang Shaojun 郎绍君 and Shui Tianzhong 水天中 (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1999), 1:717.

political and institutional strategy as well as his artistic conviction. For Xu, “if he had been able to avoid modernism in Paris, he was no longer able to do so in Shanghai.”⁷⁹ Here at home Xu found himself in the center of a cultural debate. The strong tone seemed necessary for Xu to hold his position when socialist realism was still not the predominant ideology.⁸⁰

By now we have reviewed the various opinions on the Four Wangs during the Republican Period, which should be viewed in their historical contexts. With increasing cultural exchange during the early twentieth century, the introduction of Western-style realism into Chinese art seems inevitable, and how to treat the traditional brush and ink painting is under debate. The Four Wangs, the great painters in the literati tradition in Qing dynasty, have become the focus of the debate. Some thinkers attacked the Four Wangs as a cultural strategy for the modernization of Chinese art through the Western approach, such as Kang Youwei and Chen Duxiu. Others, such as Jin Cheng and Chen Shizeng, found it necessary to defend the Four Wangs in order to uphold the literati tradition, which they regarded as the essence of Chinese art. Some criticized the Four Wangs from scholarly and artistic points of view, such as Yu Jianhua and Deng Yizhe, because they did not find any innovation in their art. Some literati painters, such as Fu

⁷⁹ Eugene Y. Wang, “Sketch Conceptualism as Modernist Contingency,” in *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions*, edited by Maxwell K Hearn and Judith G Smith (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 113.

⁸⁰ For more on the cultural debate in the late 1940s, see Richard Vinograd, “Relocations: Spaces of Chinese Visual Modernity,” in *Chinese art: Modern Expressions*, edited by Maxwell K Hearn and Judith G Smith (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001): 162-181.

Baoshi and Qin Zhongwen, praised the Four Wangs, either out of artistic conviction or as a way to defend themselves. The great literati painter Huang Binhong's opinion on the Four Wangs shifted over time as his own style matured.

CHAPTER II: EVALUATIONS OF THE FOUR WANGS DURING THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC PERIOD (1949 – present)

Mao Zedong 毛泽东 (1893 – 1976) is without question the most important figure in twentieth century China to shape both the political and intellectual landscape of the country. In his *Zai Yanan Wenyi Zuotanhui shang de Jianghua* 在 安文艺 谈会上的讲 (*Talks at the Yanan Forum on Art and Literature*) of 1942, Mao called for a socialist realist art of the people as a support for the revolutionary cause of the Communist Party.⁸¹ Mao's sense of art was clearly based on the class struggle and Mao believed art must serve the masses, and therefore artists and writers must learn from the people because "in the life of the people itself lies a mine of raw material for art and literature, namely, things in their natural state, things crude, but also most lively, rich and fundamental."⁸² For Mao, the art of the people must have the practical function of reflecting the life of the people and educating them at the same time. Mao's call had a profound influence on the direction of Chinese art and literature, especially when the Communist Party fully took power. Since then the idea that art should serve politics has been firmly established under China's Communist rule and social realism has become the dominate ideology in art.

⁸¹ See Mao Zedong 毛泽东, *Zai Yanan Wenyi Zuotanhui shang de Jianghua* 在 安文艺 谈会上的讲 [*Talks at the Yanan Forum on Art and Literature*] (Huadong Xinhua Shudian, 1949). Bonnie S. McDougall's *Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art": A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1980) offers commentary to the historical background, compares the major changes from the 1943/1944 text to the 1952/1966 text, and compiles major editions and translations.

⁸² Mao Zedong, *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Art and Literature* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1956), 22.

XU BEIHONG 徐悲鸿 (1895 – 1953)

History called for socialist realism in art and Xu was the central figure to realize that goal. Xu's opinion on art had moved closer to the official ideology of the Communist Party of China since the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Marxist class theory was apparent in Xu's "Mantan Shanshuihua" 漫谈山水画 (Random Talks on Landscape Painting) of 1950:

[Such ancient painters as Shen Zhou 沈周 (1427 – 1509), Qiu Yin 仇英 (1502/03 – 1552), and Yuan Jiang 袁江 (1671 – c. 1746)] were all capable of learning from nature as well as their own feeling, their works rejected the vulgar taste of the ruling class, but were full of joy of reclusive dwelling; these were successful works done by literati painters with great efforts. While those painters like Dong Qichang are just inferior literati painters of high official ranks who wanted to master the art of painting without laboring . . . As for the Four Wangs, they merely imitated the ancient masters without any innovation; and then Li Liweng [Li Yu 李漁 (1610 – 1680)] cooperating with some painters, compiled the *Mustard Garden Painting Manuel* for those bourgeois students to master the art of painting in three months, just to follow the fashionable trend. This had smothered the life of Chinese painting.⁸³

⁸³ Xu Beihong 徐悲鸿, "Mantan Shanshuihua" 漫谈山水画 [Random Talks on Landscape Painting]. In *Xin Jianshe 新建设 [New Development] (Monthly)* 1, no. 12 (1950). Reprinted in *Xu Beihong Yishu Wenji 徐悲鸿艺术文集 [Essays on Art by Xu Beihong]*, edited by Xu Boyang 徐伯阳 and Jin Shan 金山 (Taipei: Yishujia Chubanshe, 1987), 2:575.

[沈周，仇英，袁江等古代画家]皆能外师造化，中得心源，其作品多远离当时统治阶级俗气，得隐逸之趣；此文人竭尽心力之成功，不同于董其昌辈，达官显宦，想不劳而获的投机份子的末流文人画。……到了四王，专意贩卖古人面目，毫无独创精神，……到了李笠翁，便纠合画家，编了一部三个月速成的《芥子园画谱》，让当时那些资产阶级的念书人学几笔画，附庸风雅，于是扼杀了中国全部绘画。

It is clear that the prevailing political opinion dominated Xu's thoughts on the history of art. Xu applied Marxist theory of social classes to his writing on Chinese art. At the end of the article Xu summarized his political idea on the history of Chinese art:

Therefore we need the art of socialist realism in our time. The landscapes showing the cultivated pleasures of a leisurely life, even though they had achieved great accomplishment in history, could not have any instructional function for the people, nor any other positive influence . . . If we have talented painters, let them paint the stories of heroes (such as heroes in war), all kinds of models who had shown that we are fortunate of living in such a great era . . . [These works of social realism] can provide aesthetic enjoyment as well as encouragement to people, are they not better than the landscapes of Shixi [石溪, Kuncan 髡残 (1612 – 1673)] and Shitao [石涛 (1642 – 1707)]?⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Xu Beihong, "Mantan Shanshuihua," 581-582.

总之艺术需要现实主义的今日，闲情逸致的山水画，尽管它在历史上有极高度的成就，但它不可能对人民起教育作用，并也无其他积极作用；……我们之中倘有天才，希望他能写出各种英雄（如战斗英雄等）的史实，各种模范的人物凸出着我们幸运遭遇这个伟大时代。……[这些写实作品] 能使人欣赏，又能鼓舞人，不更好过石溪石涛的山水么？

WANG XUN 王逊 (1916 -)

With socialist realism in art as the dominant ideology, new textbooks were needed to meet the new political requirement. Wang Xun's *Zhongguo Meishushi* 中国美术史 (*History of Chinese Painting*) was written in 1956, but was not published until 1980s, edited by his students. It was widely used and circulated as the textbook from 1950s to 1970s for the Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts. Wang Xun 王逊 (1916 -) studied philosophy at Tsinghua University, and in the 1940s and 1950s he taught art history at various schools. In 1957 Wang Xun helped establish the department of art history at the Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts. Even though in his *History of Chinese Art* Wang tried to analyze painters' stylistic shifts, the tone of the prevailing political ideology was still apparent, especially in his narration of the artists' social background. Wang praised the achievement of

the Four Wangs in their employment of dry brush and ink,⁸⁵ but criticized their lack of creativity:

In their work they had given up the pursuit of expressing the content; yet it is different from the works by Shen Zhou and Wen Zhengming, whose works stress the poetic theme; the Four Wangs had “*Fang 仿* (copying) Dachi [Huang Gongwang]”, and “*Lin 临* (after) Juran” as their titles; they had imitation as the purpose.⁸⁶

他们的作品进一步地放弃了表现内容的要求，与沈周和文征明的重视作品的富有诗意的主题又有所不同；所以他们的作品就明白以‘仿大痴’，‘临巨然’为题，纯以临摹为宗旨了。

The content Wang Xun mentioned here is no doubt referring to the realistic depiction of life that socialist realism requires. The value of literati painting can no longer serve the political need of the New China.

YAN LICHUANG 阎丽川

Another textbook, *Zhongguo Meishu Shilue 中国美术史略 (A Concise History of Chinese Painting)*, was written in 1958 by Yan Lichuan 阎丽川 and the revised edition was published in 1980. In this book, the Marxist ideology of class struggle

⁸⁵ Wang Xun 王逊, *Zhongguo Meishushi 中国美术史 [History of Chinese Art]* (Shanghai: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1985), 420.

⁸⁶ Wang Xun, *Zhongguo Meishushi*, 420-421.

completely dominated the text. Yan considered the literati painters as members of the bourgeois class who simply exploited the working class. Yan wrote in the 1958 edition of paintings in Ming and Qing dynasties:

Paintings in Ming and Qing dynasties “were based on the convention of forms, devoid of real life. The themes had become narrower and narrower, and the images in the painting were lack of change. Therefore the Ming and Qing paintings will inevitably lead to formalism.”⁸⁷

明清绘画“从造形概念出发，脱离了现实生活，题材范围日渐缩小，事物形象缺乏变化，因而不可避免地走向形式主义的道路。”

This reminds us the suffering of Lin Fengmian whose art was criticized during the Cultural Revolution for being an example of formalism without any social relevance. In his revised edition of 1980, Yan kept his fundamental opinions unchanged and still applied the Marxist doctrine to the history of art:

The literati painters of Ming and Qing dynasties, who had controlled the art establishment, aligned themselves with the ruling class. They avoided the struggles of real life, and their minds were empty. Influenced by the idea of literati painting from previous dynasties, the trends of “back to the ancients” and formalism had been strengthened among schools, and the sectarianism had been established. Painters had no mind for ideas,

⁸⁷ As cited by Lang Shaojun 郎绍君, “‘Siwang’ zai Ershi Shiji” “四王”在二十世纪 [The Four Wangs in the Twentieth Century], in *Qingchu Siwang Huapai Yanjiu lunwenji 清初四王画派研究论文集 [Theses on Research of Four Wangs’ Painting in Early Qing Dynasty]*, edited by Duoyu Bianjibu 朵云编辑部 (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1993), 858-859.

contents, or subject matters in painting, but only dwelled in landscapes of trees and stones, and few forms of birds and insects to express their emotions and ideals . . . Therefore they could only compete with each other in the techniques of brush and ink. The state of art, inevitably, declined.⁸⁸

明清两代把持画坛的士大夫阶级文人画家 依附于封建统治，回避现实斗争，内心十分空虚。在前代“文人画”思潮的支配之下，复古主义和形式主义的倾向引伸到师承门户之间，发展了宗派主义。不问思想内容和题材意义，停留在无名的山水树石和有限的几种花鸟草虫上“写意”、“抒情。..... 结果只能在笔墨技术上比高低、争上下，因而导致绘画艺术之衰落，势所难免。

Particularly of the Four Wangs, Yan wrote:

[The Four Wangs, Wu, and Yun] had enjoyed their ability to imitate ancient paintings. They had only pursued various brush techniques, and satisfied in the elegance of brushworks. All their paintings are the same, devoid of power and grandeur. Because of such “orthodox” or “mainstream”, it reflected the decline of art in that time.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Yan Lichuan 阎丽川, *Zhongguo Meishu Shilue 中国美术史略 [A Concise History of Chinese Painting]* (Beijing: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1980), 284.

⁸⁹ Yan Lichuan, *Zhongguo Meishu Shilue*, 297.

[四王吴恽] 多半以师古摹古为能事，片面地追求勾皴擦染，满足于笔墨秀润，千篇一律，缺乏气势。正因这些“正统”“主流”，也正好反映了当时绘画艺术的衰落。

But Yan praised Wang Hui:

Wang Hui . . . because of his imitation of Yuan and Ming painters, his brushworks and forms are prudent and concrete, his composition of the scene has a sense of wholeness, and the spirit is throughout the picture. In his “Sleepy Crow in Autumn Forest” both the brushwork and coloring are concurrently vigorous and calm, which goes beyond ordinary elegance. His composition is more natural without any built-up blocks. This Wang Shimin could not achieve.⁹⁰

王翬 通过对元明各家的摹写，笔墨造型比较严谨结实，画面结景注意整体感，气韵贯注。从他的《秋林昏鸦图》来看，无论用笔着色，都显得苍劲沉着，已超出了一般的秀润感觉，结景也比较自然而少堆砌做作。这都是王时敏等所不及的。

It is no surprise that Yan selected the realistic painting “Kangxi Emperor on His Southern Inspection Tour” (Kangxi Nanxue Tu 康熙南巡图)⁹¹ and praised it.

⁹⁰ Yan Lichuan, *Zhongguo Meishu Shilue*, 297-298.

⁹¹ See Fig. 4 for a detail of the painting.

“Kangxi Emperor on His Southern Inspection Tour” [Kangxi Nanxue Tu], even though it is a court painting extolling the emperor to facilitate a sense of prosperity, it draws the traditional approaches from such great works as “Peace Reigns over the River” 清明上河图. The scene in the painting is spectacular, and the drawings are meticulous. All the way from Beijing to Shaoxing, the painting includes thousands of figures and many cityscapes and rural scenes. It reflects to a certain extent the agricultural productions and industrial and commercial activities in the city during Qing dynasty.⁹²

《康熙南巡图》……这个画卷虽说也是为帝王歌功颂德以粉饰太平的宫廷艺术。但它吸取了《清明上河图》等优秀作品的传统手法，场面壮阔，刻划精细，从北京画到绍兴，包括上万人物和若干地区的城市面貌、农村风光，对当时的农业生产和城市工商经济在一定程度上有所反应。

In the works of Xu Beihong, Wang Xun and Yan Lichang the Marxist doctrine completely dictated the writing of art history from 1950s to the early 1980s. It can be imagined that since the new People’s Republic of China the mood of challenging nature had become the prevailing social emotion, and literati painting was unable to offer anything to this state of mind. The call for socialist realism in art seems inevitable during that time. Unfortunately, art criticism was not unaffected by the prevailing political thinking, and Marxist ideas were applied to the study of art history.

⁹² Yan Lichuan, *Zhongguo Meishu Shilue*, 298.

HU PEIHENG 胡佩衡 (1891 – 1962)

Hu Peiheng continued to write on art until the 1950s. Hu's monologue *Wang Shigu* 王石谷 was published in 1958 and the content was pretty much the same as the book *Wang Shigu Huafa Juwei* 王石谷画法 微 (*On the Painting of Wang Shigu [Wang Hui]*) he wrote 20 years before. It is clear that the dominant socialist realism advocated by Mao Zedong and Xu Beihong influenced Hu's thinking. Hu himself had made explicit that "the purpose of our research of Wang Shigu . . . is to serve the creation of painting of socialist realism."⁹³ (我们研究王石谷的目的, 为我们社会主义现实主义的创作服务。) It is not surprising that the painting *The Kangxi Emperor on His Southern Inspection Tour* 康熙南巡图, of which Wang Hui was the chief painter, was also mentioned in Hu's late book and praised for its realistic achievement in depicting the life of the people during that time.⁹⁴ In his book Hu stressed the lack of realism in Wang Hui's work: "The biggest weakness of Wang Shigu is that he did not turn his eyes to the real life and he had not learned enough from life. But his work was not totally without the joy of life."⁹⁵ (王石谷最大的缺点就是面向现实不够, 缺乏生活, 但也不是毫

⁹³ Hu Peiheng 胡佩衡, *Wang Shigu* 王石谷 (Shanghai: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1958), 2.

⁹⁴ Hu Peiheng, *Wang Shigu*, 19.

⁹⁵ Hu Peiheng, *Wang Shigu*, 32.

无生活情趣。) Hu's remark was less radical and more scholarly than that of Xu Beihong.

YU JIANHUA 俞剑华 (1895 – 1979)

Yu continued his writing on Chinese painting after 1949. In one article on Wang Yuanqi published in 1961, Yu criticized Wang Yuanqi, claiming that his painting was not true to nature and could not have an instructional function to the people. Yu said that he did not like Wang Yuanqi in the past because he judged him from the standpoint of brush and ink techniques; he thought that now one must make judgment based on broad perspective in order to have an accurate judgment about a painter or his work.⁹⁶ Yu considered the Four Great Painters of Yuan dynasty passive because they retreated into the mountains. The works of the Four Wangs, Yu wrote, are only serving the ruling class. Therefore all these works are politically reactionary. Artistically, Wang Yuanqi's work, Yu continued, is also reactionary because it is not true to nature. These works can neither encourage nor educate people. Yu's writings after the 1950s were clearly influenced by Mao Zedong's thoughts on art and literature.

While sharply criticizing the Four Wangs, Yu exalted the Four Monks. The Four Wangs were considered serving the ruling class, while the Four Monks were

⁹⁶ Yu Jianhua 俞剑华, "Ye Tan Wang Lutai Hua" 也谈王麓台画 [On the Paintings of Wang Yuanqi], *Wen Hui Bao* 文 报, 26 July 1961. Reprinted in *Yu Jianhua Meishu Lunwen Xuan* 俞建华美术论文选 [Yu Jianhua's Essays on Art], edited by Zhou Jiyin 周积寅 (Jinan: Shandong Meishu Chubanshe, 1986), 323.

considered loyal to the former dynasty. Such contrasting judgment has been influential up to today, and many critics still consider the Four Wangs and the Four Monks and their followers in direct opposition to one another in both their artistic style (creation versus imitation) and their character (loyal versus disloyal to the former court). Such comparison is certainly derived from the fact that social and political aspects of art history have been weighed more than artistic merits. Especially during the early years of the People's Republic of China, politics dominated every aspect of cultural affairs.

TONG SHUYE 童书业 (1908 – 1968)

Tong Shuye 童书业 (1908 – 1968) was a famous historian of ancient Chinese history, who also wrote many articles on art history. Tong's article "Wang Lutai Huihua de Pingjia Wenti" 王麓台绘画的评价问题 (The Issue of Evaluating the Paintings of Wang Lutai [Yuanqi]) was written in 1961. Tong's writings were not without political tones, but besides that his works were mainly scholarly.

There was nothing good in the ideas and contents of his painting. It was just about the ideas and contents of the literati landscape painting, and I will not bother to say much. His major contribution lies in the methods of brush and ink. In this respect, we could not deny his achievement.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Tong Shuye 童书业, "Wang Lutai Huihua de Pingjia Wenti" 王麓台绘画的评价问题 [The Issue of Evaluating the Paintings of Wang Lutai (Yuanqi)]. In *Tong Shuye Meishu Lunji* 童书业美

他的画的思想内容是没什么可取的，不过是一般文人山水画的思想内容而已，这里就不多说了。他的贡献主要是在笔墨技法方面，在这方面，不能说他没有相当的成绩。

Besides that, his analysis of Wang Yuanqi seemed to deviate very little from traditional scholarship on the criticism of art. On Wang Yuanqi's brush, for example, Tong wrote: "the brushstroke of Lutai [Wang Yuanqi] was full of strength but the sharp edge was not exposed."⁹⁸ (麓台的用笔，很有力量而不漏锋芒。) On the spirit of Wang Yuanqi's painting, Tong wrote: "The spirit resonance was very special. [His painting] was boundless and broad, pure and romantic. It was worth considering and left with good impression."⁹⁹ (他的画气韵很是特别，苍茫厚实，天真烂漫，耐人寻味，令人印象深刻。)

Tong compared Wang Yuanqi with Huang Gongwang and Dong Qichang and praised Wang's innovation in brush techniques. Tong also did not agree with the opinion that Wang Yuanqi's landscapes were mere imitations, reflecting nothing from nature. Tong said Wang's painting was based on his observation of the landscapes in the Jiangnan region.

The excellence in Lutai's composition was shown in the fact that the whole canvas was filled and not much blank area was left to indicate

术论集 (*Art Essays of Tong Shuye*), edited by Tong Jiaoying 童教英 (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 1989), 665.

⁹⁸ Tong Shuye, "Wang Lutai Huihua de Pingjia Wenti," 667.

⁹⁹ Tong Shuye, "Wang Lutai Huihua de Pingjia Wenti," 667.

clouds or mists. The whole canvas was one, elegant and deep. This was achieved because [Wang Yuanqi] was learning from Zijiu [Huang Gongwang] on the one hand and the nature on the other hand.¹⁰⁰

麓台的章法妙在全幅填塞，少用云烟而混沦一气，庄重深远。这是一面取法子久，一面写生的结果。

It might be the case that Tong had to disguise his true opinions on the Four Wangs due to the political climate. Besides this, his judgment of Wang Yuanqi was purely scholarly and full of insight.

WANG BOMIN 王伯敏

Wang Bomin's *Zhongguo Huihuashi* 中国绘画史 (*History of Chinese Painting*) was finished in 1966 and was first published in 1982. In the preface Wang Bomin set the tone for the whole book: "art has class character."¹⁰¹ (艺术是有阶级性的) In this book Wang quoted theories from Marx, Engels, and Lenin to support his analysis. He had criticized the Four Wangs for their imitations of the ancient masters without any learning from nature.

¹⁰⁰ Tong Shuye, "Wang Lutai Huihua de Pingjia Wenti," 669.

¹⁰¹ Wang Bomin 王伯敏, *Zhongguo Huihuashi* 中国绘画史 [*History of Chinese Painting*]. (finished in 1966.) (Shanghai: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1982), preface, 2.

NIE CHONGZHENG 聂崇正

From late 1980s the political climate has become favorable for academics, especially for cultural affairs. Nie Chongzheng 聂崇正's article on the Four Wangs was written for the *Zhongguo Meishu Quanji* published in 1989, which is meant to be a brief and yet authoritative account of early Qing art history. Different from the previous discussions on the Four Wangs which were influenced by political ideologies, Nie's article readdressed the issue from a scholarly point of view. In general Nie had given a positive judgment of the Four Wangs and quoted Qing scholars such as Qin Zuyong 秦祖永 (1824 – 1884) in his criticism¹⁰². Of Wang Shimin, for example, Nie wrote: "his brushstroke is reserved, and his style is vigorous and elegant."¹⁰³ (用笔很含蓄, 格调苍润、松秀。) Of Wang Hui, Nie wrote: "his brushstroke is exposed, not reserved."¹⁰⁴ (用笔比较直露, 不够含蓄。) Nie praised Wang Hui's ability to depict nature and commented that as a professional painter, Wang Hui did not strictly adhere to Dong Qichang's Dichotomy of Northern and Southern Schools.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Qin's landscape is based on the style of Wang Shimin and his opinion on the Four Wangs is quite favorable. For a brief biography of Qin and examples of his painting, see Li Zhujin 李铸晋 and Wan Qingli 万青力, *Zhongguo Xiandai Huihuashi Wanqing Bu 1840 – 1911 中国现代绘画史 晚清之部 1840 – 1911 [History of Modern Chinese Painting in Late Qing Period 1840 – 1911]* (Taipei: Rock Publishing International, 1997), 38.

¹⁰³ Nie Chongzheng 聂崇正, "Qingchu Liujia jiqi Huihua Yishu" 清初六家及其绘画艺术 [The Six Great Painters of Early Qing Dynasty and Their Painting], in *Zhongguo Meishu Quanji 中国美术全集 (绘画篇 10: 清代绘画 中) [Selected Works of Chinese Art. Painting, Vol. 10: Painting during Qing Dynasty, Part II]* (Shanghai: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1989), 3.

¹⁰⁴ Nie Chongzheng, "Qingchu Liujia jiqi Huihua Yishu", 5.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

At the end of his article, Nie referred briefly to the debate of the Four Wangs during the twentieth century. There were many more painters besides the Four Wangs during the Qing dynasty, Nie wrote, who only learned from their teachers of the established conventions without any innovation; but it is due to the Four Wangs' great achievement that they got most attention. Nie pointed out, "Because of the huge influence of the Four Wangs, it is inevitable that they had been discussed and judged either positively or negatively."¹⁰⁶ (由于“四王”影响很大, 引起后世褒贬与议论, 也是必然的。) Overall Nie criticized the Four Wangs' imitations of the old painters without innovation, but affirmed their excellent brushworks.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE FOUR WANGS

In 1992 an international conference was organized in Shanghai on the paintings of the Four Wangs. More than fifty international scholars attended the conference, which was considered by the participants "the only discussion on the Four Wangs during the twentieth century that was purely scholarly."¹⁰⁷

In this thesis three essays from the conference proceedings will be mentioned to illustrate the views on the Four Wangs during the early nineties. Lu Fusheng 卢辅

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰⁷ Duoyun Bianjibu 朵云编辑部, *Qingchu Siwang Huapai Yanjiu lunwenji 清初四王画派研究论文集 [Theses on Research of Four Wangs' Painting in Early Qing Dynasty]* (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1993), 928.

圣's article "Siwang Lungang" 四王论纲 (General Remarks on the Four Wangs) offered a general and philosophical discussion on the Four Wangs concerning their historical and artistic development. Lu proposed an approach that emphasized on the intrinsic development of art history rather than a patron-painter relationship or the duality of orthodox/non-orthodox.

A painter will always enter into the history of art in a certain point in its development. Painting is an ever evolving and changing historical form, which is constantly producing new painters and new paintings, thus forming a dynamic process with connections of painters. The intrinsic dynamics of art history will set its general norms and choices in its development. This is the historical truth in art, the result of its intrinsic dynamics. To study the Four Wangs from the intrinsic dynamics will help us see things clearly without many details. We will be free from such modes of thinking as to whether they served the court or they retreated into the mountains, whether they are conservative or innovative. This approach will offer a new starting point with profound significance.¹⁰⁸

画家总是在某一绘画发展阶段上介入绘画，而绘画作为一种不断发展、不断变异着的历史形态，又总是在不断产生出众多的画家和画作并构成一定衔接关系的动态过程中，对自身的发展目标进行整体上的规定

¹⁰⁸ Lu Fusheng 卢辅圣, "Siwang Lungang" 四王论纲 [General Remarks on the Four Wangs], in *Qingchu Siwang Huapai Yanjiu lunwenji* 清初四王画派研究论文集 [Theses on Research of Four Wangs' Painting in Early Qing Dynasty], edited by Duoyun Bianjibu 朵云编辑部 (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1993), 3.

与选择，从而表现为真切可据的历史性感召，这就是本体因素起作用的结果。……从本体化的角度切入四王研究，不仅有望删除冗繁、单刀直入，而且有利于从御用还是野逸、守旧还是创新等简单化的思维模式中解放出来，寻求一个富于意味的新起点。

While Liu Gangji 刘纲纪 expressed different ideas from Lu in his article “Siwang Lun” 四王论 (On the Four Wangs), Liu did not believe that art is independent of its historical context. Instead, Liu pointed out the connections between the paintings of the Four Wangs and contemporary trends in literature and poetry.

Seen from a larger historical background, the school of the Four Wangs was the product of the cultural policy and cultural trend during the Kangxi Reign [1662 – 1723]. During this period in literature there was classical prose advocated by Fang Bao [1668 – 1749], in poetry “gentleness and honesty” were advocated by Shen Deqian [1673 – 1769] who put emphasis on the instructional function of poetry. And in the field of painting it was the Four Wangs who were the major representatives. There was an obvious commonality among the three art forms in their aesthetic trend; this was the same cultural trend manifested in different art fields.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Liu Gangji 刘纲纪, “Siwang Lun” 四王论 [On the Four Wangs], in *Qingchu Siwang Huapai Yanjiu lunwenji 清初四王画派研究论文集 [Theses on Research of Four Wangs’ Painting in Early Qing Dynasty]*, edited by Duoyun Bianjibu 朵云编辑部 (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1993), 19.

These were the products of what the Emperor Kangxi had required “purenness, truth, elegance, and integrity” from Confucian values.¹¹⁰

从大的时代背景来看，“四王”这一艺术流派是清王朝康熙时期的文化政策、文化趋向的产物。这时，在文学上有方苞倡导的桐城派尊“义法”的古文，沈德潜鼓吹的崇“教化”的“温柔敦厚”的诗歌。在绘画领域，则要以“四王”为主要代表了。三者的美学倾向有十分明显的共同之处，是同一文化趋向在不同艺术部门的表现。

都是康熙所要求的“清真雅正”这一儒家美学规范下的产物。

In Xue Yongnian 薛永年’s article “Lun Siwang” 论四王 (On the Four Wangs), Xue praised Wang Hui for his ability to learn from various painters as well as from nature. Xue summarized, in his article:

. . . The art of the Four Wangs was highly valued by the Qing rulers and was even regarded as the orthodox, and no other painters or schools can achieve this status. There are two reasons for this. First, the Four Wangs, especially Wang Yuanqi and Wang Hui, did have new achievement in their language of the landscape painting. This is why such great painters as Wu Changshuo [1844 – 1927] had praised them highly. Second, even though their art was not without the common aesthetics accepted by all classes, it still mainly reflected the value of the literati class, whose spiritual life tended to recognize the idea that “the truth shall not change as

¹¹⁰ Liu Gangji, “Siwang Lun,” 30.

long as the heaven does not change.” This is why the Qing rulers had chosen the Four Wangs to support their cultural construction instead of Shitao, a man of great personality and expressive spirit. If we ignore the first reason, we will simply regard the art of the Four Wangs as the embodiment of the feudal culture and thoughts and fail to see the artistic achievement and experience of the Four Wangs. If we ignore the second reason, we will not clearly see the limitation of the Four Wangs.¹¹¹

…… 四王艺术所以受到清代统治者的重视，甚而至于被奉为正统艺术，在清代得到各家各派几乎无法比拟的地位，一方面在于四王尤其是王原祁与王翬在山水画艺术语言上确实有新的造就，这也正是吴昌硕一类大家给予高度评价的原因。另一方面则是这种艺术的意蕴虽并非没有各阶级各阶层共同接受的美，但其主导方面仍是封建文人士大夫所需要的与“天不变道亦不变”的文化精神相适应的精神生存空间。这也正是清代统治者为什么选择四王艺术以佐助文治而不选择具有强烈个性与自由抒写精神的石涛等人加以提倡的原因。忽略了前者，就会把四王艺术简单化地当成封建文化思想的载体而看不到其艺术语言上的成就与经验，忽略了后者则无法正视四王艺术的局限性。

¹¹¹ Xue Yongnian 薛永年, “Lun Siwang” 论四王 [On the Four Wangs], in *Qingchu Siwang Huapai Yanjiu lunwenji* 清初四王画派研究论文集 [Theses on Research of Four Wangs' Painting in Early Qing Dynasty], edited by Duoyun Bianjibu 朵云编辑部 (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1993), 98.

CHAPTER III: CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have examined the reception of the Four Wangs during twentieth century China and the debates concerning traditional Chinese culture in a time of great confusion. Since the introduction of Western painting in an unprecedented scale in the early twentieth century, traditional Chinese painting has been re-examined in a new light. Whether or not the literati style deserves the highest status it used to enjoy has been under fierce debate. The Four Wangs of early Qing dynasty have become the symbol for the literati painting, and the debate on the Four Wangs is also a reflection of the attitude towards the literati painting. Those who wish to introduce the Western realistic style attack the Four Wangs, while those who are defending them find it necessary to uphold the tradition of literati painting as a whole. With the advent of socialist realism, advocated by Mao Zedong politically and Xu Beihong artistically, the literati style can no longer stay relevant and the Four Wangs received severe criticism. When the political environment became friendlier in the late 1980s, discussion surrounding the Four Wangs started to focus, once again, on the artistic rather than the political. No longer were the Four Wangs a symbol for any cultural ideologies or employed as a strategy for political discussion. Throughout this paper I have examined the aesthetic value of the Four Wangs' painting. After the long debates in the twentieth century on the Four Wangs, both during the Republican and the People's Republic Periods, the value of the Four Wangs's work will be appreciated again.

The root of this debate is found in Chinese philosophy. Confucianism has long been the dominating intellectual and moral guide for the Chinese literati class as well as the common people. The Confucian's preaching of social involvement means that art should have a social function. From Confucian's belief in the ability of art in improving morality and society to Cai Yuanpei's support for the aesthetic education replacing religion, utilitarianism of art has long been part of traditional thinking. In literati theory, painting has become a way of self-cultivation. All these are in fact the utilitarianist approaches to art. Different from the Western intellectual tradition, in China, art has never been associated with metaphysics in any sense. Metaphysics is not fully developed and art is seldom discussed from the metaphysical perspective. Art has been regarded as a way to improve the self or the society. It is not surprising that the debate on the Four Wangs became a debate about traditional Chinese art itself during the first half of the twentieth century. It is also not any surprise that Marxist ideology became the dominant ideology as of 1949, when art became a tool for improving society, receiving wide intellectual support. From this perspective we can begin to understand the complexity of the debate on the Four Wangs in twentieth century China.

List of Illustrations

Fig. 1 Wang Hui 王翬 (1632 – 1717), *Landscape after Guan Tong’s “Streams and Mountains Clearing after Mist” “Fang Guan Tong Xishan Qing’ai” 仿关仝溪山晴霭*, detail, 1678. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 29.3 x 353 cm, Shanghai Museum. Image after Hearn, Maxwell K., ed. *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632 - 1717)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 96. [See text page 35]

Fig. 2 Wang Hui 王翬 (1632 – 1717), *Landscape in the Style of Juran, “Fang Juran Shanshui” 仿巨然山水*, hanging scroll, 1664, ink on paper, 131 x 65.5 cm, Princeton University Art Museum. Image after Hearn, Maxwell K., ed. *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632 - 1717)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 24. [See text page 37]

Fig. 3 Wang Hui 王翬 (1632 – 1717), *Landscape after Wang Meng’s “Travelers amid Autumn Mountaints, “Lin Wang Meng Qiushan Xinglü” 临王蒙秋山行旅*. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 58.7 x 26.7 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image after Hearn, Maxwell K., ed. *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632 - 1717)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 76. [See text page 43]

Fig. 4 Wang Hui 王翬 (1632 – 1717) and others, *Kangxi Emperor on His Southern Inspection Tour “Kangxi Nanxun Tu” 康熙南巡图*. Scroll Seven Depicting the Journey from Wuxi to Suzhou and Tiger Hill, datable to 1698. Detail showing Kangxi’s disembarkation at the Chang Gate. Ink and color on silk, 67.8 x 2190 cm, University of Alberta, Mactaggart Art Collection, Edmonton. Image after Hearn, Maxwell K., ed. *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632 - 1717)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 170. [See text page 54]

APPENDIX I: CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF ARTICLES AND BOOKS
PUBLISHED DURING THE REPUBLICAN PERIOD (1911 – 1949)

1917

Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培. “Yi Meiyu Dai Zongjiao Shuo” 以美育代宗教说 [Aesthetic Education Replacing Religion], Speech at the Beijing Shenzhou Xuehui 北京神州学会 [Beijing China Society], 1917. First published in *Xin Qingnian 新青年 (New Youth)* 3, 6 (August 1917). Reprinted in *Cai Yuanpei Meixue Wenxuan 蔡元培美学文选 [Cai Yuanpei's Essays on Aesthetics]*, 68-73. Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1983.

Kang Youwei 康有为. *Wanmucaotang Canghuamu 万木草 藏画目 [Wanmucaotang Painting Collection Catalogue]*, 1917. Reprinted in *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Meishu Wenxuan 二十世纪中国美术文选 [Selected Works on Fine Arts in 20th Century]*, edited by Lang Shaojun 郎绍君 and Shui Tianzhong 水天中, 1:21-25. Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1999.

1918

Chen Duxiu 陈独秀. “Meishu Geming” 美术革命 (Art Revolution). *Xin Qingnian 新青年 (New Youth)* 6, no. 1 (1918). Reprinted in *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Meishu Wenxuan 二十世纪中国美术文选 [Selected Works on Fine Arts in 20th Century]*, edited by Lang Shaojun 郎绍君 and Shui Tianzhong 水天中, 1:29-30. Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1999.

1919

Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培. “Zai Beida Huafa Yanjiuhui zhi Yanshuo Ci” 在北大画法研究会之演说词 [Speech at the Research Institute of Painting Techniques of Beijing University]. *Beijing Daxue Rikan 北京大学日 (Beijing University Daily)*, October 25, 1919. Reprinted in *Cai Yuanpei Meixue Wenxuan 蔡元培美学文选 [Cai Yuanpei's Essays on Aesthetics]*, 80-81. Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1983.

1920

Hu Peiheng 胡佩衡. “Zhongguo Shanshuihua Xiesheng de Wenti” 中国山水画写生的问题 [The Issue of Sketching in Chinese Landscape Painting], 1920. Reprinted in *Yihai Gouchen, Jindai Zhongguo Meishu Lunji 艺海钩沉, 近代中国美术论集 [Collected Essays on Art in Modern China]*, edited by He Huaishuo 何怀硕, 3:51-54. Taipei: Yishujia Chubanshe, 1991.

Jin Cheng 金城. “Jin Gongbei Jiangyanlu” 金拱北讲演录 [Lectures of Jin Cheng]. *Huixue Zazhi* 绘学杂志 (*Magazine on Painting Studies*), Peking University Huixue Zazhishe 北京大学绘学杂志社, 1920. Reprinted in *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Meishu Wenxuan* 二十世纪中国美术文选 [*Selected Works on Fine Arts in 20th Century*], edited by Lang Shaojun 郎绍君 and Shui Tianzhong 水天中, 1:43-47. Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1999.

1922

Chen Shizeng 陈师曾. “Wenrenhua zhi Jiazhi” 文人画之价值 [The Value of Literati Painting]. *Huixue Zazhi* 绘学杂志 [*Painting Study Magazine*], 1922. Reprinted in Chen Shizeng 陈师曾, *Zhongguo Huihuashi* 中国绘画史 [*History of Chinese Painting*], edited by Xu Shucheng 徐书城, 177-187. Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, 2004.

1925

Chen Shizeng 陈师曾. *Zhongguo Huihuashi* 中国绘画史 [*History of Chinese Painting*]. Jinan: Hanmo Yuan Meishu Yuan, 1925. Reprinted and edited by Xu Shucheng. Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, 2004.

Huang Binhong 黄宾虹. “Guhua Wei” 古画微 (On Ancient Paintings). *Xiaoshuo Shijie Congkan* 小说世界 [*The World of Novels*]. Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1925. Reprinted in *Huang Binhong Yishu Shuibi* 黄宾虹艺术随笔 [*Essays on Art by Huang Binhong*], edited by Lu Fusheng 卢辅圣, 24 -78. Shanghai: Wenyi Chubanshe, 2001.

Teng Gu 滕固. *Zhongguo Meishu Xiaoshi* 中国美术小史 [*Short History of Chinese Art*], 1925. First published by Shangwu Yinshuguan (The Commercial Press), 1935. Reprinted in *Teng Gu Yishu Wenji* 滕固艺术文集 [Teng Gu's Essays on Art], edited by Shen Ning 沈宁, 71-93. Shanghai: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 2003.

1928

Deng Yizhe 邓以蜚. “Guohua Luyan” 国画鲁言 [Casual Remarks on National Painting]. *Chenbao Fukan* 报 [*Supplementary to the Morning News*] (May 31, 1926); In Deng Yizhe 邓以蜚, *Yishujia de Nanguan* 艺术家的难关 [*The Crisis of Artists*]. Beijing [Beijing]: Gucheng Shushe Chuban, 1928. Revised and published again in 1935. Reprinted in *Deng Yizhe Quanji* 邓以蜚全集 [*Complete Works of Deng Yizhe*], 106-115. Hefui: Anhui Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1998.

_____. *Yishujia de Nanguan* 艺术家的难关 [*The Crisis of Artists*]. Beijing [Beijing]: Gucheng Shushe Chuban, 1928.

Yu Jianhua 俞剑华. “Xiandai Zhongguo Huatan de Qingkuang” 现代中国画坛的情况 [Situations on the Modern Chinese Art World]. *Zhen Mei Shan 真美善 [Truth, Beauty, Good]* 2, no. 2 (1928). Reprinted in *Yu Jianhua Meishu Lunwen Xuan 俞建华美术论文选 [Yu Jianhua's Essays on Art]*, edited by Zhou Jiyin 周积寅, 63-73. Jinan: Shandong Meishu Chubanshe, 1986.

1929

Chen Xiaodie 陈小蝶. “Cong Meizhan Zuopin Ganjue dao Xiandai Guohua Huapai” 从美展作品感觉到现代国画画派 [Schools of Modern Chinese Painting as Seen in the Works in Exhibition]. *Meizhan Huikan 美展 [Collected Essays on the Art Exhibition]*, published by the Editorial Board of the First National Art Exhibition [Diyijie Quanguo Meishu Zhanlanhui Bianjizu Faxing 第一届全国美术展览会编辑组发行], 1929. Reprinted in *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Meishu Wenxuan 二十世纪中国美术文选 [Selected Works on Fine Arts in 20th Century]*, edited by Lang Shaojun 郎绍君 and Shui Tianzhong 水天中, 1:197-199. Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 1999.

1930

Huang Binhong 黄宾虹. “Jin Shushinian Huazhe Ping” 近数十年画者评 [Comments on the Painters in Recent Decades]. (Shanghai) *Dongfang Zazhi 东方杂志 (The Oriental Magazine)* 27, no. 1 (1930): 155-157. Reprinted in *Yihai Gouchen, Jindai Zhongguo Meishu Lunji 艺海钩沉, 近代中国美术论集 [Collected Essays on Art in Modern China]*, edited by He Huaishuo 何怀硕, 2:155-159. Taipei: Yishujia Chubanshe, 1991.

1931

Jin Cheng 金城. “Huaxue Jiangyi” 画学讲义 [Lectures on Painting]. *Hushe Yuekan 湖社月 [Hushe Monthly]* July 1931, Vol. 21. Reprinted in *Meishu Lunji 美术论集 [Essays on Art]*, Vol. 4, *Zhongguohua Taolun Zhuanji 中国画论专辑 [Special Issue on Chinese Painting]*, edited by Shen Peng 沈鹏 and Chen Lüsheng 陈履生, 5-7. Beijing: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1986.

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1932

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