

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: LEARNING NEW PAINTING FROM JAPAN AND
MAINTAINING NATIONAL PRIDE IN EARLY
TWENTIETH CENTURY CHINA, WITH FOCUS ON
CHEN SHIZENG (1876–1923)

Kuo-Sheng Lai, Doctor of Philosophy, 2006

Dissertation directed by: Professor Jason C. Kuo
Department of Art History and Archaeology

In the early twentieth century, many Chinese painters went to Japan to study. This dissertation argues that, despite learning from Japan, these artists sought to create a better future for Chinese painting. They did not desire to create a single kind of “Eastern painting” with their Japanese counterparts.

The Chinese had long claimed a kind of cultural superiority, called Sino-centrism, which did not diminish in the early twentieth century. The Japanese, however, developed a kind of thinking termed pan-Asianism, in which Asia was considered a unity, and Japan, its leader. Because of this difference, the similarities between Chinese art and Japanese art in the early twentieth century cannot be interpreted as the emergence of an “Asian art” because the Chinese did not endorse Japanese pan-Asianism.

Li Shutong was one of the first Chinese painters to visit Japan to learn Western-style painting. Gao Jianfu, founder of the Lingnan School, went to Japan to learn painting and returned with the style known as *Nihonga*, a synthesis of traditional Japanese painting and Western-style painting. Chen Shizeng was a traditional painter of the scholar class. He also went to Japan to study. But he studied natural history, not painting.

Chen Shizeng was most active during the May Fourth Movement of the late 1910s and early 1920s, when radicals wanted to abandon traditional Chinese culture. They called for a total adoption of Western culture. Although Chen Shizeng was open-minded to Western culture, he chose to defend traditional Chinese literati painting. His translation of Japanese scholar Ōmura Seigai's essay *The Revival of Literati Painting* was part of this defense.

Chen Shizeng was strongly influenced by his teacher Wu Changshuo (1844–1927). He was inspired also by other great Chinese painters of the past, and he adapted some Western methods that he learned in Japan. However, the Japanese influence in his painting should not be interpreted as his attempt to create an “Eastern art” in collaboration with Japanese painters.

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NATIONAL PRIDE IN EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY CHINA,
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by

Kuo-Sheng Lai

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Advisory Committee:

Professor Jason C. Kuo, Chair
Professor Marilyn Gleysteen
Professor Eleanor Kerkham
Professor Sally Promey
Professor Marie Spiro

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To my parents: Mr. Lai Der-Liang and Ms. Yen Li-Hua

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Figure 104. Takehisa Yumeji 竹久夢二, *Harusame* はるさめ (Spring rain) in *Yumeji gashū haru no maki* 夢二画集春の巻 (Collection of Yumeji's painting, volume of spring), n.p.

I. Introduction

From the Tang Dynasty onward, China heavily influenced the formation of Japan and its culture. However, in the first few decades of the twentieth century, the direction of influence reversed: Japan began to influence China. In this new era a group of Chinese painters went to Japan to learn Western-style painting. Japanese influences reached two other sorts of Chinese painters: those who wanted to synthesize Chinese and Western styles of painting and those who continued to produce traditional Chinese literati painting. In this dissertation I argue that, despite learning from Japan, these artists intended to create a better future for Chinese painting. They did not desire to create a single kind of “Eastern painting” with their Japanese counterparts. In this dissertation I discuss the early stages of Japanese influence on all three sorts of Chinese painters, and I pay special attention to Chen Shizeng 陳師曾 (1876–1923), who aimed to continue traditional Chinese literati painting.

At the most general level, this dissertation is about Sino-Japanese cultural interchange in painting in the early twentieth century. More specifically, it is about the career of Chinese literati painter Chen Shizeng. In the nineteenth century, both China and Japan faced great challenges from the West. Japan’s westernization was much faster and more thorough than China’s after the Meiji Restoration in 1868.¹ In the early twentieth century, Japan became China’s shortcut to westernization. Modern Chinese scholars have not adequately studied the history of cultural interchange between China and Japan during this period, mainly because of the Chinese sense of cultural superiority and their hatred for Japan (caused by Japanese imperialism). But in recent decades the political

¹ Sullivan’s *Eastern and Western Art* extensively documents the encounter between Chinese and Japanese painters and Western art, from the sixteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century.

atmosphere has changed. Chinese scholars have now started to examine a period of cultural interchange that, at first glance, appears to run against the Chinese sense of cultural superiority.

The current literature in the field may be summarized as follows.² To explain the cultural interchange in painting between China and Japan, the Chinese scholar Chen Zhenlian 陳振濂 published *Comparative Studies of the History of Cultural Interchange in Painting between China and Japan in the Modern Era* in 2000. There he discusses a number of major topics, such as the origin of the term *meishu* 美術 (fine art), Chinese painters who went to Japan, Japanese painters who went to China, Japanese influence on how the Chinese understood the history and theory of their own painting, Japanese studies on Chinese painting, and Sino-Japanese cultural exchange in art education.

Liu Xiaolu's 劉曉路 *Chinese and Japanese Art in the World Art*, published in 2001, is a collection of essays about artistic relations between China and Japan in the early twentieth century. In the essay "Ōmura Seigai and Chen Shizeng: Two People from Different Countries Fighting for the Revival of Literati Painting in the Modern Period" Liu Xiaolu introduces the lives of both Chen Shizeng and Ōmura Seigai, who was a Japanese art historian. Liu argues that Chen Shizeng's *History of Chinese Painting* (*Zhongguo huihuashi* 中國繪畫史) and the essay "The Value of Literati Painting" (*Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi* 文人畫之價值) were influenced by Ōmura Seigai's publications. In the collection, there are also two essays on Li Shutong 李叔同 (1880–1942; discussed in the first section of chapter three, below), focusing on his studies at the Tokyo

² For complete information on these studies, see the bibliography.

School of Fine Arts (Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō 東京美術学校) and his relationship with his Chinese classmates.

Japanese scholars too have recently started to study Chinese art students in Japan during the early twentieth century. For example, Tsuruta Takeyoshi 鶴田武良, in his 1997 article “Art Students Studying Abroad in Japan,” discusses four artists who studied in Japan: Gao Jianfu 高劍父 (1879–1951), Zhang Daqian (Chang Dai-chien) 張大千 (1899–1983), Fu Baoshi 傅抱石 (1904–1965), and Wang Shikuo 王式廓 (1911–1973).

Yoshida Chizuko 吉田千鶴子, in “Ōmura Seigai and China,” focuses on Ōmura Seigai’s studies on Chinese art and his travels to China. Yoshida also discusses Ōmura Seigai’s efforts to promote cultural interchange between Chinese and Japanese artists. In 1998 Yoshida published another article, “Foreign Students at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts,” to discuss how the Tokyo School of Fine Arts admitted foreign students. Much of the article considers Chinese students at the school; it also includes short biographies of foreign students who studied there.

In the United States the artistic exchange between China and Japan has also recently begun. Aida Yuen Wong finished her PhD dissertation, “Inventing Eastern Art in Japan and China, ca. 1890 to ca. 1930s,” in 1999. There she argues that the similarities found in the writings and artistic tendencies of both Chinese and Japanese artists in this period suggest that they were promoting an “Eastern art” that represented the East in opposition to the West. To prove her argument Wong depends upon similarities between Chen Shizeng’s and Ōmura Seigai’s theories. It is true that Chinese artists in the early twentieth century incorporated Japanese terms and ideas into their theories. But, as I show in this study, Chen Shizeng and most of other Chinese artists at that time did not want to promote or invent the kind of “Eastern art” their Japanese counterparts did. The Chinese

and the Japanese held very different notions about “the East.” Although Japanese artists’ ideas are found in the writings of Chinese artists, this does not mean that the Chinese artists accepted the Japanese idea of “Eastern art.” Wong has since developed her ideas. In her 2006 book, *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China*, she replaces the term “Eastern art” with a new one, “Oriental modern,” to describe the kind of painting that both Japanese and Chinese artists were creating. However, I would suggest that the idea that a Sino-Japanese collaboration produced “Eastern art” or “Oriental modern” is mistaken. As I argue in chapter two, below, the Chinese people long felt superior to, and therefore neglected, their neighboring cultures. Although the Chinese were willing to learn new things from Japan in the early twentieth century, they never wanted to create something “Eastern” with Japan, because for them, China *was* the East. It is very important not to overstate the significance of Chinese artists studying abroad in Japan and thereby misinterpret the similarities between Chinese and Japanese art in the early twentieth century.

I focus in this dissertation on the Chinese artist Chen Shizeng. In 1922, when many Chinese artists and critics favored Western painting, he published *A Study of Chinese Literati Painting*, establishing him as a defender of Chinese literati painting.³ Thus, critics and art historians today often categorize Chen Shizeng as a traditionalist among early twentieth-century Chinese artists. For example, in Wen Fong’s *Between Two Cultures*, Chen Shizeng, Qibaishi, and Huang Binhong are discussed as a group in the chapter titled “Three Great Traditionalists.”

³ Chen Shizeng used his original name Chen Hengke 陳衡恪 in this book.

Chinese scholar Gong Chanxing 龔產興 is a pioneer in studies on Chen Shizeng. In 1992 he published *Selected Paintings of Chen Shizeng*, which includes a short biography and a chronology of Chen Shizeng. In 1995, he published *Chen Shizeng* as part of the Masters of Chinese Painting series published in Taiwan. In this book, Gong included a short biography and interpretations of Chen Shizeng's paintings.

In 1999, I completed my master's thesis, "Rescuing Literati Aesthetics: Chen Hengke (1876–1923) and the Debate on the Westernization of Chinese Art," which focuses on Chen Shizeng's (Chen Hengke was his original name) defense of Chinese literati painting. There I also compare Chen Shizeng's essay "The Value of Literati Painting" with Ōmura Seigai's 大村西崖 *The Revival of Literati Painting*.

In 2003 Lu Hsuan-fei 盧宣妃 completed her master's thesis, "The New Look of Chen Shizeng's Painting and the Cultural Embodiment of the New Intelligentsia of Early Republican Era: With Focus on *Beijing Customs Album*." She links the rise of studies on cultural customs to Chen Shizeng's painting of his *Beijing Customs Album*. She argues that Chen Shizeng used Western painting techniques to produce the album, and that Chen promoted a synthesis of Chinese and Western painting. Although Chen Shizeng was open to Western painting and certainly applied some Western techniques in his painting, I argue here that he did not aim to synthesize Chinese and Western painting.

In 2003, Zhu Wanzhang 朱萬章 wrote *Chen Shizeng* as part of the China Famous Painters Collection series published in China. This book presents a short biography of Chen Shizeng and discusses and reproduces many of his paintings.

In 2004, *Selected Works of Chen Shizeng's Painting and Calligraphy* was published in China.⁴ In it are short essays on Chen Shizeng's life and works. Most important, it is by far the most comprehensive catalog of Chen Shizeng's paintings and calligraphy. Its high-quality reproductions of Chen Shizeng's works have greatly aided the study of his art.

In this study I interact with all these publications as I pursue the following argument. In chapter two, below, I discuss different worldviews of the Chinese and Japanese. The Chinese people long claimed a kind of cultural superiority, called Sino-centrism. This mentality did not diminish in the early twentieth century, when many Chinese intellectuals went to study in Japan. During this same period, the Japanese developed a kind of pan-Asian thinking, connected to Japanese imperialism. In Japanese pan-Asianism, Asia was considered a unity, and Japan, its leader. So any similarities between Chinese and Japanese art in the early twentieth century cannot be seen as the emergence of an "Asian art" because the Chinese did not endorse Japanese pan-Asianism. This is crucial to understanding the nature of Sino-Japanese artistic interchange in the early twentieth century.

In chapter three I introduce three types of Chinese painters who were active in the early twentieth century: those who studied Western painting in Japan, those who wanted to synthesize Chinese and Western painting, and those who wanted to continue traditional Chinese literati painting. Li Shutong was one of the first Chinese painters to go to Japan to learn Western-style painting. Gao Jianfu, founder of the Lingnan School, went to Japan to learn painting and brought back to China the style known as *Nihonga* 日本畫, a

⁴ Gu, *Chen Shizeng shuhua jingpinji*.

synthesis of traditional-Japanese and Western-style painting. Chen Shizeng was a traditional painter of the scholar class. He also went to Japan to study. But he studied natural history, not painting.

Chapter four considers Chen Shizeng in the context of the May Fourth Movement, in which radicals sought to abandon traditional Chinese culture and totally adopt Western culture. Although Chen Shizeng was open-minded to Western culture, he chose to defend traditional Chinese literati painting. His translation of Ōmura Seigai's essay *The Revival of Literati Painting* was part of this defense.

Chapter five examines Chen Shizeng's paintings in light of his inspirations. Because his teacher, Wu Changshuo 吳昌碩 (1844–1927), was such a strong influence, his art is discussed first. Besides learning from Wu Changshuo, Chen Shizeng looked to other great Chinese painters of the past. He also adapted some Western methods. I describe all of these influences.

Throughout this dissertation I show how important a role Japan played in the modernization of China in the early twentieth century. Influence from Japan can be seen in Chinese art and art theories. But when interpreting those influences, we must bear in mind that the Chinese and the Japanese had fundamentally different worldviews, and this makes it extremely unlikely, or so I argue, that Chinese and Japanese artists collaborated to create an "Eastern art."

II. Different Worldviews of the Chinese and the Japanese

1. The Chinese Self-Knowledge and Worldview

For thousands of years, the Chinese considered themselves the most civilized race, and so generally looked down on other cultures. Although this kind of thinking was first intensely challenged in the nineteenth century, when China was defeated by the highly industrialized fleets of Western imperial powers, it was difficult for the Chinese to dispense with this long-established sense of cultural superiority. Very complicated struggles and fights over whether to learn Western culture and technology have occupied Chinese intellectuals ever since. In Chinese art there have been severe conflicts over whether and what to learn from Western art.

Chinese people call their territory *Zhongguo* 中國, which is often translated “Middle Kingdom.” This translation is not very accurate because when the term *Zhongguo* appeared, approximately as early as the Zhou Dynasty (1066–256 BCE), China was not yet a unified kingdom. *Zhongguo* did not refer to a single nation-state in the modern sense until the establishment of the Republic of China, in 1912. However, the meaning and longevity of this name in Chinese history indicates the perpetual Sino-centrism of Chinese people. According to Wang Erh-min, the term *Zhongguo* had five meanings in pre-Qin (Qin: 221–207 BCE) writings: first, the capital of a state; second, the interior of the state; third, the interiors of the sovereignties of the Chinese states (*Zhuxia* 諸夏); fourth, states of middle-sizes; fifth, the state in a central position.⁵ Wang Erh-min says that of the five meanings, the third, referring to the territories of the Chinese states, appears most often in ancient writings.

⁵ *Zhongguo jindai sixiangshi lun*, 448.

The literal meaning of *Zhongguo* is “the territories or states in the center of the world.” Until the modern period the Chinese sense of cultural superiority to other states was built upon this geographic principle: they, the center, were the most civilized; their neighbors, on the periphery, were culturally inferior. Traditionally, they divided their world into five regions: the Center, where the Chinese dwelt; and the East, the West, the South, and the North, where others dwelt. The Chinese called themselves *Xia* 夏. The people of the East they called *Yi* 夷; the West, *Rong* 戎; the South, *Man* 蠻; and the North, *Di* 狄. This system is called “the concept of the five directions” (*wufang guannian* 五方觀念) and is best described in the *Book of Royal Regulations* (*Wangzhi* 王制) in the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記), a collection of writings by Confucian scholars of the Eastern Zhou (770–256 BCE) period later compiled in Western Han Dynasty (202 BCE–8 CE). The *Book of Royal Regulations* reads:

The people of those five regions—the middle states, and the Rong, Yi, (and other wild tribes round them)—had all their several natures, which they could not be made to alter. The tribes on the east were called Yi. They had their hair unbound and tattooed their bodies. Some of them ate their food uncooked. Those on the south were called Man. They tattooed their foreheads and had their feet turned in toward each other. Some of them (also) ate their food uncooked. Those on the west were called Rong. They had their hair unbound and wore skins. Some of them did not eat grain. Those on the north were called Di. They wore skins of animals and birds and dwelt in caves. Some of them also did not eat grain.⁶

This passage implies that customs such as tattooing, eating uncooked food, living in caves, and not knowing how to grow grains are uncivilized. Because the Chinese thought their neighboring peoples culturally undeveloped or barbaric, the terms *Man*, *Yi*, *Rong*, and *Di* became synonymous with “barbarians.” Even though *Man*, *Yi*, *Rong*, and *Di* refer

⁶ *Wangzhi* 王制 (The book of royal regulations) in *Liji* 禮記 (Book of rites). Modified from the translation by James Legge, *Book of Rites*, 1:229. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

to peoples living in the four directions, these terms are used often to refer to any neighboring people, regardless of their actual geographic origin or living region, as if they were barbarians. For example, *Yi*, *Yidi*, and *Manyi* mean barbarians in general, not necessarily people living in the east. The Chinese often called themselves *hua* 華, or *xia* 夏. *Hua-Yi* and *Yi-Xia* are terms referring to the relations between the Chinese people and the so-called barbarians.

Because they considered themselves more civilized than their neighbors, the Chinese believed it was crucial to distinguish or separate themselves from other people. Thus, maintaining and emphasizing Chinese traditions became extremely important to them. In the *Analects*, Confucius (551–479 BCE) says, “Were it not for Guan Zhong, we might now be wearing our hair loose and folding our clothes to the left.” 微管仲，吾其被髮左衽矣。⁷ Traditionally the Chinese kept their hair uncut and bound it in a knot. In traditional costume, the shirt should be folded to the right. It was considered barbaric to let loose their hair or to fold their shirts to the left. In the passage above Confucius praises Guan Zhong 管仲 (7th c. BCE) for assisting Duke Huan of the Qi State (Qihuangong 齊桓公, 7th c. BCE) and thereby helping both to maintain Chinese culture and to prevent assimilation by the “barbarians.”

For thousands of years the Chinese have maintained this sense of chauvinism or Sino-centrism generation after generation. Sino-centrism did not remain simply a theory or mentality; it directed Chinese foreign relations for centuries. Because of Sino-centrism, rulers of the so-called barbarian peoples often had to seek China’s recognition for legitimacy. The emperors of China conferred titles on foreign kings and provided them

⁷ Modified from Arthur Waley’s translation, *Analects of Confucius*, 174.

security. In return foreign rulers had to pay tribute periodically to the Chinese emperor. The Chinese also considered their country to be heaven's promised nation and their emperor, the son of heaven. They thought that because of this special relationship with heaven, China was the most civilized land and that all other nations were subordinate to it.

This Sino-centrism in foreign relations was traditionally referred to as the *Hua-Yi* system, a system based on tribute. Sino-centrism was so firmly established in the minds of the Chinese that they considered Western nations subordinate, even when those same Western nations demonstrated their highly advanced technologies and military power in the nineteenth century. In the midst of this conflict, the Chinese still treated Western nations as they would treat their neighboring "barbarians."

For millennia, the Chinese had to deal with invasions from northern nomadic tribes. Confucius's praise of Guan Zhong mentioned above refers to such an invasion in the Eastern Zhou period. Throughout the dynasties there were different nomadic peoples on China's northern front. In the Han Dynasty, there were the Huns; in the Tang Dynasty, the Turks; in the Song Dynasty, the Khitan, Jurchen, and Mongols. Although the Mongols ended the Song Dynasty (960–1279) and established the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) in China, the Chinese attitude of superiority did not change. The Chinese who served the Yuan court were condemned by Chinese scholars, both then and throughout history.

When the Manchus conquered China and established the Qing Dynasty (1636–1911), the Chinese suffered again from being ruled by "barbarians." But because their emperors highly favored Chinese culture, the Manchus soon adopted Chinese customs and became deeply sinicized. The Manchus inherited and extended Chinese traditions in various ways. They became so thoroughly sinicized that they even regarded the Westerners who came

to China during the Qing Dynasty through Chinese eyes. From the Chinese point of view, the Westerners were of course barbarians who were threatening Chinese culture.

The Opium War between China and England from 1840 to 1842 marked the beginning of the modern period in China, a period characterized by severe conflicts between Chinese and Western cultures. The conflicts did not start suddenly in 1840 and some scholars mark the sixteenth century as the beginning of modern China. Nevertheless I consider the period from the sixteenth century to 1840 to be the prelude to modern China.⁸

Refined Western technologies developed during the industrial revolution deeply impacted modern China. For instance, the strong Western navy, a product of the industrial revolution, subjugated the Chinese. Because of their long-established sense of cultural superiority and their disdain for the class of craftsmen and laborers, the educated, ruling class of China initially did not want to learn from the West, even when China was defeated by Western nations in costly battles and wars. But as the nineteenth century progressed, Chinese intellectuals began to see that it was necessary for China to learn from the West in order to survive. Still trying to preserve their sense of cultural superiority, they urged westernization only in technology and military development, areas that they thought would not affect the core of Chinese culture. By the twentieth century, however, seeing that China was still weak, Chinese intellectuals began to urge westernization in almost all respects. To enhance China's welfare more and more young students went abroad to be educated. Many intellectuals went to study in Japan, which, at that time, was much more westernized than China. With the establishment of the

⁸ For different theories of when modern China began, see Hsü, *Rise of Modern China*, 4–7.

Republic of China in 1912 by the revolutionary forces led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 (1866–1925), Western politics and governing principles were introduced to China.

One important question still remains. Did Sino-centrism fade out during the era of westernization and dependence upon Japan for education? How Sino-centric was a Chinese person of the early twentieth century? Probably not much less than one from the early twenty-first century. Consider the book *History of the Development of Art of Japan*, written by a Chinese author in Taiwan in 2004. There, Yu Ho-ching 余鶴清 writes that the New Year festival, tea ceremony, *kimono*, chopsticks, and other parts of Japanese culture “are all customs that came from China.” Every kind of arts and crafts mentioned in this book are said to have depended upon Chinese influence.⁹ Today there are still many Chinese who think that Japan’s culture came from China, even though many of them are fond of Japanese songs, TV dramas, comics, animations, and other items of popular culture like “Hello Kitty.”¹⁰

As I have already stated, the Chinese considered their nation to be the center of the world. When the Westerners came to China during their Age of Discovery, the Chinese called Westerners *yangren* 洋人, meaning “people from the sea,” or *xiyangren* 西洋人, “people from the Western sea.” They called the Japanese *dongyangren* 東洋人, meaning “people from the Eastern sea.” With time the Chinese realized that Westerners considered all of Asia to be the East. The Chinese could acknowledge the global distinction between the East and the West and that they were part of the East. But they could hardly see other Eastern cultures in perspective because they had always considered themselves to be the

⁹ Yu, *Riben Meishu Fazhanshi*, 1.

¹⁰ On Japanese popular culture in Asia, see Li, *Riben liuxing* and Chiu, *Riben liuxing*.

source of all other cultures in the East. Thus the word *dongfang* 東方, which means “the East,” became for the Chinese an increasingly popular term to call themselves. The magazine *The Eastern Miscellany* (*Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century exemplifies the rising popularity of this word. The term *dongyang* 東洋, which is pronounced in Japanese as *toyō* 東洋, was used by the Chinese normally to refer to Japan; but the Japanese used the term to refer to the East in general. Interestingly, the term *toyō* may be connected to Japanese pan-Asianism since it can mean both Japan and Asia. It seems that both China and Japan sought to make themselves the center of their concept of the East, but only the Japanese developed it into geographical imperialism. Aida Yuen Wong thinks that the Japanese notion of the East was not merely “a product of imperialism alone.” She says:

But I do want to reconfigure the discourse of the East as a two-sided phenomenon, casting China as an active participant. Although far less institutionalized than its Japanese counterpart, the Chinese concept of the East also denoted a non-Western cultural sphere with China as a vital component. Like the Japanese, the Chinese put this concept in the service of nationalism.¹¹

True, Japanese pan-Asianism appeared much earlier than Japanese imperialism. But the Chinese concept of the East was never pan-Asianist; it was always Sino-centric. Despite Wong’s assertion, China was never an “active participant” in the Japanese concept of the East. The pan-Asianism of Japan is inclusive, outward seeking, and aggressive, whereas Sino-centrism is exclusive, inward turning, and passive.

Although both the Chinese and the Japanese attached themselves to the term *the East*, their concepts were very different. The Chinese saw only themselves in the East,

¹¹ Yuen, “Inventing Eastern Art,” 2–3.

while the Japanese saw Japan as the essence of all Asian cultures. The only other culture that the Chinese thought comparable to China was India, which to the Chinese was still remote and mystical. In January 1921, Chen Jiayi 陳嘉異 asserted in *The Eastern Miscellany* that there was no need to talk about Japan when discussing Eastern culture; only China and India were worth mentioning when discussing Asia:

There are many countries and nations located in the East. However, to name the ones with distinctive cultures, there are only China and India. Although Japan has been gaining much power recently, its culture before the Meiji Restoration had come from our country. Its culture after the Meiji Restoration has come from the West. [Japan] does not have any distinctive culture to mention. Others, such as Korea, Annam [Vietnam], and Central Asian countries, are not necessary to discuss. . . . So today to use Chinese culture and Indian culture to represent Eastern culture is recognized by the scholarly field. It is not because I have any racial prejudice.

夫位於東方之國家與民族亦甚夥矣。然舉其特有之文化，則惟中國與印度。日本國勢近雖勃興，而明治維新以前之文化，受自我國。維新以後之文化，取自歐西，尙無特立文化之可言。其他如朝鮮安南與中央亞細亞諸國之不足齒數者，更無待論。……故今日舉東方之文化，而即以中國文化印度文化爲其代表者。此實學者所公認，而非吾人有何種族之偏見存也。¹²

The Chinese of the early twentieth century recognized that the West was much more advanced in many ways and were eager to learn from the West. They would not, however, abandon their sense of superiority over neighboring countries that once paid tribute to China.

When Chen Jiayi's article appeared, many Western intellectuals had already expressed their disappointment with Western culture. Some argued that the advancement of Western culture had led to the cruelty of the World War. Oswald Spengler was the most influential thinker of this kind. His book *The Decline of the West* harshly challenged the

¹² "Dongfang wenhua," 18, no. 1 (January 10, 1921): 18–38.

authority of science, upon which Western culture had been based ever since the Age of Enlightenment. As the role of science was being reconsidered in the West, China was madly worshipping it. The critical revisiting of Western culture by Westerners gave increased incentive to a few Chinese intellectuals, such as Chen Jiayi, who disagreed with advocates of radical westernization.

The title of Chen's article can be translated "Eastern Culture and the Responsibilities of Our Citizens." In the article Chen urges the Chinese to take responsibility for spreading Chinese, especially Confucian, culture; he claims that this cultured knowledge could provide an antidote to the ills of modernity. Although he divides Eastern culture into Chinese and Indian, he mentions that, because he does not know Indian culture, he would discuss only Chinese culture. He argues that both Chinese and Indian cultures are more spiritual and Western culture, more materialist. He praises Confucianism and argues that Chinese citizens should do their part to stimulate Confucian learning to save people from materialism.¹³

In her dissertation, Aida Yuen Wong cites Liang Shuming's 梁漱溟 book *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies* to show that China was an active participant in the discourse of the East, and that the Chinese sense of this discourse was similar to that of the Japanese.¹⁴ But Liang's concept of the East, which was typically Chinese, was very different from that of the Japanese. Liang's book was one of the most important works in Chinese philosophy in the twentieth century. Its goal was similar to that of Chen Jiayi's article. Liang, like Chen, divided the cultures of the world into

¹³ Chen, "Dongfang wenhua."

¹⁴ Yuen, "Inventing Eastern Art," 3–4.

Chinese, Indian, and Western. Predicting that the materialism of Western culture was going to reach a fateful end, Liang promoted the more spiritual culture. The main purpose in writing his book was to promote Confucianism, which was generally considered to be the soul of Chinese culture.¹⁵

Liang Qichao's 梁啟超 *Travel Impressions of Europe* is another example Wong uses to show that the Chinese and the Japanese had similar concepts of the East. This book comprises a travelogue of Liang's trip to Europe, essays on contemporary Europe and China, comments on current issue in Europe, and a history of the First World War.¹⁶ *Travel Impressions* is usually considered Liang Qichao's turning point, from promoting Westernization back to valuing Chinese culture. In the book he proclaims the bankruptcy of Western culture. There is no connection between this book and the Japanese concept of the East. However, Wong argues, "Using the rhetorical device of speaking through a Frenchman he claimed to have met, he bemoaned the malaise of the West and called for a revival of Chinese culture. This Frenchman supposedly had said to him that Western culture was bankrupt and that Westerners were waiting for Chinese culture to save them."¹⁷

In her footnote for this passage, Wong provides no page number to Liang's *Travel Impressions*, but rather cites three books about Liang Qichao. The actual contents of Liang's *Travel Impressions* are importantly different. It is not a Frenchman but an American reporter who tells him, "Alas! It's a pity that Western civilization has been

¹⁵ See Liang, *Dongxi wenhua jiqi zhaxue*.

¹⁶ Liang, *Ouyou xinyinglu jielu*.

¹⁷ Yuen, "Inventing Eastern Art," 5–6.

bankrupt. . . . When I go back [to America], I'll shut my door and wait for you to import Chinese civilization to save us.” 唉！可憐！西洋文明已經破產了。我回去就關起大門老等，等你們把中國文明輸進來救拔我們。¹⁸ The American was longing, not for Asian or Eastern culture, but for Chinese culture. Liang wanted to promote Chinese culture, not Eastern culture.

It is generally believed that Liang Qichao's *Travel Impressions* reflects the post-World War I attitude seen in Spengler. The book catalyzed a movement to preserve traditional Chinese culture. It is also considered to have influenced Liang Shuming's book *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies*.¹⁹

In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as nations encountered the Western culture brought by the imperial powers, proponents and opponents of westernization emerged. As mentioned above, Wong claims that both the Chinese and the Japanese conceived of the East as denoting “a non-Western cultural sphere with China as a vital component.”

But “vital component” is an understatement. To the Chinese, China was the *only* component in their concept of the East, despite the later inclusion of an India about which they knew little. The forces of counter-westernization in Japan and China were similar: both wanted to preserve their own national culture. Chinese culture, however, happens to be an important ingredient of traditional Japanese culture. So naturally, the Japanese who wanted to preserve their traditional culture also valued Chinese culture. But the Chinese who sought to preserve their own culture had little reason to include the Japanese.

¹⁸ Liang, *Ouyou xinyinglu jielu*, 15.

¹⁹ For Liang Qichao's influence on Liang Shuming, see Liu, “Cong zhongxin dao bianyuan,” 556.

Chinese thinkers such as Liang Qichao and Liang Shuming hardly cared about Japanese culture or other neighboring cultures.

In summary, Chinese and Japanese concepts of the East in the early twentieth century were emphatically different. The Chinese concept of the East was based on Sino-centrism. The Japanese conceived of the East in light of its pan-Asianism, the subject of the next section.

2. The Japanese Self-Knowledge and Worldview

“Asia is one” begins Okakura Tenshin’s 岡倉天心 (1862–1913) *The Ideals of the East*. The sentiment aptly describes the Japanese concept of the East in the early twentieth century. This kind of pan-Asian thinking is the understandable result of Japan’s long history of receiving cultures from other Asian countries, mainly China. The formation of this Japanese pan-Asianism, however, is unimaginably complex. Although their reception of cultures from other parts of Asia was nothing new in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, pan-Asianism was not articulated until then, probably a result of interaction with the West and the rise of Japanese nationalism and imperialism. Japanese pan-Asianism and imperialism reflected their will to compete with the West. But what was the origin of Japanese imperialism and its pan-Asianism? How did they relate to China? I suggest that the Sino-centric *Hua-Yi* system may be one of the causes for Japanese pan-Asianism and imperialism.

Before the nineteenth century, Japan, Korea, and other neighboring nations of China saw themselves in light of the Chinese *Hua-Yi* tribute system. As mentioned in the previous section, *Hua* refers to civilized China and *Yi* refers to the uncivilized barbarians. On the one hand, Japan, Korea, and other neighboring nations of China were the *Yi* to China, to which they were subordinate. On the other hand, when they faced less sinicized or weaker cultures, they formed their own *Hua-Yi* system and assumed the role of the *Hua*. They established their own tribute system within the reach of their power. Japan and Korea were among the relatively more sinicized nations around China so they gradually developed their own sense of superiority to other Asian peoples. The mentality they developed is often called *Xiaozhonghua* 小中華 thinking, which means “small-China thinking.”

Japanese historian Ishigami Eiichi 石上英一 divides the formation of the Japanese nation into three stages: the beginning, which was the period of the *Yamatai* Kingdom 邪馬台国; the forming, which was the period of the five kings of *Wa* 倭 in the fifth and sixth centuries; and the confirming, which extended from the late sixth or early seventh century to the early eighth century.²⁰ In the beginning stage, Japan was part of China's tribute system. To have their legitimacy recognized, rulers in Japan received titles from China. In the second stage, the Japanese rulers gained protectorates outside their own territory while still being part of China's tribute system. Ishigami says that in this period Japan started to develop itself into an imperial state, one that put its own country in the center of the world. In the third stage, after a series of reforms in the seventh century and the promulgation of the Taihō Code 大宝律令 in 701, an independent Japanese state was formed, and eventually recognized by the Tang Dynasty (618–907). They were no longer called the Kingdom of Wa. They took on a new name, pronounced “Nihon” or “Nippon.”²¹

By the thirteenth century, Japan had absorbed Chinese culture for several centuries. The Chinese *Hua-Yi* system had deeply influenced the Japanese worldview. Although the Mongols conquered China, the Japanese, who still saw Chinese culture as their orthodox model, despised the Mongols. After the Mongols conquered the Song Dynasty of China and Korea, and extended their empire to parts of Europe in the thirteenth century, they turned their attention to Japan. In 1268, Mongol emperor Kublai Khan (1215–1294) ordered the Korean emperor to send envoys to Japan to deliver Kublai's letter conveying

²⁰ “Kodai Higashi-Ajia,” 77.

²¹ Ibid. 81, 85.

the Mongol will to establish official relations. Such an act would have implied that Japan recognized its subordinate position to the Mongol's Yuan Dynasty. The end of the letter implied that war would ensue if Japan did not comply. The Japanese authority, the Kamakura Bakufu, decided not to act upon Kublai's request and prepared for war. Kublai Khan, angered by the Japanese decision, invaded Japan twice, in 1274 and 1281. Although Kublai Khan and his predecessors had conquered many nations across Asia and Europe and established an intercontinental empire, he did not successfully invade Japan. Japan survived the threat from the Mongolian Empire, but warfare had burdened the Kamakura Bakufu and all Japanese society. These military burdens accelerated the fall of the Kamakura Bakufu.²²

According to Shi Xiaojun 石曉軍, the Kamakura Bakufu refused Kublai Khan's request for three reasons. First, the Kamakura Bakufu was a warrior authority and its power was then still expanding. Second, the Japanese already had the idea that not everything in China was better than it was in Japan. Third, and most important, the Japanese had a *Hua-Yi* mentality.²³ Fujiie Reinosuke 藤家禮之助 puts it this way: "Presumably, the reason was that Mongol was '*ebisu*' [the Japanese pronunciation for *Yi*]." ²⁴

In 1590, Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1536–1598) reunified Japan and ended a century of turbulence known as the Warring States Period. Hideyoshi's reunification of Japan was based on his strong military power. Because of his unprecedented success he

²² Shi, *Zhongri liangguo*, 135.

²³ Ibid., 133.

²⁴ *Nicchū kōryū nisennen*, 154.

became vainglorious and developed a kind of self-centered system of international relations, a Japanese version of the *Hua-Yi* system. In his *Hua-Yi* system countries were assessed on the basis, not of the extent of their sinicization or the sophistication of their culture, but of the strength of their military power.²⁵ Upon controlling the Japanese Islands he did not stop his aggression but aimed to take over Korea, China, and other East Asian nations. He invaded Korea in 1592 and 1597. The Ming Dynasty (1364–1644) of China helped Korea defend itself against Hideyoshi's invasions. Hideyoshi did not successfully conquer Korea and died in 1598.

After the death of Hideyoshi, the power of the Toyotomi family slipped, then collapsed in 1615, when they lost a decisive battle to Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康. The Edo period ensued. Katsurajima Nobuhiro 桂島宣弘 analyzes the post-Hideyoshi history of Japanese knowledge of self and others and divides it into three phases: The first phase of self-knowledge is based on Sino-centrism, where China is *Hua* and Japan is *Yi*. This kind of thinking still prevailed in Japan by the early seventeenth century. The second phase emerged when the Manchus conquered China in the seventeenth century. The Manchus were considered *Yi*, or barbarian, to China. Although Japan was another *Yi* to China, the Japanese were more sinicized than the Manchus so they considered themselves more civilized than the Manchus. Thus, the Japanese considered themselves *Hua* to the Manchus' *Yi*. This kind of superiority was still based on China's *Hua-Yi* system, but the *Hua* and the *Yi* were reversed. The third kind of Japanese self-knowledge was *Nihon Chūkashugi* 日本中華主義, the Japanese version of "Sino-centrism," which became more and more popular with the rise of *Suika Shintō* 垂加神道 in the

²⁵ Arano, "Nihongata kaichitsujo no keisei," 213–14.

mid-eighteenth century. Proponents of this form of self-knowledge criticized the Chinese worldview, which saw the Japanese as the inferior *Yi* to the Chinese. They promoted Shintō, the Japanese native religion, over Confucianism, a Chinese import. With *Nihon Chūkashugi*, Japan became a nation of gods, a nation that was now elevated to the center that China once occupied.²⁶

In the nineteenth century, the Japanese witnessed the strong military power of the West and saw how China suffered from Western imperialism. The Japanese concept of China started to change: Europe became the civilized and China, the uncivilized. Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉 (1835–1901), one of the most important Japanese thinkers of the nineteenth century, published *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* in 1875. In the second chapter, “On the goal of Western civilization” (*Seiyō no bunmei o mokuteki to suru koto* 西洋の文明を目的とする事), he says:

To talk about civilizations in today’s world, the European countries and the United States of America are the most civilized countries. Asian countries such as Turkey, China, and Japan are called half-civilized countries. African countries and Australia are considered barbarian countries.

今世界の文明を論ずるに、欧羅巴諸国並に亜米利加の合衆国を以て最上の文明国と爲し、土耳其、支那、日本等、亜細亜の諸国を以て半開の国と称し、阿非利加及び澳太利亜等を目して野蛮の国といい²⁷

Koyasu Nobukuni 子安宣邦 comments that Fukuzawa Yukichi’s theories, based as they were on the standards of Western civilization, negated China and paved the way for Japan to become civilized by dissociating itself from Asia and joining Europe.²⁸

²⁶ Katsurajima, “‘Kai’ shisō,” 167–86.

²⁷ *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, 25.

²⁸ Koyasu, “*Bunmeiron no gairyaku*,” 19.

Fukuzawa Yukichi's theory of *datsuaron* 脱亜論, meaning "leaving" or "dissociation from" Asia, was published in the editorial of the newspaper *Jijishinpō* 時事新報 on March 16, 1885. In this theory, he praises the new government's promotion of westernization, which made Japan the center of Asia, and criticizes China and Korea for being conservative. He expresses shame that Japan is considered similar to China and Korea. He says that Japan should not wait for the awakening of neighboring countries but should abandon Asia and become part of civilized Western countries. He also says that Japan should treat China and Korea the same way that the Western countries treat them. Thus Fukuzawa Yukichi promoted Japanese imperialism.

When facing the threat of Western powers in the nineteenth century, China struggled with and hesitated to embrace westernization. Japan, on the contrary, quickly adopted Western culture and became the strongest country in Asia. As mentioned above, Japan's self-knowledge had already been changing several centuries before the nineteenth. Although it had never departed too far from the *Hua-Yi* system that originated in China, Japan had grown more and more self-confident before the nineteenth century. After the Meiji restoration and its experience with westernization, Japan started to despise its old neighbors, China and Korea. It wanted to "elevate" itself to become a peer of Western countries. The Japanese started to construct their world history by becoming an active participant in world affairs.²⁹ Japan also wanted to be the leader of Asia.

In late nineteenth century, there emerged in Japan aspirations for "reviving Asia," parallel to the theory that the Japanese should dissociate themselves from Asia. After seeing Asian countries, including their own, suffer from Western imperialism, the

²⁹ For more discussion on the Japanese construction of world history, see Koyasu, "Sekaishi," 21–50.

Japanese developed the idea that Asia is a unified entity and should fight the West. The two theories, “reviving Asia” and “dissociation from Asia,” seem to oppose each other, but their underlying ideologies are similar. One says that Japan should abandon the old, corrupt Asian culture and join the civilized world so that Japan can become the leader of Asia. The other says that Japan should lead other Asian countries to become civilized. Both theories provided the theoretical basis for Japanese military expansion and imperialism.

Tarui Tōkichi 樽井藤吉 is considered a representative figure of the theory of reviving Asia. In his 1893 book *Treatise on the Unification of the Great East (Daitō Gappōron 大東合邦論)*, he says that Japan and Korea are very close and similar, just like brothers. He urges the unification of the two countries to form the country of *Daitō*, the Great East.³⁰ Tarui Tōkichi also says that Qing-Dynasty China, should neither worry about the unification of Japan and Korea nor interfere with the matter, since both Japan and Korea are independent countries. Tarui Tōkichi asserts that the Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans are the same race and that the Qing Dynasty should join the alliance with the Great East to fight against the white race.³¹

The growth of Japanese pan-Asianism in the nineteenth century was closely associated with Japanese imperialism. Besides the drive to become a peer of Western imperialist powers, the long-established *Hua-Yi* worldview, adopted from China, helped form the imperialist Japanese pan-Asianism.

³⁰ Tarui, *Fukoku Daitō Gappōron*, 2, 5–8.

³¹ Ibid., 132–42.

In the traditional *Hua-Yi* system, China is the Heavenly Dynasty, *Tianchao* 天朝, which governs the whole world, *Tianxia* 天下. Chang Chi-hsiung 張啓雄 suggests that in this *Hua-Yi* system of the “Chinese World Empire,” the relation between *Hua* and *Yi* is like that between central and local governments; whoever controls China controls the whole empire. There were occasions when the Chinese lost control of their empire to the so-called barbarians. Therefore, according to Chang, as a member of this empire, Japan, an Eastern *Yi*, felt they had the chance to become the governor.³²

As mentioned above, Japan had developed its own *Hua-Yi* system by the sixth century. By the sixteenth century, Hideyoshi had the ambition of taking over China. Building on Hideyoshi’s aggression, Japan’s pan-Asian imperialism of the nineteenth century was but a stage in the continual formation of a Japanese type of *Hua-Yi* system. Chang Chi-hsiung suggests that the Japanese emperor granting to the Korean emperor his title—a ritual that annexed Korea—shows that Japan was still immersed in the tribute feature of the *Hua-Yi* system.³³

In 1894, Japan invaded Korea and initiated the Sino-Japanese War. The Qing Dynasty lost and Korea became a protectorate of Japan. It was then that Japan’s ideals for the East started to take shape. After defeating China, the imperialist Japanese pan-Asianism became even more dominant. In 1903, Okakura Tenshin published *The Ideals of the East*, which provided Japanese pan-Asianism with an academic rationale. The introduction, written by Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekânanda, says:

³² “*Zhonghua Shijie Diguo*,” 13.

³³ Ibid., 39.

What is that thing as a whole, which expresses itself through Japanese art as a whole? Mr. Okakura answers without hesitation: It is the culture of Continental Asia that converges upon Japan, and finds free living expression in her art. . . . One of many consequences will be that we shall see in Japanese art a recrudescence of ideals parallel to that of the Mediaeval Revival of the past century in England. What would be the simultaneous developments in China? in India? For whatever influences the Eastern Island Empire must influence the others. Our author has talked in vain if he has not conclusively proved that contention with which this little handbook opens, that Asia, the Great Mother, is for ever One.³⁴

The author of the introduction very well grasps the main points of Okakura's essay. Okakura argues that the Japanese culture is a mixture of all Asia. This helps his argument that Asia should be a single unity.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, Okakura Tenshin starts the book, "Asia is one." He then briefly describes how different peoples in Asia mingled together throughout history. Then, he says:

For if Asia be one, it is also true that the Asiatic races form a single mighty web. . . . Arab chivalry, Persian poetry, Chinese ethics, and Indian thought, all speak of a single ancient Asiatic peace, in which there grew up a common life, bearing in different regions different characteristic blossoms, but nowhere capable of a hard and fast dividing-line.³⁵

What Okakura means is that although people in different regions of Asia have developed different characteristics, it is difficult to find a way to accurately distinguish the races individually. He goes on to point out two major elements of Asian culture: Islam and Buddhism. After proposing his theory, "Asia is one," he argues that Japan is a mixture of all Asian cultures and that Japan best preserves the cultures of Asia:

³⁴ Okakura, *Ideals of the East*, xvi–xxii.

³⁵ Ibid., 3–4.

It has been, however, the great privilege of Japan to realise this unity-in-complexity with a special clearness. The Indo-Tartaric blood of this race was in itself a heritage which qualified it to imbibe from the two sources, and so mirror the whole of Asiatic consciousness. The unique blessing of unbroken sovereignty, the proud self-reliance of an unconquered race, and the insular isolation which protected ancestral ideas and instincts at the cost of expansion, made Japan the real repository of the trust of Asiatic thought and culture. . . . It is in Japan alone that the historic wealth of Asiatic culture can be consecutively studied through its treasured specimens.³⁶

Okakura also summarizes how Japan received different cultures from the Asian continent. Then he says, “Thus Japan is a museum of Asiatic civilization; and yet more than a museum, because the singular genius of the race leads it to dwell on all phases of the ideals of the past, in that spirit of living Advaitism which welcomes the new without losing the old.”³⁷ Okakura boasts Japan’s ability to preserve ancient Chinese culture while becoming a modernized power. He even follows up previous pan-Asian arguments by saying, “The history of Japanese art becomes thus the history of Asiatic ideals.”³⁸ The remaining chapters of his book are a history of Japanese art. To better illustrate Japanese art history, Okakura includes chapters about Chinese Confucianism and Daoism, and one about Buddhism and Indian art. He also describes the zealous westernization of the early Meiji era:

At this moment Japan, in the re-awakened consciousness of her national life, was eager to clothe herself in new garb, discarding the raiment of her ancient past. To cut away those fetters of Chinese and Indian culture which bound her in the maya of Orientalism, so dangerous to national independence, seemed like a paramount duty to the organisers of the new Japan. Not only in their armaments, industry, and science, but also in philosophy and religion, they sought the new ideals of the

³⁶ Ibid., 5–6.

³⁷ Ibid., 7–8.

³⁸ Ibid., 8.

West, blazing as that was with a wonderful lustre to their inexperienced eyes, as yet indiscriminating of its lights and shadows.³⁹

Okakura then praises those who criticized the overcommitment to westernization. He sees modern Japan as Renaissance Italy, which was able to balance Greco-Roman culture and “the new spirit of science and liberalism.”⁴⁰ Then he boasts again that Japan preserves Chinese and Indian cultures. He thinks that because Japan preserves the essence of the whole of Asia and has become the most modernized country in Asia, Japan should take the responsibility of reviving and unifying Asia:

The Chinese War, which revealed our supremacy in the Eastern waters, and which has yet drawn us closer than ever in mutual friendship, was a natural outgrowth of the new national vigour, which has been working to express itself for a century and a half. It had also been foreseen in all its bearings by the remarkable insight of the older statesmen of the period, and arouses us now to the grand problems and responsibilities which await us as the new Asiatic Power. Not only to return to our own past ideals, but also to feel and revivify the dormant life of the old Asiatic unity, becomes our mission.⁴¹

When Fukuzawa Yukichi published *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* and Tarui Tōkichi published *Treatise on the Unification of the Great East*, Japanese military expansionism and pan-Asianism were still just on paper. By the time Okakura Tenshin published *The Ideals of the East*, however, Japan had defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and had become an imperialist power. Okakura’s words were not just theories any more. The pan-Asianism and military aggression that were expressed in Okakura’s words in *The Ideals of the East* were Japan’s real goals.

³⁹ Ibid., 219.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 220–21.

⁴¹ Ibid., 223.

Japanese pan-Asianism did not burst out of nowhere. It was forged out of Japan's unique experience. But because they shared neither the theory's history nor its rationalization, the Chinese did not have the kind of thinking that the Japanese endorsed. From the late nineteenth century onward, Japanese pan-Asianism became so associated with Japanese imperialism that the Chinese became just as alarmed at the former, as they already were at the latter. All this runs contrary to the interpretation of Aida Yuen Wong, who thinks that China was an "active participant" with Japan in forging the concept of the East. She criticizes Stefan Tanaka's book *Japan's Orient*: "China in Tanaka's scheme appears as a passive and silent victim of Japan's imperialism. Tanaka hardly cites any Chinese sources and the relationship between Japan and China in his theory is one-sided."⁴² Chinese scholar Ge Zhaoguang, however, is much closer to the truth in suggesting that the idea of a unified Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was Japan's—and only Japan's—wishful thinking.⁴³

Through both sections of this chapter I have shown that, although, from the late nineteenth century onward, both the Chinese and the Japanese associated their nations with the term *East*, their concepts of the East greatly differed. The Chinese conception was based on Sino-centrism; the Japanese, on pan-Asianism. The Chinese disregarded nations other than China, whereas the Japanese considered Japan to be the essence of all Asian cultures. Because of these differing notions of the East, it is highly unlikely that Chinese painters and Japanese painters would create an Eastern art together.

⁴² Yuen, "Inventing Eastern Art," 3.

⁴³ "Xiangxiangde he shijide," 191.

III. Studying Abroad in Japan

1. China's Importation of Western Painting from Japan

In their Sino-centrism, the Chinese had long despised Japan because they thought that Japanese culture came from China. The very same fact, however, was used by the Japanese to promote pan-Asianism. They emphasized the similarities among Asian nations and promoted the idea that Japan, which they thought of as the most advanced country, should become the leader of Asia.

Despite these competing ideologies, in the early twentieth century, China and Japan had very close connections in art. Unlike previous centuries, when the Japanese learned art in China, now it was the Chinese artists who were learning in Japan. It would be wrong, however, to interpret this reversal of roles as a change in ideology. As I argue below, Chinese artists never accepted the pan-Asianism of Japan.

In the nineteenth century, both China and Japan had closed-door policies and were faced with the threat of Western imperialism. Seeing China suffer under the highly advanced Western military powers, Japan launched a series of westernizing programs soon after the Meiji Restoration, in 1868. Japan quickly became a strong power and defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and Russia in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904.

Japan's westernization was focused not merely on the military. Various aspects of culture, including art, were involved in westernization. Japanese artists then turned from Chinese artistic traditions and began to study Western art. Although the Chinese suffered under Western powers before the Japanese did, they were more hesitant to Westernize, because of their enduring Sino-centrism. Even though more and more Chinese scholars and officials sensed the importance of westernization in the late nineteenth century,

westernization in China was limited and slow to grow. When Japan defeated China in 1895, China's westernization was far behind Japan's.

The humiliation of the Sino-Japanese War prompted more and more Chinese intellectuals to take westernization more seriously and promote it. Because Japan's westernization was considered much more successful than China's, the Qing Dynasty started to send students to Japan to study, as a shortcut to westernization.

Before the Sino-Japanese War China had sent students to America and Europe, but the scale was limited. In 1871, Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823–1901) and Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811–1872) proposed that each year the government send thirty boys ages thirteen to twenty to America to study. Luckily their proposal was approved by the notoriously conservative Dowager Empress Cixi 慈禧 (1835–1908). The first group of students was sent to the United States in 1872. The fourth and last group was sent in 1874. The boys adapted and learned very well in America. However, they were criticized by conservatives back home for adapting to foreign culture too well and forgetting their own. In 1880 and 1881 the officials who promoted this study-abroad program struggled to continue it. Finally the Dowager Empress Cixi canceled the program and ordered students to be withdrawn.⁴⁴

Some students were sent to Europe, but these programs were less organized than the one for America. In 1874 Shen Baozhen 沈葆楨 sent students of the school of Fujian Shipyard to France to study ship operations. In 1876 Li Hongzhang sent seven students to Germany for army training. These students were sent by the orders of the ministers, not by the throne. Late in 1876 Li Hongzhang successfully proposed to the throne that he

⁴⁴ For more on these students see Qian and Hu, *Daqing liumei youtong ji*.

send thirty students to England and France to study shipbuilding and naval operations. The first group of students was sent in 1877. After that China occasionally sent students to Europe to study.⁴⁵

In 1896, one year after the end of the Sino-Japanese War, You Geng 祐庚, then the Chinese ambassador to Japan, requested that the Japanese government allow China to send thirteen students to Japan. This was the beginning of China's sending students to Japan. Japan's Minister of Education and Foreign Affairs Saionji Kinmochi 西園寺公望 (1849–1940) asked the president of the Normal High School (Kōtō Shihan Gakkō 高等師範学校), Kanō Jigorō 嘉納治五郎 (1860–1938), to accommodate these Chinese students. Kanō Jigorō asked Professor Honda Masujirō 本田増次郎 to oversee the students and to gather teachers to teach them Japanese and some basic subjects. The instruction took place in a private home, but later in 1899 a school for Chinese students was established. This school was the predecessor of the Kōbun Academy (Kōbun Gakuin 弘文学院), where many Chinese students, including Chen Shizeng and Lu Xun, started their studies in Japan.⁴⁶

After the end of Boxer Rebellion and the invasion by the Eight-Nation Alliance in 1901, the calls for reforms in China became louder and louder. Many high officials proposed study abroad as an important reform. Studying abroad started to become vogue among a new class of Chinese intellectuals. Students especially preferred to study in Japan. By 1906 more than ten thousand students had gone to Japan.⁴⁷ Unlike previous

⁴⁵ For more on China's sending students to Europe, see Shu, *Jindai Zhongguo liuxue shi*, 14–21.

⁴⁶ Kitaoka, *Lu Xun Nihon*, 59–61.

⁴⁷ Shu, *Jindai Zhongguo liuxue shi*, 46.

years, when most students were sent and funded by the government, now many students who went abroad were privately funded. Students favored studying in Japan because they believed it was faster and less expensive than studying in Europe. They believed that, since the Japanese language had similarities with Chinese, they could learn faster. And Japan's proximity to China saved time and money. Moreover, Zhang Zhidong's 張之洞 (1837–1909) *Quanxuepian* 勸學篇, published in 1898, encouraged studying in Japan. Zhang gives the reasons mentioned above, and also says that the Japanese had already filtered out the unnecessary part of Western learning and had adapted Western learning to fit their customs; since the customs of China and Japan were closer, it was easier to study Western learning in Japan.⁴⁸

Among those who went to Japan were art students. Li Shutong 李叔同 (1880–1942) was one of the first Chinese students to learn Western art in Japan. He was also the most influential. The remainder of this section recounts his story.

Li was a talented poet, musician, dramatist, calligrapher, painter, and educator. He went to Japan in 1905 and entered the Western Painting Department of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō 東京美術学校) in 1906, one of the first enrolled in the school. According to a list compiled by Yoshida Chizuko 吉田千鶴子 of foreign students who studied in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, only one other Chinese student, Huang Fuzhou 黃輔周, entered earlier, in 1905. Li Shutong graduated in 1911, but there is no evidence that Huang graduated.⁴⁹ Zeng Yannian 曾延年, another Chinese artist

⁴⁸ Zhang Zhidong 張之洞, "Youxue" 遊學 (Study abroad) in *Quanxuepian* (Treatise of urging study). See Zhang, *Zhang Wenxiang Gong quanji*, 3726–27.

⁴⁹ Yoshida, "Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō," 41.

who has been less influential in Chinese art than Li, entered the Western Painting Department of the school in the same year that Li did.

Li Shutong's interest was not only in painting. During his stay in Japan, he also showed his interest in music, poetry, and drama. Probably because of the rarity of Chinese students studying painting in Japan, a newspaper reporter from *Kokumin Shimbun* 国民新聞 went to where Li was staying and interviewed him. The story based on the interview came out in the October 4, 1906 issue of *Kokumin Shimbun* (fig. 1). The reporter observed that along the walls were a musical instrument, a bookshelf, a chair, and a desk. According to the newspaper, after the reporter gave Li Shutong his business card, they conversed:

“You are from Gentleman Kainan's newspaper?” “Yes, we also publish Professor Kainan's poems. You also know him?” “Gentlemen such as Kainan, Sekitai, Meikaku, Shuchiku are my friends. Poetry is my favorite. I send my poems in hope of being published. Please generously provide some critiques.” “How about musical instruments?” “I play the violin. I am also able to play other instruments a little bit. Chinese and Western paintings are my best.”

『槐南仙士の新聞社ですか』『左様、槐南先生の詩も出て居ります、貴君は御存知ですか』『槐南、石埭、鳴鶴、種竹の諸仙士皆友人です、私し詩一番好いです、投書します、批評頼みます』『楽器は……』『ヴァイオリン弾きます、外大抵弾ります、中洋画一番です』⁵⁰

The reporter's observation and their conversation reveal that Li Shutong was interested not only in painting but also in poetry and music. Kainan's full name was Mori Kainan 森槐南 (1863–1911). He was a very important figure in *kanshi* 漢詩, Chinese style poetry, in Meiji-period Japan. He and his friends established a society for

⁵⁰ “Shinkoku jin yōga ni kokorozasu,” 清国人洋画に志す (Qing dynasty citizen aiming at learning Western style painting) *Kokumin Shimbun* 国民新聞, October 4, 1906.

Chinese-style poetry called Zuiō Ginsha 随鸥吟社. Members of the society published their poems in the society's periodical *Zuiōshū* 随鸥集. Li Shutong joined *Zuiō Ginsha* after he went to Japan, and his poems were also published in *Zuiōshū*.⁵¹

Other than playing the violin and other musical instruments, as Li Shutong told the reporter, he even published a music magazine called *Little Magazine of Music* (*Yinyue Xiaozazhi* 音樂小雜誌), which was printed in Japan and mailed to China for distribution. This magazine is considered the first music magazine of China, but unfortunately it was discontinued after the first issue.

During his studies in Japan, Li Shutong was amazed by Western drama. Compared to traditional Chinese opera, the Western drama that he saw in Japan was more realistic and closer to people's lives. He organized a drama society, Chunliushe 春柳社, with Zeng Yannian—his classmate from the art school—and other Chinese friends, so as to learn this new kind of theater. They made their debut during the Chinese New Year in 1907 in a charity performance for a disastrous flood in China. They performed Alexandre Dumas Fils's (1824–1895) *La Dame aux Camélias*. They performed again, in June 1907, this time adapting Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.⁵²

Although music, poetry, and drama were all important to Li, it was painting that he pursued in formal education in Japan. It is disputed whether Li Shutong studied with Kuroda Seiki 黒田清輝 (1866–1924), founding faculty of the Western Painting Department at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. Chinese scholar Liu Xiaolu strongly doubts it, since, he says, there is no evidence.⁵³ Nishimaki Isamu 西槇偉, however, has noted

⁵¹ For more on Li Shutong's poetry in Japan, see Yoshikawa, "Hanshi huodong."

⁵² For more on Li Shutong's theatrical activities in Japan, see Yoshikawa, "Yanyi huodong."

⁵³ "Li Shutong," 241–65.

statements by Li Shutong's classmate Kōdera Kenkichi 小寺健吉 that suggest that they both studied with Kuroda in their third and fourth years.⁵⁴ Whether or not Li Shutong directly studied with Kuroda Seiki, Kuroda played an important part in the training of students in the department and Li Shutong must have been influenced by Kuroda. As will become evident, Kuroda dominated the curriculum of the department. Besides, according to the reporter for *Kokumin Shimbun*, Li Shutong had hung pictures painted by Kuroda, including nudes, beauties, and landscapes.⁵⁵ This indicates that Kuroda was important to Li Shutong. The nature of this influence on Li can be understood only in light of Kuroda's training in the West.

Kuroda Seiki was one of the most important figures in early-twentieth-century *yōga*, Western-style painting, in Japan. He went to Paris in 1884 to study law but he had great interest in painting. At the urging of friends, he started to study painting and entered Raphaël Collin's (1850–1916) studio. Later he decided to become a painter and to give up his studies in law. Raphaël Collin, generally considered a French academic painter, had studied with Adolphe-William Bouguereau and Alexandre Cabanel.⁵⁶ Although today Collin is rarely mentioned in histories of nineteenth-century French painting, he seems to have had some fame as a painter and teacher at that time. His debut in the Salon, in 1873, was with *Le Sommeil* (fig. 2), for which he won second prize.⁵⁷ *Le Sommeil*, which is in the collection of Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts, shows the characteristics of a

⁵⁴ Nishimaki, *Chūgoku Bunjin*, 19–20.

⁵⁵ See above, n. 51.

⁵⁶ Collin's teachers are mentioned in Kagesato, "Kuroda Seiki," 105, and Szabo, "Susan Watkins," 3.

⁵⁷ Bridgestone Museum of Art, *Nihon kindai*, 209.

typical French academic painting in the nineteenth century. The subject matter—the reclining female nude—had a long tradition in Europe, beginning in the sixteenth century. The dark palette in this painting was normal for nineteenth-century academic painters. Collin’s mastery of anatomy and still life in this painting illustrates his painting lineage. Another painting by Collin, *On the Sea Coast* (fig. 3), was shown at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. This painting also demonstrates his conservative style of painting, and was highly praised by Hubert Bancroft in *The Book of the Fair*, a multivolume work with detailed descriptions published for the exposition:

In better taste is Raphael Collin’s “On the Sea Coast,” the subject of which is a group of young women dancing on the sands, one of them with slight drapery of lilac hue. It is a sprightly composition, with all the finish characteristic of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and less indelicate than Aublet’s “Women on the Seashore,” whose scant attire displays rather than conceals the form. . . .⁵⁸

In *On the Sea Coast* Collin demonstrates his virtuosity and his academic skill in rendering the anatomy of the female nude. Because of the high popularity of Impressionism in the late nineteenth century, Collin produced more Impressionistic-style paintings than purely academic ones. Collin’s *Floréal* (fig. 4), dated 1886, shows influence from Impressionism. Although this also depicts a reclining female nude, the hues are much lighter than those in *Le Sommeil*. The pose of the female nude is a little more provocative than the goddesslike female in *Le Sommeil*. The brushstrokes used to depict the landscape are also looser than they are in *Le Sommeil*. These features indicate that in the mid-1880s Collin was turning away from strict academic painting. *Morning* (fig. 5), dated 1884, in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, is another

⁵⁸ Pp. 702–3.

example of his use of Impressionistic techniques. Like *Floréal*, it shows some Impressionistic influence yet retains the academic trait of accurately rendering female anatomy. The bright atmosphere in *Morning* results in a plein air painting. *Morning* exhibits the kind of features often seen in the works of Collin's students such as Kuroda Seiki and American painter Susan Watkins.

In the late nineteenth century, Collin had many international students. As Norma Broude points out:

Many of the foreign artists who would go on to develop Impressionist styles in their homelands came to Paris initially with the hope of studying at the École des Beaux-Arts or with conservative painters whose styles had been affected to a limited extent by Realism and Impressionism—painters such as Jules Bastien-Lepage, Léon Bonnat, Jean-Léon Gérôme, Émile-Auguste Carolus-Duran, Raphaël Collin, and Jean-Paul Laurens, all of whom enjoyed considerable international reputations during these decades.⁵⁹

Collin received not only international students but also women students, at a time when the École des Beaux-Arts had yet to admit female students.⁶⁰ Collin even once shared his teaching studio with Paul Gauguin at the Académie Colarossi, although their painting styles were very different.⁶¹

In his studio, Collin gave his students solid academic training, stressing the practice of drawing nude models to develop accurate anatomy. It was while studying under Collin that the American artist Susan Watkins developed her mastery of depicting the human form and had her works exhibited in the Paris Salon.⁶² Despite his stress on academic

⁵⁹ "World in Light," 28.

⁶⁰ Harrison, "Art of Susan Watkins," 142–43.

⁶¹ Supinen, "Paul Gauguin's Fiji Academy," 269–71.

⁶² Harrison, "Art of Susan Watkins," 144.

training, Collin also encouraged his students to paint in the plein-air style. As Szabo points out, “Although Collin’s style was slightly more painterly and delicately hued than that of Bouguereau, he nonetheless provided his students a firm foundation in the academic style. His classroom instruction was supplemented by sketching in museums and out-of-doors; he strongly encouraged preliminary plein-air sketches for outdoor compositions.”⁶³

Susan Watkins’s paintings demonstrate the outcome of such training from Collin’s studio. In her painting *Lady in Yellow* (fig. 6), the sitter’s pose and the overall composition is not far from the academic style. Although the lady is heavily clothed, Watkins’s training in accurately depicting human anatomy is still evident. Despite the traces of academic training seen in this painting, it has the bright color of a plein-air painting and the loose brushstrokes of an impressionistic painting.

Kuroda Seiki’s paintings are usually considered Impressionistic academic painting. Some of his early paintings are in a more conservative and academic style. *Portrait of a Lady* (Fujinzu 婦人図; fig. 7), an example of this relatively conservative style, has a more rigid arrangement of objects and a darker palette than his plein-air style paintings. It was painted from 1891 to 1892, when he had already developed a somewhat Impressionistic style. He retained a more conservative style probably because he wanted to send the painting to the Paris Salon. Another painting of Kuroda, *Reading* (Dokusho 読書; fig. 8), dated 1891, has brighter color and is similar to Collin’s *Morning* and Susan Watkins’s *Lady in Yellow*.

⁶³ “Susan Watkins,” 3.

Between 1907 and 1915, Kuroda painted *Hanano* 花野 (Flowering field). This painting was inspired by Collin's work *Three Beauties in the Green Field* (fig. 9), shown in the Paris Exposition.⁶⁴ Collin did a few paintings that have one or several women, clothed or nude, in a greenish field, and the *Three Beauties in the Green Field* is one of them: three clothed ladies lie casually on the green grass. The whole painting has a very bright greenish tone. This bright outdoor scene with loose brushstrokes is a typical plein-air painting, and Kuroda Seiki adapted it in *Flowering Field* (fig. 10). Despite the overall similarities, he made some alterations. The three women are nude, although Collin often painted nudes, too. The poses are changed; instead of two women reclining, one is sitting and one is half-sitting. The brush strokes are looser than they are in Collin's painting, making it more impressionistic.

Kuroda Seiki returned to Japan in 1893 and brought back the style of academic Impressionism—or Impressionistic academicism, as most Japanese scholars call it—that he learned in Paris. Before Kuroda's return, painters of western-style painting in Japan usually painted in the darker palette typical of academic painting. When the Japanese first saw the plein-air style of Kuroda's paintings, they called his painting the “new” school, or the “purple school,” a term just as pejorative as “Impressionism” was when first used in France.

In 1896, Kuroda Seiki was invited to help establish the Western Painting Department at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. The curriculum in the Western Painting Department was formulated mostly by Kuroda. Because he occupied such a prestigious position, his style of plein-air painting or academic Impressionism started to flourish. The Hakuba Kai

⁶⁴ Miwa, *Kuroda Seiki*, n.p.

白馬会 (White Horse Society) that he and his friends established in 1896 also promoted the Impressionistic style.

As asked earlier, what influence did Kuroda's academic Impressionism have on the painting of Li Shutong, who was in Kuroda's department between 1906 and 1911? The question is difficult to answer, in part because very few of Li's paintings survive. After his time in Japan he became more famous as a composer, calligrapher, and Buddhist monk, a change in career best illustrated by a 1912 advertisement in which he promotes not his painting but his calligraphy (fig. 11). Most of Li's paintings, which he gave away before becoming a monk, were lost, presumably casualties of war. But because the Tokyo School of Fine Arts had the custom that students who were graduating should produce a self-portrait, today's Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music still houses Li Shutong's graduation *Self-Portrait* (fig. 12). This painting is probably the only extant authentic oil painting by Li Shutong. It also provides an excellent case study, to determine what influence Kuroda had on him.

In *Self-Portrait*, Li Shutong depicts himself in a near-frontal view, wearing short hair parted in the center and a mustache. He is dressed in very dark coat. It seems that there are trees behind him. There is a signature (李 Li) and date on the upper right edge of the painting. The Chinese character is circled and is reddish, imitating seals usually stamped on a traditional Chinese or Japanese painting. Large dots are applied to form the picture, the pointillistic stippling technique typical of some post-Impressionist paintings. The left side of Li Shutong's face is brighter than the right, indicating the source of light. On his dark coat are many reddish and bluish dots, with other dots in green and other colors. The background is a bright yellow. The smaller tree trunk on the left border and the larger one on the right serve as a framing device. There is another major tree trunk in

the center-left behind Li Shutong's head, complementing the smaller tree trunk on the left and balancing the other one on the right.

Although this painting uses the stippling technique, the training of human anatomy can still be seen clearly in the depiction of his face. The bright yellowish background of the outdoor view and the bright face reflecting sunlight show the lineage of plein-air painting that came from Kuroda and Collin.

Li Shutong's participation in the White Horse Society further illustrates his close association with Kuroda. Li's works were accepted to be shown in the twelfth and the thirteenth annual exhibitions of the White Horse Society. An exhibition catalogue was published for the thirteenth exhibition and Li Shutong's work *Morning* (Asa 朝; fig. 13) was included.

After Li Shutong graduated from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts and returned to China in 1911, he started his career as an educator. He first taught in his hometown Tianjin and in 1912 he was invited to teach in Shanghai. During his teaching career he also taught in Hangzhou and Nanjing. He brought back to China the techniques of Western painting that he learned in Japan. His use of the male nude model for teaching painting aroused controversies at that time. Other than Western painting, he also taught music. He composed many songs and became a pioneer of modern music in China. His teaching inspired many young minds in China. One of his students, Feng Zikai 豐子愷 (1898–1975), was very much influenced by him and also went to Japan to study. Feng Zikai later became a renowned cartoonist.

During his stay as a teacher in Shanghai, Li Shutong became the editor for the arts section of the newspaper *The Pacific Times* (Taipingyang Bao 太平洋報). He did some

graphic design for the paper and he used the paper to publish his own article “Methods of Western Painting.”⁶⁵

As editor of the arts section, Li continued contact with Chinese who had studied art in Japan. His classmate Zeng Yannian, whose graduation portrait in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts still survives (fig. 14), ran an advertisement in *The Pacific Times* for a Japanese art book he was selling (fig. 15).⁶⁶ This shows that at least they were still in contact after they returned to China. Li Shutong also invited Chen Shizeng to do illustrations for the same paper. Chen Shizeng and Li Shutong’s time in Japan overlapped. Scholars believe that they could have known each other while they were in Japan.⁶⁷ Each issue of the arts section in *The Pacific Times* included simple pictures, sometimes with calligraphy; Chen Shizeng occasionally provided these pictures, and even some of his own seal carvings. The graphic design of Li Shutong and the simple pictures of Chen Shizeng inspired Feng Zikai to become a cartoonist.⁶⁸

The Western painting that Li Shutong brought back to China was what he learned in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in Japan. Li Shutong can be said to be part of the lineage of Kuroda Seiki’s style, which prevailed in Japan in the early twentieth century. Does this mean Li Shutong collaborated with Japanese painters to create an Eastern painting? No. Like most students who studied abroad at that time, Li Shutong wanted to learn the latest Western culture and introduce it to China. Li Shutong and other students’ goal was to

⁶⁵ Fan, “Xiyang huafa.”

⁶⁶ Not much is known about Zeng Yannian. Chen Xing 陳星 pieced together some information about Zeng and published it in his “Chunliu shuangxing,” 7–23.

⁶⁷ Chen Xing, “Bei Chen nan Li,” 141. Gong, “De shengping he yishu,” n.p.

⁶⁸ Chen Shizeng and Feng Zikai’s artwork are discussed in Chapter Five.

strengthen and reform China. It had nothing to do with creating an “Eastern art.”

Although Li Shutong learned the techniques and style from Japan, this does not mean he wanted to create an Eastern art with Japanese artists.

2. The Lingnan School's Adoption of Japanese *Nihonga* Painting

Li Shutong and other pioneers brought back Western painting techniques from Japan. For some artists in early twentieth-century China, the wholesale adoption of Western oil-painting techniques by Chinese painters was too radical. These painters wanted to combine Chinese and Western painting methods. Kang Youwei 康有爲 (1858–1927) says in *The Catalogue of Painting Collection in Wanmu Caotang*, written in 1917, “Someday there should be people who become masters by combining Chinese and Western methods. Japan has already worked hard to promote this idea.” 它日當有合中西而成大家者。日本已力講之。⁶⁹

Before Kang Youwei wrote this, some Chinese artists had tried to import Western methods in their painting. Studying painting in Japan became a means for them to produce a hybrid of Chinese painting and Western painting. In Japan they saw the success of *Nihonga* 日本画, a synthesis of traditional Japanese painting and Western media and painting techniques. These painters used *Nihonga* as their model for creating a Chinese national painting. The leader of these Chinese painters was Gao Jianfu 高劍父 (1879–1951), who was joined by his brother Gao Qifeng 高奇峰 and another painter, Chen Shuren 陳樹人. They are called the three masters of the Lingnan School because they are from the area called *Lingnan*, a term for Guangdong province.

Although the Lingnan School painters borrowed the style of Japanese *Nihonga*, their aim was not to create a kind of Eastern art. Rather, Lingnan School painters wanted to reform Chinese painting. Thus, they called their painting New National Painting (*Xin Guohua* 新國畫) and they preferred to be called, not the Lingnan School, which has the

⁶⁹ *Wanmu Caotang canghuamu*, n.p.

implication of a regional school, but *Zhezhong Pai* 折衷派, which means the Compromising School, or the Synthesizing School. They always promoted themselves as synthesizers of Chinese and Western painting. They avoided talking about any influence from Japan, although their opponents criticized their painting as being too Japanese.

Gao Jianfu was the founder of Lingnan School. In his youth he learned painting from Ju Lian 居廉, who was famous for his bird and flower painting, executed in a relatively more realistic style compared to traditional literati painting. Later Gao studied painting with a Japanese teacher and then a French one. In 1903, Gao Jianfu decided to go to Japan to study painting.⁷⁰ Gao did not have enough money to live in Japan but he thought that he could ask help from the association in Tokyo for overseas Chinese students.⁷¹ When he arrived in Tokyo he found out that this association no longer existed. Luckily, he bumped into his old friend Liao Zhongkai 廖仲愷, whose wife, He Xiangning 何香凝, once studied painting with Gao. Liao Zhongkai gave him accommodation. During Gao's stay in Tokyo, he held a charity exhibition with other painters, such as Li Shutong, for south China's flood victims. Through Liao Zhongkai's introduction, Gao Jianfu joined the revolutionary organization known as the Alliance Society (Tongmenghui 同盟會), led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. This was the beginning of his deep involvement in revolutionary movements. He stayed in Japan until spring of 1904

⁷⁰ According Chien You-wen's 簡又文 chronology, Gao Jianfu first went to Japan in 1906 ("Geming huajia Gao Jianfu," 85–86). Current scholars do not agree with this date. Tsuruta Takeyoshi compares different materials and proposes that Gao Jianfu went to Japan for the first time on January 28, 1903, stayed until the spring of 1904, returned to Japan for the second time in October or November of 1905, and stayed until the winter of 1906 ("Ryūnichijū bijutsu gakusei," 129). Chen Xiangpu 陳薌普 says that according to He Jincan, Gao Jianfu first went to Japan in the winter of 1903 and went for the second time in the end of 1905 (*Gao Jianfu de huihua yishu*, 51).

⁷¹ Chien, "Geming huajia Gao Jianfu," 86. Chien's study provides the background for the material in the remainder of this paragraph.

and returned to China. While in China he supervised the establishment of secret branches of the Alliance Society. He went to Japan again in 1905 and stayed until 1906. According to Gao Jianfu's student Chien You-wen 簡又文—who compiled a chronology based on Gao's testimony, Chien's own recollection, and that of Gao's friends and family—during his first stay in Japan Gao Jianfu studied in painting organizations such as the White Horse Society, The Pacific Painting Society (Taiheiyō Gakai 太平洋画会), and the Watercolor Study Association (Suisai Kenkyūkai 水彩研究会).

Chien You-wen also says that Gao Jianfu entered an art school called “Tokyo Fine Arts Academy” (Tokyo Bijutsuin 東京美術院) during his second stay in Japan and that Gao Jianfu was the first Chinese student to enter the school.⁷² However, there was no school called “Tokyo Fine Arts Academy.” According to Tsuruta Takeyoshi 鶴田武良, the only art schools in Tokyo at this time were the Girl's Fine Arts School (Joshi Bijutsu Gakkō 女子美術学校) and the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. Tsuruta Takeyoshi also found writings by Gao Jianfu in the collection of Guangzhou Art Museum; in these writings Gao claims that he studied in the preparation program in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts.⁷³ At this time there was another art school, not mentioned by Tsuruta: the Institute of Japanese Art (Nihon Bijutsuin 日本美術院), whose origin is discussed below. Ralph Croizier suggests that Gao Jianfu might have studied in either the Tokyo School of Fine Arts or Okakura Tenshin's Institute of Japanese Art.⁷⁴

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ “Ryūnichī bijutsu gakusei,” 129.

⁷⁴ *Art and Revolution*, 32.

Painting societies such as the White Horse Society and the Pacific Painting Society had affiliated institutes to teach painting. The White Horse Society's affiliated institute started in 1899 and the Pacific Painting Society's institute started in 1904.⁷⁵ However, no hard evidence can be found to determine whether Gao Jianfu really studied in any of those institutions. It is not even certain that Gao Jianfu took any art classes or studied with any painter in Japan. Nevertheless, it is generally believed that, while in Japan, Gao Jianfu saw a new kind of Japanese painting and wanted to learn it.

Scholars agree that it was *Nihonga* that Gao Jianfu and other Lingnan School artists pursued. This new painting started to emerge at the end of nineteenth century as a reaction against the wholesale adoption of Western-style painting in the Meiji period. The very name *Nihonga*, which literally means "Japanese painting," attests to the surge of nationalism in the period after the Meiji Restoration, when the Japanese were eager to modernize and catch up with Western countries.

In 1878, an American professor Ernest Fenollosa was invited to teach philosophy and politics at the Imperial University in Tokyo. While there he became very interested in East Asian art. Seeing Japanese traditions being abandoned, he urged the Japanese to preserve their cultural heritage. Okakura Tenshin attended Fenollosa's classes at the Imperial University and became his close collaborator in reviving traditional Japanese art. Fenollosa and Okakura greatly influenced the cultural policies of the Japanese government. They conducted nationwide surveys of Japanese antiquities and important art objects. They were also deeply involved in the establishment of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, which opened in 1889. Okakura became the dean of the school a year after it

⁷⁵ Tsuruta, "Ryūinichi bijutsu gakusei," 129–30.

opened. His nationalistic ideology was reflected in its curriculum. The painting department was designed to teach mainly traditional painting, not Western painting. The Western Painting Department, discussed in the previous section, was not established until 1896.

Because of Fenollosa and Okakura's dedication and guidance, *Nihonga* started to emerge in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Traditionally, painting in Japan was taught by masters to apprentices. With the establishment of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, the teaching of Japanese painting became institutionalized and thus more systematic. Although Okakura's aim was to revive traditional painting, he incorporated Western elements, such as live sketching, into the school's curriculum. The result was a more realistic style of Japanese painting in a traditional medium. The new style was called *Nihonga*, to differentiate it from *Yōga*, Western-style painting.

Despite his great contribution to the revival of Japanese art and the establishment of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, Okakura's dictatorial style of leadership in the school aroused many conflicts. Especially after the establishment of the Western Painting Department, his nationalistic ideals in the design of the curriculum prompted attacks from Western-painting faculty members. The clash between Okakura and Kuroda Seiki, head of the Western Painting Department, forced Okakura to leave the school in 1898. Okakura's supporters also left the school and then established the Institute of Japanese Art.

Among those who left the Tokyo School of Fine Arts to follow Okakura were Yokoyama Taikan 横山大観, Hishida Shunsō 菱田春草, and Shimomura Kanzan 下村観山. They were part of Okakura's beloved first generation of graduates from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts and they all stayed to teach in the school after graduation. They were

the pioneers and practitioners of Okakura's ideals of reforming traditional Japanese painting to compete with Western painting. After the establishment of the Institute of Japanese Art, they further experimented with new *Nihonga* techniques, such as eliminating contours to make the painting more painterly. They also tried to render atmosphere, probably to compete with the plein-air painting that Kuroda Seiki brought back from Paris at that time.⁷⁶ Critics' responses to this new style of *Nihonga*, however, were similar to those made early on against the French Impressionist painters. The critics ridiculed the new style by calling it *mōrōtai* 朦朧体, which means "very misty, unclear form."

Despite so much criticism, the *Nihonga* painters continued their painting reforms. They rediscovered the beauty of *Rimpa* 琳派 school painting of the Edo period and started to draw inspiration from it. The *Rimpa* school followed the style of Ogata Kōrin 尾形光琳 and Tawaraya Sōtatsu 俵屋宗達, who reformed the *Yamato-e* style that had developed since the Heian period, making it more bold and colorful. The *Rimpa* school of painting, which emphasized design elements, was strongly decorative and pleasing to the eye.

Yamato is an ancient term for Japan. The term *Yamato-e* emerged in the Heian period and was applied to paintings, to distinguish Japanese themes and landscapes from Chinese ones. It was the *Nihonga* of the Heian period. In the Edo period, the *Rimpa* school inherited and reformed *Yamato-e*. Now the modern *Nihonga* painters wanted to adopt the tradition begun with *Yamato-e*. This development brought the *Nihonga* painters success; their new paintings were highly praised.

⁷⁶ Saeki, "Nihonga," 56.

When Gao Jianfu went to Japan in the first decade of the twentieth century, *Nihonga* was popular and more than a dozen years old. The success of the reforms of Okakura and *Nihonga* painters such as Taikan and Shunsō must have inspired Gao Jianfu to reform Chinese painting. *Nihonga* became Gao Jianfu's model for creating his new Chinese painting. Several scholars have already pointed out the similarities between Gao Jianfu's paintings and those of Japanese *Nihonga* masters. For example, Kao Mayching says that Gao Jianfu's *The Weak Devoured by the Strong* (fig. 16) resembles Japanese painter Hishida Shunsō's *A Fox under the Moon* (fig. 17).⁷⁷ Gao Jianfu's *Efang Palace on Fire* (*Huoshao Efanggong* 火燒阿房宮; fig. 18) has long been criticized for being a copy of Japanese painter Kimura Busan's 木村武山 *The destructive fire of Efang Palace* (*Abō Gōka* 阿房劫火; fig. 19).⁷⁸

After visiting India and other South Asian countries in 1930, Gao Jianfu painted several monuments of South Asia, such as *Stupa in South India* (*Nan Yindu Gusha* 南印度古刹; fig. 20), *The Himalayas* (*Ximalaya Shan* 喜馬拉雅山; fig. 21), and *Stupa Ruins in Burma* (*Miandian Foji* 緬甸佛蹟; fig. 22). These works are considered similar to the Kyoto *Nihonga* master Takeuchi Seihō's depictions of European monuments, such as *Ancient Castle in Rome* (*Rōma Kojōzu* 羅馬古城図; fig. 23) and *Moon over Venice* (*Benisu no tsuki* ベニスの月; fig. 24), executed after his trip to Europe. Tsuruta Takeyoshi thinks that although these works are similar, it does not necessarily mean Seihō's European monuments influenced Gao's South Asian ruins; they might have reached the same goal from different paths.⁷⁹ In my opinion, Gao Jianfu most clearly

⁷⁷ "China's Response," 152.

⁷⁸ Chen Zhenlian, *Jindai Zhong Ri*, 180.

⁷⁹ Tsuruta, "Ryūinichi bijutsu gakusei," 130.

copied *Nihonga* masters when he was learning from them. His paintings of South Asian monuments are not nearly as dependent on these early influences. Nevertheless, the influence of *Nihonga* cannot be denied. Even though Gao Jianfu did not intentionally imitate Seihō, Seihō's works must have influenced him, be it consciously or unconsciously. Besides, in one of Gao Jianfu's unpublished writings, he admits that he greatly admired Takeuchi Seihō.⁸⁰

Other Lingnan School painters followed Gao Jianfu's path in learning from the new Japanese painting. Ralph Croizier points out the similarities between paintings by Gao Jianfu's brother Gao Qifeng and those of Japanese *Nihonga* artists: for example, Gao Qifeng's *Water Buffalo* (fig. 25) and Hikida Hoshō's *Water Buffalo* (fig. 26); Gao Qifeng's *Fox Suspicious* (fig. 27) and Takeuchi Seihō's *Fox in Bamboo* (fig. 28).⁸¹

The similarities between the Lingnan School paintings and Japanese paintings were quickly discovered and severely criticized when Gao Jianfu promoted his new style of synthesizing Chinese and Western paintings. Gao Jianfu called his new style New National Painting. According to Chien You-wen, in 1921 Gao Jianfu, Gao Qifeng, Chen Shuren, and their followers were promoting the New National Painting in Guangdong Province; their informal gatherings grew larger and larger; eventually it became a painting society called Painting Studies Society (Huaxue Yanjiu Hui 畫學研究會). The growing popularity of the New National Painting attracted attacks and boycott from more traditional and conservative painters, who organized the National Painting Studies Society (Guohua Yanjiu Hui 國畫研究會); they attacked Gao Jianfu's painting, claiming

⁸⁰ Quoted in Li Weiming 李偉銘, "Li Xiongcai, Gao Jianfu," 84–85.

⁸¹ *Art and Revolution*, 41–45.

that his paintings were simply his signature superimposed on paintings imported from Japan.⁸² Chien You-wen may have mixed up the years about the conflicts between Gao Jianfu and the more conservative painters because the National Painting Studies Society was established in 1925, while its predecessor Guihai Cooperative Painting Society (Guihai Hezuo Huashe 癸亥合作畫社) was established only in 1923. The conflict between Gao Jianfu's clan and the conservatives started in the beginning of the 1920s and culminated in 1926. According to Fang Rending's 方人定 recollection, Gao Jianfu asked him to publish an article discussing how to reform painting and promoting the three masters in "New National Painting and the Old National Painting" (*Xin guohua yu jiu guohua* 新國畫與舊國畫) in the newspaper *Guomin Xinwen* 國民新聞.⁸³ Fang Rending's message was probably not so simple as discussing ways to reform painting and promoting the masters, otherwise the conservative camp would not have reacted so fiercely. The leader of the National Painting Studies Society, Pan Dawei 潘達微 (1880–1929), asked a younger member Huang Banruo 黃般若 (1901–1868) to refute Fang and to claim that Gao Jianfu's paintings were plagiarizing Japanese painting.⁸⁴ This war of words between Fang and Huang went on and on for several years. Even after Fang and Huang eventually stopped fighting, criticisms about the Lingnan School's copying of Japanese painting did not completely stop. Despite being attacked for being too Japanese,

⁸² Chien, "Geming huajia Gao Jianfu," 22.2 (1973): 89.

⁸³ Huang Dade, "'xin' 'jiu' huapai," 59.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Gao Jianfu and his followers never admitted that they learned their new style from Japanese painting, and they always avoided discussion of the matter.⁸⁵

In 1936 and 1937 Gao Jianfu taught in the Central University in Nanjing. While there he gave a series of lectures promoting his ideas of the New National Painting. These lectures were later published in 1955 as *My Views of Modern National Painting* (*Wode xiandai guohua guan* 我的現代國畫觀). This book is the most important document for understanding Gao Jianfu's theory of the New National Painting. In the beginning of *My Views of Modern National Painting*, Gao Jianfu attempts to establish the value of painting: "Art can transform the society and change people's mentality. Therefore there are very few artists who commit crimes" (藝術可以改造社會，可以改變人心，所以藝人作奸犯科的實在很少。; p. 2).

To legitimize his ideal of synthesizing Chinese and Western paintings, he then argues that Chinese painting has long received foreign influences (p. 6). Then he contends that Chinese literati painting has remained the same since the Yuan Dynasty and that it was about time to change to make it the new national painting of the Republic of China (pp. 12–13). He points out that although traditional Chinese art had a glorious past, it was too lofty and abstract for people to understand. Thus, it was necessary to reform Chinese art (pp. 13–16).

To Gao Jianfu, a major change in Chinese painting was necessary. In the next section, "The Meaning of Art Revolution" (*Yishu geming de yiyi* 藝術革命的意義), he called for a revolution in Chinese painting. As mentioned earlier, Gao Jianfu was deeply

⁸⁵ Chen Zhenlian 陳振濂 has already pointed out that the Lingnan School painters did not admit that they received Japanese influence: *Jindai Zhong Ri*, 172–73.

involved in the revolutionary movements led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. After the Qing Dynasty was overthrown, a Republican government, based on Dr. Sun Yat-sen's studies of Chinese and Western political systems, was established. To Gao Jianfu, the word *revolution* seemed ideal for talking about reforming Chinese art, but this word might have sounded too strong for some people. Therefore, to ease the concern, he starts this section by saying, "Modern national painting evolved from ancient Chinese painting" (現代國畫，即由古代中國畫遞嬗演進而來。; p. 17). Then he says, "I myself am the person most actively promoting the modernization of painting and art revolution" (兄弟平生係最積極主張繪畫現代化的，主張藝術革命的。). He claims that the paintings of the past were for personal enjoyment and that in modern times painters needed to paint for a public audience. Therefore he endorses exhibitions. He says that modern painting had to be both popular and educational. Speaking as a revolutionary, he asserts (p. 20):

Modern Chinese painting cannot depart from the needs of the revolution in modern China; artists have to look at the bigger picture for future development of the revolution; work hard to cultivate oneself to cope with various needs right now.

現代中國畫是離不開現代中國的革命需要的；藝術家要從高處大處著眼為著革命的未來的發展，配合著目前各種需要，而努力增進自己的修養。

Gao Jianfu continues his theory of art revolution in the next section (p. 23): "After following the chairman for political revolution, I feel the need for revolution on our country's national painting" (兄弟追隨總理作政治革命以後，就感覺到我國國畫實有革命之必要。). He proposes a new direction for Chinese painting, one that combines Chinese and Western styles. He says in the section "The Inevitable Tendency of Modern Painting" (Xiandaihua de biran qingxiang 現代畫的必然傾向; p. 24):

To accelerate the establishment of modern painting (which will be called New National Painting for the rest of the lecture), it is better to have someone who has

certain mastery in Chinese painting and Western painting to come up to coordinate. Because this school is synthesizing the Chinese and the Western, if one has the mastery of both, it can yield twice the achievement with half the effort and a fruitful result can be easily attained.

促進現代畫的成立（以下稱新國畫），最好是中畫西畫兩派中有相當造詣的人，起而從事溝通。蓋此派是中西合璧的；有兩方的造詣，那就事半功倍，易收良果了。

To ease worries that Chinese painting would suffer or die if Western painting became too popular, Gao Jianfu argues Sino-centrally (p. 25):

I think that China is very assimilating. I am only afraid various paintings will not flourish and China will assimilate other nations' paintings. In the Yuan Dynasty the Mongols were so fierce. In the Qing Dynasty the Manchus were so mean. Over the time, however, they were all assimilated by us. What is the worry of Chinese painting?

我以為中國很有同化性的，只怕各種畫在中國不發達，將來一定會把各國的畫同化了。元時蒙古人多麼強，清朝滿人多麼兇，久而久之，都被我同化了，何有於畫呢？

He points out that Chinese painting, such as works by Shitao 石濤 (1642–1707) and Bada Shanren 八大山人 (1626–1705), had already influenced Western painting, especially Fauvism. He argues that Western painters were learning from Chinese painting; therefore, there is no reason for Chinese painters not to learn from the West (p. 26).

Certain Western methods Gao Jianfu urges Chinese painters to learn. As most Chinese at that time thought, he believed that Western methods were more scientific, and that to modernize China, the Chinese had to learn science. He argues (p. 28):

Besides keeping valuable qualifications that were inherited from the ancient times, we also need to add [painting methods] based on modern scientific methods, such as projection, perspective, light and shade, foreshortening, and atmosphere. This will create the New National Painting, which is wholesome and reasonable in visual feeling.

我們除了保留著古代遺留下來有價值的條件外，還要補充以現代的科學方法，如「投影」，「透視」，「光陰法」，「遠近法」，「空氣層」。使在視覺上成一種健全的合理的新國畫。

What Gao Jianfu proposes for his New National Painting obviously comes from the *Nihonga* that he learned in Japan, especially the added atmosphere in painting. To render the air was what Yokoyama Taikan and Hishida Shunsō tried to do in the painting that was derisively called *mōrōtai*. Throughout Gao Jianfu's *My Views of Modern National Painting*, his promotion of synthesizing Chinese and Western painting styles to create the New National Painting is evident. He never mentions that the influence comes from Japan. Because of the fierce attack by conservative painters, sometimes Gao Jianfu had to talk about Japanese influence. But Gao's defense for the Lingnan School was very Sino-centric. In another example of this, Gao Jianfu's student Chien You-wen remarks:

I recall my teacher Jianfu once told me: Painting of the Japanese originally came from our country. Even the tools of painting also mostly came from our country. However, some aspects of painting have been lost in our country and have been kept in Japan. Regaining [what we have] lost from Dongyang [Japanese] painting is [essentially] recovering antiquity and the return of our heritage. It is to promote and enrich our nation's culture. Why despise it as imported goods or Eastern [Japanese] products?

憶劍父先生生前曾語餘，日人畫學固來自吾國者，即其所用畫具亦多由吾國傳去。不過，有幾方面之畫學，在吾國失傳，而在日本保留，是則從東洋畫學而復得之，正是恢復舊物，還我遺產，以光大發揚及增富吾國文化，何得鄙視為「舶來品」、「東洋貨」乎？⁸⁶

What Gao Jianfu was saying was that people should not criticize him for imitating Japanese painting because what he learned from Japan was actually genuine Chinese painting, not Japanese painting.

⁸⁶ "Geming huajia Gao Jianfu," 21.6 (1972): 34.

Chien You-wen says that he consulted another painting master, Bao Shaoyou 鮑少遊, about the issue of Japanese influence. He says:

[Bao Shaoyou] points out the Japanese originally had no painting. They got their painting from India and China. Throughout their history they especially have long received the influence from Chinese painting.

[鮑少遊] 指出日人本來無畫，有之則自印度及中國傳來；其歷代受中國畫之影響尤大尤久。⁸⁷

Bao Shaoyou's statement is even more Sino-centric than Gao Jianfu's. However, his argument was influenced by Okakura Tenshin's pan-Asianism: he claims that Japanese painting received Indian influence. Okakura Tenshin argued at that time that Japan had the essence of all Asian cultures and thus had the right to lead all Asian countries to compete with the West.

After Japan's invasion of China reached Canton, Gao Jianfu fled to Macao and stayed there for the rest of his life. After Gao Jianfu passed away, the Lingnan School did not vanish. New generations of the Lingnan School painters in Taiwan and Hong Kong enjoyed prestigious status in the art world. Following Gao Jianfu, they avoided talking about Japanese influence, or else they just maintained Gao's defense of the Lingnan School. In most of their publications they escaped embarrassment by avoiding the issue of Japanese influence.

For example, second generation Lingnan School painter Zhao Shao'an's 趙少昂 student Zhao Shiguang 趙世光 wrote "Brief Interpretation of Lingnan School's Theory and Practice" in the Hong Kong publication *Mingbao Yuekan* 明報月刊 in March 1998. This article contains no mention whatsoever of Japanese influence. In the prelude to the

⁸⁷ Ibid.

exhibition catalogue *Chinese Painting: Lingnan School* published in 1988 by the Fung Ping Shan Museum, University of Hong Kong, the curator of the museum Liu Weimai 劉唯邁 (Michael Lau) says, “The characteristic of the Lingnan School is synthesizing Chinese and Western techniques to develop the New National Painting.”⁸⁸ Here Japan is not mentioned, either. Chen Hsiang-pu’s 陳薌普 *Kao Chien-fu: His Life and His Paintings*, published by the Taipei Fine Arts Museum in 1991, is a widely quoted scholarly work. There Chen remarks:

As far as discussing what kinds of Japanese influence Gao Jianfu received, some people have implied or pointed out that Gao Jianfu was influenced by painters who absorbed Western techniques, such as Takeuchi Seihō, Hashimoto Gahō, Matsumura, Yamamoto Shunkyo, Yokoyama Taikan, and Hishida Shunsō. However, after further research, I found that other than Takeuchi Seihō, who had met him, Gao had no direct apprenticeship with any of these painters.

在討論高劍父曾受到哪些日本影響時，一些吸收西洋技法的畫家如竹內棲鳳、橋本雅邦、松村、山元春舉、橫山大觀、菱田春草等都曾經被暗示或指出影響了高氏，考察起來，除了竹內棲鳳曾經與他見面，高氏與他們都沒有直接的師承關係。⁸⁹

It seems that Chen does not believe that Gao Jianfu learned from any of these Japanese masters because Gao never directly studied under them. Chen continues:

After several years, Gao Jianfu launched the painting reform movement in China. To see its agenda and way of implementation is very similar to the tracks of the reform of Japanese painting during the time of Meiji Reformation. We have reason to believe that he did not learn from any particular painter. All the reformist painters active in Tokyo and Kyoto during this period were the models that he aimed for. He depended on his own sensibility to grasp their principles and methods of reform and developed his own style by experimenting.

⁸⁸ Fung Ping Shan Museum, *Lingnan Guohua*, n.p.

⁸⁹ *Gao Jianfu*, 77.

若干年後，高劍父在中國展開與時代相呼應的繪畫革新運動，視其內容、做法，和明治維新時期日本繪畫革新的足跡是如此相似；我們有理由相信，他並沒有特定的學習對象，這個時期活躍在東京及京都藝壇的改革派畫家，都曾經是式法的目標；他憑著自己的敏銳，汲取他們改革的原則方法，試驗出自己的風格。⁹⁰

It seems that Chen acknowledges only that the Japanese painters inspired Gao Jianfu to reform Chinese painting. Chen thinks that Gao developed his style by himself.

In 2000 Chinese scholar Chen Zhenlian published *Comparative Studies of the History of Cultural Interchange in Painting Between China and Japan in the Modern Era*, in which he is very critical of the Lingnan School masters. He says:

We do not mean to accuse the Lingnan School masters that their plagiarism is irresponsible. Neither do we want to comment on whether they were “plagiarizing” or “introducing” or on whether they were exploring or speculating. Gao Jianfu did copy other people’s paintings but tried hard to avoid mentioning Japan. He superficially talked about what he calls “synthesizing China and the West” and admired himself for the “new” and the “modern” in national painting. As for what kind of mindset he possessed in doing these, we are not willing to go deep into this, either. But there is one thing that has to be emphasized; that is, the Lingnan School either originated from or depended on Japanese painting to be able to emerge.

我們無意指責嶺南派巨子們的抄襲是不負責任。我們也不想對究竟是「抄襲」還是「引進」，是探索還是投機發表臧否見解。至於高劍父明明抄了別人的畫，還拼命在那兒避提日本，泛泛地講甚麼「折衷中西」，儼然以國畫的「新」與「現代」自居，像這樣的舉動究竟包含了一種甚麼樣的心態，我們也不想深究。但有一點是必須強調的，這即是：嶺南派是發源或依憑於日本畫才得以一逞。⁹¹

It seems that it was and still is an unwritten taboo for a Chinese painter to copy Japanese painting or to adopt Japanese style. The Lingnan School painters would not admit either one. They were severely criticized when they started to use the Japanese

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ *Jindai Zhong Ri*, 180–81.

style. They are still criticized, in the twenty-first century. There are two main reasons why it is so unacceptable to use or even to admit the influence of Japanese-style painting.

The first is national pride. It is very difficult for the Chinese to give up their sense of cultural superiority over Japan and to admit to any counter-influence from Japan. For China, Japan in the beginning of the twentieth century was a window to the West. Students flocked to Japan to learn Western things that had been absorbed by the Japanese. But to adopt Japanese style and call it the “New National Painting” of China would have been too much for traditional Chinese painters.

The second reason is the growth of Japanese military aggression against China in early twentieth century. Japan defeated China’s Qing Dynasty in the war over Korea in 1895 and continued its military aggression against China into the twentieth century. Because of Japanese imperialism, the Chinese hated Japanese culture. So, despite the fact that Gao Jianfu and other Lingnan School masters copied Japanese *Nihonga* masters, it would be impossible for them to admit this or to entertain any notion that they were creating an Eastern painting in collaboration with Japan.

3. Chen Shizeng and His Japanese Experience

Chen Shizeng was born in 1876 into a prestigious scholar-official family of the Qing Dynasty. So important was his family in the nineteenth and twentieth century, it is hard to ignore it when studying modern Chinese history. His father, Chen Sanli 陳三立, was a high official and a renowned poet. His grandfather Chen Baozhen 陳寶箴 (1831–1900) was an important high official who promoted westernization during the Qing Dynasty. One of his brothers, Chen Yinke 陳寅恪, was one of the most important historians in the twentieth century.

Chen Shizeng's grandfather Chen Baozhen 陳寶箴 (1831–1900) passed the provincial level of civil service examination and earned his *Juren* degree in 1851.⁹² This was the same year that Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 declared the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (Taiping Tianguo 太平天國). After failing in the national level of the civil service examination in 1860 and seeing China suffer from invasions by European imperialistic powers, Chen Baozhen decided to join the local army of the Hunan area, Xiangjun 湘軍, led by Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811–1872), to save the nation. Chen Baozhen's brilliant leadership and successful military operations were recognized by Zeng Guofan.⁹³ His success in the army led to a series of promotions. In 1875 he was appointed governor of the remote area where the Miao people dwelled and thus started his career as a high government official.⁹⁴ Chen Baozhen was upright in character, but his straightforwardness in politics made the path of his career quite rough. Fortunately

⁹² Zhang, *Chen Yinke de jiazhu shi*, 34.

⁹³ Ibid., 43–46, 51–52.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 66.

there were often people in higher positions who recognized his uprightness and talent, and their support helped him stay in his career as an official.

Zhang Zhidong was among those who recognized Chen Baozhen. Chen worked for Zhang in several positions. Between 1891 and 1895, Chen worked as the governor of the Hubei Province under Zhang, the overseeing governor of the Hu-Guang 湖廣 area. During his years in Hubei, Chen Baozhen saw Zhang Zhidong implement several westernization measures to save the nation; these influenced Chen Baozhen in his later years of government administration.⁹⁵

Chen Baozhen witnessed China suffering from Western imperialism and thought that Zhang Zhidong's westernization was the way to save China. In 1895 he became the governor of Hunan and started his own westernization efforts. He established the General Bureau of Mining in 1896, and he started the newspaper *Xiangxui Xinbao* 湘學新報 and founded the school called Shiwu Xuetang 時務學堂 in 1897. Shiwu Xuetang taught both traditional and Western learning. The idea of establishing a school for new learning probably came from Zhang Zhidong's academy Lianghu Shuyuan 兩湖書院, where Chen Baozhen once taught.

Chen Baozhen was very serious about running Shiwu Xuetang. He asked his son Chen Sanli to travel, to invite specific scholars to teach in the school. Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865–1898) and Liang Qichao 梁啟超, who later were seriously involved in the unsuccessful Hundred Days' Reform, also called the Kang-Liang Reform or the Wuxu Reform of 1898, were also invited to teach in the Shiwu Xuetang. In "The Biography of

⁹⁵ Ibid., 91.

Tan Sitong.” Liang Qichao records how he was invited to teach in Chen Baozhen’s Shiwu Xuetang:

At that time Mr. Chen Baozhen was the Governor of Hunan and his son Sanli assisted him. They wholeheartedly took the civilization of Hunan as their own responsibility. In June 1897 . . . Mr. Chen, together with his son, and former Educational Commissioner Jiang Junbiao planned to summon all the elites to run [the province]. . . . So [they] invited me and a few people to be the instructors of the school. . . . The gentleman [Tan Sitong] was also invited by Mr. Chen and thus gave up his current position to follow Chen.

時陳公寶箴爲湖南巡撫，其子三立輔之。慨然以湖南開化爲己任。丁酉年六月……陳公父子與前任學政江君標乃謀大集豪傑於湘南……而君亦爲陳公所敦促，即棄官歸。⁹⁶

In 1898, Liang Qichao and his mentor Kang Youwei urged the emperor Guangxu to take over power and implement a series of modernization measures in order to strengthen China. Although the Guangxu had been on the throne since age four, he never really held any power in the Qing court. The reforms proclaimed by the emperor Guangxu were soon torn down by his aunt, the Dowager Empress Cixi, who really controlled the court. After the failure of the reform, Liang Qichao fled to Japan. Tan Sitong and the other five who later were called the Six Gentlemen of Wuxu were put to death by Cixi and became the martyrs of the Hundred Days’ Reform. Although Chen Baozhen and Chen Sanli might not have totally agreed with Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao’s reform agenda, Cixi discharged them from their current positions because of their close association with people who staged the reform.

⁹⁶ “Tan Sitong zhuan” 譚嗣同傳, in “Wuxu zhengbian ji” 戊戌政變記 (Records of the Wuxu coup), collected in Liang, *Yinbingshi zhuanji* vol. 3, 106–7.

Not long after the humiliation of dismissal, Chen Baozhen died, in 1900.⁹⁷ Then Chen Sanli moved the family to Nanjing and established a school there. In an interview, Chen Shizeng's son Chen Fenghuai 陳封懷 talked about this family school:

After Grandfather moved the whole family to Jinling [Nanjing], . . . he established a school at home again. Besides the *Four Books* and *Five Classics*, the courses also included math, English, music, and painting. There were also facilities for both literature and physical education. This school was convenient for the children in our family and also for the children of relatives or friends (such as the brothers Mao Yisheng, Mao Yinan) to attend. The sixth uncle and other uncles all established their basic study of Chinese in this kind of environment.

自祖父挈家寄寓金陵……在家裡又辦了一所學堂。四書五經外還開有數學，英文，音樂繪畫等課程。以及文，體設備。這所學堂除了方便自己家中子弟外，親戚朋友家子弟也附學。（如茅以昇茅以南兄弟等。）六叔和幾位叔叔都是在這種環境下，打下他們對國學的基礎。⁹⁸

According to Chen Fenghuai's accounts, Chen Sanli's family school in Nanjing taught both the traditional learning (the *Four Books* and *Five Classics*) and the new curriculum (math, English, music, and painting). By the time Chen Sanli moved to Nanjing, Chen Shizeng was more than 24 years old and was probably too old for the school in Nanjing. Chen Fenghuai's accounts, however, still give some idea of how Chen Shizeng was educated in his youth.

Both Chen Baozhen and Chen Sanli were traditional scholar-officials who also sensed the necessity of westernization. Their promotion of westernization, however, was limited to the technological modernization of the military. They did not question the traditional literati ideology, which was deeply rooted in their hearts. Chen Sanli's great

⁹⁷ The circumstances behind Chen Baozhen's death are a mystery. Current scholarship generally believes Cixi had Chen Baozhen killed. For further discussions on the death of Chen Baozhen, see Liu Mengxi, "Chen Baozhen kaoshi," 29–44. See also, Zhang, *Chen Yinke de jiazu shi*, 179–85.

⁹⁸ Interview by Chen Xiaocong 陳小從, spring 1980. See Jiang, *Chen Yinke*, 21.

fame in poetry illustrates the Chen family's attachment to traditional culture. Although Chen Shizeng had the chance to be exposed to the so-called new learning, he probably could not escape from the requirements of traditional education of a scholar-official.

Chen Shizeng showed his talents in painting, calligraphy, and poetry at an early age. According to Chen Sanli, Chen Shizeng's mother died when Chen Shizeng was five. Then he was raised by Chen Sanli's mother, Chen Shizeng's grandmother. Chen Baozhen taught Chen Shizeng grammar and Chinese characters during the daytime. By the age of seven or ten, he was able to write calligraphy, do simple painting, and compose simple literary works. These skills made Chen Sanli proud to introduce the young Chen Shizeng to guests.⁹⁹

Chen Shizeng's talent was furthered by different teachers. Around the year 1885, when the Chen family stayed in Changsha, Hunan Province, Chen Shizeng learned painting with Yin Hebai 尹和白, who also once taught Qi Baishi.¹⁰⁰ Around 1894, when the Chen family stayed in Wuchang, Hubei province, he studied Northern Wei Dynasty stele calligraphy and Han Dynasty clerical script with Fan Zhonglin 范仲霖 and learned prose and poetry from Zhou Dalie 周大烈.¹⁰¹

Chen Shizeng's father Chen Sanli and grandfather Chen Baozhen's promotion of westernization probably influenced his choices of further studies. In 1898, he entered the Affiliated Mining and Railroad School of the Jiangnan Army School, where his uncle Yu Mingzhen 俞明震 (1860–1918) was the principal. The great thinker and writer Lu Xun

⁹⁹ Chen Sanli, "Zhangnan Hengke zhuang," 220.

¹⁰⁰ Gong, *Chen Shizeng huaxuan*, n.p. See also, Kao, "Minchu meishujia Chen Shizeng," 159.

¹⁰¹ Gong, *Chen Shizeng huaxuan*, n.p.

was also studying there. Yu Mingzhen, like Chen Sanli, was a famous writer and reformer of the late Qing Dynasty. Chen Sanli's second marriage to Yu Mingzhen's sister suggests that the two shared a close relationship. In 1901, Chen Shizeng entered a French missionary school in Shanghai.¹⁰² In 1902, he went with his brother Chen Yinke to Japan for further studies.

According to an official letter written on March 21, 1902, between the Japanese Consul General in Shanghai and Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, discovered by Kitaoka Masako 北岡正子 in the Diplomatic Record Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Chen Shizeng was to sail for Japan on March 29, 1902. This letter states that Yu Mingzhen, principal of the Jiangnan Army School, was sending twenty-two graduates and six students of mining, along with two supervising teachers, a translator, and two secretaries.¹⁰³ The names of the students are not listed but the names of teachers and staff members are. Chen Shizeng could not have been one of the students, although he once studied in the mining school of the Jiangnan Army School, since, surprisingly, he is listed as one of the secretaries.

At the end of the Qing Dynasty, some reformers advocated sending students abroad. Different provinces selected their best students and sponsored them to study abroad. The students that Yu Mingzhen sent to Japan were in a government-sponsored study-abroad program. Lu Xun was one of the students in the program. Chen Shizeng was probably not qualified for the program because he had not graduated from the mining school. However,

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Kitaoka, *Lu Xun Nihon*, 40.

his father, who was reform-minded, must have been eager to send his children to study abroad and so probably funded Chen Shizeng and Chen Yinke to go to Japan.

During his stay in Japan, instead of studying painting, Chen Shizeng studied natural history, at the Normal High School (Kōtō Shihan Gakkō 高等師範学校). Whether Chen Shizeng graduated from the school is a mystery since Tsuruta Takeyoshi 鶴田武良 says that Chen Shizeng is not listed in the graduation yearbook.¹⁰⁴ However, several sources such as “Biography of the First Son Hengke,” written by Chen Sanli, and “Biographies of Chinese Painters in the Recent Era,” in the Japanese magazine *Tōyō*, indicate that Chen Shizeng graduated from the Normal High School.¹⁰⁵

After Chen Shizeng finished his studies in Japan and returned to China in 1909, he devoted himself to art and education. He served in the Jiangxi Provincial Education Bureau immediately after his return, then was invited by Zhang Jian 張謇 to teach natural history at the Nantong Normal School.¹⁰⁶ During his stay in Nantong, Chen often went to see Wu Changshuo 吳昌碩 (1844–1927), from whom Chen Shizeng learned very much and whom he admired greatly. When he was in Nantong, Chen Shizeng also painted some small pieces for publication in *The Pacific Times*, whose art section was edited by Li Shutong.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Tsuruta, “Ryūnichichi bijutsu gakusei,” 127.

¹⁰⁵ Chen Sanli, “Zhangnan Hengke zhuang,” 220; anonymous, “Biographies of Chinese Painters,” 207.

¹⁰⁶ Gong, “Shengping he yishu,” n.p.

¹⁰⁷ Chen Shizeng’s small works published in *The Pacific Times* are discussed in chapter five.

After a short stay in Changsha, where he taught at the Changsha First Normal School, Chen moved to Beijing in 1913. In Beijing, he served in the Ministry of Education and taught Chinese painting at different schools.

While in Beijing, Chen Shizeng met Qi Baishi 齊白石 (1864–1957), one of the most internationally recognized Chinese painters of the twentieth century. Qi Baishi owed much of his great success to Chen Shizeng's help. Before they met, Qi Baishi's paintings were sold at a very low price. Chen Shizeng advised him to change his style. Qi Baishi did so, bringing it closer to Wu Changshuo's style.

In 1922, Chen Shizeng brought Qi's and his own paintings to the second Sino-Japanese Joint Painting Exhibition, held in Tokyo. Their paintings were a triumph. All the paintings of Qi Baishi were sold at prices much higher than their previous prices in China.

While in Beijing, Chen Shizeng took an active role in the art world. He acquainted himself with many artists in Beijing and attended artistic gatherings. According to the Peking opera star Mei Lanfang 梅蘭芳 (1894–1961), many famous painters came to his house for his birthday party and collaboratively painted a painting for him. These artists included Ling Zhizhi 凌植支, Yao Mangfu 姚茫父 (1876–1930), Chen Shizeng, Wang Mengbai 王夢白 (1888–1934), and Qi Baishi.¹⁰⁸

Liu Haisu 劉海粟 (1896–1994), a Western-style painter, recalls that Yao Mangfu, Wu Xinwu 吳新吾, Wang Mengbai, Chen Shizeng, and Li Yishi 李毅士 (1886–1942) came to Liu's house to discuss trends in art and literature. He says that their discussions included works of both Chinese and foreign artists. He particularly mentions that Chen

¹⁰⁸ Mei, *Wutai shengya*, 416–17.

Shizeng often stayed very late for their discussions.¹⁰⁹ Among the artists Liu Haisu mentions, Wu Xinwu and Li Yishi were Western-style painters. Thus, Chen Shizeng did not confine his acquaintances to the circle of traditional painters. He was also close to Western-style painters, which illustrates his open-mindedness to Western painting, an openness discussed further in the following chapters.

Besides private artist gatherings, Chen Shizeng was also active in painting societies. For example, he was invited by Cai Yuanpei to teach at the Painting Method Study Society (Huafa Yanjiuhui 畫法研究會) at Peking University. Chen Shizeng also wrote a number of essays for the periodical *Huixue Zazhi* 繪學雜誌, published by the Painting Method Study Society.

Another important painting society that Chen Shizeng was deeply involved in was the Chinese Painting Research Society (Zhongguo Huaxue Yanjiuhui 中國畫學研究會). Cai Yuanpei recalled that, between 1918 and 1919, Jin Cheng 金城, Zhou Zhaoxiang 周肇祥, and Chen Shizeng started to organize the painting society; in 1920, the society was officially established at the address of the Association for Alumni Returning from Euro-American Countries in Beijing; in 1922, the painting society moved to Beijing Central Park.¹¹⁰ The establishment of the Chinese Painting Research Society was sanctioned by President Xu Shichang 徐世昌 (1855–1939), who himself was a painter and calligrapher. Xu Shichang supported the society with part of Japan's refund of its share of the Boxer Indemnity.¹¹¹ The Chinese Painting Research Society helped organize

¹⁰⁹ Liu Haisu, "Yi Cai Yuanpei Xiansheng," 143.

¹¹⁰ Cai, "Ershiwunianlai Zhongguo zhi meiyu," 220–21.

¹¹¹ An eight-nation alliance demolished the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. In 1901 China and the eight nations signed the Boxer Protocol, which required China to pay a huge indemnity, called the Boxer Indemnity. In

the Sino-Japanese Joint Painting Exhibitions—discussed above in connection with Qi Baishi's paintings—which were first launched in Beijing 1921.

The late 1910s and early 1920s, when Chen Shizeng was deeply involved in artistic activities in Beijing, marks the period of the May Fourth Movement, which involved great conflicts between the old and the new, or between Chinese culture and Western culture. As will be seen in the next chapter, the relationship between this movement and Chen Shizeng's artistic activities is important.

1909, the United States returned part of this indemnity. Other countries followed suit. The refunds were designated mostly for educational and cultural affairs.

IV. Chen Shizeng's Defense of Chinese Literati Painting and Japan

1. The May Fourth Movement and Chen Shizeng

In discussions of early twentieth century Chinese art history, Chen Shizeng is usually classified as a traditionalist painter. Because he was a student of Wu Changshuo, he is also grouped with the Shanghai School or with the Jinshi School 金石畫派 (Metal and Stone School). Wu Changshuo resided in the Shanghai area and his painting style is derived from his *jinshi* style of calligraphy. Chen Shizeng's essay "The Value of Literati Painting" attached his name permanently to the term "traditional literati painter." However, because his father and grandfather were reform-minded scholar-officials of the late Qing Dynasty, he was educated in both Chinese and Western learning. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Chen Shizeng went to Japan to study natural history, a course of study that was founded on Western science. By the time he had finished his studies in Japan and returned to China, Chen had gained abundant knowledge about the West, which most traditional Chinese literati painters at that time did not have.¹¹²

Chen Shizeng's most active years coincided with the May Fourth era of the late 1910s and early 1920s. The impact of the May Fourth Movement on various cultural aspects, especially literature has often been discussed. But in treatments of the art of this period, the influence of this major cultural movement is often neglected. A few scholars have attempted to understand the art of this era in the context of May Fourth Movement. For example, Yuan Lin's 袁林 article "Chen Shizeng and the Transition of Modern Chinese Painting" mentions that Chen Shizeng's theory of literati painting had much

¹¹² Lu Hsuan-fei's 2003 masters thesis ("Chen Shizeng"), which describes Chen Shizeng as a "new intelligentsia," represents a great leap in defining Chen Shizeng. See esp. pp. 3–9.

influence in the May Fourth era.¹¹³ The major work by Lin Mu 林木, *Studies on Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting*, discusses early twentieth-century Chinese painting in the cultural context of the May Fourth Movement.¹¹⁴ In this chapter I continue this modest trend and attempt to position Chen Shizeng directly in the center of the May Fourth Movement.

The May Fourth Movement was an outburst of the conflicts between traditionalism and westernization that had been ongoing since the late nineteenth century. As mentioned in previous chapters, China gradually started to learn from the West only when the latter presented great challenges to the former. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, China sent young students to America, Europe, and Japan to learn Western culture and sciences. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Chinese flocked to Japan to study. Artists such as Li Shutong, Gao Jianfu, and Chen Shizeng were among those who went to Japan. By the 1910s, despite the return of many Chinese students from studies abroad, China had not been transformed into a strong country. Some intellectuals were not satisfied with the limited progress of westernization and called for even more thorough westernization. Some of them were so radical that they called for a total abandonment of Chinese culture. In reaction, others stood up to defend Chinese traditions. This era of confusion, in the late 1910s and early 1920s, is called most often the May Fourth Movement, named after the May Fourth Incident. In 1919 the warlord government in Beijing was about to sign the Treaty of Versailles, transferring to Japan Germany's concessions in Shandong Province. On May 4, 1919, College students organized protests and demonstrations against the

¹¹³ "Chen Shizeng," 20.

¹¹⁴ *Ershi shiji Zhongguohua yanjiu*.

government's inability to act against Japanese pressures and imperialism. This period is also called the New Culture Movement because many Chinese intellectuals wanted to re-examine the old tradition and embrace the new culture.¹¹⁵

Before the May Fourth Movement, although various aspects of westernization had been implemented, Chinese intellectuals of the late Qing period still held the thinking that, as Yu Yingshi says, “Chinese studies remains to be the essence; Western studies is used as application” (Zhongxue weiti; Xixue weiyong 中學爲體；西學爲用).¹¹⁶ This differentiation is usually referred to as the *ti-yong* philosophy. In this study I refer to the *ti-yong* philosophy as “Chinese essence; Western application.” As discussed in the first chapter, the Chinese had held the idea of their cultural superiority from the beginning of their history. The notion “Chinese essence; Western application” provided people who promoted westernization a good basis for reasoning because it did not threaten ideas of Chinese superiority. However, this thinking confined the scale of westernization. Therefore, it was not totally unreasonable for radical intellectuals to promote a total abandonment of Chinese culture.

Some incidents caused people to believe that Chinese culture, especially Confucianism, was backward and should be abandoned. Although the Qing Dynasty had been overthrown and the Republic was established in 1912, a democratic China was not realized at that time. In 1916 Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859–1916) wanted to return the

¹¹⁵ In this dissertation I generally accept Chow Tse-tsung's definition of the May Fourth Movement, which is not confined to the May Fourth incident 1919 but embraces the broader cultural movement of the late 1910s and early 1920s. See the section “Definition of the Movement” of the first chapter in Chow, *May Fourth Movement*, 1–6.

¹¹⁶ *Hu Shi*, 11–12. Yu Yingshi suggests that although “Chinese essence; Western application” is often attributed to Zhang Zhidong 張之洞, this kind of thinking was already popular in the late Qing period, before the publication of Zhang's *Quanxuepian* 勸學篇, in 1898.

Republic to a monarchy and to make himself emperor. He eagerly promoted Confucianism because it provided the theoretical basis for thousands of years of Chinese monarchical rule. Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927), one of the most important figures for promoting westernization in the last decades of the Qing Dynasty, was also a true believer in Confucianism and also favored a monarchy.

Chen Duxiu (1879–1942), who had studied in Japan, thought that to make China strong, the Chinese people should abandon corrupt and outdated traditions, especially Confucianism. In 1915 he launched a magazine, *Youth* (Qingnian 青年), with a French subtitle *La Jeunesse*, to promote his new thoughts. The beginning of the May Fourth Movement or the New Culture Movement is usually tied to the launch of this magazine. In May 1916 *Youth* magazine was renamed *New Youth* (Xinqingnian 新青年), with the same French subtitle.

In the first article in the inaugural issue of *Youth*, “Proclamation to the Youth” (Jinggao qingnian 敬告青年), Chen Duxiu proposes his ideals to the young Chinese: first, to be self-governed and not enslaved 自主的而非奴隸的; second, to be progressive and not conservative 進步的而非保守的; third, to be active and not reclusive 進取的而非退隱的; fourth, to be cosmopolitan and not closed-door 世界的而非鎖國的; fifth, to be utilitarian and not lofty 實利的而非虛文的; and sixth, to be scientific and not imaginative 科學的而非想像的.¹¹⁷ Chen Duxiu’s propositions were based on his understanding of both Chinese and Western culture. In each proposition, there is a paired opposite, consisting of something from Western culture that he wished to achieve and something from the Chinese culture that he wished to abandon. What he thought of the

¹¹⁷ Chen Duxiu, “Jinggao qingnian.”

West might have been more idealistic than real. But during this period of Chinese weakness Western culture provided some reformers with a goal and vision, however remote. Although Chen Duxiu's article urges people to abandon the weaknesses of Chinese traditions, he does not explicitly say that these are corrupt Chinese customs that should be abandoned. In the early issues of the magazine Chen Duxiu invited young people to endorse his ideals; he did not directly attack Chinese traditions. He published articles that introduced Western culture and illustrated his ideals. However, as time went by, it seemed that Chen Duxiu gradually lost patience and started to attack more directly Chinese traditions, especially Confucianism.

In the article "Our People's Last Awakenings," published in the February 1916 issue of *Youth*, Chen Duxiu expresses his disappointment at the stumbling progress of westernization.¹¹⁸ He argues that after so many struggles over westernization, there are two last things that Chinese young people must realize: implementing full democracy and demolishing class differentiation. This article criticizes the sense of Chinese superiority that hindered westernization. It also criticizes the outdated mindset of the Chinese people that made the fulfillment of democracy in the country and the equality among people so difficult even after the Qing Dynasty had been overthrown.

In the November 1916 issue, after the magazine had been renamed *New Youth*, he published "Constitution and Confucianism." Unlike his previous articles, which indirectly criticize Confucianism, this article flamboyantly attacks it. Chen Duxiu claims that Yuan Shikai's attempt to put Confucianism in the constitution, supporting a return to the monarchism, has created many unnecessary problems. He says that religions such as

¹¹⁸ "Wuren zuihou zhi juiwu."

Buddhism and Christianity help cultivate people; the country should not set up Confucianism as the national religion; people's freedom of belief should be respected. He argues that the flaw of Confucianism is that it is centered in a code of conduct that supports the class system and harms equality.¹¹⁹ In subsequent issues he continued to attack Confucianism. In the article "The Way of Confucius and Modern Life," published in December 1916's *New Youth*, he argues that Confucianism is outdated and is the biggest obstacle to modern life.¹²⁰

In January 1917 Cai Yuanpei became president of Peking University. He then invited Chen Duxiu to become Dean of Humanities. So Chen moved his editorial office of *New Youth* from Shanghai to Beijing. Gaining such a prestigious position at Peking University, he became bolder and bolder in attacking traditional culture. Soon after Chen Duxiu became dean, professors in the university formed groups supporting or opposing Chen's New Cultural Movement.

The abandonment of Confucianism was not the only cultural reform that Chen Duxiu advocated. He also cared about changes in literature. In the January 1917 issue of *New Youth*, Chen published Hu Shi's article "Some Modest Proposals for the Reform of Literature," in which Hu proposes the use of vernacular Chinese, instead of literary, for writing.¹²¹ In fact, promoting writing in vernacular Chinese is only a small part of the platform advocated in Hu Shi's essay. He proposes eight points of reform in Chinese writing:

¹¹⁹ Chen Duxiu, "Xianfa yu kongjiao," 1.

¹²⁰ Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, "Kongzi zhidao yu xiandai shenghuo." 孔子之道與現代生活 (The way of Confucius and modern life), *Xinqingnian* 新青年 2, no. 4 (December 1916): 1-7.

¹²¹ "Wenxue gailiang chuyi."

1. Writing should have substance; 2. Do not imitate the ancients; 3. Emphasize the technique of writing; 4. Do not moan without an illness; 5. Eliminate hackneyed and formal language; 6. Do not use allusions; 7. Do not use parallelism; 8. Do not avoid vulgar diction.

一曰須言之有物。二曰不摹倣古人。三曰須講求文法。四曰不作無病呻吟。五曰務去爛調套語。六曰不用典。七曰不講對仗。八曰不避俗字俗語。¹²²

Chen Duxiu echoed Hu Shi's ideas of literary reform and published an article in the next issue of *New Youth* with a more radical title, "On Literary Revolution." To Chen Duxiu, the word "revolution" was much more glorious than the word "reform." He says:

From whence arose the awesome and brilliant Europe of today? I say it is the grace of revolution. In European languages, "revolution" means the elimination of the old and the changeover to the new, not at all the same as the so-called dynastic cycles of China. Since the Renaissance, therefore, there has been a revolution in politics, a revolution in religion, and a revolution in morality and ethics. Literature and art as well have not been without revolution.

今日莊嚴燦爛之歐洲，何自而來乎？曰革命之賜也。歐語所謂革命者，爲革故更新之義。與中土所謂朝代鼎革絕不相類。故自文藝復興以來，政治界有革命，宗教界亦有革命，倫理道德亦有革命，文學藝術亦莫不有革命。¹²³

Chen Duxiu envies European civilization and claims that the revolutions in various aspects of culture, including literature, created splendid modern Europe. He criticizes the Chinese people for being too lazy to make any fundamental changes. In support of Hu Shi's article he proclaims a revolution in literature. He proposes three principles for literary revolution:

First, Down with the ornate, sycophantic literature of the aristocracy; up with the plain, expressive literature of the people. Second, Down with stale, pompous classical literature; up with fresh, sincere realist literature. Third, Down with

¹²² Ibid., 1. Translation by Kirk A. Denton, *Modern Chinese Literary Thought*, 123–24.

¹²³ "Wenxue geming lun," 1. Translation modified from Timothy Wong's translation in Denton, *Modern Chinese Literary Thought*, 140.

obscure, abstruse eremitic literature; up with comprehensible, popularized social literature.

曰推倒雕琢的阿諛的貴族文學，建設平易的抒情的國民文學；曰推倒陳腐的鋪張的古典文學，建設新鮮的立誠的寫實文學；推倒迂晦的艱澀的山林文學，建設明瞭的通俗的社會文學。¹²⁴

Chen Duxiu's ideals of the new culture for China were not limited to abandoning Confucianism and writing in literary Chinese. He also called for an art revolution. In the January 1919 issue of *New Youth*, Chen published his correspondence with Lü Cheng 呂澂 under the title "Art Revolution."¹²⁵ In his letter Lü Cheng urges Chen Duxiu to initiate an art revolution through his magazine. In his reply, Chen Duxiu completely accepts Lü Cheng's admonition and proposes the adoption of Western realism in painting.

In January 1919, a group of students in Peking University launched a magazine, *The Renaissance* (Xinchao zazhi 新潮雜誌), to promote new culture. These students sought financial support for the magazine from the university and received Chen Duxiu and Cai Yuanpei's promise for such support. With the launch of the *Renaissance* magazine, the New Culture Movement led by Chen Duxiu became even more popular.

Although the New Culture Movement had gained in popularity, not all professors in Peking University liked to see severe attacks on Confucianism and classical literature. Although Cai Yuanpei favored the New Culture Movement, he did not suppress those who defended traditional culture. Threatened by the New Culture Movement, a group of students and faculty launched the *National Heritage Monthly* (*Guogu yuekan* 國故月刊) in March 1919 in defense of traditional Chinese culture. The factions favoring *The*

¹²⁴ Ibid. Translation by Timothy Wong, in Denton, *Modern Chinese Literary Thought*, 141.

¹²⁵ Chen and Lü, "Meishu geming."

Renaissance and the *National Heritage Monthly* thus began a series of overheated debates over whether traditional or Western culture should be embraced.

At the time, most young Chinese intellectuals wanted to learn from the West to save China, and so the New Culture Movement seemed to have the upper hand. In 1919, the New Culture Movement activists wholeheartedly devoted themselves to the May Fourth protests against the government, which was about to sign the unfair Treaty of Versailles. Their patriotic protests, which drew public attention, helped the spread of their ideals. As Shen Sung-chiao 沈松僑 pointed out, “through the impact of the May Fourth incident, the conservative forces against the New Culture Movement in early May Fourth era had been completely dissolved. New thoughts and new literature had widely gained recognition and acknowledgement. The New Culture Movement had overwhelmingly won.”¹²⁶

Despite the New Culture Movement’s big victory, after the initial fervor some Chinese intellectuals started to reevaluate the differences between tradition and the new culture. After all, the New Culture Movement aimed at destroying old traditions, and that left a cultural vacuum. The magazine *Critical Review*, which defended traditional Chinese culture, thus emerged in January 1922. Unlike the majority of previous defenders of traditional culture, many of the active participants of the *Critical Review* had studied abroad, mostly in the United States. Because of their extensive knowledge of Western culture, they could maneuver much better than their predecessors in the fight against the New Culture Movement.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ *Xuehengpai*, 61.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

Another magazine important for the May Fourth era, *The Eastern Miscellany* (Dongfang zazhi 東方雜誌), is often neglected when discussing the May Fourth Movement. This magazine was created neither to support nor to counter the New Culture Movement. It was launched by the Commercial Press in the late Qing Dynasty, in 1904.¹²⁸ The Commercial Press was established in Shanghai in 1897, when many Chinese scholars started to become aware of the importance of learning from the West. The Commercial Press developed into a publisher of various educational books. It published many translations of Western books and various educational magazines. *The Eastern Miscellany* was the most long-lived magazine of the Commercial Press. It remained in production through 1948, with only a few intervals, due to wars in China. It played a crucial role in introducing the Chinese people to new knowledge and informing them about events in China and the rest of the world.

The Eastern Miscellany published many articles introducing readers to Western art, sciences, and literature. In the area of art, many articles were published. For example, Futurism was introduced in an article in the August 1914 issue. In the April 1915 issue an article introduced Western aesthetics. Cai Yuanpei wrote an introductory article about the Italian Renaissance painter Raphael for the August 1916 issue. There was an article explaining post-Impressionism, neo-Impressionism, Futurism, and Cubism in the July 1917 issue. The list could go on.

Although *The Eastern Miscellany* helped introduce Western culture to China, this does not mean that the magazine advocated the abandonment of traditional Chinese

¹²⁸ For the history of *The Eastern Miscellany*, see Huang, *Dongfang Zazhi*.

culture. When Chen Duxiu and other radical Chinese intellectuals called for the abandonment of Chinese culture, *The Eastern Miscellany* defended Chinese traditions.

For example, as mentioned in the second chapter, Chen Jiayi wrote “Eastern Culture and the Responsibilities of Our Citizens” for *The Eastern Miscellany* in January 1921. He promoted Confucianism as an antidote to the world’s moral decline. As early as 1909, the magazine published a translation of the Japanese poet Mori Kainan’s 森槐南 (1863–1911) article “Eastern Learning Spreading through the West.” There Kainan says that he was amazed to see important Chinese books in the bookstores in London. He also criticizes the many Japanese who were thinking about abandoning the traditional writing system in favor of the Roman alphabet.¹²⁹ The translator of Mori’s article, Yao Zhenhua, uses the commentary afterward to criticize corrupt Confucian scholars who, before the abolishment of the civil service examination, despised Western learning and grasped only the deteriorating Chinese classics. According to Yao, after the abolition of the civil service examination, young students considered Chinese learning useless and studied only Western books.¹³⁰ Here Yao Zhenhua uses the Japanese poet’s observation, that Western people were studying Chinese texts, to motivate the Chinese not to abandon their own culture.

Although *The Eastern Miscellany* published many articles about Western culture, it never neglected traditional Chinese culture. In each issue of *The Eastern Miscellany*, there were a few pages devoted to photos of artwork. These photos included both Chinese art and Western art. Each issue also published Chinese prose and poetry in traditional

¹²⁹ “Dongxue xijian,” 35.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 36.

classical styles. There were also articles about Chinese art. For example, articles about ancient Chinese ceramics and about the Jingde 景德 kiln were run in the November 1914 issue. There was an article about Qing Dynasty painting in the June 1917 issue. There was an article about the Buddhist cave temples in Datong 大同 in the February 1919 issue. Thus, *The Eastern Miscellany* informed people about the new yet sustained the old, an editorial policy that enacted Zhang Zhidong's "Chinese Essence; Western application" philosophy.

Therefore, in the May Fourth era, *The Eastern Miscellany* was relatively conservative compared to *New Youth*. *The Eastern Miscellany* always sought a balance between China and the West. However, *New Youth* aimed to abandon the old. Because of the difference of the attitudes toward traditional Chinese culture, *New Youth* and *The Eastern Miscellany* clashed even before the appearance of the *National Heritage Monthly* and *Critical Review*.

In the September 1918 issue of *New Youth*, Chen Duxiu published "Questioning Reporters of *The Eastern Miscellany*: *The Eastern Miscellany* and the Issues of Monarchy Restoration." There Chen Duxiu says that the articles "A Critique on Chinese and Western Civilization" (*Zhongxi wenming zhi pingpan* 中西文明之評判; translated from the Japanese magazine *Tōa no Hikari* 東亞之光), "Utilitarianism and Scholarship," (*Gonglizhuyi yu xueshu* 功利主義與學術), and "The Perplexing Modern Mind," (*Miluan zhi xiandai renxin* 迷亂之現代人心), all have similar arguments that are questionable.¹³¹

¹³¹ "Zhiwen Dongfang Zazhi jizhe," 206.

Although the article “A Critique on Chinese and Western Civilization” was translated from a Japanese magazine, it promoted the arguments of Chinese scholar Gu Hongming 辜鴻銘 (1857–1928) with comments made by a German scholar. Gu Hongming was born in 1857 overseas, in Malaysia. He studied in England, Germany, France, and Italy when he was young. Although he was born outside China and had studied in Europe for a long time, he always wanted to introduce Chinese culture to Westerners and to defend Chinese culture. Because he wrote extensively in English, he was very well known in the West. *The Eastern Miscellany* translated the Japanese article about Gu Hongming to show that Europeans also valued Confucianism. Of course such a thesis would raise Chen Duxiu’s opposition.

“Utilitarianism and Scholarship,” the second article critiqued by Chen Duxiu, was written by Qian Zhixiu 錢智修, a figure less well known. He was never an old-fashioned stubborn Chinese scholar. He graduated from Fudan Public School (Fudan Gongxue 復旦公學), the predecessor of Fudan University. He translated several works on Western thought into Chinese. Before writing this article, he had already written articles for *The Eastern Miscellany* introducing Henri Bergson’s (1859–1941) thought. Qian Zhixiu’s extensive knowledge of Western philosophy enabled him to argue against utilitarianism, which Chen Duxiu promoted.

The third article Chen Duxiu criticized, “The Perplexing Modern Mind,” was written by Du Yaquan 杜亞泉 (1873–1933), then the chief editor of *The Eastern Miscellany*. Du Yaquan was not an old-fashioned Chinese scholar, either. He was very learned in the natural sciences. He joined the Commercial Press as the head of publishing books about physics and chemistry. Although he had published extensively on Western sciences, he completely opposed Chen Duxiu’s call to abandon Chinese traditions.

The Eastern Miscellany rebutted Chen Duxiu's attack, but Chen was not satisfied with their reply so he wrote another article in *New Youth*, "Questioning the Reporters of *The Eastern Miscellany* Again."¹³² There Chen Duxiu argues that Confucianism is closely associated with the Chinese monarchy. He expresses disbelief that *The Eastern Miscellany* could defend Confucianism without promoting the restoration of the monarchy. He also defends utilitarianism because of its close association with Western democracy.

Chen Shizeng and his family belonged to the circle of writers for *The Eastern Miscellany*. His father and grandfather were traditional scholar-officials who advocated westernization. However, they did not give up Chinese traditions. They educated their children in both Chinese and Western learning. They wrote classical poems. Chen Shizeng's father, a reform-minded official, was especially famous for his poetry. *The Eastern Miscellany* published numerous poems and other literary works by Chen Shizeng, his brother Chen Yinke, his father Chen Sanli, and his grandfather Chan Baozhen. It also published Chen Shizeng's article "The Development of Chinese Figure Painting" (*Zhongguo renwuhua zhi bianqian* 中國人物畫之變遷) in September 1921.

Chen Shizeng's brother Chen Yinke was a renowned historian. Despite his studies in Japan, America, and Europe, Chen Yinke was often said to be very conservative. Chen Yinke met Wu Mi 吳宓 when they were both studying in Harvard University, and they became very close, lifelong friends. After Wu Mi went back to China, he became the editor of *Critical Review*. Chen Yinke's famous essay "Questioning the Theory of Laozi Born 100 Years Later than Confucius" (*Laizi shenghou Kongzi baiyunian zhishuo zhiyi*

¹³² "Zai Zhiwen Dongfang Zazhi jizhe."

老子生後孔子百餘年之說質疑) was published in *Critical Review* in September 1923. A few poems of Chen Shizeng were also published in *Critical Review*.

Chen Shizeng was not ignorant of Western art. Because of his love for art, he must have learned very much about Western art during his studies in Japan. In 1912, he published the article “Recent Conditions in the European Art World” (Ouzhou huajie zuijin zhi zhuangkuang 歐洲畫界最近之狀況) in *Bulletin of the Nantong Normal School Alumni Association* (Nantong shifan xiaoyouhui zazhi 南通師範校友會雜誌). Although this was a translation of an article by Japanese author Kume 久米, it still shows that Chen Shizeng was knowledgeable about Western art. Despite his liberal attitude to Western culture, when Chinese traditions were attacked in the May Fourth era, Chen Shizeng defended Chinese culture, just as the other authors of *The Eastern Miscellany* did.

2. Chen Shizeng's Defense of Chinese Literati Painting

In his 1919 article "Art Revolution," mentioned in the previous section, Chen Duxiu severely criticizes traditional Chinese painting. He claims that Chinese literati painting in the Qing Dynasty had become nothing more than the copying of ancient works. He proposes that the only way to save Chinese painting from corruption was to import Western painting. He argues:

If one wants to improve Chinese painting, the first thing to do is to revolt against the painting of the Wangs. This is because, to improve Chinese painting, one cannot avoid adopting the spirit of realism in Western painting. . . . In Chinese painting of the Northern and Southern Song Dynasties and the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty, the skills of rendering and depicting figures, animals, architecture, and flowers and trees were similar to realism. Then the literati school looked down on court painting and concentrated on only grasping the spirit instead of rendering objects. This kind of vogue was first started by Ni and Huang at the end of the Yuan Dynasty and then was promoted again by Wen and Shen of the Ming Dynasty. When it came to the three Wangs of the Qing Dynasty it went from bad to worse. People say the painting of Wang Shigu is the essence of Chinese painting. I say Wang Shigu's painting is the aftermath of Ni, Huang, Wen, Shen's School of awful Chinese painting. . . . Among the more than two hundred paintings of the Wangs that I have seen in my family collection or elsewhere, less than one tenth have titles. Most of them were probably done with *lin*, *mo*, *fang*, *fu* the four great methods to copy ancient paintings. Almost none of them are original works. This is the worst influence on painting from the Wang school. In contrast, later the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou had the talent of free depiction. However, people look down on them. They only want to regard the painting of the Wangs as orthodox. To talk about the technique of depiction, the Wang School is far behind the Song and Yuan Dynasties. It cannot catch up with Wu Mojing of the same period. (Wu was a Catholic. The landscape and objects in his painting were influence by Western painting.) Such orthodox painting is blindly worshipped as an idol in society. If it is not demolished, it would be the largest obstacle to importing realism and reforming Chinese painting.

若想把中國畫改良，首先要格王畫的命。因為改良中國畫，斷不能不採用洋畫寫實的精神。……中國畫在南北宋及之初時代，那描摹刻畫人物禽獸樓台花木的功夫還有點和寫實主義相近。自從學士派鄙薄院畫，專重寫意，不尚肖物；這種風氣，一倡於元末的倪黃在倡於明代的文沈到了清朝的三王更是

變本加厲；人家說王石谷的畫是中國畫的集大成，我說王石谷的畫是倪黃文沈一派中國惡畫的總結束。……我家所藏和見過的王畫，不下兩百多件，內中有「畫題」的不到十分之一；大概都用那「臨」「摹」「仿」「撫」四大本領，複寫古畫；自家創作的，簡直可以說沒有；這就是王派留在畫界最大的惡影響。倒是後來的楊州八怪，還有自由描寫的天才；社會上卻看不起他們，卻要把王畫當作畫學正宗。說起描寫的技能來，王派畫不但遠不及宋元，并趕不上同時的吳墨井(吳是天主教徒，他畫法的佈景寫物，頗受了洋畫的影響)，像這樣的畫學正宗，像這樣社會上盲目崇拜的偶像，若不打倒，實是輸入寫實主義，改良中國畫的最大障礙。¹³³

In this passage, Chen Duxiu harshly criticizes Wang Shigu's 王石谷 (1632–1717) painting. Wang Shigu (also known as Wang Hui 王翬) was a celebrated literati painter of early Qing Dynasty. Wang Hui and the other three painters Wang Shimin 王時敏 (1592–1680), Wang Jian 王鑑 (1598–1677), and Wang Yuanqi 王原祁 (1642–1715) of the same period were called the Four Wangs. The four Wangs were proud of their ability to paint in ancient styles. By painting in those ancient styles, they traced their lineage to earlier literati painters, such as the four great masters of the Yuan Dynasty. Lineage is very important to the Chinese, who have a deep appreciation for antiquity. People might not be able to obtain a painting from the Yuan Dynasty. However, they might still be well pleased if they could own a painting in the style of the Yuan Dynasty painted by a contemporary master. The four Wangs created a standard for literati painting that lasted through the Qing Dynasty. Paintings following this standard are classified as part of the Orthodox School, which still prevailed in early Republic Beijing, when Chen Duxiu was active.

During the Qing Dynasty, another kind of literati painting also developed. Shitao, Badashanren, and the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou broke away from the Orthodox influence and created more original and expressive paintings. These painters were often

¹³³ Chen and Lü, "Meishu geming," 86.

unsatisfied with society and they used their painting to express their feelings. They often painted flowers with loose rather than detailed brushstrokes. Because they differed from the Orthodox School, they are usually called the Individualists. In the nineteenth century, many Shanghai area painters followed this style.¹³⁴

Wu Mojing 吳墨井 (1632–1718), praised in the passage by Chen Duxiu, was one of the six masters of the early Qing Dynasty and was also known as Wu Li 吳歷. Wu Li learned painting from two of the Four Wangs, Wang Jian and Wang Shimin. Therefore he is usually considered part of the lineage of the Four Wangs. However, because he later converted to Catholicism, he also had the chance to see Western paintings that the priests brought from Europe. Therefore it was reasonable for Chen Duxiu to assume that there was Western influence in Wu Li's paintings. But, generally speaking, Wu Li's paintings look closer to Chinese literati painting than to Western painting. So Chen Duxiu's comments on Wu Li are not very accurate.

Literati painting, or Wenrenhua 文人畫, is painting of and by learned scholars. Very often these scholars were officials, therefore literati painting is also called *Shidaifuhua* 士大夫畫, meaning “painting by scholar-officials.” No matter whether from the Orthodox School or the Individualists, Qing Dynasty painters were all involved in literati painting, which never set realism as a primary goal. Ever since the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the Chinese implemented a civil service examination to select government officials. Those who wished to take government positions had to study the classics to pass the exams. Therefore, all the Chinese officials were men of letters. Apart from their administrative duties, they recited poems, wrote calligraphy, appreciated antiquities, and,

¹³⁴ The styles of the Individualists and Shanghai painters will be discussed in Chapter Five.

for some, painted. These scholars created their own standard of judging a painting. For them, painting was a way of expression, just like poetry. Therefore, their goal in painting was not physical realism. Although literati painting was not widely practiced until the Yuan Dynasty, the idea of disregarding realism could be traced back as early as the poet and painter Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036–1101) of the Song Dynasty. In a poem Su Shi says, “If one judges painting by formal likeness, his opinions are close to those of a child” 論畫以形似，見與兒童鄰。¹³⁵ In the same poem he says, “Poetry and painting should be judged with the same standard; that is, heavenly delicacy and fresh feeling” 詩畫本一律，天工與清新. As Hsu Fu-kuan points out, many people throughout history misunderstood Su Shi.¹³⁶ Su Shi was not totally against realism; he wanted merely not to overemphasize it. More important than realism for Su Shi was poetic feeling in painting. Su Shi once praised Tang Dynasty painter and poet Wang Wei 王維 (701–761, also known as Mojie 摩詰), “When tasting Mojie’s poems, one can feel the paintings in the poems; when viewing Mojie’s paintings, one can feel the poems in the paintings” 味摩詰之詩，詩中有畫；觀摩詰之畫，畫中有詩。¹³⁷ His praise of Wang Wei indicates that he valued poetic expression more than realism in painting.

Regarding realism as a less important element in Chinese painting can be traced back even earlier, to Xie He 謝赫 of the Six Dynasties. In Xie He’s time, literati painting was not yet an issue. Extant paintings from this period show that most paintings

¹³⁵ Su Shi 蘇軾, “Shu Yanlingwang Zhubu suohua zhezhi ershou” 書鄴陵王主簿所畫折枝二首 (Two poetic inscriptions written on the Secretary Wang of Yanling’s flower painting).

¹³⁶ *Zhongguo yishu jingshen*, 200.

¹³⁷ Su Shi, “Shu Mojie Lantian Yanyu Tu” 書摩詰藍田煙雨圖 (Inscription on Mojie’s Lantian Yanyu painting).

served moral or religious functions. However, Xie He's six canons have been the ultimate principles by which painting has been judged for the entire history of literati painting.¹³⁸

The first of the six canons is "spirit resonance." "Correspondence to the object," which refers to realism, is the third. Placing realism in third place among the six canons may imply that Xie He did not think realism was the most important thing in painting.

However, realism is among the six canons, so he is by no means an anti-realist. Hsu Fu-kuan suggests that literati painters after Su Shi and Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1301–1374) wanted to go into nature to seek the balance between spirit and realism.¹³⁹

Ni Zan was one of the Four Masters of the Yuan Dynasty. *The Rongxi Studio* (fig. 29) shows his typical landscape style. The composition of his landscapes is usually a foreground land, a distant hill, and a large area of water between. Usually there are some spare trees in the foreground, and sometimes there is a small empty pavilion in the foreground. Ni Zan used very dry brushstrokes. The simplicity of composition and the dry brushstrokes make the landscape look solitary. The Yuan Dynasty marked the beginning of the dominance of literati painting. In the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty there were Qian Xun and Zhao Mengfu. Then there were the Four Masters: Huang Gongwang, Wu Zhen, Ni Zan, and Wang Meng. All these masters painted in their own personal styles, and their styles were followed by later literati painters. Although their styles differ, their works reflect the aesthetic of literati painting, which values expression more than realism.

¹³⁸ For a more thorough discussion on Xie He's six canons, see Hsu Fu-kuan 徐復觀, "Shi Qiyun Shengdong" 釋氣韻生動 (Interpretation of Qiyun Shengdong) in his *Zhongguo yishu jingshen*, 144–224.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 206.

In the early Ming Dynasty, there were more well-known court and professional painters than literati painters. Those court and professional painters usually followed the painting style of the Southern Song Dynasty court, a more detailed and minute style. Court painters were despised by literati painters, who thought that it took the fine cultural cultivation of a learned scholar to make a good painter. They thought that only learned scholars were able to convey deep thoughts through painting. To literati painters, physical appearance is not the basis upon which to judge a painting. In addition, literati painters considered selling or making one's livelihood from painting to be the practice of professional painters, whom they despised. In the late Ming Dynasty Dong Qichang proposed the theory of Northern and Southern Schools of painting, based on Zen theory. In this theory, the Northern School is painting by court and professional painters, and the Southern School is painting by literati painters. The purpose of this differentiation was to secure the high status of literati painting over court or professional painting. Dong Qichang also proposed following the styles of earlier literati masters. The Four Wangs of the Qing Dynasty continued this tradition, as did later literati painters. Therefore, in Chen Duxiu's time, literati painting was criticized for merely imitating the ancients.

Chen Duxiu was not the first either to criticize literati painting or to promote the use of Western painting styles. In 1917 Kang Youwei, a promoter of westernization in the late Qing Dynasty, had already expressed similar ideas in *Catalogue of Painting Collection in Wanmu Caotang*.¹⁴⁰ Kang Youwei initiated the failed Kang-Liang Reform in 1898. Although he was a pioneer of political reform in late Qing period, he opposed revolution and supported the constitutional monarchy. He did not change his belief in the

¹⁴⁰ *Wanmucaotang canghua mu*, n.p.

constitutional monarchy, even after the Republic was established. In 1917 he and warlord Zhang Xun 張勳 (1854–1923) attempted to restore the Qing emperor, an enterprise that lasted only for eleven days. Kang Youwei also promoted making Confucianism the national religion. Because Chen Duxiu severely criticized the monarchy and Confucianism, he also criticized Kang Youwei. Although Kang Youwei and Chen Duxiu had very different opinions on politics and Confucianism, Chen's "Art Revolution" and Kang's *Catalogue of Painting Collection in Wanmu Caotang* have similar ideas. *The Catalogue of Painting Collection in Wanmu Caotang* comprises a list of his painting collection and his essay on Chinese painting. Kang Youwei was disappointed with the Chinese painting of his time. In the beginning of his essay, he says, "Chinese painting of the recent dynasties has been extremely corrupt. This is because of the absurdness of painting theories. . . . Being able to grasp spirit does not mean it should be allowed to abandon appearance. Being able to depict ideas never means it should be allowed to forget about appearance."

What Kang Youwei says here is that the painting theories written by the literati in recent dynasties promoted the emphasis on spirit and abandoned the pursuit of realism. He blames the theory for the great decline of Chinese painting. He then compares Chinese painting and Western painting:

Touring all the hundred countries, their principles of paintings were all similar. So European and American paintings today and the Six Dynasties, Tang, and Song Dynasties' paintings have similar methods. However, since recent dynasties of China, painting has been incorporated with Zen. Since Wang Wei's painted *Banana in the Snow* [Xueli bajiao 雪裏芭蕉], people mistakenly followed it. Su and Mi abandoned formal likeness and promoted the spirit of scholar-officials. During the Yuan and Ming dynasties ruler painting was considered the work of craftsman and was abandoned.

偏覽百國作畫皆同。故今歐美之畫與六朝唐宋之法同。惟中國近世以禪入畫，自王維作雪裏芭蕉始，後人誤尊之。蘇米撥棄形似，倡爲士氣。元明大攻界畫爲匠筆而擯斥之。¹⁴¹

After the failure of the Kang-Liang Reform in 1898, Kang Youwei fled to Japan and was there until 1913. During this exile, he traveled to North America, Mexico, Singapore, India, and Europe. He visited numerous European countries and was amazed at the advancement of European culture and technology. After his travel to Europe, he wrote *Travelogue of Eleven Countries in Europe* (Ouzhou shiyiguo youji 歐洲十一國遊記). His exile also gave him the opportunity to see original Western paintings in Western museums. In the quote above Kang claims that Chinese paintings until the Song Dynasty were realistic, just as the European ones he saw were realistic, but after Wang Wei started to paint the unrealistic Zen story about a banana growing in the snow, Chinese painting started to follow this unrealistic path. He criticizes Su Shi and Mi Fu 米芾 (1051–1107) for abandoning realism.¹⁴² Kang Youwei criticized the tendency as old as the Yuan and Ming dynasties, where the literati painters despised a very detailed style called ruler painting (*jiehua* 界畫) as craftsmanship. Ruler painting was a style in which a painter used a ruler to depict straight lines and the details of architecture in painting. It was popular during the Song Dynasty. An example is *Spring Festival along the River* (*Qingming shanghe tu* 清明上河圖; fig. 30) by Zhang Zeduan 張擇端 (12th c.). Because of its detail, Kang Youwei considered ruler painting comparable to realism in Western painting. After seeing Western paintings, it was very easy for Kang Youwei to

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Mi Fu was another Song dynasty painter whose style was characterized of very simple and loose brushstrokes.

notice that Western painting was very realistic but Chinese painting was not very realistic.

So he accused literati painters of anti-realism and wanted to correct it. He says:

However, is it not ridiculous to honor the spirit of scholar-officials as orthodox painting? Now I am making special efforts to correct this. Take physical appearance and spirit as the main concern and set aside depicting ideas. Regarding colored ruler painting as the orthodox and the simple and loose brushstrokes as a sub-school. Although the spirit of scholar-officials is cherishable, court style should be the orthodox of painting. . . . Today industry, commerce, and everything all depend on painting. If painting cannot be improved, there is no industry to talk about.

然則，專貴士氣爲寫畫正宗，豈不謬哉，今特矯正之。以形神爲主而不取寫意，以著色界畫爲正，而以墨筆粗簡者爲別派。士氣固可貴，而以院體爲畫正法。……今工商百器皆藉于畫。畫不改進，工商無可言。¹⁴³

Court painters tend to adopt a more detailed and minute style, which is called *gongbi* 工筆, meaning fine brushwork. This *gongbi* style, as Kang Youwei argues above, is more realistic and should be promoted. Here Kang Youwei treats painting as a practical skill that all industries require. The Chinese literati had long considered painting as an art. They did not paint for any practical purposes. They painted for their own enjoyment. It seems that Kang Youwei was confused about the definition of painting, based on his experience with Western paintings. However, it is understandable why Kang Youwei viewed painting as being practical. Most traditional Chinese scholars promoted westernization because they witnessed the humiliations of losing wars to Western countries. They wanted to strengthen China by learning from the West. All they wanted was to make China stronger. Therefore it is quite reasonable for Kang Youwei to consider making China stronger by improving Chinese painting.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

As Chen Duxiu criticizes the Wang School in “Art Revolution,” published in 1919, Kang Youwei also criticizes people for merely imitating the Four Wangs. In this same 1917 essay, in the section regarding Qing Dynasty painting, he says:

When it came to the Qing Dynasty, Chinese painting has been in extreme decline. Not only is it in decline, but now there are no longer famous painters from the neighborhoods. The two or three famous ones left only imitate the remainder of the Four Wangs and the Two Shis. The scattered dry brushstrokes are tasteless. How can this be given to descendents?

中國畫學至國朝而衰弊極矣。豈止衰弊，至今郡邑無聞畫人者。其遺余二三名宿，摹寫四王二石之糟粕，枯筆數筆，味同嚼蠟，豈復能傳後。

As mentioned above, Kang Youwei praises Wu Mojing, also known as Wu Li, in his essay. Hoping to see people combine Chinese and Western painting methods, Kang says:

Mojing’s art has not been passed on well. Therefore Lang Shining introduced Western methods. Someday there should be people who become masters by combining Chinese and Western methods. Japan has already worked hard to promote this idea. Lang Shining should be honored as the founder [of the new painting]. If we still stick to the old and do not change, then the art of Chinese painting will vanish. Today are there not men of the elite who would like to stand up to integrate Chinese and Western painting and create a new era for the discipline of painting? I am longing for that.

墨井寡傳，郎世寧乃出西法，它日當有合中西而成大家者。日本已力講之，當以郎世寧為太祖矣。如仍守舊不變，則中國畫學應遂滅絕。國人豈無英絕之士應運而興，合中西而為畫學新紀元者，其在今乎，吾斯望之。

In Wu Li’s later years, he spent time more in missionary work than in painting. This may be one reason why his style was not continued. Another reason is that literati painting was dominant at that time and Western-style painting was not well received by Chinese painters. For example, a Qing Dynasty painter Zou Yigui 鄒一桂 (1686–1772) thought that, despite its amazing realism, Western painting was only the work of artisans. He says:

The Westerners are skilled in geometry, and consequently there is not the slightest mistake in their way of rendering light and shade and distance. In their paintings all the figures, buildings, and trees cast shadows, and their brush and colors are entirely different from those of Chinese painters. Their views stretch out from broad to narrow and are defined. When they paint houses on a wall people are tempted to walk into them. Students of painting may well take over one or two points from them to make their own paintings more attractive to the eye. But these painters have no brush-manner whatsoever; although they possess skill, they are simply artisans and cannot consequently be classified as painters.

西洋人善勾股法，故其繪畫於陰陽遠近不差鉅黍。所畫人物屋樹皆有日影，其所用顏色與筆與中華絕異。布影由闊而狹，以三角量之。畫宮室於牆壁令人幾欲走進。學者能參用一一亦具醒法，但筆法全無，雖工亦匠，故不入畫品。¹⁴⁴

Zou Yigui was a high ranking official during the reign of Yongzheng and Qianlong emperors. He was also a very talented painter. Since he was a high ranking official it would be tempting to give him the title of literati painter. However, because he painted for the court and was famous for his *gongbi*-style flower painting, he is usually categorized as a court painter. Despite Zou Yigui's extensive use of the meticulous *gongbi* court style, he did not approve of Western realism. Therefore, Kang Youwei's call to elevate court style and to abandon literati aesthetic in order to catch up with the realism of Western painting was not very practical. Although court style was more detailed, it still lacked Western techniques such as shading and perspective.

Lang Shining (1688–1766), who is highly praised in the quote from Kang Youwei, was a contemporary of Zou Yigui. Lang Shining was an Italian whose original name was Giuseppe Castiglione. Lang Shining went to China in 1715 as a Jesuit missionary. Because of his talent in painting, he was invited to stay in the Qing court as a court painter. Because it was difficult to change the long-established aesthetic of Chinese

¹⁴⁴ Zou, "Xiaoshan huapu," 733. Translation by Michael Sullivan, *Eastern and Western Art*, 80.

painting, he had to find a compromise between Chinese and Western styles. He chose to apply Western foreshortening, shading, and perspective to Chinese format and genre. Although in his essay Kang Youwei praises Wu Li and Lang Shining for using Western painting methods, he notes that they are figures of the past and that there are no longer Chinese masters who follow their styles. Therefore he hopes for someone to emerge to combine Chinese and Western methods of painting. He also observes that Japanese painters had already promoted the idea of combining Western painting and traditional painting. Since Japanese painters had already combined traditional and Western painting techniques, Kang Youwei urges Chinese painters to do the same.

During the May Fourth era, there were still other Chinese intellectuals who criticized traditional Chinese painting and proposed the adoption of Western painting styles or methods to improve Chinese painting. At the time, many Chinese thought that Western culture was based on science, which was a weak part of Chinese culture. One of the major goals for the May Fourth activists was to become scientific in every way possible. As Lin Mu points out, this scientism (the overzealousness for science) was an important reason why the Chinese wanted to adopt Western realism in Chinese painting.¹⁴⁵ The Chinese people thought that Western painting was much more realistic than Chinese painting because it was more scientific. For example, Cai Yuanpei says:

Chinese painting is closely related to calligraphy and often includes the pleasures of literature. Western painting is closely related to architecture and sculpture and is assisted by scientific observation and philosophical thinking. Therefore Chinese painting is superior at spirit resonance, and people who are good at painting are also good at calligraphy and poetry. Western painting is superior at craftsmanship

¹⁴⁵ *Ershi shiji Zhongguohua yanjiu*, 12–48.

and rationalism. Western people who are good at painting may also practice architecture and pictorial art.

中國之畫，與書法爲緣，而多含文學之趣味。西人之畫，與建築雕刻爲緣，而佐以科學之觀察、哲學之思想。故中國之畫，以氣韻勝，善畫者多工書而能詩。西人之畫，以技能及義蘊取勝，善畫者或兼建築、圖畫二術。¹⁴⁶

One may wonder why Cai Yuanpei thought that Western painting was associated with architecture and pictorial art, since nowadays architecture is associated more with engineering than with painting. In Cai Yuanpei's time, when the Chinese started to learn about Western art history, they found that the great masters of painting in the Renaissance—Michelangelo, Da Vinci, and Raphael—were all involved in architecture and painting religious frescos. Da Vinci was even a brilliant scientist. When the Italian painter Lang Shining served at the Qing court, he also helped design the Western architecture in the summer palace Yuanmingyuan 圓明園. All these facts gave the Chinese people the impression that Western painting was associated with architecture and was more scientific. This also explains why Kang Youwei thought that painting and industry were closely related.

Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻 (1895–1953) was another important figure who criticized traditional painting and favored Western painting. Xu Beihong once learned calligraphy with Kang Youwei. He echoes Kang Youwei's criticism of Chinese painting in the article "The Ways to Improve Chinese Painting," published in 1918. He says, "The corruption of the methods of Chinese painting is already in the extreme today!" 中國畫學之頹敗，至今日已極矣！¹⁴⁷ Xu Beihong also believed that Western realism was the way to save

¹⁴⁶ "Huagong Xuexiao jiangyi," 60.

¹⁴⁷ "Zhongguohua gailiang zhi fangfa." See Xu Boyang 徐伯陽 and Jinshan 金山, *Xu Beihong yishu wenji*, 39.

corrupted Chinese painting. He believed in realism so much that when he studied painting in Paris he could not accept any of the modern European trends in painting. What he decided to study was French academic painting.

Chen Shizeng, although usually classified as a traditionalist, was not very satisfied with Chinese painting at this time. For example, in his article “The Development of Chinese Figure Painting,” Chen Shizeng defends Chinese painting but also expresses his dissatisfaction with contemporary Chinese painting. He says,

Now some people say Western painting is progressive but Chinese painting is not progressive. I say Chinese painting is progressive. . . . However, from the Song Dynasty to the modern era, there has not been much progress.

現在有人說西洋畫是進步的。中國畫不是進步的。我卻說中國畫是進步的……不過自宋朝至近代。沒甚進步可言罷了。¹⁴⁸

In his article “Different Schools of Landscape in the Qing Dynasty,” Chen Shizeng argues there was not much to talk about landscape painting after Qianlong’s reign because after Qianlong, landscape painters followed only the style of the Wang School. He says:

There was no school of painting to talk about after Qianlong’s reign. Before Qianlong, the time was still not too far from the ancients. Besides the Wang School, there were still people who could create their individual styles to compete with the Wang School. After Qianlong, landscape painters were all descendents of the Wang School. . . . Therefore, critiques on Qing Dynasty painting schools could end at Qianlong.

乾隆以後之畫，無派別之可言。蓋乾隆以前，去古未遠，於王派之外，尙能有人自立面貌，與之抗衡。至乾隆以後，言山水畫者，盡王派之支裔。……固論清代畫派者，至於乾隆爲止也可。¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ “Zhongguo renwuhua zhi bianqian.”

¹⁴⁹ “Qingdai shanshui zhi paibie,” zhuanlun 3.

Chen Shizeng's dissatisfaction with contemporary Chinese painting could already been seen as early as 1912, in his comments to his translation of the article "Recent Conditions in the European Art World" published in *Bulletin of the Nantong Normal School Alumni Association*. There he says:

A Japanese named Kume wrote an article "Recent Condition of European Art World." Now I translate it and introduce it to the academia of our country so that we can learn about the development of their vogue. Besides, their art changes every day, but ours is halting without any advancement. So, this article is also a lesson that we can learn from others.

日人久米氏有歐洲畫界最近之狀況一篇。今譯之以紹介於吾學界，藉以知其風尚之變遷。且彼土藝術日新月異，而吾國則沈滯不前，於此亦可以藉鑑矣。
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By translating this article, Chen Shizeng hoped that Chinese painters could learn something from the West. The article focuses on nineteenth-century French painting, especially on Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. It says that Impressionism was a breakaway from realism and that the invention of photography had very much to do with it. So, although Chen Shizeng was not very happy with Chinese painting at that time, by translating this article, he was also sending the message that realism was not the only way in which Chinese painting could develop.

Although Chen Shizeng was not satisfied with Chinese painting of his time, in *History of Chinese Painting* he praises Zhao Zhiqian 趙之謙 (1829–1884) and his teacher Wu Changshuo for being different from others by applying the brushstrokes of ancient calligraphy.¹⁵¹ In this book, he expresses optimism about the future of Chinese

¹⁵⁰ "Ouzhou huajie zuijin zhi zhuangkuang," 35.

¹⁵¹ *Zhongguo huihua shi*, 50.

painting. He says, “How Chinese painting is going to develop in the future is unpredictable. Nevertheless, where there are people studying there are improvements” 將來中國畫如何變遷不可預知，總之有人研究斯有進步。¹⁵²

Growing up in a reform-minded family, Chen Shizeng was very open to learning from the West. In his article “Recent Conditions in the European Art World” he urges the Chinese to learn from the West. In his *History of Chinese Painting*, he also suggests that there are some good points in foreign art that the Chinese can learn about. He says:

Besides, Chinese painting has often received foreign influences. Examples mentioned above have already illustrated this. Now there are more chances to be exposed to foreign art. There should be something that we could take and absorb. So it is important to exchange in order to bring our established skills into full play.

況中國之畫往往受外國之影響，於前例已見之。現在與外國美術接觸之機會更多，當有採取融會之處。固在善於會通以發揮固有之特長耳。¹⁵³

On January 1, 1919, professors of the Painting Methods Study Association at Peking University held a farewell party for Xu Beihong because he was going to France to study painting. A few professors made remarks at the party. Chen Shizeng also made some remarks to Xu Beihong, wishing him to succeed in finding a balance between Chinese and Western paintings. He said:

The principles of Eastern and Western paintings are originally the same. Viewing ancient Chinese painting, it can be seen that there are many characteristics similar to foreign painting. Western painting such as the old school Lang Shining is also very similar to Chinese painting. Ancient Western painting, which was composed section by section, was similar to Chinese handscroll. I wish Professor Beihong that, by going abroad, he can connect the Chinese and the foreign and become a world-renowned painter.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

謂東西洋畫理本同。閱中畫古本，其與外畫相同者頗多。西洋畫如郎世寧舊派與中國畫亦極相接近。西洋古畫一方一方畫成者與中國之手卷極相似。希望悲鴻先生此去構通中外成一世界著名畫者。¹⁵⁴

Chen Shizeng's words throughout the 1910s show that he was very open-minded about learning from the West. However, in January 1921, he published the article "The Value of Literati Painting" (Wenrenhua de jiazhi 文人畫的價值) defending the lack of realism in traditional Chinese literati painting. In 1922, he rewrote this essay in literary Chinese and published it with his translation of Omura Seigai's 大村西崖 *The Revival of Literati Painting*. Some scholars argue that this essay shows Chen Shizeng's abrupt change of attitude toward westernization of Chinese painting. For example, Yuan Lin interprets Chen Shizeng's remarks at Xu Beihong's farewell party to demonstrate that he agreed with Kang Youwei. But Yuan Lin takes "The Value of Literati Painting" to show that Chen Shizeng was critical of Kang Youwei and Chen Duxiu about literati painting.¹⁵⁵ Lin Mu thinks that, by publishing "The Value of Literati Painting," Chen suddenly reversed his belief in compromising and synthesizing Chinese and Western painting.¹⁵⁶ In her master's thesis, Lu Hsuan-fei argues that before 1921 Chen Shizeng promoted the synthesis of Chinese and Western paintings but that after 1921 he promoted the value of literati painting.¹⁵⁷ She criticizes those who define Chen Shizeng as a traditionalist, suggesting that their approach is too simple and narrow minded.¹⁵⁸ She thinks that Chen Shizeng's words before 1921 best represent Chen's typical thinking. Therefore, in the

¹⁵⁴ Anonymous, "Xu Beihong fu fa ji," jishi 9.

¹⁵⁵ "Chen Shizeng," 22.

¹⁵⁶ *Ershi shiji Zhongguohua yanjiu*, 247.

¹⁵⁷ "Chen Shizeng," 91–103.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 102.

May 2004 graduate symposium at the National Central University in Taiwan, Lu Hsuan-fei argued that Chen Shizeng should be categorized as belonging to the Synthesizing School (Zhezhongpai 折衷派), the term usually applied to Lingnan School.

Although Chen Shizeng encouraged people to learn from Western painting, he never promoted a synthesis of Chinese and Western painting. In “Recent Condition of European Art World,” Chen Shizeng urged people to learn from the history of European art. And, as discussed above, that article also suggested that Western realism was not the only solution for Chinese painting. In *History of Chinese Painting*, he suggested that there were good points in Western painting that Chinese painters could take and absorb, but he did not promote a synthesis of Chinese and Western painting. What Chen Shizeng said at Xu Beihong’s farewell party is very often quoted as a proof that he wanted to synthesize Chinese and Western paintings. Chen Shizeng used the term *gotong zhongwai* 溝通中外 as his wish for Xu Beihong.¹⁵⁹ This term literally means making connections or communications between Chinese and foreign countries (that is, the West). The term does not promote a synthesis of Chinese and Western paintings. It promotes merely interchange.

Chen Shizeng did urge people to learn some Western painting methods that could complement Chinese painting. He says in “My Opinions on Teaching Painting in General Education” that learning painting should “take our nation’s painting as the core; discard our weakness, and adopt the goodness from the foreign.” 宜以本國之畫為主體，捨我之短，採人之長。¹⁶⁰ “The foreign” here also means the West. Chen Shizeng proposes that

¹⁵⁹ Anonymous, “Xu Beihong fu fa ji,” jishi 9.

¹⁶⁰ “Duiyu putong,” jiangyan 10.

when learning from the West, Chinese painting should be the core, *zhuti* 主體. This shows that Chen Shizeng did not want to synthesize Chinese and Western styles of painting.¹⁶¹

This idea Chen Shizeng champions is the same as “Chinese essence; Western application,” which reform-minded traditional scholars of late Qing Dynasty and conservative scholars of *The Eastern Miscellany* in the early twentieth century adopted. Du Yaquan of *The Eastern Miscellany* was very learned in Western sciences, but he also defended Chinese culture in his articles. As discussed in the previous section, Chen Shizeng and those who were associated with the circle around *The Eastern Miscellany*—including Chen Shizeng’s family—were all very open minded about Western culture but they were also defenders of Chinese traditions.

Therefore, Chen Shizeng’s “The Value of Literati Painting” was not at all peculiar, and it does not represent a departure from earlier thought. Learning from the West and defending tradition were not contradictory to Chen Shizeng. Before he wrote this essay, he never attacked literati painting. “The Value of Literati Painting” does not attack Western painting, either. In the essay, Chen Shizeng mentions modern trends in Western painting, which had started to distance itself from realism. He argues that there are things other than realism that should be pursued.¹⁶² His idea here, that realism is not enough, echoes what was implied in “Recent Condition of European Art World,” published in 1912.

¹⁶¹ This point has been reaffirmed recently, in Cheng, “Chen Shizeng,” 61.

¹⁶² Chen Hengke, “Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi,” *Zhongguo Wenrenhua zhi yanjiu* ed., 9.

There is no contradiction between “The Value of Literati Painting” and his words in the 1910s. However, because he had to defend literati painting from the attacks by New Culture Movement activists, his words became more conservative. After meeting Ōmura Seigai, his words became even more conservative. In his essay “About Nanga,” published in the Japanese magazine *Tōyō* 東洋 in October 1922, Chen Shizeng argues that it was unnecessary to use Western methods to renew Chinese painting. He says:

It is useless to put Western things in Chinese painting or it will be neither donkey nor house. Not being able to become either one, the result will be failure on both sides.

徒らに欧西のものを支那画の中に取り入れたとて驢に非ず馬に非ず、どちらとも付かなくなるばかりで両方とも失敗に帰するのみである。¹⁶³

Although Chen Shizeng promoted learning from Western painting in the 1910s, he was always a traditionalist by nature. His thinking, “Chinese essence; Western application,” belonged to the older generation of reformers. This kind of thinking made him and the scholars of *The Eastern Miscellany* relatively conservative compared to Chen Duxiu and other New Culture Movement activists.

Chen Shizeng’s painting is consistent with what he wrote about painting. His style was not primarily based on the Wang School. Instead, he chose to learn from Wu Changshuo, whose style derived from the Individualists of the Qing Dynasty, and his own studies of ancient calligraphy styles. Besides learning Wu Changshuo’s style, he also experimented with some Western techniques in his painting, which will be discussed in chapter five. He did not want to synthesize Chinese and Western painting. Even those paintings of his that include some Western techniques still look more like traditional

¹⁶³ Chen Hengke, “Nanga ni tsuite,” 131.

literati paintings than do the hybrid paintings of the Lingnan School. After all, he proposed that Chinese painting should remain the core when the artist applied Western methods.

3. Chen Shizeng and Ōmura Seigai

As mentioned in the previous section, Chen Shizeng published “The Value of Literati Painting” in January 1921’s issue of *Painting Study Magazine* (*Huixue Zazhi* 繪學雜誌). In October 1921, Japanese art historian Ōmura Seigai went to China and met Chen Shizeng. Then Chen Shizeng decided to translate Ōmura Seigai’s “The Revival of Literati Painting,” an essay published both as a book, and as an article for the *Alumni Association Monthly* (*Kōyūkai Geppō* 校友会月報) of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in February 1921. Chen Shizeng rewrote “The Value of Literati Painting” in literary Chinese and published it in May 1922 together with his translation of Ōmura’s “The Revival of Literati Painting” in the book titled *The Study of Chinese Literati Painting*.

Ōmura Seigai was a famous art historian. However, when he entered the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1889, he studied sculpture. He graduated in 1893 as one of the first graduates from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. After graduation, he taught at the Kyoto Arts and Crafts School (Kyoto Bijutsu Kōgei Gakkō 京都美術工芸学校). In 1896 he went back to the Tokyo School of Fine Arts to teach as an associate professor. One year later, probably because of conflicts with the president, Okakura Tenshin, he left. In 1898 Okakura Tenshin left the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, so Ōmura Seigai returned to teach sculpture again. During these years, he was also hired by the government to research antiques and ancient temples. After 1898, he also worked for the Imperial Museum, today’s Tokyo National Museum, to lead the research on sculpture and to participate on the editorial board of the *Imperial Art History* (*Teikoku bijutsushi* 帝国美術史). This

experience helped Ōmura Seigai's research on art history. In the late Meiji and Taishō periods he taught East Asian art history and published extensively on this subject.¹⁶⁴

In 1919, Ōmura Seigai and his friends established the Yūgen Painting Society 又玄画社 to promote literati painting. According to his friends in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, Ōmura Seigai painted *nanga* before entering the School, although he did not paint very well.¹⁶⁵ At that time, Fenollosa and Okakura Tenshin were promoting traditional Japanese painting in the face of the popularity of Western-style painting. Different schools of traditional Japanese painting derived from Chinese painting. They all shared the trait of underemphasizing realism. Although Fenollosa and Okakura Tenshin did not want to promote literati painting, scholars such as Ōmura Seigai, as they increasingly studied Chinese art, found that the aesthetic of literati painting was the most representative of Chinese and Japanese painting.¹⁶⁶

The Yūgen Painting Society organized exhibitions of literati painting. It also published catalogs of the exhibitions, which included Ōmura Seigai's works. To Ōmura Seigai establishing the painting society did not seem enough for promoting literati painting. In 1921 he went to China to research Chinese art and to meet Chinese literati artists in the hopes of forging alliances. Because he had published important research on Chinese art, he was already well-known among Chinese scholars before he went to China.

¹⁶⁴ The above information about Ōmura Seigai's life comes from Isozaki and Yoshida, *Tokyo bijutsu gakkō*, 175–76.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 176.

¹⁶⁶ Yoshida, "Ōmura Seigai to Chūgoku," 14.

Upon arrival in Beijing, he first met Jin Cheng 金城, and then, through Jin Cheng's introduction, Chen Shizeng.¹⁶⁷

Chen Shizeng's "The Value of Literati Painting" was a reaction against the attacks on literati painting such as Chen Duxiu's and Kang Youwei's. However, Chen Zhenlian 陳振濂 argues that Chinese literati painting still enjoyed very high status at that time, therefore the reason for writing the essay was Japanese influence.¹⁶⁸ It is true that literati painting was still popular during Chen Shizeng's time. It is also true that there are traces of Japanese influence in Chen Shizeng's arguments. However, during the New Culture Movement, Chinese traditions were faced with great challenges from Chen Duxiu and other radical intellectuals. These attacks were, on their own, strong enough to be Chen Shizeng's main motive for writing; Japanese influence was secondary or negligible.

Although Chen Shizeng was a very famous painter in his own lifetime, what made art historians and art critics continue to talk about him was this essay and his translation of Ōmura Seigai's essay. *The Study of Chinese Literati Painting* became a classic defense of literati painting and was reprinted many times (seven times by 1934). The book earned him fame as a traditionalist and defender of Chinese literati painting. As for Ōmura Seigai, his book on literati painting has been almost forgotten in Japan. His call for a revival of literati painting was not continued. Ōmura Seigai is better known today for his studies of Chinese art history, especially Chinese Buddhist sculpture.

As Chen Zhenlian points out, Ōmura Seigai's title, "The Revival of Literati Painting," implies that literati painting in Japan was already in such great decline that it

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 14, 17.

¹⁶⁸ *Jindai Zhong Ri*, 230–31.

needed to be revived.¹⁶⁹ Literati painting originated in China and from there spread to Japan during the Edo period. Among the most famous Japanese literati painters were Ikeno Taiga 池大雅 (1723–1776) and Yosa Buson 與謝蕪村 (1716–1783).

As mentioned above, “literati painting” in Chinese is *wenrenhua* 文人畫. The Japanese use the same characters for “literati painting,” but they pronounce them *bunjinga*. Although *wenrenhua* and *bunjinga* are written with the exact same Chinese characters or *kanji*, they may not mean the same thing in their respective cultural contexts. Chinese literati painters were mainly scholar-officials or scholars living in reclusion. This scholar-official or scholar-gentry class had very high status in China, but because of different political systems, this class did not exist in Japan. While *wenrenhua* in China implies the status of the painter, *bunjinga* in Japan often means just a style of painting. Most of the Japanese literati painters were professional painters, a label that Chinese literati painters always avoided. Moreover, *bunjinga* in Japan is confused with *nanga* 南畫, which refers to Southern School painting. As mentioned in chapter four, during the Ming Dynasty Dong Qichang called literati painting Southern School and court painting Northern School. He wanted to use scholars’ positive impression of Chan (Zen) Buddhism to promote literati painting. The Northern School of Chan is characterized by painstaking cultivation, which Dong then compares to the meticulous style of court painters. The Southern School of Chan is characterized by sudden enlightenment, which is compared to the more relaxed style of the literati painters. Dong Qichang implies a difference in style between the two schools but his major concern is whether the painter is literati or professional.

¹⁶⁹ *Jindai Zhong Ri*, 231.

The theory of Northern and Southern Schools aroused much debate in China because of the confusion of styles between the two schools. Sometimes literati painters use techniques typical for court painters. Court painters may also paint in the styles of literati painters. But their social status was not the same. Because it was difficult to define Northern and Southern schools according to style, the Chinese did not use the term “Southern School painting” to refer to literati painting very often. However, the Japanese tended to use *bunjinga* and *nanga* interchangeably. In Japan there was no scholar-official class, as there was in China. This is probably why the term *nanga*, instead of *bunjinga*, was more often used by the Japanese when referring to literati painting.

Japanese literati painting, or *nanga*, flourished in the Edo period and continued to be popular in the early Meiji period. After the Meiji Restoration, traditional Japanese painting, such as that found in the Kano 狩野 and Tosa 土佐 schools, started to lose its status because its major patrons, the warrior clans, were declining.¹⁷⁰ Western-style painting started to rise in the Meiji period. Many activists of the Meiji Restoration were learned in traditional Chinese studies, or *kangaku* 漢学. They promoted Chinese characters and Chinese literature, which also helped the popularity of literati painting.¹⁷¹

The popularity of *nanga* did not last very long in the Meiji period. As mentioned in chapter three, the American professor Ernest Fenollosa, who went to Japan in 1878, urged the Japanese to rediscover and preserve their cultural heritage. Fenollosa and his student Okakura Tenshin became very influential, leading to a movement to preserve Japanese national essence. However, because Fenollosa did not have the taste for literati painting

¹⁷⁰ Urasaki, *Nihon kindai bijutsu hattatsushi*, 8–9.

¹⁷¹ Kurihara, *Fenollosa to Meiji Bunka*, 171.

and even attacked it in a lecture later published with the title *Essay on Fine Art (Bijutsu shinsetsu 美術真説)*, literati painting was not part of his agenda to revive Japanese art.¹⁷²

Ōmura Seigai thought that Fenollosa was responsible for the decline of Japanese literati painting. He says in *The Value of Literati Painting*:

It is a pity that Doctor Fenollosa's eyesight cannot see the elegance and delicacy of Southern School literati painting at all. Therefore in his revival of painting, literati painting is not included. Moreover, it is seen as non-art. In the most recent thirty years or so, people did not even know the existence of literati painting. What I am saying is no exaggeration.

ただ惜むらくは、フェノロサ学士の眼識、全く南宗文人畫の雅致を領会すること能はずして止めき。ここを以て畫運振興の裡に、毫も文人畫を包含せしめざりしのみならず。却りてこれを目するに非美術を以てし、竟に最近三十餘年間、世人をして殆ど文人畫てふもの、存在を忘れ果てしめたりと謂ふも、決して過言に非ざるなり。¹⁷³

Although Fenollosa is often blamed for the decline of Japanese literati painting in the Meiji period, he was not solely to blame. Most Japanese *nanga* painters at the time just imitated or copied earlier masters and had very little innovation in their works. They could no longer produce original works that could inspire awe. The attacks that Fenollosa made on Japanese literati painting had some basis in reality, which caused it to decline quickly.¹⁷⁴

In the early twentieth century, Japanese painting was dominated by Okakura Tenshin's *Nihonga* and Kuroda Seiki's *Yōga*.¹⁷⁵ Literati painting, or *nanga*, was no

¹⁷² For discussion on Fenollosa's opinions on literati painting, see *ibid.*, 332–34.

¹⁷³ *Bunjinga no fukkō*, 4–5.

¹⁷⁴ Kurihara, *Fenollosa to Meiji Bunka*, 346.

¹⁷⁵ See chapter three for discussions about *Nihonga* and *Yōga*.

longer popular. Ōmura Seigai, through his deep appreciation of Chinese art, wanted to revive literati painting. He knew *nanga* painters in Japan were different from the literati painters in China. He also knew that most Japanese *nanga* painters sold their paintings for a living and he despised those *nanga* painters. He says later in *The Value of Literati Painting*:

They themselves knew they were not literati; therefore, they dared not take over the name of literati painting. This is why I give the name *nanga* to them. I promote literati painting only. Therefore I want to call for a revival of literati painting.

みづからその文人に非ざることを識るが故に、さすがに憚りて文人畫の名をば僭せず。ここに於いて吾人は乃ち南宗の名を彼に譲り、専ら文人畫の名を標榜して、以てこれが復興を唱へむと欲するのみ。¹⁷⁶

Although *nanga* and *bunjinga* were usually used interchangeably in Japan, Ōmura Seigai distinguishes the terms here and promotes literati painting only. He sees himself as a learned scholar, comparable to Chinese literati. As for his definition of literati painting, Ōmura Seigai says, “Literati painting is the painting done by men of letters. . . . Painting can be divided into two schools: The Southern School is painting by scholar-officials; the Northern School is painting by professional court painters. This was proposed by Dong Qichang of the Ming Dynasty.”¹⁷⁷

Ōmura Seigai’s definition of literati painting—literati painting has to be done by literati—is quite literal. But Chen Shizeng’s definition of literati painting is based not on the painter but on the painting. He says, “What is literati painting? It is painting bearing the nature and the taste of the literati. It is not particularly concerned with artistic

¹⁷⁶ Ōmura, *Bunjinga no fukkō*, 54.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 45–46.

techniques of painting. It must show the many amusements of the literati, which are elements not represented in the painting itself. This is what is meant by literati painting.”¹⁷⁸

What Chen Shizeng means is that literati painting is the kind of painting that could express the feelings of literati and that the techniques are not the main concern. For Ōmura Seigai, Dong Qichang’s theory was the ultimate guide to the definition of literati painting: a painter’s position in society is the only standard for judging whether a painting is literati or not. Ōmura believed in Dong’s theory so much that he looked down on any court or academic painter. He says:

Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty established studies of painting at the Hanlin Painting Academy. He held exams to recruit painters from all places and nurtured students of painting. However, this merely created too many painters of the court style, such as the father and son of the Mi family. Therefore [the academy] is not the place to develop studies of painting. Chokunyū once also established a school for Southern School painting. His courage is worth praising but his stupidity is worth pitying.

宋の徽宗は、翰林圖畫院に畫學を置く、四方の畫人を補試して、學生を養ひしかど、ただ院體の作者を増せるに過ぎず。米家父子の如きは、固より畫學の出す所に非ざるなり。直入が曾て南宗畫學校を立てたるが如きも、その志嘉すべくして、その愚寧ろ憐むに堪へたりと謂ふべし。¹⁷⁹

In this passage Chinese painters Mi Fu and his son Mi Youren are considered to be court painters. Mi Fu was a man of letters and was good at writing, poetry, painting, and calligraphy. It is true that because of Mi Fu’s great fame in painting and calligraphy, he was recruited by the emperor Huizong to serve in his imperial painting academy as Doctor of Painting and Calligraphy (Shuhua Boshi 書畫博士). His position in the

¹⁷⁸ Chen Hengke, “Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi,” *Zhongguo Wenrenhua zhi yenjia* ed., 1.

¹⁷⁹ *Bunjinga no fukkō*, 37.

imperial court prompted Ōmura Seigai to classify the Mi family as court painters. But Ōmura might have gone too far in this classification: even Dong Qichang considered the Mi family to be Southern School painters.¹⁸⁰ So, it seems that Ōmura Seigai took Dong Qichang's theory more literally and more strictly than Dong Qichang himself did.

In contrast, Chen Shizeng's standard, where literati painting lies not in the painters but in the paintings, implies that if a painter considers himself literati and shows the literati aesthetic in his painting, he may be considered a literati painter. Although Mi Fu served in the court's painting academy, he is still regarded as a literati painter because he is a learned gentleman. Chen Shizeng's definition of literati painting fit better in early twentieth-century China because the literati class no longer existed. Civil service examinations were abolished in 1905 and traditional family schools, which taught traditional classics, were gradually replaced with institutionalized schools. Those new schools taught Western knowledge and developed new Chinese intellectuals. Traditional literati who needed to learn only Chinese classics started to fade out. However, those who were still learned in traditional studies, such as Chen Shizeng, could carry on the practice of literati painting. Besides painting, Chen Shizeng could also write poems, write calligraphy, and carve seals. He was capable of what traditional literati could do. Therefore he could produce art works that bear the feelings and ideals of Chinese literati. Chen Shizeng thought that the ability to express the literati feelings should be considered the mark of literati painting.

Dong Qichang's purpose in writing the theory was to separate literati painting and court painting. But Chen Shizeng wanted to make the public understand the value of

¹⁸⁰ Peter Sturman echoes Dong's view when he uses the term "scholar-official" to introduce Mi Fu in his book. See *Mi Fu*, 1.

literati painting because of the threat of Western painting. As discussed in the previous section, scholars such as Kang Youwei and Chen Duxiu wanted to promote Western painting because it was much more realistic than Chinese painting. They criticized Chinese literati painting for not concentrating on depicting real nature but merely imitating the styles of masters in the past. In the Meiji period in Japan, people also started to favor the realism of Western painting, therefore Ōmura Seigai also had to defend literati painting's treatment of realism.

In *The Revival of Literati Painting*, Ōmura Seigai acknowledges the importance of imitating real nature when beginning to learn painting. He uses examples. Han Feizi said that painting ghosts was easier than painting dogs and horses. Xie He included in his six canons the depicting of forms and the application of colors, to show that he knew the importance of the live sketch.¹⁸¹ However, he does not agree that mastery of live sketching is the ultimate goal for painting. He says:

If painting is compared with photography, one can understand that this theory is wrong. The delicacy and fine detail that photography could depict from nature is what leaves painting far behind. . . . If live sketches were considered the ultimate of art, in the art corresponding to nature, painting should have died immediately or at least lost half of its territory when photography was invented.

若し一たび絵画と影寫術とを対比して考一考せば、立どころにその説の非なることを悟るべし。それ自然を寫すの精巧周密なることは、絵画の遙かに影寫術に及ばざる所なり……若し寫生にして果して藝術の極致ならば、自然に對應なき藝術の成らむやうなく、且影寫術の發明と共に、絵画はたとひ滅亡せざるまでも、少くも半ばその領域を喪ふべきに。¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Ōmura, *Bunjinga no fukkō*, 7.

¹⁸² Ibid., 8.

Probably under Ōmura Seigai's inspiration, Chen Shizeng adds comments on photography in the literary Chinese version of "The Value of Literati Painting." He develops Ōmura's point about photography by saying that even in photography there is an art, as well as ideals like those found in painting. He says:

To speak of photography, although it is faithful to material substance, it does involve artistic ideas in the selection of objects to be photographed and the design of scenes. It also fits the ideals and pleasures of painting, not to mention the pure and elegant art, which is the media for people to express their spirit and feeling.

即以照相而論，雖專任物質而其擇物配景亦猶有意匠寓乎其中，使有合乎繪畫之理想與趣味。何況純潔高尚之藝術而以吾人之性靈感想所發揮者邪。¹⁸³

Not being as realistic as Western painting seemed to Ōmura Seigai to be the most critical weakness of literati painting. Ōmura defends literati painting by noting that nature is infinite and constantly changing so it is impossible to capture every detail of nature. He says that Western painting can capture only a glimpse of nature and that live sketching also cannot grasp everything. Therefore experience tells us that this is not the way of art. He also uses waxwork to show that realism cannot be considered art. He says that because the great sculptural works of ancient Greece have no color, real artworks should be monochrome. He uses Noh Theater as an example to show that simplicity is better than realism.¹⁸⁴

Whereas Ōmura Seigai spends a large portion of his essay on the issue of realism, Chen Shizeng writes more about the superiority of literati painting. In the first paragraph

¹⁸³ Chen Hengke, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi," *Zhongguo Wenrenhua zhi yanjiu* ed., 3.

¹⁸⁴ Ōmura, *Bunjinga no fukkō*, 5–11.

he praises the expressiveness of literati painting. In this key passage he sets out his fundamental definition of literati painting:

What is precious in art is that it cultivates spirit and expresses a person's character and feelings. And literati are people who have very graceful character and noble thoughts. Their everyday cultivation and character are much more noble than that of the masses. Therefore, what they express and depict can naturally invite people to enter into its wonder, and inspire thoughts of peace and grace. In doing so, people rid themselves of all mundane ideas. People who look at literati painting, appreciate literati amusements, or sense literati sensibilities, even though their understanding of art may be on different levels, they must more or less have literati thoughts.

所貴乎藝術者，即在陶寫性靈，發表個性與其感想。而文人又其個性優美，感想高尚者也。其平日之所修養品格迥出於庸眾之上，故其於藝術也，所發表書寫者自能引人入勝，悠然起澹遠幽微之思，而脫離一切塵垢之念。然則觀文人之畫識文人之趣味，感文人之感者，雖關於藝術之觀念淺深不同，而多少必含有文人之思想。¹⁸⁵

Chen Shizeng praises literati painting for being able to express the thoughts of literati. He claims that the general public criticized literati painting because they could not understand its loftiness. He says, "That literati painting is not being appreciated by the masses only proves the sublimity of its stature" 文人畫之不見賞流俗正可見其格調之高耳。¹⁸⁶

To illustrate the loftiness of literati painting, Chen Shizeng discusses a large portion of the history of literati painting in the essay. Ōmura Seigai also includes the history of literati painting in his essay. The difference is that Chen Shizeng talks about only Chinese literati painting while Ōmura Seigai discusses both Chinese and Japanese literati painting. In Edo period, when literati painting first became popular in Japan, Japanese *nanga*

¹⁸⁵ Chen Hengke, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi," *Zhongguo Wenrenhua zhi yanjiu* ed., 1.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

painters obtained Chinese painting instruction books such as *Mustard Seed Painting Manual* and followed the style of Chinese literati painting. However, Ōmura Seigai used Dong Qichang's definition of literati painting to make up a longer history of literati painting in Japan. In his essay, he says that the founder of Japanese literati painting was a learned scholar-official of the Nara period (710–794), Ōminomahito Mifune 淡海真人三船 (722–785), who lived around the same time as Wang Wei, who is usually credited as the earliest exponent of literati painting in China.¹⁸⁷ Then Ōmura Seigai lists many Zen painters of later periods as literati painters. Although Japanese Zen painters were very learned in Chinese studies, they were not literati painters by Chinese standards. To the Chinese, monks were of lower social standing than scholars, so paintings by monks could not be regarded as literati painting. In Ōmura Seigai's essay, even Kōrin 光琳 is considered a literati painter.¹⁸⁸ Chen Hengke, in his essay “About Nanga,” says, “What is called *nanga* in Japan is the paintings other than painting schools such as Kōrin. But I think that *bunjinga* is a more proper way to call it” 日本で謂はれて居る南画は、光琳等画派のがを云ふやうであつて 寧ろ文人画と云つた方が宜からうと思はれる。¹⁸⁹ Literati painting is a Chinese art. It might have been difficult for Ōmura Seigai to promote a Chinese art in Japan when nationalism was strong. Therefore, he wanted to construct the history of Japanese literati painting to make his promotion of literati painting more acceptable to the Japanese people.

¹⁸⁷ Ōmura, *Bunjinga no fukkō*, 48.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 49.

¹⁸⁹ “Nanga ni tsuite,” 127.

Another way to promote literati painting among the Japanese was to treat it as an East Asian art. Ōmura Seigai uses the term *tōa* 東亜, which means East Asia and *tōyō* 東洋, which means the East, several times in his essay. As discussed earlier, in chapter two, Japanese pan-Asianism considered Asia as a single entity with Japan as the leader. By treating literati painting as an East Asian rather than a Chinese art, Ōmura made it more acceptable to the Japanese people. By 1919 pan-Asianism had already been used to promote literati painting, in *History of Japanese Nanga*, written by Umezawa Seiichi 梅澤精一. Umezawa says:

Japan is one of the five strongest countries in the world. It is the leader and protector of Eastern civilization. Today we should abandon the narrow-minded Japanism and look to the higher ground for the preservation and development of Eastern art. Use China's *nanga* to paint the interest of Eastern people and use its brushstrokes to paint Japanese landscapes and figures.

日本は世界の五大強国の一にして、東洋文明の指導者たり、保護者たるを以て、今日にありては偏狭なる日本主義を捨て、眼を高處に着け、東洋美術の保存発達を計る上よりして、東洋人の趣味として支那的南画を描き、又其の筆致を以て日本の山水人物をも描くと爲すべきなり。¹⁹⁰

Probably because Ōmura Seigai did not want to upset his Chinese friends, he did not boast of the superiority of Japan as Umezawa Seiichi did. The argument of pan-Asianism never appears in Chen Shizeng's "The Value of Literati Painting." This difference illustrates that, despite the collaboration between Chen Shizeng and Ōmura Seigai, Chen Shizeng would never want to create an Eastern art.

It is true that Chen Shizeng used the term *tōyō* in his writing. In his article "About Nanga," published in the Japanese magazine *Tōyō*, Chen Shizeng says:

¹⁹⁰ *Nihon nangashi*, 1011.

Chinese painting does not have a fixed format. It concentrates more on spirit resonance and methods of brushstrokes. It is the most mysterious thing. Therefore it would not be easy to be capable of if it were not done by us the Easterners.

要するに支那画は形式に在らずして専ら気韻筆法に在るので、最も神秘的なものであるから、我々東洋人でなければ容易に出来ない。¹⁹¹

Although Chen Shizeng uses *tōyō* in this article, his audience was Japanese. He uses terminology familiar to the Japanese. *Tōyō* is not the only example of this kind of accommodation. To refer to China he uses the term *shina* 支那 instead of the term preferred by the Chinese, *chūgoku* 中国.

Although Ōmura Seigai used pan-Asianism to promote literati painting, he could not change the fact that literati painting was a Chinese art. At the time, most Japanese either chose Western art or joined Fenollosa and Okakura Tenshin's revival of Japanese art; there was little room for Ōmura Seigai to promote literati painting in Japan. Therefore Ōmura Seigai's efforts made little difference and his essay *The Revival of Literati Painting* has been forgotten in Japan.

¹⁹¹ Chen Hengke, "Nanga ni tsuite," 133.

V. Chen Shizeng's Painting and Japan

1. Wu Changshuo's Painting and Japan

Chen Shizeng's painting was a continuation of the Shanghai School and the Jinshi School, both from nineteenth-century China. Wu Changshuo was a later Shanghai School painter who profoundly influenced the painting style of Chen Shizeng. Therefore before discussing Chen Shizeng's painting, it is necessary to discuss Wu Changshuo.

Shanghai School does not refer to a particular style of painting. It refers to the artists who were active in the Shanghai area in the nineteenth century. At that time, many talented painters flocked to Shanghai because of the growing prosperity of the port city, brought about by trade with the West. Shanghai was originally a small village. After the Opium War, however, Shanghai was opened to foreign trade with the British. The new trade made many merchants wealthy. Merchants in China were traditionally considered by the scholar-officials, who dominated both politics and culture, to be part of the lowest class. Scholar-officials were learned scholars who obtained their political positions by passing civil service examinations. These scholar-officials were traditionally granted large estates and very handsome salaries. Few merchants could compete with those scholar-officials. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the number of rich merchants in the lower Yangzi River region grew. These newly rich merchants wanted to elevate themselves and to be involved in the cultural activities of the traditional literati. Literati painting and antiquities—symbols of cultivated literati—became much sought after by these merchants. Literati painting thus became commercialized. The phenomenon did not happen suddenly in nineteenth-century Shanghai. It had already appeared by the eighteenth century in the nearby Yangzhou region, where prosperity encouraged the

Individualists such as the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou.¹⁹² However, when Shanghai rose as a commercial capital in the nineteenth century, the art center moved there from Yangzhou.

Although the term Shanghai School has nothing to do with style, the majority of Shanghai painters inherited the styles of the Individualists that flourished in the Yangzhou region in the previous century. The rise of these Individualists in the lower Yangzi region in the Qing Dynasty had very much to do with politics.

The Qing Dynasty was established by the Manchus in the seventeenth century. For the Chinese to be ruled by non-Chinese was their worst nightmare. It happened earlier, when the Song Dynasty was ended by the Mongols. This was the second time. Most Chinese were still loyal to the Ming Dynasty after China was conquered by the Manchus. Many Chinese scholars committed suicide, moved into reclusion, or became monks, either to escape from political realities or to avoid persecution. The painters known as the Four Monks—Hongren 弘仁 (1610–1664), Kuncan 髡殘 (1612–1673), Bada Shanren 八大山人 (1626–1705), and Shitao 石濤 (1642–1707)—were among those Ming loyalists in early Qing Dynasty. Some of them even had Ming royal blood. Because of their sorrow for losing their dynasty, they chose not to paint in the orthodox style of the Four Wangs, which was favored by the Qing emperors. The styles of these Ming loyalist painters displayed a kind of mannerism that looked strange compared to the styles of the Orthodox School. The Four Monks' styles were favored by later painters of the lower Yangzi region.

¹⁹² For detailed discussion on the commercialization of literati painting in eighteenth century Yangzhou, see Hsü, *Bushel of Pearls*.

Among the Four Monks, Bada Shanren and Shitao inherited the splash-ink technique of Chen Chun 陳淳 (1483–1544) and Xu Wei 徐渭 (1521–1593), both of the Ming Dynasty. This technique involved using washes of black or colored ink to paint flowers and rocks. Later Yangzhou and Shanghai painters who painted bird-and-flower paintings often applied this technique too. In the eighteenth century there were eight literati painters who were dissatisfied with society. They inherited the strangeness of the Four Monks and developed it so far that they earned the name of the Eight Eccentrics. The nineteenth-century Shanghai painters inherited the heritage of the Eight Eccentrics and the Four Monks. However, they painted for living and were less innovative than their predecessors. Of the various techniques that emerged in the circles of Shanghai painters, the Jinshi School 金石派 (Metal-Stone School) was the most innovative.

The Jinshi School painters used new styles of calligraphy brushstrokes that were inspired by new studies on the calligraphic inscriptions of ancient steles. Calligraphers who favored the styles of ancient steles were called the Stele School (Beixuepai 碑學派). The rise of the Stele School in the late Qing Dynasty was linked with the popularity of textual studies (*kaojuxue* 考據學) during the reigns of Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1736–1795) and Jiaqing 嘉慶 (r. 1796–1820). During this period, Chinese scholars devoted themselves in the proofreadings of ancient texts, which contained mistakes through centuries of copying and reprinting. They were tired of the lofty metaphysics of the Ming Dynasty scholars. They wanted their arguments to have proofs in ancient literature. The study of ancient texts was further supported by the Manchu emperors, who wanted the Chinese scholars to be too busy to plot any conspiracy. The rise of scholarly interest in ancient literature brought with it new attention to ancient steles. Archaeological discoveries of ancient steles further boosted this interest. Some calligraphers were

particularly fascinated by the calligraphy carved on steles from Northern Dynasties (part of the Six Dynasties period), for example, the *Zhang Menglong Stele* 張猛龍碑 (fig. 31) of the Northern Wei Dynasty. These northern steles were characterized by sharp angles appearing at the beginning, turn, and end of strokes. The technique is called *fangbi* 方筆, square brushstroke. Because these steles were centuries old, the damaged carved lines were no longer smooth. This damage was admired by Stele School calligraphers, who used trembling brushstrokes to imitate it. Another feature of carved calligraphy on steles was that the strokes were slanted from lower left to upper right, making the right side of the character seem higher than the left. Although some of these characteristics were often the result of damage or incompetent carvers, to some Qing Dynasty calligraphers they looked more vigorous than the mainstream style of calligraphy, which was elegant and neat. The mainstream style could be traced back to Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (ca. 321–379) of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317–420). For centuries Wang Xizhi's style had been passed on in model books, for example, in the *Lantingxu* 蘭亭序 (Preface to Orchid Pavilion gathering; fig. 32). After centuries of copying and recopying, these model books had lost many of the qualities that made the calligraphy spectacular. The Stele School calligraphers of the Qing Dynasty thought that the carved ancient steles best preserved the works of ancient calligraphy, so they argued that people should learn the style of ancient steles. Those who continued the model book tradition were called the Model-Book School (Tiexuepai 帖學派).

Some Stele School calligraphers were also painters. They painted with new styles of brushstrokes derived from their innovations in calligraphy and were called the Jinshi School. Wu Changshuo 吳昌碩 and Zhao Zhiqian 趙之謙 (1829–1884) were the most celebrated Jinshi School painters. During his stay in Nantong, Chen Shizeng often went

to Shanghai to learn painting from Wu Changshuo. Chen Shizeng mastered Wu Changshuo's Stele School calligraphy style and his Jinshi-flavor painting. Chen Shizeng's bird-and-flower paintings display the influence of Wu Changshuo.

Wu Changshuo was born into a traditional scholar-official family in 1844. He mastered poetry, calligraphy, and seal carving very early in life and around his thirties he became interested in painting.¹⁹³ Wu Changshuo once learned painting from Ren Bonian 任伯年 (also known as Ren Yi 任頤, 1840–1896), who was already a famous painter in the Shanghai area. They kept a close relationship, both as teacher–student and as friends.¹⁹⁴ Wu Changshuo painted a large number of colorful flower paintings whose styles derived from earlier Shanghai painters. For example, the splash-ink style he used to paint the rock and the chrysanthemum flowers and leaves in *Chrysanthemum and Rock* (*Jushitu* 菊石圖; fig. 33) can be compared with works by earlier Shanghai painters such as Zhang Xiong's *Snowy Chrysanthemum and Red Fruit* (*Shuangju hongguo tu* 霜菊紅果圖; fig. 34). Both Wu Changshuo's and Zhang Xiong's works were painted in the splash-ink style that could be traced back to the Eight Eccentrics of the eighteenth century, Bada and Shitao of the seventeenth century, and Chen Chun of the sixteenth (fig. 35). He also painted many bird-and-flower paintings in the style of Bada Shanren, for example, *Lotus* (fig. 36), from the Flower Album dated 1927. The lotus leaves were painted with a large amount of washes, which were also evident in Bada Shanren's *Lotus* (fig. 37). Bada Shanren's extensive use of ink washes could also be traced back to sixteenth-century Ming Dynasty painter Xu Wei 徐渭 (1521–1593) (fig. 38). Wu Changshuo also imitated

¹⁹³ According to Xing Jie's 邢捷 research, Wu Changshuo started to learn painting in his thirties. See *Wu Changshuo shuhua jianding*, 9.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 13.

Bada Shanren's birds. For example, Wu Changshuo's gull (fig. 39) from an album leaf is in that cartoon-like style that Bada Shanren used in *A Bird on the Willow Dancing in the Wind* (fig. 40).

The style and subject matter found in Wu Changshuo's paintings were popular among earlier Shanghai painters. To fit the taste of the new rising merchant class, they painted many bird-and-flower paintings. The most popular flowers were the four gentlemen, i.e., plum blossom, orchid, bamboo, and chrysanthemum, and the three friends of winter, i.e., pine, bamboo, and plum blossom. The popularity of these plants in literati painting can be traced back to the Yuan Dynasty. These plants represent the high character of the literati. Very often the flowers were accompanied by strangely shaped rocks, which were collectables of the literati. The style of their bird-and-flower paintings, which the Shanghai painters adopted, could be traced back to the Individualists of the Qing Dynasty and to Chen Chun and Xu Wei of the Ming Dynasty.

Narcissus, another popular flower in the repertoire of literati painting, often appeared in Shanghai School paintings. Wu Changshuo painted narcissus, for example, in his *Peony and Narcissus* (fig. 41), where the style is comparable to an earlier Shanghai painter Zhou Xian's 周閑 (1820–1875) *Fungus and Narcissus* (fig. 42). As in his other flower paintings, the style of Wu Changshuo's narcissus can be traced back to the Individualists and to Xu Wei and Chen Chun (see, for example, the narcissi painted by the latter two in figs. 43–44).

Thus, Wu Changshuo's painting style derived from contemporary and earlier Shanghai painters, whose style can also be traced back to the Qing Dynasty Individualists and to Chen Chun and Xu Wei of the Ming Dynasty. Although bird-and-flower painting had long been in the repertoire of literati painting, the great popularity of bird-and-flower

painting in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the lower Yangzi region had very much to do with the rise of the merchant class. Patronage had a role in painters' works. In her book *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China*, Aida Yuen Wong implies that Wu Changshuo's Japanese patrons had very much to do with his style. Wong points out that Wu Changshuo had many Japanese patrons in Shanghai and that he also enjoyed great fame in Japan.¹⁹⁵ Wong argues that Wu Changshuo's painting was considered by the Japanese to possess *qiyun shengdong*, the first criterion in Xie He's Six Canons, which explains his popularity in Japan. *Qiyun shengdong*, in Wong's opinion, is what defines "Oriental modern," a term coined by Wong. She says:

Qiyun shengdong (spirit resonance that means vitality), was established in the previous chapter as an elusive Chinese aesthetic criterion that came to define the essence of the "Oriental modern" in the early twentieth century. At the same time, it was raised as a key component of literati painting, which Japanese and Chinese in the early twentieth century tended to equate with self-expression and counterrealism. This vision of literati painting became crucial to the assessment of Wu Changshuo in Japan. It was a radical departure from the traditional Chinese view of literati painting, which rejected decorative exuberance in favor of loftiness, simplicity, and studied brushwork. Coloristic flourishes had been thought to look more appropriate in a reception hall than a scholar's studio.¹⁹⁶

Wong's words implies that Wu Changshuo's extensive use of color and the quality of *qiyun shengdong* in his paintings was a radical departure from traditional Chinese literati painting, a departure that better fit Japanese aesthetic. Wong says:

To the Japanese, Wu Changshuo's style might also have been appealing because it reminded them of the age-old Japanese aesthetic of *kazari* (ornamentation). . . . It

¹⁹⁵ *Parting the Mists*, 77–99.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

was, however, also a modern construct of Japanese aesthetic *uniqueness* produced in the interest of nationalism. Related to the concept of *kazari* are playfulness, asymmetry, and eccentricity, qualities that can also be discerned in Wu Changshuo's art style.¹⁹⁷

Wong also points out the similarity between Wu Changshuo and a Japanese *nanga* painter Tomioka Tessai 富岡鉄斎. She says, "In Japan, Wu's name is often linked to the painter Tomioka Tessai. . . . Tessai's reputation as the foremost *bunjingaka* [文人画家; literati painter] of the Meiji-Taishō [明治大正] periods and his disposition towards expressive brushwork encouraged comparisons with the Chinese artist."¹⁹⁸ Wong concludes that Japanese patrons directed Wu Changshuo's style. She says:

Though opinions vary regarding Wu Changshuo's merit as a painter, he indisputably enjoyed great commercial success in Japan. Historians are generally reluctant to emphasize financial gain as a motivation for creation. This resistance is perhaps strongest in China, where profit making (as opposed to moral cultivation) has traditionally been regarded as unworthy of, even detrimental to, the career of a great artist. Yet it cannot be denied that modern artists by and large sold their works on the open market and depended on these sales to build their professional reputation. Promotional activities such as publications and exhibitions became critical to their success. Wu Changshuo, living in the commercial capital of modern China, found some of his staunchest friends and champions among the merchant class, including a number of Japanese. Far from compromising his artistic standing, the support of these individuals immeasurably enhanced it—even, one could say, created it. As the story of Wu Changshuo shows, the marketplace is more than an impersonal financial machine: it is bound up with aesthetic judgement and social relations that embody the unique historical conditions of a time and place.¹⁹⁹

The title of this chapter, "Wu Changshuo's Japanese Circle: Between Patronage and Style," and the extracts given above all indicate that Wong argues that Wu Changshuo's

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 97.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 99.

style better fit a Japanese aesthetic rather than a traditional Chinese one and that his great popularity among the Japanese patrons influenced his style. But, as also discussed above, Wu Changshuo's style derived from other Shanghai painters, whose style could be traced back to earlier paintings of the Ming and Qing dynasties. The extensive use of color in literati painting is evident in contemporary and earlier Shanghai painters. As for the *jinshi*-flavor painting that Wu was famous for, he was not the first Jinshi School painter to produce works like this. Wu's style was not at all an abrupt change from Chinese tradition. Even the commercialization of Chinese literati painting was not a sudden event. It is true that Wu Changshuo's great popularity among the Japanese was quite a phenomenon. However, whether Wu Changshuo's Japanese patrons played any role in his painting style requires further investigation.

Wu Changshuo's *jinshi*-flavor paintings made him stand out among Shanghai painters. The characteristics of Jinshi School painting are evident in the contrast between his *Peony and Narcissus* of 1925 (fig. 45) and his 1896 *Peony and Narcissus* (fig. 41). The major characteristic of Jinshi School painting is the extensive use of dark calligraphic lines to draw outlines, tree trunks and branches, and leaf veins. The Chinese had a long history of using lines to define objects in painting. Literati painters tended to use a more calligraphic kind of line, so their paintings look more expressive. The Jinshi School painters took the lines to the next level. Their lines were highly exaggerated. The dark lines painted with highly stylized calligraphic brushstrokes made the paintings even more expressive. Wu Changshuo's *Peony and Narcissus* of 1896 already displays the qualities of Jinshi School painting. The narcissus was painted with dark calligraphic lines and so were the veins of the leaves. His *Peony and Narcissus* of 1925 develops this style

even further. The lines are thicker and the calligraphic quality of the lines are even more evident.

Before Wu Changshuo, Zhao Zhiqian 趙之謙 and Wu Xizai 吳熙載 were also Jinshi School painters. Their paintings also display the Jinshi School characteristic of bold calligraphic lines, seen, for example, in Zhao Zhiqian's *Cucurbit* (fig. 46) and Wu Xizai's *Rattan-flowers* (fig. 47). Wu Changshuo also painted a *Cucurbit* (fig. 48) that is similar to Zhao Zhiqian's. What separate Wu Changshuo's paintings from other Jinshi School paintings are his unique fast and vigorous brushstrokes, derived from the style of his Stone Drum Inscription calligraphy.

Stone Drum Inscription (fig. 49) was the inscription carved on drum-shaped stones dating back to the Eastern Zhou period. It was carved with an early version of seal script used in the Zhou Dynasty called large seal script. The later version of seal script used in the Qin Dynasty is called small seal script. Although seal script was replaced by clerical and regular scripts in the Han Dynasty, calligraphers still practiced seal script as an art form. Seal script was traditionally written with very smooth and curvy lines. It was written steadily with the brush tip held in the center to avoid any sharp edges. The beginning and ending parts of strokes were rounded, also to avoid sharp edges. Sun Xingyan's hanging scroll 孫星衍 (1753–1818) *Gu Shi* 古詩 (fig. 50) provides an example of this traditional style of seal script.

Wu Changshuo's calligraphy, based on the stone drum inscription, is different from this traditional style of seal script. His *Seven-Character Couplet in Stone Drum Inscription* (fig. 51) exemplifies his style. He wrote the couplet quickly, rather than slow and steadily, resulting in areas untouched by the brush. This effect is called “flying white” and often appears in cursive script calligraphy. Instead of keeping the brush tip at the

center all the time, he sometimes kept the tip on one side, which is the position usually used to create the brushstroke for writing clerical, regular, running, and cursive scripts. This results in more sharp edges. The ending of a stroke is often abrupt and unfinished, less smooth and more vigorous. The right side of a character is often higher than the left side, a feature of Stele School calligraphy. Wu Changshuo's Stone Drum Inscription calligraphy was a combination of different techniques and styles of brushstrokes. His unique style of Stone Drum Inscription calligraphy was highly appreciated by art lovers. He also applied this style to his calligraphy of other scripts, for example, his *Ten-Character Couplet in Running Script* (fig. 52). Wu Changshuo even applied his calligraphic brushstrokes to his painting. His *Wisteria* (fig. 53) can be seen as a dance of calligraphic lines rather than a mere depiction of objects. Earlier Shanghai painter Zhu Xiong's 朱熊 *Wisteria* (fig. 54) may seem similar but it does not have the vigorous calligraphic brushstrokes found in Wu Changshuo's version.

Wu Changshuo derived his painting style from the styles of earlier painters. However, his personal calligraphic brushstrokes in painting set him apart from other painters. Wu Changshuo's unique style was highly appreciated in both China and Japan. Chen Shizeng also loved Wu Changshuo's style. Just a few years after his return from Japan, he started to learn painting and calligraphy from Wu Changshuo. The next section will discuss Chen Shizeng's painting.

2. Chen Shizeng's Traditional Literati Painting and Wu Changshuo

Between early 1910 and late 1912, Chen Shizeng taught in Nantong Normal School. During his stay in Nantong, he often went to Shanghai and visited Wu Changshuo. Wu Changshuo's style can be seen in Chen Shizeng's calligraphy, seal carving, and bird-and-flower painting.

Chen Shizeng did *Chrysanthemum Painting and Calligraphy Scroll* (fig. 55) in 1893, when he was only seventeen years old. The chrysanthemum in the scroll shows that he learned the style of flowers popular among Shanghai School painters. He signed his original name, Chen Hengke, and added a phrase saying he was learning painting, an expression of the young protégé's humility. His calligraphy on the inscription is very orderly, showing that he was still learning calligraphy. Chen Shizeng's *Lotus* (fig. 56) painted in 1910, one year after his return from Japan, displays greater maturity in painting and calligraphy. The lotus was painted with the splash-ink style with washes on the leaves. His calligraphy was much more fluent and vivid. This painting does not show Wu Changshuo's style. However, his later works, such as *Chrysanthemum and Stone* (fig. 57), painted in 1916, shows the kind of brushstrokes that he learned from Wu Changshuo. The chrysanthemums were painted with dark outlines, typical of Jinshi School paintings. The stones were painted with thick and vigorous calligraphic lines derived from Wu Changshuo's style. The stones were also filled with ink washes, typical of the splash-ink style that could be traced back to the Individualists and Chen Chun and Xu Wei.

Since Wu Changshuo's style came from his calligraphy, Chen Shizeng had to master Wu Changshuo's calligraphy style in order to master his painting style. Therefore, Wu Changshuo's calligraphy style can be seen in Chen Shizeng's calligraphy works, for example, in Chen Shizeng's *Stone Drum Inscription Seven-word Couplet* (fig. 58). The

lines are very thick and dark. The “flying white” effect can be seen in many strokes. The ending of a stroke is often abrupt and unfinished. Chen Shizeng’s *Narcissus and Bamboo* (fig. 59) displays the styles of both calligraphy and painting that he learned from Wu Changshuo. The style of calligraphy on the inscription is very different from the inscriptions in the *Chrysanthemum Painting and Calligraphy Scroll* and *Lotus* that he previously painted. The calligraphy here is much thicker with sweeping, vigorous force. The narcissus was painted with thick calligraphic outlines and the bamboos were also painted with sweeping calligraphic brushstrokes.

Chen Shizeng’s *Plum Blossom* (fig. 60) is in a style typical for Wu Changshuo. The plum blossom was Wu Changshuo’s favorite subject matter. Wu Changshuo painted a great number of plum blossom paintings, including *Green Plum Blossom Screen* (fig. 61). In both Chen Shizeng and Wu Changshuo’s plum blossom paintings, the tree branches were painted with sweeping calligraphic strokes.

It is curious why Chen Shizeng wanted to learn from Wu Changshuo after seven years of studies in Japan. Although there is no hard evidence, Wu Changshuo’s increasing popularity in Japan might be one reason why Chen Shizeng wanted to learn Wu Changshuo’s style.

As mentioned in chapter three, Chen Shizeng advised Qi Baishi to change his painting style. Qi Baishi says in his autobiography that before he took Chen’s advice, his paintings could be sold only for half of other painters’ prices in Beijing.²⁰⁰ Qi Baishi implies that his new style came from Wu Changshuo’s style:

²⁰⁰ Baishi Laoren zishu, 116–17.

Shizeng advised me to create new ideas of my own and to change my way of painting. I listened to him and created the “red flower ink leaf” style. I originally painted plum blossoms in the manner of Yang Buzhi 楊補之 [1097–1171] (Wujiu 無咎) of the Song Dynasty. Yin Hebo 尹和伯 [Qing Dynasty] (Jinyang 金陽), whose hometown is the same as mine and was famous for painting plum in Hunan. He also learned Yang Buzhi’s style. I applied his brushstrokes, too. Shizeng said, “To paint with *gonbi* style would be laborious and plain-looking at the same time.” I listened to his words again and changed my manner of painting. Yi Weiru 易蔚儒 (Zongkui 宗夔) from my hometown is a senator. He asked me to paint a round-shaped fan. Lin Qinnan saw it and greatly praised it, saying, “Wu in the South and Qi in the North, they are comparable.” He compared me with Wu Changshuo. It is true that our brushworks are somewhat similar.

師曾勸我自出新意，變通辦法，我聽了他的話，自創紅花墨葉的一派。我畫梅花，本是取法宋朝楊補之(無咎)。同鄉尹和伯(金陽)，在湖南畫梅是最有名的，他就是學的楊補之，我也參酌他的筆意。師曾說：工筆畫梅，費力不好看，我又聽了他的話，改換畫法。同鄉易蔚儒(宗夔)，是參議院的議員，請我畫了一把團扇，給林琴南看見了，大為讚賞，說：南吳北齊，可以媲美。他把吳昌碩跟我相比，我們的筆路，倒是有些相同的。²⁰¹

Although Qi Baishi admitted that his style was similar to Wu Changshuo’s, he seems reluctant to admit that he learned Wu Changshuo’s style. His autobiography stops in the year 1946, when he was already a widely celebrated painter. Maybe he did not want to admit learning Wu Changshuo’s style because it might damage his prestige. But a close examination of Qi Baishi’s paintings shows Wu Changshuo’s influence. For example, in Qi Baishi’s *Peaches* (fig. 62) the dark calligraphic lines used to depict leaf veins come from Wu Changshuo’s Jinshi School style. One may argue that Wu Changshuo was not the only Jinshi School painter. However, since Qi Baishi’s new style was created out of Chen Shizeng’s advice and Chen was a follower of Wu Changshuo, Chen probably suggested that Qi should learn from Wu’s style. In Qi Baishi’s *Magnolias*

²⁰¹ Ibid., 117–18.

and *Bees* (fig. 63), the tree branches are painted in the style derived from the sweeping calligraphic brushstrokes Wu Changshuo used to paint plum blossoms and wisteria.

Thanks to Chen Shizeng's advice and promotion, Qi Baishi's paintings were later sold in Japan for much better prices. Qi Baishi recalls in his autobiography that in spring 1922, Chen Shizeng took his paintings to an exhibition in Japan. He says:

Chen Shizeng came and said that there were two famous Japanese painters Araki Jippo [1872–1944] and Watanabe Shimpo [1867–1938] who wrote to him to ask him to bring paintings to participate in the Sino-Japanese Joint Painting Exhibition in the Tokyo Arts and Crafts Museum. He asked me to prepare some paintings so that he could bring them to the exhibition to sell.

陳師曾來談：日本有兩位著名畫家，荒木十畝和渡邊晨畝，來信邀他帶著作品，參加東京府廳工藝館的中日聯合繪畫展覽會，他叫我預備幾幅畫，交他帶到日本去展覽出售。²⁰²

Qi Baishi also said that he sent his paintings with Chen Shizeng to Japan, that they were all sold at extremely high prices, and that many people asked for his paintings afterward. Qi Baishi said he would never forget Chen Shizeng's help.²⁰³ Qi Baishi's change of style was enormously successful in Japan. And many of the paintings brought to Japan were more or less influenced by Wu Changshuo. After viewing paintings in the Sino-Japanese Joint Painting Exhibition in Japan, Hirafuku Hyakufu 平福百穂 (1877–1933) published his reflections in *Tōyō* in October 1922. Hirafuku was a *Nihonga* painter who had graduated from the Japanese Painting Department at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. In the article, Hirafuku says that many of Wu Changshuo's paintings were in the exhibition and that Wu Changshuo was the most representative Chinese painter. He

²⁰² Ibid., 124.

²⁰³ Ibid., 133.

says that, since Wu Changshuo was aging, his paintings were now being done by his descendents. Of all the followers of Wu Changshuo, he particularly praises Chen Shizeng (mentioned as Chen Hengke); he criticizes other painters for all being the same.²⁰⁴ One major difference between Chen Shizeng and Wu Changshuo was that Chen Shizeng painted not only flower paintings but also a large number of landscapes and figure paintings.

Like other traditional Chinese painters, Chen Shizeng sought inspiration from many earlier painters when painting his landscapes. The earlier painter who most inspired him was Shen Zhou 沈周 (1427–1509), of the Ming Dynasty. Shen Zhou's name appears very often in the inscriptions on Chen Shizeng's paintings, such as *After Shen Zhou's Dwelling in the Mountains in Summer Days* (*Ni Shen Zhou xiari shanjutu* 擬沈周夏日山居圖; fig. 64).

Shen Zhou was a leading literati painter in the Ming Dynasty. Shen Zhou and his student Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470–1559) were from Wumen 吳門, which is today's Suzhou 蘇州 area in the lower Yangzi River. Therefore Shen Zhou, Wen Zhengming, and their followers were called the Wumen School. Shen Zhou inherited the styles developed by Yuan Dynasty literati painters. Among the styles developed by the Yuan Dynasty masters, Wang Meng's appears particularly often in Shen Zhou's hanging-scroll paintings. It is unknown whether Shen Zhou painted a *Dwelling in the Mountains in Summer Days*, as stated in Chen Shizeng's inscription. However, Wang Meng did paint one (fig. 65) and Wang Yuanqi of the Qing Dynasty also painted an *After Wang Meng's Dwelling in the Mountains in Summer Days*. Chen Shizeng may have either

²⁰⁴ Hirafuku, "Chen Hengke sonota," 100.

seen or invented Shen Zhou's interpretation of Wang Meng's painting. No matter, Wang Meng's composition can be seen in Chen Shizeng's version. There is a high mountain on one side, with smaller mountains and rocks piling up from below. Both of them have large pine trees in the lower part.

Shen Zhou's *Lofty Mount Lu* (*Lushan gao* 廬山高; fig. 66) is the most representative of his Wang Meng-style paintings. As shown in the inscription, Shen Zhou did this painting to celebrate the seventieth birthday of his teacher Chen Kuan 陳寬. Mount Lu, one of the famous high mountains in China, symbolizes the high character of his teacher. *Lofty Mount Lu* and Wang Meng's *Ge Zhichuan's Moving* (*Ge Zhichuan yijutu* 葛稚川移居圖; fig. 67) are similar in composition. They both have a large mountain on one side, accompanied by smaller and lower mountains. Piles of slopes fill the entirety of both paintings. Both have strings of waterfalls. They also have relatively large pine trees in the lower right of the painting. One major difference between them is that Shen Zhou also incorporated Juran's 巨然 (11th c.) style to paint the highest mountain, which was composed of groups of smaller rocks painted with ink dots.

Compared to Shen Zhou's and Wang Meng's hanging scrolls, Chen Shizeng's are less detailed. Chen Shizeng tended to use looser brushstrokes to paint Wang Meng's composition. He applied to his landscapes the kind of calligraphic brushstroke that he learned from Wu Changshuo. One untitled landscape (fig. 68) best represents Chen Shizeng's use of Wu Changshuo's calligraphic brushstrokes in painting Wang Meng-style landscapes. This landscape was painted with large sweeping brushstrokes derived from those evident in Wu Changshuo's plum blossoms and wisteria.

Besides large hanging scrolls, Chen Shizeng also painted landscapes in small album leaves. The composition of his landscapes in small album leaves was simpler than those

in his hanging scrolls. For example, leaf fifteen in his *Album of Landscape Paintings with Poems* (*Shanshui shihua ceye* 山水詩畫冊頁; fig. 69) was composed of a few trees painted with very loose brushstrokes. His *jinshi*-style brushstrokes can also be seen here.

Chen Shizeng painted some landscapes that do not look purely traditional, such as his *Garden Scenery Album* (*Yuanlin xiaojing ceye* 園林小景冊頁). This album is composed of six individual leaves depicting different scenic spots in a Chinese garden. All of them contain trees and some structures. Chen Shizeng applied an extensive amount of ink and color washes on these album leaves. For example, in the first leaf (fig. 70), the grass, the leaves on the tree, the rocks, the pagoda, and parts of the wall were all filled with ink or color washes. This technique was applied to other leaves in the album. Although this was not a new technique in Chinese painting, Chen Shizeng used more audacious colors and made his paintings look similar to Western watercolor. In the third leaf (fig. 71), Chen Shizeng used dots to paint a plantation in the foreground. Although using dots to paint vegetation was not new in Chinese painting, either, the effect of using this large a number of dots in one area made the painting resemble an Impressionist painting. A similar technique was applied to the sixth leaf (fig. 72). However, the dots that make up the grass in the foreground are larger. They are also more variegated in color. One major difference between these album leaves and earlier Chinese paintings of similar subject matter is that the perspective in these scenes shows that the painter was painting actually in the garden. Previous Chinese painters tended to use an angle from above, which indicates that they painted from memory. They created an imaginary view of the scenery. However, Chen Shizeng's paintings suggest that he might have painted from experience. Although techniques such as washes and dots were not new, their overall effect in these garden landscapes suggest some possible influence from the plein-air

painting that was popular in Japan when Chen Shizeng studied there. These landscapes also suggest the feeling of locale paintings that Impressionists and post-Impressionists encouraged.

Besides bird-and-flower and landscape paintings, Chen Shizeng also painted a kind of painting that can be called “*manhua*,” which is discussed in the next section.

3. Chen Shizeng's *Manhua* and Japan

Chen Shizeng painted a number of paintings that could be called *manhua* 漫畫. Among those paintings are *Beijing Customs Album* (*Beijing fengsu tuce* 北京風俗圖冊) and his small sketches published in *The Pacific Times*. *Manhua* is a simple-sketch painting, like a cartoon or comic, that could express humorous feeling. Sometimes *manhua* could also be a satirical caricature. The Chinese adopted the term *manhua* for these kinds of paintings around early twentieth century. The usage of the term *manhua* came from the Japanese term *manga* (both terms are written with the same Chinese characters).

Chen Shizeng documented his imitation of Japanese *manga* in his inscription in his painting *Climbing Over the Wall* (*Yuqiang* 踰牆; fig. 73):

There is the so-called *manhua*. The brushstrokes are simple and unsophisticated. It is imbued with humorous ideas and contains some thoughts. In Japan no one did it better than Hokusai. In our country, Yingpiaozi [Huang Shen 黃慎, 1687–1768] and Bada Shanren were similar but they were not specialized in it. My friend Gongzhan prepared silk to ask me to paint on. So I playfully imitated it to arouse some laughs.

有所謂漫畫者，筆致簡拙而託意俶詭，涵法頗著。日本則北齋而外無其人，吾國癭瓢子八大山人近似之而非專家也。公湛吾友以舊絹囑畫，遂戲仿之，聊博一粲。

This confirms that the term *manhua* describes a kind of painting originated from Japan and that he once imitated this kind of painting. Chen Shizeng calls attention to Hokusai probably because he had seen *Hokusai Manga* 北齋漫画 while in Japan. However, whether the term *manga* in *Hokusai Manga* means the sketchy and humorous painting that Chen Shizeng idealized is another question.

In China the term *manhua* originally meant a kind of bird. This usage can be traced back to Hong Mai's 洪邁 (1123–1202) *Fifth Edition of the Rong Studio Miscellaneous*

Writings (Rongzhai Wubi 容齋五筆) in the Song Dynasty. The same usage also appears in Li Shizhen's 李時珍 (1518–1593) *Compendium of Materia Medica (Bencao gangmu 本草綱目)*, of the Ming Dynasty.²⁰⁵ The usage spread to Japan and appears in Kaibara Ekiken's 貝原益軒 (1630–1714) *The Flora of Japan (Yamato honzō 大和本草)*, published in 1709. In these publications, *manhua* is described as a kind of greedy water bird that never stops finding food. Hayashi Yoshikazu 林美一 suggests that the term *manga* that appears in *Hokusai Manga* 北斎漫画 and *Manga Casual Brush (Manga zuihitsu 漫画随筆)* were metaphorical, meaning the painters greedily painted everything they saw.²⁰⁶ Miyamoto Hirohito 宮本大人 agrees with Hayashi Yoshikazu and further shows that the term *manga* in *Hokusai Manga* means neither simple sketch painting nor caricature.

There are fifteen volumes in *Hokusai Manga*, each published separately between 1814 and 1878. *Hokusai Manga* is not the kind of *manga* that people expect today. It is more like a painting manual with depictions of various kinds of figures, animals, objects, and landscapes. For example, on one page different depictions of animals are arranged (fig. 74); different kinds of trees are arranged on another (fig. 75); on another there are depicted various theatrical masks (fig. 76). Some of the pictures, such as the depictions of figures with supernatural powers in volume ten (fig. 77), do look humorous.

Indeed, *Hokusai Manga* was intended to serve as painting manual. Nagata Seiji 永田生慈 mentions *Hokusai Manga* as an *edehon* 絵手本, which means painting manual.²⁰⁷ He points out three reasons for Hokusai to publish painting manuals. First, the

²⁰⁵ Miyamoto, "Manga," 322.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 321–22.

²⁰⁷ *Katsushika Hokusai*, 135.

number of his apprentices increased. Second, people from all over Japan wanted to learn Hokusai's style. Third, many professional painters needed ready-to-use painting models. Nagata Seiji also points out that the term *manga* in *Hokusai Manga* does not mean caricature. He suggests that Hokusai's *manga* refers to randomly painted images of anything in the world.²⁰⁸ Hokusai was a famous Ukiyo-e artist. Ukiyo-e artists depicted various aspects of people's lives in the Edo period. People of various professions and all kinds of customs were depicted in Ukiyo-e prints. As would be expected in a painting manual, especially one from an Ukiyo-e artist, *Hokusai Manga* also depicts different professions and all kinds of customs.

The depictions of everyday living in Hokusai's works might have inspired, at least in part, Chen Shizeng to paint *Beijing Customs Album*. The album is undated, but most scholars agree that its leaves were painted between 1914 and 1915.²⁰⁹ In the album Chen Shizeng painted people who could be seen on the streets of Beijing. They included people at the bottom of the society, such as the recycling person, toy peddler (fig. 78), knife sharpener, baked-potato peddler, and bagger (fig. 79). Some of the leaves depict people exotic to Chen Shizeng, such as a young lady in Manchu dress, and a lama monk. Some depict old customs, such as a boating parade, storytelling, and fortune telling. There is also a political caricature depicting spies sneaking at a door (fig. 80). To create these paintings Chen Shizeng used the bold brushstrokes that he learned from Wu Changshuo. He also filled figures, animals, or objects with washes of color. One thing that sets these

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 135–36, 141–42.

²⁰⁹ According to Gong Chanxing 龔產興, Liu Xilin 劉曦林, and Yang Liangzhi 楊良志. See Chen Shizeng, *Beijing Fengsu*, 1, 85, and Gu, *Chen Shizeng shuhua jingpinji*, n.p. Lu Hsuan-fei 盧宣妃 says it was painted between 1913 and 1915: "Chen Shizeng," 14.

paintings apart from traditional ones is the use of Western methods. Chen Shizeng penciled in a draft before using brush.²¹⁰ This technique was not used in traditional Chinese painting.

Another painting of Chen Shizeng comparable to *Climbing over the Wall* and the *Beijing Customs Album* is *Viewing Paintings* (*Duhuatu* 讀畫圖; fig. 81). This painting depicts a group of people viewing paintings together. The subject of gentlemen appreciating art works had been painted before. However, this painting shows a charity exhibition held in a park. Public exhibitions in China were still new during Chen Shizeng's time. When paintings were displayed in a public space, art appreciation was no longer exclusive to the privileged class. Chen Shizeng was probably the first painter to document this kind of event. This painting is similar to those in the *Beijing Customs Album*, in that pencil was used to draw a draft.²¹¹ Foreshortening and perspective in this painting are more accurate than they are in other traditional Chinese literati paintings. However, Chen Shizeng did not pursue high accuracy in perspective. The perspective of the people around the table and the perspective of the people viewing the hanging scrolls behind were not the same. Although Chen Shizeng applied some Western techniques to his paintings, he did not intend to follow these techniques too literally. In this way the Western techniques are not too obvious, and his paintings still preserve the look of traditional literati painting.

Ordinary people's lives had been depicted for a long time in China. The most famous early example is *Spring Festival along the River* (*Qingming shanghe tu* 清明上

²¹⁰ Liu, "Beijing Fengsu," 91.

²¹¹ Lu, "Chen Shizeng," 85.

河圖; fig. 30) by Zhang Zeduan 張擇端 (12th c.), of the Song Dynasty. However, this picture did not have much to do with Chen Shizeng's *Beijing Customs Album*. *Spring Festival along the River* was an example of “ruler painting” of the Song Dynasty. Extremely fine brush was used to paint the astonishing detail of Song Dynasty city life. This technique of fine brushstrokes is called *gongbi*, as opposed to *xieyi*, which uses looser brushstrokes. *Gongbi* style was used more often by court and professional painters, and *xieyi* style was more often used by Chan (Zen) painters and literati painters. The calligraphic brushstrokes and ink-washes used in figure painting could be traced back as early as Liang Kai of the Southern Song Dynasty. For example, calligraphic brushstrokes were applied to *The Sixth Chan Patriarch Huineng Chopping Bamboo* (*Liuzu pizhutu* 六祖劈竹圖; fig. 82) and a large amount of ink-washes were applied to the *Splash-ink Immortal* (*Pomo xianren* 潑墨仙人; fig. 83). Although later literati painters despised Chan painters because they thought they themselves could understand religious philosophies better than Chan monks, the brushstrokes of literati painters and Chan painters had very much in common. Chen Shizeng, as a literati painter, adopted looser and more calligraphic brushstrokes when painting bird-and-flower, landscape, and figure paintings. Although the style of figure paintings with calligraphic brushstrokes could be traced back to Chan painters of the Song Dynasty and literati painters of the Yuan Dynasty, their figure paintings were not the source of inspiration for Chen Shizeng's *Beijing Customs Album*. What those Chan painters and literati painters depicted in figure paintings were either religious figures or learned gentlemen. They were not interested in painting subject matters associated with the lower part of society.

Zhou Chen's 周臣 (ca. 1450–ca. 1535) *Baggers and Street Characters* (*Liumintu* 流民圖; fig. 84) was the closest in both style and subject matter to Chen Shizeng's

Beijing Customs Album. The figures in *Baggers and Street Characters* were painted with calligraphic brushstrokes and with color. The figures are from the bottom of the society. Despite the fact that the brushstrokes that Zhou Chen used were closer to the kind usually used by literati painters, those figures were still painted with more details than figures usually seen in a literati painting. After all, Zhou Chen was a court painter of the Ming Dynasty. Chinese literati painters had neglected the subject matter of common people or street scenes. It is not known if Zhou Chen's *Baggers and Street Characters* was even noticed by later literati painters.

Although Huang Shen and Bada Shanren are mentioned in Chen Shizeng's *Climbing Over the Wall*, he also says that they were not specialized in *manhua*. Hokusai was the only artist mentioned as the source of inspiration for painting his *manhua*. However, since Hokusai's *manga* paintings were not entirely humorous, there must have been other Japanese paintings that inspired Chen Shizeng's *manhua*.

Although the term *manga* started to refer to painting around late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, there were paintings in Japan from centuries before that fit the modern definition of *manga*. For example, *Caricatures of Animals and People* (*Chōjū jimbutsu giga* 鳥獸人物戯画; fig. 85) and *Scroll of Hungry Ghost* (*Gaki zōshi* 餓鬼草紙; fig. 86) are narrative handscrolls from the twelfth-century Heian Period. Both are either satirical or humorous. In China, Yuan Dynasty literati painter Gong Kai's 龔開 (1222–1307) *Zhong Kui Traveling* (*Zhongshan chuyoutu* 中山出遊圖; fig. 87) also expresses some humor. However, this tradition of humorous painting was not carried on by Chinese painters. Rather, it was Japanese Zen painters who continued to produce paintings expressing humorous ideas. Japanese literati painters in the Edo period also inherited this humorous painting tradition in their *haiga* 俳画, painting for the

expressions of *haiku* 俳句 poetry. Because *haiku* poems were often humorous, their *haiga* paintings often were, too. For example, poet painter Yosa Buson 与謝蕪村 (1716–1783) painted a large number of *haiga*, with *haiku* poems inscribed on them. In his *Self-painted and Self-inscribed Mataheini Poem* (fig. 88), the figure was painted with fluid and extremely simple brushstrokes. The figure's exaggerated pose arouses humorous feeling. Such *haiga* paintings might also have inspired Chen Shizeng's painting of *manhua*.

Since Hokusai was the only documented source of inspiration for Chen Shizeng's *manhua*, it is very difficult to be certain which other Japanese artists influenced him. Feng Zikai 豐子愷 (1898–1975) can be seen as a bridge to Chen Shizeng's *manhua*. Feng Zikai was famous for his cartoonlike simple sketches and was usually considered the founder of *manhua* in China. The term *manhua* was first applied to Feng Zikai's simple-sketch paintings in Zheng Zhenduo's 鄭振鐸 *Literature Weekly* (*Wenxue zhoubao* 文學週報) in 1925.²¹² As Feng Zikai recalls, it was the editor of the *Literature Weekly*, not himself, who applied the term *manhua* to his paintings.²¹³ Although Chen Shizeng used the term *manhua* much earlier in his *Climbing over the Wall*, this painting was not very well known. Besides, Chen Shizeng did not use the term *manhua* elsewhere. Feng Zikai did not seem to have noticed Chen Shizeng's *Climbing over the Wall*, either. However, Feng Zikai says that his *manhua* was inspired by Chen Shizeng's simple-sketch paintings published in *The Pacific Times*. Feng Zikai says in his article "My *Manhua*":

²¹² Huang, "Feng Zikai," 38.

²¹³ Feng, "Wode *Manhua*," 288.

People always credited the birth of Chinese *manhua* to me, which was paradoxical. When I was still a child, I encountered Chen Shizeng's small and abbreviated brush paintings, such as *Boating at Dusk is Delightful* and *Solitary Hut*, published on the pages of *the Pacific Pictorial* [*The Pacific Times*]. These drawings were made with a few sketchy lines yet full of vividness. They impressed me greatly, and I thought they were the origin of Chinese *manhua*.

人都說我是中國漫畫的創始者，這話半是半非。我小時後，太平洋畫報上發表陳師曾的小幅簡筆畫落日放船好，獨樹老夫家等，寥寥數筆，余趣無窮，給我很深的印象；我認為這真是中國漫畫的始源。²¹⁴

In 1912, Chen Shizeng was invited by Li Shutong to publish his simple-sketch paintings in the daily newspaper *The Pacific Times*. Chen Shizeng's paintings appeared almost daily. There were different subject matters in those paintings. Some derived from traditional Chinese painting. For example, *Fishing* (fig. 89) depicts a gentleman fishing by a river. The composition is reminiscent of the one-corner style from painters of the Southern Song Dynasty. However, Chen's is much simpler. *Plum Blossom* (fig. 90) looks like a simplified version of his plum painting. It also has an inscription at the bottom, making it more poetic. There are subject matters that were uncommon in traditional literati painting. Chen Shizeng painted a bridge (fig. 91), which was not a popular subject matter in Chinese literati painting. However, bridges appeared often in Japanese Ukiyo-e. He might have been inspired by Japanese Ukiyo-e prints that featured bridges, just as Monet did. Among the paintings published in *The Pacific Times* were three paintings of baggers (figs. 92–94). They were all published in 1912, while Chen Shizeng was still teaching in Nantong. This indicates that Chen Shizeng's care for the lower-class started before he moved to Beijing. Chen Shizeng also did some illustrations that could be seen as graphic design, for example, *The Butterflies* (fig. 95). The butterflies were drawn with

²¹⁴ Ibid. Translation by Lin Su-Hsing, in "Feng Zikai's Art," 164.

very simple lines and there are repetitive patterns in the background. Graphic design was not something that a traditional literati painter would normally do. The idea of making these designs probably also came from Japan. Chen Shizeng also painted illustrations for Su Manshu's 蘇曼殊 (1884–1918) novel *The Lonely Swan* (*Duanhong lingyanji* 斷鴻零雁記), serialized in *The Pacific Times* (fig. 96). *Boating at Dusk is Delightful* (fig. 97) was the painting in *The Pacific Times* that impressed Feng Zikai the most. It was composed of a bare tall tree in the center left and a short willow tree on the right, with a man on a boat passing through the lower part of the painting. It has the title *Luori fangchuanhao* near the left border and a seal on the border line. As were other paintings that were published in *The Pacific Times*, it was painted with very simple, sketchy brushstrokes. Feng Zikai was most fascinated by this painting and produced a few of his own versions with the same title (figs. 98–99).

In 1921, Feng Zikai went to Japan to study, following in his mentor Li Shutong's footsteps. Like Li Shutong, there he studied Western painting. He also studied the violin. But unlike Li Shutong, who stayed in Japan for years and completed his degree at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, Feng Zikai stayed in Japan for less than one year. During his stay, he discovered Takehisa Yumeji 竹久夢二 (1884–1934), who had a great impact on his artistic development.

Takehisa Yumeji was a celebrated Japanese painter and poet. His paintings often express poetic and literary ideas. In his youth he was attracted to socialism and his earlier works often show that he cared about people in society. He did many book illustrations and cover designs. He was also famous for his paintings of beauties. His beauties were often melancholy, probably because of his dissatisfaction with society. Takehisa Yumeji did not receive formal training in painting. He taught himself. He studied a few Japanese

artists, such as Sharaku (Edo period), Aoki Shigeru 青木繁 (1882–1911), and Onchi Kōshirō 恩地孝四郎 (1891–1955).²¹⁵ However, he was more interested in European artists. He sought inspiration from reproductions of paintings by contemporary European artists published in books or magazines. Among them were Giovanni Segantini (1858–1899), Van Gogh (1853–1890), Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947), Cézanne (1839–1906), Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901), Modigliani (1884–1920), and Marie Laurencin (1883–1956). He attached many illustrations of European paintings cut from books or magazines to his scrapbooks as sources of inspiration for his own paintings. For example, his *Black Boat House* (*Kurofunaya* 黒船屋; fig. 100) was painted after a painting by Marie Laurencin (1883–1956) that he attached in his scrapbook (fig. 101). Although the design of *Black Boat House* came from Laurencin, the overall style was a mixture of what he learned from the art works of contemporary European artists, such as Toulouse-Lautrec and Modigliani.

Besides paintings and book illustrations, Yumeji also did cover design and stationary decor design. His designs were much influenced by Art Nouveau. For example, in his bookcover design for his own painting collection *Volume of Travel* (*Yumeji gashū tabi no maki* 夢二画集旅の巻; fig. 102), the style of the dancer derives from Toulouse-Lautrec's dancers in his posters. The exotic people and curvy patterns were all characteristics of Art Nouveau.

Feng Zikai first encountered Takehisa Yumeji's work in a collection of his monochrome illustrations called *Collection of Yumeji's Painting: Volume of Spring* (*Yumeji gashū haru no maki* 夢二画集春の巻), published in 1909. Feng Zikai was

²¹⁵ Moriguchi, "Bi no sekai," 64. The rest of this paragraph is based on Moriguchi's account.

particularly struck by an illustration in this book called *Classmate* (*Kurasumeito* クラスメイト; fig. 103). In this painting, two women who were childhood classmates bump into each other. One is married to a rich man, evident in her boutique clothing; the other woman, who carries a baby on her back, appears to be poor. Feng Zikai recalls that he felt deeply sad about society after seeing this illustration.²¹⁶

The stories behind Yumeji's paintings impressed Feng Zikai. More important, however, was the simple style of Yumeji's illustration paintings in *Volume of Spring*. Besides figures, there are also landscapes in Yumeji's simple illustration paintings, for example, *Spring Rain* (*Harusame* はるさめ; fig. 104). The expression of literary ideas in such a simple kind of painting must have reminded Feng Zikai of Chen Shizeng's simple paintings published in *The Pacific Times*.

Although Hokusai was the only documented source of inspiration for Chen Shizeng's *manhua* paintings, illustration paintings in Japanese books, magazines, and newspapers such as Yumeji's works might have inspired Chen as well. Yumeji's interest in the poor might have inspired some of Chen Shizeng's illustrations in *The Pacific Times* and his *Beijing Customs Album*.

Wu Changshuo played the most important influence in Chen Shizeng's painting style. However, Chen Shizeng did not merely imitate Wu Changshuo's style. He applied the calligraphic brushstrokes that he learned from Wu Changshuo to the subject matters that Wu Changshuo did not paint very often. Besides Wu Changshuo, Chen Shizeng also sought inspiration from various earlier painters. As seen in his writings, he was open to incorporating Western painting techniques in Chinese painting, including his own.

²¹⁶ Feng, "Huihua yu wenxue," 183.

However, unlike the Lingnan School painters, who wanted to synthesize Chinese and Western painting, Chen Shizeng applied only some Western techniques to his paintings. This makes his paintings look more Chinese than Western or hybrid, which is why he can be classified as a traditionalist.

Chen Shizeng's *manhua* was a new kind of painting for Chinese literati painters. Just as the term *manhua* came from Japan, so Chen Shizeng's *manhua* paintings were influenced by Japanese painters. Chen Shizeng mentions only Hokusai as a master of *manhua*. However, Chen's style of *manhua* must have come from other sources, such as Edo-period *haiga* paintings or early twentieth century illustrations published in Japanese newspapers and magazines.

VI. Conclusion

In the early twentieth century, the Japanese developed a kind of thinking called pan-Asianism, exemplified in Okakura Tenshin's phrase, "Asia is one." Okakura's aphorism is understandable because, until the nineteenth century, Japan had absorbed and cultivated various Asian cultures, especially Chinese. In the early twentieth century, Japan was the first nation to walk out from the misery of Western imperialism. Therefore, the Japanese thought themselves eligible to lead Asian peoples to fight against the West. However, this resulted in Japanese imperialism, which created more misery for other Asian nations.

The Chinese people had long possessed a kind of ethnocentric thinking called Sino-centrism. They saw themselves as the source of all cultures and so they despised their neighboring peoples as barbarians. Their pride made them neglect outside cultures throughout history. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Chinese people were forced to learn Western technology and culture because of the threat from the West. At this point, Japan, already highly westernized, provided Chinese students a shortcut to westernization. Although many Chinese students studied in Japan, they did not abandon their sense of cultural superiority. They studied in Japan only to strengthen China. Chinese artists were willing to learn new kinds of art in Japan, but they were not interested in creating an "Eastern art" that included Japan.

I suggest that Chinese students who went to Japan in the early twentieth century included three kinds of Chinese painters. The first kind wanted to learn Western-style painting. The second kind wanted to synthesize Chinese and Western painting. The third kind wanted to continue traditional Chinese literati painting. Li Shutong was among the first Chinese painters who entered the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. He learned

Western-style painting from Kuroda Seiki. His paintings demonstrate the academic Impressionistic style that Kuroda learned in Paris. Li Shutong brought back to China what he had learned in Japan and started to be an art educator. Feng Zikai was the most famous of his students. He followed in his teacher's footsteps and also went to Japan to study.

Gao Jianfu was the founder of the Lingnan School. He wanted to synthesize Chinese-style and Western-style paintings. While in Japan, he discovered *Nihonga*, a synthesis of traditional Japanese and Western paintings. Gao Jianfu took *Nihonga* as the model for his own hybrid painting. He called his new style "New National Painting." His paintings were severely criticized by other Chinese painters as Japanese products. However, Gao was reluctant to admit the fact that his new style came from Japan. When forced to defend himself, he said that Japanese painting came from China so anything he learned from Japan was a long-lost Chinese tradition that had been preserved in Japan. The Chinese unwillingness to accept a Japanese style of painting and the way Gao defended his painting show that the Chinese during this period were still Sino-centric.

Chen Shizeng is usually identified as a traditionalist painter who both painted and defended literati painting. Like many other new Chinese intellectuals, he went to Japan to study. Instead of studying painting, he studied natural history. After he returned to China, he taught both natural history and painting.

During the 1910s, the demand for westernization in China intensified. Going beyond the principle "Chinese essence; Western application," some radical Chinese intellectuals demanded the abandonment of Chinese culture and the total adoption of Western culture. This period of chaos over westernization is called the May Fourth Movement or the New Culture Movement. Chen Shizeng grew up in a traditional

scholar-official family. However, his father and grandfather were officials who promoted westernization in the late nineteenth century. They belonged to the “Chinese essence; Western application” generation of westernization. While radicals called for abandonment of Chinese culture, Chen Shizeng’s family seemed to be conservative and outdated. Growing up in a family promoting westernization, Chen Shizeng was open minded to Western culture. His study of natural history is evidence of this, as is the article he wrote after he returned to China, introducing the Chinese to Western painting. However, because his family was also a traditional scholar-official family, he did not want to abandon Chinese traditions. When the radicals attacked traditional Chinese literati painting and wanted to adopt Western-style painting, Chen Shizeng stood up to defend literati painting.

In Japan, there were also a group of painters who wanted to promote literati painting, which was part of Japanese traditions that came from China. Ōmura Seigai wrote an essay “The Revival of Literati Painting” and published it as a book. He went to China and met Chen Shizeng. Chen Shizeng was glad to meet this Japanese ally and decided to translate Ōmura Seigai’s essay. He published it together with his own essay “The Value of Literati Painting” as a book called *The Studies of Chinese Literati Painting*. Similarities could be found in both essays. Scholars often say Ōmura Seigai influenced Chen Shizeng. However, there is no hard evidence to prove this. Besides similarities, there are differences between the two essays. These differences indicate that although both Chen and Ōmura were promoting literati painting, Chinese and Japanese literati painting differed.

When Chen Shizeng taught in Nantong, he often went to Shanghai to visit Wu Changshuo. Chen Shizeng’s calligraphic brushstrokes in his painting came from Wu.

Unlike Wu Changshuo, who painted mostly bird-and-flower paintings, Chen Shizeng expanded Wu's style of calligraphic brushstrokes in other subject matters such as figures and landscapes.

When painting landscapes, Chen Shizeng tried to emulate Ming Dynasty literati painter Shen Zhou. Shen Zhou painted a number of paintings in the style of Yuan Dynasty literati painter Wang Meng. Traces of Wang Meng's style can also be found in Chen Shizeng's hanging scroll landscapes. However, Chen Shizeng applied the thick and vigorous brushstrokes that he learned from Wu Changshuo to his own landscapes. The resultant paintings are less detailed but more vigorous. Chen Shizeng also painted landscapes in small album leaves. Some of them display slight Western influence. These landscapes look similar to Western watercolor and show some ideas from Impressionism.

Chen Shizeng painted another kind of painting called *manhua*. The term *manhua* came from Japanese *manga*. The style of Chen Shizeng's *manhua* also came from Japan. Hokusai was the only documented source of inspiration for Chen Shizeng's *manhua*. However, there must have been other Japanese painters who influenced Chen Shizeng. Li Shutong's student Feng Zikai could be a bridge to Chen Shizeng's *manhua*. Feng Zikai was fascinated by Chen Shizeng's small simple sketches published in *The Pacific Times* in 1912. When Feng went to Japan, he marveled at Yumeji's simple sketches. Feng must have had Chen Shizeng's paintings in mind when he saw Yumeji's. There is no way to prove whether Chen Shizeng had seen Yumeji's works. However, Chen must have seen something similar in the illustrations in newspapers, magazines, and books while he was studying in Japan.

Research into Sino-Japanese artistic interchange in the early twentieth century is still in its early stages. Aida Yuan Wong's dissertation is a major contribution to this new

field. However, her interpretation of the similarities between Chinese and Japanese paintings may mislead future researchers. In this dissertation I argue for a different interpretation and establish an alternate historical background for future research. Hopefully, with this study, more people will join the study of the interaction between Chinese and Japanese painters.

Figures

Pages 161-212 (Figures 1-104) of this Dissertation have been removed due to copyright restrictions. An unabridged version of this document resides in the University of Maryland, College Park library.

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