

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: RESCUING LITERATI AESTHETICS: CHEN
HENGKE (1876-1923) AND THE DEBATE ON THE
WESTERNIZATION OF CHINESE ART

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During the nineteenth century, China, which had always been an agricultural nation, suffered from the penetration of the industrialized Western Empires. With their much more sophisticated artillery, the West defeated China in many wars. The Chinese scholar-officials had always viewed foreigners as barbarians and were unwilling to learn from them. However, some of the scholar-officials sensed that China would languish without learning from the West and thus promoted westernization. This started the debate on westernization.

Chen Hengke (1876-1923) was a traditional artist and art

theorist, who lived to witness the decline of the Qing Dynasty and the establishment of the new Republic. At that time, many Chinese intellectuals such as Kang Youwei, Cai Yuanpei, Chen Duxiu, and Xu Beihong urged the westernization of Chinese painting. They thought that Chinese painting could not compete with Western painting in terms of the accurate rendering of nature, that is, realism. However, many traditional Chinese painters refuted the westernization of painting and defended traditional Chinese literati painting. Among the latter, Chen Hengke was one of the leading figures. He wrote "The Value of Literati Painting" to defend traditional painting. A Japanese art historian Omura Seigai also wrote a book *The Revival of Literati Painting* to defend Chinese literati painting. This thesis discusses the background of westernization, Chen Hengke's life, his opinions on art, and how he defended Chinese painting.

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THE DEBATE ON THE WESTERNIZATION OF CHINESE ART

by

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To My Parents

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INTRODUCTION

Chen Hengke 陳衡恪 (1876-1923) was an artist and art theorist who lived during a time of great turmoil in China. Before the nineteenth century, China was largely self-sufficient economically and did not conduct much sea trade with the West. In order to open trade with China, Westerners had to use military force. To protect its interests, China went to war with the European countries who desired trade. This led to China's defeat by the British Empire after the Opium War from 1839 to 1843. China was still so weak in military power in 1894 that it lost the Sino-Japanese War to the newly modernized Japan. The insults that the Chinese suffered led them to agitate for reform and rebellion. Large quarters of scholars or officials called for revolution. The reformers at that time urged the Qing government to westernize their military forces in order to survive the threat of foreign powers. However, many of the reformers eventually recognized that the military was among many divisions that needed to be westernized.

Westernization thus became the crucial issue discussed and debated among the Chinese intellectuals. For example, a religious aspect of westernization was Christianity, which had never been popular in China. It even influenced Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 (1814-1864), the leader of the Taiping Rebellion

(1850-1864), enough to claim himself to be Jesus's brother, another Son of God. The advent of Christianity signifies how greatly Western culture influenced Chinese society during the late Qing period. A political aspect of westernization can be seen in, Dr. Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 (1866-1925), who organized the revolutionary movement against the Qing government and successfully established the Republic of China in 1911. During this long period of revolutionary movement, Dr. Sun studied the Western political system and invented a new system for the Republic of China based on Western models. While some of the Chinese elite were eagerly promoting westernization, a more conservative group looked upon those claims as heresy. These conservatives still considered the Westerners as barbarians and were unwilling to learn Western technology or culture. Yet, another group preferred a compromise in dealing with the issue of westernization. The most famous phrase for them was "Zhongxue weiti; xixue weiyong" 中學爲體；西學爲用. This phrase means that "Chinese learning should remain the essence, but Western learning be used for practical development."¹ It was

¹ This famous phrase is usually believed to have originated from Zhang Zhidong's 張之洞 *Quanxuepian* 勸學篇 (Chapter to urge to study). However, according to Sun Guangde 孫廣德, Zhang Zhidong was not the first person who brought out this idea. See Sun Guangde 孫廣德, *Wan Qing chuantong yu xihua de zhenglun* 晚清傳統與西化的爭論 (The debate of tradition and westernization during the late Qing period) (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu, 1982), 161. The English translation of this phrase is from Jonathan D. Spence,

this idea that made the conservatives accept some degree of westernization while maintaining their pride in Chinese culture. It was acceptable for them that the technologies of the "Western barbarians" served merely for practical use.

Chinese art did not escape from the storm over westernization. Many late Qing intellectuals criticized Chinese painting as repetitious copying of the techniques and styles of the old masters. They admired the more realistic or true-to-life Western painting that they saw. When Western artists were influenced by Japanese woodblock prints and began to react against realism, many Chinese praised the "old" Western painting that had looked more realistic. In this questioning atmosphere, Chen Hengke and many other artists and art theorists continued to practice Chinese painting to promote this traditional Chinese art. Chen Hengke not only practiced the traditional Chinese arts of painting, calligraphy, and seal carving, but also wrote articles introducing and defending Chinese art. His article "The Value of Literati Painting" contributed greatly to defending traditional Chinese painting during the time when many of the elite urged people to learn from the West. Later art critics often said that this article was influenced by a book, *The Revival of Literati Painting*, by the famous Japanese art

historian Omura Seigai 大村西崖 (1868-1927). Many artists or art historians today recognize Chen Hengke's contribution to traditional Chinese painting. For example, Xue Yongnian, a renowned art historian in China, says, "The theories proposed by Chen Shizen [Chen Hengke's *zi*, used more often than his name] in the beginning of the [twentieth] century effectively supported the development of the traditionalists."² This thesis investigates Chen Hengke's concept of the literati tradition of Chinese painting in this drastically changing era.

² Xue Yongnian 薛永年, "Shijigexinzhong de chuantongpai sanlun" 世紀革新中的傳統派散論 (Notes on the traditionalist during the reform of the century), in *Ershi shiji zhongguohua: chuantong de yanxu yu yanjin* 二十世紀中國畫：傳統的延續與演進 (Twentieth century Chinese painting: continuation and evolution of the tradition) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Meishu, 1997), 238. See Appendix I, No. 1.

CHAPTER I. BACKGROUND TO REFORM

During the nineteenth century, the Western imperial powers penetrated the Far East. At that time, these Western empires were already highly industrialized while the Asian countries still based their economy on agriculture. When people of these two different societies met, they clashed. China went to war with England in 1840 over the issue of opium trade. Although Westerners came eagerly to China for business, business was traditionally considered the lowest profession in Chinese society. Chinese divided the professions into four major categories, in descending order of status as: scholar-official, agriculture, crafts or industry, and business. The Chinese considered trading with Western countries unnecessary because they had survived well from an agricultural economy. Since the Westerners had come to China with the purpose of conducting trade, to many Chinese, it even seemed that trading was a favor that they granted to the West.

After China's defeat in the Opium War, the Chinese realized the power of the West: Westerners had better artillery, and their steam boats could operate without wind. However, these fine tools were the result of crafts and industry, only the third category of professions in Chinese thinking. Chinese officials knew that Western weapons were superior to theirs, but they were

too proud to learn military technology from coarse Westerners. They thought the techniques petty and not worth learning. What they thought important were the ethics and morality of Confucianism.

Nevertheless, some Chinese officials acknowledged that they had to learn from the West in order to develop. A series of debates over westernization thus started. From the time of the Opium War till the early twentieth century, Chinese intellectuals developed different opinions on the issue of westernization. Generally speaking, these Chinese intellectuals gradually demanded a wider and wider range of westernization.

After the Chinese defeat in the Opium War, some officials started to demand the use of Western artillery and steam ships. Later, they proposed that the Chinese should learn military-related technologies such as telegraphing, mining, mathematics, and astronomy. After Japan defeated China and Russia, Chinese intellectuals thought that the Japanese won because they had a better political system: a constitutional monarchy. Therefore, many Chinese scholars promoted the constitutional system. In 1898, Emperor Guangxu 光緒 (1871-1908) and reformers such as Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1931) and Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929) launched an unsuccessful reform, which lasted for a mere one hundred days. This reform targeted

not only the military but also the political and educational spheres. The main reason for its failure was that the Emperor did not have sufficient political power to carry out his reforms. The Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧 (1835-1908), head of the conservative forces, was the one who held real political power in the Qing Empire.

In Chen Hengke's youth, the atmosphere of reform had been growing. Chen's father Chen Sanli 陳三立 (1852-1937) and grand father Chen Baozhen 陳寶箴 (1831-1900) were among the officials who promoted political reform. After the failure of the Hundred-Day Reform, many Chinese intellectuals turned toward revolution. In 1911, the revolutionaries led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen overthrew the Qing Dynasty and established the Republic of China, the first republic in Asia. People who supported the revolution sought the prospect of a better China. However, although the old corrupted regime was replaced with the new Western-model democratic government, the whole country was still in turmoil. Many Chinese intellectuals thought that it was people of the old running the new system. Therefore, the reformers started a series of New Culture Movements, aiming to re-educate the people. Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942) was a great thinker and reformer at that time. He was also the founder of the Chinese Communist Party. He founded *Youth* 青年 magazine in 1915 and later in 1916 renamed it *New Youth* 新青年. It was a major

publication promoting the New Culture Movement. The Chinese intellectuals who promoted the New Culture Movement attacked the traditional culture. The May Fourth Movement in 1919 put the re-examination of the traditional Chinese culture to the ultimate test. It attacked traditional Confucian thought and embraced the West. At that time, almost all aspects of Chinese culture were re-evaluated.

The reformers thought that the old Confucian thinking would not fit the new democratic society. Since the Republic was established, the outdated Confucian thinking had to be abandoned. Chen Duxiu said in 1919:

To embrace Mr. Democracy, one cannot avoid opposing Confucianism, [Confucian] morality, chastity, old virtue, and old politics. To embrace Mr. Science, one cannot avoid opposing old art and old religion. To embrace both Mr. Democracy and Mr. Science, one cannot avoid opposing the national essence and the old literature.³

Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936), who was one of the greatest writers and thinkers of that time, published a work of fiction, "A Madman's Diary", in *New Youth* in 1918. In this work of fiction, he used cannibalism as a metaphor for Confucian morality:

³ Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, "Xinqingnian zui'an zhi dabiانشu" 新青年罪案之答辯書 (A letter defending *New Youth* against charges), *Xinqingnian* (January 1919). See Appendix I, No. 2.

In ancient times, as I recollect, people often ate human beings, but I am rather hazy about it. I tried to look this up, but my history has no chronology and scrawled all over each page are the words: "Confucian Virtue and Morality." Since I could not sleep anyway, I read intently half the night until I began to see words between the lines. The whole book was filled with the two words--"Eat people."⁴

Neither was painting immune to this attack on Chinese philosophy. Confucianism had always been the central philosophy for the thinking and conduct of a Chinese scholar-official. This kind of attack on Confucianism almost negated the whole essence of Chinese culture. However, when the reformers who promoted westernization attacked Chinese traditional painting, many traditional painters fought to preserve their tradition. Beijing, where the Ming and Qing rulers resided, had many scholars who spoke for the old tradition. Among these, Chen Hengke was one of the leaders.

⁴ Lu Xun 魯迅, "Kuangren riji" 狂人日記 (A madman's diary), in *The Complete Stories of Lu Xun*, trans. Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 4. See Appendix I, No. 3.

CHAPTER II. CHEN HENGKE AND HIS CIRCLE

As an artist, Chen Hengke mastered not only painting, but also calligraphy and seal carving. Chen Hengke used many different names. His *zi* 字 was Shizeng 師曾, by which he was called during his early childhood. Even as he grew, he continued to use this name. Therefore, his friends usually called him Shizeng, and he also signed his works with this name. He also called himself Xiudaoren 朽道人 or Xiuzhe 朽者. The name Xiudaoren might reveal his life philosophy or his opinion about his era. Xiu means decaying. Daoren 道人 usually indicates a man with high virtue, a taoist, or a monk. Xiudaoren could be interpreted as a decaying man with good virtue. Xiuzhe, which is usually a name that an old man calls himself, might be an abbreviation of Xiudaoren. When Chen Hengke died in 1923 at the young age of 47, his teacher Wu Changshuo 吳昌碩 (1844-1927) was extremely upset and wrote the four-character inscription "Xiuzhe Buxiu" 朽者不朽 for the catalogue of Chen's calligraphy. The inscription means literally the man of decay never decays.

Chen Hengke's studios have many different names such as Huaitang 槐堂, Tangshiyi 唐石移, Anyangshishi 安陽石室, and Rancangshi 染倉室. Chen once stayed in his friend Zhang Disheng's 張棣生 place where there was a *huai* (locust) tree in front of his room. This was how he got the studio name Huaitang.

In a prologue to a poem, Chen even recorded the genesis of this studio name. He said, "Zhang Disheng, in the east of his house, built a room to accommodate me. There is a *huai* tree in front the room. Therefore I call it Huaitang, and write this poem to express my feelings about it."⁵ He also had the studio name Rancangshi because he admired his teacher Wu Changshuo very much. Cang 倉 is a character used by Wu Changshuo in one of his names, Cangshi 倉石. Since most of the names of Chen Hengke show his close relationship with his friends and teacher, one can assume that his painting circle played a very important role in his relatively short life.

Chen Hengke was born into a family of the scholar-official class during the late Qing Dynasty. His grand father Chen Baozhen was once the governor of Hunan. His father Chen Sanli, a famous poet, was once the Chief of the Ministry of Civil Personnel. Since both his father and grandfather were high-ranking officials in the Qing government, one may assume that Chen Hengke's family would be relatively conservative.

However, this was not the case at all. Chen Baozhen and Chen Sanli devoted themselves whole-heartedly to promoting political

⁵ See Qi Shi 奇石, "Chen Hengke de shishuhuyin" 陳衡恪的詩書畫印 (Chen Hengke's poetry, calligraphy, painting, and seal), *Zhongguo Meishu* no. 7 (March 1988): 68. See Appendix I, No. 4.

reform. Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865-1898), a famous martyr of the "Hundred Days of Reform", was once a subordinate of Chen Baozhen. The reformer Liang Qichao was also a leading figure of the "Hundred Days of Reform", so much so that historians have called it the "Kang-Liang Reform", in memory of Liang and of Kang Youwei. Liang was once invited to run the school Shiwu Xuetaang 時務學堂, established by Chen Baozhen and Chen Sanli in Changsha in 1897, one year before the reform movement. Liang Qichao recorded how he was invited to serve in Chen Baozhen's court in "The Biography of Tan Sitong":

At that time Mr. Chen Baozhen was the Governor of Hunan. His son Sanli assisted him. They took the progress of Hunan as their own responsibility. In June 1897. . . . Mr. Chen, together with his son, and former Educational Commissioner Jiang Junbiao [江君標] planned to gather all the elite to run [the province]. . . . So [they] invited me [and another two persons] to be instructors at the school. . . . He [Tan Sitong] was also invited by Mr. Chen. So he gave up his position and then followed [Chen].⁶

⁶ The names of the other two people who were also invited to teach are replaced by squares in the book. There is no footnote explaining this. However, it is possible that the names were deleted to avoid causing these people trouble. Liang Qichao 梁啟超, "Tan Sitong Zhuan" 譚嗣同傳 (The Biography of Tan Sitong), in *Wuxu Zhengbianji* 戊戌政變記 (Recordings of the revolt of Wuxu), collected in Liang Qichao, *Yinbingshi Zhuanji* vol. III 飲冰室專集第三卷 (Yinbingshi special collection volume III) (Taipei:

After the failure of the Kang-Liang Reform, Liang Qichao fled to Japan. Because Chen Baozhen and Chen Sanli supported the reform movement, they were discharged by the conservative Empress Dowager Cixi after her restoration. After the loss of his government position and the death of his father, Chen Sanli moved the family to Nanjing and established a school there. Chen Hengke's son Chen Fenghuai 陳封懷 remembered the early 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 茅以昇, Mao Yinan 茅以南) to attend. The sixth uncle and other uncles all established their basic study of Chinese in this kind of environment.⁷

Chen Hengke grew up in such a family. His father and grandfather were traditional scholar-officials and at the same time

Taiwan Zhonghua Shuju, 1978), 106-107. See Appendix I. No. 5.

⁷ Chen Fenghuai 陳封懷 interview by Chen Xiaocong 陳小從, Spring 1980. See Jiang Tianshu 蔣天樞, *Chen Yinke Xiansheng Biannian Shiji* 陳寅恪先生編年事集 (Chronology of Mr. Chen Yinke) (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji, 1981), 21. See Appendix I, No. 6.

reformers sought Western learning. Chen could thus receive both the new kind of education, which made him familiar with Western learning, and the traditional Chinese one. In this scholarly atmosphere, it is not surprising that Chen Hengke became a poet, calligrapher, and painter, or that his brother Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890-1969) became a renowned historian.

Chen Hengke's father thought that it was not enough for his children to study Western learning at home. With his father's encouragement in 1898, Chen Hengke passed the entrance exam to the Affiliated Mining and Railroad School (Kuangwu Tielu Xuetaang 礦物鐵路學堂) of the Jiangnan Army School (Jiangnan Lushi Xuetaang 江南陸師學堂). There, Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936), a great modern Chinese thinker and writer, was also studying. In 1901, Chen entered a French missionary school in Shanghai. In 1902, he went to Japan for further studies with his brother Chen Yinke.

During the 19th century, Japan was also threatened by Western powers. However, historically, the Japanese tended to accept foreign cultures more easily than the Chinese. During Chen Hengke's time, Japan, was already more highly westernized than China. After China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, more and more Chinese started to recognize the importance of Western learning. Therefore, it is not surprising that Chen Hengke went to Japan.

On the way to Japan, Chen Hengke happened to take the same

ship with Lu Xun. After they arrived, both went to the Kobun Shoin 弘文書院 school in Tokyo to study Japanese. Lu Xun also loved art very much. Therefore, he naturally became good friends with Chen. Later Chen Hengke entered Tokyo Advanced Normal School (東京高等師範學校) to study Natural History and Lu Xun entered the Sendai Medical School (仙台醫學專門學校). At this time, Chen Hengke also met Li Shutong 李叔同 (1879-1942), a famous painter, calligrapher, and musician, who went to Japan in 1905, to study Western art in the Ueno Art School (上野美術專門學校). Li Shutong later became a monk and is now known by his Buddhist name of Hongyi Dashi 弘一大師. Although Chen preferred to use Chinese media while Li was studying Western art, they became very good friends.

During his eight years stay in Japan, Chen Hengke must have been exposed to various kinds of art including Japanese and Western. He knew very well the trend of art in the Western world in his time. So, he must have known that "that trend" was not toward realism at all. His knowledge of Western art can be seen in the articles that he published after he returned to China. In 1912 Chen published a translation of a work concerning the trends of Western art in the periodical for the alumni of Nantong Teacher's School. This work was entitled "The Recent Situation: Painting in Europe and the West" (Ouxi huajie zuijin zhi zhuangkuang 歐西畫界最近之狀況). When some people were condemning

Chinese art and embracing Western art, he could stand out and defend Chinese art precisely because of his rich knowledge of Western art. When producing art works in traditional Chinese media, Chen Hengke also wanted people in China to know the current art trends in the West so that the Chinese would not become lost in the debate on westernization. Chen Hengke did not fail to mention Western art in his other publications about Chinese art either.

After Chen went back to China in 1909, he devoted himself to art and education. He served in the Jiangxi Provincial Education Bureau immediately after his return. Then Zhang Jian 張謇 invited him to teach Natural History in the Nantong Teacher's School. During his stay in Nantong, Chen often went to see Wu Changshuo, from whom Chen Hengke learned very much and who he admired greatly.

After a short stay in Changsha where he taught in the Changsha First Teacher's School, Chen moved to Beijing in 1913. There, he would spend most of his life. In Beijing, he served in the Ministry of Education and taught Chinese Painting in different schools. Chen Hengke, of course, made many artist-friends. Li Chu-tsing comments on Chen's significance in the Beijing art circle: "Because of his [Chen Hengke's] background and position as a member of the Ministry of Education, he attracted a considerable following, and was the central figure in a literary

and artistic circle in Beijing during the early years of the Republic."⁸

During his stay in Beijing, Chen Hengke 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 Hengke's help. In his autobiography, he recorded his meeting with Chen Hengke in 1917:

I tagged the price for my paintings and seals in the paper shop south of Liulichang [琉璃廠]. Chen Shizeng saw the seals carved by me [there] and then purposely came to Fayuan Temple [法源寺] to visit me. After a small chat we became very good friends. Shizeng . . . had great fame in the capital area. I took out *Handscroll of Mount Jie* [借山圖卷] from the traveling box and asked him to judge it. He said that my painting's character is very lofty, but there are some parts that still cannot reach excellence. . . . He urged me to create a style of my own and not to fawn on the vulgar.⁹

⁸ Li Chu-tsing, "Traditional Painting Development During the Early Twentieth-Century," in *Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting*, ed. Kao Mayching (Hongkong: Oxford University Press, 1988), 79.

⁹ Liulichang was a place in Beijing where many art dealers gathered to sell antiques and art works such as painting and calligraphy. Qi Baishi 齊白石, "Baishilaoren zishu" 白石老人自述 (Memoirs of Qi Baishi), in *Baishilaoren zishu* (Changsha: Yuelu Shushe, 1986), 70-71. See Appendix I, No. 7.

Before Qi Baishi met Chen Hengke, his paintings were sold at a very low price. When Chen Hengke advised him to create his own style. Qi Baishi created a style he called "red flower ink leaf" 紅花墨葉. Qi Baishi said:

As for my painting at that time, I was learning the austere-leisure 冷逸 style of Bada Shanren 八大山人 [Zhu Da 朱耷, 1626-1705]. People in Beijing did not favor it. Except Chen Shizeng, there were almost no other people who understood my painting. As for the price of my painting, one fan leaf cost two yuan of silver coin, which was less than half of the price of works by other contemporary painters at that time. Even so, very few people came to buy. I had a very solitary life. 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, was famous for painting plum in Hunan. He was the one who learned Yang Buzhi's style. I also consulted his brush-concept. Shizeng said, "To paint with *gongbi* style would be laborious and plain-looking at the same time." I listened to his words again and changed my

manner of painting.¹⁰

In 1922, Chen Hengke brought Qi's paintings and his own to an exhibition in Tokyo, Japan. Their paintings were a triumph. All the paintings of Qi Baishi were sold at prices much higher than their previous prices in China. Qi Baishi said:

Chen Shizeng came [back] from Japan. All the paintings that he took were sold. In addition, the price was especially magnificent. Each of my paintings sold at one hundred yuan 元 of silver. Landscapes were even more expensive.

Paintings on paper two feet long sold for up to two hundred and fifty yuan of silver. It was inconceivable to get this kind of good price in China. It was also said that some Frenchmen in Tokyo selected some paintings of Shizeng and mine for the Paris Art Exhibition. The Japanese even wanted to make a film about our lives and work to show in the Tokyo Art Academy 東京藝術院. All these were things inconceivable before. After the exhibition in Japan, many foreigners came to Beijing to buy my paintings. Then numerous antique ghosts [dealers] of Liulichang, who wanted to speculate, asked for my paintings. The vulgar who liked to pretend to be elegant people also came to ask me to paint. From this time on, my sales of paintings became more and more

¹⁰ Ibid, 75. See Appendix I, No. 8.

abundant. All these are because of Chen Shizeng's favor of promoting me. I will never forget him.¹¹

Mei Lanfang 梅蘭芳 (1894-1961), the greatest figure of 20th century Beijing opera (Peking opera), also recorded artists' gathering where Chen Hengke participated:

During the time when I was studying painting with Mr. Wang Mengbai 王夢白 [Wang Yun 王雲, 1888-1934], earlier or later, I also met many famous painters, such as Chen Shizeng, Jin Gongbei 金拱北 [Jin Cheng 金城, 1878-1926], Yao Mangfu 姚茫父 [Yao Hua 姚華, 1876-1930], Wang Aishi 汪藹士, Chen Banding 陳半丁 [Chen Nian 陳年, 1876-1970], Qi Baishi, and so on. In the 13th year of the Republic, my thirtieth birthday, these teachers of mine collaborated to paint a painting and give it to me as a souvenir. This painting was painted collaboratively in the study room of my home. The one who did the first stroke was Mr. Ling Zhizhi 凌植支. . . . Mr. Yao Mangfu then painted roses and cherries. Mr. Chen Shizeng painted bamboo and rocks. Then, Mr. Mengbai painted a mynah bird on the rocks. At last, it was Mr. Qi Baishi's turn.¹²

¹¹ Ibid, 78. See Appendix I, No. 9.

¹² The date of this occasion is probably incorrect because the 13th year of the Republic was 1924, which was one year after Chen Hengke's death. Mei Lanfang 梅蘭芳, interview by Xu Jizhuan 許姬傳, *Wutai Shengya* 舞台生涯 (Life on the stage) (Taipei: Liren

Although these artists lived their lives in a way very different from the literati painters of the past who were scholar-officials, they still kept the tradition of the literati gathering. In this kind of gathering, these artists would paint in front of others, show their works to their fellows, or recite poems. So, they might have thought themselves literati painters or at least they might have thought that they inherited much of the literati tradition.

Mei Lanfang remembered another gathering when his artist-friends were commenting on and composing poems for his paintings:

It was autumn of the 10th year of the Republic. . . . One day in the afternoon, I took a *luohan* portrait from my home collection as a reference [for painting] by Ding Nanyu 丁南羽 [1547-1621] ([Ding] Yunpeng 丁雲鵬), who was famous for Buddhist painting during the Ming Dynasty. . . . At the time when I had finished half the painting, Chen Shizeng, Luo Yingong 羅癭公 [Luo Chunyuan 羅惇融, 1872-1924], Yao Mangfu, Jin Gongbei, and so on all came. I said, "You came at just the right time. Please give me some comments [on my painting]." After I held my breath and concentrated on finishing this Buddhist portrait, these teachers all said

Shuju, 1979), 416-417. See Appendix I, No. 10.

I had improved in painting Buddhist portraits. Jin Gongbei said, "I want to pick one weakness: The *luohan* in this painting should wear sandals." I said, "What you criticized is right. But the *luohan* has been completed. What should I do?" Mr. Jin said, "Let me add the sandals for you." He took the brush, and then added to the painting a Buddhist rod, from which hangs a pair of sandals. By the way, he added a roll of scripture. Everyone praised his additions. After Mr. Jin finished painting, he wrote a short colophon:

Wanhua [Mei Lanfang] painted the Buddha, but forgot [to paint] the sandals. I made it complete, and added a Buddhist rod, so that monks would not complain.

Xu Boming 許伯明 was also in my home that day. He took the painting right after seeing me finish it. After it was mounted, he invited everyone to write poems on it. Mr. Shizeng wrote:

Hanging sandals and wondering freely,
Don't listen to *zheng* or *pa* but listen to the sound of
the pine.

Xiuzhe [Chen Hengke] reciting a Buddhist poem,
Gentlemen please don't feel weird.

Mr. Mangfu wrote a poem with five characters to each line:

Where do the sandals go?

Being worn out is but a usual thing.

This heart is like these feet

which were originally naked.¹³

Although these artists did sell paintings for a living, they had nonetheless inherited some of the traditions of the literati painters of the past. They would hold the kind of gathering mentioned above. They painted together. They talked about Buddhism, Daoism (Taoism), and Confucianism. They recited poems and wrote them on paintings with beautiful calligraphy. They must have considered themselves literati painters, not professional ones.

The literati painters of the past usually resented the professional painters who served at court or who made a living by selling their paintings. Stylistically literati painters tend to paint in a care-free style, the so-called *Xieyi* 寫意 style, while the court painters tend to use *gongbi* 工筆, which is more meticulous and detailed. In 1923, an article about the Beijing Art Academy Accomplishment Exhibition appeared in the newspaper *Shanghai Times* (Shanghai shibao 上海時報):

The teachers of this school are masters such as Wang Mengbai, Chen Shizeng, and Yao Hua. These people are good at the *xieyi* tradition. *Gongbi* does not seem to be their specialty.

¹³ *Zheng* 箏 and *pa* 琶 are two kinds of string musical instruments. Ibid, 417-418. See Appendix I, No. 11.

Therefore their students, being unavoidably affected by them, tend to use the splash ink brushstroke [*pobi* 潑筆].¹⁴ Yao Hua, who was better known as Yao Manfu, was another leader of the Beijing painters. Yao Mangfu and Chen Hengke were close friends. Many collaborative works by them are left. Yao Mangfu also wrote the preface to "The Value of Chinese Literati Painting" by Chen Hengke.

The reporter who wrote the story above seems slightly partial to *gongbi* rather than *xieyi*. Although *xieyi* is not a distinctive feature of literati painting, the literati painters did often use less detailed or less *gongbi* style because they believed the spirit and the implied meaning expressed in the painting was more important. However, because *xieyi* is a less careful way of painting, James Cahill says that it hastened the decline of Chinese painting during the Qing Dynasty:

The increasing practice of the *hsieh-i* [*xieyi*] manner, in the broadest sense of simplified pictures done in relatively loose, fast brushwork, was a significant cause—perhaps the most significant cause—of the decline that Chinese painting

¹⁴ Li Nanxi 厲南溪, "Ji Beijing Meizhuan Chengji Zhanlanhui" 記北京美專成績展覽會 (Report on the achievement exhibition of the Beijing Art Academy), *Shanghai Shibao* 上海時報, 4 September 1923, sec. 4. Quoted in Kao Ming-fang 高明芳, "Minchu Meishujia Chen Shizeng" 民初美術家陳師曾 (Artist Chen Shizeng of the Early Republican Era), *Guoshiguan Guankan* (Taipei) no. 12 (June 1992): 174. See Appendix I, No. 12.

underwent after the early Ch'ing [Qing] period.¹⁵

Chen Hengke and his painter-friends in Beijing commanded much authority in the art world of China at that time. Through their efforts, Beijing became an alternate art center to Shanghai. These painters worked hard to preserve Chinese traditional painting, while other reformers such as Kang Youwei, Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940) and Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻 (1895-1953) wanted to adopt Western painting.

Cai Yuanpei was a reformer, aesthetician, and educator. He once studied in Germany. He also served as Minister of Education for a few years after the establishment of the Republic. He thought that the Chinese should learn from the West. Li Chu-tsing comments on him that "It was under his [Cai Yuanpei's] influence that many of the new developments in art took place."¹⁶

When Cai Yuanpei was the president of the Peking University, he organized the Painting Method Study Society 畫法研究會. Although he was partial to Western art, he still invited Chen Hengke and other Chinese traditional painters to teach in the society. On the establishment of the Painting Method Study Society, Cai Yuanpei wrote a letter to Chen Hengke on February

¹⁵ James Cahill, "Afterword: Hsieh-i as a Cause of Decline in Later Chinese Painting," in *Three Alternative Histories of Chinese Painting* (Kansas City: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, 1988), 100.

¹⁶ Li Chu-tsing, 79.

4, 1918:

Days ago you came to our school to lecture. My colleagues were so moved. Now the number of people who registered in the Painting Method Study Society already exceed seventy. We plan to start very soon. However, the constitution needs to be approved by you and then it can be announced.¹⁷

This letter shows how Cai Yuanpei respected Chen Hengke. Cai Yuanpei not only invited Chen Hengke to teach but also asked Chen Hengke for his approval of the society's constitution. Chen Hengke's status in this art circle is clearly shown in this letter.

Although Cai wanted to import Western painting methods, he could not ignore the traditional painters who were still influential in the Beijing area. Chen Hengke was one of the leading characters of the Beijing painting circle and this was probably one of the reasons why Cai Yuanpei invited Chen to teach in the society.¹⁸

¹⁷ Wu Meidong 吳梅東, ed., *Cai Yuanpei wenji: juanshi, shuxin* 蔡元培文集 卷十·書信 (Anthology of Cai Yuanpei's Writing vol. 10, letters) (Taipei: Jinxiu, 1995), 441. See Appendix I, No. 13.

¹⁸ For more discussion of Cai Yuanpei's invitation to Chen Hengke to teach in the Painting Method Study Society in Peking University, see Zhu Qingsheng 朱青生 and Shinaide 史耐德, "Zhudong duqū: guanyu Zhongguo huihua xihua guochengzhong de yige shishi de yanjiu" 主動讀取：關於中國繪畫西化過程中的一個史實的研究 (Active conceiving: a study about a historical fact during the process of the westernization of Chinese painting), in *Ershi shiji*

When Chen replied to Cai Yuanpei on February 5, 1918, he made recommendations about creating the painting society. He said:

As for how to make it operative, it seems better to appoint some advisors to discuss all the methods [of teaching] and then start to operate. The capital is the place where the intellectuals gather. There is no lack of qualified people. If people with wonderful hands for painting can gather and discuss, I also would like to follow them and benefit much from them.¹⁹

Although Chen Hengke was one of the leading figures in the Beijing art circle, it can be seen from his reply to Cai Yuanpei's letter that he was still very humble. Besides, he had many painter-friends. The letter might also show that he did not want to act alone, which would not be good for his friendship with other painters.

In 1921, Cai Yuanpei invited Liu Haisu 劉海粟 (1896-1994) to teach in the Painting Method Study Society. Liu Haisu was a famous twentieth century painter who preferred oil painting to traditional painting. At that time Cai Yuanpei was sick and stayed in a hospital. After arriving in Beijing, Liu Haisu went

zhongguohua: chuantong de yanxu yu yanjin 二十世紀中國畫：傳統的延續與演進 (Twentieth century Chinese painting: the continuation and evolution of the tradition) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Meishu, 1997), 80-91.

¹⁹ Wu Meidong, 442. See Appendix I, No. 14.

to the hospital to see Cai Yuanpei. He remembered the setting in Cai Yuanpei's room:

On the table and the bed were piled many German and French books, most of which were on aesthetics. There were also a few Japanese books. The most impressive was a Leipzig-printed catalogue of Western masters, the binding of which is very delicate.²⁰

Even in his sickness Cai Yuanpei surrounded himself with books about Western art and aesthetics.

Cai's personal interests are also very clear from another record by Liu Haisu's record:

After two days, I went to the hospital to listen to him [Cai] commenting on Western painting. Before I left, he gave me a letter, and said sincerely: "There is no good place to live around the three colleges of the Peking University. Staying in the Dongfang Hotel would be expensive and noisy, not suitable for painting, reading or thinking. It would be better to live around the Beijing Art School. There are many painters. Wu Xinwu 吳新吾, Yao Mangfu, Wang Mengbai, and Chen Shizeng are all very upright

²⁰ Liu Haisu 劉海粟, "Yi Cai Yuanpei xiansheng" 憶蔡元培先生 (Remembering Mr. Cai Yuanpei), in *Zishu yu yinxiang: yi Cai Yuanpei* 自述與印象：蔡元培 (Autobiography and impressions: Cai Yuanpei) (Shanghai: Shanghai Sanlian Shudian, 1997), 142. See Appendix I, No. 15.

artists. You can exchange opinions on painting [with them]. . . ."21

So, Cai Yuanpei talked to Liu Haisu about Western painting. It is also interesting that in introducing some "upright" (*zhengzhi* 正直) traditional Chinese painters, he included Chen Hengke. Also, by using the word "upright", Cai Yuanpei showed that he respected these traditional painters. However, it is strange to tell an artist that these artists were "upright" without saying anything about their art. Although Cai did not mention their art, he still said that they could exchange opinions on painting. Cai Yuanpei respected these traditional Chinese artists but had less interest in their art. After Cai's introduction, Liu Haisu became good friends with these traditional painters. He remembered them thus:

Yao Mangfu, Wu Xinwu, Wang Mengbai, Chen Shizeng, Li Yishi 李毅士 [1886-1942], and I all discussed the trend of art and literature there [at Liu Haisu's house]. We critiqued the famous works of China and other countries. Very often Shizeng did not want to leave until after midnight. We looked at paintings, painted our works, discussed lecture scripts, and talked about the news together. These men had great knowledge and achieved much in art. They were

²¹ Ibid, 142-143. See Appendix I, No. 16.

all more than ten years older than me and took great care of me. They accompanied me to Liulichang to buy some ancient books and Tang tomb figures. Now there are still left a few Tang dancing figures, chosen by Shizeng. . . .²²

The Chinese, or more specifically, the Han people before the nineteenth century, considered themselves the center of the world and their culture as the source of other "marginal" cultures. Therefore, they believed their culture to be the one and only culture. Without comparison to other cultures, the Chinese could not be self-conscious of their "Chineseness". Therefore, before the nineteenth century, since the Chinese painters had not seen many Western paintings, they could not be very aware that they were painting in Chinese media and styles. What they did was just painting, they did not think of the term "Chinese painting". They probably took little notice of Western paintings. Western painting was not any threat to Chinese painters at that time. The Chinese painters might even consider that Western paintings were not painting at all. However, during Chen Hengke's time, Chinese artists were very aware that they were doing "Chinese painting" because of the pressure from the West. Since more and more people started to appreciate Western painting, these artists felt that it was necessary to

²² Ibid, 143. See Appendix I, No. 17.

promote and preserve Chinese traditional painting in some way.

In 1920, Chen Hengke and his friends such as Jin Cheng and Zhou Zhaoxiang 周肇祥 (c. 1877-1954) established the Chinese Painting Study Society 中國畫學研究會, with its goal "to promote elegance and to preserve national essence."²³ In 1921, Chen Hengke published "The Value of Literati Painting." This article had made a great impact on the Chinese art world by supporting traditional Chinese painters and explaining the value of traditional Chinese art.

²³ Chen Chuanxi 陳傳席, *Zhongguo huihua lilun shi* 中國繪畫理論史 (History of Chinese painting theory) (Taipei: Dongda Tushu, 1997), 390. See Appendix I, No. 18.

CHAPTER III. THE DEBATE ON THE WESTERNIZATION OF CHINESE
PAINTING

In Chen Hengke's time, many Chinese scholars thought that many Chinese painters were just imitating the methods or copying the styles established by the old masters. Many people still think the same way today. Sherman Lee, a noted scholar on East Asian art, says:

From about 1800 on painting in China became repetitive, although interesting work surfaced from time to time. Modern efforts in the traditional "individualist" style are being increasingly and favorably studied. . . . Excellent landscapes in the orthodox tradition, deriving from the Four Wangs of the seventeenth century, were also being painted. But these add nothing to a general survey of the field.²⁴

Although people today hold a different view of Chinese painting after 1800, Sherman Lee's words are not surprising, given that many Chinese intellectuals in Chen Hengke's time agreed.

In 1919, for example, Cai Yuanpei said, "Painting and calligraphy are the treasures of our nation. However, they

²⁴ Sherman E. Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 502-503.

[painting and calligraphy] are imitating the ancients."²⁵

During the early Qing Dynasty, the four Wangs, Wang Shimin 王時敏 (1592-1680), Wang Jian 王鑑 (1598-1677), Wang Hui 王翬 (1632-1717), and Wang Yuanqi 王原祈 (1642-1715) stressed copying ancient masters. Many of the later painters thus just followed tradition. Wang Yuanqi wrote about copying the works of ancients in his article "Notes at a Rainy Window":

The copying of pictures does not equal the examination of pictures. When one comes across a true work by an old master, one should study it very closely and look for its main idea. One must find out how it is composed, how the things move out and in, how they are slanting or straight, how they are placed, how the brush is used and how the ink is accumulated. There are certainly parts in it which are superior to one's own art; after some time one will quite naturally be in close harmony with it.²⁶

Painters who believe that copying the old masters is the best

²⁵ Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, "Wenhua yundong buyao wangle meiyu" 文化運動不要忘了美育 (Do not forget art education in cultural movement), *Beijing Daxue Rkan*, 17 November 1919, collected in Wendi 聞笛 and Shuiru 水如 ed., *Cai Yuanpei meixue wenxuan* 蔡元培美學文選 (Anthology of Cai Yuanpei's articles on aesthetics) (Taipei: Shuxin, 1989), 100. See Appendix I, No. 19.

²⁶ Wang Yuanqi 王原祈, "Yuchuang manbi" 雨窗漫筆 (Notes at a rainy window). Translation quoted from Oswald Sirén, *The Chinese on the Art of Painting: Translations and Comments* (Shanghai: The North China Daily News, 1936), 205. See Appendix I, No. 20.

way to learn painting would not go out and observe a tree when painting a tree. Rather they would study how the old masters painted a tree. They did not care much about the "formal likeness" of their subject. Hence, Su Shi 蘇軾 (also known as Su Dongpo 蘇東坡, 1036-1101), the great painter and poet of the Song Dynasty, wrote a poem which has been widely quoted by later art critics.

If one judges painting by formal likeness,
his opinions are close to those of a child²⁷

The Chinese literati painters have a long tradition of regarding formal likeness as unimportant. Many painters of the Qing Dynasty wrote theories based on the four Wangs' idea and this tradition. However, this is the reason the great political reformer and calligrapher Kang Youwei argued that Chinese painting was in decline. In 1917, the very first sentence he wrote in the prologue to his *Wanmucaotang Painting Collection Catalogue* is: "Recent Chinese painting is in extreme decline. This is because of the absurdness of painting theories."²⁸ In

²⁷ Su Shi 蘇軾, "Shu Yanlingwang Zhubu suohua zhezhi ershou" 書鄢陵王主簿所畫折枝二首 (Two poetic inscriptions written on the flowers painted by the Secretary Wang of Yanling). See Appendix I, No. 21.

²⁸ Kang Youwei 康有為, *Wanmucaotang canghuamu* 萬木草堂藏畫目 (Wanmucaotang Painting Collection Catalogue) (Shanghai: Changxing Shuju, 1918), n.p. See Appendix I, No. 22.

1918, Xu Beihong echoed Kang Youwei's words and said in "The Ways to Improve Chinese Painting" that "The corruption of the methods of Chinese painting is already in the extreme today."²⁹ Kang Youwei and Xu Beihong were not the only two scholars that claimed Chinese art had stagnated. In 1917, Lü Cheng 呂澂 (1896-1989) wrote to Chen Duxiu a letter, which was later published in *New Youth* with the title of "Art Revolution":

Ten years ago, an Italian poet Marinetti published a poetry magazine [*Futurist Manifesto*, 1909], promoting the new artistic ideology of Futurism. . . . Today the literature and art of our nation need to be reformed. The situation is similar to that. And the corruption of fine art is even worse.³⁰

Why did these Chinese intellectuals say that Chinese painting, or more broadly Chinese art, was in decline or corrupt? The stress on copying the ancients established by the four Wangs was not the only cause. Many painters of the nineteenth century

²⁹ Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻, "Zhongguohua gailiang zhi fangfa" 中國畫改良之方法 (The ways to improve Chinese painting), *Beijing Daxue Rikan*, 23-25 May 1918, collected in Xu Boyang 徐伯陽, and Jinshan 金山, ed., *Xu Beihong yishu wenji* 徐悲鴻藝術文集 (Anthology of Xu Beihong's articles on art) (Taipei: Yishujia, 1987), 39. See Appendix I, No. 23.

³⁰ Lü Cheng 呂澂, "Meishugeming" 美術革命 (Art Revolution), *Xinqingnian* 6 no. 1 (January 1918), collected in Shen Peng 沈鵬 and Chen Lüsheng 陳履生, ed., *Meishulunji* 美術論集 vol. 4 (Beijing: Renmin Meishu, 1986), 8. See Appendix I, No. 24.

abandoned the four Wangs' rules and created their own styles. Many of the Shanghai school painters showed originality in their paintings. However, a significant reason that the Chinese intellectuals attacked Chinese painting stemmed from their perception that Western painting was better.

During the early Qing Dynasty, Chinese painters looked down on Western painting. In fact, they barely recognized the Western style as painting at all. Zou Yigui 鄒一桂 (1686-1772), a court painter of the early Qing Dynasty, thus commented on Western painting:

The Westerners are skilled in geometry, and consequently there is not the slightest mistake in their way of rendering light and shade [yang-yin] and distance (near and far). In their paintings all the figures, buildings, and trees cast shadows, and their brush and colours are entirely different from those of Chinese painters. Their views (scenery) stretch out from broad (in the foreground) to narrow (in the background) and are defined (mathematically measured). 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 [chiang] and cannot

consequently be classified as painters.³¹

At Zou Yigui's time, some artists in China already saw many Western paintings introduced by the Jesuit missionaries. Since the Renaissance, Western artists have invented many devices or methods to create the illusion of three-dimensionality in painting. The realism of Western painting amazed the Chinese at first. However, since Su Shi's time, Chinese literati painters have never concerned themselves greatly with formal likeness. Although Western painting impressed the Chinese very much in terms of realism, it did not fit any category of Chinese painting. For the Chinese artists, there was nothing more to say about Western painting besides realism. So, Western painting was tagged as "realism" by Chinese artists. This was still true during Chen Hengke's time.

However, after the Chinese were humiliated by the Western empires in the nineteenth century, many Chinese scholars promoted the idea of westernization to save the country. Painting was not free from this trend. Many Chinese intellectuals in Chen Hengke's time thus praised Western

³¹ Zou Yigui 鄒一桂, "Xiaoshan huapu" 小山畫譜 (Xiaoshan painting manual), in *Qinding sikuquanshu zibu* 欽定四庫全書子部 in *Liuyizhiyilu* 六藝之一錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji, 1991), 733. English translation quoted from Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 80. See Appendix I, No. 25.

painting. They also criticized Chinese painting as being simple sketches and not being faithful to physical reality. As Kang Youwei said,

Before the Song Dynasty of China, paintings were all meant to describe physical shapes. Although spirit resonance, which means vitality [*qiyun shengdong* 氣韻生動], was valued, no one had ever abandoned pursuing physical resemblance. To call court painting ruler painting [*jiehua* 界畫] was truly inevitable and unquestionable. Today the Europeans still follow this method. Since Dongpo 東坡 [Su Shi 蘇軾] ridiculously published his lofty criticism, which judges painting by the Chan [Zen] standard, saying that if one judges painting by formal likeness, one's opinions are close to those of a child, it is assumed that to paint a horse, one must not stick to appearance alone. Therefore, the four masters of Yuan, Dachi 大痴 [Huang Gongwang 黃公望, 1269-1354], Yunlin 雲林 [Ni Zan 倪瓚, 1301-1374], Shuming 叔明 [Wang Meng 王蒙, 1301 or 1308-1385], Zhonggui 仲圭 [Wu Zhen 吳鎮, 1280-1354] came out to add their voices to support the theory of *xieyi* and to attack the court style, especially ruler painting.³²

³² Spirit resonance is the first element of the the Six Laws proposed by Xie He 謝赫 (457/464-532/549) of the Liang Dynasty in his *Gu huapin lu* 古畫品錄 (A record of the classification of ancient painters). Translation of the Six Laws quoted from

It is clear from Kang Youwei's words that he thought that Western painting and the Chinese painting before the Song Dynasty emphasized realism. However, after Su Shi, the Chinese literati painters departed from realism.

Xu Beihong also thought that Chinese painting could not compete with Western painting. He said:

Does Chinese painting have any value in art? The answer is yes. Chinese painting has value so it can exist. Does it have the same value as Western painting? The answer is that it is slightly flawed in terms of materialism. However, the pleasure [of Chinese and Western painting] differs, so it is not necessary to compare them. Where does the pleasure exist? It exists in history. Western painting belongs to Western civilization. Chinese painting belongs to Eastern civilization. What can be compared are only art [yi藝] and artistry [shu術]. However, art needs to be transmitted by some kind of material. Western materialism can best support art and artistry. Chinese materialism cannot support art and artistry. This

William Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), 4. Ruler painting (jiehua 界畫) is a kind of painting method applied to depicting architecture. It is characterized by fine straight lines which are accurately drawn with the assistance of rulers. Kang Youwei, *Wanmucaotang canghuamu*. See Appendix I, No. 26.

is the reason why [Chinese painting] is flawed.³³

What Xu Beihong meant by materialism is the media and technique of painting. But why did he think that media and technique of Chinese painting are inferior to those of the West? The reason is that he thought Chinese painting could not depict things that people see in the world very accurately. And, he thought that the purpose of painting was to faithfully represent nature. He said, "Painting is to use brush, color, cloth, paper, and other trivial things to describe all the phenomena all over the world."³⁴ What he meant was that since Chinese media and technique do not support realism as well as the Western ones, Chinese painting cannot compete with Western painting. Xu Beihong's idea of connecting media and technique to materialism extends the nineteenth century belief that the Westerners best the Chinese only in terms of materialism and technology. Xu Beihong's idea is part of the larger notion that "Chinese learning should remain the essence, but Western learning be used for practical development."³⁵ Cai Yuanpei also had the same idea on painting. He said:

³³ Xu Beihong, collected in Xu Boyang, and Jinshan, 40. See Appendix I, No. 27.

³⁴ Ibid. See Appendix I, No. 28.

³⁵ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1999), 224.

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. People who are good at painting are also good at calligraphy and poetry. Western painting is superior at craftsmanship and rationalism. [Western] people who are good at painting may also practice architecture and graphics.³⁶

Kang Youwei, Cai Yuanpei, and Xu Beihong were among the most influential Chinese intellectuals in Chen Hengke's time. When these men of the elite said Chinese painting was inferior to Western painting, their opinions had enormous influence.

How did Chen Hengke respond to this environment? In 1920, Chen Hengke lectured in Beijing on "The Development of Chinese Figure Painting". At the end of the lecture, he said:

Nowadays some people say that Western painting is progressive and Chinese painting is not progressive.

However, I say that Chinese painting is progressive. The speed of progress from the figure painting of Han to the

³⁶ Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, "Huagong xuexiao jiangyi" 華工學校講義 (Coursebook for Huagong School), in Wendi and Shuiru, 60. See Appendix I, No. 29.

Six Dynasties is mentioned above. From the Six Dynasties to Sui and Tang, some progress can also be seen. Nonetheless, from Song to the recent era, there is not much progress to mention. However, one cannot say that because of the pause of [progress of] Chinese painting during the hundred years or so from Song until today, Chinese painting is not progressive. It is just as if someone paused after a long walk. We cannot say he cannot walk just because of his pause. Who knows if Chinese painting cannot start to progress again in the near future? Therefore I say Chinese painting is progressive. But as for whether the Chinese painting of today is progressing or not, it would be difficult to answer that question accurately.³⁷

Although Chen Hengke argued that Chinese painting was progressive, he admitted that Chinese painting was not progressing during his time. In other words, he seemed to admit that Chinese painting had lost the competition with Western painting during his time.

If Chinese painting really could not compete with Western painting, how did these men of the Chinese elite propose to solve

³⁷ Chen Hengke 陳衡恪, "Zhongguo renwuhua zhi bianqian" 中國人物畫之變遷 (The development of Chinese figure painting), in *Zhongguo shuhua lunji* 中國書畫論集 (Anthology of essays on Chinese painting) (Taipei: Huazheng, 1986), 255. See Appendix I, No. 30.

this problem? Kang Youwei said,

The art of ink has not been well passed on. Therefore Lang Shining [郎世寧, Giuseppe Castiglione, 1688-1768] 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."³⁸

Chen Duxiu, a professor of Peking University, helped lead the May Fourth Movement. In founding the *New Youth* magazine, he aimed at abandoning the old and corrupted tradition to establish a new culture. He said in a letter in reply to Lü Zheng, which was later published in his *New Youth* with the title "Art Revolution: Answering Lü Zheng":

If one wants to improve Chinese painting, the first thing to do is to revolt against the painting of the [four] Wangs. This is because, to improve Chinese painting, one cannot

³⁸ Kang Youwei. See Appendix I, No. 31.

avoid adopting the spirit of realism in Western painting.³⁹ Many Chinese traditional painters at that time also abandoned the four Wangs' tradition. However, they usually sought inspiration from even earlier masters and tried to create personal styles. However, for the same purpose, Chen Duxiu thought that the Chinese painters should adopt Western realism.

In 1919, Cai Yuanpei lectured at the Peking University Painting Method Study Society, expressing his idea that the Chinese must learn from the West:

Today is the era when Eastern and Western culture merge. We should adopt what the West is good at. Besides, people say that in the past the West already adopted Chinese painting methods. In the Italian Renaissance, landscape was added to figure painting. People called it the Chinese School. In France during the time of Louis XV, there was the Rococo School, which was golden and splendid. People said that it added in the painting methods of our nation. And there was a French painter called Manet. He has a painting depicting a black and a white man, using only two colors. He has other paintings of this kind, similar to

³⁹ Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, "Meishu geming: Da Lü Cheng" 美術革命: 答呂澂 (Art revolution: answering Lü Cheng), *Xinchingnian* 新青年 6, no. 1, collected in Chen Lüsheng, 10. See Appendix I, No. 32.

the painting of our nation. Western painters could adopt things that we are good at. Can we not adopt things that the Westerners are good at? Therefore what I expect of Chinese painters is that they must also take advantage of the realism of the scenery of Western painting, to depict plaster statues and pastoral scenery. . . . Today, when we learn painting, we should use scientific methods.⁴⁰

Although Cai Yuanpei was not a painter, he had quite a few opinions. It is clear in his lecture that he wanted Chinese painters to adopt Western painting methods. However, he thought that many Chinese scholars were still too proud of their own culture to change. To persuade the traditional literati painters to Westernize, he pointed out examples of Western painters who adopted Chinese painting methods, and noted that if Chinese painting had influenced Western painting before, it would be acceptable for the Chinese scholars to learn from the West now because they would think that these Western painting methods originated in China.

Cai Yuanpei also said that the Chinese painters should use scientific methods to paint. One may wonder why he related

⁴⁰ Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, "Zai Beida Huafayanjiuhui zhiyanshuoci" 在北大畫法研究會之演說詞 (Lecture at the Peking University Painting Method Study Society), *Beijing Daxue rikan* 北京大學日刊, 25 October 1919, collected in Wendi and Shuiru, 95-96. See Appendix I, No. 33.

science to painting. However, at that time, people thought that the old Chinese learning was not scientific and that this was the main reason why China was defeated by the Western powers. It was a very popular idea that Mr. De 德, the personification of democracy and Mr. Sai 賽, the personification of science were what the Chinese should learn from the West. Western painting using the methods such as perspective looked more scientific to the Chinese. This is why Cai Yuanpei said that the Chinese painters should use scientific methods in painting.

It is discussed earlier in this thesis how Xu Beihong thought that Chinese painting cannot compete with Western painting because Chinese painting cannot represent nature well. In the article "The Ways to Improve Chinese Painting", Xu Beihong pointed out many ways to make Chinese painting more realistic. Many of the methods that he pointed out are Western methods. It is clear in the article that Xu Beihong wanted to import Western painting methods into Chinese painting to improve it.

When those Chinese intellectuals such as Kang Youwei, Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, and Xu Beihong demanded Chinese painters adopt Western methods, what did Chen Hengke say? He said,

How Chinese painting is going to change and develop is unpredictable. In short, as long as there are people studying [Chinese painting], there will be improvement. Besides, Chinese painting has often been influenced by

foreign countries. This can be seen in the examples given above. Now the chances of exposure to foreign fine arts are even more. There must be something that can be adopted and absorbed. What is important is to absorb well and integrate so as to exploit the existing specialties⁴¹.

When Xu Beihong was leaving to study painting in France, Chen Hengke said at the farewell party:

The ways of Eastern and Western painting were originally the same. Seeing ancient Chinese painting, there are many places identical to foreign ones. . . . I hope Mr. Beihong's journey this time can help the East and the West exchange [ideas] and that he can become a world-famous painter.⁴²

It is clear in these passages that Chen Hengke was not against using Western painting methods. Chen Hengke had been exposed to Western learning since his childhood. His eight-year stay in Japan let him have more chances to discover Western culture. He took a liberal attitude toward Western painting. What he

⁴¹ Chen Hengke 陳衡恪, *Zhongguo Huihuashi* 中國繪畫史 (A History of Chinese painting) (Jinan: Hanmoyuan Meishuyuan, 1925), 50. See Appendix I, No. 34.

⁴² Gong Chanxing 龔產興, "Chen Shizeng meishu huodong jianbiao" 陳師曾美術活動簡表 (Brief time table of Chen Shizeng's art events), in *Chen Shizeng huaxuan* 陳師曾畫選 (Selected paintings of Chen Shizeng) (Beijing: Renmin meishu, 1992), n.p. See Appendix I, No. 35.

meant in the passage from the *A History of Chinese Painting* is that since Chinese painting has received foreign influence in the past, it is not necessary to set Chinese painting apart from Western influence at this time. For Chen Hengke, understanding the West and integrating it with the East meant exploiting the special skill of the Chinese. In other words, Chen Hengke agreed that Chinese painters can learn Western methods to polish their own art, but he did not mean to promote Western painting methods as a whole.

However, Chen Chuanxi interpreted these two passages of Chen Hengke to mean that, before Chen Hengke wrote "The Value of Literati Painting", he demanded Western painting methods be adopted. Chen Chuanxi says:

Chen Shizeng died in 1923. His *A History of Chinese Painting* was published in 1925. The time when he wrote it should be before 1919 when he was a professor at the Beijing Art Academy. His opinion concerning the "adopting" of foreign painting methods is very clear.

However, later when he was in the Chinese Painting Study Society, he changed his opinion. This is because the Study Society was aimed at "preserving national essence". Besides, he was with Jin Cheng and Zhou Zhaoxiang and had very close relationships with them. Jin and Zhou were part of the "National Essence School" and all opposed Western

painting methods. Therefore Chen Shizen changed his opinion.⁴³

One should notice that the words that Chen Hengke said in Xu Beihong's farewell party were words to Xu Beihong. And Xu Beihong was a painter who preferred Western painting. Chen Hengke's words on that occasion show that, as a Chinese painter, he was not prejudiced against Western painting. His words could even be a reminder to Xu Beihong that Chinese painting is as valuable as Western painting since he thought that Chinese and Western painting were similar in many ways.

Moreover, according to Xu Shucheng, Chen Hengke's *A History of Chinese Painting* was originally the script for his lectures in Jinan in 1922.⁴⁴ Chen Hengke helped found the Chinese Painting Study Society in 1920. When the society was established, Chen Hengke must have known Jin Cheng and Zhou Zhaoxiang very well. Therefore, it is unlikely that Chen Hengke demanded that Western painting be adopted first and then changed his mind after establishing the Chinese Painting Study Society.

On the other hand, it is true that Chen Hengke did not show

⁴³ Chen Chuanxi, 390. See Appendix I, No. 36.

⁴⁴ Xu Shucheng 徐書城, "Chen Shizeng juan" 陳師曾卷 (Chen Shizeng part), in *Zhongguo xiandai xueshu jingdian: Lu Xun, Wu Mi, Wu Mei, Chen Shizeng juan* 中國現代學術經典：魯迅、吳宓、吳梅、陳師曾卷 (Chinese modern academic classics: Lu Xun, Wu Mi, Wu Mei, Chen Shizeng) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei Jiaoyu, 1996), 744.

much confidence in Chinese painting in "The Development of Chinese Figure Painting" and in *A History of Chinese Painting*. Nevertheless, he had gained full confidence in Chinese painting by the time he wrote "The Value of Literati Painting".

CHAPTER IV. CHEN HENGKE'S "THE VALUE OF LITERATI PAINTING"

Although Chen Hengke earned fame as a painter during his time, he is not so well remembered today among the general public. However, because of his article "The Value of Literati Painting", he is still frequently mentioned when art critics discuss Chinese art history of the late Qing and early Republican era. In his treatise, he defended the literati tradition of not pursuing formal likeness, the notion that was attacked by Kang Youwei and other reformers. He also refuted the idea of adopting Western realism that was promoted by these reformers. Because of this article, Wang Yuli says that "Among the calls for knocking down the literati painting in the beginning of the Republic, Chen Shizeng was the first painter who stood up to help literati painting to regain recognition and [positive] evaluation."⁴⁵ In Chen Hengke's previous articles, he often said that Chinese painters can learn something from Western painting. However, in "The Value of Literati Painting", he never mentioned this. Therefore, this article is the most powerful weapon that later Chinese painters had against the attacks of people who promoted Western art. Also, it is generally believed that Omura Seigai's

⁴⁵ Wang Yuli 王玉立, "Huixuezazhi Yanjiu" 繪學雜誌研究 (Studies on *Painting Method Magazine*), *Xiandai Meishu* 現代美術, No. 82, February 1999: 53. See Appendix I, No. 37.

book *The Revival of Literati Painting* gave Chen Hengke much inspiration in writing "The Value of Literati Painting".

Omura Seigai was a famous Japanese art historian during Chen Hengke's time in Japan. In *The Revival of Literati Painting*, he praised Chinese literati painting and denigrated both Western and Japanese painting. Like China, Japan during the nineteenth century suffered from the threat of Western powers. The Japanese also had had a great debate over westernization. However, it seems that the Japanese were able to accept Western culture more easily. They started westernization earlier than the Chinese. Japan even became the place where many Chinese young people studied Western learning. Omura mentions in *The Revival of Literati Painting* that the American Professor Fenollosa went to Japan and helped to revive Japanese art. It was good that Fenollosa could appreciate non-Western art. However, Omura considered it a pity that Fenollosa could not appreciate literati painting. In Omura's eye, literati painting was superior to Japanese painting, such as Ukiyo-e. Realism, which was considered the most important characteristics of Western painting, was considered by Omura inappropriate for either Chinese or Japanese art. He said in *The Revival of Literati Painting*:

Western painting is more easily appreciated by the eye of the vulgar. It is like low class painting, an appealing

entertainment for the vulgar, using as many techniques of natural representation as possible.⁴⁶

Omura Seigai's comments on Western painting are similar to Zou Yigui's comments, mentioned in the earlier chapter. Omura would have agreed with Zou Yigui who said Western painting "cannot be placed in any painting categories", meaning that it cannot be considered painting at all. However, in Zou Yigui's China, most of the intellectuals thought as he did about Western painting. In both the China and Japan of Omura's time, many intellectuals preferred Western painting to Chinese painting.

Omura finished his book *The Revival of Literati Painting* on January 7, 1921. Chen Hengke published his first edition of "The Value of Literati Painting" in the second issue of January's *Painting Study Magazine* (Huixue Zazhi 繪學雜誌) in 1921.⁴⁷ When Chen Hengke published his first edition of his article, it is possible that he still had not yet read Omura's book. In this first edition, Chen Hengke wrote in the vernacular, which was

⁴⁶ Omura Seigai 大村西崖, "Wenrenhua zhi fuxing" 文人畫之復興 (The Revival of Literati Painting), trans. Chen Hengke 陳衡恪, in *A Study of Chinese Literati Painting* (1922; reprint, Taipei: Zhonghua shuhua, 1991), 5. See Appendix I, No. 38.

⁴⁷ *Painting Study Magazine* was published by the Painting Method Study Society of the Peking University. Many important artists and art critics published in this magazine. The magazine sought articles by people who promoted westernization as well as people who promoted preserving traditional painting. Chen Hengke also published several articles in this magazine. For more discussion about this magazine, see Wang Yuli, 48-61.

promoted by Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962) during the New Culture Movement.

Hu Shi is considered one of the greatest writers and philosophers of modern China. During the time of the New Culture Movement, he promoted the Literature Revolution and the Vernacular Language Movement. Traditional literary Chinese is very different from spoken Chinese and is not easily understood without sufficient education. Hu Shi thought that by writing in the vernacular instead of the literary language, common people could be better educated and become more knowledgeable.

In the modern times, many art theories came from literary theories. Shui Tianzhong notes that the Art Revolution promoted by Chen Duxiu had much in common with the Literature Revolution. He says:

Many propositions in the "Art Revolution" were extensions of and elaborations of the basic perspectives in the "Literature Revolution". In the beginning, the main arguments proposed for renewing Chinese painting cannot be said to originate totally from [the Literature Revolution]. But they did often receive influence and inspiration from promoters of the "Literature Revolution".⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Shui Tianzhong 水天中, "Zhongguohua gexin lunzheng de huigu" 中國畫革新論爭的回顧 (A review on the debate over reform of Chinese painting), *Meishushilun* 8 (February 1983): 180-181. See Appendix I, No. 39.

The main purpose of writing in the vernacular was to let ordinary people have the chance to read. However, when Chen Hengke rewrote his article in 1922, he chose to write in literary Chinese. In his new edition, Chen used "vernacular language" as a metaphor for low-class painting:

Some people may say "Literati painting is too abstruse to be understood by mundane people. Why not slightly lower the principles [of literati painting] to make it more popular?" This is just like compromising classical Chinese literature to fit the vernacular language or forcing a child who can speak to learn the cry of an infant.⁴⁹

This quote shows Chen Hengke's uncompromising opinion that Chinese literati painting is high culture, which must be valued and preserved. In this passage, he also attacked the Vernacular Language Movement, which was a part of the Literature Revolution and the New Culture Movement. By doing so, he was attacking one of the sources of the Art Revolution.

Omura Seigai visited China in October 1921, where he met Chen Hengke through Jin Cheng.⁵⁰ Because Omura was a Japanese who

⁴⁹ Chen Hengke 陳衡恪, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi" 文人畫之價值 (The value of literati painting), in *Zhongguo wenrenhua zhi yanjiu* 中國文人畫之研究 (A study of Chinese literati painting) (1922; reprint, Taipei: Zhonghua shuhua, 1991), 9.

⁵⁰ Liu Xiaolu 劉曉路, "Dacun Xiyai he Chen Shizeng: Jindai weiwenrenhua fuxing de liangge kudouzhe" 大村西崖和陳師曾: 近代

promoted Chinese Literati painting, he must have made a deep impression on Chen Hengke. It is generally believed that Omura Seigai's *The Revival of Literati Painting* influenced Chen Hengke's "The Value of Literati Painting". This can be seen more clearly in the second edition of Chen's article.

In 1922, Chen Hengke produced both his rewrite of "The Value of Literati Painting" and his translation of Omura Seigai's *The Revival of Literati Painting* in literary Chinese. He put the translation and his own article into one book entitled *A Study of Chinese Literati Painting*. This shows the close relationship between Chen's article and Omura's book. Parallelism between Chen's new edition of the article and Omura's book can be found in many places. This will be discussed later in this Chapter.

When people of Chen Hengke's time were praising Western painting's realism and criticizing Chinese painting's lack of the same quality, it was important for the defenders of Chinese painting to explain its legitimacy. Chinese painting, as an art form, has long been dominated by the literati, the official-scholar class. Discussions of Chinese painting, it is usual to refer to literati painting. To speak for literati painting, both Chen Hengke and Omura Seigai devoted a large

爲文人畫復興的兩個苦鬥者 (Omura Seigai and Chen Shizeng: The two rivals for a renaissance in literati painting in the recent era), *Meishushi yanjiu*, no. 4 (1996): 13. See Appendix I, No. 40.

portion of their works to the value placed on disregarding physical resemblance in painting.

In the beginning of "The Value of Literati Painting", Chen Hengke defined literati painting thus:

It is painting bearing the nature and the taste of the literati. It is not particularly concerned with artistic techniques of painting. It must show the many amusements of the literati, which are elements not represented in the painting itself.⁵¹

It is very clear in this definition that technique is not particularly important. What is important is whether literati painting conveys the feelings or the ideas that the literati want to express. Poetry, calligraphy, and painting are considered the "three perfections" in Chinese art. They are the media for the literati or learned scholars to express themselves. Painting is just one. The purpose of painting for the literati is not to copy nature but to show what they feel. Chen Hengke elaborated this idea in a later paragraph:

Are the materials used by [professional] painters the same as those used by literati? If [the materials] are the same, literati use them to express their feelings toward things common among people and things of the past and present.

⁵¹ Chen Hengke, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi", 1.

In this way the literati create paintings. These feelings can be expressed through literature as well as painting.⁵² In China, although literati do not care much about technique or realism, their paintings are valued much more highly than those of professional painters. Professional painters are considered tradesman with a low status in society. Yao Mangfu, a close friend of Chen Hengke, wrote in the preface to *A Study of Chinese Literati Painting*:

Since the time when calligraphy and painting went their separate ways, painting became work for craftsmen. Although the classics say that the masters [of painting] were not few during the Two Capitals Period [Western Han and Eastern Han] and the Six Dynasties Era, most of them just followed the established rules and nothing changed. It is said that the time when change started was that since Wang Youcheng 王右丞 [Wang Wei 王維, 701-761] of the Tang Dynasty, who merged poetry with painting. Then pleasure emerged from the brush. . . .⁵³

For Yao Mangfu, there is little real painting before the artistic renderings by literati. This notion of painting had prevailed

⁵² Ibid, 3.

⁵³ Yao Mangfu 姚茫父, *Zhongguo wenrenhua zhi yanjiu xu* 中國文人畫之研究序 (Preface to *A Study of Chinese Literati Painting*), in Chen Hengke, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi". See Appendix I, No. 41.

throughout Chinese history until the latter half of the nineteenth century. This is also the reason why Zou Yigui thought that Western painting "cannot fit in any painting category." When Zou Yigui saw Western painting, he could not see anything in it that was needed in a good literati painting, such as spirit resonance and the brush method. What he saw in Western painting was only realism, which he considered the result of craftsmanship.

What is more appreciated in Chinese painting is the expression of literati feelings and thoughts. However, when people started to appreciate Western realism and blame the "care-free" manner of Chinese literati painting, the defenders of traditional Chinese painting needed more powerful arguments for the literati stance to win back their audience. Omura Seigai said:

Therefore most of the reformers encourage naturalism. . . . People who think so will understand its faultiness once they compare painting to photography. Painting is far behind photography in terms of the delicacy and meticulousness with which nature is depicted. . . . If faithful representation were the ultimate mark of excellence in art, then painting, as an the art corresponding to nature, should have become

extinct after the invention of photography.⁵⁴

This is a very convincing argument. If the purpose of art is to copy the nature faithfully, then painting would indeed be dead after the invention of photography, for photography produces a better representation of nature than painting.

Omura Seigai spent a large portion of *The Revival of Literati Painting* arguing that painting is not merely copying nature. It has other valuable qualities that move people. Chen Hengke recognized this point and further asserted in "The Value of Literati Painting":

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.⁵⁵

Chen Hengke not only recognized the faithfulness with which photography represents nature, but also acknowledged that it can convey artistic ideas by shooting things differently. Today people consider photography not only a recording method but also an art. This notion of photography today is very similar to

⁵⁴ Omura Seigai, 5. See Appendix I, No. 42.

⁵⁵ Chen Hengke, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi", 3.

that of Chen Hengke's in the early nineteen twenties.

Painting in Chen Hengke's view is not only a recording method but also, something else, and that makes it art. Chen Hengke believed that painting developed past the stage of pursuing physical resemblance to the stage of not pursuing physical resemblance. He said:

Moreover, the literati's no-pursuit-of-physical-resemblance is an advance in painting. Why do I say so? Let me bring up a simple example. Today when a person starts to learn painting, he wants to pursue physical resemblance, but cannot do it. After a long time he can gradually grasp likeness—the longer the more similar. Later he can memorize all the forms of the objects that he sees. When he paints freely, nothing will be dissimilar [to physical reality]. He does not need to sketch all the details and can paint at will. What he paints and he would correspond to each other closely. This is because his spirit can go beyond the objects themselves. So, he can express his spirit through images of objects. There is no other reason. The reason is that he can get the main points.⁵⁶

If painting evolves from pursuing physical resemblance to

⁵⁶ Chen Hengke "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi", 8.

expressing human feelings, then it can be said that Chinese painting is more advanced. However, this argument by itself is not enough. The problem in Chen Hengke's time was the impact of Western painting. He needed to apply what he believed to Western painting. Omura Seigai already noted about Western painting in *The Revival of Literati Painting*:

Western paintings of recent times are not necessarily following nature blindly. Some depict impressions and are called Impressionism. Some express feelings themselves and are called Expressionism. Are these [Western art movements] not caused by exposure to the ideal of East Asian art?⁵⁷

Omura Seigai pointed out that the Impressionists and the Expressionists were moving away from the faithful representation of nature due to the influence of the East.

Chen Hengke also showed his knowledge of the trend of Western art at that time. He said:

It can be said that Western paintings resemble physical reality to the extreme. Since the nineteenth century, [Western people] used scientific methods to study light and color. They have a deep and fine understanding of physical phenomena. However, since recent times,

⁵⁷ Omura Seigai, 18. See Appendix I, No. 43.

Post-Impressionism has gone the opposite direction. It does not emphasize objective reality, but lets free [the artist's] subjectivity. Cubism, Futurism, and Expressionism have appeared one after another. The change of their thought proves that physical resemblance is not enough to make most art.⁵⁸

Since Impressionism, Western painting has developed toward non-realistic representation. If Western artists do not pursue realism anymore, why should Chinese artists follow this outdated Western tradition? Moreover, in Chen Hengke's model, pursuing realistic representation is the earlier stage of painting. Expressing feelings through painting was, to him, more advanced. Chen Hengke also mentioned Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Futurism, and Expressionism. These modern Western art trends stepped even further away from realism. This proves Chen Hengke's theory that painting developed from pursuing physical resemblance to nonrealistic representation. He not only painted his Chinese paintings but also noted the trends of Western painting. His educational background and his eight-year stay in Japan may have contributed to his broad view of world art.

Although Chen Hengke considered the artist's expression much more important than realistic representation, this does not mean

⁵⁸ Chen Hengke, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi", 9.

that he considered realistic representation unimportant. Since the literati express themselves through the objects that they painted, it is still important for the viewer to recognize what they paint. Chen Hengke said,

In the beginner's stage, if one gives up formal resemblance pursuing goals high and far-to-reach and if one only talks about lofty words without learning basic skills, the mountains and rivers, birds and beasts, or grass and woods [that are painted] cannot be distinguished.⁵⁹

From this passage one can understand that Chen Hengke thought that in the beginning stage of learning painting, mastering how to depict nature accurately is very important. He did not consider formal resemblance unimportant. After all the literati painters have to express themselves through the objects that they paint. If the audience cannot recognize things in a painting, the painting cannot be understood. Therefore, although literati painters consider expression more important, they are still loyal to nature to some extent.

Another important element that separates Chinese painting from Western painting is the influence of calligraphy. Many Chinese painters believe in *shuhua tongyuan* 書畫同源, which means calligraphy and painting have the same origin or are originally

⁵⁹ Chen Hengke, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi", 3.

the same. It is commonly believed that this idea was first written in Zhang Yanyuan's 張彥遠 *Lidai Minghuaaji* 歷代名畫記. Many scholars today still believe that calligraphy and painting were originally the same. This idea can be seen in the passage by Chen Hengke's good friend Yao Mangfu, which is previously quoted in this chapter: "Since calligraphy and painting went separate ways, painting became work for craftsmen."⁶⁰ This sentence implies that Yao Mangfu believed that calligraphy and painting were originally the same. Chinese characters were originally pictographs, many of them representing actual objects. So, writing, like painting, was image based and therefore, many Chinese scholars think that painting and calligraphy were originally the same.

Of course, Chen Hengke did not say outright that calligraphy and painting have the same origin, but he did mention the close relation between these two arts, which makes Chinese painting so unique. What he said was:

Moreover, the methods of painting and calligraphy correspond to each other. Most people who are good at calligraphy usually can paint too. Therefore, throughout history, many people mastered both calligraphy and painting. The brushwork of painting is no different from that of

⁶⁰ Yao Mangfu.

calligraphy.⁶¹

In addition, in "The Value of Literati Painting," Chen Hengke quoted a poem by Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254-1322), which says calligraphy and painting were originally the same. The poem states: "Rocks are like flying-white; trees are like seal script. Painting bamboo even requires mastering in the eight methods. If one can understand this, he must know that painting and calligraphy are originally the same."⁶² This poem quoted by Chen Hengke means that to master painting, one must master calligraphy first. So, besides pictographs, the correspondence of the methods between painting and calligraphy also makes Chinese scholars think that calligraphy and painting were originally the same. The Chinese brush is a tool for literati to express what they think and how they feel. All the character of a Chinese scholar builds up within the brush. When writing down the words of a poem or an essay, it naturally becomes calligraphy. A reader not only reads what literati write, but appreciates the calligraphy at the same time. Therefore it is important for a Chinese scholar to have an excellent brush. When the literati appreciate a painting, they also examine the

⁶¹ Chen Hengke, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi", 6.

⁶² This quote is from the colophon of Zhao Mengfu's painting *Elegant Rocks and Sparse Trees* (Xiushi shulintu 秀石疏林圖) in the Palace Museum in Beijing.

brushwork. In "The Value of Literati Painting", Chen Hengke also stated that spirit resonance (*qiyun* 氣韻) and bone method (*gufa yongbi* 骨法用筆) are the most basic and crucial elements of Xie He's Six Laws.⁶³ Since spirit resonance is the most important, physical resemblance becomes less so. The stress of bone method makes painting and calligraphy closely related. These are also the most important two elements that distinguish Chinese painting from Western painting. This also contributes very much to the debate of westernization during Chen Hengke's time.

⁶³ The translation of the elements of the Six Laws is from William Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), 4.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION

The debate over the westernization of Chinese painting was actually the debate over realism. The reformers Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Cai Yuanpei, and Xu Beihong believed Western realism could improve Chinese painting. However, many Chinese traditional painters disagreed strongly. Chen Hengke, as a leader of the Beijing painting circle, wrote "The Value of Literati Painting" to defend not stressing physical resemblance in Chinese literati painting. He quoted arguments taken from the writings of ancient artists. He also recognized the impact of photography on painting: since photography can preserve reality much better than painting, if physical reality were what a painter must pursue, then painting should have disappeared after the invention of photography. Moreover, he talked about the current trend in Western painting at that time, which was heading toward abstraction, not realism.

The Japanese art historian Omura Seigai's book *The Revival of Literati Painting* influenced Chen Hengke very much. This can be seen in the second edition of Chen's "The Value of Literati Painting". Parallels can be found in Chen and Omura's works. Chen Hengke even translated Omura Seigai's book and published it with his own article in a new book called *The Studies of Chinese Literati Painting*. This book not only shows the close relation

of Chen Hengke's article and Omura Seigai's book, but also represents the close relationship between Chinese and Japanese art circles. Qi Baishi recorded how Chen Hengke helped him introduce his paintings in an exhibition in Japan, resulting in a big success. This close relationship between Chinese and Japanese art worlds during this period is worth further study.

Chen Hengke was an important figure in the Chinese art world during the late Qing and early Republican Era. However, he lived a relatively short life. This thesis examines only a part of the debate over the westernization of Chinese painting. To grasp the whole debate at that time requires broader and deeper studies of other major artists and art critics of the time. Even though Chen Hengke was a famous artist, he is not as well remembered as Qi Baishi today. Chen's short life might be a reason. His life ended before he could create a significant body of work or create a very distinctive personal style. Although this thesis does not include a discussion of all Chen Hengke's art works, this subject in itself is worthy of further study.

Today the debate over tradition and westernization in art still continues in East Asian countries. By studying the arguments of Chen Hengke and other art critics during the great turmoil of China, one can better understand the history of this problem.

APPENDIX I: CHINESE TEXTS

1. 陳師曾在世紀之初提出的理論，有效地支持了傳統派的發展。(薛永年〈世紀革新中的傳統派散論〉)
2. 要擁護那德先生，便不得不反對孔教、禮法、貞節、舊倫理、舊政治；要擁護那賽先生，便不得不反對舊藝術、舊宗教；要擁護德先生又要擁護賽先生，便不得不反對國粹和舊文學。(陳獨秀〈《新青年》罪案之答辯書〉)
3. 古時常來喫人，我也還記得，可是不甚清楚。我翻開歷史一查，這歷史沒有年代，歪歪斜斜的每頁上都寫著「仁義道德」幾個字。我橫豎睡不著，仔細看了半夜，才從字縫裏看出字來，滿本都寫著兩個字是「喫人」！(魯迅〈狂人日記〉)
4. 張棣生於其所居之東，葺堂一椽以居我，堂前有槐一株，因名之曰槐堂，賦此遣懷。(陳衡恪)
5. 時陳公寶箴為湖南巡撫，其子三立輔之。慨然以湖南開化為己任。丁酉六月……陳公父子與前任學政江君標乃謀大集豪傑於湘南，……於是聘余及□□□□□□等為學堂教習。……而君亦為陳公所敦促，即棄官歸。(梁啟超〈譚嗣同傳〉)
6. 自祖父挈家寄寓今陵，……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。(陳封懷口述，陳小從筆錄)
7. 我在琉璃廠南紙鋪，掛了賣畫刻印的潤格，陳師曾見著我刻的印章，特別到法源寺來訪我，晤談之下，即成莫逆。師曾……在京裏很負盛名。我在行篋中，取出借山圖卷，請他鑒定。他說我的畫格是高的，但還有不到精湛的地方。……他勸我自創風格，不必求媚世俗。(齊白石〈白石老人自述〉)
8. 我那時的畫，學的是八大山人冷逸的一路，不為北京人所喜愛，除了陳師曾以外，懂得我畫的人，簡直是絕無僅有。我的潤格，一個扇面，定價銀幣兩元，比同時一般畫家的價碼，便宜一半，尚且很少人來問津，生涯落寞得很。師曾勸我自出新意，變通畫法，我聽了他話，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(今陽)，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。」（齊白石〈白石老人自述〉）

9. 陳師曾從日本回來，帶去的畫，通都賣了出去，而且賣價特別豐厚。我的畫，每幅就賣了一百元銀幣，山水畫更貴，二尺長的紙，賣到兩百五十元銀幣。這樣的善價，在國內是想也不敢想的。還說法國人在東京，選了師曾和我兩人的畫，加入巴黎藝術展覽會。日本人又想把我們兩人的作品和生活狀況，拍攝電影，在東京藝術院放映。這都是意想不到的事。經過日本展覽以後，外國人來北京買我畫的很多。琉璃廠的骨董鬼，就紛紛來求我的畫，預備去做投機生意。一般附庸風雅的人，也都來請我畫了。從此以後，我賣畫生涯，一天比一天興盛起來。這都是師曾提拔我的一番厚意，我是永遠望不了他的。（齊白石〈白石老人自述〉）

10. 在隨王夢白先生學畫時期，前後我又認識了許多名畫家，如陳師曾、金拱北、姚茫父、汪藹士、陳半丁、齊白石等。……民國十三年，我三十歲生日，我的這幾位老師就合作了一張畫，送給我作為紀念。這張畫是在我家的書房裏合畫的。第一個下筆的是凌植支先生，……姚茫父先生接著畫了薔薇、櫻桃、陳師曾先生畫上了竹子、山石，夢白先生就在山石上畫了一隻八哥。最後，輪到了齊白石先生……。（梅蘭芳《舞台生涯》）

11. 這是民國十年的秋天……。一天下午，我把家藏明代以畫佛著名的丁南羽（雲鵬）的一幅羅漢向做為參考。……剛畫了一半，陳師曾、羅慶公、姚茫父、金拱北……都來了。我說：「諸位來得正好，請來指點指點。」我凝神斂氣的畫完了這張佛像，幾位老師都說我畫佛像有進步。金拱北說：「我要挑一個眼，這張畫上的羅漢，應該穿草鞋。」我說：「你挑得對，但是羅漢已經畫成，無法修改了，那可怎麼辦？」金先生說：「我來替你補上草鞋。」他拿起筆來，在羅漢身後添了一根禪杖，一雙草鞋掛在禪杖上，還補了一束經卷。大家都說補得好，金先生畫完了還在畫上寫了幾句跋語：

畹華畫佛，忘卻草鞋，余為補之，並添經杖，免得方外諸公繞舌。

許伯明那天也在我家，看我畫完就拿走了，裱好後，還請大家題詠一番，師曾先生題曰：

掛卻草鞋，遊行自在。不聽箏琶，但聽松籟。朽者說偈，諸君莫怪。

茫父先生題了一首五言絕句：

芒鞋何處去，踏破祇尋常。此心如此腳，本來兩光光。

（梅蘭芳《舞台生涯》）

12. 該校國畫教員為王夢白、陳師曾、姚華諸名家，此數人均以寫意見長，工筆

似非所擅。故學生作品乃不免受其一部份之影響，而有頃向潑筆之趨勢也。(民國十二年《上海時報》〈北京美專成績展覽會〉)

13. 日前承臨校講演，同人甚為感動。現在報名於畫法研究會者，已有七十餘人。擬刻期開辦，惟會章須請先生審定，然後宣布。(蔡元培〈致陳衡恪函〉)

14. 而所以行之者，似宜先指定導師數人，預為商榷一切辦法，然後可資進行。京師人文薈萃，想不乏人。如有丹青妙手，集合討論，走亦得追隨其後，受益不淺也。(陳衡恪〈覆蔡元培函〉)

15. 在小桌上和床裏邊，堆放著很多德文和法文書，大都是美學論著，也有少量日文書刊，最引人注目的是萊比錫印製的西歐名家畫集，裝幀很考究。(劉海粟〈憶蔡元培先生〉)

16. 北大三院沒有好住處，住在東方飯店既貴又吵，不宜于作畫、讀書和思考，還是住到北京美術學校去，那兒畫家很多，吳新吾、姚茫父、王夢白、陳師曾都是很正直的藝術家，你們可以切磋繪畫……。(劉海粟〈憶蔡元培先生〉)

17. 我和姚茫父、吳新吾、王夢白、陳師曾、李毅士等名畫家都在那兒探討過文藝思潮，評論過中外名作。師曾常常要坐到午夜十二點後才肯離去，我們在一起看畫，作畫，討論講稿，評說時事。他們的學識和藝術上的造就都很高，年齡都比我大十來歲，對我愛護備至，陪我跑琉璃廠，買些古書和唐俑，現在還剩下師曾替我挑的幾個唐代舞俑，……。(劉海粟〈憶蔡元培先生〉)

18. 提倡風雅、保存國粹(中國畫學研究會宗旨)

19. 書畫是我們的國粹，卻是模仿古人的。(蔡元培〈文化運動不要忘了美育〉)

20. 臨畫不如看畫。遇古人真本，向上研究，視其定義若何、結構若何、出入若何、偏正若何、安放若何、用筆若何、積墨若何，必於我有一出頭地處，久之自與 合矣。(王原祈〈雨窗漫筆〉)

21. 論畫以形似，見與兒童臨(蘇軾，〈書鄴陵王主簿所畫折枝二首〉)

22. 中國近世之畫衰敗極矣，蓋由畫論之謬也。(康有為《萬木草堂藏畫目》)

23. 中國畫學之頹敗，至今日已極矣！（徐悲鴻〈中國畫改良之方法〉）
24. 十載之前，義大利詩人瑪梨難蒂氏，刊行詩歌雜誌，鼓吹未來新藝術主義，……我國今日文藝之待改革，有似當年之意。而美術之衰弊，則更有甚焉者。（呂澂〈美術革命〉）
25. 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。（鄒一桂〈小山畫譜〉）
26. 中國自宋前，畫皆象形。雖貴氣韻生動，而未嘗不極尚逼真。院畫稱界畫，實為必然，無可議者，今歐人尤尚之。自東坡謬發高論，以禪品畫，謂作畫必須似，見與兒童鄰；則畫馬必須在牝牡驪黃之外。于是，元四家大痴、雲林、淑明、仲圭出，以其高士逸筆，大發寫意之論，而攻院體，尤攻界畫。（康有為《萬木草堂藏畫目》）
27. 中國畫在美術上，有價值乎？曰有。有故足存在。與西方畫同其價值乎？曰以物質之故略遜，然奇趣異不必較。凡趣何存？存在歷史。西方畫乃西方之文明物，中國畫乃東方之文明物。所可較者，為藝與術。然藝術復須藉他種物質憑寄。西方之物質可盡術盡藝，中國之物質不能盡術盡藝，以此之故略遜。（徐悲鴻〈中國畫改良之方法〉）
28. 夫畫者，以筆色布紙，凡微之物，而窮天地之象者也。（徐悲鴻〈中國畫改良之方法〉）
29. 中國之畫，與書法為緣，而多含文學之趣味。西人之畫，與建築彫刻為緣，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，以技能及義蘊勝，善畫者或兼建築、圖畫二術。（蔡元培〈華工學校講義〉）
30. 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從漢時到六朝的人物畫。進步之速。以如上述。自六朝至隋唐。也有進步可見。不過自宋朝至近代。沒甚進步可言罷了。然而不能以宋朝到現今幾百年間的暫告停頓。便說中國畫不是進步的。譬如有人走了許多路。在中途立住了腳。我們不能以他一時的止步。就說他不能步行。安知中國繪畫不能於最近的將來又進步起來

呢？所以我說中國畫是進步的。但眼下的中國畫進步與否。尚難為切實的解答罷了。（陳衡恪〈中國人物畫之變遷〉）

31. 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，當以朗世寧為太祖矣。如仍守舊不變，則中國畫學應遂滅絕。國人豈無英絕知識應運而興，合中西而為畫學新紀元者，其在今乎？吾斯望之。（康有為《萬木草堂藏畫目》）

32. 若想把中國畫改良，首先要革王畫的命。因為改良中國畫，斷不能不採用洋畫寫實的精神。（陳獨秀〈美術革命一答呂澂〉）

33. 今世為東西文化融合時代。西洋之所長，吾國自當採用。抑有人謂西洋昔時已採用中國畫法者，義大利文學復古時代，人物畫後加山水，說者謂之中國派。即法國路易十五時，有羅科科派，金壁輝煌，說者謂之參用我國畫法。又法國畫家有謨德者，其名畫寫白黑二人，惟取二色映帶，他畫亦多此類，近於吾國畫派。彼西方美術家能採我之長，我人獨不能採用西人之長乎？故望中國畫家，亦須採用西洋畫布景寫實之佳，描寫石膏物象及田野風景。……今吾輩學畫，當用研究科學之方法貫注之。（蔡元培〈在北大畫法研究會之演說詞〉）

34. 將來中國畫如何變遷不可預知。總之，有人研究斯有進步。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。固在善于會通，以發揮固有之特長爾。（陳衡恪《中國繪畫史》）

35. 東西洋畫理本同，閱中畫古本其與外畫相同者頗多……希望悲鴻先生此去，溝通中外，成一世界著名畫者。（陳衡恪〈歡送徐悲鴻赴法國演說〉）

36. 陳師曾於西元 1923 年逝世，他的《中國繪畫史》出版於 1925 年，寫作時間當在 1919 年前在北京美專任教授期間。則他主張「採取」外國畫法的觀點昭昭明甚。

但他後來到了「中國畫學研究會」裡，他又改變了自己的觀點，因為研究會是以「保存國粹」為宗旨的。同時，他和金城、周肇祥在一起，情好密切，金、周都是「國粹派」，都反對西洋畫法，於是陳師曾的觀點也有所改變。（陳傳席《中國繪畫理論史》）

37. 在民初的一片打倒文人畫的呼聲中，陳師曾是首先站出來為文人畫進行重新肯定與評價的畫家。（王玉立〈繪學雜誌研究〉）

38. 洋畫概易入俗眼，即如應舉之低級畫品，博世俗之歡心，蓋盡寫生之技巧耳。
(大村西崖〈文人畫之復興〉陳衡恪譯)

39. 「美術革命」的許多主張，是「文學革命」基本觀點的引申和發揮。最初提出革新中國話的一些主要論點，雖不能說是「無一字無來歷」，但確實往往是受到文學革命論者的影響和啓發。(水天中〈中國畫革新論爭的回顧〉)

40. 師曾受西崖的影響，不久以白話文完成〈文人畫的價值〉，成爲文人畫之復興的姊妹篇。(劉曉路〈大村西崖和陳師曾：近代爲文人畫復興的兩個苦鬥者〉)

41. 自書畫分流，而畫爲工人之事。典籍所徵，雖兩京六代不乏名者，大都習其軌則因仍不變。始變者相傳起唐王右丞援詩入畫，然後趣由筆生……。(姚茫父〈中國文人畫之研究序〉)

42. 故革新者流多唱自然主義。……懷此意見者，一旦以繪畫與照相對比相較，立可悟其說之非。其寫自然之精巧周密，繪畫自遠不及照相。……若以寫生爲藝術之極致，則對應自然之藝術自照相法發明以來，繪畫即可滅亡。(大村西崖〈文人畫之復興〉陳衡恪譯)

43. 近時洋畫不必皆盲從自然。或描寫印象，謂之印象派；或寫自家之感想，謂之表現派。豈非東亞美術之理想浸潤之所致耶？(大村西崖〈文人畫之復興〉陳衡恪譯)

APPENDIX II: THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF CHEN HENGKE'S

"THE VALUE OF LITERATI PAINTING"

文人畫之價值
 陳衡恪
 何謂文人畫即畫中帶有文人之性質含有文
 人之趣味不在畫中考究藝術上之工夫必須
 於畫外看出許多文人之感想此之所謂文人
 畫或謂以文人作畫必於藝術上功力欠缺節
 外生枝而以畫外之物為彌補掩飾之計殊不知
 畫之為物是性靈者也思想者也活動者也
 非器械者也非單純者也否則直如照相器千
 篇一律人云亦云何貴乎人邪何重乎藝術邪
 所貴乎藝術者在陶寫性靈發表個性與其
 夫文人畫之價值
 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
 藝術之所發表抒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
 於藝術之觀念深淺不同而多少必含有文人
 之思想否則如走馬看花渾淪吐棄蓋此謂此
 心同此理同之故耳
 世俗之所謂文人畫以為藝術不甚考究形體
 不正確失畫家之規矩任意塗抹以醜怪為能

Figure 1. Chen Hengke, "The Value of Literati Painting", Page 1.

以荒率為美專家視為野狐禪流俗從而非笑
 文人畫遂不能見賞於人而進退趨踰動中繩
 墨彩色鮮麗搔首弄姿者目為上乘雖然陽春
 白雪曲高寡和文人畫之不見賞流俗正可見
 其格調之高耳
 夫文人畫又豈僅以醜怪荒率為事邪曠觀古
 今文人之畫其格局何等謹嚴意匠何等精密
 下筆何等矜慎立論何等幽微學養何等深醇
 豈粗心淨氣輕妄之輩所能望其肩背哉但文
 人畫首重精神不貴形式故形式有所欠缺而
 六文人畫之價值 二一
 精神優美者仍不失為文人畫文人畫中固亦
 有醜怪荒率者所謂寧樸毋華甯拙毋巧甯醜
 怪毋妖好寧荒率毋工整純任天真不假修飾
 正足以發揮個性振起獨立之精神力矯輓美
 取姿塗脂抹粉之態以保其可遠觀不可近玩
 之品格故謝赫六法首重氣韻次言骨法用筆
 即其開宗明義立定基礎為當門之棒喝至於
 因物賦形隨類傳彩傳摹移寫等不過入學之
 法門藝術造形之方便入聖超凡之借徑未可
 拘泥於此者也

Figure 2. Chen Hengke, "The Value of Literati Painting", Page 2.

蓋嘗論之東坡詩云論畫貴形似見與兒童鄰
 乃玄妙之談耳若夫初學繪形似而驚高遠空
 言上達而不下學則何山川鳥獸草木之別哉
 僅拘拘於形似而形式之外別無可取則照相
 之類也人之技能又豈可與照相器具藥水並
 論邪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
 文人畫有何奇哉不過發揮其性靈與感想而
 六文人畫之價值 三二
 已試問文人之事何事邪無非文辭詩賦而已
 文辭詩賦之材料無非山川草木禽獸蟲魚及
 尋常目所接觸之物而已其感想無非人情
 世故古往今來之變遷而已試問畫家所畫之
 材料是否與文人同若與之同則文人以其材
 料寄託其人情事故古往今來之感想則畫也
 謂之文亦可謂之畫亦可而山川草木禽獸蟲
 魚尋常目所接觸之物信手拈來頭頭是道譬
 如耳目鼻舌筆墨也聲色臭味者山川鳥獸蟲
 魚尋常目所接觸之物也而所以能視聽言動

Figure 3. Chen Hengke, "The Value of Literati Painting", Page 3.

獨發者乃人之精神所主司運用也文人既有此精神不過假外界之物質以運用之豈不徹幽入微無往而不可邪雖然耳目鼻舌之具有所妨礙則視聽言動不能自由故藝術不能不習練文人之感想性格各有不同而藝術習練之程度有等差此其所以異耳

今有畫如此執塗之人而使觀之則但見其有樹有山有水有橋梁屋宇而已進而言之樹之遠近山水之起伏來去橋梁屋宇之位置儼然有所會也若夫畫之流派畫之格局畫之意境

六文人畫之價值 四

畫之趣味則茫然矣何也以其無畫之觀念無畫之研究無畫之感想故文人不必要能畫畫家不必皆能文以文人之畫而使文人觀之倘有所闕何况乎非文人之畫而畫家之畫使畫家觀之則庶幾無所闕而宗派系統之差或倘有未能愜然者以文人之畫而使畫家觀之雖或引繩排根旋議其後而其獨到之處固不能不俛首者若以畫家之畫與文人之畫執塗之人使觀之或無所擇別或反以為文人之畫不若畫家之畫也嗚呼喜工整而惡荒率喜華麗而惡

Figure 4. Chen Hengke, "The Value of Literati Painting", Page 4.

質樸喜艷美而惡瘦硬喜細緻而惡劍渾喜濃澀而惡雅澹此常人之情也藝術之勝境豈僅以表相而定之哉若夫以纖弱為娟秀以粗獷為蒼渾以板滯為沈厚以淺薄為淡遠又比比皆是也捨氣韻骨法之不求而斤斤於此者蓋不達乎文人畫之旨耳

文人畫由來久矣自漢時蔡邕張衡輩皆以畫名雖未睹其畫之如何固已載諸史籍六朝莊老學說盛行當時之文人含有超世界之思想欲脫離物質之束縛發揮自由之情致寄託於

六文人畫之價值 五

高曠清靜之境如宗炳王微其人者以山水露頭角表示其思想與人格故兩家皆有畫論東坡有題宗炳畫之詩足見其文人思想之契合矣王虞王羲之獻之一家則皆旗幟鮮明漸漸發展至唐之王維張洽王宰鄭虔輩更蔚然成一代之風而唐王維又推為南宗之祖當時詩歌論說皆與畫有密切之關係流風所被歷宋元明清絲絲不絕其苦心孤旨蓋從可想矣

南北兩宋文運最隆文家詩家詞家彬彬輩出思想最為發達故繪畫一道亦隨之應運而興

Figure 5. Chen Hengke, "The Value of Literati Painting", Page 5.

各極其能歐陽永叔梅聖俞蘇東坡黃山谷對
 於繪畫皆有題詠皆能領略司馬君實王介甫
 朱考亭在畫史上皆有各足見當時文人思想
 與繪畫極相契合華光和尚之墨梅文與可之
 墨竹皆於是時表見梅與竹不過花卉之一種
 墨梅之法自昔無所聞墨竹相傳在唐時已有
 之張璪張立孫位有墨蹟南唐後主之鐵鉤鎖
 金錯刀固已變從來之法至文湖州竹派開元
 明之法門當時東坡識其妙趣文人畫不僅形
 於山水無物不可寓文人之興味也明矣
 六文人畫之價值 六
 且畫法與書法相通能書者大抵能畫故古今
 書畫兼長者多畫中筆法與書無以異也宋龔
 開論畫云人言墨鬼為戲筆是大不然此乃書
 家之草聖也豈有不善真畫而能作草者陸探
 微因王獻之有一筆書遂創一筆畫趙子昂論
 畫詩石如飛白木如籀寫竹還須入法通若也
 有人能會此須知書畫本來同又趙子昂問畫
 道於錢舜舉何以稱士氣答曰隸體耳畫史能
 辨之即可無翼而飛不爾便落邪道愈工愈遠
 柯九思論畫竹寫竹幹用篆法枝用草書法寫

Figure 6. Chen Hengke, "The Value of Literati Painting", Page 6.

葉用八分法或用魯公撒筆法木石用折釵股
 屋漏痕之遺意南唐後主用金錯書法畫竹可
 見文人畫不但意趣高尚而且寓書法於畫法
 使畫中更覺不簡單非僅畫之範圍內用功使
 可了事尚須從他種方面研究始能出色故宋
 元明清文人畫頗占勢力蓋其有各種素養各
 種學問湊合得來即遠而言之蔡邕王虞義獻
 皆以書家而兼畫家者也
 倪雲林自論畫云僕之所謂畫者不過逸筆草
 草不求形似聊以自娛又論畫竹云余畫竹聊
 以寫胸中逸氣耳豈復較其是與非吳仲圭論
 畫云墨戲之作蓋士大夫詞翰之餘適一時之
 興趣由是觀之可以想見文人畫之旨趣與東
 坡若合符節元之四大家皆品格高尚學問淵
 博故其畫上繼荆關董巨下開明清諸家法門
 四王吳惲都從四大出其畫皆非不形似格法
 精備何嘗牽強不周到不完足即雲林不求形
 似其畫樹何嘗不似樹畫石何嘗不似石所謂
 不求形似者其精神不專注於形似如畫工之
 鉤心鬪角惟形之是求耳其用筆時另有一種

Figure 7. Chen Hengke, "The Value of Literati Painting", Page 7.

意思另有一種寄託不斤斤然刻舟求劍自然
 天機流暢耳且文人畫不求形似正是畫之進
 步何以言之吾以遠近取譬今有人初學畫時
 欲求形似而不能久之則漸似矣久之則愈似
 矣後以所見物體記熟於胸中則任意畫之無
 不形似不必處處描寫自能得心應手與之契
 合蓋其神情超於物體之外而寓其神情於物
 象之中無他蓋得其主要之點故也庖丁解牛
 中其肯綮迎刃而解離神得似妙合自然其主
 要之點為何所謂象徵 Symbol 是也
 六文人畫之價值 八
 徵諸歷史之經過漢以前之畫甚難見三代鐘
 鼎之圖篆與文字不得謂之畫漢之石畫古拙
 矣文字亦若畫而不得謂之畫漢之石畫古拙
 樸魯較三代則又近似矣六朝造象則面目衣
 紋儼然畫家法度此但見於刻石者也若紙本
 練素則必彩色工麗六朝進於漢魏隋唐進於
 六朝人意之求工亦自然之趨勢而求工之一
 轉則必有草草數筆而攝全神者宗炳陸探微
 之有一筆畫蓋此意歟宋人工麗可謂極矣如
 黃筌徐熙滕昌祐易元吉輩皆寫生能手而東

Figure 8. Chen Hengke, "The Value of Literati Painting", Page 8.

坡文與可極不以形似立論人心之思想無不
 求進進於實質而無可回旋無寧求於空虛以
 提揭乎實質之為愈也以一人之作畫而言經
 過形似之階級必現不形似之手腕其不形似
 者志乎筌蹄遊於天倪之謂也西洋畫可謂形
 似極矣自十九世紀以來以科學之理研究光
 與色其於物象體驗入微而近來之後印象派
 乃反其道而行之不重客體專任主觀立體派
 未來派表現派聯翩演出其思想之轉變亦足
 見形似之不足盡藝術之長而不能不別有所
 求矣或又謂文人畫過於深微奧妙使世人不
 易領會何不稍卑其格期於普及耶此正如欲
 盡改中國之文辭以俯就白話強已能言語之
 童而學呱呱嬰兒之泣其可乎欲求文人畫之
 普及先須於其思想品格之陶冶世人之觀念
 引之使高以求接近文人之趣味則文人之畫
 自能領會自能享樂不求其本而齊其末則文
 人畫終流於工匠之一途而文人畫之特質掃
 地矣若以適俗應用而言則別有工匠之畫在
 又何必以文人而降格越俎耶
 六文人畫之價值 九

Figure 9. Chen Hengke, "The Value of Literati Painting", Page 9.

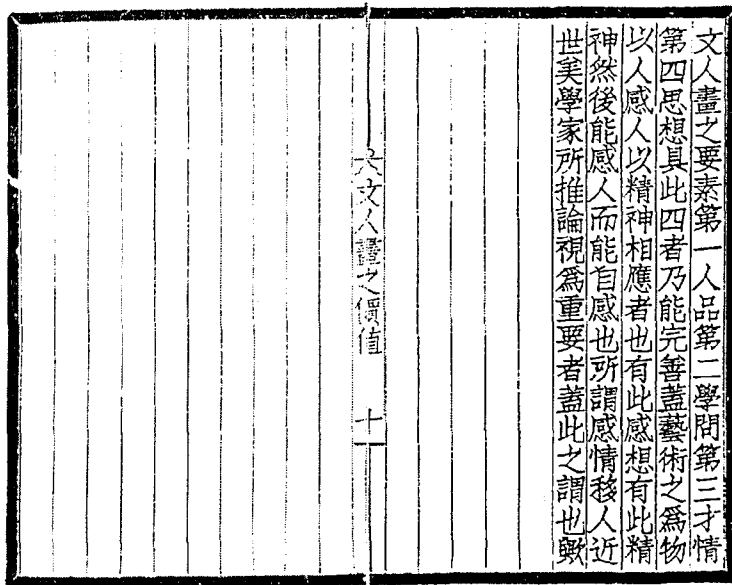


Figure 10. Chen Hengke, "The Value of Literati Painting", Page 10.

APPENDIX III: TRANSLATION OF CHEN HENGKE'S

"THE VALUE OF LITERATI PAINTING"

What is the so-called literati painting? It is painting bearing the nature and the taste of the literati. It is not particularly concerned with artistic techniques of painting. It must show the many amusements of the literati, which are elements not represented in the painting itself. This is what is meant by literati painting. However, some people say that when literati paint, they must not be competent in artistic technique. Therefore, they [literati] do something unnecessary; that is, they do things other than painting itself in order to cover up [their lack of technique]. Yet these people do not know that painting, as an art, is spirit, thoughts, and animation; it is not something mechanical or simple. Otherwise, it would be like photographic equipment, from which the productions are always the same, like repeating words that have already been said many times by other people. Then, what is the value of the human being and what is the importance of art? 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. Otherwise [looking at literati paintings] would be like glancing through sceneries and not understanding anything. This is because people with the same kind of mind can have the same kind of understandings.

Common people's understanding of the so-called literati painting is: it is not concerned much with art [technique]; the proportion of objects is not accurate; it violates the conventions held by [professional] painters; it is carelessly painted. [They think that the literati] consider ugliness and weirdness as proficient, and carelessness as beautiful. Experts see literati painting as heresy and just follow the common people's view, laughing [at literati painting]. Therefore literati painting cannot be appreciated by the general public. Moreover, [the general public think that the paintings] which are clumsy, unbalanced, too colorful, and exaggerated are considered first-rate. Lofty songs appeal only to highbrow people and few can appreciate them. That literati painting is not being appreciated by the masses only proves the sublimity

of its stature.

But is literati painting merely ugly, weird, and careless? When looking at a literati painting from the ancient times until now, one can see that the literati's design has been so serious, their concept so exquisite, their brushwork so attentive, their theory so profound, and their knowledge so deep: how can superficial, flippant, and frivolous people catch up with it? However, literati paintings first stress spirituality, but they do not honor formality. Therefore those that lack formality but have a graceful spirit still do not lose their quality as literati paintings. Among literati paintings, it is true that there are also some ugly, weird, and careless ones. It is said that simple is better than delicate, innocent better than sophisticated, ugly and weird better than bewitching, and careless better than finicky. Letting it be naive without polishing can flourish one's character, excite one's independent spirit, and correct those pretentious and over-decorated paintings, so as to preserve their high and untouchable character. Therefore the most important element in Xie He's 謝赫 [457/464-532/549] Six Laws¹ is spirit resonance

¹ The Six Laws were proposed by Xie He of the Liang Dynasty in his *Gu huapin lu* 古畫品錄 (A record of the classification of ancient painters). The translation of the elements of the Six Laws is from William Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), 4.

[*qiyun* 氣韻] and the second most important is bone method, which is using the brush [*gufa yongbi* 骨法用筆]. [These two elements] are proposed very clearly in the very beginning of his argument and are the basis for his canon. As for correspondence to the object, which means the depicting of forms [*yinwu fuxing* 因物賦形], suitability to type, which has to do with the laying on of colors [*suileifucai*, 隨類傅彩], transmission by copying, that is to say the copying of models [*chuanmo yixie* 傳摹移寫], and so on, they are merely the gateways to the basics of the learning, convenient for artistic formulation, and for the passage to holiness. One must never persist in focusing on these [lesser elements].

A poem by Dongpo 東坡 [Su Shi 蘇軾, 1037-1101] that has often been discussed says, "If one judges painting by formal likeness, his opinions are close to those of a child."² What a wonderful argument it is! In the beginner's stage, if one gives up formal resemblance pursuing goals high and far-to-reach and if one only talks about lofty words without learning basic skills, the mountains and rivers, birds and beasts, or grass and woods [that are painted] cannot be distinguished. However, if people only confine themselves to pursuing likeness and there is nothing

² Su Shi 蘇軾, "Shu Yanlingwang Zhubu suohua zhezhi ershou" 書鄢陵王主簿所畫折枝二首 (Two poetic inscriptions written on the flowers painted by the secretary Wang of Yanling).

else to say about their art except likeness, their paintings are like photography. But how can human skills be compared with photographic equipment and chemicals? 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.

What is the wonder of literati painting? It simply expresses spirit and feeling. What are the things that literati do? They do nothing more than literature and poetry. The materials for literature and poetry are nothing more than mountains and rivers, grass and woods, birds and beasts, insects and fish, and other things people can often see. The sentiment of the literati comes only from things common among people and from things of the past and present. Are the materials used by [professional] painters the same as those used by literati? If [the materials] are the same, literati use them to express their feelings toward things common among people and toward things of the past and present. In this way the literati create paintings. These feelings can be expressed through literature as well as painting. Things like mountains and rivers, grass and woods, birds and beasts, and insects and fish that are often seen can randomly be picked up [as materials for painting] for the same purpose. Like

[things perceived by] the ears, eyes, nose, and tongue all can be materials for the brush and the ink. Sound, color, smell, and taste are from the mountains and rivers, the birds and beasts, and the insects and fish, all of which the people often see. Therefore the excitement of vision, hearing, speech, and movement is controlled by the human spirit. Since literati have this kind of spirit, they simply make the most of the materials of the physical world. Would it not exploit the most profound and enter the most delicate stage? There is nothing that can stop this. However, the organ of ear, eye, nose, and tongue might hinder the freedom of seeing, hearing, speaking, and moving. Therefore one must practice in order to master Art. Individual literati differ in feelings and character from one another. Their level of artistic excellency also varies. This is how they differ.

Today there is such painting. Let a stubborn person look at it, and he only sees its trees, mountains, rivers, bridges, and houses in it. [Such a stubborn person] might further talk about the distance of trees from one another, the undulation of the mountains, and the positioning of bridges and houses, speaking as if he understood much about the painting. However, he does not have any ideas about the various schools of painting, the design of a painting, the mood of a painting, and the pleasure of a painting. Why? It is because he has no concept of painting,

has done no research on painting, and has no thoughts about painting. Therefore, literati do not have to be excellent at painting and painters do not have to be excellent at literature. Even literati may feel confused when looking at other literati's paintings, not to mention those of non-literati. Taking a painting by a [professional] painter and letting another [professional] painter look at it, he can almost understand it without difficulty. However, because of the variation among different schools, there may still be something in it that cannot be appreciated by all. When [professional] painters look at paintings by literati, although they may criticize these paintings that do not belong to their group by their own standards and rules, they still inevitably bow to their outstanding aspects. There is a painting by a [professional] painter and another by literati. When a stubborn person looks at the two, he cannot tell the difference, or he may even think that literati painting is not as good as paintings by [professional] painters. Alas! [This kind of person] prefers the organized rather than the relaxed, the magnificent rather than the simple and unadorned, the soft and mild rather than the fine and forceful, the delicate rather than the simple and vigorous, the heavy and decorative rather than the light and graceful. This is the thought of common people. However, how can the state of art be determined merely by superficial appearance? There are also

many people who consider the thin and weak, pretty and graceful; the rough and rugged, simple and vigorous; the stiff and rigid, calm and sincere; the superficial and shallow, light and broad. They persist in holding to such principles and so discard *qi*yun and *gufa*. Therefore they cannot grasp the essence of literati painting.

Literati painting has a long history. During the Han period, Cai Yong 蔡邕 [132-192], Zhang Heng 張衡 [78-139], and others were famous for painting. Although I did not see how their paintings look, they have been recorded in historical writings. During the Six Dynasties, the philosophy of Zhuangzi and Laozi prevailed. At that time literati had the thought of going out of the world. They wanted to get rid of the shackle of material. They wanted to exploit the feelings of freedom and place themselves in a lofty and peaceful state. For example, Zong Bing 宗炳 [375-443] and Wang Wei 王微 [415-443] were famous for landscapes, which expressed their thinking and character. Therefore, both of them wrote their criticisms on painting. [Su] Dongpo once wrote a poem praising Zong Bing's painting. This shows how their literati thought matched. Wang Yi 王廙 [276-322], Wang Xizhi 王羲之 [321-379], and [Wang] Xianzhi 王獻之 [344-388] had a very distinctive style. When it developed through Wang Wei 王維 [c. 699-c. 759], Zhang Xia 張洽 [1161-1237], Wang Zai 王宰 [785-805], and Zheng Chien 鄭虔 [d. c. 761] of the Tang

Dynasty, [literati painting] became the vogue of the period. Moreover, Wang Wei of the Tang Dynasty has been considered the founder of the Southern School.³ At that time, poetry and criticism had a very close relationship to painting. This vogue [of the Southern School painting] prevailed through the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties. It never meets an end. From this people can see the great efforts [of the ancients]. Literature prevailed greatly in the Northern and Southern Song Dynasties. Prose writers and poets appeared one after another and philosophy was highly sophisticated. Therefore, the art of painting also rose with this trend. All people did their best [in painting]. Ouyang Yongshu 歐陽永叔 [Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, 1007-1072], Mei Shengyu 梅聖俞 [Mei Yaochen 梅堯臣, 1002-1060], Su Dongpo 蘇東坡 [Su Shi 蘇軾, 1036-1101], and Huang Shangu 黃山谷 [Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅, 1045-1105] once wrote poems about painting and they could appreciate painting. Sima Junshi 司馬君實 [Sima Guang 司馬光, 1019-1086], Wang Jiefu 王介甫 [Wang

³ Here the "Southern School" means the school of literati painting. Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636) is usually considered the person who started the categorization of Chinese painting into Northern and Southern schools. For more discussion on Dong Qichang's theory, see Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037-1101) to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555-1636)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 158-172, and Wai-kam Ho, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's New Orthodoxy and the Southern School Theory," in Christian F. Murck, ed., *Artists and Traditions: Uses of the Past in Chinese Culture* (Princeton: The Art Museum, Princeton University, 1976), 113-129.

Anshi 王安石, 1021-1086], and Zhu Kaoting 朱考亭 all have great fame in the history of painting. This proves that at that time the thinking of literati matched painting very well. Both Monk Huaguang's 華光 [Zhongren 仲仁, c. 1051-1123] ink plum and Wen Yuke's 文與可 [Wen Tong 文同, 1018-1079] ink bamboo were showing at this time. Plum and bamboo are merely two kinds of flowers. The methods for painting plum in ink had not been heard before that. As for ink bamboo, it is said that it can be traced back to the Tang Dynasty. Zhang Zao 張皞 [c. 735-785], Zhang Li 張立 [late Tang Dynasty], and Sun Wei 孫位 [served as general 885-888] have left traces of their brushstrokes. Established methods were already being changed by the *tiegosuo* and *jincuodao* of the last monarch of the Southern Tang Dynasty.⁴ Then the Wen Huzhou Bamboo School 文湖州竹派⁵ created the canon for the Yuan and Ming dynasties. At that time Dongpo acknowledged its wonderful amusement. Literati visualize their thought not only in landscape painting. Nothing is unable to carry literati

⁴ *Tiegosuo* (鐵鉤鎖, iron hook lock), and *jincuodao* (金錯刀, golden jade-dressing knife) are the terms for the calligraphic style of the last monarch of Southern Tang Dynasty. They are characterized by forceful brushstrokes.

⁵ Wen Tong is also often mentioned as Wen Huzhou because he was once the governor of Huzhou. He was famous for his ink bamboo and his school is called Wen Huzhou Bamboo School. Wu Zhen 吳鎮 of the Yuan Dynasty wrote an article "The Wenhuzhou Bamboo School" (Wen Huzhou Zhupai 文湖州竹派). In this article he introduced many painters who he categorized as the Wen Huzhou Bamboo School.

thought. Literati's amusement is thus clear.

Moreover, the methods of painting and calligraphy correspond to each other. Most people who are good at calligraphy usually can paint too. Therefore, throughout history, many people mastered both calligraphy and painting. The brushwork of painting is no different from that of calligraphy. Gong Kai 龔開 [1221-1307] of the Song Dynasty wrote a critique on painting in which he said, "People say that this is an ink ghost playing with the brush. They are totally wrong. This is the *Caosheng* 草聖⁶ among calligraphists." How can one who is not good at regular script master cursive-script? Lu Tanwei 陸探微 [c. 437-c. 490] invented one-stroke painting after Wang Xianzhi's one-stroke calligraphy. Zhao Zi'ang's 趙子昂 [Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫, 1254-1322] poem on painting says, "Rocks are like flying-white; trees are like seal script. Painting bamboo even requires mastering in the eight methods. If one can understand this, he must know that painting and calligraphy are originally the same."⁷ In addition, Zhao Zi'ang asked Qian Shunju 錢舜舉 [Qian Xuan 錢選, c. 1235-c. 1307] about the art of painting,

⁶ *Cao* means grass-script. *Sheng* is the title for the ultimate master in a certain field. *Caosheng* means the best calligraphist among those who write cursive-script. Usually the title of *Caosheng* is attributed to the Tang Dynasty calligrapher Zhang Xu 張旭.

⁷ This quote is from the colophon of Zhao Mengfu's painting *Elegant Rocks and Sparse Trees* (Xiushi shulintu 秀石疏林圖) in the Palace Museum in Beijing.

saying "What is the thing called the literati spirit?" Qian answered: "The amateur style. If it can be identified in the history of painting, it can fly without wings. If not so, it will fall onto evil ways. The more delicate, the farther it goes [away from the discipline of literati painting]." Ke Jiusi 柯久思 [1290-1343] wrote in his critique on painting: "When painting bamboo, use seal script to paint the trunk, running script to paint the branches, and the *bafen* 八分 [clerical script] method or Lugong's 魯公 [Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿, 709-785] *piebi* 撇筆⁸ method to paint the leaves. To paint trees and rocks, use *zhechaigu* 折釵股⁹ or the spirit of *wulouhen* 屋漏痕¹⁰." The last monarch of the Southern Tang Dynasty used the *jincuo* 金錯 calligraphy method to paint bamboo. So it is clear that literati painting not only has a high-minded concept but also absorbs calligraphic brushwork into its painting methods, which makes the painting even more sophisticated. In order to be outstanding, it takes not only the efforts of painting itself, but also research into other aspects. Therefore, during the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, literati painting had great authority. This is because it combined several kinds of cultivation and learning. As for those who have gone far away

⁸ Left-diagonal brushstroke

⁹ A kind of calligraphic style for which a woman's hairpin is the metaphor.

¹⁰ A kind of calligraphic style for which the stain left on the

from us, Cai Yong, Wang Yi, Xi, Xian are all calligraphers as well as painters.

Ni Yunlin 倪雲林 [Ni Zan 倪瓚, 1301-1374] himself wrote in his critique on painting that: "What I call painting is no more than free and careless brushstrokes that are not aimed at pursuing physical resemblance. It is only for self-enjoyment."¹¹ In addition, he wrote in his critique on painting bamboo that "I paint bamboo only to describe the lofty spirit in my heart. How can [my painting] be criticized on the degree of its accuracy to nature?"¹² Wu Zhonggui 吳仲圭 [Wu Zhen 吳鎮, 1280-1354] wrote in his critique on painting that "The work of ink-play is created for pleasure after composing literature. It is a hobby for leisure time." From this it can be seen that the spirit and pleasure of literati painting matches Dongpo's argument. All four masters of Yuan had respectable characters and broad learning. Therefore their paintings continued Jing 荆 [Jing Hao 荆浩, c. 855-915], Guan 關 [Guan Tong 關仝, early 10th C.], Dong 董 [Dong Yuan 董源, d. 962], and Ju 巨 [Juran 巨然, active c. 960-985] and anticipated the different schools of the Ming and Qing dynasties. The Four Wangs [Wang Shimin 王時敏, 1592-1680;

wall by rain drops is the metaphor.

¹¹ This quote is from Ni Zan's "A letter replying to Zhang Zaozhong" (Da Zhang Zaozhong shu 答張藻仲書).

¹² This quote is from an inscription of Ni Zan's painting collected in *Qingbigegao* 清閼閣稿.

Wang Jian 王鑑, 1598-1677; Wang Hui 王翬, 1632-1717; Wang Yuanqi 王原祁, 1642-1715], Wu 吳 [Wu Li 吳歷, 1632-1718], Yun 惲 [Yun Shouping 惲壽平, 1633-1690] came from the lineage of the four masters' art. Their paintings do not disagree with physical reality, precisely matching all the rules and methods. There is nothing far-fetched, unsophisticated, or incomplete. Even for Yunlin, who does not pursue physical resemblance, when he paints woods, are they not like woods? Are they not like rocks when he paints rocks? The so-called no-pursuit-of-physical-resemblance means that the [artists'] efforts are not focused on physical resemblance, like the craftsmen of painting who meticulously pursue physical resemblance. When he [Yunlin] sways his brush, he has another idea and another implication [in mind]. He does not meticulously adhere to the old; therefore, nature and heavenly secrets can flow out fluently [from his brush]. Moreover, the literati's no-pursuit-of-physical-resemblance is an advance in painting. Why do I say so? Let me bring up a simple example. Today when a person starts to learn painting, he wants to pursue physical resemblance, but cannot do it. After a long time he can gradually grasp likeness—the longer the more similar. Later he can memorize all the forms of the objects that he sees. When he paints freely, nothing will be dissimilar [to physical reality]. He does not need to sketch all the details and can paint at will. What he

paints and he would correspond to each other closely. This is because his spirit can go beyond the objects themselves. So, he can express his spirit through images of objects. There is no other reason. The reason is that he can get the main points. In the story of Chef Ding 丁 dissecting a bull, Chef Ding cuts at the right points, therefore the meat is cut off very easily, as if it fell off naturally. Not being too focused can get the right result and wonderfully matches nature. What is the main point for this? It is the so-called symbol.¹³

Take examples from history as proof. Paintings before the Han Dynasty can rarely be seen. The graphics and the inscriptions on the bells and tripods of the Three Dynasties are merely symbols of objects. Although they are like words as well as paintings, these still cannot be called painting. The stone-paintings of the Han Dynasty look antique, innocent,

¹³ Chen Hengke deliberately inserted the English word "symbol" after the Chinese word *xiangzheng* 象徵. This is because the word *xiangzheng* is the translation for the word symbol. He may have inserted the English word to ensure that people understood that the combination of the two characters *xiang* and *zheng* means symbol but not anything else derived from the meanings of the two characters. The story of Chef Ding is from the Chapter of the Nurturing of Life from *Zhuangzi*. In the story, Chef Ding could dissect a bull very well without much effort. He just followed his own spirit and the nature of the bull. This story serves a symbolic meaning that following nature is the way of life. Here Chen Hengke means that a painter can just follow his spirit naturally and does not have to painstakingly draw the details. For the complete translation of Chef Ding's story, see Martin Palmer trans., *The Book of Chuang Tzu* (London: Penguin, 1996), 22-23.

simple, and ignorant. Compared with those of the Three Dynasties, they are even closer [to painting]. As for the sculptures of the Six Dynasties, the outlines of faces and draperies are like following the rules and methods of a painter, but this is only seen on stone carvings. [Paintings] on paper must have been considered dull. So many colors were added and they were meticulously painted. From Han Wei to the Six Dynasties and from Six Dynasties to Sui and Tang Dynasties, it has been a natural trend to pursue detailed rendering. In turn, from pursuing detailed rendering, there had to be some free and loose strokes that grasped the whole spirit. Zong Bing and Lu Tanwei thus had their one stroke painting, which illustrates this idea. It can be said that the Song people pursued delicacy and splendor to the extreme. For example, Huang Quan 黄筌 [c. 905-965], Xu Xi 徐熙 [d. before 975], Teng Changyou 滕昌祐, Yi Yuanji 易元吉 [11th c.] are all masters of natural representation. Dongpo and Wenyu did not base their [painting] theories on physical resemblance at all. No one does not have thoughts of pursuing advancement. They want to get to the truth and do not want to turn back. People will not pursue emptiness but will promote truth as much as possible. As for a person's life of painting, he will pass the stage of pursuing physical resemblance and then [his art] will reveal the art of not pursuing physical resemblance. The reason why he will come to not

consider physical resemblance is that he forgets about it after he masters the art of painting and starts to think that he is playing in heaven. It can be said that Western paintings resemble physical reality to the extreme. Since the nineteenth century, [Western people] used scientific methods to study light and color. They have a deep and fine understanding of physical phenomena. However, since recent times, Post-Impressionism has gone the opposite direction. It does not emphasize objective reality, but lets free [the artist's] subjectivity. Cubism, Futurism, and Expressionism have appeared one after another. The change of their thought proves that physical resemblance is not enough to make most art. Therefore [Western painting] could not avoid pursuing other things. However, some people may say "Literati painting is too abstruse to be understood by mundane people. Why not slightly lower the principles [of literati painting] to make it more popular?" This is just like compromising classical Chinese literature to fit the vernacular language or forcing a child who can speak to learn the cry of an infant. Can that be done? For literati painting to seek popularity, the first thing to do is to cultivate people's thoughts and character, and elevate their minds so that they can be familiar with the literati's amusement. Then they can naturally appreciate and enjoy literati painting. If people do not pursue the essentials but follow the trivial, literati

painting will become craftsmanship, and the characteristics of literati painting will be thrown to the ground. There are already paintings by craftsmen for practical use in common life. Why should the literati disregard their principles and do the things that belong to other professions?

The first element of literati painting is character, the second is scholarship, the third is brilliant expression, and the fourth is thought. The way art works is that people can affect other people and can communicate with each other through their spirit. A person must have this thought and spirit to move people and move himself as well. People say that feelings can affect people. This is what recent aestheticians think important.

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