

# The Revitalization of “Literati Painting”: A Study of Chinese Painting History in Taiwan and the United States during the 1950s-1960s



Zhaoxue Li<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Associate Researcher, School of Arts, Nanjing University, and Guest Researcher, Center for Sustainable Development Studies, Toyo University

中国の宋代に発展し、山水画に託して作者の心象を描いた「文人画」は第二次世界大戦後の1950-60年代に、主としてアメリカと台湾の研究者によって再発見・再評価された。そのプロセスの意義を検討する。

## Abstract

This article discusses how the discipline of Chinese painting history adapted its narrative direction and embarked upon a new journey in the aftermath of World War II, one which continued to develop throughout the 1950's and 1960's. This shift in form highlights the importance of Chinese art historians from outside of China, principally the United States of America, who continue to influence the fundamental aspects of Chinese painting history to this day.

**Keywords** Wenrenhua, literati painting, post-war; James Cahill, Chinese art history

## Introduction

In the decades immediately following the end of the Second World War, “*Wenrenhua*” (Literati painting) was regarded as the most important topic in the field of Chinese art history. At its core, *Wenrenhua* places emphasis on the artist's personality and internality. As has been previously discussed, *Wenrenhua* is a relatively new concept when compared to the long history of Chinese art. First coined during the New Cultural Movement(1910's-1920's), *Wenrenhua* emerged from the anti-traditional revolutionary consciousness that was prevalent in Chinese society at the time. However, these revolutionary ideals would later come to be considered inappropriate by Chinese Nationalists in Taiwan during the reconstruction period of the 1950's and 1960's.

As a result, there exists at the heart of *Wenrenhua* a paradox that must be reconciled. This is the contradiction between the revolutionary nature of *Wenrenhua* and the conservatism it came to symbolize after becoming orthodox within Chinese Nationalist rhetoric. This article will explore the dialogue between the revolutionary theses proposed in American studies of Chinese art

history, namely those conducted by Ernst Aschwin (1914-1988), James Cahill (1926-2014), and the need for cultural reconstruction by Chinese Nationalists in Taiwan during the 1950's and 1960's.

## *Wenrenhua*-Chinese Art History's Invented Tradition

“*Wenrenhua*” (Literati painting 文人畫) is regarded as one of the most representative concepts in the history of Chinese painting, as it encourages a type of painting which places emphasis on the artist's personality and internality. When compared to the long and storied history of Chinese art, *Wenrenhua* is a relatively modern concept<sup>1</sup> much like the concept of “*Bijutsu*” (fine arts 美術) in Japanese Art History, or “*Meishu*” (fine arts 美術) in Chinese Art History.<sup>2</sup> Against the backdrop of the New Culture Movement 新文化運動, the Japanese term Bunjinga (literati painting 文人画), was officially incorporated into the lexicon of modern Chinese art history following the translation of Ernest Francisco Fenollosa's (1853-1908) book, titled *EPOCHS of CHINESE and JAPANESE ART: An Outline History of East Asiatic Design* (Chinese translation title 中國日本美術分期史).

Under the strong advocacy of Chen Shizeng 陳師曾 (1876-1923), *Wenrenhua* was then subsequently re-evaluated and gained widespread support as a method to elevate the moral cultivation of the nation and its citizens. In short, the term *Bunjinga* was introduced to, and accepted by, modern China through the circulation of Fenollosa's aforementioned book and played a significant role in shaping the cultural construction of the nation and its people.<sup>3</sup>

### Discrepancies between the Revolutionary Concept of Literati Painting and the Orthodoxy of the Palace Museum Collection

Influenced by China's New Culture Movement, Masaru Aoki 青木正兒 (1887-1964) - a young scholar, who studied at Kyoto Imperial University (now Kyoto University) - also considered the concept of *Wenrenhua* to be a revolutionary artistic notion. Aoki undertook the task of integrating individualist painters from the Ming and Qing Dynasties into the lineage of literati painting. During the 1920's and 1930's, scholars and artists in Beijing, Kyoto, and Shanghai, among them Hu shi 胡適 (1891-1962) Hashimoto kansetsu 橋本関雪 (1883-1945) Liu haisu 劉海粟 (1896-1994) etc, established extensive academic connections with one another, emphasizing that the individualists were the real representative painters of China and casting negative aspersions on Southern School painters such as Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636).<sup>4</sup> It can be said that *Wenrenhua* in the 1920's represented republicanism and revolutionary consciousness, while considering orthodox painting to be a representation of conservatism.

Increasing recognition of the concept's modern roots has given rise to the need for further academic debate, notably the dichotomy between *Wenrenhua* and the paintings of the Palace Museum Collection, the latter often considered as symbols of imperial orthodoxy. The discord between the revolutionary concept of *Wenrenhua* and the pre-modern ideals of the conservative and orthodox Palace Museum Collection was resolved through three exhibitions carried out between the 1930's and 1960's (Nominally: the International Exhibition of China

Art, the Second National Art Exhibition 第二次全國美術展覽會 and finally Chinese Art Treasures). The Palace Museum Collection was first exhibited internationally at the International Exhibition of Chinese Art in London in 1935 (Fig.1). However, as Craig Clunas pointed out, this exhibition was actually an expression of enthusiasm for the Palace Museum Collection that was fundamentally a form of emotional transference, attempting to replace the nostalgia for the British Empire for that of the Qing Dynasty. That is to say, an empire of the Orient.<sup>5</sup> The exhibition placed considerable emphasis on the contents of the emperor's collection, diverging heavily from the desire of contemporary Chinese intellectuals to appraise the bourgeoisie class painting of *Wenrenhua*. As an explanation and method of understanding, *Wenrenhua* transformed the narratives of painting collections in the Palace Museum from imperial arts to "literati arts", thus representing revolution, through the Second National Art Exhibition (1937), and then to "aristocratic literati art" representing orthodoxy, which was finally pronounced as a "national treasure" in the 1960's.



Fig. 1. The display of the International Exhibition of China Art

Source: Cai, M. F 蔡玫芬. *Ba zheng mao nian : Guo li gu gong bo wu yuan ba shi nian de dian di huai xiang* 八徵耄念：國立故宮博物院八十年的點滴懷想 (Chu ban). Taipei : Guo li gu gong bo wu yuan. 2006

The Chinese Art Treasures exhibition held in the United States from 1961 to 1962 reinterpreted the Palace Museum Collection as “national treasures of literati taste,” unifying the perception of Chinese art outside of mainland China (Fig.2). From the exhibition’s preparation stage, the nationalists made a strong assertion that the inheritors of the Palace Museum Collection were the orthodox successors of Chinese culture and the legitimate government of Chinese territory. Writing in the exhibition catalog that year, Wang Shijie 王世傑 (1891-1981), the director of the National Palace Museum (Taipei), stated the following:

This exhibition may also serve as a reminder that the free Chinese are fighting to save their cultural heritage as much as to recover lost territories.<sup>6</sup>



**Fig. 2. The Chinese Art Treasures exhibition at the National Gallery of Art. © National Palace Museum (Taipei)**

## The Revolutionary Theory of Yuan Painting

In the postwar period, faced with relocating to Taiwan, the Republic of China sought to emphasize its identity as the rightful heir of Chinese orthodoxy and to re-establish its authority. Once again, orthodox Southern School painters became crucial in representing the art history of China. On the other hand, individualist painters such as Bada Shanren 八大山人 (1626-1705) and Shitao 石濤 (1641-1707)- originally seen as the vanguard against authority- became less significant. Reconciling these individualist painters, and their revolutionary ideals, with orthodox painters of the Southern School so as to form a single lineage of literati painting was a significant

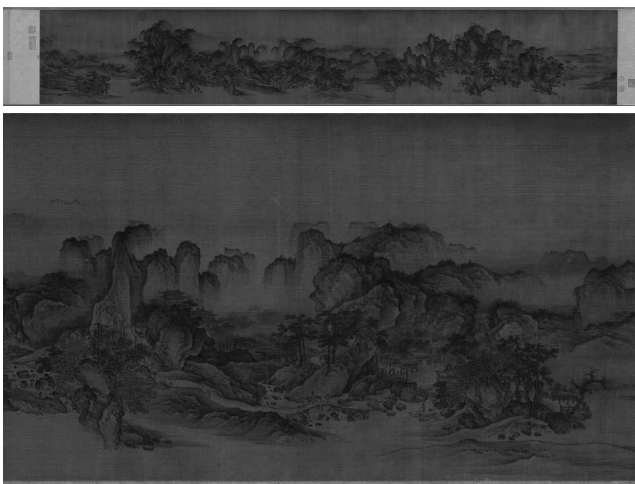
challenge for postwar scholars of Chinese art history.

The “revolutionary” nature of Yuan painting provided an effective solution to this challenge. Jerome Silbergeld posits that Yuan painting’s “revolutionary” character was first proposed by Sherman E. Lee (1918-2008) of the Cleveland Museum of Art and the young Chinese art historian Wen C. Fong (1930-2018) in their 1955 publication, *Streams and Mountains Without End: A Northern Sung Handscroll and Its Significance in the History of Early Chinese Painting* (Fig.3.4.), and subsequently furthered by scholars such as James Cahill (1926-2014) and Michael Sullivan (1916-2013).<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that the revolutionary theory of Yuan painting proposed by Sherman E. Lee and Wen C. Fong in the 1950’s was not an unprecedented invention, but rather a continuation of the *Wenrenhua* lineage theorized by Teng Gu 滕固 (1901-1941) in the 1930’s.<sup>8</sup> Lee’s focus on Yuan literati painting represented the endpoint of the Song dynasty paintings, regarded as a kind of “representational” visual art. For Lee, the historical development of literati painting features within the same artistic lineage as the Southern School orthodoxy, ranging from the Yuan masters to Dong Qichang.<sup>9</sup> This perspective did not resolve the contradiction of literati painting lineage, which has been centered around Ming and Qing individualists since the New Culture Movement, and the orthodox tradition asserted by nationalists during 1950’s-60’s.

At that time, two researchers, Ernst Aschwin (1914-1988) and James Cahill, closely associated with the study of Chinese art history in Europe during the interwar period took on this historic responsibility. Aschwin was the younger son of Prince Bernhard of Lippe and Baroness Armgard of Sierstorpff-Cramm, holding the title of Count of Biesterfeld. Raised alongside his older brother at Castle Reckenwalde, he later supported the Nazis and served as a Wehrmacht officer in the German army. He pursued his education in East Asian art during World War II, earning a PhD from Humboldt University of Berlin in 1942 with a thesis on Li Kan’s 13th-century painting. He worked at the Museum of East Asian Art in Cologne before moving to the United States in 1945. By 1949, he was working at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, contributing to the Department of Far

East until his retirement in 1973.

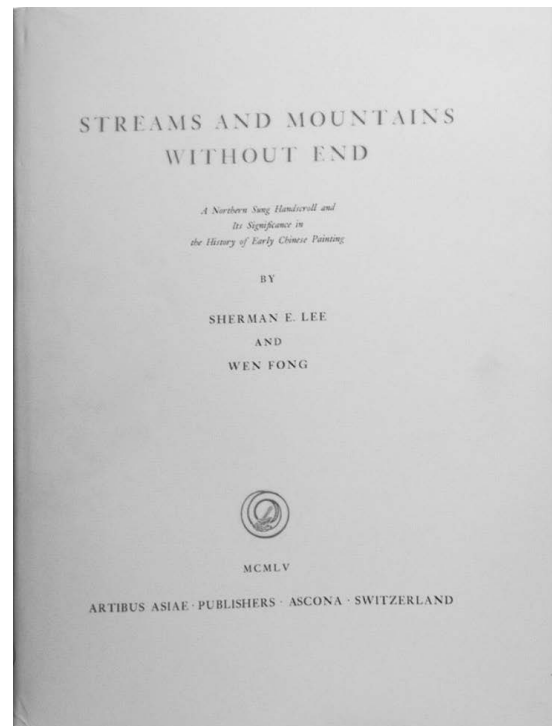
Having relocated from Germany to the United States, Ernst Aschwin brought with him to New York the revolutionary understanding of literati painting that the Chinese Nationalists and patriotic artists had propagated in Germany in the 1930's.<sup>10</sup> Aschwin's understanding of Chinese painting closely aligned with that of the Nationalists. This may explain why in 1953, when Hang Liwu 杭立武 (1904-1991), the director of the Palace Museum, visited New York, he enthusiastically introduced Aschwin to the museum's collection. Around 1955, Aschwin also visited the Beigou warehouse in Taichung to admire the Palace Museum Collection and wrote a travelogue titled "A Journey to Formosa." In this account, he documented Yuan "Literati Painting" as representing significant transition from Song to Yuan painting, one which profoundly influenced subsequent Chinese painting. That same year, as Jerome Silbergeld posits, Lee and Fong proposed their revolutionary theory of Yuan painting. Considering Ernst Aschwin's focus on individualist painters, for him, the innovation of Yuan painting was less an end to Song painting than a beginning of Ming and Qing painting. This perspective showed a different consciousness on the issue of Chinese art history from those featured in the works of Lee and Fong.



**Fig. 3. Streams and Mountains without End, 1100–1150.**  
Handscroll, ink and slight color on silk;  
image: 35.1 x 213 cm The Cleveland Museum of Art

Postwar American attention to Yuan painting has

been characterized by two main artistic historical perspectives which differ on whether the focus of Chinese painting research should be centered on before or after the Yuan dynasty. In other words, these differing art-historical trends sought to ascertain whether the history of Chinese landscape painting should emphasize discussions on the style of landscape painting (before Yuan dynasty) or address the issue of reconciling the individualist and conservative painters within the literati painting lineage after Yuan dynasty.



**Fig. 4. Lee Sherman E, Fong Wen C. *Streams and Mountains Without End : A Northern Sung Handscroll and Its Significance in the History of Early Chinese Painting.* Artibus Asiae; 1955.**

James Cahill inherited and expanded upon Ernst Aschwin's research and is today considered one of the world's foremost authorities on Chinese art. Cahill began his studies at the University of California, Berkeley, in English but switched to Japanese due to WWII. Drafted into the US Army, he served as a translator in Japan and Korea (1946-1948), where he

developed an interest in east Asian art. Returning to UC Berkeley, he earned a BA in Oriental languages in 1950. Pursuing art history, Cahill earned his MA and Ph.D. at the University of Michigan under Max Loehr (1903-1988) by 1958.

In 1955, the same year Ernst Aschwin returned from Taiwan to publish his travelogue “A Journey to Formosa,” Lee and Fong published *Streams and Mountains Without End: A Northern Sung Handscroll and Its Significance in the History of Early Chinese Painting*. Cahill had already started to write his doctoral dissertation on Wu Zhen 吳鎮 (1270-1354), one of the Four Masters of the Yuan dynasty 元末四大家, titled “Wu Chen: A Chinese Landscapist and Bamboo Painter of the Fourteenth Century” (completed in 1958). In order to complete his dissertation, Cahill conducted research on works in Taiwan and went to Stockholm, where he became a research assistant to Osvald Sirén (1879-1966) for three months in the winter of 1956. It was while working there as a promising young scholar and assistant to Sirén that Cahill inherited the latter’s perspective on Chinese painting history.

It should be noted that Osvald Sirén’s magnum opus on *Chinese painting history*, *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1956-1958), was published during Cahill’s time as a research assistant. From the 1920’s onwards, Sirén’s maintained a close relationship with the scholars of the New Culture Movement, focusing on paintings of the Ming and Qing period, particularly on individualist painters such as the “Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou 揚州八怪.” Sirén may have noticed the paradigm shifting in Chinese art history, which resulted in a completely different research tendency from the post-war period. Orthodox Southern School painter Dong Qichang had been regarded as a representative of conservatism and thus a target of criticism for the scholars of the New Cultural Movement. Sirén’s book became the first English-language publication to dedicate an entire chapter to this orthodox painter as the leading master of Chinese painting. By shifting his focus from individualistic painters to orthodox painters, Sirén showed that he was aware of the interpretation of Chinese art history

required by the nationalists during the post-war period. This shift entailing simultaneous attention to both orthodox and individualistic painters evidently influenced James Cahill.

Under the recommendation of Osvald Sirén, James Cahill commenced the writing of *Chinese Painting* (中國名畫集萃/圖說中國繪畫史 Switzerland: Albert Skira Press. 1960), leading his second trip to Taiwan in 1959 was undertaken in order to photograph illustrations for the Albert Skira publication. C.C. Wang 王季千 (Chi-Chien Wang, 1907-2003), a collector residing in the United States, and Li Lincan 李霖燦 (1913-1999), who worked at the National Palace Museum in Taipei, participated in this one-month-long photography project. During this time, Cahill extensively reviewed the orthodox masterpieces published in *Gugong Shuhua Lu* 故宮書畫錄 (Taipei: Central Administration of the National Palace Museum, 1956). Subsequently, Cahill served as a curator at the Freer Gallery of Art and contributed to the compilation of the catalogue for the aforementioned exhibition *Chinese Art Treasures*.<sup>11</sup>

Through interactions with Chinese art historians who relocated to Taiwan and research on the Palace Museum Collection, Cahill began to understand the significance of the Southern School during this special period and came to focus on literati painting studies, prompting him to consider the relationship between individualistic and orthodox schools. As previously mentioned, Cahill’s dissertation focused on Wu Zhen- a more unorthodox member of the four masters of the Yuan dynasty, who perhaps Cahill regarded as an exceptional case within the conservative faction. His dissertation has been available in American universities as a University Microfilms hard-cover copy volume since 1958, and has garnered a wide readership among postwar researchers of Chinese art history. In the first Chapter of his dissertation, “The Theory of Literati Painting in China,” Cahill discussed the concept of “wen-jen hua” (*Wenrenhua* 文人畫), highlighting the four masters of the Yuan dynasty as pivotal in distinguishing “early” from “late” Chinese painting history and charting a new direction for the field. Subsequently, the revolutionary perspective on Yuan painting became a foundational

concept in the study of Chinese painting history. Beginning with his 1976 publication *Hills Beyond a River: Chinese Painting of the Yuan Dynasty, 1279-1358*, Cahill embarked on his series on the history of later Chinese painting.

## The participation of the Abstract expressionism theory

During 1950's American researchers focused on Yuan painting and attempted to interpret literati painting through the lens of Abstract Expressionism. Susan Bush, in the preface to the publication of her doctoral thesis "The Chinese Literati on Painting", completed in 1968, made reference to the studies of Osvald Sirén and James Cahill, considering them pioneers in the American discourse on literati painting. Simultaneously, she pointed out that both Cahill's and her own studies on literati painting were influenced by Abstract Expressionism.<sup>12</sup>

Just as when it first emerged in China in the 1920's, the modern art concept of "literati painting" was an important method for constructing national idea within the art domain, focusing on the inner experiences and personal spirit of the citizens. This bears a resemblance to theory of Abstract Expressionism, which emphasizes individual independence. In the 1940's, as America's modernist Abstract Expressionism integrated European modernist movements like Surrealism and Cubism and took to the stage of art history,<sup>13</sup> one of its core tenets was to focus on human nature and consciousness, positing that art could replace religion in expressing the inner spirit of man. Art critic Barnett Newman (1905-1970) believed that "Instead of making cathedrals out of Christ, man, or 'life', we are making it out of ourselves, out of our own feelings". The sublime can be discovered within ourselves, from our own feelings."<sup>14</sup> This is also similar to modern Chinese cultural policies such as Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940)'s advocacy in the 1917 for "Aesthetic Education as Substitute for Religion" (以美育代宗教, *Yi meiyu dai zongjiao*). It can be said that China and the United States each developed their own form of modernism, both evolving from a European modernism that emphasized human spirit and inner qualities. The post-war American middle-class value system that

emphasized Abstract Expressionism and the ideal of literati painting (a bourgeoisie art that was neither aristocratic nor plebeian) cherished by intellectuals of the Republic of China share certain ideological similarities and connections. --These also explain, to some extent, why Abstract Expressionism theory became associated with "literati painting" in post-war American writings.

Wen C. Fong in his book, *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy 8th-14th Century* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992) compares literati painters of the late Northern Song dynasty with avant-garde European artists of the late 19th century and cites the theory of Abstract Expressionism critic Clement Greenberg (1909-1994). Greenberg believed that the court art represented by the painting academies was "Academicism," folk art could be referred to as "Kitsch", whereas "literati painting," which lies between the two, is equivalent to Avant-garde art.<sup>15</sup>

It has already been pointed out that the popularity of Abstract Expressionism was sponsored by the U.S. government. The fact that both the aforementioned Beigou warehouse, Taichung, and the Taipei National Palace Museum, which was completed in 1965 in Shilin's Waishuangxi, were funded by the Asia Foundation, an external agency of the U.S. government, is indisputable. Both were supported by the U.S. government at the time.<sup>16</sup> On this matter, Craig Clunas proposed a hypothesis that the CAT held in the United States during the early Cold War and the research on Chinese Painting History both demonstrated that literati painting was the most valuable, representing the Chinese and the one true Chinese Painting. As Clunas said, the background for the establishment of such an understanding of Chinese painting history was to create a defensive line with literati painting against the culture of the red regime. However, Clunas himself considered this hypothesis to be too simplistic and, withdrawing the perspective, and pointed out in a more inclusive statement that the evaluation of Chinese painting based on the literati's "expressiveness and subjectivity" is the result of the combined effects from both within and outside China.<sup>17</sup>

The historical background of ideological and physical

divergence between post-war Taiwan, the United States, and mainland China cannot be denied. On the other hand, as already repeatedly emphasized, interpreting the Palace Museum Collection and organizing the history of Chinese painting with “literati painting” as the axis inevitably requires reconciling a contradiction that has existed since the establishment of Chinese painting history. This is the contradiction between the challenge to orthodoxy and critical consciousness (the revolutionary “literati painting” advocated by the New Culture Movement) and the claim to the orthodoxy of the Southern School by the National Palace Museum in Taipei since the 1950’s. Utilizing the painting theory of Abstract Expressionism at this time, rather than style analysis, conveniently resolves this intractable issue at a theoretical level.

Specifically, James Cahill in his book *Hills Beyond a River: Chinese Painting of the Yuan Dynasty, 1279-1358*, used an art historical interpretation from Cubism, the source of Abstract Expressionism, to analyze Huang Gongwang 黃公望 (1269-1354), one of the four masters of the Yuan Dynasty. Cahill believed that “As is the case with the Cubists centuries later, his is a solution more intellectual and rational than pictorial or emotional; like them, he seems to have disassembled the visible world and rebuilt it on new, more dynamic, more intelligible patterns.” Meanwhile, Huang Gongwang’s “Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains 富春山居圖” was taken as a representative work of the Yuan painting heyday, receiving high praise from Cahill, who discussed its creation process thus:

sometimes wavering strokes that are charged with an unostentatious but always perceptible nervous energy...we seem to be presented less with a rendering of mass in terms of continuous surface than with a structure of movement which, serving as far more than mere two-dimensional calligraphy, has its own volume and depth, of a kind created by the interweavings and overlappings of the strokes-something distantly similar to the performances of Pollock or Tobey but done with nuances of touch that their more viscous

media would not permit.<sup>18</sup>

Regarding Ni Zan 倪瓚, also one of the four masters of Yuan dynasty, James Cahill provided a detailed introduction to his fastidious personality, “We have dwelt at such length on Ni Tsan the man, his life, his writings, and his paintings because he is for the Chinese the very type of the scholar-painter whose works convey with utmost immediacy his individual nature. They are as much revelations of his inner self as his poems or his eccentric behavior”<sup>19</sup>. While basing his narrative on painting analysis, Cahill also applied psychoanalytic theories from Surrealism and post-war American popular psychology to analyze Chinese painting history. Regarding Wang Meng 王蒙 (1308-1385)’s “The Hermitage of Qingbian 青卞隱居圖,” Cahill commented, “It stands as the product of some extraordinary burst of creative genius that evidently proved unrepeatable, even for Wang himself,” and insisted that at “such an early age [Wang Meng] already had an amazing performance in an expressionist mode.” In conclusion, Cahill summarized Huang Gongwang, Ni Zan, and Wang Meng as follows: “Huang Kung-wang, Ni Tsan, Wang Meng: they were the dominant forces in late Yuan landscape painting, and in literati painting for centuries to follow.” Henceforth, Ming and Qing dynasty painters who inherited the brushwork of the four masters of Yuan dynasty were no longer conservative but avant-garde. Shi Shouqian 石守謙’s study “Paradigm Shift of The Study of The ‘Four Wangs’ ‘四王’研究的範式轉移” also mentioned the post-war American reevaluation of orthodox painters (the Four Wangs, Four orthodox painters of the Ming and Qing dynasties, all of whom have the surname Wang), which facilitates our understanding of the writing approach to Chinese painting history in America at that time.<sup>20</sup>

Additionally, the assessment of orthodox painters and their origins, as well as Dong Qichang, who inherited the legacy of four masters of Yuan dynasty, has changed. In the 1980’s, James Cahill finally pointed out that Dong Qichang’s advocacy of “imitation 仿古” (imitating the ancient) has creative and revolutionary significance.<sup>21</sup> Almost simultaneously, Wen C. Fong also

believed that the antiquarianism in Chinese painting and the pursuit of an idealized “ancient” were means to seek change, possessing a duality of orthodoxy and heresy, tradition and innovation.<sup>22</sup> In the 1980s, Dong Qichang and his promoted antiquarianism, which had been continuously criticized since modern times, were re-evaluated as creative and revolutionary “avant-garde.”

This reconciled the loose topics of *Chinese painting* history left by Cahill when he wrote his book *Chinese Painting* (Switzerland: Albert Skira Press.1960). At that time, Cahill reluctantly declared that “the literati tradition, meanwhile, had split into divergent currents, and from this time onward the polarities of orthodoxy v. individualism, imitation v. innovation, were to be found within this literati tradition itself. The rich diversity of Chinese painting was sustained.” This fragmented, diverse, and contradictory interpretation of painting history was integrated and organized through the theory of Abstract Expressionism. Starting from the theory of brushwork (i.e., brushwork reveals the painter’s inner self), the Southern School orthodoxy supported by the great Qing Empire was no longer conservative but obtained a revolutionary and avant-garde nature, being incorporated into the avant-garde literati painting lineage full of innovative significance

## Conclusion

This article has discussed how Chinese art historians active in the United States responded to the contradiction between the orthodoxy of the Palace Museum Collection, as reaffirmed by National Palace Museum(Taipei) post-war, and the revolutionary nature of the literati painting concept amidst the constantly changing international environment after the war. During the 1950’s to 1960’s, scholars of Chinese painting history in U.S., such as Ernst Aschwin and James Cahill, were grounded in the individualistic painting of the Ming and Qing dynasties. They sought to integrate the conflicts within the literati painting context between representatives of the Southern School orthodoxy like Dong Qichang and individualistic painters like Shitao. James Cahill successfully applied post-war American Abstract Expressionism theory to articulate the

revolutionary of Yuan dynasty paintings. Starting with Yuan paintings, which embodied both conservative and innovative traits, he established a common origin for both the Ming and Qing Southern School orthodoxy and individualism. Thus, he incorporated both into a unified literati painting lineage, laying the foundation for today’s research in Chinese painting history.

## References

- 1) LI, Zhaoxue. “Modern Japan’s Construction of the Concept of Chinese ‘Literati Painting’” 「近代日本における「文人画」概念の構築」, *Kindai gasetsu* 近代画説, Tokyo: Association for the Study of Modern Japanese Art History. No. 25. December 2016.
- 2) Regarding the translation of “Fine Art” into “美術” in Japan and the acceptance of its concept, refer to Kitazawa, Noriaki 北澤憲昭. *Me no shinden* : “bijutsu” juyōshi nōto 眼の神殿: 「美術」受容史ノート. Chikuma Shobō 筑摩書房.2020. Satō, Dōshi. 佐藤道信. “*Nihon bijutsu*” tanjō:kindai Nihon no “kotoba” to senryaku <日本美術> 誕生:近代日本の「ことば」と戦略. Chikuma Shobō 筑摩書房.2021.
- 3) LI, Zhaoxue. “Acceptance of the concept of ‘Literati Painting’ in the Republic of China—from a target of criticism to the ideal of Guohua in the 1920s” 「中華民国における「文人画」概念の受容—1920年代に批判対象から新たな国画の理想へ」 *Kindai gasetsu* 近代画説, Tokyo: Association for the Study of Modern Japanese Art History. No. 27. December 2018.
- 4) LI, Zhaoxue. “The emergence of the concept of “Literati Painting” concept in Taoist thought: a updated perspectives on academic of interaction between Kyoto, Beijing, and Shanghai”, Oral Report in the Symposium “Generation of Contemporary Art Philosophy in the Perspective of Cross-Cultural Exchange”, Nanjing University, December 2 2023.
- 5) Craig, Clunas. “China in Britain: The Imperial Collection.” Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn ed. *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*. London: Routledge. 1998. 41-51.
- 6) Guo li Zhong yang bo wu yuan; Guo li gu gong bow u yuan. *Chinese Art Treasures: a selected group from the Chinese National Palace Museum and the Chinese National Central Museum*. Taichung, Taiwan. Geneva: Skira. 1961.8.
- 7) Silbergeld, Jerome. “The Yuan “Revolutionary” Picnic: Feasting on the Fruits of Song (A Historiographic Menu).” *Ars Orientalis* 37 (2009): 9-31. Accessed July 10, 2021.
- 8) LI, Zhaoxue. “Towards a Chinese Art History: ‘Literati Painting’ in the Early Days of the Nationalist Government” 「文人画」概念による中国絵画史の形成—1930年頃の国民政府成立初期を中心に, *Journal of the Faculty of Fine Arts* 東京藝術大学美術学部論叢. Tokyo: Tokyo University of the Arts. No.16. 2020.1-13.
- 9) Sherman E Lee. “Review of The Landscape Painting of China and Japan by Hugo Munsterberg.” *Far Eastern Quarterly* 15.(1955-56):415-416. Sherman E Lee. *Chinese Landscape Painting*. Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art. 1962.
- 10) LI, Zhaoxue. “Imagining China: the Neo-‘Literati painting’ on the Subject of Mt. Huangshan and Huangshan pine in the 1930s”,



中華意象的創出——20世紀30年代作為新“文人畫”畫題的黃山與黃山松。Oral Report at Drake Gallery, 1/F, Fung Ping Shan Building, UMAG, HKU, 90 Bonham Road, Pokfulam, Hong Kong 香港大學美術博物館 (Chinese medium), March 22, 2024.

- 11) Cahill, James 高居翰. "The Place of the National Palace Museum in My Scholarly Career. 台北故宮博物院在我學術生涯中的位置". First published in Chinese in *Kukung Wenwu* (National Palace Museum Monthly), v. 23 no. 8, Nov. 2005, 93-99. And special issue commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Museum. Cai Meifen(ed). *Ba zheng mao nian : guo li gu gong bo wu yuan ba shi nian de dian di huai xiang* 八徵耄念: 國立故宮博物院八十年的點滴懷想 Taipei shi: Guo li gu gong bo wu yuan. 2006. 57-64. <https://jamescahill.info/the-writings-of-james-cahill/cahill-lectures-and-papers/81-clp-117-2005>
- 12) S. Bush. *The Chinese Literati on Painting : Su Shih (1037-1101) to Tung Ch'i-Ch'ang (1555-1636)*. 2nd ed. Hong Kong University Press ; Eurospan distributor; 2012.
- 13) Leja, Michael. *Reframing Abstract Expressionism: Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1993.
- 14) "We are reasserting man's natural desire for the exalted, for a concern with our relationship to the absolute emotions. We do not need the obsolete props of an outmoded and antiquated legend. We are creating images whose reality is self-evident and which are devoid of the props and crutches that evoke associations with outmoded images, both sublime and beautiful. We are freeing ourselves of the impediments of memory, association, nostalgia, legend, myth, or what have you, that have been the devices of Western European painting. Instead of making cathedrals out of Christ, man, or "life", we are making it out of ourselves, out of our own feelings." Barnett Newman. "The Sublime Is Now" (1948). Pipes, Richard edited. *Reading Abstract Expressionism*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1991. 137-139.
- 15) Greenberg, Clement. "Avant-Garde and Kitsch." *Partisan Review* 6. no. 5 (Fall 1939): 34-49.
- 16) Saunders, Frances Stonor. *Who Paid the Piper: CIA and the Cultural Cold War*. London: Granta Books. 2000.
- 17) Clunas, Craig. *Chinese Painting and Its Audiences*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 2017.
- 18) Cahill, James. *Hills Beyond a River: Chinese Painting of the Yuan Dynasty, 1279-1358*. New York; Tokyo: Weatherhill. 1976. 113.
- 19) Cahill, James. *Hills Beyond a River: Chinese Painting of the Yuan Dynasty, 1279-1358*. New York; Tokyo: Weatherhill. 1976. 119.
- 20) Shi, Shouqian points out that the evaluation of the "Four Wangs" and the changing attitudes towards "revivalism" and "originality" have influenced the transformation of concepts in Chinese painting history. In the recent study of Chinese painting history, Wen C. Fong attempts to reconcile the differences between the individualist painters Shi Tao and Bada Shanren and the orthodox "Four Wangs." (Wen C. Fong. *Chin-Sung Chang and Maxwell K. Hearn. Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632-1717)*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 2008.) Wen Fong's article shares the same research objectives with James Cahill, both reflecting the basic direction and motivation of post-war American research on Chinese painting history. Shi Shouqian's "Paradigm Shift in 'Four Wangs' Research", *The Palace Museum Journal*, Beijing, 2019, Issue 5. 4-17.
- 21) Cahill, James. "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's 'Southern and Northern Schools' in the History and Theory of Painting: A Reconsideration," (1988). Gregory, Peter N, ed. *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*. India, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Limited. 1991. 429-446.
- 22) Fong, Wen C. "Modern Art Criticism and Chinese Painting History." Ching-i Tu, ed. *Tradition and Creativity: Essays on East Asian Civilization. Proceedings of the Lecture Series on East Asian Civilization*. New Brunswick: Rutgers, State University of New Jersey. 1987. 98-108.