

On the Beginning and Transformation of Modern Chinese Historiography

Zhang Yue*

Abstract: After the First Opium War (1840-1842) there were increased academic interests in studying the history and geography of China's northwestern borderlands, introducing foreign history and geography and writing the modern history of China. Such interests, however, were no more than reflections of the times in history studies and could hardly improve the whole picture of historiography. At the turn of the 20th century, Liang Qichao published "The Introduction to Chinese History" and "The New Historiography", which marked the emergence of a new trend of thought in historiography and should be deemed the beginning of modern Chinese historiography. Soon after, the "national quintessence school" (guocui xuepai) called for preserving the quintessence of Chinese culture and attempted to bridge Chinese and Western scholarship. Then the "Reorganization of National Heritage" (zhengli guogu) Movement came, urging to re-arrange traditional scholarship. Hu Shih (1891-1962) explicitly put forward the goal of "compiling a history of Chinese culture," helped dissolve the boundary between modern and traditional historiography and indicated the approach to the transformation from ancient to modern historiography from a perspective of discipline classifications. This "new trend" of Chinese historiography, centering on new materials, new methods and new issues specified the research path for the early stage of modern Chinese historiography.

Keywords: modern Chinese historiography, new historiography, the "Re-organizing the National Heritage" Movement, Liang Qichao

Ancient Chinese historiography and modern Chinese historiography are two different historiographic forms. The transformation from ancient to modern historiography is a process of gradual change but should be marked by a clear turning point. When did modern Chinese historiography begin? Some of the existing

* Zhang Yue, professor, School of History, Beijing Normal University.

* Foundation item: This paper is a staged research result of "Studies on the Relationships between Historical Materialism and Historical Textual Research School" (13BZS006), a program funded by the National Social Science Fund of China.

works on Chinese historiography consider the outbreak of the First Opium War in 1840 as the beginning of modern Chinese historiography; while other related works, focusing on expounding Chinese historiography in the 20th century, naturally began modern Chinese historiography in the early 20th century. Why is a particular historical period identified as the beginning of modern Chinese historiography? What are the origin and process of the transformation from ancient to modern Chinese historiography? How should scholars view the transition from time-honored traditional Chinese historiography to modern Chinese historiography? Even today, these questions are worth in-depth discussions in the study of Chinese historiography. In the Republic of China era (1912-1949), a number of related works and essays made comprehensive and insightful analyses of Chinese historiography in transformation. Among them were *China's New Historiography Over the Past Fifty Years* by Zhou Yutong (1941), *Contemporary Chinese Historiography* by Gu Jiegang et al.(1947), and "The growth of Chinese historiography in the past century" by Qi Sihe (1949). With the initiation of Reform and Opening-Up in 1978, the study of the history of modern Chinese historiography began to develop. Important works and essays during this early stage of development include but are not limited to "Discussion on Modern Chinese Historiography" by Bai Shouyi (1983), *Patriotism and Modern Chinese Historiography*^① by Yu Danchu (1996), *Ninety Years Development of New Historiography* by Xu Guansan (1986), *The History of Modern Chinese Historiography* (vol. 1 & vol. 2) edited by Wu Ze (1989), *The Trends and Schools of Modern Chinese Historiography* by Hu Fengxiang and Zhang Wenjian (1991), *The Journey of Modern Chinese Historiography* by Chen Qitai (1994) and "Chinese Historiography in the 20th Century" by Lin Ganquan (1996). These research findings have inspired me to write this paper and share my views with scholars in this field. I look forward to their feedback.

1. The beginning of modern Chinese history is not necessarily the beginning of modern Chinese historiography

Traditionally, most works on the history of Chinese historiography marked the beginning of modern Chinese historiography as well as the beginning of modern Chinese history, i.e. the outbreak of the First Opium War in 1840 (Hu & Zhang, 1991; Bai, 2006).^②

The division of the history of a particular scholarship is not necessarily identical with the division of the history of social development. Admittedly, the academic thoughts of a particular era directly reflect the ethos of that era. Yet, academic thoughts inherently have leading, conclusive and reflective features, for which their reflections tend to be either ahead of or behind the era they are in. Thus, as the history of a scholarship, the history of Chinese historiography does not have to begin simultaneously with modern Chinese history, or to be hastily synchronized with the ups and downs of a certain social or cultural trend of thought. Regarding the topic of this paper—the beginning of modern Chinese historiography, one scholar argued, "The development of modern Chinese historiography is not entirely

① Major essays included in the *Patriotism and Modern Chinese Historiography* by Yu Danchu were published in the 1980s and were important early-stage research findings of modern Chinese historiography.

② The *Trends and Schools of Modern Chinese Historiography* traces modern Chinese historiography back to the trend of "humanistic pragmatism," which emerged in the First Opium War; The sixth volume of *History of Chinese Historiography* identifies the beginning of modern Chinese historiography in 1840.

synchronized with social development. Just because the outbreak of the First Opium War in 1840 marked Chinese society's stepping into modern times does not mean it should be deemed the beginning of modern Chinese historiography" (Qiao, 2011, p. 312).

Around the First Opium War (1840-1842), Chinese historiography was still dominated by the continuation of traditional historiography. This can be exemplified by historical works and textual-research records on the history of the Yuan Dynasty and Mongolia in the style of the Qian-Jia school (Qianlong & Jiaqing school), such as *New Chronicles of the Yuan Dynasty* by Wei Yuan, *Textual Criticism and Supplement: Translation of the History of the Yuan Dynasty* by Hong Jun and *Historical Records of the Mughals* by Tu Ji. Works of traditional historiography during that period also include the chronicle *Comprehensive Mirror to the Ming Dynasty* by Xia Xie; event-based historical records such as *Event-based Sequel to Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance* by Li Minghan, and Li Youtang's *Event-based Record of the History of the Liao Dynasty* and *Event-based Record of the History of the Jin Dynasty*. In addition, there are typical biographies of historical figures, such as *Collection of Epitaphs and Biographies* by Qian Yiji and *Sequel to Collection of Epitaphs and Biographies* by Miu Quansun. Many more examples fall into the categories of textual research, re-arrangement and compilation of scattered writings on historical records and works in the style of the Qian-Jia school, including *Supplement and Correction to the Notes on History of the Former Han Dynasty*, *Collection of Notes on History of the Former Han Dynasty* and *Collection of Corrections of Notes on Book of Waterways* by Wang Xianqian; *Notes on the Secret History of the Yuan Dynasty* by Li Wentian; *Supplement and Correction to the Notes on Secret History of the Yuan Dynasty* by Shen Zengzhi; and compilations of scattered documents and manuscripts by Tang Qiu. According to Gu Jiegang's conclusion of the development of Chinese historiography in the late Qing Dynasty, "Scholars still followed the traditional way and continued the cause of previous scholars, working harder on supplementing and correcting the historical records of previous dynasties in biographical style and all comments related to these historical records" (Gu, 2010, p. 322). This was in line with the then development of Chinese historiography.

Popular textbooks and works on the history of Chinese historiography regard the outbreak of the First Opium War in 1840 as the beginning of modern Chinese historiography mainly because around the First Opium War, Chinese academic studies, affected by the political situation, underwent some changes. In the area of historiography, the frontier crisis, triggered by big powers' encroachment into China's frontier regions, gave rise to a research interests in the history and geography of the northwestern borderlands; the promotion of "opening eyes to observe the world" enabled Chinese scholars to step into the research areas of foreign history and geography and the continuous emergence of social crises forced scholars to attach more importance to the writing of contemporary history. Did these changes indicate that Chinese historiography already abandoned the traditional historiographic model and exhibited modern significance? The answer should be "No." Regarding these so-called changes, the coverage of foreign history and geography remained restricted to the translation and editing of relevant materials for introductory purposes. Only a tiny minority of scholars such as Wang Tao and Huang Zunxian traveled abroad and completed works on foreign history, for which their experiences were just individual cases without universal significance. Of works on contemporary history, the "general plan" (fanglue) category comprised official writings of the imperial government

to publicize its “political and military achievements;” while the Opium War-themed category comprised writings of men of insights who were mindful of potential danger. The study of the history and geography of the northwestern borderlands in the late Qing Dynasty is believed to have certain connections with the Oriental studies in Europe and the Oriental studies in Japan. Still, whether it was at its embryonic stage (i.e. the mid-period under the reign of Emperor Jiaqing with Qi Yunshi and Xu Song being representative scholars) or at its formative stage (i.e. the period under the reign of Emperor Daoguang and Emperor Xianfeng with Zhang Mu and He Qiutao being representative scholars), these borderland studies aimed to apply “humanistic pragmatism” in traditional historiography to the scholarly research of history and geography in the face of the frontier crisis in the northwest. Hardly relatable to any Western learning in a real sense, these borderland studies still generally belong to the domain of traditional studies of history and geography. The various changes could only be regarded as certain reflections of the times in historiography and could hardly reshape historiography in its entirety. Wang Guowei summarized the academic characteristics of the Qing Dynasty (1616-1912) as “academic researches advocated extensive coverage in the early years of the Qing Dynasty, intensive and profound exploration in the years under the reign of Emperor Jiaqing and Emperor Qianlong, and new methodology in the years under the reign of Emperor Daoguang and Emperor Xianfeng.” The reign of Emperor Daoguang and Emperor Xianfeng spanned decades and witnessed two Opium Wars (1840-1842, 1856-1860). Although Wang Guowei concluded the features of the academic research during that period as being “new,” he explained, “Since the era of Daoguang and Xianfeng, there was a slight change of direction in academic studies. Researchers of the Confucian classics began to pay attention to ‘new texts.’ Historical textual researchers also took the ethnic dynasties of Liao, Jin and Yuan into account, and geographers extended their research scope to remote frontiers. What they did was unprecedented. Still, they inherited the tradition of the ‘specialized learning’ of the Qian-Jia school. Though perceiving changes in society, they shared similar Confucian values and ideals with scholars from the early years of the Qing Dynasty” (Wang, 1983, p. 26). Since the era of Daoguang and Xianfeng, there was only a “slight change of direction” in academic studies. Yet in terms of both historiographic awareness and methodology, scholars in these times generally seemed to inherit the tradition of specialized learning in the era of Emperor Qianlong and Emperor Jiaqing. They might have perceived changes in society and therefore dared to pioneer unprecedented areas, however they still shared similar Confucian values and ideals with scholars from the early years of the Qing Dynasty and did not possess the connotations of modern historiography. In *Contemporary Chinese Historiography*, Gu Jiegang also held that the historiography of the late Qing Dynasty featured “three emerging trends, i.e. examination and exploration of epigraphy, the study of history of the Yuan Dynasty and history and geography of the northwestern borderlands, as well as the rejuvenation of New Text Confucianism.” Regarding these “new trends,” Gu Jiegang explained that “the examination and exploration of epigraphy” was either a “sequel to the study by scholars in the Song Dynasty (960-1279),” or a branch of “Qian-Jia Sinology;” that the study of the history of the Yuan Dynasty was a “continuation of previous achievements;” that the study of history and geography of the northwestern borderland was “under the influence of the study of history of the Yuan Dynasty” and was due to the “emergence of crisis in the northwestern borderlands;” and that the rejuvenation of New Text Confucianism was “Qian-Jia Sinology’s rebellious

superstition of the Han Chinese” (Gu, 2010, pp. 322-323). According to Gu, the three emerging trends in the then academic community were without exception “sequels” to and “branches” of traditional historiography, and featured few academic attributes of modern historiography.

From the First Opium War (1840-1842) until the end of the 19th century, in terms of degree and influence, the overall change of Chinese historiography did not exceed that in the era of Emperor Qianlong and Emperor Jiaqing or the changes of ancient Chinese historiography in any previous era. The change of historiography in the late Qing Dynasty was either restricted to the domain of traditional historiography, or gave rise to some new historiographic characteristics under the (mostly passive) influence of the times. No one can overlook or negate the significance of these new characteristics to certain indicative quantitative changes prior to modern Chinese historiography. Yet overall, no essential change was found in the subject of traditional historiography, for which no transformation to modern historiography could be defined. The aforementioned changes did not shake people’s basic perception of the discipline system and status of historiography, or exert much direct influence on the overall development landscape of historiography during that period. For a long time, the beginning of modern Chinese historiography was synchronized with the beginning of modern Chinese history. Such synchronicity was directly due to the fact that the history of modern China as an established semi-feudal and semi-colonial society began with the First Opium War and also due to the fact that the conventional wisdom attached excessive importance to the mutual influence between historiography and society. There is no solid grounding in identifying certain changes in historiography after the First Opium War as signs of the beginning of modern Chinese historiography, which probably did not begin in the second half of the 19th century. Over the past one or two decades, the study of modern Chinese historiography has gone deeper, generating substantial research findings particularly in the historiography of the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China era (1912-1949). Thanks to this, many puzzles became clearer, which helped define the beginning of modern Chinese historiography.

2. The birth of modern Chinese historiography: The emergence of the trend of thought in new historiography early in the 20th century

There were many senior scholars who recognized the innovative significance of the new historiography, which was first advocated by Liang Qichao. Zhou Yutong viewed Liang Qichao and his new historiography from the perspectives of Confucian classics-history conversion and the acceptance of the theory of evolution. According to Zhou (1983, pp. 537-540), “Liang Qichao, directly inspired by Kang Youwei’s understanding of New Text Confucianism, helped transform Chinese historiography and freed it from the Confucian restraints.” “Although Liang was a Confucian scholar-turned historian of new historiography, his historical thought shows an effort to flee from New Text Confucianism to the theory of evolution.” “Liang Qichao shifted his academic focus from New Text Confucianism to the theory of evolution and thereby transformed Chinese historiography. His contribution to modern Chinese historiography is indeed indelible.” Jin Yufu (2000, pp. 403-422) highlighted the characteristics of the conversion from traditional to new historiography and the combination of Western and Chinese historiography in the early years of the 20th century. According to Jin, “The period from the late

Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China marked a 'reformation stage' of Chinese historiography;" "the so-called new historiography means using newly emerged methods in modern times to transform traditional historiography;" "scholars of the times such as Zhang Taiyan were different from their predecessors in the pursuit of historiography; Liang Qichao went further by advocating the new historiography; Wang Guowei was particularly dedicated to textual research on ancient history through available writings and utensils; many more scholars introduced Western historiography to China and developed a seemingly irresistible trend to combine Western and Chinese historiography; 'when all means are exhausted, changes become necessary', which is a truth; in this sense, there is nothing wrong to call it a reformation." Qi Sihe (1949) stressed the critical consciousness of the new historiography. He argued that "Liang Qichao was the first scholar to introduce Western historiography to China and advocate the transformation of Chinese historiography," and that Liang's *The New Historiography* had a "bitter attack against traditional Chinese historiography," which was "the first trumpet of the new historiography and also a severe criticism of traditional historiography." In fact, attention has long been paid to the characteristics of the new historiography, i.e. Confucian classics-history conversion, acceptance of Western learning, advocacy of evolution theory, replacement of old methodology as well as criticism of traditional historiography. It has been over a century since the introduction of the new historiography concept in China. Today the various development trends of Chinese historiography prove to be mostly influenced by the new historiography in a direct and indirect way. Given that, it is still necessary to re-examine the significance of the new historiography as a pioneering force to the initiation of modern Chinese historiography.

Generally speaking, the initiation of a new development stage of historiography in a sense of discipline should be marked by transformation at varied degrees in historical conceptions, research concepts, research perspectives, sensitivity to research topics, research methodology and understanding of historical data. Such a transformation was inevitable under the influence of many external factors. Nevertheless, it was the qualitative change in the internal academic system of historiography that played a decisive role. I believe the emergence of the trend of thought in the new historiography, marked by the publication of "The Introduction to Chinese History" and "The New Historiography" by Liang Qichao in the early 20th century, should be deemed the beginning of modern Chinese historiography.^①

In 1901, Liang Qichao published his essay "The Introduction to Chinese History" in *The China Discussion*, elaborating the differences between modern historians and old-days historians at the outset. The essay primarily aimed to re-plan and re-build historiography from the perspective of modern historians and specified the self-consciousness of modern historians (Liang, 1989, p. 1). In his essay "Self-review at Thirty" in 1902, Liang (1989, p. 19) wrote, "Over the past year, I tried my best to draft

① There are scholars specifying the significance of the trend of thought in new historiography early in the 20th century to the old-new conversion of Chinese historiography. For example, according to Wang Fan-sen (2008, pp. 6-7), "Modern Chinese historiography has experienced three revolutions; the first revolution was initiated by the publication of Liang Qichao's 'The New Historiography' and focused on 'redefining history.'" "The Introduction to Chinese History" and 'The New Historiography,' two essays written by Liang Qichao in 1902 are arguably milestones of the new historiography in modern times." Qiao Zhizhong (2011, p. 313) argued, "The emergence of the trend of thought in new historiography in the early years of the 20th century was a huge turn in the mainstream ideology of Chinese historiography and can be deemed the beginning of the modernization of Chinese historiography." Xie Baocheng (2016, p. 67) also held, "At the turn of the 20th century, Chinese historiography experienced an unprecedented transformation; With new thoughts constantly emerging, the transformation triggered a 'revolution in historiography,' pronouncing the epoch-making birth of 'new historiography'."



Liang Qichao

the *General History of China* to promote patriotism. However, as time went by, I have barely completed 20%.” Liang Qichao’s original purpose of writing “The Introduction to Chinese History” was to draft a general history of China to “promote patriotism” from the perspective of modern historians. It can be inferred that “The Introduction to Chinese History” should be the “introduction” part of his planned *General History of China*.^① Liang progressed slowly in writing the general history. And the biggest challenge he faced was that traditional historiography could not fulfill modern history-writing requirements, i.e. “stating the facts, causes and effects” and “probing all dynamic progress of the Chinese people, i.e. all experiences and corresponding relationships of Chinese citizens.” “For modern scholars intending to write a history of China, there is no available published work to follow; besides, very few useful fragments can be found in ancient works. Hence, this is a difficult task” (Liang, 1989, pp. 1-2). Traditional historiography failed to live up to Liang Qichao and

other scholars’ expectations of giving full play to the functions of historiography in the new reality. The next year (1903) Liang, under the pseudonym of “Mr. New-historiography” (Xinshi Shi), published “The New Historiography” in *New Citizen Journal* (Xinmin Congbao). In the essay he argued, “Without a revolution in historiography our nation could not expect to be saved. This should be the top priority of all things. I am drafting works on the new historiography not because I like attracting attention by being eccentric, but because I have to” (Liang, 1989, p. 7). Around the same period, he also wrote and published a number of essays, including “An Observation of the Chinese Nation in History” (1901), “The General Trend of Changes in Chinese Academic Thoughts” (1902) and “The Evolution of Chinese Autocracy” (1902). These essays reflected his urgent desire to establish a new historiography in China.

In fact, saving and rejuvenating the nation was the primary purpose for Liang Qichao to shift from the study of New Text Confucianism to the acceptance of evolution theory and the subsequent introduction of new historiography. Writing a new-style general history of China was the direct cause of the emergence of the new historiography. A variety of changes had to be made in traditional historiography to apply concepts such as “state” and “nation” to the study and compilation of Chinese history. Such changes equipped Chinese historiography with modern characteristics. Based on German

① For example, the chapter “Calendar Era” ends with “Therefore the calendar era of this book begins with the birth of Confucius,” indicating this essay to be the “introduction” part of his uncompleted *General History of China*.

scholar Johann Caspar Bluntchli's view in *The Theory of the State*, Liang Qichao (1989, p. 114) argued, "Bluntchli for the first time ever introduced the concept of state and defined the nature, ethos and functions of a state; since then, statism has been popularized worldwide, making patriotism the top obligation of all citizens; that is how a powerful state is supposed to come into being." It needs to be pointed out that in traditional Chinese knowledge, there was no such concept as "state." As Chen Duxiu used to recall, until the invasion of the Eight-Power Allied Forces into China in 1900, "I began to realize that the world consists of different states with borderlines and independent sovereignties, that China, our motherland, is one of the many states in this world and that I am one of the numerous Chinese citizens. Now that the rise and fall of a state concerns all of its citizens, there is no way for me as an individual to escape from it... It was not until in my twenties that I learned the concept of state, that I knew a state belongs to all of its citizens and that I realized an obligation for everyone to contribute to the state" (Tang & Lin, 1988, p. 17). The concept of state is necessarily associated with nation. Given the reality of the then China, Liang Qichao (1989, p. 73) emphasized that nation states fall into multiple categories, with multinational states being one category. "A state comprising multiple nations may face many disadvantages, but at the same time also enjoys many benefits." "What is grand nationalism? It is a collective notion that covers all domestic nations as opposed to foreign nations" (Liang, 1989, p. 75). Liang Qichao and other scholars applied such modern notions as "state" and "nation" to the examination of traditional historiography and discovered that the traditional historiography lacked a "world consciousness" from a "state" perspective and was unable to truly save and rejuvenate China, and that the research methods and writing modes of traditional historiography were irreconcilable with modern historiography. Unless these problems were addressed, there would be no way to start writing a general history of China. Both "The Introduction to Chinese History" and "The New Historiography" devoted pages to the conception of history and style of historical records in writing a general history of China in a modern sense of "state." They mainly covered a series of new academic norms of modern historiography which were, but should not have been, absent in traditional historiography.

The new historiography discussed and normalized a series of issues concerning the style of historical records and research scope, which had never been covered by traditional historiography. This trend of thought initiated the compilation of a general history of China (textbook), brought brand-new research ideas (global vision), conception of history (theory of evolution) and research methodology to Chinese historiography and shaped Chinese people's preliminary modern perception of history as a discipline. "The Introduction to Chinese History" successively covered the "research scope of Chinese history," the "naming of Chinese history," the "geographic environment, i.e. typography in Chinese history," the "ethnicities in Chinese history," the "calendar era" applicable to the writing of Chinese history, the prehistoric times, and the stage division of historical developments. The research scope of Chinese history should consist of two aspects: "Chinese history in world history" and "Chinese history in Oriental history" to extend the research scope of history from China to Asia and the world. This was in stark contrast with traditional historiography's China-centered research scope. The "naming of Chinese history" should not be based on any of the previous dynasties. "It is unacceptable to name the history of Chinese people after any individual dynasty, or after any foreign conventional appellation." "Respectful addressing of one's motherland is a universally accepted practice." Regarding "geographic environments" in Chinese history,

“geography and people often supplement each other, giving rise to a civilization and shaping history; while the separation of people from a geographic environment would not foster any civilization, to say nothing of history.” Ethnicities here refer to all ethnic groups in Chinese history. Ethnicities mastermind history, for which they should not be set aside for being difficult to analyze. The “calendar era” applicable to the writing of Chinese history should begin with the birth of Confucius. The prehistoric times refer to “ancient times predating written records in China.” The stage division of historical development should be based on major historical events with significant impact on people in proper sequence according to historians’ judgment” (Liang, 1989, pp. 2-12). “The New Historiography” is an updated version of “The Introduction to Chinese History.” It criticized traditional historiography, elaborated “generally acknowledged truth” and once again touched upon the issues of “history-ethnicity relationships” and “calendar era.” “The New Historiography” consists of two parts, i.e. “on orthodoxy” and “on writing style.” The “on orthodoxy” part criticized the dispute over orthodoxy in traditional historiography with civil rights theory and the New Text doctrine of “Confucianism, academic tradition and political tradition.” The “on writing style” part, based on the theory of sociology and guidelines of the Spring and Autumn period, criticized traditional historiography for indulging in judgment and overlooking the “nation as a whole.” Liang Qichao was the first to openly discuss how to deal with these specific issues in modern context and accordingly “The New Historiography” became the first article to allow it to happen. The issues covered by Liang Qichao (the “research scope of Chinese history,” the “naming of Chinese history,” the “typography,” the “ethnicities,” the “calendar era,” the “prehistoric times” and the stage divisions) have all been carried over to the studies of Chinese history at all levels from the 20th century until today. It has been over 100 years since the beginning of the 20th century. During this period of development, Chinese historiography has incorporated the concept of “world history” in the research and teaching tasks concerning discipline classifications, research planning, research fellows and teaching systems. The word “China” has been extensively accepted as a due name in the research findings of various general history, dynastic history and specialized history. The studies of ethnic history and historical geography have long been specialized areas of Chinese historiography and gained increasingly important status. The “Doubting Antiquity” debate, triggered by an investigation into the pre-historic era, along with the development of Chinese archaeology, became features distinguishing modern Chinese historiography from ancient historiography. The division of history and the application of history theories to the macro-interpretation of Chinese history were at the core of Chinese historiography in the 20th century. Such basic elements of modern Chinese historiography were first collectively put forward and discussed in the trend of thought in new historiography.

“The Introduction to Chinese Historiography” and “The New Historiography” were respectively known as essays “defining Chinese history” and “defining Chinese historiography.” According to the two essays, defining the research object, specifying the research scope and pinpointing the research significance were required at the beginning of an academic research and also formed a modern approach to historiography. “Defining Chinese history” expressed the view that there was “no history” in China and showcased how to transform the traditional historiography “without history” to modern historiography “with history.” Wang Fan-sen (2008, p. 37) said, “Regarding whether China in the past had history, Liang Qichao’s essay was like a trigger, prompting people to think about the fundamental

question of ‘what history is.’” “Defining historiography” means Liang Qichao defined history based on the theory of social evolution. According to Liang (1989, pp. 7-11), “history is the narration of evolutionary phenomena;” “history is the narration of the phenomena of human evolution;” “history is the narration of phenomena of human evolution in pursuit of generally acknowledged truth.” The new historiography applied the theory of evolution to Chinese historiography and the significance of this move was soon noticed by many scholars. The pursuit of “generally acknowledged truth” carried with it a realistic intention of saving and rejuvenating China but this pursuit was later questioned and abandoned by Liang Qichao himself. Nonetheless, the special analysis of, and answer to, such an abstract historiographic question reflected a mindset of “what history is” and “how to interpret history,” which was initiated in the era of the new historiography (Wang, 2008, p. 6), and also a preliminary consciousness of modern historiography as a discipline. Since then, Chinese historiography, either actively or passively, has collided, interacted and combined with the theories, ideas, doctrines and discourse systems of Western historiography, forming the main route for the development of modern Chinese historiography.

The new historiography also advocated applying the research methodologies of the social sciences to the study of history in a multi-disciplinary approach (geography, anthropology, linguistics, politics, religion, psychology, etc.). Both the consciousness of modern discipline and the advocacy of the interdisciplinary approach to historiography feature distinct characteristics of modern historiography.

It is noteworthy that around the emergence of the trend of thought in new historiography, a variety of other changes also took place in Chinese historiography and continued to enrich modern Chinese historiography as a whole. In terms of history education and teaching, in 1901 the government of the Qing Dynasty issued a royal decree to reform the imperial examination system by abolishing the stereotyped eight-part essay writing and substantially increasing the proportion of history knowledge testing. In 1902 the Qing government issued the *Authoritative Constitutions for the Imperial University*, including historiography in the list of compulsory courses. In 1904 the Qing Government promulgated the *School Charters as per Memorials to the Throne*, setting out provisions for history education under the new schooling system. In 1913 the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China issued the *University Regulation*, dividing historiography into two categories, i.e. “historiography of China and the Orient” and “historiography of the West” and listed specific history-related courses. During that period, numerous history textbooks were published to facilitate history teaching at schools of all levels. These measures helped the trend of thought in the new historiography to promote modern historiography as a discipline and kept systemizing and improving it as the education system of modern China further developed.

Beyond all doubt, another feature of the new historiography was a deliberate highlight of historiography’s realistic functions, regarding historiography as a tool for saving and rejuvenating China. Thus, the new historiography was an outcome of a historiography-reality combination. As the first chapter of “The New Historiography” states, “Of all disciplines common in the West, historiography is the only one that is inherent in China. Historiography covers the most extensive, profound and important knowledge, and it serves as a mirror to nationals and a source of patriotism.” Liang Qichao made it clear that historiography should play a part in saving and rejuvenating China. He said, “The boom of European nationalism today and the advancement of the major powers should

be half attributed to historiography.” “The advocacy of nationalism today is supposed to enable the Chinese nation with a population of 400 million to stand firm and erect in this world ruled by ‘survival of the fittest.’ To this end, all Chinese people (whether old or young, male or female, wise or slow-witted, capable or mediocre) have an urgent need to learn history as much as possible” (Liang, 1989, p. 1, p. 7). It is precisely traditional historiography’s failure to perform such realistic functions that fostered the call for a “revolution in historiography” and the building of a new historiography by modern historians. For a time, the negation of traditional historiography became a consensus among “men of insight” who, although with different political stances and academic orientations, invariably valued the social functions of historiography and required changes in its established landscape. In his essay “General Theory of Historiography” published in 1902, Deng Shi (1902) wrote, “Regrettably, without a revolution in Chinese historiography, China cannot expect to have its own history; without a history, a state cannot be established.” As Wang Rongbao (1902) put it, “The so-called history is no more than selection and utilization of historical facts over the past thousands of years for promoting virtues and punishing evils; the purpose of making the younger generation read historical works is to enable them to imitate their exemplary conduct and noble character; this is opposite to the academic trend of the world today.” According to Liu Shiwei (1998, p. 199), “The existing historical records are all about the development of a family or a clan; besides, they gloss over mistakes, hide wrong doings, praise good deeds and cater to fatuous and self-indulgent rulers.” For both reformists and revolutionaries in the political community, and for both the Old Text and New Text schools in Confucianism, the advocacy of “criticizing traditional historiography, accepting the theory of social evolution and establishing a new historiography” was increasingly recognized among scholars, some of whom even held different political and academic views. They basically reached a consensus on the general objective of the new historiography, although for various reasons, disputes still existed in the initiation, promotion, discussion and writing of the new historiography.

In the second half of the 19th century, Chinese historiography, passively under the influence of the times, saw the emergence of multiple new trends. Unlike a passive change, the trends of thought in the new historiography, which emerged early in the 20th century, were the results of Chinese historiography’s actively responding to the call of the times. What was new about the new historiography lay in its real needs and the academic practice of general history writing. Even then, there were already multiple achievements in history writing with the new historiographic vision (Zhang, 2007, pp. 94-102). In addition to “The Introduction to Chinese Historiography” and “The New Historiography,” the “Analysis of the General History of China” by Zhang Taiyan (1900) and “On History” by Chen Fuchen (1902) also touched upon the plan of writing a general history of China. And *Textbook of Chinese History* by Liu Shiwei (1905-1906) and *History of China* by Zeng Kunhua (1903) could be deemed outcomes of the trend of thought in new historiography. The most representative of all was *The Latest Middle School Textbook of Chinese History* written by Xia Zengyou (2000, p. 6) in 1904-1906. The book aimed to “uncover underlying causes of today’s social problems;” examined social development and evolution according to the historical stages of the ancient era and the medieval era, rather than the sequence of Chinese dynasties; emphasized the overall changes in the development of history; focused on the historical development of multiple ethnicities. Such moves were all advocated by the trends of

thought in the new historiography, for which this textbook was hailed as the “first well-known new work on the general history of China” (Qi, 1949). Interpreting the disciplinary nature and characteristics of historiography in a modern sense was a necessary step to modernize Chinese historiography. The “general history” category covered many essays and works, among which were “General Theory of Historiography” by Deng Shi (1902), “Pandect of Historiography” by Ma Xulun (1902), “Introduction to historiography” by Wang Rongbao (1902), “On Reading History” by Chen Fuchen (1904), “Discussion on Historiography” by Lu Shaoming (1905), as well as “*Historiography: An Introduction*” by Cao Zuoxi (1910). Many of these works were in fact based on translations from Japanese works and helped to promote and popularize modern historiography as a discipline among Chinese people.

In various ways, these works exhibited a new consciousness of history writing different from that of traditional historiography. The development of modern Chinese historiography started with the emergence of the trends of thought in the new historiography.

3. Transformation of modern Chinese historiography in the post-trends of thought in the new historiography era

The trend of thought in the new historiography in the early years of the 20th century marked the turning point for Chinese historiography to transform from ancient to modern. The hidden impact of the trend has lasted for over 100 years. By contrast, the negation of traditional historiography and the total acceptance of evolution theory, which were initiated by the trend of thought in new historiography itself, swept across China like a “storm” but did not last long, fading to silence only a few years later. Fierce attacks against and total negation of traditional historiography were the most direct reflections of the real needs of the new historiography and also its most distinct weakness (Lu, 2013, pp. 53-61). In this regard, Yan Fu famously commented in 1905, “People may ridicule the *Commentary of Zuo* (Zuo Zhuan) for being a book of wars; or sneer at works on the history of China for being family trees of the emperors, which seems to be the case. If they are told history is created specially for the study of politics, detailed descriptions and omissions of what happened in the past in these historical records would become reasonable after all. Besides, now that China is an imperial autocracy, the stories of the royal family concern all Chinese people. In this sense, the ancient scholars’ approach to history should by no means be slandered” (Yan, 1986, p. 1249). Traveling back from Europe, Liang Qichao had a reflection on this matter, “Regarding the scholars after Xun Kuang (310 BC-235 BC), including those in the dynasties of Han, Tang, Song, Ming and Qing, their academic works were pulled to pieces;” “indeed I have brought substantial destruction but little constructive vigor to the intellectual community of China, for which I feel accountable for the superficiality and vulgarity of the intellectual community in the late Qing Dynasty.” Liang (1989, p. 62) also changed his view of traditional academic culture. “We should try to absorb as much imported new culture as possible; while at the same time avoid improperly belittling ourselves, and despising or even abandoning our own cultural heritages.” However, the new historiography initiated a trend to influence historiography with reality and combine scholarship with politics. This trend has had a far reaching influence on the development of historiography since modern times” (Xie, 2016, p. 104). The new historiography combined politics and scholarship into

a whole, exerting a profound impact on modern Chinese historiography and highlighting its severe lack of a modern sense of academic independence. The “discipline-oriented” cognition, which truly featured academic independence and separated historiography from various realistic and utilitarian non-academic elements, also became a basic condition for the formation of modern historiography. As proved by history, soon after that, the importance of academic independence was emphasized by some scholars. In the essay “On the academic community in recent years” published in 1905, Wang Guowei (1983, p. 96) argued, “Academic advancement requires taking academic research as an end, rather than a means.” “Academic debates are all about disentangling truth from falsehood; debates beyond that and with views on nation, race and region only take academic research as a means, rather than an end. Academic advancement cannot be expected without taking academic research as an end. The key to academic advancement lies in academic independence.” “The current academic community of our country should on the one hand combine Chinese with Western views and on the other hand avoid taking academic research as a means to a particular political end.” Since the initiation of the new trend of thought in the new historiography, academic independence and truth-seeking were increasingly valued by modern Chinese historiography, particularly by a new generation of scholars growing out of the New Culture Movement (1915-1919, 1919-1923), among whom were Fu Sinian, Gu Jiegang and Chen Yinke. Accordingly, the following aspects emerged as important ideas and research methods during the Republic of China era (1912-1949): textual research of old and new historical records for historiographic truth, skepticism of the system of ancient Chinese history, and the concept of “historiography being the study of historical records.” Nevertheless, one major feature of the new historiography, i.e. realpolitik-related humanistic pragmatism still fitted in with the themes of China’s reality in the 20th century, namely, saving and rejuvenating the nation and starting a social revolution. “One possible reason for the politicization of modern Chinese historiography could lie in Chinese intellectuals’ loss of original passion for the enlightenment movement of China due to their total concentration on national existence in the early years of the 20th century” (Li, 2013, p. 7). The hidden impact of the trend of thought in the new historiography could be found in the discussions on the nature of Chinese society in the “great debates over social history” and the emergence of historical materialism-based historiography in China. Li Hongyan (2011, p. 4) said, “The trend of thought in the new historiography was in fact a preparation stage for Marxist historiography in China and an indispensable stage in the process of academic inheritance. It paved the way for the birth of Marxist historiography by making corresponding logical, ideological and academic data preparations.” Modern Chinese historiography struggled to move ahead against the tensions between academic ideal and reality.

The trend of thought in new historiography initiated modern Chinese historiography and also left behind many issues to be further explored. Regarding the development direction of modern Chinese historiography, two questions were most highlighted after the new trend of thought in the new historiography. First, the trend of thought in the new historiography’s strong criticism of traditional historiography was soon negated by most historical scholars, including Liang Qichao himself. How should traditional historiography be viewed and treated during the development of modern Chinese historiography? How should Chinese historiography be transformed from an ancient to a modern version? Second, the trend of thought in the new historiography called for the establishment of a new

historiography for China and laid out a preliminary scheme. What should be the specific research approaches to and methods of modern Chinese historiography?

For the first question, in fact, early in the 20th century, debates were held on the “quintessence of Chinese culture,” “national heritage” and “Sinology,” whose core lay in how to view traditional Chinese culture against the influx of Western learning. On December 30, 1902, Huang Jie published his essay “The Protectionism of the Quintessence of Chinese Culture” in *Bulletin of Politics and Art*, emphasizing for the first time that “the quintessence of Chinese culture represents the ethos unique to China” (Deng, 1902). At the beginning of 1905, Deng Shi, Huang Jie, et al., (1906). founded the National Learning Preservation Society, issuing *The Journal of the Quintessence of Chinese Culture*. According to its General Regulations, the Society was committed to “Sinology studies and quintessence preservation.” Led by renowned figures such as Zhang Taiyan, Liu Shipei, Deng Shi and Huang Jie, the Society formed a so-called “national quintessence school” in the late Qing Dynasty. Their debates on how traditional Chinese culture could break through in new historical conditions marked modern Chinese intelligentsia’s first collective attempt to explore a development course for traditional Chinese culture. Besides, “although scholars in the late Qing Dynasty made a sharp contrast between ‘Sinology’ (or quintessence of Chinese culture) and the academic system of Western learning, they showed no intention to resist Western learning. Quite the opposite, they basically acknowledged the value of Western learning and confirmed its significance to the promotion of Sinology studies” (Yu, 2011, pp. 5-12). The schemes of “preserving the quintessence of Chinese culture” and “rejuvenating ancient learning,” which were proposed by the “national quintessence school,” already had the intention to promote the transformation of traditional Chinese scholarship to modern scholarship. From today’s perspective, one operative effort back then was the cultivation of an awareness of discipline classifications, which directed the system of traditional Chinese knowledge to the system of modern Western scholarship. Take the “Prolegomena to a History of Learning in the Late Zhou Period” by Liu Shipei as an example. The essay covered the overall development of 16 disciplines (including the history of psychology, ethics, sociology and religion) in ancient China (Liu, 1934). It also touched upon the developmental differences in relevant disciplines between China and the West, with “a clear aim to transform the ‘four traditional discipline divisions’ to the Western academic classification system” (Yu, 2011, pp. 5-12). However, the national quintessence school’s excessive conservative attitude towards and attachment to Sinology failed to disguise their ambivalence in the face of powerful Western culture. Restricted to the efforts of “rejuvenating ancient learning” and the study of Confucian classics, along with their political appeal of anti-Manchu revolution, the majority of the “national quintessence school” fell behind in the New Culture Movement that followed. Meanwhile, the term “quintessence of Chinese culture” saw a significant drop in use and was gradually replaced by the term “national heritage” (guogu). Hu Shih used to say, “The term ‘national heritage’ was an invention of Mr. Zhang Taiyan and it is much better than terms such as ‘quintessence of Chinese culture’ and ‘national quintessence’ (guohua), because ‘national heritage’ does not carry any commendatory or derogatory implications” (Hu, 1998, p. 406). In 1910, Zhang Taiyan’s *On the National Cultural Heritage* was published by the organization Seminar on Sinology and was all the rage for a time. Since then, the term “national heritage” has become popular.

The “Re-organizing the National Heritage” movement, initiated in the New Culture Movement, was directly triggered by debates over “national heritage and spirit of science” in two journals, i.e. *The Renaissance* and *National Heritage*, both of which were issued by Peking University. In the context of New Culture Movement and increasing popularization of the idea of “science,” many new-generation scholars (Mao Zishui, Fu Sinian et al.) and overseas returnees who had received Western academic training actively participated in the debates. Compared with the past, “(their) approach to national heritage was more precise and corresponding conclusions were more accurate” (Qian, 1934). Regarding the attitude towards traditional scholarship, the New Culture Movement preferred “re-organization” to “haste and complete negation,” which was in stark contrast to the new trend of thought in the new historiography. Through in-depth analyses of Sinology and national heritage, the “Re-organizing the National Heritage” initiative gradually developed into a movement with extensive influence. During that process, the “quintessence of Chinese culture” and its related traditional and conservative elements were repelled; the pessimism that traditional Chinese learning would go extinct under the impact of Western learning was criticized; the call for complete negation of the values of traditional Chinese culture was not acknowledged; and the blind trust in “national heritage” as a solution to all problems or a means to a “great” end (i.e. the rejuvenation of the Chinese culture) was also denied. Scholars at that time preferred to restrict “national heritage” or “Sinology” to the scope of academic research and apply “scientific methods” to the “re-organization of national heritage.” Or in Hu Shih’s (1998, pp. 356-359) words, the idea of history, the doubting antiquity attitude and systematic research should be combined to form a major approach to the “reorganization of national heritage.” The “Declaration of the Issue of Chinese Studies Quarterly”^① was drafted by Hu Shih and reflected the collective view of scholars at the Institute of Sinology of the National Peking University. The Declaration specified the tenet of “re-organizing the national heritage,” according to which, “the mission of Sinology is to introduce Chinese culture of the past to people today; the approach to Sinology is to re-organize the history of all previous Chinese cultures from a historical perspective; the purpose of Sinology is to write a history of Chinese culture. The systematic study of Sinology should target that tenet. All studies of Sinology, whether about the past or the present, whether big or small, should advance towards that direction. Only with such a tenet can all relevant materials be sorted out; only with such a mission can all efforts be gathered; only with such a perspective can all ‘school prejudices’ be eliminated” (Hu, 1923). Although what Hu Shih wanted to stress was the purpose of “re-organizing the national heritage,” he also put forward the concept of “history of Chinese culture,” which, according to him, covered ten aspects ranging from history of Chinese nationality, history of spoken and written language, history of economic development, history of politics, history of international traffic, history of academic thoughts, history of religions, history of literature and art and history of social customs to history of institutions. His “history of Chinese culture” was in a broad sense historiography, which in fact abandoned traditional academic classifications and replaced them with a brand-new concept, namely,

① In the diary on November 15, 1922, Hu Shih wrote, “I drafted the ‘Declaration of the Issue of Chinese Studies Quarterly’. This 10,000-word piece was quite painstaking. It should reflect the view of all staff, for which I could not express myself as I wished and had to weigh every word. Of all essays I wrote, this piece was most time-consuming” (Hu, 1985, p. 517).

“history of culture” to integrate Sinology. “The history of Chinese culture is about re-organizing all past cultures from a historical perspective,” which to a large extent redefined the scope and content of history studies and attempted to apply modern specialized historical research to all relevant research areas of historiography. Step by step, it was expected to gradually replace “national heritage” with a modern academic system by “re-organizing the national heritage” to build a new system for Chinese historiography. In reality, with the abolishment of the imperial examination system in 1905, modern schools emerged and new history textbooks were compiled and adopted, robbing the traditional learning system of necessary living space. The “Declaration of the Issue of Chinese Studies Quarterly” was more like an ideological argument and declaration that the system of traditional Chinese learning was replaced by the system of modern discipline classifications. During the May Fourth period and later developments of historiography, the system of modern discipline classifications gradually replaced the system of traditional academic classifications in history teaching and research. The term “national heritage” was decreasingly used. Although “academy of Sinology” was successively established in many universities and colleges, they existed in name only and practiced modern scholarship in reality. “Institute of history and language” was evidently more worthy of the name. The specialized histories put forward by Hu Shih, such as history of Chinese nationality, history of spoken and written language, history of economic development and history of politics gradually became part of the new research system of historiography. How modern Chinese historiography should inherit traditional historiography was an issue deserving of long-term study and more thought. And “Re-Organizing the National Heritage” Movement was not a once-and-for-all solution to that. The system of “culture history” and corresponding classifications of specialized histories, put forward by Hu Shih, also require gradual improvements in real practice. The whole process (from the new historiography’s criticism against and negation of traditional historiography, the national quintessence school’s call for “preserving the quintessence of Chinese culture” and the Re-organizing the National Heritage Movement’s advocacy of re-organizing the traditional scholarship to the explicit mentioning of the academic goal of “forging a history of Chinese culture”) in fact effectively bridged the gap between new and traditional historiography, and identified the approach to the transformation from ancient to modern historiography from the perspective of discipline classifications. This was the most important achievement of the Re-organizing the National Heritage Movement during the New Culture Movement period, and was a more rational approach to traditional historiography after the trend of thought in new historiography. This change in modern Chinese historiography also outlined a new picture in which Chinese historiography was subdivided into specialized academic disciplines.

During the New Culture Movement, Hu Shih advocated “scientific methods,” which unveiled the possibility and necessity for the combination of Chinese and Western historiography; Gu Jiegang (2010, p. 85) initiated a “doubting antiquity” doctrine which was the outcome of “seeking truth” and “overcoming ideological barriers” in historiography. The resulting debates on ancient historiography was a cognitive clash between traditional and new historiography in terms of historiographic functions. Traveling back from Europe, Liang Qichao wrote and published some works on traditional Chinese historiography, including “Introduction to the Learning of the Qing Dynasty”, “Approaches to the Study of Chinese History” and its supplement, which marked his re-discovery of traditional Chinese historiography and



the "Great Four Tutors": Liang Qichao, Zhao Yuanren, Wang Guowei, Chen Yinke.

his attempt to combine Chinese and foreign historiography. The idea of "carrying forward the quintessence of Chinese culture and integrating new learning," advocated by the then "Nanjing Higher Normal School" (Nan'gao Pai) demonstrated another attitude of that time towards traditional culture. The May Fourth period, featuring multiple approaches to the development of historiography, became another key stage of modern Chinese historiography after the new trend of thought in the new historiography.

As for the second question (i.e.

What were the specific research

approaches to and methods of modern Chinese historiography?), the most direct and leading factor concerning the research approaches to and methods of modern Chinese historiography should of course be Western historiography, including the second-hand Western historiography imported from Japan in the early years. The study of the history and geography of the northwestern borderlands, which emerged under the reign of Emperor Daoguang and Emperor Xianfeng of the Qing Dynasty and lasted until the end of the 19th century and the turn of the 20th century, was arguably the first research area of Chinese historiography to echo the Oriental studies in Europe and the Oriental studies in Japan. "The boom of studies on the history and geography of the northwestern borderlands of our country (China) creates a platform for academic communications between the East and the West and an extension of 'Oriental studies' in the West." (Liu, 2017) Shen Zengzhi,^① who was spoken highly of by Wang Guowei, "maintained relationships with Eastern and Western Sinologists such as Naitō Konan, Fujita Toyohachi and Paul Eugène Pelliot and thereby followed the latest development of that area. Because of this, he generated a desire to 'gather some elites of European learning' and 'refer to the historical works of our country' in the studies of the history of Mongolia and the history and geography of the northwestern borderlands, and to contribute the research findings to the "whole world." To this end, he collected a large number of Russian and Japanese works" (Hu, 2014). Non-Chinese historical materials and historical comparative linguistics aroused the attention of Chinese scholars. Meanwhile, new historical materials such as inscriptions on oracle bones came into the research view of related

① Wang Guowei (2010, pp. 619–620) used to comment on Shen Zengzhi, "Mr. Shen inherited the studies on governance by scholars in the early years of the Qing Dynasty and the studies on Confucian classics and history by Qian-Jia scholars, and further applied them to all academic areas... Scholars can theorize 'a few words' learnt from him to form their own view."

scholars. From 1910 to 1911, Luo Zhenyu's two works, i.e. *Textual Research on the Divinatory Texts of the Shang Dynasty* and *Bone Inscriptions Unearthed at Yin Ruins (Part One)* were published. In 1914, *Bamboo and Wooden Slips in Drifting Sand* (Liusha Zhuijian), co-authored by Luo Zhenyu and Wang Guowei, were published. In 1915, Luo Zhenyu completed his work *Textual Criticisms and Explanations of Bone Inscriptions Unearthed at Yin Ruins*. Also around this period, Wang Guowei harvested a series of important research findings, including *Textual Research on Ancient Emperors and Dukes Mentioned on the Oracle Inscriptions Unearthed at Yin Ruins*, *Sequel to Textual Research on Ancient Emperors and Dukes Mentioned on the Oracle Inscriptions Unearthed at Yin Ruins* and *On the Systems of the Shang and Zhou Dynasties* (1917). Moreover, he also introduced the "method of dual attestation" in the new research context. These publications enabled studies on the histories of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, which had been impossible due to a lack of historical materials. The study of the history and geography of the northwestern borderlands, which has gradually evolved to practical learning since the late Qing dynasty, became more vigorous with the application of historical comparative linguistics and the reference to foreign historical documents. The research approach to modern Chinese historiography, initiated by Wang Guowei and other scholars, received almost unanimous recognition.

"New historical materials" became a keyword for the Chinese historiography in the first two to three decades of the 20th century. Oracle inscriptions, bamboo and wooden slips of the Han and Jin dynasties, manuscripts in Dunhuang, as well as archival documents stored at the Imperial Cabinet Archives of the Ming and Qing dynasties were known as four newly discovered historical materials. In July 1925, Wang Guowei gave a lecture entitled "Newly Discovered Learning in China over the Past 20-30 Years" at the summer extended learning program of Tsinghua University, introducing five newly discovered historical materials and the corresponding research progress. The five new discoveries respectively were oracle inscriptions; bamboo and wooden slips unearthed in Dunhuang and the northern & western borderlands; scrolls of the "Six Dynasties" (222 AD-589 AD) found in the Mogao Caves of Dunhuang; books and archives at the Imperial Cabinet Archives, and writings left by ancient foreign tribes within the territory of China. This speech draft was first published in the 350th issue of *Tsinghua Weekly* in 1925 and soon re-published in the 45th issue of *The Critical Review*, and again reprinted in the 6th issue of *Science* (vol. 11). This shows how much importance was attached by the then academic community to these new historical materials. Having been in slumber for tens of hundreds of years, these new historical materials were all of a sudden unearthed in bulk in the late 19th and early 20th century, which was by no means just coincidence. The introduction of the new concept regarding historical materials was the subjective reason for previously overlooked historical materials to be highly valued. The robbery of Dunhuang cultural relics and bamboo and wooden slips of the Han and Jin dynasties by some Western and Japanese explorers and archaeologists such as Marc Aurel Stein and Paul Eugène Pelliot formed the objective reason for Chinese scholars to pay attention to these historical materials. In the summer of 1909, Pelliot "revisited Beijing, where he became acquainted with Duanfang, governor of Zhili (currently Hebei province) and discussed archaeology with Duan and with Luo Zhenyu, Wang Guowei (1946) and other scholars regarding a research plan for a manuscript on Dunhuang." A number of Chinese scholars had personal contacts with Pelliot, including but not limited to Shen Zengzhi, Ye Changchi, Miao Quansun, Chen Yuan, Hu Shih, Chen Yinke and Fu Sinian.

According to Sang Bing (1997), “From Pelliot, they learnt about the existence of historical records in Dunhuang and began to try all means to collect and preserve relevant historical materials, initiating the Dunhuang studies, making it a new trend in international academic circles, and establishing direct contacts with mainstream Sinologists in the West for mutual encouragement and support.” The new historical materials also worked as media to facilitate Sino-foreign academic exchanges, allowed Chinese historians to directly access the development of Sinology in the West and basic characteristics there, and inspired Chinese scholars to “recapture the dominance of Sinology.” This in fact helped set a clear direction for modern Chinese historiography around the New Culture Movement period. Chen Yinke (1980, p. 236) said, “The scholarship of a given era is bound to be faced with new materials and new issues. These new materials should be adopted to support the study of these new issues to form a new academic trend of the times. Scholars who keep up with the trend are deemed ‘entering Sotāpanna’ (i.e. being current).” After the new trend of thought in the new historiography, modern Chinese historiography, relying primarily on new materials, new methods and new issues, quickly formed a “new trend” of Chinese historiography profoundly different from traditional Chinese historiography.

Having undergone the new trend of thought in the new historiography and New Culture Movement, Chinese historiography eventually transformed from ancient to modern historiography. During the advancement of modern Chinese historiography, a number of well accomplished historians emerged. While generating tremendous historical achievements, they also went through too many twists, turns and even sufferings. Up to this day, the following questions still concern the future route of Chinese historiography development and therefore require further exploration: What exactly are the relationships between modern and ancient historiography and what are their respective characteristics? How was the ethos of Chinese culture represented respectively in ancient and modern historiography? How should scholars view various interpretations of Chinese history from a perspective of modern Chinese historiography? How should the strong influence of Western historiography on modern Chinese historiography be viewed? Where will Chinese historiography go?

REFERENCES

- Bai Shouyi. (2006). Modern Chinese historiography in moderntimes. In Bai Shouyi (Ed.), *History of Chinese historiography* (vol. 6). Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House.
- Chen Yinke. (1980). Foreword to Chen Yuan's Dunhuang remnants after the plunder. *Collection of Jinming pavilion manuscripts* (vol. 2) (p. 236). Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Press.
- Deng Shi. (1902). On politics. *Renyin series of politics and art* (vol.5).
- Deng Shi. (1902, December). General theory of historiography. *Bulletin of Politics and Art*, 12.
- Deng Shi, et al. (1906). General regulations of the national learning preservation society. *The Journal of the Quintessence of Chinese Culture*, 1.
- Hu Fengxiang & Zhang, Wenjian. (1991). *The thoughts and schools of modern Chinese historiography*. Shanghai: East China Normal University Press (ECNUP).
- Hu Fengxiang. (2014). Shen Zengzhi's study on the history and geography of northwestern borderland in the late Qing Dynasty. *Journal of Historiography*, 1.
- Hu Shih. (1923, January). Declaration of the issue of Chinese studies quarterly. *Chinese Studies Quarterly* (vol.1), 1.
- Hu Shih. (1985). *The diary of Hu Shih* (vol. 2). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Hu Shih. (1998). Another discussion of reorganizing national heritage. *Collected writings of Hu Shih* (vol. 3) (p. 406). Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House.
- Hu Shih. (1998). Approach to the study of national heritage. *Collected writings of Hu Shih* (vol. 3) (pp. 356-359). Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House.
- Gu Jiegang. (2010). Introduction to contemporary Chinese historiography. *Collection of Gu Jiegang's essays on ancient historiography* (vol. 12), Complete works of Gu Jiegang, 12 (p. 322). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Gu Jiegang. (2010). A letter to Ye Shengtao on November 9, 1926. *Collection of Gu Jiegang's letters* (vol. 1), Complete works of Gu Jiegang, 39 (p. 85). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Jin Yufu. (2000). *History of Chinese historiography*. Shijiazhuang: Hebei Education Press.
- Li Hongyan. (2011). *On the history of modern Chinese historiography*. Beijing: China Social Science Press.
- Li Huaiyin. (2013). *Reinventing modern China: Imagination and authenticity in Chinese historical writing*. In (Sui Yousheng & Wang Chuanqi, Trans.). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Liang Qichao. (1989). On the power of academics in shaping the world. *Collected works from the Ice-Drinker's studio* (vol. 6) (p. 114). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Liang Qichao. (1989). An introduction to academic studies in the Qing Dynasty. *Collected works from the Ice-Drinker's studio* (vol. 34) (p. 62, p. 65, p. 78). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Liang Qichao. (1989). Self-review at thirty. *Collected works from the Ice-Drinker's studio* (vol. 11) (p. 19). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Liang Qichao. (1989). The introduction to Chinese history. *Collected works from the Ice-Drinker's studio* (vol. 6) (p. 1, pp. 1-2, pp. 2-12). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Liang Qichao. (1989). The new historiography. *Collected works from the Ice-Drinker's studio* (vol. 9) (p.1, p. 7, pp. 7-11). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Liang Qichao. (1989). Political scientist Bluntchli's theories. *Collected works from the Ice-Drinker's studio* (vol. 13) (p. 73, p. 75). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Liu Jinbao. (2017). Study on the history and geography of northwestern borderland from a perspective of Orientalism. *Social Science Front*, 4, 118-125.
- Liu Shipei. (1934). Prolegomena to a history of learning in the late Zhou period. *Writings of the late Mr. Liu Shenshu* (vol. 14). Shanxi: NingwuNanshi.
- Liu Shipei. (1998). Essay on the new historiography. *Selected works of Liu Shipei prior to the Revolution of 1911*. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company.

- Lu Xinsheng. (2013). Re-examination of revolution in the circle of history by Liang Qichao—Criticism of linear theory of evolution and four cons and two weaknesses in new historiography. *Hebei Academic Journal*, 5, 53-61.
- Qi Sihe. (1949). The development of Chinese historiography over the past century. *Yenching Social Sciences*, 2.
- Qian Xuantong. (1934). Foreword. *Writings of the late Mr. Liu Shenshu* (vol. 1). Shanxi: NingwuNanshi.
- Qiao Zhizhong. (2011). *History of Chinese historiography*. Beijing: China Renmin University Press.
- Sang Bing. (1997). Pelliot and modern Chinese academic community. *Historical Research*, 5, 115-129.
- Tang Baolin & Lin Maosheng. (1988). *Chronicle of Chen Duxiu's life*. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House.
- Wang Fan-sen. (2008). *Historians and historiography of modern China*. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (H.K.).
- Wang Fan-sen. (2008). Political concepts in the late Qing Dynasty. *Historians and historiography of modern China* (p. 6, p. 37). Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (H.K.).
- Wang Guowei. (1983). Celebrating the 70th birthday of Mr. Shen Yi'an. *Guantang Bieji (part. 23), The posthumous work of Wang Guowei* (vol. 4) (p. 26). Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House.
- Wang Guowei. (1983). "On the academic community in recent years". Jing'an selected works. *The posthumous work of Wang Guowei* (vol. 5) (pp. 96-97). Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House.
- Wang Guowei. (2010). Celebrating the 70th birthday of Mr. Shen Yi'an. *Guantang Jilin, Complete works of Wang Guowei* (vol. 8) (pp. 619-620). Hangzhou: Zhejiang Education Publishing House.
- Wang Rongbao. (1902, December). Introduction to historiography. *Collection of Translated Works*, 9.
- Weng Dujian. (1946, June). Prof. Pelliot. *Yenching Journal of Chinese Studies*, 30.
- Xia Zengyou. (2000). Guid to the use. *The history of ancient China* (vol.2) (p. 6). Shijiazhuang: Hebei Education Press.
- Xie Baocheng. (2016). *Revised history of Chinese historiography: From the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China era*. Beijing: The Commercial Press.
- Yan Fu. (1986). Lecture notes on politics. *Collected works of Yan Fu* (vol. 5) (p. 1249). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Yu Danchu. (1996). *Patriotism and modern Chinese historiography*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press.
- Yu Yingshi. (2011). Sinology and the study of Chinese humanities. *Research in the Traditions of Chinese Culture*, 2.
- Zhang Yue. (2007). The analysis of the creation of the thought of "new historiography" and its academic achievements. *Journal of Historical Science*, 9, 94-102.
- Zhou Yutong. (1983). *Selected works of Zhou Yutong on the history of the study of Confucian classics*. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House.

(Translator: Wu Lingwei; Editor: Jia Fengrong)

This paper has been translated and reprinted from *Historiography Quarterly*, No. 4, 2017, pp. 33-43.