MUSEUMS IN CHINESE:

NATIONALISM, UNIVERSALISM, AND THE CHINESE MUSEUM

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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The PRC museum is becoming a space for the construction of a national identity grounded in an ethnicized notion of Han Chineseness. This dissertation traces the origins of the museum in the Chinese-speaking world, exploring how the conceptualization of the museum shifted from the universal to the nationalistic mode. In the history chapters (Chapters II and III), I analyze how both discursive and built museums were initially conceptualized in the universal mode, as epistemological spaces where knowledge was conceived of in universal terms, before moving to the nationalistic mode, where knowledge was understood to produce the Chinese nation. In Chapter IV, I examine how the museum is used to construct a Chineseness grounded in an ethnicized understanding of a Han Chinese identity by close reading two museums to elucidate the extent to which the nation is authorized as the sole subject of history in PRC museums.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2018, in the suburbs southwest of central Beijing, three women gathered inside the atrium of the War of Resistance Museum.[1] Beneath a screen showing a video of a speech by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Chairman Xi Jinping playing on loop, a security guard rolled two poster boards out to the center of the museum. One of the poster boards showed an image of the CCP's flag while the other showed the pledge of allegiance that each party member swears upon their entrance to the party. Another woman stood beside the poster boards and led the three women as they read the pledge of allegiance.

[1] The full name of this museum is the Museum of the War of the Chinese People's Resistance against Japanese Aggression (中国人民抗日战争纪念馆). Because of the unwieldy title, I have taken the liberty of simply calling it the "War of Resistance Museum," following Rana Mitter's usage. See Mitter, *China's Good War*.

Figure 1.1 - Swearing allegiance to the CCP in the atrium of the Museum of the War of Resistance (all photos are the authors, unless otherwise mentioned)

These women represent part of a broader trend, one in which the museum space has become an important site for inculcating a nationalistic ideology that is imbricated with the CCP.[2] Today, the number of museums in the PRC is growing at a phenomenally rapid rate due to massive investments by the state. In 2000, the PRC had 1,198 museums. By 2011, that number had more than doubled to 2,571 museums.[3] By 2020, it had hit 5,788.[4] For the past two decades, museum growth has been exponential, doubling every decade. For the last ten years, the country has built almost an average of one museum a day. This is likely the fastest rate of museum building in history.

The three women I witnessed swearing allegiance to the CCP at the War of Resistance Museum are just one part of a large, state-driven program to use the museum space to construct a singular Chinese identity that projects the CCP onto the history of the Chinese nation. Starting in the 1990s, CCP leadership began to imagine museums as playing an important role in constructing an ideology that amalgamated nation and party. In a 1994 speech, Ma Zishu, the vice director of the NACH (National Administration of Cultural Heritage, 国家文物局), explained the purpose of a museum: "a museum shall use cultural relics to educate the public to

[2] One scholar, Varutti, has described this phenomenon in the following manner: "Through the inscription of manufactured versions of the past into the 'official' national history (as well as the imposition of collective amnesia concerning specific historical periods), and by enforcing a definition of Chinese national identity that emphasizes ethnic diversity and unity, the state is actively constructing an image of the Chinese nation that is substantiated, sustained and disseminated through museums." Varutti, *Museums in China*, 3.

[3] Jacobson, *New Museums in China*.

[4] "China Clarifies Regulation for Management of State-Owned Museums." *Global Times*, June 23, 2021.

patriotism, revolutionary tradition and national conditions."[5] This museum-building program began in earnest shortly after the 1989 massacres and the shift in ideology from socialism to nationalism.[6] At the same time, the PRC began a "National Patriotic Education" movement, with many museums being declared to be "Bases for Patriotic Education" (爱国注意基地).[7] In 2004, in order to increase visitation to museums, the state ordered all state-owned museums to be free to students and their accompanying teachers.[8] By 2008, the PRC required all state-owned museums to be free to all visitors.[9] These efforts were all part of a plan to make the museum an important space for the construction of a national ideology and identity.

This push to use museums as a space for the inculcation of a nationalistic identity is not merely a top-down measure but also something that has been embraced by the Chinese public. The growth in museums has paralleled a growth in a museum going public. In 2008, when

[5] Varutti, *Museums in China*, 37.

[6] It is commonly accepted in the scholarship on the PRC that the PRC has largely abandoned socialism as an ideological basis for the state, though the state does still gesture toward socialism in its rhetoric. Instead, the PRC generally grounds its legitimacy in terms of an ethno-nationalism blended with economic growth. As Vickers notes, "Now socialist in name only, the Party bases its claim to legitimacy on its trusteeship of the glorious legacy of China's ancient civilization, on its representation of 'advanced forces' bent on forging a strong and united nation and on its record of steadfast resistance against foreign encroachments of all kinds." Vickers, "Museums and Nationalism in Contemporary China," 366. Vickers is not the only scholar to note this. As Hevia notes, "In East Asia, the end of the Cold War came in the midst of massive economic transformations that had already begun to rework memory of war and revolution. This was especially the case in the People's Republic of China (PRC), where nationalism, now uncoupled from socialism that the state itself was rapidly abandoning, moved to the center of official public discourse." Hevia, "Remembering the Century of Humiliation," 192. Also, see Denton's comments on the issue: "If this state-sponsored nationalism of the 1990s was an effort by the party to fill the ideological void left by the decline of socialism, then the revolutionary history museums were an important part of that effort." Denton, *Exhibiting the Past*, 9. Also see Markey's comments on the matter: "If this state-sponsored nationalism of the 1990s was an effort by the party to fill the ideological void left by the decline of socialism, then the revolutionary history museums were an important part of that effort." Markey, *China's Western Horizon*, 2. As Zha, another scholar, phrases it, "In fact, as the communist ideology gradually becomes an empty shell, nationalism is increasingly being used by Chinese officialdom to hold the country together." Zha, *China Pop*, 20.

[7] Vickers, "Transcending Victimhood," 19. Vickers, "Museums and Nationalism in Contemporary China," 366.

[8] Vickers, "Museums and Nationalism in Contemporary China," 366.

[9] The vast majority of museums in the PRC are state owned. In 2013, state media reported that, of the country's 3,589 museums, 3,054 were state owned—that is, 85%. All indications are that this proportion has been maintained. See: "China Has 3,589 Museums Nationwide." *Chinese Archeology, Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences*, http://chinesearchaeology.net.cn/en/News/Academic_activities/2013/1026/42070.html.

state-owned museums were made free, there were 283 million museum visits annually. By 2020, that number had quadrupled to 1.2 billion visits.[10] On average, every person in the PRC made a visit to a museum that year (despite the fact that this number is almost certainly lower than it would have been had museums not been closed for much of the first half of the year due to Covid-19). On my research trips, I have personally witnessed how popular museums have become. Though there were many museums where I saw no visitors other than myself, those were equally matched by museums which were flooded with visitors. In Beijing, I waited in line with more than a thousand visitors shoving against each other to enter the National Museum of China (中国国家博物馆). Over the several days that I conducted research at the Nantong Museum (南通博物苑), there was rarely a time when I saw the parking lot not full. There were times when I saw museums that were largely empty, but generally, museums in the country were well attended; I was the only visitor in the Chinese Audit Museum (中国审计博物馆), but next door, the Chinese Abacus Museum (中国珠算博物馆) had steady footfall from visitors. While some museums, like the Audit Museum, are likely white elephant projects, most were welcomed by visitors.

[10] Li, "Building a World Museum Superpower, These Aspects Are Still Needed to Gain Momentum."

Figure 1.2 - The atrium of the National Museum of China filled with visitors

In this dissertation, I will examine how the museum in China came to take the nation as its main subject. I will explore how the museum came to be understood as a space for the inculcation of a national, Chinese identity, tracing the process of the museum's sinification, exploring how the category of "museum" emerged as a knowledge-producing institution in the Chinese context, and articulating how the knowledge produced by museums has shifted from a universal to a nationalistic mode. Over the almost two centuries that the museum has been operative as a category in China, it went from being regarded as a foreign epistemological tool that articulated and privileged a Western understanding of universalism to being regarded as the space for enunciating a Chinese identity that conflates the modern state, the CCP, and the

historical Chinese nation into a singular, univocal identity. In tracing this history, this dissertation will demonstrate how the museum, as an institution, arced from a universalist rhetoric to a nationalistic rhetoric, while also becoming a space where the political ideology of the nation was constructed. The museum is both a sign of the nation and a medium for communicating it. Today, the museum in the PRC is a site almost entirely within the nationalistic mode, which has largely eclipsed the universal mode.

Defining the Field and Terminology

Museums as Spaces for Identity Construction

In debates in museum studies over the past four decades, one of the few things museological scholars have agreed upon is that museums are important sites for the construction of identities.[11] As Carol Duncan states, "Museums are powerful identity-defining machines."[12] Duncan is only one of many widely respected scholars to conclude that museums are technologies that can be utilized to construct visitor's identities. In *The Birth of the Museum*, Tony Bennett, another important museum studies scholar, describes how this process of identity construction works in the interaction between the museum and the visitor. Drawing off Foucault, Bennett theorizes the museum as a place where the visitor is simultaneously a subject of the gaze and an object of the museum's gaze. In his theorization of the museum, the visitor interprets the artifact that they see and thus believes themself to have subjectivity as they actively consume the museum's content. However, they are simultaneously being taught to internalize the regulations and narratives represented within the museum. The visitor believes that they are the agent in this

[11] As Barnes has noted, "Museums have served and continue to serve as image-makers for the nation; palimpsests upon which official social, political and cultural identities of Self and Other are constructed." Barnes, *Museum Representations of Maoist China*, 1.

[12] Duncan, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," 101.

process, that they are actively constructing their own identity as they gaze upon the artifact or move through the museum space, but this process is, in fact, guided by curatorial forces. The visitor links themself to the narrative that is presented in the museum.[13] This process of linking themself to the narrative within the museum involves the interiorization of the gaze as a form of self-surveillance.[14] As Kirk Denton puts it in his summarization of Bennett, the museum is, "in short, a means used by the state to internalize ideology in the minds of citizenry. Museums also assume and organize a particular way of looking at objects and a particular form of subjectivity."[15]

Museum studies scholars largely understand the museum as a space for the construction of identities, though they differ in how they understand the process.[16] Philip Fisher takes a more sociological perspective on the process when he suggests that museums function as scripts for identities, defining what identities are acceptable and then impressing these identities on visitors: "The museum is more than a location. It is a script that makes certain acts possible and others unthinkable."[17] Other scholars, such as Angelis, understand the museum through a narratological lens: "Museum narratives build national and cultural identity through framing."[18] Benedict

[13] For this language on linking an individual to an identity offered in the museum narrative, I am drawing off of Rowe. See Rowe, "Linking Little Narratives to Big Ones."

[14] Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*.

[15] Denton, *Exhibiting the Past*, 12.

[16] As Denton has noted, "In the analysis of the spatial rhetoric of Chinese museums in this book, I draw primarily from these ideological approaches to museums. Not all museologists, it should be said, are comfortable with reducing museum collections to political functions- whether nationalist or imperialist, socialist or bourgeois-and prefer to see the museum as a "dream space" in which memories, both personal and collective, circulate freely. Furthermore, whereas much museum theory has emphasized the power of the institution to impose ideology, to compel the spectator to identify with a politically driven civic and national character, other scholarship tends to be much less deterministic." Denton, *Exhibiting the Past*, 13.

[17] Fisher, *Making and Effacing Art*, 18.

[18] Angelis, "Disruptive Encounters," 11.

Anderson frames the museum as a part of the series of texts, including the map and the census, that help communities visualize the imagined communities that give birth to the nation.[19] Scholars of disciplines adjacent to museum studies share a similar perspective on how mediums like public statuary inculcate identities in the viewing public. Discussing the role that public displays played in constructing a modern identity in Meiji Japan during the transformation from a premodern to a modern citizenry, Saleer concludes that statues "remain significant manifestations of the nation in public spaces, inculcating visitors with an official imprimatur of the idea of the nation."[20] Like the museum, the public viewing experience associated with Meiji-period statuary was one in which identities were communicated to the citizenry.

In this dissertation, the process of constructing identities in the museum space will generally be conceptualized as a top-down transmission whereby the museum becomes a medium for its creators to broadcast an identity down to the museum visitor. Of course, it is important to remember that there is a difference between the top-down ideologically imposed identities that museums and similar institutions attempt to dictate and the lived identities that individuals incorporate into their lives.[21] Museums are not always able to successfully impose an identity on every museum visitor, but what they are able to do is offer identity narratives or "identity contingencies" that set boundaries for the kinds of identities that individuals can adopt.[22] The identity narratives communicated in the museum space function as normative

[19] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 178–80.

[20] Saaler, "Public Statuary and Nationalism in Modern and Contemporary Japan," 4.

[21] As Denton says when discussing the major thrust of his book, "In this book, I am primarily concerned with the representations museums are attempting to convey to their visitors, even as I recognize that they do not necessarily achieve this goal and that experiences can vary dramatically from individual to individual, social group to social group and ethnicity to ethnicity." Denton, *Exhibiting the Past*, 13. For another perspective on this discussion of the difference between identities imposed from above and identities as embraced and lived by individuals, see Melissa Brown's discussion. Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese*, 236.

[22] For more on "identity contingencies," see Steele, *Whistling Vivaldi*.

anchors to which identities can be linked. As the museum naturalizes specific identities, the majority will likely adopt said identity. If an individual chooses not to accept the identity sanctioned by the museum creators, this rejection will likely increase ideological friction between this individual and the rest of society. Thus, even when the individual chooses to reject the identity on offer, they are still pressured by the normative forces that the narrative of the museum naturalizes.

Nations and Nationalism

As nationalism lies at the heart of this dissertation, the term nation must be defined, and this, as Eric Hobsbawm pointed out, has never been done satisfactorily.[23] The same point, that the nation is impossible to define, was made by Anderson.[24] Anderson himself famously defined the nation as an imagined community that was linked through both shared texts and a modern process of pilgrimage. In another definition of the nation, Max Weber said that "a nation is a common bond of sentiment whose adequate expression would be a state of its own, and which therefore normally tends to give birth to such a state."[25] Anthony Smith, another scholar of nationalism, in discussing Weber's definition of the nation, suggests that these common bonds of sentiment are likely to emerge out of a variety of characteristics: myths and memories of a

[23] "Most of this literature has turned on the question: What is a (or the) nation? For the chief characteristics of this way of classifying groups of human beings is that, in spite of the claims of those who belong to it that it is in some ways primary and fundamental for the social existence, or even the individual identification, of its members, no satisfactory criterion can be discovered for deciding which of the many human collectives should be labelled in this way. Nation-watching would be simple if it could be like bird-watching." Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1870*, 5.

[24] "Nation, nationality, nationalism—all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone to analyse." Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 3.

[25] Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, 583, 16n.

common ancestry, a shared language, religion or other form of public culture, a shared homeland, a single socioeconomic unit, or even shared codes and institutions.[26]

The work of Ernst Gellner functions as a touchstone for many of the above scholars working in this "fruitful" period of theorizing nationalism.[27] Gellner offers two definitions of the nation: either a shared system of communication, signs, and behaviors, or the belief by members of a group that they are a nation. In other words, a nation is a group of people who define themselves as a nation. Despite the tautological nature of his definition, Gellner's exploration of the subject is one of the most productive theorizations of nationalism.[28] He argues that nations are the products of the shift to industrial societies that require economic progress. Progress creates an environment that requires an extreme division of labor and an educational system that is constructed around a shared language and a shared experience, and it is these educational institutions that emerge from the shift to an industrial society that produce the nation. Though he does not mention it specifically, the museum can be understood as one of these institutions through which the nation is produced.

The above are all definitions of the nation produced by prominent scholars of nationalism in Western metropoles. Though they are important because of the Eurocentrism of nationalism studies, they are often far removed from concepts of the nation that are operative in China. There is a competing set of questions about the nation as it applies to the specific concept of China, and it is these questions that I will now turn to.

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[26] Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 104.

[27] Hobsbawm suggested that the two decades before his book was a period of particularly "fruitful" theorization of nationalism. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1870*, 3.

[28] Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 7.

The first problem that must be addressed when thinking about the concept of the nation in a Chinese context is whether the word "nation" is even applicable.[29] In Chinese, the term used to describe the concept of "nation" is *minzu* (民族).[30] However, the word *minzu* encompasses both the English terms "nation" and "ethnicity."[31] In Chinese, the two concepts, which are often imagined to be distinct in English-language scholarship, are amalgamated into the single concept of *minzu*. Even when writing in English, Chinese scholars frequently use "ethnicity" and "nation" interchangeably. The term *minzu* is also different from the English concept of ethnicity or nation because a single *minzu* can contain multiple *minzu* (sub-*minzu*?) within it.[32] Though

[29] One of the more commonly quoted statements on this confusion is by Pamela Crossley: "In contrast to the ethnology of the Soviet Union, neither English-language scholarship nor Chinese-language scholarship has recourse to a definitive vocabulary distinguishing various types of cohesive identities from one another. Where English flounders attempting to distinguish "nation-state" from "nation," "nation" from "people," "people" from "nationality" or "ethnic group," Russian offers the compact natsiya (where we might write "nation- state"), narod (where we might write "people,nation," "nationality"), etnos (where we might write "people," "nationality," "subnationality," "ethnic group") and etnicheskaya gruppa (where we might write "people," "nationality," "ethnic group"), among other precisions. In nearly all of these instances, Chinese is obliged to make do with minzu, and it is not surprising that both Chinese and Western academic writing on ethnicity attempts to orient itself with frequent allusions to the precisions of Russian terminology." Crossley, "Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China," 12.

[30] In colloquial usage, the word "nation"(民族) and "state" (國家) are frequently conflated as equivalents. However, in the field of nationalism studies, these are recognized as two separate things that should not be equated. "States are defined by their possession of sovereignty over a territory and its people. States are the primary political units of the international system. A state is the expression of government control over a piece of territory and its people. The geographic scope of the governmental control exists in a series of nested scales. The terminology may be confusing because it is so widely misused. Instead of using the term state, the term nation or national is usually substituted. Hence, we stand for the national anthem, rather than the state anthem, in the World Cup and Olympic Games we say that national teams compete, rather than state teams. However, the term nation has a very specific meaning that, if we focus on the definition, should not be used in this way. A nation is a group of people who believe that they consist of a single "people" based upon historical and cultural criteria, such as a shared language." Flint, *Introduction to Geopolitics*, 105–6.

[31] "There is no English equivalent for 'minzu,' which has several usages. For example, it can mean 'ethnic' in the Western sense of the word, or 'nationality,' as in *Falanxi minzu* (French nationality). Also, a minzu in reality can contain several different ethnic groups in the Western sense of the concept. Lastly, a group cannot be a minzu if not recognized by the state." Khan, "Who Are the Mongols," 125.

[32] Before the late 1990s, the term *minzu* was generally translated into English as "nation," following the Soviet tradition. But, as Chinese scholars increasingly came into conversation with US-based social scientists, they increasingly switched to translating *minzu* as "ethnicity," partially because they recognized that, in English, "nation" connoted an autonomy associated with statehood. Thus, in 1995, the *Guojia Minzu Shiwu Weiyuanhui* changed the English translation of its name (but not its Chinese name) from "State Commission for Nationality Affairs" to "State Commission for Ethnic Affairs." The Beijing theme park that allowed visitors to see different minority groups, the *Zhonghua Minzu Yuan*, had its name changed from the "Chinese Nationality Park" to the "Chinese Ethnic Culture Park." In neither case did the Chinese original change. Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 37.

minzu is frequently glossed as both "nation" and "ethnicity" in English, neither of these translations exactly fits the Chinese context.

In writing about Chinese *minzu* in an English-language context, scholars have utilized a variety of strategies to deal with the fact that *minzu* maps neither onto "nation" or "ethnicity." There are essentially three strategies scholars use. Some scholars simply select a single word, either ethnicity or nation, and use that word exclusively or minimize their usage of the other. Scholars like Mark Elliott and Pamela Crossley deal with the problem in this manner.[33] A second option is to simply try to map the differences between ethnicity and nation, as conceived of in English, onto the Chinese context.[34] This second strategy tends to be less successful than the first, as scholars who adopt it struggle to articulate a clear framework that applies to the emic context. The third strategy is to interchangeably use the words ethnicity and nation.[35] This strategy is problematic because it is often confusing and imprecise.

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[33] Mark Elliott is an example of a scholar who has simply chosen to use a single word. For the most part, Elliott tends to use the word "ethnicity" and not "nation," particularly when translating the term *minzu*. When he does use the term "nation," he understands it strictly in terms of statehood, such as in instances when he is translating the Chinese term *guojia* or the Manchu term *gurun*. See Elliott, *The Manchu Way*. Also see Crossley, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners." Pamela Crossley also tends to use the word "ethnicity" to translate the word and concept of *minzu*. She restricts her use of the word "nation" in a manner similar to Elliott's, using "nation" to designate the "nation-state." See Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*.

[34] An example of a scholar who has struggled to try to frame the Chinese context within an English-language context is Emily Honig. In her admirable work *Creating Chinese Ethnicity*, she struggles with how to understand the status of the Subei peoples in early twentieth-century Shanghai. She attempts to compare the Subei to people of Irish ethnicity in the US and Britain, but she never is completely satisfied with her analogy. See Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity*, 3.

[35] For a scholar who uses both the terms "nation" and "ethnicity" interchangeably, see Zhang, "Wrestling with the Connotation of Chinese 'Minzu.'" Also see Xu Jieshun: "The Northeast China Han may be divided into the Shenyang, Dalian, Harbin and Changchun ethnic groups. The Northwest China Han may be divided into Hehuang, Hexi, Guanzhong, Xi'an, Northern Shaanxi, and Qinzhoutianshui ethnic groups. Finally, the Southwest China Han may be divided into the Yunnan and Guizhou ethnic groups. The Third level of subcategorization mainly refers to 'ethnic islands'" such as the 'Gaoshan Han' of Guangxi, the natives of Fuchuan, the Tunbao of Guizhou, the Hui'an of Fujian and the Dan, these three levels make up the immense ethnic group system known as the Han Nationality." Xu, "Understanding the Snowball Theory of the Han Nationality," 118.

A second problem we must address is how *minzu* has been understood in scholastic debates. Two of the earliest scholars to tackle the concept of *minzu* were the American scholars Joseph Levenson and John Fairbanks. Both posited that before the encounter with Western imperialist powers, an incipient form of the nation existed, but this form did not exhibit true nationalism but rather a shared form of culture. This early form of nationalism was neither cohesive enough to qualify as a true nation, in the modern sense of the term, nor was it enough to respond to the challenge of Western imperialism. The formation of a modern notion of nationalism, a process that began in the late Qing, was a reaction to the encounter with the West and the failure of Chinese culture to successfully manage to integrate into the global order.[36] This thesis, called Culturalism, retains a certain level of influence, even as subsequent sinologists have attempted to complicate their conceptualization.

Like Levenson, other scholars in the American academy have found that the concept of the Chinese nation and the Han Chinese ethnic group is largely a modern phenomenon. As Pamela Crossley wrote in her discussion of ethnicity during the Qing, "It is not self-evident that 'ethnicity' is an appropriate or exceptionally fruitful concept for the analysis of Chinese late imperial social history."[37] Rather, she and other scholars have framed Chinese national identity as a product of the modern Chinese states that have ruled over the region. Dru Gladney, Melissa Brown, Pat Giersch, Agnieszka Joniak-Luthi, and Steve Harrell have all articulated similar theses, that the national identity encompassed within the bounds of "Chineseness" and "Hanness" is not an essentialized identity connected to a long continuity of identities operative during imperial Chinese history but rather a recent construction that emerges out of both

[36] Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, 98.

[37] Crossley, "Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China," 1.

historical sources and encounters with the modern state. This identity is the product of negotiations between said state and modern individuals.[38]

If the dominant strain of thinking about ethnicity and nation in China locates the origins of the concept of the Chinese nation within the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there is another strain that sees emic concepts of the nation embedded in premodern Chinese discourses. Mark Elliott locates the earliest stable discourse on the Han in the Ming as an imperial project to construct an ethno-nationalist identity in the face of external aggression emanating from the rump Mongol-Yuan state: "If the story presented here is approximately correct, it is probably sounder historically to regard the common identity shared by *Hanren* today very much as an early modern artifact, the result of the Ming imperial enterprise, made urgent because of, and enabled by, the persistent occupation of significant parts of the Central Lands by Northern Others and the repeated challenge they threw down as to who the *Hua* or *Han* were."[39] Another scholar, Ng-Quinn, also argues that there did exist a premodern form of Chinese nationalism that depended on the Chinese elite deploying the symbols of a shared community to arouse a common sentiment cemented by a political-cultural bond that appears to have many of the characteristics of a nation.[40] Other scholars make similar arguments, such as that elements of

[38] Gladney distinguishes between culture/civilization and the Han nation, though, it should be pointed out, in contemporary China, this distinction is not operative. As Gladney states, "I suggested that while I believed Chinese culture and civilization had a long history and many kinds of continuities (as well as serious discontinuities and ruptures), the Han as a nationality was a construct of the 20th-century discourses of nationalism that had entered China via Japan in the late 19th century." Gladney, *Dislocating China*, xii. For more on how different states, when encountering peoples with a similar national heritage, can create different peoples through different processes of nationalization, see Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese?* Also see Harrell, "From Xiedou to Yijun." For more general discussions of the emergence of the discourse of Chinese nationhood, see Giersch, "From Subject to Han." Also see Joniak-Luthi, *The Han*.

[39] Elliott, "Hushuo," 189.

[40] As Ng-Quinn has noted, "I have argued that in premodern China an idealized national identity based on unity and culture had existed since the period of the Xia, Shang and Zhou. This national identity offered a stability and helped sustain the Chinese state regardless of the circumstances by unifying the population, at least psychologically. That the Chinese state has physically perpetuated itself testifies to the importance of that identity." Ng-Quinn, "National Identity in Premodern China," 57.

Chinese culture and the dynastic state map onto the contemporary conceptualization of the nation and can be regarded as a qualified sense of nationhood.[41] In other words, the idea that the Chinese nation is a purely modern construct is still contested, though it would probably be better to use Hobsbawm's term "proto-nationalism" to describe these inchoate forms of early Chinese nationalism.[42]

My dissertation is heavily indebted to this discussion, though it does not attempt to make an intervention into it. This debate is useful for my purposes only insomuch as it forces this dissertation to grapple with the processes that late-Qing China underwent. Whether these constitute the origins of true Chinese nationalism or whether a Chinese nation can be said to have existed for centuries before is less important than to note that, in the creation of contemporary Chinese nationalism, preexisting identities were incorporated into Eurocentric conceptualizations to produce a hybrid nationalism that was constituted by both emic and etic frameworks. Thinking of the nation in China as an entirely modern or an entirely premodern concept is not fruitful because it neglects the interaction of both elements. Rather, it is best to understand Chinese nationalism as a premodern imperial identity grafted onto a modern conceptualization of the nation.

For the sake of this dissertation, I tend to define the nation in terms of an ethno-nationalistic framework. In my conceptualization, the nation is to be understood as a group that is conscious of itself as being constituted as said group, usually framed in terms of common descent, history, language, and culture. To a certain degree, this definition is necessarily arbitrary,

[41] Matten, in discussing the way that the cultural memory of Yue Fei has changed, notes that, starting in the early Ming Dynasty, Yue Fei was remembered as an ethnic Chinese hero and framed in terms of ethnicity. Matten, "The Worship of General Yue Fei," 78. See Trauzettel, "Sung Patriotism as a First Step Towards Chinese Nationalism." Also see Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*. Also see Rossabi, *China Among Equals*.

[42] Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1870*, 46.

but, as the examples in the paragraphs above have shown, there is no correct way to understand the concepts of "nation" and "ethnicity." Even within the plentiful scholarship on the subject, there is a broad range of definitions for these two words. Rather than trying to struggle with how the concept of *minzu* fits within these two English-language concepts, I will generally use the word "nation" to translate the term *minzu* and minimize my usage of the word "ethnicity."

To use the term "nation" is problematic for a variety of reasons, not least because it positions the PRC as if it were made up of a single ethno-nation when, in fact, the state is composed of fifty-six officially recognized *minzu*, and the state's multi-national nature is frequently broadcast as an important part of its identity. Though the discourse that the PRC is a multi-national state is still prominent, it is increasingly being marginalized by the admixture of ethno- and state-nationalism that is becoming the mainstay of Chinese ideology, particularly as the PRC state seeks to repress many of these non Han-Chinese national groups.[43] This is

[43] Though this conceptualization of Chinese nationalism as essentially a Han Chinese nationalism is something that has recently become more prominent, it has been extant from a very early point in the emergence of nationalism as a force in China. Though he frequently adapted his views of the nation and nationalism to political expediency, Sun Yatsen, the first president of the first Chinese republic, advocated for a Chinese nationalism that was essentially Han nationalism. Sun himself frequently argued that the Chinese nation should be understood in terms of the Han Chinese nation. As he said in his 1924 essay, "Three Principles of the People," "With regards to China's minzu, altogether there are 400 million people. Among them there are a few million Mongols, a million or so Manchus, a few million Tibetans, and a few hundred thousand Muslim Turks. All together these non-natives (*wailai*) do not exceed ten million people. Thus, the vast majority of the four hundred million Chinese people are entirely Han people: sharing a common bloodline, language, religion, and customs—entirely a single minzu." Quoted in Leibold, "Searching for Han," 215. As Prasenjit Duara notes, "Sun argues that China, which for him is the Han nation, was the world's most perfectly formed nation because the people were bound together by all five of the criteria that it took to form a nation: blood/race, language, custom, religion and livelihood." Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 32. Other scholars also interpret Sun along lines similar to Duara's interpretation of Sun's conflation of Chinese-ness with the Han and the exclusion of non-Han groups from the construction of a Chinese identity. Joniak-Luthi formulates Sun's understanding of ethnicity in the following manner: "Reformulation and reinforcement of the Han/Chinese identity thus became a primary task for the revolutionaries. They set out to achieve this aim through inventing a legendary common ancestor of 'the Han' (the Yellow Emperor), as well as by creating new national symbols and a national history. In order to morally construct the revolution against the Manchu Qing, who had continued to cultivate many traditions associated with Chinese-ness, the revolutionary party strived to create a clear boundary between the Han and the Manchu through constructing a racial distinction between the unitary Han race (*zhongzu*, *renzhong*, *zhong*, *zu*) and the race of the oppressive Manchu. By contrasting 'the Han' with this powerful 'other,' especially in the pre-1912 period, the revolutionaries hoped that Han/Chinese, fragmented along strong kin and place identities, would begin to imagine themselves as one national community bound by a unitary national identity." Joniak-Luthi, *The Han*, 22.

particularly relevant for this project because the nationalism embodied in the museums I conducted research on was generally that of ethno- and state-nationalism varieties, though I frequently saw museum narratives that gestured toward the discourse that included non-Han ethnic groups. For this reason, my project minimizes references to the multi-national discourse, focusing instead on the forms of ethno- and state-nationalism that most museums articulate.

In this dissertation, I will understand Chinese nationalism as a blend of ethno-nationalism and state-nationalism, the forms of nationalism that are most operative today in the PRC. This conceptualization emerged in the late Qing, but was constructed from the proto-nationalisms of the late imperial period. As I will conceptualize it, this identity will be understood as a generic Chinese imperial identity that is frequently coded as Han Chinese. However, I also recognize that there are numerous other ways to understand the nation in the contemporary Chinese context. My usage is meant neither to deny that these other understandings exist nor to suggest that they are unimportant. Rather, these frameworks are simply less relevant to understanding the museum in contemporary China.

The Universal and National in the Museum

This question of the nation lies at the heart of one of the most heated debates in contemporary museum studies. Today, one of the most important tensions in museological circles is the question of what the roles of the universal and national museum are. In 2020, Dan Hicks's critique of the universal museum, as embodied in the British Museum, was awarded the *New York Times'* "Best Art Book 2020" and helped to continue the debate between critics of the museum, such as Hicks, and defenders of the universal museum, such as Neil MacGregor, James

Cuno and Kwame Appiah.[44] This question of these two types of museums and the divergent epistemologies that underlie them is at the heart of this dissertation.

When museums first emerged in Europe in the late Renaissance and early Enlightenment, these institutions were conceptualized as universalistic enterprises.[45] The museum functioned as a space to contemplate knowledge from a Cartesian universalism that encompassed the entire globe. As Findlen, a scholar of early museums, said, "The museum, as the nexus of all disciplines, became an attempt to preserve, if not fully reconstitute, the encyclopaedic programme of the classical and medieval world, translated into the humanist projects of the sixteenth century, and later the pansophic vision of universal wisdom that was a leitmotif of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century culture."[46] Up until the 1970s and 1980s, museum scholars largely accepted the notion that the universal museum was the normative model for all museums.[47]

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[44] "Best Art Books of 2020" *New York Times*, November 26, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/26/arts/design/best-art-books-2020.html. For the defenders of the universal museum, see MacGregor, "Neil MacGregor at the Art Institute of Chicago." Also see Cuno, *Whose Culture*. Also see Appiah, "Whose Culture Is It?"

[45] "Cabinets of curiosities were intended to demonstrate the diversity and unity of the world. They upheld the Glory of God and man's place within his creation, arranged according to the epistemic idioms of the day, such as "The Four Elements', 'The Four Continents', or 'The Seven Virtues.' They were an attempt to gather the world under one roof." Jenkins, *Keeping Their Marbles*, 41. Also, Impey and MacGregor have located these earliest museums in an impulse to universality that was current in Europe at the time: "These collections were essential elements in a programme whose aim was nothing less than universality." Impey and MacGregor, *The Origins of Museums*, 1.

[46] Findlen, "The Museum," 61.

[47] "The museum in its present state reflects the contemporary inclination towards universality." Bazin, *The Museum Age*, 278. This is not to say that the term "universal museum" was universally accepted by museum studies scholars. Frequently, the term "encyclopedic museum" is also used. For an example of this usage, see Aso, *Public Properties: Museums in Imperial Japan*, 4. However, "universal museum" is the normative phrase in the discipline. For more on the normativity of the phrase "universal museum, see Duncan, "The Universal Survey Museum." Some scholars shift between different terms, using terms like "universal museum," "cosmopolitan museum," and "encyclopedic museum" in the same work. See Levitt, *Artifacts and Allegiances*. However, a plurality of scholars use the term "universal museum." See Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, 130.

In the 1980s, there was a shift in museological studies in which the notion of the universal museum began to be problematized.[48] The question of the universal museum became closely connected with a postcolonial critique of universality that was implicated both in the field of museums and in the broader humanistic fields. Critics frequently assert that this claim of universality is merely colonial violence.[49] In masking the perspectives of individuals in the Global South, this claim functions to locate the universal in the metropoles of London and Paris, disenfranchising the rest of the world. As Hicks puts it, there are "intimate links of the narrative of the so-called 'universal museum' with enduring processes of militarist-corporate colonialism in 21st-century global capitalism."[50]

Even if it is frequently debated, both sides of the dispute largely accept that the universal museum is a category that is fundamental to the understanding of the field. The same cannot be said of the counterpart of the universal museum. Some scholars position the "national museum" as the converse of the category of the universal museum.[51] In trying to understand the universal museum and its opposite, Levitt speaks of the museum's epistemology as moving along a continuum that at one extreme contains the nationalism of the national museum, while at the other end contains the cosmopolitanism of the universal museum.[52] Ien Ang complicates this

[48] Starn, "A Historian's Brief Guide to New Museum Studies," 71.

[49] As Barringer framed it in a critique of the universal museum that eventually became the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington, "The universal survey museum of South Kensington could claim authority over the cultural terrain of Britain's Asiatic empire as well as the history of Western art and design." Barringer, *Colonialism and the Object*, 19.

[50] Hicks, *The Brutish Museums*, 16.

[51] Knell, *National Museums*.

[52] Levitt, *Artifacts and Allegiances*, 136.

tension between the national and the cosmopolitan of the two kinds of museums by emphasizing that even universal museums are bound by the national contexts that produce them.[53]

For the purposes of this dissertation, I will frame this epistemological tension as a dialectic between the universal and the national. But this framework is not meant to exclude other epistemological foundations of the museum, such as the local museum. Rather, it is intended to situate the two most important epistemologies of the museum that are operative today. This is not to suggest that the tension between the universal and national museum is entirely binary. Though the universal and the national are generally framed as antagonistic in museum studies scholarship, the two categories frequently shade into each other. Neither the universal nor the national is an exclusive category, something that Ang demonstrates clearly. However, I will argue that, in the PRC, the universal mode that was ascendant in the early history of museums is almost completely inoperative today.

Since the beginning of the new century, there has been a counterrevolution in museum studies. As the critique of the universal museum has increasingly become dominant in museum studies, several scholars, not to mention several universal museums, have reacted against this position. In 2002, a collection of universal museums from the West issued a statement called the "Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums."[54] This document attempted to define the universal museum as a site of important cultural exchange between global cultures and to distance the universal museum from the colonial looting that these institutions were often the beneficiaries of. This declaration has become the defining statement in defense of the universal

[53] Ang, "What Are Museums For?," 4.

[54] Karp, *Museum Frictions*, 247.

museum, as well as a lightning rod for its critics.[55] Since the publication of the declaration, other museum studies scholars have sought to mount a defense of the universal museum, pushing back on the notion that these institutions were inherently colonial. As the British-Ghanian philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah said in his defense of the universal museum and, more specifically the British Museum, "However self-serving it may seem, the British Museum's claim to be a repository of the heritage not of Britain but of the world strikes me as exactly right."[56] Kwame's defense of the universal museum is a part of a broader movement by scholars to defend the institution.[57]

This defense of the universal museum has also manifested itself in terms of museum exhibits. One of the most successful museum exhibits in the last decade was the British Museum's remarkably popular "A History of the World in a Hundred Objects." This exhibition functioned to situate the British Museum as a universal space for cultures around the world, both for museumgoers and the millions of podcast-listeners who consumed the exhibition aurally. In an earlier defense of the universal museum, Neil MacGregor, who midwifed the exhibit, situated China as playing an important part of his defense of the universal museum: "In their [Chinese] museums, they will see only Chinese material. Now, as China wants to engage with the rest of the world, wants to understand the rest of the world, the authorities in China, the museums in China, have asked us to send exhibitions there of other cultures, but also of world culture, and

[55] One critique of the declaration is given by George Abungu, a former director of the National Museum of Kenya; Abungu called the declaration "a way of refusing to engage in dialogue around the issue of repatriation." Kaplan, "The Case against the Universal Museum."

[56] Appiah, "Whose Culture Is It?," 81.

[57] For more examples of this defense of the universal museum, see Munira Mirza: "The word 'universalism' is much maligned and misunderstood in some circles, being associated rather crudely with imperialistic values and hagiographies of dead white men. It is sometimes misunderstood to mean, in a banal way, 'we are all the same' and that the sameness should be white, middle-class and male." Mirza, *The Politics of Culture*, x. Also see Jenkins, *Keeping Their Marbles*. Also see Cuno, *Whose Culture*.

showing the overall stories of the world."[58] MacGregor's argument situates China as an object lesson on the importance of the universal museum. China has no universal museums; rather, its museum culture is limited largely to national museums or museums that focus on bounded, particular identities. As MacGregor argues, if the Chinese people desire to engage in the global circulation of ideas, one of the means of doing so is to bring the world as embodied in the universal museum to China. Rejecting Hicks's critique of the universal museum as a space of colonial violence, MacGregor's argument positions the universal museum as a site for constructing global comity.

The Study of the Chinese Museum

In the broader field of museum studies, the museums of the PRC have been relatively understudied. As Marzia Varutti, one of the scholars dealing with museums in China, has stated, "The corpus of literature specifically addressing museums in China is relatively little developed, especially if one considers publications in languages other than Mandarin."[59] Earlier museum studies scholars focused largely on paradigmatic museums in the metropole, particularly the universal museums of London and Paris. The more recent thrust in museum studies has focused on the debate over the universal museum discussed above; this debate has compared the museums of the metropole with museums in Africa, South Asia, and Central and South America, but rarely China. Grounded as they are in postcolonial studies, these scholars have utilized frameworks the museums of the PRC do not fit into well. As they have theorized the postcolonial museum, many of these museological scholars have avoided Chinese museums. One of the

[58] MacGregor, "Neil MacGregor at the Art Institute of Chicago."

[59] Varutti, *Museums in China*, 5.

reasons for this has been that China's status as a "semi-colonial" space has meant that the stark dichotomy between the metropole and the colonized implicit in the framework utilized by many of these scholars has been more difficult to articulate in the Chinese context.

Because of this lack of attention, the subfield of Chinese museum studies is relatively underdeveloped. The most important work in the field is Kirk Denton's 2014 *Exhibiting the Past*, the first English-language monograph to be published exclusively on the subject of museums in the PRC.[60] Denton's work provides a comprehensive exploration of the museum in the country by constructing what is essentially a typology of the different forms that the museum takes in China. Each chapter in this work is organized around a particular genre of museum. Emerging out of this system of classification, his argument is that each of these types of museums is generally organized around a politicization of the Chinese past for the ideological goals of the CCP. This dissertation also draws off the two other monographs devoted entirely to Chinese museums that have thus far been published, Tracey Lu's *Museums in China: Power, Politics and Identities* and Varutti's *Museums in China: The Politics of Representation after Mao*.[61] Several other works of scholarship, including Denise Ho's *Culturing Revolution* and Qin Shao's multiple explorations of the Nantong Museum and its creator, Zhang Jian, have also contributed greatly to my understanding of the museum in China.[62]

Chinese-language scholarship on the Chinese museum is helpful but limited. There is excellent historical research on Chinese museums being produced in the PRC, but, due to the

[60] Denton, *Exhibiting the Past*. It should also be noted that Denton is in the process of publishing a monograph on Taiwanese museums. When Denton and I corresponded in early 2020, Denton said that the book was supposed to be published later in 2020. Due to Covid-19, this publication was apparently delayed. In early 2021, the projected publication date was July 2021, but the publication was again delayed. At present, publication is scheduled for late October 2021.

[61] Lu, *Museums in China*. Varutti, *Museums in China*.

[62] Ho, *Curating Revolution*. Shao, "Exhibiting the Modern." Shao, *Culturing Modernity*.

increasingly limited space for free expression, particularly in academia, the means necessary to develop a body of critical museum studies scholarship has not yet developed. In Taiwan, scholars such as Chang Wan-chen and Wang Shu-li have produced a body of excellent critical scholarship that has informed my thinking, though, as my project increasingly looked less toward Taiwanese museums, my usage of this scholarship has also been limited.

Although the general field of museum studies has blossomed in the past few decades, the Chinese subfield is still relatively underdeveloped. My goal with this dissertation is to not only grow this subfield and contribute to the excellent work already produced by Denton, Ho, and my other colleagues but also to, using the framework of the universal and the national categories, draw the subfield of Chinese museum studies into a dialogue with the mainstream portion of the field.

Chapter Outline

I begin Chapter II with an examination of how the concept of the museum first entered China. Originally, the museum was translated from a European (largely British and French) to a Chinese context. The chapter will then examine this process of translation, limiting itself to the discursive museums that were produced in Chinese-language texts between 1839 and 1908. This was the embryonic stage of what Jeffrey Johnson, the director of Columbia University's China Megacities Lab, calls "the museumification of China," the stage in which the category of the museum became an object of imagination and discussion among Chinese readers.[63] Though there were many authors writing about the museum during this period, I will limit this examination to six authors: Lin Zexu, Huang Zunxian, Li Gui, Kang Youwei, Zhang Jian, and Wu Jianren. Each

[63] Johnson, "The Museumification of China."

of these six authors was relatively famous, and therefore their discussions of the museum, to a certain degree, exercised a wide degree of influence. This chapter will examine how the discursive representations of the museum produced by each of these six authors represents a particular point along an arc as the dominant episteme undergirding the museum shifted from universalism to nationalism.

Chapter III will follow the museum's development in China as it moved along a similar arc, though this chapter will, unlike Chapter II, examine built museums rather than discursive museums. The museums in this chapter will be actual museums that were constructed and visited by individuals rather than those that were only seen by readers. I will begin by focusing on a question much discussed in the Chinese-language scholarship on museums: which museum qualifies as the first Chinese museum? This chapter will problematize the question as a way to intervene in this debate. I will do this by examining three museums that are candidates for the title of the first Chinese museum: the colonial Shanghai Museum, the Nantong Museum, and the Palace Museum. I will utilize the discussion not so much to decide definitively which is the earliest Chinese museum but rather as a means of demonstrating how built museums in China underwent a movement similar to the one that discursive museums underwent, a shift in the foundational episteme of the museum from universalism to nationalism.

In Chapter IV, I will explore the museums of the contemporary PRC and how the museums in China today embody this shift to nationalism. First, this chapter will begin by briefly surveying the history of the museum in the PRC. This survey will be a means of demonstrating how significant the shift that occurred in the 1990s was, when the museum became an important site for the state to construct a nationalistic ideology. After this survey, the core of this chapter will be a close reading of two contemporary museums, the Kashgar Urban Planning Exhibition

Hall and the Nantong Museum (the contemporary instantiation of Zhang Jian's original museum discussed in Chapter III). In close reading these two museums, this chapter will demonstrate the extent to which the museum has become a space to support the PRC's increasing reliance on notions of nationalism. The museum produces an identity constructed out of an ethno-nationalism grounded in a Han Chinese identity. As it operates in PRC museums, this discourse occludes local identity and other elements of diversity, instead imposing a unitary national identity onto the museum narrative and the museum visitor.[64]

If this dissertation has documented the turn away from universal towards the national in China, Chapter V, the Coda, will look toward possible opportunities for future research. In this introductory chapter, I have documented how one of the questions that is heatedly debated in mainstream museological scholarship today is the question of whether or not the category of the universal museum is inherently colonial. In Chapter V, I will gesture toward the way that the universal museum has, in Taiwan, become a space to reject an earlier form of colonialism—both Japanese and KMT (Kuomintang) colonialism.[65] Along with Chapter IV, this chapter will attempt to point in the direction that the subfield of Chinese museum studies can interface with mainstream museum studies.

[64] As I will discuss in further detail in the chapter, the museums of the PRC impose a national, Han Chinese identity on areas with non-Han Chinese populations. This is analogous to what Hicks calls "democide." For Hicks, the acts of stealing the Benin Bronzes and then exhibiting them in the museum without acknowledging that history of theft is an excision of the colonialist contexts by which the artifacts arrived at the museum. This distances the artifacts from the Africans and the violence perpetrated against them and erases the people from the artifacts that they produced. See Hicks, *The Brutish Museums*, 115.

[65] The notion that the KMT nationalist party was a colonialist party is still highly debated in the literature. Some scholars may be put off by the idea of calling something both a form of nationalism and a form of colonialism, seeing these two ideas as mutually exclusive. However, several scholars have convincingly argued that an ideology that imposes an external national identity onto a people is inherently colonial. In China studies, the normative example of this is the imposition of a national, Chinese identity onto the Taiwanese by the KMT. Many scholars, including Wong, view the KMT's attempt to impose a national—that is, Chinese—identity on the Taiwanese as a form of colonialism: "After World War II, the colonial rule imposed by the Kuomintang (KMT) in Taiwan was symbiotically connected with its project of nation building." Wong, "Education and National Colonialism in Postwar Taiwan," 156. Also see Denny Roy's account of the "mainlandization of Taiwan" which he concludes was a process of "forcible alien acculturation scarcely different from the assimilation the Japanese had attempted." Roy, *Taiwan*, 96.

CHAPTER II

IMAGINING THE NATION:

DISCURSIVE MUSEUMS IN PRE-1949 CHINA

In his 1905 continuation novel, Wu Jianren takes *The Story of the Stone* protagonist Jia Baoyu from his home in High Qing decadence and, Rip-Van-Winkle-like, transports him to semi-colonial Shanghai in the late Qing dynasty. The first half of the novel, *The New Story of the Stone* (新石頭記), witnesses Baoyu wandering through Shanghai and critiquing the way that China had become enthralled to Westerners.[1] The setting for the second half of the novel shifts to the "Realm of Civilization" (文明境界), a world that Isaacson says has an "inherent 'Chineseness'" that makes the Realm less threatening.[2] One of the critical sites in the Realm of Civilization is its museum. After hunting down the mythical Peng bird along the coast of Africa in a Chinese-invented flying machine, Baoyu and his posse drag the bird back to the Realm's museum. The bird is taken away to be stuffed, and Baoyu is given a tour of the museum. In the museum, he finds elements of China's earliest civilization: knots that signify the earliest "primogenitor of the Chinese character" (字的始祖), a copy of the *Classic of Poetry* (詩經) that Confucius edited, books rescued from Qin Shi Huang's book burnings by Xiao He (蕭何, –193 BCE), an official who helped found the Han dynasty.

Wu Jianren imagines the museum as a site for the inculcation of a Chinese identity. In *The New Story of the Stone*, the museum becomes an institution for inculcating national knowledge. This conceptualization of the museum differs both from the normative concept of the

[1] "First finding his way from a small temple outside Shanghai, then making his way into Shanghai, up the Yangzi River, to Beijing and eventually mystically transported to the utopian "Realm of Civilization," Baoyu is shocked and awed by the ubiquity of foreign technologies in late Qing China." Isaacson, *Celestial Empire*, 63.

[2] Isaacson, *Celestial Empire*, 76.

museum circulating in Western discourse in the early twentieth century and from earlier understandings of the museum in China. The earliest museums, developed during the European Renaissance and the early Enlightenment, were understood as universal.[3] When the concept of the museum arrived in China in 1839, the institution was understood within a universal mode of knowledge. The earliest discussions of the museum in China, as I will document in this chapter, conceptualized the museum as a universalistic space in which knowledge was not bound by national boundaries. Between 1839 and 1905, the understanding of the museum in China was transformed. Its conceptualization went from being an institution producing universal knowledge to one that produced nationalistic knowledge and inculcated a Chinese identity into its imagined visitor, just as in Wu Jianren's novel.

This chapter will examine how the concept of the museum was translated into a Chinese discourse, in search of an understanding of what transpired between 1839 and 1905. I will detail how the conceptualization of the museum was imported from Europe into China and how the initial discursive museums, written about by important Chinese authors, remained consonant with the normative European museum. After 1895, that conceptualization was rapidly eclipsed by another, one that understood the museum as producing national rather than universal knowledge. To do this, I will use six authors as lenses through which this arc can be understood: Lin Zexu (林則徐, 1785–1850), Huang Zunxian (黃遵宪, 1848–1905), Li Gui (李圭, 1842–1903), Kang Youwei (康有為, 1858–1927), Zhang Jian (张謇, 1853–1926) and Wu Jianren (吳趼人, 1866–1910). To a certain degree, the choice of these six is arbitrary. From 1839 to 1905, there was a great deal of discussion surrounding the museum; one researcher found that

[3] "Thus the museum, as the nexus of all disciplines, became an attempt to preserve, if not fully reconstitute, the encyclopaedic programme of the classical and medieval world, translated into the humanist projects of the sixteenth century, and later the pansophic vision of universal wisdom that was a leitmotif of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century culture." Findlen, "The Museum," 61. See also Bazin, *The Museum Age*, 55. See also Impey, *The Origins of Museums*, 2.

in one year, 1872, a single Shanghainese newspaper published five articles on museums, including an introduction to the concept of the museum and other articles discussing museums in Japan, Hong Kong, Britain, and Australia.[4] Another scholar has found more than three dozen articles introducing Chinese readers to museums between the years 1873 and 1899.[5] That is to say, I could have examined many other authors and their discursive museums. What warrants our attention to these six authors is that all achieved a certain degree of fame and, therefore, their writings had an outsized influence. I will track the arc of the discursive museums that they produced, starting in 1839, when Lin Zexu first introduced the museum into a Chinese-language discourse. I will cover the remaining portion of the nineteenth century and move into the twentieth, to 1905, when Zhang Jian, a political thinker, and Wu Jianren, a novelist, produced discursive moves that typified the turn away from the universalistic mode of the museum and toward the nationalistic mode.

One of this chapter's interventions is to complicate the received understanding of the late Qing conceptualization of Chinese museums. The field of Chinese museum studies is relatively young, having only emerged a little over a decade ago.[6] Yet a received understanding has already developed: museums in the late Qing are largely understood as derivative products of Western

[4] Ji, "Imagining the Modern Nation-State via Zhang Jian's Museum," 14.

[5] Based off Ji Xiaoqian's findings in the above citation, I believe the three dozen articles from the span of a quarter century cited by Wu Yongqi represent only a fraction of the newspaper articles discussing museums during this period. Wu Yongqi, "The Work of Chinese Museums"

[6] "The study of Chinese museums is an emerging field." Shao, "Exhibiting the Modern," 685. "The corpus of literature specifically addressing museums in China is relatively little developed, especially if one considers publications in languages other than Mandarin." Varutti, *Museums in China*, 5. "Museum studies is, internationally, basically already matured, but, in China, it is at present still at the exploratory stage" (博物馆学在国际上已经基本成熟, 但在中国目前只是处于探索阶段). Zhang Xiaoxu, "Shilun bowuguan zai zhongguo," 48. "In recent years, China has achieved certain progress in comparative cultural study whereas comparative research on museology seems to be lacking." Yuan, "The Development of Museology in China," 205. "So far only a scant number of studies have paid attention to the importance of museums in the development of science in China." Tai, "From Zikawei Museum to Heude Museum," 109.

museums, as if Chinese thinkers were entirely mimicking Western understandings of the museum as an institution. This received understanding is only partially inaccurate; initially, Chinese authors did draw heavily from Western discursive and built museums in order to imagine what museums in China would look like. But after 1895, Chinese authors set out a new program for museums, one that was oriented toward the nation and drew less from Western museums. In the West, the normative model for the museum remained the universal museum until the 1980s.[7] Chinese thinkers were almost a century ahead of Western scholars, beginning the shift away from the universal mode in the 1890s.

Lin Zexu and the Introduction of the Museum to China

Lin Zexu is a well-known figure in Chinese history, with his most important role being his precipitation of the Opium War (1839–1842), the conflict between the Qing and British Empires that often serves as the starting point of modernity in Chinese historiography. Less recognized is the role that Lin played in translating the museum from Western textual sources into a Chinese discourse. In fact, his role is so little known that several museologists working in China and Taiwan have not realized that he was the first East Asian author to discuss museums.[8] It was Lin who first used the word "museum" (博物館). Lin's deployment of this word was intimately bound up with the Opium War and the entrance of modernity into China.[9]

[7] Starn, "A Historian's Brief Guide to New Museum Studies," 71.

[8] "In Mandarin, 'museum' . . . was imported from Japan around the second half of the 19th century." Like many researchers, Varutti suggests that the concept of the museum first moved from Western Europe to Japan, and entered China via Japan in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century. Varutti, *Museums in China,* 10. Chen also points to Japan as the first nation to translate the concept of the museum into an East Asian context. Chen Yuan, "Zhongguo Bowuguan Zhi Yuanqi," 6. Also see Chang's claim: "Currently, scholars in Japan believe it was Fukuzawa Yukichi who first used the term 'hakubutsukan' to mean 'museum.' Chinese scholars also generally agree that China followed Japan's footsteps in adopting 'bowuguan' (literally 'house of extensive things')." Chang Wan-chen, "A Cross-Cultural Perspective on Musealization," 17.

[9] As Shao has discussed, this question of "exhibitory modernism," taking part in the contemporary culture of display to demonstrate one's own modernity, is closely connected with the museum in China. Even the 2010 Shanghai

In March 1839, the Daoguang emperor (道光, r. 1820–1850) dispatched Lin to Guangdong to put an end to the opium crisis.[10] British and other maritime colonial powers were smuggling large amounts of opium into China, leading to the social problems associated with drug addiction. Lin was ordered to end the chaos. As a part of his preparations to confront the opium traders, Lin began an intelligence-gathering program, using Western Christian missionaries and their Guangzhou converts to translate and compile a large number of texts into Chinese. With help from Liang Jinde (梁進得, dates unknown), Elijah Bridgman (1801–1861), and Karl Gutzlaff (1803–1851), Lin gathered information on the Euro-Americans.[11] The text Lin wrote based off the research he conducted over the course of this project, *Treatise on the Four Continents* (四州志), contained the first appearance of the concept of the museum in an East Asian discourse.[12] The *Treatise* contains only a single reference to the museum, but it would be a fruitful one, as Lin's discussion seeded the emergence of the museum as it would circulate throughout Qing China and Meiji Japan. Here is Lin's passage in its entirety:

World Expo, the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and the massive state support for these events functioned as exhibitory modernity—the display of China as a modern country. Shao, "Exhibiting the Modern," 684.

[10] Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 150.

[11] Lutz, *Opening China*, 202. Also, note that, in the following chapter of this dissertation, Bridgman will play another important role in the museum exchange between China and Western powers.

[12] Throughout the nineteenth century, there was a great deal of instability in which term was used to translate the word and concept of the "museum." Both *bowuguan* (博物馆) and *bowuyuan* (博物院) were in common circulation until the 1930s, when the term *bowuguan* became dominant. As Tai Li-chuan states: "Despite the existence of these two terms [*bowuguan* and *bowuyuan*], which appeared around the same time, various other terms and phonetic transliterations were also used by different authors during the following decades to describe the museums in the Western world and none of them was more prevalent than the others. The term *bowuyuan* seems to have prevailed roughly from the 1860's to the 1920's, since most of the museums established during this period used this term. However, from the 1930's onward, the term *bowuguan* became more common among newly established museums than the term *bowuyuan*." Tai, "From Zikawei Museum to Heude Museum," 109.

> London has built a large library, a museum. Oxford built this large library; in it are stored 125,000 old books.[13] In the library built in Greenwich, there is Shakespeare, Milton, Scott, Tennyson. Its farming products are wheat, beans, and rice; it is not sufficient to live and eat, so they raise capital and look to their neighboring countries to buy it. In 1800, various countries blockaded its ports, international provisions were not enough; this country struggled to farm, grain prices started to fall a little. Because its products are weak, it does not equal France; its weavings and furniture all have to be transported on water via steamship; they also use horses, but they do not use manpower. The country does not produce silk, and, because of this, it buys all silk from other countries.[14]

Lin's discussion of the museum is cursory, with few concrete details offered. In the passage, it is not clear what the museum actually does, nor is it clear how the museum is distinct from what a library does. Despite this, there is an important point worth remarking on in this passage; Lin situates the discussion of the museum beside a passage on national security. The passage immediately following the discussion of the museum and the library is an examination of food insecurity and geopolitics during the Napoleonic Wars. Lin never explicitly states this, but one way to interpret Lin's juxtaposition of the museum and national security is to understand him as suggesting that the two are somehow linked. Lin's sparse discussion leaves us unable to draw any definite conclusions, but this geopolitical interpretation is a possible, if speculative, means of understanding his curious choice to set his museum discussion in this passage, particularly in

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[13] Because Chinese-language British toponyms had not been, at this point, standardized, some of these place names are difficult to be certain of. Zhou Yuwen, a Taiwanese scholar, suggests Wo Si He (渥斯賀) refers to Oxford. Zhou Yuwen, "Wan qing wuxu weixin qian guanmin dui yingguo jiaoyu de yinjie chutan," 13.

[14] "蘭頓建大書館一所, 博物館一所, 渥斯賀建大書館一所, 內貯古書十二萬五千卷，在感彌利赤建書館一所，有沙士比阿, 彌爾頓, 士達薩, 特彌頓四人. 土產麥豆稻，不敷居食仰資鄰國商販，千八百年，各國封港，外糧不至，本國竭力耕作, 糧價始略減。所產呢羽，皆不及佛蘭西，紡織器具，俱用水輪火輪，亦或用馬，毋煩人力。國不產絲, 均由他國采買." Lin, *Si zhou zhi*, 117.

light of the fact that so much of Lin's concern, both in this text and in his work as a bureaucrat, was focused on geopolitical competition.[15]

One question in the field of Chinese museum studies is where Lin drew this term, *bowuguan* (博物館, Institution for Wide Understanding), from.[16] The phrase *bowu* (博物) appeared in texts as early as the *Zuozhuan* (左傳) and the *Records of the Historian* (史記), in which it connoted an individual who commanded a wide breadth of knowledge.[17] After the Han dynasty, the word's meaning evolved to connote an understanding of the natural world.[18] The *Record of Diverse Matters* (*Bowuzhi,* 博物志) by Zhang Hua (張華 232–300) is one of the earliest significant imperial-period texts on natural history.[19] Zhang's work is a compendium of discussions of the natural world. Considering Lin's extensive knowledge of the Chinese textual tradition (he passed the *jinshi* exam at the age of twenty-six), Lin was likely familiar with the evolution of the term *bowu*. Lin's usage of the term suggests that Lin conceived of the museum as an institution for understanding the natural world. Lin had many other suitable candidates for Chinese words to use to translate the word *museum*. His choice of *bowuguan* is likely due to the fact that it is redolent of this earlier canonical tradition.

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[15] "The first major effort to collect up-to-date information on conditions in the maritime world was made by Lin tse-hsu [Lin Zexu] when he was Imperial Commissioner in Canton in 1839. Shaken by the naval power of Western invaders and enraged by the ineffectiveness of Chinese coastal defenses, Lin organized a translation bureau, manned by Chinese who were proficient in Western languages and directed them to gather and translate Western-language materials about the West and Sino-Western affairs. His aim was to determine the source and nature of Western power in Asia and to discover Western objectives in East Asia . . . Lin included this newly mined information in his official reports and memorials and in his *Geography of the Four Continents* [*Sizhouzhi*]." Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, 97–98.

[16] Today, this word *bowuguan*, along with its Japanese equivalent, *hakubutsukan* is the standard word to describe a museum in the PRC, the ROC and Japan.

[17] Shiina, *Nihon hakubutsukan seiritsushi: Hakurankai kara hakubutsukan e*, 29.

[18] Chang Wan-chen, "A Cross-Cultural Perspective on Musealization," 17.

[19] In fact, today, Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia's* Chinese title is *Bowuzhi*, suggesting that the work's translators see the two works as very similar. The *Naturalis Historia* is one of the most important texts on the natural world produced in the Classical Mediterranean period.

Even though Lin coined the term *bowuguan* and introduced the concept of the museum to a Chinese readership, Lin's work was fated to circulate in a translingual purgatory. The *Treatise* was never published, circulating only privately.[20] Wei Yuan, one of Lin's companions, ended up taking much of what Lin had written in the *Treatise* and, with Lin's encouragement, published it in the *Illustrated Treatise of the Maritime Countries* (海國圖志, *Haiguo tuzhi*).[21] In Wei Yuan's work, Lin's passage appears verbatim. However, neither Lin's nor Wei's work was, during this period, particularly influential in China, despite the two authors' stature. Wei's discussion of the museum would, for the next two decades, be much more influential in Japan, where every arrival of Wei's *Illustrated Treatise* on a ship inspired a frenzy,[22] than in their home country, where these two authors' works remained relatively unread.[23] Ironically, their greatest influence on the museum in China probably lay in the fact that they sparked the Japanese interest in museums, and the museums of Japan would exercise a strong influence on China for the half century after 1860.

Huang Zunxian and the Universal Mode of the Museum

It was not until the 1860s that discussion of museums became prominent in China. One of the most important figures in the mainstreaming of the museum during this period was Huang Zunxian (黃遵宪, 1848–1905). Huang was a poet-diplomat who also wrote the first

[20] Wang Shu-li, "Exhibiting the Nation," 98.

[21] Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, 98.

[22] "In Japan, the most stimulating and influential Chinese-language work in the field of world geography and topography was doubtless the *Haiguo Tuzhi*." As Masuda describes it, each time a new ship with copies of the book arrived in port in Japan, there was a rush to get the book, rapidly driving up the price. Masuda, *Japan and China*, 23–24.

[23] One source complained that they could not find copies of the *Illustrated Treatise of the Maritime Countries* in bookshops in Canton. "Review of Hai Kwok Tu Chi," 418.

Chinese-language gazetteer on Japan and was the first head of the Qing consulate in San Francisco.[24] Today, it is Huang's work in poetry rather than diplomacy that he is most famous for. Along with Liang Qichao (梁啓超, 1873–1927), Huang attempted to modernize Chinese poetry. His modernization efforts were directed toward finding poetic subjects appropriate for a modern age. In his poetry, he wrote about the Eiffel Tower, the Suez Canal, and London's fog.[25] The museum was another of his modern poetic subjects.

During an 1870 trip to colonial Hong Kong, the twenty-three-year-old composed a cycle of ten poems expressing his astonishment at what he saw in the British colony. One of the ten poems was written on his amazement at the Hong Kong Museum, founded just a few years before Huang's visit:

> The *Bowu* of Zhang Hua's *Record*
>
> [compares to this *Bowu*] with a thousand rooms in a wide mansion
>
> There are foreign barbarian bronzes to rub[26]
>
> I long to return with these treasures
>
> The great bird stands like a human
>
> The whale treks across the waves
>
> They rule the land and also the sea
>
> It is hard to believe that people can have such power[27]

[24] Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm*, 25.

[25] Ying Hu, "Late Qing Poetry Revolution," 338.

[26] A special thanks to Jinsu Kim for his help with this phrase. Without his sharp eye and textual erudition, I would not have realized that this was a reference to the *Book of Han.*

[27] "《博物》张华志， 千间广厦开/摩挲钢狄在/怅望宝山回/大鸟如人立/长鲸拔浪来/官山还府海/人力信雄哉。" Huang Zunxian, *Huang Zunxian shixuan*, 2.

The first line begins with a pun that references Zhang Hua's *Record of Diverse Matters*, the proto-scientific treatise on the natural world that Lin was likely alluding to when he coined the term *bowuguan*. Huang begins his poem by comparing the museum (*bowuguan*) to the *Bowuzhi* of Zhang Hua. Huang's suggestion that the museum has a "thousand rooms in a wide mansion" is an exaggeration, and the hyperbole is meant to suggest that the British *bowu* has superseded the canonical Chinese *bowu*. In other words, his pun draws attention to the comparison between the colonial museum and the Chinese canon and the latter's deficiency in the face of this new knowledge-producing institution.

If the first lines of the poem seek to contrast the Chinese canonical tradition to this new foreign institution, the third and fourth lines locate that sense of foreignness within an ancient emic discourse limning the foreign and Chinese encounters with this other. In the third line, the poet narrates the act of physically touching bronze statues. The word Huang uses for the statues, *gang di* (钢狄), is a term that references the *Book of Han* (漢書).[28] The word *di* is a demonym for a Turkic-speaking group living traditionally on China's northern steppe lands, and in the *Book of Han*, the bronze statues that these Turkic-speaking foreigners brought with them are gifts to the Han court. By alluding to the *Book of Han*'s discussion of foreigners, the usage of the word *gang di* manages to both evoke the concept of foreignness and simultaneously locate the museum in a discourse about the Chinese textual canon. The term *precious mountain* (*baoshan*, 寶山) in line 4 is a word that here connotes the artifacts in the museum but had previously been used to refer to Buddhist commentary by foreign authors on scriptures brought to China from India via Central Asia.[29] Use of terms like *gang di* and *baoshan* situate the Hong Kong Museum in a discourse of

[28] Huang Zunxian, *Huang Zunxian shixuan*, 7.

[29] Both Chinese and Western commentators on this poem agree that this *precious mountain* is meant to evoke some kind of foreign identity. Huang, Zunxian. *Huang Zunxian Poetry Selections* (黃遵憲詩選). Edited by Xianpei Zhong, Hua Xie, and Songtao Wang. Guangdong: Guangdong People's Publishing, 1985 7. Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm*, 97.

foreignness drawn from earlier discursive encounters between China and the Other.[30] In fact, this entire cycle of poems draws on this discourse in an attempt to locate the museum within an emic discourse on the Other. In a subsequent poem in the cycle, Huang frames the wealthy British as if they were Buddhas luxuriating in Hong Kong with Chinese servants who even enjoy their service to them: "[The British live here] as if they were Buddhas in heaven, even their [Chinese] servants take pride in their barbarian masters."[31] In other words, these poems are conceptualizing the British in terms of the earlier Chinese encounter with Buddhism, an external force that entered China and, from the perspective of many Chinese readers of the poems, benefited rather than threatened the country. The fact the museum is being framed with similar rhetoric suggests that Huang is attempting to demonstrate that the museum is a foreign institution that can benefit China.

The final lines of the museum poem turn to the question of power. Just as Lin juxtaposes his discussion of the British Museum alongside the competition between Britain and France in the Napoleonic Wars, Huang locates the poet's enthrallment at the exhibition's ability to reproduce the biological world as a signifier of the geopolitical power Britain is able to marshal. The references to the giant bird in line 5 and the monstrous whale in line 6 are meant to establish a parallel with the geopolitical references in line seven where Huang writes, "they rule the land and also the sea." J. D. Schmidt also translated this poem, and he renders the line as "The British

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[30] A scholar of Huang Zunxian, J. D. Schmidt, wrote this about this cycle of ten poems: "Some of Huang's exotic allusions also come from Buddhist texts, which, although used sparingly by earlier poets, must have seemed appropriate to Huang and his contemporary readers, because most of them had been translated from Sanskrit and recounted stories that had a foreign country, India, as their background. That Huang was mainly interested in the foreign quality of these allusions is proved by the fact that most of his allusions to Buddhist texts in the Hong Kong poems have no obvious relation to Buddhist doctrine or philosophy." Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm*, 97.

[31] "佛犹夸国乐，奴亦挟天骄." Huang Zunxian,*Huang Zunxian shixuan*, 2. For more discussion on the usage of these Buddhist terms to describe the British, see: Huang Zunxian, *Huang Zunxian shixuan*, 8.

government rules both the land and the sea." Compared with my translation, Schmidt's is less true to the language in Huang's original poem, though his does a better job of making Huang's intent clear. In the original, the subject of line 7 is ambiguous (subject ambiguity is common in classical Chinese, and particularly in poetry). The antecedent of the one who rules over land and sea could either be the bird and the whale of lines 5 and 6 or it could be the British government that establishes the museum in line 8. The verbs that Huang uses in line 7, *guan* (官) and *fu* (府), both have strong political valences, implying that Huang is making a geopolitical statement rather than suggesting that the bird and whale metaphorically rule over land and sea. The phrase *guan shan* (官山) is particularly redolent of political authority, as it evokes a line from the *Guanzi* (管子, written circa seventh century BCE).[32] As the *Guanzi* itself is a text about political rule, this reference, along with the other aspects of line 7, suggests that this line is politically charged and that it is the museum builders who rule over land and sea. In evoking the *Guanzi*, the line both conceptualizes the museum in terms of geopolitics and situates the museum within a discourse on power that would have been legible to late Qing intellectuals. This parallel brings the question of the nexus of power as it relates to the museum into Huang's poem.

If we accept that this poem is foregrounding the museum's ability to project power, then how is the poem representing British might? The ability to exhibit the whale and the bird are a parallel to the British ability to project their rule over land and sea. However, nowhere in this poem (nor in the rest of this poetic cycle) does Huang suggest that the British Empire should be conceived of as a threat to the Qing. At this point in his career, Huang thought that the fault for the loss of Hong Kong to the British imperialists lay more in the mishandling of events by the

[32] The annotated edition I referenced explicitly connects Huang Zunxian's use of this phrase *guan shan* with the *Guanzi*. Huang Zunxian, *Huang Zunxian shixuan*, 8.

Qing rather than the rapaciousness of British imperial strength.[33] In other poems in the cycle, Huang portrays British power—in the form of the British police force, the economic might of British traders, and the British governor of Hong Kong—in a positive light. In this cycle, British might, in both the museum and in other forms, is conceived of as largely beneficent.

But what kind of knowledge is being produced? The museum is largely conceived of as producing universal knowledge, both in terms of its scientific focus and in terms of how it frames cultural knowledge in a universal manner. Scientific knowledge was largely understood in terms of universalism. As Somsen has pointed out, "That science is fundamentally universal has been proclaimed innumerable times."[34] Other scholars have underlined that connection. Merton, the leading sociologist of science, labels universalism as one of the four elements within the normative structure of science.[35]

It was not only leading scholars in Western metropoles who understood science as universal; Chinese thinkers also understood science within a universal framework. Yan Fu (嚴復, 1854–1921), the famed late Qing translator, formulated science in the following manner in his *On Our Salvation*:

> Nevertheless, the way of the Western learning of *gezhi* is just the opposite [of our learning]. The illumination of a principle, or the establishment of a method, before

[33] "In his early Hong Kong poems, he seems to imply that although British technology has created a prosperous way of life for the inhabitants of Hong Kong and a military power that could threaten the Qing empire, the colony was ceded to the British largely as a result of certain unwise decisions made by the Chinese Court during and after the Opium War." Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm*, 137.

[34] Somsen, "A History of Universalism," 361. For more on the rest of Somsen's argument about the changing understanding of the epistemological nature of scientific knowledge, see Somsen, "A History of Universalism," 362–63.

[35] "Universalism finds immediate expression in the canon that truth-claims, whatever their source, are to be subjected to *preestablished impersonal criteria*: consonant with observation and with previously confirmed knowledge. The acceptance or rejection of claims entering the lists of science is not to depend on the personal or social attributes of their protagonist; his race, nationality, religion, class, and other personal qualities are as such irrelevant. Objectivity precludes particularism." Merton, *The Sociology of Science*, 270.

> concluded as unalterable, must be proved effective in every test of things and affairs. Its tests should be numerous, hence universal; its effects must be permanent, hence long-standing; its ultimate inquiry must be a thorough way radiating in all directions, hence brilliant. When pursuing it, one must not cling to prejudice, employ pretext, dare to maintain the slightest subjective assertion, or be allowed to make any arbitrary decision; one must be diligent, patient, impartial, and unprejudiced so as to reach the realm of the highest perfection and to step the way of the most substantial.[36]

In this passage, as Wang Hui points out, Yan Fu understands *gezhi* as the equivalent of science: "This latter statement explicitly revealed the traditional source for the concept of 'science' as *gezhi* (by this time the two terms were already being used side by side)."[37] Other thinkers during this period similarly understood science as operating under the banner of universalism. Nishi Amane, a Meiji author whose writings on science were influential in China, similarly understood science as a universal: "A close internal connection in fact obtained among the above three different characteristics of Nishi's thinking about science. It is necessary to view scientific methods of experimentation and induction as universally applicable methods."[38] Similarly, Chinese writers from the early Republican period, such as Chen Duxiu (陳獨秀, 1879–1942) and Hu Shi (胡適, 1891–1962) articulated their understanding of science in terms of a universalistic epistemology. As Chen Duxiu wrote, "For there are two kinds of laws in the universe: one is known as natural law; the other is man-made law. Natural law, to which science belongs, is universal, permanent, and necessary."[39] All of this is not to suggest that science should be

[36] The translation is Wang's. Wang Hui, "The Fate of 'Mr. Science' in China," 32.

[37] Wang Hui, "The Fate of 'Mr. Science' in China," 33.

[38] Wang Hui, "The Fate of 'Mr. Science' in China," 36.

[39] Wang Hui, "The Fate of 'Mr. Science' in China," 54.

equated with universalism; this claim is still being debated amongst scholars. What is clear is that, during the late Qing, science was represented as universal by Chinese thinkers and that the deployment of science in this poem is meant to evoke the universal episteme. When Huang is re-presenting the exhibition on the bird and the whale, he is evoking the universalistic episteme that was understood to dominate the European museum of the nineteenth century and deploying it in the discursive museum that he is constructing for his Chinese readers.

Even in the section of Huang's poem that alludes to a cultural rather than scientific artifact, the knowledge that is being deployed is still framed as universal. In line 3, the only cultural artifact that is mentioned is a "foreign barbarian bronze" (*gang di*, 钢狄). The use of this term suggests that this statue is clearly not coded as Chinese, but it is also unlikely to be British. Because Britain does not have a significant tradition of bronze statuary, the displayed statue is most likely an artifact from one of Britain's South or Southeast Asian colonies. Is this statue meant to evoke Britain's colonial power, its ability to marshal the resources to control and display the statues of other cultures in order to demonstrate dominance? This reading is possible, but Huang's intended meaning is unclear. Other than the sense of wonderment at the museum and its ability to exhibit, he gives the reader little indication as to what his thoughts on these sorts of matters are. What is clear, though, is that Huang's discursive museum is firmly embedded within the universal mode.

Li Gui and the Question of the Dodo

Though less famous today than Huang Zunxian, Li Gui was also a very important figure in his time. Li was a well-known postal reformer and the first Qing official to circle the globe, traveling first to the US and then hopping from Europe through Suez to India, Singapore, Hong

Kong, and back to Shanghai.[40] In 1887, he published a record of his 1876 circumnavigating journey, *New Record of Circling the Globe* (環遊地球新録, *Huanyou diqiu xinlü*). The original impetus for Li's travels to Philadelphia was to be part of a team of officials observing the 1876 World's Fair in Philadelphia, and, while he traveled the globe, he spent a significant amount of his time (and descriptions in his travelogue) discussing the expositions and museums that he visited. In his preface to the travelogue, Li Hongzhang (李鴻章, 1823–1901) frames the entirety of Li Gui's project in terms of how it will appropriate Western knowledge with the goal of strengthening the Qing state and the Chinese nation:

> The various Western nations have daily exerted their intelligence and power and contended with one another. In all their plans for wealth and power, i.e. railroads, electric telegraph wires, warships, and arms, all of them copy each other, all seeking the newest [things]. Regarding commercial matters, this point is especially worth reflecting upon. A nation that disregards this fact cannot stand on its own feet, and now [such competition] influences even diplomacy.[41]

Li Hongzhang set out the stakes for Li Gui's text: discover the source of the Western nations' knowledge. Like other Qing authors writing before 1895, Li understood the museum from a universalistic perspective, echoing the episteme in the museums that he saw in Europe and the US. In his discursive museums, knowledge was not segmented under national rubrics. Rather, the space produced was an imagined space where artifacts from all nations were shared. In his writings on the museum, Li frequently gestures toward the universalistic framework that was part of his cosmopolitan worldview. Of the museum, Li describes the British Museum thus: "Of the

[40] "Li also played a pivotal role in the development of China's modernized postal system." Charles Desnoyers, introduction to *A Journey to the East*, by Li Gui, 48.

[41] Desnoyers, "Toward One Enlightened and Progressive Civilization," 151.

various nations under heaven, there are none of the animals and birds that they do not have completely."[42] Note here that Li uses the word *tianxia*, a word that literally means "all under Heaven" and was frequently used to gesture toward a more universalistic discourse in the Chinese discussion of the Self and the Other.[43] The museum is understood not as a space that produces national knowledge, but rather a science-oriented site where truths are understood to be applicable throughout the world and are applied globally.

In another passage on the same page, Li Gui turns the tables on a Western interlocutor. Using the global knowledge of the museum, Li Gui takes the universal, scientific episteme and transforms it into a space for defending traditional Chinese knowledge:

> In the Western countries, the dodo is said to have existed six hundred years ago. Today, this bird does not exist! [I] inquired how they know it is extinct. [They] said that they did research on [the dodo's] bones. Today, there are none [of these bones] that are the same as [the bones they found]. Thus, they know it is extinct. Because, as it is said, Westerners read our Confucian books, they say that the dragon, the phoenix, and the unicorn [*lin*] are fables from the sages and these things did not necessarily exist. I once replied, it cannot be said whether or not the later generations have been misled by the fables of the sages or whether in ancient times [these animals] existed and today they do not exist. Westerners do not smirk at this [logic]. Today, seeing this dodo bird, since [one] can say it is something that existed in the past and today does not exist, how can one know that the

[42] "天下各國鳥獸無不備有." Li Gui, *Huanyou diqiu xinlu*, 242.

[43] For more on the discussion of *tianxia*, see: Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, 99. Ferguson, *The Politics and Philosophy of Chinese Power*, 136. Pines also makes interesting observations on the nature of *tianxia* as a catachresis and the fact that the pre-imperial notions of *tianxia* can largely be understood as equivalent to *zhongguo* while later imperial understandings can largely be understood as something much closer to a cultural discourse that was largely universal. Pines, "Changing Views of Tianxia in Pre-Imperial Discourse," 101.

> dragon, the phoenix, and the unicorn are also not things that existed in the past and today do not exist! How does [one] know that this was true of the dodo and not the phoenix?[44]

For Li Gui, the universal episteme offered within the museum space becomes the site where Chinese knowledge and Western knowledge can compete, a space where the two cultures are evenly matched. Out of that competition emerges universal knowledge.

In an earlier passage, discussing the British Library, embedded within the British Museum, the manifestations of this universal knowledge are made evident when Li Gui writes:

> [In the museum's library] is stored the old and contemporary books from various nations, 700,000 volumes. Of Chinese books, [there are] approximately 10,000 volumes. The round building is approximately fifteen *zhang* [about 3.3 meters] and accommodates three to four hundred people. The scholars from [Britain] and traveling scholars from other countries can, with a certificate, obtain entrance into the reading room.[45]

In the passages discussed previously, Li Gui framed the museum as operating under a universalist episteme; for Li Gui, the museum is also the central engine in the production of this universal knowledge. As in the passage about the dodo, Li Gui sees the knowledge produced within the museum is not bound by any nation. Instead of Chinese knowledge being sequestered in a Chinese space or prioritized as a primary source for knowledge, in the British Library, Chinese texts are just a portion of the books that are stored. There is no national favoritism. Objective knowledge gathered in the British Museum may prove the Confucian classics correct, but the Chinese books stored here are only a small part of a global circulation of knowledge. In

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[44] "西國都都謂六百年前尚有之今無此鳥矣詢何以知其無曰考究其骨今無同者故知其無也因曰西人每讀吾儒之書謂龍鳳麟為聖人寓言不信實有其物曾答以聖人豈言以欺世者或古有今無不可謂其必無也西人多非笑之今觀此都都鳥既謂其古有今無安知龍風麟非古有今無乎又安知都都督鳥非即鳳鳥乎。" Li Gui, *Huanyou diqiu xinlu*, 242.

[45] "藏各國古今書七十萬冊中華書約萬冊圓樓徑可十五丈坐三四百人國中士子及他國遊學之士領有憑照者得進內觀覽屋." Li Gui, *Huanyou diqiu xinlu,* 242.

this way, Li Gui is provincializing Chinese knowledge, implying that it is just a component of universal knowledge.

This claim to universal knowledge is relevant to Li Gui's position (or lack thereof) on the coloniality of the museum. In his discussion of the South Kensington Museum (today's Victoria and Albert Museum), Li Gui says the following:

> In tools and clothing, there is nothing from the various countries that the Kensington Museum does not have. There is a cat's eye gemstone [cymophane] that is as big as a pigeon's egg. There are ancient and modern monarchs' headwear, clothing, knives, and swords spread out, all arrayed in ten cabinets. They have things including a bell made during the reign of Daoguang at the Juesheng Temple [today, this is the temple in northwest Beijing that is referred to as the Great Bell Temple], gold and jade bracelets, hairpins, rings, earrings, vases from Emperor Jingtai's period [1450–1456], stoves, and carved wooden tools. All of these things have been obtained from China. There is an ancient bronze Buddha and porcelain-bronzes of various kinds loaned from Japan. There are terracotta vases three feet tall and approximately three thousand years old that were excavated in Egypt.[46]

In his depiction of this museum, Chinese objects are juxtaposed with Egyptian objects. Elsewhere in his travelogue, he notes that Egypt was a colony of Britain, so he was aware of the colonial context. He even passed through Suez, India, Singapore, and Hong Kong on his journey back to Shanghai, so, by the time he penned this travelogue, he was familiar with the British Empire.[47] Yet, in this passage, Li Gui indicates the colonial context of the circulation of these

[46] "根性等博物院各國器用服飾無所不有貓眼寶石大若鴿卵古今君主12冠服刀劍羅11列13十櫃有道光年間覺生寺所製銅磬1及金玉釧2釵3環4珥5景泰6瓶鑪7雕木器皆得自中國者古銅大佛像慈9銅各件賃10自日本者有瓦瓶高三尺許三千年之物得自埃及國地下者。" Li Gui, *Huanyou diqiu xinlu,* 239.

[47] Desnoyers, "Toward One Enlightened and Progressive Civilization," 151.

Chinese artifacts does not warrant comment for his Qing readers. Li tells the reader that the artifacts were from China and that they were obtained during the Daoguang era, a period closely linked to the First Opium War, fought between the British and Qing Empires. Li gives no indication as to whether or not these artifacts were obtained licitly, though he is clearly aware of the possibility that they were not. In choosing not to comment on the colonial context, Li's silence constitutes its own statement. It is possible that Li was discomfited by these Chinese artifacts, but if he was, he did not express it. Li's choice to publish this travelogue as a Qing official, saying nothing about these artifacts removed from China to the British Museum during an era when the Qing lost a war to the British and when Westerners looted a significant number of artifacts, suggests that Li was relatively untroubled by the question of coloniality. Just as Huang Zunxian witnessed the massive display of British power in Hong Kong's museum as a sign of wonder, not trepidation, Li Gui's silence suggests that he found it unobjectionable. This is reflected in Li's perspective on modernity; Li was a cosmopolitan.[48]

Later writers would strongly condemn the presence of looted Chinese artifacts in Western European museums, but Li Gui never did. One explanation for this is that Li Gui, of course, was writing in a different context. But leaving it at that is overly simplistic. Li Gui never condemned what he saw because he understood the museum within the universal mode, as did Huang Zunxian—not in the nationalistic mode of later writers. As Li Hongzhang set out in his preface to the work, Li Gui's aim was to find the source of the Western nations' ability to marshal knowledge and produce railroads, telegraphs, warships, and arms, implying that his mission was to find the epistemic source of Western knowledge. As Li Gui's writing demonstrates, he accepted this project and found that the museum, a powerful engine of knowledge production in

[48] Desnoyer, Li Gui's biographer, said that the travelogue was " a fascinating paean to the evolving worldview of self-strengthening cosmopolitanism." Desnoyers, "Toward One Enlightened and Progressive Civilization," 149.

the West and a source of Western power, was based on an epistemic foundation of universal knowledge. This universalism can be, as he demonstrated with his discussion of the dodo, used to China's advantage—not only to build warships but also to defend the Confucian classics.

Kang Youwei

The three authors discussed so far conceptualized the museum as linked to a universalistic episteme. With Kang Youwei (and the authors I will discuss in the remainder of the chapter), the conceptualization of the museum moves from the universal to the nationalistic mode. Within this new understanding, the museum becomes a space for the production of what Arif Dirlik called "new history, a history that reified Chinese identity and constructed a racialized and ethnicized continuity of Chineseness."[49] The museum increasingly became the site where this new history, and the new citizen that it hailed, was to be constructed. This new citizen was a national citizen who emerged from national knowledge. Kang's role in the debates over late Qing and early Republican nationalism have been thoroughly debated by scholars.[50] However, his role in the shift of the conceptualization of the museum has been understudied. In this section, I will situate Kang as one of the most important architects of this shift.

In 1895, Kang founded the Society for the Study of National Strengthening (強學會).[51] It was in this society's constitution, a document that he penned, where Kang laid out his clear support for a museum. In the document, he calls on reformers of the Qing state to take four steps to save the dynasty: to found a translation press, to publish newspapers, to open a large public

[49] Dirlik, "Born in Translation," 134.

[50] For more on this debate, see: Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, 96–97. Spence, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, 1–14. Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 226. Fogel, *Imagining the People*, 19–20. Karl, *Staging the World*, 34, 74. Stephen Anthony Smith, *Like Cattle and Horses*, 39.

[51] Spence, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, 8.

library, and to found a museum. In the section of the document devoted to the last task, titled "Open a Museum" (開博物館), Kang makes clear that this museum is different from the kind that Huang Zunxian and Li Gui wrote about, as demonstrated by the section's opening:

> Open a Museum: Writing can make a meaning clear, but if writing cannot make it clear, then without illustration, it will not be apparent. In the *Classic of Poetry*, it says "'Guan, guan' goes the osprey." They may be familiar with the dredges of Lu Ji, they may know the sayings of Chong Yuan, but if scholars do not exhaustively consider its form, they do not know the osprey (and what it looks like); thus how can they know the osprey with certainty?"[52]

In this passage, Kang frames the museum as necessary for understanding the foundational text of all of Chinese literature. The line "'Guan, guan' goes the osprey" is both the first line from the first poem in the *Classic of Poetry* (詩經) and functions as the poem's title.[53] Both this collection as a whole and this specific poem are closely associated with the textual tradition out of which notions of Chineseness are constructed and projected back into history. For many Confucian interpreters of the *Classic of Poetry*, this collection of poems is interpreted as "the embodiment of the fate of the Zhou polity, manifested through the mouths of its people."[54] This specific poem is not only the first poem in the collection, but it is also the first poem of a section of poems referred to as the "Airs of the Domain" (國風). These poems are even more closely linked to the fate of the nation in the writings of later Confucian interpreters, and the prime placement of "Guan, Guan Goes the Osprey," heading this section, has long been interpreted as imbuing it

[52] Kang, *Kang Youwei quan ji,* 198.

[53] As the poems are all untitled, the first line of the poem normally functions as the name by which the poem is referred to.

[54] Owen, *An Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 31.

with a "special interpretive weight" in relation to the nation.[55] In other words, by gesturing toward this particular poem, Kang is linking his discursive museum with the imagined construction of the Chinese nation.

The museum is a space where this national identity can be exhibited to the Chinese subject. At this time, Sun Yatsen, the future first president of China, complained that the Chinese lacked national unity.[56] Kang's museum seems to be a mechanism for answering this criticism and for substantiating a national identity within the minds of the Chinese people.[57] Kang suggests that the reason that the Chinese lacked what Sun calls "national sentiment" is because it is difficult to visualize the nation in text. Texts where Chinese identity was traditionally articulated, like the *Classic of Poetry*, were accessible only to a limited number of Chinese subjects. The museum completes the poem and explicates to the visitor, unable to understand the poem, the national vision that the poem embodies. As Kang formulates it, "if writing cannot make it clear, then without illustration, it will not be apparent." Not dependent on written language, the museum makes legible the essentialized Chinese identity that Kang projects onto the poem.

The nation is at the center of Kang's conceptualization of the museum, but his discursive museum still retains some of the universalistic elements drawn from discourses circulating earlier in the Qing dynasty. Shortly after the passage quoted above, Kang states that the Qing should:

> Establish this institution now—all that is ancient and new, Chinese and foreign [matters] related to the military, agriculture, industry, and commerce, the various types of new

[55] Owen, *An Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 31–32.

[56] Sun, *The Three Principles of the People*, 31.

[57] "Foreigners are constantly saying that the Chinese are a 'sheet of loose sand'; in the matter of national sentiment it is true. We have never had national unity." Sun, *The Three Principles of the People*, 31.

> tools—for example, the new-style ironclad boat, wheeled vehicles, and naval mines—and various kinds of electrical studies, chemistry, optics, mechanics, astronomy, geography, physics, and medicine—and the many machines and various minerals and animals and plants all can be provided and purchased for viewing and collecting and can be taken to help benefit knowledge and the gathering of thoughts.[58]

Beyond the production of national identity and national knowledge, as best represented in his gesturing to "Guan, Guan Goes the Osprey," Kang also shows that he is interested in the role that museums can play in the production of non-national, universal knowledge. In the above passage, knowledge is understood not as referencing an ancient Chinese past onto which the museum visitor can project their present identity. Rather, knowledge is understood as a part of a broader framework of *tiyong* (體用 or 中體西用), meaning "Chinese learning as essence, Western learning for application." In this passage, Kang imagines the museum as offering knowledge that produces superior technology, such as the ironclad. Yet this passage's turn toward universal knowledge only highlights the national purpose of the museum in Kang's writing. Knowledge of ironclads, wheeled vehicles, and naval mines is broadly similar to the kinds of knowledge that would have been produced in the museums established by Western missionaries. The missionaries who built China's first museums made it clear that part of the reason they were representing this universal, scientific knowledge in the museum was to demonstrate the power that the West could brandish in competition with China.[59] In the above passage, Kang appears to

[58] "今創設此院, 凡古今中外兵、農、工、商各種新器, 如新式鐵艦、輪車、水雷大器及各種電學、化學、光學、重學、天學、地學、物學、醫學諸机器, 各種礦質及動植種類, 皆為備購, 博覽兼收, 以為益智集思之助." Kang, *Kang Youwei quan ji*, 198.

[59] As Reverend J.S. Whitewright, one of the missionaries who found one of China's early museums, told a missionary conference in Ipswich, England, "The greatest proof of ignorance was, however, shewn [sic] in 1900 when, during the Boxer outbreak, the Chinese attempted to make war on the whole civilised world. It was said of Yu hsien, the author of the terrible massacres in the Province of Shansi, that he himself was the victim of the grossest ignorance. How different it might all have been, if he and other high officials in like case, had been enlightened and progressive men, knowing what was best for their own country, understanding the civilisation of the west and the

be reversing that dynamic. In suggesting that his discursive museum will display these symbols of military technological prowess, Kang is hinting that the Qing will utilize universal knowledge for a national purpose—that is, weaponizing it for the defense of the Chinese nation. This should come as no surprise, as "Open a Museum" is part of a document that aimed to establish a program for strengthening the nation.

Kang's discursive museum is thus imagined to construct an affective imagined community as Chinese visitors pass through it. He notes that upon visiting the museum, citizens will "unite the thoughts of the average people to contemplate how to seek out pragmatic uses [of things]."[60] In other words, the museum is conceptualized as a site where the imagined community of the Chinese nation can be produced. The earlier discursive museums, those of Li Gui and Huang Zunxian, did not imagine museums as producing national unity. Kang's vision of the museum does. The above passages typify the way in which Kang's understanding of the museum is distinct from those of his predecessors: he imagines the museum as a space where national identity is constructed, where the subject is taught to realize their Chinese identity. Whereas those subjects could not previously recognize the Chineseness embodied in things such as the poem "Guan, Guan Goes the Osprey," with the museum, the subject is now able to visualize the essential aspects of the poem—that is, those relating to a Chinese identity. Understanding this essence, Kang implies, the subject is able to realize the continuity extending from these Zhou dynasty texts to the present and to recognize themself within this national continuity.

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principles on which that civilisation is founded, knowing also the power of the great nations of the world on whom they dared make war. Had this been so the terrible stories of 1900 would never have been written." Whitewright, "Pioneer Museum Work in China," 272–73.

[60] "合眾人之心思以求使用。" Kang, *Kang Youwei quan ji*, 198.

After he wrote the society's constitution, Kang became one of the most important late Qing reformers. Briefly, he was invited to lead the government before being overthrown by conservative forces. Following the coup, Kang fled China with a price on his head, though now he was a celebrity, and he roamed the world under the sponsorship of wealthy overseas Chinese entrepreneurs.[61] During his global perambulations, Kang spent time in Paris, where he visited many museums. At the Museé Guimet, dedicated to the collection and display of Asian artifacts, he stumbled upon objects that had been looted by Western colonial forces in the 1860 attack on one of Beijing's imperial palaces. After viewing these Qing artifacts on display in a Western museum, Kang described his emotions in both poetic and travelogue forms. This encounter with these looted Chinese artifacts demonstrates the extent to which Kang's conceptualization of the museum was nationalized. In his poem titled, "A *Fu* on the Feelings after a Lengthy Contemplation upon Visiting in Paris the Seals and Jades from Yuanming Chunshan," Kang locates his feelings in a broader emotional landscape that understands China as having once been a great power but has now been surpassed by Western upstarts. His poem reads:

> At the time William [the Conqueror] had just entered England
> Humanity did not number fifty million.
> European Civilization had not yet blossomed,
> Only our authority shined in all the eight directions.
> After hundreds of years, there is a new situation,
> [Their] steamships and railroads linking all the world.
> Regretfully, [we] were closed off for this long night,

[61] Spence, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, 25.

And it is surprising that [we] still cut ourselves off from external relations and call out to the strong enemy . . .

[I] flee ten thousand miles and tour Paris,

[and I can] rub the inherited seals and my heart is cold and mournful.[62]

If in the constitution of the Society for the Study of National Strengthening Kang had imagined the museum as a space for constructing an affective imagined community bound to a positive vision of the nation, Kang here deployed the looted Qing artifacts to incite an affective community bound to a vision of the nation as victim. This discursive museum is still a site where a national community is constructed, but here it is constructed through an experience of degradation.

The verb that Kang uses in the second line of the poem for "to rub" is a relatively rare verb that is also the same word that Huang Zunxian used when, in his Hong Kong cycle, he declared "There are foreign barbarian bronzes to rub."[63] Kang was not only one of the most well-read individuals of his time but he also had a personal connection to Huang; Kang's student, Liang Qichao, worked with Huang to modernize Chinese poetry.[64] The connection is speculative, but Kang's use of the same verb suggests that Kang may be alluding to Huang's poem. If this is the case, then this allusion purposefully contrasts the different contexts and different perspectives offered in the two poems. Whereas Huang's poem, written after the Qing had lost two Opium Wars to Western imperial powers, expresses a sense of wonder at the power of the Western

[62] "當時威廉始入英/人民不及五十億/歐土文明未開化/惟我威靈照八極/百年之間新事變/汽船鐵繞通重譯/惜哉閉關守長夜/竟兒絕海召強敵 . . . 逋臣万里游巴黎/摩挲遺玺心凄凄。" Kang, *Kang Youwei shiwen xuan,* 297.

[63] The verb is rare enough that, in the annotated edition of Huang's work, the editor defined the word for modern readers. Huang Zunxian, *Huang Zunxian shixuan*, 7.

[64] Ying Hu, "Late Qing Poetry Revolution," 339.

museum to exhibit the natural world and to project imperial power, the museum in Kang's poem functions as an index of Western nations' ability to dominate the Chinese nation.

It is also worthwhile to contrast Kang's attitude with Li Gui's. Unlike Li Gui, who described looted Chinese artifacts in Western museums without articulating concern about the symbolic ramifications of this circulation, Kang has moved the nation—and the threat to the nation—to the center of his understanding of the museum. Li Gui and Huang Zunxian both understood the museum as framed within a universal episteme and the artifacts circulating within them as universalized objects. Kang's poem implies that artifacts (and the knowledge that they produce while displayed in museums) are the property of the nation and thus should not be displayed outside the nation. The difference between the two visions is a sign of how dramatically the understanding of the museum has changed in less than two decades.

Writing about the same museum in a travelogue, Kang underlines the point with a reference to the classical Chinese canon that makes the issue legible for an elite Chinese readership:

> I came here [to the museum], and [it] is a place that hurts the heart. The Gao *ding* was placed in the Temple of Lu.[65] The Lü moved it to the Qi [state's] platform. The maps, implements, and treasured objects from the treasury of China's imperial palace are here [in the museum] are numerous. Even the imperial seals are many. This is the disaster of 1860 [the Second Opium War]. It calls out. . . . All the thousands of years [worth] of treasures and even the imperial jade seals transmitted by the ancestors were not protected; rather, they left [China] and went to the enemy's country. These artifacts are here. And

[65] A *ding* is an ancient Chinese ritual vessel.

this is the reason. China has almost collapsed. The Yellow Race will become extinct. And it is because of this reason.[66]

At the beginning of this passage, Kang frames the display of artifacts in the French museum in terms of a story from the *Zuozhuan* (左传), a pre-imperial text closely associated with canonical historiography. In imperial China, the story of the Gao *Ding* was understood as being about a country's loss of morality and the loss of the mandate required for rulership. The discussion was well known enough that, in 1806, the Jiaqing emperor (嘉慶, 1796–1820) alluded to the event in a poem, suggesting that the state of Eastern Lu had lost the *ding* because it had lost its virtue and thus experienced moral bankruptcy.[67] Kang deploys this for a similar purpose, signaling that the Qing state has lost these ancestral artifacts and thus has lost the virtue necessary to rule. As the end of the passage makes clear, this loss of virtue signifies national disaster. Just as the loss of the Gao *Ding* and its placement in the Lu Temple portended the end of the Lu state, this loss of artifacts to Western imperialists signals the extinction of China. One might be tempted to read this as a warning of the Qing state's collapse rather than that of the Chinese nation's. However, Kang's language precludes this possible interpretation when he states that "China has almost collapsed! The Yellow Race will become extinct!"[68] In his allusion to the Gao *Ding*, Kang is

[66] "來遊此乎。則傷心處矣。郜鼎。入。于。魯。廟。大呂。移。於。齊。臺。中國。內。2府。圖。器。珍。物。在此。無。數。而玉。璽。甚。多。則庚。子。之。禍。1也。 嗚呼。. . . 數千年之珍寶。乃至祖宗之傳授玉璽。皆不保而流於敵國。此物、之、在、此。為此、故、也。中國、幾、亡。黃種、滅、絕。為此故也."Kang, *Ouzhou shi yi guo you ji*, 16. Here, Kang's orthography is a bit unusual. The repeated use of periods and commas after words function as a sort of underlining of these words, so I have represented these sentences as underlined in translation.

[67] Li Boting, "Jiaqing Chao Juan Qinzhai Shiwen Tieluo Chenshe Tantao," 93.

[68] Strangely, the term "yellow race" may not refer to all Asians but specifically to Chinese people. In other texts, the term "yellow race" has been deployed in a similar manner, one that suggests its scope is national rather than continental. For an example, see the "Introductory Remarks" (例言) in Yan Fu's translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In these remarks, Yan Fu hints that he is equating Chinese workers (華丁) with the "Yellow Race" (黃種). Stowe, *Heinu xu tian lu*, 2.

transforming this French museum into a site of Chinese shame and an omen of the nation's disintegration.

In Paris, the museum becomes a space for constructing a negative nationalism, one based on loss and Chinese shame. But in both his positive and negative visions, Kang's conceptualization of the museum marks an important turning point. Kang was one of the first Chinese thinkers to imagine the museum in terms of a nationalistic rather than universalistic framework. This nationalism was a qualified nationalism. Unlike Sun Yatsen, Kang's was never a republican nationalism that believed in the end of the empire.[69] However, Kang's nationalization of the museum was apparently at odds with the thinking in the palace; at the same time that Kang was writing poetry about the national shame engendered by witnessing the Qing imperial family's artifacts in the Museé Guimet, Empress Dowager Cixi (慈禧 1835–1908) sent a scroll to that very museum, thanking the Guimet for opening a museum that celebrated Asian art.[70] One might expect Cixi, the head of the Qing family and the person with the strongest claim to ownership of the looted artifacts, to express anger about their loss. But it is Kang rather than Cixi who feels shame over their loss because Kang has conceptually nationalized the museum space.

Kang's nationalization of the museum had a rapid impact. On August 11, 1897, a group calling itself the Association of Chenzhou Society, based in Changsha, published a journal called the *New Journal of Hunan Studies* (湘学新报). One of the society's main goals was "China's national revival" and "the enlightenment of the people." They planned to achieve these goals with a museum in Changsha: "This [museum] is a temple for all the people and will be the first

[69] Kang Youwei apparently never rectified himself to a republican nationalism. In 1917, when the former emperor Puyi briefly tried to reoccupy the Qing throne, Kang rushed to the Forbidden City in his imperial robes to work for the emperor, as if the revolution had not happened. Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 287.

[70] Furth, "Frederich Hirth, Qing Dynasty Painting and the American Art World."

place to exhibit all things Chinese."[71] Within two years of Kang bringing the museum from the universal to the national episteme, Kang's rhetoric on the museum had already become pervasive throughout China, penetrating into the periphery as far as Hunan. After Kang, the museum was increasingly understood not in terms of the universal but in terms of the national.

Zhang Jian

Though today he is largely remembered for the museum that he built, Zhang Jian (張謇 1853–1926) was also one of the most important Chinese theorists of the museum. Before he became the first Chinese citizen-subject to build a museum, he wrote several important texts on the topic. Because he both wrote about and built museums, he is the only figure to receive significant attention in both this and the following chapter. Here I will explore Zhang's contributions to the conceptualization of the museum and also lay the groundwork for my discussion in the following chapter of the museum that Zhang actually built.

Zhang Jian was an industrialist who transformed his hometown, Nantong (南通), from a rural backwater into a modern Chinese city. Although little known today, Nantong was, for a brief decade, conceived of as an alternative site for Chinese modernity.[72] The "Nantong Model," as it was called, was meant to rival Shanghai's foreigner-led mode of development. Zhang's

[71] Chen Yuan, "Zhongguo bowuguan zhi yuanqi," 8.

[72] "Tongzhou, Tong prefecture, was a rural backwater until the 1890s, when it experienced so rapid a transformation that by the late 1910s it appeared to be phenomenally moderm, with, among other things, film companies and English-speaking traffic policemen. It began to attract famous Chinese and foreign visitors alike and came to be touted as a model of modernity and self-government. The agents directly responsible for what came to be known as the Nantong model were the local elites, of whom Zhang Jian, who held the highest degree, jinshi, in the imperial civil service examination, was the leader. Taking advantage of the late Qing New Policies reform, the elites developed dozens of factories, hundreds of schools from primary to college levels, and other well-executed public and social service projects. In 1914, to preserve and expand the fruits of the late Qing reform against the Republican president Yuan Shikai's dissolution of all local self-government institutions, the elites began to shape the image of Nantong as a "model" for modernity and local initiative as a means to both legitimize their continued dominance and attract outside support." Shao, *Culturing Modernity*, 2.

model was premised on the idea of a Chinese-led modernity. Though Nantong never rivaled Shanghai in size, the Nantong Model briefly challenged it in terms of ideological importance, and this was almost single-handedly driven by Zhang. Zhang drained swamps and built one of the first public libraries in China, along with a teaching college and a newspaper.[73] And the museum was at the core of Zhang's project to reimagine Chinese modernity.

The modernization of Nantong that Zhang Jian undertook mirrored Kang Youwei's proposal from the *Shanghai Strengthening Study Society Constitution*. As Kang had proposed, Zhang created a museum, a newspaper, and a library. But to understand Zhang's project only as an actualization of Kang's proposal would be to misinterpret what Zhang actually did. Zhang's museum project really began on a 1903 trip to Japan. That year, the Japanese consul in Shanghai invited Zhang to visit Osaka for the Fifth National Industrial Exposition, a smaller-scale exposition similar to a world's fair.[74] The expo and the museums he visited during his time in Japan were an "almost an inexhaustible source of inspiration" for Zhang Jian.[75] Over the next decade, he would write frequently about, plan for, and then actually build a museum. Soon after he returned to China, he joined the board of the French Catholic Sikkawei Museum in modern Shanghai, located in today's Xujiahui.[76] In 1905, Zhang penned two memorials to the Qing state, the *Proposal to the Education Ministry Requesting the Construction of a Museum* (上學部請設博覽館議) and the *Proposal to Prime Minister Nanpi Requesting the Construction of an*

[73] Wang Fang, "Mudflat Development in Jiangsu Province, China," 692. Chang Wan-chen, "A Cross-Cultural Perspective on Musealization," 20. Shao, *Culturing Modernity*, 126.

[74] It is important to note that we still know relatively little about which museums Zhang actually visited while in Japan. His diary says nothing about which museums he went to, but we do know he must have visited at least several museums because, in his later writings about museums, he alludes to the designs of museums he saw in Japan. Chow, "The Influence of Zhang Jian's 1903 Trip to Japan on the Nantong Museum," 7.

[75] Shao, "Exhibiting the Modern," 690.

[76] Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," 573.

Imperial Museum in the Capital (上南皮相國請京師建設帝國博覽館議). Both memorials called on the Qing emperor to build a museum in Beijing. Like Kang's, the discursive museums imagined in both of these memorials are conceptualized as highly nationalistic spaces intended by Zhang to create an affective link between the visitor and the Chinese nation.

In the *Proposal to the Education Ministry Requesting the Construction of a Museum*, Zhang frames his discursive museum as part of an educational system that would legitimize the Qing dynasty while also surpassing both earlier dynasties and Euro-American imperial powers:

> Undoubtedly, there will be libraries and museums, and these will be the backup forces of the school; this will allow the men of ability who continue to study references and places to experiment, to synthesize the ancient and the modern, to scrutinize and to theorize. My dynasty's awesome Confucian learning has been displayed before all the world; it displayed the *siku* bibliographic project and we have constructed the three rooms. This surpasses [*yuanmai*] the Han and Tang dynasties, how could it not surpass [*zhang*] Europe and America?[77]

As with Kang Youwei's, Zhang Jian's discursive museums are centered on the nation. This passage makes it unambiguous that Zhang's museum will function as a mechanism for projecting a historical narrative onto a present identity. Here, the Qing is imagined to be competing with earlier dynasties associated with the Chinese nation, particularly the Han and the Tang. In the Chinese imperial period, these two dynasties were frequently understood as the apogee of Chinese civilization.[78] In suggesting the museum as a project of great learning that would allow

[77] "然以少屬之學校, 授學有秩序, 畢業有程限, 其所養成之人才, 豈能蔚為通儒, 尊其絕學。 蓋有圖書館, 博物院以為學校之後盾, 使承學之彥, 有所參考, 有所實驗, 得以綜合古今, 搜討而研論之耳。我朝宏章儒術, 昭示天下, 詔開四庫, 分建三閣6, 足以遠邁漢唐, 豈僅掌歐美?" Zhang Jian, *Zhang Jian quanji*, 272.

[78] During the Qing, there was a discourse that frequently imagined the Qing state competing with the Han and the Tang in terms of greatness. In Xinjiang, Qing authors referred to how much better and more efficient Qing colonization of Xinjiang was compared to Han and Tang efforts. As James Millward has argued, "The efforts of the Han and Tang dynasties to extend Chinese power into Central Asia were the historical milestones against which the

the Qing to surpass the Han and the Tang, Zhang is implying that it is a means by which the Qing might compete and claim the title as the greatest dynasty in Chinese history.

The use of the verb *zhang* (surpass, 掌) is particularly visceral. As the word can also be used to mean the "palm of the hand," the "sole of the foot" or "to slap," and it can be used to suggest "control."[79] All of these meanings make clear that Zhang is intending to communicate to the throne the sense of unrefined power over the Europeans and Americans that the museum will give to the Qing. The verb used earlier in the sentence to describe how the museum will allow the Qing to surpass the Han and the Tang is *yuanmai* (surpass, 遠邁), which lacks the disrespectful physicality that *zhang* carries. In deploying a more corporeal verb for essentially the same meaning, Zhang hints that there is no small amount of xenophobic physicality in the nationalistic aims of his museum.

Further on in the memorial, Zhang makes it clear that the museum will not only allow the Qing to surpass earlier dynasties and the Western imperial powers but also be a space for constructing an identity that links the dynasty to the nation:

> Our country today is suited to this [Japanese] method. Especially the siting of the imperial museum being in the capital of the country. Why does it need to be called imperial? This will proclaim a high morality and spread the country's light.[80]

In this passage, Zhang is drawing off his experience in Japan and his visits to the museums in that country as a model for his own discursive museum. As Zhang frames it, the museum will

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Manchu Qianlong emperor measured his own progress. From his point of view, his conquests compared favorably with the expensive, ultimately frustrated endeavors of both earlier dynasties." Millward, *Beyond the Pass*, 25.

[79] One dictionary of literary Chinese suggests that it can also mean "wield, in control of" (执掌). *Gudai hanyu da cidian* 古代漢語辭典 [Comprehensive dictionary of Old Chinese]. "Zhang (掌)."

[80] "我國今宜参用其法, 特辟帝室博覽於京師。何以必曰帝室？宣上德而杨国光也." Zhang Jian, *Zhang Jian quanji*, 273.

allow the dynasty to promulgate the emperor's virtue to the visitor. In the Confucian tradition, the emperor acts virtuously and that virtue radiates out from the monarchical center to all subjects, setting the empire in order. What Zhang claims in this passage is that the museum can become a new mechanism for this older concept. The museum becomes the site where the ruler's virtue emanates outwards into the subjects.

Throughout the text, Zhang makes it clear that this "virtue" that the museum inculcates is equivalent to Chinese identity. Zhang frequently connects what the museum is doing to what Confucius did. He also suggests that the museum is an extension of Zhou ritual propriety texts. In other passages, he sees the museum as a space where China's long history is projected onto the individual. Speaking of the museum, Zhang says "Today, all recognize that the country called the most ancient civilization is our country [China]; this is also something that the various countries of East and West publicly say."[81] The museum's projection onto the visitors of the present thus instantiates a national identity.

Further on in this same passage, Zhang makes it clear that this projection is not something limited to Qing subjects. Instead, Zhang imagines his museum to be constructing a past for both Chinese and non-Chinese subjects:

> After the museum is built, foreigners with special passes can visit [the museum], and thus [they would see] the majesty of the capital displayed, the sights of the imperial capital arranged; and, moreover, they will take with them the knowledge of the three generations of the sage kings that has lasted [in China] up until today.[82]

[81] "今之世稱文明最古之國, 咸推我國, 此亦東西各邦之公言也." Zhang Jian, *Zhang Jian quanji*, 274.

[82] "若此馆成立以后，特许外人亦得参观，则赋上都之壮丽，纪帝京之景物，更有以知我国唐虞三代以至于今." Zhang Jian, *Zhang Jian quanji*, 274.

Zhang imagines the museum to be an institution that enhances the Qing state's reputation by communicating to foreigners both China's long history and the glories of that history. Here, Zhang is challenging something circulating in the Western discourses of the time: that China did not qualify as a nation, and that the state was disconsonant with modernity, an empire lumbering on in an age of nations. As John Dewey, American philosopher, said in an essay on his experience in China, "Is China a nation? No, not as we estimate nations. But is China becoming a nation, and how long will it take? These are open questions."[83] By projecting a Chinese past all the way back to the mythical sage kings, Zhang imagines the museum as a space for abnegating this Western discourse's questioning of China's history as a nation.

The nation was at the center of Zhang's conceptualization of the museum. In many ways, his vision of this new institution was not all that different from Kang Youwei's. Both were focused on constructing a national continuity that projected ancient greatness back to the mythical past and connected it to the present Qing state. What makes Zhang fascinating is how incongruent his nation-oriented vision, as represented by these discursive museums, is from the museum that he actually built, as I will discuss in the following chapter.

Wu Jianren

With this chapter's last author, we come full circle, turning to a deeper examination of the author briefly discussed at the beginning of the chapter. Wu Jianren (吳趼人, 1866–1910) was one of the most popular authors of the late Qing. His 1906 novel the *Sea of Regret* (恨海) was perhaps one of the period's most popular romances.[84] In another of his novels, *The New Story of*

[83] Dewey, *Impressions of Soviet Russia and the Revolutionary World*, 256.

[84] Ying Hu, "Late Qing Poetry Revolution," 353.

the Stone (新石頭記), the museum plays a prominent role in Wu's construction of an idealized national space. It is his discursive museum in this novel that this final section will examine.

The New Story of the Stone is a sequel to the mid-Qing classic, *Dream of the Red Chamber* (紅樓夢), also titled *The Story of the Stone* (石頭記). Like Zhang Jian's two memorials discussed in the previous section, Wu's novel was published in 1905.[85] Wu's text borrows characters from the original novel and reimagines them as navigating semi-colonial China. The first half of the novel follows the peregrinations of Jia Baoyu, the protagonist, as he moves through contemporary Shanghai and Beijing. In Shanghai, Baoyu frequently articulates a xenophobic exasperation with how deeply non-Chinese technologies and individuals have penetrated Chinese society.[86] Even when he expresses admiration for the technology that foreigners have brought to China, he does so in a manner that links it to nationalistic goals. At the Jiangnan armory, Baoyu fantasizes about how the Chinese state might be able to nationalize and localize Western technological prowess.[87] In this way, the novel echoes the larger *tiyong* debate, in which intellectuals struggled over how to import Western ideas while still maintaining a Chinese identity.

In the second half of the novel, that nationalistic dynamic is reversed. Baoyu enters the Realm of Civilization (文明境界), a space that is modern but simultaneously Chinese. Technologically, this new space is more advanced than the contemporary Western imperial

[85] Isaacson, *Celestial Empire*, 60.

[86] "I argue that the novel's thematic focus on a xenophobic confrontation with a foreign invader and a hydra- headed tradition, and the subsequent construction of a utopian China whose territory and history have transcended foreign incursion . . . Wu Jianren expresses concern with China's incorporation of Western epistemologies and the process of reconciling these fields of knowledge with Chinese philosophical and political traditions." Isaacson, *Celestial Empire,* 60.

[87] "Baoyu's trip to visit the Jiangnan Arsenal signals the beginning of a deeper interest in foreign learning, but again this is purely for the sake of economic nationalism. In his tour of the arsenal, Baoyu makes clear that the ultimate goal would be local production of the knowledge that is translated at the arsenal, and local invention and manufacture of the goods available there as well." Isaacson, *Celestial Empire,* 74.

powers, with airships and chemicals that can manipulate the weather. However, because the Realm of Civilization is coded as Chinese, Baoyu perceives the technology as no longer threatening but enabling.[88]

The Realm of Civilization is unambiguously framed as a Chinese realm. The founder of the realm is named Mr. Orient (东方先生). His given name is Strong (強), and his courtesy name is Civilization (文明), meaning he could be referred to either as Oriental Strong or Oriental Civilization. His eldest son is named Oriental Hero (东方英, Dongfang Ying), his middle son is named Oriental Virtue (东方德, Dongfang De), and his youngest son is named Oriental Law (东方法, Dongfang Fa), while his youngest child and only daughter is named Oriental Beauty (东方美, Dongfang Mei).[89] Beyond the clear implications of these names, these four children are also doppelgangers of the Western powers. The names of the four children correspond to the names of the four most important imperial powers: England (*Ying*), Germany (*De*), France (*Fa*), and America (*Mei*), respectively. In other words, Oriental Civilization is literally giving birth to the Eastern twins of the Western powers. Wu makes it clear that he is framing the Realm of Civilization as a Chinese mirror image of a technologically powerful West.

The museum plays a central role within this Chinese space. After entering the Realm of Civilization, Baoyu joins a hunting party in pursuit of the mythological Peng bird famously featured in the Daoist classic the *Zhuangzi*. They hunt the bird from an airship, flying all the way to the African coast to kill the bird. Dragging it back to the Realm of Civilization's museum, they send the bird to be stuffed and exhibited and then are taken on a tour of the museum. They first enter the museum's library (like most museums of the period, Wu Jianren's discursive museum

[88] "On the other hand, in the Realm of Civilization, where science decocted tradition into a transparent, tasteless, and impersonal instrument of efficiency, no threat is seen. Baoyu expresses less consternation about this shift, apparently because of its inherent "Chineseness." Isaacson, *Celestial Empire,* 74–76.

[89] Wu Jianren, *Zhongguo jindai xiaoshuo daxi,* 287.

has an attached library). As Baoyu enters the library, it becomes clear that national, Chinese knowledge is the primary episteme within this space, with non-Chinese knowledge understood as secondary:

> First they went to the book storage room. Upon entering, they took a look, and all they could see on the four walls were books. In the middle, there were ten rooms—these were the ancient and modern books of this country; on either side there were five rooms—these were the books of the five continents [the world].[90]

Unlike Li Gui's description of the British Museum's library, where Chinese books made up one-seventieth of the books in the British Museum and Library, Wu's imagined library is literally centered on the books of "this country." The books of the rest of the world occupy a peripheral position. As demonstrated with the naming of the four children of the founder of the Realm of Civilization, little of the symbolism in this book is subtle. Wu Jianren is deploying these books in this manner because he is trying to make a point about the centrality of Chinese knowledge in the museum and in the wider realm of civilizations.

As Baoyu moves further into the museum, the primacy of Chinese knowledge and a Chinese identity is repeatedly underlined by the novel. Here, I quote a long passage to demonstrate how the museum is understood as promoting an essentialized Chinese identity:

> Jianshi [their guide through the museum] pointed to a glass box and said, "This we need to see first." When Baoyu looked, all he could see was a table in the middle of the room [made of] finely engraved red sandalwood. On top of it was a five-color, brocaded felt, and placed on this was a sandalwood box, all four sides inlaid with glass. Inside the box, there was a rope. Thus, he asked, "What is this rope?" Jianshi said, "These are the ancient

[90] "先到了藏书楼，进去一看，只见图书四壁，当中十间，是本国的古今书籍；两旁各五间，是五洲的书籍。" Wu Jianren, *Zhongguo jindai xiaoshuo daxi,* 318.

ropes from when knot tying was used to govern. Because this is the primogenitor of the Chinese character, it has been provided here in the book storage room." Baoyu admired the beauty of it for a while. Jianshi pointed toward a niche and called Baoyu to look. Inside the niche, there hung a yellow curtain hanging scroll, when he opened it and looked, there were several Chinese cedar glass boxes, and packed inside were several books. Jianshi pointed to each of them. "This is the *Classic of Poetry* that Confucius edited, this is the *Book of Documents* that Confucius edited, that is the *Classic of Ritual* and the *Classic of Music* that Confucius set down. The one in here is the original manuscript of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and legend has it that this is not Confucius' own handwriting, but rather it was copied by both Ziyou and Zixia, and these two disciples of Confucius divided it up." When they were done reading, he again pointed to another side, this one with a shelf with extremely damaged old books and said, "These are the books that Qin Shi Huang's burning did not reach. Legend has it that when Xiao He [Liu Bang's Chancellor and strategist] was poor, he pulled these out of the pile of ashes. These all are very ancient things." Baoyu said, "Having seen what is very old, I wonder if you have things that are very new?" Jianshi pulled them over and pointed to two books. "These are the two newest ones." If you don't know what the newest books were, the story will continue in the next chapter.[91]

[91] "見士指著一個玻璃匣道:「要先從這個看起。」宝玉看時, 只見樓當中摆著一張雕鏤極精的紫檀桌子，上鋪五色綿氈, 放著一個紫檀匣子, 四面用玻璃鑲成, 匣子當中放著一根繩子。因問:「這一是什麼繩？」見士道:「這是上古結繩而治的繩子。因為他是字的始祖, 以供在藏書樓裡面。」寶玉賞玩了一番。見士又指著一龕, 叫寶玉看。那龕上掛著一幅黃幔幛, 揭開看時, 卻是幾個楠木玻璃匣, 裝著幾部書。見士一一指點道:「這是孔子刪訂的《詩經》, 這是孔子刪訂的《尚書》, 那是孔子所定的《禮經》、《樂經》。這一個裝的是《春秋》原稿, 傳說不是孔子親筆，是子游、子夏兩位弟子分鈔的。」看罷了, 又指旁邊一架極殘舊的書道:「這是秦始皇焚未透的書。相傳是蕭何微時, 從灰堆裡扒出來的。這都是極古之物。」寶玉道:「極古的見過了, 可知可有極新的？」見士引到一處, 指著兩部書道:「這就是最新的了。」不知最新何書, 下回分解."Wu Jianren, *Zhongguo jindai xiaoshuo daxi,* 318.

This long passage has several points worth noting. First, the exhibits on display in this section of the museum all gesture toward a Chinese identity. When analyzing Kang Youwei's deployment of the symbolic value of the *Classic of Poetry* above, I described the symbolic role that this canonical text plays in the instantiation of a Chinese identity. This text, along with these other canonical texts—including the *Book of Documents*, the *Classic of Music*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*—functions similarly here in Wu's novel: as an index of Chinese identity. The knot-language exhibit also gestures toward Chineseness. Fu Xi and Nu Wa, the mythological figures who purportedly invented the Chinese character and were the progenitors of humanity, are also closely associated with knots. Fu Xi's invention of the Chinese character came out of his work with knots, while Nu Wa created mankind out of mud and cords. The couple are frequently depicted in art as intertwined in the form of a knot.[92] Even the damaged books mentioned at the end of the passage function as symbols of an essentialized Chinese identity. The text says that Xiao He recovered the books that had been damaged in the bibliocaust of Qin Shi Huang.[93] This implies that Xiao He, being among the men who helped Liu Bang found the Han dynasty, used these books in order to establish the Han. Of course, the Han is not only a polity but also an emblem of Chineseness, as the word is today deployed to mean ethnic Chinese. By exhibiting these books and knots, the Realm of Civilization's museum is linking this foundational period of Chinese identity to the modern era.

The museum represents the broader process of what is occurring in the utopic Realm of Civilization: the space is meant to construct an identity that is simultaneously modern and Chinese. Wu's discursive museum is constructed as a counternarrative in order to invalidate the

[92] Lydia Chen, *The Complete Book of Chinese Knotting*, 10.

[93] Qin Shi Huang was most famous for unifying the first historical Chinese polity under a single empire and most infamous for burning many of the ancient books.

globally circulating discourse of the time that China, because of its loyalty to ancient ways of thinking, was incapable of surviving modernity. If the Realm of Civilization is a space where Chinese identity is understood to be both Chinese and technologically modern, the museum is a modern technology that is being used to substantiate a Chineseness that links ancient greatness to the present.

Just as Zhang Jian's 1905 discursive museum was meant "to synthesize the ancient and the modern," Wu's museum in the novel clearly links two imagined discourses—of contemporary modernity and of ancient Chineseness—within the space of the museum. At the end of the long passage quoted above, the chapter ends with Jianshi preparing to take Baoyu in to see the two newest books in the museum. The subsequent chapter reveals what those two books are: *The Statutes of Civilization* (文明律例) and *The Discoveries of Science* (科学发明). In these two books, the two threads of the utopic space are linked: civilization and science, Chineseness and modernity. Through the museum, the knowledge offered by the museum is frequently though not always coded as Chinese. Universal knowledge, particularly of science, is sometimes represented in the museum, but it is always understood to be deployed for the sake of the nation.

Several days later, Baoyu is described as exploring another part of the museum. Upon first glance, this portion of the museum appears to be creating universal, scientific knowledge rather than national knowledge:

> Thereupon, Baoyu and others lodged at the museum, staying there three days. He visited all the various halls, the [Hall] of Flying [Things], the [Hall] of Underwater [Things] the [Hall] of Animals, and the [Hall] of Plants. He looked over the various types of metals and the various non-metallic minerals. There were also the curios that [Mr.] Eastern Civilization [had obtained] in his explorations; he looked over each of these. The great

> Peng had already been made using liquid medicine [taxidermic fluid] and propped up in the Hall of Flying Birds. An office clerk had already employed the Ministry of Public Works to create its measurements. From head to tail it was fifty-two *chi*.[94] In its widest place, it was thirty *chi*. Its eye sockets were three *chi*, its shins were one *chi* two *cun*, and its talons eight *cun*. All of this was written on a sign hanging beside it, which also noted Mr. Ancient Youth and the names of the other people who had been hunting with them that day.[95]

Here, the focus of the museum initially does not appear to be the construction of any Chinese identity. Rather, the museum looks similar to the museums being built by Western missionaries in China at this time (discussed in the following chapter) that focused on natural history and the production of the visitor into a scientifically literate subject. However, even as the universalistic mode of the museum is being highlighted, the novel still clearly gestures toward the construction of a nationalistic identity. These natural objects were obtained by Mr. Eastern Civilization during his "explorations." In other words, after founding this utopic Chinese space, Mr. Eastern Civilization moved around the world, acting as a colonialist—collecting objects and bringing them into his Chinese space and putting them on display in glass cases, just as the European colonial powers did. The ability to place an object in a museum is a demonstration of imperial power. Thus, the novel transforms China into a colonial power. During the late nineteenth century, only those peoples who expanded and swallowed smaller peoples were understood to qualify as nations.[96] As with the names of his children, Mr. Eastern Civilization mirrors the

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[94] A *chi* is a traditional unit of length that is the equivalent to approximately a foot.

[95] "从此宝玉等就在博物馆住下， 耽搁了三天。 游遍了飞潜动植各院，看遍了各种金类、非金的矿质， 又有东方文明从前各种探险的奇器， 一一看遍。 大鹏早已用药水制了，支放在飞禽院当中。 经司事用工部营造尺量过，从头至尾长五十二尺，最阔处横径三十尺。眼眶对径三尺，胫径一尺二寸，爪径八寸。都写在一块牌子上。又注上老少年等名字及猎得送到的时日，挂在旁边。" Wu Jianren, *Zhongguo jindai xiaoshuo daxi,* 322.

[96] Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1870*, 31–34.

imperial powers. By establishing the Realm's founder as a colonialist, the novel demonstrates that this utopic China can also match the West as a colonizer. This is the reason that, in the earlier passage where Baoyu went to hunt the Peng bird, the reader was told that the Peng was chased to the African coast. This image of the hunter in Africa is redolent of European imperialists and the scramble for Africa. In this way, this section of the museum deploys universalized, scientific knowledge in a manner that projects China as an imperial power. Even when deploying non-nationalistic knowledge, the novel does so in a way that centers the nation, portraying this imagined China as a nation worthy of modernity.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the arc of development of the discursive museum in China from 1839 to 1905. The museum first appeared in Lin Zexu's *Si Zhou Zhi*, a text that attempted to comprehend the West as it was challenging China. It is common in Chinese historiography to cite this moment as the beginning of Western imperialists' encroachment into China, the starting point for China's semi-colonial subjugation. The museum entered Chinese discourse as a means to try to prevent this. Although it failed, it is still important to recognize that the museum was, from its earliest entrance into China, linked to modernity and the universal episteme that the West was advocating for.

The universal episteme, through which the museum was conceptualized in the West, was translated into a Chinese context, but, after 1895, that model of the museum became increasingly dated. By the time of Wu Jianren, the museum was understood largely in national rather than universal terms. Though the universal mode dominated early understandings of the museum, after 1895, it increasingly gave way to the nationalistic mode. In the next chapter, I will describe

how this arc from universal to nationalistic mode in discursive museums in China was mirrored by China's built museums.

CHAPTER III

BUILT MUSEUMS IN EARLY CHINA:

FROM THE UNIVERSAL TO THE NATIONAL

In September 1932, with the Japanese Army largely in control of Manchuria, the government of the Republic of China decided to move most of the artifacts from the Palace Museum out of Beijing, farther away from the fighting.[1] Many criticized the move, saying the government was abandoning the former capital to the Japanese army. Lu Xun, one of China's most famous writers, was one such critic. On January 31, 1933, he watched government officials load museum artifacts into trucks at Qianmen, just south of the Forbidden City. After witnessing the contents of the Palace Museum being carted off, Lu Xun penned a requiem-like poem for the artifacts and the city that had held them:

> The wealthy have already ridden out, culture has already gone away,
>
> This fortress of culture sits in an empty place
>
> Once culture leaves, it will not return,
>
> This ancient city of millennia is cold and desolate
>
> The reserved cars stood ready at Qianmen Gate
>
> The university students are weighed down by layers of misfortune
>
> The Japanese press against the pass, where can one resist them?
>
> But, in the brothels, no one is concerned.[2]

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[1] Jeanette Elliott, *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures*, 74.

[2] "阔人已骑文化去，此地空余文化城。文化一去不复返，古城千载冷清清。专车队队前门站，晦气重重大学生。日薄榆关何处抗，烟花场上没人惊." Lu Xun,*Lu Xun quanji*, 14–15. I would also like to thank Professor Roy Chan for his help in translating this poem. Professor Chan pointed out that, in the last line, the words *yan hua chang* may not mean brothel, but may rather refer to fireworks. Perhaps this line is using fireworks as a metaphor for the gunfire. If this were the case, this last line might be rendered as something like, "But, with the fireworks above [us],

In this poem, Lu Xun suggests that the loss of the palace's artifacts is a larger metaphor for a greater national loss, evoking earlier Chinese poets like Du Fu and Li Qingzhao. In his papers, Lu Xun kept an article published by *Shenbao* just a month later, on February 13, in which the article author claims that the Palace Museum artifacts represent the "crystallization of Chinese Civilization" (中國文明結晶).[3]

This is surprising because, as I will document later in this chapter, the construction of the Palace Museum was marked by a contentious situation in which politicians of the young Chinese republic fought over whether the museum and its artifacts represented the nation or its antipode. Before the opening of the Palace Museum, there was no built museum that articulated this linkage between the museum and the nation. But, within eight years of its opening, writers were already suggesting that the Palace Museum embodied Chinese civilization, echoing the discursive museums of Kang Youwei, Zhang Jian, and Wu Jianren discussed in the previous chapter. How did the Palace Museum become a symbol of the nation in such a short time?

If the last chapter demonstrated that the discursive museum evolved from a universal to a nationalistic mode, this chapter will argue that the built museum—that is, the museum in the physical form of a building with exhibits—followed a similar arc, shifting from a universal to a national focus. This chapter will examine three museums that represent three separate stages of that arc: the Shanghai Museum, the Nantong Museum, and the Palace Museum. The Shanghai Museum was built by Euro-American imperialists in 1874 in the universal mode. The Nantong Museum was constructed at the end of the Qing dynasty by Zhang Jian. Unlike his discursive museum, discussed in the previous chapter, Zhang Jian's built museum was largely grounded

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no one is concerned." I have decided to interpret the word as *brothel*, because that is what the editor of Lu Xun's authorized works suggests that it is. However, I think both interpretations are plausible.

[3] Lu Xun, *Lu Xun quanji*, 33.

within the universal—not the nationalistic—mode. It was not until the Palace Museum that any museum took the Chinese nation as its sole subject matter, catapulting Chinese museums into the nationalistic mode.

This chapter will not only demonstrate that these built museums evolved along a trajectory similar to the discursive museums of the previous chapter but it will also intervene in a museological debate. Today, in the PRC, the museum is understood as producing a national, Chinese subject-citizen. Though the universal mode was dominant during the first decades of the Chinese museum, the pasts of China's universal museums are largely repressed today. By warping the conceptualization of past museums so that they are framed within the nationalistic mode, PRC scholarship on the museum imagines the Chinese museum as having always been national. Before turning to the discussion of the three museums that will make up the bulk of this chapter, I will first demonstrate how my exploration of these three built museums intervenes in the debate emerging out of the museological scholarship of the PRC.

Intervention into a Debate

Reading PRC scholarship on the Nantong Museum, two things are clear: Zhang Jian opened the first Chinese museum, and he did so in 1905. This is the consensus that emerges from PRC museology. One scholar, Ai Jing, writes, "He [Zhang Jian] took his personal finances and, in 1905, officially created China's first public museum, the Nantong Museum."[4] Another scholar writing about the Nantong Museum, Ding Dawei made essentially the same claim:

> At the beginning of the last century, the late Qing's top imperial exam scholar, the famous patriotic industrialist, the educator and public figure Mr. Zhang Jian, grasping his native

[4] "他以个人财力在1905年正式创办了中国第一个公共博物馆"南通博物苑。" Ai, "Jindai Zhongguo bowuguan de chenlie fazhan shi chutan," 41.

> Nantong's creative disposition, opened [many operations] on his own initiative and completely managed them, creating a new global trend, beginning a modern Chinese civilization. Within this program, Mr. Zhang Jian, in line with the concepts of "initiating the people's intelligence" and "Chinese learning as essence, Western learning for application," created China's first public museum in 1905—the Nantong Museum.[5]

PRC scholarship on the museum is unanimous in the opinion that 1905 is the starting point of the museum.

[5] "上世纪初,清末状元、著名的爱国实业家、教育家、社会活动家张謇先生,在家乡南通创造性地开展自主建设和全面经营,建设起新世界的雏形,开中国近代文明风气之先。在这个过程中,张謇先生本着"开启民智""西学中用"的理念,于1905年创办了中国第一个公共博物馆——南通博物苑。" Ding, "Zai Nantong Bowuyuan 110 nian ji Zhongguo bowuguan shiye fazhan 110 nian xueshu yantanhui kaimushi shang de zhici," 1.

Figure 3.1 - The 2005 celebration of the centenary of the Nantong Museum[6]

The museum itself made it a point to celebrate the 1905 date as the founding of the museum. In 2005, the Nantong Museum had a major celebration for the centenary of the museum. A booklet published by the museum announced that "The Nantong Museum sits on Nantong Old City's Hao River's southeastern shore. It was established in 1905 by Zhang Jian, the famous patriotic industrialist and the late Qing scholar who scored the top score on the

[6] The source of these two images is the Nantong Museum's own publication, a copy of which I was given when I interviewed a museum official in August 2018. Mu, *Nantong bowuyuan dashiji 1905–1985*, 23.

imperial exams. It is China's earliest public museum."[7] The museum also sponsored several publications to celebrate the anniversary, including the 2005 *Nantong Centennial Celebration Documents* (南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集). At a conference in 2015, which the museum published in book form, the title of the speech at the opening ceremony was "A Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Academic Seminar on the 110th Anniversary of the Nantong Museum and the 110th Anniversary of China's Museum Work Development."[8] Even Taiwanese scholars have accepted the 1905 date as correct. As one Taiwanese scholar, Chen Yuan, stated, "The first Chinese national to build a museum, the Nantong Museum, was built by Zhang Jian in 1905."[9]

Both claims, that Zhang Jian began his museum in 1905 and that his was the first Chinese museum, are highly problematic. Zhang Jian, in his own writing about the Nantong Museum, makes clear that he did not build the museum in 1905:

> In 1905, taking the requirements of teaching the natural sciences which need to be collected, [I] began to build a garden [*yuan*] west of the school and the river. Moving a thousand abandoned graves and also approximately thirty people's houses, [I] built it. Wanting to elevate it, I needed to collect more widely, so I also collected things which were recondite. In 1914, the museum [*yuan*] was roughly completed in three sections [of the museum]: natural science, history, and art. The artifacts numbered, all together, 2,900, and they were marvelous.[10]

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[7] "南通博物苑位于南通古城东南濠河之滨，由著名爱国实业家、晚清状元1张謇于1905年创办，是中国最早的公共博物馆。" Wang et al., *Nantong Bowuyuan*, 4.

[8] "在南通博物苑110年暨1中国博物馆事业发展110年学术研讨会开幕式上的致辞。" Ding, "Zai Nantong Bowuyuan 110 nian ji Zhongguo bowuguan shiye fazhan 110 nian xueshu yantanhui kaimushi shang de zhici," 1.

[9] "中國第一個由國人創設的博物館"南通博物苑", 就是在张謇的手中成立於一九零五年。" Chen Yuan, "Zhongguo bowuguan zhi yuanqi," 14.

[10] "清光绪乙巳，以师范教授博物之需有所征也，始营苑于校河之西。徙荒冢千，并民居三十许为之。要于举而已，而须征者广，集物亦赜。民国三年甲寅，苑乃粗成天然、歷史、美術三部，品物凡二千九百有奇。" Zhang Jian, *Zhang Jian quanji*, 283.

He makes it clear that the museum was not complete, at least in the form that he understood the museum should be, until around 1914. One reason for the confusion over when the museum began is the word that Zhang Jian used for museum. Rather than adopting one of the two normative words accepted in Chinese for museum since the 1840s, *bowuguan* (博物館, hall of broad learning) or *bowuyuan* (博物院, institute of broad learning), Zhang Jian chose a homophone of the latter word and created a neologism, *bowuyuan* (博物苑, garden of broad learning). It is easy to see why scholars might have initially misread the above passage, where he says he started his (botanical) garden in 1905, but he did not "roughly complete" his garden of broad learning until 1914.

Confusion also derives from the fact that this 1914 date is also not as hard and fast as Zhang Jian's language would make one believe. A publication by the Nantong Museum itself, the *Nantong Museum Chronicle* (南通博物苑大事记), a year-by-year record of events related to the Nantong Museum, shows that the first event that points to the built museum itself was on April 20, 1906, when the foundation for the Middle Hall (中館, the first of the three halls) was laid.[11] In December of 1906, the buildings of the Middle Hall and the South Hall (南館) were completed, but the buildings did not initially function as museums. Instead, they were used for other purposes. It was not until September 1908 that the South Hall had its first exhibition of artifacts. At the time, the Middle Hall was a weather station, not a museum, and the North Hall was not yet built.[12] It was several years before the three halls that today make up the museum came together to function as a museum. Because it evolved in a piecemeal manner, it is difficult to identify a firm date for the opening of the Nantong Museum. In the *Nantong Museum*

[11] Mu, *Nantong Bowuyuan dashiji 1905–1985*, 1.

[12] Mu, *Nantong Bowuyuan dashiji 1905–1985*, 2.

Chronicle, the only thing related directly to any museum that occurred in 1905 was Zhang Jian's memorial to the emperor. Unless one cites Zhang Jian's memorial to the emperor as the beginning of the Nantong Museum, 1905 cannot be said to be the year in which the museum began.[13]

Because of Zhang Jian's confusing language surrounding the name of his museum, it is not surprising that some scholars might initially mistake this 1905 date for the museum's beginning. However, it is surprising that this mistake has not been corrected and that this date is so ubiquitous throughout PRC museological scholarship. The reason for this has to do with another claim: that Zhang Jian is the maker of the first Chinese museum. As one scholar, Zhang Xiaoxu, formulated it, "Taking the Nantong Museum that Zhang Jian created in January 1905 as its symbol, she [the Nantong Museum] is China's earliest museum. Within the garden [of broad learning] there were displayed specimens and documents related to natural history, history, art, and education." The claim that the Nantong Museum is the first Chinese museum is problematic. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the first museum built in Chinese territory was the Shanghai Museum.[14] This institution was built by Euro-American—particularly, though not exclusively, British—imperialists operating in Shanghai, and it opened its doors to the public in 1874.

[13] No source that I have read on the Nantong Museum has explicitly suggested that the 1905 memorials to the emperor constitute the beginning of the Zhang Jian's Museum. These scholars frequently use language that suggest that they are speaking of a built museum, not a discursive museum, such as 创办 (establish, set up) and 建设 (construct).

[14] Because of Qing China's complicated, semi-colonial status, even this claim cannot be made without a proviso. The Shanghai Museum was built within the British concession in Shanghai, land that was located inside the Qing Empire but administered by the British Empire. Another scholar argues that the first museum in China was actually founded in 1829 in Macao by Britain's East India Company. Puga, "The First Museum in China," 576. I have discounted this claim since the museum existed for only five years, appears to have only been patronized by Europeans, and was not on Qing but rather Portuguese colonial territory, unlike the Shanghai Museum, which was on Qing territory administered by Britain and had many Chinese patrons.

However, Chinese museologists have largely accepted the position, laid out in the early years of the PRC, that the Shanghai Museum, like several other missionary museums which were built after it, was not sufficiently Chinese to qualify as a Chinese museum. As Zheng Zhenfeng (郑振锋, 1898–1958) stated in the 1956 National Museum Working Meeting, "The history of China's museum work is certainly not very long; the first public museum, other than the several museums opened up by imperialists in the coastal regions, must be understood to be our Nantong Museum that Zhang Jian built."[15] According to Zheng's logic, before Zhang Jian, there may have been museums in China, but there were no Chinese museums. It is for this reason that PRC scholars work so hard to highlight the 1905 date in their scholarship. These scholars deploy this date as an effort to reify Chineseness within the category of the museum. As this chapter will demonstrate, Zhang Jian's built museum was, unlike his discursive museum, not oriented toward constructing a national, Chinese consciousness. My claim is inherently speculative, but I believe that the reason that the 1905 date is framed by Chinese scholarship as the beginning of the Nantong Museum is because this date allows scholars to foreground Zhang Jian's museum career's most nationalistic moment, ignoring his more complicated history.

The rest of this chapter will examine the evolution of China's built museums, pushing back against PRC museological scholars' nationalistic conceptualization of the Chinese museum that understands the Chinese museum as beginning with Zhang Jian. I will problematize the notion of the "Chinese museum" itself, questioning whether such a category even makes sense, at least in the earliest stages of built museums in China. Each of the museums I will examine in the following three sections could claim to be the first "Chinese museum" depending on how one defines the term. If all three can claim this title, is it really even a cogent category?

[15] "中国博物馆事业的历史并不太久，第一个公共博物馆，除了帝国主义者们在沿海地区所办的几个之外，要算是张謇他们办的我南通博物苑了。" Xu Zhenguo, "Lun Nantong Bowuyuan de baohu yu jianshe," 151.

The First Built Museum in China: The Shanghai Museum

In 1874, the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (NCBRAS) was the first museum in China to open its doors to the public, though as early as 1857, when the society had first formed, concrete proposals to build the museum were in place. The museum was built on land donated by the government of the British concession.[16] This connection to colonialism is likely one of the reasons that, in the PRC museological scholarship discussed above, the importance of the Shanghai Museum has been minimized. Despite this minimization, this is the institution that has the most credible claim as the earliest built museum in China. Because of the long span of its existence (the museum survived for three-quarters of a century) and the number of visitors it received, the Shanghai Museum was extremely influential in setting the terms for the conceptualization of the museum in China. This museum was firmly ensconced within the universal mode of the museum that was normative in both Europe and China at this time, and, until the late 1920s, it would remain within this mode, producing universal knowledge for visitors.

Before the museum was built, an 1857 discursive instantiation of the Shanghai Museum was fixed within this universal mode. In the inaugural meeting of the NCBRAS, Elijah Bridgman, the missionary who had assisted Lin Zexu with his translation of the concept of the museum into a Chinese discourse (as discussed in the previous chapter), articulated the initial vision of the Shanghai Museum. As the president of the NCBRAS, his speech envisioned the museum as a space to disseminate universal, non-national knowledge that was positioned within

[16] Lu, *Museums in China*, 65.

a scientific discourse.[17] Bridgman's conceptualization of the museum is grounded in a rejection of the racist claim, common during the period, that the Chinese are incapable of understanding universal, scientific knowledge. In delivering his vision of the museum, Bridgman rejects this racism, claiming that the Chinese people of earlier ages had advanced further than any other nation in terms of their production of a universal, scientific knowledge:

> That Yau [*sic*] and Shun and their contemporaries were, in matters of pure science, far in advance of their successors, there seems to me scarcely any reason to doubt. If so, then the highest antiquity of this nation is really its brightest period. I know the idea has been often advanced, by native and foreign authorities of no mean reputation, that the ancient Chinese were all rude savages, utterly without science, living like the wild untaught islanders of the Pacific; but the more erudite native historians generally, and with good reason, I think, discard this hypothesis.[18]

Here, Yao and Shun, mythical leaders of early China, are deployed as ahistoricized symbols of the Chinese people themselves. As Bridgman frames it, the advanced scientific knowledge of Yao and Shun represent China's superior command of scientific knowledge by the Chinese people during the Bronze Age.

The first portion of Bridgman's speech makes the claim that the Chinese are innately just as capable of engaging in the labor of producing universal knowledge as any other group. What

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[17] This is not to say that this claim to universality and to scientific impartiality actually means that those claiming this position were actually impartial, nor does it suggest that their claims to universality were not culturally grounded. Edward Said has demonstrated that the claim of universality was often implicated in culturally specific racists ideologies, though he also defended the concept of the universal as something that was potentially possible. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 44, 56. For his defense of universalism, see ibid., 229. For another critique of the role of the universalism dominant in the prevailing philosophy of British imperialism, see also Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 49. Also see the footnote in the previous chapter discussing the connection between scientific knowledge and the universal.

[18] Bridgman, "Inaugural Address," 2.

held the Chinese back in later ages was the fact that this universal truth, as Bridgman conceptualizes it, requires access to another universal truth, that of Christianity, as a way to access a higher stage of science:

> It is my settled and firm conviction that Jehovah has been pleased, for reasons unknown to us, to allow the experiment here to be tried, that all men might see and know just how far human intellect, unaided by wisdom from above, can go, to what height it can attain, and to what limits it can expand.[19]

Bridgman audaciously and problematically imagines all of humanity as a science experiment conducted by the Christian God, with the Chinese people functioning as the control group and Christendom functioning as the treatment group. At some point in the course of scientific advancement, the universal truth of science becomes inaccessible to those without the universal truth of Christianity. By linking these two aspects of universal truth, Bridgman is setting the rhetorical stage that will allow him to demonstrate that the museum is capable of becoming a medium for the universal.[20]

The categories of knowledge Bridgman envisions in his imagined museum demonstrate it as a site for the production of universal, scientific knowledge. As Bridgman says in his speech, "In the three great departments of natural history, the mineral, the vegetable and the animal kingdoms, there are thousands and thousands of objects, great and small, wooing the lovers of

[19] Bridgman, "Inaugural Address," 7.

[20] The museum was not the only medium which Western imperialists imposed on the Chinese as a means to produce what these imperialists perceived as universal knowledge. Though the map in China existed before encounters with Western powers, the West brought new forms of cartographic knowledge to China as a part of this program to promote what Westerners perceived as universal knowledge. As Lydia Liu notes, "The cartographic representation, which was not uncommon at the time, seeks to introduce a new order of universal knowledge and global consciousness to the Chinese elite so that this ancient civilization might be persuaded to join the family of nations." Lydia Liu, *Clash of Empires*, 125.

nature's form and her ever-changing drapery."[21] The exhibits that Bridgman describes are transnational, focused on the Asia-Pacific. He says the work the museum will be concentrated on the collection of specimens from the Eastern Hemisphere (what he calls "the works of the Almighty in these eastern empires") and the collection of geographic knowledge "in the China Sea, around Formosa, Liuchiu [Okinawa], Japan and up the Manchu coast, remains yet to be performed."[22] The scope of the imagined museum is less broad than the global expanse of the normative museum. Instead, his discursive museum is envisioned as a transnational museum focused on the Asian-Pacific region that evokes the spirit of the universal museum by refusing to simply be a museum of China.

This evocation of the museum as a transnational, universal episteme is not a claim to political neutrality. In fact, the claim to universality that Bridgman evokes was a mask for colonial violence being inflicted on China at the time Bridgman was giving his speech. His presentation of his discursive museum was concomitant with fighting between the Qing, British, and French empires in the Second Opium War. During an aside in his speech, Bridgman makes clear that the universal is not politically neutral. In discussing "these gathering fleets" of the British and French, he mocks the Qing and what he perceives as their rejection of the universal, suggesting that the Qing position functions as a kind of racism.[23] Satirizing what he understands

[21] Bridgman, "Inaugural Address," 6.

[22] Bridgman, "Inaugural Address," 6.

[23] This is only to say that Bridgman and other Western imperialists understood the Qing's diplomatic demands, which frequently situated the Qing empire in a position of primacy and relegated most (though not all) non-Chinese polities as secondary, as non-universal. Rather, the Qing and the Western Empires both understood their own systems as universal systems and perceived their interlocutor's system as parochial. As Hevia framed it when discussing the conflict between these two diplomatic systems in 1793, "One way of accomplishing this is to cease interpreting the Macartney embassy as an encounter between civilizations or cultures, but as one between two imperial formations, each with universalistic pretensions and complex metaphysical systems to buttress such claims. Under the sway of area studies exclusionism, twentieth-century Chinese nationalism, and notions of China's uniqueness in the age of European global domination (i.e., China as a semi-colonial space), commonalities between the Qing and British imperial formations have been ignored or denied, while their differences have been distorted." Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*, 25.

the Qing expectation of foreigners to be, he says, "Woe to the foreigners who shall then dare to approach his [the emperor's] capital, except as vassals. Bring tribute and do homage they may, but never shall they tread the soil of the celestial empire, as the equals of the black-haired race."[24] Here, he is ridiculing the Qing system of diplomacy in a manner redolent of Western imperialists' critique of China after the 1793 Macartney visit.[25] This system enforced an alien protocol onto what they perceived as the normative model of diplomacy developed in post-Westphalian Europe and limited the flow of global capital. In resisting the Europeans' Westphalian system of diplomacy, Bridgman's mocking comments are meant to evoke a sense that the Qing conceptualization of diplomacy is a challenge to his culturally biased notion of universality.

As he continues, Bridgman explicitly unveils the colonial valence of this claim to universality which, up to now, has only been implicit. In imposing his understanding of universality onto China, Bridgman is arguing that the Qing needs this universal set of values (the ones that will be embodied in the museum) even if these values must be imposed on the Qing by force:

> Such an array [of battleships] is absolutely necessary in order to give legitimate effect to the most simple and just demands for international rights—rights honestly due from man to man—rights which, I doubt not, we all alike ardently hope are to be resolutely insisted

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[24] Bridgman, "Inaugural Address," 9.

[25] For an example of an individual who reconceptualized China as rejecting universality in the period after 1793, see the story of Charles de Constant who arrived in the Qing Empire optimistic that the Chinese could be integrated as equals into the circulations of global capital that de Constant naturalized as "universal." However, in the 1790s, his position shifted and he came to believe that Qing despotism thwarted the Chinese from participating in the universal. Brook, *Great State*, 299. For a broader discussion of the Macartney mission and the way that Western thinkers reconceptualized their understanding of China after it, see Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*.

on, but which, we fear, will never be yielded with any grace or sincerity, so long as these noble sons of Han fancy themselves to be, physically, the stronger party.[26]

The evocation of the universal in the museum and the idea of universal rights mentioned in the quote above are similar enough for this juxtaposition of these two kinds of universality, the universality of the museum and the universality of global capitalism, to be jarring. On one page of his speech, Bridgman makes the claim that the Chinese are innately capable of understanding universal knowledge; a few pages later, he makes the claim that the concept of universal rights ("international rights," as Bridgman calls it) and universal access to markets must be imposed on the Chinese, violently if necessary.[27]

These two notions of universality coexist in dialectical tension with each other within Bridgman's discursive museum. With these two competing understandings of universality, it is not hard to see that the universal knowledge produced in the museum space would have the effect of denationalizing the Chinese visitor. If Christianity is conceived of as opposed to a Han Chinese identity, then utilizing the museum to offer a denationalized identity grounded in science would help fulfill the colonialist goals of the museum—to assist in the proselytizing of Christianity.[28] Thus, the initial vision of the Shanghai Museum was as an institution that utilized a universalist discourse to propagate colonial goals.

The museum that Bridgman envisioned took more than a decade and a half to achieve concrete form. After Bridgman's unexpected death in 1861, the NCBRAS and its museum floundered. It took several years for the institution to reorganize itself and several more years to

[26] Bridgman, "Inaugural Address," 9.

[27] Liu intervenes in a broader discussion of the conflict between the concepts of international law and universality as they played out in the conflicts between the Western and Qing empires. Lydia Liu, *Clash of Empires*, 135.

[28] During the Qing, Han Chinese identity was conceptualized in opposition to Christianity in parts of the Chinese world. Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese*, 150.

secure the land and capital for the museum. On March 25, 1874, the Shanghai Museum opened its doors, becoming the first museum in China to welcome the public. The first exhibition included specimens drawn from the region's botany, geology, conchology, reptiles, animals, lepidoptera, archaeology, numismatics, ichthyology, ethnology, birds, industry, and microscopy. As this list suggests, the exhibits in the museum were focused on natural history, a focus that it maintained until the 1920s.

The records of the earliest exhibits, listed in various annual reports, confirm that the museum was largely made up of biological specimens. In the early years of the museum, the collection focused on locally collected bird species supplied by hunters in Shanghai.[29] By 1878, the Shanghai Museum had a large Japanese whale featured in the museum, an exhibit that "never fails to interest Chinese visitors."[30] As with Huang Zunxian's discursive museum, the whale served as an index of the power that the museum had over Chinese visitors and manifested the power of science.

An early report on the museum, published in the Chinese-language newspaper *Shenbao* in 1875, confirms that the museum was focused on the production of scientific knowledge that lacked a national valence:

> Sojourning merchants in Shanghai have imitated the Western museum model here and constructed a gallery intending to collect Eastern (*dongyang*) things of all kinds inside. Even though they have just started to form that collection, it is not insignificant. It includes furred beasts such as the wild boar species from the Zhenzhe Lake edge and the "little rat" species and so on. In the bird family, there are eagles, magpies, sparrows. Also

[29] Sowerby, "History of the Shanghai Museum (R.A.S.)," iv.

[30] Sowerby, "History of the Shanghai Museum (R.A.S.)," iv.

> there are fish. I cannot describe in entirety the things in the hall. There are also, for instance, mantises, grasshoppers, and butterflies. Each is categorized according to its species and has a name label. Hanging above each thing is a label that clearly says where it came from and who donated it to the museums. Visitors, Chinese and foreign, need not pay an entrance fee. [The museum] treasures and collects feathers and furs of every variety. Western countries have a marvelous technique whereby animal skins are dried and stiffened but the fir will not fall out. Now we Chinese have grasped this technique. What is more, [Westerners] purchase and import glass eyes from foreign countries, so that no matter what kind of strange or rare bird, once it has been gussied up it becomes just as it would be in nature and hence greatly lifelike (*da you shengqi*).[31]

Several points are worth noting in this long quotation. First, the focus of the museum, as understood by the author of the article, is the biological. The article describes nothing in the museum other than the animals stuffed and displayed in the museum. It is not even clear from this piece whether the museum actually has any exhibits other than taxidermied animals on display.

This article does have a hint of nationalistic pride contained within it, when the author says that "we Chinese have grasped this technique." Otherwise, this article contains little in the way of nationalism. Largely aligned with how Bridgman understood the museum, this *Shenbao* article is firmly within a universal rather than a national framework. The reference to the transnational, "Eastern" category suggests that the author is conceiving of the museum as a transnational space, though here that transnational space reifies an orientalist dichotomy between East and West. The author sees his in-group as Chinese (hence, "we Chinese") but sees this

[31] Quoted in Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," 583.

museum as offering a form of knowledge that breaks through national boundaries and achieves something transnational.

This conceptual framework focused on a universal, scientific episteme held firm throughout most of the museum's history. Four and a half decades later, in the 1919 annual report on the museum, the museum's curator, Arthur Stanley, stated, "The policy has been to maintain the Museum as a Natural History Museum almost exclusively."[32] Despite several suggestions in the report that the museum would attempt to expand its collection into artifacts that cultivated a national, Chinese identity, the museum remained largely focused on natural history well into the 1920s. Of the twenty-five items donated to the museum in 1919, only a collection of bronze and iron arrowheads from the Zhou, Han, and Yuan Dynasties qualified as artifacts from China. In addition, there was a small amount of currency from the East India Company that had been found in a Shanghai cemetery that was donated to the museum. All other items donated that year were biological specimens collected from throughout Asia, including the skeleton of a Malayan tapir, a Kopsch's deer, a female muntjac, a Collie dog (this is never explained), two monkeys (unidentified), a noddy tern from Fuzhou, a kittiwake, a solitary snipe, ducks from the Huangpu ferry, a parrot, a loggerhead turtle from the Huangpu, a Chinese giant salamander from Guangdong, a variety of fish (not enumerated), marine mollusk shells and crustaceans from Fuzhou, unidentified insects, and land snails from West China. This long list of items is fairly representative of the annual reports' donation lists from the years before the late 1920s. The museum was focused on exhibiting biological specimens, not Chinese artifacts, thus situating the museum as producing scientific, universal knowledge.

[32] "Annual General Meeting," 1919, xiv.

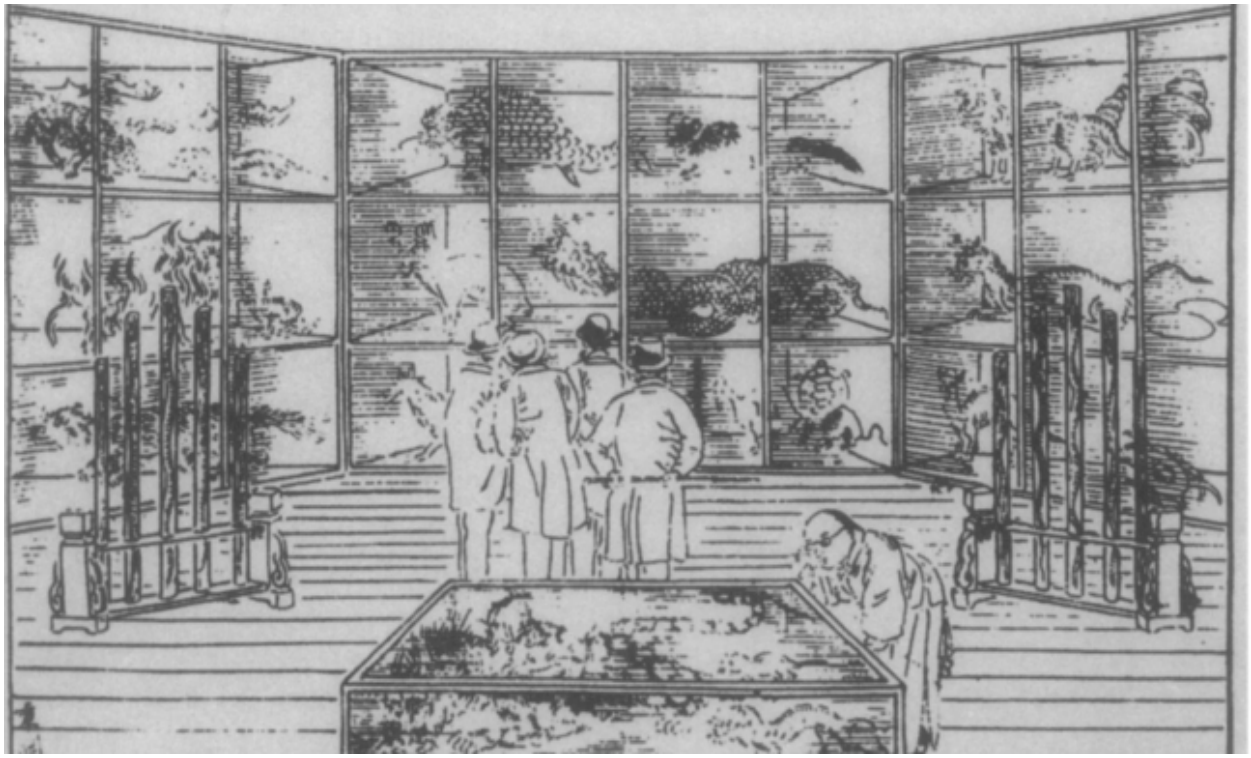

Figure 3.2 - 1909 lithographic image from *Illustrated Daily* (圖畫日報)[33]

One of the few images extant from the period before the 1920s confirms how focused the Shanghai Museum was on the production of scientific, natural-history-oriented knowledge. The image, a 1909 lithographic print from the newspaper *Illustrated Daily*, depicts four individuals dressed in contemporary Western garb, with coats and hats, in the background of the image, examining what are apparently taxidermied animals, each exhibited in one of thirty square glass display cases. This image confirms the extent to which natural history dominated the Shanghai Museum's exhibition space. In the image, there are no artifacts that could be said to gesture toward the production of a national Chinese identity. Instead, the museum was largely dominated by specimens that evoked the universalism of science.

[33] Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," 583.

Like Bridgman's imagined discursive Shanghai Museum, the built Shanghai Museum utilized this universalist framework for proselytizing purposes. In the 1919 annual report, Stanley reports that the museum's "purpose is not to collect and exhibit curiosities, but rather to stimulate that divine curiosity which leads to knowledge and wisdom."[34] Here, Stanley is constructing the museum along many of the same lines that Bridgman constructed his discursive museum. Natural history is "almost exclusively" the subject of the museum, and the goal is proselytization. The universal truth of science becomes a means to the universal truth of Christianity. In the 1919 annual report, the museum is a space where the visitor can be affectively bound to the universal truth of Christianity.

The Shanghai Museum was the first but not the only museum built by Western imperialists in China during this period. All available evidence suggests that these other museums operated in a manner similar to the Shanghai Museum—that is, within a universalist framework that promoted science as a means to proselytize Christian beliefs. One of the better documented examples of a missionary museum was a series of museums created by the Reverend John Sutherland Whitewright (1858–1926), a British Baptist missionary who built a new museum each time he moved his mission to a new location in Shandong. The Qingzhou Museum opened in 1887, but when Whitewright moved his mission in 1905 to Jinan, the Shandong provincial capital, he moved his museum with him, changing its name from the Qingzhou Museum to the Institute of Broad Knowledge (廣知院). These two museums were well received by Chinese visitors. On average, the Qingzhou Museum received 60,000 to 80,000 visitors a year, while the subsequent Institute of Broad Knowledge received 400,000 visitors a year.[35] As these numbers indicate, both these museums were broadly popular. Just like the

[34] "Annual General Meeting," 1919, xiv.

[35] Smalley, "Missionary Museums in China," 105. Flath, "Managing Historical Capital in Shandong," 44.

Shanghai Museum, these two museums were focused on producing scientific knowledge, though these museums exhibited items not only from natural history but also from a wide array of fields in science and technology. As Whitewright put it in a description of the Qingzhou Museum, "The contents of the little museum opened in 1887 consisted mainly of geographic maps and globes, diagrams illustrating elementary teaching in physiography, geology, astronomy, natural history; specimens of manufactures; natural history specimens; small models of engines; electrical apparatus, etc."[36] The focus of these exhibits was entirely on producing knowledge coded as universal.

Whitewright grounded his museum in a universal framework, but, as with the Shanghai Museum, this claim to universalism is articulated with a colonial valence. Its universalism was a means to a larger end—conversion to Christianity. Beyond conversion, another goal of Whitewright's museums was that they would engender a Chinese populace that was less hostile toward missionaries and more accepting of Western culture.[37] Whitewright mentions that a member of the literati visiting an exhibit displaying a map of the world asked, "Have you made China as small as that on purpose?"[38] As he related in another passage about his experiences in his museums, other Chinese literati were more receptive to the science that he was exhibiting:

> Occasionally a literatus was inclined to be supercilious, but that was the exception. One of these stated emphatically that there was no such thing as electricity; that if there were

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[36] Whitewright, "Pioneer Museum Work in China," 267. When writing to potential donors, Whitewright made it clear that he was hoping to add an additional exhibit on Chinese history, though he had not yet been able to do so. Ibid., 273.

[37] "Whitewright and his colleagues hoped that, after being educated by the exhibition, the Chinese would become friendly to the missionaries, would be more willing to accept Western culture, including but not limited to Christianity and would not 'dare' to fight against Western power." Lu, *Museums in China*, 47.

[38] Whitewright, "Pioneer Museum Work in China," 267.

> such a thing, the Chinese would have known all about it long ago. The assistant invited him to hold the handles of a certain magneto-electric machine while he discussed the matter with him. The result of the discussion, and the experiment, was that the scholar suddenly became converted to a firm belief in electricity, and left the premises a sadder and wiser and more enlightened man.[39]

Note how the language of science here is veiled in the rhetoric of religion. The literatus described is "converted to a firm belief" in a science which, when he entered the museum, he did not believe could have existed because the Chinese scholars of the past did not know of it.

When describing his goal for the museum, Whitewright said that it was "to endeavor to open men's minds, especially the minds of the scholar and official classes to the reception of all truth."[40] The phrase, "all truth" makes clear that he folded the truth of science into the truth of religion. At the Institute of Broad Knowledge, in Jinan, Whitewright placed a sign in the entrance hall that read:

> The object of this institution is to assist in the endeavour to manifest the truth with regard to nature, the world, history and the progress of civilisation. By its agencies it seeks to enlighten and educate, to do away with misconceptions with regard to the civilisation of the west, to explain the true nature of the Christian Faith, and its results on the individual and national life. This institution seeks to enlighten as to all that makes for the welfare and progress of China, and to assist in bringing east and west together in friendly and helpful understanding.[41]

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[39] Whitewright, "Pioneer Museum Work in China," 267.

[40] Whitewright, "Pioneer Museum Work in China," 266.

[41] Whitewright, "Pioneer Museum Work in China," 274.

Here, understanding of the natural world is conceptualized as the equivalent of understanding the truth of Christianity. A claim linking the universality of both science and Christianity was made in the exhibition space of these early missionary museums like the Shanghai Museum and Whitewright's museums in Shandong. This claim functioned as a method to cloak Christianity in a rhetoric that naturalized them, as if Christianity were as self-evident as electricity.[42] All of the earliest museums built in China claimed this universal framework focused on science, and they did so as a way to mask their provincial—that is, religious—goals.

Before moving onto the next section, I must address the Zikkawei Museum, a museum that several scholars have pointed to as a candidate for the title of first museum in China.[43] Among others, both Claypool and Isaacson have mistakenly come to believe that the Zikkawei Museum was the earliest in China.[44] The reason for this confusion is similar to the debate

[42] Whitewright was certainly not the only Westerner during this period to equate Christianity with the universal. In fact, the two were commonly linked in Western discourse. Speaking of an earlier set of Christian missionaries in China, Timothy Brook notes how the Jesuits imagined the universal truth of science as a means to proselytize the universal truth of Christianity: "The Jesuits did not pit theological and scientific truths against each other. For them, European technical knowledge of the natural world was Christian knowledge, and therefore suitable as a bridge to lead from the secular to the religious. By sharing their knowledge of the physical universe, they hoped to lead their more educated interlocutors to knowledge of the divine mind that had conceived this universe. Interested Chinese did not, however, necessarily form the same connection." Brook, *Great State*, 214. Furthermore, Wheaton, whose seminal text on international law midwifed the global legal system, operated under a similar understanding. As Lydia Liu notes: "Where Wheaton simply equates Christianity with the universal and refuses to consider reciprocity, Martin, his translator, talks about the reciprocal obligations and the communicability of universal laws across cultures and languages." Lydia Liu, *Clash of Empires*, 135.

[43] Confusingly, this museum is spelled in a variety of ways. Zikkawei is the most common, though Zikawei, Ziccawei and Siccawei are also used by scholars. Zikkawei is the anglicized version of the Shanghainese pronunciation of the site known today in Mandarin as Xujiahui (徐家汇). Today, it is a major center in Shanghai, but, when the museum was first built, it was a suburb of Shanghai.

[44] As Claypool says, "Only two natural history museums had been built in Shanghai before the Nantong Museum was established. The first was the Siccawei Museum, established on the western outskirts of the French concession by the French Jesuit priest Pierre Heude (1836–1902; dir. 1868–1901) in 1868." Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," 573. As Isaacson says, "Two museums established in colonial Shanghai served the dual function of laying claim to fields of knowledge and inculcating modern values in the citizenry. The first was the Siccawei Museum (Ziran lishi bowuyuan, or the Musée de Zikawei), a museum established by a Jesuit priest on the outskirts of the French Concession in 1868. The second was a museum established by members of the Royal Asiatic Society, many of whom had close contacts with Father Pierre Heude (1836–1902), the founder of the Siccawei Museum." Isaacson, *Celestial Empire*, 87.

discussed earlier in this chapter related to the Nantong Museum; in this case, later scholars have attached an incorrect date, 1868, to the founding of the Zikkawei Museum. This date likely derives from the fact that the Jesuit missionary Pierre Marie Heude (1836–1902), who would become most closely associated with the founding of the Zikkawei Museum, arrived in China in 1868. However, the museum should not be said to have begun in this year, as the Zikkawei Museum did not have a building until 1883. In fact, it was not until 1872 that the Jesuit proprietors even announced that they intended to build a museum. Furthermore, some sources indicate that the museum may not have been opened to the public until the 1930s.[45] These reasons make clear that the Zikkawei Museum is not a suitable candidate for the title of first built museum in China.[46]

Rethinking the National: The Nantong Museum

The Nantong Museum was founded as a part of a program Zhang Jian constructed as a means for envisioning a native Chinese modernity. His alternative model of modernity was to be Chinese-led, and he molded his hometown to be the example to follow. The museum was one part of a set of institutions that included a teaching college, a library, and a newspaper. Zhang literally offered this collection of institutions as a model for the rest of China to follow, even going so far as to name one of the nearby streets "Model Street" (模範街).[47] Initially, the

[45] Lu, *Museums in China*, 23.

[46] As Tai Li-chuan states, "The actual building was not completed until 1883, but Heude's successors considered the year of his arrival in China (1868) to have been the year of the museum's founding, in order to recognize his contributions. This view of the founding helped to spur the Zikawei Museum's elaborate celebration of its seventieth anniversary in 1939. The chronology as maintained by the Jesuit fathers gives the impression that the plan to establish the museum had already been made when father Heude arrived in China and that its construction proceeded smoothly. Although this is not entirely accurate, all available sources show that in the first half of the twentieth century, it was already widely accepted that the Heude Museum was founded in 1868, while the significance of the years 1872 and 1883 was commonly neglected." Tai, "From Zikawei Museum to Heude Museum," 113.

[47] Shao, *Culturing Modernity*, 66.

museum was an extension of his botanical garden intended for students at this model college. The museum and the rest of his alternative model were broadly successful for a decade, spurring a new discussion of modernity and attracting famous intellectuals like John Dewey (1859–1952) and Hu Shi (胡適, 1891–1962) to the museum.[48]

Like the Shanghai Museum, the Nantong Museum was dominated by natural history exhibits. According to Qin Shao, 62.8% of the Nantong Museum's exhibits were focused on natural history, with the remaining 37.2% divided between the categories of art, history, and education. The first volume of the museum catalogue, published in 1914, lists 1,879 natural specimens on display in the museum collection. The second volume, focused on those items not related to natural history, lists only 294 artifacts.[49] The differential between the space given to scientific specimens and space given to artifacts suggests the degree to which Zhang conceived of his museum in terms of producing universal, scientific knowledge. Unlike Zhang's 1905 discursive museum, the production of national, Chinese knowledge was ancillary in Zhang's built museum.

In 1911, a large whale was found beached near Nantong. Zhang had the skeleton collected and displayed on the ground floor of the museum's North Hall, among an exhibition of Chinese paintings.[50] In 1934, almost a decade after Zhang Jian's death, another intact whale skeleton was excavated during a land reclamation project in the region. The then museum owner also put that whale skeleton in a prominent place within the museum.[51] Intentionally or

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[48] For more on Hu Shi's visit, see Lu, *Museums in China*, 47. For Dewey's brief discussion of his thoughts on the Nantong Museum, see Dewey, *Impressions of Soviet Russia and the Revolutionary World*, 247–48.

[49]Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," 587.

[50] Lu, *Museums in China*, 82.

[51] Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," 580.

otherwise, the deploying of whales so prominently not only highlights the museum's scientific orientation but also evokes the whale from Huang Zunxian's poem on the British museum in Hong Kong.[52] The natural world, along with the universal, scientific episteme it represents, is foregrounded in Zhang's built museum.

In 1920, when Zhang hosted the annual meeting of the Chinese Science Society at the museum, he made it clear that the inculcation of science and the evocation of a universal episteme were some of his goals for the museum. In his address at the closing ceremony of the meeting, Zhang complained that "the average Chinese person often mistakenly thinks that scientists do not benefit society," something he labeled a "fallacy."[53] He then warned his audience that "many [Chinese individuals] use the old ways and the old talents, and those still continue; but as soon as you discuss science, as soon as you use scientists, then [they regard it] as bringing no benefit to them."[54] Rhetorically, Zhang is juxtaposing the "old Chinese ways" in opposition to the ways of science, envisioning their relationship as a dialectic. To his scientifically astute audience, which included Liang Qichao (梁啓超, 1873–1929) and other Chinese thinkers, Zhang argued that the old ways should be abandoned as they were holding back the country's social and economic development.[55] By siting the association's meeting at the Nantong Museum, Zhang located the museum as the space where this shift from the old ways to

[52] The whale was a common feature in many of the early Chinese museums in the universal mode. Whitewright's museum was pictured in 1947 with a large whale skeleton hanging above one of its large exhibit halls. See https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/CS.aspx?VP3=DamView&VBID=2A3BXZLLUF7Y&SMLS=1&RW=1366&RH=649&FR_=1&W=1366&H=649

[53] "中國一般人常以為科學家無益社會。" For *fallacy*, the term he uses is 謬論 (miu lun). Zhang Jian, *Zhang Jian quanji*, 302.

[54] "甚者用舊方法, 舊人才, 尚可維持;而一講科學, 一用科學家, 則失敗愈大。何怪社會上不重視乎。" Zhang Jian, *Zhang Jian quanji*, 302.

[55] Mu, *Nantong Bowuyuan dashiji 1905–1985*, 7–8.

the new ways, from an orientation toward China to an orientation toward a universal scientific identity, was occurring.[56]

As with the earlier missionary museums, Zhang Jian's claim to universality in the museum and his focus of the exhibits on science was not a neutral gesture. Claiming universality was clearly a move intended to align his museum with the knowledge produced in the semi-colonial context of the missionary museums. In the Nantong Museum, all biological specimens from outside of China were labeled with Latin, English, and literary Chinese names. This Latin naming project also extended to the catalogue of the museum. As Shao Qin states, "Much of the energy in producing the museum catalogue was invested in checking the Latin names and origins for various species the museum owned. Contemporary literature on the museum, to underscore it as a scientific institution, continued to emphasize how all the plants in the museum were classified and labeled with their Latin names."[57] The energy invested in correctly identifying the Latin names of museum specimens in both the museum and the catalogue demonstrates how important the universalist framing was to Zhang's project. This framing also suggests how this claim to universality was grounded in a discourse that located the "truth" of the museums in the European metropole.

Zhang largely situated his museum within the universal mode; however, there were spaces in the museum that clearly gestured toward the nationalistic mode of his 1905 memorial.

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[56] The scholarly consensus on Zhang Jian supports my argument that Zhang conceptualized the museum as a site for the construction of a modern Chinese citizenry inculcated with the universal values of science. As Shao Qin notes, "What the Nantong Museum represented above all else, however, was modern culture and science. Zhang Jian and most of the other local elites were traditional scholars at heart who were not ready for the wholesale application of Western culture and science in China. Nevertheless, they realized the need to adopt certain aspects of Western learning to improve China's condition, especially to educate the young generation on whom the future of the nation rested. This was the reason why the education exhibit, for instance, included modern industrial tools and models of various machines, steamships and trains." Shao, *Culturing Modernity*, 157.

[57] Shao, "Exhibiting the Modern," 695.

The one type of specimen that was not labeled with Latin names was those conceived of as Chinese. This labeling of "Chinese" items with only Chinese-language signage demonstrates how a national, Chinese-oriented episteme was jockeying for museum space with the universalist, Western-oriented episteme in the Nantong Museum. On the lawn of the museum, near the North Hall, Zhang created a space that was meant to evoke this sense of nationhood. In the "National Excellence Altar" (國秀壇) only artifacts and specimens conceptualized as being "Chinese" could be displayed.[58] Just as with the labeling of items, there is a particular space carved out for the nation in Zhang Jian's universalist project. The use of the word "altar" also gestures toward the construction of a national ritual. The Altar of Heaven (日壇) and the Altar of Earth (地壇) were the major sites where the Qing Emperor had performed the ritual to bond humans with the cosmic forces, using the imperial body as the medium between the two.[59] Zhang Jian's use of the term "altar" hints that the National Excellence Altar is intended to be a space where a national ritual is performed. Whereas before, the emperor had been the medium through which the polity was bound together, the museum had now become the medium that binds the nation.

Other elements of the museum suggest that Zhang was largely framing his museum within the universal mode while simultaneously adapting and incorporating the growth of the nationalistic mode of museums discussed in the previous chapter. The architecture of the North, Central, and South Halls was intended to evoke a Western style, though Zhang Jian added elements that situated the buildings within a Chinese identity.[60] On the second-floor balcony of

[58] Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," 587.

[59] Zito, *Of Body and Brush*, 2–3.

[60] "Most of the buildings were two-storey, Western-style, designed by Sun Zhixia, a graduate of the normal school who became a renowned architect." Shao, "Exhibiting the Modern," 692.

the South Hall, an epigraphic couplet carved with Zhang Jian's calligraphy says, "Set up the county schools in order to teach / become well acquainted with the names of the birds, beast, grasses and trees."[61] This couplet is the combination of two different sources in the Chinese textual canonical tradition. The first half of the couplet is from Part 1 of the Tengwengong of the *Mencius*, while the second half is from the Yang Huo section of the *Analects*. This couplet situates the museum as similar to the teaching college, both of which could be understood as institutions of learning similar to Mencius's "county schools." The second line evokes a Confucian framework for the museum to explain its natural history exhibitions. In allowing the visitor to become familiar with the names of birds, beasts, grasses, and trees, the museum is not simply mirroring the museums coming from the West but also fulfilling the goals laid out by Confucius. In combining these two passages into a single couplet, Zhang Jian is attempting to cobble together an emic, Chinese ideological orientation for the museum's universal framework.

Even though 62.8% of the museum's exhibits were natural history specimens, there were also a significant number of artifacts that articulated the tension between the national and universal epistemes.[62] Most of the artifacts displayed in the museum were Chinese-made and expressed a Chinese identity. These items included gold, jade, stone, porcelain, ceramics, epigraphic rubbings, clothing, musical instruments, statues, Buddhist sutras, and torture devices.[63] Some of these objects were clearly meant to evoke a Chinese identity, like a *chunyu*

[61] "設為庠序學校以教之，多識鳥獸草木之名。" This couplet still hangs on the South Building of the original museum today.

[62] Here, I am drawing off the technical meanings of *specimen* and *artifact*. Though common usage sometimes understands *artifact* to mean all things exhibited within a museum, the technical definition understands artifacts as being man-made *artifacialia* (hence the name *artifact*), distinct from the non-man-made objects which I am calling specimens (which some scholars refer to as *naturalia*). Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," 572.

[63] Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," 587.

musical instrument from the Han dynasty.[64] However, other artifacts were clearly meant to evoke the internationalist circulation in which Zhang was participating, such as the display of gifts Zhang had received from royalty in Korea and Italy.[65]

Beyond these two modes, the universal and the nationalistic, Zhang's built museum evokes a third mode. At the time that Zhang was building up the Nantong Museum, he was, politically, evolving into a localist, imagining a provincial identity and a provincial state to be the optimal seat of authority. In 1920, Zhang helped to form the Jiangsu Society and was elected its first president.[66] The ultimate goal of the society was to achieve an autonomous, self-governing Jiangsu that rejected the role of the national government in Beijing.[67] At the same time, his museum was utilizing a localist mode in order to construct a Nantong identity. One of the most valuable collections of artifacts that the museum put on display in the 1920s was a collection of the embroidery of Shen Shou (沈壽 1874–1921). Shen was a native of Nantong famous for her embroidery. Her most famous works were a screen celebrating the Empress Dowager Cixi (慈禧 1835–1908), a portrait of the Italian queen, and a portrait of Jesus that won a first-place prize at the 1915 world's fair in San Francisco. After her 1921 death, she willed her collection of her works to the Nantong Museum.[68] Beyond Shen, the upper floor of the North Building contained calligraphy from local Nantong calligraphers.[69] In other parts of the museum, Zhang displayed

[64] "The *chunyu* represented the Han dynasty, the distant past." Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," 588.

[65] Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," 590.

[66] Shao, *Culturing Modernity*, 45.

[67] Lu, *Museums in China*, 80.

[68] Shao, *Culturing Modernity*, 157.

[69] Ai, "Jindai Zhongguo Bowuguan de chenlie fazhan shi chutan," 42.

numerous Nantong painters.[70] During the 1920s, the museum increasingly displayed artifacts conceptualized with a Nantong identity, producing local knowledge.[71] The works of the local calligraphers, the local painters, and Shen all gesture toward a local identity that the museum was focused on producing, an identity that mirrors the local, autonomous identity that Zhang was attempting to simultaneously construct in the political sphere.

This shift away from the national and toward the local was inscribed on the building itself. By the time of the construction of the museum in Nantong, Zhang had resigned himself to not being able to build the national museum that he had discursively envisioned in his 1905 memorials. As he was constructing his built museum, Zhang inscribed his resignation onto the actual museum exterior. Facing the South Hall and the Mencian-Confucian couplet was an epigraph that was also in Zhang's calligraphy, though it focused on Zhang's inability to obtain national resources to create a museum and his subsequent turn away from the national episteme for the museum:

> In obtaining China's steles and bronzes, private individuals' financial resources are declining, and the task of searching out quality examples is quite daunting. If you cannot cover the nation, then limit your efforts to Jiangsu; if you cannot obtain originals, limit yourself to rubbings.[72]

Zhang is literally carving onto the built museum the cessation of his hopes to construct the national museum he envisioned in his 1905 texts. If the 1905 discursive museum was meant, as

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[70] Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," 577–78.

[71] "By 1920, the large number of local or provincial objects in the collection, including the epigraphs, could be interpreted as speaking to the goals and local place identity of the [Jiangsu] Sushe." Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," 579.

[72] "中國金石至博1，私人財力式微，搜採準的務其大者。不能及全國也，以江蘇為斷；不能的原物也，以拓本為斷。" Ai, "Jindai Zhongguo Bowuguan de chenlie fazhan shi chutan," 42.

discussed in the previous chapter, to "make known the light of the state/nation" (杨国光), in his built museum, he abnegates that goal. The museum becomes a text that admits that the goal of the 1905 discursive museum is no longer achievable.

Which brings us to the question that lingers over this section on Zhang Jian's built museum: why is the Nantong Museum that Zhang Jian built so different from the discursive museum he envisioned in his 1905 memorials to the Qing court? In the discursive museum, Zhang centered the museum on the nation as embodied within the emperor. The purpose of this discursive museum was to bind the people to the emperor via affective ties of national sentiment constructed within the museum. Nowhere in either of the two 1905 memorials to the throne did Zhang Jian mention science. Rather, the discursive museums he presented were grounded in discussions of Confucius and other elements of the Chinese textual canon. In Zhang Jian's built museum, the nation is not absent, but it is ancillary—the museum centers itself in the production of both universal and local knowledge, with the nationalistic mode appearing secondary. What is the reason for the difference between the two? One reason is likely the audience for Zhang's 1905 memorials. Zhang's discursive museum was proposed to convince the emperor to provide funds to build a national museum, so it is not surprising that it put the emperor in the best light. However, the 1905 discursive museum and the built museum of the 1910s and 1920s are too divergent for this to be the sole reason for the difference. The fact that his built museum looks more like the missionary museums than the discursive museum suggests that there was a fundamental shift in Zhang's thinking after 1905. In the period between 1905 and 1912, Zhang Jian reimagined the museum, moving its ideological core from the nation to something grounded in a different epistemology. PRC scholars who situate Zhang within the nationalistic mode are misreading his museum.

Evidence of the shift away from the nationalistic mode can be seen in Zhang's writings as early as 1908. As he began gathering artifacts to build what would become the Nantong Museum, he authored an announcement in which he appealed to local elites to send him artifacts. The 1908 text is headlined "An announcement: The Tongzhou Museum is respectfully soliciting poems, literary collections, works of calligraphy, and paintings, as well as steles, bronzes, and other implements owned by the previous generations."[73] In this essay, he begins his appeal to the people of Nantong by justifying his museum-building project within the framework of European museums and the "civilization" that these museums have brought:

> Under the leadership of the Europeans raising the level of civilization and spreading knowledge around the world, from the imperial houses down to local schools, all have built museums. They have focused their collections in these three areas: natural history, history, and art.[74]

Zhang grounds this new conceptualization of the museum not in terms of the national framework of China, but rather in terms of European museums and how they have augmented European civilization by increasing the knowledge Europeans have access to. Here, Zhang is not only signaling that he is dependent on local elites to fund his project but also situating himself in this wider, international circulation of the discourse of the museum while also locating the site of civilization in Europe, not China.

In contrast to his 1905 text, here Zhang does not limit himself to the potential of the museum to construct a national identity. Instead, he is already shifting away from the nationalistic mode and toward the universal. Just after this missive's opening sentence, Zhang

[73] Tongzhou is another, older name for Nantong. The Chinese title of this letter is: "通州博物馆敬征通属先辈诗文集书画及所藏金石古器启." Zhang Jian, *Zhang Jian quanji*, 278.

[74] "自歐人導公益於文明, 廣知識於世界, 上自皇家, 下迄縣郡地方學校, 咸有博物館之設。其搜集之部目三:曰天然, 曰歷史, 曰美術。" Zhang Jian, *Zhang Jian quanji*, 278.

highlights how the museum and other institutions, largely those related to scientific learning, are considered inviolable within the framework of European international law: "All churches, hospitals, institutions of higher learning, astronomical observatories, and museums, as well as other sites that promote learning and the public welfare, are not to be harmed."[75] In referencing "international law" (公法), using the same words as in the translated version of the text *Elements of International Law* by Henry Wheaton, Zhang situates the museum within the same universalist discourse in which Bridgman located his discursive museum.[76] Zhang shifts away from the nation-oriented discursive museum toward a radically different conceptualization of the museum, one located in a frame of international law and situated as an institution of higher learning similar to an astronomical observatory.

The 1908 announcement did not entirely lack references to the nation. In its titles, Zhang gestures toward the semi-national ancestral space of the "previous generations" from which he asks his readers to draw their donations. Beyond that, the donations that Zhang solicits are framed within a Chinese identity. Toward the end of the announcement, he writes, "The historical section intends to seek out official temple steles of the Tang, Song, Yuan and Ming Dynasties as well as the steles, bronzes, and items associated with the chariots and robes notable families"[77] Articulating a national, Chinese identity is still an operative logic for Zhang, at least in the history section of his museum. He is still framing the artifacts for this section in terms of how

[75] "凡敵境之教堂、醫院、學宮、星台、博物館及一切興學行善公所, 皆不可擾犯。"
Zhang Jian, *Zhang Jian quanji*, 278.

[76] This reference to "international law" gestures toward *Elements of International Law*, an 1836 text written in English by an American, Henry Wheaton, and published in Chinese in 1864. The Chinese title of this work is 萬國公法, which Zhang Jian has abbreviated as 公法. As Lydia Liu has discussed, this discourse of international law is centered on a universalist ideology that imagines European culture, particularly in the form of Christianity, to be the wellspring of that universality. Lydia Liu, *Clash of Empires*, 135.

[77] The complete sentence reads, "歷史部擬求官府寺廟唐宋元明之碑, 舊家金石車服之器。" Zhang Jian, *Zhang Jian quanji*, 278–79.

they relate to the Chinese historiographic tradition. However, unlike in the 1905 discursive museum, this 1908 text conceptualizes the museum as displaying artifacts from both inside and outside China. Of where he will draw his artifacts, Zhang says this to the readers of his announcement: "From outside [China], this museum will collect objects from Europe, the US, Australia, and Arabia. From within [China], this museum will house domestic objects from the gentry and previous generations; whether buying or soliciting them, each will be fully available."[78] Even as he asks for the donation of objects that he locates within a Chinese framework, he also gestures toward the universalist conception of the museum seen in the likes of the Shanghai Museum, explaining that he plans to display objects that are drawn from sites all over the world.

In the 1905 memorial so important to contemporary PRC scholars, the Chinese identity and the nation, embodied by the emperor, was foregrounded. In the 1908 announcement, the museum was conceptualized through a universalist framework grounded in international law, as conceived in Europe, and a localist framework. The Chinese nation is largely absent. In the block quotation above, it is European, not Chinese, emperors who are referenced. As Zhang states, "From the imperial house down to the counties and provinces and local schools, all have built museums." The only point at which Chinese emperors are mentioned in the 1908 text is in a later passage, in which Zhang criticizes them, complaining that they are one of the reasons that China fell behind Europe. Zhang says that they took artifacts and "kept them secreted in the palace of a single family."[79] If, in the 1905 memorial, Zhang Jian's discursive museum was centered on the Qing emperor as an embodiment of the Chinese nation, by 1908, Zhang Jian's conceptualization

[78] "外而歐美澳阿，內而荐紳父老，或購或乞，期備百一。" Zhang Jian, *Zhang Jian quanji*, 278.

[79] "徒秘於一姓之宮廷。" Zhang Jian, *Zhang Jian quanji*, 278.

of the museum had shifted so that the Qing emperor was now understood only to be thwarting the development of the museum in China. If, in 1905, Zhang Jian centered his museum on the nation as embodied by the emperor, the museum that he actually built functioned largely in the universal mode.

In his November 2020 visit to the Nantong Museum, Chinese Communist Party Chairman Xi Jinping praised Zhang Jian "as a model of all Chinese private entrepreneurs." A state media organ stated that "Xi said the museum should be turned into a base for patriotic education among the public, especially the country's youth, so that they will have firm confidence in the path, theory, system and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics."[80] A curious observer might wonder what Zhang's museum, built a decade before the CCP was founded, might have to say about "socialism with Chinese characteristics," but to do so would be to miss the point. The museum and the party have both been transformed into empty signifiers of the Chinese nation, another empty signifier. Zhang's museum is now framed as a project of national salvation; thus, Zhang can be equated with socialism; this is because both are reducible to the advancement of China as a nation.

Why does PRC scholarship celebrate Zhang as a "patriotic" figure and his museum as the first Chinese museum if it looked so similar to the museums built in China by Western imperialists decades before? They do so because they are reducing Zhang to a token of museum nationalism. This continues to this day, as the report on Chairman Xi's visit demonstrates. This is the reason why the 1905 date has not been corrected. Despite the fact that his museum does not look all that different from the Shanghai Museum, with both largely situated in the universal mode of its contemporary normative museum in Europe, these scholars still insist on

[80] *Xinhua*, "Xi Focus."

understanding Zhang's museums within a nationalistic mode. But as this section has shown, Zhang Jian's legacy in the world of Chinese museums is not as uncomplicated as the nationalistic scholarship produced in the PRC would suggest.

Bringing Back the Nation: The Palace Museum

Even before the 1912 Revolution was complete and the Qing Dynasty signed the Articles of Favorable Treatment that would officially end the battles between the Republican forces and fighters loyal to the monarchy, the new government was already drafting plans to build a national museum. Unlike Zhang Jian's Nantong Museum, the museums of the new state were imagined to be sites for inculcating a Chineseness that projected a contemporary identity onto an imperial Chinese past. This section will demonstrate that it was only in 1925 that the museums of the country took China as its sole subject.

The Palace Museum opened on October 10, 1925, but its origins lay in the question of who owned the nation's artifacts. For centuries, Chinese emperors had collected the country's great artworks and cultural relics.[81] These functioned as the emperor's personal property and were rarely displayed even to close advisors. Though initially no one recognized it, this became a major problem when the Qing dynasty surrendered to Republican forces in early 1912. The terms of that surrender were laid out in the Articles of Favorable Treatment, and these allowed for the former Emperor Puyi (溥儀, 1906–1967) to retain many of the trappings of emperorship—he was allowed to keep not only his title but also was to be treated by the new republic as if he were

[81] Scholars frequently point to Emperor Song Huizong (宋徽宗, 1082–1135) as the progenitor of the collection that today is the Palace Museum. Chang Lin-sheng, "National Palace Museum," 5–6. This is a problematic claim, as much of Huizong's collection was taken by the Jin leadership when his capital was sacked and Huizong was sent into exile. Emperor Qianlong is probably a better candidate for the progenitor of the Palace Museum collection as Qianlong's amassing of artifacts surpassed any other emperor's and it remains largely intact (though spread between the two different polities of Taiwan and the PRC). Jiao, "Exceptional Emperors," 16.

a foreign monarch. The Articles of Favorable Treatment contained two ambiguities that would not only stoke chaos over the next decade and a half but also led to the creation of the Palace Museum. The articles allowed for Puyi to keep all his personal property while requiring that he return all public property to the new government without providing a mechanism for distinguishing what was the emperor's and what was the state's. The two had been one and the same for more than two millennia.[82] The second ambiguity was that the articles required the emperor to leave the Forbidden City Palace at some indeterminate point but allowed him to continue to live in the northern half of the compound until he left.

The de facto, but not de jure, solution to the first ambiguity emerged out of the ad hoc practices of the new government. As the republic occupied former imperial spaces, it took many of the artifacts it found and slowly nationalized them. Initially, the 70,000 items taken from the summer palace in Chengde and the ancestral palace in Shenyang were taken by the new government when they took control of those buildings. However, the new government did not claim to own these artifacts. Signage at the inaugural exhibition of the Institute of Antiquity Exhibition (IAE, 古物陳列所, a proto-museum that functioned as a forerunner to the Palace Museum) in 1914 listed these artifacts as "on loan" from the Qing household.[83] But two years later, when the same artifacts were again exhibited, the signage now reflected new ownership, listing them as being on loan from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, not from the Qing household.

[82] "Article VII of the agreement stated that, after abdication, the emperor's private property would be protected by the government of the Republic of China. But it did not specify who actually owned the personal property of the Qing household. More than fifty years later, Pu Yi recalled how he had always considered the art treasures his personal property." Jeanette Elliott, *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures*, 57.

[83] "At the early stage, the IAE was perceived as a keeper of the royal collection, and the establishment of the IAE did not undermine the political and social status of the Qing court." Lu, *Museums in China*, 97. The term "proto-museum" is used in museological circles to describe an institution like the IAE that has some, though not all, of the characteristics to qualify as a museum. Varutti, *Museums in China*, 26.

The Republic had not paid for the artifacts; rather, it was surreptitiously nationalizing them and legitimizing its claim to control the artifacts through the space of the museum.[84]

This period also witnessed the Chinese public reimagining the ownership of these artifacts. Unlike the artifacts in Chengde and Shenyang, the still massive horde of treasures within Puyi's portion of the Forbidden City were still under his physical control. Initially, the state did not raise objections to Puyi's sales of these artifacts, implicitly acknowledging that they and the public recognized these artifacts as being Puyi's private property, just as the case had been during the dynasty. However, the Chinese public increasingly saw the artifacts as the property of the nation and not the former emperor's private property. As Jeanette Elliott says, partially quoting a report from the *Shuntian Shibao*, "By 1922 the public had developed a sense of ownership of the imperial treasures, which was reflected in a news item of that year: 'Recently some articles of great value have been sent from the palace to a foreign bank, and it is hinted the intention of the palace authorities is to sell them, in which case these priceless treasures will probably be lost to China.'"[85] As the dynastic state became an increasingly distant memory, the public increasingly wanted to lay claim to these artifacts as the property of the nation.

The two ambiguities came to a head on the night of November 2, 1924. Days before, Feng Yuxiang (冯玉祥, 1882–1948), a warlord who had for almost a decade been expressing a wish to rid the palace compound of Puyi, claimed Beijing and briefly became the most powerful man in China.[86] On that November evening, Feng dispatched Brigade Commander Lu Chung-lin (鹿鐘麟, 1884–1966), who threatened to fire cannons at the Forbidden City if Puyi did not sign a revised Articles of Favourable Treatment, turning over the palace and all the artifacts inside to

[84] Jeanette Elliott, *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures*, 58.

[85] Jeanette Elliott, *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures*, 64.

[86] Lu, *Museums in China*, 99.

the republic. Puyi absquatulated to Tianjin rather than sign the revised articles, but the result was effectively the same. Puyi left behind most of the artifacts in the imperial storehouses.

That night, the republic took physical control of those artifacts and, within days, began the process of using the artifacts to found a museum. On November 6, a government council met and appointed Li Yuying (李煜瀛, 1883–1973) as chairman of the Committee for the Liquidation of the Qing Household (清室善后委员会). Questions of politics and control of the nation were primary in these early days of the Palace Museum. When work on cataloguing the treasures began on November 7, Li Yuying found all twenty-five imperial seals. Immediately, Li ordered the seals locked away.[87] The seals were so closely associated with imperial power that Li judged them as warranting additional security. He recognized that the museum would allow for this symbol of the emperor's authority to be exhibited while simultaneously neutering any attempt by Puyi to try to regain the seals and retake the throne. Like the insect that is pinned down in the display case, the museumification of the seals not only prevented them from stinging the republic but actually enhanced the power of the republic by demonstrating that the new state had the power to display these imperial treasures. Even before the museum was being built, the importance of controlling these symbols was recognized as an important symbol of the nation exercising ownership over that Chinese imperial past.[88]

On November 25, less than a month after Puyi was ejected from the palace, Feng Yuxiang resigned from his military position. The future of the museum was clouded by the fact that Duan Qirui (段棋瑞, 1865–1936), the man who ousted Feng, favored restoring the emperor

[87] Jeanette Elliott, *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures*, 68.

[88] Puyi had been thinking about the use of the artifacts as a means to legitimize his restoration for at least several years. In 1921, one of his advisors, Jin Liang (金梁, 1878–1962) cautioned Puyi to maintain control over his numerous artifacts as a means to possibly reclaim the throne and overthrow the republic. Duan, "Guwu chenliesuo de xingshuai ji qi lishi diwei shuping," 18.

to power.[89] Would Duan stop the museum-building process and return Puyi to the palace? The committee preparing the museum recognized that their labor, their cataloguing of artifacts and preparations for displaying these artifacts to the public, was a means to prevent Puyi's restoration. Even as the republic teetered back and forth between different power centers, the museum's creators believed that the museum was a means to thwart Puyi's counterrevolution. Their exhibition, they recognized, would "symbolize the end of the Qing Dynasty."[90] They rushed to create the museum because they realized that cultivating visitation to the museum could help link citizens' identities to the republic. The creation of the Palace Museum was ideologically grounded in a project reimagining the imperial past as the nation's past in order to legitimize the shaky political foundations of a republic that was still lurching from one leader to another. In a sense, the museum, exhibiting an imperial past administered by the republican present, instantiated the Chinese identity that the new government was seeking to construct.

On October 10, 1925, less than a year after Puyi was ejected from the Forbidden City, the Palace Museum opened to the public. The new museum was an immediate success, with 50,000 visitors crowding into the site within the first two days of the museum's opening.[91] The event was weighted with national symbolism. The date was chosen because it was National Day, the date the republican revolution began fifteen years earlier, binding the museum to the nation. Huang Fu, a republican on and actively engaged with the committee that helped found the museum, highlighted this linkage in the speech he gave at the opening ceremony: "This is the first day of the Palace Museum, as well as the Double Tenth. From now on, this day will be a

[89] Lu, *Museums in China*, 100.

[90] Members of the ad hoc committee realized that it was crucial to convert the Forbidden City into a museum in order to prevent the possible restoration of the imperial system." Lu, *Museums in China*, 100–101.

[91] Lu, *Museums in China*, 104.

double anniversary, both National Day and Palace Museum Day. Any sabotage of the Palace Museum will be regarded as sabotage to this great day of the Republic."[92] Huang's rhetoric established a nexus between the state, the nation, and the museum while also hinting at the concerns that drove the committee to rapidly assemble the museum into a format that could be exhibited to the public. Like other committee members, Huang was still concerned that Puyi or a warlord might threaten the museum and overthrow the republic. In Huang's reckoning, the fate of the nation is bound to the fate of the museum, and to damage one is to damage the other.

The conversion of the former imperial space and imperial artifacts into a museum and their transformation into things that were owned by the nation itself may have contributed to political stability and the development of a cohesive sense of nationhood. After 1925, the possibility of an imperial restoration receded. The museum was the institutional medium that divorced imperial space and imperial artifacts from the emperor and conjoined them to the nation. By walking through the Palace Museum, the 50,000 people who visited the museum during its first two days were simultaneously examining the artifacts while also performing national ownership over the artifacts.

The collection itself articulated a Chinese identity, drawn entirely from items found in the Forbidden City.[93] The artifacts in the inaugural exhibit were chosen in order to instantiate a late imperial Chinese identity and produce national, Chinese knowledge. At the museum's opening, there were twenty-six exhibition rooms, many centered on producing knowledge that centered on the nation: a room for famous Qing period paintings; a room for ivory, bamboo, and wooden implements from the imperial family; a room for stationery from the imperial family; a room for

[92] The translation is Elliot's. Jeanette Elliott, *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures*, 72.

[93] The imperial artifacts from the Chengde and the Shenyang Palaces remained administered within the separate bureaucracy of the IAE, which continued its distinct existence until 1948, when it was folded into the administration of the Palace Museum.

Ming and Qing lacquer items; etc. But there were also rooms that exhibited artifacts which might be called the revolutionary mode with themes drawn from a critique of the imperial family articulated by many of the revolutionaries of 1911. There is a room for documents that demonstrated Emperor Puyi's attempts to reclaim the throne as well as a room with an exhibition on Empress Dowager Cixi.[94] These exhibitions suggest that the majority of the exhibits were located firmly within an identity that was framed as having a Chinese identity and being derived from a late imperial Chinese artistic discourse.

From the very earliest stages of the Palace Museum, the China-oriented identity of the museum was recognized. John Calvin Ferguson (1866–1945) was an American expert on Chinese art.[95] In his discussion of the museum, he highlighted the museum's uniquely Chinese subject:

> The Government Museum at Peking, containing some of the best art treasures of China, is unique among the museums of the world. In architectural design and detail and in historical surroundings, as well as in the examples of art products stored within its walls, this Museum is exclusively and characteristically Chinese. The bronzes and jades, paintings and manuscripts, pottery and porcelain, inks and writing-brushes, all owe their common origin to the genius of the Chinese race. This Museum has not needed to borrow from other nations examples of an earlier art, out of which its own development has directly or indirectly sprung.[96]

Ferguson's tone expresses a sense of awe at the uniqueness of this museum. He recognizes the museum as different from the normative, universalist museum. Unlike the Louvre or the British

[94] Na, *Gugong sishi nian,* 34.

[95] Ferguson was also a member of both the NCBRAS and the Shanghai Museum.

[96] Ferguson, *Outlines of Chinese Art*, 1.

Museum, the Palace Museum did not focus on producing universal knowledge. Rather, the museum is purely Chinese in terms of its content, and it was limited to the production of Chinese knowledge.

As Prasenjit Duara has noted, one of the elements necessary to construct a modern nation-state's sense of nationalism is the projection of a linear history backwards into time immemorial.[97] This projection of the state onto the nation's past generates legitimacy for the new state by doing what Anderson calls "stretching the short, tight skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire."[98] By demonstrating the power to own and display the imperial treasures, the young state claims this imperial, Chinese identity as its own past while simultaneously demonstrating its authority over that past and containing the threat that Puyi might claim it for himself. The museum became a medium by which the republic could navigate between the Scylla and Charybdis of embracing and restraining the imperial past. One of the more surprising examples of this is the case of Jing Hengye (经亨颐, 1877–1938), who argued that the museum's artifacts were not symbols of the nation:

> But I want to ask why should we regard the imperial artifacts as important? According to my understanding, the imperial palace is just the number one traitorous property of the emperor. This traitorous property should be auctioned off, and the funds raised from that auction could be used to build a central museum in the capital.[99]

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[97] Duara, "The Regime of Authenticity," 288. Other scholars have made similar points. For more discussion on how the image of the Forbidden City is used to project the nation into the past, see Anagnost, *National Past-Times*, 166. For more on how Chinese archaeology is used to project the PRC's contemporary international relations and ideology into the past, see Storozum, "Chinese Archaeology Goes Abroad," 284. For more on how this is done and which institutions are utilized for this kind of projection of the nation in a North Korean context, see Kim, *Illusive Utopia*, 7.

[98] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 86.

[99] "但我要问皇宫物品为什么要重视？据我的理解，皇宫不过是天子第一号逆产1就是了。逆产应当拍卖，将拍卖大宗款项，可以在首都造一所中央博物馆。" Wu Yingzhou, *Gugong Wu Nian Ji*, 95.

Speaking in 1928, three years after the opening of the Palace Museum, Jing conceptualized the Chinese nation as, at its essence, opposed to the Qing Dynasty. In his conceptualization of the new nation, these treasures could not represent the nation. Instead, he argued that the Palace Museum should be renamed the "Museum of the Wasteful Luxuries of the Abandoned Palace" (废宫奢侈陈列所) and that much of its artifacts should be sold at auction in order to pay for a museum that actually represented the nation. Jing's proposal is an extension of the racist strain in late Qing thinking, advocated by Sun Yatsen (孫中山, 1866–1925) and Zou Rong (鄒容, 1885–1905), that understood the Han Chinese as slaves to the Manchus and believed that the two groups could not live together.[100] Jing's understanding of the museum was that, because it was entirely composed of items from the Qing household, it could not represent the new Chinese nation, a nation that was conceived of as being in opposition to the Manchu dynasty.

Jing's proposal was quickly rebutted by a museum supporter, Zhang Ji (張繼, 1882–1947), and much of the young republic's elites rallied behind Zhang to defend the Palace Museum against Jing. Though Jing was one of the few republicans who resented the transformation of the imperial artifacts and space into a national museum, his resistance to the idea signals how fluid the understanding of the relationship between the nation and the artifacts still was at this point. What this contretemps demonstrates is that debates over the museum were frequently attempts to project a vision of how the nation was constituted onto the artifacts and the museum space. By the late 1920s, the museum and its collection had become, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the "crystallization of Chinese civilization."[101]

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[100] Zou Rong was a proponent of racial nationalism, something that he discussed in his highly influential 1903 pamphlet, *The Revolutionary Army*. Sun drew extensively from Zou. Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 236–37. Sun's racial-nationalistic writings were not original, but instead drew heavily on Zou and others like him. Dikotter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, 77–78.

[101] Lu Xun, *Lu Xun quanji*, 33.

This attempt to unify the imperial past and the republican present within the museum was propagated in the *Palace Weekly* (故宮週刊), a publication produced by the museum itself starting in 1929. The first issue of the weekly periodical featured an image of Sun Yatsen. In the text surrounding Sun's photograph, the opening article highlighted the way that the museum was meant to bind the public to the state by constructing an affective national community:

> This, in taking the nation's desire to improve its new civilization, [one] must develop the current level of civilization. [One] must especially take the civilization that [one] already has and channel it into the common people. Our nation has a civilized culture stretching back several thousand years, and our advanced literature and arts have shocked the world. It is only that our practice of sealing things off resulted in the marvels of all the works of art and literature being privately held by one lineage and hidden away in secret palaces and precious trunks, so that the people could never see for themselves the reality and remained ignorant their whole lives.[102]

Contradictorily, the only way for the state to construct a "new civilization" was to embrace the old civilization that it had broken away from. The author resolved this contradiction by suggesting that the essence of the nation that was to become this "new civilization" was not new at all but had always existed. The problem was that the nation had been secreted away in the storehouse of the imperial family. The solution, the author implied, was to exhibit these symbolic manifestations of the old civilization for the nation. This display would inculcate the common people of the nation with the old civilization. The Palace Museum, this publication suggested, could not be understood as a "Museum of the Wasteful Luxuries of the Abandoned Palace"

[102] "是以國家欲增進其新近之文明, 非發揚其固有之文明不可、尤非以其固有之文明灌輸於一般之民眾不可, 吾國為數千年文明古國、文藝進化、震鑠世界、徒一封閉之習過深、凡屬文藝之精奧, 大都私於一姓、匿不示人、曰秘殿、曰寶笈、循名責實、從可知矣、乃使一般普通民眾、終身盲昧、反不若外人之挾資以來者。" "Preface to the Palace Museum Weekly," 1.

because it was in fact a space for the restoration of an (imagined) essence of the nation buried within the imperial storehouses. The museum became the site on which the new nation could be constructed through its recognition that it was not a new nation at all, but an old nation renewed.

Conclusion

Both the passage from Lu Xun and the scholarly debate over the identity of the first Chinese museum demonstrate the extent to which the category of the "Chinese museum" has been nationalized. Though some, like Jing Hengye, questioned whether the Palace Museum, the embodiment of the imperial Chinese past, should be linked to the new nation, by the 1930s, most Chinese individuals understood this museum within the nationalistic mode. That conceptualization of the museum as a space for exhibiting the nation has swelled in the contemporary era of museum nationalism. What this chapter has tried to show is that this linkage of the museum with the nation was not instantaneous but rather developed through an incremental evolution whereby museums in China increasingly turned toward Chineseness as their subject. Like the discursive museums of the previous chapter, the built museums shifted slowly from the universal to a nationalistic mode. Though PRC scholars today continue to frame Zhang Jian and his museum within the confines of the nation by situating his museum as an outgrowth of his 1905 memorial, the reality is much more complicated. Zhang Jian's built museum was more of a rejection of his initial writings about the museum. The museum he built more closely resembled the universal Shanghai Museum than it did the nationalistic Palace Museum. It is only when warped by a nationalistic lens that Zhang Jian's built museum can be understood, as Chairman Xi did in November 2020, as a nationalist project. Instead, Zhang Jian

is the midpoint in the evolution of the conceptualization of the museum as it moved from the universal to the nationalistic mode.

CHAPTER IV

EXHIBITING THE CHINESE NATION:

MUSEUMS IN THE CONTEMPORARY PRC

In October 2020, the Nantes History Museum, in western France, announced that it would indefinitely delay an exhibit it had been planning on Genghis Khan and the Mongolian Empire. Nantes had been collaborating with the Inner Mongolian Provincial Museum on the exhibit, but, according to the museum and its director, Bertrand Guillet, they decided to pull out of the collaboration when their Chinese counterpart demanded the removal of some of the fundamental parts of the exhibit. Before approving the exhibit, the National Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH, 国家文物局), the branch of the PRC that regulates museums, demanded that the French cut from the exhibit all uses of words and phrases such as "Genghis Khan," "Empire," and "Mongol." The new exhibit in the French museum was to be titled "Chinese Steppe Culture of the World." Furthermore, SACH also demanded that all texts, maps, catalogues, and communication related to the exhibit be approved by Beijing.

The most interesting part of this contretemps is not trying to imagine what an exhibit on Genghis Khan would look like if it could not use the words "Genghis Khan." Rather, it is how much this construction of identity is a negative rather than a positive project. Although PRC narratives gesture toward multi-culturalism, most identity discussions center Chinese identity on ethno-nationalistic conceptualizations of Han Chineseness. Any identities that do not fit within that conceptualization are excised from the narrative. The state's goal is to restrict the discussion of Chineseness within the terms of a narrow Han identity.

In the past four decades, museums have become one of the primary spaces in the contemporary PRC for the construction of a Chinese identity. As its ideology transitioned from socialism to nationalism, the state has increasingly relied on museums to communicate this shift. In 2000, the country had 1,198 museums.[1] By 2009, that number had grown to 2,061.[2] By 2020, it had 5,788 museums.[3] For the last decade, China has, on average, built more than six museums a week, one of the fastest museum-building programs in history. Visitations have increased at a similarly rapid clip. In 2008, when the PRC made most museums free to the public as a way to encourage visitation, the total number of museum visits across China stood at 283 million museum visits annually. By 2020, that number had quadrupled to 1.2 billion visits.[4] The reason the state has invested so much in museums is because they have become what Anagnost calls the "ritualized form of subject production." This subject production projects representations of the Han Chinese ethnic group as a singular subject expressing itself in a unified voice. In this process, all forms of Chineseness that do not fit within the narrow bounds of this ethno-nationalistic conceptualization are excised. [5]

This chapter will argue that the museum in the PRC has become one of the paramount spaces for constructing this national, Chinese identity. I examine how they do this by close reading two museums. I will begin with an examination of the history of the museum in the PRC up to the contemporary period, exploring how closely the museum has been linked to the concept of the nation. After this contextualization, I will turn to two contemporary museums, the Kashgar

[1] Jacobson, *New Museums in China*, ix.

[2] *Douban,* "2009 quanguo bowuguan minglu."

[3] *Sohu.com*, "Weilai Zhongguo bowuguan ruhe fazhan."

[4] Li Xiaoxia, "Jiancheng shijie bowuguan qiangguo."

[5] Anagnost, *National Past-Times*, 12.

Urban Planning Exhibition Hall (KUPEH) and the Nantong Museum, in order to demonstrate how the museum becomes a space to articulate the nation. These two museums are particularly well suited to making visible the processes by which this national identity is constructed. The KUPEH is unique because it attempts to transform a largely Uighur, central Asian space into a Chinese space. The Nantong Museum simultaneously embraces Zhang Jian as the reason the museum exists while also distancing itself from his museum. His museum was not centered on the nation, and therefore the contemporary Nantong Museum must perform two contradictory acts: the museum positions itself in relation to Zhang Jian's original museum while denying the ideals that it expressed.

Before turning to the history of museums, a note on methodology is necessary. The field of Chinese museology is relatively young.[6] Kirk Denton's 2014 monograph on the subject is the foundational work for Chinese museum studies in the US.[7] This chapter relies heavily on Denton's scholarship, though it departs from his methodology significantly. Being the first monograph on the topic, Denton's work prioritizes comprehensiveness over detail. He examines forty-one different museums or museum-like sites in the book. This focus on examining many museums means that he has only enough space to spend three or four pages on an entire museum. His is a wide-angle examination of museums, which is certainly appropriate, as his is the first of its kind. If Denton uses a wide-angle approach to Chinese museums, the methodology of this chapter will focus on close-ups. In close reading museums—examining specific passages

[6] "The study of Chinese museums is an emerging field." Shao, "Exhibiting the Modern," 685.

[7] The PRC has several well-developed museum studies programs, though these are very distinct from Chinese museum studies in the US. Museum studies programs in the PRC are usually found in archaeology departments, and so they tend to focus on museums that are connected with archaeology. Also, due to increasingly strict ideological control in the country's universities, it is difficult to imagine any work of critical scholarship being produced in today's environment; it would be too sensitive to engage with topics such as how museums construct ideologies. Therefore, Kirk Denton's work is, even in the PRC, a very important work for analyzing museums from a critical perspective.

of text from exhibits, artifacts, and architectural elements in the museum—I am able to engage more intimately with a museum's narrative and the ideas that it is seeking to inculcate in its visitors.

The Nation as History: A History of Museums in the PRC

Before the PRC was founded, Chinese museums were in a state of extreme flux. Some museums, such as the Nantong Museum, were occupied by Japanese forces, who used the museum to billet soldiers and their horses. Other museums, particularly the Palace Museum, had their artifacts packed up and transported around the country as they fled the turmoil caused by the world war. With the coming of the civil war, the Palace Museum was, like the Chinese nation, divided along ideological lines, part of its collection going to Taiwan while the majority remained in the PRC. It was from this turmoil that the museum in the PRC emerged.

After the civil war ended in 1949, the new regime relegated the museum to a less important role than it had enjoyed in the Republican era. Part of this was directly related to politics. The CCP thought the loss of the best artifacts from the Palace Museum was a blow to its legitimacy. As Ryckman explains, "At the time, Peking experienced this move [of the artifacts to Taiwan] as a bitter political set-back and the presence of the imperial collections in Taiwan has always remained a very sore issue for the People's Republic."[8] The continued hole in the museum's collection functioned as an artifactual manifestation of the unfinished civil war and the CCP's incomplete victory.

The reduction of the role of museums in the new government was also an ideological issue. The new government established a discourse that, in general, minimized the importance of

[8] Ryckman, Pierre. "The Chinese Attitude Towards the Past," *Papers on Far Eastern History*, no. 39 (1989): 1–16. Quoted in Hamlish, "Preserving the Palace," 26.

both the nation and the museum. The discourse of the nation was never eliminated, though its prevalence was reduced.[9] The prominent discourse was that of the revolution, not the nation (at least, not the Chinese nation imagined in an essentialized, unchanging form centered on a Han identity). As the museum had, in the previous decades, become closely connected with the nation, the role of the museum was thus reduced. Wang Yeqiu (王冶秋, 1909–1987), the vice director of the SACH at the beginning of the PRC, expressed the new government's skepticism in the following way:

> Basically, there were two kinds [of museums]: the first type of museums were ones that had an aggressive character, which were arranged in China by imperialistic cultural structures; the second type was Chinese-self-made "Old Artifact Exhibition Halls." In summary, the semi-colonial, semi-feudalism of China was reflected in museum work.[10]

In Wang's understanding, China's museums were either a relic of imperialism or they reflected the fusty ideas of feudal China. Wang, whose work involved building museums, did encourage

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[9] Meisner formulated the issue as follows: "To fill the deepening ideological void created by the decline of socialism, the Communist regime since the early 1980s had been devoting enormous efforts to promoting nationalism and patriotism. Those efforts were intensified by Jiang Zemin in the 1990s, when an increasingly chauvinistic nationalism became virtually the sole ideology of the Chinese Communist state. Nationalism, of course, had always been a powerful force in the Chinese Communist movement. From the founding of the CCP in the May Fourth period throughout the revolutionary era, nationalist motivations were almost always involved in conversions to Communism. In the great urban revolutionary upsurge of the mid-1920s and the Maoist rural-based revolution that followed in the 1930s and 1940s, nationalism and social revolution had been closely intertwined. Indeed, in many respects the Maoist revolution, coinciding with the Japanese invasion of China, necessarily took the form of a war of national independence as well as a social revolution. During the Mao period, both before and after 1949, nationalist and social revolutionary goals were combined in ways that were usually reinforcing, although the inherently unstable combination became more difficult to maintain after the assumption of state power in 1949. It was not until the reign of Deng Xiaoping (1978–1997), however, that nationalism definitively triumphed over revolutionary aspirations and values. After 1978, socialist goals rapidly receded, and soon were entirely overwhelmed by a single-minded nationalist pursuit of 'wealth and power.' Indeed, socialism had been rendered quite meaningless at the beginning of the Deng era, for the paramount leader had early erased the distinction between socialism and nationalism. "The purpose of socialism is to make the country rich and strong," he declared in 1980." Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 525.

[10] "基本上不外两种类型：一种是帝国主义者的文化侵略机构在中国所筹办带有侵略性质的博物馆；一种是中国自办的'古物陈列所'。总的说来就中国半殖民地半封建社会的特点同样反映在博物馆事业中。" Peng, *Huiyi Wang Yeqiu*, 44.

museum building, but he wanted those museums to be focused on a revolutionary discourse, not the discourse of the nation.

This shift in discourses echoes other ideas circulating during the Maoist period. Conceptualizations of the idealized community were focused on the future rather than the past. Concepts of the nation (as discussed in the Introduction) generally draw from the past in order to imagine the community that comprises the modern nation. During the Maoist period, PRC theorists generally oriented themselves toward the future rather than the past in order to imagine ideal communities.[11] If earlier museums, such as the Palace Museum, had largely constructed identities by collecting antiquities, this methodology was anathema to the future-oriented CCP. This difference in orientation likely played a role in the downgrading of museums after the establishment of the PRC.

Though officials like Wang did construct many museums focused on the revolutionary discourse, the museum was still often seen as a space for articulating the nation. As the sons of Wu Fangshang, a wealthy collector, said in 1961 when they donated their father's paintings to the Shanghai Museum, "[we] had realized that these ancient paintings were the creation of the nation's forebears and they belong to the nation's culture. Through our recent study of the party and state policies for protecting the nation's cultural heritage, we have learned that the cultural relics left to us by our ancestors are properly the people's property."[12] The nation, the ancestors, the people, their heritage, these are the ideas that the museum is built to expound, even if this process is understood through the party and the state's guidance.

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[11] "As we know, one key component of the Cultural Revolution was precisely its attempt to relegate the past to history and to reject the unattainability of the future." Karl, "Culture, Revolution, and the Times of History," 699.

[12] Denise Y. Ho*, Curating Revolution*, 220.

During the first three decades of the PRC, the museum did, at times, seem to be embraced by the state, particularly during the explosion of activity surrounding the Great Leap Forward. In 1957, there were only seventy-two museums in the country. A year later, official sources recorded 360 museums.[13] As with the food production increases reported during the same political campaign, we should be skeptical of how much these numbers reflect the on-the-ground reality of actual museum building. Still, they do reflect a period of intense interest in museums, though that interest quickly waned. After 1957, the number of museums hovered around three hundred, though this number increased or decreased from year to year. In 1959, 480 museums were recorded, while in 1966, 193 museums were recorded; these two years reflect the apex and nadir of museum numbers in post-1957 Maoist China.

For much of the Cultural Revolution, museums were closed in order to "make revolution," reflecting their reduced importance during this period.[14] Some of those that were not closed were simply destroyed. The Zikkawei Museum (discussed briefly in Chapter III) was destroyed by the Red Guards. After having been criticized as a "bastion of feudalism," the Palace Museum barely escaped the same fate. On August 18, 1966, after a work team was sent by Jiang Qing to investigate the redness of the museum's staff, Zhou Enlai issued an order sealing the Forbidden City and commanding the PLA to patrol the perimeter, noting in his order that "the Palace Museum belongs to the nation, to the people, and must be protected."[15] Zhou's order framed the museum as a space associated with the nation, and he reacted against the revolution-oriented tides that were rising in the PRC.

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[13] Lu, *Museums in China*, 118.

[14] Dahpon David Ho, "To Protect and Preserve," 79.

[15] Jeanette Elliott, *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures*, 129–30.

The only part of the Palace Museum that was allowed to remain open was a single exhibit that was oriented toward a discourse of revolution rather than of the nation: the Landlord Rent Collection Yard. This exhibit was a small courtyard in a museum annex titled the Rent Collection Courtyard, a collection of statues demonstrating the evils of China's "old society."[16] When the Palace Museum did reopen the main grounds, it did so in a way that still focused more on the revolutionary discourse than on the discourse of the nation. After the 1971 reopening, one of the displays was an exhibit on archaeological digs conducted during the Cultural Revolution.[17] This exhibit combined the nation-oriented discourse, looking at the glories of imperial China uncovered by archaeologists, with a discourse that demonstrated the success of the revolution.

Like the Palace Museum, the Shanghai Museum, another of the PRC's premier museums, was shut for much of the Cultural Revolution. However, the staff continued to do work, though the nature of their work had changed. The museum functioned as a site for receiving artifacts from collectors. Because of their close association with the nation, many of these artifacts were the focus of struggle sessions with the Red Guards. However, the museum, because it was owned by the revolutionary state, represented a safe space for the nation to be collected and contained. Shanghai's collectors of artifacts frequently gave their collections to the museum for their own and their artifacts' protection. The Shanghai Museum even went so far as to create a hotline and install telephones in the houses of collectors. In case the collectors were struggled against, they

[16] This usage of the "Rent Collection Courtyard" as a way to speak to the revolutionary bona fides of a site closely associated with the Chinese nation and its old society was copied by at least one other site, the Confucian museums at Qufu. However, in Qufu, this was not enough to protect the museum, as the Red Guards still destroyed much of it. See Denise Y. Ho*, Curating Revolution*, 228; Dahpon David Ho, "To Protect and Preserve," 90.

[17] It is not clear from my source whether or not the results of these digs were the only artifacts on display. As Naquin has stated, "In 1971–72, just as scholarly journals were beginning to reappear, the Palace Museum hosted with some fanfare an exhibition that celebrated the "archaeological finds" made during the Cultural Revolution. This material—not part of the Museum's own collection—then became the basis for a major foreign show." Naquin, "Forbidden City Goes Abroad," 342.

were to call the museum to collect the artifacts.[18] These events demonstrate the extent to which the museum was imbricated with the nation during a period when the discourse of the revolution was ascendent.

If the Maoist period represents the nadir of the museum's power in China, other forms of exhibitionary culture, particularly revolutionary exhibitions, were ascendant. Groups as varied as Red Guard groups and street-level government bodies planned and executed public exhibitions on the revolution and the groups' roles in it.[19] During the most intense periods of fighting in the Cultural Revolution, there also emerged a practice of using exhibitions as a means to display political control. In some exhibitions, members of the losing faction in an ideological struggle were displayed in cages as a part of the exhibition and sometimes even tortured. In the summer of 1968, a revolutionary expo in Nanning lasted fifty-two days and saw 489,365 visitors who were able to witness victims tied up in cages and forced to wear placards. Another expo, this one at nearby at Guangxi University, saw 1.6 million visitors and more than 10,000 victims on display in torture chambers.[20] Unlike the museum, these exhibitions did little to evoke the nation. Rather, they focused on displaying the most violent manifestations of the revolution.

After 1979, the museum reemerged as an important space for articulating national policy. The elite of the CCP began to imagine the museum as an important institution for the expression of their new nationalist ideology. In a 1983 speech calling for the building of a museum at the Marco Polo Bridge, Hu Qiaomu (胡乔木, 1912–1992), a sociologist, philosopher and secretary to Mao, castigated the PRC for ignoring museum building during the first three decades of the

[18] Denise Y. Ho*, Curating Revolution*, 230.

[19] Denise Y. Ho's exhaustive work on the various forms of exhibition culture in Shanghai is the best work on the subject. See Denise Y. Ho*, Curating Revolution*.

[20] Su, *Collective Killings,* 204–5.

state's existence and called on the post-Mao state to build museums on national, Chinese subject matters:

> We really need a museum. From the founding of the state [1949] to today, we have ignored this aspect of work. . . . Now, it has already been more than thirty years. If we do not now do it [build museums/this museum], we will really let down our history, let down our state [or nation], and let down our people; we will not complete our museum work responsibility.[21]

In this passage from the speech, Hu links the lack of museums within the country to a sense of shame toward the nation. The term he uses in Chinese is *duibuqi*, a word that evokes a sense of wrong-doing—a violation of the responsibilities to the nation. Hu has reframed the museum so that it is squarely featured within the framework of the nation.

Later in the speech, Hu proposes that other sites also have museums built to memorialize them. The sites Hu lists are Confucius' home in Qufu, Hangzhou's West Lake, the Great Wall, a Sun Yatsen site, and a site associated with Yue Fei and a site associated with Du Fu. Each of these sites is intertwined with a discourse of Chineseness: Confucius is frequently seen as a nationalist hero. Hangzhou is seen as one of the glories of Chinese civilization, and, not surprisingly, the historical period when it was most important was the Southern Song (1127–1279), when China was under significant threat from northern non-Chinese groups. Yue Fei was a proto-nationalistic figure who spoke for an ethnic nationalism in reaction to non-Chinese oppressors.[22]

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[21] "我们非常需要博物馆。 从建国初期到现在，我们就忽视了这方面的工作，没有说过应该怎么去做...现在已经过了三十多年了，如果现在我们在不做，就太对不起我们的历史，对不起我们的国家，对不起我们的人民，我们就就诶有进到做博物馆工作的责任。" Hu Qiaomu, "Bowuguan shiye xuyao zhubu you yi ge da de fazhan."

[22] Zhang Taiyan, in a speech given on the anniversary of the death of the last Han Chinese emperor, which Zhang also said was the date that China (支那) died, Zhang Binglin (章炳麟, 1869–1937), evoked Yue Fei as a hero of the Chinese nation. This evocation was part of a long tradition, existent since at least the Ming, of understanding Yue Fei in terms of his status as a hero of the ethnic nation. See Matten, "The Worship of General Yue Fei," 76.

Museums were not immune from the changes that happened in 1989 as protests and state violence roiled the country. Many museum workers participated in the protests, with the Palace Museum staff going so far as to march into Tiananmen Square under their work unit's banner and donate the receipts of museum tickets to the protesting students.[23] In the counterrevolution that came after the protests, many museum workers associated with the protests were purged.

However, the more important change was a long-term shift in the museum's ideological function. After the bloodshed in Tiananmen, the state increasingly shifted from socialism toward nationalism.[24] In the early 1990s, the state promulgated a series of laws encouraging Chinese nationalism in education; one aspect of these laws was that many museums were to become "bases for patriotic education" (爱国主义基地).[25] In the 1994 annual meeting for the international museum organization known as IFOCOM, Ma Zishu, the vice minister of SACH, told the audience that "a museum shall use the cultural relics to educate the public to patriotism, revolutionary tradition and national conditions."[26] Note that, in Ma's speech, the national

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[23] Jeanette Elliott, *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures*, 132.

[24] Denton has gestured toward this shift from socialism to nationalism and museum's role in it: "If this state-sponsored nationalism of the 1990's was an effort by the party to fill the ideological void left by the decline of socialism, then revolutionary history museums were an important part of that effort." Denton, *Exhibiting the Past,* 9. Denton also says, "the Chinese Military Museum, opened in 1960, added exhibitions on premodern military history only in 1988, a time when nationalism was beginning to supplant socialism as the foundational ideology of the PRC (prior to that, the museum's exhibits had focused solely on the military history of the communist movement)." Denton, *Exhibiting the Past,* 33. Other scholars, such as James Hevia, have also extensively discussed the shift from socialism to nationalism as the grounding ideology of the state. As Hevia stated, "In East Asia, the end of the Cold War came in the midst of massive economic transformations that had already begun to rework memory of war and revolution. This was especially the case in the People's Republic of China (PRC), where nationalism, now uncoupled from socialism that the state itself was rapidly abandoning, moved to the center of official public discourse." Hevia, "Remembering the Century of Humiliation," 192.

[25] Vickers, "Museums and Nationalism in Contemporary China," 366. Also, Suisheng Zhao discusses the ideological shift from revolution to nation as embodied in the 1994 reforms to education: "In response to the decline of communist ideology, patriotic education made a special effort to link PRC history with China's noncommunist past and to justify the CCP's rule on the basis of Chinese tradition and culture." Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction*, 227.

[26] Quoted in Varutti, *Museums in China,* 37.

discourse has literally taken precedence over the revolutionary discourse, coming first on his list. As the 1990s gave way to the 2000s, the discussion of the "revolutionary tradition" would increasingly be subsumed by the emphasis on the museum as a site for inculcating nationalism.

As Guan Qiang, another deputy director of SACH, put it, "Cultural relics bear the brilliant ancient Chinese civilization and inherit our history, as well as national spirit. It can breed strength for people to pursue the Chinese Dream. . . . Museums have become key places for the people to comprehensively understand China—from ancient times to the modern era."[27] The museum becomes the site where the visitor is indoctrinated with the nationalistic ideology. The reference to the "Chinese Dream" makes it clear that the national consciousness constructed within the museum is not simply about imagining a continuous Chinese civilization but also about projecting that conceptualization onto the CCP in order to legitimize the party as the heir to the nation's heritage. Note how different this is from the first three decades of the PRC. During that period, the discourse of the revolution frequently emphasized a break from the national past, a past that was understood to be "feudal." Now, this ideology constructs the CCP as the node that links the present to the Chinese past. The museum, diminished during the Mao era, has become the site where that inculcation of ideology occurs. Or, as a sign at the end of the Ningbo Museum titled "Conclusion" formulated it, "Collecting, preserving and exhibiting these proofs which preserve the spirit of the Chinese nation (中华民族) and the art and technology of the times, [this] is our country's (我国) museums important responsibility and mission. Chairman Xi Jinping emphasized that the nation needs to 'enliven all the artifacts collected in museums.'"[28]

[27] Kaihao Wang, "Preserving the Past."

[28] "收藏、保存和展示这些承载中华民族精神和时代技艺的见证物，是我国博物馆的重要职责和使命。习近平总书记强调，"让收藏在博物馆里的文物都活起来。"

The museum is the space in which the spirit of the Chinese nation is transmitted, in which the nation's past greatness is proven.[29]

Beyond the sheer number of new museums built (as discussed in the beginning of this chapter), the state has worked in a variety of ways to increase visitor numbers. In 2004, all state-owned museums were made free to children accompanied by teachers.[30] Four years later, as a way to further museums' inculcation of nationalistic ideology into the populace, all state-owned museums were made free to every visitor.[31] From 2001 to 2008, the central government quadrupled the amount of funding it was providing to museums, from approximately 1.3 billion yuan to 5.2 billion yuan.[32] In 2021, 67% of China's approximately 2,200 counties have at least one museum. [33] Recently, one architect building museums in China claimed that museums were the "Louis Vuitton bags of architecture, every city in China wants one now."[34] Penetrating all levels of the country, for the state, the museum has become a go-to medium for inculcating nationalism.

The Nation as Excision: The Kashgar Urban Planning Exhibition Hall

[29] Other scholars have come to a similar conclusion.As Marzia Varutti frames it, "through the inscription of manufactured versions of the past into the 'official' national history (as well as the imposition of collective amnesia concerning specific historical periods), and by enforcing a definition of Chinese national identity that emphasizes ethnic diversity and unity, the state is actively constructing an image of the Chinese nation that is substantiation, sustained and disseminated through museums." Varutti, *Museums in China,* 3.

[30] Vickers, "Museums and Nationalism in Contemporary China," 366.

[31] Wenbin Zhang, "Editorial," 10.

[32] Fan Wang, "Beijing Ranks Second in Number of Museums."

[33] Kaihao Wang, "Preserving the Past."

[34] Jacobson, *New Museums in China*, ix.

The state has determined that the conceptualization of the nation that is generally to be articulated in the museum space is one that excises all elements that do not fit within a discourse of Chineseness. In PRC museums, this identity is circumscribed within the narrow parameters of an ethno-historical national framework and understood essentially as the equivalent of the Han ethnicity bounded by a dynasty-oriented framework. Chineseness is conceptualized as anything that Han Chinese bodies did in relation to the canonical dynasty format—the format extending all the way back to the Xia (夏)—and the largely mythological figures that populate the historiography of this period of Chinese history.

In this section, I will examine the Kashgar Urban Planning Exhibition Hall (KUPEH). As in the case of the abortive exhibition on Genghis Khan in the Nantes History Museum, the state-constructed narrative excises all non-Chinese elements from the KUPEH. What makes the KUPEH interesting as a subject is that because the museum focuses on Kashgar, a city that is more distant from the "Chinese" portions of China than any other major city, this process of excision is made extremely visible.[35] This visibility makes this museum an excellent site for the interrogation of the use of museums to construct the nation from the discourse of Chineseness.

Kashgar is located in the region of Xinjiang on the PRC's far western edge, in one of the poorest parts of the country. Historically, the connections between Kashgar and China have been insubstantial. During early imperial Chinese history, dynasties such as the Han and the Tang extended political control into the region around Kashgar, though this control was always relatively short term and tenuous. After the middle of the eighth century CE, those links to the

[35] The population of the administrative region of Kashgar City is about 700,000 residents. The region of Kashgar Prefecture, which includes many of the suburban regions surrounding Kashgar, has 4.6 million residents. It is the largest administrative region of its size that is more than 2,000 miles from Beijing.

Chinese empires, always nebulous, were severed completely for the next millennium.[36] During the 1750s and 1760s, the region that is today called Xinjiang (in Chinese, Xinjiang literally means "new territory" or "new borderlands") was conquered and incorporated into the Qing dynasty's empire through a genocidal campaign against the Zungharian Mongols.[37] Even after the conquest of Xinjiang, the Qing state maintained an ethno-bureaucratic distance between Xinjiang and the Han Chinese heartland.[38] Until the 1880s, only non-Han Chinese officials from the Qing government were allowed to administer the region. Heavy restrictions largely kept Han Chinese settlers out of Xinjiang.[39] During the late Qing, many of these barriers keeping the Han out were removed, and a small but important minority of Han Chinese migrants entered.

Even in contemporary Kashgar, the city is still 81 percent Uighur, despite the Chinese state's efforts to incentivize ethnically Han Chinese individuals to settle the region.[40] The percentage of the population that is Muslim is even higher, as many of the non-Uighur residents of the city are members of the Hui Muslim minority. In terms of geography, Kashgar is almost equidistant from Beirut and Beijing. Culturally, Kashgar has long been more a part of the

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[36] "For a full thousand years from this date [1751], that is, until the Qing dynasty, no power based in China would again rule Xinjiang." Millward, "Positioning Xinjiang in Eurasian and Chinese History," 39. Also see Esherick, "How the Qing Became Chinese," 230.

[37] The Qing massacre of the Zungharian Mongols has been called "arguably the eighteenth century genocide par excellence," with 600,000—approximately nine out of ten—Zunghars dying by the sword, by starvation or by epidemics caused by the fighting. See Moses, *Empire, Colony, Genocide*
188. Also, Peter Perdue extensively describes the competition between the Qing, Zunghar, and Ttsarist empires and how the outcome of this competition was contingent on a variety of factors. He suggests that Qing conquest of the region was rather highly contingent on political and military factors. In other words, the incorporation of Xinjiang into a Chinese empire was not inevitable. See Perdue, *China Marches West*.

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[39] Newby, "Xinjiang," 71. Also see Millward, "The Qing and Islam on the Western Frontier," 113–16.

[40] Toops, "The Demography of Xinjiang," 257.

circulation networks of texts and culture from central Asia than from China. There is some debate in the academic community, but it is likely that Greek armies sent expeditions as far as Kashgar.[41] Linguistically, the language of the Uighurs is Turkic, and it is fairly easy for Uighurs to communicate with Istanbulites. The Uighur language is so close to another Turkic language, Uzbek, that the two were previously considered dialects of a single language, Turki.[42] In other words, Kashgar is closely linked to the central Asian region and the broader Islamic world.

Figure 4.1 - The KUPEH as approached from Kashgar - © Galen Burke

[41] Sidky, "Alexander the Great," 240.

[42] "The Tarim Basin and particularly Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan on its southern rim have historical enjoyed close contacts with northern India, northern Afghanistan (Bactria), the Ferghana Valley, and Transoxian (the region between the Amu and Syr Rivers in central Asia). Transoxiana and Kashgaria have often been ruled as a unit by nomad states based in the north, with closer cultural and commercial links across the Pamirs than these imposing mountains would suggest. Even today, the Uzbek and Uyghur languages are extremely close and were once referred to as dialects of a single language (Turki), also spoken in parts of Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan." Millward, "Political and Cultural History of the Xinjiang Region," 30.

The KUPEH is ostensibly meant to embody the desert city, but the museum is in fact a representation of a "future gaze" of the Han Chinese state.[43] The museum is meant to present an idealized vision of Kashgar's past, present, and future—one that articulates a particular Chinese nationalist vision of the city. The museum is built on an artificial island in an artificial lake. The building is an ultramodernist structure, all wall and no roof, an architecture that evokes a futuristic non-place.[44] According to news reports from state-sponsored media published at the time the museum was built, the building's architecture intentionally quotes the Sydney Opera House.[45] The exhibits on the history of Kashgar reside on the first floor, while those on the future of Kashgar are on the second floor. Exhibits focused on Kashgar's present situation are distributed across both the first and second floors of the museum. On the museum's third floor, there is a small administrative space, where the museum is fully staffed with curators and researchers, despite the fact that the museum has been closed to almost all visitors since the museum was built in 2011.[46] All sources, including conversations with curators and new reports on the museum, indicated that the vast majority of visitors to the museum were official delegations.

The tension at the core of this museum is generated by its two goals: The first goal is to articulate the local in a museum that is ostensibly about local Kashgariness. The second goal is to

[43] I have adopted the term "future gaze" from Andre Jansson and Amanda Lagerkvist, though Denton uses different terms that approximate the term "future gaze" in his chapter discussing Urban Planning Museums. For more information, see Jansson and Lagerkvist, "The Future Gaze," 25. Also see Denton, *Exhibiting the Past,* 243–46.

[44] Reinberger, Mark, in interview with the author, January 3, 2015.

[45] *Kashgar City*, "Kashi donghu, ni chedi bian le."

[46] This last fact may seem strange, but it was confirmed by an interview with museum staff on a visit to the museum. Li Zongkang (assistant director at the Nantong Museum), in interview with the author, August 14, 2018.

make invisible anything which might imply that Kashgar is not an entirely Chinese space. I will now turn to close readings of exhibits in this museum: two from the history section of the museum, one from the section covering contemporary Kashgar, and a gallery from the section covering future Kashgar. In these close readings, I will demonstrate how the museum struggles with these two goals, attempting to be a local museum that simultaneously constructs a narrative centered on a form of Chineseness that excludes all non-Han Chinese individuals from Kashgar's past, present, and future, imagining Kashgar as an entirely ethnicized space where Chineseness is the only operative identity. It does this by only allowing Chinese figures to populate Kashgar's history and imagining a future in which Kashgar is understood to be a Chinese space, completely cut off from its central Asian heritage. It also does this by framing Kashgar as if it were produced from Chinese-language texts.[47] The only concession the museum offers to local identity is a legally mandated translation of all text in the museum into Uighur.[48]

[47] When discussing Xinjiang, scholars based in the PRC frequently deemphasize Xinjiang's place in Eurasian history, instead framing Xinjiang's history in terms of its interconnectivity in the Chinese national context. This focus on framing Kashgar in terms of its Chineseness is a part of a broader trend in scholarship from the PRC. See Millward, "Positioning Xinjiang in Eurasian and Chinese History," 63. Note also that this is a part of a wider racist trend in Chinese historiography. Non-Han Chinese dynasts have long been deemphasized in Chinese histories. The Khitan rulers of the Liao dynasty are generally only studied by Chinese scholars in relation to the Song—rarely on their own terms. When the Liao dynasty is studied at all, it is often bracketed into a grouping of other conquest dynasties, the Yuan and the Jin, implicitly making these groups into non-Han Chinese subsidiary dynasties, important not on their own terms but rather only in relation to what they can say about the Han dynasty. As Naomi Standen framed it, "bracketed with Jin and Yuan, the role of the Liao as non-Chinese, "barbarian" conquerors has been to play the foil to the Song." Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty,* 6.

[48] It is a legal requirement for government agencies to translate materials like these into the Uighur language. See: Regulation of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region on Spoken- and Written-Language Work.

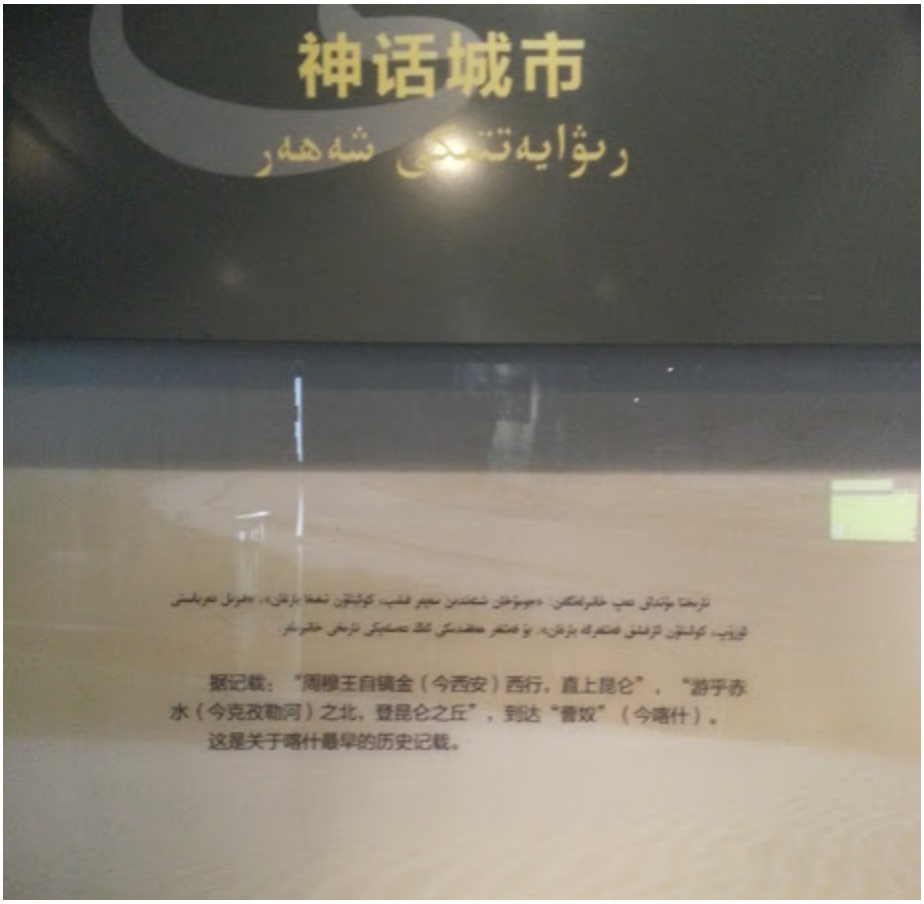

Figure 4.2 - The Mythical City exhibit

The museum's first exhibit on the history of Kashgar is entitled "Mythical City" (神话的城市). The text from this exhibit reads, in its entirety, as follows:

> According to records: "King Mu of Zhou left Haojin (today's Xi'an), going west, all the way to Kunlun," "he traveled to the north of the Red River (today's Kizil River)," reaching "Caonu" (today's Kashgar). This is the earliest historical record of Kashgar.[49]

[49] "据记载：“周穆王子镐金 （今西安）西行，直上昆仑”，“游乎赤水 （今克孜勒河）之北，等昆仑之丘”, 到达 “曹奴” (今喀什)。这是关于喀什最早的历史记载。” Also, a note on locations: the Kizil River is approximately 400 miles east of the present-day site of Kashgar, so, this museum text appears to use this reference not so much as an index of Kashgar itself but rather to the region around Kashgar. I have not yet been able to locate the origin of this text. There are several early imperial texts that this could have been drawn from, including: the *Bamboo Annals*, the *Elegies of Chu*, and the *Transmissions of Mu, Son of Heaven*, each of which has passages describing the encounter between King Mu and the Queen Mother of the West. These texts exist in several different recensions, and it has been difficult to locate some of the recensions. In my research on the place names referred to in the text quoted in

This short passage about King Mu's encounter in the Western Regions marks the beginning of the discussion of Kashgar's history.[50] This passage reaches beyond history, into the space of mythic time, to frame the origins of Kashgar in terms of Chineseness.

King Mu is simultaneously a historical and mythological figure. Historiographically, King Mu is the Zhou dynasty king known for having defeated the Dog Rong ethnic group to the northwest of the Zhou state.[51] But he was also the protagonist in a number of mythological or fictional texts as well. In these texts, King Mu travels from modern-day Xi'an into the deserts of the Western Regions where he has a relationship (possibly sexual) with the Queen Mother of the West (西母王) at the mythical Kunlun Mountain. Like the historical King Mu, the mythological King Mu is associated in the Chinese tradition with contact between the Chinese state and the peoples in the Western Regions, and the submission of the latter to the former.

In the various texts in which King Mu appears as a character, he is usually understood as embodying the Chinese state, and he takes tribute from the people in the west. In the *Transmissions of Mu, Son of Heaven* (穆天子傳), a pre-Qin text from the fifth to third century BCE, King Mu's journey to meet the Queen Mother of the West is accomplished while collecting tribute, and the exchange between King Mu and the Queen Mother resembles both the treaty rituals between Chinese and non-Chinese powers and the Daoist rites of the transmission of a

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this passage, I have not been able to find a reference to where Caonu was. The only references I have found to it are as a location in the *Transmissions of Mu, Son of Heaven*. However, I did not find this particular passage in the particular recension I found. I believe that this passage is most likely drawn from some recension of the *Transmissions of Mu, Son of Heaven.* Whether or not it is drawn from *Transmissions* or a different text, all of the texts that speak of King Mu and his westward journey to Kunlun are mythological, not historical.

[50] Throughout this section, I will refer to the "Western Regions." The term in Chinese is 西域 (Xiyu), and the discourse encompassed by this term has a more than 2,000-year-long history. This vague notion of the Western Regions did not begin to be replaced with the less abstract notion of Xinjiang, which referred to a clearly defined area, in Chinese discourse until well after the conquest of the region by the Qing in the 1760s. For more discussion of this, see Newby, "Xinjiang," 70.

[51] Shaughnessy, "Western Zhou History," 323.

text from a master to a servant.[52] The fact that the Queen Mother of the West resides at Kunlun is a sign that she represents a heterodox figure and is framed as being non-Chinese, as the toponym Kunlun has long been deployed in Chinese discourse as a site that signifies foreignness.[53]

This exhibit involves a process of euhemerization, the transformation of mythological figures into historical events. The encounter of King Mu and the Queen Mother of the West is universally understood to be mythological.[54] However, in the museum's narrative, the text frames this event as the "earliest historical record" of Kashgar. In fact, by calling this exhibit "Mythical City" and consciously gesturing to this euhemerization, the museum undercuts its own claim to historicity. If the text is transparent about the fact that these mythological events are being represented as history, why do the museum's authors site Kashgar's origins in myth? In doing so, the museum achieves several ideological goals. First, by siting the origins of Kashgar in the story of King Mu, it establishes this city in the Chinese textual tradition. The museum could have referenced non-Chinese textual evidence that mentions early Kashgar. Strabo and Ptolemy, Greek historians, probably discussed Kashgar and the movement of Alexandrian troops in the region that is now Kashgar.[55] The decision not to reference these Greek texts frames Kashgar as emerging entirely from the Chinese-language textual tradition.

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[52] Cahill, *Divine Passion*, 50.

[53] Throughout Chinese history, the discourse surrounding Kunlun understood it as both a specific mountain in the Western Regions and also as a space that generally evoked the foreign world beyond the Chinese imperial space. During visits to China, Khymers and Malagasians were frequently identified with Kunlun by their Chinese hosts. See Dikotter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, 9. During the Tang, the ocean-going vessels operated by Indic and Middle Eastern peoples, coming from lands to the West of Guangzhou, were referred to as "Kunlun ships." See Lewis, *China's Cosmopolitan Empire*, 162. In the Western Han, Kunlun could also be associated with a non-normative space of pleasure. See Cahill, *Divine Passion*, 20.

[54] "Both the heroic emperor and the Queen Mother are made to look like historical people rather than deities." Cahill, *Divine Passion*, 14.

[55] Sidky, "Alexander the Great," 240. There is also evidence that Ptolomy recorded an encounter between the Greeks and Kashgaris. For more discussion, see Hulsewe, *China in Central Asia*, 130.

Second, citing this text as the first record of Kashgar in history, the museum narrative signals that the relationship between King Mu and the unmentioned Queen Mother of the West is being presented as a metonymy for the relationship between the Chinese imperial metropole and Kashgar. The story of King Mu allows the museum to locate the origins of Kashgar in a male who embodies the Chinese state. That King Mu is the more powerful of the pair is demonstrated by the fact that the Queen Mother is not represented in the exhibit. By locating Kashgar's origins in King Mu's journey to the Western Regions, this exhibit's authors are gesturing toward a relationship that understands the Chinese imperial self as dominating the Kashgari Other by erasing that Other. Kashgar is simultaneously framed as an Other that needs to be dominated by the Chinese state and as a blank space on which a normative Chinese identity can be inscribed.

Figure 4.3 - The Han and Tang Walls of Shule City exhibit

The second text that we will examine is titled "The Han and Tang Walls of Shule City."[56] Much like the King Mu text, this second exhibit focuses on imbuing Kashgar's past with a Chinese nationalist framework. However, in this exhibit, we have left mythological time; the figures discussed here are all historical. The text from this exhibit reads as follows:

> In 128 BCE, Zhang Qian arrived in Shule (today's Kashgar) (*Book of Han*, Commentary on the Western Regions). Impressively, it is recorded that the country of Shule had a market street. In 73 CE, Ban Chao was sent to the Western Regions as an envoy. He arrived at Kashgar and built Pantuo City. During the Six Dynasties, official records indicate that Shule's name was changed to Qisha and Jiecha. During the Sui and Tang dynasties, there also appeared the names of Jiashi, Jiashizhili, Jiashijili, etc.[57]

In this exhibit, Kashgar's history is not constructed out of what Kashgaris did, but rather the history of Kashgar is constituted by Han Chinese individuals who embody the Chinese state coming to Kashgar in order to claim ownership of the region.

Despite the long period of time that this exhibit frames, stretching from the Han (202 BCE–220 CE) to the Tang dynasty (618 CE–907 CE), its history is constituted by only three things: two figures recorded as having entered Kashgar in this period, Zhang Qian (d. 114 BCE, 張騫) and Ban Chao (32–102 CE, 班超), and the various literary Chinese names by which the city-state of Kashgar is known. The limited number of events that, in the museum space,

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[56] Original title of the exhibit: "汉唐疏勒城郭。" Shule is a name for the region around Kashgar that many Chinese-language sources use. The name, Shule, has at times been forced upon Kashgaris by Han Chinese as a way to make invisible the Turkic names that locals have long used. The word, Shule, is used to demonstrate the discursive power of the Chinese authorities to name the region. For more, see Millward, "Positioning Xinjiang in Eurasian and Chinese History," 58.

[57] "公元前128年, 张骞抵达疏勒（今喀什）。《汉书-西域传》赫然记载疏勒国 "有市列"（有商贸街市）。 公元前73年, 半超出使西域, 到达喀什, 建盘橐城。我I今南北朝时期，官方载籍中的疏勒称为奇沙，竭叉。 隋唐时期有出现了伽师, 伽师祗离, 伽师佶梨。"

constitute Kashgar's history hints at the amount of excision that is occurring within the museum; the timeframe described is a period when numerous events important to Kashgar happened: Islam entered the region, the Uighurs migrated into Xinjiang from an area near present-day Mongolia, and empires rose and fell, controlling and losing power in the region. All of these events are silenced in this exhibit. Instead, history is constituted entirely within a framework of what ethnically Chinese individuals did in the region around Kashgar.

The first of the two individuals mentioned, Zhang Qian, entered the region as an ambassador of the Han Chinese. Zhang Qian arrived in the region in order to play one ethnic group, the Yuezhi, against the Xiongnu, a direct threat to the Han dynasty's security. He was sent out to control the non-Chinese groups and is likely deployed in this exhibit as a sign of a particular kind of policy, a policy that is focused on controlling ethnic groups. Zhang Qian is utilized not only because he is a part of the region's history but also because he is a symbol of the Han Chinese state's policy toward ethnic minorities. If King Mu is deployed because he, both in historical and mythological time, defeated and controlled people's to the Chinese state's northwest, Zhang Qian is utilized because he is also a figure who is understood by the museum's creators as representing the Chinese state's attempts to control non-Han Chinese groups in the region.

The second figure in this passage, Ban Chao, follows a similar pattern, becoming a symbol of a particular policy of the Han Chinese state to ethnic minorities in the region. The passage does not explain the context of Ban Chao's time in Xinjiang. Ban Chao entered the Western Regions in 71 CE. He was linked loosely to the Han dynastic state and waged a guerrilla war against ethnic non-Chinese locals in the region with a small group of Han Chinese

militiamen.[58] By 91 CE, the Han dynasty named him as governor of the city/region of Kucha (approximately four hundred miles east of present-day Kashgar). This marked the reassertion of a Chinese polity's control over the region. However, the control established by Ban Chao did not last long. By 107 CE, a few years after Ban Chao returned to present-day Xi'an, then the Han capital, the Han state had again lost control of the region.[59] The most infamous event that Ban Chao is associated with is an 87 CE ethnic massacre; Ban Chao called a truce with the non-Chinese groups he was fighting with and celebrated with a feast. After inebriating all members of the non-Han Chinese group, he signaled his soldiers to massacre the rival troops.[60]

Though the museum does not make it explicit, this record of ethnic violence is, historiographically, closely associated with Ban Chao. By deploying Ban Chao as one of the main figures in this period's history and silencing the many other events that happened in the region during the Han and Tang dynasties, the museum narrative gestures toward ethnic violence as a means to control non-Chinese groups in the region. Presenting Kashgar's history as being constituted by little more than Ban Chao, the museum frames the history of the region in terms of

[58] The use of the term "Han" is problematic here. At the time, the term Han was a political rather than an ethnic designation. Han was a subject of the state ruled by the Han dynasty, not a particular ethnic group. However, there is evidence that Ban Chao's small group of guerilla fighters was bound closely through a conceptualization that we would, in contemporary terms, understand in terms of ethnicity—that is, membership in a group with a shared identity, language, and history. Lacking a better term, I will continue to use the term "Han" to refer to an ethnic classification during this period. For more discussion of this tension embedded in the term "Han," see Shelach-Lavi, *The Archaeology of Early China,* 7.

[59] "Monarchs of the Later (Eastern) Han balked at the great costs of administering, defending, and colonizing territory so far from China proper, and at the financial aid (almost 75 million strings of cash after A.D. 73) demanded by the Tarim city-states. They thus fell into a pattern of advance followed by retreat from the Western Regions. Although the Han recaptured Turfan from the Xiongnu in 74, reestablishing military colonies and the protectorate-general, the dynasty withdrew again three years later, following a Xiongnu attack. Ban Chao consolidated Han rule in the region during his tenure as protector-general (91–101), but the court again abolished the protector-generalship in 107 and once more relinquished its forward position in Central Asia. Although Han relations with the states of the Western Regions were reestablished in 123, the office of the protector-general was not restored, and the Han court thereafter maintained only limited influence in the west." Millward, *Beyond the Pass*, 26. Also see Wills, *Mountain of Fame,* 92; Wu Shu-hui, "Debates and Decision-Making," 60; Millward, "Positioning Xinjiang in Eurasian and Chinese History," 64; Hansen, *The Silk Road*, 66.

[60] Millward, "Positioning Xinjiang in Eurasian and Chinese History," 64.

Chinese political dominance over the region, a dominance enforced by ethnic violence. In contemporary Kashgar, where there already exists a discourse critical of the Han Chinese state's use of violence as a means to oppress local Uighurs, the deployment of a figure like Ban Chao echoes this larger history of ethnic violence perpetrated by the Chinese state as a means to subjugate the region.

Beyond this implied ethnic violence, what is explicitly discussed in this portion of the text is a clear demonstration that the Han state exercises political control over the region. The text mentions one thing Ban Chao did while in the region, the founding of the city of Pantuo (Pantuo City was located in the area around present-day Kashgar). By mentioning this, the exhibit achieves two things. First, it establishes a link to the area around Kashgar. Kucha, where Ban Chao was governor, was four hundred miles away.[61] By mentioning Pantuo, the exhibit locates Ban Chao in the history of Kashgar, not just Kucha.[62] But more importantly, this move also demonstrates the political control over the region by the Han Chinese state. The act of founding a city is an inherently political act and generally requires state control over a region. By highlighting Ban Chao's founding of Pantuo City, the museum narrative is demonstrating the state's control of the region.

A pattern is emerging already in the museum: The history of Kashgar is not a product of what local Kashgaris did. Rather, Kashgar's history is constituted through the ethnic Han Chinese gaze. Individuals who embodied the Han Chinese state and traveled to the region are

[61] Modern-day horses that are well trained as trail horses can travel approximately fifty miles in a single day, though they will usually travel twenty to thirty miles a day while on long journeys. That means that Kashgar was approximately a sixteen-day journey from Kucha.

[62] King Mu and Zhang Qian may have traveled to the region around Kashgar, but records of their visits to the region are far too ambiguous to know where exactly they went. They may have passed through the region of Kashgar, but they may have bypassed it. The reference to Pantuo is the first time in the museum's history section that a site has been linked to somewhere in the area around Kashgar.

what constitutes the history of the region, irrespective of what events might be important to locals. This not only frames Kashgar in terms of its Chineseness but also echoes the earlier exhibit. Before, King Mu was the active Han Chinese individual moving into the region, while the Queen Mother of the West was disappeared from the story. In the Han and Tang Walls of Shule City exhibit, Kashgar is constructed as a passive stage on which representatives of the Han Chinese state perform history, with Kashgaris as the silent platform on whom history is performed. Implicitly, these texts are equating Han dynastic imperialism in this territory with the contemporary Chinese state's imperialism, eliding numerous differences and justifying present policies on the basis of history.

Another similarity between this exhibit and the King Mu exhibit is the way that texts from literary Chinese tradition are deployed to frame the region in terms of Chineseness. The source material for both the King Mu exhibit and the Shule City exhibit are drawn from Chinese-language discourses. For the story of Zhang Qian, the exhibit explicitly quotes from the *Book of Han* (漢書). The text does not state where the account of Ban Chao is drawn from, but it closely aligns with the material in the Ban Chao *liezhuan* (chapter) in the *Book of the Later Han* (後漢書). The latter half of this passage, which is simply a list of the names by which Kashgar (or cities near present-day Kashgar) have been recorded in Chinese historical records underlines that this exhibit is grounded in the Chinese imperial gaze. It is clear that none of the listed names are local names but rather Chinese-language transliterations of local names. In other words, each of these names is not how the city or state would have been known to locals, but rather how it was recorded in texts in the Chinese metropole. The vision of history that emerges is one that is constructed out of Chinese-language texts and aligns most closely with the Chinese imperial gaze.

If Orientalism is accomplished through the textual production of the Other as a target for conquest, then we can understand the museum as producing a Kashgar that is more pliable for a colonialist/Orientalist project. As Said has argued, "The point in all this is that, for Napoleon, Egypt was a project that acquired reality in his mind, and later in his preparations, for its conquest, through experiences that belong to the realm of ideas and myths culled from texts, not empirical reality."[63] The KUPEH narrative is not attempting to describe Kashgar, but rather it is producing a Kashgar that is shown as having been the product of the Chinese imperial gaze, and that it will always be. In suggesting that Kashgar has always been produced by this gaze, the museum naturalizes the current imperial project of the PRC.[64] This is why non-Chinese authors, such as Strabo and Ptolemy, are not deployed by the museum. Any non-Chinese-language text would undercut the imperial claims that the museum is making.

By situating Kashgar as, at its essence, having always existed only in the eyes of Han Chinese men representing the Chinese state, the museum narrative normalizes the contemporary PRC's brutal policies of cultural genocide in Xinjiang. As Prasenjit Duara framed the issue when theorizing nations in general (rather than China in particular), "It is only nations in the fullness of

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[63] Said, *Orientalism,* 80.

[64] Currently, there is a vigorous debate as to whether what the PRC is doing in Xinjiang and Tibet qualifies as colonialism. This debate frequently maps onto a historical debate as to whether earlier expansions of the imperial Chinese state qualify as colonialism. For the purposes of this chapter, I will understand both of these as imperialism, though I recognize that this is contentious. However, the PRC's activities fit well within Said's definition of imperialism: "As I shall be using the term, 'imperialism' means the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory." Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 9. For a relatively balanced examination of this debate, see Sautman, "Is Xinjiang an Internal Colony?" For examples of scholars who conclude that the PRC's actions in Xinjiang should be understood as colonial, see Gladney, "Internal Colonialism and the Uyghur Nationality." Clarke, "Settler Colonialism and the Path toward Cultural Genocide in Xinjiang," 9. As Clarke explains, "While Beijing frames such draconian measures as necessary 'counter-terrorism' measures, the intersection between concern for the 'welfare of subject populations and the desire to eradicate 'defective' elements of cultural identity central to the 're-education' system in Xinjiang betray the fundamentally colonial nature of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) endeavors in the region." Another scholar, Jia Chunyang, rejects the idea that the PRC's role in Xinjiang is colonial, suggesting that instead it is the pan-Turkic ideology of Uighur terrorists that is being utilized by colonial powers to undermine China. See Jia, "The Infiltration of Pan-Turkism in Western China and Its Impacts."

(their) History that realize freedom. Those without History, those non-nations such as tribal polities, empires and others have no claims or rights; even more, nations have the right to destroy non-nations and bring Enlightenment to them. Thus do nations become empires."[65] The KUPEH is utilizing nationalist Chinese discourse to erase the Uighurs because, essentially, the Uighurs do not fit within contemporary conceptualizations of the Chinese nation. The museum represents history in a way that destroys the Uighur non-nation and fills the lacuna that remains with Chineseness. In this way, the museum articulates a view that is simultaneously nationalistic and imperialistic.

This text also deploys historical omissions as a strategy to establish a particular identity for the region. The period represented within this exhibit, encompassing the Han and Tang dynasties, saw numerous important historical events in the region: Islam first entered the region.

During the period represented within this exhibit, encompassing the Han and the Tang dynasties, numerous important events occurred that are not mentioned in the museum text: Islam first entered the region. One legend about the Islamization of the region has it that a Muslim prince from Central Asia was, in the middle of the tenth century, granted asylum in Kashgar, where he brought his religion.[66] Xuanzang (玄奘, 602–664), the Buddhist monk famous for

[65] Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 20. This is concordant with the observations of other scholars of nationalism. Hobsbawm makes a similar point when he argues that, during the nineteenth century, nationhood was understood to be relevant for some nations. That is to say, only nations large enough to be able to take advantage of economies of scale would become nations. Those smaller nations would be consumed by these larger nations in the process of nation building. "Two consequences followed from this thesis, which was almost universally accepted by serious thinkers on the subject, even when they did not formulate it as explicitly as did the Germans who had some historical reasons for doing so. First, it followed that the 'principle of nationality' applied in practice only to nationalities of a certain size." Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1870*, 31.

[66] The conversion of the population of modern Xinjiang to Islam was a complicated and is still a much debated process, involving both limits in historical documentation and debates inflected by modern-day nationalism. The Islamization of what is today modern Xinjiang likely began in the ninth century CE and continued for several centuries thereafter, eventually making modern Xinjiang into a region dominated by Islam. See Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*, 51–58.

bringing Buddhist scriptures to China from India, passed through the region. Gao Xianzhi (高仙芝, d. 756), an ethnic Korean Tang general, led Tang troops through the region to fight troops of the Abbasid and Tibetan empires in the Battle of Talas.[67] The Uighurs migrated from present-day Mongolia into Xinjiang in the 840s after their kingdom in modern-day Mongolia was destroyed in a rebellion by their one-time Kyrgyz subjects.[68] Once the Uighurs arrived, they colonized many of the areas and they intermingled with those already residing in Xinjiang. All of these events are silenced in the exhibit. Why do none of these events constitute the history of Kashgar, as framed by the museum?

Islam is excised from the museum narrative because, as this museum was being built, Islamophobia was on the rise throughout China and the PRC was cracking down on many facets of Islam and symbols associated with the religion.[69] The Chinese state regards Islam as incompatible with the ethno-nationalistic conceptualization of Chineseness that functions as the state's major legitimizing ideology.[70] Despite being a core component of local identity, Islam is mentioned nowhere in this museum. Instead, Islam is understood by the museum creators and those in Beijing who are financing the museum to be antithetical to the narrative of Chineseness and the Chinese ownership of Kashgar, and therefore it cannot be represented in the museum space.[71]

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[67] Millward, *Beyond the Pass*, 27.

[68] Drumpp, *Tang China and the Collapse of the Uighur Empire*, 7.

[69] Myers, "A Crackdown on Islam is Spreading Across China."

[70] For more on how museums and other exhibitionary sites in China have been reticent to discuss Islam, even when they are clearly representing aspects of Islam in China such as Islamic architecture and Islam's history in China, see Stanley and Chung, "Representing the Past as the Future," 35.

[71] Islam is understood to be such an important element of Uighur identity that Uighur identity is equated with Islam. When I was talking to a local Kashgari Uighur, he told me he attended Oklahoma Baptist University. I asked him if he was a Muslim. He laughed and replied, "Of course, I am a Muslim, I am a Uighur. I just go to school there to study."

More surprising is the elision of figures like Xuanzang and Gao Xianzhi. As I was not able to ask questions of the museum's creators, my hypothesis for why these two figures are not included is necessarily speculative. While Gao Xianzhi helped prevent the conquest of Xinjiang, he was Korean—not ethnically Han—and this may have meant that acknowledging his presence in the region would not help to solidify the notion of the region being entirely Chinese (at least, in the terms that the state conceives). Just as the Nantes History Museum was not authorized to discuss Genghis Khan, in this museum, any discussion of an ethnically non-Chinese authority would have undercut the ethno-nationalistic notions of Chineseness that Beijing is constructing today. Xuanzang is widely celebrated both in official and non-official discourses in China. However, Xuanzang passed through the Jade Gate by illegal means, leaving the country when Tang law banned travel outside of China. Because his journey contravened Tang law, Xuanzang is not able to function as a symbol of Chinese political control over the region; rather, he suggests that Chinese authority in Xinjiang was, even at the height of Tang power, rather limited. To be represented in Kashgar's history, a figure must embody not only an ethnicized conceptualization of Chineseness, but one must also legitimize the political authority of Chineseness. The exhibit explicitly mentions that Ban Chao "was sent out to the Western Regions as an envoy." This phrase highlights the fact that Ban Chao's movement to the region was, unlike Xuanzang's, done with the imprimatur of the Chinese state. To be represented in this museum's history of Kashgar, one must not only embody the contemporary Chinese state's conceptualization of Chineseness but also simultaneously represent the authority of the Chinese state.

If the history section focuses on the construction of a Kashgari past that occludes all non-Chinese identities, the sections of the museum that represent aspects of Kashgar's present do

so in a similar manner. Most symbols of ethnically non-Han Chinese identity are elided from the present and future Kashgar. Ethnic diversity is sometimes evoked, but always in a way that foregrounds the Han Chinese and silences those non-Han Chinese groups who make up the bulk of the city's population.

Figure 4.4 - The Ethnic Folkways exhibit

Kashgar's population is 81 percent Uighur and more than 90 percent Muslim, yet the word "Uighur" is only used once in the museum's text, and the words "Islam" and "Muslim" are never used. Rather than discussing Uighurs, Islam, or other local elements of Kashgari identity, all knowledge produced on Kashgar within the museum is framed in terms of a national Chinese identity. The best example of this is the exhibit in the section on present Kashgar that is entitled

"Ethnic Folkways" (民俗风貌), which appears in the section of the museum focused on Kashgar's present. The subject may seem to invite discussion of the local, but the exhibit instead embodies all the tensions present in the museum:

> "If entering the marsh, get advice from the shepherd boy. If entering the river, get advice from the fisherman." "Every ten miles a different style, every hundred miles a different tradition." This style is intense. In the long river of history, this city where many ethnic groups have assembled, due to its unique social history and natural environment, its modes of production, its living customs, its architecture, its dress, its cuisine, its etiquette, its wedding and burial customs, its preferences and taboos, its handicrafts, etc., are all full of the thick scent of the local customs of the Western Regions. These unique distinguishing specialties are the best explanation of local folkways of Kashgar.[72]

Despite its title, the exhibit says nothing about the ethnicity of the region's people nor of the folkways practiced by locals. Instead, the text is merely a list of categories of things which might, if they were described, qualify as local customs: weddings, taboos, burials, etc. These categories function as empty signifiers. The visitor is told nothing about them; the exhibit simply lists them. The text ends by telling the reader that these categories are "the best explanation of the local folkways of Kashgar." This claim is undercut by the fact that this exhibit does not address what these local folkways are.

The epigraph at the beginning of this exhibit consists of two quotes, each demonstrating how the tension I have highlighted above, between claiming Kashgar as a Chinese space while still discussing this non-Chinese city, exists side by side. The epigraphs to the Ethnic Folkways

[72] "'入于泽而问牧童，入于水而问鱼师，'"十里不同风，百里不同俗。'斯风浓烈。在漫长的历史长河中，这个多民族聚集的城市，由于独特的社会历史条件和自然环境，其生产方式、生活习惯、建筑艺术、服饰、饮食、礼仪、婚丧嫁娶、喜好禁忌、工艺品等多充满这浓郁的西城风情。独有的特色是喀什民俗风貌的最好表白。"

text discuss what localness is while simultaneously centering the discourse on a distant region: "If entering the marsh, get advice from the shepherd boy. If entering the river, get advice from the fisherman" and "Every ten miles a different style, every hundred miles a different tradition." Both quotes are drawn from sources in the literary Chinese textual tradition. One is drawn from the *Lü Clan's Spring and Autumn Annals* (吕氏春秋), and the other is drawn from Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian* (史記). Even though both quotes are ostensibly about localness, they are drawn from a textual tradition alien to Kasgharis. As I discussed previously, texts from the Chinese-language tradition, such as the *Book of Han* and the *Later Book of Han*, and the *Transmissions of Mu, Son of Heaven*, are all utilized to signal that Kashgar is produced by the Chinese imperial gaze. By nesting the discussion of localness within the Chinese canonical tradition, this exhibit succeeds in conceptualizing Kashgari local folkways in terms related not to Kashgar but rather to the Han Chinese gaze.

On the second floor of the museum, the visitor is to leave behind the Kashgar of the past and present and enter a space largely dedicated to exhibiting the imagined future of Kashgar. This section is consonant with the previous sections of the museum. It reiterates the tension running through the entirety of my discussion of the museum-that this is a museum of Kashgar, but only if that Kashgar is one that is understood in terms of Chineseness. The exhibit space is filled with images and dioramas representing future Kashgar as a glistening city filled with shopping centers, chambers of commerce, and museum-like spaces. Here is a complete list of all the buildings proposed in this exhibit: Shenzhen Aid Xinjiang Base (深圳援疆基地), Shenzhen Beautiful Flute/Radisson Hotel (深圳丽笙酒店), Shenzhen City (深圳城), Zhejiang Chamber of Commerce Building (浙江商会总部大楼), Henan Chamber of Commerce Building (河南商會总部大樓), Shaanxi Chamber of Commerce Building (陕西商會总部大楼), Yinruilin Head

Office (银瑞林总部大楼), Kalabeili Head Office (卡拉贝利总部大楼), [Government] Administrative Center (行政中心), Eight Nation Trade Tourist City (八国商贸旅游城), Sichuan and Chongqing Chamber of Commerce Building (川渝商会总部大楼), Kashgar Fortune Wealth Culture Tourist Industrial Park (喀什福鑫文化旅游产业园), North Lake Tuman Garden (北湖吐曼花园), Shanghai City (上海城), Sea and Sky Chinese Famous Park Apartment District (海天中华名园住宅小区), and Ban Chao City (班超城).[73]

There are several apparent messages in this list of future buildings. First, the sleek appearance of these buildings suggests that this is a modern space, coded for Chineseness. In the PRC, modernity is often ethnically coded as linked to Han Chineseness.[74] But more importantly, the names of these buildings generally communicate an ethnic message. Although two of the above buildings do utilize Turkic names—the Yinruilin Head Office and the North Lake Tuman Garden—most of these buildings generally evoke future Kashgar as a Han Chinese space. They communicate to the visitor that future Kashgar will be populated by buildings that evoke Chineseness. Most of these buildings suggest that Kashgar is being repopulated by sites that evoke places in the Han Chinese core of the country.

One possible explanation for the use of these sites, particularly chambers of commerce, is that they are being deployed not to evoke ethnicity but rather to evoke economic prosperity, as Kashgar is one of the poorest parts of the PRC. However, this explanation is implausible, as many of the sites that are represented in the names of these buildings are drawn from some of the relatively poorer parts of the PRC. Henan, Shaanxi, Sichuan, and Chongqing are all generally considered economic laggards when compared with China's coastal spaces, such as Zhejiang,

[73] I have decided to literally translate these titles in order to make accessible to the reader the kind of messages that those choosing the names of these building projects are attempting to signal. However, names like these would generally not be translated.

[74] Joniak-Lüthi, *The Han,* 48. Also see Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 53–58.

Shanghai, and Shenzhen. Certainly, the exhibit's creators may be evoking prosperity, but this is ancillary. The main reason that these place names are being deployed is in order to evoke an ethnic—not economic—identity.

This is confirmed by the last two sites in the above list: the Sea and Sky Chinese Famous Park Apartment District and Ban Chao City. The former is a neighborhood district, a collection of high-rise apartments. What makes the notion of this site in future Kashgar fascinating is that this dioramic representation uses a word (*zhonghua*) for an ethnicized version of Chineseness in its name. In evoking an ethnonym, the exhibit uses the building to situate the Kashgari space as a Chinese space, populated by Chineseness (and Han Chinese individuals).[75] This nationalizes the space of Kashgar, transforming it from a central Asian space populated by Uighurs into what Hamlish calls a "generic imperial past" that articulates a singular form of Chineseness, one that papers over the on-the-ground reality of China's diversity.[76]

[75] Note in this example how the term that is used to note the nation is *Zhonghua*, a term that is ambiguous in terms of who it denotes. In the contemporary PRC, the term is often used to gesture toward all of China's fifty-six official ethnic groups, but as scholars have noted, the term often is used to evoke a multi-ethnic identity as a vehicle for assimilation into the ethnic Han Chinese majority. Joniak-Lüthi has noted that "as this state was extremely heterogeneous, during the establishment of the first republic the inherent tension in the pre-1912 revolutionary rhetoric that interchangeably employed the terms Han racial lineage (Hanzu) and Chinese nation (Zhonghua Minzu) had to be addressed." This tension has continued into the present day. Joniak-Lüthi, *The Han*, 36.

[76] Hamlish, "Preserving the Palace," 28.

Figure 4.5 - Ban Chao City

The Ban Chao City diorama does something similar. The potential future structure is apparently a museum dedicated to the legacy of Ban Chao. Just behind the diorama is an image that appears to show a museum, with artifacts beneath glass cases and explanatory signs on walls inside the image of Ban Chao City. The nature of this museum is not specified. Perhaps Ban Chao City is simply a reimagined version of an existing site, Pantuo City, a

museum-cum-amusement park where Ban Chao's colonization of Xinjiang is celebrated.[77] Much about Ban Chao City evokes the sense that the local has been silenced. The building is a pyramid-like structure that sits on a raised platform that suggests the museum will monumentalize Ban Chao; it is surrounded by moats and a Ming-style Chinese wall, both architectural elements completely foreign to Kashgar. Even the vegetation surrounding the museum evokes an alien land, more similar to Eastern China than the Kashgari desert; the plant life surrounding the site is filled with leafy deciduous trees and large, verdant fields of grass.

Within the KUPEH, Kashgar's imagined past, present, and future are framed as a nationalized Chinese space. This conceptualization of Chineseness is done along ethnic lines: the museum imagines Kashgar to be a space where all elements conceived of as not Chinese are excised from the narrative and its representation of Kashgar. As the Nantes History Museum case suggests, this turn toward an exclusionary conceptualization of national identity is something that is broader than this single museum. In this section, I have focused on how the KUPEH epitomizes this turn toward the nation in PRC museums. This turn is one that eliminates all non-Chinese elements from the narrative represented in the museum space. The focus on Chineseness is not unique. Rather, what makes this museum unique is that the claims made in the museum are so distant from the lived reality outside the museum that these claims are difficult to maintain. As the museum narrative attempts to imprint a Chinese identity onto the region and its people, erasing all identities that do not fit within the imagined framework of Chineseness (i.e., Muslim, Uighur, etc.), the visitor leaves the museum experiencing cognitive dissonance.

[77] Millward describes this museum-like space as having ersatz Ming dynasty walls. According to Millward, Pantuo City as a monument to Ban Chao. In this museum-cum-amusement park, Ban Chao's legacy is praised. Millward, "Positioning Xinjiang in Eurasian and Chinese History," 64.

The Nation as Local: The Nantong Museum

In November 2020, Chairman Xi visited the Nantong Museum as part of an inspection tour of Jiangsu. In reports on the visit, the state-sponsored press represented Zhang Jian as a Chinese patriot who was dedicated to a vision of the nation. The reports also represented the museum as a space that understood the nation and the party to be part of a univocal identity of Chineseness. An article on *Xinhua* framed Xi's museum visit in terms of a discourse of nationalism: "Xi . . . learned about how Zhang ran businesses that benefited the nation, developed education and took part in public welfare activities." In the same article, the reader is told that "Xi said the museum should be turned into a base for patriotic education among the public, especially the country's youth, so that they will have firm confidence in the path, theory, system and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics."[78]

As discussed in Chapter III, this statement may seem strange; Zhang Jian's museum predates the CCP by more than half a decade, and Zhang Jian never expressed any ideological affiliation with the CCP. Furthermore, Zhang Jian was backing away from discussions of the nation at the time he built his museum, preferring instead to think in terms of Jiangsu's provincial autonomy and self-governance. However, understood within the context of museums becoming sites in which the local, the nation, and the Party are what Anagnost, discussing the discursive power of assigning names and awards in PRC society, refers to as "monolithic construction that would see the 'nation' as the evolution of a selfsame subject through time," this statement is easily comprehensible.[79] Rather than recognizing the radical discontinuities inherent in the Nantong Museum's history, the museum seeks to pave over all discontinuities within the

[78] *Xinhua*, "Xi Focus."

[79] Anagnost, *National Past-Times,* 4.

conceptualization of the nation, framing the CCP, China, and Zhang Jian's Nantong Museum as elements of a single subjectivity that operates continuously and without any temporal lacunae.

The visit by Xi is just one example of this. Most of today's literature on Zhang Jian's museum situates it as a site he constructed for the purpose of national salvation. Here is one example, taken from a booklet provided to me by the Nantong Museum upon my arrival to conduct research: "The social elite, one after another, sought a path to save the nation from extinction, and founding museums was a substantive [suggestion] they advocated for in their love of the nation. What is valuable is that Zhang Jian took this advocacy and turned it into reality."[80] Here, Zhang Jian is understood as grounding his museum-building project in terms of the Chinese nation. In this section, I will first locate the contemporary Nantong Museum in its context before close reading several exhibits inside different galleries in the museum; I will demonstrate how these discontinuities have been disregarded in an effort to construct a continuity of Chinese nationhood out of Zhang Jian's museum.

In this discourse, the local is understood to be metonymically linked to the nation. In this respect, the Nantong Museum is not unique. Many local museums throughout the PRC exhibit the local, the city, and the regional as metonymies for the nation. What makes the Nantong Museum a site especially receptive to the interrogation of this process is the tension between this impulse in contemporary museum builders and Zhang Jian's original impulse, which was to align his museum with discourses of the local and the universal but not the nation. Although today's instantiation of the Nantong Museum claims that it is heir to Zhang Jian's original museum, it is ideologically disconsonant with the original museum.

[80] This was published in a booklet produced by the Nantong Museum. The booklet was given to me as a gift when I visited the museum for my research in 2018. Original: "社会精英纷纷谋求救亡图存1的道路，而创设博物馆， 就是他们爱国主张的一项具体内容。可贵的是，张謇将这一主张变成为现实。" See Wang et al.,*Nantong Bowuyuan*.

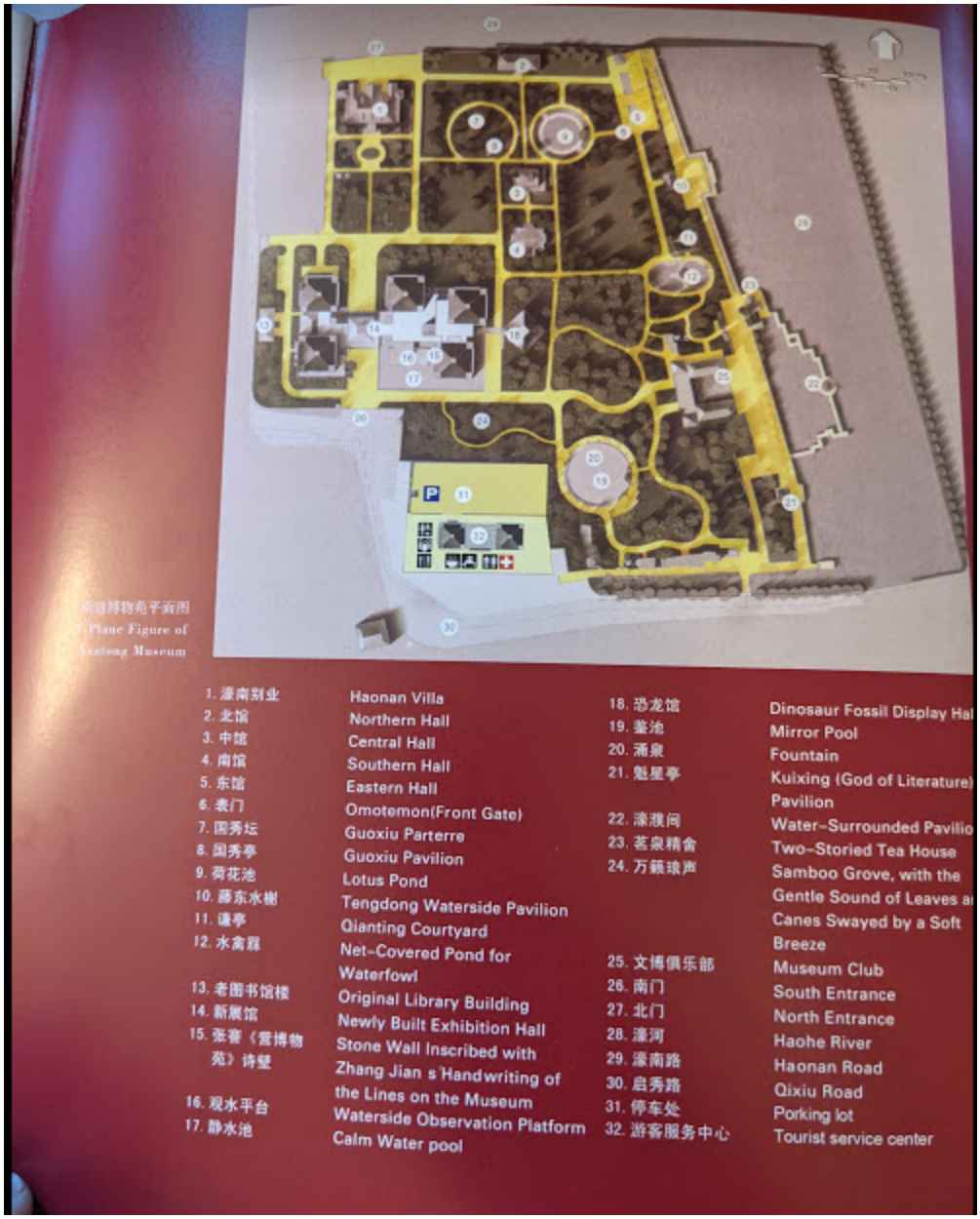

Figure 4.6 - Map of the museum compound from a booklet provided by the Nantong Museum

Today's instantiation of the Nantong Museum is actually a complex of museums constructed on the grounds of Zhang Jian's original museum. Most of the original buildings from the museum still stand, but much of the exhibitionary work is done in the new buildings, built around 2005. In the above photograph, Buildings 2, 3, and 4 are the North, Central, and South Halls (北馆、中馆、南馆). These three buildings were the core of Zhang Jian's original

museum. Today, the North and South Halls are padlocked shut. The Central Hall is open to the public, but, as I will discuss later, it receives little attention from either the public or the museum staff. Building 14 and, to a lesser degree, Building 18 constitute the main museum buildings today. Building 14 is called the New Exhibition Hall (新展馆). This is the main site of the museum. Carved into stone on the side of this building is a poem Zhang Jian wrote about his museum. Building 18 is called the Dinosaur Hall (恐龙馆). However, in Building 18, there are few dinosaurs or fossils. Furthermore, although this map refers to Building 18 as the Dinosaur Hall, the outside of the building bears a different title, Natural History Hall (自然厅). Because most of the exhibits are on natural history, I will refer to Building 18 as the Natural History Hall. Building 1 is the Haonan Villa, the former residence of Zhang Jian. This building acts as a museum memorializing Zhang Jian himself. Several other buildings are scattered around the rest of the grounds. Some of these buildings are original to Zhang Jian's period, such as the National Pavilion and the National Altar (discussed in the previous chapter). Others are new, such as the administrative building. For the purposes of this chapter, we will examine several exhibits in the New Exhibition Hall before turning to what remains of Zhang Jian's original museum.

A brief summary of the evolution of the museum after the death of Zhang Jian is necessary in order to understand how the contemporary instantiation of the museum departs from Zhang Jian's original mission. After Zhang Jian's death in 1926, the museum quickly became dilapidated. By 1932, a report on the museum noted that nine out of ten exhibits were empty.[81] In November of that same year, thieves stole many of the remaining exhibits. Most of the artifacts were recovered, but the museum was embarrassed by the wide coverage of the event in newspapers. The museum's nadir came during the Japanese invasion, when the museum was

[81] Zhou, "The Rise, Fall, and Resurrection of the Nantong Museum," 72.

used as a stable for the invaders' horses.[82] The museum was damaged significantly during the Cultural Revolution, but also, like the Shanghai Museum, gained many new artifacts from collectors who were struggled against.[83] At some point, much of the museum space was turned into a zoo (it is unclear if only the museum grounds were used, or if the museum buildings were also again used to house animals). In 1991, it was decided that the museum would be restored to its original state. In 2005, the New Exhibition Hall and the Natural History Hall were built just south of the original museum buildings.[84]

Today, the Nantong Museum receives significant support from the national-level government as well as local levels of government, both in terms of funding and high-level political visits. The national-level government provides approximately two million yuan annually in funding for the museum.[85] Visits from national leaders such as Chairman Xi, Jiang Zemin, Zhu Rongji, Li Changchun, Wen Jiabao, and Wu Bangguo provide political face that gives prestige both to the institution and to those who work there.[86] The reason that it receives this support is because it, in claiming the title of the first Chinese museum, is able to claim a status far greater than that of just another museum in a small Chinese city. This is why Zhang Jian's status as the founder of the Nantong Museum is foregrounded in all of the publications and exhibits that the museum produces.

However, in its discussion of the original Nantong Museum, the contemporary Nantong Museum adopts the nationalistic paradigm, as discussed in Chapter III, something that Zhang

[82] Shao, "Exhibiting the Modern," 699.

[83] Li Zongkang (assistant director at the Nantong Museum), in interview with the author, August 14, 2018.

[84] Zhou Guoxing, "Nantong Bowuyuan xingshuai yu fuxing," 71–79.

[85] Li Zongkang (assistant director at the Nantong Museum), in interview with the author, August 14, 2018.

[86] Wang et al., *Nantong Bowuyuan*.

Jian eschewed. This section will explore the tension between the ideological positioning of Zhang Jian's original museum and the contemporary museum.

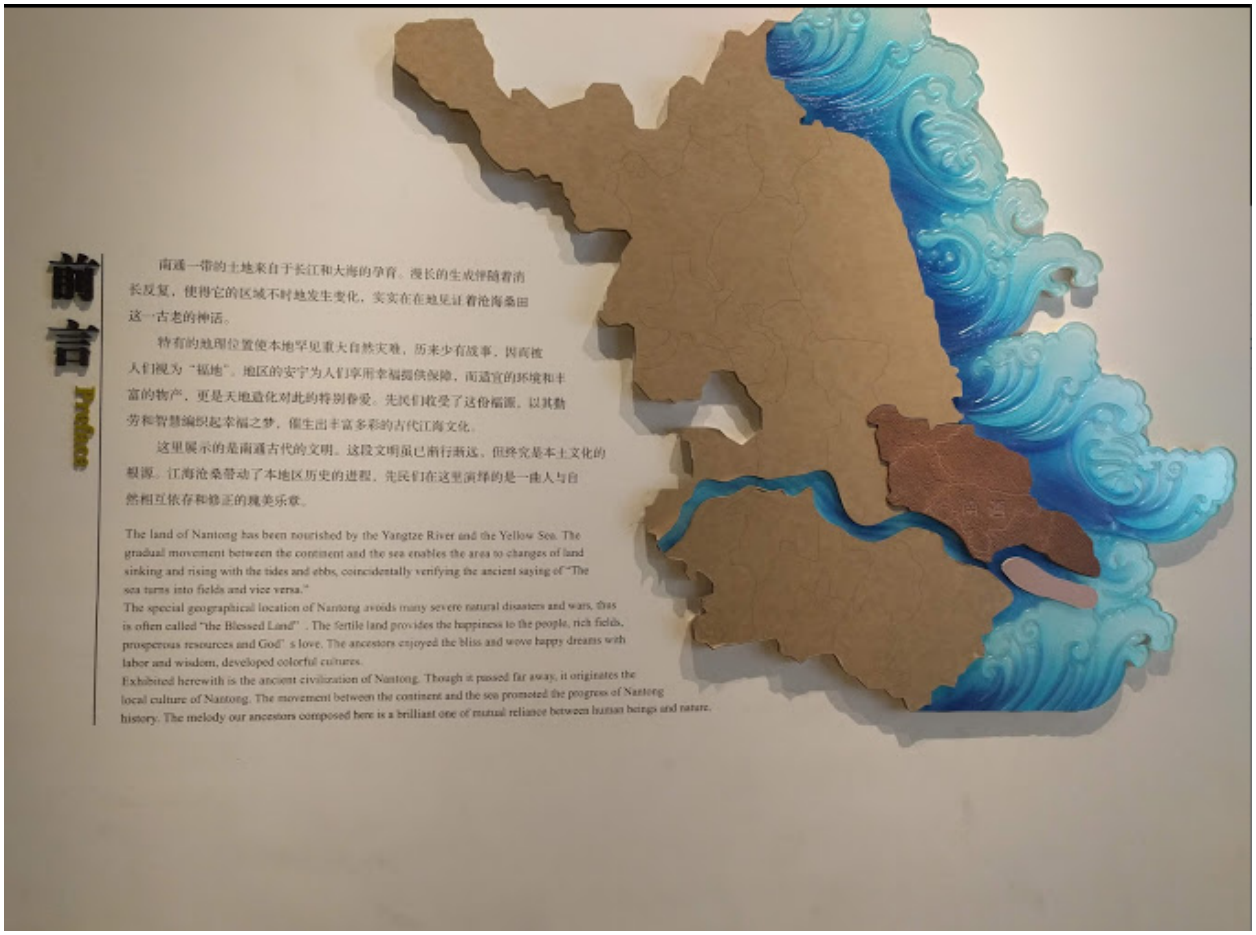

Figure 4.7 - First Half of the preface to the Main Gallery

Figure 4.8 - Second half of the preface to the Main Gallery

The New Exhibition Hall is the largest and most important part of the contemporary Nantong Museum. This hall's first gallery, the Main Gallery, represents the main focus of today's museum, and it is both the space to which visitors are first directed when they arrive and where visitors are most frequently taken by museum guides. Like many local museums throughout the PRC, the museum in this hall constructs a notion of Chineseness out of Nantong's local situation, something the gallery's "preface" (前言) makes clear by simultaneously rooting the gallery in a discourse of localness:

> Exhibited here is the ancient civilization of Nantong. This segment of civilization, although we are increasingly getting further from it, it is after all rooted in local culture.[87]

This exhibit begins by literally locating the museum's roots in a discourse of local Nantong-ness. The gallery's preface frames the exhibits that follow as being centered on Nantong. Juxtaposed next to this passage, there is an image with a map of Jiangsu Province, with the county of Nantong highlighted. This image functions to emphasize the discourse of localness.

However, in the panel that immediately follows this passage (and continues the preface), the text begins to reframe Nantong in terms of the nation:

> Five thousand years before the present time, the most northwesterly district of Nantong had already become land, and it certainly had human habitation on it...But four thousand years ago, there was an event where sea level rose, discontinuing this civilization's local continuity, and, under the influence of the movement of glaciers, this space that was originally coastal was submerged under water, and the humans who lived here were forced to migrate. This formed a blank era in the history of the humanity in Nantong District. Two thousand years ago, around the Han dynasty, this district had slowly become land, and, one after another, humans came here.[88]

This passage is odd because it first establishes that Nantong had human activity in the region five thousand years before. Then the text pivots, saying that those cultures present in Nantong five thousand years ago were driven out by the deluge of rising seas four thousand years ago. Two

[87] "这里展示的是南通古代的文明。这段文明虽已渐行渐远，但终究是本土文化的根源。"

[88]"距今五千多年前, 南通地区最西北部已经成陆，并有了人类的聚居活动。但是四千多年前的一次海平面上升, 中断了这段文明在本地的延续，受冰川运动的影响，原有海岸没如水中，生活于此的人类被迫迁移。南通地区的人类历史形成一个空白时期。到了距今二千年左右的汉代，本地区西北角有逐渐成陆。并陆续有人类来此活动。" Also, note that though this exhibit had an English translation provided, I have chosen to translate the Chinese myself because the English translation provided in the exhibit did not hew closely to the original language in the Chinese.

thousand years after that, approximately at the beginning of the Common Era, humans again occupied the area. Why is it important to state that there were peoples living in the area five thousand years ago and that after the region was flooded by rising seas, people returned? The archaeological record certainly confirms that the region was subsumed by a rising ocean in approximately 2000 BCE.[89] However, peoples had lived in the region around Nantong long before 3000 BCE. Why does the museum narrative highlight this particular date?

The reason the exhibit highlights this date is that its creators are framing Nantong in terms of the Chinese nation. In the PRC, it is part of common discourse to say that China has five thousand years of history. By evoking the figure "five thousand," this exhibit situates Nantong as belonging within a national Chinese historical framework. Highlighting that there was human habitation in the region five millennia ago demonstrates that Nantong's history is linked to the history of the nation.

The deployment of the "five thousand" figure is just one example of how the exhibits of the Main Gallery frame the story of Nantong in terms of Chinese nationhood. Beyond the preface, there is also an exhibit entitled "The Cultural Realms" (文坛艺苑). This exhibit highlights how Nantong produced literati and artists that contributed to the Chinese nation:

> This kind of style flourished even more in the Qing dynasty, and in the realm of art, it produced unique products and schools with local characteristics that influenced the nation, while also decorating the local scene.[90]

As with many of the passages featured on the signage in this gallery's exhibits, the art produced in Nantong is understood in terms of how that art has contributed to the nation. Nantong is not

[89] Shelach-Lavi, *The Archaeology of Early China,* 166.

[90] "这种文风到清代愈加兴盛，在艺术领域，产生了独具本地特征的流派或制品，对全国造成影响，亦装点了本地风光。"

the subject of history; China is.[91] Nantong's artists are not understood on their own terms, nor in terms of how they contribute to global artistic movements. Instead, art and literature are understood only in terms of the nation. Zhang Jian utilized both local and universal frameworks in his original museum, which the contemporary instantiation of the Nantong Museum ignores. Today, the national is the only accepted framework for this museum.

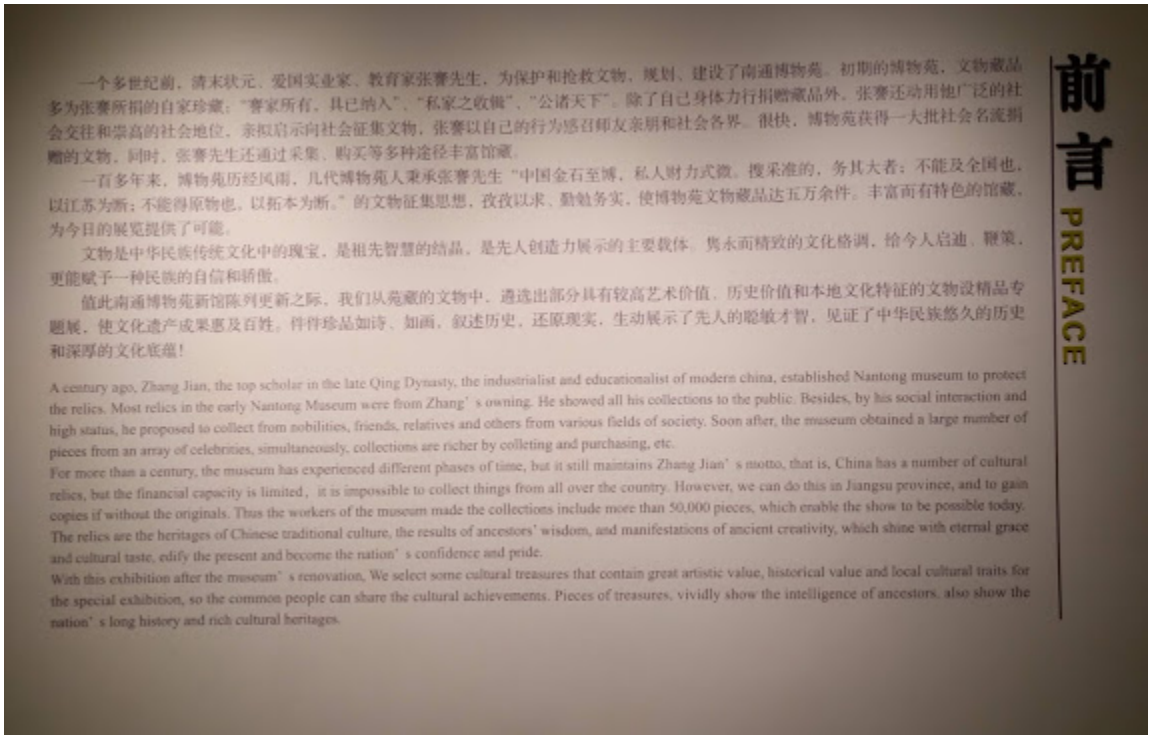

Figure 4.9 - Preface to the Precious Artifacts Gallery

As we move from the main gallery of the New Exhibition Hall to a different gallery in the same hall, the museum narrative continues to center on discussions of Nantong as framed within the Chinese nation. The subsequent gallery is titled "The Exhibit of the Nantong Museum's Precious Artifacts." (南通博物苑精品文物陈列) This gallery (which I will, for brevity's sake, refer to as the Precious Artifact Gallery) is smaller than the Main Gallery. It is designed in a

[91] For the term "subject of history" and its theoretical implications, I am drawing from Prasenjit Duara's work. For more, see Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 20.

manner that encourages the visitor to move immediately from the Main Gallery into this Precious Artifact Gallery. As with the first, this gallery begins with a sign labelled "Preface." In this preface, the museum narrative's authors situate the contemporary museum in relation to Zhang Jian, imagining today's museum to be a product of this national hero working to build a better China:

> For the past one hundred years, as the Nantong Museum has experienced hardships, the multiple generations of museum staff have carried on the tradition of Mr. Zhang Jian's thinking on the collecting of artifacts, [embodied in his words]: "In obtaining China's steles and bronzes, private individuals' financial resources are declining, the task of searching out quality examples is quite daunting. If you cannot cover the nation, then limit your efforts to Jiangsu; if you cannot obtain originals, limit yourself to rubbings." [The museum staff] have assiduously sought out [artifacts], diligently being pragmatic, [the museum staff] have brought the number of items in the museum's artifact collection to fifty thousand. This abundant and distinct collection is what we can present to you in today's exhibit [that is, the Exhibit of the Nantong Museum's Precious Artifacts].
>
> Artifacts are among the treasures of the Chinese ethno-nation's traditional culture; they are the crystallization of the ancestors' wisdom; they are the main carrier of the forebearers' creativity.[92] They are the meaningful side of the exquisite cultural style, they stimulate and encourage us today, and further, they give a kind of ethno-national self confidence and pride.

[92] Here, I am translating *minzu* as "ethno-nation" in order to highlight what I believe is the clearly nationalistic intention in this passage. This discourse of *minzu,* discussed more in-depth in the Introduction, also shades into the more prominent discourse of the *renmin* (人民, the people) that is more prominent during this period, even though the terms have distinct valences.

> On this occasion, the Nantong Museum is exhibiting a new exhibit, we have selected from among the treasures of the Museum a portion that has rather high artistic value, historical value, and artifacts that have special local characteristics and built this excellent special exhibit, taking the achievements of the cultural inheritance and extending it to the masses. Each artifact is like a poem, like a painting, narrating history, bringing us back in time, vividly exhibiting the intelligence and brilliance of the ancestors, proving the details of the Chinese nation's long history and deep culture.[93]

In this long passage, the signage's text begins by first grounding the museum's mission in terms of how it is maintaining Zhang Jian's legacy. However, the version of Zhang Jian imagined in this exhibit is strikingly different from the real Zhang Jian. Rather than the Zhang Jian who, in the 1910s, developed an autonomous self-governing society for Jiangsu and creating a museum that articulated both universalist and localist perspectives, the narrative constructs a Zhang Jian who is a symbol of the linkage between the museum and the nation.

In the first paragraph of this passage, the text quotes the epigraph that Zhang Jian carved onto the entrance of the Central Hall of his museum. As discussed in the last chapter, his epigraph ("In obtaining China's steles and bronzes, private individuals' financial resources are declining, the task of searching out quality examples is quite daunting. If you cannot cover the nation, then limit your efforts to Jiangsu; if you cannot obtain originals, limit yourself to

[93] In this passage, I am translating the word *Zhonghua minzu* as ethno-national to highlight the nationalism inherent in the passage. For more discussion of this term, see the earlier footnote on it. The original text from this passage is as follows: "一百多年来，博物苑历经风雨，几代博物苑人秉承张謇先生"中國金石至博，私人財力式微，搜採準的務其大者。不能及全國也，以江蘇為斷；不能的原物也，以拓本為斷、"的文物征集思想，孜孜以求、勤勉务实，使博物苑文物藏品达五万余件。丰富而有特色的馆藏，为今日的展览提供了可能。文物是中华民族传统文化中瑰宝，是祖先智慧的结晶，是先人创造力的主要载体。隽永面精致的文化格调，给今人启迪、鞭策，更能赋予一种民族的自信和骄傲。值此南通博物苑新馆陈列更新之际，我们从苑藏的文物中，遴选出部分具有较高艺术价值、历史价值和本地文化特征的文物设精品专题展，使文化遗产成果惠及百姓。件件珍品如诗、如画，叙述历史，还原现实，生动展示了先人聪敏才智，见证了中华民族悠久的历史和深厚的文化底蕴。"

rubbings") was a way to express his frustration with the failures of the nation and the national government's inattention to the museum.[94] In Zhang's original statement, he resigned himself to the collection of local artifacts as he, as a private individual, lacked the resources of a national government and thus could not collect objects on a national level. But here, the preface reinterprets Zhang's statement as him not abandoning the national framework he had laid out in his two 1905 memorials to the Qing emperor. Rather, in the sentence following the epigraph, the museum text massages the meaning so that it is read simply as an expression of the struggles that Zhang Jian underwent in his collecting process. The interpretation offered by the museum is that, just as Zhang Jian struggled to obtain artifacts (as demonstrated by the epigraph), we at the museum have also struggled to obtain artifacts. Zhang Jian's abandonment of the nation is instead understood as a struggle that Zhang had to overcome. Today, the results of that struggle are the fifty thousand artifacts that the contemporary Nantong Museum has collected, completing Zhang Jian's life's work.

In the second paragraph, the preface turns away from Zhang Jian. The artifact now becomes a symbol of the ancestors instead. As the preface explains, "They are the main carrier of the forebearers' creativity." The artifact manifests the creativity of the nation's predecessors. Echoing the language quoted in Lu Xun's writings and discussed in the previous chapter, the artifact has become the "crystallization of Chinese Civilization." The artifact (and thus the museum) is the medium by which the greatness of the ancestors is transmitted to the visitor of today. There is something almost genetic in the way that the artifact is understood as a "carrier" of national identity.

[94] This epigraph was carved after the Qing state ignored Zhang Jian's memorials on building a national museum for the Qing state.

This paragraph is also where the premodern rhetoric of Confucianism, a discourse that focuses on the transmission of the essence of the ancestors down through the generations, melds with the modern rhetoric of the nation-state. The discourse of the ancestor and ancestor worship goes back to the earliest recognizable "Chinese" society, while the discourse of the nation has been extant in China for little more than a century.[95] The discourse in this paragraph moves toward a conceptualization of the artifact as framed within a rhetoric inflected by a Confucian nationalism, or what one scholar has called "Confucian Patriotism."[96] This blending of the modern rhetoric of the nation with Confucianism naturalizes the modern Chinese national identity by imbricating it with the discourse of the ancestor. Thus, the museum becomes a site where the younger rhetoric of the nation is projected onto the more ancient rhetoric of Confucianism and the ancestor.

In the third paragraph, the preface gestures toward the local, but, in fact, it has fully committed to the rhetoric of the nation. The text says that it has selected artifacts that have "special local characteristics," but, as I will show, the exhibit has little to say on any local characteristics. Instead, the artifacts featured in the Precious Artifacts Gallery are either drawn

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[95] For more on the earliest evidence of this discourse of the ancestor in the earliest recognizable Chinese society, see Shelach-Lavi, *The Archaeology of Early China,* 194. Many scholars have noted that the emergence of nationalism is a phenomenon that occurred in China only after the encounter with the European colonialist powers was already well under way, and the demise of Qing state had already progressed fairly far along. Spence gestures toward the period between 1900 and 1905 as the emergence of Chinese nationalism. Smith explicitly says that it occurs in 1895 with the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War. Townsend suggests that he agrees with Smith, though Townsend's point is more nuanced, arguing that, if 1895 was the beginning, it was embryonic. For more on this discussion, see Spence, *Search for Modern China,* 231; Stephen Anthony Smith, *Like Cattle and Horses,* 38; Townsend, "Chinese Nationalism," 99–101.

[96] This is a form of proto-nationalism that melds elements of Confucianism with what we would today call nationalism, but, considering the length of time this strain of thinking has existed in China—almost a millennium—some scholars have suggested that the use of the term "nationalism" is inappropriate. I will use the term here because, at least in the context of this museum, it is appropriate. Kuang-ching Liu argues that "we may describe his concern for China, his Chung-kuo or Chung-t'u-as 'Confucian patriotism.' While he [Li Hung-Chang] was solicitous for the security and independence of the land and the people, he was not conscious of any conflict between his loyalty to the reigning dynasty—which to a Confucian was the loftiest of sentiments—and his concern for China as a country." Kuang-ching Liu, "The Confucian as Patriot and Pragmatist," 43.

from many places across China or the visitor is not told where they are from (obfuscating any claim that they might represent Nantong). Instead, the local has, by this point, largely been eclipsed by the discussion of the nation. Rather than evoking the local, the artifacts in this gallery become evidence of the glories of the predecessors of the Chinese nation and demonstrate the long provenance of the nation's history and culture.

Moving past the preface of the Precious Artifacts Gallery and into the gallery's central exhibitionary space, the textual discussion of Zhang Jian and his local museum recedes. Now that it has been established that this museum is the heir to Zhang Jian's mission to preserve the essentials of the Chinese nation, the exhibits focus entirely on discussions of China, saying little more about Zhang Jian or even Nantong. With this focus on "Chineseness," we see a divergence in the message that this gallery's exhibits communicate. The text accompanying the exhibits tend to focus on ancient China, but most of these artifacts themselves are drawn from late imperial China.

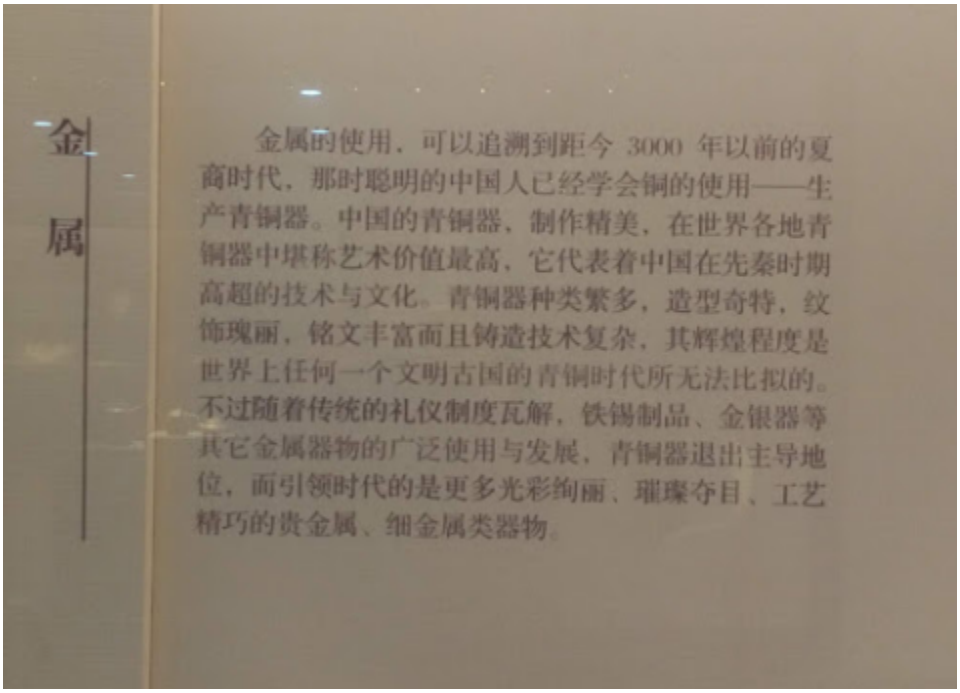

Figure 4.10 - Text from the Exhibit on Metals

For example, here is a text from an exhibit in this gallery on the use of metals in China. Note how the text constructs a long continuity of "Chineseness" that stretches back over millennia:

> The use of metals can be traced back to three thousand years ago, during the periods of the Xia and Shang dynasties. At that time, the intelligent Chinese people had already learned the use of copper—to produce bronze. China's bronzeware, its make is elegant. In the bronzes of all the world, they are worthy of being called the bronzes with the highest artistic value. This represents the exceedingly high technology and culture of China's pre-Qin dynasty.[97]

Like the gallery's preface, this text discusses metalwork entirely within the framework of a transcendent national time, a time that sites the origins of the nation in Andersonian "up-time."[98] The exhibit is situated not in terms of what happened in Nantong but rather what happened in the Chinese nation three thousand years ago. This reference is clearly not indexing the local, as this is the period when Nantong was underwater (from 2000 BCE to the beginning of the Common Era). This sign also echoes the third paragraph of the preface, suggesting that the artifact becomes a kind of carrier that evidences the intelligence of the national Chinese ancestors.

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[97] "金属的使用，可以追溯1到距今3000 年以前的夏商时代，那时聪明的中国人已经学会铜的使用--生产青铜器。中国的青铜器，制作精美，在世界各地青铜器中堪称2艺术价值最高，它代表着中国在先秦时期高超的技术与文化。"

[98] For more discussions on the nation and this notion of "up time" and "down time," see Benedict Anderson:"Nations, however, have no clearly identifiable births, and their deaths, if they ever happen, are never natural. Because there is no Originator, the nation's biography can not be written evangelically, "down time,' through a long procreative chain of begettings. The only alternative is to fashion it 'uptime'— towards Peking Man, Java Man, King Arthur, wherever the lamp of archaeology casts its fitful gleam." Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 205. Also see Prasenjit Duara's related discussion on the notion of modern linear history, where Duara argues that "modern linear history is distinguished from traditional histories principally in that the meaning of the latter almost always seek in history refers to an earlier, presumed existent ideal or to a transcendent time of god." Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 291.

This framing around the up-time of the origins of the Chinese nation is interesting because most of the artifacts are drawn from the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1912) dynasties, though several are drawn from the Yuan (1279–1368) and one is even drawn from the Jin dynasty (266–420).[99] The reason that there is a seeming mismatch between the texts and artifacts of the exhibit is because this gallery is focused on constructing a continuity of the Chinese nation, doing what the preface called "proving the details of the Chinese nation's long history and deep culture." If most of the artifacts are largely from more recent eras, the texts accompanying these artifacts creates a simulacrum of up-time.

In this gallery, it is not only time but also place where the artifacts seem to diverge from the messaging provided by the exhibit texts. Undercutting the preface's claim that this gallery exemplifies "special local characteristics," a plurality of artifacts are not identified by location, and those that are generally not local. Only one collection of artifacts in the gallery is identified as having come from Nantong. The various artifacts that are identified by location are noted as having come from Fujian, Hebei, Yixing (a part of Jiangsu relatively far from Nantong), and Zhejiang. The visitor is not told where one certain was found, but the dating on the artifact's signage identifies it as having come from the Western Xia, in the region of modern-day Gansu Province. Though the preface and other texts within the museum gesture toward the local, there is little about local Nantong culture in this exhibit. Rather, this exhibit is centered on China, and its purpose is to produce a nation-oriented identity.

As we move away from the New Exhibition Hall, let us turn to the one space in this museum complex that does articulate a non-national framework: the original museum space. The

[99] Because of the image quality of some of my photos of this gallery, it is not possible to read all the printed label on the artifacts. However, everything that is legible is drawn from the Qing, the Ming and the Yuan, with the majority drawn from the Qing.

original museum is the foundation on which the contemporary museum's legitimacy is built. It is what makes the Nantong Museum unique, and the reason that the museum, as mentioned above, receives significant support from the national government. It is the reason why Zhang Jian is frequently discussed in literature produced by the museum. The contemporary instantiation of the Nantong Museum represents itself as the heir to Zhang Jian's museum, even though Zhang Jian, by the time he built his museum, had little time for the nationalistic, China-oriented framework that the exhibits discussed above have adopted.

And that is what makes the experience of visiting the original museum space so fascinating. The original museum, despite playing a prominent role in the literature on the museum, is significantly minimized in terms of how it is experienced by visitors. First, of the three halls of the original museum, the North, Center, and South Halls, only one is open today. When I visited on a research trip in the summer of 2018, both the North and South Halls were padlocked shut. In an interview, Li Zongkang mentioned that museum administrators had considered opening the South Hall and hosting a public exhibit there but had not done so.[100] The Central Hall was open, but there were few exhibits and few artifacts on display within. The lighting was dim and the signage was poor. Unlike the newly constructed New Exhibition Hall and the Natural History Hall, the original museum had a ramshackle feel to it, not only because the original is obviously older but also because there was a lack of upkeep and attention from museum staff. The original museum stands a few hundred feet north of the New Exhibit Hall and the Natural History Hall, and visitors are generally not directed toward the original museum; nor are there guided tours offered for the original museum space (as there are for the other parts of the museum compound).

[100] Mr. Li did not explain why the museum had decided not to.

The Central Hall presents a grab bag of artifacts, which likely represents many of the remnants of Zhang Jian's original collection.[101] The Central Hall has an entrance on the southern side of the building, leading to three small rooms, each containing ten to fifteen objects. In one room, there are a number of Qing-period rubbings, including one of Su Dongpo's calligraphic paintings of bamboo; the only information given about the piece is as follows: "A Rubbing of Su Dongpo Painting Bamboo, Qing dynasty, height 143.5 centimeters, width 65 centimeters."[102] The visitor is offered no other information that might be expected on an artifact like this.

Figure 4.11 - Book on oracle bones

[101] I say that it likely represents Zhang Jian's original artifacts because they were collected in the late Qing from individuals that Zhang Jian would likely have corresponded with. The artifacts are similar to the kinds of artifacts that Zhang Jian would have displayed; however, I have not been able to check these artifacts against the 1914 catalogue of the museum's artifacts. The evidence for these being from the original museum is entirely circumstantial, but that is the only explanation I have been able to come up with as to why these artifacts are in this original space. During my interview with Li Zongkang, he stated that, of the four thousand objects that the museum held when Zhang Jian died, there are only approximately one hundred that remain. However, he did not say whether or not the artifacts in the Central Hall were part of the original collection, nor does any of the signage in the Central Hall itself explain the provenance of these artifacts. Li Zongkang (assistant director at the Nantong Museum), in interview with the author, August 14, 2018.

[102] "苏东坡画竹拓片， 清，纵143.5, 横 65。"

In another room in the Central Hall, there is a book laid out on a table, opened to a photo of an oracle bones (*jiaguwen*) text. No information is given as to why this photo or this book is on display. The only signage present in the exhibit reads as follows: "Yinxu Jiaguwen Rubbings, Modern Era, Height 29, Width 18, Nantong Museum."[103] Perhaps, these oracle bones were on display in the original Nantong Museum. Though my suggestion is speculative, the period when the museum was being built was at the height of many of the discoveries of oracle bones, and Zhang Jian, as a leading intellectual, would have likely been able to obtain oracle bone samples then. What is interesting for the purpose of my project is that, though there is a desultory effort made to have a display in this space, the visitor is given so little information about these particular photos from this particular book are on display that it is difficult to leave without concluding that the modern museum's creators constructed these exhibits with something less than a full effort.

[103] "殷墟1甲骨文拓片，近代，纵29， 横18， 南通博物怨。" Yinxu is the name of the site in Anyang, Henan, where many of the *jiaguwen* texts were discovered.

Figure 4.12 - Egyptian rubbing from Li Gui

In another room, there is a Qing-period rubbing of an Egyptian carving that was copied from a museum in Europe in 1873 and mounted on a hanging scroll in a manner similar to the that of how Chinese paintings and calligraphy are mounted and exhibited. The exhibit's signage says only that this is a "Rubbing of an Egyptian epigraph—Qing."[104] The original

[104] "埃及时刻拓片-清。"

Chinese-language calligraphic text written above the Egyptian rubbing provides more detailed information. The rubbing was taken during Li Gui's 1873 tour of Europe and its museums and is said to be drawn from a stone text that is, not surprisingly, five thousand years old. In Chapter 1, I discussed Li Gui in more detail as the late Qing postal reformer who toured many of Europe's museums. Li Gui's 1887 travelogue, *New Record of Circling the Globe*, conceived of museums as a universalist category of knowledge, much as Zhang Jian did when constructing his museum. The most likely explanation for why this rubbing is featured in this original museum space is, again, that it was part of the original museum, but that is impossible to know because the signage for the exhibits does not explain anything about the provenance of these artifacts. As with the Su Dongpo rubbing and the oracle bone photographs, the question of why these artifacts are displayed here is less important than the question of why the exhibit does not explain the reason for their display. If Zhang Jian's original museum is ostensibly the reason that the museum exists, why is the visitor given so little information in the space of the original museum? The reason for this divergence is that the contemporary museum wants to foreground the nation. It can claim to be an important site for the nation by citing Zhang Jian's as the first Chinese museum. But if the curators of today's museum were to fully interrogate Zhang Jian's museum, they might discover that the original museum was not a space constructed around the Chinese nation. Instead, we see that the exhibits contained in this hall articulate something much closer to a universalist perspective we saw in the previous chapter, where Zhang Jian selected a variety of artifacts to display and did so in a way that would not articulate any sort of nation-oriented ideology or concept of Chineseness.

If, in the KUPEH, it was the local Uighur Kashgaris who were paved over in the museum's attempts to construct a site of national Chineseness, what is paved over in the Nantong

Museum is Zhang Jian's original museum. Though the original museum is open, it is so disregarded that it is effectively sidelined. The Nantong Museum claims to be the heir to Zhang Jian's museum, but in the physical and artifactual space that would most closely link the contemporary museum to the past museum, there is no sign that today's museum creators are really interested in engaging with what Zhang Jian actually said, did, or displayed. To so engage with the original museum space would invite the possibility of unravelling the Nantong Museum's carefully constructed sense of Chineseness. If one were to think about the claim that Zhang Jian was making in placing Egyptian rubbings alongside Su Dongpo's rubbings, this could undercut the sense that the purpose of the museum was originally nationalistic.

This is the reason that this part of the museum is both frequently referenced and simultaneously discounted in the narrative of the museum. Because it has been designated the first Chinese museum, the site is necessarily important if the curators want to construct the museum in general as a space in which Chineseness can be articulated. However, the lack of nationalistic orientation in Zhang Jian's original museum means that the original must simultaneously be emphasized in the discourse and deemphasized in the actual space of the built museum.

Interestingly, this is where the discussion from the previous chapter concerning the question of which museum is China's first museum resurfaces. All the sources I have found that discuss the Nantong Museum cite 1905 as the date that the museum was created. For example, the booklet provided by the museum states that "the Nantong Museum sits on Nantong Old City's Hao River's southeastern shore. It was established in 1905 by Zhang Jian, the famous patriotic industrialist and late Qing imperial scholar. It is China's earliest public museum."[105] Of

[105] "南通博物苑位于南通古城东南濠河之滨，由著名爱国实业家、晚清状元张謇于1905年创办，是中国最早的公共博物馆。" For more examples of PRC scholars who cite 1905 as the year in which the Nantong museum was created, see Ai, "Initial Explorations of the History of the Development of Modern Chinese Museum's Exhibition,"

course, as discussed in the previous chapter, the 1905 date has little to do with the founding of the Nantong Museum. Rather, 1905 was the year that Zhang Jian sent two memorials to the Guangxu Emperor advocating for the building of a national (and nationalistic) museum in Beijing. The Nantong Museum was not actually built until almost a decade later.

If this is the case, why is the 1905 date repeatedly cited as the founding date of the museum? The most likely explanation is that this date allows the contemporary instantiation of the museum to frame it as an outgrowth of Zhang Jian's nationalistic period. Just as the original museum space is deemphasized because it undercuts the argument that Zhang Jian's museum building emerges from his love of China, by highlighting the 1905 date as the founding date, contemporary scholars are able to emphasize Zhang Jian's nationalistic credentials. To discuss Zhang Jian during the 1910s, the period in which it was actually built, would invite questions about Zhang Jian's turn toward the local and the universal, his founding of a society that advocated for the founding of an autonomous government for Jiangsu Province, and how the built museum fits into Zhang Jian's ideological evolution. By emphasizing the 1905 date, the museum and its allies are able to frame Zhang Jian as a patriot, just as Chairman Xi did in his 2020 visit.

Conclusion

In the post-1989 PRC, the museum has become an important site for the construction of a national identity. The focus of this identity has been the construction of a notion of Chineseness. This is grounded in a sense that the nation is the only acceptable subject of history, and all instantiations of identity must point toward the Chinese nation. Most museums in the PRC do

41. Also, in 2005, the museum celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Nantong Museum, and in 2015, they celebrated the 110th anniversary of the museum.

this, but the two discussed in this chapter make this construction of Chineseness particularly legible.

In the KUPEH, the museum space allows only Chinese sources to speak. Chinese-language texts are utilized, and non-Chinese language texts are silenced. Ethnic Chinese historical figures are deployed in the narrative, while non-Chinese figures are not allowed into it. Although this is true of many museums in the PRC, what makes the KUPEH so interesting is that, because Kashgar is a particularly non-Chinese space, this process is especially visible. In the Nantong Museum, this sort of excision is conducted not along ethnic lines but rather in terms of Zhang Jian's vision of the museum as a national space. Zhang Jian is understood as a national figure, using the museum as a means to "seek a path to save the nation."[106] Zhang Jian's contributions to Chinese museology are, needless to say, more complicated than the simplistic conceptualization presented by the Nantong Museum. The contemporary museum cherry-picks specific parts of Zhang Jian's history in order to emphasize the nationalistic period in Zhang's thinking about museums and ignores the way that his built museum had moved away from that nationalistic framework. The KUPEH and the Nantong Museum are examples of how the museum produces an identity grounded in a nationalist Chinese framework.

[106] "谋求救亡图存的道路。" See Wang et al., *Nantong Bowuyuan.*

CHAPTER V

CODA:

TAIWAN AND THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THIS PROJECT

This dissertation began with a bridge, and it will also end with one. Beijing's Marco Polo Bridge evoked a Chinese identity; in late imperial Chinese history, the bridge was frequently deployed as a symbol of the nation.[1] The bridge that will end this dissertation, the Olympus Bridge (奧林帕斯橋) outside Taiwan's Chimei Museum (奇美博物館), evokes a universal identity centered on classical Greece as a token of the universal. At the head of the bridge is the Apollo Fountain Plaza (阿波羅噴泉廣場), with a statue of its namesake god driving his chariot. If the Marco Polo Bridge is famous for being lined with classical Chinese lion statuary, the Olympus Bridge is famous for being lined with statuary of the Olympian gods.

Figure 5.1 - The Olympus Bridge

[1] Flath, "Setting Moon and Rising Nationalism," 246.

Figure 5.2 - Apollo Fountain Plaza[2]

Visitors, after passing the Apollo Fountain and crossing over the bridge, enter the Chimei Museum through a neoclassical facade and are then able to peruse the museum's collections. This collection includes what *Strings Magazine* calls the world's most comprehensive collection of stringed instruments, with 1,149 European violins, violas, and other pieces.[3] Other collections include exhibits on Western European Renaissance painting, exhibits on evolution and other biological topics, an exhibit on the sculptor Rodin, and an exhibit on ancient Roman and premodern Japanese armory. As interesting as what is exhibited is what is not exhibited: anything related to China.

The Chimei Museum was founded by Shi Wen-long (許文龍, b. 1928), a man who became one of the world's richest people by manufacturing chemicals, but he became more

[2] Both this image and the preceding image are captured from a video posted by the Chimei Museum in 2017. *Chimei Bowuguan kongpai yingpian kanjian Chimei*.

[3] Reuning, "Inside the World's Greatest Stringed-Instrument Collection."

well-known as he ventured into politics. He has long been a supporter of Taiwanese independence, and he served as an advisor to President Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁, b. 1950). He has long rejected the notion that Taiwan is a part of China. In 2001, he was forced to apologize for stating that the Japanese had never forced any Taiwanese women to become comfort women.[4] His museum and its aspiration to the universal mode can be seen in a similar light. The museum is not just a vehicle for him to display his collection of violins. It is also an attempt to construct a Taiwanese subject that rejects the national framework of Chineseness by embracing the universal mode.

Shi's Chimei Museum is not unique in this respect. Taiwanese museums have recently begun to embrace the universal mode, another twist in the long history of museums on the island. The earliest museum in Taiwan was built in 1908 by the Japanese colonial government. Japanese colonial museums were universalistic museums focused on exhibiting science; when the Taiwanese Museum Association was founded in 1933, the association's journal was called *Scientific Taiwan* (科学の台湾, *Kagaku no Taiwan*).[5] Museums did also exhibit content related to non-scientific topics such as Taiwanese Han and indigenous groups, though this was usually done with the intention of reframing Taiwan as oriented towards Japan, not China. Overall, Japan's colonial governments deployed the universal mode in its Taiwanese museums as a way to solidify its ideological control over its colony.[6]

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[4] Shi once collaborated with Japanese nationalist manga artist Kobayashi Yoshinori on a manga that whitewashed Japanese behavior in Taiwan, with Shi claiming that the Japanese had never forced any Taiwanese women to work as comfort women. Landler, "Cartoon of Wartime 'Comfort Women' Irks Taiwan."

[5] Aso, *Public Properties*, 102.

[6] "While Japanese state museums had come to showcase an imperial aesthetic canon, the colonial museum trained its spotlight on the island's natural resources, ripe for extraction. To replace China with Japan as the civilizational center, the colonial museum also promoted a sense of Taiwanese geographical and ethnic regionality, distinct from the continent. This required articulation from the center of a Japanese imperial identity in terms that shifted homeland particularity toward an assimilationist universalism." Aso, *Public Properties*, 96.

After the collapse of the Japanese empire, the Kuomintang (KMT) sent officials from China to Taiwan to take control of the island. With this changing of the guard, museums were reconfigured. The universal mode was jettisoned, and the nationalistic mode was deployed in the country's museums as a means of inculcating a "totalizing Chineseness" as an identity framework for the KMT's new Taiwanese subjects.[7] During this period (1945–1987), with nationalism being foregrounded, discussions of Taiwan as what Duara calls a "subject of History" were largely verboten in Taiwanese museums.[8] The architecture of the new building for Taiwan's National Palace Museum (NPM) was meant to evoke a mainland Chinese identity that excluded Taiwaneseness from its framework. As the building's architect, Huang Bao-yu (黃寶瑜, 1918–2000), said of his design, it was "intended to present a pure Chinese style museum to store those national treasures from Mainland China.'"[9] Museums like the National History Museum largely restricted their exhibits to mainland China, avoiding most discussions of Taiwanese history. During this period, Taiwanese museums were almost exclusively focused on constructing the Taiwanese populace as a part of the Chinese nation.

After martial law ended in 1987, the country underwent a burst of museum-building related to the construction of a Taiwanese identity autonomous of the Chinese one that had been imposed,[10] leading to the construction of the National Taiwan History Museum (國立臺灣歷史博物館) and the National Taiwan Literature Museum (國立臺灣文學館) were built. In 1999, the

[7] Vickers, "Transcending Victimhood," 18.

[8] Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 4. Also see Chu, "Political Change and the National Museum in Taiwan," 187.

[9] Yi-chih Huang, "National Glory and Traumatism," 214.

[10] "The period since the mid-1990s has witnessed an exponential growth in the number of museums devoted to Taiwanese or local history and culture, particularly under the DPP administration that came to power in 2000." Vickers, "Frontiers of Memory," 221.

Taiwan Provincial Museum (台灣省博物館/台灣省立博物館), a museum dedicated solely to Taiwan, was elevated from provincial to national status, giving its subject, Taiwan, greater recognition.[11] Overall, the number of museums in the country rose in a manner similar to the heightened museumification of the PRC. According to Taiwan's Chinese Museum Association (中華博物館學會), the number of museums grew from 131 in 1995 to 748 in 2012.[12] In post-1987 Taiwan, museums, both private and public, became an important vehicle for articulating Taiwanese identity.

In the last two decades, Taiwan has also witnessed the emergence (or reemergence) of the universal mode of the museum. The Chimei Museum is just one example of a growing trend in the country's museums. Another museum that gestures toward the universal mode is the Southern Branch of the National Palace Museum (国立故宮博物院南院). Before 1987, the NPM was one of the more prominent institutions for communicating the totalizing Chinese identity of KMT ideology. After 1987, the NPM became a site of contestation, where the increasingly powerful groups advocating Taiwanese independence pushed back against pro-China groups like the KMT and their centering of the country's identity on Chineseness. Tu Cheng-sheng (杜正勝, b. 1944) an activist who authored the first textbook on Taiwan, became the country's most important museum official.[13] Starting in 2000, he and the Democratic People's Party (DPP), the main China-skeptic party, began the process of building a second branch of the NPM. This branch was meant to deploy the collection of the NPM but do so in a way that focused on the construction of a transnational, "Asian identity"—one that would situate the island and its history in a discourse of Asianness rather than Chineseness. The initial name

[11] Chu, "Political Change and the National Museum in Taiwan," 188.

[12] Liu Xinyuan, "Woguo Bowuguan gaikuang ji wenti."

[13] Chu, "Political Change and the National Museum in Taiwan," 187.

suggested for the museum was the "Asian Arts and Culture Museum" and the purpose of the museum was "to transform NPM from a Chinese art museum into an Asian art and culture exhibition and research centre."[14]

Like the Chimei Museum, the Southern Branch was built in the heartland of the Taiwanese independence movement, and it deploys a transnational framework in order to reject the empty signifier of Chineseness that was previously forced onto the population. Opponents have accused the DPP of using the Southern Branch as a means to Taiwanesize (台湾化) and de-sinify (去中國化) the NPM.[15] Considering the DPP's goals, these criticisms of the NPM are almost certainly correct, but it is interesting to note that this move in Taiwanese museums toward the universal mode is understood by many as de-sinification. Even today, half a decade after the museum opened, the tensions between the universal and the national modes that this dissertation has documented are still pulling the museum in different directions. As recently as 2020, there was a major fracas over the name of the NPM. The DPP-led government was considering renaming the museum, as it no longer has more than a tenuous connection to the Beijing Palace for which it was named. Two names emerged as candidates: the Huaxia [Chinese] Museum (華夏博物館) and the Asian Museum (亞洲博物館).[16] These two names evoke the dueling between the pro-China KMT and the China-skeptic DPP and their opposed conceptualizations of what the NPM should be. One name insists on continuing to ground the museum in a Chinese identity while the other struggles to distance the museum from China by framing it as a transnational Asian museum.

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[14] Yi-chih Huang, "National Glory and Traumatism," 211.

[15] "Tai Lishi Bowuguan Qian Guanzhang: Taibei Gugong Bu Tai Keneng Qingyi Bei Taiwanhua." ""Taibei Gugong Nanyuan Chaichu Cheng Long Zeng Shou Shou Taiwan Xuezhe: 'Qu Zhongguohua' de Biaoxian."

[16] Huaxia is an ancient name for the Chinese identity. Also, for more on this controversy, see Zhang Yun, "'Gugong Gaizhi Zhengyi' Yi Qie Zhaochang Huo Geng Xian Yizhe, Ruhe Kandai Gugong de Xia Yibu?"

Across the Straits, another museum calling itself the Palace Museum is opening. In Hong Kong, the PRC has opened its own southern branch, calling it the Hong Kong Palace Museum (HKPM). This branch has been framed entirely within the totalizing Chinese identity that the KMT once deployed in the NPM and demonstrates how extensive the universalization of Taiwan's NPM's Southern Branch is.[17] After subduing the anti-Beijing protests in Hong Kong, Chinese sources pointed to the HKPM as a means for inculcating a nationalistic Chinese identity in Hong Kong's insufficiently patriotic youth. The *Global Times*, a state-sponsored media outlet, explained, "More than 800 cultural relics from the Palace Museum will be delivered to and displayed at the opening exhibition of the Hong Kong Palace Museum (HKPM), which museum officials and analysts said will serve as a historical and artistic classroom for young people in Hong Kong." The same article quoted a Beijing professor as saying, "putting cultural relics on display in Hong Kong that represent Chinese culture is likely to enhance the recognition of the country and Chinese culture among Hong Kong residents, especially the young."[18] In other words, the HKPM is imagined to be a classroom for imposing a Chinese identity.

The issues of the tension between the universal and the national modes in the Chinese museum that this dissertation has examined are as apparent today in Taiwan in the way that the universal is reemerging as they were in the PRC's recent history. Beyond the Chimei and the Southern Branch, other museums are envisioning themselves and Taiwan in the universal mode. The Museum of World Religions was founded by a Buddhist church, and it seeks to make Taipei the site of a universalistic perspective on religions by making itself into the Louvre of faiths. Taiwan's National Human Rights Museum strives to locate Taiwan's human rights struggles,

[17] Confusingly, though both the Beijing and the Taipei Palace Museums come from the same parent museum, they have different names. In Taiwan, the museum is officially referred to as the National Palace Museum (國立故宮博物院), while the Beijing museum is just referred to as the Palace Museum (故宮博物院).

[18] *Global Times*, "Palace Museum to Deliver 800 Cultural Relics to Hong Kong for Exhibition."

particularly those from the period of 1947 to 1987, within a global discourse of human rights. Even museums focused on purely local topics increasingly imagine their Taiwanese subjects in terms of global circulations. The Ketagalan Cultural Center (凱達格蘭文化館) is a museum dedicated to the Ketagalan ethnic group, a group in the Taipei Basin rendered non-existent through intermarriage. As one exhibit in the museum makes clear, some of the museum's authors understand the Ketagalan in global terms:

> It was on the island of Taiwan that this group of people entered the tide of the Great Age of Navigation. When they stepped onto the world stage, what kinds of stories did they have? We can only portray them through the perspective and pens of those on the sidelines, discovering little bits drip by drip. Afterwards, we also cannot forget the perspective of the "other," although that perspective has left a deep historical imprint on their descendants, but they are also filled with the subjective perspective and stereotypes [of the sideline observer], and that the "true treasure" of the history and culture of the indigenous people is still awaiting discovery and understanding.[19]

Even museums oriented toward the local are gesturing toward the universal.

As this project transitions from a dissertation into a monograph, I will add an additional chapter on the universal museum in Taiwan, comparing it to the nationalization of the museum that is occurring in China. This future research will attempt to come to terms with the way the Taiwanese museum has moved in the direction opposite of the Chinese museum. Beyond achieving a better understanding of the museums of the Chinese-speaking world, this additional research will put my work in dialogue with the mainstream museum studies community. Today,

[19] "這樣的一群人, 在台灣島捲入大航海時代浪潮、步上世界歷史的舞台時, 究竟發生了那些故事？我們只能從旁觀者的視線、筆下的描繪, 窺知一二。然而, 我們也不能忘記, "他者" 的注視與書寫, 雖為後人留下豐富的歷史痕跡, 卻也充滿了注視者的主觀與偏見, 原住民歷史文化的 "真實", 還有待發現與認識。"

many critics, such as Dan Hicks, argue that this claim to universality by museums in Western metropoles is, in fact, just a mask for colonial epistemological violence that centers the universal in Paris or London.[20] Other museum scholars, such as Neil MacGregor and Kwame Appiah, push back against this claim, suggesting that those like Hicks are falling prey to a postmodern nihilism that militates against notions of a shared humanity.[21] My future research will complicate this debate. By demonstrating that Taiwanese museums are claiming the universal mode as their own, I wish to explore the way that the universal museum can function as a rejection of the coloniality of the national mode and how the national mode of the museum can, in some cases, function as an agent of coloniality. If the Taiwanese today are embracing the universal mode as a rejection of the Chinese national identity imposed by the KMT, then it will be difficult to argue that the universal mode is inherently colonial.

[20] Hicks, *The Brutish Museums*, 16.

[21] MacGregor, "Neil MacGregor at the Art Institute of Chicago." Appiah, "Whose Culture is It."

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