

**IMAGINING THE MODERN NATION-STATE VIA ZHANG JIAN'S MUSEUM**

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My object in this thesis is the possibilities and limitations of the museum both as an educational and communicative space and as a significant process in the project of constructing a modern nation-state. Through a study of Zhang Jian's ideals and practices in the museum—the classification and organization of the collections, the style and layout of its architectural complexes, as well as his management and educational endeavors—this paper demonstrates the manifold ways in which Zhang's museum can be read as the reconstruction of a China which excludes the Manchu and thereby refashions this China as an equal agent.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This research aims to analyze an individual's attempt to construct a modern nation-state through the museum in China in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Zhang Jian, the founder and administrator of the Nantong Museum,<sup>1</sup> presented memorials to the Ch'ing government to establish imperial museums<sup>2</sup> right before the fall of the Ch'ing Empire.<sup>3</sup> It was in these memorials that a systematic structure of a Chinese museum was proposed. Although the government rejected his proposal,<sup>4</sup> Zhang later put his ideas into practice in establishing the Nantong Museum with profits from local industries.<sup>5</sup> This case was chosen for several reasons: First of all, the Nantong Museum worked as part of Zhang's map in modernizing China, together with normal schools, primary schools, kindergartens, and industries in local Nantong. How the museum works in the modernizing system is worth exploring. Secondly, Zhang's attempt of building museums to

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<sup>1</sup> The Nantong Museum was built in Zhang's hometown, Nantong 南通, which is in southeast China near Shanghai 上海.

<sup>2</sup> See Zhang Jian, "Shang Nan Pi Xiang Guo Ch'ing Jing Shi Jian She Di Guo Lan Guan Yi 上南皮相國請建設帝國博覽館議," 1905, in Chongpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, Vol.4, 272. And 'Shang Xue Bu Ch'ing She Bo Lan Guan Yi 上學部請設博覽館議, 1905, Ibid., 273.

<sup>3</sup> The Nantong Museum was built in 1905. See *Catalog of Nantong Museum*, quoted in "Nantong Bo Wu Guan Pin Mu Xu 南通博物院品目序," 1914, Ibid., 283-4.

<sup>4</sup> As Zhang said, "I have presented a memorial to the Ministry of Education of Ch'ing to establish national museums, while rejected by ministers." Quote "Nantong Bo Wu Guan Pin Mu Xu 南通博物院品目序," 1914, Ibid., 283-4. There is also no historical record in China showing that there is a capital museum built by the Ch'ing government.

<sup>5</sup> See Zhang's Diary on Dec. 9th, 1905 with a line identifies planing the museum (Gui Hua Bo Wu Yuan 規畫博物苑), 1905, Ibid., Vol. 6, 565.

modernize China was one of the earliest in China. The museum Zhang built was famous as the first Chinese self-established public museum in China.<sup>6</sup> Built in the imperial era and kept running to the Republic period, the Nantong Museum reflects the ever-changing China in the early 20th century. Also, Zhang, as an active and influential political, economic and educational figure in both imperial and republic times, had close relations to both governments. In both eras, Zhang presented proposals to governments on building national museums. His insistence in building museums and the changes of his ideological positions with time are worth exploring.

I use three key theoretical terms in this analysis, each of which demands some commentary: the Foucauldian idea of the “heterotopia,” the concept of the museum as such, and the notion of the nation-state. The Foucauldian definition of a “heterotopia,” as presented in “On the Other Spaces,” will serve as my theoretical horizon when talking about museums:

*“There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias.”<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>6</sup> In 1956 National Museum Conference 全國博物館工作會議, the Nantong Museum was named as the first Chinese self-established museum in China. Quoted *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, 77, 151.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault, “On the Other Spaces,” trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1986, 24.

“On the Other Spaces,” as a fundamental work of space theory, sets up an analytical model for examining the relation between subjectivity and space. Foucault’s definition of “heterotopias” and his ideas as to how they may be read are the fundamental sources of inspiration: seeing them as a *universal phenomenon*; noting their *specificity to a given culture and society*; their capacity to offer *significant juxtapositions with the existing world*; their “*heterochrony*”; and their fashioning of a system marked by *isolation and penetration, exclusion and compulsion*.

With respect to the museum’s cultural and political function, Tony Bennett’s *The Birth of the Museum*<sup>8</sup> introduces a politically focused genealogy of the formation of the modern public museum, giving an account of its early development that helps illuminate the questions of museum policies and politics. By clarifying how the museum functions as a technological environment for the management of culture, Bennett guides us with at least three critical perspectives: (1) different possibilities of representing “the people” and “the past” (Chapter 4), (2) the different principles of organizing the space of representation (Chapter 5 and 6), and (3) the behavior management and regulation of visitors (Chapter 6).

The third key theoretical term this paper uses is the notion of nation-state. The vital resource is Anderson’s masterpiece *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, in which the author ingeniously discusses the origin of the nation and deconstructs the natural and mythical appearance of nation-state by defining the nation as “a political imagined community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”<sup>9</sup> Inspired

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<sup>8</sup> See Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, New York, Routledge, 1995, 20.

<sup>9</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London & New York: Verso, 1991, 6.

by Anderson's definition of imagination<sup>10</sup> in "imagined community" and his depiction of the museum as an instrument of creating this imagined community, this paper considers Zhang's experiment on the museum as a cultural and political attempt to provide a new construction of the nation-state for 19<sup>th</sup> century China. Besides this most significant idea, this paper also follows Anderson when discussing these aspects: (1) the artificial aspect of the nation (especially its antiquity and history, Chapter 4); and (2) the education in knowledge and correct emotions of nationals (Chapter 6).

Applying these cultural analyses and museum theories to Zhang's theoretical works and practices in early 20<sup>th</sup> China, the key issue to address is how the "modern nation-state" is imaginatively constructed through the Nantong Museum. In order to reach a conclusion about the Nantong Museum as an instrument for redefining the nation-state, it is first necessary to discuss Zhang's imagination of Chinese history—his effort to redefine "the self" and "the other." Secondly, through examining architectural styles, the layout of architects, and the classification of exhibits, it is possible to describe the international relationships that Zhang envisioned. Thirdly, the methods Zhang employed to influence the nationals' knowledge, behaviors and emotions must be discussed. It is then possible to make conclusions regarding the political and experimental significance of Zhang's cultural practice.

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<sup>10</sup> Anderson holds that: "It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow- members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." *Ibid.*, 6. In this statement, Anderson opens a possible space for us to think about those alternative and different projects of nation in cultural history.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The research interest is to explore how Zhang’s museum functioned to educate the audience to be qualified nationals. The context and background surrounding this topic include the genealogy of nation and nationalism in Europe, Chinese nationalism, museums in constructing identity, and museums’ relations to religion, science and modernity. Related research on Chinese museums, especially Zhang’s Nantong Museum, also provides references for my research. Those literatures help uncover the complexity of museums in constructing national identity and the rise of nationalism.

### **2.1 NATION AND NATIONALISM**

#### **2.1.1 Genealogy of “nation” and “nationalism” in Europe**

There has been solid research on what is nation/nationalism and how they come into being. In “On Defense of the Nation,” Trofanenko discusses the issue of defining the term of nation, nation and global perspectives, nation building, and purpose of history. She discusses placing the nation—and the history that forms that nation—at the center of any study in which students endeavor to understand themselves and the world around them. She also mentions the changing position that the term *nation* holds within social studies education—from “they all belong and

share in a geographic and political sense” (as a singular entity) to “acting out the tensions between belonging and not belonging, of unity and diversity, and of cohesion and dispersion, then we come to realize the changing position that the term *nation* holds within social studies education.”<sup>11</sup>

In Liah Greenfeld’s book on nationalism, she defines “nationalism” as an umbrella term under which are subsumed the related phenomena of national identity (or nationality) and consciousness and collectivities based on them-nations. In Greenfeld’s understanding, occasionally nationalism is employed to refer to the articulate ideology on which national identity and consciousness rest, though not—unless specified—to the politically activist, xenophobic variety national patriotism, which it frequently designates.<sup>12</sup> She further argues that national identity in its distinctive modern sense is, therefore, an identity which derives from membership in a “people,” the fundamental characteristic of which is that it is defined as a “nation.”<sup>13</sup> The word “nation,” in Greenfeld’s argument, meaning “sovereign people,” was applied to other populations and countries that naturally had some political, territorial, and/or ethnic qualities to distinguish them and became associated with such geo-political and ethnic baggage.<sup>14</sup> On the criteria of membership in a nation, Liah Greenfeld argues that it may be either civic or ethnic. In the former case, nationality is equated with citizenship and is seen as an essentially political and even legal category, implying a voluntary commitment to certain rights and duties, which is a matter of choice. While when nationality is defined in ethnic terms, it is instead an ineluctable, biological, necessity, and then nationality is believed to be an inherent,

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<sup>11</sup> Brenda Trofanenko, “On Defense of the Nation,” *Social Studies*, 2005, Vol. 96(5), 193-8.

<sup>12</sup> Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992, 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

genetic characteristic.<sup>15</sup> The division of the two types of nationalism is helpful in understanding the generating of modern Chinese civil society and the inheritance of ethnic nationalism in traditional Chinese culture. As said by Greenfeld, the components of individualistic and civic nationalism, on the one hand, and of the collective and ethnic nationalism, on the other, reinforce each other, and bolster the liberal tendencies of the former and the authoritarian proclivities of the latter. In classification of different kinds of nationalism, John Fitzgerald, in his essay in *Chinese Nationalism*, has his own argument. He states that since the mid-nineteenth century, conservatives, reformers, nationalists and communists have all assumed the right to name the nation and in naming it, to represent it as a state, and they have ignored that the fact there might have been a nation in existence capable of representing itself.<sup>16</sup>

There is solid research on Europe in the eighteenth century when nationalism came into being and boundaries with “barbarians.” David Blackbourn quotes Frederick’s argument that “whoever improves the soil, cultivates land lying waste and drains swamps, is making conquests from barbarism.”<sup>17</sup> And Blackbourn thinks that was the authentic voice of eighteenth-century enlightened absolutism. The desire to order, measure, and discipline applied not only to soldiers and subjects, to land and raw materials, but to nature itself, where the Creator had left dark or “barbarous” corners that served no useful purpose. Different types of European nationalism are discussed in Liah Greenfeld’s book *Nationalism*, in which she distinguished the English type, the collective type (France), and the ethnic type (Germany and Russia). For the Chinese, anxiety of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 106-8.

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Unger Armonk (ed.), *Chinese Nationalism*, M.E. Sharpe, 1996. Quote Peter Hays Gries, *China’s New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, 80.

<sup>17</sup> David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany*, New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2006, 45.

being treated as “barbarians” still haunted even in 1930s China and Communist China. Karl Marx, in the famous *Manifesto of Communist Party* published in 1848, which later became the theoretical base for Chinese communism and communist revolutions, called the Chinese “barbarians.”<sup>18</sup> In Marx’s description of social genealogy, China was out of the European feudalism system, which implies that China lacked the possibility to become a communist country. This anxiety puzzled the Chinese people not only in late Ch’ing, but also in later periods in the twentieth century. And that is why the Social Debate in 1930s China led by Guo Moruo was significant, in which Guo constructed the Chinese into the European history.<sup>19</sup> Ironically, though it was the European countries that forced the Chinese to join the modern world, it was the invasion of Western civilization to China that helped China to step into the modern culture system.

### 2.1.2 Nationalism in Chinese context

Some scholars argue that as “nationalism” is based upon analysis of European history, it does not apply very well to Chinese situations and Chinese nationalism, and if it does, it has different characteristics.<sup>20</sup> In *China’s New Nationalism: Pride, Politic, and Diplomacy*, Peter Hays Gries says that for the Chinese, pride in the superiority of Confucian civilization is central to

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<sup>18</sup> Karl Marx, “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” Chicago: C.H. Kerr & Co., 1905, 18-19.

<sup>19</sup> For details about this Social Debate in 1920s and 1930s, see Xiuzhuo Huang, “20 Shi Ji Er San Shi Nian Dai Zhongguo She Hui Xing Zhi Lun Zhan Dui Ma Ke Si Zhu Yi Zhongguo Hua De Ying Xiang 20 世紀二三十年代中國社會性質論戰對馬克思主義中國化的影響,” *Journal of Zhengzhou University*, 2010, Issue2, 28-32.

<sup>20</sup> Such as Geller, *Nations and Nationalism*. John Fitzgerald even suggests that twentieth-century China has undergone just the opposite process, with states vying to create nations. Ibid., Chapter 7.

nationalism in China today.<sup>21</sup> Cries defines nationalism as any behavior designed to restore, maintain, or advance public images of a national community.<sup>22</sup> Chinese nationalism has never generated as an isolate; instead, it always has dynamic interactions with other cultures in international relations. There has been research on how China, at the beginning of twentieth century, looks to western culture as the teacher.<sup>23</sup> Gries argues that the Chinese imagine their “Century of Humiliation” began with China’s defeat in the First Opium War with the British in the mid-nineteenth century and formally ended with China’s victory over Japan at the end of World War II. This history of humiliation in relations with western imperialists has a powerful influence on the nature and direction of Chinese nationalism today. He harshly points out that the contemporary Chinese national narrative of heroism and victory that served the requirements of Communist revolutionaries and nation-building goals under Mao are now superseded by a new and popular victimization narrative that blames the West, including Japan, for China’s suffering. It questions to what extent the new nationalism is genuinely popular and exists independently from and increasingly challenges the party-state or state nationalism.<sup>24</sup> John Fitzgerald’s essay in *Chinese Nationalism* argues that Chinese nationalism is not a product of the nation’s desire to become a state, but “has evolved according to precisely the opposite dynamic; that is, China as a state in search of its nation.”<sup>25</sup> He points out that the relationship between state and nation is under negotiation in China today to an extent that defines all precedent and that patriotic nationalism has taken root outside the state itself.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 117-8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 117-8.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 83, 85.

## 2.2 MUSEUM

The museum is an influential site to construct knowledge and identity. Trofanenko discusses the museum's engagement in educational programs, especially the museum's role in cultural production and knowledge-creation. In discussing the difference between *being named* and having the *authority to name*, an understanding of politics of naming is mentioned: When some terminology is used by a group itself, the term becomes a symbol of defiance.<sup>27</sup> In this paper, she implies that objects displayed in the museum have a purpose as well as their physical characteristics—to know information, looking is the best, allows for the possibility of interpretation, for reflecting on what it is that the museum presents. Research on the relations of the museum and religion, science, modernity, as well as previous study of Chinese museums provides references for this research.

### 2.2.1 Museums relate to religion, science, and modernity

In the field of the museum, western influence is significant in nationalism discourse in museums in China. Missionaries from Europe and America built the first few museums in China. On nationalism, dynamic tension of the secular and the sacred engaged. Liah Greenfeld writes in *Nationalism and the Mind: Essays on Modern Culture* that nationalism is an essentially secular form of consciousness, one that sacralizes the secular.<sup>28</sup> She argues that insisting on the religious character of nationalism no longer appears sufficient, and nationalism (specifically, the nation)

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<sup>27</sup> B. Trofanenko, "Interrupting the Gaze: On Reconsidering Authority in the Museum," *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 2006, Vol. 38(1), 49-65.

<sup>28</sup> Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism and the Mind: Essays on Modern Culture*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2006, 93.

has been upgraded to the rank of the “God of Modernity.”<sup>29</sup> Liah Greenfeld also argues that nationalism shares with transcendental religions certain central qualities that make it their functional equivalent: Both secular nationalism and the transcendental religions essentially are ways to interpret—that is, invest with meaning—otherwise meaning-less reality, providing prisms through which it is to be perceived and seen as ordered; they are both order-creating cultural systems; they form frameworks of the type of identity characteristic of the age. He further argues that nationalism has replaced religion as the basis of individual and collective identity in the modern world. Nationalism has been the framework of the modern social consciousness. Nationalism has replaced religion as the main cultural mechanism of social integration. With nationalism, the heavens descend to earth. Unlike the need for immortality, the need for meaning is universal.

Missionary-built museums, interwoven with nationalism ironically became some of the most influential sites for the Chinese to come into contact with science.<sup>30</sup> There is solid research on the relations of nationalism and science. The nationalist enchantment of the world is reflected in the apotheosis of the means of knowing the world. In this way, Zhang’s building museums could be interpreted as creating the nation and promote nationalism as a religion, which uses science to understand the world. Liah Greenfeld, in *Modern Religion*, argues that science is expected to penetrate the world’s mysteries, harness its powers, and uncover its meaning.<sup>31</sup> In religious aspects, Zhang’s museum seems to inherit the legacy of early missionary museums in

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<sup>29</sup> J. R. Llobera, *God of Modernity*, Herdon, Va.: Berg Publishers, 1994. Quoted from Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism and the Mind: Essays on Modern Culture*.

<sup>30</sup> For more details about early missionaries, see *Cambridge History of China*, John K. Fairbank, Cambridge University, 2008, Vol. 10, 165-77.

<sup>31</sup> Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism and the Mind: Essays on Modern Culture*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2006, 97.

China, as it was used for scientific and educational activities. However, those scientific and educational activities are not emphasized in current research. There is some other research focuses on early museums established by foreign missionaries in China. For example, Xiong conducted a study on the Museum of Natural History,<sup>32</sup> established by French Jesuit priest Pierre Heude in Shanghai in 1868. Some scholars conduct research on those early museums built by foreigners as part of missionary activities.<sup>33</sup> Wang talks about the Royal Asiatic Society's activities in China, which focuses on the political impact on museum building in China. Another example is the study on the Shanghai Xu Jia Hui Museum, built by the French Catholic Church in 1868.<sup>34</sup>

For Zhang, the museum became an extension of religious buildings, which should be under protection of certain beliefs or law. With an ideal hypothesis of the international law on not trespassing museums during wars, which will be further discussed in following chapters, a new system of the international relationship is established in Zhang's idea. To analyze those religious factors in certain buildings, Liah Greenfeld's research on American cases could be a reference. In the book *Modern and Religion*, Greenfeld claims that in the United States "the wall of separation" prevented the various churches from interfering in the secular government, but in turn protected them from interference within wide areas of private life, including education,

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<sup>32</sup> Museum of Natural History is called "Zhen Dan Museum 震旦博物館" in Chinese. Quote Wang, Hongjun, *Zhongguo Bo Wu Guan Xue Ji Chu* 中國博物館學基礎, Shanghai: Shanghai Gu Ji Chu Ban She 上海古籍出版社, 2001, 94.

<sup>33</sup> Yuezhi Xiong, *Shanghai Tong Shi: Issue6, Wan Ch'ing Wen Hua* 上海通史: 第6卷晚清文化, 1999.

<sup>34</sup> Yi Wang, "Huang Jia Ya Zhou Wen Hui Bei Zhongguo Zhi Hui Shu Lun," *Fudan Journal*, No.5, 2003, 106-111.

allowing them considerable scope of activity.<sup>35</sup> His detailed analysis inspired me in analyzing Zhang's idea of international relations.

Although in close relationship with religion, the notion of nation, nation-state and nationalism formed with the rise of capitalism and modernity. Benedict Anderson attaches importance to the novel technology of "print-capitalism," which makes it possible to construct the imagined community of nation.<sup>36</sup> Anthony Smith also argues that the nation-state is not originally generated with human beings, instead, it is a modern norm. Smith points out that nationalism, as an ideology and movement, is a phenomenon that dates from the later eighteenth century and the "nation-state" as a political norm is quite modern. Development of nation-states in Europe is clearly described in Smith's book, in which he argues that if the system of the European states came into being at the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, it was not until the nineteenth century that these states began to be converted into "nation-states" and hence a system of nation-states came into being. Even the "nation" and its "national character" would appear to be modern, Smith says. It was not until the early modern period in Europe (the late seventeenth century) that the idea of populations being divided by "national character" and possessing a common identity became widespread among the European educated classes.<sup>37</sup> Those research studies on the birth of nationalism in Europe and particularly of Chinese nationalism are profound and significant for my research on Zhang's ideas and practices in the Nantong Museum in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century.

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<sup>35</sup> Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism and the Mind: Essays on Modern Culture*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2006, 103.

<sup>36</sup> See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London & New York: Verso, 1991, 1-63.

<sup>37</sup> Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford, UK: New York: B. Blackwell, 1987, 6-47.

### 2.2.2 Chinese Museums

In late nineteenth century China, the notion of museums already existed in public discourse. In *Shen Bao*, one of the most influential popular newspapers located in Shanghai, related reports of the museum started to appear from the first year it started to publish. Let us take the year 1872, for example, when there were five reports on foreign museums: One piece of general introduction titled “Museums 博物院” on May 21th, 1872; one piece about Japanese museums on June 12<sup>th</sup> (论东洋博物院事); one piece on a fire accident to a Hong Kong museum 香港博物院被火 on August 31<sup>st</sup>; One piece on a new museum established in the United Kingdom 英国开博物馆; and another piece on a new museum open in Australia 论澳洲设博物院事 on November 26.<sup>38</sup> From the reports in 1872, readers could easily find that the topic of museums was reported and paid attention to by the Chinese public. But those reports were basically about foreign museums instead of Chinese museums.

In the realm of late Ch’ing and early Republic Chinese museums, prior scholars have conducted comprehensive historical research. Most of this research focuses on historical documents with brief comments. There is also research with theoretical and comprehensive analysis which tends to oversimplify the dilemma early museums faced by attributing museums not mushrooming in early China to the impotence of government in feudal society. For example, Gao attributes the Ch’ing government’s lack of attention to museum affairs to its increasing

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<sup>38</sup> Quote *Shen Bao*, Shanghai: Shanghai shu dian, 1982-1986, microfilm, in Harvard-Yenching library in Harvard University.

absorption in solving the domestic crisis.<sup>39</sup> Su summarizes the history of Chinese museums into three periods and emphasizes the flourishing after 1949.<sup>40</sup> Liang conducts a historical review on several early museums from the late Ch'ing, early republic to revolutionary era. His analysis is limited by dogmatic socialist discourse in Chinese communist discourse, with which he tries to construct an early Chinese museum history as anti-colonial and anti-feudal.<sup>41</sup> Shao contributes Ch'ing's not establishing museums to lacking of confidence and ability.<sup>42</sup> Although this research has plausibly contributed to the topic, they are regrettably constrained within a simplified social evolutionary framework and thus predictably treat the museum as a footnote of the decadence of Chinese feudal society.

There is also some research that attaches importance to early museums as institutions that aroused public consciousness. For instance, Yang discusses how early museums provided knowledge for the masses and affected Chinese civil society. He argues that possessing artworks as private property couldn't satisfy the requirements of society. The underdeveloped part of this paper is the differentiation of "western," "modern" and "advanced," as well as the specificity of historical conditions of late Ch'ing and early Republic Chinese society.<sup>43</sup>

A limited number of researchers have conducted comprehensive research on the Nantong Museum founded by Zhang Jian; major arguments of this research could be summarized as follows. Some research on the Nantong Museum discusses how Zhang's idea of building

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<sup>39</sup> Gao, Pengcheng, "Nantong Bo Wu Yuan De Chuang Ban Ji Qi She Hui Xiao Yi 南通博物苑的創辦及其社會效益," *Nantong University Journal* 南通大學學報, 2007.

<sup>40</sup> Donghai Su, "Museums and museum philosophy in China," *Nordisk Museologi*, 1995.

<sup>41</sup> Liang, Jisheng, "Jiu Zhongguo Bo Wu Guan Li Shi Shu Lue 舊中國博物館歷史述略," *Zhongguo Bo Wu Guan* 中國博物館, No.2, 1986.

<sup>42</sup> Qin Shao, "Xian Dai Hua Yu Zhongguo Bo Wu Guan Shi Ye De Chuang Shi 現代化和中國博物館事業的創始," *Xue Shu Yue Kan* 學術月刊, 2005.

<sup>43</sup> Zhigang Yang, "Bo Wu Guan Yu Zhongguo Jin Dai Yi Lai Gong Gong Yi Shi De Tuo Zhan 博物館與中國近代以來公共意識的拓展," *Fudan Journal*, 1999.

museums is influenced. Basically, the influence comes from three fields: firstly, from Japanese museums, as Gao,<sup>44</sup> Shao<sup>45</sup> and Xie<sup>46</sup> indicate; in the second part, from early Chinese intellectuals' works on their visiting museums overseas, on which Gao and Shao conduct research; thirdly, from museums built by foreign missionaries, as Shao discusses.

Some projects focus on the “public” factor of the Nantong Museum. Claypool performed comprehensive research by collecting documents from the local Nantong city.<sup>47</sup> She conducted research on social strata in the local community and discusses Zhang's personal motives in building the Nantong Museum. She argues that Zhang used the Nantong Museum as an instrument to strengthen his social network. She also points out that accessibility was limited to certain groups, which reflected Zhang's exclusionism as literati. She further inferred that Zhang's keenly desire for the “West” allows him to leverage his position as self-proclaimed author and owner of the symbolic order of Chinese modernity in the city of Nantong. Shao discusses how importance is also attached to exhibition in companies, factories and schools in local Nantong. Jin discusses how public institutions are important to local self-governance.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Gao, Pengcheng, “Nantong Bo Wu Yuan De Chuang Ban Ji Qi She Hui Xiao Yi 南通博物苑的創辦及其社會效益,” *Nantong University Journal 南通大學學報*, 2007.

<sup>45</sup> Qin Shao, “Xian Dai Hua Yu Zhongguo Bo Wu Guan Shi Ye De Chuang Shi 現代化和中國博物館事業的創始,” *Xue Shu Yue Kan 學術月刊*, 2005.

<sup>46</sup> Xie, Hui, “Zhang Jian Yu Zhongguo Jin Dai Bo Lan Hui Shi Ye 張謇與中國近代博覽會事業,” *An Hui Shi Xue 安徽史學*, 2002.

<sup>47</sup> Lisa Claypool, “Zhang Jian and China's First Museum,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 64, No. 3, 2005.

<sup>48</sup> Yan Jin, “Zhang Jian Bo Wu guan Si Xiang Zhong De Guo Jia Guan Nian He Gong Gong Yi Shi 張謇博物館思想中的國家觀念和公共意識,” *Zhongguo Bo Wu Guan 中國博物館*, 2006. For more details about the local self-governance in China, see Jin Ren, “Xin Hai Ge Ming Yu Wo Guo Di Fang Zi Zhi: Hui Gu Yu Si Kao,” *Journal of China National School of Administration*, 2011, Issue 04, 28-31. Qiaohong Wang, “Sun Zhongshan De Di Fang Zi Zhi Li Lun Qian Xi,” *Theory Monthly*, 2010, Issue5, 46-48. Jian-xue Wang, “Local Self-Government Theory and Its Evolution in Modern China,” *Journal of Xiamen University*, 2011, Issue03, 110-118.

There is also some research on the Nantong Museum as realization of Zhang Jian's constitutional ideal, such as Yang.

There are other perspectives worth mentioning. Some researchers view the establishing of the Nantong Museum as anti-aggression. A typical example is Ling, but this analysis is merely a general summary without creative comments.<sup>49</sup> Claypool also summarizes preserving cultural heritage as Zhang's intention, but she doesn't deepen the discussion. Some other research discusses the social influence of the Nantong Museum. Gao discusses how the Nantong Museum did scientific research on a local river and eliminated panic of the masses. There are also research studies that discuss the development of the Nantong Museum and modernization. Shao claims the Nantong Museum as an instrument of modernizing China and disseminating scientific knowledge.

In prior research, Zhang's Nantong Museum is seldom mentioned, much less worked on. On the rare occasions when it is mentioned, it is merely in passing, and the comments made are unvarying: scholars extol Zhang's nationalist emotion, his efforts as an ethnic entrepreneur, and Nantong Museum as the first Chinese self-established museum. Those research studies do not deal with Zhang's attempts at constructing the nation's history in the museum, educating new nationals and building a nation-state; nor does the research explore how the Nantong Museum reflected Zhang's self-contradiction. The vital problem of this research that I want to accentuate here, firstly, is regarding the museum as the representation of certain fixed and "natural" idea, thus unconsciously reproducing these artificial and ideological ideas such as "nation," "ethnic" and "state." Prior researchers fail to see how these "sublime" and "divine" ideas about nation,

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<sup>49</sup> Ling, Zhenrong (2010): "Zhang Jian Bo Wu Guan Si Xiang De Te Dian" 張謇博物館思想的特點, *Bo Wu Guan Yan Jiu* 博物館研究.

ethnic and state are historically constructed by such cultural institutions and social practices. Actually, the museum from the beginning is not a representation of a certain origin, but the creation and invention with an idea in history. Secondly, these researchers seem to treat the complex historical factors in a model of totality, which is not only spatially homogeneous but also temporally linear. In other words, they treat history as monolith, without any ambiguity or self-contradiction. I argue that linear analysis and narrative oversimplify those issues presented by the Nantong Museum. These self-contradictions in the cultural sites, such as museums, may give birth to new thoughts and possibilities which never have been realized. Thus, the meaning of my research resides in that it seeks to recover the possibilities provided by Zhang's cultural practices in the late Ch'ing's historical crisis, and it challenges us to rethink "what nation can be" and "what Chinese can be."

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

As this research takes basically a historical approach, Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier's work *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* provides theoretical base for my research methodologies.<sup>50</sup> The object of this research is a museum built in China in early-twentieth century, and first-hand resources in that period used in this research are: newspapers, Zhang's essays, including proposals to the Ch'ing government and advertisements, as well as Zhang's diaries. This research also quotes Sun's memoirs as support to Zhang's descriptions, which I further discuss later.

Zhang's articles and proposals quoted in this research come from a whole collection published by Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She,<sup>51</sup> one of the most famous ancient book publishers in China. Newspapers support Zhang's works in this collection for building capital museums in China in his period, such as *Xue Bu Guan Bao* on October 17, 1907, which published Zhang's proposals.<sup>52</sup> Zhang created the Nantong Museum and lived until the year 1926. He witnessed and engaged in the building and development of the Nantong Museum. As a traditional intellectual in

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<sup>50</sup> Martha Howell, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Method*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001.

<sup>51</sup> Chongpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994.

<sup>52</sup> The title is "Fu Lu: Ben Bu Yi Deng Zi Yi Guan Zhang Jian Ni Qing Jing Shi Jian She Di Guo Bo Lan Guan Yi 本部一等咨议官张謇拟请京师建设帝国博览馆议" on *Xue Bu Guan Bao* 學部官報, Issue 36, collected by Shanghai Library 上海圖書館. This research uses the digital version from Harvard-Yenching Library.

Chinese society, Zhang hesitated before accepting the mission to develop industries in local Nantong, as industry was viewed as low-class work in Chinese tradition. Then he convinced himself by the belief that his work on Nantong's industrialization could strengthen the Chinese nation.<sup>53</sup> For these reasons, in his works describing his career, Zhang may unconsciously bring his assumption of the effect of industrialization and modernization to confirm his expectations of his own choice. As Howell and Prevenier argue, Thomas Mann has reminded us that very often people simply cannot absorb the information before them, that they are paralyzed by what he called "Glaubensunwilligkeit"—an unwillingness to believe.<sup>54</sup> Based on this theory, it is possible that Zhang avoided recording possible implications of the flaw of his modernization project.

Although he served the Manchu government, as a Han Chinese, Zhang may have still held different political opinions than the Manchu Ch'ing government. Based on his multiple identities, Zhang's construction of the Chinese history as a history excluding the Manchu influence could be better explained. So Zhang's construction of the Chinese history in the Nantong Museum is related to his political connections, which will be further discussed in later chapters. Reading Zhang's public works, my interpretation is that Zhang put himself center stage. Howell and Prevenier remind us that the vanity of the observer will play a role as well, for every

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<sup>53</sup> In *Se Weng Zi Ding Nian Pu* 齋翁自訂年譜 (Bing Shen San Yue 丙申三月,) Zhang wrote "The intellectuals have been look down upon for a long time, and the intellectuals also dissatisfied with the society. For strengthen the nation, education must be reformed first. To educate qualified nationals, one cannot separate him from the government officials or the businessmen. I hesitated for a long time, and then accept the offer to lead the industrialization in Nantong. 既念書生為世輕久矣，病在空言，在負氣，故世輕書生，書生亦輕世。今求國之強，今當先教育，先養成能辦適當教育之人才，而秉政者既暗蔽不足與謀，擁資者又乖隔不能與合。然固不能與政府隔，不能不與擁資者謀，納約自牖，責在我輩，屈己下人之謂何？躊躇累日，應焉。” Quote *Zhang Jian Zhuan* Zhang, Kaihuan, *Zhang Jian Zhuan* 張謇傳, Beijing: Zhonghua Gong Shang Lian He Chu Ban She, 2010, 77.

<sup>54</sup> *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Method*, Martha C. Howell and Walter Prevenier, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001, 67.

author puts herself center stage, implicitly or explicitly. Zhang as a government official and an influential intellectual in China in the twentieth century was actually center-staged. Reading his advertisements calling for donations for the museum and his proposals to the Ch'ing government, he explicitly showed his sense of responsibility on behalf of the intellectuals and his thoughts about the development of China. Later, after the Ch'ing government fell and the revolutions against Yuan took place, Zhang consciously justified the revolution against Yuan with his Nantong Museum. His political connections with his contemporary events were close.

Zhang's diaries quoted in this research work as secondary support. The three pieces of Zhang's diaries that support this research are concise records instead of detailed descriptions. One piece is five words long and which records support that Zhang planned building the museum in the year 1905, which could be supported with other historical documents stored in today's Nantong Museum. Based on those documents, the institution of the Nantong Museum published a series of essays in 2005 to celebrate the 100-year birthday of the Nantong Museum.<sup>55</sup> Another piece is about Zhang keenly participating in the building of the Nantong Museum, which could be supported by Sun Qu's memoir, which will be discussed in later chapters. The last piece is about the Nantong Museum being used as Zhang's private residency, which could be supported by Claypool's research and the historical documents she mentions in "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum" published in *The Journal of Asian Studies*.<sup>56</sup>

The memoirs used in this research were written by Sun Qu, the son of the first director of the Nantong Museum. He witnessed the building and development of the Nantong Museum.

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<sup>55</sup> Nantong Bo Wu Yuan (ed.) *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Qing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing: Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005.

<sup>56</sup> "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum" published on *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 64, No. 3, 2005.

From the year 1959, he started to publish articles based on his memories and historical documents of the Nantong Museum. This paper quotes his articles on a collection of articles edited under the name of the Nantong Museum, the *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* published in 2005.

Newspapers quoted here were first hand resources, such as the report of the Nantong Museum after being destroyed by the Japanese army. In my research, I quote Sun Qu's chapter titled "After the Fall" 淪陷以後 in his *Memoir on the Nantong Museum* 南通博物苑回憶錄, collected in *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Qing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集.<sup>57</sup> As a local Chinese newspaper, the reporter should be technically and socially qualified to understand what he saw. Reports on foreign museums published on *Shen Bao* were collected from a microfilm collection in the Harvard-Yenching library at Harvard University.<sup>58</sup>

I borrowed books used in this research from the Harvard University libraries, and I found a major portion in the Harvard-Yenching Library. Microfilm resources are in the Harvard Depository section in the Harvard-Yenching Library. Journals and articles in Chinese language are found through the Chinese Academic Journals (CNKI), one of the largest databases of Chinese language journals.<sup>59</sup> English journals are found through the University of Pittsburgh digital library system<sup>60</sup> and the Harvard University E-journal search engine.<sup>61</sup> Another database

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<sup>57</sup> Nantong Bo Wu Yuan (ed.) *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Qing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing: Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005.

<sup>58</sup> Link to this item: <http://discovery.lib.harvard.edu/?itemid=|library/m/aleph|007983566>

<sup>59</sup> China Academic Journals, CNKI: <http://ckrd85.cnki.net/kns50/Navigator.aspx?ID=1> My route to this database is through the Harvard University access, link as follows (Harvard University account required):

[http://cnki.en.eastview.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/kns50/single\\_index.aspx](http://cnki.en.eastview.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/kns50/single_index.aspx)

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.library.pitt.edu/articles/>

<sup>61</sup> [http://sfx.hul.harvard.edu/sfx\\_local/az/](http://sfx.hul.harvard.edu/sfx_local/az/)

used to search modern Chinese journals published from 1857 to 1919 is a CD-ROM called “Zhongguo jin dai qi kan pian mu guang pan shu ju ku,” edited by Shanghai Library; in this research I used the version in the Harvard-Yenching Library.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Zhongguo jin dai qi kan pian mu guang pan shu ju ku 中國近代期刊篇目光盤數據庫 Edited by 上海圖書全國報刊索引編輯部 Published by Shanghai: Shanghai wen da xin xi you xian gong si 上海文達信息有限公司 . Link to this record: <http://discovery.lib.harvard.edu/?itemid=library/m/aleph009039053>

#### 4.0 A HISTORY OF THE NATION EXCLUDING THE MANCHUS

Zhang, as a nationalist and patriot, attempted to construct the nation's history as a basis for national rejuvenation. He consciously used the museum as an educational instrument to define (or construct) the ideal nation. In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson implies that museums and the museumizing imagination are both profoundly political and that museums can work to create legitimacies.<sup>63</sup> Anderson gave examples in Southeast Asia and showed how a new nation-state learned from its ancestors.<sup>64</sup> When Anderson discusses the function of the museum as an instrument of imagining communities, he summarized the colonial states' imagining a Chinese series—before any Chinese did so—as the colonial state's style of thinking about its domain: The totalizing classificatory grid could be used to put anything under the state's real or contemplated control, and in this way justified the domain.<sup>65</sup> The museum's collections functioned as an album of the nation's ancestors. The final logical outcome of Zhang's museum was the logo of "China." Zhang realized the importance of building museums and the construction of Chinese history by Chinese nationals. Some of his ideas can be found in his early works, such as in proposals to the government and in diaries. In a 1905 proposal, he suggested that the government build a national museum in the capital city in order to construct an official

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<sup>63</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London & New York: Verso, 1991, 181.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

Chinese history; this would allow the government to definitively declare what was Chinese culture and what was not.<sup>66</sup>

However, in regard to representing the nation's history in the museum, Zhang was far more ambitious than to be satisfied as simply a loyal official for the Ch'ing government. First of all, Zhang reconstructed the binary relation between "the self" and "the other." He constructed the nation's history in the museum as a way of defining its identity and set up the boundary between "self" and "others." In Zhang's system, the nation of the Chinese people is "the self," while all people from other nation-states are "the other." He held the idea that the nation's cultural heritage should not be defined by other nation-states.<sup>67</sup> In his advertisement calling for donations to the Nantong Museum, Zhang portrayed China as an independent state in international relations and emphasized the importance of protecting poetry anthologies, calligraphy, paintings, and epigraphy from being destructed by other states.<sup>68</sup> By underlying the opposing and tensional relations between China and the West at that time, he succeeded in consolidated the dualism of "the self" and "the other."

Zhang's second move was more powerful and significant: He continued to reconstruct the self of China by adopting the model of "self-other" domestically. In other words, in defining the Chinese culture, he excluded the influence of the ethnic Manchu. In fact, in choosing the

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<sup>66</sup> "The capital will be the first stop when foreigners visit China. To avoid misunderstanding of Chinese culture, we should build a national museum to present the true Chinese history and culture." Quote "Shang Nan Pi Xiang Guo Ch'ing Jing Shi Jian She Di Guo Bo Lan Guan Yi 上南皮相國請建設帝國博覽館議," 1908, in Chongpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, 274.

<sup>67</sup> "Foreigners collected national treasures in China. The Chinese should protect them." Quote 'Guo Jia Bo Wu Guan Tu Shu Guan Gui Hua Tiao Yi,' Ibid., 280.

<sup>68</sup> See "Tongzhou Bo Wu Guan Jing Zheng Tong Shu Xian Bei Shi Wen Ji Shu Hua Ji Suo Cang Jin Shi Qi Qi 通州博物館敬征通屬先輩詩文集書畫及所藏金石古器啟," Ibid., 278-9.

collections to be displayed and the narrative to be presented to the audiences, he had at least two alternative selections. The first one is choosing exquisite handicrafts, natural specimens, or precious books to be displayed in the museum as a process of “logoization,”<sup>69</sup> as many colonist museums had done.<sup>70</sup> The second choice would be displaying collections to represent a pure ethnic Manchu history, or at least refers historical interactions between the Manchu and other ethnic groups on the Central Plains, as a way to justify the Manchu’s governance. However, Zhang didn’t take these two models. He defined the nation’s history as of four thousand years,<sup>71</sup> long before the Manchu governed the nationals. In other words, in defining Chinese nation, Zhang excluded the influence of the Manchu. Furthermore, calligraphy, paintings and inscriptions in former dynasties were chosen as signifiers of nationality and carriers of national culture. Seeing from the domestic perspective, Manchu had been regarded as “the other,” which should not be counted as part of “the self,” i.e., Zhang’s ideal China.

Pursuing this aim of estranging Manchu as “the other,” what Zhang did in his museum could be theoretically described as the reformation of the field of “visible” and “invisible.” He rearranged what is called the presence and absence. Tamara Hamlsh argues that the

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<sup>69</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London & New York: Verso, 1991, 182.

<sup>70</sup> For example, Han De’s Zhen Dan Museum in Shanghai focused on collecting specimens and minerals in China and sent those materials to other countries for scientific researches. Quote *Zhongguo Bo Wu Guan Xue Ji Chu*, Ibid., 94.

<sup>71</sup> “偉矣哉我國有歷史以來，今四千余年矣，其附麗於歷史兒可資考證者，曰經籍，曰圖繪，曰金石之屬” Quote “Shang Nan Pi Xiang Guo Ch’ing Jing Shi Jian She Di Guo Bo Lan Guan Yi 上南皮相國請建設帝國博覽館議,” 1908, in Chongpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji 張謇全集*, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, 273.

absences of any references to life in the imperial palace on the eve of the emperor's abdication in 1911 further supports an ahistoric image of imperial China, constructing a sizable historical gap that effectively distances the present from a remote past.<sup>72</sup>

Zhang's establishing the museum with the Manchu's absence shared similar reasons: narratives emerge out of the juxtaposition of objects in the museum, which is an erasure of the meaning of Manchu influence; that is, to make it invisible. In Zhang's ideal museum, artworks in former dynasties, "Tang," "Song," "Yuan," and "Ming,"<sup>73</sup> were viewed as heights of national culture. In Zhang's memorial to a Ch'ing minister,<sup>74</sup> he admired the aesthetics of architecture in former dynasties and suggested building a separate "Model Exhibition Section" to display models of palaces in former dynasties—that is, to make them visible again. In recognition of aesthetics of material expression of former dynasties, the exhibition could recall audiences' memory of alternative possibilities, other than being governed by the Ch'ing government.

The reformation in the cultural area is never a mere "cultural" event, but a political practice. In selecting collections to display in the museum, Zhang focused on the most glorious part of Chinese culture and believed the nation with the four thousand years' history was the true nation. He believed that only with this identity could the nation truly be comparable to the

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<sup>72</sup> See Susan A. Grane (ed.) , "Global Culture, Modern Heritage: Re-membling the Chinese Imperial Collections," *Museums and Memory*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000, 34.

<sup>73</sup> In his works calling for donations for the Nantong Museum, Zhang called for donations of stele of Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming dynasties, as well as epigraphy, clothes, carriage. Quote "Tongzhou Bo Wu Guan Jing Zheng Tong Shu Xian Bei Shi Wen Ji Shu Hua Ji Suo Cang Jin Shi Qi Qi 通州博物館敬征通屬先輩詩文集書畫及所藏金石古器啟," in Chongpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, 278.

<sup>74</sup> Quote "Shang Nan Pi Xiang Guo Ch'ing Jing Shi Jian She Di Guo Bo Lan Guan Yi 上南皮相國請建設帝國博覽館議," *Ibid.*, 274.

colonial countries.<sup>75</sup> In order to reconstruct such a nation, firstly Zhang had to deconstruct the national identity of the Ch'ing Empire. Zhang directly critiqued the Ch'ing government in building the museum. In Zhang's work,<sup>76</sup> he implied that the glorious civilization passed away and criticized that existing cultural relics were not well protected by the Ch'ing government.<sup>77</sup> Zhang wrote in his article: "Splendid and magnificent buildings in former times were secretly possessed inside palaces by one family, while ruined when time changes."<sup>78</sup> Under Zhang's critique, the validity of the Manchus' governance is questioned: glorious culture was uncovered; existing carriers of civilization were not well protected.

As narratives in the museum affect the outside real world, building such a museum was not in the Ch'ing government's best interests. Tyler<sup>79</sup> argues that the primacy of the sense of vision is its mimetic ability to provide true and accurate information about the external world. Visual sense in museums affects people's understanding of the real world; thus, a national history excluding the Manchu would threaten Ch'ing's dominance. There is solid research on the visual sense's (seeing's) impact on cognition. In *Theorizing Museums*,<sup>80</sup> which discusses the organization of visual capacities, Gordon Fyfe and Max Ross argue that gazing is a means through which individuals learn the priorities of their social structure. Tony Bennett also says

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<sup>75</sup> Anderson, *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>76</sup> Quote Zhang proposal to a minister on building a capital museum: "Shang Nan Pi Xiang Guo Ch'ing Jing Shi Jian She Di Guo Bo Lan Guan Yi 上南皮相國請建設帝國博覽館議," *Ibid.*, 276.

<sup>77</sup> Quote "Guo Jia Bo Wu Guan Tu Shu Guan Gui Hua Tiao Yi 國家博物館圖書館規劃條議," 1913, *Ibid.*, 281.

<sup>78</sup> "Tongzhou Bo Wu Guan Jing Zheng Tong Shu Xian Bei Shi Wen Ji Shu Hua Ji Suo Cang Jin Shi Qi Qi 通州博物館敬征通屬先輩詩文集書畫及所藏金石古器啟," *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>79</sup> Stephen A. Tyler, *The Unspeakable Dialogue, and Rhetoric in the Postmodern World*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1987, 157.

<sup>80</sup> Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe, *Theorizing Museums: Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World*, Cambridge, Blackwell Publishers, 1996, 148.

museums were to “arrange their displays so as to simulate the organization of the world—human and natural—outside the museum walls.”<sup>81</sup> Based on those theories, what Zhang tries to construct in the museum could be understood by the audience as a small world reflecting the outside real world. Thus, the reasons behind the Ch’ing government’s rejection of Zhang’s proposal cannot simply be attributed to the Ch’ing’s lack of confidence or energy, as Gao<sup>82</sup> and Su<sup>83</sup> imply in their papers. Building such a museum, and setting a model in the capital city to create more effect,<sup>84</sup> as Zhang proposed, was rejected by the government.

Then, what was the national history that Zhang generated? Zhang generated an order of civilization transformation of the Chinese nation. Early in his memorial presented to the Ch’ing minister, Zhang emphasized the order of exhibition and said it would aid the comprehension of the development of civilization from ancient times to the contemporary.<sup>85</sup> Zhang said, history also rested in evolution of nature and arts;<sup>86</sup> so not only were collections in the history department classified in chronological order, but so were collections in the nature and arts departments. In the history department, stone implements from ancient times, ancient sacrificial vessels, divination instruments, cherished rubbings, clothes, musical instruments, weapons, and

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<sup>81</sup> See Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, New York, Routledge, 1995, 126.

<sup>82</sup> Pengcheng Gao, “Nantong Bo Wu Yuan De Chuang Ban Ji Qi She Hui Xiao Yi 南通博物苑的創辦及其社會效益,” *Nantong University Journal* 南通大學學報, 23, 2007, 94-8.

<sup>83</sup> Qin Shao, “Culturing Modernity: The Nantong Model, 1890-1930,” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (Winter, 2004/2005), 740-741.

<sup>84</sup> For more details, see Zhang Jian, “Shang Xue Bu Ch’ing She Bo Lan Guan Yi 上學部請設博覽館議,” in Chongpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, 273.

<sup>85</sup> “重視陳列之序，覘古今之變遷，驗文明之進退”. Quote “Shang Nan Pi Xiang Guo Ch’ing Jian She Di Guo Bo Lan Guan Yi 上南皮相國請建設帝國博覽館議,” 1908, *Ibid.*, 272-277.

<sup>86</sup> “論天演之進化，天產之中有歷史，論認為之變更，美術之中亦有歷史” Quote “Guo Jia Bo Wu Guan Tu Shu Guan Gui Hua Tiao Yi 國家博物院圖書館規劃條議,” 1913, 281.

torture instruments were classified in chronological order.<sup>87</sup> He ordered artifacts of each dynasty, and audiences could view the distinct traditions and cultures of each era, in this way to demonstrate transformation of Chinese culture over time, then to provide cultural foundation for development of a new nation-state. From such representation, audiences were informed of how Chinese national culture evolved over time.

Based on a clear recognition of the Chinese nation, Zhang summoned the glorious civilization and created the identity for the ideal nationals. He then imagined an international system in which the Chinese nation's civilization and culture could continue and exist in equality with other nation-states.

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<sup>87</sup> Quote Nantong Bo Wu Yuan (ed.), *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing: Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 96-97.

## 5.0 ZHANG'S IMAGINATION OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: EQUALITY AND AGENCY

In Zhang's construction, China as a nation-state should pursue equality and act as an agent<sup>88</sup> in international relations. In the first place, Zhang insisted on "equality" as a means of deconstructing hierarchy in international relations. He endeavored for China involving itself in the global system as a unit equal to other nation-states. Although the political foundation of the international relation system is far from clear, Zhang provided a clue such as his citation of the international law. Zhang presupposed the existence of a harmonious world system by adopting the museum, implanted from western countries.<sup>89</sup> He attributed the national treasures' loss to not conserving them in public museums, which was regarded by him as an active participant of the world system. In Zhang's vision, instead of being attacked and ruined, artworks in the public museum could be protected under international laws. He quoted *Law of Nations* 萬國公法 to

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<sup>88</sup> Explanation to "agent:" "An agent can decide to act or not. Having decided to act, an agent can deliberate how to act. Once the means of acting are chosen, an agent can apply the means to bring about certain changes." Quoted in Nicholas Bunnin, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, Malden, Blackwell Pub., 2004, 32.

<sup>89</sup> There's solid evidence that Zhang investigated Japanese museums during his visiting Japan in the year 1903. Diaries on his investigations on Japanese museums are in detail. *Zhang Jian Quan Ji: Issue6-Diaries*, p.482-499. Indirect Evidence of Zhang's influenced by other western countries could be found in Zhang's employment by Zhen Dan Academy as director. Zhen Dan Academy was the one with a museum established by French missionaries. Other evidence could be found that Zhang read *Hai Guo Tu Zhi* 海國圖誌, *Ying Huan Zhi Lue* 瀛寰誌略, both of which were memoirs of traveling in foreign countries.

convince the nationals in his proposal calling for donations for the Nantong Museum: “In wars, churches, hospitals, schools and museums are forbidden to be attacked.”<sup>90</sup> Zhang implied it’s not the national civilization or culture that contradicted western modernity, but failure of actively participating/ self-expatriating from the world system that led to disaster.<sup>91</sup> Based on this judgment, Zhang justified his behavior of building and using museums as a way of participating in the world system; in this system, he believed, China would no longer be in an inferior position to other nation-states.

Zhang’s pursuit of “equality” in international relations could also be found inside the Nantong Museum. It is clear enough that visual displays in museums always embody an intention. Bennett, for example, argues that “in the museum, an ideal and ordered world unfolds before and emanates from a controlling position of knowledge and vision.”<sup>92</sup> Similarly, in *Exhibiting Cultures* Michael Baxandall argues that it is not possible to exhibit objects without putting a construction upon them.<sup>93</sup> How Zhang organizes his Nantong Museum must be seen, therefore, as a reflection of both his ideal world vision and his idea as to how the nation can be integrated into the world system.

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<sup>90</sup> For more details, see “Tongzhou Bo Wu Guan Jing Zheng Tong Shu Xian Bei Shi Wen Ji Shu Hua Ji Suo Cang Jin Shi Qi Qi 通州博物館敬征通屬先輩詩文集書畫及所藏金石古器啟,” 1908, Chongpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, 273.

<sup>91</sup> “Shang Nan Pi Xiang Guo Ch’ing Jing Shi Jian She Di Guo Lan Guan Yi 上南皮相國請建設帝國博覽館議,” 1905, Ibid., 272. “Guo Jia Bo Wu Guan Tu Shu Guan Gui Hua Tiao Yi 國家博物館圖書館規劃條議,” 1913, Ibid., 280.

<sup>92</sup> Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, New York, Routledge, 1995, 97.

<sup>93</sup> Ivan Karp et al. (ed.), *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Washington D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991, 34.

Firstly, Zhang's idea of equality was reflected by the architectural style. Zhang developed a way of combing Chinese and Western styles into one.<sup>94</sup> The Central Hall in the museum was a traditional Chinese bungalow with a Western-style attic. Similarly, in the North Hall, the main building was built with two floors and an arched door, typical of Western architecture, while the roof was in a style traditionally found in southern China. The South Hall is a two-story building, with a semi-circular balcony on the second floor being especially indicative of Western architecture. However, on each side of its gate, there was a Chinese-style gloriolite displaying classic statues, whose figures come from Taoist stories.<sup>95</sup> All the three major exhibition halls took the parameter of practicality and artistry into consideration: this represented Zhang's vision of how Chinese and Western culture could be integrated with each other and exist equally.

Moreover, Zhang's idea of equality was reflected by the layout of architectural complexes. According to Zhang, China and other nation-states should exist equally in international relations. Zhang believed that as it incorporated itself into the world system, Chinese habits should be sustained and valued, instead of ignored. He designed the layout of the museum so that it would meet the requirements of Chinese "Feng Shui" theories. First of all, the Nantong Museum had endless plains behind it and was also surrounded by a twisted river. Then, it sits in the radian of the river, where according to Feng Shui, rests the dragon, a symbol of good fortune in Chinese culture. Next, Zhang blocked up the base and buildings, making exhibition

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<sup>94</sup> Zhang keenly participated and decided the architectural complexes of the Nantong Museum. In his diary on December 12, 1905, he dicussed it with other two managers of the Nantong Museum, and plan to build three rooms as meteorological observatory, and three rooms as exhibition rooms for specimens. Chongpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, 565.

<sup>95</sup> Quote the memoirs of the Nantong Museum director's son Sun Qu. *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing: Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 48-9.

halls 80 to 100 centimeters higher than the surrounding terrain. Furthermore, scattered on the central axis, three exhibition halls, with their backs to the north and faces to the south, are surrounded by pavilions with mixed architecture style. Major exhibition halls in the museum were arranged on the medial axis, while the subordinate ones were on two sides,<sup>96</sup> meeting the standards of traditional Chinese architecture layout, which dictate that important buildings rest on the medial axis, while less essential buildings should be placed on the other two sides of the axis. Arranged in a familiar layout to the Chinese people, the exhibition halls were decorated by flowers and trees. In this system generated in Zhang's museum, the Chinese hold their right to retain their habits, reinforcing the idea that China as a nation-state should be equal with others in the world system.

If we push this line of reasoning further, we find that, the exhibits reflected Zhang's idea of equality. Zhang generated a small world in harmony in his museum, through which he constructed an equal relationship among states. In the nature department, dynamic living plants, specimens, fossils and minerals were on exhibition. Some were collected in China while others were obtained from foreign countries, such as crocodiles in India, kangaroos and hummingbirds. Unlike many modern museums which concentrate on a particular subject, the Nantong Museum did not limit its collections in any way, welcoming all donations and incorporating them into the collection system.<sup>97</sup> Zhang used the Western classification system as a way to obliterate the role of hierarchy in imperial Chinese classification of objects; whereas before, objects donated were

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<sup>96</sup> For more details, see plans for the Nantong Museum, published in the 1925 Nantong Gazetteer. Quote Lisa Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 64, No. 3, 2005, 571.

<sup>97</sup> For more details, see Jian Zhang, "Tongzhou Bo Wu Guan Jing Zheng Tong Shu Xian Bei Shi Wen Ji Shu Hua Ji Suo Cang Jin Shi Qi Qi 通州博物館敬征通屬先輩詩文集書畫及所藏金石古器啟," in Congpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji 張謇全集*, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, 278.

valued due to the social status of the donors, such as with presents from the royal families being treasured regardless of quality, all objects were now classified by the scientific method. He classified exhibits into three departments of nature, history, and the arts, then using chronological order to further organize objects within each department. In classifying the exhibits, Zhang strictly followed the Linnaean taxonomy system,<sup>98</sup> and every exhibit in the nature department was strictly classified by origin+ and marked with its Latin scientific name.<sup>99</sup> By using such organizational methods, Zhang was able to display objects from different countries next to each other, prompting the audience to view the countries as equal nation-states.

According to Zhang, simply pursuing equality was not enough—China should act as an agent in the world system; the Chinese should take an active role and exercise the power of presenting themselves to the world. Zhang believed that it was important for the Chinese as members of the world system to exercise this power, which should not be appropriated by other members. For Zhang, embracing the world system did not mean being passively involved in the globalization. In *Theorizing Museums*, Gordon Fyfe argues classification in the museum is “of cultural interdependencies between two or more groups which compete for the advantages of symbolic power and difference.”<sup>100</sup> Zhang seemed aware that exercising the power of classification in the museum is exercising the power to define relationship between nation-states.

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<sup>98</sup> The Linnaean taxonomy system was widely used for biological and zoological specimens both for their initial classification and for public display in western museums. Related research could be found in Anna Maerker’s article “The Tale of the Hermaphrodite Monkey: Classification, State Interests and Natural Historical Expertise between Museum and Court, 1791-4.” *The British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol. 39, No. 1, 2006, 29-47. Randall T. Schuh: “The Linnaean System and Its 250-Year Persistence,” *Botanical Review*, Vol. 69, No.1, 2003, 59-78.

<sup>99</sup> Based on the memoir of the Nantong Museum director’s son. Quoted Qu Sun, “Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Hui Yi Lu 南通博物苑回憶錄,” in *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch’ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing, Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 51.

<sup>100</sup> Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe, *Theorizing Museums: Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World*, Cambridge, Blackwell Publishers, 1996, 212.

In his articles, Zhang valued the power and repeatedly mentioned the display of important Chinese cultural artifacts in foreign museums and the loss, thereby, of its cultural heritage. In his later article planning the National Museum and Library,<sup>101</sup> Zhang suggested that the new government borrow ancient books, lost in Ch'ing dynasty, back from England in order to produce copies, which could then be displayed in the Chinese National Museum and Library. Zhang insisted upon the symbolic power of organizing and representing China; even if the original was not available, reproductions must be present in Chinese museums in order for the Chinese to create their own narratives.

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<sup>101</sup> See Jian Zhang, “Guo Jia Bo Wu Guan Tu Shu Guan Gui Hua Tiao Yi 國家博物館圖書館規劃條議,” in Congpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, 280.

## 6.0 EDUCATING THE NATIONALS THROUGH THE MUSEUM

For the Nantong Museum, Zhang had his ideal audience, in other words, ideal nationals who were expected to educate themselves and take responsibility for the nation. Foucault, who first introduced the terminology “heterotopia” to space theory, provided insight on the selecting of the subject, commenting that “in general, the heterotopian site is never freely accessible as a public place shows.” “To get into the museum, one must have certain permission and make certain gestures.”<sup>102</sup> What was the invisible boundary of the Nantong Museum? How did one gain access? Unlike national museums in the capital city, a local museum could not have the wide ranging audience as Zhang had imagined in his early proposals.<sup>103</sup> “The public” for the Nantong Museum was limited to those with ability to acquire a museum admission ticket through personal or institutional connections to Zhang.<sup>104</sup> As a compromise due to limited resources,<sup>105</sup> Zhang chose to mainly focus on an audience of local students and gentry’s class.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Michel Foucault, “On the Other Spaces,” trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1986, 22-7.

<sup>103</sup> See Jian Zhang, “Shang Nan Pi Xiang Guo Ch’ing Jian She Di Guo Bo Lan Guan Yi 上南皮相國請建設帝國博覽館議,” in Congpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji 張謇全集*, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 272-7. ‘Shang Xue Bu Ch’ing She Bo Lan Guan Yi 上學部請設博覽館議,” Ibid., 273.

<sup>104</sup> Information about the admission tickets could be found in “Zhong Guo Zui Zao De Bo Wu Guan Can Guan Quan 中國最早的博物館參觀券” in *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch’ing Ji Nian Wen Ji 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集*, Ibid., 188-190.

<sup>105</sup> “In western countries, they built splendid museums funded by the government. I funded this museum, and I have insisted for ten years.” Quote Jian Zhang, “Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Pin Mu

For the Nantong Museum, the major population to be educated was local school students. Affiliation with the Nantong Normal School and other modern schools in Nantong was the key factor for having access to the museum.<sup>107</sup> As early as when he presented the proposal to the Ch'ing minister, Zhang pointed out the function of “carriers of knowledge” of those collections and argued that building museums was “for students’ observation, as a supplement to their school education.”<sup>108</sup> Later, in his article calling for donations for the Nantong Museum, Zhang further stated the importance of museum collections as educational instruments: “Tongzhou Normal School has been set up for four years... Without museums, there are no places for students to find concrete evidence of what they learn at schools in their natural science studies.”<sup>109</sup> Later works also showed how the Nantong Museum assisted local school education: “The Nantong Museum was also called Specimen Room for Nantong schools students. When teaching about animals, plants, and ores, teachers will lead students to visit the museum. Other visitors should have admission ticket, or they cannot get into the museum.”<sup>110</sup>

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Xu 南通博物苑品目序,” in Congpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Nanjing: Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, 283-4.

<sup>106</sup> The audience was restricted to mid and high class, and schools and institutions. For details, see Yan Jin (ed.), *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing, Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 54.

<sup>107</sup> Nantong school students will visit the Nantong Museum when the class is on animals, plants, and ore. For this reason, the Nantong Museum is called the specimen room the Nantong schools. All other visitors need to show the admission ticket to get in the museum. Ibid., 71.

<sup>108</sup> Quote Jian Zhang, “Shang Nan Pi Xiang Guo Ch'ing Jian She Di Guo Bo Lan Guan Yi 上南皮相國請建設帝國博覽館議,” in Congpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Beijing, Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 272-7.

<sup>109</sup> Jian Zhang, “Tongzhou Bo Wu Guan Jing Zheng Tong Shu Xian Bei Shi Wen Ji Shu Hua Ji Suo Cang Jin Shi Qi Qi 通州博物館敬征通屬先輩詩文集書畫及所藏金石古器啟,” Ibid., 278.

<sup>110</sup> See Yan Jin (ed.), *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing, Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 71.

The second group to be educated was the gentry's class, with members of the gentry receiving admission to the Nantong Museum through personal relations to Zhang. They were educated not only through visiting the museum, but also through being encouraged to make donations (the behaviors). In the following chapters I further discuss why the act of donating should be regarded as a form of education. The third group was the wider public assumed in Zhang's proposal. They were educated through "popularizing science" activities. For example, the meteorological observatory inside Nantong Museum started weather forecasts and publishing the results in the local newspaper from 1909,<sup>111</sup> which was a way to use museum resources to educate the general public.

What was to be educated through the Nantong Museum? Firstly, it is the knowledge of "the self" and "the other," modern technology, and the system of organizing knowledge; secondly, educating nationals' behaviors; next, educating the nationals to have ideal emotions to be qualified nationals to strengthen China.

To begin with, knowledge of "self" and "the other" is to be taught. Zhang practiced his imagination of the "self" and "the other" in the Nantong Museum. Based on geographical differences, a world map of the self and other nation-states became clear. Anderson argues that certain nation-states are by definition restricted to certain geographical areas. In the nature department, the Nantong Museum differentiated between the specimens and natural resources originating from China from the ones collected in other states. Furthermore, the classification based on geography<sup>112</sup> was also a process of constructing a world map. In the Nature

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<sup>111</sup> See Yan Jin (ed.), *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing, Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 48.

<sup>112</sup> Based on the memoir of the Nantong Museum director's son, every exhibit in nature department was named with its Latin scientific name, and origin. *Ibid.*, 51.

Department, specimens, ores, fossils, animals from all over the world were collected and classified in geographic order. Zhang also placed emphasis on collecting ores from different provinces of China, as well as local plants and animals, through which he exhaustively narrated the “self”—China. Through highlighting geographical differences in the museum, Zhang reconfirmed the boundaries of the Chinese nation and other nations, so as to reconfirm national identity. Bennett argues that the museum is to “show and tell so that the people might look and learn.”<sup>113</sup> Clear division of each nation-states was the basis of constructing the “self” and confirming the nation’s culture.

A history of the “self” was also educated through developing an understanding of the nation’s history not only in the History Department, but also in the Nature and Arts Departments, as discussed in prior chapters, to construct the nation’s history and culture and to construct a collective memory, which is important in building a sense of community. In *Museum Frictions*, Cuauhtemoc Camarena and Teresa Morales claim that a community is a group that shares a territory, a common history, and a memory of its history.<sup>114</sup> In constructing the memory of a common history, the nationals were constructed to have a shared community. Bennett argues, “the space of representation constituted in the relations between the disciplinary knowledge deployed within the exhibitionary complex thus permitted the construction of a temporally organized order of things and peoples. This order was a totalizing one, metonymically encompassing all things and all peoples in their interactions through time.”<sup>115</sup> In the museum, this space was shared by all audiences; every audience member, as a member of the Chinese

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<sup>113</sup> Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, New York, Routledge, 1995, 20.

<sup>114</sup> See Ivan Karp et al. (ed.), *Museum and Frictions*, Durham, Duke University, 2006, 325-327.

<sup>115</sup> See Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, New York, Routledge, 1995, 79.

nation, shared the same history and cultural background. As objects of education, audiences were to learn who they were and where they came from. The Nantong Museum therefore left audiences open to accept a shared identity as the successors of the civilization it displayed. In this way, the Nantong Museum reinforced people's role as members of a community, encouraging people to imagine the national identity collectively and to project its imagination in action. As argued in *Museum Frictions*, the museum rebuilds community from within. In the Nantong Museum, material heritage, collective property, and a reservoir of traditional knowledge were channeled to sustain the collective existence of the community.

The museum also represented modern technology that could be transported from “the other” to “the self.” In early period of the Nantong Museum, Zhang built a weather station<sup>116</sup> in the Central Hall, consisting of a platform on the roof, along with instruments for measuring wind power, wind direction, and rainfall. The weather station was built in the Nantong Museum, integrated into the small world Zhang built. The Chinese used this technology, which was a model of modernity transported from “the other” to “self.”

Furthermore, the system of organizing knowledge: the modern taxonomy and the chronological sequence. As mentioned above, the collections in the Nantong Museum were organized according to modern taxonomic principles. As the catalog in 1914<sup>117</sup> showed, there were 1,879 items with detailed serial numbers. During the development of the museum, an Education Department was added. Then in 1914, there were four departments in the museum:

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<sup>116</sup> This station was removed in 1915 based on the memoir of the first Nantong Museum director's son. For more details, see Yan Jin (ed.), *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing, Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 48-49.

<sup>117</sup> “Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Pin Mu 南通博物苑品目,” 1914. Quote *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing, Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 97.

The Nature Department, the History Department, the Arts Department, and the Education Department. In the nature department, collections were further classified into three categories: animals, plants, and minerals. In the History Department, collections were classified into specific categories of jade, pottery, inscriptions on ancient bronze and stone tablets, portraits, torture instruments, etc. In the Arts Department, collections were classified into specific categories of paintings, calligraphy, sculpture, embroidery, crochet, etc.<sup>118</sup> In the Education Department, collections were classified into three sub-categories: imperial examinations, traditional private schools, and public schools. In late Ch'ing and early Republic Chinese society, generating a modern Chinese knowledge system was an essential aspect of modernization. The reordering of things in the Nantong Museum made it possible to change the perception of modernization as “other” to “self.” Bennett argues that “museums produced a position of power and knowledge in relation to a microcosmic reconstruction of a totalized order of things and peoples.”<sup>119</sup> Reordering collections in Nature, History, and Arts departments, and arranging in chronological order was modern way of understanding the real world. In this way, the ordering system in the museum could function as a model of structuring the outside world.

Not only knowledge but also behaviors are to be taught through the museum. The museum influenced nationals' behaviors by encouraging the process of “sharing.” Through the donation of private property by the gentry class (included the royal family) to the museum, the masses and the gentry class could share knowledge.<sup>120</sup> The behavior of sharing was based on the

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<sup>118</sup> See “Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Pin Mu Xu 南通博物院品目序,” 1914, in *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, 283-4.

<sup>119</sup> See Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, New York, Routledge, 1995, 97.

<sup>120</sup> In his memorial, the validity of building and donating to museums was generated in modeling after the ancestor's “Donating Books Project” in Qianlong age. Zhang cited Japanese royal

judgment that exhibits were carriers of knowledge. As carriers of knowledge, reproductions of items were also accepted in the museum. In the article calling for donations, Zhang said, “imitated signets of Han dynasty, photocopied books of Song dynasty, as well as copied inscriptions are accepted.”<sup>121</sup> Based on the judgment that the most important function of the collections was to impart knowledge, members of the gentry were encouraged to donate their private collections to the museum so that knowledge could be shared with others. Zhang said, “Exhibits are expected to be purchased or donated from local gentries, as well as overseas Chinese in Europe, America and Australia... I really hope those collectors could donate their private collections, and share them with the masses.”<sup>122</sup> Donating was a special way of educating the gentry class, as well as the masses. Traditionally, works of art were considered personal properties, to be circulated among the literati. Rather than being appreciated for their educative value, they were kept for aesthetic value and symbolic value, representing the owner’s high social status, while for those who could hardly survive, they were denied access to artworks. The western concept of sharing knowledge had been absent in Chinese culture until the early twentieth century. In the same year the Nantong Museum was established, the first freely-accessed public Reading Room appeared in Beijing. This was considered an earthshaking event; newspapers reported an innumerable influx of people to the Reading Room the first day it

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family’s publicizing private collections to support his proposition of donating to museums. For more details, see Jian Zhang, “Shang Nan Pi Xiang Guo Ch’ing Jian She Di Guo Bo Lan Guan Yi 上南皮相國請建設帝國博覽館議,” in Congpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, 273.

<sup>121</sup> In “Tongzhou Bo Wu Guan Jing Zheng Tong Shu Xian Bei Shi Wen Ji Shu Hua Ji Suo Cang Jin Shi Qi Qi 通州博物館敬征通屬先輩詩文集書畫及所藏金石古器啟,” 1908, *Ibid.*, 278-9.

<sup>122</sup> Quote “Tong Zhou Bo Wu Guan Zheng Tong Shu Xian Bei Shi Wen Ji Shu Hua Ji Suo Cang Jin Shi Gu Qi Qi 通州博物館敬征通屬先輩詩文集書畫及所藏金石古器啟,” in Congpo Cao (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, 278-9.

opened.<sup>123</sup> From the example, one could easily find how shocking the concept “shared knowledge” was for the Chinese people at the beginning of twentieth century. In the name of sharing knowledge, the nationals were taught to share the “carriers of civilization” with the masses through the museum.

The introduction of sharing was also based on reformation of “desire.” The Nantong Museum intervened in people’s inner world by reforming and controlling desires. As Zhang described in a later article, in the museum, nationals could be taught to form the habits of viewing and knowing, as distinct from possessing. Zhang proposed that people should put those desired objects in the museum so that they could be shown to people, without leading people to bad behaviors.<sup>124</sup> Displaying those collections were displaying people’s desires, while deconstructing the desires at the same time. People should convince themselves to donate those objects to share with others, while for the masses, they could view it in the museum while they cannot possess them. Only after the deconstruction of the desire to own those objects could people truly view them as knowledge carriers, rather than status symbols. For the final purpose of constructing a modern nation-state, the behavior of sharing could be regarded as a project of (re-)creating relations between man and man, by means of transforming the relation between “man” and “thing.”

Besides knowledge and behaviors, the emotions are to be taught through the museum. In the museum, aesthetic preferences, as well as emotions of humiliation, dissatisfaction, and pride

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<sup>123</sup> The event was reported by Da Gong Bao 大公報 as “extremely welcomed by the masses 群眾如堵.” Quote *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch’ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing, Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 24.

<sup>124</sup> See Jian Zhang, “Guo Jia Bo Wu Guan Tu Shu Guan Gui Hua Tiao Yi 國家博物院圖書館規劃條議,” Yan Jin (ed.), *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Nanjing, Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1994, 280.

were to be educated. First, the aesthetic emotions of a nation were constructed in the museum. Classics of Chinese culture were displayed, and the aesthetic preferences of the gentry class were selected as the standards with which to educate the nationals. Aesthetics of paintings and calligraphy, jade, porcelain, pottery, sculptures, woven and embroidered artworks were appreciated.<sup>125</sup> Nationals were educated as to which works of art should be appreciated and which should not be appreciated.

Next, emotions of pride, humiliation and dissatisfactions were to be educated. It was expected that recalling glorious civilizations of the past would inspire feelings of pride. Then, through the juxtaposition of glorious past and contemporary reality, audiences were to be taught to feel dissatisfied with the current government. As Anderson critiques in the case of Burma, “what was imagined was a secular decadence, such that contemporary natives were no longer capable of their putative ancestors’ achievements.” In this way, “the reconstructed monuments, juxtaposed with the surrounding rural poverty, said to the natives: Our very presence shows that you have always been, or have long become, incapable of either greatness or self-rule.”<sup>126</sup> Zhang’s ideal museum in China shares a similar function with the reconstructed monuments in Burma: In the Nantong Museum, through juxtaposition of the glorious culture and civilization in prior dynasties with the present plain culture, the nationals would feel dissatisfied by the present domestic situation. Also, through recalling memories of being humiliated in international relations, such as by national treasures being stolen, the Chinese nationals would feel dissatisfied by the current state of international relations. Dissatisfaction to current government and

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<sup>125</sup> See “Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Pin Mu 南通博物苑品目,” in Yan Jin (ed.), *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch’ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing, Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 97.

<sup>126</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London & New York: Verso, 1991, 181.

condition of international relations could lead nationals to search for new identities and to redefine the boundaries of national consciousness.

To summarize, in educating the nationals, the Nantong Museum worked as the educational instrument and supplement of local school education in the modern education system. Also, the way of sharing collections, viewing without possessing, and classification methods help train people with qualified and correct emotional reactions to national affairs. Based on collective memories, the museum created and constructed equal nationals.

## 7.0 HISTORICAL LIMITATIONS OF ZHANG'S INDIVIDUAL ATTEMPT IN CONSTRUCTING A NATION-STATE THROUGH THE MUSEUM

As an individual endeavor in the early twentieth century China, by building the Nantong Museum to construct a modern nation-state, Zhang faced economic, social and historical limitations. Compromise was applied when Zhang practiced his ideas into reality. Restricted by those limitations, Zhang appeared “self-contradictory” and “oscillating” in his endeavor of constructing a modern nation-state through his personal-public, disordered-ordered binary oppositions in museum management.

A gap lay between Zhang's imaginations of constructing a modern nation-state and his practice in reality, which could be traced via the personal-public binary identity of the Nantong Museum. The nature of the Nantong Museum, whether it is “public” or “private,” was ambiguous as it was not equally accessible to all sections of the population. Trofanenko quotes Maleuvre's argument that the public museum is dedicated to producing and presenting knowledge as a means to constitute, educate, and impress its national publics.<sup>127</sup> Early in Zhang's proposals to the Education Department of Ch'ing, Zhang claimed the importance of

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<sup>127</sup> Brenda Trofanenko, “Dare we know the nation? Considering the Nexus of Discursive Leveraging and Identity,” *Studies in the Culture Politics of Education*, 2008, Vol. 29(2), 257-272.

public museums and hoped the government could establish them.<sup>128</sup> Later, in his several articles, Zhang implied that the Nantong Museum was a public museum. For example, in advertisements calling for donations, he asked people to donate and preserve the collections and share with other nationals in the Nantong Museum, so those collections could be protected under the Law of Nations.<sup>129</sup> Chinese people in Zhang's times also viewed the Nantong Museum as a public museum. Evidence could be found in an announcement of the Nantong Museum in a local newspaper,<sup>130</sup> which published a piece of news that a donation was made to the Nantong Museum to preserve cultural heritage in this public institution. For those reasons, the Nantong Museum was expected to be a public museum as Bennett defines and as later documents labeled.<sup>131</sup> The real situations, ironically, was that this "public museum" served as an extension of Zhang's private residence and served Zhang's social networks. Zhang's family lived in the museum,<sup>132</sup> and his guests were also invited to live in the museum.<sup>133</sup> From memoirs and

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<sup>128</sup> "Shang Nan Pi Xiang Guo Ch'ing Jing Shi Jian She Di Guo Lan Guan Yi 上南皮相國請建設帝國博覽館議," *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, 2004, 272. "Shang Xue Bu Ch'ing She Bo Lan Guan Yi 上學部請設博覽館議," 1905, *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>129</sup> See "Tongzhou Bo Wu Guan Jing Zheng Tong Shu Xian Bei Shi Wen Ji Shu Hua Ji Suo Cang Jin Shi Qi Qi 通州博物館敬征通屬先輩詩文集書畫及所藏金石古器啟." *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, 1908, 278. This is a piece of advertisement calling for nationals to donate antiques, artworks, books, etc., to the Nantong Museum to share it with everyone and have it protected under international law.

<sup>130</sup> This piece of news was published on *Tong Hai Xin Bao* 通海新報, March 15, 1916. Quote *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing: Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 151.

<sup>131</sup> In 1956 National Museum Conference 全國博物館工作會議, the Nantong Museum was named as the first Chinese self-established museum in China. And this title comes with the Nantong Museum commonly in China. Quote *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing: Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 151.

<sup>132</sup> Zhang's diary in March 25, 1908 talks about Zhang maintenance the Nantong museum realize his wife's wish of living there. *Zhang Jian Quan Ji*, Vol.6, 599.

documentaries recently published by related institutions attached to the Nantong Museum, it is easy to find social club activities held in this museum. In May 1920, the first conference of Su She, a local society, was held in the Nantong Museum. Another example took place in August 1922, when the 7th annual conference of the Science Society was also held in the Nantong Museum.<sup>134</sup> For those reasons, some researchers argue that the Nantong Museum was built for Zhang's self-interest and served Zhang's social network.<sup>135</sup>

These “self-contradictory” aspects could be interpreted by social economic restrictions. As a brand new form of displaying and constructing knowledge, Zhang strived in every effort to fund and manage the Nantong Museum. In his original proposal, which represents his ideal, Zhang hoped the government to fund the museum (as he claimed in the proposal to the Education Ministry of Ch'ing, and the minister). However, when it came to the actual practice in the Nantong Museum, unfortunately, Zhang had to use his private property so that the museum could be established. As the founder and director, donation sources were greatly affected by Zhang's personal network.<sup>136</sup> In this way, it became reasonable for Zhang to maintain personal relationship within his clique through offering special admission to the museum, which could be

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<sup>133</sup> The famous artist Shen Shou once lived in the Wei Xue Zhai 味雪齋 in Nantong Museum. *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, p.49.

<sup>134</sup> For more details about those activities in Su She 蘇社 and Science Society 中國科學社, see *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Ibid., 49. Other research about Zhang's activities in Sushe, a Jiangsu local self-government association could be found in Lisa Claypool's paper “Zhang Jian and China's First Museum,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 64, No. 3.

<sup>135</sup> Such as Claypool's research, see Claypool, Lisa (2005): “Zhang Jian and China's First Museum,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 64, No. 3.

<sup>136</sup> Quote “Ying Bo Wu Guan 營博物苑,” *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Ibid., 32. “Tongzhou Bo Wu Guan Jing Zheng Tong Shu Xian Bei Shi Wen Ji Shu Hua Ji Suo Cang Jin Shi Qi Qi 通州博物館敬征通屬先輩詩文集書畫及所藏金石古器啟.” *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, 1908, 278.

one way to keep the sources of collections or keep the fame of the museum to earn more donations. At the same time, as funds and resources were limited, it was not practical for the Nantong Museum to be fully free and accessible to every section of the general population. Instead of making profits, as a public museum, the Nantong Museum provided free access to local educational institutions to assist public education. Though Zhang compromised in realizing his original plan due to economic social limitations, basically he insisted and devoted efforts to expand the influence of this museum and educate promising youth for his ideal nation.

Studying Zhang's museum, we could find contradictions, or we could call adjustment in Zhang's practices. The exhibits' "disordered-ordered" binary nature in the Nantong Museum could serve as an example. As mentioned above, in organizing the collections, Zhang strictly classified them into three departments titled "Nature," "History," and "Arts." For the Nature Department, Zhang strictly identified every collections with Latin scientific names.<sup>137</sup> In terms of naming and classifying, it seems that Zhang aimed to faithfully adopt the modern knowledge system, transplanted to China. However, when coming to the architectural complexes and displaying exhibits, Zhang seemed to break the order.<sup>138</sup> Although he could separate three types of exhibitions in exhibition halls, Zhang did not. Instead, the layout of the exhibits were rather disorganized. The Central Hall was for exhibits of rubbings of epigraphy, which were part of collections of the History Department. Similar "misplaced" situations could be found in the South Hall and North Hall. The upper floor of the South Hall displayed selections from the Arts Department, while the lower displayed selections from the Nature Department. In the North Hall,

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<sup>137</sup> See Sun Qu's memoir. *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集. Ibid., 51.

<sup>138</sup> *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Ibid., 48.

collections in the Arts Department were on the upper floor while collections from the Nature Department on the lower floor.<sup>139</sup> Obviously this arrangement was not the most efficient for the audience to find collections in a certain department. Without guidance, this museum would leave audiences an impression of “disorderliness.”

Why did Zhang break the order with which he strictly abide in classifying the collections? One possible explanation for Zhang’s insistence on the collections’ Latin names could be the purpose of assisting school education; while coming to the order system, Zhang believed that exhibits from different departments could exist in harmony when displayed in the same building. His view of harmony not only applied to objects in different cultures (e.g. Dutch windmill, Chinese style alcove were mixed placed as decorations in the museum),<sup>140</sup> but also expanded across disciplines. Based on the explanation above, it is possible that the “disorderliness” came from Zhang’s flexibility in organizing the exhibits. Evidence could be found in the building of the North Hall. After the discovery of whalebone in local Nantong and receiving of a landscape-painting scroll, Zhang found those two collections were the same length, then decided to build the North Hall. The whalebone was exhibited downstairs, while the scroll was upstairs.<sup>141</sup> From this example, one could find that in Zhang’s idea, he could be flexible in deciding the locations for certain exhibits’ display. Furthermore, it was more harmonious to display items from different departments in the same building. Actually Zhang was adjusting his classification of museum layout as well. As Sun Qu, the son of the first Nantong Museum director, said in his memoir, the room on the east of the Central Hall was

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<sup>139</sup> See *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch’ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, 48-54.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

originally used as a weather station, then it was removed in 1915 and replaced with an attic in 1920.<sup>142</sup> In his practice, Zhang constantly adjusted his classification system and reconsidered how to display collections in this museum. It was possible that Zhang was aware of the inconsistency inside the museum and tried to adjust the system to better represent his ideas. As an attempt of building Chinese museums, it was necessary for Zhang to generate a system through experiments and adjustments. Temporary inconsistency of early experiments could be acceptable.

During his explorations, Zhang seemed gradually to become conscious of what should be represented in the museum. In the early 20th century, there was a lack of a ready-made model of building museums to refer to, as Zhang mentioned in *Plan of the Museum*.<sup>143</sup> During the exploration of what should be displayed in the museum, Zhang gradually became more confident and conscious of using the museum as a means to generate the narratives of national history. For example, early in the Ch'ing dynasty, although Zhang strived to realize his constitutionalism ideal, he did not use the museum to justify it.<sup>144</sup> However, later in the Republic era, Zhang displayed the projectile, which was used in the second revolution against the imperialist Yuan Shikai, in the museum and classified it into “national history of weapons.”<sup>145</sup> This weapon in the museum helped create and present the idea that the war against Yuan was part of the nation's history. In recognizing this weapon as part of the national history, Zhang clearly demonstrated

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>143</sup> Quote “*Gui Hua Tiao Yi* 規劃條議,” *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Ibid., 95.

<sup>144</sup> Quote *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Ibid., 557-562.

<sup>145</sup> About weapons used to fight against Yuan Shikai could be found in *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Ibid., 96. Zhang's political opinion against Yuan could be found in Zhang's diary as early as on Dec. 3rd, 1907. Quote *Zhang Jian Quan Ji* 張謇全集, Ibid., 592.

and justified his political opinion in the museum. Although from the very beginning Zhang was conscious that the museum was a field of generating discourse, it was later that Zhang became skilled in practicing this power.

Zhang also adjusted his attitudes towards national history and cultures during dynastic changes. As mentioned above, the Nantong Museum opened in 1905 when Zhang was a constitutionalist in the Ch'ing dynasty,<sup>146</sup> and was still in operation after Zhang died in 1926. In Zhang's ideal museums (represented in the proposals to Ch'ing government and minister), he emphasized the importance of admiring traditional culture of the Chinese nation. While in his practice in the Nantong Museum, he tended to generate the national history as a history in evolution and modernization, Zhang was aware of the constantly changing political and social climate in late imperial and early republic China. For example, when the museum was originally established in the Ch'ing Empire, there were only three departments, namely "Nature," "History," and "Arts." After the imperial examination system was abandoned in 1905 and modern educational methods popularized, old and new instruments were juxtaposed in the museum, and a new education department was added.<sup>147</sup> During the 21 years when Zhang operated the Nantong Museum, old political and social systems were abandoned in Chinese society, such as the imperial examination system;<sup>148</sup> new polities were tested, such as a constitutional monarchy and republic polity. During the 21 years, Zhang tried to incorporate his new visions of the world and understanding of the "self" into the historical narratives in his

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<sup>146</sup> Evidence of Zhang as a constitutionalist could easily be found in his diaries, from his efforts in implementing constitutionalism in Ch'ing.

<sup>147</sup> "Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Pin Mu 南通博物苑品目". Quote *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Ibid., 65.

<sup>148</sup> Quote *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Ibid., 24.

museum. With old restrictions broken and new ones built, Zhang, consciously or unconsciously, made adjustments to the dramatic social changes.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS TO MUSEUM EDUCATION IN CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY**

Zhang's museum provides us profound implications. As the first Chinese museum and a site of constructing national identity, the Nantong Museum inevitably involved the intention of the founder and curator. It provided a reference to build private museums under a powerful government: private curators need to balance, not only arts and funds availability and quality, but also the political intension in dynamic interactions with governments. Also, the museum drives us to rethink how to create more efficient international mechanics to protect cultural heritage from international wars. Last but not least, Zhang's case compels us to think about how to jump out of a cage of naming if it frames people's understanding. In Zhang's case, he adjusted his naming system several times, trying to find a reasonable position on which to stand.

This study of the Nantong Museum, which was a phenomenon in the late Ch'ing and early Republic era, has concern for Chinese society and global political environment after Late Ch'ing. In other words, the repressed possibilities, which could not be realized due to social economic restrictions, was where the tension of the whole twentieth century rested and why this research is meaningful to the contemporary context. In this case, was it possible that a local autonomic and self-sufficient system as a way towards modernization, which was practiced in Nantong by Zhang, was used for a broader area of China? In this research, I tried to avoid justifying the history that have taken place, but to uncover the original state when China involved in the modern world system and the tension under different forces, through which we could

regain the possibility of telling history, and uncover how, through imagination, the haunted “nation” was converted into a localized Chinese “Republic.”

## **8.1 HOW TO CULTURALLY CONSTRUCT A NATION**

Zhang’s efforts in the museum provided a model to culturally construct a nation. Zhang imagined and practiced his idea of constructing a modern nation-state through the museum. The museum was built to reconstruct national identity, to imagine possible international relations for China by pursuing equality and agency, and to educate ideal nationals in knowledge, behaviors and emotions. Limited by dynastic changes and the lack of ready-made models, funds, and management feasibility, Zhang’s thoughts and practices appeared inconsistent. In tracing Zhang’s adjustments in the museum, this paper discovers that Zhang tended to be more adroit in using the museum to create knowledge discourse, in other words, an identified national history for the Chinese. Those limitations of this individual attempt are worth rethinking.

Some of Zhang’s early ideas to build Chinese museums are realized later and continue to help construct and confirm the Chinese national identity. After the dynastic changes in early twentieth century and a modern republic polity developed, the numbers of national public museums mushroomed in China. The museums built in Beijing were especially based on heritage from the imperial family, which partly realized Zhang’s original proposal to the Ch’ing government. In Beijing, a History Museum started being established in 1912 and then became

open to the public in 1932 with 210,000 collections.<sup>149</sup> Many early capital museums were based on the heritage of the imperial institutions, as suggested in Zhang's proposal to the Ch'ing government, such as rituals from imperial college 太學<sup>150</sup> or imperial families.<sup>151</sup> Claiming the imperial as "history,"<sup>152</sup> those museums helped justify the legitimacy of the new government.<sup>153</sup> Compared with the specimen showrooms in Zhang's Nantong Museum, the Geological Mineral Gallery was built in 1916 and got more resources as it was based on the Specimen Exhibition Room in the Office of Geological Survey in the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce.<sup>154</sup> In the year 1931, another museum, the Popular Museum,<sup>155</sup> was built in Beijing with an emphasis on biological categories and ecological distributions. Under help of the centralized force, this national natural museum with more than 80,000 collections collected more than 200,000 specimens in eight years. With the centralized state power, the museum realized what Zhang's museum could not decades ago. The cumbersome and unsystematic classification in the Nantong

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<sup>149</sup> See Beijing Bowuguan Xue Hui Zhu Bian 北京博物館學會 (ed.), *The Year Book of Beijing Museums (1912-1987)* 北京博物館年鑒, Beijing: Beijing Yan Shan Chu Ban She, 1989, 3.

<sup>150</sup> Such as the History Museum put into establishment in 1912 was built in the original site of imperial college. In the year 1917, when it moved to the Meridian Gate of the Forbidden Palace, the History Museum used the old city gate tower as exhibition rooms.

<sup>151</sup> Such as the Antiquities Gallery in 1914 used some halls outside the Forbidden Palace, and exhibited more than 200,000 pieces of antiques which used to be private properties for imperial family.

<sup>152</sup> A well-known example is the Beijing Palace Museum. November 1924, when General Feng Yuxiang expelled the last emperor from the Forbidden City, the newly built committee quickly changed the Palace into the Palace Museum and opened to the public, so that the imperial era is ended and cannot return. Beijing Bowuguan Xue Hui Zhu Bian 北京博物館學會(ed.), *The Year Book of Beijing Museums (1912-1987)* 北京博物館年鑒, Beijing: Beijing Yan Shan Chu Ban She, 1989, 3-7.

<sup>153</sup> For more details of the fall of Ch'ing Empire and the establishment of the Republic, see John K. Fairbank, "Introduction: the old order," *Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 10, 1-34.

<sup>154</sup> For more details about the Geological Mineral Gallery 地質礦產博物館, see Beijing Bowuguan Xue Hui Zhu Bian 北京博物館學會(ed.), *The Year Book of Beijing Museums (1912-1987)* 北京博物館年鑒, Beijing: Beijing Yan Shan Chu Ban She, 1989, 4.

<sup>155</sup> The Popular Museum 通俗博物館, *Ibid.*, 4.

Museum was replaced by mushroomed discipline-based and specialized museums in the Republic era. For example, the Popular Education Museum based on the Ch'ing relics displayed the transformation of apparel and cars in history, as well as new political events like the May 30<sup>th</sup> Incident.<sup>156</sup>

## 8.2 THE NANTONG MUSEUM AFTER ZHANG'S PERIOD

The imagination of the “nation” for the Chinese people was constructed in the relations with other nations, and the war with Japan in the 1930s was important in constructing such consciousness and imagination of the nation.<sup>157</sup> When the flames of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression spread to museums, countless museums closed or moved to the inner mainland. Taking the Palace Museum as an example, collections were moved to Shanghai, then to Nanking. In the year 1937, the collections were moved westward to Changsha, Hankou and Baoji.<sup>158</sup> Those books left in Beijing, unfortunately, were stolen or trampled by the Japanese-supported Chinese pseudo-civilian police in 1938. After the war against the Japanese ended in 1945, part of the stolen collections was found and returned. Instead of being sent back

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<sup>156</sup> Popular Educational Museum 通俗教育博物館, Ibid., 4. Other examples will be the National Opera Museum which collected and exhibited more 2000 kinds of Chinese opera resources; or the Astronomical Museum, which exhibited the astronomical observation instruments in Ming and Ch'ing empires; etc.

<sup>157</sup> Quote Professor Dai Jinhua, keynote speech on Association of Asian Studies Annual Conference, Toronto, March 2012: “Cutting short the extension of 20th century Chinese history, we obviously cannot inversely deduce a Chinese model from China's rise. Rather, this model can only become the latest case or footnote for global capitalism. It cannot draw from or transform the debts, legacies, and resources of 20th century Chinese history. It also cannot begin to imagine or implement a different and hopeful new world on account of China's intervention.”

<sup>158</sup> Beijing Bowuguan Xue Hui Zhu Bian 北京博物館學會主編: *The Year Book of Beijing Museums (1912-1987)* 北京博物館年鑒, Beijing: Beijing Yan Shan Chu Ban She, 1989, 28-31.

to Beijing, the collections in Nanking were sent to Taiwan in the year 1948, before the communist party took control of the mainland. In this national disaster led by the Japanese army, the Nantong Museum was not an exception. Zhang's imagination of the international system crumbled when this real battle came. On March 17 in the year of 1938, the Japanese army<sup>159</sup> landed near Nantong,<sup>160</sup> which led to a disaster for the Nantong people for eight years. On the eve of Japanese evasion, registered collections in the museum were 10,023 pieces,<sup>161</sup> while only about 100 pieces were left after the Japanese retreated. According to the memoir of Sun Qu,<sup>162</sup> the son of the first director of the Nantong Museum, although the administrators considered moving the collections, they trusted the effect of international law which should protect the museum from being trespassed, which, ironically, turned out to be useless in face of the Japanese cavalry. After the Japanese army ravaged the city, the Nantong Museum was destroyed. In a newspaper, *Wu Shan Daily*, published on February 23, 1946, there reported detailed description:

*In the South Hall, which used to have the most collections in the museum, I saw a Buddhist statue lying on the ground, whose body was in fragments. Except for some heavy stone horses, the carved stones, which were cultural relics, all disappeared. Though the hall gate was locked, the windows were broken. Two whale skulls, which*

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<sup>159</sup> The Japanese army in Nantong was called Fan Zhong Corps 飯冢旅團, with about five thousand soldiers. Quote Nantong Bo Wu Yuan (ed.) *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Qing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing: Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 65.

<sup>160</sup> The Japanese army landed on Yao Gang 城郊姚港, Ibid., 65.

<sup>161</sup> Quote Nantong Bo Wu Yuan (ed.) *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Qing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing: Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 66.

<sup>162</sup> Sun Qu spent one chapter titled “After the Fall 淪陷以後” on his “*Memoir on the Nantong Museum* 南通博物苑回憶錄,” Ibid., 66.

*originally in the North Hall, were on the fallen messy cabinets. Some ribs were among the long grass... There is nothing left in the North Hall.*<sup>163</sup>

It was after 20 years of Zhang's death that the Nantong Museum was destroyed by the Japanese army. Having started with protecting the national treasures under international laws, Zhang endeavored all through his life building this museum, while being given a cruel but vivid lesson by the military force in a real international war. It will be arbitrary to conclude that Zhang's map of international relations for China was a failure based on the bankruptcy of his belief in the effects of a clause from an international law, but at the very least it conveys the vulnerability of this passive, imaginary protection system. Ironically, as an imagination generated after national trauma in the past and under anxiety of future national crisis, the life of the Nantong Museum as an individual endeavor was ended by another international war.

After the communist party took over the mainland, the local government constituted a committee to reconstruct the Nantong Museum,<sup>164</sup> since when the display and education activities in Nantong Museum transformed from individual endeavor to government-oriented, in my understanding, it could be called the end of "the Nantong Museum." After all, as the new government confirmed its legitimacy, it is no longer necessary for any individual to imagine alternative possibilities for China or educate the Chinese nationals as he or she wishes.

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<sup>163</sup> 五山日報, quote Nantong Bo Wu Yuan (ed.), *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集. Beijing: Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 66.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

### 8.3 ZHANG'S LEGACIES

Private funded and open to the public, Zhang's Nantong Museum was a special phenomenon in the late Ch'ing and early Republic China. During the process of deconstructing self-consciousness when a new polity was founded, both in the Republic and the People's Republic era, the Mainland or Taiwan, government-sponsored museums became the leading force to create authorized public discourse.<sup>165</sup> Not only for students at school, but also for a wider range of general nationals, Zhang's museum educational system became a site for generating government-oriented discourse and knowledge. Due to the lack of centralization and government control, there came the vacancy of authorized discourse in late Ch'ing, comparatively, which enabled the variety of possibilities of China's modernization. After one century, the museum was not for representation of individual political visions.<sup>166</sup> As the polities for the Mainland China and Taiwan became stable, the public found less opportunity to involve themselves in political reforms. Instead, as marginalized political forces, the public chose to protest and express the repression under the powerful authority. Regardless of the original intention, these resistances, in my understanding, became more of artistic behaviors. Zhang's model of building a museum as a part of a social economic system to modernize and reform China passed away with the political uncertainty in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although later official discourse tended to purify

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<sup>165</sup> For more information, see Xiangguang Song, "Promoting "Identity" is an Important Mission of Contemporary Museums," *Southeast Culture*, 2011, Issue 04, 9-13.

<sup>166</sup> Private museums still exist, though their aims or functions may differ—not for improving national character. Unlike late Ch'ing museums, such as Zhang's Nantong Museum, contemporary private museums are lack of unity with local cultures and social-economic integrity. For more information about contemporary private museums in Chinese Mainland, see Hua Lin, "China's Private Museums Embrace Their Heydays," *China & The World Cultural Exchange*, 2011, Issue 05, 4-5. For more information for museums in Taipei, see Kuo-Ning Chen, "Museums in Taiwan and the Development of Cultural Awareness," *Museum International*, May, 2008, Vol. 60(1-2), 123(9).

Zhang as a heroic ethnic entrepreneur and the historical narratives chose to selectively forget his other identities, such as an independent thinker and reformer which may seem sensitive in their political dimension, I strive to uncover this political dimension in Zhang's social constructions, and I hope the repressed significance of Zhang's endeavors of autonomous region be re-examined.

Although a century has passed since Zhang practiced his imaginations, those multiple possibilities represented in old days may have new faces in contemporary China and in the broader global world. Though it is the truth that the Mainland China was under the umbrella of a communist slogan as economically capitalist country, it does not mean this polity and the Chinese identity propagandized in the Mainland is the only possibility. At least the struggles and anxieties of the Taiwanese, the Hong Kong people, and the ethnic minorities are far more complex than what is written in middle school history textbooks or the narratives in national museums in the mainland or Taiwan.<sup>167</sup> The imaginary national identity of "Chinese," in original context, was an passive invention facing the invasion of other nations.<sup>168</sup> In late Ch'ing and early Republic discourse, nationalism is always related to "shame."<sup>169</sup> In *Shenbao*, one of the most influential newspapers in Shanghai back to those days, readers could find that in public discourse, "shame" went beyond the boundaries of its original meanings in issues of "face" and connected to an idea of "guilt" and a modern nationalist rhetoric of obligation designed to raise awareness

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<sup>167</sup> For more about Chinese mainland and Taiwan middle school history education, see Shouqing Xiong, "Zu Guo Da Lu Yu Taiwan Li Shi Jiao Ke Shu De Bi Jiao," *History Teaching in Middle School*, 2000, Issue 3, 10-13.

<sup>168</sup> For more analysis of the fall of Ch'qing Emperor and the Establishment of Republic China, see Ching-hwang Yen, "The Overseas Chinese and Late Ch'qing Economic Modernization," *Modern Asian Studies*, 1982, Vol. 16(2), 217-32. John K. Fairbank, *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol.10, 1978, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

<sup>169</sup> Weipin Tsai, *Reading Shenbao: Nationalism, Consumerism and Individualism in China, 1919-37*, Basingstoke, UK; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 106.

among individuals of their roles as members of the nation. While in Zhang's system, the attitude towards western culture seems to be more cooperative, the sense of shame is not emphasized as in other public cultural activities as in Zhang's contemporaries. Dramatically, Zhang's map in the museum was more scientific, and it could also be interpreted as the trauma of the nation that could be cured temporarily in this way—not from “shame” or “humiliation,” but from corporative attitudes that the Chinese participate in the global world system.

Zhang's system of Chinese identity was based on the international relations in his times, which may be challenged under globalization context. Marc F. Plattner argues that globalization has been one of the two broad international trends (the other in democratization) dominated the last quarter of the twentieth century and the initial years of the twenty-first,<sup>170</sup> and the shrinking of the world has given rise to global cooperation as well as global conflict.<sup>171</sup> Studying Zhang's museum, readers will find the national identity was based on international relations of being invaded by other nations. Based on intense international relations, it was crucial to purify Chinese identity to unity the Chinese nation, while today in a peaceful environment, the nationalist emotions generated from international wars is no longer the theme of Chinese international relations.<sup>172</sup> Under the peaceful globalization context, will it be necessary to construct a new Chinese identity? Zhang's experiments on culturally constructing the Chinese identity to be more efficiently involved in the world may provide reference to generate this new identity for the Chinese, so as for other nations.

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<sup>170</sup> Marc F Plattner, “Democracy Without Borders?” *Global Challenges to Liberal Democracy*, Chapters 6 & 8, Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, 74.

<sup>172</sup> For more details, see “Intellectual Change and the Reform Movement,” and “Late Ch'ing foreign relations, 1866-1905,” *Cambridge History of China*. Vol.11, 1978, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Suisheng Zhao, “Chinese Nationalism and Its International Orientation,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Spring 2000, Vol. 115 Issue 1, 1-34.

The Nantong Museum worked as part of Zhang's modernization attempts in Nantong, together with local schools in Zhang's modernizing education system, and industries. Funded by profits from local companies, Zhang established more than 370 primary schools in Nantong, as well as specialized colleges in textile, agriculture, water conservancy, medicine, business, and Nantong University,<sup>173</sup> together with the Han Mo Lin Publishing House 翰墨林印書局, the Nantong Club 南通俱樂部, the Geng Su Theater 更俗劇場, and libraries. As part of these modernization attempts, through building the Nantong Museum, Zhang provided a model for China to deal with the national crisis in the early twentieth century in dynamic relations with the Great Britain, France, Japan, Russia, Germany, the United States, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and other imaginary enemies of the western,<sup>174</sup> in the name of nationalism. As a constitutionalist in the Ch'ing Empire, Zhang also engaged in political reform in central authority and practiced a possible way of autonomy as a unit for China in the early twentieth century.<sup>175</sup>

Zhang's museum was just one among numerous imaginations on possibilities of a nation-state in late Ch'ing and Republic China. Zhang's efforts in building early museums in China, though lack of social economic support and existing models, provided valuable historical

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<sup>173</sup> See Yan Jin (ed.), *Nantong Bo Wu Yuan Bai Nian Yuan Ch'ing Ji Nian Wen Ji* 南通博物苑百年苑慶紀念文集, Beijing, Wen Wu Chu Ban She, 2005, 40-1.

<sup>174</sup> For the history of China being invaded by western countries and China's reactions, see Yingpi Yang, Post-Opium War Struggle for National Survival with Western Learning as an Eye-opener, *Journal of PLA Naging Institute of Politics*, 2010, Issue 3, 8-11. Mary Timmons, "Discovering China," *School Library Journal*, August, 2002, Vol. 48(8), 57(2). Lewis M. Chere, "Great Britain and the Sino-French War: the problems of an involved neutral, 1883-1885," *Western Conference of the Association for Asian Studies*, 1978, No.7. Bin Lin, "Zai Xian Ya Pian Zhan Zheng Yi Lai Fan Di Dou Zheng Feng Yun," *PLA Daily*, 1990, Issue 6.

<sup>175</sup> Political power struggles applied between conservatives led by Ci Xi, the Queen mother, and constitutionalists led by the Emperor. Related historical documents and narratives could be found in Yim, Natasha Malone, Peter, *Cixi "The Dragon Empress,"* Chicago: Goosebottom Books, 2011. Yanfei Ming, Yazhou Gao, Bin Chen, "On the failure of Constitutional Reform in Late Ch'ing Empire," *Journal of Hunan University*, 2010, Vol. 24(2), pp.109-112.

references for later research.<sup>176</sup> His attempt, limitations, and adjustments could help understand China's transformation in the late 19th and early 20th century. This individual's attempt may also provide references to examine conflicts in the contemporary Chinese education system and the Chinese people's national identity in the international community. His efforts in applying museums in local education to train local masses to be qualified nationals worked as a significant part in his local self-governance reform system. It inspires us to rethink an alternative modernization project for China in the contemporary, ever-changing world, such as how local self-governance may coexist in a united nation-state. Those experiments may provide references for contemporary and later polity reforms, which could be furthered in my later research, and they inspire us to rethink an alternative modernization project for China in the contemporary, ever-changing world.

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<sup>176</sup> For Zhang's experiments influence modernization of China, see Guoguang Liu, *Guan yu Zhang Jian De Liang Xiang Jing Shen Yi Chan Ji Qi Dui Zhongguo Xian Dai Hua De Yi Yi* 關於張謇的兩項精神遺產及其對中國現代化的意義, Nanking: Jiang Su Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 1996.

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