CHINESE TRADITIONAL PAINTING AND SELF-IDENTITY OF CHINA
NATION STATE

Li Yingfeng¹, Chen Chongwei², Ke Yihan³

ABSTRACT
Chinese traditional painting is an important part of Chinese art system, and plays a positive role in China's self-identity. In the past, the research of Chinese traditional painting mainly focused on the changes of artistic style and creative methods of Chinese traditional painting. Most literatures ignore the relationship between Chinese traditional painting and Chinese society, and rarely mention the role of Chinese traditional painting in self-identity. This research aims to analyze the role of Chinese traditional painting in self-identity in different times. This research collects relevant data of Chinese traditional painting through field investigation and researching literature, and carries out qualitative research and analysis. This research found that the concept of Chinese traditional painting in modern China continues to improve, and become one of the tools of self-identity. Finally, the author analyzes the significance and limitations of this research.

Keywords: Chinese traditional painting, Self-identity

I. INTRODUCTION
Chinese traditional painting is one of ancient Chinese art forms. It developed in different historical periods of China, and has finally been recognized by all Chinese people (Hong. 2013). And it has been considered as one of the Chinese traditions in modern society (Lv. 2013). At the same time, Chinese traditional painting is constantly inventing in the process of development, strengthening the contact with Chinese society. After Chinese traditional painting became a part of self-identity, Chinese traditional painting also classified itself. The interior of the Chinese traditional painting system has also begun to distinguish, what kind of painting elements are Chinese traditional painting elements, what are not the elements of Chinese traditional painting.

The research concept involved in this research is self-identity. The word of identity first appeared in English in 1570 (Xin. 2018). It is used to refer to the stable self-consciousness corresponding to people's spirit and material. It is a person's self-expression different from others. Since the end of the 19th century, with the development of psychology, sociology and anthropology, especially the rise of interdisciplinary cultural studies, the expression and meaning of identity have become more and more diversified (Cui. 2016).

In the past researches, Chinese traditional painting was considered to be only a form of ancient Chinese painting. Chinese people use Chinese traditional painting to achieve the social functions of education, recording, aesthetic, entertainment and so on (Qian. 2006). In fact, the role of Chinese traditional painting is more than those. Especially in the trend of globalization, the self-identity function of Chinese traditional painting is further reflected.

The objectives of this research include the following two points. First of all, the purpose of this research is to analyze the self-identity role of Chinese traditional painting in China by studying the development of Chinese
traditional painting in different historical periods. This part of the analysis will make up for the lack of self-identity in the literature of the development of Chinese traditional painting. On the other hand, self-identity is one of the research concepts in humanities research, and the content of this research will further expand the scope of this concept. At the same time, this research will also provide reference for other researchers in this research mode and concept application.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chinese Traditional Painting

The research literatures about Chinese traditional painting have appeared in different periods of China, but most of them only studied Chinese traditional painting as art product, and ignored the relationship between Chinese traditional painting and Chinese society and Chinese people (Lv. 2013). In the past research, researchers have made a detailed analysis on the classification, artistic techniques, artistic forms and artistic contents of Chinese traditional painting. These studies will help researchers to understand the past Chinese traditional painting. However, researchers found that the development of Chinese traditional painting is not limited to the level of art. Self-identity is also an integral part of the development of Chinese traditional painting. On the one hand, self-identity promotes the formation of Chinese traditional painting system. On the other hand, the self-identity of Chinese traditional painting enhances the Chinese people's identity of the country and culture. Therefore, in this research, author will pay more attention to the formation and development of self-identity of Chinese traditional painting.

2.2 Self-identity

The word of identity first appeared in English in 1570 (Xin. 2018). In existing research literatures, the research concept has gradually developed from psychological research to interdisciplinary research, including art, clothing, ritual and other aspects. For example, in the existing literature search, we can find that the existing research literatures have appeared political identity, value identity, mutual identity of music culture, hometown identity and so on. However, the existing researches don't include the analysis of Chinese traditional painting. In fact, in the process of the development of Chinese traditional painting, it also plays a role of self-identity in China's social development.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts qualitative analysis. First, in the field investigation, author interviewed the practitioners of Chinese traditional painting. The contents include: the development trend of ancient Chinese painting, the influence of social development on Chinese traditional painting, the self-identity of Chinese traditional painting, etc. During the interview, the interviewees include dealers of Chinese traditional painting, fans of Chinese traditional painting and students of Chinese traditional painting. On the other hand, according to the existing literatures, author collected and analyzed the development of Chinese traditional painting and the basic meaning of self-identity. Based on these two aspects of information, author analyzes the current situation of Chinese traditional painting and completed the research on self-identity of Chinese traditional painting.

IV. DEVELOPMENT OF CHINA IN DIMENSION OF PRE-MODERN NATION STATE AND MODERN NATION STATE

4.1 Development of China in Dimension of Pre-modern Nation State

The Qin Dynasty was the first unified dynasty in ancient China. This laid a foundation for the economic development of the Qin Dynasty, and also created stable conditions for the development of Chinese society and
culture (Cui. 1992). In this case, from the Qin Dynasty, China began to form a unique feudal society, culture, art system. The concept of self-identity of Chinese people began to have a preliminary embodiment in this period.

Han Dynasty and almost the same period of the Roman Empire as the world's most advanced civilization and a powerful empire. The Chinese people who lived in the region of the Han Dynasty at that time formed the earliest Han people, and the culture and art they created gradually developed into the traditional Chinese culture. The cultural influence of the Han Dynasty laid the foundation for China's self-identity, and most of the cultural phenomena of the Han Dynasty are still used today (Liu. 2013).

The 5th to 11th centuries are the early middle ages of the world, roughly equivalent to the Sui and Tang Dynasties in China (Lv. 2020). In the study of Chinese history, most researchers regard the Sui and Tang dynasties as the peak of the early development of Chinese society and culture.

Sui and Tang dynasties were a regime jointly established by the Han and minority nationalities (Lv. 2020). The stable and unified rule, strong national power, vast territory, high material civilization and good cultural development of the Tang Dynasty enhanced the sense of identity of the surrounding ethnic groups (Bu. 2017). Therefore, under the rule of the Tang Dynasty, the contact and communication between ethnic groups developed unprecedentedly, and ethnic relations were further closer. Thus created the second historical stage of the growth and development of China's multi-ethnic country after the Han Dynasty.

In the course of the development of Chinese history, the Song Dynasty belongs to the middle period of the feudal society. Song Dynasty was the smallest Dynasty in the history of China (Zhai. 2017). Under the conservative military policy at that time, although it effectively maintained the long-term stability of the domestic ruling situation. But, the Song Dynasty gradually produced complex and sharp ethnic contradictions and struggles, which eventually caused the severe regression of some areas and cultures in the north.

In 1279, the Song Dynasty was completely wiped out, and China was fully integrated into the international empire of the Mongols. Before the complete demise of the Song Dynasty, Kublai Khan established the Yuan Dynasty by naming the Mongol regime in China Yuan in 1271.

The Yuan Dynasty had the largest territory in Chinese history and was the easternmost part of the Yuan Empire. In the vast territory of China, a variety of ethnic cultures have emerged, and the cultures of the Han and the ethnic minorities have started to integrate with each other. The phenomenon of learning Han culture in non-Han areas is called sinicization (Li. 2018). At the same time, the culture and art in the Han areas began to absorb ethnic elements.

During the reign of the Yuan Dynasty, part of the social system brought many negative and backward influences to the development of Chinese society. Among them, the most far-reaching and even direct destruction of the Yuan Dynasty is the emergence of ethnic discrimination and ethnic oppression policy in the Yuan Dynasty. As a result, the self-identity of the Yuan Dynasty was seriously damaged, and the society of the Yuan Dynasty was divided into a variety of social classes and ethnic groups. In the late Yuan Dynasty, class contradictions and ethnic contradictions were acute, and finally collapsed in the nationwide peasant uprising.

In the Ming Dynasty, the Han restored their rule over China. Although the country was smaller than that of the Yuan Dynasty, it was politically enlightened and socially stable. At the same time, based on the strength of the Ming Dynasty, the neighboring minority countries also maintained friendly exchanges with the Ming Dynasty. Under such circumstances, international cultural and artistic exchanges have been formed.
In the late 14th century, the Ming government established a foreign policy of good-neighborliness and friendship, sending envoys to 12 neighboring countries for 30 visits, and envoys from 17 countries for 135 visits to China (Cui. 1992). Economic, cultural and political contacts between the Ming Dynasty and Asian countries, especially those bordering on land, were more frequent than before.

The Qing Dynasty (1636-1912) was the last feudal dynasty in Chinese history, with 12 emperors and Manchu rulers. In the early and middle Qing Dynasty, China was strong and its rule was consolidated. It has formed the political center north of the Yangtze River and the economic center in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River. The formation of a unified and complete multi-ethnic state (Bu. 2017).

The Qing Dynasty, as a unified multi-ethnic country with a minority as the emperor, naturally strengthened the cultural ties among all the other ethnic groups in the region, which promoted the great development of ethnic and the cross-reference and integration of ethnic.

4.2 Development of China in Dimension of Modern Nation State

The opium war broke out between China and Britain in 1840. This marked the beginning of the modern period of Chinese history, and also the beginning of China's semi-colonial and semi-feudal society and the period of the old democratic revolution.

During the first 45 years of the opium war. Land annexation and landlord exploitation intensified, resulting in the bankruptcy and exile of many peasants, and the social crisis became more and more serious (Lv. 2020). The development of western capitalism and the colonial expansion to the east have brought unprecedented challenges and impacts to ancient China (Huang. 2019).

From then on, China no longer enjoyed complete and independent sovereignty, China's feudal economy suffered from the increasingly serious destruction and control of foreign capitalism, and Chinese society began to transform into a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. Chinese history has entered a new historical period -- the modern period.

After the founding of the republic of China, with the further development of China's national capitalism, the new social forces in the economy urgently needed to get rid of the old production relations represented by imperialism and feudalism, and in the political demand for China's progress and reform, to change the reactionary rule of imperialism and feudalism (Huang. 2019).

Figure 1: A Group of Ethnic Minorities Living In China
In 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded. After the founding of New China, the Chinese government quickly began to implement the system of regional ethnic autonomy (Piao. 2019).

Chinese government advocates uniting the dozens of ethnic groups in China to form national community. The Chinese government hopes to build China into a unified multi-ethnic country and implement the system of regional autonomy for all ethnic groups under the unified leadership of the Chinese government (Jian. 2017). It is hoped that the new policy will realize the mutual recognition of multiple ethnic groups in China and further realize the common self-identity of Chinese people of different ethnic groups.

In the course of the development of China's nation state, China has experienced the transformation from a single nation-state to a multi-ethnic state. Early China had a strong sense of self-identity based on ethnic identity and stable territory. But with the change of China's territory, the population movement brought about an increase in ethnic groups. Modern China has become a typical multi-ethnic country, and ethnic integration, ethnic unity and self-identity have become one of the social policies being promoted in modern China. In this case, Chinese painting in the development of the Chinese nation, the function of self-identity began to be reflected and enhanced.

V. CHINESE PAINTING IN CONTEXT OF PRE-MODERN NATION STATE

5.1 Chinese painting: Painting as the Communicate Tool (221BC-551AD)

The early emergence of Chinese painting is as the Communicate Tool. It covers the three historical development stages of the Warring States, Qin and Han Dynasties and the Six Dynasties. These three dynasties are the period of the establishment and consolidation of China's unified multi-ethnic feudal state, and also the very important period for the establishment and development of Chinese painting (Lv. 2020).

The rulers of the Qin Dynasty also attached great importance to plastic arts, making them serve the political purpose of promoting the unification and showing the majesty of the royal power, and made great achievements in Chinese painting.

The Han Dynasty regarded Chinese painting as an effective way to commend the meritorious officers, and made many achievements in monumental painting and palace Chinese painting. In the late Han Dynasty, the participation of officials in the creation of Chinese paintings increased. At the same time, under the habit of advocating lavish burial, Chinese paintings reflected the breadth and depth of real life.

The early development of Chinese painting is in the rising period of China's feudal society. Chinese painting Art reflects the vast and boundless cosmic consciousness and the spirit of combining romanticism and realism.

5.2 The Stage of Beginning Chinese painting: From Recording Tools to Painting Artworks (551AD -956AD)

In this stage of development, the practicality of Chinese painting began to fade, and the artistic value of Chinese painting was reflected. New forms and new themes of Chinese painting began to appear, the Chinese painting system began to gradually improve.

Tang Dynasty, Chinese painting is gradually mature period, especially the figure painting has made a significant development. Further achievements have been made in inheriting the tradition (Tao. 2020). At the same time, there are also painters from ethnic minorities who are famous for painting foreign figures, Buddha statues and strange birds and beasts (Chen. 2018). The Chinese painting of this stage presents the situation that traditional painting style and foreign style compete to reflect each other. On the other hand, with the help of the exchange of Chinese painting, the multi-ethnic integration of the Tang Dynasty was promoted.
After the Tang Dynasty, due to the continuous enrichment of painting themes and performance techniques, there were obvious divisions in painting during this period, and more and more mature Chinese painting artists appeared in different painting schools. Landscape painting also became independent from figure painting and became a separate branch of Chinese painting. From the stage of beginning Chinese painting, Chinese painting has been involved in all aspects of life.

Artworks emerged in large numbers during Chinese painting in this stage, with more diverse genres. There were theoretical works discussing the development direction of Chinese painting, as well as theoretical works criticizing individual Chinese painting artists or artistic works of Chinese painting. In this period, theoretical system of Chinese painting had been gradually complete and established.

5.3 The Stage of Golden Age of Chinese painting: The Perfection and Rapid Development of Chinese painting System (956AD -1909AD)

In the early golden age of the development of Chinese painting, a large number of Chinese painting artists were gathered in Bianjing, the capital of China at that time. Chinese painting artists displaced during the wars of the five dynasties and ten Kingdoms returned to the capital of China, which made Bianjing become another ancient painting center after Chang’ an and Luoyang in the Tang Dynasty. At this time, the area of Bianjing painting outstanding achievements, and the formation of art exchanges with ethnic minority areas.

In the early 12th century, ethnic tribes gradually conquered much of northern China and the Song Dynasty capital was forced to move south of the Yangtze River. But the migration of the capital and the entry of ethnic groups into China did not stop the rapid development of Chinese painting. In the course of their development, the minority groups occupying northern China accepted the advanced culture and laws and institutions of the Han nationality and gradually completed the transition from slavery to feudalism (Lv. 2020). Ethnic cultures and arts also absorb and integrate with each other. After learning the painting techniques and forms of Chinese painting, ethnic minority artists create Chinese painting works with ethnic minority colors. During this period, the creation of Chinese painting has become an art form recognized by all Chinese people, and also enriched the new self-identity function of Chinese painting.

Figure 2: Chinese Painting of Minority Content in the 13th Century
In the 14th century, due to the policy of ethnic discrimination adopted by the rulers, some Han officials, although in the ruling institutions, found it difficult to perform politically and could only express their feelings in Chinese paintings (Lv. 2020). In their Works of Chinese painting, they attach importance to the expression of subjective interest and ink style, and poetry, calligraphy and painting are further integrated. During this period, because of the ruler's radical national policy, the Chinese were divided into different groups, and the concept of nation-state was weakened. Influenced by this, Chinese painting has become a symbol of self-identity of some groups. Being able to create specific forms of Chinese painting has become a way for a small number of people to identify themselves.

At the end of the 14th century, during the reign of the last two feudal dynasties in China. Before the Opium War changed the nature of Chinese society from the Founding of the Ming Dynasty in 1368 to 1840, Chinese society was in the later stage of feudalism, but capitalism had already emerged (Zhang. 2019). The development of social economy, politics, ideology and culture in this period directly and indirectly affected the ups and downs of the categories of fine arts and their inheritance.

In the Qing Dynasty at the end of the feudal society, as a unified multi-ethnic country with a minority as the emperor, it was natural to strengthen the cultural ties among the fraternal ethnic groups within the region, which greatly promoted the development of ethnic minority art and also promoted the mutual reference and integration of ethnic minority art.

The development of China in ancient China was from top to bottom. Early use of Chinese painting materials, tools and art education was the privilege of the elite. The civic class usually does not have the energy and material base to work in the arts. In the subsequent development, with the development of productive forces, the popularization of education and the preference of rulers, Chinese painting began to enter other classes of society. Therefore, in the era when Chinese painting has not been widely spread, its self-identity function has not been well played.

VI. CHINESE TRADITIONAL PAINTING IN THE PROCESS OF CHINA NATION STATE

6.1 Chinese Traditional Painting before 1949 (1910AD-1948AD)

In ancient China, painting was called Danqing (丹青). Since the introduction of western painting in modern times, the name "Chinese traditional painting", which specifically refers to Chinese traditional painting, appeared to show the difference between Chinese traditional painting and foreign painting.

After China entered the modern era, the spread and penetration of western art in China has intensified the requirements for the reform of Chinese traditional painting itself. Scholars in the society believe that the spirit of time and the development of time have new requirements on Chinese traditional art, and Chinese traditional painting should have the responsibility to conform to time (Wang. 2018). This kind of thinking had a great impact on the artists at that time, but it was also strongly opposed by different opinions. The artists who oppose this view fear that in the process of artistic integration, the boundaries of Chinese painting will become less clear and eventually lose its identity.

In the context of the wide spread of western painting, Chinese modern painting was gradually divided into two different schools.1. Chinese traditional painting based on tradition; 2. Chinese traditional painting integrated with western painting techniques.

Chinese traditional painting based on tradition has a strong cultural background and a broad social foundation. These painters generally have a high level of education and solid painting skills. Most of them were very good at writing poetry and calligraphy (Chen. 2018). A few of them have studied abroad, but most still belong to China's literati community. Their works mainly focus on the creation of traditional flower-and-bird
paintings and landscape paintings, which show the protection of tradition, but they are also open to the western painting techniques (Chen. 2018).

Artists who integrate western paintings have all had the experience of studying abroad in the west or Japan. By the end of the 19th century, there were already artists from China who went to western countries to study western painting. Although the painters influenced by the western modernism have different pursuits and achievements, on the whole, they belong to a reflection of the modern art trend in the Chinese traditional painting artists (Wang. 2018). It shows the dissatisfaction with realism, advocates to strengthen the subjectivity of Chinese traditional paintings and pursues artistic forms, which is an opposition and supplement to realism. From an objective point of view, different factions have played a role in promoting the development of Chinese traditional painting.

In general, after China entered the modern era, traditional Chinese traditional painting began to contact with western art. However, artists of this period had realized the importance of preserving the self-identity of traditional Chinese traditional painting. Therefore, in the different Chinese traditional painting schools of this period, they always adhere to the inherent artistic core of Chinese traditional painting as the foundation.

6.1 Chinese Traditional Painting after 1949 (1949AD-Now)

On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded. This historic transformation brought the development of Chinese traditional painting to a new stage. Under this new social background, Chinese traditional paintings created by artists no longer aim at pure artistic expression. Artists are also willing to use Chinese traditional paintings to express their joy of leaving the war. The Chinese government at this time also urgently needs to build China's self-identity through art. The appearance of these Chinese traditional paintings promoted the popularization of Chinese traditional painting after the founding of new China.

Chinese government began to support artists in their artistic creation. And in the name of the government organized a fine arts research institute, the establishment of fine arts publications. Artists were asked to publicize the government's policies and the history of the war. Artists are also required to make the government's policies easier to be understood and accepted by the public with the help of artistic images. I hope to inspire the enthusiasm of the people to build the new China and strengthen their sense of identity with the new government.

In general, Chinese traditional painting, especially figure painting, made great progress in the early days of the founding of new China (Zhang. 2019). On the one hand, figure painting occupies a larger proportion in Chinese traditional painting works. On the other hand, new China's figure painting to a certain extent borrowed from the western painting techniques of expression, breaking through the traditional figure painting in the customary way of expression. The combination of realism and Chinese traditional painting makes Chinese traditional painting not only inherit the essence of traditional art, but also absorb the advantages of foreign art. All these factors promoted the development of Chinese traditional painting.

During the Cultural Revolution, the range of subjects in Chinese traditional painting gradually narrowed. Most of the works exclude natural themes and focus on social content. In the intense political atmosphere during the Cultural Revolution, subject matter became the most direct and important criterion for judging the quality of Chinese traditional paintings (Chen. 2018). Therefore, the creation of Chinese traditional paintings is completely restricted to the political creation with thematic significance.

During the changes of dynasties, Chinese traditional painting adapted to the changes of social background and developed continuously. After repeated by many dynasties, it became a Chinese tradition. During this period, it has
experienced periods of being ignored by the society and abandoned by the rulers of ethnic minorities, but it has not changed the traditional nature of Chinese traditional painting.

In modern times, in the process of blending with modernism, Chinese traditional painting began to experiment with collage and installation. Moreover, most of the Chinese painters trained in modern art colleges and universities have been trained in drawing, color, geometric perspective and other painting techniques (Wang, 2018). Traditional Chinese painters’ way of observation and cognition has been changed, and pure Chinese traditional painting no longer exists. The boundary of Chinese traditional painting was no longer clear, but before the reform and opening up, Chinese traditional painting still won its right to exist by virtue of its deep-rooted cultural identity.

![Chinese Traditional Painting Influenced by Western Modernism](image)

Figure 3 : Chinese Traditional Painting Influenced by Western Modernism

After the reform and opening up, China has gone from an agricultural society to a modern society, from a closed society to an open one, and finally walked out of the shadow of the Cultural Revolution, realizing the prosperity of culture and art after the reform and opening up. Chinese traditional painting is a small part of the reform and opening-up plan, but it truly reflects the contradictions and entanglements of Chinese society from politics, economy to culture.

Chinese traditional painting is not only a traditional art, but also a unique national consciousness in the world. It is one of the cultural symbols of China. The development of Chinese traditional painting after the reform and opening up has verified its traditional aesthetics and the vitality of ancient art in the context of modern society.

In general, Chinese traditional painting has played a more important role in identification after China became a modern nation-state. The ethnic policy after the founding of New China encouraged the exchange and integration of dozens of ethnic groups. In this process, Chinese traditional painting has become one of the few art forms recognized by all ethnic groups. This is related to the history of the development of Chinese traditional painting in China. In the process of development, Chinese traditional painting has encouraged minorities to accept this art form and recognize it as one of their symbols.
VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Through this study, we can understand that Chinese painting has the function of constructing Chinese self-identity. However, in the early days of the emergence of Chinese painting, due to the country and social instability, the influence that Chinese painting provides in terms of self-identity has long been neglected. As China gradually becomes a multi-ethnic country, the unified cultural identity can maintain the situation of ethnic unity, and the function of self-identity of Chinese painting began to be gradually amplified.

7.1 Significance of Research

As for Chinese traditional painting, the content of this study elaborates the relationship between Chinese traditional painting and Chinese self-identity, and makes up the gap of relevant literature.

On the other hand, the contribution of Chinese traditional painting to the construction of Chinese self-identity has been neglected in past studies. Especially in the part of ancient Chinese traditional painting, the social development in the feudal period of China does not reflect the Chinese self-identity under the situation of multi-ethnic integration, and the role of Chinese traditional painting has been ignored.

Through the study of this paper, it can be proved that Chinese traditional painting has played a role in the construction of Chinese self-identity in part of the past period.

For the research concept, this study expands the application of self-identity. On the other hand, this study can provide reference for researchers who also use this concept. This research can be used as a model of this kind of research to provide guidance for other research topics.

7.2 Limitations and Future Research Direction

This study describes the relationship between Chinese traditional painting and Chinese self-identity, and analyzes the phenomenon manifested in it. However, there are still a few limitations in this study. First of all, the sources of information in this study are based on field investigation and literature review. In the process of field investigation, interviewees may make subjective judgments about the development of Chinese traditional painting based on their personal occupation and standpoint. This phenomenon can be further analyzed by collecting as many opinions as possible from interviewees, so as to avoid errors.

REFERENCES