

The Fountainhead of All Learned Tradition: Liu Shiwei's Treatise on the Official Scribe and Its Significance for Chinese Culture

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In my paper I should like to present and analyse an early article by Liu Shiwei (1884–1919) published in the first issue of the *Guocui xuebao* (Journal of National Essence, 23.2.1905–1912)¹ and with the title “Guxue chu yu shiguan lun” (All Learning in Antiquity Originated from the Official Scribe). I shall first provide some relevant data on the personal history of Liu Shiwei as well as on the institutional history of the *Guocui xuebao* and then introduce Liu Shiwei's main theses in the article. By this means I hope to lay the foundations for an analysis of two central questions:

– First, does Liu Shiwei see the *shiguan*, the official scribe, as having any symbolical connection to his own time?

– Second, what makes Liu's description and criticism of the role of the official scribe in high antiquity so fitting for the modern discussion of the nationalisation of Chinese historiography that had been triggered off by Liang Qichao's 1902 article “Xin Shixue” (On the Renewal of Historiography) in *Xinmin congbao*, and for the discussion of making traditional knowledge available to the people (*kai minzhi*) that had been demanded by many reformers since the end of the 19th century (Tang Caichang, Wang Kangnian, Yan Fu and others)?²

The Background

Born in Yizheng in Yangzhou county, Jiangsu Province, in 1884, Liu Shiwei had been acutely aware of the concerns of the Yangzhou school of thought from childhood, firstly with respect to combining evidential research, i.e. Han-learning, with the learning of the mind and heart or Song-Learning, and secondly with respect to trying to integrate pre-Qin philosophies into the Confucian worldview and history.³ Furthermore, at the request of Zeng Guofan, his grandfather Liu Yusong (1818–1867) had edited the complete works of Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692),⁴ the author of the

1 As Fan Mingli demonstrates, the 82nd and last issue of the *Guocui xuebao* cannot have been published before March 1912, even if the coverage shows 1911 as the date of this last issue. See Fan Mingli, “Guocui xuebao,” in Ding Shouhe (ed.), *Xinbai geming shiqi qikan jieshao* (Introduction to the periodicals of the 20th century's first two decades in China), 5 vols. (Beijing, 1983), II, 314-366. Here p. 315.

2 See, for example, the case of Tang Caichang, especially his article “Zun xin” (Honoring the New) of 1897, as described in: Jens Hürter, *Tang Caichang (1867–1900). Reformer, Denker und Rebell in China an der Schwelle zur Moderne*, Hamburg, 2002, pp. 77, 138, 214. For Wang Kangnian see: Ewald Heck, *Wang Kangnian (1860–1911) und die Shiwubao*, Sankt Augustin, 2000, pp. 111, 138. For Yan Fu see: Zhang Qizhi, Chen Guoqing: *Jindai lunli sixiang de bianqian* [Changes in modern China ethical thinking] (Beijing, 2000), p. 237-238

3 Hao Chang, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis. Search for Order and Meaning, 1890–1911*, Berkeley et al., 1987, p. 147.

4 Martin Bernal, “Liu Shih-p'ei and National Essence,” in Charlotte Furth (ed.), *The Limits of Change. Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China*, Cambridge, Mass., et al., 1976, p. 90-112. Here p. 91.

Huangshu , a fervent attack on all so-called barbarian rule in Chinese history, and had thus instilled in his descendents an awareness of the shameful situation of their own people, the *Hanzu* . In the light of these facts, it doesn't seem at all strange that, after failing in the metropolitan examination in 1903 at the tender age of 19, one of Liu Shipei's first essays was an attack on barbarian rule under the title *Rangshu* , Book of Expulsion,⁵ that was equally as fervent as that of Wang Fuzhi. In this essay Liu describes the alleged superiority of the *Hanzu* over the *Limín* , the Blackhaired People (that later became the Southern *Miao*), in Darwinian terms, combining the theses of Terrien de Lacouperie (1844–1894) on the western origin of the Chinese people with both traditional attitudes regarding the superiority of Chinese culture and the Darwinian concept of the survival of the fittest.⁶

Besides this anti-barbarian strain, one can also detect an early interest in the roots of the people's rights in China. Thus, in his other outstanding essay of 1903, the *Zhongguo minyue jingyi* (The essential meaning of “Social Contract” in Chinese history), Liu's main objective was to show that the basic idea of a social contract between the ruler and the people had not simply come to China by way of the translation of Jean-Jeaques Rousseau's *Contrat Social* in 1900, but that it was an essential part of the rich tradition of Chinese philosophical thought since the times of the *Yijing* , the text he took as his chronologically first source of argument.⁷

His most severe criticism of the traditional way of ruling the Middle Kingdom was the tendency to see the *junwei* , the position of the ruler, as *tianwei* , the position of the ruler qua heaven,⁸ whereby the ruler came to occupy a position very distant from the *shumin* or the common people. This may, he states, sometimes have been balanced by the doctrine of taking the people's will as the will of heaven, but such an idea was only to be found in some philosophers' theories, not in everyday politics. Thus in his commentary to the quotations from the *Chunqiu Zuo shi zhuan* , Liu Shipei states: “After the Three Dynasties, the longer the system of taking all under heaven as the rulers hereditary possession (*junzhu shixi jia tianxia zhi zhi*) prevailed, the fiercer became the tyrannical strains [in Chinese politics].”⁹

5 It is worthwhile noting that Liu Shipei only after failing in the metropolitan examinations started his revolutionary career. And even if one cannot know for sure, it is still easy to guess that his life would have taken a totally different turn if he had been successful.

6 See the chapter “Miaoli pian” (On the *Miaoli* people) of the *Rangshu*.

7 Already in spring 1898 the first heavily abridged translation into Chinese of the *Contrat Social* under the title *Minyue tongyi* had been published. It was based on the pre-Meiji Japanese translation under the title *Minyaku yakukai* , written by Nakae Tokusuke . However, in the year 1903 Liu Shipei was able to use Yang Tingdong's far more exact translation *Minyue lun* of 1900–1902, which was based on Harada Sen's Japanese translation *Minyaku ron jukugij* of 1883. See Wang Xiaoling, „Liu Shipei et son concept de *contrat social chinois*,” in: *Études chinoises*, vol. XVII, no. 1-2, 1998.

8 See Liu Shipei's commentary on Gu Yanwu (1613-1682) in the *Zhongguo minyue jingyi*.

9 See Liu Shipei's commentary on the *Chunqiu Zuo shi zhuan* of the *Zhongguo minyue jingyi*.

Besides these two essays, in his first two years in Shanghai, 1903 to 1904, Liu Shipai also contributed articles to the *Jingzhong ribao* (Alarming Bell Daily News, 26.2.1904–28.1.1905) and its predecessor, the *Eshi jingwen* (Alarming News regarding the Russian Menace, 15.12.1903–25.2.1904). Protesting against foreign aggression (defining aggressors in terms of “foreign race,” thus also including the Manchu), the stated aim of the *Jingzhong ribao* was to stand up for nationalism and for the preservation of the national essence (*ju you baocun guocui zhi shixin*)¹⁰.

As Martin Bernal has shown, the idea of *Guocui* or National Essence originated in Japan, where it had entered into common use around 1887, as a reaction to the Meiji Government's advocacy of the wearing of western clothes and the adoption of foreign ways.¹¹ The newspaper in which the theories of Japan's National Essence were discussed most passionately was the *Nihonjin* (The Japanese). Its founders, Miyake Setsurei and Shiga Shigetaka, propounded the theory that through tens of thousands of years the Yamato *minzoku* (chin.: *minzu*, race) developed its very own purified *kokusui* (chin.: *guocui*, national essence) that suited the specific characteristics of Japan's national territory perfectly. Therefore, no other people with different customs should have the right to intrude into this perfect unity of people and territory.¹²

In 1902 and in a letter to Huang Zunxian, the foremost expert in and great admirer of Japanese reformist activities since the Meiji Restoration, Liang Qichao proposed the establishment of a journal with the name *National Studies* (*Guoxue bao*). Huang however rejected the idea and pointed to the great differences between progress in westernisation in Japan and in China.¹³ Nevertheless, the idea of preserving the national essence had a deep impact on scholars who were turning into revolutionaries, scholars like Zhang Binglin, whom Liu Shipai met in Shanghai, and Liu himself. It seemed to them the perfect way to combine their new traditionalism with their equally new fight for racial independence. Liu Shipai in particular was embarking upon three types of activity in connection with the preservation of national essence: first he published a collection of anti-

10 See “The Ten Characteristics of the *Jingzhong ribao*,” in *Jingzhong ribao*, no. 267, 28. Nov. 1904. Quoted in Wang Shili, “*Jingzhong ribao*,” in Ding Shouhe (ed.), *Introduction*, V, 42–56. Here p. 43.

11 See Bernal, *Liu Shih-p'ei*, p. 101.

12 Already in the 18th century Motōri Norinaga (1730–1801), besides others, suggested the possibility of a distinctively Japanese spirit that manifested itself through the language. For him, “National Studies” (*kokugaku*) involved the revival of old philology and poetics as well as of the classics of Japanese literature and history, like the 8th century *Kojiki* (*Record of ancient matters*) and the 11th century *Genji monogatari* (*Tale of Genji*). Under Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843), the ideas of Motōri developed into the ideological base for a popular intellectual movement with increasing political overtones. Instead of looking to the Tokugawa Shogunate for their spiritual leadership, they were searching for the Essence of Japaneseness, thus equating agricultural work to religious practice. These proto-nationalistic sentiments in favour of the restoration of the Emperor and the revival of Shintō as the state religion had been used until the end of the 1870s by the *shisbi* (“men of high purpose”) of the Chōshū and Satsuma *han* to serve their needs, but was dismissed as acutely antimodernistic at the beginning of the 1880s. Especially the slogan *sonnō jōi*, “revering the Emperor and expelling the barbarians,” proved to be not very useful for the aim of changing Japan into an open and modern country. See David L. Howell: “Visions of the Future in Meiji Japan,” in: Merle Goldman, Andrew Gordon (ed.): *Historical Perspectives on Contemporary East Asia*, Cambridge, Mass., and London 2000, pp. 85–118, here pp. 87–89. The *Kokusui*-movement initiated by the *Nihonjin* group at the end of the 1880s must be seen as a reaction to this dismissal.

13 See Bernal, *Liu Shih-p'ei*, p. 103–104.

Manchu treatises under the title *Huangdi hun* (The Spirit of Huangdi), referring to an alleged proto-national spirit, that had to be rekindled in order to expel intruders, whether Manchu or western, into Chinese territory; second he started to write articles on the early history of Chinese thought and institutions, generally publishing them in the *Jingzhong ribao*, at the same time also publishing emotional cries for assassinations and other radical political methods in the *Zhongguo baihuabao* (The Chinese Vernacular News);¹⁴ and finally and together with Deng Shi (born 1877) and Huang Jie (1873–1935), he founded the *Guoxue baocun hui* (Association for the Preservation of Chinese Scholarship) whose mouthpiece, from February 1905, was the *Guocui xuebao* (Journal of National Essence, 1905–1912). To understand how the *Guocui*-group saw its commitment to the preservation of national essence, we can refer to a statement by Huang Jie (1873–1935), one of the founders and an outstanding poet and later member of the *Nanshe*, the Southern Society. In an article announcing the planned, but not realised, founding of the *Guocui xueshe*, the Society for the Study of National Essence, at the beginning of 1904, Huang says: “National Essence is [nothing other] than Science (*guocui kexue ye*). [The preservation of National Essence] was first practiced in Japan, but the Japanese didn’t know how to develop (*fa*) [this idea], so it is up to us to develop it in our country. [Therefore one has to recognize that] presuming the existence of an “essence” implies the existence of something that is not essential. [...] So whoever wants to make the ten thousand different teachings (*wan hui xue*) utilizable (*yong*) has to start by carrying out in-depth research into them so that he may separate [the wheat from the chaff]. When this has been done, he will be able to transform [the ten thousand teachings], and after transforming [them] he will be able to utilize and thus preserve them.”¹⁵

There are two traits in this early statement to which Liu Shipei would have surely subscribed: first the definition of *Guocui* as Science, second the causal chain of research (*yanjiu*), separation (*qufen*), transformation (*bianhua*), utilization (*zhibiyong*) and preservation (*baocun*). With regard to the idea of *Guocui* as Science, one must remember that Liu Shipei, like the other founders of the *Guoxue baocun hui*, didn’t want to appear to be an enemy of (western) modernity.¹⁶ As we shall see, in his texts, Liu not only integrated new sociological ideas from Herbert Spencer to serve his arguments, but with his “Zhoumo xueshu shi xu” (Introduction to the History of Scholarship at the End of the Zhou Dynasty) that was published in several instalments in issues one to five of the *Guocui xuebao*, he revealed his knowledge of the various scientific disciplines developed

14 See, for example, the article “Lun jilie de haochu” (On the advantages of radicalism), *Zhongguo baihuabao*, no. 6, 1.3.1904, reprinted in Zhang Nan and Wang Renzhi (ed.), *Xinbai geming qian shimin jian shulun xuanji* (Selection of contemporary articles from the decade before the 1911 revolution; Beijing, 1962; 2 vols., two sections each), I, 1.888-889. Mentioned in Bernal, *Liu Shih-p’ei*, p. 373, fn 46, and Peter Zarrow, *Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture*, New York, 1990, p. 271, fn 20.

15 See Huang Jie “Guocui xueshe qifaci” (Announcement on the occasion of the foundation of the Society for the Study of National Essence), published in the *Zhengyi tongbao* (Newspaper for the Art of Politics), vol. 3, no. 1, February 1904. Quoted in Fan Mingli, “Guocui xuebao,” in Ding Shouhe (ed.), *Introduction*, II, 327.

16 See also Xu Shouwei’s article “Lun Guocui wu zu yu Ouhua” (On National Essence not being a block to Europeanization), published in the *Guocui xuebao*, no. 7, 20.8.1905. Quoted in Bernal, *Liu Shih-p’ei*, p. 374, fn 62.

in the west. By trying to show that each of these disciplines had existed in China at least as long as in Europe, he implicitly explained to the reader, *how* he intended to invigorate the supposed tradition of Chinese scholarship: by collecting and analysing every bit of information out of the old-text *and* new-text classics, out of the Confucian tradition *and* Non-Confucian tradition, out of official *and* unofficial histories, out of old *and* new sources, out of the interpretive schools of Song- *and* Han-learning, or, in short, by using all facets of the Chinese intellectual tradition to support his argument.¹⁷

With regard to the causal chain of research, separation, transformation, utilization and preservation we have to understand that Liu Shipai, while referring to every aspect of traditional Chinese scholarship, nevertheless saw his and his compatriots task as the same as that of the ideal traditional scholar: taking the whole of tradition and customs, analysing them critically, separating the wheat from the chaff, utilizing the thus extracted wisdom in order to reveal the defects of political and social practice, thereby preserving this very wisdom for later generations. Thus in the “Guocui xuebao fakanci” (Introductory remarks to the *Guocui xuebao*) which, in my opinion, was written by Liu Shipai,¹⁸ one finds the following definition of *xueshu* (scholarship): “[Real] scholarship means to exhibit thorough understanding (*xueshu suoyi guan huitong ye*). [...] But ‘exhibiting thorough understanding’ doesn’t simply mean to practice the peripheral techniques (*mo*) of evidential research (*xun gu*) and to couch [one’s thoughts] in ornamental phrases (*cihang*), or to merely follow one individual’s philosophy. [To really exhibit thorough understanding means nothing less than] having a complete hold of the [teachings] of the 100 philosophical schools (*zongguan baijia*), penetrating deeply into present and past (*botong jing*), understanding all the different currents [of traditional thought] and their sources (*dong liu suo yuan*), and [thereby] illuminating their substance and translating it into action (*ming ti da yong*).”¹⁹

17 In my opinion it is not right to translate the article “Zhoumo xueshu shi xu” as “Introduction to the Schools of Thought at the End of the Chou Dynasty,” see Bernal, *Liu Shib-p’ei*, p. 106. The article *Zhoumo xueshu shi xu* was no “Introduction to the Schools of Thought,” which would have amounted to a *Xue’an* , but an Introduction to the different strains of thought in the whole of different schools, arranging them by disciplines, not by schools. It is also not right to say that for the *Guocui*-Group “Confucianism was an equivalent ... to the stifling medieval church,” *ibid.*, p. 106. They for sure didn’t see Confucius as a reformer, or, to speak in terms of *National Essence*, as *the* main source of spirit in Chinese tradition, but by placing his portrait, even in front of the one of Laozi and in contrast to the collection *Huangdi hum*, on the first page of the first issue of the *Guocui xuebao*, they revealed themselves as fervent admirers not only of the initial deeds performed at the beginning of time by Huangdi, but also of the sheer act of editing the classics and thereby transmitting the knowledge of old times performed by Confucius. Huang Jie wrote in his “Guocui xuebao xu” (Introduction to the *Guocui xuebao*): “I am martered by the thought, that my country is no country [any more], and that my teachings are no teachings [any more]. Whoever wants to bring up the teachings of the eastern and the western countries does it in trying to be objective [in his evaluation]. But I, by researching [into these variant teachings] want to be subjective, hoping to be able to revive the teachings of our Baksh race, the teaching of Huangdi, Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, Zhou Gong and Confucius.” See *Guocui xuebao* (reprint), I: 16 (reprinted in Taipei: Wenhai CBS, 1970).

18 Liu Shipai is the only co-founder, who didn’t write a *xu* (Introduction).

19 See *Guocui xuebao* (reprint), I:7.

The Article “Guxue chu yu shiguan lun”

If we now look at the article “Guxue chu yu shiguan lun” (All Learning in Antiquity Originated from the Official Scribe), we will find that it fits exactly into this definitional scheme. First we have to recognize that this essay on the *shiguan*, the official scribe, is not included in the section *Shipian* (Essays on Historiography), but in the section *Xuepian* (Essays on Scholarship). Why? There is a simple answer to the question: the article is *not* in the history section, because it wasn’t meant to be about historiography. This relatively short article was clearly meant to be an introduction to the series of five articles that followed it in consecutive issues and in the same section: the “Introduction into the History of Scholarship at the End of the Zhou Dynasty” (Zhoumo xueshu shi xu). Nevertheless the article “All Learning in Antiquity Originated from the Official Scribe” still had a strong historiographical tendency, not only, as I will show, by calling upon the modern *shi* to take on a bird’s-eye view of Chinese history rather than binding himself to the ideology of one philosophy or one dynasty, but also by pleading for all historical wisdom—the unified wisdom of the whole Chinese tradition—to be made accessible to the common people instead of its being hidden away like an esoteric treasure. Liu Shippei’s hero here was Gong Zizhen (1792–1841). In the “Introductory remarks to the *Guocui xuebao*” Liu had already written about him and Zhang Xuecheng

(1738–1801), who is also mentioned in the “Guxue chu yu shiguan lun,” but by far doesn’t occupy such a prominent place as Gong: “In the 2000 years since the beginning of the Han Dynasty the different schools of Confucian scholarship developed while scrutinizing each other. Though sometimes their influence waxed or waned, still each one of these different schools flourished at one time or another. But all the other traditional teachings were never heard of again. Only when Zhang Xuecheng and Gong Zizhen rose to prominence in western Zhejiang Province did they find out about the perfected doctrines of the *guanshou* and the *shiru* (i.e. the scribes responsible for translating accumulated knowledge into practice, and the scribes responsible for the transmittance of the knowledge, respectively), by extracting the subtleties out of the *Yiwenzhi* of the *Hanshu*. [The erudition of Zhang Xuecheng and Gong Zizhen was] a big step forward, even compared to Zheng Qiao’s [Tongzhi].”²⁰

At the very end of his article “Guxue chu yu shiguan lun” Liu Shippei reveals the reason for writing it in the first place. He says: “[In his study *Gushi gouchen* (*Deep Inquiry into the Nature of the Official Scribe of Antiquity*)] Gong Zizhen holds that [the deeds] of the official scribe in the Zhou Dynasty were at one and the same time beneficial and disastrous (*gong zui xiang jian*). If one wished to evaluate [the merits of the official scribe] from today’s perspective, who would deny the validity of [Gong Zizhen’s] judgement. That is the reason why I [i.e. Liu Shippei] still want to discuss the history of the Zhou Dynasty, even at the risk of invoking all the sad emotions stirred up through the remembrance of

20 Ibid., I:7. Zhang Xuecheng hailed Zheng Qiao’s (1104–1162) *Tongzhi* (*All-Encompassing Records*) as a “grand design” (*bonggang*). In accordance with Zheng Qiao’s dominant themes of *tong* (“bringing things together by tracing their common origin”) and *hui* (“bringing things together which systematically belong together”), the *Tongzhi* aims at a universal history modelled upon the *Shiji*. See Achim Mittag: “Randnotizen zu Zheng Qiao (1104–1162) und seinem *Tongzhi*,” in: *Chinabläter* 19 (1994), pp. 62–88.

antiquity.”²¹ These words are not only clear illustration of the fact that Liu Shipei really saw his article “Guxue chu yu shiguan lun” as an introduction to his series “Zhoumo xueshu shi xu,” but, moreover, that the ambivalent position of the official scribe in antiquity should be seen even more critically at his, Liu Shipei’s, time, than at Gong Zizhen’s. To understand why Liu Shipei thought so, one must first consider what Liu Shipei, in following Gong Zizhen, meant by the ambivalence of the official scribe. Liu Shipei cites Gong Zizhen as follows: “Of the hereditary officials at the time of the Zhou Dynasty, the one holding the highest position was the Scribe. If not for the Scribe, there would not have been any language (*yuyan* 语言), if not for the Scribe, there would not have been any textual expression (*wenzì* 文字), [and] if not for the Scribe, there would not even have been any human relationships (*renlun* 人伦) or other ordinary matters of life (*rìyong* 日用).”²² It was exactly this thesis, formulated in Gong Zizhen’s *Gushi gouchen*, that Liu Shipei tried to prove in his article. Taking Herbert Spencer’s view of all cultures as having originated in archaic ancestor worship as his starting point, Liu delineates the official scribe’s function as consisting originally, that is in very high antiquity, of the preservation and passing down of the deeds and words of revered ancestors from one dynasty to another. Liu Shipei holds that: “The high esteem for precedents results from the adoration of human ghosts [i.e. the ancestors]. The veneration of Laws and Decorum (*fa yi* 法义) results from the high esteem for precedents. Written down, one calls it lawtexts (*fa* 法), official documents (*shu* 书), and ritual books (*li* 礼), and the implementation of writing it down was the task of the *shi* (*shizhi* 士制).”²³ Various citing Gong Zizhen, Liu Shipei then goes on to prove that the Six Classics (*liu yi* 六艺), the nine pre-Qin philosophical schools (*jiu liu* 九流), the schools of magical calculations (*shushu* 术数) and the traditions of occultism, divination and medical practice (*fangji* 方技) were all first developed by the official scribe, the *shiguan*.²⁴ So on the one hand, it becomes perfectly clear that Liu Shipei recalls with great sorrow the times when all traditional wisdom was still united in one hand: in the hand of the official scribe. But on the other hand, Liu Shipei saw the defects of this institution of antiquity: by jealously guarding the knowledge of the early rulers’ and cultural heroes’ words and deeds against the ruler and the people of their own times, the official scribes, according to Liu, became the pretentious bearers of esoteric wisdom, comparable to the class of priests in the old Greek or Jewish tradition and to the Brahmins of India.²⁵ For Liu Shipei there were two consequences of this exclusiveness: one was the dulling of the minds of the common people, the other was the total obstruction of private scholarship (*sixue* 私学).²⁶

So, coming back to the question why Liu Shipei thought that the ambivalent position of the official scribe in antiquity should now be seen even more critically than at Gong Zizhen’s time, I would suggest the following answer: what Liu Shipei wanted to present was in fact a modern concept of the preservation of national essence: sensing the dangers inherent in a complete separation from reality and from the problems of every day life and

21 See *Guocui xuebao* (reprint), I:68.

22 Ibid., I:68.

23 Ibid., I:61.

24 Ibid., I:62-66.

25 Ibid., I:67-68.

26 Ibid., I:68.

politics, Liu Shipei, with his critical position vis-à-vis the official scribe's exclusiveness (he calls it “the tyranny of scholarship [*xueshu zhuanshi*]²⁷ implicitly demands the opening up of traditional wisdom to all people. This idea had been vigorously formulated by Tang Caichang, Wang Kangnian and other reformers since the end of the 19th century under the formula of *kai minzhi* (open up popular wisdom). But at the same time Liu Shipei was also pleading for politically independent scholarship and politically influential scholars who, like the *shiguan* in high antiquity, would see the whole of tradition as a unity with different facets. In my opinion, this was clearly an attempt to establish an ethical guide for the preservation of national essence, but was at the same time also arguing against Zhang Binglin's ideal of *pure* (pure scholarship) and against the traditional dynastic way of writing history. As early as 1904, in his article “Xin shi pian” (On the Renewal of Historiography), Liu Shipei had already reacted to Liang Qichao's demand for the nationalization of historiography with the lament: “What in China has traditionally been called ‘historiography’ is merely the recording of the matters of one family and one name (*ji yi jia yi xing zhi shi*).”²⁸ Now, in 1905, with his praise for the complete scholarship of high antiquity and with the wish to see this applied to the whole of Chinese history, Liu Shipei, in his article on the official scribe, too, made a strong appeal to unify and thus nationalize Chinese historiography.

27 Ibid., I:68.

28 See *Jingzhong ribao*, 2.8.1904.