

**External Examiner's Report on the Dissertation of Václav Laifr**  
**"Historiography of Chinese Astronomy in the Pre-war and**  
**War-time Chinese Republic (1911-1949) and in the Early**  
**People's Republic of China (1949-1966): Political, Social and**  
**Nationalist Influences"**  
**Submitted in 2019 at the Historické vědy**

**I. Brief summary of the dissertation**

Taking Zhu Wenxin and Xi Zezong as two cases, against the backdrop of the "reorganization of the national heritage" movement and the war against Japan during the Republican China and the historical materialism in the early People's Republic China, this dissertation explores the characteristics of "finding national self-confidence" or "patriotism historiography" in their studies of history of Chinese astronomy, which deeply reflected the influences of political and social background on academic research at that time.

**II. Brief overall evaluation of the dissertation**

From a new perspective and with a reasonable structure, the dissertation investigates the characteristics of "finding national self-confidence" or "patriotism historiography" in the studies of history of Chinese astronomy during the Republican China and the early People's Republic China, and sheds light on the commonality and differences between them. It is an excellent research with important academic value and originality.

**III. Detailed evaluation of the dissertation and its individual aspects**

*1. Structure of the argument*

With a clear objective and structure, the author uses abundant primary sources and secondary literature, and demonstrations are elaborately organized and conclusions are properly arrived. However, here are some points that for author's consideration:

1) 1911 is chosen as the starting time of the dissertation, but as it is known, the Republican China was founded in 1912, so it would be reasonable that the starting time be 1912.

2) As there is not a section 2.2, the sections from 2.2.1 to 2.2.2.3 should be reorganized. For instance, 2.2.1 should be 2.2, and 2.2.1.1 should be 2.2.1, and etc.

3) Compared with Chapter 2, chapter 3 (pp. 110-138) looks a little insubstantial and should be strengthened.

*2. Formal aspects of the dissertation*

The dissertation is logically clear, the language is fluent, and the footnotes are standardized. But there are some terms and spellings that are worth considering. For example:

“Chinese Republic” should be “Republican China”; “reorganization of the national past 整理国故” should be “reorganization of the national heritage”; Shirt should be Short (p. 10); 筹人传 should be 畴人传 (p. 14); geologist should be geographer (p.15); Sunjatsen University should be Sun Yat-sen University (p. 49, p. 50); Qie Meng 郟萌 should be Xi Meng 郝萌 (p. 94); 周髀北極濬璣考 should be 周髀北極璿璣考 (p. 100, p. 172); Li Jiandeng 李鉴澄 should be Li Jiancheng (p. 149).

Chinese characters in the text, which some are used as traditional and while some other simplified, should be consistent.

In addition, some chapter or section titles (and even the title of the dissertation) are not concise. For example, the title of the dissertation could perhaps be changed as “Historiography of Chinese Astronomy in the Republican China and in the Early People’s Republic of China (1912-1966): Political, Social and Nationalist Influences”. In other cases, the titles of chapter 2 and 4, sections 2.2.1, 2.2.1.4, 3.5, 4.1 and 4.2 should be condensed to reflect the main ideas of the corresponding chapters or sections.

### 3. *Use of sources and/or material*

The dissertation quotes a wealth of original materials and secondary literature, and even uses rare oral history interviewed by the author himself. Thus the author draws original and reliable conclusions through reasonable interpretation of the primary sources and proper analysis of the secondary literature. For reader’s information, however, it should be noted that citations in the footnotes (such as Gu Jiegang’s works) be included in the bibliography. And some fonts or format in the footnotes or bibliography should be cared for in consistence.

### 4. *Personal contribution to the subject*

Studies on the historiography of Chinese astronomy in the Republican China and the early People’s Republic of China have been discussed before. Based on previous studies, this dissertation combines two periods to analyse with a new framework, so that the author finds out their characteristics in common and analyse the differences. This is an original contribution to the academia.

## IV. **Questions for the author**

The historiography of Chinese astronomy is a very good case for investigating the historiography of “finding national self-confidence” or “patriotic research” during the Republican China and the early People’s Republic of China. In order to reflect the whole picture, could you please talk about the situation of other disciplines such as historiography of mathematics, medicine or agriculture?

The “reorganization of the national heritage” movement and the “historical materialism” in the early People’s Republic of China were actually characterized more as a spirit of criticizing the past. Please explain how they related to “nationalism” at the time.

## **V. Conclusion**

I believe this dissertation is an original contribution to historiography of Chinese science and its summary, if revised according to above-mentioned points, would be acceptable for publication in specialised journals.

I recommend the submitted dissertation with the tentative grade of pass.

August 23, 2019, in Jeonju

Sun Chengsheng