

AI Acknowledgement

☒ I have not used AI in my assignment

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

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I acknowledge the use of [AI Tool 1] [(AI Tool 1 url)] on [Date] to [Purpose my work: (e.g. support my research/proofread/edit photographic material etc.)]. I used the prompt(s):

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(Delete or continue list as required)

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What Makes a Good Historian?

—Liang Qichao's Integration and Interpretation of the Theory of Historian's Cultivation.

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1. Historian's Virtue (史德)

- “A historian’s primary virtue is nothing other than **fidelity**.” ¹

史家第一件道德，莫過於忠實。

- Two metaphors:

Painting a person: it must look like that person.

Writing a travelogue about a place: it must truly be that place.



- The most common faults are: **exaggeration**(誇大) , **forced analogies** (附會) , and **arbitrary judgment** (武斷) .²
- “A historian’s moral character should be **like a clear mirror and a balanced scale** (鑑空衡平) — whatever is there, it reflects exactly; whatever the weight, it measures precisely. One must completely eliminate subjective opinions and cultivate one’s character to be like a mirror and a scale.”³



²Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo lishi yanjiufa bubian* 中國歷史研究法補編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), p. 18-20.⁵

³Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo lishi yanjiufa bubian* 中國歷史研究法補編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), p. 20.

2. Historian's Knowledge (史學)

- A principle: **value specialization over superficial broadness**.⁴ （貴專精不貴博雜）
- “When I was young, I once had this ambition—to this day, I have never succeeded. Now, I only hope to achieve considerable results in a specific area of historical study, and that would fully satisfy me.”⁵

⁴Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo lishi yanjiufa bubian* 中國歷史研究法補編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), p. 21.

⁵Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo lishi yanjiufa bubian* 中國歷史研究法補編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), p. 21.

- Liang Qichao suggested **approach** is:
 1. History from the entirety of human knowledge.
 2. Within the field of history, delineate a specific area—one you have a particular interest in and adequate preparation for—and devote yourself to studying it exclusively.
 3. Regarding matters outside your specialization, it is perfectly acceptable to be ignorant of many things; but regarding matters within your specialization, you must know them thoroughly and exhaustively.⁶

⁶Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo lishi yanjiufa bubian* 中國歷史研究法補編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), p. 21.

3. Historian's Insight (史識)

- “Historian’s Insight” refers to the power of observation of a historian.⁷
- “**Gaining insight from reading**” (讀書得間) means being able to see what others cannot see.⁸
- Two procedures for observation:
 1. From the whole to the part.
 2. From the part to the whole.⁹

⁷Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo lishi yanjiufa bubian* 中國歷史研究法補編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), p. 25.

⁸Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo lishi yanjiufa bubian* 中國歷史研究法補編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), p. 25.

⁹Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo lishi yanjiufa bubian* 中國歷史研究法補編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), p. 26-27.

- **Beware** of two kinds of obscurity :
 1. Do not be obscured by traditional thought.
 2. Do not be obscured by your own preconceptions.¹⁰
- Liang Qichao said: “Only by being neither obscured by inherited traditions nor blinded by one's own preconceptions can one achieve keen and subtle observation and ultimately attain outstanding historical insight.”¹¹

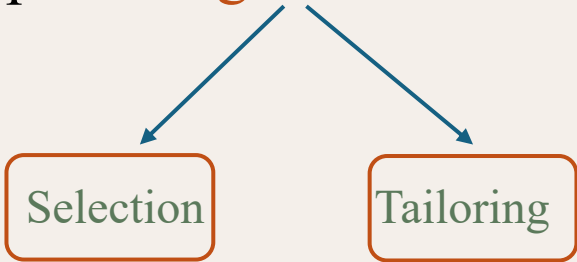
¹⁰Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo lishi yanjiufa bubian* 中國歷史研究法補編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), p. 27-28.

¹¹Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo lishi yanjiufa bubian* 中國歷史研究法補編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), p. 29.

4. Historian's Talent (史才)

What is organization?

- Liang Qichao divided into two parts: **organization** and **literary grace**.



- “Many facts, without being selected and tailored, remain just historical materials; they cannot become history.”
- “Many people are reluctant to discard what they love, collecting a huge amount of data and wanting to include everything. But for a good work, one must be willing to discard. One must remove the dross and retain the essence.”¹²

- Regarding literary grace, he proposed **two key points**:

Conciseness: No superfluous sentences in a chapter, no superfluous words in a sentence.

Liveliness: Writing should be as vivid and natural as a movie.¹³

- A very practical method:

Read more: See how previous authors wrote.

Write less: Write with intention, not prolifically.

Revise more: Don't hesitate to revise an article many times; you can even revise it again ten years later.¹⁴

¹³Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo lishi yanjiufa bubian* 中國歷史研究法補編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), p. 33. ¹⁴

¹⁴Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo lishi yanjiufa bubian* 中國歷史研究法補編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), p. 34.

5. Conclusion

“Four Excellences of a Historian” (史家四長)

Historian's Virtue is an attitude of impartiality.

Historian's Knowledge is a solid foundation.

Historian's Insight is a keen eye.

Historian's Talent is precise expression.



Thank you for listening! 