

## **Chengxin Tang Paper and the Qianlong Emperor: With a Discussion of His Connoisseurship of Ancient Paper**

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### **Abstract**

Chengxin Tang paper was produced in the Southern Tang during the Five Dynasties period. Following its discovery, study, and appreciation by scholars in the following Northern Song dynasty, it became one of the most illustrious and coveted kinds of paper in the country. Despite the efforts of Northern Song scholars, however, the shroud of mystery surrounding the enigma of Chengxin Tang paper continued to deepen. Unable to uncover its origins, the legend of Chengxin Tang paper was passed down to later generations and all sorts of theories about it emerged as a result. In the Qing dynasty, the Qianlong emperor was dedicated to the enterprise of culture. Faced with a plethora of conflicting accounts and views, not only did he enter the fray but also conducted a study and formed his own views about this legendary paper. Finally, he was able to successfully create an imitation of his idea of Chengxin Tang paper as a way to bring a conclusion to this long unsettled case. Besides being engrossed in Chengxin Tang paper, he was also an ardent promoter of the use and study of Eastern Jin Celi paper and Mt. Jinsu sutra paper. In short, these three types of paper came to have special meaning for the Qianlong emperor. By analyzing and studying these three types of famous paper, this study not only attempts to reveal their possible original appearance but also hopefully further uncover the Qianlong emperor's views in the connoisseurship of ancient paper.

**Keywords:** Chengxin Tang paper, Qing Gaozong, Qianlong emperor, Celi paper, Mt. Jinsu sutra paper