

Beijing Forum 2019 Contributing and Melding: The Dissemination of Sinitic Civilization (IV) & (V)

On the morning of November 3rd, the panel session “Contributing and Melding: The Dissemination of Sinitic Civilization” was inaugurated in the Grand Hall, Stanford Center, Peking University. Three speakers gave speeches on the topic “Contributing and Melding: The Dissemination of Sinitic Civilization”. Professor Pan Jianguo from Peking University chaired the presentation.

Professor Liu Yucai from Peking University was the first scholar to present his paper “A Study on the Transmission of Huang Kan’s Commentary on the Analects”. Liu Yucai introduced the dissemination and learning of the Analects from the 3rd century to the 8th century. He introduced the rise and fall of this book in Chinese history, which was finally lost in the middle of the Southern Song Dynasty. In Japan, the Analects have long been used as a textbook for aristocrats. 36 Japanese manuscripts shared a common source of editions, studied by Japanese scholars. The Japanese reedited Huang Kan’s Commentary on the Analects, and it was sent back to China in the 46th year of the reign of the Qing Dynasty Qianlong emperor, as well as many other editions completed in the same period. The ancient Japanese manuscript was sent back to China as well, and is now preserved in Peking University. After the introduction of this book, it attracted the attention of Chinese scholars, especially those in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, who studied the Japanese version. There are still problems in ancient Japanese manuscript, as comments by Japanese were inserted into the text by mistake. Compared with Huang Kan’s Commentary on the Analects found in Dunhuang, scholars hold different views on which edition reflects the original text. There is still a long way to go on the reediting and researching of this book.

Associate professor Cheng Sudong, from Peking University, was the second scholar to present his paper, titled “Dissemination and Acceptance of the Knowledge about the Five Elements in Japan”. First, Cheng Sudong introduced a brief history of the acceptance of knowledge about the Five Elements in Japan: during the Warring States Period, the Five Elements were thought to have had an important influence on people and the Five Elements system was abstracted and systematized by ancient scholars. The combination of the Five Elements system and Confucianism occurred in

the Han Dynasty and was studied and spread by Confucian scholars. About the sixth century, the Book of Changes was introduced to Japan, including the idea of Yin and Yang. *Shi er jie guan wei zhi* 十二冠位制, edited by Prince Shotoku, first matched the five colors to five morals, which can be seen as knowledge of the Five Elements. Second, Cheng introduced the edition of *Wuxing da yi* 五行大义 and showed how it was present in catalogues of ancient China. Finally, Cheng described the eastward spread of *Wuxing da yi* and emphasized the value of the Yuanhong edition of *Wuxing da yi*.

Professor Rong Xinjiang, from Peking University, was the third scholar to present his paper, titled “Chinese Civilization on the Silk Road”. Rong Xinjiang said he has been paying close attention to the relations between China and foreign countries and issues related to the spread of Chinese civilization. He said that the attention and participation of the academic community on the western regions have been insufficient, and the relevant scholars have only a fragmented knowledge structure and have not formed a comprehensive and systematic understanding of it. In fact, the various forms of communication (including war) between the western regions and the central plains civilization all reflect the western regions' desire for the Han civilization. Moreover, current Sinology studies have a biased overall cognition of western civilization, and their academic orientation even deviates from the origin of Han culture, and Sinologists' participation in academic exchanges in central Asia is not high. Rong expressed his belief that cultural exchanges between China and the western regions were embodied in the language, materials and system, and the traffic along the silk road was never completely cut off even up to modern times. He expressed his hope to be able to further promote academic research on the western regions through the “history of the spread of Chinese civilization” project conducted by professor Yuan Xingpei.

After the coffee break, Professor Rong Xinjiang from Peking University chaired the presentation and four speakers gave speeches.

Professor Cheng Zhangcan, from Nanjing University, was the first scholar to present his paper, titled “Integration and Innovation: British Sinologist Arthur Waley’s Absorption and Utilization of Chinese Literature”. Cheng Zhangcan introduced Arthur Waley as a great translator, scholar, and Sinologist, and spoke about his great contribution to Chinese poems and Japanese poems. He translated large numbers of Chinese poems, from ancient to 20th century Chinese poetry, not only ancient style poems but also rhyme prose. Interestingly, Waley himself used a Chinese character, “恋”

(love), as a token of love. Waley used to emulate Chinese poems and novels and even created a new chapter for the Journey to the West 西游记. In conclusion, Waley and his translations made in his own way have made a great contribution to Western world.

Lecturer Ana Jovanovic, from the University of Belgrade, was the second scholar to present her paper, titled “Understanding Chinese Culture through the Translated Works of Mo Yan and Yu Hua”. In Serbia, compared with ancient classics such as the Book of Songs and the Analects, modern and contemporary Chinese novels have had a more profound impact on the people with the development and growth of the economic, political and tourism brought about by China-Serbia cooperation. Jovanovic introduced the translation and dissemination of Chinese novels in Serbia. Twelve of Mo Yan's works have been translated into Serbian as well as eleven of Yu Hua's works. She claimed: “To translate Chinese literary works well requires a translator with high cultural quality, equal language skills in both Chinese and Serbian, and the use of one single translator to translate a work to ensure a uniform translation style.” She listed reader comments collected from various websites to show the influence of modern and contemporary Chinese novels on the Serbian people.

Professor and associate vice president Wei Chuxiong from Beijing Normal University – Hong Kong Baptist University United International College was the third scholar to present his paper, titled “The New Horizon of the East: The Chinese Way of Diplomacy as an Alternative to the Western Westphalian Mode of the West”. Wei Chuxiong claimed that there are still fundamental differences in tradition between East and West that have profound implications for policy making. Western countries have basically inherited Christian ideology and culture, which is monotheistic, while Eastern countries recognize polytheism. This difference in ideological and cultural traditions also presents different ways of thinking. Wei introduced five stages of the world pattern. He cited Tagore's ideas to criticize nationalism and the Westphalian system and assumed that this kind of system would never lead to a healthy international order. Wei emphasized the difference between a civilized state and a nation state and confirmed a broader world system as the destination of human civilization.

Chair Professor Chu Hung Lam, from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, was the last scholar to present his paper, titled “Deepening Understanding of Chinese Traditional Culture in the Confucius Institution of Hong Kong”. Professor Lam introduced the general situation, purpose and significance of the international development of Confucius Institutes, then introduced the history of

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Confucius Institutes and the setbacks they face. The core of the Confucius Institute is Confucianism and the work of Confucius Institutes follows the principles of Confucianism. He stated: “We will introduce our world view and cosmology to the world more enthusiastically and actively, and let the world understand the most valuable part of Chinese traditional culture by using other countries' languages and expressions.”