

Cultural Confidence and Overseas Communication of Fine Traditional Chinese Culture

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doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/gjahss.2013/vol12n9117>

Published October 27, 2024

Citation: Wang Y. (2024) Cultural Confidence and Overseas Communication of Fine Traditional Chinese Culture, *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol.12, No.9, pp.1-17

Abstract: *In a series of addresses, Xi Jinping, the president of the People's Republic of China, has given profound elaborations on relationship between cultural confidence and fine traditional Chinese culture and offered significant instructions. Facing the new historic opportunities presented by the Belt and Road, it would be a great task on how we further consolidate our cultural confidence and how we can facilitate overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture. We should broaden our mind and break through restrictions and difficulties by learning from classic examples of foreign countries in overseas communication of their fine traditional cultures and taking realities into consideration, so as to explore multiple views, channels and paths for overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture. We should develop our international communication platforms, build new patterns for cultural soft power, and integrate diversified superior resources so that we can play an important role in "telling China's stories well, making China's voice heard, interpreting China's characteristics, and presenting the China image well" on the world stage.*

Keywords: Xi Jinping; cultural confidence; fine traditional Chinese culture; overseas communication

INTRODUCTION

Cultural confidence is the psychological foundation for cultural heritage and development of a nation, and also ideological insurance for its culture standing firmly among the nations of the world. The heritage and development of Chinese long-standing fine traditional Chinese culture are closely tied to the firm establishment of cultural confidence. President Xi Jinping pointed out in his *Speech at the opening ceremony of the Tenth Congress of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles (CFLAC) and the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Writers Association (CWA)*:

“Culture is the soul of a country and a nation ... Cultural confidence is a more fundamental, broader, and deeper form of self-confidence and a more fundamental, deeper and more lasting power. Consolidation of cultural confidence is a major issue that is related to national prosperity, cultural security, and independence of national spirit... Throughout history, all nations around the

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world have been profoundly influenced by their literary and art masterpieces and giants of different historical stages. The Chinese national spirit has not only been embodied in Chinese people's struggle journey and achievements, but also in Chinese people's spirit life and spirit world. It has been reflected in all excellent works emerged in several thousand years of Chinese history, and also in outstanding creation activities of all Chinese literary and art masters.

In each historical period, China has produced numerous eternal works. The glorious Chinese literary and art history has been created by *The Book of Songs*, *Songs of Chu*, Han Fu, Tang Poems, Song Lyrics, Yuan Qu, Ming and Qing Novels. We have created splendid historical milky way together. The Chinese nation possesses so powerful literary and art creativity and has made splendid achievements. In addition, Chinese people always have their cultural confidence. Therefore, we should feel incomparable proud and confident.”

The strategically commanding comment of General Secretary Xi has elevated the relationship between cultural confidence and fine traditional Chinese culture to a critical position, disclosing the intermingled and indivisible relationship between heritage and development of fine traditional Chinese culture and establishment and consolidation of cultural confidence, and making it a time-crossing topic that deserves profound thinking and exploration. After raising this inspiring proposition, General Secretary Xi offered new instructions and new directions on establishing cultural confidence and promoting fine traditional Chinese culture.

“The reason that the Chinese nation could continuously develop and repetitively revive after numerous setbacks lies in the powerful support of Chinese culture. The unique concepts, wisdom, mettle and glamor of Chinese culture have effectively added the deep-down confidence and pride of Chinese people and Chinese nation. The fine traditional Chinese culture that has been bred in the civilization development of 5,000 years, and the revolutionary culture and advanced socialist culture that has been formed in CPC and people's struggles have deposited the most profound spiritual pursuit of Chinese people and have represented the unique spiritual characteristics of Chinese nation. We should vigorously promote our national spirit centering on patriotism and modern spirit focusing on reform and innovation; we should vigorously facilitate fine traditional Chinese culture and advanced socialist culture, and continuously enhance the spiritual power of the whole Party and the people of all ethnic groups.”

Under the historical context of globalization and Belt & Road, it will be a new topic and opportunity for us to enhance cultural confidence, explore new ways for overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture under the correct guidance of the speech spirit of General Secretary Xi.

Historical opportunities of overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture under the background of the Belt and Road

The Belt and Road (B&R) is short for the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. On March 28, 2015, National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce jointly published *Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road*, proposing the national top strategy. The impact of the grand concept rapidly swept the globe.

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In the context of globalized cooperation for mutual prosperity, the overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture as the lifeblood of our nation has been attached great importance. The speech delivered by General Secretary Xi and policies introduced by the state have proposed the grand topic of heritage and promotion of fine traditional Chinese culture. On January 25, 2017, General Office of the Communist Party of China and General Office of the State Council jointly issued *Recommendations on Implementation of Heritage and Development Project of fine traditional Chinese culture*, requiring different regions and departments to strictly implement the spirit of the *Recommendations*, which include:

“Promote cultural exchange and cooperation with countries along the Belt and Road. Encourage cultural trade with foreign countries, and help cultural products with Chinese cultural characteristics and powerful competitiveness enter international markets. Explore new patterns of international communication and exchange of Chinese culture. Comprehensively apply mass communication, group communication and interpersonal communication and develop all-around, multi-level and wide-range communication layout of Chinese culture... With the deep Chinese economic and social reform, expanded opening to the outside world, rapid development of Internet technology and new media, exchange and integration of different ideas and cultures get more frequent. Therefore, it is critical for us to deepen our understanding of the importance of fine traditional Chinese culture, and further enhance our cultural awareness and confidence; to explore cultural value, and further stimulate the vitality and vigor of fine traditional Chinese culture; to enhance policy support and build heritage and development system of fine traditional Chinese culture. The heritage and development project of fine traditional Chinese culture is a critical strategic task to develop a strong socialist culture, and is significant for inheriting Chinese cultural traditions, fully improving people's cultural appreciation, maintaining national culture security, enhancing soft power of national culture, and promoting modernization of national governing system and capability.”

The value of heritage and promotion of fine traditional Chinese culture under the B&R background is clearly interpreted.

The global influence of B&R can be witnessed from book publications after the initiative was raised. After the B&R was raised, a series of publications have appeared successively. According to observation and research by Hou Yangfang, professor from Fudan University, among books on the Silk Road published globally in recent years, there are three with greatest influence: *The Silk Road, A New History* by Valerie Hansen, history professor from Yale University (translated by Zhang Zhan, Beijing United Publishing Company, August 2015); *The Silk Road* by Liu Yingsheng (Jiangsu People's Publishing Ltd, September 2014); *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World* by Peter Frankopan, history professor from University of Oxford, UK (translated by Shao Xudong, Sun Fang, Zhejiang University Press, October 2016). In my opinion, two other books should be recommended: *The Silk Road and Cultural Interaction between East and West* by Rong Xinjiang (Peking University Press, August 2015); *Silk Road and Chinese and Western Cultural Exchange* by Li Gang (Shaanxi People's Publishing House, December 2015). *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World* by Peter Frankopan is the best seller. Upon publication, it rapidly swept book markets in 20 countries, including US, UK, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Poland, Turkey, India and South Korea.(Frankopan,2016: Cover). Its sales ranks the first in world history of UK Amazon, the first in

history and geography in US Amazon, the first in non-fictional books in India, a best-seller on *New York Times*, book of 2015 on *The Times* and *The Guardian*, the best history book of 2015 elected by *Bloomberg News*. In short, it is a phenomenal best-seller that influences the world largely.(Frankopan,2016: cover).As an academic work on historical study, the hotness is undoubtedly amazing. Professor Hou Yangfang believes that “This book involves numerous aspects, thousands of years, and vast regions, including Zhang Qian Going to Western Regions, Alexander Conquering the East, the Rising of Roman Empire, the Glory of Persian Empire, Struggles between Christianity and Islam, the Crusades, Genghis Khan Westward Conquest, the Discoverer of the Americas, British Colonial Expansion, Two World Wars, Cold War between US and USSR, Middle East War, Afghan War and Iraq War. The subtitle of the book is apparently more suitable as the author uses the ‘old bottle’ of Silk Road to contain his ‘new wine’ of the popular global history. It is not closely tied with the Silk Road, but is the origin of the book at least.” Corresponding to this commentary, Professor Frankopan clearly stated in the Foreword of the Chinese edition of his book, "I have taken into consideration of Chinese readers when I wrote it. The book discloses how we can find historical images of the current dramatic changes of China... The axle of the revolving world is shifting back to the original place that has turned the globe for a thousand of years - the Silk Road... Therefore, when President Xi Jinping raised the conception of “Belt and Road” in 2013, he actually evoked people’s familiar memory of the remote prosperity.”(Frankopan,2016:Forward of Chinese Edition).

He has not only acknowledged that the great sales of his book benefited from the B&R, but also made objective judgment in the Chinese Foreword about the past and current development trend of China.

“In the past thirty years, no country in the world like China has experienced earthshaking changes - poverty extrication of several hundred million people and rapid economic growth. Now, China has entered an adjustment period of its development, and a period for learning how to respond to ‘New Normal’. It is important to maintain a sustained economic growth, but it should not be as rapid as the past. It is also a period for China to learn how to handle strained relations with Eastern Asian, Middle Asian and Southeastern Asian countries. China has to learn how to play an appropriate role in the international stage. China is opening its eyes to better adapt to the world transformation.... President Xi Jinping has exceptionally stressed that the rise of China is a peaceful, friendly and civilized rise that will benefit other countries, but not threaten any one. We can find many similar responses to these in Chinese history... All these foreign exploration and communication activities are based on prosperity and maturity of a country. If a country is free of concerns and stable in the long term, it shall try all kinds of development patterns. Therefore, it is natural that different development forms become the theme of modern China.” (Frankopan,2016:Forward of Chinese Edition).

As Professor Frankopan said, the B&R has presented new historical opportunities for the development of China, and new unprecedented historical opportunities for overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture. The global popularity of *The Silk Roads* by Professor Frankopan benefits from the B&R, and fine traditional Chinese culture should be extensively transmitted under this historical opportunity, making it influence countries and regions on the routes or even the whole globe. At present, further exploration and innovation should be made on specific communication routes and strategies. In addition to establishment of cultural confidence and learning from other countries, it is crucial for China to actively explore methods and patterns that are effective and most

suitable for its specific development.

Seeking commonalities from differences – restrictions and bottlenecks in overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture

Recommendations on Implementation of Heritage and Development Project of fine traditional Chinese culture points out:

“Promote foreign cultural exchange and cooperation; innovate cultural exchange patterns; enrich cultural exchange content, and continuously improve cultural exchange levels. International promotion of fine traditional Chinese culture should be facilitated by effectively utilizing overseas Chinese cultural centers, Confucius Institutes, cultural festivals and exhibitions, exhibition of cultural relics, expositions, book exhibitions, film festivals, sports activities, tourism recommendations and brand-promoting activities. Support representative items of fine traditional Chinese culture such as Chinese medicine, Chinese cuisine, Chinese martial arts, Chinese classic books, Chinese relics, Chinese gardening and Chinese festivals, and help them step onto the world stage. Actively introduce operas, traditional instruments, calligraphy, Chinese painting and other excellent traditional arts so that foreign audience can get pleasure and appreciate their glamor.”

We can use multimedia platforms to promote fine traditional Chinese culture. In this regard, China has made effective efforts and scored satisfying achievements, among which dance drama *Confucius* is undoubtedly a success. Up to now, China has established Confucius Institutes in over 100 countries to promote Chinese language study and Chinese culture. On January 5-8 and 13-15, 2017, the large dance drama *Confucius* produced by China National Opera & Dance Drama Theater was first staged in David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and Kennedy Center Opera House in Washington. *Confucius* has been staged for over 100 times around the world and is termed as “the Chinese Cultural Card” by *New York Times*. Zhang Qiyue, Consul-General of China in New York, says that *Confucius* is an important part of Chinese culture, and is highly recognized in the world. *Confucius* tells a Chinese story in the form of drama, and is a very effective Sino-US cultural communication. The popularity of *Confucius* among New York audience has also reflected the charm of Chinese excellent culture and art works. Kong Dexin, the 77th descendant of *Confucius* and the chief director of drama *Confucius* says, “I try to interpret retreat and engagement of Confucius in the form of dance, especially his commonwealth dream and the certainty for him to be a thinker and an educator. I hope the story about the Confucius family can display the beauty of Chinese culture to the world audience.”

In addition to actively exploring methods and patterns on the basis of current conditions, the overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture should also learn experience from other countries. We should stay focus on and study classic cases of other countries that have developed with large scales, extensive influence and high reputation in overseas communication of excellent national traditional culture. In heritage and promotion of national excellent traditional culture, the British promotion of Shakespeare is a classic model that deserves reference by other countries of the world. In decades, UK Government and civil organizations have been promoting Shakespeare. Shakespeare Play Festival is held every year, and plays by Shakespeare are staged in formal theaters and informal open venues. In the Shakespeare Play Festival held during London Olympic Games in 2012, plays by

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Shakespeare were staged in 37 languages other than English, and dialogues from *The Tempest* by Shakespeare were used in the opening ceremony of London Olympic Games. In the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death in 2016, a lot of large exhibitions and performances were well organized and numerous cultural activities were held, facilitating the influence of Shakespeare all over the world. It is quite necessary for China to learn from UK in overseas communication of our excellent traditional culture. However, the diversity, richness and profundity of Chinese excellent traditional determine that our overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture can't follow the same patterns of UK as promoting one specific cultural idol. We should actively excavate core values of fine traditional Chinese culture, and seek commonality from differences with the West as our main exploring directions.

Recommendations on Implementation of Heritage and Development Project of fine traditional Chinese culture points out:

“fine traditional Chinese culture has accumulated multiple valuable spirit treasure such as life philosophy in seeking commonality from differences, harmony without uniformity, social civilizing idea in recording philosophy and cultivating people with articles, aesthetic pursuit in perfect integration of form and spirit, fusion of emotions and surroundings, life mentality of thrifty and harmony. They are condensed representations of Chinese ideology, customs, life styles and emotion patterns that have positively nurtured our unique and rich literature and art, science and technology, humanity and study, and still imposed profound impact. Heritage and development of fine traditional Chinese culture necessitate vigorous promotion of ideological and cultural contents that are beneficial to social harmony and encourage people to follow positive virtues.”

It also requests mission that “we effectively tell Chinese stories, communicate Chinese voices, interpret Chinese characteristics, and present Chinese images.”The highly generalized conclusion and declaration of the policy was in the beginning of 2017, but practices tightly related to the spirit of these important documents have already been performed with stable progress, which have continuously improved the international influence of fine traditional Chinese culture.

Since the mid-1990s, a lot of translation editions in multiple languages of Chinese excellent traditional classic books have been published, among which *Library of Chinese Classics* systematically introducing and translating Chinese traditional cultural classics is an outstanding representative.

The introduction of the *Library of Chinese Classics* is a great practice for Chinese culture to go out, and is a national key publishing project for China to fully and systematically introduce foreign editions of Chinese classics to the world for the first time. *The Library of Chinese Classics* (Chinese-English bilingual edition) was formally launched in 1994, covering a total of 110 classic books that are most representative for Chinese literature, history, philosophy, politics, economy, military and technology and have comprehensively displayed Chinese time-honored and glorious civilization and culture. “Mr. Ren Jiyu, the honorary curator of the National Library of China, highly appreciated the project, thinking that it was well planned, authoritative editions were selected, translations were accurate and styles were complete so that it could represent Chinese academic, publishing and translating levels. It has condensed the five-thousand Chinese civilizations and can effectively

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introduce China to the world. By 2011, the *Library of Chinese Classics* (Chinese-English bilingual edition) has become the veritable national card due to its excellent publishing quality and profound cultural connotation. Former Premier Li Keqiang, Former Vice Premier Liu Yandong and other state leaders have selected the *Library of Chinese Classics* as a national gift. The Office of Chinese Language Council International has also listed the *Library of Chinese Classics* (Chinese-English bilingual edition) into the catalog of books donated to overseas Confucius Institutes.” This book has been widely collected by national libraries and college libraries of different countries. The second phase of the *Library of Chinese Classics* was launched in December 2007, languages involved were further expanded on the basis of the first phase to cover official languages of major Asian and European countries with bilingual editions such as Chinese-French, Chinese-Spanish, Chinese-Arabian, Chinese-Russian, Chinese-German, Chinese-Japanese, and Chinese-Korean editions. Therefore, the *Library of Chinese Classics* is more specifically oriented and covers more world regions. By now, the *Library of Chinese Classics* has become a more influential and more widely communicated national card.

However, in addition to promotion of Chinese excellent ancient classics in the form of book publication, the backdrop of the “Belt and Road” has raised higher requirements on overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture, and has made us directly face restrictions and challenges emerging in overseas communication routes for fine traditional Chinese culture.

First, the meaning loss during translation of ancient Chinese classics. It is inevitable to cause information loss and reduction during translation of classics between different languages. Mr. Li Jianjun writes in *Contemporary Double Stars: Tang Xianzu and Shakespeare*, “Real literary languages intend to impose resistance and noncompliance against translation. In other words, the beauty and poetic charm deeply buried in literary languages are hard to be translated and transformed into another language. As a ‘profound language’, Chinese shows stronger resistance against translation than other languages.”(Li,2016:11). Ancient Chinese is a language world with profound implications, and its “resistance” into other languages during translation is more prominent. During translation, we simply can’t find corresponding expressions for some ancient Chinese words because of differences between Chinese and Western cultures. This imposes extreme difficulties for the realization of the standards of faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance.

Second, restrictions of international communication platforms and western modern academic systems. In addition to publicity of cultural idols through multimedia, study results of overseas sinologist and domestic experts are also a key driving force for overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture. However, in the current department of western colleges, the status of East Asian Departments as important research fields of Chinese literary is much marginalized compared with other colleges and departments. Furthermore, sinology achievements haven’t been listed in the current international main academic study projects. In English academic periodicals of western countries, papers on fine traditional Chinese culture are more possibly included into the history catalog due to the long cultural age rather than being classified into literature and art for detailed catalog. The translated editions of papers written by Chinese scholars on fine traditional Chinese culture can’t be well understood by western readers because they are unfamiliar with relevant background knowledge, and the contents haven’t become international research hot spots. In the academic evaluation system for article selection of western academic periodicals, Chinese papers can’t get high scores for “contribution to

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academic debate”, which further affects their publication rates. Compared with current global popular cultural topics such as AI, big data, new media and consumption culture, papers on fine traditional Chinese culture can't attract much attention in western countries. Some elements that actually exist and can't be changed in short periods on international communication platforms and in current western academic systems can be another big obstacle against overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture.

Third, real operational difficulties in finding appropriate integration points for Chinese traditional culture to enter western media mainstream with parallel comparison. Taking Tang Xianzu and Shakespeare in the same era as a parallel comparison study case. In 2016, the 400th anniversary of the birth of Shakespeare, Mr. Li Jianjun wrote a famous academic work *Contemporary Double Stars:Tang Xianzu and Shakespeare*. In academic discussions after the publication of the book, a question was raised, “Why Tang Xianzu(1550-1616) is not as well-known as Shakespeare?”The comparison of the two great playwrights in the perspective of world literature was first made by Aoki Masaru in 1930 in his book *History of The Modern History of Chinese Traditional Drama*. Afterwards, many scholars have detailed the analysis. The parallel similar to the comparison between Tang Xianzu and Shakespeare is the study case between Cao Xueqin(1715-1763) and Goethe. In 1904, Wang Guowei(1877-1927) compared *A Dream of Red Mansions* by Cao Xueqin and *Faust* by Goethe in his work *A Commentary on A Dream of Red Mansions*, and called them “Great works of the universe”.(Cai,2016:53) However, what we must admit is, for western readers, the international popularity of Tang Xianzu is far less than Shakespeare, and the international influence of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is far behind *Faust*. What is the real reason? Dr. Michael H. Hart compiled a famous world-class best-seller - *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Books in History*, among which only six Chinese masterworks were listed - *The Analects of Confucius*, *The Art of War*, *The True Story of Ah Q*, *Tao Te Ching*, *Quotations from Chairman Mao* and *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Surprisingly, *A Dream of Red Mansions* was listed as the last one. For this shocking rank to Chinese people, he explained, “*A Dream of Red Mansions* has great influence in China, but it has little influence on the world. This drastic difference suggests that *A Dream of Red Mansions* is completely of ‘Chinese style’. This Chinese style can be partially reflected in Chinese poems, paintings, gardens, and operas, but *A Dream of Red Mansions* describes all aspects of China. It is a miniature of Chinese (traditional) society.”

Just like what he says, readers from China and western countries have quite different reading perspectives and value judgments due to contrasting ideology and culture, and life scenarios in fine traditional Chinese cultural classics are remote and strange to western readers, and exceptionally different from daily life of modern western societies. Therefore, an insurmountable “wall” exists against cultural communication, which has directly prevented promotion of fine traditional Chinese culture among western people. All these lead to restrictions and challenges against overseas communications of fine traditional Chinese culture. If we try to introduce fine traditional Chinese cultural classics to western cultural mainstreams by parallelly comparing them with well-known western classics, the effects may be much different from what we have expected and hoped.

Facilitating innovation in exploration - breakthrough and transcendence in overseas communication routes of fine traditional Chinese culture

Facing these restrictions and challenges, we should actively find appropriate countermeasures, breakthrough points, commonalities among differences, and break mindset to search effective ways and methods with multiple routes and directions for overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture.

First, we should further consolidate cultural confidence and enhance overseas promotion of Chinese excellent traditional cultural classics so that they can serve as bridges for cultural exchanges and national images of China.

Cultural confidence is the psychological foundation for Chinese culture to go global. Just as General Secretary Xi has said, “Soft power of culture is the most essential and superior part of a nation's comprehensive power and it relates to spiritual unification of a nation. We must stick to road confidence, theory confidence, system confidence, and the most essential cultural confidence.” Confidence in fine traditional Chinese culture is an inseparable part of cultural confidence.

In March 2014, during his visit to France, President Xi Jinping paid a call to Li Zhihua, who spent 27 years with his wife Jacqueline Alézaïs in translating the 120-chapter *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Li Zhihua(1915-) is the first person to introduce *A Dream of Red Mansions* to France, and placed the great Chinese ancient novel into the vision of French readers. President Xi highly appreciated the great value of his translation, his persistent spirit and academic achievements. “The translation edition of *A Dream of Red Mansions* by Li Zhihua and his wife has exerted great influence on France and other European countries. In 1981, upon its publication, the work made a sensation in the French literary circle, and was recognized an important event in French literary circle. 15,000 sets of the first edition were rapidly sold out, and several thousand sets were further printed. French *L'Express* commented, “The complete translation edition of this great work has filled in the painful gap for two centuries. In this way, people find a great writer like Cervantes and Shakespeare. We seem to have discovered a French classic writer like Proust, Marivaux and Stendhal, who decided to cooperate because they suffered from independent writing, and completed such a talented great work.” The recognized *A Dream of Red Mansions* “a universal masterpiece”, “Cao Xueqin has the sharp eyes of Proust, sympathy of Tolstoy, talent and humor of Musier, insight of Balzac, and capability to describe different classes of the whole society.”

The French edition imposed much influence upon its publication, but Zhang Qingshan, the honorary chairman of The Society of A Dream of Red Mansions still believes, “Compared with understanding of Chinese readers on European and American literary classics, it is far from enough for western readers to know Chinese classics, especially to ancient classics like *A Dream of Red Mansions*. In recent decades, some changes have occurred, which are closely related to Chinese social and economic development as well as political and cultural influence. Cultural communication is related to national status in the world.” He thinks, “Such works shall be gradually known by western readers. Some values in human civilization are common...and some expressions in Chinese and foreign classics are highly consistent. Expression forms of works from different nations may be different. If we appropriately promote and study our works, they will be better understood by foreign readers. A great literary classic can give a nation honor and pride; enhance national confidence, and shape

positive national images.”

The comment of Zhang Qingshan is pertinent and hits the critical point. Therefore, translation of classics of fine traditional Chinese culture should be further promoted and inherited without any relaxation. We should translate and introduce more classics of fine traditional Chinese culture to foreign countries, and actively elevate their international influence.

Second, the global influence of international famous sinologists should be fully utilized, and maintain a share on international high-end cultural communication platforms with support from official resources, making them a significant part of telling China’s stories well.

To encourage international famous sinologists to write works about China, Chinese Translation Press Affiliated to China Publishing Group launched “Foreigners Writing China Program”. *Xinhua News Agency* reported the latest results of the program from London on March 14, 2017 - *My Tryst with China* by Indian sinologist Deepak, *Dictionary of Chinese History* by British sinologist Michael Dillon, *Memory* by German sinologist Wolfgang Kubin, all being exhibited on the 46th London Book Fair and well received by the international community. China invited winners of China Book Award for Special Contributions, overseas China research experts and famous sinologists as major writers, describing China in development from their viewpoints, including not only their study results on Chinese history and culture, but also “China’s stories” with their own experience. These books have Chinese editions, English editions and native language editions of the writers. This program was regarded by the industry as “a new effort for Chinese press circle to introduce Chinese culture to the world.” *Yi Jing* or *Book of Changes* (Chinese-English bilingual edition) annotated and translated by Mr. Shao Naidu was also published on the meeting. The elevation of the international status of China has also fueled the popularity of books about China in the world, and attention of western scholars on China keeps rising, “they may revel in great and profound Chinese traditional classic texts, or focus on different development divisions of contemporary Chinese society.”

In the afternoon of March 14, 2017 (London time), China Publishing Group Corp. held a New Book Launch Event and European Sinologist Seminar of “Foreigners Writing China Program” in Royal Garden Hotel London. Jiang Jun, then-vice president of China Publishing Group, Zhang Gaoli, then-chief editor of Chinese Translation Press, and delegates from the group subsidiaries, and over 20 sinologists and scholars from UK, France and Sweden witnessed the New Book Launch Event of “Foreigners Writing China Program” of Chinese Translation Press. Chinese Translation Press and 15 famous sinologists signed writing plans and books shall be gradually published. All sinologists attending the meeting said it was a good event. In his speech, Jiang Jun said, “At the 45th anniversary for the establishment of Sino-UK diplomatic relation, it has special meaning for we hold this New Book Launch Event and Sinologist Seminar of Foreigners Writing China Program. The famous poet Wang Bo(650-676 or 684) in the Tang Dynasty said ‘My friends are all over the world, but they are just like my neighbors even they live far away’. Therefore, all sinologists have a good grip on Chinese culture. Thanks to all scholars and sinologists present here as your study and observation to Chinese traditional culture and modern China will not only benefit China, but also influence the world.”

The launch and implementation of “Foreigners Writing China” program, a very favorable effort, have not only encouraged the world famous sinologists to write about China by virtue of their global influence which effectively promotes the international publicity of Chinese voice, but also have made

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the best use of all advantages with the international high-end promotion platforms of London Book Fair to develop a positive momentum for the whole world writing China. The international influence achieved shows that this program has offered an innovative idea for overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture, and a most pioneering route synchronous to the development of the times. Therefore, it deserves learning and reference for future overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture.

Third, we should expand our thoughts and actively build a communication platform guided by China. We should organize professional performances, exhibitions to stress values of fine traditional Chinese culture. We should build more space and make diversified and all-around promotion for overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture.

Back in September 2005, *Mulan Psalm*, a large scene symphony led by Peng Liyuan, became one of programs for the 60th UN Foundation Anniversary. It was staged at Lincoln Arts Center, New York, and was a great success. "They are amazed that Chinese opera can be so powerful to conquer western audience." The Committee of Lincoln Arts Center awarded an outstanding artist trophy to Peng Liyuan, and a lot of American people came during the guest reception party for hands-shaking, hugging, photo-taking, and the trophy was damaged because of congestion. In 2006, inspired by speeches of central leaders of the Congress of the National Federation of Literary and Art Circles, Peng Liyuan determined to present the original opera *Mulan Psalm* to more audience, showing virtues and heroism of Chinese women with the original work.¹ She overcame all kinds of difficulties; on December 22, 2006, *Mulan Psalm* was finally successfully staged in the Great Hall of the People. "Germany Brandenburg National Symphony Orchestra led by conductor Michelle Helms accompanied the opera, which starred by Peng Liyuan and Michel Austen, a contractual American tenor of Metropolitan Opera House and Vienna Opera House. *Mulan Psalm* has created 3 'firsts': A foreign famous conductor conducts a complete Chinese opera for the first time in China; a world first-class symphony orchestra performs a Chinese opera for the first time in China; and a foreign singer performs a Chinese opera completely with Chinese lyrics for the first time in China. "

The performance was successful because of lofty conception, ingenious planning, promotion and participation of national outstanding artists, cooperation with first-rate foreign art organizations and artists, Chinese and foreign high-end communication platforms. Over ten years ago, this kind of performance is an effective way to promote fine traditional Chinese culture to the world.

In addition to vigorously facilitate international performances themed on fine traditional Chinese culture, exhibitions organized by Chinese parties for overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture are promising and successful ways.

From October 23 to December 21, 2016, "A Key Program of China Federation of Literary and Art Circles in 2016 - American Exhibition Studio of China National Youth Visual Art Curators" was successfully held in New York. The program had received financial support from the China National Arts Fund and approval from China Federation of Literary and Art Circles. Besides, it was directed by the International Liaison Department of China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and

¹ Cui Yijia: *Mulan Psalm Starred by Peng Liyuan - A Classic Opera with Art Maturity (Pictures)*, "Sina Entertainment", December 2, 2006, <http://ent.sina.com.cn/y/p/2006-12-02/11201353469.html>.

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implemented by the Academy of Literary and Art, CFLAC. About 20 excellent Chinese youth curators successfully fulfilled the tasks for exchange. "The program has trained some youth talents for China with high professional levels, outstanding communication capabilities, and proficient in domestic and foreign visual art exhibitions, and is recognized as "a key event of Chinese visual art".¹ "To transform exchange results, further study guiding significance of the US trip to future work, benefit more curators, and perfect youth training system in China", on March 14, 2017, 10 trainees of 2016 American Exhibition Studio of China National Youth Visual Art Curators of the Academy of Literary and Art, CFLAC attended a dream-realizing seminar "How to Improve Overseas Cultural Communication with Exhibitions" with leaders from the National Art Foundation, the International Department of China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, Chinese Artists Association, Chinese Folk Literature and Art Center of China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, China Photography Art Center, Chinese Calligraphers Association, the Academy of Literary and Art, CFLAC in the Artist Home of China Federation of literary and Art Circles.

The participants in the seminar stated that "We should introduce more brilliant cultural works with Chinese characteristics, Chinese spirit, and Chinese wisdom. For exhibition, we should study exhibition rules for overseas communication and reception, local general art environment, or even global trends of art and art institutions."

"Dong Zhanshun, director of the International Liaison Department of China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, pointed out that cultural communication requires that curators should have sense of national missions, fully and accurately grasp connotation and characteristics of Chinese culture, and stick to art standards. Tao Qin, vice CPC Subgroup secretary, vice general secretary and inspector of China Artists Association states, when overseas study and exhibitions are involved, we should pay more attention to mental and physical preparation, and hold overseas art activities by always observing the standard 'Chinese standpoints and international visions'. Fu Yixuan, deputy director of the Academy of Literary and Art, CFLAC points out that the ultimate purpose of overseas training is for overseas introduction of Chinese culture, implementation of instructions of General Secretary Xi Jinping- 'vigorously make efforts to create new concepts, new fields, new expressions for international communication, and effectively tell Chinese stories and publicize Chinese voices'. Promotion of overseas communication with exhibitions should follow 16 characters- knowledge about China and other countries, observation of local customs, Chinese standpoints and international expression."

The conscious promotion of exhibitions and training of new exhibition forces by the state is very helpful to overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture. There are successful cases to promote fine traditional Chinese culture with exhibitions led by Chinese parties. From May 5 to November 11, 2012, an exhibition of unearthed Han treasures with the largest scale and the most exhibits in Fitz William Museum of Cambridge University was held jointly by Art Exhibitions China and Fitz William Museum of Cambridge University, exhibiting 182 excellent relics collected by Xuzhou Museum of Jiangsu Province, Museum of the Western Han Dynasty Mausoleum of the Nanyue King, Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province, sewn with gold wires, including the extremely

¹ Correspondent Ma Liwenbo: *Cultural Communication Capability for Overseas Exhibitions Should Be Urgently Improved*, China Art News, Beijing, March 31, 2017, Edition 2.

precious jade clothes.

“Zhou Ming, deputy director of Art Exhibitions China hopes this large exhibition for ‘the latest archaeological results of Han Dynasty’ can offer an opportunity for European and global audience to closely appreciate glory of Chinese history.”¹

The exhibition arrangement was extremely beautiful and unique with four independent and correlative parts forming a complete exhibition of Han Dynasty history and culture. This exhibition was very successful with great effects and positive feedback, and many visitors from different countries can remember a lot of details now.

These classic cases show promotions of fine traditional Chinese culture in forms of performances, exhibitions in major foreign countries and cities are undoubtedly an effective way deserving vigorous expansion. Fine traditional Chinese culture does not only exist in texts, but also in visual images, audio presentations and relics. Chinese ancient paintings, porcelain wares, clothes, sculptures and music works all contain profound spirit of fine traditional Chinese culture, and are exceptionally beautiful carriers. Therefore, they can produce more extensive and unrivaled international recognition than texts in overseas communication. Today, international exchanges are more and more frequent, and exchange patterns are more and more diversified. Select themes integrating special characteristics of fine traditional Chinese culture and international recognition through performances and exhibitions led by Chinese parties, and introduce precious heritage in China’s long history to the world in forms of real scene performances and real object exhibitions, which are ways deserving more detailed explorations. It is also an effective way to display our cultural confidence and reveal brilliance of treasures of fine traditional Chinese culture on international stages.

CONCLUSION

May 14, 2017, on the opening ceremony of Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, General Secretary Xi says:

“From the historical perspective, humankind has reached an age of great progress, great transformation and profound changes. In this increasingly multi-polar, economically globalized, digitized and culturally diversified world, the trend toward peace and development becomes stronger and reform and innovation are gaining momentum. Never have we seen such close interdependence among countries as today, such fervent desire of people for a better life, and never have we had so many means to prevail over difficulties... We should build the Belt and Road into a road for peace. In pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative, we should ensure that when it comes to different civilizations, exchange will replace estrangement, mutual learning will replace clashes, and coexistence will replace a sense of superiority. This will boost mutual understanding, mutual respect and mutual trust among different countries.”²

This has raised higher requirements to ideas and objectives of overseas communication of fine

¹ Editor Xu Jing: *Chinese Unearthed Han Treasure Exhibition of the Largest Scale Shall be Held in Cambridge University, China Daily*, April 17, 2012. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/dfpd/2012-04/17/content_15071551.htm

² Xi Jinping: *Work Together to Build the Silk Road Economic Belt and The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, Speech at the Opening Ceremony of The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation*, Xinhua News Agency, May 14, 2017.

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK

traditional Chinese culture under the Belt and Road background. We should further expand our international visions, and elevate our overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture to a higher level for universal harmony with international civilization reference and facilitation of international understanding, respect and trust.

Mr. Ru Xin wrote in one of his articles, "Chinese culture both has national characteristics and universal implications... The universal refers to mutual understanding, sharing and reference between China and the world. Our cultural confidence does not only exist in our unrivaled pride for our excellent traditional culture and the desire to further develop it, but also in our vast vision and heart facing the world and absorb all excellent achievements of human culture for effective integration and use to make new contributions to the world. This is the assurance of modern China! The cultural power! The cultural confidence of a rising large country!"¹

Philosophical Doctor Daniel S. Burt, the former dean of Department of Literature, New York University, made a "World's Top 100 Literary Masters" in the beginning of the century. The 100 literary masters with the most influence selected by him include Du Fu, Cao Xueqin and Lu Xun of China, and well-known foreign writers such as Shakespeare, Dante, Homer, Leo Tolstoy, Goethe, Pushkin, Hugo, Tagore. "Several foreign scholars made the ranking believed that these Chinese cultural masters had the most profound spiritual pursuit and the most essential spiritual genes of Chinese nation. They are the most critical figures in Chinese cultural circle, and have become cultural cards for the unique Chinese civilization because of their special contributions to human progress. Their names still radiate brilliance today."²The cultural values of these Chinese cultural masters are highly recognized and appreciated by academic mainstreams of the western world, and their contributions to the human civilization and progress have also been highly recognized. Therefore, fine traditional Chinese culture has an irreplaceable value to the world, and is also the psychological foundation for us to consolidate cultural confidence in cultural communication of fine traditional Chinese culture, which is the spiritual core we should strive to display.

The overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture should be directed by national policies, follow time calls and march to the globalization for more and great international influence. General Secretary Xi says:

"The Chinese civilization has linked the spiritual veins of our country and nation, so it needs heritage and maintenance for generation and generation, and should advance with the times by abandoning outdated concepts and absorbing new ideas. Mining and interpretation of fine traditional Chinese culture should be enhanced so that the most fundamental cultural genes of Chinese nation can adapt to modern culture and modern society, and promote our cultural spirit that crosses time and space, transcends national borders, possesses permanent glamor and contemporary values. We should facilitate creative transformation, innovative development, and new vitality of Chinese civilization, and offer correct spiritual guidance to human beings together

¹ Ru Xin: *Break the Dual Opposition Patterns Between China and Western Countries on Basis of Modern Practice*, Philosophical Researches, Beijing, 2017, Issue 1.

² Weng Huainan: *Does Contemporary China Have Cultural Masters?* Dangjian, Beijing, 2011, Issue 1.

with colorful civilizations created by other nations.”¹

In short, overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture is a project bearing lots of responsibilities and tasks. It needs continuous efforts from Chinese people for generation after generation. It undoubtedly has outstanding theoretical values and practical meanings to discuss this topic under the current background of the Belt and Road. The Belt and Road has not only united countries along the lines into strategic partners for common development, but also elevated the international status of China to a very high position. Soft power of culture should and must take advantage of this great opportunity for further progress as it is an extremely rare historic opportunity for fine traditional Chinese culture to produce world influence. In this historical opportunity, in addition to learning classic cases concluded by other countries when they promoted their excellent traditional culture, we should strive to break through all restrictions and bottlenecks in overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture such as meaning loss when ancient Chinese texts are translated into other languages, restrictions on international communication platforms and western academic systems. We should actively search for effective solutions and routes by parallel comparing Chinese and western classic works of equivalent values so as to lead western mainstreams into new visions. We should further consolidate cultural confidence, and facilitate overseas communication of classics of fine traditional Chinese culture; we should continuously utilize global influence of international famous sinologists by encouraging them to write China with official resources, and well use international high-end communication platforms to make them an important force in telling Chinese stories; promotion platforms led by China should be actively built by organizing and holding professional performances and exhibitions at home and abroad to display to the world great values of fine traditional Chinese culture and fully expand diversified spaces for overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture.

We should consolidate our cultural confidence and actively cope with opportunities and challenges by seeking the most appropriate breaking points among restrictions and difficulties, exploring new perspectives, new routes and new methods for overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture. In this way, we can make the overseas communication of fine traditional Chinese culture a real bridge between China and the world, a symbol of Chinese national image, and a carrier of soft power of Chinese culture that are universally recognized by the world.

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