

Beijing Forum 2019

Contributing and Melding: The Dissemination of Sinitic Civilization (I) & (II)

On the morning of November 2nd, the Panel session “Contributing and Melding: The Dissemination of Sinitic Civilization” held its first session at the Grand Hall, Stanford Center, Peking University. Four speakers gave speeches on the topic “Contributing and Melding: The Dissemination of Sinitic Civilization”. Professor Cheng Yuzhui from Peking University chaired the presentation.

Professor Yuan Xingpei from Peking University started the first session with his academic report, titled “Buddhism • Papermaking • Potatoes: Three Examples of Mutual Absorption between Chinese and Foreign Civilizations”. He illustrated the historical facts that civilizations spread and influence each other with three typical examples of Buddhism, papermaking and potatoes. He sincerely called on people to put aside their prejudices, build a bridge of cultural transmission, and make the world a harmonious but different cultural community.

Robert Dilworth, Journals Director from Duke University, expressed his pleasure on cooperating with Peking University Research Institute of Sinology on the publishing of the Chinese Literature and Culture Journal. After a brief introduction of Duke University and Duke University Press, he showed the various cultural journals published by Duke University Press. “This academic journal is the result of the joint efforts of many parties sharing the same values.” Online platform and trans-culture workshop are gradually established and improved to achieve greater achievements.

Inahata Koichiro from Waseda University was the third professor to present his paper, titled “The Thought of No Punishment: Japanese Confucianist Ashi Tozan’s Mukeirokuin Edo Period”. As a great work absorbing the essence of Chinese Confucianism, No Punishment has not received enough attention for a long time. The first print of No Punishment was published in 1877. Luckily, Ashi Tozan’s works were well collected and made a difference to Japanese history. No Punishment, whose title comes from the Book of Documents 尚书, shared the ancient method of a ideal world. The construction of No Punishment, based totally on Chinese classics and documents, especially Wen xian tong kao 文献通考, put forward criticism on governmental running and political activities.

Tan Eng Chan, former head, Department of Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore, was the fourth scholar to present his paper, titled “Confucianism’s Universal Value and Modern Singapore”. Faced with the impact of Western values, former prime minister Lee Kuan-yew of Singapore stressed the historical origins and irreplaceable position of Confucian culture in the construction of Singapore’s national spiritual civilization. From the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, varieties of Confucianism courses were set up in Singapore as a part of spiritual construction. The government of Singapore invited Chinese scholars to give lectures and compile teaching materials. Honesty, filial piety and harmony are the core ideas of building an ideal society. Through these joint efforts, Singapore's national strength has been greatly improved.

After the coffee break, Professor Liu Yucai from Peking University chaired the presentation and three speakers gave speeches.

Professor Zhang Jian from Peking University started the first session with his academic report, titled “A Partial View of the Research on Zeng Gong in China, Japan and Korea”. China has been the leading and main force in the study of Zeng Gong, with a relatively large number of results. It can be predicted that the study of Zeng Gong will inevitably have a new look. Although studies of Zeng Gong in Japan and South Korea are few in number, they pay great attention to absorbing the research results of China. With frequent communication and the development of network technology, the one-way output is expected to gradually improve in the future.

Professor Satake Yasuko from Tohoku University started the second session with his academic report, titled “How Have Japanese Received Du Fu”. Although the poems of Bai Juyi and Yuan Zhen have always been regarded as the most acceptable poems in Japan, in fact, Du Fu's poems have exerted a considerable influence on the Japanese people from the Heian period to present days. Not only imitations of Du Fu’s poems but also paintings and plays themed on Du Fu's poems can be easily found in Japanese literary history. After the efforts of several generations of Japanese scholars, Du Fu's poems have finally been well translated.

Professor Lee Chang-Sook from Seoul University started the final session with his academic report, titled “A Study on the Acceptance of Chinese Literature Works in the Joseon Dynasty and Its Implications”. Though the novels Jian deng xin hua 剪灯新话 and Wu lun quan bei ji 五伦全备记 were not well praised in China, Joseon Dynasty took them seriously. These two works in the Joseon

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Dynasty served a function as a Chinese textbook and were discovered to have other new functions. In the process of spreading a culture, the conditions and attitudes of the receivers gave birth to new cultural phenomena.