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# On the Pivotal Role of Cultural Translation in the Exchanges and Mutual Learning Between Civilizations

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## ABSTRACT

The article begins with a review of the four significant crowning points in the exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations, which were represented by extensive translation activities spanning over two thousand years in China. It reveals that the essence of exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations lies in maintaining cultural diversity, seeking harmony in diversity, promoting cross-cultural exchanges, and promoting dialogs as the bridge. It identifies two main approaches to exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations, including: promoting two-way exchanges between the domestic and the foreign; and enhancing interaction between traditional values and modern values. Cultural translation is discussed as an effective means to realize the two approaches. Based on a review about Lin Yutang's exemplary experience in cultural translation, it analyzes the features of three main types of practitioners in exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations: Chinese academics with expert knowledge about Chinese culture and civilization, foreigners who are conversant with Chinese culture and civilization, and overseas Chinese scholars who function as a bridge between Chinese and foreign cultures and civilizations.

## 摘要

本文在简要回顾中国历史上四次以大规模翻译活动为标志的中外文明交流互鉴高潮的基础上,指出文明互鉴之要义在于:维护文化多样性、遵循“和而不同”的互鉴之道、促进跨文化交流、构建对话之桥。从重写文明史的角度来看,实现文明互鉴主要有两种途径:一是中外互鉴,二是传统与现代互鉴,其中文化翻译起到关键作用。在回顾林语堂的中外文明互鉴式文化翻译实践经验的基础上,分析了中外文明交流互鉴三类典型实践者的特点。

## KEYWORDS

Exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations; essence; approaches; practitioners; cultural translation

## 1. Introduction

I read with great interest the article “Re-writing the history of civilizations” by Professor Cao Shunqing and Liu Shishi, which was published in Issue 244 of the *Journal of Sichuan*

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*University* in 2023. Inspired by their thought-provoking viewpoints raised in the article, I am happy to contribute to the meaningful discussion on this topic.

In their article, the authors point out that the discourse and knowledge system of a nation “are constructed and formulated primarily in their perception, narration and interpretation of the history of civilizations” and that “the discourse power of the West was also established in writing of the history of world civilizations” (Cao & Liu, 2023). Proceeding from this premise, they put forward the meaningful proposal on rewriting the history of civilizations, which proposes to “reexamine the historical facts of exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations” and through such a process of narration and interpretation, seeks to “establish an outlook on civilizations that can contribute to autonomous knowledge systems for various disciplines in China” (Cao & Liu, 2023). Their article begins by criticizing the “clash of civilizations” and “end of history” theories, which were posited in the West, as failing to go beyond the dichotomy of “Western” and “non-Western” concerning the origin of civilizations. It highlights the necessity to reexamine the dominant views on civilization shaped mainly by the West. In addition, it also pinpoints major problems lying in the writings of civilization history in the West, including: 1) Inconsistency between the writing of civilization history and historical facts, e.g., it is inaccurate to posit that the ancient Greek civilization constitutes the origin of world civilizations; 2) Ignorance of historical facts about exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations, i.e., the role of the Arab civilization contributing to the Renaissance in the West; 3) Distortion and denigration of the East in writings of civilization history, which even lead to racial superiority theories in some cases (Cao & Liu, 2023). To rectify the above problems, the article proposes several approaches to rewriting the history of world civilizations, including: surveying the overall status quo of civilization history writing, analyzing research about civilization writing, and incorporating previously marginalized perspectives on history, e.g., the Chinese perspective, into the writing of the human civilization history (Cao & Liu, 2023).

Against the background of dominance and supremacy of the capital value and the technology value in the current times, the progress of human civilizations is confronted with many serious issues that need to be addressed urgently. It is therefore a meaningful and imperative topic of our times to rewrite the history of world civilizations, which matters for both the current development of human societies and the future prospect of humankind. In this sense, Cao & Liu’s article can not only provide a feasible blueprint for rewriting the history of civilizations but also be used as useful leverage in shattering ethnocentrism (especially Western centrism) through the reconstruction of discourses on civilizations, particularly in the humanities and social sciences.

In this article, I will contribute to the meaningful discussion by focusing on the pivotal role of cultural translation in exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations. I am going to reveal the nature and essence of exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations, explore effective approaches to exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations, and analyze the experience of exemplary practitioners of cultural translation in promoting exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations.

## 2. The nature and essence of exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations

In Chinese, “文明互鉴” means literally mutual appreciation of civilizations. It is worth noting that “鉴” is a very meaningful word in Chinese, the etymology of which refers to “mirror.” In this sense, “文明互鉴” is a vivid Chinese expression suggesting that the people from one civilization can use another civilization as a “mirror” for comparison and contrast, through which they get to know more clearly both similarities and differences between theirs and others as well as strengths and weaknesses so that they can appreciate, exchange and learn. Just as a traditional Chinese maxim goes, using bronze as a mirror, one can set straight one’s clothing; using the past as a mirror, one can know the rise and fall of the times; using other people as a mirror, one can understand one’s gains and losses (以铜为镜, 可以正衣冠; 以古为镜, 可以知兴替; 以人为镜, 可以明得失).

This concept of “文明互鉴” or exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations is based on two premises: 1) commonality and commensurability of different civilizations; 2) complementarity of different cultures and civilizations. According to Cao & Liu’s article, the mainstream in the development history of world civilizations is “the interplay of plurality and uniqueness as well as exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations;” “in contemporary societies, exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations is still the mainstream of civilization’s development” (Cao & Liu, 2023). This statement is representative of the Chinese view on civilizations, as summarized by China’s website of “Keywords about China”<sup>1</sup>:

China promotes exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations. Such exchanges and mutual learning are necessitated by the diverse nature of civilizations, premised on the principle of equality, and propelled by a healthy dose of inclusiveness. While the world we inhabit is characterized by diversity in terms of culture, ethnicity, skin colors, religions and social systems, people across the world increasingly find themselves in a community with a shared future, with their interests interlocked. It is therefore crucial to promote mutual respect and harmonious coexistence between civilizations. Exchanges and mutual learning can be a bridge of friendship between peoples, a driver of progress for humanity and a bond of world peace. There is great promise in tapping the wisdom and power of world civilizations to find moral support and cultural inspiration for our joint efforts to address challenges facing humanity.

Bertrand Russell, a British philosophical sage, also expressed a similar viewpoint on the importance and significance of exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations, as follows: “Contacts between different civilizations have often in the past proved to be landmarks in human progress. Greece learnt from Egypt, Rome from Greece, the Arabs from the Roman Empire, mediaeval Europe from the Arabs, and Renaissance Europe from the Byzantines” (Russell, 1922: 185).

The history of the development of human societies is actually the history of exchanges, mutual learning and coexistence of various civilizations. Taking the developmental history of the Chinese civilization as an example, there were four significant crowning points in the exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations, all represented by extensive translation activities spanning over two thousand years in total. The first took place from the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD) to the Tang Dynasty

(618–907 AD), when scriptures of Buddhism written in Sanskrit as the treasure of the Indian civilization were translated systematically into Chinese by Buddhists. The second occurred in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties (the 16<sup>th</sup> Century – the 18<sup>th</sup> Century), when a great number of scientific and technological books from the West were translated into Chinese by missionaries working with Chinese scholars. The third happened from around the Opium War in the early 1840s to the period of the May Fourth Movement in 1919, marked by translation of Western Learning (西学) into Chinese. The fourth came with the initiation of the Reform and Opening-up at the end of the 1970s up to the present day, marked by the booming of translation in all areas with a focus on translation from foreign languages into Chinese in the first three decades and from Chinese into foreign languages in the recent decade.

The apex of Buddhist scripture translation lasted for about a thousand years in Chinese history, which enabled the Chinese civilization to absorb Buddhist culture from the ancient Indian civilization and cultivated fruitful interaction between the Chinese Confucian and Taoist philosophies and the Buddhist Philosophy. As early as the Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220 AD), the Persian Buddhist An Shigao (安世高) translated about 30 sutras (Buddhist Precepts in Sanskrit) into Chinese and at the same time introduced Indian astronomy to China (Zhong, 2003). In the 5<sup>th</sup> Century, translation of Buddhist scriptures was organized officially on a large scale in China and a state translation school was founded, for which the Buddhist Dao An (道安) (312–385 AD) was appointed director of this school, possibly the earliest school of translation in China (Zhong, 2003). In the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317–420 AD), the Indian Buddhist Kumarajiva (鸠摩罗什) (343–413 AD) translated 39 Buddhist scriptures totaling 313 volumes from Sanskrit into Chinese, of which the translated *Diamond Sutra* (金刚经) has remained one of the most popular Buddhist classics in Chinese to date. His sutra translation brought into the Chinese civilization a more systematic Mahayana Buddhist doctrine, enhancing the exchanges and mutual understanding between Chinese and ancient Indian civilizations.

In the Tang Dynasty, Xuan Zang (玄奘) (602–664 AD), who is well-known nowadays as Tripitaka, the main protagonist in the Chinese classic novel *Journey to the West*, took back 657 Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts from India to China after a long journey on his quest for sacred texts from the years 628 to 645. Working with collaborators in the grand translation factory established by the Tang imperial court in Changan (长安, capital of the Tang empire, known as Xi'an 西安 nowadays) for 19 years, he translated 1,335 volumes of Buddhist manuscripts. These translations helped to make Buddhism popular throughout China. Besides, Xuan Zang also translated some of Lao Zi's (the father of Taoism) works into Sanskrit (Zhong, 2003). In addition, as his oral accounts were documented by Bian Ji (辨机) in the book *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions* (大唐西域记), valuable historical records were kept and left behind about civilizations in West and Central Asia as well as in India. Xuan Zang and his large-scale translation activities fostered exchanges and understanding between the two ancient civilizations of China and India (Ma, 1998: 40–43; 60–63).

The translation of Buddhist scriptures not only enriched the sources of the three main branches of Chinese culture and civilization (Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism), but also imported a series of new knowledge into Chinese culture and civilization and stimulated their new development. As Wang (2019) summarized:

The philosophy, ethics and logic from the Buddhist scriptures spurred Chinese philosophical thinking, e.g., the Cheng-Zhu school of thoughts in Confucianism. The Gatha from Buddhist literature stimulated melody and rhythm in Chinese poetry. The stories in Buddhist sutras inspired such classical Chinese novels as *Journey to the West*, and the artwork and Zen concepts in the Buddhist scriptures sparked new development of Chinese paintings and sculptures, e.g., those in the Mogao Grottoes. Buddhism-related music also contributed to the prosperity of Chinese folk music. Additionally, the language in Buddhist scriptures promoted sublimation of the Chinese language, such as four tones and new expressions. Moreover, the translation of Buddhist sculptures contributed to the flourishing of cultural exchanges embodied by those along the Silk Road.

Ji Xianlin (季羨林), one of the representative Chinese scholars, also noted the crucial role of translation in the exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations as follows:

The long river of the Chinese culture has had times of high tides and low tides, but it has never dried up. A major reason is that there have always been inflows of new water, among which there were two big inflows: one from India; the other from the West. Both of the two big inflows were channeled through translation activities. Therefore, the secret that the Chinese culture can always maintain its vitality lies in translation. How invaluable is the function of translation! (Ji, 1997: 2)

We can observe from the above account of history about civilization development that the essence of the exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations lies in the following four aspects: 1) Maintaining Cultural Diversity. As a core principle proposed by the “UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity,” it emphasizes maintaining diversity and equality of all cultures, and calls for mutual respect, dialogue, exchanges and learning between cultures. 2) Seeking Harmony in Diversity. This concept can be traced back to the core of Chinese Confucian philosophical thoughts, which laid down a motto followed by Chinese intellectuals, i.e., as a gentleman one should seek harmony in diversity rather than uniformity or conformity (君子和而不同). This concept emphasizes that people from different civilizations should respect and tolerate each other in their differences and uniqueness. 3) Promoting Cross-cultural Exchanges. This core concept of cross-cultural communication means that cross-cultural exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations should be maintained in various aspects, such as in philosophy, history, literature, art, science, technology, etc. 4) Promoting Dialogues as the Bridge. This concept highlights the importance of engaging in mutual dialogs on equal footings, which function as the bridge for communication in exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations.

### 3. Effective approaches to exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations

From the perspective of rewriting the history of world civilizations, there are two main approaches to exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations: 1) promoting two-way exchanges between the domestic and the foreign, 2) enhancing interaction between traditional values and modern values. That is to say, against the background of

overwhelming Western-centrism in the global academic discourse, we should not only learn from foreign nations but also pay attention to the exploration and summation of traditional and modern thoughts, values and ethical principles in our own culture and civilization. More importantly, we should pay more attention to the presentation and narration of the achievements of modernization in developing countries in writing the history of world civilizations. For example, the traditional thoughts, values and ethical principles from Chinese civilization can provide useful wisdom for the international society faced with the major global challenges such as destructive artificial intelligence, inclusive growth, climate change and ecological harmony. The modern exploration for effective paths to poverty reduction and prosperous development during the past four decades in China can also provide useful pragmatic experiences for development in other civilizations. Like the epoch-making industrial revolution that had happened in the West, China's enormous economic, social, scientific and technological developments in the recent decades are significant achievements of modern human civilization, which should not be overlooked when rewriting the history of world civilizations.

In rewriting the history of world civilizations, scholars from previously marginalized civilizations need to pay special attention to universal interpretation and cultural translation of the concepts and values with their national characteristics in the global context. For example, one of the core concepts of traditional Chinese thought is “和” (*he*) or “和谐” (*hexie*), which has been used by Chinese leaders speaking on international occasions for many times to elaborate on the Chinese government's principle of peaceful co-existence in international relations. This concept has often been translated into English simply as “harmony.” However, it must be noted that in English “harmony” hints at “uniformity or conformity,” which would give people the false impression that the leaders might force uniformity and cannot tolerate differences. Daniel Bell, who has worked in China for a long time and is well-versed in Chinese language and culture, points out rightly in the opinion column of the *Financial Times* that the core concept of “和” originated from Chinese traditional thought actually means “harmony in diversity,” which implies promoting peaceful order while respecting differences (Bell, 2013).

The key to beneficial and productive exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations lies in the two-way approach to exchanges and in seeking common ground while explaining differences (求同释异). Two-way exchanges can help to realize cross-cultural communication and build the bridge of dialogues between civilizations on equal footings, which in turn can help to avoid cultural centrism and ethnocentrism, especially Western centrism. The aim of seeking common ground while explaining differences is to respect cultural diversity and to practice harmony in diversity (和而不同). It is natural that there are differences across civilizations and between various nations, peoples, and regions of the world. Differences, sometimes fundamental, exist not only in languages, writing systems, artifacts of civilizations, modes of production and relations of production but also in the worldviews and ways of thinking of people from different civilizations. For example, although the Earth that we live on is actually a sphere with no east-west or north-south distinctions, on the world maps that we use in our civilized world there exist distinctions of directions, which form the basis for different world views and ways of thinking for people of different civilizations. We can see from world maps how significantly worldviews and ways of thinking vary among peoples in different regions of the world: on the Chinese version of the world map, the origin of which can be traced back to

the Great Universal Geographic Map (坤輿万国全图) drawn by Matteo Ricci and Li Zhizao (李之藻) in 1602 in the early Ming Dynasty, China is perceived as the center on the world's east-west axis. In contrast, on the British version of the world map, the United Kingdom is perceived as the center on the world's east-west axis. This is a very telling example suggesting that the people of every civilization are always accustomed to placing their own world and civilization at the center of their thinking. Therefore, differences are natural to exist so the two-way exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations always require and entail explaining differences in seeking common ground.

In order to realize two-way exchanges and seek harmony in diversity in the writing of the history of world civilizations, we need to engage in cross-cultural dialogs between our own and foreign civilizations. The purpose is not only to seek common ground, i.e., to participate in the construction of a consensual framework for the writing of history of world civilizations, but also to explain differences, i.e., to present, narrate and explain across cultural boundaries our national civilization history, in particular the parts that have not been known, have not been understood adequately, or have been misunderstood by others due to their distinctive features, national characteristics or local features. Without active engagement in two-way dialogs with other civilizations, we would suffer from the risk of losing the legitimate right or power in shaping the global discourse about civilizations, i.e., we would be “aphasic” or even be absent from the writings of world civilization history. Besides, without presentation, narration and explanation of the differences in cross-cultural dialogs, our differences and diversity would not be respected and understood. Therefore, for civilizations that have been marginalized, many scholars are needed who have the awareness to engage actively in cross-cultural dialogs to promote exchanges and mutual learning with other civilizations. They should be active to speak out in international arenas and to present, narrate and explain effectively.

No matter in maintaining cultural diversity, in achieving harmony in diversity, in promoting cross-cultural exchanges or in promoting dialogs as the bridge, cultural translation plays a vital role in the exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations. The nature of translation activities lies in the understanding of both similarities and differences, openness to and tolerance about diversity, and positive attitude and action toward dialogs. Cultural translation, in a broad sense, means cross-cultural conveyance, narration, interpretation and transformation of information, meaning and knowledge from one civilization to another. According to Maitland (2017), cultural translation is located at the heart of human communication “as the means by which we produce and engage with cultural, political and social production in a globalized, multicultural world” so cultural translation is “the site of such contestations” (Maitland, 2017: 10). The nature of translation, as bringing the domestic to the foreign realms and bringing the foreign to the domestic realms in crossing borders and boundaries of languages, cultures and civilizations, was described vividly by Berman as follows:

Translation starts from what is one's own, the same (the known, the quotidian, the familiar), in order to go towards the foreign, the other (the unknown, the miraculous, the Unheimliche), and, starting from this experience, to return to its point of departure. (1992: 46)



#### 4. Exemplary practitioners of cultural translation in promoting the exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations

Cultural translation, as cross-cultural conveyance, narration, interpretation and transformation of information, meaning and knowledge from one civilization to another in the global context, can function as one of the most effective ways to realize exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations, so the role played by practitioners of cultural translation is important. In this regard, the successful experience of Lin Yutang can be viewed as an exemplary practitioner of cultural translation in promoting the exchanges and mutual learning between Oriental and Western civilizations.

Lin Yutang (1895–1976) is widely regarded as one of the most successful Chinese authors writing in English in presenting, narrating and explaining the treasure and essence of Chinese civilization to the Anglophone world. In the year of 1935 Lin Yutang published the book *My Country and My People* in America, in which Lin presents a systematic description and analysis about Chinese people, customs and culture in an accessible and vivid manner to Western people. In 1937 he published the book *The Importance of Living* in America, in which Lin provides a comprehensive presentation in 14 chapters about the various aspects of Chinese life as well as a cross-cultural interpretation of the wisdom of life in Chinese civilization that can be absorbed by people in other civilizations, esp. those in the West who are suffering from the consequences of industrialization in modern society. This book topped the American bestseller list for 52 weeks, has been reprinted more than 40 times in the United States alone, and translated into over a dozen other languages. As a tremendous bestseller and widely regarded as a classic for over 70 years since its publication, it provides a model of successful exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations.

Lin Yutang devoted much commendable effort to cultural translation of the classic Chinese philosophical ideas of Confucius, Mencius, Lao zi, and Zhuang zi. He published *The Wisdom of Confucius* in English in 1938 and *The Wisdom of Laozi* in 1948 at Random House Press. Additionally, he introduced the wisdom of two time-honored Oriental civilizations to Westerners in his book *The Wisdom of China and India* published by Random House Press in 1942. Moreover, he translated into English more than 100 classical Chinese essays, legendary novels, and Su Dongpo's (苏东坡) poems to make them accessible to English-speaking readers. He also translated *A Dream in The Red Chamber* (红楼梦), a masterpiece of classical Chinese literature, into English. Though it was not published in the English-speaking world, it functioned as the source text for the translation of *A Dream in The Red Chamber* into Japanese by the Japanese translator Ryoichi Sato, which was published in Japan in 1983 (Song, 2016).

Lin Yutang's ambition as a cultural translator is summarized in a Chinese couplet: “两脚踏东西文化，一心评宇宙文章” that he wrote, which means “striding with both legs to bridge the cultures of the East and the West; devoting my whole mind to seeking the learning of universal knowledge” (translated by the author). The key to Lin's success as an outstanding representative of practitioners in promoting exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations lies in four capacities that he possessed: first, highly proficient command of English, the language for global

communication; second, empathetic familiarity with Chinese culture and civilization; third, an open mind to exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations; fourth, the dialogic mode of presentation, narration and interpretation in cross-cultural communication.

To realize the renewed mission of rewriting the history of world civilizations now, a practical solution lies in how we answer the question: which practitioners of cultural translation can be entrusted with a major role in promoting exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations? As seen from cross-cultural exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations, it is necessary to reflect that there have been some false assumptions about this question. The first false assumption is that we can always rely on foreigners because they are proficient in the foreign languages that need to be used to present, narrate and interpret our civilization in the international context. Therefore, it is always assumed that they will be able to do the job and that they can naturally do it well as long as they are willing. However, relying on foreigners to shape the discourse about our civilization is risky not only because their understanding about our civilization is often far from our insider's comprehension of our own culture and civilization, which means that their presentation and narration might be incomplete and inadequate, but also because they always lack empathy or shared values with the culture that they translate, which means that their interpretation might be distorted.

The second false assumption held by many scholars from previously marginalized cultures is that it is not necessary for them to present, narrate and explain their discourse on international occasions to the international audience as long as they publish their discourse in their own languages in domestic avenues. In most cases, this is understandable either due to their lack of foreign language proficiency or because they are not brave enough to participate and argue in international academic communication, dialogs and debates. However, in the long run the consequences from this cannot be underestimated that their publications and discourse, no matter how significant and valuable they are, would be "absent" from the writing of the history of world civilizations, which explains why some scholars would become "aphasic" and "lose their voice" in the international academic community (Cao, 1996) and why their culture and civilization would be marginalized in the writing.

Therefore, a practical solution to the above question is to mobilize the collaborative efforts among three parties: Chinese academics with expert knowledge about the Chinese culture and civilization, foreigners who are conversant with Chinese culture and civilization, and overseas Chinese scholars who can bridge the above two sides effectively.

As seen from Lin Yutang's experience as an exemplary practitioner of culture translation, overseas Chinese scholars can play particularly useful roles in promoting the exchanges and mutual learning of Chinese and foreign civilizations. They not only have immersed and embodied expert knowledge about Chinese culture and civilization but are also equipped with a highly proficient command of the foreign language required in international presentation, narration and explanation of the discourse about Chinese culture and civilization. Also, because they have been working and living overseas for a long time, they not only know the target culture and ways of thinking of the target audience well but also have honed ability and skills to engage in cross-cultural communication and exchanges between civilizations.

## 5. Summary

Inspired by Professor Cao Shunqing and Liu Shishi's article "Re-writing the history of civilizations" in early 2023, I have contributed to this meaningful discussion in three aspects. First, through a review of the four significant crowning points in the exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations, which were represented by extensive translation activities spanning over two thousand years, it has been revealed that the essence of exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations lies in maintaining cultural diversity, seeking harmony in diversity, promoting cross-cultural exchanges, and promoting dialogs as the bridge. Second, two approaches to exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations have been proposed, including: 1) promoting two-way exchanges between the domestic and the foreign 2) enhancing interaction between traditional values and modern values. Cultural translation is discussed as an effective means to realize the two approaches. Third, based on analysis about Lin Yutang's exemplary experience as a practitioner of cultural translation, a practical solution in promoting exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations has been proposed, i.e., to mobilize the collaborative efforts among Chinese academics with expert knowledge about the Chinese culture and civilization, foreigners who are conversant with Chinese culture and civilization, and overseas Chinese scholars who function as a bridge between Chinese and foreign and civilizations.

## Note

1. [http://keywords.china.org.cn/2014-11/18/content\\_34085572.html](http://keywords.china.org.cn/2014-11/18/content_34085572.html)

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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