Cultural Sharing, Connectivity and Road Expansion

— Cultural Transformation and Anthropology Study of World Care from the Belt and Road Initiative

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Abstract: The era of cultural sharing marks itself mainly in the following three aspects: First, the virtual presence which bridges the world together and further broadens our horizons to observe the world in an even more extensive way. Second, the formerly stable structural relationship between peripheral regions and central regions gradually grows uncertain. Third, the establishment of cyberized roads or the cyberized expansion of roads leads the advance toward a global connectivity where the virtual world closely interacts with the real world. After "the Belt" concept comes into being, the anthropologists must upgrade their research from previously established fixed-point perspective to a more extensive observation over the "Belt" or a wider range, while the concept of "the Road" encourages anthropologists to study the culture of the other half of the world, namely, to read the world history as a whole new picture from a Chinese or eastern point of view. It is necessary for anthropology to break the geological and cultural borders in the real world to extend its antenna to a more extensive range, which will also bring the "otherness" of this field to a more prominent and obvious play. It is inevitable that all human cultures are about to take a core standing in the Belt and Road Initiative.

Keywords: cultural sharing; connectivity; the Belt and Road Initiative; cultural transformation; anthropology

It is assured that exchange, integration and sharing among different cultures are definitely favorable for boosting the prosperity and development of human civilization as whole, which, in turn, will further stimulate exchange, integration and sharing activities and might produce a cultural crest which creates a diversified cultural presence, instead of a one with only a single-dimension. The crest serves as a gathering point where various kinds of cultures meet and communicate at certain time and place. Under this circumstance, the previous linear relationships between primitive cultures and modern cultures, between barbarism and civilization which were observed separately in a chronological order or according to the civilized degree will be replaced by a co-existing and mutually penetrating relationship where these cultures seem to complete each other and will be less a whole piece without each other. The Belt and Road Initiative indicates that an era for global cultural sharing at the crest point should also be based on "road" which should be expanded to cover the whole world. So, it is also necessary for Chinese anthropologists to prepare themselves for a worldwide cultural transformation and to develop a universal caring attitude.

1. Question presented

Previously, the subject-object dichotomy mode of thinking had prevailed in the anthropological study of cultures, where the western culture stood as the subject and other cultures as a whole had to take the object position, which was the basic frame of reference for cultural studies under this thinking mode and consequently gave rise to the concept of "other cultures" compared to the subject culture. The western anthropologists also believed that they have found, from their points of view, the so-called "other cultures" which were objectified yet perceivable and were defined as a distant cultural presence which was less developed than the western culture in terms of time and only existed at "other" places (Fabian, 1983, p.27). Nevertheless, these so-called "other cultures" and the subject culture are apparently divided by the westerners because it is almost impossible for people to tell the superiority or inferiority of a certain culture and each culture must have reached its own glorious crest at a certain time and place along its development process. It is because of this crest that makes a certain culture the way it is and makes it possible for different types of cultures to communicate and share. It is safe to say that the crest points of different cultures help removing the antagonism and misunderstanding among cultures; that is to say, when observed equally from the times of their cresting, all cultures are able to stand by their true colors and therefore can be tolerant of the differences of "other cultures". So, it is possible for different cultures to communicate and integrate at a high level and dimension while keeping their own special characteristics unchanged and yet shared at the same time. Given that cultures are the most wonderful fruits of different groups of populations, so they are more of the perceptions and sharing of common values of an entire group than some simple feelings of a certain individual. It is because of these common natures that coexisting, communication and sharing become feasible among different cultures, which teaches us how to appreciate the differences of other people and cultures.

Culture usually reflects the highest value or ideal of a certain population and therefore serves as the symbol of a specific era which in turn distinguishes itself from other eras because of the special culture it has developed. There is a closely interdependent relationship between a certain era and its culture. Taking the glorious age of the Tang Dynasty, Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty for example, they developed distinctive cultures of their own and achieved splendid cultural glory, which

were deemed as the very symbol for Chinese culture and civilization. The culture could be mirrored in various aspects, including artworks, architecture and the four basic necessities of our daily lives (food, clothing, housing and transportation). On the basis of more than ten years' observation of social development, it is reasonable to assume that the 21st century will be best characterized or reflected by a globally connected image, which brings forward a brand-new way for people all over the world to interact. This eye-catching image also indicates that the big era of global connectivity is about to cover more and more people whose interdependence among each other will grow day by day in this Internet based new world which is virtual yet plays a real role in real life (Zhao, 2017a). In this era, people will be brought closer via various virtual connections, which will unveil more different cultural expressions and lead to a great change in people's living style because virtual communications will not be necessarily limited to the Internet but will serve as an inducement for face-to-face communications as well. We are going to embrace a whole new world with the Internet serving as the bridge.

2. The era of global connectivity

In the history of human cultures and civilizations, a great number of symbols have been used to define specific eras, including tools mainly used during the times, for example, the Stoneware Age, the Bronze ware Age and the Ironware Age. Also some semantic modifiers which properly summed up the distinctive characteristic of certain eras, for example, the "Age of Exploration", the "Age of Capitalism" and the "Age of Imperialism". It is noticeable that people tend to label and summarize the age they live in with clear and concise markers or words which vary from culture to culture and from

time to time. By doing this, we could describe the prominent features of a certain age with an abstract summary from the perspective of people living so as to find a sense of cultural identity and belonging.

The society we are living in has been benefiting the most from the breakthrough of technological fields and the accompanied influence over social and cultural lives. Since the 1990s, the Internet has been ushered into our daily lives, which makes real-time connections possible and its users are increasing every day. Since the first ten years of the 21st century, the WeChat platform has become popular, which presents a picture of connectivity among people all over the world. The core characteristic of this era, that is, global connectivity, is clearly reflected in the change of all kinds of social relationships with the support of the Internet and WeChat. Under this global connectivity era, the Internet covers various aspects of our daily lives and makes it necessary for people to keep in touch almost all the time, and the basic social elements like people, money and goods are mutually communicated and circulated in a speed faster than ever. Moreover, a more direct, immediate and convenient association has also been established between our thinking and the realistic material world for the first time (Zhao, 2017b). Our conceptions and needs are able to be answered almost real-time via all kinds of virtual platforms offered on the Internet, which was impossible before because of the distance between people and the barrier of media between the real world and the virtual one. As a matter of fact, it is fair to call the Internet technology a communication revolution for human society because it made previous barriers vanish. Theoretically speaking, it is possible for us to get connected with the whole world via virtual space with one intellectual mobile and the separated physical space of one's own is also being affected deeply and being included into this whole space created by the Internet. This kind of

close connection which we could not even imagine in the past is becoming a common part of our daily lives, which officially pronounces the coming of an era of global connectivity.

The era of global connectivity is mainly characterized by the following three aspects: First, the virtual presence which bridges the whole world and further broadens our horizons to observe the world in an even more extensive way. Second, the formerly stable structural relationships between peripheral regions and central regions gradually grow uncertain. Third, the establishment of cyberized roads or the cyberized expansion of roads leads the world advance toward a global connectivity, where the virtual world closely interacts with the real world.

First, "The observation horizon is broadened compared to the previously narrow one," which indicates that everyone of this era is going to be involved in this more extensive visual preference and selections to overlook the whole world unless someone excludes himself/herself from it intentionally. With support of the Internet and a narrow mobile screen, the whole world is accessible and everyone can have a real interaction with people all over the world about not just trivial things but a great number of big events, even those concerning international politics. For example, the homicide case where a Chinese student was killed in America might have stirred up a serious discussion about the differences among political systems worldwide; and the WeChat moments of a microbiological scientist might be filled with information concerning the global politics, economies, ecology, military affairs and cultures etc., that is to say, he/she presents himself/herself not only as a microbiological expert in the traditional sense, but also as a reader who might take the Internet as an encyclopedia.

Second, "The formerly stable structural relationship between peripheral regions and central regions gradually grows uncertain." This is the best footnote for you to grasp the distinctive characteristic of this era. Nowadays, the old-world pattern has changed for all, where the west stood at the very center with the east as its periphery. It is because of the instant connectivity effect of the Internet that the old structural relationship between peripheral regions and central regions gradually grows uncertain. It is hard to specifically assign certain places functioning as the dominating center for all kinds of social relationships. Take China's Wuzhen as an example, geographically speaking, it is in a border position, instead of being in a center position, however, it was chosen to be the permanent site for the World Internet Conference and has attracted a great number of participants all over the world to come to discuss over issues concerning the advancement of global Internet. It is also unfeasible for the logistics systems worldwide to operate in a geographical center-to-border downward delivery mode, instead, the so-called center site is established on the basis of the law of demand, which transforms the social relationship structure from a structural hierarchy mode to a plane-based grid mode.

Third, "The cyberized expansion is established." This implies that the old self-contained point-to-point living style has been completely intruded on by cyberization. One has to extend his/her activities as much as possible in the virtual world so as to communicate with people and circulate money and goods, and these activities on line will also stimulate communications among real people and the circulation of money and goods off line. Under this circumstance, each individual can connect himself/herself with the real world via the virtual Internet and create more opportunities and possibilities to set his/her feet all over the world. Our living radius is no longer limited to our own familiar cultural environment but enlarged to other cultures. Because of traveling, different kinds of cultures are bound
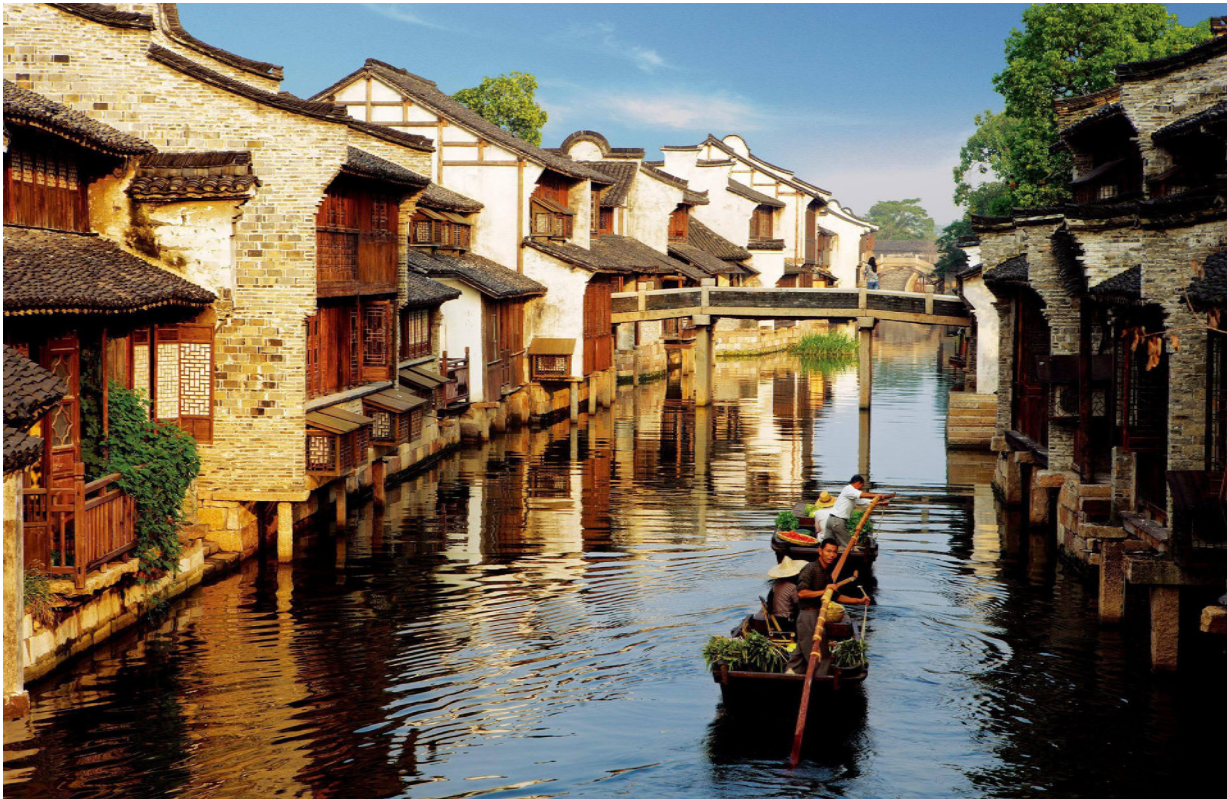
Wuzhen

to meet each other and lead to mutual learning, collision and integration and even transformation and combination.

In this specific era compared to other times, what China should focus on currently is how to have her culture included and integrated into the world civilization from a sense of cultural self-awareness. As a matter of fact, right before the "Age of Exploration," China impressed the world with the heroic undertaking of Zheng He's Voyages in the South Seas as far as Africa in the beginning of the fifteenth century (1405—1431). This opened a new chapter for the world navigation history, however, Zheng He's Voyages were motivated more by a "showing off" attitude than by a self-awareness of one's own culture because the then Ming Dynasty intended to intimidate the dismissed Emperor Jianwen who might have escaped and gone into exile outside China by exhibiting his wealth, mighty power and magnificence. The era of global connectivity offers a great opportunity for China, and other countries as well, to raise the self-awareness about their own cultures because regardless of one's social identity, as an elite or as an ordinary person, the self-awareness about his/her own culture will be established in the process of frequent surfing on line and screen flooding on one's smart phone. With cross-cultural travel, communications and migration being more and more popular among Chinese people, it is an indisputable fact that Chinese culture has been brought to the world. In 2013, the Chinese government put forward The Belt and Road Initiative, which, on the one hand, could be considered China's declaration to the

world and, on the other hand, shows our cultural self-awareness to actively take part in the advancement of the world.

As for the current development of China's anthropology, this era of global connectivity might offer a new opportunity for it to go global, which is quite urgent and requires us to review our old understandings of Chinese culture and re-define her future development and orientation in the world. For one thing, Chinese anthropology should voluntarily move out of its familiar cultural context, for another, from the caring of other cultures, Chinese anthropologists should be clear enough to find the limitations of our own culture that might be incompatible (Zhao, 2016). So it is necessary for anthropologists to look for a specific orientation for cross-border development of cultures under the circumstances of the Belt and Road Initiative, to grasp the great breakthrough points for cultural exchanges and to completely transfer their focus from research of the road anthropology to the Belt and Road Initiative anthropology (Zhao, 2015). This requires an immediate reinterpretation about the definition of Chinese anthropology in the big family of the world's anthropology under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative, which allows us to have an accurate comprehension about the significance of cultural platforms. It is noticeable that the Belt and Road Initiative is about to gather a great number of diversified cultures which reflect the highest values of their cultures respectively and is favorable for avoiding various kinds of disharmonious factors, including the conflicts among different cultures and civilizations. It is required that we inject core Chinese characteristics into the Belt and Road Initiative and avail ourselves of it as a lens to observe the world.

3. The "Belt" —A brand new media to understand China

The "Belt" area in a cultural sense is based along the northwest line of China, in Gansu, Xinjiang, Qinghai and Inner Mongolia, which, owing to its geographical advantages, functions as a bridge connecting China and countries of Central Asia, South Asia and West Asia. This kind of connection appears to be more of an economic communication, however, its influence over political, social and cultural interactions should never be underestimated. Ferdinand Paul Wilhelm Richthofen, a German Geographer (1833—1905) who should not be overlooked when it comes to the "Belt" concept in a cultural sense in that he came up with the definition of the continental Silk Road in 1877[1], which stretched over thousands of kilometers originating in the ancient Chang-an or Luoyang to bond the whole northwest part of China. On June 22, 2014, the Silk Road was included in the "World Cultural Heritage" during the 38th World Heritage Convention. The World Heritage Committee believes that "functioning as the integration, communication and dialogue road connecting the east and west of the world, the Silk Road has been contributing significantly to the co-prosperity for human beings for nearly two thousand years" (Liu, 2014, p.1).

Within the hinterland area covered by the "Belt", there are a great number of crisscrossed roads accessible to connect various types of ancient cities, passes, fortresses and other historical sites which are all considered as valuable treasures bestowed by history that will help further strengthen and expand the cultural connections between China and other countries in the world. Along the "Belt" line lives different groups of nationalities who have developed

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[1] In *China: The results of my Travels and the studies Based Thereon* (Volume 1) written by Richthofen and published in 1877, he put forward the "Silk Road" concept and marked its location on the map.

rich and colorful material and spiritual civilizations. The smooth and reciprocal economic cooperation among these countries is somewhat subject to how well one culture will tolerate the differences of other cultures. The mutual tolerance and inclusiveness among diversified cultures along the "Belt" will set a good example for other regions of the world to interact with this region culturally. As the foundation of the "Belt", the Silk Road requires an even larger space for opening up and exchanges, which should cover multiple dimensions concerning historical, social and cultural issues in an interlaced manner and will hopefully arouse cultural self-awareness and further lead to a diversified recombination and creation of new cultures. The culture along the "Belt" is inevitably associated with the western region of China, including the nomadic culture and commercial culture. As far as the continental silk road is concerned, a critical node—Linxia, Gansu must be mentioned, which was commented by Fei Xiaotong as the development model of "choosing commerce over industry." During his investigation of this region, Fei Xiaotong (1999) observed that, "The peasant's production circulation forces have stimulated the logistics between urban and suburban areas and promoted the production." He concluded that, "It is necessary for this kind of circulation forces to cover all over the west China so as to initiate the economic development of the whole area" (p.328). Having been challenged by modern development for over one hundred years, this unique cultural identity and tradition, however, has not vanished totally. Influenced by the cultural pattern of frequent goods transport and trade along the Silk Road, the peasants around this area copied these kinds of commercial exchanges to supplement what agriculture could not offer them.

In addition, the fact should not be neglected that all the cities covered by the "Belt" are of hinterland nature which boast developed and smooth traffic networks and enjoy stable political, economic, social and cultural development, which is of great influence in the promotion and prosperity of trade. When Fei Xiaotong visited the Heihe River Port of Heilongjiang province he came to the conclusion that the disadvantage of this area concerning economic development was lack of support from developed industries and that the development of hinterland cities was of greater importance than the development of trade ports because "a strong export business should be fully supported by a vast and sturdy hinterland and its convenient traffic networks" (Fei, 1999, p. 337). The comment of Fei Xiaotong indicates that, under the circumstance of the Belt and Road Initiative, it seems necessary to study the economic and cultural relationships between those hinterland cities and the adjacent trade ports distributed along the "Belt", for example, the Khorgos Port, the Khunjerab Pass and the Kashi Port, and special priority should be given to evaluate the economic development associated with cultural integration. From a cultural point of view, the "Belt" should first be considered as one regional or cultural phenomenon or expression which is closely related to the ecological, geographical and humanistic conditions of this region. So, "the Belt" offers an opportunity for those regions to exhibit their cultures accumulated over the past to the whole world and to finish a creative transformation and obtain new understanding.

When it comes to Chinese anthropology and its methodology, the Chinese anthropologists, after "the Belt" concept comes into being, must upgrade their research from previously established fixed-point perspective to a more extensive observation over the "Belt" or a wider range. They must transfer the traditional fixed-point research (for example, the ethnography research based at a certain village or factory) to ethnography in a more extensive range (Zhao, 2015b). Obviously, this remains as a pending

issue which requires further discussions in the anthropological circle and might produce creative discoveries about how to achieve the organic integration between the meticulous "fixed-point" single case investigation which the anthropologists are quite familiar with and the more extensive investigation which requires macro organization that anthropologists seldom use.

The widely spread concept of the "Belt" has upgraded the single-line ethnic corridor study to a multiple-line crisscrossed studies which are interrelated and inter-compared, which also leads the road anthropology to a new route and horizon. For example, the Tibet-Yi Corridor, the Hexi (Gansu) Corridor and the Nanling Corridor have successively integrated China and other countries of the world into one piece where China stands as the "central country" and no longer presents herself as an isolated and fragmented presence, because what China has and presents comprise one indispensable part of the world presence. These above mentioned continental cultural corridors established on the basis of historical clues connect the formerly separated continental cultural regions, which will provide a new angle for the rest of the world to understand Chinese culture in a holistic sense, which, in turn, will inevitably spur the flourishing of the cultural corridor science (Zhao & Shan, 2017).

4. The "Road" —A brand new channel to re-write history

The "Road" refers to the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, a channel established for marine communications. It bridges every corner of the world via ocean voyages crossing the Huanghai Sea, the East China Sea, the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. This, apart from the continental Silk Road first put forward by Ferdinand Paul Wilhelm Richthofen, is another piece of the blueprint China has drawn to redefine where China stands in the world. What's more, the Maritime Silk Road is closely associated with the development of the modern world since it covers the regions where all the countries compete to exert their own power for their own benefit. From the perspective of cultural sense, there are two different ways to understand the relationship between China and the world. One could be called the "China of the world" where China or the eastern culture is viewed from the perspective of western countries. The other could be called "the world to China" where the world is viewed from the perspective of China. The former concept indicates that China and even the whole eastern world strike the western world as the peripheral "others" which are the objects to be saved by the Christian Civilization because the "others" were pictured as a group of barbarous and uncivilized people in the historical development sequence. Under the western-dominant perspective, the western countries were regarded as the only developed and civilized countries, especially after the emergence of capitalism which was considered, in a way, to be the "patent" upon which the so-called world system and has been dominated dictatorially by the west with its artificially fabricated "white methodology" that has supported the western countries in their ways to invade, colonize and dominate the rest of the world.

If we see the world's development from China's point of view, it might present a new picture and reach a new conclusion about modern civilization which is totally different from the way the west understands the world. The western understanding is full of self-centered ostentation, for example, they believed that "all the modern inventions are made by westerners," which will be completely rocked in this new picture where we could easily find an "orientalized Europe" which was closely connected to the rest of the world via marine channels, that is,

the eastern civilizations sailed across the ocean to enlighten and inspire the western countries (Hobson, 2004, p.2). The marine anthropology should also upgrade its research mode from the traditional fixed-point perspective to a new clue-tracing mode. For example, it was believed that the extravagant consumption over black tea and white sugar by the British court in the 16th century led to the mass production and export of these products from China and therefore stimulated the emergence of many coastal cities like Guangzhou, which, however, had a west-centered point of view because it was supported by the logic that China was the producer and functioned as a peripheral country while the western countries were the consumers and enjoyed these products at the very center of the world. Maybe now it is time for us to re-evaluate this stereotyped west-centered thinking and shift to a China-angle observation for a change under the circumstance of the "Road" initiative. Nevertheless, it is still necessary for us to have a better understanding about cultures from the other half of the world if we are planning to draw a new picture about the world civilization from China's or the east's point of view to reveal what was concealed before under the old thinking mode.

This kind of new observation method requires us to re-read, from a cultural sense, the exchange history between China and the rest of the world, especially the various contributions China has made to the advancement of the world in modern times and her cultural transformation which might be of positive significance to the whole world. In this new picture, we could re-discover the history of how Chinese merchants sailed their way across the ocean to the rest of the world, how Chinese products like china were exported overseas and we could, following these clues, even discover the "China Road", the "Tea Road" and the "Spice Road" which seemed to be closely related to the

marine exploration by Chinese merchants. With these new studies, we could free ourselves from the stereotyped research modes of the "west-centered oriental studies" about China and even apply a brand-new research mode and finally come up with an anthropological study based on our own observations. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that we must stand at the absolute opposite side of the west-centered understanding about China and the world as a whole, it simply indicates that the picture drawn from China's point of view is just as real and has inevitably covered the western point of view. So, this picture consists of two parts, with one being the west-centered understanding which we are relatively familiar with and the other being drawn from China's point of view which could be injected with new vitality on the basis of the "Road" initiative.

The proposal and establishment of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road entitles China a say in the expression of the "Road" related world marine civilization and its safety construction. In addition, it makes us realize how important it is to write the history of our own country concerning this aspect because it is an indispensable part for a complete world history. In the past, the development of the early marine world established by the west mainly depended on the marine merchants or even the pirates who were willing to take risks, however, China's marine trade not only started much earlier than that in the west, but also radiated a more extensive region all the way to southeast Asia, Africa and Central and South America, but the then marine Huizhou merchants were described as "robbers" or even a part of the "Japanese pirates" or a group of people who were relentlessly suppressed and excluded by the Empires of the Ming and Qing Dynasties(Ye, 2004). As for the rise and development of the modern marine world, the pirates, with their rich sailing experience, have been looting the ships

passing by for a fortune, whose income, to our surprise, has comprised one major part of the wealth accumulation of their countries respectively. Take modern Britain as an example, it impressed the rest of the world as a country skilled at conspiring with the pirates to make a fortune. It was said that in the Elizabethan Age when Britain only had an annual revenue budget of 200,000 Pounds, the queen would receive a dividend three times① more than the annual budget from the pirates who would be entitled as knights by the queen because they shared their looted booties and fortunes with Her Majesty. Thus the criminals were appraised as national heroes (Isamu, 2017, pp.6-8). Viewed in retrospect, our marine history has always described the marine merchants as a group of people who were relentlessly suppressed and excluded by the government and the real picture appeared to be a blur. What's more, the modern Chinese Empire took it for granted to ignore everything related to the ocean, including the recording of events, which makes it impossible for us to observe the global marine history from China's point of view. In the last year of the late 19th century, the Empress Dowager Ci Xi, who was the real power holder of the then Qing Dynasty, misappropriated without any hesitation the fund to repair the Summer Palace, which should have been used to organize the Chinese marine fleet who later was smashed during the Sino-French War. What's more shocking, not a single person at that time had the courage to express any objection to her embezzlement (Xin, 1987, p.625). Consequently, it is necessary to re-write the Chinese marine history and re-define China's standing in the marine world from the perspective of the Chinese people under the marine anthropology

frame because it is unfair that the suppressed and excluded "Japanese pirates" were the only image for Chinese marine merchants. It is safe to say that the previous marine history read similar to the book *Europe and the People without History* written by Whorf when the eastern cases were concerned. It was after the arrival of the westerners when the marine history seemed to start being recorded and the history before their arrival was regarded as a kind of prehistory and therefore was erased. This kind of Europe centered historical point of view should be adjusted afresh and the "Road" concept proves to be the inevitable result of this adjustment. In a word, we should read the world history from our own perspectives of view and not from other's point of view.

The aim for us to decode the "Marine Silk Road" from China's point of view does not necessarily mean we want to establish a China-centered concept for the "Road" but is to offer us an opportunity to reproduce what had truly happened in history so as to make it complete, which, in the meantime, is definitely going to set a good start concerning how different kinds of cultures, civilizations and societies of the oceanic world could develop a more smooth and harmonious communication and share their common ideal values and pursuits as a whole. China, in turn, also needs some new cooperation partners to develop and implement a broader world vision concerning the "Road" concept and to establish a human community with a shared future. These new history-writing methods call for more anthropologists to perform a well-designed social historical and cultural investigation and help shape a general understanding, instead of some

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① Francis Drake, one pirate of Britain, completed his marine navigation around the world from 1577 to 1580, during which he looted a net profit of 600,000 Pounds and half of them was transferred to the purse of the British Queen Elizabeth I, but at that time, Britain only had an annual revenue budget of 200,000 Pounds, which indicated that the pirate robbed two times more than the national revenue from marine merchants. In April 1581, Queen Elizabeth I met with Drake on his looted private ship and conferred him the Knight title. Takeda Isamu (Japan). (2017). *Pirates who created world history*. In Raburoje (Trans.). Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press.

fragmented and minor understandings about the marine world. Given that a conclusion obtained from one investigation you participated in is always more believable than something you imagined while sitting in a rocking-chair, what China needs at present is some anthropologists who are committed to sailing their way out on the ocean. During this starting phase, these anthropologists should be valued and encouraged no matter how green their skills might be or how unsatisfactory their research results might turn out.

5. Interpret the Belt and Road in a cultural sense

Judged from the perspective of international politics, the Belt and Road Initiative is proposed and implemented by an eastern country concerning the development of all human kind in the 21st century and could be deemed both as a concept and an advocacy. When we interpret it as a concept, it could be decoded from a cultural sense, that is, it brings the value and significance of cultural heritages into a renewed play. When we interpret it as an advocacy, it could be decoded from a cultural sense, namely, it stresses on how to achieve mutually beneficial economic development, political order and cultural sharing through interaction and integration among diversified cultures. Either way, it will lead to the gradual implementation of a brand new global philosophy where the economy is closely connected to politics which is closely connected to the public who are nurtured by their own cultures. What's more important is that China is about to play an irreplaceable leading role in it with self-awareness about her own culture. Looking back at the past, we are pleased to see that China has, through an expanded in-depth reform, gotten rid of the old image the world used to see and is now ranked in the lead of the world in terms of economic

development. From the end of the 1970s till now, the accumulated reform bonus of the household contract responsibility system reform in China's rural areas has been released and started to take effect. This reform, on the one hand, helped the peasants of China to obtain personal liberties to achieve self-development and on the other hand, provided the urban development with a vast number of laborers, all with free will. Owing to this reform, China has experienced the most extensive amount of economic growth in the last 50 years.

Nevertheless, after decades of sustained economic growth and rapid development, we seem to have reached a bottleneck. In the meantime, the energy-saving and emission-reduction wave has become a global issue. China, as a responsible big country, must respond actively to this. Given that the cultural and ideological progress is just as important as the material progress, an initiative is therefore put forward to promote the development and prosperity of the socialist culture because the development in cultural dimensions could complement the monotony of economic development since the former covers various aspects including social moralities, common values and pursuits. Change in the cultural ideology will certainly bring forward a new angle, proposition and attitude toward different cultures, which is necessary under the circumstance of the worldwide cultural transformation. When the ecological environment is destroyed by rapid economic development, we have to reflect on our ways of development from the cultural point of view and figure out what kind of living environments we are going to create. On this basis, we could establish a world picture where the people and nature are not in a competitive and antagonistic relationship, instead, they deeply depend on each other to maintain a dynamic balance. In this picture, people adapt themselves to the natural environment and live a sustainable daily life instead of a life beyond

one's reasonable needs, which is a lot different than the current living style with changes every passing day due to the support of technological innovation. The former style follows carefully to the tradition and culture of one's own, which, to certain degree, is favorable for maintaining a balanced relationship between people's development and nature, however, the latter style causes people to be constantly on the run to fulfill various desires stimulated by the ever updating knowledge, and to realize different proposals and values by conquering nature (including the destructive utilization of nature), which comes with the price of a destroyed ecosystem which is difficult to recover.

The same or similar development bottleneck that occurred in the western world after more than a hundred years of industrialized process is troubling China after a much shorter time of industrialized development. Having been overly dependent on the outside world, China is now facing the problem of how to go global and address the overcapacity and inventory issues, which calls for the support of the Belt and Road Initiative to knock on the door of the world trade market and present Chinese culture as a gift to the world with the hope that she will be well received and accepted by other countries. To this point, we have to admit that the era of global connectivity is approaching, and that China might actually benefit from this age, for example, she could integrate herself into and even lead the world development and voice her own opinions on the world stage. The Belt and Road Initiative might pluck one of the strings of anthropology that has been idle for a long time, that is, attention to others. As a matter of fact, the science of anthropology used to follow the cultural history and development of people, however, Chinese anthropology up until now has either engaged in the archaeological excavations for prehistoric heritages, or, under the general cultural framework whose keynote has been

set by the west, struggled to seek for the peripheral orientation of itself and the recognition of other people, or mechanically included the diversified ethnic cultural fragments they have collected into the formerly mentioned cultural frame, which makes it impossible for us to piece a complete development course of Chinese culture in her true color. In fact, Chinese culture never lacks the mindset of tolerance because she had developed the concept of "All" (the whole world) at a very early stage, and it is time for the concept of "being tolerant" to be fully included in the expressions of Chinese anthropology. It should not just serve as the eastern reproduction of the west-centered anthropology of the colonized traditions of modern times but should be established on the new concept of a human community with a shared future which is able to fully tolerate differences and diversities. The Belt and Road Initiative stands as the strategic embodiment of tolerance and represents the values of Chinese culture. The Initiative aims to build a diversified and tolerant cultural atmosphere where various kinds of cultures co-exist under the same roof, instead of embracing only those homogenous cultures and a single category of culture existence.

As for the development of anthropology itself, there might be two modes, one of which could be called philosophical anthropology where the anthropologists could sit comfortably in their chairs and figure out certain issues concerning people by their rich imaginations and logical thinking and fully availing themselves of the currently available written materials, with Kant, the German philosopher, being the classical representative of this type. In the many years when Kant lived in seclusion at Koenigsberg University, he finished pieces of epoch-making philosophical works which have been enlightening the minds of modern people, including the *Practical Anthropology* which didn't involve any field investigations. This book

discusses all kinds of characteristics existing in man and the self-consciousness and the differences concerning these characteristics among different peoples from a philosophical point of view, however, it seldom describes the specific society and culture in which ordinary people live, whose gap could be filled by those modern anthropologists who get out of the rocking-chair and devote themselves to field investigation which, more importantly, has a close connection with road expansion. Without the navigation road expansion of the western ocean trade in the early "Age of Exploration," or without the adventurous sailing and the detailed navigation routes created for all the oceans by those pioneers, the anthropology of Britain might have been full of all kinds of "if-I-were-a-horse" hypotheses[①] the way Sir James George Frazer had come up with his conclusion on his rocking-chair, however, with those formerly mentioned expansions, Britain has finished a great number of field investigations concerning modern ethnography, with Malinowski, Alfred Radcliffe Brown, Evans Pritchard and Max Gluckman as the most well-known representatives. A new generation of anthropologists has been sailing all the way to Africa, Australia and even the aboriginal region of Central and South America along the navigation routes explored by those early adventurers. From the aborigines, they have discovered a real thinking mode which is easily understandable and does not require that much of a philosophical speculation, so they dedicated a great amount of time and energy to observing and pondering and then faithfully presented what they had observed. With the aid of questions and pictures, they have vividly recorded many newly discovered authentic cultural forms and existences

in detail one after another, which seems to shape an extremely sharp comparison and contrast against the current western cultures, customs and systems. As for today's anthropologists, we have developed an anthropology "road" or a road research based on our own wills, however, for those who performed the field investigation in early times, they undoubtedly had benefited from those navigation routes explored by even earlier pioneers whose unconscious exploration had helped later field investigators greatly in terms of investigation horizons and others' caring. Having said that, it always has been a heartbreaking issue to hear concerning the preservation and protection over the explored cultural sites, which maybe the painful consequences of cultural intolerance and is worth self-reflection and self-awareness of all current anthropologists.

Anthropologically speaking, the Belt and Road Initiative is bound to return to a culture, which could also be deemed as a return from the single economic track to a humanistic state. In the meantime, with further promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative, the anthropological field investigation will reveal more and more new discoveries, for example, the diversified cultural differences, the docking of these different cultures and the stacking-style establishment of a cultural network. Under this circumstance, it is necessary for today's anthropologists to finish a cross-border and cross-culture road expansion in the real world so that the "otherness" characteristic of this field could be clearly expressed. In the following years, the cultural theme of the whole human race will undoubtedly take a core position in the development of the Belt and Road Initiative. No economic development can totally separate itself from cultural development

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① This analogy was based on a conversation between British anthropologists Max Gluckman and Alfred Radcliffe Brown, implying the disadvantages of such an evolutionary thinking mode held by some anthropologists like Frazer who seldom set their feet out of his room. Max Gluckman.(1965). *Politics, law and ritual in tribal society*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

although the concept of culture is not frequently mentioned in people's daily lives. Our need for culture proves to be extremely strong.

More importantly, only through mutual communication can a culture present herself to everybody, in other words, normally, nobody will be aware of what kind of culture he/she is raised in when there is no contrast, however, when we are surprised by the differences of other cultures, we might start to see the true color of our own culture by comparison or our culture will suddenly present herself in the mirror of other cultures. The reason why our curiosities and confusions would be aroused when facing cultural conventions and traditions different than our own is because we are already accustomed to our own cultural modes. In this condition, other cultures will function like a mirror to reflect the very foundation of our culture. The road expansion of old times has set a solid foundation for anthropology to discover other cultures. Currently the world's anthropologists are also making unremitting efforts to expand the horizon to help us establish a diversified culture. The timely proposition and implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative has initiated the development of the Chinese anthropology undertaking, which is of epoch making significance, so the Chinese anthropologists seem to be duty-bound to walk in the forefront to observe and describe all types of diversified cultures and push the Belt and Road Initiative forward. As a matter of fact, these diversified cultures are not totally separated but mutually connected with each other to weave a cultural network of the entire human race, where different cultures co-exist. With the aid of the Belt and Road Initiative, it is possible for us to connect the eastern and western cultures and the continental and oceanic cultures, and the concept of a human community with a shared future will be gradually heard, understood and favored by more and more people and is being shaped to be an important picture of the world's development. In the twilight years of Fei Xiaotong, he summarized his understanding about the co-existence of diversified cultures, "Every form of beauty has its uniqueness, which is to appreciate other forms of beauty with openness. If beauty represents itself with diversity and integrity the world will be blessed with harmony and unity," which shows his extraordinary foresight about the coming age. The journey to find beauty will unexceptionally experience a circle of improvement from self-understanding to otherness-appreciations and to all-caring and tolerating. This process describes an "imaginary community" through which different kinds of cultures all over the world can communicate and interact, which echoes the ideals and responsibilities today's anthropologists should conceive and shoulder in the establishment and construction of the human community with a shared future. It will be my sincere hope that Fei Xiaotong's understanding could be deeply rooted in the heart of all Chinese anthropologists as a motto to guide their voyage in the Belt and Road Initiative and that we are able to usher in a great age of the Belt and Road Initiative for Chinese anthropology and to witness its glorious achievements together!

(Translator: Chen Ming; Editor: Yan Yuting)

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