

# Heritage and the times go hand in hand, classics and modernity coexist

—Foreign scholars discuss President Xi Jinping's congratulatory letter to the first World Classical Studies Congress

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Author: Bai Le Liu Yuwei Lian Zhixian

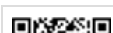
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◇Reporters Bai Le, Liu Yuwei and Lian Zhixian

On November 7, President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory letter to the first World Classical Studies Conference, which aroused great attention and strong resonance from the international academic community. The international academic community generally believes that Chinese classical civilization has nurtured and achieved the enduring and everlasting Chinese civilization. Today, as the world enters a new period of turbulence and change, the decline, decline and interruption of civilizations are common. In this sense, the inheritance and development of classical civilization is of great significance. This academic topic is related to the future of human

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human civilization, and the implementation of global initiatives in his congratulatory letter, in an incisive and profound way, melted the past and the present, and integrated the East and the West, pointing out the direction for inheriting the Chinese cultural context and deepening classical research. Focusing on the positive signals sent by this congratulatory letter to the international academic community and the enthusiastic response it generated, our reporter interviewed a number of foreign scholars. The interviewed scholars said that more than 2,000 years ago, although Confucius and Socrates were thousands of miles apart, they were spiritually compatible. More than two thousand years later, Chinese and Greek civilizations meet again across space, jointly exploring the origins and heritage of Eastern and Western civilizations, and jointly promoting the progress and development of human civilization.



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## Demonstrating a broad and far-reaching cultural vision

Nicola Polloni, associate professor of medieval philosophy at the University of Messina in Italy, carefully read the full text of President Xi Jinping's congratulatory letter. He said that President Xi Jinping showed a cultural vision that transcends national boundaries and focuses on the world in his congratulatory letter, which is thought-provoking and inspiring to him: "In his congratulatory letter, President Xi Jinping conveyed a language with foresight and strategic vision, a language full of respect and goodwill, and a language full of humanism and rational thinking. The congratulatory letter reflects President Xi Jinping's high attention to deepening the study of classical civilization and promoting exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations. This way of observing civilization from a global perspective shows a broad and far-reaching cultural vision."

Simon Mahony, Emeritus Professor of Digital Humanities at the Department of Information Studies at University College London and Visiting Professor of Information Management at Peking University, believes that President Xi Jinping's congratulatory letter is profound and powerful, and is of great significance to the first World Classics Congress, reflecting President Xi Jinping's firm support and deep concern for the conference. "Through this Classics Congress, people from all over the world gathered together for face-to-face exchanges, which constituted a new starting point for dialogue between different civilizations. China has always attached great importance to the inheritance of classics. The study of classics in China has a long history and a deep academic tradition. Now, President Xi Jinping's congratulatory letter sends a signal that China will continue to actively commit to the inheritance and development of classics and carry it forward."

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cultural figure," said Anil Kumar Singh, assistant professor of Greek at the School of Language, Literature and Cultural Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India.

"After reading the full text of the congratulatory letter, I highly appreciate the friendly gesture shown by President Xi Jinping in the field of Chinese classical studies and even global classical civilization. President Xi Jinping treats the issues and civilization studies of all mankind with a high degree of cultural awareness and diplomatic prudence. Many international cultural researchers believe that he is a leader who deeply values and is committed to spreading traditional ideas and value systems, and can be compared with the concept of "philosopher" proposed by Plato. President Xi Jinping's explanation of classical civilization is rational and objective, showing a kind of cultural sensitivity and diplomatic talent. I sincerely congratulate President Xi Jinping and the Chinese academic leadership team for successfully facilitating a feast of scholars in the field of classical studies around the world in Beijing. This is a very important and timely academic exchange. I would like to extend my warm congratulations on the successful results of this conference." Singh said.

"Today, many countries, especially Western countries, rely on the use of force to exert influence. This is in stark contrast to China's advocacy of drawing on ancient wisdom to connect the East and the West and to integrate China and the outside world. Leaders like President Xi Jinping who rely on the power of civilization to promote peaceful dialogue between the East and the West are particularly valuable," said Mangala Katugampola, professor of archaeology and director of the Heritage Research Center at the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka.

**The two great civilizations of China and Greece complement each other**

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believes that this statement reveals the important status of Chinese and Greek civilizations as the two major sources of human civilization.

Ilya Kanaev, a Russian researcher at the Department of Philosophy of Sun Yat-sen University, was deeply touched by this. He believed that the phrase "mutual radiance and beauty" is very vivid and accurate, showing President Xi Jinping's profound insights into the mutual relevance of Chinese and Greek civilizations and their importance to the history of human civilization development. Both China and Greece are ancient civilizations with a long history and splendid culture. In the long process of human history, they have created civilizations with their own characteristics and identities. Although the two civilizations have different origins, they are internally integrated and highly compatible, and have many commonalities and similarities in essence.

"The period of China's 'hundred schools of thought' bursting forth was precisely the golden age of ancient Greek philosophy and literature when many great masters emerged. At about the same time, namely China's pre-Qin period and ancient Greece's 'axial period', the two cultures on either side of the Eurasian continent became the basic pillars of East Asian and European civilizations respectively. Chinese classical civilization led the evolution of East Asian culture, while Greek culture laid the foundation for European civilization and had a wide-ranging influence on the emergence and development of other civilization factors around the world. Chinese and Greek civilizations represent the righteousness and spirit of the East and the West respectively, and the interaction between the two is crucial to the sustainable development and progress of mankind," added Han Yili.

"President Xi Jinping's congratulatory letter highly affirmed the commonalities and integration of Chinese and Greek civilizations. After reading the full text of the congratulatory letter, it seems as if I can see the collision of sparks of thought between China and Greece, two ancient countries that are the birthplaces of Eastern and

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emeritus of the Department of Sinology at the University of Trier in Germany.

Han Yili quoted the famous saying of the Greek literary giant Kazantzakis, "Socrates and Confucius are two masks of human beings, beneath the masks is the same face of human rationality." The wisdom shared by Socrates and Confucius connects the Acropolis of Athens and the top of Mount Tai, and these two places where the sages taught and preached were listed as World Heritage by UNESCO in 1987.

Marianna Thoma, assistant professor of ancient Greek literature at the University of Athens, Greece, participated in the "Walking through China" event held on the eve of the conference. She said, "This event made me deeply appreciate the commonalities between Chinese and Greek civilizations. For example, the inscribed oracle bones exhibited in Chinese museums gave me the idea of comparing the oracle bones of ancient China with the oracle bones of ancient Greece. This will be a very interesting intersection between Chinese and Greek civilizations."

### **Respect for global cultural diversity**

The cultural context is long, and the past and present are connected. In the imprint of history, various civilizations have blossomed with their own brilliance. In his congratulatory letter, President Xi Jinping mentioned: "The stars of classical civilization are shining, constantly nourishing and inspiring future generations." At the same time, the congratulatory letter emphasized the need to "pay attention to seeking wisdom and absorbing nutrition from different civilizations" and "willing to work with all parties to implement the Global Civilization Initiative."

汉伊理对此深表赞同。他谈到，事实上，古典文明虽属于古老而悠久的文明，但随着时间的流逝非但没有过时，反而历

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变，也非千篇一律，多样即是美，差异即是精彩。这种对全球文化多样性的尊重与欣赏，令中希两国人民深受感动，也让世界人民倍感欣慰。”汉伊理说道。

明兰卡告诉记者，“贺信字里行间透露出习近平主席对于不同文明相处之道的清晰认知。在当今充满不确定性、不稳定性的时刻，他意识到人类生活在同一个地球村中，也生活在历史和现实交汇的同一时空中。因此，古典文明应成为全人类的共有文化遗产，对于洞悉人类历史的全貌具有不可估量的价值。习近平主席于2023年3月提出的‘全球文明倡议’得到了国际社会的广泛认可和共鸣，为人类溯源文明、探究现实、擘画未来提供了指南”。

卜松山认为，习近平主席主张吸收借鉴外来文化中的有益成分，这与如今在西方盛行的“文明优越论”或“文明冲突论”形成鲜明对比。一直以来，中国文化传统以谦逊、包容、开放著称，这种文化态度与特征极大地促成了今日中国的成功。改革开放以来，中国创造了世所罕见的发展奇迹，离不开长期以来中国传统文化潜移默化的影响。

### 勇攀古典学研究的高峰

古典学研究承担着贯通古今、共济全球的历史重任。勇攀古典学研究的高峰，领略古典学研究的风光，是一项任重而道远的任务。“希望各位专家学者担负起古典学研究的使命。”习近平主席在贺信中明确表达了对古典学研究的殷殷嘱托。

谈及此，汉伊理认为，习近平主席的这一嘱托十分重要且必要，“担负起古典学研究的使命”令学者深感使命在肩。过去，不少人将古典学研究等同于冷门绝学，或视为边缘化学科，鲜有人问津。然而，习近平主席使用“担负”二字，深刻体现了他对于唤醒并激活古典学研究的深远期待。“同时，习近平主席呼吁为促进文明传承发展、推动文明交流互鉴作出更大贡献。这意味着，古典学研究不应停留于过去的文本，也不应局限于历史的视野，而应根据我们所处的时代特征赋予其全新内涵。”

卜松山注意到，如今，中国正在构建以习近平文化思想为指导的古典学研究基础理论体系。对此，他认为，习近平主席

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“习近平主席的贺信激励着中希学者与世界各国学者共同携手，将历史深处的共有智慧加以重新发掘。”濮若一表示，习近平主席强调的担负起古典学研究使命，将为实现全球文明的和谐与尊重、促进各国传统的增进与理解，从而实现人类文明繁荣发展、通向美好未来提供明确指引。作为古典学家，需重建过去的文化与思想，同时激活其“沉睡”的价值，使之应用于当下、服务于未来。西方哲学史体系也应纳入东方哲学元素与内容，成为东西文明沟通的纽带，为书写一部面向未来的全球哲学史贡献力量。

“对于古典学研究，学者肩负着双重使命。一方面，需跨越专业界限，将昔日的古典知识引入当代；另一方面，需进一步开阔研究视野，使古典学成为一门真正的全球性人文学科，共同构建一个基于多元、平等、互学的文化共同体。这是一项艰巨的任务，依旧路漫漫其修远兮。在这条通往光明的学术之路上，需要保持谦逊与开放，也需要耐心与定力。”濮若一说。

### 为应对现代性问题提供灵感

东西方古典学不仅是为古之学，也是为今之学。知所以来，方知何以前行。“中国积极致力于推动文明传承发展”，“携手解决人类共同面临的各种挑战。”习近平主席的贺信，让世界倾听了中国对于古典学传承与弘扬的坚定信念。

卜松山表示，文明的力量可以穿越时空，在当今时代被重新“转化”、再度“发展”，从而获得新的生命力。时间的检验最终将证明某种文明所焕发出的持久影响力。文明与现代兼容共生，相互交织。在充满变数的时代，用现代思想和理念点燃古典智慧的火种，照亮人类的前行之路，是一个关乎人类前途命运的重大文化课题。习近平主席睿智而冷静地觉察到了这一点，并将这种深意在贺信中加以传达。

“在新一轮科技革命与产业变革席卷全球之际，古典学也面临着种种机遇与挑战。危与机总是相伴而生，困难也意味着

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希腊克里特大学语文学系古希腊语文学教授康斯坦丁诺斯·斯帕诺达基斯 (Konstantinos Spanoudakis) 表示, 古典文明正是人类文化的根基所在, 对古典文明的深刻理解影响着人类文明的发展进程。古典文明在文化决策中扮演着关键角色, 影响着人们的世界观和价值观。当今人们的思维结构与行为方式都植根于过去的历史遗产之中。因此, 古典学者有责任向公众传递关于古典世界的准确信息。公共古典学作为古典学的重要一环, 应向更广泛的听众揭示古典传统的精髓和原则, 让古典知识更为普及化、通俗化。

### 古典学研究必须突破西方中心主义视角

“习近平主席的贺信体现了中国向海外传播经典的愿景, 也彰显了中国作为负责任大国, 为廓清人类文明迷思并探寻有效方案的努力。”卜松山告诉记者, 值得一提的是, 古典学研究应当突破长期以来的西方中心主义视角。5000多年的中华文明史为中国古典学研究提供了丰厚的史料基础和精神滋养。孔子创立的儒家学说泽被后世、影响全球, 是中国古典文明的重要内容。这使得中华文明在各国文明中独树一帜。因此, 中国是时候把自己的古典传统与起源于希腊的西方古典传统联结起来——西方也是时候注意到中国的古典传统了。

卜松山进一步谈到, 一直以来, 在儒家思想重和平、尚和谐理念的影响下, 中国推动构建有利于全球稳定与合作的文化框架。与一些西方大国不同, 中国从不寻求占据文化主导或单极地位。习近平主席致世界古典学大会的贺信可谓恰逢其时, 再次向世界传达了中国的和平承诺。

“在中国社会科学院的指导下, 希腊雅典建立了中国古典文明研究院, 标志着中希文化交流迈出了重要一步。这一行动代表的不仅仅是一个学术机构的成立; 它象征着一座桥梁, 连接着两种古老的文化, 进行着富有现代性、充满活力的对话。展望未来, 该研究院将促使中希学者和世界各国学者共同探索历史、哲学、伦理、文学等主题, 并加深对彼此国家文化、社会治理的见解。这种交流将激发中希两国之间的文化共鸣, 并为其他国家建立类似的文化和智力机构起到表率作用。”汉伊

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