

Original Paper

World Dissemination and Influence of Chinese Historical Classic *Shi Ji (Historical Records)* (Note 1)

Yang Tiantian^{1*}, Zhang Jie² & Ren Xiaofei³

¹ School of Liberal Arts & Language and Culture Center, Jiangsu University, Jiangsu, P. R. China

* Yang Tiantian, School of Liberal Arts & Language and Culture Center, Jiangsu University, Zhenjiang, Jiangsu, 212013, P. R. China

Received: December 30, 2018 Accepted: January 11, 2019 Online Published: January 29, 2019
doi:10.22158/jecs.v3n1p1 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/jecs.v3n1p1>

Abstract

Shi Ji is the first biography history in China and the most influential historical masterpiece in Chinese history. In the past 2000 years, the cultural classic had exerted remarkable influence upon scholars all over the world, becoming the cultural heritage for all human civilizations. The richness of the relative research findings and significance to overseas scholars of ancient Chinese culture are prominent in numerous ancient codes and books. By literature study, we traced the historical impact of Shi Ji in East Asia, Europe and the United States, exploring its contribution to the human world civilization. It is found that, due to different research emphasis and cultural backgrounds, overseas scholars' researches of Shi Ji have presented us with many different outcomes: translations and studies of Shi Ji in East Asia should be much earlier than those in Europe and America; related studies in East Asia were focused on interpretation and understanding of the text from its translation and annotation, whereas those in Europe and America showed more interests to the holistic study of the cultural background, the author as well as his life. Despite their different research focuses, all the scholars, on the basis of repeated studies and textual researches of Shi Ji, had contributed their own constructive views.

Keywords

Shi Ji, dissemination, translation, Sima Qian, intercultural communication

1. Introduction

Chinese cultural classics had been spread widely all over the world. *Shi ji*, created in about 100BC by Sima Qian, is an important representative of Chinese historiography. It is so brilliant that scholars from both east and west had taken time and effort to study its texts, ideas as well contributions to world civilization. By tracing back the history and influence of *Shi Ji* in East Asia, Europe and America, we

carry out a comparative study upon *Shi ji*'s dissemination and *Shi Ji* study in different regions of the world.

It is found that the scholars have focused more on the spread of *Shi Ji* in East Asia. Zhu Haixin, based on the large number of research achievements that Korean scholars have accomplished, made a detailed exposition of the contemporary situation of *Shi Ji* in Korea. Tan Qixun, a scholar who made a thorough study on the time and starting point of *Shi Ji* in Japan, finding that the spread of *Shi Ji* in Japan was from 600 to 604 AD. There are relatively few studies on *Shi Ji* in Europe and America, but there are still some excellent research results. For example, a large number of translation and research achievements of *Shi Ji* in Russia have been collected by Liu Ruomei. In addition, during the spread of *Shi Ji* abroad, there have been the coexistence of research and controversy and the most significant is the comparison between *Shi Ji* and *Han Shu* (Note 2). Some foreign scholars even believe that some parts of *Shi Ji* were plagiarized from *Han Shu*. Therefore, in studying the influence of *Shi Ji* overseas, for the purpose of better understanding and settling cross-cultural conflicts and eliminating cultural estrangement, we should not only study the significance but also pay attention to the disputes and problems encountered in its dissemination abroad. It is found that the spread and research of *Shi Ji* abroad have an indispensable role for foreign scholars to study the development of Chinese historiography and promote the spread of Chinese classics.

2. Research of Overseas Dissemination of *Shi Ji*

We will discuss the overseas spread of *Shi Ji* in Korea, Japan, Europe and America respectively.

2.1 Spread of *Shi Ji* in Korean Peninsula

There were no exact records about when *Shi Ji* began to spread abroad. According to Samguk Sagi, in A.D. 372, Goguryeo (a dynasty in the Korean Peninsula) set up Imperial College in the Central Committee and educated younger generation. This is the earliest record of the dissemination of *Shi Ji* overseas. In spite of teaching Confucian classics, Imperial College also teaches "three historical books": *Shi Ji*, *Han Shu* and *Dong Guan Han Ji* (Note 3). According to *the Story of Old Tang Dynasty*, people in Goguryeo always love reading. Before getting married, they practiced archery and read books every day, including the five classics, *Shi Ji*, *Han Shu*, *Hou Han Shu*, *San Guo Zhi*, *Jin Yang Qiu*, *Yu Pian*, *Zi Tong*, *Zi Lin* and *Zhaoming Anthology* (Note 4). This shows that *Shi Ji* has been the most popular book in East Asia before the Eastern Jin Dynasty. Korea has always attached great importance to the translation and study of *Shi Ji*. South Korea has published many Korean versions of *Shi Ji*, which have been reprinted many times. According to the *publication*, a journal of South Korea, *Shi Ji* was listed as "the classical book series" in South Korea universities in 1988, which is uncommon in foreign countries. The fact that it is adopted as a basic reading book for college students is also rare in foreign countries. What's more, in 1977, Hong Xibao, a professor of history of Hanyang University, completed the biography of *Shi Ji*, which was published by the famous publishers of South Korea and named as one of the "complete works of the world" and greatly promoted the dissemination of *Shi Ji* overseas,

especially in South Korea, and made *Shi Ji* a world ideological text. It can be seen that the influence of *Shi Ji* in Korea is far-reaching and widespread.

2.2 Spread of *Shi Ji* in Japan

Although the time when *Shi Ji* spread to Japan was later than Korean Peninsula, Japan ranked first in terms of influence, intensity of communication and situation of research. In historiography, the introduction of *Shi Ji* into Japan is the symbol of the introduction of Chinese history into Japan. Before that, Japan did not have its own Sinology and historiography. *Gu Shi Ji* (古史記、ふることぶみ), the first national history of Japan, was born in A.D. 712. Although it is chronicle, it is directly influenced by *Shiji*. *Ri Ben Shu Ji* (にほんしよき.やまとぶみ), Japan's second national history, imitated *Shi Ji* to write *Ben Ji*, *Lie Zhuan*, *Shi Jia*, *Zhi* and *Biao*. It starts with myths and legends and imitates *Shi Ji*. According to the chronicle of Japanese Sinology, the emperor's reading ceremony was always held in the Yu Tang hall, the emperor's temple, during the Kamakura Age (1185-1333). *Shi Ji* was read fourteen times, including *Wu Di Ben Ji*, *Liu Hou Shi Jia* and other articles. Many court officials also read *Shi Ji*, which was deeply influenced and edifying. Many essays in the Kamakura Age are about *Shi Ji*. Those of *Ben ji* and *Shi Jia* were especially for the aristocracy to read and study until the Edo period. In addition to aristocratic education, students in the school of Sinology education should take *Shi Ji* as the examination content. The oldest comprehensive university in Japan has clearly defined *Si Shu* (Note 5), *Liu Jing*, *Shi Ji*, *Zhuangzi* and *Lao Zi* as textbooks and forbidden teaching other books. In the most prosperous period, there were as many as three thousand students from all over Japan coming to learn traditional culture, such as *Shi Ji*, and imparted the knowledge they acquired. This has far-reaching influence on the extensive dissemination of *Shi Ji* in Japan. At that time, the extent to which the foreign culture spread so widely in the country was rare in the world. Table 1 shows the brief history of dissemination of *Shi Ji* in Japan.

Table 1. The Brief History of Dissemination of *Shi Ji* in Japan

Era	Starting and Ending time (AD)	Events
Asuka period	AD600-604	<i>Shi Ji</i> was introduced into Japan
The end of Asuka period	AD701	<i>Shi Ji</i> was listed as a university course and became the first of "three histories".
Hei An Chao	AD794	<i>Shi Ji</i> became the textbook of the emperor and the minister
Edo Period	Unknown	Monographs on the comprehensive editions of <i>Shi Ji</i> of Japan and Tibet.

2.3 Spread of *Shi Ji* in Europe and America

The dissemination of *Shi Ji* in Europe, later than in East Asia, has benefited from the 17th-18th century European Enlightenment movement. At that time, Europe was keen to draw a favorable factor from all over the world to promote its development. As a mysterious oriental national representative with a long

history, China was the focus in many countries. In the 18th century, Peter I led the enlightenment in Russia. Humanism and pure rationalism were introduced into Russian intellectual circles. According to Liu Ruomei's *Shi Ji in Russia's collection and translation*, Russia sent to China the sixth batches of carpenter Treaty (Yu Yongzheng's five-year treaty between China and Russia) in 1753. The Academy of Sciences sent Ye La Cic to purchase books for the Chinese Academy Library for the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Ye La Cic had been in China for 3 years and collected 42 books in China, including *Shi Ji* (Note 6). In the 18th century, Petersburg's collection of Chinese books was the largest in Europe, and *Shi Ji* has been listed in it. After the October Revolution in 1917, there were 71 different translations of *Shi Ji*.

In 1840, the first Opium War broke out. China was forced to open to the world, which attracted more countries' attention to Chinese culture. In the 19th century, the United States began to pay attention to *Shi Ji*. Scholars funded by American missionaries introduced China's first English monthly magazine—*Chinese Repository* and began to introduce Sima Qian's works. Since 1950s, two major representatives, Burton Watson (Chinese name Hua Zisheng) and William H. Nienhuaser (Chinese name Ni Haoshi)'s translating and spreading *Shi Ji* in the United States have emerged. In Watson's work of highly literariness and readability, he put forward many unique views. In 1958, New York Columbia University Press published his doctoral dissertation, *Sima Qian: the great historian of China*. This is the first English monograph on the study of Sima Qian and *Shi Ji*, including translation of Tai Shi Gong's preface. Since then, he translated the preface of Tai Shi Gong, *Bao Ren'an Shu*, the order of the three generations, the biography of the great Wan and *Shi Ji*, such as the biography of Uncle Yi's uncle, the biography of Wu Zi Xu, the biography of Tian Shan, the biography of the LV unwei and the biography of the assassin. From 1950 to 1993, Professor Watson translated 80 volumes of the 130 volumes of *Shi Ji* into English.

In 1994, the Indiana University Press of the United States published an English version of *Shi Ji* translated by Zheng Zaifa, Ni Haoshi and Roo Bott Reynolds, edited by Ni Haoshi. Professor Ni Haoshi has planned to translate the whole book and intended to publish it in nine volumes, which is undoubtedly an ambitious project. Up to now, five volumes have been completed. An English translation of *Shi Ji*, led by Nehhouse, with detailed annotations and as much as possible with literary and fluency, is faithful to the original. To this end, they carefully designed the structure of the translation style: the translation preserves the order of the five parts of the book, *Ben Ji*, *Biao*, *Shu*, *Shi Jia* and *Lie Zhuan*. In the translation, there are detailed textual researches, including examination of ambiguities, explanation and notes of intertextual research, basis of cultural background knowledge and related information, vocabulary control table, etc.

At the end of each chapter, there are relevant explanations of problems encountered by the translators during translation, bibliography of western and Japanese versions of the book and research achievements of Chinese and foreign studies on the volume, and reference catalogue of the whole book, including the study of *Shi Ji* of Chinese and foreign languages, references, translation, annotations of

the history. Studies of *Shi Ji* and Sima Qian include comparison of *Shi Ji* and *Han Shu*, other Chinese, Japanese and Western works, such as Chinese Pinyin, Chinese characters and official English translation index, Spring-Autumn Period and Warring-States Period charts, Qin Empire map and so on. On the other hand, they also made special arrangements for their work procedures: participants were prepared to translate the draft in advance, and then the other members wrote comments. Finally it was submitted to the group for repeated discussions. Experts and scholars outside the team were invited to make further comments on some chapters (Note 7). From the literary point of view, the readability of *Shi Ji* translated by Watson is still beyond its vividness. However, he is far from being careful in the translation of *Shi Ji* and its reference to European countries in studying *Shi Ji*.

Edouard Chavannes, a famous French Sinologist, once translated *Shi Ji*. His first translation of *Shi Ji* with five books in total is influential in France.

The translation by Edouard Chavannes is the most authoritative book in the history of Western Sinology. When translating *Shi Ji*, he wrote the preface and the introduction of 250 pages in front of the translation. After the death of Edouard Chavannes, his student, Kantmoo, compiled three volumes left by Edouard Chavannes and two volumes translated by himself in 1969.

Many scholars in Britain have also translated *Shi Ji*. The representative one, is Raymond Dawson's *Sima Qian Shi Ji* (published by University of Oxford Press) in 1994, named as one of the "world classic series books". In the middle of the 19th century, Fitzmayer, an Austrian pioneer of Sinology, translated 24 volumes of *Shi Ji* into German, which was the earliest German translation. There are also different translations of *Shi Ji* in other countries, such as Denmark and Hungary.

In general, the spread and translation of *Shi Ji* from East Asia to Europe has been expanding. More and more people have studied it with great achievements.

3. Review of *Shi Ji* Study Abroad

The wide spread of *Shi Ji* has formulated the upcoming of *Shi Ji* study in academic world.

3.1 *Shi Ji* Study in East Asia

Shi Ji study has a long history in East Asia. So far, a lot of academic papers, monographs, master's dissertations and doctoral dissertations have been published in Korean academic journals. The researches have covered the author's life and personality, grammatical meaning of *Shi Ji*, historical value and literary value of *Shi Ji*, overall study of *Shi Ji*, study of characters in *Shi Ji*, comparative study of *Shi Ji* and *Han Shu*, and so on. Its wide scope, new research methods and high level of content have created a new height of overseas research history. The study on the writing skills of *Shi Ji* described in detail of the writing techniques, characters and dialogues. The techniques of portraying characters in the biography of *Shi Ji* are widely discussed. The World of *Shi Ji*, written by Hong Chunchang, present a detailed description of Sima Qian's life, creation background of *Shi Ji*, writing process of *Shi Ji*, genre and content of *Shi Ji*, providing an important reference for the overall study of *Shi Ji*. Li Yin hao's *A new exploration of the value and article of Shi Ji* in 1991 made a systematic and

comprehensive review of the previous research results and a detailed analysis and discussion on the articles and literary values of *Shi Ji*. The comparative study between *Han Shu* and *Shi Ji* is undertaken too. In 1994, it was published by Beijing Chinese Literature Publishing House as an “academic series of Chinese and foreign scholars” (Note 8).

Japan’s research on *Shi Ji* has a history of more than one thousand years. The related research achievements are also very prominent in East Asia. According to the statistics, in modern terms, there are more than 100 Japanese experts on *Shi Ji*, including Fujita Katsuku, Miyazaki, Noguchi Joo, Ikeda Shiroji and Itou Deo. On the basis of *Shi Ji* and *comments on Shi Ji* added by Lingzhi and Li Guangjin’s supplement in Ming Dynasty, Fan Ping has added a lot of comments on *Shi Ji* by people in Ming dynasty and a lot of their own, which is of great help for the later generations to understand *Shi Ji* (Note 9). Historical notes and notes of textual research collected by Longchun Sichuan gathered more than 100 kinds of notes from Japanese and Chinese scholars. There are 15 aspects of the book, including history, name, record and system of *Shi Ji*. Its textual research, almost catching up with China, is widely cited.

Before 1945, Japanese scholars focused on data collection of *Shi Ji*. After 1945, great progress has been made and research scope has been gradually widened. In 1978, the Ming Depress (めいとくしゅつぱんしや) in Japan published the book list of *Shi Ji*, which was revised by Ikeda Shirojiro and Ikeda Hideo, introducing the works of more than 670 studies of *Shi Ji*. At the same time, the comments on Sima Qian and *Shi Ji* also greatly increased, such as West kayf’s *Shi Ji*, Fujita Katsuku’s *Shi Ji*, Betsuka Shigeki’s Sima Qian and Betsuka Shigeki’s “*Shi Ji* of Sima Qian”. Ikeda Hideo’s monographs “50 years of *Shi Ji*”, a detailed introduction to the study of *Shi Ji* in Japan from 1945 to 1995, makes a detailed comparison with the study of *Shi Ji* in China. Japanese scholars’ research on *Shi Ji* and related Chinese historiography has provided great help to the study of Chinese and Japanese cultural history.

3.2 *Shi Ji* Study in Europe and America

In Europe and America, the study of *Shi Ji* is as important as its translation. When Edouard Chavannes translated *Shi Ji*, he wrote 250 pages of “preface” and “Introduction” in front of the book. We can see from this translation that he objectively and impartially commented on the translation and views of some sinologists in *Shi Ji*. According to him, in dealing with translation and annotation of *Shi Ji*, the scholars have extensively absorbed the Chinese and foreign scholars’ ideas; however, He also points out that some western sinologists inevitably may make mistakes in understanding some key issues due to cultural differences. lack translation and have some terminology errors. During translating *Shi Ji*, Edouard discussed some topics based on the comparison between Chinese and Western cultures, instead of sticking to the comments of Chinese scholars., based on the comparison between Chinese and Western cultures, he put forward his own views. In the first chapter of the introduction, Edouard Chavannes explores the authorship of problems in *Shi Ji is investigated*. Edouard He introduced the author’s life based on from the self-preface of *Shi Ji* and boldly questioned Sima Qian as the only author of *Shi Ji*. In his opinion, the author of *Shi Ji* should be two people: Sima Qian and his father.

There are three reasons: first, “the preface of the *Tai Shi Gong*” refers to Sima Qian’s generation as Tai Shi, and Sima Qian’s father instructed his son Sima Qian before he died with much regrets: If I die, never forget my mission. Sima Tan was able to conceive *Shi Ji*, and Sima Qian inherited his father’s career. Second, Sima Qian introduced his father in the preface of *Tai Shi Gong* as a scholar in the Han Dynasty. He also studied *Yi* by Yang He and *Dao* by Lao Zi. It shows the evidence that Sima Tan was influenced by Taoism and followed advocated Taoism. Sima Qian, however, respected Confucius and advocated Confucianism. He wrote a piece of Confucius’s family and placed it in the ranks of the royal family. Therefore, Edouard conjectured that the part of “Chong Huang Lao” in *Shi Ji* was written by the father Sima Tan, which shows that the book was probably written both by the father and the son. Third, most of the chapters in the book are concluded with *Tai Shi Gong Yue*. For the title, almost all sinologists refer to *Tai Shi Gong* completely as Sima Qian himself; while Edouard considered *Tai Shi Gong* to refer to the official name as the father and the son respectively in the book, because *Tai Shi Gong* was established in the Western Han Dynasty and was a full-time recorder of the official historical materials in ancient China. Both Sima Qian and his father had been in this post. Therefore, it is a one-sided view to take “*Tai Shi Gong*” solely as Sima Qian. Although it is difficult to distinguish them in most chapters of the book, it is still possible to identify the different ideas or views of the father and the son in some places. Therefore, in the author’s biography, he gave Sima a very detailed introduction. In addition, in the introduction of the author, he also contrasted the methods of ancient Chinese historians with those of ancient Greek historians, holding that the latter was more vivid and comfortable in describing history by integrating into the personality of the historians. He believed Sima Qian’s *Shi Ji* was more important than the objective description of the facts, and the image of individuals was indistinct. It can be seen that European scholars in the study of *Shi Ji* are based on audacious assumptions and careful proof. They not only learned from the views of Chinese scholars, but also read between lines of *Shi Ji* over and over again. After in-depth study, they put forward their bold and innovative different views.

Burton Watson began his *Shi Ji* study together with his contact with ancient Chinese “free-lance fighter” (people who was willing to making friends and help others in ancient times). At that time, Watson, a student at Columbia University, studied Chinese Bibliography under the guidance of Professor Fu LUT. He came across the term “Ranger” in the Chinese literature with a strong interest. He was so curious about the term “Ranger” that he was determined to make further studies. Later, in an encyclopedia, he found chapters on “the swordsman” in *Shi Ji* and *Han Shu*, so he decided to continue to study the role of Rangers and the society in the Han Dynasty for his related master papers, which prompted his further study of *Shi Ji*. In 1974, “*Sima Qian, a great historian of China*” was published by the Columbia University Press, an important book by American scholars to study *Shi Ji* and its author (Note 10).

It is worth mentioning that western scholars often compare *Shi Ji* with *Han Shu* when studying Chinese history books. For example, in the article *The Relative Value of Shi Ji and Chinese books and*

documents, Yves Hervouet admit that when he translated *the Biography of Sima Xiangru*, he made a careful comparison of the two biographies of *Shi Ji* and *Han Shu*. He argued that that the historical value of *Shi Ji* is not as good as *Han Shu*. Yves Hervouet's paper also refers to the understanding of the biography of Sima Xiangru by the American scholar Bode and believed that the latter was the original text after careful comparison of the two documents of *Shi Ji* and *Han Shu*, with the traces of plagiarizing *Han Shu* in *Shi Ji*. As for this statement, many scholars have also expressed their opinion. French scholar Halon once suggested that a large part of *Shi Ji* is written in the biography of *Han Shu*. Zhang Qian (Note 11) has also been refuted by many scholars such as Newell and other scholars. First, the book age of *Han Shu* is later than *Shi Ji*. Secondly, there are great differences between *Shi Ji* and *Han Shu* in terms of genre, writing style and sentimentality. However, this debate also reflects the importance of western scholars in studying the history of the Han Dynasty.

4. Research on the Significance of *Shi Ji*'s Dissemination Abroad

Shi Ji translation and study are of great value both home and abroad. When commenting on *Shi Ji*, Lu Xun praised it as "the masterpiece of historians, and a rhyme-less *Li Sao*". Ban Gu stated that its writing is straightforward, and its core is beautiful and not false (Note 12). The former affirmed its unequalled artistic achievement, and the latter praised its unsurpassed historical value.

4.1 Offering Important Reference for Overseas Ancient China Study

Shi Ji has great research value, as Sima Qian said in his book *Bao Ren'an Shu*, "to change the past and the present; to become a family's speech; to study the relationship between god and man". The writing of *Shi Ji* is not simply about history, but also unique ideas. *Shi Ji*'s study covers natural phenomena and human social relations, evolution of historical development, and reasons for the rise and fall of dynasties. It can be described as "heaven and earth", including politics, economy, culture, science and technology, transportation, religion and celebrity in both ancient and modern times, Li Wenkui, a Korean scholar, took *Shi Ji* as an important reference in the study of the development of ancient Chinese astronomy with his publishment of *The Interpretation of the Principle of "astronomy" in Ancient China in East Asian Culture* (Note 13). Xu Yuannan, Professor of the Chinese Department of Hanyang University, wrote *The Economic Thought of Sima Qian*, which was published in the *Collection of Chinese Philology*. This paper expounds the unique economic thought of "agriculture, industry, commerce and scholar" advocated in *Shi Ji* and provides an important reference for the study of Chinese ancient economic policy.

4.2 Bearing Great Literature Research Value

The literary value of *Shi Ji* cannot be underestimated. The whole book is full of elegant words, good narration and clear choroid. The author's creation of *Shi Ji* is not only in writing history, but also for his own personal will. *Shi Ji* is well known for its narrating and changing style of writing. The writing is tremendously fluent and vivid. For example, the literature of the Five Emperors and the biography of the Five Emperors had varied. Qu Yuan biography was graceful and sad, while the funny biographies

had a funny and playful play. The uniqueness in language expression, creative techniques and character description impressed the foreign scholars very much. In the study of *Shi Ji*, Wang Jingyu, a famous sinologist, posited that despite the writing difficulty of bamboo slips in ancient times, Sima Qian was not satisfied with the simple narration way, but spent a lot of time and energy for the literary effect. To this end, he analyzed this issue from two aspects: Sima Qian's personality and his ways of writing *Shi Ji*, which is critical for future study of Sima Qian's creative background. The literary narrative techniques of *Shi Ji* have great influence on many foreign scholars and are of great help in ancient Chinese language research, such as *Shi Ji and three notes* by Xu Yuannan, *the value of texts and exegesis*, and *the study of Shi Ji quoted by origin of Chinese Characters, the study of the background of Shi Ji's idiom*, by Li Kekui, and so on and so forth. All these research reflect the value of *Shi Ji* in literary research.

The achievements that *Shi Ji* made in depicting characters and describing people's life have great reference value for foreign scholars to study historical figures of China. Sima Qian eulogized ancient sages enthusiastically, who were in adversity and persecuted but not depressed, trying to leave something valuable behind. For example, he praises Qu Yuan in *Shi Ji, biography of Qu Yuan*: His literary text is concise; his rhetoric, simple; his ambition, noble; his behavior, honorable; rising unsullied from mud and is equal with the sun and the moon in glory (Note 14). The biggest difference between *Shi Ji* and more than 20 other official histories is that Sima Qian did not flatter dignitaries, sticks to the facts and write them down as history. He did not pay empty praise to the emperors of the early Western Han Dynasty. The characters portrayed are all very full and true. For example, when describing Han Gaozu Liu Bang, he portrays his profound strategic ability to widely attract talents and know the good of people. He also cited a series of his weaknesses. For example, when Liu Bang was young, he didn't pay for drinks in restaurants. In the early period of the Western Han Dynasty, the history of Wen Di and Jing Di reigning was praised by many as "Rule of Wen & Jing". However, Sima Qian truthfully recorded the fact that Han Jing Di wrongly killed the Minister of national unity, Chao Cuo and a loyal general, Zhou Yafu, with harsh criticism. Sima Qian's characterization of these historical figures is very helpful for foreign scholars to better understand Chinese historical figures. At the same time, Sima Qian described a lot of obscure figures in *Shi Ji*, such as rangers, hermits, diners, doctors, son-in-law and divination. It is of good value for foreign scholars to study different characters of different historical periods in China. When Burton Watson studied the role of Rangers and their role in the Han Dynasty, he mainly based it on a large number of historical data in *Shi Ji* and *Han Shu*.

4.3 Promoting Intercultural Communication

Shi Ji is the first book presented history in a series of biographies in China, starting from legendary emperors on the record and ending with Han Wu Di in a period of about three thousand years. Being an encyclopedia book that is quite organized, content and extensive, it includes twelve biographic sketches of emperors, ten tables, eight books, thirty aristocratic families and five parts of seventy biographies, one hundred and thirty pieces, five hundred and twenty-six thousand and five hundred characters in

total. Its biographical style was inherited by later historians. Therefore, it is of great reference value for overseas researchers to understand the development of Chinese historiography. Such as Li Chenggui's *The Characteristics of Historical Narration - the integration of literature and history*, Pujung Jin's *study of the historical theory of Sima Qian's Shi Ji*, Wang Rongzu's *comparison between the history of Shi Ji and the comparison between Chinese and western historiography*, etc. For the study of historical development and narrative characteristics of ancient China, *Shi Ji* is an indispensable reference for foreign scholars to understand the development of Chinese historiography.

At present, with the continuous improvement of China's cultural power, more and more people start to study Chinese wisdom for a better world. *Shi Ji* provides not only an important reference for the study of China in the development of ancient Chinese civilization, but also a good promotion of intercultural communications among civilizations of the world in the new century.

5. Conclusion

Through researches and investigations of *Shi Ji* in East Asia, Europe and America, it can be found that studies in East Asia have focused on reading and understanding of the full text from the translation and annotation, while studies in Europe and America have paid more attention to the comprehensive study of the author, life and cultural background of *Shi Ji*. No matter how different research perspectives are, the spread of *Shi Ji* abroad has provided great help for other cultures in the world to better understand the history of China, the development of literature and the glamor of Chinese language. Mutual understanding is very important in cross-cultural communications and exchange. Through dissemination of *Shi Ji* and other Chinese classics overseas, we may mutually strive to promote intercultural communication between China and other nations and better carry forward excellent traditional cultural heritage to build a more prosperous common future for the world.

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Notes

Note 1. This study is an achievement of the key research project supported by China's National Social Sciences Foundation "The Overseas Dissemination and Influence of Chinese Primer Classics" (17AZS012) & 2017 China's national research project of Master of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages "The cultivation system of intercultural communication for MTSOL (HGJ201713).

Note 2. Han Shu (Book of Han): A book that records the history of the Han Dynasty. Compiled by Ban Gu, a historian of the Eastern Han Dynasty.

Note 3. Dong Guan Han Ji: A biographical history book of the Eastern Han Dynasty from emperor Guang Wu to Han Ling emperor.

Note 4. Book of Tang. (2013). *Dongyi*. Korea biography (p. 235). Bashu publishing house.

Note 5. Si Shu: four Confucian classics, including Lun Yu (Analects of Confucius), Da Xue, Zhong Yong and Meng Zi.

Note 6. Liu Ruo Mei. (2014). Collection and translation of historical records in Russia. *Guangdong Social Sciences Journal*, 26(2), 126-130.

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