

Original Paper

A Path to Understanding Dreams: Observations on Ancient Chinese Dream Culture and Western Dream Theories

Associate Professor Liang Hong¹ & Liang Shan²

¹ Tongling University, Tongling, Anhui, 244000, China

² City University, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, 46100, Malaysia

Received: February 10, 2022

Accepted: February 25, 2022

Online Published: March 2, 2022

doi:10.22158/sssr.v3n1p54

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/sssr.v3n1p54>

Abstract

Throughout history, dreams have been researchers' major focus where their keen interest lies in. Analyzing the three historical development phrases of dream theories, namely Pre-Freudian, Freudian and Post-Freudian phrases, this paper aims to demonstrate the impacts of ancient Chinese dream culture on languages, characters, medicine, psychology, literature, politics, and economy. Classical modern dream theories proposed by Sigmund Freud, Ivan Pavlov, and other researchers are collected and analyzed to help people have a better understanding of dreams and their meanings. Furthermore, the paper fully and systematically interprets the dream-related culture and scientifically classifies dream theories and technologies to reinvigorate the dream research field in China and advocates to boost global cultural prosperity and development through cultural exchanges, mutual learning and peaceful coexistence among countries.

Keywords

Dream, dream culture, dream theories

1. Ancient Chinese Dream Culture and its Manifestations

Sleep is an indispensable part of human activities as people spend 1/3 of their lives sleeping. During sleep, dreams can happen at any time. Dreams are common, mysterious, illusory and real. Dreaming is one of the most common physiological and psychological experiences of mankind. Everyone has the ability to dream regardless of their nationality, gender, age, cultural background or social status. Dreams accompany people throughout their lives, and they will exist as long as people can think. The studies and discussions on the nature, causes, mechanisms and meanings of dreams are puzzling, controversial and addictive due to its common occurrence and mysterious nature. Besides, dreams are one of the most fascinating and deeply explored phenomena throughout history.

The road of dream exploration is long and winding. Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* was first published in 1900. Marked by its publication, the exploration of dreams was divided by some scholars into three phrases, namely Pre-Freudian, Freudian, and Post-Freudian phrases.

During this long Pre-Freudian period, there were curiosities, interests, and speculations about dreams all over the world. After long-term explorations, each country accumulated abundant materials of dream culture and put forward many invaluable insights with the help of their own wisdom. However, generally speaking, due to tough objective conditions, there was a general lack of scientific research at that time. By contrast, the ancient Chinese dream culture was exceptionally developed, generating fruitful research, and became a typical and outstanding representative of this period.

China is a millennia-old nation where its people love pursuing dreams. Countless records of dreams can be found in Chinese classics. Three popular dream stories in ancient China are *Zhuangzi's Butterfly Dream*, *Golden Millet Dream* and *A Fond Dream of Nanke*. These dreams have partly carried the spiritual pursuits of our ancestors and recorded the process of their spiritual explorations. Therefore, it has formed a profound dream culture which is closely related to people's daily life and has deeply influenced their discovery of the universe and soul. At the same time, as a unique form of spiritual culture, the Chinese dream culture has its own inherent connotations and clear development phrases. Since the subject of dreams and the dream culture is also the subject of the whole Chinese culture, the existence of the dream culture and its influence have penetrated into almost every aspect of the whole Chinese culture. In this way, the dream culture has become an important part of Chinese culture.

1.1 The Meaning of the Chinese Character “梦”(Dream)

Chinese philosophies on dreams are a reflection of ancient philosophers' wisdom. Embodied in a character, dream connects the language with the whole Chinese cultural system through Chinese culture, their common medium.

First created in the Yin Dynasty, the relatively standard Chinese character “梦” was written on the oracle bone as . It is a compound ideograph with the left part indicating a frame bed and the right one an eye with long eyelashes. The big eye emphasizes the action of “watching”. For people in the Yin Dynasty, “dream” meant what they saw at dark nights when they slept in bed with fingers pointing at their eyes. The Lesser Seal Script version of the character, “𦉳”, is made up of three parts, “宀”(a house), “爿”(a bed), and “𦉳”(unknown phenomena). It refers to dreamers as who sleep in bed at night with blurry vision. “𦉳”, the traditional Chinese character version of the dream, includes “𦉳”(eyelashes), “𦉳”(an eye or what people see in dreams), and “夕”(the night or what people see in sleep). However, “梦” the character used in present days has been simplified, unable to indicate its original meaning now.

Meanwhile, “meng”, the pronunciation of the Chinese character “梦”, also has meanings. As an example of the “Chaos Order”, a popular physical concept, characters that have a similar pronunciation of “meng” including derivative cognates such as “蒙”(cover), “朦”, “瞢”, “矇”, and “萌” all imply

dimness and incipience, which contribute to the implied meaning of “梦”. *Shuowen Jiezi* (the oldest Chinese character dictionary) defines dream as something unknown that happens when people fall asleep and it is closely related to the nights.

In sleep, people are unable to see because no image is reflected on their retina. Thus, it needs to be further explored why people in the Yin Dynasty regarded dreams as “what they saw when they slept with fingers pointed at eyes”. As a matter of fact, what they really meant is “what souls saw after they left the bodies”, instead of “what people actually saw”.

Due to their lack of understanding of natural phenomena, a result of the backward economy and limited technologies, ancient people believed that the soul would leave the body when they were dreaming or saw it as an activity manipulated by ghosts or gods to deliver a message. Thus, dream interpretation that has affected humans for several thousand years was invented to deliver gods’ messages and predict the future. Interpreting mysterious dreams also makes the practice itself mysterious.

There is a great deal of Chinese phrases and slang words related to or derived from dreams such as “Jiang Yan’s dream about the blooming of his writing brush”, “daydreaming”, “strange bedfellows”, and “life is a dream”. Later linked to glyphomancy, dream interpretation became a prevailing practice. Dreams were considered as messages from gods embodied in Chinese characters, which mystifies the characters. To interpret dreams, those characters shall be separated and given a connotation. The two commonly used methods of interpreting dreams by linking them to homonyms or homophones are exclusive to China.

The fact that most Chinese characters are pictograms and ideograms enabled glyphomancy to become the most popular dream interpretation method in ancient times. One Chinese character will be separated into different parts and each part will be given new meanings. Such meaning units and dream images will be cleverly compared and connected to predict the future. A typical example is “丁固梦松”(a person named “丁固” dreamed about a pine tree). “松”(a pine tree) can be separated into three different characters “十”(ten), “八”(eight), and “公”(an official) so the dream was interpreted as that the person could be an official in eighteen years. This delicate technique that requires imagination is a unique product of Chinese character culture. As vivid as a painting, Chinese characters, a symbolic manifestation of visual images, share many similarities with dreams in terms of their creation and interpretation.

Homophones are another method to interpret dreams by linking dream images with characters having similar pronunciations. The interpretation is often related to folk customs. Examples include dreaming about a coffin means the person will be an official(“棺”, a coffin, and “官”, an official, are homophones); dreaming about fish means the person will be rich(“鱼”, fish, and “余”, wealth, are homophones); and dreaming about fish can also mean the person will be given good opportunities (“鱼”, fish, and “遇”, opportunities, are homophones) or the person may find his or her love.

1.2 Dreams and Medical Science

Dreams and medical science have been closely connected. Before establishing a mature Traditional

Chinese medicine(TCM) system, doctors had included illnesses related to dreams into the TCM category and were the first to study the pathogeny of relevant diseases. It was commonly believed among philosophers and doctors in ancient China that dreaming was caused by diseases. Wang Fu, a philosopher in the Eastern Han Dynasty, proposed that the Qi problems inside patients would lead to various diseases which further decided what dreams they would have. Plenty of books passed down from ancient times have recorded that dreams could give clues about diseases. An example is from *Legend of the Demigods* by Gan Bao. Liu Ya, a secretary of the Huainan state, dreamed that a green lizard fell from the roof to his belly and caused a stomachache. The dream appeared to be the cause of the disease but it was not true because the disease had already existed before the dream. Pathological changes had occurred although they were not obvious at the current stage. It can be proven by modern medical science that patients may subconsciously dream about their discomfort that they are unable to notice in the daytime when they are occupied with work. Through comparison, it is easy to affirm that dreams can “diagnose” diseases; thus, it has been seen as a reliable and important diagnosis method after doctors accumulated abundant experiences on connecting dreams with diseases and put it into practice. Although such practice is absurd and rigid, it is more scientific than referring to dreams as messages from gods or omens. The unique TCM analysis method and treatment of dream-related problems such as sexsomnia, nightmares, sleeptalking, sleepwalking and nocturnal emission have contributed greatly to studies on dreams.

1.3 Dream Psychology

Dream studies fall into the psychology category. As a result of the slow development of somatics and psychology in ancient China, psychology had not been established as an independent discipline. Despite that, ancient doctors proposed abundant psychological thoughts and conducted various dream studies. Numerous dream records and dream interpretation in ancient books are useful references for dream research. Unique dream theories have been proposed based on the extensive and in-depth exploration of the nature, causes and mechanisms of dreams through dream interpretation. They are valuable psychology research data, with which researchers have achieved great accomplishments.

Dream analysis and interpretation have a long history in ancient China. As early as the pre-Qin period, some famous scholars started to analyze dreams in a rational manner. In each dynasty, researchers had studied and argued about problems related to dreams from different perspectives, resulting in more in-depth studies, thus creating their unique research thinking, theories and methods. Relevant theories include the “disease-dreaming theory” recorded in *Huangdi Neijing*, “theory of six types of dreams” recorded in *The Rites of Zhou*, and the cerebral infarction-dreaming theory proposed by Wang Qingren. After an analysis of the specific time and places people dream about, many ancient scholars had noticed the effect of occupations, gender, religions, personalities, living areas, experiences and social status on dreamers’ psychology and individual differences they brought about. For example, snake hunters will not be scared by snakes in their dream; archery lovers often dream about arrows and music lovers often dream about music; residents in the south do not dream about horses while those in the

north not about boats; and men will not have dreams about delivering babies while women not about shooting. Unique views have been presented to analyze the psychology of people who dream about sex or food and dream interpretation is used to comfort, suggest, treat or relieve the dreamers to help them achieve psychological balance. In ancient China, however, there was a lack of systematic dream theories, treatises and scientific experiments on dreams.

1.4 Dreams and Literature

Dream and literature are naturally linked. With no time or space limitation, dreams can be colorful, romantic, twisty or bizarre, providing materials for poets, writers and artists who based their works on dreams and left masterpieces to later generations. Such works can be found in almost every dynasty. Owing to their delicate description of dreams, poets, writers, playwrights and artists contributed more to dream studies than philosophers and medical scientists. Dreams and dream culture serve as vivid, interesting, and endless materials for psychological writing. Writers in ancient China were good at building dream images and depicting dreams to present an ideal world and express their emotions. Works inspired by unreal dreams where people are allowed to express feelings, gain inspirations, satirize others and build a new world can be used as special figures of speech such as metaphors, foreshadowing and contrast.

As early as the Warring States Time, Zhuang Zhou, a philosopher, had written about dreams in his book, *Zhuangzi*, to illustrate his philosophies. One story is that he doubted if he dreamed about himself turning into a butterfly or the butterfly had a dream about transforming into a human. It has become an important philosophy, an inspiration for literature and guidance for dream research. Tang Xianzu, a playwright in the Ming Dynasty who was famous for basing his love stories on dreams, had four well-known plays called *Four Dreams*, which are *The Purple Hairpin*, *The Peony Pavilion*, *A Dream Under a Southern Bough*, and *Dream of Handan*. All set on dreams, the four plays have won universal praise and survive today. The most representative dream-derived story is *Dream of the Red Chamber* by Cao Xueqin on account of its subtle depiction of the “dream”. The author’s favor of “dream” can be told from the title and he wrote more than twenty bizarre and absurd dreams at great length to smooth the plot and express his emotions. Some dreams were used to set the tone of the story while the others implied the endings of characters. The marvelous practice of introducing dreams into reality and literature has propelled Chinese dream-related literature to the highest level.

1.5 Dreams, Politics and Economy

Apart from languages, characters, medical science, psychology and literature, dream culture also has profound effects on politics and the economy. Emperors had seen dreams as an important means to predict the future of the country and help them make decisions. Dreams played a subtle role in politics, military affairs, and criminal penalty in ancient China. Seeing themselves as sons of God, emperors used to make up dreams to fool civilians to prove they were destined to rule the country. Scholars also used dreams or legends to build a good image for divine emperors and prove their legitimacy. The book, *Records of the Grand Historian -Emperor Gaozu of Han*, has recorded that Liu’ao, mother of Emperor

Gaozu of Han, dreamed about having sex with God while sleeping near the lake bank on a thundering and rainy day. When her husband found her, he saw a dragon lying on her, after which, she was pregnant and gave birth to Emperor Gaozu of Han. This dream was fabricated to help the emperor win his people's support. The fact that the book's author quoted the story without analyzing it proves the far-reaching influence of such feudal thoughts. At the turning points of dynasties, dreams were recorded to predict a riot or a new emperor or to build up the momentum for rebels. In ancient politics, therefore, the ruling class often resorted to oneiromancy to secure their status, start persecution and fool common people.

Although not as closely connected to economic activities as it is to politics, dreams about trees, grains, livestock or utensils abound in books. A poem called *Wuyang* from *The Book of Songs* recorded that it was a sign of a bumper harvest to dream about locusts turning into fish while dreaming about the turtle and snake drawn the flag turning into a bird indicated a large family.

Dreams stand as a mirror reflecting individuals' psychology and dream culture reflects the whole nation. Common images and dreams reflect that Chinese people are longing to control nature and their fate, revealing the positive spiritual power of pursuing dreams but also struggles, confusion and cries.

The years-long independent research of dreams had contributed to the establishment of a unique dream culture system and theories in ancient China. However, it has limitations. With most theories set on the idea that dreams could predict the future, dream interpretation lays much stress on the connection between dream images and people's fate and ignores the fact that dreams are a physiological and psychological activity as well as the logic behind diverse dream images. Overlooking the scientific factors behind dreams, it places emphasis on the manifestations and the moral role of dreams. In comparison, modern dream theories were set on the dream psychoanalysis with no idealistic factors such as omens or predictions involved.

The 20th century marked a new chapter of the development of oneirology, the term used to describe the scientific study of dreams.

2. Freud's Dream Theory

Sigmund Freud, an Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist, was the pioneer of dream theories and psychological dream studies. In 1900, he published an epochal book called *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and started the research on dreams and sleep psychology in modern times, bringing the dream research to a new level. The book used psychoanalytic theories to define dreams in a systematic and comprehensive way. Freud was the first to see dreams as a novel psychological research field, and later, he concluded that dream was meaningful, logical, and disguised subconsciousness. His pioneering research had emphasized the importance of studying dreams and laid a solid foundation for further research. *The Interpretation of Dreams* is hailed as a revolutionary masterpiece.

After analyzing previous dream theories and ample examples of dream interpretation, Freud argued that dreams were wish fulfillment, the continuation of mental activities happening in the waking state

caused by highly complex intellectual activities. According to his psychoanalysis, one's mind is composed of consciousness, preconscious, and unconscious which are in constant conflict. With most being filtered and repressed, the unconscious thoughts will be expressed through dreams. In sleep when the mind's filter function weakens, the unconscious thoughts will be able to break into one's mind in the form of dreams without being noticed by the preconscious. Freud believed that dreams were important to humans' psychological activities because desires repressed in the waking state could be fulfilled in dreams. Observing and analyzing dreams allow researchers to gain more in-depth insights into humans' psychology and understand unconscious thoughts. For Freud, dreams are the gate to psychoanalysis, an effective way to comprehend spiritual activities, and "the interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind".

Believing that all dreams were wish fulfillment but in different forms, direct or indirect, Freud emphasized that people should not be fooled by dream manifestations. Dreams that appear to be unrelated to dreamers' wishes are wish fulfillment in nature, but they are presented in a disguised manner.

According to Freud's analysis, dream contents can be classified into two types, manifest one and latent one. The former refers to dreams that are remembered and recounted and stands as a disguise for the latent dream while the latter is the repressed unconscious thoughts and desires which represent the hidden psychological meaning of dreams. Thus, interpreting dreams is to unveil the manifest dream and reveal the latent one. Freud had identified four aspects of the dream-work, namely condensation, displacement, symbolization and secondary elaboration, after which the latent dream would be beyond recognition, therefore, difficult to decipher. It becomes necessary to interpret and analyze dreams to disclose the hidden meanings of dreams and look into humans' psychological state. Freud held that dream interpretation was an effective therapy because it could detect the repressed desires of mentally ill patients.

The source of dreams is the cause. Freud stated that the main materials and sources of dreams were the past day's events, stimulus within the body during sleep, and childhood experiences. These can explain the occurrence of certain contents in dreams. He stressed that dreams were related to events that happened within 24 hours before the dream to some extent, which coincided with an old saying that ancient Chinese believed "One will dream about what they think during the day".

However, Freud provided a more plausible and scientific explanation. Furthermore, his dream analysis has been well applied to clinical studies although it is based on a psychological analysis hypothesis.

After using the unconsciousness theory, pansexualism, and instinct theory to present a relatively comprehensive analysis of dreams, Freud clarified the special meaning of dreams, demystified dreams that are universal but mysterious, strengthened the bond between dreams and humans' spiritual activities, advanced the dream interpretation, and identified the psychological features of dreams to find out the psychological causes of dreams. Nevertheless, it is inadvisable to adopt his "wish fulfillment" theory, pansexualism theory and practices of ignoring the physiological mechanism acting in dreams.

3. Recent Advances in Modern Dream Theories and Technologies

3.1 Ivan Pavlov's Theories

Ivan Pavlov, a famous physiologist, proposed the higher nervous activity theory in the early 20th century, believing that dreams were the result of the unbalanced excitation foci repression in the cerebral cortex. The traces of past stimulus recombined after being repressed to become a dream and this process was named by Pavlov as Repressed Traces Recombination.

According to Pavlov, humans will not have dreams when the repression activity that diffuses like waves spreads to the whole cerebral cortex or deeper areas in the deep sleep state, because the psychological activities have been repressed. However, in the light sleep state which witnesses a less effective and unbalanced repression activity, a few psychological factors will remain active and result in dreams. The content of dreams, the result of brain cells' activities, is from reality and closely related to daily life. For instance, one will dream about eating when he is hungry and water when he is thirsty. Similar examples in ancient China include "people who are full will dream about giving food out while the hungry will steal" from *Huangdi Neijing*, and "people who are thirsty will dream about drinking while the hungry will eat" from a poem written by Huang Tingjian, a poet in the Song Dynasty.

Regarding dreams as a neurological process where the stimulus-induced excitation was repressed, Pavlov explained the cause of dreams from the physiological perspective. From the 1950s to the 1980s, Chinese researchers enshrined his theory as the only scientific explanation of the dream cause.

3.2 Rapid Eye Movement (REM) Sleep

In the Post-Freudian period, more advanced techniques had been introduced to dream research as new technologies and investigations of dreams in the laboratory emerged. Critically absorbing Freud's dream theories, psychologists have made breakthroughs and explored dreams from new perspectives by leveraging modern technologies and controlling the experimental conditions to study dreams and put forward new explanations, among which the most striking is the REM study.

In 1953, Nathaniel Kleitman, a physiologist at the University of Chicago, found in an experiment that brains would regularly shift between the non-REM (NREM) sleep mode and the REM one with his two students, Eugene Aserinsky and William Dement. During REM, or paradoxical sleep, eyes will move rapidly and the heart rate, breath and brain waves will rise. If being woken up at this stage, the person will be able to recall almost all the content of their dream so REM is also called "dream sleep". In comparison, people can remember no contents in NREM so it is known as dreamless sleep or orthodox sleep. NREM and REM will alternate during sleep and one alternation that lasts about 90 minutes completes a sleep cycle. The first stage in one cycle is NREM, and it shifts to the REM mode for 5-10 minutes before switching back to a longer NREM period. On average, there are five REM periods at one night with the longest one lasting for 30-50 minutes. Almost everyone has the ability to dream and the number and duration of dreams are fixed. REM is the new milestone in modern dream research. The early record about REM in ancient China is *Yiyuan*, a medical book written by Shi Shoutang, a doctor in the Qing Dynasty, which recorded that "people in sleep will lose their mind, talk, and keep

rolling their eyes”. Some scholars believe that the oracle bone script of the character “梦” was created based on it. Since the 1950s, REM has long been regarded as a neurophysiological indicator of dreams, shedding light on the nature of dreams.

In 1960, William Dement, an American sleep researcher, conducted a “dream deprivation” experiment in which he woke up participants when they were experiencing REM to deprive them of chances of dreaming. The result showed that dreams constituted an indispensable part of human life: if participants were prevented from dreaming for one or several nights, they would attempt to finish the dream at the following nights. Mental problems caused by dream-deprived participants include anxiety, irritability, memory deterioration and low concentration. Such experiments have further proved the relation between dreams and memory and fatigue reduction so it points out that humans need REM and dreams. Currently, researchers do not recognize that REM sleep and dreams are the same thing and studies have shown their differences. One instance is that brain stem damage will affect patients’ REM sleep but not stop them from dreaming while patients with forebrain damage will lose the ability to dream without losing REM sleep. Besides, some findings demonstrate that participants will have psychological activities similar to dreams in NREM such as seeing vivid visual images and experiencing emotional changes and bizarre events. Despite that fewer dreams have been reported in NREM sleep than in REM sleep, NREM is still important for dream research. Therefore, the scope of neural-based studies on dreams has expanded to NREM sleep and led to a rising number of relevant studies. Nevertheless, REM sleep remains the best and the most objective neurophysiological indicator of research dreams. Comparing cerebral activities in these two modes will allow researchers to learn more about dreams.

3.3 Activation-Synthesis Theory

In the late 1970s, J-Hobson and R.W.Mccarley, two psychologists, proposed the Activation-Synthesis theory to interpret dream contents according to the study results they achieved in the sleep laboratory. They believed that vivid and bizarre dream images were randomly created and explained that pons-gettulate-occipital brain waves and other random signals sent by people’s brain stem in sleep would activate the forebrain that later integrated signals and created dream images. In this way, dreaming became an automatic process in which the brain could piece information together in the traditional way to present a relatively reasonable but still absurd explanation. They saw dreams as the psychological concomitant of physiological activities, therefore not a major event.

The Activation-Synthesis theory can explain the dream work to some extent with research findings drawn from experiments but it overlooks the psychological factors at play in dreams. Since dreams are closely related to individuals’ ideas and personalities, the theory fails to illustrate the functions of dreams.

3.4 Other New Technologies

In recent years, technological advances, especially the development of neurophysiology and neuroimaging, have expanded the scope of dream research, allowing researchers to better understand the neurophysiological cause of dreams. Thus, dream research has witnessed rapid development.

Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), an effective tool to detect the neurophysiological mechanism behind dreams, EEG, the golden standard for dream research, and EEG-fMRI, the combination of the two aforementioned technologies, can all be used to recognize and record dreams, or the cerebral activities under the external stimulus. Another important tool is to exert feasible stimulus on the cerebral cortex.

4. Conclusion and Further Explorations

To explain dreams, researchers from Pre-Freudian to Post-Freudian periods, had provided wild guesses, proposed theories based on their hypotheses, and examined others' theories through experiments. They have made a great leap in this field by adopting a more scientific and rational method to study dreams rather than resorting to the groundless dream interpretation practice.

According to the natural selection theory by Darwin, dream, a physiological and psychological phenomenon that existed in ancient times and survives today, is also of great biological significance. The purpose of studying dreams is not only to demystify them but also to better understand humans' evolution and development, brain function, and the origin and development of consciousness. In addition, dream research can help solve clinical psychological and mental problems. Medical researchers in both ancient and modern times have accumulated experiences in treating trauma and nightmares so dream research should be attached more importance to psychological therapy.

The current studies on dreams, the higher nervous activity, are partly based on scientific methods and experiments and mostly on subjective hypotheses. Therefore, the pressing problem facing researchers now is to interpret dreams, verify hypotheses, and use new technologies to demystify dreams in a scientific and creative way in order to narrow the gap in dream research between China and developed countries.

However, what mentioned above will be a long and challenging journey. Researchers should not only carry forward and interpret the splendid ancient dream culture but also learn from developed civilizations to scientifically analyze and develop dream theories. On one hand, the superstitious part in ancient dream culture should be eliminated with only the scientific part left and on the other hand, purely western dream theories shall not be laid excessive stress on. Researchers should strike a balance between learning Chinese and western theories and technologies. Some Chinese theories were put forward earlier than western ones. For example, compared to Freud who proposed that "dreams are wish fulfillment" over 100 years ago, Chinese people had put forward that "people will dream about what they think during the day" as early as the Zhou Dynasty.

Chinese dream culture that started several thousand years ago has a long history, leaving more records and documents about dream studies than other nations. It is more profound, prospective and practicable than modern dream studies so Chinese researchers should be proud of Chinese dream theories and culture to carry them forward and innovate them while learning from western theories to reinvigorate the dream research field in China.

As globalization becomes the surging trend, all countries and nations are more closely connected and it is a common consensus to restore a new international order that stresses equality and mutual benefits and to advocate a new civilization view of peaceful coexistence. Fei Xiaotong, a Chinese sociologist, had answered how to realize mutual exchange, mutual learning and peaceful coexistence among diverse civilizations. He advocated to respect one's own culture and also appreciate other nations' in the early 1990s. Only through mutual learning and exchange on the basis of respecting and appreciating each other can one culture survive and coexist to further develop and build a community with a shared future for mankind.

References

- Che, W. B. (1998). *History of Western Psychology*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang Education Press.
- Dong, Z. H. (2006). Research on Dream Causes. *Social Sciences Journal of Universities in Shanxi*, 08, 24-27.
- Fang, P., & Li, Y. (2007). Three Historical Phases of Western Dream Research. *Journal of Hubei Radio & Television University*, 11, 72-73.
- Fu, Z. G. (1993). *Chinese Dream Culture*. Beijing: China Social Science Press.
- Guo, F., & Chen, Z. Y. (2018). The Myths and Truths of Dreams. *Chinese Science Bulletin*, 01, 22-31.
- Lu, Y. (2005). *Chinese Dream Culture*. Beijing: China Three Gorges Publishing House.
- Luo, J. P. (2005). *Eye of the Night*. Chengdu: Sichuan People's Publishing House.
- Fraud, S. (2011). *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Beijing: China International Culture Press.
- Ye, W. M. (1999). *Dream and Life*. Beijing: Guangming Daily Press.
- Zhang, H. T., & Cui, H. (2012). Observations on People's Thinking in Sleep. *Journal of Harbin University*, 03, 31-36.