

Report of 2014 from the Committee of “Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature”

YANG Huilin

As reported at the General Assembly, Scriptural Reason is a wisdom-seeking engagement, striving to enrich all participants instead of promoting monologue or authoritarianism; SR is dynamic, striving to transform contradictions into contrarities, to regard the dynamic and divergent understandings as mere differences, to find the perfection where it is not; SR helps with a better understanding of the “other’s” as well as one’s own classical tradition; SR points to an absolute humility, against any attitude of priority, individual, ethnic, cultural, ideological, including religious priority.

In this light, the Committee of “Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature” supported conferences that will help and strengthen mutual understanding. The first meeting in 2014 supported by the Committee was “China and the West: Translation of Classics in 1950s and after” held at the University of South Carolina on February 26 to March 2nd. About seven Chinese scholars attended the conference and dialogued with American scholars directly. On March 18-19, the Committee supported the conference entitled “Constructions of East and West: Translating Classical Texts” held at Renmin University of China. It gathered more than 15 scholars from University of Glasgow, University of Stirling, Lafayette College, Baylor University, Oxford Brookes University, Chinese University of Hong Kong, St. Andrews University, and Renmin University of China. On May 18-19, the Committee supported a small seminar “Human Cultures and Transcendent Meaning”. This time two pairs of distinguished scholars from University of Chicago and Renmin University of China held deep and thorough dialogues. More than 30 students from Renmin University of China joined the discussion after the presentations from both universities. Next, the Committee will support the 11th Triennial Congress of Chinese Comparative Literature Association on September 17-21 at Yanbian, Jilin Province. There will be a special roundtable of “Comparative Literature and Religious Studies” with 25 scholars from all over China and other parts of the world. A group of presentations focus on Scriptural Reasoning, and it surely will encourage and foster a deeper discussion on specific issues related to Scriptural Reasoning. In October, German theologian and thinker Jurgen Moltmann will come to Beijing and hold a one-day seminar with Chinese scholars. The Committee will support this event by presenting papers related to Scriptural Reasoning.

Besides academic conferences, the Committee has kept its publications and projects related to SR. Issue 31 (Spring 2014) of the Journal for the Study of

Christian Culture has come out in May with the title “Moving Boundaries”, representing the spirit of SR. Issue 32 (Autumn 2014) will be ready in December, collecting articles on the theme of “Trajectories of the Classics”. The spirit of reasoning and the cross-disciplinary nature will be carried on in this issue. In June 2014, Issue 28 of *Literature and Theology* (published by Oxford University Press) came out, which collected the presentation essay at the conference on SR supported by the Committee in 2013. The title of this issue is “China and the West in Dialogue”.

The project the Committee has engaged in the project entitled “The Collected Exegesis of the Translation of Chinese Classics by Western Missionaries”. Two volumes of the five-volume-series on Confucius’ *Analects* have been completed and will be published at the end of this year. These two collected the commentaries of the missionaries’ and presented the scriptural reasoning practice in a new way. There will be other three volumes published next year and more conferences related to this project will be held this year.

The Committee also supported many lectures at the School of Liberal Arts, Renmin University of China. Last November, we were honored and pleased to receive Prof. Bertens and his wife to lecture at Peking University and Renmin University of China at the end of 2013. Prof. Bertens lectured on the topic of “Postmodern (Holocaust) Literature in the Twenty-First Century”, which was well received by the scholars and students at Beijing. This year, we have received Prof. David Jasper from University of Glasgow, Prof. Roland Boer from University of Newcastle, Prof. Mark Taylor from Columbia University, Prof. William Schweiker and Prof. Dwight Hopkins from University of Chicago. In September we will have Prof. Jon Whitman from Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Such lectures and visits have helped with the future development of Comparative Literature in Chinese universities and strengthened the cooperation between Chinese Comparative Literature Association and International Comparative Literature Association. We hope in the future the Committee can keep supporting this kind of cooperation and exchange with ICLA members.

Prepared by

Prof. Dr. YANG Huilin, Chair of the Committee of Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature

Dr. ZHANG Jing (Cathy), Secretary of the Committee of Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature