



## Foreword to the Inaugural Issue

---

---

YUAN XINGPEI and ZONG-QI CAI

“Scholarly traditions of all nations form one family” 天下學問一家 is the motto we’ve chosen for the *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture (JCLC)*. It crystalizes our endeavor to create a platform for in-depth dialogue and collaboration between (Greater) China-based and Western scholars of Chinese literature and culture.

*JCLC* seeks to present cutting-edge research on traditional Chinese poetry and poetics, fiction, prose, drama, and vernacular literature, as well as broader aspects of literary culture. It will also publish works that study the shaping influence of traditional literature and culture on modern and contemporary China. The journal aims to be interdisciplinary in methodology by situating literary studies within a wider framework of the humanities, arts, and social sciences—including interdisciplinary fields like comparative literature, gender studies, and women’s studies, among others. *JCLC* will publish two issues per year, usually one general issue and one special themed issue.

### **Modes of In-Depth Collaboration**

“Scholarly traditions around the world form one family” is ultimately predicated on scholars around the world working together like a close family 天下學者一家. To cultivate such a bond among Chinese and Western scholars, we have developed various modes of collaboration at different levels of the journal’s operation.

Our editorial team consists of roughly equal numbers of prominent Chinese and Western scholars. The composition of the team also reflects our intention to offer a balanced coverage of literary genres and historical periods. A similarly structured reviewer base is also being built. Where possible and desirable, submissions will be reviewed by one Chinese and one Western expert.

Collaboration between contributors is more varied and interactive. When Western scholars contribute their work to a general issue, collaboration with Chinese scholars is normally more limited—sharing only the same publication venue. However, if they contribute to a special themed issue, they will have significant, substantive interaction with their Chinese counterparts through symposia and workshops on topics of common interest. Consequently, we hope special themed issues will play a pivotal role in fostering new areas of research and broadening the horizons of the field. In selecting themes for these issues, we will aim for a complementarity of Chinese and Western scholarship that will best advance the field.

Currently, most Chinese contributors to *JCLC* collaborate with Western scholars who translate and coauthor their works. The translation of a Chinese-language article, long considered the biggest hurdle in this process, actually works as a catalyst for in-depth collaboration. The exigencies of a fine translation force both parties to learn each other's scholarly conventions. In rewriting an article for English translation, a Chinese scholar learns about Western scholarship on the subject as well as the expectations and conventions of English scholarly writing. The Chinese author gains by having a Western coauthor who will incorporate Western scholarship as well as his or her own insights into the article.

For Western scholars, translating/coauthoring a Chinese article offers a similar chance to learn more about the Chinese scholarly tradition. The translator/coauthor can apply for a short-term fellowship from the International Academy for China Studies of Peking University, the journal's Chinese cosponsor, to work with his or her Chinese partner. Considering the time-consuming nature of Chinese-to-English translation, we propose to alternate between coauthorship and pure translation when asked by Chinese authors to find Western partners. Coauthorship is appropriate when the Western scholar has made a substantive contribution, an arrangement that should benefit his or her career development. But we also encourage all coauthors to contribute as straightforward translators when called upon to do so. The alternate use of these two modes of collaboration ensures fairness to both parties.

### **Striving for the Highest Scholarly Excellence**

For greatest impact on the field, we aspire to the highest standards of scholarly excellence for *JCLC*. We only publish articles and essays that have not previously appeared in any language. Research articles are expected to provide original analysis of texts and contexts, introduce innovative methodologies or approaches to time-honored subjects, or present discoveries of important new material. Feature essays, aimed at educated general readers, undergo the same peer-review process as research articles.

All submissions, including those we solicit, will be subject to the same rigorous peer-review process. This peer review is doubly anonymous, with the names of both author and reviewers kept strictly confidential.

We spare no effort to ensure high translation quality, as roughly half of what *JCLC* publishes will consist of English versions of submissions originally written in Chinese. Translation and coauthoring are done by published scholars in the field and, in some cases, by advanced doctoral students under the close supervision of senior scholars. All translated and coauthored manuscripts are first sent to professional editors or to our translation editors for special editing. These editors make significant stylistic emendations to ensure papers are in good, clear English. After special editing, translated and coauthored manuscripts go through the standard editorial process, along with other accepted submissions.

The standard editorial process consists of four stages: (1) editing and copyediting, with special attention to the handling of Chinese material and conformity to the journal style; (2) proofreading of revised and cleaned-up files by a *JCLC* editorial assistant; (3) a second round of copyediting by a press-hired copy editor; (4) proofreading of page proofs by a press-hired proofreader. By implementing this rigorous editorial process, we aim to reach the highest standards of academic publishing.

### **Reaching Out to Broad Audiences**

*JCLC* addresses two different audiences. Research articles are written by and for Chinese and Western literary scholars, including advanced graduate students. Feature essays introduce different aspects of traditional Chinese literature and culture to a more general audience. They are authored or coauthored by recognized experts on the subject.

Feature essays fall into three broad categories. The first, “Facets of Culture,” introduces diverse facets of Chinese literary culture, informing the reader of the broad milieu in which literary works were produced, transmitted, and received. “Terms, Concepts, and Methods,” the second category, provides an in-depth account of key terms, concepts, and statements in traditional Chinese literary criticism. It sheds light on the shifting conceptual frameworks in which literary works were understood and critiqued in premodern China and opens up a dialogue with modern critical discourse. “Text Matters” is the last category. The word “matters” (here used as both noun and verb) refers to a broad range of textual issues—from original composition to transmission, emendations, and editions of important texts—and to the way textual issues matter to our understanding of literature.

The Forum on Chinese Poetic Culture website ([chinese-poetryforum.org](http://chinese-poetryforum.org)) plays an important role in making our various services available to a wider audience. It features a broad range of topics, from “Submission Guidelines” to “Workshops

for Planned *JCLC* Special Issues.” Two useful databases, now under construction, will soon be accessible: one for English translations of terms, another for English translations of book titles (with full biographical information) that have appeared in *JCLC* issues. In addition, the website will set up two repositories, one for supplementary Chinese-language texts and data *JCLC* authors wish to provide for their published articles and one for PDF files of subsequently published Chinese versions of *JCLC* articles.

As a platform for in-depth collaboration between Chinese and Western scholars, we believe *JCLC* can reach wide audiences in both the Chinese- and the English-speaking world. *JCLC* seeks to accomplish this through partnership with its sister journals, *Newsletter for International China Studies* 國際漢學研究通訊 and *Lingnan Journal of Chinese Studies* 嶺南學報, a renowned twentieth-century Chinese-language journal to be relaunched at Lingnan University of Hong Kong in 2015. The Chinese versions of many *JCLC* articles will be published in these two journals shortly after they appear in *JCLC*. This partnership with our sister journals should enable us to deliver *JCLC* to a broader audience.

Through all the ways described above, we hope to usher in a new kind of Chinese literary scholarship that will transcend traditional national and cultural boundaries. In-depth collaboration between Chinese and Western scholars is only a first step toward achieving our ideal of “scholarly traditions around the world form one family.” In addition to Chinese and Western scholarship, there are other distinctive scholarly traditions, such as Japan’s history of Chinese studies. We have tried to include these in the journal’s purview but encountered a major obstacle: a dearth of trilingual scholars who can competently review, translate, or coauthor a work written in a language other than English or Chinese. We will attempt to overcome this obstacle and further broaden *JCLC*’s geographical and intellectual base in the years to come.

In this age of instant communication, scholarly traditions will inevitably go through a process of globalization like all other aspects of life in the twenty-first century. In our view, a healthy globalization of scholarly traditions should not eliminate differences between traditions or allow any particular tradition to gain global dominance. Rather, it should facilitate ever broader and deeper collaboration between diverse traditions. This journal of ours is probably the first experiment in this direction for studies of traditional Chinese literature and culture. Should it prove successful, we hope it will inspire other scholars and institutions to pursue similar forms of collaboration between Asian and Western scholars. By our collective effort, we can hasten the advent of the day when this kind of collaboration becomes common practice in Chinese literary studies.