

Editorial Forward: Building Bridges

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I have the great pleasure of welcoming you to *Literature and Modern China* after more than two years of pandemic-enforced hiatus. In 2019, professors Li Yi and Li Dian—of Sichuan University and the University of Arizona respectively—conceived a journal that would bridge the Chinese- and English-speaking academic worlds, bringing together the best work on Chinese literature and literary culture by scholars from around the world. The first issue of that journal, *Literature and Modern China*, was published in 2019, shortly before the discovery of the SARS-COV-2 virus and its global spread that brought much of the world's daily life to a halt, including further work on this journal. As I write, the latest variant of that virus, omicron, has the world holding its breath, waiting to see what consequences will flow from the novel coronavirus's latest surprise.

In spite of the difficulties the pandemic has forced upon us—social isolation, an inability to travel, and the constant stress of wondering what will happen next, among others—I am proud to say that everyone involved in *Literature and Modern China* has put in a great deal of effort to ensure that the vision behind it is not lost. Tuo Jianing and Sophia Kidd deserve special mention in this regard. It is thanks to their efforts that I am able to welcome you to an online, open-access version of the journal that will make the scholarship we publish freely available to anyone, anywhere in the world.

We live in a time when bridges are of great importance. The drastic reduction in international travel brought on by the pandemic has kept us from seeing one another face to face and made it easier to forget that we are one human family sharing one world that is our home. The irony is tremendous. The pandemic itself is, as its name makes clear, a global problem that can be successfully addressed only by global solutions, and it is not the only such problem that confronts us. Global warming stares us in the face and will not back down until we accept that fates of all humans are now intertwined and can never again be untangled. We are tied together whether we like it or not. Rather than struggle against bonds we cannot break, we should embrace our connectedness as an opportunity to learn from and about one another. The time is ripe for building bridges.

Like any construction, bridges require a solid foundation, and the best foundations for shared understanding are mutual respect, a commitment to truth, and a willingness to learn and explore rigorously and collaboratively. These are also some of the virtues that animate scholarly life, and sharing them is a one way in which the scholarly community can contribute to the world in what will surely be regarded as a pivotal moment in human history. It is in that spirit, and in the hope for ever-deeper ties of friendship and learning between the Chinese- and English-speaking scholarly worlds, that we republish here two of the articles from the first issue of *Literature and Modern China*.

Both articles are apt for the moment in which we find ourselves. Luo Liang's article explores the beginnings of Anglo-American (mis)understanding of Chinese popular culture through an examination of Samuel I. Woodbridge's translation of the legend of the White Snake. Her work shows that even dubiously motivated efforts at cross-cultural communication may have unforeseen positive results. Tuo Jianing's research chronicles the struggles of Wu Yaocheng, a Hui Muslim intellectual and educator, to preserve and develop his culture in the face of war and imperialism as he lived through the Mengjiang Japanese puppet regime, the Chinese civil war, and World War II—a timely reminder that we are not the first generation forced to deal with the local consequences of global catastrophes.

We had hoped to keep the PDF versions of these articles identical to the hardcopies published in 2019, but that proved impossible. We therefore present them to you newly edited and individually page-numbered. We apologize for any inconvenience this lack of agreement with the print version may cause.

— Stephen BOYANTON, *Managing Editor*