

## **Report on the Purposes of the Research Committee**

### **“Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies”**

In receiving the kindly approval letter from the ICLA Research Committee, signed by Prof. César Domínguez, the project leader of the proposed Research Committee “Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies” is requested to hand in the detailed report on specific research purposes as follows.

#### **Main Purpose of the Research Committee**

The main purpose of the Research Committee “Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies” is to explore “scriptural reasoning” specifically in the interstices of comparative literature and religious studies, to broaden its traditionally restricted scope with Chinese resources, and to deepen the intercultural, inter-lingual and interdisciplinary dimensions of comparative literature.

#### **Updated Standing Members of the Research Committee**

Person-in-Charge: YANG Huilin, Professor, Renmin University of China

Secretary: ZHANG Jing (Cathy), Associate Researcher, Renmin University of China

Standing Members of the Committee: (to be confirmed)

BOER, Roland, Professor, University of Newcastle (Australia)

CHARD, Robert, Professor, University of Oxford

CHIN Kenpa, Professor, Taiwan Chung Yung Christian University

FANG, Weigui, Professor, Beijing Normal University

FORD, David, Professor, University of Cambridge

GENG, Youzhuang, Professor, Renmin University of China

JASPER, David, Professor, University of Glasgow

JEFFREY, David, Professor, Baylor University

KUSCHEL, Karl-Josef, Professor, University of Tübingen

LEE, Archie, Professor, Chinese University of Hong Kong

LI, Bernard C.C., Professor, Taiwan Fu Jen Catholic University  
LIU, Shusen, Professor, Peking University  
LIU, Xiaofeng, Professor, Renmin University of China  
PFISTER, Lauren, Professor, Hong Kong Baptist University  
ROUKANEN, Miikka, Professor, University of Helsinki  
STARR, Chlöe, Associate Professor, Yale University  
WELKE, Michael Professor, University of Heidelberg  
WU, Xiaoming, Professor, University of Canterbury (New Zealand)  
ZHANG Longxi, Professor, City University of Hong Kong

### **Brief Description of our Mission and Vision**

Since the 1990s, comparative readings of Judaic, Christian and Islamic scriptures have attracted more and more attentions. The so-called “Scriptural Reasoning” unfolded by such comparative readings has become a very important inter-disciplinary field of Religious Studies and Comparative Literature. Although originally “Scriptural Reasoning” focused more on the Judaic, Christian and Islamic scriptures, namely the Abrahamic tradition, growing attention has been focused upon comparative studies between these scriptures and Chinese Classics. Researchers and scholars gradually have agreed that the Chinese Classics as well as the commentaries on these Classics translated by Western missionaries constitute abundant resources of “Scriptural Reasoning”, and such resources will naturally help the discipline become genuinely intercultural, inter-lingual and inter-disciplinary comparative studies.

Early missionaries such as Joachim Bouvet, Robert Morrison, Richard Wilhelm and James Legge not only endeavoured to translate the Bible into Chinese but also translated and introduced a great deal of Chinese Classics to the West. These missionaries translated almost all of the critical Chinese ancient classics. Their interpretation and commentaries based on their own backgrounds and contexts opened a great space for dialogue between China and the West. Thus, scholars from China, North America and Europe in the field of the Religious Studies and Comparative Literature have established a research website, doing research through international

cooperation and inter-disciplinary collaboration. Scholars from different backgrounds believe that when the different but shared scriptures or classics are comparatively read alongside one another, we may find ourselves being confronted with a boundary-crossing “liturgy,” in which the presence of Truth might be identified in varied ways, and we may not only gain a better understanding of the others but also potentially gain a better understanding of our own scripture and tradition

It is for this reason that we are proposing that the International Comparative Literature Association establish a Committee of “Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies”. It is our hope that with this committee we can further expand the research scope of the International Comparative Literature Association and fully develop the potential power of Comparative Literature as an inter-cultural, inter-lingual and inter-disciplinary research field. Through reading, comparing and “reasoning” together with other disciplines and cultural traditions, Comparative Literature research may avoid its self-isolation, self-interpretation or “pre-assurance”, and the inspiration and enlightenment inside this discipline might be exposed as its essential mark. As a result, the interaction and inter-relationship between theoretical research and textual studies could be greatly strengthened and mutually enriched.