

Injecting New Life into the Eastern Zhejiang Road of Tang Poetry

By Jin Lu

On April 19th, Ningbo University students Jiang Mengyuan, Yang Nan, and Shan Zhao will give an online lecture titled "Poetic Zhejiang: Travelling Eastern Zhejiang with the Poet Li Bai" to their counterparts from Kent State University (KSU) in the US.

"We hope to promote the legacy of Tang dynasty poetry in eastern Zhejiang through engaging events, so that people around the world could understand this region's history as an inspiration for many Tang poems and fall in love with the beauty of eastern Zhejiang," said Jiang Mengyuan, the team leader.

Promoting Eastern Zhejiang's Heritage of Tang Poetry

The lecture will center around the poem *Seeing Off Wan Way, Hermit of Mt Kinghouse Back to Kinghouse* written by the famous Tang poet Li Bai recalling his visit to eastern Zhejiang. It is a good starting point for those who want to discover the natural scenery and culture along the "Eastern Zhejiang Road of Tang Poetry".

The Tang dynasty (618-907 AD) was one of the most prosperous times in Chinese history, giving rise to a "golden age" of classical Chinese poetry. During that time, numerous poets, including Li Bai (701-762 AD) and Du Fu (712-770 AD), travelled to the eastern part of Zhejiang, attracted by its rolling hills, tranquil bamboo forests, and rich culture. The landscape inspired them to write many of the best-known Tang poems.

In the late 1980s, Zhejiang academics proposed the concept "Eastern Zhejiang Road of Tang Poetry" to refer to the collection of natural and cultural landmarks in eastern Zhejiang that had once attracted the famous poets. This concept integrates Tang poetry research with Zhejiang regional culture and has been widely acknowledged by the academic community.



Team members from Ningbo University.

[Photo provided to *Ningbo Times*]

After years of efforts, the route and its landmarks have finally been confirmed. Covering a total length of nearly 200 kilometers, the route starts from Xiling Wharf on the Qiantang River, runs along the Eastern Zhejiang Canal, Cao'e River, Shanxi Creek, Tianmu Mountain, and ends at Tiantai Shiliang Waterfall. During the 300-year Tang dynasty, the scenery along this route inspired over 450 poets to write more than 3,000 poems.

Unfortunately, the Road has yet to earn as much renown as Tang poetry itself: few people are familiar with the concept and its cultural potential remains untapped. "That's why we plan to do our bit in promoting the Road to a wider audience," said Jiang Mengyuan.

Linking Poetry to Landmarks in Zhejiang

The team was formed in January 2020 with the aim of promoting eastern Zhejiang's charm and its history of Tang

poetry around the world.

The team members come from a wide range of majors, including English-Chinese translation, Chinese language and literature, advertising, and tourism management. By taking a multi-disciplinary, collaborative approach, the students have produced notable results through thorough literature study and meticulous analysis.

The team discovered three hurdles hindering the dissemination of Tang poems from eastern Zhejiang both in China and internationally.

Firstly, there was an absence of poem classification based on the location of creation. Secondly, many of these poems had not been professionally translated and therefore were only known to Chinese-language readers. Thirdly, collections of eastern Zhejiang poetry are relatively obscure compared to poetry collections from other regions.

The team has managed to categorize the poems according to location, identifying the modern-day administrative jurisdiction that each belongs to. A digital database was created to link these poems to their place of origin's landscape, culture, and customs.

The team also compiled three bilingual collections of eastern Zhejiang poetry: *Poetic Zhejiang: Tang Poems about Shaoxing*; *Poetic Zhejiang: Tang Poems about Ningbo*; and *Poetic Zhejiang: Tang Poems about Taizhou*. To offer readers a more enriching experience, these volumes incorporate color and woodcut illustrations that reflect unique

Zhejiang art styles.

Showcasing the Charms of a Culture-Steeped Land

The team's Chinese-English bilingual poetry collections have been adopted by many cultural research, promotion, and translation organizations in China.

The digital database is currently being used by the Research and Dissemination Institute of Chinese Classical Poems of Central South University (CSU). It has also received recognition from Chinese Bridge, a Chinese-language proficiency contest for foreign students in China. The team is proud to see their work playing a role in the research and promotion of Zhejiang regional culture and Chinese traditional culture.

Going forward, the team will work with local foreign affairs offices and research institutes to protect eastern Zhejiang's Tang poetry heritage and increase its influence.

"The eastern Zhejiang poetry is the embodiment of regional culture. Understanding the Tang poets who came to and were inspired by eastern Zhejiang helps us gain more knowledge about the social environment of eastern Zhejiang in historical times. As an English major studying in eastern Zhejiang, I am duty-bound to preserve this legacy by translating my knowledge into action and taking up the mission of presenting this culture-steeped land to the world," Jiang Mengyuan said.



Three bilingual collections of eastern Zhejiang poetry compiled by the team.
[Photo provided to *Ningbo Times*]

SPOTLIGHT

Ningbo International University Students Festival Opens

By Gou Wen

On April 12th, the 9th Ningbo International University Students Festival and the 5th University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) Educational Week officially opened, with the aim of building a broader and more inclusive cultural exchange platform.

The theme of this year's seven-day festival is "Integration and Collaboration". International and local students in Ningbo are invited to participate in a wide range of Chinese and Western cultural and sports activities that will deepen bonds and increase mutual understanding.

Ningbo's schools have established partnerships with more than 1,200 colleges and universities in 110 countries and regions around the world. At present, over 900 foreign experts and teachers and approximately 2,280 foreign students work and study in Ningbo.

The opening ceremony was held on April 12th in UNNC's D.H. Lawrence Auditorium. Consisting of opening speeches, a scholarship award ceremony, and talent performances, the ceremony successfully highlighted this year's theme of "Integration and Collaboration".

In his welcoming remarks, Professor Nick Miles, Provost for UNNC said, "Ningbo is a globalized port city, and we have students and staff here that hail from all over the world, which brings us to the main themes of this festival, 'Integration and Collaboration'. These capture the significance of cross-border understanding and communication, while respecting and appreciating local cultures and traditions."

Eight students accepted the Ningbo Government Scholarship for International Students on stage on behalf of all recipients. The scholarship recognizes and rewards outstanding international students

studying in the city.

After the opening speeches, students from Ningbo's universities put on a talent show. The first number was *Joy of the Chinese Festival*, a festive and joyful piece performed by the UNNC Chinese National Orchestra, an ensemble of traditional Chinese instruments.

Then, a group of UNNC's international teachers and students performed the Yue opera *A Dream of Red Mansions*. When they sang the well-known melody *From Heaven Fell the Angelic Sister Lin*, the audience went wild.

In fact, the performers only had a short period of time to rehearse the piece. Sannie, who played the role of Lin Daiyu, refers to herself as a great fan of the classical Chinese novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*. This passion led her to fall in love with Yue opera a few years ago.

From April 12th to 18th, many ac-

tivities will be held, including the UNNC International Chinese Competition, Raw Music Festival, Science Expo, and more.



A group of UNNC's international teachers and students perform Yue opera.
[Photo provided to *Ningbo Times*]

Share your Ningbo stories!

Dear international friends,

Ningbo, a city of rich culture and a gateway to the world, will celebrate its 1,200th birthday this year.

Whether you are an expat currently living in Ningbo or have traveled to the city at some point, all are welcome to share your experiences in the city. It can be anything related to the "My Ningbo Story" theme, which covers living, studying, traveling and working experiences in Ningbo.

Please send your story with your contact information (name and phone number), to ningbostory@sina.com before May 20.

Requirements:

1. The topics should be your personal experiences in Ningbo.
2. Please give us a brief introduction of yourself.
3. The articles (no more than 2,000 words) should be sent as an attachment, written in English, and include at least one high-resolution picture of the author.
4. The articles and pictures should be truthful and not infringe upon the intellectual property of others.

Other things to know:

We reserve the rights to edit the piece. It will be featured in a book we plan to publish this year as well on newspapers, news apps, English websites and social media accounts related to Ningbo, including *Ningbo Focus*, *Ningbo Daily*, *Yongpai*, *ningbo.chinadaily.com.cn* and *Insight Ningbo*.

Rewards will be provided for articles which are used, including gifts and cash rewards, depending on the quality of articles.

For more information, please feel free to contact Ms. Yu Yin at yuyin@chinadaily.com.cn.

Information Office of Ningbo Municipal People's Government

Foreign Affairs Office of Ningbo Municipal People's Government

Chief Adviser: Zhao Qingchuan
Proofreader: Dong Na

Many students have expressed a great interest to participate in the events, eager to showcase their talents. "Of course, we are supposed to participate in some other activities and we would like to," said Liam, an international student at UNNC.

The closing ceremony will take place on April 18th, along with the much-anticipated UNNC Spring Symphony Concert, which will bring the Festival to a perfect conclusion.