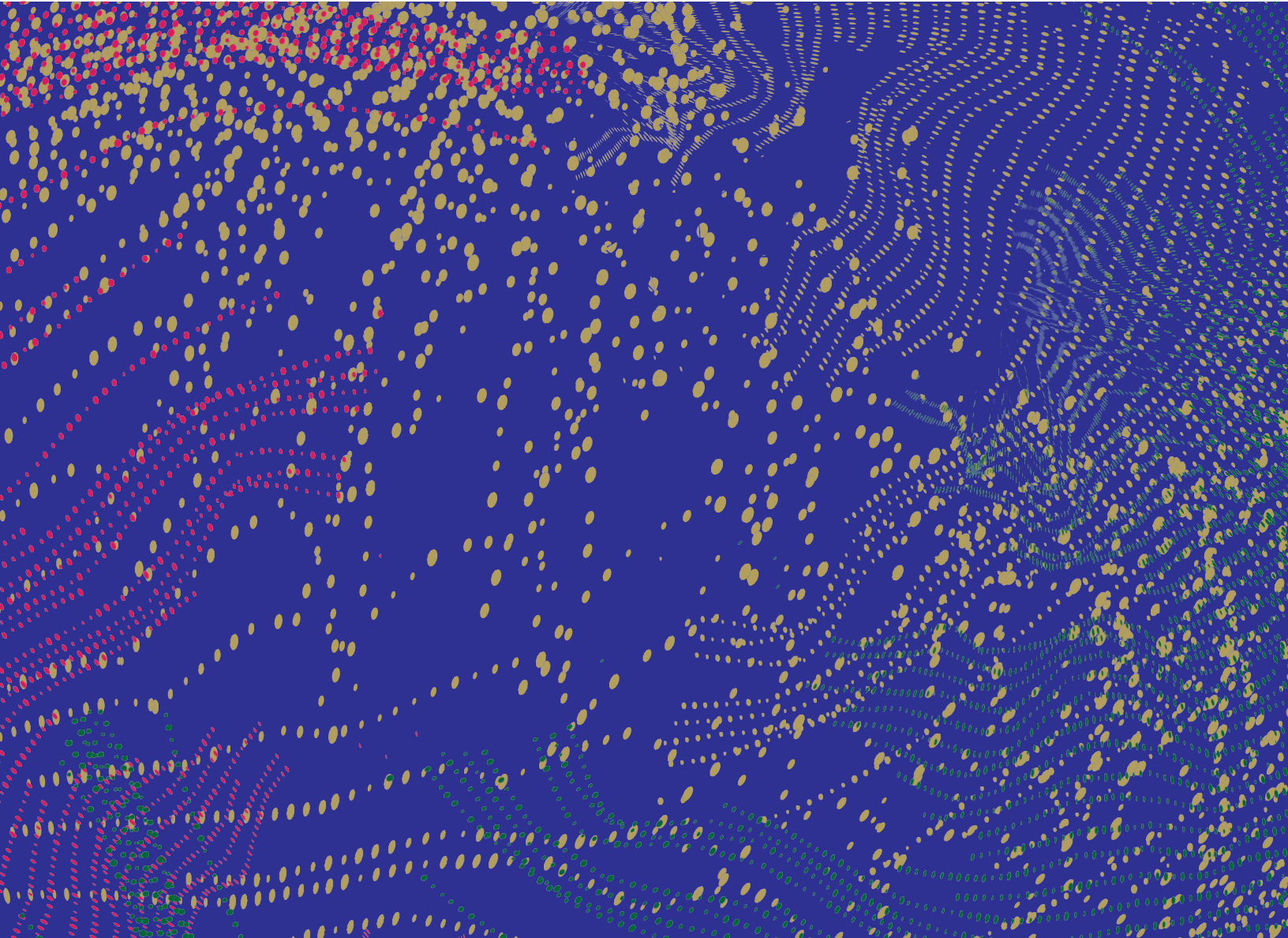


The World Humanities Report

# National Humanities and Social Sciences Organizations and Institutions

---

Yang Yongheng



The World Humanities Report is a project of the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI), in collaboration with the International Council for Philosophy and the Human Science (CIPSH). The views expressed in the contributions to the World Humanities Report are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the editors, scientific committee, or staff of CHCI.

The World Humanities Report gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

© 2024 The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System

This work carries a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-NoDerivs 3.0 License. This license permits you to copy, distribute, and display this work as long as you mention and link back to the World Humanities Report, attribute the work appropriately (including both author and title), and do not adapt the content or use it commercially. For details, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us/>.

This publication is available online at <https://worldhumanitiesreport.org>.

Suggested citation:

Yang, Yongheng. *National Humanities and Social Sciences Organizations and Institutions*. World Humanities Report, CHCI, 2024.

More information about the author can be found at the [end of this document](#).

# National Humanities and Social Sciences Organizations and Institutions

Yang Yongheng Tsinghua University

Among the numerous organizations and institutions related to the humanities and social sciences in China, four stand out: the State Council Discipline Appraisal Group, which plays a pivotal role in cultivating academic talent in these fields; the National Office of Philosophy and Social Sciences, which oversees the development and long-term planning of humanities and social sciences; the Department of Social Sciences of the Ministry of Education, which manages the development of key research programs in universities; and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the foremost research institution in the humanities and social sciences.

## Discipline Appraisal Group of the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council

To implement the Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees, the Discipline Appraisal Group was established under the leadership of the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council. This group comprises experts who engage in consultation, research, supervision, and audit of degrees and postgraduate education. In addition to implementing regulations on academic degrees, its tasks include:

- conducting research on major developments and reforms in degrees and postgraduate education based on disciplinary trends and national needs and making recommendations to the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council;
- deliberating on the addition, adjustment, and withdrawal of degree-granting units and their authorized disciplines;
- conducting research on adjustments and revisions of disciplinary catalogues for degree conferral and talent cultivation;

- inspecting and supervising the quality of degree conferral and talent cultivation and providing advice or suggestions to the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council and the Ministry of Education;
- undertaking special consultations on the mutual recognition and evaluation of degrees in international exchanges; and
- carrying out other tasks assigned by the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council.

The Discipline Appraisal Group is organized according to the disciplinary categories stipulated by the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council and is subdivided into panels specific to first-level disciplines or several closely related first-level disciplines. When necessary, interdisciplinary appraisal panels can be temporarily organized. Each discipline panel typically consists of seven to twenty-one members, with two convenors. Relevant experts from the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council serve as *ex officio* members of the corresponding discipline panels. The convenors or at least two members of each discipline panel may, with the approval of the Secretary-General of the Academic Degrees Committee, temporarily invite external experts and scholars to participate in the panel's work. These temporary appointees enjoy the same rights as regular panel members.

Members of the Discipline Appraisal Group are appointed by the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council and serve part-time. Typically, they are not older than sixty-five, and they serve five-year terms from the date of appointment. Members may be reappointed but generally cannot serve more than two consecutive terms. More than one-fourth of the members in each session of the Discipline Appraisal Group should be reappointed from the previous session, but number of reappointed members should not exceed half of the total members. Members must be patriotic, law abiding, fair, and conduct themselves with integrity. They should be professors with substantial scholarly achievements in their disciplines or experts and scholars with equivalent professional and technical positions, as well as have experience training doctoral students. The Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council may terminate an appointment if the member is deemed unsuitable to continue serving during the appointment period.

The convenors of each discipline panel are elected by the first plenary meeting of the panel from among its members. Convenors should have high scholarly ethics, significant academic achievements, strong organizational abilities, and familiarity with academic degrees and postgraduate education, and their

home institutions should support the work of the Discipline Appraisal Group. Each discipline panel is assigned one secretary, employed by the Office of the Academic Degrees Committee in consultation with the panel convenors, who assists the panel in handling daily work. The secretary's term of office is the same as that of the members of the Discipline Appraisal Group, and reappointments are permitted in special circumstances.

The Discipline Appraisal Group should convene meetings to deliberate on relevant agenda items and put forth important opinions or recommendations. General meetings of all members or individual discipline panel meetings should be hosted by the Academic Degrees Committee; in the case of discipline panel meetings, the convenors preside. When voting on the authorization of degrees and other important motions, all members present at the meeting deliberate and then vote by secret ballot. The voting results are valid if at least two-thirds of the panel membership participate and at least two-thirds of the voting participants are in agreement. When necessary, voting may take place through remote correspondence. If a member has an important motion for discussion and decision, it should be seconded by at least half of the panel members, and the convenors may, after obtaining the consent of the Academic Degrees Committee, convene a panel meeting or adopt other means to resolve the motion.

Each discipline panel may independently conduct research on issues related to discipline-building, talent cultivation, degree conferral, quality inspection, and supervision in its own disciplinary field and offer opinions or suggestions on relevant standards, norms, and requirements. Relevant opinions and recommendations should be communicated to degree-granting institutions by the Office of the Academic Degrees Committee. This office may assemble meetings of panel convenors to study and consult on relevant work. Under the leadership of the convenors, the secretary of each discipline panel should assist in organizing and implementing the panel's work.

Members of the Discipline Appraisal Group enjoy the following rights and privileges:

- to attend meetings and exercise the rights of deliberation and voting;
- to have access to relevant policies, decisions, and opinions of the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council and to consult with reference materials in accordance with rules and regulations;
- to participate in various activities organized by the Academic Degrees Committee and the Discipline Appraisal Group, including investigation and research, inspection and evaluation, assessment and appraisal, and

policy consultation; and

- to make recommendations on degrees and postgraduate matters.

Members of the Discipline Appraisal Group must fulfill the following obligations:

- to complete tasks assigned by the Academic Degrees Committee and the Discipline Appraisal Group in a rigorous, scientific, responsible, and timely manner;
- to be impartial and honest when exercising all rights, conscientiously resist unethical practices, and refrain from engaging in activities unrelated to the work of the Discipline Appraisal Group during their appointment;
- to strictly adhere to rules of confidentiality, refraining from disclosing state secrets and other protected information encountered in their work; and
- to adherence to other work-related policies of the Discipline Appraisal Group.

## National Office of Philosophy and Social Science

In January 2018 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CCCPC) established the National Leading Group for Philosophy and Social Science, with the National Office for Philosophy and Social Science serving as its administrative unit responsible for daily operations. This initiative replaced an earlier group founded in 1981. According to its website, the office's main responsibilities include:

- supervising the implementation of CCCPC's decisions and plans regarding philosophy and social sciences, analyzing national developments in these disciplines, and making recommendations;
- developing national strategies for advancing philosophy and social sciences, organizing medium- and long-term planning, and studying the formulation and implementation of relevant plans;
- coordinating teams and research units, organizing special projects, and overseeing other work related to philosophy and social sciences;
- communicating and coordinating with national social sciences associations to strengthen guidance and management of organizational development, major activities, and events;
- facilitating the establishment of new think tanks with Chinese characteristics;

- managing the National Social Science Fund of China (NSSFC), organizing the evaluation of NSSFC projects, and facilitating the application of project findings; and
- undertaking other tasks assigned by the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China and the National Leading Group for Philosophy and Social Science.

Internally, the National Office for Philosophy and Social Science is structured into divisions such as General (Finance), Organization and Coordination, Association Management, Research, Think Tank Liaison, Think Tank Research, Project Planning, Fund Management, Results Management, and Publicity.

### Department of Social Sciences, Ministry of Education

The Department of Social Sciences is an internal agency of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. Its responsibilities include:

- planning and coordinating the teaching of ideological and political theory in higher education institutions;
- planning and organizing philosophy and social science research in higher education institutions;
- organizing and coordinating major national philosophy and social science research projects at higher education institutions and guiding their implementation; and
- coordinating the supervision and management of publications from higher education institutions and those directly affiliated with the ministry, as well as guiding and coordinating television news networks within the education system.

The department comprises three divisions: General Division, Teaching and Publications, and Social Sciences Research.

Key responsibilities of the department include strict evaluation of major projects in humanities and social sciences by appointed experts, with results disseminated to the public. It also conducts site evaluations of key research bases in higher education institutions, overseeing Ministry of Education's major research projects in philosophy and social sciences, standard research projects in humanities and social sciences, special task projects in humanities and social sciences (such as research on advisors in higher education), and the selection of outstanding achievement awards in scientific research within higher education (humanities and social sciences).

## Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) stands as the foremost academic institution and comprehensive research center for philosophy and social sciences in China. Established in May 1977, CASS consolidated various research units from the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). Prior to its formation, CAS's Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences encompassed fourteen research units: Economics, Philosophy, World Religions, Archaeology, History, Modern History, World History, Literature, Foreign Literature, Languages, Law, Ethnic Studies, World Economy, and the Research Office of Intelligence Materials.

From 1977 to 1981, CASS expanded significantly by establishing sixteen new research and publishing units, including the Institutes of Industrial Economics, Rural Development, Finance and Banking, Journalism (now the Institute of Journalism and Communication Studies), Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Thought, Sociology, Population and Labor Economics, Ethnic Minority Literature, World Politics (later merged into the Institute of World Economy and Politics), American Studies, Japanese Studies, Western European Studies (now the Institute of European Studies), Social Sciences in China Press, China Social Sciences Press, Graduate School, and the Office of the Editorial and Publication Committee of Works by Guo Moruo. Additionally, the Institute of Soviet and Eastern European Studies (now the Institute of Russian, Eastern European, and Central Asian Studies), Institute of West Asian and African Studies, and Institute of Latin American Studies were integrated into CASS during this period.

Since 1981, the CASS has expanded its scope with the establishment of several new institutes, including the Institute of Quantitative and Technical Economics, the Documents and Information Center, the Research Center for Chinese Borderland History and Geography, the Institute of Political Science, the Institute of Taiwan Studies, and the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies. Currently, CASS boasts thirty-one research institutes and forty-five research centers, covering nearly three hundred second- and third-level disciplines, including one hundred and twenty key disciplines. The academy comprises over 4,200 personnel, with more than 3,200 engaged in research, including 1,676 senior professionals and over 1,200 mid-level professionals.

Benefiting from a diverse range of disciplines, a concentration of talent, and extensive research resources, CASS has been at the forefront of theoretical explorations and policy research during China's reform and opening up era. It has



been entrusted with the mission of elevating the academic standards of humanities and social sciences across China.

The development planning of social sciences in China aligns closely with the national five-year plan. CASS not only undertakes numerous key research projects across its institutes under the National Plan for Philosophy and Social Sciences but also prioritizes projects based on state needs and the developmental trajectories of each discipline. Additionally, CASS actively engages in research on major theoretical and practical issues crucial to national economic and social development, as proposed or commissioned by relevant state departments.

Research projects at CASS are typically conducted through thematic groups, where scholars from multiple disciplines collaborate to leverage their combined expertise. Simultaneously, individual researchers pursue independent studies aligned with their professional orientations and scholarly interests.

The accumulation and utilization of documents and reference materials are a basic condition for research. CASS has a comprehensive library, and the vast majority of CASS institutes have specialized libraries, which possess foundational reference collections from premodern to modern periods in both Chinese and foreign languages, and the collection of books has reached more than 5.37 million volumes. These include a considerable number of premodern collections and rare books. In addition to providing materials and scholarly information for scientific research through various dynamic repositories such as literature catalogues and thesis indexes, CASS's Library, Documents, and Information Center and institutes have established document exchange relations with domestic and foreign research institutions.

CASS has a long-standing policy of conducting scholarly exchanges with foreign countries, which have seen continuous growth in recent years. In terms of regional distribution, CASS has established exchanges with more than eighty countries and regions of the world and has established exchange relationships with more than two hundred foreign social science research institutions, scholarly groups, higher education institutions, foundations, and government agencies, including signing exchange agreements with more than twenty countries and regions. These exchanges include both developed and developing countries. Many heads of state, government prime ministers, cabinet ministers, and prominent figures in politics and academia have visited and lectured at CASS, and officials from foreign embassies and consulates in China, representatives of international organizations, and overseas journalists frequently visit CASS to conduct interviews with its scholars and researchers. Such exchanges have not

only promoted the development of social science research in China, but also enhanced mutual understanding and cooperation.

The external exchanges of the CASS encompass various forms, including the exchange of visiting scholars and advanced students for long-term training, collaborative research initiatives, bilateral or multilateral seminars, and invitations for scholars to deliver lectures. These exchanges have significantly advanced disciplines such as history, archaeology, linguistics, ethnology, and religion, as well as disciplines closely related to China's economic development, such as economics, law, sociology, and international relations.

The increasingly robust foreign exchange activities play a pivotal role in the flourishing of Chinese social sciences, fostering discipline-building, and cultivating talent. CASS has closely integrated foreign academic exchanges with research and disciplinary development, contributing to the advancement of priority research projects and disciplines. Many researchers have expanded their scholarly horizons through studies overseas and visiting exchanges, enhancing their professional development and becoming key figures in their respective fields.

CASS produces a wide array of research outputs, including scholarly publications, scientific papers, surveys, reports, translations of research materials, and document compilations. Since its establishment, CASS has published 4,293 books, 54,517 scientific papers, 7,268 investigative and research reports, 2,787 translated volumes, and 16,108 translated articles. Additionally, it has collected and edited numerous premodern manuscripts, reference materials, and popular reading materials. Annually, CASS continues to publish a substantial number of books, scientific papers, and research reports.

The work of CASS enriches and advances the foundational theories of Marxism, Leninism, Maoist thought, and Deng Xiaoping's theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It provides theoretical underpinnings and policy guidance for strategic decisions related to national reform, opening up, and economic development. Furthermore, CASS offers theoretical direction and planning for social development and the establishment of a democratic legal system. It also undertakes initiatives to preserve and promote traditional history and culture while fostering socialist spiritual civilization. Lastly, CASS actively engages with global scientific cultures to promote discipline-building, with its research accomplishments significantly influencing academic circles both domestically and internationally and yielding substantial social benefits throughout China's reform, opening up, and socioeconomic development processes.

Eighty-two academic journals play a pivotal role in showcasing the latest Chinese research across various disciplines. These journals include notable *Zhongguo shehui kexue* [Social sciences in China], *Lishi yanjiu* [Historical research], *Kaogu* [Archaeology], *Zhexue yanjiu* [Philosophical research], *Jingji yanjiu* [Economic research journal], *Faxue yanjiu* [Chinese journal of law], *Wenxue pinglun* [Literary review], and *Shijie jingji* [The journal of world economy]. They serve as platforms for concentrated dissemination of scholarly work and contribute significantly to the advancement of the humanities and social sciences in China.

Moreover, large academic publishers like the China Social Sciences Press, the Social Sciences Academic Press, and the Economy and Management Publishing House have made substantial contributions by publishing extensive volumes of scholarly works. These publishers play a crucial role in supporting and fostering the development of academic research in China's humanities and social sciences landscape.

*Translated from the Chinese*

**Yang Yongheng** is a professor of public management in the School of Public Policy and Management at Tsinghua University. His research interests include development planning, cultural strategy, and policy and public management. He has won the National Science Fund for Excellent Young Scientists and was awarded the honorary title of National Recognized Young Expert with Outstanding Contributions.