Editorial for *Chinese Annals of History of Science and Technology*

Zhang Baichun 张柏春,¹ **Jürgen Renn**² (Editors-in-Chief)

(1. *Institute for the History of Natural Sciences, CAS, Beijing 100190, China*; 2. *Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin 14195, Germany*)

Chinese science and technology have interacted with other cultural traditions, both directly and indirectly, for thousands of years. The ongoing discussions of “Silk Road,” or rather “Silk Roads” are emblematic of knowledge dissemination and the global connectivity of Chinese society. Modern Chinese science and technology can be understood as the product of practical, technical and theoretical knowledge developments in China, and an exchange with Western learning and other knowledge traditions. The distinctive history of Chinese science and technology can help us to understand how science and technology emerges and evolves and how it is communicated in globalization processes. Historical sources and new archaeological discoveries in China have been intensively studied since the beginning of the twentieth century. The results of this research, however, have been published mainly in Chinese, so that the vast majority of results and historical data remain unknown to the international community.

Research on history of science and technology began to be professionalized and institutionalized in China after the 1950s. Even earlier, Joseph Needham and other non-Chinese scholars undertook pioneering studies on Chinese science and technology. International academic conferences followed, and a great number of articles were published. A variety of approaches emerged: sinologists explored science and technology with respect to Chinese culture, considering cultural, economic, social and political factors. Historians, on the other hand, attached greater importance to the discussion of methodologies and historiographical questions in studying the relation between science, technology, and society. All of the studies undertaken, both by Chinese and non-Chinese scholars, are important and, despite their different approaches, clearly complement one other. In recent years, the study of history of science and technology in processes of globalization has become a new research focus, with the development of science and technology in China attracting increasing attention from the international community. Chinese and non-Chinese scholars,

however, are still unable to easily benefit from each other's work, with one of the main reasons being a lack of joint communication platforms.

The *Chinese Annals of History of Science and Technology* (CAHST) has been established by the Institute for the History of Natural Sciences and the Science Press to offer a broad platform for the exchange of research results. This platform will support further research on the formation and development of science and technology in China and disseminate the results both in China and in other parts of the world. CAHST is a peer-reviewed international journal that encourages studies with different perspectives and approaches, especially interdisciplinary, cross-cultural and transnational studies on the history of science and knowledge, including issues of dissemination and transformation that go beyond the Chinese tradition. We hope that CAHST will bring to the international academic community a new understanding of the diversity and global character of science and technology, as well as introduce the varied and rich traditions of research in China.

CAHST will publish longer research papers and reviews, but also specific studies on original documents and archaeological findings. Review essays on previous research and ongoing discussions and controversies on historiography or methodology are also welcomed. We aim to make each issue of this bi-annual journal thematic, with more or less homogeneous subject matter. CAHST also encourages the submission of conference reports, and proposals for special issues edited by guest editors, or by specific research teams. The International Editorial Committee of CAHST comprises historians and sinologists from various countries and includes international experts versed in history of science and technology who will take into account a wide range of disciplines and cultural traditions.

The current issue focuses on ancient Chinese history and brings together archaeological studies with the study of ancient texts. It is a combination of contributions offering new findings with invited reviews that introduce readers who are not experts in the history of Chinese science and technology to developments in particular fields. Some papers are published here for the first time, and others have been published previously in Chinese and are presented here for the first time in English. Our hope is to provide non-Chinese-speaking readers with the opportunity to access the riches of current research in China on the history of science and technology. While all papers make reference to both Chinese and Western literature, there is a prevalence of Chinese sources, reflecting the academic context in which these papers emerged. This highlights the gap that still exists between Chinese and Western academic contexts in the humanities, a gap that this journal aims eventually to close. Most of the contributors to this first issue are affiliated with the Institute for the History of Natural Sciences. We are grateful for their willingness to contribute to this pioneering effort. For future issues, the thematic scope will be widened substantially and also include papers on subjects pertaining to later history and of course we welcome all relevant submissions from wherever they may come.