



聖若瑟大學
UNIVERSITY OF
SAINT JOSEPH

**USJ Ceremony for the Conferral of Honorary Degree 2023
Citation Speech by Professor Yang Huilin**

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(...)

The root of University of Saint Joseph Macao traces back to the Saint Paul College in 1594, however, she evolved into her present form in 1996. Condensing over 400 years of tradition into just over 20 years has helped me better understand the six Chinese characters on SUJ's homepage: "秉传统、创新思," which in English literally means "Preserving Tradition and Cultivating Innovative Thinking." It is a great honor for me to receive an honorary doctoral degree from such an ancient yet young institution, and I will cherish this honor. I hope to have more opportunities to collaborate with colleagues from the University of Saint Joseph Macao and live up to your trust.

Last year, due to the pandemic, I regretfully could not make this trip as planned. After receiving Rector Morgan's email, I had an online USJ Campus Tour, which served as a nostalgic journey and reminded me of many things related to the USJ. One of the unforgettable things was the unexpected difficulties encountered in choosing the venue for the 22nd Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) in 2019. This triennial congress involved thousands of scholars from around the world and was vital for the reputation of Chinese academia. It wasn't until a few months before the congress that we realized holding it in Macao was a viable option. University of Saint Joseph Macao, among various universities in Macao, was the first to offer support, which played a crucial role in resolving the subsequent issues. I am deeply grateful for this.

What's even more interesting is that on the second day of the congress' opening, a typhoon struck, forcing the temporary closure of all the sub-venues at the University of Macao. Only the "Roundtable Forum on Comparative Literature and Religious Studies: The Sacred and the Everyday," held at the Seminary Campus of the USJ, could proceed as scheduled. This roundtable forum was co-hosted by the USJ and my institution, the Renmin University of China. I still remember that Bishop Stephen Lee hosted a banquet welcoming attending scholars for this roundtable, while Professor Peter Stilwell, the former Rector of SUJ and current Rector Professor Stephen Morgan chaired panels of the roundtable. I joked in my presentation that I did not think typhoon could affect us because where we were was close to God.

Among the scholars who participated in that roundtable was, Professor Stephan Rothlin, the President of the Macau Ricci Institute, with whom we have had a longstanding relationship. It was through this event that I learned that the Macau Ricci Institute had returned to the USJ a year earlier due to another typhoon.

It seems that typhoons are quite frequent in Macao. However, aside from these typhoons, there have been many impressive experiences, such as the visits of two USJ presidents to Renmin University of China,



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President Stephen Morgan's attendance at the triennial congress of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association (CCLA) in Nanning during the pandemic, and even his contribution of the conference proceedings from the Macao congress. Similarly, both presidents of the Macau Ricci Institute have attended the "World Conference on Sinology" organized by us in Beijing, and we have unexpectedly encountered each other at conferences in South Africa or Portugal.

The delay of this event from last year to this year perhaps was an opportunity granted by the pandemic, allowing us to find "gains at sunset" amidst the "loss at sunrise." When frequently facing inevitable changes, I always recall a quote by John Henry Newman that I read at SUJ Seminary Campus: "To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."

Corresponding to Newman's notion of "change," the Chinese Book of Changes, the *Yijing*, is the most typical "book of change." Its concept of "change" not only encompasses the ancient philosophy of the interaction between yin and yang but also permeates our daily lives. From the concepts of east and west, coming and going, existence and non-existence, you and I—using the Buddhist terms—this is the “eight negations of middle path”, or seeking affirmation through negation: non-creation, non-destruction, non-eternity, non-identity, non-coming, non-going. As the Heart Sutra describes, "not defiled, not pure, not increasing, not decreasing." If we explore the Western tradition of "negative theology" or "negative thinking," we can find parallels to the aforementioned concepts.

When the French philosopher François Jullien first encountered the Chinese phrase "这是什么东西" ("What is this?"), he was amazed by the extra two characters "东西" ("thing") beyond the expression of "what is this." This is because the predicate-subject proposition of the Indo-European language family encounters a completely different logic, where the correlation between "east" and "west" replaces the duality between "subject" and "predicate" (Being is). This is not only the "grammar of thought" but also carries a special symbolic meaning due to the phrase "东西."

For example, Zhuangzi's "Autumn Floods" states, "The east and west are opposite and cannot exist without each other." Martin Buber, who did not understand Chinese, grasped the profundity of this statement through the English translation: "East and West are convertible yet necessary terms in relation to one another." He regarded this as an excellent metaphor for correlation. Consequently, he associated it with the key concept of "I and You" in his book *I and Thou*. American scholar Kathryn Tanner further interpreted it as "all creatures are formed in relation to what they are not," which she thinks is an extreme case of humans coming to be in the image of God. Through a series of relationships such as "I and You," "East and West," "Yin and Yang," and "God and Man," we can see that everything that appears "opposite" may potentially "coexist," and all "differences" may potentially "interact and share." Just like the cooperation between my university and the University of Saint Joseph, which were originally established on different backgrounds, it did not hinder our collaboration. As Martin Buber said, "I became through my relation to the Thou; and when I became I, I say Thou."



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Once again, I would like to express my gratitude to the University of Saint Joseph Macao and to all my colleagues and friends. I hope that the next "change" will no longer be “Delta” turning into “Omicron”, but rather, it will bring more communication and exchange.

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2023 年度畢業典禮 -- 杨慧林教授致辭

2023 年 7 月 8 日

尊敬的 Stephen Morgan 校長、聖若瑟大學的老師們、同學們，各位朋友： Dear Rector Stephen Morgan, Dear colleagues and students at USJ, Dear friends, 早上好！

澳門聖若瑟大學 (University of Saint Joseph Macao) 可以追溯到 1594 年的聖保祿學院，而她又是建立於 1996 年。400 多年的傳統濃縮到 20 多年，讓我更真切地理解了聖若瑟大學校慶網頁上的六個字：“秉傳統、創新思”。能夠在這樣一所既古老、又年輕的大學獲得榮譽博士學位，我感到特別榮幸，也會非常珍惜這一榮譽；希望能有更多機會與聖若瑟大學的同事們合作，不辜負各位的信任。

去年由於疫情而未能成行，確實非常遺憾，因此收到 Stephen Morgan 校長的郵件後我登錄了 USJ Campus Tour，既算是舊地重遊，也幫助我回憶起與聖若瑟大學相關的許多事情。其中最為難忘的，是 2019 年國際比較文學學會第 22 屆年會的舉辦地點遇到了意外的困難：這個每三年一次的大會涉及世界各國的上千名學者，也關乎中國學界的信譽，直到只剩下幾個月的時候我們才想到在澳門舉辦。而在澳門的幾所高校中，是聖若瑟大學首先表示了支持，後續的事情才得以順利解決。對此我始終感銘在心。

更有意思的是，那次會議開幕的第二天便遇到颱風，澳門大學的所有分會場都不得不臨時關閉，惟有設在聖若瑟大學 Seminary Campus 的“比較文學與宗教學圓桌論壇：神聖與日常”可以照常進行。這個圓桌論壇是由聖若瑟大學和我所在的中國人民大學共同主辦的，我還記得聖若瑟大學的校監李斌生主教設宴招待了與會學者，主持論壇的則是當時的校長薛沛德教授 (Peter



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Stilwell) 和現在的校長麥仕文教授 (Stephen Morgan)。當時我曾在致辭的時候開玩笑說：颱風應該不會影響到這裡，因為這裡離上帝比較近。

參加那次圓桌論壇的學者，還有與我們交往多年的“澳門利氏學社” (Macao Ricci Institute) 羅世範社長 (Stephan Rothlin)，於是我才知道“利氏學社”是因為一年前的另一場颱風搬回了聖若瑟大學。

看來澳門的颱風真的很多。不過，除去颱風之外還有許多令人印象深刻的事情，比如聖若瑟大學的兩任校長都曾到訪中國人民大學，疫情期間 Stephen Morgan 校長居然還去南寧參加中國比較文學學會的年會、甚至給大家帶去了澳門會議的文集；又如“利氏學社”的兩任社長都曾在北京參加我們主辦的“世界漢學大會”，也曾在南非或者葡萄牙的會議上與我不期而遇。

從去年延遲到今年，這可能也是疫情所賜的機緣，使我們從“所失” (loss at sunrise) 之中體會“所得” (gain at sunset)。如果說我們常常會面對不得已的變化，那麼我想到的恰恰是在聖若瑟大學 Seminary Campus 讀到 John Newman 的一句名言：To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.

與 Newman 所說的“變化”相應，中國的《周易》正是最為典型的“變化之書”。其“變”不僅在於陰陽相生的古代哲思，也遍及我們所有人的日常生活。比如東西、來去、有無、你我；用佛教僧人的話說：這也是從“否”求“是”的“八不中道”——不生不滅、不斷不常、不一不異、不來不去，亦如《心經》所謂的“不垢不淨、不增不減”。而如果追索“否定神學”或者“否定性思維”的西方傳統，這又未必不是與 negative theology or apophatic thinking 異曲同工。



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法國哲學家 Francois Jullien 學到第一句漢語 “這是什麼東西” ，對 what is this 之外 “多出來” 的 “東西” 二字頗感驚異。這是因為印歐語系的 predicate-subject proposition 遇到了另一種截然不同的邏輯，亦即 “兩極” （ east and west ）之間的 correlation 取代了 “主謂” （ Being is ）之間的 duplicity 。這既是 “思想的語法” ，也因 “東西” 之謂而具有特別的象徵意味。

比如《莊子·秋水》有 “東西相反而不可以相無” 之句，Martin Buber 不懂漢語，卻從英譯本真正領悟到其中的玄機：East and West are convertible yet necessary terms in relation tow one another——這正是 correlation 的絕佳隱喻。於是他由此關聯於《我與你》的關鍵概念 Beziehung，美國學者 Kathryn Tanner 則進而將 all creatures are formed in relation to what they are not 視為 an extreme case of humans to come to be in the image of God。經由 “我與你” “東與西” “陰與陽” “神與人” 的一系列 “關係”，我們可以看到一切 “相反” 都可能 “相生”，一切 “差異” 都可能 “相與而共”。有如我所在的大學和聖若瑟大學，本來基於完全不同的背景，卻並不會妨礙我們彼此合作；因為正如 Martin Buber 所說：I became through my relation to the Thou; and when I became I, I say Thou。

再次感謝澳門聖若瑟大學，感謝各位同事和朋友們。希望下一次的 “變化” 不再是 Delta 變成 Omicron，而是更多的溝通和交流。

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