

Foreword

The speed at which information expands and knowledge get updated today is overwhelming. Of all the choices that dazzle like frenzied blooms, the classics have acquired an existence that is both familiar and remote, longed for but not quite understood. The classics are those that have survived the tests and selections of history. Though the time and space where they first emerged are remote to us, their influences are lasting. They are still inspirational to our lives, our ideals, our beliefs and our thinking today. For general education, reading classics is clearly of utmost importance to the achievement of its ideals, for it is a valuable entry point for whole person education, for inquiry into the essence of things, for inducing students to think about big questions like society, nature and ethics—all these what general education pursues.

Journal of General and Liberal Education previously introduced the General Education Foundation Programme of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), a programme that was piloted in 2009 and fully implemented in 2012 to all freshmen under its four-year curriculum. For this issue, our special topic is “Reading Classics and General Education Programme.” We invited three universities of different natures yet all implementing classics reading programmes to discuss the following two questions: 1) the importance of reading classics to the fulfillment of general education ideals; 2) their practical experience in classics reading as formal curriculum.

Grant Franks is a veteran teacher at St. John's College. He tells the story of the college's early development and the ideals and practice of its distinctive classics education today. Established in 1693 during the colonial age, St. John's College is one of the oldest higher education institutes in the United States. Through many historical changes in the past three decades, especially with a number of major education reforms in modern and contemporary times, the St. John's curriculum system has evolved to be distinct from the rest of American higher education in general. There is no majoring in its undergraduate curriculum, neither are there electives. All programmes embark on classic works and teachers and students learn together through seminars and tutorials. While specialization tends to neglect the integration of students' ideals for life and their values, the College's alternative practice in classics education can certainly be seen as a "strike back" to such fragmentation. As Franks points out, the most important objective of studying classics is to allow students to have freedom of the mind and an inquisitive attitude towards the world.

As a vibrant city of commercial and technological innovations in Asia, Singapore attaches great importance to its technological education. Such also is the mission of the newly founded Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD). Casey Hammond is one of the designers of its core texts programme. He also discusses the impacts of "professionalization" and "globalization" on contemporary higher education. Hammond's concern is, whether factors like media and globalization promote or debilitate understanding of human experiences in their own situation. This is also the objective of their core texts programme: through the study of classics, students learn about the different phenomena, cultures and experiences in human

history, and from there, critical thinking is cultivated. To make it relevant to a migrant country that is constituted by different races and ethnicities, SUTD's core texts programme includes classics drawn from four different cultures, namely, the Western, Chinese, Indian and Islamic. Hammond describes how, through reading, writing and discussing these classics, the students are invited to look at the world through a lens different from the fashionable "globalization" theory.

The last article of the special topic comes from Chen I-ai of Tunghai University in Taiwan. One of the core people behind the general education reform at Tunghai, she discusses the process of setting up a classics reading general education programme at the university. It was remarkable to contrast how the university had no certainty of the reception at the start and the excellent reception the programme received across the board after its launch. Our readers with similar experience may resonate with this journey, while institutions interested in developing classics reading programmes will find it useful reference. Tunghai's particularly rich programme comprises of content from their faculties of arts, social sciences and creative arts. Another noteworthy feature is how general education is extended to daily life in the university. For example, a "Study Alcove" is set up in a corner of a Tang Dynasty-styled courtyard, where students and teachers have dialogues on humanity, general education activities are held, and the learning and cultural atmosphere of the campus is enhanced.

All three articles share the same concerns, which are, in today's world where professionalization and technology are highlighted, how humanistic education can be realized and what its expectations are. They also all address the importance of classroom discussion between teachers and students in the

study of classics. Be it the veteran in classic education as St John’s College, or the new comer in core curriculum as SUTD, or the reformer as Tunghai University whose general education underwent a makeover, small class discussion has been adopted to promote active thinking and a habit of raising questions.

A good programme is a necessary condition to the success of general education, but it still has to be complemented by quality teaching. In the section “Teaching and Learning in General Education,” Lam Chiu Ying, former director of the Hong Kong Observatory and adjunct professor of CUHK, Ng Kai Chiu from the Department of Philosophy of the same university, Martha Franks, tutor from St. John’s College, and Hu Kexian of the School of Chinese Language and Culture of Zhejiang University, share their teaching experiences. Lam teaches a course titled “Climate, Energy & Life,” which integrates the issues of environment, resources and human activities. It discusses profound questions like “do individuals have absolute freedom in a city?” as well as reflects on the role of ethics in human evolution.

Ng Kai Chiu explores a core question of general education, which is—the possibility and practice of value education—through the examples of his two courses, “Outline of Chinese Culture” and “Freedom and Destiny,” Ng first of all affirms the plurality of values and then compares between technical education and value education. From there, he concludes that value education is very trying exactly because of this pluralism. He then interprets the concept of “destiny” through the lens of different cultures. By “questioning the others and examining our own self,” and with reference to different cultures, he proposes, we may help students develop a more mature value system of their own. Finally, he asserts that even though values are a thorny issue, one

must not simply shelve it. Such will only be an “empty tolerance,” because “though it seems that today we can no longer find the most correct values, through dialogues, interchanges and self-examinations, we can find the more appropriate, more convincing value beliefs for ourselves.”

Martha Franks tells us about her experience of and reflections on teaching law at the Affiliated High School of Peking University. As an “outsider” completely foreign to the Chinese culture, she describes in detail what she saw in this elite school in Beijing and also her uncertainties and self-examinations. In her course, she tried to link her observations to the course contents, e.g., the United States Constitution, separation of powers, land laws. In soil different from the Western value system, the results were interesting clashes with students’ own conceptions. Such attempt requires courage and resolution both from the teacher and from the school. Of course, attention should be paid to the fact that the “international class” that Franks participated in is not for all students. Its contents are also unrelated to the National Higher Education Entrance Examination. It was a class offered to a dozen students who were preparing for entry exams for universities overseas.

Hu Kexian of the department of Chinese literature of Zhejiang University creates in his article a colorful world of Tang poetry. His course “Studies of Classics of Tang Poetry” aims to help students find temporary shelter in classical literature, away from the hustles and bustles of daily life, to rediscover the values that support them deep down in their hearts. As one of his students expressed, studying Tang poetry is a search for a “Tao”, a way. It can contend against the pragmatic “Qi,” the utensil, the use value, that most people seek after. Hu introduces approaches to appreciate Tang poetry that are both rich and artistic. For example, at a basic level, one can read it

in its phonetics, rhythm and genre. Or one can read deeper and contemplate on the choice of words and sentence structure. Lastly, with reference to other realms, e.g., cultural relics, painting and other literature, one can develop a dynamic and enriching approach to reading Tang poetry.

The last section of this issue of *Journal of General and Liberal Education* are responses to the last special topic. In the last issue, scholars from different parts of the world share their views on programme management of general education. Some opine that good communication of the whole team is essential. Some find that good leadership is the key. Liu Yiyu and Fan Dongping of the School of Public Administration, South China Normal University, studied the general education programme of CUHK. Using the Application of System Management Theory, they analyze the factors contributing to the programme's success. They also offer some observations and suggestions to the management and administration of general education programs in the Mainland China.

In this world overloaded with information, instead of forget and being forgotten in the currents, we hope that through these discussions on reading classics, general education teaching and general education programme design, we can reflect more on how humans can live better with the world, with the society and their own selves.

卷首語

當代社會資訊發達，知識更新速度之快，常令人產生應接不暇之感。在「亂花漸欲迷人眼」的各種選擇中，經典成為人們心中既熟悉又遙遠、既期盼又不甚了解的存在。經典是指那些經過歲月與歷史的洗禮、沉澱、甄別而流傳下來的思想著作，它們產生的時空雖然與我們相隔久遠，然而其影響經久不息，至今仍對人們的生活、理想、信念、思維有所啟發。顯然，經典閱讀對於達成通識教育理念至關重要，因為無論是通識教育所追求的全人教育、對事物本質問題的探究，抑或引導學生思考關於社會、自然、倫理等大問題，經典都可以提供很有價值的切入點。

香港中文大學自2009年起試辦閱讀經典的通識教育基礎課程，並在2012年全面推行至所有四年制入學的新生修讀，本刊過去亦有介紹。本期《大學通識》以「經典閱讀與通識教育課程」為專題，邀約三所性質迥異但都推行經典閱讀課程的大學，探討兩個問題：（1）經典閱讀對於達成通識教育理念的重要性；（2）經典閱讀在課程設置上的實踐經驗。

Grant Franks在St. John's College任教多年，他為我們敘述了學院的早期發展，以及該院現行極具特色的經典教育的理念與實踐。作為美國歷史最悠久的高等學府之一，St. John's College的成立可以追溯到1693年的殖民年代。經過數百年的歷史嬗變，尤其是近現代的幾次重大教育改革，現今的St. John's College逐步建立了不同於一般美國高等

教育的教育制度：本科教育不分專業、不設選修制、全部課程圍繞經典作品展開、師生以研習和導修的方式共同學習。由於專業教育往往忽略學生的人生理想與價值觀的整合，學院這種另類的經典教育實踐，無疑可以看作是對大學過於強調專業性而導致教育碎片化的「抗爭」。正如作者指出，學習經典最重要的目的，是讓學生獲得思想上的自由，以及對世界保持追問的態度。

新加坡是亞洲極具活力的商業和科技創新城市，一直十分重視國家的科學技術教育。新近成立的Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD)，即以培養科學技術人才為己任。Casey Hammond是該大學通識教育核心課程（core texts）的設計人之一，同樣提到了當代高等教育受到「專業化」與「全球化」的衝擊。Hammond關心的問題是：媒體、全球化這些因素，對於理解人類自身的經驗和處境，究竟起到促進還是削弱的作用？而這也正是開設核心課程的目的所在——透過學習經典作品，了解人類歷史進程中的不同現象、文化及經驗，以培養學生批判性的思維能力。另外，由於新加坡是一個由不同族群構成的移民國家，Hammond為我們介紹了融合西方、中國、印度、伊斯蘭教四種不同文化經典作品的核心課程，讓學生通過閱讀、寫作和討論，以一種有異於現今流行的「全球化」理論的方式來看待和理解世界。

最後一篇專題文章分享的是臺灣東海大學經典閱讀通識課程的設立過程。作者陳以愛也是該校通識課程改革的核心人物之一。令人印象深刻的是，她提到學校最初創立經典課程時對其反響的毫無把握，到課程推出之後的廣受好評，這中間的過程或許能引起許多有過類似經驗的讀者所共鳴，也可以讓有意建立經典閱讀課程的院校所借鏡。由於該經典課程融合了文學院、社會科學院、創意藝術學院等等不同的知識範疇，所以課程內容特別豐富。另外一個值得留意的現象，是

將通識教育從課堂延展至日常生活，例如在學校一處唐式建築風格的院落一角設立「角落習齋」，供師生平時開展人文話題的對話和討論，以及定期舉辦通識教育活動，強化了校園的學習和文化氛圍。

以上三篇專題文章除投射了一個共同的議題，即在強調專業和技術的今天，人文教育可以如何展開以及其期許之外，也都提到了師生共同討論對於經典學習的重要性。無論是推行經典閱讀教育已久的 St. John's College，還是近年開始嘗試通識教育核心課程的 SUTD，以及重新打造通識教育的東海大學，都一致採取了小班討論制，鼓勵學生生活躍思考、勇敢提問。

良好的課程是通識教育成功的必要條件，但還需配合優質的教學活動。在本期「通識教與學」欄目中，分別收錄了香港前天文台台長、香港中文大學客座教授林超英、香港中文大學哲學系教授吳啟超、St. John's College 教師 Martha Franks 及浙江大學中國語言文學系教授胡可先四位學者分享的教育經驗。林超英所授的課程為「氣候·能量·生命」，這是一門將地球環境、資源與人類社會活動相整合的課程，當中既有值得深思的反省式問題，例如「個人在城市裏有否絕對自由」？又有關於道德在人類進化過程中所扮演的角色這類探究性的思考。

吳啟超以他所開設的兩門課程「中國文化要義」和「自由與命運」為例，探討了通識教育當中的一個核心問題——價值教育的可能性與實踐。作者首先肯定了價值的多元，繼而比較技術教育與價值教育兩者的分別，認為正是價值背後的多元化導致價值教育的困難之處。作者從不同文化取向來闡釋「命運」這一課題，提出通過「對他者的質詢和自我反思」，並參考不同的文化，以幫助學生自己建立較為成熟的價值觀。最後，作者認為即使處理價值問題十分棘手，也不可採取「省力」的態度，一味將其擱置，這種擱置只是一種「空

洞的包容」，因為「今天我們似乎已找不到最正確的價值觀，但透過對話、切磋、反思，我們可以得到更穩妥、更能說服自己的價值信念」。

Martha Franks 講述了在北京大學附屬中學教授法律課程的親身經驗和教學感受。她以與中國文化全然不同的「局外人」身份，細緻地描述了自己在這所北京優秀中學教學的所見所聞，其中不乏自身的疑惑和反思。作者盡力將平時所感與課程內容聯繫在一起，她授課的內容，例如美國憲法、三權分立、土地法，在不同於西方價值體系的土壤中與學生固有的觀念產生了神奇的碰撞，這種嘗試無論對於作者本身，還是校方，都需要一定的魄力。當然，需要注意的是，作者參與的「國際班」課程對象並非全體學生，課程內容也與全國統一高考無關，而是為十幾名準備參加出國留學考試的學生而開設。

浙江大學中文系教授胡可先為讀者創造了一個色彩繽紛的唐詩世界。他開設的「唐詩經典研讀」期望人們能夠在古典文學作品中暫時遠離喧囂，重新發現內心深處寧靜的價值依託，這也正如作者引述自己學生的學習感受——學習唐詩是在追尋一種「道」，它可以與人民普遍一味追求實用主義的「器」相抗衡。文中所提到的唐詩欣賞方法既豐富又極具藝術感，例如基礎層面上可從聲律、節奏、體裁等方面鑒賞唐詩，深度層面上則可以反覆思量字法、句法，最後，借助其他領域的資料來源，如文物、繪畫、其他文獻等等，創建一種立體而豐富的唐詩閱讀方法。

本期《大學通識》最後一個欄目是對上期專題的回應。在上期的幾篇專題文章中，來自世界各地的學者闡述了對通識教育課程管理的看法。有的學者認為整個團隊的良好溝通與參與十分重要，有的學者認為課程領導是優質管理的保證。針對這些觀點，華南師範大學公共管理學院教授劉益宇、范冬萍由對香港中文大學通識教育課程的觀察

與研究出發，從系統管理理論的角度，分析了中大通識教育課程取得一些成功經驗的原因，文章最後對內地通識教育課程的管理與行政提出了建議和思考。

我們希望借助本期對閱讀經典、通識教學及通識課程設計理念的討論，去反思在繁雜的世界中，人如何更好地與世界、社會和自身相處，而不是在資訊汪洋中隨波逐流。

