

Conferment of the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*
A Citation

Dr. the Honourable Tung Chee Hwa, GBM, LLD (Hon), DSSc (Hon), BSc

When Dr. Tung Chee Hwa was born on 7 July 1937, his father, the shipping magnate Mr. Tung Chao Yung, wrote in his diary: "I wish that this new life given by God would be lived to the fullest." The elder Mr. Tung had high hopes for his first-born: to bring prosperity to the family business and honour to the family name; and to serve society and contribute to the nation. How gratified would the elder Mr. Tung have been had he lived to see, some sixty years later, his son being elected the first Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, leading Hong Kong in the transition back into the fold of the motherland, to realize the vision of "One Country, Two Systems" and "Hong Kong People Ruling Hong Kong with a High Degree of Autonomy".

Born in Shanghai, Dr. Tung moved to Hong Kong in 1947 with his parents. During his secondary schooling in Hong Kong, he went to the United Kingdom in 1954 for secondary and university education, obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in Marine Engineering at the University of Liverpool in 1960. After a sojourn in the United States, he returned to Hong Kong in 1969 to help his father manage his family shipping business. In the 1980s, the shipping industry was in recession, but the Tung family boldly restructured its business model and finance, seizing the opportunity to consolidate its leading position in shipping and transportation.

As his father had wished, Dr. Tung not only expanded the family business but also took on public duties in service to the community. He had served on the Executive Council of Hong Kong, was Vice-Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the HKSAR, a member of the Basic Law Consultative Committee, and a Hong Kong Affairs Adviser. His participation in Hong Kong's public life and in the development of the nation had paved the way for his leading role in the initial years of the HKSAR.

The innovative concept of "One Country, Two Systems" was unprecedented, so the burden of the first Chief Executive of the HKSAR was inevitably heavy. Dr. Tung boldly committed himself to the challenging and historic mission of leading the administration in its governance on the basis of the Basic Law. With a "High Degree of Autonomy", the legal and judicial systems have been maintained, the common law continues to apply, and the freedom and lifestyles enjoyed by Hong Kong citizens have been safeguarded. Since reunification, Hong Kong, in its different capacities, has assumed an active role in the international arena by concluding bilateral agreements

with various countries, joining international organizations and participating in international conferences, thereby increasing Hong Kong's influence as a major metropolis. Many multilateral treaties that applied to Hong Kong before reunification continue to apply; many major international bodies continue to set up key offices in Hong Kong. All in all, these point to the leadership of Dr. Tung Chee Hwa in successfully leading a smooth transition into a new era of governance under the Basic Law.

Dr. Tung realized that the future of Hong Kong rests on two factors: leveraging on the mainland and engaging ourselves globally. So during his terms as Chief Executive, he promoted trade and economic cooperation between Hong Kong and the Mainland in order to facilitate Hong Kong's transition to a new economy and to create job opportunities.

With its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, China entered a new era of opening up to the rest of the world, and the domestic economy of China grew in leaps and bounds. Against this backdrop, Dr. Tung realized that if Hong Kong is to consolidate its position as a financial centre and further develop on that basis, we must cooperate and integrate with the Mainland, strategically leveraging and complementing each other. Thus, he negotiated the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) with the Mainland, which enables the service sector in Hong Kong to reach Mainland markets and helps high value-added enterprises to settle in Hong Kong. These developments draw Hong Kong and the Mainland closer, offer a unique opportunity and point the way for the future development of Hong Kong's economy. The economic recovery and the period of steady growth that we now witness have been made possible by the solid foundation laid during Dr. Tung's administration.

During his terms as Chief Executive, Dr. Tung led the administration through many challenges. He spearheaded many reforms and put into place measures to alleviate hardships among the population. In particular, he gave top priority to education and the nurturing of talent.

With the extensive experience and insights he gained through years of studying and working in Shanghai, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom and the United States, Dr. Tung came to appreciate that education is a long-term investment and the path to social equality. He also realized that Hong Kong, lacking natural resources, must depend on its human resources if it is to become a world city and a serious player in the knowledge economy. The visionary education policy of his administration is testimony to this ideal. Even in times of fiscal stringency, Dr. Tung still insisted on investing substantially in education.

In the early years during Dr. Tung's terms of office, less than 20% of senior

secondary school graduates in Hong Kong had access to further education, hardly commensurate with the needs of a knowledge economy. He therefore instituted a massive expansion of post-secondary places, and gave further impetus to the development of higher education. As a result, over 60% of the age cohort in Hong Kong now receive some form of post-secondary education, a number comparable to that in many developed countries. He encouraged life-long learning, so that the citizens of Hong Kong would continuously improve their knowledge and skills. He also initiated a scheme of matching grants to encourage support of higher education from the community. This policy has widened the sources of university revenues and started a new culture of giving to higher education.

Dr. Tung realized that a four-year undergraduate degree was very much the international mainstream. He therefore devoted substantial resources to lengthening the undergraduate curriculum from three years to four and to improving the school-university interface in a 3-3-4 structure. For the Chinese University this represents a long-awaited reversion to the cherished tradition that had worked so well in the past – for this we are especially grateful to Dr. Tung, our former Chancellor. These are but a few examples of the acorns that Dr. Tung had planted. They will grow into the great oaks that will support our society and its continuous development.

Dr. Tung was born and grew up in the middle of war and a period of great suffering for the Chinese people. During his election campaign, he came into contact with the grassroots, thereby deepening his understanding of the hardships some people faced. During his terms of office as Chief Executive of the HKSAR, he always put the rights and welfare of the disadvantaged uppermost on his mind. In his Policy Address, he said, "Caring for those in need, supporting the elderly and helping the disadvantaged are fundamental to the quality of our society." Such kindness and benevolence characterized and permeated the policies of his administration.

Dr. Tung continues to exert his mind and efforts for the welfare of Hong Kong and the entire nation, and for better mutual understanding between China and other countries in the world. In March 2005, he was elected Vice-Chairman of the Tenth National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Mr. Chancellor, for his contribution to the smooth transition that established Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region under "One Country, Two Systems" as spelt out in the Basic Law, and for his outstanding contributions to Hong Kong's education, it is my honour to present to you Dr. the Honourable Tung Chee Hwa, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.