

Conferment of the Degree of Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*
A Citation

Fong Yun-wah, DBA, LLD, MBE, JP

Education is a life-long process both for individuals and societies. Dr. Fong Yun-wah touches on its essence and significance for us all when he remarks that "The impact of education is not confined to the existing generation, but never-ending." Coming from a family where his father had no chance to complete secondary school, Fong Yun-wah's own schooling was interrupted by the war, and so he shares his father's ideal of helping young people to pursue their education, giving them a better practical chance of success in life. He has put this youthful idealism for improving the human condition into practice for over thirty years by donating a constant percentage of profits yearly to this work. He has held firmly to the same hope and optimism throughout his career.

Dr. Fong, in the grand tradition of Hong Kong business people, is Chairman of a group of companies, the Hip Shing Hong Group, is also Managing Director of another firm, the Kam Wah Investment Company, chairs two charitable organizations, the Fong Shu Fook Tong Foundation and the Fong's Family Foundation, while serving as a member of a third, the Hong Kong Pei Hua Education Foundation. Through these activities he has made enormous contributions to the development of schooling at kindergarten, primary and secondary levels in Hong Kong and especially in Mainland China. This splendidly comprehensive effort has led to his being named by Beijing as one of China's Ten Charitable Champions for 1997, a year in which he was the only Hong Kong recipient. Through the Hong Kong Pei Hua Education Foundation he has promoted valuable exchanges between Hong Kong and the mainland, contributing to the development of talent and leadership in China. Nor has he neglected tertiary education, being on the Board of Trustees of United College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong for over three decades, and on the College's Endowment Fund Committee, as well as taking a keen interest, through the Sponsorship and Development Fund Committee of The Open University of Hong Kong. That his caring about education extends widely into China may be seen from the long list of institutions to which he serves as a special adviser, such as Nanjing and Yunnan Universities, and Dongguan College of Science and Technology in Guangdong Province. That his concern about health and social development extends equally widely may be seen from his work as Director of the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (1956), as Chairman of Po Leung Kuk (1966), as Honorary Adviser of Pok Oi Hospital (1997), as Vice-Patron of the Hong Kong Childhealth Foundation, as a Committee Member of the Hong Kong Red Cross, as Trustee of the Wildlife Fund for Nature in Hong Kong, as Vice-Chairman of the China Association (Hong Kong) for Science and Society. That his philanthropy and sense of important fundamentals in a community's development have made a significant impact on many people is doubtless reflected in his



appointment to the Selection Committee for the First Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government.

Dr. Fong's influence in the business community needs no emphasis but it is worth noting that he is an Honorary Adviser to the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong. It is highly significant that honours and awards he has received come not only from his own country but from Britain, the United States, and Canada. As a Member of the Most Excellent Order of British Empire, as an Honorary Degree holder from both the U.S.A. and Canada, as well as a Gold Medallist from the University of California at Berkeley, he has shown that he is international in outlook as well as deeply patriotic.

Dr. Fong's meetings with astronomers and astronauts, some of whom are friends, and his involvement as an Adviser to the Asteroid / Comet Naming Committee of the Purple Mountain Observatory under the Chinese Academy of Sciences demonstrate his keen interest in space. The Observatory's International Asteroid / Comet Naming Committee, who named an asteroid the Fong Yun-wah Star, has recently approved Dr Fong's nomination of an asteroid (3297) to be called the "Hong Kong Star" to acknowledge the aspirations of local and overseas Chinese, in particular the Hong Kong people. The influential part he plays in these activities show that he has an astronomer's sense of the world as a precious place, supporting both the human race in general and also the Chinese people. His desire to help thus reaches from his own city and country to the truly global.

He is a citizen of the world, a citizen who demonstrates that doing is important, that making friends is important across national boundaries, fostering peace rather than conflict, and that facilitating excellence in others is an art as well as a necessity. As a grandfather, he realizes the significance of giving to little children the best opportunities we can offer.

How does he keep fit amidst all the demands of business, family, and philanthropy? He swims, he exercises, and plays a bit of golf. He exercises the mind and spirit by learning more about Chinese culture and reading Chinese philosophy. When he has an interesting idea, he will write it out and send it to his friends and others in many different parts of the world. He communicates.

A star among men and women, by whose light we can see what help our society needs, and one who has given generous and lasting help in abundance - such a steadfast star, Mr. Chancellor, is Fong Yun-wah, whom I present to you for the award of the degree of Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*.