

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

FORTY-EIGHTH CONGREGATION

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

A Citation

Mr. David Sin Wai Kin

David Sin Wai Kin's induction into the world of jewellery was through his father and his father's associates in the jewellery business, primarily diamonds, that commodity which has been immortalized in a Marilyn Monroe song as being a girl's best friend. He came into the trade early in his life after the war against Japan interrupted his studies and forced him to move from Hong Kong to Macau. In 1945, after the hostilities were over, Sin Wai Kin's father introduced him to his friends in the diamond import business and young David started his apprenticeship at the bottom of the ladder.

Within a few years, this native son of Guangzhou had mastered the essentials of the diamond trade. He soon learned what constitutes value in jewellery and how to assess the quality of diamonds. In 1977, twenty three years after joining the diamond trade, David Sin decided to set up his own jewellery manufacturing business and founded the Myer Jewellery Manufacturer Ltd. Today, Mr. Sin still retains an interest in diamond dealing and trading, but the bulk of his business is the manufacture and export of a comprehensive line of jewellery across all price ranges and catering to all tastes.

Myer is now not only a leading manufacturer of jewellery in Hong Kong but also has manufacturing capabilities in Shenzhen, Guilin, Dalian, New York and Sydney. In 1986, Mr. Sin re-located his production line to north of the border; he was one of the first to do so. Today, Myer employs over one thousand workers in China and has trained some 3000 craftsmen. The company probably employs more people under one roof than any other jewellery manufacturer in the world. The market for Mr. Sin's goods, in the meantime, extends from America across Europe to Japan. The Japanese market, which is notoriously difficult to get into, posed no problem for Mr. Sin who attributes his own success and the success of his products to a dedication to quality. His business philosophy, which he has drilled into his staff, is that he can accept criticism of his jewellery on price but cannot accept criticism of his jewellery on quality. To the layman, a small difference in lustre or polish may not be very important, but to Mr. Sin this is where the addition of value makes its contribution. Anyone can buy a precious stone at much the same price, Mr. Sin is fond of saying, but what distinguishes an exquisite piece of jewellery from the run-of-the-mill is the design and the workmanship.

As jewellery manufactured in Hong Kong climbs into the top five categories of Hong Kong exports, Mr. Sin's position as a leading manufacturer of jewellery in Hong Kong is also widely acknowledged. The Hong Kong Trade Development Council invited him to serve as the first chairman of its Jewellery Advisory Committee in 1986 and asked him to stay on for three consecutive terms. He also became the honorary advisor to the Hong Kong Jewellers' and Goldsmiths' Association. Mr. Sin has done more than perhaps any other person to put Hong Kong manufactured jewellery on the world map. He is justly proud of the fact that the quality of the jewellery manufactured in Hong Kong has reached world standards of excellence. As Myer Jewellery Manufacturer Ltd. is in the forefront of Hong Kong jewellers, that must make Mr. Sin's company one of the leading manufacturers in the world.

What Mr. Sin has done to jewellery manufacturing in Hong Kong is nothing short of revolutionary. In a business which was trade-oriented and short-term, he introduced quality control and new standards of excellence. He also took what was essentially a cottage-type industry into the world of modern management and corporatization. Mr. Chancellor, I am sure you will agree that just as a newspaper takes after its editor, a company really takes after its chairman; and Mr. Sin's honesty, integrity and dedication to quality have now become the hallmark of his company's merchandise.

As his jewellery business expanded, of course, so did Mr. Sin's other business interests. Today, Mr. Sin is the vice chairman of Miramar Hotel and Investment Co. Ltd. and Hip Hing Construction Co. Ltd. He is also a director of New World Development Co. Ltd., New World Hotel (Holdings) Ltd., and the Hang Seng Bank Ltd. Like many successful businessmen in Hong Kong, Mr. Sin's office is inundated with requests for charitable donations of all kinds. Over the years, he has given most support to education, both to Zhongshan University in his native Guangzhou and to this university. Mr. Sin's close association with the Chinese University started in 1987 when he became a member of the University Council. He has since served on the University's Finance Committee, the Committee on Donations and as Chairman of the Tender Board. He is also a trustee of New Asia College. In 1992, Mr. Sin played a pivotal role in establishing the C.N. Yang Visiting Professorship Fund as well as in the establishment of the Research Centre for Contemporary Chinese Culture. Mr. Sin was also instrumental in helping the University raise the funds for starting collaborative programmes with Yale University.

In honouring Mr. David Sin Wai Kin today, we are honouring a man whose work as a jewellery manufacturer has brought accolades to Hong Kong's jewellery business from around the world, who is a well-known philanthropist and who is, above all, a long time supporter of the University as his list of public duties shows. Mr. Chancellor, on behalf of the University, I present David Sin Wai Kin, industrialist, jeweller, property developer, hotelier, philanthropist, and friend and patron of the Chinese University of Hong Kong for the award of Doctor of Social Science *honoris causa*.

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