

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

FORTY-SECOND CONGREGATION

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

*A Citation*

**Dr Chiang Chen, DEng**

The economic growth in Hong Kong over the past thirty years is self-evident, but its achievements did not come without pain. The road to success can be likened to a turbulent river rather than a calm stream. Sailing down the river, one runs the risk of shipwreck at any time and whether one makes it down to the destination depends entirely upon one's wisdom and perseverance. In the same manner, equipped with their unyielding will power and their dedicated entrepreneurial spirit, many of Hong Kong's industrialists have survived one crisis after another. And their impressive success stories have often been made complete with their generous reciprocation to the community, very much in the pursuit of "li-yong hou-sheng" ("making the best of everything for the benefit of common people"). As an industrialist, Dr Chiang Chen can be said to be one of the best examples of such a conviction and spirit.

The MacLehose Trail runs from Pak Tam Chung at Sai Kung in the east all the way to So Kwun Wat at Tun Mun in the west, covering a distance of approximately one hundred kilometers. To walk the entire distance at one go is by no means an easy task. Nevertheless, three years ago, at the age of sixty-five, Dr Chiang took with him sixteen people in his company to participate in a walk. Before the trip was over, thirteen of the young people had dropped out, but Dr Chiang was able to stay the course, and finished the whole journey. From what I know, Dr Chiang doesn't exactly have strong knees - he is receiving regular physiotherapy - so the walk must have been a test of his will and perseverance.

It is no exaggeration to say that Dr Chiang has a success story longer and perhaps more complicated than most people. And it is equally clear that his commitment to the community deserves our admiration no less than his achievements. Dr Chiang was born of a farmer's family, became an orphan at an early age, endured extreme hardship and received only four years of formal education. At the age of eighteen, Dr Chiang responded to the call, "Shi-wan qing-nian, shi-wan jun" ("If there are one hundred thousand young men and women, that means there are a hundred thousand service men and women [to serve the nation]"), and enlisted in the army. In 1949 he made his arduous way down to Hong Kong from Hunan as a refugee all by himself. Once in Hong Kong, Dr Chiang endured further hardships as he took up work at a pier, a dyeing factory and the mine at Ma On Shan respectively. Despite the hardship and difficulties, Dr Chiang remained undaunted and persisted. He even went to Japan because of better wages there. Upon his return to Hong Kong, he found a job at Hong Kong Aircraft Engineering Company and, as a novice knowing hardly anything about machinery, Dr Chiang very conscientiously and methodically picked up a comprehensive knowledge of mechanical maintenance.

In 1958, Dr Chiang set up Chen Hsong, a small maintenance workshop to begin with, at Tai Hum Tsuen with the little money he was able to raise. Soon afterwards, following the rapid development of Hong Kong's plastics industry, Chen Hsong began to manufacture plastics machines and grew from a workshop to a company, and eventually to a group business. Today the Group is thriving and can be described as an industrial empire. Of course, its setbacks have been numerous, but they too are highly educational. In 1972-73, for instance, when the world-wide recession hit Hong Kong and banks started to tighten credit, Dr Chiang found himself in financial straits. And it was only through his wisdom, hard work and persistence that Dr Chiang was able to weather the crisis. Nowadays, the Chen Hsong Group has expanded its business, with plants located in Hong Kong, Taiwan and China, and its production and investment greatly diversified. Apart from injection moulding machines, which the Group is most noted for, it also manufactures robots, custom moulding, and ductile cast-iron. A trading and investment arm has also been added.

In Dr Chiang's philosophy, if Hong Kong's industry is to prosper, automation is essential. And it is only through a considerable investment in automation research that we can hope to be able to manufacture high precision products and make our goods truly competitive. To this end, Dr Chiang donated generously toward the establishment of Hong Kong Plastic Technology Centre at the Hong Kong Polytechnic.

To further make industry take root in the Chinese community, Dr Chiang in his philanthropic spirit donated his entire shareholding in the Chen Hsong Group, valued at eight hundred million Hong Kong dollars, to set up Chiangs' Industrial Charity Foundation. The funds are to be used: "1. to encourage and assist in the research and development of machinery; 2. to encourage and assist in the improvement of production techniques in the mechanical industry; and 3. to assist in the training of talents in the industrial field." It is his hope that some day the funds will support a kind of Nobel Prize in Asia to give incentives to scientists of Chinese origin to conduct technology research. Last year, Dr Chiang made a generous donation for the construction of Chiangs Building on the Chinese University campus for the accommodation of visiting scholars and trainees.

Dr Chiang started off with practically nothing and has struggled for a good part of his life, confirming the adage, "Tian xing jian, jun-zi zi-qiang bu xi" ("Nature proceeds on its own ceaseless course, so does a gentleman, forever forging ahead"). And what is particularly worth mentioning is his reformist conviction that industry must serve the community -- a conviction which he preaches and puts into practice by returning to the community that which he has obtained from it. His hope is that his gesture may encourage the business sector to contribute its share to the promotion of technology.

Mr Chancellor, Dr Chiang Chen exemplifies perseverance and success. Dr Chiang is also an example of selfless commitment to the betterment of education. His story reflects the Confucian conviction that once you are on your feet, you ought to assist others to do the same (Ji li li ren, ji da da ren). On behalf of the University, may I request that Your Excellency confer upon Dr Chiang Chen the Degree of Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*.

24th October, 1991