

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
THIRTY-EIGHTH CONGREGATION

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

A Citation

Professor Yuan-Tseh Lee, BS, MS, PhD, DSc(hon.)

Professor Yuan-Tseh Lee is a distinguished scientist who developed ways of bringing many types of chemical reactions within range of study by means of crossed molecular beams. Thanks to his research, the world can now see more clearly the dynamics of the elementary chemical process. An admirer of Madame Curie, Professor Lee tells his students to "Take hold of your own destiny and give yourself to science." That is precisely what he exemplifies, with outstanding success. In 1986, he was, together with Dudley Herschback and John Polanyi, awarded the Nobel Prize for chemistry.

The third of eight children, Professor Lee was born in 1936 in Hsinchu, Taiwan. His father is an artist and his mother a teacher. His fine family inculcated in him the habit of hard work, the measured judgment of a good artist and an independent but modest personality. It is not accidental that four of the eight Lee children received PhD degrees. At various stages in his school years, Professor Lee was a trombone player as well as a member of his school's baseball, ping-pong, and tennis teams. His love for baseball remains with him to this day. He still plays games with his students. To him, there are theories of chemical reactions to be learned at the moment of bat-ball impact.

In 1955, Professor Lee was admitted to the National Taiwan University as a meritorious student. As well as his excellent performance in chemistry, he took an active part in extracurricular activities. After graduation in 1959, he went on to National Tsinghua University and received his MS degree. He pursued his PhD at the University of California, Berkeley under Professor Bruce Mahan. In 1967-68, he was a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard, where he worked with Professor Herschbach's group on the first successful non-alkali metallic molecular beam experiment. For six years afterwards, he taught at the University of Chicago before he was drawn back to Berkeley in 1974. He is currently Professor of Chemistry and Principal Investigator at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley. He has published more than 200 scientific reports and articles.

Fondly dubbed "the Mozart in Physics and Chemistry" by Herschback, Professor Lee is a man of extraordinary talent. Yet, he works a 16-hour day, going to bed in the small hours day after day. His daughter once mistook him for a guest who came to dinner now and then. It is remarkable that Professor Lee is still able to give a part of himself to the advancement of science and education in mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. As early as 1974, he served our University as External Examiner and offered much valued advice.

Over the past two decades, Professor Lee has received many fellowships and awards, including the National Medal of Science from the White House, the Peter Debye Award for Physical Chemistry and the Ernest O Lawrence Award of the US Department of Energy. Numerous universities, including Columbia, Johns Hopkins, Chicago, Princeton, and Harvard, have invited him to hold distinguished lectureships. He has been elected a Member or Fellow of such prestigious institutions as the National Academy of Sciences, USA, the Academia Sinica in Taipei, and the Gottingen Academy of Sciences, West Germany. At least eight leading universities in China have made him their Honorary Professor. The University of Waterloo, Canada and the Chinese Academy of Sciences have conferred upon him honorary Doctor of Science degrees.

In recognition of his signal scholarship and outstanding contribution as an educator, I present, Mr Chancellor, Professor Yuan-Tseh Lee for the award of the degree of Doctor of Science, honoris causa.

October 12, 1989