

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

TWENTY-THIRD CONGREGATION

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

A Citation

Professor Cheng Te-k'un

To some of us present, the few years we spent in what was known as Free China during the Pacific War were perhaps the most meaningful in our lives, in spite of the physical hardships and the mental anguish brought about by thinking of the people at home and what the future would be. There were still campuses where university life went on under very difficult circumstances. Gathered on these campuses were a large number of well-known scholars from all over China, among them Professor T.K. Cheng, teaching students who like themselves were indomitable and indefatigable in their pursuit of learning. At that time no less than five universities were located in Chengdu, the provincial capital of Sichuan. The local West China Union University where Professor Cheng taught, played host to the four refugee institutions, generously providing them temporary accommodation and sharing with them its facilities. It was then in Chengdu that I first heard of Professor Cheng, although I did not have the pleasure of knowing him until a few years ago when our paths crossed at this University. His association with the West China Union University dated from 1936 before the arrival of the refugees. After the War Professor Cheng went on to Princeton, Malaysia, Cambridge and then Hong Kong. His appointment as Reader in Chinese Archaeology at Cambridge University was as much a personal honour to him as a mark of recognition of the quality of Chinese academia and scholarship. After Cambridge he joined our University as Professor of Fine Arts and was instrumental in developing and strengthening that Department. He also served as Dean of Arts and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, in which latter capacity he played an important part in the reorganisation of the University in 1976. It has been said that the best compliment one can pay a Chinese individual is to call him a scholar and a gentleman. As a friend and an admirer, I consider Professor Cheng as just such an example, with his unflinching kindness to both his colleagues and students and his ability as a teacher and an administrator. For his many services in various capacities to the University, I now ask you, Mr. Chancellor, to confer on Professor T.K. Cheng the degree of Doctor of Literature, *honoria causa*.

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