

Honorary Doctor of Business Administration

Dr Barry LAM

Citation written and delivered by Professor WEI Kwok-kee

Chancellor:

“Inching forward, the turtle travels a hundred miles; soaring high, the mythical roc takes the world by storm.” While I do not presume to claim any literary merit for this couplet, I believe it neatly sums up the philosophy and achievements of Dr Barry Lam, Founder and Chairman of Quanta Computer, Taiwan.

Dr Lam, born in Shanghai in 1949, came to Hong Kong with his parents while he was still a baby in arms. Like many other children at that time, he grew up in poverty. In 1966, he left for Taiwan to further his studies at National Taiwan University, where in 1970 he was awarded a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering, and subsequently a master’s.

Dr Lam practises a philosophy he developed himself, the Turtle Philosophy. The turtle heads for its goal at a slow, leisurely pace, which, for Dr Lam, is a symbol of humility, application and joy. He encapsulates this philosophy with this motto: “With humility, you will get the truth; with application, you will get perfection; joy will come forth when you realise beautiful dreams”. Thus the trinity of humility, application and joy leads to the unity of truth, perfection and beauty.

In 1973, Dr Lam and a couple of friends pooled their resources and established Kinpo Electronics. They also designed Taiwan’s first computer, for which they were awarded the Youth Medal by Premier Chiang Jing-kuo in the first Youth Medal Award presentation held in Taiwan. In 1988, again with a couple of friends, Dr Lam established Quanta Computer and began manufacturing notebook computers for leading brands such as Dell, Hewlett-Packard and IBM. Quanta soon distinguished itself from its competitors by combining manufacturing with a significant amount of original design work, enabling it to expand its business by leaps and bounds. As a result, Quanta is today the world’s largest manufacturer of notebook computers, with an annual output of more than 20 million units, which find a ready international market. If Dr Lam had not hearkened to others with

humility, managed his business with application and worked with joy, he would not have been so successful an entrepreneur.

As Chairman of Taiwan's second largest private manufacturing enterprise, Dr Lam was on *BusinessWeek's* 2002 list of the Top 25 Managers of the Year. His approach to management is no simple imitation of Western or Japanese styles. It is imbued with the Confucian ideal of "achieving one's own goals while seeing that others are achieving theirs". He is famously generous to his staff, treating them with the greatest kindness and consideration. Consequently, there is a great sense of comradeship among his employees, whatever their rank or grade, while the company's profits have grown steadily.

Dr Lam, who grew up in Hong Kong's Tiu Keng Leng shanty town community, now ranks among the 350 wealthiest people in the world, according to this year's March issue of the US financial magazine *Forbes*. Dr Lam has also lived up to the Confucian principle of "sharing one's success with society". He established as early as 1999 the Quanta Cultural and Educational Foundation for the promotion of culture, art and education in Taiwan, with a view to the "equal redistribution of cultural wealth". The Foundation's contributions to cultural preservation and development are such that it has won the Golden Prize of the Taiwan government's Wen Hsin Awards many times. Dr Lam aspires to be a cultural educationalist. He is of the opinion that Taiwanese society is too materialistic, and he sees artistic education as a remedy. He is also a strong advocate of lifelong education, and is determined to develop the computer into a more efficient teaching aid. He is now working on the idea of applying cloud computing technology to bridge the digital gulf in education for the benefit of students.

While Dr Lam is an extraordinarily talented technologist and businessman, art is dearest to his heart. One of the leading collectors in Asia, he has a collection of more than 2,000 artistic works, many of them Chinese paintings and calligraphy. Among them are masterpieces by his favourite painter Zhang Daqian. To him, high technology is short-lived, and keeps changing, whereas art is forever, defying the passage of time. He is therefore an ardent patron of artistic enterprises. In addition to serving as a director of Taiwan's famed Cloud Gate Dance Theatre group, he is Chairman of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei, and Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the National Palace Museum in Taiwan.

Technological and business pursuits require a strong sense of rationality, while literary and artistic pursuits place heavy demands on sensibility. “Rationality and sensibility are qualities that everyone possesses. However, Chinese culture is given more to sensibility, and therefore lags behind the West in natural sciences, which are highly rational,” Dr Lam says. “There is more sensibility in me than rationality. The Turtle Philosophy, for instance, is founded on sensibility. I like the idea of ‘keeping Chinese culture as the core, while adopting Western knowledge for practical purposes’.” Dr Lam’s achievements are a perfect example of this idea.

“Just as the celestial bodies revolve forever without rest, so a man of exemplary character must always strive for excellence.” Mr Chancellor, Dr Lam is a self-made man of exemplary character. His achievements are brilliant and have won worldwide admiration. In recognition of his contributions to the information technology industry, and of his devotion to public welfare, which has proved highly beneficial to society, it is my great honour to present Dr Barry Lam to you for the award of the degree of Doctor of Business Administration, *honoris causa*.