

## Honorary Doctor of Business Administration

### Dr LEE Kai-Fu

Citation written and delivered by Professor WEI Kwok-kee

Chancellor:

It is my honour to present to you Dr Lee Kai-Fu, a renowned expert in computer science, a highly successful enterprise manager, and an educator as well as mentor of youth with a great love for China and a strong sense of mission to help bring about progress in Chinese society.

Dr Lee was born in Taiwan and moved to the US when he was 11 to continue his education. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Columbia University in 1983 with a BS degree in computer science. He went on to earn a PhD in computer science from Carnegie Mellon University in 1988 after completing his doctoral dissertation on the world's first speaker-independent, continuous speech-recognition system. His doctoral work won him a special award "Most Important Innovation" from *BusinessWeek* that same year. While at Carnegie Mellon, Dr Lee became famous in 1988 after a system that he co-developed for playing the board game Othello beat a human world champion.

After two years of teaching at Carnegie Mellon, Dr Lee joined Apple. He worked there for six years, heading the company's division of multimedia interactive services, a field in which he helped make Apple a leading player. In 1996, he moved to SGI, where he worked until 1998 in charge of the company's internet products worldwide. In 1998, he joined Microsoft and set up Microsoft Research China and, as Director, soon turned it into a world-class institute of research in the field. From 2000 to 2005, he served as Microsoft's Corporate Vice-President, leading his team of researchers in making crucial contributions to server software and brand-name applications such as Windows and MS Office.

Dr Lee joined Google in 2005 and served as Google Vice President and the President of Google Greater China until 2009. Those four years witnessed the birth and growth of a 700-strong team of researchers in the Greater China region led by Dr Lee, which helped raise Google's share in the China market from 16% to 31%

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and also helped develop products that make Google the leading player in the field of Chinese-language search engine and related services.

In September 2009, Dr Lee started a new venture in Beijing when he set up Innovative Works, a new model that integrates angel investment, a business incubator, and entrepreneurship guidance. It is the first enterprise in China that aims to help young people start their own businesses in IT fields and to help bring about a new generation of high-tech companies for the nation. He hopes Innovative Works will develop highly marketable and commercially viable products, and put them into operations until they are ripe enough for spinning off into subcompanies that will eventually get listed or acquired.

For us, Dr Lee's career fascinates not only because of his many inventions in computer science and the IT industry, or his lofty positions in such world-class companies as Apple Computer, Microsoft and Google, but also because of his love for China in her progress and his help and care for China's young people.

Dr Lee's feelings for China were aroused on his first visit to the mainland in 1990. He was deeply impressed by the bright, diligent young people he met, and he saw the difference in conditions between China and the US. He decided to help them. He engaged local young talent to work on his China team of researchers while he was working with Microsoft and Google in China. Yet it wasn't until he launched Innovative Works that Dr Lee felt he could fully realise his dream of helping young people in China. To him, while Innovative Works needs to make a profit, the venture is essentially aimed at helping young entrepreneurs and fostering high-tech companies for China.

His involvement with young people in China expands far beyond computer and IT fields. So far he has written numerous public letters to students and other young people, and published several books, such as *Be Your Personal Best*, *A Walk Into the Future*, *To Students with Love*, and lately his autobiography *Making A World of Difference*. He gives dozens of lectures every year on campuses across China and he runs a popular website ([www.5xue.com](http://www.5xue.com)), which has at least half a million registered followers. On the website he teams up with dozens of experts to give guidance to young Chinese students in their work and studies.

Dr Lee advises young people to "be your personal best", namely to understand their own personalities and set their own goals. Instead of seeking to beat others, he

exhorts young people to keep on with self-improvement to become always better today than yesterday. He encourages them to make the biggest difference possible between one world with their own participation and the other world without, and to make this the meaning of their life. Put simply, he encourages “making a world of difference”, hence the title of his autobiography.

Dr Lee has Fortune’s favour. Whether in computer science, team leadership, enterprise management or helping others, he displays a zeal for innovation—a hallmark of his personality. He owes it to his parents—his mother in particular—and to the US education system. The former, since his childhood, gave him no end of freedom, support and encouragement during his formative years; the latter, with its free and open ideas and wide-ranging liberal arts programmes, has enabled his all-round development.

To this day, Dr Lee remembers well what his doctoral advisor said about a certain idea he had: “I don’t agree with you, but I support you”. Thus, the way his parents “managed” him is now how he manages his teams, and the support given by his professor has shaped his support for the younger generation. These personal experiences offer excellent food for thought to all educators and the educated.

A modest and gentle person, Dr Lee ever impresses as a meticulous scientist, an ingenious inventor, a serious and efficient enterprise manager, and an educator as well as mentor of youth with warm sincerity. Naturally, such a person is full of charisma, always encouraging young people across mainland China and, I am sure, in Hong Kong as well.

Mr Chancellor, in recognition of his many accomplishments in computer science, IT technology, enterprise management and his contributions to helping to educate young people and foster high-tech industries in China, I take great pleasure in presenting Dr Lee Kai-Fu to you for the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Business Administration, *honoris causa*.