

Honorary Doctor of Social Science

Mr SZE Chi-ching

Citation written and delivered by Professor CHENG Pei-kai

Chancellor:

Mr Sze Chi-ching's ancestral home is in Jinjiang in Quanzhou, Fujian Province, well-known since antiquity for its auspicious aura and the many distinguished people it has produced. It boasts a long history of scholarly activities and overseas trading, and as such, is a centre of cultural exchange between China and the rest of the world. Mr Sze grew up in this town of great literary splendour, where the best of cultures converge, breathing the air of open-mindedness. Elders of his father's generations had long ago settled in the Philippines. It is only natural that Mr Sze Chi-ching developed in his early years a broad mind and lofty aspirations.

Years of family inculcation since childhood have instilled in Mr Sze a respect for Chinese cultural tradition, which he studies assiduously. His mother patiently impressed upon him the importance of good calligraphy, as it reflects the depth of a person's cultivation. Moreover, his father and maternal uncle were both distinguished calligraphers. Mr Sze's early interest in calligraphy thus received close attention and encouragement. With years of immersion in the art, calligraphy has now given him a handle with which he can get a grasp of the essence of Chinese culture. It has become not only a pastime that shapes his character, but lays a foundation for his life-long pursuit.

Mr Sze moved to Hong Kong in 1957 and studied in the Chinese Department of the United College of Hong Kong and Ching Wah College of Traditional Chinese Medicine. In 1960, he established Hong Kong Jimei Compatriot School, of which he also served as the headmaster. Using Putonghua as the medium of instruction, the school provided a venue of education for the young Fujian émigrés living in Hong Kong. The work of a pioneer was tough, but three years after the opening of the school, the enrolment reached 600 students. Mr Sze threw himself heart and soul into educational work for seven years, nurturing a large number of educated talents for Hong Kong. Later, with the tightening of educational policies by the Hong Kong British government, Mr Sze left the field of education and

devoted his energy to business, having first of all made satisfying employment and education arrangements for the teachers and students of his school.

Mr Sze is practical and far-sighted in his business dealings. In the early 1980s, feeling the pulse of the reform era in China, he invested in manufacturing on the mainland, at the same time developing real estate and participating in various engineering projects. His business covered central China and reached as far as the Northeast and Southwest corners of the country. For 20 years, he has followed with conviction China's path of reform and openness, and indefatigably led his corporation through the changes of the times. His business has now developed in many directions, with a network covering the whole world, making lasting contributions to the commercial links between the two shores of the Taiwan Strait.

Mr Sze is a successful entrepreneur, serving now as the Chairman of Hang Tung Resources Holding Limited. At the same time, he demonstrates a genuine interest in the development of education and culture. In 1987, with the initial success of his enterprise, he established the Sze Chi Ching Family Education Foundation in his hometown, Jinjiang. Since then, he has set up other educational funds in Hong Kong and the mainland, making donations for the construction of schools and in other ways promoting education here and on the mainland. Schools that have benefited from Mr Sze's generosity include Huaqiao University, Xiamen University, Nanjing University, Peking University and City University of Hong Kong. Nursing schools, Project Hope, charitable organisations, hospitals and other social organisations have also been the recipients of his generosity. He has received commendations from, and been granted interviews with, national leaders, while the greater circles of society heap accolades upon him.

In addition to sponsoring education and cultural projects, Mr Sze also involves himself in many other kinds of social work and pays close attention to national politics and economic policies. He served at various times in important posts such as Hong Kong Affairs Advisor, a member of the Selection Committee for the First Government of the HKSAR and a member of the Election Committee of HKSAR of National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China. In consecutive years, he was the Vice-President of the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce and a Member of the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, PRC, and, as the Vice-chairman of the Committee for Learning and Cultural and Historical Data of the 11th Committee of the Cultural People's Political Consultative Conference, he

promoted the teaching of culture across China. Combining Chinese cultural traditions and knowledge of the modern age, he promoted in the younger generation a sense of identification with the culture of their mother country, with the hope that Chinese culture will soar to new heights in the 21st century.

Mr Sze is an avid devotee in the arts of poetry and calligraphy. He is not only fervent in his admiration and concerns for the development and transmission of Chinese culture but is also a practitioner of its arts, and has attained success in both literary and artistic endeavours. His publications include *Chi Ching's Delight in Ink*, *The Ink Artwork of Mr Sze Chi Ching*, a long cursive-script calligraphy *The Latter Rhapsody of Red Cliff*, *The Former Rhapsody on Red Cliff in Mr Sze Chi Ching's Calligraphy*, *The Snow Fragrance Collection*, *The Snow Fragrance Poetry Collection*, *The Humble Opinions of Chi Ching* and *On Various Aspects of Calligraphy*. Combining the enterprising spirit of an entrepreneur and the refined taste of a literati, Mr Sze Chi-ching is worthy of the name "The Modern Confucian-Businessman."

For his deep conviction in the enterprise of cultural education, his successful experience in building his own business, and his philosophy of repaying society for his achievements, he is a role model for young learners. Moreover, his strong interest in Chinese culture and his life-long persistence in creative work not only brings to the fore the transcendental effect of cultural refinement, but also provides the best example of life-long learning for all of us. Mr Chancellor, on behalf of the University, may I present Mr Sze Chi-ching to you for the award of Degree of Honorary Doctor of Social Science.