

## **Honorary Fellow**

### **Mr Peter Ho Ka-nam**

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Citation written and delivered by Professor Luk Kwai-man

Pro-Chancellor, Deputy Chairman of the Council and President:

Richard Wilhelm translated the third text of the *chi'en* hexagram in *I Ching*, the *Book of Changes*, as "All day long the superior man is creatively active. At nightfall his mind is still beset with cares. Danger. No blame." (《易經》, 乾·九三曰：君子終日乾乾。夕惕若厲。無咎。) According to the translation by Wilhelm, the famous German translator and Sinologist whose translation of the oldest Chinese classic text in 1923 is still regarded as the finest, the text connotes the meaning that "He who remains in touch with the time that is dawning, and with its demands is prudent enough to avoid all pitfalls, and remains blameless."

The text was shared by Mr Peter Ho Ka-nam with staff and students of the City University of Hong Kong in a speech he delivered at a ceremony in November 2007. On that occasion, a lecture theatre on the campus was named after Mr Ho, an outstanding entrepreneur and an alumnus of the University, in appreciation of his contribution to the University.

Mr Ho studied engineering in Canada in the 1970s and returned to Hong Kong in 1978. He worked as a project engineer for a few years and in 1980 started his own business, setting up factories with two partners. They first made chargers and power supplies for the European and North American markets and gradually expanded their product lines to domestic electrical appliances. Those were the boom years of Hong Kong's economy. They rode the wave and grew into a successful group that covered a wide range of businesses, including manufacturing and printing. In 2006, the partners swapped shares and parted. Mr Ho obtained Techworld Industries, a reputable company manufacturing quality chargers and power supplies. He is currently Managing Director of the company, which has won numerous awards and patents for outstanding innovation and technology products.

Mr Ho's relationship with CityU began some years ago when he sought the professional help of the University to carry out testing on some material coatings for his company. He found the University extremely supportive and a loyal friendship unfolded. He became an industrial partner of the University's cooperative programme soon after and has been offering internships to engineering students of the University in addition to a number of awards and scholarships.

Mr Ho's relationship with the University reached a new pinnacle in 2003 when he sponsored 25 of his engineers and managers to study a Master of Science programme in management at CityU. It was a valuable opportunity for them as the participants were released to attend classes besides enjoying the sponsorship of half their tuition fees. More than half of the participants completed the programme and most are still working for Mr Ho. When asked of his thoughts on the participants obtaining the degree and leaving his company, Mr Ho showed no hesitation saying that those who chose to leave would in most cases continue to work in either mainland China or Hong Kong and as such he was satisfied they would still be contributing to these communities.

To encourage his staff, Mr Ho even enrolled in the programme himself. He soon discovered it was great fun studying and acquiring the management knowledge that he would find very useful later. It was also refreshing returning to campus after so many years. Mr Ho did not put down the books after graduation. He is now studying a doctorate at the Department of Manufacturing Engineering and Engineering Management of CityU. When his eldest son sought advice about pursuing his PhD in computer science at the Imperial College in London, his advice was simple: "Studying is the most effective intellectual training of your thinking and analytical mind, which will help you greatly to make the right decisions."

Mr Ho is a strong supporter of tertiary education both in mainland China and Hong Kong. He is currently funding a scholarship programme for PhD candidates with the Joint Advanced Research Centre (Suzhou) established by the University of Science and Technology of China (USTC) and CityU. The candidates from USTC who have been selected will receive a handsome annual subsidy during their studies. He firmly believes that educated people are the

most important asset, particularly in the case of Hong Kong as it transforms to a knowledge-based economy. Hong Kong must create a bigger graduate population in order to outrun its competitors in this fast-changing world. What is true of an individual may also be applicable to a city. Perhaps it is appropriate for us to appreciate from a different perspective the *I Ching* text that "He who remains in touch with the time that is dawning, and with its demands is prudent enough to avoid all pitfalls, and remains blameless."

In recognition of Mr Peter Ho Ka-nam's accomplishments and contributions to the development of the University, Mr Pro-Chancellor, Mr Deputy Chairman of the Council and Mr President, I am greatly privileged today to present Mr Ho for the award of an Honorary Fellow of the University.