

Honorary Doctor of Social Science

Professor Justin LIN Yifu

Citation written and delivered by Professor WANG Guiguo

Pro-Chancellor:

“From both sides of the river thrust out the cliffs green;
Leaving the sun behind, a lonely sail comes forth.”

Professor Justin Lin was born in Taiwan on October 15, 1952. As a young boy, he was educated in Yilan and later entered the College of Agriculture of National Taiwan University. At a time when students were going to the US in great numbers for overseas study, Professor Lin decided to pursue a military career and was transferred to the Military Academy. After graduation, he entered the Department of Business Administration of National Chengchi University, where he earned a master’s degree.

Thirty years ago, with an agile mind, profound foresight and incredible determination, Professor Lin took the bold step of going north to enter the Economics Department of Peking University, the most prestigious educational institution in China, with the intention of laying the theoretical foundation for the economic development of China. At that time, mainland China was implementing sweeping economic reforms and opening a new chapter in Chinese history. After obtaining a master’s degree in economics, he crossed the Pacific Ocean to enrol in the PhD programme with the Economics Department at University of Chicago. He then became the first doctoral-level economist to return to China from abroad. He became a professor at Peking University, Deputy Director of the Development Institute of the Rural Development Research Centre under the State Council, Founding Director of the China Centre for Economic Research at Peking University, and served in other important positions. As a think-tank member for several departments within the Chinese government, Professor Lin consistently contributes his expertise to China’s economic development policies.

It was said in the *History of the Former Han* that “a ruler puts his people above all else. His people, meanwhile, put food above all else. If a ruler knows what is

uppermost in the minds of those he rules, he will do well.” As China is a big, developing, agricultural country, the state of agriculture and the livelihood of the peasants have always been issues that no ruler could avoid throughout the many dynasties in Chinese history. Mainland China under reform is no exception. Recognising his responsibility to bring succor to the people and revive his motherland, Professor Lin directed his research toward issues related to peasants and agriculture. He showed no aversion to hardship on treks through hills and villages to study these issues. All farming communities, from the well-off to the impoverished, were material for his study. His fieldwork, investigation, and analysis enabled him time and again to come up with creative and pragmatic proposals for the Chinese government.

Based on the results of his rigorous studies and reinforced by his characteristic foresight, Professor Lin proposed that China should pursue a development strategy that would fully tap into its comparative advantage of low production costs to attract capital and advanced technology from outside. This would bring about the rapid accumulation of capital, which would, in turn, lay the foundation for industrial upgrading. As a means to an end, Professor Lin recommended that the government should “develop medium and small enterprises, redirect agricultural labour, establish a national market of agricultural products, augment the investment in the use of technology, increase the capacity of food production, improve on the system of food storage, ensure food security, reform the administrative functions of the government, reduce the burden on the peasants, strengthen finances on the rural and village level, and reform the personnel system.” Professor Lin also advocated the reform of national enterprises to ensure a level playing field for private corporations, by which the national economy could maintain its rapid development.

Professor Lin’s research has resulted in the following publications: *Institution, Technology and Agricultural Development in China*; *The China Miracle: Development Strategy and Economic Reform*; *The Priorities of Agricultural Research in China*; *Sufficient Information and State Enterprise Reform in China*; *Technology and Agricultural Development in China, II*; *Economic Development and Transition: Thought, Strategy and Viability*; *Special Topics of Chinese Economy*; and others. Together, these works form a distinct Lin “school of thought” on economic development, which has garnered high praise from colleagues and scholars in and outside China.

Lin's school of economic development is built upon the economic reality of China but, by means of a ceaseless process of practical application and revisions, it is in turn able to provide guidance for Chinese economic development. Because of this, his 1992 article, Rural Reform and the Agricultural Growth in China, published in *American Economic Review*, was rated by the Institute of Scientific Information as the most highly referenced article among economists from 1980 to 1998, for which it was awarded the Citation Classics Award. Professor Lin has received many national and international awards for his ground-breaking research, including the 1993 Policy Article Prize of the Centre for International Food and Agricultural Policy, and the Sun Yefang Prize, the highest honour in the study of economics in China.

The *Zhuang Zi* tells of the story of a mythical bird, which, when it spreads its wings, "disturbs the waters to roil for three thousand *li*. It spirals up a whirlwind and ascends as high as ninety thousand *li*." Yet, "if the wind does not accumulate enough strength, it won't be able to bear the great wings."

Professor Lin has always argued for the need to promote a global perspective from which to observe the world. For his outstanding scholarship, exceptional theoretical accomplishments and his rich practical experiences, he became the first person from a developing country to be appointed as Chief Economist and Senior Vice President of the World Bank. We are confident that the World Bank will provide a global arena for his school of development economics. Professor Lin will carry on his work to serve as theoretical foundation for other developing countries to pursue their prosperity.

We will not be surprised by Professor Lin making more miracles. We will be proud of his further achievements. "May we all be blessed with a long life and sustained achievements. Though far apart, we are still able to share the joy of success together."

Mr Pro-Chancellor, to commend Professor Justin Lin for his significant achievements in the study of economics and social sciences, and for the outstanding contributions he has made and his dedication to the Chinese people, may I, on behalf of City University of Hong Kong, request you bestow upon Professor Lin the degree of Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*.