

Honorary Doctor of Social Science

Mr Payson CHA Mou-sing

Citation written and delivered by Mr CHAN Che-shing

Chairman:

Mr Payson Cha was born in 1942 in Beipei, a suburb of Chongqing City in Sichuan Province to a family originally from Haining County, Zhejiang Province. Mr Cha's alias, "Peisheng", means "born in Pei". His English name, Payson, actually comes from the Putonghua pronunciation of "Peisheng".

Mr Cha is the eldest son of the prominent Hong Kong entrepreneur Mr Cha Chi-ming. He is a relative of the renowned Chinese martial art novelist Mr Louis Cha; both originate from the same county.

Like his father, Mr Cha is also a distinguished entrepreneur. The son of a rich family, Mr Cha had the opportunity to continue his education. However, he chose instead to leave home when he was only 15, to develop his career.

Mr Cha went to Australia at the age of 15, then to the US at 18. Subsequently, his father asked him to go to Nigeria, to manage the family textile and dyeing business there. Later on, he went back to the US and obtained his first degree in science from Oregon State University. Mr Cha was later awarded a Sloan Fellowship by the Business School at Stanford University. In 1977, he returned to Hong Kong and started working in the family business.

As we have heard, Mr Cha started to develop his career at a very young age. As early as the mid-1960s, he began to invest in the real estate market in California. And as he had a good understanding of the US real estate market, he proved his business acumen in some very profitable investments. In fact, it was because of him that the Cha family began to invest heavily in the real estate business. Between 1976 and 1977, his father decided to develop Lantau Island, then a remote place with a sparse population, and asked him to return to Hong Kong to help. Putting to good use his many years of experience in property development in the US, Mr Cha took charge and developed Discovery Bay from a barren place to today's upmarket

residential complex. He continues to develop his extensive real estate business in the US.

In addition to his real estate interests, Mr Cha has also extended the other businesses started by his father, including finance, investment, electronics and biotechnology. In addition to their operations in Hong Kong and the Mainland, the family now has businesses all over the world: the US, Britain, France, Australia, Africa, Singapore, Thailand, Canada, and Japan.

Being successful in the real estate business is certainly not easy, but can be achieved largely through intelligence, vision, careful study of the market, and determination. For other businesses, however, success very often entails the participation of professionals from various industries. Mr Cha is well aware of this. He has established offices in strategic locations such as Silicon Valley and maintains good contacts with experts and professors in prestigious institutions such as Stanford University and the University of California. His consultants' expertise covers physics, mathematics, finance, marketing, electronic commerce, computer engineering, and genetic engineering. Obviously, as Mr Cha's businesses are so diversified, he could not possibly be an expert in every field. It is a better use of resources to strengthen links with academic institutions and even form mutually beneficial partnerships. His ability to utilize different talents is an important factor contributing to the success of Mr Cha's businesses.

What then is Mr Cha's management philosophy for operating such a diversified business with so many branches around the world? He says that before setting up an operation in a foreign country, it is important to learn about the local people and culture and think about their concerns and feelings. Chinese entrepreneurs should, in particular, strive to build up a good relationship with the local people. It is possible that Chinese business people may experience discrimination in other countries, perhaps on the grounds of race, wealth, or knowledge. However, Mr Cha believes they should always be sincere, and consider the standpoint of the local people. They should also always bear in mind the principle of "give and take". If their businesses in a community are profitable, they should not only concentrate on doing business but should also make donations to schools and social welfare organizations and integrate themselves in the community.

In Hong Kong, Mr Cha is the Managing Director of Hong Kong Resort

Company Ltd. He is also the Director of Mingly Corporation Ltd, New World Development Co, Ltd, New World First Bus Services Ltd, and China International Capital Corporation Ltd (China). The public offices that he has held, or is now holding, include Chairman of the Commission on Innovation and Technology, and a Member of the Law Reform Commission, the Housing Authority, the Housing Society, and the Airport Consultative Committee. In addition, he is the Director of the Qiu Shi Foundation of Hong Kong, Advisor to the Young Entrepreneurs Development Council, a Member of the China Synergy Programme, Trustee of the Better Hong Kong Foundation, and Vice-Chairman of the Council of City University of Hong Kong. Mr Cha also serves as a Member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Chair Professor and Vice-Chairman of the Advanced Research Institute Trust Fund of Tsinghua University in Beijing, and the Honorary Chairman of the Seventh Executive Committee of the Federation of Industry and Commerce of Zhejiang Province.

Mr Cha is concerned about the development of Hong Kong, especially since the reunification with the Mainland. He believes that there have been major structural changes in Hong Kong's economy since 1997. In the past, the territory was supported by industries such as textiles, tourism, finance, construction, trading, ship demolishing and various light industries. In that respect, it was very like Switzerland, which has a similar population and depends on industries such as clock and watch making, tourism, finance, medicine and precision instruments. But since the Asian economic slowdown, with Hong Kong's factories moving north across the border, the service industry accounting for more than 90% of GDP, and concerns about the quality of graduates in light of the expansion of tertiary education, many people are worried about the future development of Hong Kong.

Appointed by the Chief Executive to succeed Professor Tien Chang-lin as the Chairman of Commission on Innovation and Technology, Mr Cha is prompted by the urgency of finding a solution for Hong Kong's problems. He believes that the Government should not just focus on public administration, that universities should not only train students to become civil servants, and that corporations should not merely try to make quick profits. Rather, the government, education institutions and the business sector should work closely together. This cooperation, coupled with the low tax rate, should enable Hong Kong to find a way out, he believes.

In terms of technology development, Mr Cha believes that, be it low-end or high-end, we should develop a technology that is unique to, and appropriate for, Hong Kong. Looking at Finland's development of Nokia, Switzerland's development of Novartis, and Sweden's development of Ericsson, it can be seen that a breakthrough is possible only when various parties unite and work together.

Mr Cha has an international vision for seeking solutions for Hong Kong. He frequently consults world renowned mathematician Professor Chern Shiing-shen; physicist and Nobel Laureate Yang Chen-ning; physicist and President of the China Association for Science and Technology Professor Zhou Guangzhao; chemist and Nobel Laureate Professor Lee Yuan-tseh; medicine expert Professor Kan Yuet-wai; economist and Nobel Laureate Professor William Sharpe; DNA expert Professor Stanley Cohen; and economist Professor Larry Lau, for their advice on how to enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness. With this level of commitment, Mr Cha certainly contributes to the well being of Hong Kong.

Unfortunately, due to health problems, Mr Cha has recently had to resign from the Commission on Innovation and Technology. But he remains very involved in the development of local universities and believes they should cooperate and cultivate true talents that can benefit the community.

Regarding his philosophy of life, Mr Cha believes that it is more important to have a meaningful life than a long life. On the issue of wealth, he believes that it is not amassing large amounts of money that is important but, rather, spending it wisely on helping others in the society. The people he respects most are his parents. He stresses specifically that his success was built on the basis of his father's well-established businesses, and his mother not only raised him with loving care but also taught him pride and integrity. He has been leading a life following the example set by his parents. He also admires Nobel Prize winners and those political leaders who strive to improve the lives of their people. He feels that the most important thing is to have high aspirations, a critical mind, and a modest attitude. He does not like the idolization of individuals as heroes or film stars and advocates working towards the common good for the well-being of society. His beliefs and attitude to life are good examples for our young people.

Although he is a successful entrepreneur, Mr Cha is a diligent person who leads a simple life. He is also a person of integrity and is glad to help others. The Chinese

sayings of “rich but polite” and “rich but diligent in study” certainly apply to Mr Cha.

Mr Cha’s words and deeds are reminiscent of Zigong, the wealthiest student of Confucius. With his excellent understanding of market changes, Zigong was able to make sharp business decisions that earned him huge profits. With his wealth, eloquence and diplomatic skills, he was able to resolve many conflicts between the warring states of the time, and thus prevented wars. He was also highly regarded for his abilities as a warrior. The different states held him in high esteem. And as he travelled from one warring state to another, he disseminated the thoughts of Confucius, thus elevating the reputation of his teacher. In fact, historical records show that the popularity of Confucian studies is mainly attributable to the efforts of Zigong.

Like Zigong, Mr Cha is a talented entrepreneur who makes wise investments in real estate and other businesses. Like Zigong, he is knowledgeable and well-educated. And like Zigong, he travels frequently around the world for the well-being of society. Perhaps we can compare Mr Cha to a modern day Zigong.

Mr Chairman, in recognition of Mr Payson Cha’s many entrepreneurial accomplishments, and his significant contributions to China, to the Hong Kong community and to City University of Hong Kong, I now present to you Mr Payson Cha for the degree of Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*.