

## Honorary Fellow Mr Hing Chao



*Public Orator Professor Espen Aarseth*

Pro-Chancellor, Chairman of the Council and President:

A cursory glance at some of Mr Hing Chao's titles is enough to convince anyone of the breadth of his knowledge and interests. Mr Chao is the Executive Chairman of Wah Kwong Maritime Transport, the Chairman of the Hong Kong International Shipping and Maritime Services Centre, the Founder of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Earthpulse Society, the Founder and Executive Director of the International Guoshu Association, the Founder and Chairman of the Hong Kong Culture Festival, and a trustee of the Hong Kong Maritime Museum.

As he readily admits, Mr Chao had "a lot of questions to ask as a teenager". In search of answers, he read philosophy at Durham University in the UK, where the teachings of the Stoics, with their emphasis on social responsibility, set him off on a path of discovery that would merge business, education, culture, heritage, and philanthropy. After graduation, Mr Chao immersed himself in documenting and preserving endangered cultures, going as far as Inner Mongolia to study the unique worldview, ways of life and values of the Orochen, a minority ethnic group.

With comparable dedication, when he later returned to Hong Kong, he sought to draw attention to the city's diverse cultural landscape, especially overlooked local cultures, such as those of the Hakka and Chinese martial arts. In this way, he became an independent producer of large-scale public

cultural festivals and events, adding new layers to the understanding of what makes Hong Kong the proverbial cultural meeting ground.

His voice is heard in the academic world. He has organised international symposiums and conferences. Besides publishing widely in journals and compiling anthologies, he founded the book series *Martial Studies*. In the world of performing arts, Mr Chao has supervised award-winning productions such as *The Legend of Lanling* (2024) and *Convergence* (2020), both with Hong Kong Dance Company, and *Romeo + Juliet* (2021) with Hong Kong Ballet. For his outstanding contributions to cultural and arts developments in Hong Kong, he was acknowledged by the Secretary for Home Affairs' Commendation Scheme in 2017.

As he turned to manage his family business, Mr Chao began to see that the opposition between the world of money and the world of culture is fallacious. For a cultural endeavour to exist in the long run, it must be sustainable in market terms. With the art and cultural infrastructure put in place in recent years, which makes it easier for art and cultural projects to subsist, the outlook is optimistic for the advancement and growth of culture in Hong Kong.

Similarly, to Mr Chao, the assumed incompatibilities between art and technology are untenable. He demonstrates by the digital martial arts archive that he built that technology has a lot more to offer than the mere act of documentation and preservation. It can open new areas of exploration and development. In his case, collaborations with the School of Creative Media at CityUHK have enabled Mr Chao's projects to cross over to the visual, performing and new media arts.

Before joining Wah Kwong Maritime Transport, Mr Chao worked at several shipping companies where he gathered extensive experience in the maritime industries. Now, as a leader of the shipping business in Hong Kong, Mr Chao is the Founder and Convener of the Greater Bay Maritime Forum, the Chairman of the Hong Kong Shipowners' Association China Subcommittee, and the Chairman of the Port Welfare Committee.

Mr Chao has had a long-standing involvement with CityUHK. Currently, he is the Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Indra and Harry Banga Gallery and has teamed up with the School of Creative Media and the Centre for Applied Computing and Interactive Media (ACIM) on numerous projects, giving lectures, curating exhibitions and hosting events. In the name of the International Guoshu Association, he made a donation to support a martial arts project at CityUHK. Another generous donation in April 2024 supports the research initiatives of the ACIM under the School of Creative Media.

Pro-Chancellor, Chairman of the Council and President, for his dynamic and inclusive conceptualisation of culture, Mr Hing Chao has offered a new angle to the discussion of culture and opened new horizons for its development in Hong Kong. His broadmindedness is evident in the way that he bridges art, culture, technology and commerce. He regards himself as a family member of CityUHK and looks forward to serving as a facilitator between different departments and offices internally and between CityUHK and other institutions and organisations externally. We are only too happy to welcome such an invaluable individual into our midst. May I present to you Mr Hing Chao for the conferment of the Honorary Fellowship of City University of Hong Kong.