

A Citation for Dr Tin Ka Ping, MBE Doctor of Education, *honoris causa*



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Mr Chairman of the Council,

I am absolutely delighted to have the honour of delivering the citation for Mr Tin Ka Ping on this occasion.

Mr Tin Ka Ping is a distinguished industrialist and philanthropist in Hong Kong and China, and a world-celebrated educationist. A man of vision, Mr Tin realises that the future depends on education, and that education is the key to the development of the individual as well as of society as a whole. He firmly believes that, in order to rise to the challenge of the times, we need to develop and enhance education so that the next generation will benefit from it and be able to hold the future in their hands.

Mr Tin is the founder of Tins Chemical Corporation Ltd.. The story of how he spent his early years and founded this enterprise is a touching one, while his determination to create a business of his own would be an inspiration for the young. Mr Tin was born in 1919 in Yintan Village, Dapu Xian in Guangdong Province. His father, Mr Tin Yuk Wu, a merchant of Hakka descent, was a philanthropist who gave to the needy and helped those in distress. His mother was a modest woman who worked hard to raise the family. Under the fine influence of his parents and a strong Confucian education, Mr Tin nurtured a noble disposition characterised by stoicism, self-betterment, benevolence and righteousness.

In 1935, on the premature death of his father, Mr Tin had to cut short his secondary schooling to take charge of his father's business and support the entire family. At the age of 18, the enterprising Mr Tin left home for Vietnam to set up the Chayang Porcelain Clay Company, selling Dapu porcelain clay to Vietnam. The young Mr Tin was already showing his talents and business acumen: in two years' time, at 21 years of age, he had become the number one supplier of porcelain clay in his locality. In the summer of 1939, when the Japanese invaded Shantou and stopped the export of porcelain clay, Mr Tin had to end his business in Vietnam. He left for Bandung in Indonesia the following autumn. There he had to start again from scratch, working for his elder brother who had a sundry goods business. Before long, the Japanese took Indonesia, and the business environment became extremely adverse. Mr Tin suffered many ups and downs in his career, having to start from the lowest rung of the ladder; but with an indomitable spirit and an innovative mind, he was able to overcome each and every difficulty. Mr Tin's inner strength and perseverance are food for thought for the students and youngsters of today.

When the Japanese surrendered in 1945, Mr Tin had the foresight to start a rubber processing business in Indonesia, setting up two large-scale rubber plants "Chaolun" and "Nanyang". His remarkable insight into the needs of the times later saw the expansion of his business to the plastics industry. He set up the first plastics enterprise in Indonesia, the phenomenal success of which was yet another extraordinary achievement. By 1951, the young Mr Tin, at 31, was already a prominent industrialist in Indonesia.

Mr Tin has always shown extraordinary insight into the times. In 1958, in the heyday of his enterprise, he was the top industrialist in his field. However, with the rising anti-Chinese sentiment in Indonesia, he made the quick resolve to close down all his businesses and relocate to what was then lacklustre Hong Kong. This move was motivated in part out of long-term considerations for raising a family and providing education for the children. Hong Kong was a meeting point of the East and the West; it was also a Chinese society. His nine children received an excellent Chinese education, and grew up in an environment that stressed traditional and Confucian values. His children have all turned out to be paragons of such fine traits as self-restraint, diligence and integrity. Those who have been associated with Mr Tin's children often show heart-felt appreciation and respect for Mr Tin who has persevered with what he believes, thus setting a good example for his family and a role model for the community.

With remarkable vision and perseverance, Mr Tin started his plastics and manmade leather businesses in Hong Kong. In 1960, he created a 30,000-square-metre mega industrial city in Tuen Mun. Riding on Hong Kong's international status, Mr Tin rapidly succeeded in opening up a worldwide market and established himself as an industry leader. Forty years on, his business is still expanding and buoyant, and he has earned himself the title "King of manmade leather".

Education is basically the business of learning how to conduct oneself in life. In this regard, Mr Tin's character and conduct can be upheld as a valuable model. Inheriting the best of Chinese culture, Mr Tin incorporates Confucian values in matters of personal

conduct, family education, personal and interpersonal relationships, as well as social responsibilities. Despite his huge enterprise, Mr Tin has always maintained a simple lifestyle characterised by diligence and thrift. Modest and affable, he always puts other people first when problems arise; in commercial dealings, he puts the interests of his partners and clients foremost; in personal and business transactions, he stands by his credit and reputation; and in order not to dent the interests of his friends and clients, he would honour his word even in the face of adverse circumstances. His conduct and integrity have earned the trust and respect of many. In his own domain, he leads by example and adopts a hands-on approach. Ready to listen to different views, and showing genuine concern for his employees, he is rewarded with a harmonious work culture, with all ranks co-operating to make his enterprise a success, which has brought the manmade leather industry to new heights. One is drawn to the conclusion that as a person, Mr Tin is an outstanding example of how Confucian values can work hand in hand with modern entrepreneurship. He serves as an excellent role model for today's young people in finding their way in life.

Yet, what commands our appreciation and respect most is Mr Tin's great concern for and altruistic giving to education and society. He is of the view that wealth should be used to satisfy basic needs; the rest should be given away for the public good and for the benefit of the needy. In 1982, Mr Tin set up the K. P. Tin Foundation, and has hitherto given a large part of his wealth to the causes of helping the aged and the young, proliferating education and nurturing talents, and promoting learning and culture; in other words, giving for the public good, giving back to society, and making contributions to the nation. The list of educational institutions and charities sponsored by Mr Tin is a long one and they can be found all over China.

Mr Tin has taken on the social responsibilities of promoting education, helping the needy and eventually building a stronger nation. With steadfastness and unsurpassable stamina, he has given generously his fortune amassed in a lifetime and has personally undertaken to promote education, in order to raise the quality of the people and nurture the capable. In the past 20 odd years, Mr Tin has built numerous schools in China, visiting places throughout the Mainland. The vastness of his generosity is widely celebrated: bearing his name are 96 secondary schools and vocational schools, 48 primary schools and kindergartens, 850 libraries, and numerous other educational facilities. They provide quality education and have nurtured countless students who have become the cream of society. Their impact on social change and the making of a better society is profoundly inspiring.

Mr Tin is of the view that teacher quality is a deciding factor for success in education; teacher training is equally as important as the building of schools. He has hence determined very early on to give financial support to teacher training, and to date has set up a total of 46 Tin Ka Ping colleges of education or training centres to train quality teachers in normal universities in all provinces and cities in China. The strategic impact of this foundation will extend to the century to come as teachers and students who benefit from it will create a better future for the nation.

At the ripe age of 84, Mr Tin is still working tirelessly, taking a personal interest in education and public service. He has great concern for social education, and has been deeply involved in moral education, offering financial as well personal support to such causes. He has held discussions with teachers and students, encouraging them to uphold moral education and strive for excellence. His deep concern is expressed in a soothing manner which has moved and inspired many. His sincerity and noble-mindedness have made him the well-respected teacher that he deserves to be.

Mr Tin's spirit of altruistic giving and Confucian virtue have touched the hearts of many. In 1993, the Nanjing Zijinshan Observatory named the newly-discovered asteroid #2886 after Mr Tin in a gesture to honour him for his immense contribution to China. In 1996, he was honoured by Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain with the award of an MBE. In order to honour him for his work in public service and education, dozens of universities and prominent academic institutions on the Mainland and in Hong Kong have conferred upon him the titles of Honorary Doctor, Fellow, Director, Professor, Consultant and so on. What is more, over 50 provinces, cities and counties in China have honoured him with the titles of Honorary National and Honorary Citizen.

Mr Tin has always supported the Institute's teacher training with enthusiasm, offering scholarships and setting up development funds. He is also a fervent advocate of innovative teaching, and has promoted new pedagogic knowledge to over 50,000 teachers in Hong Kong schools. This will have a profound impact on education in Hong Kong. In the past few decades, Mr Tin has never ceased to play the triple role of innovator, promoter and implementer in education. His efforts have benefited all China by having nurtured countless outstanding students and teachers. For this, he is held in great honour by the community.

Mr Tin's distinguished achievement, noble-mindedness, and long-term contribution to education have made him a paragon for educationists.

Mr Chairman, I have the honour of presenting to you Mr Tin Ka-ping, and may I call upon you to confer on this distinguished educationist the degree of Doctor of Education, *honoris causa*.