

## Honorary Fellow A Citation



### **Dr Cheng Shing Lung, Edwin, LLD (Hon), BBA**

Philosophy is known as “the queen of all sciences” not simply because the sciences we have today mostly began as branches of “natural philosophy” but because the most fundamental rational inquiry about thought, action and reality must always be philosophical. For centuries philosophy has not only been the primary discipline in which students have learned verbal reasoning, what we call these days “critical thinking”. It has also been the discipline in which students have been prompted to think coherently and to speculate adventurously, in other words to “think outside the box”, about the nature of reality, the mind, the soul, death and life, the nature of God and in fact everything conceivable to the human mind. It has also been the discipline in which for centuries, in both China and the West, students have been prompted to think about right action, the virtues, human values and the nature of the good life both for the individual and for the community. For these reasons philosophy is rightly one of the principal disciplines at the heart of what we nowadays call a liberal education, “whole person education” or general education.

In other words, if we think of a university education not simply in instrumental terms – such as training for a profession or increasing our economic competitiveness as a society – it would be hard to think of a more important discipline in higher education than philosophy. And yet it is rare to find philanthropists keen to provide support for such cornerstone humanities disciplines as philosophy. And so Edwin Cheng, who stands before us tonight, shares the vision of a most rare, greatly generous and far-sighted family. The story of their wholly unsolicited but deeply appreciated support of the distinguished work of our Department of Philosophy, as well as our University General Education Programme, is one that should inspire us all.

By virtue of the family’s munificence, the University has set up The Edwin S. L. Cheng Research Fund for General Education and Philosophy. The Fund has enabled The Research Centre for Chinese Philosophy and Culture to establish a Visiting Scholars Scheme, which has brought to our campus over 50 scholars, some of them the world’s greatest exponents of Chinese philosophy. The members of the Centre have been able to organize numerous international conferences and roundtable discussions. These have provided the basis for several issues of the highly regarded *Journal of Chinese Philosophy and Culture*. The local, national and international impact of this work on Chinese Philosophy and those seeking to study it has been very great.

Phenomenology is a highly important branch of modern philosophy based on the effort to describe human experience directly, as it actually is, independent of all causal and other explanations. It is a form of philosophy in which some members the CUHK Philosophy Department have distinguished international standing. Following the gift of the Cheng family, they have set up the Edwin Cheng Foundation Asian Centre for Phenomenology, the leading centre of its kind in Asia. Within it the S.P.A. (Symposia Phaenomenologica Asiatica, Master



Class in Phenomenology for Asian Scholars) was inaugurated in 2007 and has become a major annual event for young Asian scholars in phenomenology. The Fifth S.P.A. will take place in July 2011. Under the Centre's auspices, over ten international conferences and talks have been held, eight academic monographs and four issues of the *Journal of Phenomenology and the Human Sciences* have been published. The Archive for Phenomenology and Contemporary Philosophy was established in 2005, also under the auspices of the Fund. The support of the Fund has contributed to the organization of six international conferences and talks and the publication of two issues of the *Journal of Phenomenology and Contemporary Philosophy*.

Edwin Cheng and his family have made great contributions to the jewellery and jade industry in Hong Kong. He himself is an entrepreneur of note. He is founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Jadeite Workshop Limited. He is a Director of Invest-J Limited, the Association of the Directors and Former Directors of Yan Chai Hospital Limited and Kingwise Corporation Limited.

Dr Cheng has made many admirable contributions to public and community service. At The Chinese University of Hong Kong he is a Member of the Board of Trustees of New Asia College and an Honorary Adviser of the Editorial Board of the *University General Education Bulletin*. He has been Vice-Chairman and a Director on the Board of Directors of the Yan Chai Hospital, as well as Chairman of the Social Service Committee of the Hospital Board of Directors. He is a Member of the Committee on Community Support for Rehabilitated Offenders in the Department of Correctional Services of the Hong Kong SAR Government, as well a Member of the Advisory Committee of the Public Services-Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme of the Home Affairs Department, HKSAR Government. He has been a Director on the Board of the Yan Chai Hospital Lan Chi Pat Memorial Secondary School and Chairman of Tsuen Wan Art Festival.

Among the honours and awards Dr Cheng has received are the Chief Executive's Commendation for Community Service, HKSAR Government in 2010; the Distinguished Service for Community Award, HKSAR Government, 2007-08; Leaders of Excellence, *Capital*, 2006 and the World Outstanding Chinese Award, World Chinese Business Foundation, 2006.

Mr Chairman, it is my pleasure to present to you Dr Cheng Shing Lung Edwin, entrepreneur and generous benefactor of philosophy and general education, for the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.

*This citation is written by Professor David Parker*