

## Honorary Fellow A Citation



### **Dr Tam Wah Ching, DBA, PhD**

Hong Kong is known all over the world as the Pearl of the Orient, and this epithet is derived from the colourful neon lights in the Victoria Harbour that illuminate the night sky of the entire city. However, many of our honoured guests today probably did not know that Dr. Tam Wah Ching, who would be receiving an Honorary University Fellowship today, has been a pivotal figure in the lighting of our Victoria Harbour. He is also a pillar of our community who does not spare his efforts in pursuit of the common good.

Dr. Tam Wah Ching is an industrialist and philanthropist of great renown. Over the years he has achieved amazing success in his business undertakings through unswerving will power and indefatigable efforts, in self-learning, and in diligently applying his talents and skills to his career. He is an exemplary figure among the self-made men in Hong Kong.

In 1938 Dr. Tam, owing to the impoverished conditions of his family, left his native place of Kaiping in Guangdong province, at the tender age of 12, and came to Hong Kong to earn a living. He started by working as an apprentice in a company that made fluorescent lights, and subsequently performed a variety of hard labours. He was not daunted by difficulties but quietly soldiered on, thus paving the way for his business innovations in the days to come.

In an entrepreneurial spirit and through his sheer diligence and the highest degree of integrity, Dr. Tam established the Nam Wah Neonlight and Electrical Mfy. Ltd, single-handedly and as sole proprietor in 1953. Soon Dr. Tam's business gained a leadership position within the industry on account of the high quality of his products and his dedication to his business. From then on, Dr. Tam's name began to glitter and sparkle alongside his own products, and he came to be known as "the King of the Neon Lights". Now, at 84 years of age, Dr. Tam still runs his family business, with great aplomb and effectively assisted by members of his family, calling the shots at the highest level.

While daily attending to weighty business decisions, Dr. Tam has been tireless in promoting the welfare of young students and scholars, and allowing the younger generations to have the opportunity of developing their own potentials. Over the years Dr. Tam has been an enthusiastic supporter of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, much to the praise of his many beneficiaries in academe. Since 2004 he has provided seven scholarships known as the Dr. Tam Wah Ching Non-local Study Awards for students at United College. The number of awards has been increased to eight since 2009. Recipients of this scholarship have thus been enabled to undertake various study activities outside Hong Kong, including exchange and interflow programmes overseas, research activities on specified topics, as well as language and cultural study tours. These students have been able to benefit considerably through the chance to study and grow in the company of young people from both the mainland and various parts of the world.



Dr. Tam is of a kind and benevolent disposition, and has founded the Wah Ching Chinese Medicine Foundation to promote the interflow and cooperation between Chinese and Western medicines, and to bring Chinese medicine to a higher degree of development and awareness. Over the years Dr. Tam has lent his staunch support to various academic and research programmes in Chinese medicine of the Chinese University. His sponsorship of the Institute of Chinese Medicine CME Seminars is worthy of special mention. Seminars on the topics of "Nurturing oneself in anticipation of old age, "Yoga therapy and research, and *qigong* and nurturing oneself" and "To regulate the spirit and release the frustrations" have been organized in 2008, 2009 and 2010, respectively and have proved to be of great benefit to those who study and practise Chinese medicine.

In 2005, Dr. Tam assisted the Chinese University in the establishment of The International Association of Lions Clubs District 303 – Hong Kong and Macau Tam Wah Ching Chinese Medicine Resource Centre at the Institute of Chinese Medicine. He also supported the project on melamine research at the Institute of Chinese Medicine, making extensive and substantial contributions.

Dr. Tam's concern and support for the development of other institutions of tertiary education have also been significant. He is dedicated to the promotion of Chinese culture and civic education. Over the years he has set up the Wah Ching China Education Research Centre, Wah Ching Fund for Promoting Chinese Culture, Centre for Governance and Citizenship, Tam Wah-Ching Professorship in Medical Science, Tam Wah-Ching Professorship in Dental Science, financed the Research on China Law and Development of 9-Year Compulsory Education, the Confucius Academy established by the Central People's Government in Hong Kong, and continued sponsorship, unbroken for 30 years, for the Hong Kong Youth Cultural and Arts Competitions.

It has to be understood that Dr. Tam Wah Ching's benevolent concern for the well-being of young students and the community at large has not been confined to Hong Kong, and his patriotic zeal has taken the form of munificence being extended far and wide to many locations in the motherland. He was the founder of the Tan Hua Zheng Hospital and Primary School at the Fangshan District in Beijing, the Hua Zheng Secondary College at Mentougou District, Beijing, and the Beijing Zhongguancun High School Library and Scholarship. He also financed the construction of teaching blocks, sports arenas and dormitories for both secondary and primary schools at Kaiping City, his native place.

In 1990, Queen Elizabeth II of England honoured Dr. Tam Wah Ching with the Badge of Honour. In 2000, he was made an Honorary Citizen and Financial Adviser of Fangshan District, Beijing. In 2006 he received the highest honour as a Lions Clubs International Ambassador of Goodwill. In 2008 he was made an Honorary Citizen of Kaiping City, Guangdong. In the education community, Dr. Tam received the Doctor of Business Administration and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from the Pacific Western University in California in 1997 and 2000



respectively. He was awarded an Honorary University Fellowship by the University of Hong Kong in 2005.

Dr. Tam is one who does not hesitate to pay back to society as soon as his business success enables him to do so, and over the years he has supported countless charitable organizations and social service activities. Just to name a few, these include the Scout Association of Hong Kong, the Lions Clubs International, Po Leung Kuk, the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, the Cantonese Opera Development Foundation, and the Community Chest of Hong Kong. Dr. Tam does not only support these organizations and activities financially, but also participates in the events: he has, for many years, been the Chairman of the Community Chest of Hong Kong Walk for Millions Charity Walks at Shing Mun Tunnel, the New Territories, and Tate's Cairn Tunnel. He was also a Patron of the Century Feast of the Community Chest at the Hong Kong Government House, and the Community Chest Dress Casual Day. The outstanding contribution of Dr. Tam to both Hong Kong and the country are certainly widely recognized by the community at large.

Mr. Chairman, in order to give recognition to his significant achievements in the industrial sector, to celebrate his outstanding contribution to both the community and the country, and to acknowledge his tremendous support to The Chinese University of Hong Kong over many years, may I present Dr. Tam Wah Ching for conferment of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.