

Professor the Honorable JAO Tsung-I, GBM

Citation

One of the most erudite scholars of our era, Professor JAO Tsung-I commands a range of knowledge that extends from language to literature, from history to archaeology, from oracle bone inscriptions to Dunhuang manuscripts. His research interests also include musicology, the history of Sino-Indian relations, and religious studies. For a lesser scholar, it would require the effort of a lifetime to pursue any one of these disciplines. For Professor Jao, they are among the many fields where he has made not only in-depth investigations but also ground-breaking contributions. If sinology is the name that the West uses to characterize Chinese studies in its broadest application, then Jao Tsung-I is a towering sinologist who enjoys world-wide admiration.

Born in Chaozhou, Guangdong Province, in 1917, Professor Jao was raised in a family of refined taste. Even at a young age, he was already known for his literary gifts. In 1935, aged only 18, he was invited by Zhongshan University to work as an editor at the Bureau of Canton Gazetteers. In 1943, at the age of 27, he was engaged to teach as a full professor at the Wuxi Institute of Chinese Studies. From 1946 through 1973, he taught at Shantou Nanhua University, the University of Hong Kong, the National University of Singapore, and Yale. Between 1973 and 1978, he was Chair Professor of the Chinese Department at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. After his retirement in 1978, he served for one year as Visiting Research Professor at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in France prior

to his taking up a chair at the University of Kyoto's Department of Literature. The long list of illustrious appointments testifies to not only his profound learning but also, more importantly, the global influence that he has had in the field of education. And, Hong Kong is where he has made his greatest contribution.

Professor Jao's scholarship can be characterized as both expansive in scope and intensive in investigation. He has been awarded numerous awards and honors, including the French "Stanisles Julien" award for Sinology, membership of the French Institute of Far Eastern Studies; honorary doctorates from the University of Hong Kong and Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in France; and an honorary research professorship from the Research Institute of Dunhuang Studies in Dunhuang. In 1995, in honor of his accomplishments, a special Jao Tsung-I Academic Center was established in his hometown, Chaozhou.

In addition to his academic achievements, Professor Jao also enjoys great fame for his artistic and literary talents, particularly in poetry, painting and calligraphy. His art work has been on display in museums and galleries in many major cities in China and around the world. Hong Kong is of course where he has given the most exhibitions.

For a long time, Hong Kong has been labeled a cultural desert. Those who come to its defense readily argue that, with Professor Jao Tsung-I

among us, Hong Kong is not. To many of us, Jao Tsung-I is indeed the crown jewel of Hong Kong culture, a proclamation we celebrate with honor and pride. For this reason and as an expression of our profound respect for him, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology has the great pleasure of paying this tribute of appreciation to Professor Jao Tsung-I here today.

Mr Pro-Chancellor, I have the honor to present to you, on behalf of the University, Professor Jao Tsung-I, an erudite scholar and world renowned sinologist, for the degree of Doctor of Letters *honoris causa*.

Chinese Citation written by Prof Pang-Hsin Ting