

*CITATIONS FOR
HONORARY DOCTORS*

榮譽博士讚辭

Dr Charles Chen Yidan



Doctor of Education, *honoris causa*

Mr Chairman,

Dr Charles Chen Yidan, founder of the Yidan Prize, is a devoted follower and practitioner of Confucianism, especially the motto of *The Great Learning*, one of the classic *Four Books* in Confucian philosophy. *The Great Learning* begins by teaching the importance of “illustrating illustrious virtue, renovating the people, and resting in the highest excellence”. Dr Chen has generously donated to schools, teaching young people about life and dealing with others, as well as leading the establishment of the Tencent Charity Foundation. His passion for education befits his given name in Chinese, which reflects his wholehearted commitment to education. In recent years, he has invested heavily to set up a global education prize to recognise and support outstanding individuals in the sector, and to nurture the most talented.

Dr Chen grew up under the tutelage of his grandmother and experienced the power of education in childhood. His grandmother grew up in the midst of war and famine, and had to raise her son on her own as her husband went to look for work in South East Asia. Despite various misfortunes and hardships, Dr Chen’s father managed to make himself the pride of his family by being the very first university student from the village. Later he moved from his hometown of Chaoyang to Huizhou, and finally settled in Shenzhen. Although Dr Chen’s grandmother had not received any formal education, she accompanied him throughout with love and care, and encouraged him to study hard and be kind to others. Her caring advice and unconditional love formed the basis of Dr Chen’s dedication to education and charity.

With the firm belief that knowledge is power and that education can change destiny, Dr Chen graduated from Shenzhen University with a bachelor’s degree in Applied Chemistry and went on to pursue a master’s degree in Economic Law at the Law School of Nanjing University. A few years after graduation, he co-founded Tencent with Mr Ma Huateng and their common friends since high school and university. In 2004, Tencent Holdings Limited was listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. Dr Chen became the Chief Administration Officer of the company, overseeing the administration, legal matters, intellectual property, policy development and human resources, managing over 10,000 employees. As a partner working alongside Dr Chen over the years, Mr Ma has praised him for his integrity, friendliness and affection for those around him, which has made him a charismatic leader and a strong manager. Today, Tencent is one of the world’s leading technology giants, with its communication and social media services connecting over a billion people worldwide.

In 2007, Dr Chen led the establishment of the Tencent Charity Foundation, making it an inspiration in the industry. He leveraged the mobilising power and strength of the internet to set up an emergency disaster-relief mechanism for the 2008 winter storms in central and southern China, enabling members of the public to locate missing relatives online. After the Wenchuan earthquake in the same year, he launched an online donation platform and raised over RMB 23 million – a world record for philanthropic donations via the internet.

Dr Chen believes that education can enhance human wellbeing and promote societal improvement. In 2009, he invested a total of RMB 2 billion in the establishment of Wuhan College, the first non-profit, privately-run tertiary institution on the mainland. His motto for the college is ‘Virtue. Innovation. Truth. Action. (V. I. T. A.)’. Students are expected to understand the meaning of traditional culture and to promote virtue and integrity to break with old traditions, innovate and strive for perfection. They are also encouraged to develop a global perspective and patriotic sentiment.

In 2013, Dr Chen became Advisor Emeritus of Tencent and Honorary Chairman of the Tencent Charity Foundation, devoting himself to culture, charity and education. In the same year, he donated funds to set up the Shenzhen Chen Yidan Foundation and Shenzhen Mingde Experimental School.

In 2016, Dr Chen donated HK\$2.5 billion to launch the Yidan Prize, a global education accolade that awards HK\$60 million annually to individuals or teams who have made an outstanding contribution to education. He topped the 13th annual China Charity Ranking in the same year, and was listed first in the Forbes China Philanthropy List the following year, earning him the accolades of ‘Father of Internet Philanthropy’ and ‘Pioneer of Chinese Internet Philanthropy’.

In 2018, Dr Chen donated over HK\$4 billion in Tencent shares to establish a charitable trust to promote education. He also served as a member of the founding council of Westlake University in Hangzhou. At the same time, he continued to further his studies and obtained a PhD in Business Administration in 2019 from Singapore Management University.

Dr Chen’s pursuit of learning and passion for education are highly regarded by universities around the world. In 2019, he became a member of the Global Advisory Council of Harvard University and a member of the International Advisory Board of Singapore Management University. In 2021, he was appointed as a Court Member of The University of Hong Kong. In recognition of his enormous contribution to the education sector, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and The Chinese University of Hong Kong conferred honorary doctorates in humanities and social science on him in 2017 and 2020, respectively.

Mr Chairman, Dr Chen is widely acclaimed for his vision and wisdom, and generous investment in education to help nurture the future pillars of society. On behalf of The Education University of Hong Kong, I proudly present to you Dr Charles Chen Yidan, and request that you confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Education, *honoris causa*.

Professor Ge Zhaoguang



Doctor of Humanities, *honoris causa*

Mr Chairman,

Professor Ge Zhaoguang is an expert in analysing historical evidence and has studied the history of Chinese thought with great meticulousness and insight. He is a distinguished professor at the National Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies and at the Department of History at Fudan University. Professor Ge displays the ideal attributes advocated by renowned Tang Dynasty historian Liu Zhiji in his interpretation of the fundamentals of studying and writing about history. These are the ability to compose historical works, a rich knowledge of history and historical materials, and deep insight, which enables the analysis and evaluation of history. In this light, Professor Ge is an exemplary scholar, who has written extensively and ethically on historiography.

Like many other Chinese youths born in the 1950s, Professor Ge left the city for the countryside during the Cultural Revolution. Despite living in a cramped barn, he read books voraciously to quench his thirst for knowledge. He worked at a rural brick and tile factory, a pesticide plant, and a supply and marketing cooperative. It was not until the end of the Cultural Revolution that at the age of 28, he was among the first batch of students at Peking University after the resumption of the college entrance examinations. Immersed in a liberal and strong academic atmosphere, he studied classical literature at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, engaging in extensive reading in literature, history and philosophy, and consequently establishing a solid research foundation and handling historical materials with meticulous attention to detail.

Professor Ge was deeply influenced by the May Fourth Movement and responded enthusiastically to its philosophy of “reorganising national heritage and recreating civilisation”. He regarded Mr Hu Shih, the founder and leader of the New Culture Movement, as a role model during his academic journey, particularly because of Hu’s consistently moderate rationality and firm stance. After graduation, Professor Ge began studying Zen Buddhism from the perspective of cultural history. His first book, *Zen Buddhism and Chinese Culture*, was published in 1986 and was awarded the first-ever China Book Prize in 1988.

In 1998, Professor Ge published his magnum opus, *A History of Chinese Thought*. Taking into account the ancient context and realities of life, the book challenged the conventional historical interpretations and historiographical traditions and opened up a new chapter in the study of the history of Chinese thought. The first edition of 10,000 copies was sold out within six months, and its approach became a hot topic for discussion among academics.

Despite his fame, Professor Ge has continued to work tirelessly, publishing books such as *A History of Chinese Zen Buddhist Thought: From the 6th to 10th Century*, *Here in 'China' I Dwell: Reconstructing Historical Discourses of China for Our Time*, and *What Is China: Territory, Ethnicity, Culture, and History*, which were internationally acclaimed. In recent years, he has been proactively promoting the research approach of 'viewing China from the periphery', encouraging students to broaden their historical horizons, to compare and explain historical transitions from a macro perspective, and to search for new meanings. His books subsequently won significant awards in the United States, South Korea and Japan after they were translated into English, Korean and Japanese.

Professor Ge is also passionate about teaching, and his lectures are as well-crafted as his writing. From 1984 to 1992, he was an associate professor at the Department of History at Yangzhou Normal College (now Yangzhou University). Between 1992 and 2006, he was a professor at the School of Humanities of Tsinghua University. He then became a visiting scholar and adjunct professor at Chicago University, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium, Kyoto University as well as Tokyo University in Japan, and City University of Hong Kong, among others. During this period, he published *Records of Lectures in the Study of History of Thought* (2005) and *Records of Lectures in the Study of History of Thought cont. Volume* (2012) and others. Meanwhile, he still found time to contribute his expertise to the consolidation of ancient texts and advisory on history education.

Professor Ge's teenage experiences gave him a deep appreciation of the complexities of history and society, and resulted in his great affection for the former throughout his career. Looking back, he adopted a positive attitude to hardship and reflected on his successes and failures. In 2007, Professor Ge joined Fudan University, where he was the founding director of the National Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies. In that role, he advocated the importance of humanistic care and critical minds, while stepping out of the ivory tower to inspire young people and benefit society.

In 2009, Professor Ge was appointed one of the first Princeton Global Scholars at Princeton University and was a visiting professor there from 2010 to 2013.

Mr Chairman, Professor Ge is a leading figure in academia, particularly in the history of Chinese thought. He is widely acclaimed for his strong commitment to societal care, his extensive reading, and his study of Chinese history from a global perspective. On behalf of The Education University of Hong Kong, I am honoured to present to you Professor Ge Zhaoguang, and request that you confer on him the degree of Doctor of Humanities, *honoris causa*.

Dr Zhang Yimou



Doctor of Humanities, *honoris causa*

Mr Chairman,

Dr Zhang Yimou has a global reputation for his iconic approach to film-making, which consistently conveys a sense of historical responsibility and humanistic concern through the visual medium. Throughout his career, Dr Zhang has received numerous awards for his exceptionally creative output, which is celebrated for its vibrant colour and highly detailed approach. He is also the only film director to have organised the opening and closing ceremonies for both Summer and Winter Olympic Games. He presented Chinese cultural heritage with a well-crafted, breath-taking approach through these high-profile international events to millions of viewers around the world.

Born in the 1950s, Dr Zhang was passionate about painting from a young age. He fell in love with photography while working in a cotton factory and began documenting the places, people and rituals in that environment. Completely enthralled by the art form, he spent his hard-earned savings on this passion, and he was soon rewarded with first prize in a national photography competition.

Despite his exceptional talent, Dr Zhang still had to work hard to realise his dream of studying at the Beijing Film Academy and appealed directly to the Minister of Culture to get in, against all odds. His persistence and outstanding performance eventually paid off, and he became a top student at the Academy, earning excellent grades year after year.

After graduating, Dr Zhang joined the Guangxi Film Studio, and as the director of photography, debuted in the film *One and Eight*. For this first project, he won the Outstanding Photography category at the Chinese Film Awards. In 1986, Dr Zhang starred in the leading role in *Old Well* to critical acclaim. He went on to win Best Actor at the Golden Rooster Awards and the Hundred Flowers Awards, and at the Tokyo International Film Festival.

In 1988, he returned to working behind the camera, debuting as director with *Red Sorghum*. The film masterfully captures the inner world of its characters, blending narrative, lyricism, realism and imagery in a rich, colourful and bold style. *Red Sorghum* is the manifestation of Dr Zhang's interpretation of films as classical Chinese poetry. The film celebrates the fervent patriotic spirit of the Chinese people, and won Best Drama at the 8th Golden Rooster Awards, Best Drama at the 11th Hundred Flowers Awards, and the Golden Bear for Best Picture at the 38th Berlin International Film Festival, placing him at the forefront of the cinematic world.

In 1990, his film *Ju Dou* was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, making it the first Chinese-language film to be nominated at the Oscars. Later, *Raise the Red Lantern* was nominated for the same award, as well as winning a Silver Lion Award at the 48th Venice International Film Festival and the International Federation of Film Critics Award. Two years later, *The Story of Qiu Ju* went one step further, winning the Golden Lion Award at Venice and Best Film at the 13th Golden Rooster Awards.

2002 marked a watershed year in Dr Zhang's career. His commercial film *Hero* pulled the curtain back on a new era of Chinese blockbusters. His subsequent works, including *House of Flying Daggers*, *Curse of the Golden Flower* and *The Flowers of War*, all targeted the international market, while twice setting new box office records in China. His works also topped annual Chinese box office takings for Chinese-language films four times, establishing Dr Zhang a household name as a director.

In 2008, at the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics, Dr Zhang used an ancient Chinese sundial to start the ceremony, skilfully incorporating mass performances to showcase four great Chinese inventions. It was a magnificent event of unparalleled grandeur, mesmerising the global audience. In the same year, Dr Zhang won the 'You Bring Charm to the World' award and was named one of the 'Top Ten People who Moved China'.

In 2010, Dr Zhang was conferred an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts by Yale University, which hailed him as "a genius with camera and choreography", whose work "has portrayed China in all its glory, complexity and charm". His 2018 film *Shadow* drew on the Chinese ink-and-wash painting tradition to present a highly stylised cinematic world, using black and white as the key colours. In the same year, Dr Zhang won the Jaeger-LeCoultre Glory to the Filmmaker award at the 75th Venice International Film Festival. He was the first Chinese filmmaker to receive this honour and to be conferred an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by Boston University.

In 2019, Dr Zhang served as chief director of the celebration gala at the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the People's Republic of China. He was subsequently appointed as chief director of the opening and closing ceremonies at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics and Winter Paralympics. Currently, Beijing is the only 'Double Olympic city', and Dr Zhang is the only 'Double Olympic Director'. At the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics, he used the traditional Chinese 24 solar terms as the main theme, incorporating innovative technologies, including artificial intelligence, virtual reality and augmented reality, to bring Tang dynasty Chinese poet Li Bai's prose to life. The visuals he created were striking yet subtle, in portraying the turbulent flow of the raging Yellow River. Through the Olympic ceremonies, Dr Zhang demonstrated his varied artistic styles, from the grandeur of the 2008 version to the elegance of 2022.

Now in his 70s, Dr Zhang is still deeply passionate about the art of film, and there are no signs of him slowing down. In recent years, three of his works have been released – *One Second*, *Cliff Walkers* and *Snipers*.

Mr Chairman, Dr Zhang has immense talent and boundless creativity, but he is also humble, often claiming that only half of his success is attributable to talent, and that the other half is from the training he has received. Over the years, his pursuit of perfection and artistic breakthroughs has never ceased. It is my pleasure and privilege to present Dr Zhang Yimou and request on behalf of The Education University of Hong Kong that you confer on him the degree of Doctor of Humanities, *honoris causa*.