

**Convocation Address of
University of Western Ontario Honorary Degree Recipient,
Dr Victor Li
May 24, 2009**

Traditional Values in Business

Good afternoon Dr Longstaffe, Dr Stephenson, Professor Slaughter, graduands, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I am pleased to be here today to receive my honorary degree from the University of Western Ontario. This is a prestigious recognition and I wish to thank the University of Western Ontario for this honor.

Today is also an important day for many of you. Representing the culmination of your hard work and efforts, this is an occasion to celebrate your achievements and academic accomplishments. Together with your close friends and family, I am delighted to be able to share this momentous event with you.

After receiving the phone call from Dr Davenport regarding the honorary degree, I sat down and reflected upon my experience in business over the past 20 odd years. I thought I might take this opportunity to share some of my insights with you and hope that they can give you some inspiration for your careers.

From the time I started working in the Cheung Kong Group to now, I have witnessed growth which many commentators have described as exponential. The Group has grown from a local property development company in the early '70s to a multinational with operations spanning property development, retail, infrastructure, energy, telecommunications, ports and life sciences in 54 countries, with more than 240,000 staff. Currently, we are developing well over 200 million square feet of property worldwide; our terminals look after 13% of global container throughput; and our health and beauty stores make us the largest retailer of this industry in the world. We are also one of the largest foreign investors in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and Italy...the list goes on, but I won't bore you with any further details.

For many years, magazines and newspapers love to ask us whether there is a formula for the success of the Cheung Kong Group. To this question, my answer is: I would be crazy to even pretend that there is a single formula. However, I do know several things that would reduce the chances of success.

As an engineer, I like to express my answers in point form:

Point 1:

It is very difficult to improve yourself or your company if you consider yourself very successful already. We tend to stop learning when we are too satisfied with ourselves. I have a favourite Chinese saying from Confucius: “三人行，必有我師焉：擇其善者而從之，其不善者而改之。” Roughly translated, when three people walk together, one of them has something he/she can teach you. There are always lessons to be learnt from the people around you – learn what to do and what not to do from their virtues and their vices. As long as you do not consider yourself successful, the learning process never stops – never stop walking the path of knowledge.

Point 2:

It is difficult to succeed or to maintain your fruits of success if you do not look long-term. Do not get me wrong – be it long or short-term, profit is always good. But short-term profit is almost too much fun, too many people like it – as a result, the scene is usually crowded and competition is keen. On the other hand, long-term investment needs patience and hard work. The process involves several up and down cycles and is usually less exciting. As a result, most people do not enjoy it as much and the competition scene is less crowded. Wonderful news for those who prefer the longer process.

Unfortunately, today a lot of public companies have to do quarterly reports. Analysts focus on short-term profit so they can advise clients who prefer short-term gains. If the boards of these companies do not have the backing of one or two major long-term shareholders, the senior management of these companies may have no choice other than to focus on short-term profit. This is even better news for those who have the luxury of focusing on long-term projects.

Point 3:

It is difficult to succeed if you forget what your grandparents/ parents taught you when you were a little kid:- honor, responsibility, integrity, honesty and sincerity – all the traditional values. Today, when we talk about “global village”, most people concentrate on the word “global”; I tend to focus on the word “village”. In the small corporate village we live in today, when almost all the key players practically know each other, reputation becomes more important than ever. When one villager acts irresponsibly or not honorably, his partners, shareholders, colleagues and customers will remember for a long time. A successful villager must be a good villager at the same time, or else his good fortune will be short-lived. The Cheung Kong Group operates in 54 countries. I do not pretend to know all their local customs. Sincerity is my door-opener to friends and partners around the world. I certainly would not leave home without it.

So there it is, I do not have any single formula for success; but if you do not consider yourself successful, focus on the long-term, and remember what your grandparents teach you about honor, integrity, responsibility and sincerity, your chances of success will be better, and you will be a more reputable villager in this global village.

Thank you, and I wish you all the very best of luck in your future endeavors. I hope you will all break new grounds and forge ahead in whatever you choose to do next.

Photo Captions



Victor Li was being conferred the Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, by Dr Fred Longstaffe, Acting Chancellor of University of Western Ontario, Canada today.



Dr Victor Li gave his Convocation Address, entitled “Traditional Values in Business”.



Dr Victor Li (centre) pictured here with Dr Fred Longstaffe, Acting Chancellor of University of Western Ontario (centre left) and Professor Kathleen Slaughter, Dean of Richard Ivey School of Business - Asia, University of Western Ontario (centre right).