

A Citation for Professor Jao Tsung-I

Delivered by Professor Tang Kwok-kwong,
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

Professor Jao Tsung-i, the University of Macau extends our highest respects to you as a great master of the vast and profound Chinese learning. Your writings and works are exemplary; your noble attitude towards learning is a perfect model for all of us to follow. You have set an excellent example in every aspect of Chinese studies and made indelible contributions to the development of Chinese culture and civilisation and to the whole of humanity, which will be remembered and cherished forever.

Professor Jao Tsung-i, styled Ku-an (Gu-an) and having Hsúan-t'ang (Xuan-tang) as the nom de plume, was born in Chao'an county, Guangdong province in August 1917. Being brought up and cultivated in a scholarly family, Professor Jao demonstrated exceptional gifts and talents for literature and arts at a very young age. As most schools and institutions of learning at the time produced only mediocre scholars, Professor Jao boasted neither certificates from them, nor a Western education by going abroad to get gilded. However, for half a century, Professor Jao has been leading the academic activities of a number of prestigious universities and making brilliant achievements. In 1946 Professor Jao became Professor and Head of the Department of Chinese Literature and History of South China University, Guangdong, and the following 16 years from 1952 to 1968 found Professor Jao teaching as Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Reader at the Chinese Department of the University of Hong Kong. From 1968 to 1973, Professor Jao taught at the National University of Singapore as Head and the first Chair Professor of the Department of Chinese Studies. From 1973 to 1978, Professor Jao was Chair Professor and Head, Department of Chinese Language and Literature, the Chinese University of Hong Kong. From 1980 to 1988, Professor Jao graced the University of East Asia, Macau, by being Chair Professor of the Faculty of Arts, as well as Director of the Department of Chinese Literature and History, Postgraduate School. Professor Jao has been a visiting professor in many parts of the world, such as the Chinese mainland, Japan, North America, and European, where all the academic institutions have benefited enormously from his erudite lectures on Chinese literature, Chinese history and Chinese philosophy. Such unique attainment is extremely rare, especially for one who has never gone through the experience of modern schooling. Though having never studied overseas, Professor Jao is well versed in English, French, Japanese, and even Sanskrit language and other languages in engraving, oracle bones, bronze and stone inscriptions and, using foreign languages as research media. Professor Jao made friends with such outstanding figures in Chinese studies

and Sinology in the 20th century academia as Ji Xianlin of China, Yoshikawa Kojiro of Japan, Paul Demieville of France and Joseph Needham of Britain. As a native scholar of China, Professor Jao has been enjoying equal fame and popularity with the leading celebrities of the world promoting Sinology all over the globe, and has never stopped academic and research endeavors. Professor Jao has been dedicated to Chinese learning and philology as life-long pursuit. Professor Jao, your readings of inscriptions on ancient bronze objects and oracle bones and of writings on bamboo slips and silk, your interpretations of *Si Ku Quan Shu* (Complete Library in the Four Branches of Literature), and elucidation of *Collected Taoist Scriptures* and of *Buddhist Sutra* are definitive. Your commentaries on ancient texts have helped remove many a philological obstacle. You, with your unique style of writing, powerful strokes and expertise, and your perfect command of classical prose, *pián*-style prose, *fù*-style prose, poetry and *cí*-poetry, dwarf all those who slight or vilify the vast and profound Chinese culture.

Never holding sectarian bias or confining research and learning to any particular school, Professor Jao has been searching and researching extensively, both diachronically and synchronically. Indeed, Professor Jao, you yourself embody the vast, profound and boundless Chinese culture. The spirit of Chinese learning is fair and all embracing and does not allow dishonesty or crooked means. Fully aware of and keen to capture the gist of the Chinese culture, you trace every crucial detail to its source and emerge from the past to develop the new, with a correct approach to establishing accurate thesis on a large scale. Your publications include scores of books and hundreds of papers, all being on key academic and cultural issues, and all being original, covering the whole of traditional concepts of learning, i.e., classics, history, philosophy, and literary works. Moreover, your collections of works virtually embrace all areas of Sino-Western studies over the past two hundred years. Most admired are *Studies of the History and Geography of Northwest China*, *Studies of the Yin Dynasty Engravings and Carvings*, and *Studies of Dunhuang Caves*. So are *Comparative Linguistics of Modern and Recent European Continent*, *Cultural Studies of Central Asia*, *Near East Asia and South Asia*, *Comparative Religious Studies*, and *Contemporary Studies on New Emerging Engravings and Writings on Bamboo Slips and Silk*. Indeed your writings, imbued with incomparable profundity and thorough and comprehensive understanding of Heaven and Man and of all great things, based on the highest principles and executed with utmost dexterity and faculty, are deeply appreciated and held in the highest respects by all.

Professor Jao's creative works are always built on valid sources, meticulous corroboration and the highest ethics. You have been living a noble life of utmost integrity, neither currying favour with nor relying on any groups or parties, seeking neither personal fame nor gain nor privileges, always following the natural way and affinity and remaining spotlessly clean all your life. Upright and above-board, erudite

and broadminded, you are a perfect model of the unity between Man and Nature and the Universe. Chinese literature and arts originated in the study of the Universe and Nature, with the *jing* (classics) being integrated with *li* (Rites) and *yi* (Changes), and incorporating research findings of three generations on *li*. Indeed, it took you tremendous painstaking work, involving the study of thousands of inscriptions on oracle bones to identify and locate the diviners, the meticulous efforts to compare the changes of *yao* (lines in the eight trigrams) on tattered bamboo slips, and the study of the neo-classics. And going beyond the Five Classics, you made a penetrating study on *Zhuang Zi* and *Lao Zi*, re-constructed the Chinese "Bible" by observing the natural law and the Way of Heaven and thus emphasised the religious soil that the Chinese culture is embedded in. It was owing to your efforts and contributions that the Chinese learning was reinvigorated after the Manchu of Qing, and the golden thread of academic research in Chinese studies has been able to continue into the present day. You have spent years studying history in order to find references and cross-references on key historical issues. You chose the *Spring-and-Autumn Annals* as the true essence of the Chinese historiography, with emphasis on orthodox beliefs rather than factual descriptions, culminating in the *Theory of Orthodoxy in Chinese Historiography* and thus putting an end to the unhealthy trend in this field of study. Again it was through your contributions that scholars became aware of the existence of Chinese historiography and could carry on their work in the correct direction. You have made outstanding contributions to the study of *zi* (philosophy), with numerous writings on Central Asia, India, South Asia and Japan, and on Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism flourishing there and the religious culture of the Near East, all of which sheds light on the significance of Confucianism in China. Having perused all the extant volumes in these countries and regions, you completed the work *Annotations to Lao Zi*, revealing how the Chinese culture responded to the challenge of thoughts coming from outside the country. You traveled in India and South Asia and traced the footsteps of Sakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism; you reviewed all relevant literature corroborated by further evidence, feeling so strongly and reflecting so deeply on *sunyata* and the Buddha-nature, thus setting a shining example in the study of Buddhism. You expressed deep admiration for civilisation of the Middle East, clearly indicating that it should not be encroached upon. And you were the first scholar to point out that the Middle East civilisation had long benefited from the Chinese civilisation, especially in philology. Your great book, *The Han-zi (The Chinese-Character) Tree*, stunned the academic circles, convincingly pointing out the facts of dissemination of the Chinese culture and correcting the erroneous views held by those mediocre scholars. Professor Jao is well aware of the researches and other academic activities going on in the Western world and adopts a critical attitude towards them. You have traveled all over the world; you have been to North and South Americas, Europe and Australia, engaging yourself in academic researches and making incomparable contributions to East-West cultural exchanges. Your literary works, complete with accurate references and allusions, corroboration of various editions, cataloging and review of literature, etc., are inspiring

with merits outshining those of the past. An Investigative Study on the Geography of Chu-Ci (The Songs of Chu), Index (Editions, Illustrations, Commentaries and Sources) to Chu-Ci, A Study on the Origins of Ci-Poetry, Dunhuang Qu, and A Complete Collection of Ci-Poems of the Ming Dynasty are all immortal literary works beneficial to generations to come. Your theories on classical literature advocate artistic expressions of inner feelings focusing on the theme, an in-depth reflection of the principle of phenomenology of the 20th century Europe. In short, the spirit integrating Nature and Man, the holy learning, has been consistent in your works, sparkling throughout your academic life.

Macau, with its 400-year history of East-West cultural exchanges, is blessed with the amiable environment of the unity between Heaven and Man. And the University of Macau, fully embodying the unique characteristics of Macau at the beginning of the new century, is ready to carry on its past traditions, forge ahead into the future and break new grounds. Professor Jao, you with your noble integrity and academic achievements, which always fill us with boundless admiration, will inspire the University of Macau towards these goals, just as the Book of Changes says, human beings can be educated and cultivated by fine examples. So, it is with respect and gratitude that the University of Macau is honored to confer on you the Degree of Doctor of Humanities, *honoris causa*.