

# Congratulatory Speech for the Presidential Inauguration Ceremony of Chinese Culture University

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Chairman of the Board Dr. Jen-Hu Chang (張鏡湖), other members of the Board, Acting President Spencer T. S. Yang (楊泰順), President Wu Wanyi (吳萬益), President Wen-Chen Chu (朱文成) of Tatung University, distinguish guests, ladies and gentlemen:

With great pleasure and honor, I represent President Michael M. C. Lai (賴明詔), President of National Cheng Kung University (NCKU), to say a few words to congratulate this important event of Chinese Culture University: the installation of a new president.



Standing here, I have to admit that I am both pleased and dismayed.

Pleased, because I see that my good friend Wanyi's intellectual and administration skills, which Chairman Chang had so meticulously spelled out, will most certainly be put to supreme test to build an already outstanding university to new height. I have no doubt that he can and will do it.

Dismayed, by being here means my university, NCKU, lost an outstanding colleague. As we know, however nice buildings one can have on campus, nothing beats having outstanding people. Therefore, your gain will certainly be our loss!

We all know the famous phrase 任重而道遠, namely, the responsibility is heavy and the road is distant! I am sure I do not need to remind Wanyi that the essence of this phrase will probably be describing what he will be facing with in the years to come. Although I have to say that if there were anyone from NCKU who could handle this with grace, elegance, experience, intellectual strengths and vision, it will be Wanyi. In this regard, I need to congratulate the search committee for being so wise in your selection.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I came from a country, the United States, where private institutions of higher learning are quite dominating in its intellectual landscape. Indeed, imaging US without Harvard, Yale, MIT, Chicago, Stanford and Caltech! Even more important, perhaps less known in Taiwan, imaging US without Haverford, Swarthmore, Radcliff, and of course Occidental College (the alma mater of President Barack Obama) and also my alma mater Drew University in New Jersey. In fact, of the three alma maters of Obama, Occidental College, Columbia University and Harvard University, all are private universities! Undoubtedly private universities had played, and continue to play, a fundamental role in US's intellectual and economic strengths. Indeed, with well defined mission and if operated well, private universities can be a source of strengths that maybe even public universities cannot match.

Ladies and gentlemen, in my two and a half years since coming to Taiwan, and of course to NCKU, I noticed that Taiwan's private universities have significant room for their growth.

Just last week, President Lai and I and another colleague had the good fortune of visiting Seoul National University in South Korea. There I learned the rise of private universities in past several decades. In fact, a very distinguished South Korean individual said that “if you were to look for the top twenty universities in Korea twenty years ago, you would mostly find national universities. Few private universities would be in that list. Today, the situation is reversed, which implies the overall improvement of higher education in Korea!” Indeed, except for the two outstanding national universities, Seoul National University and KAIST, those that seem to dominate the intellectual landscape in Korea are all private universities!

I believe that for the community of higher education institutions, just like any human community, needs cooperation and competition, or cooptition! Speaking as a senior administrator of a national university, I would say that the fact that in Korea, the private institutions can challenge and are challenging the dominance of national universities is and can only be good for the growth of national universities.

So, I like to offer a humble challenge to President Wu. Now that you are the president of Chinese Culture University, please challenge with vigor the university you have served for many years, NCKU.

There is no doubt that private universities are, or can be, treasure for Taiwan's higher education landscape. The road to a level-playing-field for both private and national universities is still to be achieved in Taiwan. I am convinced that reaching this level playing field can only be good for Taiwan in the short and for sure, in the long run.

Once again, while I am issuing this as a challenge to President Wu, whom I have no doubt that he will be able to meet this challenge successfully.

I wish you all every success and good health. I especially wish President Wu soaring high.

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