

PROF CHANG Hsin Kang:

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I believe that you may feel a bit drowsy because you just had lunch. Perhaps you can turn the lights down a little bit, so that you feel more relaxed. Anyway, Prof Cheng just introduced me. Thanks for his very kind introduction.

I am sorry that I really didn't have much time to prepare for the delivery this afternoon, but since the time slot has been given to me, I will just try my best.

I was sent the topic of my speech only yesterday afternoon. It may not be a very relevant topic. The title of my speech is: 2C to 2C squared.

This morning there was a very insightful and enlightened discussion. Last night there was a performance of Chen Qigang's new work. It's not really very new, but I think it's a very new performance in Hong Kong. It was Die Lian Hua.

A lot of speakers have already mentioned that piece of work, so I won't spend more time on it, but I think it's a very attractive piece of work. It gives people a very strong impression, especially that he has made a very bold attempt to merge the western musical style and musical performance with Chinese traditional musical instruments.

They have six different sopranos and different sounds. It's a combination of East and West, tradition and modernity. This is a very bold attempt and it gives me a very strong impression.

It's really an example of cultural fusion. I'm not in a position to comment about the musical content, but then as one of the audience, I feel that it is a very bold attempt and it leaves me with a very strong impression.

Since the name is Chen Qigang and the last name is "Chen", which starts with the letter "C", the first "C". The reason I have the second "C" is that Margaret Chan became the Deputy General of the World Health Organisation. Margaret Chan also starts with "C", so that is another "C".

At the press conference after the election, because the working language is English, my father worked in the World Health Organisation, so I know

about it, the official language is English and French, so usually the questions raised by the reporters have to be either in French or in English. Then simultaneous interpretation is provided.

But then because reporters from Hong Kong are very happy about it and they started raising the questions in Cantonese, but then other reporters complained about it and the Hong Kong reporters said, "Okay, I'll ask my question in English and I hope that Dr Margaret Chan will answer in Cantonese, so that we can have the sound bite in Cantonese." But then Dr Chan very politely and very diplomatically said that she would reply in English, but then after that, she would stay for 15 minutes more so as to spend 15 minutes time with the Hong Kong reporters, so that they could have the sound bite in Cantonese as well.

What does it show? It shows that in this international organisation, a Chinese deputy director who comes from Hong Kong, in order to show the international nature of this organisation -- but then on the other hand, it has to take into consideration the tradition of using English and French as the official language. On the other hand, she also has to take care of the feelings of the reporters from Hong Kong, but then she handled it very properly.

It shows that the most common language now is English and French, even though Hanyu, the Chinese language used by a lot of people, but then most of them are Chinese.

Later on I will dwell upon it a bit more, so that is where the two Cs come from.

From the materials I got, the theme for today's discussion is East meets West. Actually, I'm not East meets West. I'm just a product of an encounter between a father and a mother. Actually, Hong Kong becomes a place where East meets West. There are reasons for that. Geographically speaking, Hong Kong is East meeting the ocean. Hong Kong is actually on the eastern tip of the Asian continent and then it's Pacific Ocean below Hong Kong. But then culturally speaking, Hong Kong is really a place where East meets West. That's why I have to specify that the place where East meets West, East should be a place representing parts of Asia, including mainland China, Japan, Korea. If we are talking about China, "C" of course means Xian, it's the West of the middle part of China, but geographically,

when you talk about West, it should be Istanbul. Istanbul is really the place where East meets West. They have ferries crossing the harbour. Istanbul is a real place where East meets West, geographically speaking.

When Europeans think about East, they not are thinking about the Chinese. When the Europeans were thinking about the East, they were talking about the near East, that is Turkey and Palestine. Then they talk about the Middle East. It was only after the 16th century that they came to the Far East.

Of course, now we drop these terms. Near East, Middle East and Far East are actually from a European's perspective. For a world which is round, this is not a very accurate representation.

Now when we are talking about East meets West, I think what we meet is certain parts of Asia, especially the eastern part of Asia, not Iran or Palestine or those Middle Eastern places, we are talking about some of the eastern countries meeting the western European countries.

When we talk about West, we are not talking about Bulgaria or Romania, we are talking about Western Europe. Usually when we talk about East meets West, East means the eastern part of Asia and Western Europe.

So it is encounter between those countries at the eastern part of Asia with those countries in Western Europe. That's what we mean when we talk about East meets West.

The earliest encounter between East meeting West is of course the Middle East and the near East. At that time, they met in Vienna, they had a battle and coffee was left there. The people enjoyed the coffee and the Europeans started drinking coffee. That is the result of the first encounter between East and West.

In the last 500 years, the countries in the Far East also started to have some encounters with them. Middle East and near East actually have more encounters with the European people, geographically speaking, but when talking about fashion or aesthetic values, it seems that Asian countries have closer encounters or closer interaction with people from Western Europe, whereas the near East, including Turkey, and the Middle East, on the other hand, even though they are geographically located closer to

Western Europe, they do not have such a close encounter or interaction with the people of western Europe than those from the Far East.

For instance, Turkey does not have a very effective interaction with Western Europe. When we talk about eastern Asia, including India, they have about 200 years of British rule. English is the dominant language in India, but I believe this is just the language that they commonly use, because they have been ruled by the British for over 200 years.

Next, I would like to talk about why such phenomenon occurred. When we look at history, I'd like to make a bold assumption; that is, when the political and economic strings are strong, then the culture will be more wide spread and more widely accepted by the people around them.

Because they are strong politically and economically, their cultural values will then be easily accepted by the people near them. For instance, during the Tang Dynasty, it was very strong. So people from Japan and other East Asian countries took the initiative to approach the Tang Dynasty and to exchange with them.

In the past few centuries, in encounters of East and West, Asia was in a weak position and that's why its culture had not been widely spread. The Asian countries or the Asian people, at that time, only absorbed the values of the West, but did not spread their own values to the West.

A lot of European people also knew that the different races in Asia -- including China, Japan and Korea -- had a very rich cultural heritage and a long history. It's not that they did not know, because for hundreds of years, when East met West, it was a unilateral kind of exchange. It's the Asian people trying to understand the western world, but not the other way around. They were only copying or imitating the western values because, at that time, the Asian countries were in a weaker position.

In the last 100 years, western European countries, especially the ones using English and French, were very creative and innovative. That's why the two languages -- English and French -- were widely accepted around the world. At that time, Britain and France became very strong countries. That's why English and French have been so widely spread and have become the dominant languages in many places in the world.

There were also countries which formed federations where French became the dominant language. Also that is the historical background of why English and French are now used as the official languages of a lot of international organisations.

That's why Margaret Chan had that reaction and that was the problem faced by her during the press conference.

At this time, educated people in Asia are now able to master at least one of the major languages in the world, which most commonly is English. Those have some understanding of the western world and western culture, actually quite a deep understanding. Among the intellectuals, many of them have mastered the English language and have a certain level of understanding of western culture.

That is why among the intellectuals in Asia, many of them will be able to understand western culture and master one of the dominant western languages.

Conversely, intelligencers in Europe and America are as intelligent and as curious and they are as willing to learn. However, the percentage of them who master one Asian language -- be it Chinese, Japanese, Korean or whatever -- and have an in-depth knowledge of the values, aesthetics, cultural essence, et cetera, is a very small percentage.

We rarely call ourselves an old Britain hand, an old America hand, et cetera. But if someone speaks Chinese, we call that person a China hand. This is the contrast. The consequence of this contrast is that although in history and today, the Asian population makes up a big proportion of the world population -- Asian civilisation has a brilliant history and its philosophical base and aesthetic values are on a very high plain.

However, when Asian civilisation communicates with its counterpart in the other part of the world, it's never really a balanced communication. How do we change the status quo? I don't have the answer.

This is a depiction of the current reality. This reality came from the creativity in Western Europe that had come forth over the past three centuries. The dominant trend in the rest of the world, we have four major

inventions. The last of the four was invented in the Tang Dynasty. That was a long time ago. Our ethical culture is very meaningful.

Because of the lack of transport access, the creativity in modern times has been lacking behind that of Western Europe. That gave rise to the phenomena I was describing. However, if we take a closer look at Japan -- I don't know if there are Japanese in the audience -- rationalisation in Japan had been going on for at least 100 years. The Meiji reformation started in 1868. By the end of that century, they defeated China in a maritime war and they defeated the Russians in the early 20th century.

Did that industrialisation bring about innovation in Japan which had universal value? It must be, but I don't think there's a lot of it.

I think over the past three centuries, we Asians have done very little in leading the rest of the world, like computer technology and even in the financial world, things like hedge funds. We did not invent them. I'm not complaining about it, I'm only saying that this phenomenon has its origin. So the title of my presentation is $2C$ to $2C$ squared.

On our scale, we see how we can change it and this change will not only benefit Asians, it will enable Asia to make greater contributions to the world. The first change is to try and reward creativity to incentivise innovation.

I will use Japan and China as examples. I have not studied other countries, but I think the outcome will be the same. In the Asian culture, there's emphasis on homogeneity.

For example, in universities, the underachievers cannot really get anywhere. The net result is that we have a homogenised population, we emphasise consensus, we emphasise collective homogeneity. That applies not only to China, but also to countries like Japan and Korea.

If we want to have creative culture, C plus C -- I'm a mathematician by training, so I would describe that as $2C$ squared.

Another point is the language barrier. Considering that so many Asians know European languages and so few Americans and Europeans know Asian languages, when we introduce our new emerging cultural and artistic trends

in Asia to the Americans and Europeans, the burden is on Asians who understand and have mastered European languages. Contrast with western modernity, not highlight the features and characteristics of Chinese modernity ...

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... and the water birds are flying together and the sky and the water in the autumn day merge together. The autumn sky and the water scene merge in the distance.

I want to use the same formula and say creativity and communication can take flight together.

Economy and culture, which are normally discrete and separate, should merge in colour. That's my message. Thank you.