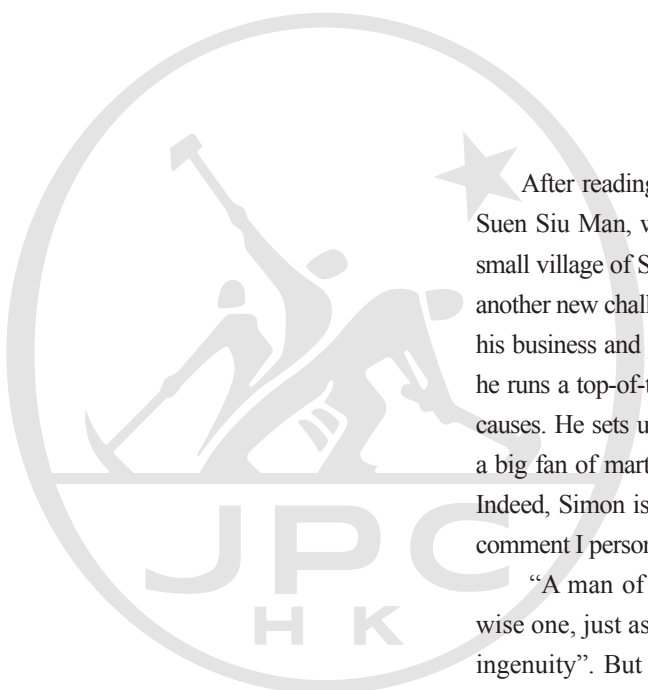


Foreword 1



After reading this book, I have a more rounded and deeper understanding of Simon Suen Siu Man, whom I have known for nearly 20 years. Four decades ago, he left the small village of Shangsha, Dongguan, in Mainland China for Hong Kong where he started another new challenging adventure. Simon has managed to overcome the ups and downs in his business and personal growth, fought persistently, and earned a wonderful life. Today, he runs a top-of-the-line label enterprise and generously supports cultural and educational causes. He sets up a museum, collects antique paintings and calligraphy, and has become a big fan of martial arts. He is a successful businessman who has lived a prominent life. Indeed, Simon is a man of wisdom, as commended by Prof. Jao Tsung-I. That impartial comment I personally cannot agree with more.

“A man of wisdom” is indeed a high regard. A clever man is not necessarily a wise one, just as the saying goes, “a clever person may become the victim of his own ingenuity”. But a wise person must be clever. His wisdom is more about his mind, insight, and capabilities in aspects of life from socializing, decision-making to task-handling.

This biography focuses noticeably on Simon’s personal growth and family life. His growth can be summarized as a “smile in tears, tears with light”. He sees self-improvement as a life-long project and persists in working in a variety of ways to better himself. As a man who suits his action to words, he holds dear to the philosophies of truth-seeking, fact-pursuing, and value-persisting. He understands the strength and warmth of family and, as a result, values the family bonds. Simon regards managing family as a way in which he may pass down traditional cultural morality. He has proven that a harmonious family serves as the foundation for everything. A family is the basic unit of a society and is highly valued in China. The regulation of one’s family represents the core of Chinese traditional culture, which

views personhood as its base, self-cultivation as its core, and family order, national governance, and world peace as its basic thinking. Of course, the time has changed so much that we cannot just copy and paste the old experiences into modern society. However, the implied rationalities can still be constructive. He thinks highly of communal dining; for instance, he insists on having family dinners on all important days. It was believed by the ancient Chinese that etiquette originated from the dinner table. Dining itself is a form of communication and the repetitive practice of etiquette. As his children recalled, Simon attaches great importance to the “sense of ceremony” in dining. These principles have informed all aspects of his cultural concepts and ways of living. Simon roots his wisdom in the profound Chinese traditional culture. At the same time, he is a good learner whose quest for knowledge can not be satiated. He has benefited from Hong Kong which has opened up a whole new horizon for him, and his journey around the globe have made his world even bigger. Rooted in traditional culture and nourished by the essence of the human civilization, Simon has been constantly enriching his wisdom.

Simon’s wisdom in business is fully represented in his philosophy that “business is busy with flexible ideas”. The word, “busy”, should not be overlooked as it is the essence, even the core, of business. Being busy means being dynamic, changeable and active. “Flexible ideas” is not just keeping up with the time but even forward-looking and forward-thinking. It is exactly what he means by saying that, “Emphasize the reality and recognize the changes, then change in response to change and change by virtue of that change.”

It is easy to recognize with hindsight the significant moves mattering most in the development of a company. After these decisions, a company might be saved, improved, or expanded. What is remarkable about Simon is that he has different ideas and emphases informing each phase in the development of his firm, and he has made the right decisions to advance his company. When he just started the business, he “lost for now yet won the future”; when his company stood firmly in competition, he “channelled all their advantages to tackle one spot”; when his company grew, he “pioneered before others, excelled above others, changed ahead of others”; when his company became top in the industry, he aspired to “go global and become number one”. Only someone with an ability to grasp the big picture can see far enough to seize opportunities, ease on temporary gains and losses, come up with unexpected thinking, sometimes even developing special and significant concepts, such as “reverse thinking”. Thus, Simon makes seemingly impractical yet promising

decisions. That is the power of wisdom.

The moment Prof. Jao Tsung-I said it was fate that brought them together, it was almost certain that Prof. Jao would exert a profound influence on Simon’s life. Simon admires Prof. Jao as a world-renowned sinologist, while Prof. Jao praised Simon as an entrepreneur with a positive, amiable, and innovative characteristic. Simon showed his respect for Prof. Jao in promoting the Jao Studies as a sort of cultural consciousness, a homage to the Chinese culture. Jao had a notable impact on Simon, gently immersing the business leader in his erudition. Their relationship was a much-told story, going beyond age, occupations, and identities. Under the guidance of Professor Jao, Simon, already beginning a collection of calligraphy and paintings, became committed to the endeavour. He studied extensively the works of famous ancient Chinese calligraphers and painters such as Shi Tao, Bada, the “Four Wangs”, “Four Monks”, and “Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou”. As a result, Simon improved dramatically his knowledge, taste, and sensitivity in aesthetic matters. Simon has further grown his own taste and prefers collecting works from modern artists. The plaque in Simon’s box room bears an inscription by Professor Jao, “Yi Tao Ju”, is a testament to their relationship. The Sun Museum, represents a concentrated display of his artistic taste.

My personal connection with Simon dates back to 1999, when the China Cultural Relics Protection Foundation in Canada held a Chinese jade exhibition. The prime ministers from both nations examined enthusiastically the relics displayed in the hall where they met. In April of the same year, I was invited to visit Canada by the invitation of the Foundation, and the jades displayed were brought back to China by my colleague, Mr. Fan Shimin, who went with me. Later I discovered that Simon had sponsored this exhibition. Shortly after that, the Foundation also introduced me to Mr. Simon Suen Siu Man. By then, I was already working in the Palace Museum.

Simon was of the view that it should be a company’s social responsibility and obligation to give back to society. He along with his company, benefited from such devotion. He funded the Chinese Museums Association (CMA) for the 2006 edition of *The Annals of China Museum*. The ceremony of his appointment as the Honorary Vice President of the CMA and the Honorary Chief Editor of *The Annals* and the launching ceremony of *The Annals* was held in October 2006 on the stage of the She Lent Fang Palace in the Palace Museum. As a representative of the organizer, I was fortunate enough to witness this important event in the history of Chinese museums. In a blink of eye, 14 splendid years have passed, and it is still vivid in my mind.

While congratulating on the publication of this biography, we look forward, and believe that Simon will make greater achievements and continue with his legend.

Professor Zheng Xinmiao
Former Deputy Minister of Culture
Former Director of the Palace Museum
Designated Research Fellow of China Central Institute for Culture and History
Director of Chinese Poetry Society

Foreword 2

In this book, you are not just reading a book but also reading a man. A good book is one that touches people. And the main character of this book is indeed a moving figure.

Many Chinese from Mr. Simon Suen Siu Man's generation have suffered in their youth. Some managed to gain entrance into college after many years of farming, and, with the implementation of the Reform and Opening-up Policy, many more were able to fight their way up. Mr. Liang Qichao once said: "Adversity is the best way to learn". Likewise, Simon faced with members of his generation a similar set of adversity. Yet, it was his bravery and persistence that ultimately led Simon to become a successful entrepreneur and global business leader. There is no doubt that the nation-wide reform and opening-up policies were crucial. Policies aside, excellent entrepreneurs, such as Ren Zhengfei, Jack Ma and Simon Suen, cannot be neglected as part of the success story. These entrepreneurs started from scratch and strove constantly for success that contributed to the miracle of the Chinese economic take-off, saving the national economy and propelling the astonishing economic growth from the Cultural Revolution to an advanced status today.

What makes the story of Simon, a successful international entrepreneur, so touching is his profound humanistic care and his responsibility for the Chinese culture. I would like to cite two instances although ample examples have been provided in this book. At the beginning of this century, Prof. Jao Tsung-I decided to establish Jao Tsung-I Petite École at the University of Hong Kong. It is the norm in western countries and Hong Kong to establish a new research institution (or research unit) through self-funding. For example, social resources need to be raised for the operation of the Petite École. For that, Prof. Jao Tsung-I suggested, forming a Petite École Fan Club to support the Petite École financially. Simon, the biggest

supporter and donator, is one of the founding presidents of the club. Not only has he made donations generously, but Simon has also encouraged a huge crowd of his entrepreneur friends to donate. It is fair to say that the Petite École would not have achieved so much without the assistance of Simon, who continues his support after the passing of Prof. Jao and held a grand fund-raising dinner in October 2019. The dinner turned out to be a great success, thanks to Simon's thoughtful arrangements and unrelenting efforts. The Petite École is now a place fulfilling the historical mission to revitalize Chinese culture — one of Prof. Jao's wishes.

Another example is Simon's full support for the establishment of the Jao Tsung-I Academy of Sinology at the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) — an academy that has organized a capable research team, held a series of high-quality academic activities and published quite a few influential academic publications, thus advancing local study of sinology. Led by Prof. Chen Zhi, the Academy is also responsible for the Chinese-English translation of the key academic publications of Prof. Jao. I believe Professor Albert Chan Sun Chi, President Emeritus of HKBU, will provide a more detailed account in the foreword that follows this one.

In addition to his great talent and bold vision, global outlook, and humanism, I admire Simon deeply for his sincerity and modesty. Thus, it is no surprise that Simon has a wonderful family and many friends. The author of this book, Dr. Faye Tong, has been working with Simon for many years and knows all these details by heart, imbuing this biography with its vividness and appeal. The detailed description about the entrepreneur himself, and business management cases can be studied in high level business administration courses, forming an invaluable tool in the cultivation of business talents of the younger generation. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Faye Tong, for composing this inspiring and touching book with rich academic, literary, and historical value.

Professor Lee Chack Fan

Director of Jao Tsung-I Petite École, The University of Hong Kong

Member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering

Member of Guangdong Institute for Culture and History

Foreword 3

I met Mr. Simon Suen Siu Man for the first time at the Scout Association of Hong Kong, when I was President of the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU). Dr. Wong Kwok Keung, the Honorary Doctor of HKBU, and some supportive friends introduced Simon who served as the deputy director of the Association.

Simon impressed me as a warm-hearted and humble person, who rarely talked about his international label business, and I was impressed even more when I learnt about the business scale. It was truly no small feat when someone can turn a business of a small label into a global enterprise.

Since we knew each other, it felt as if we were old friends. Although he was an entrepreneur and I had worked in a company before my university career, we never talked about business, instead focusing on shared interest such as Chinese culture and art. During our first lunch, he shared much about his collections and mentioned his favourite Chinese ancient painters and calligraphers: the “Four Wangs” and “Four Monks”. I happened to have the painting collection of them. It turned out that Simon and I had a lot in common, and we enjoyed our conversations a great deal.

Being inspired and influenced by the world-renowned sinologist Prof. Jao Tsung-I, Simon has actively promoted the traditional Chinese culture and has made significant contributions to the growth of Jao Studies. He has provided invaluable support for the teaching of Chinese traditional culture at HKBU, establishing the Mr. Simon Suen and Mrs. Mary Suen Sino-Humanitas Institute Development Fund to further the operation, research projects and cultural exchanges of the Institute. With his generous assistance, we have been able to advance globally in Chinese Studies and Sinology. It was later that Simon participated in the establishment of the Jao Tsung-I Academy of Sinology, a milestone in the development history of HKBU. He

is deeply esteemed as an entrepreneur who has taken profound responsibility for the social, cultural, and educational causes.

On the 28th anniversary of the establishment of SML, I wrote Simon, the founder, an acrostic couplet with his Chinese name: “少志立千秋，壯歲功成先報國；文心懷宇宙，華籤利就再雕龍”。I praised him as a determined man who carefully carved out his way to success. The six characters, “少文功成利就” extracted from the couplet, standing alone, is my compliment and congratulations toward Simon and his company. And it is for the same reason that I am writing this foreword. Simon’s success is closely attributed to his ambitions as a youth, his persistence as a young man, and his vision and courage — attributes demonstrated throughout his many experiences. All these characteristics are crucial for what he had achieved from a small label. Simon is admirable for a willingness to dive into an industry for three decades and reward the society as a successful entrepreneur.

I believe readers of this legend, from whatever fields, will be inspired to start and explore their own legends.

Professor Albert Chan Sun Chi
President Emeritus, Hong Kong Baptist University
Professor and Chairman of the Academic Committee at Sun Yat-sen University
Member of the Chinese Academy of Science

