

## CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE

### SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE

I feel greatly honoured, as one of the first students of our Faculty of Science, to be called upon to write this message to celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

It gives me great pride to see how well our Faculty has developed during the past seven decades and on this occasion, in particular, I am reminded of what went on when the Faculty was established in 1939. It was Professor Walter Brown, Professor of Mathematics at the time, who advocated the idea of a faculty of science in the university and devoted his efforts to bring it into existence. He became the faculty's founding dean.

Science subjects were taught at the time in the Faculty of Arts and I had entered the university the year before as an Arts student, doing science and mathematics heading for a B.A. degree. I was happy to be transferred in my second year to the new faculty.

There was no student in the fourth year, and only one in the third, and there were six of us in the second. But from these seven students no less than three were to achieve outstandingly distinguished careers afterwards. There was John H T Huang, who won an international reputation for his study of the history of science in China, as did Clifford Matthews in his research on the origin of life. And there was Oswald Cheung who was knighted for his service to the universities and to the Executive and Legislative Councils.

One distinctive feature of the new faculty was its efforts to maintain a high academic standard by running very strict examinations at the end of each year, so much so that of the six students in my class, only three got promoted to the third year, and of these three only two managed to get into the fourth, Miss Lam Yung Tai and me. But we could not complete our studies anyhow as the War broke out on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1941 and Hong Kong surrendered to the Japanese on Christmas day.

It was a heavy blow to us students, especially those in the final year within sight of graduating within a few months. But Professor Brown came up with the idea of awarding war degrees to all final year students, and managed to get the Senate members' support for this. The diploma awarded me served me well when I went into Free China a little later, as a refugee, in securing jobs to keep me alive. He also wrote me a testimonial which proved invaluable, especially when I was considered by the Rhodes Trust in Oxford for the award of a scholarship. Professor Brown outlived the war, and returned to Britain. I was in constant touch with him and when my wife and I visited Britain in 1954 we were so happy to be able to go up to Glasgow to see him.

I hope the reader will be indulgent with me for making this message rather personal, but I do feel that, on a happy occasion like this, some one who did so much for our Faculty, and for its students, should be remembered with gratitude.

*Rayson Huang*