

Dr C K LAU

Citation

Albert Einstein said, “Whoever undertakes to set himself up as a judge in the field of truth and knowledge is shipwrecked by the laughter of the gods.” It was Einstein’s questioning and his open mind that allowed his genius to shine through.

The man we honor today, Dr C K Lau, lives and works by a philosophy of always questioning the status quo. It is this critical questioning that Dr Lau emphasizes to his students, always urging them to keep an open mind, to seek new and alternative ways of seeing and doing things; to be creative, to stand up for their ideas, and to question the very systems of learning.

As a small child, Dr Lau wanted to be a policeman. Later, his ambitions switched from a life in law enforcement to engineering. The beneficiaries of his change of heart and direction have been Hong Kong’s vital construction industry, its geotechnical research and advancement, and engineering students at HKUST, where he serves as an ad hoc lecturer.

A graduate in civil and structural engineering from the University of Wales, Dr Lau went on to study soil mechanics at Cambridge University. He was awarded an MPhil in 1985 and a PhD in 1988. A practicing civil engineer who specializes in geotechnics, his interests include building development, ground investigation, laboratory testing, foundation, deep excavation, site formation, slope stabilization, natural terrain hazards mitigation, and sewage treatment technology.

Dr Lau worked in the UK for six years with a multidisciplinary consultancy practice before returning to Hong Kong in 1994, where he was appointed a director of Fong On Construction and Engineering Co Ltd,

responsible for the firm’s civil, geotechnical and foundations operations.

By his own admission, Dr Lau didn’t do all that well at school in Hong Kong. He says that was because he never took anything for granted. Even then he was questioning everything, an attitude that was to serve him well at Cambridge where, he says, “Questioning everything is appreciated.” And it was the eclectic nature of Cambridge—immersing him in a widely diverse learning environment—that helped to further solidify his open-minded approach to engineering, research and teaching.

He says, “At HKUST I teach the practical aspects of my work, not the academic side of things. I try to complement students’ academic training, bringing them the experience of the real world. For example, in design I impress on students that there is no right or wrong answer, just good or bad design.”

Dr Lau insists that he is not very interesting, that his huge output of work is not really that big. However, his opinion on his achievements is contradicted by the results, and, based on results, Dr Lau is indeed prolific. At last count he had worked on over 120 projects in Hong Kong and Europe, including geotechnical aspects of the Hong Kong International Airport at Chek Lap Kok, and as a consultant and registered structural engineer for our University’s recently completed Helium Facility Store.

Like all highly successful people, a passion for what he does drives his continuing professional success. His strong desire to give to the Hong Kong community is clearly evidenced by his teaching and research work.

With a strong interest in the dissemination of research findings, and case histories of good practice, he has been responsible for organizing over 50 technical meetings, ground forums, seminars and conferences, and has participated in research and development work as an industrial collaborator. In addition, he has co-edited two conference proceedings and co-authored papers covering subjects on bearing capacity, slope stability, geotechnical centrifuge modeling, construction management, and innovative sewage treatment systems.

Dr Lau believes that those in the construction industry should work more closely together for the benefit of all. With some like-minded colleagues, notably Dr Victor Li of Victor Li & Associates Ltd and Professor Charles Ng of HKUST, he founded the Association of Geotechnical Specialists (Hong Kong) to actively promote the adoption of best practices in geotechnical engineering in Hong Kong. He became its founding chairman in 1998. As an engineer it is perhaps natural that Dr Lau would devote time to serve the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE). He is a past chairman of its Geotechnical Division, and remains on a number of its panels and committees.

Dr Lau also contributes his expertise and time to numerous industry, institution and government panels, committees and working parties. Among the many are the Appeal Tribunal Panel under the Buildings Ordinance, the Appeal Board Panel under the Entertainment Special Effects Ordinance, and many university bodies.

And then he says, “I am not really as busy as one might think.”

As a man who is all too matter of fact about his prolific output, his eyes definitely do light up when the subject turns to training young engineers. In addition to his teaching at HKUST, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the University of Hong Kong, he has been an HKIE Scheme A training supervising engineer

since 1997. In recognition of his contribution to geotechnical engineering in Hong Kong, Dr Lau was recently appointed an adjunct professor of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in the Department of Civil and Structural Engineering.

Clearly, teaching is more of a passion for Dr Lau than he is willing to admit. There is no doubting his enthusiasm when he talks about the need for students to be curious, and creative, and open-minded, and of course, to be always questioning—questioning *everything*.

Mr Pro-Chancellor, I have the honor to present to you, on behalf of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Dr C K Lau, Director of Fong On Construction and Engineering Co Ltd, for the award of Honorary Fellowship.

劉志強博士

讚辭

愛因斯坦說：“誰敢大言不慚，在真理與知識面前充當裁判者，必在諸神的嘲笑中滅亡。”這種求真與開放的態度，使愛因斯坦成為耀眼的天才。

我們今天要表揚的傑出人士劉志強博士正是抱著這種“質疑成規，挑戰現狀”的宗旨治學為人。作為科大的客座講師，劉博士不斷提醒學生要保持開放與批判的態度，鼓勵他們從多角度思考與處理問題；要有創意，敢於為個人信念挺身而出，甚而向知識挑戰。

劉博士從小立志當警察，一心維護法紀，後來卻對工程學產生了濃厚興趣。這一項職志的轉移，受惠的當然是香港建築業、岩土工程的研究發展，和我們的科大學生了！

劉博士在英國威爾斯大學土木結構工程系畢業，取得工程師資格後，隨即進入劍橋大學修讀土力工程，並於1985年取得碩士學位，1988年再獲博士學位。作為執業工程師，劉博士不單是地質工程專家，對建築發展、土地勘察、實驗室測試、地基工程、深層挖掘、地基開拓、斜坡鞏固、天然地質危機修治及污水處理技術等都甚有心得。

劉博士曾經在英國一所顧問公司工作六年，1994年回港，成為晃安建築工程公司總裁，負責

一切土木、土力及地基工程。他不諱言少年時候在香港的學業成績並不出眾，原因是他讀書從來不肯囫圇吞棗，總是對一切都要問個究竟。這種態度在劍橋大學得到肯定與認同。“他們欣賞這種凡事質疑的精神。”劉博士說。正是劍橋這種兼容並包、富啟發性的學術氛圍，鞏固了劉博士在工程、研究及教學上的開放態度。

他說：“在科大，我著重教導學生實踐多於理論，以實際經驗補學術訓練的不足。例如我常常向學生強調，設計沒有絕對的對與錯，只有好與壞！”

劉博士謙稱自己不是個有趣的人，成就也不怎麼出眾；然而事實卻大相逕庭。他的工作成就確實碩果纍纍，曾在歐洲及香港領導120多項工程，包括赤鱗角香港國際機場的跑道沉降預測工作，並且擔任近期剛完成的科大氬設施中心的顧問兼註冊結構工程師。

正如所有成功人士一樣，劉博士熱愛他的專業和工作，希望能藉研究與教學貢獻社會。他樂於傳播研究成果及良好作業方式的個案歷史，曾組織50多個大小技術會議、研討會及論壇，並且與大學合作進行研究開發。他以協作形式參與編輯了兩個會議的報告，並合撰了多篇論文，內容涵蓋載重量、斜坡穩定性、岩土離心機模擬、建築管理、創新污水處理系統等。

劉博士認為建築界必須緊密合作才能達致共同目標，於是與李啟信博士及科大的吳宏偉教授聯手，組成香港岩土專業協會，推動業界人士採用優良作業方式，並於1998年成為該會首屆主席。

作為一位工程師，劉博士也致力服務香港工程師學會，曾擔任該會岩土分部主席，現為該會多個委員會的成員。同時，他樂於貢獻時間和專業知識，為多個有關行業、政府部門、及大專院校等的委員會及工作小組擔任顧問，其中包括建築物條例仲裁委員會、娛樂特別效果條例仲裁委員會等。

實事求是的劉博士對自己的專業成就保持低調，可是在提及培訓青年工程師時，卻顯得特別興奮。劉博士除了在科大、香港大學和香港理工大學任教之外，也從1997年起出任香港工程師學會工程師培訓導師，扶掖後進，不遺餘力。今年，理大土木及結構工程學系更委任劉博士為兼任教授，進一步肯定了他對香港岩土工程學的貢獻。

劉博士熱愛教學，一再強調學生亟需要具備好奇心、創意和開放的態度，當然還要懂得質疑——凡事質疑！

副主席先生，本人謹代表香港科技大學，恭請閣下頒授大學學會會士榮銜予晃安建築工程公司總裁劉志強博士。