

## 頒授 Chomsky 教授名譽博士與榮譽特聘講座教授典禮致詞

Professor Chomsky, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

With a cheerful heart, I would like to welcome Professor Noam Chomsky to Tsing Hua. It is indeed an honor for us to take part in hosting his visit to Taiwan. Just like many people are saying, this is indeed a history in the making, and we are very fortunate to be part of it.

In his seminal book, *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin and Use*, Professor Chomsky elaborated on two problems concerning the human knowledge. The first is the Plato's problem: explaining how we can know so much given that we have such limited evidence. The second is Orwell's problem: explaining how we can know so little given that we have so much evidence. He has excelled and been unquestionably the leading voice addressing these two problems. As scholars, we often wonder if anyone is paying attention to our work. Professor Noam Chomsky did not have that problem. According to the Arts and Humanities Citation Index in 1992, Professor Chomsky was cited as a source more often than any other living scholar during the 1980–92 period, and was the eighth most-cited source. Indeed, Professor Chomsky is in stellar company. The top ten cited sources during the period were: Marx, Lenin, Shakespeare, Aristotle, the Bible, Plato, Freud, Chomsky, Hegel and Cicero.

Professor Chomsky is renowned worldwide for establishing linguistics as a scientific discipline of studying human language as a biological endowment, which has revolutionized our thinking about how language evolves as part of human nature. His classification of formal languages, namely the Chomsky Hierarchy, also has a great impact on the development of programming languages.

In fact, Professor Chomsky is probably better known for his role as a political activist and commentator. His views on US foreign policies and humanity issues have inspired a new generation of social thinkers who are willing to stand up and face the grim reality of our world.

As Professor Chomsky has graciously accepted our honorary doctorate and distinguished chair professorship, he has also become an alumni and a faculty member of our big family. So what can our students learn from him? Very simple: to find out the truth, to speak the truth and to question everything you heard.

After Professor Chomsky's visit, hopefully there will be more exchanges of ideas and resources between MIT and Tsing Hua, and we certainly would like to see future cooperation between the two institutions.

Thank you. Thank you all.