

Professor Jagdish N Bhagwati

DOCTOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCES *honoris causa*

Citation

Professor Jagdish Bhagwati is one of the world's foremost scholars and most influential economists. A native of India, Prof Bhagwati graduated from Cambridge University in 1956 with a first in Economics Tripos. He continued to study at MIT and Oxford, returning to India in 1961 as Professor of Economics at the Indian Statistical Institute, and then as Professor of International Trade at the Delhi School of Economics. He went back to MIT in 1968, leaving it twelve years later as the Ford International Professor of Economics to join Columbia.

Prof Bhagwati has been described as the most creative international trade theorist of his generation. His scientific writings have influenced all aspects of international trade, and have been collected and published in five volumes by MIT Press. But, not contented with scientific achievement, he has reached out to shape public policy, championing the cause of freer trade in particular. He has done this in several ways.

He has served as Economic Policy Adviser to Arthur Dunkel, Director General of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) (1991-93), Special Adviser to the United Nations on Globalisation, and External Adviser to WTO (World Trade Organisation). He served on the Expert Group on the Future of WTO and the Advisory Committee to former Secretary General Kofi Annan on the NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) process in Africa, and was also a member of the Eminent Persons Group on the future of UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development). He is currently Co-Chair with former Finnish President Halonen of the Eminent Persons Group at UNCTAD on the Role of Developing Countries in the World Economy.

Prof Bhagwati has also written many highly readable books, all widely acclaimed and some translated into 16 languages, that have carried his scientific ideas on free trade to the public. Principal among them are *Protectionism* (1987), *Free Trade Today*

(2002) and *In Defense of Globalization* (2004). In addition, his early books, *India: Planning for Industrialization* (with Padma Desai, 1970) and *India* (with T N Srinivasan, 1975), are acknowledged to have provided the intellectual case for the economic reforms that transformed India after 1991. A more recent book, *India in Transition: Freeing the Economy* (1993), is yet another testimony to his deep concern for his home country.

His writings on public policy have been published by MIT Press in two successive volumes: *A Stream of Windows: Unsettling Reflections on Trade, Immigration, and Democracy* (1998), which won the prestigious Eccles Prize for Excellence in Economic Writing; and *The Wind of the Hundred Days: How Washington Mismanaged Globalization* (2001). Both volumes were reviewed extensively and favourably worldwide.

Prof Bhagwati has delivered many prestigious lectures and has debated with the leading critics of globalisation today, including Ralph Nader and Naomi Klein, and has lectured in defence of globalisation on numerous campuses and in other public appearances worldwide.

Among his many students are almost all the major figures in international trade today, including Nobel laureate Paul Krugman, Gene Grossman (Princeton), Robert Feenstra (NBER, National Bureau of Economic Research) and Douglas Irwin (Dartmouth). His students have honoured him uniquely with six *festschriften*. Prof Bhagwati founded in 1971 the *Journal of International Economics*, the premier journal in the field today, and *Economics & Politics* in 1989.

Prof Bhagwati has won several prestigious prizes, including the Thomas Schelling Award (Harvard) and the Freedom Prize (Switzerland) which he shared with Lord Brittan. Among his many honorary degrees are those conferred by the London School of Economics, the Free University in Berlin, and the Stockholm School of Economics. He is a fellow of the Econometric Society and has also been elected a member of the National Academy of Science, the American Philosophical Society, and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. He was a vice president, and has been elected

Distinguished Fellow, of the American Economic Association. He is also a director of NBER.

On a lighter note, Prof Bhagwati is a lover of the opera, and goes to “every opera” when the opera season opens in his adopted hometown New York City. On an even lighter note, this eminent scholar admitted his incompetence in domestic chores, and referred to an incident in which he sought advice from his wife, a leading scholar on the Russian economy, when she was about to go away for several days, as to how to tell if water was boiling. Her cheerful and tongue-in-cheek reply was: “Darling, when it looks like champagne!” One way to maintain a happy marriage is to take delight even in the partner’s shortcomings.

Mr Chairman, for his remarkable contributions to the economics profession and to the global community, may I present Prof Jagdish Bhagwati to you for conferment of the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences *honoris causa*.

English citation written and delivered by Prof Ho Lok-sang