

Ezra Vogel, Presentation to the Chinese Student Association, Harvard University, September 11, 2020

> 大家好

>我感到很荣幸我能代表哈佛大学欢迎你们参加今年的哈佛大学的新学期活动

>因为我代表哈佛我觉得我应该用英文讲话

So I will use English.

It is an honor for me to welcome you to Harvard University. I have been affiliated with Harvard for 57 years, since 1953 when I came here as a graduate student. In all my time at Harvard, this year is the most difficult Harvard has faced. Never in all my time at Harvard until 2020 have we been unable to hold regular classes. Amidst our difficulties, we at Harvard have a long term perspective. As you know, Harvard was founded a few years before the Qing Dynasty was and we are confident that our university will survive the current difficulties and will remain a great center of learning.

We Harvard faculty know that many of you had great difficulty in coming to Harvard this year because of the corona virus. On behalf of my fellow faculty I want to express our respect and appreciation for your courage and determination in coming here.

Unfortunately you come at a time when ill feelings between our two countries are very strong. Because of the horrible relationship between our two countries, we know that some of you had doubts about whether you should come. We know that your decision to persevere and come to Harvard has created worries for some of your family and friends. We know that you have to be prepared mentally for the possibility that some U.S. government officials might create

difficulties for you to remain in the United States. We know that you have to prepare yourself for the possibility that some Americans you meet will be angry at China. We admire your determination to take these risks in order to continue your education and your research. We at Harvard know that our university benefits from having bright students from all over the world and we are grateful you have persevered and come to our university.

One of the main reasons Harvard can continue to function as a university amidst corona virus is because of ZOOM. I wish more Americans knew that ZOOM was created by Eric Yuan, whose Chinese name is Yuán Zhēng 袁征, who came to America from Shandong because he wanted to take part in research on the internet. As some of you may know, he began applying for a visa in 1995 and was turned down 8 times but he persisted and on the 9<sup>th</sup> try he was allowed to come to the United States. His success in creating the ZOOM platform in 2012 and building the ZOOM company is a wonderful example of the link between talent from China and American technology. It was a wonderful case that we call “win win.”

I must confess that Harvard really only became an international university after World War II when we began to welcome large numbers of students and scholars from all over the world. It is true that some Chinese students came to Harvard as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century and after 1949 a few Chinese students at Harvard, such as Pu Shoushan, who became China’s peace negotiator after the Korean War, and Ji Chaozhu, the best known Chinese interpreter, returned to China. As you know, after 1977 when the *gaokao* (高考) was introduced, Chinese university graduates in the early 1980s began coming here in large numbers. Those who came here have played a key role in assisting

China's modernization and they have also enriched the intellectual life at Harvard University.

There may be at Harvard some people who are not happy to have Chinese students here, but among the hundreds of people at Harvard whom I know, I have not met any such people. Everyone I know here believes that Harvard should be open to able students from everywhere and we are pleased to welcome you, even now when there are difficulties between our countries. The view at Harvard is that all students, researchers, and faculty at Harvard are comrades in the pursuit of truth and knowledge 四海之内皆兄弟.

We at Harvard know that Harvard has benefitted from people with different backgrounds and different points of view. Some of the creative people who contributed most to knowledge have held views that were different. We believe that we have remained an outstanding university because we allow different points of view to be expressed, 百花齐放. We want you to feel free to express your opinions even if you disagree with your professor, though of course we hope you do so politely and respectfully. At the same time, we are aware that some Chinese scholars have encountered difficulties with Chinese authorities if they are too critical of China. While you are at Harvard, we do not want you to feel pressure to say publicly anything that might get you in trouble with Chinese authorities.

In the course of your career after Harvard you may experience times when the relations between our two countries go through many different changes. I can illustrate how much they can change by relating what I have witnessed during my lifetime. In World War II, I was in high school when China and the United States were allies in the war against Japan. When I was in college, Americans and Chinese fought against each other in the Korean War. I was drafted into the U.S. Army

although fortunately I did not personally take part in fighting. And then for over a decade, during the early part of the Cold War when China was allied with the Soviet Union, Chinese and American political leaders considered our countries as enemies and people in our two countries had almost no contact with each other. I remember in 1969 when a group of us Harvard faculty specializing in China sent a letter to Henry Kissinger who had just left the Harvard faculty to work in Washington. In our letter, we suggested that it would be a good time for the incoming President Nixon to open contact with China. I remember the excitement we Americans felt when Henry Kissinger and President Nixon opened contacts with China. I remember the special excitement among those of us who studied China that we might have the opportunity of going to China and exchanging views with Chinese scholars.

I personally had the good fortune of traveling to China in 1973 as part of the first delegation of American scientists to China, only a year after Nixon's visit to China. I remember during our visit to Peking University when Red Guards briefed our delegation on their fight against capitalist roaders. At Peking University we also met Zhou Peiyuan and others who were fervently hoping that they and their students would have a chance to come to the United States to study just as we China specialists in the United States were hoping that we would have a chance to stay in Chinese universities and work with Chinese scholars. I recall when the first Chinese students had a chance to come to Harvard and had so few fellow Chinese they could talk with. They were very poor and needed all the financial help they could get. I remember after June 4, 1989 when Chinese dissidents like Liu Binyuan, Wang Ruoshui, and Dai Qing stayed at Harvard and boldly spoke out in favor of freer expression. I remember when President Jiang Zemin visited Harvard in 1998, when I personally had the pleasure of being

President Jiang's host when he spoke here in Memorial Hall. In the decades that followed I remember the close cooperation we have had between Chinese and Western scholars.

Who knows what the future will bring and what you will experience in your careers, but it looks like the United States and China will be rivals for many years. We need to find ways to build bridges that reduce the hostility between our two countries. Some of you who are here today, after completing your studies at Harvard, will remain in the United States. Some of you will return to China. Whether you stay here or return to China you will have a deep understanding of China and the United States. At a time when our countries have difficulties in getting along, many of you can play important roles as bridge builders who keep our relations healthy. Some super-patriots in both our two countries may criticize you, but as one who considers himself a bridge builder and who enjoys many Chinese friends, I believe your role as bridge builder will be very important in avoiding conflict and promoting our common interests. The world will benefit from those of you who build and maintain those bridges.

As one who is near the end of his career I salute you as you are beginning your career. I pay my respects to those of you who will help maintain constructive relations between our two countries. I wish you a good and constructive time at Harvard and a long life as bridge builders between our two nations. 万岁