

THE gateway

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colophon

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China the key to the future, I-Week speaker says

Mona Bai

NEWS WRITER • @BAIMENGYANG

When asked whether China will start colonizing other countries after they dominate the world, Tsinghua University visiting professor Martin Jacques gives a categorical "no."

Part of this year's International Week — an annual event full of performances, lectures and films — Jacques' keynote presentation did not disappoint as the first in a highly-anticipated lineup of speakers.

On Jan. 28, after an introduction from China Institute Director Gordon Houlden, Jacques addressed a packed Myer Horowitz Theatre on a topic he knows all too much about: the rise of China. His talk shared the title of his best-selling book, *When China Rules the World*.

The ultimate conclusion of his keynote address was, after comparing China's current economy to the global economy, that China's economic strength will be twice as large as that of the US by 2030 — a conclusion he drew from two categories, the first being Chinese culture, and the second being China's long history.

"China has never had an overseas empire," he reasoned, expounding on his earlier emphatic "no."

"Since the Qin Dynasty, they think of themselves as the (Middle Kingdom) — so why would they colonize?"

China, according to Jacques, is not a nation-state like most Western countries. Instead, Jacques referred to China as a "civilization-state" — a country shaped by its sense of civilization and unity, one of the most important political values it has.

Despite having a population of roughly 1.3



CHENLEI ZHANG

billion people, an overwhelming majority of Chinese people think of themselves as from the Han race — something Jacques said is different from nation-states.

Another argument Jacques made was China's culture and language are extremely individual, making it unlikely it will ever adopt North American or European politics.

This, he argued, tied in to the economic boom he was predicting.

"It will be like the 1820s, when China is the strongest one in the world," he joked.

"Welcome to the future: we are going back to the past."

His speech segued into a meet-and-greet, where attendees could ask questions about his presentation or book.

Jacques said his interest in China began during a holiday he took in 1993.

"I went to China, and Malaysia and various other countries in East Asia, and then I sort of followed it ever since with tremendous interest," he said.

"Why China? Although these other countries

are also rising, China remains hugely the most important. China's impact on the world over the next 50 years is going to be much greater than India's or Brazil's."

In the spirit of I-Week's theme, Conscious Culture: Finding Paths to a Better World, Jacques added that China is eventually going to become important for everyone. Jacques said this was also why he agreed to give a keynote speech during I-Week.

Amid praise and thanks from those who sat in on his talk, he said that, having looked at the I-Week program he thinks it's a terrific idea.

"I think that the University of Alberta's commitment to international students, and also specifically to Chinese students and trying to find a way of getting the student body more interested in China, I think is splendid," he said.

"At the moment, we are far too ignorant about China, and we have got to learn about China, and this is absolutely crucial for the future of people here, and everywhere ... It's absolutely fundamental," he said.

streeters

As you may have heard, International Week is happening right now.

WE ASKED...

COMPILED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY Michelle Mark + Selena Phillips-Boyle

Which I-Week events are you going to, and why?



Stephanie Constantin SCIENCE II

"They haven't really publicized them that well, so I haven't heard of any except via Facebook."



Valerie Klinkach ENGINEERING V

"Robert Fisk, because it's at a convenient time for my friends and I."

Jessica Brownoff SCIENCE II



"None, because I haven't really heard a lot about them."



Ian Cowles SCIENCE VI

"The psychology one ... because I went to one of his events before, and it was pretty sweet."

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