After four decades of ‘reform and opening’ in which central planning has been mixed with a market-based economy, China has transitioned from a poor under-developed country into the world’s second largest economy, lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. How has this been accomplished so quickly in such a huge resource-poor country? How did China reform its land policies, infrastructure, transport and manufacturing systems and secure a reliable power supply?

In this lecture, Y. K. Chan, a leading Hong Kong business and economics professional, who was directly engaged in pioneering some of China’s earliest development projects, draws on his personal involvement in planning Shenzhen’s and other major cities’ container ports to ask: Is this economic system ideal and/or sustainable? Is the China model replicable elsewhere? And how might a trade war with the US and possibly Europe affect the Belt and Road Initiative, China’s continued growth or even its economic system?

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