



ThreeEQ

Preparing Young Leaders For Top Universities

Forbes, New York City, and KL

An Essay by Jason Ma
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I arrive in New York City, hop into a taxi, and ask the driver, "How long has it been THIS dark and rainy in Gotham City?" "It's been like this every day for five weeks," the balding, heavy-accent driver replies.

The next day, the dark clouds mysteriously clear and the rain takes a break. The blue-white sky seems a good omen. I picture Moses parting the Red Sea. At the pier, the Forbes family's bright smiles greet me as we board their 151-foot yacht, The Highlander, for our scheduled private luncheon cruise around the harbor. Great people, sumptuous food and wine, the radiant sun illuminating the stunning NYC skyline -- a glorious few hours.

The vessel parks. I thank Steve Forbes and his family for a memorable time and disembark. Shortly after, as I head to Greenwich Village, the sun vanishes again. Black-bottomed clouds resume hovering again across the sky, readying to outpour.

"Geez, after weeks of non-stop darkness and rain, the sun amazingly appears just in time for our luncheon before it succumbs to the dark again..." I think and grin. "The Forbes are well connected!"

Divine humor aside, let's flash forward to September 2009. This time, I arrive at KL, Malaysia, for the annual Forbes Global CEO Conference (<http://forbesasiaconferences.com/globalceoconference09/>). I see welcome weather, not dark thunderstorms as forecasted. Brilliant sunshine warms my skin while gentle breezes carry the scents of jasmine and curry through the pleasantly humid air. "Someone up there continues favoring the Forbes," I smile to myself, reminiscing on my previous NYC experience. Having been invited five years in a row as a VIP guest to this exclusive, prestigious summit is both humbling and rewarding.

Yes, I missed last year's conference because of the busy college app season at IvyMax. And, yes, this year, I'm buried again with work -- but this year I made a vow to plan ahead. I am looking forward to adding intellectual spark and social value at this unique gathering.