

Keynote Address by The Honourable Chief Justice Andrew K N Li at the Shue Yan College 28th Graduation Ceremony

Dr Hu, Dr Chung, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am greatly honoured to be invited to speak on this happy occasion. And I am delighted to be here.

Shue Yan College is a well recognised institution of higher learning, both in Hong Kong and in the Region. Over the last three decades, the College has made an enormous contribution to higher education in Hong Kong. Through provision of quality education, it enhances the diversity and richness of the education opportunities for many young people in Hong Kong. As a self-supporting institution, the achievement of Shue Yan is remarkable and commendable.

I am sure you would agree with me that Shue Yan's success owes a great deal to the vision, the dynamic leadership and the dedication of Dr Hu and Dr Chung. Being the founders of the College, Dr Hu and Dr Chung have nurtured the College from infancy to maturity, leading it to meet difficult challenges and to progress from strength to strength. Their commitment to the highest ideals of education commands the respect of us all.

To all the students graduating today, I wish to offer my warmest and heartiest congratulations. With your dedication and hard work, you have deservedly earned your diplomas and awards. I am sure that all graduates will agree with me when I say that you owe a great deal of gratitude to your families and the teaching staff of the College. It is a debt of honour which I am sure you will never forget. Throughout the past few years, they must have given you their unstinting support and wise guidance. Without them, I doubt if you will be here today. They must be very happy today and have every reason to be proud of your achievement. To them, I also wish to extend my congratulations and best wishes.

Shue Yan College was founded in 1971, some 30 years ago. The world was a very different place then.

For Hong Kong:

- It was very much a colony with an expatriate dominated Executive and Judiciary and an appointed Legislature.

- The ICAC, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, had not yet been established.
- There was no Mass Transit Railway (MTR).
- Hong Kong was an economy based on manufacturing.

As to China:

- It was still affected by the cultural revolution and its aftermath. And it was basically closed to the outside world

Major events to shake the world around that time included:

- The Vietnam War
- The Watergate affair in the US
- The world's first kidney and pancreatic tissue transplant
- World Trade Center, the then tallest building in the world, opened in New York
- The first battery-powered pocket calculator was marketed at a cost of US\$150
- Telephone direct-dialing between London and New York was introduced
- Stars like George Scott and Glenda Jackson were Oscar winners
- Carole King and Simon & Garfunkel were pop stars of the day

The last 30 years have seen the most momentous changes in Hong Kong, China and the World. There have been sea changes in the geopolitical landscape. The Soviet and the Eastern Bloc has disintegrated. The European Union is developing. Asia has been and will continue to be an area of growth. A strong and modern China has emerged. And Hong Kong has become an international financial and commercial center and was re-united with China under the imaginative concept of one country two systems, exercising a high degree of autonomy. At the same time, we have seen massive and the most amazing advances in science, technology and medicine and in every field of human endeavour. And we have entered the age of the internet. Many things which seemed impossible in the past are possible nowadays.

Today, sitting at our computers, we are linked in a matter of moments to the rest of the globe. The rapid advances in science and technology, the amazing revolution in the field of information and communication technology, the increasingly free exchanges of ideas between societies and the dynamic growth in international trade have brought all of us closer together. We talk today – without poetic licence – of living in a 'global village'.

These developments have brought about rapid and profound changes in all spheres of society. Only one thing is certain about the future. The pace of change is likely to accelerate. In order to respond to the difficult and exciting challenges ahead, it is crucial that we continue to adapt ourselves. Above all, in order to be able to contribute to and indeed survive in the 'global village', we need to be 'global citizens'. But what does this involve?

First, global citizens should see things from a global perspective. They must have a good appreciation of global issues which are constantly shaping and changing the political, economic, social and technological landscape of the world. They should be alert, well informed, analytical and insightful, and know where they stand in the sea of continuing change. They must understand that they are living and working in a highly competitive environment. And in this environment, they would be competing not only with people they meet day in and day out, but also with their counterparts around the world. They should be highly resourceful, knowing that cross-fertilization of ideas and global collaboration will always present opportunities and help to provide solutions to problems. And they should have an understanding of the diverse cultures around the world, and should be capable of communicating and working with people with different backgrounds from around the globe.

Secondly, global citizens should view life with an inquisitive and open mind. They should always ask 'why' and explore new answers and solutions to problems. They should accept and embrace change and they should not set limits to what can be achieved. They must never take things for granted, always striving to make improvements and prepared to challenge orthodoxy. They should be flexible and innovative, with the courage to try things out.

Thirdly, global citizens should constantly educate themselves so that they would have the knowledge and skills required from time to time. They should understand that the means of survival lie in the life-long pursuit of education in all respects. Things taught at schools and universities are not an education but only a means to an education and there are no limits and boundaries to learning. Global citizens must therefore believe in and practise learning for life. They must continue to acquire and upgrade all their skills including language proficiency and information technology. And they must be keen to continue to learn from experience in the university of life.

Fourthly, global citizens should act with integrity, generosity and commitment. Understanding the importance of interdependency in all spheres of human activity and endeavour, global citizens must look beyond their self-interests in the pursuit of the well-

being of the community at large. They must have a strong commitment to their families, their work and their fellow citizens. And they must abide always by the enduring values of honesty and integrity. They should always have the welfare of the under privileged in mind. They should be generous and ready to share with others. And they should be earnest in working towards the betterment of mankind.

Finally, global citizens should face and overcome difficulties with faith and courage. Living and working in such a competitive environment, global citizens would be bound to experience ups and downs in life. Sometime, the sun will shine on you. But at other times, life can be stormy. Sometimes, the sailing will be plain. At other times, the territory will be rugged. But there could be no turning back. It is important always to move on with faith and courage and tackle what life throws at you with confidence in your own ability to overcome adversity.

For students graduating today, you have concluded a stage in your life's journey and will be embarking on your next stage. You are and have to be global citizens and as global citizens, you will find life challenging, exciting and rewarding. I wish you good fortune and every success and happiness. Thank you.

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