

Mr Warren Chan Chee-hoi, QC, SC

Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*

Citation

Mr Warren Chan Chee-hoi graduated from The University of Hong Kong with an LLB (Hons) in 1977 and a PCLL in 1978. He was called to the Hong Kong Bar in the same year, and to the Bar in England five years later. Subsequently, Mr Chan was also admitted to practice by the Supreme Court of Victoria (Australia), the Supreme Court of Singapore and the State of New York (USA). In 1994, he was further appointed Queen's Counsel, renamed Senior Counsel in 1997. His distinguished practice has gained high repute over the years, and his earnest guidance of younger professionals has earned deep respect within the legal profession.

Mr Chan's career and success do not reflect a typical story of "winning at the starting line". On the contrary, he grew up in Sham Shui Po, worked part-time while studying, toiling for the basic needs of livelihood: one might say he was "born among the grass roots and seasoned in the marketplace". He struggled in his studies prior to university, even changing school four times during his five years of secondary schooling. He decided to work hard in his sixth form, though, and gained admission to the history programme at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. While fascinated by the study of history, philosophy and culture, Mr Chan had to think about the practical issue of a future career; having finished his first year at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, he was admitted as a private candidate to the Department of Law of The University of Hong Kong. A learner with a sense of inadequacy redoubles his diligence: persisting under the dual pressure of study and part-time work, Mr Chan studied hard day and night. Three years later, through firm will and stamina, he became the only graduate in his LLB class to earn first-class honours.

From rapidly raising his Chinese and English proficiency and gaining admission to the two universities, to unswerving perseverance in his study and career, Mr Chan's story is a paradigm of constant self-reliance, self-improvement and self-remoulding; it is an inspiring journey of struggle "under the Lion Rock", a testament to the Hong Kong spirit of patience and resilience. Never fond of socialising and network-building, Mr Chan only believes in constant resoluteness and application. Recalling the hardship of bygone days, he said: "Don't blame others or expect social welfare when you face adversity; rather, learn to adapt and advance through hardship. Only then will you have a fruitful and successful life. To be born rich might seem like a stroke of fortune, but in fact it easily dissipates one's motivation to improve." He even joked seriously: "Poverty in youth is priceless!" That destitution and adversity can be turned into upward drive is Mr Chan's conviction and experience, as well as the message he wishes to share with young people. He is convinced that what he has overcome can be achieved by others equally resolute and industrious. In the spatio-temporal coordinates of life, there are different starting lines and half-way finish points at various stages; the twists and turns of life allow one to turn adversity into advantage, to constantly rewrite gain and loss, success and failure. To do one's best with a sincere heart is the most fundamental attitude to life.

Law is undoubtedly the cornerstone of operation in modern society. Precisely for this reason, Mr Chan sees law as a matter for the populace rather than a privilege of the minority. He hopes to see more law firms move into grass roots districts like Sham Shui Po and Tin Shui Wai, providing affordable legal services for the common people. He strongly believes that both Hong Kong and mainland China need to train more high-quality lawyers, in order to meet the needs of a swiftly changing economy and a society of deepening tensions. He is very concerned about developments

related to the rule of law and legal education in Hong Kong and Mainland China; he sees full establishment of the rule of law and enhancement of the quality of legal education as the biggest challenges in China's move to modernisation. Thus Mr Chan actively supports the Law School of Tsinghua University, and, through donation and other work, rendered much help to The Chinese University of Hong Kong in establishing its Law School in 2004. As to his *alma mater*, he is a staunch supporter through donation and advice. More than once he has advised The University of Hong Kong and The Chinese University of Hong Kong to make further strides in order to become top-tier universities in the world.

As an intellectual, Mr Chan's existential horizon is certainly not confined to law; reflection on social ideals and truths in life are perhaps the deeper reasons underlying his abiding interest in history over the years. Not long ago, he published a general world history entitled *All Kinds of Everything: from Chinese Civilization to World History*. A narrative covering 4500 BC to 1911, this two-volume bilingual work juxtaposes, connects and brings together Chinese and world history, along with personal observations and insights. The book's core idea and aim is to "set forth facts and reason things out" instead of "justifying predetermined conclusions"; Mr Chan believes that a basis of fair and objective understanding, coupled with compassion and tolerance, will facilitate the future development of civilization. This is a humanistic concern transcending personal profession, and is also the spirit of liberal arts education and thinking.

Over the years, Mr Chan's devotion to the enhancement of legal education in Hong Kong and Mainland China has made him an exemplary professional widely praised by the legal community. He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by The University of Hong Kong in 2004, and by The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2013.

Mr Chairman, in recognition of his distinguished professional achievement and his significant contribution to the legal communities in Hong Kong and Mainland China, may I present Mr Warren Chan Chee-hoi to you for conferment of the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*.

Chinese citation written and delivered by Professor Charles Kwong

陳志海資深大律師

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贊辭

陳志海先生畢業於香港大學，先後於一九七七年獲法學士學位，一九七八年取得法學專業證書。同年，陳先生獲取香港執業大律師資格，五年後再取得英國大律師資格。其後，陳先生分別取得澳洲維多利亞州最高法院、新加坡最高法院及美國紐約州執業資格，更於一九九四年進一步獲委任為「英皇御用大律師」（一九九七年改稱「資深大律師」）。多年來，陳先生在香港法律界表現出色，聲名顯赫，同時更熱心扶掖後輩，深受敬重。

陳先生的事業和成功，並不是一個「贏在起跑線」的典型故事。相反，他小時候在深水埗長大，半工半讀，為基本生活需要所形役，可謂「生於草根之際，而歷練於市井之間」。他的小學學業成績和中學學業成績同樣欠佳；中學的五年期間，他甚至曾經轉校四次。然而中六那年，陳先生毅然發奮讀書，結果考進香港中文大學，主修歷史。他當時雖然醉心於歷史、哲學和文化的學問，卻不免需要考慮前途就業的實際課題；到完成中文大學一年級課程後，陳先生以自修生的身份考進了香港大學法律系。求學者知不足而精勤，陳先生在半工半讀的雙重壓力下堅持晝夜苦讀，結果憑著不屈不撓的毅力和鬥志，三年後成為同屆同學中唯一取得一級榮譽的本科畢業生。

從迅速提升中、英文語文能力而考進兩所大學，到學業上和事業上不斷毅進，陳先生的故事是自力更生、自強不息、自我改造的範例；它是「獅子山下」激勵人心的掙扎歷程，體現出沉著堅韌的香港精神。陳先生從來不喜歡社交應酬，只相信堅毅不移和努力不懈。他回想當年的艱辛經歷時說：「做人遇到困難時，不要怨天尤人，也不要期待社會福利，反而應該從艱苦中學會變通和奮進的精神；這樣才能夠擁有豐盛和成功的人生。表面上看，天生富足似乎是運氣，其實它很容易令人失去改進的動力。」他甚至嚴肅地打趣說：「千金難買少年窮！」貧困窮乏可以轉化為奮勇向上的動力，既是陳先生的信念和體驗，也是他希望與年青人分享的訊息。他深信自己所克服的，同樣堅定努力的人也能夠做到。在人生的時空座標中，既有不同段落的起跑線，也有不同段落的小站點，而生命的轉折，可以讓人將劣勢變成優勢，不斷重寫和更新得失成敗。盡心誠意，是最基本的生命態度。

法律無疑是現代社會運作的基石。正因如此，陳先生認為法律是普羅大眾之事，而不應是少數人的專利。他希望看見深水埗、天水圍等草根階層地區，有更多律師行為平民大眾提供可負擔的法律服務。陳先生深感香港和內地都需要培養更多高質素的律師，以應付轉變急速的經濟和矛盾深化的社會。他非常關注香港和內地有關法治精神和法律教育方面的發展，又認為全面確立法治和提升法律教育質素，是中國邁向現代化的最大挑戰。因此，陳先生積極支持清華大學的法律學院，又透過捐款及其他工作，致力協助香港中文大學於二零零四年成立法律學院。至於對母校香港大學，陳先生更是一直資助及支持。他曾多番建議香港大學及香港中文大學百尺竿頭，全方位邁進，成為世界頂級的學府。

作為一個知識分子，陳先生的生命視野當然不限於法律。對社會理想和生命真理的思考，也許正是陳先生多年來一直醉心歷史的深層原因。近年，他出版了一本名為《古今中外：從中華文明看世界》的世界通史；這兩冊用雙語撰寫的書籍，涵蓋了公元前四千五百年到公元一九一一年

的敘述，將中外歷史並置、連繫、共治一爐，並加入了個人的觀察和心得。這本書背後的核心理念和宗旨，是希望凡事盡量「擺事實，講道理」，而不是「先有結論，後找理據」；然後在客觀和公平認識的基礎上，加上愛心和包容，成就文明的未來發展。這是一份超乎自身專業的人文關懷，也是博雅教育、博雅思維的精神所在。

多年以來，陳先生對提升香港法律教育以及內地法律教育的質素盡心貢獻，一直廣受讚揚，堪為香港法律界的典範。他先後獲香港大學於二零零四年以及香港中文大學於二零一三年頒授榮譽院士銜。

主席先生，為表揚陳先生傑出的專業成就以及對香港和內地法律界的重要貢獻，本人謹恭請閣下頒授榮譽法學博士學位予陳志海先生。

中文贊辭由鄺龔子教授撰寫及宣讀