

Born in Macau in 1945, Mr Abraham Shek Lai-him completed his primary and secondary education in Hong Kong at St Joseph's College and Queen's College, respectively. He then went overseas to Australia for university study, and decided to choose history as his major. Graduating in 1969 from the University of Sydney with the BA Degree, he moved on to complete a Diploma of Education, and, in 1970, started working in the field of special education. Though he had not stayed on in Sydney as a teacher, Mr Shek's subsequent career has revealed deep roots in the education he received, both in Hong Kong and abroad, and in the worth of the educated individual he would later come to realize as the value and promise of modern citizenship.

Upon return to Hong Kong in 1970, Mr Shek joined the shipping industry as an executive trainee, and for the next fourteen years he built up the businessman in the history graduate, Hong-Kong-style, by immersing himself fully in the development of the city's export provisions, container terminal services, and multi-national shipping profile. During the mid-1980's his career entered a new phase when he was appointed the Commercial Director of the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC). While managing the KCRC's passenger and freight service, he set up the new Property Department to develop real estates along the railway line and depots. During his term of office from 1984 to 1987, the KCRC developed over 7,000 residential units and an office block. Planning was also made to identify new opportunities such as the development of the Mongkok Station and the Hung Hom Bay Reclamation. Years after he left his short service at the KCRC under colonial governance, Mr Shek was appointed to serve the KCRC again as a member of its new Managing Board, from 2004 to 2007: a clear recognition of his experience and expertise as a top business director.

It is, however, his role as Chief Executive of the former Land Development Corporation (LDC, now the Urban Renewal Authority) that Mr Shek is most proud of. From 1987 to 2000 he witnessed the urban growth of Hong Kong with its colonial identity and city landscape gradually transformed, as, for instance, in the case of the re-making of the Western Market into a people's shopping arcade with local flavours in Sheung Wan. During those thirteen years, he realized that urban renewal was an extremely difficult task, as it involved uprooting people from homes where they had lived for decades. Mr Shek worked hard to overcome such difficulty with his heart and mind set on making the LDC "a caring and fair organization". One measure of his success is that under his management, the Corporation had attempted to steer away from major confrontations with residents and owners affected by LDC's redevelopments. (These could easily have happened given the fact that the Corporation had carried out 30 projects during this period, affecting a total of 21,000 people, including 3,800 who had to be re-located.)

Soon, it turned out that one of Mr Shek's main concerns was heritage and culture, which ought to be seen as the responsibility of every citizen. In his contribution to business development in Hong Kong, the historian-at-heart has come face to face with one key question: How are we able to keep the economy growing and raise the livelihoods of people in the less developed sectors of our society, while at the same time nurturing a city's creativity and humanity in its contemporary environment? As he applies himself in developing a range of modern products and services, he sees the need to balance economic growth with rational use of our common urban resources.

As is well known, since 2000, Mr Shek has been a member of the Legislative Council representing the Real Estate and Construction Functional Constituency. He was appointed as Justice of Peace in 1995, and as a member of the Fourth Shenzhen Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in 2005. In 2007, he was awarded the Silver Bauhinia Star by the Hong Kong Government.

Currently, Mr Shek is a director of The Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation Ltd, and an independent non-executive director and audit committee member of several companies listed on The Hong Kong Stock Exchange, including the MTR Corporation Ltd. With sustained dedication to community service, he was appointed to the Antiquities Advisory Committee from 1996 to 2002, and has served, since 2004, on the Council of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the Court of The University of Hong Kong. In the Mainland, he also holds honorary professorship at Tsinghua University and Huazhong University of Science and Technology. His main message to today's youth would be that there is more to life than money, and that striving for one's own vision requires not only compassion, but also a belief in the significance of human values in any sustainable social and community development.

Seeing himself as a man of conscience, Mr Shek holds the firm belief that conscience, duty and responsibility go together. Married with three children, Mr Shek remains a believer in education, through which he wants to see history, politics and the economy join forces in shaping an integral vision for a new Hong Kong, where poverty, misery, and ignorance will have no place in its humanistic urban landscape.

Mr Chairman, may I now present Mr Abraham Shek Lai-him to you for the conferment of an Honorary Fellowship of Lingnan University in recognition of his devotion to his profession, his dedicated work in the related areas of business and urban re-development, his outstanding public service, and his contribution to the community over the years including, crucially, commitment to the value of humanistic education and the primacy of culture.

石禮謙先生1945年於澳門出生，在香港聖若瑟英文書院及皇仁中學分別完成小學及中學課程，其後負笈澳洲修讀大學課程，主修歷史。1969年石先生於悉尼大學畢業，獲授文學士學位，及後進修並取得教育文憑，於1970年開始從事特殊教育。雖然沒有留在悉尼任職教師，但石先生其後的工作與他所接受過的教育有很深的淵源，而他的學養更是融匯於他的事業及公職服務中，充份發揮及體現作為現代公民的價值觀與承擔。

1970年回到香港後，石先生投身船務業，由見習行政人員一職開始，十四年來以香港人一貫的全情投入，參與本地出口業、貨櫃碼頭服務及跨國船務事業，昔日修讀歷史的大學生已成為從事商業的人才。1980年代中期，石先生獲委任為九廣鐵路公司的商業總監，事業踏上一個新階段。在管理九廣鐵路客貨運業務時，石先生創立全新的物業部門，在鐵路沿線及車廠的土地發展房地產。在其1984年至1987年任期內，九廣鐵路發展了逾七千個住宅及一幢寫字樓，並規劃開拓新的發展方向，包括旺角火車站及紅磡灣填海區的發展。與殖民地時期的短暫任期相隔多年後，石先生於2004年至2007年再度獲委任九廣鐵路要職，出任其新設立的管理局成員；這正是充份肯定了石先生當年擔任頂尖商業總監的經驗和專業能力。

然而，讓石先生最引以自豪的是出任前土地發展公司（土發公司，現市區重建局）的行政總裁。1987年至2000年在任期間，石先生見證了香港市區的發展，這個富殖民地色彩的城市面貌，逐漸演變，較顯著的例子是將上環街市發展、蛻變為具有本土特色的西港城。在十三年任期內，石先生明白到市區重建是十分艱巨的任務，因為當中涉及將原有的居民遷移出他們居住多年的家園。為克服這個困難，石先生銳意將土發公司建立成為一個「關懷與持平的機構」。石先生的其中一項成就，就是帶領土發公司在進行重建項目的同時，成功避免與居民及業主發生重大衝突。（鑑於土發公司在期間進行了三十個項目，影響到二萬一千名市民，包括須重新安置三千八百人，能夠避免重大衝突實非易事。）

石先生對於保存傳統與文化非常關注，而這正是每名市民的應有責任。在為香港商業發展作出貢獻之際，擁有歷史學家胸懷的他也同時面對一個重大課題：如何可以既維持經濟增長，改善弱勢社群的生活質素，又可以同時在都市環境中培育這個城市的創造力及人文價值？在石先生致力發展現代產品與服務時，他看到在經濟增長與合理利用共有的城市資源之間，有需要取得平衡。

眾所周知，石先生自2000年以來一直為立法會議員，代表地產及建造界功能組別。石先生於1995年獲委任為太平紳士，並於2005年為中國政治協商會議深圳市第四屆委員會的委員。石先生於2007年獲香港特別行政區政府頒授銀紫荊星章。

目前，石先生為香港按揭證券有限公司董事，並出任包括香港鐵路有限公司在內的多家香港聯交所上市公司的獨立非執行董事及審核委員會成員。石先生長期投身社會服務，於1996年至2002年間獲委任為古物諮詢委員會成員，也自2004年起為香港科技大學校董會成員及香港大學諮議會成員。石先生亦獲清華大學及武漢華中科技大學委任為榮譽教授。人生有很多東西比錢更重要，追求個人理想不但需要熱情，還要相信在社會及社區發展中人類價值的重要性，這正是石先生向現今年輕人傳達的信息。

石先生自問一向憑良心做人，並深信良知、義務及責任三位一體。石先生已婚，育有三名子女，他依然深信教育的重要性，希望能夠透過教育見到歷史、政治及經濟三者結合力量，塑造一個讓貧困、痛苦及無知絕跡的新香港。

主席先生，為表揚石先生對他的專業範疇工作的熱誠，對市區重建發展的專注，公職服務的卓越表現，以及多年來對社區的貢獻，尤其是對人文教育及文化為先兩個價值觀之承擔，本人謹恭請 閣下頒授嶺南大學榮譽院士銜予石禮謙先生。