

Conferment of the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa* A Citation



The Honourable Chief Justice Li Kwok-nang, Andrew CBE, LL.D (Hon), DLitt (Hon), MA, LL.M, QC, JP

Four weeks ago our University held the Dedication Ceremony of the School of Law. The Keynote Address on that historic occasion was given by the man who stands before us today, the Honourable Andrew Li Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. In his speech he reminded us that the first LLB graduates of the Chinese University Law School will be sitting here on an occasion such as this in four years' time, in the year 2010. He asked the question: what will the community expect of such Law graduates? He made three main points. "First, graduates must be equipped with the intellectual and professional skills to enable them to cope with a fast changing world." Among these skills he included "the ability to think and analyse critically and to reason logically"; the ability to communicate, and to communicate bilingually; and the ability to use technology. "Secondly, graduates must possess the widest of horizons and the broadest of perspectives." It is not enough to have knowledge only of Hong Kong: graduates must understand developments on the Mainland, as well as the political, social and cultural dynamics of other countries. They will need to function as "global citizens who can operate across borders". "Thirdly, graduates must have a strong sense of commitment to the community and of commitment to the betterment of mankind". It is important to see the profession not merely as a market-driven business, but as a community held together by values, standards and a concern for the public good.

In making these points the Chief Justice was addressing future law graduates, but they apply to all of you who will graduate here today. His words are worth repeating because they are spoken with authority. We pay special attention to Chief Justice Andrew Li, not simply because he holds the highest judicial office in our community, but because he is held in the very highest respect. Seven universities in Hong Kong and Australia have honoured him as we are honouring him here today. Where lawyers and judges in the Asia-Pacific region come together to discuss future challenges to the profession, it is often Chief Justice Li who is asked to impart words of wisdom. He is respected by his peers and by the academic community, not simply because of his well-known ability to articulate the law clearly, but because he is known as a man of integrity, a man who has stood up courageously under pressure in defence of judicial independence and the rule of law.

It matters to all of us that Hong Kong's judiciary is headed by a judge whose impartiality, independence and probity are so widely respected. As Lord Denning said of England: "The keystone of the rule of law ... has been the independence of judges". The judiciary is the ultimate keystone of Hong Kong's freedoms, and of the confidence people have around the world that justice will be administered here without fear or favour. Hong Kong's respected legal system is a precious inheritance, a foundation of our prosperity, and we are fortunate to have a man of Chief Justice Li's calibre at the heart of it.



Andrew Li was educated in Hong Kong and at the University of Cambridge. In 1970 he was called to the Bar at Middle Temple. He practiced in Hong Kong from 1973, taking silk in 1988. In 1997 he was appointed the first Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Chief Justice Li has a long record of public service. He was a member of the Executive Council and has served on many boards and committees. He has been Chairman of the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee (the predecessor of the University Grants Committee) and the Land Development Corporation, as well as Vice Chairman of the Council of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. He was a member of the Judicial Service Commission, the Law Reform Commission and the Securities Commission. He is Vice-Chairman of the Council of St Paul's Co-educational College and he is a trustee of the Friends of Tsinghua University Law School Trust Fund and a Guest Professor of Tsinghua University.

For generations members of the Li family have been supporters of the Chinese University and of its predecessor institutions. As Chairman of the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee and as Chief Justice he has made significant contributions to the academic development of the University. Most recently, he has given valuable advice to the Chinese University in relation to the establishment of the School of Law.

Towards the end of the Dedication Ceremony of the Law School, key figures representing the Hong Kong Government, the University Grants Committee, the Bar Association, the Law Society and the Council of the University stepped forward and placed symbolic gifts on a stand, later to be kept in a chest to mark the historic foundation of the Law School. The first person to step forward was Chief Justice Li, who presented a wig used by judges and barristers in court. This moving gesture symbolized the ideals, practices and traditions of the common law reaching back many centuries. It recalled the inspiring words he himself had spoken with such conviction not half an hour before: "[Graduates] must understand the fundamental importance of the rule of law and must appreciate the values that underline our legal system as well as the ethical dimensions of law ... It is a profession with honourable ideals, ideals concerned with the rule of law and the attainment of justice for all."

Mr Chairman, Hong Kong is fortunate to have a Chief Justice who expresses and defends these honourable ideals with such moral authority. It is my great privilege to present to you the Honourable Chief Justice Andrew Li for the award of the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

This citation is written by Professor David Parker