

Speech by SJ at Dedication Ceremony for Philip K H Wong Theatre and Philip K H Wong Centre for Chinese Law at HKU (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the Dedication Ceremony for the Philip K H Wong Theatre and the Philip K H Wong Centre for Chinese Law at the University of Hong Kong (HKU) today (December 15):

Ms Wong (Chairman of the HKU Council, Ms Priscilla Wong), Professor Zhang (President and Vice-Chancellor of HKU, Professor Zhang Xiang), Professor Fu (Dean of HKU Faculty of Law, Professor Fu Hualing), members of the Wong family, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It gives me great pleasure to say a few words here at the Philip K H Wong Theatre for the dedication ceremony of this Theatre, and also for the Philip K H Wong Centre for Chinese Law. About two weeks ago I had the opportunity to speak at the congregation held at the Great Hall, and today I am delighted to be present once again in the enviable premises of the Faculty of Law.

It is with the most generous donations stemming from those in the legal community in Hong Kong, such as from the Philip K H Wong Foundation, that law students of today and of the future can benefit from such high quality infrastructure of the Faculty. And so it should be, as the Chinese saying goes: "前人種樹、後人乘涼". This saying in English may be translated to correspond to the 17th century English proverb: "Walnuts and pears you plant for your heirs". While today we are not talking about literal walnuts and pears, it is apt for us to think about what we should grow in order for the next generation of lawyers in Hong Kong to benefit the most. Apart from hardware, such as the Theatre we are currently in, what else should we invest in for the next generation of Hong Kong lawyers?

I am most encouraged to note that Dr Wong believed that human resources is an important element in a country's development. Indeed, equipping talents with the requisite knowledge is most crucial, and the renaming of the Centre for Chinese Law into the Philip K H Wong Centre for Chinese Law highlights the importance of investment in Hong Kong's future lawyers through the promotion of Chinese law research, as well as the strengthening of the connection of legal talents between the Mainland and Hong Kong, and also with the international community.

As we all know, Hong Kong has a significant advantage as being the only common law jurisdiction in China. We are also very privileged to have the full backing of national policies, such as the National 14th Five-Year Plan affirming the maintenance and furtherance of Hong Kong's distinctive status and advantages, and explicitly supporting Hong Kong's development as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region. To better play the role of a "super connector" or "super facilitator" by linking the Mainland with the global community, our lawyers should not only be conversant with international practices, but also have deeper understanding of the law and practice as well as the latest development of our motherland.

This is because we are witnessing increasingly closer integration and co-operation between Hong Kong and the Mainland in legal matters as well as other aspects, capitalising on our unique strengths under the principle of "one country, two systems". Such strengths would certainly include the comprehensive legal framework for mutual legal assistance between the Mainland and Hong Kong, which is made possible by Article 95 of the Basic Law, and the development of deeper integration of legal practices particularly in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). I encourage both current and future members of the legal profession to proactively dovetail with national strategies and on this, participating in the GBA Legal Professional Examination would be one of the constructive ways to broaden one's horizon and also to gain the qualification to practice law in the GBA.

I am certain that with the selfless donations from most generous benefactors such as the Philip K H Wong Foundation, present and future legal professionals of Hong Kong will benefit greatly from having access to a deeper and broader understanding of Chinese law. This will no doubt contribute significantly to the nurturing and development of our pool of legal talents to become better equipped as bridges and facilitators between the "two systems" within our "one country". Thank you very much.

Photo

The Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, speaks at the Dedication Ceremony for the Philip K H Wong Theatre and the Philip K H Wong Centre for Chinese Law at the University of Hong Kong today (December 15).

The Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, spoke at the Dedication Ceremony for the Philip K H Wong Theatre and the Philip K H Wong Centre for Chinese Law at the

University of Hong Kong (HKU) today (December 15), and officiated at the unveiling of plaques ceremony with other officiating guests. Photo shows Mr Lam (third left) and representatives of the Wong family Mrs Gertrude Wong (third right), Dr Kennedy Wong (second left) and Ms Ada Wong (first right), as well as the President and Vice-Chancellor of HKU, Professor Zhang Xiang (second right), and the Dean of the HKU Faculty of Law, Professor Fu Hualing (first left), pictured at the ceremony.

Ends/Thursday, December 15, 2022