

Speech

Speech by Acting FS at Lui Che Woo Prize - Prize for World Civilisation launch ceremony (English only) (with photos/video)

Thursday, September 24, 2015

Following is the speech by the Acting Financial Secretary, Professor K C Chan, at the launch ceremony of the Lui Che Woo Prize - Prize for World Civilisation this afternoon (September 24):

Dr Lui (Chairman of K Wah Group, Dr Lui Che-woo), ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It gives me great pleasure to be here, today, for the launch of the Lui Che Woo Prize - Prize for World Civilisation.

The "world" covers a lot of ground. So, too, does "civilisation", which generally refers to an advanced stage of human social development.

In that, of course, we have come a good long way. In technology, certainly, the world has largely become the "global village" media sage Marshall McLuhan famously promised - if that's the right word - more than half a century ago.

And while we are making progress in many other areas, we have much still to accomplish if we are to realise "civilisation" in all its full and many layered meanings.

In this life-long, age-long, earth-long, pursuit, we are helped by governments, by international associations and organisations, and by the bestowing of prizes and awards for special achievement.

Probably the best known of these is the Nobel Prize, annually recognising academic, cultural and scientific advances at the highest levels. But, in truth, there are a great many awards out there. And they honour excellence in disciplines inclusive and exclusive, great and small, universally celebrated and wonderfully obscure.

When it comes to awards, the sectors, industries, associations and people of Hong Kong do their part, and more. And in so many ways.

When it comes to advancing civilisation, I'm reminded of the Shaw Prize, with its focus on research excellence in astronomy, life science and medicine, and the mathematical sciences. The Shaw Prize - as you are, no doubt, aware - was initiated by legendary Hong Kong entrepreneur and philanthropist Run Run Shaw.

And there's Noel Croucher. The man who helped found the Hong Kong Stock Exchange also established the Croucher Foundation - some 36 years ago. It annually recognises outstanding accomplishments in science, technology and medicine.

Today, I'm pleased to say, we acknowledge the foresight and generosity of another notable Hong Kong businessman and philanthropist, Dr Lui Che-woo. Last year, he set up the \$1.3 billion GEG Charitable Foundation, to expand on his already substantial contributions to education, locally and internationally.

And now, with today's launch of the Lui Che Woo Prize, Dr Lui's munificence embraces the macrocosm. The universal. The world writ large.

Not all that surprising, to be sure. Not from a man who has an asteroid named after him: the Lui Che Woo Star, International Code 5538. A man shaped by the terrible hardships of war, a businessman whose post-war rise mirrored Hong Kong's own, whose singular achievements over the years, and the decades, speak of Hong Kong's economic success at the very highest levels.

The establishment of the prize that bears Dr Lui's name promises a worldwide and welcome recognition for the winners.

Much more than that, however, it presents the clear and compelling prospect of advancing human civilisation. Year after year. I have no doubt that there are many - in Hong Kong and around the world - who can't wait to take up that welcome challenge. Dr Lui Che-woo's welcome challenge.

Thank you.

Ends

