

Honorary Fellow A Citation

Mr Wong Man-yin Denny

Bai Juyi is one of the great Tang poets. The young Bai did not find it easy to make ends meet when he was young and had not yet established a name for himself. Once he had resolved on a literary career, he travelled from Jiangnan to the capital, Changan, to show his poetry to Gu Kuang, a literary leader at that time. Since 'Juyi' literally means 'easy living', upon seeing Bai's name on the manuscripts, Gu joked: 'Rice is expensive in Changan. Living here is no easy matter!' What Gu meant was that, given the high living standard in the capital, making a living there is not an easy matter at all. In fact, the same could be said of Hong Kong 1,200 years later. People who live in Hong Kong, especially the younger generation, have faced similar living and housing problems. The basic necessity of 'easy living' becomes a challenge. The young must be realistic and always go an extra mile in the hope of climbing up the social ladder in order to put a roof above their heads.

Forty-five years ago, Mr Wong Man-yin Denny graduated from New Asia College of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) with a Bachelor's degree major in Economics and minor in Business Administration. In a talk given at his alma mater, he shared with the students how he coped with life's challenges in the first few years after graduation and how such tribulations had made him stronger. He did not hesitate to point out that, stepping into a new workplace, fresh graduates 'should be humble, expand their social networks, be proactive, thorough and swift in acquiring new knowledge and cherish each learning opportunity.' He encouraged the students to spare no effort to take up more work so as to learn more. What is learned this way will one day become the cornerstones and assets of their careers. From his firsthand experience Mr Wong thinks that being proactive, eager to shoulder responsibilities, sincere and friendly are the keys to success. His resounding words of wisdom are music to the new graduates which will bring them lifelong benefits.

Mr Wong does not only preach a proactive and open attitude. He has practised it himself all his life. After graduating from CUHK, he worked for a leading property developer. As a new recruit, he persisted in taking up the challenges with humility, accomplishing the tasks through seeking counsel and exerting relentless effort irrespective of how demanding the work was. Mr Wong absorbed new knowledge like a sponge and always directed himself towards righteousness. He cultivated friendships with people from all walks of life with thankfulness and in good faith. In 1978, after honing his skills for four years, he co-founded the Centaline Property Agency with Mr Shih Wing-ching. The Agency started as a nano-business with only a desk and a telephone shared between the two partners, rented from a leaseholder of a small office in Central. Ten years later, the Agency was already a market leader amongst Hong Kong real estate agencies. With his high competence, discerning eye and strong leadership, Centaline Property Agency had changed the business model of real estate agency and raised the business ethics, professional conduct and service standard of the industry. By 2018, the Centaline Group had developed into a mammoth venture with 2,600 branches in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan employing over 55,000 persons. Its turnover was HK\$18.98 billion, and its after-tax profits was HK\$501 million, and even reached HK\$1.05 billion in the good year of 2017.

In 1992, Mr Wong did not further manage the Centaline Property Agency and founded Capital Property Consultants. But he did not sell his shares in Centaline Property Agency and remains until today as shareholder of Centaline Group holding 45% of its shares. In 1996, Mr Wong established the Hong Kong Chamber of Professional Property Consultants Limited with other captains of the industry and became its first Chairman. In 1999, he acquired Easy Property Co. Ltd, later also acquired Easy House Properties Ltd., then merged the two Easy real estate agencies under the trade name of Easy Property, and has served as

managing director since 2002. Nowadays, the Easy Property specializes in property agency business in Hong Kong Island East and Shatin. More than 40 years have now passed since Centaline Property Agency was founded. From Centaline Property Agency to Capital Property Consultants, and from Capital Property Consultants to Easy Property, Mr Wong has been leading his companies in new directions, onto paths not taken by other agencies before, such as establishing internal guidelines to refrain from taking part in property speculations. He places his priorities on professional ethics and services, as well as decent organisational management. He also emphasizes that a property agency should practise social responsibility. Mr Wong spares no effort in creating an easy living environment and has established himself as a leader in the industry as well as a role model for the young.

In addition to giving frequent media interviews to provide professional analyses on real estate, Mr Wong often serves as keynote speakers at public forums and community activities. Since 2000, Mr Wong has been writing articles to comment on the real estate market and to express his views on political, economic, social, educational and humanities issues. The articles are known for their perspicacity and style, and can be found in major newspapers and websites (e.g., the websites of Centaline Property Agency, Ricacorp Properties, Property Hong Kong, Many Wells Property, Easy Property and Finet etc.).

While pursuing a distinguished career in the estate agency profession, Mr Wong has not neglected his role in doing service to the community and has been lending a helping hand to the young. Every year, he donates on the average half of the net profit of Easy Property to charity, benefitting the community and setting an example of social responsibility. As a CUHK alumnus, Mr Wong cares about the development of the University and New Asia College. He has been providing caring and generous support to the cause of talent cultivation. He has served as a member of

the General Education Advisory Board of New Asia College since 2008 and the Board of Trustees since 2009. Through his selfless contributions, Mr Wong became a role model for all members of the New Asia community. He has also donated significantly to establish scholarships that encourage students to improve themselves and broaden their horizons. In 2014, he was invited to give a talk entitled 'Keys to Success – Ability, Personal Quality and Vision' for the Program for the Gifted & Talented of the Faculty of Education at CUHK, where he shared his experiences and wisdom with students and parents. Today's students are the pillars of tomorrow's society; through his benevolence, Mr Wong has sowed the seeds of many good things which will certainly be harvested by us in the years to come.

In Chinese, 'easy living' and 'pleasant living' (the Chinese name of Easy Property) are homonyms. However, a subtle difference separates them: the former speaks of a basic necessity, whereas the latter is a state to which everyone aspires. A distinguished entrepreneur, Mr Wong's distinguished career has helped to provide an 'easy living' environment for citizens. He has devoted himself to serving the community, taking care of the young, shouldering social responsibilities, and paving the way for others to attain 'pleasant living'. In recognition of his enthusiastic and generous support to CUHK and New Asia College, and his exemplifying a good alumnus model, Mr Chairman, it is my great pleasure to present to you Mr Wong Man-yin Denny for the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.