

## Principal's Speech on Speech Day 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2017

Professor Anthony Fung and Mrs Fung, Fathers, Distinguished Guests, Parents, Teachers, Alumni, Friends, Graduates, and Students,

Tonight we are very honoured to have Professor Anthony Fung Ying Him and his wife Mrs Fung to be our Guests of Honour.

Let me confess – I have ulterior motives in inviting Prof Fung – I am dying to have a Guest of Honour whom I have taught and whose future I have not ruined! And here you are, someone from Class 2A in the first year when I became its Form Master. But it is extremely easy to cover up my selfish intention because there are plenty of excellent reasons to invite you!

1) You have made important contributions to Hong Kong through educating numerous journalists who play key roles in Hong Kong and pushing the boundaries of knowledge in pop culture, cultural studies, global media and communication, cultural policy and creative industries. You are truly a role model.

2) Your interest and studies of pop culture means you probably know our students and graduates better than we do – it will be wonderful if we can have you to share your thoughts with them.

3) You were the Chief Editor of our school annual *The Star* exactly 30 years ago. Wah Yan always treasures Whole Person Development – dual emphasis on academic studies and Extra-curricular Activities (or ECA in short). Your involvement in *The Star* probably transformed you, and this might have led on to your career in and contribution to journalism. You are no doubt shaped by Jesuit education at Wah Yan and we are all proud of you!

So Prof Fung and Mrs Fung, may I thank you once again for gracing this occasion with your presence!

Last year, we completed our 3-year School Development Plan (SDP) for 2014-17. Based on the evaluation of this SDP, stakeholders' surveys, SWOT analysis, priorities

of the Society of Jesus, as well as latest developments in the educational scene in Hong Kong, we have developed the new three-year plan covering 2017-2020. The two major concerns of this SDP are a) Enhancing Self-directed Learning and b) Fostering a caring and respectful community.

In terms of academic achievements, our graduates continue to do significantly above the Hong Kong average in their DSE exam. Among local degree offers, the highest percentage continues to come from HKU, which accounts for 36% of all UGC degree offers. Over 20% of our graduates have also decided to further their studies overseas.

As said, we also put great emphasis on fostering students' whole person development through a vibrant campus life with plentiful opportunities to participate in or organize ECAs - sports, music, debating, drama, chess, uniform groups..., etc. Not only have our gentlemen done very well, but more importantly, they have discovered their potentials, developed proper attitudes and generic skills and formed lifelong friends.

For all these, I would like to thank all teachers and staff for their dedication, and the WYOFF, the WYHKPTA, and the WYHKPSA for their generous support! Most importantly, I would like to thank parents whose love and sacrifice are vital to your sons' achievements.

When writing my message for the graduation album of the Class of 2017, I dedicated to them the song "Take These Wings". It is about passing on of wisdom and tradition from one generation to the next. It is also about gaining the strength and freedom on maturity to pursue one's dreams. This song contains my sincere wish to the graduates this year.

Actually sustaining our tradition, and gaining greater strength to pursue our vision is also what the current Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) exploration of the school is about. Titled "Renewed Mission and Sustained Development", the proposal aims to tackle challenges and re-energize the school by creating more favorable conditions for the school and companions in education to go further in nurturing leaders with a heart to serve Hong Kong for many years to come.

DSS can be controversial, especially when one considers it without sufficient regard to the context of the school and the delicate design of the proposal. However, Wah Yan has never shied away from difficult issues important to our vision and tradition, and we have approached it by doing our utmost to be transparent, thorough, thoughtful, and well-balanced. We believe that our core values, not just of liberal and independent thinking, but also of respect, love and unity in diversity will carry the day, so that regardless of the result of the exploration, the whole exercise will unfold in a way that all Wahyanites can be proud of. I think for many who are involved in this exercise, it is also a learning experience. We have all grown a little in the process.

When reflecting on the experience so far, Rudyard Kipling's famous poem "If" somehow comes to my mind. I also find it a fitting piece to inspire our fresh graduates in their journey through life. So on closing, let me share a few lines with our graduates:

*If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise...*

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*...If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And—which is more—you'll be a man (**and a Wahyanite**), my son!*

Thank you.