

Speech by Mr. Li Ka-shing  
Shantou University Commencement Ceremony  
30 June 2016

The Future is Now

Mr. Yao Ming, Distinguished Guests, Faculty and Graduates,

It is such a great honour to return to STU every year. I am so humbled and grateful for all your love. Thank you for sharing this happy moment with me.

Class of 2012, four years of hard work, now is the time to celebrate. Let's give a thunderous round of applause to yourselves and your supportive teachers and loving families.

A dynamic and complex future awaits you. Amid a climate of sociopolitical and economic uncertainty, a myriad of technological forces surge forward into every corner of life, necessitating the need to reimagine and reshape established models and conventions.

In this time of flux, where the past is no longer and the future is not just yet, are you facing opportunity or a considerable challenge?

People with rigid ideas and lack of creativity have nowhere to go. Nor do Icarian visionaries without solutions, those who are blindly selfish in their ambition to reach success — such behaviour is a toxic combo that lays waste to valuable resources and time.

Mental inertness is an obstacle to effective thinking. It spawns misguided strategies and policies. It could condemn us to a Sisyphean future, a future where our goals are forever out of our reach.

Without question, this is an era where creativity and knowledge bring on opportunities that previous generations haven't had. That said, our world is a troubled place: unsustainable, unequal, unjust and conflicted.

Stay strong in the wind and rain that shake today's world. Use the fear these forces generate to your advantage — let it motivate you to become who you want to be. It can guide you all to becoming fearless solution providers and strategic visionaries who make a difference in the world.

How will you get there? I don't have a formula to offer but I'd like to share some thoughts that have helped me get where I am today.

We need to always stay curious and humble to reach success. A passion for learning advances our readiness and potential for intellectual growth and wonder — it enables us to make smarter, faster and better decisions.

Technology is the cornerstone of economic progress. Talent is the engine that powers productivity. Tolerance is the edge that spurs competitiveness and equity. Together this is the trinity that forms the basis for innovation.

Innovation allows us to learn together, to formulate new perspectives, which lead to new insights. Only in a progressive society that has the possibility to support progress can the benefits of prosperity be enjoyed by all.

In these changing times where everything is unpredictable, we need to live with a sense of purpose, we must live lives where moxie counts. In our pursuit of success, we must never forget that our world is human and intrinsically connected across the globe.

While recovering from a recent bout of illness, I immersed myself into the world of virtual reality and copied the diamond sutra in the wild cursive script of Master Huai Su. The spontaneity and unrestrainedness is fascinating and enlightening. “All conditioned phenomena are like a dream, an illusion, a bubble, a shadow.” But in reality I’m keenly aware of how blessed I am with love and concern from friends and family that fill each morning and sunset with joy.

My life has not been an easy journey — I have seen many triumphs and tribulations. Yet all in all I’m a happy man for I have tried to serve society to the best of my ability as a human being, as a citizen and a businessman.

Congratulations again. I know each and every one of you is ready to go out into the world and create a new formula for a brighter future. Be generous, be creative, live your life to its truest, in duty, in dignity and joy.

Today you are proud to be part of Shantou University. Tomorrow Shantou University will be proud to be part of you. Thank you so much.