

Conferment of the Degree of Doctor of Social Science, honoris causa A Citation



Dr William Mong Man Wai, DBA (Hon), LLD (Hon), DSSc (Hon)

The Golden Jubilee Anniversary of the Shun Hing Group in 2003 was a magnificent occasion celebrated with a large assemblage of distinguished guests and messages of congratulations and good wishes from all over the world. Founded in 1953, the Shun Hing Group is going from strength to strength after half a century of enterprising effort, and behind the grandeur of its success there is a moving story. It all began with a promise between the company and a foreign friend, which was brought to fruition through the collaborative efforts of a remarkable Sino-Japanese partnership. Through lots of hard work and a readiness to move with the times the enterprise took off, and has since soared to the heights of business success.

Dr William Mong Man Wai is the Chairman and Senior Managing Director of the Shun Hing Group, and an entrepreneur and philanthropist of international renown. His family had come from the Panyu County of Guangdong, and he was born in Hong Kong in 1927. Both his parents were overseas Chinese who returned from Japan and were very conversant with the Japanese language, and the young William had developed an early interest in mathematics and the sciences. He went to La Salle College and, during the Second World War, moved to the Mainland to further his studies. He returned to Hong Kong after the War and was then admitted to Tsinghua University in Beijing, where he proceeded to study aviation engineering. In 1948 he came back to Hong Kong upon the instruction of his father, and in 1949 he went to Japan to continue his education, at which point a unique career of exceptional dimensions began.

When he first arrived in Japan, Mr Mong ardently sought to consolidate his command of Japanese and to gain in-depth understanding of the life and manners of the Japanese people. He enrolled at the Chiyoda Primary School in the Kanda district in Tokyo and, despite his status as a university student, sat with young children and studied in their midst. Mr Mong, 22 at the time, went to school very early and devoted himself whole-heartedly to the lessons and completed the six-year primary school curriculum in the short span of six months. This firmness of purpose, coupled with great diligence, laid the foundation for his immense success in the days to come, and his fluency in Japanese played a pivotal role in facilitating his business contacts and operations in Japan.

The old Chinese adage has it that “Good tools are essential to a job well done”. Mr Mong, now equipped with solid professional knowledge in engineering and a firm grasp of the Japanese language, launched into the retail market for Japanese electrical appliances, an area not devoid of risks at the time. With the greatest perseverance and unsurpassed wisdom he boldly took the initiative to introduce National radio sets to Hong Kong, and with remarkable business results won the trust of Mr Konosuke Matsushita, known as “the god of management”. Mr Mong was then given the sole agency of National products in Hong Kong and Macau, and



a business partnership and friendship of over fifty years thus began. A bond based on mutual respect and frankness between two outstanding entrepreneurs that transcends the written contract, it is a manifestation of the trust between two real gentlemen.

Since its establishment in 1953, the Shun Hing Group has made it its business to introduce quality electrical appliances to Hong Kong. These range from the radios and electric rice cookers of the early days to the later washing machines and microwave ovens, and the more recent audio-visual equipment, office automation equipment and information network systems. In all these business initiatives the Company's priority has been to enhance the quality of life in Hong Kong through the introduction of state-of-the-art electrical appliances. During the past five decades the Shun Hing Group had grown in size and scope while the living standard of Hong Kong citizens had also risen from the modest to the affluent, and there was certainly a profound and inalienable connection between the two.

Today, at the dawn of the 21st century, Shun Hing has evolved into a business empire with diversified interests employing about 1,600 people in various operations all over the world. The Group's business is no longer confined to home appliances and audio-visual products, but has extended to security systems, construction, warehousing and logistics, mechanical and electrical engineering, advertising, and real estate investment and development in the Mainland. The structure and governance of these enterprises have also undergone large-scale revamps and the Group now comprises three main components, namely, Shun Hing Electronic Holdings Ltd, Shun Hing China Investment Ltd and Shun Hing Overseas Investment Ltd, each run by specialists in their respective fields.

Over the years Dr William Mong has explored new frontiers in international business with his distinguished foresight and brilliant acumen. In the beginning, as if gifted with prescience, he courageously brought Japanese electrical appliances to Hong Kong in the 1950's on the assumption that "I take up what others set aside, while letting go of what others are after". Then he developed a close friendship with Mr Konosuke Matsushita, sustaining it with the greatest sincerity, trust, and the most honourable form of business partnership. In running his business his operational principles are founded on the concept of "not to question those to whom duties have been assigned, while not to assign duties to those whom one might question." With the advent of the 21st century he is taking further steps in his entrepreneurial pursuits. In the spirit of the ancient motto, "if one may seek renewal he must do it everyday, and keep the renewal process going", he amalgamates the best of Chinese, Western and Japanese management concepts to create greater room for business growth and expansion. Thus the Shun Hing Group, under the leadership of Dr William Mong, sees striving for perfection as the epitome of its corporate culture, and its employees are committed to collaborative efforts under a united spirit of trust and mutual encouragement. Guided by these principles, the Group continues to grow and develop its activities to serve the community.

Dr William Mong has contributed substantially to the advancement of commerce and industry, education, medical services and social welfare. The Shun Hing Education and

Charity Fund was set up in 1984 and, since its foundation, has donated close to four hundred million Hong Kong dollars in support of educational, health care, recreational, sports and environmental protection projects in Mainland China and Hong Kong. Over the years the Fund has endowed campus facilities, research institutes, research grants and scholarship schemes at major universities in both Hong Kong and the Mainland. In 1996 an important donation was made to Sidney Sussex College at Cambridge University for the construction of a multi-purpose building; the William M W Mong Building became the first building at Cambridge University named after an Asian.

In recognition of his efforts in promoting bilateral trade between Hong Kong and Japan, the late Emperor Hirohito bestowed upon Dr Mong the Japanese Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold Rays with Rosette, in 1988. In 1994 the Comite de France presented him with the Gold Cup Award. Dr Mong is a Council Member or Honorary Committee Member of many local and Mainland universities, and a recipient of honorary doctorates from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the University of Hong Kong, the City University of Hong Kong and the Open University of Hong Kong. He also holds consultant professorships at Peking University and Tsinghua University, and an honorary fellowship of Sidney Sussex College at Cambridge. The Nanjing Purple Mountain Observatory named Asteroid 3678 the Mong Man Wai Star in 1996 for the distinguished work he has done to promote economics, science, technology and education in China. In 1999 the Municipal Government of Nanjing presented Dr Mong with an honorary citizenship as a commendation for his outstanding contributions to education in the motherland.

Dr Mong and the Shun Hing Education and Charity Fund have for long been staunch supporters of teaching and research at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Since the 1960's major donations have been received from Dr Mong and the Fund to finance scholarships, the establishment of laboratories, and various training programmes at the University. The first building at the Chinese University named after Dr Mong, housing facilities for scientific research, opened in 1998, while the William M W Mong Engineering Building was dedicated and commissioned in October this year. In 2003 the Shun Hing Education and Charity Fund generously endowed a professorial chair at the Institute of Mathematical Sciences, this being the first chair named after an individual at the Chinese University. In 2004 the University again benefited from the munificence of the Fund with the establishment of the Shun Hing Institute of Advanced Engineering. Mr David Mong, Chairman of the Fund and the son of Dr William Mong, personally participates in the project as the Chairman of the Advisory Board.

With a reputation greatly respected locally and worldwide, and a career that benefits both industry and the community, Dr Mong has won our admiration with his splendid efforts in promoting economic, educational and cultural developments. Mr Chairman, may I now respectfully present Dr William Mong Man Wai for the award of the degree of Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*.