

Dr Anthony Francis Neoh, QC, SC, JP
Doctor of Social Sciences *honoris causa*

Citation

“In human society things are never as bad as they appear, and it is up to each of us to make things better.” This piece of philosophy by Dr Anthony Neoh demonstrates very well his passion in life and his ambition in his multiple areas of service, ranging from public, legal and business to academic, all of which have earned him extraordinary recognition and respect both within and beyond the territory.

Dr Neoh embarked on his successful career as a civil servant after teaching at his own secondary school for two years. From 1966 to 1979, he served in a wide range of government administrative positions, including City District Commissioner for Kowloon and Assistant Director of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). From 1975 to 1976, he took a year off to pursue his LLB Degree at the University of London and was called to the English Bar by Gray’s Inn. In 1979, he left the Hong Kong Civil Service and commenced practising at the Hong Kong Bar. His legal practice soon took on an international dimension when he practised as a Member of the California Bar, having been admitted in 1984. He returned to full time practice at the Hong Kong Bar in 1986, and in 1990 he was appointed Queen’s Counsel (now retitled Senior Counsel). His legal practice covers a wide spectrum of private and public law matters and he is especially known for dealing with international investment disputes in international arbitration.

Apart from his distinguished professional career, Dr Neoh has shown a firm commitment to public service and has served on various public boards and committees over the years. He took up the Chairmanship for the Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission between 1995 and 1998, and was the first Asian elected to serve as the Chairman of the Technical Committee of the International Organization of Securities Commissions from 1996 to 1998. At the personal invitation of Premier Zhu Rongji, he served as the Chief Advisor to the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) from 1998 to 2004 and was given the duty of proposing policies to revamp the stock market in China. He remains a member of its International Advisory Board. From July 1997 to June 2008, he was also a member of the Hong Kong SAR Basic Law Committee under the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, contributing to many fundamental interpretations of the Basic Law of Hong Kong. In 2010, he was designated by the People’s Republic of China to sit on the Panel of Conciliators and Arbitrators of the World Bank’s International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). In addition, he has served as Independent Non-Executive Director for many publicly listed companies, such as Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, Citic Limited, the Bank of China, China Life Insurance Limited, the Link Real Estate Investment Trust, and China Shenhua Energy Holdings Limited.

On top of his manifold duties, Dr Neoh has shown continuing support and passion for education and nurturing our future generations. He has held various adjunct, honorary and visiting professorial appointments in many prestigious universities, including Harvard University, Peking University, Tsinghua University, National University of Singapore, Zhejiang University and Zhongshan University. From 2004 to 2008, he was Chairman of the Planning Committee to found the Law School (now the Faculty of Law) of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), and also served first as a member and then Deputy Chairman of CUHK’s Council. Legal and financial history and current issues in financial regulation, as well as private/state arbitration, are among the topics he has lectured on extensively both locally and internationally. He was conferred the Honorary Degree

of Doctor of Laws by The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2003, and the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Social Sciences by The Open University of Hong Kong in 2013.

When asked to share his life experience with us, he mentioned:

“Because of impecunious family circumstances, I was not able to follow a formal education, so I have had to educate myself in whatever way I could and in whatever time I could find.”

Perhaps his deep understanding of impecunious circumstances gained from his childhood days could also help explain why he remains deeply humble and grateful despite the honour and reverence he has gained across sectors and regions. “As I look back, I find myself incredibly lucky that Hong Kong and Mainland China has given me so much scope and opportunity. But I do not think that I would have achieved much had I not followed the teachings, examples and advice of my elders, teachers, friends and family who have shaped my attitude to life and exercised a continuing influence on me.”

Lingnan University is also lucky to have Dr Neoh with us. He has been serving on the Social Sciences Advisory Board since 1997, providing valuable advice to our programmes. He became a member of the Advisory Board of the Master of Science in International Banking and Finance (MIBF) Programme in 2009, and took up the Chairmanship of the Board in 2012. With the generous donation of Dr Neoh, the “Anthony Neoh Scholarship” was established in 2010 to reward MIBF students with excellent academic performance. Dr Neoh is indeed a full personification of the Liberal Arts ideal.

Mr Chairman, for his outstanding professional achievements and distinguished public service, may I present Dr Anthony Francis Neoh to you for conferment of the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences *honoris causa*.

English citation written and delivered by Professor Wei Xiangdong