

Euology by CE at funeral service of Dr Chung Sze-yuen (English only)

Following is the eulogy by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the funeral service of Dr Chung Sze-yuen today (November 23):

Last week, Hong Kong lost a distinguished, universally respected leader, a man who dedicated his life – such a long, eventful, brilliantly engaged life – to serving Hong Kong and everything that meant for him: family, community, country.

Today, we gather together here to pay our last respect to this distinguished person – Sir S Y and to celebrate his good fortune – to have lived such a full and resplendent life and slipped away peacefully, surrounded by his beloved family. His words and deeds will remain in the hearts of many of us for a long time to come.

Though Sir S Y had retired for almost two decades and rarely appeared in public since, my memories of him were fresh. As a relatively young member of his circle of friends, I had the fortune of being invited to attend his birthday parties in recent years. And earlier this month, on the 3rd of November, I had the honour of hosting a birthday party for him at Government House. It was a sunny autumn day and the party was filled with joy and warmth. There was no formality, no protocol and everyone has a chance greeting, hugging and even kissing Sir S Y on his 101st birthday. Those happy moments were captured in our respective iPhones.

I have no doubt that every guest at the party find himself or herself fortunate to be on the invitation list of Sir S Y, not mine, and rejoice at our great good fortune to have known Sir S Y, to have worked with him, to have been touched by his vision and to have been inspired by his unassailable commitment to Hong Kong. So much of Sir S Y's life will remain memorable for all of us.

Indeed, as Sir S Y remarked in the Foreword to his memoirs Hong Kong's Journey to Reunification, and I quote, "memory is very selective and porous. The mind is like a sieve, which as time goes by drains the fluid and leaves behind residues that are generally dramatic". Sir S Y's 20 years between 1979 and 1999 when he finally retired, were as dramatic for him as for Hong Kong. His contribution to the smooth transition and the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region was one that was most aptly described by himself as an accomplishment that "we can face our own conscience and sleep well at night."

My own association with Sir S Y also started from that dramatic period of preparing for the Reunification. I had the privilege of working with him in the Budget Expert Group under the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group, which dealt with the transitional Budget for the 1997-98 fiscal year and related issues before Hong Kong's return to the motherland. He was an expert to the

Chinese side while I was a Hong Kong official on the British side. During that one and a half year, I learned from Sir S Y the value of adhering to principles and objectives, the diligence in finding solutions and the dignity of speaking without fear or favour, though I have to say Sir S Y's Putonghua was often hard to follow. I was impressed by his leadership, but more so by what motivated him. And that was invariably the interest of the people of Hong Kong.

Born in Hong Kong, for almost half a century, Sir S Y participated in the administration of Hong Kong. He served the people of Hong Kong – generation after generation – and in so many ways.

He was, first and foremost, an illustrious engineer who served as president of what was then the Engineering Society of Hong Kong, which later became the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers, and led the Society in its path to become a statutory body. He won countless awards in engineering, and was well known for significantly reducing the cost of producing torches with new technology. Throughout his life, he had been highly respected by the engineering sector.

But it was politics that captured his imagination, his dedication, his remarkable ability to get things done. He was indeed a rare talent in politics. Before Hong Kong's return to the motherland, Sir S Y had served as a member of the Legislative Council for 13 years and a member of the Executive Council for 16 years, with dual membership in six of the years. He became a Senior Unofficial Member in 1980, making him one of the top decision-makers in the Hong Kong Government. With that, he found himself at history's doorstep, witnessing the negotiations between China and the United Kingdom over Hong Kong's future. In the early 1980s, he tirelessly travelled between Beijing and London to voice his views, acting solely with Hong Kong's best interests in mind.

He retired from ExCo in the late 1980s, but was no doubt persuaded by the first Chief Executive, Mr C H Tung, to assume the position of Convenor of the first Executive Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region at the age of 80 to provide a pair of safe and credible hands to put the reborn Hong Kong on her stable footing. After his official retirement in 1999, he still showed his care for Hong Kong by sharing his valuable insights on local issues from time to time. He was an important witness, and a huge contributor to Hong Kong's smooth transition and successful implementation of "One Country, Two Systems".

It is no exaggeration to say, which I did say on his 101st birthday party, that Sir S Y's legacy is being felt up to this day. During my first official trip to Japan earlier this month, I was reminded that Sir S Y was one of the early chairmen of the Hong Kong–Japan Economic Cooperation Committee which helped to lay the strong foundation of Hong Kong's trade and investment links with Japan. The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology which was established through his leadership and guidance is one of the best young universities in the world and a much sought after partner in developing higher education in the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area, and will play a pivotal role in our effort to build an international

innovation and technology hub. As the founding chairman of the Hospital Authority, Sir S Y had led our public healthcare system into a new era.

In recognition of his tremendous achievements, Sir S Y was awarded the Grand Bauhinia Medal, Hong Kong's highest honour, on July 1, 1997, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's establishment day.

Sir S Y once said that his guiding light – the principles he lived and worked by – were, and I quote: "to act with conscience and consider the best interests of Hong Kong."

Ladies and gentlemen, Sir S Y – a native son of Hong Kong – lived those principles to the fullest, completely and selflessly. We were blessed to have him among us. And we are blessed today to enjoy the innumerable rewards he helped enable. May he rest in peace.