

## THE CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH

### AT THE CEREMONY OF APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR COUNSEL

(9 JUNE 2018)

Chief Justice, Members of the Judiciary, Secretary for Justice, President of the Law Society, Ladies and Gentlemen.

There are four new senior counsel which I must, by long usage and tradition, say a few words that are calculated to remind them they are not entirely perfect.

For I function on this occasion a bit like the slave who stood next to a Roman General on his chariot in triumphal processions who whispered 'Memento homo' - 'Remember that you are but a man.'

They each of them deserve the honour of becoming Senior Counsel but I am particularly pleased to note the CJ's choice of Maggie Wong, Edward Choy and Derek Chan who are not noted for ornamenting the courts on the civil side in the High Court building.

These criminal advocates are often found further afield. They sometimes go down the mean streets of Kowloon City, into Eastern, and West Kowloon where, in the words of Raymond Chandler, a man-and woman in this case-must go who is not himself mean or tarnished nor afraid.

You will find them pacing the airless corridors, of the District Court, with furrowed brows, marshalling their thoughts for the bitter contests that go on in the courtrooms there between them and the prosecution and, very often, sometimes the judge.

They however give the lie to the adage 'Crime does not pay', as they can look forward to the enhanced earnings with their elevation.

They can be as self-satisfied about success as the judge in G&S 'Trial by Jury' who reminisced about his days at the Bar when instructed by a loyal solicitor.

The rich attorney was good as his word  
The briefs came trooping gaily  
And every day my voice was heard  
At the Sessions of ancient Bailey  
All thieves, who could my fees afford  
Relied on my orations  
And many a burglar I've restored  
To his friends and his relations

Nothing so mundane as burglars for them. Sticky-fingered bankers, careless businessmen and creative accountants perhaps, but not for a very long time, burglars.

I turn to them individually.

## **Maggie Wong**

The most enigmatic of the new senior counsel. She has disclosed a few bare details of her life and background. She is a very private person.

It comes as no surprise to me that she is responsible for the chapter in Archbold on 'Privilege, Disclosure and Public Interest Immunity'.

I have no humorous anecdotes to relay about her at her expense. No gossip or plausible falsehoods to repeat. I can only relay to you plain facts.

She has graced the chambers of Gary Plowman SC for many years - I can say that without being ingallant as the announcement of her appointment starkly disclosed her age.

She is demure, polite and yet very knowledgeable about legal matters. She can be rightly called the Portia of her chambers and like Portia it can be said of her.

*You know the law, your exposition  
Hath been most sound:*

She is industrious and organized. I see that in her work as Honorary Secretary of the Hong Kong Bar Association. For which I and other members of the Bar Council are very grateful.

## **Edwin Choy**

Edwin is a product of Wah Yan College where he studied up until F.5 then won a scholarship to United World College in Canada.

He resumed his association with the Jesuit Order by going to Georgetown University, Washington where he read Philosophy and Classics.

He came to the Bar after first working as a stockbroker. He worked for three investment banking concerns: Wardley James Capel, then Peregrine and lastly Kleinwort Benson.

All three of these companies have, curiously, since disappeared into the corporate ether after Edwin's time with them.

Edwin studied law whilst still a banker and achieved what was known many years ago as a 'gentleman's degree'.

Delicacy prevents me from giving more details to people who may be unfamiliar with the term 'gentleman's degree' but nowadays a shorthand reference to the class of that degree is to that that maligned and misunderstood English king, 'Richard III'.

Edwin fancies himself as an intellectual. He can, I am told, discourse upon the merits of the poetry of T.S. Eliot, and compares him to contemporaries like Ezra Pound.

Now I am a big fan of T.S. Eliot. I think Eliot is the poet who best represents the existentialist angst of 1920's, as shown in his bleak poem 'The Wasteland'.

When I asked a barrister who knows Edwin well to tell me what was Edwin's favourite T.S. Eliot poem so that I might open a literary debate with him I immediately dropped the idea upon learning what the poem was.

There is not time to read the poem in its entirety, but here are the opening four lines.

*Macavity's a Mystery Cat: he's called the Hidden Paw--  
For he's the master criminal who can defy the Law.  
He's the bafflement of Scotland Yard, the Flying Squad's despair:  
For when they reach the scene of crime--Macavity's not there!*

Edwin is the Hong Kong barrister who most nearly resembles King George V, with his greying, well-groomed and pointed beard.

And he is as well dressed as that king's son, Edward VIII, later Duke of Windsor.

I am advised that, like the late duke, he can agonize over choosing the right clothes to wear to go out and impress an admiring world.

He debates with himself, whether he should try one of his tried and trusted Anderson & Shepherd suit from Savile Row or be daring and flaunt his Rubinachi suit, sharp as a Neapolitan stiletto blade.

Funnily enough, fashion dilemmas like this have not been a problem for me.

Edwin comes from the stable of that venerable trainer of legal talent, Lawrence Lok S.C.

### **Jin PAO**

Product of Hong Kong University where he obtained a law degree now named after legendary WHU and England soccer player, and World Cup Winner, Sir Geoffrey Hurst.

After PCLL he went to Harvard Law School, where he excelled in constitutional law.

I would have liked to think that when JP was there he took part in a fine Harvard tradition which is to put on a theatrical show every year with a legal theme that connects with a more or less contemporary film.

'Lord of the Briefs' was the 2003 production when he was there.

Would he have stayed longer he might have starred in the 'Da Vinci Model Penal Code' in 2007, or 'Oceans Replevin' in 2010 and, best of all, 'Finding Nemo Contributorily Negligent' in 2005.

I am thinking what theatrically minded members of the Bar might make of a play about restraint orders: 'Frozen-Don't Let it Go'.

Jin is also a bit of an ace games player. He won 2nd prize in a World Challenge Mah Jong competition held in Macao.

Although qualified, as a barrister at the time, kept that fact a secret when press asked him his occupation. He said he was an 'office worker'.

I am told he gave this evasive answer because he did not wish to bring the professional game of Mah Jong' into disrepute.

When not shuffling the ivory tiles, JP scrapes a living at Temple chambers.

### **Derek C. L. Chan**

Received university education in Auckland New Zealand.

Came to HK to do PCLL but was admitted to practice in both New Zealand and New South Wales before being admitted to practice in Hong Kong.

He distinguished himself in his legal studies at the University of Auckland winning prizes there. He was the recipient of a Bar Scholarship in 2003.

Like Maggie Wong, a member of Gary Plowman's chambers and a criminal practitioner.

Like Maggie Wong, someone who seems to combine a capacity for hard work with an irreproachable character. No one will speak ill of him, which is highly suspicious.

Then again, it may be correct what the philosopher Bertrand Russell said.

*'No one gossips about other people's secret virtues.'*

I conclude by welcoming the Four to the inner bar on behalf of all members of the Hong Kong Bar Association.

**Philip Dykes SC  
Chairman  
Hong Kong Bar Association**