

Dr Jonathan Choi Koon-shum *BBS, JP*

DOCTOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCES *honoris causa*

Citation

Dr Jonathan Choi Koon-shum is a distinguished businessman and educational philanthropist. Born in Macau with ancestral home in Zhongshan, Guangdong Province, Dr Choi moved to Hong Kong at the age of three. After graduating from St Paul's Co-educational College, Dr Choi went to Japan to study the humanities. His study, however, was cut short by repeated calls from his father, a seafood entrepreneur and a great source of inspiration to him both in business and in life, to assist in managing the expanding business. Dr Choi started from the lowest echelon of his family business. With foresight and vision, he began the diversification which now sees the Sunwah Group involved in six principal domains — seafood and foodstuffs, real estate, financial services, infrastructure, technology, and the media. The Group currently has more than 100 subsidiaries spread all over the world.

Since the 1970s, the Choi family has started to provide financial support for the establishment of kindergartens, primary schools and colleges in native Zhongshan, and in Hong Kong and Macau. Dr Choi is widely recognised for his support for education. He has devoted a tremendous amount of time to grooming young talents in Hong Kong, Zhongshan, other parts of mainland China and overseas, including scholarships to financially less privileged students. Dr Choi is the founder of the Choi Koon Shum Chinese Academy of Sciences Honorary Academician Foundation, the Guangdong Sunwah Education Institute and the Sunwah International Business School of Liaoning University. The Sunwah Education Foundation he led collaborated with Michigan State University and Beijing Normal University to develop a "Sunwah Education Model" for basic education that integrates the strengths of Eastern and Western practices. The 3e International School, established in 2004 in Beijing to implement the Model, is now rated as a leading international school in Beijing, and the Sunwah Education Model has also been used by schools in the United States.

In recognition of his continuous contributions to the educational and technological development of China, Dr Choi was invited to meet former President Jiang Zemin in Beijing in 1995. Dr Choi also earned a Bronze Bauhinia Star from the Hong Kong SAR government for his public and community service, as well as prestigious academic awards from Michigan State University (Honorary Doctor of Humanities) in 2005, Hong Kong Polytechnic University (University Fellow) in 2007, and the University of Glamorgan (UK) (Honorary Professor) in 2009.

Over the years, Dr Choi and his family have donated huge sums to education, technology as well as arts and culture projects in Hong Kong, mainland China and other countries.

Always with a broader vision in mind, Dr Choi has been active in developing international networks to facilitate a wide range of business exchanges between China and

countries like India, Israel, Vietnam and Japan. In the field of technology, he founded the China-India Software Association in 2004 and the China Hong Kong Israel Technology Cooperation and Promotion Center in 2005. In trade and business development, he founded the Hong Kong–Vietnam Chamber of Commerce in 2008, and was appointed by the Hong Kong SAR Government to chair the Hong Kong–Japan Business Co-operation Committee in 2010.

Apart from being a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, a Standing Committee member of the All China Federation of Industry and Commerce, and an economic adviser to the President of the Chinese Academy of Science, Dr Choi was elected Chairman of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce in October 2008 — the youngest person to hold the post in the Chamber’s history. He has led the Chamber to new heights, integrating the Chamber with China and the world through a wide range of new initiatives as well as bilateral or multilateral activities and exchanges. He has also initiated projects to foster harmony and a caring culture in society.

For more than three decades, Dr Choi has played an important triple role of entrepreneur, philanthropist and non-official ambassador for Hong Kong and mainland China. It is this triple role that marks out Dr Choi’s remarkable career. He gauges the situation well, evolves with the times, and seizes the moment whenever opportunities arise for him to make contributions.

Mr Chancellor, for his distinguished public service and contributions to the development of Hong Kong’s economic ties with the mainland and other countries, and to the furthering of education in Greater China, may I now present Dr Jonathan Choi Koon-shum to you for the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences *honoris causa*.

Written and delivered by Professor Wong Yiu-chung