

**SPEECH BY NG YU CI, FAYE,
WINNER OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S BOOK PRIZE
(PREUNIVERSITY)
AND THE LEE HSIEN LOONG AWARD FOR
OUTSTANDING BICULTURAL STUDENTS
AT THE SPECIAL AWARDS PRESENTATION CEREMONY
ON THURSDAY, 14 AUGUST 2018, AT 3.30 PM, AT THE
REPUBLIC
CULTURAL CENTRE, THE REPUBLIC POLYTECHNIC**

Good afternoon,

Ms Sim Ann, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications
and Information &
Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

1 I am Yu Ci, a graduate of the class of 2017 from Hwa Chong
Institution. Today, I hope to share with you my journey in
bilingualism, together with some insights I have gleaned along the
way.

2 To me, language has always been something special. It is the
medium through which we communicate and form connections
with others, as well as an avenue of self-expression and
exploration. As a child, I fell in love with the vivid descriptions of
far-flung lands in the Enid Blyton storybooks I read, in the same
way as I was awed by the intricacy yet brevity of Tang Poetry my
grandparents introduced to me. But love wasn't always easy. Like

most of us here, I struggled with my grammar and dreaded the complicated strokes of Chinese characters in Spelling. I had my fair share of frustrating moments grappling with the progression of words in essays, or trying to understand the archaic language of literary texts.

3 Love meant having to work hard, and because I loved, I persisted. As the demands of both languages, English and Mandarin, grew through primary and secondary school, I realised I could no longer rely on the modest advantage I had growing up in a bilingual family. Instead, I poured hours into reading broadly and deeply in both languages, from novels and poetry to historic texts. I made it a personal commitment to keep abreast with current affairs by reading the *New York Times* and watching *Hello Singapore* during dinner every day. I wrote essays and went through them with my teachers to find out how I could make my ideas more cogent, my writing more concise. Mastery is a labour of love and takes effort and time to hone.

4 This is my first takeaway: Love what you do, and if you love it, don't be afraid to put in the hard work.

5 我想与大家分享的第二点是：感恩你所拥有的。

6 我们今天欢聚一堂，庆祝我们所取得的成就，但我想各位都知道，我们成功的背后有许多人的默默付出。我们很努力，但我们也是幸运的一群。学校为我们提供了丰富的学习资源以及自我发展的机会；老师激发了我们学习的热忱，教会我们待人处事的道理；朋友与我们并肩奋斗，为我们的学生生涯留下一幕幕难忘的回忆。还有陪伴我们走过人生低谷的家人，无时无刻在我们身边为我们加油打气……

7 “谁言寸草心，报得三春晖”、“吃水不忘挖井人，前人

栽树后人乘凉”，这些都是祖先为我们留下的传统美德。

8 “饮水思源”是我们生命中不可或缺的价值观念。所以每年的教师节，请别忘了回去母校探望老师，和他们分享你近来的学习与生活点滴。当好朋友需要帮助时，不妨聆听他们的烦恼，给予他们支持与关怀。无论学业或课外活动有多么繁重，也要记得抽出时间陪伴你的家人。他们虽然不说出口，但心里却是那么渴望能和你共享天伦之乐。

9 我想借此机会感谢南洋女中以及华侨中学的老师。谢谢你们谆谆教诲，悉心指导。你们不仅让我在探索知识的道路上一步一个脚印，而且教会我如何关爱他人，与人分享，服务人群。我尤其想感谢双文化与中国通识的老师：谢谢你们启迪我学会“两脚踏中西文化，一心评宇宙文章”。我会继续努力汲取中西文化之所长，不断提升自己的双语能力，并深化跨文化的思辨能力。我也要感谢我的家人给予我的关爱和支持，谢谢你们与我分享喜悦，更在我无助、失落的时候鼓励我、帮助我。没有你们，就不会有今天的我。

10 Today, I am a Year 1 student reading Medicine at NUS. Medicine may seem worlds apart from my love of languages, but I believe at the heart of Medicine lies communication—working well together and managing conflicts within an interdisciplinary team, explaining to patients their conditions and guiding them through the trauma of recovery; all these require the artful use of language.

11 And so I come to my last takeaway: Pay it forward. We can all be a part of something greater than ourselves, and the most satisfying feeling in the world is being able to help and uplift someone else. There is always enough time and enough opportunity to be nice, to listen, and to act on care and empathy.

12 To end off, I'd like to again congratulate all fellow prize recipients for your achievements. You have succeeded in your various fields, but I urge you to continue pushing the frontiers, to continue striving for excellence while transforming your achievements into meaningful contributions.

13 With that, I thank you for your time and kind attention.