

2019 SACE Merit Ceremony – Student Responder Speech

Judah Tan

Your Excellency, Minister, distinguished guests, school representatives, family, and friends.

This morning, I stand here before you all tasked with the great privilege of speaking on behalf of the class of 2018. It is such an honour for me to share this day with an incredibly blessed group of contemporaries whose talents and achievements are being recognised and congratulated at today's Merit Ceremony.

I want to give a heartfelt congratulations to my fellow 2018 SACE graduates. It has not been an easy journey to achieve our merits; we've had to struggle with our deficiencies, grapple with the syllabus, and fight our constant lack of sleep. In those times, we could have easily settled for less and accepted mediocrity, but I'm glad we didn't. Every tree is known by his or her fruits, and I'm glad the fruits of our academic career are ones of perseverance, hard work, and diligence. Today is the day those unseen labours are finally rewarded, so enjoy it.

Looking around, I see a lot of parents and guardians who are sharing our joy. Not only is it such a privilege to have them share this moment of celebration with us, but their constant support and steadfast guidance for all of these years have been one of our greatest blessings. To our parents: you are the most important people in our lives. We owe so much to you. You have trained us up as children in the way we should go: so that now as we grow into adults, we will not forget nor depart from the values that are most important in life. For all these things and for so much more, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

I also want to thank our teachers who have guided us along on our journey. We may have been blessed with an aptitude for learning at birth, but that only took us so far. It is our teachers who have nurtured, unearthed, guided, and refined the rest of our potential. To our teachers: as much as these awards are for us, they are for you too because we truly wouldn't be here receiving these awards without your help. Thank you for impacting us so deeply because the skills and passion you have imparted upon us will stay with us for the rest of our lives.

And finally, on behalf of all my peers, I want to sincerely thank the SACE Board for giving us with a world-class education. I do not say this lightly because coming back from Nepal, India and Malaysia 14 days ago, I realised that all of us present here are truly in the privileged few. Thank you also to SACE for giving us subjects like the Research Project, History, and Geography which have taught me personally the vast physical and spiritual plights of people all across the world. These subjects have shown me how privileged I am, and they have engendered a purpose and passion within me to live less for selfish advancement and more for my neighbours.

Therefore, I would like to leave you with the immortal words of the great Christian philosopher and writer Paul the Apostle: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." I look around and I can see all of my peers with bright young minds. We have achieved outstandingly in our individual educational journey but don't forget that we are global citizens too. Each of us has a unique capability to change the world; provided we think of others. Thank you.