

An address given by Dr. the Honourable Tung Chee Hwa, GBM, LLD (Hon), DSSc (Hon), BSc

I am deeply grateful to the Chinese University for the kind words for me and my fellow honorary graduates. I had told the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Lawrence Lau, that there were three things I appreciated most about the Chinese University. First, its unrelenting championship of the four-year university curriculum in Hong Kong and its bilingual teaching and learning. Second, its unique College system. And third, its campus, the largest and without doubt the most beautiful in Hong Kong. If only I could travel back in time, I would certainly wish to be a student at the Chinese University.

For more than 40 years, the Chinese University has been producing so many outstanding graduates now in all walks of life, and its outstanding academic achievements are known all over the world. It is indeed my great honour to receive an honorary degree from a university of such stature. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heart-felt thanks to the Chinese University for its tireless contributions to education in Hong Kong.

I stand here in gratitude. Whether it was the implementation of 'One Country Two Systems' and the Basic Law, or commitment to education and its reform, or the drive for economic reorientation, these were my duty, nothing more than what I was expected to do as Chief Executive of the HKSAR. The extraordinary success of Hong Kong since its return to China is due to the effort of its 6.8 million citizens, including all of you seated here today. I thank the people of Hong Kong for their support. I thank all my colleagues in the SAR government and Hong Kong's educators for their support. You are the ones that should be honoured and recognized. It was my greatest privilege to have journeyed forth and made history with you.

Looking from this stage, I see faces in high spirits, faces full of life, faces that remind me of myself as a young man. I turn 70 this year. For young graduates like you, your asset is your future; for me, my asset is my past. It is also my only advantage over you. Today, I would like to share with you, graduates of the Chinese University, two observations I have made on life.

Our country is experiencing an era of national invigoration. During this important time, the fate of Hong Kong and even the fate of each of us is inexorably intertwined with the fate of our country.

I was born in a China impoverished and torn by war. For close to 200 years, our country was plagued by domestic strife and external threats. Patriotic and able individuals struggled indefatigably for our country's sovereignty, our national revival and our people's well-being. It was their valiant sacrifice, immeasurable wisdom and relentless efforts that made possible the birth of a new China and the monumental success of reform and opening-up.

Today, China's progress speaks for itself. Its economy is speeding forward and people's livelihoods are undergoing significant improvements. There is sustained progress in society, and its international status is on the rise. In the short span of 29 years after the Open Door Policy, our country has set a quarter of the world's population on the path to a comfortable life – quite an achievement in itself.

In the 17th National Congress that took place recently, the Central Government affirmed the way forward for China. There will be further reform and opening-up. To improve livelihoods, there will be strengthened commitment to education, medical care, and social security. To ensure harmony with nature, energy conservation and pollutant abatement will be emphasized, as will environmental protection. Importance will also be given to the formulation of a democratic legal system, as well as the people's ability for self-management and renewal. China's next step is to build a democratic and harmonious society that is prosperous, fair and just, where the young will be educated, the workers rewarded, the sick cared for and the elderly looked after.

We are happy and proud of our country today, and full of hope for its future.

And it is precisely because of our country's strength and development that Hong Kong has been able to enjoy a smooth transition and maintain its prosperity and stability. Hong Kong's fate is intricately linked to our country's fate. And so is the life of everyone of us. I firmly believe that an even brighter future beckons.

The second observation I would like to make is that you are in a time of great development, and you have to seize the moment and rise to the call of the age.

You are going to leave this university and start your working life in society. It is the wish of every graduate to land a good and well-paid job, and then give back to your parents for their love and support, start your own family and develop your career. As individuals strive to realize their own dreams, they also collectively build social stability and development. But society expects more of you. As an ancient saying goes, 'Everyone has a share of responsibility for the fate of the country.' If you can serve the people, society and the country with your knowledge and expertise after you have established your own livelihood, you will find much greater meaning to your life.

The times make the man. The present day is not an age of national adversity. We are not in a war against invasion; you are not required to shed blood or give up your life for your country. Nevertheless, this age of peaceful construction also needs and makes its own heroes. There are many such people around us who, in their own fields, live their lives to the fullest by making contributions to the country and the people.

Qian Xueshen, who overcame numerous obstacles and returned to China from the U.S. where he had studied, led a team of Chinese scientists to develop nuclear and space technologies in spite of scanty resources, thereby laying a solid foundation for China's defence industry, space exploration and scientific development.

Yuan Longping, the father of hybrid rice, has increased rice yields significantly. He has not only solved the food shortages of China, but also made tremendous contributions to easing the world's food shortages. Thanks to his work, some 70 million people around the world have been fed by the increased rice yields.

After studying and working in the US for eight years and becoming an internationally famous expert in internet design, Robin Li returned to China amidst uncertainties in investments and established the Baidu Company. The company went through an initial period of hardship but in the end gained widespread recognition and has become a listed company. Mr. Li was elected one of the ten most successful entrepreneurs in China.

After graduating from university, Qin Wengui chose to go to the highest and toughest land in the Qinghai Oilfield. For the next 20 years, he had stayed in the Gobi Desert. He did not accept alluring jobs from international companies offering emigration opportunity but came back to serve the country. He has since invented more than 10 new crafts and technologies for developing the western oilfields of our country and was awarded the first China Youth May 4th Medal.

I saw on TV the other day how agricultural experts in Tibet developed new industries from traditional forms of subsistence. For example, they turned the unique local *Hordeum vulgare* into an industry by extracting medical supplements from it, thereby adding value manifold. Others raised new species of dairy cows. These two innovations alone have benefited 850,000 Tibetan farmers and ranchers and increased the average income per person by 900 dollars.

In addition, countless people work hard in their respective positions as teachers, workers, farmers, civil servants and professionals. They are our unnamed heroes.

The advancement of a nation is supported and driven by hosts of unsung heroes like them. Now the torch is passed to you, the new generation.

Because of a period of colonial rule for 156 years, those of us from Hong Kong are somewhat

detached from the development of the nation. Now, Hong Kong is inextricably linked with the development of the nation. We should not, indeed, cannot be the bystanders in this great time.

The graduates of The Chinese University of Hong Kong are the elites of both the city and the nation. With your advantage in languages, culture, professionalism, and cosmopolitan connections, I hope that you can pay more attention to the development of China and commit yourselves to serving the country. Whether you serve as a scientist, a professional, an entrepreneur, a volunteer building roads and bridges, or a teacher in rural areas, you will make a difference. This is what the country expects of you; this is what the people expects of you who have the good fortune to live in this great age.

Dear graduates, 2007 will soon be a thing of the past. 2008 will soon be here. The new year is a memorable time. It marks the thirtieth anniversary of China's Open Door Policy. These 30 years have changed not only the life of everyone in China but also the world's order, tilting the tip of the scale towards China. The rise of China is still revealing itself. Its potential in politics, economy, culture and science is unfathomable. In the next 30 years, China will experience another leap, and you will play a part in it.

The future of Hong Kong and China lies in your hands. I hope that as ambitious and visionary young people, you will always hold dear the motto of your alma mater: 'To broaden one's intellectual horizon; to keep within the bounds of propriety', and that you will serve society with integrity and with intelligence.

I hope that in 30 years' time when you look back at your life, you can proudly say to yourselves that I have made good use of what I had learned from the Chinese University and have not shunned the responsibility given to me by the country and society.

Thank you all.