

**An address given by**

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I feel privileged to be here today to accept this honorary degree from one of Hong Kong's most distinguished institutions. A great place to study ever since its founding in 1963, the Chinese University contributes much to Hong Kong's reputation as an education hub.

I am enormously grateful to be welcomed as part of this continued tradition of excellence.

The Chinese University has already established itself as a leading Asian university and I know that it aspires to go further: to be counted among the world's foremost institutions.

I am confident that with such high-calibre staff and world-class scholars here, the University can achieve the ambitious goals it has set for itself in the coming years.

We are all concerned, I am sure, about the current financial crisis, and what it means for our economic future. As you are well aware, in Chinese culture, a crisis is regarded not merely as danger, but also as an opportunity. With this in mind, I would like to take the opportunity to celebrate our fortune to be in Hong Kong.

I hope to give you graduates some optimism about the huge potential of this place, and ensure that you are encouraged and feel fortunate, rather than anxious, as you set out in your new careers.

When I was at Harvard, my father asked me to use what I had learnt at university in practical ways, which is to say, in business. And of course, this proved to be the right thing to do. But ironically, this has also made me appreciate the value of education more than ever.

This is why education is a topic of great personal interest to me, and why also, as a Hong Kong person, I am eager to see our city recognise its potential as an education hub for Asia and the world.

Of course, in many other areas, our city is already a globally recognised international hub. Our position as a leading financial centre has encouraged us to embrace globalisation in a profound way, leading to the creation of powerful international networks.

Hong Kong is well positioned to embrace the new globalisation of education, and must seize the opportunities presented by a flattening world. At the heart of this vision should be an ability to attract the best global talent through the doors of our universities.

For graduates, also, there is reason to be optimistic, despite the economic uncertainty.

Our international connections provide exciting career opportunities, offering a kind of ‘fast track to global citizenship’. I encourage you all to treasure this interconnectivity, and seize chances for overseas placements.

The Government has underlined its commitment to making Hong Kong an international education hub by easing restrictions on overseas students. They deserve praise for this, since it means our universities can continue building a worldwide community of advocates for Hong Kong.

Every successful graduate, who leaves with good words about their time here – not to mention valuable skills and knowledge – is another step for us towards becoming a global education hub.

We should also encourage our brightest Hong Kong students to participate in overseas exchanges, to broaden their horizons, so they return with new perspectives. A two-way flow of talent will be vital to our future success, not only as an education hub, but also to reinforce our rightful status as a global city.

This two-way flow reinforces Hong Kong’s main strength, which has always been the effortless fusion of eastern and western influences, encouraging high-quality scholarship in both English and Chinese.

This continues to give us a unique edge, since our bilingualism and cosmopolitanism are highly valued by employers. If we hope to keep our

place at the summit of education in Asia, and move towards new heights of excellence, we must strengthen this advantage.

As the Chairman of the Council of the University of Hong Kong who has regular contact with counterparts in other universities, I am aware that all universities in Hong Kong are thinking the same way. We all have a joint aspiration to secure global recognition as an education hub.

I have talked for a while about our global outlook, but we should not forget that our most important relationships lie at home. That is, we are an integral and important part of China.

In finance, trade and commerce, the Mainland has always had a great influence on Hong Kong's fortunes, a relationship that becomes stronger with each passing year.

And the Central Government attaches tremendous importance to higher education. It invests strategically to improve quality by attracting talent from overseas and maintaining healthy public funding. Tsinghua University, for example, of which I am a member of the Board of International Advisors at its Business School, still receives 80 per cent of its funding from the public purse.

As we know, Chinese people greatly value education, and this shared attitude should give us strength and mutual understanding with our friends on the Mainland.

I encourage Hong Kong universities to pursue partnerships with Mainland institutions, so that we may offer not just our experience, but also share our global knowledge. This way, we can participate in building a China that is not only prosperous, but also outward oriented and understanding of the wider world.

We should think more about ‘growing with the Chinese Mainland’, as the world becomes flatter and integration becomes a reality. For our graduates, the Mainland of China provides another reason to be optimistic – I hope you all keep in mind its enormous potential while planning your careers. You will be surprised at the rewarding opportunities that present themselves.

Before I finish, I would like us to remember the contributions of our teachers, professors, and the people who brought us into the world and raised us – our parents.

From my father I learned the value of education, and this philosophy I pass on to all young people starting their professional lives: never stop learning!

Always seek out opportunities to continue learning, because your education will certainly allow you to achieve your expectations and beyond.

I hope you will share my optimism, cherish our strengths here in Hong Kong, and always see the glass half full.

The very best to you all, and thank you.