

## An address given by

# Mr Kenneth Benjamin LI, BA

### Introduction

Let me first take this opportunity to thank my fellow Fellows for entrusting me to speak on their behalf. And on behalf of all six recipients of the Honorary Fellowships in 2017, I would like to extend our sincerest appreciation to The Chinese University of Hong Kong for recognizing our work, our values and our contributions to the University and to society.

When I think of a ‘fellow’ or a ‘fellowship’, a jingle starts playing in my head, followed by images from the first episode of *The Lord of the Rings* (as you all know is titled *The Fellowship of the Ring*). However, from today on, the term ‘fellow’ takes on a new and more special meaning to me. It is now a reminder to continue to work hard in order to make a positive difference to the world.

### Significant / Famous

This brings me to a subject my nine-year-old daughter is currently exploring in school—the difference between being significant and being famous, terms which we often use synonymously. But, while there are many people who are both famous and significant, famous people may not be significant and, on the same note, significant people may not be famous.

Today, I am proud to stand amongst so many of such great achievements. More importantly, I am truly humbled by the fact that the underlying motivations for everyone’s hard work and dedication are their passion for their respective fields and their selfless devotion to contributing to society. So, back to significant and famous. I can say with conviction that everyone present today has their focus on

making a significant contribution to the world, regardless of fame; and for this, I applaud you and I wish you all continued success.

### The Last, The Lost and The Least

In today’s high speed world, with high speed trains, high speed lifts, high speed processors, high speed delivery pills, and something we absolutely cannot get through the day without—high speed internet access; it is easy to get fixated on results, forget about the process and, most importantly, forget why we do the things we do.

For this, it is always good to go back to the basics every once in a while. This is one of the reasons I enjoy spending time with my kids and helping out at their school as it is actually an amazing opportunity for me to re-educate myself on the basic human virtues and the simple things in life that I have forgotten in my years spent in the cutthroat corporate world. One of the missions at my daughters’ school is helping ‘The Last, The Lost and The Least’, who could come in the form of humans, animals or the environment. As we look to move ahead in life, it is just as important to look back at those we can help and the positivity we can bring to make the world a better place.

In our quest for the rare one-of-a-kind limited edition ‘treasure’ to share on Facebook or Instagram, our focus shifts from what we can do for society to what the universe can or should do for us. Yet, in an era of stem cell research, commercial space flight and driverless cars, it is unthinkable that 80% of the world population still lives on less than US\$10 a day (The World Bank, 2014). Furthermore, how is it that humans today are the cause of the Sixth Mass Extinction where more than two thirds of the world’s

wildlife could be gone by the end of the decade (The World Wildlife Fund, 2016)? Finally, how is it possible that in a 'world of excess', 22,000 children die each day due to poverty (UNICEF, 2014)?

John F. Kennedy once said, 'Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country (1961).' This brings us to why we are all here today. While we may not be able to solve world hunger and global warming on our own; it is, however, imperative that we, in our own ways, ask what we can do for society and for the world. And as our ancestors have done for us, we have to ensure that we continue the tradition of passing on a better world and a better life to the next generation.

### **In Conclusion**

As we each receive our awards today with deep gratitude, I can speak with absolute certainty that with today's huge encouragement from The Chinese University of Hong Kong, our passion for our respective missions will burn even stronger as we continue to serve our communities and fulfill our duties to contribute and give back to society. To my fellow Fellows, it is an honor to meet you all and to everyone at CUHK, thank you from the bottom of our hearts.