

Address by Professor Dennis Lo Yuk-ming

盧煜明教授就職講辭

Professor John Chai, Chairman of the University Council, esteemed Council members, distinguished guests, members of CUHK, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an enormous honour for me to stand in front of all of you to be installed as the ninth Vice-Chancellor and President of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). I have worked at CUHK for 28 years and I am very appreciative of the support that I have received from the University for my career development. I am now ready to take on a new direction and serve the University in a new capacity as its Vice-Chancellor and President. I am grateful for the trust bestowed on me by the Council of CUHK, the entire University community and its stakeholders. I look forward to working closely with the staff, students, alumni and partners of CUHK and to bringing the University to new heights.

CUHK is a comprehensive research university with a unique mission of combining tradition with modernity, serving as a bridge between China and the West, and indeed the rest of the world. We aspire to be the best in our fields covering both the humanities and sciences. CUHK is a collegiate university, with its nine colleges providing all-rounded education for our students. I am grateful to the previous eight Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of CUHK for laying the foundation of the University and for

building it into one of Asia's top universities. I am therefore especially pleased to see a number of CUHK's previous Vice-Chancellors and Presidents in the audience today.

The nurturing of a child into an adult who contributes positively to the society requires the cooperation of the family, school and university. I am grateful to my family for supporting me throughout my education and career. I am therefore most grateful to see my mother in the audience today. I am also most happy to see the current principal and two past principals of St. Joseph's College (SJC), my alma mater. SJC is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. It is notable that Professor Charles Kao, a previous Vice-Chancellor of CUHK and Nobel Laureate in Physics, was also an alumnus of SJC. It was at SJC that I met Mr Stephen Hui, the biology teacher who first taught me about DNA. Without his teaching, I would probably not have developed my interest in genetics. I am also pleased to see many of my SJC classmates in the audience today.

I pursued my university education at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford. Both of these ancient universities are pioneers of the collegiate system. I am thus a beneficiary of the collegiate system and I appreciate its contributions to students' education. It was at Cambridge and Oxford that I first had a taste of what it was like to do research. My first

scientific publications were based on work that was done at the laboratory of Dr Kenneth Fleming in Oxford. I am thus particularly happy to see Dr Fleming and his wife, Jenny, in the audience today. The training in Dr Fleming's laboratory was important because it had given me the clarity that an academic career was what I would like to pursue.

I first developed the idea of pursuing non-invasive prenatal testing when I was a medical student studying obstetrics in Oxford. However, for a period of eight years, I was working in a wrong direction of trying to look for fetal cells that had entered into maternal blood. Such cells were far too few to be used reliably for a clinical test.

My wife, Alice, and I decided to return to Hong Kong in 1997. I was thus very happy to receive an offer from Professor Magnus Hjelm of CUHK's Department of Chemical Pathology. It was my joining CUHK that gave me the courage to pursue a new research direction. I thus thought about looking for fetal DNA in the non-cellular portion of maternal blood. This led to the discovery that fetal DNA was enriched over 100,000 times in maternal blood plasma when compared with the cellular portion. In other words, I struck gold!

My journey to develop non-invasive prenatal testing coincided with the steady increase in investment in science and technology in Hong Kong. When I first returned to Hong Kong in 1997, a typical research grant in the biomedical area would be around half a million Hong Kong dollars. With the launch of the

Innovation and Technology Fund in 1999, I first received my multi-million Hong Kong dollars grant. The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in 2003 showed the authority and citizens of Hong Kong the importance of biomedical research in public health. We saw a further and steady increase in research resources in Hong Kong. Such resources allowed me to gain access to cutting-edge genomics platforms to complete the development of non-invasive prenatal testing. The test was finally launched in 2011 and has now been used over 100 million times. Meanwhile, the support for science and technology has continued to steadily increase in Hong Kong, with supporting infrastructures such as the Hong Kong Science Park and large grants from the Hong Kong Research Grants Council and the Innovation and Technology Commission reaching tens or even hundreds of millions of Hong Kong dollars per grant. Hence, Hong Kong is reaching a golden age in science and innovation development.

CUHK is well positioned to capitalise on the wave of science and technology development in Hong Kong and in mainland China. CUHK has five state key laboratories and six InnoHK centres. The Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Science both have state-of-the-art research spaces coming online in the next three years. CUHK is the first tertiary institution in Hong Kong to appreciate the importance of the Greater Bay Area in our future development. In 2007, we established the CUHK Shenzhen Research Institute. In 2014, we established CUHK (Shenzhen) under the "one brand, two campuses" philosophy. CUHK thus has an

unparalleled network for contributing towards the development of the Greater Bay Area.

One of my first tasks after taking up the Vice-Chancellorship and Presidency of CUHK is to develop the CUHK Strategic Plan 2026-2030. Through such planning, we shall further enhance the educational experience of our students. One avenue is the development of the first graduate college at CUHK. We would enhance the internationalisation of the University through recruitment of outstanding students and staff from around the world. We shall continue to actively participate in international university alliances. Our 300,000-strong alumni network is a testimony to the fruits of CUHK's educational efforts over the past few decades. We pledge to develop a closer link with our alumni in the years to come.

Now, let me say a few words in Chinese.

各位嘉賓，承蒙香港中文大學校董會、全體大學成員及持份者對我的信任和期望，今天，我很榮幸接受香港中文大學第九任校長這項重要任命，讓我有機會為這所我有幸服務了二十八年的學術殿堂作出更大貢獻。我非常感謝創校先賢的英明領導，為中大樹立良好根基，讓我們能在堅固的基礎上穩步發展，屢創佳績。我亦要向中大全體師生、校友，以及來自世界各地的捐贈者、合作夥伴和友好表達最由衷的謝意，感謝他們一直以來對大學的熱心支持與貢獻。

中大創校至今六十二年，不斷開拓知識疆界，努力尋求突破，為社會帶來裨益。我們正身處風雲變幻的時代，時刻面對種種複雜而難以預測的環境衝

擊。而大學作為知識樞紐和人才搖籃，較以往更加需要對準目標，展現頑強韌力，靈活應對風浪。中大本著「結合傳統與現代，融會中國與西方」的創校使命，在迎向本地和全球挑戰的同時，矢志不渝地秉承珍貴傳統，同心同德，砥礪前行。作為一所公益為先的高等院校，我們以履行社會責任為依歸，任重道遠，為全球人類創造美好世界。

我在香港土生土長，在海外完成高等教育後加入中大，這裏就像我的第二個家一樣。中大不斷激勵我去發揮教研力量，智造變革，拓新求進，探索生命中的無數可能。我鼓勵年輕一代要以積極正向的態度，勇敢追夢、奮力向前、堅定實踐理想。

今天，我就任香港中文大學第九任校長，帶領中大踏上新里程。我已密鑼緊鼓，積極為中大勾劃未來發展路向。我會以校訓「博文約禮」為根基，立德樹人，努力突破知識界限，致力服務大眾，貢獻社會，以至全世界。我定當竭盡所能，帶領這所高瞻遠矚的優秀學府奮力前進，長足發展，再創高峰。我殷切期望得到大家的支持，並誠邀你們一起踏上這趟豐盛之旅，攜手創造更美好的未來。

In closing, today marks the significant moment when I officially embark on an exciting journey to provide strategic oversight to CUHK – my home away from home, where I am continuously inspired by a community of outstanding scholars, innovators and students. I stand ready to chart a bold path forward for the University, working closely with our stakeholders to craft a visionary roadmap that further strengthens CUHK's position as a beacon of excellence and a driver of positive

change. Guided by the University motto, *“Through Learning and Temperance to Virtue”*, I shall work with the CUHK community to push forward the frontiers of knowledge and virtuous pursuit. With my guiding principle of “I.D.E.A.” — Inspire, Discuss, Empower, and Achieve — we will continue to honour our core values, ignite innovation, foster collaboration, and create opportunities for meaningful impact. I will continue to do my utmost to serve this forward-looking institution in its pursuit of excellence. I sincerely call for your earnest support and active participation in this journey towards a shared and brighter future for all. Together, we will push innovation and societal advancement to new heights.

Thank you.