

Speech by FS at the Chinese University of Hong Kong 60th Anniversary Banquet (English only)

The following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the Chinese University of Hong Kong 60th Anniversary Banquet today (December 10):

John (the CUHK Council Chairman, Professor John Chai), Rocky (President of the CUHK, Professor Rocky Tuan), Lina (Chairperson of the CUHK 60th Anniversary Celebration Steering Committee, Ms Lina Yan), Faculty Members, students and alumni, friends of the Chinese University all,

Good evening. And what an evening it is as we all gather here to celebrate the 60th anniversary of our alma mater, the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

To be honest, I think I've spent more time at the University this year than I did when I was a member of the University's Council. In March, I spoke at the Business School's 60th anniversary reception. In April, I also spoke at the Arthur Li Distinguished Lecture and Dinner organised by the CUHK's Alumni Association of Surgeons. I happily returned, in June, for the Gerald Choa Oration. And of course, now I'm honoured to be back this evening for the 60th anniversary of the University.

As we are well aware, traditional Chinese culture holds the concept of sixty years, or "ç"²ã0," as a representation of a complete cycle, encompassing the interplay of events and forces. Today, our university stands at the start of a new era. It is a moment of new beginnings, brimming with boundless promise and fresh opportunities.

Over the years, this venerable institution has grown in enviable leaps and bounds, having emerged as a bright beacon for post-secondary education and research excellence in Hong Kong, throughout Asia and around the world.

It now counts eight faculties, more than 150 undergraduate programmes, and well over 200 taught and research programmes.

More than 280,000 graduates, this speaker included, are proud to call the CUHK their alma mater. Our alumni network extends across more than 130 associations, nearly 50 of them in centres all over the world.

And this university is one of the top 50 universities in the world, and the Medical School, among the global top 30.

The remarkable ascent of our university throughout these years is truly astonishing. As we reflect on this journey, I believe there are a few qualities that have been at the very core of its character and instrumental

in its resounding success. Allow me a few moments to share my observations on this.

First, it is the spirit of self-reliance, to persevere in spite of adversity. We must never not forget that we had a humble beginning. New Asia College, to which I belong and being one of the founding colleges of the University, had its origin in just three classrooms of Wah Nam Middle School (à¸-à¸-à¸), and then two floors of a building on Kweilin Street (æi,æž-èi-). The school song of New Asia College aptly says it all: "æ¸¸ç¸¸ç¸¸ç¸¸ç¸¸, iä, ç¸¸ç¸¸". Chung Chi College or United College might have been better off, but we know that those years were never easy for all of us.

And even the initial years of the CUHK's medical school were not all smooth sail, when medical school students had to attend classes in containers. I am sure Professor Arthur Li or Professor Francis Chan can vividly recount.

But it is exactly the difficulties we faced that motivated us to strive hard and soldier on. And over the years, this spirit has been deeply engraved in the character of the university that continues to inspire its people and their academic and teaching work.

Second, it is the university's mission to combine tradition with modernity, and to bring together China and the West. At its very beginning, our university is committed to bilingual education and the promotion of the Chinese culture. It serves as a bridge for academic exchanges and the cultivation of cross-cultural understanding.

Today, through a wide range of collaborations, partnerships and exchange programmes with leading Mainland and international institutions, the university has become a magnificent melting pot of ideas and perspectives, enriching the educational experience for students from around the world, and the community at large.

Third, it is our university's unwavering pursuit of innovation and exploration of new frontiers. We proudly stand as pioneers in numerous fields and domains. For example, the CUHK was the first in Asia to establish a Business School, in 1963. And the Chinese Medicine Material Research Centre was established in 1974.

For long, our distinguished professors and their research teams were pioneers in cutting-edge technologies, which had cast profound impact on numerous fields. Just to name a few: from the genetic research by Professor Dennis Lo, to Professor Tang Xiaou behind the AI giant SenseTime.

Finally, it is the university's strong commitment to the whole person development of its students. This is articulated well in our university's belief that university education must include inculcation of critical powers and cultural sensitivity, qualities that define an educated world citizen of today and tomorrow. Notably, the CUHK is the first institution in China to introduce general education as a core subject in its undergraduate curriculum. And the unique college general education tailored to each

college's cultural background and ideals, enriches life of students and strengthen their sense of belonging to this university.

Ladies and gentlemen, like each and every one of you here, I feel proud to be a member of this university, to be part of its extraordinary journey over these six decades. There is something that is so common to us, the people of the CUHK (ä_å¸äº), that is, we care about the development of the university, just as much as our city and country; we are always willing to contribute to the betterment of our alma mater, just as much as we are for our community. These are the very qualities that define us, and I trust they will continue to inspire the future generations of professionals, innovators and leaders that this great university will nurture.

Last but not least, allow me to express my gratitude to the CUHK, and to everyone who has played a part in its remarkable rise and shine over these 60 milestone years. I look forward to the many milestones to come.

As Christmas and the New Year are drawing close, may I wish you all an enjoyable holiday with your families, and the best of health and business in the many years to come.

