

**Ceremony in Honor of Exemplary Teaching and Students on the Dean's List of the
Faculty of Arts, Chinese University of Hong Kong**

20 March, 2010

Address to the Assembly

James Lee

Today is a day to celebrate academic accomplishment in learning and teaching. To be here, you have all accomplished something. For these achievements I say well done.

I have been in Hong Kong for only ten months almost entirely on my own campus, but I already know that devoted teaching is a hallmark of the Chinese University education, not always by university design, but treasured by students and the community. I personally benefited from such pedagogical dedication as a Fulbright Scholar in 1978 when I spent a semester at the Institute of Chinese Studies at Chinese University to study with Yan Gengwang, Chuan Hansheng, and Rao Zongyi. To the faculty we are honoring today I say, your recognition, as the recipients of the Vice-Chancellor's Exemplary Teaching Award, represents therefore both your individual achievement and your collective Chinese University tradition. I admire you.

For your students who are on the Dean's List, the public recognition we celebrate today will be for some of you among the greatest accomplishment of your lives. The Hong Kong government provides a university education to fewer than one-fifth of Hong Kong people aged 17 to 20. Of these select few, only half go to the three recognized research universities: Hong Kong University, Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Your achievements place you in the top 10 percent of these students who chose to be affiliated with the CUHK Faculty of Arts or the top 1 percent approximately of all Hong Kong people in your age group. To you I say heartfelt congratulations on already reaching such lofty heights and achieving such public recognition.

Many of you, however, faculty and students will go on to even greater life time accomplishments. To those of you who continue on this *cursus honorum* I say, you will become members of a new global phenomenon, the emergence of a highly educated, highly mobile global elite, defined partly by your elite education and educational affiliations, for whom literally the world will be your oyster.

As citizens of the world, you will sample the great cities of the world and will enjoy the fruits – material conditions, honors – of elite membership in the emerging global academe and global society.

As global leaders, you also will have increasing responsibility for world conditions. And I think it appropriate on the occasion of this ceremony to honor exemplary teaching and students to reflect for a moment on your identity and our hopes for your future achievement.

I say this because several traits set you apart from your brethren in the global elite.

First, as the sons and daughters of a new emerging China, there is your ethnicity and your nationality. While China and Asia may have led the world in the past, this has not been true in the recent present. Your brethren in the global elite are overwhelmingly from North America and Western Europe whose behavior reflects the priorities and values of their origins.

Second, as local Hong Kong people, there is your cosmopolitan bilingual and bicultural background. Hong Kong is virtually unique in China not just because of One Country Two Systems but because the system which produced you at its best represents a blend of Chinese traditions of private integrity and public devotion, of personal self sacrifice and familial altruism, and of Western liberal principles of individual freedom and equal rights.

Third, unlike many global elite who are largely the children of elites, you share the diverse social origins which are characteristic of educated elite in China but not of educated elite elsewhere. POWER POINT

I fervently hope that your diversity, your mobility, your bilingualism, and yes your ethnicity and your nationality will define in part the legacy you, the 2010 Chinese University of Hong Kong Faculty of Arts Honor Students and Teachers, leave for future generations.

In 2047, China plans to abolish the SAR. Hong Kong will become just another Chinese City. CUHK will become just another Chinese University in Hong Kong (get the pun). My own university, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, will become just another Chinese engineering school. As a Hong Kong parent – my own son is just 18 months old – and as a future Hong Kong citizen, I say indeed I beg of you, please do not allow this to happen. Make Hong Kong special, and in so doing make China special. Keep Hong Kong wealthy and dynamic, and in so doing make China wealthy and dynamic. Make Hong Kong a just and equitable society, and in so doing make China more just and more equitable.

Today, Hong Kong is the richest, the most international city in China followed by Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. In many ways with three of the five richest cities in China as our base, our potential of all the regions of China to grow, to create, and to change China are unparalleled. This cannot, however, be achieved by the local traditions of irresponsible political leadership but responsible business leadership and will require the concerted conscious efforts of you, the leading teachers and leading students of your generation to take advantage of the wealth, the freedoms, and the larger

traditions of this region to build our city, our country, and the society of the future. The Chinese University of Hong Kong must be central to this effort. You must be central to the efforts of your colleague, classmates, university, city, region, and nation.

Today we honor you for what you have already achieved. We fervently hope for your sake, and for our's, that these accomplishments are only the beginning.

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