

Mrs Janice Choi

Acceptance Speech

Council Chairman, Vice-Chancellor and Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an immense honour for me to give this speech on behalf of the distinguished honorary fellows: Dr Chai Ngai-chiu Sunny, Professor Cheng chun-yiu Jack, Mr Cheng Kam-chiu Stewart, Mr Cheung Wang-ngai Joseph and Professor Takanori Kitamura. We are deeply honoured for the conferment of honorary fellowships on us by The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), which will long be our cherished memories.

I have developed a close bond with CUHK since 1991, when I accompanied, or represented, my husband Jonathan, then a Trustee of United College, to attend the College scholarship presentation ceremonies. Through these ceremonies, and other major CUHK events as well, Jonathan and I made several new friends and acquaintances. I still remember that in the early 1990s, Jonathan and I were invited by Professor Yang Chen-ning, Physics Nobel laureate and CUHK Distinguished Professor-at-Large, to visit him at his campus residence. Since then we became close friends. During the subsequent decades, we attended his 70th,

80th, 90th and even 100th birthday celebrations. Whenever Professor Yang visited Hong Kong, he would always stay at the campus residence of CUHK, treating the University as his home in Hong Kong. The fact that Professor Yang, an internationally renowned scientist, has harboured such a strong affection for the University speaks voluminously of its international status in attracting top talents to its faculty. At that time, we also befriended another Physics laureate, Professor Charles Kao Kuen, hailed as the "Father of Fibre Optical Communications", and then CUHK Vice-Chancellor. Though being an internationally celebrated scientist, Professor Kao was a humble scholar and a loving husband. Jonathan and I had the honour of meeting up with the Kao couple several times on campus. Besides Professor Yang and Professor Kao, we also have the privilege of making friends with Professor Yau Shing-tung, a world renowned mathematician and recipient of the prestigious Fields Medal, Professor Jao Tsung-I, a world famous sinologist, and many other Vice-Chancellors of CUHK, including Professor Arthur Li Kwok-cheung, Professor Ambrose King Yeo-chi, Professor Lawrence Lau Juen-ye, Professor Joseph Sung Jao-yiu and, of course, the incumbent Vice-Chancellor Professor Rocky

Tuan Sung-chi. These extraordinary scholars have each made distinguished contributions to their own academic fields. They and the many top scholars serving the University has made CUHK, for several years, consistently rank among the top 100 universities in the world. I feel honoured to be associated with this esteemed institution for such a long period, and have always regarded myself as a member of CUHK. Conferred as CUHK's honorary fellowship, I am delighted that I will have even more opportunities to participate in the events and happenings of the University in the years to come.

Throughout the many encounters I had with CUHK, there is one incident that has always brought back fond memories to me. It was about a small donation Jonathan and I made to the CUHK Art Museum. We purchased through an auction a letter hand-written in 1961 by the prominent Chinese essayist Zhou Zuoren, the younger brother of Zhou Shuren, to his friend Gao Boyu in Hong Kong, and in 2008, we donated it to the Art Museum. Soon we received, much to our pleasant surprise, a thank-you letter from Professor Peter Lam Yip-keung, the then Director of the Art Museum enclosing a two-page annotation, basing on Professor Lam's scholarly research on the background of Zhou's letter, and citing the relevant incidents in 1961 as quoted from the book *The Diary of Zhou Zuoren*. The annotation helps elucidate the content of Zhou's few-hundred worded letter. We were very touched by Professor Lam's intense earnestness in dealing with this donation because his was not just an ordinary thank-you letter. The meticulous study of the background

of Zhou's letter speaks out loudly about the importance CUHK has always attached to Chinese culture and history. The University has not seen the letter as just a donation item. Fifteen years on, I have forgotten how much we spent on buying Zhou's letter but I still have an indelible memory of the University's respect for Chinese culture and tradition. CUHK has made stellar achievements in both innovation and technology in recent years, but the University has at the same time respected and treasured the time-honoured Chinese culture and history, and placed great emphasis on promoting its strength in the humanities.

Since its establishment, CUHK has dedicated itself to the nurturing of talents. At the same time, its commitment to whole-person development has won wide acclaim in society. At present, CUHK is the only university in Hong Kong that offers a college system under which programmes and activities of its nine constituent colleges not only complement the formal University curricula but also help widen students' horizons and enrich their campus life. As a music lover, I often come into contact with a number of talented musicians, including the internationally renowned cellist Mr Trey Lee, whose humility and friendliness have made him popular not only among music lover but also young people. Realizing the importance of whole person development in education, I have twice invited Mr Trey Lee to stage performances at CUHK campus for sharing his experiences and choices on his career path in his musical career. As Mr Lee is resident in Europe and his performing schedules have always been tight,

it is not easy to identify a time slot to stage his performance to fit the class schedules of CUHK. Thanks to colleagues of United College, in particular to Professor Jimmy Yu Chai-mei and Professor Barley Mak Chan Shuk-yin, then Head and Associate Head of the College respectively, the two campus performances of Mr Lee were arranged to perfection. Not only the 400-seat strong auditorium that staged Lee's performance was all filled up quickly, the aisles were crowded with standing audience. This is another testimony of how CUHK has been working tirelessly in promoting whole person education regardless of what difficulties lie ahead for every opportunity to enhance our students' exposure.

To support the idea of whole-person education espoused by the University, the CKY Education Charitable Trust and the Choi Koon Shum Education Foundation made a donation in 2018 to United College for the construction of a new student hostel. On completion, the four-storey hostel building will have 125 twin-bed rooms, providing a total of 250 student hostel places. Also included in the hostel is a 300-seat multi-purpose hall, which can be used to stage music performances, art exhibitions and public lectures, etc. The multi-purpose hall will be open to all students, including non-residents, thus providing an added incentive for the latter group to stay behind after classes so as to gain more campus learning experiences. Regarding the new student hostel at United College, just like receiving the donation of Zhou's letter by

the Art Museum, CUHK has taken very serious steps in the overall architectural design of, and the addition of the associated ancillary facilities to the hostel. To that end, United College has set up consultation groups to provide advice at various planning stages of the hostel, and has also conducted consultations with all appropriate stakeholders to solicit inputs to the building. After the ground-breaking ceremony, the University administrative team also regularly inspect and report on the progress of the construction work. They have looked into all fronts to ensure that the hostel will be completed in accordance with the wishes of the donors, and will serve best its future users, primarily our students.

Once again, let me, on behalf of all honourees, thank the University for this incredible honour. My family and I are deeply humbled, and feel it a great privilege, to have received this recognition from CUHK. We look forward to working, in the years to come, hand in hand with the University in making more meaningful contributions that are befitting to the promotion of higher education in the region. This year marks the 60th anniversary of CUHK and this Diamond Jubilee represents a truly unique opportunity for the University community to reflect on the past and look forward to the future. It is my wish and I am sure that the University will continue to grow from strength to strength and help make Hong Kong a better place for all. Thank you.

This acceptance speech is delivered by Mrs Janice Choi on behalf of all Honorary Fellows
