

## **Address by Mr Patrick Wong Chi-kwong**

Mr Bernard Chan, Ms Sophia Kao, President Chan Yuk-Shee, Honorary Fellows, Lingnanians, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am deeply honoured to receive this award of honorary fellowship from Lingnan University, and I am delighted to address you on behalf of the other three honorary fellows. They have made enormous contributions to the civil service, business community and civil society of Hong Kong. They deserve this honour far more than I do. May I offer my sincere congratulations to Mr Adolf Hsu Hsung, Mr Kwan Chi-sun and Mr Michael Lee Tze-hau.

This year, as we celebrate the centenary of the Xinhai Revolution, we are often reminded of the unique role that Hong Kong has played in fermenting the revolutionary spirit that fundamentally changed the fate of the Chinese nation in 1911. What has often been overlooked is the role that Hong Kong has played in continuing the pursuit of classical Chinese studies during the troubled times of the last century. Here, tertiary colleges could be formed by private citizens and organisations, perhaps with little support from the government but largely free from political influence. As China descended into the darkness and chaos of civil war and endless political struggles, these colleges provided refuge to many eminent Chinese scholars who chose to come here to continue their scholarly pursuits and mission in education.

Lingnan was one of these colleges, and it played host to two of these scholars — Prof Chan Cham-chuen and Prof Leung Kan-nang. I am the beneficiary of a Lingnan education under these circumstances. My brief encounter at the age of eighteen with an inspired student leader of what was then Lingnan College turned into an extraordinary five-year journey into the world of classical Chinese studies, a world of endless enchantment and boundless treasures. Resources available to the college were scarce, but our spirits were high. We knew what we were after. In the many years after my days as a student here, what Lingnan gave me in those days has never ceased to be a source of strength, inspiration, and above all joy.

For the last 20 years, I have had a different kind of relationship with Lingnan. I have had the good fortune of working alongside some brilliant individuals, including Dr Wai Kee-kau and Dr T S Tong, who were involved in the founding of Lingnan College in Hong Kong. They are Lingnanians of a different generation, many of them graduates of the original Lingnan University in Canton which was closed in 1952. I stood witness to their tireless efforts and selfless contributions, as they ensured that Lingnan College was provided with significant material assets and helped reform the institution's governance structure, which led to the relocation of Lingnan to this beautiful campus and its retitling as a university. This has been a motivational experience.

Today, Lingnan has transformed into a public university commanding resources beyond the imagination of the students of my day. With a first-class faculty and an efficient management team under the able leadership of President Chan Yuk-Shee, and with a Council drawing on the talents and resources of leaders from different sectors of society,

the University is entering a glorious new chapter of development. This is the greatest gift a Lingnanian could receive.

Mr Adolf Hsu Hsung, Mr Kwan Chi-sun and Mr Michael Lee Tze-hau have all made outstanding contributions to their own fields and have contributed enormously to society. Let me once again represent them in expressing our gratitude to Lingnan University and its Council for conferring this great honour upon us, and to everyone who has given us support and encouragement. We pledge to do our best to contribute in whatever way we can to the future development of Lingnan, and we wish the University every success. Thank you.