

President's Address 校長講辭

Mr Chairman/Deputy Chairman, distinguished guests, colleagues, graduates, ladies and gentlemen,

Between my official assumption of duty and today's installation, it has been an exciting three months. There is so much to learn about Lingnan's tradition, its spirit and its proud past going back 125 years in Guangzhou.

Being called to serve as president of a university is an honour that comes but once in a lifetime to a privileged few. I am overwhelmed by the trust and feel the enormous weight of duty and expectation. But I am thrilled by the opportunity and challenge of making our university the preferred destination for liberal education in Asia.

To this task I pledge to dedicate myself. My job has been made easier by my predecessors Prof Yuk-shee Chan and Prof Edward Chen and others who preceded them. I owe a debt of gratitude to them for having taken Lingnan this far, this high.

In very short order, I have learned the value of genuine dialogue and attentive listening. No problem is too big when people of good will come together. For the next five years, I will work hard to further consolidate Lingnan's sense of community and solidarity. My door is always open to staff and students. Together, let us make Lingnan the most open and close-knit campus in Hong Kong. Divided we stumble, but united we rise.

As a publicly-funded liberal arts university, Lingnan differs from its richly-endowed sister institutions in the West in one important way: wealthy liberal arts colleges in America are often populated by students from well-to-do families who don't need to worry about their future. Lingnan students, by contrast, often come from humble roots, and sometimes depressed neighbourhoods. Coming to Lingnan is their chance to climb out of poverty or move up in society, and to make their dreams come true.

This being the case, it puts a burden on leaders of Lingnan, including our dedicated Council and Court members, to give our graduates a level playing field. Underachievement is a luxury we cannot afford. Education is not a piece of paper. It should empower students to define their goals in life and help them find fulfillment in a good career. Some people see liberal education as completely opposite to professional education. I see much wisdom in an increasing number of premier US universities adding pre-professional experience to their traditional liberal arts curriculum to give their graduates a competitive edge. Given our students' family background, Lingnan should do likewise. That is why teaching and learning quality across all disciplines must come before all else at Lingnan. That is also why we must provide career mentoring to help students live a productive life in a fast-changing world.

Lingnan is different in another way. We are rooted in Chinese culture, though cross-fertilised by Western knowledge and values. I encourage students to enjoy Chinese poetry. There, they may find the soul of Chinese civilisation. Chinese culture expects the educated person to shoulder a responsibility for society. In the words of a famous

President's Address 校長講辭

Chinese scholar-official: “The educated are the first to agonise over the world’s problems, and the last to enjoy its pleasures.” At Lingnan, there is a definite convergence of Chinese and Western civilisations.

To me, the ideal Lingnan graduate is an all-round person who transcends time and geography—who is knowledgeable about history, the arts, sciences and social sciences. Without history, we have no roots and memory, and are liable to repeat mistakes of the past. Without literature, we have a poorer imagination and compassion. Without science, we are ignorant of the physical world. And without social science, we are incapable of understanding the complexity of human behaviour and social organisations.


The Lingnan graduate is, above all, independently-minded, a leader, not a follower, who respects the diversity of cultures and interpersonal differences. The university is the home of diversity. The passion of youth, so lovely to see, must be tempered by tolerance of views different from our own. This is indeed an essential trait of liberal arts education.

Lingnan may not be a rich institution. But we are rich in other ways. Here, you enjoy a residential campus, small classes and close relationships with your teachers. You also enjoy freedom in the pursuit of knowledge and enquiry. You can safely disagree with your mentors or your peers. This too is what liberal arts education is all about, and part of the Lingnan spirit.

Twenty-five hundred years ago, Socrates, the father of Western liberal arts education, said: “Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.” His insight is still valid today. True learning is discovery learning, which is what we promote and innovate at Lingnan.

We come to the university to find out who we are, to learn what we love doing best. This is a place for personal discovery and transformation, for discovering and defining our dream. Here at Lingnan, examples of these abound: from a young lady who came here without a sense of direction in life, but who has since found her calling as an art historian, to a Year-3 student who took a course in cultural studies, and decided to work for world peace in the United Nations. I can relate to these experiences because that’s also what happened to me. When I first came to Hong Kong from the Mainland as a nine-year-old, poor and not speaking a word of English or Cantonese, I struggled to find my footing, but went on to university and discovered my personal destiny. How I wish that my mother, who took me to Hong Kong more than half a century ago, were still with me at this moment.

One more word of advice to our students: whole-person education in the global era includes a global orientation. We live in a shrinking world. There should be no distance separating locals from non-locals, no division into Hong Kong, Mainland and overseas students. Some of you may one day work in Singapore, Beijing, London or New York. Your domain is bigger than Hong Kong. You should of course care about your city, but don’t forget the world beyond it. You should chase your dream wherever it leads you.



For this purpose good English and Chinese will be your global passport, which will open many doors for you.

Today is a special day for another generation of Lingnan graduates. You have my warmest congratulations and the blessings of your teachers and parents. This is a day for family and friends too, for they have helped to push you across the finish line. How about a big round of applause for their sacrifice and support?

New graduates, as I send you forward, I leave you the words of the British poet Tennyson, who urged us to be “strong in will/ To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.”

Thank you.

President's Address 校長講辭

主席 / 副主席先生、各位嘉賓、各位同事、各位畢業生、女士們、先生們：

從我正式上任到今天的就職典禮，是令人興奮的三個月。有很多關於嶺大的傳統、精神及其追溯至 125 年前在廣州的驕人歷史，都需要好好了解。

獲任命為大學校長是少數人一生難逢的榮耀。我對所得到的信任受寵若驚，亦能感受到責任和期望的重量。然而，我更為這個能把嶺大發展為亞洲博雅教育首選學府的機會和挑戰，感到十分興奮。

我承諾會全心全意投入這項任務。陳玉樹教授、陳坤耀教授及其他前任校長的努力，已經減輕了我的工作。我非常感激他們帶領嶺大取得今天的佳績。

在很短時間內，我領會到真誠對話和細心聆聽的價值。只要大家善意地攜手合作，沒有困難不能解決。未來五年，我會努力進一步凝聚嶺大的羣體和團結性。我的門會一直為員工和學生而開。讓我們共同努力，使嶺大成為全香港最開放而關係密切的校園。分歧會令我們倒下，團結會令我們飛升。

作為公帑營辦的博雅大學，嶺大跟獲得充裕捐款的西方姐妹學府有一重要的不同之處：美國富裕的博雅院校取錄不少家境富裕、無需擔心前途的學生。相對來說，嶺大學生的家境往往比較微薄，有些甚至來自貧困社區。到嶺大學習讓他們有機會走出貧窮，或在社會中向上流動，去成就自己的夢想。

在這樣的情況下，嶺大的領導層——包括我們熱誠的校董會及諮議會的成員——就須要盡力把我們的畢業生送到一個公平的競爭場所。表現不足是我們負擔不起的奢侈。教育不是一張紙；它應該賦予學生能力去確立生命中的目標，並幫助他們在良好的職業中找到滿足感。有人認為博雅教育跟專業教育完全相反。愈來愈多美國的一流大學將專業先修經驗加入傳統的博雅教育課程，以增加畢業生的競爭優勢，我看是很明智的。鑑於我們學生的家庭背景，嶺大亦應該仿效此種做法。這正是為何在嶺大，學科的教學質素比一切都重要。這也是為何我們必須提供職業輔導，幫助學生在一個快速變化的世界中開展充實的生活。

嶺大還有另一項與別不同之處。我們雖然接受西方知識和價值觀熏陶，卻植根於中國文化。我鼓勵學生享受中國詩詞，從中發現中華文明的靈魂。在中國文化中，人們期望受過教育的人承擔社會責任。正如一位著名的中國士大夫所說：「士當先天下之憂而憂，後天下之樂而樂。」嶺大明確地將中國和西方文明融合起來，兼收並蓄。

對我來說，理想的嶺大畢業生是超越時間和地域界限的全人，了解歷史、文藝、科學和社會科學。沒有歷史，我們沒有根和記憶，並可能重複過去的錯誤。沒有文學，我們想像力和同情心會變弱。沒有科學，我們對物質世界會一無所知。沒有社會科學，我們無法理解人類行為和社會組織的複雜性。

最重要的是，嶺大畢業生該懂得獨立思考，當領導者而不是追隨者，並尊重文化的多樣性和人際差異。大學是多元的地方。青春的激情固然值得欣賞，但亦須調以包容不同意見的寬宏。這正是博雅教育一項重要的特質。

嶺大未必是財政強大的機構，但在其他方面我們是富有的。在這裡，你享有住宿校園、小班教學以及緊密的師生關係。你還享受追求知識和探究學問的自由。你可以放心與導師或同輩執持不同意見。這也是博雅教育的意義所在，也是嶺大精神的一部分。

西方博雅教育之父蘇格拉底在二千五百年前說過：「教育是點燃火焰，而不是填充容器。」他的見解在今天仍然是正確的。真正的學習是探索式學習，亦是我們在嶺大不斷推動和創新的學習模式。

我們到大學來了解自己是怎樣的人，並發現我們最喜歡做的事情。大學是一個發現和改造自我、發掘和確立夢想的地方。這樣的例子在嶺大比比皆是，例如一位初時沒有方向、後來找到理想要成為藝術史學家的年輕女孩；又例如一位因上了一門文化研究課而決志在聯合國為世界和平工作的三年級學生等等。這種經驗也曾發生在我身上，因此我很有共鳴。我九歲時第一次從內地來到香港，貧窮而且不懂英語或粵語，掙扎著去尋找自己的立足點，後來得以上大學而找到個人命運。我多麼希望超過半世紀前把我帶到香港的母親，此刻仍能與我一起。

我還想給同學們一個建議：全球化時代的全人教育，應該包含全球性的定向。我們生活於一個愈來愈緊密的世界。本地人跟非本地人之間應該沒有距離，也沒有香港、內地或海外學生之分。你們當中某些人可能將來會在新加坡、北京、倫敦或紐約工作；你的領域不只限於香港。你當然要關心你的城市，但不要忘了外面的世界。你要追逐你的夢想，讓它引導你前進。為了這個目標，良好的英文和中文能力將是你的全球性護照，為你開啟多道機會之門。

今天是又一代嶺大畢業生的特別日子。你們各位都得到我最真摯的祝賀以及老師和家長的祝福。這一天也是屬於你家人和朋友的，因為他們在背後推動你越過終點線。讓我們為他們的犧牲和支持熱烈鼓掌好嗎？

各位新一屆的畢業生，在我歡送你們的同時，讓我贈你英國詩人丁尼生的話，他敦促我們要「意志堅強地 / 奮鬥、探索、發現，不要屈服。」

謝謝各位。