

## **Address by Professor Way KUO, President**

Pro-Chancellor, Acting Chairman and Members of the Council, Honorary Graduates, Honoured Guests, Graduates and Colleagues:

It is my great honour to address all of you today on this wonderful occasion. I am particularly indebted to our honorary graduates, men of distinction who have honoured City University of Hong Kong by accepting the award that we have bestowed on them today. You are an inspiration to us all and I cannot thank you enough for attending our Congregation.

For the younger generation sat before us, today marks the culmination of years of hard work, late nights and perseverance. I am sure many of you felt frustrated at times as you looked at the piles of reports you had to submit and papers you had to write.

But today is the payoff. You have climbed your mountain. The question is, where do you go from here? Will you scramble back down and never wear your hiking boots again? Will you just sit and admire the view? Or will you look for more peaks to tackle?

The degree certificate you receive today is merely a piece of paper. It is a sign that you have completed your programme of study and satisfied the examiners of your abilities. But while it will help you to enter the workplace, will it be a passport to success? Will it bring happiness? Will it eventually lead to a better society?

As graduating students, you need to bear in mind that this is only the beginning. Your new life starts here as graduates of one of Asia's finest universities. In your hand is evidence of your potential, but whether you fulfill your prospects is up to you. Your future is, literally, in your hands.

Let me use an analogy. A book is just a collection of words written on paper. Until you, the reader, take the time to analyse, explore and reflect on those words, the books will not come alive. The same can be said of your degree certificate. It has the latent possibility for greatness, but only you can provide the spark to make it glow.

It is true that your certificate can open doors to better-paid jobs, more stable careers and above average conditions. But a degree will not by itself make you a good person or improve society. You have gained knowledge and expertise, but for others to

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benefit, you have to give back to the community. You must use your degree to help fulfill CityU's mission, which is to nurture and develop the talents of students and to create applicable knowledge in order to support social and economic advancement. That has been our aim and I hope you will help make this mission a reality.

Through the programmes we teach at CityU we encourage students to care about the world around them, to live in and for their communities. Our Gateway Education courses, our emphasis on sustainability, our determination to promote creativity, discovery and innovation are part of this drive to create students with a high sense of moral duty and a genuine concern for the welfare of others.

Age is no barrier to success. You are young but you have already achieved so much. Some of us on stage today are older than you, but that does not mean we are necessarily worthier. After all, we should remember that CityU is a relatively young university compared to those in Europe or the US, some of which can be hundreds of years old, but we, too, have accomplished a great deal. Youth will not prevent us from aspiring to or reaching excellence. Youth is to be celebrated.

So where does that leave us? Standing on the mountain admiring the view, I very much hope you will feel inspired by your climb and the view from the top of the peak will motivate you to seek higher altitudes and more challenging experiences. Your degree certificate from City University of Hong Kong will give your career and post-university life a boost, and now it is up to you to make the most of it.

Congratulations and best wishes to you all.

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