

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

TSE FAMILY HKU-CAMBRIDGE HUGHES HALL SCHOLARSHIPS MOU SIGNING CEREMONY

(November 20, 2013)

Speech by Mr. Tse Sik-Yan

(Donor, Alumnus of both HKU and Cambridge Hughes Hall)

I feel like a little child being asked to speak in front of the heads of three big families. By these I refer for one to the Big Family of University of Hong Kong. Here at this majestic room is the Vice-Chancellor of HKU (Head of the HKU Family) granting me a chance to contribute something back to my Alma Mater which all started 43 years ago when I was admitted into the Faculty of Science reading botany and zoology and subsequently to further my professional training in education. I find it even more timid when we have here with us two learned teachers from the Faculty of Science and Faculty of Education witnessing this Signing Ceremony. Allow me to borrow an expression from Dr. Sun Yat Sen: “ HKU is indeed the birthplace of my knowledge. ” and in my case with the two cradles of “ Science ” and “ Education ” nurturing me into what have become of me right now.

By good fate and fortune later in life, I was able to broaden my horizon by studying “ Educational Research ” at Hughes Hall Cambridge which to me is the “ Fountain of My Wisdom ” We have here sitting beside me Mrs. Sarah Squire, President of Hughes Hall Cambridge, who had literally watched me grow at Hughes Hall since the day of my Matriculation Ceremony. I could still carry the vivid fond memory when Mrs. Squire had kindly invited me to her Office to chat for nearly an hour for a close acquaintance of my past, present and future. Never have I been so proud in my life than at the present moment to be able to sit between the charismatic leaders of these two great institutions for this Signing occasion which not only brings the two Big Families together but also my filial bondage with my TSE Family.

I am sure Professor Lap-Chee Tsui, being an authority in human genome, will find no difficulty in testifying the long genealogy of our TSE Family to be dated back at least over 1500 years. And here with us today I am so blessed to have my Mother with us at this auspicious occasion who, at the elderly age of over 93, is able to witness the fruition of this Scholarship in memory in addition to her -- my late Grandfather and Father. Subsequently this has proudly linked the Three Great Families together. These are Families having long history and cultural heritage. HKU had just celebrated her 100th Anniversary two years ago with the Opening Ceremony of the Alumni Brick Wall at the New Centennial Campus Wall a few days from now. Hughes Hall Cambridge also had just celebrated her 125th Anniversary 3 years ago and I am so happy to be playing a part in the celebrations both at Cambridge and here in Hong Kong as well with our Hughesian Alumni.

There is a western saying that “ Charity begins at home ”. What more worthwhile charities could I establish than a Scholarship which could connect the 3 Big Families together. My two Alma Maters have been so kind enough to allow me to set up this humble trust fund to pay tribute to my three filial seniors as well as my three Roots. I must say I am not an expert on investment in finance. But being a life-long educator myself I believe in the true value of investing in human talents. Here this educational scholarship is an excellent investment in the human minds with truly great impacts and return not only to my two Alma Maters and my Family but also to the society at large. What more profitable return could one have that on Day One of investing your donation you already have 100% return. Thanks to the One to One matching by the Hong Kong Government and HKU -- I was able to gather a starting fund of HK\$5 million leaving the dividend to grow year by year to cater for the administering of this TSE Family Scholarship down the ages.

I must say this is a sheer modest sum and certainly not the first one to link the two Universities together. But I am sure I might be the first Alumnus of Both Institutes setting up a Scholarship to allow the recipients to further their studies by following his own footpath – a most rewarding career path I am so blessed throughout my entire life. It is hoped that this humble gesture of mine could serve the goal of, as the Chinese saying : “ throwing out a tiny pebble in order to attract the more precious jades to come. ”. I am sure this “ tiny pebble ” is just the beginning and certainly not the end of such charitable deeds. And I do sincerely hope that, in the years to come, by comparison with the subsequent Scholarships of its kind this will be the smallest and most humble.

At this concluding note, may I once again express my heartfelt thanks, on behalf of my Mother and My TSE Family to my two Alma Maters -- the University of Hong Kong and University of Cambridge Hughes Hall for giving us this chance of being part of the contribution to the academic excellence of both Universities and bringing the learned communities of these two Great Academic Cradles in both China and the United Kingdom much closer.

Long Live Hong Kong University !
Long Live Hughes Hall Cambridge !
Long Live TSE Family !

Thank You.