

Honorary Doctor of Laws

Mr LU Ping

Chancellor:

Someone once wrote a Chinese poem to describe the common bond among people in Hong Kong, Macao, and the mainland. It reads as follows:

The cruel rains have caused catastrophic floods,
People from every direction have all come to the aid.
Thicker than water is the precious Chinese blood,
Compatriots in the same boat on horrid waves.

一片汪洋薄情雨，八方援手熱心人。
炎黃血貴濃於水，駭浪同舟見真偽。

The poet was Mr Lu Ping. As we all know, he has made great contributions to the return of Hong Kong, a momentous event symbolising the end of a humiliating period in China's modern history.

Mr Lu was born in Shanghai, in 1927. His father, a university professor, made sure that his son had a good education. Mr Lu graduated from St John's University at the age of 20, and later worked for its Alumni Association. Mr Lu's proficiency in English and excellent management skills caught the attention of Madame Song Qingling, Dr Sun Yat-sen's wife, and she asked him to be the Head of both the Translation and Personnel Sections of the Chinese Society of Social Welfare. In 1952, when Madame Song took on the responsibility of publishing the English edition of *China Reconstructs*, she once again called on Mr Lu, this time to be the Director of the Editorial Office, and later the Deputy Editor-in-Chief. *China Reconstructs* was an influential publication among overseas Chinese, and I myself read it frequently when I was a graduate student.

In early 1978, when Mr Deng Xiaoping began preparing for negotiations with Britain over the return of Hong Kong to China, he directed the State Council to set up the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office. Mr Lu was appointed head of the section responsible for comprehensive research into Hong Kong and Macao Affairs. It was the output of this section that formed the basis of Mr Deng Xiaoping's vision of "one country, two systems".

It was not surprising, then, that in 1984 Mr Lu was promoted to Secretary-General of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office. He was a member of the Chinese delegation which met with the British to negotiate the terms of the return of Hong Kong. In 1985, he was appointed Deputy Secretary-General — later Secretary-General — of the Committee for Drafting the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. In 1990, Mr Lu was promoted to Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, the top post in the Chinese team negotiating the return of Hong Kong.

In 1992, Mr Lu was elected a member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, and in 1993 he was appointed Deputy Director and Secretary-General of the Preliminary Working Committee for setting up the Preparatory Committee for the Hong Kong SAR. In 1996, Mr Lu accompanied Mr Qian Qichen, Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister, to Hong Kong to oversee the election of the SAR's first Chief Executive. Mr Lu is currently a professor at the Law School of the People's University of China and a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

In the seven years following Mr Lu's appointment as Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, Sino-British negotiations often reached an impasse. With both sides determined to protect their own interests, Mr Lu's diplomatic skills were frequently called upon. Fortunately, both sides were eventually able to reach agreement and Hong Kong was returned to China on 1 July 1997, 150 years after the Treaty of Nanjing, making the vision of "one country, two systems" and "Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong" a reality.

Britain formally agreed to return Hong Kong to China in 1984, when the Joint Declaration was signed. That was the easy part — making the return a reality was a different matter entirely! It is in acknowledgement of Mr Lu's efforts to ensure that Hong Kong continues to be a peaceful and prosperous city that we are here today.

In view of Mr Lu Ping's excellent diplomatic skills, and his contribution to the legal and administrative structure of "one country, two systems" and to the development of Hong Kong, Chancellor, on behalf of the University Council, I request you to confer on him the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws.