

The speech of HKU President Professor Xiang Zhang at the Launch of the University's 111th Anniversary
16 March 2022

Every year, we gather on Foundation Day... to honor the achievements of HKU... reflect on our history... and prepare for the future.

Today, on our 111th anniversary, I thank you for being an important part of this special journey.

I also pay tribute to the people of Hong Kong, who have supported and shaped our university for over a century. In a time of a pandemic... it's our duty to acknowledge and return that loyalty.

Throughout history, we have seen war... occupation... and disease outbreaks.

We survived them... we emerged stronger every time... and we embody the 'Lion Rock Spirit'.

The building I'm speaking to you from is a symbol of that resolve and resilience.

Built in 1912... Loke Yew Hall, formerly known as the Great Hall, has been a first-hand witness to history.

It has experienced two world wars and served as a hospital for soldiers and citizens.

Today, we fight a different 'war' against a fast-spreading virus, and once again this building is serving the people of Hong Kong.

HKU has recently set up a community vaccination center at this historic site where anyone can come, especially our elders among other vulnerable citizens.

I thank the people of HKU whose contribution to the COVID-19 response has been outstanding... especially in medicine and public health.

I also thank frontline workers in this city who risk their lives by doing their jobs. You drive our buses and trains... keep our streets safe and clean... and prepare our meals at home and in restaurants.

Finally, I pay tribute to everyone in Hong Kong... those born here and those who were not, including our foreign domestic helpers, and the refugees forced to flee their own countries.

I know our future appears uncertain at this time of a pandemic, but we will see a light at the end of this tunnel.

Tonight, our Main Building is being illuminated in an expression of hope... Hong Kong is going to be fine.

Be filled with strength and solidarity... and may this light bless us all.

-END-