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### **Perseverance – through thick and thin**

The Hong Kong spirit lies in being prepared enough to leap when opportunity knocks, sharing in times of glory and weathering the storms in times of darkness. Hong Kong, as an emerging international city, in the truest sense of the word, would continuously play an important role in bridging trade between the world and People's Republic of China in the years to come. Hong Kong, despite the cloud of political uncertainty, should continue to be the golden land of opportunities.

In relation to economic development in Hong Kong, a dramatic change is evident over the last century. It was only with the struggle and perseverance of people in the 1960s and 1970s that Hong Kong is what it is today – an international financial centre. Even during the recent financial crisis or so-called 'credit crunch', this spirit was evident. Hong Kong is known for its efficiency and hard-working people the world over. As Winston Churchill so wisely put it, 'Success is never final. Failure is never fatal. Courage is what counts.' It is this courage that Hong Kong people never let go of. And as Thomas Edison said, 'Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety nine percent perspiration.' Hong Kong has time and again proved that it is able to come out of any difficulties with the sum total effort of our population.

On the cultural front, people have conserved the important values from Chinese culture but have adapted to the changing values that the inevitable tide of globalisation brings. However, Hong Kong people may face certain identity issues, especially when overseas. Yet this is exactly what makes Hong Kong and its people so peculiar. The Basic Law, the mini-constitution of Hong Kong itself is considered to be a hybrid between the Chinese Legal System and the English Common Law. It is only natural that Hong Kong people will become more and more willing to accept and embrace this reality as time goes by.

Hong Kong people also pride themselves on their generosity. The Sichuan earthquake is but one example. The whole community came together, raised funds and organised activities for this cause. The exercise was a great success in the end. This shows that people here know how to give selflessly and understand compassion.

It would hold little meaning to straightaway claim that Hong Kong's future is bound to be bright. With the guarantee of the system remaining unchanged only for 50 years as from the return of sovereignty to China, one cannot set out with certainty what course Hong Kong's financial, political and legal systems will take after 2047. There may be two alternative options. One is for Hong Kong's system to be preserved and develop gradually thereon. Another is for the characteristics of the Chinese system to be incorporated into Hong Kong's system. However, the latter is unlikely because this may hinder economic development and stall progress. Moreover, this may upset the general public accustomed to the previous system. Hong Kong, instead, would probably be allowed the first option so as to maintain stability and prosperity.