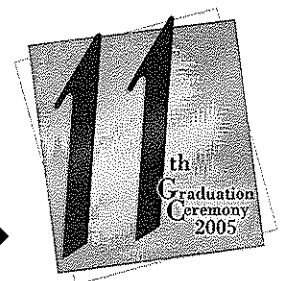


Address by Lord Stewart Sutherland, KT, FBA, FRSE

Doctor of Education, *honoris causa*



第十一屆畢業典禮

My first word must be “Congratulations” to all of those who today are awarded Degrees and Diplomas. This is your day of success, of achievement, and of recognition. It is one of those days which you will never forget. It is one of those very few days which can properly be said to transform your lives. You have achieved much, doubtless through hard work, through much discipline, and occasionally some exasperation and perhaps a little anxiety. Even if you are surprised to be here today, you should be pleased that you are and enjoy it none the less!

I congratulate you however, not only for your success, but for the path you have chosen to find that success. You have not simply obtained a degree: you have chosen a career - or perhaps that career has chosen you, for it is, I believe, a vocation which is both noble and worthy, to wish to educate others - especially as it is for many of you, to educate the youngest of those in their earliest years on the educational path. What a privilege - to help prepare the young for the life to come.

The congratulations I offer, however, are to be shared with others - particularly those whom I call “the supporters’ club”. Your parents and in some cases your partners - all of those who helped pick you up when the going seemed hard, and who were sometimes when the bank-manager refused to be - supporters of last resort! They too have their day today and it is marvellous to see so many here with you celebrating your success.

Finally I want to congratulate also the lecturers and professors - for they too had their part to play.

My second word, is one that I have already used, “Education”. Education comes in many shapes and sizes. It must come in both formal and informal ways. It has one shape when you are students at an Institute such as this - teaching you to think as well as to remember: to apply principles to new situations which you have never encountered before; to join with others in shaping the future of your chosen profession as schoolteachers.

It has quite another shape in the primary schools in which many of you will serve. Young minds are at their most receptive, least formed. The future has possibilities for these minds which it might never have again. You will help define these possibilities - a great privilege, as well as a great responsibility.

Then, of course, as we all now know and agree, education does not stop here, today. Education is and must be lifelong. The world, including the world of the classroom is changing, and will continue to change. Two obvious examples - the use of modern technology is transforming teaching in ways which if we try to gaze into the future, we can hardly discern. The other is the simple fact that human demography, and that element of it which has to do with longevity, is changing year by year. People in developed countries such as this are all living longer - in fact in the course of this ceremony, statistically, life expectation has increased by twelve minutes!

This must affect very radically our perceptions of education and of the need for the continuing upgrading and updating of education. The things your pupils will need to know are currently not known to us. They will live longer and through a faster changing world. Their need to adapt and change must be matched by changes in the way education is offered and received.

This brings me to my last word - in fact two words – “Hong Kong”. Over the nearly two decades during which I have been a regular visitor, Hong Kong has changed in character. The processes of change preceded but accelerated through constitutional change. Hong Kong is a modern city which aspires to be a regional and world leader - an example to others as well as a benchmark for others.

The significance of that change was well understood in the decision to aim to make teaching a graduate profession, and to create an Institute of Education specialising in the education of those who would be the teachers of the future, as well as developing the skills of those already in the profession - and most importantly, to create an Institute which operates at the same level as the other University and Higher Education Institutions in Hong Kong.

The decision to move in that direction was fundamentally right as well as far-sighted. I was privileged to play a small part in that process and am moved that you should have chosen to mark that with the award of an Honorary Degree. Hong Kong and this Institute will always have a special place in my memories and affections.