

Professor Inga-Stina Ewbank



Address

It is a very great honour that Lingnan University has bestowed on my fellow honorary graduands and myself; and it is a very great pleasure to me to have the opportunity to say a few words, on behalf of the three of us, on this glorious occasion.

The first words must be of gratitude: a warm thank-you to Lingnan University, for academic honours so generously granted and for a gracious hospitality which has turned this day into a thing of beauty and so, in the words of Keats, "a joy for ever". I think we all have a feeling that there is a special glory attached to becoming honorary alumni of this institution in this first year of your existence as a University, the seventh University to come into being in Hong Kong. And because feelings alone are imprecise, I should like to try to define more precisely what I see as special about this moment. To do so, I must – because my training is literary – start from a word, and that word is 'first' – and not only because Hong Kong is a region much given to thinking of tertiary institutions in hierarchical terms of first and last, nor only because the Bible tells us that the last shall be the first.

First or last Lingnan is typically Hong Kong in having proved itself capable of rapid development, and at the same time Lingnan is uniquely itself, in that what I just termed 'development' can more properly be called an evolution: a movement into the present and towards the future without losing touch with the past. When I joined the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee – UPGC as it was then known in 1982, there were just two Universities and *almost* two polytechnics. When I first visited Lingnan, in 1987, it was an institution physically squeezed between Stubbs Road and a mountain wall but spiritually expansive and intellectually buoyant, with enthusiastic students and staff showing extraordinary loyalty to the College and its aims. When I first visited Tuen Mun, in 1991, this was in search of a new site for Lingnan. There were three possible sites, and the only way to get a view of one of them was to climb up onto the roof of a block of flats. There I perched, together with Brian Smith, (who was then the excellent Chairman of the UPGC's Lingnan Sub-Committee, of which I was a humble member). To be honest, I have to tell you that at the time we were suffering too badly with vertigo to have any intimations that we were looking down on a Promised Land. Now, in retrospect, I know that we were doing just that; and that constructing a magnificent campus in so short a time is as characteristic of Hong Kong as the layout and architecture of this campus are characteristic of Lingnan, in their fusion of new and old, tradition and innovation.

For of course the physical features of this campus are important because they express – as the Stubbs Road site, however well-loved, was not able to do – the ethos of a student-centred institution which values tradition without letting it become a stranglehold. Furthermore, if, from that precarious roof in 1991, Tuen Mun did not seem like the Promised Land, eight years later it is clear that the town and the University are symbiotically important to each other, and that Lingnan has achieved an identity at once local, regional and international.

This is where the question of being first or last loses its significance before the importance of being special. Lingnan University articulates its special mission as one of being "an internationally recognised liberal arts university with Hong Kong characteristics". To the world at large, Hong Kong tends to mean finance, business, wealth creation. The strength of Lingnan as an academic community rests in its assumption that wealth should also be spiritual, and that finance and business must be underpinned by communicative skills, by social awareness, and by cultural understanding. Some of the best of my many happy memories of serving as chairperson of the Lingnan Sub-Committee are of meeting with Lingnan students (past and present) and of hearing them tell me how they were welcomed by Hong Kong employers exactly because of such skills and understanding. There is little room for ivory towers in the Hong Kong tertiary education system, and I certainly never, in my years of close contact with Lingnan, found an ivory-tower mentality here: indeed at one meeting we discovered that Lingnan students were more likely to be readers of the *Hong Kong Economic Journal* than were their contemporaries at other tertiary institutions. But I did find a genuine adherence to the idea of a liberal arts education, where

'liberal' according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (if Professor Halliday will allow me to refer to a source older than his own distinguished work) means: "Directed to general intellectual culture; not narrowly technical or professional".

I think this is also why, to me, the work of the Lingnan Sub-committee was in itself an education. Beyond and above the inevitable mountains of paperwork there was the human reality of meeting teachers who were deeply concerned about educating the 'whole person' of each student for a productive life in a multi-cultural and multilingual society, and of students who appreciated and responded to that concern. Coming to know Lingnan under the leadership of your illustrious predecessor, as well as under yours, I have been educated in the ethos of Lingnan, finding in it a grace and style which force me back to the second – and not unrelated – meaning of 'liberal' as defined by *the Oxford English Dictionary*: "Free in giving; generous; open-hearted". Today we three graduands are the recipients of that generosity and assured that the ethos of Lingnan College is carried forward by Lingnan University.

It seems, then, that all that I have been trying to articulate could be summed up by saying, first, that the Lingnan tradition of teaching and learning, with its concern for the whole person – for turning each individual into a thinking, judging, caring and talking being – this tradition makes of teachers and learners one big family. And, last but not least, that, as we now become graduates, we are particularly proud to be members of that family.

致辭

承蒙嶺南大學頒授榮銜，我們三人都無任感銘。我有幸在這盛典之中代表其餘兩位榮譽畢業生致詞，更覺高興。

首先，我要向嶺南致以衷心感謝，既給我們頒學術榮譽，又款待周詳，使今天的盛會十全十美，引用英國詩人濟慈「畢生此樂固難忘」一語形容這一刻，最是恰當。嶺南今年正名，成為香港第七所大學；在這一年成為嶺南榮譽博士，我們自然都特感榮幸。但由於感覺本身莫可名狀，我不如確切一點，談談這一刻有什麼特別。我畢生習文，院就讓我摛詞弄字，以一個「先」字作引子，一來因為香港人論大專院校，習慣分先後，論高低，二來因為《聖經》有言：後來者反居先。

首先，嶺南徹底體現了香港「發展迅速」的特色，同時亦保留了嶺南獨特的風格。因此，剛才我說的「發展」，嚴格一點該稱為「演進」，即自昔至今以至將來，始終保持傳統。一九八二年我加入當日的學工及理工教育資助委員會時，香港只有兩所大學，以及「差不多」的兩所理工。一九八七年，我初次到訪嶺南，當時嶺南局處司徒拔道與一山壁之間，地方雖然狹小，但校風宏大，學術精神抖擻，學生和教職員都滿腔熱誠，忠於學校，也忠於學校的宗旨。一九九一年，我首次踏足屯門，目的是為嶺南挑選新校址。當時我只是學工及理工教育資助委員會轄下嶺南學院委員會一名成員，主席是可敬的史密斯教授，當時也有同行。由於有三幅地可供選擇，為了看清楚其中一幅，我們得攀上一棟高的樓的屋頂眺望。坦白說，當時我們感到有點頭暈，也不知眼前所見的就是「真命之地」。現在，我當然知道那幅地就是今天的嶺南所在地。嶺南優美的新校舍建築之快，很有香港特色；而校園的設計和建築格調新舊合璧，於傳統中見創新，很有嶺南特色。新校舍的建築模式十分重要，因為它表達了嶺南精神，即以學生為中心，尊重傳統卻不受傳統束縛。這一點，司徒拔道的舊校舍實在無法企及，雖然不少嶺南師生依然深愛舊校舍。一九九一年，我們在岌岌可危的屋頂上俯視地形時，屯門似乎不是什麼福地；但八年後的今天，屯門市和嶺南大學顯然已是血脈相連。嶺南在本地、本區以至國際間的地位也已確立。

嶺南大學卓然自成一家，再談什麼「先」、「後」就沒有意義。這所大學界定了本身的特別使命，以「備受國際認可而具香港特色的博雅教育大學」自期。在國際上，香港的名字一般代表財務、商業及富裕。但嶺南深信物質的富裕應配以精神的富裕；財務和商業，還須溝通技巧、社會意識和文化知識作為砥柱。嶺南學術上的特長，即在於此。任嶺南學院委員會主席期間，我最高興的是跟嶺南的學生和畢業生見面，聽到他們說，嶺南傳授的技巧、知識，為他們贏得僱主讚譽。香港的高等教育制度不容有象牙塔，而和嶺南緊密合作多年，我也從

不覺察校內師生有象牙塔心理。在一次會議上，我們更發覺嶺南閱讀《信報》的同學，比其他院校多。同時，嶺南師生都篤守博雅教育的理念。要解釋何謂博雅教育，請韓禮德教授容我引用較他那部傑作更前面世的《牛津英文字典》：博雅教育是「著重通識培訓的，而非局限於技術或專業」。

因此，參與嶺南學院委員會的工作，對我來說，是一種教育。處理堆積如山的文件之餘，我還接觸到人，接觸到一班悉心推動全人教育的老師。他們都希望學生能在一個多元文化、流行多種語言的社會中各展所長，活得充實。學生也努力不辜負老師的期望。主席與校長先生，在你們及你們的前賢領導下，嶺南的高尚學風教育了我，使我領略到「博雅」另一個相關的意義，即《牛津英文字典》所謂「慷慨、大方、坦誠」。今天，我們三位榮譽畢業生就獲嶺南慷慨授銜。我們還看到嶺南的博雅精神在嶺南大學薪火相傳。

簡而言之，嶺南教育的特色，是著重全人教育，務求學生獨立思考，遇事能斷，關心他人及善於言辭。這獨特的教育傳統，使嶺南師生融合為一個大家庭。我們現在忝為嶺南畢業生，成了這大家庭一份子，實在與有榮焉。