

# **Mr Gaston Jean-Marie Kaboré**

## **DOCTOR OF HUMANITIES** *honoris causa*

### **Address**

Chairman, President, Council members, distinguished guests, faculty members and students,

On behalf of all the honorary graduates, I would like to express our most sincere gratitude to Lingnan University for this outstanding distinction and for the very kind words spoken about each of us.

Personally, it is a great privilege for me to address such a prestigious assembly. I have to confess that being here is just like a fantasy for me. The words “Hong Kong” and “Lingnan University” sound like a special music to my ears, as well as to my mind and to my soul, and I know that this music will continue to affect my mind and soul. Thank you very much.

I have a strong conviction that we are all brought into universality from our own specificity. That is why each individual story is affected by the story of all humanity. So, I have no doubt that you may see yourself reflected in my personal story. My studies in history have shaped in me my intellectual, moral and political position vis-à-vis the way Africans and the African continent are perceived, narrated and represented in books, icons, and the media in Western countries.

I came to realise that Africa should regain access to a recognised and legitimate capacity of questioning and analysing her historical trajectory throughout time.

Revisiting our history written by others, forging our memory, rebuilding our consciousness of our being and of our identities, reconquering the spaces of our collective future, claiming our social singularities, being our own judges and decision makers of our destiny, reinforcing our self-confidence and becoming aware of our expressive, artistic and philosophical heritage, are in sum all the ambitions and urgencies that I had on my agenda in the early 70s.

Who are we as Africans? Some fragments of answers to this question can be found in narratives, stories, tales, myths and legends that we should be told again and again, even as we also contribute by inventing new ones.

Today, the African continent is far behind when it comes to representing herself both to Africans and to the rest of the world.

Indeed, on the one hand, the African continent produces very few documentary films, which I believe is a serious issue since this makes it very difficult to raise social and political awareness in the African youth. On the other hand, I also believe that the same African youth should learn about African history, and understand both its tangible and intangible heritage. Additionally, young people should develop critical minds in order to build up their legacy, to be very participative in their present and to successfully plan their future.

And last, I believe that creative arts, mainly literature, theatre, music, painting, fashion, dance and social means of communication such as cinema, radio, television, multimedia and the Internet are capable of helping to correct that situation.

I decided to personally respond to that situation by starting the IMAGINE Institute in 2003, a film school that aims at training professionals in cinema, television, and multimedia. I believe Africa badly needs those professionals who should become today's storytellers.

However, teaching them only technical skills is not enough. It is important as well to strengthen their capacity to develop new desires, new reflections, new aesthetics and new ways of self-representation.

Africans were once victims of the devastating trauma of the black slavery trade and colonisation, during which their status as human beings was denied, leaving visible, deep psychological and mental wounds.

We cannot rewind history. There is no use trying to go back. We should start building our future from where we are and from who we are. This will require countless attempts but the most important thing is for us to continue telling our stories.

I have often been asked why I chose to make films that are inspired by traditional tales brewed within my ancestral culture.

It is as simple as this:

A tale has a driving force in general, not only in Africa. The power of a tale is to stay permanently up-to-date and to adjust to a contemporary context. With the tale, we have a possibility to continuously reinterpret our mental, philosophical, spiritual, artistic, social and cultural heritage. *Wend Kuuni*, my first full-length film, is a simple story that has provoked an interest beyond my highest expectations. At first, I only aimed at telling an easy-to-understand story that my people would immediately recognise themselves in. But finally, the film succeeded in moving not only African audiences, but also audiences on all continents and within all cultures.

Our presence here today, regardless of our origins and age, shows that we are all women and men who are conscious and proud to belong to the same and only one family, that is the family of humanity. Therefore, we should all take advantage of this to find ways to strengthen our exchanges, cooperation and mutual cultural enrichment.

Once again, on behalf of all recipients of honorary degrees today, our most sincere thanks.

# 加斯頓·吉恩 瑪麗·卡波里先生

榮譽人文學博士

## 謝辭

主席、校長、各位校董、各位嘉賓、各位教職員和同學：

我謹代表所有榮譽學位領受者，向嶺南大學表達衷心謝意，感謝大學給予我們的非凡榮耀以及讚美之辭。

在我個人而言，能夠向在座深具聲望的諸位致辭是莫大的榮幸。我得承認，身處這裡令我有如置身夢幻之中。「香港」和「嶺南大學」聽起來彷彿一種讓我耳朵、內心和靈魂愉悅的特別音樂。而我知道，這音樂將繼續影響我的思想和靈魂。非常感謝您們。

我有一個堅定的信念，就是我們各自的獨特性把我們帶進普遍性，因此每個人的故事均受全人類的故事影響。故此，我肯定您會從我的個人故事中看見自己的倒影。我對歷史的研習塑造了我的知性、道德和政治立場，有別於西方各種書籍、圖像及媒體對非洲人和非洲大陸的認知、敘述及表達。

我逐漸認識到，非洲應重新取用一種受認許和合理的能力，去質詢和分析她在歷史中的軌跡。

七十年代初，我所有的抱負和急務總括來說，就是要重新審視別人所寫關於我們的歷史、鑄造我們的記憶、重建我們存在和身分的意識、重奪我們共同未來的空間、爭取我們的社會特性、成為我們自身命運的判決者和決策者、加強我們的自信心，並覺悉我們豐富的藝術和哲學傳統。

作為非洲人，我們是誰？對這個問題的一些零碎答案，可在我們一次又一次重聽的敘述、故事、神話和傳說中發現；同時我們還編造新的故事。

今天，非洲大陸要向非洲人及世界其他地方表現自我時，遠遠落後於他人。

一方面，非洲大陸製作的紀錄片數量很少。我認為這是一個嚴重的課題，因為這令非洲青年的社會和政治意識很難得到提高。另一方面，我也相信非洲青年應該了解非洲的歷史，並了解其有形和無形的傳統。此外，年輕人應發展批判性思維以建立他們的遺產，積極參與時務並有效地規劃自己的未來。

最後，我認為藝術創作——主要是文學、戲劇、音樂、繪畫、時裝、舞蹈和社會溝通渠道例如電影、電台、電視、多媒體和互聯網等——能夠幫助糾正上述情況。

我決定於 2003 年成立 IMAGINE 學院，身體力行以回應上述情況。這所電影學院旨在培訓電影、電視和多媒體的專業人才。我相信非洲迫切需要這種專業人才，作為今天述說故事的人。

然而，只教授他們技術並不足夠。加強他們的能力去開發新的渴求、新的反思、新的審美觀和自我表現的新途徑同樣重要。

非洲人曾是黑奴貿易和殖民統治下的受害者，承受過毀滅性的創傷。在那段時期，他們作為人類的地位遭到否定，給他們留下了明顯而深層的心理和精神傷害。

我們不能倒撥歷史；嘗試回到過去是沒有用的。我們應該從我們目前所處的境地及身分開始構建未來。這將須要無數嘗試，但最重要的是我們要繼續訴說自己的故事。

別人經常問我，為什麼選擇拍攝一些靈感來自我祖輩文化傳統故事的電影。

原因是如此簡單：

一個故事背後一般有一種驅動力；這不限於非洲。一個故事的力量該歷久常新而且適應當代環境。有了故事，我們就有可能不斷重新詮釋我們的精神、哲學、靈性、藝術、社會和文化傳統。《無聲的野地兒童》——我的第一套長片——是一個簡單的故事，卻喚起了超乎我最高期望的關注。起初我只是希望訴說一個易於理解的故事，讓我的同胞能代入其中，但電影最後成功地觸動了非洲以至所有大陸和不同文化背景的觀眾。

今天我們出現在這場合，表明了我們不論出身、年齡和性別，都有意識地和自豪地同屬於一個家——一個人類的大家庭。因此，我們應該充分利用這一點設法加強我們的交流與合作，豐富彼此的文化。

我再次代表今天接受榮譽學位的各位人士，致上我們最摯誠的謝意。