

**“Soil, Soul and Society”**

**Holistic Education: Learning with Your Whole Being**

Transcript of public talk by Dr Satish Kumar on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2011

(Edited by KFBG)

**Opening Remarks by Prof. Peter Hills**

**Prof. Peter Hills :** Welcome everyone, my name is Peter Hills. I am the director of the Kadoorie Institute at the University here. It is my very great pleasure to welcome you tonight to the University, and on behalf of the University and the Institute, I welcome you to this first public talk and the short series on the theme of “Soil, Soul and Society”. And it is also my very great pleasure to welcome tonight’s speaker Dr Satish Kumar to the University. We met before, but it is a very great pleasure to have you come to the University. These public talks have been organised by the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden together with the Kadoorie Institute and Schumacher College.

I’d just like to say a few words about the Institute and the work that we do here. Of course we share the famous Kadoorie name with our friends and colleagues KFBG, but we are actually part of the University of Hong Kong, and we are a quite separate organisation. The Institute was established in 2008 and it was set up to help to develop the University’s teaching and research in the fields of sustainability and the environment. The Kadoorie family has a very long association with the University of Hong Kong, and has been a very generous benefactor over many decades. The Institute was created through a merger of two existing centres, one of which is the former Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre which is in Shek Kong in the New Territories, and in fact is next door to the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden. And that often results in a little bit of confusion because people are not quite sure whether the University bit is part of the Farm and vice versa, but we are actually two separate units.

Our work in the Institute mainly focuses on how policies for sustainability and the environment are developed and how they should be developed, how effective they are and how they should be adapted or evolve to meet new challenges, priorities and preferences. Much of our work involves engaging directly with various groups of

stakeholders that are affected by particular policies or projects. But we are also involved in major educational initiatives, one of which is a very large project which recently started called the Global Forestry Observatory Project. This is based at Shek Kong and it involves very close working collaboration with the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden. This project will hopefully train several thousand people to actually measure how forests grow and develop in the context of Hong Kong. We are also working on another big project for the Council for Sustainable Development which is concerned with Climate Change Policies in Hong Kong. And we are looking particularly at options about energy efficiency.

The Institute is very pleased to be a co-organiser of tonight's event. Given the size of audience, it's clearly an area that we all care a great deal about, and on which we will no doubt benefit from Dr Kumar's wisdom.

Thank you very much for supporting us this evening through your attendance. Thank you very much and I'll hand over to Andrew.

#### **Opening Remarks by Andrew McAulay**

**Andrew McAulay:** Thank you Peter. Good evening everybody, my name is Andrew McAulay and I am the Chairman of Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden. And it is my great honour and my great pleasure to introduce you to tonight's speaker Dr Satish Kumar.

Satish was born in India, and raised as a Jain Monk from the age of 9. When he was 18, he became interested in Gandhi's philosophy and vision, and he became a campaigner for land reform. Later, he undertook an 8000-mile peace pilgrimage, walking from India to America with no money. And this was to deliver messages of peace to the leaders of the four nuclear powers of the time. In 1973, he settled in England, and was invited to edit the *Resurgence* magazine. This magazine was described by *The Guardian* as "the spiritual and artistic flagship of the green movement." After establishing a pioneering holistic small school in Hartland in Devon, he eventually co-founded the Schumacher College in 1991, and that remains an international educational centre for the study of ecological and spiritual values.

Satish has written a number of books, including an autobiography called *No Destination* where you can read about his peace pilgrimage and other adventures. He teaches and leads workshops internationally on topics like reverential ecology, holistic education and voluntary simplicity.

Kadoorie Farm had the honour of hosting Satish's visit to Hong Kong and Beijing last year, and we've been collaborating with Schumacher College to develop courses and retreats here in Hong Kong. So if you want to stay abreast of these developments, I encourage you to visit the Kadoorie Farm website [www.kfbg.org](http://www.kfbg.org) and you can also sign up to our Facebook page, and receive our newsletter which is called *Connections*.

So tonight, Satish will speak on the subject, "Holistic Education: Learning with Your Whole Being". We hope to have a lively question-and-answer section. While Satish is talking, please feel free to take a few notes and think about what questions you may wish to ask. We'll have some pencils and paper here at the front if you don't have any. We have simultaneous translation this evening in case you are wondering about the voice at the back of the room, just to let you know.

So, without any further ado, please join me in welcoming Satish.

**“Holistic Education: Learning with Your Whole Being”**

**Public Talk by Dr Satish Kumar**

**Satish Kumar:** Thank you very much for your welcome. And it is a great pleasure for me to be in Hong Kong again, the second time, and to speak here and teach at the Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden. I am not an educationalist but I am interested in education. I would like to start with a very simple understanding of the word “education”.

What is the meaning of the word “education”? We have, I think, forgotten it. We are treating our children or students in the university, as if they are empty baskets, and we are to fill that basket with a lot of knowledge, a lot of information, a lot of ideas and so on. But the meaning of the word “education” is not to fill an empty bucket. The meaning of education is to bring out what is in there. “Educare” the word, Latin word “Educare” is to lead out, to bring out what is in the child, in the person. So, education never stops at school or university. Education is a life-long process. And you are all the time learning to bring out what is inside you. It is a profound word with a profound meaning; just on this word and the meaning of this word, you can write a whole book. How in your whole life you are going to bring out what is inside you. So, I just give an example that a student, a learner is not an empty basket or a bucket but a seed. Now, if you look at an apple seed, a very tiny seed, so bitter that you can’t eat it. And if by chance, by mistake, it comes between your teeth, you don’t like it, you spit it out. You break the seed, there is nothing in it, to your two eyes, but if you imagine properly, the whole tree is in that seed. And not only the whole tree in that seed, but thousands upon thousands of apples, year after year after year for fifty years, which will come out from that tiny seed.

Now, the work of a gardener or an orchard keeper is not to tell the seed how to become an apple tree, and this is what mostly our teachers doing. The work of a gardener or orchard keeper is to provide the right conditions, good soil, good water, good sunshine, good stake, a little fence maybe, protection, so that that the seed can develop into a tree. What is the orchard keeper doing? – loving the seed, caring for the seed, devoting himself or herself to the seed. And for me, this is a simple but a beautiful metaphor for education. Every child and for that matter every human being, each and every one of us are born with a potential. Like every seed has a

potential. An acorn has potential to become a mighty oak tree.

So each and every one of us had come here with our own particular potential and hopefully we get some help from schools, from our teachers, from our colleges, from our universities, from our parents, hopefully we get some help like an orchard keeper helps a seed. Of course, in the rain forest, you don't need an orchard keeper. If you are born in a tribal society, perhaps you will not need colleges and universities. [In the rain forest] the whole universe will be your University, your whole natural world will be your book of nature. However, we are in this civilized world, so hopefully, our teachers and our parents will help us to follow a journey, go on a journey of adventure. To discover ourselves: who we are. Education is a journey of self-realization, nothing less. Look what we have turned education into - we are spending millions upon millions if not billions of dollars and pounds and yen and Euros on building these great universities.

But what have we done? We have reduced the meaning of education to getting a degree, passing the exam so that you can go and find a job in an office sitting in front of a computer. We are given no idea that you are born in this world with a particular potential, and what that is, your potential, it is your journey to discover, to find out. So this is the meaning that I want you to remember when you are thinking about holistic education.

Now, we are born in this body, beautiful body. Amazing, the architecture of this body; amazing, the magical, mysterious design of this body. What do we have in this body? We have the brain, the mind - the mind is bigger than the brain, the mind probably throughout the body; and the brain... we know where it is, somewhere in our head or in our glands, and we are born with brain, with mind, with heart, with the imagination, with creativity. And then you go to university and are told no, no, the rest of your body is just a vehicle maybe, an excuse to look after your head. So our education has been reduced to learning, what in England we call - I don't know, in British colonial time, if this also influenced Hong Kong education, but in Britain, they say, the purpose of education is the responsibility of the schools and the teacher is to teach the 3 Rs: Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. And those 3Rs are learnt through the head. So your imagination, your creativity, your soul, your spirit, your heart, your mind, and your hands, all your body, are all irrelevant to education. Our

education, the main purpose of education is to train your brain, teach your head, head education: how to read, how to write, how to add. (They are not actually 3 Rs. Arithmetic is not spelled with a R. But never mind.) Now, if you want to focus on holistic education, then we have to replace 3 Rs with 3 Hs. We have already 4 Hs or many more Hs. But to start with 3Hs, we have to educate our Head, of course. I am not against learning, reading, writing, arithmetic, writing books, all that is fine, no problem. But that is not enough.

We need to also educate our heart. Head, heart, and also we need to educate our hands. If your heart is not trained, not educated, not developed, how are you going to deal with any relationships in your life? And the key to our life is relationships. We are not like Rene Descartes, the French philosopher who said "*cogito, ergo sum*" - "I think therefore I am". That was a completely misguided philosophy, of a materialistic, dualistic time. We are members of, or part of, the web of relationships. I don't live in my head. I live in my relationships. I am speaking to you not just because I have some ideas in my head, but because you are here. The audience is here. I am speaking here because my teachers taught me something. I am speaking to you because my mother and father brought me into this world. I am here because the soil, the earth, Mother Earth has been holding me on her body and feeding me with food, air, and water, and sunshine, and [because of my] ancestors, so I am not just head. I am an amalgam of relationships.

Once I met a great philosopher, Gregory Bateson, and he said to me "Satish, what do you have in your hand, do you have five fingers?" I said, "What a great question. A philosopher asking me 'do you have five fingers?' Yes, of course, I have five fingers." "No, Satish, you don't have five fingers." I said "What do you mean? One, two, three, four, at least I count five. There are five fingers." He said "No, you don't have five fingers." "What do I have?" He said "You have four relationships." [The different relationship between each finger and the thumb]. What a beautiful metaphor. In a nutshell, he is trying to teach me, everything is based in relationships. How are you going to deal with relationships, with your friends, with your parents, with your wife, with your children, with your natural surroundings, with your trees, with your animals and birds around you? How are you going to deal with the day-to-day relationships in the world? The schools do not help you to develop that aspect of your life. The universities don't pay any attention to this

aspect of our lives. Then this education is not enough. It is not complete. So we need to train our heart: how can we feel compassion, how can we feel love, how can we feel generosity? Even, how we can deal with sorrow, a loss and any other negative feelings that we might face in our lives. Education has to be part of it.

And then, I could go on just talking about educating our heart, for the whole lecture, but I will move further, because we are going to talk about the whole being.

Hands: Our schools and universities are producing thousands upon thousands of young people who are completely useless. I was recently reading a British newspaper [article] that [stated that] of graduates coming out of the sixth-form college and coming to the universities, 16% of them do not know how to boil an egg. We do not know anything other than maybe how to use a mobile phone, or how to use a computer keyboard.

Hands are a magical gift to us. Through these hands, with our heart and imagination coordinated, we can transform ourselves. And we can transform any material we touch. We can take a piece of clay, with these two hands, we can turn it into a beautiful pot. We can take a piece of stone or metal and we can turn it into a beautiful sculpture. You can sow the seeds in the ground, put some compost in your hands, and water your seed with your hands, and see that seed grow into a tree. If we do not teach our young people to use their hands... what is the good of just using your mobile phones and computer keyboard? I am not against technology. I am not against mobile phones or computers. If you want to use them, good luck to you. But that is not enough. You are not going to discover yourself, who you are, the true meaning of the word 'education'. You are not going to get self-realization, and be who you are. If you don't develop your heart skills, if you don't develop your hand skills, you don't develop your creativity and imagination. You are just out from university and looking for a job. You are missing out.

So simple. This is not a big science, or a big philosophy that I am talking to you about. I mean it is so common-sense. Unfortunately common sense is no longer common. That's why I have to speak about these very elementary ideas.

And so, what the need is, is to realize who we are.

There was a great, another great philosopher, an Indian philosopher called Aranda Coomaraswamy, and he said a very beautiful sentence that stuck in my memory. He said “An artist is not a special kind of person but every person is a special kind of artist.” We are all artists. The greatest art is not painting a picture, or building a house, or singing a song, or dancing on the stage. The greatest art is the art of living.

And all the other arts: dance, music, painting, sculpturing, architecture, gardening, cooking, making clothes, making shoes, all the other arts... They are all arts and crafts. And I don't make a big distinction between the arts and the crafts. They are twin sisters. They go side by side. An artist has to be a craftsman. A craftsman has also to be an artist. ...If you have imagination and creativity, and using your hands, you are coordinating your hands with your imagination so that you are an artist and a craftsman together.

So we are all potentially artists, but our education doesn't only not help us to bring out our true artists, it actually discourages us. Education really plays a negative role of dampening down, suppressing and conditioning our mind. The only way you can succeed in your life is to get a good job. That's your success. Get a few papers published. Get a name, a bit of fame, maybe something reported about you in the newspaper or your book is reviewed. So minimal! Extremely minimal.

So we need to have a broader, a bigger picture of education. Education is for self-realization. And self-realization is not returning into the self but bringing the self out of the self. You may see within the self and you may put it on a mental shelf or put candles around it, a little lamp beside it, and worship it... that way it will never be achieved. It has to come out if the apple is to be successful and self-realized; it has only happened when that apple tree is able to feed everyone who comes to it, unconditionally.

The apple tree never has any conditions. If you want to learn about unconditional love, unconditional giving, unconditional generosity, there's no better teacher. And, I am sure, there are wonderful teachers here in this room, whom I honour. But there's no greater teacher to teach you unconditional compassion than an apple tree or an



oak tree. You go to an apple tree - I mean this is in England, autumn and I am living in England so I only know what is happening there. I don't know what fruit you are growing here but at this moment, we have apples a lot, so I am talking about apples. I am a small-orchard keeper myself. I have 15 apple trees and every week I am making apple juice with a hand press. If you have not tried a real freshly squeezed apple juice, you don't know what real apple juice tastes like. You have to try it. It is nectar. It is out of this world. The taste is something... you cannot imagine how delicious it is. So if you go to an apple tree, it never asks you have you come with your visa card or American Express card. It gives you apples without any charge, without any discrimination, without any condition. Whether you are poor or rich, never mind; or a saint or sinner, never mind: you have apples. Whether human or a bird, never mind; a wasp or bee, never mind: have apples. What generosity. What unconditional giving.

Now we have learnt that by studying nature. Our universities and our schools have no time for nature. What we study is about nature. About nature. About nature, not from nature. When you say "about nature," mostly you don't want to go out to nature, because it is too cold, or too rainy, or too wet, or too messy or too unclean, or "I can watch nature on television. I can Google trees..." You cannot learn about nature by looking at a screen or in a pretty, beautifully illustrated [book with] marvellous pictures. . But that's not the real learning. You have to be in nature. When you go and walk along the river, or walk by the sea, or you go in the forest, like the botanical garden, Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, and you walk uphill and... the experience you have! Our universities and schools are feeding us with knowledge but depriving us of the experience. Knowledge without experience is incomplete. When you know something in your head, okay... but you have to experience it - in your body, in your heart, in your senses, through your eyes, through your smell, through your taste. So you touch it, you experience it. Then your knowledge is truly realized, enhanced, completed; because you have created a relationship, and it's not a study of an object. Nature has been turned into an object. An object of study. "I want to know about nature so that I can exploit nature for my benefit" [some people would say]. How I can conquer nature. That has been the project of many many schools and universities of our modern era. How to conquer nature? How to control nature? Science, technology and many other disciplines have been busy at knowing nature so that they can control it, they can

conquer it, they can use it. We have been given this idea that somehow human beings are so wonderful, so special, that we can exploit the rest of natural world for our benefit, for our use. We can do what we like as if it is a kind of human imperialism. We are the ruler of the world and all the other species, minus human species, are almost our slaves. They are at our service. They have to meet the human needs. That has been a project of industrial economic growth, unlimited economic growth.

I think if you are looking for truly sustainable holistic education that word [conquering], you are conquering nature, has to be challenged. And we have to replace that view with living in partnership with nature.

Living in relationship with nature, all the species on this earth are our kith and kin [family]. In Sanskrit, in Indian philosophy, we say: “The whole earth is our family”. “The whole earth is our community”. The earth community is the primary community and all the species on this earth are our kith and kin, our friends, we are in partnership, we are in relationship with all of the natural world. And in that relationship, we give and we take. It’s reciprocity. Reciprocity is the fundamental principle in the universe.

And so at this moment there is no reciprocity. Humans take, take, take and give very little. And what they give is pollution, and climate change, and global warming.

So this is the philosophy which was behind many great philosophers and thinkers, Mahatma Gandhi started a school, a number of schools in India on these principles. Rabindranath Tagore, who was a great poet in India, he started a school on this principle. He held classes under the trees. He said to his children, “Pupils, you have two teachers, one human teacher, myself, and the other is this great tree, the tree is your teacher.”

And my mother used to go even further than that. She used to say, “Nature is the greatest teacher – even greater than the Buddha.” And I used to say to my mother, “Mother, that can’t be true.” Because in India, we think Buddha is the greatest teacher. There is nobody who can be greater than the Buddha. How can we

challenge that? Then my mother would say, “Dear boy, where did Buddha get his enlightenment? While sitting under a tree.” And nowadays we do not get any enlightenment because we do not sit under a tree.

And so what he learnt, what he learnt from nature, what he learnt from trees [was] how the clouds, and the sunshine, and the birds, and the soil... how everything is connected. How everything is related. Everything is related and connected. That inter-dependence, that inter-connectedness, that reciprocity, that Buddha learned, and he coined a phrase “co-dependent arising”. Everything arises dependent on each other. That co-dependence, that inter-dependence, the fundamental Buddhist philosophy comes from that inter-dependence of all living beings. And that’s why the greatest teaching of the Buddha is compassion.

But we are all inter-related. We are all “inter-beings,” as Thich Nhat Hanh teaches. As we are all inter-beings, so we have to be compassionate to each other. Will you not be compassionate to your children? Will you not be compassionate to your parents? Will you not be compassionate to your friends? Because you are related to them. In the same way, if we are related to all living beings, we have to be compassionate to all living beings. And when we seem to get something from nature, from lives - like apples, other food, and clothes, and wood, and houses, everything - we say, “Thank you, Mother Earth.” We don’t take it as if we have the right to take it. We take it as a matter of gratitude. With gratitude, we say, “Thank you. Thank you nature, thank you sun, thank you rain, thank you soil for producing this food. Thank you gardener. Thank you even earthworms.” If there were no earthworms working under the soil, there would be no food. So I always say, “Long live earthworms! Thank you earthworms and thank you the gardeners, and thank you the cook, and thank you the host, thank you the guest.”

With that gratitude all around, I take this food. And only what is my real need, wholesome food, I take what is my need, no more, and no waste. And that is fundamental to education. So education has to be liberated from this narrow thinking, of books, and computers, and television screens - and has to go out in nature, in the community, the human community and the nature community. We can go out and bring that knowledge with us, when we leave the university.

Recently I was in Bhutan. The Bhutanese Government is on a wonderful path of not Gross Domestic Product, not Gross National Product, but Gross National Happiness; not GNP but GNH, Gross National Happiness. And I was speaking in the university in Thimphu, and the students asked me, “What do you advise us for education for happiness?” When we leave university, what should we be doing? I said “I have a very small but very provocative suggestion.” “What is your suggestion?” I said, “When you leave university, don’t seek a job.” “What do you mean? How can you live without having a job? We have to have a job – otherwise what’s the point of going to university?” I said, “That’s my point. You are not going to university to get a job. Leave your university and create your job. What, in Buddhist language, we call ‘creating your livelihood.’”

And a livelihood is a great deal different to a job, employment. When you become an employee of somebody, then you have to follow the orders of the employer, more or less. Then you cannot really be your own creator. You cannot follow your own heart, and your own imagination. Sometimes there are wonderful employers, and they will allow you freedom to use your imagination. But if you work in factories, and offices, corporations, and big banks, they are rule-bound; the bigger the corporation, the bigger the organisation, the bigger the bank, the bigger the rules. Rule books, thick rule books. And you have to follow the rules. When do you have a chance to develop your own spiritual, and your own ethical, and your own imaginative, and your own artistic self? So I said to the students, “Go and create your job. Create your livelihood. Be your own master. Do not serve any other master than the greatest master, and actually, that greatest master is your heart. So follow your heart. Create your job.” Our education should be to make young people self-reliant. A university graduate should come out and say now I know how to live. Now I know what to do. I have been well-equipped. I have been well-trained. I’m well-educated. Now I can go into the world and live my life happily and joyfully. And not to look for, “please give me” a job. One job, two hundred applications. Oh! Nobody gives me a job. I am unemployed. What is the good of that university that has made you so ill-equipped you cannot create a job. That’s the greatest challenge for the University of Hong Kong, and the University of Beijing, and the University of London, and Harvard, and Cambridge. The challenge is producing well-equipped young people. Equip them with imagination, creativity, skills, ideas, heart, relationships. They will go out into the world and be joyful and

happy. But today, our university graduates come out and make a mess of the world.

The biggest problems in our world are created by highly educated people. Who took us - I am talking about England - who took us to war in Iraq? Tony Blair. Do you know where he went to university? Oxford. What's the good of such a university where you lead a hundred thousand to be killed in Iraq?. And who was the other partner? Mr Bush, where did he go? Yale University. Very famous, very big.

So it is not enough to be educated in universities. You have to ask what kind of education you are getting. Are you getting education to enhance the world, to make the world beautiful, to make the world peaceful, to make the world joyful? Or are you going to make a mess of the world, of the economy, of war, of peace, of many many other things. I mean, who runs the World Bank? Who runs the IMF? Who is the Finance Minister of Greece? Highly educated. Who is the Finance Minister of Portugal and Italy? And who is the Finance Minister of United States of America? Fourteen trillion dollars in debt. And they say "We are the biggest economy of the world. We spent seven billion dollars on our military." What is the good of that? If you are in debt and then you are asking China to bail you out – what kind of education have we created?

So we have to ask some searching questions, and I am intending to be open to you, I am speaking from my heart, there is no point in mincing [my words] and hedging my bets. I want to say to you that we need a revolution in the education system, so that our graduate can come from university, go out to the world and make the world a beautiful place to live, as much as possible. And not this mess: messy economy, messy environment, no peace, economic problems, war problems, poverty problems, all these problems we face today. If education cannot take responsibility and take a lead to solve these problems, then who is going to take responsibility?

So it is a great challenge for us. And so holistic education is to take up that challenge and re-design our education system in such a way that is holistic, is whole: your body, your mind, your brain, your head, your heart, your hands, your whole body and your relationship with the world. Then I think we can create a new kind of education. Thank you.

**Andrew McAulay:** Thank you so much Satish for inspiring us and speaking the truth because when we hear the truth we have hope that things can really change. Thank You.

### **Question and Answer Session**

**Question 1 :** Thank you. My question is around the education system that we have. When [people] use the word “discussion” these days at University. [When asked to discuss], the common response in Hong Kong might be to put the head down, typing or writing something, and not turning to the person next to you. So the whole thing of getting the community talking about what [the community] is. How can we get them off using the technology, to get the discussion going, so they go back to this whole education, rather than this reaction to write an answer but not inside, like you say, to find a seed within coming out. My question is what is the technique you might use for the current educated masses coming out of university to get them discussing?

**Satish Kumar:** Education is all about participation, so even more than discussion I like the word “dialogue;” a dialogue doesn’t necessarily just mean between two [people]; when you have a group together you can have more dialogue. So I suggest that discussion should take place, first of all, in not too large groups but maybe fifteen, twenty people at maximum. And if possible, sitting in a circle, so everybody is able to see each other and talk to each other, rather than talking to a person just in front of you and not beside you or behind you. So if you sit in a circle, that will be a good technique. And then on a board written... *‘This dialogue is all about participation’*. So everybody in the group needs to be invited and given an opportunity to speak. So that is participation. So out of that circle participation and dialogue, I think your discussion might emerge and you might find some ideas which are a kind of more collective wisdom, as one would call it. Collective wisdom might emerge.

**Question 2:** [It is] My pleasure to hear your talk. My question is around 2011, where we are almost passing to 2012. You mentioned some great teachers – Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Gregory Bateson, [they deliver] perhaps perennial wisdom, that has been with us for ages and ages. My question is what signs do you, Dr Satish Kumar, see in the world today, signs of hope in our education system of this change, of this revolution that you speak so eloquently about?

**Satish Kumar:** Yes, there are signs of hope. Even ten years ago I was going around universities [and found that] there were very few people who would be interested to talk about holistic education. Even the word “holistic” was very little known or if it was, they didn’t much care. So in the last ten years, the awareness about the holistic ideas of everything interrelated are gaining ground. So that is a beginning there. In most universities now, people are beginning to take interest in these questions of sustainability, of creativity, of imagination, all these ideas are starting to take place. But still, the business idea is very dominant. And even in big universities the business schools get the most finance and most support. Business has a place, of course. We need business, but business is not everything. It has a place, but there are other aspects as well. So my hope is in young people. And they are coming out of the universities, gaining their own - even though the university did not teach them - they are creating their own ideas. In England, I know, there a number of movements like human-scale education, and the traditional movements - quite a long time ago somebody was talking to me about [International] Baccalaureates. That is a wonderful movement. They truly bring in the head, heart and hands and particularly the skill basis. So there are some international schools starting. Atlantic College in Wales, which has branches in a number of places - they use the baccalaureate as one of their systems. So those movements are the hopes for the future. And they’ve gained ground and become more related and more connected with the natural world, with our sustainability. I would like to see every school having a garden, so children can connect with nature world. In the garden, you see the plants growing, you sow the seeds and you see how [it grows and] what happens to it. I would like to see every school having a kitchen where children can learn how to cook. And I will talk about it tomorrow more, about food. So these are basic things starting to happen in such areas, in such schools.

So let's all, together, promote those ideas, and then education and scientific education also have an important place. We must not throw the baby out with the bath water, but it is a question of balancing, and it is beginning to happen. I am optimistic and after this audience, and such a good response from you already, I am optimistic.

**Question 3:** Thank you, Satish. That was a fantastic speech. That was a most fantastic speech in Hong Kong. Kadoorie Farm is maybe the only farm in Hong Kong, and the farmers have eliminated all of agriculture. I have been familiar with [the content of] your talk and a lot of the meaning. But here in Hong Kong... When you talk about relationships, the human being and nature, - we know that human beings are part of nature. But here in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong citizen is very poor, they don't have any relationships with animals. They eat pork but they don't know pork is from pigs. They cannot see pigs. They eat a lot of meat but they don't know where it is from. They have no such kind of relationships with nature. They have some grass and trees, but animals. For human beings, they are short of this opportunity.

**Satish Kumar:** I think in Hong Kong you are a place with sea and water. So my suggestion will be, there should be a renewal of fisheries - compassionate, non-industrial [fishing]. I am a vegetarian, but maybe not all Hong Kong people are vegetarians. So maybe the fishing industry [can be revived], and, again, not this industrial fishery, when you go in the ships, the vast factory-like ships, and you have no connection, but when you are sitting by the water and waiting for one fish to come. And you are so happy that you got one fish, you take it with love and care, and [say] "thank you" with gratitude, and that is a kind of connection with the other-than-human world, the more-than-human world, connection with the natural world and with water. And sitting in peace, in quiet, in silence. We have forgotten [silence]. I would like to see all schools having silence in Hong Kong. If you can start schools and your classes with five minutes of silence, that will be a very good reconnecting, and a chance to think about the Universe and the natural world. So when you are sitting by the water, and waiting and meditating in silence that is a very spiritual and very ecological, very environmentally-sustainable way of living. Maybe Hong Kong is very poor from a natural point of view but you are very rich from a financial point of view, so maybe you are so rich and now you can afford to have less work in your offices, maybe three days a week and then take one or two days every



week out. Even in the New Territories, where Kadoorie Farm is, you can go and walk and maybe garden or maybe do some working. So you can create your spiritual richness and your natural richness by being imaginative. That's all I can say.

**Question 4:** Thank you for your wonderful talk. You speak of educating hearts. There is a growing group of people in the technology field that believe that they can raise consciousness through games, bio-feedback systems, all kinds of things, even tying in with social networks. So my question to you is, do you believe that the heart can be transferred in, somehow, through the digital world?

**Satish Kumar:** I don't think we need to transfer the heart to the digital world, because we have the brain for that. So when we have a good brain, we can use technology, or the digital world or cyberspace, or any scientific approaches with our brain. Because the brain has been given to us for reasoning, for analysis, for knowing intellectually and we should use that. But the heart will not be so successful in going digital. You will have a heart failure. So I will say, use the heart for the purpose for which it is well equipped. And the function of the heart is to have courage. The word "courage" comes from the same root as heart. So have courage and have trust and be free of fear, those are the qualities which are related to heart. At the moment, our education system is not training heart and that is why our people are very fearful. There is a tremendous amount of fear: fear of nature, fear of the future, fear of not getting a job, fear, fear, fear; because our hearts are not trained to be courageous. Courage comes from the heart. So trust and courage will give you energy to go out to the world, not knowing how the world is going to respond to you, and you will discover how wonderful the world is. As Andrew said, I walked around the world. I walked 8,000 miles without any money in my pocket. I could not have done it if I was just thinking digitally on the computer and Googling and all the kind of biological science and so on. I went with my heart, with courage. I said I would trust the world. I went to Muslim countries, Christian countries, capitalist countries, communist countries, black people, white people, rich, poor, every kind of people, without a penny in my pocket for two-and-a-half years. You can read my book "No Destination". So that is the function of heart, to have that fearless, courageous, adventurous spirit. To love? - love is risky. You cannot love if you have fear. You have to have courage to love. But we don't have that courage. Therefore we are afraid. So we don't want to love. Oh, I might get betrayed, or this might be lost or the person might not

understand me. All is fear, fear, fear. So use your heart for the wonderful purpose for which you have been given your heart. And use the technological aspect with your brain.

**Question 5:** Many of us are not professional educators but we are in the position where we have leadership, and lead groups of people. So I am wondering how we can best encourage, like in the apple tree metaphor, [people] to grow; to develop the people we are leading and responsible for.

**Satish Kumar:** Wonderful question. First of all, we have to understand and appreciate that everyone is a potential leader. In some people that quality is developed, and in some people that quality is not yet developed. It is a bit undermined, or suppressed, or conditioned. For leadership, you need three things: Number one, *be an example*. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” There is no integrity in telling other people what to do if you don’t live it. There is no power in your words. The power in our words comes with our example, with our practice, with our integrity. So every leader needs to learn that: before I ask anybody else to do anything, I have to live it. When it comes from your whole being, your life, practice, then your leadership will be shining and be effective. People will follow you.

The second thing is, a leader needs to learn *to share and communicate*. Lots of leaders aren’t quite convincingly able to communicate and share, so leaders need to learn; this is a kind of technique to some extent. How to communicate your ideas in a way that the listener says, “Oh yes, I understand what you are trying to say. I understand. I know what you mean. Oh yes, yes, yes!” That is good communication. So learn to communicate and share.

The third is to learn *to organize*. Mandela, organized the big anti-apartheid movement; Martin Luther King organized. Mahatma Gandhi organized, Mother Teresa organized. All these things are organized. So just using words is not enough; you have to learn the skill of organization.

Through your practice as [a living example], practising what you are preaching; communicating well through writing, through words, through poetry, through music, through many many ways. (There is no one way of communicating, and leaders have

to really learn to communicate. Vaclav Havel, he communicated through his prose, and he became the president of the Czech Republic. So there are many, many people, intellectuals who have led the world through communication); and then organizing. So these three things: if you practice then I think you can be a very successful leader.

But eventually we are all leaders. The first thing to do is to lead our own lives in the right direction. If we don't lead our own lives, how can we lead somebody else? That's the basic point.

**Question 6:** Thank you Dr Satish for your loving speech. My question is a bit big. I am just wondering about your suggestion as to how we can treat our children, our students or even ourselves to face the fear, loss and despair in our life.

**Satish Kumar:** That is a very important question and, as you said, a big question. It's similar to the question of leadership. If parents and teachers themselves are fearless, then children will see how you deal with courage and without fear. So they will learn not by words, but by seeing. Children are very perceptive. I have two children, one son and one daughter. I know how perceptive they were, even when they were three, four, five years old. So children watch parents and children watch their teachers and children watch [other] adults. The first thing you can teach children is by example. The second thing is: do not stop your children from making mistakes. Mistakes are good teachers. By mistakes, they learn to be fearless. So if children make mistakes, that is welcome. If you always tell them "do this do this," they never really develop their own imaginative skills. So do not stop children from mistakes. That is the second thing. And the loss, how you deal with loss and despair - this is something for which there is no one word, there is no key. It is a very subtle art. It is a real communication and real relationship, and then people see, children see how adults deal with despair. Because loss and despair is part of our existence. So do try not to condemn or denigrate or put down the aspect of loss and despair, because gain and loss are complementary. If you have all the gain, gain, gain and no loss, it will not be natural. Like birth and death are natural. They are two sides of the same coin. If there is no death, there is no birth, there is no reincarnation. So birth is beautiful but death is also beautiful. So we must not fear death. If children see that our parents, our teachers, our adults in the family, don't fear death, then they will know how to deal with loss. Even if you have sorrow, sorrow is natural. Only a living heart can feel

sorrow and a dead heart cannot feel sorrow. So sorrow is part of life, loss is part of life, despair is... you have despair and then are empowered. If you want to read about it, there is a wonderful author call Joanna Macy. She has written of despair and empowerment. So we have to face the problems. We have nuclear weapons, economic crisis, environmental destruction. All these things are very despair-making. We despair where our world is going to, and how it is going through all these. So that is despair but then you have to empower positively through yourself to act. So, I can recommend Joanna Macy's book [*Coming Back to Life- Practice to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World*] to you for dealing with despair. So if we live in that kind of way, I think children will grow in a good atmosphere.

**Question 7:** Dr Kumar, next year the University has a wonderful opportunity, the curriculum goes from three years to four years so we get a lot more space to teach. We have an example where it is part of the curriculum that students go out to do camping, exhibition...service. But we have seen in Hong Kong the universities are just building more class rooms. So how can they educate students more holistically in that extra year when they have got this wonderful opportunity?

**Satish Kumar:** So, very good that Hong Kong Universities are extending three year courses to four year courses. That's good. "Slow education," like "slow food." Slow education, very good. My suggestion would be to use this time to develop what I spoke about in my talk, develop other faculties of our being, rather than just more intellectual work. Intellectual work complemented with physical and emotional intelligence and spiritual work. Education is also about transferring or exchanging values. It's not just about ideas, also about values. The parents, the elder teachers and professors, they have inherited certain values which they have to communicate to the younger, next generations. If we don't communicate values, we just give the information, information, information, knowledge, intellectual ideas, that's not enough. So I would say with the four year course you are now starting, that gives you a bit of time to be a little bit more inclusive, rather than this exclusively intellectual academic excellence. Also have some other excellences - and excellence, the quality of learning, is very important. So at this moment, universities are driving towards intellectual intelligence and intellectual excellence. I would like to make it a little bit bigger and more inclusive, and include transferring of values. What are the values? What is education for? Why are we in this world? What is the meaning or purpose of



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our being here? How do we relate to each other and the world around us? That kind of deeper values: if you bring them into education, then Hong Kong will be the leader in the education world.

Thank you very much.