

Conferment of the Degree of Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*
A Citation

Daisy Li Woo Tse-ha, MBE

Mrs Daisy Li Woo Tse-ha is a leading philanthropist in Hong Kong and an outstanding figure in voluntary social service. A native of Sanshui in Guangdong, Mrs Li was born into a family which placed great importance on charity work as well as on the education of the children. Mr Woo Hei-tong, her father, was a man of unblemished virtue and broad vision, and insisted that his children should be given the best opportunities that education could offer. The young Daisy Woo attended St Stephen's Girls' College, and then proceeded to the University of Hong Kong where she read sociology. There the foundation of her life-long commitment to service for the community was laid.

While at university she met her future husband, Mr Li Fook-shu, who was couple of years her senior. The marriage joining of their two illustrious families was a happy event that invited the attention and blessing of the whole town. After their marriage, Mr and Mrs Li have gone through blessings and vicissitudes of life for many a happy year.

It would be a fair comment to make that, with such remarkable family background, most ordinary women would easily have indulged in the life of a lady of leisure. Mrs Li, however, proved an exception. Since her marriage she has devoted herself to giving her husband support in his work and in bringing up their four children. She was firm in instilling moral precepts in her children from an early age, and gave them the best education in both the East and the West. Thus they were all sent to England while still in their teens, and Mrs Li went with them, leaving behind the busy social life of Hong Kong. While in England she not only took care of her children in their daily life but also ensured that their Chinese education was not neglected by employing the best private tutors. In the event her eldest daughter became a consultant radiologist and her younger daughter became a teacher. One of the two Li boys grew up to be an elder statesman in high finance, while the other became a dependable leader in the medical profession and in higher education. That they serve the community well, contributing significantly to society in their respective roles, much is due to their mother's foresight and hard work. There can be little doubt that the achievements of her children, and the worthy services they have rendered to the community, are, to Mrs Li, her greatest pride and joy.

After her children grew up, Mrs Li took up full time volunteer social service. Since 1961 she has been an active member of the Hong Kong Red Cross, having served as its Deputy Director and then Director, and in 1976 she became an Advisor to that organization. The Red Cross is an international charity that was founded in 1919; while the Hong Kong branch came into being in 1950. It is founded with the objectives of maintaining and protecting



human life and dignity, delivering impartial quality care and providing individuals with opportunities to help others and to help themselves, with a view to realizing its ultimate humanistic goals. Red Cross activities comprise both local and international relief work, such as tracing lost persons, blood transfusion services, care for the sick and library services. In Hong Kong, the Red Cross organization runs hospital schools, special schools, and Shun Lee Hostel, serving the old and the infirm as well as providing first-aid training and rehabilitation services. All these enterprises make a heavy demand for volunteers, and Mrs Li, since her first day with the Red Cross, has given herself entirely to its services and programmes. Some years ago, when Hong Kong experienced a specially ferocious typhoon, Mrs Li personally took charge of relief work in the field, ignoring the torrential rain and strong winds around her. In recent years she took an active part in large-scale service programmes in China such as Project Hope, through which she hopes to contribute to the country's efforts in educating for the young.

Apart from Red Cross activities, Mrs Li was for many years a member of the Executive Committee of the St James' Settlement. She is a founding member of the Spastics Association of Hong Kong, and was the Supervisor of the YWCA Hioe Tjo Yoeng College for many years. From 1988 to 1996 she was the President of the Young Women's Christian Association in Hong Kong. Since then, she has remained on the Board as a Director and is also the Supervisor of the YWCA Athena Kindergarten. Mrs Li has been commended many times for her active participation in social welfare services: she was awarded badges of honour by the Hong Kong Red Cross thrice, in 1983, 1987 and 1991, and was made a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 1993. In 1998, the University of Hong Kong made her an Honorary University Fellow.

Mrs Li has a warm disposition and a generous mind. A practising Christian all her life, she believes that Providence will help those who help themselves. She is convinced that a tolerant attitude, not attracted by gain, and fairness to all will help us overcome hardship and achieve success, and to be perturbed in mind even when we are beset by difficulties.

Mr Vice-Chancellor, Mrs Daisy Li has had a long and close association with this University, since her late husband, the Honourable Li Fook-shu, was appointed to the University Council in the early 1960's. In more recent years Mrs Li has given much appreciated support to capital projects on campus, including the construction of a student hostel at New Asia College, and various student activity schemes. Mr Vice-Chancellor, today we honour a lady for her public and private virtues, for her dedication to social welfare, and for the role model she has set for the modern woman in keeping an impartial balancing between services to the community and devotion to the family. May I now present Mrs Daisy Li Woo Tse-ha for the award of the degree of Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*.