

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



Deanna Lee Rudgard, BA, MA, BM, BCh

Deanna Lee Rudgard is both medical doctor and entrepreneur. These occupations seem to be in conflict, even contradictory in nature. How did she manage to be both? As a small girl she had an ambition to become a medical doctor, pestering her late father, Dr. the Honourable Richard Charles Lee, to allow her to pursue this fervent wish, rather than becoming a young woman destined only for a traditional Chinese marriage. Her spirit and mettle even as a child must have been considerable, because her father at length succumbed, though on one very difficult, unreasonable condition--though an obvious one to him, being an Oxford man--that she would be allowed to pursue a medical education, but only if she could get to Oxford to do it.

After early education in Hong Kong, she left home at the age of twelve to board at Upper Chine School in the Isle of Wight, where, although they had an excellent and distinguished English department, there was no science taught in the sixth form. In the face of this preposterous situation, she yet managed to arrange to take science subjects at the boys' grammar school, Sandown, and, armed with four "A" levels, passed the entrance examination to St. Hilda's College, Oxford, to read medicine. She practised afterwards in the National Health Service and there encountered the ills and the social problems of post-war Britain. During these years, married already, she also set about raising a family of three children who, between them, have also produced another medical doctor and continued the Oxford connexion. I suspect that Dr. Rudgard is as much their "pride and joy" as they are hers.

These experiences, the difficulties as well as the largely happy years as a student, have given her a profound understanding of human needs, above all the need to nurture, encourage, and support the young. In late 1982 she went to Switzerland, scene of her youthful holidays, in order to do voluntary work for the World Health Organization.

The sudden death of her father in 1983 necessitated her return to Hong Kong, involvement with the family businesses, and the "retooling" process of becoming an entrepreneur. Currently a director of Hysan Development Company Limited, Lee Hysan Estate Company Limited, Garden Hotel, Guangzhou, and of N.M. Rothschild and Sons (Hong Kong) Limited, she has been faced with difficult decisions, where business considerations must be satisfied. She has never lost sight, however, of her determination to help people, especially the young. This explains her involvement in managing the Lee Hysan Foundation and in a number of endeavours such as the Asian Youth Orchestra, the Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee, and the Asian Cultural Council. She is delighted to find growing numbers of young people she has encouraged and helped in practical ways now vigorously pursuing their artistic careers.

Her association with this University is another facet of her determination to help young people. Since her father was one of the founders of our University, she may also be seen as continuing his interest in Hong Kong education, especially through her long involvement with Chung Chi College as a member of the Board of Trustees and treasurer and chairman of its Finance Committee. She has subsequently joined the Council of the Chinese University. She made possible the workshops on the



“Open Chemistry Laboratory” and the China Pathology Programme. Over the years she has played a key role in making the Lee Hysan Foundation, their family foundation, a keen and magnanimous patron of developments in higher educational and cultural activities in Hong Kong. The Foundation has also generously funded our state-of-the-art concert hall on campus thus furthering our efforts to bring the larger community into the University and to give our students and performers a brilliant space for the cultivation of their talents.

Such a combination of business and benevolence demands enormous reserves of energy. Her activities also require broad and far-sighted perspectives on life, yet with concentration on detail, team work, effective use of time, and good timing, as well as the steely determination to get a challenging job done, though difficulties seem insurmountable. These are also some of the qualities needed for climbing mountains, and that, in fact, is Dr. Rudgard’s preferred recreation. Is she ever afraid of the obvious dangers? Indeed, yes. If you defined her work as efforts to change the world through business and the generous funding of excellent people and their projects, you could conclude that her work and her recreation not only share similar qualities but offer a similar reward: when you have survived to achieve the heights, you feel a wonderful joy. Yet her holiday sport offers also an escape from her business life into a different, humbling and re-energizing world. Amid the snow and the sting of the wind, she must concentrate wholly on the climb and forget the worst worries of her other life.

Though she may regret the loss of her medical career, her drive to help and nurture others has never flagged, and she is glad that the mass of Hong Kong residents now have access to medical people and facilities and that there is universal education. These observations link with her lifelong interests and her strong belief, held also by her father before her, that the best investment is in people, especially in young people, for their talents will in a few years bring ample returns to their society and the world at large, in the quiet but effective work that helps us build a decent society, as well as in the artistic talents that show a society has come of age. Both kinds are necessary.

Madam Chancellor, Dr. Rudgard is an exceptional person who has never forgotten the needs of Hong Kong's youth. She has used her sharp intellect to seek the best ways to direct her generosity. I present a great humanitarian, Dr. Deanna Lee Rudgard, for the degree of Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*.