

DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, *honoris causa*

The Honourable Mrs Rita FAN Hsu Lai-tai, GBM, JP

Mr Pro-Chancellor,

If I associate the words 'strength' and 'courage' with Mrs Rita FAN Hsu Lai-tai, I'm sure no one would object. When I was working on this citation, a poem kept popping into my head. Allow me to recite some of it:

It takes strength to be firm, it takes courage to be gentle.

It takes strength to be certain, it takes courage to have doubts.

It takes strength to fit in, it takes courage to stand out.

It takes strength to stand alone, it takes courage to lean on another.

...

It takes strength to survive, it takes courage to live.

When I asked her where she found her strength and courage in her remarkably successful life, her humble response was, 'right place, right time.' However, I beg to differ — for me, her achievements can be summarized as 'meeting her challenges politically, professionally, and personally head on, rising above all of them, and never looking back.'

Mrs Rita Fan Hsu Lai-tai was born in 1945 in Shanghai and moved to Hong Kong with her family in 1949. She attended St. Stephen's Girls' College before studying Physics and Chemistry at the University of Hong Kong. In 1967, armed with a Bachelor of Science degree and a first prize in Chemistry, she worked for her alma mater for seven years in the Appointment Service. During that time, she earned her Master's degree in Psychology in 1973. In 1974, she joined the Hong Kong Polytechnic as the Head of its Student Affairs Unit and later became its Associate Director.

Her work in higher education was certainly noticed and affirmed when Sir Edward Youde invited her to join the Legislative Council in 1983, which started her distinguished political career. After six years as a Legislative Councillor, she was appointed as a member of the Executive Council in Sir David Wilson's administration in 1989, and she served both councils until 1992. During that time, she was also the chairperson of the Board of Education from 1986 to 1989 and then the Education Commission from 1990 to 1992.

During the tumultuous period just before the reunification of Hong Kong with the mainland, Mrs Fan played a vital role in the smooth transition of sovereignty. She initially served as a member of the Preliminary Working Committee, and then the Preparatory Committee for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. During those years, her optimism and steady leadership ensured the success of the new concept of 'One Country, Two Systems'.

In 1992, hours before Governor Chris Patten delivered his first Policy Address, she resigned from the Legislative Council. In 1993, when the 'through-train' arrangement was no longer viable, she accepted an invitation to join the Preliminary Working Committee of the Preparatory Committee of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to ensure the smooth transition of Hong Kong from a British colony to a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. Despite a drop in her popularity, she had the strength and courage to do the right thing. Actually, this was not the first time she had followed her heart and fought for the best interest of Hong Kong. This was first seen in the 1980s, when she showed energy and eloquence when Hong Kong was faced with the influx of refugees from Vietnam. As the Convenor of the Legislative Council Ad Hoc Group on Vietnamese Refugees from 1986 to 1988, she not only spoke out in Hong Kong, but also lobbied Europe and North America for the orderly repatriation of economic refugees at every chance she got. We had the first glimpse of this fair and just future President of our Legislative Council back then.

In early 1997, when she was elected as the President of the Provisional Legislative Council, she had to deal with an unfriendly press as well as an avalanche of criticism from the Patten administration. She told me that she was her own most demanding critic, and would watch herself on TV and figure out how she could make her points more lucid, hoping to do a better job next time. We saw yet another demonstration of her strength and courage during those 16 months on the Provisional Legislative Council.

In 1998, she was elected President of the First Legislative Council, and then the President of the Second Legislative Council in the year 2000; and, in 2004, she was re-elected as the President of LegCo serving her third term after collecting over 65,000 votes in the Hong Kong Island geographical constituency election. As the President of our law-making authority, Mrs Fan upheld the principle of free deliberation and yet maintained order and due procedure; and she allowed pluralistic free debate and yet applied reasonable rules. She did remove members from the LegCo chamber when they were out of line and yet those members quite often left with a smile. She told me that she did not mind being a lonely president and, in order to be fair and just, her relationship with her fellow members had to be friendly, but at a distance.

Rita continues to be active after her time in LegCo, devoting her time and energy to the Hong Kong SAR and our motherland. Besides sitting on the Standing Committee of the People's Congress, she is currently the chairperson of the Endeavour Education Centre Limited, which is a non-profit organization established to promote Chinese history, culture and current affairs among the young people of Hong Kong.

Her grace under fire is also exemplified by the challenges in her personal life. She gave one of her kidneys to her daughter to save her life and simultaneously prepared for the unprecedented reunification of Hong Kong. Also, fighting breast cancer and losing the love of her life, Stephen Fan, to liver cancer did not affect her performance as the President of LegCo. Once again, she was the epitome of strength and courage.

Owing to her deep commitment and exemplary public service, Mrs Fan was awarded the Gold Bauhinia Star and the Grand Bauhinia Medal by the Hong Kong SAR Government in 1998 and 2007 respectively. She also received an Honorary Doctorate in Law from the China University of Political Science and Law of the People Republic of China in 2003, and an Honorary Doctorate of Social Science from City University of Hong Kong in 2005. In 2009, she also received an Honorary Doctorate of Social Science from The Polytechnic University of Hong Kong and an Honorary Doctorate of Social Sciences from The University of Hong Kong.

Mr Pro-Chancellor, in recognition of Mrs Fan's public service, her devotion to the welfare of Hong Kong SAR and her exemplary citizenship, may I invite our President to present Mrs Rita Fan Hsu Lai-tai for the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences, *honoris causa*.

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Citation written and to be delivered by Professor Kwan Ching-ping Reggie

榮譽社會科學博士學位

范徐麗泰女士

副校監先生：

假若將「力量」與「勇氣」與范徐麗泰女士聯繫在一起，本人深信大家絕無異議。當我執筆撰寫此獻辭之際，有一首詩在我耳邊縈繞不去。以下容我誦讀當中部分內容：

堅定不移需要力量，從容不迫需要勇氣。

篤定泰山需要力量，對不平事提出質疑需要勇氣。

全情投入需要力量，跳出框框需要勇氣。

特立獨行需要力量，主動尋求志同道合者需要勇氣。

……

奮力生存需要力量，有意義的生活需要勇氣。

當我問范女士，在其非常成功的一生中之力量和勇氣何來，她十分謙虛，只表示：「天時、地利而已。」。但恕本人未敢苟同，我認為「無論是在政治、專業及個人層面，范女士都是主動積極迎接挑戰，力求至善，從不猶豫」。

范徐麗泰女士 1945 年生於上海，1949 年偕家人遷居香港，其後入讀聖士提反女子中學，並於香港大學修讀物理及化學。1967 年，范女士獲頒理學士學位，並於化學科取得首名佳績，畢業後她於母校從事學生就業輔導工作七年，更在公餘時間努力進修心理學，於 1973 年獲社會科學碩士學位。范徐麗泰女士在 1974 年加入香港理工大學（前身為香港理工學院）出任學生輔導處主任，其後升任該處處長。

范女士對香港高等教育貢獻良多，於 1983 年獲港督尤德爵士邀請加入立法局，並自此開展其傑出的政治事業。在出任立法局議員六年後，於 1989 年，衛奕信港督委任其擔任行政局議員，其後同時兼任兩局議員直至 1992 年。於 1986 至 1989 年以及 1990 年至 1992 年期間，她分別出任教育委員會主席與教育統籌委員會主席。

在香港回歸祖國那一段較不平穩的時期，范女士在香港主權順利過渡上扮演著關鍵角色。例如，她獲任命為香港特別行政區籌備委員會預備工作委員會委員，進而獲委任為特區籌備委員會委員。在這幾年間，范徐麗泰女士時常都以樂觀態度面對挑戰，在她的領導下，使「一國兩制」這個全新概念得以成功落實。

1992 年，在港督彭定康公佈首份施政報告之前幾小時，范女士宣佈辭去立法局議員一職。翌年，有感於「直通車」安排落實無望，她接受了出任香港特別行政區籌備委員會預備工作委員會委員的邀請。有關委員會的成立，使香港得以順利由英國殖民地過渡至中華人民共和國特別行政區。儘管民望下跌，范徐麗泰女士從未喪失力量及勇氣。正所謂擇善固執，她本著良心，時時以港人福祉為首要考量。在上世紀 80 年代，大批越南難民湧入香港，范女士的魄力及辯才，在處理此事上，早已有目共睹。1986 年至 1988 年期間，她出任立法局議員研究越南難民問題小組召集人。在這個崗位上，她不但善用每個機會為香港的利益發聲，並且致力向歐洲及美加等國政府游說，香港才能有秩序遣返經濟難民。其領袖風範，在當時已表露無遺。

1997 年初，范徐麗泰女士獲選為臨時立法會主席。當時，她需要應付來自傳媒以及彭定康政府眾多不太友善的批評，但范女士卻告訴我，其實她才是自己最嚴格的諍友。她經常會透過電視留意自己的表現，反覆思量，以便下一次能夠改進。在臨時立法會十六個月的生涯中，我們再一次親身感受到范女士的力量及勇氣。

1998 年，范徐麗泰當選香港特別行政區第一屆立法會主席，並於兩年後再度當選。2004 年，范女士參與地區直選，出選香港島選區，最後以逾六萬五千票成功當選，並繼續出任立法會主席之職。身為香港立法機關的主席，范徐麗泰堅守中立，客觀公正，在讓不同黨派人士得以發表意見的同時，堅守議事規則，使議會決策得以順利開展。當議事堂中有議員言行過火之時，她會以主席身份要求其離開，但我們從未看到范女士臉露不悅之色，反而見她從容一笑、處之泰然。她告訴我，為了秉持中立，難免孤獨。惟其持平的作風，深得議員欣賞，對其評價甚高。

離開立法會後，范徐麗泰多年來一直熱心公益，貢獻心力為特區及祖國服務。現時她除了擔任全國人民代表大會香港區代表外，亦是勵進教育中心主席，致力向香港年青人推廣中華歷史文化，使他們能夠更深入認識中國的時事及現狀。

在個人生活中，范女士亦遇過挑戰。在籌備香港回歸祖國的工作期間，她毅然捐出左腎，以挽救患上嚴重腎病的女兒。此外，范徐麗泰女士又需面對自己患乳癌及丈夫范尚德因肝癌不幸辭世的人生難關，但這種種並未有影響到她擔任立法會主席的表現。其過人的力量和勇氣，再次可見一斑。

為表揚其對公共事務的重大貢獻，香港特區政府分別於 1998 年及 2007 年向范徐麗泰女士頒授金紫荊星章及大紫荊勳章。此外，她亦是中國政法大學法學榮譽博士（2003）、香港城市大學榮譽社會科學博士（2005）、香港理工大學榮譽社會科學博士（2009）以及香港大學榮譽社會科學博士（2009）。

副校監先生，范徐麗泰女士對本港公共事務貢獻至鉅，多年來一直無私服務社會，造福人群。為表揚其卓越成就，本人謹恭請校長引介范女士接受本大學的榮譽社會科學博士學位。

英文讚辭由關清平教授撰寫及宣讀