

DR KAN LAI-BING

Citation for the conferral of a Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*)

I have the privilege to commend to you Dr Kan Lai-bing, University Librarian of The University of Hong Kong.

We honour Dr Kan today not only for her contribution to the library profession in Hong Kong but also for her significant influence on the information profession internationally, and particularly for her indomitable support of Charles Sturt University's overseas programme in Library and Information Science.

Kan Lai-bing began her university study with a Bachelor of Science degree from The University of Hong Kong (1957). This was followed by two degrees from the University of California, Master of Arts (1959) and Master of Library Science (1959). In 1968 she earned the Doctor of Philosophy degree from The University of Hong Kong.

In addition to her substantial academic achievements, Dr Kan is also an Associate of the Australian Library and Information Association and a Member of the Institute of Information Scientists - two of the world's premier organisations in their respective fields. She has also been an Honorary Fellow of Charles Sturt University since 1989 in recognition of her contribution to our Library Science programme in Hong Kong.

With regard to her employment history, Kan Lai-bing has served Hong Kong's academic community as a librarian for more than thirty years. From 1959 to 1970 she worked at The University of Hong Kong first as an Assistant Librarian and then as a Sub-Librarian, and from 1970 to 1972 she was Deputy Librarian of the University. In 1972 she 'migrated' to The Chinese University of Hong Kong, serving as University Librarian and Director of Libraries until 1983, when she returned to The University of Hong Kong as University Librarian.

During more than a decade as University Librarian at The University of Hong Kong, Dr Kan has been responsible for monumental changes to the University Library system. Most striking has been the planning and execution of the beautiful Library extension of 8600 square metres opened in 1991 - and in which hangs a tapestry donated by Charles Sturt University as a symbol of the co-operation between our two institutions. She has also been responsible for renovation of the old Main Library and of the various branch libraries within the University. Architecturally and technologically Kan Lai-bing has been at the forefront of academic library development in Hong Kong - at The University of Hong Kong, she has seen the introduction of a sophisticated turnkey system capable of handling a wide variety of library functions, and has pushed for constant improvements and upgrades in this area. A major CD network has been installed in the University Library system to allow access to the substantial collection of CD databases, and a new Audio-Visual Department was established in 1991 giving access to products that many libraries only dream about - not only microcomputer software and traditional audiovisual materials, but also laser video discs, audio compact discs, and multimedia interactive video materials.

To achieve all of this Kan Lai-bing has exhibited financial wizardry second to none in the academic library world. After many years of hard negotiating, she convinced the University that library funding levels should be set as a percentage of the total University budget in order to keep pace with growing demands on library services and resources. Beginning with the 1992-93 financial year, the University agreed to a library budget equivalent to 6% of the University's Block Grant. As any Vice-Chancellor will tell you, this one feat alone qualifies Dr Kan for more kudos that any single University can bestow!

If all of this were not enough, Kan Lai-bing has also established herself over the years as an important scholar in the field of library science. She is the author of some ten books and more than forty papers in international library journals. Most recently, she has joined with scholars from China, Macau and Charles Sturt University to participate in a major study of library science education in China. Dr Kan has been awarded grants and fellowships from the Carnegie Corporation, the Asia Foundation, the Inter-University Council, British Council, US Department of State and the China Medical Board - clear evidence of her standing in the international community.

Kan Lai-bing has been active in major professional bodies since the 1950s, most recently serving as President of the International Association of Orientalist Librarians. At home she has devoted many years to the Hong Kong Library Association, serving as Vice-President for three terms and President for five terms.

In her spare time, Dr Kan has been intimately involved with library science education in Hong Kong since the 1960s, and it is in this context that she has developed a strong relationship with Charles Sturt University. For some thirty years she has been Director of Studies for the Hong Kong Library Association's Joint Certificate for Library Assistants. Since 1989, she has also been a key figure in the HKLA Diploma in Librarianship and Charles Sturt University's Graduate Diploma of Arts (Library and Information Science). Indeed it was at her instigation that Charles Sturt University was invited to join The University of Hong Kong, through its School of Professional and Continuing Education, in offering postgraduate training in library science in Hong Kong. In 1992, again with Dr Kan's support, Charles Sturt University began offering its Master of Applied Science (Information Studies) in the Territory, and in 1993 our Bachelor of Arts (Library and Information Science) had its first Hong Kong intake. Charles Sturt University's Graduate Diploma programme has already produced more than 40 Hong Kong diplomates, and we now have some 150 Hong Kong students enrolled in our three library science programmes. From small beginnings has grown a major international training programme for librarians, and the success of Charles Sturt University in Hong Kong owes a great deal to the foresight, determination and tenacity of Kan Lai-bing. The pinnacle of our activity in the Territory was reached in 1993, when, for the first time in its history, the Australian Library and Information Association gave formal course recognition to an off shore programme of an Australian university. Much of the credit for this significant breakthrough goes to Dr Kan, who prepared an impressive schedule for the ALIA Recognition Panel.

In many ways, Kan Lai-bing is library science education in Hong Kong and has been personally responsible for training hundreds of information professionals over the years. She is held in extremely high regard by both past and present students, by the profession in Hong Kong and by her colleagues at Charles Sturt University. She has played a key role in our success in Hong Kong, and her efforts in helping to develop an innovative off shore programme in library science education have placed this University at the forefront of innovation in training for the information profession.

We applaud Dr Kan Lai-bing for her tireless efforts on behalf of library science education, and for her support of Charles Sturt University.

Dated this Fifteenth Day of April One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety Four