

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG  
THIRTY-EIGHTH CONGREGATION

Conferment of the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*

*A Citation*

**The Honourable Tam Wai Chu, Maria, CBE, LLB, JP**

The name Maria Tam Wai Chu is known to most, if not every, resident adult in Hong Kong. The daughter of a police sergeant, she rose rapidly to be a powerful figure in local politics through devotion, hard work and outstanding service.

Born in Hong Kong, Miss Tam graduated from St Paul's Co-educational College and completed her law studies at the University of London with honours. Called to the bar at Gray's Inn, she began her career as a barrister in England.

In her youth, Maria Tam was a student leader and an adventurous traveller. At St Paul's, she was Head Prefect and School Mixed Choir Chairman. While in London, she spent her summers working in factories. She walked, camped and rode long distance buses through Europe, Central Asia and North America. Thus, when she decided to return to serve her own people, she was already a well-travelled Hong Kong believer.

Miss Tam's unusual ability and her dedication to the service of grass roots citizens soon propelled her into political prominence. In 1979, she was elected to the Urban Council. In 1981, she was appointed to the Legislative Council and two years later, to the Executive Council as well.

Few individuals have given more of themselves to public service than Miss Tam. She is not a director of any corporation, but, she has served with distinction on many government councils, bodies, committees and civic associations. Among Hong Kong's many councillors, she alone has been a member at all four levels of representative councils. She is a founding leader of at least three Hong Kong organizations: the Federation of Women Lawyers, the Junior Police Officers Association and the influential Progressive Hong Kong Society. Many of Hong Kong's public bodies and community organizations have benefited from her service. They include the Housing Authority Operation Committee, the Transport Advisory Committee, the Board of Education, the Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association, the Association of Business & Professional Women, the Newspapers Association, and many others. The Chinese University is fortunate to have had Miss Tam on its Council and the Terms

of Service Committee since 1982. The University's Student Union also has the benefit of her service as a Legal Advisor. Her significant achievements over the years have been recognized when she was named one of the Ten Outstanding Young Persons of 1982, and made a JP in 1982, and awarded the OBE in 1985 and CBE in 1988.

At present, Miss Tam is a member of Hong Kong's Executive Council and Legislative Council, as well as a member of the HKSAR Basic Law Drafting Committee. Miss Tam often puts herself in the eye of a political typhoon. With courage, conviction and endless energy, she tackles difficult, sometimes thankless, jobs. Her instrumental role in the adoption of the "Lowu Through Train" formula for the first government of the future Hong Kong Special Administrative Region earlier this year is only one example of her drive and successes.

For her outstanding service and achievements, I present, Mr Chancellor, Miss Maria Tam Wai Chu for the award of the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.

October 12, 1989