

H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn

DOCTOR OF LETTERS *honoris causa*

Born in 1955 to King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit of Thailand, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn has rendered public service since her early youth. Education and care are unquestionably at the core of her lifelong commitment to the well-being of the people.

From the very beginning, Her Royal Highness showed an aptitude for learning and a passion for literature.

After completing high school in 1973, the Princess enrolled in the Faculty of Arts at Chulalongkorn University to study history, Thai and oriental languages, and graduated with first-class honours. Not only did education provide a great opportunity for Her Royal Highness to get to know people from all walks of life, it also confirmed for her the value and ideal of service for the people. More importantly, experiences gained from frequently accompanying her parents to remote areas throughout the country have inspired her with a strong desire to help improve the quality of life of the underprivileged and needy, particularly the children.

The Princess continued to pursue her studies, obtaining an M.A. degree in oriental epigraphy (Sanskrit and Cambodian) from Silpakorn University in 1979, and an M.A. degree in oriental languages (Pali and Sanskrit) from Chulalongkorn University in 1981. She went on to enroll in a doctoral programme in

development education, an interdisciplinary degree at Srinakarinwirot University, and graduated in 1986 with a doctorate degree in education.

Princess Sirindhorn started her academic career by teaching history at Chulachomkiao Royal Military Academy in 1980, and became Director of the Department of History in 1987. She has taught courses in Thai Studies, Thai history and Southeast Asian history, East Asian history and contemporary world history.

Her Royal Highness has been involved in numerous charitable activities. She has been Chairman of the Sai Jai Thai Foundation (which promotes the quality of life of veterans who devoted themselves to safeguarding the country) since 1975. She has served as Executive Vice President of the Thai Red Cross Society; and Executive Chairperson of the Chaipattana Foundation (which supports rural development projects), President of the Anandamahidol Foundation (which promotes higher education) and the King Rama II Foundation (which advances the conservation and promotion of Thai culture). She is also President of the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation (which gives international recognition to individuals with outstanding achievements in medicine and public health).

Imbued with a sense of responsibility and caring, Her Royal Highness went on to foster social and community initiatives: providing basic education for children in remote areas, starting the programme of agriculture for lunch, promoting vocational training

in schools, promoting plant genetics preservation and gene bank projects, developing nutritional campaigns for children and pregnant women in remote areas, and instituting IT efforts to facilitate independent living among the handicapped. Some of these projects, begun over three decades ago when she was in her twenties, continue to this day.

Since 1990, Her Royal Highness has led educational and nutritional programmes for the Lao people, Myanmar, the people of Cambodia, Vietnam, Mongolia, Bhutan and Bangladesh. In Sichuan province of the People's Republic of China, she supported the construction of a new school in place of the old one destroyed in the earthquake. She is not a distant benefactor, but inspires those who have followed her life and work to be a part of her charitable deeds. Many people, companies, associations and organisations continuously present her with money or essential resources for implementing her initiatives. On this basis, the H.R.H Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Charity Fund was founded to support projects that improve people's lives, including programmes that relieve those suffering from catastrophes.

The Thai people have acknowledged Her Royal Highness's long-standing efforts to help people in distress and her unselfish service to humanity, regardless of socio-economic status, creed, race or nationality. Borrowing from the Buddhist ideal of "the good king," many have called her "the good princess."

Her Royal Highness has a passion for Thai art and culture heritage. She is especially supportive of reconstructing monuments and preserving antiques, and always champions the cause of culture, as in the restoration of national treasures and the promotion of Thai classical music.

Princess Sirindhorn's achievements have reached well beyond the Thai people. In addition to her knowledge of Pali, Sanskrit and Cambodian, Her Royal Highness is communicative in English and French, and has been learning German, Latin and Chinese. Being an active patron of numerous humanitarian charities and philanthropic foundations founded on her initiatives for public service, Her Royal Highness is in no small way "the good princess."

Mr Chairman, in view of her lifelong commitment to and achievements in promoting social, cultural and community developments, may I now present Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn to you for the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Letters *honoris causa*.

English citation written and delivered by Prof Stephen Chan Ching-kiu

瑪哈·扎克里·詩琳通公主殿下 榮譽文學博士

贊辭

瑪哈·扎克里·詩琳通公主殿下誕生於 1955 年，其父為泰國國王普密蓬，其母為王后詩麗吉。詩琳通公主自青少年時代便致力於公共服務，畢生關注人民福祉，尤其重視教育及護養。

公主殿下自幼聰穎好學，求知若渴，對文學尤為熱愛。

1973 年高中畢業後，詩琳通公主進入朱拉隆功大學人文學院就讀，學習歷史、泰語及東方語言，並以一級榮譽畢業。教育不僅為公主殿下提供了接觸各層各界人士的機會，也堅定了她為人民服務的信念與理想。更重要的是，頻頻伴隨父母造訪全國偏遠地區的經歷，使她萌生了強烈的意念，要改善貧苦大眾尤其是兒童的生活條件。

詩琳通公主求知不輟，於 1979 年獲得辛巴克恩大學東方金石學（梵語及高棉語）文學碩士學位，1981 年獲得朱拉隆功大學東方語言（巴利語及梵語）文學碩士學位，之後又進入詩納卡寧威洛大學攻讀跨學科發展教育博士學位課程，並於 1986 年獲得教育學博士學位。

1980 年，詩琳通公主於朱拉中高皇家軍事學院執教歷史，就此展開學術事業，並於 1987 年出任歷史系主任；所授課程包括泰文化研究、泰國史與東南亞史、東亞史及當代世界史。

公主殿下熱心支持慈善事業，自 1975 年起任西潔泰基金會主席，致力於提高曾保家衛國的退伍軍人的生活水平，並曾先後擔任泰國紅十字會常務副會長，以及出任主要為促進農村發展的采帕塔納基金會執行主席，又為推行高等教育的阿南塔瑪希敦基金會及旨在增強泰文化保護與推廣的拉瑪二世基金會擔任會長。她亦是瑪希敦王子獎基金會會長，致力表揚在醫藥及公眾健康領域作出傑出貢獻的人士。

詩琳通公主富有責任感與充滿愛心，積極倡議社會與社群進步。她為偏遠地區兒童提供基礎教育，開展耕種午餐計劃，促進學校職業培訓，推廣植物基因保護計劃並建立基因庫，為偏遠地區的孕婦與兒童推展營養補充計劃，並設立信息技術項目以幫助殘障人士生活自理。有部分項目更早在公主二十餘歲時便開始的，歷時三十多年，持續至今。

自 1990 年起，公主殿下已在老撾、緬甸、柬埔寨、越南、蒙古、不丹及孟加拉國為當地人民開展教育和營養補充項目。中國四川大地震後，她亦曾幫助重建一所地震區內的學校。詩琳通公主不是遙不可及的贊助者，而是用自己的人生和事業去激勵他人加入她的善舉。長期以來，無數人員、企業、協會與機構為實現她倡議的計劃提供了資金或必需資源。在此基礎上，瑪哈·扎克

里·詩琳通公主殿下慈善基金會得以成立，以資助用於改善人民生活的各項企劃，包括災民援助。

詩琳通公主無分社會經濟地位、信仰、種族或國籍，長期以來堅持幫助受苦民眾，為人道主義無私奉獻，備受泰國人民愛戴。引用佛家「理想王者」的形象，人們親切地稱她為「天佛公主」。

公主殿下十分熱愛泰國文化藝術遺產，特別支持重建紀念遺跡及保護文物，一直大力支持追索遺失的國寶、弘揚泰國古典音樂等文化事業。

詩琳通公主的成就不止惠及泰國人民，更推展至不同地區。公主殿下不僅精通巴利語、梵語及高棉語，亦能用英語、法語交流，同時還在學習德文、拉丁文及中文。由於她在公共事業領域的倡議，多個人道主義慈善機構及慈善基金會得以成立；身為這些機構的贊助人，詩琳通殿下確實無愧於「天佛公主」的稱號。

主席先生，詩琳通公主在推動社會、文化與社群發展方面付出了畢生心力及取得巨大成就，本人謹恭請閣下頒授榮譽文學博士學位予瑪哈·扎克里·詩琳通公主殿下。

(英文贊辭由陳清僑教授撰寫及宣讀)