

# **Professor Wang Gungwu, CBE, BBM, PBM**

## **Doctor of Humanities *honoris causa***

### **Citation**

Descended from ancestral roots in the province of Hebei, Professor Wang Gungwu was born in Surabaya in the former Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia, and grew up in a mixed ethnic setting in the former British Malaya, now West Malaysia. His formal schooling was twice upset by war: his secondary education in Ipoh was disrupted by the Japanese Occupation during World War II, while his study of foreign languages at the National Central University (now Nanjing University) was terminated by the civil war in China. Returning to Malaya for his tertiary study, Prof Wang received his BA and MA degrees in history in 1953 and 1955 from the University of Malaya, Singapore (now the National University of Singapore), and went abroad to earn his PhD degree in history in 1957 at the School of Oriental & African Studies of the University of London.

Returning to Southeast Asia upon graduation from the University of London, Prof Wang began his academic career at the University of Malaya, first in Singapore and then in Kuala Lumpur, rising to become Professor of History and Dean of the Faculty of Arts. He went to Canberra in 1968 to take up the position of Professor of Far Eastern History in the Research School of Pacific & Asian Studies (RSPAS) at the Australian National University, and later served as Director of RSPAS as well.

Prof Wang's academic distinction next took him to the University of Hong Kong (HKU), where he served as Vice Chancellor from 1986 to 1995. His sharp foresight and firm support led HKU to establish the University of Hong Kong Foundation for Educational Development & Research, the first foundation of its kind at the local tertiary education level, in order to foster stronger links with the community and to enhance the institution's capacity for teaching and research. He himself acted as a model of a socially engaged intellectual leader in Hong Kong: he served as Chairman of the Council for Performing Arts and Chairman of the Environmental Pollution Consultative Committee, and accepted an appointment as a member of the Executive Council of the then colonial Government in 1989. All these extra duties were shouldered at the same time as his scholarly output continued in spite of his heavy administrative work at the helm of HKU. As a shaper of tertiary education in Hong Kong, Prof Wang is endowed with a multicultural and international vision as well as a socially oriented outlook at a level unusual in his generation.

Upon his retirement as Vice Chancellor of HKU, Prof Wang moved to the National University of Singapore (NUS), where he served, among other academic and leadership posts, as Chairman of the Governing Board of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy until 2017. As founding Chairman of the School, he provided strong strategic leadership and guidance to the Board and the development of the School; his many significant contributions helped to propel it to become one of the leading public policy schools in Asia. Prof Wang has been named a University Professor at NUS since 2007, and is currently Chairman of the Management Board of its East Asian Institute, which, under his direction, has become a leading regional think-tank on modern China. In addition, Prof Wang is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, an autonomous organisation founded by the legislature of Singapore through an Act of Parliament. Such is the commitment and stamina of this distinguished scholar.

In the main, Prof Wang's illustrious career can be seen in terms of two interrelated aspects: as a scholar and researcher, and as a teacher and educator. He is an eminent historian in modern

Chinese history and an international authority on the history of the overseas Chinese, especially those in Southeast Asia. Prof Wang's identity at birth as an overseas Chinese, his upbringing in colourful colonial settings, and his choice to stay in Malaya upon its attainment of independence from the British in 1957, all gave him personal experience of, and extra insight into, the life of the overseas Chinese in the region. The social, economic, political and cultural significance of these communities was to become the centre of gravity of his lifelong scholarship and research. He has written many books and articles on various topics in the history of the overseas Chinese, not only in English but also in Chinese and Malay, and continues to publish scholarly writings well into his eighties. His works have been translated into Japanese, German and Spanish.

Prof Wang's research into the identity, trials and tribulations of the overseas Chinese naturally led him to reflect on traditional Chinese culture, and from various points of view. To be rooted in Chinese ancestry and cultural traditions, yet to be located outside the main sphere of Chinese culture, history and geography, offer both a unique vantage point and a deep challenge to gauge one's tensional sense of self, individually as well as collectively. Among his diverse intellectual interests may be counted the history of ideas and the theory of international relations. After all, history does not only assess the past; it lights up the present and points the way to the future as well. Reflecting on questions of what it means to be Chinese in a global context, Prof Wang thinks that the old Chinese notion of *tianxia*, or "all under Heaven", is a far more flexible and inclusive concept than the often nervous pulse of sheer nationalism, with far greater potential to foster mutual support and harmonious cooperation on the regional and international levels.

It is natural that Prof Wang should have received multiple honours and awards in the course of his illustrious academic and educational career. Honorary doctoral degrees have been conferred on him by various universities across the globe: among them are an honorary Doctor of Laws (LL D) from Monash University, Melbourne in 1993, the Australian National University in 1996, the University of Melbourne in 1997, and Wawasan Open University, Penang in 2012; and an honorary Doctor of Letters (D Litt) from the University of Sydney in 1991, the University of Hull in 1998, the University of Hong Kong in 2002, the Open University of Hong Kong in 2007, and the University of Cambridge in 2009. Prof Wang is an Emeritus Professor at the Australian National University as well.

Over the past four decades or so, Prof Wang has been invited on numerous occasions to deliver named lectures at prestigious academic institutions all over the world, such as the University of Cambridge, the University of Manchester and the London School of Economics in the UK; Harvard University, Princeton University, the University of California and George Washington University in the US; Peking University and the Academia Sinica in the Greater China region; and the University of Melbourne in Australia.

The number of academic appointments and honours Prof Wang has held over the years are too numerous to be fully listed here. He is a former President of the Australian Academy of the Humanities; a foreign honorary member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences; an honorary member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, as well as an Academician of the Academia Sinica, Taiwan. For his outstanding research achievements in the history of China and Southeast

Asia, he won the Academic Prize of the Asian Culture Prizes established by the Japanese city of Fukuoka in 1994. He was made a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) by the Government of Hong Kong in 1991, and was also awarded a Public Service Medal (PBM) in 2004 and a Public Service Star (BBM) in 2008 from the Government of Singapore.

For six decades—or the full cycle of sixty years in terms of traditional Chinese chronology—Prof Wang has been a devoted scholar and researcher, teacher and educator, as well as a servant of the public. Mr Chairman, in recognition of his distinguished academic achievements and his wide-ranging contributions to the growth of tertiary education in Hong Kong and the Asia-Pacific region, may I present Prof Wang Gungwu to you for conferment of the degree of Doctor of Humanities *honoris causa*.

*Citation written and delivered by Professor Charles Kwong*

# 王廣武教授

## 榮譽人文學博士

### 贊辭

王廣武教授祖籍河北，出生於前荷屬東印度群島(今印尼)的泗水，在前英屬馬來亞(今馬來亞半島)一個多種族聚居的環境中成長。他的學業曾因戰火兩度中斷：在怡保就讀中學時正值第二次世界大戰，因日本佔領而輟學；在國立中央大學(今南京大學)修讀外語時又經歷國共內戰而停學，遂返回馬來亞繼續接受高等教育。王教授分別在1953和1955年於新加坡馬來亞大學(今新加坡國立大學)取得歷史學文學士及文學碩士學位，後負笈倫敦大學亞非學院，於1957年取得歷史學博士學位。

王教授在英國畢業後返回東南亞，先後在新加坡及吉隆坡的馬來亞大學開展學術工作，升任歷史系教授及文學院院長。他於1968年赴坎培拉，擔任澳洲國立大學太平洋及亞洲研究學院的遠東歷史教授，其後亦出任學院院長。

王教授傑出的學術成就，吸引香港大學邀請他出任校長。前後十年間(1986-1995)，他敏銳的遠見和堅實的支持，帶領港大成立「香港大學教研發展基金」，為本地高等教育首個同類型基金，促進大學加強與社會的連繫，並提升大學的教學和研究能力。他本人亦以身作則，成為積極投身香港社會的知識份子領袖：他曾任香港演藝發展局董事會主席、香港環境污染問題諮詢委員會主席，並於1989年獲委任為港英政府行政局議員。這些額外的公職都是王教授領導港大期間，在繁重的行政工作和持續的學術出版以外所肩負的職責。作為一位香港高等教育的塑造者，王教授具備多元文化背景、國際視野及以社稷為本的生命觀，在同輩中罕有其匹。

從港大榮休後，王教授轉往新加坡國立大學工作，肩負學術研究和領導職務，包括擔任李光耀公共政策學院理事會主席，直至2017年。作為學院的創建主席，他為理事會和學院的發展提供了堅實的策略性領導和指引；他眾多重要的貢獻有助推進學院成為亞洲頂尖的公共政策學院之一。王教授於2007年獲新加坡國立大學頒授「大學教授」殊榮，目前擔任東亞研究所理事會主席。在他的領導下，該所已成為一所研究現代中國的地區性領導智庫。王教授同時是東南亞研究院董事會主席；該院是透過新加坡議會法案成立的獨立組織。種種工作，都反映這位傑出學者的承擔與耐力。

王教授的傑出事業，主要可以從兩個相關的方面理解：作為學者與研究者、教師與教育工作。他是卓越的現代中國歷史學家，更是海外(尤其是東南亞地區)華人歷史的國際權威。王教授生為海外華人，成長於豐富多彩的殖民地環境，並選擇留在1957年從英國獨立的馬來亞；種種個人經歷，都深化了他對於生活在區內的海外華人的理解。這些群體的社會、經濟、政治和文化意義，成為王教授終身的學問和研究重心。他以英文、中文和馬來文，為海外華人歷史的不同議題寫下多種學術專著和論文，如今八十高齡仍然不斷出版學術論著。他的著作已被翻譯成日文、德文和西班牙文等。

王教授對海外華人之身份和艱辛經歷的研究，自然地引領他從不同角度反思傳統中國文化。植根於中華血統和文化傳統，卻身處於中華文化、歷史和地理的主體範圍以外，為他提供了獨特的視角和深切的挑戰，去衡量由個人到群體層面的張力性自我感。他廣博的學問也涵蓋思想史和

國際關係理論，因為歸根結柢，歷史不只評價過去，也同時照亮現在和指引未來。王教授思考在全球環境中作為華人的意義，認為古代的「天下」觀念，遠比絕對式民族主義那種經常緊張的脈搏更具彈性和包容性，在地區和國際層面上具有更大潛能去培養互相支持及和諧合作。

王教授的學術和教育事業成就卓越，獲得眾多殊榮和獎項屬理所當然。全球各地有不同大學曾頒授榮譽博士學位予王教授：頒授榮譽法學博士的院校包括墨爾本的莫納什大學(1993)、澳洲國立大學(1996)、墨爾本大學(1997)及檳城的宏願開放大學(2012)；頒授榮譽文學博士的有雪梨大學(1991)、赫爾大學(1998)、香港大學(2002)、香港公開大學(2007)及劍橋大學(2009)等。王教授亦是澳洲國立大學的榮休教授。

過去四十年間，王教授多次獲邀到世界各地享負盛名的高等學府主講冠名學術講座，例如英國的劍橋大學、曼徹斯特大學和倫敦政治經濟學院；美國的哈佛大學、普林斯頓大學、加州大學和喬治華盛頓大學；大中華地區的北京大學和中央研究院；以及澳洲的墨爾本大學等等。

王教授歷年所獲的學術委任和榮譽，無法一一盡錄。他是澳洲人文學院前任院長；美國人文與科學院的外籍名譽院士；中國社會科學院名譽研究員；以及台灣中央研究院院士。他對中國及東南亞歷史的傑出研究貢獻，為他贏得1994年福岡亞洲文化獎項的學術獎。他在1991年獲港英政府頒授司令勳章，亦分別獲新加坡政府頒授公共服務獎章(2004)和公共服務之星獎章(2008)。

在六十年間——即中國曆法中的一甲子——王教授始終貫徹著學者、研究者、教師和教育家的工作，同時亦是社會的公僕。主席先生，為表揚王教授卓越的學術成就以及他對香港和亞太區高等教育發展的廣泛貢獻，本人謹恭請閣下頒授榮譽人文學博士學位予王賡武教授。

贊辭由鄺龔子教授撰寫及宣讀