

Honorary Fellow A Citation



Professor Jin Sheng Hwa, Serena, OBE, JtDip, MA, Doctorat de 3e Cycle en Littérature et Civilisation Françaises

As the one of the most important hubs of East West Interchange, Hong Kong today is fortunate to be endowed with a large contingent of excellent translators, among whom are some of the best and most renowned in the world. That had not been the case until the closing decades of the last century, when formal education in translation, commenced in the early 1970's, began to bear fruit. For the rich harvest in bilingual talent that Hong Kong today enjoys, we owe a debt of deep gratitude to Professor Jin Sheng Hwa.

Professor Jin is one of the most well known members of the Chinese University Community. She studied English at Chung Chi College, and upon graduation, she proceeded to the United States for further studies, gaining a Master's Degree, and then, she went on to the Sorbonne in Paris, where she graduated with a doctorate in Literature and Civilization.

In 1965, she returned to the Chinese University to teach and in 1972, she was a founding member of the Department of Translation. The Translation Department was the first such department in any university in Hong Kong. Professor Jin was Chairman of the Department from 1993 to 1998. Her dedication to teaching and her leadership, turned the Department of Translation into one of the most celebrated institutions of the University.

The Department of Translation has over the years produced some of the best bilingual talent for Hong Kong. The Translation Degree Course of this University is one of the most sought after university courses in Hong Kong and attracts the very best university entrance applicants. The Translation Department has also among its faculty, some of the most renowned scholars in the field and constantly redefines the frontiers of scholarship in the field.

Professor Jin has published prolifically in the field of translation. She is an authoritative translator of the works of Joseph Conrad, John Updike, Carson McCullers and Michael Bullock. She published an enduring work in the *Life and Work of Fou Lai*, one of the most accomplished and revered translators from the French language in the last century. She is at the same time a published creative writer, with an increasingly wide following.

Apart from being dedicated teacher, leader of the Department of Translation, and author of academic works and creative writer, Professor Jin had taken more than her fair share of the running of the University. She was Sub-Dean of the Faculty of Arts from 1998 to 2001 and a member of the University Council from 1992 to 1995 and from 1999 to 2005. She was Public Orator of the University, a most onerous position, as I have found. She has always been and continues to be a stalwart member of the governing council of New Asia College and spares no effort in promoting the cultural activities of the College in keeping with the tone set by its illustrious Founder, the late Ch'ien Mu.



It is only fitting that when Professor Jin retired in 2005 from her full time teaching position in the University, her appointment as Emeritus Professor of Translation was attended to by unanimous acclaim of the Council. Despite her retirement, Professor Jin continues to take an active part in the academic activities of the Translation Department and in promoting the art of translation and creative writing in Hong Kong.

By any measure, Professor Jin is an extraordinary person who has made extraordinary contribution to the University, and to Hong Kong. One might then, perhaps pause to consider what makes such a person “tick”.

I first came to know Professor Jin in the late 1980’s when we served as the first members of the Bilingual Laws Advisory Committee. We continued with our work until 1997, when we completed our review of the Chinese version of the entire collection of Ordinances and Regulations in the Laws of Hong Kong.

In the Saturday mornings when we would regularly meet for nearly seven years, I came to know how fashioning the Chinese version of something as dry and outwardly uninteresting as a piece of legislation couched in nineteenth century English legal language, could be turned into a fascinating intellectual adventure. I had thought that we were merely involved in finding the equivalent Chinese words but Professor Jin with her inexhaustible passion for language convinced the whole Committee that we were creating a new legal language, which on the one hand did not parse the original language, as that was the function of the courts, and on the other, should make good sense in current usage of the Chinese language, which was the function of the Committee.

I still have fond memories of our Bilingual Laws Advisory Committee meetings. Professor Jin has a great capacity to turn the mundane or even the boring, into the most appealing intellectual feast. Hours would pass as if they were minutes. The legacy of the intellectual discipline which Professor Jin had insisted should be brought into the process of preparing the Chinese version thus became embedded in the Laws of Hong Kong.

The imprint which Professor Jin has left on the pages of the Laws of Hong Kong is repeated in the many other ways she has touched the life of others.

For over a quarter of a century, Professor Jin has run a Master of Arts in Translation Course, the central feature in which is the celebrated “Translation Workshop”. Each of the students engaged in the translation of a substantial work, to be exchanged for mutual critique and the critique of Professor Jin. The graduates of this course are among the top ranks of the bilingual talents of our community. One graduate vividly remembers the five features of a good translation, epitomizing the approach of Professor Jin to the discipline:

- Elegance of language
- Clarity of Purpose
- Understanding of content
- Power of Expression and
- Connection with audience.



Another former student describes Professor Jin as a person who has every reason to be proud of her erudition as a scholar and her vast talents as a translator and yet she conducts herself with humility and elegance. That is an apt description of a pioneer who has carved a wide and ensuring path in translation. It is a path whose importance clearly speaks for itself. Professor Jin is a person who never extols her own virtues and yet, her accomplishments are there for all to see.

But perhaps the most apt accolade that could be bestowed on Professor Jin may be found in her own attitude towards the practice of her profession. In the preface to her book *On the Road to Translation*, she says:

“Actually, translation may be compared to life. Translation is like life because in life, one’s path is never straight nor is there ever plain sailing, but now and again along one’s dim and tortured path, one would encounter the exquisite beauty of a thousand blooms, each competing for admiration or the bedazzling splendour of a thousand mountains and caverns, each vying for attention. That knowledge would be motivation enough for continuing with the journey or for future travellers to attempt the same.”

This is an attitude which one should commend to all who aspire to excel!

Mr Chairman, I have the privilege to commend to you Professor Jin Sheng Hwa, Serena, linguist and scholar par excellence, and most of all, beloved member of the Chinese University community, for the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.

This citation is written by Dr Anthony Neoh, QC, SC