

# Hong Kong RotaryAnn Anson Chan bestowed Dame Grand Cross by the Queen in 2002

by Herbert K. Lau (劉敬恒) (Rotary China Historian)

1 September 2021



“Men in great place are thrice servants: servants of the sovereign or state, servants of fame, and servants of business”, thus wrote Francis Bacon. Bacon was on the syllabus when Mrs. Anson Chan (陳方安生) read English in the University of Hong Kong (香港大學) over decades ago. Contrary to what Bacon has written, Hong Kong’s top civil servant, Anson Chan, has shown that she could serve without loss of liberty or integrity, without fear or favour, that she could hold her high position with dignity and confidence. In a speech she summarized her philosophy of life and of high office by quoting Abraham Lincoln: “I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed but I am bound to live up to what light I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right, stand with him while he is right and part with him when he goes wrong.”

Mrs. Anson Chan is the widow of the late Rotarian Archibald “Archie” John Chan Tai-Wing (陳棣榮), MBE, QPM, CPM, BSc (HKU) (19 September 1934 - 31 May 2010) who was an Active Member of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong (香港扶輪社) and served the Club as Director and Club Secretary for some years.

On the other hand, RotaryAnn Anson is the niece of the late honorary member of the same Rotary Club, Dr. The Honorable Sir Harry Fang Sin-Yang (方心讓爵士), Kt, GBM, CBE, HonDSc (HKOU), HonDSocSc (HkPolyU), HonLLD (CUHK), HonLLD (HKU), MCH.ORTH, FRACS, FACS, FRCPE, FRCSE, MSc (Liverpool), MBBS (HKU), JP (2 August 1923 - 24 August 2009).

Anson is a retired Hong Kong politician and civil servant who was the first ethnic Chinese and woman to serve as Chief Secretary, the second-highest position in both the British colonial government, and the Hong Kong SAR government under the Chinese sovereignty, from 1993 until she retired from the government in 2001.

In recognition to her prominent service during the British Crown Colony Hong Kong era, on 7 November 2002, Mrs. Anson Chan was appointed “Honorary Dame Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George (GCMG)”, by Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom. Since Anson was no longer British citizen in 2002, the Order granted to her was hence in the nature of “honorary”.

The Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George is a British order of chivalry founded on 28 April 1818 by George, Prince of Wales (the future King George IV), while he was acting as prince regent for his father, King George III. It is named in honour of two military saints, Michael and George.

The Order of St. Michael and St. George was originally awarded to those holding commands or high position in the Mediterranean territories acquired in the Napoleonic Wars, and it was subsequently extended to holders of similar office or position in other territories of the British Empire. It is at present awarded to men and women who hold high office or who render extraordinary or important non-military service to the United Kingdom in a foreign country, and it can also be conferred for important or loyal service in relation to foreign and Commonwealth affairs. People are appointed to the Order rather than awarded it. There are three classes of appointment to the Order, and Dame Grand Cross is the highest.



## A Sketch of Rotary Ann Anson Chan

Dr. The Honourable Dame Anson Maria Elizabeth Chan Fang On-Sang (陳方安生), GCMG, GBM, CBE, *HonLLD (AUW)*, *HonLLD (Sheffield)*, *HonLLD (CUHK)*, *HonDLitt (HKOU)*, *HonLLD (Liverpool)*, *HonLLD (HKU)*, *HonLHD (Tufts)*, BA (HKU), JP, was born in Shanghai, Republic of China (中華民國上海), into an affluent family on 17 January 1940. Her father Fang Shin-Hau (方心誥) was a banker and textile businessman who moved his family to the British Crown Colony Hong Kong (英國殖民地香港) in 1948 on the eve of the Communist victory of the Chinese Civil War. Fang Shin-Hau died suddenly in 1950 aged 36 when Anson was only ten, leaving eight children to her mother Fang Zhaoling (方召慶). Anson’s mother took the eldest sons off to England to oversee their education, leaving the rest in the hands of Anson’s paternal grandmother and some uncles and aunts.

Anson was educated at the Sacred Heart Canossian College (嘉諾撒聖心書院) and studied English literature at the University of Hong Kong. She put herself through

university by working as a private tutor and for a year as a clerk at Queen Mary Hospital (瑪麗醫院). Along with studies, she was keen on amateur dramatics, and it was through this that she met her future husband, Archibald John Chan Tai-wing. Anson received a Bachelor of Arts degree with Second Class honour in English Language and Literature from the University of Hong Kong. She began work on a social work diploma, but later changed her mind and joined the Hong Kong Civil Service in 1962. The following year, she married Archie, who became a science teacher at St. Joseph's College (聖若瑟書院), his *alma mater*.



*Rotarian Archibald John Chan Tai-wing and Rotary Ann Anson*

### Career Civil Servant of several Firsts

Few are blessed with the good fortune of having careers which are wholly fulfilling and satisfying. Among the few so blessed is Anson, who counted joining the Hong Kong civil service as a cadet officer (官學生) (now an Administrative Officer) in 1962 as certainly one of the best decisions she has ever made in life. Her early aspiration was to be a social worker. To that end, in preparation for further studies, she worked briefly for the Po Leung Kuk (保良局). Her original career plans were laid aside when she responded to an advertisement for cadet officers. Her rise through the ranks was rapid; she held many senior positions in the Administration dealing with finance, economics, commerce and industry and social services. Indeed, as things turned out, the civil service's gain was not to be entirely social welfare's loss. She has served in 1979 as Deputy Director of Social Welfare (社會福利署副署長), and then was promoted to Director in 1984, in the course of her postings within the government. She was the first woman Director of a governmental department in Hong Kong.

Anson has also held the post of Secretary for the Civil Service (公務員事務司) briefly. Between 1987 and 1993 she was Secretary for Economic Services (經濟司), a cabinet-level post which gave her responsibilities for overseeing Hong Kong's physical infrastructure, including ambitious port and airport facilities, the liberalization of Hong Kong's telecommunications market, tourism, energy, food supplies and the monitoring of public utility companies.

Anson scored two notable firsts when she was appointed Chief Secretary (布政司) of the Colonial Hong Kong Government in November 1993. As principal advisor to the Governor and head of Hong Kong's 190,000-strong civil service, she was responsible for the effective implementation of the whole range of the Government policies. She broke a 150-year-tradition in being the first Chinese Chief Secretary. All previous incumbents had been British. She was also the first woman. Breaking new ground and scoring firsts is not new to Anson Chan. She was first woman director of a government department, first woman head of a policy branch, first woman to head the civil service, first woman civil servant appointed to the Legislative Council (立法局).

Asian women have suffered for countless years not just from unfair treatment but also unfair literary and media stereotyping. They are finally emerging as outstanding leaders in the region and internationally. To Anson Chan the women of Hong Kong can point with pride. Her qualities of leadership have won recognition beyond our shores, as exemplified by the conferring in September 1995 of the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, on her by Tufts University, Massachusetts, for her “many achievements, and for (her) adherence to the ideals of fairness and openness in government”. She has, in addition, won many leadership awards.

After Hong Kong's handover to China on 1 July 1997, Anson stayed on as head of the civil service. She retired as the Chief Secretary for Administration (政務司司長) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (香港特別行政區政府) in 2001, after nearly forty years of service. During her career in the public service she was responsible, amongst other things, for development of Hong Kong's economic infrastructure including the planning and construction of Hong Kong's new international airport, which opened in July 1998, port expansion and deregulation of the telecommunications market.

## Politician and Lawmaker

Anson has played a prominent role in the campaign for full universal suffrage for election of Hong Kong's Chief Executive and all members of the Legislature.

Enjoying wide popularity during her tenure and often dubbed as “Iron Lady” and the “Conscience of Hong Kong”, Anson became increasingly outspoken about pushing for a faster pace of the democratization in Hong Kong and defending the autonomy of Hong Kong. Supported by the pan-democracy camp, she stood in the 2007 Hong Kong Island by-election and briefly served as Member of the Legislative Council (立法會民選議員). After her retirement in 2008, she continued to lobby domestically and internationally for democracy and autonomy of Hong Kong, until her retirement from public life entirely in 2020.

Anson is well known for her stand on transparent and accountable government, on democracy and on safeguarding the rights and freedoms enshrined in the “one country, two systems” concept that applies to Hong Kong. She is the Convenor of “Hong Kong 2020”, a

small think tank concerned with democracy and governance issues and a founding director of Project Citizens Foundation Ltd. (公民實踐培育基金有限公司). This Foundation promotes civic awareness and participation and educates the public, particularly the younger generation, on the need to protect Hong Kong's core values, rule of law and basic rights, and freedoms under "one country, two systems".

One of Anson's favourite authors is Jane Austen, who has written, "A woman, if she have the misfortune of knowing anything, should conceal it as well as she can." Fortunately for the community our Rotary Ann Anson does not subscribe to this dictum.

The Chinese has a notorious tradition of powerful women who have risen to power on the coat-tails (or robe-tails, as the case may be) of their husbands, but Anson has risen through her own abilities. After initial encounters with mild sexism she found the Hong Kong civil service to be a meritocracy, and her abilities were quickly recognized and rewarded.

Her career, which spans over decades, coincides with a time of great change in Hong Kong and its administration, and she has consciously adapted to these changing times. She reached her present position at a most significant time in Hong Kong's history and her ability, strength of character and faith in Hong Kong's future have been- and are - invaluable assets to the community at this challenging time. She has throughout her career not wavered in her loyalty to the people of Hong Kong, and it is her fondest wish that she will be able to continue to be of service to them.

## Personal Life

In addition to having achieved outstanding success in her profession, Anson also enjoys success in her personal life. Her upbringing and the closeness of her family ties have done a great deal to shape her character and beliefs, and they are a continuous source of strength to her. If in her courage and dedication to duty she can be compared to Hua Mulan (花木蘭), the woman warrior, in her devotion to family she can be compared to the mother of the philosopher Mencius. Inculcated with traditional Chinese virtues she has never allowed her career to work to the detriment of her roles as wife, mother, daughter, sister and now grandmother.

## Decorations

- (1) 1992 – Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE)
- (2) 1999 – Grand Bauhinia Medal (GBM) (大紫荊勳章) by Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, People's Republic of China
- (3) 2002 -- Honorary Dame Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George (GCMG), United Kingdom
- (4) 2009 -- Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur, Republic of France

## Honorary Doctorates

- (1) 1995 -- Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, by Tufts University, Massachusetts, U.S.A.
- (2) 1996 – Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, by The University of Hong Kong (香港大學), Hong Kong.
- (3) 1996 -- Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, by The University of Liverpool, United Kingdom.
- (4) 2000 – Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*, by The Open University of Hong Kong (香港公開大學), Hong Kong.
- (5) 2001 -- Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, by The Chinese University of Hong Kong (香港中文大學), Hong Kong.
- (6) 2002 -- Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, by The University of Sheffield, United Kingdom.
- (7) 2017 – Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, by the Asian University for Women, People’s Republic of Bangladesh.

## Honorary University Fellow

2000 -- Honorary Fellow, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, United Kingdom.



## Glossary -- RotaryAnn

In many Rotary clubs throughout the world, wives of male members are affectionately called “RotaryAnn’s”. This designation was never one of disparagement, but rather grew out of an interesting historical occasion. The year was 1914 when San Francisco Rotarians boarded a special train to attend the Rotary Convention being held in Houston. In those days few wives attended Rotary events, and until the train stopped in Los Angeles, the only woman aboard was the wife of Rotarian Bru Brunnier. As the train picked up additional convention-bound delegates, Mrs. Ann Brunnier was introduced as the Rotarian’s Ann. This title soon became “RotaryAnn”. Since the clubs of the West were inviting the Rotarians to hold their next convention in San Francisco, a number of songs and stunts were organized that would be performed in Houston. One of the Rotarians wrote a “RotaryAnn” chant. On the train’s arrival at the Houston depot, a delegation greeted the West Coast Rotarians. One of the greeters was Guy Gundaker of Philadelphia, whose wife was also named Ann. During the rousing demonstration, someone started the RotaryAnn chant. The two petite ladies, Ann Brunnier and Ann Gundaker, were hoisted to the men’s shoulders and paraded about the hall. The group loved the title given to the two women named Ann. Immediately the same term of endearment was used for all of the wives in attendance, and the name “RotaryAnn” was here to stay.



## 榮譽法學博士陳方安生女士讚辭

對本港以至海外不少人來說，陳方安生女士所代表的價值理念，正是香港繁榮之所繫。她多年來悉力倡導的法治及公務員政治中立的傳統，皆為香港超卓經濟成就的基礎。

陳方安生女士為人沉毅果敢，廉正自守，深獲各方推崇。她擔任公職期間，在在體現傳統儒家「德」的觀念，取信於民。

觀其一生，卓爾不群，吾人尋根溯源，當知其道德力量由來有自。正如陳方安生女士所言，畢生沐受福澤，豐盈充實，生活中亦能內外兼顧，均衡協調。

陳方安生女士由能幹卓越的婦女撫養成人，並從中學會如何憑勇氣、智慧應付逆境。她生於上海，家境富裕，一九四八年隨家人遷居香港。父親為銀行界翹楚，為人仁厚，惜於一九五零年遽然棄世，當時陳方安生女士年僅十歲。其母親遂挑起撫育八名子女的重擔。雖則幼兒年僅兩歲，但方夫人毫不氣餒，沉著應變，攜同較年長的數名兒子前往英國，使其在當地接受教育，並親自督導；其餘子女則交由祖母及叔伯共同照顧，使其成長於親切慈愛的大家庭中。她的祖母雖然受正規教育不多，卻堅強幹練，大有智慧。她教導孩子對家庭盡責，並知榮知辱。其教誨陳方安生女士至今受用，未敢稍違。

陳方安生女士早年就讀於嘉諾撒聖心書院，當時師長亦為堅毅幹練、處事盡心的婦女。她們雖秉承另一個傳統，但所奉道理和陳夫人所受家訓並無扞格。在聖心期間，陳夫人找到「精神所託」的終生信仰，兼且養成閱讀的終生愛好。進入香港大學時，決定主修英國文學，因而練就繡口錦心之才。事實上，當今用英語演說的公共人物，能夠媲美陳方安生女士那般辯才出眾者，實屬鳳毛麟角。在港大期間，陳方安生女士結識了未來丈夫，她日後事業上輝煌的成就，實有賴夫婿的大力支持。

大學畢業後，陳方安生女士有幸找到足以發揮所長的事業。她自始即熱愛公務員工作，入職時更是團隊精神高揚、彼此暱呼名字的時代。今天，不少人以為陳夫人一入仕途就扶搖直上，其實不然，她只是穩步升遷而已。她發覺晉升往往涉及機運，因而一切處之泰然。不過，踏入事業中途，她終於有所領悟，以後一切亦水到渠成。陳方安生女士自謂：「我終於找到自我，知道自己要做什麼樣的人。」「我明白每一天都要活得誠誠實實，關懷應該關懷的人。」抱著這個為人誠實正直的宗旨，輿論的壓力就大為減輕。她不再為已下的決定煩惱，但求良心所安，即轉而致力處理下一件工作。她會聆聽忠言，對異議者則說之以理，而非服之以力。為了辦妥事情，她必須運用權力，然務求用得宜，合乎公正，且無懼承擔隨權力而來的責任。她並不戀棧權位，因此，退休之後與官居要職時同樣滿足愉快。

陳方安生女士的仕途即使並非平步青雲，然而身為女性華人，亦在多方面開創先河。她是香港第一位主掌政府部門的女性，也是第一位主掌決策科的女性，更是第一位獲委為立法局官守議員的女公務員。一九九三年，她出任布政司，是香港一百五十年殖民史上第一位膺此重任的華人，及第一位膺此重任的女性。

陳夫人曾經竭力為女性爭取平等機會。一九六二年她初任公職時，女公務員薪酬只及同職級男性的百分之七十五，婚後更只能以暫僱形式受聘。陳夫人和一些志同道合的女公務員組成工會，反對這些不平等待遇，終於取得成果。一九七五年，女性公務員與男性同工同酬；一九八二年，則聘用條件也和男性看齊。

由於陳方安生女士成就輝煌，加以竭力倡導男女平等，人們多視之為香港女性典範，尤以在職者為然。陳夫人認為，機會平等還應包括負起母親、妻子天職的自由。就她自己而言，家庭責任及艱巨公務均能內外兼顧。陳夫人在孩子就讀小學期間，並無聘補習教師，執意親自督導功課，而要好好兼顧事業與家庭並不容易，若非夫婿多年來全力支持，絕難成事。

陳方安生女士對香港貢獻甚多，其中兩項更將長銘人心。第一為香港回歸中國時，她引領全體公務員平穩過渡，成為「一國兩制」得以切實執行的一個重要因素。第二為推行高瞻遠矚的基礎建設計劃，為香港未來多年甚或多個世代的繁榮奠定基石，包括機場建設核心計劃、港口發展計劃、開放電訊市場等。此等建設提高了香港作為亞太區貿易、金融和旅遊中心的地位，以及運輸、通訊的中樞地位。

陳方安生女士將自己對香港未來的信心繫於港人身上：香港人適應力強、具創新能力，能為自己製造、處理的產品翻陳出新、增添價值。香港的「軟基礎建設」也有利發展，包括使用英語的傳統、效率超卓的行政架構，以及至關重要的法治。陳方安生女士認為，這等資產，較諸財政盈餘甚至鋼筋水泥的基礎建設，更能持久、更加寶貴。

陳方安生女士歷來所獲榮譽不勝枚舉。她一九九二年獲頒英帝國司令勳章，一九九九年獲頒大紫荊勳章，並先後獲美國杜霍茨大學（一九九五年）、英國利物浦大學（一九九六年）、香港大學（一九九六年）和香港公開大學（二零零零年）頒授榮譽博士學位。此外，陳方安生女士並為美國杜霍茨領袖及國際透視研究所榮譽所長（一九九七年），以及上海交通大學顧問教授（一九九七年）。二零零零年，又獲英國倫敦大學亞非學院榮譽院士名銜。

近代一位英國首相曾說：「若要議事，求諸男士；若要成事，求諸女士。」以陳方安生女士而言，若以其彪炳的功業與成就來詮釋此話，則意猶未盡。她退休前夕，曾譽為全球最具權勢的二十位女性之一；今天，她還經常接到各方邀約，請她演講、講學及出任研究顧問等。而即使事務繁忙，只要身在香港，陳夫人每星期依然撥出半天時間，回母校嘉諾撒聖心書院，向年輕學子講述經驗，傳授心得。陳方安生女士德望俱崇，成就超卓，本人謹恭請校長先生頒授榮譽法學博士銜予陳方安生女士。

