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Raja Permaisuri Agong launches biography of Dr Siti Hasmah

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - "Siti Hasmah - Lady of Two Eras", pictorial biography on Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, wife of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, provides a rare glimpse into the life of one of Malaysia's most respected women.

Prof Dr Sharifah Hapsah, giving a citation on the book, said it traced "the remarkable story of a lady who rose to the challenges of her time from the period before independence to modern Malaysia".

"...Who breached tradition but yet retained a strong value system and philosophy of life that would guide her in her exemplary behaviour that will forever be a beacon for generations to come."

The book, a project of the Association of Malaysian Women Graduates (PWSM), was launched by the Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Siti Aishah here today.

Dr Siti Hasmah, 73, said: "I hope all that is written in the book will be a guide to young mothers."

She said it was "quite an experience" being the youngest in the family of 10 and going through many episodes to become what she is today.

She said she was grateful to the writers of the book and especially her parents, siblings and her own family.

"I wish my parents were here today to see all that is happening," she said.

Dr Siti Hasmah, who is PWSM's patron, also urged the association to produce biographies on other exemplary women in the country for the people's benefit.

Meanwhile, PWSM president Datuk Asiah Abu Samah said the association had bestowed on Dr Siti Hasmah the "Dr Siti Hasmah bt Hj Mohd Ali Chair" in Universiti Malaya for Malaysian women in the field of science and technology.

She said the PWSM had so far collected RM1 million in a special fund for that chair but the Universiti Malaya needed RM2 million to maintain it.

She said part of the proceeds from the book would go to the chair. The hard-cover version of the book retails at RM120 and soft cover RM80.

The book is a translation from a Bahasa Malaysia version Siti Hasmah - Citra Wanita Dua Zaman written by Prof Datuk Dr Nik Safiah Karim, Datin Azizah Mokhzani, Prof Dr Rokiah Talib, Prof Dr Farida Habib Shah and Normah Dali.

It was translated and improved upon by Khoo Siew Mun and Ibrahim Ismail. The Bahasa Malaysia version was launched in 1998.

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