

TARA LIAO

Year of call

English Barrister 2023; Hong Kong Barrister 2015; Hong Kong Solicitor 2010.



Prior to her call in the UK, Tara practised in Hong Kong as a solicitor in an international law firm from 2010 to 2014 and as a barrister from 2015. She is ranked as a leading junior in the Commercial Disputes category by Legal 500 Asia-Pacific in 2021, 2022 and 2023. She sat as a Deputy District Judge in Hong Kong in 2021 and 2023. She is on the HKIAC List of Arbitrators (July 2023-December 2026) and sits as arbitrator from time to time.

Tara has a broad commercial practice with a focus on commercial injunctions and civil fraud, international arbitrations, shareholders' disputes, company, insolvency, trust and cross-border disputes. She also has experience in insurance and regulatory matters. She was a Committee member of HK45 from 2020 to 2022, an active young arbitration practitioners group in Asia.

Tara is a native speaker of both Mandarin and Cantonese. She holds a bachelor degree in PRC laws from Peking University, one of the most prestigious universities in Mainland China, and passed the PRC National Judicial Examination.

Due to her language skills and background, she has been instructed by PRC law firms and clients in arbitrations and to provide legal opinions in PRC legal proceedings from time to time.

LEGAL EXPERTISE

Arbitration (as counsel)

- Acted as sole advocate in the substantive hearing of a Germany/Korean joint venture dispute which involved allegations of falsification of accounts and meticulous forensic analysis of financial statements of multiple subsidiaries in Hong Kong, Vietnam and Korea.
- Acting as co-counsel in the substantive hearings of a complex securities lending case involving two parallel arbitrations in St Kitts & Nevis and Hong Kong, injunction applications in aid of arbitration as well

as court proceedings concerning enforcement of the awards and the resolution of residual issues.

- Acted as in the substantive hearing of a domestic arbitration involving the interpretation of a deed of mutual covenant in a commercial building.
- Acting as sole counsel or junior counsel in various injunctions/ ancillary relief in aid of arbitrations.

Commercial litigation & civil fraud

- Acting for the borrower in a complex securities lending arrangement involving civil fraud, breach of trust and the tracing and preservation of the pledged securities by way of proprietary injunctions and Norwich Pharmacal orders. *Silver Universe Investments Ltd v China Times Securities Limited & ors* [2019] HKCFI 834, [2019] HKCFI 153, [2021] HKCA 105.
- Acting for the borrower of a complex securities lending case involving two parallel arbitrations in St Kitts & Nevis and Hong Kong, injunction applications in aid of arbitration.
- Acted for the second largest shareholder of a Hong Kong listed company in a complex shareholders' dispute involving numerous interlocutory applications including applications for prohibitory, mandatory, proprietary and Mareva injunctions, and applications for receivership and provisional liquidators. *Acropolis Limited & another v W&Q Investment Limited & others* [2018] HKCA 184, HCA 1496/2017, 31 August 2017; *Aeso Holding Limited & another v Chan Siu Chung & others*, HCA 1737/2017 & HCMP 1647/2017, 4 September 2017; *Aeso Holding Limited & others v Chan Siu Chung & others*, HCMP 1721/2017, 11 August 2017.
- Acted for a Hong Kong legislative council member of the education sector in an interim injunction application concerning breach of confidence and the restriction of freedom of expression. *The University of Hong Kong v Hong Kong Commercial Broadcasting Co Ltd & another* [2016] 1 HKLRD 536.
- Acting for the executors of the estate in a common intention constructive trust/civil fraud case, whereby the estate seeks the recovery of various properties and shares of companies, which the deceased allegedly transferred to his son and daughter-in-law or their nominees on trust for the deceased in order to avoid the assets being claimed by his second wife in the divorce proceedings. *Lam Hon Keung Keith v Lam Chi Tai Anthony & others; Lam Hon Keung Keith v Silver Door Development Ltd & others; Lam Hon Keung Keith v Harvest Win Development Ltd & another; Lam Hon Keung Keith v Dalny Estates Ltd & others; Lam Hon Keung Keith v Elegant Fund Ltd, & other; Lam Hon Keung Keith v Jollida Enterprises Ltd & others; Lam Hon Keung Keith v Gold & Silver Enterprises Co Ltd & Others* [2021] HKCFI 1282.
- Acting for the respondent in a common intention constructive trust/civil fraud case concerning the alleged trust arrangement of shares in a Hong Kong company. *Zhao Zhi Qiang v Zhao Zhiguang & Asian Trinity Limited* [2022] HKCFI 3356.

Company & winding up

- Acted for the second largest shareholder of a Hong Kong listed company in a complex shareholders'

dispute involving numerous interlocutory applications, including applications for prohibitory, mandatory, proprietary and Mareva injunctions, and applications for receivership and provisional liquidators. *Acropolis Limited & another v W&Q Investment Limited & others* [2018] HKCA 184, HCA 1496/2017, 31 August 2017; *Aeso Holding Limited & another v Chan Siu Chung & others*, HCA 1737/2017 & HCMP 1647/2017, 4 September 2017; *Aeso Holding Limited & others v Chan Siu Chung & others*, HCMP 1721/2017, 11 August 2017.

- Acted for a company that successfully opposed a creditor's winding up petition on the basis that the petitioner was carrying on business as an unlicensed money lender in contravention of provisions of the Money Lenders Ordinance, Cap. 163. *Re Florescent Holdings Ltd.* [2022] HKCFI 649; [2022] 2 HKLRD 203.
- Acted for the respondents, who successfully opposed an unfair prejudice and just-and-equitable winding up petition and claims of breach of fiduciary duties in respect of a well-known tutoring business in Hong Kong. *Tsang Woon Ming v Lai Ka Lim & Others* (HCCW 407/2016); *King's Glory Educational Centre Limited v Tsang Woon Ming & Others* (HCA 33/2017); *Nobility School Limited v Tsang Woon Ming & Others* [2020] HKCFI 1503.
- Acted for the members of a wine club, who successfully challenged the validity of resolutions purportedly passed at the annual general meeting to appoint new members of the Executive Committee. *WHC Limited trading as Wine High Club & others v Hong Kong Wine Chamber of Commerce Limited* [2019] HKCFI 2548 (*irregular general meeting/resolutions – Chairman's exercise of power -determination of membership*).

Regulatory

- Acting for the respondent who is the chairman and founder of a Hong Kong listed company in a public interest petition presented by the Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission. The petition seeks a disqualification order and an order (the "Buy-out Order") that the Respondent buy out the shares of public shareholders in the trial at the Hong Kong Court of First Instance and the upcoming appeal, where the Hong Kong Appellate Court is expected to consider the applicable principles of a Buy-out Order for the first time. *Securities and Futures Commission v Sound Global Ltd & Others* [2022] HKCFI 3025.

Appointments

- Deputy District Judge (Hong Kong), 2021 & 2023

Memberships

- HKIAC List of Arbitrators (July 2023-present)
- HK45 Committee Member (2020-2022)

Education

- Postgraduate Certificate in Laws, The University of Hong Kong
- Graduate Diploma in Law, BPP Law School, UK
- Bachelor of Laws (PRC), Peking University, Beijing, P. R. China

Scholarships & Awards

- Hong Kong Middle Temple Society Advocacy Scholarship
- Herbert Smith PRC Scholarship