

Professor Sunney I. Chan, admirably known to all of us as “Sunny,” with his warm smile, unique shape, genuine friendly demeanor, and love for good food, made him appear like that cute, lovely panda that we all flocked to meet. He was no stranger to the scientific community in Hong Kong. He was like a “sunny day” that lifted everyone’s spirits whenever he was around.



Most importantly, it was his scientific reputation and his love for helping young scientists through mentorship that commanded the respect of all of us who came to know him. Like all the young scientists he mentored, I also benefited from this unique trait of his through the publication of my first JACS paper as a young academic in Hong Kong some 40 years ago.

Later on, we worked together to develop an NMR workshop sponsored by the Lee Hysan Foundation in Hong Kong, held at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, with the specific goal of exchanging knowledge with colleagues from China who had fewer resources to travel abroad to learn about new developments in NMR science. In this endeavor, Sunny was instrumental in bringing together the right people with the right heart, the right educational focus, and strong hands-on abilities to serve as instructors in both solution and solid-state techniques for the workshop.

In 1995, Hong Kong was not known as a scientific hub, and China was not known as a country of scientific innovation. The workshop was not a high-profile activity for most established scientists, but the efforts of this unique group of true educators assembled under Sunny's leadership brought about a successful workshop.

Today, quite a number of the participants in this workshop have gone on to become very successful scientists in their own right. Moreover, the Chinese NMR community has grown tremendously since then, and research groups are often much better equipped than their Hong Kong counterparts.

While this workshop may have seemed insignificant in the long list of achievements in Sunny's scientific career, little did he know he silently contributed to the growth of many successful scientific careers in the East and, in the process, to the rapid development of the Chinese NMR community that took place a few years after the workshop.

Like other established scientific giants, Sunny achieved a great scientific career. Unlike other giants, it was Sunny's genuine kindness in giving back to the scientific community and his humility that left an imprint on everyone who had the good fortune of knowing him. In my mind, this is the best legacy of Professor Sunney I. Chan: a truly kind human being in the best form of humanity and a timeless role model of what any educator should be like.

With a heavy heart, I bid farewell to my friend and mentor. The force shall always be with you.

As always, respectfully yours,
Steve CF Au-Yeung