



Sunney, you indeed were the Emperor, and our exemplar: a scientist, a scholar, a true friend of virtue, and a person of character. We shall **carry your legacy and your memory with us, always.** Thank you.

Derrick (aka DT) and Regina Lee

Eulogy in Honor of VP Sunney Chan

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**Derrick (aka DT) Lee, Distinguished Visiting Chair Research Center for IT Innovation,
Academia Sinica**

We gather here today to commemorate former Vice President Sunney Chan. To us Sunney was not only a great scientist, a biophysical chemist in particular, he was also a remarkable mentor and a friend whom we most respected.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my eulogy in his honor.

Sunney came to Academia Sinica as the Director of the Institute of Chemistry, in 1997, one year before I did, and became the Vice President during 1999- 2003. We were neighbors across the hall living in the apartment building of Academia Sinica. Throughout the years in Academia Sinica, and after his retirement living in 汐止 Xizhi, we have shared many gatherings together with his students, postdocs, and with Irene, Mrs. Chan, and Dr. Steve Yu's family, Sunney's postdoc at the Institute of Chemistry.

Sunney told us that he accepted the invitation by former President Yuan Lee, to come to Academia Sinica, which was to fulfill his long-held wish to return to China someday, giving back to society and sharing his devotion to science with his fellow citizens. He said he had a chance to be President of a university in China, but he chose to come to Taiwan instead. The reason for him to accept the offer to work in Taiwan was that, in his own words, I quote **“the culture and value systems in Taiwan are more compatible with my own: respect for human rights, individual liberties, a free society with freedom of speech and intellectual thinking, Confucius culture, warmth of people and of course, wonderful restaurants here in Taiwan”** unquote.

When Sunney was in Caltech, he served as a University Dormitory Master, at the encouragement of late Academician Ted Wu 吳耀祖院士, a renowned expert in Fluid Mechanics, and a professor at Caltech at that time. Ted told Sunney that this was the first time that an Asian faculty member was ever invited to serve as a member of the Caltech university administration, and that he should take the offer. **And he did.** Sunney said of the appointment that he had to be interviewed by the Members of the Univ. Board of Trustees and by the representatives of Student Council.

As always, Sunney loved to interact with the students and helped them in any way he could, whether the students might have had personal problems with girlfriends, work at school, or alcohol. or even drugs. Students could come to see him any time, whenever the curtains of his apartment were drawn open. He would invite students to his residence on Thanksgiving and baked them turkeys. This is how he was, very generous and caring, offering his heart-felt care to the students. **It is no wonder** that so many friends had come all the way to Taiwan from around the world to celebrate his 85th birthday party in 2020.

Sunney brought this generosity and warm caring to Academia Sinica, and we had the joy of eating Turkeys he baked at his apartment too, and had many memorable occasions and moments, at parties he threw for his students, postdocs and friends. As some of you know, Sunney was a gourmet, and a lover for food. He even had his own little pink book containing names of his favorite restaurants, at some of which they even had Sunney's menus.

Sunney has made tremendous contributions to Academia Sinica, and to Taiwan. **In particular**, during his tenure as Vice President, he helped set up the **Taiwan International Graduate Program, TIGP** in 2002 from scratch, by drafting up the program brochure with regard to admission and degree requirements, financial planning, program description, etc. all in English of course. English was no problem for Sunney, but it was a very big deal for the administrative staff of Academia Sinica. Communication presented a huge problem, **as Sunney did not read Chinese, nor speak mandarin** at that time. Moreover, as Academia Sinica cannot, by law, offer an academic degree, it must work with local universities. Thus, Sunney had to cope with many bureaucratic red tapes, negotiating externally with the universities, and internally with various Institutes within Academia Sinica, as the academic-degree programs were the responsibilities of the Institutes. I know about it because I was the Director of the Institute of Information Science, and IIS participated in two of the TIGP programs at that time, Bioinformatics, and Computational Linguistics and Chinese Language Processing.

I was very happy when I learned that Sunney won the Presidential Science Prize in 2021. I thought after so much Sunney had done for Taiwan, this award, being the highest and most prestigious, is **both a timely and well-deserved** honor for him. My wife and I had the privilege of attending the award ceremony, held on Nov. 1st, 2021 at the Presidential Palace. **Sunney's acceptance speech** was quite humble and warm, filled with wisdom. He was humorous as he had always been. He told the story to the audience that when he was elected in 1988 to be an Academician 中研院院士, the news got reported in the SF Daily News. His father, an immigrant from China, was so proud that he showed his fellow friends the newspaper and said that his son was a 狀元 (the Number one scholar in the Imperial examination in China). Now that he won this Presidential Science Prize, if his father had been living, he would have said that his son was a 皇帝 (the Emperor)!

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