



A tribute to a teacher

A visit by a few fortunate classmates who travelled the West Coast of USA and a detour through New York City, landed them in Canada where this story began. I was asked if I would recount the tale I told of Mr. Chiang Heng Gin for all ACSians. It is truly my pleasure to share with all, but more importantly it shows how Mr. Chiang can have a lasting impact on those who knew him. He may not realize it, but he has a far reaching influence on our lives as a person, in more ways than he knows and not just what he taught us in school.

I will never forget his sense of fair-play and true empathy. It was 1963 when I was in Form II. I came from a very poor family and my parents did not think it was neither necessary nor able to afford to spend money on a metal school badge of ACS that cost 60 cents. I knew that wearing the badge while in school was strictly enforced. I was generally law-abiding and did not want to run afoul of the rules. Plus, I was really proud to want to wear the badge. So, I cropped the badge out of our school printed material and stuck it on my shirt with a safety pin. As you would recall, every morning as students entered the school compound, a group of Prefects would ensure orderliness and everyone was appropriately dressed i.e. for boys; shirt tucked in, proper white canvas shoes and the whole nine yards.

One of the newly appointed Prefects (a 'sun see hung'.....new broom sweeps clean lah...) hauled me up to see Mr. Chiang. I was shaking like a leaf while he was told of my 'offence'. Mr Chiang examined my paper badge and asked for an explanation as to why I was not wearing a metal badge instead. He commended me on my intent and resourcefulness, and right away lectured the Prefect about 'blind justice'. He said "Never look down on the poor. Always uphold the rules of law but fairly and with compassion." He then dug into his pocket and gave me 60 cents to go buy myself a metal badge.

The best lesson in life is not necessarily taught in school, but by how you conduct yourself and in the case of Mr. Chiang by being a very generous man with outstanding sense of justice and compassion. I will never forget that incident and my own life will continue to be shaped by this exceptional experience that I had the privilege to be part of.

THANK YOU MR. CHIANG!!!.....you are the best teacher anyone can have. I guess I also owe you RM 6,000 in today's value, if I had invested then. But then the lesson is priceless and I owe you much more than that.

Danny Chin (Kon Lem)

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