

Mr Chan Wai-nam, BBS

Honorary Fellow

Citation

Mr Chan Wai-nam was born in Chaozhou, Guangdong, in 1919. In 1936, he graduated from Hanshan Normal University in Guangdong Province, and the following year he moved to Hong Kong as a job seeker. When Hong Kong fell to the Japanese in 1941, Mr Chan returned to his hometown, but after the war, he moved back to Hong Kong, where he established the Singapore Trading Company Limited in 1947, and, in 1964, the Ping Shan Enterprise Company Limited. He ran animal husbandry and food businesses, becoming a successful Teochew entrepreneur.

Although Mr Chan achieved tremendous success with the businesses he started and built up in Hong Kong, his heart has always remained in his hometown. Over the years, he has made contributions and significant donations to Chaozhou and the people there, actively promoting culture and education, and nurturing talent throughout the region. An enthusiastic philanthropist, Mr Chan has supported projects such as Baoshan Middle School in Chao'an District, Shaxi Overseas Chinese Hospital, Hanshan Normal University, Jao Tsung-I Petite Ecole Chaozhou, Chaozhou-Hanjiang Bridge and Chaozhou Stadium. He has also set up numerous charitable trusts for disaster relief, poverty alleviation, medical care, and cultural education.

In late 2020, Chan Wai Nam Cultural Center became the newest cultural landmark in Chaozhou's old town. Its design, based on traditional Teochew house, was the idea of Mr Chan and other leading figures from the Teochew community in Hong Kong. There is an exhibition that tells Mr Chan's life story covering his contributions to public welfare, education, the Chinese and overseas Chinese, and Teochew culture.

A decent man, Mr Chan is grateful, honest, altruistic and highly respected by Chaoshan scholars, who call his way of thinking "Wai Nam spirit". He believes that "the value of life is in what you give", a philosophy that is widely recognised by his compatriots at home and abroad. The Purple Mountain Observatory of the Chinese Academy of Sciences has named asteroid 8126 "Chanwainam" in recognition of his philanthropy and immense contribution to cultural education.

Hong Kong has become Mr Chan's second home. He exemplifies the contribution Teochew people have made to Hong Kong society. After working tirelessly for many years and inspired by "the great power in solidarity", Mr Chan founded the Federation of Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community Organizations in 2001. The Federation unites Hong Kong's diverse Teochew organisations and provides a platform to enhance exchanges and collaborations between Hong Kong and the Mainland. It also supports the development of the four major cities in Eastern Guangdong. Its accomplishments have been magnificent. Mr Chan's son, Dr Ian Chan Yau Nam, is also actively involved with the Federation. Father and son have a common vision: bringing glory to the Teochew people.

To that end, Mr Chan supports universities in Hong Kong to promote Chaoshan culture and nurture talents in Eastern Guangdong. In 2012, to support Lingnan University's four-year university curriculum, Mr Chan donated funds in the name of his son to establish the Dr Ian Chan Yau Nam Hostel Bursaries to allow less privileged students to enjoy hostel life and fully experience the liberal arts education on campus. Mr Chan also contributed to the construction of the Chan Wai Nam Function Hall, which provides better teaching venues and facilities for Lingnan students under the new academic structure, displaying the Wai Nam spirit and nurturing the next generation.

Mr Chan's benevolence, compassion, and generosity help keep him happy and healthy. He still takes care of himself, and remains chairman of his company although he is a centenarian. He insists on going to his office every day to maintain his physical and mental vitality, and the secrets of his longevity are early to bed and early to rise, making proactive contributions, and aging with confidence.

Mr Chan "loves China, Hong Kong and his hometown", and for many years he has devoted himself to giving back to China, making contributions to Hong Kong, and bettering his hometown. He is a shining example of a Confucian Teochew entrepreneur, Mr Chairman, and I hereby present Mr Chan Wai-nam for the conferment of an honorary fellowship.

Citation written and delivered by Professor Lau Chi-pang