

SOUNDING BOARD

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“Please go beyond your best!” - An interview with Professor Norman Ko

K.K. Lu, Wilson Ho & Banting Wong

On a warm Saturday afternoon in January 2011, we are honor to have a home visit to one of our respectful old friends and teachers, Professor Norman Wah-man Ko on behalf of HKIOA. “Please go beyond your best!” Professor Ko reiterated to us, KK Lu, Wilson Ho, Banting Wong and CW Law, when talking about the profession and attitude towards life.

If you are young enough, you may not have a chance to join Professor Ko’s lecture or speech in acoustics, noise, environmental protection, mechanical engineering. However, if you are living in Hong Kong, you must have seen his sculptures, for examples, the great sculpture in front of Hong Kong Stadium, on the podium of Hong Kong Coliseum, at Wan Chai near Revenue Tower, Causeway Bay along Gloucester Road, Admiralty near Harcourt Road, Ma On Shan Park, Tsim Sha Tsui, Yuen Long, Tai Po, Shau Kei Wan, The University of Hong Kong (HKU), Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPU), Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)..... They are everywhere. Professor Ko is not only a famous acoustician, mechanical engineer and scientist but also a renowned sculptor. His contributions to acoustics or scientific fields are recognized internationally. Having been the Chair Professor of Mechanical Engineering Department in HKU before his retirement in 2000, he has supervised 16 PhD students, published over 240 research papers, organized 4 international conferences and has been the technical committee member of 11 conferences.

His “records” were much more than that, he was the committee member of numerous environmental protection committees of the Hong Kong Government, Appeal Board Member of Environmental Protection Department, Chairman of School Council. He is currently a HKU Emeritus Professor and also an Honorary Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. At present, Professor Ko has retired from acoustic field but is still working actively as an artist (not only sculptor, but painter and photographer as well).



Of course, we are very interested in learning the skills of time management and the key to efficiency. We started the discussion from Professor Ko’s childhood.

Childhood

Like most of our members, Professor Ko was educated in Hong Kong when he was a child. He studied at St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School. He loved reading very much and he was one of the few primary students who visited the school library frequently. He was fascinated with aeroplanes after his mother had brought him an aeroplane model in a bazaar. Since then, he used to read books about aeroplanes. Also, he enjoyed reading books about Greek, Roman and Renaissance histories. He was impressed by the exquisite craftsmanship of the sculptures, and gradually developed passion towards western sculptures.

Professor Ko started studying mechanics in secondary school. He studied very hard; he read Physics university books on his own in F.3. Sometimes, he would challenge his Physics teacher about something he did not understand. However, this always made his teacher got mad and gave him a demerit once. Professor Ko really felt disappointed about this. “A good teacher should teach much more beyond the books!” Professor Ko laughed, “That may be the reason why I become a teacher later.” Besides studying, he made small handicraft like aeroplane models as a part-time job. His “models” were popular “luxury products” among his classmates as it could earn him \$5 each, which was handsome in the 1950s.

Professor Ko was an outstanding student and entered Mechanical Engineering Department in HKU. “It was a difficult subject and could be kicked out easily.” Yet, Professor Ko was the one graduated with First Class Honor in 1963.

Working

Professor Ko did research projects on fluid dynamics during his PhD in England and got a monthly pay of £50. During that period, he always participated in technical seminars with his teacher. He learnt a lot when his teacher asked the presenters tough and critical questions. He also applied this skill, critical thinking, in his research and work. After the studying, he worked as an engineer in England to improve turbine designs. A few years later, in the late 1960s, he got the PhD and came back to be a teacher in HKU. “At that time, Kai Tak Airport is at the centre of city. Both the government and Hong Kong people were not aware of any noise pollution.” Professor Ko pioneered in noise pollution research and published a lot of papers on different kinds of noise pollution in Hong Kong. “They were influential to the government’s establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency and later the Environmental Protection Department.” He gave government useful advice and played an important role in shaping government policies and noise control strategies in the 1970s and 1980s.



Hobbies

Professor Ko started his “multi-professions” in 1970s. To capture wonderful scenes, he reached places such as, Taiwan, Hawaii, Mexico, Philippines etc.. He loved photography and diving, combining the two, he took underwater photos during his leisure time. Meanwhile, he improved the technologies of underwater camera and even got two patents. “We should make things better!” Professor Ko said. He thought that people could not be stuck in a place and must have improvement from time to time, achieving their best.

He joined an evening course in stone crafting when he was doing his research in the University of Cambridge in 1979. Since then, he felt in love with making sculptures. He worked as part-time sculptor and now his art pieces were seen everywhere in Hong Kong. Speaking of his “multi-professions, Professor Ko claimed that, time management is crucial in our daily life regardless of our profession. Information to supplement, other than being a Chair Professor in Engineering Faculty, he also taught sculpture at the Departments of Fine Arts and Extra-Mural Studies at HKU starting from 1988.

Top of the top

Before his retirement in HKU, he worked as a professional sculptor, painter and photographer. It seems impossible for a person to excel in both science and art, but Professor Ko did. When we were talking how busy we were, to make our lives better, and to do our best, Professor Ko shaped his motto, “Do your best is not enough. You have to devote your every effort and go beyond your best!”

In Professor Ko’s view, one should go beyond his best not only in his career, but in his interests as well; “Moreover, “no spare time” is not an excuse!”, he added. HKIOA members shall not only deepen their expertise in acoustics, but also broaden their knowledge through a wide range of interests. Sometimes general knowledge can give us inspiration and creativity in tackling specific problems. Also, state-of-the-art will change over time and people must keep on improving themselves, if they think they have already done the best and are satisfied with it, they doomed to failure. “I know you may be the top in the industry, however, please go beyond your best!” Professor Ko reiterated.

Nowadays issue

Through a photography event, Professor Ko had some contacts with the teenagers. He found that, teenagers nowadays did not understand things in depth, and even not knowing their own will and interest. “If they could not think wide and far, it would be absolutely difficult for them to success in the sophisticated society.” Professor Ko cared about our new generation.

Last

Professor Ko still worked actively in the field of Art. If you are new to Professor Ko but want to know more, please go beyond, and search in the web. There is a lot of information.

The five-hour discussion at Professor Ko’s home and studio was full of joy and happiness. Thank you Professor Ko, we learn much beyond the books. Thanks were also given to Mrs Ko for the good tea and refreshments.

Report on HKIOA 2011 AGM held on 23rd March 2011

K.W. Cheng & C.W. Law



The HKIOA 2011 AGM was held on 23 March 2011 at Hong Kong Yacht Club. Members, the Executive Committee, together with 17 guests from other local professional institutes and organizations (including Professor Andrew Y.T. LEUNG from the Department of Building and Construction, City University of Hong Kong) attended the AGM and joined the Annual

Dinner afterwards. There were also 5 proxies received prior to AGM opening.



was also healthy with balanced revenue and expenditures. The full 2010-11 Annual Report was available at: <http://www.hkioa.org/activities.html>

As for composition of our Executive Committee, Mr. Aaron Lui, Dr. Raymond Lee, and Ir. Maurice Yeung were newly elected, Dr. C.W. Law and Ms. Grace Kwok were re-elected as Committee members.

Taking the opportunity, Mr. Tom Ho also briefed members the progress of organizing the ACOUSTICS 2012 HONG KONG, to be held in 13-18 May 2012 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. While the conference would be a joint meeting of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA), the Acoustical Society of China (ASC), WESPAC, and HKIOA, it would be held in Hong Kong for the first time. Tom expressed that there would be a lot of challenges ahead for the Institute. In closing, Tom thanked members for their continual support to the Institute.

Following the closing at around 8:00pm, Professor Andrew, Y.T. LEUNG gave the attendees an inspiring lecture. The lecture covered the development of building intelligence, various building models, and the intelligent building index adopted in AIIB which was established in 2000 as a non-profit making organization in Asia to promote public understanding and industry adoption of the principles and technologies of intelligent buildings.

The event was completed at around 11:00 pm after enjoying the Annual Dinner and wines by the attendees. Looking ahead, the HKIOA would continue its effort in organizing different kinds of functions aiming at benefiting our members while at the same time striving to uphold members’ professional quality and conduct.



Meyer Poon Memorial Award 2011

Lixi Huang



In 2011, a total of 5 entries were received by 1 July for the Meyer Poon Memorial Award, 4 in the undergraduate category and 1 in the postgraduate category. All five were short-listed and the presentation was held on 1 August 2011 at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The presentation was started at 7:20pm and the award presentation ceremony began at 9:50pm. A total of seven panelists (Richard Kwan, Westwood Hong, Raymond Lee, Tom Ho, CL Wong, Kin Cheng

and KK Lu) were involved.

We congratulate the following students for winning this year's awards and thank all supervisors for encouraging their students to participate in this annual activity.

Undergraduate category:

Winner: CHAN Cheuk Yiu, CHUNG Wai Tung, WONG Ka Ki: Flow-through Silencer by Hybrid Method



Postgraduate category:

Winner: WANG Cong Zhi (PhD): Development of a Vibro-ultrasound Method for Muscle Stiffness Measurement in Vivo

Technical Visit to MTR West Island Line Contract No. 705 Kennedy Town Station and Overrun Tunnel (16 April 2011, Saturday)

M.K. Cheung

The Institute organized a technical visit to MTR West Island Line (WIL) in the morning of 16 April 2011 (Saturday).

WIL is an extension of the MTR Island Line, as well as a community railway that runs below densely populated areas of the Western District. Construction of WIL commenced in July 2009 and is expected to complete in 2014.

Engineers from Gammon Construction Limited provided an update on the current construction status and shared their experience in noise mitigation measures that are being implemented for WIL.

The technical visit was very well received with a total of 21 members attending. Given the interest from the attendance, more future technical visits will be organized to promote the acoustic treatment in different environments.



Congratulations to Grace and Dennis!!!

Y.N. Au Yeung

Let's extend our sincere and warmest congratulations to Grace and Dennis for giving birth to their baby daughter!



1st July is an important day for Hong Kong; it is a very memorable day for our family as well.

Tiny pink nose, ten tiny toes, our precious one is here, making every moment dear.

Grace and Dennis are delighted to announce our little gem, Olivia who was born on 1st July 2011.

After 7 months, she is now not shy to show her beautiful face to all of you. Cheers!

Grace & Dennis