

A Fast Slow-paced Life

A Brief Biography of Professor Leung Sing Fai

“Everything no more than three points.”

This pithy, straightforward and concise remark carries more than a key point to medical students in his class about the essentials of learning. It also reflects how Professor Leung Sing Fai interpreted and faced life. He lived up to his words: work, faith and family were the focal points of his whole life. Professor Leung worked fast, thought fast when teaching, walked fast, and spoke fast. But he was a totally different person at home. He would never bring work troubles home. On weekends, he enjoyed taking a walk, thinking deeply and slowly. He was such a person.

I think, therefore I “do”.

In his medical career of over 30 years, Professor Leung said more than once to his family, friends and students that being a medical doctor was an exceptionally happy experience. He always encouraged his students to share this happiness with patients and their families. Indeed, his enthusiasm for medical science was not limited to healing patients; it also inspired him to devote himself to teaching and research. As a man who liked to think deeply and quietly, he knew too well the difficulties and the good things a doctor encountered. The question was how he would respond to it.

He was always ready to share his knowledge of survival skills in the medical field with junior doctors (housemen and residents). A discussion with these doctors in the classroom some ten years ago became a written version of a meaningful and practical survival guide. He only wanted to give these doctors inspiration and clues. He made many tours around hospitals to give presentations, and speak about how he was trying to put into practice what he had thought about and believed in.

He had an extremely heavy workload, and he was precise and witty in speech. But he could remember the whole class of more than 100 students every year. He could recall each and every one of them by their names, write comments for them, and give them advice. All these efforts he made were not for personal satisfaction but purely in the hope that he could pass on the happiness and that local medical practitioners could unite together and uphold the good spirit of serving patients. The strength of one man might not be enough, but he carried on and worked quietly. We saw what he had been

doing and could feel his passion. It was not surprising that he was granted the Exemplary Teaching Award 13 times by the Faculty of Medicine of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He did not inflate himself with pride and his determination to strive for knowledge was as strong as ever. He obtained a doctoral degree in medical science in 2005.

Love in an instant is eternity.

Professor Leung was indifferent to fame and wealth. Happiness to him was having the environment in which he could think and the time for him to have family meals with his mother and wife, the two women he loved. Being the family's eldest son, he was born in Guangzhou and came to Hong Kong with his parents at a very young age. He attended St. Paul's Primary School and studied at King's College for his secondary education. He was a sensible child, receiving good family education from his parents, and became the Leung Shing Fai of today. As he was talented and intelligent, he attained a 7A1B at the Hong Kong Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations and later entered the medical school with a 3A1C in the Advanced Level Examinations.

He once said that the person he admired most was his mother, a schoolteacher who travelled from their home in Western District to her school in Sai Kung every day and did her best to take care of the family without complaining. When he was a child, he very much enjoyed visiting his father's office on weekends to watch him work. He saw everything, and he studied hard so that his parents did not have to worry about him. In the 1980s, when he was already a medical doctor, he bought a small Christmas tree for the family one day. He wanted to share the joy of Christmas with his parents. To him it was gratifying, a fond memory that should be kept forever.

He was humble and unassuming. He never coaxed his wife, his other half who he loved deeply, with fancy words. His love to her was expressed in a subtle and caring way, from the bottom of his heart. He once drew a four-panel comic strip just to make her laugh, and he even picked dresses for her though he was rather casually dressed himself when he was young. Both husband and wife were happy with their marriage, which lasted more than 20 years, referring to the relationship as "a fine match". They maintained their own independence and yet they respected each other. Mrs. Leung described the time they were together as ordinary but warm.

To his students and junior doctors, Leung was a loving and caring mentor. He had to go through a second operation in 2016 because a cancerous tumour was affecting his

brain, and coincidentally, the anaesthetist participating was his former student Dr Winnie Wan. He thanked her for her help and encouraged her repeatedly, trying to put her mind at ease. He also invited relatives, friends and former students to his Christian baptism and his birthday dinner that evening. His generosity and broadmindedness were like seeds that would sprout and grow in other people's hearts. One of his former students, Dr. Li Chi Wai, was once a puzzled young man but today a mature medical doctor and has a family of his own. He named his son Sing after his teacher with the wish that the child can grow up like him. This is indeed a lifetime achievement for a person to be able to make significant impacts on people of two generations.

The birth of two new lives.

Throughout his life of 59 years, Professor Leung did not stop pondering upon and looking for the truth of life. In January 2015 he was diagnosed with lung cancer which had already spread to the bones and brain. As an oncologist, he was much more knowledgeable than anyone else about the situation. But it only took him half an hour to calm down and began to make arrangements for his family and to prepare to conclude his ambition and pursuits.

Fortunately, with the eyes of the Lord on him, he managed to live normally when he was fighting against this disease. Since he loved his work so much, he tried his best not to miss any teaching lesson, particularly the clinical class. He still taught during the last two weeks of his life. The disease might have taken away his body, but it also made him put down his work for a moment so that he could have time to find out what eternal life was.

In the two years when he was sick, he reflected on a lot of questions, from the meaning of life, the capriciousness of living to the grace of God through the redemption of man. As witnessed in his baptism, he finally realised that man as a creation is small and his strength is as weak as an ant. He knew that everything is in the hands of the Lord through witnessing to the Christians by his side, the wisdom and strength of the Holy Bible, and the miraculous experiences he had. He was grateful and was glad that God had allowed his wife to approach the throne of grace once more. Significantly he chose his birthday on December 28 as the date of his baptism to commemorate the beginning of two new lives.

In the eyes of his mother and wife, Professor Leung was a good son and a good husband. He wanted other people to remember only his happy face. Departure is sorrowful, but God had been with him, which enabled him to go through the difficult

time without much suffering. He was with his wife to celebrate her birthday on January 19 and passed away peacefully the following day. May you rest in God's loving hands, Professor Leung Sing Fai.

After all these life events (like a thousand sailboats travelling by), Mrs Leung concluded Professor Leung's gracious life: "You were a very good man! And you have been very good to me!"

(English translation)