

June 28, 2021

Happy Retirement

Dear Professor Yeh, Dear Friends and Colleagues,

First, I wish to express my gratitude to the organizers of this online meeting for their kind invitation to join in the celebration of the retirement of Professor Yeong-Nan Yeh.

It is hard to believe that I first met Professor Yeh in Taipei precisely thirty years ago, in the scorching summer of 1991, during my first business trip shortly after I left MIT. It was awfully hot out there. Yeong-Nan pronounced that I was not properly dressed, and insisted that he should take me to buy a few shirts, because one would look out of place when wearing a long sleeve shirt at the very time. Of course, I knew that I had no choice but to follow his advice, which indeed turned out to be practically necessary, I must admit.

The streets of Taipei were filled up with cars and motorcycles. I was utterly impressed with the brave drivers and riders. Yeong-Nan told me that all of them were the first rate. I asked a foolish question: where were the second rate? The only answer would be that they were completely wiped out.

To my surprise, while the day passes by, I've come to the realization that this was not entirely a joke, because the thing is that either you got to acquire certain surviving skills, or you will be at the risk of being wiped out.

I have a great many fond memories of my visits to Taipei and the meetings with Professor Yeh in the mainland and in the US. It has been my good fortune to know Professor Yeh as an optimistic, compassionate, and persuasive friend and colleague. Professor Yeh has remained an invaluable source of encouragement, and I deeply appreciate his friendship and support!

I still remember Professor Yeh's complain about the government policy of postponing the retirement age over and over again. At this glorious moment of his official retirement, I am honored to convey my warmest congratulations to him on achieving the highest level of freedom, and I am quite certain that he will manage to enjoy life and work even more thoroughly than ever before.

Professor Yeh once mentioned to me that he could not imagine himself in an administrative position because he could not bear the dressing code that is apparently not in favor of shorts in the summer. I recently came across a Chinese verse in the Qing Dynasty reflecting the relief from official duties. Here is a simplified version:

What a pleasure to be home!

What a beautiful June!

The June in the old days may not mean the same as that of today, but this June is undoubtedly a beautiful season, especially for the beautiful reasons and the sweet dreams of Professor Yeh.

So, Happy Retirement!

Thank you very much for your attention!