

First let me say how honored I am to be invited to say a few words to you about Professor Fan.

I first met Professor Fan forty five years ago, walking over to a "reception for new faculty", for both Professor Fan and I came to UCSB in the fall of 1965. At the time, Professor Fan liked very much to speak French. If he saw my wife (who is French) on campus, he would have a big smile and wave at her saying "Bonjour madame".

Professor Fan had very strong feelings about what a first-class mathematics department should be like, and he did not hesitate to make his feeling known, some times quite aggressively. For this reason, some members of the department and members of the campus outside the department were quite scared by him. But I found that if I disagreed with him on an issue and I gave him my point of view, he respected this. Despite his sometimes forbidding exterior, he was a very kind and generous person. And he and Yu Fen were excellent hosts.

He had a great sense of humor - let me tell you one story about him...

In 1985, Bor-Luh Lin and I organized a conference at UCSB to celebrate Professor Fan's 70th birthday. Before the event, Professor Fan was very tense, because he was afraid that nobody would attend. Well, these fears were ungrounded because sixty three mathematicians came from three continents for the celebration, including Jean-Pierre Aubin from the University of Paris, Felix Browder from the University of Chicago, Zhang Gong-Qing from Peking University, Andrzej Granas from the University of Montreal, Paul Halmos from the University of Santa Clara and Shizuo Kakutani from Yale University.

In 1990, Professor Fan was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Paris-Dauphine. He decided that he would give his acceptance speech in French, and he asked my wife to read it beforehand to make sure that there were no mistakes. Despite the fact that he had not spent an extended stay in France since 1945, his French was essentially perfect. I was out of town at the time, but my wife has very touching memories of being taken by Professor Fan and Yu Fen to a meal. On the way to the restaurant, Professor Fan held one of her arms and Yu Fen held the other one, and in the restaurant they sat on either side of her shoveling food onto her plate. When I returned, she had to go on a strict diet!

I went to two meetings abroad with Professor Fan. The first was to the seminar on "Game Theory and Mathematical Economics" held in Bonn and Hagen in Germany in 1980, and the second was to the conference on "Nonlinear and Convex Analysis in Economic Theory" at Keio University and the Tokyo Institute of Technology in Japan in 1993. In both of these trips, he was a very congenial and interesting companion. Something very strange happened at the seminar in Bonn and Hagen: both Professor Fan and I gave almost exactly the same talk! He had made a vague observation to me several months before about some work that I had done, but neither of us mentioned to the other that we were planning to talk about this topic. He sent a paper to the proceedings of the seminar on a totally unrelated topic - this is what I mean when I say that he was a "generous" person.

Later on, when I took a trip out of the country and people found out that I was from UCSB, invariably they asked "how is Ky Fan doing?", since it had become known that he was in poor health. In a very real sense, Professor Fan was the outward face of UCSB in many mathematical circles.

I want to finish by sharing with you some thoughts from Professor Bor-Luh Lin of the University of Iowa, one of Professor Fan's students, who is unable to be with us today.

"Professor Fan, you have left us, but you will always be remembered in our hearts.

Your love of mathematics and your dedication to mathematics was a model for all of us. You taught us to appreciate the beauty of mathematics, and cultivate the taste for fine mathematics. Your presentations were well prepared, intensive and beautiful, and you always filled the whole blackboard precisely at the end the class. We learned from you what it meant to be a good teacher.

There were five of us working on our Ph.D. theses under your supervision. You assigned five topics from different areas so that we could not talk to each other about them. Your reason was simply that you wanted us to learn how to do research independently. None of the five topics were directly related to your own work, in fact you never mentioned any of your own papers when I worked on my thesis. In my early career, I could not answer the question "what area is your adviser in?" because the small fraction of your papers that I knew of at that time ran the whole gamut from analysis to topology and algebra.

I realized later that you had so many beautiful, elegant and fundamental papers that you could easily have assigned them as projects to your Ph.D. students and build an empire surrounding you. Instead, you pushed us to find our own research paths.

Even after you were confined to a wheelchair in 1995, you encouraged us when we sent you our work for comments, no matter how hard it was for you. After you retired from UCSB, you started on a completely new research topic. When I received your paper which was to appear in the Proceedings of the American Mathematical Society in 1994, you happily informed me that this was your way of celebrating your 80th birthday. You surely lived up to your teaching "think and work on mathematics every waking moment".

Professor Fan, please rest in peace. Your contributions to mathematics will be studied and appreciated for generations to come.

Your student,

Bor-Luh Lin”