

Professor C N Yang's Interactive Session with Students

Professor C N Yang's Dialogue Session with Students (3 March 2010)

Named in honour of Professor C N Yang, one of the greatest scientists of our era, the C N Yang Scholars Programme is one of the premier undergraduate programmes at Nanyang Technological University for science and engineering students. To many of the students under the programme, Professor C N Yang is a model scientist par excellence. It was therefore a great honour for many of them when they were given the chance to interact with Professor Yang at a special dialogue session for students.

During the dialogue session, many students were keen to find out Professor Yang's perspectives and opinions regarding the future directions of physics, mathematics and engineering research. They also wanted to know how they could do better in research as students and how they should cultivate their interest in science and engineering. Concerning the latter question, Professor Yang remarked that they should first honestly find out their own interest.

He mentioned poignantly that when he was young, his father asked an interesting mathematics problem regarding the number of rabbits and chickens given that there are ten



An inspiring dialogue session with Prof C N Yang (7th from left).

heads and thirty legs. After he found out how to solve the problem, he was extremely fascinated by the intrinsic beauty in the solution. Years later, he posed the same question to his children. Although they learned the solution quickly, they did not seem to be enthralled by the beauty of the question. His children had to be reminded about the solution repeatedly. None of his children subsequently became physicists or mathematicians. Their interests were obviously not in science. However they still did well in other career paths.

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