

A Conversation with Professor Yuki

Interview date: 2025/11/7

Interviewer: 陳子騫, 饒漢強 (應數系 18 級)

Interviewee: 千野由喜

We interviewed professor Chino Yuki, a professor who is currently teaching at the Department of Applied Mathematics in National Chiao Tung University of Taiwan. During our interview, we got to know why he wanted to pursue mathematics as his career and how he became a mathematics professor in Taiwan. He also gave advice for the students who are currently studying in the department of Applied Mathematics and for students who want to pursue mathematics studies.

Education

1. What motivated you to pursue a PhD in mathematics?

My decision wasn't driven by a strong desire at the beginning. I explored various career options, but gradually I ruled them out one after another. Eventually, a supervisor encouraged me to focus on mathematics, since it was the subject I naturally enjoyed. When all other paths were no longer suitable, continuing in mathematics and pursuing a PhD became the direction that made the most sense for me.

2. What was the biggest challenge you faced during your studies?

The biggest challenge was simply the subject itself. Mathematics is difficult, and I never considered myself a genius. The field constantly pushed me, so mathematics itself became the core challenge I had to face during my education.

Career

1. What inspired you to become a professor?

I was encouraged by other professors. I was first invited to Taiwan as a postdoctoral researcher, and later more professors suggested that I apply for an academic position here. Their support and guidance influenced my path and led me toward becoming a professor.

2. What do you find most rewarding about your work?

What truly motivates me is the feeling of discovering new connections within mathematics; especially between ideas that seem unrelated at first. When those ideas finally connect and something becomes clear, it brings me a strong sense of satisfaction, almost like solving a puzzle. That moment of understanding is what keeps me motivated.

Teaching in Taiwan

1. What influenced you to pursue an academic career in Taiwan?

Taiwan's academic environment attracted me because it brings together students from many different countries and backgrounds, unlike in Japan where most students share a similar educational foundation. Teaching here challenges me to adjust my methods to suit diverse learners, and that has shaped my growth as an educator. Advice from colleagues in Taiwan also influenced my decision to continue my academic path here.

2. Why did you choose Taiwan instead of other countries?

I compared Taiwan with other places I enjoyed, such as the Netherlands, and I found that Taiwan offers many of the same positive qualities; good weather, friendly people, enjoyable food, and comfortable living. The language difference exists, but it's manageable. With these factors combined, Taiwan became the place I chose to build my career and life.

Advice

1. What advice would you give to students who want to pursue advanced studies in mathematics?

I think it's important to understand that the academic job market is getting more competitive. For that reason, I cannot simply tell everyone to stay in academia. However, if you have strong motivation and passion, then you should pursue it. Above all, learning to communicate and being able to explain your ideas clearly is one of the most valuable skills in research and in professional life.

2. What advice would you give to freshmen in Applied Mathematics?

Your first year happens only once, so enjoy it. Don't focus solely on academic credits; explore, try new activities, and experience campus life. You have many options and freedom to choose your own path, so make the most of it. Let your university life be richer than just coursework.