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Java Talk
(for August 23, 2007 to August 29, 2007)

Every Age Is The Best Age

Sun Yat Fai Lok, (Happy Birthday), Philip Chan!

Chan Dun, who immigrated to Victoria from Canton, China, in 1894, was a good role model for his son, Philip Chan. His philosophy was to “work hard and give value for service.” Some of you will remember their landmark restaurant, the Panama Café. This family-run business opened in 1913 at 536 Johnson Street, and then, during the Depression, moved to 1407 Government Street, where it continued until 1967. In 1930, the breakfast menu included choices such as a Porterhouse steak for 75 cents or sausages for 20 cents. Both came with rolled oats; tea, coffee, or milk; toast; and stewed prunes, stewed figs, or apple sauce. Eggs were extra, at 5 cents each.

Philip Chan, born in Victoria in 1912, became an outstanding role model, but not just for his own five daughters. “He is a great Victorian, a great human being and a treasure to be cherished with pride. He retains his sharp wit and an insatiable desire to learn more,” said one friend. “He is my best friend and he helps the less fortunate,” said another.

Philip, a Charter Member and a Past President, etcetera, of the Victoria Chinatown Lions Club; is also one of the longest-standing Board Members of the Boys & Girls Club Services of Greater Victoria; a Life Member of the Hoy San Society; a Past Director of the United Way; a Past President of the Canadian Restaurant Association (Victoria Branch); and a life-time member of the Pentecostal Church. Philip was made an Honorary Citizen of the City of Victoria (1977); plus he received awards such as the Melvin Jones Fellow Award (1986) and the Judge Brian Stevenson Fellowship (2006), for sponsoring guide dog teams. He is well-known as an avid amateur photographer, for his support of Chinese Veterans and the Boy Scout Movement, and for continuing to improve all the organizations he is involved in!

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