A Tribute to Dr. S. P. Li

Dr. CH Leong

We gather here today to say our final goodbye to Dr. Li Shu Pui.

In bidding him farewell, we also pay tribute to this great man — the grand old man of Hong Kong — a loving husband, a devoted father, a caring doctor, a concern employer, a determined health care builder, an uncompromising philanthropist, a visionary educator and an unreserved supporter of the society at large.

Graduated as a medical practitioner, trained as a surgeon, and excelled in the domain of the Ear Nose and Throat, Dr Li’s work and contribution span many areas and sees no boundaries — most, far beyond the call of the duty of a medical personnel. Together with his beloved brother, Dr. Li Shu Fan, they built the Hong Kong Sanatorium and Hospital, initially a convalescent home with some 20 beds in the swamps of Happy Valley, to now under Dr. S. P. Li a 430 bed comprehensive state of the art hospital standing proudly as one of the best, if not the best private hospital in HK, a Mayo Clinic of the east.

So caring was Dr. Li to his patients and the hospital, that he himself hand pick student nurses to be trained to ensure that the service and standards of the hospital subscribe to his ideals. Until last year or so, when his health deteriorated, he would still chair his own senior management meetings daily ordering rational decisions and offering rational directions, doing hospital rounds to ensure that the HK Sanatorium is providing the best to the patients.

He established the Li Shu Fan Medical Foundation through the income of the hospital, partly to continuously upgrade the HK Sanatorium but more importantly to support patients who could not afford the necessary medical care on the applications from the private visiting doctors in charge who have also decided to waive the professional fees.

A happy staff is the best way to assure the best for patient care. Whilst all public hospitals were slashing staff salary, Dr. Li insisted on doing his best to his staff that the hospital could afford. As a result, staff emolument was not only maintained but increased.

S. P. Li believed that the future of medical practice hinges on enhancing education to medical students and postgraduate doctors alike. Through the Li Shu Fan Medical Foundation, Dr. Li donated extensively to the HK University Medical Faculty, the Federation of Medical Societies of Hong Kong, the HK Medical Association and many others, to assure that medical education could be offered at its very best. The health care profession and the health care services of HK owes much to this grand old man’s philanthropic act and vision.

Having lived a full life spanning 2 centuries, Dr. Li had witness the ups and downs of HK, the devastation of the Japanese occupation and the rebuilt of the city; the end of the colonial era, and the return of sovereignty to the Mother Land. He obviously has the whole of the society of HK at heart. He had stood firmly behind, and unstinted support his beloved wife Dr. Ellen Li in her work as the first lady legislative councilor of HK while maintaining always a loving husband.

It was unfortunate that Mrs. Li passed away a few months before Dr. Li. That had been an enormous blow for this revered old man, to which he never recovered. To Dr. Ellen Li we also offered our fond memories.

It is indeed an honour for me to be invited by the Li family to speak in this occasion. It is my greatest honour to have a chance to recall the contributions of this grand old giant of the medical fraternity, a man who possess all the core values of the time honoured Chinese culture: integrity; frugality; modesty; comity; honesty and trustworthy.

Dr. Li is undoubtedly a man for all seasons. He will always be a model for all, young and old, an icon we will all aspire, a man who stands for courage and commitment, of challenges and successes.

To his sons and daughter and many many members of the family, we offer our sincere condolence.

* Adapted from a speech delivered by Dr. CH Leong at the memorial service of the late Dr. SP Li on 8th September 2005.
Fond Memory of the Late Dr. Li Shu Pui
Founding Treasurer (1965-79)
Federation of Medical Societies of Hong Kong

Dr. Chok-wan Chan

Dr. Li Shu Pui passed away on 31st August 2005 at the age of 102. He was one of the key figures in the formation of the Federation of Medical Societies of Hong Kong in 1965 and Hon. Treasurer of the Federation for 14 years. He will be greatly missed by all members of the professions.

In the early years after formation, the Federation undertook two main projects. One was the publication of the Medical Directory of Hong Kong. The other was the planning of a Medical Centre. Both projects were accomplished with outstanding success by Dr. Li. With donation from the Li Shu Fan Medical Foundation as funding base for publication of the Directory, the inaugural issue of the Medical Directory was published on December 23, 1970. The Medical Centre was planned to satisfy the requirements of its member societies in providing them with offices, and a secretariat with secretarial, clerical and other administrative facilities. As the Federation did not have much financial resources at its disposal, a Building Fund was established to raise funds through the following ways:

1) Sponsoring the Gala Premiere of Puccini’s Opera “Madam Butterfly” produced by the Hong Kong Choral Group in March 1971;
2) Organizing a concert by Los Angeles Doctors Symphony Orchestra Society in May 1973;
3) Organizing a fund-raising raffle in August 1975. The first prize was a Rolls Royce Silver Shadow 4-door saloon.
4) Making appeals to individuals and organizations in Hong Kong for contribution to the Building Fund of the Federation. Of the fund HK$600,000 raised from 1972 to 1976, HK$300,000 was from the Li Shu Fan Medical Foundation.

Under his capable management, the Federation’s financial situation improved gradually and the Federation moved into its headquarters on the 4th floor of the Duke of Windsor Social Service Building in October 1975. All these paramount achievements bear permanent witness to Dr. Li’s great leadership and powerful management skills which contribute significantly to the robust Federation today.

During the 14 years of service, Dr. Li managed to improve the difficult financial situation and put it “on a much sounder footing” through various fund raising activities, fruitful investments and through the generous and unfailing support of the Li Shu Fan Medical Foundation. He has established a strong infrastructure for his successors to promote and demonstrated clear directions for his younger colleagues to follow. He will be eternally remembered by us all at the Federation.
Introducing a Monograph on “Half a Century of Orthopaedics in Hong Kong”

Dr. Kow-tak Chan  MBBS(Hk), FRCS(Glasgow),FHKCOS, FHKAM(Orthopaedic Surgery)
Private Practice

To commemorate half a century of development of Orthopaedics in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong College of Orthopaedic Surgeons and the Hong Kong Orthopaedic Association have collaborated to produce a Monograph, ‘Repair, Reconstruct and Rehabilitate’. (香港骨科五十年)

This 236-page work attempts to trace and record the developmental milestones of the orthopaedic discipline in Hong Kong against the historical progress of the Hong Kong society through the past five decades.

Ever since Dr. Arthur R. Hodgson joined the Department of Surgery at the University of Hong Kong in 1951, the Orthopaedic service has made leaps and bounds as Hong Kong became more and more urbanised. Tuberculosis, poliomyelitis and trauma were commonly seen in the 1950’s and 60’s. Then we had more industrial hand injuries in the 70’s as the Hong Kong economy was fuelled by flourishing industrialisation. Trauma and recreational sports injuries were prevalent in the 80’s and 90’s when people were more affluent and had more free time to enjoy life. The recent decade saw more degenerative disorders of the bones and joints and fragility fractures when Hong Kong people’s longevity was among the top of the world.
As the orthopaedic discipline grows from strength to strength, thanks to the dedication of the fraternity, subspecialisation into different specialties is a natural trend. Many high quality research publications were produced and accepted by world class scientific journals. Hong Kong orthopods became active and involved in the international orthopaedic scene, earning much respect and recognition.

Apart from the clinical and academic excellence, many orthopaedic colleagues took leading roles in local community affairs and voluntary work.

A touch of nostalgia is added through the description of several institutions of historical interest and through the reminiscences of some colleagues.

It’s the people who made history. This Monograph manages to conduct personal interviews with several outstanding forerunners and explores into their interesting career paths and wisdom of life.

In essence, this book is more than a mundane record of the past events. It attempts to inspire the readers to hold the key to the future by knowing the past. It hopes to instill some passion into a profession which is paying too much attention on rationality and coolheadedness. Afterall, this is a caring profession.

p.s. This Monograph can be obtained at the secretariat of HKCOS, Hong Kong Academy of Medicine, Wong Chuk Hang, at the cost of HKD300 per copy.

Enquiry Tel: 2871-8722

e-mail: hkcos@hkcos.org.hk