Yan-Fei Yang, MD, 1911-1997

Yan-Fei Yang, MD, Eminent Professor of Ophthalmology and former chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at the National Taiwan University Hospital and School of Medicine, and the Eminent President, Ophthalmological Society of the Republic of China, Taipei, Taiwan, died December 27, 1997, after a brief illness. He was born November 3, 1911, and graduated from Taipei Medical College in March 1932. He is survived by his 2 sons, 1 daughter, and 6 grandchildren.

He is best remembered for leading the eradication program against trachoma in Taiwan during the early 1950s, sponsored by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) of the World Health Organization and in collaboration with Dr T. C. Hsu, Commissioner of Health, which proved for the first time the efficacy of such programs in developing countries. Yet within Chinese ophthalmology, Professor Yang is remembered as much for his instrumental role in creating the foundations of modern ophthalmic care and education in Taiwan on his return from the United States in 1955.

Together with former Superintendent Professor H. Y. Wei of the University Hospital and the former chancellor of National Taiwan University, Dr S. N. Fu, he established the first ophthalmology residency program in Taiwan at the National Taiwan University School of Medicine in 1950. He subsequently founded the Ophthalmology Society of the People’s Republic of China, with colleagues throughout Taiwan, and was elected its first president in 1960, an office he held until 1978. The first issue of the transactions of the Ophthalmology Society of the Republic of China was published in 1962.

Together with Professor L. S. Ko, President of the Ophthalmology Society of the People’s Republic of China, he formally established the Chinese Board of Ophthalmology in 1987, the first specialty board in China.

Ophthalmology and visual sciences in Taiwan has lost a most respected leader. He was an honest, committed, and unselfish educator and clinician. In his will he requested that his body be donated to the Department of Anatomy at National Taiwan University School of Medicine for medical education purposes. We are deeply saddened by the loss but will cherish his lasting contributions and the influences he has made on the medical community and the colleagues who worked either under his direction or worked with him in the past. We will miss him dearly.

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