

Obituary Shih Chun-Jen: Dedicated Life for Advancement of Neurosurgical Specialty

Sir,
Dr. Shih Chun-Jen M.D.; IFAANS, (2 December 1923–18 June 2017), was internationally renowned Taiwanese neurosurgeon, mentor of a generation of neurosurgeons across the continents, former head of the National Health Administration, great teacher, acclaimed academician, politician and Minister of the Health department, Taiwan.

Shih was born in 1923 at Taichung, Taiwan, Empire of Japan. He received early education during the Japanese colonial period. He studied medicine at National Taiwan University and after completing medical graduation in the year 1947.

In second phase of professional career, Shih started working for the National Defense Medical Center and continued to work for 38 years. Dr. Shih went to work with Dr. Shi-Kai Wang and then, travelled to Montreal to continue his studies in neurosurgery under Dr. Penfield at the Montreal Neurological Institute. Shih completed 2-year (1956–1958) residency at the Montreal Neurological Institute in Canada. After completing his studies for 2 years, he returned to the National Defense Medical College, became a pioneering neurosurgeon.

In 1958, Dr. Shih advocated a cancer registry by implementing his experience at the Montreal Neurological Institute of McGill University in Canada and promptly started a cancer registry among three Taiwanese health-care systems: National Taiwan University Hospital, Tri-Service General Hospital, and the Veterans' General Hospitals. He was the first neurosurgeon in Taiwan to regularly perform brain tumor surgery, while at the same time conducting research.

Prof. Shih was a great teacher, many of his student hold chair of Neurosurgical center across Taiwan including, Dr. Albert L. Y. Shen, who became the first chair of the neurosurgery department at the Taipei Veteran's General Hospital, which was the first department to include neurosurgical subspecialty programs.

Dr. Shih was cofounder of the Taiwan Neurological Society in 1977, which grown expeditiously and currently have around 600 board-certified neurosurgeons as member serving 23.5 million Taiwan population.

Shih served as the head of the general surgery department at Tri-Service General Hospital, which was the dedicated teaching hospital of the National Defense Medical Center during 1975–1984.

In the third phase of professional and academic career, Shih left Tri-Service general hospital and the National defense medical center to lead the Department of Health. He headed the Taiwan National Health Administration also popularly later on known as Department of Health during 1986–1990 under presidents Chiang Ching-kuo and Lee Teng-hui. Prof. Shih facilitated the revision of the Physicians Act and helped push through the Medical Care Act and the Human Organ Transplant Ordinance. Shih's memoir was published in Taipei in 2009. Dr. Shih created multiple landmark medical legislations and improved Taiwan's health-care system. In particular, Dr. Shih established the medical professional criteria for determining brain death and created the Human Organ Transplant Ordinance.

He started cranial surgery for traumatic brain injury, neoplasm, aneurysm and vascular malformation, cervical disc herniation, and meningomyelocele, spinal surgery. He remained actively involved in progress of neurosurgery in patient care, operative procedure, and advancement of research. He was active with World Federation of Neurosurgical Society, Asian-Australasian society of Neurological surgeon, Asian surgical Association, and closely associated with many international neurosurgical Journal and published about 100 publications in international neurosurgical reputed Journals.

His areas of interest included traumatic brain injury, hyperhidrosis, heat stroke, Moyamoya disease, epidemiology of head injury in Taiwan, an animal study on the potential benefit of cold stress in the management of brain edema and intracranial hypertension, neurogenic pulmonary edema, experimental study of intracerebral and intraventricular hematoma in rabbit, myelography with iopamidol, and microneurosurgery in peripheral nerve injury.

Shih had thousands of happy patients treated by him and many neurosurgeons trained under him. Shih died of a heart attack at a hospital in Taipei at the 93 years of age.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

Guru Dutta Satyarthee

Department of Neurosurgery, Neurosciences Centre, AIIMS, New Delhi, India

*Address for correspondence: Dr. Guru Dutta Satyarthee,
Department of Neurosurgery, Room No. 714, Neurosciences Centre,
AIIMS, New Delhi, India.
E-mail: duttaguru2002@yahoo.com*

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

Access this article online	
Quick Response Code: 	Website: www.asianjns.org
	DOI: 10.4103/ajns.AJNS_190_17

How to cite this article: Satyarthee GD. Obituary Shih Chun-Jen: Dedicated life for advancement of neurosurgical specialty. Asian J Neurosurg 2019;14:334-5.

© 2018 Asian Journal of Neurosurgery | Published by Wolters Kluwer - Medknow