Obituary – Prof. Ye Ganyun (1924-2013)

The forerunner of dermatology and venereology in China and the former adviser, deputy director of Institute of Dermatology, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, Prof. Ye Ganyun died from cerebral infarct on 19 October 2013 at the age of 90.

His ancestral home was in Mihou County in Fujian province. But he was born on 21st July 1924 in Beijing, and graduated from the Medical College of Beijing University in 1948. After graduation, he stayed at the college Hospital working as an assistant professor and resident doctor on dermatology and venereology. At the end of 1953, the Professor took part in setting up the National Institute of Dermatology in Beijing (later the Institute of Dermatology, CAMS).

He assisted the Ministry of Health in writing the First National Leprosy Control Plan in 1956, and attended the first National Meeting on Leprosy Control which was held in Jinan city, Shandong Province in June 1957. After the meeting, he set up the research group on sexually transmitted diseases and leprosy in the National Institute of Dermatology with Dr. Ma Haide. Dr. Ma Haide, a famous expert in the United States from the 1930s, worked with the former president of China, Mao Zedong, in Yanan, Shanxi province was appointed leader of the group, and Prof. Ye Ganyun was appointed deputy leader of the group. Prof. Ye Ganyun and Dr. Ma Haide agreed that leprosy was not only a medical problem, but also a social one, and believed that the success of leprosy control must rely on the integration of control measures in physical and social science. He and Dr. Ma Haide first suggested carrying out a research ‘Study of integrated control of leprosy based on County level in China’ in Haian, Jiangsu Province and Chaoan County, Guangdong Province. The study was very successful, and later was extended into all China. This study also received the national award of China Medical Science in 1978. Prof. Ye Ganyun and his colleagues also acquired many study achievements in leprosy, epidemiology, sociology, early diagnosis and treatment and rehabilitation. Some of these achievements acquired National Science Progress Awards Issued by the Country and Ministry of Health.

Prof. Ye Ganyun was appointed as a duty director and Departmental Director for Leprosy Research in 1963, then as Deputy Director and Chairman of the Academic Committee of the Institute of Dermatology, CAMS in 1979. In 1984, he was appointed as a consultant working on leprosy and venereology control.

Prof. Ye Ganyun, as the chief editor, published many Chinese books such as Practical leprology, ‘Sexually transmitted Diseases, ’Dermatology and Venereology’ and ‘Practical Venereology’. He also published more than 60 papers in national and foreign journals. Because of his wisdom and acumen, he was appointed Chairman of the National Consulting Committee of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Leprosy. Prof. Ye Ganyun was also appointed as the Chairman of China Leprosy Association, and adviser to the China
Association for Sexually Transmitted Disease and HIV Control, deputy chief editor for the Chinese Journal of Dermatology, and chief editor for the China Leprosy Journal. He once was a member of the WHO Technical Advisory Group on Leprosy and a member of the International Leprosy Association. Prof. Ye Ganyun was the first tutor for PhD and medical postgraduates in the Institute of Dermatology, CAMS. He had exerted all his efforts to foster many young students throughout his life. Because of his meritorious service, he received the special allowance given by the State Department of China, and was approved as a senior and non-retired expert for all his life by Ministry of Human Resource, China in 1993.

Prof. Ye Ganyun had attended the Workshop on Leprosy Chemotherapy which was organised by WHO in Geneva in 1981. During the workshop, he exchanged experiences of leprosy control with other participants, and worked out the regimen of multidrug therapy for leprosy.

In 1882, invited by Damien Foundation, Belgium, Prof. Ye Ganyun, Dr. Ma Haide and other experts visited Japan, the United States, Canada, Britain, Belgium, India and Thailand to see the leprosy control work and research into leprosy in these countries. He learnt a great deal about leprosy from these countries, and was also able to introduce the Chinese method of leprosy control to them. On his return to China, Prof. Ye Ganyun made a visit report to the Ministry of Health, which included many suggestions on how to improve current leprosy control work, strengthening international academic exchange, setting up the China Leprosy Association and the Chinese Leprosy Journal. All these suggestions were gratefully accepted by the Ministry.

Prof. Ye Ganyun had attended the 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th International Leprosy Congresses, and made several excellent oral presentations there. He worked as a deputy leader of Chinese delegates during the 13th International Leprosy Conference and was the deputy chairman of the Organizing Committee of the 15th International Leprosy Conference which was held in Beijing in 1998. He also acted as the host to many famous international leprosy experts in China, and fostered good relations with them. This provided an excellent base for international cooperation and technique exchange in leprosy between China and the world.

Professor Ye Ganyun will stay in our memory for ever.

Dr. Shen Jianping