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• Insights •

Commemorating the 125th anniversary of the birth of Professor Chen Yaozhen (Eugene Chan) and his academic thoughts

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Chen Yaozhen (Eugene Chan, 1899-1986), ancestral home was in Taishan, Guangdong, China. He was a famous ophthalmologist and medical educator, and one of the founders of modern Chinese ophthalmology.

He graduated from Boston University in the United States in 1927 with a Bachelor of Science (BS) and a Doctor of Medicine (MD). From 1929 to 1934, he worked as a postdoctoral fellow and assistant of ophthalmology at Wilmer Ophthalmological Institute, Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, USA under Professor William H. Wilmer. He returned to China in 1934 and was a professor and chairman of department of ophthalmology at Qilu University, School of Medicine (1934-1937), West China Union University, School of Medicine (1937-1950), Lingnan University, School of Medicine (1950-1953), Sun Yat-Sen Medical University (SYSMU, 1953-1977), and professor in Peking Union Medical College Hospital

(PUMCH, 1977-1983). He was also the Director of the Eye Hospital (1965-1977) and Honorary Director of Zhongshan Ophthalmic Center of the SYSMU (1983-1986).

Professor Chen was the Honorary Chairman of the Ophthalmology Society of the Chinese Medical Association, member of the Medical Science Committee of the Chinese Ministry of Health, and member of the Academic Committee of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences.

From 1955 to 1982, he was invited as an honor guest for the Feratov Ophthalmology Academic Conference, USSR (1955), the American Academy of Ophthalmology Annual Meeting, and the Japanese Academy of Ophthalmology Annual Meeting (1981) and an honor guest at the 24th International Ophthalmology Congress, San Francisco, USA in 1982.

He was awarded the "Contribution Award" by the Asia Pacific Association of Ophthalmology (APAO)

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in 1981 and the “Recommendation Award” by the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) in 1986.

Professor Chen was one of the founders of the Zhongshan Ophthalmic Center, SYSMU in 1983, which is the supporting unit of the State Key Laboratory of Ophthalmology, the Key Laboratory of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education of China.

Chen Yaozhen had achieved by his academic thoughts. He advocated:

1. Vigorously carry out basic research on ophthalmic applications and establish a modern ophthalmic system in China.

2. Develop interdisciplinary ophthalmology as a source of innovation.

3. Vigorously cultivate academic backbone.

4. Promote the integration of “prevention” and

“clinical”.

5. Explore the heritage of Chinese ophthalmology.

6. Commit to promoting academic exchanges in ophthalmology both nationally and internationally and advancing high-level international cooperation.

He is hailed as a great man in modern Chinese ophthalmology.

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