COMMUNICATION

The father of Chinese modern pediatrics – Professor Futang Zhu

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Received: 28 May, 2018; Accepted: 7 June, 2018

FIGURE 1 Photograph of Prof. Futang Zhu.

Professor Futang Zhu (Figure 1), the most famous Chinese pediatrician, was the founder of the modern Chinese pediatrics.

Professor Zhu was born in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China, on November 28, 1899. He obtained his MD degree from the Peking Union Medical College (PUMC) in 1927 and received the MD degree from the Medical School of the State University of New York. He had served as an assistant, lecturer, and professor in the Department of Paediatrics of PUMC. He was trained in Boston Children’s Hospital, Harvard University from 1931 to 1933, and served as the chief of the Department of Pediatrics of PUMC after he returned to China. When PUMC was forced to close its operation after the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941, Prof. Zhu, together with Prof. Ruiping Wu and Prof. Jinxian Deng, founded the Beijing Private Children’s Hospital in 1942. After 1945, he also served as a professor of pediatrics at Medical School of Peking University. In 1952, Prof. Zhu, Prof. Wu, and Prof. Deng actively donated the private hospital to the State, and the hospital was then renamed as Beijing No. 2 Children’s Hospital. Under the leadership of Zhen Peng (the then Mayor of Beijing), Ren Liu, and other municipal government leaders, Beijing Children’s Hospital, the first large-scale hospital for children since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, was founded on June 1, 1955. Prof. Zhu served as its first director till October 1982, and then the honorary director.

Prof. Zhu was a delegate to the first to sixth National People’s Congress, a delegate to the seventh Beijing Municipal People’s Congress, and a member of the Standing Committee of the seventh Beijing Municipal People’s Congress. He served as the chairman of the Chinese Pediatric Society and the editor-in-chief of the Chinese Journal of Pediatrics from 1950 to 1981. In 1955, he was elected as the academician of Chinese Academy

DOI: 10.1002/ped4.12033

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©2018 Chinese Medical Association. Pediatric Investigation published by John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd on behalf of Futang Research Center of Pediatric Development.
of Sciences. His other titles during this period included vice chairman of the National Committee for Children’s Defense, director of the Pediatric Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, and director of the Beijing Institute of Pediatrics.

When he was receiving training in the United States in the 1930s, he carefully investigated the role of placental extract (globulin) in preventing measles, which was hailed as a “children’s gospel” by the TIME. His in-depth research on vitamin C deficiency and its clinical applications was reflected in dozens of publications. In the 1960s, Prof. Zhu led medical staff from seven institutions across China to jointly develop a live attenuated measles vaccine and promoted its use to the whole country. This vaccine dramatically lowered the incidence and mortality of measles and effectively controlled the spread of this major infectious disease.

As early as in 1937, Prof. Zhu decided to compose a monograph on pediatrics in Chinese. Despite his tight schedule, he managed to publish the first edition of Practical Pediatrics in 1943 based on his rich clinical experiences and extensive literature review (Figure 2). For decades, Prof. Zhu and his colleagues have revised this great work six times, which has been highly evaluated both at home and abroad. The book was awarded the first National Book Award (first class) in 1993 and won the National Science and Technology Progress Award (second class) and the Ministry of Health Science and Technology Achievement Award (first class) in 1996. He established the “Gong-Ci-Qin-He (fair, charity, diligence, and harmony) Award” in the Children’s Hospital to honor the departments and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the hospital.

Prof. Zhu had devoted his life to China’s pediatrics. His rigorous scholarship, philosophy of hard work and plain-living, self-discipline, love of the motherland, and love of socialism will always be remembered and followed.

Prof. Zhu always worked hard and persisted. When he was a student at PUMC, he won the “Wenham Prize” for excellent student. Other important awards he received included “Beijing Model Worker” (1958), “Beijing Municipal Science and Technology Congress Award” (1977), “Advanced Worker” (by the National Science Conference, 1978), “National Outstanding Worker for Children” (1987), and the “Camphor Tree Award for Women and Children Undertakings” (by the China Welfare Institute, 1990). In 1991, the Ministry of Health of China and the Canada-China Children’s Health Foundation of Canada decided to set up the “Zhu Futang Award”, which was awarded annually to honor medical staff who have made outstanding contributions to the clinical practice, scientific research, and health care of children in China.

Prof. Zhu had always been concerned about the development and construction of the Beijing Children’s Hospital and personally blueprinted a future of the
Children’s Hospital. He never stopped writing. Even in 1994, he was still personally leading the revision of the sixth edition of *Practical Pediatrics*. Before his death, he still paid close attention to the development of pediatric medicine and child health care. He always earnestly instructed younger generation of doctors to strive for the development of pediatrics in China.

Prof. Zhu, the founder of modern pediatrics in China, and his contribution will be remembered forever!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Jingyan Liu for sorting materials for this report.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest exists with this manuscript.