Obituary

Jin-Pok Kim (1933–2005)

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With great personal regret, I must announce the passing away of a giant in our field, Professor Jin-Pok Kim, on August 16, 2005. He was honorary president of the Korean Gastric Cancer Association and the International Gastric Cancer Association. I would like to express my sincere condolences to his family and his friends.

Professor Kim devoted almost his entire life to the fight against cancer. He operated on as many as 700 cases of gastric cancer per year, totaling 13,135 cases by the end of 2001, which is the largest number of cases in the world at a single institute. He was Professor and Chairman of Surgery of Seoul National University. After reaching retirement age at that institution, he became Professor of Surgery at Inje University and Director General of Paik Medical Center. Not only was he an eminent leader in Korea, but in addition, his contributions to many international societies and associations were truly immense. All the readers of *Gastric Cancer* know that he played a significant leadership role in

the International Gastric Cancer Association and organized the 3rd International Gastric Cancer Congress held in Seoul in 1999. He was also congress president of 15th World Congress of the CICD (Collegium Internationale Chirurgiae Digestivae) in 1996, and an honorary president of the Asian Pacific Federation of Organizations of Cancer Research and Control. He was an honorary member of many international academic societies including the Japan Surgical Society.

One of his great achievements I strongly remember was the live operation in the UICC workshop on gastric cancer treatment held in Korea in 1994. It was a wonderful opportunity for authorities to come together from all over the world and is but one of the countless indelible impressions that Professor Kim made upon the minds of his peers.

He was respected and beloved by members of the Japanese and international associations of surgery, myself included. He came to Japan to attend the 6th International Gastric Cancer Association that I organized in May of this year. I was deeply impressed with his kind and thoughtful support from the floor when young colleagues had problems with English during their presentations. He could speak fluent English and also Japanese, and said, "Learn Japanese to work on gastric cancer" to his son-in-law, Dr. Han-Kwang Yang. His respect for Japanese medical science always gave my colleagues and me great motivation.

In each of our lives, perhaps two or three people stand out as being most influential. For me, Professor Jin-Pok Kim was one of those people. I was fortunate to know him, a true mentor, responsible for the careers of many researchers in the world today.

It is difficult for me to accept the passing of such a close friend, but in his honor I have resolved again to redouble my own fight against cancer, inspired by his spirit.

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