WHO'S WHO

Wen-hua Zhou, Guo-yue Yang Tian-min Cheng: A Brief Biography

Tian-min Cheng Professor Third Military Medical University of the P.L.A. of China

Professor Tian-min Cheng was born in Yixing, Jiangsu Province, in December 1927. He graduated from the Sixth Military Medical University of the P.L.A. of China (Third Military Medical University of the P.L.A. of China now) in 1951 and became a member of Medical and Health Engineering Division of the Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE) in 1996, and a member of the Engineering Management Division of the CAE when it was founded, as one of the first interdivisional members.

In November 1986, Professor Cheng was appointed the president of the Third Military Medical University of the P.L.A. of China. He worked on many academic positions, including committee member of Trauma Society



of Chinese Medical Association (CMA), appraisal group organizer of the Public Health and Preventive Medicine Discipline of the Degree Committee of the State Council, and vice chairman of Chongqing Association for Science and Technology.

Professor Cheng began his medical career when he was enrolled to the National Chiang Kai-shek Medical College at Nanchang in 1945, and after he graduated from the Sixth Medical University of the P.L.A. of China, he became a teacher, an early instructor of pathology, at the University from which he graduated, in 1951. He was one of the major pioneers and practitioners of national nuclear defense medicine. China began to deploy the research on radiological medicine and radiobiology when the decision of developing N-weapon was made.

In 1958, Professor Cheng began his studies on radiation sicknesses. He wrote his first paper on radiation sicknesses, *Pathomorphological Observation of the Infection and Hemorrhage Caused by Acute Radiation Sickness,* which was well received at the first national conference of radiological medicine. In 1960, he began to extend his attention to the consideration on the radiation combined injured and attended the first national academic conference on radiobiology and radiological medicine, in 1963. His early studies and his experiences on the two conferences associated him with nuclear defense medicine, and further involved him in the nuclear tests in the late 1960s. Between 1965 and 1980, Professor Cheng led his research teams to participate successively in the nuclear tests, for 14 times all together. Touched by the horrific scene caused by nuclear explosion, he made up his mind to shift his study on pathology to the preventive medicine of nuclear explosion. In 1967 and 1974, as an experienced participant, and as an invited team member, Professor Cheng worked in the programs of nuclear test data summary and analysis, which made a significant contribution to the construction of the Chinese academic and technological system of protection against N-weapon injury.

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Professor Cheng was a pioneer of nuclear defense medicine, especially of the research of combined injury. He established the first Institution of Combined Injury Treatment in China. He was the first Chinese scientist who discovered and described the basic pathological characteristics and pathogenesis of combined injury, and collected valuable pathological information for clinical treatment and diagnosis. He discovered an after-burns physical phenomenon, named it megakaryocytophagia, and further conducted investigations on its mechanism. A recent study of research literature shows that 60% of international research papers on combined radiation injury are authored by the members of the team led by Professor Cheng.

As one of the appraisal group organizers of the Public Health and Preventive Medicine Discipline of the Degree Committee of the State Council, Professor Cheng, in 1996, proposed to establish a new medical discipline, military preventive medicine, integrating the contents of several related medical courses including military environmental hygiene, occupational hygiene, and nutritional and food hygiene. In June 1997, the Degree Committee of the State Council and the Ministry of Education approved Professor Cheng's proposal, and set up the new discipline and listed it into the national catalogue of graduate programs as a sub-discipline or secondary discipline of the public health and preventive medicine discipline.

Professor Cheng, in 1998, as the editor in chief, led the production of the textbook, *Introductory Military Preventive Medicine*, which prepared the theoretical system and the fundamental frame of content for the new discipline. In the subsequent educational activities, Professor Cheng and his team improved the quality of teaching of the military preventive medicine discipline as graduate program, with systemic teaching innovations. In 2006, on the basis of the original textbook and the educational practices of nearly 10 years, Professor Cheng and his team produced *Military Preventive Medicine*, a monograph which included the most recent advancements of the discipline, of 78 chapters, in 2.46 million Chinese characters in total. In 2007, this monograph was awarded the second "Excellent Chinese Publications Book Award" and the sixth "People's Liberation Army Book Award."

The creation and development of the new discipline greatly promoted and improved graduate education in the field of military preventative medicine. In January 2001, the doctorial program in the public health and preventive medicine discipline of the Third Military Medical University of the P.L.A. was ranked among the first-class disciplines. In April 2002, the military preventive medicine discipline was listed among the national priority disciplines by the Ministry of Education. In 2005, the research on construction and instruction in military preventive medicine was awarded the second-class national teaching award.

The significant contribution Professor Cheng made to medical science and education won him general respect from the scientific communities, and many prizes from governmental, scientific and technological institutions, including two firstclass of the "National Science and Technology Progress Awards," one first-class of the "National Teaching Achievement Awards," one of "Science and Technology Progress Awards of the Ho Leung Ho Lee Foundation."

Professor Cheng still keeps his passion and enthusiasm to research and education in his filed. His achievements are the fruits of the combination of his knowledge, experience, creativity, persistence and scientific attitude. Following Professor Cheng are not just a small group, but a large forest of scientists, technologist and engineers of the younger generations.