

Special Editorial¹

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To those beloved by Professor Changsoon Koh, who is no more with us but whose teachings are within us

The last moments of his life were a long journey to the inevitable. It was near the end of October 1997, when I called on him after hearing about his unexpected surgery. I was then distressed and confused since there remained less than a year before the much-anticipated World Congress on Medical and Health Informatics (MEDINFO 1998) held in Seoul. Then again, his first utterance after surgery was, “Is everything well prepared for MEDINFO 1998”—there, warming my heart, was his resolute spirit fighting the odds with unrelenting passion.

He, for the last several years, continued to speak to us,

though his life; I still hear his voice ringing vividly in my ears, “Medical Informatics is a study of, and for, the future”, “I am much blessed to have worked in Medical Informatics”, “I am grateful to have met admirable people while working in the field”, “No strife, please, among young scholars; you know, most conflicts stem from greed”, “Rectitude is the base of scholarship”.

It was a blessing for me to have had a chance to talk with him at length for the preparation of the society’s quarter-centennial anniversary history book. Just a day before his hospital admission late last year, we talked for many hours until we were almost exhausted. To such questions of mine, “Why then did you do that?”, “Must have it been that way?” did he offer answers of regrets and entrustment—“It was my fault”, “Please never repeat my faults.” That night I cried a lot, in remorse and sadness that I had not realized my mentor’s deep love for his students.

His nom de plume, ‘凡山’; means “common mount,” a familiar mountain that we can see from anywhere in Korea. He was such a mount to us, while always staying near to us. So close was his presence to us that we may not have perceived his magnificence as we should have. Only later did I realize that he is a mountain of a person with heights of dignity and awe. Teacher, now rest in everlasting peace, and leave the remaining work to us. In your memory, we will earnestly endeavor towards the goal we share.

¹The current editorial is devoted to the memorial address for Prof. Changsoon Koh who passed away on August 6, 2012. Prof. Koh was the founder of KOSMI, the President of KOSMI from 1987 to 1997, and former HIR advisory board member.