Our most respected mentor, Dr. John H. C. Ho, passed away peacefully on August 10, 2005 (Fig. 1). He was deeply respected as the father of radiology and oncology in Hong Kong, and was fondly nicknamed “Emperor Ho.” He was decorated Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for his outstanding service. His contributions to our profession were profound and far reaching. His legend is an inspiration to all.

Dr. Ho was born on July 6, 1916, the Year of the Dragon. He was a unique character with tremendous self-confidence and absolute determination, a great visionary who excelled at creating opportunities to turn his dreams into reality. He was a selfless patriot. Soon after his graduation from the University of Hong Kong (HKU) and his marriage in 1940, he volunteered for service in the Red Cross under the Chinese Defense League and worked in army field hospitals across China until the end of the war in 1945.

He was a brilliant scholar. With a scholarship awarded by the British Council, he started studying radiology in London in 1946. Besides obtaining higher qualification in internal medicine (awarded membership in 1947 and fellowship in 1963 by the Royal College of Physicians), he was one of the very few who was given fellowships in both diagnostic and therapeutic radiology by the Royal College of Radiologists (United Kingdom).

Dr. Ho was a very caring doctor, with exceptional acumen. To his patients, he was both a trusted friend and a savior who brought them hope and good cheer. Had he so desired, he could have set up his own lucrative private practice. Hence, many of his grateful patients gave generous donations to support his quests.

Dr. Ho was a most dedicated and outstanding leader. He was the director of the entire public service in both diagnostic and therapeutic radiology in Hong Kong from 1950 to 1985. At a time when oncology was poorly recognized, he had to fight through much bureaucratic red tape to build the whole spectrum of cancer services from scratch. Because the development of cancer services was not a government priority, many of his ideal goals had to be implemented through private donations.

When he first took over the service, the small department at Queen Mary Hospital had only one 400-Kv Maxima and no hospital beds for patients requiring external radiotherapy. In 1956, with financial support from Oxfam, he built a hostel with 32 beds and obtained a donated van to transport patients to the department for daily treatment. In 1964, with a generous donation from the Royal Jockey Club, he set up the Institute of Radiology and Oncology, well equipped with the most advanced equipment of the time, at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. In addition, he founded the Hong Kong Anti-Cancer Society (HKACS), a charitable organization through which he built the first hospital (Nam Long Hos-
ated staging system should be used for NPC because the natural behavior and therapeutic considerations are grossly different from other head-and-neck cancers. The current staging system by the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) and the American Joint Committee for Cancer Staging and End-Results Reporting was largely based on his concepts. The radiotherapy technique that Dr. Ho designed was one of the finest two-dimensional techniques at that time, and the achievement of 5-year disease-specific survival of 52% during the period 1976–1985 was the first breakthrough for what used to be an inevitably fatal cancer.

The honors that Professor Ho received are phenomenal not only in terms of number but also in terms of global extensiveness. The most prestigious ones include the following:

- In Europe: Order and Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Cavaliere of the Order “Al Merito della Repubblica Italiana” by His Excellency The President of the Republic of Italy, the 32nd Skinner Lecture by the Royal College of Radiologists, Certificate of Appreciation by the UICC, the 1st Werner Henle’s Memorial Lecture, and the Award by the International Association for Research on EBV and Associated Diseases
- In North America: Honorary Fellow of the American College of Radiology, the first Gold Medal and Inaugural Lecture of the del Regato Foundation, Gold Medal and the 5th Annual Lecture of the Gilbert H. Fletcher Society, Gordon Richards Memorial Lecture by the Canadian Association of Radiologists, the Albert Soiland Memorial Award
- In Australia: Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Radiologists of Australasia
- In Asia: the 1st Sir Patrick Manson Gold Medal, Honorary Doctor of Science, and the 6th Digby Memorial Lecture by the University of Hong Kong, Award by the Asian-Oceanian Congress of Radiology, Honorary Fellow of the Hong Kong College of Radiologists

With his warning against the Southern Chinese habit of feeding babies at weaning age with salted fish and a gradual change to a Western diet, the age-standardized incidence rate of NPC in Hong Kong dropped by more than 40% over a 25-year period (1975–1999). Furthermore, thanks to the enthusiasm that he inspired in his disciples, treatment results have further improved, to a 5-year survival rate of 80% for patients treated in recent years (1996–2000). All these were the fruits of the seeds that Emperor Ho sowed during his reign. It was his lifelong crusade against cancer that led to both the cure and prevention of a major cancer in his home country.

With all his eminent contributions to our profession, no words could adequately express our profound respect and gratitude for the unique heritage that he gave us. We earnestly hope that this brief account will bring loving memories for all his friends and, above all, inspiring messages for younger generations. A tribute to a Great Giant—Emperor John Ho!