Farewell Message

To everyone - family, friends and colleagues – thank you for joining us here today at the funeral service for Dr. Shigeaki Hinohara. As chairperson of the funeral committee, I wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to all.

As one of the numerous physicians who have been directly tutored by Dr. Shigeaki Hinohara along our career paths, I realize anew, in deep gratitude, how much I am indebted to this giant of our profession, and I hereby wish to express my sincere sympathy to his family and relatives, with your loss.

After Dr. Hinohara graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at Kyoto Imperial University in 1937, he entered the graduate school for clinical training and research in the field of cardiovascular medicine, and was appointed as an internist at St. Luke’s International Hospital in 1941. Until 2014, over a period of 73 years, he served in such positions as president and chairperson of the board of trustees of St. Luke’s International Hospital, president and chairperson of the board of trustees of St. Luke’s College of Nursing, and later continued to lead the staff of St. Luke’s International University and Hospital as honorary president of both the university and the hospital, and honorary chairperson of the board of trustees.

Dr. Hinohara’s legacy, even if the focus is only on the field of medicine, lies in the emphasis he put on treating every single patient by a holistic approach, his pioneering work in the fields of primary care, or general medicine, and the way he succeeded in promoting preventive medicine through a system of comprehensive medical checkups and health promotion. He furthermore distinguished himself in carving a new disease category called “lifestyle-related diseases,” which has come to be a phrase on everyone’s lips, introducing the concept and facilities of hospice and palliative care, and actively supporting educational and training curricula for first-class doctors and nurses. Surpassing medicine, he also touched a huge number of people by influencing their view of life and way of living.

Although Dr Hinohara suffered sequelae of tuberculosis he had contracted as a medical student, he lived beyond the age of 100 years, and – until quite
recently - was in exceptionally good health and performed important social activities. However, his organs had been weakened by age, and he was hospitalized in March this year for a relatively mild infection. His ability to swallow was affected and he could no longer eat or drink enough. With his family present, I asked him whether he wanted to have an artificial nutritional supplementation through a tube, and whether he wished to return home. He clearly answered, “I don’t want to receive a tube feeding. I just want to go home.”

He returned home where he was lovingly taken care of by his family and a team of devoted general internists and home-visiting nurses from St. Luke’s. He passed away peacefully early in the morning of July 18th.

Since 1976, when I started as an intern at St. Luke’s International Hospital, I was molded by Dr. Hinohara’s teaching and guided by his attitude and behavior.

At St. Luke’s International Hospital, during Dr. Hinohara’s grand rounds every Tuesday morning where we presented his patients, in discussions and through personal advice he gave on numerous occasions, he not only taught medical knowhow and skills, but also shared insight into the basic values expected of a physician, and the way of life of a professional caregiver.

On a more personal note, I can clearly remember when I met Dr Hinohara for the first time, he was describing his study experience at Emory University in the United States, at age 40, saying, “I was learning so many new things there every day, it felt to me as if I was growing taller from absorbing all the information.” And surely, when I later studied at a hospital and university in the United States, thanks to Dr. Hinohara’s arrangement and encouragement, I had exactly the same invigorating experience. After my return, I continued working with Dr Hinohara on a variety of occasions, very special experiences that provided me invaluable opportunities of pioneering into new fields.

There are many, many more medical professionals who had similar experiences here at St. Luke’s International Hospital and St. Luke’s College of Nursing, They were able to learn from Dr. Hinohara, and grow in their professions. He was instrumental in enhancing all of our lives.

For the last 13 years I had the opportunity to work side-by-side with Dr
Hinohara, and had the chance to understand the thought and attitude behind his “way of life.” I learnt, for example, that his spiritual pillar was Christianity, and that this embraced all the humanities - from philosophy to literature. I was amazed by the unrelenting energy with which he worked, his unashamedly endless curiosity, and his childlike excitement about new advances. He did not forget the past, though he was always living in the present, and always ready for the future. He was passionate about the importance of making high-quality information available, in an easy, understandable way, to all people - and this was not limited to the field of medicine. I will forever find myself a part of a wide arc Dr. Hinohara strove to create.

Dr. Hinohara lived to be 105 years. However long that is, and however great he was, he must have dreamed of many more accomplishments.
We will miss him. Dr. Shigeaki Hinohara, please rest in peace!

Tsuguya Fukui
Chairperson of the Funeral Committee
President, St. Luke’s International Hospital/
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