



International Leprosy Association

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Obituary

Dr. Yo Yuasa 1926 – 2016

The International Leprosy Association is sad to announce the passing of Dr. Yo Yuasa in September, 2016. Dr. Yuasa served as President of the ILA for two terms from 1993 to 2002. His first contact with ILA was in 1958 when the 7th International Leprosy Congress was held in Tokio. At that time, he served as liaison between Dr Wade, from ILA and the local Japanese organizers of the conference. That was the beginning of a long relation with the ILA. From 1975 to 1980 Dr. Yuasa took the post of medical director of the Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation. He continued to serve the same organization now as Executive and Medical Director till 2005, when he assumed the position of advisor. Dr. Yuasa had a close relation with the action that led to the process of implementation of WHO recommended MDT and the concept of Elimination of Leprosy.

Fortunately, the Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation has recently released a collection of the speeches and writings of Dr. Yo Yuasa: “**A Life Fighting Leprosy**”. Dr. Yuasa’s working life coincided with unprecedented changes in the world of leprosy, not least the introduction of multidrug therapy and its public health application. Dr. Yuasa was, in his own words, one of MDT’s “most radical protagonists” and in this collection of his speeches and writings spanning a 30-year period, he can be seen arguing passionately for MDT and making the case for why delivering the cure to all who need it should be seen as a moral responsibility of public health policy.

A life devoted to leprosy and leprosy affected persons, Dr Yo Yuasa's demise is a great loss to all of us and to ILA in particular. His great contribution in the field of leprosy will be remembered by each of us and by the future generation. The ILA fully regrets the passing of Dr. Yuasa.

Marcos Virmond MD, PhD
ILA President