

In Memory of Prof. Jialiang ZHAO (1944-2024)



It is with profound grief that Prof. Jialiang ZHAO, former Vice-President of the Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology (APAO), a distinguished glaucoma specialist, a founder of ophthalmic public health in China, and an instrumental figure in bridging the ophthalmic communities in China and the world, left us peacefully on June 23, 2024, at the age of 79.

Prof. Zhao graduated from Peking Union Medical College in China and dedicated his career to the Peking Union Medical College Hospital, where he rose to become Director of the Department of Ophthalmology. His in-depth research significantly improved the early diagnosis of primary angle-closure glaucoma, elevated the standards of primary open-angle glaucoma diagnosis, and advanced the surgical techniques for complex late-stage glaucoma cases, benefitting innumerable patients. He also conducted extensive surveys on other eye diseases, including trachoma and cataract in China, providing important references for healthcare policymakers.

Equally devoted to promoting scientific exchanges across borders, Prof. Zhao worked as a Visiting Scholar at the Doheny Eye Institute, University of Southern California, and the National Eye Institute in the United States between 1989 and 1993. Throughout his career, he introduced many globally advanced ideas and techniques to China, and brought ophthalmology in China to the world stage. Remarkably, it was through his efforts that the Chinese Ophthalmological Society joined the APAO and the International Council of Ophthalmology. His contributions earned him worldwide recognition. In 2004, he became the first ever Chinese scholar to be elected an Academician of the Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis (AOI). Subsequently, he was elected Vice-President of AOI in 2018.

At APAO, Prof. Zhao is fondly remembered for his visionary leadership and unwavering commitment. Year after year, he generously shared his pioneering research as an invited speaker at our annual Congress. He also served as our Vice-President (2008-2012) and Chairman of the APAO Golden Jubilee Celebration Committee. To honor his contributions both within the organization and to the Asia-Pacific region respectively, APAO recognized him with an Achievement Award in 2012 and the Jose Rizal Medal in 2013.

We extend our deepest condolences to Prof. Zhao's family during this difficult time. His indelible legacy in eye care will continue to shine.



“Professor Zhao’s lifelong dedication to elevating the standards of eye care for patients and promoting the science and art of ophthalmology across nations was exemplary in carrying out the missions of APAO. His exceptional efforts bridged the ophthalmic community in China with the world, while his pioneering research left an indelible mark in the profession. We all revere him as a lofty role model, and will miss him as an esteemed scholar and cherished friend.”

*Ava HOSSAIN
President, APAO*

“In the field of glaucoma, Professor Zhao has always been an inspiration and a key role model for me. Personally, I am particularly indebted to him for bringing the Ophthalmology Museum Exhibition from Beijing to Hong Kong during the APAO 2018 Congress. His professional wisdom, gentlemanly smiles, and great enthusiasm to inspire and teach our younger generations of ophthalmologists and glaucoma specialists will always be very fondly remembered.”

*Clement C THAM
Secretary-General & CEO, APAO*

“Deepest sorrow for Prof Jialiang ZHAO. May almighty rest his soul in peace.”

*Md. Sharfuddin AHMED
Regional Secretary for Bangladesh, APAO*

“Jialiang was a great friend and colleague and we worked together one way or another for 40 years or so. He made so many real contributions and really helped start and led much of the early development of ophthalmology in China from the 1980s. He was a lovely man to work with, always fun to be with, and always with a smile. He also did so much to help develop and lead the APAO in a number of leadership roles.”

*Hugh TAYLOR
Councilor-at-Large, APAO*

“Nepal Ophthalmic Society is deeply saddened by the sudden demise of Prof. Jialiang Zhao. We would like to express our deepest heartfelt condolences to the family and the Chinese Ophthalmological Society. May his soul rest in peace.”

*Meenu CHAUDHARY
President, Nepal Ophthalmic Society*

“May Prof. Zhao rest in peace and let’s express our deepest condolences to his family.”

*Khamphoua SOUTHISOMBATH
President, Lao Ophthalmological Society*