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## Shizuo Oi: the 2002–2003 ISPN president

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### A big dream and fantasy

Shizuo Oi was born on 12 June 1947 in Toyooka, Hyogo, Japan, in a Christian family of doctors. His father, Yoshio Oi (1911–1982) was an ear/nose/throat (ENT) doctor, and his aunt, Toshiko Oi (1899–1951), was one of the first female doctors in Japan to graduate from Tokyo Women's Medical University School of Medicine. His two elder brothers, father-in-law, brother-in-law and grandfather-in-law are all doctors. He decided his specialty was to be neurosurgery because of the influence of his eldest brother, Yoshiyuki Oi, also a neurosurgeon, who obtained a doctorate with a series on hydrocephalus research in the 1960s. In these familial circumstances, as a child, his first goal was to become a doctor of medicine. However, before premedical school age, he excelled most at sport baseball, volleyball, swimming, skiing, golf, track events (short and long-distance running), etc., and also at photography. He was the only gold prize winner for the Hyogo Prefecture athletic competition in his high school out of 550 pupils. His performance recorded at that time was 11.8 s in 100-m track running, 80 m in ball throwing, 85 cm in the high jump, 70 kg in a hand grip power (right = left), etc.

He was admitted to the Kobe University School of Medicine in 1967. As a medical student, he devoted his

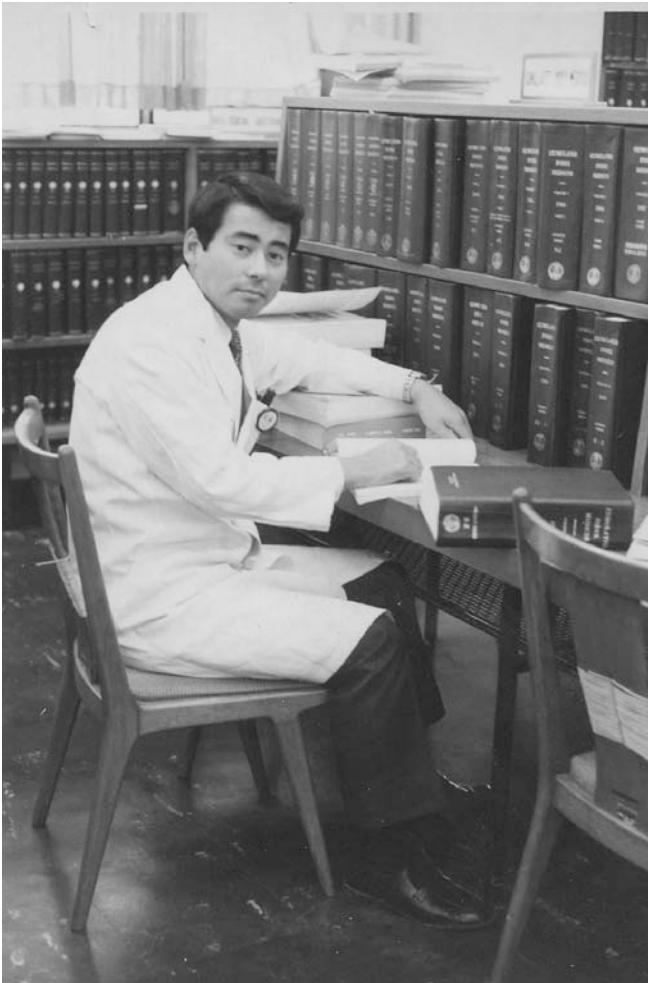


energies to an interesting school club activity, i.e., the English Speaking Society (ESS). He became the 20th Club President for the academic year 1970–1971, and founded the West Japan ESS Medical Student Association (WJEMA) in 1971, which he continues to develop today and more actively promotes globalized education to medical students in Japan. By the fifth year of medical school, despite these activities, he shifted his career or future goal from general practice to an academic professional position on a par with the global standard. It was a great dream and a fantasy that naturally grew in his young, but extremely active, creative, and ingenious mind (Fig. 1).

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### Meeting with his eternal teacher

Shizuo graduated from medical school without a single examination failure in all the subjects on the medical



**Fig. 1** The young Dr. Oi, beginning the dream

curriculum over 6 years. Soon after graduation, during his internship, he spent 6 months in New York and Chicago learning neuroradiology. Then, in December 1974, when he had finished the 6-month selective period, he encountered the moment of truth in his life, the first personal meeting with Professor Anthony J. Raimondi [1–3]. Shizuo remembers the day clearly, with snow on Chicago Lake Shore, at Professor Raimondi's home, where he was informed that he would be accepted for a residency (6 years) at the Department of Neurosurgery, Northwestern University Medical School. It was the moment at which the gateway to an academic profession on a global level was opened to Shizuo. His dream and fantasy planted in his student days started to flower in Chicago.

Professor Raimondi's education for the residents was thorough both in clinical and in scientific aspects. Half were from the United States and half from other countries. During Dr Oi's residency (1974–1980), a total of 26 residents graduated from Professor Raimondi's training

program[4]. Seven of them specialized in pediatric neurosurgery: Dr Concezio Di Rocco from Italy (1974), Dr David McLone from USA (1975), Dr Kiyoshi Sato from Japan (1977), Dr Yoon Sun Hahn from Korea (1979), Dr Jose M. Velasco Siles from Mexico (1979), Dr Tadanori Tomita from Japan, USA (1980), and Dr Shizuo Oi from Japan (1980). All of these students without exception became leaders in pediatric neurosurgery at an international level as university professors. Professor Raimondi held "Alumni Day" once a year in June with his students, and all residents had to present their "best" scientific paper for the Award of the Year.

The Anne Addington (experimental research) and Eleanor Clark (clinical research) Awards have been established as name awards through private donations for microsurgical research for particularly promising investigators. The awards are to stimulate young minds to address themselves to problems directly related to pediatric neurosurgery, in general, and primary or secondary hydrocephalus, in specific, and to encourage warmth and compassion in treating children... [4]

During such a strict residency, Shizuo published 21 original scientific papers, 19 of which he was the first author. He received the Eleanor Clark Award 3 years in a row in 1976, 1977, and 1978. Through these achievements, he gradually recognized that his big dream and fantasy would be in the field of Pediatric Neurosurgery.

### **A great help**

As Shizuo had decided to go to the United States for early medical training and study, he had tried to get married before the residency. At that time (1970s) in Japan, arranged marriage was most common and he had arrangements 13 times, including four times during the examinations for graduation. However, the number "13" was a great and lucky number for him. She was the graceful Noriko, a professional pianist. Before Shizuo left Japan for the United States, there were just 4 weeks left. They met every other day and he proposed to her after 3 weeks. Their two boys were born in the United States, Takanori in Chicago and Takayuki in Evanston. It was a very quick decision and goal to get married (Fig. 2), but their yoke of matrimony has been supported by their respect and love for each other. As all of us are aware, they are always happy and smiling, and have never had as much as a quarrel with each other. Shizuo remembers that he could overcome days of suffering at any critical moment with the help of Noriko.



**Fig. 2** Shizuo and Noriko Oi on their wedding day

### Great steps toward neuroscience

After the residency, Dr Oi started his clinical and scientific activities, focusing on Pediatric Neurosurgery as the Chairman of the Department of Pediatric Neurosurgery, National Kagawa Children's Hospital, which is one of only two National Children's Hospitals in Japan and a well-equipped institution. He was in his mid-30s and performed extensive basic experimental studies as well as clinical research. His extraordinarily active investigations produced epoch-making theories and evolutionary treatment modalities in the field of pediatric neurosurgery by global standards. These include embryopathogenesis of spina bifida and cranium bifidum: "Overgrowth and Reopening," Spina Bifida Neurological Scale: "SBNS," Surgico-Anatomical Embryo-Pathogenetic Classification of Spina Bifida: "EPSAC-SB," slit-like ventricle as a cause for "Post-shunt Isolated Compartment," Perspective Classification of Congenital Hydrocephalus: "PCCH Stage I-V," Hydrocephalus Chronology in Adults: "HCA Stage I-V," Long-standing Overt Ventriculomegaly in Adults: "LOVA," Hydrocephalus Parkinsonism Complex, Neuro-Vascular Developmental Interaction: "NVDI," and Minimally-invasive Preferential Management of Pineal Region Tumors, A new Fine Rigid-rod Neuroendoscope: "Oi-Sa-

mii Handy Pro" with a New Technique of "Free-hand Maneuver," The "Evaluation Theory in CSF Dynamics" and "Minor Pathway Hydrocephalus," etc. Dr Oi then moved to Kobe University in 1986 and was next invited to Tokai University in 1991 as the Associated Professor of the Department of Neurosurgery by the great world leader of CSF and hydrocephalus research, Professor Osamu Sato. Professor Sato was fascinated with Shizuo's extensive work with hydrocephalus and his international activities, and Professor Sato nominated Shizuo as the seventh Secretary (1991–1996) of International Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery (ISPN; Fig. 3). Dr Oi expanded his work over the next 8 years at Tokai University with Professor Sato's great support. Another Professor, Kiyoshi Sato, was also a great teacher to Shizuo in Neuroscience and like an elder brother, as well as Professor Concezio Di Rocco from "Professor Raimondi's School" (Fig. 4). Professor Raimondi, discussed with Professor Madjid Samii, Hannover, Germany, and Shizuo was appointed and invited to Hannover as the Permanent Visiting Professor at Nordstadt Hospital, Hannover since 1991, and later, Director and Professor of the Department of Pediatric Neurosurgery at the International Neuroscience Institute (INI), Hannover, Germany. Shizuo was blessed with such great teachers in his academic and personal life...

In addition to his occupancy of these professional positions, Dr Oi had published by 2003 213 original papers (authored 133 and co-authored 80), 108 review articles, 32 books, and 72 chapters in his 30-year career as a neurosurgeon and academician. For these achievements, Dr Oi received the following awards (as well as the three Eleanor Clark Awards in 1975, 1976 and 1978 during his residency): the "Nagai Prize," Award for "A Man of Merit" Tottori Red Cross Hospital (1981), the "Galenus Prize," Award for the Best Scientific Paper (Pediatric Neurosurgery), The Japanese Neurosurgical Society (1983), the "Kato Prize," Award for the Best Scientific Paper, The Japanese Neuroradiological Society (1984), the "Kawabuchi Prize," Award for the Best Scientific Paper, The Japanese Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery (1986), "The Best Operative Technique," Award for the Best Operative Video Presentation, The Japanese Congress of Neurological Surgeons (1991), the "Robert H. Pudenz Award" (CSF Physiology Prize) for 1990 (1991), and the "Kawano Prize," Award for the Best Academic Pediatric Doctor for 2002, The Kawano Foundation for Pediatric Medicine (2002). Dr Oi had, up to 2003, published a total of 34 scientific papers in the official journal of the ISPN, *Child's Nervous System* (23 as the first author and 11 as the co-author). This record has never been broken...

### Humanity and Christianity

Shizuo, Noriko, and their two sons came back from the United States to Japan in 1980, and soon after, Shizuo's

**Fig. 3** Representatives of the XXIV Annual Meeting of the ISPN



**Fig. 4** Professor Kiyoshi Sato (*left*), Professor Concezio di Rocco (*middle right*), Professor Shizuo Oi (*right*) and their teacher Professor Anthony J. Raimondi (*middle left*)

father, Yoshio Oi, expired. Shizuo was just at the starting point for his subspecialty and needed his father's suggestions so much that, as he remembers, he was severely depressed. His teacher, Professor Raimondi, sent a letter immediately to him:

Shizuo, For a man, there are two great losses: his father, his son. Life will have it that we must all suffer at least one of them, a pain for which there is no consolation, only the effort to turn the loss to a strength, by having a better life, being a better man, remaining thoughtful, and finding peace within oneself and with one's own life. My condolences...

Anthony J. Raimondi [1].

At Christmas in 1983, 1 year after this episode, Shizuo, Noriko, and their two sons were baptized at a Catholic

church in Japan. Shizuo deeply committed himself to the Christianity that appeared in his teacher Professor Raimondi's noble mind, figure, and teaching. The most humane teacher, Professor Raimondi was just like that, as Mrs Lucia Raimondi states,

Actually, Shizuo was born to a Christian family, which was extremely rare in Japan at that time. His grandfather, Yosoji Oi (1866–1938, born in the Edo Keio era, 15th generation of the Oi family), was the first Christian in the Oi family tree. Although Shizuo's father was a Christian, he let his three sons to decide their own religion.

As his godfather, Professor Raimondi gave Shizuo the name "Ambrose":

During the fourth century after the birth of Christ, St. Ambrose, through his lifestyle, tireless work, and compassionate understanding, was successful in bringing Christianity into the lives of the highly civilized pagans who lived in the province which is now Milan...He was able to forgive the sinner, to inspire the zealot, to comfort the mystic. I suggest that you take the Christian name of Ambrose [1].

### **International Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery**

Shizuo was deeply involved with the activities of the ISPN and enjoyed tremendously being assigned various offices. He worked for 10 years on the Executive Board, as the Secretary from 1991 to 1996, and as the Treasurer



Fig. 5 Shizuo Oi, the 30th President of the ISPN

from 1996 to 2000 [5, 6]. As all ISPN members recognize and agree, Shizuo is an extremely well-organized person, maintaining all records and documents/photos, and so he was really the right person for the positions of Secretary and Treasurer. The history of the ISPN, with its valuable records and stages of development, was summarized and published as the 20th Anniversary Member's Booklet in 1992 [5] and as the 30th Anniversary Member's Booklet in 2002 [6], due to his devoted and organized work. On 26–31 October, 2002 Shizuo served the 30th Annual Meeting of the ISPN in Kyoto, Japan as the Congress Chairman. All the participants, over 300 people, were fascinated both by the scientific program and the delightful events designed by Shizuo with considerable and outstanding hospitality. Shizuo, as the 31st President of the ISPN (Fig. 5), gave an excellent Presidential Address in Monaco on 16 September, 2003, entitled "Development in Harmony" [7]. He was at the summit of his life as a pediatric neurosurgeon and has by now matured through his terrific effort, patience, suffering, and through the support and love of many people.

### Education, for ever

As time passes I see more and more within you the gentle, sensitive, poetic characteristics of a person God made to help his fellow man. I am thankful for having had the opportunity to influence, in some little way, your life, and to give it direction [1].

On 15 June 2000, Shizuo and Noriko were invited to Verona, Italy, by Professor Raimondi's arrangement. They

stayed at a small hotel in the village of Monteleone, Verona, just next to Professor Raimondi's house. In the early morning of the next day, Professor Anthony J. Raimondi passed away.

June 16, 2000 at Monteleone: it was the last day when we met. You were warm, and Dr Raimondi appears to me as a Saint; Nothing else... [1].

Shizuo bought all the flowers from a florist's shop in the village and brought them to the room where the great teacher in his life forever lies...

On 1 January, 2001, 6 months after Professor Raimondi passed away, Shizuo was appointed the first Professor of Pediatric Neurosurgery in Japan, as the Head of the Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery, The Jikei University School of Medicine, the oldest medical school in Japan, which was established in 1881. Professor Concezio Di Rocco was appointed the equivalent in Italy at almost the same time. They are really brothers with "the Teacher and the Father."

You have reached another step which furthers your career—a very deserved one! Now you have become a Teacher. As you grow and train your own students remember you learned from the most humane teacher...In sending you this pen (which belonged to our dear Professor) and which I engraved with both of your initials AJR and SO, I hope that when using it you will feel his presence and know that he is watching over you and smiling at your achievement...

Lucia (Fig. 6 [1]).

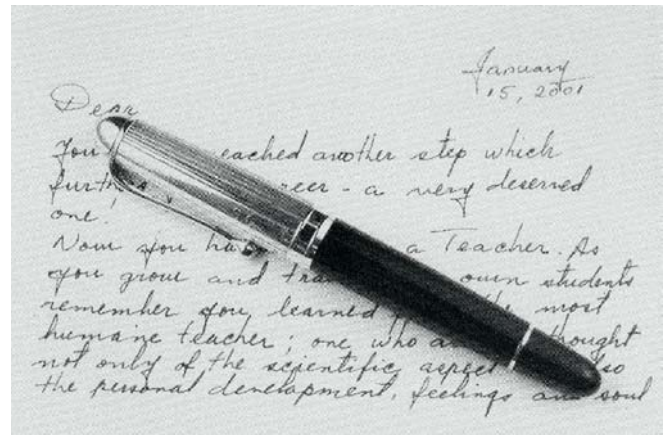


Fig. 6 The pen given to Shizuo by Professor Raimondi's widow

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