

Masaki Watanabe, MD
1911-1995

Dr. Masaki Watanabe is truly the “Father of Modern Arthroscopy.” After the IInd World War he continued the work that his professor, Dr. Takagi, had started back in 1918. Dr. Watanabe worked with the emerging optics and electronics industry in Japan, to develop better arthroscopes with marvelous lenses and appropriate light. His No. 21 Arthroscope was the first arthroscope that provided clear pictures of the interior of a knee joint. He then developed the first “fiber light scope” (No. 22) and the first small 2mm scope (No. 24) for smaller joints. He also introduced several new techniques such as the use of a second cannula through which instruments could be passed into the joint, (the beginning of triangulation) and the development of small instruments with which to operate. The first arthroscopic surgical procedures he recorded were the removal of loose bodies and in 1962 he did the first partial meniscectomy in an athlete. Dr. Watanabe will also be remembered as a generous teacher, willing to share his knowledge with fellow surgeons. Dr. Watanabe was a Founding Member and First President of the International Arthroscopy Association.