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Yasuaki Taiho | KYODO

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Taiwan-born ballplayer Taiho dies of leukemia

KYODO

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NAGOYA – Taiwanese-born Yasuaki Taiho, who formerly played for the Chunichi Dragons and the Hanshin Tigers, has died of acute myeloid leukemia. He was 51.

Taiho, whose Taiwanese name was Chen Tai-feng, passed away at a Nagoya hospital on Sunday evening.

Taiho joined the Dragons as a second-round pick in the 1988 draft. Emulating the “flamingo kick” style of his hero Sadaharu Oh, Taiho hit 38 home runs while recording 107 runs batted in to win two titles in the 1994 season.

“He came from Taiwan on a baseball study abroad, and he really just enjoyed baseball,” said Oh. “He was a player who was serious about anything he did. He didn’t produce (big) results, but he was a wonderful person. I can only say that it is unfortunate that a person as sincere as him has passed away so soon.”

Taiho moved to the Tigers in 1998 before returning to the Dragons for the 2001 season. Taiho, who was once named to the Best Nine and was a three-time All-Star, retired in 2002.

After his retirement, Taiho worked as a scout to create a pipeline with Taiwanese baseball and also coached little league. He also operated Chinese restaurants in Nagoya and Gifu Prefecture’s Kaizu.

Taiho had a lifetime .266 average with 277 homers and 722 RBIs in 1,324 games in Japan.

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