

## OBITUARY

Professor Emeritus Khunying Tranakchit Harinasuta, who had been the Editor-in-Chief of the Southeast Asian Journal of Tropical Medicine and Public Health since 1971, passed away peacefully on 29 April 1999 at the age of 82 years. In her death, the world has lost a great physician, an eminent scientist and a remarkable human being.

Professor Emeritus Khunying Tranakchit was born in Bangkok, Thailand on 6 May 1918. She was the eldest daughter of Phraya Phadungvidhayaserm and Khunying Rian. She graduated MD from Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital, University of Medical Science in 1944. After an internship (1944-1946), she was posted as a lecturer in the Department of Internal Medicine, Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital (1947-1971). She went to the United Kingdom to further her study at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and graduated Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in 1953. After returning to Thailand, she helped Professor Chamlong Harinasuta to establish the Faculty of Tropical Medicine within the University of Medical Science (later on becoming Mahidol University) in 1960. Among many high positions held by her during 1960- 1978 were : Head of the Department of Clinical Tropical Medicine, Faculty of Tropical Medicine and Director of the Hospital for Tropical Diseases (1961-1978); Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs, Faculty of Tropical Medicine (1971- 1978); Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, Mahidol University (1975-1978); Editor-in-Chief of the Southeast Asian Journal of Tropical Medicine and Public Health (1971-1999); President of the Thai Medical Women's Association (1970-1976); Vice President of the Medical Association of Thailand (1971-1975); President of the Parasitology and Tropical Medicine Association (1973-1974); Member of WHO Expert Committee on Malaria (1975-1999); Chairman of the Medical Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee for Refugees, Ministry of Public Health; Consultant to the Faculty of Tropical Medicine (1978-1999).

In her childhood, she was a good daughter to her parents, an affectionate sister to her brothers and sisters, a brilliant student to her teachers and very pleasing, unassuming, humble and friendly to her colleagues. In relation to her distinguished career words seem inadequate to do full justice to her dedicated service, and to her many contributions to tropical medicine and clinical research. Her outstanding achievements, national and international, speak for themselves and she will be remembered as one of the outstanding Thai personalities and contributors to tropical medicine in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

It is difficult to give adequate credit to all her contributions to the field of tropical medicine particularly the malaria chemotherapy. The following condolent message sent from Dr A Kondrachine and his colleagues in WHO Geneva is best describe both her personality and her impact on Tropical Medicine:

"Professor Tranakchit was a very special person, small of stature, but a giant in the field of Tropical Medicine. Her motivation, dedication, knowledge and organizational capacity were legendary, and without her the Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University would not have developed into the international centre of excellence as it is today. She also had an impact on Tropical Medicine internationally through the detailed studies on the treatment of drug resistance falciparum malaria carried out over 30 years since she first reported the resistance of Plasmodium falciparum to chloroquine on the Thai-Cambodia border".

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