

Report of The ASEAN Junior Travelling Fellowship 1997

Dr. Harwant Singh,

Department of Orthopaedics, Hospital Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

This is the report of the ASEAN Junior Travelling Fellowship for 1997. The fellows for 1997 are;

1. Dr. Andre Chandra Sihombing, of Hospital Pertamina, Jakarta, Indonesia.

2. Dr. Harwant Singh, of Hospital Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

3. Dr. Henry P. Tupas, of West Visayas State University, Phillipines.

4. Dr. Tan Mak Yong, of Singapore General Hospital, Singapore.

5. Asst. Prof. Dr. Surin Thanapipatsiri, of Siriraj Hospital, Bangkok, Thailand.

Sunday Oct 12, 1997: We were met at Don Muang International Airport by Dr. Surin, who saw to our safe arrival at the Royal Princess Hotel in Bangkok, which was our home for the next 7 days. That night we had dinner with the Council of the Thai Orthopaedic Association. Dr. Andre arrived at 2300hrs that night and we went to fetch him from the airport after dinner.

Monday Oct 13, 1997: We visited the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Chulalongkorn University and spent the whole day here. We were shown the hospital and spent some time in the operating theatres. Many interesting cases were discussed during the course of the day. Some shopping was done in the evening. Dinner was with the staff of the Orthopaedic Department of Chulalongkorn University.

Tuesday Oct 14, 1997: The morning and early afternoon were spent at the Siriraj Hospital. We saw staff queuing in an orderly manner while waiting for lifts, thereby avoiding rush during peak hours; an admirable attribute of a well disciplined people. We again had a lively discussion on many interesting cases. There was also a lecture given by Professor Richard Jones from Texas, USA on revision joint arthroplasties. Also visited were the Spinal Unit, Brachial Plexus Clinic, Biomaterials

Centre, and Anatomy Museum. We were amazed at the elephant femora displayed in front of the Siriraj Bonebank, the grandfather of all bonebanks in the ASEAN region. Each femur could provide xenografts for literally thousands of patients. This reminded us of the Burmese orthopaedic surgeon who had developed hip implants in the 1960's with ivory. Pity the elephant, a beast used in life and also in death. A brief visit to the Royal Palace was also managed. The early evening was spent with leisure pursuits and dinner was with the staff of the Orthopaedic Department of the Siriraj Hospital.

Wednesday Oct 15, 1997: The morning was spent at Rajavithi Hospital. Interesting cases were seen and discussed in the morning, together with a hospital visit. Lunch was with the staff of the Rajavithi Hospital Orthopaedic Department. The afternoon was spent at Ramathibodi Hospital. We were shown the Ramathibodi Spinal System, and 10 spine cases, as three of us had spine interests. Dinner was with the staff of the Ramathibodi Orthopaedic Department.

Thursday Oct 16, 1997: The morning was spent at Lerdsin Hospital where again interesting cases were discussed, among which were bone tumours which had prosthetic replacements. Dr. Andre and Dr. Harwant presented their papers, which were 'Loss of correction in TB spine after surgery' and 'A method of measuring sagittal spinal curves.' Lunch was with the staff of Lerdsin Orthopaedic Hospital. The afternoon was spent shopping at Silom Road. Dinner was also with the staff of the Lerdsin Orthopaedic Department.

Friday Oct 17, 1997: Dr. Surin drove us to Nakornpathom Hospital which was about 1 hour from Bangkok. Here we spent the morning with the Orthopaedic Department and had a lively spine discussion session. We were surprised to see a number of complicated cervical spine procedures being done at this hospital. Lunch was with the staff. In the afternoon we were taken to see the

Phra Pathom Chedi, the first pagoda in Thailand, and the King Rama 6 Summer Palace. Dr. Surin then drove us to Kanchanaburi, his birthplace, and took us to the famed Bridge over the River Kwai. The museum and war cemeteries served to remind us of the futility of conflict and the pain that was and is still suffered by the survivors. We returned to Bangkok later that evening and proceeded to Patpong for our dinner and more shopping.

Saturday Oct 18, 1997: This was an extremely busy day. We visited the Bang Pa In Palace and the old city of Ayuthya, which was the capital of the Thai nation up until it was destroyed in the mid 1700's. We also managed elephant rides, which made us feel like King Narai travelling through Ayuthya in the old days. Lunch was on board a river cruise boat which brought us back to the River City in Bangkok in the evening. This was a very interesting day, as we had the opportunity to see an old city in Thailand and also understand some of its history and culture.

Sunday Oct 19, 1997: A travel day to Manila, the Philippines. Drs. Tan and Andre went on Phillipine airlines, and the rest of us on Thai Airways. We were met at the Nino Aquino International Airport by representatives of the Phillipine Orthopaedic Association and taken to the Great Eastern Hotel in Quezon City, Manila. We rested for a few hours and then had dinner with the Phillipine Orthopaedic Association and the Phillipine Board of Orthopaedics; dinner was at the Kamayan restaurant.

Monday Oct 20, 1997: The morning was spent at the University of the Philippines - Phillipine General Hospital complex. We also met the dean of the school and the director of the hospital. Many interesting spine cases were seen in the wards during our visit. In the afternoon, we visited St. Luke's Hospital. Dr. Andre presented his paper here. Dinner was with the staff of St. Luke's Hospital. We got back to the hotel early and explored the Maalikaya Complex, which was across the road from where we stayed.

Tuesday Oct 21, 1997: The morning was spent at the Phillipine Orthopaedic Centre. As usual, interesting cases were seen during the visit to the hospital. The afternoon was spent exploring the Intramuros and visiting the place where Dr. Jose Rizal spent his last days at Fort Santiago. We also managed to see the University of St. Thomas and were able to visit the St. Augustine and Manila Cathedral. We were especially entranced by the plaque in front of the Manila Cathedral detailing the difficulties encountered in its constructing. Finally, only the 6th structure stands tall and proud. From this we remembered that, "if you do not succeed at first, try, try and try, again". Extremely important advice to any young candidate struggling through his board examinations.

Wednesday Oct 22, 1997: We visited the Malacanyang Palace in the morning. This was educational as we now are able to understand the psyche of the Filipino and

appreciate the difficulties that they had to undergo throughout their history to achieve their freedom. We then went to the Makati Medical Centre and had yet another interesting case discussion during lunch. The afternoon was spent shopping and dinner was at the Rembrandt Hotel. We had an early night.

Thursday Oct 23, 1997: Another early start as we departed for Iloilo City, Panay Island in the West Visayas; about 1 hour by jet from Manila. This is the home town of Dr. Henry Tupas. We were met on arrival in Iloilo by the West Visayas Chapter of the Phillipine Orthopaedic Association, who checked us into the Amigo Terrace Hotel. Wasting no time, we had a wonderful lunch and were driven around Iloilo province, taking in Molo, Arevalo, Oton, Tigbauan, Guimbal, and Miagao. We visited many churches which had been built since the 1590's. We were told that Iloilo is also known as the 'Athens of the East' because of all the old architecture. One church was built entirely with coral, and has remained sturdy throughout the centuries. We saw this as having some orthopaedic potential as our Filipino colleagues have published good results of using their shoreline coral (*montipora ramosa*) as a bone graft substitute. On the return journey, we passed through the new UP campus. Dinner was with the West Visayas Chapter of Orthopaedic Surgeons. That night we explored the nightlife of Iloilo.

Friday Oct 24, 1997: This was also a busy day. We visited the West Visayas State University and the Western Visayas Medical Centre. Again, an agenda of interesting cases, especially spine cases, was presented. The afternoon was spent on a bangka trip to the island of Guimaras, passing a sugar mill. In the evening, we attended the Visayas Chapter POA meeting. Drs. Surin, Harwant, and Andre presented their papers. Dr. Surin's paper was titled 'Sagittal spinal alignment in Thai adults'. This was an extremely successful and enjoyable meeting. The evening was spent exploring Iloilo city nightlife.

Saturday Oct 25, 1997: We returned to Manila in the morning and were taken out to lunch by the secretaries of the POA. We were driven to Angeles City to see the shops at the old US Clark Air Force Base. En route, we saw the effects of Mount Pinatubo's eruption in 1991. Only after seeing the houses covered to their roofs in ash and 'LAWA', and the vast amount of land laid to waste, could we appreciate the enormous economic effects of Pinatubo. Hell hath no fury like Mother Nature scorned. At dinner we were presented with our Junior Travelling Fellow uniforms and T-shirts with identical monograms.

Sunday Oct 26, 1997: We wore our uniforms this morning and flew together to Jakarta, Indonesia. We were met at the Sukarno Hatta International Airport by residents of the Indonesian Orthopaedic Programme. We were put up in the Hotel Arcadia in Central Jakarta. Dinner was at the residence of Dr. S. Subroto.

Monday Oct 27, 1997: We visited the Orthopaedic Department of the Ciptomangkusomo Hospital and the Medical Faculty of the University of Indonesia, the oldest and most prestigious medical school in Indonesia. Very interesting spine cases were presented. Lunch was with the President of the Indonesian Orthopaedic Association. We visited the home of Dr. Andre's parents after lunch. The rest of the afternoon was spent sightseeing in Jakarta. We managed to see the National Mosque and Church which are beside each other in Jakarta. We also managed to see the National Monument and the Freedom monument of Irian Jaya. We then proceeded to the Gambir railway station for our train trip to Bandung. The train journey took 2.5 hrs and we were met by the Bandung Orthopaedic residents. That night, we were put up in the Nyland Hotel in Bandung. Bandung is a city in the highlands and it was quite cool during our visit there.

Tuesday Oct 28, 1997: The morning was spent at the Orthopaedic Department of the Hassan Sadikin Hospital, University of Padjadjaran, Bandung. Spine cases were the order of the day again. Lunch was with the head of the Bandung programme. In the afternoon, we drove through the campus of the Bandung Institute of Technology. We also drove up to the Tangkuban Prah, an active volcano near Bandung. For some of us this was the first time that we had seen or gotten near an active volcano. On the way back to our hotel we made a detour to Jl. Cihempelas, the student shopping district in Bandung; a lively place to be in the evening.

Wednesday Oct 29, 1997: The morning was spent at the Hassan Saidikin Hospital again. Dr. Tan Mak Yong presented his paper titled 'Results of autograft ACL repair' and Dr. Surin presented his paper. Lunch was with the Bandung Orthopaedic residents and consisted of traditional Sudanese food. In the evening, we departed for Jogjakarta by train. The train journey took 6.5 hrs.

Thursday Oct 30, 1997: We were met at the railway station by a resident of the Gajahmada University of Jogjakarta at 0200hrs. He arranged for us to stay at the guest house of the Gajahmada University. In the morning, we visited the Hospital of Gajahmada University. In the late morning, we drove to the Prambanan Temples, which were built around 856 A.D. by the Hindu dynasty of Sanjaya. The temples are tall, slender structures which remotely resemble the Kuala Lumpur twin towers in miniature. After Prambanan, we saw the Kraton Palace of Sultan Hamengkubuwono in the city of Jogjakarta. We then proceeded to the Borobodur site and spent the rest of the afternoon here. The Borobodur temple complex was also built at about the same time as the Prambanan temples by the Buddhist King Sailendra. On the way back to the city of Jogjakarta, we also stopped at the Mendut candi. We could only leave with a sense of awe, as all these huge temples were built before most of the West was civilised,

only to be 'rediscovered' by Western colonisers 150 years ago. What mighty empires existed in Java! We rested a short while and did some shopping at Jl. Malioboro, before making our way back to Bandung by rail overnight. This was our second night in a row sleeping in train seats. We were extremely exhausted, but satisfied that we accomplished so much in the day.

Friday Oct 31, 1997: We arrived in Bandung at 0500hrs, had breakfast, and washed up at the home of the parents of one of the Bandung orthopaedic residents. We again visited Hassan Sadikin hospital and Drs. Henry Tupas and Harwant presented their papers titled 'Fire-cracker injuries of the Hand' and 'TB spine- the evidence revisited'. Cases were also discussed with the residents until lunch. The afternoon was spent at an 'Angkalung' concert and doing some shopping. That night, we explored Bandung's nightlife.

Saturday Nov 1, 1997: We started early and went by road back to Jakarta, stopping at Puncak and Bogor on the way. We reached Jakarta in the afternoon and rested till the evening. Dinner was at Dr. Subroto's residence, as it was also the farewell of Professor Eugene Bleck, who was Visiting Professor to Indonesia at that time.

Sunday Nov 2, 1997: Again we were up early as this was our travel day to Singapore. Drs. Tan Mak Yong and Andre went earlier. The rest of us were on a later flight. We were met by SOA officials at Changi Airport. We were put up at the King's Hotel near SGH. Dinner was hosted by Dr. and Mrs. Tan Mak Yong. We had an early night.

Monday Nov 3, 1997: We were at NUH Orthopaedic Department for the day. In the morning, we were given a brief tour of the department after attending a morning lecture. We also attended the official opening of the Bone Bank. Also visited were the Operating Theatres and Biomechanics Laboratory, which were very interesting. The afternoon was spent with the Hand Unit. We saw some interesting hand prosthetics and were shown cases which had extensive microvascular reconstruction for tumours. We had dinner with the delegates of the Tissue Bank Operators Course.

Tuesday Nov 4, 1997: This day was spent at SGH. Drs. Harwant and Tupas presented their papers at the morning meeting. This was followed by a brief hospital tour and lunch with the staff of SGH. We were very fortunate to catch a glimpse of Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahatir Mohammad, when he posed for photographs with his alumni in front of the Academy building. The afternoon was with SGH's Hand Surgery Department. We were shown some cases in the wards. We also met the hand therapists and were given a tour of the hand rehabilitation facilities. This was followed by interesting case discussions in the department. Following this, the Hand Unit took us out for dinner. We had supper at the residence of Dr. Ong Leong Boon. The night ended late.

Wednesday Nov 5, 1997: We started late this morning, as we needed to recuperate from the activities of the last few weeks. Our visit today was with the Orthopaedic Department of the New Changi Hospital. The hospital is very new and we were shown their fully computerized (paperless) casualty department. Lunch was also here and the afternoon was spent shopping along Orchard Road.

Thursday Nov 6, 1997: This was also a busy day. We began with a visit to the Tan Tock Seng Orthopaedic Department. We were shown cases in the wards, again with a spine cases preponderance. We were particularly impressed with the Radiology Department; it is a splendid set up with a powerful MRI scanner, which is also being used as a research tool. We visited Dr. Ong Leong Boon's practice in the late afternoon. Dinner was with the SOA officials. That night, we explored some of Singapore's nightlife at Geylang.

Friday Nov 7, 1997: This morning began with a visit to the shopping district. In the afternoon we visited the Alexandria Hospital Orthopaedic Department. Here again we had a good tour of the hospital and saw some interesting cases in the ward. We were then taken for a meal at The Island and Country Club. This was followed by The Night Safari, which was very good and enjoyable. Supper was Indian food in Sembawang.

Saturday Nov 8, 1997: The morning was spent at the Kandang Kerbau Women's and Childrens Hospital. Drs. Surin and Andre presented their papers. These were followed by 3 cases which were discussed with the Senior Orthopaedic Staff of Singapore. The residents could not join us as they had their "In Service Assessments" that morning. This hospital, we were told, the newest in Singapore; we saw robots moving about in the wards. Very high tech! In the afternoon we visited the famous Sentosa Island. We had an early night as we were travelling again the next morning.

Sunday Nov 9, 1997: We woke up late and took our time packing. We left on the same flight to Kuala Lumpur and were met at Kuala Lumpur Subang Airport by Dr. Ranjit Singh of the Hand Department, Kuala Lumpur Hospital. We then went to the house of Dr. Harwant's parents for tea. That evening, we had dinner at the Royal Lake Club hosted by Drs. Ranjit and Harwant. After dinner, we drove around the City of Kuala Lumpur and saw the Twin Towers, currently the tallest buildings in the world and the Kuala Lumpur telecommunication tower, the tallest free standing structure in the world. The clear sky gave us a most spectacular view.

Monday Nov 10, 1997: We attended a Sports Medicine seminar held at the Gleneagles Medical Centre. The afternoon was spent at Imbi Plaza scrutinising and purchasing various computer software programmes. Evening was spent exploring Kuala Lumpur on foot.

Tuesday Nov 11, 1997: This was a free morning as we were quite tired. The evening was again spent driving around the city, which included a brief visit to the new University Kebangsaan Hospital in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur. We had an interesting dinner, which was a special Bak-Kut-Teh.

Wednesday Nov 12, 1997: We had an early start. The morning was spent in Malacca visiting the old Portuguese, Dutch, and English colonial forts and buildings. We also briefly saw the Malacca General Hospital. On the drive back to Kuala Lumpur, we saw the Commonwealth Games Village, The Shah Alam Stadium, and The Shah Alam Mosque. We could not decide whether this mosque or the mosque in Jakarta was the biggest in ASEAN, as both the Malaysian and Indonesian Fellows were convinced that theirs was the biggest one. The evening was spent shopping in Kuala Lumpur along with a visit to the 'Padang' to see the tallest flagpole.

Thursday Nov 13, 1997: We began early again, this time driving to Penang. By mid-morning we were in Ipoh. We briefly passed through the Ipoh Hospital. We also saw Chinese and Hindu temples housed in the limestone caves near Ipoh. Lunch was at a famous vegetarian restaurant, which prepared 'meat' dishes. The meat eaters among us were fooled. After lunch, we resumed our journey to Penang. The highlight of the drive was going over the Penang Bridge, the third longest bridge in Asia. We arrived at the Mutiara Resort where the meeting was held early in the afternoon. After checking in, we went to the Botanical Gardens, the Waterfall, and drove around Penang Island. In the evening, we had our debriefing with the Council of the AOA, where a preliminary report was presented by Dr. Harwant Singh.

Friday Nov 14, 1997: The whole day was spent at the Scientific meeting.

Saturday Nov 15, 1997: Again the whole day was spent at the Scientific meeting. The Travelling Fellows presented their papers in the afternoon in a well attended session. The judges commented that all the papers were of good quality and it was extremely difficult to choose a winner. Dr. Harwant Singh of Malaysia won the best scientific paper award for his paper 'A method for measuring sagittal spinal curves'.

Sunday Nov 16, 1997: This was a day of mixed feelings; happy as we were returning home to our families, and yet sad as we were parting company after spending the last 5 weeks together. All of us were a little tearful when it was time to say goodbye. Drs. Surin and Tan Mak Yong stayed over another day to attend meetings that had been previously planned.

CONCLUSION

A Travelling Fellowship like this must have some objectives which are to be accomplished. In its narrowest definition, the Fellowship can be achieved by visiting only academic institutes. However, for us it meant a lot more. This was the opportunity to visit each other's country, to understand the constraints and the strengths of each country's practice, to understand the attitudes of each society towards their health care delivery, and most of all to be

aware of our neighbours. On a personal note, we now can put faces to names of officials we met at the various National Orthopaedic Associations. We also have begun lifelong friendships and expect that regional orthopaedic communications between the five of us will be on a more speedy and personal note. We hear rumours that this might be the last Junior Travelling Fellowship; we hope this is not so, as it would be sad to end such a meaningful programme.