

Citation for Dr Chan Sing Kit

Text by Prof Tan Cheng Lim

When the President of SMA asked me to deliver this citation for Dr Chan Sing Kit in honour of her receiving the SMA Honorary Membership, I was most happy to do so.

It was my good fortune to have had her as my mentor for paediatrics in the late sixties, when I was a medical officer (MO) and she was the Head of Paediatric (East), Singapore General Hospital (SGH).

Sing Kit had a kind and warm personality with a strong commitment to patient care and had a way of putting everyone at ease, be it doctors, nurses or ancillary staff.

As a MO, she had worked under the late Prof Benjamin Sheares in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Kandang Kerbau Hospital; Prof Gordon Arthur Ransome in Medical Unit I, SGH; Prof Yeoh Ghim Seng in Surgery A, SGH; and Dr Elaine Field, Dr Quah Quee Guan, Prof Wong Hock

Boon and Dr Tan Kwang Hoh in Paediatric East and West, SGH. All their special talents must have rubbed onto her.

Sing Kit graduated from the University of Malaya (Singapore) with MBBS in 1956 and served a Government scholarship to the UK to attend courses, and sat for the membership exams and obtained her DCH (Lon) and MRCP (Glas, Edin & Lon) between 1961 and 1963.

She was also awarded a Commonwealth Fellowship to study neonatology under the late Prof Peter Tizard at the Hammersmith Hospital, London, from 1968 to 1969. She was subsequently awarded the FRACP in 1971, FRCP (Glasgow) in 1972 and FRCP (Edinburgh) in 1973.

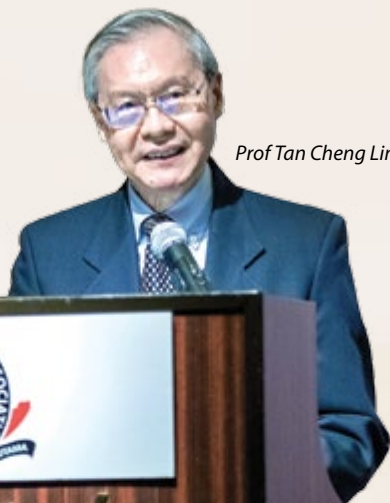
She was a clinical teacher and examiner for the MBBS (NUS) and MMed (Paediatrics) examinations. She also spent one month on a United Nations Children's Fund grant to study childcare set up in the Soviet Union (then a Communist country where

the state is the only employer and everyone is an employee). She visited centres in Tashkent; Yerevan, Armenia; and Moscow. This eventually led to the setting up of childcare centres in Singapore in 1964.

Sing Kit continued as senior consultant and head of Paediatric (East), SGH till 1977 when she went into private practice as a paediatric specialist in Gleneagles Medical Centre till today. I am not sure where she gets her energy from, but she is still going strong after 40 years in private practice.

She has also been a visiting consultant to Saint Andrew's Mission Hospital for children since 1969.

I thus continue to marvel at the commitment, dedication and energy that Dr Chan has had all these years, serving as a role model for all paediatricians. May I present Dr Chan Sing Kit to us all as someone truly worthy to be conferred the SMA Honorary Membership. ♦



Prof Tan Cheng Lim



Dr Chan Sing Kit receiving the SMA Honorary Membership from Minister Gan Kim Yong

Citation for A/Prof Goh Lee Gan

Text by A/Prof Cheong Pak Year

Introduction

I am very happy to give this citation for A/Prof Goh Lee Gan on his conferment of the SMA Honorary Membership. I am reminded of how Lee Gan would often begin his speeches by quoting his father's admonition to make only three points, because any more than that, the audience would forget. So in this citation, I would narrate the three roles he played in the medical profession: first as a servant-leader, second as an academic-teacher and the third as a physician-healer.

Servant-leader

Lee Gan was born to **lead by serving**. He was born in Kuala Lumpur in 1946 to a Chinese school teacher and a housewife. He was the eldest in a large family with ten children; his youngest brother being 21 years his junior. From a young age, Lee Gan learnt to lead and serve.

I first met Lee Gan 55 years ago in Anglo-Chinese School when I joined the stage crew of the Drama Society. This team that Lee Gan led was the unseen and unsung hands that set the stage for the actors basking in the limelight. This was the servant-leader role that Lee Gan played time and again.

It was therefore not surprising that Lee Gan chose to study medicine, graduating with MBBS from the University of Singapore in 1971 with a distinction in Social Medicine and Public Health. He then underwent training in internal medicine (IM), culminating in the Master of Medicine (IM) in 1977.

We all know Lee Gan's immense contribution to the medical profession as a servant-leader. He served in various capacities in many professional bodies; notably as President of SMA from 1999 to 2001, and as President of the College of Family Physicians Singapore (College) from 2007 to 2011.



A/Prof Goh Lee Gan listening attentively during the delivery of his citation by A/Prof Cheong Pak Year

Lee Gan also laboured relentlessly in numerous committees in the Ministry of Health (MOH) for the past 30 years. For his role as Chairman of AIDs Task Force, he was awarded the Public Service Star (BBM) in the National Day Awards of 2005. He also served the community outside healthcare; for example, as a member of the Public Guardian Board of the Ministry of Social & Family Development, Singapore.

Outside Singapore, Lee Gan was the Regional President of the World Organisation of Family Doctors in Asia-Pacific (WONCA) for six years, from 2001 to 2007. His professional achievements were recognised by fellowships conferred by many institutions: The Academy of Medicine and College of Family Physicians in Singapore, Academies of Family Medicine (FM) in Malaysia and the Philippines, and the Royal Colleges of General Practitioners in UK and Australia.

He also championed training projects in Singapore and overseas. He is presently the deputy team leader of a Singapore

A/Prof Cheong Pak Year





Ms Chan Swee Swan, the woman behind the successful man

International Foundation (SIF) project to enhance healthcare services for the elderly in Yunnan, China, and was SIF's expert in FM to Indonesia for ten years from 1995.

Academic-teacher

In 1987, Lee Gan left private practice to answer the call to start **academic FM** in the National University of Singapore (NUS). He was Divisional Head, Department of Community, Occupational and Family Medicine, from 1987 to 2008. When FM joined the National University Hospital (NUH) in 2008, he took on the role of the Head of the Division of FM in the Department of Medicine for the next three years.

Lee Gan led many sentinel College and MOH committees that laid the foundation of FM training in Singapore. As Deputy Chairman, FM Committee, School of Postgraduate Medical Studies, from 1993 to 2011, he directed its development. Lee Gan was, and still is, the stalwart of various FM academic programmes in Singapore.

Presently, Lee Gan is an associate programme director of the National University Hospital System FM residency programme. His teaching tasks range from supervising FM residents in clinical work to helping them develop competency in research and scholarly activities.

For what he has done for FM in Singapore, the FM fraternity rightly considered him the "Father of FM" in Singapore, but Lee Gan will always reply:

"No, I am just the midwife." Midwife indeed! In February this year, NUS celebrated thirty years of Academic Family Medicine.

Lee Gan is an accomplished academic. His 60 publications cited in the PubMed literature spanned the panoply of FM and public health (PH). His present research interests are related to FM training,¹ assessing mental capacity² and translational research on dementia prevention.

However, Lee Gan would be remembered best by generations of doctors as a **compassionate teacher**. He taught FM as a holistic discipline of breadth, often reminding his students not to be daunted, as we can "eat the FM elephant in parts".

Physician-healer

Lee Gan is a three-in-one generalist **physician** straddling the world of FM, PH and IM.

He worked in the joint FM and PH Department in NUS, consulting and publishing papers in both disciplines for two decades since 1987. Trained as an IM specialist, he continues to run an IM clinic in NUH. This clinical work, he tells me, provides contemporary and contextual clinical experience to teach in various FM settings – ambulatory care clinics, nursing homes and community hospitals.

More than just a physician, Lee Gan epitomised what it takes to be a **healer**. He is still preoccupied with

tending to the suffering of the chronic sick. He is presently the medical director of Bethany Methodist Nursing Home and also the liaison physician for the Agency for Integrated Care HOME programme in NUH.

To him, healing transcends the body. When one colleague became severely depressed and lost his will to live, I saw how Lee Gan carried him by spending an inordinate amount of time being with him. His unconditional positive regard carried the day. He attributed his energies to answering "God's assignments", which he never flinched from.

Back to family

Lee Gan is happily married to Chan Swee Swan. Their son, Terence Goh, a consultant plastic surgeon in Singapore General Hospital, happily married Marilyn Liew last year. They are a happy family. I do not want to ask Swee Swan whether she was happy to share Lee Gan with us for the past four decades but certainly, in honouring Lee Gan tonight, we are also honouring Swee Swan for her sacrifice.

As a close friend of Lee Gan, I tried to convince him to say "No" to some of the onerous demands on his time. But if he had taken my advice, he would not have lived his life so fully. Many doctors would be contented to be recognised as leaders, academics or physicians, but tonight we have the rare occasion to honour one of our own as a composite servant-leader, academic-teacher and physician-healer.

SMA President Tien Hua, distinguished guests and colleagues, I present A/Prof Goh Lee Gan as most worthy of being conferred the SMA Honorary Membership. ♦

References

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2. Lim HM, Goh LG, Thirumoorthy T. Legal medicine: assessing mental capacity and writing medical reports for deputy applications. *Singapore Med J* 2017; 58(1):18-23.