

## COLLEGE OF ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS



### VICTORY OVER PAIN – THE STORY OF ANAESTHESIA IN THE MALAY PENINSULA

*“A method of mitigating pain in surgical operations by the inhalation of certain ether has been discovered in America, and it is said that successful experiments have been made”*

**(Liverpool Mercury, Friday, December 18, 1846)**

#### THE BEGINNING

Anaesthesia was first successfully administered at the operation theater of the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, on October 16, 1846, by William Morton. The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal carried this news in its October 21, 1846 edition.

Penang, then a remote outpost of the British Colony, received this news when the ship carrying the London newspapers docked in the Penang harbor on March 12, 1847. On April 28, 1847, an assistant surgeon at the Malacca Hospital by the name of A J Ratton an anaesthetic using a hookah and ether to a Malay soldier whose right hand had been blown off by a gun

and needed an amputation. It was indeed remarkable that a medical procedure done on the other side of the world had successfully been performed in the Malay Peninsula in a record time of just about seven months. Thus, began the story of victory over pain in this part of the world.

Anaesthesia really developed after the Second World War ended in September 1945. The earliest anaesthetists included D A B Hopkins, E Morrison, E G Hudson, J George Lomaz and B E G D’Bras. The anaesthetic services were provided mainly in the west coast hospitals in Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Penang, Malacca, Johor Bahru, and in Kuching in Borneo (Sarawak).

Another prominent colonial medical officer who later would be well-known for his contribution to respiratory physiology and anaesthesia was J F Nunn. His anaesthetic device for delivering Cyclopropane and oxygen, known as Nunn’s bag, was widely used by the anaesthetists in the Malayan hospitals in the early 1950’s till the advent of the universal Boyle’s anaesthetic machine.

#### THE STORY OF EARLY ANAESTHESIA TRAINING

T Arasu was the first to be offered a scholarship to do the Diploma in Anaesthesia but he refused the scholarship and went into private general practice. The same scholarship was subsequently given to Frank R Bhupalan who went to Liverpool and obtained the Fellowship. He was the first Malayan born anaesthetist.

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Bhupalan went to Liverpool in 1956 and excelled there by winning the Nuffield Prize in the Part 1 examination of the Fellowship. Other Malaysians followed including Law Gim Teik, Alexius Delilkan and A Ganendran.

### UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS OF ANAESTHESIOLOGY

When T J Danaraj established the Faculty of Medicine in the 1960's, he brought several of his colleagues from Singapore to man the infant faculty. When A Ganendran was invited to come to Kuala Lumpur to the faculty, he placed several audacious conditions that included an independent department not attached to the surgical department, unheard of in this region at that time, and eventually a Chair in Anaesthesiology, another first to which A Ganendran was the first to be appointed. Through the tireless efforts of A Ganendran and his academic staff, the department in the University of Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC) acquired full recognition by the Faculty of Anaesthetists of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in 1968, as a training centre for the entire course. Both Part 1 and Final examinations were held in Kuala Lumpur, alternating with Singapore. One of the trainees under the ASTS, Lee Choon Keet was the first to obtain an Australian qualification. He was awarded the prestigious Cecil Gray Prize for the Final FFARACS examination.

The second academic anaesthesiology department of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) was set up in

the 1970's and was initially based in the Faculty building adjacent to the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital and sharing its clinical facilities.

The Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) Department of Anaesthesiology was set up in 1982 and also carries out undergraduate teaching and post-graduate training.

### FACULTY OF ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS, COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF MALAYSIA

The College of Surgeons, formed in Malaysia, had a Faculty of Anaesthesiologists. The College however, was not able to obtain full registration as academic organisations but were given temporary registration under the Societies Act to carry out continuing medical education and promoting the science and art of medicine.

The aim of the Faculty of Anaesthesiologists was to set standards of training, oversee curriculum development and conduct post-graduate examinations in anaesthesia as it was felt that the Australian College would withdraw their recognition in the future, and local examinations would have to be conducted.

Unfortunately, the Colleges Bill that was tabled in the Parliament in the late 1970's was withdrawn and the Faculty lost its momentum and became dormant except for occasional meetings and annual general meetings to elect office bearers.

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**POST-GRADUATE MASTERS PROGRAMME IN ANAESTHESIOLOGY**

The Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia department headed by A Sappany was given the task of planning the conduct of the four-year Master of Medicine (Anaesthesiology) programme after the Colleges Bill which would have allowed the local medical colleges to conduct post-graduate examination was withdrawn in the Parliament after the first reading. Rusli succeeded A Sappany and it was during his short term as head of the UKM department that the first batch of post-graduate students were admitted in 1985. Goh Choon Seng and later Karis Misiran, carried out the transformation of the local examination successfully together with the assistance from the staff of the Department of Anaesthesiology of University of Malaya, the Departments of Anaesthesia of the Royal Melbourne Hospital, and the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne. Two years later, the University of Malaya started its Masters programme and both these universities held common examinations for a while but conferred their respective degrees.

When the Universiti Sains Malaysia started its post-graduate anaesthesiology programme, it was felt that it would be preferable for all universities to have common examinations. A conjoint committee was formed under the Ministry of Education, and after much careful deliberations, mutual understanding and compromises, all three universities agreed to common

examinations and a directive given to other universities that were contemplating post-graduate training in anaesthesia to follow the common format. The Universiti Putra Malaysia and the International Islamic University that came in later adopted this format and, today, it can be said all anaesthesiology training for the Masters degree follow a common curriculum and format. In 2014, the UKM changed the name of its masters degree to Doctor of Anaesthesiology and Critical Care.

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With the failure of not achieving independent existence by lawful statute, the two medical colleges, namely the College of Physicians and the College of Surgeons and their Faculties, decided to merge with the Academy of Medicine of Malaysia, which had been founded in 1966. This gave the opportunity for the Faculty of Anaesthesiologists to step away from the shadows of the surgical colleagues and venture out on its own as a Chapter of Anaesthesiologists in 1995. Chang Ham Loong became the first President of the Chapter. In 1999, the Chapter was accorded the full collegiate status and came to be known as the College of Anaesthesiologists, Academy of Medicine of Malaysia. At long last, the specialty of Anaesthesiology achieved its rightful position in the spectrum of medical specialties after an initial failure in 1986.

Since then, the College has grown in strength though the membership in terms of numbers is significantly

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lower than its sister organisation, the Malaysian Society of Anaesthesiologists, which had been formed much earlier by the pioneer Malaysian anaesthesiologists in 1964. The story of this Society has been chronicled in detail earlier in two books, namely the *History of Medicine in Malaysia, Volume II, Pg. 15-31 (Publisher: Academy of Sciences of Malaysia, ISBN 978-983-42545-1-3)* and *History of Anaesthesia in Malaysia (Publisher: Malaysian Society of Anaesthesiologists)*.

## OFFICERS

## PRO-TEM CHAIRMAN

1995 – 1996 S Jenagaratnam

## PRESIDENTS

1996 – 1997 Chang Ham Loong

1998 – 1999 K Inbasegaran

1999 – 2001 Patrick Tan Siew Khoon

2001 – 2003 Lim Thiam Aun

2003 – 2005 Ramani Vijayan

2005 – 2007 Chan Yoo Kuen

2007 – 2009 Mohamed Namazie Ibrahim

2009 – 2011 Mary Cardosa

2011 – 2013 Norsidah Abdul Manap

2013 – 2015 V Sivasakthi

2015 – Sushila Sivasubramaniam

FACULTY OF ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS,  
COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF MALAYSIA

The documents relating to the activities of the Faculty are sparse due to loss of these documents.

As far as it is known, the following have served in one way or the other, in the course of time from late 1970's when the Faculty was formed till the Chapter of Anaesthesiologists in the Academy of Medicine of Malaysia was created in 1995.

**A E Delilkan**, *Dean of the Faculty*

**T Sachithanandan**, *Dean of the Faculty*

**Lim Say Wan**, *Vice Dean, Education Officer*

**Abdul Hamid bin Hj Abdul Rahman**, *Education Officer*

**A S Manavalan**, *Secretary/Treasurer of the Faculty*

**Sylvian Das**, *Dean and Secretary of the Faculty*

**Mohamed Namazie Ibrahim**, *Secretary of the Faculty*



Council 2016 – 2017

Compiled by

**DR MOHAMED NAMAZIE IBRAHIM**