

## History of Asian Biomedicine

# Professor Tada Yipintsoi: beloved teacher, great researcher and practicing cardiologist (10 February 1934 - 9 January 2011)

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This is a short biography of a great Thai clinician teacher and scientist. He left many students and friends behind when he passed-away this year and will be greatly missed.

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Professor Tada Yipintsoi was born to a wealthy family in Thailand, the fourth of five children. Most of his early years were spent in education abroad. He received his undergraduate and medical degrees from the Welsh National School of Medicine at Cardiff and obtained his MRCP from the Royal College of

Physicians of London. After spending two years at Royal Hammersmith and Brompton Hospitals at London as house officer in Cardiology, he returned for two years to work as a teaching cardiologist at Siriraj Hospital, Bangkok. He then moved to the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine at Rochester, Minnesota as fellow in Cardiology where he was awarded his PhD from the University of Minnesota. Subsequently, he was appointed a faculty member at the Montefiore Hospital in New York. He became Professor of Medicine and Physiology and Director of the Basic

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Cardiovascular Research Laboratory at the Medical Center and at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He later became associated with Yeshiva University of New York, where he was also appointed as the Associate Director of the Cardiology Fellowship Training Program.

In 1980, he returned to Thailand and to the Faculty of Medicine, Prince of Songkla University, Songkla, Thailand; a newly established medical school in the southern part of the country. He commented in the university medical education newsletters: "I chose medicine because I love it. I did not even entertain a second choice" [1]. Through this love of medicine, he inspired many students, and young faculty members. He became much loved and a role model in teaching and medical practice and a role model which many wanted to emulate.

It must also be mentioned that he was the senior member of the very wealthy Yipintsoi family. He refused assuming the position in business in favor of remaining a lowly paid teacher and medical practitioner in the public sector.

Professor Tada was very actively involved in health research as chairman of research foundations, steering board member as well as a participating advisor and researcher in many national research initiatives and organizations. Among these are the International Health Policy Program-IHPP [2], Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Program-HITAP [3], Clinical Research Collaboration Network-CRCN [4], large research projects: cross-sectional studies [5, 6], national health examination surveys [7], as well as the EGAT- (Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand) long-term cardiovascular cohorts study [8]. His research mindedness stemmed from passion and a joyous experience in conducting research *per se*; without a feeling of sacrifice. The phrase that best describes his strong character is that he followed the initiatives and projects closely by reminding and continuous monitoring to ensure proper progression. This stimulated and motivated his long term students and resulted in successful projects as well as their professional growth and ability to later contribute themselves. The first CRCN's multicenter clinical research, under his leadership, the Thai Acute Coronary Syndrome Registry-TRACS [9-10] has become one practical management model for subsequent projects. Working closely with academicians and health researchers, he showed leadership through participating not leading and

spoonfeeding, consulting not dictating and motivating positively and efficiently not instructing. Instruction was only given directly when absolutely needed. He could be recognized as a natural leader from his combination of participative/democratically style [11]. He was one of the founding members of the Medical Research Foundation, the foundation for promotion and capacity development of national clinical research, multicenter in particular. Among the Foundation's initiatives was the On-line Medical Research Tools-OMERET [12] an affordable local program which enables large amounts of multicenter clinical data to be managed effectively in a short time. He coached the cardiovascular fellow research training workshop of the Heart Association of Thailand for over ten years. The "Tada Yipintsoi's Clinical Research Program", an introduction course to Cardiology Clinical Research, was eventually established.

Professor Tada was, above all, one of the greatest Thai bedside clinicians. He loved his patients and they loved him. He not only worked as a cardiologist and general internist but also as a nuclear medicine physician. In the out-patient clinics at the university and Hat Yai Government Hospitals he regularly saw around 25 patients per day, three to four days a week. He rarely postponed seeing patients despite his heavy work load as a chairperson in many committees and laboratory projects. His patient care was always his top priority. Professor Tada loved and supported his students, colleagues and friends without reservations. He helped produce many teachers, researches and outstanding clinicians in Thailand and perhaps also at New York. His departure is an immense loss for everyone who had the chance to know him. Although we momentarily felt a boundless sense of loneliness when he left us, we have come to realize that through many of us, he will live on by our efforts to practice his style of humanity and intellectual honesty.

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