

History of the Singapore Orthopaedic Association

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Abstract

Since emerging from the shadows of General Surgery, the specialty of Orthopaedic Surgery in Singapore has grown from strength to strength. The year 2002 commemorates 50 years of orthopaedic specialty practice in Singapore. It also celebrates the 34th birthday of the Singapore Orthopaedic Association and coincides with the 25th Annual Scientific Meeting. The Singapore Orthopaedic Association, from its humble beginnings, has grown into a credible organisation that aims to fulfill the academic aspirations of its members as well as serve as a bridge to other related organisations abroad. Apart from its academic activities, it also aims to broaden the bond of friendship with other orthopaedic organisations.

Ann Acad Med Singapore 2002; 31:558-60

Key words: 50th anniversary, Academic activities, Affiliations

Inauguration of the Singapore Orthopaedic Association (SOA)

The University of Malaya in Singapore was established in 1949. With this, the King Edward VII College of Medicine became the Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya.

Orthopaedic Surgery became an independent surgical specialty in 1952, when a Chair of Orthopaedic Surgery was created in the Faculty of Medicine. Professor J A P Cameron, a general surgeon, who later trained to become an orthopaedic surgeon, became the first Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery in Singapore.

In 1967, a group of 7 like-minded orthopaedic surgeons got together to form an association for orthopaedic surgeons. The inaugural meeting of prospective members of the SOA was held on 14 October 1967 at 9.15 am in the consultation room of Dr V K Pillay, Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at the Outram Road General Hospital. Those present at the meeting included Dr V K Pillay, Dr K H Yeoh, Dr W G S Fung, Dr P C N Wong, Dr B T Khong, Dr C Y Tan and Dr S Ayaduray. The meeting was chaired by Dr Pillay (personal communication—personal papers and documents of the late Dr Khong Ban Tze).

At the meeting, the following office-bearers were elected:

President:	Dr W G S Fung
Vice-President:	Dr V K Pillay
Honorary Secretary:	Dr B T Khong
Honorary Treasurer:	Dr P C N Wong
Honorary Editor:	Dr K H Yeoh

The first draft of the Constitution was presented at this meeting. It was subsequently revised. The Association's Constitution (2nd draft) was eventually, unanimously, adopted on 8 November 1967 at a Special Meeting.

On 3 February 1968, a Special Meeting was held to elect Honorary Auditors. Dr S Ayaduray and Dr P B Chacha were elected Auditors.

Birthday

The Inaugural Dinner of the Association was held on 11 February 1968 at the Majestic Restaurant at Bukit Pasoh. The Guest-of-Honour was Dr Robert Roaf, Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, University of Liverpool. Other official guests at the dinner included Dr Y Cohen, Chairman of the Singapore Surgical Society and the Chapter of Surgeons, Academy of Medicine.

It was at this dinner that Dr W G S Fung proclaimed, "it can be historically recorded that the SOA is born on the 11th day of the 2nd month of the year 1968 A.D." (personal communication—personal papers and documents of the late Dr Khong Ban Tze).

It was only on 1 March 1968 that the Association was formally registered with the Registry of Societies, Singapore under the Societies Act 1966. A notification to this effect was published in the Government Gazette.¹

The SOA Emblem

The design of the Badge: The central theme is a tree with twisted trunk bound to a straight post copied from Andry's "Orthopaedia". It is common to the presidential badges of

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Fig. 1. Emblem of the Singapore Orthopaedic Association.

orthopaedic associations of the British Commonwealth. The plane tree was chosen because it was beneath a plane tree that Hippocrates stood at Cos to teach his disciples. The clasp is in the form of an orchid, the vanda Dearie. At bottom centre is an outline of the island of Singapore, with a lion inside (Fig. 1). The design in colour has the background rendered in red, the same shade as that of the flag of Singapore.

SOA Tie

The SOA tie was officially launched in 1976 and was available for \$16.00.

The SOA Through the Years

Members:

At the inauguration of the Association, it had less than 10 members. Today, 34 years on, the Association has a membership of 134 viz:

Honorary Members	-	4
Ordinary Members	-	106
Associate Members	-	16
Senior Members	-	8

Academic Activities:

The first Scientific Meeting of the Association was a combined meeting of the SOA and Singapore Surgical Society held on 30 April 1968 at the Pathology Lecture Theatre, Outram Road General Hospital. Prior to this meeting, before the formation of the SOA, there had been two earlier orthopaedic meetings in 1964 and 1966.^{2,3} Following the success of this first meeting of the Association, further meetings were held covering a wide range of topics.

The 3rd Scientific Meeting of the SOA was held on 20 and 21 September 1968 at the Orthopaedic Lecture Theatre of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Outram Road General Hospital.⁴ It was held under the auspices of the University of Singapore. This meeting was the first international orthopaedic conference held by the Association. Since then, the SOA Scientific Meetings have been held, initially, at 2-year intervals, and more recently, annually.

This year, we celebrate 50 years of orthopaedic specialty practice in Singapore, the SOA's 34th birthday as well as the 25th Annual Scientific Meeting.

In addition to these annual scientific meetings, the SOA also organises practical workshops and courses — e.g., AO Courses for both doctors and nurses etc — on a regular basis. The association continues to hold regular Saturday conferences rotated among the various hospitals to foster the growth of the science of orthopaedic surgery. These conferences provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences, apart from promoting collegiality.

The SOA is not directly involved in formal training and examination for orthopaedic trainees but it nevertheless contributes to their training with its various activities that the trainees are encouraged to attend and partake in.

Affiliations of the SOA

The SOA applied for corporate (institutional) membership of the World Orthopaedic Concern (WOC) in 1978 and was accepted in 1979. The first member of the SOA to partake in the WOC teaching project at Hassanuddin University in Ujung Pandang, Indonesia was Dr K Q Yeo in October 1980 where he visited for 2 weeks.

The SOA has maintained close ties with the Malaysian Orthopaedic Association (MOA) and regular annual meetings have been held since 1971 to foster closer ties between these two Associations. The first meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur. Singapore hosted the 2nd meeting in 1972. With the founding of the ASEAN Orthopaedic Association (AOA), this tie between the 2 Associations has been maintained in the context of the AOA. The last formal social- scientific get together between the SOA and MOA was held in conjunction with the Western Pacific

Orthopaedic Association and ASEAN Orthopaedic Association meetings in 1989 in Singapore.

The Association is a founder member of the AOA, which held its first meeting in Manila on 5 and 6 December 1981. The SOA was represented by Dr R W H Pho, Dr Tong G On and Dr L B Ong. The AOA is registered in Singapore.

The SOA has convened 3 AOA meetings — in 1984, 1989 and 1994 — to foster the spirit of co-operation and friendship within the ASEAN nations. SOA members often attend the regional annual scientific meetings of the AOA. This year, SOA is hosting the 22nd Annual Scientific Meeting of the AOA.

The SOA has participated actively in both the Junior as well as the Senior ASEAN Travelling Fellowship programmes since their inceptions in 1982 and 1985, respectively.

The Asia Pacific Orthopaedic Association (APOA) [previously the Western Pacific Orthopaedic Association (WPOA)] has a significant presence in this region. The SOA has no formal affiliation with APOA but a number of our members take an active interest in it. In 1989, the scientific meeting of the WPOA was organised by the SOA in Singapore. The Western Pacific Orthopaedic Association became the Asia Pacific Orthopaedic Association in 2001 at a meeting in Adelaide.

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Past Presidents of SOA

Dr William G S Fung, Founder President (1967/68)
 Dr V K Pillay (1969)
 Dr Yeoh Kean Hong (1970)
 Dr N Balachandran (1971)
 Dr Khong Ban Tze (1972)
 Dr P B Chacha (1973)
 Dr Cheng Wei Nien (1974)
 Dr William G S Fung (1975)
 Dr Ling Chaw Ming (1976)
 Dr K Bose (1977)
 Dr Lim Swee Keng (1978)
 Dr S Krishnamoorthy (1979)
 Dr Chan Heng Thye (1980)
 Dr Robert W H Pho (1981)
 Dr Tong G On (1982)
 Dr Ong Leong Boon (1983)
 Dr Low Yin Peng (1984)
 Dr P Balasubramaniam (1985)
 Dr Tan Ser Kiat (1986)
 Dr Jimmy S Daruwalla (1987)
 Dr Tay Chong Kam (1988)
 Dr Tay Boon Keng (1989)
 Dr Aziz Nather (1990)
 Dr Lim Swee Lian (1991)
 Dr See Hung Foo (1992)
 Dr K Satku (1993)
 Dr Seow Kang Hong (1994)
 Dr S T Kasinathan (1995)
 Dr Lee Eng Hin (1996)
 Dr Shamal Das De (1997)
 Dr Low Boon Yong (1998)
 Dr V P Kumar (1999)
 Dr Tan Chong Tien (2000)
 Dr Wong Ho Poh (2001)
 Dr Amit K Mitra (2002)