

# **The Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand Relationship with The Royal College of Surgeons of England**

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The medical relationship between Thailand and England evidently started in 1887. At that time, the British living in Bangkok donated eight hundred bahts for the construction of the Victoria building at Siriraj Hospital to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the accession to the throne of Queen Victoria.

Between 1923 and 1935, when the Rockefeller Foundation provided some support to medical education in Thailand, Prof. Thomas Peterson Noble, MD, FRCS, FRSE, was the first Surgeon-in-Chief at Siriraj Hospital. He was highly honoured by the Thai Royalty by being appointed to be personal surgeon to King Rama VII. The Surgical Department under his leadership was well recognized for its progress and advancement.

When he returned to England, his outstanding student, Dr. Prajak Thongprasert, served as the next chief of the Department of Surgery from 1936 to 1951. On his return to England, Prof. Peterson was very helpful to all Thai physicians who studied in England.

The modern relationship with the Royal College of Surgeons of England started when His Majesty the King made an informal visit to the Royal College of Surgeons of England in 1966. An official letter from the

president of the Royal College of Surgeons of England was presented to the president of the Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand by Professor Sir Roy Calne in April 1984. At that time, Professor Sir Roy Calne also gave a speech on Renal Transplantation to Thai Surgeons.

The relationship between the two Colleges was strengthened when the Thai Royal College Council hosted a formal reception for the President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and Council members in October 1984, following a Royal visit by Sir Geoffrey Slaney and the granting of an honorary fellowship to His Majesty the King by the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

A Joint Academic Meeting of The Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand with The Royal College of Surgeons of England, The College of Anaesthetists and the Faculty of Dental Surgery, took place in October 1989 where 138 surgeons, anaesthetists, and dentists, and their families from England gathered for the meeting at the Shangri La Hotel, Bangkok. The group was led by Sir Terrence English, the President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. It was a successful meeting in terms of strengthened academic collaboration and personal relationships among members of both surgical

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colleges. At the time, the Council Members of the Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand led by Prof. Thira Limsila, and the English participants were granted an audience by His Majesty the King.

On February 15, 1990, Professor Dr. Kasarn Jatikawanich, the former President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand was presented an honorary fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

The following prominent English surgeons made great contributions to the progress of Surgery in Thailand and they were presented honorary fellowships of the Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand :

1. Mr. Donald N. Ross, Senior Surgeon and Director of the Department of Surgery, Institute of Cardiology, London University (1987).
2. Sir Terrence English, Former President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, Director of the British Heart Foundation, Heart Transplant Research Unit, Papworth Hospital, Cambridge (1991).
3. Professor Sir Roy York Calne, Director of Liver Transplantation Programme, King's College, and University of Cambridge (1991).
4. Professor Robin Charles Noel Williamson, Director of the Department of Surgery at the Hammersmith Hospital, London (1992).

Following the joint academic meeting, the mutual relationship between the two Royal Colleges has been satisfactorily strengthened. All of the honorary fellowships have been very supportive of young members from Thailand seeking additional training in England. Sir Terrence English, the former President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, has been very helpful and friendly, even to students majoring in other areas who have sought his help. He also assisted in the arrangement for the Joint Academic Meeting between the Society of Thoracic Surgeons of Thailand and the Society of Thoracic Surgeons of Great Britain in March 1995. After the Meeting, the Thai Surgeons visited several institutes for Thoracic Surgery in England. This has resulted in good relationships between the surgeons of the two countries which, hopefully, will continue to grow and be increasingly strengthened.