Obituaries
Matsuki Miyazaki
1900-1972

Leprosy patients in India and Japan sustained an irreparable loss in the death of Japanese-born Dr. Matsuki Miyazaki. This self-effacing humanitarian and noted authority on leprosy was killed when the plane on which he was traveling crashed near New Delhi, India, June 14, 1972.

Dr. Miyazaki, known to his patients in India as the “Schweitzer of Japan,” had led a full and active life at the Kaifu-en Leprosarium in Kumamoto Prefecture in Japan until his retirement in 1958. He was then selected to go to India as director of the India Center, Japan Leprosy Mission for Asia (JALMA), at Agra, near the Taj Mahal.

The Center, whose formal designation is, “The India Leprosy Treatment, Rehabilitation Training Center,” was built at a cost of 250 million Japanese yen and is a gift to India from JALMA. Members of Japanese Lions Clubs were in the forefront of those making donations for the center and Dr. Miyazaki was a Lion himself. After the center was opened the good doctor, accompanied by a Japanese medical team and nurses, went there to treat and rehabilitate leprosy patients and to train Indian doctors in his methods. He had completed seven years in India and planned to continue working for leprosy patients until he reached the age of 80.

When he first started out for India, Dr. Miyazaki said: “Foreign missionaries helped us to conquer leprosy in Japan. Now it is time for Japan to help others.” He was returning to his patients in India from a meeting in Tokyo of the Japan Leprosy Mission for Asia, when the airliner crashed, killing 84 of the 89 persons aboard. (Adapted from The Star 32 [1972] 15)

Dr. U Tha Saing died suddenly on 24 November 1972 in Burma. U Tha Saing was born in Thein-Zeit village of Thaton district in Burma on 7 November 1903. He graduated from the Rangoon Medical School in 1926. In the same year he joined the Burma Health Services and served as assistant health officer and traveled widely to all parts of Burma.

From 1936 to 1941, he was appointed to the post of Chief Special Leprosy Officer of Burma. In this capacity his investigation into the leprosy problem in Burma revealed the true nature of the problem which was found to be many times greater than what the Burmese government had expected. Thus in 1951, with the cooperation of WHO, he presented to the country the fact that leprosy was not just another health problem but it was actually a national health problem.

In 1953 he was promoted to the post of Chief of Leprosy Control Project. He was the founder of the leprosy campaign in Burma. His devotion to leprosy work in Burma was much appreciated by colleagues all over the world. He was awarded a WHO fellowship in 1955 and he traveled to India, the United Kingdom, Africa, Thailand, Singapore, and in 1957 to In-
donesia. He represented Burma at the International Leprosy Conference in Tokyo in 1958, and in 1960 he served as a WHO short-term consultant in leprosy in Iraq for three months. After serving in the Burma Medical and Health Services for forty years, he retired from the post of the Director of Leprosy Control Project in 1966. During his retirement he wrote a book in Burmese called *The Leprosy in Burma*, for which he became the second winner of the National Literature Prize.

In 1967 he served in India for a year as a WHO consultant in leprosy. Those who had the chance to know him will remember his very agreeable warm personality, tremendous energy, missionary spirit and a zeal for the work of leprosy.