

Olaf K. Skinsnes, M.D., Ph.D.—An Appreciation

Dr. Olaf K. Skinsnes leaves a distinguished record of service behind him in his departure as editor of the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY.

Dr. Skinsnes was born in Sinyang, Honan, China in 1917 of medical missionary parents. After an early education in the American school in Kikungshan, China, he graduated from St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota in 1939. In 1947, he received the degrees of M.D. and Ph.D. (in Pathology) from the University of Chicago. After an internship at the Cornell Medical Center in New York, he returned to Asia and became a co-founder of the Hay Ling Chau Leprosarium in Hong Kong.

Dr. Skinsnes has had a long and distinguished career as a teacher at the University of Hong Kong from 1949-1959, at the University of Chicago from 1959-1967, and at the University of Hawaii since 1967. It is the spirit of the teacher that he brought to the JOURNAL, kindly and painstakingly offering suggestions, at times offering extensive revisions of his own writing, and, on occasion, offering his personal photographic equipment and skills to provide illustrations to authors submitting their articles to improve their work.

Never an investigator who shunned controversy, Dr. Skinsnes, with his unmatched articulate reasoning, has consistently stimulated, sometimes provoked, and always engendered the wholehearted respect of colleagues who, like him, are at the very leading edge of our knowledge about this ancient disease. In a landmark explanation of the immunology of leprosy in 1964, Dr. Skinsnes synthesized a remarkable amount of information and correctly predicted the fundamental concepts of immunology of the disease years

before their experimental verification.¹ This accomplishment came from a keen observer, gifted with an extraordinarily analytical mind, who was without benefit of the concepts of "modern immunology" enunciated years later.

The duties of being an editor involve a complex routine of attending to detail: reviewing manuscripts, carrying on an active correspondence with persons submitting material for publication as well as to other persons in the leprosy community, and dealing with endless publication minutiae to insure accuracy of the final product; it is hard work which has given the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY its envied scholarly reputation. It is that same energy that inspired Dr. Skinsnes to tackle three particularly distinguished publication projects: the *Centennial Festschrift* (41 [1973] 149-394), the Cumulative Author and Subject Index of Volumes 1-40 of the IJL (44 [1976] 1-574), and Vogelsang's *Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen* (46 [1978] 257-332). It is a tribute to his seemingly endless capacity for long hours and dedication to hard work that during the time Dr. Skinsnes served as editor he has continued to maintain a full-time teaching schedule, pursue a vigorous research program, offer significant community service, and lecture extensively throughout the world.

During this period of editorial change, Dr. Skinsnes has offered the widest possible assistance and advice to effect an orderly tran-

¹Skinsnes, O. K. The immunological spectrum of leprosy. In: *Leprosy in Theory and Practice*, R. G. Cochrane and T. F. Davey, eds., Baltimore: The Williams & Wilkins Co., 1964, pp 156-182.

sition. His patience, courtesy, and generosity of time with a totally inexperienced incoming editor have made it possible for us to hope to maintain the same high quality of scholarship, editorial meticulousness, and good taste that the JOURNAL has exhibited during the past ten years.

Dr. Skinsnes has been ably and loyally supported as editor by Ms. Linda W. Peterson, Assistant Editor, and Ms. Anwei Skinsnes, Assistant to the Editor, who have been responsible for the technical production and typing of the JOURNAL. Their attention to detail has kept the JOURNAL virtually free of errors.

It is fortunate as we assume the responsibilities of the editorship to have as a model a person who in his personal and professional life offers an example of commitment to re-

sponsibility, duty, honor, and accomplishment. We know that Dr. Skinsnes plans to continue a demanding schedule in the future in directing his active research program, teaching, and writing at least two books. We hope that he will contribute regularly and often to the JOURNAL and that he will find time to enjoy and enlarge even further his breathtaking collection of Chinese ceramics. Our heart-felt gratitude and best wishes go with Dr. Skinsnes as he departs.

As the present incoming editor, the feeling cannot be expressed more appropriately than Dr. Skinsnes did on these pages in reference to Dr. Esmond Long a decade ago (36 [1968] 450): "As a Chinese saying has it, 'He who is for one day my teacher, is my father for life.'"

—ROBERT C. HASTINGS