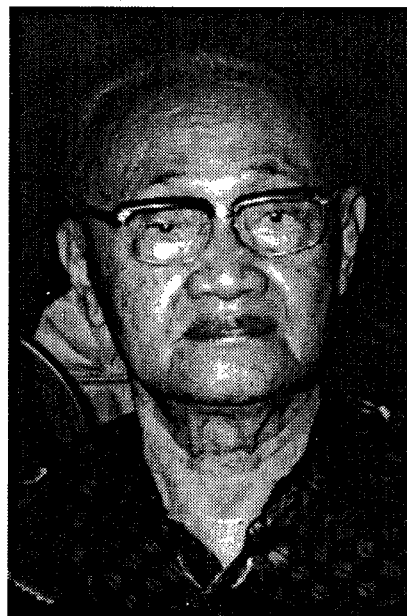


Biographical sketches of nutritionists in the Asia-Pacific region

Poorwo Soedarmo, MD



Dr Poorwo Soedarmo, born in 1904 in Malang, East Java, is regarded as the "Father of Nutrition" ("Bapak gizi") in Indonesia. His presence and contribution at the recent First Asian Congress of Dietetics in Jakarta (2-5 October 1994) was a source of great pleasure and pride to delegates, especially his Indonesian former students and colleagues. With him was his present wife, Djoeweriah (born 1920) in Jakarta and noted Indonesian Home Economist. Dr Poorwo's former wife died prematurely and altogether he has 8 children, 21 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren; his son is Professor Sumarmo Poorwo Soedarmono, Adviser to the Minister of Health, Professor Sujudi. He lived in Banten, West Jakarta, during the Japanese occupation in Indonesia and was head of its medical services until 1948. He was then expelled during the time of emerging Indonesian independence and went as a ship's

doctor on the "Polodarus" (a Blue Funnel-line ship) to the Netherlands for 6 months and then to London in 1949. This was the turning point in his career orientation towards nutrition. At the London School of Tropical Medicine in Hygiene, he undertook studies in malaria and the role of DDT in its control with Prof McDonald, but also developed an interest in nutrition with Professor Platt. He became aware of diseases as nutritional, such as the dermatological manifestations of Kwashiorkor, which previously had not been appreciated in Indonesia. He actively pursued his thinking and study of this issue during his 39 days aboard ship on his way home. He then proceeded to set up a dietetic school with the help of Dutch dietitians who stayed on under contract in Indonesia after independence. "Akademi Gizi" was founded in 1952 and the dietetic school commenced operation in 1950.