

## Plenary Lecture - History of allopathic medicine in Jaffna

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First batch of 5 American Missionaries with some exposure to medicine arrived in the island in 1816 at Point de Galle. After getting permission from the governor, the mission started a hospital at Tellippalai in the North. This was the first effort to introduce western medicine to the people of the country.

Dr. John Scudder, World's First Medical Missionary, opened his dispensary at Pandaitarippu in 1819. He carried out plastic reconstruction of mutilated ears, above knee amputation, excision of large tumours and even cataract operations without anesthesia, blood transfusions or antibiotics. Dr. Scudder left Jaffna for Madras in 1836 and later shifted to Vellore. Dr. Ida Scudder, Founder and Principal Emeritus of the Vellore Christian Medical College, was a granddaughter of Dr. John Scudder.

Dr. Samuel Fisk Green organized his dispensary at Manipay in 1847. He started a Medical College with 3-year course as in American Universities to increase the number of doctors. He selected students from the Batticota seminary (presently the Jaffna College). Under him, 87 completed the course and 33 more after his departure in 1873. The graduates found employment in the newer hospitals being established by the government or as General Practitioners and also in countries like India and Malaya.

During the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Dr. James Loos who was the Colonial Surgeon for the Northern Province recommended medical education for the entire island following the model of Manipay Medical School. This laid the foundation for the establishment of the medical school in Colombo on the first of June, 1870. The government decided to stop its grant to Manipay Medical School in 1884. This resulted in closure of the school. Dr. Benjamin A Mills stated on the demise of Dr. Green in 1884, "During Green's time, Jaffna was regarded as the headquarters of western medical science in South-East Asia".

Friend in Need Society Hospital at Jaffna was established by Ackland Dyke, the Government Agent, N.P., with the assistance of Dr. Green in 1850. This hospital has grown into what is now the Teaching Hospital, Jaffna. The medical staff of this hospital was drawn almost totally from the graduates of Dr. Green's medical school. It came under Civil Medical Department in 1907 and re-named as Jaffna Civil Hospital. Rapid development commenced after 1950. In the 1960s, it was a recognized center for postgraduate training for the Final Examinations of the Royal Colleges of England.

Dr. & Dr. Mrs. Scott arrived at Manipay hospital in 1893 and Dr. Mrs. Scott was the first lady doctor to serve in Jaffna. She started the first nursing school at Manipay –nearly 70 years before the present nursing school in Jaffna.

Two sisters of the American Mission (Mary & Margaret Leitch) who had been in Jaffna since 1880 felt the need for a hospital for women and collected funds. The hospital was opened in 1898. Since then the hospital has essentially served as a maternity and later children hospital.

Majority of the psychiatric patients were treated by Ayurvedic physicians, spiritualists and faith-healers. From the start of the Psychiatric Unit in Point Pedro and Kankesanthurai there was a rush of patients.

The community hospitals developed at Moolai by the people on a cooperative basis became popular in the 1950s. Another Cooperative Hospital was established in Tellippalai.