

News Blog

Penn Medicine's Global Reach to the Far East

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John Morgan, MD, whose passionate advocacy for establishing the first medical school in America swayed the trustees of the College of Philadelphia back in 1765, did not lack for ambition. As we look back to where and when the Perelman School of Medicine began, however, it's likely that even Morgan would be amazed at the global reach of the school, its faculty members, clinicians, and alumni. Both Morgan and William Shippen Jr., MD, the second professor appointed by the trustees, were familiar with Europe. Both earned their medical degrees from the University of Edinburgh and broadened their experiences in cosmopolitan London, and Morgan was known to have visited such sites of learning as the University of Padua. But India, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, China? Those places would have been inconceivable.



Victor Rambo (M 1921) and staff at the Christian Hospital Mungeli, India, 1937. Courtesy Christian Hospital Mungeli.

As the Perelman School of Medicine continues its yearlong celebration of its 250 years, one of the most tangible ways it is celebrating is through its new history book, *To Spread the Light of Knowledge*. Even such a large book, of course, must be selective, given the long and fascinating history of the school. One chapter that covers what may be a lesser-known portion of that history is the ninth, "Engaging Globally." Some parts of the chapter are familiar -- for example, the major role Penn doctors and nurses played in establishing and maintaining the 20th General Hospital in India during World War II. As editor of *Penn Medicine*, I was delighted to include in our most recent issue an article called "[From Burma to Penn: A Family Saga.](#)" It is a kind of follow-up to the 20th General Hospital experience. The article relates how three children of a Burmese doctor who served there with Penn's legendary I. S. Ravdin made their way to the University of Pennsylvania many years later, to pursue medical training or earn degrees. In fact, Jennifer Chu, MD, GME '1979, became a professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Penn.

About this Blog

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