Professor Odd Preben Lind passed away this year in Spain in his 82nd year of life. Professor Lind was known in Hong Kong as Preben Lind, but at home in Denmark he was known as Odd Lind. As Odd Lind he had had a distinguished career prior to his arrival here in Hong Kong. He had worked in the Danish Public Dental Health Service, studied law as a postgraduate to better understand the legal framework of dental health care, and had been a senior academic in Public Health Dentistry in Aarhus, Denmark. He had also been awarded three periods of academic leave from the University of Aarhus to study in famous centers of dental public health in the United States. Accompanied by his delightful wife Jette, Preben Lind came to Hong Kong towards the end of 1982 to serve as Reader in Dental Public Health at the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Hong Kong. He was promoted to Professor in 1986. Preben left Hong Kong in 1988 to work at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, from which he finally retired to Spain to enjoy life in the village of La Herradura on the Mediterranean coast until his death this autumn after a long and well-lived life.

While at the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Hong Kong, Preben established an undergraduate teaching program in dental public health, based on the active participation of students learning through the planning, conduct, and reporting of community health projects. This model for the teaching of Dental Public Health came to be emulated in many other countries and persists at the University of Hong Kong to the present day.

In the years since Preben instituted the student Community Health Projects, they have provided a wealth of information about oral health conditions in Hong Kong and the surrounding region, and about oral health care delivery in outreach situations and settings as well as for special groups in Hong Kong society. In addition to this legacy in Hong Kong, Preben spearheaded a survey of adult oral health in Hong Kong, completed in 1984, which has formed the baseline for further studies. Furthermore, Preben designed and delivered, along with his colleagues, the Masters program in Dental Public Health. Preben had strong links with the Danish International Development Agency, which funded in part the Inter-country Centre for Oral Health, then situated in Chiang Mai in northern Thailand. These links gave the work of Preben and his colleagues a strong regional presence and orientation. Preben’s final legacy to Hong Kong was an indirect one: Preben invited Prof. Eli Schwarz, the then Chief Dental Officer of Denmark, to visit Hong Kong en route to Australia. Prof. Schwarz so liked Hong Kong that he ended up as Preben’s successor.

Preben Lind was his own man with his own style, who significantly influenced those lucky enough to be his students and colleagues, and who worked tirelessly for better oral health for all of the communities in which he served. He will be greatly missed as we continue to appreciate well into the future the gifts he has left us.

Esmonde F. Corbet

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