

Obituary

PROFESSOR LE KINH DUE (1925–2001)

Professor Le Kinh Due, an eminent leprologist and dermatologist, former Director of the National Institute of Dermato-Venereology (NIDV), Hanoi, Vietnam, died on 6 February 2001.

Professor Le Kinh Due was born in Ha Tinh province on 10 May 1925. He had his early education in Hue City and took his medical degree at Hanoi Medical College in 1952. Subsequently, he served the cause of National Independence in the capacity of surgeon. After 1954, he received specialized training in immunology and histopathology of the skin at Humboldt University, Berlin.

In 1975, Professor Le was appointed to the Chair of Dermatology, Bach Mai Hospital, and became Head of the Dermato-Venereological Department of Hanoi Medical College, where he enjoyed a long and distinguished teaching career. He took up the position of Director of NIDV and President of the Vietnam Dermatology Association in 1982.

Professor Le began his career in the field of leprosy control over 40 years ago, in the capacity of director of his country's leprosy programme. Over the years, he made a major contribution to establishing a nationwide anti-leprosy network, from central to grassroots level. In 1981, a national leprosy elimination programme was launched by Professor Le and his colleagues under the guidance of the Ministry of Health; it was successfully implemented in a stepwise manner, and proved very fruitful. In recent years, the stigma attached to leprosy has virtually been eliminated, even in remote areas.

Professor Le was the author of many books on leprosy, skin diseases and sexually transmitted diseases. He visited and worked in many countries as a WHO consultant on leprosy, and was awarded a 'Health for All' medal and the Sasakawa Health Prize by the WHO in 1988 and 1995, respectively. He also received many prestigious awards for his work from the Government of Vietnam.

Professor Le is survived by his wife and two sons. He will be greatly missed by his co-workers, students and colleagues.

*(Condensed from a longer article written by
Dr Tran Hau Khang, Vice-Director, NIDV)*