

Obituary

In Memory of Kittipong Srivatanakul

Shigeru Miyachi, Srintara (Pongpech) Singhara Na Ayudhaya, Jeyaledchumy Mahadevan, Timo Krings, Maksim Shapiro, Eytan Raz, Erez Nossek, Peter Kim Nelson, and Hideaki Shigematsu



A Preface to the Special Issue in Memory of Professor Kittipong Srivatanakul

Shigeru Miyachi

President of the Japanese Society for Neuroendovascular Therapy (JSNET)
Department of Neurological Surgery, Aichi Medical University, Nagakute, Aichi, Japan

Professor Kittipong Srivatanakul passed away on the 11th of July at the age of 52. He was one of the most important persons in our Japanese society. Although he was born in Thailand, he loved Japan very much and devoted much of his life to the education of young neurointerventionalists. He was known to stimulate students by challenging them to deeper understanding and bringing their knowledge to higher levels.

His motivation and passion for the study of neuroanatomy was originated from the inspirational teachings of his mentor and the late Professor Lasjaunias, and he always diligently and passionately organized the educational seminars in Japan based on the international Pierre Lasjaunias Neurovascular Education Team (PLANET) course. I am choked with emotion and deep regret for his abrupt cessation only halfway in his prolific lifework.



My appreciation for his contribution to "Neuroendovascular Therapeutics" in September 2018

He was a fine speaker of both English and French, and not to mention his mother language, Thai. His multilingual talent contributed to mediating the good relationships in south-east (SE) Asia, and his positive and insightful comments at international conferences were highly admired by world members.

Although his name might not be known to some JSNET members, with rare exception, we decided to set aside this special issue to mourn for him because of his great contribution to our society. This plan was proposed by his best friend and the editor-in-chief of this journal, Professor Kiyosue, and was realized with the approval of many members and his mutual friends.

In truth, as I had personally expected for him to assume a leadership position in the Asian-Australasian Federation of Interventional Therapeutic Neuroradiology (AAFITN), his death came as a great loss to our society as well as to international neurointervention. I express my sincere condolence and pray for the repose and peace of his soul.

15 July, 2022

From Nagakute, Aichi, Japan

Dear Friends and Colleagues in INR around the World

Professor Sirintara (Pongpech) Singhara Na Ayudhaya, MD

Ex-President of ATIN, AAFITN, and World Federation of Interventional and Therapeutic Neuroradiology (WFITN)
Faculty of Medicine, Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand

It was with a great sense of loss when we heard of Dr. Kittipong Srivatanakul (or Dr. Jack)'s death.

We are deeply saddened by the news, even we have heard that he fought bravely to the bad disease, the same way as he did for every battle in his life.

Jack was more than just a wonderful endovascular surgeon, an impressive lecturer in the field, especially in the intracranial vascular anatomy, which we shared the same teacher/mentor, Professor Pierre Lasjaunias, since many years back. He was also a thoughtful and loving friend and colleague, not because he is a Thai but because he was always so kind to friends from all over the world the same way as he did to the Thais.

We know that his passing will leave a void not only in our society but also in the hearts of those who knew him.

On behalf of myself, the Association of Thai Interventional Neuroradiology (ATIN), and SE Asia friends, we appreciate the academic knowledge and friendship he brought to us. He will be remembered for his willingness to share his time and expertise with all students and colleagues. It would be difficult to measure the impact he has had on many people's lives he touched, personally and professionally. We are very grateful for the many contributions he made to our Interventional Neuroradiology (INR) societies.

We are deeply sorry to have lost such a good doctor, and friend.

Jack will always remain within our hearts, and we have included him in our daily prayers.

Obituary for Dr. Kittipong Srivatanakul

Dr. Jeyaledchumy Mahadevan on behalf of Neurovascular Alumni friends around the world.

Department of Radiology, Pantai Hospital, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

There are a few people whom you meet along your career who you know are special from the start. Kittipong, known to most of us as Jack, was one of them.

Most of us met Jack during the neurovascular training sessions in Chiang Mai, conferences, and meetings, and have spent time with him both at work and socially.

Jack was one of those rare people who had a passion for anatomy and had a talent for teaching. He was a thinker in his practice and always tried to analyze the problem to look for the best solution. He inspired many people to do the same and was a leader in his field. Many of us consulted him on complex neurovascular architecture and he was our neurovascular anatomy guru! I'm sure he made Pierre Lasjaunias, his mentor, proud.



From left to right in the photo, Jack, Jeya, and Prof. Sirintara in China



From left to right in the photo, Josephine, Nick, Jack, Pierre, and Victor in Chiang Mai 2006

He was a joy to be with as he was a humble and soft-spoken person with a brilliant sense of humor. There were many hours of camaraderie amidst the work and he cared for his friends and colleagues very much.

He always said that he had a wonderful life, surrounded by good friends and had no regrets until the end. He was a great father and husband and loved and did all he could for his family. Even in illness, he put others before him and was calm and strong until the end.

We, your friends, shall miss you always Jack, and hope we will meet on another plane at another time. Goodbye dear friend.



The last alumni in Kota Kinabalu (KK) 2018



Jack presented in last AAFITN in KK

Kittipong Srivatanakul (Jack)

Timo Krings, MD, PhD, FRCP(C)

The David Braley and Nancy Gordon Chair in Interventional Neuroradiology,
Toronto Western Hospital & University Health Network, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Professor, Departments of Radiology and Surgery, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Interventionalist, teacher, and friend

Kittipong Srivatanakul, also known as Jack, and myself first met in 2004 in Phuket at the Neuroanatomy Course organized by Pierre Lasjaunias, and our paths crossed many times over the years as we grew into the field of neurointervention and became friends.

As an interventionalist, Jack was rooted in the “Neuroanatomical” school of thought, paying attention to understanding the disease rather than just performing the treatment, focusing on the approach rather than the device, and respecting the anatomy rather than being “handy” in dealing with complications.

He did not only perform cases at the highest level of technical finesse – having an inquisitive mind, he “dissected” every aspect of the case to identify teaching points and to highlight the anatomy.

Jack used technology and materials as the disease demanded it rather than deploying new gadgets that were currently “en vogue” – in other words, he put the patient not the devices first.

Jack was not only an amazing and sought-after teacher, he also organized different teaching courses, including the two sessions of the 2016 PLANET course in Tokyo where faculty from all over the world taught all aspects of neuroanatomy and treatment of neurovascular diseases.

Whether he taught my two girls how to do origami or an audience of 700 physicians how to identify the facial arcade, he was patient, modest, and meticulous with a sense for beauty and an attention to detail that engaged his audience to join him in his journey.

Different from talks where only technical issues or new devices are discussed, his presentations furthered our understanding of diseases. Using clinical examples and beautifully colored 3D renderings, he taught us that from understanding the anatomy, you could derive the best path of treatment.

At the symposium *Neuroradiologicum* in 2022 in New York, I had asked him to give a talk on extracranial to intracranial (EC-IC) anastomoses and he approached this talk in such an innovative way that his talk received the best feedback of the entire session. His modest answer to this honor was: “I was trying to look for an idea to attract people, not reading them out of the textbooks”.

Foremost, Jack was a friend, a good person, someone you gravitate to. He put others before himself, listening rather than talking. He was genuine and true, and there were no “hidden agendas” when you talked to him. I want to end with a quote from Jack. In his last email to me, days prior to his passing, he concluded with what stands as a reminder to all of us and as his final teaching we all should take to heart being in a field that is very demanding on our families and us, a field that makes us easily forget where our priorities should lie. Jack said:

“I am sending you this message as a friend. Please don’t work so hard, please try to spend as much time with your pretty family.”



Jack teaching my daughter origami in Toronto in 2019



Jack and me discussing Anatomy at JSNET 2019

Obituary for Kittipong

Maksim Shapiro,¹ Eytan Raz,² Erez Nossek,³ and Peter Kim Nelson⁴

¹Associate professor, Departments of Radiology and Neurology, ²Associate Professor, Department of Radiology,

³Associate Professor, Department of Neurosurgery, and ⁴Professor, Departments of Radiology and Neurosurgery, NYU School of Medicine, New York, NY, USA

With indescribable heartbreak, we mourn the death of Dr. Kittipong Jack Srivatanakul known all over the world as Dr. Kittipong. He was a dearest friend and colleague. A fellow of Lasjaunias, he possessed an incredibly deep and clinically-relevant understanding of functional vascular anatomy. He believed in and lived the life of a doctor-teacher, both in Japan and internationally. With his help and guidance, we launched the highly successful basic and advanced neurovascular anatomy (BANANA) course in 2019, persevering in the subsequent pandemic-era with the online series. His beautiful and instantly recognizable drawings and segmentations are unmatched in neurovascular education.



Val d'Isere 2019: To life in stereo!

Above all, he displayed unsurpassed grace and kindness. His patient humility – a quintessential attribute of greatness – was the backbone of his unique and highly effective teaching style, endearing him to all who were privileged to know him.

The grief of his loss is overwhelming. The BANANA 2022 course will be dedicated to his memory, and our commitment to neurovascular education will be part of his legacy.

Professor Kittipong

Hideaki Shigematsu

Department of Neurosurgery, Tokai University School of Medicine, Isehara, Kanagawa, Japan

I am still unsure why I am writing this letter; I feel somewhat shy about it. I first met you in 2012 and it has been only 10 years, but I feel we have known each other for longer than that. You are a teacher who had a significant impact on my life, professionally and personally.

You are the one who taught me the theories of endovascular treatment. You always thought ahead when conducting treatments and taught me that it helps ensure patients' safety. Now, I have the opportunity to do the same for my juniors and equip them to provide proper treatment while anticipating future developments in patients.

You gave your best at everything you did in your career. On your last day at work, you apologized to a group of students from the neurosurgery department, saying you would not be able to teach them properly again. I don't think I can say such a thing. You were someone who did their very best at teaching.

Finally, this was our last email conversation.

Dr. Kittipong: "I'm afraid I can't make it to tomorrow's AVM embolization."

Shigematsu: "I think the case tomorrow will proceed smoothly."

Dr. Kittipong: "I'm not too worried. Just do it as usual. It's no different from playing golf."

People who have never played golf may not get this, and even those who have played may still not understand what you meant as each player has a different style of playing the game. However, I am proud that we had a relationship where we could explain and understand everything using golf terms.

Four days before you passed away, you did not shake my hand because you said we were going to meet again. I thought the same. It was a little too early.

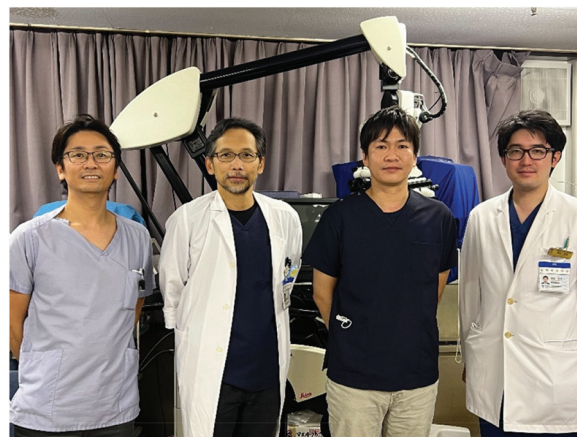
When we meet again, I am going to shake your hands first and then tell you stories of how your student has hopefully lived up to your legacy.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,



In AVANCE basic 2021



Cerebral Endovascular Therapy Team 2022