

# Hong, Lie Sek (1915–1996)

---

## JONATHAN OEY KUNTARAF

Jonathan Oey Kuntaraf was born into a Buddhist family. He joined the SDA Church at the age of 17. During his 44 years of denominational service, Kuntaraf has served as a pastor, teacher, and administrator. Before his retirement, Kuntaraf served as the director of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Silver Spring, Maryland, USA. His wife Kathleen Kiem Hoa Oey Kuntaraf, a physician, served the denomination for 36 years, with her last responsibility as the General Conference associate director of Health Ministries department. The Kuntarafs are partners in preaching, teaching, presenting seminars, and writing books and articles. They have two children.

---

Lie Sek Hong, later also known as Dr. Elisha Liwidjaja, was a dedicated Adventist layperson who generously contributed his time and wealth to the development of the Adventist mission work in Indonesia.

## Early Life

Lie Sek Hong was born on April 13, 1915, in Fort de Kock, West Sumatra, Indonesia (currently known as Bukit Tinggi) to his parents Lie Seng Kiat and Inyo Tiok Nio.<sup>1</sup> He was the third son of 10 children. His siblings who survived until adulthood were Lie Sek Kiong, Lie Pek Giok, Lie Pek Bie, Lie Pek Lian, Lie Sek Tjoen, and Lie Pek Kiem.<sup>2</sup>

He spent his early life in Fort de Kock and Padang, West Sumatra. He was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church by Pastor J. H. Stuiwenga in 1932.<sup>3</sup> In the same year, Lie Sek Hong and his family moved to Surabaya, East Java.

## Education and Marriage

Lie Sek Hong finished his elementary school in Padang, and he started attending high school in Padang, West Sumatra. After moving to Surabaya, Sek Hong attended Hollandse Chinese School, a Dutch government-operated high school for Chinese.<sup>4</sup>

After completing high school with honors, Sek Hong received a scholarship to The Nederlansch Indische Artsenschool (now known as The Airlangga University), Surabaya, Indonesia, to study medicine. He graduated on October 8, 1941, with a medical doctor degree.<sup>5</sup>

After obtaining his medical degree, Dr. Lie Sek Hong married Miss Liem Ie Lien in Manado, Indonesia, on October 29, 1941, solemnized by Pastor D. S. Kime. They had four daughters (Kiem Loan, Kiem Giok, Kiem Hoa, and Kiem Lian) and one son (Goan San, 1948-2017).<sup>6</sup>

## Career

It was the common practice in those years for the colonial government to send recent medical school graduates to regions where medical services were limited. Dr. Lie was sent to Aceh, Sumatra, where he was the only trained physician within 100-mile radius. He would travel from village to village delivering babies, performing Cesarean sections, appendectomies, and even amputations. He also extracted teeth since there was no dentist. He treated psychotic patients by administering Electro Convulsive Treatment with equipment he had assembled himself. He stayed in the region of Aceh from 1941-1948.<sup>7</sup>

Due to non-conducive environment there, he went to Penang, Malaysia, in 1948 for the safety of his family. During his exile in Penang, he was unable to practice as a physician. Instead, he spent his time reading Mrs. Ellen G. White's books, which convinced him of the importance of establishing Seventh-day Adventist churches, schools, and hospitals.<sup>8</sup>

On January 1, 1950, Dr. Lie and his family moved to Medan, Sumatra, where he was employed by the Indonesian Government Tuberculosis Hospital as a general practitioner. Two years later, in 1952, he opened his own private practice in addition to his government job.<sup>9</sup>

Starting in 1955 for the next 10 years, he was asked to act as Health and Temperance Director of the North Sumatra Mission, and served as a member of mission executive committee for 10 years.<sup>10</sup> In 1968, Dr. Lie retired from his government job to devote himself to his private practice and to establish Medan Adventist Hospital.<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Lie did not lose his vision of a Seventh-day Adventist Hospital in Medan. In 1952, he started to purchase parcels of land that amounted to 25,000 square meters at Jl. Gatot Subroto and 17,000 square meters in Sunggal. He donated the land to the West Indonesia Union Mission, and he was given permission to build with his own money.

On May 27, 1967, Dr. Lie launched the groundbreaking ceremony for building the hospital.<sup>12</sup> After overcoming various challenges, a 20-bed hospital was officially opened on June 1, 1969. Dr. G. C. Ekvall, the Health and Temperance Director of the Far Eastern Division, was the honored guest to cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony.<sup>13</sup> Starting in 1968, Dr. Lie Sek Hong served as the first president of Medan Adventist Hospital,<sup>14</sup> and he served there for the next 15 years until his retirement in 1985.<sup>15</sup> He has also worked as Health and Temperance Director for the West Indonesia Union Mission from 1970 to 1980.<sup>16</sup> Today, The Medan Adventist Hospital stands as a 160-bed institution ever since June 2019.<sup>17</sup>

## Dedicated Life

Dr. Lie Sek Hong did not give his service only in medical work. He involved himself with many other church activities like evangelistic meetings and personal evangelism. Many souls have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior as the result of his outreach activities. Another example of his unselfish contributions was that Dr. Lie had always dream of having a church building that could seat 300 people. So, he took on the chairmanship of a committee to build a church located at Jalan Veteran 14A, Medan. On February 6, 1954, the building was dedicated with guest speaker Pastor A. G. Steward from Australia and Pastor N. C. Wilson offering the dedicatory prayer.<sup>18</sup>

Some of the other work he was involved in included:

1954 Starting the first Adventist elementary church school at Jl. Veteran, 14A, Medan, which eventually became the educational center from elementary education to high school in the city of Medan.<sup>19</sup>

1958 He donated a parcel of land to the North Sumatra Mission, and built a day academy. Now that land has become an Adventist complex on which are a church building, an evangelistic center, and an orphanage, all operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>20</sup>

1966 He had the vision to start a nursing school with 35 students. When The Medan Adventist Hospital started accepting patients in 1969, these nurses were ready to serve the hospital.<sup>21</sup>

1969 On June 1, the first unit of the hospital was opened by Dr. G. C. Ekvall, the Health and Temperance Director of the Far Eastern Division, with one attending physician, Dr. Lie Sek Hong and 10 nurses.<sup>22</sup>

1970 He was able to recruit a non-Adventist physician to work at Medan Adventist Hospital, followed by more non-SDA physicians in the following years.

1971 He started IKKGA (Ikatan Kedokteran dan Kedokteran Gigi Advent), an Association of Adventist physicians, dentists, as well as medical and dental students). This association has served as an instrument to encourage Adventist physicians, dentists, along with medical and dental students to work to support one another, giving health lectures to the communities as well as organizing various charity clinics in many places. Also, the Association went to various Seventh-day Adventist academies to recruit students to take up medicine and dentistry as their professions. Today, the success of IKKGA can be measured by the number of Seventh-day Adventist young people who are pursuing the medical and dental professions.<sup>23</sup>

1974 An Adventist dentist Dr. Glinawaty Kay Liwidjaja (also known as Lie Kiem Giok), the second daughter of Dr. Lie Sek Hong, joined the hospital, working in the dental department.<sup>24</sup>

1976 A second Adventist physician, Dr. Kathleen Hanayanti Liwidjaja (also known as Lie Kiem Hoa), the third daughter of Dr. Lie Sek Hong, joined the hospital. Then eventually, more Adventist physicians joined the hospital. <sup>25</sup>

He established many church buildings, and in recognition of his many contributions to the SDA Denomination, a three-story building located in a busy section of Medan was named in his honor as the Dr. Lie Sek Hong Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>26</sup>

## Later Life

In 1968, after retiring from working for the government, Dr. Lie Sek Hong served 10 years as the president of Medan Adventist Hospital and Health and Temperance Director for the West Indonesia Union Mission. He generously paid out of his own pocket for all his travels to the many islands in Indonesia. He worked at the Medan Adventist Hospital until 1984 and retired at the age of 69. After that, he continued his private practice.

On January 29, 1996, he passed away in his sleep about three months after he had stopped practicing medicine. He was 80 years old.<sup>27</sup> His children and grandchildren continue his legacy of dedicated service to the Church and beyond.

---

### SOURCES

*"Division Medical Secretary Opens New Hospital," Far Eastern Division Outlook*, June 1969.

Emil Tambunan, *Seabad Gereja Masehi Advent hari Ketujuh di Kota*, Medan, Jakarta: Graha Lumbung Lestari, 2016.

Emilkan Tambunan, *Sejarah Gereja Masehi Advent Hari Ketujuh di Indonesia*, Indonesia Publishing House, Bandung, Indonesia.

*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association. Various years.  
<https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

*"West Indonesian Union Mission," Far Eastern Division Outlook*, March 1967.

---

### NOTES

1. Emilkan Tambunan, *Sejarah Gereja Masehi Advent Hari Ketujuh di Indonesia* (Indonesia Publishing House, Bandung, Indonesia), 517.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid

5. Ibid
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid
8. Dr. Glinawaty Kay Lim, daughter of Dr. Lie Sek Hong, interview by author, Medan, September 14, 2018.
9. Tambunan, 517.
10. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, "North Sumatra Mission," years 1955-1965.
11. Dr. Glinawaty Kay Lim, daughter of Dr. Lie Sek Hong, interview by author, Medan, September 14, 2018.
12. "West Indonesian Union Mission," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, March 1967, 18.
13. "Division Medical Secretary Opens New Hospital," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, June 1969, 5.
14. Ibid.
15. Tambunan, 517.
16. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, "West Indonesia Union Mission," years 1971-1980.
17. Dr. Rudy Sitepu, president of Medan Adventist Hospital, interview by author, Medan, June 27, 2019.
18. Emil Tambunan, *Seabad Gereja Masehi Advent hari Ketujuh di Kota* (Medan, Jakarta: Graha Lumbung Lestari, 2016), 171.
19. Ibid., 249.
20. Jonathan Oey Kuntaraf, personal knowledge as son-in-law of Dr. Lie Sek Hong.
21. Tambunan, *Seabad Gereja Masehi Advent hari Ketujuh di Kota Medan*, 270.
22. Ibid., 133.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Dr. Glinawaty Kay Lim, daughter of Dr. Lie Sek Hong, interview by author, Medan, September 14, 2018.

---

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000