

Obituary

DR GUNNAR SEIDENFADEN

To our great sadness we learned that Dr Gunnar Seidenfaden passed away in February 2001 at the respectable age of 92. His career as an orchid taxonomist has been a long and extremely fruitful one. He continued to be productive right up to his death, leaving several unfinished manuscripts.

His impact on the taxonomy of the orchids in the Indo-Chinese to Malaysian region has been enormous. The core of his orchidological oeuvre is his revision of the orchids of Thailand. In order to have at least a chance of completing this project he developed his own, slightly unusual but certainly concise style: full bibliography, full citation of specimens, good illustrations but no descriptions. Making use of the information gathered for this project, he produced a checklist for the orchids of Indo-China, and, together with Jeffrey Wood, he revised R.E. Holttum's *Orchids of Malaya*. For the latter project he visited Singapore on several occasions to consult the Singapore Botanic Gardens' herbarium.

Seidenfaden can be ranked among the greatest in the field of South East Asian orchidology, on par with Smith, Schlechter and Holttum. While all these persons were professional plant taxonomists; for Seidenfaden, however, orchid taxonomy was only one of his many fields of interest. One could say that he 'did' the orchids of Thailand as a hobby, which makes his achievements all the more impressive.

Gunnar Seidenfaden has left an admirable scientific legacy. His death is much regretted.

Reference

Seidenfaden, G and J.J. Wood. 1992. *The Orchids of Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore*. Olsen & Olsen, Denmark.

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Singapore