

Obituary

K. Ramamoorthy

(25 September 1933–4 April 2009)



*Clinician, Teacher, Mentor,
Friend*

My relationship with Dr Ramamoorthy started 50 years ago, when he was medical registrar at King Edward Memorial Hospital, Bombay (now Mumbai). I was his house physician. After completing his residency, he joined Lokmanya Tilak Municipal Medical College and Hospital as a faculty. Three years later, I joined him.

The two of us with other colleagues started a scientific session scheduled for every Monday morning. This meeting became so popular that undergraduates, postgraduates and physicians from different parts of the country and abroad visiting Mumbai attended it. After his retirement as Honorary Professor of Medicine in 1990, he continued to chair these *Monday Meetings* over the next 19 years. My colleagues and I are keeping this tradition alive.

He was a consummate teacher, equally skilled at bedside clinics and formal lectures. He taught that a good clinical history stood above any technological advances. 'Listen to what the patient can tell you—it may be more important than anything else you do,' he repeatedly emphasized to his students. I was impressed by his diagnostic skill, judgement and above all by his humility and modesty.

Ram studied at South Indian Education Society (SIES) High School, Matunga, Mumbai, which later honoured him with its Distinguished Alumnus Award. He passed the Inter Science examination of the University of Bombay from Ramnarain Ruia College. This college conferred upon him the title 'Jewel of Ruia' in 2008. He passed the MB,BS and MD examinations of the University of Bombay from Seth G.S. Medical College and K.E.M. Hospital with gold medals in medicine and pharmacology. He served as honorary physician to some of the finest institutions of Mumbai, viz. Bombay Hospital Institute of Post Graduate Medical Sciences, Lilavati Hospital and Shushrusha Hospital.

His weekends were used for giving lectures in different parts of the country. He was a much sought-after speaker. His favourite subjects were PUO (pyrexia of unknown origin), electrolytes and

resistant infections. He was a founder fellow of the Indian College of Physicians and contributed chapters to the *API Textbook of Medicine*.

Ram received numerous awards including 'Karmayogi Puraskar', 'Giants International Award for Excellence in Medicine', two life-time achievement awards and three honorary memberships of Rotary Clubs. He was selected for the 25th 'Rameshwardas Birla Award for Outstanding Practising Clinician in Modern Medicine'.

He gained unusual popularity as a physician. He was a walking encyclopaedia of internal medicine. Because of his profound knowledge and experience, he was consulted frequently by colleagues. Throughout his life, he related easily and warmly to other doctors. His criticism was always constructive.

Ram's patients were many of the rich and famous of India—religious heads such as the Dalai Lama, artists, scientists, industrialists, businessmen, politicians and prominent physicians. He delivered utmost care to anybody and everybody from the President of India to a poor woman from a distant village coming to his clinic. Everyone was equally welcome. Universal humanity sprang spontaneously from his heart.

He maintained a simply furnished office in Dadar. The best tribute I could pay to Ram was to highlight his approach to some of the problems that degraded our profession. His practice was most ethical. He had deep concern for the poor and was always modest in his fees, so much so that it used to upset some of his young assistants. To wealthy patients, he suggested that a generous cheque be given to a worthy medical cause.

He enjoyed good health and took early morning walks at Jogger's Park, Bandra, Mumbai. Even as he aged, he was so fit that in an annual contest for brisk walking, an army brigadier could only rank second to him. After a courageous, protracted battle with multiple myeloma, Ram died at Lilavati Hospital on 4 April 2009. Despite his ill-health, he had continued to practise, lecture and attend the *Monday Meetings*. He would say 'I get withdrawal symptoms if I don't come on Mondays.'

He is survived by his wife Shushila, a great exponent of Carnatic vocal music, daughter Ranjani, a speech therapist and three grandchildren.

He has left an important legacy for all of us.

R. C. KHOKHANI

*Former Honorary Professor of Medicine
L.T.M. Medical College and Hospital*

Mumbai

*Maharashtra
rck@vsnl.com*