Obituary

With a deep sense of regret, we record the death of our beloved teacher Sri S. Ramana Rao, a high level intellectual, an excellent and willing teacher, a forthright person with impeccable honesty and integrity. Mr. Rao was born to Late Narayana Swami Nadu and Venkata Ratnamba at Kharagpur. His father was a railway employee and worked at many places.

His formal secondary education commenced in September 1939 as a student of the coeducational Bishop Cotton High School, Nagpur. His course of study covered six years, fourth standard to ninth standard (Senior Cambridge). He was awarded First Grade oversea Certificate by the University of Cambridge in 1945.

Whenever an occasion arose to dwell upon his school days, he had choice words of praise for Mr. R.S. Aiyyar, M.A. who taught Shakespeare, prose and poetry to senior classes (seventh, eighth, and ninth Standards). In the latter half of the ninth Standard the batch was bidden to render the substance of a poem into idiomatic prose as homework and submit the exercise books the following week for valuation. His piece of prose elicited memorable approbation from Mr. R.S. Aiyyar. “Rao,” he said, “you have formed a style of your own”.

He sometimes spoke of his mathematics teacher, Mr. A.N. Stacey, who taught arithmetic, algebra, and geometry to senior classes. Every month, in the ninth standard, Mr. Stacey set a hard rider in geometry to be solved in about fifteen minutes. As he was the only student, in a class of twenty, who evinced natural ability to solve riders, Mr. Stacey began to call “Rao!” as the allotted time was expiring. “Just a minute, Sir,” was the expected answer.

Proficiency in English and propensity towards Geometry brought his latent talent to the fore. After his father’s retirement the family settled in Waltair. He studied Intermediate (1946/1947) in Mrs. A.V.N. College. He joined the Geology Department, Andhra University in 1948. He took his M.Sc (Research) degree in 1953. His research director was then the Head, Prof. C. Mahadevan. Prof. S. Bhagavantam an internationally reputed Professor of Physics at Andhra University, was the adjudicator of his M.Sc thesis, and his thesis was adjudged as the all times best M.Sc thesis submitted to the Geology Department.

Mr. Raman Rao had razor edge sharpness and intellect. He derived 32 Classes of Symmetry in Crystallography, in another method, in just 3 hours.

Pursuing his flair for Mathematics, he studied Spherical Trigonometry, Group Theory, and Theory of Polyhedra. This self-schooling evoked the appreciation of the then University Professors of international repute in mathematics – Vomm Ramaswamy, S. Meenaksi Sundaram, T. Venkata Rayudu.

Mr. Ramana Rao was an excellent teacher gifted with crystal clarity. His expression was apt and precise. He was approachable and always willing to share his knowledge and clarify the doubts of the students with affection.

Mr. Ramana Rao could help a Chemist pursuing doctoral studies, by examining a small crystal under microscope, which bears testimony to his sharpness and original thinking.

Ramana Rao’s academic life, viewed apart, discloses divers pursuits. Avid reading, habitual writing, occasional drawing and modelling, extemporary speaking, indulging in extra-curricular activity, mainly marked his turn of mind.

Mr. Ramana Rao was frank and fearless with unimpeachable honesty and integrity. Consistent with his abilities he published three Research papers and three books on Pre-War Mahabharata “Sri Krishna and Kuru Princes” Earlier Days of Srikrishna and Kuru Princes”, “Pandavas’ Exile and Preparations for Kurukshetra War”.

Since brevity is a virtue, it is appropriate to end with a quote of his sage advice to teaching fraternity: “If mediocre, be useful. If merited, be creative. Time is not static.”

Mr. Ramana Rao who was ailing for some time with age related problems, breathed his last on 14-1-2020. Sri Ramana Rao leaves behind, his wife Mrs. Prameela, three sons, daughters’ in-law and grand children, many colleagues, students to bemoan his loss. With his death, India lost an intellectual and a good human being.

May his soul rest in peace.

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E: murtypariti45@gmail.com

R. Jagdeeswara Rao

P.S. N. Murthy