Prof. Dir. Dr. K.C. Mohanty era is over.

All time hero, real stalwart, lion-hearted teacher, walking encyclopedia, great thinker and guiding force behind hundreds of chest physicians, physicians, policy makers & all those involved in the fight against tuberculosis, who left a legacy of four generations of chest physicians behind him, left us for heavenly abode on 1st June 2017.

“We always lead… we show the path …” were his words & he lived his life true to that.

Born on 18th June 1940, he hailed from Odisha, after graduation in Medicine, he left for Mumbai to pursue his post-graduate studies in tuberculosis, & took up the first assignment as Honorary TB specialist at the Group of TB hospitals, Sewri and Professor at the department of TB & Chest diseases at Grant Medical College and Sir J. J. Group of Hospitals in 1972. In last 45 years that he served as teacher & dynamic physician and continued to head the department till 1999. He was examiner and inspector of TB and Chest diseases at several universities and institutions across the country, including the University of Bombay and Delhi and the National Board of Examinations. He joined the Department of TB & Chest diseases at the K. J. Somaiya Medical College, Mumbai as Director Professor & Head in 1999 and continued to serve till 2014. During the five decades of services, he treated and cured more than 25 lakhs patients of Tuberculosis. His most pioneering contributions were the introduction of Ciprofloxacin (1989) and Meropenem with clavulanic acid (2010) as anti-TB drugs, the efficacy of immunomodulators, especially levamisole and immunoglobulins in TB, the efficacy of partially supervised TB treatment and the integration of TB-HIV health services. He also scripted and produced a 35 minute film on “TB- The number one killer”.

He received innumerable State & National awards & as a mark of respect various organizations instituted awards, shields & orations in his name. He authored number of chapters & edited more than 20 books.

He was a hardcore environmentalist and tirelessly he worked for upliftment of adivasis & rural areas. He adopted village Pathraj near Karjat & looked after complete needs of the villagers-social, financial, & emotional issues. He constructed Saibaba temple without any professional laborers & architects, and made a community center. Temple offers free meals to all on Sundays & special festival days. He got more than 300 adivasi couples married at village. He had special love for North east region of India & made herculean efforts to integrate north east region to mainland. He was very close to His Excellency Shri PB Acharya – Governor of Nagaland. Prof Mohanty did multiple camps at Nagaland. He visited more than 25 times the North East region & did many multiple state level conferences. He holds record of doing conference at Tavang - at the height of 13,500 feet – one of its type of regional conference done by civilians for civilians. He encouraged a lot of doctors to travel to these areas and gave them platform to contribute for scientific upliftment of under privileged parts of India.

He started life at very ground level, struggled very hard to make both ends meet but always kept his spirits up. He always lived life his way, making no compromises.

He was Sai Bhakt, & through his life, he came in touch with various saints & spiritual leaders. Infect one spiritual leader exchanged his life for him & that’s the reason he got life after complete straight line on monitor for full 3 minutes. He lived for 2 decades after that episode. He never opted for any five star hospital attachments. He never accepted any invitation from out of India as speaker. He rejected very lucrative offers from foreign countries to migrate & head departments. He continued to serve the poor & needy. “I am the doctor of mass & not the class” as he would always say. Poorest of poor would get the best of treatment from him.

He always promoted juniors & I am the live example. His Midas touch changed my life completely. I want to become like you, is what I told him in my first meeting with him. “It would need a lot of compromises “ he said. But he saw to it that I rise in my career. I owe everything I have to him.

“If I have to die I want to die in Agam’s hospital” were his last words for me. I was not with him when he spoke this. “He will feel bad if I die anywhere else…” He developed acute viral infection that lead to myocarditis, then ARDS & then gradually multi-system failure. When I last interacted with him (he was intubated & communicated with eyes & notes on paper ) he told me show must go on. Do not cancel conference, I read in his eyes. Very firm message he gave me. 23 NESCON 2017 – a National annual conference on Environmental & respiratory diseases, is dedicated to him. Can there be any other way to offer our tribute to the teacher’s teacher & the best chest physician & TB specialist India ever produced?

Sir, I promise to do it the way you would have done it, the way you would have wanted me to do it.

Dr Mohanty achieved so much in the subject that he chose for himself & generations of physicians would be grateful to him for his contribution to the subject.

May his soul rest in peace.

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