

President, Neurological Society of India 1954-1955

As a child, Dr. Ram Ginde watched his father at work in his medical practice in Baillhongal (near Belgaum). The deep interest displayed by Dr. G. R. Ginde in the welfare of his community (he was chairman of the village municipality for 9 years), music and religion impressed the future neurosurgeon. Whilst the musical heritage from their father is most evident in Pandit Dr. K. G. Ginde, Dr. Ram Ginde too thrilled to Hindustani classical music to the end.

The young Ram was frail and prone to illness. Despite this, he was able to complete his primary education in Kanarese though his mother tongue was Marathi. (No Marathi schools existed in that district). He later studied through the medium of English at the Jackson High School in Baillhongal. For high school education he had to go to Belgaum and the Government Sardar's High School. He passed the Matriculation examination of the Bombay University in 1928. By now he was adept at playing not only the harmonium but also the flute and the dilruba. At the height of the Swadeshi movement, he too consigned his clothes (made from imported material) to the flames and changed over to Khadi.

As no graduate education in science was possible in Belgaum, he joined the Deccan College in Poona under the guardianship of Mr. Kashinathpant Kelkar, a close friend of his father and lecturer at the College. Dr. G. R. Ginde, suspecting young Ram's ability to withstand the strain of college education, intended to keep a close watch during the first year. Under the supervision of Professor Kelkar, the student more than justified his claims. He moved to Bombay and completed his intermediate science from the Wilson College. A bonus from this shift to Chowpatty was his introduction to and a growing friendship with Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande.

As an undergraduate at the Seth H. S. Medical College, he attracted the attention of such teachers as Drs. P. C. Bharucha, Gopal Rao Deshmukh, H. R. Moghe and N. A. Purandare as he accumulated various prizes and medals and won the University and Inter-University tennis cups. His own ambition of becoming a surgeon conflicted with his father's desire that he return to Baillhongal. Despite poor financial support, he travelled to England in 1937 but had to return before obtaining his fellowship as war broke out. The University of Bombay balked at letting him appear for the M. S. straightaway until Dr. D. V. Nadkarni's strong recommendations prevailed. He continued working at the K. E. M. Hospital and came into close contact with Dr. R. N. Cooper. The latter, impressed by Dr. Ginde's hard work, dedication and expertise, adopted him as a family member and called him "Sonny". Dr. C. K. Deshpande recalls the many ways in which Dr. Cooper helped Dr. Ginde. In view of Dr. Ginde's keen interest in blood transfusion, he was asked to organize all transfusions needed by Dr. R. N. Cooper's private patients thus being ensured an additional steady income. (Few are aware that it was Dr. R. G. Ginde who founded the Blood Bank at the K. E. M. Hospital). Dr. Cooper also saw to it that this young surgeon was appointed as a consultant at his alma mater.

Dr. Ginde was already a keen student of surgical pathology and he spent hours with Dr. S. M. Nadkarni studying specimens and slides. Dr. Khanolkar returned from a trip abroad bringing slides prepared by Professor Ramon Y Cajal. These caught Dr. Ginde's imagination. He was further stimulated by Dr. Nadkarni's suggestion that Dr. Ginde consider neurosurgery as a career. At this juncture the Government of India offered a fellowship for training in neurosurgery. About forty candidates from all over the country applied and Dr. Ginde was selected, thanks to the strong recommendation offered by Dr. Jivraj Mehta. It was suggested that he would proceed to England for training but at Dr. Ginde's request a reference was made to the Montreal Neurological Institute (MNI) and soon he was on his way to Drs. Penfield and Cone. During the two years 1948 and 1949, working up to 20 hours a day he absorbed all that the MNI had to offer. Impressed by his dedication, Drs. Penfield and Cone spontaneously arranged an American and European study tour for him. On his return to India, he was appointed Honorary Neurosurgeon and Lecturer in Neurosurgery at the K. E. M. Hospital and Seth G. S. Medical College. He held these posts from November 1953 to March 1955. Soon after returning to his alma mater, Dr. Ginde drew up a detailed proposal for a full fledged department of neurosurgery. This was shelved as resources were not available for it. To an individual such as Dr. Ginde, unwilling to compromise on efficiency and standards, this was a big blow. The K. E. M. Hospital also rejected his offer of functioning as a fulltime neurosurgeon on a salary of Rs. 2,000/- per month. Despite this, he struggled to give his best to patients. Everything had to be attended to personally. Shaving the scalp, transporting the patient, burr holes, ventriculography, preparations for surgery,

postoperative care... in addition, of course, to the operation itself were carried out by him. As the hospital did not possess the necessary instruments, Dr. Ginde purchased his own set and brought them to the hospital.

Discontent with the conditions at the K. E. M. Hospital prompted him to look elsewhere and the Breach Candy Hospital snapped him up as a consultant neurosurgeon. Shortly thereafter, at Dr. R. N. Cooper's recommendation, Mr. G. D. Birla appointed him Honorary Neurosurgeon at the Bombay Hospital. Dr. Ginde left the K. E. M. Hospital in 1955. Ere doing so, he reviewed neurosurgery at the K. E. M. Hospital over the 27 years from 1926 to 1953 in a memorable paper (J Ind. Med. Prof. 1954,1,81-88). It is of interest to note that already 84 intracranial tumours had been operated upon here, 482 cranial operations (319 for craniocerebral injuries), 129 spinal operations and 96 operations on the sympathetic nervous system formed part the grand total. The average operative mortality was 11.87%. Dr Ginde observed, "It is gratifying to see that although facilities for investigating and operating on these cases unfortunately did not improve, a significant reduction in the case and operative mortality is seen in the subsequent years" Between 1951 and 1953 (October), Dr. Ginde had personally performed 36 PEGs, 35 ventriculograms, 8 carotid angiograms and 28 myelograms among other procedures at the K. E. M. Hospital.

He set about establishing a well organised department at the Bombay Hospital. He was able to interest Dr. D. S. Dadhich in neuro-radiology and arrange for his training in this speciality abroad. Over the years he was able to enrol Drs. Bijay Daftary, Vijay Dave and S. N. Bhagwati as colleagues. Gradually, this department grew in size and reputation. Such growth, however required back breaking toil on Dr. Ginde's part and during the earlier years he was spending 10-12 hours in the hospital and even on reaching home, was constantly in touch by phone, checking on his patients.

In 1964, the Government of Maharashtra offered Dr. Ginde the post of Director of Neurology and Neurosurgery. Mr. Y. B. Chavan, then Chief Minister, gave Dr. Ginde the understanding that he could continue in this post even beyond the customary age of retirement (58 years). He therefore took over this appointment and was also Professor of neurosurgery at the Grant Medical College. He was paid a salary of Rs. 2,000/- per month and permitted private practice. (This unprecedented set of terms caused grave discontent in the concerned departments where Drs. N. H. Wadia and Gajendra Singh had been functioning as honoraries for several years). The assurance mentioned above notwithstanding, on Dr. Ginde's attaining the age of 58 years in 1970 he was retired by the new chief minister. It is a telling commentary on the state of affairs in Government that a large grant obtained by Dr. Ginde from the Ford Foundation for updating the equipment at the J. J. Hospital lapsed from beaurocratic bungling.

The last four years of his life were spent once again in efforts at upgrading his department at the Bombay Hospital. In the last week of April 1974, after completing an operation, he mentioned to his close friend, anesthesiologist Dr. G. S. Ambardekar, that this was his last operation. This statement proved all too prophetic for soon after he was admitted to the intensive care unit in the same hospital and breathed his last on 3rd May.

Dr. Ginde tried hard to attain perfection in whatever activity he undertook. His detailed and meticulous notes on every patient he treated remain mute evidence. He was universally acknowledged to be the scholar practitioner. His enviable personal library contains books on a wide range of subjects. His surgical skill set high standards. Of his temperament this is what someone near to him says: "He was a very sensitive person and would get very upset if a particular thing was not exactly as he wished it to be. The result was that the person receiving his instruction, invited displeasure in unsavoury terms. However, no sooner was he his normal self than he would show kindness unhesitatingly and often shower affection. Those who could understand and bear with him have educated themselves immensely and advanced their careers".

Dr. Ginde held 21 hospital appointments, was member (and often president) of 23 medical societies and published 31 papers. Married to Miss Sarala Herekar in 1936, and greatly helped by her throughout the subsequent years, Dr. Ginde was blessed with three sons. The eldest (Arun) followed in his footsteps and now practises neurosurgery in Maryland, U. S. A. The Second son (Suhās) is a chemical engineer, also settled in U. S. A. The youngest (Vijay) stays with his mother in Bombay and is also a chemical engineer.

On 15 December 1970, Dr. Ginde, delivering the guest lecture at the Institute of Neurology, Madras, during its twentieth anniversary celebrations highlighted our failures in terms that make us think hard even today. "...It is necessary or rather

essential that large scale assistance should be made available by central and state governments, philanthropic institutions and trusts, people in affluent circumstances and the talents of scientists and technocrats harnessed for improving medical care, medical education and research... It is a great pity, however, that due to vagaries of different traits of human nature based on tradition, bureaucracy, vested interests, political influences, corruption at all levels and above all, because of lack of real national fervour and concern for fellow men, such contrasting conditions are noticed even by casual observers from abroad in this unfortunate, overpopulated, multiracial, multireligious, multilingual, economically poor and still largely illiterate and backward country of ours..."

During his later years he was increasingly enthused by religion and philosophy. He found solace in the teachings of Meher Baba. His own thinking was epitomised in the lines with which he closed one of his papers, "Neurosurgery is born here (at the K. E. M. Hospital) out of the pioneering efforts, inspiring guidance and dogged perseverance of so many.. Haltingly or smoothly, it will surely move forward. It has every right to do so since it deals with the master system of the human body. To quote Shri Aurobindo, "knowledge must be aggressive, if it wishes to survive and perpetuate itself To leave an extensive ignorance either below or around it, is to expose humanity to the perpetual danger of barbaric relapse".

BIODATA OF DR. RAMACHANDRA GUNDO GINDE

20th July 1912-3rd May 1974

M.B.B.S	: 1934
M. S. (Bombay)	: 1940
F. A. C. S.	: 1961
F. I. C. S.	: 1962

First in the University in the First and Final M. B. B. S. Examinations.

The Charles Morehead Prize in Medicine

The J. C. Lisboa Gold Medal in Surgery

The Balkishna Sudamj Prize in Midwifery and Gynecology

Sir Jaswantsinghji Limbdi Gold Medal

Mrs. H. D'Sa Memorial Gold Medal

Sir Nusserwanjee Choksey Cold Medal

Fellow in Neurosurgery at the Montreal Neurological Institute- 1948 to 1950

Hon. Surgeon, K. E. M. Hospital and Lecturer in Surgery - Seth G. S. Medical College, Bornbay - 1950 to 1953.

' Neurosurgeon - K. E. M. Hospital and Seth C. S. Medical College, Bombay - 1953 to 1956

Neurosurgeon, Breach Candy Hospital, Bombay - since 1954.

Hon. Neurosurgeon, Head of the Department of Neurosurgery, Bombay Hospital from 1954.

Hon. Neurosurgeon, Sir J. J. Group of Hospitals and Hon Lecturer in Neurosurgery at Grant Medical College. Bombay from February 1962.

Hon Consulting Adviser in Neurology and Neurosurgery to the Society for Children requiring Special Mental Care since 1959.

Hon. Consulting Neurosurgeon, K. E. M. Hospital, Bombay - 1962.

Director of Neurology and Professor of Neurosurgery at Grant Medical College and Sir J. J. Group of Hospitals 1964 to 1970. (till retirement)

Hon. Consultant in Neurosurgery, Armed Forces Medical Services and Hon. Consulting Neurosurgeon, INS Asvini since 1951.

Hon. Consulting Neurosurgeon to several hospitals in Bombay since 1952.

Member	British Medical Association	1939
	Indian Medical Association	1954
	Association of Surgeons of India	1943
	Bombay Medical Union	1953
Member	Neurological Society of India	1953
(a)	President of the Neurological Society of India in	1954, 1955
(b)	Member of the Executive Committee of the Neurological Society of India from	1954, 1955.

(c) Hon. Editor "Neurology" (Bulletin of the Neurological Society of India) from 1956 to 1964.

Member Advisory Committee of the Editorial Boards of 7 journals

Founder Member Middle East Neurosurgical Society 1958

Hon. Member Scandinavian Neurosurgical Society 1959

President Indian Rheumatological Society 1962

Examiner and chairman, M. Ch Neurosurgery at Madras, vellore, Delhi and Lucknow.

President International College of Surgeons, Indian Section 1967-1968

Corresponding Member Harvey Cushing Society

(American Association of Neurological Surgeons) 1969

Hon. Corresponding Member German Neurosurgical Society 1965

TEN IMPORTANT PUBLICATIONS BY DR. R. G. GINDE

1. Anomalies of the spinal Part of the Axial skeleton and calcification of the Costal Cartilages - Indian Journal of Medical Science, 2,333-343, 1948.

2. Spinal tumours - A review of 25 cases. Indian Journal of Surgery, 10, 333-358, 1948.

3. Glioma of the Hypophysis-A case report (with C. G.S. Iyer) Neurology, 2, 5-8, 1954.

4. Sciatica with Reference to Intervertebral Disc Disease Journal of Indian Medical Profession, 1, 545-55 1, 1955.

5. Treatment of Trigeminal Neuralgia - Historical Review (presidential Address. Neurological Society of India) Neurology. 4, 5-10, 1956.

6. Care of the Bladder and Bed Sores in paraplegia. *Neurology*, 4, 19, 1956.
7. Prolapsed Lumba. Intervertebral Disc (A follow up of 60 operated cases) (with S. N. Bhagwati), *Neurology*, 4, 14-17, 1956.
8. Compression of the Spinal Cord by Aortic Aneurysm (with N. V. Nimbkar), *Neurology*, 5, 18-22, 1957.
9. Tuberculoma of the Brain (with P.C. Chandrani), *Neurology*, 5, 1-15, 1957.
10. Surgical Treatment of Cervical Spondylosis, *Neurology(India)*, 10, 13-23, 1962.