

TRIBUTES TO DR. S. K SHANKAR

Colleagues

Dr Challa Sundaram, Neuropathologist

To Sir

with Reverence

Shraddhanjali

*Neuropathology was his **Yogam***

*Neuropathology was his **Dhyanam***

*Neuropathology was his **Moksham***

That's how I know Prof SK Shankar sir

Dedicated and Disciplined

A Guru in true spirit

A Guide, Friend and Philosopher

An Inspiration to one and all

An Epitome of Knowledge, but

Simple and Straight

Humble and Kind

With unconditional Generosity

The void left behind can't be filled even by eternity

He will live forever by his teachings and contributions

May his soul rest in peace

Om Shanti

- Sundaram Challa

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Prof. VV Radhakrishnan

Prof. S.K.Shankar – My compassionate colleague

I am honored to write a eulogy on the founder member and past president of our society – Prof. S.K.Shankar. I also feel that this is the best way to convey my richest tributes to my dear compassionate friend.

In many ways, Prof. Shankar and I had several similarities. Both of us were born in the year 1947. Both of us graduated in the year 1970 and completed the postgraduate training in Pathology in 1974. It was a coincidence that both of us started our respective professional career in Neuropathology under similar circumstances in late 1970s and we also attained superannuation in 2011. During this long period of association, we were closely watching each other's progress and there was a healthy competition between us. We used regularly attend and meet at the annual conferences of NSI during the period 1980-1990. A stiff competition between two of us at the platform presentations during these conferences attracted the attention of Prof. B.Ramamurthy and Prof. P.N.Tandon – the two great stalwarts in Neurosurgery. In all fairness and honest to myself he was much more committed and had a passion for the subject than myself.

I used to periodically discuss the problems and setbacks that I faced at SCTMC with Prof.Shankar. He would always come with simple solutions and he was a source of encouragement for me. For the development of a museum at SCTMC, he personally took interest and denoted several academically interesting specimens. He also visited our institute several times and delivered a series of lectures for the benefit of residents in neurosciences. These visits were very valuable for the academic growth of my department.

His contributions to development of Neuropathology in this country are too well known to every one of us. However, for the benefit of younger generation of our society, Prof. Shankar who for the first with the concept of starting Neuropathology Society of India and with his two of his deciples Prof. Chitra Sarkar and Prof. Anita, he toiled hard but he worked behind the curtain. As a result of which NPSI was born in 2015. He also was the first person of our country to start 2 year diploma program in Neuropathology at NIMHANS, Bengaluru. Subsequently, DM program in neuropathology became a reality. By this, he promoted the training in Neuropathology and touched the lives of countless students all over the globe. Despite his physical disability, he will stand hours after hours and teach the gross neuroanatomy and neuropathology to his students. Such was his passion for teaching.

Prof. Shankar most remarkable contribution is that he established a facility – Human Brain Bank and tissue repository (HBTR) at NIMHANS, Bengaluru for the support of neurosciences research in this country. He also personally established the neuropathology brain museum at NIMHANS, Bengaluru.

During the post retirement period, he opened it to public and school children to disseminate the neuroscience knowledge and ‘sow the seeds of neurosciences’ in young minds.

He had health issues and was not keeping good health during his terminal years and left for heavenly abode on September 5, 2022. The Teacher’s Day – poetic justice for a great teacher. What is most noble and remarkable is that he being a life – long crusader of organ donation, he donated his brain, eyes and heart to support neurosciences in the country.

Prof.Shankar, you made an indelible mark as a great teacher, innovator, researcher in the field of neurosciences of our country. The void left by you is irreparable and certainly our society lost his precious jewel. Personally, it is huge loss for me. Prof. Shankar, my dear friend, ‘you may be gone from my sight but you will never go from my heart’. The shining sun has set but the glory will remain with us.

*Dr.V.V.Radhakrishnan MD, FAMS
Formerly Dean and HOD, Neuropathology,
SCTIMST, Thiruvananthapuram 695011*

Dr Tina Rao

The word that most describes Dr Shankar to me is ‘Inspirational’.

I first encountered Sir as a junior pathologist from Kidwai, when we used to bring difficult neuropathology slides to him for a second opinion, with a lot of trepidation and preparation. Sir would immediately put us at ease and make it a very interesting and informative learning session.

Going from there, Sir gradually became a guide, both in diagnostic pathology and research projects, a mentor and source of encouragement and inspiration, even though I was from another institution. He was generous with his time, ideas and constructive criticism and was always welcoming, regardless of time, which was usually after routine working hours.

I will miss his no-nonsense advice on many other things as well, including how to get along and negotiate the obstacles one encounters in any working environment.

His presence will live on in the hearts and minds of countless students even those like me who were not from Nimhans but lucky enough to know him, learn from him and have him as a mentor.

Rest in peace Sir, you will never be forgotten.

*Dr. Clementina Rama Rao
Former Prof,
Department of Pathology,
Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology,
Bangalore*

Dr. Jayshree R.S.: An Adieu to Dr. Shankar...

I was first introduced to Dr. Shankar through Dr. Ravi somewhere in the 1990s when I joined the Department of Microbiology, Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Bangalore. Having passed out of PGI, Chandigarh and trying to find my feet, I was a frequent visitor of the NIMHANS library and Neurovirology Department. Both Drs. Shankar and Ravi were a tremendous source of strength and

support during my teething years at Kidwai under exacting circumstances! – else I would have ended up on the other side of the road in NIMHANS!

In fact, Dr. Shankar was a huge source of motivation, his ‘never say die’ attitude helped me and many others overcome many problems. I revere Dr. Shankar for his ability to troubleshoot any problem which he did so whole heartedly and with ease. He was a true mentor, teacher and guide. The doors of his chamber used to be ever open – anybody could walk in for any help at any time whatsoever...

Over the years we did some collaborative projects on CNS infections, when I witnessed his excellent microphotography skills. During the long hours at work, he was also particular about catering to feed our neurons - food was always available *ad libitum* in his cupboard!

I cherish my long association with you, Sir! Ever grateful to you, for me crossing your path!

*Dr. Jayshree R.S.
Former Prof. and Head,
Department of Microbiology,
Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology,
Bangalore.
20th September 2022*

RG Subramanyam (Dr Jayshree’s father)

I have some unforgettable memories of Dr Shankar to share.

Some people in our apartment complex wanted to see the Brain bank that had been established in NIMHANS. It is said that the credit for establishing the bank largely goes to Dr.Shankar.I expressed once to him with some trepidation our desire to see the bank. He readily agreed and took us round. He showed us the brains of magnificent people, In a simple language free from jargons. As all of us know the functioning of the brain is not fully known, even to the neurologists. He made the most complex matter appear simple. He showed the different functional areas of the brain. We came out fully satisfied. He was a very simple man devoid of ostentation. It would be no exaggeration, when I say that the world of neurosciences has become poorer with his passing away.

I express my deep condolences to his numerous admirers and members of his family.

RG Subramanyam

Dr. Kalpana S.R.

A tribute to Dr. Shankar

My association with Dr. Shankar dates back to 1995 while I was tenuring at Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Bangalore.

I found in him a great teacher, a guide, a mentor and a well-wisher. He was easily approachable and always had a ready solution for any problem. He would go out of his way to help people but preferred to remain in the background.

I am one of the many beneficiaries of his kindness. After I joined Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiology, Dr. Shankar helped me get trained in Cardiac Pathology and Molecular Cardiology under Dr C C Kharta, at Sri Chitra Tirunal Institute, Trivandrum.

I cannot forget the support and guidance that I received from Dr. Shankar towards my first attempt at organizing a National Symposium on Cardiac Pathology (May 2002). He considered me his little sister - So much was his commitment to help me that during the International Conference on Cardiovascular Research that I hosted in Feb 2019, he came in person to wish me although he was just discharged from the hospital after primary angioplasty.

I also fondly remember his affection for my son - Dr. Shankar keenly followed his academic progress, motivated and blessed him.

Sir, Ever grateful to you - 🙏

Sri Gurubhyo namaha

*Dr. Kalpana S.R.
Professor & Head,
Department of Pathology,
Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences & Research,
Bangalore-560 069*

Dr Muralidharan Nair

Sir was a legend of his time, his spirit and academic pursuits is unsurpassed . Sir has firmly put his imprints on the sand of time.

RIP Dear Sir

*Dr MD Nair
Former Prof & Head
Department of Neurology
SCTIMST, Trivandrum*

Dr. Kusuma Venkatesh

Your tribute is very soulful and apt for a person like Prof Shankar Sir. I have been one of the students who got about a month's posting to his dept, from BMC in the year 1991. Sir had influenced me a lot and when our postings was getting over I felt so bad and had told him about it. He was so kind, had told me to seek any help in my PG course and the microphotographs for my dissertation were taken by Dr. Gayatri madam as per his instructions. I new Dr. Vani also. Whenever I happened to meet him in any conference or CME he used to talk to me and I used to wonder that he remembered my name despite having so many students every year. His memory was excellent. Now I have retired from KIMS following 28yrs of teaching service. Just for the love of teaching and practicing pathology I have joined a new medical college, East point college of medical Sciences, Bangalore. This is only five years old and slightly closer to my residence compared to kims. You are really lucky for working with Sir for such a long duration.

I was really touched by your tribute to sir and I adore him as a teacher and join your group to be his student for ever. You have also written about his life and health issues. He never spoke about others and in his little free time used keep listening to telugu music on radio! I wish him to be a medical teacher again if there is rebirth and to have good health.

With best wishes and regards

Dr. Kusuma Venkatesh

Collaborators

Prof Tom Solomon

You do not know me, but I just wanted to express to you my sorrow at the sad death of your brother, Dr Shankar. He was an inspirational and brilliant teacher who will be missed by all of us.

I first met him when I was a young researcher visiting NIMHANS from the UK for the first time back in 2002. I was doing research on Japanese encephalitis, and had gone to meet the virologist Dr V Ravi, as well as the Neurologist Dr Satish Chandra, and the Director Dr Gourie-Devi,

As part of the tour around NIMHANS, they took me to the Pathology Department, where I met Dr Shankar. We immediately struck up a friendship! He started quizzing me on some of the autopsy specimens sitting in jars on the shelves, and before long, we got into a great debate about disease mechanisms in Japanese encephalitis. As you may know, this has been a major trouble in India and the rest of Asia over many years, although recently it has been brought under control through national and international vaccination programmes, with much support from NIMHANS.

That visit was the start of a very productive relationship between the University of Liverpool (where I am based) and NIMHANS, which continues to this day with major research collaborations plus a wealth of student and faculty exchanges (summarised [here](#) if you are interested). I like to think that it was the initial visit, and wonderful reception from colleagues like Dr Shankar, which set the tone for our whole partnership: friendly, respectful, fun and intellectually rigorous.

I have visited NIMHANS countless times over the years. Often very short and very busy trips. But no visit to NIMHANS would ever be complete for me, unless I popped in see how Dr Shankar was, and to continue some of our neuropathological sparring!

It was a fabulous tribute to Dr Shankar when the new neuroscience research building went up, that they created some ground floor space for the neuropathology museum. This has really proved to be a fabulous resource for educating doctors and researchers, but also I think for enticing visiting children into the mysteries of the brain.

I understand that Dr Shankar has decided to donate his brain to the museum, which does not surprise me at all. It is very much in keeping with his spirit and enthusiasm. I only hope that the NIMHANS authorities will give it suitable pride of place the centre of the museum with an exhibit all of its own!

Dr Shankar really was a remarkable man, who taught me a lot, and will be missed greatly by his many friends and colleagues.

Professor Tom Solomon CBE FRCP FMedSci

- Vice President (International), Academy of Medical Sciences

- Director, The Pandemic Institute

- Director, NIHR Health Protection Research Unit in Emerging and Zoonotic Infections

- Chair, Neurological Science, University of Liverpool

- Honorary Consultant Neurologist, Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust.

Dr. Avindra Nath

I am deeply saddened to hear that. I will miss him. He was such a warm and friendly person. His contributions to neuropathology and the field of clinical neurosciences is unsurpassed particularly at the times of the AIDS pandemic where he showed exceptional devotion the cause and bravery in

conducting autopsies and characterizing the pathology that the entire community benefitted from. Please convey my deepest sympathies to the family.

Avindra Nath, MD
Clinical Director, NINDS

Dr. Gautam Ullal, MBBS., PhD., MAMS

This is such a shocking and disturbing news indeed! Dr. Shankar's passing away is not only a huge loss to NIMHANS but a loss to medical pedagogy. In my multiple interactions over two decades with Dr. Shankar, first as a resident in NIMHANS, and later as a collaborator in my research, I always saw a deep passion, commitment, and knowledge. In short, I will always remember him as a legendary, "Karma Yogi". May his Soul rest in Peace!

*Dr. Gautam Ullal, MBBS., PhD., MAMS
Chair Basic Medical Sciences
Professor & Course Director for Neuroscience, Co-Director Brain & Behavior
Office Room 331 Building 2
American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine
Sint Maarten*

Parthiv Haldipur

I am writing to you on another matter though. I want to offer my condolences on the passing of Dr Shankar. My mother who resides in Bangalore read it in the newspaper told me about it. This is huge loss to the field of medicine and neuropathology. I have always held Dr Shankar in the highest regard. My mother also told me about how Dr Shankar had donated his brain and eyes to research. This evoked a sense of pride and sorrow in me. My dear father who was also a doctor passed away this summer and he too was so dedicated to his profession that he donated his body to medical research. Dr Shankar's passing leaves a void, but I am certain the field is in good hands, including yours. Wishing you all the best.

I hope to meet you the next time I'm in Bangalore.

Best wishes,
Parthiv

*Parthiv Haldipur
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Chao Wang

Dear Prof. Anita Mahadevan,
This is Chao Wang, a previous collaborator of Dr. S K Shankar when I was still a graduate student of Prof. Ludmilla Morozova-Roche at Umea University, Sweden. Dr. Shankar was listed as a co-author in two of my publications (DOI: DOI: [10.1038/s41598-018-31141-x](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-018-31141-x); [10.1007/s00401-013-1208-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00401-013-1208-4)).

It has been almost 6 years since the last time I contacted Dr. Shankar to thank him for his recommendation letter used for my postdoc position application. With the help of his letter, I successfully received the postdoc position at the lab of Prof. David M. Holtzman at Washington University in St. Louis at the beginning of 2017. Prof. Holtzman is one of the leading experts in the field of Alzheimer's research.

After finishing my five years postdoc career, I have been back to China at the beginning of 2022 and established my own research group at Institute for Brain Science and Disease, Chongqing Medical University (<https://brain.cqmu.edu.cn/info/1026/1018.htm>). My research interest is continuing to better understand mechanisms underlying neurodegeneration, particularly as they are relevant to Alzheimer's disease.

I tried to contact Dr. Shankar recently to seek the possibility to obtain aging- and dementia-related human cortical tissue samples from Human Brain Tissue Repository, NIMHANS. However, I was completely shocked when I read the editorial article in Greater Kashmir by Dr. Rumana Makhdoomi mourning Dr. S K Shankar's death last year (<https://www.greaterkashmir.com/todays-paper/editorial-page/there-cannot-be-another-dr-shankar>). Dr. Shankar was such an impressive teacher and an excellent researcher. During our collaboration, he provided so much valuable advice. When I started my job search at the end of my graduate studies, he encouraged me to continue my research career and kindly gave me an excellent recommendation letter. He will always be remembered.

At the end of this email, I am wondering if it still is possible to obtain aging- and dementia-related human cortical tissue samples from the human brain bank, NIMHANS. The potential material is only used for research purposes and I will make arrangements for transportation and pay for any cost. Co-authorships are guaranteed if these samples are used in any publications and co-communication authorship is also discussable if the major conclusion is drawn from these samples.

Thank you so much for your consideration!

Yours truly,
Chao

Students

Dr. Lily Pal

I was lucky enough to do my senior residency at NIMHANS for 3 years and got the opportunity to learn from Dr Shankar. Such a great teacher, highly energetic and a wonderful human being he was. His knowledge was immense, his art of teaching made everything sound so simple and interesting. I remember the day I joined in Neuropathology department as SR, he said will you continue for 3 years, here you will not get alveolar soft part sarcomas. I was not sure at that point of time but the ambience and teaching was so good in the department I never missed general pathology. Sir has inspired many people and shall always be immortal in our memories. Thank you sir for being an inspiration, icon and great human being.

Dr Lily Pal

Professor, Department of Pathology

SGPGI, Lucknow

Dr. Nandeesh BN

" It is my greatest fortune that I happen to be sir's student , which made me come this far. A teacher / mentor like Shankar sir can have such great influence on ordinary / mediocre students like me to dream big and do better.

I did not have any knowledge of publishing papers, it was sir who showed me the method of writing a manuscript and I got my first publication through him and that too in an International Journal.

If I look back and see, If I have joined NIMHANS as faculty it is his guidance, motivation and blessings that made me join NIMHANS as faculty.

I owe my life and career to a great teacher like him and seek his blessings at every step of my life. Sir will always remain in our mind, memories and every step of our endeavors as a positive energy within, around and behind us.

I always felt he is an extra-ordinary or a super human being/ higher being as he had such great qualities which is so difficult to follow. Such personalities are very rare and divine. In behalf of all the students , I seek his at most blessings on all of us.

“Om sri Gurubhyo Namaha , Parama Gurubhyo Namaha”

Dr. Nandeesh BN

Addl Professor

Department of Neuropathology

NIMHANS

Dr. Pooja Chavali

(PDF, Neuropathology, NIMHANS)

First words I heard about sir were punctual, strict and disciplinarian... I remember being quite apprehensive entering the brain bank museum of sorts for his class.. we were a timid batch of newbies One of the many thousands he might have taught... he started the class right away... we were awestruck by the vast knowledge and more importantly the palpable passion for the subject and zeal to teach... he gauged as well as piqued our interest the entire time.. his teaching was very awe

inspiring with many witty anecdotes .. Sometime midway through the lecture, to give a break to our fused out brains... he started general conversation... I vividly remember his fond recalling of Andhra , AMC and Sundaram madam after knowing that I was from NIMS and Andhra. Eventual interactions were more congenial. I feel very privileged to have interacted and learnt, albeit for a short time from such a doyen in neuropathology, and more importantly a great and enthusiastic teacher. Sir will always be revered by one and all.

Dr. Chandrashekar TN **(PDF, Neuropathology, NIMHANS)**

I have no words to describe the sir magnanimous personality in Toto , I try to share my experience with him for a brief period of one year.

After finishing MD Pathology I have joined the NIMHANS for residency and got a chance to work under the tallest tree of Neuropathology. I had the impression from my ug/pg carrier that professor in any subject is a rarest person in medical fraternity to be encountered by a resident and should hunt them by waiting hours. This impression vanished in a single day of my NIMHANS journey. I could able to see sir in grossing room, typing room, reporting room , autopsy, over phone equerry ,@8am, @ 9pm wherever the department stretched and whatever the time of day wherever I turned around the department.. I am able to see the sir interest, spirit, enthusiasm, passion for subject, alertness, and dedication. I understood by the end of first week that I am with a different school of people and academic level is truly a tallest peak like Everest needs to be discovered to at-least some extent, if not conquered by poor guy from country side.

I started to understand the ABCD of neuropathology by observing sir and madams dedication over there towards the subject. Sir is seen all-round from grossing , reporting, autopsy room and kept on encouraging/guiding / correcting all of us. Sir concerned about smallest mistakes and use to correct it on spot and we have got lot of memories like even for the smallest things(writing, spelling mistakes, request form, xerox, pencil and not answering phone call), this will certainly shows sir s concern for patients, subject and medical field.

Sir never lost enthusiasm, focus, speed, passion even for a single day in my entire NIMHANS tenure and I have never seen sir in a low energy or tiered look at any point of time. Even after finishing CME talk from far away place (500KM) like Hyderabad and Hubli sir used to return to department work directly and take a review of all the thinks directly without wasting a minute. In discussion front sir is un-matchable in all forum (reporting, autopsy , brain cutting, conferences and meetings). the speed at which sir replay to query kept me astonished on several occasion. I can recollect few of the like meningioma, temporal lobe specimens, tuberculosis, cryptococcoma etc,

Sir was very energetic and keep on encouraging academic activities by promoting youngsters all the time and passion to teach was clearly visible when he thought the visiting students, and guests. Dedication towards autopsy was UN-matchable as sir is able to stand and deliver all cases even at eleventh hour of day. One day suddenly at 8pm after busy schedule in deans office sir came and asked me why r loosing weight and becoming lean day by day, I surprisingly realized that I am lost 5-6kgs. This incident highlighted that sirs keen observation power and concern even when he is off the department and keeps focus and concern for everything.

At the fag end of my journey in NIMHANS sir keen on our feature and guided us and kept highest moral and academic standards to be followed in public life and our professional carrier, that still remains in my eyes and ears.

The great teacher I was fortunate to call mine

Dr Rumana Makhdoomi **(PDF, Neuropathology, NIMHANS)**

Most of us may remember Dr. S. K. Shankar as a neuropathologist of excellence, a father of neuropathology in India, as a brain behind the Brain-bank, as an excellent researcher, as an able administrator – but for me Dr. Shankar was an impressive teacher, an able doer, a giver, a clean mind, a pure soul free of malaise, a generous heart and a great visionary. I am indebted to Dr. Shankar not only for being my teacher in Neuropathology, but also for being a teacher in basic human values which he never preached but always practised.

I had gone to Bengaluru to spend some time with my husband who was pursuing M.Ch. in Neurosurgery at NIMHANS. As an inquisitive postgraduate in Pathology at GMC Srinagar, I sought permission to be an ‘observer’ in Neuropathology NIMHANS for a month.

That month transformed my perception of pathology as I got an opportunity to ‘observe’ and learn from the best minds in neuropathology. I had never seen a nerve cell before, never witnessed an autopsy, never touched ‘live brain’ or never seen an ‘electron microscope’.

NIMHANS allowed me to have a glimpse of everything – thanks to Dr. Shankar who allowed me ‘in’.

I was asked to join a group of students who had come for the observership to NIMHANS and was required to see all the slides that would come to the department for reporting.

Neuropathology reporting room was the kernel of pathology and neurosciences where all consultants, residents, residents from clinical specialities sat together, discussed the cases together, commented on their findings and asked each resident and observer for an opinion.

No case was left untouched and no aspect or possible diagnosis was left unexplored. Every participant was given an opportunity to present his point and every opinion was respected. It was like a ‘clinical round’ with the wholesome view of a case and the ultimate pathological diagnosis.

There were many microscopes in the reporting room and you could use any. Trembling with the fear of not being able to diagnose the cases, I saw my first slide of neuropathology with Dr. Shankar sitting next to me. Noticing my discomfort Dr. Shankar pulled out an atlas and told me, “Try to correlate what you see in the slide with the atlas”. That gesture and caring advice unlocked neuropathology to me.

As I went back to Kashmir after a fruitful observership I wanted to be back at NIMHANS. Neuropathology NIMHANS was a temple of learning - I did not want to miss. I wanted to be a student of ‘great’ teachers at NIMHANS and pursue Neuropathology. I came back a year later to pursue ‘postdoctoral’ course in Neuropathology. The work was tougher as a ‘fellow’ than as an ‘observer’. Dr. Shankar was a tough task-master. He meant ‘business’. He would take ‘no nonsense’, no ‘irresponsible behaviour’ and no ‘lies’. If you failed to do the work assigned to you, he would ensure that the work was done – all by him, himself!

The old fashioned doors of NIMHANS Neuropathology would open with a ‘creak and click’ every morning before 8 A.M. and welcome their lover Dr. Shankar. He would sit in the reporting room and ‘see’ all the slides and write his opinion legibly on the corner of the “Card”. He would instruct all the students not to get up when he would be around. Books from his personal library were meant for ‘all students’ interested in Neuropathology.

I have not seen a human being like Dr. Shankar. His will and conviction to do the seemingly impossible had no match. His physical limitations and challenges did not prevent him from doing what physically robust people younger than him could do. He would rush to open the 'lift' for you, rush to open the locks and put 'on' or 'off' the lights if you happened to accompany him 'into' or 'out' of the department.

Dr. Shankar had multiple facets, in the afternoons at the department he would slowly mould from a strict disciplinarian into a sensitive human being who would care for his 'family' at NIMHANS. His refrigerator was always loaded with 'sweets'. He spoiled our taste buds with his 'Mysore Pak' which was always available for the students who stayed back to see the slides. We all would storm into his room every afternoon and rob his refrigerator of everything everyday and would be surprised to find it full – the next afternoon. Feeding us every afternoon was his favourite past-time. Sometimes if he wished to have a different afternoon snack, he would take a student along and treat us with 'samosas, pakoras, chat, mangoes or apples'.

Dr. Shankar liked the background noise of radio – All India Radio would be playing in his room non-stop. The ever mobile Dr. Shankar would never stop to listen to music, news and views or any other programme aired. The radio was always 'on' -perhaps it stimulated him to move 'on'. We had got so much used to working in the background noise of his radio that if radio was 'off' we would hate the 'quietness' of the department.

NIMHANS Neuropathology was known for its hectic schedule for residents. You had reporting, grossing, screening of slides, clinicopathological meets, brain cutting sessions and most challenging of all 'autopsies and autopsy presentations' on Saturdays. As a resident, I had all this and a small child to look after. My husband pursuing M.Ch. Neurosurgery hardly had time for the family. My child along with the maid trespassed once into the corridors of Neuropathology. Dr. Shankar saw her and immediately held her in his arms, one arm gripping her firmly and the other holding both the crutch and her with care. He played with her, showed her the things around and ordered me 'bring her to Neuropathology every day after 4 PM'. I did that without fail. While I would screen the slides, Dr. Shankar would take care of the baby – play with her, run around with her and empty his seat for her. When I would see his room messed up he would judge my discomfort saying, "Don't worry! She has sanctified my room". I remember him holding the baby outside the mortuary while I was doing autopsy inside.

Dr. Shankar lived a life of total commitment and dedication to Pathology especially Neuropathology. He was instrumental in making a CJD (Creutzfeldt Jacob Disease) register, in development of India's only brain bank, in creation of a Neuropathology museum and opening it to the school students. He was a champion of organ donation and worked vigorously for it. Dr.Shankar was an able guide, a keen observer and a researcher of excellence. His teaching skills were unmatched. He would take a class on neuroanatomy for not less than an hour and explain the most difficult and boring aspects of it in a simple language. His classes had many lovers among neurosurgeons and neurologists. He was always keen to have mind boggling brain cutting sessions in the department. He published his work in almost all leading neuropathology journals. He would never deny credit to any contributor-usually prefer to be at the tail-end of the author list though having contributed the most. I wrote my two original articles under his tutelage, he taught me how to write and how to crop the article, taught me how to write honestly without exaggerations and insertions.

Dr. Shankar was keen that I go back to Kashmir and start Neuropathology there. His motto in life was 'either lead or follow or get out of the way'- clearly written on a board in his room. He advised me, "don't refer the cases to me, try yourself, face clinicians, patients and you will not make mistakes". It has been almost eighteen years since I left NIMHANS but his advice is still ringing in my years, I tried to follow his advice and did a satisfying work in Neuropathology for myself, my students and my community without any referrals to any institution outside.

As I parted from the department Dr. Shankar handed over to me an album with all the photos that Dr. Shankar had of him and my daughter. He also painfully tied the silver anklets to my daughter – telling me to remind her who gave them to her.

It is difficult to comprehend Neuropathology NIMHANS without Dr.Shankar- his audible tap, his aura, his magnanimity and his devotion. NIMHANS will miss this giant dancer who tap danced with his crutch along the corridors of neuropathology –Neuropathology will miss a visionary. Students will miss a teacher of class and we who looked upto him from a distance will miss his inspiring presence.

There cannot be another Dr.Shankar, let us reconcile to this fact. But, let us mend our lives today and bend our ego to develop some element of devotion that overwhelmed Dr. Shankar.

*Dr Rumana Makhdoomi, MD (Path),
Fellowship Neuro-oncopathology [NIMHANS],
Professor, Dept of Pathology SKIMS, SRINAGAR*

Dr. Ashwani Tandon

Shankar sir was continuous source of inspiration and his name attract me to NIMHANS and Department of Neuropathology. His aura and department synonymise each other in India and abroad. He was passionate worker 365 days 8am to 8pm if available in Bangalore. He was very happy to see me working beyond routine hours and use to take me to nearby shops to buy sweets and evening snacks. I witness sir's passion and dedication for diagnostic autopsy and it inspire me to take initiative of COVID19 autopsy in India on a later date. He pointed out my errors and also cover in scientific forum when my handling of hippocampectomy specimen went wrong. After One and Half year service I abruptly discontinued my passion of neuropathology due to family reasons and kept his gift of yellow shirt with me as token of love. As passionate scientist he taught me to maintain confidentiality of research work and asked to return back if possible. My memories with NIMHANS, my mentors are immortal so with Sir. Srradhanjali!

*Dr Ashwani Tandon
Additional Professor Pathology
Associate Dean (Academics)
AIIMS Bhopal*

Dr. Aparna Govindan

(PDF, Neuropathology)

I will miss sir's "Hows Bhadraa and Anmol(my kids)?" whenever i call him. It was my routine all these 13 yrs to wish him on his birthday and he used to like it, i know, though he never spelt it out. And it was on 29 September 2021 that I didnt hear his familiar hello...and I instantly knew he was not well.

Sir had a fatherly affection i should say. I experienced this in the first week of my fellowship days itself. He would wait at night till i finished reading all the trays which would be around 8.30PM and then I would lock the department and walk with sir to the car park where he would 'jump'(he would never say 'get in', always used to ask us to 'jump in') into his car and i would go the hostel. He would never leave me at the department alone. There are many more instances which i treasure deep in my heart. I am definitely going to miss the most encouraging person i have had in my career. Adieu sir, you will always be fondly remembered. Will send you my birthday wishes on this 29th too even

though you are not with us physically.

Dr Aparna Govindan
Addl Professor
Department of Pathology
Calicut Medical College, Kozhikode

Dr Balaji K (DM Neurology)

Not the buildings

high up reaching the skies

Not the thick volumes

lining the libraries

Not even the patients

indispensable otherwise

It is thee

that make NIMHANS what it is

The great teacher I was fortunate

to call mine

Ever indebted I shall be

to your teachings that will last me

a lifetime

Thank you for shaping me

and seeing me through

through my reluctance and ignorance

in spite of myself

Your unseen hand is always there

to guide and shape me
through the paths winding
that life may find me in

Your patient teaching is
what makes me me
the weight of which I cannot repay
with lifetime of gratuity

Thank you Sir
for never giving up on me

Dr. Balaji K

Dr Sharath Kumar JJ, Neuroradiologist

He was the best researcher, educator, orator, highly energetic and above all a nice and humble human being. I was lucky enough to get an opportunity to interact with him many times and may his soul attain sadgati.

Aditi Naskar

It was April 2015, my first visit to the NIMHANS brain museum where I got to interact with Prof. S.K. Shankar. Before demonstrating the human brain he asked me to hold it. That was the first time I got to touch the human brain and observe the regions from such a proximity. Also, he narrated the stories behind each and every brain that's been preserved in the museum. It was an overwhelming experience for me. Sir's been my source of inspiration towards neuroanatomy and fundamental research.

PhD student, CPNT, NIMHANS

Bidisha Bhaduri

Our beloved Professor Dr. S.K. Shankar had a great personality and had gifted hands. During my MPhil, he showed us different parts of the brain and different staining procedures to stain discrete cells and fibers. The way he explained and showed each and every section of the brain, was indelible. May his soul rest in peace. He will always be remembered

PhD student, CPNT, NIMHANS

Colleagues and Staff, NIMHANS

Mrs. Lakshmi Mohan: Miss you sir!

(Department of Health Education, NIMHANS)

Dr. Shankar Sir has been one of the finest persons I have come across and consider myself lucky to have interacted and shared many personal as well as professional experiences with sir. Those were the days in 1980s and 90s when he would come to photography section for the extensive photography of the brain slices after brain cutting. Initially, I used to be a bit scared, but as time passed, I mustered up courage to talk and discuss with sir. Always looked up to his suggestions and advice. Sir has been my crisis manager -personally as well as professionally.

Sir helped with my father's diagnosis, treatment and referred to ones of the best Haematologist then. His very presence was so reassuring. When my daughter was born his was the 1st greeting card I received, addressing her as 'sweet princess'.

On 15th August 2020 sometime in the afternoon I passed Neuro pathology dept and bumped in to Dr. Suresh and he told the Peripheral smear is ready and he would send it down to photography. Told Dr. Suresh, I no longer need the report as my father is no more (he passed away on 12th Aug 2000) and came down as I couldn't stay longer there. May be in less than a minute he was in photography along with Dr. Anita and Dr. Suresh, to convey the condolences and volunteering to help. I was deeply touched by this gesture. That was the humbleness and greatness of Sir. He could have just was called and spoken to me on phone or asked me to come up. There are so many instances which are hard to forget and harder to express. And if I have to recall and write, I am sure it would run into pages.

He discouraged my daughter in taking up medicine, but said if you are very keen then do aviation medicine. Where ever I met him Dr. MVG centre he would never forget to ask how is Shweta? He was so fond of all the kids.

I did his video recording in 2019, he was not his old self, told, 'I cannot remember very well Lakshmi' and asked 'if it has come out well'. Assured him it was fine.

I must say I had the privilege of visiting Sir with my daughter and thank Dr. Anita for taking us to meet Sir. But at Sukino, the sight of Sir not responding to verbal command was very disheartening. Dr. Anita and I kept asking Sir, if Shweta should go to Manchester or Amsterdam for her Masters. If he was in good health he would asked so many questions and given tips to her. Kept wondering if it was the same Shankar sir who was so full of life asking questions and answering. Without much thinking I prayed God to help sir, he should not suffer anymore.

On 5th September 2022, when I got the news Sir was no more, I was feeling very guilty for having prayed God, to ease his suffering and one thought kept coming repeatedly, why did I pray God!

It is the same place- mortuary where he had done the autopsy of my brother-in-law in 1994 May, and told me I don't want you to see this post mortem Lakshmi, it is your family. On 5th September 2022, he was there at the mortuary not moving around or giving instructions. Sir was looking so much at peace!

Miss you so much Sir.....

Pushpa

My few words for Dr. Shankar " Dr. Shankar was an quintessential teacher. His interest was in the advancement of knowledge. He did this by patiently teaching us in groups or individually but at the same time expecting us to do our part in learning. His objective was to share knowledge. He was kind and always helpful. He patiently listened to questions and took time to answer each of them. He had advanced the careers of many of his students with his generosity. He will be missed. "

Pushpa

*Former Secretarial Staff, Department of Neuropathology
NIMHANS*

Shobha Anilkumar CBR, IISc

(Former JSA, Brain Bank)

Dr. Shankar, It's not just a name, it's a **VIBRATION** like the Shank nadh of Lord Shankar.

Joined as a college pass out with no idea of future, Sir taught me right from personal behavior to scientific knowledge like how the sculptor carves the stone into a beautiful sculpture, he fine-tuned my journey. Not to forget got lot of shouting from sir, but had I never felt that he is scolding and instead became better and better in the process.

He has always been a family member to me. He was the first among the few who visited when both my kids were born not only that when my father was hospitalised for a cardiac arrest and immediate coronary grafting was suggested, all relatives giving ideas after ideas, with no clue I was sitting at the hospital lounge, I see someone walking towards me and stood beside. Yes, that's Dr. Shankar I couldn't believe. He gave me so much confidence that everything else seemed so simple and I handled the situation and came out of it successfully. Another incident, my daughter wanted to have her birthday celebrated at our pathology lab as she was close to all the staff, I told her that it cannot happen, but upon her insistence, with so much hesitance I put this across to sir, his response, my God, "When Shobha, what time, ok, we will celebrate". Nostalgic even when writing I can imagine that moment.



There are lots like this but sharing a glimpse... I have both satisfied thoughts and regrets. Satisfied because, every step I took in my life was always updated to him immediately and advice were duly considered. Regrets because did not know about illness and sufferings and couldn't visit him.

Sir, you will always live with us through the ideologies that you have inculcated within us.

Dr. Shobha Rani Anilkumar
Scientific Officer,
CBR, IISc,
Bangalore

Schools & Colleges

George Verghese. P, CHRIST JUNIOR COLLEGE

Dear Madam

Greetings to you, from my limited interaction with Dr Shankar, I understand him as an embodiment of principles, integrity and values, with utmost diligence and commitment to his service, which he considered as his passion. He has been a source of inspiration to many of us, may his legacy and good work continue in years to come, may his soul rest in peace.

Saipallavi BGS Global International school

Our first time experience in nimhans brain museum was with Shankar sir.....our students gained more knowledge about brain. Really vHV missed great person. Who was dedicated and down to earth .Let his soul rest in peace.

Narasimha Rao Faculty BMS Engineering College

Dear Friends

Greetings.

First of all let me pay my Tributes Dr SK Shankar, for development of brain museum and interest in explaining with the help of PPTs. I approximately visited 10 times along with my students, colleagues and with Katterguppa Laughing club members to understand the functioning of each organ, its physical appearance, its importance, especially brain, liver, heart, spinal chord, kidneys etc, and importance of wearing a seat belts, helmets.

I pray GOD to give HIM sadgathi for His Noble service to the mankind.



Savitri M Bhat

A visit to 'NEUROPATHOLOGY BRAIN MUSEUM' at NIMHANS, Bengaluru was arranged for students for 6th semester Biotechnology students from Biotechnology Department, B.M.S College of Engineering, Bangalore on 3rd June 2022 Friday. Dr Savithri Bhat, Professor from the Biotechnology Department coordinated the visit with support from Industrial Visit Coordinators Dr. Divijendranatha Reddy and Dr. Rashmi S Shenoy. It was one of the most memorable moments in our students career. They were glad to touch & Feel the real Human Brain and have a learning journey through diseased brains.

We faculty and students are indebted to the kind of Facility created by Dr. S K Shankar.

May his soul Rest in Peace.

Thank you Sir.

Prof. Savithri Bhat

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