

* Gordon Arthur Ransome— An Appreciation

Dr. Andrew Chew

GORDON ARTHUR RANSOME graduated a medical doctor at the age of 23. He must have been at 25, one of the youngest to be admitted to the Membership of the Royal College of Physicians.

He is known to more than 3 decades of medical school graduates. Many have known him as a teacher. Those who were fortunate enough had him as a working colleague. Many more appreciated his greatness as a physician whose concern and care for the sick was exemplary.

Those of us who graduated during the Ransome era will recall him as a teacher with few equals. He never fails to provide the knowledge we seek. His approach and technique may be less than orthodox, but it was medicine made easy. Yet it was not beyond him to openly state that he is learning all the time from young and old. To quote a favourite remark of his 'from the mouth of babes come forth words of wisdom'. This Gordon Arthur extends to all returned postgraduate scholars 'digging their brains' for second opinions. His greatness as a teacher was often shadowed by the humbleness which many during our time least expected of a subject from Her Majesty's Kingdom.

To be a patient under GA's care is an experience. Never have I seen a physician so upset if he cannot come to a diagnosis. The pacing up and down his simple consultation room to the wards and back, the hours he would spend on one case till he is satisfied makes his working day too short for his liking. Often has he stated how nice it would be to swallow a pill and satisfy the stomach's call for food, rather than waste time eating, when patients are sick and wanting attention. For to GA a correct diagnosis is practically a cure. And treatment is a simple procedure which he prefers to relegate to secondary importance. While many of us may wonder at this, yet none can deny that an incorrect diagnosis cannot but lead to improper treatment.

GA never fails to put his colleagues at ease. He responds to a call anytime of day or night. He may not drive a vehicle himself, though he has old faithfuls to attend to this need. His willingness to visit patients in their homes should serve as a reminder to those of us who hesitate to respond to house calls. At the end of such a consultation he will always tell the patient that his GP has looked after him well. Not only has GA reassured, a patient he has also enhanced the image of the patient's GP. What more can we expect of such a colleague.

As the outstanding physician to this country, and a well accepted consultant to the region he was bestowed honours by the British Government, Singapore Government and the State of Kelantan. Despite his prominence he lived a simple life style: His needs were basic. He enjoyed fishing and occasionally shooting. He was never one to care for a rainy day. This could be GA's weakness, but his close colleagues made sure he was not in want.

GAR lived a full life. His dedication to the teaching and practice of medicine can rightly be said to have laid the foundation for the standard of medical practice we see in Singapore presently. Whilst we may not have him physi-

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cally with us today, his pioneering efforts, the inspiration he provided and the dedication he displayed will always serve as the example for medical professionals to emulate. May we continue to see the fine tradition of GAR being followed.