

THE RAJAKUMAR MOVEMENT

The Wonca Asia Pacific Region Working Party
for Young and Future Family Doctors

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In August 2008, Professor Michael Kidd A.M. planted the seed in my mind of establishing a sister organisation to the highly successful Wonca Europe Vasco da Gama Movement (VdGM). The VdGM has had success in creating a strong regional network for representation by young family doctors and medical practitioners.

In September 2008 Dr Rajakumar provided permission for his name to be associated with this new development in our region of the world. He expressed his characteristic humility and also his delight at lending his name to the new movement.

*"Dear Dr Naomi Harris,
I am both honoured and embarrassed by your initiative in my name. I agree to the use of my name, but as you know, we all worked together and contributed to the advancement of health care in the community through General Practice. Your own emergence from student to become a leader of the profession is testimony to our efforts. Our region is fertile field for your efforts. I shall be following closely your endeavours for the health of our people.
Best wishes, Sincerely, Rajakumar"*

An initial meeting of this new initiative was held at the Wonca Asia Pacific Conference in Melbourne on 4th October, 2008 and 40 people attended.

The late Dr Rajakumar was a highly regarded, well respected Wonca elder. He was a Wonca World President and a respected leader of family medicine in Malaysia and the Asia Pacific Region.

According to Datuk Dr Daniel Thuraiapah, a lifelong friend and colleague of Rajakumar, and whom I now am pleased to call a friend of mine, *'the man [who] has devoted his entire life to the development and betterment of the general practitioner by promoting the discipline of family medicine through education ... he continues to inspire us ... the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson are apt to describe him as follows: to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden*

patch or a redeemed social condition, to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. That is to have succeeded... it is hoped that everyone will benefit from his faith, his hope and his charity for the world'.

Dr Rajakumar is an exemplary role model for all in our region – especially those of us just commencing our journey through the jungle of family medicine.

The Rajakumar Movement hopes to foster mentoring between current and future leaders in family medicine and to promote continuity of representation by young family medicine leaders in the Asia Pacific Region.

Young and future family doctors in our region of the world require an avenue to explore the greater depth of our clinical discipline and The Rajakumar Movement hopes to expose young doctors to the cultural differences in family medicine across our region and in training towards becoming a qualified family doctor. This will hopefully lead to members gaining an international perspective on training in family medicine and enable us to work together within the region to strengthen the role of primary health care and allow us to contribute to the development of new structures to support high quality primary health care.

I believe that Dr Rajakumar would also have encouraged us to promote training in family medicine and to promote family medicine to the community of the Asia Pacific region. As Dr Rajakumar wrote to me 'our region is fertile field' and will allow learning from the diverse, old and young countries in our region where there are many different models of family medicine, and family medicine training. Interest has been shown from the UK for family medicine trainee exchanges in the future.

I would also like to work towards having Rajakumar Movement representatives on relevant Wonca Asia Pacific Working Parties and for an official presentation at Wonca Asia Pacific Conferences to occur from a nominated young family physician who has been chosen in honour of continuing the development of family medicine in the same ethos as that of our namesake.

I was planning on visiting Raj this September on my way to Wonca Europe. Sadly, in late November last year I received an email telling me that Raj had lost his battle with a short, but serious illness. I was in hospital at the time myself and I can honestly tell you I shed a tear. The passing of a man I had known for four days ten years ago, and we had shared one email since, had truly saddened my life.

I have been in very close contact with Raj's family since then, and visited Mrs Rajakumar, Sunita and Jeya in Kuala Lumpur. I also was fortunate to meet Arjuna and Kiren whilst in Hong Kong. They are a tremendous family and I truly value the support they have given me in my endeavours to ensure the success of The Rajakumar Movement.

Since establishing The Rajakumar Movement, so many people have come to me to express their encouragement and also their delight that Raj is to be recognised in this way. I have to be honest that when all of this started, I did not realise the amount of support and encouragement that would come forward. I am being contacted by people whom I don't even know to express their delight that The Rajakumar Movement now exists. My hope is that I can now build on this and carry the Movement forward.

On 4th June 2009, I was present at the Wonca Asia Pacific Council meeting to discuss a number of papers I had submitted regarding official endorsement of The Rajakumar Movement as a Wonca Asia Pacific Working Party for Young and Future Family Doctors. I am very proud to say that this endorsement occurred and I have been given the support of this Council.

The occurrence of this support meant that very proudly, on 5th June 2009, coincidentally my thirtieth birthday, The Rajakumar Movement was officially launched at the Wonca Asia Pacific Regional Conference in Hong Kong. This was done by two of Raj's children, Arjuna and Kiren, Raj's friend and colleague, Datuk Thuraiappah, and myself. It was one of my proudest achievements.

The groundwork has been laid for a very successful Wonca Asia Pacific Working Party. It is my hope and dream that The Rajakumar Movement continues long past when I am eligible for membership. Proudly, there is great enthusiasm throughout our entire region, and indeed the world. Hopefully that will translate to action, participation and support.

I am honoured that Raj knew of this initiative before his passing. It is only just that a man as important to the Asia Pacific Region, and such a wonderful husband, father and grandfather should know that the young generation of family doctors are motivated to continue improving family medicine as he set out to do as a young doctor himself. My newfound friendship with the Rajakumar family, Daniel Thuraiappah and his wife, and the Malaysian Academy of Family Physicians is a blessing that perhaps Raj has organised himself. Knowing this man now, as well as I do, it would not surprise me!