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MY MOST INFLUENTIAL TEACHER

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I met my most influential teacher, who taught me Sanskrit language and its literature when I was fifteen years old during my pre college year. Although, I pursued engineering studies in college and currently myself a faculty member in Stevens Institute of Technology for about fifteen years, I can say after reflecting on all these years of learning and experience, that his teaching and personality has touched my life and profession . His goal was only to impart his knowledge and see it blossom in his students. His masterly teaching was clear and simple. I still remember vividly the excellence in his teaching and pleasant personality in him both inside and outside the class room. I never saw him teaching or answering in a hurry. He used to say that never give up in finding answers to your questions because, a question not answered will always come back and bother you later. He used to advise us to set higher goals of achievement and used to inspire by giving examples of students who excelled with high achievements in previous years.

One of many incidences that made great impact on me is: in one class he was describing the qualities of an ideal king particularly in reference to Ramayana, a classical epic in Sanskrit. I with two of my friends had a

question regarding the conflict in a king between his personal matters and issues of kingdom. He said that the question was interesting and needed detailed analysis. As there was not enough time in the class period, he invited us to his office room. In the discussion in his office room, he described the dual role of a king as a person with usual responsibilities of family and as a person with responsibilities of the state (as a bigger family). Later, when we expressed that we did not have a lot of time to go through an elaborate discussion, he invited us to his residence during evenings or week ends. This invitation inspired us to think more on this topic and we gladly accepted to visit him. Soon after that we did visit his residence and had a very elaborate analysis from him about the conflicting roles of a king and how an ideal king would put the interests of the state (as a bigger family) above his personal interests which involve sacrifices not only by the king but his personal family members. These wonderful discussions that I had with him are still fresh and inspiring. My most influential teacher's name is Swami Rangapriya. He resides in Bangalore, India. He retired only from the profession of teaching but not from teaching itself. It is impossible for me to imagine my life and accomplishments without his influence. I wish to sum up his influence in my words, "Learning has a beginning but no end whereas ignorance has no beginning but has an end".

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