Dr. Hrishikesh Jana

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Dr. Hrishikesh Jana, President of the Indian Society of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis, died on February 18, 2006 at the age of 78 of cirrhosis of the liver. He was a long standing friend of international hypnosis. He was a gentle, wise man possessing immense energy and clinical insight in understanding and teaching the scientific underpinnings and clinical applications of medical hypnosis.

Dr. Jana graduated in Medicine with a postgraduate degree in Physiology, eventually becoming Professor and Head of the Department of Physiology and Biochemistry, Smt. N. H. L. Municipal Medical College in Ahmedabad from 1963 to 1996. He was the founder of the Psychosomatic Medicine and Hypnosis Clinic at Sheth Vadilal Sarabhal Hospital in Ahmedabad, where he worked from 1983 to 1986. Following his position on the staff, he continued to serve the Hospital as a consultant Hypnotherapist until his death.

During his work as a scientist and teacher in the field of physiology, he witnessed a demonstration of hypnoanesthesia performed by a medical student. Stimulated by this demonstration, Dr. Jana began a systematic, mid-career exploration of the science of hypnosis, just as Ernest Hilgard had done many years before him. Dr. Jana published his findings in the Journal of Applied Physiology in 1963. He began traveling internationally presenting scientific papers. At the Fifth International Congress of Hypnosis and Psychosomatic Medicine, he first met and discussed his work with Professor Hilgard, Dr. B.J. Raginsky, and others.

In 1972, Dr. Jana founded the Indian Society of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis, which became a Constituent Society of the International Society of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis the forerunner of the International Society of Hypnosis (ISH). He became the President of the Indian Society in 1974, and held that position until his death. He was elected to the Board of Directors of ISH from 1977 to 1979. During these years he presented papers throughout the world on both hypnosis and physiology. He steadfastly insisted on the value of studying and applying hypnosis in a variety of diverse clinical settings while remaining true to the foundations and principles of physiology.

Professor Jana earned numerous prestigious awards including Fellowships in the National Academy of Medical Sciences in 1984: the Indian Academy of Neurosciences in 1990; and the Indian Association of Biomedical Scientists in 1996. He was awarded the Vimia Virmani Award by the National Academy of Medical Sciences in 2004 and the Rashtriya Rattan Award by the International Study Circle in New Delhi in 2004. In addition, he left a rich legacy to hundreds of doctors, dentists, and clinical psychologists throughout India who participated in the Hypnotherapy Training Courses of the Indian Society of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis.

He will be remembered as a light that shone brightly in his home country — for working alone for many years promoting hypnosis throughout India. Those of us who had the opportunity to share time and space with him, knew we were fortunate indeed. He reminded us that talent has no geographical limits, but transcends cultures and inspires us all.

Dr. Jana is survived by his wife, Sarasw tidevi, two sons, and daughter.