FELICITATIONS

G. N. RAMACHANDRAN

Professor G. N. Ramachandran attained 60 on 8th October 1982.

The scientific contributions of GNR, as he is known to his colleagues have been prolific. He has published hundreds of original scientific papers and more than half a dozen books in the areas of Crystallography and Biophysics. Amongst his outstanding contributions are those to x-ray topography, the phase problem in x-ray crystallography, the triple helical coiled coil structure of collagen, the conformation of biopolymers (the ϕ–Ψ map, now known as the Ramachandran Plot), the basic ideas of tomography and many others. He can be identified as the one man who initiated and established biophysics as a field of research in India and his contributions to this field have brought international reputation to our country.

Professor Gopalasamudram Narayana Ramachandran was born in Ernakulam where he also had his schooling and he did his under-graduate studies at the St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli. He secured first rank throughout his school and University careers. It is not generally known that he first chose the Electrical Communication Engineering Course when he joined the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore in 1942. He dropped out within a few months when he met Prof. Sir C. V. Raman who was then at the Institute, to become his student. It was Raman who initiated Ramachandran into research and Ramachandran's taste in scientific problems all through his career can be traced back to this early influence. His first research problem was in optics, the theoretical study of haloes and glories using an extension of the Raman-Nath theory. This and other optical researches were submitted for his Master's thesis.

Prof. K. S. Krishnan who was the examiner opined that he had never read a thesis so outstanding and that it was worthy of a conferment much higher than a doctorate. He later worked on the thermo-optic behaviour of crystals and the photoelastic properties of diamond, the subject of his doctoral thesis.

In 1947 he went to England on the prestigious 1851 Exhibition scholarship to work at the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge. He returned to the Institute but did not stay long as he was appointed as Professor and Head of the Department of Physics at the Madras University in 1951 when he was not yet 29. It is here that he started and carried out his now famous researches in Biophysics.

In 1970 Prof. Ramachandran moved back to the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, along with some of his co-workers. He set up the Molecular Biophysics Unit at the Institute, where again he and his colleagues made important contributions to Biophysics.

More recently Prof. Ramachandran has gone into mathematical biology and mathematical philosophy—fields which continue to interest him.

GNR was elected a Fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences at 28. Among other honours, he is also a Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy, an Honorary Member of the American Society of Biological Chemists, an Honorary Foreign Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, London. In 1977 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London. He was named the Institute Professor at the Indian Institute of Science and later became a Distinguished Scientist of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

One has to come into close contact with Professor Ramachandran to see the remarkable way his mind works. His quickness of grasp of ideas is unbelievable. Even as one speaks to him of a new scientific idea, he perceives the full scientific content and significance of what one says and is able to derive all the consequences in the shortest possible time. I recall an incident when Professor Raman showed him a Laue photograph of diamond (taken by Mr. P. S. Hariharan) wherein the spots had some streaks inside them. Prof. Raman said that this could be used to map the imperfections in the diamond and that he could think of different geometries involving the Bragg and Laue reflections. Within 24 hours Ramachandran had worked out the experimental arrangement and the first topograph—as Raman called it—of a diamond plate was produced within 3 days!

Celebrations to commemorate his 60th birthday are being planned by GNR's students, friends and colleagues at the end of this year at Kharagpur and Madras. A special Symposium on Molecular Biophysics and Biocrystallography is being organised in Madras. A Festschrift volume containing contributions by leading scientists from all over the world and published by the Adenine Press, New York, USA will be presented to him on this occasion.

GNR has always had a soft corner for *Current Science*; many of his outstanding papers were first announced in this journal. He was its editor for seven years from 1951–1957 and he spared no pains to maintain its scientific quality.

Prof. Ramachandran is one of our most eminent scientists. I cannot think of any other who by his

personal contributions has enhanced the stature of Indian science since Independence as he has and one who is so utterly devoted to his science. His simplicity is child-like and he is almost naive in his approach to matters other than science. On the occasion of his attaining the age of 60, the scientists of India convey to him through *Current Science* their best wishes for many more years of creative scientific activity.

October 1982,
Bangalore

S. Ramaseshan

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE INDIAN NATIONAL SCIENCE ACADEMY (INSA) NEW DELHI

Prof. A. K. Sharma of the Calcutta University has been elected as President of the Indian National Science Academy for the year 1983. Prof. C. N. R. Rao of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and Dr. S. Sriramachari of Indian Council of Medical Research were elected Vice-presidents. Dr. P. K. Das, Director General of Meteorology and Prof. P. N. Tandon of All India Institute of Medical Sciences were elected secretaries.

CFTRI—NEW DIRECTORY

The Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI) Mysore, will bring out a revised two-volume edition of the directory of food processing and allied industries. The two volumes would contain information in a concise packaged form the name and address of the manufacturing units, products manufactured and exported, brand names, as well as machinery and equipments manufactured. They would also give an account of the development promotion agencies, export promotion councils, food research organisations, training institutions and associations.

70TH ALL INDIA SCIENCE CONGRESS

The 70th All India Science Congress will be held at Tirupati from January 3 to 8, 1983.

Further particulars may be had from Prof. V. S. Rama Das, Organising Secretary, 70th Science Congress, Head of the Department of Botany, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati 517 502.