

## Obituary

In the death of Dr. Meherji P Mehta, India has lost one of the pioneers in cardiovascular & thoracic surgery, a great teacher and one of the most beloved personalities in surgery.

Dr. Meherji P Mehta was born on April 5, 1917 at Navsari. After doing his early education in Elphinstone & Xavier's College, he graduated from Grant Medical College and J. J. Hospital, Bombay in December 1939. He took his Masters degree in Surgery from Bombay University in October 1942, securing distinction.

Dr. Mehta then joined the Armed Forces as a recognised surgical specialist in 1944 in the Indian Medical Service and was granted permanent commission after World War II. When he resigned from the army in 1948, he was in the rank of a surgeon.

He later proceeded to the U.K. and joined the Thoracic Surgery Unit at Fenchay Hospital in Bristol (UK) and worked until 1950. In 1951 he became Fellow of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons of England and Edinburgh.

In 1951 Dr. Mehta returned to India to join the faculty of the Parsee General Hospital and was appointed in 1953 as an Honorary Assistant Surgeon and Honorary Assistant Professor of Surgery at Grant Medical College & J. J. Hospital.

In 1960 he was promoted as Honorary Professor of Surgery and Head of Department of Thoracic & Cardiovascular Surgery of J. J.



Hospital, the post he held till the time of his retirement in 1975.

In 1973, when Jaslok Hospital started its department of Cardiovascular & Thoracic surgery, Dr. Mehta was appointed as a Senior Consultant surgeon.

Dr. Mehta held a number of important memberships and fellowships which included Fellow of International College of Angiology, Member

of the International Federation of Surgeons and Surgical College, and Member of Society of Thoracic Surgeons of Great Britain. In 1973 he was elected as President of the Association of Thoracic Surgeons of India, and he held the post for three years. In 1976, he was elected as the President of Association of Surgeons of India.

Dr. Mehta was one of the pioneers of thoracic surgery in India in 1953. During the period 1953-63 he carried out closed heart surgery, pulmonary surgery and open heart surgery under hypothermia at the J.J. Hospital.

In 1963, he performed his first open heart operation at J.J. Hospital using the heart lung machine which he had indigenously designed. The machine was subsequently used for several years at J.J. Hospital. Dr. Mehta designed

indigenously the first disposable plastic bubble oxygenator as early as 1968 which he used clinically in several operations.

Dr. Mehta was the first to use biological valves and carried out successful replacement using calf valve in 1972. In 1974 he attempted the first aortocoronary bypass operation in the country.

Dr. Mehta was a recognised postgraduate teacher for post graduates in general surgery and cardiothoracic surgery of Bombay University and trained several young cardiovascular and thoracic surgeons. Dr. Mehta remained an active cardiovascular & thoracic surgeon to the end.

He was one of the most lovable personalities and was extremely popular amongst his colleagues and students. He passed away on 7th July 1983.

G. B. P.