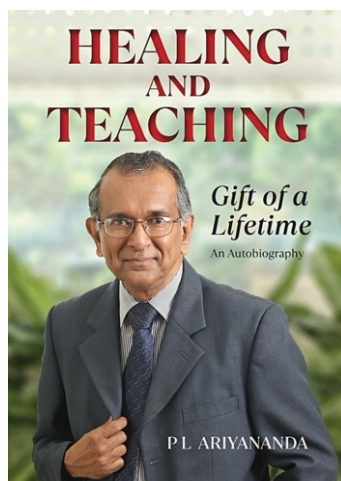




Healing and Teaching Gift of a Lifetime: An Autobiography - P L Ariyananda

(Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2023, 203 pp., ISBN 9786242050348)

Reviewer:

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Autobiographies provide unique windows into the lives and minds of individuals, offering personal insights and lessons that readers can connect with, learn from, and find inspiration in.

Emeritus Professor P. L. Ariyananda, a distinguished academic physician and Fulbright Scholar, is a former Dean and Chair of Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine, Galle, and retired as Professor and Head of the Division of Medicine at the International Medical University, Malaysia. His autobiography, *“Healing and Teaching – A Gift of a Lifetime,”* is a remarkable narrative of his journey as a medical professional and academic.

Spanning 28 chapters in chronological order, the book provides a self-reflective and inspiring portrait of a life defined by resilience, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to personal and professional growth. Each chapter vividly recounts key milestones and achievements that shaped not only his career but also his philosophy of care and community engagement.

The early chapters transport readers to the formative years that ignited his passion for medicine. These sections are rich with relatable anecdotes about student life, the intensity of medical training, and the camaraderie that sustained him through challenging times. Particularly striking are his reflections on the profound lessons learned in the anatomy dissecting room, where the humanity underpinning medical science becomes profoundly evident.

This foundation transitions seamlessly into his internship and early career as a junior doctor, where he narrates the trials and triumphs of honing clinical skills under pressure while balancing empathy with the rigors of practice.

Chapters such as *‘Treating Sick Children’* highlight his evolution into a compassionate and skilled clinician. His poignant accounts of working with children stand out, capturing the emotional and professional challenges with candour and depth.

His overseas training in the UK provides a fascinating perspective on cultural and professional

growth, illustrating how exposure to a different healthcare system enriched his medical outlook. The theme of global learning recurs during his sabbatical leave, which took him to England, New Zealand, and the USA, offering readers a compelling insight into international medicine and the broader horizons it brings.

The later chapters showcase his monumental contributions to the field of medicine. In *'Birth of a Medical School and a Teaching Hospital,'* he details the challenges and rewards of establishing institutions that would shape future generations of healthcare professionals. His roles as a clinician, academic, and leader are further explored in chapters such as *'Life as a Clinician and a Medical Academic'* and *'Life as a Medical Dean.'* These sections reflect on the complexities of balancing patient care, teaching, and administrative leadership, as well as the opportunities to innovate and build lasting legacies.

One particularly inspiring episode involves his pivotal role in the establishment of an Emergency Trauma Centre - a long-felt need fulfilled through a generous overseas gesture following the tsunami. This anecdote underscores his ability to turn challenges into opportunities that benefit entire communities.

Professor Ariyananda's candid and engaging writing style makes it easy for readers to connect with his challenges and triumphs. His reflections on leadership, particularly during the more demanding phases of his career, are insightful and relevant. While certain sections could benefit from more depth, the overall narrative is a compelling roadmap for anyone navigating complex professional landscapes.

A notable feature of the autobiography is its deliberate avoidance of naming colleagues and close friends, despite their undoubtedly significant roles in his journey. This choice adds a unique dimension to the narrative, keeping the focus on events and principles rather than personal relationships.

In summary, *"Healing and Teaching – A Gift of a Lifetime"* is an extraordinary blend of personal anecdotes, professional milestones, and reflections on the broader implications of medicine and education. It stands as a testament to a life lived with purpose and passion, offering valuable lessons not only to medical professionals but to anyone striving to make a meaningful difference in their field. Highly recommended for readers seeking motivation and insight into a life of profound impact.