In Memoriam: Ratip Kazancıgil - the Modern-day Dervish

On August 12, 2017, we lost Ratip Kazancıgil, a medical doctor, malaria warrior, administrator, lecturer, researcher, volunteer, and cultural person, as a retired academic member of Trakya University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Medical History and Deontology (Figure 1). After his death, we can now acknowledge him with various books, articles, and scientific meeting sessions. He was recognized as “the modern-day dervish,” who was known for his wise and humble personality and productive nature of continuous projects with no financial concerns. He was both a fighter and a supporter. He revealed all his works based on scientific documentation (1-5).

He was admitted to İstanbul University Medical Faculty in 1937, educated in “Türk Talebe Yurdu,” and graduated in 1943. After his military service as a reserve officer, he was appointed as a doctor to Aydın Malaria Struggle Zone Central Branch to perform his compulsory service. For four years, he both treated malaria patients and managed swamp-drying activities within the scope of the malaria struggle. After his successful duty, he worked as the Head of Malaria Struggle in Edirne since 1950. He played a major role in the eradication of malaria in the Thrace region. He was awarded many times by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare for his superior efforts.

He started to work as the director of Edirne Health Directorate in 1961 and made significant progress with the support of community and administrators until his first retirement in 1985. He started education in nursing and midwifery and opened medicine corners for easy access to medication in villages to ensure proper healthcare services in rural areas. Health homes, followed by efforts to open health centers, has achieved widespread accommodation of maternal and child healthcare services. He ensured the socialization of healthcare services in the region without the need for any state support. In this period, Edirne had been both an example and pioneer in socialization studies. This success earned him the “Prof. Dr. Nusret Fışek Public Health Award” given by The Turkish Medical Association. He also served as deputy chair of Edirne Municipality and provincial directorates of Culture and Youth & Sports.

He received his doctorate in the field of History of Medicine and Deontology with the thesis entitled “Health Institutions and The Working Staff in Edirne Province between the years of 1362 and 1920, 1981, İstanbul” under Ord. Prof. Dr. Süheyl Ünver’s supervision from Istanbul University Cerrahpaşa Medicine Faculty. He concentrated on academic studies as a doctor of science and was appointed as an assistant professor in the Department of Medical History and Deontology at Trakya University, Faculty of Medicine. He continued serving education and training activities until and after his second retirement. He was elected twice as the best lecturer of the year by the Faculty of Medicine students. In this period, he managed three master's theses, established his library, which can be described as the laboratory of this department, and enriched it with his books in the fields of science and culture.

He wrote 125 papers and 27 books mainly on health and the history of Edirne. He continuously made tremendous efforts to realize his biggest dream, and finally, he managed to establish the Health Museum within the body of Trakya University in Sultan 2. Bayezid Complex. This museum won the European Union Museum Award in 2004.

He was very keen on reading and writing “Ottoman Turkish” or “Old Turkish” which enabled his research on city historiography, history, culture, health, and social fields of Edirne. In this way, transferring important resources to the present Turkish, even if summarized, has enabled researchers to benefit from them. The topics of his articles are Rakım Ertür, Dr. Rifat Osman, Ord. Prof. Dr. Süheyl Ünver, health, and history of Edirne. He has four monographs: Ord. Prof. Dr. Süheyl Ünver, Hafiz Rakım Ertür, Rifat Osman Bey, and Edirne Governor Hacı İzzet Pasha.

Dr. Ratip Kazancıgil compared physicians to greenhouse flowers, which should be given special care and who should be satisfied with matters (5).
To show our respect and immortalize his memory, Trakya University named the lecture hall of Trakya University Faculty of Medicine after him (Figure 2), and both medical students and faculty continue to remember his memory by giving it the respect he deserves.

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