



## Adib Domingos Jatene

(Brazilian, b. Xapuri en 1929; d. San Pablo, 2014)

*“Nada resiste ao trabalho quando é serio e feito com dedicação em benefício do doente”*

*“Nothing can oppose work when it is serious and done with dedication in benefit of the patient”*

EUCLIDES DE JESÚS ZERBINI

In the mid-nineties of the twentieth century, San Pablo was such a populous metropolis that its center and surroundings had a similar population to that of Argentina. In that spring evening three Argentinians ran swiftly, dodging highways and streets crowded with vehicles to arrive on time for the heart transplant surgery to which we had been summoned as, at that time, we were working at INCOR (Heart Institute). We were surprised to see who commanded the surgery; it was the internationally renowned heart surgeon, later Minister of Health of the State of San Pablo, Adib Jatene. When the intervention was finished and despite being long past midnight he requested some food and remained a long time chatting with us about our country and the specialty. This short introduction is intended to highlight that the enormous creative flow of this precursor of cardiac surgery techniques was supported by a continuous and coherent will. With a tall and stout demeanor, olive complexion, of Lebanese roots, he was meant to study engineering but changed his profession at the last minute. He held a total concentration during surgery, only abandoned to dip, at frequent intervals, his big gloved hands in a container supported by a tripod placed behind him. A disciple of the Master of Latin American cardiac surgery Euclides de Jesús Zerbini, he participated with him in the first beating heart mitral valve stenosis surgery (1951).

He became director of INCOR after a long career in general hospitals, imitating the remark in our setting of Ricardo Finochietto, convinced that “to the downtown hospitals one arrives from the suburban ones”. On that night, he told us “we were forced to develop our oxygenators, valves and sutures because

import is extremely expensive for our country.” Adib Jatene was a fan of bioengineering to the point of contributing to the construction of heart-lung machines. At the request of Euclides de Jesús Zerbini he entered INCOR to develop them in that institution, since it was difficult to repair imported machinery. In this project he had the collaboration of Domingo Braile, another prominent heart surgeon, who later settled in Rio Petro. Then, as we returned walking in the night of San Pablo, one of my colleagues commented that the quality of these enterprises was not comparable to that of the US or Europe. Time combined with the Institute’s effort allowed in a short time a remarkable development of these machines with their concomitant export to a greater part of the world. I also remember that during that magic night of our youth, Adib expressed wistfully that his father, whose job was seringueiro (rubber-tapper), had died of yellow fever when he was barely two years old. I was not surprised by his confession; a man with occasional companies perceives he may open to the memory of feelings without shame.

Pioneer in cardiac surgeries of great international reputation (arterial switch for transposition of the great arteries, ventricular geometric reconstruction), he was director of INCOR, Minister of Health of the State of Sao Paulo and then of Brazil on two occasions. At the age of 85 he died in San Pablo on November 14, 2014. Possessor of an enormous patience and easy accessibility, he will be leaving in all who met him that vivid and intelligent expression held by the man who never ceased to fulfill his task. During that night he also fostered upon us the belief that only an ethical education protects society and that the individual in a society without it, accentuates the bad faith of consciousness alluded to by Jean Paul Sartre when he warned of the danger of “being what [we are not] is not and not being what [we are] is”.

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