

American **OBSERVER**

This page was published: Thursday, October 4, 2007

<http://americanobserver.net/2007/10/04/palm-reading-goes-medical/>

Palm Reading Goes Medical

By JIHANE ABOU CHABKE

Observer Staff

OCT. 4, 2007

Neelakanta Rishikesh never misses a visit to his palmist on each of his annual trips to Trivandrum, his hometown in India. Last year was no exception. After having retired from the World Health Organization as a Senior Scientist, Rishikesh, 79, and his wife went for three months last December to Trivandrum where their visit to Dr. Adarsh Kumar, a palmist, brought them some medical news.

By looking at Rishikesh's palm, Kumar informed him of impending disturbances of nasal or lung complaints. As for his wife, he diagnosed her with joint pains.

"He absolutely stupefied my wife by saying after one glance at her palm that she is presently suffering from joint pains," Rishikesh said. "He was right and it was astounding considering that she never had these pains until recently!"

Kumar, 42, is a scientist at the Indian Space Research Organization in Bangalore, India. Twelve years ago, a palmist told him by looking at the palm of his hand that he would become a palm reader himself, a prediction that really embarrassed Kumar, he said in an e-mail, but that ended up igniting his interest in palmistry. He spent years reading books and learning about this science and ended up opening his own practice.

There, Kumar said, he observed many hands and was able to detect similarities in the palm lines of people living with certain type of diseases such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease. This led to his visit to the Regional Cancer Center where he studied the palm lines of about 160 patients with cancer. According to Kumar's observations, most of them had the same lines.

"It made me think of another matter," said Kumar. "If this disease is detected in the primary stage itself, it is quite curable. Then why can't we get precaution against this fatal disease through finding the palm line symptoms? Really, this notion opened before me the endless and eventful vista of medical palmistry."

Medical Palmistry Around the World

The general definition of palmistry is the study of the hand lines to predict the future, assess personalities and provide counseling. Medical palmistry on the other hand, looks at the hand's lines, shape and texture to detect abnormalities that will help diagnose physical and mental diseases.

For centuries, Chinese and Indian medicine has recognized the link between palmistry and good health. Abnormalities such as vertical ridges on the fingernails, or a life line that's faint in color, can represent a diagnosis for all sorts of illnesses from intestinal problems to heart disease.

The Catholic Church, for its part, has always branded palmistry as devil worship and forced it underground.

Deacon Dominique Hanna, a student at the Catholic University of America, said that the Church still does not encourage this technique. "Today," he said, "there is no specific document from the Church that bans medical palmistry as such. The Church might go with this medical process if it helps people in curing their illnesses and diseases."

So far however, this science is still far from being accepted in the West. According to Kenneth Lagerstrom, a professional palmist and founder of a website on the human hand, in North America "the palms of the hands are sometimes called 'no man's land' because it's expected that no self-respecting medical professional will deal with palmistry."

"They [people in the West] are so sure that any disease can be nipped out with the use of modern medicines," Kumar said. "So to some extent, they do not have to think eagerly about the coming of diseases. Whenever it comes, they can treat."

localhost/.../palm-reading-goes-medical...



Photo By Jihane Abou Chabke
Adarsh Kumar is a scientist and palmist at the Indian Space Research Organization in Bangalore, India. Kumar was told years ago by a palm reader that he would also read palms.

Another reason for the West's reluctance to recognize medical palmistry as a reliable diagnosis tool is the lack of belief in what is considered by many here as an "occult science," Lagerstrom said.

In addition, he blames his fellow practitioners themselves for all the uncertainties still surrounding medical palmistry.

"In my opinion," he said, "more than 95 percent of them are either dangerously incompetent or outright fraudulent. Very few seek details that can be scientifically or medically verified, preferring instead to make their readings either fortune-telling or 'spiritual.'"

Reading the Hand

Both hand shape and lines change over time, except for the fingerprints. When looking at the hand, Edward Campbell, a professional palmist for the past 20 years said that he is looking for more than just impressions.

"I look for duplication, replication," he said, "and if I see certain signs, then it's likely to lead to certain biological, physical, behavioral and medical conditions. And it should be replicable: someone else looking at the same signs should be able to arrive at the same information."

By looking at three areas of the hand (the fingernails, the line of the heart and the Mount of Venus, the area at the base of the thumb) medical palmistry recognizes warnings for diseases like heart disease, diabetes, urinal tract infection, urine stones, kidney-related diseases, mental depression, and severe memory complaints.

Kumar recognizes that all these symptoms are best used as a tool for early detection of health issues, and he admits that there is a margin of error in his medical diagnoses.

Ramesh Radhakrishnan, a young U.S. resident, says he's skeptical about medical palmistry. On a recent visit to India, however, his friend introduced him to Kumar who was able to give him very accurate information about his personality and his life. That drew him one step closer to believing in the power of palm reading, he said.

"Even though I've never heard of the medical side of palmistry before," Radhakrishnan said, "if Kumar tells me there is something wrong with me by looking at my hand, then I'll believe him enough to go see a doctor."

Published in: <http://americanobserver.net/2007/10/04/palm-reading-goes-medical/>

© THE AMERICAN OBSERVER IS PRODUCED BY THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION'S GRADUATE JOURNALISM PROGRAM.
COPYRIGHT 1995-2008, THE AMERICAN OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

[XHTML](#) & [CSS](#). ¶ SUBSCRIBE: [ENTRIES RSS](#) & [COMMENTS RSS](#)
