

Tribute to C. S. Seshadri

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I met Seshadri in 1980, when he was giving a few lectures on vector bundles at the ENS Paris (the lectures were later expanded in the very nice *Astérisque* volume nr. 96). I was a young Professor in a small province university, with no international reputation; still he was incredibly kind and warm. He spoke an excellent french, and was clearly happy to practice — we had some nice chats in the cafés nearby.

I knew close to nothing about vector bundles at the time, but his lectures aroused my curiosity. In fact, a few years later I got strongly interested. The subject had been highly developed by the mathematicians of the Tata Institute (Seshadri, Narasimhan, Ramanan) — Mumford used to call the moduli spaces of vector bundles on curves the “Tata spaces”. This is why I visited the Tata Institute in 1988. In the meantime Seshadri had moved to Chennai; he invited me to spend a few days there. Though he was very busy with administrative tasks at that moment, he took the time to discuss with me and invite me for a wonderful dinner at his place.

Then we met again in various conferences, all around the world. In a few of these occasions I had the privilege to hear him sing, each time in front of a small audience of friends. I am totally incompetent about Indian music but I must say each time I was moved to tears.

Last time we met was in Jussieu in 2013, when he received an honorary doctorate from Paris 6. I was asked to lecture about his work; I only treated the part I am familiar with — moduli spaces of vector bundles on curves. At the end of the lecture, with his usual kindness, Seshadri told me: “It’s incredible how much material you covered in 50 minutes!”. On the spot I had not the wit to make the obvious answer: “It’s incredible how much material you covered in 50 years!”

We have lost a great mathematician, and a perhaps greater human being.