

Spa professional

writer Zoe Louise Cronk

rajesh ramani kamalaya wellness sanctuary

Rajesh Ramani has had a remarkable career in spiritual philosophy, healing people worldwide from top politicians and celebrities to the locals of rural villages. With work spanning 16 years and as many countries, the life transformation expert and esoteric meditations teacher can now be found at the luxurious Kamalaya Wellness Sanctuary, a resort that echoes his passion for spiritual teaching.

Growing up within a traditional, religious family in Chennai, South India, Rajesh Ramani was immersed in the concepts of spirituality and philosophy from an early age. Describing his upbringing, he explains how the “ideas of God, grace and enlightenment were instilled early” and soon became part of his day-to-day life.

With aspirations to become a banker, he went on to study accountancy before an introduction to a spiritual master at the age of 22 changed his life. It was then that he made the decision to leave his banking training behind, and follow the path of his spiritual leader to become a monk. This decision, he recalls fondly, was “supported entirely by my parents as they saw it as an opportunity to serve people.”

Rajesh then spent a rigorous 14 years learning a variety of “Hindu and Buddhist spiritual teachings, practices and meditations,” which he describes as having had a “profound effect” on him. He explains, “It was a special experience – both empowering and humbling – and going through deep spiritual processes and intense contemplation on esoteric sutras (teachings) shaped me as a person and a teacher.”

Throughout this time, his life was made up of conducting spiritual teachings all over Asia, in particular Korea, Bali and Japan. He recalls, “I used to travel and teach for three to four months and then go back to India for a couple of months to study at the monastery.” During one of these many trips, he met John and Karina Stewart, the future founders of Kamalaya Wellness Sanctuary. Having formed a deep friendship with the couple,



they were thrilled to offer him a position at Kamalaya in 2008 when Rajesh made the decision to end his career as a monk. He has been there ever since, leading personal mentoring and pranayama classes, as well as complimentary workshops.

His passion for teaching at the Koh Samui-based retreat is clearly evident in the manner in which he speaks, describing it as the “perfect setting” for his work. He explains, “the holistic and open approach to growth and healing sets Kamalaya apart from so many other places.” In many ways, he sees it as a progression from his monastic life. “The spiritual growth, knowledge and experience I gained as a monk is now enhanced by my learning and experiences in the normal (non-monastic) world. Working closely with other practitioners at Kamalaya, who

are experts in different areas of holistic health and wellbeing has broadened my understanding and views.”

Of course where there is success, there are challenges. Contemplating the greatest issues he has faced during his career, Rajesh deems the most pressing as having had to learn humility. “My teacher taught me how, as a spiritual leader with the power to teach and heal, it is easy to fall into the trap of ego and arrogance. Working successfully with large groups of people around the world meant that I was in that place early in my career. One of my biggest challenges was to stay grounded’ and always be humble against one’s own limitations.” For Rajesh, these experiences were made worthwhile by the people he counselled and who “have a breakthrough or transformation. These moments give me great fulfilment and meaning as an individual and a teacher.”

In the 16 years he’s spent as a spiritual leader, Rajesh has had the opportunity to “mentor people from all walks of life”, an achievement that he ultimately credits to his supporting and caring family. He reveals how they helped him “to be open mind in relating to people and having trust in the goodness of all.”

And his work continues, as in the coming years he sees himself reaching out to more and more individuals. “I believe my work will always be a reflection of my personal inner growth. Through the tools of awareness and teachings I consistently work on moving towards greater love, connection and compassion towards others and myself.”

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