



My Search for Ramanujan: How I Learned to Count

Ken Ono, Amir D. Aczel

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"The son of a prominent Japanese mathematician who came to the United States after World War II, Ken Ono was raised on a diet of high expectations and little praise. Rebelling against his pressure-cooker of a life, Ken determined to drop out of high school to follow his own path. To obtain his father's approval, he invoked the biography of the famous Indian mathematical prodigy Srinivasa Ramanujan, whom his father revered, who had twice flunked out of college because of his single-minded devotion to mathematics.

Ono describes his rocky path through college and graduate school, interweaving Ramanujan's story with his own and telling how at key moments, he was inspired by Ramanujan and guided by mentors who encouraged him to pursue his interest in exploring Ramanujan's mathematical legacy.

Picking up where others left off, beginning with the great English mathematician G.H. Hardy, who brought Ramanujan to Cambridge in 1914, Ono has devoted his mathematical career to understanding how in his short life, Ramanujan was able to discover so many deep mathematical truths, which Ramanujan believed had been sent to him as visions from a Hindu goddess. And it was Ramanujan who was ultimately the source of reconciliation between Ono and his parents.

Ono's search for Ramanujan ranges over three continents and crosses paths with mathematicians whose lives span the globe and the entire twentieth century and beyond. Along the way, Ken made many fascinating discoveries. The most important and surprising one of all was his own humanity."

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