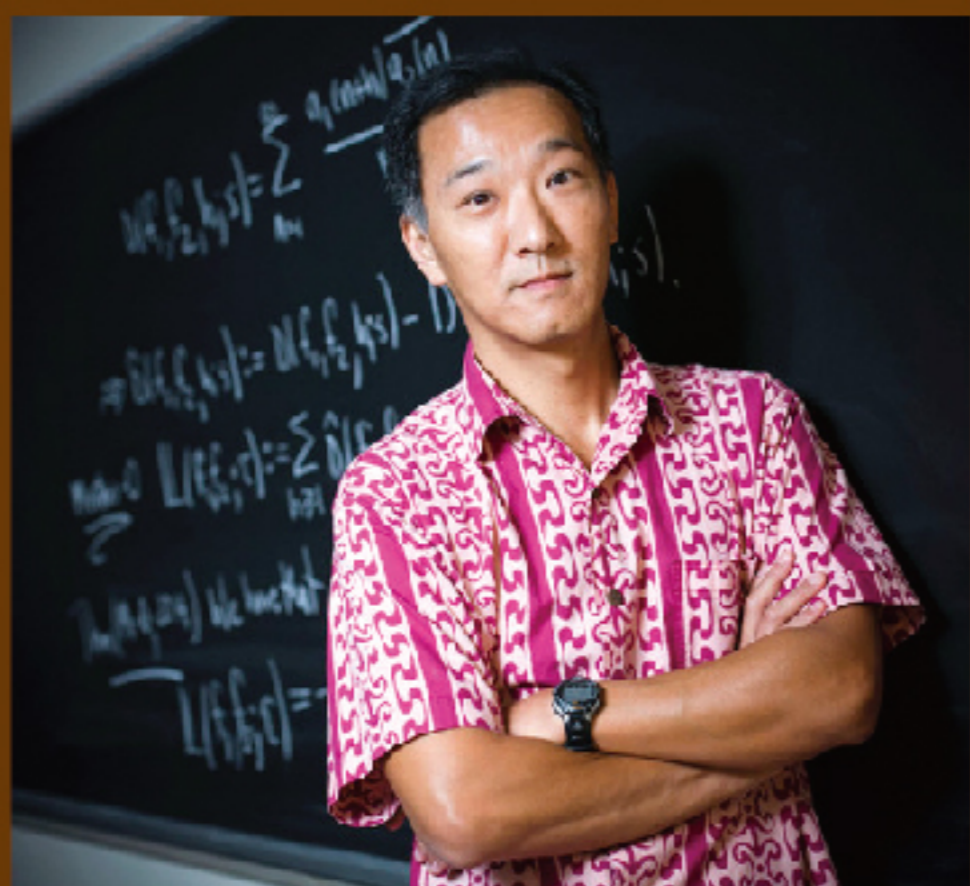# Frontiers of Mathematics Lecture
Why does Ramanujan, "The Man Who Knew Infinity", matter?

Professor Ken Ono

Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Mathematics at Emory University
Vice President of the American Mathematical Society

Date : July 18, 2018 (Wednesday)

Time : 5:00 – 6:00 pm (*Tea Reception starts at 4:30 pm*)

Venue : Lecture Theatre A, G/F, Chow Yei Ching Building, The University of Hong Kong

Abstract

Srinivasa Ramanujan (1887-1920), one of the most inspirational figures in the history of mathematics, was a poor Brahmin from lush south India who left behind three shabby notebooks that engineers, mathematicians and physicists continue to mine today. His ideas came to him as visions from a Hindu goddess. As a two-time college dropout, he could have easily been lost to the world, a thought that scientists cannot begin to absorb. I will present some of the studies of Ramanujan that are most accessible to the general public, and share several clips from the film "The Man Who Knew Infinity" (starring Dev Patel and Jeremy Irons) about Ramanujan. I will also explain why Ramanujan matters today, in terms of the "Idea of Ramanujan": talent is often found in the most unpromising circumstances. It must be located and then nurtured.

Biography

Professor Ken Ono, is the Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Mathematics at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. He previously held the Hilldale Professorship in Mathematics and the Manasse Professorship of Letters and Science at the University of Wisconsin – Madison and the Martarano Professorship of Mathematics at Pennsylvania State University, having received his Ph.D. at the University of California – Los Angeles. Professor Ono has over 170 publications and is a leading expert in modular forms and partition theory, among many interests in number theory and beyond. Much of his expertise is centered on interests inspired by Srinivasa Ramanujan and he recently served as an associate producer and consultant for "The man who knew infinity".

Professor Ono was named a fellow of the American Mathematical Society in 2012 and is the current Vice President of the American Mathematical Society. He has been an Alfred P. Sloan Fellow and a Guggenheim Fellow. He also received a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers from President Clinton in 2000. In addition to serving on a variety of editorial boards, he has served as editor-in-chief or managing editor for the Encyclopedia of Srinivasa Ramanujan and His Mathematics, Proceedings of the American Mathematical Society, Research in the Mathematical Sciences, and Research in Number Theory.

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