

PKR: Pleasant, Intelligent and Lively

-K Sankaranarayanan
Governor of Maharashtra



Within days of my coming to Maharashtra as Governor, Shri P K Ravindranath and Sri P V Vijaykumar, Managing Editor of 'Kerala in Mumbai'

came to see me in Raj Bhavan.

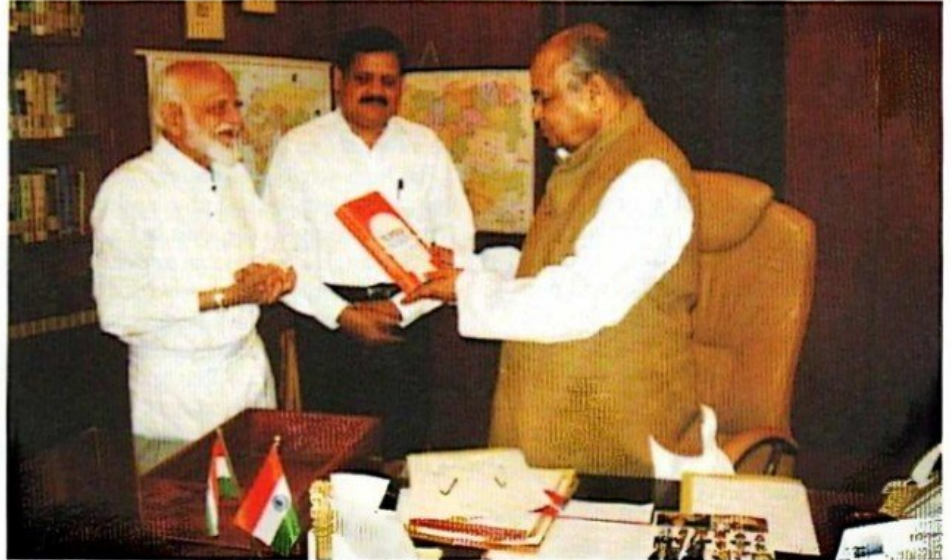
They briefed me about the launching of the new magazine 'Kerala in Mumbai' and asked me to do the honour of releasing its first issue. That was the beginning of my long and rewarding association with Shri P K Ravindranth.

I released the magazine 'Kerala in Mumbai' at Nehru Centre on 6th of February 2010. Thereafter I met Shri Ravindranath at various programmes and at most of the programmes organised by the numerous Malayali organisations in Mumbai. Occasionally he used to come to see me in Raj Bhavan with various delegations.

Meeting with him was always a pleasant experience. His mere presence was elevating. Silent to the extent of looking shy, he was a gem of a person with good sense of humour.

Shri Ravindranath was intelligent and gifted with phenomenal memory. He had firsthand knowledge of the polity in Maharashtra and he could narrate political events of the past with such accuracy as though they had taken place only recently.

I came to know that he had close association with political stalwarts like late Shri Balasaheb Thackerey, Shri



Ravindranath and Vijaykumar with Governor at Raj Bhavan

Sharad Pawar and many others. But he never boasted of his acquaintances with the high and the mighty.

I was amazed when I learnt that he was teaching journalism in six of the best colleges in Mumbai. Few people at that age have as much commitment and enthusiasm as he had. He could gel with the young and the old alike.

Ravindranath-ji carried a formidable reputation, having served as journalist with the Times of India, Free Press Journal, Mathrubhumi and later as a freelance journalist and editor of many journals. He had also authored a few books. He had also served as Press Advisor to Shri Sharad Pawar and as Director of Nehru Centre in Mumbai. He

was the best editor and one could see his silent work through the pages of 'Kerala in Mumbai', the latest publication edited by him.

Ravindranath was a humble and self-effacing person. He detested the idea of projecting or promoting himself. Even though he was easily one of the most respected Malayalees living in Mumbai and eminently qualified to appear on the cover page of 'Kerala in Mumbai', he never allowed KIM to write about him or his achievements.

During the last few days, his speech was affected and he had become weak. But illness couldn't stop him from reading newspapers and keeping himself update with social and political developments. He was a man of action and remained active till the end.

The news of his demise deeply saddened me. I felt as if I had lost an elder brother.

He was a source of inspiration to those who came in contact with him. His wife Smt Tara was a source of strength for him and perfectly complimented him. His demise will be felt particularly by her, by their family and by the people of Kerala living in Mumbai for whom he was a fatherly figure. Most of all, he will be missed by his students and well wishers.

Ravindranath-ji taught us how to live meaningfully and indeed how to face death bravely. He may no longer be with us, but he will continue to live in our hearts for many many years. ■



Governor calls on Ravindranath when he was hospitalised

Ravindranath A PEEP INTO HIS PERSONA

- Sasidharan Nair



Professor P.K. Ravindranath was an epitome of simplicity, dignity, genuineness, beauty, experience, knowledge, authenticity and truth. You cannot see any similar person in

Indian media of his stature with immense experience of life. His persona is unique and he is a role model of ethics and purity.

"To be a true Indian you must develop the culture of the Indian Army," avers Ravindranath. "That alone will instill in you patriotism, selflessness, discipline and to think and act as a member of the great human race."

He himself had never been an army man, but the first decade of his formative years were spent in an army hill-station, Mynmar in Central Burma, where he went first to a convent school, then to an Arya Samaj school. He imbibed the best of both the Catholic faith and the reformist Hindu system of life. Being in an army cantonment, he would roam freely on a bicycle all around the town, which kept him healthy and fit.

He went to primary school in a government-run high school, whose headmaster was a former adjutant in the British Army.

Then World War II broke out. Ravindranath and his family consisting of his parents and five siblings caught the last steamer from Rangoon back to Madras in 1940. Indians after him had to trek through unfriendly terrain and seek refuge in India through Assam.

His earliest recollection is sitting on the lap of Mahakavi Vallathol, who had come to his house during a tour of Burma with his Kathakali troupe, and reciting a poem. Another memory is of a Velichapad (oracle) biting off the head of a live cock during a homam (religious sacrifice) at his uncle's house in Calicut, which had a Kuttichathan kavu attached to it. It revolted the six-year old.

Back in Calicut in 1940 "as a refugee" the next seven years were indeed gruelling poverty stricken, inability to adjust to life in a joint family, difficulty at school with Malayalam language, which ultimately forced him to seek exemption from that

subject for his SSLC examination. By the time he joined Zamorin's College, he had come to grips with Malayalam. Due to financial inability to pursue his studies after Senior Intermediate (the present plus-two stage) he landed in Mumbai.

His high school and college days coincided with the last phase of the freedom struggle, the Quit India movement. He became an active member of the Student's Congress, which brought him in touch with a whole generation of selfless national leaders, including the redoubtable Krishna Pillai and A.K. Gopalan and a whole array of Congress leaders who sacrificed much for the nation.



PKR with wife Tara

In Mumbai, he landed in a job with the Kuwait Oil Company and was sent to Kuwait on a job he badly needed to help the family. It lasted for only ten months, for he along with a group of 19 and 20-year old employees of the company could not stand the haughty attitude of the British and American bosses of the KOC. They called for a strike, and the entire operations of the mighty company came to a standstill for five days.

Ultimately, the Sheikh himself intervened and promised to get the

grievance of the "Indian brothers" redressed. Within a week Ravindranath, along with a dozen other "rig leaders" of the strike were rounded up by the Kuwait police and packed off to Bombay on a waiting ship.

Then followed a series of jobs "some like hawking a special brand of phenyl and another procuring printing order for a commercial printing press in the Fort".

Then, he sent an application the only one he sent in his entire life to S. Sadanand, the editor of The Free Press Journal. He was called for an interview and within fifteen minutes was appointed a sub-editor. He worked for five years in the FPJ till 1955. That year he was called and offered a job in "The Times of India". Before he joined, the TOI discovered that he was not a graduate and asked for the return of the appointment letter. By then

Ravindranath had become aware of the laws of the employment and terms and conditions pertaining to a job. "Give me the contracted salary for the next thirty years and I will return the letter," he told the Management. He knew by then that the Editor of the TOI, the Chief Reporter, The Chief of Bureau and several other heads of departments were not graduates. Then why single him out?

The management compromised. He was allowed to work, on condition that he would get a degree "soon". In two years time, he got one. In another three years he had procured a post-graduate degree in political science and sociology, "which I found were very helpful for my profession".

Then he registered for a doctorate, when the general manager, J.C. Jain asked him: "What next?" By then, he had become totally immersed in the journalists' struggle for higher wages, security of service and better working conditions." He had become Chairman of the Bombay Union of Journalists and was elected the Treasurer of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists.

He had occasions to go round the country on behalf of these organisations settling disputes with managements and ensuring that harmonious conditions prevailed in the newspaper industry.

As a newspaperman, he found that this

early influences in life gave him a healthy outlook in dealing with communal riots, attitudes towards the minority communities and the pernicious caste system in the country. A series of articles in the Times of India, The Illustrated Weekly of India, The Economic Times, The Filmfare and the Femina followed. In ten years time, it was his boast that he could walk into any English language newspaper in the country and say: "I am P.K. Ravindranath. I want a job, and I would get it on the spot."

All this brought him to the notice of political leaders, social activists and makers of public opinion in the country. His interest in Malayalam drama, films and all other social activities endeared him to film makers, the theatre fraternity in Bombay and elsewhere. He came close to a number of leading journalists in the country, several top Congress and other political leaders.

Then came emergency and the strict imposition of censorship on the press. He was shocked at the way some journalists who had been critical of emergency rule were hounded out and imprisoned without trial. The then editor of the TOI, he found, did not back him on a crucial issue concerning a news item, which "pertained to prominent friend of the Establishment." He resigned his job in August 1976. "I should have left the TOI ten years earlier," he lamented. "I had everything by then, a known byline, ample experience and contacts."

He joined the National Herald but within a year, thanks to the changing political fortunes, the Herald was under a lockout. "I was left with a staff of six whom I had recruited and had to ensure that their monthly wages were paid with no money coming in from Lucknow, the headquarters of the Herald group."

He managed, with help from friends in the advertising agencies till 1980. Then, A R Antulay became the Chief Minister. By then Ravindranath had also become the Bureau Chief of the Mathrubhumi in Mumbai. He had been close to the Mathrubhumi since 1957, when he covered important news from the city and Maharashtra under the name of his wife Tara Menon. So when he was sacked by the National Herald at the instance of Antulay, who felt "he belonged to the enemy camp," he had no problem.

He was sacked by the Mathrubhumi management in 1986, when he publicly

corrected an agency head who said "The Mathrubhumi" is the only genuine people's paper in the country." Ravindranath countered: "No longer. It is now run by Plantation Owners and Lorry Operators." Prompt came his marching orders.

Two years of freelancing were "profitable years, since I earned more than I ever did in another job. Writing editorials, edit page articles, reviews, interviews and the like." But then working hours were flexible- early morning to midnight and later to meet deadlines. There were no computers and telephone facilities," he recalled.

Then came a call to join the Chief Minister's Secretariat. Sharad Pawar was the newly elected Chief Minister whom Ravindranath had known intimately since 1977, when he too was a non-conformist with the Emergency. On persuasion he joined him as his Press Adviser. "It was a great experience. I came to know how the

following the Cement Scandal. "I wasted 25 years of my political life," he lamented then.

In 1984 he had written "Chandrashekhar: A Political Biography". He also wrote 'Sardar Patel in a New Perspective', 'A Slice of Life' and a coffee table book 'Iyer Weddings'.

Since 2000 when the Mumbai University introduced the BMM (Bachelor of Mass Media course) he had been called to conduct classes in various colleges. In the last decade he had trained over 200 journalists, who now adorn good positions in the print and electronic media. "All committed to the righteous journalism".

From 1978 to 1986 Ravindranath ran a very popular column in Mathrubhumi- "Maharashtra Kathu" (Maharashtra newsletter, which caught the attention of the entire political leadership of Kerala).

Married to Tara Dharadhar, Ravindranath has three children-Jayesh, Anuja and Naresh, all well settled in life and who

look back to Kerala as their second home. Tara has been a social activist and is an active member of the Kerala Mahila Samaj, of which she has been the General Secretary and President one time. She is also an active member of the Mumbai Grahak Panchayat, a consumer organisation, which provides for members all household commodities at fair prices and exact weight.

Ravindranath translated Keshavadev's "Ayalkar" as "Neighbours" (Sahitya Academy), N P Muhammed and M T Vasudevan Nair's "Arab Gold" (Arabi Ponnurupa) and M T Vasudevan Nair's "Randamoozham"

("Second Turn"-Macmillan). He published six books on journalism for students of the BMM course for which there was an acute dearth of textbooks. They are: "The Art of Editing," Lectures on Broadcast Journalism, Indian Regional Journalism, Press Laws and Ethics, News Media Management and Contemporary Issues. They have proved to be a boon for a whole generation of students of journalism, for whom there were no books in the Indian context on these subjects.

P.K. Ravindranath contributed much to Malayalam journalism and literature also. His trademark white shirt-white trousers attire resembled the purity of his inner personality, his calm and quiet face with a serene smile that said 'I know it' reflected his limpidness. His attire and body language conveyed his attitude, simplicity and inner beauty. ■



At the launch of Kerala in Mumbai

government works from within." In those years he wrote "Sharad Pawar: the Making of a Modern Maratha," published in 1992. By then Pawar had gone to Delhi as Union Defence Minister. In 1992, Ravindranath became Director (Publications) of Nehru Centre, of which he had been a founder member. He was removed from this honorary job too by Antulay when he took over as ipso facto President of Nehru Centre, when he became the Chief Minister. Years later, when Ravindranath led the delegation of Mumbai Malayalees to meet Antulay, the MP from Ratnagiri, to ask for special train services from Mumbai to Thiruvananthapuram, Antulay told him "You know things happened. They should not have, it is all God's mercy." Ravindranath agreed, in full satisfaction that he had contributed immeasurably to oust Antulay from the Chief Ministership

Ravindranath

A Man Of Gigantic Capabilities

- K V Satyanath



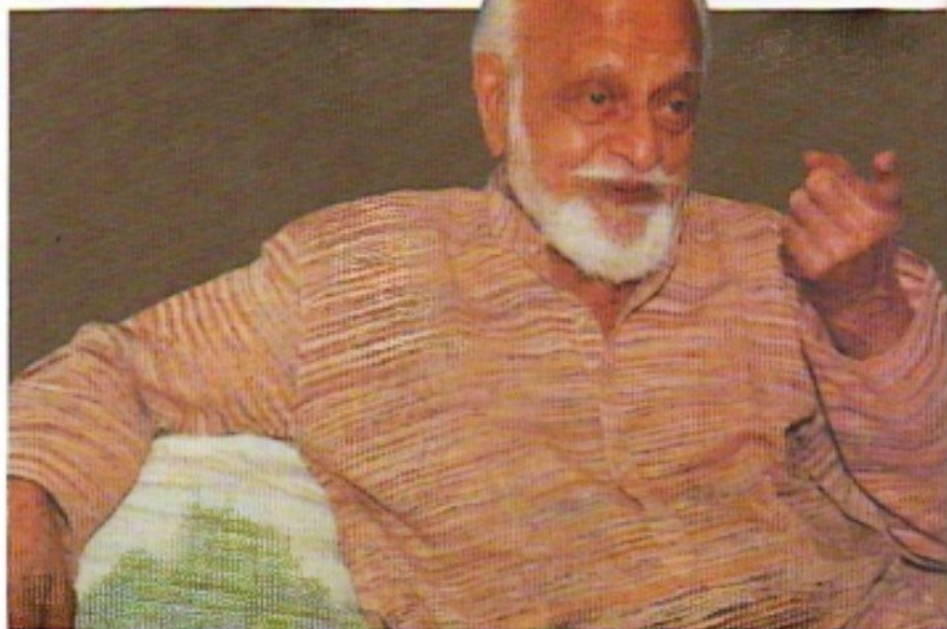
It was by sheer chance that I got introduced to P K Ravindranath who was known to me as a correspondent of Mathrubhumi daily. It was M T Vasudevan Nair, the most

respected litterateur of Malayalam today, who became instrumental for this chance introduction. When the news about M T winning Jnanapith Award in 1995, President of Odakkuzhal, the Malayali Association of Marol, Dr C Rajagopalan, an old friend of MT and me thought of inviting MT to Bombay and organize a felicitation for him. Soon we dialed Mathrubhumi and got MT on the line. When I explained the purpose of our call, MT said, "I am coming to Bombay next week and going to stay with Raviettan. You talk to him," he disconnected the line. Who is Raviettan and where does he stay? We had no answer. All our efforts to contact MT again failed as his line was always engaged.

Both of us knew, MT had no close relative in Bombay. We thought of his Mathrubhumi connection and soon we remembered of one P K Ravindranath who wrote a column 'Maharashtra Kathu' on every Thursday. If you know the name of the person, it was easy those days to locate him as there was only one Telephone Company operating in the city. So we took a copy of Bombay Telephone Directory. There were two Ravindranaths. I dialed the first and soon was informed that he was an officer with Central Labour Institute but he had the number of the journalist Ravindranath because he received more calls meant for the journalist than for himself.

An amiable voice on the other side of the line identified himself as the man we were looking for. "Vasu is being felicitated at Hotel Leela by Capt. Krishnan Nair and you can meet him there," that voice said.

We indeed met MT and Ravindranath at the Hotel Leela with Capt Krishnan Nair as the Captain sent us four



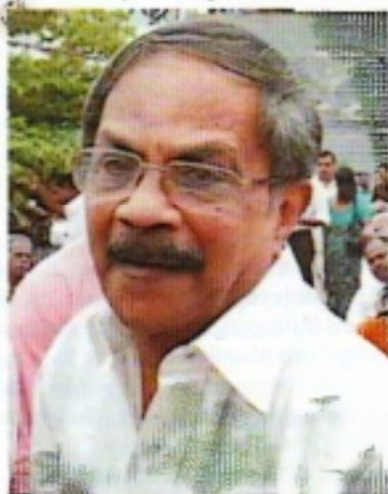
invitations for the function. Next day we again met at Ravindranath's residence at Patrakar Colony and spent a couple of hours with them, sipping tea prepared by Mrs Ravindranath.

Soon I had many opportunities to meet Raviettan (by then Ravindranath became Raviettan to me also) and our general topic of conversation was MT and his writings. Through these meetings, I came to know the role played by him in getting the Jnanpith for MT. Since anyone could nominate any author for this award, Raviettan did it, recommending MT. He was soon asked by the Bharatiya Jnanpith, the trust that

manages the award, to provide an English or Hindi copy of MT's work. Raviettan was then translating 'Randamoozham' for MacMillan and he rushed through the work and submitted the copy on the last day of submission. The rest is history.

I often thought of Raviettan as a Sanyasi who never hesitated to say 'NO' whenever anyone brought the topic of any award for himself. He had tremendous influence with the powers that be, including the politicians and bureaucrats and could have arranged a few awards for himself but he never did it. Another instance came to my memory. A couple of years ago, Prof Dr M Leelavathy was chosen for a Padma Award. She was surprised at the choice and wanted to know who recommended her for it. When I met her at her residence soon after but before the award presentation, she asked me about the nominator. She said, "I'm sure no one from Kerala would recommend my name for it and it could be done only from outside." I pleaded innocence but assured her co-operation. A few days later, I called on Raviettan at his residence and brought the topic. He had his characteristic smile and after a pause he told me the story.

Raviettan was with Governor S M



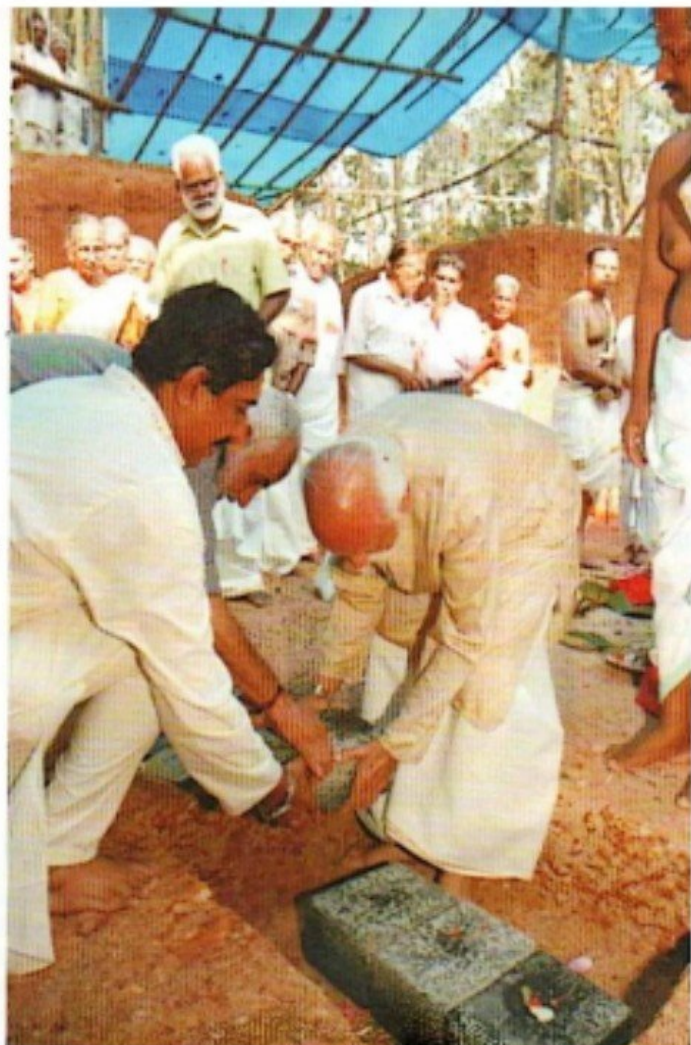
M T Vasudevan Nair

Krishna and a letter was lying on his table. During their talk, Krishna asked him if he knew anyone who deserved a Padma award but did not get it. Though Raviettan did not personally know Dr Leelavathy, he had an admiration for her writings. When many writers from Kerala, much younger to her had already received this award, why not her, he thought. He told the Governor about her and the latter nodded in agreement. Her name was included in S M Krishna's list, recommending her name for Padma Bhushan but the three Keralites sitting in PM's office, including J N Dixit, wetted it to a Padmashri. After several months, I introduced the nominator and the nominee to each other and felt happy doing so.

His wealth of information

During August 2008, I sought an appointment with Shri Uthradam Thirunal Marthanda Varma and it was granted. I was ushered into his room but when I saw none inside, I went through the room looking at the various painting hung there. When I was looking at a copy of Raja Ravi Varma's painting of Mahalakshmi, I heard a voice, "Interested in painting?"

I turned and saw Shri Marthanda



Laying foundation of Mahalakshmi temple near Aluva

Varma standing behind me. When I said in affirmation, he started talking about paintings and casually asked me where he could see the original of the said painting. I pleaded ignorance but assured him soon I would find out for him. Again it was Raviettan who surprised me. May be a fortnight later, when we met, I brought this topic

before him and he immediately blurted, "It is hanging on the walls of Baroda Maharaja's museum." I asked him if he was sure. He said he had seen it there himself.

Coming out I immediately called Somasekharan Nair, PA to Shri Marthanda Varma and asked him to convey the news to His Highness which he promptly did. Very often, I was surprised at his sharp memory and quote the date, scene and the sequences that he had seen or witnessed or read decades ago.

Respect for opposite views

Raviettan always had very strong views on many issues but it never prevented him from respecting those of others. He was generally considered as an atheist but to me, he looked like a man of spirituality. By sheer coincidence, I was persuaded to become the Secretary of Sri Adi Sankara Kanakadhara Smruti Trust, a trust founded by a few Mumbai Malayalees

who wanted to establish a monument for Kanakadharastavam, at its original place, along with so many new concepts, unheard of in Kerala. There would be a temple dedicated to Mahalakshmi, who appeared in Kanakadharastavam, an astrological park, Children's home, Senior citizens' Home, a small medical centre, training centres for Yoga and meditation, research centre for Sri Sankara's philosophy and so on. It was estimated to cost around Rs.40 crore.

I was of the opinion that such an expansive project cannot come up without the intellectual output from learned persons. The trustees authorized me to get people of stature. I had some apprehension when I approached Raviettan as he was known to decline such positions. When I explained the matter, first he tried to dissuade me but after seeing my commitment to the project, he said he would consider it. Then I told him, that during the Devaprasnam, it was said that two people associated with the project would not live to see the completion of it. He immediately accepted my invitation to join us and also agreed to be its Chairman of Board of Advisors. I



In conversation with O Rajagopal

mentally saluted him for his positive approach.

I then sought his help to induct more renowned persons to the Advisory Board and he asked me to contact Prof N S Ramaswamy, former director of NITIE. He also said that Padmabhushan N S Ramaswamy was then director of Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore. When I asked him to talk to Prof Ramaswamy, he gave me his telephone number and asked me to do it. Later when I contacted Prof Ramaswamy, he was also reluctant to accept the position for want of time. But when I told him that it was Ravindranath who suggested his name, he immediately said, "Oh, if it's Ravi's wish, I am in it."

Both of them attended the Shilanyas of the temple and Raviattan presided over the meeting of the Board of Advisors on the eve of the day and he and Prof Ramaswamy gave invaluable guidance. Further, Raviattan even agreed to lay one of the five stones. It shows that even if he did not believe in these rituals, he was ever ready to keep aside his belief to make others happy.

I would say I regret now for what I did then as Prof Ramaswamy died in September 2012 and Raviattan now before the completion of the first phase of the project. In fact when I was supervising the erection of the mural of Mahalakshmi at the site in Pazhamthottam on February 18th at 5 p m, Raviattan breathed his last. The first phase of the project is now 99%



With Padmabhushan Prof. N S Ramaswamy

complete.

Before concluding I should mention one more incident that he mentioned to me a few years ago. He narrated an incident of a visit to Kozhikode with his wife Tara Ravindranath. They were to reach Ernakulam next day to meet some relatives there and board a flight to Bombay. Then his wife expressed a wish to go to Guruvayur Temple on the way and he readily agreed as a loving husband would do. When they were

waiting for a bus going to Guruvayur at Panniyankara bus stop, it started raining heavily and no bus was coming their way. Suddenly a car passed them, stopped a few metres away, reversed to approach them. The man inside the car peeped outside and asked him why he was waiting there. When he answered that they wanted to reach Guruvayur by early morning, the man said that he too was going to Guruvayur and asked them to get in.

When they reached Guruvayur early morning, there was a long queue for the darshan, Raviattan thought it would be difficult to meet the time schedule. Then a man approached them and asked them why they were waiting. He introduced himself as P T Mohanakrishnan, chairman of Dewaswom Board. All problems were instantly solved and Raviattan and Tara Chechi had a nice peaceful darshan of Guruvayurappan. Raviattan also told me that Mohanachandran also arranged for a car to take them to Ernakulam.

Raviattan then smilingly added that sometimes unexpectedly things fall into place when we felt insurmountable.

Raviattan, I learned so much from you especially the positive approach to life and a dedication to the cause. Good Bye Sir, we shall meet again! ■



Tara and PKR with Padmashri Dr M Leelavathy

P K Ravindranath My Reminiscences

- Dr. C. N. N. Nair



It was the middle of the sixties almost half a century ago. As bachelors, we were staying in different lodges. From the 'Prosser Boarding House', very near to

Hotel Taj, I moved over to 'Abbas Building', at the behest of an old school mate (back in Kerala) and my friend, PNV Nair, who recently joined as Sub-Editor of the famous *Free Press Journal* of Late S Sadanand. A great many Titans of later years including the redoubtable Bal Thackeray, Novelist Malayattoor Ramakrishnan IAS, P K Ravindranath, doyen of Journalism to name a few, had FPJ as their springboard to launch their illustrious careers. PNV's then roommate got married and he was looking for a substitute. I was then working as a Tech. Asst., in the international telecom organisation known as 'OCS', at Flora Fountain (today's Hutatma Chowk). A couple of years later, PNV shifted to *Indian Express*. It was then that I began seeing the name of P K Ravindranath in print in articles in the *Indian Express*. I was, of course, very proud of the fact that a Keralite rose to such eminence and had a latent desire to meet him once!

Years rolled by. PNV moved on to join Russi Karanjia to start '*Mid-Day*' and later began '*The Independent*' in Mumbai and then left for Hyderabad to join the '*Deccan Chronicle*'. I learnt that PKR too moved up in the ladder, adorning major publications like the Times, National Herald etc. and later became the press advisor to Sharad Pawar, CM, Maharashtra. Subsequently, he became the Director of Publications in the Nehru Centre, Mumbai.

In October 1997, I got a letter from the convener of *Sahityavedi* in Mumbai, Cheppad Somanathan, to attend its annual function in Kerala Bhavanam where I came across the well-known critic, V T Gopalakrishnan. That was the beginning of my association with the *Sahityavedi*, Mumbai. They were felicitating some authors and other celebrities. I was invited because my book on the history of International telecommunications

commemorative of 125 years of completion in 1995, titled "Back to the Dots..." was recently released by the then Union minister of Communications, Beni Prasad Verma in Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. This annual meet was presided over by P K Ravindranath. That was the first of our personal meeting. I recall that in his opening remarks, PKR mentioning about his being in Delhi during the book release function and witnessing the same. Since then, we had developed close association and used to meet often in various literary and other functions like the Malayalam-Marathi literary meet in Dombivli, or the *Sahitya Vedi* which discussed the role of independence of the Fourth Estate, aptly, again, presided over by PKR. On another occasion, when the biographical work of V V Achuthan, a celebrated actor of



yesteryears of Mumbai, was presented to the audience by me in the same venue, I was astonished to find the depth of PKR's involvement in areas like drama, films etc, in his own words in its preface. Of course, for journalists, as for lawyers, all that they survey are their domain.

When the first meet of the CMS College (Kottayam, Kerala) Alumni, Mumbai chapter was opened on 21-11-2009, again we had the benevolent presence of PKR as a special guest of honour to grace the occasion. He had a unique and suave way of supplementing the facts inadvertently missed by some previous speakers without any trace of malice or offence. When the *Sastrakalavedi*, Mumbai gave me a platform to present my graphic work of 'Malayala Bhaashaa Tharangangal', in Kerala Bhavanam on 24-02-2009, PKR sat through the entire three-hour period

with great patience and later offered his encouraging and critical advices and suggestions on my work. During this session, I was instrumental in bringing together the two old journalistic friends, PK Ravindranath and PNV Nair, together. They spent the whole evening exchanging nostalgia.

I further recall that we had attended together, the condolence meet held in Kerala House, Navi Mumbai on 31 May 2009, upon the sad demise of the celebrated poet and novelist, Kamala Das Suraiya. This was organised by Shri Bhupesh Babu. Once again, quite aptly, PKR presided over this function and shared with the audience his long and personal experience with the genius that passed away. It was our privilege to escort the couple Smt. Tara and PKR from Navi Mumbai and on way back, he

further enlightened us on the many aspects of the celebrity personality of *Madhavikutty*. They had invited us to share their hospitality at Kalanagar residence, but because it was late, we politely 'postponed' it. 'Do feel free to visit us whenever you have leisure', he told us. However, fate didn't allow us that honour and privilege!

The last we met was during the second anniversary of *Kerala-in-Mumbai* in Shanmukhananda Hall in 2012. We exchanged usual pleasantries and extended invitations to visit our respective homes.

Some of us cannot help thinking that the nation did not recognise his genius or his life-long contributions adequately, by including his name in the list of Padma Awardees. But then, PKR was never after name or fame.

Whenever we heard about his accident or subsequent hospitalisation, we had joined emotionally all his well-wishers for his fast recovery. But, destiny had the last word. Although he left us physically, P K Ravindranath with his flowing white hair, beard and moustache and white attire, still keep smiling at us in our mental screen with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, almost with a 'Rishi-like' detachment, reminding us the famous lines of poet G: '*Innu njaan; Naale Nee*' (It's my turn today and tomorrow yours). ■

SOME THOUGHTS ON A TEACHER CALLED RAVI ETTAN

- K R NARAYANAN



I have never been able to understand the myth of the so called self-made men!!

At least, in my case, I would never dare to make such claims in life. There are many to

whom I owe many things - my existence, talents, expertise, - why, even the inner me!! And there is not a single moment in my life, when I have not felt grateful to them, for whatever they have given me or taught me. Besides my parents, there was a learned catholic missionary who taught me the intricacies of a great science, there was an internationally reputed professional expert who made me a good professional, and there was a giant among literary personalities who introduced me to writing. As I approached the dusk of my life, I was thinking that my learning process would come to an end. But, I was wrong!! As I retired from an active life, about six years ago, I bumped into a thin saint-like person in his eighties, who said, 'Follow me, you have still miles to go'. I blindly followed him into a new world of writing. And I owe to him the revival of my spent mental energy and rose again to follow the long path he was treading in the world of letters. This elderly saintly writer-journalist was none but the late Shri P K Ravindranath, whom we all know as Ravi Ettan.

Though I had never met him till I settled down in this metropolis in 2007, we seemed to have known each other from the mid-sixties and have had many common friends in the prestigious Mathrubhoomi of Kozhikode. Innumerable interactions between us followed and we started meeting frequently to talk about the bygone days of Calicut, the erstwhile Malabar, the origin, ethnic groups, geographical peculiarities, and the history of the present day Kerala. He liked my long studies and research on Kerala history

and entrusted me with preparing features on all these aspects of Kerala for his Kerala-in-Mumbai. I have since been with them, sharing whatever little I knew. He sometimes used to say with a laugh: "You have married from our Kozhikode and so, to me, you are half Kozhikodan".

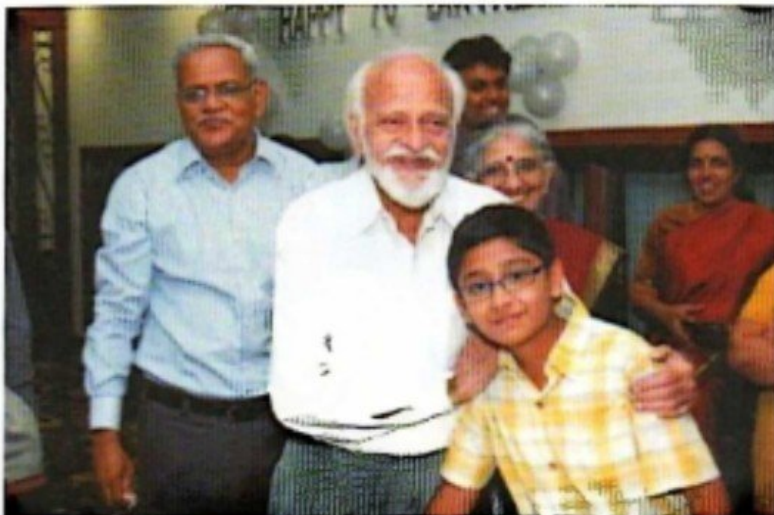
Ravi Ettan's finer sentiments worked at their best, when he heard words of affection or love. When he graced my 70th birthday celebrations, with his wife, he was moved to hear the simple but emotional speech of my grandson about

Mumbai.

While preparing the third anniversary special issue of Kerala-in-Mumbai, the editors suggested that there should be an article on Ravi Ettan in that issue. As everyone knows, he did not like any publicity and might not have relished such an article. My friends on the Editorial Board, therefore, put the responsibility on me. But I had never expected that my write-up would be the last one on the living Ravi Ettan. He read it just a day before he bade farewell to us all. Is this what we call *Nimitham* in Malayalam? I would never know.

Losing an affectionate friendly elder a Karanavar - and a learned guide is really an irreparable loss. His demise has created a vacuum that cannot be filled in so easily. But, we are not the masters of our destiny and what 'He' wills shall be done. Like his family members, his colleagues and friends, I too console myself that I could share some best hours of my life with him and learn some very good things during the

short span of my association with him. May the Lord grant his soul eternal peace. ■



At the 70th birthday celebration of KR Narayanan (standing behind PKR)

his grandfather. He hugged the child and congratulated him for his kind words. He made it a point to publish the speech and photograph of the child with his very warm remarks in Kerala-in-

Tributes to our Ravindranath

Our beloved Ravindranath
(‘May his tribe increase’)
Did not die; He never dieth
But lives along ‘n’ among friends
He left cherished memories ‘n’ deeds
In hundreds ‘o’ thousands for
All his friends who remain undead



- P V Chacko

Remembering Ravi Sir

- Lakshmi Venkatachalam



Ravi sir or Raviyettan as he was affectionately called is an institution by himself. He lived his life as he believed and when he passed away he has done the ultimate in sacrifice

donating his whole self to the medical field for the benefit of people for whom he worked tirelessly with his pen while he lived. No blind rituals and customs for him but contribution to the society - is there a better way to serve humanity?

As the feature editor of Kerala in Mumbai I had many opportunities to interact with him since he was our Consulting Editor. And every time I was overwhelmed by his passion for journalism and writing a passion that I shared with him. He was always willing to hear my views on various subjects and with his smile he made me at ease to open up to him. In matters of editing copies, those small mistakes that escaped our eyes, caught his attention. He trained us to be brief, concise and terse. He insisted on following the ethics of true journalism. No undue flattery, absolute impartiality in filing

news, true to details and checking before reporting facts. He was against abbreviations and short forms. Names were to be doubly checked before going to print, cutting down on praise and flattery, and no emotional outbursts. Short but eye catching headings, brief introductions and significant highlights- I have learnt all this from Ravi Sir.

I remember my first meeting with Ravi Sir. I had taken along two pieces - one on a general topic and the other on the beauty of Kerala. Ravi Sir went through the articles and remarked, "This goes out" (the article on the general topic) and "This goes in our magazine" (the one on Kerala).

Ravi Sir was very clear: anything connected with Mumbai Malayalees and Kerala news and culture always had a place in KERALA IN MUMBAI. A standard we always follow.

I was assigned to cover the suburbs, and artistes and families of Mumbai and he was never stingy in appreciating if my work was good. I was fortunate in getting praised by Ravi Sir for some



Lakshmi with PKR

features on the suburbs that I covered and value them close to my heart. In fact his words of praise goaded me to write more and more.

As days pass by, I am sure that his tips on perfect editing will guide me to improve my writing. That is my way of remembering and paying tribute to my mentor and guide - My dear Ravi Sir.

He may be here no more, but his spirit will always bless our fledgling magazine to spread far and wide. ■

0% Ego 100% Self respect.

- Pratap Nair



PKR Sir, is how I addressed him. He was a fatherly figure to me and he treated me like one of his sons. I adored him for his many qualities; one being his closeness to

Goddess Saraswathi.

His knowledge on various matters often baffled me. Science, yoga, mathematics, films, novels, poetry, you name it. Our bonding and closeness grew during the days when the book "She - the incredible" happened. We sat together several hours making it and the longest was when we did the proof reading together - seven hours at a stretch. He was associated with us, as the Jury Head of ICE Awards 2011. In 2012 he was the Head of the Governing council, for Ice Awards. His passion, enthusiasm and energy is

seen to be believed. He did correct me on everything I said, wrote and wanted to do. And every time he did it, my adoration for him(only) increased. He was loved for his simplicity, frankness and fearless views on several controversial issues. His romantic self was hidden to many. Whenever Tara aunty narrated to me their love story, sir would be sitting next, blushing. He loved and respected his wife and believed in his children. Anuja was her dad's favourite and she lived up to his love for her. Show me a man who has 0% EGO and 100% SELF RESPECT and the first or the ONLY name that comes into my mind is - PROF P. K. Ravindranath. People who knows him will vouch for this.

When FEI Cargo Ltd instituted Shailaja Nair Purashkar to honour a Keralite of a different kind, he was undoubtedly our first choice. Kerala in Mumbai was kind

enough to join us in this noble cause and allowed us to do the presentation during their third anniversary celebrations. We were fortunate to honour him personally by presenting a cheque of Rs 1 lakh and a citation expressing his enigma. [thanks to the skill of Shri Satyanath ably supported by Mr Vijaykumar, the wordings on this citation became apt and to his liking]. I often asked him, as a son, to transfer Goddess Saraswathi into my tongue from his tongue. He left everything for the mankind. He left a legacy of knowledge and wisdom for the world through his many written books and thousands of his students. He succeeded in living a blessed and envious life. Love you and respect you, Sir, for what you were to me and my family. Will always treasure the memories of our association with lots of pride. ■

BRIEF NOTE ON INTERACTIONS WITH LATE SHRI P.K. RAVINDRANATH

- Dr. Gopakumar Nair



It was a great shock to hear from Mr. Vijaykumar of KIM, about the sad news of the demise of Raviyettan, on February 18, evening.

The loss continued to be felt till I attended the farewell on 19th noon at Patrakar Colony with all others and thereafter. Being there, amidst a sea of admirers of Raviyettan, it dawned on me that here is an achiever, who has done so much in a life time, not only for his noble family, Taraji and children, but more importantly, for the community at large and the Keralites in particular. His noble soul will rest in peace with the Lord Almighty, rest assured.

My early memories of him are when dignitaries like Shri Panampalli Govinda Menon and the like used to visit Mumbai & hold press meet, where I used to accompany Late Shri G.P. Nair in the seventies. On behalf of IDMA, when we had a meeting arranged by Shri Sharad

Pawar, with Shri Manmohan Singh (who arrived by a Helicopter) in the early nineties at the Mumbai Raj Bhawan to brief them on the implications of impending Intellectual Property regime, Shri Ravindranath was also present. Later I had met Raviyettan many times in Nehru Centre, where he was a Director. I was deeply impressed by his sharp memory, literary and intellectual proficiency and

"writing". He used to write and give me to read. In turn, I used to reply him in writing. Later I realised that I could speak to him. When I started speaking, he had a good smile on his face. I was extremely fortunate (like Mr. Vijaykumar) that I could participate in felicitating him at the hands of His Excellency the Governor of Maharashtra on 11th December 2012, at Shanmukhananda Hall, during the



Dr Gopakumar Nair presents an award to PKR on the occasion of Golden Jubilee celebration of Bharat Education Society

sincerity for every cause he took up and on every subject. Even though, I met him in 2012 after a gap of many years, he promptly remembered his earlier meetings with me. The last few conversations, I had with him were in

Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Bharat Education Society, as well as during the Annual Day celebrations of Raagalaya and KIM on 10th February 2013 at Kalidasa Sabhagriha in Mulund, where thanks to my longtime friend Mr. Pratap of FEI Cargo, a citation with Rs.1 Lakh was bestowed on Shri P.K. Ravindranath, in the presence of Mrs. Taraji on both occasions. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have come in contact with such an illustrious personality in my lifetime. I am indeed grateful to KIM and Mr. Vijaykumar for reviving my contacts with Raviyettan before his sad demise. ■

The departure is so sudden that it is difficult to believe that Raviyettan has left us forever. He always treated me as his younger brother and provided me necessary advice in my chosen field of activity. Our frequent contact over telephone and direct meet at various venues gave an inspiring impetus to my zeal of social work. Like others close to him, I will also miss him and the void may not be filled in. He will remain in our memory for ever.

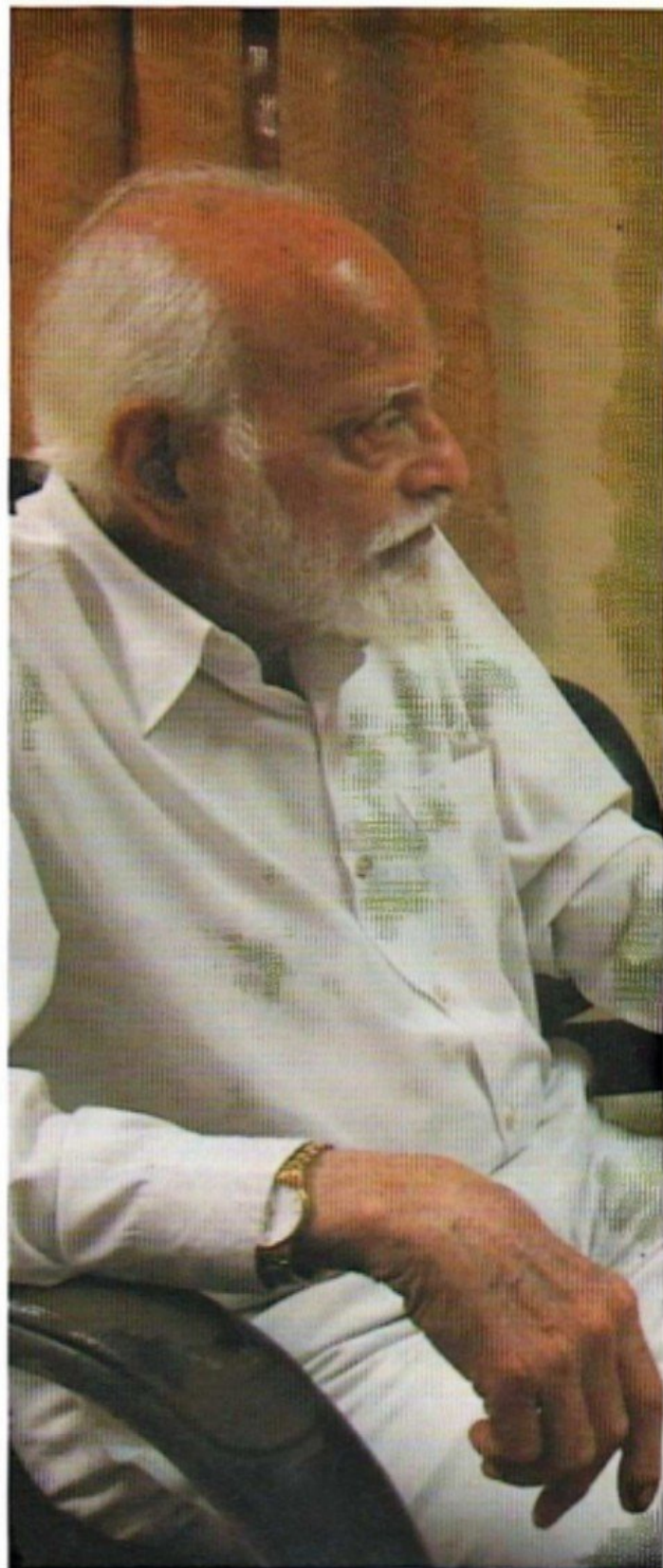
-Rajan V Nair



A tribute to P K Ravindranath



- Geeta Radhakrishna



A distinguished man in white,
Snow white hair,
Spotless white attire and
Swanky white beard!
White is the sublime colour
That suited him so well and
Set him apart as a class by himself
A sublime aura enveloping
The gentleman with a pure heart!

Though born in Burma,
He belonged to Zamorin's beautiful land of Kozhikode,
Where the exotic palm trees swayed and danced in scented breeze.
He left the native breeze behind
In search of pastures anew!
His new home was Mumbai where he began his fruitful journey.
To settle down and accept Mumba Devi's state of prosperity
As his own,
Was a decision that he never ever regretted.

A man of letters, a voracious reader,
In Malayalam and in English,
He made the right choice in
Entering the field of Journalism!
His journey began from Free Press Journal to Times,
A skip and a hop to National Herald and to Mathrubhumi
As editor, to many more magazines and publications!
The highlight of his career was his position
As the Press Advisor to the Government of Maharashtra!

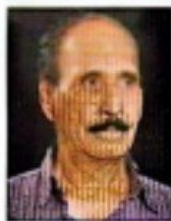
His strength and power came from his admirable wife
Tara- a lady of dignity and poise,
Who stood with him thick and thin throughout his life
A pillar of strength, resilience and calm composure!
Together, they made an excellent couple
As a warm cushion to the literary circles,
To dancers and artistes,
Their presence at every performance
Was welcomed, as a blessing and joy!

Gentle and soft spoken,
Most affectionately addressed as
'Ravi Ettan' by one and all,
He lived a worthy life
Ever ready to help,
To support a cause,
For the growth and progress of Malayalee culture!
As the consulting editor of 'Kerala in Mumbai'
His contribution was rich and invaluable.

As Ravindranath makes his transition
From this materialistic world,
And merges with nature and silence of this Cosmos;
Leaving behind his family, friends and admirers,
There is a strange serenity
Of a life fully lived, of contentment and peace.
The open sky gazes at the noble 'atma'
While the clouds welcome the spirit
Through the glittering pathway of a heavenly corridor!

Raviettan My Godfather

- V Balachandran



It was Monday, February 18, 2013 and a cool breezing was caressing all. I thought of calling on Raviettan in a casual way and proceeded to his residence at Patrakar

Colony, with prasadam from Goregaon Ayyappa Temple. When I reached around 11.30 a.m., the side entrance door was partially open. I was shocked to see him lying on a cot in the front room, severely ill. His wife Tara Madam told me that he had a fall from the bed on the previous night and the family physician had attended to him since Raviettan abhorred stay in hospitals. After a few minutes of silence, I left consoling her that I would pray for his fast recovery to Lord Ayyappa and that he would be fine soon.

The response I got from his residence when I telephoned at 2.30 p.m. was not very encouraging. I was told some breathing problem had occurred. Soon I contacted P V

Vijaykumar of Kerala-in-Mumbai and was told that he was on his way to Raviettan's and would contact me after reaching there. After 5 p.m., Vijaykumar informed me the demise of Raviettan and that his body was taken to Gurnanak Hospital and it would be kept for public view next day between 12 noon and 2 p.m.

I was shocked beyond words and my mind was filled with memories of Raviettan.

After emergency, the Shiv Sena came to power in BMC. Being a Malayali I was troubled by them during my tenure as Ward Officer (Slums) and Sr Ward Officer in M Ward, Chembur, and

Deonar Area on the Eastern Suburbs. My family and I were under threat by the elements of Shiv Sena and I felt, my time was too bad to survive. I was then staying at Versova and my contacts P K Rajan, Achuvettan and senior members of Kendriya Sanghatana told me that only P K Ravindranath could be of some help. When I met him at his residence, he comforted me and put me at ease. It was indeed a turning point in my life.

His writings such as 'Shiv Sena's trusted Malayali Ward Officer: Mr Balachandran' and 'MLA sets bad precedent' were two examples how he used his pen on my behalf.



P. K. Ravindranath and V Balachandran

When people in BMC came to know about my contact with Ravindranath Sir (those days I addressed him 'Sir'), the pressure on me started reducing and the corporators found me 'good for work'. Hatred soon disappeared and they accepted me as a task master. This change of attitude was the result of his invisible hand since I had no other contacts or godfathers in Mumbai.

Now I am orphaned.

When I was transferred to H (West) Ward, the Mayor of Bombay initiated his 'Clean Bombay, Green Bombay' programme and I took the initiative to implement it. Ravindranath wrote several pieces on my beautification initiative and those write-ups had a

great impact on our anti-pollution programmes during festivals.

When I retired from BMC on October 31, 1994 as Dy Municipal Commissioner, Ravindranath along with Oliver Andrade, Municipal Councillor, organized a farewell function at Otters Club, Bandra. Sunil Dutt MP and Dilip Kumar, actor, attended the function.

Later I became a part of the programmes attended by him, be it for Malayalee Samajam, Mahila Samaj, People's Art Centre, various Onam programmes and social, cultural and religious events. He was a friend, philosopher and guide to many organizations and he had clear cut views on all matters.

Raviettan was fortunate to have strong support of his wife Tara and she used to accompany him to many events. Many thought that she was an original Malayalee as she spoke fluent Malayalam, office bearer of Keralaleeya Mahila Samajam and participated in Kaikottikkali.

A plot was allotted to Keralaleeya Mahila Samaj on 'Vacant land Tenancy basis' during Mayor Madhavan's tenure and this was not like by his successors and

they put hurdles in its survival as it occupied a part of Mayor's Bungalow in Shivaji Park but Tara Ravindranath always had something up her sleeve to get them overcome. Finally she sought Raviettan's intervention and he talked to Governor of Maharashtra, K. Sankaranarayanan. It finally clicked and BMC accepted his recommendation and granted more or less on a regular basis.

Raviettan had a tremendous influence on political leaders and bureaucracy and he silently worked on them without letting the beneficiaries know who he indeed contacted for their work.

Mumbai Malayalees will remember him for a long time. ■

Death takes a person away and we feel how much closer the person is to us.

- Upendra Menon



At birth he cries and makes everyone around happy but he makes others cry while he departs. It's said death does not matter; what matters is the journey from birth to death.

Here is a person who showed us not only the journey but death can also matter. The body will not turn out to be mere ash in a few hours. It's in use at J J Medical College, the eyes will give sight and a new life to some others.

While many of us here stand in silence, immersed in grief, I can see him there away with a smile on his face, always a good friend, many a times an uncompromising elder brother.

Our association started when we wanted Mathrubhumi weekly regularly at home. He was to be contacted in Mumbai that time. We were coming closer when he suggested my name as Vice chairman in railway Action Committee RAC. Our association



became closer as time passed. Our interaction was much more when he entered Kerala in Mumbai. When he with Tara chechi called on us, our house was blessed.

Of late when he agreed to take up as Chief editor of Mumbai Malayali Directory and my name was proposed

as Chief Co-ordinator, he nodded in agreement. A plethora of interaction for many matters especially reinforcing the foundations of the directory, he was there ready for action as always. He was always there to come along with us for identifying the patrons and we could complete and publish in web.

I have noticed his concern for family when Tarachechi had a knee operation. Keeping aside his pen and paper and turning his head away from all important functions outside home, he held his wife in support when she needed it.

His commitment to Mumbai Malayalis touched a new height when he attended Mumbai Pooram preparatory meeting at Nair Samaj hall at Dadar. He could hardly speak and physically constrained on the movements yet he would call the organizers, ask for pen and paper to inform them, his willingness, to be a part of souvenir committee.

Thank you Ravi Vettan, for being with us as a source of inspiration, motivation and guide. No doubt you were, you are, our pride. ■

The stalwart of Print Media

- C K K Poduval



It was 15 minutes past five in the evening of Monday, the February 18, 2013. A message from Vijaykumar, the Managing Editor of Kerala in Mumbai informed me

that 'Ravi Vettan' left us forever a few minutes ago. I remained frozen for a few minutes as the memories of Previous Sunday at Kalidas Natya Mandir rushed in. On that day, Ravi Vettan accepted the life time achievement award for the services rendered for the last six decades to the print media, consisting of Rs one lakh and a citation, presented jointly by Shailaja Pratap Nair Foundation and Kerala-in-Mumbai. Incidentally, I too received an award for my lifelong association with the stage as an actor and director during the same event.

Soon the news was confirmed and it was my duty to inform all known people including the members of Mulund Keralaleeya Samajam, that sad piece of information.

Ravi Vettan had a strong bondage with the Mulund Keralaleeya Samajam. On the occasion of the 53rd anniversary of the Samajam, an award was instituted in memory of K M Mathews. The jury consisting of Sreeman, Lion Kumaran Nair and Dr A Venugopal unanimously decided to bestow it on P K Ravindranath considering his six decades of service to the print media.

His ill-health did not permit Ravindranath to come to the event and so it was organized at his own home. President K Gopalan Nair, General Secretary C K Lakshminarayanan, G Mohan Kumar, Oommen Michael and members of the jury panel besides Kerala-in-Mumbai's Vijaykumar and

Lakshmi Venkatachalam and me went to his residence in Patrakar Colony. When the award consisting of a purse of Rs.25,000 and citation was presented, Ravi Vettan unable to speak, gestured to his wife Tara to read his letter of appreciation and gratitude. It was indeed a heartrending occasion. Ravi Vettan was an elder brother to me. Since he came to see and analyse my first drama on June 15, 1963 at King George High School, Dadar, we were in constant touch.

It was a rare sight that after the death, the physical remains, instead of being moved to the cremation ground, were taken in an ambulance to J J Hospital for the use of the medical students for their education and research. It was indeed a valuable gift on his part to will that it should be done so that his entire life and physical body were dedicated for the benefit of humanity. ■

PKR- A humane Journalist

- V. N. Gopalakrishnan



P. K. Ravindranath was 'PKR' for colleagues and 'Raviyettan' for close friends. My close association with him started when he was the Chief of Bureau of

Mathrubhumi Daily. As a PR personnel, representing the Silk and Synthetic Mills' Research Association (SASMIRA), I had to approach him with the Press Releases of the organization. Though the Press Releases had little relevance to the Malayali readers, he would forward select items to Calicut office which would invariably carry them in Mathrubhumi Daily. When I approached M.V.Kamath, the renowned journalist for writing the history of SASMIRA, he declined due to paucity of time but graciously recommended me to PKR.

My adulation for him began much earlier after I started my journalistic career with Free Press Journal in 1972. The Evening News of India, the

evening published by The Times of India group started a feature focusing on Malayalis in the Cosmopolitan Bombay Series in September 1985. PKR wrote about Bombay's Malayali Legacy highlighting the profiles of many successful personalities including Sarvashri. K. M. Philip, Father of Rubber industry; P.K. Koshy, the engineering stalwart; Rajan Vaidyar, Ayurveda promoter; K.P.Ramachandran Nair, India's ace reporter; Padma Nair described by the Mumbai Police as 'extortionist'; Nirmala Matthan, TV personality; Ezhikara Ambujakshan, playwright and art promoter; M.K. Sambamoorthy, Public Sector PR man; V. Balachandran, Shiva Sena's trusted Malayali Ward Officer; C.D. Oommachen, Malayali MLA; Capt. C.P. Krishnan Nair, the ace Entrepreneur; K.S. Neelakandan, PR Czar; the Moplahs of Bombay (Ahmed Ismail, P.C.K. Moosa, K.P. Ali Koya and P.K.K.

Mammoo); besides the Narielwala; Malayali dance teachers; Circus performers etc. His close proximity with the 'successful Malayalis' had helped him to feature them in Kerala in Mumbai, where he was the Consulting Editor till his end.

When I was in charge of the Press at the Indian Merchants' Chamber and as Chief Executive Officer of Priyadarshini Academy, I had occasions to interact with him intimately. His amiable and friendly nature brought me closer to him in recent times. Whenever, I needed advice on some features in Kerala in Mumbai, he was too glad to respond. The last time I could see him was at the Raagalaya event when he was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award. He is no more with us but his memory will ever be fresh in the minds of Keralites in Mumbai for years to come. My humble pranams to a journalist who was humane and friendly till his end. ■

Man of all seasons

-Johnson G Therattil

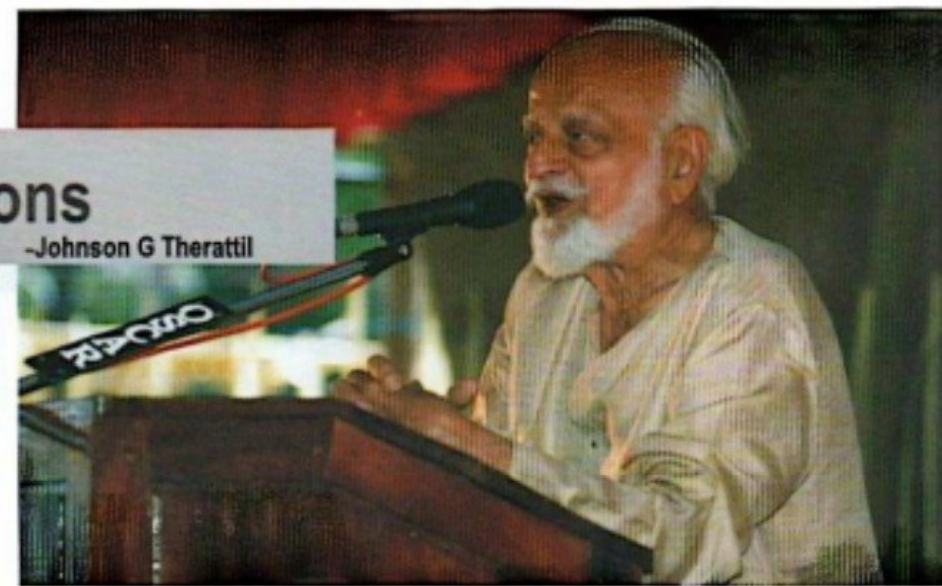


An Obituary to a close friend is never an easy task especially if he is a journalist, a senior one at that, a multi-talented personality, who had a penchant for creative

writing, editing, re-writing press releases, writing news stories, a writer, a film buff, all rolled in one! P K Ravindranath was a man who wore different hats to befit the occasion.

P K Ravindranath left planet Earth to be close and with his Creator God, who created a vacancy in His Board of Directors, so that PKR could join him on Monday 18th February 2013. Even in his second innings, his life after death, he left something for humanity his body was donated for scientific research.

PKR connected instantly with people - politicians, (he was Press Secretary to



former Chief Minister Sharad Pawar), film folk (he wrote English sub-titles for Malayalam films), students (who acknowledged him as a great teacher, a soft spoken person, humble, kind, yet young at heart) and also people at all levels. During his lifetime, all of 86 years, this unique gift, landed him with an assignment at INSHARP (INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR HARMONY AND PEACE), when I was General Secretary. Here, I came closer to late PKR and got to know him better, at a more personal level. He

even contributed to the print industry. Late PKR breathed life into the Nation Herald. Despite having his hands full with these commitments, PKR still found time to author a book titled "SLICE OF LIFE".

PK Ravindranath is survived by his wife Tara, one daughter and two sons. To them we offer our family's heartfelt condolences and pray that the Almighty should give them all the strength and fortitude to come to terms with his untimely passing away. Rest in Peace PKR!!!

പി കെ രവീന്ദ്രനാഥ് അനുസ്മരണം



അമ്പത്തഞ്ചുവർഷത്തെ സുഗീർഘമായ സ്നേഹബന്ധമാണ് എനിക്ക് രവീന്ദ്രനാഥുമായിട്ടുള്ളത്. അദ്ദേഹം പ്രമുഖ പ്രസ് ജേണലിൽ പ്രവർത്തിച്ചിരുന്ന കാലത്തോടുള്ളതാണ് ഈ ബന്ധം. നിരവധി കലാസംസ്കാരിക പരിപാടികളിലും, വേദികളിലും ഞങ്ങൾ ഒത്തുപേർന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. മനസ്സിൽ യാതൊരു നിൽക്കുന്ന സുപ്രധാനങ്ങളായ ചില സംഭവങ്ങൾ ഓർമ്മ വരുന്നു.

1974-ൽ നിർമ്മാലും സ്പോർട്സെന്റ് സംഘടിപ്പിച്ചപ്പോൾ എടിയെ ഇവിടെ കൊണ്ടുവരാൻ സഹായിച്ചത് അദ്ദേഹമായിരുന്നു. അക്കാലത്ത് ദേശാഭിമാനിയുടെ ബോംബെ ലേഖകനായിരുന്നു ഞാൻ. രവീന്ദ്രനാഥ് മാതൃഭൂമിയുടേയും വാർത്താശേഖരത്തിൽ ഞങ്ങൾ പരസ്പരം സഹായിച്ചിരുന്നു. മാതൃഭൂമിക്കു കൊടുക്കാൻ തരപ്പെടാത്ത വാർത്തകൾ അദ്ദേഹം ദേശാഭിമാനിക്കു നൽകിയിരുന്നു. ഒ എൻ വി കുറുപ്പ് കേരള കലാമണ്ഡലത്തിന്റെ ചെയർമാനായിരുന്നപ്പോൾ, കലാമണ്ഡലത്തിന്റെ ശോചനീയാവസ്ഥ പരിഹരിക്കാനായി ഒരു ഫണ്ട് സ്വരൂപിക്കാൻ ബോംബെയിൽ വന്നു. എം കെ നായരും, രവീന്ദ്രനാഥും ഞാനും ചേർന്നാണ് രണ്ടു വർഷംകൊണ്ട് അരക്കോടി രൂപ പിരിച്ചെടുത്തത്. രവീന്ദ്രനാഥ് അതിൽ പ്രധാന പങ്ക് വഹിച്ചു. പിൽക്കാലത്ത് ഒ എൻ വിക്ക് ജാനപീഠം പുരസ്കാരം ലഭിച്ചപ്പോൾ കേരളീയ കേന്ദ്രസംഘടനയുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ നൽകിയ സ്വീകരണത്തിലും പിന്നീട് നടത്തിയ മഹാകേരളീയ പരിപാടിയിലും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ വിലയേറിയ സഹായ സഹകരണങ്ങൾ ലഭ്യമായിരുന്നു. മലയാളികളുടെ ഏതൊരു നല്ല കാര്യത്തിനും രവീന്ദ്രനാഥ് ഒപ്പം നിന്നിരുന്നു. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പാവനസ്മരണക്കുമുമ്പിൽ കെ കെ എസ്സിന്റേയും എന്റെയും ആദരാഞ്ജലികൾ!

ശ്രീമാൻ സെക്രട്ടറി, കേരളീയ കേന്ദ്ര സംഘടന



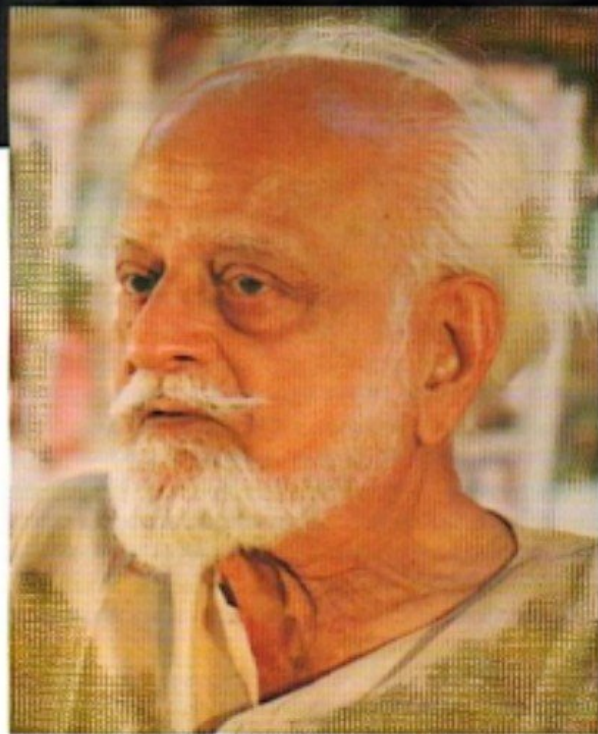
അഭിമാനമായ കുറ്റുകൈ!

മറുനാടൻമലയാളിക്ക് സുപരിചിതനും സമുന്നതനുമായ ഒരു വ്യക്തി. ഫത്രപ്രവർത്തകൻ, കോളിസിങ്ങ്, അധ്യാപകൻ, മലയാളികളുടെ ഏതു പ്രശ്നത്തിലും ഇടപെടുകയും കൂടെ നിൽക്കുകയും ചെയ്തിരുന്ന ഒരു ഉത്തമസുഹൃത്ത്. സങ്കുചിതാശങ്കകൾ കക്ഷിരാഷ്ട്രീയത്തിനും എതിരെ നിന്ന് സ്വന്തം വ്യക്തിത്വം കാത്തുസൂക്ഷിച്ചു. മലയാളിയുടെ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പാവനസ്മരണക്കുമുമ്പിൽ

അരുപ്പൻ (ആടം തിയറ്റേഴ്സ്)



1968-ൽ ടൈംസ് ഓഫ് ഇന്ത്യയിൽ ന്യൂസ് ഡെസ്കിൽ ജോലി ചെയ്തിരുന്ന കാലം തൊട്ട് രവീന്ദ്രനാഥ് അറിയും. അന്നദ്ദേഹം അവിടെ അസിസ്റ്റന്റ് എഡിറ്ററായിരുന്നു. പിൽക്കാലത്ത് അദ്ദേഹം ഉയർന്ന ശ്രേഷ്ഠാധിക പദവിയിൽ എത്തിച്ചേർന്നു. നെഹ്റു സെന്റർ ഡയറക്ടർ വരെയായി. മലയാളികളുടെ പെരുത്വം വലുതുമായ എല്ലാ സംരംഭങ്ങളിലും രവീന്ദ്രനാഥ്



സാന്നിദ്ധ്യമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. മാധ്യമങ്ങളിൽ അവ എത്തിക്കുന്നതിലും കലാസംരംഭങ്ങളെ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിലും അദ്ദേഹം മുൻപന്തിയിലായിരുന്നു. അടുത്ത കുടുംബ സൗഹൃദമാണ് എനിക്കുണ്ടായിരുന്നത്. യാതൊരു സങ്കുചിത താൽപര്യവും കക്ഷിരാഷ്ട്രീയ ചിന്താഗതികളും രവീന്ദ്രനാഥ് പുലർത്തിയിരുന്നില്ല. മലയാളികളുടെ നന്മയുടെ മാർഗ്ഗങ്ങളിലെല്ലാം രവീന്ദ്രനാഥ് ആശംസകളും അനുഗ്രഹങ്ങളും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ദേഹവിയോഗം കലാസംസ്കാരിക സാമൂഹ്യരംഗത്തിന് വലിയ നഷ്ടംതന്നെയാണ്. ആ പാവന സ്മരണക്കു മുമ്പിൽ പ്രണാമം അർപ്പിക്കുന്നു.

ബാലാജി നാടക/സിനിമാനടൻ

ജീവകാരുണ്യത്തിന്റെ പ്രതീകം



ബഹുമുഖപ്രതിഭയെന്ന നിലയിൽ നിരവധി മേഖലകളിൽ പ്രശോഭിക്കുന്ന, വിനയാന്വിതനായ രവീന്ദ്രനാഥ് മുംബൈ മലയാളികൾക്ക് പരിചിതമാണ്. എന്നാൽ ജീവകാരുണ്യത്തിന്റെ മുർത്തിരൂപമായി രവീന്ദ്രനാഥ് മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞത് അദ്ദേഹം വിടപറഞ്ഞ ശേഷമാണ്. അന്ത്യദർശനം കഴിഞ്ഞ് രോടെ മാത്രമെ ഓർക്കാൻ കഴിയൂ. മരണാനന്തരം തന്റെ ഭൗതികശരീരം മനുഷ്യനന്മക്കായി പ്രയോജനപ്പെടുത്താൻ മുൻകൂട്ടിത്തന്ന നിയമിച്ച ആ മഹാത്മാവിന്റെ പാവനസ്മരണക്കു മുമ്പിൽ പ്രണാമം അർപ്പിക്കട്ടെ.

എഴുത്തിന്റെ മേഖലയിൽ ഒരുപാട് സംശയങ്ങൾ രവീന്ദ്രനാഥ് തീർത്തു തന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. 'മുംബൈ മലയാള നാടകവേദി-താളുകൾ മാക്കുമ്പോൾ' എന്ന പംക്തിയുടെ ഒടുവിൽ രവീന്ദ്രനാഥുമായി ഒരുമിച്ചു. തയ്യാറാക്കണമെന്ന് വൈറ്റ് ലൈൻ വാർത്തയുടെ പുത്രാധിപർ പ്രേംലാലും ഞാനും തീരുമാനിച്ചിരുന്നു. രവീന്ദ്രനാഥ് അതിനു സമ്മതിച്ചിരുന്നുതാണ്. പക്ഷെ അതു സഫലീകരിച്ചില്ല. അങ്ങനെയൊരു നിരാശ മനസ്സിൽ ബാക്കി കിടക്കുമ്പോഴും അദ്ദേഹവുമായി പങ്കുവെക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ള സന്ദർഭങ്ങൾ തിളക്കമാർന്ന സ്മരണകളായി മനസ്സിൽ നിറഞ്ഞു നിൽക്കുന്നു. ഒപ്പം രവീന്ദ്രനാഥും.

പവിത്രൻ കണ്ണപുരം



മുംബൈയിലെ കലാസാംസ്കാരികരംഗത്തും പത്രപ്രവർത്തനരംഗത്തും ഉള്ള മലയാളികളുടെ വലുതായിരുന്നു ശുഭ്രവസ്ത്ര ധാരിയായ ഈ കോഴിക്കോട്ടുകാരൻ. അനുസ്മരണകാലം പത്രപ്രവർത്തനരംഗത്ത് ജ്വലിച്ചുനിന്ന വ്യക്തിത്വം. എൺപത്തിയൊരമത്തെ വയസ്സിലും ശാരീരികാസ്വാസ്ഥ്യം വളരെയേറെ ഉണ്ടായിട്ടും സാംസ്കാരിക

വേദികളിൽ അദ്ദേഹം പങ്കെടുത്തിരുന്നു. ഇക്കഴിഞ്ഞ പത്താംതിയ്യതി രാഗലയയുടെ വാർഷികസമ്മേളനത്തിൽ ആണ് ഒടുവിലായി രവിയേട്ടൻ പങ്കെടുത്തത്.

1983-ലാണ് ഞാൻ രവിയേട്ടനെ പരിചയപ്പെട്ടത്. കുർള കൈരളി കലാകേന്ദ്രം അവതരിപ്പിച്ച കർമ്മരൂപി എന്ന നാടകം രവിയേട്ടൻ 'കാണുകയും' നാടകാവലോകനം പത്രത്തിൽ എഴുതുകയും ചെയ്തിരുന്നു. എല്ലാ കലാസാംസ്കാരിക പരിപാടികളെയും പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് നാടകത്തെയും അദ്ദേഹം പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിച്ചിരുന്നു. ഇതുപോലൊരു വലുതെന്ന ലഭിക്കാൻ ഇനിയെത്ര കാലം കാത്തിരിക്കണമെന്ന് പ്രവചിക്കുക വയ്യ. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ആത്മാവിന് നിത്യശാന്തി നേരുന്നു.

വിശ്വനാഥൻ പള്ളൂർ

വിനയാന്വിതനായ വലിയ മനുഷ്യൻ



രവീന്ദ്രൻസാറിനെ ആദ്യമായി കണ്ടപ്പോൾ ഒരു ചിത്രകാരനോ കലാകാരനോ ആയിരിക്കാമെന്നാണ് കരുതിയത്. എന്നാൽ പിൻക്കാലത്ത് സഹോദരനുള്ള രവിയേട്ടനുമായി അടുത്ത് ഇടപഴകിയപ്പോഴാണ് വിനയാന്വിതനായ ആ വലിയ മനുഷ്യന്റെ മഹത്വം മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞത്. ഒരിക്കൽപോലും ദേഷ്യവും അസൗകൃപ്തിയും രവിയേട്ടന്റെ മുഖത്തു

കാണാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടില്ല. അതുപോലെത്തന്നെ പൊട്ടിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നതും കണ്ടിട്ടില്ല. ശാന്തവും സ്നേഹം തുളുമ്പുന്നതുമായ

വാക്കും പെരുമാറ്റവും മാത്രമാണ് എന്നും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റേതായോ അഹങ്കാരമോ തൊട്ടുതീണ്ടിയിട്ടില്ലാത്ത സ്വഭാവം ശാരീരികാസ്വാസ്ഥ്യവും യാത്ര ചെയ്യാനുള്ള വോക്ക് രൂടെ നിർദ്ദേശവും ഉള്ളതുകൊണ്ടാണ് രവിയെ കാണാന കഴിയാതെ പോയതെന്ന് ക്യാപ്റ്റൻ കൃഷ്ണൻ നായർ പറഞ്ഞു. മരണാനന്തരം സ്വശരീരം മനുഷ്യനന്തരമായി ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്താൻ അദ്ദേഹം നിർദ്ദേശിച്ചിരുന്നു. ആ ജീവകാരുണ്യ അദ്ദേഹത്തെ ഒരു മഹാത്മാവാക്കുന്നു. ആ പാവനസ്മരണയ്ക്കു മുമ്പിൽ ആദരോജ്ജ്വലികൾ അർപ്പിക്കുന്നു.

ജി കെ രത്നകുമാർ



മുംബൈ മലയാളികളുടെ കാരണവരെയെന്ന മുക്ക് നഷ്ടമായത്. മലയാളിയുടെ ഏതൊര നല്ല സംരംഭത്തിനും നന്മ നേരുന്ന വ്യക്തി സ്വപ്നസ്വരൂപം എല്ലാ പരിപാടികളിലും രവിയേട്ടന്റെ മഹനീയ സാന്നിദ്ധ്യവും ആശംസകളുമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ശുഭ്രവസ്ത്ര ധാരിയായ രവിയേട്ടന്റെ മനസ്സും ശുദ്ധമായ

രൂപവും അവശനിലയിലായിട്ടും രാഗലയയുടെ വാർഷിക പരിപാടിയിൽ അദ്ദേഹം സന്നിഹിത നായി എന്നത് ശാരീരികമായ അവശതയെ അതിജീവിച്ച മനുഷ്യന്മാരുടെയൊണ് വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുന്നത്. സഹധർമ്മിണി അനുഭവിച്ച അതിമനോഹരമായി മലയാളം സംസാരിക്കുമെന്ന മാത്രമല്ല, മലയാളത്തിനുമകൾ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുകയും ചെയ്തിരുന്നു. മുംബൈ മലയാളികളുടെ കലാ സാംസ്കാരികരംഗത്തിനും അവരുടെ കൂട്ടായ്മയ്ക്കും രവിയേട്ടന്റെ വേർപാടായ നഷ്ടമാണ് വരുത്തിയത്. സ്വന്തം ശരീരം മൊത്തം മെഡിക്കൽ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് വിട്ടുകൊടുക്കാൻ തീരുമാനിച്ച രവിയേട്ടന്റെ മാനവസ്നേഹത്തിനും ജീവകാരുണ്യത്തിനുമുന്നിൽ പ്രണാമം.

പ്രൊക്യുട്ടർ

(ഗായകൻ, സംഗീതസംവിധായകൻ)

STATEMENT ABOUT OWNERSHIP AND OTHER PARTICULARS ABOUT THE NEWS PAPER TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE 1ST ISSUE EVERY YEAR AFTER THE LAST DAY OF FEBRUARY

Kerala in Mumbai

(Form IV- See Rule -8)

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Raviettan - an eternal social yogi

- Sriprakash Menon



Raviettan as he is popularly known never used Menon in his name. I came to know about that in P K Ravindranath, the K stood for Konthimenon P was his ancestral

home name in Kozhikode, much later. For him casteism, religion and class was least important, he judged people by what values they had in life and how good they were in the social realm.

My association with him was from the mid eighties when I landed for work in Mumbai from Pune via Delhi. It was at a cultural function and later at a seminar on cinema, I had an opportunity to get introduced to him. My association with him grew over the years and I used to visit him at the Mathrubhumi office at Fort. What I liked about him the most was his simplicity and vast knowledge about varied subjects. As a budding journalist I got cue from his advice and guidance.

As I started attending functions and programmes organised by Malayalee organisations, I got more familiar with Raviettan. As far as Malayalee functions were concerned whether it was organised by Bombay Keraleeya Samajam, People's Arts Centre, Raagasudha, Raagalaya or any other Kerala organisation, he was an iconic figure presiding over the proceeding. Actually, he was more Maharashtrian than Keralite, after migrating from Burma to Kozhikode. He was in Kerala for less than ten years but developed deep bondage with a handful of friends there before coming down to Mumbai. No wonder he was so nostalgic of his home state.

Right from the beginning of Raviettan's career at the Free Press Journal, he established himself for his writings as well as for his conviction. He wanted to grow beard and then editor veteran S Sadanand wanted it to be removed. How Raviettan could manage to grow beard and continue in the FPJ is an interesting story itself.

Raviettan was well connected with writers, thinkers, rationalists and political heavy weights of his times. No doubt he was a socialist at heart and hated discrimination on the grounds of religion or caste. He was not a traditional or religious person but he would never be critical about them.

He was a prolific and radical writer and wrote for many publications including Asiaweek, Mainstream, National Herald besides FPJ, Times of India and Mathrubhumi where he worked for several years. His association with Maharashtra and its



politics through his writings are too well known. It was the experience, understanding and closeness to regional politics that got him closer to Sharad Pawar. He was chosen as the press advisor to then chief minister of Maharashtra by Pawar himself. After this semi political stint at Mantralaya, he was appointed as director of publications at the Nehru Centre.

Raviettan was from the old school of journalism and he was vehemently opposed to changes especially in the

arena of print journalism. Journalism of course in the present times is against any kind of social activism. Only those social and political issues, approved and sanctioned by the management of publications, will find enough space to be written about of course tokenism does exist. As pointed out by a leading foreign newspaper, Indian journalism is more influenced by the market forces and has become a PR tool to reach out to the people. People like Raviettan would not trade good old values for a change which would bring riches and comfort. This was a great challenge which Raviettan till his death lived with and did not compromise.

Though he acted in a Malayalam film directed by Jayaraj, may be just to oblige his well wishers. He was not particularly awed by the television media or else with his bearded intellectual look he could have anchored several socio-political shows on Malayalam channels. He was not a big fan of TV. He loved movies, he has not only written some critical pieces on cinema, he was a movie buff himself. His association with writer, editor, author and well known film maker M T Vasudevan Nair blossomed as both shared common interest in literature and cinema.

A very unassuming person, Raviettan was very popular in his heydays as a writer, reporter and social activist. Always in white dress, he was not at all aspirational, he was not moved by the trend or the market whether it was media or the

outside world. Raviettan like many others of his times was not comfortable with computer and laptops but it never affected his professional or personal work. He never compromised his principles. His never said no to anyone when they sought his help though some of the people whom he supported may have questionable credentials, this of course was a problem with him.

His social attitude dominated his decisions. To great extent he was

stubborn and reluctant to change. After his operation at Hinduja, a well wisher had suggested to him an alternative therapy for his ailment but after knowing the attitude of that medical practitioner, he outrightly rejected the offer for medicines. That's Raviettan. Had he been a little flexible, he may have been around for several years more, but that's life and that's how some "unforgettable people" are made of.

Both Tara ji and Raviettan were made for each other and they shared common interests though she is spiritual and homely. Both of them together have attended innumerable functions in Mumbai. Raviettan was an eternal yogi always trying to guide and advise people in the outside world. Raviettan's children Anuja, Jayesh and Naresh all

are well settled and were quite supportive. They led their own lives but the "grand couple" chose to be "independent" in the sylvan surroundings of Patrakar Nagar, Bandra east. Raviettan enjoyed teaching students and would travel from one suburb to another by public transport for the sake of lectures. He was very popular with students and was greatly enjoying this new found interest in his evening of his life. His life was a true example of "high thinking and simple living" in this glitzy megapolis Mumbai.

Noted journalist and author M V Kamath in his foreword for Raviettan's book "A Slice of Life" said in five decades Ravi has turned out to be not only an acute observer of the passing scene but a friend, philosopher and

guide to numerous people. They include iconoclast Dr Abraham Kovoor, vedic scholar Dr T K N Trivikram, actors Motilal, Sunil Dutt and Amitabh Bachchan, socrates of Kerala - Balakrishna Pillai, poet Kamala Das, cartoonist and FPJ colleague Bal Thackeray and several others.

I shared a good rapport with Raviettan and quietly studied him how he could be so untouched by the ever changing dynamic media like a steady "swan on the placid water" not drenched in the water of time. When I visited him at his residence, his eyes deep and attentive spoke for the last time. A glance which expressed several words in silence and solitude. That warm smile hidden beneath the flowing beard, Raviettan, Sir, I will miss you ! ■

PKR- He gave more than he got

- Prakash Padikkal



Two decades ago, my wife introduced me to P K Ravindranath at a function. My wife had worked with Mr. Ravindranath on a project.

Years later, when I became active in the social field, I had a chance to meet Mr Ravindranath not once but on several occasions in functions where the Malayalee community gathered. Always dressed in white, he was addressed as "Raviettan" and was treated with affectionate brotherly feelings and immense respect. He radiated warmth and was very likeable as a human being.

It seems very strange to be talking about Raviettan in the past tense. I have known him as a person who has given 100 percent to any project he undertook. Mumbai Pooram was one such event, where he was totally involved much to the delight of its organisers. The magazine, Kerala in Mumbai was one of Raviettan's pet projects.

In May 2012, Vijaykumar (Managing Editor of Kerala in Mumbai) wanted to meet me with regard to an article about my social activities. He said he would come home to meet me. When I opened the door of my flat, I was surprised to see Vijaykumar accompanied by

Raviettan. I welcomed them home and later when Vijaykumar told me that Raviettan had come to interview me for the Kerala in Mumbai magazine, I was embarrassed. Why should a senior citizen and a journalist come to my house to meet me, especially when he was ailing? I would have gone and met Raviettan for the interview, instead. When I mentioned as much to Raviettan, his response was, "an



individual's deeds are the deciding factor'. He would not let anything come in the way of his work. His dedication to his art was admirable.

Raviettan was ailing for some time and when we met, I realized he was finding it difficult to talk continuously. I could see his physical suffering and realized he was fighting the disease. Even though he was unwell and needed support to move, he attended to all his cherished programs.

The last program that Raviettan attended was Raagalaya's annual program at Kalidas Auditorium, Mulund. He arrived in a wheelchair and was taken up the stage to receive the lifetime achievement award given by Raagalaya. As he stood up, my eyes turned moist at the struggle he was going through, but it was his strong determination which enabled him to do whatever he wanted to, and with much success.

Raviettan's wife always followed him like his shadow. She has been with him in all his good times and the difficult, too. My heart goes out to the lady who has lost her companion and husband.

Raviettan always gave 100 percent to whatever he undertook. In death too, it was the same. His mortal remains were taken away in an ambulance to J J Hospital, Mumbai.

He had long since decided to donate his body upon his death—he saw to it that his body too would prove useful to others.

The loss of a veteran journalist and a karmayogi—in the real sense of the term, is a huge loss to all Keralites in Mumbai. I feel I have lost one of my closest relatives, whom I respected and loved a lot. Raviettan's death is an irreparable loss to Malayalees in Mumbai. His presence and warmth will be hugely missed. ■

A SLICE OF LIFE

- M V Kamat



P K Ravindranath is an old friend. And that means I have known him since 1952 when he joined the Free Press Journal. I was then editor of the Free Press Bulletin. But

equally doing more writing for the Free Press Journal than I care to remember. By the time that Ravi and so I remember him joined as, I had been on the FPJ staff for six years. Considering the turnover that was characteristic of the FPJ staff, I could have been described as a veteran. Few stayed that long at 21 Dalal Street.

When Ravi joined the FPJ no one could possibly have taken him for a fresher. He had seen life. Uprooted from Burma and back in Calicut he had tasted politics, becoming secretary of the Calicut unit of the Indian Students Congress. While still a student he had served as a reporter to *The Malayalee* published from Trivandrum (now Thiruvananthapuram). As a student activist he had dared to defy the dreaded Malabar Special Police and had to be pulled up by a President of the Kerala Pradesh Congress committee for his foolishness.

So, when he came to the FPJ he came as one whose political thinking had been already honed, and therefore needing no special guidance. He quickly showed astuteness in many remarkable ways, as this collection of his various articles spread over half a century would show.

Half a century. That is a long time. In these five decades Ravi has turned out to be not only an acute observer of the passing scene, but a friend philosopher and guide to numerous people, some of whose lives and times he has chronicled in this book, sometimes with humour, sometimes with sharpness, but always with compassion. And the people he had known! They include men and women from practically all walks of life. You have Dr. Abraham Koor the

iconoclast. Dr. T K N Trivikram the Vedic Scholar, Motilal the great film actor, Balakrishna Pillai, the 'Socrates' of Kerala, the widow of Champakaraman Pillai the patriot, Atma Ram, the film maker, Amitabh Bachchan no less, Sunil Dutt, Fr. C Rodrigues, a clergy man, Kamala Das the rebel, and among fellow journalists, K P Ramachandran Nair ace reporter, M P Iyer, K N Singh- name a person and Ravi has known them all, including Padma Nair, described by the

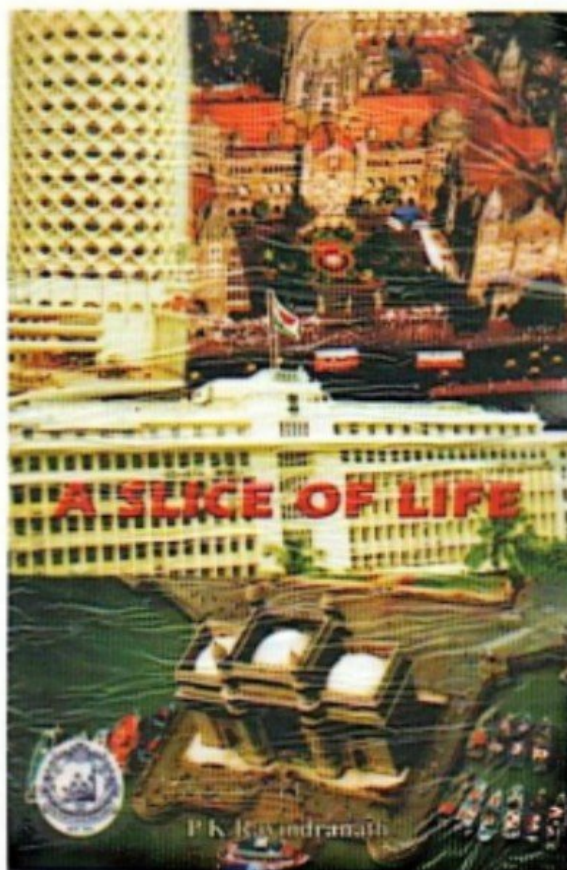
was declared but he was apparently bowled over by Sanjay Gandhi who came courting editors in Bombay in 1976 as Ravi's article in *Asiaweek* indicates. But that would only show that Ravi not only had the courage of his convictions but was open to persuasion. When Sanjay died Ravi wrote again for *Asiaweek*: He said: "In the end it was the monotheistic structure of the group that cut it down. Sanjay Gandhi was so high in the party and a second line of acceptable leadership was so

conspicuously absent that his death left the youth wing of the Congress without any hope of survival in its present form".

Whatever his personal views, as a reporter and a journalist, Ravi kept them well under control and would not let them colour his writing. He could thus write mouth-watering relish about the biryani served him by Godwari Parulekar, a communist leader of tribals, with uninhibited enthusiasm about Habib Tanvir, the Chattisgarh folk theatre authority and with equal objectivity about riots in Bhivandi of Behrampada. Of the former he writes: "With the paralysis that struck the intelligence and the police force in Bhivandi, local social and political workers also appear to be immobilised with fears of consequences or reprisals....". Ravi may have once been a friend of Thackeray but when it came to reporting he had no qualms of calling a spade just what it is, a spade. Of the Shiv Sena and the Bombay riots he wrote (*Mainstream* 22 Feb, 1969):

"The Shiv Sena chief, Bal

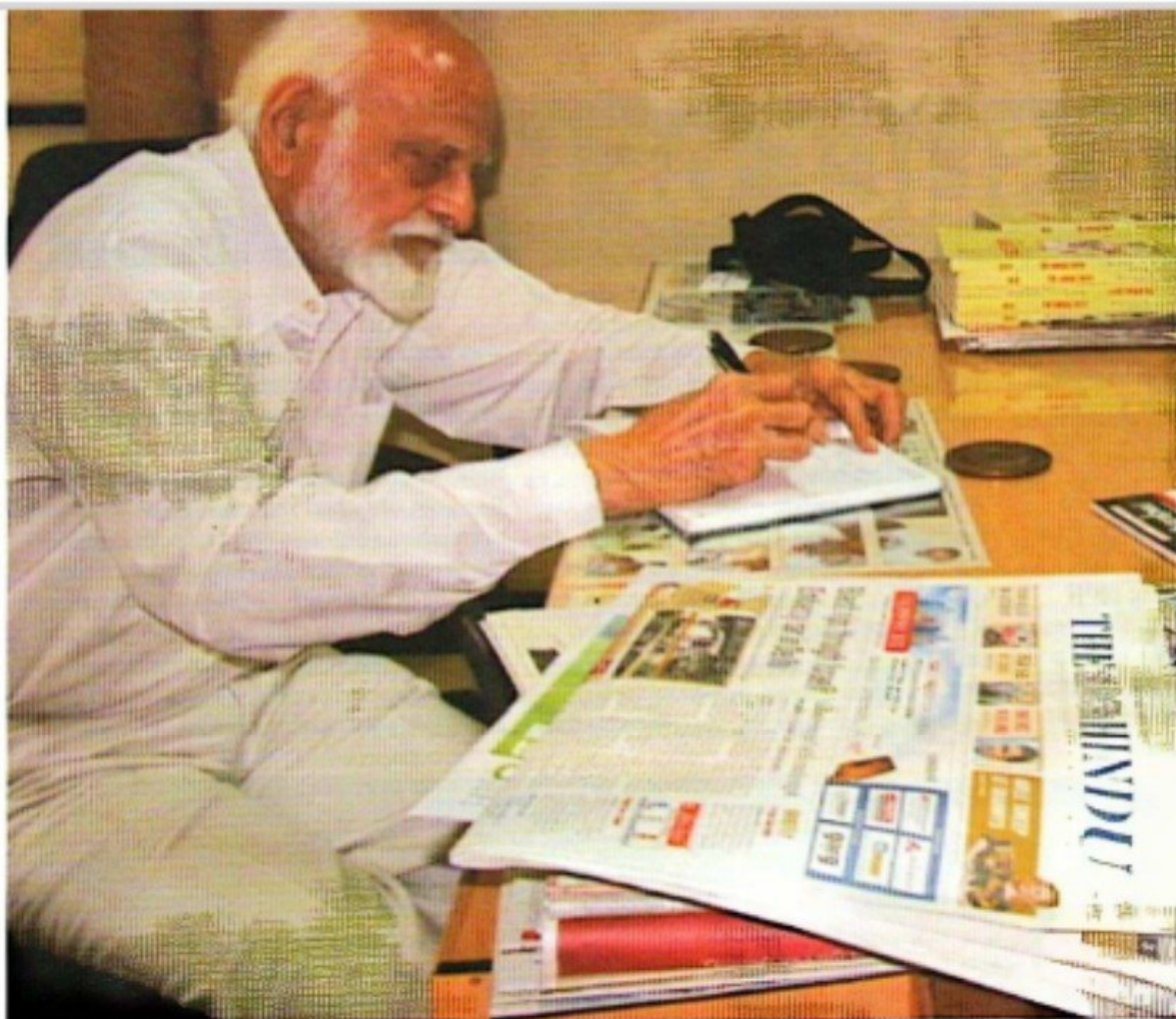
Thackeray who was in Preventive Detention on the second day of the riots had a new experience in life, jail. He is known to have broken down and wept when the police officials went to his house early in the morning to arrest him!" To that he added with refreshing candour: "The riots and the violence have discredited the Shiv Sena. It has lost face even among its own cadres who were capable of independent



Bombay police as an 'extortionist'!

During his career he came to know not only Bal Thackeray, the Shiv Sena leader, but his parents and entire family as well. In a way Thackeray had been responsible for getting Ravi sacked from the FPJ nevermind if he was reinstated the very next day! That, it may be said, was part of the FPJ culture.

Ravi had the guts to resign from *The Times of India*, when the Emergency



pieces, each reflecting the times in which they were written, is the sheer range of Ravi's life as a journalist. It is difficult to put this book down once one starts reading. Ravi holds the reader's attention with charming openness. And to think that but for the fact that he was once "carried away by righteous indignation" as he puts it when an upstart British official called an Indian mess supervisor in the Middle East "You dirty Indian bastard" he would have been in serving in Kuwait and probably retiring fifty years later with a fat bank balance! His anger mounting, Ravi had become instrumental in becoming secretary of

Indo-Pakistan Staff Association with membership of 3000 who paralysed an oil company with a one-week strike. That the Kuwaits thereafter bundled him into a steamer and deported him with just a shirt on his back speaks volumes for Ravi's sense of patriotism and even more his willingness to stand bravely for a cause. Those are the virtues come through so richly in his later writings for which the Lord be praised. One suspects that it was all the making of the Good Lord to get the British official swear at Indians. But for that Ravi would probably never have come to India or become a journalist! So thanks are due to God for being so originally merciless!

It has been a privilege to have known Ravi for half a century. It is not that we have always been in agreement on sundry issues. But it speaks for Ravi's catholicity of mind, his great capacity not only to make but keep friends that he is regarded with respect and affection by his fellow journalists. This book is aptly entitled *A Slice of Life*. A slice, indeed.

Or else what would be a life of journalism for?

(From FOREWORD by M V Kamath to PKR's *A Slice of Life*) ■

thought and analysis". When it comes to analysing the Shiv Sena's past, Ravi sticks to truth. That is why it is important to read his penetrating study: 'Cleansing the Police of communalism' (June 2001).

Ravi has neatly subdivided his book into several sections like 'Personalities', 'Riots', 'Investigation', 'Perceptions', 'The Arts', and 'Review' and every section brings out the best of Ravi. What is most striking about Ravi's writings is the meticulous research that has gone into each piece and the fairness with which he greets his subjects. Nowhere does one find any rancour of personal bias. It is as if he is merely holding the mirror to every situation. An example of this kind of writing is Ravi's article on 'The Fight Against Obscurantism' which he wrote for *The Times of India*, thirty years ago. It speaks of the obscurantism among Parsis and Christians and how when a Catholic priest in Pune conducted a mass, Indian style, complete with *chandanam*, flowers, arti and recitation of hymns in Sanskrit, critics attacked him for contaminating the holiest act in Catholic worship with 'un-Christian' symbols. In today's context the priest would probably be dismissed as a product of safronisation!

Ravi's frankness and openness is admirable even when it is appalling! He is willing to take on even fellow journalists, with brutal transparency. There surely will be many red faces among columnists when they read what Ravi has to say about them. Thus he writes: "Each newspaper and journal has its own favourite set of columnists churning out their 600-word pieces week after week. They pick up cues from each other or from the day's headlines to dish out their say. Anything new or fresh in what they say?...Wade your way through the haystacks to look for the proverbial needle."

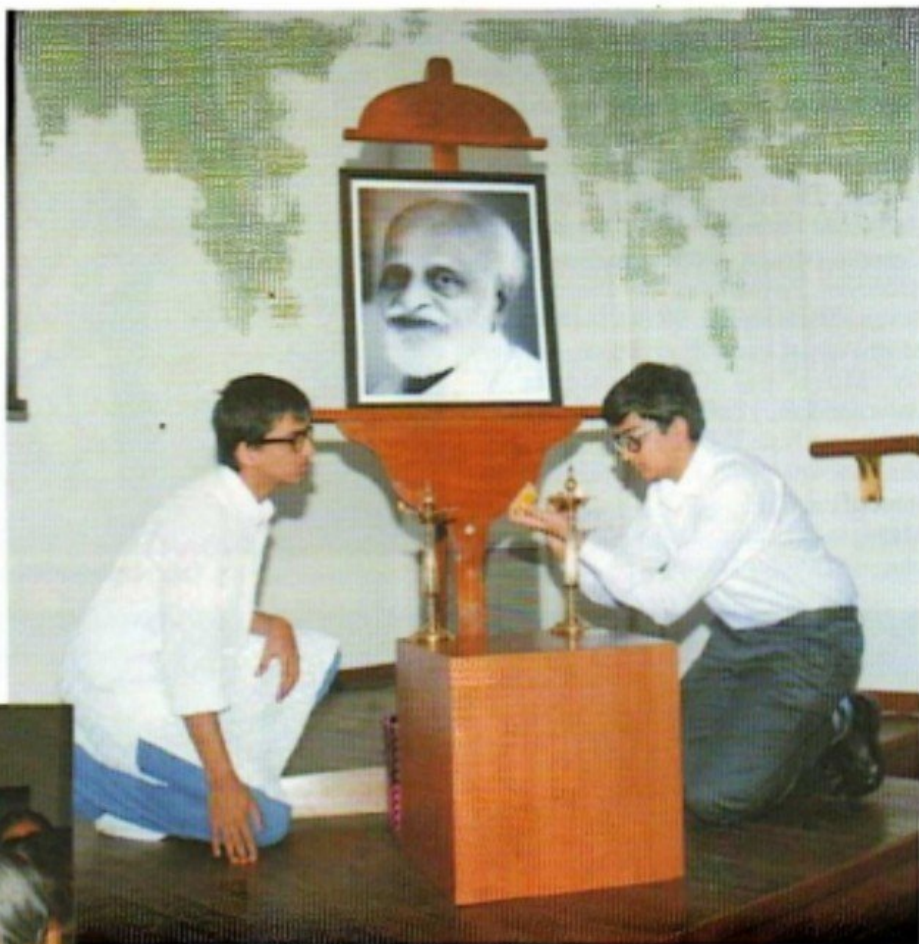
As for today's journalism Ravi says: "Today's editors are chosen for their adaptability to the dictates of the advertising manager. This is true of almost all newspapers...my mentors in journalism fifty years ago would be squirming in their graves. The dividing line between truth and fiction, propaganda and fact, advertising and news are all fast thinning.... The truth is that except for a few newspapers like *The Hindu*, the sticklers for truth and objectivity are unknown commodities in the print medium...."

What is stunning about this rare collection of essays is that they could, one supposes, also be called period

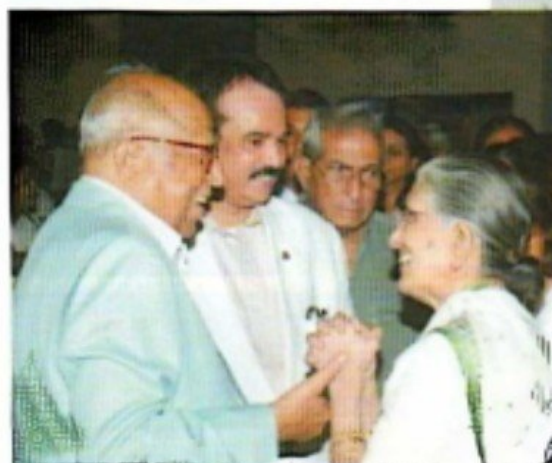
P K Ravindranath Memorial Events

It was a solemn occasion when many admirers of late P K Ravindranath assembled at Nehru Centre Auditorium to pay tributes to his memory. It was surprising to see so many people from different walks of life to be present simply on the basis of a newspaper notice on a busy Saturday evening.

Mrs Tara Ravindranath and her children Jayesh and Anuja attended the function. In his introduction, Jayesh said that it was not a condolence meeting but an occasion to celebrate the achievements of Ravindranath. He on behalf of his immediate family, recalled the past activities and ideas of his father. Soon Capt C P Krishnan Nair of the Leela Group recalled his association with Ravindranath and his assistance in overcoming the obstacles that he was subjected to and thankfully mentioned that whatever Raviyettan did was not with any objective



PKR's grandchildren light the lamp



Capt. Krishnan Nair and Prince Valdyan with Tara Ravindranath

of compensation. Whatever he did was with sincerity and commitment and for a just cause. Anuja also spoke on behalf of her mother and thanked everyone who attended the event.

Ravindranath's second son Naresh presented a video film showing some moments from Raviyettan's life. Kerala-in-Mumbai organized another memorial event next day evening at Marol Education Academy auditorium and



Capt. Krishnan Nair



Anandini Thakur



Anuja

many noted personalities from all over Mumbai and suburbs attended the memorial.

Ravindranath's wife Smt Tara and daughter Anuja lighted the auspicious lamp. Many of the participants recalled their association with Ravindranath and spoke at length. Adv Padma Divakar, M N Kutty Nair, Dr Aprain, Dr Gopakumar G Nair, Dr Bijoy Kutty, Girish Nair, Harikumar Menon, K R Narayanan, Upendra Menon, Prince Vaidyan, P R Krishnan, Premkumar, Dr Panicker of Seven Hills Hospital, Suresh Menon, A S Madhavan of Varier Foundation, Former Dy Municipal Commissioner V Balachandran, Prof A Vijayashankar, Sasidharan Nair, K D Chandran, Lakshmi Venkatachalam and K V Satyanath were some of them.

Managing Editor P V Vijayakumar proposed a vote of thanks.



Tara Ravindranath and Anuja light the lamp



Tara Ravindranath addresses the gathering



Sections of the audience



Speakers at the memorial organised by Kerala in Mumbai

P.K.R : A tribute in remembrance...



-Lakshmy N, Mumbai

A charismatic smile unforgettable,
A pensive look with the brain in work
Never in anger or in sour mood- a saintly face
Never a 'No' to displease any one .

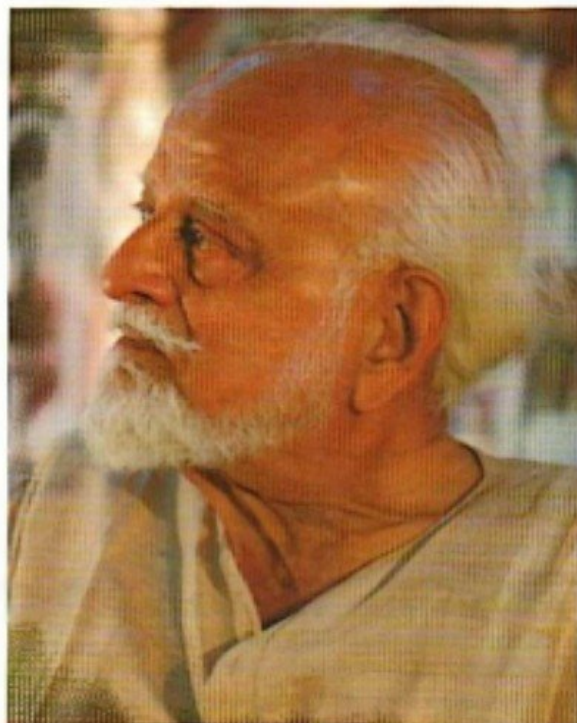
A gentleman, always in white attire
A philosopher to people with quest
A friend to all, with no bias or contempt
A guide to all who seek wisdom, was PKR.

A tall figure among Mumbai Malayalees
A pious man with many an awards and honours
Came to limelight with Sharad Pawar's biography
Curious people flocking to know more of PKR.

Great strength to his beloved wife and children
Grandpa of journalism, literary and social circle
Gave all his energy until death to the malayalee arena
Granting his blessings with no air of superiority.

PKR, my close friend and guide for over two decades
Passed on positive energy to writers and journalists alike
Placing this humble tribute, looking back over the years
Praying to Almighty, to rest the good old soul in peace.

May his family gain the strength to bear the loss
May his admirers find solace in remembrance
May his charismatic smile envelope us all
May his soul lead one and all towards an impeccable life.



With best wishes to
Kerala in Mumbai
On its 3rd Anniversary



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