

Reminiscences: Memories of a Visit

By Indubala

Amma (chithi to Sunder, younger sister of his mother Savithri) says Sunder came to Mumbai (then Bombay) in March 1969 for two weeks training. He chose to stay with us and Amma remembers these days fondly. Sunder's program was very exacting and he hardly got any time off. He used to have breakfast at home and rush off to his program, coming home only around dinner time. He would have been tired but never failed to smile and talk pleasantly about the day as he ate. The very small and modest flat we lived in was on the fourth floor in an old typical Girgaum building in a narrow lane. There was only one bedroom and the common bathroom and toilet had to be accessed through this. In this tiny flat lived 5 people, my grandmother, my parents, my brother and I. My brother was in college and I was still in school. But one didn't need space in the days where families were more bonded together than now with warmth, sharing and adjustment! Sunder enjoyed whatever was cooked and never failed to appreciate my mothers recipes! Sunder loved the movies especially Hindi ones and Amma still recalls with a twinkle in her eye how Sunder took us all to a night show. "Shatranj" it was with Rajendra Kumar and Waheeda Rehman. We came home in a Victoria (horse drawn cart) driving down Chowpatty in the middle of the night while Sunder entertained us all (including the hopefully deaf coachman) in a loud baritone tunelessly singing the film's choicest numbers.....

I remember Sunder as a warm wonderful human and a brother who loved me. On Sunday, he asked me what my favorite books were and I said "Enid Blyton." He promptly took me off to Thakurdwar area where the bookshops were. He ordered all of the Enid Blytons to be brought to the counter and insisted on buying me every single book I hadn't read! I protested saying one or two were enough. But would Sunder, generous, overwhelmingly vast-hearted Sunder even listen? Both of us staggered home with our hands full of the most delicious books that kept me occupied for many weeks and months and years. 1969. And I still treasure these. Because these were not just books. These were parts of himself that Sunder gave.

(sent on 27 July, 2017)