

## "Rathin"

**Translated from a write-up in Bengali by Shri Debabrata Basu, published in "Basudhara", 24th June. 2007 edition.**

His nickname was "Jagannath" as he was born on the day of "Rathayatra". Those of us who were close to him, called him by this name. Rathin was my cousin – my maternal uncle's son. We had walked along the same path in life for many years.

In the mirror of my memory, several faces are getting reflected – will name a few who have created a significant impact on Rathin's life. Firstly, remembering Rathin's mother who was my aunt ("Boro Mamima"). She had passed away very early, when Rathin was barely around twelve years of age. She had certain characteristic traits which had attracted my attention even at that tender age. Boro Mamima had a strong personality but led a simple life. After her demise, Rathin, his brother Biswanath and sister Jharna became closer to us. My mother, who was called "Chhotopishima" by Rathin, took care of them as her own children. She was very affectionate to them, especially Rathin, who practically spent the major part of his time in our place. Therefore, these two ladies had a lasting effect on Rathin's character – simplicity and determination.

Rathin and I were admitted to the same school in the same class and completed our Matriculation together. Rathin was considered as one of the meritorious students of the school. The memories of this period will remain incomplete if I do not mention the name of Shri Jyotirbikash Mitra who was the Headmaster of our school known as "Saraswati Institution" at that time. He was a bachelor, lived in a room on the first floor of our school and led an ascetic life. He was a very scholarly person of great wisdom and we are lucky that he had a special affection for Rathin and myself. He had influenced Rathin to a great extent.

We started our college education together and completed I.S.C. from Presidency College. Thereafter, Rathin joined BE College at Shibpur for his course in Engineering and I continued in Presidency College to complete my graduation with Honours in Mathematics. Here, we got a little separated due to our choice of subjects, but from school till the second year in college, we constantly stayed, studied and visited places together. Later, in our working lives we also met regularly in different ways. When he was posted in Maithon, working for Damodar Valley Corporation, I visited him and we spent time together recollecting our childhood days, without anybody else.

Then came Joya in the fifties. If I do not mention Joya, Rathin's life sketch will be incomplete. As I have mentioned earlier, Rathin had two special qualities which he had inherited from his mother – simplicity and strong personality. After marrying Joya he also became spiritual and I observed that this brought a significant transformation in him. He

was drawn more and more to spirituality and later became a devotee of The Mother. He came to Lakshmi's House and you all know that Joya and Rathin spent their lives here. They had dedicated their lives here at the service of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

There have been other people who have created an impact on Rathin. When he was working for "Development Consultants Limited," he was closely associated with the eminent person Dr Sadhan. C. Dutt. In his spiritual life, the huge impact of Shri Pradyot Kumar Bhattacharya whom he called "Daddy" was known to us. There are others who have influenced Rathin's life, but it is not possible to name everyone.

Shri Adinath Chattopadyay was another person who is not present today amongst us but was very fond of Rathin. He was Executive Director at C.E.S.C. Joya's elder brother Aloke had worked for C.E.S.C. for some years, when Rathin got acquainted with Priyobroto Ghosh, Chitu Dasgupta, Adinath Chattopadhyay, etc. The latter had great respect for Rathin. Adinath Babu was himself a simple but extremely scholarly person, the qualities which Rathin had. These qualities in him along with his spirituality attracted many people and Adinath Babu was among them. He presently lives in an ashram in Deoghar. I do not know whether he has received the news of Rathin's departure, but if he does, he will be extremely grieved.

Rathin is no longer with us. He left us a few days ago on 5th February. I remember that night – the next morning when I received the news, I came to Lakshmi's House and observed Rathin lying, with an expression of eternal peace. As ordinary people, we are scared of death. Since childhood, I have been thinking, is this fear due to the fear of the unknown or lack of faith? In this context, Rabindranath Tagore has written, "The dark night of sadness has knocked at my door again and again. Only the tears have witnessed the pain and agony of miseries, through darkness." We are scared of this role of 'fear' or the 'mask of death' that comes in front of us. Are we scared because we do not know what death is? If we have faith, we can overcome this fear. After seeing Rathin before his final journey, I felt he had been able to conquer this fear of death – he had not been scared.

A few days ago on 2nd February, many people had come to Lakshmi's House to observe Joya's birth anniversary and meet Rathin. He was a little unwell. But nobody could imagine that he would leave us forever in a few days. And he had embraced death quite gracefully, just like it had happened with Joya. There was a function at Lakshmi's House and Joya was not well. But nobody understood that she was unwell and she left us within a short while.

Today, we are here, remembering Rathin and sharing our grief which is natural when our loved ones leave us. But Rathin's departure is a little different – we must remember that Rathin has left us to rest at the lotus feet of the Divine Mother and also to get united with his beloved Joya. When I think of this, my grief is less. I pray that Rathin's soul may rest in peace.