

S.H. RAZA
101, RUE DE CHARONNE
2, CITÉ DU COUVENT
75011 PARIS
TÉL. 370-97-64

Paris, 29th March, 1987.

My dear Kinshen.

Thanks for your letter dated 22nd Feb. I try to reply back promptly to important letters, but life has been so busy here - that - I did not have a minute to myself. On the whole things are well. Mother also. So well indeed that she will not want to come & stay with us. You know we have acquired an ~~adjoin~~ adjacent apartment, next to my studio & it has been equiped & fixed up so that when necessary she could come & stay with us. Happily she is well & as long as she can be on her own, she wants to stay in her own apartment with her environment & furniture & her habits. Only Janine has to go to her every day, to the shopping & help the moral. I do agree that it is so necessary to be attentive to elders in their declining age, as they were to us when we were young. One takes this for granted, but in practice it is not that easy. A consistent effort, patience & time has to be invested, in spite of the compulsions & demands of life. Janine is admirably devoted & is attending to her mother to the best of her ability. It's an every-day job, a duty, a religious act, which she does most naturally & with heart. And it does bring her much happiness & peace. Sunday I am on duty. I start by going to the church... yes, really, & then I go to her apartment & bring her to my house - in car. And we spend the day together. The acute winter is making ~~way~~ place for spring. Sun appears occasionally & this helps not only the aged, but everyone living 6 long months of unending winter.

I am so happy that Rasika, Malati & Karan & you too are all taking good care of your mother. It's good to be several!!! Please convey her my "Adab" & greetings - from Janine also.

Apant from any showing in Grenoble in June, & in Paris in November, the Geneva project of "Conc de Coem" of Mrs Helen Barbier came up. The exhibition is scheduled to take place in July but certain details are yet to be finalised. Normally I will be represented, but nothing is yet sure. Perhaps you know better already. The other exhibition, also in Geneva, is "young artists from Kerala" - an initiative of Vivian Sundaram, seems more sure. Helen visited us here - but we have little news for the last 2 weeks. Enormous funds are necessary for such projects transport, insurance, and above all a catalogue which is a must, & costs a lot of money. I hope that it will work out as the Geneva exhibitions will be important & will help the prestige of Contemporary Indian Art which is little known here. Switzerland will be the 3rd European Country to present it in a serious manner.

Regarding the project of the "Hell Age", ~~as~~ it goes without saying that I will be with you all. India is not well organised as far as health & security schemes are concerned & the children & the aged need particular attention. It's thoughtful to ~~think of~~ do something about this problem on a national scale. May be the 12 Painters backed by industrials can set an example, help awareness, give new incentives. I have no news from Akbar & I wonder how far the idea has been pursued. As far as I am concerned, I will be willing to send an important canvas. But as you know well this involves customs & the declared value of the painting has to come to France. This can be solved if the R.B. can give the foreign exchange & if you work on the basis of 40 or 50% of the price of the painting. It's complicated to convince the customs here of "Gift" for a cause & the unending formalities are long & tedious. Besides Parisian painters are constantly asked to be generous towards innumerable difficult human situations, that most of us propose

to donate maximum 50% on sales. And mostly it works out well to the advantage of everyone. The important thing in such project is that the painter gives an important canvas - as sending minor work helps no one.

Please let me know how the situation stands now.

Thanks for giving us news of the Delhi exhibitions. I am so glad that Nasreen fared so well & had an impressive show. I am also happy that you have accepted to be the Chairman of the purchasing Committee of the N.G.M.A. As ever, there will be problems, but ~~but~~ some important paintings & sculptures will enter the museum - and it will be a great asset. You did well to acquire 3 of Babu's paintings. It will be necessary to survey constantly to art scene - starting with the artists' studios, major exhibitions & have the first "pick" at the right time - as far as possible directly from the painter. With discernment & perception - which you have - I am sure some of the most vital canvases will enter the national collection at most reasonable price. You surely are working this way. N.G.M.A. is one of the most visited museum of Contemporary Indian Art & is hardly representative. With the prospects of a new museum buildings both in Delhi & Bombay, I am sure that your work will be extremely precious - not only for Indian painters & art lovers, but for the foreign visitors who hardly have an idea of Contemporary Indian art. So God-Speed! But pick the BEST.

Dominique Bozo is no longer the Director of the Pompidou Museum. He is now the President of the Fondation Nationale de Arts Graphiques et Plastiques & has replaced Mr. Claude Mollard. It's a different way, and a different style. However, he is a very serious minded person, and now all the more important in the French Ministry of Culture since Mr. Francois Leotaud was appointed the Minister of Culture.

by Jacques Chirac, the new Prime Minister. There is much that is politics which I do not understand, but these changes concern us all. ~~At~~ Never before, the relations between France & India have been as good, & we have to follow the events. The next elections April 1988 will be important here - and as it seems - projects seem to drag along. It will be so, another one year.

Recently there was a "Commission" of the Ministry of Culture, which I am told received 1500 Canvases & Sculptures. Bozo presided, it seemed. And they acquired only 20 works in a very severe scrutiny. I was happy they purchased one of my Canvases - 200x100cms - for 25,000 Frs. I was happy, because some of the most important painters & sculptors, also because, well, the painting will go to a museum. And of course, since I do not sell expensive, this was rather a high price for my work.

My letter is long - It is belated. I am sorry. But I have had so many preoccupations. And it's a habit with me to do one thing at a time & do my best. So here it is with all the news we are working. Ram has asked for photographs of my paintings. I am expecting them any time & will send you or him very soon. I am with several large canvases - & very small too. I am with work, really in - the days pass by so fast.

Today papers carried the news of the sale of Van Gogh's "Sunflowers" for 219 million French Francs - It does something to you deep down your heart to think of his life, his work & the gross misunderstanding & total lack of appreciation during his life. It also compels you to think that ~~the~~ ^{the true} art can be appreciated with time & measured with money. What inspired me & still inspires me is the flame in him, this divine force - "Agni" in Hindi, अग्नि in Urdu "Ugn" which ^{expressed} so completely in paint, in such a short span of life.

Give my love to Ram, Pooja & every one at home. How much I wish I could come, but now I have to wait till Jan 88. Till then hard work. Good bye

Oct-March 82

