

ETOY, 28th of April 1985

Dearest Friends,

Thank you most sincerely for your long letter dated 2d of March. I am so glad to know that your trip to India was a success. Of course, in 6 days in Bhopal, you could not evaluate the damages... The Indian population is terribly resilient, and except for those directly affected, is soon back to normal. What else to do? But ^{for} the families touched by death or lung illness or cecity, it is another story. Union Carbide will let them wait and wait... and the subsidies will dwindle as months elapse. It is always the way, and I feel very sorry, thinking that the few rupies at long last received, will not do much good for the afflicted. After the first furore the accident suscited, news of other terrible happenings take its place. As we say in French : un clou chasse l'autre !! Life goes to fast and is to full, to grieve for long on anything. Events and people are soon forgotten ^{for} ~~helas~~.

As for my problem, I have done many inquiries here and there, and I think to have contacted a small Museum in Yverdon, willing to take the whole collection. The attorney who draw the donation papers is on the job now, and we are expecting an answer pretty soon. I had even written to the Indian Embassy in Bern, asking ^{the} cultural officer to tell me about Museums interested in Indian Art. But I did not get an answer.... The ideal answer of course, is for the collection to stay in Switz. now that it is there... Transportation is awfully expensive, and I donot know if the Gov. would allow certain pieces, (at least) to get out of the country. Anyway, we will know soon what will come out of all those efforts. You ask me many questions indeed, but nearly all about conditions, if selling is considered... which is not the case. The only proposition I am willing to agree to, is to separate personal items from Raman's collection, as textiles do require care many Museums cannot offer. In Yverdon though, there is a Musée de l'Habillement, willing to accept what I have in this line. So it would really be ideal if the deal comes off. But I am sorry to say, that curators are no better than dealers, and criticize and run down the collection as "a buch of articles available anywhere in the bazaars of New Delhi"!!! I was pained to hear such affirmations from people posing as experts... But two ^{of them} said, that even so, they were willing to take the lot in their Museum!!!! as a great favor I suppose! Anyway, that was enough for me to look somewhere else! As a rule, Museums are filled to the heave, and put the majority of their possessions in their attics, to be forgotten with time, and of course, slowly to disappear.... I knew the game to well. Mr Hiranank, the greatest expert in New-York of Indian art, himself son of a parsi antique dealer of Bombay, was a friend of ~~ours~~ and we had long talks and discussions with him, as to the tricks played by business and Museums, ^{alike} ~~He~~ died soon after Raman ~~helas~~, and left his wonderful collection to some American Museum, I donot recall which one. As you advise me rightly, I go slowly and donot take any decision lightly, even if I am at time so tired of it all, that I would be willing to take any step to ^{end} ~~finish~~ this situation. I could take legal steps with the Museum in Morges, for breach of contract, duly written and signed, but what is the use ?? The results would not be satisfactory anyway, if interest and enthusiasm are not present. The previous curator had visions, and would tell me all he ~~planned~~ ^{planned} to do... But he is dead, and the ~~new~~ ^{own} one is quite a different person... using her position as curator, to foster her ^{own} reputation among the intelligencia of the locality... So I prefer to look elsewhere for a solution. I will let you know of course, what is coming out of my transactions. I have only one fear, that the Morges' museum may discourage my own contact in Yverdon, for the reason I did not accept their suggestions!!!! Anyway, we will soon know. It is truly wonderful to offer to help me in anyway, and I knew I could count on you in my predicament. If things donot come out as hoped for, we will have to think of something else, and I will keep in touch with you in any case.

Twenty years' ago, the collection was evaluated - for fire insurance - at a low 350.000 swiss francs. So, it is far from rubbish. But there is not the question... Of course, I can send you a list of all items and I will, if nothing comes from my actual transaction.

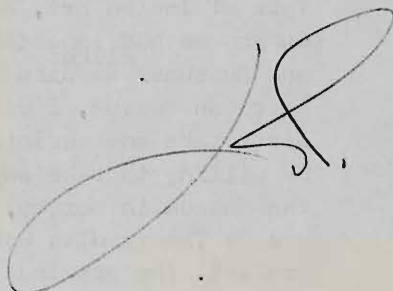
I have little to tell about my personal life... Quiet and monotonous, as I continue to do exercises, walks etc etc to ameliorate my condition. As I said before, progress is terribly slow, and in a year (on the 15th of May 1984 I was operated) I did not recuperate much sensibility in my leg and foot. When it is cold as it is those past days, they are just like concrete and I walk with difficulty. I count on a warm Spring and Summer to help me a little. Still, looking back, I did come out of a terrible situation : no brace, no bandage, no special stocking anymore to sustain my muscles... I am grateful, believe me, inspite of my actual impediment. Even if I have to limp for the rest of my life, even if I cannot walk better nor faster, I walk... and this is an achievement, believe me ! Not only I walk, but I am more or less independant, able to do some housework, and to come to office on week-ends.... I still stay in bed for 12 to 14 hours a day, but I am used to this immobility, and I put it to good use, reading a lot, and even able to knit flat on my back !!! I feel happier today than last year believe me... and glad that the worse is now behind me.... With time, you get accustomed to everything, and develop tricks to help you accomplish what you have to. I look to those much worse off, than I am, and they are so many, that I can only thank God from the bottom of my heart for all I still have left. This sacroiliac trouble is now a true epidemic... and young and old are victims of it. Noone knows the true cause of it, but fumes of heavy oil seem to be at the root of the matter... and with our millions of cars, central heating and the like, it is no wonder we are sick ! Sometimes I think it is a wonder we are still alive, living as we do today...

I hope you take care of yourself and Janine too, so as to be together, for many years to come. Living alone is no fun, and presents endless problems, particularly in the West where egoism is truly abysmal.

My dear Friends, once more I say thank you... your support and your advice are most precious to me and I am grateful.

Best of everything; till I write again, when I know for sure the results of all those transactions.

Yours ever,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large loop followed by a series of smaller, connected strokes.

Forgive the many mistakes, as I am constantly interrupted by the telephone....