



## **Random Memories- Part I**

(Dated 10<sup>th</sup> Nov 2012)

I too wanted to write something but it got delayed for one reason or the other. One of my excuses was that I wanted others, particularly my elders, to write their pieces first. "Reflections at 85" by dear Joychayan, published in our site the other day, is an excellent article and it has inspired me to write these lines .



**At Capitol Hill -April, 2010**

I always wanted to write something about my grandfather, late Shri. A.N. Thomas , who was the fourth of the five sons born to our great ancestor. He was born in 1875 and was called to eternity in March, 1957. I was privileged to live with him, at our ancestral home



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at Chirappuram since my birth in December, 1949 and I do have happy memories about him. He was a teacher in the beginning and then a business man at Alleppey.

After winding up the business at Alleppey, he settled down at Ayroor. He was a six foot tall man, with a commanding personality. He was a great visionary. He was very active in the church and society. One thing which I remember with admiration is the fact that he maintained daily diary, very regularly. I believe that diaries are meant for posterity and I was one of those who have read those diaries. I hope to write further about my grand father later.

Joychayan has mentioned about his late father. He was my father's first cousin. We used to call him 'Thattareth' Appachan. When ever I came on vacations from North India, where I spent most of my time, I used to visit him. He was a fair complexioned, handsome and athletic man. He used to sit in his arm chair, with the Malayalam Pulpit Bible placed by the side table with a magnifying glass beside it. The time I talk about him is of the 1980s. A transistor radio was by his side, National Panasonic, I guess. One day, when I visited him, he was listening to a running commentary of lawn tennis matches, may be Wimbledon or Australian Open matches. He used to discuss about the ABC of Lawn Tennis, namely' Amrithraj, Borg and Connors. He was associated with the management of Ayroor Carmel Agathimandiram. He used to listen to our experiences of the north and to narrate his child hood memories, particularly about the evening bath he used to take in the near by river 'Pampa' after the football matches he had with his friends on its sandy bank. We used to discuss matters related to church, society, politics and what not. My late father had told me much about his father, elder brother of my grandfather, whom he had the privilege to meet. About Joychayan's late mother, I have heard much from my 86 year old mother who joined the Azhikkakathu family at the age of sixteen. My mother is a source of information to me, about our family. She uses to talk high of Joychayan's Ammachy.



Now, about Usha's article, 'Ente Amma'. I have read this article, both the versions, Malayalam as well as English. She is my first cousin, the youngest member of my generation. She is about 15 years junior to me and we were brought up in the same ancestral home at Ayroor. I very vividly remember the day she was born. We used to take her around on our shoulders around in her infant hood. Her article is also an excellent one. One thing, which I remember about her mother, who was my teacher too and whom I used to call, 'Ammamma' is the Malayalam word she suggested for the English word 'skit' which we planned for our 'yuvajanasakhyam' in the church at Edappavoor during the time, when we were in colleges. We wanted to avoid the word, 'naadakam' in Malayalam for a skit organized for the church for many reasons. We were in the lookout for a suitable word and I approached her. She suggested the word, 'Prahasanam' and I remember to have relished and used it for the skit.

Those are some of the memories I gather, when I read the memories about our elders. Every one of us should try to write down such memories as time may permit. It would be very helpful.



**With Jeevan -September, 2012**

I am leading a peaceful life after retirement, taking part in our church activities, taking care of family matters, reading a lot; to the extent that my age may permit, interacting



with children on webcam etc. We were lucky to have our grandson Jeevan with us for about three weeks in September, this year. He was born in September last year in USA.

We could not go and see him there. Ashish, my son and Susa, his wife understood our sentiments and the grandson was brought to us by Susa, while Ashish and Gia, our granddaughter stayed back in US. Omana and I thank God for the mercies He is showering up on us and spend our time with our daughter Aishwarya at Ernakulam. May God bless and keep each one of us.



**At Gia's baptism - January, 2011**

***This concludes the first part of the article by Shri. A G .Oommen – To be Continued***