

Tribute To Our President of 25 Years Late Narendra Luther

Greatly missed by the Society; yet ever alive with the Deccan Rocks.

Poem and Caricature

By B.P. Acharya, Life Member



*The Minarets doff their
Crowns in deference
And whisper to each other
"Who will tell our story now,
And of our builder,
Of his beloved too?"*

*The Lashkar pauses
For a while standing still
As if in a guard of honour
The Regimental Bazar downs
Its shutters to remember
Its Chronicler par excellence!*

*The Crocodile Rock,
Standing still since
2,500 million years
Stirred within
And sheds a tear or two.*

*To bid adieu to
A frail man with
An impish smile
And fragile voice
Who knew them,
As no one else did
Alvida!*

It is 25 long years that Narendra Luther was the President of the Society to Save Rocks. His love were the rocks of Hyderabad, apart from the city of Hyderabad. Right at the start of the Society, his "Rockumentary", a short film on the stunning rock formations of Hyderabad helped to create awareness and publicity in the city. It won 2 Aster Awards at a Japanese Short Film Festival. This was followed by "Rockitecture", a coffee-table book of fascinating rock photos which was authored by him and published by the Tourism Department of erstwhile A.P. It evolved into the bigger book "Rockscape of Andhra Pradesh" and was recently edited and reprinted as "Marvels of Nature. Rockscape of Telangana". He also published photos of great local rock formations in the books he wrote on the history of Hyderabad, and also in his Autobiography.

For 25 years, Narendra Luther chaired our Committee Meetings. He was there for all these General Body Meets, was our effective representative with the Government, presiding at all cultural awareness functions we organized. It was always a great comfort to be able to rely on his judgment in cases of doubt, to be helped by his guidance, his encouragement and his positivity.

May he now rest in peace.

Frauke Quader, Secretary

We mourn the passing of a generous mentor and friend to our film, "Other Kohinoor, Rocks of Hyderabad", Shri Narendra Luther. A Hyderabadi who needs no introduction. A learned and scholarly man, he wore his learning lightly and always shared his knowledge with a dash of humour. During our research he guided us with great patience and energy not only about the rocks, but the culture that so enriches Hyderabadi sensibilities. Many an afternoon of tea and biscuits were shared in his lovely home with rocks preserved in it, with him reciting poetry, sharing photographs, articles, analyses and thoughts.

His achievements as one of the city's leading civil servants were many and varied. What is not so well known is that he was also the President of the Zinda Dilane Hyderabad and organized the World Humour Conference in 1985 (15 Countries and 22 languages represented) held at the Numaish grounds. As he told us with understandable pride "Hyderabad at that time was the humour capital of the world! Log ticket leke aate the, people bought tickets to come and hear our Mizahiya Shairi, poetry of humour and satire."

He had a deep and lasting love for the city and contributed fundamentally to seeing it be a beautiful well-run modern city, that retained its natural and cultural heritage. His work to save the rocks of the city is well known. He was the President of the Society to Save Rocks and had succeeded in getting many of our beautiful and ecologically irreplaceable rock sites notified as heritage precincts and deemed for permanent preservation. It is deeply saddening that his work along with the Society, in achieving this for Hyderabad and its citizens is coming to nought, as many of these heritage precincts are now being demolished.

His favourite rocks site was Durgam Cheruvu and he spoke fondly of outings and picnics with friends and family to the rocks of Osman Sagar. On one occasion, we mentioned someone (whom we had met in the course of our film research) saying "The Deccan rocks are boring. They are not tall and impressive like the Himalayas" When he heard this he smiled and said "These rocks are more than twice the age of the Himalayas" He would wax eloquent about the rocks and urge more appreciation for them among the city's residents. He quoted the most beautiful poets of the ages to support his points with a twinkle in his eye.

On his beloved Hyderabad itself, he shared a most erudite and moving collection of poetry. One of those poems he shared, by Kamal Pershad Kanwal:

*Isne kitni tabaahiyan dekhein
Iske zakham ka kuch hisaab nahin
Bavajood iske zamaane mein
Hyderabad ka javaab nahin*

*(She has seen such devastation, her wounds are immeasurable
Nevertheless, in all the world, Hyderabad is incomparable)*

*It is only appropriate that so much fabulous poetry comes to mind
in remembering this wonderful man, civil servant, writer and
cultural icon. We will miss him and remember him for all this
and more, in gratitude, respect and deep affection.*

by Uma Magal, Life Member

