

## Memories of August 15, 1947



Arvind Kolhatkar

Arvind Kolhatkar spent his childhood in Satara, and later studied at Fergusson College, Pune and the University of Pune. After getting his MA in Mathematics, he joined the Indian Revenue Service, served in the Income Tax Department for about 30 years, rose to the rank of Commissioner, and retired voluntarily. He was an Executive Director of the Bombay Stock Exchange for 3 years. He and his wife Aruna currently live in Toronto.

I have a vivid memory of August 15, 1947, even though I was only four years old! At that time, we lived in Satara, Maharashtra. I attended a Montessori school, which was located in the backyard of the local girls' high school called *Kanyashala*.

Our school had organized a celebration, in which a small tricolour Indian flag was hoisted. More importantly, the school had prepared *sooji halwa*, a sweet dish traditionally eaten at celebrations. In my excitement, I was jumping around, and tripped on a wooden box. My knee got a scratch, and I started crying. My Bindu *aatya* (aunt, my father's youngest sister) was a Matriculation (Class XI) student in *Kanyashala*. My teacher called in Bindu *aatya*, who took me home. They remembered to give me a tin medal of the tricolour and my share of the *sooji halwa*!

My aunt is still around in Mumbai and remembers this and many similar incidents. It was my habit to drop into her class whenever I felt like it, and loudly call out for Bindu *aatya*. This had become a standing joke for her friends and an embarrassment for her. Things were much more informal then in our small corner of the world!

---

© Arvind Kolhatkar 2009