

Rajarethinum Sungeelee



- Born 1912 Magon Street, Port Louis.
- He attended the Rose-Belle Government School.
His Dad supervised the estate of Sandrassen Mootoosamy in New-Grove.
- He received his monitor's certificate at the age of 15. He was coached by his brother for that purpose.
- 1930 – 1937: He worked at his brother-in-law's (A.S. Padiachy) shoe-shop in Curepipe.
- 1937: He worked in his brother's bookshop in Port-Louis.
- Plenty of time at bookshop – received much help from Pandit Permal Soobrayen to perfect his knowledge in Tamil.
- 1946 (After World war II): Recruitment in the primary Education Sector began again. He did not have to undergo any competition as Mr. Ward, Director of Education, knew his competence. He thus went straight into teaching at primary level.
- 1952: Continued the work started by Pandit Permal Soobrayen as regards the teaching of the Tamil language benevolently. He was very active in this respect at the **“Union Tamoule de L'île Maurice”**
- Lecturer in Tamil at the Teachers' training school.
- Lecturer at the Municipality of Port Louis in Tamil in the nineteen sixties.
- Assistant Head Teacher since 1953
- Promoted to the grade of Head Teacher in 1970.
- 1972: Retired from the primary sector.
- Great reformer of Tamil culture and religion in Mauritius. He was conferred the title of **“Tirukuralar R.Sungeelee”** at Belle Vue Maurel.
- Passed away on 7 September 1987.

Having been an avid learner, Rajarethinum Sungeelee was well read in various languages, namely English, French, Hindi and Tamil. After having spent years perfecting his knowledge of the Tamil language, he took the initiative of teaching it to those who were willing to learn it. This was done free of charge and his altruistic nature extended well beyond race, creed or religious aspirations. He also contributed in translating articles from Hindi to Tamil in the newspaper Zamana. He also gave tuition to pupils of standard 6 and most of them hailed from low-income families. Therefore, he resolved to give many of them tuition for free. Moreover, in order to rid these children of any embarrassment, he requested them to bring along an empty envelope and to pretend to pay. He would even offer meals to the needy children attending his tuitions.

Retnon Sungeelee was a cultured, broad-minded individual who was fond of literature, especially English and Tamil, and relished classical music. An erudite, he often spontaneously quoted verses from the Tirukkural scriptures. His curiosity of the world induced him to invest in a six-month tour around the world on board of a cruise, visiting countries such as Africa, India and many European countries. He brought along his whole family for the odyssey.

Being so generous and ready to spare his time to help people, Retnon Sungeelee nevertheless did not neglect his family and even spent quality time with them. He always made it a point to eat with his family.

Retnon Sungeelee was a compassionate, kind-hearted person who, at the same time, also believed in the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle. He was against cruelty to animals and believed in the sanctity of all life forms. Thus, on his own impulse, he adopted a vegetarian diet at the age of eighteen. After retiring, he took up gardening as a hobby and sprouted his own beans and a variety of other pulses to enrich his family's diet with vitamins and proteins. He also prepared home-made yoghurt. He even grinded wheat to make whole-wheat flour for the family's daily consumption.