Dear Yunping,

I am honored to be invited for a meeting in honor of my old friend Ravi Kulkarni. I am currently on sabbatical leave in Taiwan. I am sorry I cannot come to your very meaningful gathering.

  Ravi is one of the best mathematicians that I knew for more than forty years and have been good friend. I met him when both of us just graduated and were young members of the institute for advanced study in Princeton. Both of us lived in the housing complex of IAS, where I lived in a studio and Ravi in an apartment with his wife.

   We had many lunches and exchanges on mathematics together.
He had done a nice thesis under Shlomo Sternberg in harvard. Sternberg had just written to offer me a BP instructor of harvard when I graduated from Berkeley. I turned down the very nice offer from harvard and went to IAS, at the advice of Chern. Shlomo   became my very good friend and colleague many years later. Ravi admired Shlomo tremendously. Under the guidance of Shlomo, Ravi worked on the topic of determination of   the metric by its sectional curvature in his thesis . Ravi demonstrated in a very nice way that for dimension greater than two, the metric can be determined conformally.

   In IAS, we had many lively discussions on conformal geometry , which I found fascinating. He wrote a beautiful paper on classification of conformally flat hyper surfaces in euclidean space. There are nice beautiful constructions he used in his work. I learned quite a bit by listening to his research. A year later, I wrote a paper to complement his thesis that appeared in the annals of mathematics.

   We did not see each other for quite a long time after I left IAS. However , about ten years ago , he invited me to visit India . That was a very rewarding experience .I went with my wife . This was the first time I visited India. We arrived at Delhi and then flied to the Harish Chandra institute. Ravi was really very nice . He took us to visit many places of historical importance, and explained to me their history. India history is very rich and I am fascinated by it. Ravi also brought me to see the president of India who is an extremely intelligent man. I remembered that on our way to Delhi, Ravi and I took a sleeping train together . It was quite an experience as there were so many people in the train and the train station.Many indian put their heavy carriage over their head. I guess only china can compare with it in terms of population. My wife and I then went to Tata institute and had very nice sight seeings in Mumbai. Overall, I am very grateful for Ravi to go out of the way to show his hospitality to my wife and myself. The india culture has been impressive .

     The second time I came to india was also based on the invitation of Ravi, who was then at IIT in Mumbai. It was a rather eventful trip. I was invited to give a talk in the Indian mathematics society , along with Richard Hamilton. We went together from Shanghai , after the big conference that we had in Hangzong . I forgot to apply for a visa to visit India. That caused a huge problem. We went to the Shanghai airport at midnight. I was not allowed to travel and Hamilton went. (

It is ironic that I kept on telling Hamilton to prepare for the trip while I was not prepared at all) I went back to Shanghai to stay overnight to apply for a visa. The india consulate will not grant me any visa . They insisted that I had to apply the visa through Indian ambassy in america. I tried very hard to convince them, even through my connections in china. It still did not work. I was on constant phone call with Ravi . We tried almost every methods to solve the problem. None of them worked until the president of ITT stepped in to help. He knew the secretary of the state of India. The visa was granted at the very last minute before the indian consulate closed their door. It was a miracle that I was able to get a travel agent to issue a new ticket for me to Mumbai a couple of hours before the plane took off,although it is quite a bit more expensive than the original one as I needed to buy two round trip tickets through singapore. I arrived in India and gave a talk on comparison of the history of mathematics in india and in china. It was well received. After the conference, hamilton went to north india to watch tigers while Ravi brought me, spending a couple of days, to see quite a few very nice temples in India . the stone carvings are spectacular. I gave several talks in ITT where the faculties treated me very well.

Ravi came to harvard for my birthday conference about five years ago. It is a friendship that I consider to be one of my best . and I like to toast for this friendship which has lasted for more than forty years, and will continue forever.

best regards

Yau