



Malati Aurobindo Jani

October 9, 1931 - December 31, 2020

Malati A. Jani peacefully left this earth on the morning of December 31, 2020 at home. And as a leaf falls ever so gently to the ground, so also did her breath leave her body, even as she listened to one of her favorite recorded chants, Nirvana Shatakam, sung by Dilip Kumar Roy.

She culminated her 90-year long journey with peace, accompanied by a gratitude-legacy for a love-filled lifetime of experiencing all that mattered to her – the joys of family, deep friendships, and fulfillment of her roles as mother, grandmother, wife, sister, daughter, and friend. And so too mattered the growth of her mind and spirit, immersed in a life of learning and sharing, influencing countless people, especially children. She demonstrated incredible resilience and always brightened the room with that ineffable smile, a smile of acceptance and equanimity in the face of chronic severe physical pain from disabling arthritis over decades. Most of all, as throughout her life, especially in later years, she grew evermore into being a pure conduit for the puissance of love for her immediate circle of family and friends and all sentient beings. Whether near or far, one felt that power expressed through the countless moments of laughter, wise and empathic discourse, constant awareness of the aesthetic, compassion for the vulnerable, and the ever-present joyful gleam in those beautiful eyes. And while her crippled gait hid the dignity of her

stride, she kept constant company with the Mystery within and behind life, a Mystery ever brimming with curiosity and bursting with wonder. Such enormity of spirit and grandeur of heart, paradoxically confined to that frail petite frame, enabled her to transcend life's suffering and burdens. And with what fortitude and surrender she bore the greatest burden of all in the fateful last year of her life – spending each day without the physical presence of her one and only love, my father, her partner of 71 years! How she missed him indeed. And so too, during this last earth's orbit for her terrestrial trek, and despite the wind-gusts of grief and loneliness trying to snuff out the flame of her faith, she managed to stay steady and strong, transforming her vulnerability into a vastness of space. Ever true to herself, despite this great loss, she kept reading, thinking, smiling, conversing, praying, reflecting, learning new facts, sharing her joys, listening to music, watching dance, staying enthused by the little things of daily life, honoring the ephemeral, and yet rooted in the eternal.

She is survived by so many, near and far, including her son, Asim and his wife, Smruti, a grandson, Arjun, a remaining brother/sister-in-law, Gautam and Renuka Mehta in India, and another sister-in-law, Ranna Mehta in the US. The rest include nephews, nieces, cousins and an extended circle of other relatives and friends who became relatives, because for “mom”, everyone was part of her family-at-large.

She had so many incarnations – professional and personal. Professionally, from her youthful days, she scholastically excelled to become one of a handful of female attorneys in Ahmedabad, Gujarat in the post-independence India of the 1950s, when she litigated cases of domestic violence, divorce and social activism causes. She then joined her husband as a Fulbright Scholar, both coming to Duke University for graduate work in Psychology. The diverse positions she

held over the following decades included being a Professor of Philosophy, a producer of children's and women's programming for All India Radio, and a children's librarian for 20 years at the Tampa Public Library (now the John F. Germany Public Library).

The context of her personal life story was remarkable – playing out from the days of the pre-independence “Quit India Movement”, to the prime ministership of Jawaharlal Nehru - whom she admired greatly and at whose home, Anand Bhavan, she was once an invited scholar-in-residence for several weeks. She enjoyed a 5-year long premarital platonic friendship phase with her future husband, Arvind Jani, a paduka-wearing philosopher-lawyer and reader of Karl Marx and Sri Aurobindo. Their interactions, before and after marriage, consisted of countless trysts discussing a staggering range of topics from philosophers such as Socrates and Radhakrishnan to Indian culture, spiritual matters such as the Gita and other scriptures to economics, sociology, psychology, art, music, dance, history, science, comedy, literature, child development, politics, human rights and more. Whether on park benches in public gardens when they met or the dining table at home 60 years later.

Her indomitable courage (Zodiac sign of Leo), marked her path, facing the challenges and adversities that life offers to all of us. And she was a mom's mom, whether it was being a wonderful cook making scrumptious Indian Cuisine dishes or carrying out supplemental home-school type lessons in spelling and vocabulary for her 6-year-old son, Asim or later immersing him in the library where she worked. She introduced him not only to tales, fiction and plays that children are drawn to but also biographies, history, science, poetry, art, spirituality, geography, architecture, philosophy,

and a broad range of topics. Ensuring this sustainable shared space of a life-long love of books and continuity of a richly informed dialogue throughout life. Nurturing a deep friendship, she gave all that she could to him, including being a role model in forgiveness and generosity and magnanimity of spirit, and offering her blessings right up until the last week of her life. And what a deep love she had for Arjun, her grandson, and his mom, Smruti, both of whom literally infused vitality and provided company and comfort over the last decade of life. We will miss her but know she is freed from the confines of her body, returning to that Mystery, once again unified with her husband, her youngest brother, her friends and all those dear to her who preceded her.

Thank you, mom for your Presence of Love, then, now, and forever!

Please view the recording of the online Zoom “Life Celebration” event we had for Malati Jani on 2/21/21 below:

ONLINE ZOOM RECORDED LINK: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/sK4gt-o7udg2e9nKMT3RSnjK7Is3B7F93MnO8VAWmdnQD3OkmEcK6R_8KR6ueJt1._EeP6KB0it-sUreZ?startTime=1613917673000

- Start to about 11 min-40 sec: Intro and formal Eulogy (including most of the Obituary text above plus a little more detail)
- From 12 min-35 sec to 20 min-20 sec: Embedded short video (has slight audio interruption that is then corrected)
- From 22 min-15 sec till the end (1 hour, 31 min) – Comments/shared memories from several participants

Please make the following donations too:

Libraries Without Borders:

<https://www.librarieswithoutborders.org/donate/>

American Library Association:

<https://ec.ala.org/donate/projects>

Krishnamurti Foundation of America:

<https://www.kfa.org/malati/>

Matagiri:

<https://matagiri.org/donate>

Previous Events

Hindu Service

JAN 5. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (ET)

DeGusipe Funeral Home & Crematory Maitland Chapel

9001 N. Orlando Ave

Maitland, FL 32751

(407) 695-2273

todd@degusipe.com

<https://www.degusipefuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall

BP

“ *Malati aunty was a beautiful soul with an infectious smile and a great sense of humor.
I have some fond memories of her from my teenage years visiting her at the Tampa Public library in Indian outfits for a presentation. Later on, talking to her about child psychology and learning some valuable lessons.
We will miss her.
We pray for her soul to find eternal peace and condolences to Asim, Smruti and Arjun.*

Brinda Pandya - March 12, 2021 at 10:30 AM

SS

“ *Malati Aunty, that is what I called her, was a generous, full of life, always smiling and jovial person!
It is hard for you not to smile and be at peace when you are around her. She injected enthusiasm and inspiration on us and everyone who meet her. Everyone who knew her miss her.
She will stay on our memories forever.
Sanjeeb and Sabina*

Sanjeeb Sapkota - March 09, 2021 at 06:11 AM

AD

“ *A beautiful soul, a dear older friend, has moved on to the eternal journey. May the Divine Mother keep this beautiful soul in Her lap.*

Abhinav Dwivedi - January 04, 2021 at 12:10 PM

KH

Long time dear friend and spiritual consule. Always smiling face. May her Devine journey be auspicious, will never be forgotten

Khodabhai - January 05, 2021 at 11:46 AM

KH

Long time dear friend and spiritual consule, always smiling face, may her journey be auspicious

Khodabhai - January 05, 2021 at 11:50 AM