



Dr. Renubala Panda

October 1, 1947 - October 8, 2020

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Called 'Doctor Sahib' by all, 'Mimi' by her grandchildren and 'Ma' by us

Childhood

Ma was fiercely independent and intelligent yet lively and extremely witty. Though she had a major pancreatic operation when she was barely 18, first year of medicine - she was told that she won't survive more than few months/years and mostly never have children, but that did not stop her as she was mentally very strong and a fighter. Her parents were educated so they did not let those thoughts bog them or her down, rather her parents got her educated and helped her flourish into the strong, independent woman that she was. The eldest among 5 siblings, she earned the love and respect from all. Raised in a cultured joint-family where everyone doted on her for her simplicity and strong character.

Adulthood/Family

Not only did she fight to live til 73, she got married into an affluent family and had 3 children (Monalisa, Swetalina and Madhulima). Our dad, Mr. Bijay Kumar Panda, was in Germany and when he was looking to get married (arrange marriage)- he saw my mom, despite all her ailments he willingly married her (Simplicity added to beauty and intellect was a rare find those days!). He then decided to settle in India so they don't live away from parents. Our dad with all his heart loved Ma - spoilt her!!!

Professional

Story goes that Ma was super excited to treat her first ever patient that came to her private clinic, but then soon realized that the patient was struggling to pay for the treatment. She

let him go without paying for the treatment. This is Ma.

Throughout her medical practice career, she continued to give free treatment to those who couldn't afford. We have seen her go to patient's home at odd hours and treat them for free if for any reason they couldn't come to her hospital or clinic. She was the 'de-facto' personal doctor to all our neighbors and to our big-joint-family.

She started her medical career in a private clinic and then soon joined the hospital. She was known for her liveliness, wit and simplicity - adored by all her colleagues everywhere she worked. When we moved to South India, all the North Indian Patients would come to only her standing hours in the long line - as they thought she was one among them. We hear that some of the patients came just to see this beautiful doctor and simply to talk to her.

When our Dad became the Chairman and Managing Director of Vizag Steel, Ma took the role of First Lady with great grace. Despite her own busy career, she stood by dad attending all social obligations with him and most importantly, with a smile, led Steel Women Association, did charitable work and what was more impressive - Ma stood tall, straight and spoke her mind fearlessly be it in front of large gathering, trade union leaders, politicians or celebrities. When asked what they do for living, we have never heard both our parents mention or flaunt their position but rather just say 'Service' - a humbling lesson for us!

The Person

Ma was Gandhian born - known for her simple living and heart despite having it all - God has always been kind and generous to her from all sides. She was unlike woman of her times - didn't know any cooking or small talks or fashion - spend her money on good books - there is no Robin Cook's books that she has missed reading. Besides having a full-fledged medical career as a practicing doctor, she never gave up on her love for Theatre, music and Art - She was always the main actress on all her theatre plays. She sang Hindustani classical and knew Odissi Classical dance. She taught her daughters classical music and Odissi.

She was very curious - drove cars, at age of 40 learnt to play guitar, and when we moved to Vizag, she quickly learnt the local language - not only to speak but read and write. She would kill us with practicing her Telugu everyday at home - on all of us....it was so irritating to us kids but my grandparents, who lived then with us, were her sincere supporters. She was dotted on by all in dad's big-joint-family for her simplicity. She was a fun grandmother and all her grandchildren fondly called her Mimi. Ma always kept family as her first priority.

Hoping we can continue our parent's legacy with same wisdom and integrity. Our nourisher, protector and strength - that love for us cannot be replaced. Ma is missed

dearly and her fond memories celebrated!!!

<https://youtu.be/wv6a4d1SNVo>

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