**Dr. T. Sarada (My Dear Chithi)**

My Sarada Chitthi (mom's younger sister) is the second daughter of two teachers: Shri Thyagaraja Iyer and Shrimati Ranganayaki Ammal. Sarada’s parents named her and her siblings after careful thought in the memory of great celestial humans from the Hindu scriptures: Mythreyi, Chandrasekaran, Sarada, Parasaran, Gargi, and Bhavatarini.

Very little has been said about my Chithi, Dr. T. Sarada, and she liked it that way. Under the radar often, she was (past tense is difficult for me) quite fierce and spunky. She never backed away from an argument especially when it was backed by facts that she had assimilated through 93 years of meticulous reading, research, and discussion. She was bold, decisive, and determined. One great thing my grandmother did was make all her four daughters fiercely independent and highly educated. The age and times she mentored them, this was rare in rural India. She groomed them to lead, to teach, and all with great values, and humility. No one typified that better than Dr. T. Sarada.

Sarada Chithi is a scholar, and served Pitney Bowes and Celanese in various capacities for 40 years. Not to forget the several years she spent in Padmavati College in Tirupathi as a Chemistry lecturer preceding her stint in the United States. A PhD in Physical Chemistry from American University, with much work done at Columbia University and MIT, she was a specialist in Liquid Crystals research and education. She is quite well known for her work that are visible through her literary publications and several US Patents. In addition, she has been a tireless board member of the Bharatiya temple in Northern Pennsylvania.

Quite importantly, she was the catalyst for the success of the Thyagaraja Iyer and Ranganayaki Ammal family amidst their poverty and hardships. The fact that the descendants of that family are so situated and facile as they are today is in very large measure due to her innumerable sacrifices and discipline. For instance, she did not get married since she took the mentorship of her own younger siblings and all her cousins who were placed under her mentorship — both physically and financially, very seriously.

She coped with the loss of both her parents, her younger sister Gargi, her oldest sister Mythreyi, and her younger brother Parasaran with whom she had lived with for more than 20 years in the same house. She is very close to her family and did everything in her capacity to keep them motivated and happy. She is philosophical and led the life of an ascetic dedicated to the betterment of her fellow humans whether at the temple or the society at large . She was a big fan of various genres of Indian Classical Music. At same time, Western Classical Music and Opera played in the background in her house always. She attended several concerts of all genres, Eastern and Western, and discussed and dissected music ad nauseam, with experts and fans alike. She loved watching the big three of Tennis: Federer, Nadal, and Djokovic, and kept up with many sports quite keenly. She argued fiercely for the teams or players she rooted for.

Sarada has committed more than several tithes of her income and savings to several charities. She has continued to fund the education of several, several people at any and all times. But, her humility and ‘never asking for credit’ qualities are quite simply put - unparalleled.

Now, her fierceness was not just limited to her piercing glance in family albums. In fact, she will never remain a snapshot in the family album. When you think of her, memories keep gushing out. What backed up her serious energy for arguments was her knowledge of so many things. The younger bunch of her siblings – Gargi, Bhavatarini and Parasaran never picked up arguments or even disagreements with her, out of extreme respect for her. My mom as the elder sister would argue for a while and then given up. The arguments that turned into Maharabharata Yuddhams were those between her older brother Chandrasekaran and her. Both are highly educated, with PhDs to boot, both extremely well read, both strong in their convictions and ideals, and yet they had epic arguments even of seemingly ‘simple’ topics. There would be some and puffing during those tense moments. But, the most endearing aspect was that they would both back down eventually and behave that none of this happened. They would act normal and revert to the ever-loving siblings in a matter of 15 minutes. So, That is a small snippet of the family banter and entertainment that all of us children dreaded and at the same enjoyed through the years. They together, are very informative for the bystander. I have used quotes from their arguments on my own for years. Nowhere will you see or hear Shakespeare, Dumas, and Dickens, or the Alwars in a routine context. So many facts and figures will be thrown for all to gather. The decibels will rise to a crescendo, and get back to a constant audible level in a matter of minutes. These are the two role models for the entire family.

She had expressed a desire to have a few verses from Gita and Prabandams recited in her memory. We have selected the most appropriate.

**अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जना: पर्युपासते |
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् || 22||**

*ananyāśh chintayanto māṁ ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣhāṁ nityābhiyuktānāṁ yoga-kṣhemaṁ vahāmyaham*

***There are those who always think of Me and engage in exclusive devotion to Me. To them, whose minds are always absorbed in Me, I provide what they lack and preserve what they already possess.***

**कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन |
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि || 47 ||**

*karmaṇy-evādhikāras te mā phaleṣhu kadāchana
mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo ’stvakarmaṇi*

***You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, nor be attached to inaction.***

ஊரிலேன் காணி இல்லை உறவு மற்றொருவர் இல்லை
பாரில் நின் பாத மூலம் பற்றிலேன் பரம மூர்த்தி
காரொளி வண்ணனே என் கண்ணனே கதறுகின்றேன்
ஆர் உளர் களைகண் அம்மா அரங்க மா நகருளானே (29)

UrilEn kANI illai uRavu maTRRovar illai
pAril nin pAda mUlam paTRRilEn parama mUrtti
kAroLi vaNNanE en kaNNane kadaRuginDREn
Ar uLar kaLaikaN ammA aranga mA nagaruLAnE

*O Supreme Lord, I am of no town, I have no land, I have no other kin in this world. I have not even been able to access your feet! O Lord with the complexion of brightly lit clouds! O my Kanna (Krishna)! I cry in despair! Who is there to be support me like a mother! O Ranganatha!*

துப்புடையாரை அடைவதெல்லாம் சோர்விடத்துத் துணையாவ ரென்றே\*

ஒப்பிலேனாகிலும் நின்னடைந்தேன் ஆனைக்குநீ அருள்செய் தமையால்\*

எய்ப்புஎன்னை வந்துநலியும்போது அங்குஏதும் நானுன்னை நினைக்க மாட்டேன்\*

அப்போதைக்கு இப்போதே சொல்லிவைத்தேன் அரங்கத் தரவணைப் பள்ளியானே!

Thupudayaarai Adaivathellam Sorvidathu Thunaiyavarendre
Opilenagilum Ninadainthen Annaikku nee arul seithamaiyaal
Eippu ennai vanthu naliyum pothu angu ethum nan unnai ninaikka matten
Appothaikku ippothe solli vaithen arangath tharavanaip palliyane

People generally depend on persons whom they think will help them when they become weak and old. Eventhough I am not qualified and eligible person, I have surrendered unto to you Oh my Lord. The other day you saved the Elephant Gajendra when it was caught by an aligator and cried out for your help. At the old age when i am fraught with disease i may not be able to call nay even think of you. Hence I would prefer to call you now itself when I am hale and healthy so that you can save me at my odd hours Oh my Lord Ranga Natha who is in reclining pose at divine Sri Ranga Shetra.