

Dimensions of Indian Art

PUPUL JAYAKAR SEVENTY

VOL. I : TEXT

Editors

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DELHI

1986

A Tribute to Mrs. Pupul Jayakar

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Who does one call a Guru ?

The pendulum swings. To Eklavya, his Drona and to the Beatles, their Maharishi. Each age and seeker endeavours to define its or his own equation with deliverance. Krishnamurthy speaks of a relationship between friends; in the truth of a dialogue. Tradition defines the rites of initiation 'Dvija'—twice born—as the coming of age for a youngman.

It happened to me for the first time when I walked into the office of Mrs. Jayakar; Warli tribal paintings on the ceiling, the tussar clad Eam's chair—a dhokra boar on the uncluttered table, no chrome plastic pen-holder and files, the brightening twinkle in her eyes and that incredible chuckle whenever she sees something she delights in !

It could not have been better for an inexperienced 16 year old walking in to meet 'someone important' with sketch-books and scratch-pads under his arms. She understood the pouring of adolescent poetry scribbled on margins and the irrelevant drawings of shocking clothes meant to reject all that is wearable. And as she sized me, for the first time, I became aware of looking up at someone awesome; Yet someone, whom one could simply call—Pupul. Status and generation gaps disappear with Pupul as one's respect for her grows. One sits together under a great banyan—reaching out as it sends in, constant renewal, its ancient roots.

For the young, Pupul is an ocean of inspiration, challenging and deep, as it sweeps away the raft. Like a godmother who differentiates between indulgence and encouragement, she moulds as she scolds. Most believe she is the university best to train with, while some say you only have your egos to lose at the altar.

How to empty oneself ? The replenishing source of a *puṇyāghāṭa*. . . overflowing from a composed surface and no storm within; what is the energy that sustains that flow ? So much yet to learn and at 70, each moment as alive as the one before :

I have learnt most from her learning; learning as one walks with her on the bend of the River Ganga in the holy city, or sitting under the great banyan in Rishi Valley where her soul responds.

One learns while observing her conversations with the great sage or just listen as she listens to the tales of the housewife craftswoman. One learns seeing her orchestrate a bunch of discordant file-pushers or laughing with the beat poets of early revolts. Great art ought really to fall off trees like ripe fruit. She gives with the grace of an opening palm. Never intimidating as she reveals. And if there be in one, that faltering moment of hesitation, she bends easily to take you by the hand.

The gentle hand on your head is also the hand on your shoulder.