

Kapila ji as I knew her

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It is a matter of great pride for me to be able to say a few words about our respected Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan ji. We all used to know her as an eminent scholar and a great connoisseur of Indian Culture, Art and Music, who served the cultural domain of India till her last days.

In the year 1960, I met her for the first time when she visited our Faculty. In the year 1963, she presented Pt. Ravi Shankar ji and Pt. Kishan Maharaj ji in Max Mueller Bhawan, which was situated at the Connaught place, New Delhi during that time. I was so impressed by the way she presented the program along with the vast knowledge she had about our Music that I went to meet her in person after the program. I was charmed by her knowledge and got to know that she could also speak Bengali and many other languages.

I remember a seminar organized by the Faculty of Music and Fine Arts, University of Delhi a few years back, where Kapila ji donated an Esraj, which was played by her mother. Apart from playing Esraj, Kapila ji also used to practice Classical dance in her earlier days.

As an author, she has written many books which got recognition all over the world. In the year 1970, I was selected as a member of the Indian Cultural Delegation and all the members of the delegation met her in the office of the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. While briefing all of us, she said one thing that I quote: “When we send our delegation abroad, we send them as good friends, but when they come back, they come with a different temperament, but I hope this will not happen to you.” When I came back from my tour, I told her that we had a pleasant trip and I am grateful to her and the Ministry of Culture.

After two years, I was invited by UNESCO to attend the International Seminar on Music in Perth, Australia, called ISME (International Seminar on Music Education). During the seminar, I was amazed to see how Kapila ji was explaining different postures of Indian Classical Dance. She was also very surprised to see me at the seminar. I went up to her and thanked her once again for sending me abroad in the delegation in the year 1970.

Few years back, I met her at the India International Centre, New Delhi and that was our last meeting. I cannot forget her contribution in the field of Music and Kapila ji will always be remembered as a great soul whose contribution can never be forgotten by all of us.

Kapila ji was not only a great Scholar, Artist, Philosopher but was also a wonderful human being, respected by all. Kapila ji's demise has left a void in the domain of Indian Culture and Music which can never be filled up.