



Reflection on
Vasanti Damle's Life
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Vasanti had a charm of her own. It was of friendly warmth and I recall several intellectual conversations that were scintillating and nostalgic, without being sentimental. Her social circle was wide, not only in the academic world but also extending to the cultural arena. She could easily dissolve herself in feminist groups like Stree Mukti Sanghatana as well as literary circles like Granthali. Her participation and contribution in such groups was creative and spontaneous.

I have known her for over 35 years. We had so many common interests. One of them was understanding the nature of Soviet society and Communist rule in the USSR. She had spent years there and she was

fluent in Russian language. She was familiar and had widely read Russian literature. After I visited Russia, we could exchange our experiences and notes. She would always give her insights, with personal anecdotes. She never showed off her knowledge or her academic excellence or her designation.

I was often invited by her to deliver guest lectures in her Department of History. She has felt that my journalistic experience would be useful to the students and lecturers who were attending refresher course and I used to thoroughly enjoy those interactions. Perhaps even those who attended those lectures felt so. Through this, my relationship with the academic community

was enriched, primarily because of Vasanti's initiative.

We had many common friends with diverse interests-like filmmaker Vinay Newalkar, (late) Shreedhar Shrimali, Pushpesh Pant, Madhavi Kamat and Amla Newalkar, Raghu Kul, Syed Mirza and so on. Not everybody shared her ideological predilection or political position. But that was never an impediment in her case. In fact, those differences could only result in non-partisan discussions. The open mind, grand sense of humour and of course the intellectual content were the

foundation of that relationship. The books she read and reviewed, the articles she noticed, the seminars she attended or participated etc used to be the fulcrum of those group meetings.

Books, particularly of history, modern or ancient, were her passion. Now, all those pleasant memories are with us. In those memories she lives, and therefore she is still amongst us and will remain with us till we join her wherever she is.

