

Dahananta by Debasis Majumdar

The Play

This is a tale of a lower middle class septuagenarian couple Akinchan and Sabarni- lonely, isolated and deserted. Their elder son Abhirup, a methodical careerist lives in Oklahoma with his family. Their daughter, Ratnasree and son-in-law Romit, who stay in Delhi, can be called selfish, covetous and hypocrites. Their youngest son, Dhritirup, an extremist yields to his political belief of terrorism by sacrificing himself in a police encounter. Grief engulfs the couple. They mourn Dhritirup's death and keep the sorrow within themselves. Abhirup and Ratnasree avoid their parents and gradually, the couple becomes more alienated and insecure.

Their loneliness and isolation compels them to think, what will happen to either of them if one of them dies? Who will provide them a shelter or lend a hand of support? Such questions bother them, thereby making their life a burden. Both of them decide to consume sleeping pills. But was that inevitable? Another fold of this play raises a question on the future of our socio-political scenario. The quasi-fascist politics that prevails under the veil of democracy, the terrorism or the ideology of Rabindranath Tagore to search humanity within one's self – which one of these ideologies will survive?

The Director & Playwright

Shri Debasis Majumdar was born in Baktiarpur, Bihar in 1950 and grew to adulthood in Kolkata amidst the political turbulence of the early 1970s. Starting as a poet in Bengali, he found his true calling as a dramatist with the production of *Dansagar* (1975) based on Premchand's well-known story *Kafan*. Shri Majumdar formed the theatre group 'Sudrak' in 1977 and launched its first production *Amitakshar* in the

same year. The play subsequently won the West Bengal Natya Akademi's Award (1980) and was translated and performed in several Indian languages. In Hindi, *Amitakshar* was named as *Tamrapatra*. Out of some forty plays and numerous critical essays written by him, *Samabartan*, *Ishabasya*, *Asamapta*, *Chandalini*, *Pratinidhi*, *Swapna Santati*, *Rangamati* and *Dahananta* are some of his most notable plays. These plays were produced by Sudrak and have been published in various literary periodicals. Shri Majumdar has been the recipient of various awards like the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2005) and State Natya Akademi Award for his plays, *Amitakshar*, *Swapna Santati* and *Rangamati*.

The Group

'Sudrak' came into existence on 9th October 1977. With its first production, *Amitakshar* in 1978, Sudrak established itself as one of the leading theatre groups, involved in the Experimental Theatre Movement of Bengal. Besides the appreciation received from the audience, *Amitakshar* received applause from eminent personalities like Satyajit Ray, Shambhu Mitra, Samaresh Basu, Ganesh Pain etc. The play is considered as one of the best ten original plays ever written in Bengal and has been translated into seven national languages.

Some of the remarkable plays by Sudrak are *Amitakshar*, *Ishabasya*, *Chandalini* (Based on Rabindranath Tagore's *Chandalika*), *Rangamati*, *Pakhiwala*, *Sahajsajan*, *Dahananta* and *Paryabarto*.

Apart from theatre, Sudrak publishes 'Natya Patra : Sudrak' each year. The group also publishes books based on theatre like *Tripti Mitra*. Since, 2008 Sudrak conducts National Theatre Festival, called 'Sudrak Utsav' at the Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata. Besides the theatre festival, the group also organizes exhibitions on painting and sculpture.

Joymoti by Anup Hazarika

The Play

The play *Joymoti*, is about an iron lady of 17th century Assam history, who with her fortitude and self sacrifice entirely changed the course of destiny of the 'Ahom Empire' when the atrocious ruling of a certain class of the Ahom royal family were about to lead the entire Ahom kingdom to its doom. The play not only gives information about Joymati's life but also focuses on her inner thoughts and mental power.

Director's Note

"What Joymati might have thought during her days of sufferings?"—were the key questions haunting us before preparing the play. We were searching for the answer in the available references in the Assam history and other forms of literature. Our discussions with various persons who spent much of their time in the scholarly study of Assam history and particularly on the Ahoms were other resources and inspirations in writing and shaping up the play. But still our search is on; hope someday we will get the answer.

Playwright & Director

Anup Hazarika, the playwright & director of the play *Joymoti*, graduated from National School of Drama in 1990. He specialized in acting. So far he has directed 32 stage plays for both amateur and mobile theatre of Assam. He established his group Baa (The Creative Breeze) in 1995. As an actor he acted in 72 stage plays, 21 feature films, more than

fifty television serials, tele-films and a number of radio plays. Apart from that he enjoys translating plays & dramatizing plays from different stories & novels. He has already translated Mohan Rakesh's *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* into Assamese and staged the play under his direction in 1993. In the year 2008 he was awarded the best light designer's award by The Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (Meta) & in 2007 he was awarded the best supporting actor's award by the Govt. of Assam for his performance in Assamese cinema. Presently he is working at Regional government Film & Television Institute, Kahilipara, Guwahati as a lecturer of Acting

The Group

BA (A Cultural Organization), of Guwahati, Assam was established in the year 1995, by a group of active theatre workers. So far the group has staged several plays including Arun Sarma's *Agnigarh*, Mahendra Borthakur's *Sinsa Paneer Mass*, Jimoni Choudhury & Pakija Begum's *Menaka* and Habib Tanvir's *Charandas Chor*. Apart from producing stage plays the group has organized production oriented intensive theatre workshops and children theatre workshops in collaboration with National School of Drama and Sangeet Natak Akademi in Guwahati.

Gambhira-Gambhira by Parimal Tribedi

The Play

The play tells the story of Bhubhan, a Gambhira artist. Bhubhan believes that without truth, Gambhira is not possible. What we see today, Bhubhan says, is not the original Gambhira.

It's only a mike, a mike to announce various projects like sanitation, literacy, health etc. It has lost its voice. The *vandana* that they once sang to please lord Shiva is now sung to please the political leaders. The voice which once spoke against the social follies and foibles, now advertises different projects.

Director's Note

I was born and brought up in a village. In those days there was no television. Radio was the possession of only rich people. So we found our sources of entertainment only in *Jatra, Alkap, Manosa Gan, Kirtan, Gambhira* and other forms of folk theatre. Among these 'Gambhira' was the most powerful medium to depict the follies of the society of the time. It spoke the truth. It spoke for the common people. But now, days have changed. Entertainment has several fountainheads and in the crowd of media and hordes of TV channels the true 'Gambhira' is lost. I miss it. I miss its real flavor, its power to speak the truth.

As 'Gambhira' has its own distinct identity and it bears the folk identity of Malda district, it was difficult to give it a dramatic shape. I have gone through a lot of experiments and studies. Its language, tone, song, dance, body movement, costume, and theme – every part of it needed an in-depth attention. It was not an easy task to string all the parts into a single thread. We have to arrange workshops, seminar and several sessions of talks with the Gambhira artists to bring clarity on each part of Gambhira. The play took about eight months to get prepared. In these eight months we tasted the real flavor of Gambhira and earned a great experience.

The Director & Playwright

Director, actor, playwright and founder of 'Malda Malancha', Parimal Tribedi is a well-known theatre personality in Bengali Theatre and is a Member of Paschimbanga Natya Akademy. For the

last twenty one years he has been leading his present group 'Malda Malancha' in the mofussil district, Malda. In these years he has directed nearly fifty plays. He has written 15 plays which has been staged and highly acclaimed.

Some of the noted plays written by Parimal Tribedi are *Gambhira Gambhira*, *Ranir Ghat*, *Brittanta*, *Bhalo Manush*, *Ratan*, *Udas Puja*, *Asamayer Bhabna*, *Lotun Jevan*, *Swasti* and *Lajja*. He has directed almost all these with his group.

The Group

A group of young but competent theatre workers led by Sri Parimal Tribedi formed 'Malda Malancha' in 1993 to devote itself to the task of promoting the glorious tradition of experimental theatre movement. "Malancha" ventured to produce some significant modern plays, both original as well as in translations. "Malda Malancha" also organises theatre festivals every year and conducts seminars and theatre workshops.

Darshak by Priyamvad

The Play

Once again they entered into the shiny yet dark...real yet dreamy...cave of love which was built with memories, sorrows and pain. When life has to pay heavily in return to the desires to live, they were in their own magical world. Her body was breathing the coldness and he thought that she is surrendering. She was there...right there... and her soul could see clearly through her body that only the body was needed by him. He always said that the soul doesn't participate and

starts to play an audience when there is this fear or doubt, only bodies are the active participants... And that night soul did the same while the bodies reacted to the desires.

Time passed by and again they met. Her body looked sad and ugly. Still they were ready to enter the cave of love... Again... And so they entered. He was wearing his clothes... Soul was an audience again... When suddenly she uttered ...

Director's Note

"Hum jaadu ke andar the...usi tarah jaise prem aur swapn ya dukh ke andar hote hain..."

These were the lines which inspired me to work on the story and to adapt it as a play. The so called love between a man and a woman is the very manifestation of convenient desires. The entire life keeps revolving around the search for eternal love and satisfaction, both physical and spiritual, dealing with responsibilities and finally getting nowhere...and we start living in installments. What's going to happen when Soul is the audience or when Soul is the active player.

The Director

Sadanand Patil, began exploring the theatre in the year 1987 in Katni, Madhya Pradesh. In the year 1994, he started to work with "Rang-vidushak (Bhopal)" under the direction of the maestro Bansi Kaul and continued till 2001 with the group. In 2001, entered National School Of Drama and graduated in acting and then worked with the NSD Repertory Company for six years where he got the opportunity to explore the art under the legends like Late B.V. Karanth, Late Bhaskar Chandravarkar, Habib Tanvir, Naseeruddin Shah, Anuradha Kapur, Prasanna, Ram Gopal Bajaj, Devendra Raj Ankur, Rob Clare and many other stalwarts.

Having over two thousand performances and more than hundred plays to his credit, presently he works with Kingdom Of

Dreams.

The Writer

Priyamvad is best known for his fictions in Hindi. His widely acclaimed novels include, *Ve Wahan Qaid Hain*, *Parchhai Naach*, *Chhutti ke Din ka Chorus* and *Dharmsthal*. His collections of stories like “Khargosh” and “Aainaghar” attracted the immediate attention of the readers and critics alike for their content and style. He has been the guiding spirit behind the last 19 Kathaakaar Sammelan Sangman. Two films, *Anwar* and *Khargosh*, were based on his short stories.

Story – Priyamvad

Direction – Sadanand Patil

Of Mice and Men by

The Play & Director's Note

Of Mice and Men takes place during America's Great Depression, which lasted from the stock market crash of October 1929 until 12 years later when World War II began. One result of the depression was lack of steady jobs, which resulted in an increase in the number of itinerant workers. For the most part, these itinerant workers were men who traveled from town to town seeking short-term employment. The play addresses the real hopes and dreams of working-class America. It raises the lives of the poor and dispossessed to a higher symbolic level. *Of Mice and Men* tries to explain what it means to be human. It touches on several themes: the nature of dreams, the nature of loneliness, man's propensity for cruelty, powerlessness and economic injustices, and the uncertainty of

the future. Nearly all of the characters admit, at one time or another, of having a profound sense of loneliness and isolation the characters are rendered helpless by their isolation, and yet, even at their weakest, they seek to destroy those who are even weaker than they are. Steinbeck records a profound human truth: oppression does not come only from the hands of the strong or the powerful. The novel suggests that the most visible kind of strength—that used to oppress others—is itself born of weakness.

The farm, of which George and Lennie dream, does not exist in reality but it, is very real in their minds, where they will have self-respect and independence. It becomes a symbol of their relationship and the re-telling of the dream becomes a ritual. In opposition to this symbol is the bunkhouse which represents the cruel world of reality, where we see discrimination, cruelty, insensitivity and suspicion. This production evolved during a workshop with Rang Vinayak Theatre Group. Apart from struggling hard to portray the complex characters the young actors contributed in many other ways. They added certain hand properties, made set props, even brought suitable costumes.

The Director

Hema Singh, a well known actor, a graduate of NSD's Integrated Course, worked with NSD Repertory Company for 10 years. She has done major roles with eminent national and international directors. She was awarded with NSD's prestigious 'Manohar Singh Smriti Award' for her contribution to theatre in 2008. She has acted in tele-films and serials with directors like Shyam Benegal and M.S.Sathyu. Her portrayal of Imarti Devi in a T.V. serial has fetched her 'Indian Television Academy Award 'for Best Actress in a negative role'. She has done innovative work in the field of Parsi theatre and presentation of poetry on stage. She has assisted famous Parsi style actor Late

Master Fida Hussain 'Narsi' at NSD for 6 years. Apart from 15 productions in Parsi style to her credit, she has directed plays of other genres such as *Hot Air*, *Gadar*, *Jasma Odhan* & *Chainpur ki Dastan*.

Presently, she is an Associate Professor of Acting at NSD.

The Author

The winner of the 1962 Nobel Prize in Literature, John Steinbeck was an American author of twenty-seven books, including sixteen novels, six non-fiction books, and five collections of short stories. He is widely known for the comic novels *Tortilla Flat* (1935) and *Cannery Row* (1945), the multi-generation epic *East of Eden* (1952), and the novellas *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Red Pony* (1937). The Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) is considered Steinbeck's masterpiece. Many of his works are considered classics of Western literature.

The Group

Established in 2007 by Dr. Brijeshwar Singh, 'Rang Vinayak Rang Mandal' is a cultural wing of Daya Drishti. In 2010 Rang Vinayak formed its own Theatre Repertory which has now 30 artists. It has been hosting theatre festivals, showcasing works of eminent theatre directors. It has also been organizing Children theater workshops, giving them a cultural platform. It's widely acclaimed productions of different genres are *Adarsh Hindu Hotel*, *Jab Shaher Hamara Sotha Hai*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Mattavillas*, *Reunion*, *Saiyaan Bhaye Kotwal* and *Chainpur ki Dastan*.

Design & Direction Hema Singh

Akoopar by Shri Dhruv Bhatt

The Play

Akoopar is based upon the first novel in the history of Gujarati literature, which deals with the life of Maldharis and their relationship with lions, nature and the animals of Sasan Gir- the last homage of Asiatic lion. Written by Shri Dhruv Bhatt, this play won two awards this year.

Director's Note

Akoopar is the only play in Gujarati theatre, based on life of Maldharis. The unnamed narrator, who is a painter, has an assignment to paint the elemental form of Earth, under a grand project. The artist is an outsider who gradually unfolds the inner world of the Gir forest.

To create and understand reality, a team of artists and technicians stayed in Gir forest for ten days, in turns. They met a lot of Maldharis, forest officers, staff, rescue operators and forest guides. To bring authenticity to the play, natural sounds of forest, lions, leopards, other animals and Maldharis were recorded. In addition *marasiya* (death songs), marriage songs and *dohas* (couplets) were also recorded.

The costumes were made in Sasan village and jewellery as well as properties for the play, was also purchased from there.

The Director

Creative Director and Managing Trustee of JT Memorial Foundation, Aditi Desai pursued a career in theatre since

childhood under the guidance of her father, Shri Jashwant Thaker. She developed herself from an actress to an activist, trainer, director, producer, film maker and script writer. Her key areas of interest are theatre, video film making, development of popular educational material and Gender and theatre training. She has directed 18 plays and made 21 documentaries, docu-drama, video-spots and programmes based on various social and environmental issues. She has also acted in plays directed by Bharat Dave, Naushil Mehta, Raju Barot and many more. Desai has worked extensively in Regional Television, feature films, documentaries and radio in last twenty two years. She has been the pioneer of street theatre in Gujarat, on issues pertaining to women and has conducted over sixty theatre training workshops in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Desai has also been a faculty member and course coordinator for theatre in J.G. School of Performing Arts.

The Playwright

Born on 8th May 1947 in Gujarat, Shri Dhruv Bhatt was always interested in writing fictions and plays since childhood. He retired as a Section Manager from an engineering firm. Some of his notable works are *Khovayelun Nagar*, *Agnikanya*, *Samudrantike*, *Tattvamasi*, *Atarapi*, *Shruvantu*, *Gaye Tena Git*, *Karnalok* and *Lovely Paan House*. His work, *Samudrantike* has been awarded by Gujarati Sahitya Parishad as a rural novel, by Gujarati Sahitya Academy as a travelogue, by Marwadi Sammelan as best literary work and by Goverdhanram Tripathi Award committee as a novel. His works *Gaye Tena Git*, *Akoopar*, *Karnalok* and *Tattvamasi* have been awarded by Gujarati Sahitya Academy.

The Group

Jashwant Thaker (1915-1991) was the doyen of Gujarati theatre. He initiated the Navi Rangbhoomi Movement in Gujarati and was the founder member of the Gujarat chapter of IPTA aka Lok Natya Sangh. To honor his memory, JT Memorial Foundation was set up in 2005.

The Foundation works towards development communication, with a focus on gender. It believes that communication and training can be used to strengthen oppressed people and catalyse social movements. They create productions to empower children, youth, women and community members. All the plays under this foundation are usually in Gujarati. Some of their plays are *Agnikaya*, *Akoopar*, *Kasturba*, *Savitribai Phule*, *Patra Mitro*, *Udan Charkaldi*, *Kaagdo*, *Prem* etc.

Play It, So 17 Dances About Something

The Play

It's 2044. Janina, Jan and Janka start working on an experimental documentary. In one of the rooms of a well-maintained museum theater, while making use of some former technologies (MacBookPro, overhead projector, etc.), costumes (Milan Fashion Week, 2013) and emotions (early twenty-first century cinema, dance, theater), Janina, Jan and Janka try to play out that SOMETHING that was the THING.

Directors' Note

In 2012, with a symbolic show *Celebration so the end and Once Again*, we closed two decades of the existence of Dada Theatre. With the performance , *Play it, So 17 Dances About*

Something, we're going to enter a new Dada Epoch, by loosening the shackles binding all artistic creation of such a long-lived form. Please let us not reveal the inspiration and intentions that accompanied us while working on *Play it*. The inspiration and intentions are, in fact subject to constant evolution until the premiere day. To those impatient, we can offer a short note announcing the show. However, we cannot resist not mentioning that we're approaching 100th anniversary of the first emanation of Dada (Zürich 1916). Hence, once again we would like to publicly confess our belief that, since that memorable event, everything has only been as it is, and can no longer be any different. *Play It, So 17 Dances About Something*, is a collective brainchild of three Dada artists: Anna Steller, Katarzyna Chmielewska and Leszek Bzdyl, the co-founders of this one of a kind and legendary Theatre.

The Directors

Leszek Bzdyl – A dancer, actor, choreographer, director as well as founder and artistic director of Dada von Bzdülów Theatre, he has been involved in a professional stage career since 1987. He graduated from Department of Philosophy and History, University of Wrocław, in 1990 and founded Dada von Bzdülów Theatre in 1993 with Katarzyna Chmielewska. He has been awarded by the Minister of National Education (1999), the Marshal of the Pomerania Region (2006) and Theatre Pasta International Theatre Awards – India (2007) for his artistic achievements. In 2010, he was conferred with a 'Meritorious for Polish Culture' medal, by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage.

Katarzyna Chmielewska – A dancer, choreographer, director, dance teacher as well as founder & artistic director of Dada von Bzdülów Theatre, Katarzyna graduated from the State Ballet School in Gdańsk (1984-1993), following which she studied at P.A.R.T.S in Brussels (1996-1997). She has been involved with numerous Polish cultural institutions e.g.: the Ballet Group of the Baltic State Opera House, Gdańsk (1993-1994), Gdańsk

Dance Theatre (1994-1995), City Theatre, Gdynia (1997-2000), Klub Żak, Gdańsk (2000-2008) and Wybrzeże Theatre, Gdańsk (2008-present). She has been awarded by the Mayor of Gdańsk and the Marshal of the Pomerania Region for outstanding and lifetime artistic achievement.

Anna Steller – A dancer, performer and choreographer, Anna has been an actress and dancer in Dada von Bzdülów Theatre, since 2003. Since 2004, she has been performing with 'Read My Lips Theatre'. In 2005, she co-established 'Good Girl Killer' collective. She is a proud recipient of the Dance Web Scholarship for the 2003 Impulstanz dance workshops and festival in Vienna. In 2012, Steller was awarded by the Marshal of the Pomerania Region for her outstanding achievement in the field of dance and theatre.

The Group

Dada von Bzdülów Theatre is an independent group of professional dancers and actors staging performances, in cooperation with home and foreign cultural institutions, such as: Teatr Wybrzeże, Gdańsk, Klub Żak, Gdańsk, Dance Advance, Philadelphia, USA, Les Hivernales, Avignon, France, Old Brewery, /Poznań and Teatr Nowy, Łódź; Nuova Foundation, Poznań. Since 2008, it is affiliated with Teatr Wybrzeże, Gdańsk, and has been regularly staging all its premiere & repertoire performances there. As of today, Dada has produced more than 45 performances, some of its productions are, *Play it, so 17 dances about something*, *Enclave 4/7*, *Invisible Duets*, *Le Sacre*, *Caffè Lattè* and *Red Grass*.

Directed, Choreographed by: □ Katarzyna Chmielewska, Anna Steller, Leszek Bzdyl

Snake, Love and Sexuality

Ravindra Tripathi's



There are a lot of stories in Indian mythology and folklores where you find the snake or the serpent as sexual motif. Some modern plays are also based upon it. For example Girish Karnad's play Nagmandala. The snake as sexual motif is not limited only to India. In 13th bharat rang mahotsav, the Japanese play *Ugetsu Monogatari* (directed by Madoka okada) also presents the snake as a charmer and lover of human being.

It is story of 10th century Japan. There is a young man, named Toyoo, son of a fisherman. He lives near seashore. A beautiful woman named Manago comes to his home in a rainy night. Toyoo is attracted towards her. He also lends his umbrella and promises to meet her again in near future. After some days he goes to her house on the pretext of going back

his umbrella. During that he gets intimate with her. Manago gives him a beautiful sword as a token of their relationship. But after sometime it comes out that the sword was stolen from a shrine. Toyoo is caught by the officials on the charge of theft. He is taken to the house of Manago and there it is discovered that actually Manago is not a woman but a serpent. She transforms herself as a woman to get Toyoo love. Now the question is what will happen of their relationship. Will Toyoo accept Manago, the serpent as his beloved or leave her?

Ugetsu monogatari is a play about coexistence of natural and supernatural in human life. We are fascinated by supernatural things but it is not always joyful. Sometime pain and sorrow also come with joyful supernatural. Are we ready to accept both of them? Or we want to enjoy one and discard the other thing? Actually ambivalence is part and parcel of life.

It is a stylized play and full of body movements. Four actresses play role of Manago one actor of Toyoo. The director of the play Madoka Okada is known for his experimentation. He also assimilates the linguistic beauty of Japanese and traditional theatre of Japan. There are elements of pantomime in it also. It must be underlined that there are good plays from non-western countries in this festival. It is time to call it international bharat rang mahotsav.

‘The Park’ as a metaphor

Ravindra Tripathi's

theaterama



Three benches for three – yet no space –
a scene from *'The Park'*

The 13th Bharat Rang Mahotsva has started with fanfare. Although the city of Delhi is freezing with severe cold, the theatre lovers are daring with enthusiasm to watch the plays. Even those who can't get ticket or passes, can enjoy food with fire in *The Foodhub*, which serves delicious kababs and momos . But let us talk about theatre instead of cold and food.

In Sriram Centre, on 8th of January, *'The Park'*, jointly written and directed by Manav Kaul and Kumud Mishra, witnessed a houseful of appreciative audience.

'The Park' is a play of just four characters, mainly three, who come in a public park during daytime. of course reasons for their coming to the park are different. One wants to spend some leisure time, the second one to have a nap on a bench and the third one, to watch a woman after she has had a shower.

There are three benches in the park, so there should be no problem for separate and independent spaces for them. But the problem starts when all of them want a particular bench for themselves. No one wants to leave his preferred bench. They argue and fight over their `rights'. The play starts as a comedy but slowly and gradually it becomes serious. Laughter disappears and serious identity issues appear. Right over the bench becomes a bone of contention between them. The burning topics of displacement and dislocation of people, the Indian adivasis, the Palestinians, the Israelis come in foreground

and in the process a comedy turns black. The play becomes a metaphor. A metaphor for struggles of indigenous people fighting for their demands in many parts of the world . Who has the right of land where Israel exists today? The Israelis, who are there today or the Palestinians, who are displaced? What is the basis of their rights? Who has the rights in Mumbai? Does the marathi speaking person have more rights there than those who don't know this language? These issues come during their arguments.

As the arguments go further, tension develops and all of them start fighting among themselves. the dialogue is broken. This shows how we, human beings, don't settle our differences amicably and democratically. This is not happening only in India, but everywhere.

'The Park' ends on positive note and initiates a process to think about how we bear our children. What is the state of our education system? The actors gave commendable performances.

Do you know Janusz Korczak?

Ravindra Tripathi's

theaterama



A Scene from 'Sunil Shanbaug's Play 'Dreams of Talim'

Sometime you hear a true story which is more dramatic than drama, more painful than Greek tragedies. Here is a story for you which Sunil Shanbaug, the director who presented 'Dreams of Talim' in 13th BRM (Bharat Rang Mahotsav), told before a gathering in NSD on 14th of January. We met in 'meet the director' program in BRM. I was officially asked to conduct the program by Dinesh Khanna, the coordinator. The idea of the meet is a very good concept and well organized by Dinesh and his team members' i.e. Suman Kumar Singh, Savita Rani, Vipin Bhardwaj and others. During the course of question-answer session, Sunil narrated a story which stunned the audience.

Replying to a question, Sunil said that this time (in 13th BRM) initially he wanted to bring another production based on Ravindra Nath Tagore's *Dak Ghar* (the post office) in 13th BRM. But, regarding staging of *Dak Ghar*, there is another story attached to the play, the story of Janusz Korczak. Korczak was a polish writer of children literature during the Second World War. He was also a principal of a school for orphans. It was the time when Hitler's German forces were encircling Poland. Himself a Jew, Korczak was at the receiving end of the Nazi German power, but he was continuing his work. He felt that

something unexpected might happen any day and children of his orphanage should be prepared for this. At that horrible time of history, Korczak decided to do a play with orphan students and the name of the play was *Dak Ghar*. The play was staged. After sometime, the Nazis sent all the children to a concentration camp and they were massacred there. Korczak accompanied the children in graveyards.

In Sunil's production of *Dak Ghar* this story is interwoven and it is already staged in Calcutta. The staging the Tagore's play in those circumstances and story of Korczak's integrity and commitment tells a lot about strength of literature. Korczak was himself a littérateur and wrote for children. But he chose Tagore's play. Those who have either read or seen *Dak Ghar* know that it a story of hope and faith of a young and innocent boy. Perhaps Korczak thought that this play will be a moral source of strength at that time of darkness. Or maybe something else was in his mind. Who knows? But one thing is certain that literature, drama or art has a moral relevance.

I am eager to see this production of Sunil.