

BLUEPRINT: RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

Project Type: Data Creation on 'Bonobibir Pala' and 'Tarja' --- 2 decaying folk forms of Sundarban area

Scheme: Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India

Grantee Organization: Uhinee Kolkata

Sanction Letter Reference: 28-6/ICH-Scheme/72/2013-14/13656

Dated: 31.03.2014

Preface:

'Bonobibi' and 'Tarja' are completely different two subjects. 'Bonobibi' is Goddess of jungle situated in the southern cost part of West Bengal. The Goddess is worshiped by the dwellers of these places who earn their livelihood from woods and its adjoined rivers. 'Tarja' is a kind of art form based on songs. Two singers raise points and counter points to reach to a conclusion by defeating the other. To narrate their logics, they derive subjects from epics like Mahabharata, Ramayana and Purana. Once very popular in rural Bengal, this art form is at present decaying.

1. BONOIBIR PALA (the singing enchantment of Bonobibi)

Or

BONOIBI HUJURANAMA

A) Introduction:

Worshipping Bonobibi is a popular faith among the people residing in the jungle oriented districts of Southern Bengal and especially in *the land of 18 tides*. The world knows it as Sundarban. One third portion of this vast and famous jungle is situated in India and the rest part is in Bangladesh. Bonobibi is worshiped in both the countries.

Bonobibi is originally Bonochandi. She is worshiped by the Hindus and Muslims alike. It seems that after Muslim invasion in undivided Bengal, the Sufi Peers took the initiative to perform the rituals of worshipping

Bonochandi and gradually Bonochandi became Bonobibi to satisfy the people of both the faiths.

The story is something like this:

A Sufi saint lived in Arab. He had no children. Being satisfied with his devotion, God sent his ambassador Gabriel to the saint. Gabriel said that God would give him a daughter and a son. But they, after achieving youth, would be devoted to the cause of God. The saint agreed. In time he got children. They were brought up in Sufi manner. They dressed and lived like Sufi saints. The name of the female child was Bonobibi and the male was Shah Jangli. When they achieved youth, Gabriel appeared again and said to the father that time has come to take the children to the cause of God. He would take them to the land of 18 tides.

In the mentioned land, Dakshi Ray was the ruler. He was a tyrant. Bonobibi arrived at the land. There was fierce fight between Dakshin Ray and Bonobibi. Dakshin Ray was defeated. Bonobibi and Dakshin Ray came into a treaty. It was decided that Dakshin Ray would rule the southern part of the land and Bonobibi would establish habitation in the northern part but overall supremacy of the land would be of Bonobibi.

A merchant after facing losses in business decided to try his luck by going into the dense forest to collect the forest wealth. He prepared seven vessels and employed men as his workers. He was looking after a young boy for his cooking. At last he found one. His name was Dukhe. Dukhe lived with his mother. His father died early. They were very poor. When Dukhe's mother was informed that the merchant would take his son into the forest, she rushed to the merchant and requested him not to take Dukhe because she has no one in this world other than Dukhe. The merchant proposed lucrative amount of money and assured that he would return Dukhe to his mother after the mission was over. When the frightened mother's all request failed, she took Dukhe aside and whispered in his ear that if he would face any danger in the forest, rivers and creeks he should chant the name of Bonobibi and she would protect him.

The merchant's vessels went to the dense forest. Dukhe was cooking for all of them. After reaching the desired island the merchant and his men entered into the forest. Dakshin Ray immediately learnt about the arrival of the merchant. He intervened and asked the merchant not to cut wood or to acquire anything from the jungle. Dakshin Ray himself would give the jungle's wealth in plenty to the merchant. But there was a condition. The merchant should leave Dukhe, the young boy, in the island for Dakshin Ray's feast. The merchant agreed with. Dakshin Ray filled up all the seven

vessels with wood, wax, honey, leaves, fruits, medicines, various fishes and crabs etc. Meanwhile, the merchant asked Dukhe to collect some woods for cooking from the forest. Reluctantly Dukhe entered into the forest, collected wood and came back only to find that all the vessels have left the bank. Dukhe was all alone in the dense forest. Frightened, he started weeping. Suddenly he found that a tiger was approaching towards him on the other bank of the creek. Out of terrible fear, Dukhe was almost fainted but before that he remembered his mother's words, ---- "Whenever you are in danger, chant the name of Bonobibi." Dukhe intensely prayed and chanted the name of Bonobibi. Bonobibi noticed everything. She knew Dakshin Ray in the image of tiger came to make his feast. Bonobibi immediately appeared before Dukhe, asked Shah Jangli to fight against Dakshin Ray, took Dukhe on her lap. Dakshin Ray fled away. Dukhe soon found his senses back by the caressing of Bonobibi. She took Dukhe to her resting place, kept him for some times and after giving all the forest wealth she took Dukhe and returned him to his mother. The name and rituals of worshiping Bonobibi spread out in the land of 18 tides.

The worship of Bonobibi is performed before the local people into the forest. But the main worship time is the harvesting month that is in the month of 'Poush', winter time.

The jatrapala, a unique dramatic form popular in rural Bengal depict the story and the divinity of Bonobibi in the winter and the people of Sundarban coming from the distant villages enjoy the performance throughout the night and return back at dawn.

B) Objective:

To take initiative towards the preservation of the form with Research, Data Creation and Publishing Documents and to restore their music with live recording and notation making and publishing them afterwards.

C) Implementation:

Some areas nearing Baruipur and Chhoto Mollakhali in South 24 Pargana district of West Bengal have been identified. In the season time of their performance, i.e. in winter, a team under our key resource person Debidas Tarafdar will visit the places to meet the community performers. The team will also have a harmonium player with them. The work plan shall be:

- i) to interview the performers,
- ii) to identify and the 'Pala' form of the mythological story mentioned above,
- iii) to recreate the story by understanding and simplifying the local dialect and Arabian usage in the hymns,
- iv) to collect specimens of their original tunes and to play them in harmonium on spot in order to make proper notation for the oral songs,
- v) finally, to publish the collected materials, history, connotations along with the notations.

D) Time Frame:

At the time of Bengali ritual 'Poush Sankranti', authentic performances of Bonobibir Pala can be found. According to English calendar, the time will be middle of January, 2015.

E) Specific Area:

Sundarban, which is expanded through West Bengal to Bangladesh, covering a total area of 8,00,000 square miles, is the largest vegetation of the world. Not only from this point of view, but also from the form of action of land mass, its floral and faunal wealth, the people therein, along with their culture and civilization, it occupies a unique position in the world.

F) Conclusion:

The geographical, archeological and anthropological studies on this area revealed many interesting facts. There are number of references about the land and people of this area in old literature such as the Upanishad, Purana, Ramayana and Mahabharata. References on this part of land as 'Banga' or 'Prachya' was probably first appeared in Vaidic literature ---- Aytarya Brahamana. This land was inhabited by Nishadas, Kiratas, Bharatas and Savaras and so on belong to Pre-Aryan, Proto-Indian or Proto-Astroloid clan. The lower Bengal appears to be the farthest territory in the east known to the Aryans till the age of Puranas.

This dense forest oriented people have their age old culture, civilization and practices which is pushed to the fence by the present urbanized culture of our society. It needs deep study and collection of data for preservation of this culture and practices for the posterity.

2. TARJA

A) Introduction:

Not much evident history can be found regarding 'Tarja'. Tarja is basically an oriental singing culture of Bengal without any hint of religion. Two people form a 'Pala' with questions and answers through songs with the music of dhol, kansi and harmonium. It is a cultural fragment of 'Kobiyali' --- a traditional form of Bengal. They were invited in any type of carnival in Bengal. There is no specific place for them. A famous name in 'Kobiyali' is Bhola Moyra. Actually it is the regional culture of 24 Parganas. Before the British came, 'Kobiyali' was popular even in cities apart from towns. However, like the other rural forms, no history of this form too has been maintained. The speciality of 'Tarja' is to attack the opponent through songs. Hence, the subjects are often dominated with Ramayana, Mahabharata, Purana and Folk Tales. Excepting the hill area of Darjeeling, entire West Bengal once had the practice of 'Tarja' culture. In this century in the age of T.V. and internet, this culture is almost extinct. They are now can be found very rarely in some parts of South 24 Pargana, Murshidabad and Birbhum district. Their songs contain stories of Panchamati, Daanveer Karna, Akal Bodhan and so on. Sometimes social features like rural oppression, corruption or values also become subjects of 'Tarja'.



Scheme for “Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India”

Form for National Inventory Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage of India

- A. Name of the State : West Bengal
- B. Name of the Element/
Cultural Tradition (in English) : The Singing Enchantment of
Bonobibi
- B.1. Name of the element in the language
and script of the community concerned,
if applicable : Bonobibir Pala
- C. Name of the communities, groups or,
if applicable, individuals concerned : ‘Moule’, ‘Bede’, ‘Kathuriya’,
‘Jele’
- D. Geographical location and range of the
element/cultural tradition : i) Chhoto Mollakhali,
ii) Baruipur,
South 24Pargana,
West Bengal
- E. Identification and definition of the element/cultural tradition of the India
- (Write “Yes” in one or more boxes to identify the domain(s) of intangible cultural heritage manifested by the element. If you tick ‘others’, specify the domain(s) in brackets.)
- (Yes) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage
 - (Yes) performing arts
 - (Yes) social practices, rituals and festive events
 - () knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
 - () traditional craftsmanship
 - other(s) ()

- F. Provide a brief summary description of the element that can introduce it to readers who have never seen or experienced it : See Blueprint (section 1A)
- G. Who are the bearers and practitioners of the element/Cultural Traditions? Are there any specific roles or categories of persons with special responsibilities for the practice and transmission of it? If yes, who are they and what are their responsibilities?
- i) Moule
Community: Muslims & Hindu Schedule Cast
Profession: Honey & Wax collection
 - ii) Bede
Community: Muslim, Hindu Schedule Cast & Schedule Tribes
Profession: Herbs Collection and Medicine Making
 - iii) Kathuriya
Community: Hindu Schedule Cast
Profession: Wood Collection
 - iv) Jele
Community: Muslim and Hindu Schedule Cast
Profession: Fishing
- H. How are the knowledge and skills related to the element transmitted today? Decaying
- I. What social functions and cultural meanings do the element/cultural tradition have today for its community? Communal Harmony
- J. Is there any part of the element that is not compatible with existing international human rights instruments or with the requirement of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, or with sustainable development? I.e. describe any aspect of the element/cultural tradition that may be unacceptable to Law of the country or may be in opposition to practicing

community's harmony with others. NO

K. Your Project's contribution to ensuring visibility, awareness and encouraging dialogue related to the element/cultural tradition

: Data Creation, Music Restoration & Publication

L. Information about the safeguarding measures that may protect or promote the element/cultural tradition

a. (Write "Yes" in one or more boxes to identify the safeguarding measures that have been and are currently being taken by the communities, groups or individuals concerned)

i. () transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education

ii. (Yes) identification, documentation, research

iii. () preservation, protection

iv. () promotion, enhancement

v. () revitalization

b. Write about the measures taken at local, state and national level by the Authorities to safeguard the element/cultural tradition?

No found by us yet

M. Write about the threats, if any, to the element/cultural tradition related to its practice, visibility and future longevity. Give facts and relevant reasons based on the current scenario

: i) Deforestation
ii) Urbanisation

N. Safeguarding measures proposed

: See Blueprint (section 1C)

O. Community Participation

(Write about the participation of communities, groups and individuals related to the element/cultural tradition in formulation of your project)

P. Concerned community organization(s) or representative(s)

(Provide detailed contact information for each community organization or representative or other non-governmental organization that is concerned with the element such as associations, organizations, clubs, guilds, steering committees, etc.)

- i. Name of the entity
- ii. Name and title of the contact person
- iii. Address
- iv. Telephone number
- v. E-mail
- vi. Other relevant information

Q. Give information of any Inventory, database or data creation centre (local/state/national) that you may be aware of or of any office, agency, organisation or body involved in the maintenance of the said inventory etc.

R. Principal published references or documentation available on the element/cultural tradition

- :
- i) 'Bonobibir Pala'
[book by Sujit Kumar Mondal]
 - ii) 'Sundarban'
[book by Jyotirindra Lahiri]
 - iii) Hungry Tide
[novel by Amitava Ghosh]

Signature:

Name & Designation: TAPAS DHARMAPAL

SECRETARY

Name of Institution (If applicable): UHINEE KOLKATA

Address: 30P/2, H.K. SETT LANE, KOLKATA 700050



Scheme for “Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India”

Form for National Inventory Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage of India

- A. Name of the State : West Bengal
- B. Name of the Element/
Cultural Tradition (in English) : Tarja
- B.1. Name of the element in the language
and script of the community concerned,
if applicable : Tarja
- C. Name of the communities, groups or,
if applicable, individuals concerned : Any rural community of Bengal
- D. Geographical location and range of the
element/cultural tradition : i) South 24 Pargana
ii) Murshidabad
iii) Birbhum districts of
West Bengal
- E. Identification and definition of the element/cultural tradition of the India

(Write “Yes” in one or more boxes to identify the domain(s) of intangible cultural heritage manifested by the element. If you tick ‘others’, specify the domain(s) in brackets.)

- i. (Yes) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage
- ii. (Yes) performing arts
- iii. () social practices, rituals and festive events
- iv. () knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- v. () traditional craftsmanship
- vi. other(s) ()

- F. Provide a brief summary description of the element that can introduce it to readers who have never seen or experienced it : See Blueprint (section 2A)
- G. Who are the bearers and practitioners of the element/Cultural Traditions? Are there any specific roles or categories of persons with special responsibilities for the practice and transmission of it? If yes, who are they and what are their responsibilities? Any rural community of Bengal
- H. How are the knowledge and skills related to the element transmitted today? Almost Extinct
- I. What social functions and cultural meanings do the element/cultural tradition have today for its community? Today it hardly exists to function
- J. Is there any part of the element that is not compatible with existing international human rights instruments or with the requirement of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, or with sustainable development? I.e. describe any aspect of the element/cultural tradition that may be unacceptable to Law of the country or may be in opposition to practicing community's harmony with others. NO
- K. Your Project's contribution to ensuring visibility, awareness and encouraging dialogue related to the element/cultural tradition : Data Creation & Publication
- L. Information about the safeguarding measures that may protect or promote the element/cultural tradition

a. (Write “Yes” in one or more boxes to identify the safeguarding measures that have been and are currently being taken by the communities, groups or individuals concerned)

- i. () transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education
- ii. (Yes) identification, documentation, research
- iii. () preservation, protection
- iv. () promotion, enhancement
- v. () revitalization

b. Write about the measures taken at local, state and national level by the Authorities to safeguard the element/cultural tradition?

No found by us yet

M. Write about the threats, if any, to the element/cultural tradition related to its practice, visibility and future longevity. Give facts and relevant reasons based on the current scenario

: i) Urbanisation

N. Safeguarding measures proposed :

O. Community Participation

(Write about the participation of communities, groups and individuals related to the element/cultural tradition in formulation of your project)

P. Concerned community organization(s) or representative(s)

(Provide detailed contact information for each community organization or representative or other non-governmental organization that is concerned with the element such as associations, organizations, clubs, guilds, steering committees, etc.)

- i. Name of the entity
- ii. Name and title of the contact person
- iii. Address
- iv. Telephone number
- v. E-mail
- vi. Other relevant information

Q. Give information of any Inventory, database or data creation centre (local/state/national) that you may be aware of or of any office, agency, organisation or body involved in the maintenance of the said inventory etc.

R. Principal published references or documentation available on the element/cultural tradition

: i) 'Banglar Polligeeti'
[book by Chittaranjan Deb]

Signature:

Name & Designation: TAPAS DHARMAPAL

SECRETARY

Name of Institution (If applicable): UHINEE KOLKATA

Address: 30P/2, H.K. SETT LANE, KOLKATA 700050

28-6/ICH-Scheme/72/2013-14 / 13456

31st March, 2014

To,

UHINEE KOLKATA

30P/2, H.K. SETT Lane,

Kolkata, West Bengal-700050

Registered/ Speed post



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Subject: Scheme for "Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India"

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is in reference to your proposal received by the Akademi regarding the Scheme as mentioned in the subject above. In this connection this is to convey the sanction of grant from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India via the Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi to the payment of an ad-hoc non-recurring grant of Rs. 1, 50,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Fifty Thousand only) for the purpose mentioned below:

Purpose	Amount of Grant (Rs.)	Remarks
Rhizome Tune-Salty Breeze (Preservation of 'Bonobibir Pala' & "Tarja"- 2 decaying folk forms of Sundarban Area	1, 50,000/-	DVD/VCD/CD of the Documentation/ Data creation / Cataloguing along with periodic report and other research documents are required to be submitted to the Akademi

The grant is subject to the following conditions:

1. The grant will be released in three installments - 50% in advance, 25% as 2nd installment after appraisal and balance 25% after completion of the project/ activity and submission of relevant documents as proof thereof.
2. The first installment (50%) will be released immediately after receipt of **Assurance Certificate** in the form enclosed duly completed and signed by the Competent Authority of the Institution or by the Individual along with a **certificate of non-receipt of grant**. (Both attached with the letter)
3. The second installment (25%) of the grant will be released after appraisal. An appraisal/ inspection of the beneficiary may be done by the Expert Committee/ Sub-Committee or officials of Ministry of Culture at a point of time which will be intimated accordingly in time bound manner. Progress report of work done out of the 1st installment received will have to be submitted along with other relevant documents, work reports, documentation (Audio-Video or any other format)

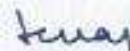
4. The final installment (25%) of the grant will be disbursed after completion of the project/ activity and submission of relevant documents as proof thereof along with the **Utilization Certificate** (Attached with the letter) and audited statement of accounts together with statement of Expenditure incurred out of the Akademi's grant for the stipulated financial year of the sanction of the grant. The statement of Annual Accounts of your institution viz. (i) Statement of income & expenditure/ Receipt & payments and (ii) the Balance Sheet duly audited either by a Chartered Accountant or Auditor, showing the receipt of this grant and expenditure met there from and Utilization Certificate in the enclosed form duly countersigned by a Chartered Accountant or Auditor will be sent to the Akademi soon after close of the stipulated financial year. The individual grantee will have to submit a utilization certificate audited by a Chartered Accountant/Auditor showing the receipt of this grant only.

Kindly note a few other guidelines pertaining to the sanction of the grant:

- i) The amount will be utilized only for the purpose(s) for which it has been sanctioned.
- ii) The fund release will be done by electronic transfer as per the Bank Details provided in your application. You are further advised to kindly reconfirm your Complete Bank Details i.e. Name of the Bank, Account No. and MICR & IFSC Codes if necessary.
- iii) A final consolidated report on completion of the project has to be submitted to the Akademi. The grantee is encouraged to prepare an electronic soft copy of all their work/research/data for easy access and further dissemination.
- iv) Before the first installment (50%) of the sanctioned grant is actually released, the Assurance Certificate regarding utilization of the grant duly completed and signed by the competent authority of the institution, should be sent within 15 days from the date of issue of this sanction letter. Failure to respond within stipulated time will entail cancellation of the sanction.
- v) Any enquiry pertaining to the process of documentation, survey, cultural mapping and data creation may be directed to the concerned Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Section of the Akademi by calling on the phone numbers mentioned above or by e-mail to ich@sangeetnatak.gov.in.
- vi) The receipt of this sanction letter may please be acknowledged immediately (by post/e-mail).

Wishing you best for your endeavors,

Yours faithfully,



R.K. Chandra
Deputy Secretary
(Finance & Accounts)



RHIZOME TUNE – Salty Breeze

Report 2: BONOIBIR PALA

Places we have been able to visit

Rangabeliya, Satjeliya, Marichjhanpi and Chhoto Mollakhali --- only four of the two hundred and forty five islands of Sundarban.



Kolkata – Starting Point (Underlined in Red)

Canning – Nearest Railway Station for the entire territory (Underlined in Red)

● Rangabeliya Island

● Satjeliya Island

● Marichjhanpi Island

Chhoto Mollakhali Island (Pinned)



Rhizome Routes:-

ISLAND	STARTING POINT	DESTINATION	TRANSPORT	DISTANCE (Km.)	TIME
Rangabeliya	Kolkata (Sealdah Rail St.)	Canning Rail St.	Local Train	56	1 h. 30 m.
	Canning	Gadkhali Ferry Ghat	Trekker	29.6	31 m.
	Gadkhali Ferry Ghat	Gosaba Kheya Ghat	Ferry	1	26 m.
	Gosaba	Rangabeliya	Cycle Van	5.2	35 m.
				91.8	3 h. 2 m.
Satjeliya	Kolkata (Sealdah Rail St.)	Canning Rail St.	Local Train	56	1 h. 30 m.
	Canning	Gadkhali Ferry Ghat	Trekker	29.6	31 m.
	Gadkhali Ferry Ghat	Gosaba Kheya Ghat	Ferry	1	26 m.
	Gosaba Kheya Ghat	Jatirampur Ferry Ghat	Cycle Van	6.5	30 m.
	Jatirampur Ferry Ghat	Satjeliya Ferry Ghat	Ferry	0.45	12 m.
	Satjeliya Ferry Ghat	Satjeliya Village	Jeep	2.9	7 m.
				96.45	3 h. 16 m.
Marichjhanpi	Kolkata (Sealdah Rail St.)	Canning Rail St.	Local Train	56	1 h. 30 m.
	Canning	Gadkhali Ferry Ghat	Trekker	29.6	31 m.
	Gadkhali Ferry Ghat	Gosaba Kheya Ghat	Ferry	1	26 m.
	Gosaba Kheya Ghat	Jatirampur Ferry Ghat	Cycle Van	6.5	30 m.
	Jatirampur Ferry Ghat	Hetalbari Kheya Ghat	Ferry	4.7	51 m.
	Hetalbari Kheya Ghat	Kalidaspur Kheya Ghat	Cycle Van	8.1	45 m.
	Kalidaspur Kheya Ghat	Marichjhanpi Kheya Ghat	Ferry	0.5	14 m.
				106.4	4 h. 47 m.
Chhoto Mollakhali	Kolkata (Sealdah Rail St.)	Canning Rail St.	Local Train	56	1 h. 30 m.
	Canning	Gadkhali Ferry Ghat	Trekker	29.6	31 m.
	Gadkhali Ferry Ghat	Gosaba Kheya Ghat	Ferry	1	26 m.
	Gosaba Kheya Ghat	Jatirampur Ferry Ghat	Cycle Van	6.5	30 m.
	Jatirampur Ferry Ghat	Hetalbari Kheya Ghat	Ferry	4.7	51 m.
	Hetalbari Kheya Ghat	Chhoto Mollakhali Bazar	Trekker	6.7	34 m.
				104.5	4 h. 22 m.

Even today, the islanders need to go into the jungle for financial reasons; to collect at least fish or crabs if not honey and wax. The government issues their work permits. In southern Bengal, the men of the villages set out for jungle before the arrival of monsoon. If they manage to return



from jungle, it is believed that it has happened by the grace and generosity of 'Maa Bonobibi'. Hence, in 'Maghi Purnima' or the full moon night of Bengali calendar month *Magh* (January-February) the entire village worships Goddess Bonobibi. The villagers cook and eat together in front of her makeshift temple (*Thaan*), recall the benevolence of Goddess Bonobibi and perform the original unedited play or 'Pala' named 'Bonobibir *Johuranama*' for the entire night. That is the traditional way to present Bonobibir Pala. Nowadays, however, many troupes have formed who perform the 'Pala' to entertain the tourists. Naturally, they have to edit and redesign the original overnight long folk play to a refined presentation of maximum one hour.

The original 'Pala' has two main episodes --- (1) Birth Episode and (2) Tale of Dukhe. The first episode tells about the story of Ebrahim or 'Brahim Fakir' and his two wives. It also shows how his twin children Bonobibi and Shah Jangoli are born and come to be settled in 'Athaaro Bhaatir Desh' (the land of eighteen tides) which is Sundarvan. The second episode, on the other hand, is the story of a poor village boy Dukhe and how he receives the benevolence of Goddess Bonobibi is rescued from being killed by tiger i. e. Dakkhinray, the archetypal enemy of Bonobibi and Shah Jangoli.

The troupes performances of Bonobibir Pala does not present the Birth Episode in order to cut the play short. We have seen such contemporary presentations in Rangabeliya and Satjeliya, the worshiping rituals of 'Maghi Purnima' in Marichjhanpi and Chhoto Mollakhali and the original 'Bonobibir *Johuranama*' in Chhoto Mollakhali.

Apart from that we have discussed on various topics related to the 'Pala' with performers, villagers and research scholar Sri Kanailal Sarkar whose book 'Sundarbaner Itihass' (The History of Sundarvan) is perhaps the only chronological and analytical account of this territory.

Last but not the least; Uhinee Kolkata has also arranged a show of Bonobibir Pala, as an initiative for revival, on 28th February 2015 in Tagore Cultural society for Rural Development in Rangabeliya island.

From the personal collection of a villager of Chhoto Mollakhali, we have been able to collect a worn out manuscript of an age old Bonobibir Pala which contains the entire original play and songs. we are enclosing the English translation of the whole script with this report.



Discussion with Artists and Experts: 1

[20 January 2015 || Rangabeliya, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana]

Interviewee : Sri Basudev Mondal, Sri Bishwajit Mondal, Sri Chittaranjan Mondal and Sri Ashok Poyra
[Professional Artists of Bonobibir Pala]

In an informal discussion with the artists we got to know that even before eight to ten years tourism was not so popular in Sundarvan locality. At that time, 'Bonobibir Pala' was performed as a part of the rituals of worshipping Goddess Bonobibi according to the age long tradition. Those who have jungle as their only means of survival, used to pray to Goddess Bonobibi (even now) for the man may return alive. It is heart rendering, yet true that the married women of Sundarvan follows the customs of a widow when their husbands go to the jungle. Till he returns, the wife eats only vegetables, does not tie up or comb her hair. The most pathetic part is that the husband puts off 'Shankha' and 'Pola' (wedding signs for Bengali women) from his wife's hands, mops up 'Sindur' from her forehead. If he comes back defeating all the dangers then only, after worshipping Goddess Bonobibi once again, he puts them back. And if he does not come back then . . .

To talk about the experience of jungle all four faces lost their colours. In spite of being dependant on jungle, the aspect of safety has remained totally neglected. The common dwellers of Sundarvan have to fight in empty hand with threats like tiger, crocodile, 'Kaamot' (a species of shark found in these waters), wild boar and snake. Till now, not even an effort has been made to figure out some special training or device which can provide some safety to them.

The worshipping ceremony of Goddess Bonobibi usually takes place on the first day of Bengali month *Maagh* (January-February). The artists told us about a special custom of this ritual. It has the tradition of reading hymns and description (*Panchali*) according to the Hindu convention. On the other hand, the utterance of 'Aajaan' (prayer according to Muslim convention) is compulsory here. The utterance of "Allah-hu-Akbar" goes on simultaneously with the singing of 'Panchali'.

According to the Hindu tradition, another form of Bonobibi is known in this locality. Her name is 'Bishalakkhi' or 'Bonodebi'.¹ There are not much



external differences between these two forms. Goddess Bishalakkhi or Bonodebi has four hands; she is armed with an axe, a 'Trishool' (Hindu mythological three-head spear) and a sword; she carries Dukhe on her lap and she rides on a tiger. On the other hand, Goddess Bonobibi generally rides on a rooster; she has two hands; Dukhe sometimes remain on her lap and sometimes by her side.

They also took us to visit two local temples. Both temples have simple construction --- thatched with terracotta tiles and tin shade with walls made of tin and hey. We could not find much difference between the two earthen statues. In both temples, the Goddess is dressed in brocade *saari* and riding on tiger. Her hands, however, are two in number. Thus, the different features we had known from the artists got all mixed up here. She is riding on tiger like Goddess Bishalakkhi but having two hands instead of four. On the other hand, if she is Goddess Bonobibi then she should be riding on rooster. The arms of Goddess Bishalakkhi are also missing here. The twelve year old boy named Dukhe is in different positions in both temples. He is on the Goddess' lap in the first temple and in the second one; he is riding on a ferocious open-jawed crocodile on the right side of the Goddess. We got to know that these small variations are seen all over Sundarvan.²

On asking about their performance they said that all the '*Palas*' are derived the mythological '*Bonobibir Johuranama*'.³ However, the '*Pala*' which they perform is written by poet Jasimuddin.⁴ This '*Pala*' was first appeared in Barishal district of East Bengal (present Bangladesh) and spread all over Sundarvan in time. Hence, the music of this '*Pala*' has immense influence of '*Barishali*' (adj. Barishal) tune. We were also told that the collector and compiler of most of the songs and tunes of this '*Pala*' is Abbasudin Ahmad Sahib --- celebrated singer of Bangladesh.

When the tourism business started timidly for the first time in Sundarvan, a '*Pala*' director named Sri Rampada Mondal formed a team under the title '*Bonolata Tour & Travels*'. This team worked as organiser of tourist programme and also performed Bonobibir Pala for them. Later on, Sri Baburam Sardar and Sri Uttam Bar formed another troupe for Bonobibir Pala in Rangabeliya which they named '*Bhai Bhai Opera*'. However, that

1. For cross reference see Pg. 7, Question 1 [Interview of Sri Kanailal Sarkar]

2. For photograph see Pg. 84, Pic. Ref.: B/R/11 and B/R/12

3. See Pg. 22 - 83

4. For cross reference see Pg. 9, Question 4 [Interview of Sri Kanailal Sarkar]



troupe also desolved in time. Sri Uttam Bar formed a separate troupe named 'Sebastian Smrity Natya Sanstha'. This troupe was closed after the death of Sri Uttam Bar. Our interviewee Sri Bishwajit Mondal and Sri Basudev Mondal were members of that troupe and had learnt from Sri Uttam Bar. Nowadays they are working in 'Maa Bonobibi Opera' under the direction of Sri Shashi Bhushan Mondal.

Sri Ashok Poyra told us that today, apart from the rituals; the performance of Bonobibir Pala has been associated with tourism which has opened an alternative way of earning. But at the same time several teams are performing and the trend is inclining towards entertainment. Thus, the dignity, depth and artistic excellence of the '*Pala*' are suffering.

According to Sri Chittaranjan Mondal, because of the association of Bonobibir Pala with tourism, both earning and enthusiasm of the artists have increased. With his rural simplicity he states the financial reality in this aspect. Tourist season in Sundarvan prevails from December to February. In these three months several troupes rush about in every tourist lodge to perform. Three shows are performed in one day on an average in the pick hour. During the season, the artists divide one day into two working days. From 6:00 am to 2:00 pm they attend their regular professions such as pulling cycle van, digging, shop keeping and others. From 3:00 or 4:00 pm onwards they prepare and present the show. If everything goes well in this three month long season then an artist earns about fifteen thousand Rupees in total. Sri Chittaranjan Mondal says without pretention, "I earn two hundred Rupees for digging and two hundred and fifty Rupees for performing in a day."

To quench our curiosity they told us now they all have been habituated with the adjustment of this dual lifestyle of a labourer and an artist. They utter from the core of their heart, "Many respectable people come from outside, they watch our show, appreciate. This honour is much more attractive than money."

However, regret is also heard from the four. Morbidity takes over the artistic minds when tour parties do not want to watch performance, when they have to wait for hours after putting on make-up or when a funky tour party ignores the performance and starts on shallow chilling out. But on the very next moment they revive with the name of '*Maa Bonobibi*', plunge for the next show with fresh zeal. It is evident enough that the struggling lives of the people of this frightfully beauteous land can never be defeated by trivial and pitiful urban negligence.



Discussion with Artists and Experts: 2

[28 February 2015 || Rangabeliya, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana]

Interviewee : Sri Kanailal Sarkar
[Research Scholar. Author of 'Sundarbaner Itihaas'
(History of Sundarvan)]

In our long discussion with Sri Kanailal Sarkar, we had precisely asked him four questions which he had answered according to his study and view. The questions and elaborations are as follows:

1. What is the connotation of the names Bonobibi and Shah Jangoli?

The 'Bon' part of 'Bonobibi' has double meaning. In Bengali 'Bon' means 'jungle' and 'sister' both. Usually a Muslim married woman is addressed as 'Bibi'. Maybe because of this, some say that Bonobibi is married but no reference of her husband is found anywhere in the saga or in rituals. Sri Kanailal Sarkar says in this regard that a lady of his acquaintance was named as Amirun Bibi and she was not married. So we can assume that even unmarried Muslim women can sometimes be referred as 'Bibi', at least in Bengal. Regarding Shah Jangoli he says that 'Bon' in 'Bonobibi' means 'jungle'. The Bengali synonym for 'Bon' is 'Jangol'. The brother and sister have been named as 'Bon-Jangol' as they were born in jungle according to the myth. Later on, the word 'Bibi' gets attached to 'Bon' and 'Shah' is added to 'Jangoli' due to the course of history.

Sri Kanailal presents another explanation in respect of Shah Jangoli. He says that the twelve year old boy Dukhe belonged to the trader family named 'Shaha'. Jangoli saved him from Dakkhinray or tiger. Due to this rescue, the surname 'Shaha' is adjoined to the name of Jangoli; which means his name became 'Shaha Jangoli'. With the wave of Muslim cultural influence 'Shaha' turned to be 'Shah'. On the other hand, 'Bon' was also without surname. However, after rescuing Dukhe she was considered as divine, she became 'Bonodebi' (the goddess of the jungle). 'Debi', for the same reason, became 'Bibi' in time.



2. The Birth Episode of 'Bonobibir Pala' is basically the story of Ebrahim (father of Bonobibi and Shah Jangoli). We wanted to know whether there is any connection of this delta with the 'Ibrahim' of Koran Sharif or 'Abraham' of Old Testament (who belonged to present Iraq or Iran)?

Sri Kanailal laments in this case and says that he is collecting the historical facts without any kind of help. However, this effort is not sufficient for such a subject. It needs a thorough research combining respective areas of both West Bengal and East Bengal (present Bangladesh). According to Sri Kanailal Sarkar, only 30% of Sundarvan or '*Baadaabon*' is here in West Bengal, the rest 70% is in Bangladesh. To search out the origin of Bonobibir Pala, the entire Ganges Delta has to be scanned which is a matter of massive finance and man power. The individual initiative in this case would be like "collecting pebbles in the shore of the sea of knowledge".

3. Is Dakkhinray Hindu?

Sri Kanailal Sarkar brought here the reference of '*Baaro Bhuinya*' or the Twelve *Bhuinyas* (feudal lords) of Bengal. He told us that Dakkhinray is born in Ray family. This family belonged to Jesore district of East Bengal (present Bangladesh). They were the feudal lords of the area and also the worshipers of Lord Shiva. Dakkhinray is the son of Prabhakar Ray of this family. Dakkhinray was immensely powerful and dominant. Sri Kanailal assumes that may be the image of Dakkhinray has been equated with that of a tiger because of his monstrous physical strength.

Soon after the Turk invasion in Bengal, many types of people spread even in the most interior villages to strengthen the base of Muslim reign. These people were '*Peer*', '*Badar*', '*Fakir*' and '*Gaaji*'. In the own words of Sri Kanailal, "Sundarban is called the land of Twenty Two '*Fakirs*'." It is said that Barkhan Gaji of Birat Nagar, who is also one *Peer* of the famous '*Five Peers of Bengal*', had come to '*Baadaabon*' to popularize Islam instead of taking the throne. According to Sri Kanailal, '*Barkhan*' is '*Barha Khan*' (the elder Khan). He gave up the throne and became saint by taking the title of '*Gaaji*'. His conflict began with Dakkhinray's mother Narayani for the possession of '*Baadaabon*'. It is quite evident from these sagas that at the beginning there was huge dispute between Hindu and Muslim communities for religious and social control. However, with the course of time, that conflict faded out due to dwelling at the same place side by side. That is why, Dakkhinray also rose to divinity. He is also worshiped like Bonobibi and Shah Jangoli. This tale of power game ends in friendship and treaty



which gradually takes an artistically magnificent form of communal harmony.

4. Who is the original writer of Bonobibir Pala?

It is told that Jasimuddin Sahib is the writer of 'Bonobibir Pala'. However, this Jasimuddin is not the famous rural poet of Bengal who is known as '*Pollykobi Jasimuddin*'. This Jasimuddin was born in Howrah district. Sri Kanailal also told us that probably Dukhe belonged to the Barunhat area of present South 24 Pargana district. It can be found that Brahim Fakir (Ebrahim, father of Bonobibi and Shah Jangoli) met the King of Bhangor (another age old place of South 24 Pargana). It is known that Narayani Debi (mother of Dakkhinray) had sacrificed one hundred men as an offering to god for her prayer coming true. In the old age local dialects 'head' was sometimes called '*Bara*'. Because of sacrificing hundreds of '*Bara*', the place was named as '*Barashato*' ('*Shato*' means hundred), which later turned to be '*Barasat*' (the present District Town of South 24 Pargana).

However, Sri Kanailal Sarkar repents on the fact that he is not equipped enough to properly analyse and clarify these fragmented information. It cannot be done by interest only, financial support is extremely necessary as well.



Discussion with Artists and Experts: 3

[1 March 2015 || Rangabeliya, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana]

Performing Team	:	Maa Banadebi Opera
<i>Adhikari</i> (Owner) & Director	:	Shashi Bhushan Mondal
Performers	:	Ashok Poyra, Chittaranjan Mondal, Sanjay Mondal, Robin Mondal, Ratneshwar Bachhar, Kalpana Mondal, Sumana Mondal
Musicians	:	Paritosh Mondal, Bikash Mondal, Nitai Mondal

We asked Sri Shashi Bhushan Mondal whether any of the troupe members has the experience of going into the jungle or does anyone of them earn his living from the jungle?

Sri Shashi Bhushan said that none of his troupe members have the experience of '*Mahaal*' (visiting jungle to collect natural resources) except himself. Even he does not go for '*Mahaal*' now. Today he is a serviceman and a cultural personality. The family of Sri Shashi Bhushan had survived on jungle before. He was a boy when his elder brothers used to go for '*Mahaal*'. In that early childhood, he had gone to '*Mahaal*' with his brothers and had seen the awful beauty of the jungle. From then, he had thought upon various ways of living avoiding this dangerous profession. That is why he tried to study and to look for jobs when he grew up --- Sri Shashi Bhushan admitted aptly. Both of his brothers died for tiger attack. Even now, forty year old Shashi Bhushan Mondal becomes breathless while talking about that insufferable experience. He puts his grief of losing his dear ones to oblivion through cultural practice.

Sri Shashi Bhushan says that worshipping Goddess '*Bonobibi*' or '*Bonodebi*' is a compulsory feature of going for '*Mahaal*'. So his elder brothers performed in '*Bonobibir Pala*' (the original '*Bonobibir Hujuranama*' along with all rituals) He used to watch the performances and thought how to make this '*Pala*' more attractive; how to modernize the visuals of dance, song and acting? Thus, when he grew up, Sri Shashi Bhushan Mondal formed a troupe of his own and with complete self-initiative he added his own modern concepts with the traditional form of Bonobibir Pala. These very concepts became the inevitable cause of success and popularity of Maa Bonodebi Opera with the excellence of application.



Troupes of Bonobibir Pala used to come from Bangladesh in the time of Shashi Bushan's childhood. Troupes had formed in West Bengal one after another being inspired by them. Sri Shashi Bhushan says that even now in most of the 'Palas' the tune and style of Barishal district (in Bangladesh) have remained, although the artists of West Bengal cannot deliver them correctly. For instance he said that "*Shonen Dhana Bhai*" (listen Dhana Bhai) should be pronounced as "*Honen Dhana Bhai*" in the dialect of Barishal.

Sri Shashi Bhushan is quite frank about the modern applications in his 'Pala'. He says that apart from spirituality, the professional aspect should also be considered. They have to perform in several tourist lodges. Tourists will not watch a performance for more than thirty to forty minutes; may be for an hour at the most. Some of the tourist parties are not even interested. Hence, Sri Shashi Bhushan has to concentrate more on entertainment. He has used everything from oil lamp (*Hajak*) to strove light to make is performance contemporary. In fact, for the visual design of flying bees, he uses a special light which he calls '*Moupoka Aalo*' (bee light) which creates the illusion of flying of bees in flock on stage. Apart from these illusions; showing bee hives, unanimous colour of set and props, use of mid curtain, editing and composing the songs with vibrant music, the dance of '*Daakinee and Joginee*' (mythological demons), use of mask for crocodile --- all such applications have lifted his performance to a special and unique level. Moreover, the mythological background of 'Bonobibir Pala' is written in English on the mid curtain, so that even the foreigners can understand the crux of the performance easily. Sri Shashi Bhushan simply states, "If everybody likes the performance then only we will get invitation for more shows, with more shows we will be able to give some money to my performers. Sundarvan is actually a dreadfully poor locality. Financial necessity cannot be ignored here."

What's on your mind?

Sri Ashok Poyra (Actor playing Dakkhinray): Local tea seller, acting in the same role with absolute command for last three years. Neither he nor any of his family members were ever associated with the jungle professionally. Sri Ashok Poyra says that his love for art and culture has drawn him to acting. In his case, his passion for acting is more applicable than religion. He has never participated in worshipping ceremonies of Goddess Bonobibi, but has attended several such invitations.



While talking of his character analysis, Sri Ashok Poyra said that Sri Shashi Bhushan Mondal had told him that Dakkhinray was a Brahmin and he need to prepare himself for acting by keeping in mind of the power and command of a Brahmin. Hence; to depict Dakkhinray's possession over jungle, his tyranny and creating terror; he need to present himself in a much more tough image.

Regarding religious belief Sri Ashok Poyra clearly said that in the old days people had strong faith, so the worshipping ceremony and performance both were religious ritual altogether. However, people have now understood with experience that only worshipping gods and goddesses will not save them in jungle. Apart from that, the number of 'Mahaal' has decreased as people are gradually getting habituated to various other professions. Thus, the aspect of faith has become vacillating nowadays. However, cutting off the supernatural side, it can be said that the poor men; who must go to 'Mahaal' for living; get mental strength from these rituals, prayers and hymns.

Smt. Kalpana Mondal (Actress playing Dukhe's Mother): Sister of Sri Shashi Bhushan Mondal, I.C.D.S. worker by profession. The rest of troupe members say that the troupe will be paralised without Kalpana. She looks after the entire management alone. She is acting and singing for ten twelve years. In this particular performance she had played the role of Dukhe's Mother, although she had acted as Bonobibi earlier. She once belonged to the profession of lending costume. Hence, today she takes the complete charge of costume, props and requisitions.

Smt. Sumana Mondal (Actress playing Bonobibi): Acting for about one year. Her husband is a cycle van puller by profession, family is in financial constrain. She says in a simple manner that though she has started acting for passion but it will be better if it turns to be her profession.

Sri Chittaranjan Mondal (Actor playing Shah Jangoli): He started his words with the line, "I love to act." He is performing in Maa Bonodebi Opera for two years. Initially he had worked in amateur 'Jatra' (Folk Theatre of Bengal). However, he sincerely wanted to act as a professional for survival. Today his dream has come true; he earns money for his acting. His father, uncles, elder brother --- all have performed in Bonobibir Pala and he has been inspired by them. However, they all were amateur while he is professional --- that makes all the difference.

Sri Paritosh Mondal (Synthesizer Player): Artist of the old times with lots of experience. He told us proudly that he used to act as Dakkhinray once.



He performs in the '*Pala*' with total spiritual and ritualistic faith and conviction. He does not eat fish and crab in the day of performance, although he or his family members do not survive on the jungle.

Sri Robin Mondal (Actor playing Saadhu Majhi) and Sri Sanjay Mondal (Actor playing Madhu Majhi)*: Both the actors told us that some of the songs of this '*Pala*' are traditional and some are written and composed by Sri Shashi Bhushan Mondal. They have learnt even the traditional songs from Sri Shashi Bhushan Mondal. A singer Sri Ratan Pole has also taught the songs. According to them, all tunes of Bonobibir Pala is remembered by hearing (Although Sri Shashi Bhushan Mondal says that he has made their notations and has kept the under his possession). Sri Robin Mondal and Sri Sanjay Mondal are performing in Bonobibir Pala for a long time; they are also associated with other sorts of music for about fourteen years. However, as per them, Sri Shashi Bhushan Mondal wants them to sing the songs of the '*Pala*' in different manner. The novel musical use has strengthened the songs a lot more than those of the earlier days. These two artists also have chosen Bonobibir Pala as their profession.

Sri Bikash Mondal and Sri Nitai Mondal (Percussionists): Both of them had started their career with playing '*Khol*' in '*Kirtan*'. Gradually they have learnt to play several kinds of percussions. They told us that all the original songs of Bonobibir Pala are based on '*Jhampak*' and '*Jhaanp Taal*' beats. The other beats; which are derived from '*Jaari Gaan*', '*Saari Gaan*', '*Bhatiyali*' or '*Baul*'; differ from one performance to another according to the choice of the director or '*Adhikari*'.

Km. Ratneshwar Bachhar (Actor playing Dukhe): The appreciation of his magnificent sweet singing while playing Dukhe brought blush to his face. He is a student of Standard VI in Pakhhiralay High School. He has learnt to sing from his elder brothers. His performance as young Krishna in '*Kirtan*' also has been immensely appreciated by the villagers. Ratneshwar wants to be a professional artist in future, he cannot think of anything else for him.

*Saadhu Majhi is the Senior and Chief Boatman. He is also referred as '*Paka Majhi*' (skilled boatman) sometimes. Madhu Majhi is the Junior Boatman. Different performing teams of Bonobibir Pala introduce different numbers of boatmen. The character of Saadhu Majhi, however, is compulsory. The boatmen in Bonobibir Pala must be good singers as they carry on with most of the singing portion of the play. The performance of this particular troupe shows only two boatmen.



Initiative for Revival

[28 February 2015 || Rangabeliya Tagore Society || 6:30 pm.]

Performance Title	:	Dukhini Maayer Chhele Dukhe
Performance Type	:	Bonobibir Pala
Direction	:	Shashi Bhushan Mondal
Production	:	Maa Bonodebi Opera
Arrangement	:	Uhinee Kolkata



Pic Ref.: B/R/1. Actors of 'Dukhini Maayer Chhele Dukhe'. Back line (from left): Saadhu Majhi, Dhana, Dukhe's Mother, Bonobibi, Shah Jangoli and Dakkhinray, Front line: Dukhe (left) and Madhu Majhi (right)



Duration of the performance was one hour. Although there was nothing excessive in the stage design, intelligence was evident enough. Three maroon pieces of cloth of same height were hanging as backdrop. The one in the middle was a broad one and the cloths in both sides were comparatively slender. The backdrop in actor's right had printed on it, "With the benevolence of Maa Sheetala (rural Goddess of Bengal) Maa Bonodebi Opera, Rangabeliya, Gosaba, South 24 Pargana". The one on actor's left was printed with a religious consolation, "Whenever you will face danger in battlefield, jungle or in water; remember the name of Maa Bonobibi once; she will save you." Both of these were printed in Bengali. The broad piece of cloth in the middle had the abridged historical and cultural background of Bonobibi printed in English ---

"Banabibi the goddess of jungle is a myth of Sundarban area. Perhaps about Five hundred years ago, at the time of Hussain Shah, the Nabab (King) of Gour (Bengal) she comes in the Folk talk. She is mainly the goddess of Fishermen, honey collector and wood cutters and also a spiritual concept of Hindus and Muslims - both."

It can be mentioned here that the backdrop on right shows the name of the troupe 'Bonodebi Opera' and the same on left contains the suggestion of remembering the name of 'Bonobibi'. Thus, the words 'Debi' and 'Bibi' are projected in such a manner as to express the union of Hindu and Muslim cultures.



Pic. Ref.: B/R/2



Two banners made of venial flex were hanging in the extreme right and extreme left of the performance space. The banner on extreme right showed the picture of dense forest and river of Sundarvan along with the horror incarnate --- the tigers. The other one on extreme left showed a temple of Goddess Bonobibi surrounded by the jungle and river and a man praying in front of it down on his knees. Thus, the sense of '*Bhoy*' (fear) and '*Borabhoy*' (solace) prevails on both sides of the performance space and reveals the prime conflict of the '*Pala*' with great intelligence.



Pic. Ref.: B/R/3

The most significant and advanced trick was behind the middle back drop. That piece of cloth was hung in such a manner so that it could shift when pulled from a side. When it shifts, it reveals another stage design behind it. There was another piece of cloth, printed with foliage green and yellow, hanging as the extreme backdrop. In front of that cloth, two huge branches of tree with lots of leaves were standing up straight (tied to two chairs) on left and right. This design instantly makes the audience aware of the profundity of the jungle. With grand proficiency, the broad mid curtain had shifted and had revealed the jungle backdrop in relevant moments of the play. This effort surely demands appreciation.



Pic. Ref.: B/R/4

Three microphones were hanging to capture sound from a rope over the performance space. Two halogens of 500 Kw. were used for general lighting; one was hanging over the space from front (like a cat light) and another was positioned at down centre as a foot light. Apart from this, two current rotating prism lights from down centre foot.

Following the traditional rules, the tune players were sitting on right side of the performance space and the percussionists were sitting on the left. There was no other tune instrument except a synthesizer. As percussions there were 'Karha', 'Nakarha', 'Dhol', 'Jhampa' and 'Juri'.



Pic. Ref.: B/R/5



Many of the scenes were appeared to be outstanding with the touch of modern recent applications. The scene of searching honey in the jungle by the boatmen was truly striking among all of them. A neatly prepared artificial bee hive was hanging over the right side of the performance space from the very beginning. However, it was folded in such a manner that the audience did not have the slightest hint of its existence before it was used. At the time of the mentioned seen, the bee hive suddenly stretches out and catches the attention of the audience.



Pic. Ref.: B/R/6

Another such scene was the appearance of Dakkhinray in Dhana's dream. The mentioned mid curtain shifts and the backdrop of the jungle is revealed. Dakkhinray appears in front of it covered with a cloth printed like a tiger skin. Thus, the dual and yet sole character of Dakkhinray abruptly reaches the audience with great significance.



Pic. Ref.: B/R/7

Again, Dukhe recalls Goddess Bonobibi singing the song, "Maa Tore Daakbo Kato, Paashaan Hridoy Gole Naa" [How many times I will call you Mother (Bonobibi), your stony heart does not soften] and Goddess Bonobibi appears as Dukhe's Mother. The visual is like this --- mid curtain shifts to reveal Dukhe's Mother standing in front of the jungle backdrop. She sings to answer Dukhe and then turns back. The audience finds Goddess Bonobibi facing them and answering Dukhe in song. Both actresses keep on singing like this with continuous alternative turns with their backs joined together. This illusion also is an instance of current visual design.



Pic. Ref.: B/R/8

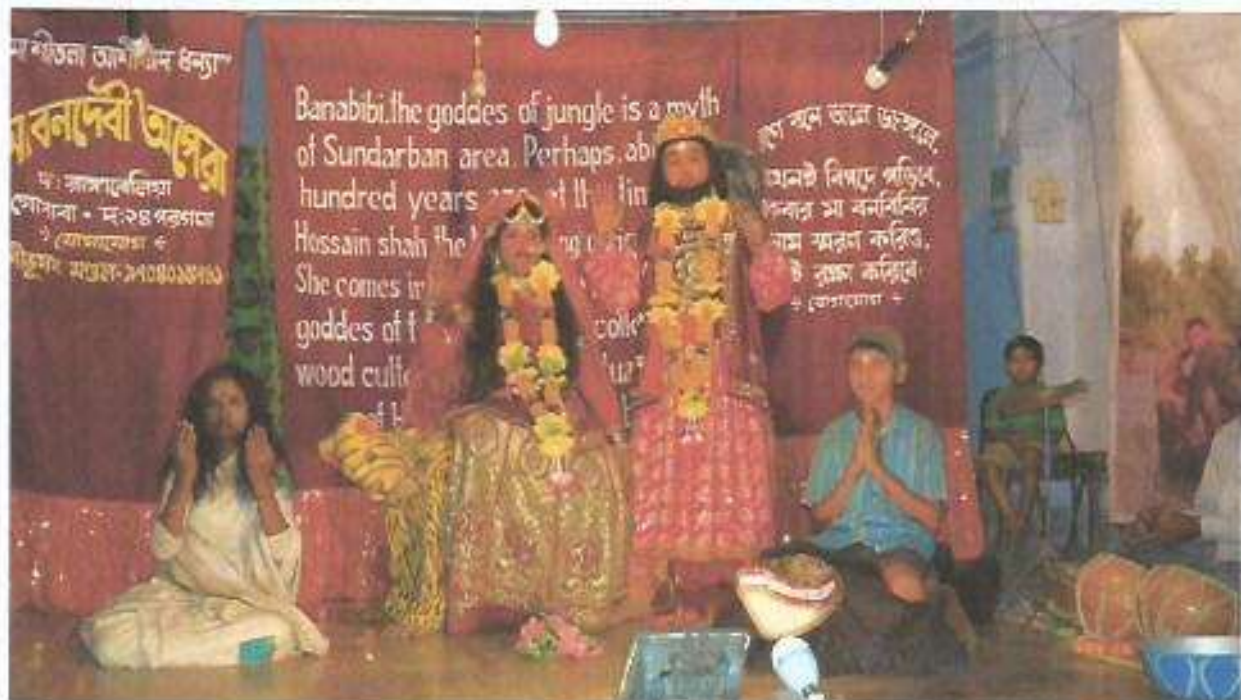


The director has also evoked curiosity of the audience in the scene of cooking rice by Goddess Bonobibi and Dukhe. A small iron bucket has been placed at down left as stove. At the time of cooking red rays are generated from a hidden light inside the bucket.



Pic. Ref.: B/R/9

The production 'Dukhinee Maayer Chhele Dukhe' by Maa Bonodebi Opera has evidently been successful to present an entertaining performance of distinguished taste leaping out the boundary of customs. For this very reason, this 'Pa/a' is being enacted with applaud in various tourist lodges for years.



Pic. Ref.: B/R/10. Curtain Call,



Although this very performance was organised by Uhinnee Kolkata as a part of the project 'Rhizome Tune --- salty breeze' under the Scheme for 'Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Tradition of Inida", people from the surrounding villages also came spontaneously to watch the show. At the end of the performance, following the tradition, Dukhe and his mother sang to plead the audience to contribute for constructing the temple of Goddess Bonobibi. It is to be noted here that the entire original '*Pala*' (which takes at least four hours) was not performed here. It was only an edited version of merely an hour and that too was presented with recent acting style and design applications. In spite of that, we could see the profound faith and devotion of the local people when maximum of the villagers donated money in the *saari* of Dukhe's Mother as per their ability. No matter how contemporary this '*Pala*' turns to be nowadays, it still seems that the mass faith and rituals have planted the seed of an eternal cultural tradition.



BANABIBIR PALA

by
MAHENDRA NATH HAOLI



1. EPISODE ONE: BIRTH EPISODE

SCENE - 1

[Hymn of Glory in Chorus]

*I welcome You, O! Lotus Aboded Goddess! O! Frolicsome Mother!
 O! Rippling Aquatic Goddess! Come and seat in my Voice!
 Do not throw us from Your Feet, O! Holy Mother!
 Do not deprive Your poor Children from Your blessings,
 O! Holy Mother!*

[Chorus exit]

[Place :Rasul's mausoleum]

[Ebrahim (Eb) and Phool Bibi (Plb) enter]

Eb : Oh Khoda! What sin I have committed that You made me childless. Non-flowering, fruitless trees are sacrificed in fire as firewood, I shall also sacrifice my body in fire like that.

Plb : O! Dear, let's go and pray in of Rasul's mausoleum. By the grace of Khoda we will have children and if we do not have any then we will accept that we have no luck to have children.

Eb : Well dear! Let's go to Rasul's mausoleum and pray.

[Both exits]

[Monturam, the *Ganja*-addict enters]

Mnt : Who calls me a drug puffer his father is cattle lifter, who calls me a drug addict, his house I regular visit. . . . But, where I have come, looks like a ghost land. I am dying for a puff, let me have a strong puff.

[Prepares a *Chillum* and gives a long pull. Drunkard Ghontu enters and burst into loud laughter and as he stops Montu begins to laugh and this goes for some time]

Gnt : I am Ghonturam, loves drinking and I have sacrificed my property, my land, my storage grain and my everything to Madam Wine. Lifted a *Sari* of my wife, will sell it and go for drink.

[Moves ahead and notices Montu]

Hey, there! Who are you? A thief, I suppose, hiding here? You swine! Plan to snatch the *Sari*. Forget it, I will piss on your plan.

Mnt : [with a dumb smile] Sir, I am Monturam, I am a *Ganja* addict. Frightened by ghosts I fled here.

Gnt : Ha, ha, ha, you are a drug addict and I am a drunkard. You are



Monturam, I am Ghonturam, ha, ha, ha.

Mnt : Oh, that's fine. You are Ghontu and I am Montu. Let's be friend.
Now you have a sip and let me have a puff.

[They start their actions. The caretaker of the mausoleum enters].

Caretaker : You scoundrels, smoking and drinking in this holy mausoleum. I
will beat you severely. [Start beating them]

Mnt & Gnt : Sir, please spare us

[Caretaker starts beating and drives them out of that place and both exit.]

SCENE – 2

[Place : Rasul's Tomb]

[Ebrahim (Eb) enters]

Eb : This is Rasul's mausoleum. Let me pray here
[Suddenly an Oracle is heard off-stage]

Oracle : Listen Ebrahim, Phool Bibi will never be able to bear your child.
You have to go for a second marriage and you will have children
from the marriage for sure.

Eb : By the Prophet's order I have to go for a second marriage. I must
go to Phool Bibi, tell her and seek her opinion. [Ebrahim exits]

[Ebrahim's House]

[Phool Bibi enters]

Plb : One by one, seven days have passed. My beloved husband hasn't
come yet. Where do I go, how shall I live?

[Ebrahim enters]

Eb : Hope everything is fine with you, my dear !

Plb : So, at last you came back my love! Please tell me, what is the
prophecy?

Eb : It will be shocking for you my dear to hear that. You will not be
able to bear any child. For a child, I have to go for a second
marriage. If you love me, believe me, please permit me to go for
the second marriage.

Plb : Oh God! How can I do this? My heart is tearing apart in grief.
The folks will call me a barren woman. I have such a bad luck,
yet I will give you my consent, but with a condition.

Eb : Please tell me your condition, dear. How difficult it may be, I will
fulfill it.

Plb : My beloved, I don't need it now. Whenever require I will ask that
from you.



- Eb : I promise by the Khoda that I will fulfill it.
 Plb : My beloved, I permit you then, you may go for marriage.
 Eb : Then, let me go. [Ebrahim exits]
 Plb : He is not able to understand my trick for the pleasure of newness. [Phool Bibi exits]

SCENE - 3

[Ebrahim's House] [Phool Bibi enters. Ebrahim (Eb) enters with Gulal Bibi (Glb)]

- Eb : How are you, my love. By the Nabi's grace your wish has been fulfilled. Please see it yourself [Shows Gulal Bibi]. But, darling why you look so pale?
 Plb : Oh! Dear, what to say? My heart becomes heavy to say that why Khoda had thrown me into this pool of sorrow?
 Eb : My sweetheart ! Please don't feel bad and welcome Gulal in.
 Glb : Oh, Dear! Why my right limbs are trembling. It must be indicating a bad omen !
 Eb : Oh! My moonfaced damsel, don't be afraid. Everything will be alright. The Almighty Khoda will protect us from all adversities. [Gulal Bibi holding Phool Bibi's hand]
 Glb : Oh! Sister, why you are so worried? You are like a Goddess to me and I am your maid, always offer my service to you. Please order me whenever you want to, I am dedicated to you.
 Plb : Let me embrace you, O my dear Gulal!

[Phool Bibi embraces Gulal Bibi. Gulal Bibi too embraces Phool Bibi with tears, rests her head on Phool Bibi's chest]

- Plb : Why you are weeping Gulal, what is the matter ?
 Glb : What shall I tell you my dear sister. Your pious touch has Brought tears in my eyes. These are tears of joy!
 Plb : Gulal, let's go in, it is time for Namaz. [Both of them exit]
 Eb : Phool Bibi's attitude does not seem clear, any harm may happen To Gulal. But, how can I help it. I am depending solely on the Khoda' wish, he will take care of Gulal. [Ebrahim exits]
 Glb : I have conceived for nine months, and nobody meets me or looks after. I am afraid of my co-wife. What will happen, where shall I go? [Ebrahim enters]



- Eb : Gulal, O! My dear Gulal.
- Glb : O! Dear, at last you came. I am carrying your child, but I am Very worried.
- Eb : Why you are so worried? The Khoda is kind, depend on him, he will protect you. Let me go to Phool Bibi and request her to take care of you.
- [Ebrahim exits]
- Glb : That unpleasant incident is going to happen to me for which I Was afraid of. But shedding of tears will not be of any help. Let the wish of the Khoda prevailed.
- [Gulal Bibi exits and Phool Bibi enters]
- Pfb : The maid told me that my love has met Gulal, who has conceived for nine months. She also informs that my love has promised Gulal that he is going to request me to look after her. How can he think like that? After all she is my co-wife. He must have forgotten that he had made a promise to me long back. Let me see, what I can do.
- [Ebrahim enters]
- Eb : My beloved, how are you?
- Pfb : Look, who is here, my lord! Please rest and take seat [Make him Sit with lot of care]. Now, tell me, how is my Gulal.
- Eb : My love, Gulal Bibi is fine and by the grace of the Khoda she is carrying. I come to request you to look after her during this period.
- Pfb : [Soliloquy] What? I have to take care of my co-wife?
[Aloud] Oh! My dear, I have just remembered and request you to fulfill your promise that you have committed.
- Eb : Oh! My dearest darling, please tell me your wish. How difficult it may be, I am assuring you that I will fulfill it.
- Pfb : My love, then let the Sun, the Moon, the other celestial bodies And my father, my brother be the witness, that in their presence you are going to fulfill my wish that you have promised long ago.
- Eb : My love! My sweetheart! I promise, if I have to sacrifice my life, even then I will keep my promise. Please tell me your wish.
- Pfb : [With a crooked smile] Send Gulal to exile in forest.
- Eb : [With a loud lamentation] Oh! What a severe curse befallen on me. You monstrous evil female! I have loved you as a flower and instead you have struck me like a venomous serpent. By the holy prophecy of the Khoda, I had to marry in such advance age for a child. Gulal is in her advance stage of pregnancy. How can I send her in such condition to exile? Please consider, I fall at



your feet. The Great Khoda will not pardon me for this. Please wish anything else instead. I will be loyal to you like a slave.

P1b : By the Khoda you have promised to fulfill my wish. Now it is up to you, whether you fulfill it or not. But I will not deviate from my wish.

Eb : Oh, Khoda! What a foul luck I have for such a treacherous woman, who forced me to such a dilemma. To which way I tread, I shall be a sinner. But, Bibi, please don't feel sorry for my abusive sour talk. I am going to Gulal Bibi to fulfill your wish and send her in exile.

[Ebrahim exits]

P1b : Now, my wish is fulfilled, But, I am not able to comprehend the cause behind it. Let me go and see what my dear husband is doing?

[Phool Bibi exits]

G1b : Ten months have passed and the child will be born soon. What shall I do? Where shall I go? I stay alone and not feeling well. My dear told me that sister will come and look after me. But where is she? No one is around. Who will look after me? Whom shall I tell about my troubles?

[Lamenting Ebrahim enters with tears]

Eb : Oh Gulal! My darling

G1b : Why on the Earth you are crying my dearest? What had Happened to us? Is my sister all right? Why are you not uttering a word? Oh kind Khoda! What have you done? How I shall console my dearest darling?

[Keeps her head on Ebrahim's chest and sobs]

Eb : Gulal dear, please don't shed tears. My heart is tearing apart to see you lamenting. By the wish of the Khoda, I have married you and in course of time you have conceived. You don't have any mother-in-law or sister-in-law to care for you. I shall take you to your father's home and your mother will take care of you during the child birth.

G1b : What happened, so suddenly, that you are talking like this? Let the thunder befall on my head. How can I stay away without seeing you, even for a moment?

Eb : Why do you worry my sweetheart? I shall visit you very often.

G1b : If it is so, then let's go my dear or else I will not leave you.

Eb : So, shall we go now? [Enters Vivek and starts singing]

*Don't you go Mother, I forbid
May go, but won't come back, be sure of it,
Plan to go Father's House, but a deceit
Think well and cross the sea, else may sink into it,*



*Ram in Treta deprived Seeta, of her right,
It is all the same and look, the chances are bright,
Don't you go Mother, I forbid. [Vivek exits]*

- Glb : My Love! Who is that man? Listening to his song, I don't feel like going.
- Eb : Dear! He is a lunatic with a cracked head and has no control over his words. Don't deviate your mind on his words, let's leave.

SCENE - 4

[Place : Jungle]

[Ebrahim and Gulal enter]

- Glb : O! Dear, why you have suddenly changed the plan and came to jungle? This fearsome jungle frightens me to the core. It is infested with so many tigers, bears and knowing all this, why you have come to this dreaded place?

- Eb : Dearest! Don't be frightened. There is a sacred tomb of a pious soul and I had vowed to this pious soul that when you will carry our child, we will come here and pray merrily in his tomb for the welfare of our child and for that we are here.

- Glb : But, my dear! In such physical condition, this long walking Made me tired. I am yawning frequently and feeling sleepy. Before going to the tomb, I need to rest for a while. Let's take rest under this shady tree.

[Both of them sit. Gulal fall asleep instantly]

- Eb : This is my only chance. But, how I shall be able to desert my dearest Gulal in this dense wood? I am not able to decide. O! Khoda, what a lamenting dilemma you have put me in. Gulal on one end and Phool Bibi is on the other. I am bound by my own promise, why should I blame Phool Bibi. What will happen, will happen, Let me leave now. Let the wish of Khoda be prevailed!

[Prepares to leave, but comes back and calls]

- Eb : Gulal, Gulal . . . No, No, I will not call, O! Khoda give me strength.

[Exits but returns again]

- Eb : Gulal, Gulal . . . [Pause] Gulal, Gulal . . . No answer for once in response.

[Looks for a while and finally leaves]

- Glb : [Wakes up and sees no one around] What a bad luck has



Befallen on me. What shall I do now, where shall I go, who will help me in this dense wood. My dear! So finally you have deserted me in this jungle in this physical condition. How can you do that, deserting me in this helpless wretched condition? All men are like that, cruel and heartless. O! Kind Khoda! Please help me in this friendless, dreaded jungle. You are the ultimate saviour, have mercy on me and save me.

[Gulal, Gulal [Pause] Gulal, Gulal . . . voice of Ebrahim is heard off-stage]

Glb : Seems, my dear is calling me. O! Dear here I am.

[Gulal exits promptly and Phool Bibi enters after sometime]

Pfb : Yes! He is returning alone. My mission is successful. I am relieved.

[Ebrahim enters]

Eb : So, my dear wife....

Pfb : Please come and sit here. [Cordially make him sit]

Eb : I want to take rest, please arrange.

Pfb : Please, come to my bed room. [Both of them exit]

SCENE - 5

[Jungle Estate]

[Gulal enters with her son and daughter]

Glb : By the grace of the Great Khoda! I am blessed with a son and a daughter. But, how will I bring them up? How long I can keep them alive? Let me take my son with me and leave my daughter here at the mercy of kind Khoda! Oh! Khoda, why have you put me into such an unbearable dilemma! Oh! All women folk of the world! Please behold, whether am I a villainous, monstrous mother? Oh! Khoda, please behold! Am I a woman or a fiend?

[Sobbing, Gulal exits after deserting daughter]

[Her daughter (Banabibi) is also weeping. A deer suckles her. She exits]

[Ebrahim's House]

[Ebrahim and Phool Bibi enter after sometime]

Eb : To fulfill your wish I have sent innocent Gulal in exile. She was in helpless condition and I did not look for her and thus committed a crime. Oh! Kind Khoda, what explanation can I give? So, my dear wife, you stay at home and allow me to search Gulal Bibi in that forest.



P1b : Please go my dear! [Both exit]

[Jungle Estate] [Gulal is playing with her son (Shah Jangalee), in the jungle]

Eb : Who is that lady sitting under the tree and the boy in her lap?
Looks like Gulal. Oh! Indeed it is Gulal! O! Gulal, my Gulal.
[Goes near and holds her hand]

Eb : It is true that I have sent you in exile. But believe me, I have never forgotten you, even for a day, cried for you and searched for you many times. I am suffering from a guilty conscience. Please do pardon me. But why are you not responding to me? Gulal, please talk to me.

Gulal : Why this futile conversation? I have realised your mind. With false, sweet talk you have impressed me and then deserted me in this dreaded jungle without considering anything. Is this your sense of virtue?

Eb : For the sake of Khoda, please pardon me and let's go back to Home with our son.

[Ebrahim Holds son's hands and ready to leave. Banabibi (Bnbb) enters]

Bnbb : Where are you going Shah Jangalee (Sjl), my beloved brother? Now we don't need our parents. We have stayed together for so long and we have been bestowed with the territory of *Atharo Bhati* (Land of Eighteen Ebb-Streams), our new home.

Sjl : Look, who is here, my beloved sister!
[Get down from mother's lap]

Bnbb : My dear Mother, please leave us and go back home. By the Greatness and the Directive of the Almighty Khoda, we become the masters of the *Atharo Bhati*. If we are lured by your affection then we will commit sin and will be heading towards hell.

Glb : Alas! What you are uttering, my beloved. How do you forget that I have carried and nurtured you for 10 months in my womb? Only a mother knows how to bear the pain. . . . How much I have hoped to listen to the recital of *Kalma* (The sacred hymns of the Islam) of my children, in my last journey the sacred soil will be offered by my children on my last rites. . . . But who will do those now?

Please don't throw me into the sea of deep sorrow!

[Gulal burst out into intense sobs]



Bnbb : O! My dearest mother, please don't cry. Whenever you remember us we will meet you in dreams. But, if we are captivated by your affection we will end up in hell. . . . O! My most affectionate Mother and Father, please allow us to leave.

[Both of them salute. Gulal and Ebrahim touch their head and bless them]

[Banabibi's song]

*Please don't cry mother, please don't cry,
For my heart will burst, if you cry,
By stepmother's evil will, father forced you to exile,
Again both of you are together and we see you in smile.
Now, you leave for home and we leave for our province,
Have to fulfill a promise, so behold the world and convince.*

Gulal : My daughter, my little Angell [Embraces her dearly]

Bnbb : Father, please take mother home. Please console her and take care of her. She must not suffer from any pain. Now, bless us and permit us to leave.

[Both Banabibi and Shah Jangalee salute and exit]

Glb : [Sobs loudly] Oh! Khoda, this ill luck you have befallen on us. . .

Eb : My dear lady, please don't cry and control yourself. All these have happened as per the wish of the Holy *Nabi*. None can deny His Holy Wish. Now, please compose yourself and let's leave for our home. [They exit]

[Both Banabibi and Shah Jangalee enter the arena]

Bnbb : *Bhai* Jangalee! With the blessings of the Khoda we came to this land of Ebb Steams. Now what will we do at this afternoon hours. Let us go for *Ajan*.

Sjl : [Calls for *Ajan*] *Allah Ho Akbar, Allah Ho Akbar, Allah Ho Akbar.*
Bnbb : *Bhai* Jangalee! Let's move to *Bhurkund*.

[Banabibi and Shah Jangalee exit]

[Narayani (Nrni) and Dakshin Ray(Dkr) enter]

Nrni : My son! Who is shouting so obnoxiously in this deep forest? I am being suspicious. My son! Go and enquire.

Dkr : Mother, please order me. I shall go and see, who is this scoundrel, entered the jungle and shouting like that, not knowing that the Supremo of the jungle is Narayani and I am Dakshin Ray, her son. All trickery and sorcery will be futile in front of me.

[Leaves the arena and return after a while]

Dkr : O! Mother a trouble has occurred! A lass and a brat have entered the jungle and shouting *Ajan*. . . . Please order me I shall be happy to drive them out.



[Almost ready to leave]

Nrni : My son, have patience. It is not right for a man to fight against a woman. I shall go and fight with her. Bring my weapons and armours and follow me. Let me see the villains myself. [Both exit]

[Both Banabibi and Shah Jangalee enter the arena]

Bnbb : Bhai Jangalce, can you hear the shouting of an army?

Sjl : Sister, it seems some treacherous fellows are heading towards us for a fight, hence the shouting of an army.

[Narayani enters]

Nrni : Who are you notorious pair? How dare you enter my territory And disturb the peace. This is my kingdom and I am the queen.

Sjl : But who are you and what right you have over this territory? Better you retreat. . .

Nrni : You fools, challenging me in my own territory. Soldiers, attack them from all side. [Soldiers enter and attack]

Sjl : Where are you going monsters, I will send you to hell. [Starts fighting with the soldiers] Sister, O! My sister, I am not able to fight with these monsters anymore.

Bnbb : *Bhai Jangalee*, have courage and fight. Go for a loud *Ajan* and Kill these demons.

Sjl : [Calls for *Ajan*] *Allah Ho Akbar, Allah Ho Akbar, Allah Ho Akbar.*

[The soldiers retreat back]

Nrni : Now, you come demoness and fight me. I will send you to hell.

Bnbb : *Bhai Jangalee*, you stop fighting now. Now you come, O, Lady! [Both start fighting and after a while Narayani's sword fall down]

Nrni : Friend! My friend! From today we are friends forever. Please pardon me. Be the supremo of this territory.

Bnbb : Me Supremo and what about you?

Nrni : Your maid

Bnbb : No, my friend, let us all enjoy the kingdom. You come *Bhai Jangalce*.

[Enters every one]

***** End of Birth Episode *****



2. EPISODE TWO: TALE OF DUKHE

SCENE - 1

[Hymn of Glorification in Chorus]

*I welcome You, O! Lotus Aboded Mother! O! Frolicsome Goddess!
 O! Rippling Aquatic Goddess! Come and seat in my Voice!
 Do not debase us from Your Feet, O! Holy Mother!
 Do not deprive Your poor Children from Your blessings,
 O! Holy Mother!*

[Chorus exit]

Dhana (Dh): Clear, azure sky, gentle breeze is blowing slowly. I was in my pleasant slumber. I had a dream and someone came in my dream and told me 'Wake up Dhana! Organise a Seven Fleet Voyage and row deep into the prosperous Jungle Estate. . . .' But, why I have dreamt like that? Will the Devine dream-words come true? Oh, Kind Khoda! I don't know any vices & virtues, but how will Your *Banda* able to carry your order. . . Wherefrom I will get the Seven Fleet and so many crew members? How will I be able to cross the boundless sca?

[Manohar (Mnr), Dhana's brother enters]

Mnr : O, Brother, how long you will happily seat idle in home, how long ?

Dh : You are right brother. I am also thinking, so far money, we have saved has been exhausted. We have to go for any new venture . . . Our forefathers used to go to Jungle Estate, collect honey, wood and such other material from forest and had made lot of money by selling them.

Mnr : but are you really planning to do that ?

Dh : But, why are you so astounded? Why not follow the same path ? We will enter the Jungle Estate, collect honey, bee-wax and wood. Then sell those in the nearby market in town. We will be able to make lot of money. . . . So, let's prepare for it. You go and look for two score and ten boatmen and seven fleet of large rowing boats The spring has advent and by the end of *Chaitra*, the end of spring, forest will be harvested with honey and we should take preparation from now. Please go. . . .

Mnr : Please, think of any other business my dear brother and I will be with you. But, I am completely disagreeing with you in your business in Jungle Estate.



- Dh : Please don't prevent me. It was oracle I have received in my Dream that if we go to jungle we will make enormous fortune.
- Mnr : We are two lotus in a pool. Why will we be plucked by the evil spirit and devoured by the carnivore beasts. Why, my brother, why you want to venture it ?

[Enters Vivek and starts a song]

*Don't go to jungle brothers, I forbid,
You won't come back and be very sure of it,
Infested with beast of prey, I am shivering
You will fall prey for sure, it is frightening
Don't go to jungle, better go for begging
I forbid you to tread into jungle and stop entering.*

[Vivek exits]

- Dh : Whichever way you try to forbid me, my beloved brother, I will go for sure. Now you go and collect the boatmen and the rowing boats. I am going for the necessary supply. [Dhana exits]

- Mnr : Don't able to follow Your wish on my brother, Oh! Kind Khoda! We were together since birth. But it seems that I am going to lose him forever. . . I don't know, why my brother is behaving like that? Under the desire of Holy Spirit, which was conveyed to him in dreams, he decided to go to the uncertainty and earn a fortune? Let the wish of the Great Khoda be prevailed!

[Enters Vivek and starts a song]

*What will happen, will happen in Khoda's wish,
Why we brood over and go feverish,
Mother's blessings be fulfilled and turns to reality
Let's go accordingly and pray to almighty,
Why worry for it? Why worry for it?*

- Mnr : Who are you my revered? Must be a prophet? Can you tell me the future of this venture – will it be good or bad? I am not able to understand anything.

[Vivek continues the song]

*Someone's gloomy and someone's gay, as night comes after day,
Someone will sob and someone will smile, but the divine glory will stay.*

[Vivek exits]

- Mnr : What did you say? I didn't get it properly. I am depending on the mercy of the Khoda. . . . Now, let me perform my duty that is delegated to me. Let me look for the boatmen and boat. . . . [Manohar exits]



SCENE - 2

[Enter the singing boatmen]

*O! Revered Manik Peer!
Help us to cross the Mortal River,
Leaving behind all earthly pleasure.
The worldly plays are not marvel,
All plays are but, Khoda's miracle.*

*O! Revered Manik Peer!
Help to cross the Mortal River,
So many glories that unable to visualise,
Moving her pelvis, Dulal Bibi goes frenzies.
Divine acts of Mother reflect in the skies,
Khoda's Lion roar covers all the sides.
Sun rises in the day, at night the moon with gay.*

*O! Revered Manik Peer!
Help us to cross this mortal river.*

[Manohar enters]

Mnr : A group of boatmen! Let me talk to them whether they will agree to go to Jungle Estate? [Moves to them]

Sadhu Majhi (SdM) : Hey! Attend the man and talk to him.

1st Boatman (Btm1) : What do you want, brother ?

Mnr : Are you ready to go to Jungle Estate? You will be paid handsomely.

2nd Boatman (Btm2) : . . . to Jungle Estate?

Mnr : Yes, you are right, to the Jungle Estate.

3rd Boatman (3Btm) : No, no, we will not go.

Mnr : But, why so?

Btm1 : We don't want to fall prey to the tiger.

Mnr : Oh! No, You don't have to be frightened.

Btm2 : So, you say, but the tiger will surely make us prey in jungle.

Mnr : Al right! Go and talk to your chief, let's see, what he says?

Btm2 : You wait here and let me see. . . [Goes to Sadhu Majhi (SdM), who is bit deaf] Listen, Sadhubhai, shall we go to Jungle Estate?

SdM : Where? To the Jungle Estate?

Btm2 : Yes, to the Jungle Estate.

SdM : I see. You wait here and let me talk to him. . . . Yes, brother,



please tell me.

- Mnr : I want to work with you. Will you all be able to go to Jungle Estate? You will be paid well.
- SdM : Well, let me ask others and have their opinion.
- Mnr : But, do you think they will agree?
- SdM : [Authoritatively] Well, if I tell them they will agree. Now, tell me folks, will you go to Jungle Estate?
- Btm1 : No, I will not be able to go. If at all I go, my brain will not go.
- SdM : [Turns to another] Hey, what about you?
- Btm2 : No, never. I will stay hungry, never go to Jungle Estate.
- SdM : [Turns to the 3rd one] Hey, can you go?
- Btm3 : Listen to me Sadhubhai, without telling my clansman and Without their permission, I can't go. Else, they will pull my ear and make it red.
- SdM : Why would you want to die without food? They will give money.
- Btm1 : Will they give money? . . . Are you sure Sadhubhai?
- SdM : Yes, yes, they will give money. One of you go and ask, how much each of us will get.
- Btm1 : You wait here, while I will go and ask. [Goes to him] Look here, what is your name, brother?
- Mnr : My name is Monohar.
- Btm1 : What? Mono Mono?
- Mnr : Monohar, my name is Monohar.
- Btm1 : We don't need a name. Now tell me, how much you are going to pay?
- Mnr : You will get Rs.20 each.
- Btm1 : Then we will not go.
- Mnr : You will get Rs.40 each, then.
- Btm2 : So many persons and only Rs.40, that won't do, never.
- Mnr : Oh! You didn't get me correctly. Each of you will get Rs.50.
- Btm1 : Will it be on monthly basis or on daily basis?
- Mnr : Monthly, you will get it month wise.
- Btm1 : No, no, we will not able to make it as monthly basis.
- Mnr : Tell me, how can you make it? Go and consult your chief.
- Btm1 : Well then, you wait here for a while. We will go and talk to him

...

[Goes to Sadhu Majhi]



- O! Sadhubhai, come, let's do the calculation.
- SdM : Well then, let's do the calculation [Counting the finger knot] It is One Rupee and Fifty Paisa for [Keeps on counting . . .]
- Btm1 : It comes to seven *Sika* (Quarter of a Rupee), it is seven *Sika*.
- Btm2 : Add five *Sikka* more. . . Is it alright?
- All : That is fine and it comes to nine *Sikka*.
- SdM : Yes, now it is correct. Go and ask him, whether he will be able to pay nine *Sika* to each of us?
- Btm1 : Listen you! Will you able to pay nine *Sikka* to each of us?
- Mnr : Is it per day or per month?
- Btm2 : No. no . . . Per month only.
- Mnr : Oh! Fine! Now I can see why you have to stay in empty stomach!
- Btm1 : You stupid! What did you say? We stay in empty stomach. Why your father has to be bothered for that? You dumb skull, fool, I break your neck with one slap.
- Mnr : O brother! Why are you so angry?
- SdM : [Authoritatively] Hey you! Stop it. Tell me, what is the problem?
- Btm1 : I was trying to make this dumb skull understand, whether we
slay
in empty stomach or not.
- SdM : Now, you! Stop. Let me see. Listen, my brother! Can you pay
nine
Sikka per head for a day? If you can, then pay us some advance.
- Mnr : Yes, I can
[Count and give them some money to Sadhu Majhi]
- SdM : [Receives the money, passes it to the others] Count it yourselves.
- Btm1 : Where we have to report?
- Mnr : At Dhana Moule's (honey collector) house.
- All : You go ahead, we will meet our family, bid them goodbye and
Come to you.
- [All exit]

SCENE -3

[Bibijan (Dukhe's mother - DkM) and Dukhe (Dk) enter]

- Dk : O Mother, I am very hungry. Please give me some food.
- DkM : Not a single grain of food is at home. What shall I give you to



cat? Dear! I have to go for pounding crops and will come back early, for now you have this paddy fry.

[About to leave. . . A neighbour (Ngr) enters]

Ngr : Are you at home Dukhe's mother?

Dk : Mother, someone is calling you.

Ngr : What kind of female are you Dukhe's mother? You are supposed to pound paddy in my house, against which smartly you have taken rice as advance, but you did not turn up. Come at once and stop indulging with son.

Dk : Hey! Who are you, talking to my mother in that way?

DkM : My dear Dukhe! Don't mind his words. We are poor and needy, we have to listen to this kind of harsh, unkind words from the rich people. Better not to mind these words. If we mind and react, I will not be able to feed you and we will be finished. I don't have to hear this sort of harsh words when you grow up, my son.

Ngr : What is this Dukhe's mother? You are not saying anything.

DkM : Sir, my son is hungry, I shall give him some food and go to your house right now.

Ngr : Well, let me see, how you keep your words? I am leaving.

[The neighbour exits]

DkM : My dear son! Please stay in home and wait for me. I shall be right back.

Dk : Mother, please don't go, they will kill you.

DkM : Do you think, I am that lucky to die so early, Dukhe. Will Khoda be that kind?.

Dk : O! Mother, don't say like that. If you die, then who will bring me up, who will feed me with paddy fry, broken rice fry and whose lap I seek, when feel sleepy.

DkM : O! Dukhe, my poor child, please wait for me in home.

Dk : Oh! Khoda, the Great, why I am so unlucky?

[Dukhe's Song]

*O life! Depart from my body and don't ask for meal,
For the meal, my mother is being treated ill
Mother will live, if I die, to ask for food I feel shy,
I shall starve instead and want to be dead.*



O life! from my form you better shed.

[Dhana enters]

Dh : Searched in so many houses, but didn't get one. One young fellow will do. But, I am not getting one. Let me see this house, heard that a boy lives here, named Dukhe. Dukhe, Dukhe, are you there?

[Enters Dukhe's house]

Dk : Someone is calling my name. Yes, I am Dukhe. But I don't know you.

Dh : But, how would you know me? For a long time I didn't visit your house. I am your father's cousin, your *Chacha* (Uncle).

Dk : Oh You are my *Chacha*. Please come and take your sit. I am Asking for your blessings!

[Dhana touches Dukhe's head and gives his blessings]

Dh : You have grown up Dukhe. How are you looking after your family?

Dk : Then listen *Chacha*,

[Dukhe's song]

*Dear Chacha listen to our sufferings
Bad luck on us and is long prevailing
Father went to forest and fall prey to tiger
Mother has to work hard to earn a meager
Poor mother is pounding grains and working hard
I am grazing cattle and roaming after other's herd*

Dh : It is pathetic that you are passing your days in such poor condition. So far you only grazing cattle of others and didn't learn anything to earn money. Will you come with me? I will take care of you and you will stay in my house. I will teach you how to do business. And then I will arrange your marriage. Will you come with me.

Dk : I will go *Chachaji*, surely I will go. My mother does have to do pounding of crops, not listen to foul words from others. But please tell me that you will teach me business and help me to earn money.

Dh : Of course, I will teach you, Dukhe. Within a year you will earn lot of money and you will be out of poverty. Will you able to learn?



- Dk : Why not *Chachaji*, I will surely learn it. Are you surely going to arrange my marriage *Chachaji*?
- Dh : Surely I will, after all you are my nephew, I will do everything for you.
- Dk : Now, tell me *Chachaji*, what is the business?
- Dh : A very good business, which our forefathers used to do.
- Dk : *Chachaji*, I haven't seen my father. I really don't know what business our forefathers used to do ?
- Dh : Nothing unusual, they used to go to Jungle Estate and collect honey, bee-wax and wood and sell them in the nearby town market.
- Dk : You, please wait *Chachaji*. Let me call my mother, . . . Ma . . . Ma . . .

[Bibijan, enters singing]

*Why call me again and again dear,
Left early for pounding crops, here and there,
Who will provide me food without labour and prayer?
Looking at your hungry face brings me tear,
You are my only little gem, O dear! My dear,
Why call me again and again O! Dear.*

- Dk : O, mother! Look, who is here, my *Chacha* ! He came here to take me to jungle and to join his business of collecting honey, bee wax and wood from Jungle Estate and sell them in the nearby town market. I will be able to earn lot of money and we will be rich and you don't have to go for work for others. Please allow me to go with my *Chacha*.
- DkM : But, who is your *Chacha*? I never saw any of your *Chachas*. With you in my womb, I became widow. Nobody came forward with a fistful of grain and I had to break my waist and work hard to bring you up. We have no relative and from where your *Chacha* came to take you to his business in Jungle Estate? I will continue with begging and working for others to feed you . . .
- [Dhana stands up and salutes Bibijan]
- Dh : *Bhabiji* (Sister-in-law), my *Salaam* ! Please don't worry. He is a fine energetic, grown up boy. How long you are going to keep him with you and feed him. Please give him, I will teach him my business and make him my partner and he will earn money.
- DkM : No. I will not allow him with you to jungle. Better, I will beg and feed him.



Dh : That's why a woman is called woman, having a quarter brain.
Dukhe, you stay with your mother, I am leaving.

[Prepares to go, but, Dukhe prevents]

Dk : Please don't go *Chacha*. Oh! Mother, please bless me and allow me to go with *Chachaji*. We will not be poor anymore and will be rich. Moreover, *Chachaji* said that he will arrange my marriage. Isn't it, *Chachaji*?

DkM : Oh! My dearest! How can I let you go to jungle?

[Enters *Vivek* and starts a song]

*Don't you go to jungle, O! Gem of Mother, I strongly forbid
Separation from you, your mother will be deceased,
When Ram deserted Kaushalya and went to exile
Think of her condition, which put her into peril,
Don't you go to jungle, O! Dukhe! I forbid.*

[*Vivek* stops]

Dk : Hey, you drug addict, go away from here. No one will listen to you.

[*Vivek* continues]

*I am not an addict, you will be in tears, I predict
You won't find a way out and without any delight.
Don't go to jungle, O! Dukhe! Be out of this plight.*

[*Vivek* exits]

Dh : Go away, you wretched fellow. Nobody will listen to your word.
Dukhe, you don't listen to him and don't feel depressed.

Dk : I am feeling very courageous, so don't feel bad, my mother!

Dh : *Bhabiji*, please stop worrying. Many people will be there with us.
Dukhe doesn't have to do any laborious job, but to be in the boat.

DkM : Well, I am giving my Dukhe to you. Please take utmost care with him, Dhana.

[Song of *Bibijan*]

*Dhana, look after my Dukhe well, he is innocent and frail,
Tears should not shed he, when remembering me,
When he will weep, treat him dearly and deep,
He knows his mother only and no one else,
Feed him when he is hungry and treat him with grace,*



Dhana, look after my jewel and take no chance.

- Dh : *Bhabiji, please don't worry. I will take care of him as my son. Now you keep Rs.500 and I will give you more when I come back from jungle.*
- DkM : *I swear by the kind Khoda and leave him at your care. Dhana, take my Dukhe with you. If, he commits any mistake please forgive him, guide him in the business as your son. I earnestly request to feed him when he is hungry and take utmost care when he will be in jungle. [Embracing Dukhe dearly] Oh! My dearest angel, please listen to me carefully. Whenever you are in any danger, pray and call for Banabibi louder. She is the epitome of kindness and bestows of her blessings to anyone, who prays to her. She is the Mother Goddess of the Jungle Estate. Be careful in the dense forest and remember Mother always.*
- Dk : *Ma, my kind Ma, give me your blessing and bid me farewell.*
- Dh : *Bhabiji, let me depart too.* [Both Dhana and Dukhe leave]

[Song of Bibijan]

*My Dukhe is leaving me, going to jungle,
Not listens to me, fallen to Dhana's cajole.
Forbid him anyone from going to that far,
If he goes, none will call me mother here.
Ill fated, helpless with a tormenting life
If he doesn't return, that continues my strife
Look after my little Dukhe, O! Banabibi Ma!
There shouldn't be any spot on your divine charisma!
I pray you, protect my most precious jewel,
Save him from any peril and the tiger cruel!*

[Bibijan exits]

[Monohar enters]

- Mnr : *Oh! Almighty Khoda! Don't know your wish. We two brothers are living together happily. If I lose my brother, how will I live alone. But, what am I uttering? This is business of our forefathers. Why am I worrying? Let Khoda's wish be fulfilled.*

[Boatmen enter]

- SdM : *Now it is ebb-tide, Why we are getting late? Let's start.*
- Mnr : *Please wait for some time. We are waiting for Dhanabhai. As Soon as he comes we will start.* [Monohar exits]
- SdM : *Oh! Don't know how long will he take.*



[Dhana enters with Dukhe]

Here he comes. Where is your working man?

- Dh : Why Sadhubhai, This is my man!
- SdM : You have chosen a perfect man. Still I am getting his infantile smell.
- Btm1 : You may be getting his infantile smell, but I can see his milk teeth. He is of no use to us.
- Dh : You are all forgetting your past. One day you were also like that and had started for the first time. Let him do as per his capacity, you have nothing to do in that.
- Btm3 : Well, that is true. We have nothing to do in this. So, my young friend, what is your name?
- Dk : I am Dukhe.
- Boatmen: That is fine. All of us will be happy.
- SdM : Then, let us weigh the anchor and start our voyage.

[Boatmen's song]

*Take Allah's name, let ebb tide come
Row the scull, set the sail,
Spring's glow is gone, now wind is slow,
To go to the deep, try tooth and nail
Put effort more, weigh the anchor,
Take Allah's name, row offshore.*

- Dh : Sadhubhai, please tell us about the name of rivers in our route.
- Btm1 : I shall try to tell the names, you all please help me.

[Song of Boatman 1]

*Listen to our journey thru' rivers and places,
Sails off at Hasnabad then Rajnagar at sight,
We row to Kahutala and then Shihnagar reaches.
Next is Dehata, then Shutir Ati falls on its right,
On left Basantapur, Ichhamoti approaches,
At right Barunhat and Khanjer Daye, we meet,
Keeping left Shulpur, cross Boltala in breezes
Basantapur at left to see Hingalganj is bright,
Bankura, we land n' rest, where river Kalindi swells.
Rowing by Hardoha to reach Ushak in plight,
River Ushak is turbulent, full of mighty waves
Navaratnais next, where nine gems used to meet,
To meet king Vikramaditya, legendary n' wise!*



*Trimona comes then, if we go further proceed.
At right is Dambala and then Kanaikati arrives.
Thru' Kalindi, reach Kanaikuti if we turn right,
Mighty Raymangal, in front of us, with large waves.
Here we stop, eat and rest for the night.*

SCENE -4

[Place : Gadkhali]

[Dakshin Ray (DkR) and Sanatan (Stn) enter]

DkR : Look Sanatan! Behold the beauty of our Jungle Estate in the Spring, so beautiful and enchanting. All the branches of the Trees are blooming with fascinating flowers, stooping with honey-filled beehives. Prosperity and peace are prevailing everywhere. Go, watch carefully all around and look after well, so that no one is able to disturb this peace and tranquility of this Jungle Estate.

Stn : O! King, are these honey and bee-wax for our consumption and usage only?

DkR : Not at all Sanatan, this is not only for our consumption. It is like a fanciful market garden. Rowing their boat, the traders, merchants from different corners will come here, worship us and merrily collect and fill their boat with honey and bee-wax. Be very careful that no human being is able to collect honey and bee-wax without worshiping us and without our consent. If they do so, we will lose our sanctity, reverence and dignity.

Stn : But, O! King, where there is wealth there are miscreants and thieves. If I am able to catch hold of a thief, what do I do?

DkR : Promptly bring him to me, I will punish him accordingly. Now, take the demons and demoness with you and carefully guard the Estate.

[Dakshin Ray exits]

Stn : Come all the demons and demoness and be with me in Performing my duty.

[Enter singing demons and the demoness]

*O! Victorious! Reverential Dakshin Ray,
We bow and dedicated respect we pay,
We perform our duty and dance with gay,
O! Victorious! Reverential Dakshin Ray.*

[The demons and the demoness exit]



SCENE – 5

[Enter singing boatmen]

*Oh, Ho, Ho, Hail! Pull the anchor, set the sail!
Venturing a new land, of which we know no head and tail.
Hope for the best you flock of ram, chances of return is frail,
But we will be back for sure, to eat rice and drink from grail
Oh, Ho, Ho, Hail! Pull the anchor, set the sail!*

- Dh : Where are we heading dear oarsmen?
SdM : Oh! That is *Gadkhali* in front of us.
Dh : Let's stop here and down the anchor for the day.
SdM : Oh! Dhanabhai, look at the sky! Observe carefully!

[Boatmen start singing]

*Cloud forms in the Ishan sky, wind is gushing strong,
Put down the sail and anchor, don't let it went wrong
Lightning strikes, water swells, don't be in danger for long
Hurry up, hurry up and hurry up, don't make it prolong.*

[All exit]

SCENE – 6

[Place: *Bhurkundi*]

[Banabibi (Bnbb) and Shah Jangalee (Sjl) enter]

- Bnbb : Dear Brother! I couldn't tell you earlier and you also don't know that we have an enemy in this Jungle Estate. He does not have the courage to enter *Bhurkundi*, but he creates problem in other parts of the Estate. If we are not able to banish him, we will earn a bad reputation.
- Sjl : But, till now you haven't told me anything about him. Where he lives, My Sister?
- Bnbb : It's very difficult to locate him and capture him. He roams around In *Gadkhali*, *Kendokhali*, but avoids *Bhurkundi*. He influences the poor and downtrodden people with his sorcery and then ruthlessly robs them off. He is very cruel like a demon.
- Sjl : Strange! Is there any such man in our peaceful *Atharo Bhati* Estate?
- Bnbb : He is not only a tyrant, but to satisfy his beastly desire, he



consumes human flesh also.

Sjl : How gruesome! My reverent sister! Please allow me to arrest him and bring him to you for judgment.

Bnbb : Yes, you have to do that, go and search for him.

Sjl : Sister! Give me your blessings! I will go out of *Bhurkundi* and arrest him. Let me see, how great sorceress is he? How dare he enters our territory and able to cause tyranny on our subjects?

[Shah Jangalce exits]

Bnbb : Born to a high caste parents with the blessing of Lord Bramha. But why so mean and cruel actions you perform with your filthy sorcery. Now, we will be brought you to justice, Dakshin Ray.

[Banabibi exits]

SCENE – 7

[Dhana (Dh) and the Boatmen enter]

Dh : You all boatmen, please go to the Estate cautiously. I have to go for some important work, I will join you later.

[Dhana exits. The boatmen anchored the boat in a safe place and get down on the bank and prepare to enter the jungle.]

Btm3 : O! Let three of us go to all five and half direction.

SdM : Hey, you all, where are you going? Do you know to which direction you have to go?

Btm2 : No Chief, we don't know any direction.

SdM : [Showing eastward direction] Well, tell me which is this direction?

Btm3 : Let me tell, it is the west direction, isn't it Sadhubhai?

SdM : [Showing westward direction] Then tell me which is this direction?

Btm1 : Oh! This is north.

SdM : [Showing northward direction] Then tell me which is this



direction?

- All : This is the direction where we all live, isn't it Sadhubhai?
- SdM : [Looking at all] Oh! You all have such a wonderful knowledge on direction, I am amazed.
- All : Sadhubhai, why are you talking tall? Will you able to show us the directions?
- SdM : [Looking at all] Well then, listen. [Pointing correctly and Separately to all directions] This is East. This is West. This is South. And, this is where we all live, is North. Do you follow?
- All : That may be correct, Sadhubhai. After all you are our chief.
- SdM : Yes, I am your chief and it is not easy to be a chief.
- [They walk into the jungle]
- Btm1 : Oh Khoda! I have been stuck by the pikehead of the jungle. Somebody help me please.
- Btm2 : What happened, why shouting like a boar?
- BtM : I have been stuck by a pikehead, please help me.
- [Helps him and all exit]

SCENE - 8

[Place: Gadkhali] [Dakshin Ray(DkR) and Sanatan (Stn) enter]

- DkR : Be very careful Sanatan. Some fellow, named *Dhanai Moule* (Honey collector and trader) came from *Barizhati* with a pompous preparation. See to it carefully that he shouldn't get a drop of honey without worshipping and giving tax in kind to us. He is enchanting and calling the Name of Mother. Let's see, You rascal, from where your Ma (Banabibi) will provide you with honey? Look Sanatan, until he prays our name and worship us, not a single drop of honey he will get. Go with your demons and demoness and make every beehive dry.
- Stn : Come all the demons and demoness, my companions and be With me in executing the order of our Lord.

[Enter four singing companions]

O! Sanatan, let's run, not a single drop to him,



*Let him search everywhere but has to sing Baba's hymn.
O! Victorious! Reverential Dakshin Ray.*

[The demons and the demoness exit]

SCENE - 9

[All the Boatmen enter the jungle for collecting honey]

- Btm1 : [Listening to some harsh rustling sound] Oh! Allah! Must be
Seven hundred Tigers [He falls down]
- Btm1 : What happened? What are you talking?
- Btm1 : Oh! Allah! Seven hundred Tigers are chasing us
- SdM : How can one collect honey in this jungle with these bunches of
half headed boors?
- All : Look, Sadhubhai, once again you are uttering such words. One
By one we all will pluck each of your beard.
- SdM : Tell me, can a person survive, if seven hundred tigers would
Have attacked?
- Btm1 : It may not be seven hundred, but definitely five hundred
- SdM : If five hundred tigers would have attacked you, can any of you
survive?
- Btm2 : But, three hundred definitely
- SdM : What an incorrigible stupidity?
- Btm3 : Then definitely one hundred
- SdM : Do you think you will get one hundred tiger, if you search the
jungle?
- Btm1 : Then at least fifty tigers
- SdM : Worthless boors!
- All : Sadhubhai, why you have to utter such words. It must be one . . .
- SdM : Have any of you ever seen a tiger or at least consumed a tiger? ,
- Btm1 : Why, on the earth we will consume a tiger? No, we have not seen
a tiger. We only know that it wags it tail and eat grass
And that's all we know.
- SdM : Now, I know, which tigers have chased you?



- All : Then what is that sound in the jungle silence?
- SdM : Those are fanpalm tree leaves rattling in the in the briskly wind and you boors, you thought that seven hundred tigers is chasing you.
- All : May be that's right, Sadhubhai.
- SdM : Hurry up now, the insects (the bees) are moving around. We Have to follow those with *Arhi* (Smoke making device) and drive the bees away from the hive. Then hold the *Bolen* (Bee collecting pot) under the hive and slice it and collect the honey.

[They all depart and enter from the other end. They all keenly watch and follow the movement of the bees. Boatman 1 mockingly holds the *Bolen* under the gray beard of Sadhu Majhi]

- SdM : Oh, Allah! You are searching honey bee in my beard? You
- Btm1 : Oh! it is your beard, I thought a beehive . . .
- SdM : Follow the bee and hold *Arhi* and *Bolen*, you rascal!
- [They all follow the instruction of Sadhu Majhi and move ahead]
- SdM : Oh, Ho, Ho ! What a damage you have done, spoiling all the collection!
- Btm1 : Sadhubhai, no such thing happened, there is not a single drop of honey!
- [All start discussion and informs Sadhu Majhi]
- Btm2 : Very strange, Sadhubhai! We smoked the king-size beehives, cut it, but there was not a single drop of honey! Not able to understand the matter!
- Btm3 : Let's call Dhanabhai and inform him. O! Dhanabhai, where are you?

[Dhana enters]

- Dh : Tell me Sadhubhai, how much honey did you collect?
- Btm1 : Not even a drop!
- Btm2 : Few drops would have been better, at least, that would made the taste of our meal better.
- Dh : What is the matter, Sadhubhai?
- SdM : It is beyond my imagination! I have seen them doing smoking, cutting . . . everything. But only Khoda knows what had happened?
- Btm1 : Something must have happened in between, which is beyond



our knowledge!

- Btm2 : That is right Sadhubhai, something must have happened?
- Dh : Please tell me Sadhubhai, what shall I do now?
- [Sadhu Majhi deeply engrossed in thought]
- SdM : Whatever I tell you to do, will you able to do?
- Dh : Yes, I will do Sadhubhai! Please tell me.
- SdM : You have to keep fast for few days and have to stay here. Will you be able to pursue that?
- Btm1 : Better option is to rest at tiger's stomach. . . . All cock and bull story!
- SdM : This is not weird or a cock and bull story, Not really
- Btm1 : Look, Sadhubhai! I shall never able to make it. I eat four times a day, I am not able to make it.
- Btm2 : But, what will happen after that, what are you indicating at Some miracle?
- SdM : Well, some miracle may happen!
- Btm1 : Sadhubhai ! Is it a miracle by some *Peer Paygambar* (Holy Saints) Dhanabhai, we all should do it.
- Dh : Right, let's all go to boat and lie down. [All exit]

SCENE - 10

[All the Boatmen, Dhana and Dukhe enter]

- Btm1 : Listen Dukhe, prepare a smoke for us.
- Btm2 : Don't want to have smoke now. I am lying down to sleep.
- Btm1 : Then, I am also following you. [Both of them lie down]
- SdM : Hey you all! Have you all pray your *Namaj* and thinking of lying down?
- Btm1 : That's right! O! *Akkaz*, O! *Ferraz*, come, O! You all! Let's all pray *Namaj*.
- [All stands up]
- SdM : You all! Stand properly. Now all of you pray



All : *La Illah Ha Muhammad Rasul Illahah*

[Most of them are not quite versatile with the intricate rituals of *Namaj* and their performances and dictions are quite different from each other. Most of them complete their *Namaj*, but *Ferraz* still repeatedly bending his body up and down from waist]

Btm1 : Hey *Ferraz*, *Namaj* is over! Now stop

Btm2 : What happened *Ferraz*? Are you having a stomach ache?

[Both of them try to make him stop and stand]

Ferraz
(Btm3) : Go to hell, both of you! Shall give you a solid slap, can't you see that my *Namaj* is not yet over . . .

SdM : That's alright *Ferraz*, do the remaining part tomorrow. Now lie down and keep some room for this old man. *Dhanabhai*, you also try to get some sleep and don't worry

[All the boatmen lie down on the platform of the boat]

Dh : Oh! Almighty *Khodal* Don't deprive me of your kindness! Investing so much money and came with so many persons to this *Jungle Estate*. But strangely didn't get a single drop of honey! Oh! Kind *Khodal* Have mercy on me and bless me, so that I am able to collect some honey and bee-wax. O! Dear *Dukhe*, please come and lie beside me.

[Both of them lie down on the platform of the boat]

[Suddenly an Oracle of *Dakshin Ray* is heard off-stage]

Oracle : My dear *Dhana*! Withempty stomach and burning worries, you look miserable! I feel bad for you, *Dhana*! Tell me, what happened? I will relieve you from your miseries!

Dh : In this dense forest, amongst these howling and roaring of beasts, who are You Kind Hearted, calling my name! Seems like Mother Goddess! Who are You, Mother! Please come and reveal Yourself.

Oracle : My dear! Whom are you calling Mother! I am not Mother, You can call me Father!

Dh : My Kind Deity! Please appear before me and resolve my doubts. *okhali* they have promise to offer me to Lord *Dakshin*
[*Dakshin Ray* enters in disguise and then removes his cover]

DkR : Behold *Dhana*! I am here, before you. You may not know me. I am *Dakshin Ray*, the son of the Holy Sage *Danda Bramha*, who was the owner of this *Ebbing Estate*. Each drop of honey and bee-wax of this entire *Estate* is my creation. Who worships me, I bestow my blessings and kindness on them.



- Dh : My Adoring Deity! If You are really the God of this Estate, kindly tell me, whether I have committed any mistake that I am not getting a drop of honey in Your Estate! Be kind to me My Adoring Idol!
- DkR : Listen Dhana! Since long, nobody has offered me a human sacrifice. If you offer me human sacrifice, then there will be no dearth of Honey and bee-wax for you and you can load your all seven fleet with Honey and bee-wax.
- Dh : What did You say My Lord? You want human sacrifice!
- DkR : You heard me correct, Dhana. I want you to offer me that 8 year old Dukhe and in exchange you will get honey and bee-wax as much as you can from my Estate.
- Dh : Oh! My Lord, I am terrified to death just by listening to human sacrifice, moreover You want Dukhe! Oh! My Adoring Deity! I want nothing from your Estate. I bow to Your feet and beg for Your kind forgiveness!
- DkR : [In a threatening voice] Dhana, listen to my order or else I will sink your boats and feed my crocodiles with your people and you. Let me see how you can go out of my territory.
- Dh : Oh! My Lord, even I shall accept that, but I can't sacrifice Dukhe.
- DkR : Dhana, how dare you say such words? If you want to go back home, you have to sacrifice Dukhe. If I don't get Dukhe, once again I repeat, I will sink all your boats, my pet crocodiles will kill and eat your entire crew. My pet demons and demoness will torture you to death. If any of your crew manages to save himself from crocodile then my pet tigers will kill him on land. There is no escape from my wrath.
- Dh : Oh! My Almighty Khoda! Why this kind of injustice is prevailing in your glorious world! O! Dukhe, why are you destined to such ill fate? You were safe in warm lap of your mother, why did I bring you here? No, no, I have brought you here by cajoling your mother. But I am a helpless being in the hands of fate and you cannot evade that ... [Sobbing profusely] Dukhe, Dukhe
- No, no, I will not call you. If you wake up and call me *Chacha*, I will not be able to bear it and everything will be ruined. . . . Oh, My Adoring Idol! Take anyone of our two brothers and spare Dukhe. He is the only blue-jewel of his widowed mother and with profound faith she allowed me to take him to this jungle under my care. Once again I bow to Your feet and beg for Your kind mercy, spare Dukhe!
- DkR : [with a grave voice] The Sun may change its course and rises in



the West and the Moon may ascend on Newmoon, but my words will never change. You have to sacrifice Dukhe.

- Dk : [Soliloquy] What is wrong in sacrificing Dukhe, if I get such enormous fortune? But, the world will call me a Traitor! Oh! Khoda what an agonising dilemma!
- Dk : [Continuing] My Lord! I bow to your wish, but it must be an absolutely secret and please help me in that.
- Dkk : Dhana, your desire will be fulfilled. Row all your boats to *Kendokhali* tomorrow, you will find abundance of honey and bee wax there and collect as much as you wish.
- DkR : [Continuing] But, be very careful to fulfill your promise! I must get Dukhe at *Kendokhali*. Don't forget it! [Dakshin Ray exits]
- Dh : What evil omen had befallen me that I have taken such an appalling decision, denying my brother's good voices I came to this Estate for collecting honey! What shall I do, now? People will call me a Traitor! How can I expiate for my sin! Oh! Kind Khoda! Have mercy on me, have mercy on me! Let me take refuge in sleep.
- Dk : Is that true, what I have heard just now? Dhana *Chacha* will Offer me to Dakshin Ray and will get plenty of honey and bee-wax and become a rich man? And my mother will continue to beg or be a grain-pounding labourer without me. When she will hear the news she will go blind and deaf in agony and then will definitely die. Khoda! Why are you so unkind? Why Dhana *Chacha* had made such false promise to my poor mother? Mother told me to call Ma Banabibi in danger. Ma! Be kind to me and show me your graceful form. I have heard that whoever has called you in peril you emancipate him from danger. But then why not emancipate me, because, I am poor and orphan? Ma! I pray, be kind to me and show me your graceful form! If you don't show your kindness and mercy, the world will show disgrace to your divine glory. So much shedding of tears doesn't soften your stone heart. Whatever may happen I will call you till my last breath!

[Dukhe's Song]

*Oh! My stone hearted deserting Mother!
Can't dissolve you with so much tear,
I know nothing but to offer my prayer*



Only can call you - Mother, Mother and Mother.

[Banabibi enters singing]

*Behold, My dear Dukhe, your Ma is here,
Food for you in my 'Anchal', shed no tear,
Fallen prey to Dhana's deceit, you drifted here,
I forbade you, knowing well that you couldn't bear,
Behold my dear Dukhe, your Ma is here!*

Bnbb : Why did you call me, my dear son! I forbade you not to fall prey to Dhana's sweet words, your suffering in Dhana's clutch is painful. Everyone will be your friend in your heyday, but desert you in peril.

Dk : Who are You divine beauty! Are You my Deity Mother? Appear before me in response to my prayer! Shedding tears for such a small devotee, You are looking as if the bright full moon is with cloudy smear! Now, salvage me from this wretched sphere.

Bnbb : When someone fall prey to some danger in jungle, I salvage them! You tell me why you have remembered me?

Dk : O! Holy Mother, You know everything! Dhana *Chacha* brought me here, promising wealth and bride for me to my mother. But here he promised to sacrifice me to Lord Dakshin Ray and in return he will get plenty of honey and bee-wax and make big fortune. He will return home with lavish wealth, but my poor mother will die when she will hear about my ill fate. I am totally surrendering myself at Your feet.

Bnbb : No not on my feet and come to my lap. Oh! Dukhe from now you are my son.

Dk : Oh! Kind Mother! Your holy touch soothes all irritation of my body and mind. I take asylum in Your feet and I am blessed to have such a blissful care. . . Tomorrow morning at *Kendokhali* Dakshin Ray will have me. Telling anything to *Chacha* will be futile and I have to go straight into the gulp of Dakshin Ray. Tell me Mother, what shall I do, if am frightened?

Bnbb : Don't be frighten, when I am with you, My son!

[Enters Shah Janglee (Sjl)]

Sjl : Reverent Sister! For a long time I am trying to capture Dakshin



Ray, but wasn't successful. I will not miss this golden opportunity. If Dhana goes to *Kendokhali* tomorrow and offer his sacrifice, Dakshin Ray will surely appear and I will capture him there and crash his vanity. Bless me Sister!

Bnbb : Go ahead. You have my blessings, Brother! But be careful, Dukhe must not get hurt.

Dk : No, Mother! I pray to You, don't let me go.

Bnbb : I assure you Dukhe, Dakshin Ray will not be able to touch even A single hair of your body!

Sj : Dear Dukhe, probably you don't know, this territory of *Atharo Bhati* is our sole Estate. We will not allow anyone to do anything unfair act here. Let see, how Dakshin Ray do such a crime there? But, Dukhe, don't tell anybody regarding this. Tomorrow you will see how I will defy Dakshin Ray and capture him. Even it seems to be an impossible act, I will perform it. Now let us move Sister, before anybody in the boat wakes up. Dukhe don't be frighten and have courage, see you tomorrow morning.

Bnbb : Dukhe, My son! Call me at once in your peril. Brother, Shah Jangalee, will come to rescue you then. Let's move Brother!

[Both of them exit and Dukhe lie down again]

SCENE - 11

[Next Day, Morning]

Dh : What a lovely morning, golden sunray has flooded the horizon! All on the board please wake up. Sadhubhai, please wake up, see the beauty of the eastern sky off the jungle.

[Holding hand of Sadhubhai, Dhana makes him stand]

SdM : Oh! Allah! There must be wild boars on the board or the Lord of the Hell with his retinues! You all, still sleeping, wake up right now.

[Holding their hands, Sadhubhai tries to make them stand]

Btm1 : Hey Sadhubhai, You are slashing my hand like a wild boar.



[Jumps up on his feet]

SdM : Look at them, digging mud with their nose

Btm1 : Wake up *Akkaz*. What makes your nose swollen?

[Makes *Akkaz* stand on his feet]

Btm2 : Come, come, come! O tiger! Come and take one of us!

Btm3 : Hey! Have you gone crazy! What are you uttering in this
Wretched jungle!

Btm2 : Come on. Do you really believe that I have that much power that
If I utter the tiger will jump on one of us?

Dh : Stop all these stray words. *Sadhubhai*, we have to start for
Kendokhali right now.

SdM : Do we get honey there?

Dh : Yes, we will get that.

[All Boatmen start whispering among themselves]

Btm1 : If we don't get honey and bee wax there, I may go crazy and do
something extreme

Dh : We will get honey and bee-wax there for sure.

Btm1 : *Sadhubhai*, how did he know that we will get those over there?

SdM : You all, wait here. Let me enquire about the mystery?
Tell me *Dhanabhai*, you don't know much about the jungle, yet
how do you come to know that we will get honey and bee-wax in
the same territory? Did you get something in your dream?

Btm1 : Please tell us *Dhanabhai*, have you dreamt of something?

Dh : I have to tell you. Please come to this end.

SdM : No, don't tell us here. There must be something uncanny. I am
frightened!

[*Sadhu Majhi* is shuddering]

Dh : No, You don't have to be frightened of anything While I
was sleeping yesterday, a stout and tall fellow with a falchion in
his right hand



- All Boatmen: [Exclaimed together, all panicky and shuddering] Oh! Khoda, where shall we flee?
- Dh : Stop it all and listen to me. That tall fellow with a falchion told me to go to *Kendokhali*, where we will get plenty of honey and bee wax.
- SdM : But, I don't think, showing this kindness is without any reason? There must be something.
- Btm1 : Tell me Dhanabhai, did he ask for any special offer? Do tell us Dhanabhai, don't hesitate!
- Dh : No, nothing of that sort, but
- Btm3 : But ? Dhanabhai, why you are hesitating?
- Dh : No, I am not going to hide anything from you, but I need your help. You have to help me. Won't you?
- Btm1 : First you tell us the truth, then we all will decide. Now tell us . .
- Dh : That valiant person is Dakshin Ray!
- Btm1 : What? then?
- Dh : He wants some offering human offering.
- All Boatmen: [Exclaimed together] Oh! Allah so dreadful
- Dh : Please keep quiet, don't shout, Dukhe may wake up. Nothing will happen to you. He wants us to offer Dukhe to him as sacrifice!
- Btm1 : Oh! Allah! What a cruel *Kafir*, demanding a kid, like Dukhe, as a sacrifice?
- Btm2 : It can't be. Dukhe will not be enough for a mouthful grab. And why he is demanding such a kid, when grown up person like us are there? Something must be fishy. We will not go.
- Dh : I am assuring, you have no danger, nothing will happen to you. Please help me a little.
- SdM : Don't worry for that. We have so many persons, one will go. Now call Dukhe and wake him up.
- Btm3 : Dukhe, now wake up and prepare a smoke for us. All get ready To go for *Kendokhali*



- Dk : [Wakes up, listens that] Why you want to go to *Kendokhali*?
- Sdm : Why? What is your problem? Boatmen, weigh the anchor, pull the sail and start rowing.
- Dukhe : No, don't go to *Kendokhali*.
- Btm1 : Now you keep quiet, lad.
- Dk : [Murmurs] It is that *Kendokhali*, where my life will come to an end
- Btm1 : Hey, what are you murmuring? Give you a big slap and that will send you to *Kendokhali*.

[Dukhe's Song]

*Ma! I go to Kendokhali to spend my last day,
Cruel Chacha is offering me to Lord Dakshin Ray,
Listening to this, my poor mother herself will slay,
Forever sadden mother, was never happy and gay,
Mother, going to Kendokhali to have my last day.*

- Btm1 : Don't make trouble. Hurry up and get going to *Kendokhali*.
- SdM : You must have heard our conversation, isn't it? Madhubhai, push him on the boat and row fast.
- Btm1 : Hey lad, hurry up. The Ebb tide will stop soon and we are getting late.

[All of them exit]

SCENE - 12

[Place : *Kendokhali*]

[Banabibi and Shah Jangalce enter]

- Sjl : This is *Kendokhali*, where Dhana Moule (Honey collector) will come.
- Bnbb : Be very careful and hide yourself well into the jungle, so that nobody can make any trace of you!
- Sjl : Sister! I am intolerantly waiting to meet that valiant Dakshin Ray and give a fight.
- Bnbb : Now, get ready. They may come here any time.



- Sjl : Yes, we will move on air and stay near Dhana and his folks.
 [Both exit]
- [Dhana, Boatmen and Dukhe enter]
- SdM : Down the anchor here.
- Dh : Yes, do that. We will enter jungle today.
- Btm1 : But, if all of us go to jungle, then who will cook rice for us?
- Dh : Dukhe will cook rice today. Dear Dukhe, please prepare rice for us.
- Dk : But *Chacha*, I never cooked in my life. How can I prepare food for so many persons?
- Btm3 : What else can you do? You and your *Chacha* may give a trial of cooking today.
- Dk : But, I never cooked in life.
- Btm1 : Well, then learn it.
- Dk : No I won't be able to do it.
- Btm3 : Then do one thing, you and your *Chacha* go to jungle and collect honey and bee-wax and we will prepare food for you.
- Dh : You Boatmen, why are you spoiling your time. Prepare to go to jungle at once. Dukhe, please cook food for us.
- Btm1 : Prepare food well.
- Btm2 : If we don't get our food in time we will eat you.
- Sdm : Dukhe prepare the lobster well with care.
 [All of them depart]
- Dk : Oh! Kind Khoda! What shall I do now? How to cook for so many people? How can I cook with dampen firewood and cracked earthen pot? If I don't prepare, they will kill me. Even if they kill me, what else can I do? Mother told me to call Ma Banabibi in misery. If I call her, she will definitely show me a path. Let me pray. Ma Banabibi, I am in acute adversity. Salvage me from this situation. Oh! Holy Rescuer I have none but you and I pray to You!



[Dukhe's Song]

*Show me Your Holy Form, O! Holy Mother!
In distress I have no one, but, only You are there.
I am poor, I am orphan that of you are aware,
Save me from this agony, at your feet, I am there.*

[Banabibi's entry and Song]

*Behold Dukhe! Here I came,
Don't get frighten.
What is the trouble dear?
Why call me again?*

Dk : The distance between *Gadkhali* to *Kendokhali* is so high that I thought You may not hear my call and I was scared to death.

Bnbb : No Dukhe, it is not that far. Whoever is fallen into misery in this Estate of *Atharo Bhati*, calls me and I wipe their distress. What is your trouble?

[Dukhe's Song]

*Ma! They told me to cook and cooking I know nothing,
But with damp wood and cleft pot, how am I trying?
I keep on blowing, but only smoke, no flame is emerging,
Repetitive blowing makes me gasping and my eyes are itching,
If, no food there, they go crazy and give me severe beating.
Ma! I have none, but You for me, thus I am praying!*

Bnbb : Oh! Just this! Duke you don't worry, I will do it for you.

[Banabibi's Song]

*What a luck you wrote for me, Oh! Almighty God,
Dukhe's pray made me cook and that too for Dhana's lot.
Don't worry my son, now relax and rest
When they come, serve them and do your best!*

Dk : But, Mother, so little quantity of food for so many persons? How shall I manage?

Bnbb : Don't worry, my son! Just chant *Bish Millah* and serve them food. You see, they will be happy! Now I have to go as they will be back anytime.

[Banabibi exits]



SCENE – 13

[Place : *Kendokhali*]

[Honey collectors enter, busy in collecting honey]

SdM : [Looks up] Follow the bee, follow the bee.

Btm1 : Can you follow the bee? Smoke the hive.

Btm2 : Just see! It's a wonder! So much honey! Hey, hold the pot.

[Music Concert goes for some time while their actions are shown]

SdM : Now, all stop, It's enough. There is no room to keep more. It won't be possible to row these boats to home.

[Dakshin Ray's voice from off-stage] : Dhana, listen to me, throw honey into water and collect more Bee-wax.

Dh : Listen Boatmen, Don't collect honey anymore.

SdM : Then, what? Shall we load timber?

Dh : No, load bee-wax.

Btm1 : What, we have to load those shit of bees? What kind of trader we are working for?

Btm2 : Sadhubhai, we should follow Dhanabhai, because he is our trader. Brothers, let's do it.

Btm3 : What? Dhanabhai, our trader, must have gone crazy. Probably he didn't see so much quantity of honey in his father's lifetime!

Dh : Perhaps you don't know bee-wax is more expensive than honey.

SdM : Brothers, let's do it.

Btm1 : Shall we throw the honey in water?

SdM : Yes that's right. Do that.

[Music Concert goes with their actions for some time]

SdM : Don't forget to keep some honey for us.

Dh : Yes, you can keep as much as you need for yourselves. And throw the rest in water.

SdM : Now, hurry up and throw the honey.

[With rhythm of music they do the action]



- Btm1 : At last, it's over. Now let's go back.
- Dh : I have to go early, you come later. [Dhana exits]
- SdM : Now, let's leave. I shall carry the honey pot.
- Btm1 : No, I shall carry that.
- Btm2 : No, I shall carry that.
- Btm3 : I shall go with you, not ahead of you. Sadhubhai will definitely eat honey!
- SdM : No, no, that's not right. First do proper distribution then consumption.
- Btm3 : You will be busy distributing behind us. We believe you.
- [All move ahead and Sadhubhai starts licking honey from the pot, suddenly they all turn back]
- All : What is this, Sadhubhai? Is this your first step to distribution, licking honey from the pot?
- SdM : Oh, no! An insect slipped into honey and I am using my beard to throw it off the honey.
- Btm1 : Sadhubhai, now I will go behind you.
- Btm2 : We want to see how you distribute with such skill. We all will observe.
- SdM : So, you won't go ahead?
- All : No, Sadhubhai, we want to learn. We will follow you.
- SdM : So, you don't want to go ahead. Do you know what happen if you go ahead?
- Btm1 : What happens Sadhubhai, what happens?
- SdM : You get money. . . . Do you know what happen, if you go trail behind ?
- All : What happens Sadhubhai, what happens?
- SdM : You will fall prey to tiger! Remember tiger !
- All : [With scared shout] Oh! Allah! We will not fall behind.



[Everyone wants to go ahead of other and there is a bit commotion. Sadhu Majhi waits for some time and then starts eating honey again. All of them exit]

[Dukhe enters]

Dk : It is quite late. Why *Chacha* and others are not returning? Oh! here they come.

[Dhana and other enter]

Dh : All listen, have your lunch now. As soon as possible as the flow tide comes, we have to leave this place.

SdM : Hey all! Come and see the amount of rice and curry.

Btm1 : [Looking at the containers] Sadhubhai, look at the quantity, just one plate of rice and one plate of curry!

Btm2 : No, we are not going to eat, we will not

Dk : All of you please be seated and have your lunch.

All : Hey lad! How you are going to manage? If, we are not able to have our lunch, we will eat you.

Dh : Boatmen, please be seated. Let me see the matter.

SdM : All of you listen to our trader, Dhanabhai. Let's seat.

Btm3 : What is he going to do with such meager quantity?

Dk : All of you please listen to me and take your seat. I shall take the blame, if I am not able to give you food.

Btm1 : Well, let's see what miracle you can do?

Dk : [Dukhe starts serving the food] *Bishmillah!* I request you all to chant *Bishmillah*, before having your food!

All : What are you saying? We just utter *Bishmillah* and our stomach will be full. We are not eating.

[All exit. Sadhubhai stays back and whenever getting an opportunity lifting food and eat. Boatman1 enters and watches that and slaps him on his back. All enter.]

Btm1 : What is this Sadhubhai, why are you stealing food?

SdM : No, no, I am not stealing, I am tasting the food. Hey, all of you come and taste it. It is delicious!



- Dk : Please come, take your seat and have your food. I am assuring you that you will enjoy.
- All : [Taking their seat] Alright! Serve your food. Don't know how you will manage?
- Dk : All my boatmen brothers, please remember Banabibi once and take your grab.
- All : Again those funny stories! Stop all this nonsense.
- [All on the verge of leaving]
- Dk : All my boatmen brothers, please come. I assure you once again. Please come.
- [All of them resume their seat and Dukhe serves]
- All : Stop whining these nonsense and serve.
- [All of them observe with utter surprise that from that small earthen container Dukhe is serving them, but somehow it is not exhausting. The food seems delicious and they had a lot. They all start whispering among themselves]
- Dk : All my boatmen brothers, please have some more.
- All : No, no, that's enough! Are you going to kill us?
- SdM : But, Dukhe from where did you learn such wonderful cooking . . . And to tell you the truth, we never had such superb and delicious food in our life
- Btm1 : You were telling that you don't know anything about cooking!
- Btm2 : Oh Khoda! Bless this boy! After so much eating I am not able to stand up. Anyone, please help to stand.
- Btm1 & Btm3: Not only him, we are all in same condition, please help to stand.
- [Dukhe helps one by one, but Sadhubhai, to stand]
- SdM : Dukhe dear! Please help me also.
- All : No, Dukhe, let him steal some more food. Sadhubhai go ahead.
- SdM : Oh Dukhe, dear! Please help this old man to stand [All help him to stand] Oh! You all, do it bit tenderly. My stomach will burst with your enthusiastic help.
- Dh : Listen, all boatmen. Now we have to do a very difficult job, we



Have to offer Dukhe as per the promise.

- SdM : I am not going to do that. I am not going to help you.
- All : We are also not going to do that.
- Dh : I promise to pay you Twenty Rupees each!
- Btm1 : Even if you promise Forty Rupees each, we will not do it.
- Dh : I am promising to pay you Hundred Rupees each! Please do it for me.
- Btm2 : Sadhubhai, please tell us , how we are going to do such an sinful act.
- SdM : What has he done that we have to take such a step! Please do pardon us!
- Dn : Sadhubhai, please help me. We all have promised to Dakshin Ray and how you are going to escape his wrath?
- SdM : [Deeply thought for some time] Well, we have one way out.
- Dh : Sadhubhai, please tell me.
- SdM : There is not much fire-wood and leaves in boat and we need them badly for our journey. Send Dukhe to Jungle to collect those and as soon as he gets down from boat, row the boat away. . . . He will face his fate in the jungle!
- Dh : Dukhe dear, tell me whether there is any fire-wood and leaves in boat?
- Dk : [After checking] No, there is not much fire-wood and leaves in boat.
- Dh : We have to collect it from jungle. Boatmen, please collect fire wood and leaves from Jungle.
- All Boatmen: We are all very exhausted and we want some rest after such a feast. Dukhe dear, why don't you go to jungle and do it for us?
- Dk : No, I am not going to jungle.
- SdM : Why you are not able to do it. So far we haven't told you to do anything, but cooking and you have done a splendid job. This is also you shall able to do well. Please do it.



- Dk : No Sadhubhai, I am not going to jungle.
- Btm1 : Oh, Dukhe! Please go hurriedly and come back quickly. We are all really exhausted. Please do it for us.
- Dk : No, I am not going to jungle.
- Dh : Please go my dear! They are all exhausted and requesting you. Do it please!
- Dk : *Chacha*, please tell others to do it. I am not going to do it.
- SdM : We are all very tired and repeatedly requesting you to do it. So far we haven't told you to do anything, but cooking and you have done a splendid job. This is also you shall able to do well. Please do it.
- Dh : [Soliloquy] No, I shall not tell him to do. Shall I forget my dream of becoming a rich man and forget my promise to Dakshin Ray?
- [The roaring of tiger is heard in the off stage]
- Dh : What is that frightful sound? Is it tiger's roar? I have to fulfill my promise to Ray *Thakur*.
- Dk : *Chacha*, what is that dreadful sound? Is it definitely roaring of tiger? *Chacha*, Please save me and don't send me to collect fire wood and leaves from the jungle.
- Dh : No, my dear Dukhe, it is not the roaring of tiger. It is the sawing of tree in the jungle by the woodcutters. Don't be afraid, I am with you. Now please go and collect some fire-wood and leaves from the jungle.
- Dk : *Chacha*, I never been to jungle alone. Please tell somebody else to do that.
- Dh : Again the same plea, I am assure you that nothing is going to happen. Please go . . .
- Btm1 : Do it what you are being told to do. So far, what you have done, only cooking. You are only grabbing food and shitting in the jungle. Just go and do it.
- Dk : Whatever you may say I am not going to jungle.
- Dh : Sadhubhai, tie his hand and legs and throw him in the jungle.
- Dk : Save me *Chacha!* I bow to your feet, don't be so heartless! Don't



be so traitorous and deceitful! How are you going to face my mother?

Dh : Sadhubhai, don't delay. Tie his hand and legs and throw him in the jungle.

[Dukhe's Song]

*Don't tie my limbs Chacha, don't do it,
I may not able to bear and curse you for it,
Your heart is full of grit, which drags you to sinful pit,
Believed you solely but, you make my mother deceit,
My ever sadden mother will never forgive you for it.
Don't tie my limbs Chacha, don't do it*

Dh : Dhana, turn yourself to stonehearted creature, deafen yourself to any distressed cry, blind yourself to any pathetic sight, or else your cherished dream will be shattered within a moment. Fulfill the promise you made to Dakshin Ray *Thakur!* Oh! What an agonising dilemma? Let the world behold a traitor! Oh! Good old Mother Earth! Don't ever keep any room for me in your eternal peaceful lap! Oh, Sun! Oh, Moon! Don't ever touch me with your heavenly Rays! I pray to Almighty Allah for mercy!

Dk : Chacha, for Khoda's mercy! Please save me and undo my chain.

Dh : I'll make you free, but go and collect fire-wood and leaves from the jungle.

Dk : Chacha, I had listened to Dakshin Ray's Oracle and aware of my fate!

Dh : What have you heard? Sadhubhai we have no other option, but to tie his hands and legs and throw him in the jungle. . . . But we may make you free, if you go and collect some fire-wood and leaves from the jungle.

Dk : Chacha, I will do that, but don't desert me in this jungle and leave. I am going

[Dukhe exits]

[As soon as Dukhe goes out of sight]

Dh : Oh, Dakshin Ray *Thakur!* I have called Dukhe as my son and I am supposed to do my duty like a father, which I have promised to his mother. Instead, I have snatched Dukhe from his mother's



lap to sacrifice him to a monster! Merciful Allah,
pardon me, if You can!

SdM : All hurry up, pull the anchor, row fast and go out of sight!

[They all exit hurriedly]

SCENE - 14

[Place : *Kendokhali*]

[Dukhe enters with a bundle of fire-wood on his head]

Dk : Where is *Chuchaji* and others, where are the boats? Probably, I have come to a wrong place. But, it seems we were here! . . . I know, they have left me in this dreaded jungle. Now what shall I do? Oh, Mother Goddess! Oh! Ma Banabibi! I am surrendering to You! Save me from this perilous situation! Ma Banabibi! Save me!

[Enters *Vivek* and starts a song]

*Call Mother, call Mother, when you are in distress,
Mother will respond to you, when you are helpless.
Taking refuge at Mother's feet and steadily row your boat,
Even in the worst tide, your boat will float.
Row your boat, row your boat with complete faith in Her,
Mother, will salvage you and guide you to a place safer.*

[*Vivek* exits]

[Repeated roaring of tiger is heard off-stage]

Dk : Where are you mother? Why are you deserting me in this situation? Tigers are roaring and coming towards me. I will be killed any moment?

[*Dukhe's* Song]

*My last moments are rushing to me,
On last breath Mother, You, I want to see.
Mother where art you Thee?*

[*Dukhe's* collapses]

[First the Tiger enters. Then Banabibi and Shah Jangalee enter]

Bnbb : Brother Jangalee, go fast and fight Dakshin Ray, before he does any harm to my son *Dukhe*! He turns himself a Tiger and going to kill *Dukhe*. His malicious attempt will malign my name. Go



and fight fiercely against him. I want to see him flat on the ground and I feel ecstatic at that sight.

[The tiger is about to pound on Dukhe, Banabibi comes in between and take Dukhe in her lap and exits. Shah Jangalee jumps on the tiger with his club. The tiger then goes off-stage and Dakshin Ray enters with a sword. They start fighting fiercely]

Sjl : You wretched carnivore, transforming from a human form to a tiger by trick and calling yourself a human being! Soon you have to face the defeat and I will capture you and enslave you forever.

DkR : You talkative runt, stop talking and fight. I will send you to hell, where you will live the rest of your life! You don't know with whom you are combating.

Sjl : Born in a celebrated *Bramhin* family, how do you become such a filthy beast? You are wretched carnivore, transforming yourself to a tiger by trick and calling yourself a human being? I will salvage you from your beastliness by killing you.

DkR : You have touched and playing with fire, soon I will turn you to a pyre. Now stop talking and fight for your dear life.

[They fight intensely for sometimes and both of them go off-stage and enter again fighting. Slowly Dakshin Ray starts retreating and finally run away. Shah Jangalee chases him]

SCENE – 15

[*Barkhan Gazi's Place*][*Barkhan Gazi* (Bkz) enters]

Bkz : I feel very tired. Let me rest for a while.

[Dakshin Ray enters hurriedly]

DkR : Are you there my friend, I am in great danger? A reputed rogue is after me to kill me. Please give me shelter.

Bkz : Oh! My friend! What happened to you? Why you are trembling and looking so frightened, wounds and bloodstains are all over your person, tell me what had happened?

DkR : A honey trader, named Dhana, came to my territory to collect



honey and bee wax. He offered me a boy of eight, named Dukhe as sacrifice. But, when I was about to attack the boy, a lass and a brat emerged almost from nowhere, slapped me hard and took the boy away. The lass is amazingly beautiful and the brat is surprisingly powerful and starts fighting with me. I have put my mightiest effort, but couldn't prevent his bout and forced to flee. Now please help me and find some way to save me!

[Shah Jangalee enters]

- Sjl : There is only one way and that is to send you to hell. Get ready to accept that.
- Bkz : Look, who is here! My old friend Shah Jangalee! Please control your wrath my gallant hero.
- Sjl : *Gazi Saheb*, I shall talk to you later. First let me teach this beastly tormenter a lifetime lesson.
- Bkz : Please control yourself my valiant friend !
- Sjl : Look *Gazi Saheb*! I will compose myself only after I detained him.
- Bkz : Why do you worry. I will do that for you !
- Sjl : But, who he is to you?
- Bkz : A friend, my dear!
- Sjl : Look *Gazi Saheb*! He may be your best friend. But, I can't let him escape and will not stop till I capture him. If require I will fight against you to get him. Now you decide what will you do?
- Bkz : I don't want to fight with you. You just want to arrest him, isn't it? He has taken my asylum and I have given him shelter. If I submit him to you it will be a misanthropic deed against Allah! I can't do that as a true servant of Allah!
- Sjl : Look *Gazi Saheb*! I am giving you some time to decide. But, I have to arrest him.
- Bkz : If you really have to arrest him, then please arrest me instead and wherever you want to take me, let's go there.
- Sjl : Look *Gazi Saheb*! You are a noble soul! Only for your sake, my Noblest Sister, *Banabibi*, will be considerate and kind! Let's go to her in *Bhurkundi*. She is ruling her kingdom, the territory of *Atharo Bhati* from there.



[Astonished on hearing that and turns to Dakshin Ray]

Hkz : Dakshin Ray! My dear old friend, probably you don't know with whom you have quarreled and initiated a fight? The entire Estate of *Atharo Bhati* belongs to her and she got this as a gift from your mother Narayani! What had happened is the result of gross misunderstanding and perjury of fate. Now let us go to her, confess to your wrong deeds and beg her pardon! Oh, my valiant Shah Jangalee, please guide us to her. [All exit]

SCENE - 16

[Place : Approach to *Gadkhali*]

[Singing Boatmen enter]

*Row the boat faster, coming back after so long,
Mind's heavy and tears roll on, don't make it prolong.
Spread the sail in cool breeze, run the boat faster,
Meeting kins and loved ones, to see them in laughter!*

Dh : Boatmen, anchor here and silently alight the goods!

SdM : Why Dhanabhai? Why we have to do it silently, like a thief? Have we stolen anything?

Dh : No, that is not the reason. The country is full of swindlers and thieves. If they come to know, they may do some mischievous act and I am being cautious! Please take the material one at a time and carry them with care.

Btm1 : What about you Dhanabhai?

Dh : If I go with you, then who will lift the material on your head from the boat?

Btm1 : Oh! That's right, who will do that? I am carrying this one. [He exits]

Btm2 : Give me that one. O hell! It is so heavy . . .

Btm3 : Sadhubhai, I am taking this on, comparatively lighter . . . [Both exit]

SdM : I am old, please give me a lighter one, Dhanabhai. [He exits]



Dh : Cool, aromatic breeze is blowing, birds are merrily chirping, I am happy to have such a good fortune. But, how am I going to face Dukhe's mother? She may arrive anytime How I am going to tell her that I have sacrificed Dukhe to Dakshin Ray to get this enormous fortune? How I am going to tell her that what I have done, I have done it for my greedy self-interest Oh, kind Khoda! I am a great sinner. Have mercy on me!

[He departs]

SCENE - 17

[Place : *Bhurkund*]

[Banabibi and Dukhe enter]

[Dukhe's Song]

*My human birth is successful and blessed,
Mother touches me and from death I am salvaged!
Savior of all danger, Banabibi is eternal Mother!
I take refuge in her lotus feet, where I live forever!*

Bnbb : Dukhe, here you are completely safe. You may roam anywhere in this forest area. There are many fawns, stags and does in the jungle, you can play with them. Can you go and catch the little fawn?

DkR : No Mother, I don't want to go away from you. My own *Chacha* has deserted me in the jungle and never came back. I am survived till now only because of Your kindness!

Bnbb : Why Dukhe, because your *Chacha* had deserted you, you think, I also leave you, never my naughty boy!

Dk : Mother, look, who are all coming to you.

[*Shah Jangalee, Dakshin Ray and Barkhan Gazi enter*]

Sjl : Reverent Sister, I am able to capture Dakshin Ray, but he took refuge to his friend. Please tell me, what shall I do?

Bnbb : Who are you?

Bkz : I am *Barkhan Gazi*, son of *Shah Sikandar*, who went to his heavenly abode long back.



- Bnbb : But, why are you doing here?
- Bkz : I came to beg for Your forgiveness on behalf of my friend. Kindly show Your mercy for his misdeed.
- Sjl : Reverent *Gazi Saheb!* Do you think he deserves any such human act, like forgiveness? Can you think, he did not even hesitate to kill an eight year boy to fulfill his evil hunger? Don't you think that he should be severely punished for his evil act?
- Bkz : I know that is true! Yet I came to You to beg Your pardon on behalf of my friend. Kindly show Your mercy on him for his misdeed. But, Mother he is the son of Your confidante, Narayani and like Your son too! Dakshin Ray, bow to Mother's lotus feet and beg for her forgiveness!

[Dakshin Ray fall on Banabibi's feet]

- DkR : Mother! I am surrendering at Your feet and begging Your forgiveness!
- Bnbb : *Bhai* Jangalee, What do you think we should do?
- Sjl : Whatever You think best, we accept that!
- Bnbb : Dakshin Ray, you are forgiven for your misanthropic act. But, you have to promise that you never ever going to do such crime anywhere, particularly in the jungle.
- DrR : No, Mother! I am never going to do such sinful act in my life!
- Bnbb : *Gazi Saheb*, you are my son too, like Dakshin Ray and Dukhe! And you all know Dukhe is orphan and poor. What are you all going to gift for Dukhe?
- BkZ : I shall gift him seven earthen potful of money!
- DkR : Ma! Kindly allow me to take Dukhe on my lap for once.

[Takes Dukhe in his lap]

(Continues) How on the earth, I was going to commit such a sinful blunder, Why I was about to eat this boy of eight.
 (Continues) Mother! I promise to supply any amount of wood and leaf to Dukhe, whenever he requires throughout his life.

- Bnbb : But, how my Dukhe will get it?
- DkR : When he will requires those, he has to remember me and ask for



those. Wood and leaf will be reached at his place!

Bnbb : You may all depart now. But Dakshin Ray, never ever think of committing such a vile act!

DkR : No, Mother! Not in my life. You have kindled my wisdom! Allow me, Mother!

BkZ : Allow me too, Mother!

[Both of them exit]

Bnbb : Dukhe you have got so many things now! You must go home. Your mother must be eagerly waiting for you.

Dk : No, Mother! I will not go back. All in my village knows that tiger had eaten me. Then why should I go? I am going to stay here with You Mother!

Bnbb : Shah Jangalee, just listen to Dukhe!

Sjl : Yes, my Reverent Sister! I have listened. But, if he lives with us then the folks will never come to know that he is not killed by tiger and he is alive. . . . They will lose faith in You and may say that Banabibi is not there. Banabibi does not exist. You will be disgraced and dishonoured.

Bnbb : You are right my gifted Brother! My dear Dukhe! You have listened to what my brother has said. If you don't go back then people will lose faith and dishonor my name!

Dk : If I go back, then I will lose You forever and never able to meet You! Moreover, I don't know the way to home. Whatever may happen, I am not going to leave You.

Bnbb : Dukhe, my son! Whenever you wholeheartedly remember me, I will come to you and meet you! . . . Now, go home. My pet crocodile, *Senko* will escort you home.

[A crocodile appears; Dukhe rides on him and gets ready to go]



SCENE – 17

[Place : Dhana's House]

[Dhana enters]

Dh : Four days passed. That excruciating thought is eating me, when Dukhe's mother will come and ask me for Dukhe, what do I answer? Oh! What an agonising dilemma? Why did I go for such a venture? Whose footsteps I can overhear, it seems she is coming! Let me abscond, but where can I go? Wherever, I will go the thought will follow. Oh Kind Khoda! Give me strength to face her!

[Dukhe's mother (DkM) enters]

DkM : So many containers and bags are heaped in one place? Definitely it's Dhana's house. Dhana are you there? Where is my Dukhe? . . . But, what happened? Why are you standing like that? Please, for Khoda's sake tell me everything! Anything happened to my Dukhe? Where is he?

Dh : Bhabiji, Bhabiji [Dhana breakdowns down in loud sobs]

DkM : Why are you not uttering a word? What is the matter? Is he no more?

Dhana : (Sobbing) For a while, he got down to bank and a tiger attacked him and took him away. We have all searched but didn't get his body.

DkM : (Dumbfounded by deep shock then suddenly shrills) Dhana, What are you telling? Why I am alive to hear such news? My heart is darkened forever? Who is going to call me – mother? Better you make me blind and deaf. Why did you snatch him from my lap? Dhana, why did you do it to me? Oh, Dukhe! At least for the last time call me – Mother!

Dh : Curse me severely, scorch me with your fierce wrath. But, I profusely request you to calm yourself and listen to me.

DkM : (Delirious) My dear Dhana! Why should I curse you? You have given so much fortune to my Dukhe, arranged his marriage and throughout the marriage ceremony you are with him! How can I cause any harm to you?

[Exits with loud madly laughter]



Dh : How can I console this unfortunate grief stricken mother? Let me try.

[Exits, following Dukhe's mother]

SCENE - 18

[Place : *Bhurkundi*]

[Banabibi and Dukhe enter]

Dk : Once you have rescued me from tiger's Jaw. Now you are pushing me to crocodile's jaw by asking me to ride on crocodile's back! Better you kill me!

Bnbb : Dear Dukhe! The crocodile, which is escorting you to your home, is one of my pet God sons, your God brother. Shah Jangalee will bring him now.

[*Senko* (the crocodile) and Shah Jangalee enter]

Sjl : Sister! *Senko* is here. Order him what to do.

Bnbb : Dear *Senko*, he is Dukhe, your God brother, who had fallen into a perilous situation in the jungle. You have to escort him to his home town. Dukhe, now I have to blindfold you for this journey. As soon as you reach home, remember Barkhan Gazi. He will appear and give you seven earthen potful of money. And avoid any kind of squabble with Dhana! Don't forget, because of him only you met me. [Dukhe departs with *Senko*]

Bnbb : (Continues) Dear Brother Jangalee! Let us leave also.

Sjl : Yes, Reverent Sister! Let us depart too.

[Both of them exit]

SCENE - 19

[Place : Dukhe's Home Town]

[Dukhe's Mother enters]

DkM : (Delirious) Alas! I have hoped for a bright future for my Dukhe. He will return with good fortune, then get married and I don't have to work anymore and can spend my last days happily.



Dhana had promised me all these and took away my precious possession, my only support, Dukhe from me. Dhana, what have you done with him? You lost him in the jungle, where he was killed by tiger. How painful were his last moments. He must have cried loudly in his last moments and wanted to see me. Oh, unsympathetic Khoda! Why did You made his fate in like this? But, I told him to call Mother Banabibi and definitely he had called, yet he was killed! Is it possible? If it so then it will grossly disgrace her glory and reputation! But, why I am thinking like that. It must be a nightmare and not true? My Dukhe will come with his newly married wife and with plenty of wealth. Dhana, his beloved *Chacha*, has given him all these. Let me welcome them. (Loud and delirious laughter, like mad). No, no, let me search for some crop pounding job. But, why suddenly it is becoming so dark and silent? I am not able to see or hear anything. Am I becoming blind and deaf? Now, I will die. Oh, Dukhe! Why you have deserted me, why? For once show me your smiling face and call your mother for once!

[Dukhe enters with *Senko*]

[Dukhe's song]

*Where shall I go and stay, I am so helpless,
I am orphan, have no father and no one to bless,
I am alone without a home, haven't such a place.
Searching my tearful mother to give her happiness!*

Dk : *Bhai Senko, you may leave now and convey my sincerest salute to Ma Banabibi and Mama Shah Jangalee!*

[*Senko* leaves]

Dk : All knows Dukhe is no more, tiger had killed Dukhe. But no one knows that a conspicuous presence of a compassionate Goddess with a Divine soul is there in the jungle. The Goddess protects and rescues anyone, who is in danger or in peril in that dreaded forest.

[Notices something like a corpse]

Oh! An unfortunate soul! I should avoid passing beside it. But, why should I? Tiger couldn't do any harm to me and it is just a lifeless being.

[Go closer, observes and reacts emotionally]



Oh! It's my poor mother! What had happened to her? I am such an unfortunate that I could not present in her last moments! I have no money, no companion, how I am going to arrange for her last rituals?

[Touches the body and exclaims piercingly]

Dk : (continues) Oh! Kind Khoda! She is alive and breathing! *Ma, Ma*, see your Dukhe is back and by the blessings of *Ma Banabibi* your Dukhe is alive! Please look at me and listen to me. But what happened, you are not responding? [Observes minutely and exclaims piercingly] She became blind and deaf in shock! Why this has to be happened to my mother and me? Oh! Kind *Ma Banabibi!* Show your kindness. Cure my mother of her blindness and deafness!

[Oracle of Banabibi is heard off-stage]

Oracle : By remembering me touch and caress over your mother's eyes and ears! She will be cured!

Dk : Oh, Divine Banabibi! Bestow of your divine kindness on my mother and cure her! Bestow of your divine kindness on my mother and cure her!

[Keep on repeating the same and simultaneously touches and caresses eyes and ears of his mother. Gradually Bibijan (DkM) is coming round]

DkM : (Touches Dukhe) Who is this? (Watches carefully) Is it my Dukhe? (Little louder) Are you really Dukhe? But you were killed by tiger? You must be joking with this helpless poor lady! Go away and leave me alone!

Dukhe : *Ma!* I am not going to leave you! I am your Dukhe and by the blessings of *Ma Banabibi* your Dukhe is alive! (Takes her palms and makes her touch his face and body) *Ma*, feel me with your own hand, I am your Dukhe and I am alive.

DkM : (Watches more attentively) Oh, Almighty Khoda! It is true, it is true. He is my Dukhe! Definitely, Banabibi had responded to your prayer and by the virtue of Her Kindness, I have got you back!

Dk : You told me to call Banabibi in my agonising distress and I had done so during my most perilous moments. *Ma Banabibi* and *Mama Shah Jangalce* save me from clutches of the deadly tiger. As the *Hazi* learns the Holy Words from *Roza's Namaz* and



preaches those for salvaging the mortal folks, the same way you have baptised me with the pious *Mantra* of *Ma Banabibi* and told me to enchant that to salvage myself from dreadful moments! I had done that, which saved me from tentacles of death.

DkM : Dear Dukhe! By the unfathomable compassion of *Ma Banabibi*'s, you got back your life and I got back my *Dukhe* and both of us got back our peace of mind and merriment! Now, it is our duty to try our best to pay tribute to her great compassion and glory! But we are very small individuals and try accordingly as per our own strength. We will sing the song of her majestic glory and compassion to the people. We have to go to the people, beg for money and arrange her '*Puja*'! Now let us try from this moment only. But, *Dukhe* tell me how did you manage to reach so promptly?

Dk : *Ma*, it is also because of her kindness! She ordered her pet crocodile *Senko* to escort me home. *Senko* did that within a moment, I didn't even come to know about it.

DkM : *Ma*, how we will be able to understand Your glory and greatness! *Dukhe*, shall we start begging for her *Puja*.

[Song of *Dukhe* and *Bibijan*]

*O! Noble citizen, please come and listen,
The Glory of Banabibi and be enlighten!
We came begging for alms and to organise,
To celebrate her Puja to fulfill our wish!*

[Both of them reach the spectators and ask for money, people give also]

Dk : *Ma*, *Banabibi* told me to ask for seven earthen potful of money from *Barkhan Gazi*, a pious soul in the jungle. Reverent *Barkhan Gazi*, please fulfill my wish, I am humbly asking for the gift!

[Oracle of *Barkhan Gazi*, is heard off-stage]

Oracle : Your gift of seven earthen potful of money is kept under the palm tree on the Westside of your hut! Go and get it from there.

[*Dukhe* and his mother went to the spot and got the money]

Dk : *Ma*, it's all ours. Do you have any wish to fulfill?

DkM : Yes, I wish to punish *Dhana*.



Dk : *Ma, Banabibi, forbade me to take any such action. You also pardon him. Don't forget that because of him only we are able to get so much fortune and able to get the blessings of Ma Banabibi!*

DkM : *You are right my precious angel. I have pardoned him forever . . . But Dukhe where you are going to keep so much money?*

Dk : *Ma, Banabibi, kindly tell me where shall I keep so much money?*

[Oracle of *Ma, Banabibi*, is heard off-stage]

Oracle : *Listen Dukhe, Lord Viswakarma, the Engineer God will built the house for you. You remember him and pray to him!*

[Both of them exit]

SCENE – 20

[Dukhe's hut]

[Three thieves enter]

1st Thief: *Do you know Dukhe got lot of money from jungle?*

2nd Thief: *Can you guess, where Dukhe can keep that money?*

3rd Thief: *It is buried here, let's dig.* [They start digging the spot]

1st Thief: *Oh hell! A big venomous snake!* [He runs away]

2nd Thief: *Oh! I am stung by a hornet and so many of them!*

[He runs away]

3rd Thief: *Good, both of them ran away. Now I shall take all. Oh Khoda! So many red ants have wrapped all over my body!* [He runs away]

[Dukhe enters in Royal dress]

Dk : *Ram Sing, are you there?* [Gateman enters]

Ram Sing: *Yes, at your service.*

Dk : *Gateman, go and bring Lord Viswakarma here.*

Ram Sing: *(Calling loudly) Where are you Viswakarma Thakur ?*

[Lord Viswakarma (I.Vk) enters, singing a song]



*I am Viswakarma, who called me now?
I make door and window, platform and plough.
I am an expert also in making boat and ladder.
Talkhali, I stay there. I wish to get an order
To build a palace for one, who is a human gem,
Philanthropic he is, who doesn't care for name.*

- LVk : Who called me?
- Dk : I have called you *Thakur*. My name is Dukhe.
- LVk : Please tell me what can I do for you?
- Dk : I want you to build a house for me here.
- LVk : Who, will assist me here?
- Dk : *Khanipa Bhai*, where are you? [Khanipa (Knp) Bhai enters]
- Knp : Here I am, please tell me, what I have to do.
- Dk : Viswakarma *Thakur*, this is your assistant.
- LVk : What is your name?
- Knp : What a problem! I have left my name in house. How can I tell you?
- LVk : Do you know your job well?
- Knp : Well yes, I think better than you . . . But . . .
- LVk : Then measure this East-West distance with this hexagonal instrument.
- Knp : Yes, *Thakur*, I have already done it.
- LVk : Then the house is built. Give me my remuneration.
- Knp : Please tell me *Thakur*, I will give the amount right now.
- LVk : Give me nine thousand twelve hundred fifty rupees and ninety nine paise. Try to arrange it as soon as possible. I have some other works.
- Knp : Not a very big amount. But, I have left the money at home.
- LVk : Give me money, at once.
- Knp : Please wait for some time, I shall go and fetch the money from



home. I shall go and get it right now. [Try to depart]

LVk : Trying to abscond? First give my money and then go.

KnP : No, no, I never intend to do that! *Thakur*, please come tomorrow and I shall make it ready.

LVk : Try to arrange it definitely by tomorrow. If, everybody is giving money tomorrow, then how shall I manage today? Give the money right now or else, I am going to hammer you with this.

[Shows a hammer like masonry tool]

KnP : *Thakur*, please listen, Definitely you will get your money . . .

[He runs away]

LVk : Filthy swindler! Let me hope for tomorrow!

[Lord Viswakarma exits]

[Dukhe enters]

Dk : Where are you, Ram Sing?

Ram Sing: At your service, my lord!

Dk : Go and call honey trader Dhana.

Ram Sing: As you wish my lord. [Ram Sing exits]

Dk : My fortune has blessed me because of Dhana. So far what I have got, this money, this palace, everything, are all for him only.

[Bibijan, Dukhe's Mother enters]

DkM : Has Dhana come?

Dk : No, not yet come. . . . probably he is coming.

DkM : Dukhe, I want you to marry Dhana's daughter Champal

Dk : Your wish will be fulfilled my mother!

[Dhana enters with Ram Sing]

Dh : I profusely apologetic to both of you for my misdeed. If, possible please forgive me.

Dk : *Chacha*, don't make me ashamed. Please try to forget those incidents.

DkM : Dhana, I want Champa as my daughter-in-law. Please don't say



no.

Dh : How can I say no, to this dream proposal! Champa will wed Dukhe for sure. Ram Sing, please go and bring my daughter, Champa.

Ram Sing: As you wish, Sir! [Ram Sing exits]

[Ram Sing enters with Champa]

Ram Sing: Sir, Your Daughter . . .

Champa : Why do you call me Abba?

Dh : Yes my beloved!

DkM : Dhana, now perform your duty.

Dh : Dukhe my Son! Please accept the pupil of my eye, my most precious gift by Allah! Champa as your wife! Please take utmost care for her and forgive her, if by chance she commits any mistake!

Dukhe & Champa (Together): Bibijan and Abbajan, we ask for your blessings!

Dhana : Always be happy and smiling! Kindness and blessings of Allah, always showers on both of you.

***** End of Tale of Dukhe Episode *****

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze



BONOBIBIR PALA

Rangabeliya, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

20 January 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/R/11

Two different temples of Bonobibi or Bonodebi.

In both temples the Goddess has two hands and she is riding on tiger.

Above : Dukhe is in her lap. Down : Dukhe is riding on a crocodile



Pic. Ref.: B/R/12

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

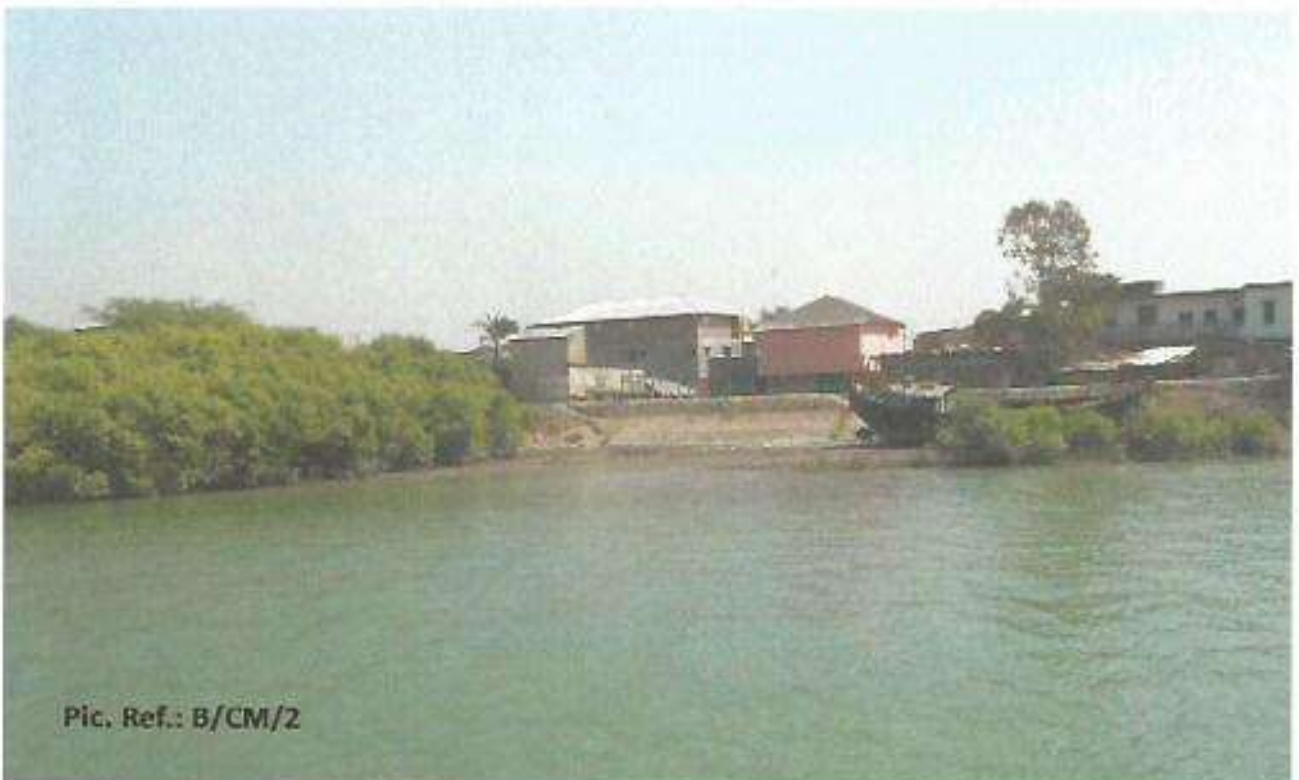
Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/1

Path of our journey to the venue



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/2

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/3

03/02/2015 11:07

Path of our journey to the venue



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/4

03/02/2015 11:11

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana
3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/5

Path of our journey to the venue



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/6

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/7

Surroundings of Chhoto Mollakhali village



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/8

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze



BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/9

Surroundings of Chhoto Mollakhali village



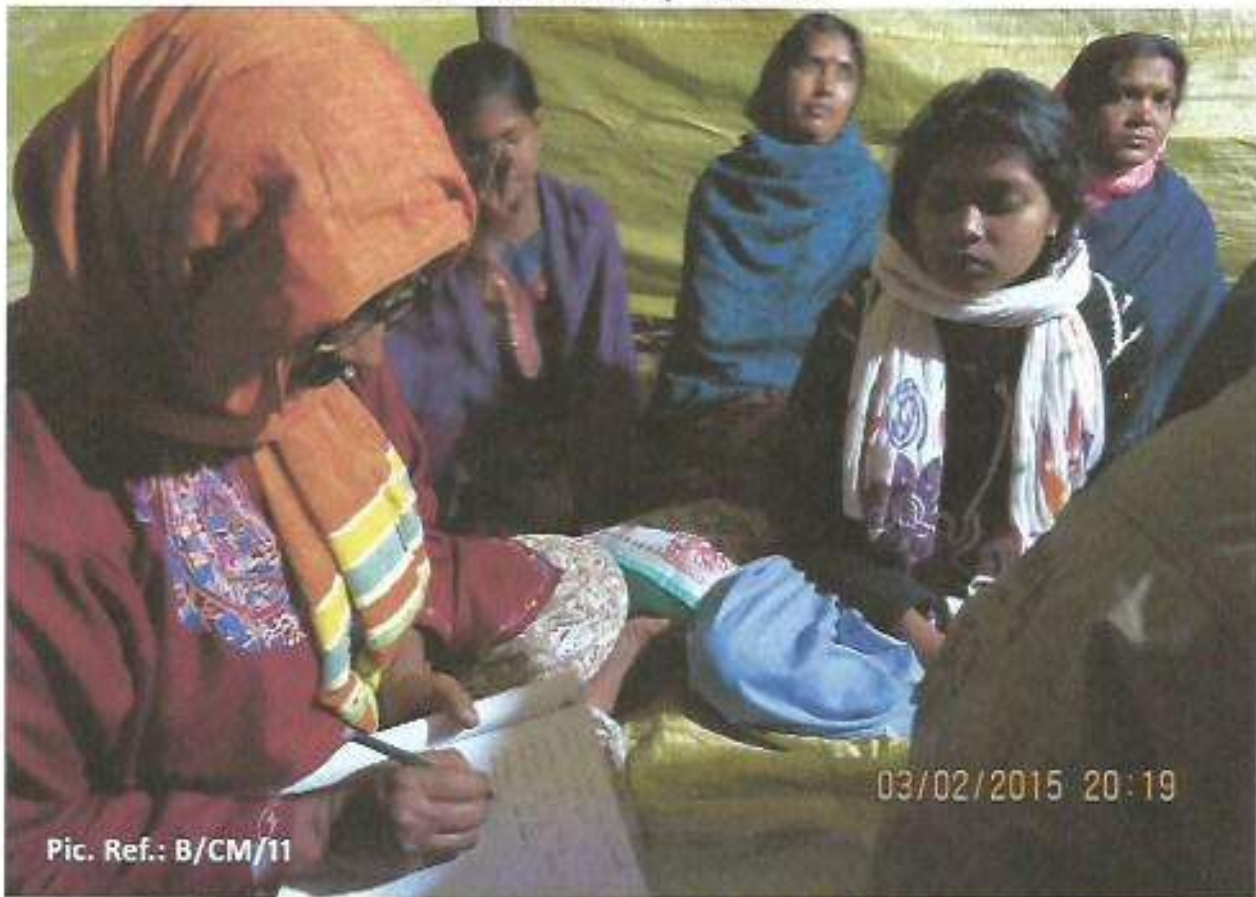
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RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/11

03/02/2015 20:19

Adrija Dasgupta is interviewing the performers of Sundarban Ancholik Loka Bonobibi Jatra Sanstha on behalf of Uhinee Kolkata



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/12

03/02/2015 20:20

Anindya Das is interviewing the performers of Sundarban Ancholik Loka Bonobibi Jatra Sanstha on behalf of Uhinee Kolkata

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze



BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/13

03/02/2015 20:54

Avijit Sarkar is interviewing the performers of Sundarban Ancholik Loka Bonobibi Jatra Sanstha on behalf of Uhinee Kolkata



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/14

03/02/2015 20:38

Subit Mistry is clicking photographs of the performance preparation on behalf of Uhinee Kolkata

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/15

Women of the village are preparing the offering (*Prasaad*) for Goddess Bonobibi in front of her makeshift temple (*Thaan*)

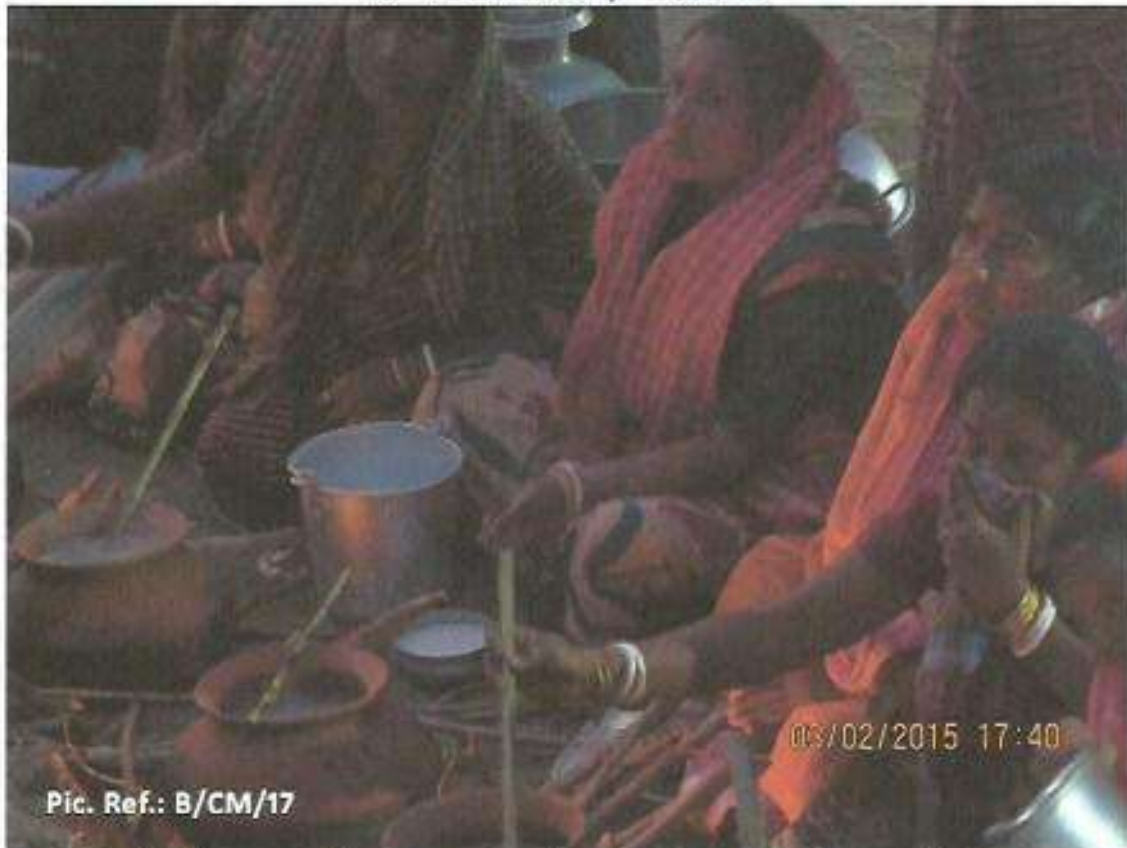


Pic. Ref.: B/CM/16

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana
3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/17

All the worshiper women have put on new *Gamchhas*



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/18

Goddess Bonobibi riding on Rooster. Her brother Shah Jangoli is on her left

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Preparation for Performance : Costume



Preparation for Performance : Make up Materials

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze



BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Make up for the Play



RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

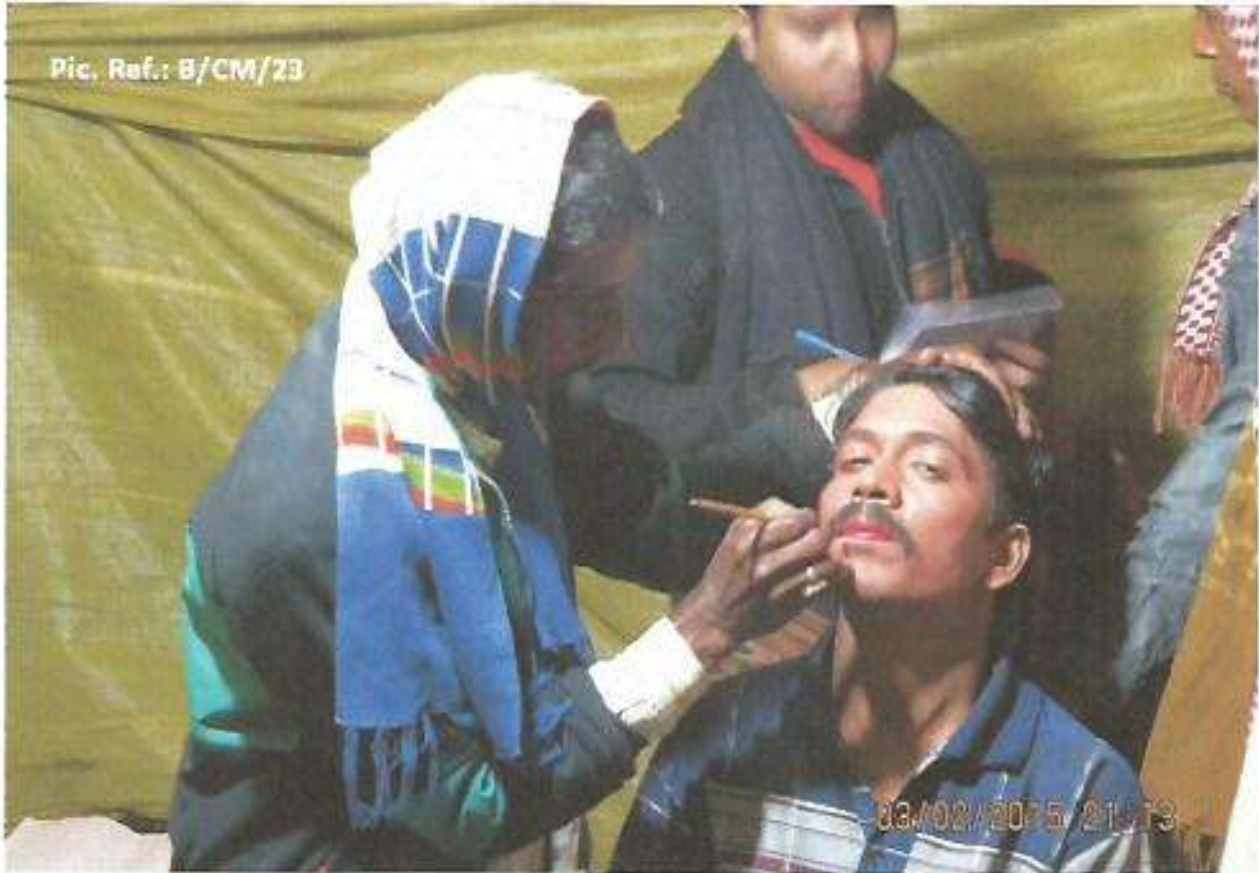
BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/23



Make up for the Play



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/24

03/02/2015 21:26

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Make up for the Play



RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Make up of Dakkhinray



RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

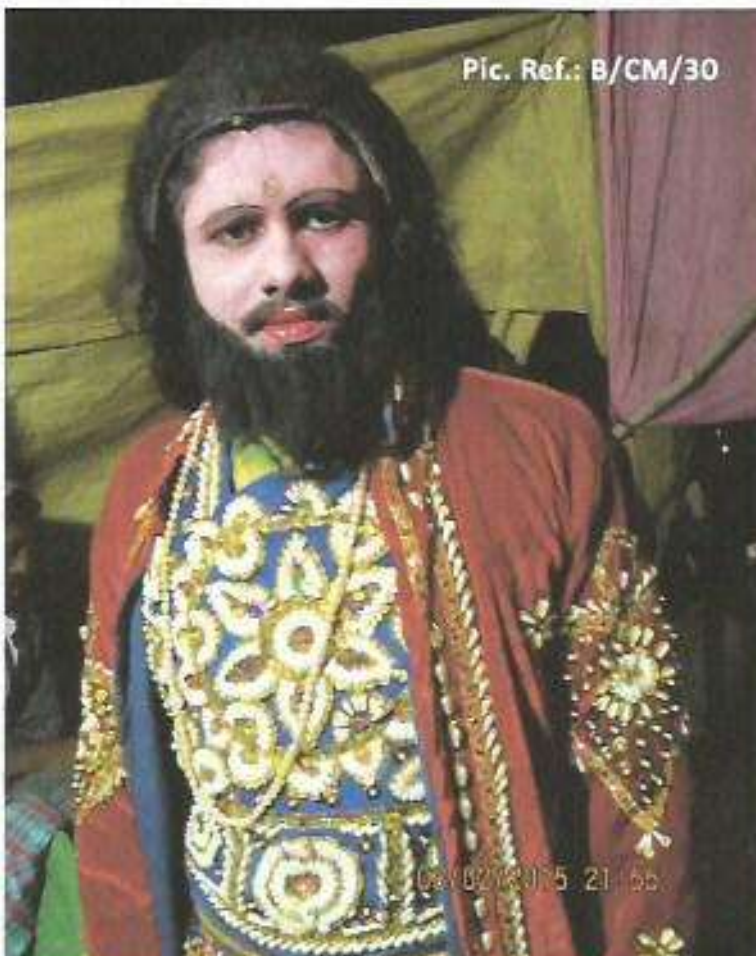
BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana
3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/29

Make up for the Play



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/30

**Merchant Dhana in
full Costume and Make up**

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze



BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

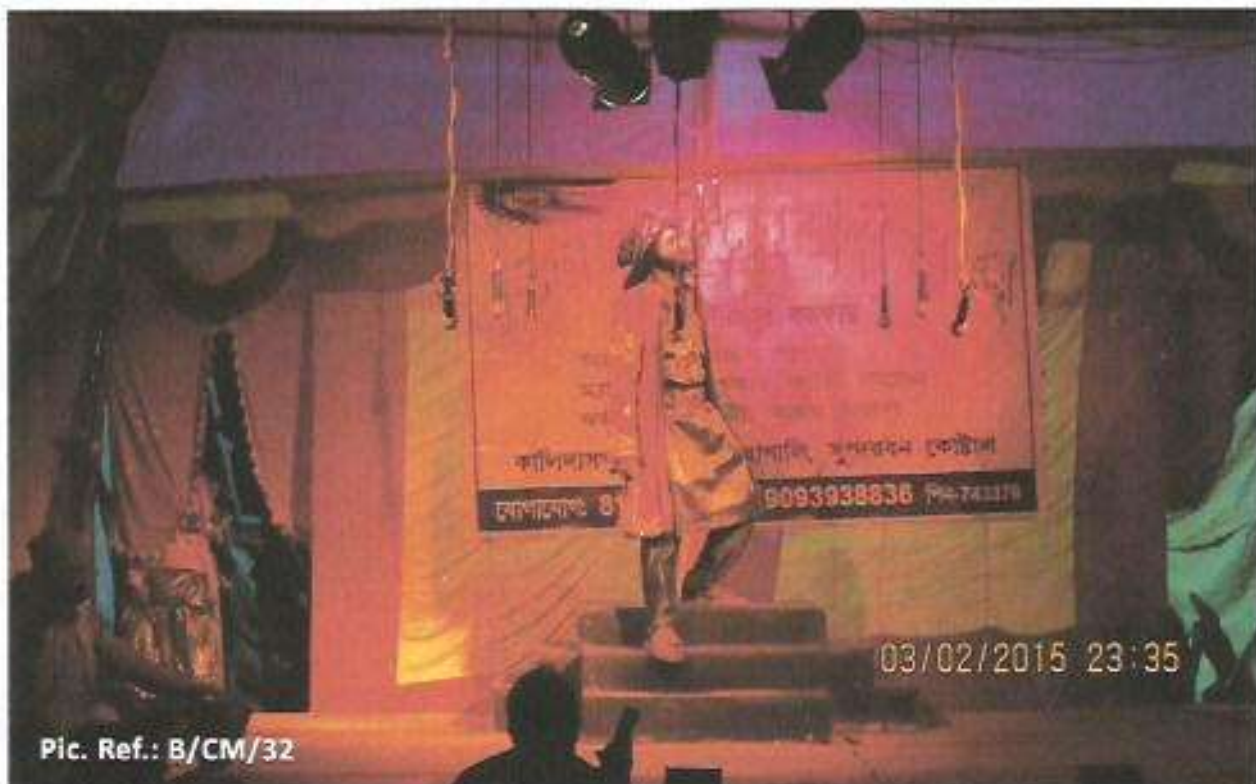
3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/31

03/02/2015 23:17

All the Characters of the play are facing the audience before the performance



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/32

03/02/2015 23:35

Performance of Bonobibir Pala

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze



BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/33

Performance of Bonobibir Pala



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/34

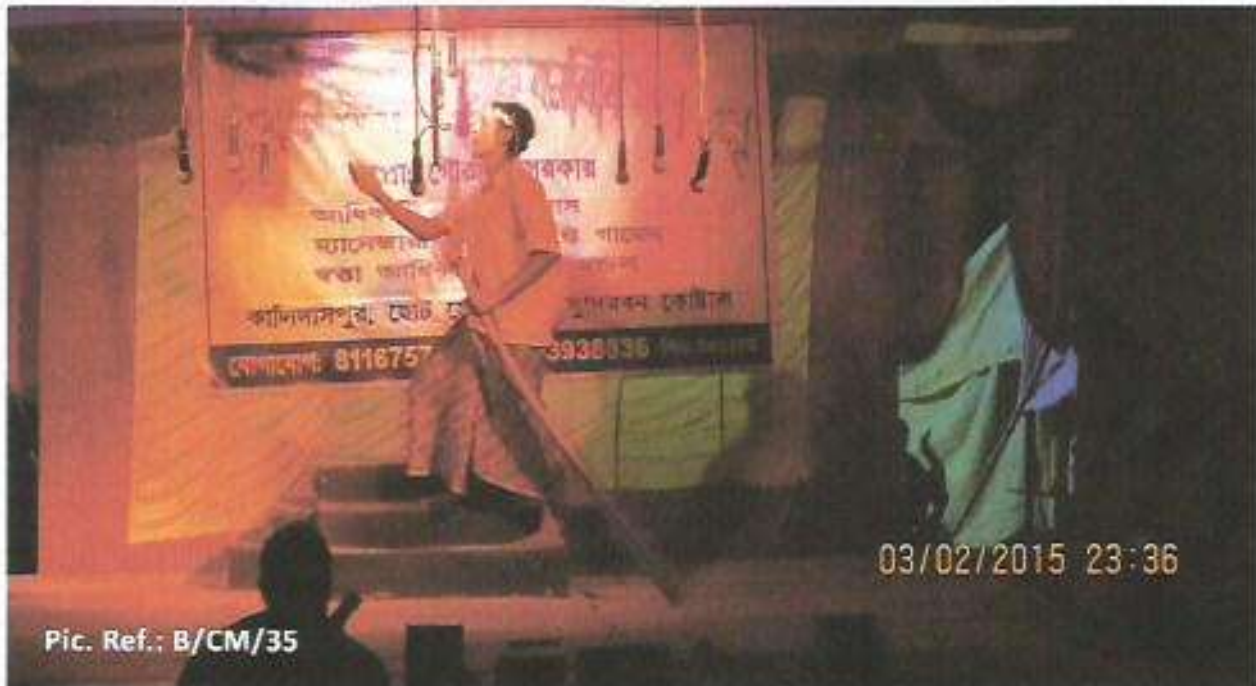
RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze



BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Performance of Bonobibir Pala



RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze



BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/37

Performance of Bonobibir Pala



Pic. Ref.: B/CM/38

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze



BONOBIBIR PALA

Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

3 February 2015



Performance of Bonobibir Pala



RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

Rangabeliya, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

28 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/R/13

Surroundings of Rangabeliya



Pic. Ref.: B/R/14

Rangabeliya Tagore Society for the Rural Development

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

Rangabeliya, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

28 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/R/15

**Discussion with Sri Kanailal Sarkar,
Research Scholar and Author of 'The History of Sundarvan'**



Pic. Ref.: B/R/16

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

Rangabeliya, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

28 February 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/R/17

The Artists of Maa Bonodebi Opera are preparing for performance



Pic. Ref.: B/R/18

RHIZOME TUNE --- Salty Breeze

BONOBIBIR PALA

Rangabeliya, Sundarban, South 24 Pargana

1 March 2015



Pic. Ref.: B/R/19

Discussion with the Artists of Maa Bonodebi Opera



Pic. Ref.: B/R/20



RHIZOME TUNE – Salty Breeze

Report 2: TARJA

Since the ancient age, after finishing their everyday struggle for survival, the human clans have presented the individuals sometimes by stretching both hands towards the sky with joy, sometimes by producing various musical sounds and sometimes by making sketches on cave walls. In the course of evolution, Man's practice of living through actions and reactions with Nature and other Men gives birth to culture. Thus, culture is emerged from man's life and human life is reflected in culture. In the same way, folk arts are also created from the culture of the locality and then sometimes it spreads over different places and sometimes it remains as the tradition of that area.

The word '*Tarja*' could have been derived from the Bengali word '*Tarko*' or Debate. Another word '*Tartaja*' [Fresh, Young] can also be its origin. Tarja is basically a practice of debate through songs. There is controversy regarding the fact that whether the immense religious debate between Sri Chaitanya Dev and Nityananda Prabhu or general mythological description in several rural rituals are the origin of Tarja. Once Tarja was the easier way to present debates on various subjects of Veda, Ramayana, Mahabharata and Purana for rural awareness. In 2015, Tarja is used even by the government for generating mass awareness. The rural daily life itself can be the subject of Tarja.

The larger 24 Parganas (North 24 Parganas, Kolkata and South 24 Parganas combined together) is considered as the birthplace of Tarja. Nowadays, few or more Tarja artists are found in all over West Bengal. Like all other folk arts, this form is also surviving on the tradition of Mentor and Disciple (*Guru-Shishya Parampara*). Even today, the Tarja artists believe that lessons and practice under Mentor is necessary for '*Choubandi*' i.e. the skill of composing songs instantly and '*Akorh*' or the ability to explain the connotation of the song after singing it.



Details of Few Reputed Tarja Artists



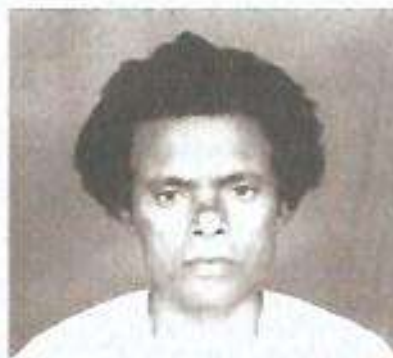
Late Golam Rasul: A well known name among the Tarja artists of South 24 Parganas. He used to compose good Tarjas himself. His son Sri Nuruddin Molla is also an upcoming Tarja artist. Two of his students --- Sri Sushil Naskar of South 24 Pargana and Smt. Bhabani Das of Midnapore district are composing quality Tarja now.



Sri Basanta Kumar Naskar: Inhabitant of Mandira Bazar in South 24 Parganas. He is 86 years old and is singing Tarja for 69 years. He had learnt Tarja from Sri Prabodh Chandra Naskar of Garkhali village under Magrahat police station. He got acquainted with Sri Mukunda Das --- the legendary minstrel of Bengal, in 1947 and he remained in Sri Mukunda Das' group for quite a few days. His first performance took place in 'Goshtha Mela' of Mathurapur.



Sri Meghnad Mondal: 72 year old artist of South 24 Parganas. He began singing at the age of 14 years. He had learnt from his mentor Late Subal Chandra Pandit for 12 years.



Sri Mani Bhushan Pramanik: His age is 48 years and he is singing for 33 years. His mentors are Sri Bankim Bihari Pramanik and Sri Sushil Chandra Naskar. Sri Mani Bhushan Pramanik presently lives in Durgachak, Haldia.

Sri Tarendranath Mondal: Inhabitant of Kakdwip of 54 years. He is singing for 40 years. He has learnt to sing from Sri Gobinda Adhikari and Sri Harekrishna Das. It is to be noted that Sri Tarendranath Mondal has taken the initiative to make notation of some Tarja songs.

Sri Kartik Chandra Mallik: 78 years old. He has started singing Tarja when he was a student in the eighth standard. He is singing for 47 years. His mentors are two eminent Tarja singers of North 24 Parganas --- Late Kalipada Mondal and Sri Pafulla Sarkar. Sri Kartik Chandra Mallik lives in Hathatganj Bazar, Nimatala.

Sri Nepal Chakrabarty: 50 years old. He had learnt Tarja from his uncle Sri Shaktipada Chakrabarty at the age of 14. He is now 84 years old and



has been awarded because of presenting Tarja for the campaign of Right to Education.

Smt. Mahamaya Das: She is 62 years old and has learnt from her father. Later, she has also learnt from Sri Bholanath Das. She lives in Balagarh of Hoogly district. She has a Tarja team of her own named 'Mahamaya Das Tarja Party'. Her father Sri Annada Prasad Das was once an eminent Tarja artist.

Sri Gobinda Chandra Adhikari: 72 years old. He had started learning Tarja from his elder brother Sri Gopal Chandra Adhikari when he was 15 years old. He lives in Tarakeshwar at present.

Sri Manik Chandra Das: His age is 64 years now and he is singing Tarja since he was 20 years old. His mentor is Late Narayan Chandra Das of Radhamadhabpur in Bankura district. At present Sri Manik Chandra Das lives in Subiyara village in Bankura district.



Discussion with Artists and Experts: 4

[25 December 2014 || Princep Ghat, Kolkata]

Performing Team : Radhagobinda Tarja Kobi
 Artists : Smt. Dipali Bhuinya [*Baadi* or Prosecution]
 Sri Debkumar Patra
 [*Bibaadi* or Defense and owner of the team]

The team had come from Mahishadal area in East Midnapore district. The song began with '*Bandona*' (Prayer) by the prosecution --- Smt. Dipali Bhuinya. She first offered her respect to her parents and then to her mentor. Then she greeted her fellow countrymen and the audience through song.

Since the duration was limited, Smt. Dipali Bhuinya delivered two questions straight away to Sri Debkumar Patra through songs. First question was related to religious rituals. She asked that we all know that all the temples according to Hindu custom have the picks of their domes upwards. Which temple can be seen in Hindu culture which has its pick downwards?

The second question was related to mythology. Which mythological incident shows that the lover instantly turned into a woman when his beloved put a garland on his neck? Then she challenged her competitor to come on stage and answer her questions.

Since it was a small team, when Smt. Dipali Bhuinya sang, Sri Debkumar Patra played '*Dhol*' and when Sri Debkumar Patra answered her, she played '*Kaansi*'.*

Instead of answering directly, Sri Debkumar Patra started singing on the communal harmony in India. In a very contemporary and modern language, he sang,

*"Bharatbasi Aamra Sabai Ek Maayer Santan
 Keno Mondir Masjid Issue Kore Korchhi Maayer Apomaan"*

[We all Indians are the children of the same mother. Why are we insulting her by creating issues on temple and mosque?]

* An authentic Bengali percussion made of bronze which functions almost like a cymbal.



After finishing this song, Sri Debkumar Patra greeted the audience and various gods and goddesses and then he came to the subject of the challenge thrown by Smt. Dipali Bhuinya. Following the practice of Tarja, he first ridiculed his competitor. He sang,

"Singhake Ki Korbe Bondi Makorhsaar Jaale"

[Do you want to capture a lion with spider web?]

Then he began to answer the question, "Which temple has its pick downwards?" Sri Debkumar Patra said that according to the Hindu doctrine, a human body has twelve parts in which 'Tilak' (sacred mark) is to be drawn. The shape of this 'Tilak' is like an upside down temple dome. This is called "*Dwadosh Ange Tilak Sabha*" (Union of sacred marks in twelve body parts).

Regarding the answer of the second question, he sang to us a mythological story. It was the story of Lord Kirshna's coming to meet Radha right after her marriage. Her sister-in-law Kutila got the news and wanted to complain to Radha's husband Ayan Ghosh. To save Radha from disgrace, Lord Krishna took the form of a woman and received the garland from Radha on his neck.

In the concluding part, both performers told the audience all about their name, address, identity, their mentor's identity through song. The performance ended with a huge round of applause.

What's on your mind?

Smt. Dipali Bhuinya: She is singing Tarja for the last twenty one years. Her husband passed away soon after her marriage, their son was only one and a half year old then. Her age was nineteen or twenty years. Her father used to sing Kirtan. She had learnt Kirtan since her childhood and used to sing Kirtan before getting married. She had left singing after her marriage because of the discontent of her in-laws. However, after the death of her husband, she had to come back to the world of singing for survival. Due to the objection of her in-laws, she returned to her father's house and started singing Kirtan. She got acquainted with Tarja by hearing such programmes in radio. Later, she came to know Sri Debkumar Patra who was already a Tarja performer and teacher. They formed a performing team together and started singing Tarja. Today Smt. Dipali Bhuinya feeds her family and children by singing Tarja. She is evidently happy and



satisfied to have been able to establish her childhood passion as profession.

Sri Debkumar Patra: He used to go to Kirtan programmes with Smt. Dipali Bhuinya. Since, he had learnt Tarja from childhood; he proposed that he could teach Tarja to Smt. Dipali Bhuinya if she would teach him Kirtan in return so that they can form a team and sing professionally. Today, both of them are established 'Kirtaniya' (Kirtan Artist) and Tarja artists.

Sri Debkumar Patra also made us known about the practice of singing Tarja. Since, the primary subject of Tarja is religious and topics from Hindu scriptures, it is necessary to have thorough knowledge on the subject. Apart from that, a Tarja artist needs to be aware of the day to day incidents so that he can include any of it in his song. Moreover, some instant additions are made during the performance according to the reaction of the audience. Selection of subject also depends on the place, time and audience.

Regarding profession, both of them said that they are professional Tarja artists. They perform in several programmes throughout the year. The performing season begins with the worshiping ceremony of Lord Bishwakarma or Goddess Manosa in Bengali calendar month *Ashwin* (September-October) and ends in the month of *Ashaarh* (June-July). Apart from the government awareness projects on AIDS, dowry, child marriage or communal harmony; they also perform in various religious celebrations such as; Rath Yatra of God Madan Gopal Jiu of Mahishadal, several age old worshiping ceremony of Goddess Manosa and obviously Durga Puja. They can manage an average lifestyle from these programmes throughout the year. Apart from that, both of them are teaching the new generation in their own localities. Some of them are presently singing as professionals. They also told us that earlier women were used to be blamed and harassed for singing Tarja. Nowadays the situation has improved to some extent because of government support.

However, both of them have learnt from experience that the taste of the audience has changed a lot due to the influence of daily soaps. Nowadays audience is demanding various music instruments like synthesizer in Tarja. If a Tarja team used synthesizer by breaking the tradition of 'Dhol' and 'Kaansi', audience considers it as a reputed team. Whatsoever, Sri Debkumar Patra and Smt. Dipali Bhuinya are singing Tarja in spite of all hindrances and are resolute to do so in future.



RHIZOME TUNE – Salty Breeze

Conclusion

Working team for the project

In order to conduct the project properly, we had distributed our total work force as the following:

Key Resource Person	:	Debidas Tarafdar
Project Coordinator	:	Adrija Dasgupta
Camp Coordinator	:	Subir Mistry
Researcher	:	Adrija Dasgupta, Sejuti Bagchi
Interviewer	:	Avijit Sarkar, Sejuti Bagchi
Data Accumulation	:	Avijit Sarkar
Data Analysis & Translation	:	Subhasish Bagchi, Tapas Dharmapal
Documentation	:	Tapas Dharmapal, Soumenshu Samanta

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2. Pashimbanga Natya Academy, I & C Department, Govt. of West Bengal
3. Rangabeliya Tagore Society for Rural Development, Rangabeliya, Sundarvan, South 24 Parganas
4. Sundarvan Maa Bonobibi Women's Cultural Society, Anpur, Satjeliya, Sundarvan, South 24 Parganas
5. Maa Bonodebi Opera, Rangabeliya, Sundarvan, South 24 Parganas
6. Sundarvan Loka Bonobibi Jatra Sanstha, Kalidaspur, Chhoto Mollakhali, Sundarvan, South 24 Parganas



7. Sri Kanailal Sarkar
8. The villagers of Chhoto Mollakhali and Marichjhanpi

Above all, we thank Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi for providing us a chance to get closer to our roots.

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- | | |
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| 3. <i>Bangla Natok O Lokosanskriti</i> | Dr. Subhash Bandyopadhyay |
| 4. <i>Lokayata Sundarban</i> | Subhash Mistiri |
| 5. <i>Sundarvaner Itihaas</i> | Kanailal Sarkar |

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1. *Sundarvan Charcha* (3rd year, 1st & 2nd issue)
2. *Lokoshruti* (February 1996, December 2003, June 2002 & June 2008 issues)

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