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Interview of Cine and theatre actor, Ganesh Bhaskar Ambhyankar alias Vivek by Bapu Watve

This is the interview of Cine actor and theatre actor, Ganesh Bhaskar Ambhyankar alias Vivek, taken by Bapu Watve on 6th February, 1987.

Bapu Watve : Vivek, in which year were you born?

Vivek : In the year, 1918.

Bapu Watve : Do you remember the date?

Vivek : 23.02.1918

Bapu Watve : That means this 23rd February, you will be entering in 70th year of your life.

Vivek : Yes.

Bapu Watve : Where were you born?

Vivek : In Alibagh.

Bapu Watve : In Alibagh. What is your education?

Vivek : I had completed my education up to matric.

Bapu Watve : Up to Matric. Ok. How was your family's condition?

Vivek : My family's condition was very bad.

Bapu Watve : Very bad? Ok. What was the reason?

Vivek : My father used to work.

Bapu Watve : Where did he work?

Vivek : In the bank. In the beginning, he was at Ranichi bagh.

Bapu Watve : At Ranichi Bagh? What was his role there? As a supervisor?

Vivek : No. He used to check whether the animals were fed or not.

Bapu Watve : That means, as a supervisor.

Vivek : Later, he was working in the court, as a Pattewala.

Bapu Watve : Oh my God.

Vivek : After that, he started working in Bank.

Bapu Watve : So, he had also worked as a Pattewala. Ok.

Vivek : Then in the bank.

Bapu Watve : What was his role in the Bank?

Vivek : There he worked as a cashier.

Bapu Watve : Oh, he was a cashier. I think you had many siblings.

Vivek : We were four brothers and two sisters.

Bapu Watve : You mean, six children. Your financial condition was not sound because you were six children.

Vivek : Yes.

Bapu Watve : I would like to ask you why your accents are not clear. What is the reason for this?

Vivek : When I had gone to Solapur for the drama “Lagnachi Bedi”, I met with an accident. It was a big accident and my tongue was cut.

Bapu Watve : Oh, that is the reason for your unclear pronunciations. I think around ten years must have passed since that accident.

Vivek : Yes, definitely.

Bapu Watve : I think, it was on 19th May, 1977. This change in your life, which was made ten years ago, must have affected the roles you were getting in cinema and at theatre and must have also caused you to suffer financial losses.

Vivek : The roles offered were very few. I knew about my tongue problem so, I myself declined to act. I hope to work again in cinema or drama once the pronunciations are clear.

Bapu Watve : You and I, first met in Prabhat Film Company, must be in the year 1948-49. At that time, Prabhat Film company had decided to produce a film named “Sant Namdeo”. The Director of that movie was Vasant Painter and the writer was Shivram Kashikar. They were discussing whom to take for the role of Namdeo? Shahu Modak’s name was also in the list. I was the main assistant director so I had suggested to them that the person who has played the role of Sawai Madhavrao in the film “Ramjoshi”, I found that boy suitable. He had a sober face and even he looked like Shahu Modak. “Why couldn’t we select him?” The producer supported my opinion and even the director and writer also agreed to it. They said that, as I had selected him then it was I who should call him there. I did not know that child’s name. Master Chotu, that means the father of Yashwant Dutt told me that his name was Shinde. If you remember, I had written a letter to the Art Director of Rajkamal, Pal Husbana. Do you remember? I wrote a letter asking him to send the boy to Prabhat Film Studio who had acted in Sawai Madhavrao film. I wrote that there was a suitable role for him, do you remember writing this letter written by me?

Vivek: Yes, I do remember.

Bapu Watve: Then you came down to Pune.

Vivek: B. N. Dada, a film technician told me that a letter has come from Prabhat. He told me that I should go to Prabhat.

Bapu Watve: And thus, you came down to Pune. The next day, I had come by a Tanga to take you to Prabhat. There we realized that you were not Shinde but your name is Ganesh Abhyankar. Then you had a photo session in Prabhat and we almost finalized your selection for the role of Namdeo. But afterwards, many changes took place. Instead of “Saint Namdeo”, it was decided to do the film “Saint Janabai”. Director and writers changed. Writer Madgulkar was replaced by writer Kashikar. Govind Ghanekar director took place of the director Vasant Painter. I was going to be the main assistant director. But your role of Namdeo remained the same. Hansa Wadkar was playing the role of Janabai in that film. In this fashion, your first film at Prabhat Film studio was finalized. How much were you offered by Prabhat studio as an honorarium?

Vivek: Rs.5,000/-

Bapu Watve: For Hindi and Marathi films?

Vivek: Yes.

Bapu Watve: Had you tried to get into Prabhat Studio before?

Vivek: I had visited once to Prabhat for business purposes.

Bapu Watve: why did you go there?

Vivek: I had brought my paintings.

Bapu Watve: Paintings?

Vivek: I had come to meet Vishnupant Damle, as he wanted paintings.

Bapu Watve : Because he himself was one of the great artists at Prabhat, were you under pressure while meeting him? There were people there who had produced films like, Tukaram, Dnyaneshwar, Gopal Krishna, Ramshastri, you must be a little bit tensed to meet such a great personality.

Vivek : Yes, I was tensed.

Bapu Watve : On top of it, he was a great artist.

Vivek : I was not knowing that he is an Artist. I just knew that he is a big director. The rest of the things, I was not aware of. I just went to meet him because he wanted paintings, I had no idea about the rest of his talents.

Bapu Watve : Then you went to meet him, carrying your paintings?

Vivek : He told me to show the paintings. Then he asked me, “Who has done this painting?”

Bapu Watve : He asked you about the painting which was in their office in front of him?

Vivek : Yes. It is nice. “Who has made this?”, he asked and answered, “I have done it.”

Bapu Watve : Who said this?

Vivek : Damle, not Damle, Fattelal Mama.

Bapu Watve : Yes, Fattelal, Sahebma.

Vivek : he said, “I have done it.” I said, “They are good.” He asked me to show him other paintings. Then I told him that I had done my paintings by poster colours while he had done his paintings using watercolour. He said, “Yes, you are right. They are very nice.” Later, he also bought poster colours and tried to paint but couldn’t do it.

Bapu Watve : Did they like the paintings?

Vivek : Yes, they liked the paintings. He appreciated that they were nice paintings. He asked me, “where did you learn”? I said, “No one taught me. I do it as I have passion for it.”

Bapu Watve : Did you tell him that you wanted to be there in their art department?

Vivek : Yes, I told them that to keep me in their art department. But as there were so many painters already, my turn did not come. I told him that he can call me whenever required.

Bapu Watve : Had Damle saw your paintings?

Vivek : He did see my paintings.

Bapu Watve : As he was an artist, what did he say?

Vivek : He said, “Paintings are good but you have a good face which is suitable for movie. Would you like to act in films?” I replied, “I don’t have any experience of that. Whatever paintings you will ask me to do, I will do them.” He said, “I feel, you should come to the movies.”

Bapu Watve : He means to say, instead of working in the art department, he felt that you were more suitable for movies as an actor.

Vivek : Yes, he said, “You will earn fame.” I told him that I was not willing to work there as an actor.

Bapu Watve : You told them clearly, that you are not willing to join as an actor even though a big company like Prabhat was inviting you?

Vivek : They asked me, “How much salary do you expect?”

Bapu Watve : Did they ask you, if in case they ever decided to take you, how much salary would you expect?

Vivek : He told me that they would pay me Rs.35/-. I exclaimed, “Rs.35/-?” and I laughed. He said, “Actually, we pay Rs.25/- but we will pay to Rs35/-.” I said, “I am not coming as I have to interest to enter in the film industry. If you have anything in art, then tell me.” There was Fattelal and also Damle. Then I greeted both of them and left.

Bapu Watve : You came out of the Prabhat film company, thinking that you don't want to become an actor and there is no work in the art department for you, so you came to Thane. What did you do in Thane?

Vivek : In Thane, I went to J.J. School.

Bapu Watve : No, No. Have you done any Jobs?

Vivek : Yes, I worked as a teacher.

Bapu Watve : As a teacher, meaning drawing teacher? Where?

Vivek : New English School. I served there as a teacher.

Bapu Watve : For how many years?

Vivek : Two years.

Bapu Watve : what was your salary there?

Vivek : Around Rs.25/- later, I got Rs.35/-. It was a part-time job of two years.

Bapu Watve : Then when did you work with Block Naiker?

Vivek : At the same time, I was going to J.J. school with G.B. Naik.

Bapu Watve : When you were in J.J. school? That means after leaving the drawing teacher job. Where did you learn drawing?

Vivek : I was in J.J. School.

Bapu Watve : When were you in J.J.? Was it before entering into Prabhat? That would mean that you were in J. J. school around the year, 1938-39? It was the year 1939. Ok. So, you went to J.J. school of Arts.

Vivek : First, I went to a commercial. No, first I went for painting. But it was very expensive for me, so I came to the commercial.

Bapu Watve : It was too expensive for you?

Vivek : Yes. Very expensive for me, so I went for a commercial. I was bored at commercial so I came here. Two to three years I was here. Just spent three years here.

Bapu Watve : If your financial condition was not good then how could you attend J.J. school of arts?

Vivek : there was one Brahmin Organisation that used to give scholarships. I went and met them. I asked them for monetary help for my art. They told me that they only gave money to the students.

Bapu Watve : That means only to the students.

Vivek : We don't help any others. I pleaded, "please try."

Bapu Watve : You should have told them that learning art is also a kind of education.

Vivek : They said, "Ok, we will have a meeting within two days. Come on Monday." I went again on Monday. He said, "Good news." I asked, "what is it?" He said that your request is sanctioned. I thanked him.

Bapu Watve : How much help they sanctioned?

Vivek : Rs.42/-, Rs.36/- and Rs.56/-

Bapu Watve : That means they helped you to pay the fees of J.J. School of Arts.

Vivek : Yes, they helped to pay the fees.

Bapu Watve : That means at that time, the fees of J.J. School of Arts were very less. It was I think the year 1939-40.

Vivek : It was not much at that time. Even the students for commercial education were very less. We were only four to five students.

Bapu Watve : Did your father helped you?

Vivek : He did help me. He told me that he will only pay for my railway pass.

Bapu Watve : He gave you money for a railway pass. And you had to do something for whatever extra expenses occurred. What exactly you did?

Vivek : I draw the paintings. Even I did landscapes.

Bapu Watve : Then what you did with those paintings?

Vivek : I sold it.

Bapu Watve : where did you sell it?

Vivek : Literary, On the road.

Bapu Watve : On the road means on the pavement?

Vivek : Yes, some on the pavement. Once I went to hair dressing saloon. I told saloonwala that Saheb, I don't have money but I have paintings.

Bapu Watve : You mean to say that you clearly told him that you don't have money but have paintings?

Vivek : yes. He laughed and said, "what will I do with your paintings?" I told him to just have a look. He saw it and he agreed to it. So, then we decided that he will cut my hair and I will give him landscape.

Bapu Watve : Then he used to hang that landscape in his saloon. That means you had gone through a difficult situation. If you have ambition and determination then you

don't feel inferior to do any work. You keep working hard. But I think, that wasn't sufficient money. So, what else you were doing?

Vivek: Then, I had a friend named Bal Kurtadkar.

Bapu Watve: The one from All India Radio?

Vivek: yes. He was in charge.

Bapu Watve: In-charge of Marathi? Was he in charge of the program?

Vivek: I went to meet him. He was playing cricket. He said, "come, we will go to have tea. I have some time to spare." I said, "let's go." I was not knowing that you will get money.

Bapu Watve: Oh, you had no idea that you will get money at the Radio station.

Vivek: First day, they asked me to laugh in drama. Ha ha ha. I laughed.

Bapu Watve: What was your role there?

Vivek: Nothing. Just laugh like a monster. It was the role of monster.

Bapu Watve: They gave you a role of monster? Afterwards, you have done roles of Gods.

Vivek: After laughing like monster, I told Bala that I am leaving.

Bapu Watve: To whom? Bal Kurtadkar?

Vivek: Yes. He said, "wait, take the cheque and go." I signed the register and took the cheque of rs.5/-. I told Bal that I was not aware of getting money here. He said, "keep quiet and go." (Vivek laughed). I was in need of money.

Bapu Watve: whenever you were in need of money, you used to go to All India Radio.

Vivek: Bal also told me that I can come as many times as I need.

Bapu Watve: That means one way, All India Radio had also helped you. Did you complete your education at J.J. School of Arts?

Vivek: No. I couldn't.

Bapu Watve: Why?

Vivek: At that time, the "Bharat Chodo" movement was going on. At that time, some rich students had the expensive car. The car which Rajan Javdekar has, that kind of cars they had. They all left the college.

Bapu Watve: That means complete college was barren?

Vivek: I had no option but to quit.

Bapu Watve: So you left unwillingly because there were no students. After that, you went to Prabhat and showed them your paintings. This is what you told me in beginning. Then you came to Thane, and did some job, also conducted the band. Somewhere at (inaudible). I think you made Akashkandil at Diwali and sold them for survival. What else you did.

Vivek: Yes, I did many things.

Bapu Watve: You had made few things related to paintings and sold them at that time. Afterwards, you went to Rajkamal.

Vivek: That day, my elder brother had come home in the evening. He said, "Rajkamal is starting here. It is a film company of V. Shantaram." I said, "is it? Ok." I went there in simple clothes. I was not sure whether it will work. It was ok for me if it clicks. People were there in plush cloth.

Bapu Watve: That means people had come all decked up.

Vivek: yes. I was wearing Manjar patacha (low quality cloth) payjama and coat of same cloth. But I was having good look. V. Kashinath a big person of the company, saw me. He made a gesture to call me. I looked back. He said that don't look back. Come here. I went near him. He asked me, "what is your name?" I said, "Abhyankar."

He asked me, “There is a person by the name, Abhyankar working at Bank of Maharashtra, who is he?” I told him that he is my elder brother. Then he said, “Is it? I know him well. Alright, come inside.” I said, “First thing is that I will not like to work here with reference. Secondly, I want to work in the Art department, not as an actor.” He said, “Alright”. Keshvrao Date is head of our art department and Raja Pandit is head of Actor department, they both saw us. V. Kashinath said, “Now you start working.” I asked them that how much they will pay me? He said, “we will give you Rs.35/-, will do?” I said. “alright.” I told him, “I have not come here to get the job or for money but I wanted to see who is Shantaram Bapu.”. He asked me, “if you will meet him, what you will do?”. I said, “Nothing, I would just like to meet”

Bapu Watve: You did not ask them for a job at the art department?

Vivek: No, it will happen when it has to happen.

Bapu Watve: probably you were knowing that you are not going to get it so for the time being, you decided to remain with Rajkamal as an actor.

Vivek: I was even helping them with casting and also helping with scene decoration.

Bapu Watve: even you were working in other departments also.

Vivek: Then I worked in the film “Shakuntala”.

Bapu Watve: So you starting getting roles? Which role you have done in Shakuntala?

Vivek: I worked as an extra actor. There were ten actors and I was eleventh.

Bapu Watve: That way even you have worked as an extra actor in “Dr. Kotnis”. There is one shot in that film. You are giving a flower to a Chinese man. That was the only role in that film. Then when did you starting getting proper roles?

Vivek: I got role in Sasvta Mala.

Bapu Watve : Bhakticha Mala? This film was of Keshavrao Date. In that film, Krishnarao has worked as Savta Mali. Which role you had done in that film?

Vivek : Of Dnyaneshwar.

Bapu Watve : Of Dnyaneshwar, ok.

Vivek : It was not a big role but even not very small. But it was good.

Bapu Watve : Yes but it was rememberable. It was not of just giving a flower.

Vivek : No, no. It was a proper role. It was suitable for me.

Bapu Watve : Yes. It must have suited you.

Vivek : The one who has played the role of Namdeo, he said, “the role which Keshavrao Paranjape is doing of Dnyaneshwar, you do that.

Bapu Watve : You mean to say, he wanted you to do the role of Dnyaneshwar instead of Namdeo.

Vivek : He said that the one who is going to do that role, he is not coming for many days, that means I know he will not join. He does not want to do that role. So, you do it. Then I left role of Namdeo and did the role of Dnyaneshwar. I went there as usual on the first day but he said, “tomorrow come early?” I said, “ok.” I came from Thane at about 8.30 am.

Bapu Watve : At Rajkamal studio? For make-up?

Vivek : Yes. But he had already present in the studio.

Bapu Watve : Who? Date?

Vivek : Yes. He told me to cut my hair. There was machine, I took it and cut my hair, just keeping a small round of hair on the head.

Bapu Watve : But you were having lots of hair.

Vivek : I had thick long hair, purposely maintained.

Bapu Watve : You had kept for the role of Dnyaneshwar? Was it like English people used to keep, curly hair resting on the shoulder?

Vivek : same as that resting on the shoulder.

Bapu Watve : Did he asked you to cut it all?

Vivek : He made me to cut from the front and completely from the back.

Bapu Watve : and asked you to keep little on top of the head.

Vivek : Yes. I said, “no problem, after shooting will cut properly.” Afterwards, we sat for the make-up. Make-up master, Keshavrao Paranjape was there. He said, “why do you want hair on head?” I told him that Tatya has told me. He said, “Tatya himself does not have hair on the head so he must have asked you to shave.” Then he put make-up on me. He said, “bring Dnyaneshwar photo.”

Bapu Watve : Oh, that photo of Dnyaneshwar which he is wearing turban.

Vivek : Me and my friend. Madanmohan Baxi searched everywhere but could not find picture of Dnyaneshwar.

Bapu Watve : Madanmohan Baxi was artist as well as great actor.

Vivek : We could get that picture of Dnyaneshwar with turban. He said, “I wanted Dnyaneshwar like this.” So, he did make-up on me and told me to show it to Anna. Anna means who? Anna means Shantaram Bapu. I went and stood in front of him. He asked me, “what is this?” I said, “I am Dnyaneshwar in the movie.” He asked me whether I have the photo of Dnyaneshwar. I showed him. He laughed and asked me, “where is Date?” I told him that he is down. He asked me to call him. I went down. He (Mr. Date) did not realise that I have come down. He asked me to do the rehearsal. I went inside the studio and did my rehearsal. He asked me whether I met Anna. I said, “yes. I had been there and he had asked you to meet him.” He said, “why you didn’t

tell me this?" I said, "You did not ask me." Then he went up to meet Anna (Shantaram Babu). He said, "Datekaka, this Dnyaneshwar will not work."

Bapu Watve: Who said this? Shantaram Babu?

Vivek: How we have shown with hair, we want that type Dnyaneshwar.

Bapu Watve: He wanted Dnyaneshwar, the one how it is shown in Prabhat studio.

Vivek: He told Datekaka, "Comb his hair. He got good physic but you have made "Vang" (brinjal) of that. Do it again as per our Dnyaneshwar photo. This way it was decided."

Bapu Watve: Then he must have scolded our make-up artist, Keshavrao Paranjape.

Vivek: yes, he scolded him too.

Bapu Watve: Because when Dnyaneshwar film was done, amongst many he was with Prabhat studio. He must have vented all his anger on Paranjape.

Vivek: Yes, obviously. He scolded by saying that you don't have brain. Then he searched the wig for me and put it on my head. Every day nearly four hours I used to wear that wig.

Bapu Watve: Every day, four hours you had to wear that wig? That means, this was a punishment for you to remove your original hair and wear artificial hair on the head. This was a horrible experience of your first role in the film industry.

Vivek: yes. And at that time, I really felt that I shouldn't get roles like this.

Bapu Watve: This kind of role should be first and last role. Every day four hours you used to sit for make-up, then what time you used to come to the studio since Rajkamal was very strict with timings.

Vivek: I used to come to the studio around 7 o'clock in the morning.

Bapu Watve: Then you used to do your make-up till 11 o'clock?

Vivek : Yes. We used to start make-up at 7 o'clock. Our Saheb (sir) Amit was there. We used to go down in studio at around 11-11.30.

Bapu Watve : It was horrible experience for you.

Vivek : Sometimes I used to feel that I shouldn't do this role. It is not my cup of tea.

Bapu Watve : After that why have you not acted in any of the films?

Vivek : afterwards "Ram Joshi" film shooting started.

Bapu Watve : I heard you were selected in the film "Ram Joshi".

Vivek : Not for the film "Ram Joshi" but for Ram Joshi.

Bapu Watve : Who had selected you?

Vivek : Shantaram Bapu.

Bapu Watve : Was it Shantaram Bapu or Baburao Painter?

Vivek : Shantaram Bapu had selected me. Baburao Painter was not in favour of me becoming Ram Joshi. So, they asked make-up man. Make-up man also selected me as Ram Joshi. But somebody objected by saying that I cannot sing. Shantaram Bapu said that doesn't matter if he cannot sing. He is our known person. But in the end what happened is that Shantaram Bapu left for abroad and I was given role of Peshwa.

Bapu Watve : That role of Ram Joshi was given to Jairam Shiledar. Then how did you get the role of Peshwa? The role of Sawai Madhavrao.

Vivek : There was nobody else to do this role. I was good looking. And I was given this role in exchange of Ram Joshi. From where they will bring another actor for role of Peshwa? They did my make-up. Baburao Painter said, "Wa, very good Peshwa."

Bapu Watve : who said this? Baburao? Did Keshavrao Date like it?

Vivek : Very much. He said that what a figure you have and gave me the blessings by saying “keep getting such big roles.” He didn’t give me anything but gave me blessings (Laughs).

Bapu Watve : (laughs) only gave blessings. Do you remember any dialogs of that film?

Vivek : from that film “Ram Joshi”? (thinking...)

Bapu Watve : It is something “ Shahir Ram Joshi, you have....

Vivek : Kavi Ram Joshi, tumhi amchya samor sakshat Guru ubhe kele. Dhanya Kavi, Wa, wa, wa (Poet Ram Joshi, you have actually created Guru right in front us. Poet is blessed.

Bapu Watve : This is the first dialog of that movie. Your role of “Sawai Madhavrao” from the film “Ram Joshi”, many people liked it. I remember you had told me this incident

that you had heard it yourself. When you had come to Pune.

Vivek : There is (word not audible)

Bapu Watve : means near Vasant Talkies?

Vivek : No, near bridge at Laxmi road. There were some boys gossiping. They were saying, “what a lovely movie is it?”

Bapu Watve : Which one? Ram Joshi?

Vivek : Yes. One of them further said, “leave everything aside of that film but Peshwa of that film looks so good. Peshwa, Peshwa.” (laughing)

Bapu Watve : you heard this yourself. This role, I liked very much and also liked by everyone, so that is why I had called you in Prabhat film studio. When in Prabhat, film “Saint Janabai” was going on and the same time we were making Hindi film “Sati Ahilya”. It was also in Prabhat studio. You had acted in that film as “Brahmadev”.

Vivek: Yes, I remember.

Bapu Watve : I think it was just three days shooting and we had paid Rs.300/- for three days. That time, you had laughed on that. Why did you laugh?

Vivek : I was getting salary of Rs.100/- per month in Rajkamal and here I got Rs.100/- per day.

Bapu Watve : So much was the difference? You got money of three months in three days. Which film you got after Janabai?

Vivek : There was a gap in between.

Bapu Watve : You were not having any film in hand.

Vivek : After that, I felt I will do anything. But at the same time, I received letter from Madgulkar.

Bapu Watve : No, at that time, a difficult situation befell you.

Vivek : Yes. When there was a gap, at that time, my wife had admitted in the hospital for delivery of our second daughter and I had no money.

Bapu Watve : For your wife's second daughter delivery and you were having no money was the situation.

Vivek : She was admitted in Thane Hospital and I had come here to take the language. Same time, she delivered our second child. I was not having any money. My dues were balance so first I sent my brother to bring it. I was staying near Mandai. Prabhat studio was ...

Bapu Watve : at the place where now Film Institute is.

Vivek : They told my brother that we don't have money. I was nervous. I took my cycle and rode towards studio. I asked Saheb for the money. Saheb said that we don't have. I said that I am asking for my money and not asking money from you. I further

said that at least give my dues. He said what can I do if I don't have money. I kept quiet. I asked him that there was a time that company had given us Rs.50,000/- plus and now you don't have money to give me. In the end, he asked me to sit. He removed Rs.100/- from his pocket and gave it to me.

Bapu Watve : Only Rs.100/- but at that time, the financial condition of Prabhat studio was bad.

Vivek : yes, yes. It was really bad. I took that Rs.100/- and I left. My bad luck is that the hospital had closed down so I went home. Next day morning, I went to the hospital. My wife started crying. I told her that this is not the time to cry. She asked whether I had money with me? Why did not you bring it here? I said that I was not having but company has given me. She said you are lying. Again, I came home, took that money to the hospital and showed that Rs.300/- to my wife.

Bapu Watve : That means yours' was Rs.200/- and Company had given you Rs.100/- so altogether Rs.300/-.

Vivek : I asked her whether she is sure about what I said. She said yes. Then I came home and again I went to Thane.

Bapu Watve : Again you went to Thane?

Vivek : Yes, at Thane.

Bapu Watve : Where was she delivered?

Vivek : Yes, at Pune.

Bapu Watve : That means you went to Thane along with your family at the time of your wife's second delivery. So, this was difficult situation you had to face.

Vivek : Very bad experience.

Bapu Watve: Ok. I wanted to ask you that did you acted in any film after Ram Joshi at Rajkamal?

Vivek: Yes, I did in Bhumi Putra. But have not done much role after that.

Bapu Watve: I think you had acted in “Vinayak chi Jeevan Yatra”.

Vivek: Yes, I had done. There was a role of Bullock Cart rider.

Bapu Watve: So, you must have met Vinayakrao there.

Vivek: Yes. At that time, I got to meet him.

Bapu Watve: What did Vinayakrao said to you?

Vivek : I greeted him in a special voice and teasingly asked him whether he recognised this? He denied. I said, “this is voice of Vivek. This voice is of Abhyankar.” He said, “very nice.” He looked at me with smile and said that you got a special voice and further said when you will come again, tell them that I have called you. I said, “alright.” Next day, I went to the studio and told them that I have been called by Vinayakrao. They asked me, “for what?”. I told them that I do not know but he has called me. Vinayakrao asked me to sit down. He said, “you got a very good voice. Do you have a desire to act in the movie?” I said, “No, I have no willingness to act in movie. I am an artist.”

Bapu Watve: ok.

Vivek: He told me to sit. He said, “you work under me and even If you will act in the movies, you will definitely become a hero.” I asked him, “if I become a hero, will I achieve everything?” He said, “Not like that. You will get work.”

Bapu Watve : That means what Damle sir told you, the same thing Master Vinayak told you. **Vivek :** I became nervous again. I was just sitting there so I told him,

“instead of just sitting ideal, give me some work to do?” (One line is not audible). I said, “it will do.”

Bapu Watve : He didn't asked you, what have you decided further?

Vivek : He did ask me. I told him that I don't have any aim in the life. I am hardly earning salary of Rs.35/- then what aim I will have?

Bapu Watve : Somehow just managing the house this is the only aim. (laughing).

Vivek : What could I get in Rs.35/- salary?

Bapu Watve : But, could Vinayakrao complete his desire to make you “Hero” ?

Vivek : No, no. He could not as he expired.

Bapu Watve : He expired in the month of August, 1947. May be Master Vinayak could have make you a hero. But it was not your destiny. Anyway, after “Janabai” moving and coming out of all the problems, did you receive any call you for movie?

Vivek : I came back to Prabhat for Dnyaneshwar.

Bapu Watve : No, No, after Janabai.

Vivek : After Janabai, I came to Manik studio.

Bapu Watve : Manik Studio? For which film?

Vivek : “Pudhach Paul”. It was on the story written by G.D. Madgulkar. He wanted known people to act in that movie so he called me. I asked him for the story. He said that it is a story of Annaji but I will not tell the story.

Bapu Watve : Who said this? Raja Paranjape?

Vivek : No, G.D. Malgulkar Sir. This is my picture. I said, “what do you mean by it my picture?”. Then he told me the story. I said, “This is rural based picture.”

Bapu Watve : You told him?

Vivek : He said, “yes, I have written this character.” I said, “Anna, come here. That “Pudhach Paul” is a rural base picture.”

Bapu Watve : Pudhach Paul.

Vivek : He said, “Fadtare and other our own people are going to act in this”. I asked him, who is going to become Bajirao? He said, “you take that role.” I told him, “first thing is that I cannot do rural role.”

Bapu Watve : Because you were not comfortable with that language?

Vivek : I told him that you had called me so I came here but I am disappointed. He said, “ok. If I give you any other role, will you do it?” I said, “ok.” And then we came to make-up room.

Bapu Watve : Who all were other actors with you in that movie?

Vivek : Kusum Deshpande, Hansa Wadkar, G.D. Madgulkar, Ambapkar, myself and P. L. Deshpande were there in that movie.

Bapu Watve : One more name you have forgotten.

Vivek : Sulochana was also there.

Bapu Watve : Sulochana was in that movie?

Vivek : Vasant Deshpande

Bapu Watve : You have forgotten one more very important name that Director, Raja Paranjpe, himself had acted in that movie. Alright. After that there was no shooting for next three days.

Vivek : I don't know why. Then shooting started and in the end of the days my turn came. When sun was setting down, it is almost dark everywhere and they asked me for shooting.

Bapu Watve : That means when the shooting came to an end, your turn came.

Vivek : At that time, studio used closed by six to six thirty. Quarter to six (name not audible)_ came and started winding up. I told him that I will act. He said, “Oh Dada, I will give you the voice for your acting (voiceover)”. He used to call me Dada. So, I went in and gave my shot. This way, my first shot was done ok. Afterwards, somebody whispered in Raja Bhau’s ears and I came to know. I became very nervous, got up and went to Anna.

Bapu Watve : Anna means Madgulkar.

Vivek : Yes. I told him that I cannot do this role. As the language was rural, to just do the acting was not possible for me. He got angry. He said, “you just do the acting. I will do dubbing ” So, in the end I completed my role and that movie was finally realised. At that time, everyone praised me for my acting.

Bapu Watve : At the time of this picture, your name on the screen changed.

Vivek : Yes. It was changed to “Vivek”.

Bapu Watve : Who has suggested this name?

Vivek : By Bal Kurtadkar.

Bapu Watve : Whose idea was it to change the name?

Vivek : It was my own idea.

Bapu Watve : Till that time, your name appeared everywhere as “Ganesh Abhyankar”.

Vivek : When I told Anna Madgulkar that I want to change my name as its old fashioned. He flatly refused and said, “The name Ganesh, is the name of Shiva’s son. It is not tiger or lion to change.” I told him, “Anna, you just suggest me the name.” He asked me whether I have anything in my mind. I said, I have not taken out anything

yet but I will. Then he said, let us see your Kundali. According to my Kundali, Deepak name came out. I said, OK. P.L. Deshpande said that we will search something more.

Bapu Watve: Why, was there any other person by the name, Deepak?

Vivek : There was some one by that name but his first film had gone flop. So, Madgulkar said that we will search more. Then, I told all this to Bal Kurtadkar. He suggested that my name should be kept “Vivek”. I was also ok with it and even everyone agreed to it. So, I declared my name as “Vivek”. But this name was not given in the film.

Bapu Watve: Why not? And the name is different for the film title.

Vivek: while writing the name they used to write the old one.

Bapu Watve : That means, in the advertisement, they were writing your name as “Ganesh?”

Vivek : Yes. I was also feeling bad for changing my name. I also told Madgulkar, “what is this? I have kept my name “Vivek” and still they are writing as “Ganesh”. He said, alright. He called the technician and asked him to change the name. Then he changed my name. This way, slowly and gradually my name was changed to Vivek.

Bapu Watve: That picture was done very well.

Vivek: Yes. Very well.

Bapu Watve: Did you ever acted in any rural film?

Vivek: No, I never acted in any rural film.

Bapu Watve : That means, that was the only one rural film you had acted in. After that film, continuously you got two to three films.

Vivek: Yes, “Devbappa”...

Bapu Watve: Before that I think, “Shrikrishna Darshan”.

Vivek: Yes.

Bapu Watve: In Shrikrishna Darshan, you were Krishna and after that you did film “Mard Maratha”. In Mard Maratha, you had played role of Shivaji. How did you get selected for this role of Shivaji?

Vivek: I had friend named Keshav.

Bapu Watve: Who, Keshav Talpade? The producer and Director of that movie.

Vivek: He told me to do the role. I asked him, “which role you want me to do?” Then he laughed. I asked him, “why did you laugh?” He said that I should work in his film. I asked him that which role he is offering me. He said that do the role of Shivaji.

Bapu Watve: He asked you to play role of Shivaji?

Vivek: I laughed and asked him, “Talpade Saheb, do I looked at Shivaji?” He said, “you leave that to me.” I told him that I will do that role but on one condition. If people recognise me that this is Vivek then I will not do that role but if they did not recognise me then I will play that role. He agreed to it. Then I went to make-up room and it took me five hours to do the make-up.

Bapu Watve: five hours?

Vivek: Yes, we spent five hours to do the make-up of Shivaji, sitting on the horse. Then we clicked the photographs and showed it to people. Everybody started asking that whose photos are these? He asked them to recognise and told them that this person in photograph is known to you. Nobody could recognise it. When he told them that these photos are of Vivek, they started laughing. Also, they appreciated my look of Shivaji. So, that day I decided to do that role of Shivaji. Then I told them that one more problem is that I cannot sit on the horse.

Bapu Watve: You cannot sit on the horse?

Vivek : Yes. He said, “you don’t worry about that? We will go to race course for that.”

Next day, we sat in the car and went to race course. He told to the person at the race course, “He is our person. Teach him horse riding.” Then we selected the horse. They were knowing that I am absolutely ignorant about the horse.

Bapu Watve : In Prabhat, they teach horse riding. Prabhat had two-three horses of their own.

Vivek : We selected horse and I learnt riding on that horse. Even I met with accident on the same horse. I tried to climb the moving horse but I fell down then he straight came towards me and walked over me.

Bapu Watve : Was it the horse which is used for race?

Vivek : Yes, it was horse for the race. Very good looking, black horse.

Bapu Watve : So, you rode the horse.

Vivek : yes, I learnt horse riding.

Bapu Watve : At this same time, you also acted in the film “Maya Machindra”.

Vivek : Yes, I acted in Maya Machindra.

Bapu Watve : Which role did you play in that film?

Vivek : of Gorakhnath.

Bapu Watve : That means of the hero and who was the director of that film?

Vivek : The director was Aspi Irani. He was not knowing Marathi at all.

Bapu Watve : Not knowing Marathi at all?

Vivek : No, not at all and on top of it, he was directing Marathi film (Laughing). He used to “*Jor se bolo, Jor se bolo*”(in the sense speak loudly). How much loudly we can speak? So, he used to say “*Isme Jan Chahiye, Jan*”. (Laughing) He said “*Chaila*” loudly. ...

Bapu Watve : Did he speak like that?

Vivek : yes and said how you speak with you *Ba* (father), similarly you should speak loudly.

Bapu Watve : So, he wanted force in the dialogue. So, this way you acted in that film. Do you have any memories of that movie? About Gorakhnath role?

Vivek : (trying to remember)

Bapu Watve : People chase Gorakhnath and then he hide himself in Dholi. Something like that...

Vivek : Yes. We had gone for outdoor shooting. And there is shot like this ..

Bapu Watve : Some people chase Gorkhnath, something like ...

Vivek : yes and then he had to hide in the Dholi (Hole in the bark of the tree). I said that I am not scared but I hope it is clean. They assured that it is clean and nothing is there. I thought, at the most there will be ants. Shooting started. I climbed the ladder and entered the Dholi, at that same time, police arrived.

Bapu Watve : Who arrived?

Vivek : police.

Bapu Watve : There is no police in the film “Gorakhnath”.

Vivek : Police of other party.

Bapu Watve : other party means people of opposition.

Vivek : Yes, police came and at the same time, I came out of Dholi and was shouting “*melo, melo*” (I am dying, I am dying). So, they came forward and started asking “*kya hua, kya hua*” (what happed?)

Bapu Watve : Gorakhnath shouted like this?

Vivek : I came out of the Dholi. All black and red ants had stuck to my body.

Bapu Watve: (laughing) Didn't director say that this scene is not there in the movie.

Vivek: I told them that I have suggestion to check the spot first.

Bapu Watve: From thereon, you became a real hero. "Mai Bahini" 1952. So many years have passed.

This is Part-2 of the interview of Cine actor and theatre actor, **Ganesh Bhaskar Ambhyankar** alias **Vivek**, by Bapu Watve on 6th February, 1987.

Bapu Watve: You have completed 35 years of becoming a Hero. After that, I mean to say, you got a role in film immediately after "Mai Bahini"

Vivek: yes, I got it immediately.

Bapu Watve: Did you got it while other film was going on?

Vivek: I had come to Pune for some work and was leaving for Kolhapur.

Bapu Watve: "Mai Bahini" was done at Kolhapur? Who was the director of this film?

Vivek: Patil.

Bapu Watve: Dinkar Patil and who had written it? Bhalji Pendharkar?

Vivek: In that you said, Baburao Pendharkar and Baby Shakuntala were in that film.

Bapu Watve: Even Rajan was there. During this film shooting, immediately you got another film "Dudh Bhat".

Vivek: Yes, immediately. I had come to Pune. While going, Deo came to meet.

Bapu Watve: Who is Deo?

Vivek: He was producer. He asked people at home whether I am at home. They told him that I just left and train must be at station.

Bapu Watve: means you were going to Kolhapur by train.

Vivek: That time there was no ST. I was sitting in the train.

Bapu Watve: There was ST but not so comfortable.

Vivek: I was sitting in the train and he came. We greeted each other. He asked me where I am going. I told him that I am going to Kolhapur for shooting. He asked me about my luggage. He told me that he is going for the inauguration of his movie and I will not tell of which movie. He further said that you must be busy person. I said that I never said so. When you reach there, give me call, if you permit me then I will come there, inaugurate the film and come back. He said that alright. Then when I was at Kolhapur, I received a phone call from him. I am so and so person; can you please call Vivekrao. My assistant told me that there is call from him. I said that I was knowing that he will call. I received the call and said, alright. I went there, did the inauguration and returned.

Bapu Watve: Then Dudh Bhat film started. Who all had acted in that film?

Vivek: Usha Kiran was there. Vasant Deshpande.

Bapu Watve: Vasantrao Deshpande?

Vivek: Yes, Vasantrao, the singer. Myself and Sulochana. Even Karve was there.

Bapu Watve: Who was he? Kamlakar Karve. Was this your first movie with Usha Kiran?

Vivek: Right.

Bapu Watve: Usually, it is a habit of heroines that if the hero is new then they tend to make them nervous. Do you have such kind of experience of Usha Kiran?

Vivek: Right in the beginning she had tried but I came to know.

Bapu Watve: You guessed what is she going to do?

Vivek: I told her straight way that I will just do my role.

Bapu Watve: What did you guess that she was going to do?

Vivek: There is no work but she used to call me unnecessary.

Bapu Watve: What was that scene for which she had call?

Vivek: She had come to me to click the photo. She told me that this is scene wherein I am feeding you sugar.

Bapu Watve: I am putting sugar on your palm.

Vivek: No, not on my palm. She wanted to put it in the mouth and she called the photographer.

Bapu Watve: Oh! She wanted to click that phot.

Vivek: I told her that I will not allow to take this kind of photo.

Bapu Watve: Ok Ok

Vivek: I really wondered why she comes again and again? I found her eccentric. Then she disappeared. Everyone was searching her. I told them that call me when you find her. I was sure that she was around. After some time, Ram Gabale called me. I told him that once heroine finishes her laughing, I will come. I didn't like it. She finished her shot and again started laughing. It was her habit.

Bapu: After that also you worked with her

Vivek: Yes. I did work with her.

Bapu Watve: but she had not behaved liked this. This was just temporary. "Dudh Bhat" film was also successful film. After that, there was a silver jubilee of your film.

Vivek: When we went at Kolhapur, I met Usha Kiran because she had a role for me. Balasaheb told me that she has contacted for your role so now you pay for it. So, I paid.

Bapu Watve: Around the same time, there was a silver jubilee of your film "Devbappa".

Vivek: Yes.

Bapu Watve: It was of Bhaskarrao Dharap. Here, we can say that was the best period of your career. Can you tell me any memories of “Dudh Bhath?” I vaguely remember something like Usha Kiran was drowning...

Vivek: Yes, I remember. Scene was like this; we were going from this bank of river to another.

Bapu Watve: You mean, you both were in a boat and going from this bank of the river to another. You were going to drop her across the river.

Vivek: Yes. We both sat in the boat. Boat started and she was bending down. I told her, “Bai, sit properly. Do you know swimming?” She did not listen and was again bending. So, boat turned and she fell into the water. I remain on the boat. She was drowning. Then somehow, I pulled her up on the boat. I scolded her, “Don’t you understand what I say? Sit quietly.”

Bapu Watve: So you saved her life.

Vivek: yes, I saved her life.

Bapu Watve: Devbappa was the film of Bhaskarrao Dharap and director was of Ram Gabale, the one who had directed of Dudh Bhat. In that movie, which role did you played? Of Doctor?

Vivek: yes, of Doctor.

Bapu Watve: Doctor is the hero of that film. So, did you study the character of Doctor? Did you personally observed, how they talk to the patients?

Vivek: My friend “Kanitkar” is a Doctor. I went to him. He greeted me. I told him that I have some work with him. I am going play a role of Doctor and this film is going to be successful.

Bapu Watve : So, you were knowing that this film is going to be hit.

Vivek : yes, certainly. Story was so great that it was going to be hit. It was complete six-reel film. He asked me, “who is going to act with you?” I said, “Chitra.” Then I used to go to his dispensary and observe how he talks to the patient. How he gives injection. This way, I spent fifteen to twenty days. Then our shooting started at his place. There were ten to fifteen doctors came to see the shooting.

Bapu Watve : Doctors came to see the shooting.

Vivek : After seeing them I was scared seeing 10-15 doctors. I told my friend that the picture is going to a fun. Then picture was released at Alka Talkies. At interval somebody asked where is Doctor? Baburao said, “He is sitting upstairs. Vivek, please come down.” I went down and greeted them. Again, came up. One gentleman got up and said, “welcome Doctor.” At that time, I felt I have won.

Bapu Watve : When you do the study of some character, you really get benefited.

Vivek : certainly.

Bapu Watve : Every actor must study the role given and must think what one can do for that role. It will definitely help them to play the role.

Vivek : At the time of film shooting, I had written one song at the time of shot. Complete Marathi and Hindi version. Complete song. (two/three sentences are not audible)

Bapu Watve : Who all artists were there in the film “Devbappa?” Chitra heroine, one of them and who else was there?

Vivek : there was Janvi.

Bapu Watve : Who else.

Vivek : She was in earlier movie.

Bapu Watve : Medha and I think Dhumal was also there.

Vivek : Yes, and also Indira Chitnis was also in that movie.

Bapu Watve : after that, your another film was followed for silver jubilee, “Vahinichya Bangdya”.

Vivek : right, Vahinichya Bangdya.

Bapu Watve : It was just in a row and I think was released next year. You were a Professor in that film. It was a very good film. You can say, it was totally family-oriented movie. The movie was directed by Shantaram Aathawale. I think Chitra was heroine in that film. Who else was there?

Vivek : Sulochana bai was there.

Bapu Watve : Sulochana was Vahini in that film.

Vivek : Dhumal was there.

Bapu Watve : Indira Chitnis was there in that film. Do you remember any incident of that film?

Vivek : It was happened like this; he explained me the story and I said, “ok”. Last scene is that they find Vahinichya Bangdya in balefire and I did not like it.

Bapu Watve : That means, the director and you had an argument at the time of shooting.

Vivek : We had a solid argument. I told them that this is all non-sense. It is just to attract ladies’ crowd. So far, nobody has shown such kind of scene in films. Why are you showing like this? This argument went on till 11 o’clock.

Bapu Watve : 11 o’clock at night.

Vivek : No, at morning, eleven o’clock. Then writer, himself arrived there and started asking, “what happened Shantarambapu?” Shantarambapu said, “he is fighting with

me.” He asked me why I am fighting? I told him that I don’t agree with the last scene. He told me to come to his office. I went to this office. There he nicely explained me the scene. He told me that it is a true story.

Bapu Watve : That means he had experienced everything. It is a real story of the bangles of married woman which was found like this.

Vivek : He told me that he had witness the same scene when he had attended some funeral. He had seen that bangles with his own eyes. He came home from the funeral and wrote this story. I said ok and I did that scene. After seeing that he appreciated it.

Bapu Watve : That scene was done very well. After that

Vivek : I still remember one incident. He was not knowing her and directly he said, “I don’t want this lady.”

Bapu Watve : Which lady he was talking about?

Vivek : Sulochanabai.

Bapu Watve : He said like that?

Vivek : Yes, he said that we don’t want this lady. He asked her to seat outside and Then asked, “who is Vivek? Is he Bambayya (Mumbaikar)?” I said, “No, I am Vivek Abhyankar.” He said alright and further said that he does not want this lady in the movie. Then there was a meeting and in that meeting it was decided that we will present one scene. Sulochanabai and I, we performed one scene and then he agreed to take her.

Bapu Watve : The role of Sulochanabai in that movie was unforgettable. Even at the time of Hindi version “Bhabhi ki Chudiya”, Meena Kumari also agreed that she could not do better than her. It was a lifetime performance.

Vivek: It is called taking calculative risk.

Bapu Watve: yes, but something you miss the calculation. “Ovalani” was your one of the best films at that time. After that, you had done “Postatil Mulgi” at Mumbai. Who was the heroine in that film?

Vivek: It was Usha Kiran. Dhumal, Indira Chitnis..

Bapu Watve: There you met Meena Kumar.

Vivek: Yes, same time. At the time of shooting, Laxmikant Kashikar told me, “come, I will introduce you to heroine.” I asked him, “who?” He said, “Meena Kumar.” I was feeling shy. He said, “Let’s go.” She was sitting there in make-up room alone. He introduced me to her by saying, “this is Vivek”. She said, “I have heard a lot about you.”

Bapu Watve: She said like that?

Vivek: Yes and then we were just chatting.

Bapu Watve: She appreciated you.

Vivek: She asked us whether we had food. I told her that when the set is getting ready at that time. I told her, “today, you see how we take our scene.” Then we contacted many people and finally showed her film at 6 o’clock. I told her that we have made this film.

Bapu Watve: Postatil Mulgi.

Vivek: She said, alright and further asked, “how many days it has taken?” I said, “What do you think?” She said, “It must have taken month or two.” I said, “it has just taken eight days.” She started laughing. I asked her, “why are you laughing?” She said surprisingly, “Eight days?”

Bapu Watve : She must be surprised. This way you got to know her from that day.

Then, when did you started acting in drama?

Vivek : in the year, 1956

Bapu Watve : That means, at that same time. But how did you started acting in drama? Or is it like, somebody has taken advantage of you being famous person.

Vivek : Dhumal asked me.

Bapu Watve : Which was that drama?

Vivek : “Lagnachi Bedi”

Bapu Watve : It is written by Acharya Atre.

Vivek : Vasant Joglekar was making film. He was looking for someone to play the role of Dr. Kanchan. He asked me whether I will take up the role. First, I refused.

Bapu Watve : Because you had not done it before. But you had done this before at J.J. School of Arts. This is what you had told me.

Vivek : It was in “Nishigandhachi Navri”. I had done feminine role.

Bapu Watve : I think it was of Parvatibai. Means you had done feminine role.

Vivek : At that time, Bal Kurtadkar was also there. Keluskar’s wife, Kamal was also in that. She had worked with me.

Bapu Watve : No, you had done role of Parvatibai. I vaguely remember. You had done it earlier but by profession you had not done feminine role.

Vivek : For drama “Lagnachi Bedi”, he explained me the role. He gave me the book and asked me to go through. I went home and gone through the book. I was really taken back. On every page, there was something different scene. How will I mug up so many the dialogues?

Bapu Watve: yes. Acting in cinema is totally different than that of acting in drama. In cinema, once the shot is over, you can forget the dialogue.

Vivek : Next day, early in the morning, I went Dhumal. He asked me, “what happened? why did you come?” I told him, “I have some work with you. Kindly take this book and relieve me. This is not my cup of tea.” And I left. Next day Sunita and me had gone to play. He came home and told that give this book to Vivek and tell him that we are going to do ten shows of this drama on Konkan tour. Now I am going ahead to Mumbai When I came back, I saw the book. There was no one to whom I can say “No.” I was not knowing anything, where he is going to Mumbai and with whom he staying. How I am supposed to contact him? So, I was forced to mug it up. Then I started slowly mugging sentences one by one.

Bapu Watve: Whoever was coming to meet you, were asked to speak that lines.

Vivek: At last, I started for Konkan tour.

Bapu Watve: You started means you were going by boat?

Vivek: Yes, by boat.

Bapu Watve: At that time, Vasantrao Joglekar was present there?

Vivek: yes, I had called him. So, he had come. I told him to come and relieve me. He said, “No, no, you can definitely do it.”

Bapu Watve: Does he say like that?

Vivek: I told him that I have not done this before so you don't force me. He said, “you do it.” And the boat started. All other actors came on the deck. Sumati bai said ..

Bapu Watve: Who said?

Vivek : Sumati Gupte said, “let us start the rehearsal.” I was sitting on the bench of the deck and looking at the birds flying in the sky. But nobody was doing rehearsal. Asha bai asked me, how much part I have done.

Bapu Watve : Is it Asha Gadgil?

Vivek : Asha Gadgil. I told her that she will come to know tomorrow. Sumati said, “let us do the scene.” We did one small part of the scene. Then Sumati said, “I don’t about others but Vivek has done good work on the script.” I said to myself, I know how much I have worked. Next day we reached to Ratnagiri. A gentleman came to meet me. He said, “since you have come to Ratnagiri, please inaugurate my saloon.”

Bapu Watve : Means you were there for drama and he wanted first you to inaugurate his shop.

Vivek : I told him, “After finishing this show, I am leaving today night by train. I am not going to stay back”. The person who had arranged the show said, “why don’t you go tomorrow.” In my mind I was not ready but somehow agreed. Dhumal said, we will see tomorrow. Then early in the morning at 8 o’clock I came down. The rehearsal was going on. I stood there. Everyone came out with their ideas.

Bapu Watve : Every other person started teaching you.

Vivek : Even office boy was also acting like a Director. I just nodded. Then I was not having suit. So, we bought it from Bhaskarrao.

Bapu Watve : From whom you borrowed the suit?

Vivek : Bhaskarrao Dharap.

Bapu Watve : You were not having suit, so you bought it from Bhaskarrao Dharap.

Vivek : I was not having anything. The show was to start now. First bell rang, then second bell rang. Last bell rang and my time to take the stage entry arrived. I was perspiring. Somebody said, “Go ahead, go ahead”.

Bapu Watve : You should have said, “what are you telling me to go ahead, I am already there.”

Vivek : I entered the stage and said, Hello. Audience started clapping. Vasant Thengane was prompting me to go ahead. Somehow, I gathered the courage and started. And without mistake I completed the drama.

Bapu Watve : This way, you had completed your first stage performance very well.

Vivek : Everyone praised me. In entire drama, I had not made any kind of mistake.

Bapu Watve : Not a single dialogue was missed. At that time, you had become so famous that more than drama, people had gathered in large number to see you.

Vivek : The crowd was so much that even the road was full.

Bapu Watve : After that how many years you were acting in this drama.

Vivek : I was acting for nearly twenty-five years.

Bapu Watve : Oh my God, twenty five years. How many Rashmi (name of the character of that drama) were changed?

Vivek : Seventeen to Eighteen

Bapu Watve : Seventeen to Eighteen? Do you remember, roughly, who all had acted as Rashmi?

Vivek : Snehlata Ballal, Shanta Apte, Hansa Wadkar, Ranjana and who is that

Bapu Watve : Must be Padma Chavan

Vivek : Even Ashu had played the role. And so many had come and gone.

Bapu Watve : Till which year you played this role? Till 1970-71?

Vivek: So far I was playing this role. I still act in the drama in Pune.

Bapu Watve: Which was the other drama you had played role in?

Vivek: I acted in “Shyam chi Aai”.

Bapu Watve: What role you played in Shyam chi Aai?

Vivek: I played role of Shyam’s father.

Bapu Watve: That was also one of the good role.

Vivek: (sentence is not audible)

Bapu Watve: Which else? It is something “Dilya Ghari ..” of Kalelkar. Dilya Ghari was a quiet successful drama.

Vivek: I was the hero in that drama.

Bapu Watve: Which was that drama, set by Master Dattaram.

Vivek: Shyam chi Aai.

Bapu Watve: After that “Kunku Japun Thev”. “Nath Ha Maza” was still going on. ..

Vivek: In Nath ha Maza, I had a role of drunkard.

Bapu Watve: At that time, you continued acting in cinema. Similarly, there was a scene of drunkard in “Devghar” with Raja Paranjape.

Vivek: It was before.

Bapu Watve: What do you mean before? Before drama?

Vivek: The scene was like this ...

Bapu Watve: but you never drink alcohol.

Vivek: I told Rajabhau, it is drunkard scene. People should not come to know that we are not drinking alcohol but ordinary water. That is fake alcohol bottle. He said, “Don’t worry. I am there. I will show you.” And he did it. Next day, I did the same

acting. Rajabhau liked it and said, “wow, without drinking a drop of alcohol, you have acted very well.”

Bapu Watve : Did Rajabhau said that looking at your acting, “no one can believe that you don’t drink alcohol.”

Vivek : Yes. He said that.

Bapu Watve : That means you gets full marks for your acting.

Vivek : Full marks.

Bapu Watve : What was that scene. You drink alcohol and come home. What happens next...

Vivek : Ramesh Dev was there in that movie and Nanda was also there.

Bapu Watve : What was Nanda in that? Your sister-in-law?

Vivek : Yes and Ramesh was her husband.

Bapu Watve : He was a gentleman.

Vivek : yes. I was showing her acting of drunkard. I wanted her to know that I can drink alcohol.

Bapu Watve : Because of that she was angry?

Vivek : Yes, finally we finished that scene. We had taken twenty-one retakes.

Bapu Watve : Even this “Devghar” was successful film. “Maze Ghar, Mazi Manase” was a really good film but could not succeed.

Vivek : Sulochana was there in that film.

Bapu Watve : Even Chandrakant Gokhale and Indira Chitnis was in that film. You had given many hit films like this. You have almost done eighty to eighty-five films. It is not possible to mention here all the movies. But I remember, one of your best is

“Gruhdevta” which was awarded at Russia. “Dhakti Jau” was also good movie.

Which role you had played in “Suhasini”?

Vivek: Of the hero.

Bapu Watve: Do you remember the name of the character?

Vivek: It was of the Artist.

Bapu Watve: I think as a hero, “Thamb Laxmi Kunku Lawate” was your last movie.

Vivek: There were three heroes.

Bapu Watve: Three brothers so three heroes. I think, by this time, you had reached to fifty.

Vivek: easily.

Bapu Watve: That means you had played heroes role till fiftieth of your age. What had happened with you that you first acted as a hero in “Mai Bahini”. So, you got a chance to act as a hero very late.

Vivek: Yes, you are right.

Bapu Watve: At that time, you had become roughly around thirty four years of age. That is the reason. Otherwise, as a hero you would have acted in many more films. If you would have entered ten years back at the age of twenty-five then you would crossed hundred films.

Vivek: certainly.

Bapu Watve: In how many movies you have acted as a hero.

Vivek: Must be around sixty five.

Bapu Watve: After that, you kept on acting in films till you met with an accident. In most of these films, you had acted as a hero but did you ever do different kind of role?

Have you done any challenging movies? I agree with your role in “Mard Maratha”. As a Shivaji you have done a challenging role.

Vivek : I had done role of Loafer.

Bapu Watve : In which film?

Vivek : In “Punerjalm”.

Bapu Watve : While doing that role of loafer, were you having anyone in your mind?

Vivek : I was watching one dark complexion person.

Bapu Watve : It was near your house.

Vivek : Yes. He used to smoke cigarette, comb the hair. Always in his own word. I went after him, followed him to City Post office. He stood there. Smoke the cigarette, combed the hair. I observed everything and came home. Took out old pant and one red coloured bush-shirt.

Bapu Watve : Did you tie hanker-chief? And hold cigarette? And done hair untidy?

Vivek : Yes, I did all these things. Took cigarette and started going out.

Bapu Watve : You don't smoke, I believe.

Vivek : No. People at home asked me where I am going. I told them, to clip the photos. Then I went to studio. I did all the make-up and clothing of loafer. Clicked photos and came home. My daughters were playing outside the house. They shouted, “mother, look who has come?” My wife came out and shouted at me. (laughing)

Bapu Watve : So, you got the acknowledgement of your make-over.

Vivek : Then I called Appasaheb and told him this story. He started laughing.

Bapu Watve : Did people liked your this role?

Vivek : Yes, they liked it. But I have not done this kind of role afterwards.

Bapu Watve : Why have not done?

Vivek: I used to go to play Badminton early in the morning. There I met a couple.

Bapu Watve: Where did you meet them?

Vivek: Near Vijay Talkies. They asked me, “Hi, Vivek, how are you?” I said, “I am good.” Then they further asked me, “Which picture is going on?” I told them, “at present this movie is going on?” They said we have seen all your movies. I asked them whether they seen this picture?

Bapu Watve: Which picture?

Vivek: “Punerjalm”. They said, “yes, we have seen this picture also. We have a request that henceforth, don’t do this kind of role.” I am an artist; I have to do all kinds of roles.

Bapu Watve: Artist will have to do all kind of role.

Vivek: That role does not suit you. Your face does not look like that kind. You are fit for Doctor, Engineer, Advocate.

Bapu Watve: Doctor, Advocate, Professor ...

Vivek: After that I have not done such kind of role.

Bapu Watve: Did they say that you and Sulochana Bai are suitable for sober roles.

Vivek: After that, I acted in “Bara Varsh Saha Mahine Tin Diwas”

Bapu Watve: In that film?

Vivek: I acted as a Villain.

Bapu Watve: Did people liked it?

Vivek: They did not like it.

Bapu Watve: That was the only one of villain.

Vivek: People abused me for that role.

Bapu Watve: For that Villain role? Actually, it is appreciation.

Vivek : They were saying that I should be bitten by shoes.

Bapu Watve : You had done role of mad man in one of the film.

Vivek : Yes, with Jayashree Gadkar.

Bapu Watve : Which film was it?

Vivek : “Bhagyalaxmi” of Anand Mahale.

Bapu Watve : While doing role of Loafer in Punerjalm, you had kept someone in your mind, similarly acting as mad person, you had anyone in your mind?

Vivek : I went to the hospital.

Bapu Watve : Which hospital did you visited?

Vivek : At Thane

Bapu Watve : Mental hospital at Thane.

Vivek : All mental patients started jumping. Give me Vidi, give me Vidi (a kind of cigarette). I ignore them and went upstairs. One person was sitting there. He said, “hello gentleman, how are you?” I said, “I have come to meet you.” He said, “please sit down.” I was not knowing that he is mad. He was reading Times of India. He asked me, from where did I come. I said, “from Bombay.” He asked me again, how did I come here. I told him that I have a friend here and have come to meet him. He asked me, “do you have a cigarette?” I said, “I don’t smoke.” He got angry with me and said, “you act in films and does not smoke? You bloody fool.” I was tensed as he might hit me. He stepped forward to hit me. I stood there quietly.

I found him a good person so I came up. He said, “what nonsense! He is also mad patient amongst other.” I came down. All the patients were standing there to see me. When I came out of hospital, I was shaking. That is the same scene we have shown in the movie.

Bapu Watve : Was this your role appreciated? And who did it?

Vivek : yes, it was appreciated by P. L. Deshpande. He said, “you have done excellent acting.”

Bapu Watve : who else? Did Acharya Atre said anything?

Vivek : Acharya Atre

Bapu Watve : Did he come for the movie?

Vivek : Yes, he had come for the movie. He asked, who is this Veda (mad)? I said, “it’s me.” He said, “Vedya (mad man) come here. You have done wonderful acting.” By saying this, he hugged me.

Bapu Watve : Did he say that this kind of role of Veda, no one has done in last ten years?

Vivek : Yes, he said like that.

Bapu Watve : You got the acknowledgement for your role. Though you had done different kinds of roles, they were appreciated. Because of you met with an accident ten years back and you had suffered. But if you look back at your successful career, you could not buy any flat.

Vivek : No, I could not get a chance to buy a flat.

Bapu Watve : That means you never got sufficient money. And also, the ration of money and loss was high.

Vivek : That was always.

Bapu Watve : You lost more that you earned.

Vivek : I lost lots of money.

Bapu Watve : You never asked people to return your money. You also never kept any note of the money given.

Vivek : If I ever asked them, then I will not get the roles again.

Bapu Watve : May be, I think, you had three daughters so, you had to be little on low key. They were to get married so you had taken low note. But good thing is that all of them are married and got good families. This is the biggest satisfaction you got.

Vivek : My youngest daughter comes home very often than the other two.

Bapu Watve : That is alright but they are married at good place. Secondly, what I feel to ask, with Marathi films you got fame. They called you Dev Anand of Marathi films but could not gain monetarily or you lost your money. If you could have acted in Hindi, but I think you had acted in Hindi films also. You did in “Sati Ahilya” but that was very small role. You had not done a big role in Hindi films.

Vivek : Yes. At that time, Datta was searching actor for the main role.

Bapu Watve : Means of Datta Dharmadhikari? Ok.

Vivek : Sheela Raman was there. She said, “you come with us at Mumbai.” I asked her, for what? She said, “Chalo to Sahi (at least come with us). I went with them at Central Cinema, Mumbai. I met Vijay Anand there.

Bapu Watve : No, it is Chetan Anand. Yes, it was the film on Bhagvan Buddha.

Vivek : He met me there. He asked me, “So, you are Vivek?” I said, “yes.” He said, “Sheela told me that Vivek is going to work with us. I have recognized you. You are earned name in Marathi film industry.”

Bapu Watve : So, Hindi film industry was knowing about you.

Vivek : He said, “We are producing film on Buddha. You play role of Buddha”. So, everything was set for the film but Buddha committee objected for this film. So, this film was not completed.

Bapu Watve : If you would have worked with Chetan Anand then you would have become in Hindi film industry. But I think, you had worked with Master Bhagwan in one Hindi film.

Vivek : That is Rangeela. It was with Pournima.

Bapu Watve : That film was also not successful.

Vivek : Both films were not successful.

Bapu Watve : Otherwise, in Hindi film industry, you would have become ..

Vivek : Certainly, a different place.

Bapu Watve : Do you feel that you have made mistake in selecting this filmy line?

Vivek : Previously, when I was having roles that time I was not feeling anything. But now I feel. When I go out, I feel I should take some education. If I would not have fought with teacher, I would have completed my education. But I could not have come to this line.

Bapu Watve : Then you would have become an Artist. You were supposed to get flat.

Vivek : I am trying. I will get when I am supposed to.

Bapu Watve : Do you get any help from Government?

Vivek : Yes. I get Rs.350/- per month from Government.

Bapu Watve : When you stopped getting roles, have you started any other business?

Vivek : Nothing.

Bapu Watve : Are you doing something at home?

Vivek : Previously, I was doing birds, then painting.

Bapu Watve : You used to sell it?

Vivek : Yes, I used to sell them.

Bapu Watve : Some of them have taken by agencies. Even you have made lanterns. I have seen your birds, made of stuffing. They were really beautiful. Have you ever taken them to Mumbai in film industry?

Vivek : I had given those birds to Ashok Kumar. He had called me at home. I went home to meet him with my paintings. He asked me, “Have you done this?” Then he asked me, from where I got these features. He was so impressed that he took those paintings to the studio. He told everyone, “He is not just film actor but also an artist. Rajendra Kumar asked me, “what is the price?” I told him, “sixteen hundred.” He gave me sixteen hundred. I took that money, drank the coffee and came home.

Bapu Watve : Ashok Kumar himself is an artist.

Vivek : Yes, he is an artist. Where I was sitting ...

Bapu Watve : means when you had gone to his house ...

Vivek : He had gone to take bath. So, I was just moving around in the room. Someone was doing landscape of _____. I asked, “who has done this?” He said, “I have done half.” Ashok Kumar came out, asking, “where is he?” He introduced me to that person saying I am his friend and I am good artist. Then he asked me to complete it. When I did a bit of that, he appreciated.

Bapu Watve : He appreciated you. It is quite useful to have an art. And till now, before your accident, you had maintained your body quiet well. Still you were playing badminton. You were roaming around on cycle. I think, after getting mild heart-attack, doctor has asked you to stop riding the cycle. Now, how do spend your time?

Vivek : Reading books, nothing else.

Bapu Watve : Now you don't do any work for leaving, does your wife?

Vivek: My wife makes bags and stitching.

Bapu Watve: Frankly speaking, actor like you who once upon time was very famous, should have been in sound condition. You don't have bad habits neither you are spendthrift.

Vivek: I have not received excess money then from where will I spend?

Bapu Watve: You have worked with so many directors. Amongst those directors, specially whom did you liked to work with?

Vivek: Raja Paranjape.

Bapu Watve: Raja Paranjape or you want to say Raja Thakur?

Vivek: No, Raja Paranjape.

Bapu Watve: Vivek, when you stepped in film industry 40-43 years ago and today's atmosphere of film industry, what difference did you find? Now, the difference I have noticed is correct or not that you tell me. When you were in film industry, that time it was an institute and now it has become of personal. At that time, everyone used to feel that they are working for an institute and it has to be successful. Is it true?

Vivek: Yes, it is true.

Bapu Watve: Now it has become a personal affair.

Vivek: This is because of money. Nothing else.

Bapu Watve: right. What difference did you find?

Vivek: People don't know what role they are playing.

Bapu Watve: People means actors?

Vivek: At our time, first we were explain the scene. Then the writers used to tell us the story. Then the scenes used to get segregated. First scene, second scene ... like that. We used to keep the scenes ready. Directors used to give us the responsibility of

the scene. That is why we were prompt. And because of that we used to complete single song in one shot.

Bapu Watve : Was it at that time like, actors used to give enough of time for the film shooting. Now actors play acts in drama and even in films. So, they are not been able to the required time. Or can we say that actors are getting pampered unnecessarily.

Vivek : It is just their behaviour. They are careless and always in their own words.

Bapu Watve : Do you think, they have intension to harass producers.

Vivek : It is not so but just they do not want to work hard. Previously, they were not having such kind of relation with producer. Even they never bother of money. They used to feel that if they ask for money, they will not get role in next film.

Bapu Watve : Do you think, in comparison with your time, today's actors are earning more than you?

Vivek : Certainly. They are getting lots of money.

Bapu Watve : That means you are not benefitted of such gain. In your time, i.e. in the decade, 1940 or 1950, it was your peak period in Marathi industry then how you were not benefitted with monetary gain? At that peak time and you must be on tour for shooting or for drama, how come you were not worried about your family?

Vivek : My wife is a very nice lady. She never bothered me with domestic problems. I used to be on tours for thirty days or sometimes more. During that period, she had taken care of entire family. I never asked my daughters whether they studied or not. I never had to turn back during my tour.

Bapu Watve : So you are giving that credit to her. And that is the reason you could work peacefully.

Vivek : Certainly.

Bapu Watve : You are always on tour from Pune to Mumbai or Mumbai to Kolhapur and like that, then you must be meeting somewhere.

Vivek : Whenever there is shooting in Pune, at that time she used to meet me.

Bapu Watve : Was it happened that she had met you at the station?

Vivek : Whenever I am traveling for outdoor shooting, I used to inform them that by so and so train I am going to Mumbai or Kolhapur. She used to come to the station with clothes and necessary accessories. I used to take a bath in waiting room, change the clothes, come down and used to leave by catching another train.

Bapu Watve : You were wearing the clothes she had bought and give her the old ones.

Vivek : Yes, even she used to bring all the necessary things in two sets.

Bapu Watve : This is the way you have lead your life. You want to say that you could reach so far because of the support you received from Leela Vahini. Vivek, if you look back to your life, are you satisfied with it?

Vivek : No, I am not.

Bapu Watve : Why not?

Vivek : When I could not get money when required. And now because of my health, I can't do anything.

Bapu Watve : It is grief you are having in your mind.