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Interview of Movie artist Shahu Modak by Bapu Watve

Bapu Watve : Hello Shahurao, Namaste

Shahu Modak : Namaste

Bapu Watve : We are meeting after a very long time.

Shahu Modak : That's true

Bapu Watve : Many days have passed since you quit the film industry.

Shahu Modak : Many years have passed.

Bapu Watve : I want to know you better and also wants to know your views. It will be better if you could answer some of my questions and help us in updating the history of the film industry by giving your valuable knowledge. When you started working in talkie films, did you ever act in any of the dramas or were you having any theatre experience? Have you taken any training for that?

Shahu Modak : No, I had not acted in any of the theatre academies and had not taken any training either. When I was a kid, all of us neighbouring children, used to do drama. It was for children.

Bapu Watve : Your first role was in “Shyamsunder”?

Shahu Modak : Yes, that's right.

Bapu Watve : Was it a coincidence or did you get the opportunity to work in this film, could you elaborate on this?

Shahu Modak : According to routine, it was unexpected but according to astrology, it was expected.

Bapu Watve : Oh, good. But, is it right to take the reverse perspective of astrology?

Shahu Modak : This is the right perspective of astrology.

Bapu Watve : How is that?

Shahu Modak : In my horoscope, Surya Narayan and Chandrama, are in shukrama Rashi. My shukrama is in a high position. Chandrama is in my fate position. Shukra is in a finance position. My role in the mythological film and which will remain in heart of people is in my Kundali (Horoscope). I have acted in commercial films and also in mythological films but my mythological role has given me importance.

Bapu Watve : ok. When “Shyamsunder” was produced, it was your first role in films?

Shahu Modak : Yes, right.

Bapu Watve : That film completed the silver jubilee. That means according to astrology whatever you said was correct. Was this “Shyamsunder” movie directed by Bhalji Pendharkar? There was a Saraswati Cineton studio. You may know it, there is an open place on the road going to Parvati, where I think there was a roofless studio. It was made of tins. And you have worked in that roofless studio.

Shahu Modak : Yes. Yes.

Bapu Watve : Secondly, how was the lighting arrangement. How did give light effects?

Shahu Modak : There were big mirrors.

Bapu Watve : Ok.

Shahu Modak : We used to hold it such a way that the sun's rays would fall on it and we used to capture the reflection.

Bapu Watve : How can you do from the top?

Shahu Modak : Not from the top, but when you put sun's rays on the light and that rays we used to put it on the mirror. It used to refill the lights. When the sun used to come down, we used to get its' light.

(here 2/3 sentences are not clear)

Bapu Watve : Ok. But that film completed the silver jubilee. How did you enter this field? Was it a co-incidence or how did you enter?

Shahu Modak : There are two things, which are opposite to each other. This all happened unexpectedly. It was not in my mind at all that I will enter into the film industry. My family had an advocacy profession. So, everyone wanted me to become an Advocate and study well. These were my parent's expectations. From my side, ICS was important. At that time, I had a dream of becoming an ICS officer.

Bapu Watve: In early, 30', at that time?

Shahu Modak : This was my background. It is in my horoscope. Without any intuition, Nanasaheb Sarpotdar had come to our Nagar village to shoot for the film on the life of Chandbibi. It was a silent movie. Nanasaheb Potdar had a famous drama company. It was a silent movie. He was knowing my father very well. There is a theatre right in front of my house. He was boarding there. He had come to meet my father. I have mentioned earlier about Datare, he first chose me. At that time, I must be ten years old. He said that this boy is good for our role. I matched their

requirement of a pure brahmin. (one sentence not audible). Afterwards, he had told Nanasaheb Sarpotdar about me. Then he started coming home. I used to do draw pictures. He gave me a drawing book. Then he went back. After a few days, they had clashed and the company closed down. Coincidentally, at same place, Aryan had started.

Bapu Watve : Aryan Film Company.

Shahu Modak : Yes, Aryan Film Company. Dadasaheb Torne, Baburao Pai were producers in partnership and Bhaljibaba was to do the direction. Shantabai Apte had starred in this movie. Do you know that she was a famous singer? But then who will play Krishnas' role? If he would have searched, then he would have found someone. But Bhalji was very worried. At the same time, Nanasaheb and Datare happened to meet each other. Datare told him that there is a boy from Nagar who was fit for this role. But I doubt whether his family will allow him to act in the cinema. One day, I came home from school in recess. We always had three or four visitors for my father. That day, there were two to three guests at home. When I came home in recess, they were observing me. I could not make out why they were looking at me. I felt awkward. We all finished our food and I was leaving for school. One of them said, "My child, please wait." I stopped. Then we all went outside. Bhalji asked me, "Will you sing a song for us?". I said, "Yes." I sang "Tarulata Pahata" this song of Marathi drama. To sing this song, one requires a practised voice. When I finished, they were so happy that they started demanding to sing one more.

Bapu Watve : How could you sing at the eleventh hour.

Shahu Modak : I was not knowing anything about film or drama. They asked me to sing and I just sang the song. Then they asked me whether I would like to act in a movie? I immediately said yes. I did not say, “will think”. They all laughed. Then I left for school. There was a big storm of discussion in the house. All we're saying that in our house no one has acted in film and you won't act in films. You will spoil your life. At that time, I was in 5th std. My mother had passed away when I was a child. I was looked after by my granny and my aunt. All of them did not want me to go into the film industry. I did not think much about what to do. But after some days, we received a letter, asking for a favourable reply. At last, Bhalji came home again. He told my father that he should not worry about my education. He was ready to appoint a special tutor for my education. And he kept his word. Which was the month? July. It was the year, 1931. I went there for the shooting, that time nobody knew what the future will be. Before that Raja Harishchandra Movie was released and ...

Bapu Watve : Yes, I know, I know.

Shahu Modak : **This person** released this “Shamsunder” film and on the first day, it was a great hit. And on the first day, I got fame. It was unexpected. Some people from our Nagar area had seen this movie in Pune and the news spread everywhere, “Modakancha Mulga”, “Modakancha Mulga”. I went to school, forgetting everything.

Bapu Watve : You had taken care of both things. Your education and also acting.

Shahu Modak : Yes. I took care of it. This was unexpected. Personally, it was not my wish to go to cinema. But how this happened, because it was in my horoscope.

Bapu Watve : Secondly, I think you had acted in “Aaut Ghatkecha Raja”.

Shahu Modak : Yes. I did.

Bapu Watve : I think it was a double role.

Shahu Modak : What happened was, we had gone to Kolhapur for the outdoor shooting of Shamsunder movie. It was the shooting of “Shobhayatra”. They were shooting for “Bhakt Pralhad”. They offered me to act in the film. I gave it a thought and acted in that film. (one sentence not audible)

Bapu Watve : yes, I know, it is of Mark Twain

Shahu Modak : Yes, I acted in that.

Bapu Watve : Who was the director?

Shahu Modak : Master Vitthal. But even other people used to be there like Dada Kondke.

Bapu Watve : who had taken trick scenes?

Shahu Modak : There was no trick scene. There was a direct shooting. Rangnekar was there. Three to four more people were also there. Even Sarpotdar was there.

Bapu Watve : I think that it was made by four to five directors.

Shahu Modak : Secondly, there are songs in that movie. “Hin Koni Din Koni, Bhed Asaha” or “He Doghe Bhagyashali”.

Bapu Watve : That means you liked the songs and so accepted the film.

Shahu Modak : There were eight songs.

Bapu Watve : How many? Eight songs? There were Hindi songs also?

Shahu Modak : Hindi songs were like Gazals.

Bapu Watve : It was of Pragati products, right?

Shahu Modak : “Hech Udaye Bhagya Sathi, Baki Sare Majasi Bhave...” (singing)

Bapu Watve : Had it become famous?

Shahu Modak : it was very popular at that time. Very much.

Bapu Watve : When you entered this field, you were not familiar with it.

Shahu Modak : Not at all.

Bapu Watve : Then what was your first reaction. Were you bored of it? Or did you find it troublesome?

Shahu Modak : No, Not at all. I never felt bored of it. I had a hidden quality that whatever task I am given, used to do it wholeheartedly. When rehearsals started, they also felt that even though I am a new actor, I am honest and faithful. I used to give three to four takes but was never tired of it. What else could they have wanted? I was fit and disciplined. That is why they increased my scenes of the film. All the scenes were increased. But they never regretted it.

Bapu Watve : What is that song, “Bhavi Hota Mani Vase”

Shahu Modak : Yes, Bhavi Hota Mani Vase”

Bapu Watve : Even I remember another song, “Hin Bhava Mani Nasava”

Shahu Modak : Yes, I was the actor who can sing.

Bapu Watve : I think you have not done any silent movies.

Shahu Modak : No, I came into the industry afterwards.

Bapu Watve : What you think about the working style of your time and present time? How the directors used to demonstrate or I think the acting was extroverted at that time. Don't you feel so?

Shahu Modak : Rehearsals were taken in the same manner as they were taken in the Maharashtra Film company. At that time, they used to correct the mistakes. There

was an actor who was a great singer also. He used to explain things to me. I used to say yes to whatever he said. He worked on my singing.

Bapu Watve : This was a Maharashtrian system. Don't you think, this Maharashtrian system was extrovert?

Shahu Modak : No, there are two styles of working.

Bapu Watve : The system was, first your acting used to reach to the audience and after that, because of the audience your role was got eligibility. This was a development. Like so your acting improved?

Shahu Modak : I did not understand your question.

Bapu Watve : We can see subtle distinctions in recent films or the films which were directed by Vinayakrao, this subtlety was not there in previous films before 1936.

Shahu Modak : It was very much there. Certainly, it was there.

Bapu Watve : was it there? Then in which films?

Shahu Modak : It was in (name not audible) and my Ayodhecha Raja film. The scene is subtle. There Radha has given very nice subtlety. (singing.....) . The story was like this. This song becomes Hindi in future. It was a song, "Thamba ho Laxmi". When I was singing that song, (name inaudible) came, so we name him _____. The funny thing is that in 1942 Saigal saheb met me in Mumbai. He had come for some shooting. He was looking at me with a smile on his face. So, I approached him. I said, "I have listened to many of your songs.". He said, "Are, tumhara gana abhibhi muze yad hai (I still remember your song). I asked him, "Which song do you remember?". And he sang that song. (laughing). Few sentences not audible as all are talking together.

Bapu Watve : You must be proud of yourself. Saigal must have sung from the film “Bhavrah” or may be “Shahajaan”.

Shahu Modak : yes, yes. Shahajaan.

Bapu Watve : That means, from your opinion, there was subtlety.

Shahu Modak : Certainly, it was there. Bhalji liked the information and even we gave motivation.

Bapu Watve : Let me ask you this out of curiosity, what was the basic difference between the style of Shantaram Bapu’s acting and teaching and the style of Vinayak Rao’s acting and teaching.

Shahu Modak : The main technique was the same for both. Vinayakrao’s had given more importance to sensitive films and Shantaram Bapu had presented the sensitive films differently. There was the same sensitivity but the presentation was different. There was not much difference in the techniques of the films. Some social films and motivational films were presented differently and some historical films were handled differently. The main technique was the same.

Bapu Watve : Secondly, your colleagues if remained in one place, started feeling bad about others progress.

Shahu Modak : No, we were one family. Technical staff, workers, all were like one family. There was no difference. All actors and others used to sit together. When I left the company to go to Mumbai, I felt very bad. I could not see my colleagues in Shyamsunder film. When I went to Mumbai, first I acted in Awara Shahzada. I was not knowing my world was going to change.

Bapu Watve : In Nand Ke Lala, you had acted with Zubeida , who was the director?

Shahu Modak : Director was Nanubhai Desai.

Bapu Watve : You had worked in Pune and also in Mumbai. Did you find any difference?

Shahu Modak : Let me tell you first about Pune. First, I acted in Shyamsunder and then another company from Pune like Chandorkar came and then Alurkar came. That time I felt, the more I will learn, it will change my world. At a very young age, I realised this big truth of life.

Bapu Watve : That means, you have realized very early.

Shahu Modak : Not only in the film industry but how to talk and how to live in this world, I realized it at an early age.

Bapu Watve : Would your directors demonstrate the role? Even Bhalji himself?

Shahu Modak : In Maharashtra, it was a practice to do so.

Interviewer : Would the Directors tell you how they want the role? Was it a demonstrative direction?

Shahu Modak : There was an impact of theatre, so there was a rehearsal system. Then slowly it was reduced.

Bapu Watve : I think Javdekar was also with you.

Shahu Modak : yes.

Bapu Watve : He and I were acquainted. He had called me home. He wanted to do shooting on Suryanarayan.

Shahu Modak : We were good friends. He too had acted very well. A good gentleman.

Bapu Watve : Secondly, I feel, at that time, Marathi talkie film or you can say any talkie film was considered secondary.

Shahu Modak : I did not understand.

Bapu Watve : I mean to say, they were considered of no value.

Shahu Modak : No, it is not like that. It depended on how the stories were written. The story for Shyamsunder was written first and then it became a literary classic. He was not against films, but it never so happened that the stories were written with films in mind.

Bapu Watve : What I feel that it was a period of creating an audience?

Shahu Modak : The important point is that after all cinema is a business. Literature and arts come later. Considering this, the film should be liked by the audience, the story was chosen. Still, Maharashtra is an idealist.

Bapu Watve : Was it so, if any producer wants to produce a talkie film, he had to consider “L” shape on the map of Pune, namely Sadashiv, Deccan Gymkhana and Kasaba.

Shahu Modak : Yes, that is right.

Bapu Watve : He has to do some compromises as he has invested too much.

Shahu : it was a real situation. Right now, the condition of the Marathi cinema is really bad.

Bapu Watve : it is very bad. I doubt if it will continue. Secondly, your recent memories and childhood memories about how the technician used to light up the set.

Shahu Modak : That was done at Shanivar Vada.

Bapu Watve : Had any electricians come?

Shahu Modak : It was Arbaraz. He used to give lighting effects to all the films.

Bapu Watve : I remember, he used to handle (camera name not clear)?

Shahu Modak : Yes, he used the handle (camera name not clear). It was a period of a silent movies. (camera name not clear) the camera was left behind and then came the period of still photography.

Bapu Watve : But was Hand Camera useful for talkie movies?

Shahu Modak : I will tell you, for “Aut Ghatkecha Raja”, the shooting was done by hand camera. They shot as many repeat scenes as possible.

Bapu Watve : What was the difference?

Shahu Modak : I didn't feel much.

Bapu Watve : I would now like to ask you if it was necessary that twenty-four pictures have to go in one second. Were they shot by hand camera?

Shahu Modak : Yes, they were.

Bapu Watve : In one second?

Shahu Modak : For some times. Initially, we had to tell them to stop.

Bapu Watve : Was there someone named Annasaheb Ghume as the photographer?

Shahu Modak : Yes.

Bapu Watve : I know, let it be big or small, just hit one grand and you get lots many photographs. I know it should have a difference of nineteen and half a second's soundtrack. Was it possible?

Shahu Modak : No, not with a hand camera.

Bapu Watve : Ok. How did Drama get separated from Cinema?

Shahu Modak : Both the mediums are different. Till 1935-36, drama had a great impact on cinema.

Bapu Watve : Should I tell you something?

Shahu Modak : Yes?

Bapu Watve : Both the department directors were hoping that they will be different from each other.

Shahu Modak : I don't know that. When Baburao was there, Bhalji Munde was producing the film, at that time there was an impact of drama. But the technique of the film was different and the drama technique was different. They were acting as per the instructions. There were no schools for teaching acting.

Bapu Watve : This is your system of acting. I want to ask you; every medium has a language. What was the language of this medium? Was it created at that time? Camera too has a language. It is quite different.

Shahu Modak : The main language of the camera lies with the director. Whatever the director speak through the lenses of the camera is its' language.

Bapu Watve : It shows in taking the shots.

Shahu Modak : In Shyamsunder, they wanted to take a shot. There was no trolley. Where would they keep the camera? You can't keep it down as it was creating pits. They spend three days discussing how to take the shot. Then they made wooden strips and put the camera on them. For one shot they had to do so many things. In 1939, shooting skills have developed so much.

Bapu Watve : Now let me ask you, if I consider the period from Shyamsunder to Manus, then in Manus film, lots of technical changes must have taken place.

Shahu Modak : Yes. Many technical changes had taken place.

Bapu Watve : In Manus film, it was sure that Shantarambapu had recognised the language of the camera. This was confirmed by everyone.

Shahu Modak : Yes. Right.

Bapu Watve : When Shantarambapu used to capture anything, his speciality of camera technique was so great that even lifeless things used to come alive. In 1955, ...

Shahu Modak : It was his style of direction. One thing I must tell that he used to put that role in one's mind. Take an example, plumber, chingi etc. These roles were popular. He used to explain the roles in such a way that we used to get a clear idea of the character which we are going to play.

Bapu Watve : I would like to ask you when she leaves you and you go in search of her. (two-three lines of conversation are not audible as the interviewer and Shahu Modak are talking at the same time. It is a description of the movie.) There is police band music in the background. The music tries to remind him of his police duties. But he has chosen to be a Manooos, rather than a person in uniform.

Shahu Modak : He has shown the wonderful character of human beings in this film.

Bapu Watve : Were you happy to perform that?

Shahu Modak : Yes. I was very happy. And when it reached a silver jubilee, I was happier than ever.

Bapu Watve : In Manooos film, they had exposed you a lot. This is what I think.

Shahu Modak : A lot but that film was really good. He used to take only one shot and never took retake of the shot.

Bapu Watve : After that, you played the role of Dnyaneshwar.

Shahu Modak : Yes. You are right.

Bapu Watve : one shoot was going on at Prabhat of Shantaram and another at Fatellal or Damle. According to me

Shahu Modak : My exact role of Dnyaneshwar in that film was very different. That role had a slow and soothing effect. I would have gotten confused and my Krishna conversation would have entered into that role when this role was of quiet personality.

Bapu Watve : I have seen your film Dnyaneshwar and your role in that film. I have even seen Manoos and your role in that film. Is there any difference in the roles?

Shahu Modak : Certainly. There is a vast difference.

Bapu Watve : Is it like, you have forgotten to act in Dnyaneshwar and in Manoos you acted a lot. Is it so?

Shahu Modak : In Manoos, the scenes were like that. As there is excitement, there is a message to the society as it is a social reformist film. But here it is the role of Saint of a quiet person. There is no message in the Saint Dnyaneshwar film.

Bapu Watve : See, we have seen his discourse. At a certain level, he is grown up, giving lectures. He is getting followers. In the future, when society boycotts him, those followers leave him.

Shahu Modak : That is an extraordinary story. You should admire the art of make-up man. When I put on the make-up I used to enter into that role.

Bapu Watve : That means, you used to completely forget yourself?

Shahu Modak : He used to do the make-up in such a way that when I used to put a step on stage, people would feel it was real.

Bapu Watve : That means it's a make-up man's job. The people were overwhelmed by your make-up.

Shahu Modak : (laughing) In the end, they were looking for Dnyaneshwar, not me.

Bapu Watve : I heard, at that time, in the studio, the ambience was such that people who were working there, got overwhelmed.

Shahu Modak : Yes. I, myself have experienced this.

Bapu Watve : Keshvrao has given a good tune to the songs.

Shahu Modak : Yes. He has given a good tune.

Bapu Watve : moving on, which are the next important film you have done?

Shahu Modak : After that, I had done many talkie films. Some were hit and some were not. Bharat Milap was one of the challenges for me. It was from the Prabhat film company and there were many great artists. Light effects, sound, everything was of Prabhat.

That was the system of Prabhat. I had completely devoted myself to the Prabhat company. It gave a boost to my film journey in the film industry. I had many films after that.

Bapu Watve : You have done many films after that.

Shahu Modak : I left Prabhat Films but this film was my first commercial film. I acted very well so I got a big audience. The writer of this film was Aundhkar,

Bapu Watve : yes, Vishnupant Aundkar.

Shahu Modak : I got well acquainted with Aundkar.

Bapu Watve : Yes, that man was a real gentleman.

Shahu Modak : We discussed rehearsal. He was very happy with me. Our acquaintance grew.

Bapu Watve : After that, after leaving Prabhat, I think you had acted in Vasant Sena

Shahu Modak : Yes but first I acted in three-four films. First Apana Paraya, then Sahakari and then in Vasantsena. After Vasant sena...

Bapu Watve : In Vasantsena, can you judge the merits and demerits of the film?

Shahu Modak : I had not given thought to demerits. This is a very different subject. Sometimes, it does not work. It is sheer luck. There are many films and when I saw the preview of those films, was very scared of the demerits. What will happen of the demerits?

Bapu Watve : It was bad luck that Vasant Sena could not be successful.

Shahu Modak : There are many films like that.

Bapu Watve : How did you find the acting of Chintamanrao?

Shahu Modak : Very nice. He acted well. Everyone in the film had acted well. The story was good. Music of that film was excellent.

Bapu Watve : Prabhudesai was the art director.

Shahu Modak : This film was all over the newspaper. The first week was houseful for all the theatres. After first week, theatres were empty. There were no bookings after that.

Bapu Watve : That means, the director had suffered a heavy loss. Secondly, I want to ask that the co-actors who were with you in the film, how was their co-operation?

Shahu Modak : They were all good. Everyone was doing their job and also helping out each other.

Bapu Watve : Did the actors behave impolitely to each other?

Shahu Modak : No, there was no such behaviour at that time. It came later.

(Two three conversation is mixed so not audible)

Bapu Watve : The Indian film industry's contribution to the whole world' horizon or you can say to canvas, we can say, was certainly of good standard?

Shahu Modak : it cannot be said for sure, for all films. There were some good standard films.

Bapu Watve : Yes, some of them were of a good standard.

Shahu Modak : Certainly of good quality.

Bapu Watve : How did you find the style of teaching acting or pattern of teaching in the school of acting?

Shahu Modak : I feel that there cannot be a school for acting. Acting cannot be taught. There are Gharanas for singing. Singing and acting are separate things. If you are in Cinema and you have to do the role of Shivaji Maharaj, then what will they teach him? You cannot teach him how to express himself, how to present himself and also to be technically correct but that is something that the person has to decide for himself.

Bapu Watve : I feel that there is a difference between Bengali actor doing film and Marathi film actor.

Shahu Modak : No, the nature of both films are different.

Bapu Watve : yes, their films are different.

Shahu Modak : Behngali films were different. The writer is a poet and also a singer at the same time. So automatically, the feelings come in that role. That is why their acting was spontaneous. Even their calculation for keeping the pace or rhythm in songs were different than that of Marathi songs.

Bapu Watve : Secondly, this is my experience that looking at the history, I feel that their films are based on their famous novels.

Shahu Modak : Yes, that is right.

Bapu Watve : This is not with our films. You must have noticed this difference.

Shahu Modak : Yes, certainly.

Bapu Watve : Sharadchanda Chatterjee has written all Bengali novels.

Shahu Modak : Yes, all most for all films.

Bapu Watve : And the success lies in that. Vinayakrao has given good attempts.

Shahu Modak : After Vinayakrao, I met Raosaheb

Bapu Watve : then Vinayak Rao Khandekar

Shahu Modak : Similarly, Shantaram Mohile.

Bapu Watve : Vinayakrao started moving towards methods and he ended with that.

Shahu Modak : I don't think. We can't say, what leads you to the end. These things are altogether different.

Bapu Watve : Ok. Secondly, Darekar, Bose, Shantaram, NRN Kale, Bhalji Pendharkar, Samarth, Vinayak, Junnarkar, Dhirubhai Desai etc., amongst these directors did you find any difference with all of them?

Shahu Modak : There is lots of difference. There is nothing common with them. Dhirubhai Desai means padre fallen in the Christian religion. (two to three words not audible). But the best person to learn with. He used to take a risk. Kale did whatever he has decided. He never thought that because of film, your life changes. Direct message. He produced good movies. The scenes were also good. About Junnarker, he was good by nature. He was good at film techniques. (two to three lines not audible)

Bapu Watve : Now I would like to ask you that it was your nature that you used to fully devote yourself to acting. It is quite rare and difficult to find such a thing in an actor. Was this temperament with you from childhood?

Shahu Modak : To act is something that I have been taught since I was a child. Spirituality and Mysticism, I have studied these things from childhood.

Bapu Watve : Which year was it?

Shahu Modak : Right from the age of 9 years I had a liking for this.

Bapu Watve : In 1932, you were in Pune and nowhere. Did you like Pune and also this place?

Shahu Modak : A few years back, Prabhat completed 50 years. I was on my way to go there. While going there, at Dagadi Pool, I was confused about that is it the same Pune? It has changed so much. I could not make out where I am. When I saw Jayakar's bungalow I came to know where I am.

Bapu Watve : Previously, Tilak Road and the surrounding place was full of greenery.

Shahu Modak : I was having a bungalow at Deccan. I could not make out where was it?

Bapu Watve : Now, we have seen many Hindi and Marathi films. Now I see Hindi movies and I feel there is more technical perfection in Hindi movies. The other day, I happened to see the Marathi film "Adla Hari", but they have spoiled logic, consistency, technicality. but still, it was houseful. I didn't understand what was the reason.

Shahu Modak : This is a different question.

Bapu Watve : I feel that some films go successful is sheer luck. Commercial success is not depending upon the film.

Shahu Modak : certainly. Sometimes, I see songs on the Chhayageet TV program. How meaningless these songs are and the way they dance? I just feel like asking people, why are you singing and dancing like this?

Bapu Watve : Now, the film industry has transformed into heavy industrialisation. The Cine industry has taken up speed. At this juncture, people are thinking on it is a good sign. What I say that there were films before the war and also films after the war.

Shahu Modak : Yes.

Bapu Watve : Why this difference occur? Because of heavy industrialization. When heavy industrialization takes place, it hammers the human culture. That is the side effect of industrialization. That is the reason why the film industry has come to this level.

Shahu Modak : When people are watching the film that time he sees the film with a free mind. They just watch. If you see properly, what do they feel?

Bapu Watve : No, they are not confused.

Shahu Modak : No, what you are saying about the industrialization effect, is today's condition. While watching actors acting in the movie, they are free. When a movie is going, they talk, eat, do anything they want. Then there are films lacking?

Bapu Watve : I will tell you, the concept of relaxation has changed. This is my opinion.

Shahu Modak : The audience has changed this concept.

Bapu Watve : 10-12 years back, at my college gathering, especially to show some standard, we had presented a scene from “Manoos”. Students created a nuisance by saying, “what rubbish you are showing”. Somehow, we managed to wind up and then decided that we will never show like this again. This is how happened that the ethical values which are changed are not superficial but it is rooted inside their minds.

Shahu Modak : Yes. Even it has given an impact on their social life. I never found this kind of effect on people before. I was at Kolhapur, Pune and Mumbai but I had never found it anywhere.

Bapu Watve : This effect was more on the people of age 30 to 35.

Shahu Modak : What you are saying about Manoos, it was a love story. In that story, they have shown love which people would like to watch. Then what more they wanted that created nuisance? Those students must be mischievous.

Bapu Watve : They were not mischievous but they wanted colourful, lively scenes.

Shahu Modak : Do you remember “Saigal?”. You should have shown his films.

Bapu Watve : I showed them one silent movie. The person who was sitting next to me asked me, “what are you showing? We have not even heard the name of it.” I don’t think he must have understood acting. They will not understand the undertone.

Shahu Modak : I don’t know much about undertone but that type of acting was famous in the industry.

Bapu Watve : The effect of industrialization because of wartime situation, had automatically effected on youngsters.

Shahu Modak : That is right.

Bapu Watve : That has changed world culture.

Shahu Modak : Yes, you are right.

Bapu Watve : Now I thank you for showing interest in giving me all the required information. From our point of view, it is necessary to preserve this historical information in Achieve. I am grateful that you have taken lots of effort for us and given all information.

Shahu Modak : I am happy that you have taken my interview. This is not my complete interview as you do not know about my other side.

Bapu Watve : Why are you saying this?

Shahu Modak : Because that is the outer character of mine. As an artist, my inner side is different. That is not reflected in my interview. That I will tell you now.

Bapu Watve : How can it be different? Should I tell you the truth, when you are saying the inner side, it is subjective.

Shahu Modak : Take an example, the role of Sita.

Bapu Watve : That was a role in the drama.

Shahu Modak : Yes, role of Sita. In the end, she tells Shriram. I had acted in that drama. In the end when I spoke for five minutes on the stage, people were looking at me, without uttering a single word. It was role of Shriram which explained what is the character of Ram. Then came Bhishma who had taken pledge. There was complete silence. Not a single word. People didn't feel that it is a film and not real scene.

Bapu Watve : If the time comes, you can give hit films.

Shahu Modak : Now, I want to say that, to take a review of everything, I am giving you the following information. I had acted as Krishna in Shyam Sunder movies of Bhaleja. The famous song of that movie is *HIN BHAVA MANI NAANA SWABHIMANA KADHI NA TYAGA* (हीन भाव मनी न आणा, स्वाभिमाना कधी न त्यागा). This had become very popular. People liked it very much. I had decided to remain permanently in this field. I did not know but somehow, I received calls from many different film companies. I especially received a call from the Imperial film company of Mumbai. They had called me to play the role of *Krishan* in the film *Nand Ke Lala*. That means my name was well known outside of Pune. I started getting roles outside of Pune and I got fame along with money. As I was at such a juncture of age that neither was I a kid, nor was I old, I had a hard time getting roles. Finally, I got work in the film “Honhar” of Kolhapur Film Company. It was the role of a young lad. Then I got a role in the film “Aryaveda”. Gajanan Jahgirdar was the director of this film and the complication was done by Pandit Anant Pawar. In between a few days passed, I was not getting any roles. Maybe I had stopped getting the roles but I would like to say I learnt something in that period. I got attracted to astrology. I learnt Astrology. There was a Director, K. Narayan Kale at Prabhat Film Company. After producing the film “Kunku”, Prabhat Film Company got great success. Because of this film, the name of Prabhat Film Company spread not only in Maharashtra but also outside of Maharashtra. So, V. Shantaram had decided to produce a talkie film and accordingly, he gave the responsibility of the direction of that film to Shri K. Narayan Kale. K. Narayan Kale was a very intelligent and experienced person. He was very knowledgeable and also well versed in literature. When I got a chance to work under his direction, my

opinion about him was different. A film “Maza Mulga” was produced based on his novel “Padsad”. When this film was produced, I was offered the role of the main hero. It was the role of an idealist hero. Funny thing was that the lady who was going to act with me as a heroine was two to three years elder than me. My age was 20 years and hers’ was 22 years. That film did not give me much monetary gain but working under Mr. Kale had given me a great experience and had added to my knowledge. Because of working under his direction and his training, I had gained great confidence in the film industry. I even got a new approach to cinema technology. The main thing about this film was that I got to sing excellent lyrics. Before that, there were not many lyrics in the films or you can say there weren’t any. In this film, there were good lyrics. These lyrics were written by a famous lyricist, Shantaram Athavale. These lyrics written by Shantaram Athavale had become very famous. They were a big hit. Do you know who had composed these lyrics? by Keshavrao Bhole. Because Keshavrao Bhole had given _____ to these lyrics and verse compositions of Shantaram Athavale, I can say 100% it was the utmost sugar-coated combination for those lyrics. “*Usalat tej bhare gaganat*”, or “*Jevhna tuzya Mohini ne bharle mi*” these were lyrics. Even I remember my song, “*ek, don, tin, char*” when I was going on the war in the movie at that time Keshavrao Bhole had given good _____ to this song. This cinema was a great success of this cinema. When K. Narayan Kale had produced such a good movie, then Shantaram Bapu decided to produce the film “*Manus*”. It was a story of the life of an ordinary police constable, how he breaks the social barricades and had taken a progressive step towards uplifting the lives of ordinary people of the society. V. Shantaram had set a complete road in the vicinity

of the studio. That road was the main spot in that film as all important events of the film take place there. Because of the events of this film my knowledge increased. Even my vision broadened. Shantarabapu's director was excellent. He used to explain, show how to act and also used to take the retake. This way Shantarambapu had exposed 1,86,000' film and after cutting the best part out of that he chose 13,000' long film and created a film "Manus". The notable thing that Shantarambapu was continuously editing this film 12/12 hours, forgetting everything else. By sitting at the studio, he had done excellent direction of this film. Then it was sent to the censor board. When it was released, the audience welcomed it with great enthusiasm. I still remember, on the first show of this film, Shantarambapu was sitting in Prabhat Talkies. Even we all were sitting there in talkies. After watching that incomparable film, Keshavrao Date who was sitting there got up and gave a big hug to Shantarambapu. He said that you have produced an incomparable, excellent film.

After that, I acted in many other films, in Mumbai also. Even I checked with the films for a social cause. But what I gained knowledge in Prabhat Film Company and Kolhapur Cine tone; I did not get anywhere else. After that, I worked with mythological films. I can not give you the list of those films as we don't have that much time. There was a director named Kumarsen Samarth. I had done a big main role in his film "Shobha" with great actress Shobhana Samarth. Many people liked my acting. We both look good as a couple. But according to me, Kumarsen Samarth was a technical person more than a director. He had acquired technical knowledge from Germany, also he was an excellent photographer. After acting in Shobha Film of Kumarsen Samarth, by my good luck or you can say good faith, I got a role in

“Pahili Mangalagaur” of Navyug company. I was invited by them to do the main hero role in that film. I was very happy since it was the main role. The main thing was Master Vinayak was going to direct this film. His direction was so superb that though I was not of farcical actor kind I could do the role of “Hirwai” very easily. The shooting had started. As soon as he used to come on set, he used to show me how to act. He used to explain the event and show everyone where to stand, how to act. He was known for his capturing the scene and also for his great direction. It was bad luck that 1/3rd cinema completed and the owner of the company and Vinayakrao conflict escalate. Vinayakrao left the cinema on a half completion. Though he left the cinema on the half completion his assistant, Junnarker who was a very good technical person, completed this film. Because of this film, I got the advantage of learning with two directors; one was Junnarkar and the second was Master Vinayakrao. Junnerkar was also very good at taking the scenes. He was well versed with cinema technology. Still, I think he was able to match Master Vinayak. There were lots of problems with the Cinema. He had completed the film with his excellent direction. He completed the film with his excellent direction. I had again worked under Junnerker in his Hindi film “Ladhai ke Bad”. After completing this film, I was invited by Acharya Atre to act in his film “Vasant Sena”. I got the opportunity to play the main role of hero “Charudutta” of this film whose screenplay was written by Acharya Atre, directed by Gajanan Jahangir and was having huge sets. I don’t know how but the heroines who acted with me were always two to three years elder than me. I was Charudutta in this film and the heroine “Vanamala”, who had played the role of Vasantsena, was seven to eight years elder to me. I got the opportunity to work

under Jahagirdar but unfortunately, this talkie film took a year and a half to complete. Many problems arose. The war had started so it was difficult to get the things in time. Even we were not getting theatres and also studios. The monetary problem arose. Acharya Atre found himself in financial crises. He completed this film but it was not successful and also not of grade. I remember, Acharya Atre had given songs to this movie very easily. He was such a great poet. Whatever the reason may it was not proper casting or maybe some other reason, this “Vasantsena” film was completely unsuccessful. I came out of that movie and I was just doing some other roles. Many things happened. After that, I got a role in the “Bharat-Bhet” film. I got good roles in all mythological films. In this famous Bharat-Bhet film, I got the role of Bharat and also got to work under Vijaybhai Bhatt. According to me, I had performed the role of Bharat very well in this film. I would honestly say, the way I like my role in Manus, even in Maza Mulga, similarly I liked my role in this film. Especially, I liked the scene, when Ram and Bharat meet each other, very much. Secondly, the film “Ramayan” which was having huge sets, however old it becomes, feel like to see again and again. The film industry found the fair and good-looking hero for mythological films in me. I was doing roles one after another. During wartime, many films were released. There were lots of restrictions. Some films were successful but some were unsuccessful. After some time, I worked in the talkie film Dhirubhai Desai. He had given me many roles in his talkie films. He had produced many mythological films, even some films were on the life of Sants and some were imaginary. I got two to three roles in those films. I will tell you, Dhirubhai had a great hold on cinemographs. He had a solid hold on it. He used to take perfect trick scenes.

Days were passing by me doing roles with Dhirubhai and others and again I got a call from Prabhat film studio. I played the role of the main hero in Seedha Rastaa under the direction of Vasant Painter. I had left Prabhat Film in the year 1939. Nearly, after eight years, again I entered Prabhat film studio. Vasant Painter has taken good performance out of me and I liked that work of mine. Even I had started doing similar roles in other films. As I came to know for my mythological roles, I started getting similar roles. Then I remember, around 1949, my role of Krishna in Maya Bazar was a big hit. I liked that my role of Krishna and even the audience also liked that role. I got engrossed in that role. Before this, Baljee Pendharkar alias Baba had produced a Hindi film named "Maharathi Karna". In that Hindi film I had played the role of Krishna and Prithiraj had played the role of Karna. This talkie movie with a huge set was a big hit and also my role in that film. Prithiviraj Babu had played the role of Karna very nicely. Bandopant Sohoni had played the role of Vishwamitra and the third role of Kunti was played by Durga Khote. After getting these big roles, my self-confidence grew. But I was stamped as a Krishna. If anyone wanted the role of Krishna to be played, they used to come searching for me. Again, it started. The film Subhadra was produced by Datta Dharmadhikari. He called me. That was also an excellent movie. I became synonymous with the role of Krishna. Krishna means me and me means Krishna was summery. This synonymity started in 1932 and continued up till today. What happened after that, whoever Directors I got, amongst them, Bhalchandra was good. Even Gajanan Jahagirdar was good. Master Vinayak, Kumarsen Samarth even Datta Dharmadhikari, after that Junnarkar, these all directors had given me important co-operation in this field. After that, M. G

Rangnekar. See the co-incident. M. G. Rangnekar had started an organization named “Natya Niketan”. In that academy, in the Marathi drama, written by Mama Varerkar “Bhumikanya Sita”, Rangnekar had given me the role of Ram. This way, I first stepped on stage and entered the theatre. But I would say, it was not much successful. After that, I acted in some more films but my inclination was towards spirituality. I studied the complete principles of Swami Vivekanand and I wonder around the world. I went to America and also some more countries. In between I was acting in the films but acting in the film was secondary. I worked in the films and gathered experience. Even I studied Astrology quite a lot and I concluded that It has a meaning. Our Indian people have set up mathematical science. You despise but it is extraordinary. I had asked Ghate Shastri about Shantaram Bapu’s future. Ghate Shastri had told me his future. I had told the future of many people and it turned out true. I had devoted nearly twelve hours of the day to this shastra. I used to study many Patrika, even used to meet many people for this. This way I turn towards astrology. Not even astrology but also towards spirituality. I studied a lot on this. I studied the principles of Vivekanand. I studied Mantras and also was getting attracted to meditation. I went around the Hindustan giving lectures on principles of Vivekanand. Even I had given a lecture at many places, even 5-6 years ago, on the ground behind Garware High School, Pune. I would like to mention that I got a great response. In 1947, I had given a lecture on principles of Vivekanand at Ferguson College ground. Students gave me a big response. My lecture was in English so all the people from all the caste and creeds of society liked it very much. In the end, I would like to say I am very successful, happy and satisfied with my life. This is what I feel

from the bottom of my heart. I would like to express my feelings in this interview which you are taking for the archive that I am content with my life. The film industry is a very powerful medium. It should not be the medium for youngsters to earn. If you use this medium properly and through it, if you give the right messages to society then society's angle of looking at the cinema field as trivial, will change. The camera should reach deep down. They should bring out their problems in front of society through the camera. They should give teachings through cinema. Then cinema can churn the social atmosphere very easily. I had seen "Tara" talkie film on TV. I don't think anyone had put forth dissecting truth as they had shown of Sati. Again, I would like to mention that I was happy working in talkie films, also in mythological films, acted in historical films, worked in social cinema. What I experienced while acting as Krishna, even while playing the role of Dnyaneshwar; was different. Now, I don't have anything left to say. I am just hoping that something good should happen to me. I feel from the bottom of my heart to do something for society. I am still wanted to say that one can do a lot by staying in this field. If I get the chance I will do it but I will never give up the study of astrology, the study of Patrika, and also the road to spirituality. I don't mind if I have to around India. I will keep giving lectures on Vivekanand. I will make awareness of Indian cultural integration. I am grateful to you for taking my interview. I, Shahu Modak, now take your leave. From the bottom of my heart, I am truly grateful to you. If we will meet in future and if I have to tell you something more then we will have one more interview. I am even grateful for giving me extra knowledge which I was not aware of. By saying this I take your leave.