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Interview of Shivananda Veerana & T.S. Karibasaiah by Randor Guy

00.00.00

This is Randor guy interviewing Mr. T. S. Karibasaiah and also Mr. G. V. Shivananda. Mr. Karibasaiah is one of the pioneering figures of Karnataka cinema. He has been on stage and also in the world of Kannada movies, almost from the very beginning some 50 to 40 years ago. He has had the good fortune of being associated with the legendary figure of Kannada stage and cinema and the world of arts. The late Mr. Gubbi Veeranna, a memorable figure in the history of the art of India. Mr. Karibasaiah has been associated with him in many capacities as an actor, administrator, a partner in many of his ventures.

Mr. Karibasaiah has been not only an actor but also a filmmaker, director, producer, studio owner. In fact, the growth of cinema in Kannada owes a good deal of its current progress to the untiring and pioneering efforts of this grand old man.

Shivananda, my old friend is the son of the venerable Gubbi Veeranna; following his footsteps Shivananda has also been involved in theater, films; both as an actor and writer. He has written plays and he has also written screenplays and acted in films. He also wrote dialogue and has been associated with well-known filmmakers of the current generation like Balu Mahendra and Mani Ratnam, for whom he wrote a dialogue in their ventures into Kannada cinema-like Balu Mahendra's ***Kokila*** and ***Pallavi Anu Pallavi*** of Mani Ratnam.

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This interview, the first one, takes place on the morning of November 13, 1990, Tuesday at the residence of Mr. Karibasaiah on Vishwanath Rao Road, Madhava Nagar, Bangalore city. I first talk to Shivananda about ...

Randor Guy : Hello Shiva. How are you? It is a long time since we met ... like many years ago. Now let me ask you, whatever questions I ask you, tell me by the best of your knowledge and the other things I'll pick up from the book and so on... How well do you remember your father?

Shivananda Veerana : I remember him very well because till my after my completion of National School of Drama. Also, I worked with him in the production of *Dashavatara*

Randor Guy : That is a play

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : Stage production?

Shivananda Veerana : Stage production, mythological play, which was produced at the cost of One Lakh Twenty-Six Thousand Rupees in 1955, June

Randor Guy : That expensive

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. You can imagine the amount in 1955

Randor Guy : Let me go back to the beginning. Where was he born?

Shivananda Veerana : He was born at a place called Gubbi

Randor Guy : Where is this Gubbi?

Shivananda Veerana : It is about 55 miles from Bangalore, inside Tumakuru. 4 miles from Tumakuru

Randor Guy : It's a small village?

Shivananda Veerana : Haan. It's a Taluk

Randor Guy : It's Taluk's headquarter. What was his family background?

Shivananda Veerana : His father, my grandfather, his name is Ampanna, and my grandmother's name Rudramma.

Randor Guy : What was Mr. Ampanna?

Shivananda Veerana : He was a lock maker

Randor Guy : Lockmaker... locksmith?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes, locksmith and it was famous as a 'Gubbi Locks'

Randor Guy : Gubbi locks what he used to make

Shivananda Veerana : Yes, and Veeranna was born in 1891 and my grandfather married another woman and her name was Nanjamma. So, after the second marriage, he was in love with the second wife. So, naturally our grandmother Rudramma was neglected

Randor Guy : It happens

Shivananda Veerana : So, she suffered a lot and she used to tour villages...

Randor Guy : By what?

Shivananda Veerana : By bull shivkathas

Randor Guy : Like the Harikatha Kalicharan (inaudible: 4:15)

Shivananda Veerana : ... like that, in marriage functions and other functions

Randor Guy : She was capable of all that

Shivananda Veerana : Yes, for a duration of four days or five days continuously and at the end, she used to collect this rice and ragi and other things; and clothes, sarees, and father used to go with her...

Randor Guy : ... as a young boy?

Shivananda Veerana : ...as a young boy about 5 years. My grandfather's brother, his name also Veeranna. So, he put him to Gubbi, where this drama troop, *Gubbi Sree Channabasaveshwar Swami Krupaposhit Natak Mandali*, it was running

Randor Guy : Who was running it?

Shivananda Veerana : It was run by one Mr. Chandana. He was deputed by the Gubby (inaudible: 04:56); because this Gubby company was founded by some merchants. They collected about 500 rupees as a donation from several persons and they started in 1884

Randor Guy : So, they had an interest in the theater?

Shivananda Veerana : Theater. So, this company was running at Gubbi and my other grandfather Veeranna took my father to that troop

Randor Guy : ... as a five-year-old?

Shivananda Veerana : ... five-year-old boy. So, he joined the troop and there he used to act as the child characters. (Inaudible) as Saumshekhra, Chitrashekhara, and Raj Shekhra

Randor Guy : At that time, I suppose most of them were mythological...

Shivananda Veerana : ... all mythological and folklore. So, he is in the troop... he learned several instruments

Randor Guy : To play? Musical instruments?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes yes. Harmonium and Tabla, Drums and even Violin. Violin he learned it. And when he was about 21 years. He before 21 years. I mean, He first acted as the thief in *Sadarame*

Randor Guy : Now let's go into little more details about this *Sadarame* because I have not seen the play. I saw the Tamil version of a film made in the 1950s by B. C. Subraman with Gemini Ganesan and Bhanumathi, which was recently televised in Madras and it was not a success as a film but I have heard about this *Sadarame* in Kannada both as a drama and also as a film, which your father made in 1935 with Ashwathama, Murarachaar ...

Shivananda Veerana : Narayan Naidu

Randor Guy : ...which was directed by Raja Chandrashekar, which was one of the early successes of Kannada cinema. In which Ashwatham made again, which brought her again into *Chintamani* in Tamil - second part of Tamil film history. And you know I started as a lawyer before I came into plays and I used to work under a very famous Madras lawyer called V. C. Gopalaratnam. He was a very famous stage actor, playwright and he was connected with the Subhna Vila Sabha??, he's very famous in

the theater.(inaudible: 07:06) and all those people and he and your father were very great friends and whenever he came to Madras, I believe he used to visit Mr. Gopalaratnam and Gopalaratnam, whenever he came to Bangalore he used to visit Mr. Veeranna and invariably he used to talk about Mr. Veeranna's **Sadarama** and that particular character "Pucca Kalla", which I believe is his specialty.

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : ...that is the reason, why I want you to go into a little more detail. This **Sadarama** was folklore or it had any textual basis?

Shivananda Veerana : No, it is a folklore

Randor Guy : From Kannada?

Shivananda Veerana : Kannada.

Randor Guy : I see. In Tamil also, it was done as **Satharam**. The film is also called **Satharam**. Here in Kannada, you call it **Sadarama**. So, it is not historical. So, there is no fact about it.

Shivananda Veerana : No fact. Purely fiction.

Randor Guy : Do you remember who wrote it, by any chance?

Shivananda Veerana : No... nobody...

Randor Guy : Nobody knows?

Shivananda Veerana : Nobody knows!

Randor Guy : It was there already. Maybe it was made popular by your father

Shivananda Veerana : Most probably, it might have written by one Mr. Virappaa Shastry because in Gubbi company, when it started, Virappa Shastry only wrote the plays for Gubbi Company

Randor Guy : (inaudible: 08:11) company writer as they called it

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. From the beginning, from the inception, he was the writer at that time. So, he might have written

Randor Guy : Possible

Shivananda Veerana : ...because when my father was 10 years that time they used to perform *Sadarame*

Randor Guy : It was already popular and his favorite

Shivananda Veerana : ...and my father used to see the characters and he very much liked that character

Randor Guy : Pucca Kalla?

Shivananda Veerana : "Pucca Kalla" and "Adhi Murthy"

Randor Guy : Both?

Shivananda Veerana : Both. Two roles. This *Sadarame* was the character who was acting that the Kalla's role, who was absent in one situation, so some others also acted but they were not successful. Then my father asked the proprietor that Chandana, "sir, give me a chance. I will act that role". Let me see and he gave chance. So, the acting was superb and then, later on, he told, "*I am very happy with your performance so from now onwards you are the thief*". Like that he started and he got the name *Nataki*

Veeranna by acting that Kalla's role. This is when he was about 16 or 17 years old.

Randor Guy : Teenager?

Shivananda Veerana : Teenager.

Randor Guy : ...so he was totally a stage man even as a boy

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : ...what they call a boy actor (inaudible: 09:34).. then after that what happened?

Shivananda Veerana : ...after that when he was 21, Chandana expired. At that time, he had a son Nagrajaya. So, he handed over the proprietorship to both my father and his son Nagarajaya. He was not interested, so, he left it to my father. My father gave some amount and took it over. Then the first thing he did as soon he took it over, he toured Tamil Nadu with the Kannada plays. First, he went to Coimbatore at that some Vincent some theater

Randor Guy : Samikannu Vincent, one of the pioneers of cinema

Shivananda Veerana : ...in his theatre, he staged this play and it was very successful. Then he toured all over Tamil Nadu and then he came back

Randor Guy : ... that was the period I think when there were no linguistic chauvinism and people (inaudible 10:34) one language accepted. It was a great period; which I think we lost all that today. Anyways, that's another... we are staying into politics. Then what happened? And after that, he went and toured South India as a stage personality. How did he come into the cinema? I believe he made some experiments in silent cinema

Shivananda Veerana : First he produced *Bhakt Kabir* with the help of some foreign director. I don't know his name. Hand operated camera was used.

Randor Guy : Those days hand cranked

Shivananda Veerana : ...in Tarikere camp

Randor Guy : Is Tarikere is small town?

Shivananda Veerana : It is a Taluk. When going to Shimoga, it is about 25 to 30 miles.

Randor Guy : I have crossed through Tarikere, but never stayed there.

Shivananda Veerana : There they were staging dramas. In day timing they used to shoot this *Bhakt Kabir*

Randor Guy : ...as a silent film?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : When was this, roughly?

Shivananda Veerana : This is 1924. My father told me the year because he has forgotten to write in his autobiography. After it was printed only, I saw some small photographs and I asked him. Then he told me it was a silent film that I produced. Just casually he mentioned. Then I told him that he didn't mention it in his autobiography. No, I have forgotten he said

Randor Guy : Was this the first silent film attempted in Mysore State?

Shivananda Veerana : I think so

Randor Guy : ... because for this book I am writing for film chamber for South Indian Cinema, which has brought me to Bangalore primarily. I've been doing a lot of research for almost a year - both the silent cinema made in Madras, then in Hyderabad, and also in Bangalore. What I have studied and learned is that Hari Bhai Desai of Surya films; they made quite a lot of silent films in Malleswaram, where they had the studio. And earlier they also had this Mohan Bhavnani. But all this seems to have been done in the late '20s. So, I think this activity of your father in 1924 probably was the first attempted silent filmmaking

Shivananda Veerana : Yes, I think so

Randor Guy : ...in this part of the country... in the old Mysore Maharaja governed state.

Shivananda Veerana : ... because there were no manuscripts available

Randor Guy : no record

Shivananda Veerana : ... only mouth to mouth

Randor Guy : ...and that sometimes facts get twisted, exaggerated, fiction becomes fact all those things happen. But we can only do the best that is available and how long was this *Bhakt Kabir*?

Shivananda Veerana : It is about two or three weeks I think

Randor Guy : After that, they gave up?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : So, it was never released or showed

Shivananda Veerana : No

Randor Guy : So, it was one of those 'about to attempt' ... but he was a ... he foresaw I think the future of cinema and made it. Did he act in that himself as a Kabir?

Shivananda Veerana : No. One Mr. Gurusurthapa, he acted as a Kabir and my father used to act in some comedy role

Randor Guy : He was specializing in comedy roles

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : He was known as a very... this was Mr. Gopalratnam used to say that his gestures used to be very comical (inaudible 13:39)

Shivananda Veerana : ...because in 1923 itself he got the title of a versatile comedian by late highness Krishnaraja Wadiyar

Randor Guy : Maharaja of Mysore

Shivananda Veerana : ... Maharaja of Mysore Krishnaraja Wadiyar, after seeing several plays of Mr. Veeranna, he gave the title versatile comedian in 1923

Randor Guy : ...and after this about to attempt of this ***Bhakt Kabir***, it was in 1924, I think he made few more one or two like ***His Love Affair***

Shivananda Veerana : ***His Love Affair; Hari Maya*** and ***The Song of Life***

Randor Guy : ...you something about this? Now, ***Hari Maya***, I heard was directed by Y.V Rao.

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. Yes. Y. V. Rao.

Randor Guy : This is what Y.V. Rao once told me that he had directed the silent film for Gubbi Veeranna. Do you remember anything about this ***Hari Maya***? Probably by the title it must be a mythological film.

Shivananda Veerana : ***Hari Maya*** was directed by I think Mr. Y.V Rao.

Randor Guy : Yes, that's what Mr. Y.V Rao told me once

Shivananda Veerana : ...but I don't know the details. It must be of Hiranyakashipu and the Prahlada and three generations of Hari. So, I think they might have done either one single episode on Hiranyakashipu and Prahlada or all three of Vishnu's incarnation. Regarding ***His Love Affair*** ...

Randor Guy : ... seems like a contemporary social as we call it

(The sound guy stopped the tape @ 15:05-15:09)

Randor Guy : We were talking about this ***His Love Affair***

Shivananda Veerana : ***His Love Affair***, he had made it with the help of one Belgium director, I think. Algoet, his name is Algoet. He directed this, ***His Love Affair*** and ***Song of Life*** in which Lalita Pawar acted as a heroine

Randor Guy : Hindi actress character actress who is still going strong

Shivananda Veerana : ... yes and her husband Mr. Pawar as the hero that is a ***Song of Life***

Randor Guy : ...and what was this ***His Love Affair*** business

Shivananda Veerana : that... the story I don't know

Randor Guy : ...but who acted in it?

Shivananda Veerana : My father acted as the main role and my mother and my stepmother...

Randor Guy : Jayamma?

Shivananda Veerana : ... Yes, Jayamma she acted

Randor Guy : Your mother also acted in it?

Shivananda Veerana : ...yes yes

Randor Guy : What was your mother's name?

Shivananda Veerana : Sundaramma. She was the first wife. So, both of them acted in that *His Love Affair*. Regarding this *Song of Life* that is a short story by Devudu Narasimha Sastri, one of the pioneers in the Kannada literature

Randor Guy : Short stories?

Shivananda Veerana : ...not only short story, has written mythic *Maha Brahmana*, *Mahākṣatriya* it is about 600/700 pages

Randor Guy : ...volume in sound quality

Shivananda Veerana : His short story (inaudible 16:37) so that was ...

Randor Guy : ... that became Song of Life. Do you remember what it was about?

Shivananda Veerana : That one... that Song of Life was directed by this ... I told you before

Randor Guy : ...Belgium Algeot

Shivananda Veerana : Algeot, he directed His Love Affair that is (inaudible16:56)

Randor Guy : So, he did two films? Both silent?

Shivananda Veerana : His Love Affair and Song of Life

Randor Guy : ... and when was the Song of Life and His Love Affair was made?

Shivananda Veerana : All of them around the 1930s. This Hari Maya directed by Mr. Y. V. Rao and His Love Affair was directed by Mr. Algeot, Belgium director

Randor Guy : How did the Belgium director come to Bangalore?

Shivananda Veerana : That I don't know. That is also not mentioned in his autobiography

Randor Guy : Your father did not tell you?

Shivananda Veerana : ... only the name

Randor Guy : So, you have no idea how that man stayed here ... what brought him all the way from Belgium?

Shivananda Veerana : He formed a Public limited Karnataka Film Corporation at that time

Randor Guy : Your father promoted a public limited company?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes in 1930

Randor Guy : He must have been a very enterprising man

Shivananda Veerana : So, he was the managing director for that the Karnataka film corporation, and he produced *His Love Affair* and *Song of Life*, for which the Belgium director Algeot was the director. For *Harimaya*, Mr. Y.V. Rao was the director. For this *Song of Life*, Lalita Pawar was the heroin and Mr. Pawar was the hero

Randor Guy : G.P. Pawar that's the name of the (inaudible18:07)

Shivananda Veerana : I don't know???

Randor Guy : I had referred some reference books and his name is given as G. P. Pawar

Shivananda Veerana : So, this is in 1930

Randor Guy : Nothing of this film remains I suppose...

Shivananda Veerana : No.

Randor Guy : ...this is all burnt because of the nitrate base.

Shivananda Veerana : Yes.

Randor Guy : ... they must have been reduced to (inaudible 18:26) powder. It's very unfortunate but there it is.. we can't help it. From the biodata you have given me he seems to have been an exhibitor also apart from being a producer, in the sense that he was constructing theaters. Can you tell us something about it?

Shivananda Veerana : Constructing theater means he used to construct only drama theaters. Later on, they have been converted into cinema theatres

Randor Guy : Where was all this?

Shivananda Veerana : Only in Davanagere

Randor Guy : That's a very busy commercial....

Shivananda Veerana : ...and one at Tipturu and one at Tumkur. He constructed Vinoda Talkies at Tumkur; Vinoda Talkies at Tipturu, Vinoda Talkies at Davanagere. Now Ashoka talkies name has been changed to Ashoka.

Randor Guy : All these still owned by your family?

Shivananda Veerana : No. It has been sold out. He might have taken it on a leased basis and returned it to the original owners

(TEA BREAK @ 19:19)

Randor Guy : Is there any reason for giving his name?

Shivananda Veerana : He got the title of *Vinodratnakara* by the citizens of Bangalore

Randor Guy : When was this?

TSK... in 1958. He used to act as a comedian. *Vinoda* means *haasyaa*. So like that... so wherever he constructed this theater and then later they have converted into cinema theatres, they were called as Vinoda talkies. Vinoda talkies at Davanagere. Vinoda talkies at Tipturu. Vinoda talkies at Tumkur.

Randor Guy : (Audio unclear 19:50)

Shivananda Veerana : ... like that only

Randor Guy : See the famous heroin of *Chintamani*. The famous hit of Thiyagaraja Bhagavathar in Tamil, which was directed by Y.V. Rao as you know. That had the heroin Aswathamma who became a rage in Tamil Nadu after that picture. Her songs became extremely popular and in every house, they used to have photographs of Aswathamma framed with her hair put up, that came to be known as Aswathamma Vichvada. You know that hairstyle became very famous... she became such a kind of a cult figure among the women and I have read and also heard that she was introduced to the public by your father as a member of his dramatic troop. Do you remember when she came in? You said sometime in the 1920s you were telling me ...

Shivananda Veerana : I think in 1924 or 1925. Most probably when he toured in Tamil Nadu

Randor Guy : So, she joined him in Tamil Nadu

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. When he camped at Salem. After the camp of Ettaiyapuram

Randor Guy : At Ettaiyapuram also he was there!

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. He was there

Randor Guy : ... famous Zamindari sector

Shivananda Veerana : ...from there he went to Salem. At that camp, K Aswathamma, joined the drama troop

Randor Guy : ... but she was from Karnataka

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. Yes. She was from Karnataka. When the troop was in

Salem, she joined the troop there

Randor Guy : She was very famous for her singing

Shivananda Veerana : ...and later on she acted in so many main roles...

Randor Guy : ... in your father's drama troop?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : So, she was basically a stage senior actress, who came into cinema?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : I think she did very few films, because of her tuberculosis. I think she acted in *Sadarame*, which your father produced in 1935

Shivananda Veerana : ... 1935 at Bombay

Randor Guy : ... which was directed by Raja Chanderashekar, one of the famous directors of South India. Do you remember this *Sadarame* as a film? Have you seen the film?

Shivananda Veerana : No. Because I was born in 1935

Randor Guy : ...you were born that year... but afterward you never had an opportunity to see that film anywhere

Shivananda Veerana : No. Because in 1935, 31st December, he celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the drama troop then he went to Bombay. He used stage plays in the night and he used to produce the films in day times

Randor Guy : That was how; this film was made in Bombay by Raja Chandrashekar. Have you heard your father giving you any impressions about this *Sadarame* as a film? It was a talkie

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. It was a talkie. His first talkie

Randor Guy : ...may be third or the fourth talkie in Kannada. After this *Dhruva* and Y. Y. Rao's *Sati Sulochana*.

These two almost came on about the same time... One came about the month earlier than another... one claiming to be the first and another claiming to be the first released picture. There is some kind of controversy about it. So, this probably was one of the early films. I was told that this was a major success as a film also

Shivananda Veerana : Yes, I was told

Randor Guy : This is what I heard... because the some of the people who have seen these films from the old-timers whom I have been talking to they said that *Sati Sulochana* and also this *Bhakta Dhruva* they were mostly like stage plays photographed... what they called Canned theatre; whereas *Sadarame* was little different, may be because Raja Chandrashekar brought in some cinematic ideas so I believe it ticked very well. It was a very successful film so far as the box office was concerned. You have absolutely no idea about the *Sadarame*

Randor Guy : No no...

Randor Guy : Also, no print exists anywhere. Do you have any stills of this in the book?

Shivananda Veerana : In the book, I think one or two... one still is there, I think

Randor Guy : Who played the main role in *Sadarame*? In the film. Your father played the famous Pucca Kalla

Shivananda Veerana : Pucca Kalla and Adhimurthi both the roles he did

Randor Guy : But who was the hero? The king who falls in love with her and all that
(inaudible 23:48)

Shivananda Veerana : I have not remembered

Randor Guy : But not your father? Your father was not the hero?

Shivananda Veerana : No. He was not a hero

Randor Guy : Maybe Murarachaar played that role?

Shivananda Veerana : I think so

Randor Guy : He was a famous stage actor at that time. His name is mentioned.
(AUDIO CUT HAPPENED @24:02)

Randor Guy : Now talking of this *Sadarame*, in one of the reference books, I have been able to get it. The name of the production company given as *Shakuntala films* or *Shakuntala movies*

Shivananda Veerana : Shakuntala Pictures

Randor Guy : Shakuntala Pictures. Who are these people? Any names?

Shivananda Veerana : That is one Mr. Shanmukha Chaatiyara of Coimbatore

Randor Guy : Shanmukha Chaatiyara of Coimbatore. So, he was the man who was putting the money and the banner was his?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. For about 40,000 Rupees contract for the production

Randor Guy : So, he took it on the contract and produced the film

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. He took Ten Thousand Rupees advance from Mr. Shanmukhchatiyar and then produced this *Sadarame* film

Randor Guy : Today we can shoot for one day in 5000 Rupee

Shivananda Veerana : (laughs) they took about four months to complete the film in Bombay. To Kurla and other places... for outdoor shooting they used to go there

Randor Guy : Kurla was in the outdoor, is it?

Shivananda Veerana : At that time the instrumentalists... accompaniments they used to go behind artists, and they used to play the instruments

Randor Guy : There was no re-recording like we have today. They used to see trolley and go along and there was only one mic for everybody. This is how it was in those days

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. It was produced like that

Randor Guy : ...like the dialogue you have to sing also, along with orchestra following wherever he went

Shivananda Veerana : At the same time, the Baliwala Theater, he took for rent and he used to stage plays

Randor Guy : ... simultaneously both were going on?

Shivananda Veerana : ... nights he used to do drama productions and in the day they used to shoot.

Randor Guy : in sunlight... working for 24 hours

Shivananda Veerana : ...like that only they produced *Sadarame*

Randor Guy : That must have been a great strain on him

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : ...and the reception of course as I heard, was something very great about

Sadarame and then in the bio data there is 1930, there is a mention of his constructing a cinema house in Bangalore itself, what is now called Movie Land, which is *Shivanananda* maybe after which you were named

Shivananda Veerana : No after that only I was born

Randor Guy : ... you were born... that's what I said

Shivananda Veerana : In 1934, the Shivananda Theater was constructed

Randor Guy : ... in Bangalore

Shivananda Veerana : ... and there only our Golden Jubilee of the drama troop was celebrated

Randor Guy : Now... it's called Movie Land. Is it still functioning?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : It's not in your family now? Or sold it?

Shivananda Veerana : Only on lease basis they have taken the ...

Randor Guy : They took it on lease

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. But my father constructed the building. The same building now it is there; only the face has been changed

Randor Guy : Façade, cosmetics have been changed

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : ... and then after this *Sadarame*, there is a mention of this mythological drama *Kurukshetra*, about which everybody talks. It was a fabulous stage production. For instance, Honnappa Bhagavathar told me yesterday that elephants and horses used to come. Elephant and horses were donated as a gift by the Maharaja of Mysore, who I believe was a great fan of your father ...

Shivananda Veerana : Certainly

Randor Guy : ... can you tell us something about Elephant coming on stage?

Shivananda Veerana : Maharaja of Mysore, the late Krishnaraja Wadiyar, gave the title versatile comedian to my father in 1923 itself. After seeing this *Kurukshetra* he presented one Elephant and the two Horses to the drama troop

Randor Guy : ... must have been very difficult to maintain it

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. Certainly. And he translated this, *Kurukshetra* and *Sadarame* dramas into the Telugu language, and then he toured all over Andhra also. He used to engage special trains for the shifting of camps. One first-class compartment, one second-class compartment, one inter-class was there that one, one compartment and the two third-class compartments and wagons about 4 to 5 wagons. One wagon to carry Elephant and another wagon to carry two horses to carry like that. And wherever the troops go, the people used to say Veeranna's jatra has come like that. The cinema people they used to stop the shows during our camps at their places. Only after we vacated, we went to the next place, then they used to resume the cinema shows.

Randor Guy : ... because they were not getting crowds... because I (inaudible 28:14) very big attraction

Shivananda Veerana : ... three days... four days before itself the theatre used to get full... like that he toured, and he got the title *Karnatakadya Nata Sarvabhoma in*

radhmahindri ??? (inaudible28:27)

Randor Guy : I think personally Shiva, I am talking between friends. His life which is now in Kannada must be done in English and I will be very happy to do it. Because the rest of the country does not know about people like this who have contributed so much. They will only hear about Balgandharva or somebody else ... Parsi company

Shivananda Veerana : He was an adventurous person

Randor Guy : This kind of person, for instance, people in the north, they have not heard of these names like Gubbi Veeranna, Subbaiah Naidu, Nagendra Rao and then in Madras Sambandha Mudaliar, T. K. Shanmugam and these all are very great figures

Shivananda Veerana : (inaudible 29:03)

Randor Guy : so many of them made Indian theatre what it is.... may be because we don't project ourselves so successfully. I think the time has come for us to project ourselves... so that... at least for the sake of the future generations and posterity it must be there. What was his ... after... I see in 1941 he has produced this ***Subhadra***

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : ... which I believe was made in Puna by P. Pullaiah, who was a multilingual director whom we used to call Daddy. I used to know him very well and he is incidentally from the Nellore from which place I also from. He was a very good friend and he used to treat me as his son. Recently he died. Can you tell us something about this ***Subhadra***, in which Honnappa Bhagavathar played Arjuna? Incidentally, this ***Subhadra*** was also made in Tamil, in which Honnappa Bhagavathar played Lord Krishna with K. L. V. Vasantha playing Subhadra. It was a production of T. R. Sundaram of Modern Theaters; so, he had the unique privilege of playing two different roles in two languages versions of the same story.

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Randor Guy : Now we come back to *Subhadra* of Kannada where he played Arjuna and Jayamma played Subhadra. Who played Krishna?

Shivananda Veerana : Girimaji Vasudeva Rao

Randor Guy : Is he still alive?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes...yes. He is in Mysore. Now he is the manager of Abhimaan studios

Randor Guy : Balkrishna's

Shivananda Veerana : ... Balkrishna's. He is there. You can talk to him also

Randor Guy : I would like to talk to him. And who played ... what was your father's role in this?

Shivananda Veerana : It was a comedy role - a friend of Arjuna (Inaudible: 30:38)

Randor Guy : ...they always had some friends coming along from the beginning till the end and he will be the comedian because the pattern of filmmaking in South India in those days, I think that was kept and it was made in Puna, was it in Prabhat or any other studio?

Shivananda Veerana : I don't know the studio

Randor Guy : The name of the studio, I have not been able to find out. Even Pullaiah

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was not been able to remember. Now, we were talking about the making of **Subhadra**, which was done in Puna as you said. Is there any... Do you remember where it was made? In which studio? Was that Prabhat or...?

Shivananda Veerana : No. The name of the studio I don't remember...

Randor Guy : ... even in the books

Shivananda Veerana : ... no it has not been mentioned. Only at Puna, he had gone to the studio and he had booked the studio

Randor Guy : One another question. Why did they go to Puna? At the time there was no talkie studio. In 1941, there was no talkie studio in Bangalore...

Shivananda Veerana : I don't think so

Randor Guy : ... Madras, there were quite a few by this time

Shivananda Veerana : ... in Bangalore there was (Inaudible: 31:35) studio

Randor Guy : ... studio in 1940

Shivananda Veerana : ... because even that the studio in which silent films were produced....

Randor Guy : ... in Malleshwaram

Shivananda Veerana : ... in Malleshwaram, that was also closed, because it was a limited (Inaudible: 31:47). So, afterward, he started this again with the same name Karnataka Films Corporation... only later he produced

Randor Guy : And talking of some of the studios in Malleshwaram, do you remember

what were these three studios? One was Surya Films by Haribai Desai at Malleshwaram. I am told there was another - Timbayya who had a studio in Malleshwaram

Shivananda Veerana : I have no idea but in Malleshwaram only my father started Kannada Films corporation

Randor Guy : So, your father had a studio then?

Shivananda Veerana : ... studio in Malleshwaram... not a studio... it's a big house. There only they used to shoot.

Randor Guy : ...so, it was used as a studio

Shivananda Veerana : ... yes...that's all..., where Mr. C. V. Raman's house was there in Malleshwaram

Randor Guy : Sir. C. V. Raman famous scientist

Shivananda Veerana : ... Sir. C. V. Raman, yes, just adjacent house it was, I was told

Randor Guy : Where exactly is that in the Malleshwaram? Does it exist today in the same form?

Shivananda Veerana : No, the house has been demolished and some other building has come up there

Randor Guy : ... that's where he had the studio? Under the same name Karnataka Films Corporation studio?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : And does the house that you said adjacent to C.V. Raman's house... and where is that C. V. Raman's house that you are not very sure about?

Shivananda Veerana : I am not very sure

Randor Guy : And this *Subhadra* you were telling me earlier about who performed the Muhurat, you said, there is something interesting about it

Shivananda Veerana : That is a great Director V. Shantaram. He clapped

Randor Guy : ...V. Shantaram. He did the clap for the first shoot

Shivananda Veerana : he did the clap for the first shot

Randor Guy : He just died a few days ago in Bombay

Shivananda Veerana : and it was written by Mr. B. Puttaswamayya

Randor Guy : The famous writer Mr. B. Puttaswamayya

Shivananda Veerana : He wrote *Dashavatara* and *Kurukshetra*.

Randor Guy : (Inaudible: 33:23)

Shivananda Veerana : ... with his help only Venkanacharya and their partner he came (Inaudible: 33:27)

Randor Guy : So, your father had a partner in this picture

Shivananda Veerana : Yes, he had a partner for this film

Randor Guy : What was his name?

Shivananda Veerana : Venkanacharya ...

Randor Guy : ...he was not a film man

Shivananda Veerana : No. He was not the film man

Randor Guy : ... but he just invested the money

Shivananda Veerana : ... yes, he invested the money, for which Honnappa Bhagavathar acted as Arjuna and Raghavendra Rao acted as the Balarama

Randor Guy : Who was this Raghavendra Rao?

Shivananda Veerana : He was one of the veteran artists from the drama troop. He is no more

Randor Guy : I have seen his photographs in some stills and it was pointed out that this is Raghavendra Rao the famous artist

Shivananda Veerana : ... and Krishna was done by Girimaji Vasudeva

Randor Guy : ... that you said, and your father played a Brahmin and comes along as a comedian. (Inaudible: 34:06)

Shivananda Veerana :and my aunt Jayamma acted as a Subhadra

Randor Guy : How did this picture fair box office-wise?

Shivananda Veerana : Not bad, but before the release itself the partner went to the court and there was the trouble. So, my father gave the rights to them and he took the loan responsibility ...

Randor Guy : He offered to pay the loans?

Shivananda Veerana : ... yes, yes

Randor Guy : ... other people (Inaudible: 34:30) ... good show!

(AUDIO CUT HAPPENED @34:36)

Randor Guy : Now talking of this *Subhadra*, do you know who scored the music?
Composed the songs for this film?

Shivananda Veerana : Asthana Vidwan Mr. Devrappa

Randor Guy : Devendrappa

Shivananda Veerana : ... and his party, they scored the music

Randor Guy : ... must be a very famous man in the music in those days

Shivananda Veerana : ... yes, yes... certainly

Randor Guy : When you say Asthan Vidwan, he was in the court of the Mysore Maharaja, as a regular paid man

Shivananda Veerana : Yes, and the lyrics were written by Bellave Narahari Sastry

Randor Guy : Was he a well-known writer?

Shivananda Veerana : ... well-known writer. He has written more than 60 dramas

Randor Guy : I have seen his photograph. That was what the book says about Bellave Narahari Sastry ... and after this *Subhadra*, which probably came out in 1941. You said they started it in December and is there any indication as to how much it had cost at that time?

Shivananda Veerana : I think more than One Lakh because by the first print they had spent about Ninety-Thousand Rupees. Afterward again, he borrowed some Sixty Thousand Rupees from Dr. Patel from Bombay to finish the film

Randor Guy : ... post-production work

Shivananda Veerana : ... yes

Randor Guy : Where was this post-production work done?

Shivananda Veerana : ... that was in Bombay only

Randor Guy : ... not in Puna?

Shivananda Veerana : ... not in Puna, because he used to go to Bombay and used to get the prints processed in the laboratory

Randor Guy : Now, you were telling me a little while ago about the studio in Bangalore in the Malleshwaram, which your father had Karnataka Film Corporation Studio. Where was this studio located? Can you name some buildings you were mentioning?

Shivananda Veerana : In Malleshwaram, one of Mr. H. V. Nanjundaiah's bungalow

Randor Guy : ... that was his private house, which became a studio...

Shivananda Veerana : ... yes... they took it for a monthly rent of Two Hundred and Fifty Rupees per month and their one room for the developing ...

Randor Guy : ... so, one room was converted into a darkroom

Shivananda Veerana : ... into a darkroom and for drying purpose

Randor Guy : ... one-room laboratory

Shivananda Veerana : ... yes, like that they took it on hire and processed there only, all the silent films

Randor Guy : ... and how was the shooting done? You said something about iron pipes

Shivananda Veerana : ... iron pipes, they used to put it on the ground and the top ones they used to cover the sealing...

(Audio cut due to phone ring @36:55)

Randor Guy : Shivanand, you were telling me during the break, something interesting about the make-up business during the silent film days. What was that story?

Shivananda Veerana : ... even though they had the cream to remove the makeup, they didn't know how to use it

Randor Guy : ... that cream was available to remove make-up?

Shivananda Veerana : ... available... they used to return with the made-up face, and they used to wash with water and soap. Even then after washing also the make-up used to remain

Randor Guy : ... it must have looked funny even after washing. They used to walk on the road, wherever they went by car (Inaudible: 37:31)

Shivananda Veerana : (Inaudible: 37:33)

Randor Guy : (Inaudible: 37:44)

Randor Guy : The next production, which was done, I see is in 1942. It was again a talkie film in Kannada called *Jeevana Nataka*, the drama of life or life as a drama as a play...

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : ... and (Inaudible: 38:01) they say it in Tamil (Inaudible: 38:06) ... and was this an adaptation of any other novel or play or was it an original script?

Shivananda Veerana : It was an original script

Randor Guy : Who wrote it?

Shivananda Veerana : The great novelist Mr. A. N. Krishna Rao

Randor Guy : A. N. Krishna Rao is a Kannada novelist. Can you tell us something about A. N. Krishna Rao because his name keeps appearing quite often?

Shivananda Veerana : He has written a number of novels and he was very famous, and he was the first time for the movement of Kannada language in Karnataka. He used to promote that Kannada should be the official language like that... he was the pioneer of that movement. So, he wrote the screenplay

Randor Guy : Was he involved in theater?

Shivananda Veerana : No

Randor Guy : What was he? Was he the teacher?

Shivananda Veerana : He was the novelist... pure novelist... full-time writer

Randor Guy : He had no job?

Shivananda Veerana : No

Randor Guy : ... because his name comes up every now and then

Shivananda Veerana : ... because he was one of the greatest novelists

Randor Guy : A Na Kru his initials. I have seen that initials

Off-screen voice: His books were sold like anything.

Randor Guy : His books were sold like hotcake and this was one of his original screenplays, written to be made as a film

Shivananda Veerana : Yes, and for the direction one Mr. Wahab

Randor Guy : Wahab Kashmiri very famous name

Shivananda Veerana : ...yes, he was engaged by my father

Randor Guy : I saw him some years back at Satya Studios, a very big made man. He died a few years back. At that time, he was not in good health. The Wahab Kashmiri has done pictures in South Indian languages, which is surprising, and he also played the villain's role in a film called *Rani* produced by Jupiter in Tamil and Hindi in which Bhanumathi played the heroin in both versions. In Tamil, S. Balachander played the hero and in Hindi, you must have heard of Anoop Kumar, he is one of the brothers of Ashok Kumar. Ashok Kumar, Kishor Kumar, and Anoop Kumar. This

Anoop Kumar was very active for a short while, after that he faded. This Anoop Kumar played that lover's role, and this **Rani** was an adaptation of '**The Loves of Carmen**'. You remember? Glenn Ford, Rita Hayworth, that famous film.

Shivananda Veerana : Yes, yes. I remember... Carmen

Randor Guy : ... this was an adaption of that. The gypsy girl, Bhanumathi as a gypsy girl and Bhanumathi claimed that she performed better than Rita, of course, that's another story. And in that picture, there is a villain who kidnaps the child. A gypsy actually is supposed to be some king's daughter, she's kidnapped, it comes out in the end you know, the gypsy turns out to be the king's daughter, usual climax they used to have and he tries to marry her and when she doesn't want to marry him he tries to seduce her and then there is a fight and all that between the hero and Wahab. Wahab Kashmiri was a very big made man. I don't know whether you have seen him. When I saw him, he was sick ... very tall and hefty... typical like a Pathan, he was a Pathan and he came from Kashmir I suppose, so, he used to call himself as Wahab Kashmir. So, you tell me, he directed that....

Shivananda Veerana : *Jeevana Nataka...*

Randor Guy : ... in Kannada

Shivananda Veerana : ... and Shanta Hublikar was the heroin. My aunt B. Jayamma was also there

Randor Guy : Is Shanta Hublikar is the lady who played the heroin in **Aadmi**?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : (Inaudible: 41:08)

Shivananda Veerana : ... same...

Randor Guy : ... same as classic of V. Shantaram

Shivananda Veerana : ... same lady

Randor Guy : In 1937 it came. Shanta Hublikar from the name, did she come from Hubali, which is in Karnataka?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. Yes, from Hubballi

Randor Guy : Is she is a Karnataki or Maharashtrian?

Shivananda Veerana : Karnataki. But she is more famous in Marathi films

Randor Guy : She was a Marathi film star

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : ... and may be this is the only picture she did in Kannada to my knowledge

Shivananda Veerana : I think so... and Kemparaj Urs acted as the hero

Randor Guy : D. Kemparaj Urs was the hero

Shivananda Veerana : brother of late Devaraj Urs

Randor Guy : ... The Chief Minister of Karnataka

Shivananda Veerana : ... he acted as the main role.

Randor Guy : That was his first film I think

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. That was his first film

(AUDIO CUT HAPPENED @41:48)

Randor Guy : Shanta Hublikar could speak Kannada herself?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. Because she was from Karnataka

Randor Guy : Hubballi. That's why she was called Hublikar... and where was this made?

Shivananda Veerana : It was made in Central Studios, Coimbatore

Randor Guy : ... which was then under a lease with Jupiter Pictures later on

Shivananda Veerana : ... the rate was at that time was Two - Hundred and Fifty Rupees per call sheet and for outdoor shooting, they shot the film in Vrindavan Gardens, Mysore

Randor Guy : Was it the first time that Vrindavan Gardens was used as a location?

Shivananda Veerana : I think so... exclusively it was used, the Vrindavan Gardens, for the outdoor shooting ... and this film was released in October 1942

Randor Guy : ... and this *Jeevana Nataka*, can you tell us something about what kind of story was that? You may not remember the entire story I understand. What was the theme like?

Shivananda Veerana : Obviously, it was a love affair between the main artist of the troop

Randor Guy : Drama company? So, it has something to do with life in a drama company

Shivananda Veerana : Yes.

Randor Guy : That's why the title is called *Jeevana Nataka*

Shivananda Veerana : Yes ... actual life and with the drama company

(Inaudible: 42:58)

Randor Guy : There is a love affair between the drama producer and the heroin of one of the plays I suppose... something like that

Shivananda Veerana : ... most probably it must be the wife of the drama proprietor and the artist

Randor Guy : ... the hero?

Shivananda Veerana : ... yes... like that... they used to act in the play, and they fell in love with each other

Randor Guy : That must have been a daring theme to attempt in 1942 ...

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : ... married man falling in love or married woman falling in love ... because they were not supposed to fall in love ...

Shivananda Veerana : ... it was a nice film but financially it didn't make (Inaudible: 43:36 - sound overlap)

Randor Guy : Your father was the producer?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : ... and under what banner was it made? Produced?

Shivananda Veerana : That was made with this same ...

Randor Guy : ... was it Gubbi productions? I can check that with my book in Madras

Shivananda Veerana : I have no idea

Randor Guy : What was your father's role in the film? Not as a producer. What role did he play?

Shivananda Veerana : ... the proprietor of the troop. He used to act as a comedian in that film also

Randor Guy : ... played two roles in the picture?

Shivananda Veerana : One is the main drama producer,

Randor Guy : ... the drama producer, whose wife falls in love

Shivananda Veerana : ... but in the film, they produce the plays

Randor Guy : ... play in a film

Shivananda Veerana : Yes ... play in a film ... he used as a comedian

Randor Guy : The drama producer acting as a comedian. The play in a film ... quite complicated

Shivananda Veerana : The similarities like actual life of my father only ... because he used to run the troop and used to act as a comedian in the drama

Randor Guy : ... maybe he introduced lots of his own life ... some of the incidents...

Shivananda Veerana : He must have told this to A Na Krishna Rao to write like that only

Randor Guy : ... he must have been the inspiration behind the story. It was not a very successful film you said

Shivananda Veerana : It was not a very successful film, because it was the first social film, he produced

Randor Guy : ... in Kannada?

Shivananda Veerana : ... no ... in Kannada itself (Inaudible: 45:00) was the first film

Randor Guy : *Samsara Nauka* (Inaudible: 45:02) in 1936

Shivananda Veerana : sorry *Samsara Nauka* was the first Kannada social drama film. I think, next Kannada social film was *Jeevana Nataka*

Randor Guy : ... *Jeevana Nataka* in which Kemparaj Urs played the hero and he talks about it in one of his interviews, how he came to see your father, to look for a chance to act and your father was very doubtful that this so-called royal family people will make good actor (Inaudible: 45:25) so much discipline, and you have to wake up at 6 O' Clock and be here, stand with makeup. He said, "*I will do everything, sir. I am very keen*". He says that in an interview. He said ok then you come, and I believe as he walked out of your father's house, probably you were a small boy at that time. He was

very doubtful whether he will be chosen but somehow, he was able to wangle. He looked very nice and tall... he was a very tall and handsome looking man. Finally, he made it. The same doubt I believe, Shanta Hublikar had when she came to Coimbatore and saw him, and they said a new man is going to act against you. She said what is this some new fellow you are (Inaudible: 46:03). I am a big star and all that. By the time she had done this ***Aadmi. Aadmi*** came in 1937 or 39, it was a very big film which made her a super star and she used to look down on him in the beginning but of course later she was quite impressed. Maybe, she got carried away by his personality or whatever and then everything was all right. He says all that in an interview, which I have read in one of the books. So that is the story of ***Jeevana Nataka*** and it was never done as a play even later...

Shivananda Veerana : No

Randor Guy : Do you have any script or anything available with you of ***Jeevana Nataka***?

Shivananda Veerana : No

Randor Guy : ... nothing at all, no traces, no stills also?

Shivananda Veerana : ... stills, you may have in my aunt's Jayamma's house

Randor Guy : ... because in that Jubilee 50-year souvenir, which was brought out by the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce, which Mr. Laxman gave me, I think I saw one or two stills...

Shivananda Veerana : ... because this (Inaudible: 46:56) Gopi he has collected the some of the stills

Randor Guy : ... he is not here. He has gone to London I believe for festival

Shivananda Veerana : He has got some of the photographs of our films

Randor Guy : ...you are not... Is he having them?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. He is having them

Randor Guy : (Inaudible: 47:07) contacted probably you can get some because, in that book I saw, there are a number of stills almost from the first picture that **Dhruva**. Muthu acted as a Dhruva you know. Right from that photograph, there are a number of stills, quite a lot of them

Shivananda Veerana : He has got... he has collected purposely...

Randor Guy : ... for that book...

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : ... and it contains a number of interesting stills from early days; even there is one still from **Sadarame** with Ashwathamma in it; looking very nice in that particular still. But you don't have anything whether the script?

Shivananda Veerana : No

Randor Guy : What about the songbooks of Kannada films? Are they available? Is there anybody who is collecting these? Now, for instance in Madras, there is a friend of mine called (Inaudible: 47:49). I don't know whether you have heard of him. He is a one-man archive. He has got a collection of all the photographs of every Tamil film from the beginning. Many numbers of Telugu and he also got Kannada and he has got songbooks of every picture released from 1934 from the first picture from 1931 and In Madras, anybody who wants any information about Tamil cinema, they will ask on the phone. Sir, who is the hero in this picture? Which year it was made? In which studio was it made? One-minute sir, he refers to the songbook and whatever writing I

have done in a Tamil film; have done books and articles and so on without his help, you just could not think of doing it. In fact, my book on S. S. Vasan, which I wrote for the film archive; is a pending publication. I have dedicated this book to (Inaudible: 48:42). He is the real one-man archive. He recently completed 60 years about a week back and his admirers in the field and others collected a purse and they gave him 1.41 lakhs as a prize medal for the services he did and the collection he has is invaluable nobody else has and every time a preview is held he has got a sheet a printed shape in which all the details are there. The producer is expected to fill it and files it. So, if you ask him about some picture in 1955, he immediately takes the sheet, footage, when was it censored? Who are the artists? Who wrote the songs? who is the makeup man?; who is the editor? Everything he has done. Is there anybody doing that kind of voluntary work in Kannada? He is a fantastic kind of guy. We call him a one-man archive and whenever they hold exhibitions, these government runs exhibitions you know; he is invited to have a stall, where he exhibits all the pictures and all these stills and he has even got pamphlets published brought out by these producers. You know, in those days I believe whenever the picture was released, they (Inaudible: 49:51) as souvenirs. He has got the collection.

Shivananda Veerana : ... yes... the folders also they used to...

Randor Guy : ... folders also, especially Gemini because (Inaudible: 49:56). For every picture, there will be a souvenir. He has got all of them, which gives photographs, which are all rare today. It gives a lot of interesting news about the various pictures, which I have used for my own work. Nobody likes that doing that kind of work on Kannada cinema... very unfortunate! Anyway, we hope somebody comes up. Somebody must be having these kinds of collections you know like Rangarao has this

Shivananda Veerana : ... in 1942, my father started this Karnataka Film Cooperation's distribution company

Randor Guy : What is it called?

Shivananda Veerana : Karnataka Films limited

Randor Guy : ... for distribution of films ... not production?

Shivananda Veerana : ... afterward they started the production also

Randor Guy : ... so he was also a distributor

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : ... exhibitor, distributor, actor everything ...

Shivananda Veerana : ... that is because, our great ex-Chief Minister S. Nijalingappa, he sent his what you called (Inaudible: 50:53). One Mr. C R Basavaraju and another S. Gurunath and one Mr. Dummi Murigeppa (Inaudible: 50:55). They formed Karnataka Films Limited.

Randor Guy : Was Nijalingappa interested in cinema?

Shivananda Veerana : No. He was not interested in cinema

Randor Guy : ... he only supported the Kannada cinema and wanted it to grow

Shivananda Veerana : ... so in 1942 they started this Karnataka Films Distributors

Randor Guy : Where was this office in Bangalore?

Shivananda Veerana : ... in 6th cross Gandhinagar

Randor Guy : It was a limited company

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. Limited company

Randor Guy : ... your father was probably the managing director of the company or one the director

Shivananda Veerana : He was one of the directors. C R Basavaraju, S. Gurunath, and Dummi Murigeppa; they are the other directors

Randor Guy : ... and what was the next production he thought of after...

Shivananda Veerana : ... this *Hemareddy Mallamma*

Randor Guy : ... this was a film; I think which he made with Soundararajan of Tamil Nadu Talkies. He directed the picture also that's what his son tells me. Can you tell us something about this *Hemareddy Mallamma*?

(AUDIO CUT HAPPENED @ 52:04)

Randor Guy : The next film your father made was this famous *Hemareddy Mallamma*, which came out in 1945; maybe it started in 44. This was a joint production, or I think Soundararajan of Tamil Nadu Talkies, he was also involved in it that's what I heard from his son

Shivananda Veerana : It was supposed to be directed by Mr. Soundararajan ...

Randor Guy : ... supposed to be!!

Shivananda Veerana : ... because after the production started, he left for the States ...

Randor Guy : ... he visited Hollywood...

Shivananda Veerana : ... yes, so here nobody was there to direct, then my father when he asked Mr. Soundararajan, he told him that he has given the responsibility of

direction to Mr. Jitan Banerji ...

Randor Guy: ... very famous cameraman. Jitan Banerjee came from Calcutta. In silent days, he was one of the shareholder directors of Newton Studio and he was one of the most brilliant cameramen of South India.

Jitan Banerji as a cameraman, Dinsa K. Tehrani as the audiographer, sound recordist, and Nagoor as an art director, were the three pillars of the Newton Studios at that time. All of them are very famous technicians. Today all of them are gone and Jitan Banerji was supposed to have been a master in focusing. I believe he will close his eyes and focus, and it would be perfect, that's what they say of him. He died quite early. One of the very early Bengali technicians, who came to Madras, a long time before K. Subramanyam brought many others. The others came later Kamal Ghosh, Kiran Das Gupta, Jyoti Sinha. All these people came much later; whereas Jitan ... and Jitan was supposed to be a specialist in taking close-ups and lighting close-ups. I believe he was absolutely brilliant and some of the work, which I have seen; for instance, in ***Bhakta Meera*** with great M. S. Subbulakshmi that was a black and white film. It was shown on TV recently as a late-night show, the Hindi version of it with M.S., there the close-ups of M. S. Subbulakshmi done in black and white; I have seen through T.V (Inaudible: 54:12) It was positively brilliant, and you don't have that kind of lighting done today, even in color. In black and white you know it's much more difficult to do lighting, need much more creativity, you have blacks, whites, and shades only. I spoke to Mr. Nagoor and also Mr. Mastan who was the very famous cameraman and director of the South, who was trained by Mr. Jitan Banerji. Mastan is still alive. He was Nagoor's nephew. So, he said they used to make a mold of M. S. Subbulakshmi's face, a papier-mâché mold. Keep it on the set exactly at the height where her face will be and then light it in different ways and shoot it with varying lenses 28, 35, 50, 75, 100...

Shivananda Veerana: ... now who does this!

Randor Guy: ...today nobody... it's not all. After that is done, this footage is developed, printed and then strips are made. 50 feet 10 feet of each shot and he used to cut the

frames, put it in a slight projector, and then sitting with a glass of whiskey, later on, Jitan and Ellis R. Dungan, used to watch what is the effect of each lens, each angle, each lighting and they took the best and then made M.S made (Inaudible: 55:29) and then they shot it. He said that's how you see the brilliant effect. Now 50 years later Randor you are coming and telling me you are a writer, you are a technician, you are a filmmaker. It is not something surprising they have worked for it. They worked so hard and Ellis R. Dungan with whom I am in correspondence, I am doing a book on him. He says all this was done and I have here 'still' with me which Dungan has sent where the papier-mâché mold of M. S. Subbulakshmi's face is there on one table and they're all standing around with the camera and they're lighting it. So, it's not just a story they have done it. So, this kind of work was done, that dedication was there. That involvement today is totally absent, and everybody has lost it you know that's a different story. And that was this Jitan Banerji. He was a master of He directed quite a few pictures...

Shivananda Veerana : ... so with his help he wrote this screenplay by late dramatist Bellave Narahari Sastri,

Randor Guy : ... and this *Hemareddy Mallamma*, what kind of a story was it? Devotional, musical?

Shivananda Veerana : It was a devotional...

Randor Guy : Who was this Mallamma? Was it the real person?

Shivananda Veerana : She was a disciple of Shiva... ardent devotee of Shiva...

Randor Guy : So, it is what they call it is Bhakti film

Shivananda Veerana : Yes

Randor Guy : ... because yesterday, when I was talking to Honnappa Bhagavathar, I

think who acted as a lord Shiva in the picture. He told me that this story is almost like ***Bhakta Meera***. Meera was in Rajasthan and she was a Rajasthani

Shivananda Veerana : Just like ***Sant Sakhubai***

Randor Guy : Sakhu Bai was the devotee of Panduranga. Meera was the devotee of Krishna and here she is a devotee of Ishwara he said. This is what Honnappa Bhagavathar said

Shivananda Veerana : The similarity is much more in ***Sant Sakhubai***

Randor Guy : In what way?

Shivananda Veerana : She stays in family background...

Randor Guy : ... she is a housewife

Shivananda Veerana : ... whereas Meera She is (Inaudible: 57:16) that is the difference

Randor Guy : ... and this torture by the mother-in-law and sister-in-law all these were there?

Shivananda Veerana : Yes ... that was there

Randor Guy : To Bhakt Meera, the sister-in-law gives the poison. But there is no mother-in-law in this story. By the time she is dead. Only sister-in-law is there, which is played by K. R. Chellam

Shivananda Veerana : ... and for music, V. Nagaiah did the music for ***Hemareddy Mallamma*** and lord Ishwara's role, Honnappa Bhagavathar played the role and the great drama artist C. B. Mallappa, he acted as a Hemareddy's role

Randor Guy : Hemareddy ... husband of Mallamma?

Shivananda Veerana : ... no father of Mallamma and husband of Mallamma was done by my father

Randor Guy : ... and Mallamma was Jayamma...

Shivananda Veerana : ... Jayamma and Ku. Ra. Seetharama Sastry, he did (Inaudible: 58:05) role...

Randor Guy : He was a director of some pictures?

Shivananda Veerana : ... later on, he directed some picture for Honnappa Bhagavathar

Randor Guy : Who was this Seetharama Sastry? Can you tell us something about him?

Shivananda Veerana : He came in as a lyric writer. Even in ***Gunasagari***, he wrote some lyrics...

Randor Guy : ***Gunasagari*** came much later...

Shivananda Veerana : ... and then for ***Hemareddy Mallamma*** he wrote the lyrics and songs also

Randor Guy : ... and Nagaiah, composed the music ...

Shivananda Veerana : Yes. Composed the music and later on it was released ... and one for this (Inaudible: 58:40) role, one Lakshama Sani, she used to act as a male role in dramas

Randor Guy : man or woman?

Shivananda Veerana : ... woman

Randor Guy : ...woman doing male roles in drama... its reverse of the (Inaudible: 58:52)

Shivananda Veerana : ...so, she acted in as the mother-in-law's role ...

Randor Guy : The name Lakshma Sani is not a Punjabi...

Shivananda Veerana : ... no ...

Randor Guy : ... Kannadian?

Shivananda Veerana : Here some Dynasty is there....

Randor Guy : Called Sani

Shivananda Veerana : ... they are Devadasis

Randor Guy : (Inaudible: 59:06)

Shivananda Veerana : (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : ... so she was doing male roles....

Randor Guy : We are talking about the making of Hemareddy Mallamma. Can you tell us about whether it was made in the Newtown Studio in Madras?

Shivananda: Yes, I think so. It was made in Newtown. The role of Mallamma was played by Jayamma and Lakshmasami acted as...

Randor Guy : So, you are talking about Lakshmaswami?

Shivananda: Yes, She had her own drama school.

Randor Guy : Is she alive?

Shivananda: No, she is no more. At that time she was 55 years old.

Randor Guy : Any stills of that lady? Show what she looked like?

Shivananda: I don't think so.

Randor Guy : That is very sad.

Shivananda: Yes. She played the mother in law i.e. the woman's role in the film. In dramas she was stereotyped as Bheema or Kansa.

Randor Guy : Was she popular in those roles as a man?

Shivananda: At that time, she was very popular.

Randor Guy : Popular in the Men's roles?

Shivananda: Yes, she was.

Randor Guy : That is very unusual. In those days, males used to play females' roles but the females did not come part of that.

Shivananda: Lakshmasami had an interest for Nagarathanamma's Stree Nataka Mandali who started her own theatre group.

Randor Guy : Malamanyamala (Tamil Nadu).

Shivananda: Exactly.

Randor Guy : This Nagarathanamma is different from Telegu Ngarathanamma who used to sing and was a disciple of Thyagaraja.

Shivananda: Yes, this Nagarathanamma is the stage artist.

Randor Guy : Oh, this is different Nagarathma who was the stage artist.

Shivananda: Yes, the stage artist.

Randor Guy : Oh, I see.

Shivananda: At the time when Hemareddy Mallamma was being produced in the studio M. S. Subbalakshmi set for Meera in the same studio.

Randor Guy : Kannada? (Note - it is a Tamil film)

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : So, that is also 1944 or 1945 production.

Shivananda: Yes, in which C. Nagaiah played the lead role.

Randor Guy : Nagaiah played the main role, Rana Pratap.

Shivananda: Yes. Hemareddy Mallamma took 11 months (to complete).

Randor Guy : 11 months?

Shivananda: Yes, because the main set was made for the film Meera and Hemareddy Mallamma was shot in the gaps only when the shooting for Meera was stop. ...

Randor Guy : I was told by Mastan the Camera Assistant the production took very long because of financial problems; they were not able to raise money. So, they used to shoot and then stop for a while and again the same. So, it took 11 months or even more. It was a classic film, M. S. Subbalakshmi sang songs in it, and it was directed by Ellis R. Dungan. It was Subbalakshmi's last film. But it was a failure in box office. I tell you an interesting story. In Madras there are some famous (Inaudible) called Khagi seri (Inaudible) Subramanya Shastri used to throw shells on the ground and then he questioned the (Inaudible) and then he used to tell the people their luck (Inaudible) And in those days 1930s or 1940s he supposed to earn 5 to 10 Lakhs by this profession and he was charging only 1 rupee. If he got more than that he used to take it but when he was asked for his fee, he only charged one rupee. Mr. Sadashivam, the husband of M. S. Subbalskhmi was his patron, he has given him lakhs and lakhs issues (Inaudible)

and he (Sadashivam) used to come every day. There were quite a few big people of Madras like S. Srinivasan (Inaudible), owner of The Hindu (Inaudible) was one of his permanent clients. As Khagi seri Subramanya Shastri and S. Srinivasan were good friends The Hindu used to carry at least a free advertisement of Subramanya Shastri's prediction for his publicity. Khagi seri told Sadashivam, I believe, "I am contemplating the picture. Please don't produce, you will be a flopper. Although Ellis R. Dungan is directing it, Nagaiah is there, S. V. Venkatraman is the music director but your stars are bad. You will end up this picture with lots of debts and it will take lots of years for you to come out of that".

Shivananda: I believe it happened.

Randor Guy : Yes. The picture flopped. It became a classic. Everybody talked about the film. Later, they made it in Hindi entitled 'Meerabai' which went on TV and it had an introduction by Sarojni Naidu. Naidu appeared on screen and said, "This is the Nightingale of India", she was the called the Nightingale who could really sing and with this introduction the picture begins. All the famous dictators of India like Pandit Nehru, Lord Mount Batten saw this picture on TV. In spite of all these he (Sadasivam) failed and he was dipped in debts. Khagi Seri's prediction came true here. It is a very relevant story for human interest here. Now you tell me about Hemareddy Mallamma.

Shivananda: It was released in 1945. S. Soundarya Rajan came at the time of the release. My father had to give him the share of 30,000 rupees. Then he released his...

Randor Guy : I think your father was a victim or an intermediate. He was too good man so that everybody came to him and lend money or maybe like most creative artists he was an idealist.

Shivananda: He was not a good businessman.

Randor Guy : (Inaudible) people are very good I can tell you this from my personal experience. (Laughs). They are core businessman. They only think of art and creativity. So, may be your father was an example of that. At least I am in a good company. Now tell me what was the next picture he produced after Hemareddy Mallamma?

Shivananda: Gunasagarikathe

Randor Guy : No. He produced a film called Raja Gopichand.

Shivananda: No, that was a play.

Randor Guy : Oh, That's a play?

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : Then tell me something about that. I am asking this because Raja Gopichand was made as a film in Tamil with M. K. Radha as hero and it was produced by Thyagaraja Bhagavathar's brother who did not used Thyagaraja Bhagavathar to play the hero because he demanded an actor and not a singer. I tell you very interesting story about it, briefly. May be Thyagaraja's brother purchased the copyright of the play Raja Gopichand from his father i.e. Thyagaraja's uncle. They came to M. K. Radha who was a top Hero, who later on did Chandrlekha. M. K. Radha astonished when Thyagaraja came to his house in the morning at 8.30 one day. He said to M. K. Radha "My uncle is taking a picture". Radha said "Fine. What I have got to do with that?". Thyagaraja told him "I want you to act". Radha said "What? You want me to act? Your uncle is making a picture, what about you? You are the superstar. He said "No, my dear Radha, this story they have selected needs an actor. I am only a singer." So you see, Thyagaraja was very conscious of his limitations. Many actors think that

they can do any role, Thyagaraja was unlike that. [conversations in Tamil]. And Radha was surprised thinking that Thyagaraja – the then superstar who could sell the picture on his name and could also bring the crowd came to him asking him to act in his uncle’s film. Upto half an hour this ding-dong game went on and finally M. K. Radha agreed to do the film. Thyagaraja then said “Otherwise I would not have come. My uncle knew that if he would come alone without me then you would give him the same answer as you gave to me and would turn him around. You could have told him that you have Bhagavathar in your house and you want me to act in your film. Get out”. So, my uncle dragged me to you and I have come. Radha said “All Right”. Thyagaraja then said “Whatever is your remuneration, my uncle would pay”. Radha said, “No. It is your picture” but he said “No, it is my uncle’s picture and this is our livelihood. I don’t want you to reduce your remuneration because I have come here and my uncle is producing. You are living on this. Suppose you are a very rich man and doing films on your hobbies I can’t tell you come on Radha, act for free and do some favour to my uncle. I don’t want favours. I don’t want you to reduce your remuneration even one rupee.” Thyagaraja insisted Radha to take money in advance saying that he also takes advance from his producers. He also said “I brought the money asking my uncle whether he has advance money with him, otherwise I would not have come. I expect my producers to pay me first and then come to see me. Similarly, Radha is another big artist. He must want me to pay him first. Whatever principles I follow, I would like you to follow those”. This was the greatness of Thyagaraja Bhagavathar which many people don’t know. Many say that he was a gay man, so on and so forth. That was how Raja Gopichand was produced. That is why I am asking you. And later on, there was a Telegu film titled Raja Gopichand featuring A. Nageshwara Rao in the 70s or in the

early 80s.

Shivananda: In Marathi also...

Randor Guy : Can you tell me something about this Raja Gopichand. The name is there in so many languages then it must have a very popular story.

Shivananda: Yes. There was a king who had two wives. The King's mother was an ardent disciple of a Guru.

Randor Guy : A Religious woman.

Shivananda: Yes, a religious woman. The 2nd wife of the king felt some relationship between the Guru and the Rajmata (The mother of the king) and informs the king about this. Listening to this story the king goes to the Guru while he was meditating and threw him into the wale. Then another disciple of the Guru rescued him from the wale. In this way the story goes. It is a very famous story. I think it is originally in Marathi.

Randor Guy : This story now reminds me of Thagaraja Bhagavathar's Raja Mukthi. The incident of taking away the Guru from his meditation and throwing him into a wale is narrated in Raja Mukthi which he made after coming out of the jail. It was made in 1948 or in 1949 in Saba Studio (Inaudible) This was the first film he made after he came out of the jail. Bhanumati, V. N. Janaki (acted as a queen) acted in this film. But the story is a little bit changed here. Mother's role is not there in Raja Mukthi. The younger woman Bhanumathi appeared as a vamp in this film. She complains that king's wife has a relationship with the rishi. It is not at all a sacred relation but it a sexual one. Then the rishi is thrown into the wale (Inaudible) Because he has committed a sin. So, these kinds of things were there in the middle of the film. Maybe this is inspired by Raja Gopichand.

Shivananda: Here also when the guru is thrown into the wale, the disciple of the guru was present there(Inaudible)hink they have taken the story from Raja Gopichand.

Randor Guy : Might be. May be Bhagavathar remembered the story of the film Raja Gopichand made by his uncle from which he took some fragments for Raja Mukthi.

Shivananda: Hunsur Krishnamurthy wrote the play.

Randor Guy : I know, I know.

Shivananda: He wrote the dialogues for Diamond Jubilee. It was a Diamond Jubilee production in 1948. In Mysore we get the first production.

Randor Guy : As a play?

Shivananda: Yes. As a play.

Randor Guy : Was it made in Kannada as a film?

Shivananda: No. Only drama. It was a very good play, with a lot of stage tricks like the whole fort would blow out and the soul of the king would come out on the disciple of the guru, if I am not wrong then the story used to put on the stage this way. And the photos spoke.

Randor Guy : It must have been very interesting to the audience.

Shivananda: After listening to the story of the 2nd wife about the illegal relationship between the mother and the guru he (the king) himself goes to the mother but he hesitates to ask her mother about it. Then he speaks like it was his duty to teach her (the mother). So, a lot of stage tricks were there.

Randor Guy : Another interesting point about this film Raja Mukthi is that it has lot of similarities with Raja Gopichand. The production office of Thyagaraja Bhagavathar was in Malleshwaram.

Shivananda: Where? In Madras?

Randor Guy : No no. In Malleshwaram. After he was released from prison in April or in May of 1945 [**Note:** Bhagavathar was released in April, 1947] for the Lakshmikanthan murder case, he didn't want to stay in Madras. He was such a big man and became mentally agitated and had a nervous breakdown and so he wanted to come in Bangalore. He lost all his money in that case. So, he wanted to produce, and I believe at that time there was a theatre owner in Bangalore by the name Mr. Gopal Rao (Inaudible). I don't know who he was. He was connected in some theatre in Bangalore. This Gopal Rao was an admirer of Thyagaraja Bhagavathar and all Thyagaraja Bhagavathar's superhit films like Haridas, Ambikapathy ran only at his theatres.

Conversation in Kannada

Randor Guy : This Gopal Rao brought Thyagaraja Bhagavathar's wife and children (Thyagaraja had one son and a daughter) in a house in Malleshwaram. The office of the Narendra Pictures which was previously "Trichy Thyagaraja Films" was in Malleswaram. After getting released from the prison Thyagaraja came to Malleswaram and started Narendra Pictures there. I wanted to know what Narendra was all about. Just before I left Madras, I had an opportunity of meeting Thyagaraja's son Ravindran. (Inaudible) I asked him who is this Narendra. He said "My father was a great admirer and disciple of Swami Vivekananda. Vivekananda's original name was Narendra. So, he called the company Narendra Pictures and the office was in Malleswaram where we used to live". Thyagaraja used to live in a hotel. The entire work was done here for the Raja Mukhti, I am wondering whether Hunsur Krishnamurthy also helped him in writing script. He must have seen Raja

Gopichand because it was made by his uncle. So, Raja Gopichand and Raja Mukhti have tremendous similarities. [story of the films retold]. If I remember right, Raja Gopichand was directed by Bhagwan (Inaudible)

Shivananda: The play?

Randor Guy : Nono, the Tamil film. Meanwhile I will check that. Around this time your father was nominated as the member of Legislative Council of Karnataka. Karnataka was Mysore at that time.

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : I remember it was for his services in art.

Shivananda: He was mostly in theatres.

Randor Guy : It was called MLC (Member's Legislative Council). In MLA people were elected but in MLC people were nominated. Prithviraj Kapoor, Nargis, R. K. Narayan all were the members of the Parliament. The actress Aarti was a member of the Legislative Council. Your father had also got an Award from the President of India in 1955 with the Golden Lotus embossment.

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : This was the central Sangeet Nataka Academy award.

Shivananda: Yes. This award was given for the first time. Next year Prithviraj got it.

Randor Guy : In 1950, he made a film called Gunasagari which was Sathya Sodhanai in Tamil. Can you tell me something about that production?

Shivananda: Previously I told that my grandmother used to tell Shivakatha just like Harikatha in villages and collected rice out of it.

Randor Guy : Oh. And you're your father remembered those stories.

Shivananda: My sisters Sarunamma and Maruthamma used to write these stories.

These stories were given to my father and my father gave it to H. L. N. Simha out of which he wrote the screenplay and my father produced Gunasagari in Kannada and Satya Shodhanai in Tamil. Now coming to H. L. N. Simha who is one of the prominent figures in Karnataka Cinema. He directed Samsara Nauka.

Randor Guy : Samsara Nauka was made in Tamil later and he (H. L. N. Simha) directed the Tamil version too. But I know that the Kannada version was a big success and it was a memorable film. Can you tell me something about H. L. N. Simha?

Shivananda: He was a stage man.

Randor Guy : H. Lakshmi Narasimha.

Shivananda: Yes. H. Lakshmi Narasimha. He came from Nanjanagud (Inaudible). He had his own drama troupe. He was a full-time professional stage man.

Randor Guy : Was he also an actor?

Shivananda: No. He was a stage actor

Randor Guy : Stage actor, writer, director and film producer?

Shivananda: Yes. He produced Samsara Nauka. Abba was his another play in which Mynavathi did the lead role.

Randor Guy : But I think his first attempt was Samsara Nauka as a film in 1937 [**Note:** It was a 1936 film].

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : That is supposed to be the first contemporary film in India starring Panthulu and M. V. Rajamma. I think, Panthulu came in the limelight through this picture in 1936.

Shivananda: Yes. Here in the play also he used to do the same character.

Randor Guy : Sundar. Satyanarayana very kindly narrated the story yesterday. Did

H. L. N. Simha worked for your father's troupe ever?

Shivananda: No. He had his own troupe. Panthulu was starred in some of his films.

Randor Guy : He worked on the script of Gunasagari. What kind of story is Gunasagari?

Shivananda: It was a folklore. A husband going abroad,

Randor Guy : After Gunasagari, your father made Satya Shodhanai in Tamil in 1950 or in 1951. Can you tell something about that film as you were teenager then?

Shivananda: I was not associated with the films at all. I was in school then.

Randor Guy : So, you said that your sisters wrote it listening to the stories of your grandmother and H. L. N. Simha scripted it. Who directed this film?

Shivananda: H. L. N. Simha directed it.

Randor Guy : Who were the main artists?

Shivananda: It was Pandari Bai's first film as a heroine. My aunt Krishna Kumari (sister of actress Sowkar Janaki) was starred in this film. Others were Rajasulochana, Honnappa Bhagavathar (hero of the film), T. S. Balaiah (acted as villain).

Randor Guy : Did T. S. Balaiah acted as villain in other Kannada movies?

Shivananda: There was no concept of villain those days. All were hero.

Randor Guy : (Laughs).

Shivananda: And Kari Basayya acted as the 2nd villain in this film.

Randor Guy : The photography gave a villainous look to Kari Basayya. (Laughs).

Shivananda: Yes. And B. Hanumanthachar was also there.

Randor Guy : The music director Hanumanthachar?

Shivananda: Yes. He was the comedian. Later he started playing univox.

Randor Guy : Who were comedians other than Hanumanthachar?

Shivananda: Basavaraju. He was also having a drama troupe. This film was produced with the partnership of A. V. Meiyappan. One portion was of my father and other was Karnataka Films Ltd.

Randor Guy : That is again your father's company.

Shivananda: Yes. It was my father's concern. And another one was Chettiar (i.e. A. V. Meiyappan).

Randor Guy : So, there were three shareholders?

Shivananda: Yes, there were three shareholders. [**Note:** the three producers of this film were A. V. Meiyappan, Gubbi Veeranna and C. R. Basavaraju]

Randor Guy : What was the banner under the film released?

Shivananda: Gubbi Karnataka Productions.

Randor Guy : How long the picture took to get released?

Shivananda: It took 1 and half to 2 years.

Randor Guy : 2 years? Why? What went wrong?

Shivananda: Because there were several worries for that.

Randor Guy : What were the worries?

Shivananda: Chettiar wanted to make it a multilingual film like Phalke's films. Mr Veeranna used to call night shifts for the shoot.

Randor Guy : That was very tough to work

Shivananda: Later also a set was made on the exterior.

Randor Guy : What type of set it was?

Shivananda: It was a Kane set (Inaudible). When heavy rain used to start, everything used to wash away. Again, the set was to be rebuilt.

Randor Guy : It must have hiked the cost of production also.

Shivananda: Yes. lights came with the (Inaudible) Here also Kari Basayya who played the villain was the executive producer.

Randor Guy : Who was the music composer? Who wrote the lyrics?

Shivananda: Lyricist was Ku. Ra. Seetharama Sastry and Music Director was R. Sudarshanam.

Randor Guy : Sudarshanam - the Music Director and the music composer of the AVM Productions?

Shivananda: Yes. Sudarshanam was also there in our drama troupe when he was a boy. He was the main music director of AVM Studio.

Randor Guy : He was a very good music director. How did this picture do at the box office?

Shivananda: Its Kannada version was very successful, but the Tamil version was flopped. Because then Paropakaram (Inaudible) released in Tamil theatres which fetched the huge crowd. Hence it was a great loss for Gunasagari there. Lord Shiva used to come there.

Randor Guy : Who was Lord Shiva?

Shivananda: I think Pandaribai

Randor Guy : But in 1950 when M. K. moment started the films got big canvas. In 1952 Parasakthi was released starring Shivaji Ganeshan and all that. The trend of the films itself changed. Parasakthi in 1952 and Velaikari in 1949.

Shivananda: Shivaji Ganeshan used to act in Shakthi Nataka Mandalam. Once they came to our theatre in Bangalore and he used to act in villain roles. My father gave him a golden ring and blessed him saying that he would be a great star within a short time.

Whithin the six months of this incident he got selected for the film Parasakthi.

Randor Guy : In Parasakthi, A. V. Meiyappan worked very hard to remove Shivaji Ganeshan from this film as he wasn't impressed by him thinking that he was a newcomer without a heroic figure and lack of personality. At that time K. R. Ramasamy (Acted in Velaikari) was a very popular actor and well known to A. V. Meiyappan. So, Meiyappan wanted to cast him in this film and told Perumal (the producer) about this but Perumal said that he had promised Shivaji Ganeshan that he would provide him the role in this film. Somehow, I have a feeling that Perumal was the right person here. Perumal also said that he would not step back from his promise, money is not the point here, if this picture flops they would burn it on the stage. Meiyappan was thus compelled to cast Shivaji. Meiyappan was a very business-like person. Then the film became a hit and Shivaji Ganeshan became a superstar from this film. But Meiyappan never liked it and Shivaji himself told me about it once.

Shivananda: Not only that. Mr. Chettiar didn't like Narasimharaju.

Randor Guy : The comedian?

Shivananda: Yes. For the Gunasagari, Narasimharaju was taken to Madras but Meiyappan never liked him.

Randor Guy : As you were telling that huge set was directed for Gunasagari, do you remember who was the Art Director?

Shivananda: I don't remember it now.

Randor Guy : Was he from AVM Studio.

Shivananda: Yes, but I don't remember his name now.

Other: Shantaram was the art director.

Randor Guy : Oh! S. Shantaram. He was a very good art director.

Shivananda: Muthu was the Cameraman (T. Muthuswamy).

Randor Guy : You were telling that this was a hit in Kannada and a flop in Tamil. So, it was a loss for your father. This was a loss for your father. What is your comment on that?

Shivananda: (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : (Inaudible) It was due to Meiyappan.

Shivananda: Chettiar promised my father to complete another film which was done on the same partnership basis as the Gunasagari was done. Hence, they produced Bedara Kannappa starring Rajkumar (it was the first film of Rajkumar as a hero), Narasimharaju, Balakrishna and G. V. Iyer. All of them became stars later. This film was completed within five months.

Randor Guy : It was made quite fast. Was it a folklore story?

Shivananda: Yes, it was a folklore

Randor Guy : It was there in Telugu poetry.

Shivananda: Later it was produced in Telugu language by Chettiar by the name of Kalahasti Mahatyam.

Randor Guy : Bapu also made Bedara Kannappa with Raju.

Shivananda: But Rajkumar was there in Telugu version of this movies.

Randor Guy : Recently it was made by starring Krishnam Raju - that tall Telugu Hero who is very famous. He produced this film and he played that role. He is also a producer and he make this kind of big costume dramas with him as hero. Whenever he finds this kind of stories, he makes these as films so that his grand personality shall remain. Bapu directed this Bedara Kannappa [**Note:** The name of this Telugu movie is Bhakta Kannappa]. This was very well received artistically.

Shivananda: Lingamurthy and Padmanabham were starred in Kalahasti Mahatyam

and here also Rajkumar played the lead role. So, you are talking about the different film here.

Randor Guy : That I need to check when I will reach Madras. Did your father ever play Bedara Kannappa on stage?

Shivananda: Yes. [conversations in Kannada something about Goutam Buddha] Ku. Ra. Seetharama Sastry played the role of Bedara Kannappa in this play. Watching this play they decided to make it as a film.

Randor Guy : So, your father made it as a play and then found the idea that it was good enough to be made as a film.

Shivananda: Yes. Later, this Bedara Kannappa was played by not only our troupe but also by other Karnataka Theatre groups too. On Shivaratri days our troupe used to present this play with G. V. Iyer, Narasimharaju, Ku. Ra. Seetharama Sastry.

Randor Guy : G. V. Iyer who later on made Hamsageethe, Adi Shankaracharya which became the cult films. Was he a member of your father's troupe?

Shivananda: Yes, he was in our troupe for more than 25 years.

Randor Guy : What roles he used to play at that time?

Shivananda: Very small roles in the plays. Later on (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : How did G. V. Iyer come into your father's troupe?

Shivananda: He joined as a sign board writer.

Randor Guy : For the drama announcement?

Shivananda: Yes. He used to act in small roles too. But he wasn't recognised till eight years of his joining.

Randor Guy : How many people were there in the troupe?

Shivananda: 60 to 100 people were there in the troupe. Each role was done by three

to four people. When third person's turn used to come then the first two persons sometimes became ill or on leave. Likewise, G. V. Iyer was doing small roles only. Iyer played a small comic role with Vibhuti on his forehead in a social drama Chalti Duniya. Although named in Hindi it was a Kannada drama about the freedom struggle period. Watching this character my father enquired about him and then he started acting in main characters in the troupe. Later he used to act in Shakuni's role in Kurukshetra, sometimes Bheeshma in Kurukshetra and other major roles. He along with Balakrishna wrote plays for our troupes too. They were the joint writers in our troupe.

Randor Guy : Was Balakrishna good in writing also?

Shivananda: Yes. Balakrishna used to write comedy scenes and Iyer used to write the serious scenes. Kalachakra and the two social drama were written very well by them.

Randor Guy : And those were produced by your father.

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : So, Was this Bedara Kannappa the first film of G. V. Iyer?

Shivananda: Might be.

Randor Guy : What role did he play here?

Shivananda: A villain role - the pujari of the Shiva temple. Narasimharaju the comedian played the role of his son.

Randor Guy : Was Bedara Kannappa the first film of Narasimharajau?

Shivananda: Yes. I think so.

Randor Guy : Iyer once told me that he and Narasimharaju were introduced in this picture and they made their names. They also told me that Rajkumar was paid 1000

Rupees for this film by A. V. Meiyappan

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : That was a good amount in those days.

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : This Bedara Kannappa was produced in AVM.

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : And who were the other artists in this film? Lady artists?

Shivananda: Pandaribai acted here as the main heroine. Although she acted in the films before it but AVM casted her in this film as the main heroine.

Randor Guy : She also acted in Gunasagari as a main heroine.

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : Hence Bedara Kannappa was her 2nd major film.

Shivananda: Yes, it is.

Randor Guy : What was the reception to Bedara Kannappa from the public?

Shivananda: Very good. Big success. It also got the award.

Randor Guy : The certificate of Merit?

Shivananda: Yes

Randor Guy : Was it the first time the story was being made in Kannada as a film?

Sometimes one story repeatedly gets made into film e.g. Bapu made the Bedara Kannappa in Telugu later.

Shivananda: Yes. Those were the later versions. This was the first time in Kannada then Kalahasti Mahatyam in Telugu by Chettiar.

Randor Guy : There is a similar story same as Kannappa. In Tamil they call it Kannppa Nayanar but the story is the same. In Telugu also there are long story poems

(Inaudible) I read them when I was a schoolboy. In Telugu it is called Kannaiya. This was the first film of Rajkumar as a hero. I believe he was doing small roles earlier. Mr. Vittalacharya told me about that. I wrote a magazine piece in “Star and Style” some ten years ago on Vittalacharya. We were very good friends. I called him the people’s film maker because he made films for the common man and not for the intellectuals. It was called Vittalacharya school of film making. At that time, he told me that in some of his film Rajkumar did some Maharishi role and something like that. He was doing some minor roles. I believe that he was there in you father’s troupe also.

Shivananda: Yes, he was. His whole family was there.

Randor Guy : That means he comes from a theatrical family.

Shivananda: Yes, he did. His father Puttaswamiah...

Randor Guy : His (i.e. Rajkumar’s) full name was Singanalluru Puttaswamiah Muthuraj

Shivananda: Yes. He acted as Kansa and Bheema...

Randor Guy : He was a well-known stage actor.

Shivananda: Apaji. Rajkumar, his brother Varadappa, his sister Sharada are no more.

Randor Guy : Whole family was in acting.

Shivananda: Yes. Later on he joined the M. V. Subbaiah Naidu’s troupe.

Randor Guy : From the year he went there?

Shivananda: Yes. There he used to act major roles.

Randor Guy : Then what happened? The entire family left.

Shivananda: Yes. And joined Subbaiah Naidu.

Randor Guy : Was he S. M. Subbaiah Naidu or S. P. Subbaiah Naidu?

Shivananda: M. V. Subbaiah Naidu. Rajkumar got bigger roles there to act in. So many

people were there in our troupe and he had to wait for his turn to come. He got very good roles there.

Other: The Hubli (Inaudible) came.

Randor Guy : Hubli?

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : There is the story which is circulated about Rajkumar. H. L. N. Simha who discovered him in a bus stop in Nanjanagud(Inaudible)

Shivananda: (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : You were talking about Rajkumar. You said he went to M. V. Subbaiah Naidu's company from where he was supposed have been brought and I told you that there was a story that he was discovered by H. L. N. Simha while waiting at the bus stop.

Shivananda: I was told that when he was in our drama troupe his father used to ask my father to give him roles so that he looks like Rajkumar (Inaudible) When he was in Naidu's troupe it was (Inaudible) Hubli. My father brought him in Madras

Randor Guy : Is it how he got the name Rajkumar?

Shivananda: Yes. His father used to tell that he looks like Rajkumar. Same name was given to him for the films.

Randor Guy : Hence Muthuraj became Rajkumar.

Shivananda: Yes. It was his father's wish.

Randor Guy : That is interesting. You told me earlier that originally in the earlier film i.e. Gunasagari, AVM was not impressed with him but this time he agreed to cast him.

Shivananda: That is because my father insisted that the star cast must be from our side. Narasimharaju, Balakrishna, G. V. Iyer and even Rajkumar.

Randor Guy : Balakrishna who was the finest artist of Kannada cinema got many admirations. Can you tell me something about Balakrishna?

Shivananda: He was also in our troupe for more than ten years. He used to act and was also a writer.

Randor Guy : From which place Balakrishna came?

Shivananda: I don't know.

Randor Guy : From which place G. V. Iyer came?

Shivananda: He was from Nanjanagud

Randor Guy : So, He was a Tamil speaking Brahmin.

Shivananda: He was Iyer. His father and his ancestral all were from Nanjanagud

Randor Guy : He talks Tamil also very well.

Shivananda: Yes. Balakrishna and G. V. Iyer wrote two plays for our drama troupe.

Randor Guy : Kalachakra and Jatadhari (Inaudible)

Shivananda: Yes. Later on when they entered in the films they left our troupe and got settled in Madras.

Randor Guy : Balakrishna was also living in Madras.

Shivananda: Yes. He had his own house in T Nagar. That is just behind the house of Rajasulochana.

Randor Guy : G. N. Chetti Road.

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : So, he was settled down for sometimes in Madras.

Shivananda: Yes. Even now, they have that house.

Randor Guy : Iyer had a house in Baroda Street. I met him in that 93 Baroda Street house.

Shivananda: He has sold it. Not in 33 Baroda Street. It was near Kodambakkam Railway station.

Randor Guy : I went to his house number of times. We were good friends. He sold that house then.

Shivananda: He constructed house here in Bangalore.

Randor Guy : Who was the music director for this Bedara Kannappa? Was it R. Sudarsanam

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : Who wrote the dialogues? Was it H. L. N. Simha?

Shivananda: Yes, H. L. N. Simha. Lyrics were written by Ku. Ra. Seetharama Sastry

Randor Guy : It was of course Black and White those days?

Shivananda: Yes, it was.

Randor Guy : How much did this film cost?

Shivananda: I have no idea.

Randor Guy : All new people were there. Rajkumar was new,

Shivananda: I have no idea. Mr. Kari Basayya may have.

Randor Guy : Ok. I will ask him. (Inaudible) Was the reception very good?

Shivananda: Yes. Very good. It also got the certificate of Merit.

Randor Guy : It was a much talked about film in Kannada and the very first vehicle of Rajkumar as hero and he went on to conquer the cinema world. After that your father did not make any films.

Shivananda: No. He made.

Randor Guy : After Bedara Kannappa?

Shivananda: After Bedara Kannappa he made Sodari (Inaudible) and some Tamil

films also (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : Can you tell us something about it?

Shivananda: You must have known that.

Randor Guy : (Inaudible) was produced by your father starring Shivaji Ganeshan?

Shivananda: Yes. Shivaji Ganeshan, Gemini Ganeshan, Savithri and Jamuna

Randor Guy : No, Jamuna was not there. S. V. Ranga Rao was.

Shivananda: It was a big star cast.

Randor Guy : That was produced by your father and (Inaudible) Directed.

Shivananda: Karnataka Films. I don't know about the banner.

Randor Guy : People were told that it was more or less an AVM production. There was no Karnataka Banner and I don't think his name appeared in that. I recently saw that picture on Television (Inaudible) What were the activities of your father after this production? Did he produce any films or acted in any films for other banners or for other producers?

Shivananda: No. Later, this Gubbi Karnataka Productions was dissolved. Only Karnataka Films started producing films.

Randor Guy : Of which your father was the Chairman.

Shivananda: Yes, and Sodari was another Kannada film.

Randor Guy : Who were artists in Sodari?

Shivananda: I have no idea because I was also not in that.

Randor Guy : So, you don't know who directed Sodari.

Shivananda: No. Shankaram was there. (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : J. Shankaram? I will check it in Madras getting the directory. What was after that? You said that Sadarame was remade under Karnataka Films banner.

Shivananda: Yes. Here father acted as the father of Adimurthy.

Randor Guy : Who played this Pucca kalla?

Shivananda: Kalyan Kumar. [**Note:** The character of Pucca Kalla was played by Gubbi Veeranna in Sadarme]

Randor Guy : How did he combat you father's role?

Shivananda: It was fairly good acting.

Randor Guy : Who directed the 2nd version of Sadarame?

Shivananda: I have forgotten.

Randor Guy : I will check it up. Don't worry. How was the reception to the 2nd version?

Shivananda: Average.

Randor Guy : Who played the main role?

Shivananda: Kalyan Kumar.

Randor Guy : (Inaudible) I will have to check it up and fill up the details.

Shivananda: (Inaudible) Because my father was also not completely active in the film world and I was busy in my studies and in other things. (Inaudible) Delhi only...

Randor Guy : What were you doing in Delhi

Shivananda: I studied in National School of Drama.

Randor Guy : So, you are a graduate from National School of Drama?

Shivananda: Yes. The very first batch. 2nd batch was Mr. Karan (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : E. Alkazi was there?

Shivananda: No. Mr. Satu Sen was the director of the National School of Drama.

Randor Guy : E. Alkazi came later?

Shivananda: Yes. He came on the 3rd year. After I came to Bangalore, I was here still in drama productions. For Dashavatar I was handling the accounts and all.

Randor Guy : So, he was still continuing to produce drama?

Shivananda: Yes, he never stopped drama activities.

Randor Guy : Was he also continuing the acting?

Shivananda: No. Very occasionally he used to act.

Randor Guy : He was getting very older then.

Shivananda: One or two places in a camp in the end he used to act to connect full house. It was very helpful for explain (Inaudible) Then I came here. I was away because of my studies in Delhi. I didn't know much about (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : When did he pass away?

Shivananda: In 1972

Randor Guy : He got the Padma Bhushan Award?

Shivananda: He got the Padma Shri Award in the same year in March, I think.

Randor Guy : So, he got the Padma Shri Award from the Government of India.

Shivananda: He expired in October 18th.

Randor Guy : Only for a few months.

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : So, that is the story of your father which you narrated...

Shivananda: At that time only the songs of Swayamvara were recorded.

Randor Guy : What is this Swayamvara.

Shivananda: Swayamvara - the film. Production by Karnataka Films Ltd. Rajkumar acted as a main character. He (Gubbi Veeranna) expired at the start of the shooting of this film.

Randor Guy : That is the (Inaudible) story. Then I will ask Mr. Kari Basayya. I am very thankful to you Shivananda for your very great help and having spend so much of

your time.

Shivananda: Thank you for giving me this opportunity for narrating all these things.

Randor Guy : This book I will take with me and I will keep it very carefully and I will return it as quickly as possible. As I told you that I am planning to do a series of articles on a national level and talking to some national magazines about some of the outstanding personalities of South India who have not been visited at all on an All-India level for instance in Karnataka you have your father Gubbi Veeranna, Mr. M. V. Subbaiah Naidu, Mr. R. Nagendra Rao in theatre and later on in films also. Similarly, you have in Tamil Sankaradas Swamingal - the man who is supposed to have created (Inaudible) thatres. Then Pammal Samdandha Mudaliar who is called the father of Tamil Drama. (Inaudible)

Shivananda: Yes, I know Samdandha Mudaliar ...

Randor Guy : Samdandha Mudaliar is a very famous figure you know. Eeven people in South India don't know much about them because there is so much of neglect of this kind of study. So, I am trying to revive this activity as much as possible.

Shivananda: Very good.

Randor Guy : So, I need that book and as I said that this must come in English. We must work very hard to tell the powers that we...

Shivananda: (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : I know, I won't leave you. I can take the liberty with you as a friend. I am very thankful to you Shivananda. I will never forget this favour you have done to me. This book will come back to you as safe and this also, if you can give me a copy of this.

Shivananda: Yes.

Randor Guy : I will be here for another two days, till Thursday.

Shivananda: You leave it here. I will give you...

Randor Guy : A xerox copy of this. Thank you very much. I will now take this story

Thank you.

Shivananda: Thank you.

(AUDIO CUT HAPPENED @ 59:17 - ANOTHER INTERVIEW STARTED)

Randor Guy : We were just talking about the pillars coming and shaking and ... they gave a guarantee on your confidence Prabhat Murthy agreed

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... and then they have started (Inaudible: 59:30) and then the film will be started (Inaudible till 59:56). Then I built another floor (Inaudible) no no I want this floor (Inaudible) like this, if it becomes famous for...

01.00.00

Randor Guy : Totally how many floors did you have?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Only Two ...

Randor Guy : One is that 140 by 140

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... and 60 by 121

Randor Guy : ... which you divided into two?

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... No no

Randor Guy : ... the pillars?

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... that is one 140 by 140. That is divided by pillars...

Randor Guy : ... oh that's the one divided by the pillars

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... but another one without pillars (Inaudible: 01:00:24 -01:00:47) ... mostly all Kannada producers liked Kanteerava (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : ... any particular reason why you named it Kanteerava?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Kanteerava means that is a name called King of Animals, that is 'Simha'

Randor Guy : 'Simha' is Kanteerava

T.S. Karibasaiah : Kanteerava in Sanskrit. There is a Mysore Maharaja family also called Kanteerava. So that, I prefer the Kanteerava Studios ...

Randor Guy : That's the only reason

T.S. Karibasaiah : This is the only reason ... no other reason. Even my dramatics was a Kanteerava (Inaudible: 01:01:16)

Randor Guy : I see that Kanteerava you use it

T.S. Karibasaiah : Even my Kala Kanteerava I got the title (Inaudible: 01:01:25)

Randor Guy : Title they gave you Kala Kanteerava

T.S. Karibasaiah : (Inaudible) and Bhakt Sitamani that has been given by your Madras where that ... who was the ...

Randor Guy : ... Adyar Ayurveda San

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes. Somewhere in that ... Raj Gopal Acharya, he had given me the certificate ...

Randor Guy : I saw it in your book ...

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... I have forgotten (Inaudible: 01:01:48) ... but the Kanteerava is the famous name in Karnataka

Randor Guy : Kanteerava stadium is also there

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... stadium is also there. Then it is started, after that all producers liked Kanteerava

Randor Guy : What about the lab?

T.S. Karibasaiah : See, I wanted to start the lab also

Randor Guy : You did not have a lab at that time?

T.S. Karibasaiah : No. I did not. Because I wanted to start the (Inaudible: 01:02:16) black and white machine by that Bombay... I forgot his name

Randor Guy : Film center guy?

T.S. Karibasaiah : No. He's a famous man. Forgotten his name... famous man in the lab in Bombay

Randor Guy : Not Adlabs ... Bombay Film Center...Ramnord?

T.S. Karibasaiah : No

Randor Guy : ... So anyways from Bombay you got the equipment? You wanted to
(Inaudible: 01:02:46)

T.S. Karibasaiah : I purchased for 1 lakh and ...

Randor Guy : You purchased the black and white equipment?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes, and put it in the building. That building is also still there.
(Inaudible: 01:02:54) I didn't start the plan because the financial position was bad to me so that I waited for the starting. Then Mr. Chettiar from Mangalore somebody came here then (Inaudible: 01:03:06) ... the only problem for me is the names ...

Randor Guy : Who are these people?

T.S. Karibasaiah : That is Manohar Shetty, Quality lab. He said here I want that building on lease

Randor Guy : They had started in Bangalore?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes, it is there at (Inaudible: 01:03:29)

Randor Guy : Still they are keeping it?

T.S. Karibasaiah : ...still they are keeping it

Randor Guy : By the time color production has started isn't it? What happened?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Color production used to go to the Chamundeshwari

Randor Guy : They have a colour lab?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes, a colour lab they have it there. One another lab is there
(Inaudible: 01:03:43)

Randor Guy : ... and I think Prasad has got a laboratory now. What about recording facilities in your studio? For Sound recording, VO recording ...

T.S. Karibasaiah : I haven't got into that... I wanted to start but by that time it had started by (Inaudible), so I didn't start it but by that this Chamundeshwari and this Rangaas they came up.

Randor Guy : (Inaudible: 01:04:02)

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... but I didn't want to copy it with your own people. Why should we copy it? So, I didn't start anything (Inaudible: 01:04:13)

Randor Guy : So there was no dubbing and all that...

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes

Randor Guy : What about editing facilities?

T.S. Karibasaiah : I have got editing...editing rooms ... everything is there

Randor Guy : What about a preview? When editing you must see the rushes

T.S. Karibasaiah : Preview is there. Preview Theater is there

Randor Guy : ... for projection?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Projection it is there ... to see the rushes and all ... to sync those out

Randor Guy : ... otherwise you can't edit you know... you can't see all the time on the

Moviola. You have to see it on the screen

T.S. Karibasaiah : Moviola is there... screen is there

Randor Guy : How many editing tables do you have there and how many Moviolas do you have?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Only one Moviola I have then I had given on lease to Manohar Shetty. Because he was starting that editing ...

Randor Guy : (Inaudible) so everything ...like a package?

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... like a package I had given this. So, he was running it. So only production side ...

Randor Guy : ... you were looking after

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... I looked after ...

Randor Guy : How long were you running the studio? After that you left I think

T.S. Karibasaiah : I left after about 20 years I believe

Randor Guy : You started in 67 and left in 84-85

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes

Randor Guy : ... so almost 20 years ...

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... almost 20 years, I was the managing director and I managed that very well

Randor Guy : ... then why did you leave? You built it with your own hands. You worked so hard. You sweated ...

T.S. Karibasaiah : Because I will tell you when Mr. Devaraj became a Chief Minister then Kemparaj came to me

Randor Guy : Kemparaj Urs his brother

T.S. Karibasaiah : yes. Urs, he was (Inaudible) in Madras...

Randor Guy : I know he (Inaudible: 01:05:29). He made a lot of debts there and ran away

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... and then he came here and he has an attachment with his brother. He said, no, no, I got to leave Madras. I cannot stay there. I am lost. Then brother naturally wanted to take him...then he told Kanteerava is there, you can be a chairman for it like this year (Inaudible: 01:05:46). Then he had complained because what happened in between the Kemparaj came (Inaudible) ... I who got this fellow in the industry. He came and he used to call me brother, Anna Anna (Inaudible: 01:05:59-01:06:18) then I agreed because we want government support. So, then we accept all the terms. Then I told him I want to become a chairman (Inaudible: 01:06:25)

Randor Guy : He agreed too and Kemparaj became the chairman

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes. Chairman of the studio ... then what happened that fellow gave the 12 lakhs loan given by the Virendra Patil, that there was a mutual understanding with the government, that interest will be waved off after 3 to 4 years

Randor Guy : so you have not paid interest

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... not paid the interest. That itself become a Five Lakhs and ...

Randor Guy : ... so accumulation of interest

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... accumulation of interest had become Five Lakh

Randor Guy : so it became 17 lakh

T.S. Karibasaiah : no no I mean the Five Lakh has been accumulated as an interest then this fellow Kemparaj wanted to take it off. He had purchased the share which Sham anna has been taken by Industry Development Corporation. Just the government has purchased that Five Lakh and this 5 lakh and that interest has been converted as a share illegally ... illegally converted as a share and it's become a 10 lakh... then more than 51%

Randor Guy : ... the government has ...

T.S. Karibasaiah : (Inaudible: 01:07:38)

Randor Guy : ... the controlling interest he manipulated ... Kemparaj took up to the government side

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... government side ... then this Kemparaj was the chairman and I got (Inaudible: 01:07:49). Then after another two years ... not two years... he had canceled my managing directorship

Randor Guy : Just like that! How can he do that!

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... because the government had taken majority shares, so, that they want on top IAS officer as a chairman

Randor Guy : There was no agreement between you and the government?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Only Five years was there. Only 5 years 5 years 5 years like that we did

Randor Guy : ... that was unofficial

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... unofficial and even agreement also (Inaudible) it has been renewed (Inaudible: 01:08:32). That was running for about 20 years. Then they asked 21st year and 22nd year, the government has not approved me as a managing director... not an IAS man to be a managing director ... chairman will be like Kemparaj Urs. Then the Kemparaj Urs died. Now even today that is in separation

Randor Guy : Is the studio working today?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Studio is working

Randor Guy : ... and who is the chairman now?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Chairman is ... formally the minister was there but they all are retired. Now the Director of information and Public Relations

Randor Guy : Who is the chairman? Who is the managing director?

T.S. Karibasaiah : (Inaudible: 01:09:12)

Randor Guy : ... run by the government

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes, now it's completely government. Then the Hegde came as a chief minister. He knows me very well from the beginning. He knew that I have struggled for the studio and I have taken a lot of pain. You know then I thought that he would be able to help me. That fellow that one unknown fellow in film industry (Inaudible: 01:09:37) Kumar

Randor Guy : (Inaudible) Kumar

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... he made the chairman

Randor Guy : (Inaudible) Kumar was made the chairman by the (Inaudible)

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes... by the (Inaudible) Then he was able (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : You were there as a director?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes. When the ???Kumar had taken the charge within 8 days or 12 or 15 days my renewal had come as a director (Inaudible: 01:10:04) ... the renewal of directorship came. But that (Inaudible) Kumar and some of the government directors had decided themselves not to promote me as a director. They didn't want me there.

Randor Guy : That's unfortunate

T.S. Karibasaiah : ...and then in the meeting that proposed (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : ... and somebody seconds like in any company meeting

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... nobody supported me (Inaudible: 01:10:27) ... Then I came back. Now I am only the shareholder

Randor Guy : What will be your shareholding like?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Twenty-Five Thousand Rupees share holding

Randor Guy : Any dividends in the share?

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... no dividend was given so far. But when I was there I was in just the border of the margin. For another two or three years, I would be able to give the

dividend

Randor Guy : You were about to break even

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes, break even. Then after he becomes a chairman about one month that (Inaudible: 01:11:04) died. (Inaudible: 01:11:04) Now I am only staying as a shareholder of the Kanteerava studio. But no Chairman has been appointed ... because Hedge did all this mischief like this because he wanted to take care of the (Inaudible: 01:11:20)

Randor Guy : (Inaudible) Kumar was his friend?

T.S. Karibasaiah : He was a Janta Party man. He has a (Inaudible: 01:11:25)

Randor Guy : So far as the studio is a concern, you were totally out of it accepting as a share holder

T.S. Karibasaiah : (Inaudible). I don't know what the decision government has taken... god only knows. But I don't want to compel anybody and I want to say like (Inaudible: 01:11:47) let them hang themselves ... After, I left they no payments have been given to the workers, staff ... no payments. (Inaudible: 01:12:01). So far in my 21 years when I was there, on the 31st, 5 o'clock in the evening every technician should have their payment in their packets and on Saturday at 4:30 all the weekly wagers should get their labors with their packets. That was the condition for 21 years I maintained like that.

Randor Guy : Now it's not done...

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... even if suppose if the 31st has come on Sunday so I used to give on 30th itself the payment

Randor Guy : In the studio, do you have a back-projection facility?

T.S. Karibasaiah : No

Randor Guy : ... no back projection. You didn't think of it

T.S. Karibasaiah : No, but I want to have all those things (Inaudible: 01:12:40)

Randor Guy : Another thing I want to ask you. Before you started this studio in Bangalore this Kanteerava studio, what were the studios in silent days? I am told there were some studios in Malleshwaram about which even Shivanand talked. There was I believe Gubbi Veeranna and the studio. He said something about it

T.S. Karibasaiah : No it is not the Gubbi Veeranna studio one (Inaudible: 01:13:12) had that but he was a friend of Veeranna. He wanted to produce the picture there, that one I don't know *The love affair* or something...

Randor Guy : What is this Mysore Sound Studio in Malleshwaram. You manager (Inaudible) Narayana said that he has seen some board - Mysore Sound Studio. Talkie studio never existed in Malleshwaram

T.S. Karibasaiah : No ... not in Malleshwaram

Randor Guy : What about studios in Mysore?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Mysore there was this Navajyothi. (Inaudible: 01:13:37)

Randor Guy : Tell me about that. When was Navajyothi started? The 1940s -30s?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Even before I believe 1938 or something like that

Randor Guy : You started it? (Inaudible: 01:13:47) Who were the other partners with you?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Krishnaswami from the Sound department, recording, he has passed the technical from Bangalore itself. And one Mr. Iyengar

Randor Guy : Is he alive?

T.S. Karibasaiah : No. They all died.

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... and one very good studio owner in Mysore; rich studio owner (Inaudible: 01:14:10). Navajyothi, but we sold it to Mr. Ramaiya ...

Randor Guy : G.R. Ramaiya. How long did you run this studio?

T.S. Karibasaiah : One or one and half that's all

Randor Guy : Did you make any pictures in that?

T.S. Karibasaiah : I don't think. Some picture has been taken out but ...

Randor Guy : One of those pictures ...

T.S. Karibasaiah : I have forgotten it

Randor Guy : *Krishna Leela* is it?

T.S. Karibasaiah : I don't...

(AUDIO CUT HAPPENED @01:14:36)

Randor Guy : At Navajyothi, you started the production but you don't remember whether you completed it or not

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes... I didn't have the capacity to invest in it

Randor Guy : Where was the studio in Mysore, Navajyothi?

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... in Saraswathipuram

Randor Guy : Now what has happened to that?

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... that has been purchased by third purchaser (Inaudible: 01:14:56)
that Shivarathri Sri Veera Math... they are running college now

Randor Guy : They are running a college in the studio. So, the studio is now gone.
What about the previous studio? When did it come? After yours? or before yours?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Not before but after this Mysore studio. They had sold it Ramaiya.
Then Ramaiya was not able to

Randor Guy : ... He did not (Inaudible: 01:15:17)

T.S. Karibasaiah : (Inaudible)...because Basavarajaya started this studio because he
escaped that... one that lady?

Randor Guy : This Premier studio was built by this Basavarajaya ...

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... but formerly it was not a studio

Randor Guy : What was that?

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... that was a Bungalow of an (Inaudible: 01:15:35) family

Randor Guy : Bungalow belonged to the Mysore Maharaja family

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes Mysore Maharaja family but he had purchased it and then built a big Bungalow over there

Randor Guy : ... converted it into a studio

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... converted and he (Inaudible: 01:15:46)

Randor Guy : Where is this studio situated?

T.S. Karibasaiah : in Hunsur Road ... about two/three miles from ...

Randor Guy : I have seen the studio. Once or twice I have gone there ... and the Premiere Studio, Basavarajaya, how long was he running it?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Even now it is running

Randor Guy : Is it working?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes, it is working of course

Randor Guy : ... not very active?

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... not very active but it is running. He wants to sell it out. He wants to stop the studio because he is fade up with workers and all this (Inaudible: 01:16:10) ... Then workers have not left and Government is also not giving the permission ... then he is forced to run. And another two floors have been to rent out for other purposes... and one and two floors are running for the cinema

Randor Guy : Is anybody going to Mysore and shooting?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Somebody (Inaudible: 02:16:20)

Randor Guy : (Inaudible) Mysore people

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes of course

Randor Guy : Another thing I wanted to ask you this B. Vittalacharya and Shankar Singh, they all were making pictures; Mahatma pictures and all that

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes

Randor Guy : Did they own their own studio in Mysore?

T.S. Karibasaiah : No

Randor Guy : Where were they shooting?

T.S. Karibasaiah : They were shooting in Madras

Randor Guy : Not in Mysore

T.S. Karibasaiah : No studio in Mysore at that time. Shankar and Vittalacharya were close friends with Prasad

Randor Guy : What about the T. Janakiram? Which studio was he running from Madras? He said he had a studio under lease ...

T.S. Karibasaiah : Where is it?

Randor Guy : ... in Mysore. The T. Janakiram was a technician ...

T.S. Karibasaiah : No.

Randor Guy : ... not that you know of. And you know M. G. Ramachandar made a picture. He made it and he acted. He and Janaki. It was made by Govindan Company.

Recently they made one film in Bangalore. After many number of years, they made one Malayalam film in Tamil. It was a big success with some other producer. They got those rights and they remade in Kannada with the same director Govind and the company's original. They made a picture in Tamil called ***Marudhanaattu Ilavarasi*** with M. G. Ramachandar, V.N. Janaki, P. S. Veerappa and C. S. D. Singh and all those people; and that was shot in Mysore

T.S. Karibasaiah : But mostly I remember with MGR (Inaudible: 01:17:45) ... then MGR was given a permanent registration but he would have started the one picture in Mysore itself. He acted in that picture. After that he had given the permanent registration as a staff, wherever you want to have a picture in Karnataka (Inaudible: 01:18:08) in Kanteerava Studios (Inaudible). He was so close to me, very friendly with me and very (Inaudible) with (Inaudible) me When he had become the Chief Minister of Madras, I went to see him (Inaudible: 01:18:26) I went there and then he was at some bungalow there. He was there (Inaudible) Hundreds of people who had crowded. People crowded before the house (Inaudible) ...Then somebody came, I give him my visiting card. I sent him to MGR and told him that I am sitting behind. That fellow I don't know whether he has given to him or not I don't know. He must have given to his PA or something. He kept it there like as usual.

Randor Guy : ...nothing happened?

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... then I waited for about half an hour/45 minutes in the row seating in the car (Inaudible) Now he has become Chief Minister, he must have forgotten (Inaudible: 01:19:05). Just I was moving a car, somebody came and said, "what do you want sir?" I said I want to see Mr. Ramchandra, because I have come from Bangalore, MD of Kanteerava Studio. Wait, sir, he told me and he ran away. He had told Ramchandra. He himself came out. See the greatness of Mr. Ramachandar I am telling you (Inaudible: 01:19:32)

Randor Guy : He remembered all the old days

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes yes

Randor Guy : ... very nice of him to do that

T.S. Karibasaiah : (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : ... very touching occasion

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... then I told him I don't want to waste your time because so many people are waiting. I will take leave (Inaudible)... thank you so much for your kind (Inaudible) I will come and see you or I will call you then I went and he called me. We talked about for 15/ 20 minute and Janaki was there (Inaudible) Janaki is also our Kannada lady you know (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : In one of the pictures I wrote a song for him, an English song. It was a dance scene. It's a duet in English and Tamil. Originally they wanted to shoot it in Bombay in a hotel called Hotel Horizon. They went and took a number of colored stills - transparencies. They said listen this is no good year. Let's set in Bangalore and I think they erected a set in a studio. The song was shot here.

T.S. Karibasaiah : He was very fond of that set. And another sequence I may say in my studio, the good producer Ramananda Sagar

Randor Guy : ... who made *Ramayana*

T.S. Karibasaiah : ...that man came ... I don't think they (Inaudible: 01:21:20)

(AUDIO CUT HAPPENED @01:21:28)

Randor Guy : ... Hema Malini and Amitabh one of his favorite

T.S. Karibasaiah : ... that producer Ramanand Sagar came to my studio I was there.

He had brought his art directors and some carpenters and Mistry ... everybody from there and he had shown me the sketch. The sketch of the bedroom set. Then I (Inaudible). Yes, sir, I can give you. How many days you can give me? I can give you in three or four days. Then I brought all of my staff and they will make a set, I told him, no necessity of your art director or carpentry section. I have got my own art director and carpentry section. I can give you the set. (Inaudible: 01:22:08) ... you do one thing, I will make a set for you, if you are satisfied, you give me the charge. Otherwise, if you don't like the job, you put your set and I won't charge you for the call sheet. That was the condition. Then he accepted and sent everybody. And I myself stood and made the set - bedroom ... a big bedroom (Inaudible: 01:22:32) bed (Inaudible) all these things I made it. Then he came and started what is this (Inaudible: 01:22:36). Hereafter, I have to do all my pictures here, he had told me. Then Mr. Amitabh Bachchan and this Hema Malini had some sequence there in the bedroom. I have forgotten now. It was so many years back. They were also very happy. He was telling that day that the Hema malini and Amitabh Bachan (Inaudible) "*Hum yahi rahega, hum Bangalore main picture main kaam karega Madras... Bombay nahi jata hai*" ... (Inaudible) They all were very with the studio and cooperation of the technician, boys. They all seemed to be very happy. Then he went away and then he is not come back. By that time my position was (Inaudible: 01:23:22 till 01:23:34). Then after I left even Raj Kapoor also has come to my studio and he was very happy with the studio.

Randor Guy : (Inaudible: 01:23:40)

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes, off course Raj Kapoor was not there during the shooting. His father had done the shooting

Randor Guy : Prithvi Raj Kapoor (Inaudible) Kannada film?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes Kannada film

Randor Guy : *Sakshatkara?*

T.S. Karibasaiah : *Sakshatkara* you are right. You are better than me

Randor Guy : This *Sakshatkara* was shot in Kanteerava?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes. The whole picture had been shot it there. Mostly all successful pictures have been done in Kanteerava. Hundreds of pictures have been shot there. But after I left (Inaudible: 01:24:04) ... all the technicians are not cooperative and even (Inaudible) not happy

Randor Guy : It is very difficult to run a studio today ... not at all easy

T.S. Karibasaiah : (Inaudible: 01:24:17) I don't want to tell anybody ... I don't want to take mud ... let them hang themselves. They are not bothered about it. Even papers (Inaudible: 01:24:26)

Randor Guy : I am very thankful to you sir for giving so much of your time. I troubled you...

T.S. Karibasaiah : I have to thank you because this is the first time I have given my things in public...

Randor Guy : I am glad that ...

T.S. Karibasaiah : See if anybody asks me (Inaudible: 01:24:52)

Randor Guy : I am very thankful to you (Inaudible)

T.S. Karibasaiah : (Inaudible: 01:25:07) I have published like anything (Inaudible) Television serial also and I have penned about Hundreds of dramas that have been uploaded by all very good (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : Your drama that *Prachanda Ravana*, I saw that. Was it a play in which

Vajramuni made a name? He played Ravana?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes. He played Ravana but what I played with our own Kanteerava studio people, that was better than what Vajramuni had acted and that is been written by (Inaudible: 01:25:47) Prabhakar himself came and told me that I am not been able to do a play like what you have given today

Randor Guy : Who wrote your play?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Same play (Inaudible: 01:26:00) ... because one thing is that capacity of Prabhakar - the dialogues and the sequences. He is a good writer (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : ... and who played Ravana in your version?

T.S. Karibasaiah : In my version, there are two members. One (Inaudible) Insurance Corporation (Inaudible)
For 7000 rs

Randor Guy : What is his name?

T.S. Karibasaiah : V. Nagaraj. He played Ravana ... and another fellow was played by another (Inaudible)
In a corporation Hanumantaiya

Randor Guy : So, both were amateurs?

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes. Amateurs (Inaudible)
But they have taken 30 years (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : You directed the dramas?

T.S. Karibasaiah : I directed the drama and I used to give training every day like this for two hours or one hour

Randor Guy : Vajramuni did not act in your troop

T.S. Karibasaiah : No. He has not acted ...

Randor Guy : ...only acted in that play.

T.S. Karibasaiah : and only produced by the author itself (Inaudible: 01:26:55)

Randor Guy : I will tell you one interesting thing when Vajramuni was interviewed by one of the magazines called *Vijay Chitra*. He said that though it is true that he got fame and all that ... acting as Ravana in *Prachanda Ravana* and he was responsible for the script also and by the time I'll tell you by the time I think the Prabhakar Shastri passed away

T.S. Karibasaiah : Prabhakar Shastri passed away (Inaudible: 01:27:24)

Randor Guy : ... that's what I'm saying. After that, his wife wrote a letter. Mrs. Prabhakar Shastri wrote a letter to the editor Vishwanath Reddy, Nagi Reddy's son saying that I saw the interview with Vajramuni. He is telling a lie. (Inaudible)

She said he is bluffing. Whatever my husband wrote he just acted and he came up because of that role. Now he's saying, "*I am responsible*". Do you remember that she had sent a letter?

T.S. Karibasaiah : (Inaudible: 01:27:53)

(AUDIO CUT HAPPENED @ 01:28:28)

Randor Guy : Did you ever act in the drama, sir?

T.S. Karibasaiah : No

Randor Guy : You never acted ... only did the backstage

T.S. Karibasaiah : Madras people wanted me to ... Meiyappa Chettiar and some other producers wanted me to act (Inaudible: 01:28:39) I refused because I wanted to start the studio

Randor Guy : The only movie you acted in was ...in that (Inaudible)

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes only picture (Inaudible)

And another two films were offered to me (Inaudible)

In Telugu (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : ... you were more interested in the studio

T.S. Karibasaiah : (Inaudible)

I didn't want to stay in Madras and I came back and I started the studio

Randor Guy : Thank you very much, sir

T.S. Karibasaiah : I have to thank you

Randor Guy : Not at all

T.S. Karibasaiah : You have taken a lot of time coming from Madras and creating all this. This is a very good game you're playing. It's very influential and very needful for the film industry

Randor Guy : I am glad you think on those lines...

T.S. Karibasaiah : I am very happy to see you and (Inaudible)



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Randor Guy : Thank you very much and I wish you a longer life, good health and you will continue to serve

T.S. Karibasaiah : Yes. The only persuasion that I want to serve (Inaudible)

Randor Guy : (Inaudible) ... I wish you all the best for your TV serial. You are 78 (Inaudible)

That's how I would like to put it

T.S. Karibasaiah : All the film actress (Inaudible: 01:29:51)

Randor Guy : Wish you all the best, sir

T.S. Karibasaiah : Thank you very much

Randor Guy : That was the interview or interviews with Mr. G. B. Shivananda, son of the famous legend of Karnataka Gubbi Veeranna, and Mr. T. S. Karibasaiah one of the leading figures of Kannada cinema and stage. He is retired from the Directorship and the running of the Kanteerava Studio in Bangalore and he now spends his time helping youngsters to train themselves in drama and also helping people who come to him for advice either regarding cinema or the Kannada stage. Shivananda, Gubbi Veeranna's son is active in theater, writing plays, and also in the production of television serials in Kannada for the Doordarshan Kendra, Bangalore. He also acts occasionally in films even now; especially with what is called the parallel cinema makers like G. V. Iyer and others. These two interviews were done in the course of a single day from morning till late in the night at the residence of Mr. Karibasaiah in Madhava Nagar, Bangalore city. This is Randor Guy finishing off these two interviews recorded today in Bangalore.