



# National Film Archive of India

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting  
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## Interview of famous Comedian and Character Actor in Film and Theater Vasant Shinde by Bapu Watve

This is an interview of Vasant Krishnaji Shinde - famous Comedian and Character Actor in Film and Theater conducted by Bapu Watve at FTII on March 30, 1985.

**Bapu Watve :** Did you enter the film industry because you liked the medium or due to financial need?

**Vasant Shinde :** I entered the industry because the situation at home was not good.

**Bapu Watve :** What do you mean by that?

**Vasant Shinde :** Because my uncle sent us to our maternal brother's place to complete our education.

**Bapu Watve :** No, but what was your father doing?

**Vasant Shinde :** My father was a watchmaker but I don't remember much about it. I only remember that I offered him water during his last breath. I must be around 7.8 years old at that time after that they sent me to my uncle's place.

**Bapu Watve :** So your mother took care of you?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes mother did take care of me by sweeping the school and washing people's dishes.

**Bapu Watve :** So it was your mother?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, my mother and as she worked in a Brahmin family I have a similar cultural influence on me. My language is pure because of the culture followed in my home and in the surroundings. There they taught us to lead life according to our own will even if your situation was dire.

**Bapu Watve :** What happened afterwards?

**Vasant Shinde :** Afterwards my uncle sent us to our maternal brother's place to complete our education.

**Bapu Watve :** Then?

**Vasant Shinde :** My uncle gave his keys to my maternal brother. My brother thought anxiously what to teach him and how to teach him as our situation was not that good.

**Bapu Watve :** Well.

**Vasant Shinde :** Then he was working in Phalke Company i.e. Hindustan Film Company as a cameraman.

**Bapu Watve :** What is his name?

**Vasant Shinde :** His name was Prabhakar Bhimrao Chavan. He introduced me to Phalke Company with his reference and I started working over there.

**Bapu Watve :** What was the year?

**Vasant Shinde :** I think I was around...

**Bapu Watve :** 12 years old.

**Vasant Shinde :** I have been there since I was 12 years old.

**Bapu Watve :** That means it must be around 1924?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes it must be around 1924 or 1925, then I worked there for 5.6 years.

**Bapu Watve :** But what was your nature of work?

**Vasant Shinde :** The job was not defined. Initially I worked in the painting department under Vishwanath Painatkar.

**Bapu Watve :** Art Director

**Vasant Shinde :** Art director and under his control I used to mix colours. Then I worked in a carpentry section if somebody needed my hand. There was no specific section defined for my job profile. Then I worked in the stores section then editing department or film drying section.

**Bapu Watve :** You mean laboratory?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, Laboratory. We worked in all these departments.

**Bapu Watve :** But at that time did everyone have to do such work in all the departments/sections?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, yes, yes, even if you are a hero or a heroine

**Bapu Watve :** Ok.

**Vasant Shinde :** They willingly did other work.

**Bapu Watve :** That means you have to do whatever work came across?

**Vasant Shinde :** Hmm

**Bapu Watve :** Whatever work came across should be completed?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, yes, yes, it was a routine then as compared to current days where we are burdened under actor's tantrums. Even Phalke used to remove grass by using a shovel.

**Bapu Watve :** Being the owner?

**Vasant Shinde :** Being the owner and then all your hero's used stand in a queue to throw away that waste. Along with working in the cinema they used to do all the work from sweeping the studio floors. This was the routine in that studio.

**Bapu Watve :** But in which Phalke's film did you work as an actor for the first time?

**Vasant Shinde :** I got my first acting opportunity in the film titled Ganapati Chaturthicha Chandra.

**Bapu Watve :** Ok

**Vasant Shinde :** Hmm

**Bapu Watve :** What was your role in that film?

**Vasant Shinde :** I was cast for Ganapati's role.

**Bapu Watve :** Ok

**Vasant Shinde :** So Ganapati's work was such that he dances and dances and falls down. The moon watches at his dance and laughs at him when he falls down.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh

**Vasant Shinde :** After the moon laughs at him Ganapati curses the moon out of anger.

**Bapu Watve :** Ok.

**Vasant Shinde :** That was the scene.

**Bapu Watve :** But did they attach a trunk on your face?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes the trunk was moulded at that time. I don't know how old it was?

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** They brought it and installed it on my face. After sometime I felt like something kept biting me from inside of that trunk.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh

**Vasant Shinde :** I ignored it and kept dancing after which there was a lot of itching inside. They were complimenting my dance as my pain in the form of voice was suppressed by background music generated by Tabla and Harmonium. They had no clue why I was shouting and when I could not bear the pain I fell down on the floor. They kept complimenting me for that act and after noticing that I was not getting up they stopped the film. Everyone came to see me noticing that something went wrong. I yelled at them to remove that trunk citing something is biting me from inside. Then they found out that it was a scorpion which kept biting me from inside of that trunk.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh my god.

**Vasant Shinde :** It kept biting from inside of that trunk. I was sweating. They took off the trunk and wiped the sweat by offering me water. I requested them to shoot after some time but then they postponed it to the next day. The shoot for the day was halted and completed the same on the next day.

**Bapu Watve :** But even if the shoot continued till you fell down you were appreciated for your dance.

Answer: - Yes

**Bapu Watve :** Falling down was -----

**Vasant Shinde :** They say that fall easily makes wonders. I had no idea what happened at that time but it appeared nice and they liked it.

**Bapu Watve :** Do you remember any other film that you acted in?

**Vasant Shinde :** The one which was about luv and kush.

**Bapu Watve :** You mean Sita Vanvas?

**Vasant Shinde :** Sita Vanvas which had this Luv - kush in it and a Maruti.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** So in that

**Bapu Watve :** What was your role in that?

**Vasant Shinde :** Now the character can be termed as Maruti, but at that time we looked like monkeys. There was a funny scene in it where they make fun of a monkey and that monkey makes fun of them. So, while making fun that monkey known as Maruti climbs upon a tree. Luv and Kush start irritating that monkey in various ways like throwing stones towards the monkey. This makes that monkey angry and it jumps towards them. After jumping the tail stayed up on the tree and this Maruti fellow came down. Immediately the cameraman said” cut cut. What happened? Vasanta Your tail is up on the tree and you came down!”

**Bapu Watve :** What other films made by Phalke have you acted in?

A. I have acted in many Phalke films Kaliya Mardan was completed earlier. But films like Syamantak Mani and Shatmukhi Ravan.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** Films like...

**Bapu Watve :** Sati Tara

**Vasant Shinde :** Sati Tara

**Bapu Watve :** What role did you play in Sati Tara?

**Vasant Shinde :** In Sati Tara, I played the role of Wali, Sugriv and Angad.

**Bapu Watve :** Role of Angad

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes of Angad. The role of Wali was played by a driver named Shelar and Sugriv’s role was played by

**Bapu Watve :** That Shelar driver had acted as Wali!

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, and Sugriv was played by Bhaurao Datar who recently passed away.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh the famous actor

**Vasant Shinde :** Famous actor who used to play Shivaji.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes

**Vasant Shinde :** So he was alive then and he used to pat on my back and say Chal Vasanta (lets go Vasanta) when I was playing as Sugriv. I didn't mind him patting my back calling me as Vasanta instead of Sugriv .

**Bapu Watve :** Because there was no talkie at that time!

**Vasant Shinde :** Then there was no talkie and I had a trained body. Even he used to go to the same gymnasium as mine. Both of us went to Mohan Master's gym in Nashik. I had an impressive walking style. We completed one round of sit-ups after finishing the walking inside palace scene. It was shot in Ramkund near Nanu Shankar's Bell.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes

**Vasant Shinde :** After finishing that scene inside the temple we completed sit-ups. Then it was not crowded as compared to the current situation.

**Bapu Watve :** So it was compulsory for actors to exercise regularly during those times?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, It was made compulsory by our owner

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** I mean Vamanrao Apate had kept two Punjabi Watchman.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** After office hours in the evening they used to call all the boys and made them do exercises. They used to instruct everybody to do Sit-ups, Push-ups.

Single bar, Double bar, little bit of Wrestling etc. Everybody used to play some games after which they were offered a glass of milk before leaving for home. Whenever the owner of the company used to be around, he used to tell everybody that they should not go home for dinner on that night. This was usually in a particular season. Suppose if there was mango season then the owner used to arrange Amras (Alphonso Pulp) and eat the dinner along with the boys.

**Bapu Watve :** Any other memories from the Phalake's Company?

**Vasant Shinde :** Once we were shooting outdoors in Trimbakeshwar for Shatamukhi Ravan film. Shooting at an outdoor location means you have to stay there with company for months. So me and one of my friends Prahlad who played Lord Krishna in earlier films where I played Gangaram Barbar along with him.

**Bapu Watve :** Continue,

**Vasant Shinde :** They had made arrangements for us in the kitchen of Dharamshala. And our job was to clean the mattress and keep it accordingly. After that lunch...

**Bapu Watve :** So you had no escape from work as a child artist?

**Vasant Shinde :** Everybody had to do this.

**Bapu Watve :** How much were you paid as salary?

**Vasant Shinde :** Initially they paid me 5 rupees salary which gradually increased to 16 rupees.

**Bapu Watve :** So what happened next?

**Vasant Shinde :** The practice, after cleaning the mattress a meal vehicle used to come and deliver food. There were chefs to collect the same. So, at one outdoor location while cleaning the room we found a brass box that came out of mattresses.

**Bapu Watve :** OK



**Vasant Shinde :** My friend Gangaram was aware about the contents inside that brass box. He took up pinch of that to put it in his mouth. After seeing the same I also asked for the same to which he refused initially. Then he offered me a Pinch of that, and I ate the same. I felt good as sugar was one of the ingredients of that content. While keeping back the box he took one more pinch of it and put it in mouth. I asked for a little more saying that he took it twice , then he grudgingly he shared his part, closed the lid of the box and kept it back. Then we cleaned the room and went down to play marbles. It must have been 15 to 20 minutes since I started playing marbles. I started to feel like I was falling down while playing. I asked myself why this was happening and then convinced myself that it must be because of some random reason. I asked Gangaram when this thing got repeated. Gangaram said we will look at it afterwards and then we continued playing marbles. Finally I lost my balance and fell down on the ground. Then they woke me up immediately. There were chefs who offered me buttermilk after which I tried to sleep. While I was trying to sleep there was a sudden disturbance in my mind and I got up. I asked Gangaram why this was happening to which he replied that this is a normal thing and told me to sleep. After some time, I vomited and felt good then I slept. All people arrived in the evening and nobody said anything to me about the incident. The person who was responsible for my work...

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** Kashinathrao Chavan was notified about the incidence. He was angry at me but he did not hit me. After the shoot was finished, we went back to Nashik and incident was notified to Dada Saheb Phalke.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh

**Vasant Shinde :** He listened to the incident and called both of us.

**Bapu Watve :** Well

**Vasant Shinde :** He called me , slapped on my face and asked whether I committed the mistake? I accepted my mistake thinking that somebody must have already told him about that incident. I thought that I should speak the truth. He said it is inappropriate behavior to open somebody's box and eat things from the same. It could have been dangerous if the contents were something else. I said, “No, it was my mistake, etc” and the matter was settled down.

**Bapu Watve :** He must be of strict disciplinarian.

**Vasant Shinde :** Dadasaheb's discipline was terrible. Once his driver had to experience the same.

**Bapu Watve :** What

**Vasant Shinde :** Once he was about to miss the shooting time because of his driver. The norm that time was everybody had to be ready by 7:00 a.m. If the shoot location was in the radius of 2 or 4 miles, then everybody had to walk down to the location except the director and the cameraman. otherwise you have to carry your luggage and the props and walk towards the location.

**Bapu Watve :** Along with the makeup?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes you had to apply the makeup and go on the spot.

**Bapu Watve :** Ok

**Vasant Shinde :** And the shoot used to start when the director used to arrive on the set. So once the driver was late and as Phalke being a disciplined man he furiously left walking towards the set. The driver must be around five minutes late and came from behind driving the car following Phalke. He kept on requesting Phalke to sit inside the car but Phalke refused and kept walking towards the set. The driver

followed him in the car till the set but Phalke made sure that he would not sit inside the car and reached the set.

**Bapu Watve :** What were your experiences while working in other sections/departments?

**Vasant Shinde :** While shooting for the film Narjamin was in progress I was working under the painter for his section. They were about to shoot a scene with a Python. Painter had created a 10 to 12 feet python. He inserted waste material inside the cloth and stitched the same. My job was to apply white powder on that python. As the shoot was planned in 2-3 days, I applied the Powder and went home in the evening. The next morning, I saw an impression of a foot on that python.

**Bapu Watve :** Well

**Vasant Shinde :** Painter asked me, "Who kept his leg on that python?" I said I didn't keep my leg. Then he inquired everywhere and tried to match the foot of every person who was present on the set. Nobody's foot matched with the imprint except mine. I then said I painted it yesterday, how can I put my foot on it? He slapped on my face.

**Bapu Watve :** Who? Painatkar?

Ans: - Painatkar, Vishwanath Painatkar I could not bear it because I did not commit the mistake. I was sure of this because if I painted it, I would never put my foot on it. I went crying to my cousin and told him that painatkar slapped me without me committing any mistake. He was also working as a chief over there, so he came along with me and asked Painatkar that whether he slapped me? Painatkar replied that he slapped him as I had put my foot on the python that was about to be used for next day's shoot. My cousin said that I was not speaking lie to which Painatkar said that

my foot matched with the imprint. My cousin told painatkar that you could have repainted it instead of slapping my brother to which painatkar replied that he punished me. My cousin said, "You did not do the right thing you could have told me instead". Then they settled the matter between themselves.

**Bapu Watve :** Well, you have acted in how many films?

**Vasant Shinde :** I have at least...

**Bapu Watve :** Well, How many films have you acted in which were made by Phalke?

**Vasant Shinde :** I must have acted in about 10 to 12 films.

**Bapu Watve :** Was there any other director in that company besides Dadasaheb?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes there was one.

**Bapu Watve :** Who?

**Vasant Shinde :** There was one Shinde Mama who used to direct films.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** Means he used to direct after doing his regular work. Dadasaheb Phalke was the director - I mean the owner and director. Shinde Mama directed a lot of old films and has also worked in the same.

**Bapu Watve :** How many years were you working with Phalake? 3 years, 3 to 4 years you must have done films?

**Vasant Shinde :** I must have worked with him for 4 to 5 years.

**Bapu Watve :** But before you came to this film Industry, were you a film goer?.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, I used to watch cinema.

**Bapu Watve :** So you used to watch cinema?

**Vasant Shinde :** I used to.

**Bapu Watve :** Even in that dire situation?

**Vasant Shinde :** But look at the roll.

**Bapu Watve :** How did you manage to watch films as you had no excess money?

**Vasant Shinde :** Situations and circumstances show you the way . Whenever I planned to watch the film I went there and used to see the color of the ticket. Then I used to reach the people who distributed handbills.

**Bapu Watve :** Well

**Vasant Shinde :** I used to keep the handbill which matched with the colour of the ticket on that day. I used to tear the same equal to the size of the ticket and used to go for the evening show. I used to submit that piece of paper as a ticket taking the advantage of darkness and used to move inside the hall. The handwill will be of that color. I have watched the film using this trick about 2 to 3 times. Whenever they tallied the number of tickets with the income of that day, they filtered out these pieces of paper for the next 2 - 3 days. They must have understood the trick. Once again, I took a chance and they caught hold of me by my shirt. They grabbed me by my shirt and slapped me on my face 2-3 times. I started shouting and apologizing for my mistakes They started asking me about my whereabouts to which I cited my relatives name and saved myself from them. I never attempted that trick after this situation.

**Bapu Watve :** What was the name of the theatre in which this incident took place?

**Vasant Shinde :** Vijanand Theater

**Bapu Watve :** And later on, I think there were a lot of your films which were screened in that theatre.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes some were screened there.

**Bapu Watve :** After leaving Dadasaheb Phalke's company did you go to the cinema company or the drama company?

**Vasant Shinde :** I joined a drama company and the reason for that was a friend named Balu Joshi.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** He came there to gather people and as he was knowing me he kept across a proposal saying, "Such and such a drama company is about to start and whether I will be interested in joining the same?" I showed my interest towards the offer and the name of the drama company was Aruna's Sangeet Mandali

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** He knew me before and had a bad experience in working with me. In the year 1928 I joined Balmohan Sangeet Mandali for two months.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh

**Vasant Shinde :** I ran away from there in two months because I had broken my habit of doing domestic work after leaving home. and I couldn't find any work there soon. I just had to sweep the floor and bring coal and flour from the market. I got tired of all such work and finally I left that place. I was not sure that he would come back to me but he dared when Aruna Sangeet Mandali started in 1929.

**Bapu Watve :** Incorporated.

**Vasant Shinde :** When it was incorporated, he called me again to work over there. I had taken my mother's permission.

**Bapu Watve :** Well

**Vasant Shinde :** However, My elder brother was not allowing me to join the field as he was facing problems with the field and he wanted us to complete our education.

Education was impossible due to our condition at that time. I noted down the timing of my brother leaving for his work and the company leaving for the tour. I managed to escape from the house and in the year 1929 I joined the Aruna Sangeet Mandali.

**Bapu Watve :** How many days were you working in that company?

**Vasant Shinde :** I worked over there for many years

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** Once I joined them we started with rehearsals. The rehearsal for the first play titled Giriniwala by Madhavrao Joshi had started. I played the role of a butcher.

**Bapu Watve :** Butcher?

**Vasant Shinde :** Butcher - A Pathan who is initially a watchman of the mill and then he has to fall in love with a woman from that locality. They fall in love with each other and that woman asks him to convert himself into a Hindu. Then there used to be a duet song between them which was very funny.

**Bapu Watve :** Well, who else's worked in that play?

A- Then a play named Sakshatkar by Sadashiv Shukla's, Nanasaheb Gokhale's big plays like Pranapratishtha, Maharwada etc. Some plays like Asarkar's ICS, Veer Vamanrao Joshi's some play named Tillu. There was a wrestling match between a man and a woman.

**Bapu Watve :** Was it Sakshatkar

**Vasant Shinde :** Uh

**Bapu Watve :** Sakshatkar

**Vasant Shinde :** Sakshatkar was by Anand Shukla.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** Sadashiv Anand Shukla.

**Bapu Watve :** Then how many days were you working in this company?

**Vasant Shinde :** I was in this company for 5 to 6 years

**Bapu Watve :** Oh, For so many years?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes

**Bapu Watve :** What did you do after that?

**Vasant Shinde :** I did not work for 5 to 6 years over there. I think I worked for 2 to 3 years over there. Then I joined Navjivan Sangeet Mandali which was a new company.

**Bapu Watve :** But when did you work under Gosavi painter?

**Vasant Shinde :** I was in Gosavi Company after leaving Navjivan Sangeet Mandali.

**Bapu Watve :** Gosavri Painter

**Vasant Shinde :** Gosavi painter - I used to rub the board and paint it over there under Gosavi.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** I was thinking of settling down over there but a friend of mine came there. Sonba Jonawane said how much salary do you get here? I said I get 10 rupees salary. He said he will pay more if I join him. And since he had seen my work on stage with Dattu Vhatolnikar he took me with him. I used to spray-paint under his guidance in Pachgani Motor Services and was paid Rs 20 against my work.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** I was residing in Tulshibaug at that time and I used to walk to my work location in the morning.

**Bapu Watve :** Were you married at that time?



**Vasant Shinde :** I got married when I was working for the company

**Bapu Watve :** Oh, already married at that time?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, I already got married by spending Rs. 300 while I was staying in Jalgaon,

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** The procession was taken out in the buggy at that time.

**Bapu Watve :** How far have you used to walk from Tulshibaug?

**Vasant Shinde :** Pachgani Motor Service near West End Cinema

**Bapu Watve :** Oh my God

**Vasant Shinde :** Near Camp.

**Bapu Watve :** You used to walk down and return back walking.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, I was paid Rs 30 including the overtime. Then I received an offer..

**Bapu Watve :** From?

**Vasant Shinde :** Londhe.

**Bapu Watve :** You mean Rajaram.

**Vasant Shinde :** No not Londhe but I got a call from some company where I thought of settling down. Then I thought of settling down in Kolhapur where I met Mr. Raghunath Kelkar.

**Bapu Watve :** OK.

**Vasant Shinde :** The one who was running an art institute?.

**Bapu Watve :** Anand Chitra.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes Anand Caricatures.

**Bapu Watve :** Anand Caricatures.

**Vasant Shinde :** He had started a cartoon company over there.

**Bapu Watve :** I mean you are aware of sketching..

**Vasant Shinde :** I am addicted to sketching. I have not appeared for any exams, but I had this hobby which was enhanced under Kelkar painter as he was working along with me in the drama company. In Anand Caricatures I learnt more about colours and my job was to draw the outlines, sketches etc Then I got a call from the Rajaram Company by Mr. Londhe

**Bapu Watve :** Oh, Gangadharpant Londhe?

**Vasant Shinde :** Londhe said I am setting up a company, I want you to join and do Gokul's role in Prem Sadyasani. I told Mr.Raghunath about the same to which he told me to join it. I joined Rajaram Company where initially they were setting up the play titled Bhavbandhan and I played the role of Kamanna. Chintamanrao Kolhatkar was working over there.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** They taught me a systematic method of drama education. How to stand in a play, how to talk, how to position yourself while talking and how to accurately deliver the dialogue with reference to distance of audience from the stage.

**Bapu Watve :** That was taught by Guru in the field of drama Mr.Chintamanrao Kolhatkar

**Vasant Shinde :** Chintamanrao Kolhatkar and then I got other work as he had set-up my work over there. After bahvbandhan they set-up another play titled Gokul. I got a little name and fame from there. I imitated Dinkarrao Dhere who played the role of Kamanna earlier and I had seen him playing that only once in my life.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes.

**Vasant Shinde :** Because of that play I was able to play Kamanna.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes Dinkar's Kamanna

**Vasant Shinde :** I set him as an ideal for my work and kept working accordingly. One day I got a call from Ranbasera picture which belonged to a company named...

**Bapu Watve :** Asha Pictures.

**Vasant Shinde :** Asha Pictures, someone in that company had called me as a makeup master.

**Bapu Watve :** Why? Did Rajaram stop operating at that time?

**Vasant Shinde :** Rajaram was operating but I was asking for Rs. 25 as my salary was Rs.20 over there.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh my God

**Vasant Shinde :** They did not increase my salary so I had to leave from there.

**Bapu Watve :** Whose acquaintance did you get the job in Ranbasera Picture?

**Vasant Shinde :** Chintamanrao.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** I used to do makeup for the play, so he thought it could do makeup over there. But I didn't succeed because there is a difference between makeup for the picture and makeup for the play.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** Then I worked under famous Mumbai makeup artist Baburao Aitodekar who recently died a car accident.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** He was the head and under him. I used to do jobs like applying powder, showing mirror to artists, and cleaning the sweat from artists' faces.

**Bapu Watve :** But how much was your salary at that time in Asha Pictures?

**Vasant Shinde :** I was paid Rs 50 in Asha Pictures. I worked over there for a few days hoping for the best in future.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** Suddenly I got lucky and received a letter.

**Bapu Watve :** From?

**Vasant Shinde :** Chintamanrao

**Bapu Watve :** OK1

**Vasant Shinde :** Bhalji Pendharkar is making a film called Sasurwas and he wants a man who can replace Dinkar Kamanna.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** So you...

**Bapu Watve :** Dinkar Kamanna was not in this world by then.

**Vasant Shinde :** He expired and his film titled Sunbai was made earlier.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes

**Vasant Shinde :** So a film titled Sasurwas - a sequel to earlier film was in the making.

**Bapu Watve :** I see Subhanya's role.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, Initially Bhalji tried many actors for the role but nobody was apt for the role. Chintamanrao suggested Bhalji that he has one of his disciples named Vasanta who should be given a chance for trial. So he wrote me a letter asking me to leave for Kolhapur as early as possible..

**Bapu Watve :** To Kolhapur?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes to Kolhapur. Then I showed this letter to the makeup master's and he told me to come back immediately. Then I told the owner that my grandmother was ill and left from there. Bhalji's method of rehearsing was like a play. They had a rehearsal hall where every artist was seated Sulochanabai,.Raja Paranjape, everyone was there. Everybody was doing something related to the shooting. Bhalji stopped the activity and asked me “What can you perform”, I said, “Whatever you say, an imitation from some play”.He said show me anything, then I performed on a speech of Kamanna from Bhavbandhan, He selected me for the role and scheduled my shoot for next 4 to 8 days. Before that they shaved my head completely.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh

**Vasant Shinde :** So for Subhanya's they shaved my head in an old style called ghera. I got a little nervous initially, but the shoot was at night.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** The night scene explained to me that the character comes back home from Tamasha (Folk Dance). He opens the door, comes inside and sleeps as he was awake throughout the night. His wife is also awake waiting for him to come home and I had to sleep on her lap. They instructed me that you should not start performing before they say the word ‘start’. After saying start you open the door, come inside and sleep on her lap. She continues her song and after she finishes her song you wake up and say your two-line dialogue. So, they started the scene and she finished her song. I was supposed to wake up but I didn't as I had fallen asleep.

**Bapu Watve :** You mean you slept on her lap?

**Vasant Shinde :** I really slept on her lap and they were waiting for me to wake up according to the scene.. They stopped everything. Hey Vasanta, did you sleep? I didn't understand anything then and got alerted by saying I slept. He said, "Is it because you are experiencing a lap of women working in cinema for the first time?". His comment was embarrassing and I said, "I slept for real". Then he arranged a retake by saying "Do not sleep now". I washed my face for the retake and then that shot was OK.

**Bapu Watve :** OK. How much you were paid as per the contract?

**Vasant Shinde :** As per contract I was paid one and a half thousand at the beginning.

**Bapu Watve :** This was enough as per that time.

**Vasant Shinde :** Enough as when I was working in a drama company or did other work, I had never seen a hundred rupees note in my life. As soon as I saw a hundred rupees note, I jumped in excitement. The incident of getting the actual note in hand and then explaining to me about income tax etc. was a new experience. I didn't understand anything about income tax. He said to save income tax they are signing me for a 6 months contract and they finished the picture in 3 months.

**Bapu Watve :** Good

**Vasant Shinde :** And then immediately.

**Bapu Watve :** What immediately?

**Vasant Shinde :** Using their reference I got introduced to one Devtale or...

**Bapu Watve :** Talpade

**Vasant Shinde :** Talpade Sorry Keshavrao Talpade. He had started shooting for his film title Mard Maratha. He asked me for a role and told me to take permission from Baba (Bhalji). Then Baba said as you wish.

**Bapu Watve :** Mard Maratha or Karasthan.

**Vasant Shinde :** Sorry, Mard Maratha was his next film. Thanks for reminding

**Bapu Watve :** Karasthan.

**Vasant Shinde :** It was his first film featuring G.D.Madgulkar, Paranjape...

**Bapu Watve :** Raja Paranjape?

**Vasant Shinde :** Raja Paranjape and I am not sure about this Vinayi Kale? He was told to pay me that same amount that was paid to me earlier Rs. 1500. While the shoot of this film was about to end Bhalji started with his own film titled 'Jay Bhavani'

**Bapu Watve :** Historical?

**Vasant Shinde :** Historical.

**Bapu Watve :** But Vasantryao let me ask you a question that you worked in Sasurvas in 1946.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes

**Bapu Watve :** It was after 18 or 19 years after leaving Phalke's Company. What difference did you feel this time while working in cinema? And also another difference was that Phalake produced silent films and this was talkie film by Bhalji.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes

**Bapu Watve :** So what did you feel while working in a talkie film?

**Vasant Shinde :** In a talkie film?

**Bapu Watve :** I mean, how did you feel working in cinema after so many years?

**Vasant Shinde :** I did not feel any major difference because finally I had to imitate in a similar way what I used to imitate in the play. The only difference was between dramatic and cinematic acting which they taught me. That's all, but in the beginning,

there was pressure on me. It was about how am I talking, then they had to focus on talking for a particular distance. It didn't take me long to pick it up.

**Bapu Watve :** When you came to the Talkie film from the Silent film era, did you feel a little bit of tension of equipment like mic?

**Vasant Shinde :** That is what I said that initially there was a little bit of pressure because of all the attention by the camera and mic. I was not sure whether I was acting right or not, whether my face was visible or not etc.

**Bapu Watve :** Because you were a child while working with Phalke and then the understanding level was...

**Vasant Shinde :** Nothing and since there was no talkie there I used to speak anything as per the context. There was no need to memories your lines.

**Bapu Watve :** They must be instructing from outside of the frame.

**Vasant Shinde :** They used to instruct from outside and it didn't matter. But here you cannot speak in between so you should memories your lines and concentrate while working.

**Bapu Watve :** Whose film did you opt after Jay Bhavani?

**Vasant Shinde :** Then I acted in Talpade's Mard Maratha. There after I got films in succession and then people started recognizing me in the villages.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** After the film was released people used to call for tea or something else. When I used to refuse tea, they used to offer me Soda. They used to say you have worked in 4-5 films, now you have become a big actor etc. I was a little affected by what they said

**Bapu Watve :** OK



**Vasant Shinde :** I felt like I have really become a big actor and even if I stay at home, they will come for me. I sat at home for a year waiting for the call.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** As nobody was ready to call me and I saw plays running in Anviraj Theatre which was opposite to my home. I was watching the same from my window and expected somebody would call me, but nothing happened for days. Then I got a call from a director named Shankar Danve who was directing a play for a person named Govind Dutt. He was the sole owner of the company and had experience of producing a play. Before rehearsals they made me sign a contract which said I will work honestly and dedicate some number of nights for them. The two-sided contract was signed as both parties were happy and agreed upon the terms. But they compressed two-page contract to one-page contract. They never gave me the second page of the contract ever. Whenever I used to ask for the same, they used to provide reasons and delay the same to next time. The rehearsals were going on, the play was about to freeze, and they still kept saying they will give me that page of contract. I smelled a rat after observing their suspicious activities and asked for the complete contract just a day before the play was scheduled on stage. I said I will not work unless and until you provide me with a complete contract. I had no idea about their game plan, but they didn't provide me with the same till the last moment. The play was staged and after that I was sitting in my home. I received court notice the next day.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh

**Vasant Shinde :** The lawyer gave me the notice which mentioned that I should compensate for the loss as I was the reason for the loss. I was scared because nothing like this had happened before in my life. By God's grace I met Anant Dhumal

**Bapu Watve :** The actor.

**Vasant Shinde :** It was raining that night and he was going somewhere. He called me from the window. I welcomed him inside the home and told them the complete situation. He listened to me patiently and told me to accompany him so that we can meet his lawyer friend Manohar Kele. We also sent a notice to them and the topic was finished then and there. There was no reply from the other party. Later Anant Dhual told me that the lawyer who sent me the notice earlier was working under Manohar kele.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** So I got out of the matter just because that Manohar Kele was senior to this lawyer and they settled the case between themselves

**Bapu Watve :** In which film you worked after that incident?

**Vasant Shinde :** (No context)

**Bapu Watve :** No.

**Vasant Shinde :** Before that incident I worked in a film titled as Jivacha Sakha. They wanted to start that film again.

**Bapu Watve :** This was in Prabhat Studio

**Vasant Shinde :** This is what I understood that Charudutt was staying in Poona guest house.

**Bapu Watve :** OK, Mangal pictures...

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, Mangal Pictures. So, I thought of going there and asking for the work as I was knowing a lot of people over there. Vasantrao Saranaik was known to me as we worked together in Baba's (Bhalji's) project. Raja Paranjpe was known to me and after learning that G.D.Madgulkar was also working there then I was confident of getting work.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, Raja Paranjape was the director and Madgulkar was the writer of that film.

**Vasant Shinde :** It was just due to my condition I went towards them to ask for work.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, yes understood

**Vasant Shinde :** Then I asked him whether I can get some work? he replied that an actor of your calibre should not ask for work from us.

**Bapu Watve :** OK.

**Vasant Shinde :** And we do not have such a big role that can be given to you. We have a small role, but we cannot afford to pay a big actor like you. I said I am ready to accept whatever you pay, and you will pay as per industry standards. Then he replied that he has no work for me. Then I met Vishnupant. I went and met Vamanrao Kulkarni who told me to meet Madgulkar. Madgulkar said it was not in his hands but asked to check for the role of Kala.

**Bapu Watve :** OK

**Vasant Shinde :** Raja Paranjape told me that you have acted for such a big role and offering you a small role is not good. I replied my situation is difficult and I am in need of work. I said I am ok with whatever amount you pay for my work. After that they discussed among themselves and came to a conclusion of paying me rupees 250 for my work.

**Bapu Watve :** For complete film.

**Vasant Shinde :** They said we will pay Rs. 250 for the complete film.

**Bapu Watve :** And you accepted the offer?

**Vasant Shinde :** There was no other option than accepting the same as the images of my family came in front of my eyes. I said yes to them keeping faith in God. I told about this incident in my house and they paid me rupees 50 in advance. When the work started I got another offer for a film. You and Vasant painter both came to my house and you know what happened next. You asked me for a film based on a woman.

**Bapu Watve :** Sati Ahilya

**Vasant Shinde :** Sati Ahilya

**Bapu Watve :** Hindi

**Vasant Shinde :** I said I do not know Hindi. Will you take care of that? You said yes from behind and hence Painter got convinced.

**Bapu Watve :** He was convinced?

**Vasant Shinde :** You respected me and they took me too. The first shot between both of us was on a tree

**Bapu Watve :** How much did they pay you for Ahilya as per contract?

**Vasant Shinde :** Everything was decided in the beginning

**Bapu Watve :** I think a contract of Rs 1,500 was signed

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, this number 1500 was common everywhere

**Bapu Watve :** And how much did they pay you as an advance?

**Vasant Shinde :** They paid me Rs 500..

**Bapu Watve :** The producer was Pandurang Gotnis

**Vasant Shinde :** Pandurang Gotanis gave me advance and started with the work.

**Bapu Watve :** This means the amount that was paid for the complete film Jivacha Sakhala was paid as advance for this Hindi film.

**Vasant Shinde :** After getting the advance, our shooting started and we both were on that tree.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, I did work with you.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, you were Kirmakam.

**Bapu Watve :** Shapatayan Shapatayan...

**Vasant Shinde :** Why Shapatayan?

**Bapu Watve :** And you Trishul .

**Vasant Shinde :** I don't even remember the name of my character. We both were playing the role of celibates and our first shot was we see this woman taking a bath in the river. We had to jump in that river. After seeing you jumping inside the river I thought why not try to jump in an innovative way. In order to show variety in my acting skills I got hold of my legs and pressed my nose and jumped inside the river. I did fall on a rock which resulted in a fracture. One of the fingers of my leg was fractured and at the end of the day the shooting was stopped due to this incident.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes

**Vasant Shinde :** They stopped shooting my part and when the shoot was in the last stage they took my random shots. They made me sit somewhere and took my shots.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, yes

**Vasant Shinde :** Raja Paranjape used to instruct me to keep your hands in a position and supported it with crutches.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, yes

**Vasant Shinde :** When the shot was ready I used to keep aside the crutches, stand on one leg and perform in front of the camera. They took a lot of shots above my waist level and completed the film.

**Bapu Watve :** After this, did your situation improve?

**Vasant Shinde :** My situation got better but later due to floods I faced a new problem of diphtheria.

**Bapu Watve :** Who was the patient?

**Vasant Shinde :** My daughter was diseased with... diphtheria. I didn't have enough money for her treatment, so I kept a gold chain as a mortgage at a saraf (Jeweller). The girl was terribly ill and my wife was not ready to leave her. Chittaranjan and Takalkar persuaded her and as per the doctor's instructions we took her to the hospital. She was not ready to let her go, so we persuaded and took her there. Then I paid the bill with mortgage money and released her. She was fine after we released her.

**Bapu Watve :** The crisis was resolved

**Vasant Shinde :** When this crisis was averted there was a parallel crisis of floods. In the flood situation I was shooting for some film in Kolhapur.

**Bapu Watve :** Which one?

**Vasant Shinde :** I think it was a film titled Manini. The shooting was going on in full pace. I was in Pune on the flood day to take a trademark from there to Kolhapur. I took that trademark, Bindi etc. hired a taxi and left for Kolhapur as Baba would not have come this far. The next day I read in the newspaper that there was water on the bridge. I got nervous there and left for Pune in a night dress. On the way to Pune near Shirwal somebody told me that the administration is not allowing vehicles inside

Pune. But somehow, I managed to come inside Pune. I went home and the house was locked. I searched for my family around and found out that they went to Chittaranjan's house. After going to Chittaranjan's house I met my family. They were moved to camp the day before the flood, and they spent the night in camp.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh my god.

**Vasant Shinde :** The next day I came home and opened the door. It was muddy and everything was spread all over. After 8 to 10 days a letter from Suryakant arrived. Before that, I forgot to tell you about an incident. I was working on an embroidery of Sai Baba. To my surprise it remained the same even after the flood. Chittaranjan was also surprised to see it. Then he left it as it is, and I still have that embroidery work with me. So, I got a letter from Suryakanta. I went to Kolhapur and he had sent Rs. 100 with Chandrakant Shinde. He gave me a place to stay in his own house with my whole family. Then he had started constructing his own house and he built a room for me, a big kitchen and a place where I could stay. Then I stayed there for a year and repaired my house in Pune. For about 8 months I travelled back and forth to Pune and as soon as I repaired my home, I shifted to Pune.

**Bapu Watve :** Afterwards.

**Vasant Shinde :** Then I restarted working in films. The work was flooded in such a way that the memories of flood were wiped out.

**Bapu Watve :** Well

**Vasant Shinde :** All poverty had been washed away.

**Bapu Watve :** Good

**Vasant Shinde :** And then my daughter got married. Both daughters got married and it was all happiness in the house. The Almirah made by Godrej and other things. There were no problems afterwards and I am satisfied with the work I got till date.

**Bapu Watve :** Vasant, were you cast for comic characters or did you play any other roles in films?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes

**Bapu Watve :** I mean a villain type role?

**Vasant Shinde :** I have played a villain character.

**Bapu Watve :** In which film?

**Vasant Shinde :** In a film titled ----"Kortchi Payri". I have played a comic villain in Manache Paan. I had to play role of a tailor

**Bapu Watve :** You played the role of a villain in Karasthan.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes

**Bapu Watve :** Also in Chuda Tujha Savitricha.

**Vasant Shinde :** I played a villain in that film also.

**Bapu Watve :** Also in that film?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes I played it.

**Bapu Watve :** What other roles did you play besides villains and humorous characters?

**Vasant Shinde :** What do you mean by others?

**Bapu Watve :** I mean a sympathetic role.

**Vasant Shinde :** Of course, the role of servant in Manini is sympathetic. Also, in Malhari Martand etc.

**Bapu Watve :** In Saticha Waan?



**Vasant Shinde :** In Saticha Waan?

**Bapu Watve :** Satichi Punyayi?

**Vasant Shinde :** Satichi Punyayi?

**Bapu Watve :** In this...

**Vasant Shinde :** Sasurvashin etc.

**Bapu Watve :** Your role in Thapadya was different, wasn't it?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, it was the role of a big horticulturist. But I said that I may not be the perfect match for that role. But everybody from the author to the owner insisted that you have to do it. But in fact, my opinion has been 50% should be your looks and 50% should be your work. I was thin and to look like a gardener one must appear huge with an attitude. Still they insisted on me, so I did the role using my acting skills. I inserted sponges in my garments and used mustache on my face. Then they appreciated my work saying Anna, even if your height is small you increased the height of the character by your acting skills.

**Bapu Watve :** Wow?

**Vasant Shinde :** And now you say that your work has been so good

**Bapu Watve :** So you found that as a challenging role.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes.

**Bapu Watve :** Your role in movie Sangate Aika.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes

**Bapu Watve :** After watching your role in this film, I heard that Johnny Walker had praised your work.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes

**Bapu Watve :** What is that incident?

**Vasant Shinde :** That was because of Anantrao's effort to create that silent expression, I had no idea. He took all the expressions in pieces and after editing, he got that idea. The effect of that expression was so much that it faded the effect of the dialogue. After this man watched there in Mumbai.

**Bapu Watve :** Who? Johnny Walker?

**Vasant Shinde :** After seeing that Johnny Walker asked Anantrao Mane who is that person? Then Anantrao told him about me after which he praised my acting saying, "he is good man".

**Bapu Watve :** What an expression!

**Vasant Shinde :** When Anantrao told me this, I also felt a little better

**Bapu Watve :** Do you remember the names of the films that were famous?

**Vasant Shinde :** First one is Sangate Aika.

**Bapu Watve :** Not these before the film Bala Jo Jo Re.

**Vasant Shinde :** Before it was Dharma made by Dharmadhikari

**Bapu Watve :** Pedgaonche Shahane.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes Bala Jo Jo Re, Pedgaonche Shahane then

**Bapu Watve :** Grahadevata

**Vasant Shinde :** Grahadevata.

**Bapu Watve :** Rangalya Ratri Ashya.

**Vasant Shinde :** You remember them more than me, Rangalya Ratri Ashya. I am unable to remember them one after another.

**Bapu Watve :** And Thamb Laxmi Kunku Lavate did well even Sasurvashin did well.

**Vasant Shinde :** You played a small role in Thamb Laxmi Kunku Lavate even in Kadak Laxmi you played a small role. You played a memorable role in the film titled Bhalu.

**Bapu Watve :** Vasantrao, have you done any work in Hindi films besides Marathi films?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes

**Bapu Watve :** Which one? You told about Sati Ahilya some time ago.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes, it was done for Santoshi.

**Bapu Watve :** In the year 1953-54

**Vasant Shinde :** (film name- Pahili Tarikh) with Raja Nene

**Bapu Watve :** Pahili tarikh

**Vasant Shinde :** I worked with him in a Hindi film titled Malati Madhav. Like this I worked in about 2 - 4 hindi films. Namdev by Talpade was shot in Hindi as well as Marathi.

**Bapu Watve :** oK.

**Vasant Shinde :** I worked in both languages.

**Bapu Watve :** It was also made in Hindi.

**Vasant Shinde :** But it didn't work. People understood the picture in one week, so no one saw it again.

Q:How many total films have you worked in?

**Vasant Shinde :** It must be above 175 films.

**Bapu Watve :** Which one are your favorite roles?

**Vasant Shinde :** How can I tell my favorite role? One of my favorite roles is in a film which I can't find it now. A film titled Akher Jamla.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes

**Vasant Shinde :** It was a very good role then there was this one challenging role that we spoke about some time ago. Then there was one role from Sangate Aika and a role from Manini and one role in film I don't remember the name of the film. One after the other there are several roles in film. Then there was one long duration shot in this film title Savitricha Chuda .

**Bapu Watve :** Do you have any memories while working in those films?

**Vasant Shinde :** What kind of memories do you want?

**Bapu Watve :** I mean, an incident that you have always remembered. Any incident where you got beaten by somebody or had to fight.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes it was in Pedgaonche Shahane and Maanacha Paan.

**Bapu Watve :** Well

**Vasant Shinde :** In these two pictures, the artist's had to beat me.

**Bapu Watve :** Well

**Vasant Shinde :** I was playing the role of a Marwadi in Pedgaonche Shahane and the owner's son is about to repay the borrowed money. I go and meet Madgulkar and ask for the money. But as soon as I ask for the money, he slaps me on my face, and I fall down on the floor. Another slap I got in the film Manache Paan.

**Bapu Watve :** Well

**Vasant Shinde :** That tailor plays pranks on this wrestler. And When I am bringing this to his notice, he calls me and asks whether I was lying or telling the truth. And then Chandrakant would slap me and I had to fall inside a block. But he slapped me that hard that I went outside the block. When the thought of another retake I was worried as I would get a second slap from him.

**Bapu Watve :** Chandrakant is a healthy man.

**Vasant Shinde :** He was in good health. And he was unaware of false acting.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes

**Vasant Shinde :** He was unaware of hitting in a false way. He used to wear rings in his hand and once he used to slap it was miserable for the next 2 - 3 days.

**Bapu Watve :** Vasant Rao, are you still working?

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes

**Bapu Watve :** You came into the film industry in 1924, which means you have completed 61 years in this film industry

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes

**Bapu Watve :** You have worked with many directors.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes

**Bapu Watve :** So who is your mentor in the film industry?

**Vasant Shinde :** Bhalji Pendharkar

**Bapu Watve :** So what did you learn from him?

**Vasant Shinde :** I got to learn from him how to deliver dialogue. It became easy for me because he used to act and show us. I also had the strength to pick it up because I learnt the art from Chintamanrao. Since I was a good imitator, they complimented me for picking up. So how to speak in cinematic way, how to throw dialogues at such a distance, how to give an expression is not like looking at a camera constantly like you do in a play. So, the camera should capture your face but it should not appear that you are looking at the camera. I got this education over there.

**Bapu Watve :** Bhalji's discipline was also strict.

**Vasant Shinde :** Very strict

**Bapu Watve :** After that you worked under which director?

**Vasant Shinde :** I have worked under Raja Paranjape who also used to explain the role by acting himself. I got the education in a systematic way over there. I liked working under him as he was also an artist turned director. But nowadays there are many directors who are not artists, so they do not show us what to do. For example, Dinkarrao.

**Bapu Watve :** Patil

**Vasant Shinde :** Patil...He does not show you what to do and even if it does he will do it according to his method. Then he tells you that you do it according to your way. Even the director Datta Mane does not show you how to act in his film.

**Bapu Watve :** But what about working with Datta Dharmadhikari and Anant Mane?

**Vasant Shinde :** I don't think there was any pressure on me while working. I think their method was very good.

**Bapu Watve :** Both?

**Vasant Shinde :** Both were good

**Bapu Watve :** Now that you have been working in cinema for so many years. You have seen the changes in industry. What difference do you see now?

**Vasant Shinde :** Now the only difference is Silent film and Talkie film.

**Bapu Watve :** No, not that way. Let us think from Bhalji Pendharkar's era. At that time, there were institutions which were phased out slowly. Then came the producers which changed the working of industry from Institution model to Person centric model. Now what type of similar changes have you observed. What can you say about the current breed of directors? What can you say about the current business model that is running?

**Vasant Shinde :** I can't say much about it. Now that the contract system has been introduced over salary system which hampers that intimacy.

**Bapu Watve :** That was in the organization

**Vasant Shinde :** Institution has that intimacy and this is a contract way.

**Bapu Watve :** But why do you feel this difference now?

**Vasant Shinde :** Earlier these institutions had a salaried environment so nobody used to praise others' work unnecessarily. Everybody had to complete their assigned tasks. Nobody used to delay or ignore the work assigned to them. Now this is completely changed as the actor fraternity has been valued more. There is one person to arrange a chair for him, one person to hold an umbrella. There was not this type of unnecessary attention at that time. Now it is much inclined towards publicity so the intimacy that was lingering in the Institutions has lost.

**Bapu Watve :** I mean the salary was low, the fame was low but we had close relationships between us.

**Vasant Shinde :** It was intimate

**Bapu Watve :** And an artist used to yearn that his film should be good.

**Vasant Shinde :** There used to be that urge so if some scene was left halfway we would retake it again. Now it should be done quickly as it should finish soon. Due to such a situation, what is called intimacy is reduced. You get a name, fame, money etc. Everything is fine but the intimacy has diminished. Nowadays it is more of a publicity. The only aim is to complete the film and show it on screen which was not the case in earlier days.

**Bapu Watve :** What is the difference between the old directors and the new ones?

**Vasant Shinde :** Some of the new directors are really learned. Some of the pictures I have seen are very nice. I like it when I see these Hindi Films.

**Bapu Watve :** No, I am talking about working with a new breed of directors in Marathi Cinema. You worked with Bhalji Pendharkar, Raja Paranjape, Datta Dharmadhikari etc. What did you feel while working with these new directors?

**Vasant Shinde :** Working with these new directors means...

**Bapu Watve :** You can tell your clear opinion without mentioning their names..

**Vasant Shinde :** I will tell you that even if I take their names they will not feel bad about it. I mean Datta is very kind and understanding

**Bapu Watve :** Means Rajdatt?

**Vasant Shinde :** Rajdatta is a man who understands everything. He is a man who works very well with his techniques and explains everybody in a nice manner. He has improved his direction skills as he is disciple of Raja Paranjape. He does whatever he says which is his best quality.

**Bapu Watve :** But what about other directors?

**Vasant Shinde :** Torane is one of them.

**Bapu Watve :** Do you feel the difference between the old and the new directors? The old ones were experienced and used to study the subject in a deep way. Do you feel that difference in the case of some directors?

**Vasant Shinde :** I don't think so in terms of studying a topic. Because in the past everyone used to sit together, explain, and listen to each other. Now there is only one person who guides everybody. I see collaborative effort in very few directors. There are people who expect us to do the work as per their wish.

**Bapu Watve :** Earlier directors used to tell you right way of acting.



**Vasant Shinde :** Yes

**Bapu Watve :** Now is it the opposite way where your experience in acting is accepted by them.

**Vasant Shinde :** The problem is that they themselves can't perform it. They are very weak in pointing out the mistakes of an actor. The only thing they can point out is to increase a factor or decrease a factor. So, what we have seen in earlier days is not seen from these new directors. In earlier days the directors used to act Infront of us, so we used to refine that according to our way. Nowadays it is only based on our experience and they accept our work. They can only tell us to increase or decrease something in the Act.

**Bapu Watve :** Nowadays the artist gets more honors than before. This is what has happened to the award and now I think the artist gets more payment than before.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes we are paid handsome money.

**Bapu Watve :** Also the rate of duping somebody's payment has decreased as per me.

**Vasant Shinde :** It is a lot less nowadays. In the past, it used to be a dilemma till the end of the picture. It used to be a small last installment, and, in the end, we never got it. Now it is not like that. Earlier they just took your last receipt and signed on it. We were on our way to the figure that was written on that receipt. There used to be all sorts of scandals earlier but now it is not like that.

**Bapu Watve :** You came into the film business 61 years ago due to your circumstances. Do you feel good about it now?

**Vasant Shinde :** What happened to me was good as I was unable to do anything else. God gave me a helping hand and I got into this industry. But I was self-doubting

myself as I do not have any personality, no height or face value. Only God knows how he has handled till the end of his service in the eyes of the audience.

**Bapu Watve :** No, I think you have survived till now as you have artistic qualities.

**Vasant Shinde :** This is the later part that was accepted by the audience. I am grateful to them that they have accepted me for so many days. In fact, they have surpassed my demands and I am still there. It has not happened that I am nominated for a Nobel or they have rejected me completely. At Least I have not heard of it.

**Bapu Watve :** No, but you have come forward from a very unfavorable situation now you have become an idol./home/Bungalow

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes.

**Bapu Watve :** I mean you have reached that milestone.

**Vasant Shinde :** Yes.

**Bapu Watve :** I mean this because of the film industry and the theater.

**Vasant Shinde :** It is true that when my daughters were wearing kilts I was unsure whether I could buy them saree due to my condition. It was not the same situation now. Now they are married. My son is married. The girls are married. They have a child. And all this has made me happy. I have 2 grandchildren in my house, and I have built a bungalow. I love my son very much, so I named that bungalow as Vinod Vriksha meaning I have planted a tree in the name of Comedy, and I understand that I am staying in that shade.

**Bapu Watve :** Vasantrao, you once told me that Damuanna Malvankar worked for so many years. He was working till he was 80 years old, then you said that you are sure to work for those many years. But looking at your enthusiasm at your age I think you will work longer than Damuanna and I hope that the drama, cinema world will get

good actors like you for a long time. I am saying this because it is a fact that you are still invited to work in movies and dramas. And you still perform dramas in various locations as your health is still very good. I think that what you said in the past that you want to work for at least 10 years, your wish will be fulfilled, my prayer to the Lord is to give you a long life. Vasant Shinde, you are also the oldest artist in the film industry because you joined Dadasaheb Phalke's company in 1924 as a child actor. It has been 62 - 63 years since this event. And you still work. I don't think we have such an old actor in the Indian film industry. Now the number of your films has gone up to 200. You've played a variety of roles and that's all you must build your own house with whatever little money you get. So yes, but by staying in this city of temptation, you have remained unaddicted and you have set an example for the next generation. I can say the same about you. You should get the Dadasaheb Phalke Award because if it is given for a long career and a strong performance, then you are good in both. I and many like me wish you that you should get this award. Vasant Shinde completes 75 years in May 1987. Due to his age, he was forgetting some things, but I should mention this special quality of his that he never forgot the dialogues of his films and dramas.