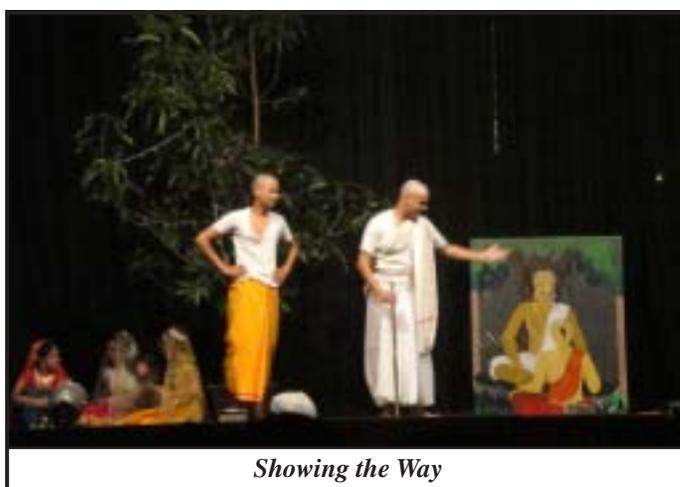


REGULARS 2	ROSIE 3	CREATIVE 3	BASKETBALL REPORT 4
----------------------	-------------------	----------------------	-----------------------------------

Classic Drama

Debasish Chakrabarty reviews the Founder's Day Hindi Play staged in the MPH on October 11, 2009



Showing the Way

Baudhayana is a name that is familiar to any student of classical Indian philosophy. Hence, it did come as a surprise to this reviewer that he was also capable of writing a farce. *Bhagvadajjukiyam* is a *prahasana* (farce) written by King Mahendra Vikrama Pallava of Kanchi in 7 AD, the same time King Harsavardhana was writing his *Ratnavali*. 'Bodhayana Kavi' was the pen name the king chose for himself, after the great Baudhayana (8 BC) who was a famous law-giver and mathematician.

The post-Mauryan era saw Hinduism and Buddhism thriving simultaneously on royal patronage. Drama was a convenient tool used by both Hindus and Buddhists to reach out to commoners. The date and the authorship allow us to understand many a strand in the play:

the subtle criticism of the Hindu system of schooling and positing of the Buddhist alternative, the use of the names like Vasantasena, the courtesan who was embraced into the *sangha* by Upagupta, one of Buddha's disciples. Yet the playwright employs a very Hindu system of theatre and stagecraft as propounded by Bharata in his *Natyasastra* (6th century AD), and uses Hindu deities like Yama and his aides as characters in the play. Most critically, he employs the concept of *parakayapravesa* (entering into another body by yogic prowess) as the crux of his plot.

Bhagvadajjukiyam would belong to the *suddha* (pure) *prahasana* category of Bharata. According to Bharata, this category should contain comic disputations between various categories of Brahmins, and jocular remarks by cowardly and ignominious persons. The wit and the comic element in a play of this genre would reside not so much in the characters or characterization, but in the plot and the situations. This play, of course, took liberties with the category and borrowed stylistically from other types. In the process, it became not only propaganda, but a knowledge-device as well. The play contains brief discourses on types of theatre, the need for education and even the symptoms and cure of snake-bite. One cannot help but surmise that these must have been the pet obsessions of the Pallava king. Of course, by propounding the need for education, the play very subtly promotes the Buddhist variety by projecting a Buddhist master winning over a dejected Brahmin disciple.

The Indian dramatic tradition always insisted that the audience should never identify with the characters. Hence the play is much stylised. MHF employed the Brechtian aspect of 'alienation' to perfection in the play. The use of the Chorus, which doubled up as individual characters and members of the Buddhist Sangha; the translucent paintings of the teacher and the courtesan, which were intermittently lit to signify the transmigration of souls; the use of calculated melodrama and stylised choreography to signify an affair of the heart; the use of the man-lion and girl-peacock in the garden sequence; the use of a popular Hindi film song as playback music; the staccato laughter of Vasantasena after the first round of transmigration, are all calculated Brechtian devices, well within the norms of *Natyasastra*, intended to provoke thought. These devices were used to shake the audience out of its torpor and perceive the ordinary and the familiar as striking and peculiar.

On the acting front, Aruj Shukla and Smitha Nair's controlled execution of their rather demanding roles was praiseworthy. Aruj and Smitha were able to bring out at least six of the nine different *bhavas* (stable emotional states) competently. The innate peace of a knower, the anger at the petulant student or the anger of the guru-as-Vasantsena at being treated as a mere physical object, the coyness of the courtesan, the determination and courage of the Guru to take the risk, the pain of loss of love, the fear of imminent death and the wonderful sense of comic timing were clearly evident.

Aruj was convincing in his portrayal of a learned guru (though he overdid his courtesan stint a bit). Smitha used her Bharatnatyam skills, not only in the small dance sequence, but also in holding together two very challenging character shifts. In this comedy of errors, Smitha played more of Aruj than the other way round, and did a fantastic job of it.

Varun Gupta as Shandilya acted his petulant, hungry, irritating student self to perfection. He was just being a 7 AD Dosco! Shivam's antics and Dinesh's *la-ka-la-ka-la-ka* had even the most disinterested boy in the audience in splits.

(contd. overleaf)

APPOINTMENTS

Uddhav Prasad and Shatrunjai Rai Dewan have been appointed Boys-in-Charge of the **Entertainment Committee** for the forthcoming year.

Devashish Singal has been appointed Boy-in-Charge of the **Archives** for the forthcoming year.

Shreyvardhan Swaroop has been appointed the Boy-in-Charge of the **Implement Store** for the coming year.

We wish them a fruitful tenure.

DRIBBLE AND SHOOT

The following boys have been awarded colours in **Basketball**:

Half Colours:

Rishabh Chatterjee

Shivam Pal

Pururava Jamwal

Tushar Gupta

Congratulations!

Full Colours:

Abhinandan Rajan

| Poetry |

Dropping Scenes

Abhilaksh Lalwani

Gilted sun falls upon the sere autumn,

Spring, summer, lost in timely fall.

Winter dawns anew – cold breath

And stark eyes which enthrall

The beholder who, with bated breath,

Looks at the warming light.

Years have left the leaves withering,

Old, wise, patient, but withering.

Time's torments have been borne

Through with tempered thought.

In need is now life of Aesir mead

To help forget the times past -

Radiant, sunny times, when

Thrusted greatness felt promissory,

Sleepless dreams were reality.

Sigh, it seems lost now in the cold

Which thoughts thought lost renews

And gives past the winged feet -

Life goes by in parts - dropping

Scenes, forgotten in a flutter.

It will be over soon. Truth will out.

The game is afoot. Will soon be up.

Salad days grow thin. *Sigh*.

But painted lilies appeal now,

Woe is me and rotting time.

The well-trod primrose path

Now leads into an imminent end.

Judgement would soon be due:

To each, for each, with each.

But, call it what you must or will:

Roses, christened, smell as sweet.

Exits and entrances continue.

Scattered remains will soon be ripe.

And ended time be reaped anew.

(contd. from page 1)

What was absolutely brilliant was the clear enunciation and the perfect timing of the entire cast. One marvelled at the competent diction and voice projection of Ashvat, Abhinav, Vigya, Samarth and Chandrachuda. There was something about the presence of these boys that made the audience take notice. Chandrachuda and Samarth's *sutradhar* (narrator) and *vidushaka* (jester) sequence at the commencement of the play laid out the central premises about the plot, brilliantly executed through quick exchanges and sharp wit. The other cameos by Tanuj, Uma Shankar, Simarpreet, Ateendra, Bipasha, Malini, Shikha and Jai Pratap were equally valuable and controlled. I think Doscoc who were there that evening will talk for a long time of the resounding slaps so generously doled out by Smitha to Tanuj and Jai Pratap!

It is true that the play was one of the more complex productions of recent times, and many in the audience struggled to keep pace with its dialectics. It is also true that it can claim a place among the all-time great Founder's Day productions. The technical complexity and the competent execution would have had both Bharata and Brecht smiling across the centuries, and that is no mean feat.

An appeal from the Archives

Of all our cultural heritage and national assets, our archives are the most precious inheritance. They are a gift from one generation to the other, and the extent of our care for them marks the extent of our civilization. This is why it becomes our duty to bequeath them to posterity as an asset and as a record of past time.

The Doon School has already established an Archives of its own. The endeavour began in the first week of December, 1998. All the records salvaged so far from official custody have been shifted to the upper floor of the School Library where the Archives section is housed.

After due appraisal, the records which are found worthy of preservation are managed in such a way that they are easily retrievable for use both by administrators and the alumni for dissemination of information contained in them. These records are invaluable and our most urgent task is to preserve them for use in the future.

Apart from the records already received from unbroken official custody, the records relating to the School in private custody will also be of great value to fill in the gaps, if any, in the history of the School. These will help as a supplement to the existing records and corroborate already known facts. These may be important either for their intrinsic value or for their textual content. Such records of archival value may be in the form of personal diaries, correspondence, notes and rare photographs.

The Archives makes an earnest appeal to members of staff, past and present, Old Boys, and all others who have been, or are still, connected with the School in some way or the other, to kindly donate to the School Archives all such material lying with them. Every contribution will be gratefully received in our endeavour to construct and maintain The Doon School Archives.

| Viewpoint |

Losing a Kidney

Vivek Santayana on the new structure of the Rose Bowl



*In the beginning. . .
(photograph sourced from the Archives)*

We've all had a chance to see the new structure of the Rose Bowl. We are often caught between the dilemma of change and preservation. While it is acceptable to shed traditions for the sake of the future, one cannot tolerate the discarding of history for this reason.

The above picture is from the 1940 edition of *The Doon School Magazine*, in which it was captioned 'The Rose Bowl then'. The Rose Bowl was constructed by the staff and students. The 'kidney' didn't exist then, but the friezes and the stepped stage did, and Lord Mountbatten had once addressed the School, sitting on these steps, with the boys seated before him on the ground. The 'Rosie' also had a very unique stage structure, one that stimulated better stagecraft, with the many entrances and exits it offered. I remember my first evening in School, when the play *The Barlowville Ghosts* was staged, which was the first junior summer production. I was struck by the curious stage structure of this amphitheatre and was impressed by how well it was used. If I remember correctly, the cast used the side entrance to the 'Rosie' and also the *khud* as two of their entrances, along with the central doorway, green room and the main entrance ramps. I got used to the distinctive design by the time the Inter-House One-Act Play Competition concluded. Of course, it will take a long time for us to adapt to the new stage, not to mention to innovate with the limited number of entrances and exits we have at our disposal now.

The 'Rosie' looks wonderful, is comfortable and can seat a larger audience. But we have compromised partly on acoustics and almost entirely on stage design. It is also a heritage building, a symbol of social service and teamwork put in by staff and boys of yesteryears. Such unnecessary reconstruction is, in my opinion, disrespectful to the original structure. If I recall correctly, we were told at one Assembly that the plan was to "increase the seating capacity", not to redo the structure completely. We have defaced a special structure which lent a certain character to our campus. It was the fruit of our own hard work, and had timeless emotions embedded in its concrete and bricks. To lose it, is indeed, a colossal loss.

| Short Story |

The Same Old Thing

Kanishka Malik

"This country needs a change, but that's my neighbour's headache."

On a morning as ordinary as any other, a teenager sits at the breakfast table with his parents, waiting as usual, for the hour hand to reach 8. His mother is laying the table while his father, gazes blankly at the newspaper with the same attention one gives to a fertilizer advertisement.

'So what's happening in the country these days, dad?'
'Son, this country is going straight to hell.'

'Is there any explanation for that, dad?'

'The only explanation for this country's problems are locked in the government's files, son,' says his father, laughing in the cynical way that one adopts when addressing the problems of this country.

'Is there any explanation for that, dad?'

'Well, you see, son, corruption is like a religion in this nation, where the ministers are gods.'

'Is there any explanation for that, dad?'

'Why don't you ask me something new?'

'Why don't you *tell* me something new?'

'What...what... do you want to know?' His father asks in the exasperated tone that adults use with impertinent youngsters.

'Well, something I don't know.'

'Like what, mister?'

'Like a solution.'

'Oh...I see... so this is what's in fashion among you guys these days, huh...?'

'Excuse me?'

'*Excuse me*,' mimics the father, 'is that the latest phrase you've learnt to argue with? Anyway, you tell me, son, what solution do *you* propose?'

'I thought you were supposed to tell me that.'

'Oh...I see... so we're even supposed to do that for you?'

The teenager's mother enters and says the same thing a person would expect a mother refereeing in such a father-son contest to say.

'Oh, why don't you two ever talk about something else? Honey, let the poor boy go to school.'

The father looks up from the newspaper and says, 'Speaking of which, I hope you've found a 'solution' for your dismal marks? You've seen how well your brother's doing, haven't you?'

'What's so great in that?' counters his son. 'Just because he's in America...'

'Son, I'm not letting you get stuck here like your cousins...'

'What do you mean by 'here'?'

'I mean this godforsaken country...'

His son gets up to leave for school. 'No wonder you couldn't give me a solution.'

'Oh yeah? Why don't *you* find this stupid, ridiculous 'solu...?'

'Because you'll never let me.' And the son leaves.

Court Highlights

Kanishka Malik and Rahul Srivastava report on the recently-concluded Inter-House Basketball Competition

Another ordinary year has gone by.

This isn't what the participants in the inter-house basketball competition would say and neither would the ones who cheered them on. This term, after all the interruptions the school community has been through, the level of competition was truly commendable. The display of talent and skill that was showcased by both seniors and juniors alike was proof of the kind of dedication this sport has received from the boys over the years.

The junior events saw talent that is here to stay for the years to come. As in every year, different players came into the limelight and the overall results were completely different from that of the previous year. The likes of Adhiraj Thakran (scoring a record 140 points!) and Dhruv Aggarwal, were seen emerging throughout the competition. The final positions of their Houses proved their dominance, with Tata winning the event and Jaipur coming a joint second with Hyderabad. One of the noteworthy matches was the Tata vs. Hyderabad Juniors A match where Tata House sent some of its key players to play for the Juniors' B team, as a strategical move to ensure a safe victory in that category. Tata House nevertheless won the Juniors A match too. In second position, along with Jaipur came Hyderabad House, breaking a so-called 'jinx' that had held them back for three years.

The senior teams witnessed an extremely eventful year which included a series of major upsets and nail-biting thrillers. Despite the reduction of practice hours due to the swine flu break, the teams were in form. The tournament was full of exhilarating performances and one will never forget the uproar that was heard from the basketball courts in the evenings during the matches. The School witnessed some memorable moments. Amongst the flukes people exclaim over every year, there were some that played a crucial role. Sumer Boparai's winning shot against Hyderabad House, besides being unforgettable, was also one of the reasons why Kashmir House preserved its record of not losing a single match this tournament. Hyderabad House put up a similar fight against Tata House which also had accomplished players like Pururava Jamwal and Rishabh Chatterjee. The match went over time to give Hyderabad House the victory.

Speaking of the results, the boys could be seen totalling their Houses' points after every match. The battle for the first position was fought primarily between Kashmir and Oberoi Houses. It is for this reason that the matches between Kashmir and Oberoi House on the last day were the deciders. The Seniors' B match was ruled by Kashmir House but the

decision for the first position was yet to be decided in the Seniors' A match between them, in the following hour. Both the teams comprised only school teamers like Aseem Kumar, Sarthak Singh, Abhinandan Rajan, Anmol Jamwal, Varun Srivastava and Tushar Gupta, and both the teams had an excellent defence with players like Shivam Pal, Aishwarya Karan and Kushagra Singh. At around six o'clock, the Kashmir House supporters could be seen elatedly jumping in the air. Kashmir House had won the tournament after a period of more than fifteen years!

On the whole, one can conclude that the tournament produced some unexpected results. Shekhar Bishnoi, as the highest scorer amongst seniors (with 118 points), was lauded for his performance. All the matches were played in favourable conditions and it was an excellent way for the viewers to spend this evenings. Along with a number of new cheers, the School recognized the skill and talent of some new players, especially in the Juniors' section. Most importantly, the teams comprised boys of all forms and this ensures a good future on the basketball front.

Opinion Poll

Do you think the recent test week served any academic purpose?



(320 members of the community were polled)

Next Week's Question: How many books have you read for leisure this term? – None/Up to 5/Up to 10/More than 10

doontoon

Nikhil Narain



"Blasting out on Diwali"

Online Edition: <http://www.doonschool.com/magazine>

weekly@doonschool.com



IPSS® All rights reserved. **Printed by:** The English Book Depot, 15 Rajpur Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand – 248009, India. **Published by:** Philip Burrett, The Doon School, Dehradun.

Editor-in-Chief: Vivek Santayana **Editor:** Shashank Peshawaria **Senior Editors:** Chandrachuda Shukla, Bharat Ganju, Arnav Sahu **Associate Editors:** Kanishka Malik, Abhinav Mittal, Arjun Singh Badal **Special Correspondents:** Arifeen Chowdhury, Shashvat Dhandhania, Yash Mall, Shivank Singh **Correspondents:** Utkarsh Jha, Kunal Kanodia, Rahul Srivastava **Graphics Editor:** Madhav Dutt **Guest Editor:** Dhruv Velloor **Webmaster:** Vishal Mohla **Assistant Managers:** Stuti Bathla, Priya Chaturvedi, Arvindanabha Shukla **Special Assistance:** K C Maurya **Photo Credit:** Sookrit Malik, Archives