



“Jagadamba” is the story of Mahatma Gandhi through his wife, Kasturba’s, eyes. Kasturba Gandhi is a simple woman, with no formal education, raised with traditional Hindu values. Married to an extraordinary man, she is thrown into circumstances far beyond her expectation and becomes a source of inspiration and comfort to him. Einstein said that future generations would scarce believe that such a man lived on this planet. Present day readers would scarce believe that such a man had such a woman in his life.

THE SETTING

Act I: January 1915.

A cabin on the ship taking Gandhi and Kasturba back to India.

Act II: August 1942 to February 1944.

The Aga Khan Palace in Pune, India, where Gandhi and his fellow freedom-fighters are being held in detention by the British.

CAST OF CHARACTERS (Mentioned in the Performance)

The Gandhi Family:

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi: (aka ‘Bapu’ (father))

Kasturba Gandhi: (aka ‘Ba’ (mother))

Their sons:

Harilal (aka ‘Chhota’ (Younger) Gandhi);

Gulab, his wife Manilal;

Sushila, his wife

Ramdas and Devdas

Chhagan and Magan

Their nephews:

Boer leader in South Africa

General Jan Smuts:

Indian leader, Gandhi’s mentor

Professor G. K. Gokhale:

Gandhi’s secretary and very close associate

Pyarelal:

Sarojini Naidu: a poet, also known as the “Nightingale of India”

Indian Fighters for Freedom (from British rule) also interned with Gandhi:

Sushila: Pyarelal’s sister

Miraben: an Englishwoman, born Madeleine Slade, daughter of British Rear-Admiral,

Sir Edmund Slade – devotee of Gandhi)

Mahadeo: Gandhi’s secretary, like a son to “Ba” and “Bapu”



About the Artist

Yashodhara (Yashu) Deshpande Maitra, taught physics, chemistry and mathematics at the National Technical Institute of the Deaf at the Rochester Institute of Technology for 20 years. She then embarked on a second career as a professional translator, and has translated works of fiction, non-fiction, biographies, and now the play “Jagadamba”.

On her most recent trip to India, Yashu visited the Aga Khan Palace in Pune where Kasturba was imprisoned, and was spellbound. Yashu has presented “Jagadamba” in staged readings to audiences in India, as well as here in the United States. “Jagadamba” marks her debut on the stage.

“The story of Kasturba Gandhi has touched me deeply. I feel humbled and blessed to have the opportunity to present her story. The story of a simple woman, who faces circumstances and challenges way beyond anyone’s expectations. A story of love, sacrifice, non-violence and understanding. A story, I feel, that transcends barriers of nationality, age and religion.”

GLOSSARY

Bahu: Daughter-in-law
Brahmacharya: Celibacy
Charkha: Spinning wheel
Coolie: (literally, porter) Derogatory way of referring to Indians
Gora sahibs: The white rulers, the British
Gujarati: A language of the Indo-European family, spoken in Western India
Harijans: (Children of God) name given by Gandhi to India’s untouchables
Hindi: An Indo-European language, the *lingua franca* of Northern India
Honewali: Future (often used to refer to fiancée, or future wife)
Ijrat: Honor
Jagadamba: Mother of the Universe
Kala: Black
Khadi: Homespun cotton cloth
Lagan: Marriage
Marathi: An Indo-European language of Western and South-Western India

Mohan or Mohaniya: Kasturba’s nickname for Gandhi
Muddum: Manner of referring to a white woman (Madam)
Muhurat: Auspicious time or day
Parsi: People of Persian origin, practicing the Zoroastrian faith, who settled along the West Coast of India in the 9th century to escape persecution in their homeland. During British rule, they adopted Western ways and habits to a significant extent, including a style of wearing the traditional Indian female garment, the *sari*
Puja: Religious worship
Sagai: Engagement
Sansaar: Married life
Satyagraha: Civil disobedience, non-violent non-cooperation
Shlokas: Verses
Vilayati: Of English/British origin
Vrata: Vow



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