



MALAYA GOSWAMI

In Pursuit of Excellence

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The first thing that draws one on meeting Malaya Goswami is her simplicity, earthiness and a sensitivity that touches a rare chord. The many awards, including the National Award adorning a shelf of her sitting room speak volumes of her talent and capacity to deliver. Catapulted into fame at the national level with Jahnu Barua's *Firingoti* and Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia's *Agnisnaan* in the late eighties, her recent roles in *Jeebon Bator Logori*, *Rang* and *Sankardev* have also challenged the actor in her and taken her to new heights.

She began her foray into the world of acting primarily as a radio artist and a stage performer and finally as a cine artist. When asked about her craft, she recalled with characteristic humility stalwarts like the late Lakshyadhar Choudhury, remarking on the perfection of her diction on stage. She believes herself to be a director's actor, an artist who has to translate the director's vision into reality. This she has done with élan while straddling the three worlds of radio, stage and cinema each with their distinct style and traits. She

reiterates that each medium with its different range, scope, tone, texture, vocabulary and so on brings out a different performer in her and the challenge of the real artist lies in his or her ability to blend into or transmute from one medium to the other. She lays great emphasis upon training, proper grooming and a mind alert at all times to observe and learn from life

One wonders how someone can be comfortable in such a variety of mediums and she speaks of being groomed and trained in the early stages by people like the late Satya Prasad Barua, late Arup Chakravarty, and the late Deba Kumar Nath among others. One sees in her the diligent student who keeps her eyes and ears open for any tip that would come her way. Always looking for ways of self-improvement she emphasizes the need for physical fitness in a lifestyle like hers. She relies on yoga, self-discipline and meditation to maintain balance in her life. She humorously recalls an instance when she walked barefoot for more than two months in order to get into the skin of a particular character.

It is with the same diligence, sincerity and warmth that she also essays the roles that life has chalked out for her, that of a mother, wife, daughter and professor. A post graduate in Education, she has worked for more than nearly twenty-five years at Kopilli Anchalik College, Jagiroad, Assam. Besides sharing an excellent rapport with students and colleagues alike she is also an integral part of the corporate life of the college to which she commutes nearly 56 Kms to and from daily. She believes in being responsible and dedicated to her students. Though many of her roles, specially those in *Agnisnaan*, *Firingoti*, *Sankardev*, to mention only a few, have been major turning points in Assamese Cinema, Malaya Goswami, is not one to rest on her laurels, rather she speaks more of her social responsibilities. Therefore she is associated with organizations like *Arohan*, *Arpita* and *Ashadeep* which deal with child and women issues, that of the mentally challenged and nurturing young talent.

Naturally then the question arises as to how she manages to do so many things at the same time and do them all so well. What is her time management mantra? Multiple roles, Malaya believes is a by-gone word today with everyone especially women being capable multitaskers. But here, she confesses that she has to leave off doing many of the things that she loves, like reading, writing, doing more of challenging roles and devoting enough time to her social commitments, or even just enjoying an idle leisurely day by herself or with friends.

When asked about her sources of inspiration she speaks of her supportive family, her husband and equally talented daughters Nishita, an accomplished actor herself and a post graduate from TISS, who is presently working. But she reserves a special place for her father who had stood by her like a pillar of strength as she began her journey into the arch lights. For her another name for inspiration is Dewta (Father) and she believes that it is this source of inspiration which will one day lead her on to fulfilling her dream of scripting, directing and producing a film.

When asked about what she treasures a lot, she mentions the hundreds of heartfelt letters that poured in from her fans across the globe whenever she crossed a milestone or gave a good performance. She feels humbled and inspired by them. In conclusion it can be said that she more than deserves all the love and respect which the audience of Assam has showered on her. If as Ritu in Jahnu Barua's *Firingoti* she became the torch bearer for education so she could be the beacon light for the cine industry of Assam so that it may grow from strength to strength. □□