

SWR/WDR/DLF/ORF/ABC/YLE – Editor Walter Filz

Karma aus Blech / Karma Of Tin
A Radio Play by
Jean-Claude Kuner

Zusammenfasser:

Zusammenfasserin:

1. Übersetzer:

2. Übersetzer:

3. Übersetzer:

O-Ton: Stadtatmo, Hupen und dichter Verkehr, dann Markt

She:

Little devil,

did you grow up on a farm
on the shadowy slopes of distant Afghanistan?

Did you have a rough ride
in a pick up truck
as you bounced along in a cloud of dust,

down muletracks and winding dirt roads?
Or did you cross the Khyber Pass on a camel's back
in the company of brigands?

Go, you little devil.
Bury him alive,
bury the whole lot of them.

Like a landslide in the Hindukush can
bury a whole army
of ten thousand horsemen.

And remember.
The blessings of my breasts
go with you.

Author:

Mumbai, which used to be called Bombay, is one of the largest and most densely populated cities in the world with 20 million residents.

It's as overpopulated as India, with its 1.1 billion people.

New immigrants stream into the city every day.

Bombay is packed into each other. A lot of people living per square kilometer. The stress level is extremely high.

A megacity that knows no borders and yet has long since surpassed them.

Traffic chaos, air pollution and noise.

Extreme social contrasts.

Not a melting pot.

Slums and modern skyscrapers right next to each other.

Probably a salad bowl!

Money is the only god who can answer prayers

Altaf Tyrewala:

We lost any pretense of being religious or sacred society of any sort. It's all gone now. The qualities one attributes to goodness and godliness are completely being polished away by money.

Men on the Street:

They tell me India is an underdeveloped country; that India has yet to develop. Stuff and nonsense, of course.

I tell them they have no knowledge of history and even less of their own heritage. I tell them that if they would read the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, study the Golden Ages of the Mauriyas and the Guptas and even of those Muslim chaps the Mughals, they would realize that India is not an underdeveloped country but a highly developed one in an advance state of decay.

O-Ton: Zugfahrt

Author:

Those who travel to work in the overcrowded commuter trains cannot carry any unnecessary baggage.

Because we cannot carry the tiffin in the morning.

The trains stop just 10 seconds at each station. The masses simultaneously squeeze themselves into and out of the cars.

With loud calls and cries.

But never aggressively.

Schauspieler (Adhir):

Many times the trains are the only source of entertainment this people have. They are going and coming back. So you see them playing cards, you see them listening to music, you see them singing in groups as they were ABBA, you know! They are all singing with drums...

O-Ton: Bahnhof/Zugverkehr

Everywhere in the crowds and at every train station you see men bustling about carrying metal lunch pails by the dozens.

Men on the Street:

Bombay grew along a north–south axis; people live in the north and commute, in inhumanly packed trains, to the south.

Metropolitan Bombay is the largest urban area in India: 32 per cent live in the Island City; 42 per cent in the northern suburbs, and 18 per Cent in New Bombay. But 72 per cent of the jobs are in the Island City.

Sudhir Kakar:

The opening up of actually the encouragement of some of the Indian qualities which were very much restricted in the pattern of society we had until the 1990s, socialist pattern of society which really restrained completely the

entrepreneurial spirit of Indians. And they are very entrepreneurial: at every street corner you can see somebody selling something...

Author:

Sudhir Kakar, born in 1938, and his German wife Katharina live in Goa. He is an author and India's most famous psychoanalyst. She is a theologian. Together they investigated the psyche of the subcontinent in their book "The Indians".

It includes aspects where culturally the Indians are possibly ahead of us.

Sudhir Kakar:

The mentality is than an optimism, hope that if one works one can do well. And also the mentality is also the adaptability. I think that is a very big thing which comes from the hindu part from very context depended way of that if you are in one context do not stay the same. Change, adapt to the context!

Katharina Kakar:

I think also which plays into what Sudhir was saying it is a very young country there are a lot of young people around who are full of hope and motivation.

Sudhir Kakar:

Well hope... one is the demographic part, I mean young people always have hope. But the hope is also in the sense of that you have more time, that you are not restricted, that if you don't, certainly your children will and that it is not the end of life! It gives you much more time. So if you feel restricted by time then you often get into a panic and often make bad decisions...

Katharina Kakar:

Because family values are so high, giving everything for the next generation, for the children. I think this is also a great factor of giving ones best to have a better rebirth, to give your children a better education and so on. There is an acceptance of one's destiny in a way which is sometimes amazing: the humour, the niceness the people have even in the worst conditions. You can't even think of living like that and they still have a smile on their face and try to cope with life! I think this is partly also because of the Hindu world view that the destiny one is in is in a way self afflicted. What one gets in this life is because of the deeds of previous lifes. It is part of the acceptance of destiny and trying to make the best out of it.

Sudhir Kakar:

Also I think there is the very hierarchical nature of Indian society which is divided in so many sections and which do not interact that much which each other. So it is not an homogenised society and if it is not homogenised then the only people you feel envious about are the neighbours or the ones you think are part of you. So there are less chances for envy makes it better for being in a better disposition for laughing and smiling.

Envy of course destroys hope.

O-Ton: Dabbawala auf Fahrrad

O-Ton: Dabbawala Chef:

I am Manish from the Dabbawala system. And today we are going to talk about our 117 years old Dabbawala organization. And how we are delivering food to the people of Mumbai.

Author:

Manish Tripathi is the spokesman of the Dabbawalas. 32 years old, dressed completely in white. The typical white hat atop his head.

O-Ton: Verhandlungsgespräch, Computer

O-Ton: Dabbawala Chef:

And how our good work – time management, accuracy, supply chain management – has created a respect the world over.

Top 10 Reason For Using Dabbawalas Services:

Top 10 Reason For Using Dabbawalas Services:

The Local train of Mumbai are always very crowded and it is very tough to take even small luggage during peak times.

Author:

Since its founding in 1890 this food delivery service has functioned without any hierarchy. All the workers are on an equal footing and all earn the same amount of money.

Each day 5,000 Dabbawalas fan out into the residential quarters of the Indian megacity, collect up to 200,000 lunch boxes to then take them on their long journey to the commercial centres of Mumbai.

They're easy to recognise with their white ship-shaped caps.

They're famous for their punctuality, reliability and great efficiency, ingenious logistics and organisational structure.

O-Ton: Dabbawala MORGENS / ERSTE KUNDIN

Author:

What's your name?

Dabbawala (Ashok):

Ashok.

Author:

Hello, good morning!

Client:
Good morning.

Author:
Can I just ask you a few questions?

Client:
Can I quickly change?

Author:
Sure, but I don't know if he has time...

Client:
No, he is earlier than he is supposed to be! And the food is not yet ready...

SCENE 1

Father:
(calmly)
Twenty-six years ago I married a mediocre poetess.

Mother:
I used to be a poetess and would dwell on minute metaphors for days.

Son:
Home is where mom chases me with a plateful of food and frozen poems in her eyes...

Father:
She gives me two kids...

Son:
... where dad is vocal with his disapproval...

Mother:
Now all day long I cook for Ubaid and Minaz...

Father:
... a son who spends every waking hour online

Son:
... where my sister Minaz, on witnessing the scenes, runs out the door like an anxious squirrel.

Father:
... and a daughter who's never home.

Daughter:

After we park the car near Colaba Post Office, my 'friend' and I walk to Pasta Lane under the severe afternoon sun.

Mother:

... spend the thousands their father earns every month...

Daughter:

I spot Shamma Nursing Home on the ground floor of a decrepit building.

Mother:

... and contemplate television absent-mindedly.

Daughter:

I won't be pregnant for too long now.

Mother:

The hum of air-conditioned rooms and twenty-four-hour TV has silenced me.

Father:

We live together and are still married, the woman and I.

Son:

But my heart isn't at home.

Father:

The poetry has escaped our lives. I don't know her any more.

Mother:

I have nothing more to say.

O-Ton: Dabbawala MORGENS / ERSTE KUNDIN kommt zurück

O-Ton: Dabbawala Chef:

This is the dabba. I am just opening this dabba. You can see: there are four segments in this dabba: one you can pick breads, in the other you can prepare fresh vegetables, in another you can pick rice. It's all in this tiffin box.

O-Ton: Dabbawala MORGENS / ERSTE KUNDIN

Client:

Generally the food outside is more oily. You know it is not so nutritious. He started about quarter to nine. And now it is nine thirty and I should push him out because he is not supposed to come at nine thirty. But he is so efficient that he is always before time! (lacht) Always! They are doing a good job and they are very efficient. And I can trust them... like family. Yeah, they are very reliable! I know he is going to come and the food is going to reach the office.

O-Ton: Dabbawala Chef:

And that is the reason why celebrities like the Prince Charles or Richard

Branson has come to meet us.

Author:

Global corporations are coming to them on the search for inspiration.

Author:

Now, it's ready?

Client:

Today there is ocras and rice and chapati. That's what you call bread.

[Treppenhaus]

Dabbawala (Ashok):

Come!

O-Ton: DABBAWALATAG MORGENS / ZWEITER KUNDE

Dabbawala (Ashok):

Tiffin! (spricht weiter)

[TV-Geräusche]

Author:

Dabbawalas must be physically fit.

Running up and down stairs from morning until evening.

O-Ton: Top 10 Reason For Using Dabbawalas Services:

Home made food is best for health and because health is wealth. Outside junk foods may take your life and makes you sick.

Home made food keeps your doctors bill down and there are fewer absences from office due to poor health.

In fact bad food is the reason #1 of all the diseases.

O-Ton: Ranjit Hoskoté:

As one of the great, important, creative and positive aspects of Bombay, yes there are definitely the dabbawalas. I mean they are a great model and symbol of agency.

[Ashok im Treppenhaus]

Dabbawala (Ashok):

Come!

Top 10 Reason For Using Dabbawalas Services:

Do you not love your mother or wife and like to eat food made by her? When

you use Dabbawala's services to deliver your home cooked food to your office you are actually saving your hard earned pennies. The delivery charges of Rs 250 - 300 per month is very nominal and reasonable. Its simple maths.

[Ashok im Treppenhaus]

Dabbawala (Ashok):
Last tiffin!

O-Ton: Ashok mit Fahrrad, dann Bahnhof und Zugfahrt

Author:

Time is just as important for the system of the Dabbawalas as the smooth running of the commuter trains.

Six million people are transported through Mumbai each day.

With them come the lunch pails on their complicated journey every which way through Mumbai.

The monthly cost for the delivery service is approximately just 10 Australian Dollars.

The majority head south to Churchgate, the end of the line, in the Colaba neighbourhood, where the old commercial centre of Mumbai is located.

O-Ton: DABBAWALATAG MORGENS / ANDHERI BAHNHOF + IM ZUG

Dabbawala:
Time is very compulsory!

Author:
It is all about time...

SCENE 2

Dinshawji:

One day I had to take the train around eleven o'clock. You ever did that?

Gustad:

'You know I never'

Dinshawji:

'It's the time of dubbawallas.

Top 10 Reason For Using Dabbawalas Services:

The Local train of Mumbai are always very crowed and it is very tough to take even small luggage during peak times.

Dinshawji:

They are supposed to use only the luggage van, but some got in the passenger compartments. Jam-packed, and what a smell of sweat. Toba, toba! I began to feel something wet on my shirt. And guess what it was. A dubbawalla.

Standing over me, holding the railing. It was falling from his naked armpit: tapuck-tapuck-tapuck, his sweat. I said nicely, 'Please move a little, my shirt is wetting, meherbani.' But no kothaa, as if I was not there. Then my brain really went. I shouted, "You! Are you animal or human, look what you are doing!" I got up to show him the wet. And guess what he did. Just take a guess.'

Gustad:

'What?'

Dinshawji:

'He turned and slipped into my seat! Insult to injury! What to do with such low-class people? No manners, no sense, nothing. And you know who is responsible for this attitude — that bastard Shiv Sena leader who worships Hitler and Mussolini. He and his "Maharashtra for Maharashtrians" nonsense. They won't stop till they have complete Maratha Raj.'

O-Ton: Dabbawala Chef:

What is amazing about the system is that it is run by mostly uneducated people who can hardly read and write and understand the alphabet.

But what is important is that our people are qualified (enough) to serve the customer. This is one of the most important thing.

And another aspect is that we don't use any technology. All operations are done manually only.

O-Ton: Hoskoté:

Author:

India is always described as torn apart between tradition and modernity.

Ranjit Hoskoté:

This is one of these clichés that seem to simplify India for a lot of people. But tradition is only a special form of modernity. Traditions are constantly changing and being updated. And at any given point tradition only represents an influential view of the past. It is not actually the past.

Author:

Ranjit Hoskoté, born in 1969, is a cultural theorist and together with Ilja Trojanow wrote the book "Refusal to Fight". A wide-ranging essay who's main point is that, today as in the past, without each other the various cultures couldn't exist at all.

It also says “adieu” to the idea of a “clash of cultures”.

Ranjit Hoskoté:

Over the last decade I have spent a fair amount of time in the Ruhr valley, in the Ruhrgebiet and in Bavaria. And in both of these situations I have found pretty much the same sort of structure and very similar situations of an old economy and culture in retreat and forms of hyper modernity springing up. So in the heart of Europe you have exactly the same sort of situation. On the other hand I think in India we are more able to deal with some of these contradictions because we have lived with contradictions for so many centuries. And it is just one more on the table.

O-Ton: Dabbawala Chef:

I am taking one example of the coding system

Author:

The coding system ensures that each lunch pail unfailingly reaches its intended destination.

Red – E – VLP – 3 – 9 – E –12.

This is a code painted on the lid of one of the lunch pails. The colour represents the train line, **E** for a specific Dabbawala, **VLP** indicates the target train station, in this case Vile Parle, **3** the further target station Churchgate, **9** represents the Dabbawala who gets the container there, **E** stands for Express Tower – each office tower in Mumbai has a name, and finally **12** stands for the floor to which it is to be delivered.

Every Dabbawala understands it!

O-Ton: Dabbawala Chef:

Most of the people are from the villages near Mumbai like Pune. We dabbawalas are relatives of each other, that point should be noted. Because people are from the same group, working together is very easy. Team work is there. Synergy is there.

Author:

The main reason for the success of the organisation.

SCENE 3

Vinod:

On the day I have passed my Bachelor of Commerce exam, my father announced they had found a suitable match for me, the niece of his uncle's wife, who had been at Paplu's birthday party last week.

Sudhir Kakar:

Indian organizations function still on the model of the large family which

means the head of the family is idealized and considered high, but whose duties are to take care of all the family members.

Vinod:

I didn't give her any special attention, nor had I tried to talk to her. She was not the most beautiful woman I had laid eyes on, but on the other hand, I couldn't remember any obvious physical defects either.

Sudhir Kakar:

The hierarchical distance is much higher than in another country or any another culture in the world. On the another hand the caring of the subordinates is also the highest in India. So this "high caring" together with "high hierarchy" that seems to be the model what one does in the family.

Vinod:

The wedding was negotiated that very week.

The period between the engagement and wedding passed by in a haze. I spent the days at my new job in the bank, and my evenings as before, gathering with friends at the cafe near Churchgate. There were many jokes about my impending union...

Sudhir Kakar:

People working for such a leader they work much much harder. They don't look at it as a contractual obligation. Their loyalty is much much greater.

Katharina Kakar:

Ja. People don't only work for themselves but also for their family. Because family is important one wants to please and make them proud. So any effort that is given in work reflects also in the pride of the family. So that's a motive to do well.

Vinod:

... but somehow I managed not to think about how my life was going to change. The wedding always seemed to be at least a few days away, and I occupied my hours without letting myself worry about it.

It was only when I saw my garments being tied to Sheetal's that the enormity and irreversibility of the situation hit me.

Sudhir Kakar:

I think what enterprises can learn is that organizations are not impersonal places: that relationships are extremely important, caring for others in organizations is very important and not only important but ultimately there are going to be also monetary importance and effectiveness: that you are going to earn much more if you place emphasis on human relationships in institutions, organizations and not only look at them as work places.

Katharina Kakar:

I think the dabbawalas are a wonderful example for that!

Vinod:

I was getting married, and I did not know why, or to whom.

Musik: Bombay Rap

O-Ton: Schauspieler

Schauspielerin:

My generation is – because of the satellite television and the internet – opened to a whole lot!

Schauspieler:

I perceive the west as a model. They are somewhere we should be, in terms of society and education.

Schauspielerin:

And why looking at it like “We are trying to copy the West”? It is just a matter of...

Schauspieler:

But the thing is that in India we have very strong values.

Schauspielerin:

... opening your interest so much and then becoming what you want. It's not like we are forgetting the Indian way at all!

Schauspieler:

Now what happens is that sometimes there is a clash between the Western and the Indian sensibility. Many times the Indian sensibility is that you stay with the family, you stay together. Now many youngsters want to move out. They want to marry on their own.

[Zugfahrt]

Author:

Hindus are vegetarians, the Jains, an old Hindu religious community, additionally don't use salt and don't eat any vegetables that grow underground, Muslims don't eat pork.

The dietary prescriptions of the various religions were one of the reasons for the Dabbawalas delivery service. What's possibly even more important these days is healthy food.

Dabbawala Chef:

Mumbai is a cosmopolitan city. Mumbai has people from different religions and because of this people want to take out food from their home.

One of the pillars of our theory is that serving people is like serving God. This are our religious believes. Yes, we are all Hindus. Serving food is serving God.

Author:

Religion, time-honoured mores and traditions rule throughout large parts of India, despite the modern age.

But the norms are changing now. Especially in the cities.

They also rule the conduct of employees.

Their industriousness and their thinking in heirarchies.

Above it all thrones the family.

For Hindus and Muslims alike.

SCENE 4

Abortionist:

I haven't spoken to my father since.

Kaka:

I saw him this morning.

Abortionist:

I am an abortionist.

Kaka:

From the time he arrived at Dockyard Road station till he got off the train at VT...

Abortionist:

I save families, lives, marriages.

Kaka:

I watched him.

Abortionist:

But now...

Kaka:

I lost him in the morning rush at VT.

Abortionist:

I need to be saved.

Kaka:

But my son didn't see...

Abortionist:

Two years ago my mother went to Mecca for Haj.

Kaka:

... because he doesn't look for me.

Abortionist:

For my sake. Of the three hundred Indians who had gone to perform Haj that year, Ma was the only one who died in the stampede.

O-Ton: Hidaayat (Schauspieler des Abortionist)

Abortion is still a huge taboo in India. It's huge ... They advertise abortion clinics ... But a lot of religions look down upon it.

Kaka:

When I reach the shoe shop it is not yet ten-thirty.

Abortionist:

My father, my wife and I got the news a day later. He threw out Afsana and me!

Kaka:

I have sat up there...

Abortionist:

He too works in Colaba; has been a salesman at a shoe shop for thirty years.

Kaka:

... for thirty years now. There is a closing-down sale in the shoe shop.

Amin-bhai:

The old anger returns.

Kaka:

Amin-bhai wants to move to America with his wife and three-year-old twins.

Amin-bhai:

This dusty, dirty country. This dump of a subcontinent that will kill each one of us.

Kaka:

Religion killed my wife.

Abortionist:

I see him sometimes.

Amin-bhai:

Here's how it will happen: take-off and then it will be gone, gobbled and blackened by distance.

Kaka:

There is no Allah, no heaven, no hell. No life after death. No sense in wasting precious hours of life inside mosques and temples and churches.

Amin-bhai:

I will remember the protection money demanded, the covert and blatant religious slurs, the riots, the aftermaths...

Kaka:

I stopped praying years ago. I'm not going to start now for Amin-bhai's visas.

Amin-bhai:

Let them have their Hindustan for Hindus.

Abortionist:

And the least I can do for my father?
To let him be.

Musik

Top 10 Reason For Using Dabbawalas Services:

Do you not love your mother or wife and like to eat food made by her?

O-Ton: Dabbawala Chef:

We have been running for more than 118 years now. We started in 1890. Some of the management and also schools and colleges come to meet the dabbawalas to understand their system. And one of their questions is: what is the reason of the success of the dabbawalas? Because in our system most of the persons are illiterate and we don't use any modern technology. The reason why is simplicity: everything is very simple. There is no technological record, no hard copy, there is no list of customer, it's all recorded by the brain give by the God that is our brain. That is the biggest computer given by the God!

Author:

Manish Tripathi, the intellectual among the Dabbawalas, is carefully leading the company into the 21st Century. With website and seminars for managers.

He has worked out lessons from the experiences of the food deliverymen, lessons that western corporations crave, as if they were the much longed for wisdom of an Indian guru, as if they would remediate their distress.

The secret of success? Simplicity!

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O-Ton: Kakar

Katharina Kakar:

Yes, I think that it is wonderful that actually the dabbawalas get attention by huge companies. They would like to learn what binds these groups of dabbawalas, how they organize themselves and how they function. It's wonderful that large companies try to take over some of their ideas to make their companies more functionable.

Sudhir Kakar:

Because all large companies know that it is no longer individuals who matters. Teamwork is the most important part in any larger institution if it is going to innovate. And dabbawalas of course are one of the best teams.

Katharina Kakar:

I think they are the best team!

Sudhir Kakar:

One sees how teamwork is done. So to learn from the dabbawalas is teamwork.

O-Ton: Hühnermarkt

Seth:

There is a limit to how much ugliness a man can bear. I am afraid I have reached my breaking point for today. Medina Chicken Mart closes at eight p.m.

I would like to walk out this very instant. But sometimes I like torturing myself. At least this much I know is wrong. To torture oneself is wrong.

Altaf Tyrewala:

My name is Altaf Tyrewala and I am the author of No God in Sight.

Seth:

Anything that makes a man happy is right.

Anything that makes a man unhappy is wrong. But what is a man to do when something makes him neither happy nor sad? Most of the time I feel nothing. Inside, everything is dead.

Author:

Altaf Tyrewala, born in 1977, drew a gloomy image of his hometown Mumbai, modern India and the consequences of the economic upswing.

People who are only striving for material things and are increasingly losing their beliefs and their traditions.

Like Seth, the chicken butcher.

Or Kaka, the shoe salesman and his son, the backstreet abortionist.

Altaf Tyrewala:

There is a way of technology und industrial modernisation, that is an empty promise in consumerism.

Modernisation has holes in its heart and empty promises.

Men on the Street:

In Bombay, *money is God*.

Men on the Street:

Long before the millennium, Indians such as the late prime minister Rajiv Gandhi were talking about taking the country into the twenty-first century, as if the twentieth century could just be leapfrogged.

India desires modernity; it desires computers, information technology, neural networks, video on demand. But there is no guarantee of a constant supply of electricity in most places in the country. It is an optimistic view of technological-progress—that if you reach for the moon, you will somehow, automatically, span the inconvenient steps in between.

Altaf Tyrewala:

The air is noxious. Almost every second person has respiratory disorders or is suffering from an infection. The electricity is cut two hours a day. There is no understanding for basic things like sewage or garbage disposal.

Men on the Street:

India has the third-largest Pool of technical labour in the world, but a third of its one billion people can't read or write.

All things modern in Bombay fail regularly: plumbing, telephones, the movement of huge blocks of traffic. Bombay is not the ancient Indian idea of a city. It is an imitation of a Western city, maybe Chicago in the 1920s.

Altaf Tyrewala:

Yes! And even then this people who doubt the numbers and sit in their air conditioned cars have no contact with these realities! They drop numbers! They throw figures at us! And at the same time all this GBT rocking! It is not rocking when you cannot breath the air. There is no economic success if you cannot drink water!

Men on the Street:

And, like all other imitations of the West here - the Hindi pop Songs, the appliances, the accents people put on, the parties the rich throw - this imitation, too, is neither here nor there.

Altaf Tyrewala:

You know India has now completely be reduced to a concept more than an actual physical living space.

O-Ton: Bahnhof CHURCHGATE

Top 10 Reason For Using Dabbawalas Services:

Dabbawalas are an icon in their own sense and famous world over for their efficiency and by taking our services you are being part of India's image building.

Author:

Is it heavy?

O-Ton: am Bahnhof Churchgate, dann durch die Strassen von Colaba

(Karrengeräusch und Verkehr)

Author:

Where do you go now? To VT?

Dabbawala:

We have to be in time!

Author:

We have to hurry!

Dabbawala:

(auf Hindi)

Dabbawala:

**There is no traffic signals
for Dabbawalas**

Author:

This is a privilege!

Dabbawala:

**Ja! Free!
Everybody is free!
Dabbawala is the best.**

Author:

Were you ever late?

Dinesh-Übersetzer:

Sometimes.

Author:

What is he doing then?

Dinesh-Übersetzer:

**He just have to rush to
cover time.**

Author:

**So the dabbawala has to
be very fit?**

Dinesh-Übersetzer:

Yes. He needs to be fit.

Dabbawala:

**This is ten minutes late
now! This is running!
Dabbawalla is the best.**

Dabbawala:

**Timing and the
Dabawalla: Same to same!
(small talk)**

Author:

Dabbawalas are always in a hurry. They must meticulously keep to their schedules – despite all the uncertainties like traffic chaos and monsoon rains.

The 18-year-old Shankar adroitly manoeuvres his cart through the chaotic streets dense with traffic in Mumbai's business districts.

There are no traffic regulations for him.

Mornings many flights of stairs.

The delivery, again many flights of stairs, up to the office suites.

Then at the end of the day, back to the residential neighborhoods to return the empty containers.

O-Ton: Dabbawala beim Ausliefern, Kundengespräch

Author:

Are you delivering one tiffin now?

Dabbawala:

Ja-ja! Two tiffins to the third floor! Are you coming? Third floor!

Author:

...Ok!

[Treppenhaus, Tiffinabgabe an einem Kunde]

Kunde:

Because it is better to eat home made food. The other food is full of oil and everything! So everything is in proper order.

Author:

Thank you very much!

Author:

We have to go! Thank you very much! I just had to run so I have to sweat! Thank you very much! Ok, let's go.

[Treppenhaus runter, Straße]

O-Ton: Dabbawalla beim Mittagessen auf der Straße

Dabbawala-Chef:

These are the managing learnings from the dabbawalas and in these learnings, there is something you can use in your personal life as well as in your office.

I will give you one example...

Author:

We're standing here in Churchgate station. We've just accompanied the Dabbawalas... What can a corporation like yours learn from the Dabbawalas?

Panalpina-Chef:

Wir sind von der Gruppe *Panalpina Welttransport*. Wir behandeln Großprojekte und machen die gesamten Logistik from door to door für Großprojekte überall auf der Welt. Da die Dabbawalas für Mumbai sehr bekannt sind, haben wir uns die Internet-Seite angesehen und gemerkt, dass es genau das ist, was wir mal studieren wollen, wie die eben so eine hohe Erfolgsrate mit ihre deliveries haben. Das heißt, die Fehlerquote ist sehr niedrig und sie arbeiten mit basic tools, das heißt ohne irgendwelche Computer-Technologie und das wollten wir uns einfach mal angucken.

Author:

Panalpina - one of the leading logistics provider in the world – does door to door air and ocean freight.

A group of them came to Mumbai to study the Dabbawalas who work similarly.

Because of their high succes in deliveries without mistakes.

And all this without any technology.

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O-Ton: Dabbawalla beim Mittagessen auf der Straße

Author:

Is this your dabba?

Dabbawala:

Yeah! This is the rice and...

Eat the dabba, come! Eat the dabba!

Panalpina-Chef:

Ich glaube, was wir davon lernen können ist, daß der Customer Service im Vordergrund steht. Wenn ein Kunde dreimal das Essen nicht fertig hat morgens, dann lehnen sie den ab, was wir in der Praxis so nicht machen...

Author:

They see that customer service comes first.

But when food is not ready in the morning, they will drop the customer.

Panalpina doesn't do this.

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Panalpina-Chef:

Wir laufen unseren Kunden hinterher bis sie uns bezahlen und das passiert hier nicht: Wenn es kein Geld gibt, wird die Ware auch nicht mehr abgeholt, das ist ganz einfach!

Author:

They are running after their customers for payments. The Dabbawalas not. Who's not paying will not be served anymore.

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Panalpina-Chef:

Aber das lässt sich aber bei uns in der Praxis nicht umsetzen, leider.

Author:

A company like theirs will not be able to put this into reality.

Unfortunately!

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Dabbawala-Chef:

And that's the reason why in Mumbai house wives fear dabbawalas more than their husbands!

SCENE 5

Manager:

My Bombay is a cold, dry city.

Beggar:

It is not easy to die when you are a beggar.

Manager:

On waking I turn on my cellphone.

I sit at the kitchen counter with the newspaper— Times of India.

Beggar:

Life clings to you like a rabid stray with its teeth sunken into your flesh.

Manager:

There, there's your Bombay again...

Beggar:

You manage to survive...

Manager:

... swamping my mind...

Beggar:

Please...

Manager:

bringing the whole of India with it.

Beggar:

...friend! Friend, money!

Manager:

The parking lot is sweltering!

Beggar:

... food, food!

Manager:

Before my body can feel the shock...

Beggar:

... hungry, hungry!

Manager:

I dash through a wall of sunlit heat and leap into the back seat of my car...

Beggar:

God! (lacht)

Manager:

... kept chilled and ready by Chinu, my driver...

Beggar:

These are the only words you need as a beggar.

Manager:

My car windows are practically black. If I moved my head a little to the right, I would see the blaze of the steaming, shitting, spitting city you live in.

Beggar:

You learn how to render these words in every tongue spoken under the sun.

Manager:

I never look up or out.

Altaf Tyrewala:

I almost feel like drown out by this rush for money and success at any cost.

Beggar:

Every twenty-nine days, a full moon quietly rises in the east.

Manager:

A shadow begins tapping lightly from outside.

Beggar:

It is a silver that would take your breath away.

Manager:

For one more day, for another twelve hours I can, I must, I will have to forget that your Bombay exists.

Beggar:

When you are a beggar, you no longer have the words left to account for such a extraordinary thing.

Men on the Street:

The Battle of Bombay is the battle of the self against the crowd. In a city of 20 million people, how much value is associated with the number one?

The battle is Man against the Metropolis; which is only the infinite extension of Man and the Demon against which he must constantly strive to establish himself or be annihilated.

A city is an agglomeration of individual dreams...

Schauspieler-Dinesh:

It is a city of dreams... hopes ...

Men on the Street:

... a mass dream of the crowd.

Schauspieler-Dinesh:

Everybody that comes to Mumbai has a dream I think ...

Men on the Street:

In order for the dream life of a city to stay vital each individual dream has to stay vital

Schauspieler-Dinesh:

Most of the people come to be a star... a city of dreams...

Men on the Street:

The reason a human being can live in a Bombay slum and not lose his sanity is that his dream life is bigger than his squalid quarters. It occupies a palace.

Schauspieler-Dinesh:

Also in business, there is many business here ... everything is here. That's why we are twenty millions!

[Atmo Verkäufer am Victoria Terminal]

Schauspieler:

There is a Japanese, an American and an Indian. What happens is that they are in some remote area in India trying to dig something.

The Japanese take them to Japan. He digs his country and goes 5.000 feet down and finds wires and he tells them: "Look at least 5.000 years ago my country had wires!"

The American takes them to America and takes them 10.000 feet down and the wires have names of different countries. He says: "Even at that time my country was so advanced we got the wires from all other countries!"

So the Indian get both of them to India and he digs like 15.000 feet down and he finds nothing. So the Indian looks up and says: "Now you see. Our economy was so advanced at that time that we were using wireless 15.000 years ago!"

Sudhir Kakar:

I think saying "war, clash of civilizations" is not completely right. In India for instance we had many culture encounters, Islamic culture, British colonial culture ... So all of those encounters your own culture gets enriched. And that's what Hinduism has been doing all the time. So those are the processes

which are happening much more in an encounter of cultures than clashes or conflicts. And I think this has been true for most of the cultures in the world too.

And the term “clash of civilizations” or “war of civilizations”, these terms “war” or “clash” come only when there is a great deal of fear. Of losing one’s own sense of self.

Schauspieler:

As an Indian yougster I am open to the West. I’ve seen what is happening outside and I choose the best of the West and I choose the best of my country. And I try to merge them. I think that’s how it should be.

Altaf Tyrewala:

But I don’t think we have defined for ourselves what is really “modern”. Is modern what is western? I don’t know. Is modern what is American? Not necessarily. And what is traditional? I don’t know. So there is this whole confusion between what is tradition and what is modern.

Katharina Kakar:

If a culture is secured by itself, about its values and so on then you don’t need to close your doors. You can be more open towards other values and ideas and be enriched by it .

Sudhir Kakar:

Gandhi put it once very nicely: “I want the doors and windows of my house to be open to let all the winds blow, but that does not mean that I want to be blown off my feet by the winds!”

Schauspielerin:

I think basically that the cultures are different.

[Mumbai Song]

SCENE 6

Friend:

Hello?

Daughter:

Let’s just go this afternoon and get it done with.

Friend:

What?

Daughter:

There’s no way out, okay!

Friend:

What?

Daughter:

What do you mean *what*? Are you drunk?

Friend:

It was inevitable.

Daughter:

Hello? Kasim? Are you there?

Altaf Tyrewala:

I have to admit that every week there is this self inquiry: "Can I really live here? Do I want to live here?" When the environment grows more and more noxious what does one do?

Friend:

It had to be done.

What Minaz and I did this afternoon will wound us for ever.

With a foot on the boarding platform and a hand clutching the metal railing I was on the 95, but only just.

It's the way I intend to live my life from now—on the periphery.

Tethered, but only just.

But there is gratitude—a shameful and hopeless gratitude towards Minaz for consenting to the desecration of her body in order to salvage our shining futures.

O-Ton: Kakar

Sudhir Kakar:

I think there will be more individuality, but not completely. I think the family still will play a very important role as it has continued to do for a long time. But the family itself will give more room for the individual, for the young people.

Katharina Kakar:

Western culture will not take over for the simple reason that the young generation itself is very critical. Naturally it will come to the point that they'll take the best of both cultures. Also very typical for India is that the young generations do not break with the traditions, they just bend it! That is very typical for India. While in the West the young generation needs to break with the older generation to move on with their own lives.

O-Ton: Hidaayat

I just feel that we us people are generally much more interested in what the other person or what the neighbour is doing, where he is working and his son is studying and how much money they are earning. We are much more inquisitive by nature.

O-Ton: Meera

I think a lot of the Westerners are very fascinated by the culture, by the costumes and the very traditional dances and animals ... But I think they are pretty disgusted with the filth. Which let me tell you so are the Indians.

Ranjit Hoskoté:

When you see them scouring about and making sure that this lunchbox lands on their table at a certain hour, you know: that's a symbol of Bombay. Speed, efficiency, meeting the deadline. All of that.

O-Ton: Strasse, Treppenhaus, Klingeln und Abliefern ...

Author:

So when is your work finished?

Dabbawala:

Now!

O-Ton: Dabbawala-Chef:

Sometimes people ask for how long the Dabbawala System will continue to run? So I tell them: as long as husbands keep on loving their wives and they long for the homemade food, the Dabbawala System will continue.

Musik: Sarod

Men on the Street:

On our Sundays in Bombay, time becomes frozen.

The two most elusive qualities in a metropolis are intimacy and silence. Both exist here, within the Sunday afternoon.

If you go around Fountain or Fort you will be able to walk on the sidewalks on this day of rest; the streets will be revealed for what they really are.

The rest of the week people get home too late to do anything but eat and sleep, like animals, driven by animal needs.

Sundays we become human again.