



Description of Muktadhara festivals

Dear Friends, critics, relatives and well-wishers of Jana Sanskriti,

Muktadhara is back!

With great joy in our hearts we announce the **8th edition of Muktadhara - Jana Sanskriti's Bi-annual International Forum Theatre Festival** which will be held from **8 December 2018 – 22 December 2018**.

In the last 7 festivals spanning over 14 years we have witnessed an ever increasing number of sincere TO artists and activists who are interested to explore Jana Sanskriti. So we thought that perhaps it would only be fair to announce the festival at the earliest as this would give time to those, young and passionate, to collect and gather resources which are necessary to travel to India to participate in this festival.

Muktadhara 2018 will be formatted in a style similar to that of 2016 **beginning with a week-long workshop by Sanjoy Ganguly at Badu**. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the name - Badu is a suburban village where Girish Bhavan, the administrative center of the organization is located. The season in December will be winter and the weather will be cool. The workshop will take place as usual in our neighbour's mango garden and these sessions will be followed by tea breaks and a delicious lunch. As evening falls and darkness sets in, we will continue to work for another hour or two. By then little boys and girls after their evening play will gather outside the garden eager to find out what is happening.

When the last bird has gone back home to her nest, we will break for the day. Participants will then have two choices, either to go away to lose themselves in the narrow roads of Badu village and find themselves in places like the nearby market or they may join us at Girish Bhavan to contemplate in quietness the beauty of Indian classical music, ragas, as played out either by a particular instrument such as the sitar or there might be vocal performances. Not all the evenings will be spent this way. There will also be such evenings when we will assemble at the mango garden again to witness the beauty, life and vigor of Bengali folk dances such as Gambhira, Chau, Natua etc. We will end the day with a splendid dinner and retire to our places of stay for the night and meet each other again the following morning for breakfast.

After the 7 day workshop, **inauguration of the performing part of the festival** will take place at the wonderful auditorium of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations at Kolkata. Remaining part of the **festival will be taken to the villages of the district of South 24 Parganas where Jana Sanskriti operates**. The participants apart from enjoying the nature of rural Bengal will have a **first-hand experience of the practice of Theatre of the Oppressed among the marginalized communities** – in this case, agricultural workers. The participants are not subject to the hardships of village life but it acts as an exposure albeit in comparatively comfortable living conditions.



The plays which you will construct in Sanjoy's workshop will be played out before the audiences in the village - several thousands of them. We shall witness how humanity comes together to create understanding about the issues causing oppression and offer pathways to one another. It is indeed special to see humanity mix and mingle re-examining, constructing thoughts and practices. After rounding up the performing part of the festival in the villages, tired and exhausted participants will return to their base at Badu.

The day after is the last day of the festival and is usually spent in some serious reflection about ideological and practical issues facing Theatre of the Oppressed in general and there is also an evaluation of the festival and further questions and answers regarding what had been witnessed in the villages combined with the practical and theoretical knowledge participants have about Jana Sanskriti and their own work back home. This discussion session is followed by a special dinner. Busier participants leave the very next day while those who wish to travel around the country linger around and spend another day or two at Jana Sanskriti to plan and organize their travel.

We hope you enjoyed reading this briefing of what a 'Muktadhara' festival is like. We further hope that this will serve as a motivation for you to register your names and do the necessary in order for you to be here with us for 15 days to personally witness what **Augusto Boal** termed, **"The largest and the longest lasting forum theatre operation in the world"**.

Thank You!

With lots of love,
Jana Sanskriti family

(Please Note: Participation fee for the festival is 500 Euros. The fee includes workshop, performances of Jana Sanskriti and all other participants, food and accommodation at Badu and villages, local travels for the whole period of the festival, seminar presentations, musical performances, folk dance etc. For more information, write to muktadhara.janasanskriti@gmail.com and please do circulate this announcement to your friends, those you think will be interested to take part in 'Muktadhara 2018')