



Book Review

Divaswapna (Daydream)

Author: Gijubhai

Genre: Novel

Translated by: Sharachchandra Wasti

Editor: Rajendra Dahal

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As soon as our Principal Professor Dixit learnt that I had read and finished writing the review for 'How to be a Brilliant Teacher' by Trevor Wright, he sort of cornered me with another book- to read and to write a book review as a complementary to the preceding book review. I was almost in an 'Oh no, not again!' mode as I anticipated the ordeal of going through another book. But then, a miracle happened: I finished reading the whole book in one sitting that evening (or rather, night)! The narration was just too absorbing to put the book down.

The writer of the book, Girija Shanker Bhagwanji Badheka, fondly called as Gijubhai, was born in the Indian state of Gujarat in 1885. He was a colleague of Mahatma Gandhi and shared not only similar roots with him, but also went on to study law and worked in Africa like Gandhi did. But the parallel ended there- as Gandhi thereafter began the freedom movement, while this less known peer of his went on to work for childhood education in India and became an expert in the field. Interestingly, he was often referred to as Children's Gandhi.

In Divaswapna, the protagonist who is a writer by profession, chooses to become a four-grade teacher for a year in order to see if the learning objectives can be

achieved through innovative strategies- strategies that are more student-friendly, student-centric and student-participatory. The story basically narrates the obstacles and challenges faced by the teacher in implementing his ideas and achieving his goals.

The two books- 'How to be a Brilliant Teacher' by Trevor Wright and Divaswapna by Gijubhai are in many ways comparable and complement each other. Both books intend to inoculate innovative ideas and inventions in the teachers' minds. Like the 'How to be a Brilliant Teacher' book, this one too emphasizes on innovative teaching and learning. It stresses on the need for a paradigm shift in education system. Because we are medical teachers, the natural question is how much of innovation is desirable, allowable and feasible in our context. Well, I guess, we can always debate on that!

For those who cannot or do not read Nepali, I found an English version online at:

http://www.mavjibhai.com/EBOOKS/Divaswapna_Eng.pdf

And, even an audio version can be found online at:

<http://www.ashishdanai.com.np/2012/10/nepali-novel-divaswapna-by-gijubhai.html>