

# **Uttarpriyadarshi, play in Manipuri**

Directed by **Ratan Thiyam**

Akademi Awards, 2012

*Duration: 80 minutes*



*Synopsis (Scene-wise):*

## *Prologue*

Uttarpriyadarshi opens with the chanting of a prayer by the four samvadaks (monks). They are joined by eight other members of the chorus who bear symbols of the eight-fold path of Lord Buddha. They pray to Lord Buddha and praise his benevolence.

## *Flashback*

A child plays with the dust of the earth in a courtyard. He stops suddenly as the wandering Sakyamuni (Lord Buddha) stands before him smiling, asking for alms. The child offers a handful of dust to Lord Buddha who sprinkles it on the surface of the earth, sanctifying it for this child, who will be reborn as Ashoka (also known as Priyadarshi), the future king of the Mauryas.

## *Time Wheel*

As the samvadaks extol Lord Buddha, who looks upon all with compassionate eyes, they form a mandala (time wheel), and move from the past into the present. In the background, prayers are chanted.

## *Scene One*

Riding an elephant at the head of the victorious army, Priyadarshi returns home, having vanquished the kingdom of Kalinga. The samvadaks recount his exploits as conqueror of the vast continent.

## *Scene Two*

Priyadarshi commands his bhat-charans (royal musicians) to sing a nandi, glorifying his victory and extolling his fame. But the emperor is mocked by the Samvadaks, who address him as a