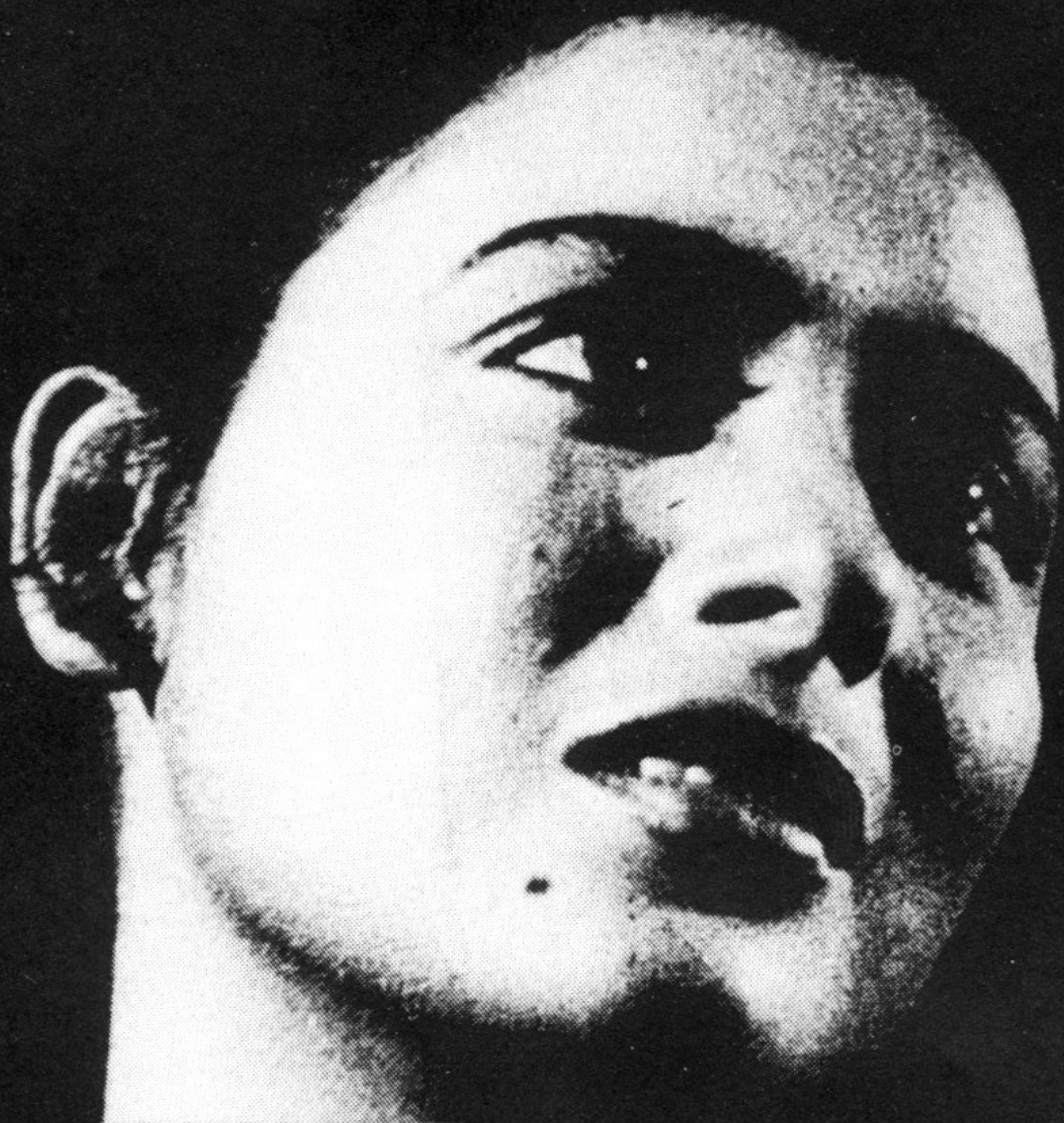


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By Popular Demand- Ritwik Ghatak



It is frankly rare at the NFT for a whole season to sell out. Even more so when it is a season of films by a hitherto unknown film-maker. Yet for our Ritwik Ghatak season in July queues for each house demonstrated that we had under-estimated the demand for this film-maker's work.

Ghatak (who died in 1975, virtually unknown both at home and internationally) was driven by a passion, a horror of injustice, and his films are a full-blooded commentary on aspects of Indian life. Much of his passion stemmed from his personal situation as a refugee from East Bengal, which was later to become Bangladesh.

We are especially pleased to be able to include in this second season. *A River Called Titash*, based on a Bengali epic novel and shot by Ghatak in Bangladesh, which was thought to be lost at the time of our first season.

And so, truly by popular demand, we are pleased to bring back to the NFT the films of Ritwik Ghatak.—CK.



Mon 20 Dec
6.15

The Citizen
(Nagarik)

Ghatak's first feature film *The Citizen* treats directly with his continuing theme of the difficulties of individual integration into modern Indian society. A young man, unable to get a job, falls in love but a rival comes to live in his family's house. His father dies, his girlfriend's sister becomes a prostitute, the family moves from a middle-class to a working-class neighbourhood. The 'Internationale' fills the sound track. *India 1952/With Satendra Bhattacharya.*



Mon 20 Dec
8.30/
Wed 29 Dec
6.15

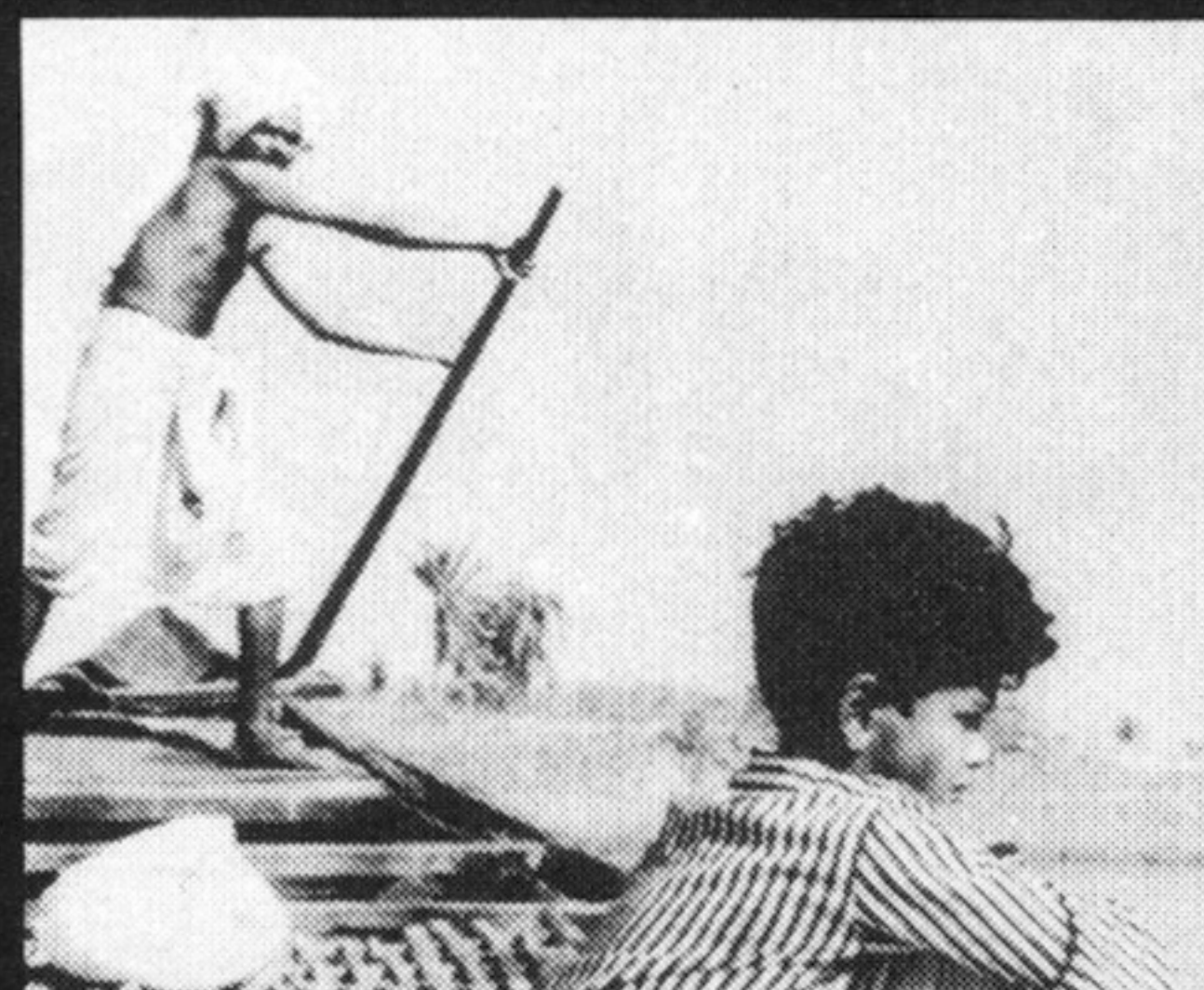
The Mechanical Man
(Ajantrik)

Ghatak's best-known film, one of the seminal forces in the development of the modern Indian cinema, has long been due for greater international recognition. It is the story of a taxi driver in a small provincial town whose greatest friend is his vintage taxi, Jagatdal, the object of ridicule to others. Great entertainment on a superficial level; but also a fascinating study of an obsessive psychology as well as a comment on the advent of the machine in a traditional society. *India 1958/With Kali Bannerji.*

Kanchan, a 10-year-old boy from a small village, runs away from the cruelty of his father to the big city of Calcutta. The city, seen through his eyes, is a strange place but he is befriended by a street pedlar who was once a teacher, a gangster masquerading as a magician, an ageing maidservant, a wealthy young girl. Eventually he returns home and tells his father what the city is really like. A moving affirmation of the incorruptibility of childhood. *India 1959/With Pram Bhattarak Lahiri, Padma Devi, Sailen Ghosh.*

Wed 22 Dec
8.30/
Thu 30 Dec
6.15

The Runaway
(Bari Theke Paliye)



An indomitable young woman is the sole support of her refugee family living in post-partition Calcutta and sacrifices everything, including the man in her life, to keep it together. The first of three films on Ghatak's very personal theme of refugees from East Pakistan, *The Hidden Star* is thought by many to be his masterpiece. Maybe verging on the melodramatic, it is full of deeply-felt passion. With a marvellous music track. *India 1960/With Supriya Chowdhury, Anil Chatterjee.*

Mon 27 Dec
6.15/
Wed 29 Dec
8.30

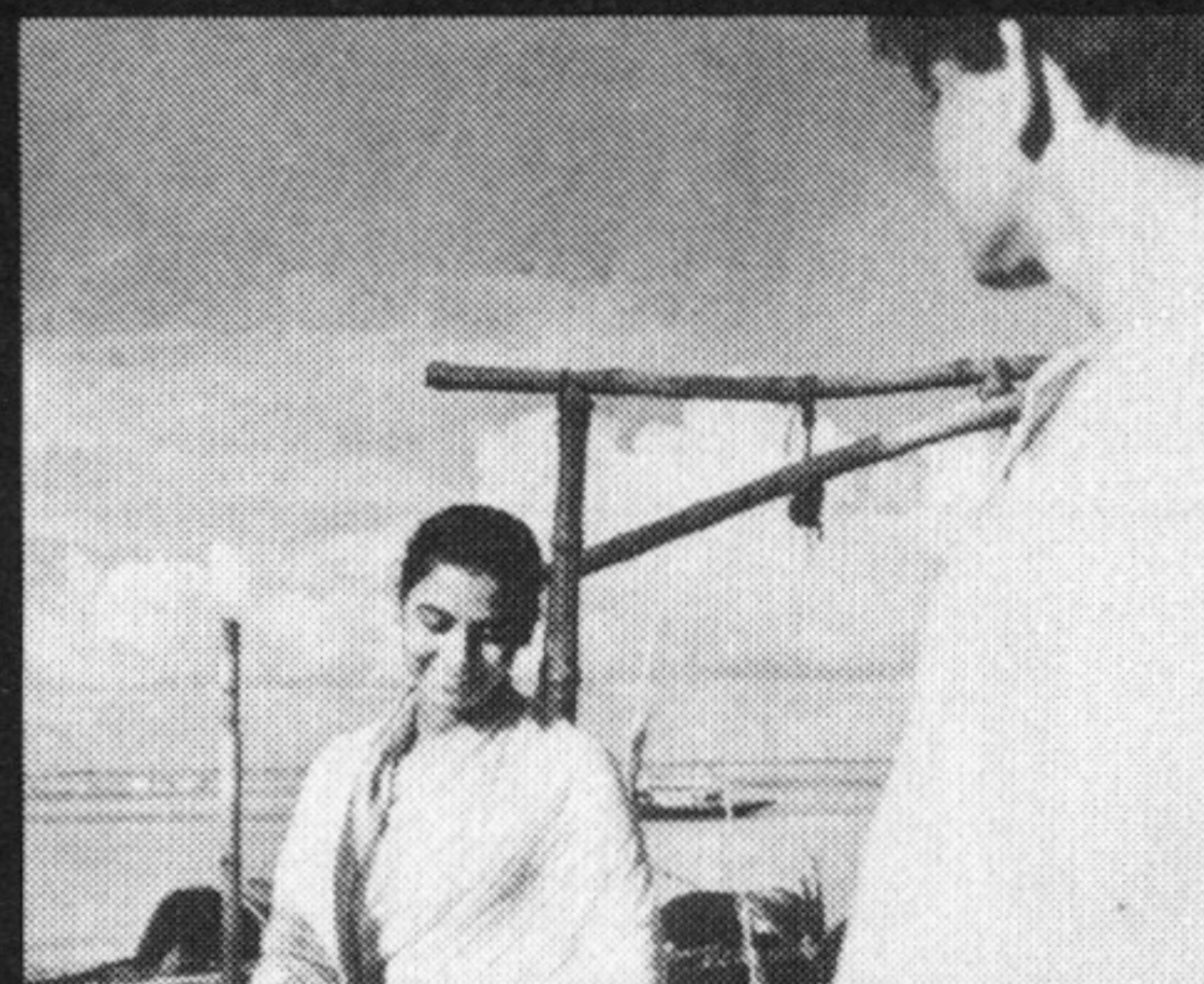
The Hidden Star
(Meghe Dhaka Tara)



Based on incidents from Ghatak's own early life when he travelled around small villages putting on plays, *Komal Gandhar* tells the story of a young man whose mission in life is to reach the people through his People's Theatre Group. A refugee from Bangladesh, he seeks the meaning of patriotism in a partitioned country. A more experimental work for Ghatak, *E Flat* is the crystallisation of all his preoccupations. Again, a noteworthy sound-track. *India 1960/With Supriya Chowdhury, Avinash Bannerjee.*

**Mon 27 Dec/
Fri 31 Dec**
8.30

E Flat
(Komal Gandhar)



Shot in Ghatak's homeland of Bangladesh with the blessing of the government, who donated a brand-new camera, *A River Called Titash* was an unhappy film for Ghatak as his health deteriorated greatly during the shooting. It was his most ambitious project and, though the end result is flawed, its epic re-creation of the tragic lives of a fishing community takes in romance, melodrama and passionate anger; it also proves that there is much acting talent to be found in Bangladesh. *India 1973. 140 mins.*

Tue 28 Dec
6.00/
Thu 30 Dec
8.30

A River Called Titash
(Titash Ekti Nadir Naam)



A highly autobiographical film, Ghatak's last completed feature stars the film-maker himself as Neelkantha Bagchi, a confirmed alcoholic and intellectual. The film consists of episodes from his life showing the moral alienation of Bengali intellectuals in the early 70s, the impact of the war of liberation in Bangladesh and the tensions created by the militant Naxalite movement. His personal life, including his relationship with his estranged wife, is also shown. Ghatak's performance is quite remarkable. *India 1974/With Tripti Mitra.*

Tue 28 Dec
8.30/
Fri 31 Dec
6.15

Reason, Debate and a Tale
(Jukti, Takko aar Gappo)

