

A Resume of the Cultural Programmes during Centenary Celebrations at Allahabad

By Mr. Justice K. B. Asthana,

Convener, Cultural Programmes, Centenary Celebrations, High Court, Allahabad

It was very rightly decided to organize cultural shows and other kinds of entertainments during the Centenary Celebrations of the High Court, as an essential activity connected therewith. A sub-committee, with Justice K. B. Asthana as the Chairman, and consisting of the following members, was constituted for the purpose:

Mr. Justice G. C. Mathur.
Mr. Justice Satish Chandra.
Mr. Justice H. C. P. Tripathi.
Mr. Kedar Nath Sinha, Advocate.
Mr. Hari Swarup, "
Dr. R. S. Dwivedi, "
Mr. Swami Dayal, "
Mr. Narendra Kumar, "
Miss N. A. Rehman, "
Mr. M. P. Tandon, Deputy Registrar (Admn.)
-Officer attached to the Sub-Committee.

In the various meetings of the Sub-Committee, it was decided to organize a musical soiree consisting of dances, vocal and instrumental music, a Mushaira, a Kavi-Sammelan and a dramatic performance. It was also kept in view by the Sub-Committee that while the entertainment and the various cultural shows be of sufficiently high standard, yet the same ought not to be on such a lavish scale as to require heavy expenditure. The Sub-Committee, therefore, decided to collect the best talent at the minimum expense. The artists who took part in the dance and musical performance were mainly local; and those artists of all-India fame, who came from out-station (thanks to the efforts of some members of the Sub-Committee) accepted very reasonable terms which were approved by the Sub-Committee.

To the Mushaira and Kavi-Sammelan were invited poets who were either members of the Bar or of the Judiciary or belonged to the Staff. Invitations were issued to poets after the list had been approved by the Sub-Committee. It was gratifying to note that the success of the Mushaira and the Kavi-Sammelan amply fulfilled the expectation of the Sub-Committee that the three sources mentioned above could produce talented poets of highly cultural literary standard. The Sub-Committee also invited a few guest poets of fame, who were good enough to agree to recite their poems on such an important and historic occasion.

The Sub-Committee, at the suggestion of the Hon'ble the Chief Justice and Mr. Justice S. N. Katju, Secretary of the Planning Committee, Centenary Celebrations, decided to include on its programme the staging of the famous drama of Kalidas: "Abhigyan Shakuntalam" in Sanskrit. A local organisation of amateur artists offered to stage the play in Sanskrit and the Committee gratefully accepted their offer and met the necessary expenses incurred in staging the show.

The Sub-Committee published a brochure in Hindi containing the programme of its activities. The Sub-Committee, considering the seating capacity in the Pandal, threw the performances open to all the members of the family of the Judges, Lawyers and the Court Staff, reserving a few specified seats for dignitaries. The seating arrangement, in spite of the invitation being general, did not create any problem for the organisers; as the same were pre-planned, and a number of volunteers consisting of Advocates and the Court staff helped the Chairman. As far as it could be done, the organisers saw to it that every man, woman or child who came to the functions was seated comfortably. Proper arrangements were made by the Sub-Committee for drinking water and the catering of tea, coffee and refreshments. For the artists and the poets, who were invited, arrangements for dinner were also made.

On the 25th November, 1966, the programme of musical soiree consisted of Saraswati Vandana, recital of guitar by the students of Jhankar School of Allahabad, a solo recital by Sri Nalin Majumdar, a group dance by the students of Sri Panna Lal Sridhar, namely, Rachana Jauhari, Sohini Dayal, Kamini Dayal, Mamta Dubey, Anita Gopesh, Anjana Baijal and Purnima Shanglu, in the Kathak style, depicting a composition of Mahraj Vindadin showing the yearning of Gopis for Lord Krishna and a solo dance by Km. Purnima Shanglu, depicting a scene from Sita-haran. The dance performances were much appreciated. A Sitar recital was given by Sri Shamim Ahmad of Bombay, a disciple of Pt. Ravi Shankar. It was of very high standard and chaste in its classicism and sonorous in cadence. The last item of the musical soiree was a masterly performance of vocal music by Ustad Latafat Husain of Bombay, a musician of national renown. The vocal performance depicting different ragas and raginis lasted well late in the night and kept up the interest of the audience to the last note.

On the 26th November, 1966, in the afternoon, the Sanskrit drama of Kalidas-"Abhigyan Shakuntalam"-was staged in the auditorium of the St. Joseph's High School. The drama performance was inaugurated by Sri K. Subbarao, Chief Justice of India, and was witnessed by distinguished guests, including Shrimati Subbarao, Sri M. C. Setalvad, the members of the Russian delegation, Chief Justice of Nepal, and Chief Justices and Judges of some other High Courts and other dignitaries and prominent members of the Bench and the Bar. The drama was of a very high standard and really fascinating. It kept the audience of more than one thousand persons present there spell-bound, though many of them did not know Sanskrit.

Later, in the evening, a grand Mushaira was held in the Pandal under the presidentship of Sri Ambika Prasad Srivastava, retired Judge of the High Court. A very literary inaugural speech was delivered by Smt. Surajkala "Sarvar" Sahiba, an Urdu poetess of all-India fame. A large number of poets, representing the Judiciary, the Bar and the Court staff, recited their poems. Of particular interest were the patriotic poems recited by 'Qatil Bandvi', a

member of the staff of the District Judge, Banda, who was repeatedly requested by the audience for recitation. The highlight of the programme was a recitation by Firaq Saheb, Bismil Saheb of Allahabad and 'Saba' Saheb of Bombay. The Mushaira lasted till the early hours of the morning of November 27.

On the 27th November, 1966, the performance started with a film show exhibiting musical paintings given by Sri Hiro Hingorani. This was followed by a grand Kavi-Sammelan which was presided over by Mr. Justice Harish Chandra Pati Tripathi. Eminent Hindi poets, like Bedharak Banarasi, Soond, Dr. Shambhunath Singh, Deonath Pandey, Vijaya Balliatic, Chandra Shekhar Misra and Sudhakar Pande, and members of the Judiciary and the Bar as also the Court staff participated in it. Their poems were highly appreciated. The Kavi-Sammelan also lasted tin the early hours of the morning of the next day.