

**A Brief Account of National Seminar on 'Pūrvaraṅga–Preliminaries to
Indian Theatre
(7-9 November, 2012)**

Very recently Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Eastern Regional Centre, Varanasi in collaboration with Jñāna Pravaha, Varanasi organized a National Seminar on **Pūrvaraṅga:Preliminaries to Indian Theatre** from 7th to 9th November, 2012 which consisted of two phases: (1) Performance and (2) Deliberations on the concept.

Performance i.e. theatrical evening unravelled before the eyes of audience on 7th November, 7 p.m. at Nagari Natak Mandali, where two beautiful presentations entertained the guests and scholars: (1) *Pūrvaraṅga* (more specifically Kaṇḍikā) Dance in two pieces: (a) '*devam vandyam*' Benediction to Śiva and (b) '*devīm vācam*' Benediction to Supreme Goddess presented under the direction of Prof. C.V. Chandrasekhar and Prof. K.K. Sharma participated by Smt. Jaya Chandrasekhar, Dr. Svaravandana Sharma, Dr. Layaleena Bhatt and others. (2) There was a beautiful small Dance-drama "*Uṣas*" centred on Uṣah-sūktam of Ṛgveda presented by Smt. Manjari Chandrasekhar and her party.

Actual academic session of the Seminar was held at Jnana-Pravaha Seminar Hall (8-9 November, 2012). In this part totally 10 lectures were delivered by the scholars. The seminar was inaugurated on 8th November, 2012 at 10.30 a.m. with melodious Sāma chanting which was rendered by Pt. Gagan Chattopadhyaya and his students.

In the sanctified atmosphere Smt. Bimla Poddar, Managing Trustee, Jnana-Pravaha gave welcome address to the scholars and guests assembled at the Seminar Hall.

Prof. K.D. Tripathi, Advisor, IGNSA, E.R.C., Varanasi in his brief keynote address gave an idea of *Pūrvaraṅga*.

Next to him Prof. C.V. Chandrasekhar gave a small lecture as chief-guest. In his brief note he explained the nature of *Pūrvaraṅga* and some related technical terms like *piṇḍibandha*, *aṅgahāra*, *kaṛaṇa*, *vardhamānaka*, etc. Dr. N.D. Sharma, HoD(KK), IGNSA, New Delhi addressed the scholars as guest-of-honour. Prof. N. Ramanathan offered presidential remarks. The inaugural session ended with vote of thanks extended by Dr. Vijay Shankar Shukla.

After a short break the first session started under the chairmanship of Prof. K.D. Tripathi. In this session three lectures were delivered by Prof. Y.K. Mishra, Prof. N. Ramanathan and Prof. Ritwik Sanyal.

Prof. Y.K. Mishra spoke on Vedic background of *gāna* as enunciated in the Nāṭyaśāstra with special reference to Pūrvaraṅga. Prof. Mishra raised a series of questions in order to answer those he discussed whether Sāmaveda and Gāndharva veda are contemporary or sequential. Where from they have been originated? Who was the first propagator? What is the true connotation of the name Gāndharva? How it is related to Aditya? What is the necessity of *Śuṣkāṣara* and whenceforth it came in use in the performance? etc. etc.

Next speaker, Prof. N. Ramanathan through a power-point presentation discussed on varieties of Pūrvaraṅga with all the specific details as enunciated in the tālādhyāya, tāndavādhyāya, dhruvādhyāya and avanaddha-adhyāya of the Nāṭyaśāstra. Next to him was Prof. Ritwik Sanyal who talked on concept of *gāna* in the Nāṭyaśāstra and its seminal presence in the Pūrvaraṅga. Prof. Sanyal in his detailed speech discussed on *dhruvāgāna* especially *vahirgīta*. In course of his lecture Prof. Sanyal has thrown light on the polemics of *nāṭya*, *gāna*, *gīta* etc. in their cultural context. He also discussed how *gāndharva* and *gāna* are inherently related and dependent to each other and how they are different also. After these three lectures Prof. K.D. Tripathi gave his remarks as chair person.

In the second session, Dr. Rajanikant Tripathi presented a paper on "Different types of Pūrvaraṅga as enunciated in the Vth Chapter of Nāṭyaśāstra". In course of his presentation Dr. Tripathi discussed the nineteen components of Pūrvaraṅga in detail and focussed on their necessity also. Next speaker was Prof. Upendra Pandey, who discussed the nature of *Prastāvanā* as described in the 5th chapter of Nāṭyaśāstra. In this session, there was a special lecture-cum-demonstration also presented by Prof. C.V. Chandrasekhar who (accompanied by four students) gave his deliberation on the composition of Kaṇḍikā Dance in present performance—its background and innovations. In the musical demonstration Smt. Jaya Chandrasekhar, Dr. Smt. Svaravandana Sharma and Dr. Smt. Layaleena Bhatt accompanied him.

In the third session there were two lectures delivered by Prof. Krishnakant Sharma and Dr. Smt. Svaravandana Sharma.

Prof. K.K. Sharma talked on how the performance of Pūrvaraṅga is re-assessed, reconstructed and revived in the Folk Theatres of Assam especially in the *Aṅkiya Nāṭ* and *Bhaonā* tracing *baḍagīta*, *sattriyā* etc. and their characteristics also. In course of his lecture Prof. Sharma has shown some typical movements also. Next speaker was Dr. Smt. Svaravandana Sharma, who told on the Role of *vardhamānaka gīta* in *Pūrvaraṅga*: how it was reassessed and reconstructed by Late Prof. Prem Lata Sharma in the performance of Pūrvaraṅga during their presentation of dramas viz.

Vikramorvaśīyam, *Uttararāmacaritam* etc. Prof. Ritwik Sanyal offered his comments as chair person of the session.

In the IVth session Prof. Mahesh Chapak Shah gave a lecture on the "Continuity and Reconstruction of Pūrvaraṅga in the regional theatrical forms, viz. *Bhavai* of Gujarat, *Khayal* of Rajasthan and *Tamasha* prevalent in the Maharashtra till date. Next speaker was Prof. Karl G. Paulose, who, through a power-point presentation, discussed on the Continuity of Pūrvaraṅga on three major theatrical forms of South India viz. *Kuṭyaṭṭam* of Kerala, *Kathakali* of Andhra and *Yakṣagāna*—their different aṅgas with all the minute details. Last speaker was Prof. R.P. Dwivedi who in a brief illuminating note talked on *nāndī*—its actual meaning and purport in the performance of *nāṭya*.

In the Valedictory session, at first Dr. P. Ghosal presented a brief summary of the activities of entire Seminar before the chair person. Next, Prof. K.D. Tripathi in a brief lecture narrated the background history of Indian Art Tradition especially Indian Theatre. Prof. Karl G. Paulose gave a short valedictory address. The Seminar ended with vote of thanks extended by Dr. V.S. Shukla.

(Pranati Ghosal)