

Shubh Aarambh

It was yet another hot and humid evening. A routine lazy evening till the time I entered into a different world. It might sound exaggerating, but believe me, it was a different world!

A place where we normally meet for dance practice seemed different. The beauty, the vibes, the energy, it was all different. A simple but a very colorful Rangoli welcomed people. The side walls were full of paper cuttings, photographs and news-paper articles of various occasions. The moment we entered the Sabha Gruh (the dance studio), a few hand gestures (Mudras) were ready to communicate with us. Mudras embossed with 'Nadachhadi' were beautifully displayed, making the ambience alive and throbbing. Mild incense fragrance filled the air and made it serene.

Gradually the students and guests started coming, Meeting and greeting went on for some time. Madam Supravaji was making sure everything was arranged and organized properly.

Kala guru Smt. Smitaben Shastri, an art critique Shri S.D. Desai and Kala guru Shree Chandan Thakor arrived right on time. The program started after the arrival of Dr. Umaben Antani.

Since the auspicious festival of navratri is on, we began by bowing down to the "Ma Shakti". After a brief introduction of Aum Arts Dance Academy, creations and achievements of Guru Smt. Supravaji Mishra were narrated. Smt. Supravaji welcomed all the guests, invitees and students through a welcome address. Students welcomed the dignitaries with bouquets.

The holy lamp was lit by the worthy hands of all Kala Gurus and guests and the training centre was officially inaugurated.

A student of the academy, Ruchi Trivedi invoked Lord Ganesha through a beautiful depiction of 'Manglacharan'. She also shared her own experiences of learning Odissi dance and participating in the youth festival on a national level.

The program was planned in a different manner, where it was not merely a ribbon cutting event, but also a learning session for students. All Kala Gurus delivered lectures on the topic, 'Guru Shishya Parampara'. The talented Guru Dr. Smt. Umaben Antani expressed her views on the rich tradition and emphasized the importance of Gurus. Shri S.D. Desai, art critic and columnist, spoke about how the Guru Shishya Tradition passes to the next generation. He drew an interesting parallel when he claimed that bowing down to the feet of a Guru is equivalent to providing medicines to 100 people!

Shri Chandan Thakor, Nritya Bharti while addressing on the topic, put forward a novel idea of working toward a confluence of all the classical dance forms so as to keep the art alive for centuries.

Supravaji's mother was the next speaker. She is a retired teacher and a drama artist, singer and an eminent orator on Lord Jagannath culture. She shared her interpretations on the subject and described the relationship of Guru Sandipani with Krishna.

It was a pleasant surprise to have Mr. S.K. Nanda, Principal secretary, Home, Govt of Gujarat gracing the occasion. He has been a key source of motivation for all Odia artists all these years and joined us to show his support for our endeavors.

Guru Smt. Smitaben Shastri shared her experiences with her Guru while learning the dance and how her Guru's insistence on being disciplined helped her achieve perfection in her art form.

Smt. Supravaji brought the evening to an end by sharing some interesting facts about Odissi and its origins. She also expressed her gratitude towards the dignitaries for sparing their time and sharing some invaluable inputs. She also thanked her team for putting up a great event together

Mr. Ashutosh Dave, Director, Calorx and Smt. Bijal Haria, Shashi Kunj, also attended and lend their support for the event.

As they say that all beginnings should have a sweet end so we brought the evening to a closure with an ice cream treat for everyone.

Note: - The article is written by Ms Falguni Hiren who ably anchor this program beautifully. She is Director of Spandan, an organization of folk dance and learning Odissi Dance from Guru Smt Suprava Mishra.