

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF CELEBRATION OF 100 YEARS OF MANIPURI DANCE IN SHANTINIKETAN AND FESTIVAL OF DANCE-DRAMA ON 16TH JANUARY, 2020 AT JNMDA AUDITORIUM, IMPHAL

Prof. H. Tombi Singh, Vice-Chairman, J.N. Manipur Dance Academy,

Friends from the Media,

Respected Gurus,

My dear young Artistes and Students of the Academy,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege for me to be in your midst this afternoon at the celebration of 100 years of introduction of Manipuri Dance at Shantiniketan and observance of 44 years of Foundation Day of the Production Unit of the Academy. I would also take this opportunity to congratulate distinguished Artistes who have kept our State's great cultural traditions high.

The Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy, a National Institution, the first of its kind in India for Manipuri Dance was established in the year 1954 under the patronage of late Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with the sole objective of preserving and disseminating Manipuri culture such as dance, music, dance-drama not only within the country but in overseas also.

We are celebrating today the centenary of introduction of Manipuri dance in Shantiniketan and on this very day, the 44 Foundation Day of Production Unit of J.N. Manipur Dance Academy. The occasion is indeed historic, auspicious and joyous as the Academy achieves the first milestone completing 100 years of introduction of Manipuri Dance in Shantiniketan, a prestigious learning centre of the country and the world. My best wishes to all the known and unknown Artistes for their selfless and relentless efforts to nurture the rich cultural heritage of this tiny State of the country.

As you all are well aware, Artistes from this State have given innumerable shows in our country and abroad and have brought commendation and recognition from various parts of the country as well as overseas. We all know that Manipur is today popularly known to the world through her rich performing arts and culture and not through her geographical position and size.

To me, Manipur is almost synonymous with dance and music. Dancing for the sake of dancing was almost unknown here. The occasion of dances in Manipur is the changing of seasons and the objective is devotional.

I am very happy to know that since the establishment of J.N. Manipur Dance Academy in 1954, i.e., 66 years ago, the Production Unit of this Academy has produced more than 40 Dance-Dramas which is really praiseworthy.

Today, since many distinguished Gurus and experts of performing arts are here, I would like to place my humble opinion before you that the performing arts of India had a great historical role to play in the emotional integration of India. The revival of performing arts and their massive propagation through mass media and cultural exchange on a large scale shall impart a cultural dimension to the forging of National Integration. We have, of course, a mass awakening of the traditional art, specially after Independence and this should be further intensified. In these days, when the separatist tendencies raise their head in various parts of India, we can chalk out an intensive programme of mass cultural intervention with performing arts acting as transmission bridge between the Government and the people.

I am fully confident that the Academy's endeavour to keep producing various Dance-Dramas as well as new performing arts so that the Academy will be able to disseminate message to the people of the country as a whole for bringing peace and harmony in the society. I congratulate the Artistes of the Academy for their selfless contribution in the field of dance and music. On

behalf of the people of the State and on my own behalf, we wholeheartedly appreciate the efforts made by the Shantiniketan to preserve and nurture of Manipuri Dance. I do not intend to take much of your time as everybody must be eagerly waiting to see the varieties of wonderful cultural programmes to be staged by the talented students of this Academy. My good wishes to all the Artistes, Gurus who took pain to promote, nurture and disseminate the beautiful dances and performing arts of the State.

I, once again, thank the authorities of the Academy as well as Shantiniketan for inviting me to this celebration and wish the celebration a grand success.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.