

An absorbing and inspiring play

By CHAGANTY
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THE Telugu play, 'Prajanya-akudu Prakasam', which was presented for the 50th time in a short period indeed reflected the social and political situation prevailing in Prakasam's life which was full of thrills all the way. Prakasam was having his teacher, Immaneni Hanumantha Rao Naidu, as his ideal, who helped the boy in his studies, theatre activities in which also Prakasam was a natural choice, what with his handsome looks and dandled with aplomb roles of ill types, Arjun, the hero of Jayopakhyanam, etc. and even female roles.

The boy moved to Rajahmundry from his native Ongole and completed his education there with Naidu's help and also studied law at Madras, to practise as a 2nd grade pleader, in which he amassed a big fame and money. Encouraged by his fellow lawyers, Prakasam went to London to study for Barrister and was influenced by the speeches of Jada Bhai Naoroji and others and imbibed national feelings.

He practised law at Madras where too he made his name as a top class Advocate, earning lakhs of rupees every month. On hearing Gandhiji's exhortations, Prakasam relinquished his thriving practice and gave away all his property and went to Congress which is fight-

ing for India's freedom and himself jumped into the fray.

He faced the British bullets at the time of the Salt Satyagraha and was also imprisoned for various lengths of times. He became the premier of Madras Province against heavy odds and even defying Gandhiji's word when the latter wanted

to impose Rajaji as the premier. But he had to step down after a couple of years due to the power politics which had already started influencing the unprincipled politicians.

Prakasam, despite his stiff opposition to agree for an Andhra state without Madras, was chosen by popular demand as the first chief minister of Andhra State in 1953. But even here, he was let down by his own people and had to step down, but not without offering a bitter fight, coming out successful in one no-confidence motion and lost in the second one due to the defection of his trusted colleagues lured by power and ministerial posts.

Rajaji at Madras and Pattabhi after that were in the fore-



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front to antagonise Gandhiji against Prakasam but the same Gandhiji later wrote a letter to Prakasam acknowledging that Prakasam was the only Congress chief minister in the country who put into practice the policies laid down by Gandhiji for rebuilding India and village self administration.

Prakasam died a disappointed man at 84 after trying to help a poor man who was unreasonably implicated in a case, which caused Prakasam to walk to the village in the hot summer sun and suffered a sun stroke.

The play with 50 member cast was an example of a good biographical theme presented with dramatic appeal. Chatla

Sreeramulu looked like Prakasam come back to life and carried himself in exactly the same manner as Prakasam did in his day, defiant against injustice, honest to the core, principled with steadfastness. The writer Modali Nagabhushana Sarma and BP Prasad acted as narrators and filled up the connecting li-

nks in the narration.

Burra Subrahmanya Sastry, known for his prowess in portraying female roles, acted as the model mother of Prakasam, bringing up three sons, who lost their father, by running a humble mess and sacrificing her every comfort till her last breath. R Pratima, R Hemanasa acted as young Sreeramulu and Prakasam. Duggirala Someswara Rao's portrayal of Immaneni Hanumantharao Naidu's role was exemplary. GB Ramakrishna Sastri as Pattabhi and Mutunuri Kameswara Rao as Rajaji call for special mention for their excellent portrayal, each bringing out the duplicity and cunningness of these politicians to become closer to Gandhiji so as to pull

down Prakasam. Surabhi Syamala came as Suryakumari and fitted her role well. S Mohan led the group of freedom fighters leading the salt satyagrahs. In fact, every member of the cast acted with team spirit and this was the reason for the play's resounding success. There were some poignant scenes like the demise of Prakasam's mother which were touching.

Modali Nagabhushana Sarma himself directed the play with a thoughtful approach. The sets and costumes were aptly arranged by Surabhi Poorchandra Rao and Pundari.

Some of the names of the scenes were wrongly placed causing a slight confusion as in the case of Salt Satyagraha, etc. The political conspiracy which caused Prakasam's down fall as the first chief minister of Andhra State should have found a mention in the play.

In fact, Prakasam was the first to show the importance of self-respect, which was lacking in the Telugu people, who tamely agreed for the secondary role to which they were relegated in every sphere despite their talent and sincerity and this was only due to the self-seeking politicians among them. A very good play, educative, inspiring and true to life, which every Telugu youth should be exposed to. Chaganty.

Book of play on Prakasam Pantulu released

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RASARANJANI has been putting on boards a full length play, 'Prajanyaakudu Prakasam', written by Dr Modali Nagabhushanam and completed 50 shows in a short period of 6 months. Rasaranjani has since brought out the drama in book form, which was released at a function held at Ravindra Bharathi during the three-day celebrations to mark the golden jubilee of the play, which concluded on Wednesday. Penkunonda M L A, Lakshmiiah, was the chief guest released the book and said that the play deserves to be presented in every village so as to inspire the youth about the uprightness, undaunting courage, servitude and patriotism of the late Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu, who maintained these principles against the odds, all his life. He assured that the Trust through which he is connected would extend every possible help in this endeavour.

Justice K Punniiah (Retd), who was the guest of honour, recalled his association with the late Prakasam with whom he had the good fortune of working in the days of the Freedom Struggle and said that the play which he witnessed before the book release function is indeed truly representative of the times and the life of Prakasam. He advocated that Rasaranjani should strive to



Penkunonda M L A Lakshmiiah releasing a book on Prakasam Pantulu at Ravindra Bharathi on Wednesday as part of the Rasaranjani festival.

present the play at least at every district headquarters in the state so that the youth, who have already been deprived of the opportunity of remembering Prakasam's princip-

led life and would regain their lost faith in principled politics and shape their own lives on the lines of Prakasam's exemplary character. In fact, this is a task which the government

should weigh in with their support, he said.

Director General of Police HJ Dora, honorary president of Rasaranjani who was in the chair extended his good wishes

to the Rasaranjani members for their sincere efforts in taking forward this ideal play and also bringing it out in a book form.

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