

Usha Mangeshkar visit to Assam



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Almost all the Assamese of yesteryears has got special likings for the immortal songs '*Chinaki Chinaki mur monar manuh*' and '*Asom desor bagisare chowali*'. The singer of these immortal songs is Usha Mangeshkar, the youngest sister of the famous Mangeshkar family. Music of these songs were of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, the inimitable singer from this part of the country.

Lata Mangeshkar introduced her youngest sister to Dr. Hazarika during their rehearsal for the song '*Jonakore Rati*' from the film '*Era Bator Sur*'. In their first meeting itself, Dr. Hazarika offered Usha Mangeshkar proposal for singing some Assamese songs and she accepted it with all her sincerity. This was the beginning of a honeymoon between Usaji and the Assamese songs. With her mellifluous voice, she gifted songs like '*Chinaki Chinaki mur monar manuh*', '*Asom desor bagisare chowali*', '*Jilmilia Komol Bali*', '*Chenai mur o*', '*Hawa Nai Batash Nai*', '*Aparupa, Aparupa*', '*Ayotire Uruli*', to name a few to the music lovers of Assam.

She received state award for the song '*Chinaki Chinaki mur monar manuh*' from the film '*Khoj*'. The best quality apart from her voice is her almost perfect pronunciation.

She was invited as the chief guest in the award giving ceremony of 'Natyaprabar-Silpapran' on 28th August at Nagaon. In her lecture, she expressed her emotional closeness with Assam and the Assamese people. She said that the Assamese culture is very rich and she wants the preservation of this rich culture. She gave a clarion call to the new generation of Assam to remain alert so that this rich culture can not be eclipsed by bad external cultures. She recollected some of her sweet memories mentioning how Dr. Hazarika taught her and Lataji the Assamese songs. She ended her lecture with the song '*Chinaki Chinaki mur monar manuh*'.

She spent the night in the circuit house of Nagaon. She became quite nostalgic when she was served the dinner with her favourite 'Kaldilor Tarkari'. She recollected that she had the same food with fish curry of gourd, tomato and lemon when she visited Assam with Dr. Hazarika many years back. She has a liking for the 'Nemu tenga', the Assamese lemon. So, next day, when she visited Kaziranga, she was offered lunch with her favourite fish curry. She did not forget to take 'tamul-pan' after her food. On her way to Kaziranga, she visited the Kellydane tea estate. Starting from plucking of tea leaves to the preparation of tea in the factory, she observed all the processes keenly. While she was walking in the tea estate, I heard her singing the song '*Asom desor bagisare chowali*' in a low tone. While we were moving by the side of the hills of Karbi Anglong on our way to Kaziranga, looking at the clouds on the hills, she spontaneously uttered- 'Assam is like the Switzerland'. During our visit to Kaziranga she recollected her earlier visit to the sanctuary with Dr. Hazarika and said that she was really missing Dr. Hazarika at that moment.

She visited the holy Kamakhya temple on 30th August before flying back to Mumbai. She was accompanied by her nephew Adinath Mangeshkar, son of Hridaynath Mangeshkar and Adinath's wife Krishna Mangeshkar. Adinath was also seen also to be quite emotional towards Assam and Assamese people.

Before she went back, Ushaji expressed her wish to come to Assam again for some musical function. She let me know that she has a dream to record some of her Assamese songs in an album. I sincerely hope that her dream will be fulfilled by someone very soon.

*With inputs from **Kumar Bhaskarjyoti**, Silpukhuri, Guwahati*

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