

**FULL COURT FAREWELL REFERENCE BY HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE
MEENAKSHI MADAN RAI, JUDGE, HIGH COURT OF SIKKIM
ON RETIREMENT ON SUPERANNUATION OF HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE
SUNIL KUMAR AGNIHOTRI, CHIEF JUSTICE, HIGH COURT OF SIKKIM
ON 29TH OF JUNE, 2018.**

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Satish Kumar Agnihotri, Chief Justice, High Court of Sikkim and Mrs. Yogmaya Agnihotri.

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan, Judge, High Court of Sikkim and Mrs. Manasha P. Pradhan.

Mr. Justice A.P. Subba, former Judge of this High Court and Mrs. Asha Rani Subba.

Mr. Justice S.P. Wangdi, former Judge, High Court of Sikkim and Member Judicial, National Green Tribunal, Delhi and Mrs. T.T. Wangdi.

Ld. Senior Advocates.

Ld. Registrar General, Ld. Registrar, Legal Remembrancer-cum-Secretary, Law.

Ld. District Judges and Ld. Judicial Officers.

Members of the Bar Association of Sikkim.

Officers of the District & Sessions Court, Gangtok, Sikkim SLSA.

Officers and staff of this Registry.

Press & Media.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. We have heard from learned Advocates of the journey of the Hon'ble Chief Justice from Bar to the Bench and the progressive steps taken by him for this institution and his untiring efforts. On transfer from the High Court of Madras, he assumed office of the first puisne Judge of this High Court on 23rd May, 2016 and thereafter, assumed the office of the Chief Justice of this High Court from 22nd September, 2016.

2. Last evening, I was reminded of the speech of *Jacques* from "*As you like it*" by Shakespeare.

All the world's a stage and all men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances. And one man in his time plays many parts.

The monologue tells us of the stages of man's life between birth and his ultimate destination. It also describes man as a judge which is;

And then the Justice, in fair round belly with good capon lined, with eyes severe and beard of forward cut full of wise saws and modern instances and so he plays his part.

Undoubtedly, the description of the Judge is befitting, though I may not agree with the physical attributes of a Judge as described by Shakespeare nor do I intend to foist the description on the Hon'ble Chief Justice but the role attributed to the Judge is indeed correct.

3. We have in these two years of our association with the Chief Justice seen his role as a Judge replete with wisdom and knowledge of the laws. We have witnessed that the Chief Justice is a stickler for quick work and expects immediate clearing of files whether it be on the administrative side or on the judicial side. He was not only well equipped with relevant legalese but also made the Court Room discussions lively with his ready wit and legal knowledge. I often noticed that he was quick to grasp the subject

matter which was before us and to deal with it in equally fast and suitable manner. He is undoubtedly a thorough professional and his competence needs no questioning. We have indeed drawn from his experiences as a Judge whether at the Bar or at the Bench and are the richer for it.

4. It is during his tenure that we have had the Foundation Stone laying ceremony of the Court of Civil Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate, Chungthang Sub-Division, North Sikkim on 9th October, 2016, by the then Chief Justice of India, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar, accompanied by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Madan B. Lokur, Judge, Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

5. A flurry of activities ensued this month, all achieved with his leadership and persuasive powers, which if found unworkable changed colour to coerciveness. Special mention has to be made of the inauguration of the Courts of Civil Judge-cum- Judicial Magistrate Soreng Sub-Division, West Sikkim on 21th April 2018, Civil Judge cum- Judicial Magistrate Rangpo Sub-Division, East Sikkim on 30 April, 2018, Civil Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate Jorethang Sub-Division, South Sikkim on 26th May, 2018, Civil Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate Yangyang sub-Division on 12th June, 2018 and Civil Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate Rongli Sub-Division on 18th June, 2018.

6. On 27.06.2018, we were also a witness to the opening of the Sikkim Judicial Academy at Sokeythang.

7. While on his qualities as a person who relentlessly pursued what he thought was good for the Institution, he ensured that his plans materialised. On a lighter vein, I would say in Nepali - "Chitayo ki bitayo". Despite being a strict administrator and disciplinarian, at the same time compassion is a part of his nature and he refrained from any harsh acts towards the officers and staff of the Registry. He dealt with the person on a one to one level but I have never come across an instance when he would issue a show cause or take any extreme disciplinary steps against anyone. Judicial Officers, Staff, my Colleague Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan and myself, will undoubtedly miss the Chief Justice as we carry on with our day to day works devoid of his guidance. Surely our Tuesday lunches with the exhilarating conversations filled with narration of experiences is going to be the first casualty.

8. We also acknowledge the very lively presence of Mrs. Agnihotri, a strong and intelligent personality in her own right and no doubt the pillar of strength behind the Hon'ble Chief Justice. We wish her a life of togetherness with the Hon'ble Chief Justice and not a long distance marriage.

9. As we bid him good bye, I would wish him the very best for the new future that he steps into and I would like to quote some words from the Bible, the Book of Numbers;

***The Lord bless and keep you,
The Lord make his face shine upon you,
and be gracious to you,
The Lord turn his face upon you and
give you peace.***

Thank you,
