

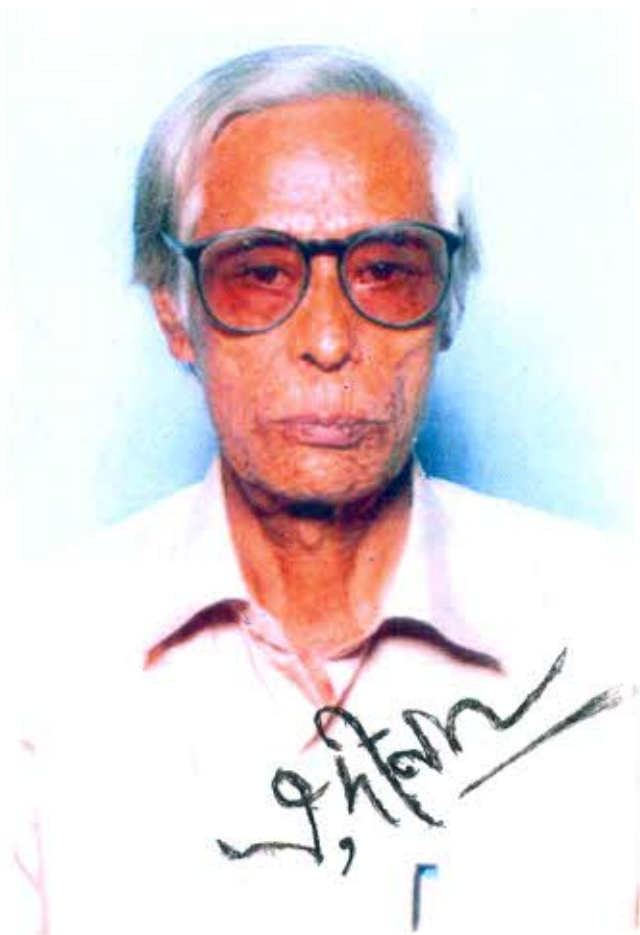
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Sahitya Akademi

meet the author

Elangbam Dinamani Singh





“I like satiric humour producing a simple smile which is, I presume, the clear expression of a healthy heart”—says Professor E. Dinamani to young writers in a surprise interview. One of the important writers who have left indelible impressions of their talents in several genres of modern Manipuri literature, Elangbam Dinamani Singh was born on 14 December 1940 to E. Kulchandra Singh, a Nat-Sankirtan singer and Heisnam Nandamukhi Devi at Elang Khangpokpi, a village in Thoubal District of Manipur. His formal education started at Pettigrew L.P. School, Imphal and continued in D.M. College, Imphal. He got his M.A. degree from Agra University in 1969. He is a D. Phil. of Allahabad University.

Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature, published by the Sahitya Akademi, has recorded that Dinamani's short stories are a class by themselves in Manipuri literature. They usually build up effectively a humorous

atmosphere tinged with sympathetic outlook. He looks at the problems of life from a humanistic angle. All these are expressed in a humorous way and are blended with a mild sarcasm, which reveals the reality of the problems concerned.

Dinamani is an expert in the creation of comic situations and eccentric characters who interact with one another in a dialogue of simple words. The story 'Picnic' provides a hearty laugh aimed at one of the five picnickers who hungrily devour the dishes prepared when all of them had to suffer a great shock as an old stocking, gone rancid, is found in the pot of rice. 'Radio' tells us of a young clerk's predicament when his newly acquired sleek radio unexpectedly fails to play before two specially invited pretty girls for one of whom he has personal intentions. In 'Etaona Shabiba Phousukhong' (The Husking-Shed Raised by My Friend), the new shed constructed by the friend, free of cost, gave way, before the house-warming party is over. *Thaklabi* (1970), *Morambi Angaobi* (1974), *Pistol Ama Kundalei Ama* (1981), *Mantra Jantra Tantra* (1986) are some of Dinamani's important collections of short stories. The Sahitya Akademi Award for Manipuri was given to him in 1982 for his collection of short stories entitled *Pistol Ama Kundalei Ama*.

In the field of novel, Dinamani has

made significant contributions with *Shangaishei* (1997), *Lanjao Macha Achouba Sandhi* (1998). To his credit there are books of poems such as *Chojainaraba* (1972), *Luribadi* (1987), *Kumbang Sharaba Pareng* (1995) etc. Dinamani is a playwright too. In addition to what has been recorded above, he also writes plays such as *Khongsana* (1994), *Kapkhairamdai* (1994), *Wakat Upu* (1998) and radio plays like *Tarang Khongnang Chaothoiba*, *Band Keithel* etc. The All India Radio Imphal gave him the award for being the best Humorous Playwright 1992-93.

Apart from being an established creative writer, E. Dinamani Singh ventures into literary criticism also. The first three of his major critical works are *Manipuri Sahitya Amasung Sahityakar* (1969), *Khwairakpam Chaoba* (1971) and *Dr Kamal, Pungsi amasung Sahitya* (1982). In the first work, he postulates seven tenets with the peremptory statement that they are the only criteria available or applied till today for literary criticism and takes up for himself five of them, namely (a) subjective, (b) judicial, (c) inductive, (d) historical and (e) psychological. The first he applies to Kamal's *Madhabi* and in doing this he takes the liberty of being static ignoring the obvious drawbacks in plot and characterization. The second he applies to Anganghal's *Khamba - Thoibi Seireng* and *Thambal*. And Dinamani brings Tongbra's one-

act plays under the focus of the last. Thus, he attempts to put literary works in the straight jacket of defined principles. But in his later critical works like *Hijam Anganghal Singh* (1997), Dinamani stands on a firm ground to place the writer and his works in proper perspective.

Well read in Hindi and English besides his mother tongue Manipuri, Dinamani is a good translator also. *Tyagpatra* (novel) of Jainendrakumar Jain, *Hayavadana* (play), *Amamb Yug* (play), *Nongma Ingada* (Asad Ka ek din) are his translations into Manipuri of different titles belonging to various Indian languages. He was honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Translation Prize in 1994.

After serving in Government higher secondary schools and colleges, Dinamani joined the



With Jainendrakumar (writer of *Tyag Patra*) in New Delhi in 1970



With his wife and daughter at the Birla Mandir in Delhi

Centre of Postgraduate Studies of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Imphal. He retired as Professor of Manipuri Language and Literature from Manipur University in 2003.

Dinamani was Editor of the *Ritu*, a quarterly journal of the Cultural Forum, Manipur, of which he was General Secretary for a long time. He was a member of the Manipuri Advisory Board of the Sahitya Akademi. He has been associated with literary and cultural organisations like EZCC, Kolkata, Natya Sangha of Allahabad etc. At present he is the President of Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal which had conferred upon him the 'Sahityaratna' in 2007.

Elangbam Dinamani Singh's humanity is overwhelmingly present in his works, though his expression is often humorous and

sarcastic. He writes in a radio talk, 'Punsi amadi sahityada phagigi mapham' (Place of humour in life and literature), "Humour-coated serious satire may be regarded as a powerful style of expression." This opinion has clearly underlined the fact that the most important quality of Dinamani's writings makes the readers smile for a while and think over the inner truth and realities of life.

A Select Bibliography

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Morambi Angaobi, 1974, Imphal : Y. I. Devi
Tingkhanglei, 1977, Imphal : Dineshwar
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Imeisuni Tourasuni Hang Hang, 1983, Imphal : Dineshwari and Dineshwar
Mantra Jantra Tantra, 1986, Imphal : Dineshwari and Dineshwar
Lairel Marimbong, 1991, Imphal : Dineshwar and Kartar
Kege Makhongda Certificate, 1995, Imphal : Bobi Publications
Lai Kishi, 1997, Imphal : Dr I. Devi and Dineshwar
Ipak, 2000, Imphal : Y. I. Devi, Dineshwar and Kartar
Malang Chanu, 2011, Imphal : The Cultural Forum, Manipur

Literary Criticism

- Manipuri Sahitya Amasung Sahityakar*, 1966, Imphal : Writer self



Receiving Sahitya Akademi Award at FICCI Auditorium, New Delhi in 1983

Khwairakpam Chaoba, 1972,
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Dr Kamal pt.I, 1976, Imphal :
Author self

*Dr Kamal : Pungsi amasung
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*Anganghal : Sahitya, Samaj
amadi Samskriti*, 1992, Imphal :
Bobi Publications

Hijam Anganghal Singh, 1997,
Sahitya Akademi

Bharatki Kavya Shastra, 1999,
Imphal : Bobi Publications

Poetry

Chojainaraba, 1972, Imphal :
Km. Momcha Devi

Luribadi, 1987, Imphal : V. I.
Publications

Kumbang Sharaba Pareng, 1995,
Imphal : Bobi Publications

Sheireng Khudap Amatang,
2002, Imphal : Writers'
Association

Novel

Shangaishel, 1997, Imphal : Bobi
Publications

Lanjao Macha Achouba Sandhi,

1998, Imphal : Bobi Publications
Nangga Eiga Amattan, 2012,
Nambol : Raj Publications

Play

Khongsana (3 plays), 1994,
Imphal : Bobi Publications

Kapkhairamdai (verse play),
1994, Imphal : Bobi Publications

Wakat Upu, 1998, Imphal : Bobi
Publications

Radio play

Tarang Khongnang Chaothoiba
(5 plays), 1993, Imphal : author
self

Band Keithel, 1995, Imphal : E.
I. Devi

Khonjel Lila Ahum (3 plays),
1998, Imphal : Bobi Publications

Bindha Ollaba Ex-Gratia (3
plays), 2006, Imphal : Bobi
Publications

Translation

Tyag Patra (novel), 1971,
Imphal: E. K. Singh

Amamb Yug (play), 1985,
Imphal : Translator self

Ingagi Mongma (play), 1993,
Imphal : Bobi Publications
Hayavadana (play), 1992,
Imphal : Bobi Publications
Nadmandala (play), 1994,
Imphal : Bobi Publications

Essay

Manipuri Amadi Manipuri :
Wakhal Matek Matek, 1996,
Imphal : Bobi Publications.

Other Works

Film scripts for DDK Imphal,
Children Programme,
Directorate, Govt. of Manipur,
Private Producer etc.

Dramatization of novels and
short stories by awarded
Manipuri authors.

Translation of Hindi poems and
the National Song of India for
AIR.

Translation or interpretation (on
the spot) of Indian President
Giani Zail Singh's Hindi public
speech on 5.10.1985.

Awards, Recognitions and Laurels

Sahitya Akademi Award for the
collection of short stories *Pistol
Ama Kundalei Ama* in 1982.

Manipur State Kala Akademi
Award for Literature (for the
collection of short stories
Imeisuni Tourasuni Hang Hang)
in 1985

Best Humorous Playwright
Award from AIR, Delhi for the
Radio Play *Band Keithel* in 1993.

Sahitya Akademi Translation
Prize for *Hayavadana* in 1994.

People's Choice–Lifetime
Contribution to Literature from
North East TV Guwahati in
2006.



Reading poetry at Manipur Hindi
Parishad, Imphal, Manipur

'Sahityaratna' by Manipuri
Sahitya Parishad, Imphal in
2007.

A Chronology

1940 Born at Elang
Khangpokpi, Manipur

1959 Matriculation from C.C.
High School, under Gauhati
University

1966 Published first book
(literary criticism)

1969 MA from Agra University

1974 Joined Manipur University
(Centre of P-G Studies, JNU)

1981 Ph.D. from Allahabad
University

2003 Retired as Professor from
Manipur University

2012 Was elected President,
Manipuri Sahitya Parishad for the
term 2012-2015