

Library
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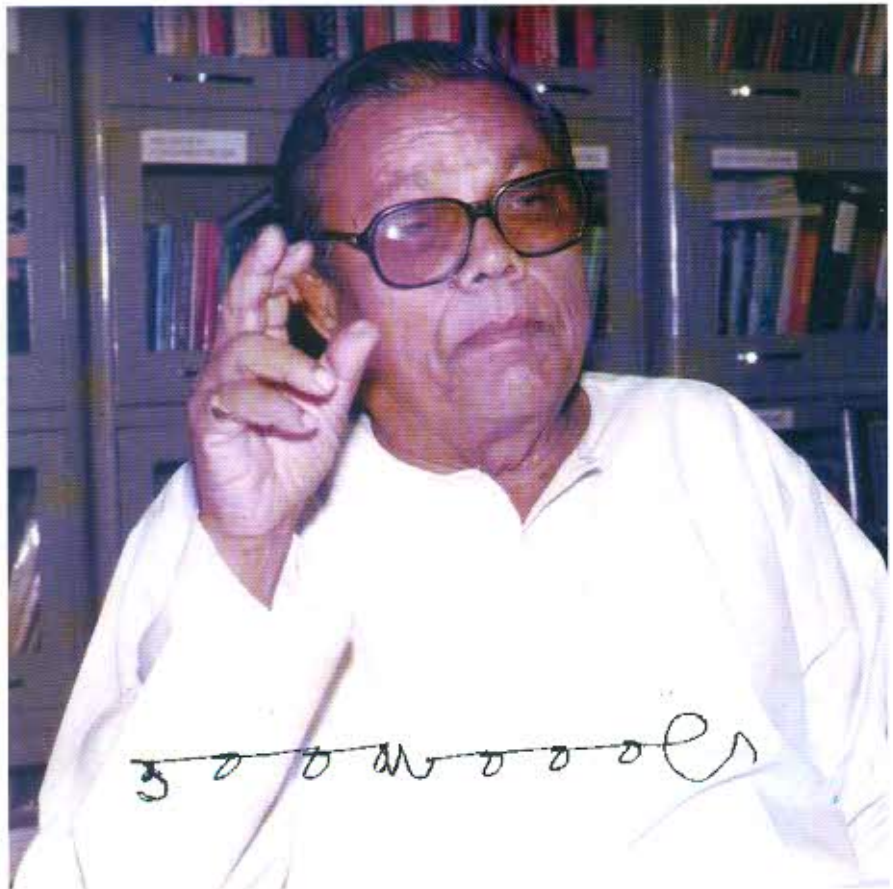


Sahitya Akademi

29th June 2009

meet the author

Kalipatnam Ramarao



Kalipatnapu Ramarao, writing as Kalipatnam Ramarao and fondly known as KARA MESTARU in literary circles, won Sahitya Academy Award in the year 1995 for his anthology of stories titled YAGNAM TOTOMMIDI.

Born in Ponduru, a place famous for khadi clothes, in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh on 9th November 1924, he was a native of Murapaka village near Srikakulam. His father, Perraju, was a village karnam of seven villages and his mother, Bhramaramba, was a housewife. KARA was the eldest son of the family and was taught, from childhood, to maintain high standards in behavior as he would be a role model for his villagers as well as for his siblings. This had a great influence on his character and literature and as a consequence, he always maintained and continues to maintain accountability in personal, professional as well as literary life.

He showed artistic traits from very early age and tried his hand at painting, poetry and short story writing. He studied up to SSLC(1942) and that was when he penned his first short story, and aspired to be a teacher so that he could get sufficient leisure to devote for literature. This was against his father's wishes of seeing him as successor of his karnam (village officer profession). He continued his pursuit, joined many jobs and finally completed teacher

training and joined Saint. Anthony High School, Visakhapatnam as a teacher.

He got married in 1946 and had five sons and one daughter. His moderate earnings as a secondary grade teacher did not give him sufficient time for his pursuits as he aspired for, but continued his voracious reading and occasional writing. As a reader, he was greatly influenced by Kodavatiganti Kutumbarao and Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastry, the great literary giants of his period. His early writings showed some glimpses of Bengali writer Saratbabu, who had already become a household name in Telugu reading public through the translations of his works.

He started his literary career with a card-story titled "Platforamo..." published in the magazine 'Chitragupta' of September 1943. His writings up to 1948 did not make waves even though they show signs of his wisdom lying in store. Pempakapu Mamakaram, a short story published in the then famous monthly Bharathi of September & October of 1949, attracted many critics and reading public. He continued writing and published about 10 stories, including 2 short novels, in the span of 6 years and then stopped writing for 9 years!

He recounts the reasons for not writing, in his speech on the occasion of receiving academy award:



Family photo of KARA Mastaru



Receiving Sahitya Akademi award for 1995, from the Prisedent Dr. U. R. Anantamurthy.

"As a person, I lacked in self-confidence. As a story -writer I didn't have a world view. Coming to stories - the stories I liked were different from the ones I was able to write. Comparing the ones I was writing with the ones I was unable to, certain dissatisfaction was troubling me. With that much of knowledge, I stopped writing. Not a single story did I write for another nine years."

Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastry's friendship enhanced his understanding of world and Marxism and led to the second phase in his writings. His understanding of the economic facet of human life blossomed into unique writings; some regard it to be KARA'S School of Thought. On his magnum opus **YAGNAM**, he explains:

Whatever little was written about rural folk has not touched the primary agrarian life. Some stories appeared on oppression and violence. Yet, stories which traced the root cause of exploitation were almost non-existent. But for one or two, the stories written during my second stage depicted the rural society in its various layers of life. The prime point in Yagnam is exploitation. Deproperitisation of small peasants is made clear. Yagnam shows how some classes of the village gained and why some lost in the practical implementation of the Five Year Plans meant for developing agriculture in rural areas.

Kodavatiganti Kutumbarao, father figure of Telugu progressive writings, compares *Yagnam* of KARA to *Mee Peremiti?* of legendary GURAJADA:

If Gurajada depicted ignorance of a village, Ramarao wrote about the inhumanness of a village. He adds: Internal struggle of down trodden with its physical foundations is clearly visible in stories like Yagnam and Aarthi. Yagnam might have happened just before Srikakulam Armed Struggle.

Ravisastry, a pioneer of Telugu revolutionary fiction, praises KARA:

It is my fortune to have the friendship of a noble soul like Ramarao and of my people, to have a noble writer like him.

Velcheru Narayana Rao, Professor at Wisconsin University, concludes in his elaborate essay on KARA's stories:

In the world literature that I know of, there are not many storytellers like Ramarao.

Between 1964 and 72 he wrote 17 stories. All the 9 stories of *Yagnam to Tommidi* belong to this period. His writings of this period were discussed by many and a book titled **KATHA YAGNAM** with some of those discussions appeared in 1981. Later, another writer Ranganayakamma published a book containing two very long essays examining *Yagnam* very critically.

It is very rare for a single story to attract so much discussion! Yagnam is unique in many other respects also. Kara had a very clear understanding of the difference as well as the relation between oppression and exploitation. He wanted to show how the "development plans" actually create and reinforce a system of economic and social relationships that leads to exploitation in a myriad ways. More importantly, he wanted to show that this exploitation will be independent of the traditionally understood values of "goodness"! This story, at the surface level, centers on a loan dispute between a poor Mala villager Appalramudu and an erstwhile businessman Gopanna. However, as the story gradually unfolds, we see the economic changes taking place in a village during the course of the implementation of 5 - Year Plans meant for the development of the society. Sriramulu Naidu, the protagonist of development plans appears initially as a perfect gentleman, peace-loving in nature and democratic in thought and action. It is only towards the later part of the story that we realize the crushing impact of the "reforms" ushered in by him! At one point, Appalramudu says addressing Sriramulu Naidu: "Your hit does not appear at the place it is struck. Whatever you do, you drown a person softly ..." The ending of the story in which, Seetharamudu kills his own son disturbed many people. Yet, it was seen by many as realistic

though cruel depiction of reality of the village. All the characters in the story were crafted with utmost care and the language used was completely true to the background chosen. A story with extraordinary impact in deed!

After writing several high-impact stories between 1964 and 1972, Kara again stopped publishing stories for quite some time. However, his activities in the literary field did not stop; they took a different shape!

He was active in literary movements and was a member of Visakha Rachayitala Sangham of Visakhapatnam. He was one of the founding members of the revolutionary writers' association, Viplava Rachayitala Sangham, popularly known as Virasam. And was state secretary of the association for a brief period.

He guided many budding writers by editing about 1000 stories for the popular daily 'Andhra Bhoomi' for three years under title 'Neti Katha (Present Day Story)'. With that experience, he wrote a book titled 'Katha Kathanam' which is still viewed as a Bala Vyakaranam (Elementary Grammar) for enthusiasts in writing. Several editions of this book have already been released by the Publishers.

In 1996, he founded a unique library, "Katha Nilayam", for Telugu Short Story. He intends to collect each and every story published from the



Hon. Doctorate conferred by P.S.Telugu University, Kammam, Hyderabad.
L to R : Sri Kalipatnam Ramarao, Sri Rameshwar Thakur, Governor of Andhra Pradesh,
Dr. A. Manjulatha Vice Chancellor, P. S. Telugu University



Receiving the Andhra Pradesh Government 'Prathibha Rajiv Award' from the Hon. Chief Minister Dr. Y.S. Rajashekar Reddy, (19th Nov, 2004)

beginning i.e. early 1900s and plans to preserve them in the digital form also. He wishes to make them available to public through all available means including Internet. During its inauguration in February 1997, Sri Gutala Krishna Murty of British library, London, opined that this effort is the only one of its sort in the whole world. KARA donated all his earnings from literature to this project and then

onwards devoted all his energies to collection of books and funds. He aims to collect the voices of writers also in addition to the manuscripts and preserve them for future generations. Though he continues to publish an occasional story, his main passion these days is indeed "Katha Nilayam", a unique contribution of Kara to the world of Telugu!

Important Awards and Honours

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|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AP Sahitya Akademy Award | : | For Collection of Stories Yagnam 1973-74(Rejected) |
| Telugu University Puraskaram | : | For "Kalipatnam Ramarao Kathalu" 1987 (Declined) |
| Gopichand Award | : | By Yuva Kalavahini, Hyderabad, 1989 |
| AP Films- Nandi Award | : | For Story of feature film Yagnam 1991 |
| Sahithi Satkaram | : | Kondepudi Sreenivasarao Literary Award by AP Arasam, Gunturu 1992 |
| Central Sahitya Akademy Award | : | For Collection of Stories "Yagnam to Tommidi" 1995 |
| Sahithi Harathi Puraskaram | : | With a purse of Rs. 20,000 at Khammam on 8-9-1996 |
| Janapeeth Award | : | By Literary & cultural Circles with a purse of Rs. One Lakh on 9-11-1996 |
| Visesha Puraskaram | : | Dr. Ramineni foundation (U.S.A) 1999 |
| Hamsa Award | : | By AP State Cultural Council, Govt. of AP for Literature 1999 |
| Gurajada Award | : | By Sahridaya Sahithi, Visakhapatnam for 2002 |
| Mahathi Puraskaram | : | By Mahathi Literary & Cultural Association, Srikakulam 2002 |
| P. Brahmayya Sahithi Puraskaram | : | Rasadhuni, Palakollu on 31-7-2004 |
| Prathibha Rajivam Award | : | By AP State Govt. with purse of Rs.50,000 on 19-11-2004 |
| Honorary doctorate | : | By Potti Sriramulu Telugu University on 26-2-2007 |
| Loknayak foundation Award | : | With a purse of One Lakh on 18-1-2008 |

Published Works:

1. Ragamayi : A novelette 1957, reprint in 1974
2. Yagnam : Story collection 1971,1974,1975(3 stories)
3. Kalipatnam Ramarao Kathalu : Story collection 1972, 1979
4. Abhimanalu : A novelette 1974
5. Jeevadhara : Story Collection 1974 (6 Stories)
6. Kalipatnam Ramarao Kathalu : Story collection 1986(25 Stories)
7. Katha Kathanam : Essays on Art of short story writing
8. Yagnam To Tommidi : Story collection (9 stories) 1993
9. Kalipatnam Ramarao Rachnalu : Complete works upto 1999
10. Kalipatnam Ramarao Rachnalu : Complete works up to 2008

Books on Kalipatnam:

1. Katha Yagnam : Collection of essays by various authors 1981
2. Yagnam pai rendu vyasalu : Critical analysis by Ranganayakamma
3. Reaserch on socio-economic reflections in Kalipatnam Ramarao stories

Editorial Service:

1. July 30 : Essays on Ravi Sastry 1982.
2. Manalo Manam : Collection of Essays reflecting the Social, Literary, Cultural and Politico economic life of Telugu people.
3. Swethartrulu : Collection of Telugu short stories 1993
4. Ruthupavanalu : Collection of Telugu short stories 1996
5. Neti katha : Edited stories for daily publication in Andhra Bhoomi Daily for 3years 1985-1988 (about 1000 stories)
6. Neti Katha : Selected Short stories from above project- 1990
7. Telugu Katha Kosam : Telugu academy publication on Information of short story writers

Languages in which translations appeared:

English, Russian, Lithuanian, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, Malayalam

As Publisher:

Sagara Granthamala
R.K. Publications

Published 10 anthologies of Telugu short stories
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Receiving 'Lok Nayak Award' from D. Purandareswari, Union Minister (18.Jan.2008)