

5 December 1995



Sahitya Akademi

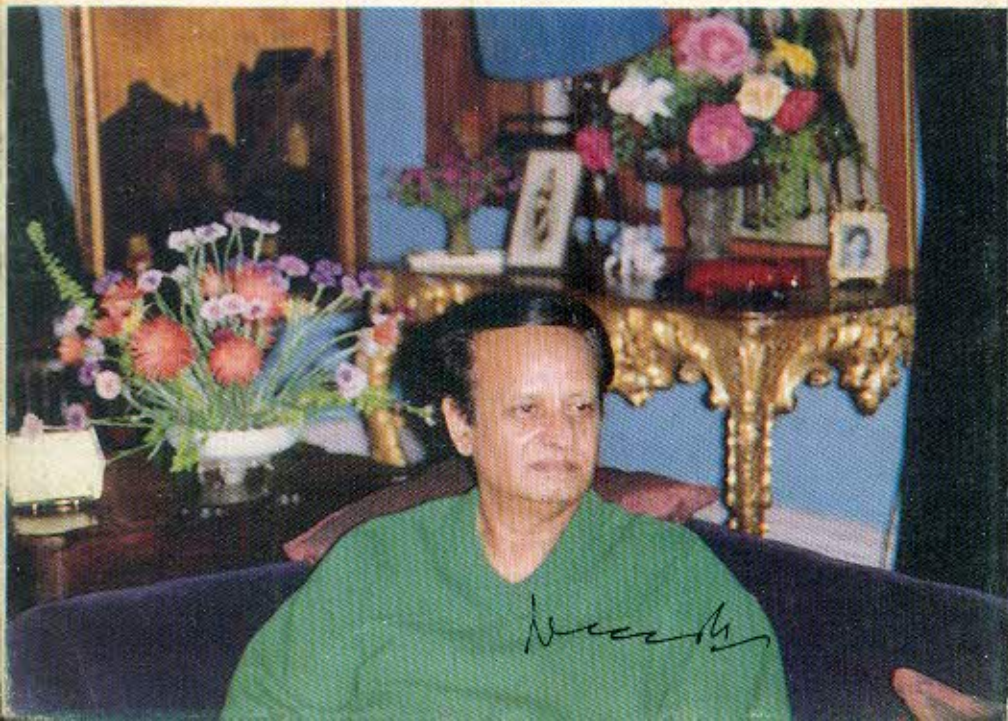


India International Centre

invite you to

meet the author

Seshendra Sharma



*Seshendra is not a mere medium of the Age
but the architect of the spirit of the Age*

V.Upadhyaya

Gunturu Seshendra Sharma, poet, critic and scholar was born on 20 October 1927 in Nagarajupadu in the Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh. After graduating from the Andhra University, he did law at the Madras University. He worked as Municipal Commissioner for 37 years under the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Sri Sharma began his writing career in 1951 with a translation of *Sohrab and Rustum* with the help of Matthew Arnold's version of the Persian epic *Shahnama*. From then on he concentrated on poetry, occasionally turning to criticism to fulfil his dialectical urge. The unique credit of having invested Telugu poetry with the life breath of modernity in the late 70s and early 80s goes entirely to him. Even today in the mid-nineties, he is considered a unique poetic voice. Seshendra "melted anew the materials of poetry, language, imagery, symbolism and fashioned for himself a forceful poetic instrument which bears the stamp of his personality."

Sri Sharma's first collection of prose-poems *Seshjyotsna* written between 1968 and 1972 was published in 1972 in bilingual editions (Telugu and English). This book was the beginning of the new trend in Telugu poetry pioneered by Seshendra. It was a decisive moment in his life as all along he had stood at the crossroads unable to decide in what medium he should forge ahead. According to C.N. Sastry, "His emergence is to be hailed as a significant landmark in the history of modern Telugu poetry."

The publication of his *Munday Suryudu* (Burning Sun) and *Rakta Rekha* (Arc of Blood) in 1974 created a stir in Telugu literature constituting a turning point in poetry and criticism. *Rakta Rekha* gives a measure of the poet's intellect and erudition that is varied and profound. The poet has expressed his thoughts with such clarity that *Rakta Rekha* has now become a classic in Telugu literature. In *Munday Suryudu* his intensely felt ideas burst into poetry. The poetic language necessary to handle



Prof. V.N. Mishra presenting Subramania Bharati Award, 1993



With his wife Rajkumari Indra Devi in Athens, 1987

a revolutionary theme in a poem first found expression in Telugu in this work, an idiom that is being used by one and all today.

In 1975 his magnum opus *Naa Desham, Naa Prajalu* (My Country, My People) brought Seshendra into prominence once again as one of the outstanding poets of our country. Many important critics like Dr Vishwambaranath Upadhyaya, Virendra Kumar Jain and Ali Sardar Jafri hailed it as a landmark in the recent history of Indian literature. For writing this epic, Seshendra simplified his diction so as to reach his people. Some of the well-known critics have compared this epic poem with T.S. Eliot's *Wasteland*. Steeped in the spirit of Indianness and Indian culture which includes qualities of humaneness, patience, sacrifice and courage, this epic moves with the grandeur of lyric beauty on the one hand and reflects the epic landscape of India on the other.

A year later came *Neerai Paari Poyindi* (Turned into Water and Fled Away) in bilingual editions. The poems in this collection were quite different. Their structural skill was dazzling, and in them he propounded a new concept in

Indian poetry, that of 'genetic memory'. In 1977 came out *Gorilla* which has been described by a critic as 'pure poetry'.

Seshendra's critical commentaries to Ramayana entitled; *Shodasi* and Harsha's *Naishadhiya Charita* entitled *Swarna Hamsa* are considered monumental.

Seshendra's Sharma is the founder member of Kavi Sena Movement, for which he wrote a manifesto (*Adhunika Kavya Shastra*). His desire was to educate the new generation of poets and also those already writing, the intricacies of modern poetics.

Kaala Rekha, his Sahitya Akademi award-winning book, is a collection of 25 papers presented in seminars on various subjects like ancient drama, comparative literature, classical poetry and modern writing. This paragon of contemporary Indian literary criticism reflects Seshendra's vast erudition, rare critical insight, fruitful application of comparative poetics and refreshing originality.

Seshendra Sharma has attended International seminars and presented papers held in Greece, Germany, Mauritius,

Madagascar, Kenya, France, Italy and England. He has also published several articles on science, philosophy and history in many important dailies and journals.

The many honours and awards Seshendra has received include Subramania Bharati Ekta Award from the Hindi Academy, Calcutta in 1993, the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Rashtriya Sanskriti Ekta

Puraskar in 1994. He was also honoured with D.Litt. from the Telugu University in the same year.

His irresistible and vibrating style, his vision and voice rule the poetic world of Andhra Pradesh today. He has become the pioneering voice to a rapidly growing new generation of aesthetically and socially aware poets in Telugu.

A Select Bibliography

Poetry

Ritu Ghosha (Cry of the Seasons)

Champoo Vinodini

Pakshulu

Seshjyotsna

Munday Suryudu (Burning Sun)

Neerai Paari Poyindi (Turned into Water and Fled Away)
Gorilla

Samudram Naa Peru

Premalekhalu (Love Letters)

Nenu Naa Nemili (Me and My Peacock)

Naa Raashtra

Epic

Naa Desham, Naa Prajalu (My Country, My People)

Short Story

Vihwala

Play

Mabbullo Darbaru

Criticism

Shodasi (On Valmiki Ramayana)

Swarna Hamsa (On Harsha's Naishadhiya Charita)

Sahitya Kaumudi (A re-evaluation of the Classical Poets of Telugu literature of the medieval period)

Relationship of Meghdoot with the Epic Ramayana (English)

Sita

Kavi Sena Manifesto (On modern poetics)



Prof. U.R. Anantha Murthy presenting Sahitya Akademi Award, 1995



With Greek poet Yannis Ritos in Athens, 1979

Alankara Charcha (Lectures)

Vaartika Vimarsha (Criticism)

On Form and Language in Poetry (Lectures in English)

Essays

Narudu Nakshatralu (Essays on Man and Stars)

Oohalo (Collection of essays)

Vishva Vivechana (A science dissertation)

Poet's Note Book

Rakta Rekha (Arc of Blood)

Kaala Rekha (Arc of Time)

Jeevana Rekha (Arc of Life)

Letters

In Defence of People and Poetry (English)

Translations

Sohrab and Rustum from the Persian epic *Shahnama* (in English)

Meghdoot (in English)

Premalekhalu (in Hindi)

Seshjyotsna (English, Hindi, Urdu)

Naa Desham, Naa Prajalu (English, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Urdu)

Gorilla (English, Hindi, Kannada, Urdu)



With Faiz Ahmed Faiz in 1978

Vihwala (Urdu)
Seshendra Kavita (Kannada)
Ritu Ghosha (English)

Munday Suryudu (English,
Hindi)
Neerai Paari Poyindi (English)
Nenu Naa Nemili (English)

A Chronology

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1927 Birth | 1980 Published <i>Premalekhalu</i> |
| 1949 Graduated in Law from Madras University | 1987 Participated in World Seminar on Theatre at Greece |
| 1963 Published <i>Vishwa Vivechana</i> | 1989 Participated in the World Conference on Greek Theatre in Greece |
| 1968 Visited Mauritius | 1990 Greek translation of <i>My Country, My People</i> published |
| 1969 Visited West Germany | 1991 Member of the Jury for Kabir Samman |
| 1972 Published his first collection of prose-poems <i>Seshjyotsna</i> | 1993 Received Subramania Bharati Rashtriya Sahitya Puraskar |
| 1974 Published <i>Munday Suryudu</i> and <i>Rakta Rekha</i> | 1994 Received Rashtriya Sanskritik Ekta Puraskar
Conferred D. Litt. by Telugu University.
Sahitya Akademi Award for <i>Kaala Rekha</i> |
| 1975 Published his epic <i>Naa Desham, Naa Prajalu</i> in Telugu, English, Hindi and Urdu | |
| 1976 Published <i>Neerai Paari Poyindi</i> | |
| 1977 Published <i>Yuga Kavi Seshendra</i> | |
| 1979 Appointed Visiting Professor at S. V. University, Tirupati | |



Receiving Rashtriya Ekta Puraskar, 1995