

Classic Poetry Series

Annada Shankar Ray
- poems -

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Annada Shankar Ray(15 May 1905 - 28 October 2002)

Annada Shankar Ray (Bengali: আনন্দা শঙ্কর রায়) was a renowned Bengali poet and essayist.

Biography

Annada Shankar Ray was born in Dhenkanal in Orissa. He graduated in English from Ravenshaw College. His father had shifted base from their ancestral village of Rameswarpur near Dhamnagar in Bhadrak of Orissa, following a family feud. His family roots go back to the 'Ghosh Mahashayas' who migrated to Rameswarpur from Kotarang near Howrah as a part of Todarmal's contingent during Akbar's reign.

He topped the list of Indian Civil Service examinees in 1927. He had failed to make the mark in the previous year being cut-off by one rank. It is said that he promised to his family and friends that if only one person was to be selected for ICS the next year, it would be himself, and he proved it. Incidentally he was the first ICS officer from the territory later forming the state of Orissa.

After serving in various administrative posts, he sought voluntary retirement in 1951 to devote himself to literary pursuits. Ray was a Gandhian in politics and Rabindranath Tagore inspired his literature.

A Bengali rendering of a short story by Tolstoy and an appraisal of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's essay Narir Mulya marked his debut on the literary scene at the age of 16.

Literary Life

His first published book was Tarunya (1928), which gave him a footing as an essayist. His first two novels were Asamapika and Agun Niye Khela. As an essayist, he was urbane and sophisticated and combined in his craft two different styles of prose, represented by Tagore and Pramatha Choudhury.

A significant breakthrough in his literary career came with the publication of Pathe Prabase, a brilliant diary of his Europe trip, in 1931.

Ray also established himself as a short-story writer. His collections include

Prakritir Parihas (1934), Man Pavan (1946), Kamini Kanchan (1954) and Katha.

He received the Vidyasagar Smriti Award from the state government and the Padma Bhushan. He was made a fellow of the Sahitya Akademi in 1989. The Visva Bharati conferred on him the Desikottama and an honorary . He also received the Rabindra Puraskar, the Ananda Puraskar twice and the prestigious Zaibunnisa Award of Bangladesh.

He was a bitter opponent of the partition of 1947 and wrote several Bengali poems criticising it. Most notable is "Teler shishi bhaanglo bole khukur pare raag karo". Among his many essays, the book "Banglar Reneissance" has an analytical history of the cultural and social revolution in Bengal. His married Leela Ray, an Indianized American lady with literary talent. Annada Shankar's most famous work is "Pathe Prabaase" - a diary of his Europe trip in 1931.

From amongst his other great works in Oriya, the poetry "Sabita" finds place in higher studies of the language at College level, making him one of the rare poets to have the distinction of getting such acclaim from two different language speaking states of India. He died in Kolkata on 28 October 2002.

** Works **

Annadashankar Roy was a contributor of both prose and poetry. His literary works were included in the curriculum of school level, secondary, higher secondary and graduation level Bengali Literature in Bangladesh.

Badur Jhola

Annada Shankar Ray

Bangabandhu

Annada Shankar Ray

Batasia Lup

Annada Shankar Ray

Bharat Matar Ukti

Annada Shankar Ray

Chal Na Pele

Annada Shankar Ray

Hobuchandro Raja

Annada Shankar Ray

Hukum

Annada Shankar Ray

Khuku O Khoka

Annada Shankar Ray

Pan

Annada Shankar Ray