

Classic Poetry Series

Bharatchandra Ray

- poems -

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Bharatchandra Ray(1712 – 1760)

Bharatchandra Ray (Bengali: ?????????? ????) was an 18th century Bengali and Sanskrit poet and song composer. He is mostly known for his poetic work, Annadamangal or Annapurnamangal. He is often referred to simply as Bharatchandra.

< b > Early Years </ b >

Bharatchandra was born to Narendranarayan Ray and Bhavani Devi in Pedo-Bhurshut village (in the present-day Howrah district). He had to leave his ancestral home because of property disputes and marriage of his own choice. He roamed from place to place. While living in Ramchandra Munshi's house at Debanandapur in the present-day Hooghly district, he learned Persian and Sanskrit.

< b > Court Poet of Maharaja Krishnachandra </ b >

When Bharatchandra was residing in the house of Indranarayan Chaudhury, the Diwan of the French government at Chandernagore, his talent was noticed by Maharaja Krishnachandra of Krishnanagar and Bharatchandra became his court poet. He was bestowed with the title Raygunakar and received huge amount of land in Mulajore from Krishnachandra. He was the first poet in the Bengali language to be identified as a people's poet, and lent a new grace and beauty to the language.

< b > Works </ b >

The most notable work of Bharatchandra is Annada Mangal or Annapurnamangal. This work, completed in 1752, is divided into three parts. The first part, which eulogises the goddess Annapurna is known as Annadamangal. The second part, which narrates the story of Vidya and Sundar is known as Kalikamangal and the third and the final part, which narrates the story of Man Singh I and Bhavananda Majumdar is known as Annapurnamangal. His another work, Rasamanjari is a Bengali adaptation of a Maithili work of the same name written by Bhanudatta. Nagashtaka, a bi-lingual poetic work in Sanskrit and Bengali, shows his mastery over Sanskrit metres. His other notable works include: Gangashtaka in Sanskrit, Satyanarayan Panchali and an incomplete work, Chandi Natak.

< b > Songs </ b >

Bharatchandra was the true representative of the transition of Bengali music from medieval to modern age. He was well versed in classical music, a skill he possibly acquired in the court of the Maharaja Krishnachandra. While he adopted the line of mangalgan (song of bliss) which was traditionally dedicated to the gods and goddesses, he attempted to liberate the poetical as well as musical compositions of Bengal from the hold of gods and goddesses and infused a human touch into them. Many of the songs he composed as part of long poetic works were on their own lyrical and could be sung independently. Bharatchandra may also be regarded as a pioneer in composing songs on Radha-Krishna love theme in raga musical form outside the area of padavali kirtan. In a way he is considered the forerunner of Ramprasad Sen and Ramnidhi Gupta (popular as Nidhu Babu).

Translations

Gerasim Lebedev translated a portion of Bharatchandra's Annadamangal into Russian. He also borrowed from the lyrics composed by Bharatchandra for the musical composition of the two translated plays he stage in Kolkata.

Annodar Bhobanondo Bhabone Jatra

Bharatchandra Ray

Horihorer Brittanto

Bharatchandra Ray

Roti Bilap

Bharatchandra Ray

Shiber Dokkhalye Jatra

Bharatchandra Ray