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Sahitya Akademi

meet the author

Hariprasad Gorkha Rai



Hariprasad



Our birth place is Kohima
Queen of all lands
Our nation is human
All of us are global friends.

The message signifies Sri Rai's feeling to his neighbours as well as to his countrymen. These lines also give us an impression of Sri Hari Prasad Gorkha Rai's love for his motherland, human interest and intense feeling for the universal fraternity.

Sri Rai was born in 1915 at Kohima, the head quarters of the then Nagahills. No light of Nepali literature or culture could percolate there for the iron-curtain of the British rule, whose policy at that time was to save the people of Nagaland (the then Nagahills) from eating the forbidden fruit and be ousted from the garden of Eden.

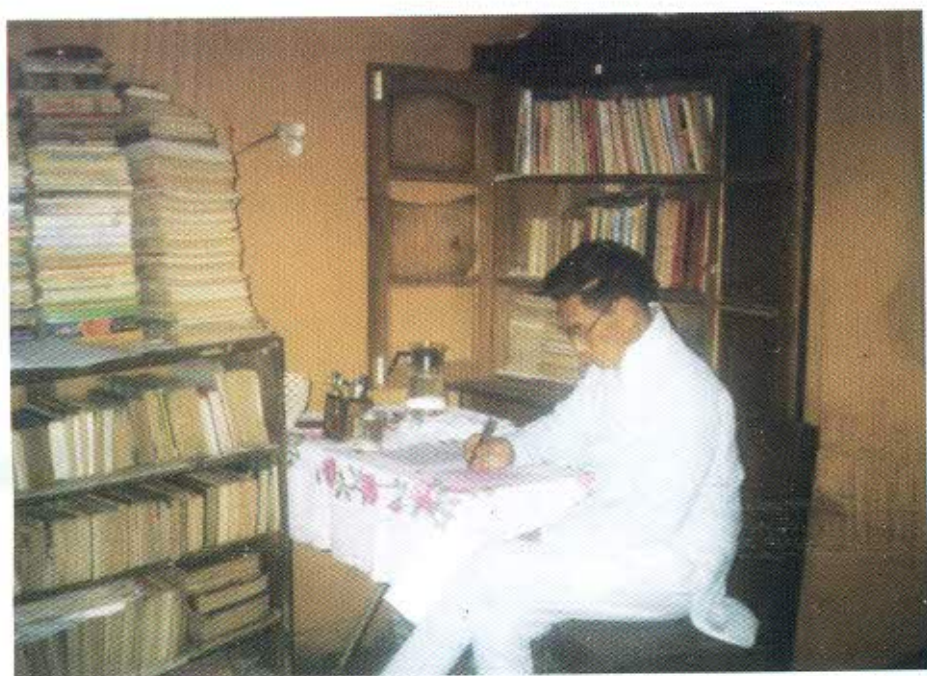
From the age of eight years, his father started teaching him, with his limited knowledge of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and the Devnagari and Assamese scripts.

The highest school education available in Nagahills was the Kohima Govt. Middle English School. He completed it in the year 1930, securing first division with marks above 80% in all subjects. Thus winning a monthly scholarship of Rs. 10/- p.m. he joined Jorhat Govt. High School.

He started his career as a teacher. Later he served the All India Radio at Guwahati and Cuttack as Assistant Director. He knows Assamese, Hindi, English, Oriya and Bengali, and can read and write in several Naga dialects.

He began writing at the age of seventeen and has written poems, novels, short stories and essays which appeared in noted Nepali periodicals like *Himadri*, *Gorkha Sewak*, *Diyalo*, *Gorkha*, *Bharati*, *Katha Dharati*, *Utthan* and *Udaya*. Describing Hari Prasad Gorkha Rai as one of the pioneers of Nepali literature, eminent Nepali critic I. B. Rai said : 'Most of his contemporary writers have been missing, but he is yet going strong, due to excellence in his writing.' Sri Hari Prasad Gorkha Rai writes : 'As regards the question who gave the inspiration for my writings, the first and foremost answer is that, it was my home, my father and my mother. Second, my teacher Late Mitradewa Mahanta, who was not only my school teacher but my religious Guru also. *Gita* is the book which has guided me in my life.'

His two anthologies of poems



Sri Hai Prasad Gorkha Rai in his study room

Babri (1974) and *Manchariko boli* (The voice of mind 1977) were acclaimed for their simplicity and lucid narration. *Babri* contains 24 poems of different themes and style such as romantic, patriotic, philosophical, satirical as well as cultural. His poetic insight and charm is directed towards the present-day political satire. His masterpiece and oft-quoted poem 'Camp utthyo' (camp dissolved) throws light on the characteristic sentiments and romantic feeling of an army man. Sri Rai has remarked the significance and sequence of this poetry as ironical than emotional. The racial character and migration from one place to another with deep impression of love and affection left behind have been vividly expressed in his poems. *Manchariko boli* is his second collection of poems where 22 poems of

different theme and style of contemporary scene have been included. 'Manchariko boli' means the voice of the inner mind. In fact some poems express the style of presentation of songs and poems. They are short, simple, humorous, emotional and lyrical. 'In My dream' and 'Beautiful world' are the most impressive songs of this collection.

He is a celebrated short story writer in Nepali. His short stories got a concrete shape when his collection *Yaha badnam humchu* (I am defamed here, 1974) was published. It consists of 14 stories of different styles and types among which 'Meri euti Naga huki' (one Naga friend of mine) stands outstanding and deserves special mention. Some of the stories in this book are very simple in terms of technique. His short stories have been mostly influenced by

the Nagamese social and cultural life. This can be considered as his craftsmanship in the short story writing.

Women psychology, life of army-men and hazards that a traveller is to face, are well depicted in his short story 'One pair of birds in the evening'. Devastation caused in Kohima by the second world war and entry of INA in Kohima in the year 1944 have left a deep impression in his mind. This historical facts have also found places in some of his short stories. Stories like 'Modi' and 'Gorkha Model' are other masterpieces where he has expressed his feelings, sentiments and sympathy. The description of natural beauty and environment of Nagaland and description of social-economic realities of Nepali society are the vital and central themes of Sri Rai while writing

short stories. He has also written a novel captioned *Himadri*.

He has written one-act plays as well, mainly for the needs of radio. Among them 'Savitri Satyavan', 'Ek tukra roti', 'Madan', 'Shiv Parbati', 'Pery Sahab ko diary', 'Bank pass-book', 'Din ra rat' and 'Santavana' are widely acclaimed. Hariprasad has written in Assamese also, mainly in such periodicals as *Awahan*, *Banhi*, *Ramdhenu*, *Manideep*, *Akan*, *Jeuti*, *Pakhila*, *Soumar joyti* etc. He has also co-authored *Assamer Janojati*, edited by Promod Bhattacharjee. He is a celebrated short story writer in Nepali.

His proficiency in the Naga dialects made him co-author such books as *Kabui-Hindi dictionary*, *Maring-Hindi sabdokosh*, *Garo-Hindi sabdokosh* and *Miri songs* published by the Hindi Bhasa Parishad of Nagaland.



Sri Hari Prasad Gorkha Rai at his leisure

The credit for starting and nurturing the *Uttarachal Anusthan* in 1957, a popular Nepali radio programme, goes to him. The Government of Assam honoured him by including him among the ten recipients of literary pension.

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

POETRY

Naga Hills to Sowai	1933
Babri	1974
Man Chariko Boli	1978

SHORT STORIES

Yahan Badnam Hunchho	1974
Madan	1985

EKANKI

Ek Tukra Roti	1936
Krishna Janma	1936
Janani Janmabhumi	1957

RADIO PROGRAMMES

Madhur Sapana	1957-58
Euta Salaam	1957-58
Bolne Letter Dox	1957-58
Maudy	1957-58

DRAMA

Puru Ra Sikandar	1936-37
Jomolarjun	1936-37
Krishna Janma	1936-37
Satyawan Sabitri	1936-37

LONG STORIES

Kanchi Maiya	1932
Turako Smriti	1936
Nepaliko Maya	1936
Dukhamai Itihas	1939
Nari Ko Man	1939
Bhannu Po Sakinna	1940
Mero Aparichit Sathi	1944

TRAVELOGUE

Parsum Yatra	1930
Assam Ko Cheukuna	1931
Orissako Hernu Parne	
Thaon Horu	1961



Sri Hari Prasad Gorkha Rai with his family members

TRANSLATION

Lokraj (from Assamese Iyaruigungum)

LEXICONS

Hindi Maring 1974-76
Hindi Nepali 1974-76
Hindi Kabui 1974-76
Hindi Mikir 1974-76
Hindi Garo 1974-76
Hindi Assamese 1974-76
Hindi Maram 1974-76
Hindi Meiring 1974-76

FOLK SONGS & FOLK TALES

Mishing Folk Songs with Nepali meanings. Naga, Mishing Folk Tales with Nepali meanings
JONOJATI (Hill people)
Asomor Jonojati (in Assamese)

A CHRONOLOGY

- 1915 Born at Kohima,
1930 Passed M. E. Exam.
1931 Started writing in Assamese. First poem 'Sahisnuta' published *Jeuti* School Magazine.
1932 Started writing in Nepal. First poem 'Paraajao'.
1935 Passed Matriculation from the University of Calcutta. Joined F.T. School as Teacher after four years shifted to Kohima Government Minor School.
1937 Married Junu Maya Rai.
1940 Joined National Extension Service
1941 Joined Kohima Devout Block as Education Officer
1942 Joined Second World War Services
SDO (BER) 916IWS
Refugee Camp Commandant as C.O. Fort Keay Relief Camp Barma Border.
Appointed Interpreter in war Front Kohima
1944 Certificate of Valonv received.
1956 Joined A.I.R. Gauhati as A.S.D.
1968 Retired
1975 Assom Sahitya Sabha felicitated.
1987 Member, General Council, Sahitya Akademi.
1989 Govt. of Assam grants literary pension for life
1993 As a member of 'Bhanerapo' receives prestigious Memento Certificate.
1996 Jagadamshree award granted by Madan Puraskar Guthi.
1996 Sikkim Sahitya Parishad offers Abhinandan Patra.
1999 Fulchand Khandel Sanghati Bots Puraskar given by Golaghat Asom Sahitya.
2000 Parasmani Puraskar of Kalimpong Nepali Sahitya Adhyayan Samiti.