

THISAI ETTUM

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A Naa. Pa. Ensemble

Translator: R. Natarajan

Naa. Parthasarathy

Naa. Parthasarathy, a Tamil scholar, poet, novelist, short-story writer and journalist, was an institution by himself commanding wide readership. After serving *Kalki* he founded and edited the literary monthly *Deepam*. He portrayed in his own way idyllic scenes, local politics and inter-national affairs. He bridged the academia and the literary world. His works are prescribed textbooks for Tamil literature students. Some teachers have done their M. Phil, and Ph. D. on his works. He was nominated for the coveted *Gnan Pith* award; unfortunately he passed away in Dec. 1987 and he did not get it because it is not posthumous. He could not also take his doctorate for his thesis submitted to the University of Madras because of his untimely death.

Several of his works have been translated into other languages; *Gangai Innum Vatrividavillai* - English & Hindi, *Kothadimaigal* - English and French, *Ninaivin Nizhalgal* & nine other stories - English, *Samudhaya Veedhi* - English, Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam, *Thulasi Maadam* - English, Gujarati and Malayalam, *Pattu Poochi* - Hindi and Gujarati, *Aatmavin Raahangal* - Hindi & Gujarati and *Neela Nayanangal* - English. Some have been translated in Urdu too.

Bi-lingual writer, translator and journalist **R. Natarajan** (64) is a Member of the Sahitya Akademi's Tamil Advisory Board. He has written about 40 books in English and Tamil, including translations. Some are new additions to Tamil. He earned the Tamil Nadu Government's prizes for his books on Economics and Management and the State Bank of India's award for a book on current affairs. He was presented the Khasa Subba Rao Award for excellence in English Journalism besides *Dinamalar* Krishnamurthy Award for excellence in Tamil journalism. He has translated short stories of Akilon, Naa. Pa, A. S. Raghavan, M. K. Santhanam, Subrabalan and some poems of Abi and Abdul Rahman. Sahitya Akademi has published his English translation of Naa. Pa.'s award-winning Tamil novel *Samudhaya Veedhi*;

Trend - Setter Naa. Parthasarathy

Naa. Parthasarathy was more than a writer; he was a movement. He laid great emphasis on the values of life. All through his career he remained an idealist writer; his heroes and heroines are idealists. He was a satirist from the angle of righteous indignation which found expression in most of his works. He lampooned politics mildly in his later short stories because he could not bear the contemporary trends.

Naa. Pa. was a poet, a poet of the old order. His prose has an innate element of poesy. An occasional expression of his poetic sensibilities could be found in some of his fictional works. Those apart, he has written numerous poems. In the later part of his career, he also gave a hesitant nod to modern free verse which sprang in the 1970s.

Naa. Pa. commanded a wide readership in all age groups. To the college students of the 1960s and 1970s, he was a mentor-like figure. He kept cordial relationship with all writers, though as a literary critic, he did not approve of some of their writings. He was a curious combination of tradition and modernity.

In fact, Naa. Pa. laid a bridge of understanding between the academia and the media, when the teaching community was reluctant to invite popular writers to its precincts. That was possible because he had been a teacher before he became a writer; Tamil teacher strong in grammar. He was a popular writer; a popular speaker too in public platforms and in colleges and universities. In literary seminars he was the voice heard with authority and respects.

When he launched his literary magazine *Deepam*, he happily accommodated well known and less known writers. *Deepam* introduced to Tamil readers national and international writers through interviews and translated works. He looked into the stuff, not the names. Whoever wrote in *Deepam* became his friends; those writers formed the *Deepam* family. Still some writers identify themselves to be of *Deepam* clan.

While serving the Sahitya Akademi in different capacities for many years, Naa. Pa arranged for many national and international seminars on Indian literature. To describe him a Tamil writer is to limit his personality. He was a national writer. He felt he was first an Indian and then a Tamil. He had a large heart for assimilation; had he lived longer, he could have contributed more cherishable stuff. We are not fortunate on that score.

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"Cherish me in your
dawns and dusks,
springs and winters,
gaiety and grief,
life and death.

Even if I be not with you,
may I be the dream
in your wakeful hours
and an awakening
in your dreams.

When your pillow is moist
with tears you shed for me,
may my fiery heart
pining elsewhere
rest pacified at last."

*From Naa. Pa's story Vidhivilakkaaha
Oru Vyapaaram (The Sale Exceptional)*