



Press Release

Webline literature series on Contribution of Kashi to Indian Literature

New Delhi, 29th December, 2021; Sahitya Akademi's virtual seminar on 'Contribution of Kashi to Indian Literature', being conducted under the Akademi's webline literature series, began today, on 29th December.

Delivering the inaugural address, Prof. Viswanath Prasad Tiwari, Former President of the Akademi and Fellow, said that Kashi is one of the oldest cities in the world. It is not only the centre of religion, culture, devotion, and literature, it is also a city associated with great philosophers. He referred to the 2500 year old legacy of Lord Buddha and went on to celebrate the legacy bequeathed on the city by legends such as Adi Shakaracharya, Swami Ramanand, Kabir, Tulsi Das, pundits of Kashi. Sri Tiwari also dwelt upon the association of the city with father of modern Indian literature Sri Bharatendu Harischandra. He described Kashi as a vibrant centre of learning, which emerged through its intimate connection with great writers such as Jayashankar Prasad, Premchand, Acharya Ramachandra Shukla, Hajari Prasad Dwivedi, Madan Mohan Malviya and institutions like Banaras Hindu University and Nagari Pracharini Sabha. Writers like Rabindra Nath Tagore or even foreign authors have derived inspiration from this glorious city.

In his Presidential speech, Prof. Abhiraj Rajendra Mishra, Convenor, Sanskrit Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi, stated that Kashi is as important as a symbol of India's identity as the Himalayas and the Ganga. Kashi has shaped the directions of Indian literature. He observed that the importance of Kashi is evident in the fact that many institutions in other parts of the country are named after Kashi. Instances of this include Uttar Kashi in the north or Kanchipuram in the south. He added that, in Kashi one finds the convergence of Vedic, Buddhist and modern intellectual traditions.

Sri Chittaranjan Mishra, Convenor, Hindi Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi, in his concluding remarks presented Kashi as a city where all knowledge systems are boldly interrogated. Kashi, a city of diversity, represents a unique blend of life and death, acceptance and negation. Here, the Belle-lettrist tradition to which Hajari Prasad Dwivedi, Vidya Niwas Mishra and Kubernath Rai contributed, flourished.

Dr. K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi welcomed the dignitaries and participants.

In the first session of the seminar, presentation was made by Uday Prasad Singh on the association of Shankaracharya with Kashi. Sri Nandkishore Pandey spoke on the Saint poets of Kashi. The contribution of Jain Acharyas to the culture of Kashi was discussed in the paper presented by Sri Vir Sagar Jain. Sadashiv Dwivedi threw light on ways in which Kashi based scholars Rewa Prasad Dwivedi and Satyabrata Shastri enriched Sanskrit literature. S. Ranganath, who chaired this session, explored Sri Shankaracharya's links with the holy city.

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The second session of the seminar was chaired by Sri Surya Prasad Dixit. Manjula Rana dwelt upon Saint Kabir's enduring popular appeal. Anand Prakash Tripathi discussed the achievements of Jagannath Das 'Ratnakar' and Bholashankar Vyas. The presentations of Kailashnath Upadhyay and Sailendra Kumar Sharma highlighted the significance of Tulsi Das's epics and Raidas. Surya Prasad Dixit offered perceptive comments on the works of Shyama Sundar Das and Lala Bhagwan Din.

Ashtabhuja Shukla presided over the third and concluding session of the seminar. Insightful observations were made on writers such as Pitambardutt Badthwal, Premchand, Jayashankar and Devkinandan Khatri in the presentations of Vishnu Dutt Rakesh, Ramkali Saraf, Avnijesh Awasti and Vasishth Anup respectively.

Tomorrow's sessions will focus on literary journalism in Kashi, the importance of Banaras Hindu University and contemporary poetry. These sessions will be chaired by Baldeo Bhai Sharma and Avdhesh Pradhan.

Anupam Tiwari, editor (Hindi), Sahitya Akademi, co-ordinated the seminar.



(K. Sreenivasarao)