

MRS. MANORAMA

MODERN SANSKRIT DRAMATIST:
DR. RAMA CHAUDHARY

Dr. Rama Chaudhary — Grand daughter of Late Anand Mohan Bose, a great scholar and well-known Barrister, President of Indian National Congress; daughter of late Sudhanshu Mohan Bose, Member of Legislative Assembly and Chairman of Public Service Commission, West Bengal, wife of famous modern Sanskrit Dramatist — late Dr. J.B. Chaudhary, is a renowned Sanskrit Dramatist of the 20th Century.

Dr. Rama Chaudhary has an extra ordinary brilliant academic career all through standing first in all examinations from Matriculation to M.A. She is First class First in B.A. and First class First in M.A. in Philosophy of the Calcutta University. She is the first Indian Lady to obtain Doctorate Degree from the Oxford University.

Dr. Rama Chaudhary is retired Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy and the Principal of the Celebrated Lady Brabourne College, Government of West-Bengal, Calcutta for 30 years. She was the Vice-Chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University, Calcutta. She is the Founder Secretary of Prachyavani — and Institute of Oriental Learning.

Dr. Rama Chaudhary is a Pioneer of Modern Sanskrit Drama Movement in India. She is the author of a large number of original and Research Publications on Philosophy and Sanskrit and writer of More than 20 modern Sanskrit Plays as follows:

1. Shankar-Shankaram.
2. Desh-Dipam.
3. Nagara-Nupuram.
4. Palli-Kamalam.
5. Samsaramritam.

6. Kavi-Kula-Kokilam.
7. Kavi-Kula-Kamalam.
8. Megh-Medura-Mediniyam.
9. Yatindra-Yatindram.
10. Abhedanandam.
11. Nivedita-Niveditam.
12. Yuga-Jivanam.
13. Bharatacharyam.
14. Rama-Charita-Manasam.
15. Bharata-Tatam.
16. Chaitanya-Chaitanyam.
17. Rasamaya-Rasamani.
18. Prasanna-Prosadam.
19. Gana-Devata-Natakam.
20. Agni-Vina-Natakam.
21. Bharata-Pathikam.

1. *SHANKAR-SHANKARAM*: This drama is written on the life and Philosophy of the great Advaita Vedantist Shankaracharya. It is an extra ordinary attempt of the dramatist in displaying Shankaracharya's Philosophical attainments through different episodes in his life.

Dr. Satkari Mukherji writes: «What has surprised me most is the wonderful ease and flow with which the present work represents to us the most abstruse Philosophy of the great Advaitin Shankara. Who could have ever thought that any one would be able to serve the same under the guise of a Drama? But the supremely efficient and infinitely courageous Dr. Rama has been able to perform. Who could have thought her capable of producing such a superb dramatic work on Shankara's holy life and teachings, in such a beautiful, poetic, enchanting easily intelligible language? Further, the numerous verses in different metres as well as the songs add much to the great glory of this exhilarating work of great literary and other kinds of merits.

But who could have ever thought that even Sanskrit dramas, generally supposed to be very difficult dead language dramas, could be made so very popular, and so very attractive to all, scholars and laymen, sanskritists and non-sanskritists, Indians and

foreigners alike, with equal glory and grandeur, equal sweetness and softness, equal serenity and sublimity to no mean extent».

2. *DESH-DIPAM*: In this play focus of light is directed to the life-stories of the brave heroes of the country who became martyrs for the mother land. In this drama the Dramatist has depicted a vivid picture of village environment. Generally the themes in the Sanskrit dramas are hardly concerned with rural life. But Rama Chaudhary has treated the village as the central locale of her drama.

The names of the birds have been given to the Actors to impact comic and humorous tone to the stage. For example — 'Mar-kaṭ' 'Vrika' «Kukkuṭ» 'Pechaka' etc. In the perspective of the Hero, locale and theme, this play has opened a new avenue of ideas and directions in the dramatics.

3. *NAGARA-NUPURAM*: This drama is composed of ten scenes. It is full of thrilling and glamorous dances accompanied by congenial music highlighting the performance of a beautiful damsel named Mekhala. She dances with swift steps, passing over the stage with tremendous impact on the audience and her admirers. The scene changes suddenly with the cold realization on the part of Mekhala that "all that glitters is not gold". She confesses that her artistic efforts on the stage has no meaning. She is impressed so much by a saintly person of Hardwar that she embraces the life of an ascetic and becomes a saint to gain peace of mind.

4. *PALLI-KAMALAM*: This drama is written in nine scenes, the theme of this drama is about a village girl. The village girl Kamalkalika is married to the hero Rupakumar. In this drama some typical folk-lore of Bengla literature are presented with interesting lucid translation.

1. 'Akash Chandra Patita Kare me'
2. 'Kukcham chuddha Mukhe Lajja'
3. 'Pathi thakkura adriyamano mastkamarohti'.

The dramatist values comedy as much as music for the entertainment of the audience. The comic notes typical of village-culture are interesting and provoking in this drama.

5. *SAMSARAMRITAM*: This drama is written in seven scenes. All of them represent the pathetic lot of the daughter of the poor Kely family. A man named Mayukh deceives the girl. At last she is married to Mayur whom she wanted to marry.

Mayur is rich but very weak in character. Slowly but steadily she is able to change his bad habits.

6. *KAVI-KULA-KOKILAM*: This drama is written on Maha Kavi Kalidas dealing with the first half of this life. This drama was staged in the Kalidas Samaroh held at Ujjain. In 1967 and was awarded 'Golden Kalash'. It is an entertaining play, replet with wily anecdotes, even petty songs have been rendered with exquisite refinement and perfection.

7. *KAVI-KULA-KAMALAM*: This play is written on Maha Kavi Kalidas's later life.

8. *MEGH-MEDURA-MEDINIYAM*: This drama is written in nine scenes. The incidents preceding the theme of «Meghdoot of Kalidas» have been described here. It repeats the story of Meghdoot incidently and the meeting of «Yaksha» and «Yakshini» follows at the end. This play was also stage of at Kalidas Jayanti Ujjain and was exceedingly extalld by the Top Committee of Scholars.

9. *YATINDRA-YATINDRAM*: Rama Chaudhary has written this drama on the holy life of her husband, Founder of Prehgavani Dr. Jatindra Bimal Chaudhary who died in 1964. Rama Chaudhary presented this drama on the stage as a tribute to her husband by focusing light on the rich contribution of Yatindar-Bimal Chaudhary to Sanskrit Drama.

10. *ABHEDANANDAM*: This drama is written on Swami Abhedananda, the chief disciple of Swami Ram Krishna. His life of purity, sacrifice and miracle has been acted upon in this darma through twelve scenes. Swami Anhedananda founded the monastery of Ram Krishna Vedanta Math. His moral and philosophical views are inspiring, awakening and exalting.

11. *NIVEDITA-NIVEDITAM*: In this drama the life-style and character-story of sister Nivedita have been dramatised beautifully through twelve scenes. Nivedita was a foreigner. She met Swami Vivekanand in London and was so impressed by him that she opted for India for the rest of her life in serving for Indian Society. She paid special attention to the poor and suffering women.

12. *YUGA-JIVANAM*: This drama is written on Sri Ram Krishna-Parāmhansadeva and reflects the life of modern era and projects its spirit in the styles of acting as seen in the role of the actors on stage.

13. *BHARATAACHARYAM*: There are twelve scenes in this drama extolling the life and achievements of Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnana, the second President of the Indian-Republica. The scenes focus attention to the efforts of the philosopher to enriching philosophy as a subject matter and important body of knowledge. Rmaji presented this drama in the presence of Dr. Radha Krishnanan at the Government House in Delhi in 1966 and was profusely complimented for her successful drama.

14. *RAMA-CHARITA-MANASAM*: Is written on Tulsidas, the writer of Ram Charit Manas. This drama has been streamlined by the profound love of Tulsidas for his wife, the denouncing attitude of his wife who inspired him to worship immortal RAM which would meet all his problems. The most ethereal and perfect verses of Tulsidas have been tarnslated into Sanskrit making them equally rhythemic and darmatic in this drama.

15. *BHARATA-TATAM*: In all the six scenes of this Drama, one has a pleasant glimpse of the varied and rich experiences of Mahatma Gandhi. Such social services as Harijanoddhar, Communal harmony and meetings with such leaders and Subhash Chandra Bose and Deshbandhu Chitranjandas have been gracefully dramatised.

16. *CHAITANYA-CHAITANYAM*: In this drama Mahaprabhu Chaitanya is presented with his saintly, aesthetic life of devotion

spread over different places and enriched by varied miraculous life of songs and soul. His awakening, Childhood, triumphant marches in devotion to Lord Krishna and ultimate salvation ring through the five scenes of this absorbing drama.

17. *RASAMAYA-RASAMANI*: The queen Rasamani was an ideal character whose many splendoured life has been presented in checkered forms in this drama for its varied hues, colour and excellent performances through eight rich scenes.

18. *PRASANNA-PROSADAM*: It has ten scenes of exquisite musical experience with the famous Bengala Maestro Shri Ram Prasad.

19. *GANA-DEVATA-NATAKAM*: This drama is based on the episodes in the life of Tara Shankar Bandopadhyaya, a great Bengala Novelist.

20. *AGNI-VINA-NATAKAM*: The life style of Nazrul Islam, a Bengala Poet has been dramatised in this play.

21. *BHARATA-PATHIKAM*: Raja Ram Mohan Roy as the pathfinder for Bharat glorifies all the five scenes of this drama. The main episodes staged are eradicating Sati Pratha, motivating the people to learn English and establishing 'Brahma Samaj' etc.

STYLE: Dr. Rama Chaudhary is genuinely interested in popularizing Sanskrit, thus bringing it to the orbit of the common man and ordinary folks.

This is manifested by her continuous efforts in simplifying Sanskrit language, humanizing its rhythm and tone as obtained in the sentiments, emotions and aspirations of their lives, and sufferings. her dramas played by her team as well as other connoisseurs of her art and ecstasy ring across the country in the renaissance of Sanskrit which she partakes so successfully.

It is indeed a rare characteristic of her drama-writing that her diction is far excellent and her actors are psychological creatures responding to the literary ecstasy of so rous expression, dying

cadence and physical indication of acute emotional stresses.

STYLE: The expression of the drama is lucid in language and rhythmic in sound. Flawless Sanskrit, articulate expression of ideas and profundity of ideas and thought are the sterling features of her style in drama. She has raised Sanskrit drama from a craft to a sophisticated level of art. Without her personal interest and the harmonious engagement of mind and heart, the drama of would not have obtained the excellent that she commands.

It seems that Dr. Rama Chaudhary tried to immortalize her husband by adopting and assimilating the dramatic style and aspiration of Dr. J.B. Chaudhary's dramas. A look at her dramas on the screen given an impression that the actors in the dramas of Prof. Chaudhary have been reincarnated. Rama Chaudhary writes in the introduction of her drama 'SHANKAR SHANKARAM'.

*Yato yatishreshthasya yatindravimalasya punyajivanasadhanapi
na mlana suska ca bhavisyati kadapi / sa prasphuṭitā
rājiṣyate nirantaram yatindravimalajīvanasarvasvāyā
yatindravimalaikajīvanāyā daktararamāya ramaṇīyajīvane /*