



Sahitya Akademi

(The National Academy of Letters, India)

04 May 2009

Invites you to

meet the author

Erode Tamilanban



Erode Tamilanban (Prof.N.Jagadeesan) is a master of Craftsmanship. A winner of many awards he has established himself as a poet of the first order through his independent views incisive thinking his human and humane approach to social problems his vision of a new old order and his mastery of art. His collection of poems titled '*Vanakam Valluva*' (Salutations Valluva!) bagged **Sahitya Akademi** award in 2004. These poems explore the relevance of *Thirukkural* to modern times using several new devices keeping in view the continuity of the Tamil Literary heritage from the *Sangam* age. This style is simple and rich. The creative poetic force can be evinced in one way or the other in every poem and the epic character be enjoyed. The work is a significant and original contribution to Indian poetry in Tamil.

Born in what can be called a lower middle class family in a small place called Chennimalai, Erode District, in Tamilnadu. Tamilanban developed a taste for Tamil through the sizable collections of his grandfather. Even his mother had done her own share of reading, an astonishing matter in those days, and bequeathed a few of her books to him. In his school days he had the good opportunity of studying under inspiring Tamil teachers. Even as a school boy Tamilanban

published a manuscript 'Suya Chintanai' magazine to carry his writings. He got his higher education in the reputed Karanthai Tamil Sangam and got the diploma of pulavar in Tamil language and literature. He has served as a Tamil teacher and later a professor of Tamil for a long period.

Like most youngsters in his days, Tamilanban came under the sway of the Dravidian movement and was influenced by the thoughts of Periyar and Arignar Anna, which have made a lasting impression on his thinking. He owes to the Dravidian movement his love for Tamil, faith in the common man and rationalist thinking. It is during this period that he met Bharatidasan, a poet par excellence, and cultivated a bond with him for the rest of the latter's life. His wide reading familiarised him with many outstanding poets of the world, many of whom he introduced to the Tamil readers through translation.

Though all the readings are bound to make their impact on a reader, only a few inspire a writer. Such inspiration, by his own admission, Erode Tamilanban received from Subramania Bharati, Bharatidasan, Rabindranath Tagore and Pablo Neruda. Yet, the essential Tamilanban remained unaffected by external influences, maintaining independent thinking and carving out a path for himself.



Dr. Kalaignar presents Murasoli Award to Tamilanban



Erode Tamilanban with his wife Shanthakumari

Tamilanban published his first collection of poems in 1970, and has published thirty eight collections so far. His earlier poems were made mostly of traditional forms and were largely under the influence of the Dravidian movement. They spoke mostly of the resurgent Tamil nationalism and rationalism as an antidote for the evils of casteism, communalism and superstitions. Even at that early stage he developed a passion for the ideology of Socialism. It is interesting to note during school days that he attended public meeting addressed by Jayaprakash Narayan and Ashok Mehta and he stated the real reason in his leave letter for which he was rebuked by the headmaster.

His poems published in the eighties and nineties speak of variety of topics and we find his voice coming from the depth of his being, having been seasoned and mellowed by experience in

life. He laments the fate of man who locks himself in, rarely reaching out to others, while he must be out, reaching out to the cosmos. In these poems we find Tamilanban engaged, among other things, a spiritual quest, looking out for a place in the cosmos where he can get himself dissolved.

Tamilanban takes care to keep his poems from degenerating into propaganda by using a dramatic monologue or dialogue form where he makes his characters speak. He also puts epic characters to good use. His wide sweep encompasses all facets of human life. Politics, elections, education, judiciary, social life, family bonds, casteism, communalism, inequality, ecology, oppression - there is practically no field of social intercourse that Tamilanban has not touched and put forth his views with a firmness.



Tamilanban presided over a meeting at Erode in which Puratchikkavignar Bharathidasan and Prof. N.Ramanathan participated (11.11.1963)

In fact wherever he finds injustice, corruption or degeneration of values, Tamilanban is filled with indignation which he gives vent to, raising his voice against them vehemently, but without sacrificing artistic niceties.

Tamilanban has published a unique travelogue, in the form of poems, on his visit to the United States (which he calls the home of Walt Whitman). He advises the Tamils living there not to give up their cultural roots, keeping in mind that they have gone their as ambassadors of the Tamil Land. At the same time, he is aware of the younger ones being born and brought up in that country who cannot be kept from imbibing the culture of the country of their adoption.

Like Pablo Neruda Tamilanban, 'lives many lives as a poet, shedding each one and its accompanying poetic manner, as a lizard sheds a skin, and emerging always with new insights, new attitudes and new poems.'

He achieves brevity mingled with force of expression by the use of myth and images, epigrams and paradoxes. Many of his titles are examples of how paradox and oxymoron can be taken best advantage of. His poems are all interspersed with puns, humour, satire and irony.

He has also experimented with such forms like haiku, Limericku and senryu, with remarkable agility. It is astonishing that he finds himself at home in every form of poetry. Following Pablo Neruda's "Book of Questions", Tamilanban also published a book of questions, in the centenary year of Pablo Neruda (2004). The discerning reader can find or cannot find answers but will certainly experience a thrill and wonder with every question and at times with a zen touch. The question form is meant to tease him, disturb him and goad him into action.



Erode Tamilanban standing in front of the Walt Whitman's House, Camden, New Jersey, USA



*Receiving sahitya akademai award from
President Gopichand Narang.*

Honours and Awards

- Tamil Nadu Govt., Award (1973 & 2000) for his poetry books.
- Recited poems at National Symposium of poets at New Delhi (1978)
- Lyric writer for several films
- Wrote story and dialogue and also worked as Associate Director for the film Vasanthathil Oru Vaanavil. Which bagged the Best Creation Award in Rome (1983).
- Lectures given at various capacity including India and abroad
- Visited the United States to take part in the anniversary of the Federation of Tamil Sangams (1996) received a title of honour 'Puthukkavikko'
- Visited Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Arab Countries for giving lectures.
- Served as a Tamil News Caster at DD, Chennai (1975 - 1992.)
- Bharatidasan award in the year 1991 - Govt of Tamilnadu
- Sahitya Akademi, General Council Member (1998-2001)
- Kalaigarnar Award - 1998 - Instituted by Murasoli Trust
- Kalaimamani Award in the year (1999)
- Rana Literary Award 1999 - Erode Ilakkia Peravai
- Kural Peedam Award - 2001 - Govt. Of Tamilnadu
- Tamizhavel Umamaheswaranar Award (2002)
- Thiruppur Tamil Sangam Award 2003 - Salem Tamil Sangam Award
- 'Tamil Vaakai Chemmal'
- Two days National Seminar conducted by University of Madras based on his writings (2003)
- Cheyvaru Tamil Sangam Award 2003, received title of Honour
- Kavipparuvi*
- Sahitya Akademi Award (2004)
- Kavignar Sirpi Poetry Award (2004)
- Periyar Award (2005)
- Kamban Kazhagam Prize (2008)

Post held

- Editor, Arima Nokku - quarterly research magazine
- Member, Film censor board
- Member, Institute of Scientific Tamil.
- Executive member, Tamilnadu Iyal, Isai, Nataka Mantram
- Co-ordinator, Gnanapith Award, Tamil Language Committee

Books Written - Poetry

- Tamilanban kavithaikal (1970)
- Cilirpukal (1970)
- Thoni Varukirathu (1973)
- Vidiyal Vizhuthukal (1977)

Teevukal Karaiyerukinrana (1978)
 Kalathirukku oru nal munthi (1982)
 Antha Nanthanai eriththa neruppin micham (1982)
 Vumai Veiyil (1984)
 Nila Varum Neram (1984)
 Sooriyap Piraikal (1985)
 Thirumpi Vandha thervalam (1985)
 Karuvaiyilirundhu Oru Kural (1987)
 Namirukkum Nadu (1989)
 Voor sutri Vandha Osai (1989)
 Kudai Raatinam (1990)
 Kizhakku Salaram (1991)
 En Veetu Ethere Or Erukkanth Chedi (1995)
 Un Veetukku Vanthirunthen Walt Whitman (1996)
 Nadai Marantha Nathiyum Thisai Mariya Odaiyum (1998)
 Pani Peiyum Pagal (1998)
 Minminik Kadu (2000)
 Vanakam Valluva (2000)
 Parani Padalam (2001)
 Thamizhoviya (2002)
 Varthaikal Ketta Varam (2002)
 Chennimalai Cleopatrakkal (2002)
 Oru Vandu Senryu (2003)
 Iravup Padakan (2003)
 Minnal Urangumpothu (2004)
 Kanak kanum Vinakkal (2004)
 Ivarkalodum Evatrodum (2004)
 Kavinkuru Nooru (2005)
 Kathavaith Thattia Pazhaya Kathali (2005)
 Moontru Peyarkalum En Mukavari Puthakamum (2006)
 Annai Madiye Unnai Maraven (2007)
 Idukkuripeyarillai Islam (2008)
 Solla Vandhathu (2008)
 Olaichchuvadiyum Kurunthakadum (2008)

Prose

Thaiyin Manikkodi (1966)
 Kavipadia Kavalargal (1967)
 Bharat Ratna Lalbhagadur (1968)
 Thanippadal Thirattu (1987)
 Sikarangal Mel Viriyum Siragukal (1988)
 Kavithai Chinthanaikal (1990)
 Ilakkia payan (1992)
 Puratchikkavignar Kavithaikalil Tamil - Tamilan - Tamilnadu (1994)
 Anaikkava entra America (1998) travelogue.
 Bharatidasanodu Paththandukal (2000)
 Kalaiya? Kaivinaiya? (2001)
 Kanmanikku sila kathaikal (2001)
 Mathippeedukal (2002)
 Thames Nathiyil Thentamil Alaikal (2006)
 Pablo Neruda Paarvaiyil India (2007)
 Tamilanban Paarvaiyil Tekwando (2008)

Fiction & Drama

Kodi Katha Kumaran (1961)
 Nenjin nizhal (1965)
 Oru Mazhai Nalil (1995)
 Eera Neruppu (2002)