



Sahitya Akademi



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meet the author

Uday Prakash





"It's not the centre which decides the fate of literature or history. It's the margins..."

Uday Prakash

Here is a writer who seems to have made the margins the centre, a rebel non-conformist centre, through some centrifugal energy of his personality. "I have little faith in the Left or Right establishment. When they bulldoze the homes of the poor, the bulldozers can be Left or Right, it seems the same to me. They're part of the power-capital structure ruling the globe. I'd prefer to be with the voiceless, the meaningless..." he says. His margins centre around pure visionaries like Federico Garcia Lorca, Ritwick Ghatak, Muktibodh and Nirala. In other words, one can gauge him for the true artist he is by his kind of preferences. "Satyajit Ray was an excellent master of his craft. But it was Ritwick(Ghatak) who

taught us that there was no difference with breaking all barriers and great art... Despite Ray's greatness, till this day, I'd rather follow Ritwick."

Uday Prakash was born in 1952 and brought up in a small village by the Son River in a tribal area of Madhya Pradesh bordering Chattisgarh. His family had been the major landowners in that area, and his father was accepted by the tribals virtually as their chief. Uday Prakash's mother died when he was thirteen years old; and his father died when was eighteen—both of cancer.

Uday Prakash graduated in science and then took a Master's degree in Hindi Literature with Gold Medal from Saugar Univer-



sity, Sagar, (M.P) in 1974. He was an active member of the Communist Party of India during his late teens and early twenties, and established its student wing in Shahdol District. When Emergency was declared in June 1975, Uday Prakash was doing his Ph.D. at Saugar University.



With Family



Near Bertolt Brecht's statue at Berliner Ensemble, Berlin

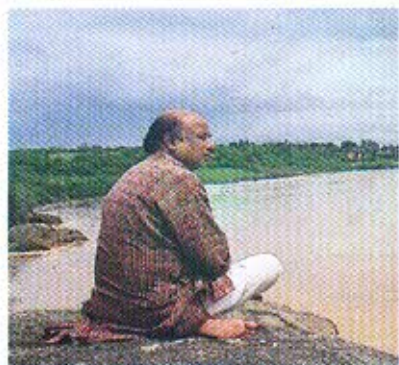
He soon left for Delhi, to escape being branded as a Naxalite and jailed; he joined JNU, and has lived in Delhi continuously till date, from 1975, except for the period 1979-1982, when he taught at JNU's Post-graduate Studies Centre in Imphal, Manipur or worked as an officer on special duty in the Department of Culture at Bhopal.

From the earliest days of his life in Delhi, he began to engage himself seriously in writing poetry and short stories. His first poetry collection *Suno Karigar* was published in 1980, and *Dariyayi Ghoda*, his first collection of short stories, in 1982. He has four collections of poems, ten collections of short stories, one collection of critical writings, essays and interviews. His works have been translated

extensively into English, Urdu, Marathi, Oriya, Kannada, German, Spanish, Russian, Dutch etc.

Most of his stories have been adapted for the stage by young directors from as diverse a background as IPTA to the National School of Drama and campus theatre.

One can readily imagine the impact his stories make even in one of the most acclaimed writers, like U.R. Anantha Murthy, who writes: "After reading the story ('Tirich') I was deeply moved. It is one of the great stories I have read in my life. .. 'Tirich' is moving for its innocent narration but a narration with a metaphysical depth...I have some experience of stories that get written



By the Son river, dreaming a story

by me and I would be surprised that I was lucky enough to be a vehicle... As an older writer I feel proud that Indian literature has writers like you."

Iftikar Jalib, celebrated Pakistani poet, had written a poi-



At Amnesty International meet at Frankfurt, with Mahasweta Devi

gnant poem on him after reading his stories just a couple of months before his death in Lahore, Pakistan. Ajmal Kamal, editor of 'Aaj', a literary Urdu journal, published from Karachi says, "Pakistan has everything, except Uday Prakash."

television. He scripted, directed and produced films for Sahitya Akademi on eminent writers.

Uday Prakash has toured several foreign countries including Germany, Netherlands and USA on invitation, holding readings and lectures, and has



Story reading session, with Paul Zacharia

Asad Zaidi, a most sensitive contemporary Hindi poet points out 'It seems that Hindi power centres have discovered for themselves 'the other' in him, without which it was becoming difficult to retain and redefine their own identity for quite sometime. There has been a boom of sprouting discourse industry around Uday's writings for the last few years in Hindi.'

Uday Prakash is, besides, an acclaimed freelance journalist, director and writer for film and

been honoured by several eminent institutions.

Uday Prakash has always been the non-conformist that he is. He has always been alert against getting settled in the literary establishment, and kept his 'artist's soul' untainted and transparent, never being biased or opinionated, and always open to the contemplation of the puzzle that human life is. He is someone who has nothing to lose, and so, can afford to speak the truth. The courage of his conviction shows through his works.

A Select Bibliography

Poetry

- Suno Karigar* (1980)
- Abootar Kabootar* (1984)
- Raat Mejn Harmonium* (1998)
- Ek Bhasha Hua Karti Hai*, (2007)

Short Stories

- Dariyayi Ghoda* (1982)
- Tirich* (1990)
- Aur Ant Mein Prarthna* (1994)
- Paul Gomra Ka Scooter* (1997)
- Peelee Chhatri Wali Ladki* (2001)
- Duttatrey Ke Dukh* (2002)
- Mohan Das* (2006)

(All the above books are published by Vani Prakashan, Darya Ganj, New Delhi.)

Areba-Pareba – Collection of short stories, Penguin India (published in Four Languages(in 2006)

Mangosil – Collection of short stories, Penguin India, New Delhi (2007)

Critical Writings, Interviews

- Eeshwar Ki Aankh*, Vani Prakashan (1999)



Receiving Muktibodh Award from Habib Tanvir in Bhopal

Translations of His Work

Short Shorts Long Shots: Collection of short stories Katha, New Delhi. (2003)
Rage, Revelry and Romance –

A Girl with Golden Parasol: Translated by Jason Grunebaum, Penguin India, New Delhi (2007)
Der Goldene Gurtel: (Collection of short stories in German)



Standing L to R: Arun Kamal, Dhirendra Asthana
 Sitting L to R: Uday Prakash, Kedarnath Singh, Vinod Bharadwaj

Collection of Selected Short Stories, Shristi Publishers, New Delhi (2003)

Translated by Lothar Lutze, Draupadi Verlag, Berlin (2007)



With J. Swaminathan, Surendra Rajan, N. Vinod Kumar Shukla



With Nagarjun and Som Dutt (sitting at the centre), standing L to R: Surendra Rajan, Bhagawat Rawat, Uday Prakash, Rajesh Joshi

A Chronology

1952	Born in a small village Sitapur, District Shahdol, now Anuppur in Madhya Pradesh.	1984	collection of short stories published Awarded Om Prakash Samman
1974	Passed M.A.(Hindi) with Gold Medal from Saugar University, Sagar.	1990	Won Shrikant Verma Award
1975	Research Fellow in JNU, New Delhi	1996	Awarded Muktibodh Samman
1978-80	Asst. Professor in JNU's Post-graduate Studies Centre in Imphal, Manipur.	1998	Awarded Sadbhawna Samman
1980	First poetry collection <i>Suno Karigar</i> was published. Won Bharat Bhushan Agarwal Puraskar	1999	Awarded Sahityakaar Samman Awarded Senior Fellowship of the Department of Culture, Govt. of India
1982	<i>Dariyayi Ghoda</i> , first	2003	Awarded Pahal Samman
		2005	PEN Grant Award, USA
		2007	Won Pushkin Samman



At Gandhi House, Gottingen, Germany

The picture on the front cover shows Uday Prakash standing in front of the old town library at Gottingen, Germany, at night