

## In Fond Remembrance Of.....



*The following pages have been included in deference to the unanimous opinion of the "Editorial Board" to publish brief biographical sketches of at least one ex-Ravenshavian who has risen to eminence in his sphere of activities. Ed.*

**Shri Manoj Das :** (Born 1934)

Manoj Das saw the light of the day in the remote village of Sankhari in the north eastern tip of the Balasore district of Orissa. The village abounded with people living in abject poverty. His parents however, were rich. Glaring sights of inequality and exploitation a logical sequel of a feudalistic society and memories fo the devastating famine of '42 perhaps gave child Manoj the impetus to become a Marxist in later years. He had his school education in the Zilla School at Balasore. The latent poet in him came to the fore in 44, when his first collection of poems "Shatabdira Artanada" was published. He was then in class IX. Next year a periodical "Diganta" appeared under his editorship. "Diganta" in a different format has sporadic appearance even now, under the tutelage of Gianpitha award winner Sachi Routroy.

Manoj's college days at Cuttack were turbulent; his Marxist belief getting the better of him, so much so, that he had a stint in the Cuttack jail for leading a peasant's demonstration. In'56 he visited Bandung, Indonesia as a delegate to the Afro-Asian student's conference.

Around this time he took to short story writing. In'62 he was rated as a leading force in short-story writing by an opinion poll conducted by the prestigious Oriya magazine "Dagar". In the wake of recognition came a flood of awards; Orissa Sahitya Academy Award in 65; Visuva Milan Award in 71 and again in 86; Sahitya Academy Award in '72; Sarala Award in 80; Bharat Nayak Award of Sambalpur University in 87; second Orissa Sahitya Academy Award in 89, etc.

Psychic questions relating to happiness, reality, external surroundings, etc, led Manoj Das to Sri Aurobinda Ashram at Pondicherry, where he is a Professor of English Literature at the Aurobinda International Centre of Education.

He is a bilingual writer; writes in English and his mother tongue Oriya. Famous writers like Graham Greene, H.R.F. Keating, A. Russel etc., have words of high praise for his short stories, His stories, nourished by his varied experiences, are conceived in silence; its mainifestations are either in Oryia or in English. To a question he once replied "I write in English because India's cultural and spiritual heritage not only gives vast scope for interpretation of questions like 'What is happiness' what is it that sustains man through travails and torments of life ?" Is it the dream of happiness ? Can man ever be happy ?" etc. but are also relevant for humanity in general.

Some of his better known publications are

1. A song for Sunday and other Stories, Madras, Higginbotham, '67.
2. Fables and Fantasies for Adults, new Delhi, Orient Paperback '78.
3. The Dusky Horizon and other Stories, New Delhi, B.R. Publication, '89.
4. Stories of Light and Delight, New Delhi, NBT'70
5. Books for Ever, New Delhi, NBT, '73.
6. Sri Aurobindo, New Delhi, Sahitya Academy, '72.
7. Jibanara Swada, Cuttack Nabayug Granthalaya, 53.
8. Dura Duranta, Cuttack, Grantha Mandira, '73
9. Etc.

**PS:-** Mr.Das, we at Ravenshaw College, Cuttack are proud of your achievements. Ed.