

# LETTERS OF SESHENDRA



**IN DEFENCE OF PEOPLE AND POETRY**



Seshendra's mother Ammayamma (sitting)  
with (from left) her youngest daughter Devasena, daughter-in-law  
(Seshendra's wife) Janaki, son Seshendra, Husband Subrahmanyam,  
Youngest son Rajasekharam and elder daughter Anasuya in 1949  
at Seshendra's house at Thotapalli Gudur Village, Nellore District,  
Pin-524 311. A.P. India.

***Letters of Seshendra***  
***In Defence of People and Poetry***  
*Excerpts from Letters of Seshendra*

*Copyright: Saatyaki S/o Seshendra Sharma*

*1st Edition: 1977*

*2nd Edition: 30 May 2020*

*Seshendra's 13th Anniversary*

*Price: Rs. 125 /-*

*DTP: Saatyaki*

*Page Layout: Kiran Akruthi*

*Cover Design &*

*Concept: Saatyaki*

*Design: A.Raj kumar*

*Available with all leading book shops*

*Publisher:*

*Gunturu Seshendra Sharma*

*Memorial Trust*

*Printed at:*

*Akruthi Offset Printers*

*chikkadapally,Hyderabad*

## **Index**

	<i>Page No</i>
1. <i>Seshendra's Profile</i>	IV
2. <i>Seshendra : Multi-faceted Genius</i>	VI
3. <i>Crystallised Thought</i>	XI
4. <i>Seshendra's Works</i>	XIII
5. <i>Letters of Seshendra</i>	1 TO 102

## **Gunturu Seshendra Sarma: an extraordinary poet-scholar**

*One of the ironies in literature is that  
he came to be known more as a critic than a poet*

*HYDERABAD: An era of scholastic excellence and poetic grandeur has come to an end in the passing away of Gunturu Seshendra Sarma, one of the foremost poets and critics in Telugu literature. His mastery over western literature and Indian 'Alankara Sastra' gave his works a stunning imagery, unparalleled in modern Indian works. One of the ironies in literature is that he came to be known more as a critic than a poet. The Central Sahitya Akademi award was conferred on him for his work 'Kaala Rekha' and not for his poetic excellence. The genius in him made him explore 'Kundalini Yoga' in his treatise on Ramayana in 'Shodasi' convincingly. His intellectual quest further made him probe 'Naishadha Kaavya' in the backdrop of 'Lalita Sahasra Naamavali', 'Soundarya Lahari' and 'Kama Kala Vilasam' in 'Swarna Hamsa', Seshendra saw the entire universe as a storehouse of images and signs to which imagination was to make value-addition. Like Stephene Mallarme who was considered a prophet of symbolism in French literature, Seshendra Sarma too believed that art alone would survive in the universe along with poetry. He believed that the main vocation of human beings was to be artists and poets. His 'Kavisena Manifesto' gave a new direction to modern criticism making it a landmark work in poetics. Telugus would rue the intellectual impoverishment they suffered in maintaining a 'distance' from him. Seshendra could have given us more, but we did not deserve it! The denial of the Jnanpeeth Award to him proves it*

**The Hindu**  
India's National Newspaper  
Friday, Jun 01, 2007

## **SESHENDRA: A MULTI-FACETED GENIUS**

*In the galaxy of Indian poets and critics, the position of Seshendra as a luminary is unique. He visualizes the cross currents of tradition and modernity as perpetually interacting and moving towards the future, in new directions. As a Telugu poet and critic, he is a multi-faceted genius, seminal in his thought, his writings in various genres facilitating the evolution of new modes of literary activity among the new generation writers.*

*As Seshendra says with all humility in the First Memorial Lecture on the Jnaan Peeth Award-winner Viswanatha Satyanarayana titled "Valmiki to Kalidasa - Ashram Kavya Yuga," "...my guru. His blessings have been with me all my life and it is only through his blessings that I am today." Seshendra's interaction with Viswanatha for years is evident from the latter's Forewords to Seshendra's epoch-making works Shodasi Ramayana and Ritu Ghosha. The traditionalist facet of Seshendra is evident in Shodasi Ramayana. It is a new interpretation of a part of Valmiki Ramayana in terms of Kundalini Yoga. The Sundarakanda represents the quintessence of Valmiki Ramayana's thought. The first verse of the Sundarakanda, "Tato Ravana Nithayah," etc., has been interpreted by Seshendra as representing an attempt by Hanuman to traverse the path of the Sushumna, which is the mystic path situated between the Ida and Pingala, thereby reaching the final goal, of oneness with the Kundalini Sakti. In the chapter on Indra Paratva as opposed to Vishnu Paratva, the critic makes an original thesis: that the Ramayana closely follows the predominant position of Indra in the pantheon of gods, which is the Vedic pattern as against the supremacy of Vishnu which is the Puranic pattern. "Shodasi" is related to the Maha Mantra "Sri Vidya." Viswanatha in his Foreword says that it is Seshendra's commentary on Gayatri Mantra. He wonders about Seshendra's genius in reading the Maha Mantra "Sri Vidya" with such deep significance. While maintaining that no one else has read*

# LETTERS OF SESHENDRA

## I

A problem indeed, what an irremediable problem I am faced with, it is a feeling of a whole country hurting me.... Then, where to run for refuge? a person who acquires complete consciousness of all climes and conditions of human existence, is the very person most hurt, but not the common man who has not developed this cursed consciousness.

Evil has been haunting the world despite many men of action who rose up against it. In all times and in all centuries thinkers, crusaders, honest and truthful men were persecuted. But despite this historical threat I cannot change you see –

## II

I shall pass on to the aspect of what my philosophical eye perceives in the poet and his tools of work.

Poetry is a struggle between language and human experience. Poet the chosen medium to express the total experience of man on

earth, is an eternal adventurer scaling to the peaks of expression while the language which is the product of common people and pedestrian experience and which alone is available to the poet in his adventure keeps failing him. It is in these struggles of the poet that the common language arrives at levels of sublimity in the expression of higher experience.

The growing understanding of life by man is not merely the effect of external experience gained by age but in truth a gradual flowering of one's own soul –

When the flower of soul blossoms and its fragrance begins to waft on the breeze an attempt to bring it under one division or the other of creative art as romanticism , classicism , surrealism or any other ism is too much of a gross approach to too subtle a thing which transcends the mere physical plane of human experience. No attempt at a formal denomination of that state of creation can ever be successful.

Each emotional and intellectual stress of each instance of intense experience that I pass through , is a step higher in my mountaineering of poetic peaks, for , I look upon thing around and thing within thereafter only from that level –

### III

It is exhilarating to have rapport and bond of fraternity with thinker like you. This is just the time in our country when poets and writers have to develop a real communication with one another and compose the intellectual map of our country so that there will be a real impact of our work on our people with some coherence and direction. Now when the soul Indian is setting behind the walls of languages and regionalism an effort should be made by us to spearhead a movement for achieving intellectual leadership in this country .

In this sense I was thrilled to hear your voice from Kashmir, the other end of this country. Our meeting the other day in Hyderabad still lingers in my memory. We were here for theMushaira . I finished my latest work “My country – My

### **XIII**

Of course I do not agree with you on many views expressed regarding revolution and violence and social consciousness, though there are large areas of agreement between us on many other subjects. The moral and natural urge of man for exploitation of his inner – self is a subject on which we have the most fruitful links of understanding and I am really most enchanted by your spiritual quest for your inner –worlds. But where I take a diversion is where I feel that an individual cannot morally afford to be oblivious to his social surroundings. His participation in the social struggle is to me an ethical duty. I believe that it is the balance between the society and the individual that man has been striving for throughout his journey on our planet; for sometime in was ritualism, then it was religion, and then it was pure thought, then finally in our own time it is politics. Politics therefore is basically but indirectly connected to the fundamental goal of man. This is how I understand a Shankara, a Socrates or a Jesus, or a Lenin in our own times, could emerge in the human society. There was no need for Shankara to trek the whole length and breadth of the country and preach , if personal salvation was the only final goal of all individuals. ( Dharmaraja in Mahabharat refuses to enter heaven if the dog , his fellow – traveller , also was not allowed.

### **XIV**

I understand the last traces of your anxiety which still linger in your mind. I have said enough on the subject. What is now necessary I believe, is not a continuation the dialogue but a simple meditation or rather a kind of mental stock – taking covering the total material on the subject. That is to say I have

led you to the farthest point up to which one can be led and now I have to leave you to trek your own way. Remember in your solitary journey your open mind is your only lantern.

You may note for convenience a few recent world occurrences; one is that the Proletariat Dictatorship was not brought about in the East European Countries by means of a class war as in Soviet Russia. In those countries the Communist governments are the post-war division of the spoils of war by the major powers. It was more or less the same in Korea and Indo-China. The transformation of society in China also is nearly the same. The second point is the modifications that the theory and apparent techniques have undergone in Yugoslavia and China. The third one is the bitter enmity and break out of war within the camp of Communist States.

This must show to you how breaches have occurred in the theory and how history has steadily undermined the Marxian Logic. This why I repeat, let us take the solution of the problem and just not bother about the reasons of the problem! Even this would be one decisive step ahead.

There is really no clash between the two systems of living. We have to graft them into each other since they have no essential difference.

You doubt whether Class War is unavoidable to capture means of production in the Society. But remember you cannot also reduce Marxism into a mere Arabian Tale –

## XV

The doubts about book reading are dangerous signs. The ignorant, the shortsighted and at times the interested men misguide the young generation against books by playing down

## XLV

I like your questions. Because it takes us to the very roots of the real problem of man today – atleast the man in Asia and Africa.

I think – this is by careful reasoning and intelligent deliberation – neither transcendental meditation nor Kirishna consciousness can save man from the myriad faced suffering he has been passing through for centuries. These two methods you mentioned in your letter are useful only to well to do people but certainly not the large masses that are spreading these two huge continents. They are suffering from hunger, from weather and nakedness like the beasts of jungles. How dastardly it is to offer them transcendental meditation instead of food, house and clothing, which are the only solutions to their problem. For those millions of enslaved creatures, whose problems are quite simple but the solution quite complex, it requires reorganizing the entire economic structure of the society to lift them from this suffering. What absurdity it is to prescribe transcendental meditation to physical suffering. They misunderstood its applicability. It almost amount to asking a hungry man to forget his hunger by swallowing Marijuana or gulping alcohol or drug himself with chloroform or take an injection of Pathedrin. Why should any man resort to these methods? Why should he not assert his birth right to live and live like a full human being with all the consequential rights?

Moreover transcendental meditation in actual practice fails on him so long as his basic problem is not solved. To ask him to feel happy about himself by some trick or magic is positively cheating him and asking him to cheat himself as well. This I feel is antihuman.

Transcendental meditation can save the rich from their imaginary troubles. It can be prescribed to the wealthy nations of the west . To the Eastern Nations nothing short of economic solution will be useful.

Transcendental meditation or any religious or occult rituals and practices have serious social implications in this hemisphere if they are sought to be canvassed on a social scale. To turn large masses of people to such practices to raise a potential threat to the goal of economic reconstruction by diverting and diluting the attention of the society.

Human suffering is essentially of two kinds in the ultimate analysis. One is manufactured outside by the society and the other is manufactured inside by man himself. Suffering arising from want of food and shelter and social exploitation, is a product of malorganisation of society and the solution for this suffering is not in the hands of man. More than 60 percent of human suffering is only this, remaining suffering which is round about 40 percent has its solution within the man. Problems arising from a disturbed condition of mind , ambition , anger , discontentment , arrogance , restlessness , even perhaps the marital relationships between couples etc. can be solved and peace attained by transcendental meditation . But for the basic type of problems which are social nature, man has to find solutions by working in conjunction with the other members of the society on a joint basis.

If the teachers of meditation invite also common people like the wage earning classes and turn them into soldiers to fight social economic evils , they will make their mission complete ; because mere meditation will otherwise leave large masses of needy people outside their programme.

## LX

It is of great importance that friends in our country should know how Marxism has not been literally gulped but had only been taken as an inspiring source and as a guideline in all those countries in the world which have enacted revolutions originally in their own countries. The most outstanding example of course is

China; I would bring to your notice the modifications that the fundamental tenets of Marxism have undergone in the hands of original thinkers and visionary leaders and architects of great historical epochs.

Talking on the basic principles of Hegel, Mao Tse-tung propounds and projects his own original thinking in the following words. "I have also looked at the materials on analysis and synthesis. It is a good thing collect materials like this on the law of the unity of opposites , what the bourgeoisie says about it , what Marx , Engels , Lenin and Stalin say about it , what the revisionists say about it. As for the Bourgeoisie, Yang Hsien –Chen talks about it and Hegel of old talked about it. Such people existed in the olden days. Now they are even worse.

"... What is synthesis? You have all witnessed how the two opposites, the Kuomintang and Communist Party, were synthesized on the mainland.. Their armies came and we devoured them, we ate them bite by bite.... It was not the synthesis of tow peacefully co –existing opposites , one thing eating another , big fish eating little fish , this synthesis. It has never been put like this in books.. "I am a native philosopher, you are foreign philosophers..."

“Engels talked about the three categories, but as for me I do not believe in two of these categories. ( The unity of opposites is the most basic Law , the transformation of quality and quantity into one another is the unity of Opposites , quality and quantity and negation of negation does not exist at all )..

“What is method of synthesis? One thing destroys another, thing emerge, develop, and are destroyed everywhere is like this. If things are not destroyed by others, then they destroy themselves.. This is a natural Law – forest live longer than human beings, yet even they last only few thousand years...

“The life of Dialectics is the continuous movement towards opposites.. Freedom is the understanding of necessity and the transformation of necessity... if you merely understand, is that sufficient? When you discover a law, you must be able to apply it, you must create the world anew, you must break the ground and edify buildings, you must dig mines, industrialize ... it won't do just to understand necessity, we must also transform things.”(Talks on Questions of philosophy 18<sup>th</sup> August 1964.. “Mao Tse – Tung Unrehearsed)

It is necessary to note here how Mao differs with Engels on ‘the three categories’. Another vital issue where he differs is the ‘synthesis of opposites’. It should be remembered Mao adopts the most vehement expression possible.

Yet another issue of basic nature on which Mao differs is ‘the inevitability of transformation of capitalist society into socialist society’ where he obviously finds an inherent contradiction in Marxism. If Socialist Society is inevitable is it enough to know this principle? Mao answers by saying, “when you discover a Law, you must be able to apply it, and you must

**End of Preview.**

**Rest of the book can be read @**  
**<http://kinige.com/book/Letters+Of+Seshendra>**

\* \* \*