

**Biographical sketch of the
Great Thinkers**

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE GREAT THINKERS

A. D. Pusalker (1905-1973)

Professor A. D. Pusalker was an Indologist and the Director and Curator, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona. He did his MA in Sanskrit and obtained his PhD on *Bhāṣā*.

He contributed profusely to the field of Indology namely *Purāṇas* and Ancient Indian history and Culture.

He wrote about 100 research papers and edited first two volumes of *Cultural Heritage of India* (1957-59) published from the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark, Kolkata. He was awarded a silver medal by the Asiatic Society of Bombay. The President of India awarded him certificate of Honour in 1971 in recognition of 'his erudite Scholarship and enlightening contributions to Indological Studies'.

He has authored several books which include *Eminent Indians*, *Indian Literature* etc.

A. L. Basham (1914-1986)

A famous Indologist. As a visiting professor invited by Britain, United States, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Recipient of *Deśikottama* Award from Visva-Bharati University in 1985. Formerly Vivekananda Professor of the Calcutta Asiatic Society and the President of Ramakrishna Movement. *The Wonder that was India* is the most famous of his books.

Arcot Ramaswami Mudaliar (1887-1976)

Sir Arcot Ramaswami Mudaliar was an outstanding educationist and an eminent physician. He earned the MD,

LLD, DSL, D.Sc., F.R.C.O.G., F.A.C.S., degrees. Sir Mudaliar adorned the post of the Vice chancellor of Madras University since 1942. Since he was an educationist *par excellence*, Sir Mudaliar had his associations with almost all the leading academic centres of learning in India. He was a high profile Indian delegate in the annual WHO's Conference and became the chairperson of the Executive Committee of the WHO. He even headed UNESCO's WHO Board. Between 1948-58, he was a member of the Commonwealth universities. In 1946, Sir Mudaliar was elected a member of the Legislative Council of Madras. Besides all these, he had authored several books on medical science and other subjects.

Mudaliar was a recipient of the *Padmabhūṣaṇa* in 1954.

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963)

Aldous Huxley was an English writer and one of the most prominent members of the famous Huxley Family. He spent the latter part of his life in United States, living in Los Angeles from 1937 until his death in 1963. He was the author of *The Perennial Philosophy*.

Amaury de Reincourt (1918-n.f.*)

Amaury de Reincourt was born in Orleans, France. He received his BA from the Sorbonne and his MA from the University of Algiers. He has authored several books. Of these the most remarkable publications are *The Soul of India* and *The American Empire, The Eye of Shiva : Eastern Mysticism and Science*.

His reading of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* as 'the most acute, penetrating depiction of human nature and true morality' shows, how Reincourt has studied the *Bhagavad-Gītā* as a book

* n.f. = not found

‘whose soaring beauty makes it one of the monuments of world literature.’

Amiya Chakravarty (1901-1986)

Amiya Chakravarty was one of the greatest critics of the Post Tagorean period, and a well known Poet. He was Rabindranath’s travel companion during his tours to Europe and America in 1930 and to Iran and Iraq in 1932.

Annie Besant (1847-1933)

Annie Besant was a half-Irish woman of boundless energy. Mrs Besant began social reform work in London and joined first the Fabian Society and then the Theosophical Society in 1889. She was elected President of the Theosophical Society in 1907 and held that position until her death. Her life in India began in 1893 with lecture tours and expressed her views through a weekly newspaper, *New India*. She founded the Home Rule League in 1916 and campaigned in London for constitutional reform.

She was elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1871. The Indian Boy Scouts Association, the Women’s Indian Association, the Society for the Promotion of National Education, and a National University of Adyar near Madras are all her gifts to India.

Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1852-1883)

Arnold J. Toynbee was an English economic historian also noted for his social commitment and desire to improve the living conditions of the working class. A collection of Toynbee’s lectures was published posthumously in 1884 and soon became a classic of British economic history. He wrote in 12 vols., *A Study of History*, a most memorable work.

Ashapura Devi (1909 -1995)

Ashapura Devi was an eminent woman literateur of Bengal. She had no formal education. She was simply a housewife. But her passion for literature went a long way in shaping her literary self. She was born in a very conservative family but it never was a hindrance to her literary practices in private. She studied the Bengali Women's plight from her four walls. But her interior observations were so realistic that she became indeed a spokeswoman of the whole womenfolk of Bengal.

Her literary career spanned over seventy years. Naturally her literary oeuvre was vast. Among her one hundred and seventy-six novels, her trilogy, *Pratham Pratiśruti*, *Suvarṇalatā*, *Bakulkathā* have won the hearts of Bengal. She was a recipient of several prestigious literary prizes which include 'Rabīndra Puraskār', 'Sāhitya Akademi Puraskār' and above all the country's highest literary award *Jñānapīṭha* in recognition of her outstanding literary contributions.

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950)

Aurobindo Ghosh successfully competed in the ICS examination but did not join the alien Government's service to devote himself to the freedom struggle (1902-1910). He retired from politics and went to Pondicherry where he stayed till the last day of his life. Amongst his famous writings are *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *Sāvitrī*.

Kakasaheb Kalelkar [Dattatreya Balkrishna] (1885-1961)

Kakasaheb Kalelkar was born to a *Sāraswata* Brahmin family at Satara. He began his professional career as a school

teacher and finally he was the Vice chancellor of the National University of Gujarat.

Kalelkar became an ardent follower of Gandhi for the rest of his life and made his principal contributions to Gandhi's Constructive Work in the field of education.

He was among those who undertook the task of popularizing Hindi as the national language, reforming the *Nāgarī* script in which Hindi was written. Kakasaheb Kalelkar wrote many books in English, Gujarati, Hindi, and Marathi for advancing Gandhi's ideas at home and abroad. Honoured with the *Padmabhūṣaṇa* in 1965, he gradually withdrew to an increasingly simple and ascetic life.

R. Rybakov (1908-2001)

R. Rybakov was a Russian historian who personified the Anti-Normanist vision of Russian History. Rybakov held a chair in Russian History at the Moscow University since 1939, was a deputy dean of the University in 1952-54 and administered the Russian History Institute for 40 years.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920)

Born at Ratnagiri, Tilak was a frontline leader of the Indian Freedom Movement. He was widely acclaimed as 'The Father of Indian Unrest'. Influenced by Swami Vivekananda and Swami Dayananda he did a great amount of study on Vedic Philosophy. He was a scholar in Sanskrit and Mathematics. His works include books like *The Gītā Rahasya* and *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*.

Benoy Kumar Sarkar (1887-1949)

Professor Benoy Kumar Sarkar was a versatile genius with an original vision of his own. A Bengali by birth, he transcended

the limits of his country and culture, thoroughly became cosmopolitan in outlook and knew the actualities of Asia and Europe in their fundamentals as few.

Bepin Chandra Pal (1858-1932)

Renowned leader of India's Freedom Movement. In politics, he worked in collaboration with Tilak, Lajpat Rai, and Sri Aurobindo. In 1906, he started a daily paper, the *Bande Mātaram* and in 1913, a monthly journal the *Hindu Review*. In his youth, he became a Brāhmo; in his later life he was greatly influenced by Saṅkarācārya's philosophy and also by the Vaiṣṇava philosophy. He was a great orator, prolific writer, leader of thought. Sri Aurobindo described him as one of the mightiest prophets of nationalism.

Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya (1861-1907)

Formerly known as Bhawani Charan Bandyopadhyaya, he was a classmate of Narendranath Datta (later Swami Vivekananda) at the General Assembly's Institution. He later came in contact with Sri Ramakrishna and Keshub Chandra Sen. He turned away from Hinduism to first become a Protestant and later a Catholic, when he started *Sophiā* in 1894. He also started *Swarāj* and *Sandhyā*, and authored *Āmār Bhārat Uddhār*, *Samāj Tattwa*, *Bilātyātrī Sannyāsīr Cīthi* etc.

Brojendra Nath Seal (1864-1938)

Acharya Brojendra Nath Seal was an outstanding teacher and a philosopher of international renown. Since he was an emblem of an ideal teacher he was addressed as *ācārya*. He had a brilliant academic career. He stood first with first class in philosophy from the University of Calcutta in 1883. After

serving different colleges for a few years, he joined the Calcutta University and headed the department of Philosophy between 1912 and 1921. In 1921, Brojendra Nath became the Vice chancellor of Mysore University where he remained till 1930. Rabindranath Tagore invited him to be the President of the inaugural ceremony of the Visva-Bharati University in 1921. He knew ten different European and Indian languages. Brojendra Nath was also adorned with the Knighthood. The highest civilian honour, *Rājatarāna Prabhā* was conferred upon him by the Mysore dynasty. People admired him as a 'Moving University'. Few of his remarkable publications are : *Neo-Romantic Movement in Bengali Literature 1890-91*, *A Comparative Study of Christianity and Vaiṣṇavism*, *Introduction to Hindu Chemistry*, *Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, *Rammohan : the Universal Man*, *The Quest Eternal*.

C.F. Andrews (1871-1940)

C.F. Andrews was an English Priest who was an ardent admirer of both Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. With Gandhi Andrews worked in the Indian Civil rights struggle in South Africa and in the Indian Independence Movement. He spent many a long time at Santiniketan with Rabindranath. His letters, written to Rabindranath, are priceless documents for knowing Tagore both as man and poet. He wrote many articles and authored several books like *The Sermon on the Mount*, *The Rise and Growth of the Congress in India*.

C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar (1889-1966)

C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar was a South Indian Brahmin. He had his graduation from the Presidency College, Madras. Initially he joined the Bar. Afterwards, he was much influenced by Annie Besant. He actively participated in the Home Rule

Movement. Between 1917-18, he was elected the General Secretary of Congress. In 1920, he became the Advocate General and in 1931, he was chosen the Law Minister of India. He was well-versed in both literature and philosophy. For his academic distinctions and administrative acumen, he was the Vice chancellor of Tribancore Annamalai and Benaras Hindu Universities respectively.

Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (1879-1972)

Chakravarti Rajagopalachari was the first Indian to occupy the position of the Governor-General of India in 1948 and the last person to hold the position until India became a Republic in 1950.

Rajagopalachari remained in political life as a Minister of Home affairs in New Delhi in 1951 and the Chief Minister of the State of Madras from 1952-54. As a result of his differences with Nehru, he founded the 'Swatantra Party' in the mid 1950s.

He was popularly known as a man of reason and moderation rather than of ideology and populism. He was a powerful orator and writer in both Tamil and English, and among his lasting legacies are his translations of the two epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.

Indian Nationalist Leader. Closely associated with Gandhi (from 1918); served on Working Committee of Indian National Congress (1922-42); Chief Minister of Madras (1937-39, 1952-54); Governor General of India (1948-50); founder of conservative 'Swatantra' (Freedom Party, 1959).

Christopher Isherwood (1904-1986)

Christopher William Bradshaw Isherwood, the Anglo-American novelist and playwright, was born in England. He deliberately failed in his tripos and left Cambridge without a

degree in 1925. For the next few years he lived in the home of the violinist André Mangeot while working as secretary to Mangeot's string quartet. With his first two novels, *All the Conspirators* (1928) and *The Memorial* (1932), Isherwood gained a measure of recognition. During the 1930s he collaborated with his friend W.H. Auden, the Anglo-American poet, on three verse dramas. He immigrated to the United States in 1939, settled in Southern California and was naturalized in 1946. For several years during the 1950s and early 1960s, Isherwood taught in a creative writing course at Los Angeles State College (now California State University, Los Angeles). In Hollywood he met Gerald Heard, a mystic-historian. Through Heard he had his first contact with the Vedanta Society of Southern California, and eventually with the Ramakrishna Movement through Swami Prabhavananda. With Swami Prabhavananda he produced a fine translation of the Hindu religious classic *The Bhagavad Gītā* (1944) and a collection of the aphorisms of Patañjali. He wrote, *Sri Ramakrishna and His disciples* and *Vedanta for the Western World*.

Claude Alan Stark (n.f.)

Claude Alan Stark was once a research scholar in world religions, and a Chairman of a development company in Africa. He had his under graduation at the Clark University followed by graduation in finance at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Babson College. He was attached to finance and government for eight years in Boston and Washington D. C. Later he took his BD degree from Harvard University and became ordained into the Christian ministry. From the Boston University he later got his doctorate in Christian missions and world religions. His most widely-read book is *God of All*.

D. S. Sarma (1883-1970)

D. S. Sarma joined the profession of letters as a lecturer in English and served several Govt. Colleges of Madras. Afterwards he became a Principal. He was not a professional philosopher but philosophy was in his blood. He was well versed in Vivekananda-Ramakrishna literatures and wrote many articles on them. He had books in English on the *Gītā* and the Upanishads. *Renasant Hinduism, The Experience of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and Western Civilization, The Ramakrishna Movement, Intellectual Knowledge and Spiritual Experience* etc. are some of his remarkable works.

Dalai Lama (1935—)

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama was born to a peasant family in Northern Tibet on 6th July, 1935. In Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama is believed to be an incarnation of *Avalokiteśvara*, the Buddha of Compassion. When the Dalai Lama was a teenager, he became the head of the Tibetan Govt. in their fight against the occupying forces of the People's Republic of China. Since 1959 the Dalai Lama has been the leader of the Government in exile. His travels in the cause of peace and a free Tibet have made him an international celebrity and in 1989 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace. The following books are in his credit : *The Good Heart—A Buddhist Perspective on the teachings of Jesus; Kindness, Clarity and Insight; The Four Noble Truths* etc.

Ernest Cary Brown (1916-2007)

In 1916 E. C. Brown was born in Bakersfield, California. After graduating with honours from the University of California, Berkley, he pursued studies in Economics at Berkley and latter

at the Harvard University. But the World War II had interrupted his studies, and Brown served as an economist at the War Production Board in 1940-41. From 1942 to 1947 he served as an economist at the Division of Tax Research at the US Treasury Department. In 1948 he received his PhD in Economics from Harvard. Cary Brown was a leading expert on fiscal policy and the economics of taxation. He was a member of the MIT economics faculty for more than 60 years, and a visiting professor at Yale and the University of Chicago as well. Brown was also a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. After his retirement from MIT in 1986, he served as an Emeritus Professor until his death.

E. P. Chelishev (1921—)

A leading Indologist of Soviet Russia, Professor Chelishev is a renowned scholar of contemporary Indian, especially Hindi literature and a recipient of the Jawaharlal Nehru Peace Award. For the last thirty years, he has been connected with the spread of culture and research on Vivekananda. He is one of the Vice-Presidents of the Committee for Comprehensive Study of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850-1919)

Ella Wheeler Wilcox was known for her keen interests in theosophy, New Thought and Spirituality.

Poet, Writer, born in Johnstown Centre WIS. She studied briefly at the University of Wisconsin (1867-68), and later was largely self-educated. Her sentimental and inspirational verse was immensely popular in her day. Her poems tended to be on such subjects as temperance and in later years, on religion and spiritualism. She wrote a poem daily in a newspaper for some years. She also wrote fiction and essays.

Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900)

Friedrich Max Müller was a German by birth. He became the greatest of the European Indologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Max Müller was one of the first to evaluate properly the greatness of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and give wide publicity of his warm admiration for Ramakrishna in the West.

Federico Mayor (1934—)

He was a Spanish scholar and politician. He served as the Director General of UNESCO from 1987-1999. Mayor obtained a doctorate in Pharmacy from the Complutense of Madrid in 1958. He was a member of the Honorary Board of the International Coalition for the decade for the Culture of Peace and Non-violence.

Felix Marti-Ibanez (1911-1972)

Born in Cartagena, Spain, Dr Felix Marti-Ibanez had his doctorate in medicine, and practised psychiatry from 1931 to 1939. Throughout Spain he lectured on Psychology, medical history, eugenics, art and literature. At the World Peace Congresses in Geneva, New York and Mexico City, he officially represented Spain in 1938.

Went to the US in 1939, and there he held many responsible positions. Participated in the International Congresses of History of Medicine, History of Science, Psychology and Psychiatry, held since 1950 in various countries. The magazine *International Record of Medicine* had him as its Editor-in-Chief, and he was the International Editor of the *Journal of Clinical & Experimental Psychopathology*. Besides, Marti-Ibanez was the co-founder and Associate Editor of two medical

journals — *Antibiotics & Chemotherapy* and *Antibiotic Medicine & Clinical Therapy*. His writings on the history of medicine include *Centaur: Essays on the History of Medical Ideas* and *Men, Molds, and History* etc.

Francis Younghusband (1863-1942)

Sir Francis Younghusband was a British Army officer, explorer and spiritualist. He is remembered chiefly for his travels in the Far East and Central Asia and his writings on the subject.

George C. Williams (1926—)

George C. Williams is an American evolutionary Biologist. He received a PhD in Biology from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1955. He is also an advocate of evolutionary medicine. He is the author of an outstanding book, *Adaptation and Natural Selection*.

Gopal Halder (1902-1993)

Gopal Halder was a distinguished writer of Bengal. Before he turned to literature, he took part in the revolutionary movement of Bengal. His professional career began as a law practitioner in Noakhali. He left the profession and in 1926 he joined as the sub-editor of the 'Welfare' which had its link with *Prabāsī*. Along with this, his research in linguistics under the guidance of Acharya Suniti Kumar Chatterji continued till 1928. Afterwards, he went to Noakhali to join Fenny College as a teacher. He was there between 1929-30. He returned to Calcutta and became a research associate in the department of linguistics of the University of Calcutta. Finally he worked in *Prabāsī*, *Hindusthan Standard*, *Modern Review*.

Among his literary contributions, which are many, mentions could be made of *Samskṛtir Rūpāntar*, *Bāṅgālī Samskṛtir*

Rūp, Bāṅglā Sāhitya O Mānavsvīkṛti, Ruś Sāhityer Rūparekhā, Imrāji Sāhityer Rūparekhā etc. He was awarded the D.Litt. degrees (*Honoris Causa*) by several universities of Bengal for his outstanding contributions to Bengali literature and criticism.

Govind Ballabh Pant (1887-1961)

Govind Ballabh Pant had an illustrious political career. He did his graduation in Law from the Allahabad University and joined the Bar at Nainital. Subsequently he was involved in political activities and became the President of the Congress Party of his province. He was offered the Chief Ministership of Northern India in 1937 and he resigned in 1939 as protest for the anti-Indian activities of the British Government in India. He was imprisoned several times by the ruling British Government for his anti-British feelings. In 1954, following India's political freedom, Govind Ballabh became the Home Minister of India, the post he held until his death in 1961.

In 1959, the Government of India conferred the highest civilian award *Bhārat Ratna* upon Govind Ballabh Pant.

Harlow Shapley (1885-1972)

Harlow Shapley was an American astronomer. He was born on a farm in Nashville, Missouri, and dropped out of school with only the equivalent of a fifth grade education. After studying at home and covering crime stories as a Newspaper Reporter, Shapley returned to complete a six year high school Programme in only two years graduating as class Valedictorian.

Henry Miller (1891-1980)

Henry Miller was an American writer and painter. He is known for breaking with existing literary forms and developing a

new sort of 'novel' that is a mixture of novel, autobiography, social criticism, philosophical reflection, surrealist free association and mysticism. He also wrote travel memories and essays of literary criticism and analysis. He was awarded the French Legion of the Honour in 1976. His much known works are *Tropic of Cancer*, *Book of Friends*.

Henry R. Zimmer (1890-1943)

Henry R. Zimmer was an Indologist and historian of South-Asian art. He was born in Greisfield, Germany. Zimmer began his career studying Sanskrit and linguistic at the University of Berlin, where he graduated in 1913. Between 1920-24 he lectured at Ernst-Moritz-Aruidt University in Greisfield, thereafter moving to Heidelberg to fill the chair of Indian Philosophy.

Hiren Mukherjee (1907-2004)

Professor Hiren Mukherjee was a legendary Communist Leader, an accomplished Parliamentarian and a Scholar of eminence. He taught at Rippon College, Presidency College and at the University of Calcutta before his participation in active politics.

He was a man of versatile genius. Being a prolific writer he wrote both in Bengali and English for several magazines.

Among his chief works one can mention the names of the following : *Indian Struggle for Freedom, under Marxist Banner*; *Portrait of Marxism*; *India and Marxism*.

He was honoured with the 'Mujaffar Ahmed Smṛti Puraskār' for his book *Yuger Yantraṇā O Pratyer Saṅkaṭ*.

He was also the recipient of the *Padmabhūṣaṇa* in 1990 and the *Padmavibhūṣaṇa* in 1991.

Huang Xin Chuan (n.f.)

Professor of History of Beijing University, China and Deputy Director of the Institute of Asian Studies at the Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, he wrote a book in Chinese on Swami Vivekananda entitled *The Modern Indian Philosopher Vivekananda : A Study*. Also one of the Vice-Presidents of the Committee for Comprehensive Study of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement.

Huston Smith (1919 —)

Professor Huston Smith was born at Soochow, China, and spent the first seventeen years of his life there. Between 1944 and 1947 he first taught at the University of Colorado before going to the University of Denver. During the next ten years he was attached to the Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Afterwards he went to the MIT as a Professor of Philosophy, and stayed there from 1958 to 1973. Finally he moved to the Syracuse University and became the Thomas J. Watson Professor of Religion and Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Philosophy until his retirement in 1983 and currently is having an Emeritus status. He also served as the Visiting Professor of Religious Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Twelve honorary degrees were awarded to him and his fourteen books include *The World's Religions* which was sold over two and a half million copies, and *Why Religion Matters* has won the Wilbur Award for the best book on religion published in 2001.

Jagadish Chandra Bose (1858-1937)

Jagadish Chandra Bose was a Bengali Physicist and Science fiction writer, who pioneered the investigation of radio

and microwave optics, made extremely significant contributions to plant science, and laid the foundations of experimental science in the Indian subcontinent. He is considered the father of radio science.

Jadunath Sarkar (1870-1958)

Sir Jadunath Sarkar was the founder of modern, scientific, historical scholarship in India based on archival and primary sources. He received many honours including the Knighthood in Britain as well as in India. Sarkar became the most famous historian of late Mughal India and an acknowledged master of Maratha history. He authored many volumes on Aurangzeb. He was the *doyen* of Indian historians in the 20th century. He acquired international recognition as a profound scholar and great writer on historical and other topics of national and international interest. His researches remind us of the great work by German historian Ranke.

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964)

Famous Indian politician and the first Prime Minister of Independent India. An ardent follower of Gandhiji, he was the architect of India's foreign policy. He was a prolific writer. *Discovery of India*, *Glimpses of World History*, *Letters from a Father to a Daughter* etc. are his famous publications. He was awarded the *Bhārat Ratna* in 1955.

Jay Prakash Narayan (1902-1979)

Jay Prakash Narayan was affectionately known as J.P. Jay Prakash Narayan was born in Bihar and educated in Patna and Benaras. He was influenced by the Marxist ideas and by the writings of M. N. Roy. Soon after returning to India from USA where he was a student in 1929, he joined the Civil

Disobedience Movement of 1930 led by Mahatma Gandhi. Contact with fellow prisoners Achyut Patwardhan, Ashok Mehta, and Minoo Masani strengthened J.P.'s Socialist leanings and in 1935 and 1936 they organized the All India Socialist Congress Party which was connected with the 'Kīṣān Sabhā' and acted as a left-inclined singer group within the Indian National Congress and general national movement.

J. P. renounced party politics soon after independence and joined Vinoba Bhave, seeing in his 'Bhūdān Movement' 'the germ of a total agrarian revolution'.

In 1974, he became the symbol of an oppositional, if not exactly revolutionary movement.

Though considered to be the patriarch and spiritual guide of the Janatā Party Coalition that came to the power after the elections of March, 1977, Jay Prakash Narayan refrained from taking up any position of formal leadership.

As man Jay Prakash Narayan commanded respect from all quarters and people reverentially called him 'Lokanāyak' (Leader of the People).

Joseph Campbell (1904-1987)

Professor Joseph Campbell was a writer and orator, best known for his work in the fields of comparative mythology and comparative religion. Campbell was also an accomplished athlete, receiving rewards in track and field events.

K. M. Munshi [Kannaiyalal Maneklal Munshi] (1887-1971)

K. M. Munshi was born in Broach in South Gujarat in a high middle class Brahmin family. He was profoundly influenced by Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, M. K. Gandhi, Sardar Ballabhbhai Patel and Bulabhai Desai. He drew inspiration from the Vedic culture and the classic Sanskrit literature.

Munshi founded a number of academic and cultural institutions. His greatest contribution was the foundation of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan which brought out the *History and Culture of the Indian People* in eleven volumes.

Munshi was a prolific writer in Gujarati and English. His major English works are : *Gujarat and its literature*, *The Changing Shape of Indian Politics*, *The Pilgrimage of Freedom*. The autobiographical and literary writings of Munshi deserve an important place in Indian literature. These works have been translated in a number of Indian languages including Hindi.

He was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1946. He was an important member of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India. Munshi was also the Food Minister of India and the Governor of Uttar Pradesh. In 1960, he resigned from the Congress and joined the 'Swatantra Party' founded by C. Rajagopalachari.

K. M. Panikkar (1894-1963)

K. M. Panikkar was a scholar, journalist, historian, administrator and diplomat. Educated at the University of Oxford, Panikkar read for the Bar at the Middle Temple, London, before returning to India, where he then taught at Calcutta University. He turned to journalism in 1925 as editor of the *Hindustan Times*.

Lal Bahadur Shastri (1904-1966)

Lal Bahadur Shastri was the Prime Minister of India from 1964 until his death in 1966. He had an unimpeachable political career and served the Central Ministry first as its Railway Minister. In 1956, he resigned in the wake of a fatal Railway accident while owing its full responsibility.

In 1958, he became India's Commerce & Industry Minister. In 1961, he was the Home Minister of India.

During his tenure as the Prime Minister of India, the Indo-Pak war broke out. India's victory in that war owes much to Lal Bahadur Shastri.

The surname 'Shastri' used after his name, was in fact a title which was conferred upon him after his graduation in Philosophy from the 'Kāśī' (Benaras) Sanskrit University.

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910)

Russian novelist who served the Russian army from 1852 to 1854. Authored *War and Peace* (1865-69) and *Anna Karenina* (1875-77). After 1876 he developed a form of Christian anarchism and devoted himself to social reforms.

Leroy S. Rouner (1930-2006)

Leroy S. Rouner was Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the United Theological College, Bangalore. He did his undergraduate work at Harvard before taking his B D at Union Theological Seminary and PhD at Columbia University. He has written on the Philosophy of Religion for journals in India and the United States. He contributed to Madras Christian College's *Rethinking Our Role*; edited *Philosophy, Religion, and the Coming World Civilization* (Essays in honour of William Ernest Hocking).

Emma Calvé (1858-1942)

Emma Calvé was one of the legendary singer artists of Chicago during 1890s. In fact she was equally famous for her melodious voice on opera performances in other European

countries. During Swami Vivekananda's visit to Chicago, Emma Calvé had had the opportunity to have direct contact with him, who came upon her life like a messiah. Emma Calvé received Swamiji's blessings profusely.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948)

M. K. Gandhi was an Indian nationalist, popularly known as 'Bāpuji'—the Father of the Nation. Studied Law in London (1888-1891), practised in India (1893). Championed the cause of the blacks in South Africa (1893). Presided over the Indian National Congress (1925-1934). Author of *Hind Swarāj* (1909), *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, etc.

Mahendranath Sircar (1882-1954)

Dr Mahendranath Sircar first taught in Sanskrit College, Calcutta and then became the Professor of Philosophy in Presidency College and the University of Calcutta respectively. He presided over the Indian Philosophical Congress held in Kasi Viswavidyalaya (1947). He had a lot of books in his credit : *Upaniṣader Ālo*; *Tantrer Ālo*; *Yoga Paricaya*; *System of Vedantic Thought and Culture*; *Hindu Mysticism*; *Eastern Lights* etc.

Manabendra Nath Roy (1887-1954)

Manabendra Nath Roy alias Manabendra Nath Bhattacharya popularly known as M. N. Roy was a refreshingly original and creative thinker. He was a great revolutionary from his early youth and later became the founder and organizer of the Communist Movement in India. At an advanced stage he became a Radical Humanist than a professional communist.

Michael Talbot (1953-1992)

Michael Talbot was the author of a number of books highlighting parallels between ancient mysticism and quantum mechanics and espousing a theoretical model of reality that suggests the physical universe is a kin to a giant hologram.

Mohitlal Majumdar (1888-1952)

Mohitlal Majumdar was an eminent poet, critic and teacher. He was known for his outspokenness. He was a regular contributor to *Śanibārer Cithi*. His poems were published in monthly magazines like *Bhāratī* etc. He even edited and published Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's magazine, *Baṅgadarśan*. His poetical and critical works include viz. : *Vismaraṇī*, *Swapan Pasārī*, *Kāvyaamañjuṣā*, *Sāhitya Vitān*, *Ādhunik Bāṅgālā Sāhitya*, *Vividha Pravandha*, *Srīkānter Śaratcandra*, *Baṅkim Varaṇ*, *Kavi Śrī Madhusūdan* etc.

Muhammad Daud Rahbar (n.f.)

Professor Muhammad Daud was born in Lahore, Pakistan. *Rahbar*, meaning 'Guide', is a pen-name adopted by him. From his great-grandfather to his father, all were teachers of Arabic and Persian literature. Even at the age of 16, he prepared and read a research paper at an All India Oriental Conference in Benaras. He had his education at the Government College in Lahore followed by the Oriental College of the Punjab University. He then went to Cambridge University in England, and in 1953 got his PhD in Oriental studies. His teaching profession took him to many places like the McGill (Canada), Ankara (Turkey), Hartford Seminary Foundation, the University of Wisconsin and the Northwestern University. In Boston

University he has been Associate Professor of World Religions in the School of Theology since 1968. His area of interest and research are as varied as religion, aesthetics, folk religion, essential religious phenomena, comparative religions, folk mysticism and Muslim biography. He has some books to his credit.

Munshi Premchand (1880-1936)

Munshi Premchand (Dhanpat Roy) was an Indian author of novels and short stories in both Hindi and Urdu. He pioneered the adaptation of Indian themes to Western literary styles. Premchand's works depict the social evils of arranged marriages, the abuses of the British bureaucracy, and exploitation of the rural peasantry by moneylenders and officials.

Premchand's novels include : *Godān*, *Premāśram*, *Raṅgbhūmi*, *Gaban*, *Nirmalā*, *Kayākalp* etc.

Nagendranath Gupta (1861-1940)

Nagendranath Gupta was an eminent journalist and a great writer. In 1884, he became the Editor of *Phoenix* which was published from Lahore. In 1891 and 1905 respectively, Nagendranath looked after the editorial works of Lahore *Tribune* and a weekly paper *Indian People* which was published from Allahabad. In 1901 Nagendranath alongwith Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya published a monthly English paper, *The Twentieth Century*. For sometime, he edited *Pradīp O Prabhāt*. He wrote many short stories and general novels. He collected and edited the verse compositions of *Vidyāpati O Govindadās Jhā* on behalf of the Maharaja of Darbhanga who financed the whole literary project. A few years before his death,

Nagendranath joined the court of Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi as his private secretary.

Nicholas K. Roerich (1874-1947)

Born in October 1874 in St. Petersburg, Russia, his original name was Nikolay Konstantinovich Ryorikh. Once a scenic designer for *Sergey Paviovich Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, he became an archaeologist, landscape painter and popular mystic. Roerich immigrated to the US in 1920, where he became a reputed painter, seer, guru and peacenik. His more than seven thousand paintings have now their places in different museums and galleries around the globe. As a talented writer he wrote for many eminent Indian journals like *Modern Review*, *Prabuddha Bhārata* etc. During his time, Roerich was universally revered as the greatest living Apostle of culture, and became the first President of the World of Art. In 1929 Roerich proposed to have a pact among the countries of the world for preservation of all art and science treasures. The legal form for the pact was eventually drawn, and was accepted by the League of Nations in 1930. Later this pact, known as 'Roerich Pact', was accepted by various countries. 'When I think of Nicholas Roerich', Jawaharlal Nehru once said, 'I am astounded at the scope and abundance of his activities and creative genius.' During the last twenty years of his life, Roerich had his residence in India at the stunning Kulu Valley of the Himachal Pradesh. He had a wonderful book of paintings *The Himalayas*.

Paul Brunton (1898-1981)

Paul Brunton was born Raphael Hurst and later changed his name to Brunton Paul and then Paul Brunton. He was a British Philosopher, mystic, traveller and guru. He left a journalistic

career to live among yogis, mystics and holymen and studied a wide variety of Eastern and Western esoteric teachings. His two important works : *In Search of Secret India; Secret Path.*

Philip Glass (1973 —)

Philip Glass has had an extraordinary and unprecedented impact upon the musical and intellectual life of his time. The operas—‘Einstein on the Beach’, ‘Satyāgraha’, ‘Akhnaten’ and ‘The Voyage’ among others—play throughout the world’s leading houses, and rarely to an empty seat. Born in Baltimore, he began his musical studies at the age of eight. Glass has always gone his own way.

Pitirim Alexandrovitch Sorokin (1889-1968)

Pitirim A. Sorokin was a Russian-American Sociologist. Academic and Political Activist in Russia, he immigrated from Russia to the United States in 1923. He founded the Department of Sociology at Harvard University. He is best known for his contribution to the social cycle theory.

Prafulla Chandra Ray (1861-1944)

A distinguished Chemist and educationist Acharya (Sir) Prafulla Chandra Roy was the founder of the ‘Bengal Chemical & Pharmaceutical Works Ltd.’ in Calcutta. He was a brilliant student who was awarded the DSc degree from the university of Edinbough for his outstanding research in Chemistry. He was a recipient of the prestigious Hope prize from the said university in recognition of his thesis.

He was an outstanding teacher who chaired the post of Palit Professor of Chemistry at the Science College of the University of Calcutta. His love for the students and devotion to his research, have been proverbial.

He believed in 'Plain living and high thinking' and was involved in many benevolent services for the welfare of his country. He was a key figure in introducing the vernacular to teach science. Prafulla Chandra was adorned with several honours which were bestowed upon him by several Institutions and Organizations at home and abroad.

Among his important publications which of course are many, we need to mention his autobiography, *Life and Experiences of a Bengali Chemist* and *History of Hindu Chemistry* (two volumes).

Pramathanath Tarkabhusan (1865-1944)

Professor Pramathanath Tarkabhusan was basically a Sanskrit Scholar. Later on he became a Professor in Indology. In 1858, he joined the Sanskrit College to teach *Smṛiti*. When Sanskrit was introduced in the Postgraduate classes at Calcutta University, he was associated with the department. After his retirement from Sanskrit College in 1922 he went to Benaras Hindu University. He wanted to reform some social codes for the Hindus and worked with Paṇḍit Madan Mohan Malavya for the same course. In 1911 he was honoured with the title, *Mahāmahopādhyāya* by the Govt. of India. And the D.Litt.(Honoris Causa) degree was conferred upon him by the Benaras Hindu University. He authored several books : *Karmayoga*, *Sanātan Hindu*, *Bāṅgālār Vaiṣṇavdharma* etc.

Protap Chandra Mozoomdar (1840-1905)

Protap Chandra Mozoomdar was a member of the Hindu reform movement of the Brāhmo Samāj, and a close associate of Keshub Chandra Sen. He is best known for his research into the Oriental aspects of the teachings of Jesus. He also wrote a biography of Sri Ramakrishna of whom he expressed deep admiration.

Romesh Chandra Dutt (1848-1909)

Romesh Chandra Dutt was a Bengali, civil servant, economic historian and translator of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. He was the President of Indian National Congress in 1899. He studied law at Middle Temple, London, was called to the bar, and qualified for the Indian Civil Service in the open examination in 1869.

Ramesh Chandra Majumdar (1888-1980)

A noted historian and academic, he was the Vice-President of the International Committee for publishing *History of Mankind : Cultural and Scientific Development*. Hony. D. Litt. from Calcutta University, Rabindra Bharati University and Jadavpur University. His publications include the 11 vols. *History and Culture of the Indian People*; *History of Freedom Movement in India* (3 vols.); *Ancient Indian Colonies in far-East*; *Swami Vivekananda*; *History of India* (4 vols.) etc.

R. G. Pradhan (1876-n.f.)

R. G. Pradhan is an ex-administrator and bureaucrat in the Indian Government. He was the Union Home Secretary in the Rajib Gandhi's Government. He was in service of the Government of India for 36 years. He later was an Indian Representative diplomat in International Trade and Commerce in Geneva for ten years. His remarkable publication is entitled, *India's Struggle for Swaraj*.

Ratnamuthu Sugathan (1902-1970)

He was born in a poor family in Alissery, Alleppy, erstwhile Travancore State's nerve centre of inland water trade and the coir industry.

Sugathan started his public life through social work and organized his class, the working class. Hence his pioneering work in the field of organized labour earned him the name 'Father of The Trade Union Movement in Kerala'.

For fifteen years Sugathan (Sreedharan) taught in the Asian Primary Grant School at Kanhiramchira. During this period he was in great demand at Socio-Cultural gatherings as an effective speaker.

Sugathan was both powerful writer and a speaker. He was an equally effective columnist. His collected verses were published under the Malayalam title *Proletarian*. A collection of his essays has also been published under the title *Janakīya Sāhitya Vicāram*.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Rabindranath Tagore was a renowned literateur, philosopher and educationist. First Asian to be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature (1913). He resigned the Knighthood in protest against military atrocities at Jalianwallabagh (1919).

Radhakamal Mukerjee [Mukhopadhyaya] (1890-1968)

Professor Radhakamal Mukerjee was a recipient of the Premchand Roychand Scholarship. He taught at Berhampur Krishnanath College. Later on he joined the University of Calcutta. Finally he moved to Lucknow for his appointment at Lucknow University as its Principal (Vice chancellor). As an eminent economist, he visited several universities both at home and abroad on invitations to deliver lectures. He wrote a good number of books which include *Democracies of the East : A study in Comparative Politics*, *Theory and Art of Mysticism*, *The Social Structure of Values*, *The Culture and Art of India* etc.

Radhakumud Mukerjee [Mukhopadhyaya] (1881 - 1963)

Professor Radhakumud Mukerjee had a very distinguished academic career. He passed the BA Honours in two subjects in 1901 and he completed even his post graduation in history in the same year. This was indeed a record in the annals of Calcutta University. In 1902 he again passed the MA examination in English. In 1905, he was a recipient of the Premchand Roychand Scholarship. In 1905 he obtained his PhD degree too.

He joined the profession of letters in 1903 and began to teach English literature at Ripon College (present Surendranath College). Later on he served several educational institutions outside Bengal. Finally he settled down in Lucknow where he joined the Lucknow University as the Head of the Dept. of History.

He received several honours from different organizations for his indefatigable endeavour to the cause of Indian History and her civilization. The Government of India conferred the *Padmabhūṣaṇa* Award upon him in 1957. His remarkable publications include *A History of Indian Shipping*, *Local Government in Ancient India*, *Nationalism in Hindu Culture*, *Chandragupta Maurya & His Times* etc.

Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963)

Rajendra Prasad was the first President of the Republic of India (1950-62). He was a comrade of Mahatma Gandhi in the earliest Non-Cooperation Movements for independence and was also the President of Congress Party (1934, 1939 and 1947). By profession he was a lawyer-turned journalist.

He was a student of Presidency College in Calcutta. He practised at the Calcutta High Court and in 1916 he moved to

the Patna High Court where he founded the *Bihar Law Weekly*. In 1917, he was recruited by Mahatma Gandhi to help in a Campaign to improve conditions for peasants exploited by the British indigo planters in Bihar. In September, 1946 he was sworn in as Minister for Food and Agriculture in the Interim Government preceding full independence. From 1946 to 1949 he presided over the Indian Constituent Assembly and helped to shape the Constitution.

Richard Schiffman (n.f.)

Richard Schiffman lived in India for a number of years and studied Hindu spirituality under several spiritual Masters. He is the author of *Sri Ramakrishna—A Prophet for the New Age*. He has an open mind and he is also knowledgeable. He examines Sri Ramakrishna's mystic experiences.

Romain Rolland (1866-1944)

Romain Rolland was a French man of letters. Received 1915 Nobel Prize for literature. His works included *Jean Christophe* (1904-1912) and pacifist manifestos collected in *An-dessus de lamelee* (1915), second novel cycle *L'âme-enchantée* (1922-1933); historical and philosophical plays collected in *Le Theatre de la revolution* and *Les Tragedies de la foi* (1913); biographies *Beethoven* (1903), *Michel-Angelo* (1905), *Tolstoi* (1911), and *Mahatma Gandhi* (1924), *The Life of Ramakrishna*, *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*.

Sarat Chandra Bose (1889-1950)

Sarat Chandra Bose was the elder brother of Subhas Chandra Bose. He completed both his postgraduation and law in 1911. Later on he joined the Bar in Cuttack. He did the Bar at

Law from England and returned to India in 1918. Soon after, he was involved in the Freedom Movement of India and was imprisoned several times for his anti-British activity. He was elected the Alderman of Calcutta Corporation.

Between the years 1937-39, Sarat Chandra was a member of the Congress Working Committee. He was a founder of the 'Socialist Republican Party'. In 1948, he began to publish a daily newspaper *Nation* in English. He was an Honourable Minister of the Indian Republic, following her independence.

Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949)

Sarojini Naidu was born to a remarkable Brahmin parents in Hyderabad. She was the daughter of Dr Aghornath Chattopadhyaya. Sarojini had a brilliant academic career at home, in London and in Cambridge and was widely acclaimed for the poetry she published between 1905 and 1917. She was popularly known as the 'Nightingale of the East' for her poetical compositions in English. Sarojini was elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1925 and faced imprisonment after the 1942 'Quit India Movement'. She became the first Woman Governor of a State in Independent India and died in office. *Bird of Time*, *The Broken Wing*, *Golden Threshold*, *The Songs of India* are some of her chief poetical works.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975)

He was philosopher, humanist, educationist and orientalist. Elected the Vice-President of India (1952); unanimously elected the President of the Republic of India (1962-67). Amongst his many works are *Indian Philosophy* (1923-27), *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* (1924), *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (1939), *East and West* (1955).

Satis Chandra Chattopadhyaya (1873-1938)

Professor Satis Chandra Chattopadhyaya had a brilliant academic carrier. He first taught at Tangail College. In 1901, he joined Brajomohan College, Barisal where he came in close contact with Aswini Datta. In fact, Sri Datta initiated him in Nationalist Movement. During Barisal famine, Satis Chandra played a very significant role. He suffered imprisonment in 1908. For his involvement in Indian Nationalist Movement, he had to quit Brajomohan College. He came to Calcutta where he served both Surendranath College and City College. In 1924, he again came back to Barisal as the Principal of Brajomohan College. In 1911, he was converted to a Brāhmo. Of course in the years to come, Satis Chandra was drawn to Vaiṣṇavism.

Satyendra Nath Bose (1894-1974)

A scientist and teacher of international fame. His numerous scientific papers (published from 1918 to 1956) contributed to statistical mechanics, the electromagnetic properties of the ionosphere, the theories of X-ray crystallography and thermoluminescence and unified field theory. Bose's *Planck's Law and the Hypothesis of Light Quanta* (1924) led Einstein to seek him out for collaboration. This Indian mathematician and physicist is specifically noted for his collaboration with Albert Einstein in developing a theory regarding the gas-like qualities of electromagnetic radiation.

Sayed Mujtaba Ali (1904-1974)

Sayed Mujtaba Ali was an eminent literateur and a distinguished linguist. At the call of Mahatma Gandhi, he left the school and joined the Non-violence Movement. Between 1921

and 26, he studied at Santiniketan. After the completion of his studies at the Visva-Bharati University, he went to Kabul where he was appointed a Lecturer in English and French in the Kabul Education Service. He was awarded a scholarship by the German Govt. Between 1928 and 30, he studied at the University of Berlin and Bonn and obtained his PhD degree. Afterwards, he became an itinerant and travelled across the whole of Europe including Jerusalem and Damascus. After his return in 1936, he was invited to chair the Comparative Religion Dept. at Baroda. In 1950, he joined the All India Radio as its Station Director. He headed the Dept. of Islamic Studies at Santiniketan for a few years.

Among his notable publications mention may be made of *Deśe Bideśe*, *Pañcatantra*, *Cācākāhini* etc. In 1949, he was awarded the Nara Singha Das Memorial Prize for his outstanding contributions to Bengali literature.

Shyama Prasad Mookerjee (1901-1953)

Shyama Prasad Mookerjee was the son of an intellectual giant and a leading jurist Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee. He became the Vice chancellor of the Calcutta University in 1934 at the age of 33. He was elected to the Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1929 on a Congress ticket. He again returned to the Bengal Legislature in 1937. Later on he joined the Hindu Mahāsabhā in 1939 and became its President. He founded the Bhāratīya Janasaṅgha in 1951 and returned to the first Lok Sabhā in 1952. He joined the first National Government in August, 1947 as Minister for Industries and supplies. For his differences with Nehru in regard to the latter's policy towards Pakistan, he resigned from the Government and organized opposition in Parliament.

Sivanath Sastri (1847-1919)

Sivanath Sastri was a scholar, religious reformer, educator, writer and historian. He played an active role in the Brāhmo Samāj of his time and kept a wonderful record of events but for which it would have been difficult to know and understand his turbulent age. His views have occasionally been criticized. He was not merely a detached historian but also an active participant of the age. His books include *History of the Brāhmo Samāj*, *Rāmtanu Lāhiḍī O Tatkālīn Baṅga Samāj* etc.

Subhas Chandra Bose (1897—?)

Indian Politician. Supported Gandhi and joined Swarāj Party (1923); Chief Executive Officer of Calcutta (1924); President of Bengal Congress (1927); led Bengal delegation to National Congress (1928); advocated complete independence for India; many times imprisoned; wrote *The Indian Struggle* (1935) and *Taruner Swapna*; President of the Indian National Congress (1938).

Subrahmanya Bharati (1882-1921)

Subrahmanya Bharati was an outstanding Indian writer of the nationalist period. He was in fact the father of the modern Tamil style. He received little formal education, still he translated English writings into Tamil for several magazines and later joined the Tamil daily newspaper *Swadeśamitram*. This exposure to political affairs led to his involvement in the extremist wing of the Indian National Congress, and, as a result, he was forced to flee to Pondicherry, a French Colony, where he lived in exile from 1910 to 1919. During this period, Subrahmanya's nationalistic poems and essays were a popular success. His best known works include *Pāñcāli Śabadam* (*Pāñcāli's* vow), *Kaṅṅanpāṭṭu* ('Songs to Kṛṣṇa'). Many of his English works

were collected in *Agni and other Poems and Translations and Essays and other Prose Fragments*.

Suniti Kumar Chatterji (1890-1977)

An internationally renowned educationist, linguist and an extraordinary luminary in the academic world. Among his English publications are : *Origin and Development of Bengali Language* (ODBL, in several volumes), *A Bengali Phonetic Reader, Indo-Aryan and Hindi, Languages and Literatures of Modern India, Africanism, Balts and Aryans in their Indo-European Background*, and *India and Ethiopia from the Seventh Century B.C.*, as well as a large number of papers and monographs.

Tarasankar Bandyopadhyaya (1898-1971)

Tarasankar Bandyopadhyaya was an outstanding literary figure of post Rabindranath, post Sarat Chandra of Bengal. In 1921 he was involved in the Non-violence Movement of Bengal and was imprisoned. He was in jail again in 1930. Afterwards he resolved to serve his motherland through literary practices. Until death he served Bengali literature untiringly and wrote several rewarding novels and short stories which include *Hānsulībānker Upakathā, Dhātrīdevatā, Saptapadī, Gaṇadevatā, Jalsāghar, Kavi, Pañcagrām*. Many of them have been filmed like his short stories, *Bedenī, Ḍākharkarā*. He was a recipient of *Śarat Smṛti Puraskār, Jagattāriṇī Smṛti Padak, Rabīndra Puraskār, Sāhitya Academy Puraskār*. India's highest literary award *Jñānapīṭha* was conferred upon him along with the civilian titles the *Padmaśrī* and *Padmabhūṣaṇa* of the Govt. of India. He was the President of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad.

Thomas Merton (1915-1968)

Thomas Merton was one of the most influential Catholic authors of the twentieth century. A Trappist monk of the Abbey of our lady of Gethsemani, in the American State of Kentucky.

U Thant (1909-1974)

U Thant was born in a Burmese well-to-do family at Pantanaw, British India (which later became Burma*) in 1909. His education at the University of Yangôn (Rangoon) remained incomplete due to his father's death. U. Thant returned to Pantanaw and started as a teacher at the National High School. Later at the age of 25 he became the headmaster of that school. During this time he grew a close friendship with U Nu, a man from neighbouring Maubin who was the local superintendent of schools. U Nu would later become the Prime Minister of Burma. U Nu as a Prime Minister of the newly independent Burma took U. Thant to Rangoon in 1948, and appointed him in an important Government post. From 1951 to 1957 U Thant acted as the Secretary to the Prime Minister. From 1957 to 1961 he served as Burma's permanent representative to the United Nations. In the United Nations he was appointed as an Acting Secretary-General from November 3, 1961, and later became Secretary-General on November 30, 1962. He was reappointed for a second term in the UNO as its Secretary-General on December 2, 1966 and continued in that chair till his retirement on December 31, 1971. Following his farewell from the United Nations, *The New York Times* wrote: '...the wise counsel of this dedicated man of peace will still be needed after his retirement.'

* Since June 1989 the name was changed to Myanmar.

Vincent Sheean (1899-1975)

Vincent Sheean was born in Illinois, USA. Even during his Chicago University days, he worked as a reporter with the *Daily Maroon*. Later he took a job with the *Chicago Daily News*. In 1922 Vincent became a foreign correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune* and travelled to different countries. He had the repetitive luck of witnessing history's most important events. He was in Italy when Mussolini's Black Shirts took over the streets. In the early days of the Communist revolution he was in China. He witnessed the unfolding of the Bolshevism in the Soviet Russia. In 1929 he visited Jerusalem and saw the Palestinian uprising. During the Second World War his assignment with the New York *Herald Tribune* took him, among other places, to China and India. Purely for personal reason he revisited India in 1947, and within three days could watch the aftermath of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. He wrote many books of which some are novels.

Vinoba Bhave [Vinayak Bhave, 1895-1982]

Acharya Vinoba Bhave was a national leader and social reformer. Mahatma Gandhi's chief aide during Nationalistic Movement. He led the life of an ascetic. After India's Independence, Bhave started the *Bhūdān* (land-gift) *Movement* (1951) after Independence with a view to turning each village into a model which would be self-sufficient in food and clothing. He walked thousands of miles, criss-crossing India, urging landlords and wealthy peasants to give land voluntarily to poor landless peasants. Also led a nation-wide campaign against cow slaughter.

He was opposed to the Western system of education and he developed the Gandhian ideas about basic education.

Will Durant (1855-1981)

Durant, William James, known as Will, American historian, taught at Habor Temple School, New York city (1914-1927). After success of his *Story of Philosophy* (1926), he and his wife Ariel Durant, collaborated on 11-volume *Story of Civilization* series, comprising, *Our Oriental Heritage* (1935), *The Life of Greece* (1939), *Caesar and Christ* (1944), *Age of Faith* (1950), *Renaissance* (1953), *Reformation* (1957), *Age of A Voltaire* (1965), *Rousseau and Revolution* (1967, Pulitzer prize), *Age of Napoleon* (1975); also wrote *Dual Biography* (1977).

William Digby (1849-1904)

William Digby was the Editor in the *Madras Times*, an Anglo-Indian newspaper. In 1901 he wrote the book *Prosperous India*, which became a legend in the days of Indian Freedom Struggle. He became the Secretary of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress in England, and edited the Committee's organ *India* (1890-98). It was due to Digby that Swami Vivekananda got an astonishing coverage in the *Madras Times*.

Sympathetic to the Indian cause, William Digby of England was a severe critic of British colonialism and bleeding exploitation of Indian resources. His monumental work *Prosperous British India* was a pioneer work on Indian's economic history under British rule.

William Ernest Hocking (1873- 1966)

Professor William Ernest Hocking is one of the most renowned philosophers of America of the twentieth century. He was a professor in the Department of Philosophy at Harvard. He endeavoured to blend idealism with pragmatism. Among his works are: *The Meaning of God in Human*

Experience, Man and the State, Types of Philosophy, Living Religions and a World Faith etc.

William James (1842-1910)

William James is unquestionably one of the most influential of American thinkers. He became widely known as a brilliant and original Lecturer, and his already considerable reputation was greatly enhanced in 1890 when his *Principles of Psychology* made his appearance. His other main works: *Varieties of Religious Experience, Pragmatism* etc. He came into the close contact with Swami Vivekananda, more closely with Swami Abhedananda, with whom he had hours of fruitful discussion regarding the Philosophy of Vedantic Monism and Philosophical Pluralism and Pragmatism.

Indira Gandhi (1917-1984)

Mrs Indira Gandhi was the first woman Prime Minister of Indian Republic. She was born in an illustrious Nehru family. She studied at Santiniketan in Bengal and then left for higher studies abroad. She returned to India after her studies at Oxford and then was involved in Indian politics. She toured extensively accompanying her father Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Mrs Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister of India for three consecutive terms from 1966 onwards. But she could not complete her fourth term from 1980 for her assassination in 1984. She proved her mettle as an able-bodied stateswoman during the 1965 Indo-Pak war. Nuclear weapons programme near the desert village of Pokhran was launched during her tenure in 1974. Mrs Indira Gandhi was awarded the *Bhārat Ratna* in 1971.

Muhammad Sahidullah (1885-1969)

Muhammad Sahidullah was an illustrious figure in the cultural domain of Bengal. Being a Muslim, he wanted to study Sanskrit in the Postgraduate classes at the University of Calcutta. But no Muslim student was allowed to study Sanskrit since the Vedas were included in the syllabi. For a Muslim did not have any access to the world of the Vedas. Subsequently Md. Sahidullah studied comparative Linguistics from the said University and later did his PhD in Linguistics from Paris University.

Professor Sahidullah knew several languages and had a boundless love for his own mother language Bengali. He distinguished himself as a great authority on linguistics. He had written several books besides a good many highly acclaimed research papers and essays.

Professor Sahidullah taught at the University of Calcutta.

Humayun Kabir (1906-1969)

Professor Humayun Kabir had an illustrious academic career. He stood first with first class in his MA examination. Then he proceeded to Oxford where he earned a rare distinction for his outstanding academic result. After his return from Oxford, Professor Kabir joined the University of Calcutta as a faculty member in the department of Philosophy. He was in that service till 1940.

Professor Kabir became the Chairman of the University Grants Commission. Afterwards he switched over to politics and became a Central Minister of the Indian Republic.

Professor Kabir was the Editor of the reputed literary journal *Caturaṅga*. His poetical and critical works include *Swapnasādh*, *Sāthī*, *Aṣṭādaśī* and *Bāṅgālār Kāvya*.