

English (Hons) Part-3, Paper-7 Unit-01 Poem - Topic
'The Lotus'; Lec Scri- 63: by: GANGESH KUMAR
'The Lotus': TORU DUTTA: AND College
Patory.

Indian English poetry is an attempt to give a generic cover to the Indian imagination seeking creative outlet in and through English. The alien language does not necessarily diminish or regard the writer's sense of heritage.

Toru Datta's poem 'The Lotus' expresses such a sense of Indianness or the glimpses of Indian heritage. Before coming on the poem we must have glimpses of the poetess, Toru Datta.

Toru Datta, an Indian poetess, born on 4th March 1856, lived a short life of 21 years when she died in 1877. Tuberculosis caused her death. She spent her early years in Calcutta, her birth town, with elder sister Anu and brother Aban. In her later years, she travelled to France, Italy and the England as her father was an Indian officer and had been mostly in abroad. She went to school in France, for the first time and had an intimacy with French during that period. After publication of several translations and literary discussion, she published a "Sheaf Gleaned in French Field", a volume of French poem which she had translated into English. At the time of her death, she left behind two unpublished novels -

'Le Journal de Mademoiselle d'Arves', (thought to be the first novel in French by an Indian writer) and 'Binaca' or 'The Young Spanish' (thought to be the first novel by Indian women writer). Her another famous poem 'Cassurina Tree' is considered as her biography.

Her poem 'The Lotus' made us understand her affection for an Indian flower and her endeavour to establish the superiority of Hindu religion over the other religion in the world. Indianness is explicitly vivid in this poem. Indian heritage, culture and myth have been superbly imposed over others.

In this poem, Toru Dutta presents the idea that Indian Lotus is the most beautiful of all flowers:

"And Flora gave the Lotus, 'rose red dyed'!
For a long time there had been a fighting between Lily and Rose for the title "Queen of Flowers".

Each flower claimed for this title. And for this supremacy there had been a tug of war between the two.

"The Lily and the Rose, long long had been Rivals for that high honour".

But when the rivalry was on apex, the God of Love came to Goddess "Flora"

asking for a flower, which would be the unchallenged queen of flowers.

"Love come to Flora asking for a flower!"

Love wanted for a flower, which was as stately as lily and as delicious as rose. Goddess Flora gave God of love the 'lotus' flower and resolved the long standing quarrel between lily and rose. Lotus has had the qualities of both the flowers. It combined the redness of the rose and paleness of the lily. Goddess Flora created lotus which was both rose red and lily white.

One more thing to note is that the 'lotus' is a flower of significance both to Indian and Hindu religion, and by giving impetus to lotus, the poetess tried to emphasize the significance of Indian culture, philosophy and religion.

The poem is very beautiful and lucid and is in sonnet form based on Shakespearean model of three quatrains followed by a couplet with rhyming pattern of abba abba cdcd ef.

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