

## Taras Shevchenko the Man



■ A national poet, revolutionary democrat and fighter for human freedom. Taras Shevchenko used his rare talents of poetry and painting to fight Russian tsarist tyranny and suffered a martyr's fate in exile. His name has become a household word among Ukrainians throughout the world. In Winnipeg alone many societies and organizations bear his name. Taras Hryhorovich Shevchenko shaped the cultural destiny of Ukraine and left an impression on the world as one of the great humanists of our time during his life time from 1814-1861.

During his time Taras Shevchenko experienced hardship of forced labour from the earliest struggle for social and national emancipation. At the same ti-

me he became a brilliant national poet of Ukraine, one of the classics of world literature. A son of a serf, not only an artist and academician but one of the most versatile people of the 19th century, reflecting a refined world in his painting, poetry and his literature which inspired others the hope of freedom and sought no less for the oppressed everywhere in the world.

People say that a poet of one language becomes a poet of all languages. At times it is very difficult to translate poetry from one language to another, but Shevchenko's language is one-half of the poetry. It is the other half of the poetry of such a poet who was known nationally and yet so internationally, poetry became the taste for all. Taras Shevchenko's poems focused on social and national oppression of Ukrainian people. Majority of his poems initiated Ukrainians to learn their history, past glories of Ukraine, her struggles stressing the fact you should know from where you come from and your place in the world. Surprisingly, what Taras Shevchenko wrote during this time has become relevant in today's Ukraine.

Taras Shevchenko's work and life is honoured by Ukrainians throughout the world and by non-Ukrainians. His literary impact on literature is immense and he is known as the founder and father of the modern written Ukrainian language. Shevchenko and the man, the beloved bard, a person who has monuments erected to him throughout the world, and in particular a bronze statue on the Manitoba Legislative grounds. Taras Shevchenko's monument was designed by New York sculp-

tor Andrew Dragan assisted by Winnipeg sculptor Roman Kowal at a cost of \$150,000 and unveiled on July 9th 1961.

The unveiling took place commemorating the 100th anniversary of Taras Shevchenko's death. The late Canadian Prime Minister, the Right Honourable John Diefenbaker unveiled the statue. Also the unveiling ceremony coincided with the 70th anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada. The site for the monument was approved by Premier Duff Roblin, in attendance Federal Labour Minister Michael Starr, Winnipeg Alderman Slaw Rebchuk and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. The monument stands today as a symbol of the lasting contributions of Uk-

rainians to Canada.

For many, Taras Shevchenko remains immortal, a poet and a leader who navigated the way in the struggle for ideals. He was a person who achieved the highest heights of creative genius, who spent ten of his forty-seven years a free man, who was a playwright, an artist, but most importantly a person who profoundly reflected the thoughts, the life and the dreams of his people. Taras Shevchenko belongs not only to the Ukrainian people but to all mankind. A popular poetical genius, a giant among giants in the world of spirit, the most known figure in modern Ukrainian history, a national hero and symbol of the struggle for all of mankind.

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Лунає ніжним голосом гаївка, мов писанка, розквітла вся земля,  
Як давню мрію першопоселенців, ми збережемо усе для майбуття.

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