

An Interview

With Nadoja Dr. Chennaveera Kanavi

Interviewer :

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Nadoja Dr Chennaveer Kanvi is a very great name in the field of Hosagannada poetry. For over seven decades he has done writing poetry non-stop. During his long poetic career, he has passed through various stages such as *Navodya*, *Pragatisheela*, *Navya* and *Dalia-Bandaya*. What is unique about Dr Kanvi is preserving his identity and special characteristic quality despite having passed through the phases of *Pragatisheela*, *Navya*, *Dalita- Bandaya*. He is essentially a Navodaya poet.

Like all other Navodaya poets, he too is a high priest of nature. He is a consummate lyric artist. The beauty of nature has enriched his emotional quotient. During the Navya period, he developed rational attitude to suit the changing time without however losing his emotional foot-hold. An uncrowned poet laureate of Kannada, he reigns supreme in the hearts of lovers of poetry. He is a critic too in his own right. *Sahitya Chintane*, *Kavyanusandhana*, *Samahita*, *Samatolana*, *Sadbhavaare* some of his critical works. As a poet, he seeks beauty in all aspects of nature.

When he started writing poetry, the change from the classical to the romantic mode was in evidence. He knew very well which way the wind blew, and he set his craft in that direction. Like him, his poetry too is soft,

sweet and gentle, expression of a cultured heart. He has brought to the lyric freshness and tranquil magic. He has remained throughout a *Navodaya* poet with a mystical bent of mind. Also his daring simplicity and spiritual beauty claim our sympathies and thrill our imagination, as only a great poet has power to do. Taking the best from both *Navya and Dalita-Bandaya*, he has enriched Kannada literature with his distinct contribution. It is both a privilege and a pride to enter into a meaningful dialogue with a poet of such a high order.

Q.1. *Sir, you are a poet of Dharwad. What do you say about the poetic climate of Dharwad where the gentle breeze of poetry always blows?*

A. The climate of Dharwad is very vibrant. It pricks and prompts every feeling heart to compose poetry. The town enjoys the reputation of being the cultural capital of Karnataka. It is situated on the fringe of *Malenadu* with lush green meadows, mounds, and vernal woods all around. The sunrise and sunset, the drizzle of *Shravana*, the moonlit nights of autumn, the warm summer heralding spring time – all is congenial for poetic hearts to blossom. The freshening mellow luster of morning and golden yellow of evening mesmerize the beholders. Added to this is the lilting music of singing birds. Dull would he be who dwells here and yet is not moved. Dharwad is virtually a nest of singing birds. This hallowed land has been sanctified by the never ending poetic activities of poets like D.R. Bendre, V.K. Gokak and Betgari Krishnasharma and others. When I came to Dharwad all this was there, and is still there.

Q.2. *What is it that inspired you to write poetry?*

A. Right from the beginning, I was attracted towards poetry. My love of nature generated in me love for poetry. My intimate contact with nature awakened the poet in me. Rural background, folk life, zest for life all this had deep impact on my growing mind. The mystical songs

of Nijguna shivayogi sung by my father at home, and the musings of Shivasharanas had immense influence on me. My infatuation for poetry naturally dragged me towards poetry. While studying in the primary school, love for poetry was kindled in me by my singing of songs and learning of verses by rote. Later coming under the influence of poets like D, R. Bendre, Madhura Chenna, Kuvempu and many others, I developed intense fondness for poetry.

Q.3. A stage was made ready by B.M.Shri, Panje Mangesharaya and others who were influenced by the English Romantic poets. Who among the English Romantic poets influenced you most, and why?

A. Prominent among the English Romantic poets who exerted their influence on me was William Wordsworth. The English Romantic poets were all poets as well as prophets of nature. I admired all but loved Wordsworth because of his unique way of looking at life and nature. He worshipped both the physical and the spiritual aspects of nature. He was not an uncompromising idealist like Shelley. Wordsworth, like his Skylark, loved both heaven and home. Even while it enjoyed higher flights in the sky, it never lost sight of its nest on the dewy ground, ever covered with lush green grass, whereas Shelley's Skylark, which is not a bird but a blithe spirit, is ethereal in its nature, and always takes delight in higher and still higher flights. Never did it bother about its earthly nest. It gets lost in its dizzy flights of fancy. Shelley, like his skylark, gets lost in the light of thought. He is captivated by the melody of its own sonorous songs. But Wordsworth's nature is different. In him is a harmonious blend of the physical and the spiritual. To describe him in his own words:

“Type of the wise, who soar but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home”.

This very faculty of belonging to both heaven and home (earth) endeared me to Wordsworth.

Q.4. What are the outstanding milestones on the path of your long poetic career?

- A. My poems so far published better explain the various phases of my poetry. My poetic collections from *Kavyakshi* to *Akasha Butti* represent the *Navodaya* tradition, whereas my poetic fancy from *Deepadhari* onwards took the *Navya* path. I grew up, by taking the best from the *Navya* movement too. In that *Navya* (modernist) poetry, an element of rationality triumphed. Moreover, satire became a convenient instrument to point out the drawbacks of the contemporary society. Commencing its journey with the *Navodaya*, my poetry passes through the *Pragatisheela*, the *Navya*, *Dalita-Bandaya*, and goes even beyond. The *Navodaya*, the *Pragatisheela*, the *Navya* and *Dalita-Bandaya* — these different movements have made Kannada poetry multidimensional. My poetry is rooted in the high Kannada poetic tradition. The ideals of the *Navodaya* (romantic) poetry have inspired my poems from *Kavyakshito Madhuchandra*. It is primarily culture oriented. My poetry embodies such qualities as objective experience, love of nature, motivation, longing for the past, pursuit of high ideals, dreamy- atmosphere, aesthetic enjoyment, etc. At the 1950 Mumbaii Kannada Literary Conference, Dr V. K. Gokak identified a new wave of poetry in Kannada literature. It was the wave of *Navya Kavya*. In keeping with the spirit of the changed circumstances, I leaned towards the *Navya* poetry without, however, losing my fidelity to the *Navodaya* tradition, nor spoiling my taste in the least. I accepted the *Navya* mode of writing with sufficient care and restraint. An attempt to write freely, breaking loose from the bond of old style, search for new values, longing to graft new values on the old ones — I accepted all this as a challenge. My *Deepa Dhari* took shape while I was engaged in building up a new house of

experiments on the firm foundation of the great Kannada poetic tradition. One can easily notice in it the change of poetic diction and use of hard images. At the time of my poetry taking big strides by responding to the needs of contemporary life, my *Mannina Meravanige sought* to reflect the sad state of split personality. The change in the direction of my poetry is vividly depicted in it. I have accepted all new ideas with open mind, using enough discretion. If there are in *Nagaradalli Neralu* poems reflecting environmental awareness, in *Genia* and *Kartikada Moda*, you find poems about Kannada culture and Kannada language.

Q.5. You are acclaimed as the emperor of the Sonnet form. What made you choose this alien form for most of your poems?

A. The sonnet is my most favourite metrical form. Its scope is limited to 14 lines. Its short form, in which thoughts and emotions can be fused perfectly and in which pen portraits can be drawn effectively, captivated my mind.. The sonnet entered Kannada poetry during the Navodaya period through Govind Pai, Masti, Bendre , Kuvempu, Pu. Ti. Na., Gokak and others. It is Italian in its original form with 8+6 pattern. When it landed on the English soil, there was some change in its inner structure. Instead of the 8+6, it adopted the 4x3+2 pattern. The poet, who tried it first, was William Shakespeare. So it came to be named after Shakespeare. I have used mostly the Italian pattern of 8+6 lines. For sketching pen portraits of persons, it is a very suitable form. I have etched in it the portraits of old, middle and modern Kannada poets, besides distinguished personalities in the fields of music, mysticism, social works and politics. I, who loved nature all through my life, have written sonnets about nature. In the poetic collections from *Kavykshi (1948)* to *Baredu Tirad Baduku (2002)* there are many poems dealing with nature. Among them, sonnets take the pride of place. The sonnet has gained so much importance because of its artistic structure, scope for metrical

experiments, communicative quality of the language used. If ‘Rasika Ranga’, ‘Eppattara Bendre’, ‘Svayamprabhe’, etc. are in the Italian form, ‘Vinayakarige Vandane’, and many other poems are in the Shakespearean form. In addition to these, I have composed sonnets of free patterns, in which there is a beautiful blend of word meaning and spirit, intellect and emotion. They have their own uniqueness: cultural values as well as the values of poets and distinguished personalities. Varied are the patterns of the *Navodaya* and *Navya* poets. I have written numerous lyrical poems in several poetic forms, having lyrical qualities as well as the rhythm of spoken speech. But the sonnet is my most favourite form. Composing of sonnets is not as easy as it seems. It brings both pains and pleasures at once. Each sonnet is a little lamp, spreading its glow all around, a twinkling star as it were. Hundreds of such twinkling stars light up the milky way of Kannada literature.

Q.6. *At some stage of your career, you were called a ‘Samanvaya Poet’. How did you take it?*

- A. During the *Navya Kavya* period, an attempt was made by some to dub two of us - G. S.S and me as ‘Samanvaya poets’. Even while the *Navya* poetry and *Navya* poets stormed the Kannada literary scene, G.S.S and I wrote poetry without allowing ourselves to become *Navyas*. The *Navyas* gave this derogatory label, which is a mark of their unjustified anger towards us. Some *Navya* critics used this as a weapon to satirize our poetry. On one occasion, no less a critic than U.R. Anantamurthy admitted the mistake committed by his group, saying: “We called both G.S.S and Kanavi ‘Samanvaya Poets’. It was a blunder on our part. Whatever the time, a good poet is a *Samanvaya Poet*’, who, taking ideas from different sources, blends them harmoniously. This act of *Samanvaya* is a universal function of poets at all times.”

Q.7. Your poetry is ‘Chembelaku’. It (Chembelaku) has lent golden glow to your life and poetry. What do you say about the significant role of light in your life?

A. Light is a symbol of knowledge. It is very dear to me. The title of one of my poems in the first collection is ‘Chembelaku’. Also the title of the book brought out on the occasion of my completing 50 years is ‘Chembelaku’. The title of the complete collection of my poems is Hombelaku, which means golden glow. The metaphor of light appears in various forms in my poetry. A tiny earthen lamp is more close to my heart than any dazzling light. Chembelaku looms large in my entire poetry. My march is always from darkness (ignorance) towards light (knowledge). I would like to keep the light filling the whole world outside in the inner recess of my heart, in the heart of my hearts. At this juncture, I am reminded of a few lines of my poem- ‘Chirantana Daha’ (Never Ending Thirst):

“ಜಗವತುಂಬಿದ ಬೆಳಕು ನಮಗೇಕೊ ಸಾಲದಿದೆ
ಎನಿತು ಮಾನವನೆಯ ಆಳ ಅಗಲ!
ಬಂದಷ್ಟು ಇಂಗುತ್ತಿದೆ ಮತ್ತೆ ಬರಿದಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ
ಎಷ್ಟು ಸೆಲೆಯೊಡೆದರೂ ವಿಫಲ ವಿಫಲ.”

“The light filling the world is not enough
for us, somehow.
How wide and how deep the human heart!
Come how so much light. Absorbing all,
it becomes empty soon.
Ooze how so much light, No use, no use.”

Q.8. You have enriched the barn of Kannada poetry even by translating poems from various languages, India as well as foreign. What were the challenges faced by you? How did you meet them?

A. Any translation is a cultural give and take. It can better be explained through an analogy of a bride of one culture enriching the culture of the house into which she is married: Translating a text from one language into another language is like marrying a bride of one culture into a family of another culture. Treated gently and with love, the new bride brightens up her husband's house by her conduct illumined by the culture brought with her from her father's house. Imbibing the cultures of both houses she fills the husband's house with fresh fragrance of her parents' culture. Otherwise, no light, no fragrance. Likewise, the translation, done without love and respect to the cultures of the languages concerned, becomes dull and dry, as dry as bone. I have translated into Kannada poems from English, Bengali, Urdu, Punjabi, Kashmiri, , Czech, Arabic languages. Collections from *Kavyakshi* to *Shishiradalli Banda Snehita* include a host of my translations. If my translations read like original poems, I am more than pleased. Translating a poem from one language into another is an uphill task. It is a kind of *Parakaya Pravasha*, i.e. one's getting into the body (the heart and soul) of another person and act like one possessed (by a spirit). While translating a poem from one language into another, the cultural contexts, the rhythm and linguistic nuances of the original language have to be taken into consideration. The translator has to have that ability. Or else the translation tends to be mechanical, artificial, dry and meaningless. My first attempts at translation are of the poems of Shakespeare, Robert Burns, and Tagore. Though then most poets were busy translating poems of modernists like T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden and Dylan Thomas, I tried my hand at the poems of the poets of my own choice, little bothering about what others did. The poems of the south African poets depicting the African struggle for Independence have landed on the Kannada soil through my translations. The fire and force of African poets, trying to satirize those who, forgetting their own unique identity, were after imitating the British, is of one type, and the beauty of the

Czech poetry is of another type. While translating the poems from Indian languages, I have laid enough emphasis on the social aspect. The countries and languages of those poets may be different and varied. Yet I have tried my best to make them blossom in the Kannada soil.

Q.9. You have written children's poems also. What is their place in the entire gamut of your poetry?

A. My *Hakki Puccha* (Bird's Feather), published in 1985, is my humble contribution to the children literature in Kannada. While writing children's poems a poet also has to be a child himself. Knowing a child's mind and becoming one with the child, he should write such poems as would please him as well as rouse his curiosity. The language of children's poetry is also different. 'Minchu Hula' (The Glow Worm), 'Bidige Chandira' (The Crescent Moon), 'Miamvu, Miamvu, Bekkanna', 'Ame Kappe' (The Tortoise and the Frog) and other poems seek to arouse children's curiosity, and make them wonder too. Sometimes he has to give them moral lessons, but his instructions have to be implied and never obvious and direct. I have tried to perform that function of preaching through amusement in poems like 'Dudime' (Hard Work) in *Hakki Puccha*

“ಎಲ್ಲರು ತಮ್ಮಯ ಕೆಲಸವ ತಾವೇ
ಮಾಡಲು ದೇಶವು ಬೆಳೆಯುವದು.
ದುಡಿದರೆ ಮಾತ್ರವೆ ದೊಡ್ಡವನಾಗುವೆ
ಸ್ವಾತಂತ್ರ್ಯದ ಸವಿ ತಿಳಿಯುವದು

(The nation grows, if everybody
does his work himself.
You become big, if you work hard
And savour the flavour of freedom.)

Children like rhyme, alliteration and melody. The variety of rhymes and alliteration in 'Haakki Puccha' poem is worth noting. It is both curious and mesmerizing. Children's poems have no rigid frames of different literary trends, like *Navodaya*, *Navya*, *Dalita- Bandaya*, etc. They transcend all such barriers as they tend to break rigid frames. They are free from dogmas and doctrines. They are at once circumstantial time pieces and, containing universal truths as they do, are of all times. These ripples of emotional utterances are ever fresh and freshening too.

I published long ago, as far back as a decade, a new collection of children's poems entitled *Chinnaralokava Tereyona*, which includes many new poems in addition to the poems from my old collection *Hakki Puccha*. It has already seen three reprints.

Q.10. *Satire is much against your nature. Then what made you resort to satire?*

A. Satire is such an instrument as would be beneficial, if used with good intention and at the impersonal level, and is likely to prove banal, if used at the personal level, and with ill intention. Normally, it is used to point out drawbacks of individuals and society. If the purpose is good, the end result will be good. If the purpose is bad, naturally, its effect will be bad. On my march from the *Navya* onwards, I had to resort to the writing of satires. I have unveiled the ironical discord in the contemporary life through satire. While bringing out the corruption, bribery, exploitation that have been, like cancer, eating into the vitals of society, I could use satire. My satire is not at all personal. It is always impersonal. The eradication of social evils is its prime concern in 'ಯಾರು ಕೇಳುತ್ತಾರೆ, ಹೇಳಿರಣ್ಣಾ' (Who listen, tell me, O brothers) I have tried to depict the present state of affairs in India. The health of the society is not good; it has been spoiled by the personal prestige and selfishness of the leaders. It pained me to depict all this. My anger is righteous anger, as it is born of genuine concern.

In order to make it palatable, the satire in my poems has been mixed with mild irony.

Q.11. It is said, "To judge of poets is only the faculty of poets". Yourself being a poet-critic, how do you regard this statement?

A. I fully endorse the truth of this statement. It is true that both poet and critic derive their light from one common source, i.e. heaven. The critic is hidden in the womb of the poet. He lends discriminating intellect to the poet whose criticism commences from his own self. Later he tries to see other poets in the same critical light. In every good poet, there is a good critic too. He is endowed with the faculty to know other good poets. "Only a snake can trace the track of another snake". Like a snake's, it is the characteristic quality of a sensitive poet to see through other poets. I think this statement is not complete. I feel it is necessary to add a corollary to this theory, that is, "Not all poets, but only the best." Only the best poet is dowered with this rare faculty.

Q.12. Born and brought up in the tradition of the Sharana culture, who, of all Sharanas of the 12th century, influenced you most?

A. Right from the beginning, I came under the influence of *Vachanas* of the 12th century *Sharanas*. Of all the *Vachanas*, I was most influenced by Basavanna's *Shtsthala Vachanas*. It was by sheer chance that I happened to get a copy of Basavanna's *The Shatsthala Vaachanas edited by Shri S.S. Basavanal*, an erudite scholar of *Vachana* literature. I like the unique structure of *Vachana*. It is a combination of prose and poetry. It contains the rhythm of spoken speech and the delicacy and daintiness of poetry. Verse gains additional strength by being associated with prose. The reasoning faculty of prose prevents verse from becoming mere musical utterance. The spoken word to become poetry, it should have enough of inner rhythm, and should go beyond the reach of verbal meaning

to communicate mystic experience to the reader. I have tried to gain this faculty by studying Basavanna's *Vachanas*, which have the best of both, the rhythm of spoken speech and the delicacy and daintiness of poetry.

Q.13. Does a singing bird need titles and honours?

I don't sing for others to listen to.

It's my *Karma* to sing, an unavoidable duty.

(ಹಾಡು ಹಕ್ಕಿಗೆ ಬೇಕೆ ಬಿರುದು ಬಾವಲಿ?

ಎಲ್ಲ ಕೇಳಲಿ ಎಂದು ನಾನು ಹಾಡುವುದಿಲ್ಲ

ಹಾಡುವುದು ಅನಿವಾರ್ಯ ಕರ್ಮ ನನಗೆ)

says Shivarudrappa, a poet of your generation. What is your reaction to this?

- A. "A poet is a nightingale who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude", says Shelley, one of the English romantic poets. Shivarudrappa's poem too echoes the same view. Poetry should have sublime effect on its readers. It should foster such noble human values as love, compassion, friendship, etc. Did not our poets in the past write poetry so that the people would benefit from it and learn to live in peace, radiating light and delight all around. A poet has a duty towards the society in which he lives. Poetry carries a moral lesson and teaches it as if it does not do any such thing. I too have tried to cleans the lives of the people around me and beautify their lives. Poetry should sublimate human emotions by purging them of all baser qualities. Mere giving aesthetic pleasure amounts to escapism, which is not at all its objective in any case. Never can he know the reality of life who loves to live in an ivory tower. Correcting the human errors and filling up the lacunae of life is one of its functions. What is reflected in the above lines is Shivarudrappa's romantic ideal. That poetry should be a bridge between fiction and reality is my stand. In other words, it should bridge heaven and home. Its method of preaching ethics is unique. In Samskrit, it is called

Kanta Sammita, that is, its teaching is persuasive, pleasing and charming.

Q.14. What is your advice to save Kannada in the present context of globalization?

- A. In the context of globalization, we are spreading a red carpet for everything foreign, foreign languages being no exception. We are eager to create job opportunities for the speakers of foreign languages. Already the English language has grown deep roots in Indian soil. By injecting the good elements of the English language in to Kannada, we should try to strengthen it. Kannada has to march ahead, absorbing all foreign influences, instead of yielding to their oppressive pressures and powers. Globalization has been sending out signals of red alert to all Indian languages to be aware of the impending danger. We the *Kannadigas* should wake up from our deep slumber, or else we cannot retain our identity, nor can we remain 'ourselves'. Our Karnatak Government should make Kannada the language of day to day administration in all Govt. offices, and should see to it that in all Govt. offices Kannada is used without fail. A criminal injustice is done to Kannada by making Samskrit and Hindi compulsory in high schools. It is not right. The Govt. should form a committee of Kannada scholars, and ask it to frame a comprehensive language policy. Whatever the policy decision of the high level committee, it should be given effect to immediately. Our language is our life- breath and badge of honour. We see what is the present state of Kannada in Bengaluru, our state capital city, and how it is jeopardized in the very heart of Karnatak. *Kannadigas* should get a lion's share in all kinds of job opportunities in both Govt. and semi- Govt. offices.



Exploring the Mysteries of Evolution in K. P. Poornachandra Tejaswi's *Carvalho* (1980)

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The mysteries of Evolution have always fascinated the attention of the creative writers across the Globe. The paper intends to trace the creative energies of K.P. Poorna Chandra Tejaswi (1938-2007) in the textual production of an exploration of the mysteries of evolution in *Carvalho* (1980). The realistic and the metaphysical portrayal of the spirit of an exploration adds novelty to the genre of Science-Fiction and provides the Naturalist frame work for understanding the mysteries of evolution. An attempt to critically analyse the novella contributes to the understanding of the metaphysical realities. It is hoped that such a study underscores the contributions of K. P. Poorna Chandra Tejaswi into Science Fiction in Kannada and the Naturalist Philosophy as well.

Carvalho (1980) is a unique example of K. P. Poorna Chandra Tejaswi's oeuvre where the mysteries of nature have found fictional representation with utmost realism. His observation and commentaries on ecology not only ignite curiosity in the minds of the readers but also extend the frontiers of ecosophy. *Carvalho* (1980) a novella, is titled after an imaginative

entomologist who takes interest in the reported creature which has the features of being a reptile and a bird. Prof. Carvalho at the Paddy Research Station, an entomologist, leads the expedition into the Narve Forest assisted by Mandanna for a fleeting glimpse of the flying lizard. The flying lizard occupies the centre-stage in the novella. This mysterious creature retains the interest of the readers till the end of the novella. What interests the readers is not merely the subject matter, but the spirit of inquiry into the mysteries of the nature. Thus, the readers become curious to learn what happens when a million-year-old creature surfaces to resolve the mysteries of evolution which is believed to have become extinct centuries ago.

Set around Mudigere a small town nestled in the Western Ghats, the plot revolves around the experiences of Prof. Carvalho, Mandanna and an unnamed narrator who witnesses the flying lizard. Narrated in the first person, the narrator constantly shifts in time and space. Structurally, the plot can be divided into three parts constituting the beginning, the middle and the end. The beginning is an introduction where the characters are introduced and the individuals become familiar with each other. The intimacies among these individuals become stronger gradually. The individuals who were preoccupied with their own materialistic world and pleasures of life participate in the journey to explore the unknown!

The novella begins with the narrator's visit to Mudigere Honey co-operative society, where he meets Mandanna. The narrator is a creative writer and a farmer who lives in the same town. He is sceptical about everything until he is convinced of the truth. He attempts to elicit answers for many of his questions from different individuals throughout the novella. The narrator's interactions with Prof. Carvalho unfold the plot gradually. He is convinced of Prof. Carvalho's convictions and says "I was prepared to follow Carvalho even if it was to chase an illusion" (50). The narrator is at the core of the vivid experience. He takes interest in the natural philosophy and engages himself in the quest for the truth. He is a witness to the existence of the

flying lizard and considers that its appearance is the vision of the truth and eternity. The narrator's association with Prof. Carvalho and Mandanna results in an interest for the fleeting glimpse of the flying lizard. Mandanna is a rustic vagabond who comes from the village called Narve, which is located amidst the Western Ghats. He is a born naturalist who stands for innocence and worldly pleasures. He has abundant knowledge, he has seen nature from a close quarters and becomes an indispensable guide to Prof. Carvalho. His knowledge appears to be thousand times valuable to Prof. Carvalho than all he had learnt in the laboratory.

THE EXPEDITION: A QUEST FOR TRUTH

The novella relates the exploration of Prof. Carvalho and his team into Narve forest to have a glimpse of the flying lizard. It is hoped that the appearance of the flying lizard would provide vital clues to the mysteries of evolution. The first-half of the novella sets the stage for exploration and the latter half of the novella reveals the journey and the appearance of the flying lizard. The exploration becomes a pilgrimage for Prof. Carvalho and others to unravel the mysteries of evolution. The problems of the mundane life become insignificant and irrelevant to the members of the team. The team undertakes the exploration as ascetics in search of the enlightenment! Such an understanding provides a basis for their common pursuit: the quest for truth. The narrator is very much impressed by what Prof. Carvalho says "You won't be able to have a glimpse of the truth .We must travel beyond all this illusion. It is only then we shall be able to see a different world, a different universe" (54). Thus, the individuals overcome their personal problems before they set out on their journey.

The individuals are drawn from different strata of a society and an each individual in the novella is symbolic of a different approach to the mysteries of Nature. Mandanna a villager who has seen the environment from a very close quarters becomes Prof. Carvalho's indispensable guide. It is Prof. Carvalho's firm view that a sight of the flying lizard would resolve the

mysteries of human evolution. What interests Prof. Carvalho are the data and samples to prove a certain hypothesis which is in the nature of the scientific world. “He had complete faith in the instruments.” (73). However, Prof. Carvalho considers Mandanna as his disciple and valuable than a diamond. Hence he undertakes a mission to relieve Mandanna out of his problems. Mandanna’s report about the ‘creature’ to Prof. Carvalho generates a lot of interest in the scientist to trace the flying lizard. Mandanna is symbolic of all those depleting generations of the born naturalists in the villages who know much about the biotic world but remain unknown to the scientific communities. The other man who accompanies Prof. Carvalho is Biryani Kariyanna. He is known for his culinary expertise and the natural skills like hunting, tree climbing, swimming, bird watching, but nothing is more important to him than his gluttonous hunger. Wherever he finds a creature, his immediate desire is to kill, bake and devour the creature. He firmly believes that the sins of killing a creature are washed away by devouring the creature! Considering the natural significance of a being and rationality for killing a creature seems absurd. For Kariyanna everything is a need whereas Prof. Carvalho believes in the philosophy of coexistence. Thus, Biryani Kariyanna is symbolic of a technology driven world which aims at exploiting the nature for consumption and comforts. Finally, Yenka a snake charmer who joins Prof. Carvalho after the second day of their camping in the forest, makes his living from gathering eco-products and selling them in the cities and towns. He represents the market economy, which acts as a compliment to the technologies for large scale production. The dog ‘Kiwi’ is the narrator’s pet which accompanies him during the expedition.

The second section encompasses the actual journey of these people and the subsequent conclusion till the glimpse of the flying lizard. This is a transient part in the novel. This part relates the difficulties faced by the team on its way to the Narve Forest. The unnamed narrator, Mandanna, Prabhakara, an assistant to Prof. Carvalho move together and they are led

by Prof. Carvalho himself. As the exploration proceeds, the journey seems backward in time to the narrator. The endless palm field appears like a field of illusion. It is at this stage that the participants in the journey rise from the world of fragmented realities to the world of selfless nobility and oneness. The narrator reflects that Carvalho's ideas and his understanding of the world touched the depth of his mind like the flashes of divine knowledge that transcended "Time and Space" (57). When the explorers are settling down to relax, the narrator feels that the scene also transcends "Time and Space" (75). Such is the acknowledgment of metaphysical attributes of an exploration. Thus, the conclusion is abrupt, and symbolic.

THE VISION AND THE MYSTERIES OF EVOLUTION

The concluding scene begins with the sight of the flying lizard and concludes with its disappearance. "Carvalho stood gazing at the creature in wonder, unmindful of everything else. It didn't have wings like a bat or a bird. Instead, the very ribs themselves fanned out like an umbrella frame and the wings came into being" (101). Amidst the glorifying moment between the appearance and disappearance, there is the glimpse of truth. Biryani Kariyanna and Yenhta attempt to catch it, but it eludes them. The narrator notes that the creature became one with nothingness after the sudden disappearance into the void. The narrator opines that "A fragment of oblivion, beyond time and place had flashed before us and had melted back into the oblivion". (103). Thus, the coming together of the individuals and their attitude towards the nature signifies the human negotiation between the physical and the metaphysical worlds. The narrator wonders at the fantasy which appeared before the eyes of Mandanna that had taken a shape in the mind of Carvalho and the passion with which the curious narrator had joined hands with them to trace the creature. He inquires Prof. Carvalho, "Why did the environment which had got us off the trees and onto the ground, made quadrupeds into bipeds, enabled us to hold weapons in our hands, build civilisation and fight wars, retain this lizard as the sole representative of a line of reptiles millions of years old? (84). Prof. Carvalho replies that

“Man’s ancestors were monkeys. But they climbed off the trees, became bipeds, and eventually developed the opposed thumb. Gorilla and Chimpanzees also started living on land, but they remained primates. They never evolved towards becoming the humans and took another direction altogether. Isn’t that a mystery? ”(89). He adds that it is a mere conjecture and then proceeds:

“Creatures like this flying lizard are like a dictionary of time... Perhaps we might learn even more if we can catch it. Who knows perhaps it tried to fly even before the ancestors of the birds did. May be some organ, some angle of movement of a joint... a slight elongation of a bone entirely changed the direction of the evolution. When we accost the animal, perhaps some of the questions will be answered” (89).

The search for the flying lizard lasts for about four days and the sudden appearance and disappearance of the creature permits introspection and provides a philosophical dimension to the exploration. Though the birds and animals are described during the exploration, the readers learn about the flying lizard for the first time only in the second half of the narrative. When the flying lizard reveals the mystery, Prof. Carvalho exclaims that “its every posture and every form opened up unlimited pages of the mystery of creation’ (101). Further, the author employs various symbols, metaphor and allegories in weaving the plot. All pervading sense of humour makes the plot more engrossing. The trivial and insignificant which fragment the reality appear to be irrelevant. Ultimately, what prevails is the nature which is also universal! However, the frequent use of words like ‘hypnotised’, ‘another world’, ‘illusion’, ‘reality’, ‘primitive’, ‘eyes glued to the spot’, ‘spell’, ‘space’, ‘universe’, ‘void’, ‘oblivion’, ‘nothingness’ suggest the metaphysical significance of the event as if the narrator is in trans during the exploration. The novelist uses many onomatopoeias to suggest the inherent qualities of the creatures like “bees buzzing around”, “the bees

inside hissed louder”, “hissing like cobra, the bees moved up and out”, “There was a strange rushing sound ...circling... buzzing sounded as deeply resonant as a conch ”(27). All these words make a sense of the bees, snakes and the flying lizard which also hisses like a snake. Thus, it is argued that there must have been a relationship among all these creatures million years ago and what led to the formation of different species in different habitats is still a mystery!

The journey into the Narve forest is a metaphor for the journey into the unknown and the infinity. However, the progression of events in the novel assists in fictionalising the mysteries of evolution. The narrator’s comments on the fellow members in the team and their food habits, marriage and sexual orientation make the narrative more realistic. The appearance of the flying lizard provides a vision of the reality! Whatever knowledge possessed by the man is only a fragment of the unknown. While bringing together, the realistic and the metaphysical in the pursuit of truth, the author illumines the misconceptions and limitations in the human understanding of the nature. The human knowledge is proven to be abstract and finite. Prof. Carvalho envisions the realities of the nature. He realises that the human success is temporal and the nature has too many mysteries for human exploration. What interests the readers is the abundant knowledge possessed by Mandanna who is a born naturalist capable of relating his observations.

Revealing the mysteries of the nature, K. P. Poorna Chandra Tejaswi’s writings are an uncommon contribution to Ecoliterature. Much of his writing emanates from his everyday experiences and philosophical interpretations of the natural manifestations and events. Often critics contrast and compare his thematic preoccupations with the writers of the West like Ernest Hemingway and D. H. Lawrence. However, unlike the Romantic poets who portray the serene beauty of the nature, the author brings out the mysteries in the human understanding of the environment.



Uttarakanda: Rupturing Sita's Silences

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Women's lived realities, deeds, and participation in human affairs have been neglected or undervalued in recorded histories. Women have been spoken about extensively since times immemorial, she they been spoken for, but it is in the recent times that attempts to listen to their real voices, their trials and tribulations and their innermost voices have been made with all sensitivity and objectivity. Be it IravatiKarave, Anupama Niranjana, ShashiDeshpande, Vaidehi, Volga and very recently Dr. S. L. Bhyrappa have all questioned the stereotypical presentation of women characters that flood our Indian Mythology. These writers have all tried to rewrite the stories of Draupadi, Kunti, Amba, Madhavi of Mahabharata or Urmila, Sita, Mandodari of Ramayana, who are frozen either as ideals of perfection or demons of transgression while their real experiences have remained muted. Among the most popular mythical images of women, 'Sita' has been cast as an icon of self-effacing, pure Indian woman, who has had a lasting impression on the psyche of Indians over the centuries. Though her desertion by Rama, the Purushottama has been condemned by many with sympathy for the victimized Sita, not many have tried in earnest to crawl into her mind and voice her silences, as her silence is glorified as her valued virtue. This paper analyses the feminist presentation of 'Sita' in

Dr. S. L. Bhyrappa's *Uttarakanda* where Sita's inner mindscape gets revealed overcoming the passivity of narratives in which she is subsumed. The manifestation of Sita as thinking, feeling individual as emergent in *Uttarakanda* where she has found a release from the entangling patriarchal formulations is analysed.

The world of letters over centuries of human civilization testifies that women's voices have been muted and their experiences, opinions and perspectives lay stifled amidst the hegemonic dominance of male world view. This obliteration of the authentic expressions of almost half of human population has probably led to a partial understanding of the universe, leading to the fractured and incomplete understanding of their interior mindscapes. The mythological narratives also have multifariously projected many women characters, but most of them have been presentations of male perceptions of women. But with the feminist awakening of the politics of representation, many writers have consciously recast the mythical women recharging them with feminist interrogations that rupture the hegemonic gender relations misconstrued in society.

The archetypical image of 'Sita' is by far the most renowned ideal of an Indian woman. She is hailed as a perfect match to Rama, the 'purushottama'. (The Best among Men) Her matchless beauty, her devoted duties towards her husband, her submissive demeanor, self-effacing and sacrificial nature and above all her silent suffering and forbearance of unjust treatment meted out to her makes her icon of perfect Indian woman, as these are the idealized qualities of Indian womanhood. But, for many feminists Sita's silence and composure even when she is deserted by Rama, has remained unpalatable. Her unperturbed silence over the violence of Rama is considered more violent as her anger, resentment, feelings of humiliation and bitterness has been muted. Many writers have tried to provide voice to the repressed questions that logically any thinking woman would naturally have posed, saving Sita from the throes of passive victimization to providing her agency to emerge

as a woman with her own personality. Among them the most recent novel *Uttarakanda* of Dr. Bhyrappa successfully has reinstated 'Sita' as a woman capable of taking control of her life. The second half of Sita's life at sage Valmiki's ashram after her desertion by Rama has been portrayed in the novel thereby exploiting the context of her solitude enriched with her introspective analysis of her life which provides ample scope for projecting the violence of her silences she had to suffer. The novel explores the inner world of Sita using the technique of interior monologue, laying bare her innermost dilemmas, conflicts, and all that has been covered under the veneer of respectability. The human in Sita has been allowed to break up the golden image of eternal feminine and emerge as an individual in quest of her identity.

Dr. Bhyrappa's 'Sita' in *Uttarakanda* is a demystified and demythified Sita, who emerges completely as a daughter of Earth. She stands tall as a spokesperson of all the inner turmoil, rage and frustration that any woman in her situation may very naturally experience. Dr. Bhyrappa has freed Sita of all the allegations leveled against her silences in the *Valmiki Ramayana*. Contrary to her image of being a meek and docile virtuous wife and being a shadow of Rama, Sita in *Uttarakanda* has emerged as a woman of strong mind who is capable of designing her life and taking decisions to protect her self-respect. She does not blindly eulogize Rama, but assesses the qualities of Rama and also forms her opinions about his actions and their effects.

The novel *Uttarakanda* begins with Sita trying to decipher her identity and reformulate her life by ruminating over the past events of her life in the shelter of Valmiki Maharshi ashram after her desertion by Rama. The entire second half of *Ramayana* is recreated centering Sita's perspective, enabling the strength of her personality to manifest in all its dimensions. The reminiscence of the fourteen years spent by her in the forest with Rama and Laxmana reveal the innermost feelings of Sita. Her sincere acknowledgement of all the service rendered to her and Rama during their

exile by Laxmana and her feelings of gratitude towards him pictures Sita's humaneness and modesty. She in fact helps Laxmana in his farming experiments so that they could survive in the deep jungles, where even fruits were scarce. While Rama devotes his time in meditating about rights and wrongs, of adhering to strict disciplinary living in the forest, it is Laxmana who practically makes the aims of Rama palatable. Sita very early recognizes the worth of practicality of Laxmana in comparison to the sterile idealism of Rama. However, the femininity already conditioned in her does not allow her to openly declare her thoughts to anyone and she is always conscious of Rama's feelings being hurt if she spends more time with Laxmana in order to help him. So the fear of being misunderstood by her beloved husband lurks in her right from the beginning, which however comes true later in her life. Her soliloquy about her accompaniment with Laxmana in the forest for aiding him is poignant:

“My mind doesn't approve of leaving Rama alone everyday.....Moreover, I am worried of what Rama will think if I roam alone with Laxmana in the forest every day. One can't be sure about the changing minds of others.”(P. 144. Trans mine)

Dr. Bhyrappa here very realistically and subtly lays bare the fears and insecurities that lie submerged in any woman's psyche which determine her behaviour and control all her actions. The chains of patriarchal controls are the inner 'laxmanrekhas' that are etched on any woman's inner mindscape. Sita's dilemmas between her desire of asserting herself and religiously following the values imbibed by her father find expression throughout the novel, which show the patriarchal clutches that troubled Sita in the early part of her life. However her abduction by Ravana and her sufferings thereafter at the hands of the demonish people at Lanka which she bravely endures illustrate the invincibility of her personality. Of course many times she contemplates suicide in order to finally free herself from the throes of tortures she experiences, but her love for Rama is so strong that she cannot

imagine Rama's agony after her death. She does not wish to do anything that may cause slightest pain to him. When Ravana's demon guards in her captivity in Lanka force her to eat, she refuses and plans to starve herself to death, but then immediately is frightened at the thought of the plight of Rama after her death. She thinks-

"If I die, and if Rama also dies sorrow stricken, I felt like crying.... give me some food, I said." (p. 220. Trans mine)

This line indicates Sita's intense love for Rama, who tolerates Ravana's humiliations just to be alive for Rama, not wanting to cause slightest pain to him. But the profundity of her love for Rama does not find its reciprocity, because although Rama defeats Ravana in the fierce battle, his attitude towards her at their reunion disillusions her completely. When he meets her after winning the war, he addresses her as "*The princess of King Janaka*", (p. 271. Trans mine) she is surprised that he didn't call her 'Sita', or 'dear', not even 'wife.' And then he proclaims that he fought with Ravana not for her, but to keep his family 'Ikshvaku' name untarnished. He further adds that- "*I do not have faith on you as you were in the custody of a notorious womanizer like Ravana for a prolonged period. You are independent now. You can live wherever and in whatever way you wish.....your choice.*" (p. 271. Trans mine)

These words of Rama that she may choose to do whatever with her life, most unexpectedly is like a bolt from the blue to her. She helplessly tries to convince him of her chastity by asking him to countercheck with Vibhishina's wife Suramey. But when Rama cold shoulders all her appeals, she offers to undergo the fire trial as a test of her purity in order to reinstate her image in Rama's heart, which shows Rama's heartless lack of trust on Sita. And, it is this heartlessness of Rama that ultimately taints Sita's love for Rama, which finally snaps off when he deserts her after heeding the words of a washer man. However, at that crucial time, it is Laxmana who

emerges more humane when he dissuades Sita from falling prey to the fire and drives sense into his brother Rama, by arguing that even Sita has equal rights to doubt his chastity as he too was away from her. So throughout the novel, there are several instances where Sita receives Laxman's support, so much so that after her desertion by Rama, Laxman along with Urmila, also leaves Ayodhya and settles in a far off district that is a part of his mother's dowry, and aids Sita throughout her life, sending food grains and other necessary household requirements with Urmila who visits her often in Valmiki ashram. Hence Bhyrappa's Laxman emerges as a foil to Rama, hinting the lacunae in Rama's personality. Bhyrappa's Rama is drunk with self-love and wants to keep up his image as an ideal king sacrificing his humanity. Although Rama is a perfection of all the ideals of a king, he fails in his duties for his wife and therefore justifiably comes out as a lop-sided personality.

Rama's ceremonious conduct of 'Ashvamedayajna' with the golden image of Sita placed next to him only shows the shallowness of Rama who is incapable of evoking love from real beings. It is sage Valmiki's efforts to unite the couple, which ultimately brings out Sita's strength of character to the fore. When sage Valmiki sends for Sita, she is reluctant to meet Rama at Ayodhya. She ponders-

"It is disrespectful even to step into this land. My mind is intensely indicating that it is awkward to see the face of that husband. But how can I disrespect the words of the sage who has given me shelter in my difficult times, has consoled me whenever I was troubled and has showered grandfatherly love on my children?" (p. 303. Trans mine)

It is to keep the words of sage Valmiki that Sita comes to Ayodhya after many years. But after her arrival, she refuses to even enter the palace and seeks shelter at the homes of ordinary subjects, asserting her sense of self-respect. Also, she firmly rejects Rama as the father of her children stating

that Rama had deserted her along with the children in her womb, which leaves no filial connections intact, which comes as a shock to all the people gathered in Ayodhya. Her conviction of her presenting her independent identity free of any reference to Rama, and owing up with pride the responsibility of her twin children in front of the citizens of Ayodhya is what makes Bhyrappa's Sita, a self-consciously gritty woman of strength and character.

Unlike the archetypal Sita of Valmiki's *Ramayana*, she does not seek shelter and sink in the womb of mother Earth after giving her children to the care of Rama, but returns to the ashram after firmly rejecting the proposition of uniting with Rama. The abrupt and unwarranted elimination of Sita from the surface of Earth, after she hands over her sons to the custody of Rama, makes her presence redundant and extraneous in Valmiki *Ramayana*, which reeks of the patriarchal yardstick of measuring women in terms of their relevance to the man's life only. On the contrary, Dr. Bhyrappa's Sita ends her life later, after returning to ashram. Her clarity of perception of herself and her guilt-free conscience is evident when she is unruffled even at the receipt of the news of Rama's death by drowning due to heartbreak. It is Rama who suffers from guilt and lays down his life.

Bhyrappa has given a glorious ending to Sita's dignified life. She is found all decked up in jewelry gifted to her by Anasuvya, lying in a pit that she had got dug in her farm, which shows that she had the agency to decide on the kind of death she willed and fulfilled it on her own. Thus Bhyrappa's *Uttarakanda* through voicing Sita's deep-rooted thoughts in the recesses of her mind and heart has unveiled the violence of the silences that she had to suffer all through her early life till she comes on her own after the unfair desertion by Rama.

Thus, as Nayantara Sahgal says - "Through such re-writing . . . new Sitas and Savitris will arise, stripped of false sanctity and crowned with the human

virtue of courage. Then at last we will know why they did, what they did". Dr. Bhyrappa has released Sita from the shackles of her muted existence and echoed her silences to reverberate the inherent multiple violence.

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Intolerance: Sarana's Solution

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“What a piece of work is Man....”

The Bard aulogized man in such sublime terms that we have no choice but to agree and accept this sublimation undoubtedly man is ‘Unique’ by his ‘Reason’, he is infinite in variety; in brief he is simply ‘singular’.

The accomplishments that are endless in almost every field are enough testimony to the praise the Bard heaps on this creation called ‘Man’.

If that be one side of ‘Man’, he has cursed himself and has given himself another side. If the first one is ‘Noble’ the second one is “Ignoble’. Just a peep into the ‘past’ and a mere glance the ‘present’, they point to the dismal days to come. As there are number of men, so are there respective views, faith, beliefs, thoughts, convictions. They are most of the times self-imposed, you may call them illusions. Starting from the family level to the world level, these self imposed thoughts and convictions are disturbing the harmony and balance both at the micro and macro level. This is taking away even the simple moments of pleasure that nature holds in its boundless folds. This is taking away the hopes of a better tomorrow of ‘flesh woods’ and new pastures. Some are hell bent to keep this atmosphere evergreen, by

nourishing it with their heinous ideology and extreme intolerance. Why such an intolerance?

Answer to this problem has been given by men of yore both ancient and the present ones. These saints, rishis, thinkers and visionaries, with their deep reflection and profound wisdom have offered effective solutions to these problems faced by world at large.

The focus of this write up is how the 12th century's sharanas dealt with such innumerable woes affecting the fabric of society. They led a very dynamic revolution to transform the society through the transformation of the mind, because mind is the key that can make the variable hell or transform the world into a heaven. These revolutionaries are known as 'Sharanas' led by Shri Basaveshwara, the fountain head of this great movement.

These sharanas strove hard to eradicate the evil that ate away the very warp and woof of social fabric and societal health. They put their best to free the society from evil practices blind beliefs, thereby put an end to the heinous practices prevailing then all in the name of religion, god and god realization. This conglomeration of sharanas had such men who were dedicated and came from distant and different parts of India. Their backgrounds too were varied. Nevertheless, all of them had only one objective i.e. overall transformation of the human society. They revealed their concerns, expressed their thought, manifested their vision, expressed their thoughts and suggested their solutions through prose-verses popularly known as vachanas.

Now coming to the issue of the present write-up i.e. the environment of intolerance, unrest prevailing (both in the past and the present) many visionaries, saints and thinkers both of ancient times and that of the present times after due introspection and vision traced the source of the intolerance for example: Lord Buddha traced greed to be the source of all misery; Lord

Sankara traced it to mistaking the appearance for reality. 20th century thinker's say it is due to the inability to see a thing in itself.

Coming to the Saranas of 12th century Karnataka, one Sarana namely Siddharama in a simple prose-verse, lays bare the main cause for the state of intolerance. Here is the Vachana:

ಬಣ್ಣ ಹಲಪಪ್ಪಲಿ, ಬಣ್ಣ ತಾನೊಂದಾಗಿ, ಬಣ್ಣ ಮೂಜಗಕ್ಕೆ
ಮುಕ್ಕಣ್ಣ ತಾನು
ಬಣ್ಣಕರು ಬಣ್ಣದೊಳಗಾಳುವದನು ಕಂಡು
ಅಣ್ಣ ನಗುತಿದರ್ನಯ್ಯ ಯೋಗಿನಾಥ

In this vachana, he uses the analogy of the original colour, and its innumerable shades. To know the true colour which is ONE one has to go beyond the shades. Sad fact is that man is stuck between variety of shades. Indulges in these shades throughout life. What does the 'shade' in the analogy stand for? Well we can attribute these shades to the convictions, thoughts beliefs that human mind cultivated, which makes the mind extremely conditioned. It cannot see beyond these and cannot allow anything that differs from his conditioned beliefs. This leads to disagreement. He cannot make any room for the 'right' things to enter. Mind is shut and such a person is imprisoned who cannot allow the Reality/Truth to prevail upon.

When we extend this analogy of shades these shades are the beliefs, thoughts about religion, culture, caste, community, language, country, state, individuals, practices, well, the list goes on.

People mistaking these shades, for the True colour, nourish this for such a long time that they envelop his whole being preventing him from the perception of the Truth. This leads to intolerance. Because the other people too are the victims i.e. mistaking shades for the Truth.

A man with one belief coming across others not following his belief, sharing his ideologies he gets desperate and believes he must see to it that others too share his fond ideas or school of thought. On reaching the extreme limits there will be duels, clashes, the volcano is ever simmering billowing smoke and at times erupting thereby extinguish the very existence of those who don't share his ideology and his school of thought. This intolerance prevails at the individual level, family level, at the level of religion, caste, community, culture, language, food that we eat and water that we drink. Is it ever possible to establish sound mind, sound body, sound society and a sound world to live in?

Look into the pages of history. It is replete with instances of men, obsessed by their faith and belief, they insisted the world should share it. One man obsessed by his belief in his race was hell bent on extinguishing the other race.

What is happening in our country presently? Intolerance is reeling the roost. Left ideology versus Right ideology; x faith v/s y faith; A culture v/s B culture; C party v/s D party; It has reached such a level that anything can be turned into an issue that is paralysing even day to day's life and activity.

The scenario across the continents is so different. The tribal was in African continent; ideological war between N. Korea, U.S. Japan, China, Russia, not excluding India.

The ideological war between the left and right ideology has brought the world on the brink of nuclear war. This is the height of intolerance. As the vachana of siddharama says, men indulging in this game of "Shades" have forgotten the source of these shades is not many but ONE. When the realization of the ONE source dawns this world will be a better living place, free from intolerance of every type and every kind.

In brief, this Vachana is meant for introspection, assimilation and importantly for appreciation. The Vachana has a universal bearing that holds trace for all times to come. That is the profundity of the Vachanas and that is the vision of 12th century saranas.



Few Poems on Crows

Org: Dr Sarajoo Katkar

Tr: Dr Kavita S Kusugal

We don't dance as peacocks
We don't write as poets
We don't sing as cuckoos
We are crows we live
In the name of crows

2

Whose feathers
Are sold
To them is reserved market
Our feathers
Are not sold
So sky is our limit

3

Once we left
Go on the palaces
To cack and come
Tell me
To rebel against
Big people's cheap dealings
Which is the powerful
Way than this?

4

Leaving everybody
Yama chose us only
As he was aware
While touching
Humans' panda
We never change colors,
To the man
Color is life
Life is colour.

5

Never ask us
Which is our way
As we never got
Any way.
We on the trees
Built the house;
Once a while
We go also to garden
Hearing the stories of
People sitting
We laugh mouth wide open

6

We have no history, nor geography
No past, nor future
In no zoo
Our ancestors
Are seen to you
But still we
Give our attendance

On the day
Of your death rites

7

Crow and holeya
Not much difference between the two
Both are dark both untouchables
We both can't enter
Anybody's house
We both are prohibited
The entry to temples
Sometimes on the
Temple's shrine
We urinate.
This freedom have
The holeya doesn't

*(Pinda is a ball of food item used in death rituals as a symbol of the soul of the dead)
(holeya is considered as a lowest of the castes in India by upper castes)*



Water system in Adilshashi's Period

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"Salilam Khalvidam Jeevanam" Mean's (Water is life in true sense)

- Rigveda

'Water', water everywhere, water denotes is quality of expanse, movements, storvation and life water has vast expanse immeasurable that covers 314th of earth surface, water has always movement and force in it, never stops unless it is obstructed, water has the quality of gathering in and making a store and repth, and finally water is equated with life itself 'Sallam Khalvidam Jivanam', a Rigvedic hymn — a secreted song of praise for water, it has equated 'water' with 'life' with 'water', Life does not survive without water, is also defines that if there is not water then there is no life at all.

BIJAPURADILSHASHI 'S',

The last of the Yadava Kings of Deogiri Shankara Deo was killed by Malikkafur, the General of Allauddin Khilji the Sultan of Delhi, and Malik Kafur's son Karimuddin was placed of Bijapur as the governor by his father. Subsequently from 1347 as Bahamani kings come to be in possession of Bijapur in 1478 in the new distribution of Bhamani Kingdom, Bijapur with its neighborhood was formed into a province and Muhammed Gawan, a Laureate, was appointed as its Governor later on the king found in him a treachery and therefore was executed in 1481. The King's favorite Yousef Khan was then appoirited in his place as the Governor of Bijapur.

The Bahamani power at Bidar declined. Yusuf Adil Khan began to serve his connections with Bidar, and in 1489 he himself declared independent ruler of Bijapur, Bidar was completely cut off from Bijapur, Yusuf Adil Khan, as the first King, established the Adilshah dynasty, and changed his name to Yusuf Adil Shah — King Yusuf Adil. From 1489 to 1686 A.D. eight rulers of Adil Shah Dynasty ruled Bijapur, Bijapur was fortunate to have benevolent rulers, it became ‘Dekhhan-Ki-Raani’ queen of the South (Deccan). Their contribution in Indo-Islamic architecture is great, unparalleled in any of the Deccan Sultan’s contribution. In magnificence, it surpasses even the moghuls. Now Bijapur is called as Vijayapur.

Vijayapur (Bijapur) was also well developed and the city population was increased from thousands to lakhs. To the growing population of the city, provision of water was a very much important matter to the state administration. Effective projects for the regular water supply were taken up and relatively the plans made by those engineers are so amazing, that our modern engineers, remain spellbound. Keeping in view the elevation of the land on the west and south of the city, efforts, were made to collect every drop of rain water to bring it to the city people. Their plan and implementation are simply a symbol of tremendous devotion to the public duty. But now its quite opposite.

Before Kishwar Khan, a Sardar under Ali Adilshah-I was appointed chief supervisor, for bringing water through canals from a distance of ‘5’ kms contemporary historian Ferishta says that it was Ali Adilshah-I who gave serious thought to the problem of water supply.

About ‘5’ km, west of Vijayapur (Bijapur), is the village called Torvi. About 1 to 1.5 km., away from the uplands. the rain water was made to flow by channels to a spit near the village and from there the water was carried by underground canals to Afjalpur, where it was collected in a large lake. From the

ruins of the water lake near by Afjalpur, which is locally called Ramling Lake', one can visualize the large extent of the lake. Now most of the Lake is occupied illegally and cultivated. The dilapidated parts of the barrage here and they are as high as 60 feet. Near this big tank there was another small lake meant to collect excess water and for the supply of water.

The underground channel from the main lake was about 8 feet broad and 6 feet deep. The layout of the channel must have been quite difficult at certain spots. one would see the cutting of the rock as deep as 60 feet. Here and there, are brick constructions, however generally the channel is stone built of the two, one was laid upto the old Jamiya Masjid and the other up to citadel. From citadel channel water was supplied to the palace within and meat of the citadel. Another channel was brought from the northern side, and water was collected in a huge tank built near Shahpur gate. The tank was known as *Karanji* care was taken to see that this tank was always full of water. This is nothing but the well known as 'Chand Bavadi'.

In honor of his queen Chand Bibi, Ali Adilshah-I got constructed this Bavadi in 1570, now it runs still the extant architecture is impressive about 144 ft north west and 156 ft east west, the rectangular well is provided with steps an all the sides. The arch gate is actually part of the well.

Taj Bavadi: Ibrahim Adilshah II, got constructed a well in 1620, in the name of Taj Sultana, his queen. Located near the Makka Gate, the Bavadi is provided with stately arched entrance about 35 ft in height. On the sides are demed towers. After the entrance is the screen wall, about 120 ft long, with broad platform On the both sides of the platform are flights of steps going below down to the water level. There is on the inside a passage of 6 ft wide on all three sides. This famous well covers an area of 12000 sq.ft. and is 52 ft deep. On all three sides of the well are resting rooms along with well wall. It is told that the well is the 3 second biggest in the subcontinent after Barakuvan in Gujrat.

Begam Talab: In spite of the Torvi water scheme and the construction of hundreds of water wells, it was not possible to provide enough water to the city. Mohammad Adilshah planned another scheme of water supply from outside. While his grandfather arranged to bring water from the western side, grandson got water from the southern side. About 2 km away from the city, Begam Talab, was constructed in honor of his beloved queen. This covered approximately 236 acres. of land. The water was brought through the earthen pipes instead of channels. The earthen pipes with flanged neck could therefore be joined into one another without allowing the water to percolate out. The water, thus brought into the fort, was stored in high square water towers known as Ganj. The water was lifted to the Ganj only on the basis of gravity.

To avoid accumulation of mud in the pipes, obstructing the water flow, incoming pipes were fixed at low level, and distribution pipes were fixed into it at about height of 4 ft to 6ft, so that mud would settle down at the bottom. The stored water from the Gunj was supplied through distribution pipes, four or ten or fifteen in number fixed into it, according to the demand. The water tower in the place complex is having 70 distributor pipes carrying water to the different parts of the place. These Ganjs are about 25 to 40 ft in height and 12 to 16 ft in width. There are steps from outside to inside to go up and down in order to clean the tank regularly.

City of Bavadis: In 1815, when Captain Syke was camping at Vijayapur, he traced about 700 stepped water wells and 300 drawing water wells within the fort. Even now one can still see some 200 water wells, in different sizes and structures. More than 20 of them are still in use. Some of the large wells in the city are Alikhan Bavadi, Andheri Bavadi, Basti Bavadi, Hasimpeer Bavadi, Ibrahimpur Bavadi, Ilal Bavadi, Maal Bavadi, Mas bavadi, Masjid Bavadi, Mubarak Bavadi, Mulkri Bavadi, Naalband Bavadi, Nagar Bavadi, Navab Bavadi, Neem Bavadi, Sonar

Bavadi, Taj Bavadi, Thaal Bavadi, Valas Bavadi Etc., of these the Chand and Taj Bavadis attract tourists till today. They are known for their unique architecture.

Water for pleasure sports in Vijayapur : For Vijayapur Sultans and Sardars, water was not only a common necessity in the daily life but also an item turned luxurious. In the outskirts of their stately mansions, were water ponds with water channels which were ornamental. The water troughs, with water gushing forth from the channels and dashing against them, were in the shape of circular, triangular, square, hexagonal or zigzag or even haphazard on plan. There were fish in the ponds. The water was indeed a feast to the eyes. There was a separate bathing tank for queens called *Jalamanjil*. Air-conditioning facility : In order to create cool interiors, water pipes with constant flow of water were inserted underground, in the core of the walls and between the double ceilings. There are many buildings with such facility existing every today. Viz., Faruk Mahal, Sat Manjil. Mumbarakkham Mahal, Summer Palace at Kumatgi etc.,

Mubarak Khan Mahal: Mubarak Khan Mahal, three floor building within a pond, located in the southwest corner of Jumma Masjid, is now in ruins. There are peacock heads oozing water in every storey. One can visualize how Miya-bibi might have been playing freely on the third floor of the artistic building, so cool and pleasant.

Salilam Khalvidam Jivanam' water is life and where there is water life exists there. Water is equal to life and this equation is from the ancient Vedic thought. Conservation of water and water harvesting are attempted in reality on surface and under-the ground through ages in the human history and many hydro-engineering works are experimented in the history of Adil Shahs also.

In the arid environs, the Adil Shaha in their Kingdom encompassing vest area, lat: 14th — 21 north and long. 74' — 77 east, and oughy 300 k.m x 250 k.m north south and east west respectively, measuring 75000 sq. kilo-meters, not only constructed religious and secular structures of Indo-Sarasenic order, but also for the wel-fare of their subjects built several water lakes, water canals, wells, reservoirs, water citerns, water pavilions, water fountains.

To be specific the then Adil Shahi Kingdom covered almost the present day north Karnataka. The Districts of Bijapur, Bagalkot, Gadag, Dharwad, Belgaum, Karwar, Koppal, Haveri, Raichur, Gulbarga, Bidar, etc., and Goa state, and further south parts of Shimoga, Hassan, Sira, Bangalore (Shivaji's father Shahaji Bhosale was a Governor of Adil Shahs at Bangalore), and the parts of Districts in Maharastra Sholapur, Ahammednagar, Stara, Sangli, and Southern part of Kolhapur, Ratnagiri, and Sindhadurga, in the Arabia sea, and Island, etc., covered their sway.



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Social Reality in Karnad's wedding album

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Karnad's *Wedding Album* exhibits the socio-cultural reality in Indian society. It questions the institution of marriage regarding sexual relations in globalized india. It also shows the growing fundamentalism in the contemporary Indian society.

The main plot of the play is concerned with the marriage of a twenty two year old girl Vidula Nadakarni. The Nadakarni family is typical middle class, Saraswath Brahmin family. The father is an aged man, who loves his brother Ramdas more than anybody in the family. The mother is a sensitive responsible woman who manages the home well. The couple has three children – the eldest Hema is married, the second is a son Rohit working in a teleserial group and the last one is Vidula, a beautiful girl. The family resides in Dharwad and they have a maid servant, Radhabai.

In the complete play the negative effect of westernization and technology is observed. Vivan Kaikaini a neighbor of the Nadakarni's is younger than Hema's son. He has a laptop and is a boy of the times. He has read the novels *Madame Bovary* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. These two English novels are considered sensual as they portray intimate scenes and were banned, when they were published. Vivan is a brilliant and intelligent boy

who feels proud of the books he has read. He tells Hema through letters that he is in love with her.

Darling, you don't know how I desire to crush you in my arms.....(2009:19)

He is not even bothered if Hema informs his mother about these letters. Hema's initial response is an expected one. She thinks,

Hema: Such filth. Filth. I have no time now. But are you going to stop this nonsense or shall I tell your mother?

Vivan: Go ahead, I'll also tell her I love you the moment I saw you the other day, I fell desperately in love. I want to die kissing you. I want to die with my hand inside your blouse. (2009:45).

In the above lines it can be observed that the teenager Vivan has become a pervert due to the influence of technology and English novels and is hence representative of globalization.

The play holds a mirror to contemporary Indian society and is depicted in the growing fundamentalism and addiction to technology on part of the youth. Vidula goes to internet café to play video games. But nobody knows what kind of video games she plays there. She goes there under a fake identity of technology on part of the youth. Vidula goes to internet café to play video games. But nobody knows what kind of video games she plays there. She goes there under a fake identity of Jezegell, inside a dark cabin with a computer. There she meets the disembodied Ananga and plays a porn videogame and even undresses herself, enjoying sexual pleasures.

Voice : First I'll strip you. Then I'll rape you.

Vidula : I can't wait. I can't.

Voice : But this timeI shan't stop there. I shall kill you and cut you up.

Vidula : I can't wait. I can't.

Voice : But this time..... I shan't stop there. i shall kill you and cut you up.

Vidula : Ooo! That sounds divine! I am yours.

Voice : into tiny pieces of meat.

Vidula : yes love, yes.

Voice : God! This is going to be a wow. i am getting all excited.

Vidula : go ahead. i am yours. All yours. (2009:65)

While the above lines from the play depict sexual pleasure of a youngster via the internet the following lines portray growing fundamentalism in the youth of India,

Youth 1 : You have cubicles in the outside foyer for video games?

Youth 2 : Why does she need a special room for video games?

Youth 1 : The moment I saw her sneak in alone with him I smelt a rat. I smelt a rotten bandicoot. (to Vidula) You are watching porn films, aren't you?

The play wright depicts growing casteism in contemporary India in the following development in the play,

Youth 2 : Listen, she is one of us.

Youth 1 : what do you means 'us'?

Youth 2 : shel belongs to our community.

Youth 1 : so what?

Youth 2 : Look. This once we'll let her go. (2009:69)

In the above lines Karnad depicts a secret erotic world. Through Hema scolds Vivan directly after reading his love letters, she enjoys them secretly. This can be observed in her actions towards the young boy. She "smiles to

herself as she shoves the letters into her handbag, then takes them out, folds them carefully and puts them inside her blouse” (2009:45)

In the play every character has a secret self. Vidula goes to play porn video games secretly. Hema enjoys the young Vivan’s love letters, further there is a secret relationship in the family that is of the mother with Ramdas, Her husband’s younger brother. The relationship is guessed at by the daughters after twenty two years and is a shock to the family members. Ramdas mentions his name in the column for name of the father in Vidula’s birth certificate. Vidula’s mother flies into a rage whenever his name is mentioned and states,

“I am sick and tired of your Ramdas. I regret the day I laid my eyes on him” (2009:73).

The prominence given to illicit sexual pleasure in Indian society can be seen in the inappropriate behavior of the cook Nagappa who does not spare even the little girl Vidula. In her childhood, she had been touched by him under her skirt quite accidentally it seemed but actually on purpose because of his great sexual appetite. This incident is recalled by the adult Vidula to her sister Hema in the following, “He would touch us in the oddest of spots” (2009:23).

Rohit also has a secret life, after marriage. He wants to talk to Isabel, the former girl friend, when his wife is not at home.

Prathiba: you know Isabel has been in Bangalore for the past six months. But you phoned her ten days ago. And invited her home. To dinner. On the day your wife left for Hyderabad! You didn’t mention that you were alone at home. But she guessed. She knows you well, she says. Since then you have asked her again. Twice within ten days. In spite of her refusal. What’s she make of it” You know she is vulnerable.

Rohit: you expect me to invite her home when my wife is there? To discuss our past relationship? (2009:61)

The whole play is about self centered characters. Everybody wants their happiness, whether it's physical or psychological. Even society is self centered. Though Hema knows so many things about physical abuses, she takes it calmly. Rohit marries Tapasya, when he loves Isabel. Vidula marries Ashwin, an NRI, who wants an innocent girl as wife and mother, which she is not. The play depicts the real Indian society as it is, without any exaggerations.

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Twelfth century women poets of Karnataka

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The purpose of this essay article is to elucidate the women poets of Karnataka in the twelfth century to readers. The concept of women writing poetry, composing songs and expressing themselves in the current scenario is considered quite a common affair. Surprisingly however the scenario at the end of the nineteenth century was such that it was considered a sin for a woman to be educated. It coincided with the introduction of the British system of education in India. The atmosphere was such that women either of upper/lower class/caste were unable to think of educating themselves either in the native, regional or formal British modes of education. The famous scholar Pundita Ramabai notes in her work *The High Caste Hindu Woman* (1888) that the laws of Manu as explicated in Manusmriti were considered sacred and strictly adhered to in every aspect of life of a Hindu. She describes the caste system in India and explains that the Vedas are believed by a devout Hindu as eternal, self-existing word of God, revealed by him at different stages. According to Hindu belief, besides the Vedas, there are twenty-five books of sacred law compiled at various times. These books regulate Hindu customs and religious institutes. Of the twenty-five sacred texts, the code of law giver Manu¹ ranks highest as it is believed to be sacred and second only to the Vedas.

¹According to writer Roshen Dalal in *Hinduism An Alphabetical Guide*. Penguin Books. New Delhi. (2010:242). Manu-refers to the archetypal man or the first man. In Manusmriti the Hindu legal text of the Dharmashastras Manu is the spiritual son of Lord Brahma.

In her work *The High-Caste Hindu Woman* (1888) Ramabai efficiently takes apart the philosophical foundations of Hinduism and methodically depicts how the patriarchal system has maintained the low status of women in Indian society by propagating such beliefs as,

The popular belief among high caste women was that their husbands will die if they should read or should hold a pen in their fingers (1981:103)²

If the above was the situation of women at the end of the nineteenth century the present article argues that it was a very conducive atmosphere for women's education in the twelfth century in Karnataka. Tharu and Lalitha in their ground breaking work *Women Writing in India 600 B.C. to the Present* (1993) identify women's writing of the Ancient and Medieval periods (1993:41) stating that women exhibited resistance in the twelfth century during the time of King Bijjala I in Karnataka. The social reformer, philosophical leader, statesman, Kannada poet Basavanna played a major role in the same. His chief contribution as the Chief Minister of his kingdom was to begin institution called Anubhava Mantapa translated as the "hall of spiritual experience". The purpose of this hall was to welcome men and women irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds to discuss spiritual and mundane questions of life. Basavanna was a great social reformer and thinker who spoke of eradicating social problems of caste system through reform in religion through his poetry known as Vachans. He rejected gender and social discrimination instead instructed the common man to seek happiness through doing work efficiently³. Inspired by his simple and humble approach to life despite being in a high position of Chief Minister to the King, many women of the times came out into the open with their

²Pundita Ramabai: *The High-caste Hindu Woman (1888)*. (Bombay: Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture. 1981).

³*Kayakawekailasa* - work is the path to heaven, happiness.
- work is worship

compositions. Scholars Dr. M.M. kalburgi, (1993) Dr. L. Basavaraju, (1996), Dr. P.V. Narayana (1983) and Dr. S.S. Marulaiah (2008) also trace women writing as resistance in this period. Dr. M.M. Kalburgi in a fourteen volume work titled *Vachana Samputa* (1993) speaks of thirty five women from all sections of the society freely expressing their views on society. Akkamahadevi and Sule Sankavva, who was a prostitute by profession, are spoken of the most and highlighted as their work survives today in the translated version by A.K. Ramanujan in the book titled *Speaking of Siva* (1973).

Akkamahadevi or Mahadevi or Mahdeviyakkha, a brilliant medieval Kannada poet, rebel and mystic, was a prominent figure of the Veerashaiva Bhakti movement of the 12th Century Karnataka. Her vachanas in Kannada, a form of didactic poetry are considered her greatest contribution to Kannada Bhakti literature. It is said that she was the first woman to write vachanas in Kannada literature. In all she wrote about 430 vachanas which is relatively fewer than that compared to some other saints of her time. Yet the term ‘Akka’-elder sister which is an honorific given to her by great Veerashaiva saints like Basavanna, Chenna Basavanna, Kinnari Bommayya, Siddharama, Allamaprabhu and Dasimayya speaks volumes of her contribution to the movement that was underway. She is in hindsight seen as a great and inspirational woman for Kannada literature and the history of Karnataka. She is said to have accepted the God Shiva ‘ChennaMallikarjuna’ as her husband, traditionally understood as the ‘madhurabhava’ or ‘madhurya’ form of devotion. Similarities can be drawn to Meera Bai, the sixteenth century saint, who considered herself to be married to Lord Krishna.

Akkamahadevi was born in Udatadi or Udagani near the ancient city of Banavasi, in Shikaripura Taluk, Shimoga district. From an early age she was initiated into the worship of Shiva. She considered this initiation to be the most important moment of her life and she became a devoted worshipper of Shiva. The form of Shiva she worshipped was known as

Chennamallikarjuna..., Which translate as “The Beautiful Lord, white as jasmine.” Much of Akkamahadevi’s poetry refers to her vivid descriptions of her beautiful Lord. And indeed she always signed her poems O Lord White as Jasmine. Legend says that the local Jain King of the area desired Akkamahadevi for she was a woman of charming beauty. Her family naturally agreed and perhaps was a little fearful of incurring the King’s displeasure should Mahadeviyakkha be uncooperative. The wedding is said to have taken place although some scholars dispute this however Akkamahadevi was unwilling to reciprocate the desire of the King. She was immersed in devotion to her Lord and she could not accept a life of servitude to an atheistic King. Her family was highly critical of her “unorthodox” behavior and this led Akkamahadevi to renounce her worldly life. She left her marriage and place of birth to live the life of a wandering mendicant and is said to have worn only long tresses, as she felt clothes were a needless adornment for one seeking the Lord. She is said to have then travelled to the region of Kalyana. Kalyana was a refuge for genuine Shiva bhakti; it stood out from the normal religious and social customs of the time. One of the leading saints Basavanna is said to be one of the first socialists because he spoke out against the inequities of the caste system. However even the leaders of this community Basavanna and Allama had some trouble accepting Mahadevi, they were somewhat disturbed by her naked appearance. However Allama was eventually impressed by both her humility and genuine spirituality and Mahadevi was accepted into the community. Much of her poetry relates to the dialogues Mahadevi, and with Allama as she was seeking to prove her spiritual intent. Her advice was to wholeheartedly yearn for the Divine without any inhibition. Mahadevi felt that external rituals were mostly unimportant, what was important was the consecration of the inner worship. Despite her years of great tapas Mahadevi still had not had the ultimate experience of merging into the infinite – into her Chennamallikarjuna. It is said that towards the end of her life, she retreated to the cave where her last desire was fulfilled. Merging into the infinite she quietly left the earthly stage, leaving behind a legacy of illuminating poetry. The life of

Mahadeviyakkha to some extent mirrors that of Meera Bai. Both female saints had to renounce the comforts and expectations of a family life. Both suffered censure and displeasure from parts of society who didn't appreciate their devotion to spirituality. However despite the difficulties both faced, the intensity of their divine intoxication is startlingly revealed in their poetry.

Akka's poems are moving, haunting and unforgettable. For women, her work embodies a radical legitimacy as she struggles in her poetry to go beyond much of Veerashaiva poetry to include the struggles of her body, struggles against the pettiness of roles she is forced into as a woman, struggles against a man who is also prince and a Jain, and against the social expectations that restrain her.

The following poems by Akkamahadevi translated by A.K.Ramanujan⁴ are presented here:

As the sun is the seed
For the bustle of the world
Mind is the seed
For the bustle of the senses.
I've only one mind
That caught in you
Channamallikarjuna
Is there worldly life for me?
I have Maya for mother-in-law
For father-in-law, the world
Like tigers; three brothers-in-law,
And the husband's thoughts
Are full of laughing women;

⁴*Ibid.* (1973:111-143)

No god, this man,
And I cannot cross the sister-in-law.
But I will
Give this wench the slip
And go cuckold my husband with
Hara, my Lord.
My mind is my maid:
By her kindness, I join
My Lord,
My utterly beautiful Lord
From the mountain peaks,
My Lord white as jasmine,
And I will make Him
My good husband.

The arrow that is shot should penetrate so deeply
that even the feathers do not show.
Hug the body of the Lord so tightly
That the bones must be crushed to crumble.
Weld to the divine until the very welding disappears.

I have fallen in love, O mother with the
Beautiful One, who know no death,
Knows no decay and has no form;
I have fallen in love, O mother with the
Beautiful one, who knows no death,
knows no decay and has no form;

I have fallen in love, O mother with the
Beautiful one, who has no middle, has
No end, has no parts and has no features;

I have fallen in love, O mother with the
Beautiful One, who knows no birth and
Knows no fear.

I have fallen in love, O mother with the
Beautiful One, who is without any family,
Without any country and without any peer;
ChennaMallikarjuna, the Beautiful, is my husband.
Fling into the fire the husbands who are subject
to death and decay

Sule Sankavva was a poet in Kannada, and only one of her poems has come down to us. This poem makes it clear that she was Bhakti poet, besides also being a prostitute. She is the only instance of a practitioner of this profession she does not seem to have been a high-class courtesan following the Bhakti path. Her poem is called '*In my harlot's trade*' and details how the God Shiva comes to her, but she refuses him as she has already taken another man's money. Shiva wears the aspect of a 'polluted' wanderer, and if she cohabits with him she will be tortured and punished by society. The irony of the poem comes from the contrast between Shiva's godhead and the conventional reaction of disgust and repudiation of his unconventional appearance and ritual impurity, a reaction that threatens her also, if she goes with him.

In my harlot's trade
having taken one man's money
I daren't accept a secong man's sir.
And if I do,
They'll stand me naked and
Kill me, sir.
And if I cohabit
With the polluted,

My hands nose ears
They'll cut off
With a red-hot knife, sir,
Ah, never, no
Knowing you I will not.
My word on it,
Libertime Shiva.

This work of the thirty five women poets needs to be examined for the role it played on the women compers in giving them economic and social independence. The written work needs to be examined for the contestations they sought to resolve from the contemporary literary studies and theories. Another aspect that could be researched is the change of thought in the intervening periods of time from twelfth to the nineteenth centuries, as it depicts such an extreme contrast in thought regarding the education of women.



Shobha Nayak's Poems

Translated by: Dr R.G.Hegde

EGO

I am a book
Of aesthetic poetry
In Braille script. The tragedy is
My reader is not blind.

The blind eyed poem moves forward
And dashes against the fire-fly.
For the night to become naked
Light has to douse itself.
How shameless is the ocean
That becomes naked
Even during the broad daylight?

When the seeds stepped into the field
A question arose in the mind of the fruit:
Seed superior? Or the field?
The suppressed cry inside the belly superior!
The tree of light and shade cried silently.

The name of the pleasure you derive
When I reel under pain is-
Ego.

HISTORY AND THE POEM

In the coronations of the purana's
He is, not me; in the languid smiles of history
He is, not me.
In the decisive moments of the past
And a Present that seeks to enforce a decision,
He is, not me.

Time did not wait for me
Night did not cool the simmering heat
Of the day. Night is boiling and I am baking.
In the light and the moonlit night
He is, no me.

Through – out the course o Histroy
Kitchen for me, the burning stove is the bed
On which he the Patriarch of history
Writes his own letters. Even my bed
Is not mine.

For him all that is. For me, if I only keep quiet.
Mine is the poetry that wails silently.
The History that echoes loudly
In the corridors is his.

Translated by: Dr. R.G. Hegde

THE STONE

The stone is not that stone, friend,
It is the mind of the poet
The stone is not hard
It is the mind of the poet

The tender feeling hidden
Inside the bud of the stone
Varieties of postures probed by the artist
Who found the shape.

Understand, dear friend,
The unseen intestine inside the stone
See how the locks are shaped
Under the hammer of the one who craved and carved.

The belle of Belur, The Gommata at Belagola
What imagination of the architect!
Life is like this, Friend,
Hundreds of unseen written within the seen;
The sweat that flowered
Out of a hundred experiences.

Translated by : Dr. R.G. Hegde

LIVING

Breath without greenery
How many flowers in the fields!
Unexplainable existences.

Emotions do not need mouth
Flowers do not want pain.
There in no living if flower and pain do not meet
Merging into to one another.

Living does not have any other name.
Lving is mere living
Search for breath in the fields
Only the pleasure of being on the search
Is enough.

*Translated by : **Dr. R.G. Hegde***

I AM A RIVER THAT FLOWS

I was a river that flows
In my yearning to touch the sky
I hankered to merge with the sea.

Me, the sweet water
Crushed innumerable stones and rocks
On the way
To mingle with the sweetwater.
Created beautiful springs and fearful floods
Both and created mind-craving beauty
As well as a house of death.

Waived both hands and called
Swallowed those who came facing.
Mesmerized those at the distance with my waves.

In my expectation to reach the sky.

Translated by : Dr. R.G. Hegde

Mr. Abdulrazak Aralimatti's "The English poets of Vijaypur City"

*Review by Prof R.K. Kulakarni
Retd. Professor of English*

Indian English poetry has nearly two century old history. It presents a rich panorama of creative minds right from Derozio, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Tagore, Aurobindo to Kamala Das, A.K.Ramanujan, V.K.Gokak, Armando Menezes, Shankar Mokshi Punekar, Arun Kolatkar and a host of others. It has been an ever-flowing river joining the vast ocean of Indian literature. It has thus an inherent sustaining power.

Indian poetry is a significant and spectacular part of Indian English literature. It is not an off-shoot of British poetry as much as American or Australian poetry is not. It is an expression of Indian sensibility and ethos through the medium of English.

The present anthology title The English poets of Vijaypur City is work belonging to Indian English Poetry. This is a brain-child of Mr. Abdulrazak Aralimatti, a poet himself, who has put his best in bringing to the light of day, through this work, eleven poets of the city of Vijayapur with their selected English poems along with the biographical notes on these writers. Indeed a very commendable job. He eminently deserves appreciation and admiration of all lovers of poetry. Kudos to him for this first-ever wonderful work!

Vijaypur has never suffered from the dearth of literature though driven hard by drought more often than not. Old and middle Kannad epics like Pamp Ramayana and Toravi Ramayana, the rich corpus of Vachan and Das literature, Sufi poetical works and a good many classics of the Adilshahi period like ‘Kitab-e-Navaras’ etc., speak volumes for the memorable legacy of the past. The present anthology of poems is in continuation of this great literary tradition though in the English language.

This work contains 59 poems selected from eleven poets of whom two are not alive. Except two all of them are in their sixties and seventies and one more common features of these compositions is the meliowed experience of life expressed in contemplateive and philosophical musings. Therefore, they form a special category of poetry in the sense that it is meant not for entertainment but for enlightenment. One more thing, they do not mistake verse for poetry.

The bunch of seven poems selected from Shri Siddheshwar Swamiji’s ‘Songs of Silence’, the title containg of paradoxical truth, is the crest jewel of this poetical anthology. We need to read the Swamiji’s poetry as the product of a seer-poet’s mystic vision. It should be received as we receive the poetry of Shri Raman Maharishi, Shri Aravind Maharishi and Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. These poems have originated from deep down depth of the soul’s silence. Therefore, the parameters of English prosody and criticism take us nowhere in understanding them which are spontaneous expressions of philosophical and spiritual thoughts. They need to be viewed from within in the light of music and elegance of ‘felt thoughts’. While reading these poems you feel as though a Kannada Vachankar like Allam Prabhu or Yogi Siddharam is speaking in English. Indeed they are the echoes of great enlightened soul, gems from the bright blue ocean of wisdom and reflections from the illumination beyond our ken. Let us have a glance at each of these poems.

‘Man the finder’ shows the futile struggle of man, the “brainy bee”, busy in discovering the mysteries and riddles of Nature; at last he gets lost in the infinite nothing; if the line “he lost his own being “ is an anti-climax, it is dramatically followed by an illuminating paradox, viz, “in this loss he found himself”! The poem ‘Words’ speaks powerfully of the power of words, deep and wide, on the earth, in the sky and beyond; words can reach where the mind cannot, can construct or destroy, can create God or Satan and their power is simply ubiquitous and universal; it is words that join hearts or break them; they can start and stop wars. At last the poet says in happy internal rhymes, “they jingle, tinkle and chime, they reel, fling and waltz”. ‘Illusion’ describes how all things are an illusion; pleasure and pain, dark and white is all illusion; solution to problem and the problem to solve is all illusion. ‘Belief’ creates, as the poet says, good and bad, love and hatred, heaven and hell; makes men mad after name and fame to go down in poetry and history; if belief fades out into truth, then man will have real freedom of saying and doing in the light of understanding rid of pride and prejudice.

‘Mind Fooled the Man’ say “Mind paints heaven and hell” reminding us of Milton’s sublime dictum — “It is mind that joins and asunders, soothes and harms, creates things neither seen nor heard.

‘In Search of Life’ is again a poem emphatically bringing out man’s shadow-boxing in the search of life. Life is said to be movement. All right. But where and how to search it? You can find neither inside the body nor in the world outside. If you try to search it within yourself deep and deeper, you will vanish like mist. The last of this group of poems in ‘The Soul’. This seer-poet says that the soul is not at all in need of being sought and found; you are the soul and it is you. Then where do you search it? “Know thyself” is the key to the door of the soul. Many have spent their lives, seeking it searching and worshipping it but all in vain. See the succinct, epigrammatic ending of the poem— “Is it not you? Are you not it? If yes, why worry? If not, why worry?”

A.H. Farooqui, a natural singing soul, is a master of metre and rhythm; his poetry is one of ease and elegance and it has enlightening philosophical stuff and an element of mysticism. He is a staunch God-believer who believes that man is a puppet in His hands and He shows His play, a 'leela' for His own pleasure. Service to man is service to God is the theme of 'The Blessed Life'. 'Object of Life' advises man to be in life and out of it at the same time, giving an original and apt analogy of pieced of earthen pot that "Will mix with dust nor ever will rot", which stands for man's uncontaminated soul. The pair of poems 'The Spiritual Wine' and 'God's Reply' reaffirm the poet's staunch faith in God, suggesting that man should ever be drinking the love of God to receive Him and His love.

G.S. Bhavi is an idealistic poet with a lot of concern for the society and the country. His is a sincere craving for an orderly and morally correct society where one would find knowledge and wisdom, peace and harmony. He is good at composing poetical sketches of personalities. 'A Salute to my Professor' depicts a lively picture of the renowned scholar and teacher of English, Prof. Armando Menezes. 'The Tree' is a well-structured piece of writing which effectively brings out how Indian democracy has fallen into a sinister mockery. But it should be said that Mr. Bhavi is more of a righteous upholder of noble values in verse than of a poet with artistic ability and skills.

Mohan Tilgul is a serious, sensitive and sometimes devastatingly unconventional poet in his thought and expression. He has zero tolerance —to put it in journalistic language —for taboos, sham and snobbery, hypocrisy and hollowness. He is always a forward-looking contemplative poet. He brings to bear his haunting past on the tone and content of his poetry. There are undoubtedly, echoes (unavoidable in his case) from T.S. Eliot. Originality shines through some of his phrases and idioms like "pangs of fire and thirst", "liquid fear", "mortal gown", "with ashes all gone", etc. 'My Mother' is a moving elegy taking the poet to the terribly smothering

time of his life. It is studded with powerful images. He is simply adoration for his mother, “a goddess in flesh and blood” who was “first in probity and foremost in love”. ‘Shadown’ is a poem woven out of the past childhood with happy as well as disquieting moments. See how the poet concretises the abstract in the line “Emotions flew like birds” while telling the ‘Saga of Being a Girl’.

Gopal R. Kulkarni (Popularly known as GRK) with a shining record as a teacher and educationist is overtly and emphatically a moralistic and didactic poet. Two poems ‘college’ and ‘Youth of the Day’ focus on the duties and responsibilities of today’s youth. He advises them to have such dreams that they will be able “to turn them into reality” and that their achievement will make them a proud progeny of their worthy parents and enable them to march on the path of roses and roses for themselves and their country. He cautions them against banking upon ‘Luck’ which he interestingly defines as “Labour under correct knowledge”. GRK has no tolerance for hefty-salaried youth” on their heels and wheels” frittering away their time, money and energy on wrong activities spending week-ends that” weaken and shaken” the roots of their heritage with “drink, dance” and what not in their blind imitation of the western lifestyle. This poet views woman as divinity and says” “Love thy name is woman” right in contrast to the Hamletian cynical view “Frailty thy name is woman”. In the same poem he fumes at the naked exploitation of woman and wails “What is the way out for her Deliverance?”, who delivers mankind. GRK does not follow the requisites of poetic craft but moves on with the verve and zest of a social reformist.

The poet Ramesh Joshi is born with the love of poetry and philosophy. He seems to see discord at the heart of human life which makes him search for an enduring harmony and peace. A kind of restlessness and spiritual craving turn him per force Godward. “Life Relationships” shows the way to God through the three-fold path of knowledge, devotion and renunciation. Adi Shankaracharyas’s philosophy has had a tremendous influence on his poetry. The poem ‘The Child’s play’ shows the ephemeral nature of man’s

life, giving the analogy of a child playing” on the sand of time”. Despite the clichés and platitudes, which could have been avoided for a more pointed poetic effect, the poem ‘Love to Live in Harmony’ drives home the thematic idea that all castes and communities of India should live in harmony like sugar dissolved in milk mild”. The most successful and satisfactory of Mr. Joshi’s poems in this collection is “The Elegy of Life”. This poem is created out of a Sanskrit subhashit. It is a pictorial depiction of man’s short-lived existence nurturing fleeting joys and hopes under the shadow of death represented by the elephant here. “Lotus jail”, “dreaming unreal real”, “ever contracting life” are really succinct phrases. This is thematically and technically well-structured poem, an artistic creation rich with slant. ‘The Cuckoo’s Cacophony ‘ too is piece with a sad note and a forlorn feeling. Mr. Joshi will harvest a richer crop, if he moves on wider arenas.

Rafiq Ahmad Killedar’s poetry moves under the shadow of bitter memories. He is restlessly curious to know the mystery behind God’s creation. Indeed very original and appealing is the pathetic fallacy in what he speaks of couple of souls killed on a bridge corner, “Where huge trees drip tears, Where PEARLS of memories scattered. Where autumn leaves cover all road”. The poem ‘ How Long’ expresses death-wish because long painful living is worse than death. The poem ‘The Beauty’ is a lovely tribute to nature. Mr. Killedar is not a diligent craftman but is like a high-strung guitar that vibrates at the touch of gentle wind. See the sad sweet note in the lines:

“But how long we go along
Let’s move to a burial ground
On a big lawn of peace”.

Killedar is Keatsian in his plaintive notes.

Prakash singh Rajput tries to see unity among all things and beings in the whole creation. But his problem is his inability to cohere his ideas into an artistic whole. 'Death Winner' creates a daring hero, You find beautiful and well-coined phrases and lines such as "Smile curtains his worries and bothers" and "fought with his fate". Better he needs to take care of syntax, the lack of which leads to obscurity. 'Maybe' is indeed a beautiful piece. The poet keenly observes the movements and chirping of a bird. The bird's plight is indeed man's also in the time of drought.

R.I.Ijeri is a bilingual poet and an able translator of Kannada poems into English. He enjoys felicity of expression; ease and grace are the hallmarks of his translations; he deftly uses internal and ending rhymes. The Vachan 'Act on my Father', 'They Invoke in Vain' and 'Prayer without faith' emphatically speak of total surrender on the part of the devotee to God for His grace, while 'Pride and Pride', a very aptly phrased composition, speaks to our heart and head stressing the removal of pride for God's blessing. These are effective transcreations. Mr.Ijeri will certainly scale greater heights if he tries other forms of poetry too.

Dr. Sheetal Harkuni, deserves special mention for the thematic excellence and the matured poetic vision. Her poetic inspiration comes from the treasure book of life. She experiences the divine presence in every moment of observation, no matter whether it is personal or impersonal matter around her. By virtue of being a reputed medical professional, she has a keen insight of anatomy and diagnostic excellence in the observation of daily affairs of life. Her poem 'Life', is "a tender leaf....sweet as the drop of juice" to enjoy. Hard work, and daunting courage makes life worth enjoying, and she further adds that it" is in your hands". 'Daily Drama' opens with refrain:" Though there are no claps, we all participate in that", speaks of the Hero (God), who shines there. "Half of His day goes in writing, Later He directs us all". The Hero writes our parts to dusk. Each one of us has a part, for each he has worked a lot, elucidates the supremacy of the divine controller of the universe, who moves and directs our lives inch by inch; in

the same breath, Dr. Sheetal concedes, that “Each one of us has a part, for each he has worked a lot”. She reaffirms the faith in life, that “Each story has its glamour, whether it’s story of rich or poor”.

The poem “He is There”, further elucidates the power of divine glory that guides human life, “someone behind these silent breeze and waving seas, He is there, I can feel”. She declares with confidence that only the good, loving, and innocent honest souls feel” the blooming flower in life”.

The other two poems, ‘Orate Lectures’ and ‘Seasons’ unlock the deep commitment for duty as worship of God, grace abounding, that bind the tender cord of life. Her poems, although appearing different, share the common bonds of the spiritual insight, and the restless craving to attain perfection.

Abdulrazak Aralimatti, is an important poet in more than one sense. He subjects himself to self-intro section and believes that a poet is answerable to his inner voice and God. He is constantly in search of peace and solace from within. ‘Prologue’ describes how a poet should be and what he should do, while ‘Epilogue’ says that great poets of the past sang immortal songs here and their songs are recited there in Heaven today by angels. ‘I See the World’, a genuine piece of poetry, lays before us the truth that we find the world as we see it and receive it. ‘A Piece of Glass’ foregrounds the view that our spiritual perception of mundane things changes our world-view elevating our vision to the Eternal and making us know that many fly and the One remains. To this highly contemplative and truth seeking poet his own birth is an enigma and is at sea, with deep turmoil within, to know and serve the purpose of life. Comparing as he does in the poem ‘Man’s Ages In Sun’s Stages’ man’s earthly journey to the daily journey of the sun, he very poetically closes” As the sun enters the earth’s womb, So does man enters the tomb”. Aralimatti will surely prove a poet of greater significance, if he moves more confidently and on wider fields.

Thank you, Mr.Aralimatti, for the delight this anthology has given me. I am sure this work will be heartily received by the connoisseurs of poetry.



Lokopakaram An Introspection

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Lokopakaram is a unique work in Kannada Classical literature. It was the first of its kind and stood distinctively as an independent book in Kannada literature giving an insight about the community welfare, health and education. The title, Lokopakaram itself declares that, this is an essential Knowledge for every human being. This book also brings in the wonderful concept of Encyclopedia in ancient Kannad knowledge. It was written in the eleventh century A.D. According to H.Sheshayyanagar, the first editor of Lokopakaram it was written in the 1025 AD. The great scholar Chavundaraya wrote this book. Chavundaraya consolidated the physical materialized things on the earth in a systematic manner in his work Lokopakaram. His intention was to codify the integral knowledge with scientific way, which in daily utensils.

Undoubtedly Chavundaraya is one of the ancient multi disciplinary scholars in Kannada. By the literary evidences, we can find that, he was a resident of village called Mahabali. It is in Shikaripura Taluk of Shivamogga District. He was a poet and scholar in the royal court of king Vikaramasimha of Chalukya dynasty. Chavundaraya has given details about himself in his work Lokopakaram. In the 'Peethika Prakaranam' he tells about himself and the literary rendition of his family. Also he tells that, he had received many awards from the societies like 'Dayavantha', 'Sathysandha', 'Dharma

murthi', 'Mantadarevatta', 'Arivina kani', 'Aachalita vachan' and etc. Chavundaraya was also honored with the titles like 'Shista kalpadruma', Kaaya Vilaasa', 'Vagvdhumandana tilaka', 'Dharma Dharmaatmaja', 'Dharma murthi', 'Viprakulottama', 'Bhudhabandhu', by the king Chalukya Vikrama Simha. The inscription (114 of Ephigarphica Karnatika) of SHikaraipura which belongs to 1047 AD emphasizes his Prashasti (illusions).

When we see the structural features of Lokopakaram, it has been divided into twelve independent chapters called Adhikarams. Each adhikaram tells us about the independent and inter-dependent expressions. They also cover one or many disciplines depending upon the categories. The work creates an artistic way of presentation. The whole work has been structured with the ancient meteoric sense. All work is presented in the form of 'Kanda' (four line poem) and Khyata Karnataka (six most popularized four line meteoric form of poem in Kannada) vrutta. These are the most prominent forms of structuring the poetry in Kannada literature. Chavundaraya was not only a scholar, but also a good poet and a narrator. His way of presentation is excellent in all manners.

The first and foremost Adhikaram in the Lokopakaram tells us about the author and scholarly rendition of his family. It depicts about the Daivatha sthotram, introduction of his work and its importance. In this chapter Chavundaraya discusses about the concept of the Indian calendar system and its nature. The Indian calendar is called as panchag which contains waras, thithis, nakshatras, karanas and yogas. The seven waras, fifteen thithis, twenty seven nakatras, five karanas and karaka yougas are depicted in the chapter as per the Indian astrological system. This kind of Classification of the time will be decided over the human destinies in their lives. The author stands upon the ancient Indian theology in this presentation.

In the second Adhikaram author Chavundaraya, delas with the social behavior of human beings and their rituals. How the Varnaashrama dharma concept existed in Indian society and the structure of the social hierarchy.

Author also tells about the Social organizations like marriage and its forms which exist even in the contemporary society and how the rituals play important role in the human life. He has projected the anuloma and viloma vivahas in the systematic presentation.

In the third Adhikaram, the Author discusses about the vastu shastram. In this chapter the author deals with the entire vastu vijnana of ancient India. He has given the instructions about, what measures should be taken to construct any house, temple, public buildings and etc. He gives specific information about the kind of materials that should be used for the durability of the buildings. He mentions about the various kinds of wood used for residential, commercials, public utility and construction of forts. He gives specific directions for residential commercial, public utility purpose buildings and related things.

In the fourth Adhikaram, author Chavundaraya says about forecasting the weather and its features. He gives a lot of idea about forecasting the events like heavy rain, less rain, flood, earthquakes and other natural calamities for the coming years through the Indian system. It is appropriate to appreciate the attempts of the author about scientific way of presentation of the understandings towards nature of wind, water and sunlight with authenticity. With the assistance of the results obtained from these studies, people were aware about monsoon rain, winter and summer seasons. This science leads the agriculture which was, and even today is the backbone of our economy. In the last part of the chapter, the author gives the details about sowing seeds, the time of sowing, and its cultivation and cropping.

The fifth Adhikaram of the book Lokopakaram by Chavundarya tells us about the water, its sources and necessity of water preservation and consumption. In his opinion, water plays a vital role in everyone's life. He also informs about the features of construction of tanks, reservoirs and

digging wells including selection of places for them In the next part he depicts the nature of the water.

In the sixth chapter the author deals with the issues of bio-ecology. It is called as 'Vrukshayurveda Shastra'. These botanical aspects are seriously discussed in this Adhikaram. Different kinds of trees, veins, plants are classified into various groups. Naturally growing forests are maintained under natural law of helping in the growth of each other. In this chapter author Chavundarya strongly advocates the natural law proving with the help of many examples of the trees growing together. Then he has proceeded the scientific way of classification of trees in the forest.

In the seventh chapter the author deals with the scented gas extracts from plants, flowers and animals. This is used as perfumes and also as flavouring agents. He classified the flavors and smell into two divisions. One is pro-people and another one is anti people livelihood. Also Chavundarayaya mentions various kinds of gases. He explained that some are storable fragrance in the solid form. He listed out that kind of flavors and its uses.

In the eight chapter author Chavundarayaya depicts about the Soopa Shastra. It means science of food. He describes the various recipes and classifies the food material into two groups. One is vegetarian and another is non vegetarian. He also tells about the various sweets which existed in the 11th century. Separate list of food items made by the ghee and oil is also given. He strongly advises that mixing of food articles is allowed, but not while cooking. For instance, mixing of ghee and oil, mixing of ghee and curd are not allowed. And also he tells about food poisoning and their causes and remedial measures for the same. This chapter mentions about more than hundred and forty ancient food items that were used in the daily food. He gave recipe of all the items also.

The Ninth chapter of Adhikaram is meant for medical science. Mainly it contains two important parts. One is human health science and medicine and another one is animal health. The author has the deep concerns about the human illness, its causes and remedies. He mentions about the medicines for fevers, flue, cough and other seasonal diseases. Skin, Stomach, intestine and other internal human diseases were also discussed in that. In this section of animal health, Chavundaraya tells about the animal diseases which bothered elephants, horses, camels, cattles and other domestic animals. He discusses the facts under the sub sections like ‘Gajashastra, Hayashastra’.

In the tenth chapter Author Chavundaraya deeply concerns about various poisoned infections which are harmful to the human body and health by biting snake, Scorpio, rat, insects, domestic and wild animals. He instructs the diagnosing method and remedial measures for these infections. This was very essential and useful profession in that time. This discipline called as ‘Vishavaidya Shastra’. So he meant for one chapter for it.

The eleventh chapter is meant for animals and birds. He classifies them into two categories. One is domestic and another is wild animals. He mainly concentrates on features of domestic animals and their parts. Also discusses about its kinds and breeds which was useful for the living of horse, elephants, oxen and cows and camels. He also tells about their human friendly natures.

In the last chapter the author tells about the ‘shakunashastra’ which was very popular during 11century. This shastra depicts about the presage. It tells about the things happening in the near future and in advance. It was decided by beliefs based on experiences in social segments. He strongly advocated that theses practices were ritualized from ancient period and established in human minds. Then he tells about the good and bad presages based on the gesture and sound made by the animals and birds. In his narration the author opined that the human parts also instruct the presages by gesturing.

The Eye, Thai, Shoulders, Tung, and hands particularly curves on the hand decide their fate.

Thus, the Lokopakaram is an integral work of Chavundaraya. It is a wonderful work for the welfare of the human beings. He focuses on various subjects of livelihood. The title tells about their objectives. The word 'Lokopakara' in Kannada means 'helping hand to the community or society'. Through this work Chavundaraya preserved ancient various knowledge disciplines. He has created his own place in the History of Kannada Literature.



KUVEMPU'S SHUDRA TAPASVI: A POST MODERNIST STUDY

Dr. Basavaraj Donur

Kuvempu, a national poet of Karnataka, is undoubtedly the greatest writer of 20th century Kannada Literature. He was a poet, novelist, short story writer, essayist, biographer and playwright. He excelled in all forms of literature. Although his name and fame mainly rests on his two epic-novels, his poetry including his epic poem *Shree Ramayana Darshanam*, his plays and prose writings cannot be undermined. Kuvempu was the first Kannada poet who reinterpreted the time tested Indian myths, questioned the stands they take and changed and twisted them for the purpose of retelling. He demystified myths and used them to communicate his thoughts in light of humanism and rationalism.

An attempt is made to study Kuvempu's play *ShudraTapasvi* (A Shudra's Meditation) from a post-modernist perspective. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are regarded as great Indian metanarratives— a fact that every Indian writer has acknowledged from time immemorial. Major poets in Indian vernaculars have written epics, poems and plays based on the *Ramayana*. In Kannada alone, many versions of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* have come out. Kuvempu's *Shree Ramayana Darshanam* is a new addition to the list of epics written on the *Ramayana* in modern times.

Kuvempu's *Shudra Tapasvi* which appeared in the early decades of 20th century showed the ways in which the Indian epics could be interpreted and the manner in which they could be deconstructed to suit modern times on the one hand and it hurt the religious sentiments of the people who believed in the epics on the other. The shock that the play gave to writers and the traditional minded people was so forceful and so intense that they all vehemently objected to Kuvempu's treatment of epic. It made even a great writer like Masti to oppose what Kuvempu was trying to advocate through his play. Their objection was why Kuvempu made Rama in the play to save the life of *Shambuka* and forgive him. They argued that Kuvempu tried to misinterpret the epics and he failed to understand the Rajdharma that the epic tries to uphold. But Kuvempu was not discouraged by the opposition and what he did in *ShudraTapasvi*, he did the same with renewed force in his subsequent works..

Kuvempu borrowed the episode of Shambukavadha (the killing of Shambuka) from the *Ramayana* to write his play *ShudraTapasvi*. He tried to demystify by re-writing the myth. Kuvempu wrote his play at a time when people still used to think of literature and culture within the parameters of *Sanatanadharma* and they were conditioned by the taboos of their times. But writers like Kuvempu raised the banner of revolt against such a parochial and one sided point of view.

In Valmiki's *Ramayana* a Brahmin comes to Rama with a complaint that his son died because a Shudra called Shambuka did meditation. The Brahmin argues with Rama and appeals to him to protect dharma by killing Shambuka because of whose meditation, he believed, his son died. Being a Shudra Shambuka was not supposed to meditate as it was an exclusive privilege of the Brahmins. Rama in Valmiki's *Ramayana* agrees and kills Shambuka.

But Kuvempu in his play *Shudra Tapasvi* demystifies this popular myth and breaks the metanarrative of Valmiki. In his play Rama does not kill

Shambuka at the behest of a Brahmin. Instead, he tells the Brahmin that his son did not die because Shambuka had done meditation. Kuvempu's Rama does not allow the Brahmin to commit the sin and he thus saves both Shambuka and the Brahmin.

A post modernistic analysis of this text reveals that Kuvempu rejected Valmiki's *Ramayana* by denying its metanarrative status. One of the most important features of post modernism is its rejection of treating any one text as metanarrative and its rejection of any one centre. The paper makes an attempt to study Kuvempu's *Shudra Tapasvi* from this perspective.

Of all the modern Kannada writers of the *Navodaya* (literally New, Birth, Renaissance) period, Kuvempu seems to be the one writer with whom many generations have felt the need to enter into a dialogue. His creative and discursive writings possess the strength of an expansive and inclusive vision and the subversive power of interrogation. His fiction has the solid specificity of social detail with which it creates a universe of its own, world which reconstructs the lived history of the *Malnad* region from late 19th century to the fourth decade of the 20th century, tracing the disintegration of an agrarian feudal society, its unobtrusive exposure to modernity mediated through education, English, socio-cultural reformist movements, English romantic poetry and the culture. The novels of Kuvempu construct an extraordinary phase of cultural transformation in which a colonial negotiation with 'modernity' takes place within a specific historical framework and the analysis of this historical framework is a prerequisite task to under the major concerns of his novels. Kuvempu's novelistic world is abrasively local. It is polyglossic, woven with dialects and registers inseparable from their geographical and social locations in caste groups and professions. The thick descriptions of the human and natural worlds in his novels perform a double subversive role. On the one hand the model of English, realistic regional novel of the Hardyian kind is subversibly transformed into a loosely knit folk epic model in which all kinds of narrative

styles merge. On the other hand such writings also subverted the hegemony of the cultural mainstream which had, until Kuvempu began to write, never permitted the 'Shudra Loka' to be represented in any form of writing. From the very beginning Kuvempu conceived writings as an act of cultural subversion, of creating space for the subaltern experimental world of the Shudra and the Dalits. He uses the lyric (of the loosely Wordsworthian style) to document the mundane life of the unlettered people of the forest (kaadu, forest, is the central metaphor of all his works) just as he uses it to record epiphanies of oneness with the cosmos. His major plays *ShudraTapasvi* and *Beralge Koral* (A life for a Thumb) are a conscious reworking of the myths of the mainstream with the objective of questioning the *Varna* and *Jathi* systems which they had been enlisted to support in the past. Masti VenkateshIyengar's disturbed and angry response to *ShudraTapasvi* ostensibly raises the question about the freedom of the writer to rework and tamper with canonical myths and traditional material. In reality it is an expression of the insecurity faced by the brahmanical hegemony at the authority arrogated by a *Shudra* writer to reinterpret the traditional. The fear was that the cultural homogeneity ensured by an inherited main tradition and its privileged brahmanical interpretations was being shattered by a young writer of genius who was out to subvert it. In Kuvempu's play *Jalagara*, Shiva describes himself as a *Jalagara* (scavenger) of the world and aligns himself with the real *Jalagara* against the brahmanical priesthood, the pandits and rulers. Kuvempu was always a threat to the hegemony of the cultural elite because unlike Shivaram Karanth, the modern agnostic, Kuvempu claims the canonical tradition from the *Upanishads*, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* as his own and with inwardness and confidence goes on to reinterpret it to suit his humanist, egalitarian vision. In the process, he interrogates and denounces the *Varna* and *Jathi* system, feudalism, monarchy and all form of imperialism. In the most extraordinary feat achieved in Kannada cultural history Kuvempu went on to secure the image of a *Rasa Rishi*, *Rashtrakavi* (*national poet*) and became the most enduring icon of modern Kannada culture without ever giving up his questioning of

the mainstream. One explanation is that he did not reject tradition. Accepting the Vivekananda reformist model, he could locate himself as critical insider who wanted to reconstruct the tradition purged of its evils. His critique of Brahmanism, *Varna*, *Jathi* and cultural hegemony is so powerful that the recent Dalit and Bandaya (Protest Literature) literary cultural movements have acknowledged a bonding with Kuvempu. Even with legitimate misgivings about the Sanskritising element in his writings, the present generation has been able to re-read and appropriate Kuvempu in its own struggle against the consolidation of the brahmanical hegemony.

Some of Kuvempu's plays such as *Shudra Tapasvi*, *Yamanasolu* and *Smashana Kurukshetra* try to demystify popular Indian myths on the one hand and reconstruct them in light of English education we had in the early decades of the 20th century on the other. These plays can be read not only as literature but also as inquiries into the nature of jati (caste) system and the nature of death and falsehood of the war. The present paper reads the text of Kuvempu's *Shudra Tapasvi* as a site to reconstruct the literary and mystic discourses. Deploying the post modernists' theory fragmentariness in narration and characters construction of meta narrative and little narrative of Jean-Francois Lyotard, it is argued here that the play boldly attempts to demystify one of myths and recreates the same on the basis of humanisms. The paper tries to show how the play validates the myth by juxtaposing the motifs of the Valmiki Ramayana and *Shudra Tapasvi*. The paper lays stress on intertextuality by considering *Shudra Tapasvi* as a good example of intertextuality with reference to the Valmiki, Ramayana.

The paper aims at studying Kuvempu's play *Shudra Tapasvi* from a postmodernist perspective highlighting the author's attempt.

Kuvempu was categorical in his rejection of the metanarrative of the *Ramayana* in its present form. It should be borne in mind that his aim was not merely to sound different by demystifying the myth, but was to correct

the wrong that occurred in the text of the Ramayana. Kuvempu said one need not accept the episode of Shambukavadha simply as presented in Valmiki's Ramayana. He raises questions above the authenticity and correctness of the text.

“As the temple built by a good sculptor becomes old, rat, lizard, bat and the likes begin to construct their nests there. If Valmiki's masterpiece also comes to this state of affair, it only bears a testimony to its oldness”.¹

What Kuvempu means by this statement is that we need not accept the universality or dominance of a work of art just because the author of this work of art (a time tested) is a great poet. Those who go to temple, says Kuvempu, don't worship rat, lizard and bats just because they are also present at the temple similarly, a few episodes like the Shambukavadha which have somehow found place in the great poet's Ramayana especially in its latter part would not be worshipped.

Kuvempu out rightly rejects irrational, unscientific, illogical, absurd and inhuman things found in a work of art. He could do it as he did not consider Valmiki's Ramayana a metanarrative.

Let us see what Valmiki's Ramayana says about episode. After Sita's renunciation an old poor Brahmin comes to Rama with the dead body of a Brahmin boy. Keeping the body before the palace he starts grieving. He tells Rama that his child died on account of latter's negligence of his duty. On verifying the truthiness of what the Brahmin had complained with the saint Narada, Rama was convinced of the truth that Shambuka's meditation caused the death of a Brahmin's child. Rama, then, orders the dead body of the child to be put in oil and sitting on his “Pushpakavimana” he goes to catch the culprit and hunt him down. He finds Shambuka in deep meditation, he awakens him and asks him to which caste he belongs. Shambuka was killed even before he could complete his sentence that he was a Shudra.

Kuvempu knew what impact a work of art of a poet of Valmiki's stature could make on the opinion and minds of millions of people. If such a work of art becomes a metanarrative and is treated as the only centre, it would make very bad impact upon the readers. Valmiki's Ramayana claims that a Shudra has no right to meditate. In this respect, says Kuvempu, Valmiki's Ramayana is not less dangerous than Manusmriti.

It is very pertinent to know how Kuvempu in his play *ShudraTapasvi* rejects the universality, centrality of Valmiki's Ramayana and also rejects its metanarrative status.

When the Brahmin tells Rama that a Shudra's meditation caused the death of his child, he does not trust the story even in the least. But Valmiki's Rama does not even think of verifying the Brahmin story. Let up see how Kuvempu's Rama rejects the Brahmin's allegation.

“How to teach lesson to this man of high sense of ego of his caste and utter ignorant of scriptures. Shambuka is a great saint and as it were he commands the respect of gods. How could his meditation cause the death of a Brahmin's son in my empire? He does not know his own fault. I wonder how this man criticizes publicity the saint Shambuka! ”²

So Kuvempu's Rama is aware of the power and status of Shambuka and therefore he wonders at the sagacity of the Brahmin who complains against Shambuka.

Rama decides to give an answer to the Brahmin in his own language. He thinks of a way out. He shoots Brahmastra at Shambuka who is in deep meditation in the forest. The arrow, creating havoc on the earth, in the sky, goes at the highest speed. But after reading the spot it loses its intensity falls to the ground. On his left the Brahmin thinks that the arrow has failed to hit the target. But Rama says that it has not failed and it will come back

and hit the person who did not act according to dharma. “Does it hit Shudra, then?”³ asks the Brahmin. “No, no it will hit the Brahmin”,⁴ says Rama. The Brahmin learns the lesson at the end and apologizes to Rama. Rama tells to Brahmin that no caste is superior or inferior. Do the air and the fire discriminate? It does not matter who the person is and what caste he is born into, he should be respected if he is a saint. To respect and salute such a person is virtue and to disregard and disrespect him would be a vice. The Brahmin does not dispute with Rama anymore. He accepts whatever he is told. Rama thus saves both Shambuka and the Brahmin.

Valmiki’s Rama does not face any dilemma. He does not think at all. He acts at once. He acts as the Brahmin’s agent. He thinks that his duty as a king was to protect the so-called Varnashramadharm and defend the interest of Kshatriyas. To him safeguarding the interest of his citizens meant protecting the interest of Brahmins and Kshatriyas. Rama in Valmiki’s Ramayana is unconcerned and cunning in so far as Shudras and antyazas are concerned. He does not stop to understand whether there can be a connection between a Shudra’s meditation and the death of a Brahmin’s child. Valmiki’s Rama sounds both irrational and partial.

But Kuvempu’s Rama is both rational and impartial; he stands for truth “only truth”. He does not act as anyone’s agent. He is a humanist to the core. He knows the ups and down of human life, human tragedy. Kuvempu’s Rama is an outcome of liberal education that Kuvempu had received.

The play may also be studied from poststructuralist, post colonial and post-deconstructivist perspectives as well. I can claim that the present attempt to read the play as a postmodernist text has yielded good results.

English scholars and critics must pay attention to the texts written in Indian regional languages which can be studied from any of the modern perspectives. It is true that these texts can challenge any work of art produced

in any part of the globe, from both the point of view of art and from the point of view of quality. This renders Salman Rushdie's statement that works in the Indian regional languages are artistically and qualitatively of low standard meaningless.



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