



Works in Classical Sanskrit Contributed by Women Poets.

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History of popular books on classical Sanskrit Literature and Poetics is rarely contain names of women poets. In ancient India some names are found to be flourished and their names appear in golden letters.

Since ancient classical age to medieval India we come across several names with their works preserved till date.

Poetry is the subline experience of the poet's experience. Only a wellversed and meditative person with aesthetic heart can compose poetry. Composing poetry is a kind of Upasana (Meditation). While composing poetry a poet evolves into a mature human being ably seeing and gazing people, things, events, nature, philosophies, religions, spirituality and ideologies around and in her/him both passionately and dispassionately depending on the subject of creation. Thus the poet is both subjective and objective in composing verses.

Aesthetic and romantic heart, common sense and allround knowledge in literature together with proficiency in the language of verse composition and an idea about the world and worldly things and happenings around make a charming poet.

All poets possess pleasant traits to be an enchanting composer of verses. We enjoy relish feel with concur, fall into contemplation and many amicable moods are created in us while going through poet's composition. The slender work of any poet in a treasure house of tender feelings expressed with grace sensitivity and insight. The personality of the poet peeps through his every verse. The distillation of observations and feelings will be done so gracefully and enchanting that we feel pleasant by going through the poems in the compilations.

A poet is both entertainer and enlightener. Though most poets write under compulsion of their nature of self satisfaction, their outpours and compositions will be interesting to many a discerning reader. Readers get both charmed and their intellect gets sharpened when they go through the verses. A poet is also a human being. He/She possesses, thirst and hunger. A poet is to have a touch, responsive and compassionate heart.

It is an endeavour to trace the origin of love in Regveda and in Sanskrit poetry especially by women poets and to penetrate into their minds. Naushidyia Sukta shows the origin of mind and desire.

GHOSHA, the poetess of Rigveda elicited the primitive desire found in every woman. Maitreyi stated that Love is driven by a person's soul and further she discussed the nature of Atman and Brahman and their unity. She is one of the pioeers of Advaita Philosophy.

How can any one marginalize Gargi in Brihadaranyaka Upanished ?

We find poetry by women writers in Sanskrit tradition in classical age. Most of them range from earliest time to as late as fourteenth century, i.e. advent of Islamic influence in society.

Vijja, Morika, Lakshmi, Shilabhatarika of ninth century are of eminence.

Mamamatacharya in his Kavyaprakash has immortalised one verse of Shilabhatarika. It is a poetic expression of primitive love affair between a lass and lad in a natural scenario of Narmada River and Cane Bush. "Who deprived me of my Virginhood, that same indeed is my bridegroom, those same are the nights of Chaitra (Spring) and those same are the luxariant Kadamba breezes fragrant with the blooming malati flowers, I too, am what I was, yet my heart longs for indulging in sport of love, these beneath the cane arbours on the bank of Narmada River."

This verse is considered as one of the greatest ever written in the Sanskrit tradition. Indian Scholar Supriya Banik Pal believes that the poem expresses the speaker's anxiety to be reunited with her husband.

According to American author Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, the poetess possibly a middle aged woman implies that the illicit premarital love between her and her lover was richer than their love as a married couple. The same place is generating nostalgic feelings.

In 16th Century at Jagnannath Puri Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu suddenly came across the hand written manuscript in the house of one of his followers and read it. It influenced him so much that it engrossed him. He started dancing and singing loudly the same verse.

^^;% dkSekjgj% 1,o fgojLrk ,o ps=y{kifLr pksUehfyr ekyrh lqje;% izkS<k dnEckfuyk% A

lk pSokfLe rFkfi r=lqjRO;kikj yhykfo|ks jsokjks|fl osrlh r:rys psr% leqRd.Brs AA**

Except a few nobody in the crowd could not understand this Sanskrit verse.

Chaitanya lived a life of purity and austerity. He could never come down to the cheap love poetry. His kirtans, songs and prayers are full of profound love. Chaitanya took the verse to a new height of Divine Love i.e. Radhabhava. It is Madhura Bhava of Shri Radha towards Shri Krishna. Chaitanya had the same bhava towards Jagannath i.e. Shri Krishna.

Vijja also known as Vidya, or Vijjika, 8th, 9th Century. She was daughter in law of Immadi Pulakeshi II. Chandraditya was her husband. Poetry came naturally to Vijjika. After the death of Kalidasa good poetry had taken a back seat, as poetry had turned into a medium for scholarly show-offs. Vijjika broke this trend and took to Vaidarbhi Shaili – simple, unornamented style, literally the style of Vidarbha, to compose her poems. Her lucid and captivating style won her appreciation from the likes and Rajashekhara. Her personality was marked by relentless courage and confident demeanour. She was also an able administrator. Dandin was a famous poet and Rhetorician and master of prose, next only to Banabhatta. In Kavyadarsha he wrote –

prqeqZ[k eq[kkEHkkst ou&gal o|qeZe A
ekuls jerka fuR;a 'kqDyk ljLorh AA

Vijjika was contemporary of Dandin.

She wrote a response –

Not knowing me, Vijjika, the one with the complexion of a blue lily, Dandin has stupidly described Saraswati as being wholly fair. The import of Vijjika's response is that she thereof was Saraswati. Her verses bear eloquent testing to her natural power of expression, her graceful diction, her self confident handling of long compounds, She usually aims high sounding effects and revels in displaying mastery over language.

Vijjika has three verses on fate.

The First describes the vicissitudes of all existence, human or otherwise. Once the tank was so wide and deep that huge elephants sported there with ease; but now, in course of time, it has come to be reduced to such a state that there is not even water enough for a heron (bird) to dive in.

The second metaphorically depicts the inexorableness and inexplicability of human destiny. Human beings are being whirled round and round on the wheel of care, like a lump of clay, by providence none knows for certain what is going to happen to him.

The third verse under this head praises the courage and fortitude of great men in times of calamity. Just as mountains and oceans survive even after universal dissolution.

PRABHADEVI – belonged to Lata country modern Gujarat. Baja Sekhara 880-920 AD eulogised her poetic genius and allround versatility.

MARULA – flourished in 13TH Century or earlier. Anthology of Sarangadhar Paddhati in 14th CE and Jalhana's Suktimuktavali in 13th CE quoted her.

Shilabhatarika, Vijja, Marula and Morika are poetesses with great poetic genius and erudition, those who have command in overall branches of learning, having participated in dialogues with other scholars and having defeated them in debates are regarded as sound scholars and experts.

Consequently, they alone are venerable in the scholarly world. Dhanada Devas and Sarangadhar Puddhati mentioned them.

MARULA : Only five of Marula's verses are now extant,

Ref. Supriya Banik Pal, A.K. Warder Indian Kavya Literature, 1994, MOSL.

Ganagadevi also known as Gangambika was a 14th Century woman poet of Vijayanagar Empire. She was wife of Kumarakampana, the son of Vijayanagara King Bukka Raya (1360-1370).

Ganagadevi chronicled the story of the victory of her husband over the muslims in Madurai in the form of a poem. The title of the Nine Chapter poem was Madhura Vijayam also known as Veera Kampa Raya Charitram. She was from a Telugu speaking region.

VIJAYA – flourished in 650-655 CE. The Chalukya dynasty then ruled in Karnataka region. She is author of Kaumudi Mahotsava. She composed on love, nature, change of season, seas, female beauty. Her verses are characterised by eloquent expression, long, compounds, rhythmic sound effect.

A few names of Sanskrit Poetesses :

Bhavadevi also known as Bhavaka devi flourished 11th Century. Her verses included in early medieval Sanskrit anthologies, including Vidyakar's Subhashita – Ratna Kosha – Sadukti Karnamitra and Kavindra Vachana Samuchuhaya.

Vikatanitamba was a Sanskrit woman poet flourishes before the 9th Century noted for her simple and elegant verse, frequently with erotic elements. Her verses come to us from several anthologies.

Sarayadhara Paddhati compiled by Sarangadhar in 1363 AD, in Sudhashita Ratnakosha compiled by Vidyakara in 12th Century and in Sadukti Karnamitra, Subhashitavali. Her verses deal often with shringar rasa. Her verses are praised by Rajashekhara for the simplicity and elegance. She is quoted in text on literary style, such as Dhvanyaloka of Anandavardhan (9th Century), the Kavyalankarashekhara, Vyaktiviveka.

CONCLUSION

Ancient India shows many emancipated women. Position and value of woman were at the zenith. In Mahabharata the story of Vak Rakshasha has a story within the story. The Brahmin in whose house Kunti and Pancha Pandavas were staying in disguise of Brahmins at Ekachakra, the Brahmin's Soliliqui and conversation with his wife and children elicited the facts, how the daughters were looked after. This is overheard by Kunti, and thereafter she intervened and Bhima was sent to Vak Rakshasha, and how Bhima killed Vak Rakshasha.

In India we come across many stories and sayings in the forms of oral history. In Bengal sayings of Khana i.e. "Khanar Vachan" in Bengali poems is famous and still these are prevailed in village Bengal and found to be very helpful to cultivators and hosue holders. Similarly many inanonymous composers were prevailed throughout India, constituting a rich heritage of intellectual property.

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