

CHAPTER

IV

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H.V. NAGARAJA RAO: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

IV.I PERSONAL LIFE

H.V. Nagaraja Rao was born on 10th September 1942 at Somenahalli, a village in Kolar District of Karnataka. Saryalakshamma and Veṅkaṭanārāyaṇāppā are his parents.¹

IV.II EDUCATION

After the primary education in the village, he had his High School studies at Gudibande, the Taluka Headquarters. Being encouraged by his Sanskrit teacher N. V. Anantaramaiah, he moved to Mysore to pursue Sanskrit studies and joined the Maharaja's Sanskrit College in 1958. He studied *Vyākaraṇaśāstra* and *Alaṅkāraśāstra*. He has also passed the *Vidvad Uttamā* examination with distinction securing the first rank in both subjects. He went to the United States in 1971 and got the M.A. degree in Asian Languages from the University of Washington, Seattle, U.S.A. He also passed the M.A. (Sanskrit) examination of the University of Mysore, securing four gold medals.

IV.III ACHIEVEMENTS

Shekhavati Sanskrit University, Bhivani, Haryana honoured him with *Maharṣi Vedavyāsa Praśasti* in 1996 for the best Sanskrit Essay. The Seer of Svarnavally in Karnataka gave him the title *Kāvyaśāstra Vicakṣaṇa*. In 2006, he received the Central Sahitya Akademi award for his Sanskrit translation of *Sārthaḥ*, a Kannada novel of Dr. S. L. Bhyarappa, published by Sudharma Prakashan. He has served as a Visiting Professor at the University of Chicago, University of Wisconsin and University of Jerusalem.

¹ Dash, Achyutanand, *Modern Sanskrit Writings in Karnataka of S. Ranganath*, p. 69

As a student, he participated in the All India Sanskrit Education competitions held at Varanasi (1964) and Delhi (1966) obtaining gold medals in *Sāhitya*, *Antyākṣari* and *Samasyāpūrti*.

IV.IV WORKS

H. V. Nagaraja Rao is a versatile and talented author. He has written on rare and neglected themes and has contributed to new genres. He joined the Oriental Research Institute, Mysore as a Research Assistant and edited Sanskrit works. He worked as the Deputy Editor of the Ancient Indian Literature project of the Sahitya Akademi. In 1995, 1996 and 2001, he was invited by the University of Chicago to teach Sanskrit as a Visiting Professor. In 2003-04, he was invited by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to be a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies.

He has been writing Sanskrit commentaries on ancient works. He has written three plays - *Vidulāputrīyam*, *Samudyatā* and *Dāmpatyakalahāḥ*. All of them have been published from Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai in 1996. His other writings are - *Varānveṣaṇam* and *Mālavikā* two short stories published in 1974 and 1975; *Rṇavimuktiḥ* - a novel, *Śārādā-darśanam* - a travelogue, *Upākhyāna-yugmakam* - prose and *Siddha-gaṅgāyāḥ Śuddhacetanaḥ* a biography of Shivakumar Swamiji of Siddhagaṅga Mutt.²

Nagaraja Rao has edited *Subhāṣitakaustubha* of Veṅkaṭādhvari (1976) as well as *Anyāpadeśasatakam* and *Ānandasāgarastavaḥ* of Nilakaṇṭha Dīkṣita in 1973. His dissertation on *Veda-Vedāṅga* has been published from Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bangalore (2005). He has done valuable work as translator also. He has translated H. M. Nayak's Kannada work '*Namma Maneya Deepa*' under the title *Asmākam Gr̥hasya Dīpaḥ* in Sanskrit as well as the Kannada novel by well-known author S. L. Bhyarappa as *Sārthaḥ*. He has also translated five short

² *Op. cit*, p. 70

stories of Premchand, one of the greatest short story writers of our age, under the title *Vipaṅcikā*. He has also rendered several works from Sanskrit into Kannada, such as *Varadarājastavaḥ* of Appaya Dīkṣita, *Rāmāyaṇasārasaṃgraha* and *Raghuvīrastutiḥ* of Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita, *Bhāvanālaharī* of Gaurīśaṅkara Svāmī, and *Śivapādādikeśāntastotram* of Śaṅkarācārya.³

Varānveṣaṇam is a short story by Rao. It realistically portrays the plight of bride's parents and their search for a bridegroom. Rao has rendered some of the Kannada proverbs in Sanskrit. *Vidulāputrīyam* is a play based on an episode from the *Udyogaparva* of the *Mahābhārata*. It is a very inspiring tale presenting the character of great lady Vidulā. *Samudyatā* is a social play based on the headlines of newspapers. The author raises several burning issues like dowry. The play presents contemporary society. *Dāmpatyakalahāḥ* is also a social play depicting humorous situations of fight between husband and wife. In *Upākhyānayugmakam*, Rao presents two legends from the tradition concerning Urvaśī and Śakuntalā. It is a fine example of lucid prose. In *Śārādādarśanam*, Rao has presented an account of his visit to Sringeri.⁴ His important translation work includes Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar's *Shritattva Nidhi* into English.

Sārthaḥ is translated effectively in a lucid language with effective expressions, capable of capturing the minds of readers. The translator has matched the analytic intellect of the original author, in translating this work. The book is doubtlessly a rewarding addition to Indian fiction in Sanskrit translation.

Presently he is the Honorary Editor of *Sudharmā* - the Sanskrit Daily (News Paper in India) publishing from Mysore. Apart from this, he has published many books under the Sudharma Prakashan and they are:

1. *Bhallataśatakam*
2. *Ānandasāgara-Stavaḥ*

³ *Ibid*

⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp 70-71

3. *Varadarāja-Stavaḥ*
4. *Anyopadeśaśatakam (Anyopadeśaśatakam)*
5. *Asmākam Gr̥hasya Dīpaḥ*
6. *Subhāṣitakaustubha*
7. *Rūpaka Catuṣṭayī (Four Sanskrit Dramas)*
8. *Haribhaṭṭana Subhāṣita (Kannada translation)*
9. *Daśāvatārastotra (Translation - Sanskrit & Kannada)*
10. *Vipañcikā*
11. *Sūkti-Dviśati (with Kannada Translation) and many more*
12. *Kathālaharī*
13. *R̥navimuktiḥ*
14. *Vicāralaharī*

In the introduction of *Kathālaharī*, S. Ranganath writes about Dr. H. V. Nagaraja Rao as:

नागराजरावद्वारा प्रणीताः सर्वा अपि कथाः प्रासंगिक्यः प्रतिभान्ति । क्वचिन्मानवहृदयदौर्बल्यं क्वचिदन्तर्द्वंद्वं गूढवेदनोपरूढं वा कथासूत्रतामेति । तत्सर्वम् समुचितपात्रचयनैः संवादकल्पनैः व्यवस्थावर्णनैश्च सम्यक् प्रतनोति कथाकारः ।

Here, we can see the modern and readable style, even the beginners can understand easily.

कथयामि । अचिकित्सेन अर्बुदरोगेण सा पीडिता । तस्याः चिकित्सायै भूयिष्ठं धनं मया व्ययितम् । भूयांसः श्रेयांसः वैद्याः प्रार्थिताः । सर्वेषां देवानाम् अर्चना कृता । सर्वम् निष्फलम् । सा जीवन्ती अपि मृता इव गृहे अस्ति । तां दर्श दर्श मम भार्या अश्रूणि प्रवाहयति । मयि कस्माद् भगवतः क्रोधः इति न जानामि इति कथयन् हस्तयुग्मावृतमुखः सः अश्रूणि अमुञ्चत् ।

यदि भवान् अनुमन्यते तर्हि सकृत् रमां द्रष्टुम् इच्छामि इति मया उक्तम् ।

आगच्छ । गच्छाव इति उक्त्वा सः उदतिष्ठत् । पानीयस्य मूल्यं दत्त्वा अहं तम् अन्वसरम् ।⁵

Even in the following quotation of विचारलहरी also, we can see the language and style of the writer as follows:

अत्र कस्यचन राज्ञः स्तुतिरियम् । रिपुस्त्रीजनस्य रुदितेन राज शत्रून् ऽ नामावशेषान् कृतवान्
इति तस्य प्रभावातिशयो मुख्यो वाक्यार्थः रिपुस्त्रियः स्वप्ने पतिं दृष्ट्वा तत्र तेन सह भाषित्वा प्रेम्णा
tma आलिङ्गन्ति । स्वप्नान्ते तत्सर्वम् मिथ्येति ज्ञात्वा रुदन्ति इति वर्णनात् करुणरसस्य
अभिव्यक्तिः । शच करुणरसः कविगतायाः राजविषयायाः रतेरङ्गम् । टत्परितोषाय उपात्तत्वत् ।
अस्मादत्र रसे भक्तेः अङ्गत्वम् अश्रुते इति रसवदलङ्कारः । टदाह आनन्दवर्धनः प्लत्यत्र करुणरसस्य
शुद्धस्याङ्गभावात् स्पष्टमेव रसवदलङ्कारो भवति इति प्रश्नम् उद्भाव्य तत्समाधानं प्रदर्शयति
अभिनवगुप्तो लोचनाख्ये ।⁶

In our History and *Purāṇas*, many Āruṇis, Naciketās, Dhruvas etc. showed there incredible strength. Aṣṭāvakra is also one of them. He defeated his father on the strength of knowledge. He was very intelligent. In the *Vanaparva* of *Mahābhārata* there is the story of Aṣṭāvakra.

Nagaraja Rao is very famous in the field of Modern Sanskrit Literature. His style is neither so easy nor so tough. *Rṇavimuktiḥ* was published in Sanskrit daily *Sudharmā* serially and became very famous. It was in great demand by a large group of readers to publish it in the book form. So, it got published by Sanskrit Bharati, Bangalore. Its language is lucid, simple and easily readable. We can see the easy and readable style in the following paragraph.

पूर्वा दिक् अरुणकिरणैः शोभमाना सूर्यस्य आगमनं सूचयति स्म । तावत्पर्यन्तम् अन्धकारेण आवृत्तं निर्जीवमिव स्थितं जगत् तेषां किरणानां स्पर्शेन किञ्चित् सचेतनमिव भवति स्म । निःशब्दे

⁵ Rao, Nagaraja, *Kathālaharī*, p. 20

⁶ Rao, Nagaraja, *Vicāralaharī*, p. 64

अरण्ये कश्चन पक्षी मधुरं कूजित्वा दिवस्य तस्य जगद्व्यापाराणां नान्दीम् आचरत् । ब्राह्मः मुहूर्तः
उपस्थितः इति तेन ज्ञात्वा महर्षिः उद्दालकः निद्रां विमुच्य पर्णशय्यातः उत्थितवान् । करतलद्वयं
दृष्ट्वा तत्र सङ्कल्पेन देवतानाम् आह्वानां कृत्वा क्षणमात्रं ध्यात्वा पर्णशालातः बहिः आगतवान् ।⁷

Thus, Dr. Nagaraja Rao has made valuable contribution to the field of Modern Sanskrit Literature. He is a distinguished scholar, writer and poet.

⁷ Rao, Nagaraja, *Rnavimuktih*, p. 1