

CHAPTER - III

SUMMARIES OF THE TEXTS

The present chapter contains the summary of the compositions written by the poetesses belonging to the Medieval and modern period.

Madhurāvijayam :

The *Mahākāvya Madhurāvijayam* consists of nine cantos composed by poetess Gaṅgādevī. The first canto is named “*Rājadampatyosukhānubhūti*” by the commentator, i.e. Experience of happiness on the part of the Royal couple king Bukka and queen Devāyī. The name of the first Canto is not given by the poetess Gaṅgādevī but is given by the commentator P. S. Shastry.

The Canto begins with the invocatory verses addressed to God Gaṇeśa, Goddess Pārvatī, Lord Śiva and Goddess Sarasvatī.

In verses 4 to 16, poetess Gaṅgādevī has shown her respect to earlier celebrated poets viz. Kālidāsa, Bāṇa, Bhāravi, Daṇḍin, Bhavabhūti, Kaṇāmṛtakavi, Tikkaya, Agastya, Gaṅgādhara and Viśvanātha. Thus she has envisaged her acquaintance and in-depth study of the well-known allied texts like *Raghuvamśa*, *Kāvyaadarśa*, *Kirātārjunīyam*, *Saugandhikāharaṇam* etc.

In verses 18 to 24, the poetess expresses her views regarding a poetic composition :

गुणं विहाय काव्येषु दुष्टो दोषं गवेषते ।

वनेषु त्यक्तमाकन्दः काको निम्बमपेक्षते ॥मधुराविजयम्-१.२०॥

In other verses of the first canto she has given information regarding the ancestors of King Kampana. We also find description of various aspects of the nature like sunset, moonrise, seasons, lakes, reservoirs of water etc.

At the end of every canto (except the first one), we find two colophons, one by the poetess and another by the commentator, viz. :

- (i) इति श्री गङ्गादेव्या विरचिते मधुराविजयनाम्नि वीरकम्परायचरिते मधुराविजयसाधनं नाम नवमसर्गः ।
- (ii) इति श्री परमेश्वरीकृपा समुपलब्धसास्त्रसाहितीवैदुष्य साहित्यालङ्कार विद्वत्कवीशान पोतुकुच्चि सुब्रह्मण्यशास्त्रिणा “काव्यकलानिधि” “महीशूरमहाराजास्थानमहाविद्वत्कवि” श्री चिदम्बरशास्त्रिणां भागिनेयेन विरचितया भावप्रकाशिकाख्यव्याख्यया समलङ्कृतायां श्रीगङ्गादेव्याः कृतौ मधुराविजये महाकाव्ये मधुराविजयप्रशंसा नाम नवमसर्गः ।

The second canto contains 42 verses which describe the beauty of King Bukka's wife Queen Devāyī, bearing the signs of pregnancy. Poetess has also referred to religious rites like *Puṁsavanam*, *Nāmakaraṇa* and *Caulakarma* of prince Kampana.

Queen Devāyī gives birth to three sons namely Kampana, Kampa and Saṅgama, who resemble the three eyes of Lord Śiva (त्र्यम्बक). According to the poetess the first prince is named Kampana because he made his enemies to tremble with fear at the very mention of his name. This canto is therefore named *Kumārajananam* by poetess Gaṅgādevī and *Kumārotpatti-varṇana* by the commentator P. S. Shastry.

Third canto contains 47 verses which depict the early military training given to prince Kampana by his father King Bukka and his marriage with Gaṅgādevī, belonging to the *Kākatīya* dynasty of Andhra Pradesh.

It is stated that his father Bukka guides him about the evil vices like indulgence in women, gambling, hunting and drinking liquor and he also advises him about the duties of the royal prince. Finally poetess Gaṅgādevī refers to king Kampana's establishment of his own empire at Kanchi.

Thus, this canto is rightly named *Jaitrayātrādeśa* by the poetess and *Kāñcī pura-Madhurāvijaya Sādhana* by the commentator.

The fourth canto contains 83 verses describing the royal preparations of the march against the King Śambubarāya, ruling over Kanchi. King Kamparāya is accompanied by the Cola, Keral and Pandya kings. He crosses the country of Karnat and in a fierce fight defeats and kills Śambubarāya and happily rules over Kanchi. The name given by the poetess to this canto is *Kāñcīpuravijayaprasāṁsā* and it is named as *Kāñcīpuravijayavarṇana* by the commentator.

There are 76 verses in canto five, which highlights the great city Kanchi, where King Kampana establishes his kingdom and properly looks after his subjects. There he is greeted by various kings ruling over different regions like Magadh, Malva, Sevan, Simhal, Dramil, Keral and Gauda. The name of this Canto is *Kamparāya-Rājyaparipālanaṭupabhoga-varṇana* and *Rājyaparipālanaṭubhoga-varṇana* by the commentator.

The sixth canto consisting of 69 verses, commences with the description of the water sports of king Kampana and his royal recreations. Thus it is rightly named *Vanavīhārajalakriḍā-varṇana* by the poetess and *Jalakriḍavarṇanavīhāraprasāṁsā* by the commentator P. S. Shastry. (Note : verses 14-56 are missing in the text).

The seventh canto comprises of 52 verses containing a dialogue between king Kampana and his wife Gaṅgādevī. There is a beautiful description of sunset and moonrise and therefore it is rightly named *Candrodayakīrtana* by the poetess and *Candrodaya-varṇana* by the commentator P. S. Shastry.

There are 36 verses in the eighth canto in which the devastated condition of the city Madhura is narrated by the *Madhurādhidevatā* (deity of Madhura) who urges king Kampana to destroy the invaders by presenting him a divine sword. Hence it is appropriately named *Madhurādhidevatā-divyāstrapradāna* by the poetess and *Divyāstrapradāna* by the commentator.

The ninth canto comprises of 42 verses in which the poetess presents a graphic description of the warfare between the *Yavana* ruler Jalāluddīn Hasan Shah and the hero of the *Mahākāvya* King Kampana in which the former is defeated and killed by King Kampana. This last canto is named *Madhurāvijayasādhana* by the poetess and *Madhurāvijayaprasānsā* by the commentator.

Thus, the *Mahākāvya Madhurāvijayam* comprises of nine cantos and 522 verses.

Raghunātha-Abhyudaya :

Raghunātha-Abhyudaya written by poetess Rāmabhadrāmbā is a *Mahākāvya* containing twelve cantos which do not bear any name. There are in all 75 verses in the first canto which begins with a prayer to various Gods like Lord Śiva and Pārvatī, God Gaṇeśa and Goddess Sarasvatī and also gives a detailed description of the Cola region and depicts the natural beauty of trees, flowers, animals and the river Kāverī and Tāmraparṇī which flows in the city of Tanjore.

The Second canto comprises of 60 verses delineating Tanjore, the capital city of the Cola and its prosperity.

In the Third canto there are 51 verses portraying the magnificent personality of king Raghunātha endowed with different virtues like valour, generosity and compassion.

The Fourth canto which contains 71 verses furnishes the details about the daily routine of the king such as reciting the morning prayers, uttering the mantras, paying homage to the Sun God, worshipping God Rāma and reading the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

The Fifth canto comprises of 58 verses depicting the physical beauty of the king *Raghunātha*, and the description of his court which was attended

by the contemporary rulers of regions like Keral, Anga, Magadh, Malava, Kaling, Gauda, Arrata and Nepal alias Jaffna.

The Sixth canto contains 59 verses describing the ancestors of king Raghunātha beginning from his great grand father Timma, who ruled in the second half of fourteenth century, Cinna Cevva (1549 to 1572 A.D.), king Acyutarāya (1572 to 1614 AD). It also depicts the penance observed by king Acyutarāya and his wife Mūrtyambā.

There are 79 verses in the Seventh canto beginning with a description of the physical beauty of the young prince Raghunātha. In about 33 verses poetess Rāmabhadrāmbā has depicted his beautiful big eyes, his teeth, his neck, his broad chest, his waist and his thigh.

The Eighth canto comprises of 102 verses describing the help offered by king Raghunātha, to the three rulers viz. Veṅkaṭadevarāya of Karnat, king of Nepal and Kṛṣṇappa Nāyaka of Tundir.

The Ninth canto contains 71 verses in which king Raghunātha is described by the poetess as crossing the sea, defeating the *Paraṅgis* (Portuguese) and restoring the kingdom to the king of Nepal presently known as Jaffna in Srilanka.

The Tenth canto containing 73 verses depict king Raghunātha vanquishing the kings of Pandya and Tundir. Finally, it is said by the poetess that King Raghunātha defeating Kṛṣṇappa Nāyaka, the ruler of the Tuṇḍira region returns to his country Tanjore along with his army.

Eleventh canto contains 109 verses which depict the learned ladies of the Tanjore city conversant with a number of languages. These ladies were skilled in the performing arts like music and dance for which they were honoured by the emperor Raghunātha.

The Twelfth and the last canto contains 89 verses describing the women of Tanjore conversant with performing arts like Karnatak Music and dance. They were efficient in dance and were knower of Tāla like *Mārga*

Tāla, *Harikṛma Tāla* and *Jaya Maṅgala*. Thus art and literature flourished in his kingdom.

The *Mahākāvya Raghunātha-Abhyudaya* comprises of twelve cantos and 897 verses, depicting an interesting profile of king Raghunātha endowed with multifaceted personality.

Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-praśasti :

Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-praśasti is a *Khaṇḍakāvya* written by poetess Devakumārikā containing five chapters called *Prakaraṇa*.

The first chapter containing 48 verses enumerates the powerful kings like Bāppā Rāvala, Bhīmasimha, Kṣetrasimha, Kumbhakarṇa, Amarasimha, Jagatasimha, Saṅgrāmasimha-II and their achievements in life. The poetess gives the whole family lineage as under :

- 1) Bāppā Rāvala (c. 781-810 AD)
- 2) Rāhappa Rāṇa (1201 AD)
- 3) Narapāla (1300 AD)
- 4) Dinakara (1300 AD)
- 5) Yaśaḥkarṇa (1300 AD)
- 6) Nāgapāla (1300 AD)
- 7) Pūrṇapāla (1300 AD)
- 8) Pṛthavīmalla (1300 AD)
- 9) Bhīmasimha (died 1303 AD)
- 10) Jayasimha (c. 1300 AD)
- 11) Lakṣmaṇasimha (1314 AD)
- 12) Arisimha (c. 1314 AD)
- 13) Hammīra (1327-1365 A.D.)
- 14) Kṣetrasimha (1365-1382 A.D.)
- 15) Lakṣā (1382-1397 OR 1422 A.D.)

- 16) Mokala (1397 OR 1422 AD)
- 17) Kumbhakarṇa (1433-1468 AD)
- 18) Rāyamalla (1474-1509 AD)
- 19) Saṅgrāmasiṃha I (1509-1530 AD)
- 20) Udayasiṃha II (1537 OR 1541-1575 AD)
- 21) Pratāpasīṃha (1571-1597 AD)
- 22) Amarasīṃha (1597-1620 AD)
- 23) Karṇasiṃha (1621-1628 AD)
- 24) Jagatasiṃha (1628-1654 AD)
- 25) Rājasīṃha (1654-1681 AD)
- 26) Jayasiṃha (1681-1699 AD)
- 27) Amarasīṃha II - Devakumārikā (1699-1712 AD)
- 28) Saṅgrāmasiṃha II (1711-1734 AD)

She has beautifully depicted in a poetical manner, the activities of the *Rāṇās* (kings) of Mewar.

1) Dinakara : Since Dinakara possessed the lustre like that of the Sun and so was called Dinakara :

दिनकरस्तु ततोऽप्यभवत् सुतो दिनकर दुयेति भाङ्गरपालतः ।
अवनिमण्डलभूपतिमण्डलीमुकुटरत्न विराजित पत्कजः ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.-१.१३॥

2) Yaśakarṇa : So called because he attained fame of the *Rāṇā*, which was spread far and wide :

यशकर्ण इहाभवत्ततो यशसैवातिसमुज्ज्वलां भुवम् ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.-१.१४॥

3) Pūrṇapāla : The name itself signifies that he governed his kingdom for the complete happiness of people :

ततोऽभवत् पूर्णमनोरथोऽयं कृपाणपाणिः किल पूर्णपालः ।
पूर्णं सुखैः पालयतीति विश्वं तत्पूर्णपालत्वमधायि तेन ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.-१.१६॥

4) Hammīra : As he was lustrous like Śiva who acquired Gaṅgā and thus

sanctified thousands of people :

ततोऽरिसिंहादभवद् हमीरः समिद्धतेजा इव शम्भुरीड्यः ।
शिरस्खलत् स्वर्धुनि सुप्रवाहपवित्रिताशेषजगज्जनौधः ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.-१.२३॥

5) Rāyamalla : Rāyamalla was a great warrior. No *malla* or wrestler could defeat him :

यं रायमल्लं प्रति मल्लयोद्धा धरातलेऽस्मिन् न बभूव कश्चित् ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.-१.३०॥

6) Pratāpasimha : He defeated Mughal Emperor Akbar by his bravery and was a great warrior, who fought the famous battle of Haldighati.

प्रतापसिंहोऽथ बभूव तस्माद् धनुर्धरो धैर्यधरो धरित्रयाम् ।
म्लेच्छाधिपैः क्षत्रकुलेन मुक्तो धर्मोप्यथैनं शरणं जगाम ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.-१.३४॥

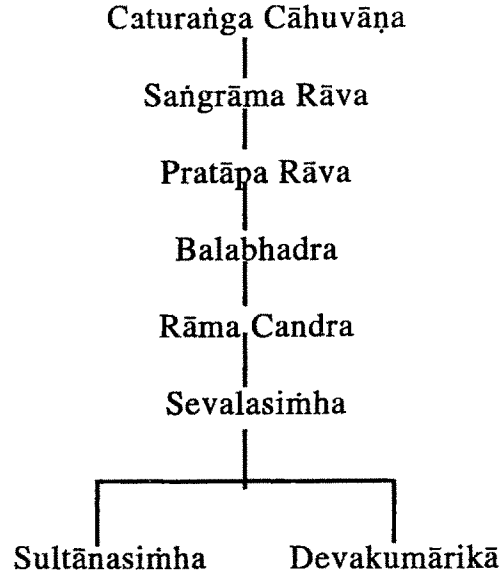
Udayasimha, son of Saṅgrāmasimha, built the beautiful city of Udaipur.

The second chapter containing 23 verses describe the coronation ceremony of prince Saṅgrāmasimha, the son of *Rāṇā* Amarasimha and queen Devakumārikā. Sukharāma, the old priest, took a leading part and made all the preparations for the proper performance of the ceremony.

After the performance of the coronation ceremony king Saṅgrāmasimha was given the bath with holy waters from the well known rivers like Gangā etc. and then he mounted on the elephant and moved around the city of Chittor. Soon after his accession to the throne there was a fight with the Muslim ruler Dalelkhan in which the *Rāṇā* was victorious. King Saṅgrāmasimha was helped by Vihārīdāsa, his chief minister who was highly learned, very pious and extremely devoted to the good of the king.

In the third chapter there are 15 verses describing *Rāṇā* Saṅgrāmasimha's donations to learned priests and scholars like Dinakara (1724-25 A.D.) of Benares, Sukhānanda – the logician, Puṇḍarīka as well as Devarāma – well versed in Vedic Rituals.

The fourth chapter consisting of 29 verses describes the family of Devakumārikā :



In this chapter we get some personal information of Devakumārikā herself who married *Rāṇā* Amarasimha of Mewar and is the mother of *Rāṇā* Saṅgrāmasimha. After the death of *Rāṇā* Amarasimha and the accession of Saṅgrāma to the throne the queen mother made up her mind to dedicate her life to the cause of religion and performed three *Tulādānas*. Then she renovated the old Śiva temple and also arranged to dig a well, for the *Abhiṣeka* (consecrating by sprinkling water) of God Śiva.

The fifth and the last chapter contains 27 verses which describe the opening ceremony of the holy temple of *Vaidyanātha* built by Queen Devakumārikā. At that auspicious occasion kings of Kota as well as Dungarpur (Rajasthan) and celebrated priests took an active leading part. On this particular occasion Devakumārikā, the queen mother, was immensely helped by Minister Harajī and Udā, son of Premā, her own maid. Priest Sukharāma together with other renowned priests performed all the religious rites in connection with the inauguration of the temple. The canto concludes with an octet (अष्टक) glorifying the supremacy of God Śiva.

Santānagopāla Kāvya :

Santānagopāla Kāvya, a *Khaṇḍakāvya*, contains three Cantos (सर्गः) and is composed by poetess Lakṣmī Rājñī.

In the first canto which contains 43 verses poetess portrays the pathetic picture of pious Brahmin, who loses his eight children and approaches Lord Kṛṣṇa at Dwārakā. When his ninth son too died, he again goes to Dwārakā and on his return meets Arjuna who promises him to get back his tenth child.

As depicted by the poetess, Arjuna makes all his preparations to save the tenth child from the clutches of death, but he fails to do so. Being disappointed and abused by the Brahmin, he decides to put his life to an end, when Lord Kṛṣṇa comes to his rescue and promises him to help in getting back his lost children.

In the second canto containing 37 verses the poetess says that God Kṛṣṇa along with Arjuna approaches Viṣṇu for help. Lord Viṣṇu on hearing their difficulty assures them that the poor Brahmin would get back his lost children.

In the third canto, consisting of 50 verses, poetess depicts the return of God Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna from *Viṣṇuloka*. Brahmin is pleased to get his children back and with a glorification to Lord Viṣṇu describing his *Avatāras* the last canto comes to an end.

Thus the *Khaṇḍakāvya Santānagopāla Kāvya* contains three cantos and 130 verses.

I hereby present the summary of the compositions of some of the modern poetesses taken for study.

Pandita Kshama Rao :

Pandita Kshama Rao has composed *Śankarajīvanākhyānam*, *Mīrālahari*, *Tukārāmacaritam*, *Rāmadāsacaritam* and *Jñāneśvaracaritam*, short stories

like *Kathāpañcakam*, *Gramajyoti* and *Kathāmuktāvali* and the other compositions namely *Satyāgrahagītā*, *Uttarasatyāgrahagītā*, *Svarājyavijaya* which describe the freedom struggle of the Motherland – India.

Śankarajīvanākhyānam is a *Mahākāvya* containing 70 *Ullāsas*, in which poetess has described the great personality of her father Shankar Pandurang Pandit.

Mīrālahari is a *Khaṇḍakāvya* having *Pūrvakhaṇḍa* and *Uttarakhaṇḍa* depicting the life sketch of the great saint poetess Mīrābāi.

In the *Mahākāvyas* *Tukārāmacaritam*, *Rāmadāsacaritam* and *Jñāneśvaracaritam*, poetess throws light on the life of great saints Tukārāma, Rāmadāsa and Jñāneśvara of Maharashtra.

Her *Kathāpañcakam* is a collection of five stories. *Gramajyoti* contains three short stories and *Kathāmuktāvali* contains 15 short stories.

Her *Satyāgrahagītā* and *Uttarasatyāgrahagītā*, depict the events and episodes that took place during the freedom struggle undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi.

Vanmala Bhavalkar :

Poetess Vanmala Bhavalkar has written two short ballets namely *Rāmavanagamanam* and *Pārvatīparameśvarīyam*, which contain three scenes depicting God Rāma's exile to the forest and the penance performed by Pārvatī to obtain Parameśvara as her husband. *Pārvatī-parameśvarīyam* is based on *Kumārasambhavam* of Kālidāsa.

Nalini Shukla :

Poetess Nalini Shukla has written a *Stotra Kāvya* named *Bhāvāñjaliḥ*, which contains 21 *stotras* addressed to the deities like God Gaṇeśa, God Kṛṣṇa, Goddess Sarasvatī etc.

Mithilesh Kumari Mishra :

Poetess Mithilesh Kumari Mishra has described in 100 verses the great personality of sage Vyāsa in her composition *Vyāsaśatakam*.

Pushpa Trivedi :

Agniśikhā is a collection of 48 compositions by poetess Pushpa Trivedi, in which she describes the lovelorn condition of a lady separated from her husband.

Uma Deshpande :

In anthological work called *Arcanam*, Poetess Uma Deshpande in 43 compositions highlight different topics like significance of Sanskrit language, contribution of celebrated personalities and has introduced *Haiku* and *Garba* (मण्डलनृत्यगीत) prevalent in the state of Gujarat.

Pravesh Saxena :

Poetess Pravesh Saxena in *Anubhūti* containing 56 poems (some of which are translated poems), depict different topics related to nature, the contemporary society and the Indian Philosophy.

Conclusion :

Right from the Vedic age, the female writers have contributed to different genres of poetic literature in particular and Indology in general.

On the basis of the summaries of the composition of medieval and modern poetesses we find that the thematic beauty is continuously found in the texts of these poetesses. We find some salient features of the literary contribution made by the poetesses since the Vedic age. The *Rṣikās* during the Vedic period mainly invokes the deities like Agni, Indra, Aśvins, through their hymns, which highlight the social and family life during the Vedic period.

But the poetesses belonging to the medieval era have mainly focused on the description of the contemporary rulers and their prominent achievements. The ladies like Gaṅgādevī, Viśvāsadevī, Tirumalāmbā, Rāmabhadraṁbā, Devakumārikā and Lakṣmī Rājñī have contributed to several branches of Indology like Indian History, Philosophy, Mythology, Morality, Ethics etc. These poetesses have employed skilfully in their text a number of *Alaṅkāras*, *Rasas* as well as metres. Their compositions reveal an attempt to imitate the celebrated poets like Kālidāsa, Māgha, Bāṇabhatta, Daṇḍin, Bhavabhūti etc. They have however, furnished a great deal of historical information through their poetry. But the modern poetesses have generally restricted themselves to the small compositions.

Except Kshamadevi Rao, all the poetesses have composed *Khaṇḍa-kāvya*, *Śatakakāvya*, *Stotrakāvya* or *Muktaka* containing a few verses. It can be surmised that these poetesses might not be endowed with the essential traits of qualities required to become a poet (*Kavi*), i.e. *Vyutpatti*, *Abhyāsa* and *Pratibhā*.

Secondly, they might not have absolute control over Sanskrit language, its grammar and the poetic nuances required for composing a *Mahākāvya*.

Thirdly, these poetesses might have been influenced by the regional literature (Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Kannada), which mainly comprises of short poetry, short stories and concise articles.

On the whole, it can be said that along with the poets the poetesses have also laid the torch of knowledge (*Jñāna-pradīpa*) to different corners of the motherland. They have attempted to continue the glorious tradition of writing charming poetry, commenced with the Vedic *Rṣis* and *Rṣikās*.

