



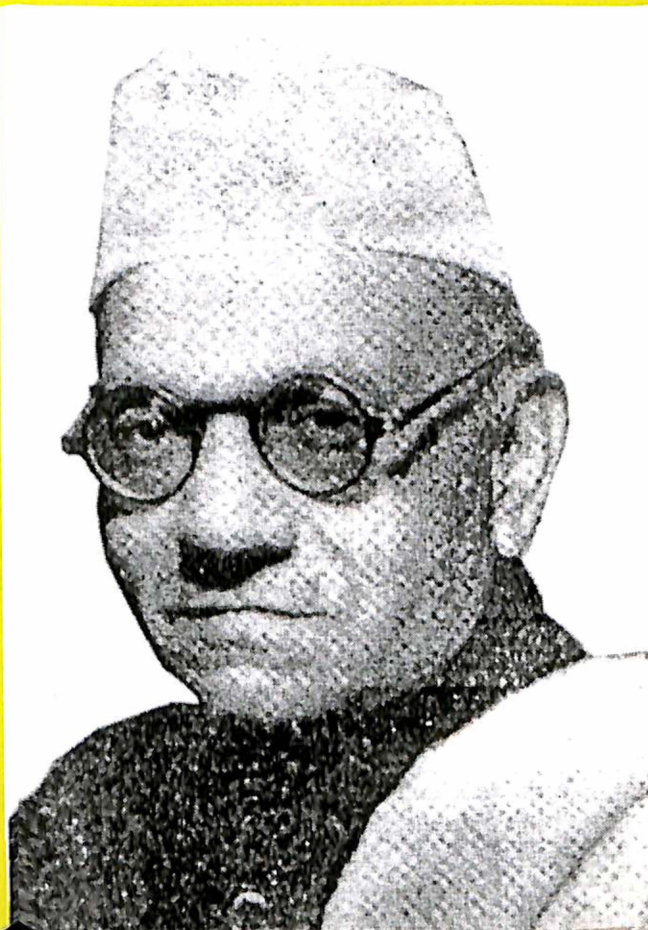
Rasiklal C Parikh

Priyabala Shah

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Rasiklal C. Parikh

The Sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King - Suddhodhana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording, the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From : Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.

Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi.

MAKERS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

Rasiklal C. Parikh

Priyabala Shah



Sahitya Akademi

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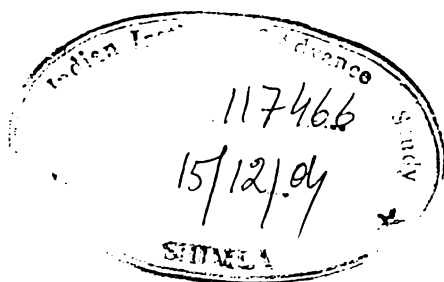
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Literary Background and Life Sketch

Literature of all modern Indian languages after 1850 AD breaks away from the literature of the previous 500 years in content, presentation as well as the worldview of the writers. With few exceptions, the old literature was generally religious with God as the focal point. Modern literature, on the other hand, is more interested in life as it is lived on this globe and the central place is taken by Man. Also old literature used prose to a very small extent, while modern literature has established many prose forms like drama, short story, novel, essay, etc. The modern point of view is that literature as an art is a source of joy rather than an instrument of religious instructions as in the middle ages. In fact, modern literature was born in an atmosphere humming with academic activities. For Gujarat, the greatest factor in the development of modern literature was the establishment of Bombay University which provided facilities for the study of English, Sanskrit and Persian literature. Students translated this literature in to Indian languages like Gujarati, Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, etc. enriching them. Many translators have brought to the Gujarati reader a number of eminent literary works in English and through English, in several European languages.

Against the background of these influences modern Gujarati literature can be broadly divided in to three periods.

1. This can be called the Reformation Age after the most powerful source of inspiration or the Dalpat-Narmad Age after its most influential men of letters. This period stretches from 1850 AD up to the death of Narmad in 1886. Literature in this period had been written in an inspired atmosphere of social

consciousness.

2. The next period is the Scholastic Age or to name it after the most imaginative and versatile author of the period, the Age of Govardhanram. The language used in prose and poetry became literate, more meaningful and more pleasing. This period began in 1886 with the death of Narmad and continued up to 1920.
3. The Gandhi Age or the Swaraj Age is the third period of modern Gujarati literature, which began after 1920. Gandhiji returned to India from South Africa in 1915 and after a short interval during which he remained silent, started *Navjivan* and *Young India* in 1919. In these weeklies he began to voice his message in a language which could be understood by everybody. In his opinion, language was a means of expressing thought and he introduced a style that was direct, simple, restrained, without literary flourishes and applicable to both poetry and prose. These views naturally affected Gujarati literature of the time and brought about literary simplicity as well as a sense of realism and the scholastic style of using too many Sanskrit words began to lose its hold. Gandhiji's direct contribution to Gujarati literature is his autobiography *Experiments With Truth*. To him also goes the credit of bringing about uniformity of spelling in Gujarati. In addition, he made available to the Gujarati reading public the services of his companions in Sabarmati Ashram, like Kaka Kalelkar, Mahadev Desai, Kishorlal Mashruwala, and the students and teachers of his Gujarat Vidyapith like Ramnarayan Pathak, Sundaram Sneh-Rashmi and many others. Gandhiji and the freedom struggle waged under his leadership have become inspirations for several poets. The authors of this period were sensitive to art and amenable to experimentation. The Gandhian period continues till today.

Mention must also be made here of some leading periodicals whose contributors are responsible for taking the Gujarati language to its height over the last 100 years. They include *Jnan Sudha*, *Vasant*, *Sundari Subodh*, *Vismi Sadi*, *Yugadharma*, *Prasthan*,

Kaumudi, Kumar, Buddhi Prakash, Urmi, Sanskriti, Navajivan, Prajabandhu, Saurashtra and Phulchhab and they have rendered valuable service in the literary world. Many institutions like Gujarat Vernacular Society (now Gujarat Vidya Sabha), Farbes Gujarati Sabha, Gujarat Sahitya Parishad, Gujarat Sahitya Sabha, Sahitya Samsad and Gujarat Vidyapith have contributed much to the development of literature and informative writing in Gujarati.

In such a literary background stepped **Rasiklal C. Parikh**, a man of letters, litterateur, critic and research scholar and flourished in this rich soil.

Life Sketch and Career Graph

I met Rasiklal C. Parikh for the first time in 1942 in connection with my postgraduate studies. He was director of the institution and when I went in he was sittinig in his vast chamber, looking like a Brahmin sage or rather like a very worldly sage. We discussed Ancient Indian Culture, the subject I had chosen for study. He showed me the vast curriculum for the subject and told me that if I was willing to read all the books listed there, then and only then should I enroll for this subject. I accepted this condition--I was impressed with his talk and the guidance he gave me, the ease with which he talked and the vast knowledge he had of all streams of art.

In appearance he was not tall but he cannot be called short either. His face was round with small penetrating eyes. He was completely bald, bespectacled and wore a white khadi dress with his Gandhi cap lying on the table beside him.

He was born on 20th August 1897 on Janmashtami day (the day Lord Krishna was born-a day celebrated by all Hindus) in the town of Pethapur near Gandhinagar, the first of three brothers. His father was an advocate and they lived in Sadra-today a sleepy town but a busy, bustling one then, being the agency town of Mahikantha where Rasikbhai got his primary school education. His father wanted him to go on for higher studies abroad, but unfortunately he passed away when Rasikbhai was just fifteen years old with his dream unfulfilled. At an early age, Rasikbhai was influenced by his father's love for literature in general and his

mother, Samarathben, introduced him to poetry and Sanskrit literature. His teacher in primary school, Manilal, taught him to appreciate subjects as diverse as Balashankar's poetry and English literature. He got his secondary education in Proprietary High School, one of the leading schools in Ahmedabad, and one which contributed much to his formation. The time he spent there left an everlasting impression on his mind and he loved to talk about those days and his about his teachers, particularly Jivnaji Diwan, Balubhai Thakor and Shri Jogalekar-some of the best teachers of those days.

In 1913, Rasikbhai was married to Manekben an educated and accomplished lady. She played the sitar well and sometimes entertained him and his friends. They had four sons, Sushil, Pramed, Vastupal and Subandhu.

After he completed his schooling his uncle, Vadilal Lallubhai, persuaded his mother to let Rasikbhai go to Poona (now Pune), where he enrolled in Ferguson College in 1913. Manekben accompanied him there and lived with him throughout his stay in Poona. In Ferguson College he came in contact with leading educationists and affectionate preceptors like Professors Ranade, Patwardhan and Bhate and Doctors Gomeha and Gune. All these learned men were devoted to the imparting of education. Rasikbhai studied English literature under Professor Patwardhan, philosophy under Professor Ranade and learned to do research under Dr. Gomeha. He had selected Sanskrit and English as his subjects for B.A. which he passed with honours in 1918. He was appointed fellow of Shankracharya Seminar in his college where he studied western philosophy for one year. He was already familiar with Indian philosophy and had a genuine interest in research work which he did under the able guidance of Dr. Gomeha. Never one to waste even a minute of his time, he simultaneously attended postgraduate lectures in English and Sanskrit, read ancient manuscripts for a few months with Muni Jinavijayaji, a leading Jain Priest, as a result of which he got interested in Prakrit grammar and continued the study of the history of Gujarat which he had embarked on soon after coming to Poona. Last but not the

least, he took the opportunity of studying the Darshanas with Pandit Sukhlalji. He had developed a vast knowledge base by the end of his stay in Poona with a lifelong interest in history, archaeology and philosophy and was ready for a bright and fertile future.

After completing his studies Rasikbhai started writing learned and informative articles on various subjects in English which required a lot of research. It was a stroke of luck that he met Indulal Yagnik in Poona and together they planned to establish an institution of higher learning and research in Gujarat, on the lines of Ferguson College, with the help of devoted volunteers. He decided to drop the idea of becoming a barrister much to the disappointment of his family and friends and also decided not to accept a government job out of a sense of patriotism. He returned to Ahmedabad and joined Gujarat Kelavani Mandal as a lifelong volunteer.

Indulal Yagnik, Rasiklal Parikh, Trikamlal Shah (a college friend and Dakshina fellow), Nandlal Shah, Ramnarayan Pathak and others planned to start an educational institution and with the encouragement of Gandhiji, Gujarat Vidyapith was established.

Rasikbhai's work with Gujarat Vidyapith

Gujarat Vidyapith was established in October 1920, and two months later, Gujarat Mahavidyalay (University) came in to existence. In June 1922 the first batch of 250 students enrolled in the University. Its library contained 75,000 books and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel raised ten lakh rupees for the construction of a building.

Rasikbhai taught Sanskrit in this University and considered himself lucky to have the opportunity of working with scholars like Kakasaheb Kalelkar, Pandit Sukhlalji, Muni Jinavijayji, Dharmanand Kosambi, Ramnarayan Pathak and others, who were giants in their respective fields. In 1921, a new section for archaeology, Puratattva Mandir was added to the University headed by Muni Jinavijayji with Rasikbhai as secretary. Puratattva Mandir started a quarterly magazine, 'Puratattva' which was edited by Rasikbhai- this being the start of his career as a writer. As mentioned above,

the library of the University had a large collection of books including books on European, Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali literature, western philosophy, history and archaeology and Rasikbhai had access to all of them. Making use of this literary wealth, Rasikbhai wrote several original works-both prose and poetry, edited several classics and translated Sanskrit writings making them available to a larger population. He edited *Tattvopaplavasimha* of Jayarashi Bhatt with the help of Pandit Sukhlalji and compiled a Sanskrit grammar, *Vedic Pathavali* with critical notes. In 1927, he translated selections from Vedic hymns and Brahmanical literature. His well-researched articles on Sanskrit drama in general and plays of Bhasa in particular were published in *Puratattva*. In 1924, he translated the first six chapters of *Kavya Prakasha* of Mammata with Ramnarayan Pathak. In fact, because of his literary ability and vast knowledge, he was considered the Mammata of Gujarat. During this period Rasikbhai also started contributing poems to *Yugadharma* magazine and wrote two plays, one being a translation of the English translation of Tolstoy's Russian play *Pehlo Kalaal* (*First Distiller*) and the other an original play, *Rupiya nu Jhaad* (*Money Tree*) under the pseudonym Sanjaya.

In 1930 Rasikbhai left the university because he felt that the purpose for which it was established was not being served. Although he continued to teach, edit and write literary articles, his resignation left him in financial straits for several years. In 1938, luck smiled on him when he was appointed co-editor of *Prasthan*, a leading Gujarati magazine of scholarly writings, with Ramnarayan Pathak and tutor to Lady Tanumati, the wife of Sir Baronet Chinubhai. At about the same time, he edited with Professor Athavale, *Kavyanushasana* of Hemchandracharya and independently edited two great Sanskrit works, Siddhachandra's *Kavyaprakashkhandana* and Kavi Someshwara's *Kavya Prakash Samketa*.

In 1938 his career took another even better turn-Hiralal Parekh who was assistant secretary of the Gujarat Vernacular Society died and the president of the institution, Anandshankar Dhruva, offered the post to Rasikbhai, who willingly accepted it. As assistant secretary, Rasikbhai's job was to arrange lectures of famous

scholars, Sunitikumar Chatterjee amongst them and he became the force behind the writing and publishing of many works by different authors.

Being a scholar Rasikbhai had no interest in administrative work but Anandshankar was anxious to establish Gujarat University. With that in mind and relying on Rasiklal Parikh's experience with working in a University, he started a department of learning and research in his own institution. This gave Rasikbhai the kind of work he was interested in and he was happy at the institution. Bombay University granted limited affiliation to the institution for the subjects of Ancient Indian Culture, Gujarati and Sanskrit at the postgraduate level and the department received a grant from the then Bombay State government. Regular courses started in 1939 with Anandshankar as the honorary director and Rasikbhai as the head of the department. On the death of Anandshankar in 1941, Rasikbhai succeeded him. To lessen the burden of administrative work on him, Jethalal Gandhi was appointed assistant secretary of the society and Rasikbhai was now free to devote more time to scholarly studies.

Rasikbhai taught Epigraphy of India and Gujarat to postgraduate students at the institute. He was always well prepared for the topic he was going to lecture on before entering the classroom and he was equally exacting with the students. He made sure he read all the available material and prepared notes from which he would write down the main points on the blackboard for the students. It is rare to see such sincerity today.

It speaks volumes for the man when you consider the fact that Rasikbhai had no postgraduate degree himself, yet Bombay University recognized him as a postgraduate teacher for M.A. students and a guide for Ph.D. students registered for Ancient Indian Culture and Sanskrit.

In 1946 Gujarat Vernacular Society was renamed Gujarat Vidya Sabha. Sheth Bholabhai Jesinghbhai on the advice of Pandit Sukhlalji donated rupees two lakhs for higher education and research and Rasikbhai's department was named Sheth B.J. Institute of Learning and Research after him. The institution is renowned in

India even today for the research work that is being done there.

In 1950 Gujarat University was established and it supported the B.J. Institute in its teaching and research work, but the institute had to appoint its own professors and research workers in Sanskrit, Gujarati and Ancient Indian Culture as well as Arabic and Persian which were added later. Rasikbhai trained altogether sixteen Ph.D. students of whom the first three had not registered under him yet received his full attention and guidance. Of the other thirteen, eight students registered for Sanskrit, four for Indian Culture and one for English. Because of the variety of subjects in which Rasikbhai could guide the students, he was often called a 'walking university.'

In 1947 the B.J. Institute of Learning and Research started classes in Bengali language and in Journalism. In 1948 during its centenary celebrations the play *Rai no Parvat* was staged and its success gave the idea of including dramatics in the curriculum. Rasikbhai was interested in dramatics and in 1952 he started Natamandal which produced and performed *Mena Gurjari*, a dance-drama written by Rasikbhai, which became very popular.

On seeing the progress of the Institute in various fields of learning and the encouragement that was given to the students, Gujarat University finally gave permanent affiliation to the B.J. Institute of Learning and Research, so that it became a virtual department of the university and in 1960, the Institute got its own building on Ashram Road in the heart of the city.

In 1954, Rasikbhai became the honorary director of the B.J. Institute and at the same time he joined Gandhi Smarak Nidhi. As the financial condition of the institute was not sound, many of the teachers were shifted to Shri Ramanand Mahavidyalaya which was founded by Gujarat Vidya Sabha. Rasikbhai was appointed Dean of the Arts faculty by the University-a fitting recognition-and he held the post for seven years. Dr. Hariprasad Shastri helped Rasikbhai with administrative work.

In 1967, it was decided to publish a series of writings on the political and cultural history of Gujarat. The work of editing was given to Rasikbhai who had retired by then. He edited seven of

the nine volumes between 1972 and 1981. A series of lectures on Indian Culture were also arranged in the institution and Rasikbhai invited renowned scholars like Dr. R.C. Majumdar, Shri Dolarrai Mankad, Dr. V. Raghavan, Dr. D.C. Sarkar, Dr. Bhogilal Sandesara, Dr. P.L. Gupta, Shri C. Shivaramamurti, Prof. K. Krishnamurti, Dr. H.P. Sankalia and Dr. Vasudev Saran Agrawala, all experts in their subjects, to deliver them. Even after Rasikbhai retired in 1968, he continued to guide the institute in an honorary capacity.

Between 1954 and 1974 Rasikbhai gave several lectures and radio talks. His first five lectures in 1954 were on the ancient capitals of Gujarat, which were delivered in Bombay University. In 1960 he gave three lectures in Baroda's M.S. University on *Anand Mimamsa*-concept of aesthetic enjoyment. Then came five lectures in Gujarat University in 1963 on *Form and Method of History*. In Gujarat Vidya Sabha he delivered a critical lecture on the *Importance of Characterisation in Sarasvatichandra*, a landmark of Gujarati literature, the lecture being published in 1976. These talks and lectures were interspersed with several writings. In 1953, he edited with critical notes *Kavyaprakasha Khandana* and *Kavyaprakash Samketa*. He edited, together with me, two volumes of *Nritya Ratna Kosha* of Shri Kumbhakarna in 1957, entitled '*Evaluations And Judgments In View of Modern Literary Principles And Aesthetics*'. In 1974 a collection of his talks on All India Radio Ahmedabad was published under the name of *Akashbhashita*. In 1965 his articles on writing of prefaces (*purovachana*) and criticism (*vivechana*) were published. All these works were widely acclaimed because of his critical ability and mastery over a wide range of subjects.

Rasikbhai was asked to preside over various conferences-in 1961 it was the All India Oriental Conference in Srinagar, in 1963, the Gujarat Sahitya Parishad in Bombay and in 1968, the Gujarat Itihas Parishad in Vallabh Vidyanagar-at each of these conferences he delivered the presidential address in his usual masterly fashion. Before each lecture he made sure he went through previous presidential addresses to avoid repetition, a sign of his thoroughness.

Rasikbhai is well known for his vast knowledge in the subjects of literature, philosophy, history, Sanskrit, poetry, dramatics, criticism and many others. Besides, he proved himself to be a skilful dramatist as is obvious in his plays like *Rupiya nu Jhaad*, *Mena Gurjari* and *Sharvilaka*, a consummate poet as is clearly shown in the collection of his poems *Smriti* and a skillful short story writer as seen in the collection of short stories entitled *Jivan na Vaheno*. Rasikbhai also had a lasting interest in parapsychology- he studied many books on the subject and read Jung extensively. When he was told about a three-year-old girl who remembered her previous birth, he travelled all the way to Wankaner to study the case personally.

All these activities kept him busy but he still found the time to look in to the problems of the Institute as also the personal problems of the staff. His motto was to learn and teach and he had earned the respect of the trustees so that whenever he approached them with problems of the institution or the staff they never refused to listen to him. The staff, including the peons, came to him for help and he took care of each one like a family member, when needed. His students also received his full attention and guidance and the trustees trusted him completely. Thus all those who came to know him were touched by his kindness and caring nature.

He passed away on 1st November 1982 after a brief illness. He was like a walking encyclopedia and will always be remembered in the field of learning and knowledge. The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation honoured him by renaming Ashram Road, the road on which the Sheth Bholabhai Jesinghbhai Institute of Learning and Research is located, after him and it is now known as Rasiklal Chhotalal Marg.

The Plays

Rasikbhai had a lively imagination and an amazing command over language. His vocabulary was vast and he used it to paint images with words that were just right-in fact, he always took great pains to find the right words, occasionally even coining new ones to give the correct picture. His poetic ability is seen in *Mena Gurjari* and his imagination runs riot in *Sharvilak*-who else could have thought of taking folklore or a part of a classical play and moulding them in to two such beautiful plays. He also put to good use his knowledge of history, psychology and Indian and Greek mythology in all his writings.

Rasikbhai had mastered the intricacies of theatre by years of study of dramatics. He included elaborate directions and lengthy prefaces in his plays with a view to having his plays performed on stage successfully as well as giving his readers as much pleasure in reading them as to audiences in seeing them performed. His habit of researching thoroughly before writing anything helped him in this.

According to Rasikbhai, dramatics (natyakala) is an art form which must involve more than one person and offer both a visual as well as an auditory experience-without this a play could not be successful. Although it is an independent art form, dramatics is a composite of prose, poetry, music and dance-like a rainbow is a composite of colours. He believed that a play should reach out to all kinds of audiences regardless of language or region-that it should be truly international in its influence.

Having studied Bharat and Aristotle, Rasikbhai was influenced by both. He had read Sanskrit drama and was equally familiar with

the works of English, German, Russian, Greek and French dramatists. His reading was not confined to pre-modern works-he also read T.S. Eliot, Bernard Shaw, Ibsen and other modern writers. He incorporated in his plays, the four basic types of Abhinaya (acting)-Angika (action and dance), Vachika (dialogues either prose or poetry), Aharya (settings and costumes) and Sattvika (the most difficult covering expressions or the display of different moods)-propounded by Bharat, proving that tradition is nothing but a living continuation of the past. All these types of acting lead towards the ultimate aim or purpose of drama-the aesthetic delight, or Rasa. Rasiklal Parikh has most successfully applied Bharat's principles in *Mena Gurjari*.

Not only because of his knowledge of the art of dramatics but because of his involvement with Gujarati theatre, in 1937, Rasikbhai was invited to talk at the inauguration of the Theatre Conference held in Ahmedabad. He started by saying that theatre is the image of a nation-it reflects the nature, customs and actions of society and if it is not of the highest order than the leaders, cultural and political, should sit up and take notice. He shared some of his ideas with the audience about the ways of encouraging the development of theatre, which should include drama, cinema, radio drama performed by professionals or amateurs, by institutions or individuals, at the urban or village level. He suggested that there should be a separate academy to foster this art form or at least a separate department of the Sahitya Parishad headed by an expert actor or director and a committee of scholars and actors to supervise the growth of theatre. These should be responsible for providing descriptions and notes for scenes and to help in differentiating between good theatre and bad. They should be in touch with playwrights and scriptwriters who have made a name for themselves. A journal should be published and contributions should be invited from experienced actors, directors and critics. Monetary help should be provided to amateur drama and cinema companies till they are able to stand on their own feet and they should not be asked to stage any dramas free of charge. The educated class and women should be encouraged to get involved with the theatre. At present

there are no serious critics of literature or theatre-a committee of such critics should be formed to provide constructive criticism. Awards should be instituted to encourage directors, scriptwriters and actors and a review should be done every year of the activities of the theatre. All this is to give due importance to theatre as an instrument of entertainment and education for the public, and change the mentality of the public who look down upon theatre people. This he felt was the duty of all well-wishers of Rangbhoomi. This lecture reveals Rasikbhai's love of theatre as an art form and he wanted Gujarati theatre to have the same stature as the Sanskrit drama of old.

Having noted his sentiments so far on the subject of theatre, let us look at each one of his plays in detail.

Pahelo Kalal (1930)

This was the first play written by Rasikbhai under the penname Sanjay. It was an adaptation of the English translation *First Distiller* of Tolstoy's Russian play. Rasikbhai classified the play as a comedy since he believed that comedies could convey social or moral messages in a simple language understood by all. At the time of writing this play, prohibition was in force throughout the country and Rasikbhai wanted to motivate people to observe it faithfully. He also pointed out the evils of ill-gotten wealth.

Briefly, the devil requires his imps to tempt people away from honest ways. Imps assigned to businessmen, lawyers and other affluent people have an easy task-the problem as always is with those who earn their living by the sweat of their brows. The devil is displeased with the failure of a particular imp who asks for a grace period of three years to trap an honest, god-fearing farmer. Using his supernatural powers, the imp forecasts the weather correctly several times so that the farmer can take steps to save his crop. The imp gains the farmer's trust and with every successful harvest, his granary overflows. The imp shows the farmer how to use the excess grain to make wine which he can then sell thus adding considerably to his income. This marks the beginning of the farmer's downfall-he who was earlier willing to share his meager food with another, refuses to look after his own grandfather when

he has plenty to share.

While translating the author takes care to use words which are a part of the people's day-to-day language so as to successfully convey the message of the play to even less educated farmers and labourers. For example, he uses the word 'kothara' for granary, 'pali' for measuring grain, 'chulo' for stove and does not hesitate to coin words like 'teen tara' for the Russian instrument balalaika so that anyone would know it is similar to 'ek tara' with which he is already familiar. As a result the play can be performed before any audience, be they scholarly or not.

Rupiya Nu Jhaad (1932)

This play was mired in controversy on publication: Indulal Yagnik who was Rasiklal Parikh's mentor and whose ideas were presented in the play through the protagonist, Kundanlal, disagreed with Gandhiji's ideas of satyagraha and non-violence. As a result, some of Gandhiji's followers did not allow Rasiklal Parikh to stage the play. When finally it was staged, it was overshadowed by his far more popular and colourful play *Mena Gurjari*.

Gandhiji believed that it was the duty of the educated privileged class to help uplift the poor and uneducated of the nation. Many unscrupulous people, while pretending to follow Gandhiji, took advantage of the gullibility of the simple people, mostly villagers. This play exposes the rascals but concludes on a pessimistic note : that such people will continue to prosper as long as there exist fools who trust them.

There are eleven scenes and each one, as is the author's habit, has elaborate stage directions that describe the place of action and the psychology of the characters besides contributing to the development of the theme so that a person who reads the play can visualise it and enjoy it as much as one who watches it being performed. The first three scenes show the formation of a fictitious insurance company by a coterie of rich men successful in their fields and they start collecting a nominal premium from the poor telling them that in their hour of need they will be given the required amount. They convince them by giving money to a subscriber for his mother's funeral in front of the other villagers.

On seeing this, several villagers part with their hard-earned money. The crooks of course have no intention of giving the villagers even a part of the money which goes in to their own pockets. Soon, the company's representative, who approached the villagers, gets caught while the owners abscond with the money. Kundanlal, the idealist, at first does not believe that Gandhians would do such a thing, but when he is confronted with the evidence, he upbraids the schemers. Finally he accepts the reality that moral lectures cannot change society and that capitalists will continue to fleece the poor even after independence.

Mena Gurjari (1952)

This dance-drama is Rasiklal Parikh's outstanding contribution to Gujarati literature. Being well-versed in Sanskrit and Aristotelian concepts of dramatics, he was able to take up a popular folk song and convert it in to a play which caught the imagination of audiences who were charmed by the music and poetry of its lyrics as well as the strength of the characters whose presence pulsates throughout the play as does that of the author.

The author tells us in a rather lengthy preface that he was enchanted by the story the first time he heard the folk song. His mother had also heard it and could sing a few lines from it much to Rasikbhai's surprise. With the help of Muni Jinavijayaji, he gathered enough historical and literary evidence to show that the incident had indeed occurred in present day Mandu in central India. He also points out that he has tried, quite successfully we can add, to incorporate all the four basic types of acting (abhinaya) to satisfy the requirements of Sanskrit drama. The play is not divided in to acts but the separation of one event or episode from another is achieved by the dropping down of the curtain.

The play is about the Gurjars-a courageous community, descendants of Aryans and Rajputs. They are tall, good looking and attired in colourful clothes and heavy ornaments. The men carry swords while the women carry hidden in their skirts a dagger and a vial of poison, which they do not hesitate to use when their honour is threatened. According to custom, Mena, a motherless child, was married off at a tender age, by her father, Surshi, to a

boy from Gadha Gokul. At the start of the play, Mena is shown as a willful girl with a doting father and it is time for her to be taken to her husband's house by her brother-in-law, Hiraji, a young and handsome warrior. There is a tearful farewell scene between father and daughter while the memory of her mother envelops them. Surshi consoles his daughter with the assurance that the goddess Mahakali, who is mother to all women, would look after her in times of distress.

A year goes by during which Mena settles in the routine of daily life in Gadh Gokul. Here the playwright introduces a minor character, Amthikaki the village gossip, describing skillfully the teasing banter between her and the village girls.

The routine of the village is disturbed by the news that the emperor of Delhi has set up his camp nearby and that it resembles Indra's city in heaven. On hearing this, Mena breaks in to a song describing the camp imaginatively and ending with the desire to see it. Amthikaki and the village priest warn her against going but she and her friends pay no heed. They willfully plan, instead, to disguise themselves as milkmaids and flower girls to go and see the camp for themselves, their colourful clothes described in a song. When Mena's mother-in-law sees her all dressed up, she questions her and on hearing that Mena plans to visit the emperor's camp, she forbids her from going there. Mena ignores her and 'runs off like a flash of lightning with her anklets tinkling musically'. The first inkling of impending tragedy comes when Mena discovers that in her hurry she has forgotten her dagger and vial of poison. She tells her friends to go ahead without her while she waits for them in the lonely mango grove. She breaks in to a sad song voicing her fears and sure enough towards the end of the song, the emperor enters the grove. On seeing Mena, he is smitten by her beauty, while Mena starts trembling with fear. She manages to put up a brave face and there ensue some of the most delightful lyrics in the play-an exchange of witticism between the two, sung in different languages, all the while both of them dancing to the accompaniment of music.

The emperor asks Mena to go with him and tells her about

the wealth and jewels he will give her, the far away places he will show her and the love he will bestow on her. He invites her to his camp to watch the festivities that are held daily around the campfire. She tells him that he is merely infatuated with her and tells him to let her go. The emperor, however, approaches her at which Mena faints with fear and he carries her off to his camp. He prevents the other girls who are already there from leaving the camp because he knows that if they go back to the village and tell their men about Mena they will attack his camp. The girls defy him by refusing to eat the food cooked in the camp saying it is unclean. The emperor gets the village priest to come and cook for them but Mena refuses to touch even this food, saying that she will only eat when she returns to her husband's house. The girls secretly send a message with the priest to the men of Gokul Gadh telling them about their plight. In the meantime the emperor breaks up camp and returns to Delhi with the girls.

When the men get the news they sing a stirring, martial song—the theme of which is that being of the warrior class they have to fight for their honor even if they lose their lives. Hiraji gives the call for the attack and they ride to Delhi where there is a fierce battle during which Mena's father is killed. Seeing that the battle is going their way, Hiraji leaves the site of the battle and enters the palace in search of Mena. With defeat staring him in the face, Hiraji comes upon the emperor asking for Mena's forgiveness. The days of fasting and purity have given a glow to Mena's face which blinds all those who look upon her. The radiance on her face makes her look like Jogmaya, an incarnation of the deity and she walks out of the room with Hiraji following her.

The entire village prepares to welcome the surviving victorious warriors, but the girls are ignored. The women of the village call Mena the emperor's wife and her mother-in-law refuses to let her enter the house saying that the men went to avenge Gujjar honor and not to save her. Mena turns away from them all, a divine glow envelopes her face, and drawing herself to her full height walks out of the house and goes to Pavagadh where she becomes one with the goddess Mahakali.

This play was so popular that it was performed more than any other Gujarati play-there were more than 125 performances-not only in Gujarat but also in Delhi and Bombay. The role of Mena was played ably by the late Deena Pathak. In the 17th session of All India Oriental conference held in Ahmedabad, of which Rasikbhai was the local secretary, it was performed for the entertainment of the delegates. The audience enjoyed the performance and the president of the Conference, Mr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, in a letter to the Institute, described his emotions on seeing the performance. Excerpts from his letter are reproduced below.

Excerpts from the letter written by Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji:

Witnessing the performance of the Gujarati dance-drama..... 'Mena Gurjari' has been a unique experience..... The theme is built on a charming little ballad of Gujar and Rajput heroism and self-abnegation which has been dramatised in the setting of old Gujarati folk-songs and dances..... The gorgeous dresses of the Gujar women and men presented a wonderful feast of colour heightened by the exquisite folk-dances and popular melodies which come down from the heroic middle ages of India.the romance concentrated in a medieval ballad in which crystallised the 'joie-de-vivre' as well as the chivalry and austerity of a simple society has been fully retained with all its subtlety and idealism and its naiveté and passion.I was constantly reminded of the high artistic skill which suffused the Shantiniketan performances inspired as they used to be by the genius of Rabindranath Tagore.We remained spellbound for three and a half hours after a very fatiguing day of meetings and conferences and lectures and the sheer joy of witnessing such a highly artistic creation.removed all our fatigue and craving for sleep. We are leaving Ahmedabad with very happy memoriesand among these memories the brightest and most dazzling, the sweetest and the most entrancing will always be that of this performance of 'Mena Gurjari'.

Sharvilaka

When this play was published it was widely acclaimed in the Gujarati literary world-it was the first successful attempt to blend

traditional Sanskrit drama form with the western style and earned for the author the coveted Sahitya Akademi award while ensuring Rasikbhai's place amongst the leading literary figures of the country.

The author has given a subtitle to the play- 'A Chapter Derived From *Daridracharudatta-Mrchhakatik*'. The plot of the play is taken from Shudrak's *Mrchhakatikam*, which in turn is based on Bhasa's *Daridra Charudatta*, in both of which the love of Charudatta and Vasantsena is the central theme. Rasikbhai, with characteristic skill, has selected two minor characters from these plays, Sharvilak and Madanika, and has built up a central theme of political and religious conflicts to which their love story is made subordinate. The author uses a storyteller (sutradhar) to acquaint the audience with and to provide links to the historical background of the play.

The play is set in and around Ujjaini, the capital of the kingdom of Avanti and there are three threads running through the story.

The first is the historical thread which deals with the sons of king Pradyot and the influence of the Machiavellian Prime Minister, Bharat Rohtak. The older son, Gopala, is gentle, learned and popular but he has chosen to support the Buddhists and Jains which displeases Bharat Rohtak, a conservative Brahmin. He decides to side with the younger, unscrupulous Palaka and makes him king. He imprisons Gopala and starves him to death, at the same time making sure that all his wives and children are killed so that no descendant can claim the throne. Much to his chagrin, it is prophesied that Gopala's son, Aryaka, will succeed Palaka. He decides to find the boy and kill him. He captures and imprisons the boy but is prevented from killing him by Sharvilak, who hatches a plot and with the support of the people of Ujjaini, Aryaka manages to escape. Palaka is killed by the people and Aryaka is crowned king.

The second thread is the love between the merchant-trader Charudatta and the courtesan Vasantsena. Charudatta has also felt the wrath of Palaka, who prompted by Bharat Rohtak, takes away all the wealth that Charudatta has inherited from his father and seizes his ships laden with goods, floating a rumour that the

ships have been lost at sea. The king's brother-in-law, Shakya, is in love with Vasantsena and is jealous of Charudatta whom the courtesan prefers. As a result of a misunderstanding, Vasantsena lands in the clutches of Shakya who strangles her. She faints but Shakya, thinking that she is dead, leaves her to go to Palaka's court and announce that Charudatta has killed Vasantsena. Charudatta is sentenced to be killed by beheading and the sentence is carried out just as Vasantsena arrives-albeit a little late.

The third and most beautiful thread is the story of the eponymous hero and the slave girl Madanika. Sharvilak has two goals-to crown Aryaka and to free Madanika from her bondage, in that order. In a moment of weakness he puts his love before his duty and regrets it. He is brought to his senses with the news of the prince's capture and decides to forsake Madanika, but she has already formed a plan and disguising herself as a man, helps the prince to escape. She however is caught and sentenced to death by hanging.

In the last scenes, Bharat Rohtak conscious of his failure collapses, Vasantsena and Sharvilak find their own means of consolation and the coronation of Aryaka begins. Some of the best dialogues in the play are in this scene when the philosophy of the author is evident. The implication is that Vedic rites are meaningless if carried out without honesty and sense of justice. Buddhism in particular and Jainism inspire these virtues in their followers and they are victorious in the end.

Rasikbhai's language and stage directions paint a 'word-picture' so that a person reading the play can visualise it in his mind's eye and derive as much enjoyment from it as one who watches it being performed on stage.

Short Stories

Few people knew Rasiklal Parikh as a short story writer since his achievements as a scholar overshadowed his other talents. Also, he wrote very few stories-only eight, over a period of nearly 50 years. The stories were written at the beginning of the Gujarati short story age. By 1926, stories of the Romantic genre had become popular such as those of Dhumketu and within the next couple of years, the Classical genre was established when the stories of Ramnarayan Pathak were published and admired.

Seven of his eight stories were written between 1926 and 1940 and were published collectively in 1941 in the first edition of *Streams of Life* and again in the second edition in 1945, while the eighth story was written after a long gap of 38 years and is included in the third edition published in 1978.

The author himself has classified five of his stories as social and the remaining as historical. However, there is a commonalty in the stories in that in each one he takes a character typical of the times or a historical event and builds the story round it-the characters are used by the author to express his philosophy of life, his political and social views and his understanding of human psychology. Having stated this, one must also acknowledge that each story is quite different in its narrative style. In the historical stories he remains faithful to the atmosphere of the times bringing alive the characters with a few strokes of his verbal paint brush. The social stories depict the social upheaval resulting from the Independence movement led by Gandhiji and the conflict between tradition and modern ideas resulting from the movement. The author shows his disapproval of existing customs which restrict

and even destroy the individual who is forced to conform to the norms of an orthodox society which follows rituals without understanding them and therefore misinterpreting them.

All the stories start with a character or an event and the ambience is captured immediately with a few appropriate words. Rasikbhai's choice of words is so precise that there is not a single instance where a reader will find an inappropriate word which fails to create the image or impression intended by the author. For example, the story *Statecraft*, opens with strains of music which Rasikbhai has described so skillfully that the reader seems to 'hear' the music and his interest is immediately aroused.

Section 1 : Social Stories

In this section, social problems of the day are highlighted, the stories being spun around a central figure. In *KAMALA* (1926) a lively, motherless girl is married off at a tender age but her personality is crushed under the routine of household chores which she is forced to do by her dominating mother-in-law and jealous sister-in-law, while her husband is sent off for studies to another town. When her maternal uncle, who is the narrator, suggests that she run away, she refuses since she has been taught to accept her fate. Rasikbhai conveys to the reader his opprobrium of such tradition through the narrator. The next story, *TWO FRIENDS* (BE MITRO-1926), is a tussle between the idealistic teacher, Chandulal and the materialistic lawyer, Shyamlal who grew up together in similar circumstances, but life taught them different lessons. The story is in the form of a dialogue, succinct and effective. Shyamlal worldly wise, wants to start a newspaper and invites Chandulal to become its editor, promising to make him wealthy. Chandulal, a staunch Gandhian, prefers to follow his vocation of teaching rather than amass wealth and blames people like Shyamlal whom he believes are responsible for the failure of the Swadeshi movement. He refuses the offer which would have brought him financial security and a stable job and goes away disillusioned. *ON THE ROAD* (RASTAMA-1929) is the third story in the collection and once again the author makes use of a dialogue between its two protagonists to convey his own philosophy and opinions. The two

men-the older, a Gandhian social worker and retired teacher, the younger, a college student, discuss the problems facing the country and the attitudes of the people. Two philosophical questions arise: is truth the same everywhere?; and, what is more important, wealth or happiness? In answering the questions, the author juxtaposes the experience of the older man against the theoretical knowledge of the younger leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions. In BITTER COCKROACH (KADVO VANDO-1929), the protagonist is Priyamvada, whose parents want her to get married. Priyamvada is educated and has a mind of her own-she is wary of men because of the two living examples before her and decides not to marry. She has often seen her mother cry silently out of loneliness as her husband has no time for her, while her maid, Jamuna is often beaten by a husband who drinks and has no job. As she grows older she becomes bitter and abrasive so that her name is changed to the symbolic bitter cockroach. The next story, SHOBHAN KUMAR (1929), is about a forty year old widower-sensitive, well educated and refined. However, he is unable to express his loneliness and need for a female companion due to social constraints.

Section 2 : Historical Stories

The theme of these stories is political intrigue. RAJMATA (DOWAGER QUEEN-1933) is a devout Buddhist and a follower of the priest Aryasingh who is critical of the king, her son. The two are always quarreling till the king can no longer tolerate the priest and gets him killed-on hearing this the dowager queen commits suicide under the Ashoka tree, a symbol of Buddhism. RAJSUTRA (STATECRAFT-1940) is the story of the intrigue woven around Kumarpal, king of Patan and his guru, the omniscient Jain acharya Hemchandra. The acharya reminds Kumarpal of how his father was murdered and urges him to take revenge, knowing that this is the only way for the king to preserve his kingdom even though violence is against Jain scriptures. The Brahmin priests are disturbed and they are jealous of the Jain acharya because he is going to select a Jain bride for the king, since that would mean that the child born to the King will be a Jain and will be the next

ruler while the king's Brahmin nephew will be disinherited. The story ends with the acharya exhorting the king: '.....but son! What is statecraft without intrigue-this is in the nature of statecraft-always be prepared!' The last story, ANAHILPUR NO RAJMANYA NAGARMUKHYA (The Popular Mayor of Anahilpur-1977), tells about the ups and downs of Vasahi Abhad's life and his loyalty to the royal family. The story shows the familiarity of the author with the Chalukya dynasty and in particular with Hemchandracharya. He has bestowed all the best qualities of a Naik of Sanskrit literature-Dhir, Gambhir, Udata-to his chief character. With language in the form of Sanskrit verses, he has retold a lengthy story which transposes the reader to that historical period.

Poetry

The main subjects of Rasiklal Parikh were Sanskrit and English but he was inspired to write in Gujarati by Ramnarayan Pathak, well known poet and author of many literary works in Gujarati. Not only did Rasikbhai write poetry beautifully but also because of his ability to understand and appreciate poetry, he was invited to deliver a lecture on the poet Nanalal-an excellent one as shown later in this chapter.

We will first look at the poetry that Rasikbhai wrote. His first attempt at writing was an article on the fifth sloka of *Meghdoot*, which was published in *Vasant* magazine. It was at this time that he came to know Ramnarayan Pathak, Kaka Kalelkar and Balvantrai Thakore. Under the influence of these well-know writers he started writing in Gujarati. He wrote a long poem, *Darshan* and Balvantrai published it in *Kantamala* of which he was editor then. Pathak published several poems written by Rasiklal in *Prasthan* two of his poems, *Kaho Hun Shu Sochu* and *Prthvi*, were also published in *Yugadharma*. In 1955, he published a collection of all his poems in a single volume *Smrti* under the pen name 'Musikara'.

The poems included in *Smrti* were put to music by his friend Vadilal Shivaram Nayak in the style of Pandit Bhatkhande. From his childhood, Rasiklal Parikh was interested in different forms of Gujarati poetry. As he grew older, he studied them thoroughly as was his habit and as a result he could compose poems of different genres. He composed many folk songs (garba) but the one that is worth mentioning is *Shikharini Shatak* completed in 1938 using the classical (shikharini) meter which he first came across in the Sanskrit poetry of Jagannath and Balashankar.

In the poem, *Tell Me What I Should Think*, the poet is at his lyrical best. The theme is about how one tends to ignore the beauty around till he comes face to face with reality when all he has left is regrets for the loss of time and opportunity. The language used is simple and easy to understand, but the poem leaves behind a lingering memory-perhaps because it talks about a feeling that all of us experience at some time or other in life.

Woman and the Poet included in his collection of poems was first published in 1948 in *Kumar*. The Dilwara temples on Mt. Abu are famous, but not as famous, is the smaller temple of Shrimata or Kanyakumari and the powerful image of Rasia Valam. This Shrimata is regarded as the principle deity of Arbudachala and only after her friend Ambadevi the deity of Girnar obtained her permission for him, could Vimalshah build the now famous Jain temples. 'Arbuda' is the name of a cobra after whom the mountain Arbudachala is named and it is believed that this is where the skilled Naga sculptors and builders of the times lived.

There is another folktale about Shrimata. Behind Vimalshah's temples of Dilwara, there are 2-3 small temples of which one is of Shrimata (Kanyakumari). Outside that temple and exactly opposite, there is a male statue under the dome of a broken temple, holding a vessel in his hand. People believe it to be the image of Rasiya Valam who was supposed to have mystic powers. He wished to marry the daughter of the king of Abu, but the girl's parents were not willing to allow this. Finally, the king told the persistent suitor that if during the course of the night, he could build steps for people to go up and down Mt. Abu starting in the evening and finishing by cock crow, he would allow him to marry his daughter. Rasiya Valam confidently accepted the challenge and using his mystic powers started the work. When the girl's mother realised that the work would be completed in time and she would have to allow Rasiya Valam to marry her daughter, she crowed like a cock before daybreak. Rasiya Valam thought he had failed to meet the challenge and walked away disappointed. Later, when he realised it was a trick, he cursed the mother and daughter so that they turned to stone. He destroyed the mother's statue and piled up the

stones next to the daughter's where they still lie. The daughter's image is the so-called Shrimata or Virgin Girl (Kumari Kanya). Then Rasiya Valam also took poison and died. The vessel in the hand of the male image is supposed to be the vessel holding the poison. Rasiklal Parikh tells us that since this is a folktale and he is one of the folk he has taken the liberty to modify the old story in keeping with the times giving new form to old portions, but without changing the original story. Rasiklal Parikh had heard a folksong in the Abu valley in which Rasiya Valam was mentioned and according to Ozaji, a poet, Rasiya Valam is actually Rishi Valmiki. In another story he is thought to be Rasik Vallabh. Thus there is a play on words which follows the rules of emotions rather than the rules of language.

The poem, *Visvamiitra*, published in 1950, is another narrative poem. The incidence described is based on Adiparva of Mahabharata. Valmiki was practicing austerity to find the secret behind the Brhmarshi but the gods wanted to disturb him so they sent down Menaka, an apsara, who succeeded in disturbing the sage but also fell under his spell. She bore him a daughter named Shakuntala who was brought up by the sage Kanva after she was abandoned by her mother when her time on earth ended and she had to return to heaven. The surprising thing about this poem is that the sage, famous for a fiery temper, instead of cursing the apsara, thanked her for giving him the experience of love (kama). This indicates the importance Rasikbhai believed love had in our lives.

The other poems included in this collection are folk songs (garba), mangalashtakas (sung at the time of weddings bestowing good wishes on newly-weds) and other beautiful poems which can also be sung. Stories from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata have been adapted to make some of the most beautiful poetry in the language. He also wrote a poem adapting the legend of Romeo and Juliet in 1927, based on a play written by Shakespeare in 1596.

In 1984, on the occasion of the 88th birthday of Nanalal, one of the most famous poets in Gujarati literature, Rasiklal Parikh

was invited to deliver a lecture by the Mahakavi Nanalal Smarak Trust—who better than him for such a task. He considered himself fortunate to be thus invited since he thought of Nanalal as a natural born genius maintaining that while philosophy can be learned at the foot of a guru, poetry cannot be taught and has to come naturally. Nanalal started writing poetry in 1892 and the idea of *Kurukshetra* was born in 1894. It took him almost three years to complete the magnum opus and this was soon followed by two other great works, *Vasantotsava* and *Harisamhita*. In the latter his faith and beliefs are clearly stated. His nickname was Prembhakta (devotee of love) which he remained for life. He has written many other notable works.

Kurukshetra is an epic poem about the great war in *Mahabharata* and is often compared to Milton's *Paradise Lost* in form and construction. Both are composed in blank verse, both are full of figures of speech like metaphors and similes and both have 12 chapters. There are many other similarities which become obvious when read together. Another poet with whom Rasikbhai compares Nanalal is Tennyson whom he admired greatly. Nanalal tried to model the character of Krishna in his opus on the lines of King Arthur in *Idylls of a King*. The story is told in the words of Subhadra, Krishna's sister and Krishna is depicted as both divine and beautiful. According to Rasiklal Parikh, this poem should not be judged by the characteristics of poetry laid down in Kavyashastra, but should be enjoyed and valued for its matchless beauty.

Lover of Classical Music and Art

Rasiklal Parikh had friends who were connoisseurs of music and who had studied the subject thoroughly. While he himself had not studied music as a subject, he was so knowledgeable about it that he could and did have long discussions with them. One musician in particular, Vadilal Nayak (who later helped Rasikbhai to put his poems to music), was a very good friend and they spent hours arguing about the finer points of music and quoting Sanskrit texts in support of their arguments. Vadilal Nayak had studied music under the great musical luminary, Pandit Bhatkhande, who thought very highly of his student and he told Rasikbhai that he had imparted all he knew about music to Nayak and that Nayak had an eye for the science of music as well as an ear for the art of music. It was with such a man that Rasikbhai could hold his own while arguing about music!

Rasikbhai was able to achieve this confidence again because of his scientific approach to all that he studied. He was able to analyse systematically and create a larger picture by putting together all the parts methodically and he applied the same methods for music and art. The questions he tried to answer when studying any subject were :

What is the evidence?

Who are the masters of the subject?

What is the relation between the form and the artist who produced it?

What is the relation between them and history?

In music particularly he had a sensitive ear and enjoyed listening to music and when Vadilal was putting his poems to

music, Rasikbhai himself helped with the notations. He always exhorted his students to listen attentively to Vadilal when he sang, so that they would remember his music. When some of his friends decided to start a music lovers' group, Majalis, he joined up and as was his wont, he not only took active part in it but also guided the members in all their activities. He even coined a motto for the group, altering one of the Sanskrit slokas to 'Sangitam Charu Sadhanam'. After all, he believed that music like other art forms is a form of worship and gave the maxim 'Sangit Khalu Sadhanam Moksha' to the group. He tried to understand all the intricacies of Indian classical music and could discuss the finer points with the visiting artists invited by Majalis, to the surprise of one and all.

Radio Talks

Rasiklal Parikh not only wrote intelligently and beautifully but he was also able to talk on a variety of topics, so it was only natural that All India Radio Ahmedabad invited him several times to talk on various subjects. *Akash Bhashita* is a collection of these talks but as the author tells us in the foreword, not all his talks are included in this book-one of the reasons being that he had lost some of the transcripts, another that not all were worth printing. The original lectures were published in various magazines or as books, and he condensed these for the radio. On the other hand, he had to rewrite some of the talks for publication as they were originally for the listening public. He confesses that it was a learning experience for him as these talks were different from his earlier experience of giving lectures and discourses, since he had to say all he wanted to, clearly and concisely, within a period of 3-14 minutes depending on the time allotted to him by the recording studio.

He believes that if he had to select the topics himself, he might not have picked such a variety of subjects but since he was given specific topics in subjects he was somewhat familiar with, he was inspired to put in a lot of hard work. Sometimes he had to courteously but firmly refuse to talk on topics which required venturing in to unfamiliar areas of knowledge.

A variety of subjects are covered as is to be expected with a scholar of his caliber, spanning a period of 23 years from December 1949 when AIR Ahmedabad was first established up to May 1972 including a play written for the radio, *Value of Love*. Of these, he has selected 42 talks for this volume-including his first talk on

Ramayana and the last one, Art in Education. The talks are not printed datewise, but are divided in to five sections to enable a random reader to locate the topic of his choise. Transcripts of several talks were found when the last chapter, Miscellaneous, was being printed and had to be included there. The sections are :

Sanskrit poems, criticism of Indian dance form, Indian Arts, etc.

History and culture

Religion and Philosophy

Distinguished persons-Abhay Mahavir, Jawahar's Jewel and Musicologist V.S. Naik

Miscellaneous

Some of the best articles are in the first section which deals with subjects closest to Rasikbhai's heart. The real skill in his talks lies in the way he describes ancient times and puts them in the modern context to make it more interesting and keep the audience from switching off the radio. In *Vaital Panchvimshati-Folklore in Sanskrit Literature*-the author first narrates the story briefly and then tells how it exists with appropriate variations not only in other parts of India but also in Tibet and Mongolia indicating his vast reading and depth of knowledge. In all these variations, the idea of Vetala is the same i.e. a ghost which enters and lives in another dead body.

The article on Ramayana shows the author's ideas about the influence of this famous epic in our social life today. He starts from the creation of the epic and goes up to the end, putting the whole story succinctly. He appreciates the first part of the epic that describes the triumph of good over evil. In the latter half, when Ram disowns Sita allowing public opinion to overrule his judgement, Rasikbhai feels that this attitude has come down through the ages and harmed the fabric of social life in India.

In one of the talks he takes the reader on a journey to the site where an ancient capital of Gujarat, Bhinnamal, was located. He gives the dimensions of the various structures, mostly temples, located on a hill seen from Mt. Abu and describes some of the dwelling places also found there. He tells us how the name 'Gujarat'

for the province evolved. According to him, there were two tribes- Anarts in the north associated with Saurashtra, and Laats in the south. The two names were combined and became Gurajartra which was later abbreviated to Gujarat. The name was given by the Gurjar dynasty which ruled between 7th and 10th century AD. The capital of this nation state was Shrimal or Bhinnamal, But the capitals of Anart and Saurashtra were Valabhi and Girnagar and even before that according to the Puranas, Vадnagar or Anandnagar and Dwarka. Rasikbhai tells us that the culture of Gujarat today is derived from the people of Shrimal as proved by the various communities like the Kshatriyas who are descendants of the Gurjars and the origins of today's Brahmins can be traced to Shrimal and its satellite towns. Today Shrimal is habited by vaishyas, mostly traders and goldsmiths. After Shrimal, the capital was Anahilwad Patan where the goddess Shree came to live and blessed the place. He ends by stating that Shree is equivalent to culture and not wealth.

Rasikbhai had always admired western scholars, most of who came to India as administrators and fell in love with the local culture, folklore and literature. They learned Sanskrit to better understand the finest nuance of the spoken and written word. Their approach was scientific-conclusions were drawn only after thorough research and examination of all available evidence, archaeological and literary. Rasiklal Parikh feels obligated to them for teaching us their methods and giving a new direction to our study of history. This thought is elaborated in a talk entitled : *Materials for Research in History-Copper Plates And Stone Inscriptions*. An interesting view held by Rasikbhai is set forth in another talk when he states that there should be a common script for all Indian languages in order to promote unity. These two talks along with others like 'Influence of Gandhiji on Gujarati Literature', 'Nature and Culture of Kashmir', 'Indroduction to Vedas' and talks covering subjects like anthropology, archaeology, philosophy and psychology show his vast knowledge which is why he was invited so often by AIR Ahmedabad.

Research Director and Research Subjects

The Gujarat Vernacular Society (renamed Gujarat Vidya Sabha in 1946) was established in December 1848. Its aim was to spread the knowledge of Gujarati language and literature among the general public and to bring to light the extensive knowledge of Gujarat and Gujarati classics thereby strengthening the language and popularising it. Since the society also wanted to institute higher education and research in Gujarati it was decided that Rasikbhai should approach Bombay University for financial help, which he did in 1929. Ten years later, in 1939 (a year after Rasiklal Parikh became the secretary of the society), the grant was sanctioned and the postgraduate department was started the same year. The president of the society, Acharya Anandshankar Dhruva, became the honorary director of the department. The day-to-day work of the society was looked after by Rasiklal Parikh who was the honorary secretary. He had to relinquish the second post of assistant director because the rules laid down by the university did not allow one person to hold two posts at a time. He became the superintendent of the section which was inaugurated by Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan in October 1940. A little later, the honorary director passed away and Rasikbhai was given this post which he held from 1942 to 1946 when the department was transferred to Sheth Bholabhai Jesinghbhai Institute (BJI) of Higher Education and Research where Rasikbhai continued to be director up to his retirement in 1954. On retiring, he was appointed honorary director from 1954 to 1967, thus being associated with the institution for 25 years. After 1967, he continued to be associated with the institution as trustee, secretary and honorary professor guiding

young students in new fields of research.

In order to be eligible for the university grant, Rasikbhai added research and post-graduate sections. Rasikbhai continued to study, teach, conduct research and publish regularly-putting in a lot of hard work which came naturally to him. Besides Sanskrit, Gujarati and Ancient Indian Culture, the department was also recognised for post-graduate studies in Persian. Rasikbhai was recognised as guide for post-graduate studies in Sanskrit and Ancient Indian Culture. His contemporaries were all the literary luminaries of the time and they formed a team of devoted teachers interested in research and teaching. Rasikbhai, now professor, was in the center of this literary circle. Due to financial constraints, some of these professors were later transferred to Ramanand Mahavidyalaya, but the association continued.

Rasikbhai had developed a method of teaching and research in Sanskrit wherein he tried to explain the historical significance of ancient works in the light of modern concepts and theories. He referred to Professor Nadavi and Dr. Chhotubhai Nayak who had translated Arabic and Persian texts in to Gujarati. He created a bridge between Sanskrit and Ancient Indian Culture and hundreds of students received their Masters under his able guidance. As Ph.D. guide, Rasikbhai introduced students to subjects which were never researched before and 15 of the students registered under him got their Doctorate degrees. Students registered under other professors also sought his guidance and he gladly gave it, as he was genuinely in love with learning and teaching. He guided students in such diverse subjects as 'Copper Plates of Maitraka Period', 'Development of Sanskrit Literature during the Time of Vastupal in Gujarat', 'Ancient Arts for the Development of Archaeological Evidences' and 'Comparative Study of Bharat and Aristotle' selected by his last student. The variety of subjects mentioned above indicates the grasp that Rasikbhai had on widely disparate fields of knowledge and learning.

Acharya Anandshankar asked the professors of the department to write on Gujarati language and literature, prosody (Chhandshastra) and history (social, political and cultural) of Gujarat and Rasikbhai

published 62 such works. Rasikbhai was in the habit of checking his work thoroughly before handing it over to his colleagues to make their task of editing easy. He was instrumental in enriching the library of the BJI by ordering hundreds of books on a multitude of subjects in order to facilitate research with the result that there were 60,000 books, 10,000 handwritten manuscripts and 15,000 antiquities making the BJI a treasury of information.

Rasikbhai ensured that the teachers were also trained to do research and he sent them to attend conferences encouraging them to do field work. He sent Prof. K.K. Shastri to Jaiselmer to research old handwritten manuscripts, Dr. Hariprasad Shastri to Poona and Kolhapur to train in archaeology and I was sent to Lothal, a Harappan site, for training in excavation.

Rasikbhai started courses in Journalism and Dramatics (Natyavidya) at the instance of Dr. Radhakrishnan who had commented on its lack when he came to inaugurate the postgraduate wing. As Rasikbhai himself loved dramatics, he was only too glad to start a theatre group, Natyavidyamandir, and prevailed upon Jayshankarbhai (aka Sundari) the well-known director-actor to join him. Together they experimented in dramatics and the institution gave several public performances. Altogether twelve plays were staged of which Mena Gurjari was performed 100 times-a rare feat in the history of Gujarati drama.

Rasikbhai instituted two lecture series in order to expand the horizons of knowledge of his students-the Popatlal Hemachand Adhyatma series and a research series. he invited many scholars from Gujarat as well as from outside between 1942 and 1962 and got the lectures published as a collection.

Rasikbhai was a founder member of Gujarat University where he helped to shape the syllabi in his capacity as Dean of Arts faculty to which position he was elected unopposed-another measure of his reputation as a scholar.

The seeds of research work sown by Rasikbhai have flourished like a banyan tree and the torch he has lit will be held high for those who seek knowledge and learning. He is also credited with having started the system of comparative methodology in research.

The accompanying table shows that Rasikbhai guided students over a period of almost thirty years in a variety of topics related to fine arts, ancient Indian culture, history, religion, philosophy, epigraphy, etc. Being deeply interested in history and Sanskrit he could imagine new horizons in history and Sanskrit literature. Rasikbhai was a very assiduous guide and he insisted that his students not make a single statement without supporting remarks or references.

I observed that in spite of his many preoccupations, Rasikbhai always found time for his students in their research work. While writing my thesis, the time I spent with him at the B.J. Institute as well as his residence has been very useful for my work and study. I revised my entire work under his guidance and his suggestions went a long way in improving it.

Learning from his students was as important to Rasikbhai as teaching them. Shri Jetaly during his research work brought to Rasikbhai's attention the existence of several other commentaries by Jain authors on the works of Nyaya-Vaisesika systems- Rasikbhai encouraged him to make an exhaustive study of the subject.

Rasikbhai's abilities did not lessen with age and when his last student, Dr. Varsha Shah, who was working for her Ph.D. in English, wrote a comparative study of Aristotle and Bharat he guided her as ably as he had his earlier students. The thesis was sent to Prof. Siegfried A. Schulza of the Catholic University, Washington D.C., who specialized in Greek and Western literature and to Prof. K. Krishnamurthy, head of the Sanskrit Department, Karnataka University at Dharwar for external evaluation. Both of them were full of praise for this enlightened study and Gujarat University awarded Rasiklal Parikh a special recognition.

Student	Topic	Year
1 Hariprasad Shastri	Sanskrit Inscriptions of the Vallabhi Kingdom	1947
2 Bhogilal Sandesara	Contribution of Vastupala and his literary circle of Sanskrit literature	1948
3 Priyabala Shah	Vishnudharmottara Purana-criticism of section on Fine Arts	1951
4 J.S. Jetaly	Critical survey of Jain writers to Nyaya Vaisesika	1953
5 I.B. Jhaveri	Samkhya Yoga and the Jain theories of Parinama based mainly on Sanskrit texts	1953
6 E.A. Solomon	Avidya and the cognate concepts in Vedic, Buddhist and Jain Darshanas	1954
7 S.R. Desai	Bhavai-medieval form of ancient Indian dramatic art prevalent in Gujarat	1955
8 R.G. Asti	Mahakavyas-analysis in relation to its definition in Alamkara Shastra in the earlier ones and influence of the definition on the later ones	1957
9 H.A. Majmudar	Some Medieval Sculptures of NorthGujarat	1957
10 T.S. Nandi	Origin and development of the theory of Rasa and Dhvani in Sanskrit poetics	1968
11 M.H. Mehta	Fairs and Festivals and religious observances of Gujarat	1969
12 Chinubhai J. Nayak	Cultural Data in the Natyashastra ascribed to Bharat	1973
13 Bhaktinath G. Shukla	Jayant Bhatt : Ancient Gurjar critic of Dipika of Kavyaprakasha: a study	1974
14 B.M. Trivedi	Art of Dancing (Nrtya and Nrta) in ancient India up to 1200 A.D.	1976
15 S. A. Somaiya	Study of Rupakastaka composed by Vatsaraja	1979
16 Varsha R. Shah	Critical comparison of Aristotle's theory of Catharsis and Bharata's theory of Natya-Rasas	1982

Scholar of History

Professor Rasikbhai had a keen interest in the study of history since his college days in Poona and he devoted his life to this branch of knowledge as student and teacher of ancient Indian culture. All his writings were in some way or other related to history. He saw the significance of the study of history in understanding the present, correlating the two expertly. He had insight and a sharp sense of historical appreciation which helped him to understand proven facts from the past in the light of modern concepts and this was his original contribution to the field of history. He believed that the value of history is that it teaches us what man is and what he has done and the habits and the economical status of ancient man can be surmised from artifacts, public buildings, dwellings and towns. He drew logical conclusions from all available evidence like literature, arts, sculpture, stone inscriptions, copper plates, coins and old manuscripts and he managed to convey his 'historical sense' to his students. History was, no doubt, his favourite subject and he delivered many lectures on it.

He achieved this proficiency in the study of history when he worked as a close associate of Shri Muni Jinvijayji but his real venture in history started when he edited, together with Prof. R.B. Athavale, the *Kavyanushasana* of Hemchandracharya. The managing committee of Shri Mahavir Jaina Vidyalaya entrusted Mr. Rasiklal Parikh the job of editing this work for academic studies. In a lengthy introduction, he wrote a detailed history of the life and times of Hemchandra in which he recounts the cultural and political history of Gujarat from the ancient times up to the

times of Hemchandra covering the period from the Mauryan dynasty to the Solanki dynasty-almost 250 years-including the history of Yavan, Kshatrap, Gupta, Maitraka and Chavada dynasties. Gujarat had reached its zenith in all activities of life in the age when Hemchandra, the great apostle of the Jain Church, lived. Rasikbhai's purpose in writing such a long introduction was to give a clear perspective of the times but the result is a short survey of the history of Gujarat with its cultural points. He has spared no pains in making the introduction useful and informative about the history of Gujarat. The intellectual and cultural life of the city Anahilpur-Patan was in the high tradition of Pataliputra, Ujjayini, Kanyakubja, Valabhi and Bhinnamala. The rulers of the city were fond of raising architectural monuments and as a result there are some of the finest temples at Patan, Modhera, Siddhapura, Somnath, Mt. Abu and many other places. These temples were also the storehouses of fine arts such as sculpture, painting, music, dancing and play-acting which were fostered in these temples. Rasikbhai points out that 'All this culture had behind it the magnificence of its merchant-princes whose fabulous wealth was the fruit of their sea-faring adventures. The religious outlook of the age was one of admirable tolerance though now and then enlivened by rivalry among the priests of different sects.

Rasikbhai has collected information from all possible sources such as accounts of travellers, description and references in literary works, architectural remains, inscriptions on stones, copper plates and coins together with such legends in the Puranas and the Prabandhas which are consistent with proved historical facts. All this shows Rasikbhai's familiarity with various historical materials and their interpretation. He had an immense historical imagination which explains his tremendous output, encyclopaedic in its scope and accurate in detail. He takes great pains to prove the historicity of a person or an event by giving supportive details or facts from the above-mentioned sources and by quoting relevant authorities.

In 1950-51, Rasikbhai's historical appreciation got him an invitation from Bombay university to deliver five lectures on *The Capitals of Gujarat Before the Muslim Period*. The lectures were

delivered under the auspices of Thakkar VasANJI MadhavJI lecture series and Gurjar Granthratna Karyalaya, Ahmedabad, published these lectures in 1958 collectively in a book. They deal extensively with the history and culture of Gujarat and provide a good source of reference to students of these subjects. Rasikbhai states in the preface that his aim is to point out the development of civilization in human settlements, which he traces from the age of barbarians to the modern urban age. Rasikbhai acknowledges the significant work done by western scholars, supporting his own statements with their authoritative comments and opinions. He describes community living in which civilizations flourished. He studied and analysed a unit to show that in all the ages from ancient Egypt to the modern America the highest development of human spirit, initiative and achievement has been in urban communities which depend for their expansion on the progress of agriculture, industry and commerce. He quotes Lewis Mumford: 'The city is the form and symbol of an integrated social relationship-it is the seat of the temple, the market, the hall of justice and the academy of learning. Here in the city, goods of civilization are multiplied, here is where human experience is transformed in to viable systems of order. Here is where the issues of civilization are focused'. It has been noted and Rasikbhai concurs that although men make cities, it is equally true that cities make men and he who makes the cities makes the nation and it is indeed the cities which will determine the character of the nation. Rasikbhai then applies these observations to the well-known historical cities of Gujarat. Referring to various sources, he concludes that the Sanskrit word for city, nagar, means city by the port, which is where cities were initially located. Besides western writers, he depends on the references in pauranic literature and the rock cut edicts of Girnar. The latter is unique in that three great emperors, Ashoka, Mahakshatrapa Rudradaman and Skandagupta are immortalised, inspiring Rasikbhai to call it a sacred place of history (Itihastirth).

When he discusses the capital city of the Maitrakas, Valabhi, he has more reference material: literary references and copper plates of the Maitraka kings, notes of the Chinese pilgrim, Yuan

Chang, who visited one of the two biggest Buddhist universities (the other being Nalanda) and literary works like Bhattikavya, Dashkumar Charit, Kathasaritsagar and many others. At the time of the Maitrakas, Valabhi was the center of wealth and learning. From the various copper plates, he proves that there were 20 rulers after the Maitraka Senapati Bhatarka in 480 A.D. and all these rulers gave donations regularly to develop arts and learning. One remarkable point that Rasikbhai highlights is religious tolerance. Generally the rulers of Valabhi were worshippers of Maheshwar-Shiva but they were generous to the Buddhists as many ladies of the royal families followed Buddhism. He ends the lecture with the causes for the decline and destruction of Valabhai.

Next Rasiklal Parikh discusses Bhinnamala the capital city of Shrimala. According to the notes of the Chinese pilgrim, Yuan Chang, there was a Gurjar desha and its capital was Bhinnamala. From the references in the Shrimala Purana, Rasikbhai gives four different names of the city: 1. Shrimalnagar in the Satayuga, 2. Pushpamala in the Tretayuga, 3. Bhinnamala or Bhillamala and 4. Ratnamala in Kaliyuga. He gives three meanings of the word 'mala'-forest between villages, ridge of hilly places and the barbarian race. It is believed that Lord Vishnu called together different types of Brahmins and asked them to stay in this city. Many communities in Gujarat at present are related to Shrimala. At the end he describes how the capital shifted to Anahilpur Patan.

Anahilpur Patan, established by Vanraj Chavada, was the well-known capital of the Chavada and Solanki dynasties for 500 years. Though it was ruined twice by Muslim invasion, the wealth and culture of the city flourished remarkably. This development is inscribed in details in inscriptions, Jain discourses, works of Hemchandracharya and remnants indicating construction of magnificent palaces, temples, wells and reservoirs. Rasikbhai paints very revealing pictures of the Sahasraling sarovar built by the great king Siddharaja, stimulating the reader's imagination. Here he pays tribute to two great ladies of Gujarat, Minaldevi the mother of Siddharaja and Anupamadevi, the wife of Tejpal who made him and his brother Vastupal build the famous Delwara temples in Mt.

Abu. Both the ladies contributed to the prosperity of the city.

As a further indication of his reputation as an expert in history, Rasiklal Parikh was asked to deliver five lectures in February 1963 at Gujarat University on *History : Form and Method* (Itihaas : Swarup Ane Paddhati), which were published by the university in 1969. This lecture series was to commemorate Govardhanram Tripathi, the doyen of Gujarati literature. Prof. Parikh humbly states in the preface that he is no match for Govardhanram's versatile personality and profound thinking reflected in his immortal work *Sarasvatichandra* but nevertheless makes so bold as to talk about history and its form and methodology in the memory of the great savant. The topics of the five lectures he delivered were : 1. History in ancient Indian tradition of learning, 2. History as the instrument of knowledge, 3. History in the western tradition, 4. History in the modern western times with methodology and 5. Some problems in the history of Gujarat and methods of solving them. The lectures covered history in the ancient Indian and western traditions as well as analysis of the evidence available to scholars leading up to the problems of the history of Gujarat and methods used to tackle them.

History is traditionally defined as a record of events but Rasiklal Parikh included its appreciation in the definition and discusses a few problems of definition and scope of history. He wonders whether history can be given the stature of philosophy, whether it has a definite, systematic and logical methodology. He believes that it is not possible to study the methodology of history without thinking about its nature and form. He points out that western thinkers have worked much more in this field than Indians and we must accept their norms, though not to the exclusion of our Indian system and style.

It is often said that Indians do not have an understanding or knowledge of history. Pargiter maintained that while Brahmins have no sense of history, the Kshatriyas preserved the sayings of sutra indicating their awareness of history. He believed that the puranas belong to the Kshatriyas and not to the Brahmins-a conclusion strongly refuted by Anandshankar. M.A. Stein, the

editor and translator of Raja Tarangini states that modern Europe has used the recorded history of the Greeks and Romans to understand their past, but in India, no such written historical information was available. However, the puranas can be and are considered as historical evidence but unfortunately there are no dates. The presence of inscriptions, antiques and coins discovered at various archaeological sites are used in the study of ancient Indian history.

The book is full of long commentaries on the supportive references that he collected to prove his own statements from western as well as ancient and modern Indian literature. The work is full of beautiful panoramas and though at times difficult to grasp for the layman, for academicians it is a treasure.

The second lecture discusses the instruments and ways of acquiring knowledge in the ancient Indian tradition. The purpose of learning is to acquire truth in that particular subject to regulate one's life. The attainment of knowledge is known as *Prama* and the instruments or tools or methods of knowledge are known as '*Pramanas*' and every philosophical and religious sect has its own '*Pramanashastra*'. The four instruments of knowledge of history are *Smriti* (memory), *Pratyaksha* (direct evidence), *Aitiha* (History) and *Anumana* (logical surmise). Rasikbhai points out that ancient Greece and China have recorded history while Indian history has no written records. In ancient India this historical sense was lacking and many great works have neither the name of the author nor the date of writing mentioned with some exceptions like *Rajtarangini*.

The third and fourth lectures talk about history in the western tradition of learning. The word 'history' has come from the Greek word '*historia*', which means inquiry or research or investigation. The German word '*Geschichte*' means to happen and the French '*Istavara*' means to know. The German word was used to mean the materials for the study of history but later it came to mean history itself. Professor Collingwood, an English historian and philosopher said that history is a subject of research like any other science. The knowledge of history is necessary for man to

know himself. The famous philosopher Bradley thinks that history points out two aspects, subjective and objective-there must be a historian and the events must have happened. There may not be a recorder but the absence of records does not mean that there is no history. Every chapter has detailed explanatory notes quoting works of Indian and western scholars-a remarkable aspect of his work.

In the last lecture Prof. Parikh applies his knowledge of history and its methodology to solve some problems of the history of Gujarat. He states that only in the last hundred years history has been researched in Gujarat when Dr. Bhagvanlal Indrajee and Mr. A.M.T. Jackson wrote the history of Gujarat. In the absence of written documents the only method of knowing the history of Gujarat is from excavations and the findings of artifacts and dwellings at different earth levels which indicate that there was a human settlement 80,000 years ago in the valley of the Sabarmati River. This method has revealed the history of Gujarat up to the Neolithic age. Prof. S.R. Rao used this method in Lothal to prove the continuation of Mohenjodaro and Indus valley civilization and of Harappan culture in Gujarat. Artifacts like seals, toys, ornaments, articles made of stone, earth and metal, an impression of a skeleton estimated to be 5000 years old, remains of buildings showing broad walls and large halls, sand and shells were found at Lothal indicating that it was a port and carried on trade with Africa. There were several other port cities in Gujarat. Panini mentions Mahinagar, a one-time port on the Mahi river, followed by Cambay which continued to be a major port till the end of the Muslim power. Other ports of Gujarat were Bhrgu Kutchh and Vallabhi. It showed that Gujarat was economically prosperous, the ports indicating that it was a nation of seafarers. Rasikbhai has described in detail the history of Cambay with archaeological evidence. Information of the 75,000 years between the Neolithic age in the Sabarmati area and the finding of evidence of town planning in Lothal and other places, is obtained from archaeological evidence like coins, inscriptions, seals, copper plates, wooden articles and literary evidence like the letters of Hemchandra, Kirtikaumudi of

Someshvara, the great epics the literary documents of the Charanas, poetry and drama. He maintains that the drawback of Indian recorded history is the absence of any mention of dates. Much of this has to be surmised from the Greek records which state that Sikander and Chandragupta were contemporaries. There is one mystery in the history of Gujarat which remains unsolved-the history of the Chavada dynasty-because of the absence of contemporary inscriptions. There is plenty of written evidence though of Jain history in the form of literary pieces on palm leaves and paper, indicating that the people were fond of reading and these probably formed a part of a library.

He ends his lecture by stating that the history of the province is significant in relation to the history of the nation as a whole. When his lectures were published, the work of editing them was done by me and I can confidently say that this is an outstanding contribution to the literature of the history of Gujarat.

The academic world of Gujarat was so impressed by Prof. Parikh's research work that in 1966, he was invited to be the president of the annual conference of history (Gujarat Itihas Parishad) held at Vallabh Vidyanagar, Anand. The subject of his presidential lecture was 'Analysis of History' (Itihasa Mimmamsa). At the outset he categorically stated that in Indian tradition, history does not have an independent place in the pursuit of knowledge but is considered a part of literature where the stories of man's actions and events were recounted in the puranas and the agamas. Rasikbhai poses three questions and then answers them himself: what is history-it is the study of the past; how does one get the information of the past-by studying the stories of the actions of men; can history be called a science-science is a study of present facts while history is the study of the past. Some history commentators like Croce and Collingwood believe that history forms a separate branch of learning but no human act is independent. Tolstoy has made some interesting comments in his novel *War and Peace*-that history examines the manifestation of man's free will as related to the external world as defined by the laws of reason and so history is a science only in so far as this

free will is defined by those laws.

He discussed the theory of karma and related it to the principle of cause and effect. He went on to establish that history is a part of existence-it is the past but it points towards the present and peeps at the future, making it an indivisible continuum. He posed several questions and expounded and analysed their answers. History according to him is an inquiry in to the past and one learns about the present from the answers. 'Can history be called a science?' was his most thought provoking question. He maintains that history is the study of human behaviour in the past, never isolated but always interconnected thereby affecting future events. The Italian philosopher Croce and the English philosopher Collingwood believe that history forms a separate branch of learning and that the conception of a cause is inapplicable to the phenomena under study but the conduct of man as an individual, as a nation and as a community makes history and it will forge the future too. Then comes the question of moral values. According to Tolstoy, history examines the manifestations of man's free will against the external world in time and its dependence on cause. It defines this freedom of will by the laws of reason. To discover and define these laws is the problem of history. At one end the movement of the human will is hidden in the unknown and at the other end, it is conspicuous in the present, in space, time and is dependant on cause. There are three types of causes-mechanical, biological and spiritual or moral. Prof. Parikh has very thoughtfully presented the harmony of these causes on the effects on the form of human character. Once again one notices his wonderful historical appreciation in this lecture published in 1966.

In 1968, when Prof. Rasikbhai retired as director of the B.J. Institute of Learning and Research, the then Chief Minister of Gujarat, Balvantrai Mehta, proposed that a detailed Political and Cultural History of Gujarat be prepared. Rasikbhai was in charge of the project and he edited and published seven of the nine volumes during his lifetime (the other two being edited later by his colleagues) containing exhaustive information on the subject. The authors he selected were specialists in the period or subject they

were asked to write on. Gujarat can never forget what it owes to Rasikbhai for this painstaking and valuable work.

Prof. Parikh's yajna for learning was performed continuously- he wrote innumerable articles many of which remained unpublished. After his death these were put together and published as a book, 'Hutashesha'-one more proof of his scholarship. Most of the articles included in this book deal with analysis of history, religion, philosophy, literature and theatre-all of which were his favourite subjects and which he had studied deeply in his lifetime. One particular article is worthy of notice-'Vastukala in the Rigveda and such other works'. This article reveals his knowledge and love of architecture. It was his nature that once he got interested in a subject, he studied and understood it thoroughly-all his works are proof of this. He never wrote to show off his scholarship but because he wanted to share with others what he had found to be amazing in human art and creation.

Rasikbhai was so immersed in history that his creative writing was full of historic references. For example, he wrote short stories with historical figures as protagonists and their characters were chiselled after thorough research. The plot of his most famous drama, Mena Gurjari, is taken from a historic incident and even his poetry is steeped in history.

His radio talks and his lectures before bodies of learned men- all have historical references. He often mentioned the unity of Bhartiya culture in the diversity of historical material. The subjects he selected for his own research work as well as the subjects he assigned to his Post Graduate and Ph.D. Students were inspired by his love and knowledge of history.

Scholar of Sanskrit

Prof. Parikh's scholarship found a special field in the study of old Sanskrit literature, which was his first love followed closely by his love for history. The editing of old texts and translation of several Sanskrit classics by Rasikbhai has enriched the present day literature. While editing or translating, Rasikbhai read all the available material separating original thoughts from interpolations and made sure that the conclusions he had drawn were supported by referring to authoritative sources on the subject. His translations of *Vedic Pathavali* and parts of *Vedic Samhita* published in 1927 and Mammata's *Kavyaprakash* published in 1924 are distinctive landmarks in Gujarati literature.

Puratattva Mandir decided to publish primary level books for the study of ancient languages and literature. Rasikbhai undertook this pioneering work to explain the nature of Sanskrit in Vedic times. In this work, verses are selected and translated from Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samveda and Atharveda. It required knowledge of grammar, prosody, aesthetics (Alamkarshastra) and philosophy (Darshanashastra). Prof. Parikh succeeded in this mammoth work because of his knowledge in all these systems. He had very carefully selected the appropriate suktas like the dialogue between Pururava, Urvashi and Pani Sarma, for their historical importance. In Yajurveda, the importance of performing yagna-religious rituals and sacrifices are highlighted and to illustrate this Rasikbhai has selected mantras of Manodevta which bring mental and spiritual peace. Atharveda offers material for physical and economical prosperity. Prof. Parikh's assiduous study of Vedic literature is evident in this work and the presentation is such that it inspires

the reader to go to the original and make interesting a subject considered dry by most people-the mark of a true teacher.

Prof. Parikh's *Bhasa Nataka Chakra* a translation of thirteen plays of Bhasa in 1922 is another monumental work. He not only translated the plays in to Gujarati but also fixed their dates and gave detailed notes explaining the significance of each play and references of Bhasa in other literary works. In fact, it was Prof. Parikh who was the first one to point out that these plays were written between 2nd century BC and 2nd century AD possibly before the time of Panini. *Tattvopaploavasimha* was edited by Prof. Parikh jointly with Pandit Sukhlalji and was published in 1940 by Gaekwad Oriental Series, Baroda. Students of Indian philosophy were familiar with the school of Charvaka known as Lokayata Darshana. Prof. Parikh shows that Jayarasi was also a serious thinker like other Indian Darsaniks and his main thesis is to point out the capacity of human instruments of knowledge to know anything really. Both Prof. Parikh and Panditji were authorities on philosophy but Prof. Parikh, having a good grasp of the subject himself, has made the meaning clear with the help of several explanatory notes.

Prof. Parikh's devotion to history and love for Sanskrit literature is obvious in the next text that he edited as the director of B.J. Institute of Research and Learning, Ahmedabad and published in 1953 by the institute. *Kavyaprakash Khandana* was written by the Jain acharya, Siddhisena, in the last glorious period of Sanskrit literature during the Mogul period. The Acharya was a contemporary of Akbar and Jahangir. Siddhichandra lived between circa 1587 and 1666 AD and in the text he evaluates and criticizes the earlier work of Mammata. He defends Mammata's views against improper interpretations and unfair criticism. Prof. Parikh points out the differences between this criticism and the original work. It shows how thoroughly he has studied both the texts.

The two volumes of *Nrtyaratnakosh* were edited by Prof. Parikh in 1957 and 1968, together with me. This work is believed to have been written by the king of Mevada, Maharana Kumbha (AD1433 to 1465) as a part of *Sangitaraja*-the other works in this

volume being *Pathyaratnakosh*, *Gitaratnakosh*, *Vadyaratnakosh* and *Rasaratnakosh*. As the names suggest, these are different aspects of Natya and have the ultimate aim of arousing collectively Rasa or essence. Prof. Parikh was very well acquainted with all the arts connected with the performance of dance drama and had studied the Natyashastra of Bharat Muni. As a result he was able to do full justice to this text, taking great pleasure in editing it. His joy in doing this work is obvious from the preface and notes.

One of Rasiklal Parikh's best-known lecture series is 'Anand Mimamsa' consisting of five lectures delivered in February 1960 under the auspices of the M.S. University, Baroda. In 1963 these were published collectively in a book of the same name. The word 'ananda' used in the title is a translation of the English word aesthetics, but with a much wider meaning analysed by Rasikbhai in these lectures, which show his understanding of the nature of aesthetic enjoyment and can stand comparison with any western work on aesthetics. He analyses the nature of pleasure as experienced in life and describes the entire range from the simple sensuous joy to the supreme or ultimate joy of being or, a word found in the Taittiriya Upanishad. Rasikbhai proves that the joy of existence becomes purer and grander as we expand our consciousness by coming out of our own limited individual existence to embrace Infinity (Bhuma). The pleasure that is derived from the experience of art is refined but it lasts only as long as we are face to face with it. It can however easily grow in to spiritual experience of pure bliss (Brahmananda)-the experience of existence after all limitations of form, time and place have fallen away. The perception of this harmony in beauty and divinity led to the great synthesis of art and religion in Indian culture. In the Indian tradition, the aim of human existence is the achievement of this bliss of realisation of the absolute truth and once achieved can never be lost. Rasiklal Parikh quotes extensively from Indian aesthetes as well as Greek and English scholars to support his statements. This achievement of Prof. Parikh is beyond comparison-one cannot but bow down to him in respect.

The title of his presidential address at the All India Oriental

Conference (21st session) held in Sirnagar was 'Some Aspects of the Study of Classical Sanskrit Literature'. He maintained that there are many approaches to the study of Sanskrit literature and research but some are basic and fundamental. For example, the best way to study a text is best done literally in the way old Sanskrit was studied. In the study of the Shastras, it is essential to know the way in which topics are proposed, defined, attacked, defended and finally established.

In the history of Gujarat, the age of the Chalukyas or Solankis of Anahilpura (924-1300 AD) was noteworthy for its political advancement, economic prosperity and cultural development in the fields of learning, literature and art. The connection between Kashmir (known as Shardadesa because of a temple to the goddess on the banks of the Madhumati) and Gujarat is established by Biihler, who says that Bilhana left Kashmir in 1062 and after travelling through Mathura, Kanauj, Prayaga, Benares he reached Anahipur-Patana in 1070 during the reign of Karna of Chedi. His contribution to Gujarati literature is a single play, *Karna Sundari Natika*. Hemchandra travelled in the opposite direction with the desire to see the original idol of Brahmi in Kashmir in the temple of Shardadevi. This temple occupied a prominent and commanding position above the right bank of the river.

The Critic

In Gujarati literature, Rasikbhai was more than just a literary critic who interpreted current literature, he was a walking university. He had an original point of view on all subjects of his interest and stands in the same class as Navalram, Govardhanram, Manilal and Anand Shankar. In his critiques he uses the word 'apūrva' (rare) often and strove to point out whatever was unique in every work he examined. Rasikbhai often gave details of the work he was working on and quoted vastly from it, with the result that what he was trying to say was sometimes obscured.

Rasikbhai also wrote articles on the art of criticism giving the essence of the subject and his views are accepted by all. While reviewing the great works, he did not judge them in the modern context but based his criticism on the social and political environment of the times. The author often quoted from *Sahitya Mimamsa* to prove his points.

He believed that it was not necessary that children's literature be childish pointing out the drawbacks of this tendency in many works such as those of Gijubhai Badheka, Taraben and Balvantrai Thakore's *Ugati Javani*. In Vinodini Nilkantha's *Rasadvara*, he questioned the need to make young people grief stricken.

Prof. Rasiklal Parikh has minutely examined Balvantrai Thakore's translation of Kalidas's *Malvikagnimitra* and pointed out the errors in details as well as in interpolation as well as the inappropriate words and rough language used by the translator, but he has praised the attempt and given due credit.

He was critical of the title given by Muni Jinavijayaji to his article on *Bhartiya Jain Shramana Sanskriti and Lekhankala*

published in Jain Chitrakalpadrum maintaining that for a secular subject like Lekhankala, a religious title should not be given.

Being as learned as he was, he was often invited to write prefaces by other authors. He also wrote lengthy prefaces to his own works which were explanatory and served as reference material to students and scholars. He has brought out the difference between critiques and prefaces. In the former, both the merits and drawbacks of a work are brought out while in the latter, the merits alone are pointed out to the reader.

One can say without exaggeration that his critiques inspired people to read the original works.

Lecture Series

Most of the lectures have been discussed in the relevant chapters; a list of these is given below with the chapter name:

University Lectures

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Capitals of Gujarat | See 'Scholar of History' |
| 2. Anand Mimamsa | See 'Scholar of Sanskrit' |
| 3. History : Form and Method | See 'Scholar of History' |
| 4. Significance of Saraswatichandra | See below |

Presidential Lectures

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 5. Kavi Nanlal | See 'Poetry' |
| 6. Rangabhoomi | See 'Plays' |
| 7. Tattvachintana | See below |
| 8. Study of Sanskrit Literature | See 'Scholar of Sanskrit' |
| 9. Self expressions | See below |
| 10. History : A Commentary | See 'Scholar of History' |

4. Significance of Saraswatichandra in the creation of its characters

Rasiklal Parikh delivered six lectures on the greatness of the novel by Govardhanram in 1972 as a part of the Vidyaben Nilkanth series commemorating the birth centenary of Vidyaben who was the secretary of the Gujarat Vidya Sabha. Since Rasikbhai's reading covered both Sanskrit and European writers he was qualified to assess any work of literature from a critical point of view. Saraswatichandra was published in four parts and Rasikbhai first read it during his school days. According to him, the author, Govardhanram, had poetic ability and firsthand experience of life.

In this lengthy novel, besides the main story about the

In this lengthy novel, besides the main story about the eponymous hero, there are three subordinate plots, skillfully interwoven-making it one of the greatest novels of the times. The novel also highlights the social, political and religious problems which existed then. Rasikbhai quotes several authorities : Prof. Balvantrai Thakor who compared the novel to Brahma with his four faces merging in to one, Ramnarayan Pathak who compared it to a river which as it flows towards the sea is joined by three smaller rivers and finally Nanalal who called it Kadambari. There are 150 characters spread over four imaginary towns, each one is assigned his or her own dwelling place and status in the story, interacting with each other, making the whole come vibrantly alive. The story of the protagonist is given in the form of a letter. Rasikbhai appreciated the technique of story telling employed by Govardhanram, terming it refined and admires the way he relates events and acts to weave a web of circumstance.

7. *Tattvachintana*

In 1941, as president of the Tattvajnana Parishad Sammelan Rasiklal Parikh delivered this lecture on philosophy. The Sammelan was a part of the 14th conference of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad held in Bombay.

He began the lecture by saying that the study of Literature and Philosophy are interdependent and the study of one without the other is meaningless. While the study of philosophy has been carried out in every age, it is not necessary that its definition or the interest in it remains the same. He divides Indian philosophy into three sections and refers to the Vedas for understanding of philosophy. He believed that a man's ultimate goal should be spiritual awakening which is only possible with the help of religious philosophy. He mentions the great philosophers of India and their writings with which he appears duly impressed.

9. *Self Expressions*

At the 22nd conference of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad held in Bombay in 1963, Rasiklal Parikh delivered this lecture. He recapitulated the history of the formation of the parishad and its activities. The Sahitya Parishad is an association for interaction

between readers of literature and creators of literature. It was based on the International Congress of Orientalists and the French Academy. Topics like spelling, script, meanings, grammar, folktales, ancient poems and the use of technical terms in literature were discussed. The history of Gujarat and its ancient literature were later added. On the whole, Rasikbhai felt that studies of Gujarati literature and history were well developed and ably carried out under the auspices of the parishad.

Goshti

This is a dialogue between Rasiklal Parikh and Yashwant Shukla on All India Radio Ahmedabad. It was conducted in the form of traditional ancient discussions between the pupil and his preceptor. Classical literature-Greek, Japanese or Indian-is full of such dialogues and they are usually the result of a knowledge-thirsty student asking his teacher questions on a subject which confuses him. In response, the teacher answers with patience and compassion. Thus a learning process is established between the two as the answers reveal the truth to the student as seen in Goshti.

Yashwant Shukla was a prominent literary critic in his own right and a conversationalist. He was a contemporary of Rasiklal Parikh who admired him greatly and made him principal of the college managed by the Brahmachari Vadi Trust. We shall see how the student asks his teacher several questions and the replies are simple and light-hearted. The replies reveal the foundation and development of Rasikbhai's literary career, how he got interested in philosophy, history and literature and how he conquered new horizons with the help of English literature in general and by ancient Greek literature in particular. Rasiklal mentions the many prominent figures who were instrumental in moulding his character and his life. The entire conversation was in Gujarati but here only Rasiklal's replies, translated in to English, are given so that the reader can directly appreciate the aspirations and achievements of Rasiklal as a scholar and a man of letters.

'My father used to tell me so often that it was not possible for him to give me wealth as inheritance, all he could do was to

spend as much money as possible on my education which included sending me abroad for higher studies. He passed away in 1912 so his dream of sending me abroad could not be fulfilled but I did get higher education in India. My father's intelligence and independent thinking impressed me from my childhood. I always think of my father as having been intelligent, his dignity was awe-inspiring. My mother came from a rich family and she also loved literature, was fond of art and was a very cultured person. Her personality also influenced me greatly.

'My father was a pleader in Sadara, a very small town in north Gujarat. The town where I was born, Pethapur, was also a very small town. I did my primary schooling in Sadara and it was here that I came across Manilal, a Brahmin teacher. He was versatile and filled with a zest for life-unusual qualities to find in teachers of today. He used to go round Pethapur with his students and sometimes I got a chance to join him in his rounds. At that time he happened to be singing the poems of Kalapi and Balashankar and when he finished he would start telling us about these two poets as well as about Manilal Nabhubhai another great poet of the Gujarati language. It was he who got me interested in Balashankar's poetry. He was a well-read man and his English was excellent. After I graduated I got a chance to experience his skill at English and I also saw that he read books other than the prescribed textbooks. One of them was-I remeber very well-'Essay on Human Understanding'. He had read this book eight to ten times. He knew closely a priest, Mr. Keliar, whom he took me to visit. The remarkable thing about Manilal was that he was self-taught and although he did not have many qualifications he was a good teacher. He was a family friend, respected my father and often sang some of the poetry along with my mother. I do not recollect now whether he had given me any books to read but I do remember vividly his talks on many subjects. He was a devotee of mata (Shakti) and he had a combination of rare qualities-he was loveable, jolly and witty. Perhaps later in my life I accepted him as my role model.

'In high school, my Sanskrit teacher was Jogalekar. This was in Proprietary High School, Ahmedabad. The other teachers there were Balubhai and Diwan master but Jogalekar was the only one who impressed me. There was no one else worth remembering. He left the school later to join New High School.

'For my college education I went to Ferguson College, Poona in 1913. My father wanted me to go there and although he was no more, my uncle sent me there. This college was considered to be one of the best at that time and also it was attended by many patriots like Gokhale, Paranjape and Tilak. The professors were learned and taught us sincerely and selflessly. It was my father's belief that Bombay and Ahmedabad were cities where luxuries were easily available so if he sent me to either of these cities I would become a spendthrift and a happy-go-lucky person, whereas in Poona I would learn good manners besides getting a good education. Thus it was that with my mother's consent, my uncle sent me to Poona.

'Amongst the professors who impressed me most in Ferguson College was one Prof. Patwardhan who taught us English poetry and Shakespeare for four years-right from First Year to Sr. B.A. In his teaching he covered the entire history of European drama. He also talked about Ibsen and that is how I came to know and like Ibsen. Another noteworthy professor was Dr. Gomeha who taught us Sanskrit and it was from him that I understood the importance of research. Another professor was Prof. Ranade who taught Metaphysics and who left a lasting impression on my mind. Prof. Bhate taught us the history of Indian philosophy.

'During the time I was in Ferguson, the Shankracharya Seminar was established in which it was decided that students from western universities should study Sanskrit philosophy and those from Indian universities should study western philosophy. Thus it was that I got a chance to study western philosophy. Prof. Ranade taught us Carlyle in B.A. and it was then that I got to know him closely and started thinking of him as my guru. My subjects in B.A. as well as in M.A. were Sanskrit and English. However, I was unable to complete my M.A. because I joined the non-cooperation movement

started by Gandhiji. After my B.A., I spent 12 months in the Shankracharya Seminar followed by 4 months in the Bhandarkar Institute where I worked with Jinavijaya and came to know him very closely. He it was who inspired me to do research in the history of Gujarat.

'When I was in Poona, I met Trikamlal Shah, a brilliant engineer who was a Dakshina fellow while I was fellow at the Shankracharya Seminar. We became good friends. I also met Indulal Yajnik who was in the habit of seeking out young Gujarati men in Poona and lecturing. His lecture which lasted for 1-1/2 hours impressed me a lot. He told me that in our country it is useless to take jobs with the government or the ICS and strongly advised me against them. Instead he suggested I should contribute to National Education. This was in 1918 when Gandhiji, whom Indulal Yajnik knew very well, had returned to India.

'By this time Trikamlal and I had finished our fellowships and returned to Ahmedabad where we once again met Indulal. We thought of starting a college in Ahmedabad, on the lines of Ferguson College. We took over the administration of J.L. English School with which Indulal was closely connected, and established the Gujarat Kelavani Mandal. Till the end of his life, I remained very close to Indulal. The political changes that were taking place were no concern of ours and although most bright students preferred to become barristers or join the ICS, Trikamlal and I joined the field of education and volunteered our services to the Gujarat Kelavani Mandal, disappointing my relatives who thought that I would follow in my father's footsteps and become a barrister.

'Indulal influenced us immensely-he was very energetic and it was difficult to keep up with him. He inspired me in the two decisions I took-to serve the nation and not take up a government job. We were joined by Ramnarayan Pathak who left his flourishing law practice in Sadara and joined the Gujarat Kelavani Mandal. Pathak became the principal of the J.L. New English School and as he was staying near the school, Ramnarayana, Trikamlal, Nandlal, Pranjivan, the younger brother of Ramnarayana and I often met at his house. If Indulal had the time he would join us.

We discussed the possibilities of establishing an institute of national education. Indulal told Gandhiji about this plan, but just then the Jalianwala Baugh incident occurred and the atmosphere throughout the country was tense. Indulal was busy with the political situation so we had to temporarily shelve our plans, but once calm returned to the country we started working on it again this time with the blessings of Gandhiji. After the slaughter of Jalianwala, the need for an institution of higher studies was felt even more keenly and we started Gujarat Vidyapith with Ramnarayan, Trikamlal as Registrar and I as professor of Sanskrit.

'When I was attending the M.A. lectures, Jinavijayaji taught me Prakrit from Hemachandra's Prakrit grammar text book. Once I joined the Vidyapith, I had no time to pursue the study of Prakrit as my subjects of interest increased. Soon Muni Jinvijaya and Pandit Sukhlalji joined the Vidyapith and we established the Puratattva Mandir. We also started the department of Indology where I worked. We had a very large library, developed by Acharya Gidvani and this was my greatest attraction. It contained many books on western literature, history, politics, economics and sociology as well as many other subjects. The need for a good library was evident because many learned persons joined the Vidyapith; besides it was inspired by Gandhiji. Gidvani had just returned from Oxford and had joined as principal of one of the colleges in Delhi. He was a man of ideals and high thinking.

'Gandhiji also liked the idea of the Puratattva Mandir and Punjabhai, one of the trustees of the Mandir, donated thirty thousand rupees-a big sum in those days. The money was used to establish the library for which many Sanskrit books were purchased from all over the country. Books in Pali and Prakrit were also purchased. Many subjects were covered in this collection and as a result the library became rich in content, attracting many scholars from all over. These scholars did not agree with the non-co-operation movement or the idea of national education, but they visited the library for their research work.

'Pandit Sukhlalji and Pandit Bechardas Doshi joined the institution, starting a magazine, *Puratattva*, of which I was appointed

editor. I was only 24 at that time and I was also doing secretarial work at the behest of Kaka Kalelkar who was the official secretary. I protested at first because of my age and requested Kaka saheb to ask some one older and more experienced to help him but he insisted and I did the work for five years.

'I knew Pandit Sukhlalji in Poona and I always respected him highly. I was the one who brought Sukhlalji to the Vidyapith and after he joined us, the study of Prakrit, Sanskrit and religious philosophy (Darshanas) became very intense and successful, I studied Darshanas with him and also did some editorial work with him.

'Gandhiji came to the Vidyapith regularly but I met him only once. During our meeting, he stressed the importance of having a good library and he told me that our library should be as important as those of Oxford and Cambridge. Although I respected him and would have liked to spend more time with him, I knew that he was busy and many people came to see him every day. As far as Ramnarayana is concerned I knew him from our Sadara days but I came to know him very closely in the Vidyapith.

'When I was in Poona I was inspired to write but I only wrote in English. My first article was published in the college magazine- it was on '*Comparative Study of the Bhagvad Gita and Pravachanasara*'. Then I wrote two papers in the seminar- '*Dialectics in Indian Philosophy*' and '*Doctrine of Change and Permanence*'. Since I had studied in English, it was easier for me to write in that language.

'In the Vidyapith while teaching Sanskrit and Indology, I also started reading *Darshanashastra* with Pandit Sukhlalji and Pali language with Kosambiji. When I was in Ferguson College I had started studying Indian and western philosophy and I continued to study these subjects. Prof. Patwardhan taught us European literature including the works of English and German writers and others like Ibsen. We got all these books from our library in the Vidyapith. After I finished working, which was for 12 to 15 hours a day, I would read late in to the night but my thirst for reading was never quenched. I wanted to know as much as possible about

everything from history to philosophy.

'All my reading was methodical-I never put a book I had read on the shelf after finishing it and forgot about it. I read to develop my mind and it was also my hobby and joy. I planned what I read and then reflected on it. I also used to discuss what I read with Ramnarayan. He was a student of philosophy so I used to study the subject with him. When he joined the Vidyapith he preferred to teach Gujarati language. I discussed *Darshanashastra* with panditji and history with Jinvijaya. It was from Jinvijaya that I came to know about the material available on the ancient history of Gujarat and its glory. If a person likes a subject and develops it as a hobby he can learn much more. If anyone asks me whether I strained myself I would reply that I only satisfied my fondness for learning.

'I told you about Prof. Patwardhan and his refinement which I imbibed. He used to teach tragedies in such a graphic way that I was inspired to write tragedies in Gujarati. I remember that I even started writing one in my college days-a scene of the cremation ground from the history of Karna Vaghela. I wrote other things from time to time such as a play *Sal Mubarak* which was even staged. Most of my work though remained incomplete. I composed a poem which was published in the first issue of *Yugadharma*. The first long poem I wrote was *Darshan* in the style of Kanta.

'The credit for my contribution of short stories goes to *Prasthan*. Ramnarayan wanted to publish short stories in the magazine-I took his request as an order and started my 'machine'. I wrote just a few stories-much less than what Ramnarayan himself wrote.

'I edited *Tattvopaplavasimha*, a single work written by one of our greatest philosophers Jayarashi Bhatt on scepticism, with Pandit Sukhlalji who managed to get the only palm leaf manuscript in existence. It was published in the Gaekwad Oriental series.

'When I left Vidyapith I was in financial difficulties as I had joined the non-cooperation movement. After the formation of the provincial government I joined Gujarat Vidyasabha and for 8-10 years I continued to struggle financially. Mahavir Jain Vidyalyaya asked me to edit *Kavyanushasana* and for the preface I wrote the

history of Gujarat from the pauranic period to the time of king Kumarpala. I mentioned the universities of Bhinnamala-Shrimala and Vallabhi. I wrote the preface in English because the book was meant to be a text book in colleges and as per the intention of the Jain Vidyalyaya the book was to be read by Indian as well as foreign scholars.

'During this time I could have got a job with the government but because of my involvement with the non-co-operation movement I preferred to be independent. The wealth I had inherited from my father was almost exhausted and I was thinking of selling my wife's jewellery since I had to support my family somehow. Unexpectedly, my friend Chaitanyaprasad Diwanji got me a position as a tutor to a wealthy lady. I had to teach her for an hour every morning. This brought in good money with which I could support my family comfortably.

'I left the Vidyapith in 1930 and joined Gujarat Vidyasabha in 1938. During the intervening eight years I was busy editing first, *Kavyanushasana* and then, *Tattvopaplavasimha*. There were other small works I edited and I continued to teach.

'I joined Vidyasabha quite accidentally. The secretary of the Vidyasabha which was at that time known as Gujarat Vernacular Society, died suddenly and there was a vacancy. Keshav Dhruva, the president, was very old and had almost retired. He was succeeded by Anandshankar Dhruva. Anandshankar wanted to bring about changes in the society and he wanted to appoint an assistance secretary. I did not apply for the post myself but when Anandshankar met Ramnarayan, he told him to ask me to apply for the post. When I applied, he called me and told me that this was not just an administrative post, as he wanted me to work as I had for Puratattva Mandir, which meant that I would be doing research work too. Anandshankar also wanted to start a postgraduate institute with a grant from the Bombay Government.

'When I first joined I was not particularly interested in administrative work so I tried to find out what activities were going on in the institution. I discovered that several scholars had been assigned to write nearly 50 to 60 volumes but no one had done

any work on them. I wrote to each scholar and asked him or her to let me know his or her progress. All the scholars completed their assigned work immediately. Next, I arranged a lecture series and for the first lecture I invited Sunitikumar. At this time, the Kher ministry was rejected and Satyagraha movement had started. Since I was involved in academic work, I was not harassed for my involvement with the non-co-operation movement.

'During this time, all the activities in the institution came to a halt as I could not find work for each and every worker. Most of my time was spent in planning the curriculum for postgraduate studies and whatever leisure time I got was spent in reading. At this time Umashankar Joshi joined the Vidyasabha and Lady Vidyagauri became its honorary secretary. Both were good at their work but it was difficult to work with some of the other people-anyway the work had to go on.

'In our post-graduate courses we taught Sanskrit, Gujarati and ancient Indian culture. A commission was sent by Bombay University to observe the work of the institution and to send in its report. The commission recommended that the institution should have a building for housing classes, a teachers' room and a library. The Kher government gave 8,000 rupees for the building and 20,000 rupees as a recurring grant. Since the funds were earmarked for particular purposes, there were no spare funds to start an independent post-graduate section. Kanaivalal Munshi was the home minister and he insisted that the institution should be affiliated to Bombay University in order to qualify for a grant. The commission visited us again and recommended us for post-graduate studies first in Ancient Indian Culture, then Gujarati and finally Sanskrit. They, however, objected to my appointment as a post-graduate teacher because although I had kept terms I had not passed the M.A. examination, but when Professor Abhyankar saw my work he ignored this and insisted that the institution be recommended and that I be retained and we started enrolling students. Pandit Sukhlalji requested Sheth Bholabhai Jesinghbhai to donate two lakh rupees for the post-graduate department. An independent trust under the supervision of the Vidyasabha was organised and

it was named after Sheth Bholabhai. We did not have much income for post-graduate teaching but money had to be spent and this situation remained forever.

'After some time I thought of applying for recognition as Ph.D. guide and got it-first for Gujarati and then for Ancient Indian Culture and Sanskrit. I do not remember the number of students who studied under me for Ph.D. but I do remember the different subjects I suggested to them. They were mostly those subjects which I liked and had studied. For example, I asked Hariprasad to work on Maitrak kings of Vallabhi and the copper plates of the period; for Sandesara, since he was knowledgeable about Sanskrit I selected 'Contributions of Vastupala and his literary circle to Sanskrit Literature' and Priyabala Shah was assigned the work on fine arts of Vishnudharmottara Purana. These were the first three Ph.D. students under me. Esther Solomon worked on Darshanashastra, religious philosophy. Since she had studied Vedanta deeply I asked her to work on Indian dialectics while Mr. Jetaly was asked to work in Jain Nyayashastra (law and justice) since he was very good in this subject, as he had studied law in Benares. Indukala Jhaveri from Bombay did the comparative study of Jain and Sankhya Darshanas for her Ph.D. All these students wrote their theses in English.

'I was doing several things at a time. When I joined Vidyasabha I wanted to continue my research work and also write plays and in the latter activity I was encouraged by Ramnarayana. We contributed our plays to the Mumbai-Gujarati Nataka Mandali, as it was my ambition to have my plays performed in Premabhai Hall. I told Anandshankar that the layout of this hall is flat but for a good auditorium there should be an inclination. Anandshankar knew of my love for drama and allowed me to do whatever I liked. By then Jayashankar Sundari had retired from professional theatre and had gone back to his village Visnagar where he had opened a grocery shop. I requested him to return to Ahmedabad and join us in an honorary capacity. I discussed this with our president Dadasaheb Mavalankar. When Dr. Radhakrishnan visited our institution he asked us whether we had any theatre activities.

Dadasaheb told him with my concurrence that we did and we staged '*Rai no Parvat*' for him. Jayashankarbai and Jasvant Thakar came for the show, as also did Dinaben. Dinaben and Thakar asked me to organize plays for the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) which pleased me a lot as this was an activity to my liking. We established Natyavidyamandir and a group called Natamandal. Many lectures were organized in the Natyavidyamandir and many professors of colleges in Ahmedabad were attending. The actor, Shivakumar, first performed in Bhasa's *Urubhanga* and he acted very well. We had good support from Vidyasabha, Dadasaheb and Vidyaben.

'*Mena Gurjari* was first written as a short play and Khurshid Medora played the role of Mena when the play was performed in her college days. Later with the establishment of the Natyavidyamandir and Natyamandal, we thought of staging plays and when Dinaben and Jayashankar approached me for a play, I offered to re-write *Mena Gurjari* as a full-length play. When I finished, it was a 2 hour play and Dinaben as Mena was acclaimed for her acting. Natyamandal earned a lot from this production. In the meanwhile, Dinaben and Jayashankarbai suggested the inclusion of songs and dialogues in the play so that *Mena Gurjari* continued to be revised and improved.

'The seed of *Mena Gurjari* was planted when I was in Poona. I was going through the files of Indian antiquary and I found a ballad composed by a Parsi lady, Putlibai Kabaraji. I was impressed and when I told my mother about it, to my surprise she sang a few lines from the ballad. Since then 'Mena' was always at the back of my mind. When Vallabhbhai Patel gave a call for Satyagraha in Bardoli, the entire country was awakened to people's power, and this reminded me again of Mena. She appeared to me as a symbol of people's strength. The story remained in my mind-and more and more ideas kept coming such as woman in the form of Mahakali, the behaviour of a spirited woman who loved life faced with trying circumstances and so on. The character of Mena started taking shape and once the ideas were focused the play was composed and developed.

'Regarding '*Sharvilaka*' there is a little history behind it. We liked the way the Mumbai Natak Mandali enacted '*Rai no Parvat*' and they asked for another play. I read out *Mrcchakatika*, one act of which was ready. They liked it and decided to perform it when the play was completed. When the second act was ready I read that to them also. Bapulalbhai, one of the Mandali's members, did not like the second act and thought it tasteless. On the contrary, I preferred the second act to the first one, so I decided not to continue working with the Mandali. Another point of contention was that the Mandali wanted me to write for them on a salary of Rs. 250 per month, whereas I preferred to write independently so we parted company. Just then Jaswant Thakar came to me and asked me to write a play with a revolutionary theme. I re-wrote the play giving a historical background to it and adding period characters. Then I picked one of the characters in the original *Mrcchakatika*, *Sharvilaka* and placed him in the centre of the action. His character is lively, fun loving and brave and he is the lover of Madanika. I named the finished play *Sharvilaka*.

'I have started another play but I am not sure I will be able to finish it. The subject is a great queen of the last dynasty of the Gupta Empire. I have written two acts but I don't know when I will write more.

'Govardhanram in my opinion is the best writer in Gujarati literature. It is not that I am partial towards an author who writes about Indian culture, but he is truly intelligent and I have not seen this type of intelligence in any other author. Govardhanram wrote *Saraswatichandra* in four parts with the characters in each part being independent. This is the way Shakespeare and Tolstoy wrote and I was impressed by this. That is why I chose the subject of the greatness of *Saraswatichandra* for one of my lecture series.

'Besides history, literature, poetry, drama and sociology, I am interested in parapsychology. Each subject in its own way teaches something new about life but my faith in life remains unchanged. It is a fact that in our Upanishads and Darshanas, the close examination of man, god, Brahma and in Yogashastra, the effects

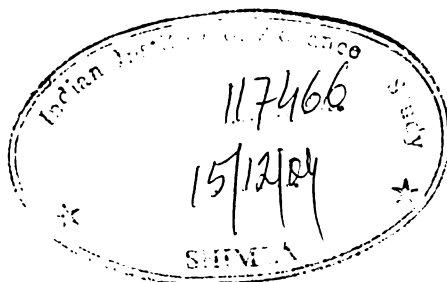
of yoga may be thought of as imaginary by some scholars but I think that it is a truth which is derived from a great experience of the rishis whether we accept it or not. From this my faith evolved that what we experience is the external world but there is another internal world with which we must keep contact. You may call it divine or supernatural but it is true. Man is born at a certain time and dies at a certain time, but this is not the end. Besides the Darshanas, I read Goethe and other western scholars which only strengthened my belief.

'I am happy that we had this talk-what more can I ask for.'

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Rasiklal Parikh was a profound scholar, an orientalist, an expert on Indian culture and history, an avid student of philosophy, psychology and religion, a critic and a literary master and above all a dramatist, a poet and a great teacher. He was like a walking university, embracing all the branches of human knowledge and civilization-a rare intellectual, top among many. He personified his names 'Rasik' (joyous) and 'Parikh' (discerner) and was full of the joy of existence and aesthetically sensitive.

Rasikbhai was a pundit by nature of his scholarly studies but he had all the tastes and sensitivities of a poet. He had a round face with smiling, shining eyes. He spoke little and softly. He was soft and compassionate to others but a strong disciplinarian towards himself. He was very unassuming, he never tried to draw limelight towards himself, but quietly and deeply he kept thinking about the mysteries of life in the changing circumstances around him. He never complained though he passed through many difficult stages but continued with his studies in the many fields of human knowledge. He was a rare intellectual, top among many. He had a genuine thirst for learning, which resulted in his spiritual awakening. He was shining example to his younger generation showing what hard work and true interest can achieve. He worked with single-minded attention till his last breath, and his joy in learning is fully manifested in all his works. He personified his name 'Rasik' (joyous) and was full of the joy of existence.

The author, Priyabala Shah was his student at post graduate studies. Also he was an able guide for her Ph.D. thesis. She had close association with Rasiklal Parikh. She has tried to portray monographs.



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