

## Indian Patriotism: a Discourse on Nationalism From the Periphery

K. RAGHAVENDRA RAO

Indian Institute of Advanced Study  
Shimla

In this presentation, which is largely exploratory, I shall focus on a major discursive text of modern Karnataka, Hardekar Manjappa's Kannada classic *Bharateeyara Desabhakti* (Indian People's Love for the Country), a historical-theoretical discourse published in 1921. Paradoxically, Manjappa, who played such a crucial role in building the nationalist movement in Karnataka, focused theoretically on *desa*, a spatial category, rather than on *rashtra* (nation), a more complex human collective category. The identifying feature of a *desa* that Manjappa recognizes is common habitation in a common territory, referring, thereby, to all those making the space of India their natural home, without imputing any integrative ontology to this group of people.

### *Manjappa's Early Years*

Manjappa was born into a poor Lingayat family on 18 February 1886 in Banavasi village in Uttara Kannada (erstwhile North Canara) district of Karnataka, which was then a part of Bombay Province. Although the district had a very small number of Lingayats, this group constituted a very powerful and dominant force in the Kannada-speaking part of the British Indian Province of Bombay.

Supported by his elder brother and encouraged by his mother, Manjappa passed the government-conducted 'mulki' examination in 1903 after studying at the school in Sirsi town. Manjappa took up employment in the same school as a teacher, where he proved to be extremely popular and successful. In spite of his very meagre formal education, Manjappa became competent in English, Marathi and Sanskrit by studying on his own. In 1905 at the time of the division of Bengal, Manjappa plunged into the nationalist movement and gave up his job. He started the journal, *Dhanurdhari*, in 1906, explicitly to promote the nationalist movement led by the Congress. In 1908, the journal had to cease publication because of the severe restrictions

imposed by the government. Manjappa then shifted from journalism to social and religious reform and revival. In 1910 he took the *brahmacharya* vow and devoted himself to national and public life. His lifestyle became ascetic, his dress simple and his food spartan, which is why he came to be revered as Karnataka Gandhi.

Around this time Manjappa began to study his own religion and its socio-religious ideology. In particular, he studied the philosophy and life of Basaveswara, the founder of the Veerasaiva movement which was directed against orthodox Brahmanical Hinduism. The Veerasaiva movement advocated, as early as the 12th century, modernist ideas like equality of the sexes, the brotherhood of man, and the uniqueness of human individuality based on rationality. Basaveswara rejected the Hindu *varnashramadharma* order, freeing occupational activity from its rigid caste constriction. Manjappa went back to Basaveswara's ideas, as embodied in the powerful poetry of the *vacanas* – literally prose-poems.<sup>1</sup>

Till his death in 1947, Manjappa was involved with a wide range of public activities – scholarship, socio-political and religious discourse, socio-religious reform, the anti-imperial struggle, and the cause of *swadeshi* and *khadi*. He also wrote extensively on a variety of themes central to national, regional, social, cultural, religious and political life. He reinterpreted Basaveswara's ideology as an early pre-figuration of the essential teachings of Gandhism, and thus succeeded in drawing the Lingayat community away from its anti-Congress stance, which was primarily the result of the community's interpretation of the Congress as a Brahmin movement. He thus brought a major community of Karnataka into the nationalist fold.

Manjappa was a master of Kannada prose, and his writings constitute a major contribution to discursive literature in Kannada.<sup>2</sup> During the last years of his life, he became critical of Gandhi and moved closer to the communal Hindu Mahasabha. In view of the current claims of some Lingayats that they are not Hindus, it is interesting to recall that Manjappa held his community to be fully Hindu, albeit articulating a protestant version of it.

### The *Bharateeyara Desabhakti*

Manjappa's text, *Bharateeyara Desabhakti*, has not been taken seriously by the Kannada intellectual community.<sup>3</sup> This is not surprising since the modern intellectual culture of the region has been dominated by an obsession with 'literature', downgrading discursive writing in general. Manjappa's text is organized into five

sections, divided into paragraph units. However, in the fourth section entitled, 'The Awakening/Development for Love of the Country Among Indians', the argument runs through one unit. This is also the shortest section. The text is divided into the following units: The Basic Principles of Love for One's Country – 21 para-units, 23 pages; Love for the Country and Love of Religion – 30 para-units, 31 pages; Causes Preventing the Emergence of Love for the Country in India – 6 para-units, 15 pages; the Awakening/Development of Love for the Country among Indians – no division, 12 pages; and Serving the Country – 5 para-units, 21 pages. In all, the text consists of 192 pages of arguments, facts, history and theory.

Before examining Manjappa's arguments in detail, certain important conditioning circumstances should be noted. The first is that Manjappa was not a scholar in the commonly understood sense. He was severely handicapped by his inability to consult the massive literature in English. This accounts for his naivete when alluding to writers in English, who often strike us as obscure and insignificant. When he does refer to well-known writers and thinkers like Mazzini and Darwin, his use of their ideas is unconventional, if not a misunderstanding of the original material. The second point to keep in mind is that Manjappa begins from personal experience, insight or intuition, and supports this with peculiarly lop-sided scholarship. He has used a fair amount of Indian material in Sanskrit and Kannada, but is pitifully short on Western, English-based material. What is crucial to note is not that Manjappa was constrained by these limitations but, despite them, he was able to develop systematic arguments and generate viable structures of thought. Manjappa possessed a natural gift for intellectual analysis and logically coherent thinking, and these assets often make up for his lack of formal training in scholarship. For instance, Manjappa pioneered scientific research in the area of theological, moral and historical investigations in his own Lingayatism.

I shall first summarize and then critically interpret the text. As already mentioned the first section of *Bharategyara desabhakti* as already indicated deals with the fundamental principles that govern and ought to govern one's attitude and behaviour towards what one may call one's country, native land or motherland, including the question of what constitutes one's country or *swadesa*. At the start a semantic ambiguity needs to be noted, not in order to fault it but to see it as a part of the real situation. Though Manjappa uses the term *desa* or country, he often seems to spill over into something more complex like the nation or *rashtra*. This is because Manjappa

regarded the two as coterminous, though his own discussion shows that they are not.

However he is not aware of this contradiction in his thought-structure. He recognizes two factors that go into the constitution of a country, namely natural boundaries that demarcate one country from another (like mountains and rivers) and artificial factors (like religion, race and language). He considers the former as foundational and the latter as supplementary, complementary, secondary or reinforcing. But he also concedes that unnatural countries have come into being, based purely on artificial entities. Without analysing the issue, he merely asks the question: Have such countries contributed to world peace and happiness? The second question Manjappa asks is: How can one claim a country as one's own? He finds no clear-cut or decisive answer, and suggests that such a claim can be grounded in more than one reason, of which the most frequently offered is one's own birth, or one's parents' birth or domicile.

He proceeds to examine the concept of *swadesabhakti* or *desabhakti* very briefly. *Swadesabhakti* is said to be based on *swadesaseva* (serving one's country). While this service should promote the prosperity and happiness of the country as a whole, it must be done through *nyayareeti* or fairness. In fact, *swadesabhakti* is rooted in a sense of oneness with one's fellow-inhabitants, and Manjappa cites Mazzini to underscore the point. If, indeed, this is what *swadesaprema* or *swadesabhakti* is, then why should one have it? What is its rationale? Unlike in the past when people were not inquisitive about causes and justifications, in the modern age of rationality, Manjappa holds no belief or principle is acceptable without argument and proof. Hence, one demands a scientific answer according to *sastreeyadrishhti* or the scientific perspective. And he offers one. The two sciences he invokes are life sciences and social sciences.

It is important to state, at this juncture, that the basic paradigm of a collectivity (that is analogous to the country or motherland as a collectivity in Manjappa's discourse) is the family. The family is a recurring metaphor as well as an analytical-conceptual tool throughout this discourse. *Swadesa* is one's parents, which provides a total life-context, sustains one from birth to death, and without which one could not survive. Therefore, one has to be grateful for *swadesa*, just as one is grateful to one's parents. This gratitude is a natural quality that distinguishes a human – from the most primitive to the most civilized – from an animal, and to claim this gratitude (*kritagnate*) is a natural human attribute. Manjappa cites the Western philosopher, Butler, to support his arguments, but he does not give

any details about Butler. He links gratitude to the familiar Hindu notion of *rina* (debt). One's life is a system of debts owed and repaid, and *swadesaprema* or *swadesabhakti* is simply the repayment of a debt owed to one's motherland. He argues that this is such an important quality for human beings that one can measure the degree of 'civilization' of an individual or a group by the degree of *rina* present in them. We love our country and, by implication, our fellow-residents in exchange for their contribution to the possibility of our existence.

Manjappa then elaborates this quality of gratitude, now turned into a duty, by referring explicitly to life sciences and social sciences. According to him the foundational principle of gratitude is the species-bond or gregariousness, which he refers to as *swajatirakhane* (guarding the welfare of one's species). But he argues that, though gratitude and the species-bond are natural to man, his nature, unlike that of animals, is not given by nature, but must be nurtured through systematic and sustained effort, as embodied in personal and institutional practices. He must also regard this task as a duty. This argument, he says, is drawn from his knowledge of biological or life sciences.

Manjappa points out that sociology also strengthens this understanding, and thus promotes the need for *swadesabhakti*. Sociology establishes that man is a social animal simply because his needs and survival are predicated upon interdependence with fellow-humans, starting from the level of the family to the country, and ultimately to humanity as a collectivity or species. He invokes the organicist metaphor, acknowledging Mazzini as its source, and observes that any society/collectivity is like a whole body, its individual members representing the different organs of the body. This interdependence has been progressively increasing through history, Manjappa quotes Darwin to support this contention. This is surprising because Manjappa draws from Darwin the principle of co-operation, whereas Darwinian biology is generally associated with fiercely competitive individualism and the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. All these arguments, writes Manjappa, do not touch one crucial practical issue: that of self-interest and the relationship between patriotism and individual self-interest. Yet, having raised the issue, he dismisses it by saying that even to ask it is a betrayal of one's country. Patriotism must be a supreme moral duty transcending mundane and narrow considerations.

Having established the need for, and the nature of, one's love for one's motherland, Manjappa examines the question of how it should be shown and how it should manifest itself in practice. Reverting

again to the familial model, he suggests that the family is an interdependent organization in which members play different roles and perform different tasks. Their complementary contributions sustain the family. Similarly, in a country, especially in the modern period, a whole range of specialized functions have emerged, and an individual will be serving his country and showing his love for it if he simply carries out the work for which he is temperamentally or professionally qualified. He divides this work into two types – the physical and mental. Manjappa locates the genesis of the classical Indian caste system here, and regards the four *varnas* as representing such a functional division. He also points to its universal prevalence, citing Plato's class theory as an example. But these characteristics ultimately derive from the essentially moral nature of one's commitment to one's country, a Kantian imperative and a duty.

More explicitly, depending on Gandhian ideas, Manjappa holds that to love one's country is to live a life of virtuous conduct. Thus he finds no contradiction between the individual good and the collective good of the country. Again he cites an obscure Western text, *To the Nations* by Paul Richard, calling him a *prasiddha vidwansa* (a famous savant)! A country will be ruined if its inhabitants see a rift between their interest and the country's interest. Here, again, he invokes the organicist model of the family. When Manjappa asks whether these ideals are understood and internalised by all, his argument takes a clearly elitist turn. Only a select few possess a knowledge of these principles and have the will to follow them in practice. From this assumption, two different conclusions are drawn. First, this prevalence of the unworthy in a country leads to economic inequality, polarizing the population into the poor and the rich. Secondly, it is the duty of the worthy minority to preach and persuade the unworthy to return to the virtuous path of *swadesabhakti* and *swadesaseva*. They should not cover up their countrymen's deficiencies in the name of glorifying the country, but bluntly correct them.

The duties discussed so far can be divided into broad categories: (a) to live according to the right principles of *swadesabhakti* and *swadesaseva*, and (b) to help one's erring countrymen abandon the wrong path and return to the fold of the good and the virtuous. These duties are moral duties which one can perform in the service of other types of collectivities as well (like, a religious community or a sect). Hence, what is perhaps the most distinctive aspect of *swadesaseva* is a third duty – the duty to sacrifice one's life to defend the country's borders. It is one's duty as a *desabhakta* (patriot) to defend one's country against invaders, even if they are of the same religion.

However, a religious fanatic will not hesitate to betray the country to support his fellow-religionists. Manjappa does not refer here to the Muslims in particular. However, since he turned towards the Hindu Mahasabha in the later years, it can be inferred that he had the Muslims in mind. Indeed, he was referring to a possibility, and not to actuality (that is, given the Muslim commitment to religion, it is more likely that the Muslims would sacrifice their motherland for the religion of their birth). This third duty is the highest duty, and it involves a closing of the ranks – religious or otherwise – against foreign invader, and is the supreme test of one's *swadesabhakti*. Manjappa compares this duty to the duty of devotion owed to a deity by a devotee, as exemplified in the *bhakti* cults of India. He points out that this duty has been the subject of two different interpretations – one by the English philosopher Sidgewick in 'The Elements of Politics' and the other by Gandhi in his article 'The Doctrine of the Sword' in *Young India*. The Sidgewickian doctrine is a doctrine of violence. According to Sidgewick, if one suspects another country of intending to conquer one's motherland, then one is justified in attacking it first. Also if a foreign country uses immoral methods, one is justified in responding with equally immoral methods (such as violence, torture or deceit). But the Gandhian view is that though violence is better than cowardice, non-violence is better than violence. This is because Gandhi held that non-violence involved greater courage and heroism than violence, and that it is better and more human to get killed than to kill.

Manjappa is categorical that *swadesabhakti*, and one's readiness to sacrifice one's life for its cause, should not be taken to mean that such sacrifice is justified when one's country embarks on an expedition to invade or ransack the wealth of another country. In other words, he rules out the imperialist path of development for the simple reason that *swadesabhakti* is a moral principle and cannot be extended to legitimize such an immoral act. In fact, it would amount to a betrayal of one's country as, in the long run, it tends to ruin one's country. It is like a family decimating a neighbouring family. He alludes to the ideas of Nietzsche and Bernhardie, among other Western thinkers, in discussing this theme. He rejects the contention of these writers that war is a necessary element in the progress of a country, and that all countries have progressed by waging wars to promote their imperial ambitions. He questions the assumption underlying such expansionist doctrines that the conqueror is always more civilized than the conquered, and hence has the right to conquer the conquered. By implication Manjappa rejects the idea of a tutelary control of one

country by another as trusteeship territories. He cites the example of Greece and India which had been conquered and ruled by the less civilized Muhammadans, who destroyed the culture and civilization of the conquered. Mere physical powers or military victory should not be confused with cultural, intellectual or moral superiority. Manjappa quotes from J.R. Seeley's *Expansion of England* to support his view. Referring to Herbert Spencer and Western sociology, he argues that mankind has now outgrown the age of warfare and its central doctrine that might is right. Most countries have now entered the industrial age where war and conquest are seen as harmful to one's own country. This does not mean that all countries are equally civilized or advanced. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that a more advanced country – whether technologically or otherwise – could assist the less advanced one. But, in the industrial age, Manjappa believed, this could take place without imperial conquest, because the less advanced can systematically copy and learn from the more advanced, because of the nature of the modern technology.

Using his own parameters, Manjappa recognizes three epochs – the epoch of warfare, the epoch of industry and the epoch of peace. Manjappa locates his own time within the second epoch, but sees signs of the next epoch on the horizon. His argument is that, in different epochs, the principle animating *desabhakti* will be different. Here, he uses traditional Indian psychological vocabulary, well-known through the great text of the *Gita*, and maintains that, in the epoch of warfare, this principle is *tamas*, in the epoch of industry *rajas*, and in the epoch of peace *satvika*. He argues that progress into the third epoch is inevitable in terms of the process of historical development. In his epoch, some of the signs of the coming epoch were the spread of democracy throughout the world, Wilson's doctrine of world peace and the emergence of the League of Nations.

After analysing *swadesabhakti* in terms of a free country where the rulers and the ruled demonstrate a substantial congruence of interest, Manjappa examines situations, like colonial India, where democracy did not exist, and how the principle of *swadesabhakti* should operate when there is a clear conflict of interest between the rulers and the ruled. If a *desabhakta* or patriot takes the side of the rulers, he will be guilty of betraying the people. If he takes the side of the people, he will be guilty of betraying his country's government. Manjappa categorically states that, in such a situation, the duty of a patriot is to join the people and fight for the interest and welfare of the people. In short, *desa* means *praja* or the people, and therefore to serve the country is to serve the people. Thus he transforms *desabhakti* and



*desaseva* into *prajabhakti* and *prajaseva*. This obviously means that the principles of *desabhakti* and democracy, are inseparable.

The next question Manjappa addresses is how one should promote the cause of the *praja*. He argues that the answer has to be the same whether the *praja* belongs to a free country or a country under the imperial control of another country. He rejects the method of *tamasa* or violence fight the rulers in the cause of the people. Conceding that one might resort to violence with genuine *desabhakti* or *prajabhakti*, Manjappa still rejects such violence as ultimately counter-productive in the sense that it harms the people and, eventually, mankind itself. In other words, mere good intentions are not enough; they must be backed by morally valid methods and modes of action. The right mode, and the one morally justified, is *rajas* or non-violence. It involves communicating public grievances and aspiration to the rulers and the government, and, if the rulers are unresponsive, to criticize them bluntly and thus create public awareness. The *satvika* principle implies that one should resist the government on principle and in the interest of the people, through the Gandhian method of non-violence or *satyagraha*. Following his master, the Mahatma, Manjappa notes that this approach requires an unusual degree of *atmabala* (soulforce), *manonigraha* (mental control) and *satyapriyata* (love of truth), all of which constitute the essence of the principle of *satva*. Calling this a new mode of political praxis, Manjappa advocates the adoption of this difficult path as being ultimately good for not only one's country but for the whole of mankind.

In the second section, Manjappa focuses on the relationship between *desabhimana* (patriotism) and *dharmabhimana* (religious commitment). He situates this problematic within the Indian historical context by asking whether the ancient Indians (Aryans) possessed *desabhimana*. Citing Carlyle, Manjappa argues that historical knowledge is essential to our understanding of the present, and crucial to our current projects and future plans. But he also recognizes the inadequacy of source material for re-constructing India's past, and the need to go outside India, to foreign sources (such as Herodotus, the ancient Greek historian). He also refers to the travelogues of foreign visitors to ancient India, such as Huien Tsang. Manjappa suggests that Indian historiography should make use of literary sources, and examines literature in the three traditional periods of ancient India to see if there is any evidence of the existence of *desabhakti*. The three periods are *shritikala* (the age of *shruti*), *smritikala* (the age of *smriti*) and *puranakala* (the age of the

*Puranas*). After examining the literary source, Manjappa looks at the historical source. While conceding that some ancient seers may have had the notion of a motherland which they worshipped, there is no evidence that the common folk had any *desabhakti*. This is true of the age of *shruti* as well as the age of *smriti*. In fact, the latter period did not show any awareness of the idea itself. For instance, the *Manusmriti* contains extensive political material but no reference to *swadesabhakti*. This is true of Puranic literature as well. In short, ancient Sanskrit literary material, in spite of the claims of nationalist historians like Radhakumud Mukherji and Sattvalekar, is notable for a total absence of any reference to the principle and practise of *swadesabhakti*.

Turning to the historical period, Manjappa examines the contention that *swadesabhakti* existed during the time of Chandragupta Maurya, Harshavardhana and others, then suffered a temporary eclipse and re-emerged during the period of Shivaji. As a test for the existence and strength of patriotism, Manjappa suggests the manifestation of *swadesabhakti* when a nation is attacked by a foreign power. Based on this test, Manjappa finds that there was either no *swadesabhakti* in the past, or that it had a negligible presence, while in contrast, it flourished in ancient Greece. In India, when the Muslim invasion began in A.D. 711, there was no united Indian resistance rallying round the principle of *swadesabhakti*. In fact, historical evidence shows the existence of *desadroha* or the betrayal of the country, both the record in the north (which witnessed a large number of foreign invasions), and in the south (where foreign powers were allowed to penetrate the country through the sea-route). If the country had any patriotism, then it would have put up strong and united resistance against the Muslim, and the subsequent Western, conquests of the land. At this point, quite inexplicably, Manjappa refers to *rashtra* (nation), not *desa*, and talks about *rashtriya abhimana* (nationalism). On careful examination, it appears that he is using the term, not on his own but simply as a quote from Govinda Sakharam Sardesai's *British Riyasat*.

Manjappa critically examines the claim made in recent years, and most vociferously in Maharashtra, that Shivaji was a great *swadesabhakta*. Instead of using sources likely to be prejudiced against Shivaji, Manjappa refers to a strongly pro-Shivaji text, namely, N.C. Kelkar's *The Marathas and the British*, the context in which Shivaji established his kingdom. The context, according to Manjappa, was a religious one, in which the Muslims had violated the most sensitive part of the Hindu psyche – their religious practices. Under Muslim dominance,

the Hindus had suffered countless humiliations, including massive and forcible conversion. Hence, Shivaji established his political system not on the basis of *desabhakti* but on the basis of *dharmabhimana*, to rescue Hindu religion from the onslaught of Islam. In fact, the reason why the mighty Maratha power could be destroyed by a handful of Englishmen was that Indians had no *swadesabhakti*. Manjappa cites V. V. Khare's foreword to Kelkar's text in order to support his argument. According to Khare:

The greatest weakness of the Maratha people was their utter lack of *desabhimana*. If that great virtue is so scarce in India as a whole, how can one expect from the Maratha people any significant display of it? Let any foreign invader come, and conquer the country, Indians seldom worry about who they were and what they were doing, so long as the foreigners did not directly affect one's village, one's landed estate and one's religion. We recognize and know that tolerance for other religions is a virtue. But we do not see that tolerating foreign rule is a supreme vice. Some are under the delusion that there was *desabhimana* in the Maratha rulers, from Shivaji to Shahuji. But their outlook is better characterized as territorial greed than *desabhimana*.

In the text, Kelkar states that India not only lacked *desabhimana* in the past but, even today, *desabhimana* does not exist. Manjappa laments, that the British, in contrast had a glorious tradition of *desabhimana*, and he quotes Elizabeth I in this context: 'My country, England, is my husband, the English people are my children!' England was at the pinnacle of power and prosperity precisely because of this glorious *desabhakti*. Echoing Gandhi in *Hindi Swaraj*, Manjappa concludes that the truth is that the British did not take India but the Indians offered India to them because they had no *desabhakti*. Thus, the central spirit and motivating force in Indian history and life is not *desabhimana* but *swadharmabhimana* which is exemplified by the religiously inspired Sikh fight against the Muslims.

Manjappa surveys the subsequent history of India, dividing it into two phases – the East India Company phase (1757-1857) and the Imperial phase (1857-1921). He credits the first phase with enabling Indians to come closer through the administrative and economic integration of the territory and public peace. Despite these gains, the greatest evil that existed was the appalling poverty of the land. This is because, unlike the Muslim conquerors who were interested in religious domination, the British were primarily interested in commercial and economic exploitation, which led to abject poverty in

India. During their 63 years of direct governance, the British had a mixed record of both positive and negative achievements from the Indian point of view. A major drawback of British rule was that the Indians became totally disarmed, their war-skills and their physical courage and heroism suffering an eclipse. This was done to prevent any challenge by the Indians to the political sovereignty of the British over the country.

According to Manjappa, India also benefited from British rule. He identifies four benefits of British rule: (a) For the first time in history, the whole country became politically integrated into a single territory. (b) Political integration was accompanied by a physical integration of the people, brought about by new modes of communication (such as the railways, and the post and telegraph services). This enabled the people to develop a sense of *ekarashtriyata* (nationalism). Manjappa also recognized the negative aspect of this – the provision of an infrastructure for foreign commercial exploitation, resulting in the impoverishment of India. (c) Peace and tranquility based on the rule of law was maintained, which enabled, for the first time in India, the flowering of individualism involving a rational-critical attitude towards tradition. (d) Enormous expansion took place in the educational sphere, providing to people, without traditional biases, access to modern systems of knowledge. Thus, Manjappa categorically concludes that British rule benefited India far more than the Muslim rule preceding it. In short, if India had to choose between the two masters, British rule would be the choice.

Unlike chauvinistic nationalist historians looking critically at British Indian history, Manjappa, recalling Marx, regards colonialism as a historical necessity: a temporary setback necessary to take the country on a progressive path. One of the most serious misfortunes characterizing precolonial India was the pervasive, irrational and virtually irresolvable hostility between the Hindus and the Muslims. This was a mutually destructive situation, because of the basic religious overcommitment of both the groups to their religious identities. Given the nature and history of the Hindu and Muslim polities of the past, Manjappa argues that neither of them could, in their then prevailing forms, have taken the country on the right path. Thus, in spite of its negative consequences, colonial dominance was a welcome evil. Better a progressive imperial power than reactionary native rule. In other words, better government was preferable to self-government. Thanks to the British, the two hostile communities were being brought into a common framework of administration, law and the market. Yet, Manjappa was not optimistic about inter-religious

relations, since both the major religious groups involved displayed a stronger loyalty to *swadharma* than to *swadesa*. As in the past, *swadharmabhimana* in India tended to undermine *sewadesabhimana* because its logic, unmediated by some notion of civil society, remained irreconcilable. He argues that unless Indians emulated the West, as exemplified by the English developing a secularist ideology based on a sharp separation between the religious and socio-political domains, *sewadesabhimana* and finally *rashtrabhimana* cannot emerge.

#### *Explaining the Absence of Desabhimana*

Why did the Indians in ancient India not develop any sense of *swadesabhakti*? They were not uncivilized forest-dwellers but in fact, were far ahead of other countries in the field of learning, technical skills and cultural institutions. They had produced the *Upansads* (which taught the secret wisdom of the soul), written speculative and philosophical works of the highest order, produced substantial social discourse and had great sages and ideal kings. Why then this unbelievable lacuna?

Several explanations have been offered by philosophers and scholars. One is that the land is too vast to generate any attachment to it. However, this still does not explain the fact that the various regional divisions (such as *Anga*, *Vanga*, *Kalinga* and *Kashmira*) did not generate *swadesabhakti* within themselves. The second reason is that India never became politically integrated under one authority, and thus could not develop *swadesabhakti*. This is not a satisfactory explanation because, even within the different kingdoms and empires, no *swadesabhakti* developed. Even the people within these units did not have enough *swadesabhakti* to resist the invasion of such units. The multiplicity and diversity of regimes may at best be a contributory cause but cannot be an adequate explanation. It is also argued that the multiplicity of religions and sects prevented the emergence of *swadesabhakti*. This appears to be a plausible explanation, but a little probing exposes its limitations. For instance, it is difficult to understand why, even where a kingdom or territory was unreligious, no attempt was made to resist foreign aggression in the name of the political territory. Moreover, the multiplicity of religions and sects came much later. Ancient India had only one religion – the Vedic religion. Finally, some scholars have suggested that the key to the mystery lies in the fact that India is a predominantly agricultural country, and only commercial societies can

generate *swadesabhakti* based on motives of economic rationality. This argument is also flawed because countries like England and France had long been agrarian when their *desabhakti* came to be formed.

Manjappa concedes that the fore-mentioned causes did influence *desabhakti* – not so much the non-genesis of *desabhakti* as the factors preventing its spread once it was born. But the Indian problematic is more fundamental, and is a question of why the phenomenon did not emerge at all. Using Western sources – Mazzini, Sir Frederick Pollards and Lord Morley's 'Compromise' – Manjappa argues that each country is characterized by a distinct and specific governing spirit or worldview. Following Pollock, Manjappa holds that human intelligence develops along two paths – *jnanamarga* (the path of knowledge) and *kriyamarga* (the path of action). Every country is inclined to follow one of these paths. Manjappa buttresses Pollock with no less an authority than the *Gita* (Chapter 3, *sloka* 3) to support the theory of the dual paths of human destiny – *jnanamarga* and *karmamarga*. Once a country's natural path is set, its subsequent intellectual-cultural evolution follows a logical course. A country ruled by the spirit of *jnanamarga* tends to produce classics in speculative philosophy and high theory. A country governed by *kriyamarga*, on the other hand, produces classics in natural or social sciences. Only those countries where the *geist* of *kriyamarga* and *kriyasakti* dominate will produce practical texts relating to politics and material power, and thus generate and foster *desabhakti*, a predominantly political category. It is not that a country does not produce any writing in a field inconsistent with its *geist*, but this remains a very minor and negligible component in the totality of the intellectual culture.

Manjappa works out a fascinating geneological schema of human sciences in which *jnanasakti* generates *manasastra* (sciences of the mental) and *tatvajnana* (metaphysics and philosophy). *Kriyasakti*, on the other hand, generates two broad domains of knowledge – the *naitika* (moral) and *bhautika* (physical-natural). *Naitika* is further divided into sciences relating to the individual and others relating to the collectivity. The first division generates *neeti sastra* (the science of conduct), while the collective domain generates sociology and political science. *Bhautika* generates *rasayanasastra* (chemistry) and *padarthavijnansastra* (physics). Indeed, this is a naive and antiquated schema, questionable to the point of being condemned as a museum-piece today. For instance, this schema does not provide for either mathematics or literature. But the point surely is not to deride it, which is all too easy, but to admire Manjappa's creativity in the face of

incredible epistemological adversity.

Manjappa also examines the nature of the knowledge systems generated by the ancient Indians. In his detailed survey of the ancient Aryans and their historical record, he finds that their strength lay in *jnanasakti* (as against the proficiency of the ancient Greeks in *kriyasakti*). This explains why the Aryans in ancient India excelled in speculative philosophy at the cost of social and political discourse. The Greeks did not neglect the latter in their pursuit of philosophical enquiry.

Using Sanskrit classical texts like the *Rigveda* and the *Manusmriti*, Manjappa notes that political discourse was born to question the absolute monarchies based on doctrines of divine right, which first emerged in the evolution of early Indian tribal societies. This led to the institution of limited monarchy. Under absolutist kingship, the king's duty was restricted to that of merely physically protecting his people. But under the second type of rule, the king was called upon to perform a second duty – that of protecting the religious life of the people. In India, prior to colonialism, a modified system of limited monarchy flourished, and the political genius of the Indians did not go beyond enlightened monarchy. Indian political discourse was frozen at the point of kingship and its functioning. Such king-centred political thought failed to initiate democratic discourse. Not persuaded by scholars who claimed the existence of a republican tradition in India, Manjappa dismisses this as an undue focus on exceptionalism.

The dominant and persistent political culture and political discourse revolved round the notion that the kingdom belonged to the people. In contrast, the Greeks had a richer and more dynamic political tradition – institutional as well as discursive. Besides monarchy and oligarchy, they also initiated the first democratic experiments in human history. This tradition was carried on by the Romans, and eventually became incorporated into the Western tradition, illustrated by the democratic discourse in the writings of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. All this occurred because the ancient Greeks were wedded to *kriyasakti* ideals whereas the ancient Indians got bogged down in *jnanasakti*.

Manjappa refers to the Indian *varna* system as another manifestation of political stagnation. The concentration of political function in one particular caste – the Kshatriyas – in the classical Indian system prevented the possibility of the emergence of democratic and dynamic polities. In short, the lack of orientation towards the political was part of the Indian commitment to *jnanamarga* and *jnanasakti* (as

against the commitment of the Greeks to *kriyamarga* and *kriyasakti*). In his own way, Manjappa re-lives the oriental myth of the material West versus the spiritual East, and the activist West versus the contemplative East. Therein lies the basic reason why Indians in the past failed to generate a tradition of *desabhakti*.

*The Emergence of Indian Swadesaprema:*

Manjappa is of the view that modern Indians, are able to develop *swadesabhakti*. He accounts for its genesis and growth by formulating the issue in terms of a theoretical framework: if *kriyasakti* is a necessary condition for the rise of *swadesabhakti*, then how and why did the Indians make a revolutionary switch from *jnanasakti* to *kriyasakti*? Of course, the basic Indian rooting in the tradition of *jnanamarga* cannot be fully eliminated. It will persist and, in fact, does persist. Yet there is also a simultaneous tendency to move closer to the paradigm of *kriyamarga*, which is why the Indians had come to accept the ideal of *swadesabhakti*. Manjappa gives a naive but interesting example to explain the complex historical transformation of the Indian ethos into one of *kriyamarga*. Imagine a student who is excellent in mathematics but poor in history being taught by an excellent teacher of history. Under the spell of the history teacher, the student is weaned away from mathematics towards history. Similarly, Indians gradually began to give up *jnanamarga* under the spell of the new English rule, which was predominantly wedded to the paradigm of *kriyamarga*! Thus Manjappa attributes the birth and growth of *swadesabhakti* to the impact of Western education in India, itself an off-shoot of colonialism. He follows up this argument by a historical account of the growth of new education, with facts and figures. Yet Manjappa is not sure if the historical transformation will not be revised, given the native Indian predisposition towards *jnanamarga*.

Manjappa traces the growth of the nationalist movement, starting from the establishment of the Indian National Congress. His account, otherwise conventional, is interesting because it focuses on the role of caste in the evolution of Indian national consciousness. He refers to the non-Brahmin movement which opposed the nationalist movement as a Brahmin-controlled affair, its goal being to replace British raj with a Brahmin raj. Manjappa condemns both non-Brahmin and Muslim politics as harmful to the growth of *rashtriyaprema desaprema*. But as modern education spread among these groups, they too joined the mainstream nationalist movement as a movement



transcending narrow caste and communal divisions. Manjappa sees the nationalist movement not only as the result of the positive sense of unity among Indians but also as a response to the British policy of suppression. After surveying of the nationalist movement. Manjappa makes three concluding points: (a) an essential feature of the movement is that it was inspired by *desabhakti*, and not by any narrow loyalty to a religion, caste or royal dynasty. Its goal was the progress and welfare of the country; (b) a close bond had been forged between the different regions of the country, such that the fate of any one province became the fate of all the other provinces; (c) those serving the country in the nationalist cause had come to be worshipped, irrespective of their religious or other narrow affiliations. This flowering of *desabhakti*, paradoxically and ironically, was the gift of British rule and modern education introduced by the British. This should be recognized not as a continuation of ancient political tradition and culture, but as a fundamental break with the past.

### *Desaseva*

In the final section of the text, Manjappa discusses the problems of political praxis, and of sustaining and strengthening *desabhakti* through *desaseva*. Manjappa condemns India's ancient heritage as a heritage of political, social and economic sickness. The first item on the agenda of national reconstruction should be to build up political strength. Such strength is essentially political independence, without which no other goal can be achieved. In other words, the first goal is to throw the British out of India. Except for the supporters of the non-Brahmin movement, all the parties and groups were agreed on this priority. The non-Brahmin movement, like the Muslims earlier, wanted social reform as a precondition for political independence, because independence without social reform meant a perpetuation of Brahmin dominance. The Muslims had been drawn into the struggle for political independence, so the non-Brahmins should accept independence as the foremost priority. In other words, all contradictions and conflicts in the socio-cultural and economic domains should not be allowed to come in the way of the freedom movement, and can be resolved only after independence is attained through unity.

However, accepting the goal of national independence as the first priority did not necessarily mean totally neglecting of the social question. Efforts should be made to bring about social change to achieve equality. Evils like poverty, famine and epidemics be tackled without being politically independent, and yet it would be wrong to

assume that only those involved in the political movement are real patriots. It would be equally wrong to assume that socio-economic reforms will automatically be realized once freedom was gained. Political freedom is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for national sustenance and progress. In fact, it could even be argued that social evils are far worse than political slavery. This is why political goals, as a strategy, should not be too sharply separated from social aspirations, which are more important in the long run.

Manjappa also launches into a sharp critique of the Hindu social order, which was very different from the Muslim and Christian concept of society. Describing the Hindu order as prone to social and economic stasis and stagnation, Manjappa focuses on two of its evils – its tendency towards fragmentation, and its treatment of women as inferior and marginal. He pleads for the unification of Hindus on the basis of a commonly accepted framework. In this, he echoes Gandhi as well as some Hindu nationalists, but for different reasons. Like Gandhi, he is interested in the Hindu community becoming a vibrant community, but unlike Gandhi, he considers this objective to be conditional on the substantial egalitarian and rational-individualistic reform of Hindu society. Like the Hindu nationalists, he does not use the language of identity – for him the Hindus have to be united in order to live and survive as a group in the context of India's religious pluralism. But, on the other hand, he also emphasizes co-existence.

Finally, Manjappa explores the question of economics. He prefaces his discussion with a quotation from Karl Marx to emphasize the centrality of the economic factor in a social system. While disassociating himself from what he thinks are the economic determinist implications of the quotation, he nevertheless regards economics as a crucial factor. Here Manjappa emphasizes economic self-reliance and industrialization. Economic goals, however, cannot be achieved without a radical re-structuring of the system of production and distribution. He criticizes the existing system in which the primary producers control neither the process of production nor the system of distribution. In short, he advocates the introduction of a socialist re-structuring of the economy. He also rejects the system of the free market economy. Manjappa ends with a Kannada translation of Tagore's well-known poem from the *Gitanjali*: 'Where the mind is without fear...'

### Discussion

Although the contents of Manjappa's text have been set out in considerable detail, certain questions remain. What can one make of this text? How can one situate it? How can one relate to it today?

The following discussion is divided into three parts: the specific context of the text and its implications, the structure of the text, and its relevance. This work was written in 1921 during the early phase of the nationalist movement which had felt the impact of Gandhi. This explains Manjappa's concern with historical details pertaining to the period. It is a text which tries to identify certain recurring patterns which have trans-historical implications. Indeed all texts, no matter how great, cannot escape the mark of their birth, but this does not mean that all texts are equally imprisoned in their history. It is my contention that Manjappa's text manages to escape its own history to a considerable extent.

To my mind, the structure built up by Manjappa is as fascinating as its substantive content. One can view this process of structuring in methodological terms. First of all, it is a causal explanatory structure in the sense that it explains phenomena by regarding them as determinate structures relating to determinable causes. For instance, patriotism is shown to be a phenomenon that emerges under specific historical causes. Since structures are seen as the result of processes which constitute their causality, this way of explaining and understanding can be termed causal structuralism. It, therefore, turns to history as its key methodological component. Manjappa appeals to history to grasp issues theoretically, and to see how they occur at a specific point of time in a specified location.

The second point to note is that the epistemological co-ordinates of Manjappa's structures are multi-directional. They encompass classical Sanskrit sources, modern Indian sources (like Gandhian theory and praxis), ancient Western sources (like Plato), and modern Western sources (like Mill, Spencer and Marx). Though the regional co-ordinate of Karnataka's tradition does not figure in this particular text, it exists as an invisible source of Manjappa's rationality – a rationality derived from the proto-humanist tradition in 12th century Karnataka by the Lingayat socio-religious reform movement directed against Brahmanical Hinduism under the charismatic leadership of Basava. Manjappa is able to handle the Indian co-ordinates best (whether ancient or modern), but is understandably uneasy and diffident with regard to the Western co-ordinates. The fact that he was not formally trained in the Western mode proved a handicap. He

realizes the importance of these referential co-ordinates for his discourse, and hence tries to access them to the extent he can – by reading Marathi versions of Western texts or through personal discussions with those claiming competence in them. In fact, he is able to put these scanty resources to intellectual use. In a sense, he represents a periphery beyond a periphery, since even in the regional periphery, the English-knowing Western-educated elite dominated. Hence it is all the more remarkable that Manjappa produced a discursive text on an issue troubling the country and his region – the issue of nationalism – while the Westernized elite failed to do so. What is significant is not that he wrote a local narrative on universal themes but that he constantly tried to negotiate the meta-narrative located in the West with the help of native resources. In my view in the peripheral zones, the most significant and fruitful thinking comes from thinkers like Manjappa who tackle global narratives with local resources, while the more visible mainstream thinkers tend to be too integrated into the metropolitan knowledge systems to be able to generate local contexts and contents.

When considering what Manjappa has added to our existing knowledge, it is immediately evident that most of what he says has been said before. However, the text is of such discursive quality that it should not be summarily written off. It should not be judged in terms of global or international standards. Its originality lies in the site of its birth. I make two claims on behalf of the text. First, Manjappa has offered us something theoretically original, which may increase our understanding of the much debated and contested arena of nationalist discourse. He makes a conceptual distinction between country and nation, and patriotism and nationalism. But he makes the distinction only to underscore their relationship. He seems to suggest that within the internal logic of the history of a country, nationalism or *rashtravada* arises without a strong tradition of patriotism or *swadesabhakti* as a precondition. This is based on the assumption that patriotism socializes one into modes of articulating and living complex identities such as nationalism. In the absence of any history of patriots, a country or *desa* can be pushed with historical violence into a nationalist identity only by external forces of colonialism. Manjappa does not limit the impact of external forces to colonialism. He suggests that a free country can constitute itself into a new national identity by generating adequate patriotism, which would stimulate it to assimilate nationalist ideology from other historically-constituted nations without the mediation of violent midwifery. The second claim is that Manjappa's critical spirit has exploded some

national myths promoted by nationalist historiography.

Above all, the crucial question: Is India truly a nation? Even more important is the question: Who is interested in India being a nation? Manjappa's text forces us to ask these questions by taking us back to the time and place where Indian nationalism had its genesis.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Examples of the *Vacanas* may be found in A.K. Ramanujan's well-known anthology of the *Vacanas* translated into English in *Speaking of Siva* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1973). See also the works of K. Ishwaran on Lingayatism, especially his volume *Speaking of Basava*.
2. His collected works have been published as *Hardekar Manjappa, Rashtradharm Dhrishtara*, ed. by G.S. Halappa (Dharwad: Hardekar Manjappa Smaraka Granthamala, 1966). All references in this article are to this volume.
3. The only study of his political ideas is by my former student S.Y. Gubbannavar (see his doctoral dissertation Karnataka University, Dharward 1969).