

Dr. Basavaraj Naikar, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt (California) was educated at Municipal High School, Naragund, Karnatak Arts College and Karnatak University, Dharwad. Before joining the Karnatak University as Reader in English, he taught for several years in the Post-Graduate Department of English of Gulbarga University, Gulbarga. He has worked on Shakespeare's Last Plays for his Ph.D. The range of his academic interests is very wide which includes Indian English, American and Commonwealth Literatures in addition to his basic interest in Shakespeare Studies. His publications include *Sarvajna : The Omniscient Poet of Karnataka*, *Critical Articles on Nirad C. Chaudhuri*, *Musings of Sarvajna*, *Sparrows*, *Shakespeare's Last Plays : A Study of Epic Affirmation*, *H. H. Vijaya Mahantesh*, *Beloved Poems in English* and *Paduvana Nadina Premavira*, *Huchchuhole*, *Kollada Neralu*, *Jogibhavi*, *Govardhanaram*, *Kannada Asangata Natakagalu*, *Asangata*, *Samrachanavada*, *Beowulf* and *Bharatiya English Sahitya Charitre* in Kannada. He has published his research articles in various Indian and foreign journals. He reviews Indian books for *WORLD LITERATURE TODAY*, Oklahoma, U.S.A. He is deeply interested in Kannada literature especially the folk-drama and mystic poetry. In addition to literature, he has a passion for music and philosophy in general.



Library

IIAS, Shimla

894.814 2 N 143 F



G2095

Basavaraj S. Naikar

THE FOLK THEATRE OF NORTH KARNATAKA



894.814
2 N 143 F

894.8142 RASARANGA
N 143 F KARNATAK UNIVERSITY DHARWAD - 580 003
(INDIA)

Presented by
Dr. Basavaraj Naikar
Professor of English
Karnatak University
Dharwad 580 003

Mailing address:
Sivaranjani Nilaya
Kotur Complex
Malapur Road
Dharwad 580 008
Ph: (0836) 347204

2 - 11 - 97

BS Naikar



**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF
ADVANCED STUDY
LIBRARY SIMLA**

The Folk-Theatre of North-Karnataka



The Folk-Theatre of North-Karnataka

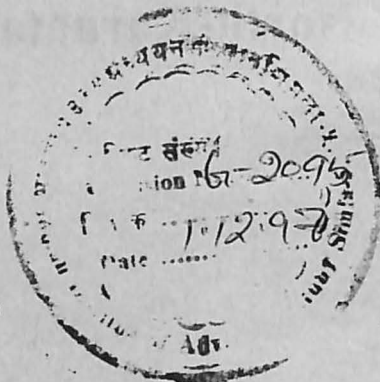
Basavaraj S. Naikar



**Prasaranga
Karnatak University, Dharwad.**

The Folk-Theatre of North-Karnataka, by Dr. Basavaraj Naikar,
M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt. (California). ~~Reads in~~ English, Karnatak University,
Dharwad. Published by Prasaraṅga, Karnatak University, Dharwad,
580 003, INDIA.

Copyright : Author



First Edition : 1996

Copies : 600. Price : Rs. 50/- US 10/- Dollars. or £ 5/-

894.814 2
N 143 F

Publisher :

H. V. Nagesh
Director
Prasaraṅga
Karnatak University, Dharwad.

Printer :

N. S. Malipatil, M.Com.
Director,
Karnatak University Press
Dharwad



Library

IAS, Shimla

894.814 2 N 143 F



G2095

FOREWORD

This University believes in the wise words of Carlyle : 'The true University of these days is a collection of books' Books make a University.

Like many other Universities of the world, we have three functions to perform-teaching, research and extension. The Prasaraṅga (the Publication Division) publishes books and journals and arranges extension lectures. I am glad that of late the Prasaraṅga has been very active and a number of books have come out. This indeed is a matter which thrills me for I have loved and enjoyed books.

It has been the noble aim of this University to spread the fragrance of the varied and colourful flowers of knowledge. These flowers are the books. They enrich our lives and help around development of the human personality. I believe that they contribute to making our life more beautiful, enrich our experience and inculcate in us the human values. Hence I strongly believe that these publications have a unique place in the world of knowledge. I have no doubt that book lovers would draw from them immense sweetness and light.

The present work by Dr. Basavaraj Naikar offers a comprehensive picture of Folk-Theatre of North Karnataka, especially the two prominent traditions namely, *Mudalapaya Doddada* and *Sannata*. He has a lucid style. This helps the reader to comprehend fully the two styles in their entirety.

He is critical and yet avoids all controversies which are natural in such discussions. The discussions on *Dasavata*, *Rajanata*, *Radhanata*, *Sangva-Balva*, *Rupasena*, *Tiru Nilakantha* etc., are also interesting, though very brief. I congratulate Dr. Naikar on completion of this much needed work in the field of folk - theatre.

Dr. S. Rame Gowda
Vice -Chancellor

PREFACE

My disappointment with Balwant Gargi's otherwise excellent book *The Folk-Theatre of India* prompted me to write the present one. I was rather surprised to notice the fact that Balwant Gargi who had dealt with every kind of Indian folk-drama including the *Yaksagana* of coastal Karnataka had dismissed the folk-theatre of North-Karnataka within a short para without any complimentary remarks about it. The mistake must not have been completely his. The lacuna in his fine book was perhaps, caused by lack of proper information and absence of academic scholars interested in the folk-theatre of North-Karnataka at that time. Fortunately days have changed for the better now. Many an academician has been taking active interest in the publication of folk-dramatic manuscripts and the study of folk-theatre of North-Karnataka. Hence the availability of abundant information about it these days.

In the present work, I have tried to offer a comprehensive picture about the folk-theatre of North-Karnataka in a concise but critical style, eliminating all the side-tracking controversies, fanatical exaggerations and trappings of a doctoral thesis. My intention has been to present all the salient features of the said theatre in a nutshell and that in a readable style, thereby arousing the curiosity of scholars in it and inspiring the international scholars to study it from a comparative perspective. The book is also intended to arouse the curiosity of the general reader and to provoke the research-minded folklorist at the same time. Any suggestions for the improvement of the present book are welcome from the kindred souls.

I would like to record my grateful regards to Dr. S. Rame Gowda, Vice Chancellor of Karnatak University, Dr. S. S. Wodeyar, ex-Vice Chancellor of Karnatak University and Dr. H. M. Nayak, ex-Vice Chancellor of Gulbarga University for

their affection and encouragement of my academic pursuits. Likewise I express my gratitude to my beloved teachers and eminent scholars like Dr. M. M. Kalburgi, Dr. C. R. Yaravintelimath, Dr. Buddanna Hingamire among others who have been inspiring me to render my 'squirrel's service' to the realm of letters.

`Sivaranjani'

Basavaraj S. Naikar

Malapur Road,

Dharwad - 580 008.

INDIA

CONTENTS

1.	Foreword	iii
2.	Preface	v
3.	Introduction	5
4.	Mudalapaya (Dodddata)	14
5.	Mudalapaya (Sannata)	55
6.	Conclusion	113
7.	Select Bibliography.	115

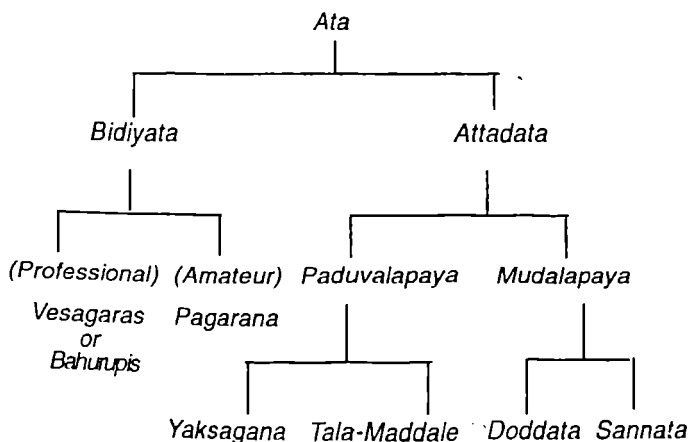
Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The folk theatre of North-Karnataka is very rich in its tradition and stands off as a separate unit of art from that of the southern or coastal Karnataka. It has, therefore, its own distinctive features which have been neglected by theatre scholars of India and abroad. Hence an attempt has been made here to present in a brief but comprehensive fashion the main outlines of the rich folk-theatrical tradition of North-Karnataka so that scholars may study it from a comparative perspective with pleasure and profit.

The first misconception that needs to be removed is that it is an art-form meant only for the rural audience. While it is true that it draws its sustenance from the rural artists and audience, it is not meant only for the villagers. It can be seen and studied with real profit by all the connoisseurs of the city as well. The folk-theatre of North-Karnataka is generally known as *Bayalata*. The word *Bayalata* is derived from the word *Ata* which means a play or drama (and game also) in general. In the context of Karnataka, drama (*Ata*) was classified into two categories for convenience : *Bidi Ata* (Street Play) and *Attadata* (Stage play) or *Bayalata* (Open Air Drama). *Bayalu* means open space and *ata* means performance. *Bayalata* is, therefore, folk-drama performed in the open-air before the audience. It can be contradistinguished from the covered theatre of the later days. It is generally intended for the free entertainment of rural folks. *Bidi Ata* or *Bidiyata* may be divided into two groups: one, professional plays performed by *Vesagaras* or *Bahurupis* and two, amateur plays known as *Pagaranas* performed by amateur artists.

Attadata or *Bayalata* may be divided into two groups: one, *Paduvalapaya* (Western Mode) and two, *Mudalapaya* (Eastern Mode). *Paduvalapaya* is prevalent in the coastal Karnataka consisting of North and South Canara districts, whereas *Mudalapaya* is prevalent in the eastern Karnataka in general but predominant in North-Karnataka districts like Dharwad, Belgaum, Bijapur, Bellary, Raichur, Gulbarga and Bidar. Geographically speaking these two modes of drama are divided by the Sahyadri mountain range in Karnataka State. *Mudalapaya* may be divided into two categories: one, *Dodddata* (Grand Play) and *Sannata* (Little or Small Play). Likewise *Paduvalapaya* may be divided into two categories: one, *Yaksagana* and *Tala Maddale*. (Please see the chart).



BIDIYATA (STREET PLAY)

Bidiyata (Street Play) may be divided into two categories: one, professional and two, amateur. The professional artists of *Bidiyata* are known as *Vesagaras* or *Bahurupis* whereas the amateur artists are known for their plays called *Pagaranas*.

VESAGARAS (PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS)

The professional artists are called *Vesagaras* (Vesa = guise or costumes, kara = those who use them). The *Vesagaras* who learn their art inherently from their fathers, elder brothers or other near relatives are itinerant artists touring from village to village. There are many references to *vesa* (costumes) and *vesagaras* (drama artists) in the *vacanas* of Cennabasavanna. There are a few references to *Koramara Vesa* (Guise or role of Koramas) and Kantheya Jogini (Mendicant Jogini) in the Vinaya Sandhi of *Bharatesa Vaibhava*. These *vesagaras* are different from *Gandharvas* or musicians and are also called *Jatigaras*. They tour from village to village with their mobile property such as horses and cows etc., and camp on the outskirts of a village or in the village *chavadi* or in a deserted temple for about "three months and play thirty three roles or plays". But nowadays their camp is reduced to fifteen to twenty days and their performances are done during the day time only. Originally they are said to have come to Karnataka from Andhra Pradesh. They claim to belong to Ksatriya lineage and have blood relation with *Ramakondas* and *Sudugada Siddhas* (Sepulchral Mendicants). These *Jatigaras* are quite different from the Muslim *Jatigaras* who indulge in mockery and mere entertainment. (This is a virgin field for folk scholars and anthropologists to do their research).

The *Vesagaras* generally impersonate the great characters from myths or histories. They are known for their costumes or guises and ornaments which is part of *aharya* according to Bharata's *Natya Sastra*. They use the make-up, garments, ornaments and masks required for their roles. In spite of their crushing poverty, they manage to collect them somehow or the other. They may buy or borrow them from the well-to-do people.

They prepare the masks with cardboards or/and aluminium utensils. They buy the colours like *sapeta*, *ingalika* and *nili* and mix them in butter (in the past) or vaseline or coconut oil (now-a-days) for their make-up. Generally they go in for direct colours and do not bother about mixing them. They manage to prepare the crests, bows, arrows and maces with simple things like cardboards, glittering paper and bamboos etc. But they refer to chariots, elephants, gardens and places by oral description.

Compared to the *aharya* aspect of their acting, the *angika* (gestural) *vacika* (dialogical) and *sattvika* (emotional expression) aspects are negligible as the *vesagaras* do not pay sufficient attention to them. But there may be a few exceptions here and there. Once a *sanyasi* went to the palace of H. H. Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar and was welcomed by His Highness with great reverence. The *sanyasi* refused to accept the fistful coins of *daksina* offered by His Highness and took leave of him with a sense of detachment. The next day a beggar went to the palace. His Highness ordered his servant to offer a small coin to the beggar who refused to accept it and asked the King, "Your Highness, why are you giving me a small coin today when you were ready to offer me a fistful of coins yesterday?" The King was surprised at his question and asked him, "Are you the same person who came here yesterday in the guise of a *sanyasi* ?" The beggar replied, "Yes, Your Highness, I am a professional *vesagara* and earn my livelihood by playing different roles on different days." Then the King asked him, "Gentleman, yesterday you refused to accept the *daksina*, but today you are asking for more. Why ?" The *vesagara* replied, "Your Highness, accepting *daksina* would have been unjustifiable for the *sanyasi* yesterday, but today it is quite justifiable for the beggar". The King was immensely pleased by the *vesagara's* reply and questioned him further, "Gentleman, have you seen any yogi in real life who has achieved the sense of detachment affected by you yesterday?"

The *vesagara* replied that he had seen such a super yogi called Balalila Mahanta Sivayogi at Mulagund village. The King who was pleased by the *vesagara's* histrionic talent sent him away after offering him a big sum of money and subsequently invited His Highness Mahanta Sivayogi of Mulagund to his palace and treated him with great reverence. The event testifies to the superb histrionic talent of *vesagaras*.

The *vesagara* who plays the role of Sarvajna (the itinerent poet of Karnataka in the 16th century) recites 300 to 400 *vacanas* of Sarvajna. They walk from door to door and spend nearly half an hour or so performing their roles. Usually these actors are two or three in number who are accompanied by another two or three actors acting as chorus for them. They use the instruments like harmonium, drum (tabla or *dammadi*), and cymbals. They are known for their specialisation in the enactment of the role of Ardhanari (Half man and half woman). The artist paints the left half of his face as that of Goddess Parvati and right half, as that of Lord Siva. He reveals either side of his face by covering the other side with a veil. These artists do not ask for money everyday. But on the last day of their camp they play the role of a magician demand thier fee in the form of cash or cereals from the villagers.

Although we may trace the influence of the *vesagaras* on the *Bayalata*, we cannot attribute the origin of *Bayalatas* to them. There is some critical controversy about the origin about the identification of *vesagaras* with *bahurupis*. Dr. Kalaburgi opines that they are one and the same. This controversy is yet to be resolved after more detailed research in the field.

Bahurupis (literally players of multiple roles) are generally confused with *Vesagaras*. Dr. Malasetty opines that *bahurupis* are not of ordinary class and that they grew under

the Virasaiva patronage. They must have been present in the society at the time of *Saranas* in the twelfth century and continued four or five centuries before finally disappearing from the scene. Dr. H. M. Dasagupta opines that *Bahurupa* was prevalent in Maharastra also. There are a few references to *Bahurupa* in the *vacanas* of Caudayya. There was a *Sarana* called Nageya Marayya (literally Marayya with a laugh) who was perhaps a *Bahurupi* whose duty was to entertain the *Saranas* and conduct *dasoha* out of the money earned from his entertaining profession. References to *Bahurupis* occur in Nayasena's *Dharmamrita* (4-46), Cennabasavanna's *vacanas*, Bhimakavi's *Basava Purana* (28, 3; 21, 4) and *Kanthirava Narasaraaja Vijaya* (21-117).

PAGARANA

(LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT)

Pagarana is a kind of popular street play performed by the amateur artists of villages in order to provide light entertainment to folk-audience.

Pagarana has been a source of dramatic entertainment in Karnataka from age old days. It is generally believed that the Kannada word *Pagarana* (*Hagarana* and *Hagana*) is derived from the Sanskrit word *Prakarana*. (In spite of this etymological derivation of words, there has been quite some difference between the two forms of drama. Dhananjaya (in his *Dasarupaka*, 3-29, 40) says that the themes of *Prakarana* are normally the worldly ones and that the hero is either a minister or a brahmin or a merchant who is instructed in ethical science of *dharma*, *artha*, and *kama* and is *dhira prasanta* (hero quiet) leading a life of hardship. Viswanatha (in this *Sahitya Darpana*)

adds two more points by saying that the themes of *Pagarana* are imaginary and that the prominent sentiment is erotic (*sringara*). A. R. Krishnasastri says (in his *Sanskrit Drama* p. 33) that the heroine of *Prakarana* is either a lady from a noble family or a prostitute or both. The characters like *Vita* (lover), *Cheti* (servant), *Jujugara* (gambler) are quite common in it. The other characteristics are identical with those of (Sanskrit) drama.

The difference between *Prakarana* and *Pagarana* may be noticed in the following details. Whereas *Prakarana* is a rigid art-form, *Pagarana* happens to be a freer art-form. Whereas the former deals with imaginary themes, the latter, with social themes. The former has well arranged scenes and is well written in a refined fashion, whereas the latter does not have written text thereby resulting in a crude form of drama without having an organised narration of a *Bayalata*. The erotic sentiment (*sringara rasa*) is common to both the forms. Likewise the characters like *Vita* (lover) and *Cheti* are also common to both the forms. But there is some difference between the two as far as their craft is concerned. Whereas *Prakarana* is well planned and well constructed, *Pagarana* cannot have a tight plot construction as it has no written text. *Prakarana* is not only written according to a definite plan but it is also refined in its style and language. *Mrichhakatika* is a fine example of *Prakarana*. On the contrary *Pagarana* does not have a well arranged narration as in a *Bayalata*. It is popular mainly for its spectacular quality.

The first reference to *Pagarana* could be seen in the tale of St. Kartikeya in *Vaddaradhane* wherein it is described as a play with strange costumes and roles. *Pagarana*, unlike *Prakarana*, was to be enacted in the open spaces especially in

fairs and festivals, like *Kara Hunnime* (Full Moon Day) or (*Badubbe Habba*). *Badubbe* Festival This is corroborated even by St. Cennabasavanna in one of his vacanas. *Pagarana* is generally enacted on *Holi Hunnime* in Kumata Taluka of Karwar district and Mavinakoppa of Belgaum district. In Kittur (of Rani Chennamma) it is enacted during the month of *Sravana* and is locally called as *Sogu*. The other *Pagaranas* enacted by the people of Kittur are :

- 1) *Kudure Sogu (A Play about a Horse)*
- 2) *Rayannana Sogu (A Play about Rayanna)*
- 3) *Maya Sogu (A Play about Maya)*
- 4) *Gidda Balyana Sogu (A Play about short Balya)*
- 5) *Ganda-Hendati Sogu (A Play about Man and Wife)*
- 6) *Jogatera Sogu (A Play about Jogatis)*
- 7) *Gondaligara Sogu (A Play about Gondaligas)*
- 8) *Bekkabadiyavara Sogu*
(A Play about the Beaters of Cats)
- 9) *Maduveya Sogu (A Play about a Wedding)*

Pagaranas are enacted in Haladipura village of Kumata taluka of Karwar district on *Devikana Hunnime* (Full Moon Day of Devika)

Pagaranas generally deal with mythological or social themes and their language is rather low and vulgar as it is addressed to the laity. These plays contain traditional songs and dances. The dialogues are not ready-made but improvised by the characters on the spur of the moment. There are many references to the theatres or houses of *Hagarana* in *Dharmamrita*. People used to invite the *Hagarana* artists with edible pans (*vilya*) A *Hagarana* is normally rehearsed for eight or ten days only by the amateur artists in a particular village which is interested in such a performance. It is staged in the open space of

the village or before the front yards of the houses. Women's roles are played by men only. Masks are used for the roles of gods, demons and snakes and are supplied by the villagers. Since the main purpose of *Pagarana* was to provide entertainment to men in the street, the actors would put on grotesque costumes and indulge in absurd dialogues, mockery and social satire. But as days went by, the humour, unfortunately, degenerated into mere vulgarity. Because of the vulgar language employed by the characters in the *Hagaranas*, these plays came to be avoided by the respectable men and women of society.

Chapter II

MUDALAPAYA (EASTERN MODE)

North-Karnataka has a very rich tradition of *Mudalapaya* (Eastern Mode) which is known by different names like *Dodddata*, *Hire Ata* (Grand Play) or *Bayalata* (Open-Air Play) etc. It is prevalent in the districts of Belgaum, Dharwad, Bijapur, Bellary, Raichur, Kalburgi and Bidar (as also Southern Karnataka). Although it was originally known as *Mudalapaya*, it has really come to be known in North-Karnataka as *Dodddata* (Grand Play) only in order for it to be contradistinguished from *Sannata* (Small Play) or *Dappinata* (*Dappu* = little flat drum, *ata* = play) which came to be staged in recent years in this area. Whereas *Dodddata* is characterised by grand theme, grand stage properties, grand costumes, grand songs and dance, *Sannata* is marked by simple theme, simple stage costumes, simple songs and dances. Thus *Mudalapaya* includes both *Dodddata* and *Sannata* of North-Karnataka.

Although the history of *Bayalata* is not older than about 150 years, there are many literary evidences to show the prevalence of these plays and similar puppet plays in Karnataka as early as twelfth century. Kumaravyasa, for example, refers to *nadadigala nataka* i.e. drama by the populace in his *Jaimini Bharata* (Karna Parva, 24-3). Similarly Bhimakavi refers to 'Godddata' in his *Basava Purana* (Jiva Sambodhane, 5-36) by which he means a crude play enacted by villagers. Likewise Siddhalingesvara of Gummalapura employs the word 'marulata' in his version of *Sunya Sampadane* (p. 420) by which he means a 'foolish play' and which is equivalent to 'Godddata' referred to by Bhimakavi.

MEANING OF *MUDALAPAYA*

Taking the Sahyadri mountain range as a line of demarcation, the scholars have divided the theatrical tradition into *Paduvalapaya* and *Mudalapaya* although the actual practitioners of these modes do not use these terms. The dramatic tradition to the west of Mt. Sahyadri, along the coastline is called *Paduvalapaya* which consists mainly of *Yaksagana*, whereas that to the east of the said mountain is called *Mudalapaya* and consists of *Dodddata*, *Sannata* and other kinds of folk-drama.

One thing to be specially remembered about *Mudalapaya* is that it is not merely a particular style of drama prevalent in the eastern part of Karnataka, but is also indicative of its entry into Karnataka from the eastern provinces of India through the artists of Vijayanagara Empire (the present Andhra Pradesh State). The mountain of Tirupati, adorned with the Temple of Lord Venkateswara, was similarly known as *Mudala Giri* (Mudala = Eastern, Giri = Mountain)

MUDALAPAYA : FROM MUSIC TO DRAMA

Like *Yaksagana*, *Mudalapaya* was originally a musical style, a branch of southern or Karnataki music. It gradually spread from east to west of Karnataka. This style of music is still dominantly prevalent in the talukas of Southern parts of Dharwad district like Ranebennur, Hanagal and Haveri. *Mudalapaya* style of singing is definitely different from *Yaksagana* style of singing. The subtle difference is shown by the maestros of this area. The *Yaksagana* style easily resembles that of the coastal belt. But the *Mudalapaya* is dominant in the eastern districts of North-Karnataka like Bellary, Raichur and Gulbarga etc. But the style of singing in the district of Belgaum has not retained its purity as it belongs to

the border area where the influence of northern or Hindusthani classical style is very powerful. Therefore, the *Mudalapaya* style, has undergone a little change in that although it employs the melodic patterns (*ragas*) of Southern (*Karnataki*) style its narration is affected by the Hindusthani music. For example, the singers and instrumentalists of *Mudalapaya* employ the southern melodic patterns and rhythmic patterns like *Zampa Tala*, *Adi Tala*, and *Atta Tala* etc., but yet their method differs from that of the classical (Hindusthani) musicians using the same melodic and rhythmic patterns. The *Mudalapaya* style of singing is, therefore, more appealing and interesting than the classical one.

One difference may be noticed between the development of *Yaksagana* and that of *Bayalata*. Whereas *Yaksaganas* were originally dependent upon *hadugabbas* (recitative poems) to which dialogues were added later. *Mudalapaya* came into being when songs and dialogues were combined. Therefore poetic works like *Sarana Lilamrita* were composed for singing in *Yaksagana* style. But there was no necessity for separate composition of works for singing in *Mudalapaya* style, since songs and dialogues were never divorced in *Mudalapaya*.

The texts of *Mudalapaya* are not older than 150 to 160 years. Since these plays were known for their simple themes and techniques, they were quite popular in the Karnataka of 19th century. Around 1860, a few texts of *Yaksaganas* were published from Bellary and Bangalore. (*Sananda Gimeshwara*, 1881 and *Yaksagana Chandravali Kathe*, 1880 were published by Mysore Book Depot from Bangalore)

The practice of adding dialogues to *Yaksagana* poetry was started in the early part of the 19th century. A collection of eighteen plays, of this kind has been found out recently. Out of these eighteen plays, only four have been known to be written by a poet called Duradundisa (which is *mom de plume* of Sivabasava.) He

hails from Bailahongala and must have been born around 1800. He has written four plays : 1) *Sita Swayamvara Yaksagana*, 2) *Prabhudevara Yaksagana*, 3) *Krisna Harana Yaksagana* and 4) *Cholangana Yakaagana*. The playwright is aware of the technique that he has employed in these plays. One of the manuscripts of *Krisna Harana Yaksagana* is devoted to the suggestion of musical notations, tunes and rhythms. The dialogue is infused with the folk raciness. The plays which combine prose with poetry are found on the plain, but not along the coastal belt of Karnataka. The Bayalata of *Mudalapaya* style is the result of the addition of music to the *campu* kind of *Yaksagana*. The earliest *Mudalapaya* manuscript available so far is *Kumararama* which is a copy of the text published and printed by Surja Singh of Dharwad. Many *Bayalatas* were printed and published in Bellary around 1900. All these details suggest the fact that these *Bayalatas* must have come into vogue in the later half of the 19th century. During the same period, a Yaksagana troupe of Uttara Kannada district is said to have given a few performances in the districts of North-Karnataka. It is quite likely that the troupe must have inspired the practitioners of *Mudalapaya*.

MUDALAPAYA : WRITING

Mudalapaya came into existence in the latter part of the 19th century. The opening of new schools in the villages provided a lot of encouragement to the students who were conversant with grammar and literature and who tended to write *Mudalapaya* plays. Most of the playwrights happened to be either school teachers or non-teachers who had intimate knowledge of village life. Since the middle class people had the Sanskrit drama as their model, they found it easy to transfer the material into folk-drama.

PRAAYER

In India , it is common for poets to begin their poetry with a prayer to their pet and personal deity. According to this tradition, the earliest playwrights of *Mudalapaya* used to begin their plays with prayers to their pet deities like Lord Visnu, Lord Siva, Lord Hanumanta, Lord Kama, Lord Venkatesa and Lord Virupaksa etc. But this practice was modified by the later playwrights who shifted their attention from personal deities to the common deity and began their plays with a prayer to Lord Ganapati. Other deities simply faded into insignificance in the presence of Lord Ganapati. Whereas the earlier writers used to mention Lord Ganapati in the third or the fourth or the fifth stanza after invoking their personal deities, the later writers began their plays with a prayer to Lord Ganapati. One thing to be specially remembered is that Sanskrit plays do not begin with a prayer to Lord Ganapati. One might easily ask as to why this is the case ? As an answer to this question it could be said that whereas Lord Siva and Lord Visnu are deities of first class and meant for cultural aristocrats, Lord Ganapati is the deity of the populace. Hence the supreme importance to Lord Ganapati in *Bayalata* which is by and for the common people.

Thus prayer to Lord Ganapati became a compulsory feature at the beginning of a *Bayalata*, although it was followed by other songs which varied according to the nature, region and caste of the respective authors. But as years went by, a couple of these songs were commonly approved by the people and used by them as substitutes for the original songs at the time of copying the texts. Consequently two or three songs are invariably found in all the texts of *Bayalatas* no matter who the playwright is.

The prayer to Lord Ganapati which is almost common to all the *Bayalatas* of North-Karnataka is as follows :

Sri Gouri Varaputra, Santatasubha charita
 Yogi sajjanastotra, Jananibagatra ----- 1
 Nitilaneetrana sutane, nigamagama vandipane
 Satita sannitakarane, kundalabharana -----2
 Podaviyol Kudutiniya, odeya Bhimesana
 Odeya Bhimesana, bidade bhajisuve nanu --- 3

A free translation runs as follows :

O Lord, ; illustrious son of Sri Gouri,
 Incarnation of auspiciousness.
 Revered by yogis and the virtuous.

.....

Lord, son of Nitilaksa
 Revered by scriptures,
 Thy wrists and ears
 Are adorned with snake-rings.
 Let me worship thee, O Lord Bhimesh
 Master of Kudutini village
 Constantly.

There are a number of variants for this song. In the place of 'Lord Bhimesh' other local deities may be mentioned by other playwrights.

SUTRADHARA AND NATI

After the singing of prayer, the deity prayed to arrives on the stage and at the request of *Sutradhara*, blesses him for the smooth run of the play. Then the other important character *Sarathi* arrives and begins to address the audience. The dialogues of these stock characters are standardised and the playwright has no originality of any kind in formulating them. In the earlier days the

influence of Sanskrit drama on *Bayalata* was quite powerful and hence the presence of *Sutradhara* and *Nati* on the stage at the beginning of the play. This couple used to introduce the theme of the play and achieve a mental link between the audience and characters. But as later *Bayalata* was able to stand on its own feet, it gave up the characters like *Sutradhara* and *Nati* and introduced another folk character called *Sarathi* who has come to stay on.

BHAMINI

After the prayer to Lord Ganapati (in some plays, after the dialogues between *Sutradhara* and *Nati*) a song is recited by *Sutradhara* in a musical stanza called *Bhamini Satpadi* (which has six lines). The usual number of these stanzas is 5 or 6 or 7 and some times 8 to 10 also. The purpose of employing the *bhamini* form is to introduce the broad outlines of the theme of the play to be enacted that night. Since the playwright has no scope for interference in the course of the play, he takes the opportunity of invoking the favourite deities and poets and of mentioning his name and place etc. But nowadays the use of *bhamini* has been growing out of fashion.

DIALOGUES

Madalapaya is a deliberate art-form. Its dialogues are quite independent of the songs preceding or following them (unlike in musical operas or *Gitarupakas* like *Sangya Balya*, *Radhanata* and *Dasarata* etc). In it both the dialogues and songs contribute to the growth of the play. This might be ascribable to the influence of Sanskrit drama. In spite of the innumerability of songs, the dialogues are never short or abrupt, but on the contrary are developed according to the law of rhyme, alliteration and marked by sanskritised and old-kannadised diction. Thus the nature of

dialogue is fixed or standardised. In some plays dialogues which follow the songs and explicate the contents of songs are known as explanatory dialogues (*Padadamatu*) Whereas those which follow subsequently are called independent dialogues (*Bidi Matu*). These dialogues which are a special feature of *Mudalapaya* as they stir the spectators by their grandeur and beauty; are those of the characters introducing themselves. The characters have to follow a definite pattern - of three stages-of introducing themselves. This, no doubt, contributes a lot to the delineation of heroic (*vira*) and amorous (*sringara*) sentiments

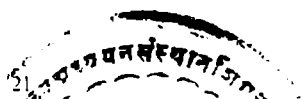
In the court scene, the characters are usually seated on their thrones (chairs). Then *Sarathi* enters on the stage and goes on asking them their names one by one. When asked thus, no character answers directly. On the contrary he or she offers a preparatory description of his or her nature and then asks the *Sarathi* his name. This is called preparatory speech (*Pithika Matu*). For example, when Laxmi is asked by *Sarathi* as to who she is, she counter-questions him thus :

Laxmi - Oh my dear servant. I am a lady who has the gait of a swan; face like the full moon, graceful and auspicious figure; big breasts; cheerful and poetic nature ; the smile of a jasmine and virtue. May I know you who has been asking for my name ? Please tell me your name, oh the paragon of servants.

(*Sivajalandhara*)

The preparatory speeches like these give us a sure hint of the nature of the characters speaking them out-be they gods or goddesses; the virtuous or the vicious; monks or sinners ; men or women; saints or demons. When the *Sarathi* asks Sumbha about his identity, the latter answers him as follows;

Sumbha - Who are you , the best of monks who is enquiring



about me the great demon. ? Tell me instantly who you are and what your name is. Otherwise I will lop your face off your trunk with my sword. Do you understand, the meanest of mortals ?

(*Devimahatme*)

These words naturally hold a mirror to his demoniac roughness and cruelty.

The *Sarathi* offers a few details about himself by way of answering to the preparatory question posed by the character. Then *Sarathi* asks the name of the character once again. In giving the second answer to the second question of the *Sarathi*, the character describes his name and nature in a very detailed fashion. This is known as the 'naming speech' (*Namankitada Matu*). Usually the playwright exhausts his talent in composing this speech which provides a chance for the exhibition of his linguistic skill, rhetoric and prosodic mastery etc. The 'naming speech' has a lot of variety in it and at times may run to pages together. It may contain reference to countries, the royal lineage, detailed description of the capital and so on. Hence the length of the speech. After the delivery of this speech by the character, the *Sarathi* confesses that he and the courtiers (i.e. characters, assembled on the stage) are well informed about him.

Then the *Sarathi* asks the next question to the same character about the purpose of his arrival. The usual structure of this stereo-typed question is, 'what is the reason for your coming into the court ?' The answer given to this question by the character is known as 'court speech' which contains the theme of the play in a nutshell. Lord Indra, for instance, answers the *Sarathi* as follows :

Indra- O *Sarathi*, the reason why I have come here is that I happened to hear the dinning sound of various drums like *diddi, tammate, dhanka nagari* which would shake the cos

mos itself. I have come to this assembly with the intention of having the *darsan* of the lotus-born Lord *Brahma* and satisfying the hunger of my arms by defeating the powerful enemy. O *Sarathi* the intelligent one, know this to be the purpose of my coming here.

These three kinds of speeches are the distinctive features of *Mudalapaya*. The influence of old Kannada and Sanskrit may also be seen in these dialogues because the playwrights used to be quite conversant with these languages. Whenever the playwright cannot get the right word from the old Kannada he would be satisfied with grafting of old Kannada inflection to the modern Kannada phrases. Consequently, the dialogues of these plays sometimes tend to be an odd mixture of Sanskrit, old Kannada and modern Kannada.

Since the playwrights of *Mudalapaya* gave undue importance to bombastic language, they could not write very poetically. But there are quite a few exceptions to this rule.

However high they may soar in the sky, the folk-playwrights never leave the earth. It is never possible for them to disentangle themselves or their imagination from the day-to-day life. They are quite aware of the fact that the plays are meant for the villagers. Their images are, therefore, borrowed from their own life, although they are quite simple. Prabhavati, for example, requests Sudhanva when he is about to leave for the battle field, "How can the crops grow, if you forget to sow the seed ? We can achieve liberation (*mukti*) only if you lovingly sow the seeds into the field of my intoxicated youth." (*Pramile*, p.23) Such a fertile image is sure to touch the hearts of the villagers who are only too familiar with agriculture. Sometimes the dialogues are also likely to degenerate into mere vulgarity, although there is no doubt that they hold a mirror to the contemporary society.

The playwrights of *Mudalapaya* have given a greater at-

tention to the construction of prose dialogues than to poetry. They selected the stage for the exhibition of their verbal *tandava*. They are extremely fond of rhymes of two kinds: one, internal rhyme and two, exclamatory rhyme at the end of a dialogue.

The internal rhyme could be found in many sentences. The playwright delights in the exhibition of his linguistic skill in this process. He, for example, tries to bring in the internal rhyme of either *da* sound or *da; ja* or *ra; pa* or *la* etc., which cannot unfortunately be reproduced in English translation.

The exclamatory rhyme by and large comes at the end of a dialogue. The addressee's proper name or descriptive name is accompanied by a word or phrase which rhymes with it. These exclamatory rhymes are a memorable aspect of the dialogues of *Mudalapaya* and thrill the audience either because of their descriptive appropriateness or because of irrelevant but comic element. The following list will help the reader to understand the rhymes if not the meanings :

The following exclamatory rhymes are used when the addressee happens to be a male character :

Kanta	- Gunavanta
Kanta	- Mativanta
Kanta	- Rajasrimanta
Raja	- Ravikotiteja
Chakravarti	- Sadgunamurti
Arasa	- Matinol Sarasa
	- Sammohanabharana
Sundara	- Manohara
Punda	- Muru Lokada Ganda

Ramana	- Bhagya Sampanna
Dusta	- Kulabrasta

2. When the addressee happens to be a female character :

Kantamani	- Sundara Suguni
Kamini	- Kalahamsa Gamini
Kante	- Srimante
Sakhiye	- Chandramukhiye
Ramani	- Sadgunabharani
Nari	- Vaiyari
Mate	- Lokavikhyate

3. When the addressee happens to be the *Sarathi* :

Bala	- Sadgunasila
Bala	- Susila
Kinkara	- Anuchara
Kinkara	- Sukhankara
Kanda	- Manokhananda
Duta	- Prakhyata
Magane	- Chenniganē
Sandanagrani	- Dhimani
Sarathi	- Chaturyakarapurti
Sarathi	- Satisayapriti
Sevakagrani	- Bhaktachintamani
Suta	- Prakhyata

4. When *Sarathi* addresses other characters :

Arasa	- Horasa
Bhupa	- Krupa
Doreye	- Hatti Katigi Horeye
Tayi	- Hanna Menasinakayi
Tayi	- Hasi Pyaralakayi

Besides these double rhymes, there are single rhymes also.
For example,

Uttunga Kuchada Mattebhagamini
Matsyagangale
Sarpaveni
Padmanetri
Pranavallabhe
Chapalakshi
Uduraja Vadane
Rajivanetre

SONGS

Songs are the poorest feature of *Mudalapaya*. Since the talent of the playwrights is exhausted in the construction of dialogues, they have not paid much attention to the composition of poems or songs. Many times it is difficult to distinguish between a prose piece and a poem.

Many songs of *Mudalapaya* have two lines which are mistaken for individual songs, but the actual fact is that these two lines (couplets) are the refrains of a song which is followed by a dialogue or stanzas (*caranas*). But each stanza is followed by a

dialogue or two. Thus a song of *Mudalapaya* is interspersed with dialogues after every stanza. The mixture of poetry and prose adds a special beauty to the *Mudalapaya* drama form.

PROSODY

Satpadi (six lined stanza) is the most commonly used metre in *Mudalapaya*. But occasionally other metres like *Kanda* and *Sisa* are also used. Various types of *Satpadi* like *Kusuma Satpadi*, *Sara Satpadi* and *Vardhaka Satpadi* are used quite commonly.

But the recent playwrights have been ignoring these metres. The researcher has yet to study the manuscripts which are available here and make a systematic analysis of these metres.

CHARACTERS AND SENTIMENTS

One of the striking features of *Mudalapaya* is that even the complex themes undergo a process of simplification when they are depicted in this form of drama. Neither the playwright has any willingness to analyse the subtle nature of the characters nor the spectator has any patience to know the subtleties of characters. Almost all the characters are or can be divided into black and white ones. It, obviously, saves a lot of botheration for the playwright to introduce the subtle details of characters. The spectator knows the characters too well to expect much from the playwright. He has absolutely no difficulty in identifying himself with the characters. The playwright is relatively free from the responsibility of attempting subtle characterisation. However, the urban spectator has less imagination and power of empathy than the rural one. Even the dialogues and the underlying logic are quite simple. It is unfortunate that some times the dialogues become so simple that they degenerate into the language of the street rabble. The folk-consciousness of the playwright is so deeply rooted in the down-to-earth reality that although he employs mythological characters

like Rama and Ravana, he makes them objective correlatives of the rural people's psyche. Ravana, for example, stands for a village rowdy who has kidnapped another man's wife whereas Rama represents a helpless man who has lost his wife. In these situations, the mythological characters tend to lose their dignity and stoop to the level of village rowdies and speak the language indigenous to them. The rural spectator easily tolerates this linguistic degeneration, although it is very difficult for an urban spectator with a sophisticated taste to do so. On the whole there is no denying that the characterisation in *Mudalapaya* is very naive and insipid.

The heroic and the wondrous sentiments are the main features of *Mudalapaya*. Stage property, dialogues, dances and entry of characters are all factors contributory to these sentiments. War, therefore, happens to be the main theme of many of these plays and is suggested by their titles themselves containing 'yuddha' (war) or 'kalyana' (marriage). *Ramanjaneya Yuddha* (*War of Rama and Anjaneya*) *Babhruvahana Kalaga* (*War with Babhruvahana*) and such other titles testify to the predominance of heroic sentiment. It may not be wrong to say that *Mudalapaya* came into existence mainly for the expression of heroic sentiment. As in characterisation, in the depiction of the main sentiment also the playwright does not show any great responsibility. Most of the heroic sentiment is expressed in the highflown language of dialogues, dances and back-choruses. Beside the theme of war, the theme of marriage is also quite common in *Mudalapaya*, but most of the time the two themes are intertwined. *Girija Kalyana* (*Marriage of Girija*) and *Kanakangi Kalyana* (*Marriage of Kanakangi*) and such other plays depict the matrimonial theme. Although there is a lot of scope for the treatment of erotic sentiment in these plays, it is more often than not neglected by the playwright. Even when there are occasions for the depiction of erotic sentiment, it is done through artificial dialogues. The theme of devotion is also very common in *Mudalapaya*. *Hanumanthana Lingadharane* (*Hanumantha's Possession of Linga*) is a good example of this. Sometimes even Harischandra's truthful life is depicted in the devotional pattern.

But unfortunately the playwright makes Harischandra talk and dance after the fashion of Rama and Ravana which looks ridiculous indeed. Subtle themes, when introduced on *Mudalapaya* stage look as incongruous as a poor monk wearing a golden crest.

THE PLAYWRIGHTS

The playwrights of *Mudalapaya* are generally not the first rate writers. Although they write them for folk audience, they are not purely folk poets either. They are average men combining the element of folklore and standard literature. Most of these playwrights belong to brahmin community who are generally well acquainted with myths and scriptures. These writers have no ability to compose works of standard literature, but because of their acquaintance with mythology and philosophy, they attain a place a little higher than the folk-laity. These playwrights are well-informed rather than inspired ones. Like the standard writers, these playwrights also mention their names and favourite deities :

1. This play was written in the city of Kampali by the virtuous son of Nagappa, native of Kalagi village in a very delicate language
(*Kanakangi Kalyana*)
2. I pray continuously to Lord Bhimesh, master of the Rama-Ocean
(*Samba Laxmi Kalyana*)
3. I offer my prayers to the kind Lord Amaresh of Nalavadi and sing the glory of the King of Celestial Beings.
(*Sugandha Puspa Harana*)

Since the *Bayalata* troupes used to tour from village to village, there is no fixity about the names of deities and places.

The names of local deities and villages were inserted in place of the non-local ones. Hence the difficulty of identifying the original author and place of composition of these plays.

There are a few manuscripts of *Mudalapaya* available which are printed around 1900. The playwrights of *Mudalapaya* must have been between 1900 and 1950. These fifty years may be said to be the golden age of *Mudalapaya*. A list of these playwrights may be found in the appendix. Even now there are quite a few playwrights in the villages.

MUSIC

The earliest playwrights of *Mudalapaya* seem to have been good musicians of Southern or Karnataki style who could compose songs and set them to music. But the later ones seem to have been quite ignorant of music, although they have learnt a few set tunes from their *Gurus* and transmit them orally to their own disciples.

The number of tunes (*ragas*) commonly used in *Mudalapaya* does not exceed 10 or 15. They are *Mohana*, *Kalingada*, *Kedaragouli*, *Kalyani*, *Todi*, *Bhimapalasi*, *Bhairavi*, *Udayaraga* and so on. It is not possible to elicit formal information about these melodies from the *Sutradharas*. The rhythms (*talas*) generally used by these artists are *Adi*, *Rupaka*, *Atta*, *Triputa*, *Jampa*, *Bilandi* and so on. Some times even if other rhythmic patterns are employed, they are based upon these basic ones only. Thus the addition of regional peculiarities to the southern music has resulted in *Mudalapaya* system of music.

But it is an interesting historical fact that the *Mudalapaya* system of music has been slowly alienating itself from the southern mode and surrendering itself to the influence of northern (Hindustani) mode. This fact is easily borne out by the practice prevalent in the districts of Belgaum, (western) Dharwad and (western) Bijapur

where the assimilation between northern and southern modes of music is quite successful. But in the eastern part of these districts the gap between the two modes is still maintained. There the female characters follow the northern mode and therefore their songs (which are sung by the *Sutradhara* himself) are accompanied on the tabla, whereas other songs by male characters are sung in southern mode and therefore, are accompanied on the horizontal drum (*maddale*). The songs of male characters are sung by *Sutradhara* himself, although they add their voice or lip movement to that.

The back-chorus of *Madalapaya* is a unique feature of this theatre not to be found in any other theatre. It consists of at least four members throughout the performance. Many characters who play minor roles join the back-chorus after they complete their part in the scenes. Thus the number of members of back-chorus runs up to ten or twelve. They begin with the tag (*kochu*) i.e. 'He Deva' (O Lord) and sing the song in an elevated tone at the height of their pitch. This style naturally adds up to the heroic sentiment of the play. They also enhearten the characters by their hortative interference like 'shabash', 'vahava', 'shahabo shahaba' which are roughly equivalent to the English words like 'bravo' and 'cheers' etc. Back-chorus is thus a very important feature of *Mudalapaya* theatre.

THE STRUCTURE OF SONGS

The popular tune of *Mudalapaya* is sung in three tempos consecutively. The first is slow (*vilambita*), the second, (*madhya*) i.e. double that of first and the third, quick (*tivra*) i.e. double that of the second. The change from one tempo to the other is suggested by *Sutradhara* himself, as for example SLOW (single speed) :

Sutradhara - Odatiye Nanondu Yuktiya Peluve Yuktiya
Peluve Nadeyamma Adarante Kadu Janc.

- Hinimela - (Repeats it twice)
 Sutradhara - Dasaratha Bhupanu Nadesida Tantravanu.
 Himmela - (Repeats it twice)
 Sutradhara - Ena Helali Nanu, Ena Helali Nanu Kadu
 dukka baruvada.
 Himmela - Odatiye Nanodu Yuktiya Peluve Nadeyamma
 Adarante Kadujane.

MEDIUM (Double speed) :

- Sutradhara - Odatiye Nanondu Yuktiya
 Peluve Nadeyamma Adarante Kadujane.
 Himmela - (Repeats it twice)
 Sutradhara - Kela Odati.
 Himmela - Tha Thayya.
 Sutradhara - Enna Vacana.
 Himmela - Tha Thayya.
 Sutradhara - Peluvena.
 Himmela - Tha Thayya.

QUICK (Fourfold speed) :

- Sutradhara - (in soprano voice) Kela Odati Enna
 Vacana (Descent) A, a, a, a, a, a,
 (to the base sadja)
 Himmela - (Soprano Sadja) Kadkadata, Kadkadata,
 dhitta

These rules of music are not uniformly employed in all the areas of Karnataka. There are, of course, many regional variations and options. But one tune is particularly common to the folk-

theatre of North-Karnataka and that is the prayer to Lord Ganapathi, 'Sri Gouri Varaputra' This song is sung in single (*vilambita*) and fourfold (*dhruta*) tempos only.

In Raichur district there is another practice of adding to the song. The addition is called *Anda* which literally means beautiful or ornament. After a stanza (*carana*) is sung, the content of the same is broken up into rhythmic tags of phrases and are sung within one or two notes before or after the base note (*Sadja*). The following serves as an example :

Song- Rakkasanu Bidade enna / Fakkane sere vaivanamma
Kakkulati illavenamma / Mikките Karma
Anda - Rakkasanu Ivanu Abaleyu nanu / Sere Oyvanivanu
Kakkulati illadavanu / Bhanda rakkasanu

(Ms. Sulakskine Pada in *Vali Sugrivarā Kathe*.)

This addition of *Anda* is not composed by the playwright himself, but by others. Nabisaheb is said to be a popular composer of these additions in Raichur area. Since these 'additions' are quite simple and can be composed and inserted by anyone with a minimum artistic talent, it is difficult to trace the authors of the same. Such features, though of anonymous authorship, are found in the *Madalapaya* of western part of North-Karnataka. The 'Kela Cdati - Tha Thyya' portion of 'Odatiye Nanondu' song before the beginning of quick tempo, is composed not by the playwright but are common poetic phrases. Whenever the songs are addressed to a king or a minister, the exclamatory phrases are modified accordingly. In that case 'He Deva' is replaced by 'Kelo Raja.' (Listen, Your Highness) or 'Kelo Mantri' (Listen O Minister) and so on.

When the song is being sung in the double tempo, the members of back-chorus interpret it with their exclamations like 'He Deva' ('O Lord') This is a common feature in the *Mudalapaya*

of North-Karnataka. But around Haveri area (Dharwad district) tags like 'He Deva' are not used at all, but the entire *Koche* is sung in *alap* at the heighest pitch of their voice.

A few *bols* are added to the song when it is completed in the quick tempo. These songs generally end with a bol in soprano like for example : *Kadkada ta Kadkada ta dhitta*. The songs in Raichur area end with 'Hodi dandana taita taita aha. But in Dharwad area, the song in double tempo ends with lengthier bols like *Ta, Kada tom, Janana, dhigi dhigi dhitta*. *Thaita ! dhitta Tonta dhitta Thaita, dhigi, dhigi dhigi ! Dhittom dhinna, kada kada ta / dhinna / kadakadata / dhinna kadakadata*.

INSTRUMENTS

Musical instruments are an indispensable feature of *Mudalapaya* theatre. There is no rigidity about the use of these instruments in the history of this folk-theatre. Different instruments are used at different times in North-Karnataka depending upon the availability of instruments or instrumentalists. The main instruments used in *Mudalapaya* were, and still are, horizontal drum (*maddale*) and cymbals (*talas*). The base tune, of course, was provided by a mono-stringed instrument (called *swarakayi* made of wood, pumpkin and string). But nowadays the artists devise an easier method of replacing *swarakayi* by an adhoc instrument. They tie one end of a thin cotton thread around their neck and the other end to the bottom of a tin and produce a series of short sounds like *jee, jee, jee, jee*, by striking the cotton thread with match-stick-like-piece of wood. That sound also produces a good base note. All these old fashioned instruments disappeared with the advent of harmonium. Harmonium has become an inevitable part of the folk-theatre because of its portable size, impressive sound and variety of scales. Although it is looked down upon by the snobbish musicians because of its so called crudity of sound, it has become very popular among the rural audience as it can capture the attention of

a large gathering on account of its volume of sound. The maestros who have devoted their entire life for practice on this instrument are capable of showing extraordinary dexterity in performance and capturing the hearts of even the unmusical people. The horizontal drum (*maddale*) is quite big i.e. around three feet in length and ten inches in diameter at the right end and fourteen inches in diameter at the left end. Some experts play the classical Karnataki *bols* on this instrument. The right end of the horizontal drum produces hard, sharp and metallic sound, whereas the left end of the same produces soft, mild booming or thumping sound. The *Maddale* maestro plays on his instrument on either side or on both sides alternately or simultaneously. He strikes the right-side of it with his forefinger and other fingers (except, of course, the thumb) simultaneously or alternately and produce a sound like that of hooves of a horse or thuds on it. He slaps or pecks the left side of it with his fingers and produces a thumping or a booming sound. When the horizontal drum is played like this, the exciting rhythm of it energizes the characters and enlivens the dozing audience. Nowadays, because of the influence of Hindustani music, the horizontal drum (*maddale*) is replaced by a pair of vertical drums known as *tabla* and *dagga*. Cymbals of bell-metal are used in the folk-theatre of all the parts of Karnataka. They are known by different names like *gundadala*, *sottedala* and *atada tala*. They are played by the *Suradhara* and three or four members of back-chorus. When a pair of cymbals are struck against each other periferally, they create a light rattling sound, but when they are struck centrally and totally, they produce a clangorous sound. Thus the jingle and clangour of cymbals go on alternating. As the tempo changes from slow to medium to quick, the clangour and chime create an intoxicating effect upon the ears of the audience. The use of fiddle also was quite common in certain areas of North-Karnataka. The wailing, moaning and groaning of the fiddle, no doubt, contributes to the varying moods of the play. Nowadays other wind instruments like *Mukhavine*, *Sanadi*, or *Saj* (different forms of clarionets of

different sizes) are also employed. The effect of the super sweetness and serpentine phonic meanderings of these instruments upon both audience and characters is enormous indeed.

DANCE

Dance is a predominant feature of *Mudalapaya* theatre. It is customary in North-Karnataka to ask 'which role do you dance ?' rather than 'which role do you play ?' In this theatre character-playing is less important than dancing it out. The dancing is, obviously, influenced by a number of folk-dancers. It is quite simple and unsophisticated. The field still awaits further research.

There is a difference between the male dance and the female in this theatre. The male characters dance according to the heroic or terrific sentiments (*Vira or Bhayanaka rasas*) they have to express, whereas the female characters dance more gracefully and their dance easily resembles *lasya*. The male dance must have been formulated from a combination of step-dance (*Hejje-Kunita*), impersonators' dance (*Puravantara Kunita*) and *datti* dance (*Datti-Kunita*). In the male dance steps are given special importance and hence the negligence of facial feature and other gestures. The dances are, therefore, known by the number of steps used in them such as three-step-dance, five step-dance and six-step-dance. The male dancer moves either back and forth or left and right. Occasionally he jumps off the platform and kicks the wooden board of the platform. By the time he completes his dance, he is totally exhausted and is gasping for breath and therefore unable to continue his next dialogues. Even then he struggles hard to play his role in order to attract the attention of the rural audience.

The female dance is not so crude as the male, although it does not express the finest feelings of the human heart. The female dancers never go to the extent of breaking the wooden boards. Their dance varies from two-step. to nine step. Fortunately their dance is

not confined to steps alone. They give some attention to facial features, gestures and neckturnings. Although the female dance was originally expressive of fine feelings, nowadays it has degenerated into a crude and artificial one.

Sometimes the female characters were made to appear and dance on the stage inbetween the scenes of dialogue. The dance consists of turning up and down; moving back and forth and show simple gestures of hands. For example, in the Flower Plucking-Dance they go ahead rhythmically and mime the act of plucking the flowers. Many of these dances have been influenced by the regional cultures. For example there are many symbolic dances suggestive of cotton-picking, corn-cob cutting and harvesting. In some areas Straddle-Dance (*Kisagalu-Kunita*) are practised and they must have been imitations of Bharata Natyam. In brief, it can be said that the dance of *Mudalapaya* is not capable of expressing the subtle feelings of characters as the dance of *Yaksagana* is.

In some areas, the dances are accompanied by *bols* of horizontal drum uttered by the Sutradhara. These *bols* are obviously modelled upon various rhythmic patterns (*talas*) like *Rupaka*, *Adi* and *Atta* etc. These notations (*bols*) which are also called *gattu*, by and large, come at the end of dances.

I. The following notations are common to all types of characters :

- 1). *Taitaka dhinna. Taitaka dhinna. Taitaka dhinna*
Taitaka dhinna tai tai. Taitaka dhinna taite .
Taitaka dhinnoti / Tadaginita/ Tadaginita, tadaginita .
- 2). *Dhittai taita kitata / kita tata tata kitata*
Tai talangu tadagit tadagit tomta /.
- 3). *Ta taya ta taya / dhigitattaya / dhigitattaya*
Dhigitattaya / taitalangu ta / dagit tadagit tomta

II. Notations for male characters :

- i). *Te tonga/ dhittonga / kadataijanam / dadhitaijanam /*
Kadataka ta taya / Kadataka ta taya / Kadataka tataya /
- II) *Kadakadatam / janta janta migitaka /*
Dhinna kidataka ta/ dhinna kadataka ta /dhinna kadataka ta

iii). Notations for female characters :

- 1). *Kadataka dhatai dhatai / kidataka dhataka dhinam /*
Tadhkim gidataka / tadhim gidataka / tadhim gidataka /

SUTRADHARA

We have already discussed how the playwrights of *Mudalapaya* imported the character of *Sutradhara* and *Vidusaka* from the Sanskrit Drama available to them. But these stock characters have been naturalised totally in the folk-theatre. *Sutradhara* has been known by different appellations in different regions. He is generally known as *Bhagavata*, *Nayaka*, *Mummela*, *Mastaru*, *Kathegara*, *Metitala* and so on. The word *Nayaka* is quite popular in Raichur area whereas those like *Mummela* and *Metitala* are quite popular in Belgaum district.

Sutradhara's duty consists more in the preparations for *Bayalata* than in on-the-stage activities. He is, therefore, called master (*mastaru*). In the eastern districts of North-Karnataka there are many professional masters. Generally they have a mastery over half a dozen or dozen plays. They travel from village to village and train the rural participants for a whole month or so. He teaches them songs and dialogues. But coaching in dance is not his responsibility. The elder villagers teach these dances to the younger ones.

On the day of performance of the play, the drama director (or teacher or master) who is a paid servant so far, assumes an elevated status of a 'guru'. He has to direct every aspect of the play. In a way he himself can be said to be the 'hero' of the play. He stands with members of the back-chorus (*Himmela*) at the right wing. After the prayer to Lord Ganapati is sung, the *Sutradhara* prays to Lord Ganapati to ward off all the hurdles in the performance of the play. Similarly he requests Gopala the child-god and Goddess Sarada also to facilitate the enactment. After the gods are done with, *Sutradhara* starts his dialogue with *Sarathi*. He asks the *Sarathi* to introduce the kings and emperors on the stage to the gathering and withdraws from the stage. But he stands behind the wings and sings with the members of the back-chorus. But whenever the *Sarathi* indulges in jokes by comparing kings and emperors to Lord Kama or Allah, the *Sutradhara* comes on the stage and asks him to talk with respect about them as they happen to be kings and emperors. The *Sutradhara* has no organic connection with the content of the play. That he is an echo of the *Sutradhara* of Sanskrit drama is quite clear. He is called 'Mummyala' (front-chorus) and 'Metitala' (central rhythm or cymbal) as his duty consists mainly in singing.

But in the early days, the *Sutradhara* used to provide a link between scenes and narrate the events which could not be spoken or acted by the characters on the stage. Sometimes he gives a hint of what is going to happen in the forthcoming scene. In this respect he resembles the chorus of the Greek theatre.

SARATHI

Although 'Sarathi' is called 'Vidusaka' by the playwrights, he is known as 'Sarathi' only. Though the type is borrowed from the Sanskrit Drama, he has acquired the regional characteristics. Whereas in *Yaksagana* he is called 'Kodangi' and 'Hanumanayaka' he is known as 'Sarathi' in *Mudalapaya*. He is even called an indirect protagonist of the play because of his predominance on the stage. There is simply no limit to his jokes, songs and speeches.

His movements which more often than not exceed the limits of relevance are immensely liked by the audience. His comedy is generally very closely woven into the texture of heroic and wondrous sentiments of the play. After the exit of *Sutradhara* from the stage, *Sarathi* assumes the important role of controlling the entry and exit of characters. Sometimes he even replaces the *Sutradhara* by performing the latter's duties also. He invokes the spirits of deities like Lord Ganesh and Goddess Saraswati and asks for their blessings. He enjoys a liberty that is denied to *Vidusaka* of Sanskrit Drama and combines in himself the roles of *Sutradhara* and *Vidusaka*.

Most of the plays of eastern mode (*Mudalapyya*) deal with the theme of war. The hero who is to go to the battlefield has got to have a chariot and a charioteer (*Sarathi*). *Sarathi* was introduced into *Bayalata* in order to suggest chariot and war but later he was made to control the entire dramatic activity. All the characters of the play confide in him their joys and sorrows, worries and anxieties, pangs of separation etc. He acts as a loyal servant to all the characters who ask him, usually in prose but sometimes in poetry, to oblige them. It is usual for a warrior (character) to sing:

"Come on, *Sarathi*, drive my chariot quickly".

When Lord Indra has to call his wife Sachi on to the stage, he sings :

"Come on *Sarathi*
Go and call my dear spouse.
Come on and bring her quickly".

Usually the *Sarathi* enters on the stage after the prayer (benediction) is over. Sometimes, as in the area around Kittur (of Belgaum district) his arrival is announced in a song by *Sutradhara*. As *Sutradhara* goes on singing the following song :

The Sarathi is coming
Is coming
To the beautiful stage
With a branch of neem tree
In this hand.

The Sarathi comes on dancing on the stage in his own style. After the dance is over, he relaxes a little and starts talking with the *Sutradhara*. His first dialogue addressed to the *Sutradhara* is quite involved, stylish and querulous in tone. After that is over, he goes on introducing the characters to the audience one by one, in a rather bookish language :

1. Ho sir, who are you who have graced this stage with your pomp and glory? What is your name ?
2. Now both the respected audience and I came to know you. May I further ask the reason why you left your court hall and came to the stage ?

The *Sarathi* thus, talks with other characters very respectfully. But when they ask him back about himself, he switches on to the colloquial language which is instinct with raciness, contemporary consciousness, mild humour and self-directed irony and which is uttered in a rhythmic fashion. A sample can be seen in the following :

He Raja, Jarkateyannu uttu, harkangiyannu tottu, berki annuttiruva harki kwanana hanga sarkara davarannu darkara madadantha murkha sarathi annuttare.

(Trans : O King, I am called the foolish *Sarathi* who is clad in a ragged shirt, who rides a clever he buffalo and who does not care for the Government people).

It is simply impossible to bring out the raciness of Kannada language in English translation. But what is to be noted is that his sentences are marked by word-rhythms, initial rhymes, middle rhymes and end rhymes. His sentences may contain satirical comments on the corrupt-government, his own poverty, matrimonial incompatibility or helplessness etc.

Whenever the entry of characters is delayed by the problems of make-up or costumes, it becomes mandatory on the part of *Sarathi* to keep the audience engaged with his dialogues. It provides him a chance to use his resourcefulness to the maximum extent. He cracks all the jokes he knows and sometimes addresses himself directly to the audience. He sings short but sweet songs composed by local poets and captures the attention of the audience. If he exhausts his collection of folk-songs, he would not mind singing film songs. He may interlard the film songs with jokes, references to popular local heroes, digs at VIPs and anecdotes. His dialogue is thus a gallimaufrey of countless items and therefore elicits full response from the audience. When everybody in the audience is absorbed in the enjoyment of his speech, nobody bothers about the relevance or otherwise of the contents, at least for a while.

Although the *Hanuma Nayaka* of *Yaksagana* and the *Sarathi* of *Mudalapaya* serve the same purpose, they are not cast in the same mould. There are a few subtle differences between the two. *Hanuma Nayaka*, being a cultured comedian, is appointed to eulogise the kings by their order. Besides, there are other regional and cultural differences between the two.

The character of *Sarathi* is not moulded by the dramatist. On the contrary he is a creation of folklore. His dialogues or songs were not to be written down, as they were orally crystallised and transmitted from individual to individual. It is only recently that the copyists have started capturing them in scripts or print. The expressions of the *Sarathi* are nothing but the expressions of the

folk mind and folk-ethos. Hence the deep rapproachment between the audience and him. *Sarathi*, therefore, occupies a very important role in *Bayalata* and as such, it applies to the entire Indian folk-drama.

COSTUMES

Costumes in *Mudalapaya*, unlike in *Yaksagana*, are not given special attention. Although each character requires a particular type of costumes, this rule is not followed very meticulously. One can easily see the process of simplification in the assignment of costumes. The characters are roughly divided into 1) noble ones like Karna, Arjuna, Laxmana, Dharmaraja, Abhimanyu and Indrajitu; 2) evil ones like Duryodhana, Ravana and Kichaka etc, and 3) women like Sita, Draupadi most of whom happen to be goddesses. Whereas all the noble characters have one type of costumes, all the evil characters have another type of costumes. Likewise all the women characters have costumes of a set pattern. Most of the characters are forced to use silken garments only so that these garments would glisten in a pleasant fashion in the yellowish light of petromax lamps.

Generally rose-tint is used for the make-up of all the characters except, of course, Rama, Krisna, Siva and demons. The popular rose-tint is prepared from a combination of white, red and blue powders. Originally this was prepared from a nut called *aradala* or *antavala*. A king is usually decked with a topon of long curly hair let down behind his shoulders. It is topped by a crest of golden glitter. The crest is not so big as the ones used by kings in *Yaksagana*. The crest is made of metal or wood or simple cardboard and painted with golden colour. Whether the characters use a metallic crest or a cardboard one depends on the financial position of the organisers of *Bayalata*.

Most of the male characters are supposed to have mustaches. If they do not have natural mustaches, they are made to have artificial ones made of wool. The evil characters like villains and demons are expected to have thicker mustaches than those of others. Usually the mustaches are thickest below the nose and go on tapering at both the extremes and are twirled upward into circles with a flourish. The simple difference between a righteous character and a villainous one can be detected by the size of their mustaches themselves. A long flowing cloth is usually hung from shoulders and let down until it trails on the ground. They wear a white or silken shirt and put on a waist-band and colourful necklaces. Most of them wear large shoulder-crests in the eastern region of Karnataka. They hold a sword or bow and arrow in their hands. In some districts, they have the habit of having a bouquet in their hands.

Villainous or ferocious characters do not have any special make-up. Their ferocity is expressed in the large shoulder crests, tall crests on heads, thick mustaches covering almost half of their faces and big heavy garlands of flowers. In their right hand they hold a bow or mace and in the left hand, a red towel.

Female characters wear a special type of crests. They are usually smaller than those of male characters. Further, all of them wear very costly silken sarees, with filigree work on them, borrowed from the local families. Since many times most of the female characters wear such silken sarces, it becomes rather a problem for us to distinguish between a queen and a maid-servant. Most of them are burdened with golden or gold-like ornaments like bangles and necklaces which are more than aesthetically required. But the rural audience do not find fault with this excess at all.

The male characters like Siva, Rama and Krisna wear blue make-up. Hanumanta is made to wear a pair of hairy shorts and is painted lurid red around his nose. The saints like Narada wear long

hempen beard and mustaches and long loose saffron cassocks. As for the *Sarathi*, he is not restricted by any rule with regard to costumes. He wears a shirt and a pair of shorts and a turban wound around his head or simply a cap. His face is painted with white straps. He wears one or two necklaces around his neck and holds a neem twig in his hand. Initially the crests, shoulder-crests, swords and clubs used to be made of wood. Nowadays the gorgeous costumes have been disappearing because of the influence of Campany Drama.

STAGE

The stage of *Bayalata* is prepared in accordance with its grandeur. It is generally known as *atta*, *cappara*, *handara* or *catta*. Although it is known as Open-Air-Drama (*Bayalata*), it is not always staged at the outskirts of the city. Usually it is enacted before the houses of local leaders, or in front of temples or near big cross-roads. The preparations for the erection of the stage begin a couple of days in advance. Sometimes they may start it weeks ahead. As it is usual in Indian life, the people interested in a *Bayalata* consult an astrologer or an almanac for an auspicious moment and erect a wooden pillar at that time. After a few days, they fix cart-wheels at both sides and wooden beams inbetween them and cover them with wooden boards. Some times they use oil-drums in place of cart-wheels. Now the bare stage is ready. The back portion is covered with a big carpet. The upper portion of the stage is fixed with a few bamboos and covered with a big carpet again. The flanks and the front portion of the stage are not covered. The floor of the stage is also covered with a big carpet.

In the early days the stage arrangement used to be quite grand. This can be understood from the words of Sri Virabhadra Sastri, author of and actor in *Tripura Samhara*. He has written in his autobiography, "We had erected a three storeyed stage and fixed in the third storey a three coloured rotating device to suggest three

cities. Besides, we had fixed many mythological paintings drawn by famous artists, on different parts of the stage." (*Sri. Virabhadra Sastri, 1885-1957*) This is an evidence of the grandeur of the folk-stage and its technique. But in modern days, it is unfortunate that folk-theatre has been blindly following the Company Drama.

LIGHTING

One can trace the line of evolution in the history of lighting also in the folk-theatre. In the earliest days of *Bayalata*, the lighting was provided by cowdung lamp. At both sides of the stage two tripods of man's height used to be erected. On these tripods two cauldrons used to be kept. One or two servants used to soak the cowdung cakes in kerosene oil and keep them burning in the cauldrons. They would keep on supplying the cowdung cakes and provide a very lurid light on the stage. Later on, the primitive method was replaced by a more sophisticated one of keeping two big torches on both sides of the stage. The light of these torches contributed very richly to the portrayal of the sentiment of fear or ferocity. Whenever the villains would start dancing with excitement, some servants in the side wings would throw the *aradala* powder on the torches which would flare up and add up to the ferocious atmosphere. Later again, the torches were replaced by petromax lamps. Nowadays the villagers who have come under the influence of electricity, have started using electric lamps. This snobbery has unfortunately taken away the natural charm of the folk-theatre. The electric light does not create the mysterious and misty atmosphere.

PRAYER

The Sutradhara worships some favourite deity in the green-room and walks to the stage with Himmela and instruments. There also he performs worship of the stage and instruments. It is only then that the prayer is sung. This prayer is sung differently at

different parts of North-Karnataka. The prayer is generally known as *Stutipanchaka* (Five-Fold Prayer) containing five songs. Many times they are not actually five songs but only three, the three sections of the third being wrongly counted as independent songs. Generally a prayer starts as follows :

'Sri Vighneswara Pahimam'

and is followed by the second song with three sections :

'Sri Sambhavi Sukumara'

and ends with a praise of Guru :

'Manabhimanava Ninnadu Tande'

In some districts of North-Karnataka, a single prayer to Lord Ganesa i.e. Sri. Gouri Varaputra is sung instead of the *Stuti panchaka*. This method is followed in the district of Bijapur. In the prayer to Lord Ganesa, a brief reference is also made to Lord Sankara. But in the districts of Dharwad and Belgaum a prayer to Lord Siva is followed by prayers to Lord Ganesa and Goddess Sarada. It must be noticed that though prayers are addressed to Lord Siva and Goddess Sarada, it is only Lord Ganesa who appears on the stage, dances lightly and sits on the holy seat. It is only then that the Sutradhara starts his dialogue. Normally the situation is as follows :

Sutradhara - Lord, my salutations to you.

Ganesa - Please get up, O Sutradhara

Sutradhara - Yes, my Lord.

Ganesa - O Sutradhara, as I was at the shrine of Mt. Srisaila, and of Mt. Kailasa and enjoying the sight of dances of Nandi, Brungi, Narada, Saraswati, Garudas, Kinnaras and Kimpurusas, I heard your melodious voice and came here instantly. I am very pleased with you. Let me know your wish so that I can grant it immediately.

Sutradhara -Lord, I fall at your feet and pray to you. Tonight I am going to arrange a play called *Lanka Dahana* (*The Burning of Lanka*)

Ganesa -My dear Sutradhara, I bless your play *Lanka Dahana* whole heartedly. As for the mistakes likely to be made by children and the ignorant, you please pray to Saraswati, Goddess of Speech. My time is already up. I must be going to my abode now.

Sutradhara -Lord, kindly do as you please.

Then the *Sutradhara* prays to Goddess Sarada. While he is praying Goddess Sarada comes on dancing on the stage. The dance of this goddess has its own distinctive style which does not bear any resemblance to the other dances of *Mudalapaya*. The dialogue between the goddess and *Sutradhara* resembles that between Lord Ganesa and himself. But Goddess Sarada, unlike Lord Ganesa, clinches the matter by granting the wish of the *Sutradhara*. It is only then that the *Sarathi* comes on the stage and continues the scene.

BALA GOPALA

Like in the *Purva-Ranga* of *Yaksagana* there is a tradition in the eastern part of North-Karnataka, of bringing in BalaGopala (Child-Gopala) at the beginning of the performance. Usually a small boy is made to play this role. His arrival on the stage is preceded by a song praising him. The song is generally as follows :

Come, O come / O Gopala, the child,
Stealer of Gopi's clothes, / Lifter of Mt. Govardhana,
Tender of cows / Rider of the eagle,
O lotus-eyed one, / *Kaustubha*-decked one,
Come O come / Gopala, the child

The boy with the make-up of child-Gopala stands behind the back-curtain when the song of praise is sung. As soon as the song is over, he comes on the stage dancing. (In some areas, it is the child-Gopala and not Lord Ganesa who comes on the stage after the prayer to Lord Ganesa is sung). But unlike Lord Ganesa with his protruding belly and trunk, Bala-Gopala stands and is talked to, not by *Sutradhara* but by *Sarathi*. Here *Sarathi* does not bother about asking for boons or blessing. On the contrary he goes on introducing the other characters to the audience through his dialogues. A sample can be seen in the following :

- Sarathi - O Lord, may I know who you are ?
- Bala Gopala - (Preparatory Speech) Bravo, man.
Who are you the crest-jewel who come to this
gem-studded court-hall and ask the name of the
holy deity. ?
- Sarathi - I am called Sarathi who talks with people like you.
- Bala Gopala - (Naming Speech) Bravo Sarathi . O Sarathi,
the supremely intelligent one. Please know that I
am Sri. Balakrishna who is like the moon to the ocean
of Devaki's womb and Vasudeva who is a great
Lord intent upon rewarding the good and punish
ing the wicked in the world.
- Sarathi - Now I could understand that you are Lord
Balakrishna. Respected sir, may I know the reason
why you left your celestial abode and came to this
court-hall ?
- Bala Gopala - (Public Speech) Bravo, Sarathi. The reason
why I came down to this pleasant looking
court-hall is to grant the wishes of my devotees.
Understand Sarathi ?
- Sarathi - Lord, whom do you bless with boons ?
- Bala Gopala - (Song I)
Please know that

I bless those
Who worship my feet
With wealth abundant.

(Prose) O, Sarathi, please understand that I shall grant all the wishes of the devotees who pray to me. O man of glorious virtue.

(Song II)

I entered into the ocean
And slaughtered the demon
Called Somakasura
And brought the Vedas

(Prose) Bravo, Sarathi. Listen to the story from here carefully. Please know that I am Lord Madusudhana who protected the earth by bringing the Vedas after destroying the demon called Somakasura.

Sarathi - Dear Lord, we have planned to enact a play called *Chandrahasa*. I request you to kindly bless us.

Bala Gopala - Bravo, my dear Sarathi, why not ? I bless you wholeheartedly. My time is up now. May the play be enacted very happily. My dear Sarathi, let us go to Gokula now. Do you understand me ?

These dialogues of Bala Gopala appear to be incomplete. But in the earliest days the passage must have contained a full description of all the ten Incarnations, both in prose and in song.

ENTRY OF CHARACTERS

The good or virtuous characters wear a cover on their face while they walk from the green room to the stage. But the demon charac-

ters come on dancing right from the green room itself. As they come dancing and jumping ferociously in the light of torches and accompanied by drum-beats the somnambulistic audience are awakened with a jerk as it were. Some times crackers are fired only to add up to the ferocity of the situation. In some districts the characters enter on the stage from side-wings, whereas in some others, they do so from within the audience. Whenever there is a court-scene two servants hold a blanket or a shawl until the characters occupy their seats or chairs behind it and then lift it away.

Since the people of North-Karnataka, like other Indians in general, are quite superstitious they want to ward off the effect of evil-eye. They therefore, wave lemons or coconuts or pumpkins before the characters according to their size or stature and crack or break them. In some districts only coconuts are waved and cracked before all the characters no matter what their size or stature be. This practice of warding off the evil-eye is conspicuous by its absence in the western tradition of folk-drama (*i.e. Yaksagana*)

REHEARSAL

The movement of chariot, war or journey and such other scenes are accompanied by rhythmic singing in the background. The background singing of this type is called 'talim' (rehearsal) which is in accordance with the rhythm of horizontal drum (*maddale*). In the early days, senior *Sitradharas* used to show a lot of variety which the present-day actors cannot afford to excel. The musical phrases like "*lali lali lalito, lali lali*" with the repetition of 'l' sound are quite pleasant to hear. Such musical phrases are also called "lali biditi". '*Talim*' also belongs to this type of singing, but in it only the notes (*bols*) of *mridangam* are recited like, for example, "*Tomtaka janadhim takajana tom tomtaka janato Dhimtaka jana tom takajana takajanadhim taka janata taita Dhimataka janata*". Such notes of drum accompanied by a drone

of harmonium and *sahanai*, naturally, create a very exciting atmosphere.

OTHER ASPECTS

Usually the people of North-Karnataka stage a single play in a night, but paradoxically enough, even the single play contains three plays or themes and deserves to be a trilogy. A *Bayalata*, like *Pramile*, for example, contains the stories of Sudhanva, Pramile and Babhruvahana. Similarly another *Bayalata* like *Devi Kathe* contains three stories of *Madhu Kaitabha Vadha*, *Mahisasura Mardhana* and *Sumbha Nisumbha Vadha*. However this does not rule out the possibility of the enactment of single-storied *Bayalatas*

The *Mudalapaya* theatre is generally said to have been nourished by amateur artists only. But an example contrary to the general supposition is provided by the Harijans of Kappagallu (Bellary district) who are said to have made enactment of *Bayalata* their full time profession. Their troupe is said to have consisted of only four or five artists. Another surprise of their troupe is that an actress used to play the role of *Sutradhara*. They are even said to have visited other districts with their troupe

Nowadays it is unfortunate that the villagers have been losing interest in *Bayalata* because of the influence of urbanisation. They do not have the patience to learn the song and dance required for the *Bayalata*. They have been attracted by the cheap professional plays. They have been giving up the practice of employing men for female characters. As a result the actresses of professional theatres have started playing female roles in *Bayalatas*, as is seen in villages like Kudligi (of Bellary district). Dr. B.S. Gaddagimath opines that in some *Bayalatas*, *jagate* (gong) is employed along with *maddale*, and he therefore calls them *Jangateyatas* (Gong-Plays).

PREMILI BABHRUVAHANA

Premili Babhruvahana (edited by Dr. M.S. Latthe) is a mythical *Doddata* written by Saranappa Ingalagi of Ravuru village of Chitapur Taluka of Gulbarga district. A weaver by profession, Saranappa was an ardent devotee of the pontif of the local Siddhalingeswara Monastery. He, therefore has paid homage to the deity i.e. Lord Siddhalingeswara in his songs. He has changed the name of the village from Ravuru to Ragramavasa as he thought the name of the village was not a pleasant name. He is said to have lived from 1896 to 1954. This *Bayalata* has been performed several times in the villages around Chitapur. The play draws its popular theme from Aswamedha Parva of Vyasa's *Mahabharata* and the Kannada *Jaimini Bharata*. The central event of the play concerns itself with the war between Arjuna and his son Babhruvahana sired on Chitrangada. When Babhruvahana hesitates to fight with Arjuna suspecting the latter to be his own father, he is taunted by the latter who says that a true *Ksatriya* will never hesitate to fight with any one as it is part of one's duty. Hence the fight between father and son takes place. Finally Arjuna faints and Chitrangada sheds tears at the sight of her husband lying in a swoon. Babhruvahana, as directed by Ulupi, brings the *sanjivaka mani* (life reviving jewel) and restores the life of his father. Because of the depiction of the sentiments of love (*sringara*) and war (*vira*), this play naturally attracted a large number of spectators.

CHITRAKETU

Chitraketu (edited by Dr. M.S. Latthe) is a very popular mythical *Doddata* written by Jadara Malleshi, of Mutanala village who lived between 1890 and 1950 and who was known for his several *bhajans* and *Bayalatas*. The play begins with the prefatory song (*nandi*) and praise of Lord Ganapati (*Ganapati stuti*) composed by Kudutini Narasingaraya. The story of this *Doddata*

has been borrowed from *Bhagavata* text. The plot may be traced as follows.

Chitraketu was the King of Surasena City and did not have a single issue in spite of having ten thousand wives. He, therefore, conducts a 'putrakamesthi' sacrifice. One day he brings consecrated rice from Lord Hari and as per Narada's suggestion offers it to his elder wife Charumati who consequently conceives and gives birth to a male child called Chitrangada. But the mischievous Narada instigates Chitraketu's younger wife Sumati against Charumati. Charumati scolds Sumati as 'the daughter of a beggarly brahmin'. Insulted by this Sumati seeks the help of her father to take revenge upon Charumati. Angirasa, father of Sumati, therefore, goes to king Chitraketu on the occasion of the birth of a child to the latter and asks him three boons : 1) that Charumati should go to the forest along with her child, 2) that King Chitraketu should be his slave and 3) that King Chitraketu should hand over the kingdom to Sumati. King Chitraketu agrees to all these conditions, trapped as he is by his own words. He sends his wife Charumati to woods and becomes a slave of King Angirasa who sells him to Nidhipati for 10,000 rupees. Chitraketu is not defeated by any of these humiliations. Finally Angirasa makes Nidhipati's daughter Chandramalini tempt Chitraketu. Even this trick fails. Angirasa contrives the situation in such a way that Chitraketu is impelled to murder his own wife Charumati. But before he does so, Lord Krishna appears there and prevents the possible tragedy, and blesses him with a long and happy life. Finally Angirasa confesses his inability to ruin Chitraketu and apologises. The play ends with a benedictory song.

Chapter - III

SANNATA (DAPPINATA)

Bayalata was bifurcated into two forms of drama namely *Dodddata* (Grand Drama) and *Sannata* (Little Drama). The cause for the birth of *Sannata* in addition to *Dodddata* is interpreted differently by different scholars. Dr. B.B. Hendi opines that *Dodddata*s are very expensive performances on account of the grand stage properties, costumes and musical instruments and were beyond the reach of poor villagers who, therefore, must have evolved another form of drama called *Sannata* which was not only inexpensive but could cater to the social and moral needs of their life. Dr. M.S. Sunkapur opines that *Sannata* was evolved by the villagers to give expression to the sentiments of eroticism (*sringara*), devotion (*bhakti*), pity (*kuruna*) and humour (*hasya*) etc not covered by *Dodddata* which was confined only to the expression of sentiments of heroism (*vira*) wonder (*adbhuta*) or terror (*bhayanaka*). Though both Dr. Hendi and Dr. Sunkapur show the contrast between the two forms of *Bayalata* in their external aspects, they do not examine the deep reason for the change from *Dodddata* to *Sannata* in its essence. Dr. M.M. Kalburgi perceives a deeper reason for this change. He rightly argues that the birth of the new form of folk-drama called *Sannata* was caused by the inner necessity of the people. He says that the heroic sensibility of the people of Karnataka came to an end in the twelfth century and was replaced by the devotional sensibility enriched by the *Bhakti* movement of Basaveswara and other super-Saranas. Just as the *campu* style of standard Kannada literature was replaced by the new literary forms like *vacana*, *ragale* and *satpadi*, *Dodddata* mainly a vehicle of expression of heroic sensibility gave rise to *Sannata* which became a vehicle of expression of devotional sensibility. The difference between the two forms of folk-drama which began to be noticed in the twelfth century took a very long period of nearly four hundred years

until the fall of Vijayanagara Empire in the sixteenth century. This change from the heroic sensibility to the devotional one was very slow and latent in the hearts of people until it manifested in the nineteenth century in the form of *Sannata*. Dr. Kalburgi, therefore, concludes that whereas *Dodddata* was a product of heroic age, *Sannata*, that of devotional age.

Sannata has thrived only in North-Karnataka and not in the South because North-Karnataka had come under the strong influence of the *Siva-bhakti* of *Saranas* and the *Hari-bhakti* of *Dasas*. Such religious movements were conspicuous by their absence in South-Karnataka. The Kingdoms of Keladi and Mysore in South-Karnataka after the fall of Vijayanagara Empire provided favourable atmosphere for the development of heroic sensibility in the people. North-Karnataka which was oppressed by the Muslim rule and the British consecutively provided a very favourable atmosphere for the flowering of religious sensibility. The opium of spirituality provided by Nijaguna Sivayogi's philosophy, Saint Siddharudha of Hubli, Saint Sharif of Sisunal and Saint Madivaleswara of Garag added up to the devotional sensibility of the people of North-Karnataka.

The *Saranas* of North-Karnataka preached the supreme idea of devotion to Lord Siva (*Siva-bhakti*) and had done away with mere physical heroism of the past. They had also brought in a good transformation in Kannada literature in the form of *Vacana*, *Ragale* and *Satpadi*. The heroic poetry of Pampa had already been replaced by the devotional poetry of Kumaravyasa. But the element of devotion had not yet entered into the field of drama so early. It had to wait for its manifestation until a new theme and theatrical genre was evolved by people in the form of *Sannata*.

Consequent upon the change from heroic sensibility to devotional one, the *Bayalata* underwent a conspicuous change in its theatrical aspects. The dance and other physical features (*angika*), the speech and songs (*vacika*), the costumes, ornaments and stage

properties (*aharya*) and the histrionic expression of feelings and emotions (*sattvika*) of *Dodddata* were generally grand and gaudy which would not be employed in *Sannata* without becoming absurd. They, therefore, had to be transformed and adapted to the needs of social and devotional themes of *Sannata*. There was some kind of change from mythological symbolism to social realism and a reduction from mythological grandeur to quotidian simplification. Social awareness contributed a lot to the development of *Sannata*. Because of the reduction from the grand to the small and simple, the new form of theatre was called *Sannata* (Small or Little Theatre) just to be contradistinguished from the Grand Theatre (*Daddata*) of the past dealing with only mythological themes.

Dappinata started and grew sufficiently in stature only in the latter half of the nineteenth century. *Dappinata* is a play (*Bayalata*) which contains songs sung to the accompaniment of *dappu* or small drum. In the earliest days *Dappinatas* were nothing but a series of songs sung to the accompaniment of a small drum. (In a way they may be called musical operas of North Karnataka). The tempo and tunes of the songs are in agreement with the rhythm of the small drum. The use of any other instrument would simply spoil the beauty of *Dappinata*.

Dappinata came to be known as *Sannata* only in the second stage of its development i.e. after the second decade of the twentieth century. The label 'Sannata' was used only to differentiate *Dappinata* from the *Mudalapaya* (or *Dodddata*). Whereas *Dodddata* was quite grand in its stage, costumes and theme, *Sannata* (i.e. small play) was small in scale in terms of its stage and costumes if not in theme.

Before understanding the nature of *Sannata*, it is better to guard against a few misconceptions about its origin. It is neither inspired by *Dodddata*, nor a dramatic type of shorter duration of 3 or 4 hours ; nor a simplified version of *Dodddata*.

The folk-theatre of North-Karnataka received a great im-

petus in the nineteenth century. Many cultural changes took place in that period. New styles of writing and forms of drama (literature) were evolved then. According to the present evidences, the ancestry of *Dappinata* cannot be earlier than 1860. But it came into its own between 1880 and 1890. By that time it had established itself as an independent dramatic form. In fact, it grew simultaneously with *Mudalapaya*. The impetus for the origin of *Dappinata* was, in fact, provided by the *Tamasa* of Maharashtra and *Dasarata* of Karnataka. *Dappinata* is thus either inspired by one of these two drama forms or a combination of the two. They have certainly not originated from *Yaksagana* or *Dasavatara Ata* or puppet-shows.

FIRST PHASE

The history of *Dappinata* could be divided into two phases. The first phase could be traced from the beginning to the second decade of the 20th century. The second phase starts from there to the present time. Initially all the *Dappinatas* were musical plays. The plays like *Radhanata*, *Sangya-Balya*, *Rupasena* and *Station-Master* are all musical. The members of the front-chorus (*mummela*) used to sing the songs. The dialogues were never fixed. On the contrary, they used to be spoken by characters extempore. It is only the songs which were composed by the dramatists, whereas the prose-dialogues were improvised by the characters on the stage. The old manuscripts of *Dappinatas*, therefore, contain only the songs, but it is only in the recent manuscripts that the dialogues are interlarded. But even these prose-dialogues, though they look like extempore utterances of characters, are in fact concretisations of the folk-language, proverbs, rhythm and beliefs. The prose dialogues of the characters are in no way inferior to the songs composed by the playwright.

SECOND PHASE

The second phase of *Dappinata* set in when the playwright not only composed songs but added the prose-dialogues also alternately. Thus *Dappinata* came to have the present form. The tradition of combining song (poetry) and prose was first initiated by Nilakanthappa of Kadarolli with his composition of a play entitled *Tirunilakantha* around 1920. It marks the transition of *Dappinata* from the first phase to the second one. Because of this novelty, *Tirunilakantha* became extremely popular and came to be called 'Kadarolli Ata'.

Sivanandakavi of Hannikeri wrote a number of *Dappinatas* in the fourth decade of the twentieth century. He established the tradition initiated by Nilakanthappa. These plays, with a little alteration could be staged as musical plays. The *Dappinata* entitled *Nijaguna Sivayogi* has thus been said to be adopted to the form of musical drama. The inspiration for such adaptations provided by the introduction of contemporary element in *Dappinata* is traceable to the influence of professional theatre. It is a matter of irony that *Dappinata* received inspiration from the Company Drama rather than vice versa. Later when Nilakanthappa wrote his *Dappinata* entitled *Tirunilakantha*, he seems to have drawn upon his experience as actor in the professional theatre.

The professional theatres had established themselves far earlier than the folk-theatre had struck roots. The following were a few famous professional drama - companies :

1. 1869 - Nataka Mandali of Halasige
2. 1862 - Viranarayana Prasadika Kritapura
Nataka Mandali, Gadag.
3. 1880 - Tantupura Sangita Nataka Mandali, Dharwad.
4. 1908 - Konnuru Nataka Mandali, Bailahongala.

5. 1904 - Sri Laxmiprasadika Nataka Mandali
(owned by Sirahatti Venkobarayya)
6. 1913 - Viswagunadarsa Nataka Mandali
(owned by Vamanrao Master)
7. 1916 - Sri. Dattatreya Nataka Mandali
(owned by Garuda Sadasivaraya)

Although Nilakanthappa and Sivanandakavi were influenced by the professional theatre, they retained their independence when they composed *Dappinatas*. But recently the folk-theatre has come under such a powerful influence of the professional theatre that it has been losing its native purity and charm. Sometimes a few plays of professional theatre were converted into *Sannatas* with an addition of a few songs and dances. *Bhagyalaxmi* and *Hemaraddi Mallamma* are examples of such transformations.

CLASSIFICATION

M.S. Sunkapur has classified the *Dappinatas* into four categories namely, 1) *Saranarata*, 2) *Rajanata*, 3) *Dasarata*, and 4) social plays on the basis of the singing style adapted and major themes depicted in them. But this classification is unfortunately not satisfactory as it tries to reduce accident into a rule. It is part of a general convention in North-Karnataka to call the *Dappinatas* either by their heroes, or by the famous actors in them, or by their authors. Sunkapur's classification is, therefore, to be given up. Instead, these plays can be classified as follows :

1. Mythological plays - *Anasuya, Bhakta Prahlada, Lavakusa, Viswamitra etc.*
2. Historical plays - *Sangolli Rayanna, Keladi Chennamma, Dharma Samrjaya etc.*
3. Social plays - *Sangya-Balya, Sahukaranata, Katti*

4. Folk plays - *Chenna, Rupasena etc.*
- Basavanta-Balāvanta, Dharma
Devate, Madaga-Masura
Kenchamma etc.
5. Devotional plays - *Tirunilakantha, Nijaguna Sivayogi.*
Kabira Dasa, Tukarama etc.

INITIAL PRAYER AND PREPARATORY SONG

The prayers of *Dappinata* are not as complex as those of *Mudalapaya*. Every play compulsorily begins with a prayer to Lord Ganapati. But unlike the prayer in *Mudalapaya* which is standardised in all the plays, that of *Dappinata* varies from author to author, play to play (though the author may be the same) and place to place. For example, the plays written by Nilakanthappa and Sivanandakavi have prayers different from each other. Generally every *Dappinata* begins with a prayer to Lord Ganapati. But in some plays, the prayer to Lord Ganapati is followed by a prayer to Lord Siva (as in Nilakanthappa's *Tirunilakantha*) or one to Goddess Devi (as in *Nijaguna Sivayogi*). The prayer to Goddess Devi which is freely translated as follows cannot be said to be original :

I sing your holy name
 Bless me, O Goddess.
 You are the essence of *Vedanta*
 And the veritable Om,
 The shelter of *Saranas*
 And dedicated devotees,
 Destroyer of demons and
 Cheerer of monks and saints.
 You are the Protectress of the world,
 And Giver of life to all creatures

Bless me O Benefactress and
Consort of Lord Murahara.

(Ms-- *Nijaguna Sivayogi*)

This prayer to Goddess Devi seems to have been influenced by the prayer to Goddess Sarada of the *Mudalapaya* tradition.

The initial prayer to Lord Ganapati is normally quite simple and straightforward which contains the name, signature and place of the author. (Sometimes they may contain references to the local deities of the villages where the manuscripts were copied down.)

The prayer to Lord Ganapati is straightaway followed by enactment of the main theme. The character, as and when required by the situation, may sing the praises of their own personal deities. But sometimes these prayers to personal deities seem to be totally out of context and, therefore, irrelevant. For example, Taravati, wife of Basavanta in *Basavanta-Balavanta*, begins praying to Lord Siva as soon as she comes on the stage and that too without caring for her husband's call. In the same play, Sidda the black magician sings prayers to Lord Rama at both his entry and exit. Irrelevant prayers such as these seem to be only foolish interpolations.

In the *Dappinatas* of musical style of the first phase, there used to be a preparatory song which followed immediately after the prayer to Lord Ganapati and which addressed the audience directly, and announced briefly the theme of the play. See for example the preparatory song of *Station-Master of Kadlimatti*. The following translation brings out its contents though not its style or structure.

Elders of the houseful audience
Listen to me please and let me
Narrate the story from the beginning.

The Station Master of Kadlimatti
Committed a crime in ignorance when
Evil time had indeed come to him.

The fool had grown mad after a lady
Her beauty had inflamed his lust.
He entreated her for dalliance
But she condemned him 'Go away, you fool'.

Angered was the Station-Master
By the lady's rejection and
Hacked the limbs of her babe
The crest-jewel of Devalapura.

Similarily there is a preparatory song in *Sangya-Balya* which begins as follows :

Ladies and gentlemen
Please make not any noise.

But this song does not announce the theme of the play. It only refers to the 'matter' of *Sangya-Balya* without entering into any details. The preparatory songs such as these are not to be found in the *Dappinatas* of the second phase, probably because of the thick influence of the professional drama itself.

ORIGINAL THEME AND CHANGE

The *Dappinatas* of the second phase have created a novelty in terms of the choice of themes and development of scenes. Though such *Dappinatas* are nearer to standard drama, they are quite independent in their purpose. The main purpose of these *Dappinatas* is to explicate *Vedanta* or philosophy in such a simple style as to be easily grasped by the folk-audience. The dramatist's special responsibility lies in seeing that the philosophical explication

tion does not degenerate into a sermon. Many dramatists have succeeded in the task of creating contrastive characters in order to express contradictory points of view of a particular philosophy. The question-and-answer pattern seen in the encounter between Allama and Maya in *Allamaprabhu* is easily modelled after the one available in the original story of *Prabhulingalile* (an epic of the 16th c.) But whenever a dramatist of *Dappinata* cannot lay his hands on any dialogue-oriented passage in the original story, he has to fall back upon his native resourcefulness to create scenes with dialogues which can bring out clearly the contradictory points of view. For example, in the original story of Nijaguna Sivayogi, there is no dialogue between Nijaguna and the prostitute. But the dramatist who has written a *Dappinata* namely *Nijaguna Sivayogi*, used his imagination to create a scene of dialogue between the saint and the prostitute. According to this *Dappinata*, Lord Sambhulinga keeps Nijaguna as a servant in the house of a blind prostitute in order to test his spirituality. When Nijaguna rubs her head, the blind prostitute regains her eye-sight. By way of gratitude, Pramila, a young prostitute and daughter of an old one, begins to woo him. But Nijaguna refuses to yield to her. The conversation between Nijaguna and the young prostitute provides an excellent opportunity for the dramatist to depict two contradictory points of view namely lustful and spiritual. Similar imaginative inventions and adaptations are to be seen in the *Dappinata* dealing with the great saint Akkamahadevi also. In the original story, for instance, King Kousika snatches away Mahadevi's sarce but yet fails to denude her. The pile of sarces lies in a mass. Angered by this, King Kousika feels scorched by the invisible fire and begins to roll up and down on the floor. The large mass of sarces is burnt up at the angry sight of Mahadevi. Such new miracles depicted by the playwright never fail to elicit the appreciation of the folk-audience. The deliberate changes or adaptations such as these are to be found only in the *Dappinatas* of the second phase and not in those of the first one.

CHARACTERS

The characters of musical *Dappinatas* of the first phase were manifestations of the simple-minded villagers, whereas those of the subsequent period took on the air of urbanity and artificiality. The dialogues of musical *Dappinatas* were mostly extempore, simple and straightforward and based upon the songs themselves. Therefore, these dialogues are controlled and authentic creations of the folk-mind.

The simplicity, straightforwardness and folk-purity which are characteristic features of musical *Dappinatas* are lost in those of the second phase, which are marked by limited learning and a superficial fondness for *Vedanta* (or philosophy). Because of these reasons, the *Dappinatas* of the second phase underwent a sort of degeneration. The characters could neither retain the purity of folk-drama nor attain the height of standard drama. Most of these characters delight in producing the inordinately lengthy dialogues without having a sense of relevance. Sometimes they forget the very nature of the roles they are playing. For example, Tirunilakantha in the original source (Harihara's *Ragale*) is a saint who is known for his secret devotion. But in the *Dappinata* of the second phase the saint degenerates into a talkative sermoniser who goes on lecturing to the other characters and audience, about the stereotyped themes like life, *maya*, devotion to *Guru* and *mukti* etc. Satyavati, wife of Tirunilakantha, starts lecturing to the audience about the virtue of chastity (*pativritya*) as soon as she comes on the stage : "O my dear sisters and mothers, I shall tell you as much as I know about how women should behave. Woman will achieve salvation only if she serves her husband with her body, mind and wealth". (*Tirunilakantha* p.4) The same lady again condemns the whole of male species when her husband returns from the house of a prostitute. Many times there is no concordance between the dialogues and the behaviour of the characters on the stage. The talkative speeches of the characters are not attended by the dignity and sophistication required by the context.

Another important cause for the degeneration of *Dappinatas* of the second phase is the deep influence of the tradition of *Haradesi-Nagesi* (also known as *Kalgi-Turayi*) which is made of two or two sets of characters (male and female,) arguing and proving the male superiority over the female or vice versa. This tradition was extremely popular in North-Karnataka when *Dappinata* was in its second phase of growth. The people who were attracted by the *Haradesi-Nagesi* tradition tried rather blindly, to incorporate it in their *Dappinatas*, by dividing the characters into two (male and female) groups and making them agree with each other in a decidedly exaggerated fashion, without, unfortunately caring for the dignity of their nature. The male characters like Allama, Nijaguna and Tirunilakantha turned out to be (I must say, rather degenerated into) lawyers pleading for male superiority in the court of the audience, whereas female characters like Akkamahadevi, Satyavati and Pramila become lawyeresses pleading for female superiority. The playwrights of *Dappinatas* who were deeply influenced by *Haradesi-Nagesi* tradition, tried to structure the play in such a way as to select and highlight only that part of the story which allows the possibility of a quarrel or conflict between male and female characters and to neglect the other aspects of the story however important they may be. In the *Dappinata* entitled *Allamaprabhu* the dramatist arranges only scenes of dialogue between Allamaprabhu and Maya and avoids the scenes of Allamaprabhu's meeting with Basavanna and Siddharama. Similarly in other plays the dialogues between Lord Siva and Goddess Parvati and between Akkamahadevi and King Kousika occupy a major portion to the exclusion of other aspects. This is an evidence of the extraordinary influence of *Haradesi-Nagesi* tradition on *Dappinatas* resulting in the dilution of dramatic material

One more thing to be specially noticed in these *Dappinatas* is that although mythological and historical characters are employed in them, they behave not like figures whose name they bear, but

like simple-minded villagers. Let them be kings or queens or ministers, they do not exhibit any dignity or grandeur or grace indigenous to the original figures but behave as simplistically as the villagers and give expression to the common emotions of humanity like love, anger, sorrow and hope etc. In this sense the characters of *Dappinatas* whether they are historical or mythological, act as mirrors of contemporary folk-consciousness.

SONGS

There is no metrical restriction to the songs of musical *Dappinatas*. The number of lines and stanzas may vary, but the end rhyme is invariably maintained. But it is only in those of the second phase that the initial rhyme is retained. The literary values like poeticality, simplicity and fecility of narration characterising the musical *Dappinatas* are not to be found in those of the second phase. Whereas the songs of musical *Dappinatas* have colloquial tempo and rhythm, those of the second phase are composed in bookish language.

When Irya is about to leave home for his business tour, Gangi tells him :

There is not a single soul
In the three storeyed mansion.
My dear husband
Not a single child have I
Nor has my youth withered.
Alas ; the poor me ;
How shall I ever live alone
In this large mansion, dear ?

Although the original colloquial rhyme or rhythm cannot be brought out in this translation, it brings out the naturalness and directness of the heroine's thinking. The suggestive quality of the lines "Not a single child have I/Nor has my youth withered" is quite

obvious and universal. It succeeds in bringing out the intimacy of relation and cordiality of atmosphere. Later, when Gangi invites Sangya for a rendezvous she says :

Let us mingle together
Like milk set with curd
And eyelids closed in sleep.

(*Sangya-Balya*)

Again the racy images are to be specially noticed. Similarly when *Duti* sees the abode of Krisna, (*Gokula*) she says :

See the gate of Gokula
O my dear sister,
See the colourful stage
Flanked by plantain-trunks
And decked with festoons.

(*Rupasena*)

The raciness of the description of Gokula should not be ignored. Thus naturalness, raciness, simplicity, and straightforwardness are the characteristic features of the songs belonging to the *Dappinatas* of the first phase.

On the contrary, the songs of those of the second phase are quite bookish and artificial in nature. These songs abound in external and internal rhymes and rhythms which they owe to the deep influence of *lavanis* (ballads) extremely popular in North-Karnataka in those days. Another important feature of the songs of these *Dappinatas* is that most of them are in the form of dialogues, although the names of the characters are not openly mentioned, they are suggested in the very structure of dialogues.

DASARATA

The title '*Dasarata*' had created a good deal of confusion among the critics of Karnataka themselves. But fortunately the confusion has recently been cleared. *Dasarata*, on the surface, may mean 'a play about *dasas*'. Here *dasas* are generally mistaken to be 'Haridasas' like Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa etc. *Dasaratas* were therefore, supposed to be plays written or enacted by *Haridasas* on the theme of *Dasa* culture or tradition. This pedantic mistake was made because of reading a broad meaning in a work having a narrow one. Factually speaking, the word 'dasa' in *Dasarata* has nothing to do with the *Haridasa* culture. On the contrary, it denotes a caste i.e. of 'dasa' or 'dasar' in North-Karnataka having many subcastes in it.

1. *Golla-dasas* are the devotees of Lord Krisna. The men-folk of this community go on singing around and collect grains and teach the histrionic art of *Bayalata* to the aspiring actors, whereas the women-folk move about selling sundry things like needles, strings, ribbons and pins etc. Usually they know nothing about the songs and plays in which their men-folk indulge. These people who earn their livelihood by wandering the streets and singing, think that they are the best class among the *dasa* community.
2. *Hole-dasas* are called *Ura-dasas* (*dasas* of the village or town) also. These people go on singing along with their women-folk in the streets and touring from place to place. The other class of *dasas* look down upon them. It is customary in the villages to invite and feed them in the houses of high caste Hindus whenever there is a post-funeral worship or post-pilgrimage celebration.

3. *Ambige-dasas* are not an itinerant class. On the contrary, they settle in a place permanently. Fishing, weaving and selling wicker-baskets are their main professions.
4. *Putta-dasas* are also called *Uppars* and their main profession happens to be stone-cutting.
5. *Rama-dasas* are not *Uppars* although their profession is also stone-cutting. They claim to be *gurus* to *Uppars* and shepherd class (*Kurubas*).
6. *Kabbera-dasas* are a community of actors and actresses. It is customary in their families to allow (some) of their women-folk to become *basavis* or prostitutes. The men and women of this community go on touring from village to village to perform *Bayalatas* which have come to be known as *Dasaratas*.

Besides these major castes (or groups), there are many other minor groups also like *Dandagi-dasas*, *Chhatte-dasas*, *Beda-dasas* and *Domba-dasas*.

ORIGIN OF *DASARATA*

It is rather difficult to know the exact nature of the evolution of *Dasarata*. One can only guess it roughly as follows. The *dasas* of *Dasarata* are indubitably the children or descendents of *devadasis* (temple-prostitutes). Originally the *devadasis* were appointed by Kings to dance in the temples at the time of *puja* and were granted lands for their livelihood. Such dance of *devadasis* can still be seen in the temples of Lord Venkateswara and Lord Sankaralinga at Naragund of Dharwad district and other places of North-Karnataka. But gradually with the disappearance of princely states and decline of people's faith in religion, the *devadasis* began to suffer from poverty and were compelled by sheer economic

necessity to participate in the drama not of standard style but of folk-style. The songs and dances which they had learnt earlier were adopted to suit the needs of the folk-drama which came to be called *Dasarata*.

A PIECE OF ENTERTAINMENT

Dasarata does not require elaborate stage-property. Most often it is played in the religious fairs. But occasionally it is staged on the platform of the public hall (*chavadi*) or in front of a temple or in the yards of important persons. These plays have never been enacted on well-arranged stage. About half a dozen actors and actresses, mostly belonging to the same family manage the entire show. Out of these five or six, only three act the roles whereas the other three provide background chorus. The three characters are *Chimana* (Heroine), *Goddibhima* (Hero) and *Jawari* (*Vidusaka* or Comedian)

Dasarata begins with a prayer to Lord Ganapati and other goddesses. It is followed by the entry of two girls in the role of child-Gopala who begins to sing : " The child has come ; Gopala has come ". After the completion of this song, the girls exit by singing other songs and dancing. The next scene is the encounter between *Goddibhima* and *Chimana* which is occasionally interfered by the humorous speeches of *Jawari*. The whole scene of encounter between *Goddibhima* and *Chimana* is replete with songs and gestures of various kinds. The usual sequence of scenes is as follows : the first meeting of a youngman and a younggirl ; mutual attraction for each other ; germination of amorous feeling; youngman's request for the girl's love; the girl's rejection of the man's love ; the man's pangs of separation; the girl's repentance; the man's rejection of the girl's love ; the girl's pangs of separation; the ultimate union of the lovers through the agency of *Jawari* (or *Vidusaka*). In order to present this theme, the playwright makes use of *Dasa*-songs, amorous *lavani*, *jawali* and other light songs. The playwrights have a large collection of songs suitable for a variety

of scenes. But it is unfortunate that these artists gradually began to employ film-songs and even to dance just in order to cater to the degenerating taste of the audience. *Dasarata*, therefore, became only a means of pure entertainment consisting of amorous songs of Krisna's dalliance, or of man and woman; jokes and such other episodes, without having a fixed or particular theme containing any serious thought or vision. It may be said without any hesitation that this drama amply succeeds in giving vent to the suppressed feelings of the sexually starved village audience. It is quite common in villages for youngmen to be inspired to go on the stage and play some role which would help them to achieve a sexual catharsis at least verbally.

The vulgar or sexual element in *Dasarata* is suspected to have come there from the *Tamasa* - form of Maharashtra. But it is not true. On the contrary, it has come from the *Jalasa*-form. It must be specially remembered that there is a difference between *Tamasa* and *Jalasa*. *Tamasa* became *Jalasa* when the sexual element in it became too blatant and overpowering. In *Jalasa*, three or four women dance with sexual gestures. They also sing sexual folk-songs or film-songs. Whenever a spectator offers her a five or ten rupee note on which he writes the title of the song of his choice, the actress obliges him by singing that song and wishing him increase of wealth (*Doulat Javu*). There will be another actor who is quite mischievous and who goes on deliberately misinterpreting the speeches of female characters. The Marathi people have concluded that the *Jalasa* is not to be seen by respectable gentlemen. The actresses of *Dasarata* were, no doubt, deeply inspired by the *Jalasa* form, to indulge in blatant sexual speeches and gestures, as they were women of easy virtue. In brief, there is no difference whatever between *Jalasa* and *Dasarata*.

It has already been said that sometimes the youngmen of the villages walk on to the stage and begin to play some stray role

just in order to achieve a verbal catharsis for themselves. They straightaway begin to converse with the actresses in *double entendres*. The actress concerned who is intelligent enough to catch the overtones and undertones, does not hesitate to offer the right answers. The following is an example:

- Youngman 1 - O our he-buffalo is missing . Have you seen in which direction he has gone?
- Youngman 2 - (Pointing to the actresses) It must have gone into this narrow lane. He must have followed the young buffalo in their house.
- Youngman - O madams, why have you captured our he-buffalo ? Please release it.
- Lady -Why does he come to our house ?
- Young man 1 - Why? He has followed your young buffalo. You should tie your buffalo in your house. You should not let her wander on the road.
- Lady - 'Go go, Our buffalo is not an ordinary one. She does not allow herself to be touched by the useless he buffaloes whose necks are hardened because of constant labour in the mill.

(Quoted in *Janapada Sahitya Darsana*
Part III, by B.B. Hendi)

It is unfortunate that *Dasarata* did not develop its own tradition. Since it went on catering to the cheap taste of the audience and changing times, it did not have fixity of theme or style. It never had a definite theme or story. It was always satisfied with presenting a fragmentary episode with indefinite dialogues. *Dasarata*, therefore, never attained the stature of serious drama, but on the contrary remained a means of cheap entertainment. That is why there is a proverb in Kannada which says that '*Dasarata* can never be a proper play, just as a meal of *dosas* can never be a

proper meal.' But one remarkable feature of *Dasarata* is that it introduced the actual ladies (or actresses) for the female roles which is a revolutionary achievement in the history of *Bayalatas*. The actresses of *Dasarata* eventually began to participate boldly in *Dappinatas* and *Parijata*-plays. Even now most of the *Chimanas* who earn their livelihood through acting, belong to *Dasar* community.

Dasarata has, of late, fallen into oblivion partly because it catered to the cheap taste of minor audience and partly because of the roaring popularity of other forms of *Bayalatas*. One can see a community of people called *Jatigars* in Manvi taluka of Raichur district, who are not at all different from *Dasars*. These people i.e. *Jatigars* go on touring from village to village with their women and enact *Dappinatas* there. Needless to say, these women are of easy virtue and could be hired by any one anytime.

DASARATA - TAMASA

Some critics of Karnataka opine that the *Tamasa* form of Maharashtra originated from the *Dasarata* of North-Karnataka and that the characters like Galpoji, Radha and Sakharam Tatyia of *Tamasa* were nothing but variants of Goddibhimanna, Chimana and Jawari of *Dasarata* respectively. But this view is not the correct one as it is coloured by fanatic enthusiasm. *Tamasa* as Balwant Gargi has clearly stated, had originated in Maharashtra in the 17th century and reached its height by the early part of the 19th century. (*Folk Theatre of India*, pp.73-74) But the ancestry of *Dasarata* does not go beyond 160 years from now. *Tamasa* which had reached its zenith long back has no reason to be inspired by *Dasarata*.

RAJANATA

There is a lot of critical confusion and misinterpretation about *Rajanata* in Karnataka. Whereas some critics interpret it as

a form of drama dealing with royal personages, others ridiculously opine that it is a form of drama which can be enjoyed by the spectator in a royal fashion. All this havoc is created by the adjective 'royal' (Raja) in the caption. Neither of these views is correct.

Rajanata is, in fact, a form of *Dappinata* which was in vogue in Karnataka in the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. Sri. Moleram, a famous *Parijata*-artist reminisces about having seen his own elder brother participate in a *Rajanata* seventy years ago. He further remembered the fact that it was a very popular form of folk-drama then, although later on it disappeared suddenly. *Rajanata* came to be given that caption as it, unlike many contemporary social *Dappinatas* like *Rupasena* and *Sangya-Balya*, dealt with two kings, one of whom is called Chitrasena who has a pretty daughter. This play begins with a milkmaid who is accosted by Galpoji. But there is no connection between the milkmaid-and- Galpoji scene and the subsequent story of Chitrasena in the play. Historically speaking, it is only after *Rajanata* disappeared that *Radhanata* came into vogue.

RADHANATA

Radhanata is born in the latter part of 19th century, out of a combination of the elements of *Dasarata* and *Tamasa*. Since the elements of *Dasarata* which must have initially inspired this form of drama are missing from it now, we feel that it is a Kannada version of *Tamasa* in terms of theme, characters and enactment. The typical characters of *Tamasa* like Chimana, Galpoji and Sakharam Tatyha have been, no doubt, incorporated in *Radhanata*. But, there is no historical evidence to prove that they had been imported into *Tamasa* initially from the Kannada source and returned to Kannada folk-drama later.

The first *Radhanata* was composed by a folk playwright of potter community and a resident of a village called Basaragi of Chikkodi taluka of Belgaum district. The author being anonymous,

the play has come to be known as *The Potter of Basaragi's Play* (*Basaragi Kumbarana Ata*.) A few passages in this *Radhanata* suggest that the author must be a man called Babuji who happens to be the disciple of a Guru called Tulsiram Singh. The *Radhanata* is not exclusively authored by Babuji, as it is suspected to contain many interpolations by Tammana of Narewad and Appanna of Samanewadi.

The set theme of *Radhanata* i.e. Galpoji winning over the love of Chimana for him was not palatable to the people of *Haradesi* tradition. They, therefore, adapted the story to their point of view. In order to prove the female superiority, they made Chimana preach Vedanta to Gapolji. The new version gained enormous popularity, especially through the enthusiastic adventures of an actor called Nabi from Talewadi village of Basavana Bagewadi taluka. Nabi is said to have entitled this *Radhanata* as *Anubhavasara Lila*, but later it came to be known as *Nabi Ata* or *Talewadi Ata*. Nabi toured all over North Karnataka with his troupe and entertained a wide range of audience. Even today we can meet people here and there who remember to have enjoyed seeing Nabi's excellent performance on the stage in the role of Radha.

The *Radhanata* which is prevalent in North - Karnataka now, begins with a prayer to Lord Ganesa, which is followed by the arrival of the milkmaid (*Gallati*). *Duti* (i.e. the messenger) asks her as to who she is, *Gollati* introduces herself to *Duti* and describes the curds that she has brought :

Duti, listen to me,
I have brought milk and curds
Without any dirt
Or contamination.

Then she describes the butter and butter milk that she has brought and asks the *Duti* about the place where she can sell her

goods with profit. *Duti* suggests that there is no place better than Gokula where she can have a good market for her milk. Accordingly *Duti* and *Gollati* go to Gokula where *Gollati* is obstructed by cowherd Krisna who teases her by demanding some sort of tax from her. *Gollati* promises to love or marry him and pay him the tax when he, she and *Duti* will be born as Galpoji, Chimana and Sakharam Tatya respectively. With this promise, the first half of *Radhanata* comes to a close.

The latter half of the play begins with the friendly conversation between Galpoji and Sakharam Tatya. They have been playing chess on the stone slab there. At that time Galpoji sees Chimana pass by them and instantly falls in love with her. He, therefore, sends Sakharam Tatya to win her love for him. But Sakharam Tatya fails to persuade her. As the last resort, Galpoji himself meets her and pleads for himself but is unfortunately rejected by her. Being deeply disappointed by her rejection, he goes away from home and wanders about aimlessly. After knowing his plight, Chimana begins to search for him. When, at last, she meets him, she finds to her surprise, that he has become a *sanyasi*. Nevertheless, she repents of her bygone foolishness. After a long exchange of words, they are united with each other. The episode in which the milkmaid is teased by Krisna is quite common in the *Dappinatas* of the second phase (except, of course, *Sangya-Balya*). But it assumes a special importance in *Radhanata* in that it is linked with the later events of the play. The idea of Gopala, Gopika and *Duti* wishing for the next life in the role of Galpoji, Chimana and Sakharam Tatya is quite a beautiful one which is conspicuous by its absence in other *Dappinatas*.

The songs of *Radhanata* are composed only with the purpose of being sung. The colloquial language is adapted for the songs which are very simple and loose in rhythm. Many playwrights who composed these songs were influenced by the *lavanis* (folk-ballads).

Dappinatas are dialogue-oriented plays and not dance-oriented ones. It is only occasionally that Chimana, while singing, dances lightly and goes from one side of the stage to the other. Her dance mostly resembles that of *Jogatis*. The costumes of the characters of *Dappinata* are not of any special quality. Usually the Gollati, like all the milkmaids, places the hem of her saree across her chest. Whereas Chimana and Galopoji dress up like an aristocratic lady and a gentleman respectively, Sakharam Tatya wears clothes of mediocre quality.

Chimana is usually the heroine of *Radhanata*. But nowadays the word 'Chimana' has come to mean an 'actress' or a 'coquette' in general. The word 'Chimana' is originally a Marathi word meaning a 'tiny sparrow' and affectionately applied to children. But later it came to be applied to women also. The heroine of *Radhanata* which was inspired by Maharashtra, came to be called 'Chimana'. The following are some of the famous Chimanas or actresses who captured the hearts of enormous audiences in North-Karnataka through their talented performances: Kamalavva of Metagudda, Gangavva of Badakundri, Yamanavva of Dulaganawadi, Sitavva and Sankaravva of Alalagi, Saravva of Madal, Susila of Modaga, Ganga of Sivanapura, Santavva, Sitavva, Lalita and Kamalavva of Navalagatti etc.

The *Radhanata* written by Nabisaheb Ingalagi has been very popular in North-Karnataka. Nabi used to play the role of Radha so excellently that a young lady of high caste fell deeply in love with him and married him. Though Nabi followed the original version of *Radhanata* written by Hassan of Bibi-Ingalagi village of Indi taluka of Bijapur district, he is said to have made some minor changes in the play. As he is said to have been directed by a goddess in dream to prefix his name with another artist's he borrowed the name of his co-artist and excellent *tuntuni* player called Talavara Malla of Nagarala village and formed a signature Malla-Hassan. Another actor who used to play with him was a man called

Maula of Marola village of Hunagund taluka. Similarly Imamsaheb (Imya) of Sagaragaddi village of Sahapur taluka of Gulbarga district was known for his excellent role of Radha in *Radhanata*.

Gurulingeswara Kavi of Devanagaon village of Bijapur district has written a play entitled *Madanasundari* in the fashion of *Radhanata*. There are many folk-troupes in Gokak, Paschapur, Mutanala, Salotagi, Devanagoan and Kusanur which are specialised in *Radhanata* performances. A comparative study of different versions of these performances of *Radhanata* will, no doubt, be a rewarding job for researchers.

SANGYA -BALYA

This play is said to have been written by an anonymous playwright who happened to be a school teacher and who belonged to the community of goldsmiths and who was a native of Bailawadi village of Bailahongala taluka. The actual name of the author is not identified yet. His ancestors are said to have migrated from Gagad to Bailawad and settled there. The initial prayer in the play reveals the fact that Lord Sankarabasavanna of the temple of that name situated at the Sapurpet lane at Gadag, happened to be his personal deity. The theme of this play is based upon an actual event that happened in Bailahongala in the middle part of nineteenth century. Even today one can meet a few old men around Bailahongala who remember to have seen Gangi, the heroine of this play. The play must have been written when the murder of Sangya and the execution of Irya were still green in the folk memory.

The reason for the writing of this play is quite an interesting one. According to the widespread rumour, the playwright had fallen in love with Gangi. He, therefore, tried to win her over to him but unfortunately failed in the task. Both of them, of course, belonged to the village i.e. Bailawada. As luck had it, Gangi married Irya of Lagali family and went away to her husband's village i.e. Bailahongala. Deeply insulted as he was, the playwright was

secretly contemplating revenge upon her. He, therefore, wrote the play and began to have it staged in the village. The play, soon, attracted a wide audience in the surrounding villages and became extremely popular. Irapakshi and Basavanta, brothers of Irya had just escaped the punishment of execution by being converted to Christianity. They, naturally, felt deeply insulted by the performances of this play and sued the playwright in the court of law. Consequently the British Government in India prohibited the play for a few years. But in spite of the governmental ban on the play, it was secretly performed by the villagers of Avaradi near Kittur. Although the playwright was not an educated one, he was a pure folk-dramatist who combines in himself the colloquial flavour, lyrical delicacy, rhythmic sense and picturesqueness of imagery. From this point of view, he becomes a symbol of the highest folk-talent that North-Karnataka could ever produce.

THEME OF *SANGYA-BALYA*

Sangya is a rich youngman of Bailahongala and has a friend called Balya who happens to be a very poor fellow. They have met each other after an interval of eight days. Sangya is deeply moved by the extreme poverty of Balya and therefore takes him to a Marwadi's shop and buys a dhoti, a shirt piece and a turban for him.

Then Sangya invites Balya for playing cards. But Balya refuses to do so because he thinks it to be a bad habit. After a little persuasion Balya agrees to oblige Sangya. Together they go to the temple of Lord Basavanna.

Meanwhile a messenger from Belariy comes and hands over a letter to Iranna Lagali at Bailahongala. Irya (or Iranna) is another rich youngman of Bailahongala who has two brothers namely Irapakshi and Basavanta. Irya is recently married to a pretty girl called Gangi. Although Gangi is reluctant to allow him to be away from her, Irya is forced by circumstances to go to Bellary on

his business of pearls. Gangi says she cannot stay alone in a three storeyed mansion. Irya asks his two brothers to look after the family. Further, he asks his paternal aunt (who is an old woman now) called Paramma to stay with his wife and be her guardian in his absence. Then he leaves Bailahongala along with his servants who carry his axe, sickle and food packet.

Meanwhile there is a fair of the Temple of Lord Basavanna. Gangi takes consecrated food to the temple and is accompanied by Paramma. Gangi who is extraordinarily beautiful is bedecked with golden ornaments. Even the priest of the temple is tempted by her beauty and tries to flirt with her, but is rightly rebuked by her. By that time Sangya happens to come there and falls in love with her at first sight. He also happens to pick up the golden necklace which slips down from her neck without her knowledge. Sangya meets her and declares his love for her, but is rightly scolded and advised by her. He is so mad after her that he cannot think of anything else. He, therefore, forces his companion Balya to return the necklace to Gangi and plead for his love. Though Balya is reluctant to oblige him, he at last agrees to act the role of a Pandarus between the two. He goes to Gangi's mansion and is respectfully welcomed by her. But when he begins to describe Sangya's pangs of separation, he is thoroughly chidden by her and has his ears twisted by her. Knowing that his love is rejected by Gangi, Sangya grows more adamant about his love for her and decides to succeed in the amorous adventure by hook or by crook. He, therefore, forces Paramma (who happens to be his paternal aunt) to woo Gangi's love for him and promises to pay plenty of money and gold for the mediation. Paramma goes to Gangi's house and tries to eulogise Sangya before her, but Gangi pays no attention to it at all. Paramma feels insulted to know her own inability to tempt Gangi. At last she hits upon a plan of bringing Gangi round by blackmailing her. Accordingly she brings in Sangya's turban and keeps it on Gangi's bed without her knowledge and showing it to Gangi threatens her that she would publicise it widely in the village. Gangi is flabbergasted and is mortally afraid of the possible scandal. She, therefore, agrees to

oblige Paramma by asking her to bring along Sangya to her house at night.

The love affair between Gangi and Sangya continues smoothly. Meanwhile Irya who is on business tour to Bellary dreams peculiar dreams in which he sees his wife being married to somebody. Suspecting that something has gone wrong, he returns to his village and to his chagrin, learns the story of his wife's adultery is being widely circulated in the village, Irya begins to fume with anger and rushes home. The front door is closed. He calls out for Gangi. Gangi and Sangya who are dallying in passionate privacy are shocked beyond measure and do not know what to do. But Gangi, using her usual feminine resourcefulness, opens the door only after putting off the lamp. When Irya asks her why there is darkness in the house, Gangi lies that she could not find the match-box. By this time Sangya who has been waiting in the dark near the door escapes from there as soon as Irya enters the house. But, unfortunately, Sangya's turban is tilted by the door and slips down on the floor. Irya picks it up and is more than convinced about his wife's adultery. He confiscates all her clothes and ornaments and asks his brothers to send her away to her native place. Then he decides to take revenge against Sangya who has cuckolded him. He wants to take the help of Balya in this vindictive task. Though Balya initially hesitates, later he yields to the temptation and agrees to betray Sangya.

The festival of *Panchami* is a few days ahead. Sangya, therefore, is planning to take the festival gifts like copra and blouse-pieces for Gangi. Meanwhile Gangi happens to hear the news of her husband's preparations for Sangya's murder. She, therefore, secretly sends a letter to Sangya asking him not to stir out of home (or village). But as luck would have it, the letter happens to fall into Balya's hands. Balya tears off the letter and gets another letter written in Gangi's name asking Sangya to come over to her village with Balya and hands it over to Sangya. Unable to understand the conspiratorial plan, Sangya goes with Balya to Bailavada where

Gangi meets him secretly on the bank of a tank and expresses her premonition and sheds tears. Sangya, however, pacifies her and in spite of her warning, returns to Bailahongala. When Sangya and Balya are on the way to Bailahongala, Balya according to the pre-plan, asks Sangya to wait for a while until he relieves himself. He goes behind the fragrant screw-pine clusters and gives a signal to Irya, Irapaksi and Basavanta who encircle Sangya with their murderous weapons. Sangya entreats them to spare his life and promises to give anything demanded by them. But they turn a deaf ear to his entreaty and hack him to death. After the frenzied murder takes place Irya faints at the sight of the pool of blood. Finally all of them go to the police station and confess their crime before the authorities.

The playwright has lifted the theme from a real event that happened before him, but has given it an artistic touch thereby making it a beautiful *Bayalata*. The play is an evidence of the author's strength as well as weaknesses.

For example, the scene of Sangya's taking Balya to a Marwadi's shop is deliberately introduced by the playwright to show Sangya's generosity to the audience. The humorous dialogues between the Marwadi merchant and the two cronies provides a good contrast to the subsequent serious theme, although strictly speaking, it has no connection with it.

The visit of Sangya and Balya to the temple of Lord Basavanna for playing chess and Gangi's arrival there are coincidences deliberately contrived by the author. Similarly Gangi's losing her necklace and its being found only by Sangya and Sangya's begging for her love are all imaginative inventions of the playwright. Similarly when Gangi and Sangya talk with each other, the playwright cleverly removes Paramma and Balya from the scene to provide privacy for the lovers. Gangi, far from giving in to Sangya's request, gives him a piece of advice which though not in keeping

with her nature, conforms to the tradition of *Bayalata*.

Irya's dream comes as part of the thematic development of the play. The first meeting between Gangi and Sangya has been depicted very poetically. The songs that occur in the scene, their rhythm and symbolic images -all these contribute to the theatrical success. This scene which can be said to be the heart of the play is an evidence of the playwright's poetic talent. He has deliberately kept Irya and Basavanta away from the lovers when they are courting. This is how the playwright has given an artistic expression to the event that happened before him.

When compared with the *Dappinatas* of the first phase (contemporary ones), *Sangya-Balya* has certain distinctive features which are not to be seen in other plays of those days. For example, the tunes of *Sangya-Balya* are not to be found in other plays. Nor were there plays written in the *Sangya-Balya* tradition. The role of 'Duti' so common in other plays is not there in *Sangya-Balya*. Similarly the role of 'Gollati' so common in other plays is done away with in *Sangya-Balya*. The playwright has thus achieved an organic structure in the play by removing the characters of 'Duti' and 'Gollati' which served only to provide fun, although they had no organic connection with the theme in other plays. The playwright is intelligent enough to weave the episode of a Marvadi and Paramma into the texture of the play. All these factors testify to the playwright's able craftsmanship.

The character of Gangi which is central to the play is a memorable one in the history of folk-literature of North-Karnataka. The theme of *Sangya-Balya* widely known in North-Karnataka is staged in different parts of the area regularly in the rural fairs and festivals. Although the basic theme is the same, regional variety of tunes and phrasology enters into the language. The various regional versions of *Sangya-Balya* need to be researched into. Nowadays this play has been growing popular in cities also. For

example, Chandrasekhar Kambar's troupe has given a number of performances in Bangalore and earned a great deal of popularity. K.V. Subbanna's opera-version of the play also has been equally popular in Karnataka.

RUPASENA

Rupasena is a popular play of the first phase. It is also known as *Ingagalavi Ata* or *Sipayi Ata*. It seems to have originated in a village called Ingagalavi. Since the protagonist happens to be a soldier, it is also known as *Sipayi Ata*. It is like many contemporary plays a musical opera having both social and folk elements.

The play, of course, begins with the 'Gollati' (milkmaid) episode which is followed by the scene wherein Ramasingh receives the Government employment order asking him to join the army as a soldier. Jayadevi, Ramasingh's wife implores him not to go away after making all the arrangements for the family maintenance. Rupasena (Ramasingh's son) also wants to follow his father, but Ramasingh tells him, "you stay back with your mother. I shall get for you whatever you want.". After thus consoling his son, Ramasingh goes to Bombay to join the army.

In the next scene Kamalaksi, a prostitute and her maid sit for grinding corns and singing simultaneously. When Kamalaksi sees Ramasingh passing by the lane, she instantly falls in love with him and sends her maid to bring him to her. Ramasingh sends her back after scolding her and telling her that he is not interested in any woman other than his own wife. Then Kamalaksi herself approaches him. There ensues an elaborate discussion between her and him about man, woman, love and *maya* etc. Finally Ramasingh yields to her request and starts living with her happily forgetting all about his appointment. After a few days Jayavanti receives a notice

from the Government that her husband Ramasingh has not yet joined service for the last three months and that he must report himself to duty immediately. Jayavanti is deeply worried and discusses the same with her maid late into the night. The maid who cannot return home because of advanced night, sleeps beside her mistress. But when Rupasena returns home he mistakes the maid for a lover of his mother and suspects her character. His doubt is, however, dissipated when Jayavanti wakes up and clarifies his doubt. Deeply nauseated with himself for having suspected the chastity of his own mother, Rupesana goes away to the forest for undergoing repentance.

Later Jayavanti, accompanied by her maid, goes in search of her husband and finds him in Kamalaksi's home. She implores the latter to restore her husband to her. The initial exchange of words between the two is likely to result in an exchange of blows. Ramasingh who understands the gravity of the situation calls his wife apart and confides in her that he would return home within three days and asks her not to worry about it any more. Kamalaksi who overhears these words burns with jealousy and manages to stab Ramasingh to death when he is asleep at night. Meanwhile Jayavanti sees an ominous dream and grows worried. She, therefore, goes to Kamalaksi's home where she sees the deadbody of her husband. Unable to bear the sorrow she also dies. By that time Rupasena returns from the forest after practising penance and is dumbfounded to see the deadbodies of his parents. He is also ready to die after praying to Lord Siva. By that time Lord Siva appears there and revives the dead parents. This is the plot of the play.

This play is said to have been staged for the last 80 to 90 years in North - Karnataka. There are, of course, minor regional variations. In some regional versions Jayadevi is called Jayavanti and Kamalaksi is not a prostitute, but the wife of an important man falling in love with Ramasingh.

TIRUNILAKANTHA

The play dealing with the famous Saiva saint variously known as *Nilakanthana Ata* or *Kadarolli Ata* marks the beginning of the second phase of *Dappinata*. The play is authored by Nilakanthappa Pattar around 1920-25. Though the playwright's formal education was limited only to the sixth standard of the primary school, he had a rich artistic experience. Having started his theatrical career at the early age of 15, he had acquired a very good insight into theatrical art. His interaction with spiritualists like Baba Maharaja of Dattawad, Adrisyappa and Chulki grandpa had left a deep impression of spirituality upon his mind. He had read and heard *Vedanta* very keenly. Most of his plays, therefore, have a strong dose of *Vedantic* element in them. He wanted to offer Vedantic instruction concerning devotion, knowledge, life, *maya*, woman and land etc through the dramatic medium of *Dappinata*. He thus gave a spiritual dimension to art by writing a play on the life of Tirunilakantha a Saiva saint which created history in North Karnataka.

So far the folk-opera did not encourage full length dialogues. The little dialogue it had was extempore and came only in support of songs. The main aim of the dramatist was to develop the theme in a simple and direct manner. Most of the time extempore dialogues were loose and illogical. But the credit of giving the importance due to dialogue must go to Sri. Nilakanthappa Pattar (endearingly known as Pattar Master). It was he who gave dramatic expression to his *Vedantic* knowledge thereby giving a definitive shape to *Dappinata* and contradistinguishing it from the earlier operatic drama.

The theme of the play reminds us of Harihara's *ragale* depicting the life of the eponymous saint. But Sri. Pattar has made a few significant changes in the original story by Harihara as his intention was to capture the attention of the folk-audience. He, for example begins the play with an invocation to Lord Siva instead of

to Lord Ganapati. He has named the prostitute as Rambha. In Harihara's poem the prostitute throws dish-water upon Tirunilakantha when he is walking through the lane. But in Pattar-Master's play Rambha spits upon the saint. In Harihara's poem Tirunilakantha goes ahead without bothering about the dish-water falling upon him as he is absorbed in his contemplation of Lord Siva, whereas in Pattar Master's play he stands still there before the prostitute's house worrying about how the spit fell upon him. When Rambha comes down from her mansion and apologises to him out of fear for him and his curses and even invites him to her home. But he frankly refuses to enter into her house as it is one of ill-fame. Nor does she keep quiet because of her innocence. She explains the pros and cons of prostitution with mythological examples. She, further, convinces him about how even the prostitutes like Mahananda and Virasangavve earned the grace of Lord Siva through thier devotion. Finally persuaded by her arguments, Tirunilakantha agrees to go over to her house. The wife of Tirunilakantha is named as 'Muttaide' by Harihara whereas she is called 'Satyavati' by Patter Master. Patter Master who is influenced by *Haradesi-Nagesi* tradition makes the characters take side with men-folk or women-folk. Whereas Satyavati defends woman-kind and feminine virtues, Tirunilakantha defends men and Lord Siva. The debate violates the normal marital life of the couple. The characterisation of Satyavati is fraught with many cantradictions. When she refuses to admit him into her bed Tirunilakantha is about to set out on an endless journey but is persuaded by the maid-servant to stay back. The rest of the story is faithful to Harihara's version. Tirunilakantha, for example, is tested by Lord Siva who comes in the guise of a saint and is graced by a vision of the Lord.

The play is deficient in many respects. The moral of *Vedantic* vision is not transformed into artistic vision properly. Morality remains only at the level of statements. The songs are marked by lack of poetic qualities such as rhythm and rhyme. The play as a whole fails to rise to the artistic height of *Sangya-Balya*.

An important paradox of *Nilakanthana Ata* is that it, in spite of all the aforementioned weaknesses, has achieved great popularity and captured the attention of the folk-audience. Patter Master is said to have written about twenty *Bayalatas* which have not been as popular as *Nilakanthana Ata*.

ALLAMAPRABHU

The tradition of dialogue-dominated drama started by Nilakanthappa Patter was continued and sufficiently strengthened by Sivanandakavi whose real name was Yallappa Master and who hailed from a village called Hannikeri near Sampagoan in Bailahongala taluka of Belgaum district. A teacher in a private school, Sivanandakavi is said to have written many plays among which two dealing with the lives of Allamaprabhu and Nijaguna Sivayogi are very popular. Moral edification has been the main purpose of this playwright like that of Patter-Master. But Sivanandakavi has greater mastery over the theatricality and control over his characterisation.

The play entitled *Allamaprabhu Vijaya* (*Victory of Allamaprabhu*) also known as *Mayi Ata*. (*Play of Maya*) is based on Camarasa's religious romance called *Prabhulingalile* (*Sport Divine of Allama*). The playwright has, of course, taken minor liberties with the original source material in keeping with the taste of folk-audience. The play begins with the entry of Narada who, as usual in the plays of this kind, offers a lengthy lecture to the audience about *Vedanta* and walks up to Lord Siva's court in Kailasa. Unlike in Camarasa's epic where the story begins with a playful dialogue between Parvati and Lord Siva here it is initiated by Narada who refers to the excellent spiritual achievement of Allamaprabhu in the mortal world. Parvati who feels nettled by the account, takes a challenge and wants to defeat Allamaprabhu by sending Maya, an embodiment of her own dark (*tamasik*) power. Lord Siva tries to defend Allamaprabhu. The celestial couple begin to quarrel with

each other by taking the side of their own parties.

Unlike in Camarasa's poem where Maya meets Allamaprabhu in the temple of Lord Madhukeswara, in this play Maya knows the purpose of her descent into the mortal world. On coming to know about Allamaprabhu's presence in the temple, she sends gifts of cloths to him through her maid-servant. Then she herself goes to the temple to meet him. There ensues a lengthy discussion. Finally when she goes to embrace him, he disappears.

In the next phase Parvati takes the mortal guise of Akkamahadevi in Camarasa's epic. But in the present play the name has been changed from Akkamahadevi to Sattviki. Whereas in Camarasa's poem King Kousika falls in love with Akkamahadevi, in the present play he is instigated by Allama to test Sattviki by falling in love with her. There ensues an usual discussion between the two. When King Kousika tries to disrobe her he falls unconscious. On awkening from his swoon he attains saintly renunciation. This is, indeed, a very significant change made by the playwright, from the theatrical point of view. Then Sattviki goes away from there after giving the king a piece of advice.

The playwright has created a new scene in the play in which Allama comes in the guise of a *carvaka* (hedonist) in order to re-test Sattviki and starts disputing with her. Finally impressed by her devotion, spiritual quest and renunciation he shows her his real self. This scene offers ample scope for discussion and enables Sattviki to draw on the diverse models of *Sarana* life.

Some very important scenes of Camarasa's poem like Allama's visit to Kalyana and meeting with Basava and Siddharama are conspicuous by their absence in the play. The author who seems to have been deeply influenced by *Haradasi-Nagesi* tradition has made the male and the female characters argue from a partisan

point of view. Allamaprabhu who is a super-*Sarana* and master-mystic in Camarasa's poem has degenerated into a talkative chauvenist in this *Bayalata*. As far as poetic language is concerned, Sivanandakavi happens to be far superior to Pattar-Master. In spite of using bookish language he has given it better rhyme and rhythm. The strength and weaknesses of *Mayi Ata* could be seen in the playwrights's other *Dappinatas* also dealing with saints like Nijaguna Sivayogi, Kabiradasa and Jodhabayi etc.

BASAVANTA - BALAVANTA

The *Dappinata* entitled *Basavanta-Balavanta* seems to have been written by an anonymous playwright from Bellary district. It has been performed in Bellary district for the last 75 years.

The plot of the play may be traced as follows. King Mandaraja and Queen Somavati have a nubile daughter called Pulavati who is not married off yet for lack of certain pearls. Consequently the minister goes to Basavanta's house and conveys the King's order. Basavanta agrees to bring the pearls. He is blessed not only by his parents Kamalaraj and Kamalavati, but even by Lord Iswara. Then Basavanta returns home and tells his wife Taravati about his intention to go away on business. She requests him not to leave her at all, but he leaves home after convincing his wife and asking his younger brother Balavanta to be in charge of the household. After the husband's departure from home, Taravati invites her brother-in-law Balavanta for sex, but he refuses to oblige her on moral grounds. There ensues a lengthy discussion between the two about morality and immorality. Finally Balavanta goes away from home in order to avoid her. Deeply disappointed, Taravati confides her problem to a friend called Mallamma and seeks her help to get Balavanta's love and promises some gold for the favour. Mallamma makes Taravati lie in a room in her house and seeks out Balavanta whom she brings home on the pretext of providing a

pretty prostitute to him. When Balavanta enters into the dark room and lights a match he is shocked to find his sister-in-law Taravati there. Again after a lengthy debate, Balavanta escapes from there. Having failed in the first plan, Taravati and Mallamma hatch another plan. They offer a thousand rupees to a magician called Siddappa and ask him to work a charm on Balavanta. Siddappa, therefore, gives them a magically charmed thorn and asks Taravati to pierce it into Balavanta's head. Seeking an opportune time when Balavanta is asleep, Taravati pierces the thorn into his head and lo he is instantly transformed into a dog. Then Basavanta returns home with pearls and gets a prize from the King for offering the pearls to him. On returning home he is surprised to know that his younger brother is missing from home. Taravati consoles her husband that Balavanta must have gone away with some prostitute. Meanwhile the dog used to lick Basavanta's feet. Later Basavanta sells the dog to a hunter called Timmanayaka. By that time the Kingdom is pestered by thieves and robbers. King Mandaraja declared that he would offer his daughter to the person who can capture the thieves. Timmanayaka accepts the challenge. While he is asleep, his dog captures the thieves. He, therefore, hands over the thieves to the King's custody and asks for Parvati's hand. But the King refuses to oblige him as he knows that it was not he but his dog which has captured the thieves. Finally the King decides to give his daughter in marriage to the dog. Preparations for the wedding are begun. Parvati is deeply disturbed at having to marry a dog. Then the wedding takes place. Timmanayaka takes home his dog and its wife. When Timmanayaka is away hunting, Pulavati caresses the dog affectionately and finds a thorn stuck on its head. As soon as she removes the thorn from its head, the dog assumes its original shape of Balavanta and narrates the whole story of his past and flirts with her. On returning home Timmanayaka mistakes Balavanta for a stranger trying to seduce Pulavati and fights with him. However, defeated in the fight Balavanta runs away from there. Then Pulavati returns with Balavanta to her father and explains the whole thing. King Mandaraja refuses to believe in it until she demonstrates the

truth by sticking the thorn into Balavanta's head and showing how he would be transformed into a dog. Then she removes the thorn and shows how he assumes the human shape. Now the King is completely convinced by the reality. Then Balavanta sends for his elder brother Basavanta who is extremely happy to meet his lost brother. Balavanta narrates to his brother how he was deceived by Taravati and Mallamma. Basavanta orders his wife Taravati and the abettor Mallamma to be murdered. But Balavanta and King Mandaraja prevent it. Basavanta then takes Balavanta and Pulavati home and marries them again properly in the presence of his parents. Then they live happily everafter.

The main events of this *Dappinata* resemble those of a folk-tale. Originally the play was an opera in which dialogues have been inserted at a later stage, and are no more than simple explanations of songs. There is a good deal of similarity between this play and *Sangya-Balya*. Though adultery happens to be the main theme of these two plays, there is a difference in their delineation. Whereas Gangi, the heroine of *Sangya-Balya* is basically a virtuous lady who is forced into adultery by circumstances, Taravati, the heroine of the present play is basically a nymphomaniac who tries to tempt her brother-in-law and take revenge upon him when he refuses to oblige her. The motif of the magically charmed thorn has been of great help to the dramatist. The matrimonial song (*Sobanada Pada*) and the song of washing the feet (*Kalu Poleyuva Pada*) coming at the end of the play hold a mirror to the cultural habits of North-Karnataka people. The introduction of the brahmin characters like Enkabhatta and Gundabhatta provides a good deal of humour. One of the weaknesses of the play is that the bookish language is mixed up with the colloquial one.

KATTI CHENNA

A special play resembling the *Dappinatas* of the early phase in structure, is said to have been written by an anonymous playwright. It has been staged in the Haveripeth lane of Dharwad city for the last seventy years

The play deals with the adventures of the titular hero Chenna and holds a mirror to the feudal society of North - Karnataka. There are two brothers. Whereas Gadigeppa is the elder brother, Chennappa is the younger. They live in a village called Sapadli. Gadigeppa sends Chennappa to bring their sister from her husband's home for participating in the Festival of Nagapanchami according to the North-Karnataka custom. Chenna, therefore, goes to Twanagatti village by riding his bull. But the Gowda (chief) of Twanagatti feels insulted to see Chenna riding a bull, because he expects that none other than himself should ride a bull in his village. He, therefore, orders Chenna to get off the bull but the latter refuses to oblige him. There is a heated exchange of words between the two. Chenna swears that he would loot the Gowda's village on a particular day and returns to his village without meeting his sister. On the day scheduled, the Gowda sits with his villagers waiting for the robber. As they remain awake all through the night, they feel sleepy during the early morning. It is exactly at that time that Chenna comes to the village, loots it and goes away by plucking the mustaches of the Gowda. Unable to tolerate the unforgettable humiliation, the Gowda of Twanagatti writes a letter to the Gowda of Sapadli explaining his grievance. The Gowda of Sapadli, therefore, sends for Gadigeppa and orders him to advise Chenna to behave properly. Chenna who is exasperated beyond measure by the advice, kicks the Gowda of Sapadli and leaves the village to reside on a hill. He befriends Sidda and Hussaini there. Later, the Gowda of Sapadli complains to the Police of Sampagaon. When attacked by the Police, Chenna thrashes them and escapes from there. Chenna had a mistress called Lingavva whom the Police take into confidence and in whose house they arrest him.

When he is led by the police to Belgaum he escapes from them by making them drunk. The police try in vain to rearrest him. Finally they declare a fat prize for those who would capture him. The Gowda of Sivapura tries to capture him. But Chenna takes revenge upon him by kidnapping his daughter-in-law. Finally Sidda and Hussaini are captured treacherously, but yet Chenna manages to escape from there. Sidda impersonates Chenna and accepts the punishment of execution. Chenna goes away wandering in the guise of a sanyasi.

The songs of this *Dappinata* are set to different tunes both old and new. The play is famous on account of its social theme and realism.

SANNATAS OF HYDERABAD KARNATAKA

Sannatas like *Allamaprabhu*, *Tirunilakantha*, *Kadlimatti Kasibayi*, *Sri Krisna Parijata* and *Sangya-Balya* are very popular in North-Karnataka, because these plays have already been published. But the fact that there are more than 70 *Sannatas* in manuscript form but very popular in the Hyderabad-Karnataka area is not known to many. These plays are yet to be published. Recently Dr. M.S. Lathe has published *Arabarata* and *Bhukailasa mattu Chandrasiromani*. These plays may be classified into three categories : 1) mythical, 2) historical and 3) social.

Bhukailasa and *Manasaraja* are mythical *Sannatas* written by Dhumanasuru Siddhaprabhu and Lada Sivaraya. The other famous mythical *Sannatas* are *Vibhuti Mahime* by Gurulingasidda of Mahagoan Village of Gulbarga district, and *Sukamuni* by Ambalagi Jagadevappa. It should be specially noticed that the language spoken by the people of Hyderabad-Karnataka is a strange mixture of Kannada and Urdu dialects. Hence the presence of Urdu words even in the Kannada folk-plays dealing with Hindu myths.

Many historical *Sannatas* have been written on famous Indian figures. Most popular among them are *Bhakta Kumbhara* by Andappayya of Mudabi village, *Risikavi Kahiradasa* by Kheda Tukaram and Madyal Krishnaji, *Jagajyoti Basavanna* by three authors namely Okali Chennabasavayya Swami, Karabhasagi Revanasiddhaya swami and Savalagi Mohammasadasab and *Prabhulinga* by Ambalagi Jagadevappa. *Hemaraddi Mallamma* which deals with the chaste wife Mallamma who lived with a foolish husband and set a model of matrimonial life to the women of the world was written by Hyderasab of Narona village. This *Sannata* has been extremely popular in this area.

As for social *Sannatas*, they are countless in number. The most famous among them are *Nilakantharaja* by Naguru Sayibanna, *Madanamanjari*, *Taramali* and *Nannabhumi*, by Benura Bhavan Singh, *Gunavanti* by Ainapur Maruthi, *Gunasekhararaja* by Kurakota Basavanna, *Gunavanti - Gunalopa* by Gurupadappa Chengati of Hebbala village, *Sattva Parikse* by Sivalingaswami of Doddagoratha village, *Sivi*, by Deogoan Mahalinga, *Dharmapala-Gunasila* by Salagara Sidramappa, *Nandagopala* by Khelagi Pirappa, *Chandrasiromani* by Dhummanasura Siddaprabhu, *Sivakantaraja* by Okali Chennabasavayya, *Chitarangi* by Ambalagi Jagadevappa and *Bandhuprema* by Gireppa Jamadara.

The virtue of chastity has been celebrated in quite a few *Sannatas*. *Gunavanti* and *Nannabhumi* serve as good examples. In *Gunavanti* the eponymous heroine's father Gunasila leaves his daughter alone at home and goes away from home on business tour. At this opportune time the local King who has an eye upon Gunavanti tries to seduce her. But she escapes from him and goes to the woods by tricking him away. She disguises herself and guards her precious chastity. She has remained the model of chastity in the society.

Adultery happens to be the theme of some *Sannatas* like *Taramali*, *Madanamanjari* and *Sivakantaraja*. In *Taramali* the

eponymous heroine falls in love with the younger brother of her husband and tries to tempt him when her husband goes away to the forest to practise penance for getting issues on his wife. But the younger brother refuses to sleep with her. Taramali, therefore, takes revenge upon him by charging him with attempted rape and has him sent by her husband to the woods. In *Madanamanjari* Manjari, daughter of a Guru falls in love with her father's disciple called Madana. She invites him for sex but he rejects her amorous invitation. Humiliated by his rejection, Manjari charges him of attempted rape and has his head cut off from his trunk. In *Sivakantara* a mother who has fallen in love with her step-son invites him for sex. But when he refuses to oblige her, she accuses him of seduction and has him sent by her husband to the woods.

Gunavanti-Gunalopa is one of the most famous *Sannatas* of Hyderabad Karnataka area. The theme happens to be the contrast between a wife and a prostitute/mistress. Gunavanti is a very virtuous wife, whereas her husband Gunalopa is a debaucherous person who visits prostitutes very frequently. He leaves his wife at his in-laws and goes after a call girl called Sintrasaini and squanders all his money upon her until he becomes a pauper. He even steals the golden ornaments of his wife to give them away to the prostitute. When he is finally reduced to a pauper he is rejected by Sintrasaini and begins to beg in the same village in which he had shone as a rich man. But his virtuous wife Gunavanti takes pity on him and takes care of him by earning her livelihood by labour.

Arabarata is a social *Dappinata* which is very popular in the Gulbarga (Karnataka) and Solapur (Maharashtra) district even now. This play was written jointly by Katabara Rachu and Uppara Maruti, who were very close friends. Whereas Rachu was an expert in singing, Maruti was an expert in playing the drum called *Dappu*. Both the dramatists were the disciples of Gaibi Pir and therefore pay homage to their mentor in their songs. They are said to have composed the play between 1870 and 1880. The theme of

Arabarata is incorporated by Gondaligyas and Katabas (Puppet-players) in their own plays for convenience. This *Dappinata* is performed very enthusiastically even now by the artists of Aherwadi village of Akkalakot taluka. The manuscript is in Marathi script though it is written in Kannada language. The main theme of the play is chastity and temptation of a virtuous wife. In this regard the play may easily be compared and contrasted with *Sangya-Balya* or *Kadlimatti Station-Master*. *Arabarata* (A play about Arabs) is a fine picture of the contemporary social evils of North - Karnataka. The theme may be summarised as follows: There has been a famine in the area for the last three years. Driven by poverty and hunger the couple Basavalinga and Ratnabayi go to other villages in search of labour. Finally they are employed by Ramasetty a rich man who has no children but who as per his wife's wish, has been conducting *dasoha* (feeding the people freely as part of his religion). Basavalinga and Ratnabayi accept the employment there and stay in his house. One day two Arab brothers happen to come to the village for demanding repayment of loan from the borrowers and fall in love with Ratnabayi because of her beauty when they first see her by the side of the village well. The elder Arab is impressed so much by her beauty that he simply faints at the sight of her person. Both the brothers devise a plan of possessing her by hook or by crook. They assign the immoral task to a woman of flower-vender caste namely Mallavva. But in spite of Mallavva's machinations they are not able to get Ratnabayi into their bed. Finally they chase Ratnabayi and threaten her. Then they ask her to bring her husband promising her that they would not harm him. But when she brings her husband to them in a helpless manner, they go back on their words and kill her husband mercilessly. They then try to rape her. But before that Ratnabayi implores Lord Siva who is pleased by her virtue, restores her husband and kills the Arab brothers. Ratnabayi is so good by nature that she does not want to be the cause of the murder of those Arab brothers. She therefore, prays to Lord Siva to restore their lives also. Lord Siva accordingly revives the Arab brothers who realise their folly and ask for forgiveness by falling prostrate at her feet. In spite of the mythical padding, the

play is based upon a real event that took place in the Mughalayi regime, and throws light on the contemporary society of Hyderabad-Karnataka.

Sannatas are written even now in the Hyderabad-Karnataka area. An example may be cited of Chennanna Walikar's two recent *Sannatas* entitled *Somaraya-Bhimaraya* and *Ayya Madiddu Kayyamyalemba Dappinata*. Both of them throw light on the contemporary society of North-Karnataka. *Somaraya-Bhimaraya* is based upon a folk-tale popular in this part of Karnataka. The plot runs as follows : Somaraya and Bhimaraya are very close friends and wrestlers. Bhimaraya is married whereas Somaraya is not. One day Somaraya happens to cast his eyes on a beautiful lady when she is washing clothes near a tank. He follows her and locates her house. After a few days Somaraya confides the secret to his close friend Bhimaraya who is inwardly shocked to know that the younglady is none other than his own beloved wife, but momentarily pretends ignorance about her. Then Bhimaraya persuades his wife to entertain his friend Somaraya at night. His wife agrees to the proposal rather helplessly. Bhimaraya asks Somaraya to go to the village gymnasium about 5 O'clock in the early morning where he will be waiting for him. Accordingly Somaraya enters into the younglady's house for a rendezvous with her, but on seeing the sword and the tumbler he realises that it is the house of his own close friend Bhimaraya and the younglady being Bhimaraya's wife. He realises his own folly and feels ashamed of himself. Unable to show his face to Bhimaraya, Somaraya stabs himself to death. Lest people should mistake her to be a murderess of Somaraya, the younglady (Bhimaraya's wife) also stabs herself to death. Bhimaraya waits for Somaraya in the gymnasium for long and returns home only to be shocked by the sight of two suicides. Unable to bear the shock, Bhimaraya also ends his life by stabbing himself. Walikar has made the *Sannata* realistic by removing the mythical element from the folk-tale. The moral tone of the play is quite obvious.

His second *Sannata* entitled *Ayya Madiddu Kayyamiya-lemba Dappinata* is also based on a popular folk-tale. A shepherd wants to buy a pair of bullocks in a neighbouring village. He carries a cash of 3000 rupees with him, but does not know where to stay at night in that village. A swami gives him a letter of introduction to an Ayya in the neighbouring village. Accordingly the shepherd goes to the village and gives the letter to the Ayya and tells him the purpose of his visit to the village. The Ayya is tempted by the cash of Rs. 3000/- in the possession of the shepherd. Ayya, therefore, plans to pilfer the cash and asks the shepherd to sleep in the room. Meanwhile he employs a few rowdies to murder the shepherd at night. But Ayya's young son who has planned to elope with his beloved that night, sleeps in the place of the shepherd by removing the latter to another part of the house. The rowdies mistake the Ayya's son for the shepherd and murder him. When they show the severed head of the son to the Ayya, he realises how his treachery has recoiled upon himself and cost him the precious life of his son. The *Sannata* is a fine satire on the social evil in the contemporary society and conspicuous for its didactic tone. Songs occupy an important place in this *Sannata*.

On the whole, the *Sannatas* of Hyderabad-Karnataka resemble the plays of professional theatre or Company Drama in many ways.

COMIC CHARACTERS

The contribution of the character type of 'Duti' in *Dappinata* is a significant one. What *Sarathi* is to *Mudalapaya* is *Duti* to *Dappinata*. The function of *Duti* (maid-servant) is to provide humour to the audience. The typical character of *Duti* is something indigenous and unique to *Dappinata* and cannot be found in any other type of drama in any language of India. This character does not require many and complex costumes. A person can play the role of *Duti* by wearing a dhoti with a border. The function of

Duti is to introduce the other characters to the audience, to elicit answers from characters by posing clever questions to them, and to intervene between the dialogues to crack jokes and make the audience laugh. The character of *Duti* is to be found in every *Dappinata* except in *Sangya Balya*. It should also be noted that there are no special scenes meant for *Duti*'s expression of humour, but *Duti* has to wait for the right occasions to crack her jokes. The dialogues of *Duti* used to be extempore in the *Dappinatas* of the early phase, but they were reduced to black and white in those of later phase.

The comic characters in *Nilakanthana Ata* and *Nijaguna Sivayogi* are called *Lalu* (*Lala*, *Lalya*) or *Bisu*. *Lalu* who is a servant in a prostitute's household is known for his function of providing humour. An earlier play entitled *Hemaraddi Mallamma* was very popular at the time when *Pattar-Master* and *Nilakanthappa* were about to write their plays. In that play there was a servant called *Lalya* who served the prostitute *Chitraranjani*. These two playwrights seemed to have borrowed the character of *Lalu* from *Hemaraddi Mallamma*. *Lalya* is generally found in all the plays where the characters of prostitute are found. The introduction of the character of *Lalya*, though meant for the provision of humour, seems to be rather arbitrary. *Sivanandakavi* is said to have given a good deal of importance to the character of *Lalya* by acting it himself.

MUSIC

The music employed in *Dappinata* is of two types: one, standard (*marga*) and two, regional or local (*desi*). The standard tunes of the *Dappinatas* of the first phase were based upon the Hindustani melodic patterns (*ragas*.) which had infiltrated into North-Karnataka from the southern Maharashtra. Most of these tunes were aligned to particular *ragas*. The standard tunes of *Dappinatas*, though basically based upon Hindustani *ragas*, were employed by the playwrights more for entertainment than for musical education or elevation. On the contrary, the regional tunes of the *Dappinatas*

of later phase were mainly inspired by *lavani* tradition of North Karnataka. The rhyme, rhythm and pattern of *lavani* known for its variety are employed to create novel tunes. Except in *Sangya-Balya* where the entire music is regional, all other *Dappinatas* have an admixture of standard and regional tunes. More than 50 tunes are employed in *Dappinatas* which are yet to be recorded in writing for the use of future actors and actresses.

The main instrument to be used in *Dappinatas* is *dappu* or little, flat drum. Hence the plays are named after it (Drum-plays). The rhythms or beats played upon *dappu* vary from place to place. Nowadays *dappus* are replaced by *tablas* in the performances in Belgaum district. The use of harmonium or fiddle has also been very popular in the recent days. The harmonium player and the fiddler have lots of opportunities to enrapture the audience by their high tempo rhythms and provide momentary rest or breathing time for singers or actors. The use of cymbals is, of course, common to all the *Dappinatas*.

STAGE

Unlike *Mudalapaya* (*Estern Mode*) drama, *Dappinata* does not require a large or grand stage or properties. The stage platform is relatively small and does not require a backdrop or ceiling of carpet or blankets or curtains. Even the costumes are very simple and realistic. A character of King need not necessarily have a crest. A silken turban will easily serve the purpose and be easily accepted as a crest by the audience. A clean shirt and dhoti would be enough costumes for the characters. Sometimes a few bad habits have crept into the costumes. For example almost all the characters from King to maid-servant wear wrist watches. Nijaguna wears a wrist watch both when he is a King and when he becomes a saint. Similarly, the use of cooling glasses by the characters of Kings and Queens is another ridiculous habit of the village artists.

The leading character of *Dappinata* is called *Metitala* or *Mummyala* who is a counterfoil to *Sarathi* in *Mudalapaya*. But *Sutradhara* is conspicuous by his absence in *Sannatas*. Sometimes, in the regions where *Mudalapaya* tradition is prevalent, even *Sannatas* are performed in *Mudalapaya* style by introducing *Sarathi* into them. *Sangya-Balya* though a *Sannata* is presented in *Mudalapaya* style in Hospet taluka.

PARIJATA

It is rather difficult to classify *Sri Krisna Parijata* either as *Sannata* or as *Dodddata*, though it has borrowed a few elements from both. The introductory scene containing the character of *Gollati* and the employment of the character of *Duti* in *Parijata* owe their origin to *Sannata*. That is why it is popularly known as 'the Crest Jewel of *Sannatas*'. But that is not enough to make *Parijata* a *Sannata*. Nor is it right to consider it as an improvement of *Mudalapaya* as there is a good deal of difference between the two in terms of intention, theme, performance or music.

One may notice two stages in the evolution of *Parijata* from the writing phase to the performance. Initially it was written by *Aparala Tammanna* in *Yaksagana* style and later adapted to the stage by *Kulagoda Tammanna*.

There is no controversy at all about *Aparala Tammanna* being the author of *Parijata*. *Tammanna*, a brahmin of *Madhva* sect, hails from a village called *Aparala* in *Raichur* district. When the news of the successful performance of *Parijata* was reported to the Pontiff of *Vyasaraya Math*, the holy man excommunicated *Tammanna* on the charge of violation of their religion. But when he saw the performance of the play and noticed the element of devotion to Lord *Krisna*, he withdrew the punishment and allowed *Tammanna* to go ahead with the performances. *Tammanna*, then,

moved about in the country with his troupe and captured the attention of wide audiences.

There is a controversy about the date of birth of Aparala Tammanna which oscillates between 1760 and 1850. But 1760 happens to be the most probable date of his birth according to the scholars in the field. Recent research in folk-literature has brought to light the fact that Aparala Tammanna was not the only author of *Parijata*. It is said that when he had made a mistake in writing the first part of the play (i.e. he had made Satyabhama address Rukmini as a she-ass) he was chidden in his dream by Lord Krisna for insulting his consort and was ordered to stop play-writing further and to wait for a tragic end within nine days. Aparala Tammanna stopped writing the play for fear of Divine Wrath. The second part of the play was continued and completed by Siraguppi Sadasivayya at the behest of Rangabhupala, King of Gujjala lineage.

TEXT OF *PARIJATA*

It is wrong to argue that *Parijata* was influenced by the Kuchipudi style of dance called Bhamā Kalapa from Andhra Pradesh. Aparala Tammanna is not the first playwright to write *Parijata* the tradition of which was already there in vogue. Long before Tammanna, poets like Prasannavenkatadasa and other ones had composed the *Parijata* play in a poetic and *yaksagana* style. The character-type of 'Koravanji' had already become popular in North Karnataka. Aparala Tammanna drew upon the popular theme of the contemporary society to write his play in which to express the amorous (*sringara*) and devotional (*bhakti*) sentiments.

The plot of Aparala Tammanna's *Sri Krisna Parijata* can be traced as follows : once the earth-goddess goes in the guise of a cow to Kriramava and requests Lord Visnu, to protect her from the persecution by demons. Lord Visnu, therefore, takes his birth as Sri Krisna in Devaki's womb, kills the demon Kamsa and lives

happily in Dwaraka with his eight queens. One day Narada the celestial wanderer goes to the mortal world, offers the *Parijata* flower to Sri Krisna asking him to give it only to Rukmini. Sri Krisna, therefore, sticks the flower into Rukmini's hair. Then Narada meets Satyabhama and reports the matter to her thereby arousing her jealousy. Satyabhama feels restless and thinks that her husband is rather partial to Rukmini. She, therefore sends a letter through Rajakira to Sri Krisna asking him to go to her immediately, but the latter sends a consolatory reply. Unable to bear the pangs of separation, Satyabhama sends her maidservant (*Duti*) who returns after being insulted by Rukmini. Finally Satyabhama herself goes to Rukmini's house where Sri Krisna who is playing chess with Rukmini does not pay much attention to Satyabhama. She, therefore, faints. She is not happy even after being hugged and consoled by Sri Krisna. She takes Rukmini to task and there ensues a heated exchange of words. Satyabhama takes an oath that she would win her husband back by earning the blessings of Goddess Sakti through her holy service (*puja*) and returns to her palace. Then she worships Goddess Sakti whole-heartedly and earns Her grace and is even promised by the deity the return of Krisna to her. Accordingly, Krisna feels more and more attracted towards Satyabhama and goes to meet her in the guise of a Koravanji and prophesies to her that she would unite with her lord that very night. Krisna, after taking permission from Rukmini, goes to Satyabhama and unites with her. Further he promises to plant the tree of *Parijata* itself before her residence. Later there starts a battle between Lord Indra and Krisna about the tree of *Parijata*. Finally Krisna defeats Lord Indra, brings the tree of *Parijata* and plants it in front of Satyabhama's residence. Paradoxically enough, even then Satyabhama is not completely happy because all the *Parijata*-flowers used to be found lying before Rukmini's residence. When Satyabhama asks for the reason of this strange happening, Krisna replies that it is all due to her own egotistic vanity. It is only then that Satyabhama realises her folly and goes to Rukmini's palace where she is received warmly by the latter. Then Krisna marries sixteen thousand girls and lives happily everafter.

The protagonist of the play is Satyabhama and not Sri Krisna though the latter also plays a dominant role in it. The erotic (*Sringara*) sentiment is predominant in the play. Satyabhama's anger, frustration and devotion seem to add to the erotic sentiment. Her love in separation is the cause of her jealousy for Rukmini. Then she suddenly behaves like an experienced penant worshipping Goddess Sakti. Similarly her union with Sri Krisna is very passionate. Then her behaviour changes suddenly in the morning when she, like an old woman, requests him to narrate the story of his ten incarnations. Thus the sudden changes in her mood and blatant contradictions in Satyabhama's behaviour are evidence of faulty characterisation by the dramatist.

The dramatist appears to have first thought of writing a fragmentary epic (*Khanda Kavya*) and later added a preface and an epilogue to it. Though his main intention was to delineate the erotic sentiment, he must have thought that the audience would be bored with it. He, therefore, must have prefaced it with the earlier story of Krisna's incarnation in an all too brief a manner thereby violating the principle of proportional balance between Krisna's birth and his love for Satyabhama. The latter part of the play is completely an imitation of *Harivamsa* story and again presented in a hurried manner. Thus the play appears to be a piece of patchwork. But the dramatist's talent exhibited in the subtle delineation of the contours of erotic sentiment is really admirable on account of its poetic and picturesque nature.

KULAGODA TAMMANNA

The *Parijata* written by Aparala Tammanna is basically a musical poem (*Hadugabba*) and not a play proper. It may be said to be a *Yaksagana* composed in the poetic tradition, as it has all the characteristic features of contemporary *Yaksaganas*. The *Sri Krisna Parijata*, a recitative poem composed by Aparala Tammanna was learnt by heart by Purabhimanandasa (Sadasivayya) and

recited by him before the King of Kanakagiri for which he was appreciated by the latter.

The poem which had been composed by Aparala Tammanna and had attained wide popularity was adapted to the stage and reworked into the structure of a *Bayalata* by Tammanna of Kulagoda village in Gokak taluka (Belgaum district in Karnataka). Kulagoda Tammanna is said to have lived around 1860. He belonged to the goldsmith (*chinivala*) caste. There is a story about him according to which once he was staging the *Parijata* along with his beloved who sang the songs without proper rhythm. Angered by this, he hurled the cymbals at her who wounded by them died on the spot. Later Tammanna was ordered by the court to be hanged. Before being hanged, he was allowed to ask for his last desire. He expressed his desire of staging *Parijata* with his troupe. His request was granted. The performance of the play began. The judge also attended the play and first noticed Tammanna violating the rhythm and later realised that it was not a mistake. Consequently the judge is said to have spared his life. It is said that Tammanna's handwritten manuscript of the play is to be still found in the jail of Gokak. Kulagoda Tammanna's adaptation of *Parijata* poem to the stage is said to have been inspired by the Maharastrian *Tamasa* plays which he happened to see on his way to and back from Pandarapur. He borrowed the character-type of 'Goulani' from Marathi theatre and Kannadised it as 'Gollati' (cowherd, milkmaid) which he introduced in the prefatory part of his *Dappinata*. Luckily the character-type of Gollati became very popular in North-Karnataka and was employed in many other *Dappinatas*. Kulagoda Tammanna did not compose his own songs, but on the contrary, borrowed them from others and made them sung by Gollati in his play.

Another important person who, like Kulagoda Tammanna, popularised *Parijata* is an actress called Ningamma from Koujalagi village. This actress (i.e. Koujalagi Ningamma born around 1857.)

is said to have joined Kulagoda Tammanna's troupe at the very young age of 12. She, after the death of Tammanina, started her own troupe and moved all over North-Karnataka and popularised *Parijata*. Though educated in Marathi, she knew many Indian languages and was an adept in music. *Parijata* was very popular around 1900 because of her efforts. She is said to have divided the play into three divisions : 1) Gollati and Rukmini encounter, 2) Satyabhama and 3) Koravanji and staged them on three consecutive days. She is also known for training the famous folk-artists like Hukkeri Siddharamappa, Badakundri Basappa, Mahalingapura Rajesaba, Sanadi Gondaligya, Sivaguri, Baragi Rachayya and Navalagatti Savakka etc.

TEXT AND PERFORMANCE

There is some difference between the *Parijata* popularised by Kulagoda Tammanna and Koujalagi Ningamma and the modern version. The current version of *Parijata* is an improvisation by many minds. Many artists have stabilised its form by the introduction of beautiful songs and delightful dialogues. In spite of regional variations in dialogues and ideolects, the essential stuff of the play remains the same. The modern versions of *Parijata* are characterised by certain crudeness and lightheartedness which were absent in Aparala Tammanna's version.

The main reason for the popularity of *Parijata* the folk-play is to be found in its dialogues. The actors of *Parijata* enjoy a freedom not allowed to any of other folk drama. Many times the actors go on adding to the dialogues from their own reading of *Vedanta*, *Vacanas* or myths, thereby attracting the attention and respect from the rural audience. But the unfortunate fact is that many times this freedom is misused by the actor who goes on giving lengthy lectures on philosophy.

BHAGAVATA

Bhagavata may be said to be the central figure in the modern version of *Parijata*, because it is he who controls the whole play. Whereas he is known to the audience as *Bhagavata*, he is addressed as *Duti* by other characters on the stage. Though he performs the function of a manager or *Sutradhara*, he is never called *Sutradhara*. He is always called *Bhagavata*. He remains on the stage from start to finish. More often than not, the characters engage him in dialogue. All through the performance the *Bhagavata* is seen by the audience in his various functions. He sings the benedictory song and other prefatory songs at the beginning of the play. Then he acts as a supporting singer when other characters sing their songs. *Bhagavata*, thus becomes a combination of *Duti*, *Sutradhara* and *Himmela*.

Another thing to be noted in *Parijata* is that almost every scene is infused with light humour provided by *Bhagavata* and rarely and occasionally by a minor - *Bhagavata* called *mari-Bhagavata*. They make the audience laugh by the use of local phrases, proverbs, jokes and wordplays. It is on account of the humorous element provided by *Bhagavata* and minor-*Bhagavata* that *Parijata* retains the attention of the audience without ever boring them.

The costumes of characters in *Parijata* are quite simple and never gaudy or costly ones. The actor playing the role of Krisna wears a clean shirt and a dhoti and turban with brocade around his head with a peacock feather stuck on its front top. Many times he is not even painted with blue colour. The actresses playing the roles of Rukmini and Satyabhama wear the normal dress like sarces and blouses. But the character of Koravanji has a peculiar and distinct appearance. She has to wear her hair let loose on her back, to be clad in a black sarce, carry a Koravanji-basket on her head and clasp the doll of a baby in her arm. The stage of *Parijata* is the

same as that of *Dappinata*. When the tempo of the play is to be noticed, the female characters move dancing from one end of the stage to the other.

MUSIC

The popularity of *Parijata* is mainly ascribable to its distinctive musical style. The songs of *Parijata* enjoy the popularity and respect by the audience denied to those of other *Bayalatas*.

Aparala Tammanna had originally composed the *Parijata* as an opera or recitative poem. In the earlier days the songs of *Parijata* used to be sung in Karnataki style, or in *Yaksagana* style according to which songs were adapted to the *ragas* and *talas*. But nowadays i.e. after 1920, the same songs of *Parijata* are sung in Hindustani musical style, because of the influence of Hindustani music on the artists of North-Karnataka. Many songs of *Parijata* are sung in the *Khyal* style of Hindustani music. A few songs are sung in mere *ragas* without rhythm which resembles *gamaka* style of Karnataki tradition, but is clearly imitative of Hindustani *thumri* style. Koujalagi Ningavva, who knew both Karnataki and Hindustani styles trained her disciples in both and thus combined tradition with modernity in herself. Mahalingapur Rajasab, Nanadi Gondaligya and Siraguppi Kadagouda knew Hindustani music very well and popularised it in North-Karnataka.

Thus both Karnataki and Hindustani styles of music are employed in *Parijata*. *Zunzoti*, *Regupti*, *Sriraga*, *Mayamalavagouda*, *Sankarabharana*, *Mandavi*, *Kambhoja* are some of the Karnataki *ragas* employed in *Parijata*. Many times some Karnataki *ragas* like *Mohana*, *Todi* and *Kalyani* were easily converted into their Hindustani equivalents like *Bhupa*, *Bhairavi* and *Yaman*. Some of the other Hindustani *ragas* commonly employed in *Parijata* are *Pihu*, *Misra Kafi*, *Pahadi*, *Misra Pahadi*, *Khamaj*, *Abhogi*, *Purvi*, *Puriyadhanasri*, *Darbari-Kanada*, *Malakamsa*, *Sarang*, *Ananda Bhairavi*, *Hamir*, *Sohani*, *Bhimapalas*.

Desa, *Jogiya* and *Nilambari*. It is interesting to note that sometimes a song is begun in Karnataki style and concluded in Hindustani style. Similarly some Karnataki *talas* (rhythmic patterns) like *Trividhi*, *Bilandi*, *Zampa* are retained in their original form. Some other Karnataki *talas* like *Aditala*, and *Attatala* are easily converted into their Hindustani equivalents like *Tritala* and *Dadara*. It is rather unfortunate to note that the present day artists lack the rigorous training in music required for the purpose. But the local variations in musical style are inevitable and certainly add to the variety.

One of the important differences between *Parijata* and other *Bayalatas* is that whereas in the latter all the songs are sung by the *Sutradhara*, in the former the various songs are sung by the respective actors or actresses themselves. It is said that by about 1880 Anna Kirloskar and Trilokekar introduced into Marathi stage the practice of actors/actresses singing their own songs. It is also said that Anna Kirloskar translated the Kannada *Parijata* into Marathi and staged it in Pune about 1870. He has retained in the Marathi the original tunes of Kannada which inspired the other Marathi plays. One special musical distinctiveness of *Parijata* is that whenever an actor or actress is singing a song in a particular *raga*, the back-chorus will sing *alap* or *koch* in the same *raga* in a descendo, which adds a special beauty to the singing as a whole. In *Parijata* all the actors or actresses have white *sadja* key as the base of their scale. This requires rigorous training for and hard practice by the artists.

Parijata is popular next only to *Sangya-Balya*. There are both professional and amateur troupes of *Parijata* in North-Karnataka. The amateur troupes provide entertainment to only a couple of neighbouring villages, whereas professional troupes deserve systematic research. Most of the professional *Parijata* troupes are based in Jamakhandi, Mahalingapalur and in Bijapur and Belgaum districts. In the villages of this region many fairs and *okalis* (colour-throwing) in the name of Lord Hanuman take place

between January and June every year. On these occasions the villagers invariably invite the *Parijata* troupes and enjoy seeing the performances.

Many of the professional artists of *Parijata* depend upon the play for their livelihood. Thus the commercialisation of this art, sometimes, resulted in its degeneration. Modernity has made its way into *Parijata* tunes, dialogues and costumes. Many times the artists stoop to the level of singing film songs to cater to the vulgar needs of the audience. This is, indeed very unfortunate.

Chapter - IV

CONCLUSION

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF BAYALATAS

The *Bayalatas* of North-Karnataka have certain distinctive theatrical characteristics of their own. Some activities which cannot be shown directly on the stage are shown through mimetic or symbolic action. For example, chess-plying is shown through miming in *Sangya-Balya* and *Parijata*. Rupasena doubting the chastity of his mother when he sees her sleeping beside a stranger or the Gollati selling her curds to Duti are shown only through miming. Similarly two scenes taking place simultaneously on the stage which was common in Sanskrit Drama has been continued in *Bayalatas*. The two scenes are not separated by a curtain. In *Sangya-Balya*, for example, Sangya and Gangi will be singing on one side of the stage and Irya and Byagari will be shouting on the other side. In *Parijata*, Krisna and Rukmini will be playing chess on one side of the stage whereas Duti and Satyabhama will be coming from the other side. The former should be imagined to be Krisna's palace and the latter, to be the outside of palace.

The entry of demons or *Raksasas* in *Bayalatas* is simply grand or terrific. When Hanumanta has to create the impression of burning Lanka he goes in front of the stage and sets fire to a tiny house made of paper. The actor playing the role of a *Devi* follows many vows. The actor who plays the role of a goddess or *Devi* is always seated on the back of a lion and never dances. These are some attempts at realism in *Bayalatas*.

One difference between Sanskrit Drama and *Bayalatas* is that whereas in the former certain actions like bloodshed and death are forbidden on the stage, in the latter there is no prohibition of any kind. Dying and carrying the dead are shown very realistically in *Mudalapaya*. The killing of Sangya is a very impressive scene on the stage. Kamalaksi killing Ramasingh and the Station-Master butchering Kasibayi's baby are gesticulated very impressively.

MODERNITY

In modern days *Bayalatas* are losing their folk purity because of foolish adaptation of modernity in them. Sometimes the artists of *Bayalatas* employ film songs in the plays thereby violating the folk purity of the drama. This kind of modernity is not a happy sign.

NEGLECTENCE

The folk-theatre of North-Karnataka is known for its creativity and social awareness. It has happily combined tradition with experimentation. But unfortunately it does not enjoy the encouragement by the State Government. Many scholars have neglected this form of drama either because of their ignorance or because of snobbery. Its contribution to the Indian folk-theatre is very significant. It has also influenced the modern Kannada drama to some extent.

The songs and theatrical technique of the folk-drama have been successfully employed in the modern Kannada plays. The prefatory part of *Jokumaraswamy* (by Chandrasekhar Kambar) is an imitation of *Parijata* convention. Some songs of *Gokarnada Goudasani* (by Chandrasekhar Patil) are directly borrowed from *Bayalatas*. Sriranga has borrowed the characters of *Sutradhara* from *Bayalatas* and successfully employed it in his plays. Thus the *Bayalatas* of North-Karnataka are very rich in their native theme and techniques which can inspire many a modern dramatist.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

(English)

1. Gargi, Balavant. (1966), *Folk-Theatre of India*.
Washington: University of Washington Press
2. Mathur J.C. (1964), *Drama in Rural India*.
New York : Asia PublishingHouse.
3. Ranganath H.K. (1960) *The Karnataka Theatre*.
Dharwad : Karnatak University.

(Kannada)

4. Chidananda Murthy, M. (1977). *Gramina*. Bangalore,
L Bapco Prakasana.
5. Hiremath R.C. (1974), *Janapada Sahitya Darsana*,
Part I. Dharwad : Karnatak University.
6. Imrapur, Somashekhara, (1979), *Janapada Vijnana*.
Dharwad : Chetana Prakasana.
7. Ittannavar, Srirama, (1991), *Sri Krisna Parijata : Ondu
Adhyayana*. Bilagi : Vini Prakasana.

8. Kalburgi, M.M. (1988), *Marga*, Vols I & II. Bangalore : Naresh and Company.
9. Kambar, Chandrasekhar, (1965), *Uttara Karnatakada Janapada Rangabhumi*. Dharwad : Manvantara Prakasana.
10. Latthe, M.S. (1978), *Bayalatada Sarathi*. Mutanal : Mallasarja Prakasana.
11. Latthe M.S. (1980), *Janapada Kavicharite*. Dhangapur : Basavantharao Malipatil Memorial Publication.
12. Latthe, M.S. (1980) *Janapada Samsodhanatmaka Barahagulu*. Kalburgi : Patil Dal Mill.
13. Malasetty, Basavaraj, (1983), *Uttara Karnatakada Bayalatagalu*. Dharwad : Prasaraanga, Karnatak University.
14. Sunkapur M.S. (1976), *Janapada Sahitya Darsana, Part II*. Dharwad : Karnatak University.
15. Sunkapur, M.S. (1978), *Janapada Sahitya Darsana, Part III*. Dharwad : Karnatak University.



1. A scene from a Dodddata, *Partha Vijaya*.
Courtesy: Dept. of Kannada and Culture.



2. A scene from a Dodddata, *Lanka Dahana*.
Courtesy: Sri Basavalingayya Hiremath.



3. A scene from a Doddata, *Kuruksetra*
 Courtesy : Dept of Kannada and Culture



4. A Scene from a Doddata, *Kuruksetra*.
 Courtesy : Dept of Kannada and Culture.



5. The Opening scene of a Sannata.
 Courtesy: Sri Basavalingayya Hiremath



6. A scene from a Sannata, *Mahasati Silavati*.
 Courtesy : Dept of Kannada and Culture.



7. A Scene from a Radhanata.
 Courtesy: Sri. Basavalingayya Hiremath.



8. A Scene from Parijata.
 Courtesy: Sri. Basavalingayya Hiremath.

