

Acclaimed as the Italian of the East, having been the language of Lyric and Opera throughout the southern peninsula for three centuries (15th, 16th and 17th) TELUGU, like the Vraja Bhasha in North India, produced many saint composers, who sang in praise of the Lord, among whom KSHETRAYYA was one of the brightest pearls on the Rosary. The essence of elegance and sweetness of Telugu language is epitomised in the immortal lyrics of Kshetravyya, portraying love life in its entirety, in which, the Supreme Soul, the Divine Cowherd 'Gopala' with jingling bells, is the hero. Lexicons and treatises on the tenets of the Literature, Poetics, Science of erotics, classical music and dance have enriched themselves by quoting passages and usages of Kshetravyya's exemplary lyrics. His work illuminated and won high esteem of the land and the people, temple yards and royal courts, and saints and kings, throughout the Deccan and South India.

The author of this monograph is Dr. B. Rajanikanta Rao, a poet, playwright, musician, composer, a well-known broadcaster and a winner of the Sahitya Akademi award in 1961 for his research work in Telugu, *Andhra Vaggeyakara Charitramu* which dealt with a evolution of India Music, incorporating a chronological presentation of biographies of composers of lyrics and music. In recognition of his services in the fields of music and literature he has been conferred the Honorary degree of Doctor of Letters by Andhra University.



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KSHETRAYYA

B. Rajanikanta Rao

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KSHETRAYYA

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

From Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.

Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi.

MAKERS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

KSHETRAYYA

by
B. Rajanikanta Rao

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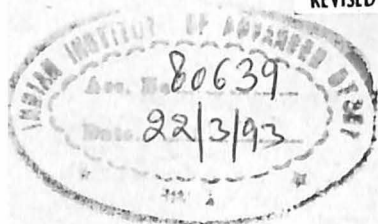


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Dedication

If I were not to be born at all
couldn't I hope to have been Muvvagopala?
If at all I were born in 'those days'
wouldn't I have been Kshetranya's beloved?
That I am born in this present age,
haven't I been able to do this little job?
With humility why not I dedicate this
short life-sketch of Kshetranya,
throwing lustre on his lyrical prowess—
to all those scholars who have laid the path,
to all the readers who would evince interest,
and the Divine Cow-herd with the Jingling Bells?

Preface

For assigning me the responsibility of writing on Kshetrayya my gratitude to the National Academy of Letters cannot be expressed in words. Kshetrayya is the foremost among the lyrical poets of Telugu and the Makers of Indian Literature. The assignment came on me like a sacred task to fulfil, at it were, a pre-ordained mission in my life. It proved to be an absorbing recreation to my mind and activity soon after my retirement from active service.

Before actually beginning this monograph, I started indoctrinating my mind and soul with Kshetrayya's thought, imagery and theme as embedded in each lyric, by taking up the translation of his *Padams* into English covering more than 60. Then it looked as though I was possessed by the spirit of Kshetrayya and his favourite deity, Gopala of Jangling Bells! Every thought, argument and conclusion; every character, episode and sequence, were getting themselves revealed before me, through a trance. The relief I now feel after completing this work, appears to be the end of a sojourn, but in fact, that of a long quest.

The critical estimates and assessments of the contribution of Kshetrayya to our literature and culture, by such renowned scholars like Subbarama Dikshitar, C. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, P. Sambamurthy, E. Krishna Iyyer, T. V. Subba Rao and V. Raghavan, supplied me with a firm outline of the halo around Kshetrayya's personality. I am indebted to these scholars.

The researches, theories, conjectures and conclusions of such eminent musicologists and scholars as Vissa Appa Rao, R. Ananta Krishna Sarma, C. R. Reddy, P. V. Rajamannar and Malladi Ramakrishna Sastri and those of my learned contemporaries like Arudra and S. Gangappa, have given me intimate glimpses of the personality of Kshetrayya, but the picture that presented itself to me was one of two conflicting images superimposed on each other. All the same, I am indebted to these scholars in no mean measure.

Internal evidence helped me to present in my own way, a clear-cut and well-focussed personal picture of Kshetrayya and a most rational chronology of events in his life. My sincere thanks are due to Malladi's son, Narasimha Sastri, for having supplied me with such a guiding article of his father, which served me to unfold some hitherto unknown aspects of Kshetrayya's life.

If my interpretations of some of the very simple common usages of Telugu of Kshetrayya, while explaining the lyrics, delineating the characters and reconstructing the events of his life, including the identity of Chevvaṇḍi Linga, could elicit the concurrence and appreciation of discerning readers, I would sing in praise of Lord Muvvagaṇḍa, rather than claim any credit for myself.

Lastly my thanks are due to K. N. Sundaram, a family friend of mine, belonging to a family of literateurs and musicians, for having got the manuscript of this monograph typed within a short period, offering me now and then quite helpful suggestions.

December 1978.

B. RAJANIKANTA RAO.

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1. A WORTHY BEAD ON THE ROSARY

IN The August Presence of the Supreme, a rosary chants on the Glory of the Lord, pushing each worthy bead to keep a count. Stringed on the rosary were enlightened souls who sang the praise of the Lord in His various forms, attributes and names. Their songs brought forth the art of lyrical composition (*Geetam*) with music, the art of singing with melody and rhythm to the accompaniment of instruments (*Vadyam*), and the art of dance (*Nrityam*) with expressive movements and postures of the human body. These carried the singer, the dancer, and the audience nearer to the Supreme. These elevated souls were called *Vaggeyakars* (meaning makers of *Vak*—words of lyrics—and *Geya*—musical setting). The lyrics were either in Sanskrit or in a language of the people. One such pearl on the rosary was *Kshetravyya*.

In the earliest treatise on performing arts and theatre, *Natyasastra* (4th century B.C.), sage *Bharata* used the word *Padam* to mean a song, synonymous to other terms like *Geeti*, *Geetam*, *Kirtana*, *Sankirtana* and *Prabandham*. Each of these synonyms later acquired its own specific connotation with a shade of difference from the others. *Bharata* further mentioned that *Padam* was usually composed in Sanskrit, Prakrit, or *Desa Bhasha*.

Starting from the beginning of the Christian era, with the rise of *Saka satraps* and *Kushans* in the North, who adopted Hindu names and religion, right upto the zenith of *Gupta* empire (4th and 5th century A.D.), there was, throughout the sub-continent, a gradual decline of Buddhism and Jainism and consequent assertion and revival of Hinduism. Along with the concept of *Asethuhimachalam*, that *Bharata Varsha* was one unit of land or country right from the *Himalayas* down to the cape *Kanyakumari*, came the fusion of Aryan culture with the cultures of Dravidian and other pre-Dravidian domicile races. Consequently, the merger of theological doctrines and religious practices took place. This merger gave rise to renovation or re-orientation of ancient temples, conversion of *Bouddharamas* into *Saivaramas* and construction of fresh temples to enshrine *Siva*, *Vishnu*, (*Vasudeva*), *Devi* (*Sakti*), etc. The out-come of this was revised versions of *Puranas* like *Linga* (*Siva*), *Skanda*, *Vayu*, *Bhagavata*, *Brahmanda* and *Padma*. These

versions included *sthalapuranas* (gazetteer information) of places of pilgrimage on river banks and shrines on sacred hills. These also contained *agamas* detailing the system of worshipping deities and laying down rules and regulations for the observance of austerities and festivals of different deities.

Vaishnava saints (*Alvars* like *Periyalwar*, *Andal* and *Nammalwar*) and *Saiva* saints (*Nayanmars* like *Appar*, *Sundarar* and *Sambandar*), had to their credit immortal lyrics in praise of *Vishnu* and *Siva* the Supreme Divine according to their respective concepts. Remarkable are the four thousand divine lyrics composed and sung by *Alvars* in the people's language and these have together been acclaimed as the *Dravida Veda* (the Scripture in Tamil language). This was the beginning of the wave of *Bhakti* Cult (in the 7th and 8th Centuries A.D.). The *Bhakti* Cult enunciated that the path of devotion to Lord and righteous living led one to make one's life worthwhile and ultimately to attain salvation.

During the period between the 7th and the 12th Centuries A.D. three great thinkers (*Acharyas*) *Sankara*, *Ramanuja* and *Madhwa* (680, 1027 and 1199 A.D.) appeared on the scene of South India. They electrified the whole of the sub-continent through their philosophies, respectively known as *Advaita* (Monism) *Visishtadvaita* (qualified Dualism), and *Dvaita* (Dualism). These doctrines have eternal application. *Sankara* did not support *Bhakti Marga* in his teachings but composed hymns. These are lustrous gems of Sanskrit literature and of unmistakable grandeur addressed to different deities of the Hindu pantheon of Gods. *Ramanuja* was a staunch upholder of *Bhakti* Cult stipulating absolute surrender to the Lord (*Prapatti*). He is credited with the authorship of Sanskrit passages of poetic eminence called *Gadyas*, which englorified the Lord. *Madhwa's* philosophy and teachings provided the source of lyrical creations of saint-composers in Kannada under the appellation *Dasa Koota*.

The 10th and 11th centuries saw the self-assertion of the people's languages of Kannada and Telugu countries under the patronage of the *Chalukya* monarchs. This paved the way for *Kavya* literature (metric verse). Karnataka took the lead in raising the status of 'song' as a worthy piece of literature, through devotional and didactic *vachanas* (poetic prose passages with a smattering of internal rhythm) of *Basaveswara*, Prime Minister of *Kalyani* and *Acharya* of *Virasaivism*, a militant cult preaching

Bhakti towards Siva. Akkamahadevi, another devotee of Siva and a close contemporary of *Basaveswara* (both of 12th century), had to her credit hundreds of *vachana* type of subjective lyrics dedicated to the Lord depicting the *Sati-Pati Bhava* in which the devotee was the loving wife and the Lord, the husband. In Tamil, *Andal* or *Goda Devi*, daughter of *Periyalwar*, composed such sublime subjective lyrics about her beloved Lord *Sri Ranganatha* during the beginnings of *Bhakti* wave.

But to *Jayadeva*, of 11th century A.D. of *Tindubilwa* in *Birbhoom* district of Bengal, goes the credit of being the forerunner of the adherants of the path of devotion through his full-length Sanskrit opera, *Geetagovinda*, dealing with the amours of Lord *Krishna* with *Radha*:

"If your mind is passionate in remembrance of *Hari*, if it is curious about the amatory arts, then listen to *Jayadeva's* eloquence: a sweet, tender love string of verses".

According to tradition it is said that, when *Jayadeva* recited the lyrics of *Geetagovinda*, his wife *Padmavathi* danced, interpreting their meaning and content through expression and acting.

Each State in India, besides Bengal and Orissa, like Andhra, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, has given *Geetagovinda* an honoured place in devotional congregations as well as by artists of performing arts, each State having its own tradition and version of music. *Geetagovinda* was the first full-length lyrical poem written by a poet, completely thorough with court traditions of Sanskrit Poetry. All the same, the poet took the cue from folk-ballads in the popular language of medieval Bengal (*Apabhramsha*) in imbibing the form and theme. The *Vaishnava Sahajiyas* of Bengal held *Jayadeva* as their *Adiguru* (their first teacher) and his poem as a revelation of their 'secret' doctrine of Love-Divine. '*Ujjwala-neelamani*' of *Rupagoswami* tried to establish that *Bhakti* is a separate *Rasa* distinct from *Sringara*. With an uninhibited depiction of all aspects of conjugal love ascribed to God and his consort, the same '*Rasa*' came to be called '*Madhura Bhakti*'.

Close on the heels of *Jaya deva*, or a little later, *Nimbarka* and *Vallabhacharya*, two scholar-saints of Andhra origin, went north and established the school of devotion to *Radha* and *Krishna*

as the supreme Godhead pair. In the 14th and the 15th centuries, Bidyapati of Bihar-Bengal border adorned the court of Sivasena, the Pala King, and composed lyrics in the Maithili dialect, following the same theme of love for the Divine Lord. The *Sahajiyas* who followed *Jayadeva* had *Chandidas* as the leader of their cult in the 14th century. *Chandidas* was also a great bard composing and singing *Kirtans* about the Lord as his beloved. In the 15th century *Chaitanya Gauranga* of Bengal swayed the whole country with his innumerable *Kirtans* in ecstasy as beloved *Radha* pining for Her Divine Lord *Krishna*.

When Eastern India was finding its soul expressed in people's languages in the form of ecstatic lyrics of love for the Supreme, a similar wave flooded the Western part of India. The Sufi Saints like *Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti* of *Ajmir*, *Baba Fariduddin* of *Multan*, *Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya* of *Delhi* and his disciple *Amir Khusro* who lived through the 13th century, influenced large masses of people through their spiritual lyrics in the form of *Qawalis*. Saints like *Kabir* (1398 to 1527 A.D.) and *Guru Nanak* (1469 to 1538 A.D.) are also memorable for their immortal lyrics of devotion to one Supreme Lord, integrating the essence of both Muslim and Hindu streams of thought. The wave continued when in the 16th century *Tulsidas*, *Surdas*, and *Mirabai* in and around *Brindavan* and *Madhura*, and *Namdev*, *Jnandev* and *Tukaram* near *Pandharipur* in Maharashtra enriched people's languages of their respective regions with their lyrics replete with unswerving devotion to Lord and righteous human conduct.

In the same 11th century when *Jayadeva* was singing the Indian Song of Songs in the temple of *Puri Jagannath* and in the court of *Lakshmansena* of Bengal, down in the Deccan, on the banks of the *Godavari*, under the patronage of the Eastern *Chalukyan* King *Raja Raja*, *Nannaya Bhattu* started the line of Telugu poets through his pioneering work *Mahabharata* (only three cantos), into which he incorporated some of the age-old metrical forms of Telugu like *Seesam*, *Ata Veladi*, *Geetam*, *Taruvoja* and *Madhyakkara*.

In the 13th century there was a growing demand for a liberal use of idiomatic Telugu free from Sanskrit influence and employing indigenous lyrical forms. *Palkuriki Somanatha* adapted the folk ballad metre, *Dwipada*, for his two major canonical works *Basava-puranam* and *Panditharadhya Charitra*. The works were on *Vira Saiva* thought and practice (according to teachings of *Basaveswara*).

In these works we come across mention of forms of Desi lyrics of *Padam* category and a variety of indigenous forms of performing arts, like *Yakshagana* and street plays.

In the same period, under the rule of Kakatiya Kings, music and dance flourished, as evidenced by the treatise on dance, *Nritta Ratnavali*, giving importance to Desi forms of dance. This treatise was written by *Jayaprasanna*, the commander of the elephant regiment in the *Kakatiya* capital. The same period also saw *Lilasuka* or *Bilwamangala* enthralled by the vision of the Lord as *Balakrishna*, the child prodigy. This vision was immortalised in his work *Sri Krishna Karnamrutham*, a collection of his lyrics in Sanskrit on the beauties of *Balakrishna*. It was then that the first composer of Telugu lyrics, *Krishnamacharya*, having connection with the *Kakatiya* King *Prataparudra*, dedicated his lyrics to the Lord *Varaha Nrishma* of *Simhachalam* in *Visakhapatnam* district. His lyrics are called *Simhagiri Narahari Vachanamulu*. They were written in the form of poetic prose passages, which were subjective appeals to the Lord, descriptions of His attributes, His grace, etc., along with some autobiographical narratives of the saint-composer.

We find mention of both the names of *Jayadeva*, and *Krishnamacharya*, in the *Samkirtana Lakshanam*, a treatise on the techniques of devotional lyrics, written originally in Sanskrit by *Tallapaka Annamacharya* (1408-1504). *Annamacharya* was a devotee and composer of 32,000 *Padams* dedicated to, and having Lord *Venkateswara* of *Tirupati*, as the hero. Now only a Telugu translation of *Samkirtana Lakshanam* done by *China Tirumalayya*, the grandson of the author, is available to us. *Annamacharya* was acclaimed throughout the South as *Padakavita Pithamaha* (the progenitor of poetic lyrics) and also as *Samkirtanacharya* i.e., preceptor of 'Samkirtana' (eulogy to God). Like his predecessor *Krishnamacharya*, *Annamacharya* also was an ardent follower of *Ramanuja* and *Bhakti Marga*. Like the *Geetagovinda* of *Jayadeva*, a majority of *Annamacharya's* lyrics have for their theme, the uninhibited portrayal of amatory pursuits of Lord *Venkateswara*. His lyrics go under two heads, a majority under the head 'Sringara Padamulu' (amorous lyrics) and a lesser number under the head *Adhyatma Padamulu* (Spiritual lyrics). According to *Annamacharya's* usage, *Padam* and *Samkirtana* were synonymous in import. Only subsequently,

from the time of Kshetrayya, *Padam* came to be used only for the amorous lyric and *Samkirtana* for the devotional or spiritual lyric.

We have evidence from the lyrics of *Annamacharya*, that opportunities were plenty in his time, and they were utilised, to get his lyrics sung, portrayed and enacted by *Devadasis* and *Rajanartakis*. In *Krishnamacharya's* case also the saint was not free from such contacts. Unlike *Krishnamacharya* and *Annamacharya*, who were saints by temperament and not recluse ascetics, *Siddhendrayogi* and *Narayana Teertha* were avowed ascetics. The latter two banned the inclusion of women in *Bhagavata* communities. Both *Siddhendra* and *Narayana Teertha* were known to have contacts with and adherence to monism. *Siddhendra's* treatment of his two dance plays in Telugu (*Bhama Kalapam* depicting the amours of *Satyabhama* and *Gollakalapam* depicting the amours of *Krishna* being rejected by the cowherd woman and in turn the latter teaching Him the highest tenets of *Advaita* Philosophy) is unique.

It is of interest to note that *Sankaradeva* and *Madhavadeva*, two saint composers of Assam of the 15th and 16th centuries took up themes like *Parijatapaharanam*, *Rukminiharan* and such other *Bhagavata* themes for their musico-dance-dramas in Assamese called *Ankavali*. They too belonged to the monistic school of philosophy. Kerala and Karnataka, a century later, also seem to have followed suit and took up to revise their themes of *Attakatha*, *Kathakali* and *Yakshaganam*.

Narayana Teertha, unlike *Jayadeva* and his followers, completely eschewed amorous approach and concentrated on devotion to the Lord. This can be seen throughout his *Krishnaleela Tarangini*. This work can be called a *Mahayakshagana* in Sanskrit in 12 acts, depicting the entire life of *Sri Krishna* from his birth upto his marriage with *Rukmini*.

It was during the last quarter of the 16th century (1569-95) that some batches of *Bhagavata Mela* families from *Kuchipudi* in *Krishna* district of Andhra went down South to Tanjore district. They obtained from the King of Tanjavur, *Achyutappa Naick* (1565-1614), *Achyutarajapuram* and colonised there. They continued their avocation of presenting dance-dramas. This place laterly came to be known as *Melattur*. The successors to the original migrants produced many composers of *Kirtanas*, *Padams*, *Sabdams* and *Yakshaganas*. Such composers included *Melattur Veera-*

bhadrappa, Kasinathappa and Venkata Rama Sastri, who enlarged the scope and enriched the depth of what we today revere as the tradition of Karnataka music. Those who remained in *Kuchipudi* continued their tradition as of old. Besides *Siddhendra Yogi*, another contributor to the *Kuchipudi* repertoire, *Narayana Teertha*, also must have left his native place and settled in Tanjore in the same period (1565-95), and finally attained liberation in *Tirupundurti*.

This is the exact juncture when Kshetrappa entered the scene. He was not an ascetic like either *Siddhendra* or *Narayana Teertha*, for at least a major part of his life. He was not only not obsessed like them by taboo against women but took full advantage of contacts with all categories of women, as a matter of faith or credo according to his own idealistic principles. He was an ardent admirer of beauty in nature and life and a conscientious and most sincere devotee of the Lord, who was the Absolute (as envisaged in the 'Charm' of *Gopala* of Jingling bells of which we shall say something later). He was a keen observer of human behaviour and master craftsman in lyrics portraying love-life in its entirety. Kshetrappa found himself born in the last decade of the 16th century (round about 1595) in *Movva*. This place is situated in the same tract of land which was then reverberating with the lyrics of *Siddhendra* and *Narayana Teertha* and echoing the *Padams* of *Annamacharya*, in the temple yards and the gurukula schools where teachers were training such youngsters as himself (Kshetrappa) to grow up possibly into one of the brightest pearls on the Rosary of Devotion to the Supreme!

2. CURTAIN RAISER

THE Hindu ethos suffered a set back throughout the peninsular India, with the devastation of *Hampi Vijayanagar* and the practical dismemberment of the Empire, after the battle of *Rakshasthagdi (Thalli Kota)* in 1565 A.D.

A spiritual vacuum had been created which had to be filled in. A labyrinthine darkness of cultural degeneracy had enveloped the life of the people that had to be cleared. People were in a morass of despondency and they had to be lifted out of it. They had to retrieve their identity as a race, with renewed self-confidence and a balanced approach to the fore-fold pursuits of life (*Purusharthas*). To perform these tasks as an instrument of God, Kshetrappa was born in this world, in the *Krishna* estuary, just three decades after the fall of *Vijayanagar*. He was inspired to choose, as a means for the fulfilment of the divine task, the medium of song and dance depicting the love pursuits of the Supreme Lord.

As an individual, in his adolescence, Kshetrappa, represented the race of his time—a rudderless boat torn off its moorings. He gave rise to legends that, although born in a traditionally pious brahmin family, he was a vagrant and behaved like a philanderer, a bohemian and breaker of social laws. Even in such a way of life he had a weakness for all that was highly aesthetic, elegant and sublime in creative arts, like music, poetry and dance. One legend has it that the stiffness and advice of one of his girl friends was an eye-opener. He got initiated to the '*Gopala Mantra*' the charm containing a powerful combination of magical attributes of *Vishnu* in His incarnation as *Krishna* or *Gopala*, the cowherd boy with jingling bells dangling on his waist-belt and fastened to the anklets. This penance brought out from Kshetrappa thousands of lyrics which contained exemplary and exhaustive depiction of love-life, of love—sacred and profane. These exhibited subtle nuances of glory and bliss on the one side and shades of jealousy on the other, touching on such qualities as knavery, tiffs and pangs of separation, scandal and censure. These mostly had *Muvvagopala* (Lord *Gopala* of jingling bells) as the hero (*Nayaka*) and a variety of heroines (*Nayikas*) and messenger maids (*dootikas*). These were couched in extremely elegant but simple idiomatic spoken Telugu. These were structured in exquisite melodic (*Raga*) patterns that could serve as background for the most beautiful cameos of dance performance.

From the available remnants of his creations, Kshetrayya cannot be said to be a drop-out from the traditional learning and scholarship, merely relying upon the local traditions extant in *Krishna* district of Andhra. His *padams* (Lyrics) are replete with evidences of his thorough insight into, and knowledge of, all the traditional *vidyas* like *Vedanta*, *Sastras* and the sixty-four traditional Indian arts known as *Chatu-shashti kalas*.

The assumption according to local legends that Kshetrayya might have started his career as a bohemian philanderer could be accepted for a while. But, through penance and a metamorphosis of his mind and his attitude to life and people, he reached a state of unattached, indescribable, universal soul! In the process he proved himself to be a *Kavi-brahma*, a master-portrayer of human emotions and love, universalised by his crede. According to this crede, Lord *Gopala* of Jingling bells was the Supreme Lover—a lover of his wedded consort, a lover of another's wife, and also a philanderer among the courtesans. Each lyric has an independent theme, woven round a different incident in which the Lord is the hero. Some may be tempted to identify Kshetrayya as the hero, the Lord, in all such portrayals. But, when it comes to the portrayal of various types of heroines pining for the Lord, Kshetrayya can only be identified with each such heroine, allegorically standing for the individual human soul pining for union with the Supreme Lord. His lyrics portray the love-lorn solitary contemplations, dialogues with confidante-maids, whisperings of love-pairs, odes to lonesomeness and pangs of separation, messages of mediating maids and all that could be had in human nature.

Some of the most sublime lines, lifting the reader to the heights of mysticism, from the Song of Songs of King Solomon and lyrics of Shelly, Keats and Byron have an unique parallel in *Kshetrayya's* lyrics.

At the same time, Kshetrayya's lyrics reflect the kaleidoscopic facets of culture and wisdom of our country handed down from generation to generation. There is every reason to believe that Kshetrayya evolved himself into an universal Individual Soul.

With regard to the appeal of Kshetrayya's creative work to the common man of the land in which he lived, the comments of the father of modern literary criticism of classical literature in Telugu, C.R. Reddy, in one of his letters to Vissa Appa Rao in 1950, are:

"You have no idea how much I am lost in admiration of all that you are undergoing in *Bhava*, *Kala*, and *Kriya* as a musical *rasika*. The illustrations will certainly add to the attraction of the *sahityam* and *sangeetham* of this great genius. Did I tell you that about the year 1922 when I happened to be in Tanjore, I heard a cow-herd going about the streets singing '*Manchidinamu nede?*'"

In the same letter Reddi, wondering whether Kshetrayya was a *uitaraya* (bohemian) in his youth, comments further:

"Are you sure that Kshetrayya was in his youth a *Vitaraya*? There are two types of people with a dislike of sex. The one is the ascetic type which finds in it something sinful, and therefore to be avoided. The other is the extra sensitive aesthetic, who does not find it sufficiently exquisite and free from nastiness and ugliness that revolt sense and sensibility. The highly sensitive or over-sensitive avoids sex.....To which class does Kshetrayya belong? He revels in sensual imagination. I half suspect that he was not sensual in conduct. The imaginative abhor the real".

Later in his letter, C.R. Reddy, expressing annoyance at the preponderance of sex in our music and literature, criticises the conventional approach of some pundits trying to justify it by way of allegories and uneasy theories.

The convention of aesthetic creations where sex is not taboo is purely Indian, and in this, the approach of our ancients carried a rider that in artistic presentation, no single pursuit of life among the four *purusharthas*, should get an unbalanced biased treatment to the detriment of any of the others.

It is not easy to say that Kshetrayya's lyrics did not have this balanced approach. That is why C.R. Reddy comments further in his letter unequivocally:

"All the same, I am not dead to literature and literary beauties as not to be able to enjoy the wonderful style of Kshetrayya, his fancy, and his imagination, dramatic settings and the rest of them that constitute a certain type of life which has come upon us since the sublime days of *Mahabharata* and the ascendancy of Buddhism."

Going into the origin and connotation of the name of the saint-composer, Kshetrayya and *Kshetrajna*, as it obtained currency through the last three centuries, some scholars have made useful comments.

Rallapalli Anantakrishna Sarma refers to the tradition among some families to name the child as '*Kshetrapalayya*' after *Veerabhadra*, the commander of the '*Pramatha*' hordes of Lord *Siva*. He, however, does not go further to admit that the name *Kshetrapalayya* could have been shortened as Kshetrayya. He comments that the most respectable way Kshetrayya is referred to by musicologists and scholars in Tamil tracts as '*Kshetrajna*' is too sacred and beyond pollution to meet the spiritual capacity of the Telugus or their bohemian permissiveness. The sarcasm of Sarma underestimates the spiritual attainments of Telugus as a race. He seems to have overlooked the achievements of such great poets as *Tikkanna* (who was acclaimed as *Kavi-Brahma* for his spiritual attainments) and *Srinatha* (who was acclaimed as *Paramamaheswara* and a bohemian at one time or the other in his life). Was not *Potana* the author of *Bhogini Dandakam*? And, did we not get the most spiritual work, *Bhagavatam*, from him later? Does the saint-poet *Vemana* tell us a different story about himself?

According to Nidadavolu Venkata Rao's revelation, the word '*Kshetriya*' (the spelling has the second vowel as 'i' and a single 'y') would mean an expert in lyrical composition or a paramour of a married woman and alternatively he should be a *vita*—a frequenter of courtesans. He should not be mistaken for a pimp or a tout of the present day parlance, for explicit is A.B. Keith's definition:

"*Vita* resembles, though distantly, the parasite of the Greek Drama; he is a poet skilled in arts, especially music, acquainted *au fond* with the ways of hetaerae, in short, a perfect man of the world with literary and artistic culture to boot".

Gangappa (in his thesis on Kshetrayya) reveals that, according to *Guru Bala Prabodhika*, one who knows this body as a vehicle for enjoying pleasures is a *Kshetrajna*.

An alternative meaning given by *Gangappa* is "One who knows the sacred places of pilgrimage and seats of well-known shrines and deities".

According to *Vissa Appa Rao*, "if one could attain the state of a '*Kshetrajna*' in personal evolution, as propounded in the *Bhagavadgita* Verse 1, in chapter 13, it need not be overstressed that such a person is a Great Man. Our Kshetravya might have attained such a state of evolution". And now, Radhakrishnan's translation of the above verse of *Bhagavadgita*:

"This body—O son of *Kunti*—is called the field and him who knows this, those who know thereof call the knower of field."

And now, from *Sankara's* comments, again as rendered by Radhakrishnan:

"*Kshetrajna* is the light of awareness, the knower of all objects. The witness, who is not the individual embodied mind but the cosmic consciousness for which the cosmos is the object. It is calm and eternal and does not need the use of senses and the mind for its witnessing.

"*Purusha* or *Kshetrajna* cannot be recognised as an object among other objects or as a substance. He can only be recognized as subject, in which is hidden the secret of existence, a complete universe in an individual form.

'*Kshetrajna*' is the universal in an individually unrepeatable form.

Here is an aphorism of *Sankhya* system of philosophy, with reference to *Kshetrajna*:

"*Alepakō Nirgunah, Kshetrajnah purushah*" meaning *Purusha* (the supreme soul) is unattached, indefinable and knower of the various manifestations of the body (*Prakriti*, manifested in masculine and feminine forms)"

All the definitions and attributes revealed above get merged in the last two, which lead to the unattached indefinable (without attributes) universal individual into which our great master lyricist Kshetravya evolved himself and got acclaimed as *Kshetrajna* and, with his spiritual halo and cultural glory, he illuminated,

and won high esteem, of the land and the people, temple yards and royal courts, and saints and kings, right from the northern banks of the *Musi* down to the southern banks of the *Kaveri* and far southward upto *Rameswaram*.

3. THE TREASURE TROVE OF 'JINGLING BELLS'

THE Lyric which has been quoted by every scholar who dealt with the biographical data of Kshetrappa and his contribution to literature is:

VEDUKATO—Devagandhari Raga, Adi Tala

The Prince among Libertines

who sought after pleasure!

Since seven and three generations here,

it is said He is our treasure!

Muvvagopala espouses me,

my Lord, with peerless grace!

—The Prince—

When *Tirumala Nayak of Madhura*

having offered me liberal gifts,

Ordered me to be seated in his presence

and asked for the best of lyrics,

Out came two thousand lyrics,

which the host was asked to count,

And to the Lord hovering over the dais

the pleasure was of boundless measure!

—The Prince—

Getting over earlier misgivings

when *Vijaya Raghava Nayak of Tanjavur*,

In response to many an emissary,

was promptly visited by me

In the cool garden retreat

straight away with a thousand lyrics,

When the Lord was brought into communion

he had me honoured that day!

—The Prince—

When the powerful *Padsha of Golkonda*

having offered many a gift,

Desired to hold a contest

of lyrics with *Tulasimurti*,

My Lord *Muvvagopala* had

a thousand and five hundred lyrics

Composed in forty days

having possessed and inspired me!

—The Prince—

This is a faithful and free rendering of the wellknown 'Meruvapadam' of Kshetrappa. As mentioned earlier, this lyric has been quoted by every scholar who dealt with the biographical data of Kshetrappa and his contribution to literature, starting from the first compiler of a musical anthology (with texts, notations and biographical notes), under the title *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini*, Subbarama Dikshitar, a nephew of the great Muthuswamy Dikshitar and a scholar of Ettayapuram Estate in the last two decades of the 19th century. This Anthology was published in 1904. In this song, Kshetrappa addresses his Lord *Muvvagopala* as the Prince among Libertines (*Vitaraya*) and a 'treasure trove' (*Kānāchi*) of his native place, protecting and enhancing the prosperity of the people there, for 'seven and three generations'. This may mean either $7 + 3 = 10$, or $7 \times 3 = 21$, generations, since there is no conjunction in the original between 'seven'—and 'three'; accounting for either 200 or 420 years prior to the 17th century.

Kshetrappa expresses his gratitude and devotion to the Lord whose (1) peerless grace, (2) immediate presence (hovering on the dais), (3) granting of communion and (4) possession and inspiration, enabled him to compose 2000 padams at *Madhura Nayak's* court, 1,000 at *Tanjavur* in *Vijaya Raghava Nayak's* court, 1,500 (or 1,100) lyrics at *Golkonda* in *Abdulla Qutubsha's* court—all totalling 4,500 (or 4,100).

The central figure of praise and the recipient of the composer's gratitude in this song is clearly his Lord *Muvvagopala*. This is explicit in the burden of the song (*Pallavi*) and in the following couplet (*Anupallavi*). The idea continues to pervade through every stanza (*Charanam*) and the references to the names of three kings and their gifts to the composer are only of secondary importance. As *Vissa Appa Rao* has rightly mentioned in his introduction to his compilation of '*Kshetrappa Padamulu*' these four thousand and odd lyrics need not necessarily have, and would not also have actually, included any songs (worth mentioning as) dedicated to any king as the hero.

The subtle references made to *Muvvagopala* in the last line of each stanza (*Charanam*) cannot be and should not be missed:

- (1) '*Chaduru meedane unna saamiki santosham intinta kaade*': Here '*Saami*' or '*Swaami*' is a reference to the Lord who was hovering over the dais (*Chaduru*). It can never be a reference to the royal host.
- (2) '*.....chakkagaa veyi padamula palakarinchukogaane bahumaana mippinche naavela*'; Straightaway with a thousand lyrics, when the Lord was brought into communion, He had me honoured that day. Such a simple Telugu expression of common conversation like '*Palukarinchukogaane*' with its active voice of oneself (*Atmanepada*) coupled with the causative form of the root '*Paluku*', clarifies the sublime and intimate contact of the devotee with his favourite deity (*Ishta Devata*) in a 'spiritual communion'.
- (3) '*Velaya Muvvagopaludu.....naluwadi dinamula lonannannu kalisi vinipinchene*': Here the word '*Velaya*' appears at first sight to be a metre-filling word having no particular significance and '*Kalisi*' indicates the unfinished function of the verb '*Kalayu*'—to meet. But when '*Velaya*' and '*Kalisi*' are read together, they convey the sense of very high spiritual contact with the deity who must have possessed and inspired the composer.

If the burden of the song (*Pallavi*) is read together with these annotations to every stanza, as it should be, our discerning readers would appreciate the import of Kshetranya's '*Meruvapadam*', as highlighted in the foregoing paragraphs.

It is not known how, when and by whom this *Padam* was christened as '*Meruvapadam*'. No scholar or musicologist seems to have dilated on the meaning of this title, but the chance is now left to us. '*Meru*' of '*Meruvu*' is the imaginary (geometric or astrometric) line connecting the earth's axis to the Pole Star. As the earth rotates around its axis, towards its (eastern) right side, the whole of the cosmos appears to be revolving around us (earth) from the East to the West. Our ancients called this

imaginary line itself the mythological Merugiri (Mount *Meru*—the Indian *Olympus*) around which the heavens and heavenly beings roamed about. Here it would be proper to state that the life and world of Kshetraraya revolved around the '*Meruvapadam*' and, as such, the title is the most fitting one. '*Meruva*' is also the end of '*Veena*' (with the chiselled head of an animal with an open mouth) and according to musical lexicon it is called '*Veenaagra*', from where musical notes and modes arise in the ascending order (*Arohana*) as ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni, etc., the starting 'sa' or *Shadja* being intonated by the *mukta tantri*, the free string untouched by any fret. This interpretation may indicate the cross-roads or the juncture of turning of a new leaf in the life and activity of Kshetraraya when he took to the path of gradual spiritual ascendancy.

In this *Padam*, *Muvvagopala* has not at all been the object of description but He, being the *Purushottama*, is always the subject, the Supreme Soul. He is also the subject of the finite verb of the central idea of the lyric as stated in the burden of the song, the following couplet and in every following stanza. At the outset, He has been described as the Prince among Libertines, a *Vitaraya*. It must be noted that He is not a libertine of common parlance, since He is the Treasure Trove of the composer's native place for '7 and 3' generations. He is not only the content of the Treasure Trove but also its custodian, the guardian angel of the spiritual treasure of the people around Him for generations. In the second couplet (*Anupallavi*), Kshetraraya says that the Lord espoused him (*Koodukone*) with peerless grace.

Why is *Muvvagopala*, who is the Treasure Trove of the people described as the Prince among Libertines? Is there any canonical justification for this epithet?

Yes. *Manda Lakshminarasimha Kavi* of 1700 A.D., in his Sanskrit work '*Andhra Kaumudi*', was the first to mention Kshetraraya: '*Muvvagopala Bhaktena Kshetrarajna Kavinaa*' (by the poet *Kshetrarajna* who was a devotee of *Muvvagopala*). The second was, of course, *Subbarama Dikshitar* who, in his biographical note on Kshetraraya refers to him as one who was initiated to '*Gopala Mantra*' in his boyhood in the temple of '*Gopala*' in *Muvvapuri*. We can identify this boyhood as the stage of adolescence around his 15th year (1610 A.D.) *Dikshitar* says that Kshetraraya had the vision of the Lord after chanting the *Gopala Mantra* for a long period and then

started composing *Padams* on the Lord. What is this *Gopala Mantra*? And what is its efficacy?

We waded through the recesses of *Mantra Sastra*. '*Saaraadaa-tilakam*' has thrown a considerable flood of light on this subject.

Mantra Sastra (the science of occult power of words) was one of the outcomes of synthesis of various religious practices and systems of worship in the post-pouranic Hinduism. This *Sastra* included charms to propitiate different deities of the Hindu pantheon, like *Siva*, *Vishnu*, *Ganapati*, *Skanda*, *Lakshmi*, *Saraswati*, *Kali*, *Hanuman* and *Bhairava*. Among the series of *Mantras* on *Vishnu*, the *Gopala Mantra* is of interest to us:

'OM, Klem, Krishnaya Govindaya
Gopijanavallabhaya Swaha !'

*Gavam Santim Karot Yasu Govindo Gokulapriyah
Sisuvashadharam Devam Kimkinidama Sobhitam*

Gopala Mantra is addressed to '*Krishna*', followed by the expression '*to Govinda*', thereafter by '*to the beloved of cowherd women*' and ends with the word '*Swaha*'. It is preceded by the 'initial mystic syllable (*Bija Akshara*) occulting the God of Love (*Kama*)'. It is a charm consisting of 18 letters. Its presiding Saint (progenitor) is *Narada* and the metre is *Gayatri*.

While chanting or repeating this *Mantra*, the devotee should prayerfully contemplate on the image of Lord *Govinda*, the beloved of *Gokulam* and protector of cattle and as manifested in the form of a child (boy) adorned with a waist belt carrying jingling bells. We should not miss the special attribute of *Gopala* mentioned in the last line—'*Kimkinidama Sobhitam*'—meaning adorned with a waist belt carrying jingling bells. Does it not ring into our minds the name of our Kshetranya's favourite deity '*Muvvagopala*', '*Muvva*' being the jingling bell?

The attribute of *Gopala* as *Gopijanavallabha* should be understood in the context of the aphorism in '*Taittiriya Brahmanam*' on the vedic expression '*go*' meaning cow: '*Chandamsi Vai Vraja Gosthaanah*'. The inspired lyrical utterances of seers are compared to sacred cows. As such, the subject of their praise and protector is the Supreme Cowherd *Gopala* or *Govinda* and '*Gopijanavallabha*' (the beloved of cowherd women) is none other than the beloved of the seers and saints who incarnated as *Gopis* in the village of

Vraja, only to have direct communion with the Lord during His incarnation as *Gopala Krishna*. That is why He is called the Prince among Libertines.

Here is another verse stipulated in the *Mantra Sastra* by one of the commentators, to be used as a meditative verse (*Dhyana Sloka*):

*'Auyat vyakocha nityambuja ruchir arunambhoja netrambujastho,
Balo jangha Katira sthala kalita ranat kinkiniko Mukundah
Go gopi gopaveeto ruru nakha vilasat kantha bhoosham chiramvah!'*

'May He protect us for long,
the one with bodily hue of a blue lotus,
the lotus eyed and the lotus footed,
the boy known as *Mukunda*
with his ankles and waist adorned with jingling bells
with long nails, and having garlands around the neck
carrying in both the hands butter just prepared
out of fresh milk, adorable to all,
beloved of cows, cowherd girls and boys.'

The expression '*Ranat Kinkiniko Mukundah*' meaning '*Mukunda* with jingling bells' also brings the image of '*Muvvagopala*' before us.

It is the same *Gopala* of Jingling Bells, the presiding deity of the efficacious charm, who changed the course of life of our vagrant hero. The change was the result of his earnest (and perhaps cantankerous) prayers through a long drawn penance and pining which he suffered in the precincts of his village temple. In his pining away, he mentally transformed himself into a 'gopi' burning with jealousy at the Lord showing favours to the 'other woman'. Then came out the first lyric of Kshetrayya replete with devotion, conjugal love and jealousy! (This sequence is described in fuller detail elsewhere).

4. LIFE A PLAY, WORLD THE STAGE

THE Story of Kshetrappa is now narrated in a chronological and cogent manner, as far as possible piecing together agreeable fragments of information available along with a few plausible conjectures.

A major part of Kshetrappa's creative activity took place in *Tirupati*, *Kanchi* and *Tanjore*, with occasional contacts with *Chenji* (Fort *Gingi* in the North *Arcot* district of Tamil Nadu). In view of this, scholars like *C.R. Srinivasa Iyengar*, *Sambamurthy* and *Arudra* were led to believe that the birth place of Kshetrappa, *Muvvupuri* with a *Muvvagopala* temple, should be found somewhere in the proximity of those places, either in *Chittoor* or North *Arcot* districts. These theories may be discarded as there is no supporting evidence through local tradition and legends. There is a preponderance of local tradition and legends handed down through generations that Kshetrappa was born in *Muvva* in *Krishna* district. This is supported by the declared belief of local scholars like *Veturi Prabhakara Sastri* and *Gorrepati Venkatasubbayya*. Some local families claim to be the descendents of Kshetrappa giving out an aura of anecdotes and personal characteristics of their ancestor, *Muvva Varadappa* by name. In view of this we are compelled to start our narrative with *Muvva* of *Krishna* district as the centre of the scene of action.

Perhaps Kshetrappa was born as *Varadappa* in a pious brahmin family in *Muvva Village* twenty miles away from the coastal town of *Masulipatnam*) around the year 1595 A.D. There is no indication about his back-ground or his parentage except that in *Masulipatnam* and *Muvva* too, *Varadappa's* maternal uncles were connected with temples perhaps as trustees. These uncles and parents could be expected to have been masters of traditional learning. Both *Muvva* and the adjoining village *Kuchipudi* were *Agraharam* type of villages. Such villages were usually surrounded by fertile agricultural farms and orchards, gifted by royal patrons to be enjoyed by brahmin families. It was customary for such families to engage themselves in imparting traditional knowledge to the youth through the *Gurukula* system. Under the system each head of the family was a *Guru* and students usually came

from the other families in and beyond the village and even the districts, to stay there and learn. The curriculum of this purely oriental system of education consisted of the *Vedas*, the *Vedangas*, *Sastras* like *Vaidya* (medicine), and fine arts like music, dance and architecture.

Village temples were throughout maintained as seats of learning and repositories of arts, like music, dance and architecture, in the expression of which all castes thrived in general with equal opportunities but *Devadasis*, *Viswakarmas* (or the architects) and barber community enjoyed some special hereditary privilege through the mandates of the local chiefs.

The role of *Ibrahim Kutubshah* of *Golkonda* in the devastation of *Vijayangar* in the wake of the battle of *Tallikota* (or *Rakshastagdi*) in 1565 and subsequent havoc caused by the armies of *Qutubshah* at *Ahobilam* (1579) and *Udayagiri* (1584), did not affect the life of the people in the villages and towns in and around *Krishna* district. This was due to the inherent strength and assumption of *de facto* supremacy by the local chiefs of *Nuzvidu*, *Repalle*, *Gandikota* and other principalities, although, in subsequent decades, these chiefs were also made either loyal vassals or punished and subjugated by the *Qutubshahis*. There was no change in the routine life of the people in the *gurukula* schools and temples of *Movva* and *Kuchipudi*.

It was customary for the pious people of the coastal districts of Andhra to go on pilgrimage to sacred shrines of the Deccan and South India like, *Tirupati*, *Kanchi*, *Srirangam*, *Rameshwaram*, *Srisailem*, *Bhadrachalam*, *Pandaripuram* and *Puri-Jagannath*. *Kshetrappa* must have been named *Varadappa* according to the local tradition in *Movva*, since he was born as a result of austerities observed by his parents to propitiate Lord *Varadaraja* of *Kanchi*.

Kshetrappa must have been a charming lovely child with an amazing power of sensitivity, reacting to the sweetness of melody and song with a remarkable sense of rhythm, and capacity for expression even as a child. He must have been admired as a child prodigy by one and all in the village for his artistic talents. The appearance of *Kshetrappa* on the scene was just a century and a half after *Annamacharya* set a pattern of routine for every pious family in South India to have daily *Sankirtanas* (worshipping the Lord by songs) propitiating the *Ishta Devata* (family deity). These *Sankirtana* sessions at home, visits to village fairs and temple festivals

where traditional *Kuchipudi* troupes presented dance-dramas and occasional dance performances of *Devadasis* who were dedicated to serve the Lord through their art, all these must have created in our child-prodigy a bent towards lyricism.

When the stage for schooling came, the traditional methods of repeating the declensions of Sanskrit nouns, conjugation of verbs, and learning the verses of the lexicon, *Amarakosam*, by rote, would not have attracted this individualist with an artistic and delicate bent of mind. Instead, he would have preferred to mix with the cattle-herds and farmers in open fields, along with whom he would have enjoyed the indigenous beauties of Telugu songs sung by the cowherd girls and other groups of workers in the farm yards and orchards and in village theatricals. A few sittings with the teacher for learning each *kavya*, or each *sastra*, would have given him, not an inkling, but a deep penetrating insight, into every subject, after which he might not have felt like attending any more classes but would have preferred to follow his own ways of schooling in the open air from the Mother Nature.

When he was between the 8th and the 11th year of age, his *Upanayanam* must have taken place, a ceremony which was a must for every brahmin boy, who would be wearing a *Tajnopaveeta* (sacred thread) and initiated to the *Gayatri Mantra* (the sacred charm on the Supreme Being) expected to be chanted thrice a day, in the morning, mid-day and in the evening.

Although the main group of *Kuchipudi* dance masters followed their *Guru, Siddhendrayogi*, in barring women and courtesans in their performances, some individual teachers continued their avocation of teaching dance according to *Bharata* and *Nandikeswara*, both to boys of their own caste and to girls of *Devadasi* and *Rajanaartaki* professions. This can be deduced from the '*Nritta Ratnavali*', a treatise on the traditional (classical) and *Desi* (indigenous) dance forms. This work clearly indicates and defines the qualities of *Nartakis* of different categoris. (*Jayappa*, the commander of the forces of *Kakatiya* emperor *Ganapati Deva*, was originally a brahmin boy belonging to the same *Divi* taluk where *Kuchipudi* flourished even in the 12th century, and was discovered by the emperor as a boy talented in dance and taken away by him to his capital).

While *Varadaya* was reluctant to attend the classes dealing with subjects of Sanskrit orientation, his attendance at classes of music and dance under a *Natyacharya* must have been very regular

with whole-hearted attention. This must have left a lasting impression on his creative brain, not only because the interest the subjects drew from him, but also the interest he evinced in some fair faces among his studymates, who hailed from the *Devadasi* community.

When *Varadayya* passed off his adolescence and was just entering youth, around 1615, his marriage with *Rukmani*, daughter of his uncle, must have been performed. But it was not possible for him, who gave an impression of a wayward youth on people around him, to remain contented.

A fair faced co-student of *Varadayya* in the dance class had come of age and had just started her career as a *Devadasi* in the *Gopala's* temple in the village *Mouva*. This *Devadasi* has been named as *Mohanangi* by *Katuri Venkateswara Rao* in one of his radio plays. The same name has been adopted by *R. Rangaramanuja Iyengar* in his biographical note on *Kshetrappa* in the second edition of his book *Kriti Mani Malai*.

Taking advantage of his acquaintance with *Mohanangi*, *Varadayya*, made advances to her in the temple yard. "How could this wayward youth and a vagrant boy, coming from the high class of teachers, himself having no creative talent, throw at her the sweet-nothings of love-making? If he had the capacity, let him compose a song on the Lord, the presiding deity of the village. Then she would show him at least some respect and adoration, if not love!" She chided him thus and spurned him. *Varadayya* remained in the temple heart broken and stayed there for a long time! It would be right to contend that, even at this stage, after his infructuous encounter with the *Devadasi Mohanangi*, he composed a *Padam* (in the *Raga Mukhari*) in which he himself was the hero and it was a supplication to the Lord:

Inni vidhamula poojinchera Swami (Raga Mukhari)

(The Heroine in the lyric is of *Devadasi* category, under a taboo for any love-making, but the hero is ardently in love with her. He goes on making prayerful offerings to his personal deity, invoking His blessings for the fulfilment of his desire).

I offer You worship in ever so many ways,

O! Lord, unite her with me!!

For having supplicated you to such an extent

O! Lord, fulfil my desire!!

— I offer you—

If I could comprehend the girl's face,
 I shall be fasting on the full-moon night of spring!
 If I could, once, kiss the pair of her eyes,
 a pair of lillies will be offered to you!!
 If I could touch the smooth line below her navel,
 on the fourth lunar day of snakes I shall be fasting!!
 If I could lay my hands on her pretty breasts,
 a golden vase will brighten your temple top!! — I offer—

If I could drink the honey off her sweet lips
 honey from fresh blossoms will be offered to you!
 If you make me lay her and enjoy on my bed,
 penance will be observed on the fourteenth lunar day of *Ananta*!
 If that coquette throws at me her shinning glances
 your sanctum will be made to glow with the sacred lamp!
 If I get perspired in her comforting embrace
 you'll be offered every day a perennial ablution!! — I offer—

If at all that teenager beckons me at least once,
 You'll be praised, my Lord, as Prince *Muvvagopala*!
 If I could have a long session of pleasant time with her,
 nights for me, henceforth, will be wakeful and prayerful!
 If I am able to enjoy her fairly in the game of love,
 Your sacred wedding with *Lakshmi* will be celebrated!
 If I am able to gain a place in the heart of the fair-eyed one,
 I shall always be meditating on you O! my Lord!! —I offer—

(This should have been *Varadayya's* first or earliest devotional lyric, though, out of deference to tradition, another lyric in *Anandabhairavi Raga* mentioned a little later, has to be accepted as the first one composed by him.)

Varadayya would not leave the temple and go home for hours together in a day or even for days together in a week. When he did go home he would not mix with and talk to other people. They would all be worried and looked askance at his wife *Rukmini*. Hers would have been a highly soft and soothing approach, which would have made him speak the truth to her. Next to God, in her estimate nothing or nobody would be deserving a high pedestal except her husband. Nay! he was her God and everything in her life! She would have talked to him opening her heart and telling

him what she thought about him and such a person would always be the most loved one for God! She would have advised him that love for the presiding deity, *Muvvagopala*, would make him the most happy man in the world, making everything else trivial and unworthy even of the scantiest thought.

One fine morning, near the *Dhwaja Stambham* (flag mast) of the temple of *Gopala*, *Varadayya* saw the imposing figure of an aged and venerable person in saffron robes, with a grey tuft of matted hair high on his head, and a halo around! The venerable one would not have come there by foot! Did he descend from Heaven? He raised his hand and beckoned *Varadayya* to come near him! He said: "I know your present mental disarray! The Lord has ordained me to initiate you into the most charming of charms about the most charming incarnation of His. Let us go to the temple tank, have a purifying bath and complete the sacred task. You will realise the efficacy of the charm when you find yourself possessed by the Lord to get a divine task fulfilled through you for the enlightenment of the world!"

After the initiation and the imparting of some regulations to be observed, the saintly personality disappeared; how and where *Varadayya* could not make out.

A cycle of weeks or months or seasons, just rolled on as *Varadayya* underwent a regulated routine of penance. There then started the evaporation of *Varadayya's* ego, the whole universe filling the vacuum. The centre of the universe expanded into whole cosmos. A complete flood of light, a deep den of darkness! Then, a closed-in circle of halo appeared in which he saw the projection of himself in the image of the Lord before him, holding a flute, wearing a crown with peacock feather in it and jingling bells hanging on the waist belt and anklets. And what about himself? "Oh! what is this transformation? Who am I? Am I *Varadayya*? Am I transformed into *Rukmini*, my cousin and consort? What is this miracle? Am I *Perundevi*, as He would love to address me? My Lord, my husband (*Varadayya*) is standing before me with flute, crown with peacock feather and jingling bells, in place of *Muvvagopala*! Would I not sing and dance for him? How is this? A song of jealousy comes out! Oh! This is my husband's favourite *Raga Ananda Bhairavi*. I shall sing and dance and crave for my husband's love so that He never does entertain thoughts about that *Devadasi*! Oh! Oh! I am

Varadayya! And he is my Lord *Muvvagopala*! How jealous I am about his intimacy with that wench of a *Devadasi*! He must be chided for that. How can I bear this langour?"

Thus came out the first lyric of *Varadayya* dedicated to the Lord *Muvvagopala*:

Sripati Sutu Baariki

(*Raga Anandabhiravi*)

When I am unable to bear the onslaught of Cupid,
are you angry, *Muvvagopala* that I aspire for your love?

—When I am—

Staying in that woman's house, like a servant, day and night,
does it behove you, *Muvvagopala*, to go on with cheap chatter?

—When I am—

For intimacy with that wench of such gilt-edged gibberish
Is it proper, *Muvvagopala*, to suffer from such languish?

—When I am—

With me; who never stared at any one else excepting you,
is it proper, *Muvvagopala*, to have pretentious courting?

—When I am—

My possession, having lost to her, having no source of pleasure,
is it my lot, *Muvvagopala*, to sigh with such langour?

—When I am—

After an absence of four or five months *Varadayya* went back home as a different man, always forming a melody in his mind, with a supple movement of body or limbs, or holding up a hand-made symbol of dance, or laying steps in accordance with the lilt of a rhythm working in his mind or planning a new situation in the story of his love for the Lord. The way in which he was received by his beloved wife *Rukmini* when he reached home after a long absence, we shall not describe in our words, but just render what *Varadayya* conjured up into a memorable lyric:

Ninnu jooda galigen innaallaku

(*Raga Punnagavarali*)

It has become possible to see you after such a long time!
Four or five moons passed away since I saw you last!

O! *Muvvagopala*!

—It has become—

Not a single pleasure, ever since you left me,
no dinner, no betel and nut, no entertainment, no sleep;
as if, when the sun has set, amidst wilderness, darkness and rain,
I grope like one, who is completely drenched and lost her
way in woods!
— It has become—

Singing and dancing his newly composed lyrics on *Muvvagopala*, wherever *Varadayya* went he presented to the people of the village altogether a new picture, his hair grown long and left uncombed after a bath, donning a neatly sketched 'U' shaped *sindoor* caste mark on his forehead, wearing a yellow silk dhoti and a white upper garment! On the way to the farm yard or to the orchard on the embankment of the temple tank or in the premises of the temple of *Muvvagopala*, the first to bow down to him in this guise was *Mohanangi*, his young friend the *Devadasi* herself, whose spurning and instigation made him turn this new leaf in life. From this point *Mohanangi* began to dance to his tunes and became his first disciple and partner in the service of the Lord. The common people and many women-folk in the village fell for this new turn in *Varadayya's* life, with all veneration, but the orthodoxy and village elders derided this as a vagrant youth's wanton seduction of innocent minds of the village women-folk through his 'immoral lyrics' and went to the extent of holding sessions to impose a social boy-

cott or excommunication on *Varadayya*. They made it hot for *Varadayya* to continue to live either in *Movva* or *Kuchipudi*.

Here comes the episode of his widowed cousin *Rukmini*, with whom it was alleged that he developed intimacy. We do not subscribe to this calumny, but also do not rule out the possibility of her falling head over heels before *Varadayya's* feet along with the women-folk of the village and the common hordes of admirers of his newly achieved prowess. Being a close relative, her visits to her cousin *Varadayya* might have been many and frequent, with nothing but platonic love. But the orthodoxy set afloat scandalous rumours. This orthodoxy might have been the earliest to call him, in their sanskritic jargon, a *Kshetrayya*, which meant a paramour of another's wife. *Varadayya* might have welcomed this derisive title and adopted the name as a fitting one for his role in his yet uncharted course of life. He made up his mind that it would be a long, long pilgrimage, to all the sacred shrines (*Kshetras*) in South India and thenceforward started calling himself and signing (perhaps) as *Kshetrayya* and his lyrics as *Kshetrayya Padamulu*.

In consultation with the most dear ones that mattered, his wife *Rukmini*, his dancer friend *Mohanangi*, and perhaps a few ardent admirers, he must have decided and left his native place amidst a scene of heart-rending and tearful leave-taking. This is described in the lyric:

Emani telupudu elagu taaludu

(*Raga Anandabhairavi*)

How am I to tell you, how shall I bear,
what shall I do my friend?

—How am I—

O! fair one, when he was about to
leave for the neighbouring town,
after pulling me near him, with a surge of love,
whatever the words my Lord whispered to me!

—How am I—

Not to neglect food, not to pine away in anguish,
not to shed tears, not to dream and talk about,
in ever so many ways, making exhortations
whatever words my Lord told me with eyes full of tears!

—How am I—

As tears rolled down his broad eyes, he nodded his head
and said that himself would return if he could not stay away
long;
heaving sighs at every step, and with an upsurge in longing
whatever words the Lord of my life whispered to me!

—How am I—

Making a reference to austerities and all the prayers offered,
and talking thoughtfully about whatever was written by fate,
whatever *Muvvagopala* told me with determination and resolve,
that we shall be happy ever after, together in the game of love!

—How am I—

There is no idea about the members of his entourage during his pilgrimage, due to lack of any source, but he must have either travelled alone, or have been accompanied by a very close junior companion and a confidant, whom we can characterise as a *Vidushaka*, reminding one of *Maitreya*, friend of *Charudatta* in *Sudraka's* social play. Taking a cue from a few of his *Padams*, portraying *Chevvardi Linga* as the hero and a close friend of *Muvvagopala*, a temptation offers itself to name *Kshetrayya's* companion as *Chevvardi Ramalingam*, possibly the son of a *Natyacharya* of *Kuchipudi*, and an old school-mate.

In a quick montage, we would like to take the reader along with us, following *Kshetrayya* and his friend through their pilgrimage after they left *Movva*. Their only resource during their journeys were their enchanting songs describing the loves of the charming Lord *Muvvagopala*, and their capacity to captivate their audience with the sweetness of their melodies, the tantalizing lilt of the rhythm of their songs and their prowess of portraying the songs through soul-stirring dance and *abhinaya*. The pair used all opportunities to teach the songs to *Devadasis* and *Rajanartakis* when requested. In all the songs *Muvvagopala* was personified in the presiding deities of the place the pair visited. It would not be an exaggeration if it is said that wherever the pair went they were welcomed as a duo of sincere savants of the Lord, both by the temple priests and devotees at every shrine and also by the *Devadasi* community. There are a number of *Padams* which refer to *Muvvagopala* and a few that have reference to his friend *Chevvardi Linga*. Evidence from some *Padams* also shows that they were daring

enough to enter the colonies of courtesans in spite of their impecunious condition but the dancing community must have praised each of them for his capacity in arts of civility, love lyric, music and dance, as evidenced in the *Padam*:

Cheta Kasu Ledu Gaani

(*Raga Bilahari*)

He doesn't possess a pic in his hand,
but goes on gesticulating!

At this juncture, *Muvvagopala*
is merely a beau, my dear!

— He doesn't —

Donning U-shaped caste-mark on forehead,
and wearing a pair of wooden sandals,
flinging side-long glances, having come to join me
where I have been staying,
smiling unto himself, having stared at every one,
he sets about overtaking me amidst
all these companions!

— He dosen't —

Holding a flute in hand, wearing tightly a silk lower garment
and having an upper one hang like a rope,
having slowly arrived here, when all of us
fragrant with jasmine studded plaits have been chatting
together,

he comes verily a miserable man,
asking for landmarks of our house!

— He doesn't —

Often hitting in the air with the little finger nail,
having arrived here and singing small lyrics,
in time and out of time, having touched my sensitivities,
and credulously won over me, *Muvvagopala*,
has finally laid his hand on my treasure!

— He doesn't —

[The heroine in this lyric is *Samanya*, *Proudha*, *Adhama*. The heroine is a common courtesan—a mere mercenary. She has no restraint in her reference to the hero, who in this context is a *Vaisika*, being a libertine, a frequenter of the houses of public women.]

Their pilgrimage started around 1620. The first place of their pilgrimage happened to be '*Chakkerapuri*'. This place can be identified with *Bellamkonda* on *Guntur-Macherla* route or with a fort of that name. This fort is known to historians as the one to have been subjugated around 1610 by *Mohammad Kuliutbshah* along with *Khammam* and other forts belonging to a rebellious chieftain called *Sitapati* (also known as *Sitab Khan*). The next place of their pilgrimage was *Bhadrachalam*. Visiting the temple of *Sri Rama*, *Kshetrayya* must have been reminded of the story of *Sita's* abduction and pangs of separation suffered by *Rama*. In *Kshetrayya's Padam*, a translation of which is given below, we find a comparison of *Rama's* anguish with his own (*Muvvagopala's* or *Kshetrayya's*) langour for his beloved:

Rama Rama Pranasakhi

(*Raga Ahiri or Bhairavi*)

Blessed be *Rama*, having been separated from his beloved wife
how could he endure?

Thinking of the lotus-eyed one, my heart gets torn with grief;
what am I to say alas! — Blessed —

Were not the calls of the parrots in his time, as they are now,
piercing his ears like lances?

Did not the moon then, like now, burn him like a scorching fire?

Not knowing day and night passing like this,
did he not have to pine away in his heart?

Ever since I have been separated from my beloved
my mind is in an absolute disarray!

— Blessed —

Would Cupid like a sworn enemy have not teased the Prince
like this?

Had the call of the cuckoo not have caused him anguish and
distress?

Would food and sleep, by far, have not been insipid to him,
but welcome?

Ever since I have been separated from my fair one
I was subjected to the onslaught of Cupid!

— Blessed —

Would he too have on demand from her
not made promises many a time?

When his gem of a woman was away
 were not his eyes filled with tears?
 With a vicious type of love would he have
 put up with courage and will?
 My chum, who beckoned me with passion calling me *Muvvagopala*,
 has hoodwinked me, alas, what am I to do?

— Blessed —

[Here the heroine is *Parakiya*, *Proshita*. The hero is *Upapati*. In this lyric, the hero's anguish for his beloved at his native place is portrayed when he was away from home. The heroine is *Parakiya* i.e. *Devadasi* who is not independent to have an affair and if she has, it will be clandestine. We felt that this was a lyric of Kshetranya, composed when he visited *Bhadrachalam* where he remembered his love for *Mohanangi*, his *Devadasi* friend. This is the only place where *Rama's* name is mentioned suffering from separation from *Sita*, in comparison with the anguish of the hero *Muvvagopala*.]

It can be said with certainty that a visit to *Golkonda* was not on their itinerary at this stage. The *Qutubshahi* rulers, after their prominent part in the destruction of *Vijayanagar* and their commanders' role in the pillage of *Ahobilam*, *Udayagiri* and *Rajahmundry*, had yet to impress the people of the Coastal Andhra as beneficent patrons of peaceful arts.

It can be surmised that leaving *Bhadrachalam* the pair passed on to *Yadugiri* (Gulberga district) where *Cheluvaraya* mentioned in one of the *Padams* was the presiding deity. Thereafter the pair went to *Srisailem*, the well known hill shrine on the banks of the *Krishna* where '*Muvvagopala's* friend *Mallikarjuna*' was (and is) the presiding deity as depicted in a couple of lyrics.

Leaving *Srisailem*, Kshetranya and his friend visited the ruins of *Hampi* and *Vijayanagar*. Very near the ruins was *Hemadri*, where lyrical homage was paid to the presiding deity '*Hemadrinilayudu*'.

Ela Tellavaren Ayyo

(*Raga Ahiri*)

Why has the day dawned alas, so quickly,
 as I just talked to my *Muvvagopala*, O! my young friend!

— Why has —

At last after a long absence, when my beloved came to our house,
with the loosened waist band and an upsurge in heart,
single minded when we lay down on bed
shared the betel and nut and turned playful! — Why has—

When the bodies touched each other in warmest embraces
when both of us were entangled and passion rose very high
when lilting lyrics on god of love were being recited
when I leaned on to him and again asked for an embrace!
— Why has —

Lord of Hemadri, same as my Muvvagopala,
and talented lover was kind to give me an 'equal sport'
during which at the desire's peak having lost
ourselves in unison
just when I pressed my heavy bosom to his and overwhelmed him!
— Why has —

[Here the heroine is *Sweeya*, *Proudha*, *Suratapriya*. In many *Padams* like this, one can find a dichotomy in Kshetrappa, in delineating the character type of his heroine, in whom we find a superimposition of both *Sweeya* (wedded wife) and a *Samyana* (a courtesan), which combination pursues the composer throughout his career, in the form of an obsession, due to the fixation of two foci in his love life, viz, Rukmini his wedded wife and Mohanangi, his friend *Devadasi*. In this *Padam*, the author works up through his creative imagination dream-like, a fulfilment and dissolution, at the same time, of his union with his beloved.]

Later covering Pamidi in Anantapur district, they entered Kadapa district, touching the feet of Chennakesava of Palakonda, Inapura Raya of Inaprolu and finally reached Kadapa.

Chellabo Palagiri Chennudu

(Raga Sankarabharanam)

What a pity, Oh fair one, he is Chenna of Palagiri!
Don't you hear, he is said to have his sway over all the universes!
—What a pity—

Having collected gold from a vagrant visitor,
 could you not give him the land marks of your house?
 Of what worth are your civil manners?
 Being a suitor, shy of sounding any one
 out of fear as he roamed about from lane to lane
 haven't you spotted and brought him in here?

—What a pity—

To wait for him till he arrived at your threshold
 would it be wrong for you or your girl-friends?
 Is it enough if you received gold from him?
 What about high and low and whom did you take him for?

—What a pity—

It's your luck to have in charming Chenna of Palagiri
 your lover, who is the same as Muvvagopala, my dear!
 He said he would be coming tomorrow; without saying 'yes'
 why did you ask him not to come,

Oh! how shall I chide you dear!

—What a pity—

[Here the heroine is *Samanya*, *Adhama*, Situation: *Sakhi-upalambhana*. The heroine here is of courtesan category (mercenary) and the hero a vagrant visitor. Kshetravyya seems to have composed this at Palagiri near Guddapah, to educate his hosts there the proper hospitality to be offered to visitors such as himself. This lyric must have been presented before Lord Chennakesava of Palagiri with dance and Abhinaya, by one of Kshetravyya's admirers at Palagiri.]

In a *Padam* composed at Kadapa, as an offering to the Lord Venkateswara (a replica of the deity at Tirupati) the anguish of his beloved at Movva for himself (projected as his own anguish for his Lord Muvvagopala 'who was the same as Venkatesa of Kadapa') can be noticed.

Indukemi Setunamma

(*Raga Punnaagavaraali*)

What shall I do for this, who will bring him here? —
 Oh fair faced one, how far away is Venkatesa of Kadapa?

—What shall —

Accustomed to pulling me towards him, into embrace with
 extreme passion,
 would he be able to sleep alone?
 Searching for me on the bed and not finding me there,
 would he not be calling me aloud in his dreams?
 Due to excessive anguish of separation,
 how much would he have got emaciated?

— What shall —

Oh bright faced one, he could not remain even a minute
 without sipping the nectar of my lips;
 he would not relish his food at all
 unless it was served in my loving company;
 I did not realise that our love was
 Subjected to evil eyes, Oh my friends!
 Would my beloved also have not been harassed now
 in the same way as I had been a target of Cupid?

— What shall —

Having joined Venkatesa of Kadapa, who is Muvvagopala,
 O! fair one, I hoped that we would be inseparable for good;
 without delay, since I thought of one way
 and God disposed it of in another,
 in haste, if I think of taking any risk,
 my friend, I am afraid of what he might do!

— What shall —

[Here the heroine is *Sweeya*, *Madhya*, *Proshitapatika*. Heroine in this lyric is a wedded wife, whose grief for the separation from her lord, who has gone far away, and her recollection of his indulgence and her pampering, while they were together, are narrated to a maid in waiting.]

Kadapa was named as such, meaning the threshold or the gateway for all those who go on a pilgrimage to worship the Lord Venkateswara of Tirupati. The duo must have spent a little longer period in Tirupati as there are nearly six *Padams* dedicated to the Lord, besides a couple of lyrics addressed to Adivaraha of the same centre. Thereafter they covered other shrines of such deities as Satyapuri Vasudeva, Parthasarathi of Tiruvallikeni (subsequently part of Madras), Subrahmanya of Tirutani (*Chirutani vasudu*) offering one *Padam* at each place and Veeraraghava of Tiruvallur

offering Him three *Padams*. The six *Padams* composed in Tirupati and three *Padams* composed in Tiruvallur contain some element of the composer's autobiography like the one composed at Kadapa.

Reference with gratitude must be made to Vissa Appa Rao for a nice story of conjecture in respect of Varadayya's advances to Mohanangi, the *Devadasi* during his adolescence when he was attending the dance school. The Professor went through and quoted a number of *Padams* (most of which) carrying a dedication to Varadaraja of Kanchi and another a dedication to Lord Venkatesa of Tirupati. It can be contended that this lyric was composed by Kshetravaya when he was at Tirupati and sent through an emissary to Mohanangi at Movva.

Piluvanampe Nannee Vela

(*Raga Kedaragaula*)

He has sent for me today, with over-powering love,
It's Muvvagopala my dear, my heart is overjoyed now!

— He has —

Beckoning my flower-like body, coiling blossoms on my plaits,
saying it would serve as gold, for the day I shall be growing ripe,
and for not forgetting the sacred oath,
and a very memorable day for both,
the archer with his sugarcane bow
as declared witness by my Lord!

— He has —

Even in my teens when I met the clever youth
under the roof of the same teacher, with the consent of elders
His sweet whisperings with surging pleasure—
"that we would be uniting in amorous sport,
when I became mature"—have come to be true!

— He has —

In a young mango grove, on a day of rejoicing,
when I was engaged in the worship of Gauri,
whatever was said to me by Venkatesa,
who is the same as Muvvagopala,

has come to be true, that one day
we would unite on a bed of lilies!

— He has —

Here are two more lyrics composed at Tirupati in which the heroine can be guessed to be Mohanangi, depicted as a *Parakiya* (a woman for whom love making is a taboo since she is dedicated to the Lord). These lyrics describe the hero's (or composer's) love and anguish for his Devadasi friend, as described through a messenger-maid (dootika):

Intiro Varaduniki Neepai enta Mohame

(*Raga Dhanyasi*)

You don't know how much infatuated has Varada been about you;
Here I have come, Oh dame, unable to see him long

in that anguish!

— You don't know —

With his hand on his cheek, he smiled to himself,
and said that things wouldn't happen according to expectation;
that he couldn't forget the friendliness he had in the earlier wooing;
and that life was worth nothing without enjoying your beauty!

— You don't know —

He pondered over his past actions which could
cause the present plight;
and that he wouldn't endure the pangs of

separation even for a moment;

He said he was tongue-tied, laying his hand on his forehead,
and challenged our concern either to mediate or pacify!

— You don't know —

Talking aloud in sleep, our Varada who is Muvvagopala himself
Oh fair-eyed one, wondered whether the wonder of

the past could happen again!

He ruminated and sighed; and criticised fate,
and said such a sin like love shouldn't be the lot of even an enemy!

— You don't know —

Ninnu Nenu Maratuna O Cheliya

(Raga Kalyani)

Do I forget you, Oh my chum!
You were so crafty to have made me your own
and calling me Venkatanatha,
to have asked me to reach you!

— Do I forget you —

My dear, just to test your attitude towards me,
When I reddened my eyes, with assumed anger
and remained without talking a word,
you, having joined the other woman,
laughing mirthfully, tickling my ribs,
and thrusting your boquet-like breasts on my bosom,
you were cunning enough to have won over me!

— Do I forget you —

Your response, to start with, being in the negative
when I lay down simulating sleep,
did you not realise and come near me
to drink the nectar of my lips,
and having held them tight together,
so that my face didn't move either side,
did you not press very hard and drink out of them
and shake off like an adroit sweet-heart!

— Do I forget you —

Calling me Venkatesha, who is the same
as the celebrated Muvvagopala,
You complimented me for having sported without exertion,
with sixteen thousand gopis and while making love to me
You resorted to story-telling for killing time
and being such an expert in game of love,
You could claim attention with confidence to watch your style!

— Do I forget you —

The events described in the latter lyric might be references to Varadayya's teenage exploits preceding his early temple episode. They can also be a lover's boastful depiction in letters to evoke love in his unresponding beloved's heart.

It can be assumed that the messages that went from Tirupati along with these songs brought back some reply, although Mohanangi, the Devadasi friend could not come to Tirupati belying the expectations of Kshetrappa. The tenor of her reply can be sensed in another *Padam* composed by Kshetrappa at Tirupati:

Naakopame Nanninta Chesenamma

(*Raga Saindhavi*)

My anger has brought upon me all this misery—
Oh bright faced one, since the women around me
have been carrying tales against him!

— My anger—

Shall I myself have got to go and call him
or send a messenger-maid to bring him round?
Or make up my mind and explain to his girl friends?
Or would you mediate knowing well either side?
All the faults be forgiven now and ask him to come home!

— My anger—

My heart-piercing taunts which were like burning sharp arrows
because it was he, who could, were withstood; when he came,
a minute appeared to pass like an year, whom shall I castigate?
Lack of propriety led me to loss of worldly wisdom!

—My anger—

Young woman, whatever pranks Venkatesa, who is Muvvagopala
performed during the sport of love with me
haunt my memory now and boil my body;
fate has wreaked vengeance upon me;
the langour is uncontrollable, why don't you bring him home?

— My anger—

One of the three lyrics composed with Veera Raghava as the hero, makes one feel like interpreting that the reunion of Mohanangi, the *Devadasi* friend, with Kshetrappa was achieved perhaps in Trivellore (Tiruvallur) through the mediation or help of a woman friend. The lyric:

Nee Melu Maratunate O Muddugumma

(Raga Saveri)

Can I forget your favour Oh lovable doll! —
 Oh young woman, at least after
 a long time, I am able to achieve
 communion with Veeraraghava
 of Tiruvallur, Oh my dear!

— Can I —

Dear, can any one get a friend like you
 for many generations, even after bequeathing
 half of one's own physical self?

— Can I —

Can I get redeemed of my indebtedness to you?
 Had you not come on the scene how could the anguish
 in my heart
 have subsided and helped my lord return to me after ages?

— Can I —

When darkness spread all over my mind
 and there were no friends around me to talk,
 and when I was at the boiling point
 in the fire of frustration, you came there
 pulled me towards you, Oh beauty with a thin waist,
 and gifted away to me the lord of our life, having
 shut the mouths of those jealous women for good!

— Can I —

Oh young woman, you conveyed the news about my plight
 to Veera Raghava, who is Muvvagopala, in an agreeable manner,
 Made him come here under compulsion, and due
 to your good offices,
 one who never cared to see me, was reconciled
 and made promises for all time!

— Can I —

[Here the heroine is *Parakiya, Mudita*. A woman under taboo
 from making love (like a Devadasi) praises and thanks her maid
 for having helped her meet her paramour.]

On second thought it can be assumed that this was but another thrilling trance of Kshetrappa experienced in the sanctum of Veera Raghava, reminding him of his earlier trance at the Muvvagopala's temple, for which Mohanangi, his Devasadi friend, was the causative factor and the experience expressed in this song might after all be a flash-back.

After a stay for a few weeks or so in Tirupati, Kshetrappa reached Kanchi. Having been named as Varadappa by his parents, perhaps after Lord Varadaraja, the presiding deity of Kanchi, would he not have felt a supernatural thrill on reaching that holy place? Would he not have felt as if he were re-entering a very well-acquainted place of a previous birth? It is but natural, too, that he stayed there the longest, for months or perhaps years too and made it a spring-board for some of his memorable visits of creative achievement to some historically and spiritually important places situated around.

By the time Kshetrappa reached and almost settled down in Kanchi (around 1625) it was nearly five years since he had left home. Kanchi was then a flourishing seat of traditional learning, with a highly developed temple culture. This offered ample scope to Kshetrappa for giving full vent to his intellectual, emotional and aesthetic talent. In Kanchi besides the temple of Varadaraja, shrines of Kamakshi and Sundareswara, Ekambareswara, etc. were famous and drew pilgrims, devotees, saints and scholars from all parts of India. It was also the headquarters of the 'Kamakoti Peetha' one of the spiritual seats of learning originally established by AdiSankaracharya. It was AdiSankara who held sway over religious matters of the *Smartha* sect of Hindus throughout South India. When Kshetrappa was living in Kanchi, Sri Bhagavan-nama Bodhendra Sankaracharya was the *Peethadhipati* (Pontif) there.

Varadappa, who became by this time wellknown as 'Kshetrappa Vaaru' or 'Kshetrappaavaal', could not have felt more homely at any other place, including Movva. In Kanchi there were plenty of opportunities for displaying the full resplendence of his creative genius. In Kanchi the *Devadasi* community enjoyed a very respectable place in society due to their artistic excellence and, perhaps, austere seclusion. 'Ayyaavaal' commanded respect from every section of the society by dint of his austere routine and propagation of high truths of life through the arts of dance and music imbibing through such arts the most sincere devotion.

From out of the now available twenty and odd lyrics of Kshetrayya (composed at Kanchi), all having Kanchi Varada 'who is the same as Muvvagopala' as hero, Vissa Appa Rao built up a nice story around five or six *Padams*. According to the context, one is tempted to believe that Kshetrayya's friend, Mohanangi, took a long journey and made a tryst with her master at Kanchi. The local tradition at Movva also partly supports this. Moreover, the *Samanya Nayika* (the courtesan heroine) portrayed in the following lyrics, also brings before us the same picture of Varadayya's friend Mohanangi:

Naa Manasu Vantide Nee Mana saite

(*Raga Mukhari or Kalyani*)

If your feelings are like those of mine
my austerities will bear fruit; not only that!
As if fruits are laid in thousands upon sugar cane,
pleasures will be redoubled, Oh my Varada—
Not to remain idle, whatever I sketch with my nail
reveals itself to be your image, Oh my dear; after a wink,
when I am awakened, it looks as though you were with me;
my enamoured state is like this, you alone know it;
To whom can I narrate all this, Oh my Varada!

— If your feelings —

Turning back while climbing the stairs, if the shadow is seen,
it looks as though you were following;
with the drone of the *Tamboora*, when I start singing,
you seem to be singing along with me;
incomparable love of mine is very well known to you;
whom can I narrate all this, Oh my Varada!

— If your feelings —

Listen my dear, the delight of getting interlocked
in your embrace keeps haunting my memory, what shall I say?
In my mind if I think of you as Varada, beloved of *Perundevi*,
I feel like having had the communion;
it is a matter of great joy to hear the women of my clan
referring to you as my consort;
the secret of union of a pining pair is very well known to you;
To whom can I narrate all this, Oh my Varada!

— If your feelings —

[The heroine in this lyric is a courtesan. Her love for her hero is very ardent and she is proud of it. She is suffering from anguish of separation, during the absence of her beloved who is far away, and the text of the lyric could be her message to her lover.]

Enni Talachu Kondunamma

(*Raga Ghantarava*)

How many times do I ruminate, Oh dear
how can I forget at all!
About the virtues of Varada of Kanchi,
my charming deity, Oh my young maiden friend!

— How many times —

With all courtesy having asked me to be kind
and never to forget, having touched my feet,
saying what he is now, is because of me,
with an assumed smile to cover his discomfort,
having kissed me on my eyes, ears, neck and cheeks,
the way he looked at me before going on tour!

— How many times —

Having melted like butter, with unswerving mind,
the way he looked at me often with downcast face,
holding my breasts like boquets of golden flowers
having pressed them to his eyes, he could not raise his head!

— How many times —

Calling me a red-lipped girl of unripe age
that cannot withstand the rigours of love-sport
rousing my passion by sly and slow action,
when my heart was bubbling, the way he pulled me on
to his bosom like a fragrant jasmine flower,
the indulgence favoured by Varada of Kanchi
who is, in fact, the same as Lord Muvvagopala!

— How many times —

Wherever Kshetrappa portrays conjugal satisfaction in love in his lyrics and, if the heroine therein happens to be a wedded wife, we have to take it that his experience with his own wife Rukmini, before he left Movva is recollected. In case the heroine happens to be *Samanya* (a courtesan type) or a *Parakiya* (another's wife),

who has not responded to Muvvagopala's advances, or one having given him rebuff, it is definitely a recollection of his early affair with the *Devadasi* Mohanangi. For extending the theme, he appears to have given several twists to the main characters in his lyrics.

Making Kanchi the centre of his activities and availing all opportunities available to display his creative and spiritual prowess, Kshetrayya remained in the South for nearly 20 years.

The most sublime incident that happened in Kshetrayya's life, when he was at Kanchi (actually the second incident in his whole life including the earliest one of his vision of Muvvagopala at Muvva), inspired him to compose an exquisite lyric, sung in Raga Mohana. The incident as narrated by Ananta Krishna Sarma follows.

One day, Kshetrayya witnessed the worship held at night time in the temple of Varadaraja. The priests arranged the sacred nuptial bed for the Lord, escorted the idol of the Queen-Consort (*Perundevi*) from her sanctum (*Sannidhi*) into the Lord's Chamber, locked the doors and went away. Nobody noticed the 'lyrical maniac' (Kshetrayya) who was leaning onto a pillar in some dark corner. Perhaps he was in a trance envisioning the amorous plays of the Divine Couple. Just at the time of day-break, when he woke up from the trance and opened his eyes, he witnessed a feminine form descending the steps of the Lord's Chamber. Out came the *padam*:

Maguva tana kelika mandiramu

(*Raga Mohana*)

There the spouse divine emerges out of the bridal chamber,
Awakening amorous Varada of Kanchi, and announcing daybreak!—
With untwined garland of roses drooping from plaited hair,
And intertwined riddles of encircling rounds of necklace;
With a haze of sleep hanging over the half-opened wide eyes
As the pair of feet get entangled, causing a faltering gait!

— There the spouse ---

As charming looks expose and cover her fatigue and surrender,
With all-pervading layers of fragrant odours of musk,
The ruby-like effulgences of leaf-buds of her lips,
And an array of crescents found on her half uncovered breasts!

— There the spouse —

With exhaustion of fulfilled union, spilling sense of pride,
The flowing upper cloth covering the petticoat with filigree,
Resting herself on shoulders of young women on either side,
Awakening the Supreme Soul, Muvvagopala, at daybreak!

— There the spouse —

[Here the heroine is *Sweeya* (a wedded wife) and *Divya* (the Divine Consort of the Lord) and not a *Samanya* as averred by some commentators.]

As mentioned earlier, keeping Kanchi as his headquarters, Kshetrappa visited other sacred shrines like Chidambaram, Veda-puri (Vedanarayanapuram) and (Tiruk) Kovilur. Out of these, we have had the most interesting revelation through the grace of the Lord in respect of Kshetrappa's association with Chidambaram. This is a well-known saivite sacred place where the famous '*Akasa-linga*' is sacrosanct, there being 'nothing' behind a curtain in the sanctum visible to the naked eye, but known to be '*Akasalinga*'. The '*Chitsabha*', a pavilion of the temple, consists of sculptures of all the postures of Tandava of Lord Siva, or Nataraja as He is called there. No scholar-biographer of Kshetrappa has till now located any composition of Kshetrappa that was associated with or dedicated to Nataraja, the presiding deity of dance at Chidambaram. In Tamil, Chidambaram is called *Tillai*. Scholars took notice of one or two *padams* of Kshetrappa dedicated to 'Tilla Govindudu'. This provides the conclusion that Kshetrappa was present in Chidambaram and visited the only local shrine, that is that of Nataraja who could be addressed as Govinda also (cf. '*Pasupati*' as an attribute of Siva).

"Chevvandi Linga" finding a mention in some of Kshetrappa's *Padams* needs some clarification. Our submission is that 'Chevvandi Linga' whom most of the scholars could not place anywhere, but were content with identifying Him with Varadaraja of Kanchi, is none other than Chidambara Nataraja. 'Chevvandi' is not the name of a place but it can be the honorific of a pastmaster of dexterous dance who can do the most difficult of all the 108 varieties of *Tandava*, i.e., the *Urdhva Tandava*. R. Satyanarayana says in his treatise on Bharatanatya: "*Anugraha* ascribed to Sadasiva is signified in the *Urdhva Tandava* in which Siva assumes Lalata Tilaka pose. The Lalata Tilaka '*Karana*' consists of a final pose in which the left leg is slightly bent into the '*Swastika Sthanaka*' and the right leg is turned vertically upwards such that its big toe

is made to describe a *tilaka* on the *lalata* (the forehead) with the left hand. The right hand surrounds the upturned right leg and holds a *pataka* (a hand posture) at chest level. Now all these culminate into the *Ananda Tandava* pose in which the Lord stands at Chidambaram."

When the anklet of the upturned right leg is seen by the onlookers as touching the (right) ear, it is called '*chevi + Ande = Chevande or Chevvande*' (*Chevi* means the ear and *Ande* means the anklet). (For a parallel usage, we may recall *Chevi + Aku = Chevaku* or *Chevaku*, an ornament of the ear, prepared out of metal, but resembling a folded ring of palmyra leaf).

It was one day around the year 1638, Kshetrayya was invited to a scholarly assembly consisting of both Vaishnavite and Saivite veterans to be held in the pavilion, '*Chitsabha*', in Chidambaram. In this hall on one side the image of the Lord Nataraja in his *Ananda Tandava* pose (which everyone of us would have seen in museums and pictorial presentations) presides with a live retinue of Saivite priests and scholars and on the opposite side there stands a cellar with the image of Lord Varadaraja of Kanchi with the Vaishnavite priests serving Him. It has been confirmed by my friend Manchala Jagannatha Rao, out of his personal knowledge, that this is a permanent feature of Chitsabha. A challenge was made to 'Ayyavaal' (Kshetrayya) to sing extempore a lyric in simple conversational style as addressed by a courtesan simultaneously invoking both Varadaraja and Nataraja, but the subtlety of the lyric must bring out the most sublime truth of Vedic knowledge. The challenge further stipulated that the superficial meaning and the esoteric import must be brought out without word-splitting, pun or any such verbal jugglery. Perhaps, His Holiness the Pontiff of Kanchi Kamakoti, Bodhendra Sankaracharya, must also have been present as a mediator. The lyric composed by Kshetrayya was sung extempore and when it was being sung, his friend Mohanangi, or some close disciple danced then and there interpreting the import of the song through postures and facial expressions. The lyric is:

Chakkani Daya Galada

(*Raga Dhanyasi*)

Isn't your grace abounding? This is your home Chevvandi Linga!
Your coming here is so great, Oh Varada of Kanchi!

I have come to see you chum, Oh Chevvardi Linga!
 I know why you haven't visited my home, O! Kanchi Varada!
 Since you are here, I have come here, Chevvardi Linga!
 How come, whose home is this, after all, O! Kanchi Varada!
 Let it be so, I shall argue later, O! Chevvardi Linga!
 Certainly we shall stay together, O! Kanchi Varada!
 Who is it that Laughs in this bed chamber, Chevvardi Linga?
 But for Muvvagopala, who else can it be, Kanchi Varada?

Commenting on this Padam, C. R. Srinivasa Iyengar wrote (in 1929-31): "We are driven to conclude that Chevvardi Linga is identical with Muvvagopala and is but another name for Kanchi Varada though the affix Linga might excuse one concluding that it is the name of Lord Siva. I pray that better informed friends of mine will throw light on this point and tell us who Jevvardi Linga is in reality." According to our understanding, Kshetravaya demonstrated in this performance that Siva and Vishnu were one and the same Supreme Lord who was none other than Muvvagopala!

We also reaffirm our earlier conclusion in the chapter of Kshetravaya in our book of Composers (*Andhra Vaggeyakara Charitram*), that this lyric was an example of one of the psychic complexities occurring during the sport of love under the nomenclature *Gotra skhalanam*, i.e., a slip of the tongue committed by any one of the pair of lovers in addressing the other. This is an age old literary convention usually appreciated in a society where polygamy is an accepted custom, when the slip occurs often in the speech of a hero. But, when the heroine addresses her lover by mistake by another paramour's name, it is appreciated having propriety, only when the heroine is a courtesan or a wedded woman of loose morals. Here in this lyric of Kshetravaya, it is a unique bolder concept, in which there is no slip, but, the courtesan addresses two suitors simultaneously with all civil manners, but subtly suggesting that either of them is equal to, of neither or them is better than, a third suitor (Muvvagopala) with whom she is already engaged. What gives literary flavour here is that the apparently most mundane event carries with it the highest truth about the Supreme, depicted in the subtle presentation.

We are sure that no scholar nor our readers will disagree with us if we declare that, at this juncture, such a spiritual head like the Sankaracharya of Kamakoti, with the unanimous concurrence

of all those assembled there, must have honoured our Kshetravyya, or Varadayya of Movva, to be thenceforth called only as Kshetrarajna, a highly evolved spiritual person, a Universal Individual. In the three other *Padams* in which Chevvandi Linga was portrayed as the hero, He was referred to as the friend of Muvvagopala. Lord Siva is referred in classics as '*Vishnu-sakha*'—friend of Vishnu. One of the *Padams* describes Chevvandi Linga as one who donned a silk scarf, a garland of blossoms around the clean shaven head and a gilt-edged upper cloth hanging over his shoulders, when He went on His love beats. The lyric is:

Kopamu Raada yevvari kaina

(*Raga Bilahari*)

Would anyone be quiet without getting angry?—
My God, ever since the chum of Muvvagopala,
Chevvandi Linga had won me over,
if one hears what-so-ever he had been saying
only tantalising me in that woman's house!

— Would anyone —

Day after day having approached me,
like a dumb artless lover, keeping ever mum with me,
he revels in her house, now, with jingling of bells,
and strange songs sung to the accompaniment
of the drone of *Tamboora* and strains of melodies!

— Would anyone —

Oh Lotus-eyed one, when he came to me for the first time
he had no charm to mention, but a spotless upper cloth;
but, now, when he goes to her, he dons a silk scarf,
a garland of blossoms around his clean shaven head,
and a gilt-edged upper cloth hanging over his shoulders!

— Would anyone —

Charming chum *Chevvandi Linga*, when he approached me
assumed anger as towards a wedded wife,
but, now, how is he in that woman's house,
enjoying love-warblings and pigeon calls
over and above, fair-haired one! if he behaves hen-pecked!

— Would anyone —

It is our strong conviction that Kshetrappa did not leave his home to acquire any royal patronage. Kshetrappa never voluntarily sought and never came into contact with any Prince or Chief other than his own 'Prince of Libertines' (Muvvagopala). Kshetrappa could see only Muvvagopala reflected in the presiding deity in each of the sacred shrines visited by him until at least around 1628, when his benign presence was beginning to take roots in and around Kanchi. It was then that he attracted the attention of a Telugu Chieftain of the nearby fort of Chenji (Gingi of North Arcot District), called Tupakula Venkata Krishna (Bhupati). On the Chieftain's invitation, Kshetrappa must have visited the Chenji fort and after receiving due honours, on the Chieftain's request Kshetrappa might have condescended to compose a few Padams, again dedicated to Muvvagopala. Only three padams with the name of the dedicatee as Tupakula Krishna are available today in the collection before us. We find in them the same love theme and a style similar to that of Kshetrappa as those in the love lyrics on Muvvagopala.* Only the name of the hero or the dedicatee, is that of Tupakula Venkata Krishna. Here is one of the lyrics:

(Raga Nadanamakriya)

What did he say, Oh golden doll
What nice things did he say? —
What did he say? Why this secrecy? Don't conceal dear!
Fair one! what did the Chief of Tupakula family say to you?
— What did —

Oh Proud one! did you take the first chance
to broach my topic during your talk,
or did he raise it himself, being very kind to me
did he hold in his hand any gift to be passed on to me;
please tell me my friend, I swear by my word!

— What did —

Oh Woman! did he say that he would come here or did he
ask me to be chaperoned there? Did the Lord of my life
speak with langour or did he find fault with me;
please tell me about him, I am longing to hear!

— What did —

Has Tupakula Venkata Krishna, out of pleasure
made any mention of my losing a bet during the game of love?
Has he brought in today anything in the context of chiding me?
Or is he in an obstinate mood or What Oh my friend!

— What did —

[*Kalahantarita*. Here, the heroine is a *Sweeya* or *Samanya*, i.e., a wedded wife or can be a courtesan, who is deeply in love with her beloved. They were separated after a quarrel. A messenger maid had met the hero. In this lyric, the heroine enquires about her beloved, in a mood of reconciliation.]

It is felt that Tupakula Venkata Krishna might have induced Kshetrayya to visit the court of King Raghunathanayak at Tanjavur around 1630. Because of the way the king questioned him, Kshetrayya, would not have felt quite at home in Raghunathanayak's court, although Kshetrayya's versified replies were so bold and historic enough as to have been quoted by subsequent writers.

Manda Lakshminarasimha Kavi (of 1700 A.D.) in his Sanskrit work '*Andhra Kaumudi*' referred to Kshetrayya as *Kshetrajna Kavi* and a devotee of Muvvagopala. He mentioned a Telugu verse in Kanda metre ascribing it to Kshetrayya. The poem was composed by Kshetrayya, according to Narasimhakavi, in the court of King Raghunathanayak of Tanjavur, when the king asked him why the composer visited his court. The English rendering of the verse is—

“Those who need something or other
go out of their own volition,
to a discerning benefactor;
does anyone invite the bees
to come to a place where lotuses thrive
Oh King Raghunatha! a successor of Achyutendra?”

We understand that the same admirer, Tupakula Krishna Bhupati, introduced Kshetravaya (around 1635) to Tirumalnayak of Madura. We already know that he was the first king mentioned in the *Meruva Padam* as having honoured Kshetravaya and requested for a recital of the choicest of lyrics. Kshetravaya recited there 2000 *padams*, when the king as well as Lord Muvvagopala were immensely pleased. Out of these two thousand, we do not know how many of them are there in our surviving 300 and odd lyrics today. In our earlier treatise '*Andhra Vaggeyakara Charitramu*' we brought to the notice of scholars that at least the *Padam* '*Paradesamuna chesina panulu*' in Mohana Raga, might be a relic of this group. Since its dedicatory reference includes an expression '*Madhurapuramsudaina Muvvagopaludu*', wherein the qualifying epithet is a reference to the host's capital in the South rather than the Northern *Mathura* which was only the birth place of Lord Krishna, because Kamsa or, after his death, his father Ugresena reigned there. This *padam* is:

Paradesamuna Chesina Panulu

(Raga Mohana)

Exploits made in foreign lands need not be retold now!—

What is all this, Oh young maidens,

wouldn't you put a stop, for goodness' sake!

— Exploits made —

Having gone to her and paying profusely

do you mean to say, he begged for her?

Was she not charmed by his manliness

and having made love and prevailed upon him.

would she not have been able to trap him by her

excellence in the art of music?

Perhaps he could not have restrained his mind

since inherently he is a male, my dear!

— Exploits made —

Adorning herself with ornaments like

the tree which blossoms from top to bottom.

Having approached him like the divine nymph

as it were chosen by Cupid purposely.

manifested itself in Kshetraraya's paying more than one visit and staying there for considerably long period, spending his time in extempore composition of lyrics, offering them for singing and dancing, and such other intellectual, literary and artistic pursuits.

One of the *padams* containing Vijaya Raghavanayak's name as dedicatee and hero describes the qualities of the king the hero; which the reader would find out to be very much fitting with the qualities of Muvvagopala or the author Kshetraraya himself. The *padam* is:

Samanyamu kade vanipondu

(*Raga Kambhoji*)

Not for easy virtue, he would like to be a lover!
Many a woman, having no talent to credit
has sought after him, but of what avail?

— Not for easy virtue —

The master is indeed, King Vijaya Raghava,
to the people of the world, It's feast to the ear,
to hear about his attainments, Oh my dear!

— Not for easy virtue —

One must be mature and clever and respond to
his poetic and lyrical exercises;
efficient so as to read and write his lovely
lyrics and, as a musician, capable of
presenting the charms in melody, my dear!

— Not for easy virtue —

Must be dexterous in dance, softly stroking
on Tamboora, expanding melodic structures,
should sing away sonorous songs about him,
and talk, preconceiving his whims, my dear!

— Not for easy virtue —

She should offer him camphorated nuts and half-bitten
betel-leaf, adding the nectar of her lips,
watching the desire having taken a surge,
should be prompt to press the lips,

and Vijaya Raghava, then and there,
be won over, my dear!

— Not for easy virtue —

[Here the heroine is *Samanya*, *Proudha*, *Premagarvita*. The heroine belongs to the courtesan category, but she is telling her friend about the unique characteristics of her hero as beyond the common kind, she being proud of her love and her possession, and the hero deserves all the qualities mentioned in the lyric.]

Out of the 12 *Padams*, one quoted in one of the musical plays written by another court poet of Vijaya Raghava, and another are worthy of mention. These are:

Dontara videmuto na chenta rakura

(*Raga Punnagavarali*)

Don't come near me, with a pile of folded
betel leaves and nut,
I swear by my word (of honour) !
Can I endure all this
Oh clever lover Vijaya Raghava!—

Your lips reveal the fact of having
suckled the fragrance of cosmetics, and
your forehead carries the unravelled
dignity and loud imprint of red-lac;
don't stand near me, go away,
I cannot endure all this!
Having cheated me, face to face
how can you afford to lie in this manner ? — Don't come —

With the dent of pressure of the bulging bosom
and whipping lash of the plaited hair,
with the loss of memory in the heavy haze of sleep
you speak many untruths;
isn't this her chamber:
Why this assumed sincerity?
Go and have a talk with the woman today! — Don't come —

Oh Charming Lord! my Vijaya Raghava!
haven't you had your sway over me?
Haven't you gone to that coquette's house with langour?

Where (else) have you managed to acquire these withered flowers?
 The garlands around your neck have got into knots
 Indeed about her, you entertain your love;
 Straight to her abode, why don't you move? — Don't come —

[The heroine in this lyric is *Sweeya*, *Proudha*, *Khandita*, *Anyagopana*. The hero is *Dhrishṭa*; the emotions are *Santa*, *Vipralambha*—*sringara* and *Adbhuta*.]

Sudinamayene ee proddu

(*Raga Kambhoji*)

Very auspicious is today; very auspicious is today!
 Serving Cupid's re-incarnation is our great pleasure!
 — Very auspicious —

The fruit of having looked into the mirror early morning
 is seeing this most lovable face, Oh Charming little doll!
 — Very auspicious —

The fruit of coming face to face today with a water pot
 is seeing this unique and majestic royal person!
 — Very auspicious —

The sacred omen of having worshipped the twice-born
 bears fruit in the royal presence of Vijaya Raghava
 — Very auspicious —

[The heroine in this lyric is *Samānya Nayika*.]

Subbarama Dikshitar narrates how Kshetraraya threw a challenge on the poets and scholars of King Vijaya Raghava's court in Tanjavur, after reciting a famous padam:

Vadaraka Po Pove

(*Raga Kambhoji*)

Enough with your prattle, why would he come at all,
 he is not wanted here, ask him not to come!
 That was a golden age, and this is another birth,
 I don't know what he is to me, and what I am to him, my friend!
 — Enough —

Every moment expecting him to be coming today or tomorrow,
 due to incessant heaving of many a hot sigh, my dear,
 having the lips parched up, how many moonlit fiery nights
 have I got to pass off, what else is there to talk,

— Enough —

Hoping that my beloved would be coming any moment,
 having set looks on the thoroughfare, got tired,
 counted passing months and got bored and suppressed
 my uncontrollable love;
 how many springs resounding with the calls of
 the cuckoos and parrots have I passed off, why empty talk!

— Enough —

Oh My dear friend! I asked for omens fore-boding
 Muvvagopala's arrival,
 having seen my friends who have desired and met their beloveds,
 I pined away in grief:

Leaving the last couplet of the stanza (not quoted above) unrecited, Kshetrayya challenged the poets and scholars of the court to complete it before he returned from his pilgrimage to Rameswaram. On his return he found that none could complete the lyric and he himself completed it with the words (last line of the last stanza):

"*Rama Rama, ee menito ika vani momu choodavalena*, etc," meaning 'Oh my God! with this body have I still to see his face? Our first meet was more than enough!' This incident further proves that the of his pilgrimages cannot be separated from his visits to royal courts. The last stanza of this Padam, moreover, starts with the dedicatory reference to Muvvagopala.

[In the lyric quoted above, the heroine is *Sweeya*, *Proudha*, *Virahotka* and the hero *Satha*. Here the hero is crafty; hollow hearted and even treacherous to his love. The heroine is the most ideal wife, who is quite sensitive to pleasures and pains of love game. The situation is when she tries to explain away to her confidante her husband's absence, with undying optimism.]

In the year 1647-48, Bijapur Sultan destroyed the fort of Chenji. Thereafter, Tupakula Venkata Krishna, an inveterate political adventurer, joined the army of Mirjumla under Abdulla

Qutubshah of Golkonda. After subjugating all the Rayalascema and coastal districts of Andhra and portions of Tamil Nadu upto Chenji and annexing them to the Golkonda kingdom, Abdulla was trying to win over the confidence of his subjects in these parts by encouraging arts and letters in the language of the people. Perhaps, again on the introduction of Tupakula Venkata Krishna Bhupati (an ardent admirer of Kshetrayya), Abdulla invited Kshetrayya to visit Golkonda to participate in a contest in the composing of *Padams*.

Kshetrayya must have visited the court of Abdullah at Golkonda around the year 1650. He must have then completed about 55 year of age. Tulasimurti, a court poet of Golkonda, was the opponent in the contest of padam composition. Kshetrayya needed and requested forty days' time for meeting the challenge. Of course Kshetrayya was successful in the contest, by being able to solicit the grace of his Lord Muvvagopala, who possessed and inspired Kshetrayya to recite one thousand and five hundred (or one thousand and one hundred, due to difference in recensions in the manuscripts) padams and obtain royal honours.

Golkonda being nearer Movva than Kanchi, we surmise—and our surmise is supported by the burden of the song, and the following couplet of *Meruvapadam* discussed earlier—that Kshetrayya left Golkonda and visited Movva. The lines 'Prince among Libertines who sought after pleasure, since seven and three generations here, it is said, He is our treasure; Muvvagopala espoused me, My Lord with peerless grace!' more than imply that the *Meruvapadam* was composed in Movva in the presence of the Lord there. Of course, the local legends do not mention about Kshetrayya's return home. We feel that the return visit was unostentatious, very brief, and known to a limited circle of very close confidants of family members and admirers. '*Meruvapadam*', according to the implied meaning of the title, marks a turning point in Kshetrayya's life, that of spiritual ascendancy and his becoming a recluse and an ascetic. Ananta Krishna Sarma also feels, although through another interpretation, that on getting a rebuff from Mohanangi, the boyhood love *Devadasi* (after 55 years?) Kshetrayya's life turned a new leaf. It was a new leaf no doubt. But was it due to a rebuff from an age-barred *Devadasi*, or could it be some other event like his dear wedded wife Rukmini or even the *Devadasi* friend Mohanangi, not

being there to receive him at Movva? Such an eventuality would have caused a stunning blow to his already tired mind and turned him into total ascetic ways making him abandon all active pursuits of life!

If we conclude in favour of such a renunciation on the part of Kshetrayya, there can be nothing further to narrate in his story. We may recall that his lyric dealing with 'the Prince of Libertines' is called 'Meruvapadam'. We explained earlier that it meant 'the axis' around which the details of Kshetrayya's life and work revolved. The other meaning of the same term is the starting point of the ascending order of notes on the musical instrument Veena. When applied to Kshetrayya's life, the juncture at which he composed this lyric should mark a turning point in his life, since it cannot be a starting point at the age of 55 years. So, at this point of age, it is natural to surmise that this was a turning point which changed the path of his life towards spiritual ascendancy.

Anantakrishna Sarma's surmise about Kshetrayya having had a rebuff in his advances of love towards Mohanangi, his *Devadasi* friend, in Gopala's sanctum at Movva, at this stage appears partly plausible to us after second thoughts. Sarma and Gangappa mentioned in their writings, that Kshetrayya's lyrics composed after this incident in Movva, took entirely a spiritual turn. We agree with this view, if it does not necessarily mean that the whole lot of lyrics of Kshetrayya composed prior to this juncture are not declared to be unspiritual. We must not forget the earlier rebuff from the same Mohanangi leading him into getting initiated into the penance with the Charm of Gopala.

If there was a second rebuff from the same Mohanangi at the same temple of Gopala in Movva, after about thirty and odd years, the event could as well be surmised as the death or disappearance of Mohanangi before fulfilling the personal desire of Kshetrayya.

Relying on the conjectures of Vissa Appa Rao on the episode of Kshetrayya's love for Mohanangi, we were earlier inclined to believe that the latter might have been in correspondence with the poet during his travels, and might have met him either in Trivellore or Kanchi or at both the places. But, the continued stubbornness and indifference of Mohanangi towards Kshetrayya's advances of love throughout, as evidenced in a number of lyrics, make us doubt that premise. But the local legends passed on from generation to generation among the people in Movva and around, in

Krishna district, support some sort of co-operation and collaboration on the part of Mohanangi with Kshetrappa in the service of the Lord through song and dance. This traditional belief of the successors of Varadappa now living in Movva, does not make any mention of any voluntary acquiescence on the part of Mohanangi of Kshetrappa's appeal of love, but, the former also is believed to have left home along with Kshetrappa, visiting places of pilgrimage and offering service to the Lord, through song and dance. This traditional belief finds a mention in the second edition of '*Kriti Mani Mala*' of Ranga Ramanuja Iyengar. The tradition does not mention anything about the return of the pair at any stage, to their native place. But the *Meruvapadam* at least implies the return of Kshetrappa! We can surmise that these two 'lines' (Mohanangi and Kshetrappa) kept on meeting on and off during certain occasions in the sublime service of the Lord but parting thereafter and finally met at Gopala's temple on Kshetrappa's return to Movva from Golkonda. Here, we have to concede perhaps that Kshetrappa, still imagining himself to be as young as ever, and an irrefutable lover, might have made the alleged final appeal of love to Mohanangi! But, with her respect and reverence to him as her preceptor, Mohanangi would have stuck to her stand that she was dedicated as ever to the service of the Lord and, as such, could not respond to Kshetrappa's appeals.

It comes to that, that Kshetrappa was not recognised by her as an irrefutable lover. He must have reconciled himself to this rebuff and remained contented thereafter rather to be a devoted beloved (*Preyasi*) of the Lord than a conceited omnipotent lover.

We are not unaware of our prevarication, or reluctance to accept the theory of a direct rebuff from Mohanangi, received by Kshetrappa at this stage. Perhaps we are afraid that our favourite picture of Kshetrappa as a spiritually evolved person would get blurred. After all, one should not be dogmatic in these conjectures. Nor can we be uncharitable to Mohanangi, in not accepting the theory of her being stubbornly dedicated to the Lord and continuously remaining adamant and refusing Kshetrappa's appeals, as persistently depicted from time to time in a number of Kshetrappa's lyrics. As such, we need not entirely rule out the possibility of this rebuff having taken place. Kshetrappa himself seems to have taken it to heart, as a big personal blow, a chiding or a thrashing from his master, the Lord, as a mark of the latter's displeasure.

This fact finds mention in one of Kshetrayya's lyrics, to be quoted at the end of this chapter. (c.f. - Lyric - Sarasijakshi Ni janmamam).

A preponderance of his lyrics with the heroine as a wedded wife (*Sweeya Nayika*) among the available *Padams*, also does not rule out Kshetrayya's wife Rukmini having spent as a dutiful wife highly satisfactory moments of life (both for him and herself) early at home, although for a considerably short period. She might have tried to keep contact with him even later, at least through correspondence, during his travels. We are tempted to surmise that she must be the beloved who had personal contacts with him, of utmost emotional and conjugal satisfaction, in places like Tiruvellore and Kanchi, managed through the good offices of some travelling elderly women among friends, orthodox pilgrims of long-distance, if not heterodox parties of temple musicians and dancers. Too personal a reference in the following couple of lyrics could not have been made to any other beloved than his wife *Rukmini*. Or else, they could as well be mere flash-backs of fulfilment dreams of an idealist-dreamer-poet, such as Kshetrayya.

Ennitikani ne meththu

(*Raga Mukhari*)

On how many counts shall I admire you!
and what a lot have I to tell you!
Your favours run into thousands Oh my girl!

— On how many —

In the midst of the ocean of anguish of separation
when no shore was in sight,
for having relieved me of my fear
lifting me on to the boat of your bosom;
when the heart was being scorched
by the sharp fire-emitting arrows of Cupid
for having come anon and made my
heart calm and cool!

— On how many —

Having got separated from you, my dear dame,
and distressed in day and night
when I was reeling in grief,

for having relieved me of my langour;
 when moonlight was burning me like a forest fire furnace
 for having offered me the honey of your
 lustrous lips and made me relax!

— On how many —

With a springing smile on your face
 haven't you called me Muvvagopala and
 having pulled me near yourself and
 perspired in warm embrace;
 when I assumed anger and kept aloof,
 instantly having come to know,
 for having asked me not to be cross
 and assured me of your confidence!

— On how many —

[Here the heroine is *Sweeya—Proudha—Abhisarika*. The heroine is a model of chastity and wifely devotion, free from self-restraint in her tender relation to her husband! The lyric is depicted in the words of the hero who, in this context, is the model husband, who suffered from her separation and feels grateful for all her favours conferred on him when both of them meet at an appointed place (perhaps Kanchi).]

Ee Menu Jeevunaku Enta Priyamayen

(*Raga Ghanta*)

Is this body worthy of the soul
 if it is not embraced by Muvvagopala

— Is this body —

Oh Woman! myself in one place and my beloved in another
 having been separated and put to hardship by Cupid
 and boiled in the fire of limitless loneliness,
 on this planet, wouldn't there be another birth for us, Oh Fair one!

— Is this body —

Having desired to see his face, and liked to drink out of his lips
 with overwhelming love, heaving heavy sighs, aloud,
 losing sense of consciousness in the heat of moonlight,
 Oh Fair One! when I am like this, without a break, shedding tears!

— Is this body—

Having recollected my meeting with Muvvagopala in sport of love,
 my mind out of surprise digressed into a thousand ways;
 Oh Woman! I am unable to hear till now about my Lord's welfare
 What was ordained by fate, after all is to be endured!

— Is this body —

[The heroine in this lyric is *Sweeya, Proudha, Proshita Patika, Viyoga Vipralambha*. This heroine is indeed the ideal wedded wife of the hero who has left her and gone on a very long tour during which she pines away in grief. The contents of this lyric might have been culled from an epistle the composer had received from his wedded wife during his tours.]

It is very touching to note that Kshetravaya was highly conscious and sensible throughout about the innocent love and sensitivities of his dear wedded wife Rukmini. In the latter lyric mentioned above, he depicts her attitudes quite aptly, the whole body of the lyric carrying the exact frame of her mind—the burden of the song and the last couplet reflecting the eternal voice of the ideal Indian Wedded wife through ages:

“Is this body worthy of the soul
 sans the Lord's embrace”

“What was ordained by fate
 is to be endured.”

Besides a considerable number of lyrics having the hero's pangs of separation from a wedded wife for their theme, we have a number of Padams dealing with the unrequited love of a beloved, or where a beloved had rebuffed him. Wherever the latter theme persists, we can be sure that they refer to the earlier rebuff of Kshetravaya's *Devadasi* friend, Mohanangi, who appears to have remained in the same mood throughout, as far as Kshetravaya's advances were concerned until the final rebuff at Movva, in the evening of their life. This persistent indifference and stiffness of the lady can be found in many Padams, one of which might have been composed by Kshetravaya in the final stage.

Komaliro Valachinanduku

(*Raga Ghantaram*)

Oh delicate one! do they not call me
 Gopala, because I love!

I do not know by what other names
do people in this realm call me, alas!

— Oh delicate one —

When passion overcame me beyond my control
you raised hopes in my heart;
as cupid's darts melted my heart, making me prevail upon you,
you did not respond with compassion!
Fair one, I couldn't wait, but, prayed for your sway,
you said it was not worth enjoying!
Oh Luna! Passing off day and night
you played with time like dice, alas!

— Oh delicate one —

Craving for your company, when I revolved around you,
you made my life miserable!
As a result, my eyes were filled with tears
you never cared to wipe them fair one!
When I was agitated in moonlight, Oh woman
you didn't speak nicely 'o cool me down!
You became jealous and took vengeance upon me
bereft of the least human compassion, alas!

— Oh delicate one —

You didn't beckon me, calling me Muvvagopala
and demonstrate your devotion;
Fair-eyed one, you forgot the promises you made
to me on the day when we met for the first time;
Oh my dear! you did not kindly receive me, even when
I waited for hours together before you!
Oh woman! you didn't care for civilities of such a lover
like me, and chose to remain proud, alas!

— Oh delicate one —

[Here the heroine is *Siceya? Proudha, Dhiera*. The hero is *Satha*. This lyric is a supplication to the beloved by the hero, who is crafty, hollow-hearted and even treacherous to his love. The heroine is an ideal wife, sensitive to pleasures and pains of love, and makes no secret of her anger. This is one of the many lyrics of Kshetranya in which, either his adolescent episode of love with

Mohanangi or his civility (though shortlived) towards his own wife, is often reflected.]

The categorisation of the rhetoricians for the heroine in this lyric as 'sweeya' a wedded wife, does not appeal to us. A 'Parakiya' or a 'Samanya' would fit in better and indicate Mohanangi, according to the contest.

The last stanza clearly mentions that she did not beckon him by his name (Muvvagopala) and demonstrate her love towards him, and that she forgot the promises made to him on the day they met for the first time, and that she did not care to respond to his civilities.

Now, there is a stalemate or an end of the episode of *Devadasi*. As we have mentioned already, the sweet wedded wife also not being there, love in Kshetravaya's lyrics composed after this turning point naturally eschews any reference to the carnal side of 'Kama'. He says in one of the lyrics which, it is felt, he might have composed in this final stage, that 'people have concocted scandals out of things they had never seen, and events that never happened'. This lyric supports us in the stand taken by us, with regard to the character mould of Kshetravaya as a person and as an idealist-dreamer-poet, as depicted by us in these pages.

Choodani Koodani Nindalu Jodinchiramma

(Raga Anandabhairavi)

They have concocted scandals
out of things they had never seen,
and events that never happened, dear!—
Is there anybody, who never talked ill
of me and Hari, among people?

— They have —

Have I actually stood and had a straight look over at his face?
Have I ever embraced him to the fulfilment of my desire?
Have I ever suckled the honey out of his sugary pair of lips?
Sister, because of the only thing
I said, he is a charming chum!

— They have —

Oh dear, have I ever cherished
or have I told any one that I am
fit to be his beloved?

Have I ever had the pleasure
 to hum or listen to his lyrics?
 When they are bent upon a thing,
 would not their desires make them act? — They have —
 Oh fair lady, has ever the lord
 Muvvapuri known about my heart,
 and out of condescension made me
 loose myself in sport of love?
 Oh virgin, if it proved to be
 a lesson to those scandal-mongers,
 I shall be arranging a special service
 with flowers to our lord in the most fitting manner!
 — They have —

[The heroine in this lyric is *Parakiya*, *Parodha*, *Pratibhachatura*. Here, the heroine is not independent due to some social taboo to extend her love to her lover; she is quite intelligent in the art of concealing her secret. A *Devadasi* expected to live an austere celibate life; if she makes love to a person, she is considered *Parakiya*.]

Finally, we have been able to lay our hands on the last lyric to be quoted in this narrative. It clearly states about the fulfilment of the life's mission of Kshetrappa, for having had the Grace of the Lord. It mentions about the Poet's surrender, and the deity's fondling him with all care and whatever untoward experience the Poet might have had at this stage is described as a chiding by the Lord at a moment of the Lord's displeasure. Kshetrappa going away to the South on exile finds mention in the last stanza, that the Lord had kept him in privacy to ward off evil eye. It is not the self-conceit of a Poet, but the equanimity and the balanced approach of a 'Kshetrappa' an universal individual, that made him take both the chiding and protection of the Lord in the same stride!

Sarasijakshi nee janmamu saphalamayene

(*Raga Todi*)

Fulfilled is the purpose of your life, Oh Fair-eyed young woman!
 due to the touch of the hand of Muvvagopala,
 the Supreme Soul! —
 Having won your confidence and your offers of surrender,

and received you with fondling care and placed you on his bosom,
 day and night when he remained in your apartment,
 Young maiden! in a fit of anger, should he not raise his hand?

— Fulfilled —

Oh Fair-eyed one! when you shouted, did he not smile away?

Did he not adorn you with all suitable ornaments?

Woman! did he not brush your hair, and

beautify it with blossoms?

Should he not threaten you, in a moment of displeasure?

— Fulfilled —

Having kept you in privacy, to ward off evil eye,

Muvvagopala having rendered services to you,

as and when you wanted him, did he not favour you?

Oh My God! after all this, should he not chide you, my dear?

— Fulfilled —

5. SHADOWS OF STIGMA AND SUNBEAMS OF RECOGNITION!

BESIDES the recorded evidence of bare facts in the publications of the previous century by scholars like Manda Narasimha Kavi and Subbarama Dikshitar, whatever further has been written on Kshetrappa's life during the present century is mostly or invariably based on hearsay, legends, riddles and deductions of various scholar-commentators. Subbarama Dikshitar is the renowned author of *Sangitha Sampradaya Pradarsini*, an anthology of music. Even in the 19th century, Subbarama Dikshitar himself would not perhaps have included in his anthology, Kshetrappa along with other reputed saint-composers and added notations of a few of his *Padams* and a biographical note, had not *Dikshitar* possessed unremitting admiration for and reverence to the highest aesthetic value of Kshetrappa's creations in the fields of music, dance and literature.

The first edition of *Kshetrappa Padamulu* including only the text of 228 lyrics, edited by scholar Tevaperumalappa, was published in 1862 by the Suryaloka Press, Madras. The book mentioned that Kshetrappa was a '*Parama Bhagavata Sikhmani*', meaning the crest jewel among the devotees of the Lord. Six similar editions came out subsequently in the 19th century. In 1916, the well known publishers of literary classics, Messrs. Vavilla Ramaswami Sastrulu & Sons, brought out their first edition. In none of these editions, the collected lyrics exceeded 250. '*Sangitha Sarvartha Sara Sangraham*' of *Tachchuru Singaracharyulu* contained the text of only 21 *Padams* of Kshetrappa. It took nearly half a century for Kshetrappa's *Padams* to get cleansed of the stigma of low rate of respectability that was attached to them in the beginning of the century, and to draw the revered attention of the enlightened public through their realisation of the aesthetic appeal, poetic value and sublimities in the theme inherent in the lyrics.

At the beginning of this century, due to the changes brought about by the western civilisation, in the outlook, values of decency and social decorum in our country, some sections of our educated public acquired a sort of modernistic puritanism which questioned the social-worthiness and ethical justification for apparent pre-

ponderance, or an uninhibited presentation, of eroticism in Indian art, architecture and literature. This attitude of the elite had to be met, with all the force of age-old conventions of our cultural and literary tradition, by some oriental scholars who could succeed, in scholastic and even legal combats, to retrieve some of our literary masterpieces and works of art from proscription.

When such was the plight of some poetical masterpieces, what would have been the lot of the more maligned works of song literature, which, notwithstanding their high emotional and aesthetic appeal and unmistakable melodic and rhythmic sweetness, were maltreated as social untouchables and of questionable respectability?

This writer recalls memories of his own adolescence when such stigma was stamped on even Kshetravyya's lyrics. This was primarily due to the *padams* being the inevitable part of the repertoire of the *Devadasi* community attached to the temples and courtesans attached to the courts of Indian states and Zamindaris. Both these categories were commonly termed as dancing girls and were under a cloud of disrepute. This brought down the sacred art to the level of street nautch parties and midnight hovels of immorality. Lovers of Hindustani music among our readers may recall as a parallel the plight of the best of Thumries and Ghazals due to their association with such class of singers of social disrepute in the beginning of the century.

The capacity of the traditional troupes of Bhagavata Mela of Kuchipudi and Melattur to draw appreciation and to gain popularity for their repertoire of *Padams*, was also at a low ebb due to the advent of the modern stage drama and the movie.

The success of anti-nautch movement of the social reformers following the teachings of Veeresalingam and Raghupati Venkata Ratnam Naidu, resulted in the enactment of legislative measures and there was a new social awakening. The result of these were that the system of public nautch parties and the malpractices of midnight hovels associated with the courtesan class were statutorily banned and eradicated.

The traditional schools of Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dance-drama received a new impetus with their being recognised as the necessary forms of performing arts worthy of being taken up and practised by all respectable classes of society.

The highest traditions of Karnataka Music and Bharatanatyam

reached the pinnacles of perfection in the courts of Tanjore, Mysore, Travancore and some Zamindaris, like Ettayapuram and Vijayanagaram, where they were fostered and nourished by the scholars, composers and artistes of successive generations upto the beginning of the 20th century. Concerts of masters among Karnataka musicians, expert *Nattuvanars* and *Nartakis* of Bharatanatyam and exponents of dance-dramas of Kuchipudi and Melattur made the discerning art lovers realise the excellence of, and the aesthetic appeal inherent in, the *Padams* of Kshetrappa. Scholars then started gathering all the available lyrics from various sources, taking pains to unearth facts about the life and work of the great composer.

Close on the heels of Subbarama Dikshitar, around the beginning of the twentieth century, there appeared the well known grammarian and lexicographer, Bahujanapalli Sitaramacharya. He was a Telugu scholar of repute and brought out a dictionary 'Sabda Ratnakaram'. Sitaramacharya was the earliest to give a respectable place for Kshetrappa along with other great Telugu literary figures by including passages from Kshetrappa's *Padams* as authorities for correct expression, spelling and idiomatic usage. The noted scholar Veturi Prabhakara Sastri brought to light, in a short story published in 1924, a tradition in Krishna district, that Kshetrappa who composed *Padams* on Muvvagopala was a native of the village Muvva of Krishna district. In 1926, Kasinathuni Nageswara Rao included "*Muvvagopala Padamulu*" of Kshetrappa in his index of reference to Telugu literature (*Andhra Vangmaya Sookhika*). In 1929-31, C. R. Srinivasa Iyenger, in his serialised articles on Indian dancing, dealt extensively, with Kshetrappa's contribution to Karnataka music and dance tradition, describing him as a master musician, a great composer and more than all, a whole hearted server of the lord in the way that was open to him.

Ranga Ramanuja Iyenger published 40 *Padams* with notation in 1948, in his '*Kriti Mani Mala*'. In the second edition of the book published in 1967 with the aid of the Tamil Nadu Sangitha Nataka Akademi, we find 77 *Padams* with notation.

The Andhra Gana Kala Parishad of Rajahmundry formed a committee to collect the texts of the compositions of well known music composers, like Thyagaraja, Jayadeva, Purandaradasa, Narayana Teertha and Kshetrappa. Through their research and efforts, the convenor of this committee Vissa Appa Rao went

through more than half a dozen then available old printed editions along with nearly ten palm leaf manuscripts from oriental libraries and published in 1950, a neat volume of "*Kshetrayya Padamulu*" consisting of 330 *Padams* along with a detailed introduction with some conclusions and conjectures about Kshetrayya's biography. The Gana Kala Parishad published in 1954 a collection of 70 *Padams* of Kshetrayya with musical notations collected from Tanjore area by Manchala Jagannatha Rao and edited by T.V. Subba Rao. In 1952, G.V. Seethapathi collected about 350 *Padams* at the behest of Maharaja of Pithapuram, who got it published. The Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Akademi published in 1973 a bulkier collection of *Kshetrayya Padams* (135 in number), complete with musical notation, collected, preserved and edited by Manchala Jagannatha Rao. In 1956, the writer of this monograph included an entire chapter on Kshetrayya in his extensive treatise *Andhra Vaggeyakara Charitramu*, dealing with the evolution of Indian Music and a chronological account of biographies of notable music composers. Very recently in 1974, Gangappa has written and published an elaborate thesis on Kshetrayya's life and work in which, in support of his conclusions, he has quoted extensively from this writer's work also along with the theories and conclusions of other senior writers of the century! Rallapalli Anantha Krishna Sarma, among such senior scholars, wrote an extensive article in the magazine '*Bharati*' (1942-43). In 1974, Nataraja Ramakrishna, who was associated with "*Kshetrayya Padabhinaya Prachara Samithi*" (a society for promoting and propagating Kshetrayya's lyrics through dance) brought out a book entitled "*Kshetrayya Padamulu—Abhinayamu*" (The art of expression of Kshetrayya's *Padams* through dance).

Three works on Kshetrayya's life as fiction, deserve mention, one in Telugu by A.V. Ekambareswara Rao (Kshetrayya, novel in Telugu 1979 Vijayawada) another in English by M.V. Ramasarma (Bliss of Life, novel in English 1979, S.Chand & Co. New Delhi) and the third a Telugu translation of the latter (Kshetrayya, novel in Telugu, 1979, Machilipatnam). M.V. Ramasarma now the Vice-Chancellor of Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, originally belongs to village Movva in Krishana Dt. Andhra, and is known to be a family descendent of Kshetrayya the hero of our book.

In an article published in 1963, the noted short story writer,

scholar and poet, Malladi Ramakrishna Sastry, narrated some more anecdotes connected with the life of Kshetrappa prevalent in Krishna district through generations and raised some riddles which are answered here after giving a brief account of the anecdotes.

Some people in the area think that Varadappa developed a love affair with a cowherd girl and that his lyrics were the outcome of this affair. None of the *Padams* that are available leads to such a conclusion. From the applicability of the arts and sciences of his day and the variety of human nature depicted in his *Padams*, the other heresy that he did not have any traditional schooling can be discarded. We do score a point in favour of his mastery over the nascent Telugu idiom and indigenous song-form as found in his *Padams* mostly perhaps due to his association with the cowherds! When all the royal patrons of Reddi kingdoms dwindled, did not Srinatha, a Kavi Sarvabhouma, sustain on the succour offered by such common people as cowherds in whose company he could produce such popular folk ballads as *Palnati Veeeracharithram* and *Katamaraju Katha* in the *Desi* ballad metre *Dwipada*?

It is believed that a temple trustee in Masulipatnam (port town in Krishna district 20 miles away from Movva) was Varadappa's maternal uncle whose daughter Rukmini was his wedded wife and she inspired him to become what all he had attained in his life.

We are not inclined to disbelieve this hearsay, since there is a preponderance of lyrics having a wedded wife (*Swaseya*) as the heroine than the other varieties of heroines among the *Padams* that are available.

Another anecdote refers to a love affair with another girl, a young widowed cousin, also named Rukmini, and that he could not stand the social odium and censure as a result of which he had to leave the village. This may be one more instance of Kshetrappa being entrapped in an unconventional situation besides the already maligned association with a Devadasi. After all Kshetrappa may not be at fault, if we view the situation from his wedded wife Rukmini's view point. This story includes a narration of his getting initiated to Gopala Mantra and his becoming a great composer.

Sastry's riddles start with the one concerning the absence of mention of either Kshetrappa's name or the name of Movva in the chronicles and gazeteers of some Zamindaris and *Samsthanams*

(estates) like Nuzvidu, Devarakota, Amaravati and Repalle, in Krishna and Guntur districts and around, nor by any subsequent poet like Kasula Purushottam (who wrote *Andhra Nayaka Satakam*) of the region. As Sastri himself answered in the form of a question, both the social odium that arose around Kshetrayya's controversial early life and the low popularity for *Pada Kavita* (song literature) among elite of the day might have been the reasons for absence of the name of Kshetrayya and Movva in the gazeteers. Both these names appeared for the first time in the written record of Veturi Prabhakara Sastri (in 1924), who is a native of Krishna district.

Malladi questions, the identity and placement of Muvvagopala mentioned by Tallapaka Timmakka in her poem entitled *Subhadra Parinayam*. She was the wife of the great composer Annamacharya of Tirupati and lived in the 15th century. We say that Timmakka's Muvvagopala is a name which occurs in *Mantra Sastra* (as already mentioned by us in an earlier chapter) which contains charms on Narasimha, Hayagriva, Hanuman and many other deities, on whom we find several kirtanas composed by Annamacharya himself. As such, her Muvvagopala need not necessarily mean the presiding deity of a shrine situated near or around Tirupati.

Why don't we find any mention of Krishna district in Kshetrayya's lyrics; why could we not find any manuscripts of his *Padams* in Krishna district? Kshetrayya, for that matter, did not make any mention of his name or his parentage excepting reference and dedication to Gopala who was the Lord of Muvvapuri. Due to lack of patronage and encouragement, the *Devadasis* who learnt the songs in and around Krishna district might have migrated to northern or southern districts. Besides Tanjore and Kalahasti, there are other regions, where Kshetrayya's *Padams* were known. We were told by our elders at home, that one Rasika called Ponugupati Venkata Raju, our relation and personally known to Vissa Appa Rao, also in his youth, as an exponent of Kshetrayya's *Padams* was a resident of Samalkota in the East Godavari district. He used to recite *Kshetrayya Padamulu*, which were being portrayed and enacted in the dance recitals by experts among Devadasis like Duggirala Manikyam and Chataparru Sundari in a place like Mandapeta (very early in the century) in the same district. Writings of Nataraja Ramakrishna also support this.

Meruva Padam mentions about there being more than 4000 *Padams* composed by Kshetrayya. Why then could we not get more

than 300 to 350? As we have already mentioned, we cannot easily explain the causes for losing the rest. Vandalism and vagaries of time and history can only be the causes. It is worth remembering that Movva is situated in the same Divi Taluk in Krishna district which was recently subjected to the ravages of cyclone and tidal waves. For the Masulipatnam coast this was not the first time in history. The successors of Kshetrayya tell us in support of this that the temple of Muvvagopala which inspired Varadayya to compose his lyrics was subjected to natural calamity and went down into the bowels of the earth and that the present temple was reconstructed in the year 1900 A.D. They talk about the existence of a village of *Devadasis* attached to the temple very near Movva, with the name Saanempaadu, meaning the village of *Devadasis*.

Throughout there must have been two sections of public opinion holding diametrically opposite views as far as the popularity and admirability or otherwise of an enigmatic character like that of our Kshetrayya. One section might think that he was but a renegade, a drop-out and a social outcast, while the others might think that he was an *Acharya Purusha*, a Kshetragna, the knower of all the manifestations of *Prakriti* or the nature of all bodies, himself being unpolled and unattached—the universal Individual!

6. MULTI - FACETED GEM !

SIGMUND Spaeth says in his work "*The Art of enjoying music*":

"Art-song is the reverse of folksong in almost every way. Where folksong establishes a melody, which may then be fitted with a variety of words, art-song begins with a definite poem, striving to fit it with music which will express every detail of its meaning".

More than mere meaning, if we search for the source of emotional content in the 'Art-song', we can find it from what Edward J. Dent wrote in his 'Survey of the 17th century' on the European opera:

".....In the seventeenth century, the whole tendency was to become more musical and less like an ordinary play in verse, that means that the emotion, instead of being distributed more or less evenly throughout the opera, became concentrated in the songs, while the recitative became more and more conventional and dull".

Whatever is said above about the Art-song of Europe and the incidental songs with a high concentration of emotion in the operas of Europe in the 17th century, can be applied verbatim to 'Padam'—the lyric with amorous theme—and the incidental songs in *Yakshaganams* (or musico-dance dramas) of South India in the same 17th century. These also were saturated with emotion.

In the 15th century itself the pioneer-composer of *Padams*, Annamacharya of Tirupati, chose for his expression the song-form with a high concentration of emotional element. From *Kelika*, *Kalapam*, *Yakshaganam* and many other folk and tribal song forms, Annamacharya gave a form and shape to 'Padam'. In his treatise on the technique of *Samkirtana* or *Padam* (*Samkirtana Lakshanam*) he stipulated that the favourite deity was always the hero and the heroines could be from any stratum of the society. The language used for the *padams* should be the dialect which naturally suited the chosen heroine's social standing.

A century and a half later, Kshetrappa, being himself a multifaceted gem of a genius, chose '*Padam*' as the vehicle for his expression and chiselled it into a polylustrous jewel, as it were!

Connoisseurs of music place Kshetrappa on a high pedestal, e.g.:

"Kshetrappa, the greatest composer of Telugu *Padas*, has a unique place amongst the musical luminaries of India. He is the father of the musical form, *Padam*. His *Padas* are brimful of *raga bhava* (melodic structure) and *rasa bhava* (emotional impact). They have been the admiration of illustrious composers like Tyagaraja, Syama Sastry and others."

— P. Sambamurthy, 1952.

Adherents of music and drama as the path of devotion, worship him along with other revered *Gurus* and saints: e.g.:

"Some were content with music alone and others (among our *Vaggeyakaras*) believed that perfect devotion could be expressed only by a combination of song, dance and *abhinaya*. Jayadeva, Thirthanarayana and Kshetrappa appear to belong to the latter school of thought. The Bhagavata Mela dance-drama tradition of Kuchipudi of Andhradesa and of Merattur and other villages of Tamilnad is based on this line of thought".

— E. Krishna Iyer, 1952.

Those with a high sense of literary taste, aesthetic and rhetorical values find Kshetrappa to be unparalleled for his proficiency in equal measure in *sahitya*, *sangita* and *nritya*:

"he illustrates most faithfully the characteristics of the hero and the heroine as laid down in the works on *rasas* (theory of aesthetics) and *Alamkaras* (Poetics). His words are pregnant with noble ideas and are extremely suggestive. The melodic types (*ragas*) he has chosen for their expression are most happy in that 'the sound is an echo to the sense' is portrayed in its fullest possibility.

"He has no predecessors in that line nor has left any successors behind him with whom we may compare or

contrast him. These *padams* are not for each and every man that goes to swell the ranks of musicians, irrespective of qualifications and equipment. A critical and profound scholarship of Telugu and Sanskrit, a thorough and wise study of *Natya Sastra* in theory and practice; the ability to voice forth the sentiments through the chosen *ragas* in slow effective time-measure: must go with him, who would try his hand at the rendering of these masterpieces of erotic psychology"

—English rendering of C.R. Srinivasa Iyengar (1929-31) of the comments of Subbarama Dikshitar on the greatness of Kshetrayya *Padams*—1904.

So much for the assessment of three senior scholar-commentators of the century about the place of Kshetrayya among the makers of music and dance using lyric form. No doubt, they place him in a unique position.' Now, we offer you our own assessment of Kshetrayya's place among the 'Makers of Indian Literature'.

He did not compose any poetical work or poetry as such with metrical verse. Those who wrote '*Gadyam*' (poetic prose) like Bana and Dandi were none-the-less considered as poets. Then why should not the same yard-stick be applied to the Master of Poetic Lyric? Does not every line of his lyrics dazzle in poetic excellence?

If an expert dramatist and a master-poet were to be combined in one, we would get a national poet like Kalidasa or Shakespeare. These master play-wright-poets knew all the types of human character—heroes, heroines, confidantes, villains, etc. They knew the working of their minds, the courses, turns and twists of their actions and reactions in a variety of situations and the manner of speech fitting each character-type and situation.

Kshetrayya can be compared to a master play-wright-poet! He did not write a single play but every lyric of his portrays into a piquant dramatic situation. The situations and episodes in his lyrics were not artificial products from the ivory tower of a court poet's wild imagination but were true pictures of human love-life. They also include some of his own most sublime experiences and some factual experiences of mundane life. In the most elegant 'day-break scene' at the Varadaraja temple in Kanchi, the Hero is addressed as *Paramatma*—the very Supreme Lord! In another scene describing the nocturnal adventures of Muvvagopala in

the courtesan colony, the courtesan describes Him as "a pauper having not even a pie in his hand, but going on making advances." Of course by dint of his civil manners and powers of courting, nobody succeeded like him!

But when the incidents are presented in lyric form they are enjoyable as literary gems. These gems effulged radiant rays—soliloquy of the hero or heroine, solicitation of one to the other, each prevailing upon the confidant to mediate between them after a lovers' tiff, each complaining against the other to the confidant, the confidant maid pleading with each to be kind and considerate to the other and get reconciled, the heroine complaining about, the 'other woman' carrying tales to her Lord against herself and keeping Him away, her own jealousy against "the other woman" who kept the Lord away from herself, wailings against the woman who intruded between the couple and got all the favours due to the heroine for herself from the Lord. In short, Kshetrappa's *Padams* are, a compendium, an encyclopaedia of human nature in love-life in its entirety.

But what is the individuality of Kshetrappa as a poet among other poets who wrote love-poetry or love-cum-devotional lyrics? Most of the Indian Poets followed the conventions of Sanskrit poets in royal courts.

With reference to the amours of Radha and Krishna in *Geeta-govindam* of Jayadeva, Lee Siegal writes:

"Jayadeva expresses not only Radha's love and longing for Krishna, but in juxtaposition to that, his own devotion to Krishna. The juxtaposition implies at least an analogy between the sacred and profane dimensions of love and the actual psychological dimensions. Such juxtaposition is less typical of the literary courtly tradition, than of the tradition of the vernacular literature which reflected popular ideas and expressed popular sentiments".

We have narrated in an earlier chapter how in the evolution of devotional lyric, one after another, Vidyapati, Chāṇḍīdas and Chaitanya followed the footsteps of Jayadeva in the path of devotion in adapting common people's regional tradition and enriched the regional languages of the people (*dasa bhashas*) of the North.

Comments on *Padawali* or *kirtan* of Chandidas, the Bengali poet who was a close follower of Jayadeva, as mentioned in the History of Bengali Literature (of Surendranath Dutta) fit in verbatim to whatever we find about the *padams* of Kshetrayya:

“Chandidas’s songs omit no particulars of human sentiments. The longing and regret at parting, the pleasure, even ecstasy, of stealthy meetings at odd moments, and the devices used for such meetings are described by him in simple and un-adorned style. Indeed the scantiness of these that strikes the reader. But the descriptions are vividly realistic at once presenting a picture to the mind Chandidas repudiates classical similies and the language of convention.”

We have stated that in the South, Annamacharya and Siddhendra in Telugu and Narayana Teertha in Sanskrit followed the same path through song and Yakshagana. These poets were succeeded by Kshetrayya, who enlivened the same popular tradition. We reiterate here that till Annamayya took it up, this tradition was dormant among the people. It was Kshetrayya that lifted it sky-high, giving it perfection and a definite mould. The gamut of definitions of *Alamkara Sastra* (poetics) appear limited when compared to the expanding octaves of Kshetrayya’s themes, characters and incidents portraying Sringara (eroticism) in his *Padams*.

Sringara Rasamanjari, a treatise in Telugu on Poetics, is a translation by an anonymous author, of the Sanskrit work, *Rasamanjari*, written by Bhanudatta Misra of 1550 A.D. This work enumerates and defines the different types of heroes, heroines and other states of attitudes varying according to character and situation. According to this work on Poetics, there are 1,152 types of heroines, with minute shades of differences. It is really credit-worthy of the anonymous author of this work to have included nearly 200 *Padams* of Kshetrayya as illustrations for the definitions.

The linguistic style adopted by Annamacharya, and later brought to a perfection in the *Padams* of Kshetrayya, derives its legacy first from the flowery narratives of folk tales and folk ballads of our mothers and grand-mothers. One gets thrilled by the expressions of lilting cadences of speech of characters like Satyabhama or Usha

in the dance plays of Kuchipudi and Melattur. The same fountain fed Kshetrappa's creative pen. In Kshetrappa's *Padams* we find popular idioms and proverbs usually uttered in such a way recalling the rhythm and melody of a mountain streamlet or a forest-brook, by village housewife or a young bride or by women-folk in their leisurely chatter with all their intrinsic beauties of the lisp and natural cadence. We also come across sweet and elegant conversational phrases of lovers capable of expressing subtle feelings of love, jealousy, langour and passion. All these go together in making Kshetrappa an equal to another master-poet *Kavibrahma* Tikkana Somayaji. That is why such gems of finest usages in Kshetrappa's vocabulary have enriched one of the earliest dictionaries of Telugu (*Sabda Ratnakaram of Sitaramacharya*) ensuring for Kshetrappa the most honoured place among the Makers of Indian Literature!

Being a very close successor to Annamacharya, Kshetrappa leaves ample evidence in his lyrics, in respect of this indebtedness in vocabulary and theme to the former. But, the latter's individuality and personal touch cannot be missed both in the chiselled verbal structure and portrayal of the chosen theme.

Kshetrappa impact can be found on at least one contemporary of his, Rangajamma, a poetess and playwright in the court of King Vijaya Raghava. Here is a bit of her lyric:

“What is the use of having so many maids-in-waiting;
but for merely bantering can they make me up?
If I call my beloved whom I met once in my dream,
all the women in one voice, will call me names, my dear!”

Among those who made a name as lyric composers, after Kshetrappa, Moovanallur Sabhapati of Tanjore district (17th century) and Sarangapani of Karvetinagaram (18th century) were most outstanding, carrying both poetic and musical prowess. Some of their lyrics resemble so much in every respect that they are mistaken as Kshetrappa's *Padams*. Among others of a subsequent generation, Munipalle Subrahmanya Kavi of Kalahasti, Giriraja Kavi (18th century) a court poet of King Sahaji of Tanjore and the grandfather of the great Tyagaraja, Sahaji not excluded, were among recognised masters, on whose work, we can find Kshetrappa's influence. The last but not the least was Tyagaraja himself (18th Century) from among whose compositions, here

is an example having sameness in the choice of Raga, musical structure and vocabulary with those of Kshetravya

Kshetravya: Telisi Teliyaleka Palikeru Chelulu

(*Raga Madhyamavati*)

“With an understanding and even without it,
my maiden friends keep talking a lot!
Is it for any one easy to make it
hot for my Lord, who is always with me!”

Tyagaraja: Nadupai Palikeru Narulu

(*Raga Madhyamavati*)

“People go on talking about me
that I kept my mundane life apart,
Oh my Lord who is praised by the scriptures!
Oh father of cupid, the joys of mundane world
are equated in my estimate to fleeting snow!
sharing legacy and accruing wealth,
did I revel in pride and declare that
there is no scope for other pursuit in life?”

Having almost the same stock of alluring words and sentence structures, each differs from the other in the portrayal of his respective theme, Kshetravya in his amorous and Tyagaraja in his ascetic approaches in their lyrics.

Lastly, we quote once again from Lee Siegel, comments incorporating Adi Sankara's Sanskrit verse on the cult of Devi worship (Saktism) from '*Soundaryalahari*' (Waves of Beauty) for the benefit of those who would like to draw a line demarcating the worldly and the divine love in Kshetravya's *Padams*:

“In the worship of the Goddess, the voluptuousness of woman, which had always been a relished theme of *Kavya* (Poetical work) became sacred! Praise and adoration of Devi's full breasts and thighs, her flowing hair and lotus face, her eyes and side-long glances, her ornaments and graceful limbs, became means of liberation. Her devotee dissolves the union of soul and bond and savours the sweetness called supreme brahman.

“Saktism was a phase of Hindu *Tantrism*. And the *Geeta-govinda* was written in a milieu in which *Tantrism* had become popularised and proliferated”.

Following the same path as Jayadeva, Kshetravya excelled in his own way.

P. V. Rajamannar declared “*the Rasa*” in Kshetravya’s *Padams* was only *Sringara* and that Rupagoswami’s effort in “*Ujjwalaneelamani*” to prove that bhakti was a separate *Rasa* from *Sringara* was not convincing.

It would be appropriate to declare that as far as love poetry or love lyrics of most of our ancient and medieval Indian poets and bards were concerned, particularly when they were dealing with Gods, no dividing line separating sex from life was intended, as *Kama* was one of the four main pursuits of life (Purusharthas). This can be emphatically said of any poet, be he Kalidasa, Amaruka, Andal, Jayadeva or Kshetravya. This can even be extended to King Solomon of the Holy Bible and Omar Khayyam. The humble answer to the query of C. R. Reddi quoted in an earlier chapter is that our poets did not sexualise spirit but spiritualised sex, and neither they nor we need be ashamed of it.

‘What was the *Saadhana* (pursuit) of Kshetravya and what was his ultimate *Siddhi* (attainment)?’ was one of the questions raised by the learned writer, Malladi Ramakrishna Sastri, in his article written in 1963. We have not broached this point earlier so that it may be answered at this stage. Presenting the love-life of the people through poetic lyrics, wherein the experience of every lover and beloved is reflected in the amours of the Supreme Lord Muvvagopala, was the only pursuit of Kshetravya throughout his life! To get the source of inspiration and material for his themes and also to get the result of his artistic creation displayed and exhibited through talented professionals in *Sangeeta* and *Nritya* (music dance), he had to lead a free-lance itinerant life! As C. R. Reddi rightly said (and we firmly believe) Kshetravya must have led the life of an idealist observer and was a keen student of human behaviour, rather than an active participant in the mundane realities.

When the highly evolved state of a “*Purushottama*” or a ‘Kshetrarajna’ in its true sense is attained by a creative aesthete and a poet of imagination of cosmic dimensions, he would also have

acquired a power of universalisation of feelings and experience with an attitude of equanimity, compassion and a sense of belonging to all people. To such an individual, persons male and female with whom he comes into contact in life, and the events involving them, would present before him universalised arch-types of characters in the arena of life. Even the incidents and events in which he is not at all personally involved would create in him highly intense feelings of joy, sorrow, jealousy and love, as if it were his own personal experience. That is how a master poet's creativity like that of Kshetrayya, finds expression in such universal masterpieces of poetic creation.

We are reminded of an expression of taunting eulogy of the Telugu Poet Srinatha (15th century) with reference to the presiding deity of Daksharama, a pilgrim centre of the East Godavari district, under the appellation 'Bhimeswara', as '*Viswaloka Kutumbi*', the Supreme who takes the whole universe for his family! That is what we estimate to be the *Siddhi* (attainment) of 'Kshetrayya' bestowing upon him the right to deserve the title 'Kshetrajna' (a highly evolved person as mentioned in *Bhagavadgeeta*) the Universal Individual.

7. GRATITUDE

On behalf of all the lovers of art, we deem it our duty to express our gratitude to those who were noted to have inherited and kept up the traditional styles of rendering Kshetrayya's Padams in music and dance.

The most well-known among them in the century belong to the family of Sangita Vidushi Vinai Dhanammal of Madras, to whom Sangita Kalanidhi T.V. Subba Rao's personal tribute flowed in these words: ".....Her forte, however, was the skill with which she rendered the sumptuous padas of Kshetrajna. In this she had no equal. Her taste for classicism never declined; and her exposition never failed to be regarded as the standard of unquestionable authority." Dhanammal's daughter, Jayamma and granddaughter Balasaraswati (Padmabhushan and President's award winner, fortunately still with us) inherited the tradition and excelled many others by being the masterly exponents of Kshetrayya's Padams both through music and dance. Among the grand-children of Dhanammal, Sangita Vidushis T. Brinda and T. Mukta, Vidwans T. Viswanathan and T. Sankaran, who are all still with us, with a rich repertoire of Kshetrayya's padams, are propagating them even as their grandmother did. Sangita Vidwan R. Rangaramanuja Iyengar was a direct disciple of Dhanammal and through him Dr. Sripada Pinakapani inherited the tradition.

In Andhra, Sangita Vidwan Munuganti Venkata Rao was carrying with him a repertoire of more than 100 padams from whom and from Dr. Sripada, Sangita Vidwan Voleti Venkateswarlu inherited the tradition. Dr. Sripada has other disciples also among our front rank musicians, like Sangita Vidwans Nookala China Satyanarayana and Nedunuri Krishnamurti and Sangita Vidushi Gopala Ratnam, who are carrying on the tradition effectively. The late Parupalli Ramakrishnaiah Pantulu had a considerable command over the padams, among whose disciples, Dr. Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna very effectively continues the tradition. Acharya Ananta Krishna Sarma and Vidwan Sandhyavandanam Srinivasa Rao carry a sizable collection of padams in their repertoire. Vidwan Manchala

Jagannadha Rao acquired music for nearly 135 padams from Tanjore district, when he was quite young, and these were published by the A. P. Sangeet Natak Akademi.

Natyacharya Nataraja Ramakrishna, through his many publications on dance and through a special 'Abhinaya Sadas' conducted by the Akademi in 1974, revealed such names like those of Duggirala Manikyam, and Chataparru Sundari of the East and West Godavari districts who, early in the century, were experts in Abhinayam of Kshetravaya's padams. The Devadasi tradition of Andhra contained perhaps many more names. Sangita Vidwan Parvataneni Veeravaya Chowdari inherited nearly 100 padams and took pride in presenting entire concert comprising only of Kshetravaya's padams.

Among others, besides Marla Suryanarayana, a disciple of Tiger Varadachary with a couple of gramophone recordings of padams to his credit, M. V. Sastri a septagenarian connoisseur of music and the singing sisters of Andhra—Anasuyadevi and Sita-devi all belonging to Kakinada, the most effective and emotive renderers of Kshetravaya's lyrics happen to be close family friends, of the present scribe, who include Thota Chellayamma (Lcelagaru of Chalam's musings) of Pithapuram and Kannamma Sarma of broadcasting at Madras in early forties.

TRANSLATION OF SELECTED PADAMS

Aligite Bhaagyam aaye

(Raga Huseni)

If he is angry, it is my luck, what else,
if he is angry, it is my luck!

Oh friend, with a twig-like mien,
can I punish him at all!

— If he is —

To him who speaks apparently nice-words
can I be considered a nice woman?

He doesn't come to me, my dear friend, and
may not see my face again,
is there no God above?

— If he is —

No more pangs of separation, perhaps
my company is too much for him,
well and good;

if I am not to his liking like you,

Oh black-haired one, lacking in affection of olden days,

— If he is —

There are so many instances in which
even in my teens he enticed and enjoyed me,
how many a promise he made to me,

Oh my dear, the same Muvvagopala, now

— If he is —

[The heroine in this lyric is *Parakiya*, *Madhya*, *Virahotka*, is one having a secret love affair. Her lover is away with anger; She is trying to explain but being timid and at the same time struggling with love, she is unable to be stern against him.]

Lemaro maa Muvvagopaludu endaina

(Raga Saaveri)

Oh young maid, let my Muvvagopala be
safe and sound at some blessed place!

Does it behove one to have a thousand clips
and make the well water rise in a tide?

Immeasurable is this fortitude!

— Oh young maid —

On many a previous occasion when I was fortunate enough
 did he not favour me?
 He has deserted me at this juncture,
 Does not everyone have like this
 moonlight and darkness?
 Is it worthwhile joining issue with him? — Oh young maid —
 Oftentimes having watched me in anguish,
 having pity on me, you may say things against him;
 angered as I am, if I make you talk about him,
 won't he feel hurt, and what do I gain? — Oh young maid —
 Oh young maid, Muvvagopala who got absorbed in
 my embrace, when he met me last, has got now
 his butter-like soft-heart turned stone-hard;
 having deserted me he wouldn't come here and see me at all!
 — Oh young maid —

[The heroine in this lyric is *Sweeya*, *Proudha*, *Divya-divya*, a model wife and semi-divine, but pines away in grief for her husband's unfaithful nature, but she would not like others talk against him.]

Evvade Oh Bhaama

(*Raga Sankarabharanam*)

Who is he; who is he; Oh Fair one! who is he?
 When I was lying down on my bed, who is he
 that, having hurled a floral arrow, upset me and went away!—
 Having come in broad day light, and
 entered our house with abundant courage,
 lifted me by shoulders, embraced me and
 pressed his lips on mine and went away!
 — Who is he —
 Is it not of the same style, like stealing
 butter as a child delinquent,
 or harassing the cowherd maidens?
 Like a tribal lord who has paid the brides' money
 he snatched away my upper garment, held me by the bosom,
 asked me not to resist and finally went away!
 — Who is he —

Is this town habitable for the poor and nonviolent?
 Are there no youngsters and elders here?

The residents of this street only stare at me with surprise!
Should there not be a discussion or a complaint, Oh My friend!

— Who is he —

Oh Fair Lady,
does he expect me to be bound to him always;
is it proper for him to shout at me?
When my man was out of town, and daylight was waning
he whispered sweet nothings to me, and kissed and went away!

— Who is he —

Shining with the lustre of a blue-black cloud
and wearing an orange silk lower garment, he said,
that he was Muvvagopala who had held his sway on
the sixteen thousand cowherd women, so saying he went away!

— Who is he —

[The heroine here is *Parakiya*, *Navodha* and the situation is *vritta vartishyamaana suratagopana*. A newly wedded young bride is the heroine here. She wants to hide the pleasures she had when Muvvagopala visited her when she was alone at home, but narrates the incident with assumed anger, as it were to hide her own acquiescence.]

Ayyayyo Vegataayene - Naadanaamakriya

Bitterness prevails now, all over, alas
With my lord who used to rest on the garment of my bosom!

— Bitterness prevails —

When he comes to me and stares at my face, Oh friend,
without beating the eyelids just even for once,
if darkness encompassed in waning twilight,
that it would not be helping to see my 'sweet face'!
with one; who calls for a lamp while the Sun shines!

— Bitterness prevails —

Listen my dear, with his abundant love
having pressed hard his front teeth on my lower lip
that if he tried to speak, he would have to release my lip,
with one, who goes on making signs with his palm!

— Bitterness prevails —

Listen, Oh fair one, to what Muvvagopala asked;
 lest embrace would slip 'way when sleep over-took,
 in haste, the four corners of blanket be held
 tightly, with pleasure; with such a lord of mine!

— Bitterness prevails —

Sweeya - Proudha - Virahotka - Suratapriya

Here, the heroine is a model wife, free from self-restraint in expressing her tender love for her husband; she is quite sensitive to pleasures of love game and in this situation she is to explain away the absence of her lord at home and feels aggrieved at his indifference.

Meragadu rammanave

(*Raga Sahana*)

It is beyond the limits of civility, my dear! ask him to come,
 my Lord Muvvagopala, without neglecting me!—

Are there no couples who had been angry with each other
 and got reconciled subsequently; Oh! at this juncture,
 he is obstinate and could not come here

and does not heed my prayers;

It is impossible to withstand Cupid's frontal attack, my dear!

— It is beyond the limits —

When I say something out of my tender feelings for him,

he makes it the apple of discord,

and annoys me, Oh maiden! uttering many untoward things!

Swimming in the sea of passion,

I am able to bear all this, my dear!

Tell him this is most unbecoming a master of his make!

— It is beyond the limits —

Having patted me with affection even in adolescence,

and for the favours thrown upon me, while

playing a poised sport of love,

when I snatched a moment of kissing to make a dent on his lip,

Oh woman! Muvvagopala wouldn't care to

come and is quite indifferent!

— It is beyond the limits —

[The heroine in this lyric is *Sweeya, Proudha, Kalahaantarita*, that is an ideal housewife, suffering from lonesomeness after a tiff with her lover, sends her supplication to her beloved through a messenger maid.]

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GLOSSARY OF PROPER NAMES AND TECHNICAL TERMS OF LITERARY IMPORT

A

- Abhisarika** : A heroine who goes out to meet her lover in an appointed place at an appointed time.
- Achyutappa nayak** : One of the rulers of Tanjore belonging to Telugu speaking 'nayak' dynasty.
- Achyutarajapuram** : A village in Tanjore district granted to brahmin families of Telugu origin, who dedicated their lives to music, dance and drama. (Melathur)
- Ahobilam** : A place of pilgrimage in Kurnool district of Andhra.
- Akkamahadevi** : A saiva saint poetess of Karnataka of 13th century.
- Amaravati** : A saivite and buddhist centre in Krishna district.
- Amaruka** : A Sanskrit poet who wrote erotic poetry
- Amir Khusro** : A poet and musician in the Court of Allauddin Khilji
- Anantakrishnasarma Rallapalli** : Well-known literary critic and musicologist of Andhra, who wrote on Kshetrayya earlier.
- Anupallavi** : The couplet or single line which follows the burden of the song.
- Ankavali** : The musico-dance dramas of Assam of 15 century.
- Annamacharya (or) Annamayya** : The pioneer lyric composer of Tirupati (Andhra) (of 15th century)
- Anyagopana** : A heroine having a clandestine affair.
- Appar** : A saivite saint poet of early christian era.
- Apparao Prof. Vissa** : A musicologist of Andhra, who wrote extensively on the biography of Kshetrayya.

- Attakatha : A dance play of Kerala.
 Adi Varaha : An ancient deity in Tirumala, representing the 'wild-boar' in-carnation of Lord Vishnu.
 Ahiri : A traditional Raga of Karnataka music.
 Alwars : Vaishnavite saint poets of South India of early Christian era.
 Anandabhairavi : A traditional Raga of Karnataka music.
 Ananda Tandava : The most popular pose of dancing Siva or Nataraja.
 Andal (Goda Devi) : A Vaishnavite saint poetess of Tamil country of early christian era.
 Ataveladi : A metrical composition in Telugu verse.

B

- Baba Fariduddin : A sufi saint of western India of 14th century.
 Bala Saraswati : A living expert in Bharatanatyam and interpretation of Kshetranya's lyrics.
 Bana(Bana Bhatta) : The well-known Sanskrit poet of 7th century in King Harsha's Court.
 Barakatha : The musico-dance-drama of Assam in the 15th century.
 Basaveswara : A saivite saint poet and minister of Karnataka, in the 12th Century.
 Bellam Konda : A town in Guntur district which might have been visited by Kshetranya.
 Bhadrachalam : A pilgrim centre on the river Godavari, where Kshetranya visited.
 Bhagavannama
 Bodhendra San-
 karacharya : A pontif of Kanchi, and a contemporary of Kshetranya.
 Bhagavata Mela : A troupe of dance dramas portraying devotional and puranic themes.
 Bhagavatapurana : One of the eighteen puranas, dealing with Krishna's exploits.
 Bhairavi : A traditional Raga of Karnataka music.
 Bhogini Dandakam : An erotic poem written by medieval Telugu poet Potana.

- Bidyapati
(Vidyapati) : A mythili poet of Bihar of 15th century.
 Bilahari : A traditional Raga of Karnataka music.
 Bilwamangala : Another name of medieval saint poet Lilasuka.
 Brahmandapurana : One of the eighteen puranas.
 Brinda T and
 Mukta T : Living exponents of Kshetrappa's lyrics,
 grand daughters of Veenai Dhanammal.

C

- Chandidas : Lyrical poet of Bengal of 15th century.
 Charanam : A stanza; one fourth or one eighth part
 of a song.
 Chaturdandi Pra- : A treatise on music written by Venkata-
 kasika makhi of Tanjavur court in the 17th
 century.
 Charudatta : Hero of an ancient social play in Sanskrit,
 'Mrichchakatika' or 'The Clay-toy-
 Cart'.
 Chatapparru Sundari : An expert in dance and exposition of
 Kshetrappa's lyrics in the West Goda-
 vari dt. of early 20th century.
 Chidambaram : Well-known town of pilgrimage in Tamil-
 nadu-where Nataraja, is the deity.
 Chittoor : A district of Andhra Pradesh on the
 southern border.

D

- Dasakoota : Saint-poets of Madhwa cult in Karnataka
 are called 'Dasakoota'.
 Devarakota : A feudal principality in Guntur district
 of 17th century.
 Dhanammal (Veenai): Famous musician of the early 20th
 century; an exponent of Kshetrappa's
 lyrics.
 Dhanyasi : A traditional Raga of Karnataka music.
 Dheera : A heroine who is bold enough to chide
 her lover when he is wayward.

Duggirala Manikyam : An expert in dance and exposition of Kshetrayya's lyrics in the East Godavari dt. of early 20th century.

E

Ekamreswara : A saivite shrine in Kanchi, pilgrim centre of Tamilnadu.

Ettayapuram : A Zamindari in Pudukkottai dt. in Tamilnadu.

G

Gangappa Dr. S. : A Contemporary writer and research scholar who wrote about Kshetrayya.

Ghanta, Ghantaram : A traditional Raga in Karnataka music.

Ginji (Chenji) : A medieval fortress town in the North-Arcot dt. of Tamilnadu.

Giriraja Kavi : A Telugu composer of lyrics and musician in the Court of Sahaji, Maharashtra ruler of Tanjavur in the 18th century.

Golakonda (Golkonda) : Capital of Kutubshahi kings of Deccan in whose court, Kshetrayya was honoured.

Golla Kalapam : A dance-drama of Kuchipudi with a philosophical theme.

Gopala Ratnam-S. : A contemporary musician, able exponent of Kshetrayya's lyrics.

Gorrepati Venkata-subbaiah : A contemporary Telugu writer and research scholar.

Gurukula Paddhati : The ancient Indian system of education where the pupils are treated as residents with and family members of the teacher.

Guru Nanak : A saint poet of North India and founder teacher of Sikhism.

H

Hampi : A town on the banks of the Tungabhadra where the capital of imperial Vijayanagar was located.

- Hayagriva : A horse-faced incarnation of Lord Vishnu.
 Hemadri : A pilgrim centre near Hampi.
 Hemadri Nilayudu : The presiding deity of Hemadri.

I

- Ibrahim Kutubshah : A ruler of Kutubshahi dynasty of Golkonda.

J

- Jayamma : A well-known musician of Madras of the early part of this century – an exponent of Kshetrappa's lyrics, daughter of Veenai Dhanammal.
 Jayaprasanna : Commander of Kakatiya court in the 13th century and author of Nrittaratnavali, a treatise on dance.
 Jnana Deva : A saint poet of Maharashtra of 13th century.

K

- Kabir : The great mystic poet of North India, an exponent of Bhakti cult.
 Kadapa Venkatesudu : Venkatesa, the presiding deity of Cuddapah
 Kalahantarita : A heroine who has quarrelled with her lover.
 Kalapam : A musico-dance drama, a monologue in which a divine consort portrays the episodes of her love for the Lord.
 Kalyani : A major Raga of Karnataka music popularised along with the lyrics of Kshetrappa.
 Kamakshi : The presiding deity (Devi) at Kanchi the pilgrim centre in Tamilnadu.
 Kambhoji : A traditional major Raga of Karnataka music.
 Karvetinagaram : A feudal town in Chittoor district where the Zamindars patronised music, dance and literature.
 Kasinathayya : A Telugu lyric composer of Melattur a village in Tanjavur district.

Kasinathuni

Nageswara Rao : Well-known Telugu writer; national leader and literateur of this century.

Kasula Purushottama Kavi

: A poet of Krishna district of 18th century.

Katamaraju Katha : A folk ballad in Telugu of 15th century.

Katuri

Venkateswara Rao : Well-known poet of the century who wrote a drama on Kshetrayya's life.

Keith, A. B. : English writer and scholar in Sanskrit literature.

Kedaragaula : A traditional Raga in Karnataka music.

Kelika : A form of dance drama of 16th century incorporating contemporary themes.

Khwaja Mo'inuddin

Chisti : A sufi saint of the 13th century.

Khandita : A heroine who is cross with her beloved for his mis-behaviour.

Krishna Iyyar, E.V. : A contemporary writer and scholar who wrote on dance and music.

Krishna

Karnamritam : Lilasuka's Sanskrit work full of devotional verses.

Krishna Leela : A dance drama in Sanskrit of saint Narayana Tirtha depicting episodes from Krishna's life.

Tarangini

Krishnamacharya : A saint poet of Simhachalam (of Vijag. district) who composed lyrics on the presiding deity of the place.

Kuchipudi : A village in Krishna District from where generations of masters of dance, music and drama hailed.

Kutubshahis : The dynasty of rulers reigning at Golkonda in the 16th and 17th centuries.

L

Lakshmanasena : A king of Gauda Desa (Bengal) who patronised the great saint composer Jaydeva.

Lalata tilaka : A dance pose where the toe of the right foot touches the forehead.

- Leelasuka : A saint poet in Sanskrit who wrote Krishna Karnamritam.
- Linga Purana : One of the eighteen puranas dealing with Siva and his manifestations.

M

- Macherla : A town in Guntur District.
- Madhavadeva : A saint poet of Assam, who was the author of several musico-dance dramas in Assamese.
- Madhya : A heroine who is at the same time love-lorn and shy of expressing her love.
- Maitreya : A character in Sanskrit drama who is usually a court jester.
- Manchala : A contemporary musician who collected and published prevalent versions of music for Kshetrayya's lyrics.
- Jagannatha Rao
- Manda Lakshmi-narasimham : A medieval author who made a mention of Kshetrayya.
- Malladi : A contemporary scholar who has thrown much light on Kshetrayya's life.
- Ramakrishna Sastry
- Meerjumla : A commander in the court of Golkonda (17th century)
- Melattur : A village in Tanjavur dt. from where generations of masters in dance, music and drama hailed.
- Meruvapadam : The lyric of Kshetrayya, holding the key to open the details of his life to some extent.
- Mohana : A popular minor Raga in Karnataka music.
- Mohanangi : Supposed to be the name of the devadasi with whom Kshetrayya had an affair in his teen-age.
- Moovanallur : A composer of lyrics, a successor to Sabhapati Kshetrayya in the tradition.
- Movva (Muvva, Mavva, Muvvapuri) : Variations in the name of the native town of Kshetrayya.

- Mudita** : A heroine who is pleased with the fulfilment of her desired object.
- Mukhari** : A traditional and the most popular Raga in Karnataka music.
- Munipalle** : A composer of Kalahasti in Chittoor district who authored Ramayana in lyrics.
- Subrahmanya Kavi**
- Munuganti** : A musician of the early part of the century and an exponent of nearly 100 lyrics of Kshetrappa.
- Venkatarao**
- Muthuswami** : One of the three great composers of the 18th century.
- Dikshitar**

N

- Nandikeswara** : One of the mythological exponents of ancient Indian dance.
- Nammalwar** : A Vaishnavite saint poet of the early Christian era.
- Namdev** : A Maharashtra saint poet of the 17th century.
- Nannaya Bhattu** : The first-known Telugu poet (1060 AD)
- Narayana Teertha** : A saint composer of the 16th century who authored the 'Krishnaleela Tarangini' in Sanskrit, a dance-drama of Yakshagana type—dealing with episodes on Krishna.
- Nataraja** : A contemporary expert on dances of Andhra who has published books on Kshetrappa's lyrics and their application to dance.
- Ramakrishna**
- Nedunuri** : A contemporary musician, an exponent of Kshetrappa's lyrics.
- Krishnamurti**
- Nimbarka** : A philosopher of Andhra origin and an adherent of path of devotion to Krishna.
- Nookala China** : A contemporary musician, an exponent of Kshetrappa's lyrics.
- Satyanarayana**
- Nrittaratnavali** : A treatise on Desi (indigenous) dances of Andhra, written in Sanskrit by Jayapasaani (13th century)
- Nuzvidu** : A Zamindari town in Krishna Dt.

O

Omarkhayyam : The well-known Persian philosopher poet.

P

- Padavali : The lyrics of Chandidas and Vidyapati are collectively called Padavali.
- Palagiri Chennudu : Chennakesava, (Vishnu) presiding deity at the town Palagiri in Cuddapah dt.
- Palkuriki Somanatha : A Saivite Telugu poet of the 13th Century.
- Pallavi : The burden of the song, into which the import of each subsequent stanza culminates.
- Palnati Viracharitam : A folk-ballad in Telugu of the 15th century.
- Pamidi : A town in Anantapur dt. supposed to have been visited by Kshetrayya.
- Pandharipur : A pilgrim centre in Maharashtra.
- Parakiya : A married woman making love beyond wedlock.
- Paramamaheswara : A staunch devotee of Lord Siva.
- Parthasarathi of Tiruvalliceni : Incarnation of Vishnu hailing in Triplicane Madras.
- Parvataneni : An exponent of Kshetrayya's lyrics in the early part of the 20th century.
- Virayya Chowdari
- Perialwar : A Vaishnavite saint of the early Christian era
- Perumdevi : Queen consort of Sri Ranganatha, the presiding deity of Sri Rangam, pilgrim centre on the Cauveri in Tamilnadu.
- Pinakapani, Dr. Sripada : A well-known contemporary musician, and an exponent in Kshetrayya's lyrics.
- Ponugupati Venkata-raju : An exponent of Kshetrayya's lyrics in the early part of 20th century in the East Godavari dt.
- Potana : Famous Telugu poet of 15th century; author of Bhagavatam in Telugu.
- Prabandham : In musical parlance, a musical composition with lyric and music set and in literary parlance, a poetical work of stipulated conventions.

- Prabhakara Sastri : Well-known scholar who wrote about
 Veturi Kshetravyya's native place
- Pratibhachatura : A heroine who is talented in sport of love.
- Proshitapatika : A heroine whose beloved is away on tour.
 Proshitabhartrika
- Proudha : A heroine well-versed in the art of love.
- Punnagavarali : A traditional raga in Karnataka music.
- Purandaradasa : A Kannada saint poet of the 16th century.
- Purushartha : Pursuits of life according to ancient Indian
 concept are four (1) faith (2) wealth
 (3) sex and (4) salvation

Q

- Qawalis : Islamic devotional songs—mostly asso-
 ciated with Sufi-poets.

R

- Raghupati Venkata- : Educationist, scholar and intellectual of
 ratnam (Naidu) of the early half of the 20th century.
- Raghunatha Nayak : One of the Nayak rulers of Tanjore who
 patronised arts and letters.
- Rajamannar, Pakala : A reputed writer, ex-Chief Justice and
 connoisseur and critic in arts and letters.
- Raja Raja : The Eastern Chalukyan King of Rajah-
 mundry who patronised the first known
 Telugu poet, Nannayya (1060 AD)
- Rakshas Thagdi : The name of the place where the battle
 of Tallikota was fought in which the
 imperial Vijayanagar fell.
- Rameswaram : The southern most pilgrim centre of India.
- Rangajamma : A poetess and author of the Tanjavur
 court in the reign of Vijaya Raghava
 Nayak.
- Ranga Ramanuja
 Iyengar : A musician and author who published
 Kshetravyya's lyrics with musical nota-
 tion.
- Rasamanjari : A medieval treatise on Indian poetics as
 applicable to poetry, drama and dance.
- Reddy, Dr. C. R. : Well-known educationist, ex-Vice-Chan-
 cellor and literary critic.

- Repalle** : Zamindari in Guntur dt. in the 16th and 17th centuries.
- Rukmini** : The name of Kshetrayya's wedded wife as known from local legends in Krishna District.
- Rupagoswami** : An ascetic and philosopher who wrote a treatise on the 'Bhakti Cult' entitled 'Ujjwala Neelamani'

S

- Sanempadu** : A village of dancing girls on the outskirts of Kshetrayya's native town, Movva.
- Sabdaratnakaram** : A Telugu dictionary, published in 1904, compiled and edited by B. Sitaramacharya.
- Sahaji** : A Maharashtra ruler of Tanjore who composed lyrics and operas in Telugu and patronised poets and musicians.
- Saindhavi** : A traditional raga in Karnataka music.
- Sakhi-Upalambhana** : A messenger-maid tantalising the hero and/or the heroine.
- Samalkota** : A pilgrim centre in the East Godavari dt. where Bhimeswara is the presiding deity.
- Samanya** : A heroine of courtesan category.
- Sambamurty Prof. P.** : A reputed writer of books on Karnataka music and South Indian Composers like Kshetrayya etc.
- Sambandar** : A Saivite saint poet of Tamilnadu of early Christian era.
- Samkirtanalakshanam** : A treatise on the essential requisites of a song, written in Sanskrit by Annamacharya and translated into Telugu by China Tirumalacharya.
- Sandhyavandanam** : A contemporary musician and an exponent of Kshetrayya's lyrics.
- Srinivasa Rao**
- Sankarabharanam** : A very popular traditional Raga of Karnataka music.
- Sankaradeva** : A saint—poet of Assam who was the author of musico-dance dramas of Assam, in 15th century.

- Sankaran, T. : A contemporary musician belonging to a family of musicians, grandson of Veenai-Dhanam, exponent of Kshetrayya's lyrics.
- Sangita Sampradaya : An anthology of musical compositions of various composers in Karnataka music with notation published in 1904.
- Pradarsini
- Sangita Sarvartha : An anthology of Karnataka music.
- sarasamgraham
- Sarangapani : A composer of Padams, a native of Karttinaagaram, a successor to Kshetrayya's tradition.
- Satipatibhava : Theme of conjugal love in lyrics, the deity being the hero and the devotee represented as heroine in subjective presentation.
- Satyabhama : One of the eight consorts of Lord Krishna and the heroine of 'Bhamakalapam', the musico-dance-drama of Kuchipudi tradition.
- Satyanarayana, R. : A contemporary critic, scholar and musicologist of Mysore.
- Satyapuri Vasudeva : 'Krishna' the presiding deity of Satyavidu in Chittoor district.
- Saveri : A traditional Raga in Karnataka music.
- Siddhendrayogi : The founder of Kuchipudi school of dance-drama
- Simhachalam : A hill-shrine presided by Lord Varaha
- (Simhagiri) : Narasimha in Vizag Dt.
- Simhagiri narahari : Prose lyrics composed in praise of the deity of Simhachalam by Krishnama-charya of 13th century.
- Vachanamulu
- Singaracharyulu : A musicologist and author of books on music hailing from Vijayanagaram in the 19th and the early 20th century.
- Tachchuru
- Sitapati, : Ruler of Rajamundry a convert and
- (Sitabkhan) : tyrant in the 16th century.
- Sitapati Dr. G. V. : A well-known scholar who edited one of the collections of Kshetrayya's lyrics.

- Sitaramacharyulu : Author of the Telugu lexicon 'Sabdaratna-karam'
- Bahujanapalli : One of the eighteen puranas otherwise known as Lingapurana.
- Sivapurana : King of Mithila in Bihar, who patronised Maithili poet and lyricist Vidyapati.
- Sivasena : One of the eighteen puranas.
- Skandapurana : King of Israel, known to have composed amorous lyrics on the Supreme-soul (see the psalms in the old Bible)
- Solomon (King) : Famous Sanskrit poem of Sankaracharya in praise of Devi the Supreme Goddess.
- Soundaryalahari : The famous Telugu poet of the 15th century who was honoured by the Reddi kings and Vijayanagar court also.
- Srinatha (Kavisarvabhouma) : A contemporary scholar and writer on Indian Music and dance, of early 20th century.
- Srinivasa Iyengar, C. R. : Famous shrine in Tiruchirappalli dt. in Tamilnadu lying between two branches of the Cauveri.
- Sri Rangam : The presiding deity of Sri Rangam.
- Sri Ranganatha : A famous Saivite hill shrine in Kurnool Dt.
- Sri Sailam : Chronicle dealing with the origin and mythological and religious importance of places of pilgrimage.
- Sthalapurana : Compiler of an anthology of musical compositions of great composers in Karnataka Music with notations.
- Subbarama Dikshitar : A scholar and musicologist of the early part of the 20th century.
- Subba Rao T. V. : A Saivite saint poet of Tamilnadu of early Christian era.
- Sundalarar : The king consort of the presiding deity Meenakshi of Madhura.
- Sundaeswarar : A heroine who is fond of love-sport.
- Suratapriya : Famous composer of north India, and devotee of Lord Krishna (of the 16th century.)
- Surdas :

- Suryaloka Press : One of the early publishers of Kshetrayya's lyrics in Telugu.
- Swastika Sthanaka : A dance posture of the leg where the leg is bent at the knee sideways.
- Sweeya : A heroine who is an ideal wedded wife.

T

- Taruvoja : An indigenous metre of Telugu verse.
- Tevapperumallayya : One of the early editors who compiled Kshetrayya's lyrics.
- Tikkana Somayaji : Famous Telugu poet of Kakatiya period (12th Century) and the author of a major part of Mahabharatam in Telugu.
- Tilla, Tillai : Tamil name of Chidambaram, a pilgrim centre famous for the shrine of dancing Siva, Nataraja.
- Tilla Govindudu : A shrine of Vishnu in the campus of Nataraja's temple in Chidambaram.
- Timmakka : A Telugu poetess and wife of the great lyric composer Annamacharya (1408-1503)
- Tirumalanayak : Ruler of Madhura in Tamilnadu whose court was honoured by Kshetrayya's visit and lyrical prowess.
- Tirupati : A pilgrim centre of Chittoor Dt., in Andhra, near where on the seven hills, presides Lord Venkateswara (Balaji)
- Tiruttani : A pilgrim centre on Tirupati-Madras route, where the presiding deity is Subrahmanya. Kshetrayya's lyric mentions this town as Chirutani.
- Tiruvellur : Another pilgrim centre on the same route where the deity Veera Raghava was praised by Kshetrayya.
- Todi : A traditional Karnataka Raga.
- Tukaram : A saint poet of Maharashtra of 17th century.
- Tulasimurthy : A composer of lyrics in the court of Golconda with whom Kshetrayya had a literary bout and success.

- Tulsidas : A saint poet and lyricist of the Hindi belt in the 16th century, a great devotee of Sri Rama and Hanuman, author of Sri Ramacharit manas.
- Tupakula Venkata-:
krishna or } A petty chief ruling at Chenji, which
Krishna Bhupati } was a buffer between the Naik Kingdoms Vijayanagar, and the Bahmani rulers. He was a great admirer of Kshetrappa.
- Tyagaraja : The great composer of the 18th and 19th centuries, one of the Trinity and successor to traditions set by Kshetrappa in lyrical composition.

U

- Udyagairi : A fortress in Nellore district.
- Ujjawalancelamani : A treatise on Radhakrishna Bhakti written by a scholar saint Rupagossami of Bengal.
- Upapati : A paramour of a woman with whom she maintains a clandestine connection besides the acknowledged husband.
- Urdhwa tandavam : A unique posture of Lord Siva's masculine dance in which the toe of his right foot touches his forehead.
- Usha : Daughter of the Asura King Bana, who falls in love with Aniruddha the grandson of Krishna; on this theme both Kuchipudi and Melattur have their respective versions of Yakshagana.

V

- Vaggeyakar : Composer of both lyric and music.
- Vallabhacharya : A saint composer of Andhra origin and leader of a Cult of devotion to Radha and Krishna prevalent in Gujarat, and in and around Mathura in North India.
- Varahanarasimha : Presiding deity at Simhachalam in Vijag.
- Varadappa : dt. Supposed to be the original name of Kshetrappa.

- Varadaraja : Presiding deity representing Vishnu in the Vaishnavite part of the ancient city (Kanchi) of South India.
- Vayupurana : One of the eighteen puranas.
- Vedanarayanapuram : One of the places visited by Kshetrayya near about Kanchi.
- Veerabhadrayya : A Telugu composer of Melattur in Tanjore dt. who was responsible for spread of the lyrical music tradition.
- Veeresalingam : One of the pioneers, social reformer, writer, (critic, playwright and biographer) in Modern Telugu Literature.
- Vemana : Famous and popular Telugu poet of 17th century.
- Venkatarama Sastri : Author of nearly 12 dance dramas in Telugu hailing from Melattur and contemporary and collaborator with the great Tyagaraja.
- Venkatamakhi : Author of Chaturdandi Prakasika a treatise on Music and contemporary of Kshetrayya in Tanjore Court.
- Venkatarao : One of the contemporary writers on
- Nidudavolu : Kshetrayya, a scholar, poet and critic.
- Venkatesa (Venkateswara) : The presiding deity on the hill (Tirumala) at the pilgrim centre, Tirupathi (Balaji)
- Venkatesa (Venkatanatha of Kadapa) : The presiding deity at Cuddapah.
- Venkateswarulu Voleti : A contemporary musician and an able exponent of Kshetrayya's lyrics.
- Vidushaka : A jester or a court fool.
- Vijayanagar : Capital city of the empire of Vijayanagar (Vidyanagar)
- Vijaya Raghavanayak : The most famous of the Nayak kings of Tanjore, who honoured Kshetrayya.
- Virahotka, Virahotkanthita : The heroine who suffers from the anguish of separation from her beloved.
- Virasaivism : A militant sect of Saivism, of which Basaveswara was the leader prophet.

- Vishnusakha : A title of Siva being a friend of Vishnu.
Viswanathan, T. : A contemporary musician, a grandson of Veenai Dhanammal and exponent of Kshetrayya's lyrics.
Vitaraya : A prince among libertines — a title of Lord Krishna, the prince of Cowherds —given by Kshetrayya.
Viyoga Vipralambha : The anguish of a heroine or a hero caused by separation.

Y

- Yadugiri : A town in Gulbarga district near Hyderabad, where the presiding deity Cheluvarya was praised by Kshetrayya.
Yakshagana : Originally a musical narrative on the manifestations of a deity and gradually developed into a musico-dance-drama by the time of the Nayak kings of Tanjore

