

Outside Vaishnava poetry the most significant literary work of the sixteenth century in Bengali is *Candimangala* by Mukunda Chakravarti. A poem in three parts, it deals with the Puranic story of Siva in the first part. Other two parts are known as 'Fowler Section' and 'Merchant Section'. A keen observer of men and manners, Mukunda has depicted the humanity with its infinite varieties in his long poem. Thus his poem has become a perfect gallery of pictures of the domestic, social, economic and cultural life of the day and the region. His chequered career has seen the vicissitudes of life which have been judiciously utilized in *Candimangala*, but these are never allowed to get the better of poetic fancy and clarity of style.

Dr Sukumar Sen, a renowned scholar and a fellow of the Sahitya Akademi, is an authority on cultural history and comparative mythology. Rich contents of Mukunda's poem fascinated him and for a definitive edition of Mukunda's *Candimangala* he visited different villages in the south Damodar valley, collected various manuscripts, sifted and compared them. The task, an uphill one, took more than thirty years to complete.



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Inset: A sketch from the Ramjaya edition of *Candimangala*



# Kavikankana Mukunda

Sukumar Sen

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KAVIKANKANA MUKUNDA

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

From Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.

*Courtesy* : National Museum, New Delhi.

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**KAVIKANKANA MUKUNDA**

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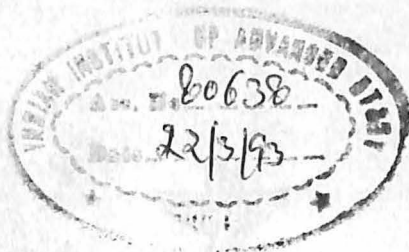
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## Preface

Bengali literature is assumed to have started from the 11th or 12th century. Except a few songs written in proto-Bengali no evidence of its existence is available till the middle of the fifteenth century. Since then it is running uninterruptedly. The most important works of pre-modern Bengali literature are about half a dozen and these were all written before the close of the 16th century. The most representative one among these works is Kavikañkaṇa Mukunda's *Caṇḍamaṅgala*. It presents not only an excellent piece of literary production but supplies us with unique material for the study of cultural history and comparative mythology. Mukunda wrote his poem in the seventh decade of the 16th century. The themes of the poem are three stories regarding the Supreme Goddess, of which two are unrecorded and one is partially recorded in the Puranas. Mukunda's poem was immensely popular and soon it had spread all over the entire Bengali-speaking region. I have analysed Mukunda's poem from various aspects and presented my conclusion.

17 July 1988

Sukumar Sen

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

Mukunda's verse was familiar to me even in my childhood days. My father liked poetry and he often muttered lines from Rabindranath and Mukunda. Couplets and quadruplets like the following were familiar to me even before I had learnt the alphabet.

Piṭḍār pākhā uthe maribār tare ।  
Kāhār ṣodaśī kanyā āniyācha ghare ॥

Ants grow wings only to die. Whose young daughter  
have you brought home?

Satini kondal kare dvigun balibe tāre  
Abhimāne ghar chāḍā keni ।  
Kope kari viṣapān āpani tejibe prāṇ  
Satinera kibā habe hāni ॥

If the co-wife quarrels, you should chastise her doubly.  
Why should you forsake your husband? If you take  
poison, you only die. No harm would come to the co-  
wife.

When I was of school-going age I learnt from my father that the poet Mukunda who lived about five hundred years ago was a native of Dāmīne, a village just beyond the south-western outskirts of our own village, Gotān. He had also told

me that a very learned man Ambikā Caran Gupta, who was for sometime a teacher in our village school, had discovered some interesting facts about the poet. My interest turned into curiosity which, however, remained dormant for years and years until it blazed up in the beginning of the fourth decade of the century. I was then engaged in linguistic research in the peculiar mixed language adopted by the most writers of early Vaishnaba songs and lyrics. Rich contents of Mukunda's poem-linguistic, literary and cultural-fascinated me. I felt the urge of compiling an authentic edition of Mukunda's *Caṇḍimaṅgala*. I consulted all available printed editions and as many of old manuscripts as I could lay my hands on. Not satisfied with this material I began to hunt for manuscripts that could be found in old villages in the South Damodar valley, the region where Mukunda had lived. My effort, though slender, was not unsuccessful. I visited Dāmuniyā (ancient name Dāmine) to examine the manuscript that was currently known as written by the poet himself. It was preserved as a heirloom in the family. I examined the manuscript thoroughly but could not find anything that could place it earlier than the beginning of the nineteenth century. The paper was not made of cotton or linen; it was made of pulp. The ink was not bright or deep; the mode of writing was clearly modern. Moreover, the lines were written in the black and the red ink alternately. The most pinching point against antiquity of the manuscript was its two cover boards. Instead of expected wood pieces they were leather boards.

My visit to Dāmuniyā was not a failure. It proved that the assumption of Dinesh Chandra Sen and other experts were wrong. The Dāmuniyā manuscript was not at all old. I returned from Dāmuniyā with the intention of preparing a definitive edition of Mukunda's poem. I started soon after the publication of the first volume of my *Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihās* in 1939. The task was heavy and it took more than thirty years to complete it (there were frequent long interruptions). It was published by the Sahitya Akademi in 1975. My text was based on the oldest, complete and dated manuscript known. The

manuscript was completed in 1717 A.D. But I must confess that it is not a definitive edition, in as much as it was a copy of two older manuscripts of different versions. Nevertheless the reading is no doubt old.

Even after the publication of the Sahitya Akademi edition (second edition published in 1985) I have not ceased to examine Mukunda's poem from other than the linguistic and the textual point of view, the results of which have been published in several articles. The present pamphlet records my latest efforts.

## The Poet and His Ancestry

Kavikañkaṇa Mukunda Chakravarti produced a poem which is representative of the entire Middle Bengali literature (from the second half of the fifteenth to the end of the eighteenth century). The poem is a lyrical narrative on a very important and interesting religio-mythological theme on some activities of the Great Goddess of Indian tradition. The author did not assign any definite name to his poem but he often mentioned it as an Auspicious Chronicle (*Maṅgala*) of the Benevolent (*Abhayā*) or Violent (*Caṇḍī*) Goddess. The theme follows the tradition of Indian mythology carried through the ages in Puranic literature.

The first part of the poet's name (Kavikañkaṇa) does not seem to be an honorific title but was probably an epithet of the name indicating his performing capacity. *Kaṅkaṇa* means tiny bells or jingles worn as bangles or anklets. Some of the writers of *maṅgala* poetry were also performers or singers, i.e. bards of their own production. Mukunda was such a poet. Hence he has been better known as Kavikañkaṇa and his poem widely known as *Kavikañkaṇa Caṇḍī* (The sobriquet *Kaṅkaṇa* appears in the colophon of a mystic song written in old or proto-Bengali). The surname Chakravarti was peculiar to Sun-worshipping brahmins of foreign origin (*Maga* or *Saka*) in the fifteenth-sixteenth century.

Mukunda belongs to a Brahmin family that had been resident of the village Dāmuniyā or Dāminyā situated at the

southern and the northern boundary of Burdwan and Hooghly districts respectively of West Bengal, about thirty miles from Calcutta. As the name of the village implies, it was a gift obtained as a priest by his ancestor who had settled there. The benefactor was a local chief or army commander (Vīra) Digara Datta. Mukuṇḍa's ancestor was appointed the superintending priest of a local deity.

Mukunda has an elder brother who had not been named but mentioned by his sobriquet or title *Kavicandra* (Moon Poet). Kavicandra was possibly attached to the court of Gaur or some chief such as the Mallas of Panchakota. Mukunda has often mentioned Kavicandra "Hriday-rangana" (Kavicandra dear to Hridaya) in the colophons of his poems. Apparently Kavicandra lived away from his native village. Another fact which may be very significant is that the poem on Ganga occurring in the introductory portion of Mukunda's poem bears the signature of Kavicandra in many stray manuscripts of some antiquity.

Mukunda's father was Hridaya Misra and he is often mentioned by his official title Gunirāja (Gunarāja) Misra. Such titles were bestowed only by the Pathan Kings of Bengal in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. It may be mentioned that Mālādhara Basu, who had produced the poem Śrīkṛṣṇa Vijaya, was given the title Gunarāja Khan by Barbak Shah. (Mālādhara was not a Brahmin, hence he is "Khāna" and not "Misra".) Mukunda's father's connection with the Sultan's court at Gaur was a very significant fact for the formation of the poet's education and training. In some stray colophons in some manuscripts Mukunda is mentioned as Daivakīnandana, i.e., the son of Daivaki. Here we find the name of the poet's mother.

Mukunda's grandfather Jagannātha was a very remarkable person. He had eight brothers (seven were elder): Uddhava, Purandara, Nityānanda, Maheśvara, Garbheśvara, and Sāgara. Vāsudeva was Jagannātha's younger brother.

Jagannātha was a very good scholar (Mahāmīśra). He was



also a very devoted Vaishnava. Mukunda had frequently mentioned that his grandfather was a devoted worshipper of Child Kṛṣṇa and had given up eating fish and flesh for life. It is quite likely that Jagannātha had somehow come in contact with Mādhavendra Purī who was the Guru of the gurus of Caitanya and who was responsible for introducing the Bhakti Cult of Child God worshipped widely in Bengal at the later half of the fifteenth century. Mukunda himself was a Vaishnava at heart and undoubtedly it was due to his grandfather's influence.

Mukunda's great grandfather was Mādhava Śaṛmā. Mādhava's father was Umāpati and Umāpati's father was Tapana Ojhā. According to Mukunda his ancestors belonged to the clan of "Kayaḍi" or "Kaṅjadi" brahmins.

This clan-name does not occur in any wellknown list of Bengal brahmin aristocratic clans, 'Rādhiya' (West Bengal) and 'Vārendra' (North Bengal). I presume that Tapana Ojhā belonged to 'Sogdian' (Sākadvipī) brahmins who had immigrated to India during the first few centuries of the Christian era. They brought in the worship of Sun, horse-riding or horse-driving, as well as astrology and palmistry. Tapana's surname was 'Ojhā' (meaning a teacher or master who gives practical teaching on occultism or prescribes occult remedy).

Tapana Ojhā was brought in from Karṇapura (a place not identified). The local chief Digara Datta made Tapana Ojhā the superintending priest of the local deity. This local deity has been confused with Śiva, but it is quite clear from the name of the deity, Cakrāditya, that it was actually Sun God. So says Mukunda : "He (the God) took the name of Wheel Sun and made His residence in Dāmuniyā".

Two distinct autobiographical poems are found in the manuscripts of Mukunda's poem. One, which is very short, is found only in two manuscripts. In one manuscript the first is there but not the second while both are there in other manuscripts. The shorter poem is concerned mainly with

Mukunda's ancestry. Some important corrective information is found in some old manuscripts. The first and shorter poem was written for the first section of Mukunda's poem. This section *Devakhaṇḍa* (Divine Book) was written, when the poet was young, as an independent work which was perhaps entitled *Hara-Gaurī Maṅgala* (Gospel of Hara and Gaurī).

The second and larger autobiographical poem occurs in almost all the manuscripts of the poem. There are a few exceptions where no autobiographical poem is included. These manuscripts do not necessarily embody unauthentic versions. On the other hand one such manuscript, dated in the last decade of the eighteenth century, presents a really old and authentic reading of the text. This second autobiographical account begins with the poet's immigration from his native village which, as we shall see, happened in 1544-45 A.D. But this poem, though undoubtedly written by Mukunda himself, was added to the poem long after its completion and performance in 1555 or 1556. It was written after Manasiṃha was sent to Eastern India as Governor. The poem is a remarkable piece of poetry and I quote it in full translation :

Listen, friends, assembled, how this poem was produced. Caṇḍī appeared in a dream and sat down at my head looking, as my mother.

In the town of Salimābāza dwelt a very good man, Commissioned Officer Niyogī Gopīnātha (Nandī). We reside in his domain and cultivate land at Dāmuniyā. We are settled there for six or seven generations.

Blessed is Rājā Mānasiṃha, a hungry bee at the (lotus) feet of Viṣṇu, (now) the master of Gauḍa (West Bengal), Vaṅga (East Bengal), and Utkala (Orissa). (But then) during the rule of an unjust sovereign, and as a result of transgression for the moral degradation of the people, the territory was bestowed as a gift on the noble man (Sarif) Māmuda.

Rāyazādā became the minister, opposed to traders and merchants. He turned hostile to Brahmanas and

Vaishnavas (and made) surveyors measure plots diagonally and calculate a bīgha by 15 kāthās (instead of usual twenty) ; they paid no heed to the tenant's complaint.

The revenue collector was a devil and he recorded the fallow land as arable. He extracted bribe but did not offer any help any way. The banker behaved as mortal enemy by taking premium of two annas and a half per rupee and by demanding an interest of a pie for a rupee per day.

The administrative chief was an imbecile eunuch. No daily labour was available even on cash payment. There was no buyer of paddy or cattle. Our landlord Gopinath Nandī was unfortunately arrested. There was no chance of his release.

A spy was assigned to every house so that no one could escape. He was stationed at the door and was watchful. The people became panicky. They daily sold paddy and cattle. But the value of a rupee was reduced to ten annas only.

Śrīmanṭa Khān, the landlord of the village Caṇḍībāti and the leader of (our) village, was a well-wisher. He was consulted. I left Dāmuniyā accompanied by my friend Rama Nandī<sup>1</sup> ; on the way Caṇḍī made an appearance. We reached Bhelia<sup>2</sup>. Rūpa Roy robbed us and Yadu Kuṇḍa, an oil-seed merchant, gave us shelter. He saved us by taking us home and kept us for three days.

Boating down the Muṛai and depending on fate we arrived at Vheutiya. Crossing over the Dārukeśvara we reached my mother's village where Gaṅgādāsa<sup>3</sup> was a great help.

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1 The name has many variants such as Dāmāla Nandi, Dāmodar Nandi, Ramananda, etc. Dāmāla was probably the nickname of Rāmā Nandi, who was possibly a relative of Mukunda's landlord and friend Gopinātha.

2 Variants : Teli Gāe, Bhetanāya, Bhāilāyā.

3 Probably Mukunda's maternal cousin.

Passing over the Nārāyaṇa, the Parāśara and the Āmodara we arrived at the township of Kñcoḍiā<sup>4</sup>. I had my bath there without smearing oil, and breakfasted on water. The child, however, cried for a plate of rice.

(Our) shelter was the bank of a tank ; offering to the deity was only a lotus-stalk ; with a full-blown lily, (the deity) was worshipped. Pressed by hunger, anxiety and fatigue (I) fell asleep there. Caṇḍī appeared in a dream.

She was very compassionate. With great pity she commanded me to write (her) song. Taking hold of the writing materials she sat down and wrote with a pen line after line of verses.

I have read various texts but nowhere could I find the mantra (which she told me). On her command I mutter it daily. Dismissed by Caṇḍī we crossed the Sitāi and arrived at Āroḍa.

Āroḍa belonged to an area inhabited mainly by Brāhmanas, and was owned by a Brāhman. The ruler was (an august person) like Vyāsa. I greeted the Brāhman chief by uttering benedictory verses. The chief offered me ten quintals of paddy.

Bākura Rāya, the competent son and successor of Chief Mādhava, appointed me tutor of his young son. His son Raghunātha, a good looking and well-behaved youngstar, hailed me as his teacher.

My companion friend Rāmā Nandī, who knew the dream affair, often pressed me to write down the song (as commanded by the Goddess. When it was completed) Raghunātha, who had then come to age, arranged for a public performance. He bestowed ornaments on the singer. (The singer, who was) the son of Vikrama Deva was a fine artist ; he was lauded. He was highly experienced in musical art and he was a delightful person, intelligent and soft-spoken.

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4 Variant : Nākā Rāya.

Mukunda left his village home and arrived at Āroḍā in the Śaka year 1466 (i.e., 1544-45 A.D.). This date is found in the last colophon in some manuscripts as well as in the first printed edition published in the Śaka year 1745 (1823-24 A.D.). The quadruplet runs as follows :

Śāke rasa rasa veda - śaśāṅka gaṇitā  
Katakāle dilā gīta harera vanitā |  
Abhayā maṅgala gīta gāila Mukunda  
Āsara sahita mātā haibe sānanda ||

In the Śaka year 1466 (1544-45 A.D.) the wife of Hara revealed to me the song. The gospel of the Compassionate Mother has been thus sung by Mukunda. May the Mother and the assembly be satisfied.

The poem was completed after eleven years, in the Śaka year 1477 (i.e., 1555-56 A.D.). This date is gathered from the colophon of the concluding poem summarising the entire tale. (Such a poem was called *Aṣṭamaṅgalā*, meaning "Eight-day Gospel"). *The couplet runs as follows:*

Aṣṭamaṅgalā sāya Śrī Kavikaṅkaṇa gāya  
Amara sāgara munivare |  
Cāriprahara rāti jwāliyā gḥṭera vati  
Śrī Rāmesvarera mandire ||

The Eight-day Gospel ends—so sings Śrī Kavikaṅkaṇa (in the Śaka year) 14 (*amara*), 7(*sāgara*), 7(*munivara*-the seven sages), burning clarified butter-lit lamps throughout the night in the temple of the deity Kāmeswara.

Mukunda does not give the date of his birth but it can be reasonably surmised. In the 15th-16th century a boy from an upper class society was generally married when he was a late teenager and his bride would be eight to ten years old. The first child of the couple, therefore, was not expected before the fifth or sixth year of marriage. Mukunda left home with his family not long after the birth of his first child. So we may presume that at the time of migration Mukunda was about

twenty-five or twenty-six years old. He was possibly born in the second decade of the sixteenth century.

## The Matter

### Book One

Mukunda's poem is divided into three sections narrating three distinct stories. The first section is entitled *Devakhaṇḍa*, i.e., Divine Section. It was written when Mukunda was still living in his ancestral home. The story of this section is taken from Puranic lore and from Kālidāsa and the goddess eulogized is the spouse of Śiva in her two incarnations, first as the eldest daughter of Dakṣa and then as the daughter of Himālaya. Mukunda's poem begins with homage to the all-embracing, all-pervading supreme being (Brahman) in a single couplet :

The being called *Brahman* in Vedanta philosophy and Great Person elsewhere is the ultimate end of the universe and the controller of all cause and effect. To Him I bow down my head thousands of times.

This short homage to *Brahman* is followed by full hymns to Gaṇeśa, Caitanya, Saraswatī, Lakṣmī and the Great Goddess Haimavatī or Umā. Then came the hymns to the God and Goddess of Creation (*Ādideva* and *Ādidevī*) and a few lines mentioning the creation of the gods. Then the story starts with the dramatic appearance of Dakṣa as an enemy of god Śiva who had just married his eldest daughter and took her away to his abode in a hinterland. Dakṣa, a son of Brahmā, was now holding a sacrifice where all gods and demigods were invited but not Śiva. Śiva's wife Satī wanted to visit her mother but Śiva would not permit. She appealed piteously :

Do please give me permission to pay a visit to my parents. All married women meet their parents periodically. Why should I not do so ?

Please take pity on me, you the ocean of virtue. I shall be away for five days only. For a long time I have been longing to meet my parents but did not dare ask you.

Immediately after the marriage ceremony I have come away with you and I am here for seven years. Don't be displeased, grant my prayer. I am longing for a mouthful of my mother's cooking.

Śiva would not agree and Satī would not desist. She would go to her father's place alone. Now Śiva relented and allowed her to go. She was warmly received by her mother and sisters. When she met her father at the ceremony, there followed an altercation between them regarding Śiva.

Śatī was mortified at the attitude of her father and threw her into sacrificial fire then and there. When Śiva came to know of this tragedy he at once sent his army of demons, disrupted the ceremony and punished Dakṣa by changing his human face into that of a goat. Here ends the episode of Satī.

The other story narrates the reincarnation of Satī as the daughter of Himālaya, named Umā. The birth and growth of the girl is narrated according to Kālidāsa. When Umā was a grown up girl, Śiva, an itinerant mendicant, came and settled for a time in the neighbourhood of Himālaya. With her parents' permission Umā attended to the comforts of Śiva when he was in meditation. The gods had intended that Śiva would marry Umā and produce a son who would be their leader against the assault of the Asuras. The plot, however, fizzled out — Cupid was killed and Umā was humiliated. Śiva left the place. In the meantime Umā had fallen in love with Śiva. With the permission of her parents she now took to hard penance in order to propitiate Śiva and become his wife.

Śiva was pleased at her hard penance and asked Nārada to arrange his marriage with Umā. Mukunda describes his



marriage ceremony as a contemporary affair. The following poem pictures the reaction of the women folk invited to the marriage ceremony.

They all agreed that Gourī (i.e., Umā) is lucky ; (the bridegroom with his overwhelming effulgence had illumined the hall).

One married woman (lamented her fate and) said, "My husband suffers from elephantiasis and the remedy for sympathetic fever is not readily available. In the rainy season the sore aggravates and I feel nausea when I apply ointment."

Another woman lamented, "My husband has lost all his teeth and can eat only vegetable dishes, pudding and soup. If I cook a stiff dish, he beats me and I weep."

A third woman remarked, "Unfortunately my husband is stone-blind. There is no woman more unfortunate than I. I always give him company but he behaves as if he is a lost man."

A fourth woman said, "My husband is stone-deaf and it is a great nuisance. In day time we communicate by gesture and posture but at night as bed companion he behaves like an animal."

One woman desired death, another wailed, "I am ashamed to say that I hate to come out in the open (in the company of my husband) as the people ridicule on seeing a couple of dwarf husband and giant wife."

Then came an old woman. She saw the bridegroom and at once fell in love with him. Her son had a son who had a daughter. (She said), "My locks are white (not for age only but) for continuous use of medicated hair oil ; I am really not an old woman. I am looking for a suitable groom for the daughter of my grandson. Come here, my dear, embrace me."

Now came a group of widows. They expressed surprise on seeing the handsome bridegroom, and remarked,

“We have handsome and qualified grand-daughters unwed. If we find such husbands for them we will keep them at home.” The charm of the bridegroom made all the young women unhappy.

The wedding ceremony was smoothly over. Umā continued to live with her husband in her parental home. The couple had been assigned apartment of their own and Umā was given two girl attendants. She had a very intelligent friend and companion also. The attendants were Jayā (Miss Success), Vijayā (Miss Victoria) and the companion was Padmā (Lotus Lady). The goddess was passing her days happily.

One day the attendants were helping Umā in toilet. They had rubbed off a quantity of dirt from the body of their mistress. Umā collected the dirt and fashioned a doll out of it. The quantity of dirt, however, was not sufficient for the head. So it was a headless doll. Just then Śiva came there, saw the unfinished doll and asked his attendant Nandi to go out and bring him the head of a living being. Nandi went out and met an elephant lying on the ground with his head towards the north. As it was not proper for a living being to lie with his head to the north, Nandi took offence, beheaded the animal and brought the head to his master. Śiva fixed the head to the unfinished doll and gave it life. Thus Gaṇeśa (or Ganapati)<sup>5</sup> came into existence. But Umā was not very happy on account of the elephant-head. Śiva understood her abhorrence and promised a better son soon.

In no time Śiva had a son but he was not carried as an embryo by Umā. Śiva’s seed was first cast into the holy fire and then from fire into deep water where six nymphs nurtured it and Kārttikeya was born. He had six mouths so that he could suck from six nurses simultaneously. Umā was now satisfied.

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<sup>5</sup> The name literally means the leader (Ga or pati) of retinue (Gaṇa). He was really the elephant headed leader of Rudra’s host.

Umā did not help in any way her mother in running the household. On the other hand her family was now a heavy burden on the household of Himālaya. The mother could not tolerate her negligence any more and one day spoke out her mind to her daughter. Umā took offence and spoke to Śiva ; they immediately shifted elsewhere. Now their household was run on Śiva's mendicancy. For sometime it was quite sufficient but Śiva became lazy and would not go out to beg alms everyday. Śiva would not understand the position but insist on elaborate menu every day. Umā came to the end of her tether. She determined to run away from her family and seek her fortune independently elsewhere. She sought advice from Padmā, who suggested her course in a manner that appears as a reading from horoscope.

Listen, O daughter of Himālaya, I am forecasting your wide worship in future. Now you have to reveal yourself in order to get adoration in the wide world for ever.

At the end of the third cycle of creation (*Dvāparayuga*) in the dominion of the Kalinga king, Universal Architect (*Viśvakarmā*) will build a temple. You will appear to him in a dream as a merciful goddess and will get your worship there.

You will occupy the forest land, settle animals there and make the lion their ruler. You will make the lion your ensign.

In the beginning of the Kaliyuga you will make Indra's son Nilāmbara to be born in the family of a hunter. He will worship you and then return to heaven.

Then by your magic the divine dancer Ratnamāla will be banished from heaven and born as Khullanā. in the family of a spice merchant Dhanpati, who will marry her.

Khullanā's husband will go abroad and she will be extremely maltreated at her husband's home. She will worship you in the wilderness and will win the heart of her husband.

When carrying Mālādhara in womb she will suffer indignity from her husband's relatives. You will save her.

Then commanded by the king, her husband will go to Sīmhala for trade. When starting he would show his contempts for you. As a result he will lose most of his merchandise and will suffer imprisonment there. Soon the son Śripatī will be born. He will go in search of his father in the same manner to Sīmhala where he will rescue his father, marry the king's daughter and will return home triumphantly.

#### Book Two

The second section is named "Akṣati-Khaṇḍa" (or Akhatika-Khaṇḍa meaning The Book of the Hunter). It begins with the goddess calling Universal Architect and commanding him to build her temple in Kalinga on the river Kaṁsa near a tamala tree. When the temple was built she commanded King Vikrama of Kalinga in a dream to inaugurate the temple and initiate her worship therein. The king did it with great pomp. Soon the wild animals gathered near the temple seeking safety and the goddess promised them protection. She gave this command to them :

"Lion, you are the strongest and most valiant among the beasts. You are the king of the beasts." She pressed her stamp on the forehead of the lion. "Leopard, you listen to me ; you shall always stand by the king and hold a white umbrella over his head."

Śarava<sup>6</sup>, you are an aristocrat and leader of the animals as the Brahamana among men. You, as the priest, will always look to the welfare of the king. No one else can do it. Be always cheerful, you Tiger, Bear, Wolf, Wild

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<sup>6</sup> It is a mythical being. It had eight feet and was considered very intelligent and superior to all beasts.

Bear, Rhinoceros, all great fighters. Like pupils accompanying the master you all behave as councillors of the king. Pay homage to him daily."

She made the elephant the lion's mount. She appointed a couple of horses as drawers (of lion's: chariot). She appointed the monkeys as labourer.

"Listen to me, Yak. I appoint you to fan the king with your tufts. I appoint you, Hayena, herald. I shall occasionally ride on you for sports.

You Mongoose, as physician, will be given land for livelihood ; you shall look over the health of the king's household. You shall prescribe diet and look after the health of the animals. Snakes will not bite you.

Buffalo; you are the headman of the productive animals. You shall live on the harvest produced. You shall act as the door-keeper of the king. You, Jackal, shall keep awake at night, and shout every three hours and act as a watchman.

Dark-necked Deer, (you act as) a courier ; you Antler, (shall act) as a liaison officer ; you, Long-ear Deer, shall be the commissioner. On account of your devotion to me you shall move freely in the forest. Tigers won't touch you any more.

Camel and Ass, you shall enjoy allowance and serve the king and always shall carry goods. All other animals shall be ordinary tenants. Antelope will be their headman."

Thus settled, the animals in the domain of the Great Goddess lived in amity and peace. The Goddess now turned her attention to man.

Indra was a devotee of Śiva. He worshipped the god daily offering flowers which were gathered by his son Nīlāmbara. By the dispensation of the Goddess, Nīlāmbara, one day, was inattentive while gathering flowers. As a result a few flowers were infested by ants. Unfortunately an ant bit the god. Śiva

took offence and cursed him so that Nīlāmbara had to pass a lifetime in the world of mortal. Nīlāmbara died and his wife Chayāvati committed suicide and became sati. They were born as son and daughter in two neighbouring families of the fowler-hunter caste. Indra's son was born to Dharmaketu and Nidayā while Chāyāvati was born as daughter of Sanjayaketu and Hīrā. They were named Kālaketu<sup>7</sup> and Phullarā<sup>8</sup> respectively. Kālaketu grew up and became a handsome giant. Phullarā grew up to be a beautiful and smart girl. They were soon married. Trained by his father, Kālaketu became a master in the art and practice of hunting. When he grew up his father retired and the husband and wife left home for Vārānasi.<sup>9</sup>

Kālaketu's hunting and stalking soon devastated the forest and the animals were in mortal fear of him. Their piteous complaints disturbed the king. He came to fight but was defeated. His army commander, Tiger, was killed. He then appealed piteously to the Goddess.

The lion and other animals called the Goddess and wept: Mother, you have forsaken us without any reason.

The lion said : Mother, you have made me king. I would serve you in any capacity, but not any more as the lord of the beasts.

The bear complained : I am a beast that lives on ants and insects and is named Bhalluka. I am not a commissioned officer nor a revenue collector. I do not possess any land. Kālaketu caught my seven sons in trap and killed them. In spite of your protection my family have perished. I am living in terror of the hunter. I have

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7 The name literally means 'Dark Sign' (an ominous person). It also implies Śiva as Śaṣaṇ kaśekhara.

8 The name comes from Phullā-adharā meaning 'smiling lips'. The detention of 'U' indicates that the name was taken by Mukunda directly from an Abahatta source. (Compare the note on the name Khullanā).

9 It was then customary for good-fearing and honest men and women, if feasible, to pass their last days in Śiva's city Kāśī or Vārānasi.

lost my wife and son and only two grandsons have been spared...

The old hero rhinoceros threw himself in the dust, wailed and wept...

The tigress threw herself down on the ground and shed tears (she wailed) : Why are you Mother, once graceful but now hostile ?

(My) husband was dark, handsome and lotus-eyed ; his eyebrows were like Cupid's arch. The white spot on his forehead like the moon illuminated the entire forest. I cannot hold myself when I remember him.

The elephant wailed: I am gigantic in body and there is no place to hide in. My tusks are my enemy and I have no where to go. The hunter caught me by the trunk and plucked out the tusks. Oh Mother! such an insult is intolerable.

The monkey sobbed and cried: I do not want to enjoy freehold any more when the hunter is my enemy. My great-grandfather was a commander in Rāna's army. He walked through heaven and leapt over the sea. What calamity has fallen to me! Seven sons of mine have fallen victim to the hunter's noose.

The antler, light footed antelope and long-ear deer — all wept helplessly in distress: Why have we been born in such cursed families? We, the deer folk, are our own enemies on account of our flesh.

The porcupine and hare hiccupped and cried: Oh Mother! we have served you the Almighty but our suffering has not ceased. As we live underground, we cannot keep ourselves hidden. He pours water down our holes. Four sons and two daughters are killed and so also our wives. We are old. It is futile to go on living.

Having lost his wife and son the mongoose mourned and complained: Relying on you, Mother, I have lost my family.

The Goddess was full of compassion. She came down and heard their complaints, grievances and assured them of immediate relief.

She put a spell over the entire forest. As a result Kālaketu could not find a single beast to catch or kill. On the third day, as he was entering the forest he saw a golden chameleon ; it was a very small animal and nothing much as food. He ignored it and pushed on. He roamed through the forest but could not find anything. As he was returning home hungry and exhausted, he again saw the golden chameleon. He could not reject it any more—he netted it and took it home. As Phullarā was not in, he tied the animal to a doorpost and went out in search of his wife. As soon as he was out, Phullarā came in after borrowing a small quantity of rice from a rich acquaintance. As soon as Kālaketu was out of door, the golden chameleon turned itself into a beautiful, well-dressed, young girl and sat by the door of the cottage. Phullarā came in and was astounded at the sight. She, however, bowed down to the girl and humbly asked who she was. The girl replied guardedly:

I am a native of the northern region and belong to the Brahmin caste. From my childhood I am accustomed to moving about freely. My husband comes from a very good Brahmin family and my father is a very rich man. But my husband has many wives, which is a great nuisance. If you kindly permit, I may live with you for sometime.

At this reply of the girl, Phullarā was thunderstruck. But she collected herself and argued that her proposal was extremely ridiculous. She should at once go back to her people. Phullarā offered to accompany her and help her to be reconciled with her family. The Brahmin girl in retort said that she had come to their cottage only to help them. She would help them with money and see them well-established. She added that she was at the present moment living in Vārānasī quietly. Her husband was a poor mendicant and was



controlled by his senior wife Gaṅgā, who was a shrew. It was she that compelled her to leave home. But Phullarā went on arguing:

Husband is the master and the shelter. He is all in all to the wife. He is her most valuable possession. There is no one else who can fulfil her hopes and desires...

If your co-wife falls foul, you should deal with her harshly. Why should you leave home? If you drink poison in anger you will only die and that would cause no harm to the co-wife.

The Goddess replied artfully:

I was resting alone in the forest. Your husband has netted and brought me home. You may ask your husband whether I am telling the truth or not. If he says otherwise, I shall leave you at once. I have come here to help, but you are hostile to me.

Phullarā did not pay heed to her, but continued to give a detailed account of their very hard life throughout the year, month by month. She said:

The month Vaiśakha is spring time but the sun is very hot. I do not find cool shed to place the tray of meat. It is difficult to walk on hot ground and the cloth I wear is not long enough to protect my head from the sun. Vaiśakha is a month of scarcity. People prefer vegetables and do not buy meat...

In the month of Āswina Mother Goddess is worshipped at every house and buffaloes, goats and rams are killed on the occasion. Women wear smart dresses, but the only thought of my poor self is to satisfy hunger. Nobody buys meat as every household sacrifices goat or ram to the Goddess...

In the severe month of Māgha days are misty. My hunter finds it difficult to catch a game. Unfortunately, people do neither pluck nor buy vegetable leaves during the month. In the cruel month of Magha everyone is a vegetarian...

In the month of Madhu(i.e., Caitra) there is soft breeze ; there are flowers and bees drinking honey ; men and women sport in love. But I am tortured only by hunger. To whom can I speak of my sufferings? At night we occupy the same bed but remain miles apart.

To her long complaint the Goddess told her not to worry as they would share her fortune.

Phullarā did not reply but rushed out in search of her husband. She found him strolling in the market place. Phullarā was weeping. Kālaketu asked why she was weeping as she had no co-wife to quarrel with. She replied:

My dear, you are my co-wife, and Destiny has turned its face against me. Ants grow wings just before death. From where have you brought in the younger? Now you have turned sinful. You are behaving as Rāvana of Lankā.

Kālaketu was angry and said harshly that she was talking nonsense. They hurried home.

Kālaketu was too angry to be astonished at the sight. He spoke at first harshly, then humbly pleaded her to return at once to her people. He offered to accompany her as her guard but the Goddess would not give any reply. The hunter was then exasperated. He attempted to shoot her down but could not — he was petrified by the spell of the Goddess. At last the Goddess took pity on them and revealed her identity. She offered him the valuable signet ring she was wearing and told him to sell it and get enough money to buy the Gujrata forest and to establish his own dominion there. Phullarā remarked maliciously that the ring might not fetch enough money. At this the Goddess then took them to a pomegranate tree and asked them to dig at the root. They dig the ground and obtained a concealed treasure which the Goddess helped them to carry home surreptitiously. Before leaving, the Goddess instructed Kālaketu to build her temple at the centre of the city and to institute her worship on Tuesdays. Kālaketu agreed.

Next morning Kālaketu called on Murāri Sīla the goldsmith who was a regular customer of the hunter. Perceiving his approach the goldsmith crept into the inner apartment and his wife came out to meet Kālaketu. Like her husband she thought that the hunter had come to collect his bill. So she told him that the goldsmith was away and he might come next day to collect his dues. She also requested him to bring a load of firewood and also some sweet berries. Kālaketu said that he had not come to collect his dues but to sell a ring. The goldsmith heard it and made his appearance. He took the ring from Kālaketu and after examining it minutely shook his head and said that it was not at all costly and he offered a few cowries for it. Kālaketu would not accept it but wanted back the ring so that he might take it to another goldsmith. But Murāri won't let it go and finally agreed to pay the amount satisfactory to the hunter.

Kālaketu bought the Gujrata forest and employed daily labourers to cut down the trees. Mukunda gives a detailed list of trees and plants showing his encyclopaedic knowledge of local flora. They cut down the trees and plants except a few.

They spared jackfruit tree, banana and betel-nut. They preserved āsvatha and built a terrace round it. They spread rudrākṣa, jāyaphala and lavaṅga.

They preserved all flowering plants and fruitful trees. They carefully preserved the banyan tree as it was the residence of the Child-Goddess as well as a resting place for travellers and villagers.

When the land was clear the Architect of the Universe (Viśvakarmā) was instructed by the Goddess to build a city for Kālaketu and to raise her temple at the centre. It was done in no time.

The city was laid down according to plan, but it remained uninhabited as for some time no tenant was coming. Kālaketu was embarrassed; he prayed to the Goddess. The Goddess consulted Padmā, who advised her to seek the help of Gaṅgā, the controlling deity of all rivers. Gaṅgā was helpful. Heavy

rains continued for days and all the rivers were in spate and villages were inundated. The people of Kalinga were now compelled to seek new asylum. They came and settled in Kālaketu's estate. Kālaketu welcomed them and offered them all facility. Among the settlers there was a nasty person named Bhāṇḍu Datta, who behaved like a leader of the Kāyastha community. .

Followed by his brother-in-law carrying a bunch of green banana as tribute, Bhāṇḍu Datta came in arrogantly — an arrogant person, his head smeared with sandal, wearing torn clothes trailing on the ground, pen and blotting stuff pushed by the ears.

Bhāṇḍu saluted Kālaketu calling him uncle. He sat down on a torn piece of old blanket. With a smiling face and his arms moving he said:

Uncle, I have preferred to come and settle in your land. You would better appoint me as the headman of your tenants. All Kāyasthas, you know, are inferior to me in all respects.

I tell you that I belong to the Datta family' of Amalahāḍā<sup>10</sup>. I am connected with the three top clans of our caste; my two good wives are daughters of Ghosha and Basu families of my caste and I have married my daughter to a Mitra.

All the Kāyasthas that are settled on two sides of the Gaṅgā accept my invitation. They accept gifts from me.

I have a big family: two wives, four brothers-in-law, four sons, a sister, mother-in-law, six stepmothers and eight maid servants. For this reason I have to maintain six establishments. I may tell you that I won't be paying any interest for any advance from you.

My dear uncle, you must give me your bulls and sufficient quantity of rice as seed. Provide me with a husking machine and winnowing fans also. I am the

<sup>10</sup> Literally, 'pot' of sour rice.

councillor and you are the ruler, satisfy me first and then you will know my worth.

Bhāṇḍu's speech satisfied Kālaketu.

Now people left the dominion of the king of Kaliṅga and began to settle in Kālaketu's estate. Muslims were warmly welcomed and they were assigned the western quarter for settlement.

It was called Hāsanahati and consisted of rows of house under a common roofing.

They woke up early in the morning, spread red carpet and held prayers five times a day. They carried the rosary of Solomon, muttered the name of saints and prophets and offered sweet dishes in the evening at the sanctum of saints.

Groups of comrades sat together and discussed religious matter and recited the Korān. Some Muslims held stalls in the markets and sold milk pudding which had been offered to saints. In the evening drums were beaten.

They were all very charitable and quiet; they strictly observed religious fastings. They were dressed like *Kāmbozas* (i.e., Afghans); they shaved their head but grew long beard, covering the chest.

They strictly observed their customs. They always wore tight trousers. If they found any co-religionist bare headed, they would not speak to him but would strike him on the head.

Their leaders occupied the areas allotted to them with all their goods and chattels. After dinner they wiped their hands clean on their garments. Surānī, Lohānī, Spānī, Kitāpī, Bittani (?), Huni — all these Pathan clans were there.

Many middle class Muslims settled with their tools; some married widows, some virgins. Mollās earned rupees by uttering blessings from the Korān on the occasion of widow marriage.

For cutting the throat of a fowl with the one-edged knife they would get a fee of forty cowries. If they slaughtered a goat or a ram they would receive the head as well as a fee of fifty cowries.

Schools for children were held in corridors.

The Muslims who did not observe religious fastings and daily prayers were known as *Golā*, (i.e., Native fools). Those who carded cotton for weaving were called *jolā*<sup>11</sup>, Those who conveyed paddy on bullocks were known as *Mugari*<sup>12</sup> Those who sold cakes were known as *Pithāhāi*

*Kābādi*.<sup>13</sup> was the name for those who sold fish. They always talked tall and did not grow beard.

A convert Hindu was known as *Garasāla*. They feigned blindness and begged for alms at night.

Those who manufactured combs for the weaving machinery were known as *Sānākara*. They depended on the weavers for livelihood.

Some roamed from place to place showing picture scrolls. Some manufactured arrows and were known as *Tirkara*.

Those who manufactured paper were known as *Kāgati*.

Some turned into itinerant mendicants.

The Hindu quarter is then described. The most eminent were the brahmins. They were always occupied with study and discussion, and they received profuse presents from the chief. The premier families of brahmins were Mukhaṭī, Cātwati, Vandya (Ghaṭī), Kājilāla, Gāṅguli and Ghoṣāla. There were also other families. Barendra brahmins settled near Vandya Ghati. They used their *Gotra* (old family-names) as surnames. They were simple hearted and straightforward; they were always engaged in studying the Yajurveda. A gorgeous Vishnu

11 From Persian meaning 'weaver'.

12 The word is from Arabic.

13 The source of the word is Sanskrit Kaivarta (fisherman).

temple adjoined every house. Students came from all countries to study under them. There were also other classes of brahmins.

Uneducated brahmins also settled there. They had learnt only the process of worshipping deities and acted as priest in every house. They smeared their body with sandlepaste, performed the daily worship of house deities and received loads of foodstuff.

They received sweet meats from vendors, pots of curd from milkmen and enough oil from oilmen. Some were paid monthly salary, others regularly received pulses and pulse cake. A village priest had an easy life. The village priests conducted Sradh ceremony and they exacted heavy fees for it. The brahmin matchmakers always insisted a heavy commission.

In a corner of Gujrata resided the sun-worshipping astrologers who also acted as superintendents of temple complexes. They always carried astrological texts, Dīpikā and Bhāsvati, and told fortune and prepared horoscopes for new born children.

In another corner dwelt the group of sannyasis, wearing neat garb, with rough knotted hair on head and various marks on their forehead and arms.

Vaishnabas were also there. They muttered the names of Gods and enjoyed freehold. They wore chain made of beads of tulsi plants; they were fond of music and dance.

All kinds of people settled in Gujrāta and Kālaketu allotted them proper quarter and sufficient capital. They were noble kṣatriyas, who loved to listen the Puranas recited by brahmins. There were also stout Rajputas and there were Mallas, the kingmakers. The Mallas were devoted Vaishnabas, and were very charitable to brahmins. The Rajputas were famous for the skill in sports and military enterprise.

Herald (*Bhāta*) came and settled in Gujrāta. They recited verses from *Piṅgala*. They chief provided them with fine

clothes and horse to ride. Their duty was to sing the glory of Kālaketu.

Well-to-do *Vaisyas* who settled there were all devoted worshipper of Vishnu. Their occupation was cultivation and maintenance of cattle ranch. Some were moneylenders, some transported paddy on bullocks; some acted as middlemen or brokers; some were jewellers and others plied maritime trade. These people were most prosperous. Next to the merchants settled the Vaidyas (physicians). Their surnames were Gupta, Sena, Dāsa, Datta and Kara. Some were specialist in drugs, others in tonics and some had occult practice.

They got up early in the morning, put on clean clothes, wore turban and painted their forehead with sandal paste. With a medicinal text in armpit they would start visiting patients from door to door. When they found the patient curable they tapped the patient's chest and prescribed proper medicine and demanded the fees. If they found the patient incurable, they would try to leave the place on some pretext or other. They would prescribe a camphor mixture (camphor being not easily procurable). Asking the patient's people to secure camphor they would quickly depart.

Mukunda then describes elaborately the settlement of *kāyasthas* in the domain of Kālaketu. The top ranking *kāyasthas* came to Kālaketu with a large quantity of palatable foodstuff as presents: curd, fish and jars of ghee. They saluted the chief, who was very pleased to meet them.

Some of them belonged to aristocrat families; some came from common and honest families. The *Kāyastha* community had spotless reputation. Their talk was pleasant and they were all educated and cultured. Their presence increased the prestige of Gujrata.

Then the poet gives a list of *kāyastha* families that came to settle there with their relatives and servants. Kālaketu was pleased with them and allotted them the southern part of the settlement.



Mukunda then gives some detailed account of other settlers.

There came the cultivating class of the cattle-breeding caste. They were simple-hearted people. They produced various crops, such as sugarcane, pulses, wheat, oilseeds, cotton. They were well-to-do.

Many oilmen came to settle; some of them were cultivators, while others pressed oil. Some were oil merchants.

Ironsmiths started workshops. They manufactured axes, shovels, ploughshare, choppers and arms.

Beteldealers sold betel leaves and nuts and they were regular suppliers of chewing betel to the chief. They prepared chewing betel carefully and did not forget to stuff betel with chips of nut and so they were never penalized.

Potters who settled in Gujrata regularly produced various earthen plates and pots as well as shells for various types of drums. Hundreds of weavers settled together and wore various kinds of stuff both from cotton and flax, plain and multi-coloured.

Gardeners also settled there. They always looked after their flower garden and made garlands and bouquets. They hawked their goods in the city.

Betel-growers came and settled. They grew betel under shade and maintained daily supply of betel leaves to the chief. They would always exact their price from buyers.

Barbers too settled there; they carried razor in armpit and mirror in hand. *Agharis* (?) settled there and ran their own business and they never transgressed law.

Experienced sweet-makers were known as *Rānā* (holding royal charter). They prepared all kinds of sweets, such as *khaṇḍa* (sweet lump), *nāḍu* (sweet ball). They hawked their commodities in streets throughout the settlement followed by a band of children.

*Sarākas* (men following Jaina religion) also came to settle in Gujrata. They would not kill animals, big or small. They were staunch vegetarians. Receiving aid from the chief they wore fine costly clothes from cotton and silk. Kālaketu was very much pleased with them.

Scent merchants (*Gandhabāniā*) sold in the market place scent and spices. Conchshell merchants (*Saṅkhabāniā*) cut conchshells (and manufactured bangles). They decorated their (commodities) variously. Jewellers too settled in Gujrata.

Brass-smiths (*Kāsari*) started workshops and manufactured jugs, cups, plates, dishes, water vessels - all made of bell-metal. They also manufactured hand-boxes for carrying betel leaves, nuts and lime, bells of various sizes, throne and lamps.

There came also gold merchants who dealt in gold, silver and other costly metals. They were a very prosperous community.

In the heart of the city settled (goldsmiths) the community of blatant thieves who manufactured ornaments and cheated the customers openly.

Cowherding milkmen (*Pallava-gopa*) also came in and settled there. They sold milk, carrying their goods hanging in poles. They cut down woods to make their ranches.

Mukunda then gives a brief but interesting account of smaller communities and their special occupations. There were communities of fishermen some of whom caught fish while others cultivated land. *Kalus* ran oilpress. Drummers played on various drums and other musical instruments. Some of them hawked mats. *Narīs* manufactured bangles from lac (or wax). *Saus* resided apart and they distilled liquor. *Bāgadis* carried arms and sought employment as guard. *Mātiās* wove fishing net and caught fish. *Kōcas* had various professions. There were many families of washermen; they stretched long strings and hung washed clothes to dry. In one corner tailors

settled; they sewed clothes and were employed on salary. *Śiulis* extracted juice from date palms and prepared molases from it. *Chutāras* prepared flattened and fried rice. Some of them painted pictures and scrolls. *Pātānis* plied boats day and night and collected tax from the passengers.

*Jogī* singers roamed about and begged alms from door to door. There were settled the community of palanquin-carriers (*Caudulis*), lime-makers and sailors. Jokers showed gymnastics and magic. *Mālas* settled outside the boundary of the city. *Caṇḍālas*, however, lived within; they sold salt, water-nut (*pāniphala*) and sweet grass-root (*keśura*).

Muslim street singers (*Koāli*) were always roaming in the streets and singing song. *Mārāthas* settled together. Their profession was surgical operation of enlarged spleen and cataract.

Indomitable *Kirātas* and *Kols* were in charge of beating drums in market places. *Koṛās* (?) lived on the earning of their wives. *Kaḷḷās* and *Hāḍis*, grasscutters by profession, passed all spare time in liquor shops. *Cāmāras* settled in corners; they made boots, shoes and saddles. *Domas* manufactured fans, brushed, umbrellas, sticks, sieves and various wicker works. In another corner settled whores eager to catch lascivious men. Their neighbours were the communities of dancers (*Nātuā*) and musicians (*Kalanta*).

When the settlement was complete *Kālaketu* opened a market place. He planted a bamboo pole and hung a garland on it. Then he employed labourers to make a ford in the river which would help both buyers and sellers. All kinds of goods were brought in for sale. Market ran smoothly for sometime. Then came a disturbance. *Bhāndu Datta* began to oppress vendors by not paying for the goods he took from them. The tyrannical behaviour of the headman was reported to *Kālaketu*, who summoned *Bhāndu* to appear before him in court. *Bhāndu* came and had an altercation with the Chief. *Kālaketu* was disgusted and drove him away from the court. This humiliation enraged *Bhāndu* and he forthwith went to the king of *Kalinga* and informed him about the rich estate established by a poor

hunter in the neighbourhood. The king summoned the police-chief (*Kotāla*) and took him to task for negligence in duty. The police-chief humbly submitted that what the newcomer had reported might be a malicious lie. He humbly asked the king to allow him time to get the real information. The king agreed.

The police-chief and his assistant in the guise of Yogi mendicants came to the settlement of Gujrata. They were received with reverence by the people and were richly entertained. The police-chief returned and reported to the king that Bhāndu's information was not false. The king ordered the police-chief to raid Kālaketu's estate, search the place, arrest Kālaketu and bring him up to him.

On the approach of the police-chief and his army Kālaketu was ready to oppose when Phullarā piteously asked him not to do so. She said:

My dear, listen to my advice. An enemy defeated would come again and again. There is some reason behind this attack.

If you want to enjoy a long life, give up the estate and let us run away. Our days here are over. Our enemy is irresistible. Please listen to my appeal (and remember that) a palm tree can never be cut down by a nail-cutter.

Phullarā then reminded him the story of the Rāmāyana in support. Kālaketu was convinced and he hid himself inside the store-room.

The police-chief met with no resistance and he came to Kālaketu's residence, who was soon arrested and brought in before the king. The king was ready to sentence him to death but his minister advised him to wait for a day or two. Kālaketu was sent to prison for the night. Put in prison, Kālaketu prayed to the Great Goddess. The poet sets his prayer in quadruplet containing the Goddess's various names according to alphabetical order (such poems were termed *cautisā*, meaning collection of thirty-four consonants). For example:

Cancala cetaṇā āmi callīṣā bandhane  
 Corera caritra haila caṇḍikāra dhame  
 Caḍa caḍaḍe mātā caṇḍakara cūra  
 Carācara-gati go bandhana kara dūra.

My head is whirling being pressed by forty fetters. I am being treated as a thief for the wealth bestowed by the Great Mother. Oh Mother! do please smash the oppressor by physical punishment. You mistress of the Universe! do please remove my fetters.

The Goddess appeared to the king in dream and commanded him to release Kālaketu early in the morning and to send him to his estate.

The king responded promptly. He released Kālaketu from prison early in the morning, invested him with honour and ornament and sent him back in pomp.

Kālaketu's days passed on smoothly. Before long the shameless double-eyed villain, Bhāṇḍu, came to him and pleaded that it was he who had advised the Kalinga king to bestow honour on the Chief. Kālaketu would not be deceived again. He ordered that Bhāṇḍu's head be shaved and the fellow be driven out of his estate. The Chief, however, relented and allowed Bhāṇḍu a very small allowance for bare livelihood. The fellow, however, was banished from the court.

A son was born to Kālaketu and Phullarā named Puṣpaketu (Flower Banner). Kālaketu and his wife Phullarā passed the rest of their life peacefully. After death Nilāmbara and his wife returned to heaven. Here ends Book Two, the second part of Mukunda's poem.

### Book Three

The third part begins with the performance of the celestial danseuse Ratnamālā at the court of Indra where all gods and

goddesses were assembled. Ratnamālā was a beautiful girl, perfect singer and a skilful danseuse. She was a favourite of the Great Goddess Caṇḍi. Her performance was accompanied by Nārada, singing the episode of Rādhā's Bereavement (*Rādhā Viroha*). Accidentally Ratnamālā missed a beat which displeased the divine audience and enraged the Great Goddess. She cursed the girl condemning her to a mortal life. Ratnamālā entreated piteously and the Goddess relented. She soothed Ratnamālā by telling her that she had done it intentionally. Through Ratnamālā she intended to establish her divine majesty among mortals and receive their homage.

Ratnamālā was born as the daughter of a very rich merchant family in the city of Ichāni. Her father was Lakṣhapati and mother Ramvābati. Ratnamālā was born as Khullanā. She grew up a very pretty girl. When she was twelve years old her parents were ready to marry her to a rich and suitable groom. In the city of Ujāni, there was a rich but small merchant family attached to the court of king Vikrama Keshari. Young, handsome and smart Dhanapati was the sole male member of the family. His favourite game was pigeon flying. One day he and his friends were engaged in flying their pigeons. (The poet names here more than fifty species of pigeons, male and female.) It so happened that a favourite pigeon of Dhanapati being chased by a hawk came down to earth and was captured by Khullanā, the young daughter of Lakṣhapati. She took the bird home. Dhanapati, who was following his flying pigeon, noticed it from afar and followed Khullanā to her home and took it back from her. Khullanā's beauty caught his fancy and he wanted to marry her but Dhanapati was already married, so Khullanā's father did not at first entertain Dhanapati's proposal which was made through a brahmin middleman (*Ghataka*). The reason for his objection was that Dhanapati was not only married but married to the daughter of Lakṣhapati's cousin. But the arguments of the *ghataka* finally persuaded him to agree to the proposal. Khullanā's mother also agreed; the marriage was settled.

Lahanā (actually Lohnā, meaning an 'alluring girl') came to hear of the proposal of his husband's marriage with her cousin and was direly disturbed. Dhanapati, however, soothed and convinced her.

My dear, you have wasted your beauty and charms at the kitchen. You have exchanged a diamond for a bit of crystal. After bath you do not apparently comb your hair. You do not dry your long hair, and soaped water has destroyed your traces. You are always thinking about running the household smoothly. You have sacrificed your beauty at the kitchen hall. Your lips are discoloured and withered as you do not chew betel for the reason that you have to blow constantly at the oven. Your eyes, smitten by smoke, are always streaming. If you look up at a mirror you will see that corners of your eyes are stuffed with rheum. You have not a single relative, such as aunts, sisters or co-wives who may help you in the kitchen. Tell me if I am speaking unreasonably. I shall soon fetch you a maid for the kitchen.

Simple-hearted Lahanā was pacified. She knew that she was barren and her husband must have a son. Dhanapati presented gold ornaments to her. Lahanā was satisfied. Without any delay Dhanapati's second wedding was smoothly over. The newly-wed couple returned home.

On the next morning Dhanapati with loads of offerings came to pay homage to the king. It so happened that a fowler had come to the king to offer him a wonderful parrot couple he had recently caught.

Here Mukunda has appended the episode of the wonderful parrot. (I may mention here that in late Sanskrit and Abahaṭṭa and old Venraculars there had emerged a kind of short lyric composition consisting of conversation between a male parrot called *Śuka* and a female one called *Śārika*. Such a poem was technically known as *Śukaśārika* . . .

The parrots were semi-divine. The male parrot was a holy man in the guise of a bird. He could talk on any topic, cultural

or religious. The king was fascinated. He asked his minister to get a gold cage for the parrot couple. The minister said that no artisan of Ujāni could do it. It could be obtained only at Gour. The king then commanded Dhanapaṭi to go forthwith to Gour and get a gold cage from there. The merchant appealed to the king to excuse him a few days as he had just been married. But the king would not listen to him. So Dhanapati had to start at once for Gour. He was given the necessary quantity of gold from the royal treasury. Before leaving for Gour Dhanapati wrote a letter to Lahanā telling her that he was compelled to start for Gour at once and that she should look after his co-wife Khullanā and the household during his absence.

Before marrying Khullanā, Dhanapati's household consisted of three persons - himself, Lahanā and the maid-servant Dubalā ('Double speaking'). So Khullanā's task was not at all heavy. Lahanā had already accepted her fate and she treated Khullanā not as a rival but as a friend. The house ran smoothly but it, however, bothered the maid-servant. The good relation between the co-wives annoyed Dubalā because now she had to serve two mistresses. One day as she was combing Lahanā's hair she expressed her sympathy for her burden with co-wife. Simple-hearted Lahanā fell victim to Dubalā's malice. She was pleased with her and promised her a pair of gold ear-rings. She then sent the servant to her friend Lilāvati asking her for a visit. Lilāvati was the clever wife of an erudite brahmin expert in orthodox medicine and black magic. She came to her friend Lahanā. The friends had a heart to heart talk in privacy. Lilāvati then concocted a forged letter from Dhanapati addressed to Lahanā. It began with the word *svasti* (Hail).

My precious beloved Lahanā, my blessings and love to you. I have to stay here for sometime. You shall hear from me time to time and you should correspond regularly. You may spend as much as you require but send me some gold for the cage. You remember you are now in charge of the house. Take off from Khullanā all



ornaments and let her take charge of tending the goats, give her to wear linen cloth as lower garment and hessian as wrapper. You assign the husking shade as her bedroom. She should be treated in this manner for a full year. Her fixed ration will be only half a seer of rice. You must do as I tell you otherwise I shall punish you by shaving your head. I have married Khullanā at an extremely inauspicious moment. These measures are for getting rid of consequences of the evil. This course has been prescribed by an expert astrologer because Khullanā was born at a time when devil was rampant. To nullify its bad effect Khullanā has to undertake this penance for a full year. You must obey me.

The letter was folded and sealed. Lilāvati was then paid her fees and she left. After a week Lahanā with tearful eyes handed over the letter to Khullanā. Khullanā read it through and rejected it at once as a forgery made to ridicule the family. But Lahanā was adamant. She forced Khullanā to obey her. Wily Dubalā advised Khullanā to obey Lahanā for the time being until she informed her parents who would then take her home. She, however, kept her promise and informed her mother of the affair but she did not fail to mention that the penance had been prescribed for averting the evil effects of the very inauspicious moment of Khullanā's marriage. At this Khullanā's helpless mother could not take any steps for relief. She, however, entreated Dubalā to look after her daughter.

Khullanā was compelled to start in the morning with the herd of goats to graze them in the wilderness outside the town. She returned with the herd at sundown, ate her ration and retired in the husking shade. This continued for several months. When the spring time came she was in extreme distress. One day the prize she-goat, Sarvasī, was missing. She was in panic but dared not return home without the goat. She wept helplessly and prayed to Heaven for the recovery of the goat. Goddess took pity on her and sent her five attendants, who advised Khullanā to worship the Goddess then and there for the recovery of the lost animal. It was a very simple ritual. A

pot filled with water would represent the Goddess and eight grains of rice, eight strands of durbā grass sufficed as offering. They imparted to her the secret formula (mantra) to be muttered when worshipping. Khullanā promptly acted according to their advice. The Goddess was pleased and appeared at once before Khullanā as an old brahmin lady. First she tested her by remarking that Khullanā's worship of the Goddess was a futile action. The Goddess was cruel (*Nidayā*) hearted and she wouldn't help her. But Khullanā protested violently. The Goddess then smiled on her and told her not to worry. The goat was there and henceforth her life would be smooth and happy. Then the Goddess disappeared and Khullanā found all the goats gathered near her.

By this time night had fallen. Lahanā was very anxious as the goats and Khullanā had not yet come. She felt pity for the girl and started with the maid-servant in search of her and the goats. They met her on the way and the two cousins were reconciled.

Dhanapati's sojourn at Gour was unnecessarily prolonged for the reason of his friendship with the king. They both were expert dice players. For this reason Dhanapati felt no urge for returning home. The Goddess, however, appeared before him in dream at the same night and revealed a picture of his family suffering terribly. The merchant was very repentant and quickly returned and delivered the cage to his king. The king was glad and rewarded him profusely. Dhanapati came home and found his household running smoothly.

It was a festive day. Dubalā was sent to the market with enough money to buy all the delicacies of the season that would be available in the market. She bought all palatable food-stuff of the season. She, however, did not forget to deduct her commission cleverly. Mukundā gives a humorous account of the detailed list of Dubalā's marketing. She thus accounted for the amount she had spent :

Sir, I am telling you what I have spent item by item. I am not a cheat really. I am illiterate, so I have to think out. You may give me time to think. On entering the market-

place I met the astrologer Hari, who chanted to me good auguries for person born when the sun was in the Zodiac Fish (i.e., you).<sup>14</sup> I had to give him a *kahana*<sup>15</sup> of cowries. Next I met the priest Kusai Ojhā, who uttered Vedic mantras and blessed you. I gave him ten *paṇas*<sup>16</sup> of cowrie. It included also arrears due to him. Camphor was scarce in the market. I had to search for it and got only five *tolās* at five *kāhanas per tolā*. I paid four *kāhanas* for banana and vegetables, such as potato<sup>17</sup>, alum and various stalks, and the leaver I bought at a cost of four *kāhanas* and eight *paṇs*. I paid five *kāhanas* for oil, ghee, salt and curd. Castrated goat's meat cost eight *kāhanas*. I met the royal herald who was chanting benedictory verses with hands up. For your prestige I paid him ten *paṇs*. Seven *paṇs of cowries were kānā*<sup>18</sup>. The market place is crowded with aristocratic Muslim mendicants and Hindu monks. I distributed fifty-one cowries among them. I hired ten porters and paid ten *paṇs* to them. I have take only four *paṇs* for myself.

Dhanapati commented that her account was faulty. Dubalā insisted on her honesty.

Dhanapati passed his days happily, paying equal attention to Lahanā and Khullanā. In course of time Khullanā conceived. The family was jubilant. Here ends the first sub-story of Part Three.

The second sub-story starts with the banishment of a son of Indra who was a renowned actor-dancer in heaven. On a boat in the Gaṅgā, Śiva and his consort had arranged for a performance of a play on the *Kāliya-Damana* episode from the Kṛṣṇa legend. Mālādhara played the role of the hero while Śiva and Pārvatī (Candī) acted as Nanda and Yaśodā respectively.

14. Dhanapati was born when the sun was on this zodiac.

15. 1 *kahana* - 640 cowries.

16. 1 *paṇa*—80 cowries.

17. It was not the same thing as is now known to us.

18. *Kānā* - a defective cowrie, not negotiable.

Ganeśa played on the earthen drum (*mṛidaṅga*) and Nandi and Bhṛṅgi played cymbals. When the play was over the audience applauded. The gods then bestowed gifts on Mālādhara. Śiva's gift was a neck-chain of bones. Mālādhara received it with reluctance. This attitude of Mālādhara angered Śiva and he put a curse on him. As a result Mālādhara would be born as the son of Khullanā and Dhanapati.

Khullanā's conception was hailed by the family and was celebrated suitably. As soon as the celebration was over the family priest reminded Dhanapati that the day of his father's annual *śraddha* ceremony was near and he should make arrangements immediately. Dhanapati at once sent invitation letters through couriers to his kinsmen and relatives residing far and near. The invitees began to gather. The most notable among them was Dhūsadatta, the most prominent member of the caste, from Vardhamāna. Riding on an elephant came Cānda, the celebrated merchant from the city of Campā accompanied by Lakshmi and Gadādhara (Vishnu). From Karjanā came Hari Lā and Nilāmbara Dāsa with their brothers riding on horse. Sanātana Canda and his brothers Gopāla and Govinda came from Ganapura. Bāsu Lā from Daśagharā and Sridhara Hazara from Siyakhālā arrived. Riding on a chariot drawn by eight horses came the merchant Saṅkha Datta from Sāko. Then came Viṣṇu Kuṇḍa wearing embroidered robe accompanied by seven brothers in palanquins. From Kāyathi came Aravinda Dāsa, from Jaḍagrāma came Raghu Datta, from Phatepura-Baḍaśūla Hari Caṇḍa, from Teghari Gopala Datta, from Sītalapura Rāma Raya and his nine brothers—some by road, others on boat—from Naṛugrama Rāma Datta, from Pāncara Caṇḍidāsa Khāna, from Sātagā Rāma Dā, from Viśupura Yośomanta Khāna, from Khāṇḍāghosa Bāsu Lā, from Hālīśahara five relatives, Rām, Raghu, Rāghava, Késaba, Jawārdana, from Gotāna Dhusa Datta and his five brothers, Yādhava, Mādhava, Hari, Śrīdhara and Balai, and finally Dhanapati's father-in-law Lakshapati with rich presents. The guests numbered seven hundred. They were all received cordially.

The trouble came when the guests were called to dinner cooked by Khullanā. They refused on the ground that they were doubtful about his second wife's chastity in as much as during his absence in Gour she was engaged in grazing goats outside the town. They would be satisfied if she underwent occult tests or if Dhanapati paid a suitable amount as compensation to the community. Dhanapati reported the situation to Khullanā. Khullanā forbade him to pay any compensation. She was willing to undergo any trial they would demand. It was done and she passed all the severe inhuman tests one by one but the guests would not relent. They finally demanded that Khullanā should undergo the Fire Ordeal known as *Jau-hara* (Wax pavilion). Relying on help from the Great Goddess, Khullanā gladly underwent the ordeal. A wax pavilion was built, she entered into it, doors were closed and it was set to fire. When the pavilion was reduced to ashes and fire was quenched, Khullanā came out unscathed. At this miracle the resistance of the kinsmen and relatives collapsed. They joined the dinner and were dismissed with ample presents.

Dhanapati's troubles were not over. After a few days he was called by the king, who commanded him to go forthwith to Simhala and fetch sandal and conchshells which were sorely heeded. The merchant pleaded to be excused but the king was adamant. Dhanapati returned home and made arrangements for the journey. His ships and boats since his father's days were out of use and were kept in the dark under water. They were now renovated and filled with cargo for trade. He was in so much haste that he did not care to consult his astrologer for an auspicious day of starting. As he was leaving the house Lahanā saw him in private and said that her co-wife was engaged in worshipping some obscure deity. Dhanapati was a staunch devotee of Śiva, the deity of the merchant class. He was furious and disturbed Khullanā, while she was engaged in worship of the great Mother. Khullanā was terribly afraid for the future of her husband but the Great Goddess assured her.

Dhanapati started with his fleet which sailed down the Ajaya and the Gaṅgā and reached the sea. The poet has mentioned notable ports and spots that lay on both sides of the rivers — Lalitapura, Indrāni where the merchant worshipped the local icon of Śiva called Indrisvara, Navadvipa and Pādapura, Śāntipura and the administrative town Ambuyā, Guptapadā, and the port of Kodāliya near Bagā-caṅḍīgāchā, Halīshahara and Trivenī, where there was always a crowd of people for taking holy bath in the Gaṅgā and then the fleet arrived at the port Saptagrāma. Here Dhanapati stopped for a couple of days and made some transactions. He started from there and passed by Nimāitīrtha and Khaḍadaha (where he and the sailors shouted with reverence the name of Vīrabhadra<sup>19</sup>). Then he came to Kumāranagara where the merchant worshipped the earthen image of Śiva. Then he came to Chatrabhogā and Hāthyāgara. Thence he reached Medanamalla on the right and Birakhāna on the left. He was near the mouth of the river, from where the roar of the sea was heard. (Here the poet gives a list of rivers which were tributaries to the Gaṅgā). Now he encountered a terrible storm to which most of his vessels fell victim. With the rest he arrived at Sanketa Mādhava where he worshipped the celebrated tower of Viṣṇu. Dhanapati now sailed following the coast and arrived at Nilāchala (Puri) where he and the sailors landed and worshipped Jagannātha. Starting from there the fleet passed by many countries and islands, most of which are fictitious. For instance, Kaḷadhantapura, Chandradvīpa of Siddh, Leech Lake, Conchshell Lake, Ramanaka island (Roman territory?), Serpent Lake, etc. The fleet was now approaching the narrow channel leading to Simhala.

Dhanapati with his cargo landed at Ratnamālā port and at once visited the king and offered him choiced goods as

19. Vīrabhadra was the son of Nityānanda, the right arm of Caitanya. This mention fixed a date for this statement.

Nityānanda had settled in Khaḍdaha and Vīrabhadra succeeded him about the time when the poet was about to leave his native village.

present. The king was pleased and offered him all help. Dhanapati then told the king of his wonderful experience at Kālidaha. The king expressed his surprise for not being aware of the divine appearance in his territory and he took his police-chief to task for not reporting him the matter. The police-chief said that the merchant was telling fiction and not fact. Dhanapati was piqued and insisted on his veracity. There was an altercation between the police-chief and the merchant. Finally it was settled that the merchant would show the sight to the king and his court.

On the next day the merchant accompanying the king and his court came to Kālidaha but failed to show the wonderful sight. At this the king was enraged. He sentenced the merchant to lifelong imprisonment. Accordingly Dhanapati was put into a dark and dusty prison hall.

The poet now comes back to Ujāni. Khullanā in due course delivered a son who was named Śrīpati (or Śrīmanta). All the rites were performed and the child was growing up under the fond care of Khullanā. Here the poet gives us a specimen of contemporary nursery verse:

Oh child, come come, why do you cry, my dear?

I'll pluck for you flowers from heaven. Each of them costs a lakh (of rupees).

I'll make a garland of the flowers, my precious dear, stop crying.

I'll lay a snare in the sky and catch for you the autumnal moon.

I'll fix the moon on your forehead as decoration. I'll give you a golden ball to play with, my dear.

I'll give you milk cakes to eat and I'll smear you with scented paste and I'll give you excellent betel stuffed with camphor and bits of preserved nuts to chew. I'll arrange for you to marry a couple of king's daughters with chariots, horses and elephants (as endowments).

Śrīmanta, decorating himself with scented pastes, shall enjoy rides in fancy boats.

The child, tenderly fanned, was sleeping quietly. So sings Mukunda.

Under the loving care of his mother and the other two members of the family the child grew up. When he was in his fifth year Lahanā, the officiating head of the family, requested their family priest to undertake schooling of the child. The brahmin agreed. He performed the rites of initiation (*Hātekhadi*). After that Śrīpati attended the school at his teacher's residence, regularly in the morning. There were other pupils of varying age and learning various subjects and topics, such as grammar, lexicography, literature, logic, astronomy, astrology and medicine. Danāi Ojhā, the teacher, often narrated to his pupils interesting stories from the Puranas where God was invariably merciful to criminals and sinners. One day Śrīpati heard such a tale and questioned the validity of God's behaviour. Danāi Ojhā, however, took this attitude of the young pupil as impertinence. He said:

I am now fifty years old but I have never been challenged and insulted in my discourses. To explain oneself to a child is the worst experience for a teacher. You won't understand if I explain and if I speak the truth you will be hovelling in the dust.

Śrīpati remarked that in discussing learned topics there is no question of personal honour or dishonour. At this the teacher flew up in rage and said that Śrīpati had no right to contradict him as he was a bastard. He asked the boy to leave his place at once. Śrīpati left, his eyes streaming.

He arrived at home apparently unnoticed by anybody and shut himself up in his bedroom. Dinner time was over but Śrīpati had not yet returned from school. Khullanā was extremely anxious and she sent Dubālā in search of her son. The servant could not find Śrīpati anywhere and returned home. Khullanā then rushed out and went straight to the teacher. He told her his altercation with her son and remarked



that he must have returned home. Danāi Ojhā took her to task for her free activity and reminded her that she was probably now a widow because her husband, absent for so many years, should now be considered dead and she should now behave as a widow.

Khullanā, humiliated, returned home and went straight to her son's bedroom and knocked at the door. As there was no response she cried piteously and wept. Śrīpati at last opened the door. The mother and the son had a heart to heart talk. He insisted that unless her mother agreed to allow him to go to Simhala in search of his father he wouldn't take any food and commit suicide. Khullanā had to agree. Śrīpati then demanded from Lahanā the sanction for the expenditure of building a fleet he would be sailing with carrying cargo to Simhala. Lahanā agreed, Sripati broke his fast.

Next day he engaged the town-crier to beat a drum throughout the town inviting carpenters for building up a fleet of seven ships as soon as they could. He promised handsome fees for the work. The great Goddess was helpful ; by her command the divine architect and his two assistants appeared as very old artisans and responded to the announcement. Śrīpati at first could not believe that such old men could build a fleet. But their leader said that they could do everything if sufficiently paid. Śrīpati commissioned them.

The fleet was soon ready. The poet gives somewhat detailed description of each ship.

The first boat was a hundred yards in length and twenty yards in breadth. On the front was built the face of a shark, occupying a square yard. Diamonds were set as eyeball. The next boat, Madhukara, had a central cabin and seats on two sides for the rowing sailors.

They built a watch-tower with the mast atop and the strong room by it. Then they built a ship named "Betel Cup" with a lion emblem. The next ship was named "Victoria". Next was built a big fine boat, "Fierce in Fight". The sixth boat was named "All Holed" and the

seventh was "Dancing Hall". They built oars and helms out of jackfruit and salwood. They fixed flag staff on the boats. The boats were floating in the "Whirl Pool" dockyard.

In the morning Śrīpati found the boats ready for sailing in the Whirl Pool dockyard. He consulted an experienced astrologer and fixed the sailing date. He then collected goods to be sold and then approached the king to get his permission for his voyage. Before that he had obtained his mother's consent. The king at first was reluctant to give him the necessary permission but Śrīpati persuaded him and the king relented. Encouraged by his mother's blessings Śrīpati set sail. He pursued the same course as his father and ultimately reached the narrow channel leading to the port Ratnamālā. Like his father Śrīpati also saw the wonderful vision of a beautiful girl sitting cross legged on a full-blown lotus growing out of the sea and playfully gobbling down and vomiting an elephant. Śrīpati was welcomed by the king of Siṃhala. He made arrangements for the sale and exchange of the goods brought by the young merchant but Śrīpati committed the same mistake as had been done by his father. He confided to the king his unique experience of witnessing a divine girl at the entrance of the narrow channel leading to the port. The king was extremely annoyed to hear this fantastic tale repeated by another foreign merchant. He thought that perhaps foreign merchants were spreading this false story in order to damage the prestige of Siṃhala. The king harshly demanded that the young merchant must show him the sight, otherwise he would be punished for spreading falsehood. Śrīpati failed to show the sight and was condemned to death. The king ordered to confiscate all his goods and ships.

The executioner led Śrīpati to the place of execution. The young merchant offered some bribe to the executioner and asked him to spare an hour so that he could worship his deity for the last time. The required ingredients, viz., eight grains of rice and eight strands of durvā grass were easily obtained. Śrīpati then paid his last homage to the Great Goddess and

was ready for execution. Now the Great Goddess appeared there as a very old woman walking with difficulty with the help of a stick. She approached the executioner, gave her blessings and said piteously,

May you live long and enjoy wealth. I have come to you for the purpose of recovering my last grandson, this child. I am suffering from infirmity. If I sit down I cannot get up without support, but there is nobody to help me. I am missing my grandson for sometime. But now I find him here. My dear Sir, how did you get hold of him? Please give him back to me. I am in search of him throughout the country. I had been to Aṅga, Vaṅga, Kaliṅga, Utkala, Trigarta, Lāhura (modern Lāhore), Dilli (modern Delhi) and other places. Now I am here in Siṃhala. By extreme ill fate my husband is a destitute, mad and addicted to drug. He is not competent even to beg. Our only possession is an aged ox. We have no place to settle in. My brother was drowned in the sea. I have two sons but they do not care for us. Please give me back my grandson. I bless you with all my heart. The child is quite innocent. Duplicity or misbehaviour is totally unknown to him. Please give him back. I entreat you.

To the old brahmin lady's piteous appeal the executioner humbly replied that the young fellow was a foreign merchant who had somehow offended the king and the king had sentenced him to death. He himself being a servant of the king was helpless. In the meantime the old lady had drawn the boy close to her and held him in embrace. The executioner now tried to pull him away but could not. He then tried to strike the boy mortally but failed. His assistant came to help but all his arms were of no avail. The boy remained unhurt.

The executioner took the old woman for a witch and he reported the matter immediately to the king. The king at once sent an army to assist the executioner. The Great Goddess created then and there a counter army of ghost, ghouls and demons to oppose.

A fierce fight ensued. The army of the king was routed. On the advice of his minister Sālavāhana, the king of Siṃhala then fell at the feet of the old brahmin lady begging for respite. The Goddess relented and showed the king and his Court the wonderful vision of the girl and the elephant. The king was convinced of Śrīpati's truthfulness. The Goddess then commanded him to marry her daughter immediately to Śrīpati as compensation for his ill treatment of the young merchant. Śrīpati demurred and said that he had come in search of his father and until he found him or knew his fate he wouldn't marry. The Goddess was pleased. She then asked the king to release all the prisoners living wretchedly in the dusty and dark underground prison house. (The astrologer consulted by Śrīpati had told him that his father was a prisoner for life in Ceylon). All the prisoners were at once released by order of the king. Śrīpati met them but could not identify his father as he was born sometime after his father had left home. Then suddenly he remembered that his mother had told him that there was a black spot on his father's forehead (because of his daily touching the ground with his forehead in paying homage to his ancestral deity, Śiva) and a wart on his nose. Besides, one of his front teeth was brighter. Śrīpati could now recognise his father. But before revealing himself as his son Śrīpati had a talk with the prisoner. He asked:

Prisoner, tell me— what is your name? To what caste do you belong? From what country have you come? Give me an account of your family. If you tell me frankly I will reward you and send you back home.

The prisoner replied:

I belong to the caste of scent-merchant. I belong to the country known as Gauḍa. I am a resident of the village Ujabanī (i.e., Ujjayanī) in Mangalkoṭa region. My surname is Datta and my name is Dhanapati. Our king is widely known as Vikramakeśarī. My imprisonment here is an act of fate.

Śrīpati questioned:

Prisoner, tell me the name of your father and grandfather. How long ago had you left your native place? To what clan do you belong? Whose daughter is your mother? Tell me the name of her grandfather. To what clan do they belong? Your distress is painful to me. Do speak frankly.

The prisoner answered:

Raghupati was my grandfather and Jayapati was my father. They were residents of the well-known Vardhamāna region. Our clan is Durbārisi (i.e., Durvāsa). My mother's name was Candramukhī. My mother's father was Somacanda of the clan Kausika.

Śrīpati asked:

How many wives have you? What are their names? When did you leave your village? I know you have suffered terribly. Tell me how far from here is Ujbanī.

The prisoner replied:

My two fathers-in-law are named Nidhipati and Lakṣapati and brothers are residing at Ichānī. They belong to kāśyapa clan, their surname is Datta. My two wives are Lahanā and Khullanā. I am undergoing imprisonment for more than twelve years. A journey to Ujbanī from here will take three months.

Śrīpati quarried:

Prisoner, why did you come to Siṃhala? Tell me frankly for what offence you had been condemned to imprisonment. You must speak freely as I feel for you.

The prisoner replied:

I was commissioned by our king to fetch from the south conchshell and sandal, the supply of which was exhausted in the royal store-room. At the end of my journey I saw a wonderful vision; a beautiful girl squatting on a full-blown lotus and alternately gobbling

and vomiting an elephant. I mentioned this vision to the king here. Unfortunately I promised to show the vision to the king but could not. For that offence I was sentenced to imprisonment shackles-bound.

Śrīpati asked:

You are imprisoned here for a long time but why have your son not come here to enquire? Your wives and relatives apparently do not care for you. Tell me, prisoner, why is your king indifferent?

The prisoner answered:

Unfortunately I have no son. It appears that my people do not care for me. I cannot blame my wives because they are helpless. It is my ill fate that our king does not care for me. Sir, you are now my son and relative. Please take pity on me.

Śrīpati said:

Prisoner, if you have no issue then who takes care of your wives? How could you leave them uncared for and come away on a long voyage? Tell me, prisoner, why did you accept the commission of the king to come here?

The prisoner replied:

My first is barren and the second was pregnant when I left. The king sent me here when my second wife was carrying for six months. The only helping hand at home is our old maidservant Dubalā. I do not know whether my wife has given birth to a male or a female child.

The prisoner's eyes were streaming as he was speaking. He fell down senseless. Then the prisoner was shaved, bathed and properly clothed. Dhanapati then worshipped Śiva. He then dined with Śrīpati who had carefully arranged the dishes. After dinner they sat together and relaxed. Śrīpati casually asked him whether he could read the Bengali alphabet. Dhanapati said, "Of course, I can." Śrīpati then handed over to him a letter and asked him to read it aloud. Dhanapati read it slowly. The letter began with the word *svasti* (Hail!).

My dear Khullanā, my love and all my good wishes to you. I write this letter to counteract all doubts and suspicions that might arise in future. You are now carrying for six months and I am commanded by the king to go to Simhala. If you deliver a daughter, name her Śaśikalā and marry her to a person belonging to a good family. If a son is born give the name Śrīpati to him. You must take care of him and see that he is properly educated and trained. If you find him competent send him to Simhala with a fleet of cargoes for trade. These instructions I give you in this letter.

As he was reading, Dhanapati's eyes were streaming. Śrīpati's eyes were also tearful. When the reading was finished Śrīpati recounted to the prisoner the history of his father's meeting with Khullanā, marriage with her and subsequent incidents up to his start for Simhala. Dhanapati now understood that the young merchant was none but his son. It was a blissful union.

Dhanapati urged his son for leaving Simhala at once as the place was infested with cheats and rogues; the king was unjust and cruel and Śrīpati must not marry the king's daughter. Śrīpati then assured him that it was now all well and there was no need for worry any more.

Śrīpati was soon married to the king's daughter, Suśīla. Comfortable life under the care of the king of Simhala made the father and the son forgetful of returning home. The attitude of the father and the son worried the Great Goddess who was anxious to remove the distress of her devotee Khullanā. On Padmā's advice she appeared in a dream in the guise of Khullanā to Śrīpati and piteously spoke to him of the miserable condition of the family. In his long absence the king had taken away all their property. They were now practically destitute. This dream made Śrīpati anxious for immediate return. His wife tried to detain him. She remarked that a dream is a false vision and it could be counteracted by holy ritual. She also tried to tempt her husband by telling him in

detail the comforts that were available in Simhala throughout the year. Here we find a fine *Bāramāsi* (Twelve Monthly) poem narrating the pleasures enjoyed during a year. Some portions are quoted below in translation:

In the month of Agraḥāyana, harvest is gathered. Our house would be filled with paddy, rice and mustard. I shall make my father sanction a hundred store-rooms to put in the crops. The top month is auspicious. The man who is not a cultivator is helpless.

In the month of Pauṣa we shall pass the days in various pleasures. There would be good supply of fish, meat, honey, raddish and other items of foodstuff. We will pass the winter in pleasure and you would forget the days you had enjoyed at Ujāni.

In the month of Phālguna all sorts of flowers would be blooming in our gardens. I shall build there a pleasure pavilion. There we will pass our time sporting in coloured and scented dust. I shall sing with my girl friends and shall be delighted to hear songs on Śrīkṛṣṇa.

But Śrīpati wouldn't listen to his wife Suśīla's enticement and entreaties. He would start early next day. Suśīla rushed to her mother weepingly and reported to her Śrīpati's intention to leave Simhala next day. The queen-mother through her personal maid tried variously to detain Śrīpati for a year at least. But Śrīpati would not agree. The queen-mother then reported the matter to her husband. The king came in haste to Śrīpati and attempted to detain him at Simhala for four months. It was of no avail. The king then appealed to Dhanapati but he could not help. Sālavāhana then consulted his councillors. They advised him not to antagonise the son-in-law. The king had to relent. He restored the entire fleet of Śrīpati and stuffed the ships with plenty of priceless present and costly commodity. Śrīpati, Dhanapati and Suśīla with the fleet left for home and passing through the old route entered Ajaya and stopped a few miles away from Ujabanī. From there Dhanapati sent the captain of his ship to Ujabanī and



informed his family of their safe arrival. When the fleet arrived at Ujabanī the old town was excited. Śrīpati and his wife riding in a palanquin arrived home and were received by Khullanā and Lahanā joyfully. Dhanapati came later in a bullock-cart that was also carrying the dowry and prizes. After receiving her son and husband Khullanā prayed to the Great Goddess with the appeal that she would now be gracious to her stupid husband. The Goddess relented and Dhanapati was restored to his normal health and appearance.

Śrīpati then visited the king Vikramakesari and delivered the goods for which he had been commissioned. The king was very pleased on the return of the father and the son. He was curious to know the experience of Śrīpati in his voyage to Siṃhala and recovery of his father there. In course of his narration Śrīpati mentioned the vision of the Girl on the Lotus. The king disbelieved him and called him a liar. Śrīpati took offence and promised to show him the sight.

The king became angry and said that if he failed he would be put to death. Otherwise he would give his daughter in marriage to him. Earnest prayer of Śrīpati brought down the Great Goddess and the mirage appeared on land before the king and courtiers. The king was humbled and Śrīpati was married to his daughter at once. On the next day Śrīpati returned home with his second bride, Jayāvati. The couple was warmly received by Khullanā and Lahanā.

Khullanā's happiness was not yet complete. Disease and starvation had deformed the once stalwart and handsome merchant Dhanapati. She now prayed to the Great Goddess for her husband's restoration to normal health and looks. The Goddess fulfilled her wishes. Dhanapati was restored to his former health. The original version of Mukunda's poem ends here with a long poem summarizing its contents. It was the Great Goddess who recounted the entire history to her devotee. The concluding couplet of this poem, previously quoted, contained the date of its first performance. There are one or two poems after the Aṣṭamaṅgālā which describe the return of Ratnamālā and Mālādhara to heaven.

## 4

### The Deity

Mukunda had mentioned repeatedly that he was writing the poem with the sole purpose of glorifying the Goddess whom he had mentioned by many names: Abhayā (Protective), Ambikā (Motherly) and Caṇḍī (Passionate). Mukunda's long narrative is like a minor epic and is not a single story. Its three parts illustrate the glorious activities of apparently five different goddesses.

The first part comprises stories of two divine girls — not full-fledged deities — Satī and Umā (Pārvatī), the only connecting link being God Śiva as the husband of the two divine ladies. The story of Satī is given in an almost bare outline. The material is taken directly from Puranic tradition. The Puranic tradition, however, goes back to Vedic lore. In early Vedic prose literature there is the story of Rudra (Śiva) who was created by the gods to punish the creator Prajāpati for violating his own daughter. At this extremely improper conduct of Prajāpati the gods were enraged. They discharged anger which concentrated and turned into a new god Rudra (literally meaning "Howler", subsequently meaning "Hunter"). Rudra was ready to shoot Prajāpati down. (The Vedic story, however, stops here but the Puranic version mentions the result, beheading of Daśa).

The story of Umā (Parvati) is adapted almost directly from *Kumārasambhava* of Kālidāsa. In the first story the divine lady

suffered for being married to a hapless mendicant whom his father did not like. In the second story, on the other hand, the divine lady tried her best to win the love of the man of her choice. Here also the husband was a very needy man but he was held in high esteem by her father. Domestic suffering compelled her to leave her husband and seek her fortune elsewhere.

The second part contains the most interesting of the five stories. The source of its material is not found in any Sanskrit Purānas (except perhaps in a single verse occurring in a very late Purāna which seems to have been compiled in the fifteenth century in Bengal). Apparently Mukunda's source was some Prākṛit or Abhatta text or tradition. (From the point of view of comparative mythology this story is very important in as much as it has elements that go back beyond the Indo-Iranian period).

The deity here is a goddess of a very peculiar type. She is a composite personality consisting of three distinct divine concepts found in the Rigveda. In Mukunda's treatment also the Goddess appears in three distinct forms of manifestation. Before animals she remains invisible but her presence is demonstrated by her speech to them. She is here the Goddess Vāk (Speech). To the man Kālaketu she appeared as a lizard (Godhikā), the woman Phullarā met her as a beautiful lady. The Goddess appearing as a lizard can be compared to the Vedic tradition of the Goddess Earth viewed as Sarparajñī (Serpent Queen). Her appearance as a young girl before Phullarā clearly refers to the tradition of Kanyākumārī (Little Virgin) whose worship is included in the three day festive ritual of the Goddess Durgā performed annually in autumn and or in spring. The Godhikā story is very old. It is traceable to Pāli Jātakas.

Mukunda names the deity that commanded the forest strip as Varga-bhīmā (literally, Queen of the restricted area). It is almost a synonym of the Vedic Goddess Aranyānī (literally,

mistress of forest land), celebrated in a hymn in the tenth Maṇḍala of the Rīgveda. Both the deities are called "Mother of the wild animal" and they have common characteristics.

The name of the hunter Kālaketu is very interesting. Etymologically it means a person identified by a black spot. It is practically the same as Nīlakaṇṭha (literally, "Blueneck"), a name of Rudra-Śiva. This identity in name leads to the suspicion that the Kālaketu story had its remote origin in the legend of the Kirāta-Śavara hunter in the Vindhya hills as found in the Mahābhārata. This, in fact, is a legend corresponding to the story of the Himālayān deities Rudra-Śiva and Umā-Haimavatī. Kirāta-Śavara and Rudra-Śiva of the two legends are represented in Mukunda's story as Kālaketu, and Kirāta-Śavarī and Umā-Haimavatī correspond to Phullarā and the Goddess as a brahmin girl. In the Himalayan legend Umā-Haimavati won the affection of Rudra-Śiva through hard penance whereas in the Vindhya legend (and also as in Mukunda's story) the female deity has succeeded in winning the love of the hunter by offering promise of wealth and comfort. If this theory is accepted it may be presumed that Phullarā (literally, Blooming Lips) was identical with the Goddess appearing in Mukunda's narrative first as chameleon and then as a glorious brahmin girl.

The basic legend receives further extension if we consider the names of Kālaketu's parents. His father's name was Dharmaketu. (It was really dharma, the element ketu being added in analogy of his son's name Kālaketu), and mother's name was Nidayā meaning "Cruel Lady". It is also a name of the Great Goddess Caṇḍī. Apparently Dharma and Nidayā correspond to Dharmathākura and his consort Ketakā of the story of creation as found in the post-Puranic legend current in mediaeval Bengal. According to this legend Rudra-Śiva was a son of Dharma and Ketakā (Ketakā was a cruel woman: her conception led to Dharma's death).

The story of Kālaketu is not without interest for the student of cultural history of the world. It gives a nice picture

of progress of human society, its transition from wild life to agricultural stability.

The matter of the third part is a long narrative easily divisible into two stories - one ending in the father's mishap and the other ending in the son's triumph. In the first story the Great Goddess appeared throughout as an elderly divine lady who is always ready to help her devotee. (She had partiality for women.) Her worship was a very simple ritual. A pot filled with water represented her. The offerings were eight grains of rice and eight blades of common grass. In the second story the Goddess manifested herself as a decrepit brahmin woman who was in search of her lost grandson. The Goddess, however, met a rival divinity with whom there was a clash which she won by exerting her tremendous destructive power. It is this rivalry of two deities that distinguishes the story of the third book from that of the second.

The adventure of Śrīpatī in Simhala is faintly reminiscent of the account of Vijaya-simha's advent in the same country as narrated in Mahāvamśa, a Pali Buddhistic text. Simhala was then in possession of semi-divine Yakṣas. On Vijay's arrival the Yakṣas sent a Yakṣinī in the form of a bitch to spy on Vijaya and liquidate him. Vijaya was spiritually protected and the bitch (who reminds us of the divine bitch Saramā sent by the gods to trace the stolen cattle of the gods as told in the Rigveda) failed and ultimately became Vijay's wife and thereby founded the royal dynasty there. If we equate the Girl-on-the-Lotus with Suśīla, the daughter of the king of Simhala, the identification of the Pāli story with the Bengali would be plausible.

The Girl-on-the-Lotus was the guardian deity of Simhala. She was perhaps a mighty Yakṣinī. Yakṣas were stockholders of wealth. Therefore the guardian Yakṣinī later on became in Indian tradition the protective deity of the rich community, i.e., the merchant folk. She was represented in art (sculpture or icon) by the figure of a gorgeously clad beautiful lady

squatting on a full-blown lotus growing in mid-ocean, two elephants on her left and right pouring water on her head. When Śrīpati and Dhanapati were approaching Ceylon, the Goddess showed them a distorted image of herself in order to warn them not to misbehave in the court of Simhala.

## The Structure

Poetic compositions in proto-new Indo-Aryan languages, such as Bengali, Gujrati and Rajasthani were publicly performed in two slightly different manners according to the size of the composition. Very short poems comprising of one to twelve or fourteen verse lines were sung whereas longer compositions were chanted. The longer compositions in course of time developed into fairly long narratives of various types. They absorbed songs and were accompanied by puppet-dance. Such literary compositions came to be known as Pāñcālikā (Bengali, Pāñcāli) meaning "Puppet-show". Mukunda's work belongs to this genre. This name survived in Bengali till the end of the seventh century. Later on Pāñcāli denoted short narratives belonging to folklore. In Bengali the hero or heroine of Pāñcāli poem is invariably a divine being and performances of such narratives were considered ritualistic. So the genre is named Maṅgala meaning "Holy auspicious".

Maṅgala poems in Bengali gathered much material from the Puranas and their structure was somewhat modelled after the Sanskrit texts. Writers of Maṅgala poems were highly esteemed as established poets. The poets on their part tried to enhance the merit of their composition by a show of extensive knowledge both academic (e.g., Zoology, Ornithology,

Botany, Agriculture; Town planning, Geography, Topography, Lexicography, Astrology, etc.) and non-academic (e.g., games and sports, rituals, religious and social, sorcery and black art, domestic intrigue and social rivalry, child welfare, education, ship building, commerce). Such unwarranted extraneous insertions were prescribed by writer of guide books. However, one must say that Mukunda as a sophisticated poet could not overlook directions of the guide book writers, but his genius rendered the unwarranted material agreeable, fitting the canvas. We are really grateful to Mukunda for supplying us with these rare and useful information.

Works of the Pāñcalikā or Maṅgala genre incorporated specimens of almost all poetic crafts and devices. In old days a poet's excellence depended on his capacity of promptly solving a conundrum or riddle on the spot. In the Śuka-Sārikā episode at the beginning of the third part, Mukunda has quoted some very interesting riddles with solution. (Some of these riddles were old as they occur in the Sanskrit version also.) I quote a few instances.

It is a sealed chamber created by God.  
 A yogī fellow is there fasting.  
 When the fellow grows up strong he comes  
 out smashing the room fashioned by God.

Answer : egg

It rests at the feet of Vishnu but it is  
 not a Vaishnaba,  
 It is not a tree but it has leaves  
 growing on its body.  
 A scholar may solve it in a few days.  
 But a fool cannot do so even in forty years.

Answer : Tulasī plant

A chariot that moves in speed but does not  
 run even a foot.  
 The charioteer is not there, he is sitting  
 in relaxation.



You scholar pay your attention to this riddle.  
The chariot runs in the sky and the  
charioteer is on the ground.

Answer : kite

It is not a tree but it grows in *Vana*  
It has profuse foliage.  
It moves about by the help of the wind.  
It remains in *Vana* but soils it.

Answer : Waterplant. The word *Vana* here means water and not forest.

There are four brothers engaged in colourful  
play,  
They are separated when alive but united in  
death.

Kavi-kaṅkaṇa pushes forward this riddle,  
A scholar may not solve it what to speak of fool.

Answer : dice

It is expected that a good poet would show his dexterity in painting all types of emotion a normal man experiences in life. Mukunda has not failed to do so. I quote a few lines in translation to illustrate his attempt in creating a scene of horror (which now appears to be primitive and juvenile).

To meet the army sent by the king of Siṃhala to help his police-chief in the execution of Śrīpati, the Mighty Goddess called her demon host. The demon host appeared at once. Mukunda describes the eight leaders of the demon army one by one. First came Smoky Nose who was a voracious giant. Next came Black Midget who knelt in fight. Next came Palm Leg who could fight day and night incessantly. Then appeared Horrible Monster who screeched and chewed human heads like nuts. Then came the chief Tall Rude, a staunch fighter. Next came Giant Goblin whose teeth were a chain of shovels. Next appeared Lion Mouth who could

swallow armies. The eighth leading demon was Joint Horn who routed the king's army and smashed their armour.

Mukunda's poem is an epic in size, but there is no formal division like canto, chapter or book. It is, however, divided into small units of verse (i.e., chants and songs). Chants were known as *Payāra* meaning precipitous fall or waterfall; while songs were known as *Nācāri* meaning "dancing steps". The verse units have no caption but one is separated from other by a colophon couplet which generally contains the signature of the poet.

Most of the verses are written in *Payāra* and *Nācāri* versifications and he has shown his dexterity in handling these metres.

*Abhaṭṭa* varieties of *Payāra* and *Nācāri* were not unknown to him but instances are very rare. I cite one:

Dāmuniyā nagare Cakrāditya sūra  
Smarane jaḍimmā karaye dūra |  
Nandī Gopīnātha tāhe thākura  
Kautake racila Mukunda pura ||

In the town of Dāmuniyā there is Cakrāditya the  
Sun God

(He), when prayed, removes lethargy.

Gopī (nātha) Nandī is the landlord there.  
Mukunda the priest writes (this) in fun.

The metre here is really defective, *Payāra* with initial accent.

The total number of verses (i.e., chants and songs) are not the same as in the old manuscripts of Mukunda's poem. They vary from four hundred fifty to six hundred approximately. The original version of Mukunda's poetry, the final portion of which was sung at night in the Viṣṇu temple of Kāmeswara in the Śaka year 1477 (i.e., 1555-56 A.D.), probably contained three hundred verses or there about. But it must be admitted

that the poet himself must have added verses later on. It is also a fact that the singers of Mukunda's poem to whom most of the manuscripts belong had contributed largely to the inflation of the poem.

The performance of Mukunda's poem was no doubt a highly enjoyable public entertainment but it was also a ritual and was often an important item in the autumnal session of worship of the Great Goddess as against the Vaishnava festival of *Aṣṭaprahara Saṅkīrtana* (Day and Night Holy Chants). The performance of Mukunda's *Caṇḍīmaṅgala* was a ritual of eight days. It started on a Tuesday morning and ended on the next Tuesday morning. On the seventh day the performance occupied the entire night and terminated just after sunrise. For this reason the final portion containing the climax of the story which was performed throughout the night is technically called *Jāgaraṇa* (keeping awaked). The whole-night performance at the temple of Kāmeswara was a *Jagaraṇa* recital.



