
Translation Practices in Pre-colonial India: Interrogating Stereotypes

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Abstract

This present paper examines two assumptions that prevail in the current understanding of pre-colonial language/translation situation in India.¹ Translations of this period are seen primarily as empowering the vernaculars to become literary languages. It is also claimed that the vernacular languages were able to successfully negotiate the hegemony of Sanskrit through translations. Secondly, the scholars of 'Bhakti' movement hold that the "high texts" which were available only in Sanskrit were made available in vernaculars, and this move enabled certain sections of society (women and others) who were hitherto kept away from these texts to get direct access to divine teachings in their own languages. Thus, it is held that these "Bhakti" period translations democratized religion during that period. In this paper these two commonly held opinions would be examined in the context of pre-colonial translation practices in Kannada.

Translation practices of pre-colonial India are studied in four basic ways:

1. Looking at what the old grammarians have to say on the nature of language and drawing possible inferences from it for a theory of translation (See for example Gopinathan 2000- where he discusses implications of Bhartrhari's concept of *sphota* ['bursting forth'] for a theory of translation).

2. Looking at the question of identity-formation of a language and its relation to translation (See for example Kaviraj 1992, Pattanaik 2000 and Dash & Pattanaik 2002).

3. Analyzing the actual translations of the period, both textual analysis as well as placing them in a context (See for example Gopinathan 2000; Pattanaik, 2000 etc.), linking it to the questions of state, standardization of language, emergence of literature etc. (See for example Nagaraju 1995 and Pollock 1998 etc.).

4. Looking at the metaphors/phrases used by the authors while describing their indebtedness to earlier text(s)/author(s) and theorizing it (See Devy 2000, Mukherjee 1981 etc.).

It is not that these methods are mutually exclusive. The second and the third overlap considerably. And often in an article we might find these methods being juxtaposed in various combinations.

I will look at only the second and third kind of work to point out how the existing literature on pre-colonial translation practices does not apply to translations from and into Kannada and/or writing practices in what we call Karnataka (Kannada-speaking regions).

Discussing the relationship between identity formation of a language and religion, Sudipta Kaviraj remarks that during the Bhakti period the vernacular languages saw a gradual development and produced literature by slowly separating from the allegedly 'high' Sanskrit tradition. This development was very gradual and subtle. Kaviraj has characterized this development thus:

[V]ernacular literatures (Bhakti literature) and poetic traditions began an undeclared revolution.² Within the formal terms of continuity with classical traditions in terms of narratives, forms and texts, these 'translations' (the new literatures that were emerging in vernacular

languages were based on certain well-known Sanskrit texts) in vernaculars were hardly passive cultural creations; and they gradually produced an alternative literature which told the same stories with subtle alternative emphases to alternative audience (Words in parenthesis are mine, Kaviraj 1989: 35).

In a similar manner while surveying the translations into Oriya, Pattanaik says:

What is so significant about endotropic translation into Oriya is that it has always aligned itself with the attempt to formulate a distinct identity of the Oriya-speaking people. Endotropic translation has also acted as an instrument of democratization, consistently subverting the power bases of the elite religion and political groups (Pattanaik 2000: 72-73).

Discussing translations from Sanskrit into Oriya as social praxis in medieval Orissa, in another context, Dash and Pattanaik say:

The attempts at translations of deba bhasha (Sanskrit) texts in medieval India countered this divine origin theory of texthood by placing texts in a more public domain and by problematising the notion of authorship. Mediation between languages ultimately meant a shifting in social power-equations, because such transfers dealt a deathblow to the linkage of language with knowledge....
...non-Brahmins revolted against Brahmin hegemony by subverting texts written in Sanskrit. Translation activity was an expression of the desire on the part of the hitherto excluded social groups to appropriate a cultural space which had been denied them (sic) (Dash and Pattanaik 2002: 76).

But at a later stage they also add that the vernacular begins to emulate the hegemonic structure/language.

From the above quoted passages it is clear that two themes are identified in the context of translations in medieval India³. One is that translations which were hitherto not permitted in the direction of Sanskrit into Indian vernaculars did take place. And the other is that this challenged the hegemonic order/language, and was a democratic move.

A look at the translation practices in Kannada literature around 10th century onwards will warrant a reformulation of these two arguments. There are certain assumptions that work behind these arguments, and the aim of this article is to critically examine these assumptions and articulate doubts before laying out some future lines for research. To begin with, the emergence of Bhakti literature and the emergence of Indian language literatures don't coalesce in the context of the emergence of Kannada and Tamil literatures.⁴

Scholars such as S. Nagaraju and Sheldon Pollock, who have worked on the socio-political context of the emergence of Telugu and Kannada literature, point out that a certain kind of agrarian economy led to formation of states, and emergence of chieftains. These developments in turn enabled vernacular languages, making them capable of expressing complex issues. It also gave rise to literary production. Pollock characterizes the emergence of the language of Kannada literature in such a context as giving rise to a cosmopolitanism in the vernacular because these languages emulated the cosmopolitan vernacular (Nagaraju 1995 and Pollock 1998). These scholars have laid emphasis on state and class formations. I argue here that the role of religion cannot be undermined in the emergence of literature in Kannada and both state-formation and religion have to be taken into consideration.

Another problem that is haunting us, Translation Studies scholars is that of the language-culture overlap or equating class, caste and language. This is also due to the fact that we generally look at literary histories chronologically and not at their spatial spread (topos) and we take a single language/literature as a unit of construction of its history. We only grudgingly acknowledge its link with other languages or literatures. If those who are looking at translation practices firmly base their analysis on empirical data, this problem could be overcome. But for such an analysis, Translation Studies has to, as a precondition, look at the spatial spread of literature that maps literature not only chronologically but also spatially. If we don't do it, then we would apply certain theories which would tell us that translations from Sanskrit was from an alien land/culture; which was high culture and it was imposed on us; and through our subversive practices (i.e. mainly through translation) we negotiated the hegemony of Sanskrit and developed the vernacular literatures and democratized certain non-available religious texts into them.

Let me explain this with translation practices in pre-colonial Karnataka. Let me begin the story from second or third century B.C. According to well-known traditions, Jainism entered South India in a major way in 300 B.C. When there was a twelve-year famine, a large group of Jains headed by Srutakevali Bhadrabahu, accompanied by King Chandragupta, left Madhyadesha and came to Kalbappu (Shravanabelagola). Another small group moved towards Tamil country. But there is evidence of the existence of Jainism in Sri Lanka and in the Tamil region from around 6th century B.C. That is a different issue altogether. It is enough to understand that there were two streams of Jainism that came to South India at different points of time. In Tamil also we find that many of the early texts are Jaina texts. Authorship and its relation to religion are contentious issues. Still I would like to quote some of the texts claimed by Jaina scholars as Jaina texts: For example, *Tolkaappiyam* (450 A.D.),

Tirukkural (600 A.D.) *Silappadikaaram* (800 A.D.)⁵, *Jivaka Chintamani* (1000 A.D.) etc. (Khadabadi 1997: 208-209, and for more details on Jaina literature in Tamil, See Chakravarti 1974).

The impact of Jainism on Malayalam literature or Jainism in Malayalam is not much discussed. It might be due to the fact that by the time Malayalam emerged, the hold of Jainism in South India was on the decline. But still there are “points of contact” between Prakrit and Malayalam languages (Nair 1995).

We focus here on the aftermath of the entry of later stream of Jainas and their settling down in Shravanabelagola, which is in Hassan district of present-day Karnataka.

The Jaina group that came and settled down in Shravanabelagola had brought along with them the oral knowledge of Jainism. The knowledge was passed on orally from generation to generation. The teachings of Mahavira, which were in the Ardhamagadhi language and were in circulation in oral form, were put into script form around 5th century A.D., following Shwetambara and Digambara traditions. Most of it, except certain portions of the 12th and fifth agama, is lost; but whatever remained was put into the script by Pushpadanta and Bhutabali in Jaina Sauraseni Prakrit around 1st and 2nd century A.D. Even other canonical literature of Digambara Jains was composed in Jaina Sauraseni.

The translation of these canonical literatures appears not in the form of independent texts but in the form of commentaries of varied types written mainly in Maharastri Prakrit, Sauraseni Prakrit and also in Sanskrit. Only after these commentaries do we see original works in Sanskrit by Jaina teachers and scholars, along with works in Prakrit. The reasons for this could be two-fold:

1. As scholars like Khadabadi say, it was “to convince and propagate their religious tenets in Sanskrit-knowing circles and also to expand their influence over rival groups and others.” (Khadabadi 1997: 207).

2. As scholars like Pollock have argued, Sanskrit was gaining currency during this period, the middle centuries of the first millennium, because of a certain kind of state structure obtaining across South Asia and its dependence on Sanskrit as a language. I too argue that it might have become inevitable for Jains to translate as commentaries their canonical texts as well as compose secular texts in Sanskrit that might have been of use to the state.

There was also a moment when Sanskrit was preferred to Prakrit by Jainas. “The revolt in favour of using Sanskrit” says K.M.Munshi, “as against Prakrit, headed by Siddhasena Divakara (C.533 A.D.) was an attempt to raise the literature and the thought of the Jainas to the high intellectual level attained by those of the Brahmins. This revolt naturally met with considerable opposition from the orthodox Sadhus.” (quoted in Khadabadi 1997: 207).

The commentaries are a form of translations of this period and an important one. These have not been looked at by Translation Studies scholars. Commentaries are basically explications, interpretations in the same language or in a different language. How the meaning/interpretation of a text differs from time to time; whether the presence of different sects/sub-groups in a cult/religion can explain the differences or whether the differences in various commentaries constitute the different sects; whether the need for commentaries in the language of the original, is due to the language of the original composition being no more current in the language today - these are some of the questions that Translation Studies as a discipline has to address. Neglecting such an important area of investigation could be due to our leaning towards a certain notion of

literature that excludes what is generally called Shastra literature, which is also closely associated with religion.

Jaina tradition has four different kinds of commentaries - Choornis, Niryuktis, Bhashyas and Tikas. A study of these would in itself form another interesting research project. Niryukti is a genre peculiar to Jaina literature. Niryukti explains the meanings of the words in the original text and also gives details about references to other sects/religions, ethics, logic, arts, science etc. They contain stories that explicate a particular philosophical proposition. In order to explain the words that come in Niryukti and the detailed descriptions of the stories that are mentioned, Bhashyas came into existence. It is difficult to find out the difference between Bhashya and Niryukti as both are written in Prakrit in *Gaaha* prosody. Niryuktis contain references to the story and Bhashyas narrate them. Relatively speaking, Bhashyas are simpler to understand than Niryuktis. Similarly Choornis are simpler than both Bhashyas and Niryuktis. Choornis are basically bilingual texts written both in Sanskrit and Prakrit. Choornis review each and every word that occurs in Bhashyas and Niryuktis. Tikas are basically written either in Sanskrit or in languages such as Kannada, Tikas contain the original text in Prakrit as well as their explication in Kannada or Sanskrit (See Sannayya 1976: 100-101 for more discussion).

A cursory look at the catalogues of manuscripts found in the Jaina math at Shravanabelagola, now kept in the National Institute of Prakrit Studies and Research, would reveal the extent of practice of tika tradition in Shravanabelagola. Volume two of the catalogue, which describes the details of Prakrit manuscripts, contains 146 entries. Volume one has 455 entries and lays out details of Kannada manuscripts. This volume includes details of original Kannada texts as well as Kannada tikas on Prakrit and Sanskrit texts. These tikas contain the original texts as well. There are 146 Prakrit language

manuscripts that are found in Kannada scripts. Volume five contains Sanskrit texts, some of which also have Kannada tikas, volume three and four are updates to volume one giving details of Kannada manuscripts (Sannayya and Seshagiri 1997, 1998, 2003 and 2004). Even when we look at the ten volumes of catalogues published by Karnatak University, Dharwad, giving details of the manuscripts preserved in the Institute of Kannada Studies there, we find that more than 25% of the entries are either tikas or satiku (commentary with the original text) (Kalburgi 1992).

Kapil Kapoor talks about different ways of the renewal of texts that existed such as 1. commentary (tika) 2. recension (a creative revision) 3. redaction (a re-arrangement) 4. adaptation 5. translation 6. popular exposition ('katha pravachana parampara') and 7. re-creation (Kapoor 2006: 3).

Today many texts, which are not available but are mentioned in earlier texts, are recovered through their commentaries. One such text is the sacred Jaina text *Shatkandagama* (twelve Agamas), the commentaries of which are called *Dhavala*, *Jaya Dhavala* and *Maha Dhavala*. These commentaries were not known to the world till the end of the 19th century. The copies of these commentaries were in the Kannada script but the language was Prakrit. It took another 60-70 years to copy them to Devanagari script and translate it into Hindi before publishing in book form in 39 volumes.⁶ The Hindi translation was edited by Hiralal Jain, a Jaina scholar. Thus the foremost scripture of Jaina religion was preserved through a commentary in Prakrit but was in the Kannada script. Now it is available in Hindi translation, and a mega-project of translating it into Kannada has been on since 1998.

Such stories are not a rare phenomenon. When texts were preserved through palm-leaf manuscripts and the later generations did not know how to read them, they just worshipped them. In such

cases, commentaries have kept them alive and what Walter Benjamin calls the afterlife of a translated text is true both metaphorically and literally.

Coming back to the story of textual production in Karnataka, the centers of textual production in that period were mainly two: 1. Jaina mutts (mainly in Shravanabelagola) and 2. The royal courts. These centers didn't merely patronize textual production in Kannada but they produced texts in multiple languages.

In Shravanabelagola we find mainly puranic and shastra texts being produced in Prakrit, Kannada, Sanskrit, Apabrahmsha languages. Though none of the Apabrahmsha writers was born in Karnataka, they composed their texts in Karnataka. The two important writers of Apabrahmsha were Svayambhu and Pushpadanta and they got their patronage in Karnataka. Svayambhu, in the words of Prem Suman Jain, was the first "known writer of eminence who selected Ram and Krishna for composing the Prabhandha-Kavya in Apabrahamsa literature" (Jain 1977:155). His main works are *Paumachariu* and *Ritthanemichariu*. His influence on subsequent writers in Apabrahmsha and the Hindi language is well noted by scholars. Svayambhu's *Paumachariu* is dated by scholars as belonging to the middle of 8th century A.D. (See introduction to Vimalasuri's *Paumachariu* by Kulkarni).⁷

Then Pushpadanta is seen as a genius of Apabrahmsha literature. His patron was Bharatha and his son Nanna who were in the court of Krishna III of 10th century A.D. (for details on this issue, see introduction to *Mahapurana Vol.1*, Pushpadanta, 1979). Three works are credited to him: 1. *Mahapurana*, 2. *Nayakumarachariu* and 3. *Jasaharachariu*. It is said that he exerted great influence on later writers of Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi etc.

In a similar manner most of what became canonical literatures of Jainas later, such as the works of Acharya Kundakunda, Vattakera (both 1st century A.D.), Sivarya (2nd century A.D.), Yativrsabha (6th century A.D.), Acharya Nemichandra (10th century A.D.), Maghanandi (13th century A.D.) have composed texts in Karnataka in Jaina Sauraseni Prakrit (Khadabadi 1997b).

Similarly many Sanskrit texts have been written in Karnataka. *Mahapurana* is an important puranic text in Sanskrit. It served as a source text for various epics in Kannada, Sanskrit, Apabhrahmsa, Prakrit etc. *Mahapurana* is a text jointly composed by Bhagavajjinasenacharya and Bhavdgunabhadracharya (if you leave the honoric prefix Bhagavad and the suffix acharya, the names would be Jinasena and Gunabhadra). It is said that Jinasena could not complete the entire Purana on his own, by the time he came to the 4th poem of the 42nd chapter of the first volume, i.e. *Poorvapurana*, he died. Then his disciple Gunabhadra completed the *Poorvapurana*, i.e. the remaining poems of the 42nd chapter and five more chapters (*Poorvapurna* contains 47 chapters). Gunabhadra also wrote *Uttarapurana*. Thus this text is referred to not only as *Mahapurana* but also as *Poorvapurana* and *Uttarapurana*. Jinasena was a guru of Amoghavarsha, the Rashtrakoota king. Historians have fixed the date of Amoghavarsha's rule from 815 A.D. to 877 A.D. So, Jinasena must have been around that time, i.e. between 8th and 9th century. *Harivamshapurana* by Jinasena (a different Jinasena acharya) refers to Jinasena of *Mahapurana* and his guru Veerasena and the date of that text is fixed as 783 A.D. Jinasena of *Poorvapurana* must have written his other two works *Jinaguna Stotra* and *Vardhamanapurana*, which figure in *Harivamshapurana*. (See introductions written by Shantiraja Shastri in Jinasena and Gunabhadra 1992).

As no earlier puranic texts are available in the Jaina tradition, some of the scholars have said that *Mahapurana* of

Jinasena and Gunabhadra is the first Jaina puranic text. But internal evidence in this text refers to a text by Kavi Parameshti as a source text. Even though some of the Kannada epics also refer to Kavi Parameshti, whether they do so because Jinasena's text claims so or these later poets had seen Kavi Parameshti's text is not known. It is the usual tradition that while writing the epics these poets employ a technique of saying that though there is an individual talent in their composition, the original story had a divine origin, and is retold by several revered Acharyas to claim a certain kind of sanctity for what they are composing. It is through this ploy/technique that they would combine both individual talent and collective or shared tradition.

The canonical classical Kannada literature is full of epics composed based on *Mahapurana*; it has triggered the imagination of several later poets/scholars.⁸ *Mahapurana* narrates the purana related to 24 Thirthankaras, 12 Chakravartis, 9 Balabhadras, 9 Narayanas and 9 Pratinarayanans. Later epics have expanded a particular story of a Thirthankara or summarized the *Mahapurana* entirely, but focussed on one or two Thirthankaras/Chakravartis or others. Each later epic not only consults *Mahapurana*, if we go by the claims of the poet in the opening stanzas of the epic, but also other epics that have come in Kannada, Prakrit and Sanskrit. Only a thorough textual analysis would reveal whether they simply named the earlier texts/poets or they have taken them as source texts.

For example, the story of Yashodhara is retold by many. According to A.N Upadhye, who has written an introduction to Vadiraja's *Yashodharacharitra* (a Sanskrit epic of early 11th century) with a Sanskrit commentary by Lakshmana, and edited with an English translation in prose by K. Krishnamoorthy. There are important epics on the same theme before the *Yashodharacharitra* of Vadiraja. They are Prabhanjana's work (which is not available and hence the title is unknown), Somadeva's *Yasastilaka* (959 A.D.) and

Pushpadanta's *Jasaharachariu* (around 965 A.D.), the latter two being the most significant. (See Vadiraja 1963). Kannada *Yashodhara Charitre* by Janna was composed in 1209 A.D.⁹ Except Prabhajana, about whom I don't know much, all other writers lived in Karnataka. Pushpadanta, who I have discussed earlier, lived in Karnataka although he was an Apabhramsha writer.. Similarly Vadiraja's activities were patronized by Chalukya kings and he lived both in what are today called Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Janna was a Kannada poet. Only a comparative study of these various texts would help us to know which the original source is. And whatever be the original source, all the texts were composed here, in this land, so it was not an alien land or culture that poets like Janna were translating.

Most of the poets of that period were well-versed in many languages. They could compose poetry in a language learnt later in their lives.¹⁰ For example Chavundaraya, a tenth century writer, has written both in Kannada and Sanskrit. His *Trishashti Lakshna Mahapurana* is also known as *Chavundarayapurana*, it is an abridged prose version of *Mahapurana* mentioned earlier. Chavundaraya has also written another Sanskrit text called *Chaaritrasara*,¹¹ which is basically a conduct book for jaina saints, based on the earlier shastra literature found in both Prakrit and Sanskrit. He was the one who built the Gommateshwara statue in Shravanabelagola, and was a minister in Ganga dynasty (for details about Chavundaraya, see introduction to Kamala Hampana and KR Sheshagiri (eds) 1983). Chavundaraya's Kannada text has been helpful in fixing the dates, and the authorship of many Sanskrit texts (See Shastri 1977:39-41).

Chavundaraya's case is not an isolated instance. There were many who have written in more than one language during those days. Many of the poets of this medieval period have claimed that

they were *ubhaya bhasha kavīs* ('bilingual poets') or others have called them so.

A further point about Sanskrit textual production in Karnataka is that, many of the *Tikas* or *Vyakhyanas* available today on Jaina canonical literature in Sanskrit were composed during this period in Karnataka or, to be precise, in what historians call 'Deccan'.

Even a cursory look at the patronage given to literature by various dynasties that ruled Karnataka or Deccan would tell us that they provided patronage to writers of all languages, though there might have been differences in proportions either due to their own religious/language inclination or due to larger general factors which might have been beyond their control. Kadambas were the first ones to patronise Jainas. Gangas, who ruled from Talakadu, were the first to openly encourage Jaina literature (middle of the first millennium). Many of the kings during this period were also writers. Durvinita, who gets mentioned in Srivijaya's *Kavi Raja Maarga* might be the Ganga king Durvinita who ruled around 500 A.D. Another king of this dynasty Shivakumara (780-814) has written *Gajastaka*. Ereyappa (886-913) of this dynasty had patronised Gunavarma, who has written *Shudraka* and *Harivamsha*. Chavundaraya, who has already been broached earlier, was a minister with Rachamalla, the Ganga king. It is said that this dynasty was established with the help of a Jaina guru (Nagarajaiah 1999).

Similarly Rashtrakutas extended patronage to literatures in all languages. Writing about the condition of education and literature during the Rashtrakutas whose kingdom included even Gujarat, Altekar says that during this period Canarese literature (=Kannada literature) had begun to flourish in Karnataka (Altekar 1967:406). He also says that it was during this period that *kavya* or classical

style of writing established its grip in the Deccan. *Kavi Raja Maarga* composed by the Rashtrakuta king Amoghavarsha, is the first work of poetics in Kannada and is also the first available text in Kannada, although it is an adaptation of Dandi's *Kaavyadarsha*. During the reign of Krishna II many Sanskrit texts were composed. Altekar says that although "Hindu Sanskrit writers, having any composition of permanent value to their credit, are indeed few" in this period, the contribution of Jainism to Sanskrit literature is considerable (Altekar 1967: 408-409).

Rastrakutas who ruled from Malkhed extended their patronage to Sanskrit literature, Kannada literature and Prakrit literature. According to Nagarajaiah who has looked at this issue, "the literature of this age, in whichever language it may be, not only mirrors the religious liberalism, but also reflects the military strength, immense wealth, religious catholicity, cultural opulence, literary affluence, and love of art and architecture" (Nagarajaiah 2000:61). Ravikirthi (early 7th century), Kaviparamesthi (750 A.D.), Jinasena I and Jinasena II, Gunabhadra (already mentioned); Srinidhi (the author of *Mahapurana*), supposed to be the preceptor of Ugraditya (770-840 A.D.) who has written a treatise on the science of medicine called *Kalyanakaraka*; Kuchibhattaraka - all of these people contributed to writing *Mahapurana*. Bhatta-Kalankadeva (720-80 A.D.) is seen as someone who defeated Buddhists in the discussion on logic at the court of Pallava king Himasitala and drove them to Ceylon. He was a dialectician of unequalled eminence. He has authored basic texts on varied subjects including Jaina epistemology, logic and metaphysics like *Tattvartha-Rajavarthika*, *Astasati*, *Siddhiviniscaya Pramana-samgraha*; Swami Virasena has authored three important works on Jaina philosophy touching upon the science of computation, cosmography and ksetra ganita; Dhananjaya (late 8th century) is known for his lexicon and an epic *Dvisandhana Mahakavya*; Vadiraja (already mentioned); Vidyananda (900-950 A.D.) composer of *Tattvartha-sloka-varttika*,

Astrasahasri, *Yuktyanusasanalankara* etc.; Palyakriti Sakatayana (840 A.D.), a court poet of Amoghavarsha composed the grammar *Sabdanusasana*, he also wrote a commentary for his own work; Mahaviracharya (850 A.D.) was a protégé of Amoghavarsa-I and composed *Ganitasara-samgraha* (a mathematical book); Indranandi (930 A.D.), author of *Samayabhusana*, *Srutavatara*, *Nitisara*, *Srutapanchami* and *Jvalamalini-kalpa* was a resident of Manyakheta. He seems to have written an auto-commentary for his *Jvalamalini-kalpa* in Kannada. Somadevasuri is known for his *Yasastilaka*, a work commissioned by Baddega II (955-965 A.D.), a subsidiary of Rashtrakutas. Somadeva also flourished as a court poet of Calukyas of Vemulavada.

During the Chalukya period also we find many Sanskrit writers, Prakrit writers and Kannada writers. Chalukyas supported Vaidic literature, that too Shastra literature of a secular nature. On various subjects we find Shastra literature such as Jataka Tilaka, Grammar, Lexicons, Govaidya (Veterinary science), and Mathematics. As we have just seen, even the Rashtrakutas promoted shastra literature. The Chalukyas were ruling from Kalyana and they were known as Kalyana Chalukyas. Someshwara III (1127-1139) has authored *Manasollasa*. This text is seen as an encyclopedic work, a guide book to ruling, and the knowledge contained in it is a must for a king.¹² Even during the Keladi dynasty period as late as 1709 A.D., Basavaraja, the king composed an encyclopedic work, which is also one of the rare texts that gives a lot of historical facts (though not coherently narrated, but scattered), called *Sivatattvaratnakara*. The history of the dynasty is interwoven with different branches of knowledge (Chitnis 1974: 5-6 and 213-221). Another important text that was composed during the Kalyana Chalukya period in Sanskrit is *Mitakshara* of Vijnanesvara, which deals with the constitution of court of justice, the grades of courts, the branch of judicial procedure, the origin of ownership, the transfer

of ownership, the topic of possession as the basis of the title, the subject of partition and inheritance etc. This text has several commentaries: Apararka, a Silahara king ruling in the 12th century, has written a commentary called *Yajnavalkyadharmasastranibandha*.

After Rashtrakutas and Chalukyas, Seunas of Devagiri (also known as Yadavas) ruled the Deccan and South India. They also supported all languages and literatures. I will not elaborate on it. Hoysalas supported Jainism. Later on with the conversion of Bittideva into Vaishnavism, they also supported it. At the time of Seunas of Devagiri, Veerashaivism had made its presence in this region, so they also generously supported this new religion/sect.¹³ Prakrit literature continued even during the time of Hoysalas - commentaries both on earlier canonical Jaina literature and puranic epics. Textual production in Sanskrit continues to dominate Prakrit hereafter, though the production of Jaina literature didn't stop in Kannada and Sanskrit.

The intent of this long story of textual production in Prakrit, Sanskrit, and Kannada in this period is to show that Prakrit and Sanskrit were not translated from a distant culture to Kannada. Texts were produced simultaneously in all the languages. Translations into Kannada and Sanskrit from Prakrit Jaina literature begin almost simultaneously. The foundation for Apabrahmsha (Hindi), Marathi Prakrit (Marathi) and other north western languages might have been laid during the Rashtrakuta empire which extended from the south to Gujarat. Even the production of Jaina literature might have taken place in Shravanabelagola. Acharyas like Kundakunda, who wrote in Prakrit, were in charge of Jaina religion in the Tamil country. So it was a multilingual metropolis (both religious as well as political city-towns) that we are talking about. If a Jaina writes a text in Sanskrit and also writes a commentary for it in Kannada, I don't think it can be seen as negotiating the hegemony of Sanskrit.

Translations and textual production gradually shifting from Prakrit to Sanskrit and other Indian languages is one way of coming to terms with the ascendancy of Sanskrit in secular matters pertaining to state.

As far as the question of translations making a ‘god-spoken’ tongue accessible to the vast majority of the populace is concerned, the Jainas targeted only the first three varnas. They certainly didn’t touch the Sudras and those who were outside the varna fold.

We now move to textual practices and translations during the Veerashaiva period and Dasa literature (Vaishnava) period.

What is called ‘Bhakti movement’ is an amalgamation of different movements/ formations and expansions of sects/religions/cross-religious churningings that happened in various places across India and also across a time span ranging from the 9th century to the 18th century. In the Kannada context, the emergence of Veerashaiva sect/religion is seen as part of the Bhakti movement, and literature (both oral and written) associated with it is also named by some as Bhakti literature. When Jainas were engaged in textual production/translations in Kannada they were targeting (if at all that was the motive) only the first three varnas of the varna hierarchy. It was the Veerashaiva movement that tried to embrace as many people as possible across caste/varna/occupations. During this period, a certain kind of decentralization of worship of a particular god, Shiva, happens. It is during this period that in the form of vachanas¹⁴, a literature that was not directly linked with an institutionalized sponsorship either of a monastery or of a royal court began emerging. But that was only in the 12th century for a brief period. Later on this cult got institutionalized and produced puranic texts of the cult as well as Shastra literature, although in some of the vachanas there are anti-Sanskrit statements.

But again if we look at the cases of “Bhakti literature”, unlike in other cases, there were no translations linked with the Veerashaiva movement in the initial stages though some of the early Vachanakaras like Allamaprabhu and others were well versed in Sanskrit and were aware of the major debates in philosophy.¹⁵ After a century of the beginning of the movement in the 12th century in Kalyana, institutionalization of this religion/sect begins. Harihara writes a new form in Kannada called *ragale*¹⁶ in which he writes the history of Old Shaiva devotees. The source of this composition is recognized as the 11th century-end or early 12th century text *Periyapurana* of Shekkilar. This is the only recognizable translation. That too happens in the 13th century after a gap of nearly 50-100 years of what is called ‘Vachana movement’. Later Veerashaiva poets also produce epics on the heroes of the 12th century such as *Basavapurana* of Bhima kavi written in Telugu, later translated into Kannada and also Sanskrit; Padmananka on Kereya Padmarasa, Chamarasa on Prabhudeva (Allama Prabhu), Virakta Tontadarya on Tontada Siddalinga and Palkurike Somanatha; Chennabasavanka on Akka Mahadevi; Bommarasa on Revanasidda; Virupaksha Pandita on Chennabasavanna; Adrishha Kavi on Prauda Devaraya; Parvatesha on Revanasiddha, Marulasiddha, Ekorama etc. Epics get created not only in Kannada but also in Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil and Marathi; and most of these were translations from one to another. Epics were not created in Sanskrit, but only translated into Sanskrit from Telugu and Kannada.

Later the vachanas were put into textual form, and they were arranged according to Shatsthalas, and a lot of Shastra literature was constructed around it. Some of it was in Sanskrit. *Siddantha Shikamani* is an important text that was composed in Sanskrit by Shivayogi. Sripati Pandita writes *Srikara Bhasya*, Svaprabhananda writes *Shivadvaitha manjari*, Mayideva writes *Anubhava Sutra*, Palkurike Somantha translates Basavapurana as *Basavarajiya* etc. Later on commentaries get produced on these shastra texts as well as

vachanas in Sanskrit and Kannada. Some of them get translated into Telugu, Tamil and Marathi languages much later on.

So what scholars identify as ‘Bhakti movement’ in Kannada didn’t come up as a result of translations but gave rise to translations from Kannada and Telugu into Sanskrit. Many of these writers were also bilingual writers. With the ascendancy of the Marathi language in Northern Deccan, some of these texts get translated into Marathi or the copies of the Kannada texts are available in Marathi script.

When we come to Dasa Sahitya which was a product of Vaishnava philosophy, we find translation of Sanskrit texts into Kannada as well as Dasa literature into Kannada. Dasa padas were also in oral form and they were also later on found in Marathi, Tamil, and Telugu. Only this could match to some extent the characteristics of translations during Bhakti literature that other scholars whom I have quoted earlier discuss.

Thus the translations and textual practices of the first millennium and early part of the second millennium of Christian era need further empirical work and this article is just a pointer towards it. The existing theoretical understanding does not seem to hold in the case of translation practices in Kannada or Deccan region (or what we today call as Karnataka) or even South India in general. Pan-Indian theoretical models derived from a faulty notion of ‘Bhakti movement’, which puts several movements under a single rubric may not take us far.

NOTES

1. A note on the term 'pre-colonial': I am using the term 'pre-colonial' as a time marker to periodize translation practices in India. Certain objections could be raised against such a periodization as it would privilege the moment of colonial intervention on our translation practices and also look at our past from that coloured angle. The term 'pre-modern' can also be used, as the dawn of modernity coincides with colonialism in India. It would undoubtedly be better to periodize Indian translation practices based on the characteristics that can be discerned during a particular period than to put them together as 'pre-colonial period'. But in the absence of studies that characterize the translation practices, I am using the term just as a period marker without implying any ideological stance. The term was used by other scholars who have worked on the notions of translation during pre-colonial days and I have argued elsewhere that employing such binaries would not take us too far (Tharakeswar 2005).
2. Kaviraj seems to be using emerging vernacular literatures of the medieval period and Bhakthi literature interchangeably here.
3. 'Medieval' is the term used in the discipline of history. Indian history is divided into three phases, 1. Ancient period 2. Medieval period and 3. Modern period. In my analysis I have not used the word 'medieval'. Instead I have put both ancient as well as medieval together and called it 'pre-colonial' emphasizing the colonial intervention, as stated earlier. Although I am looking at the period from 10th century onwards, which is designated as the medieval period in historical studies, I would be keeping in the background the kind of textual production that happened in what we today call

- Karnataka since around the beginning of the Christian era, which falls in the ancient period.
4. This point I have made elsewhere in a more detailed manner (See Tharakeshwar 2003).
 5. The English translation of this text named *The Cilappatikaram: A Tale of an Anklet* based on the Tamil scholar's opinion mentions the date as 5th century A.D. (See Atikal 2004).
 6. The story of copying the manuscript from Moodabidri Jaina matha itself is a fabulous story filled with several years of labour of many scholars, opposition to take it out from the mutt, stealthily preparing copies, etc. and would be worth looking at from the point of view of Translation Studies, especially that of translating religious scriptures and the taboo associated with it, as well as History of Religions.
 7. This text by Svayambhudeva is edited and published (See Svayambhudeva 1977). For more details on Svayambhu, See Jain 2004: 262-265.
 8. I have a list of more than 150 such published epics with me. Around 50 texts are going to be reprinted by Kannada University, Hampi in 25 volumes in the coming year. The list, if it includes Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhrahmsa etc., would be even greater than this and might even outnumber the epics in Indian languages composed keeping *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha* as source texts.
 9. A major part of this text in Kannada has been published (See Janna 1994).
 10. In that sense many of the poets of the Sanskrit texts of this period have written in a newly learnt language (assuming that by this time Sanskrit was not a spoken language at home).

11. This Sanskrit text, edited by Hiralal Jain, is published in Mumbai's Jaina Grantha Mala Series-9 in 1917. In this introduction Jain also mentions another work by Chavundaraya but it is not available. Based on this text (i.e. *Veeramattandi*, which is not available today) Todarmal has written a text called *SamyaJnana Chandrika* in Hindi according to Hiralal Jain.
12. I have looked at the Kannada translation of this Sanskrit text (Someshwara 1998).
13. For details of patronage of literature by Seunas, See the section on Education and Literature in Ritti, 1973.
14. Vachanas literally mean 'sayings' with no metrical restriction of any sort or any prescription. They were composed and sung mainly in oral form. Only after a gap of 2-3 centuries textualization of vachanas happens in the form of edited anthologies, where the vachanas are arranged and linked with the comments by the editor into a coherent narrative.
15. Some scholars have tried to argue that vachanas are translations from Upanishads, retold in simple folk-friendly manner.
16. A kind of blank verse form.

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