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Sanskrit domination: Defending strategy of Kannada

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Sanskrit was a ruling language once upon a time. When compared to the other Indian languages, it became evident that because of the abundant knowledge it contained, Sanskrit attained the ruling power. Now, English rules over other languages of this world. Before the entry of English to India, Sanskrit nurtured the Indian languages other than Sanskrit under its leadership. Therefore there was no language which did not have the influence of Sanskrit on grammar, form or content.

Indian languages identified their growth in the background of the view that becoming classic meant conforming to the model of Sanskrit. Hence Sanskrit became the model for the classics as well as the literature of every Indian language. Other forms of art which grow along with language too conformed to the model of Sanskrit as a part of becoming classic. The quantity of being conformed to Sanskrit differs from language to language. North Indian languages, including Sanskrit, belong to the family of Indo-Aryan, while south Indian languages to the Dravidian family. The impact which a language has on other languages of the other family is more curious than it has on other languages of the same family. It is found that each Dravidian language has formed their own rules according to their nature in order to encounter Sanskrit. Kannada did not accept Sanskrit as much as Telugu and Malayalam did. Meanwhile, Tamil accepted it very less. The reason for such difference in acceptance should be traced out from the linguistic structure of every language. It does not mean that there were no external reasons. The language itself possesses an urge not to get affected on the natural strength and beauty of it due to the encounterance of Sanskrit.

With a reference to the nature and the flaws of poetry *Kaviraajamaarga*, the first available literary work of Kannada speaks firstly of the relation of Kannada with Sanskrit. *Kaviraajamaarga* asserts that it is not fair to mix Sanskrit with Kannada excessively but with a limit. It decrees certain laws with regard to it. Developed or mature Kannada poetic language of before tenth century can be available in the edict while no poetry of the age has been found so far. But it is clear from *Kaviraajamaarga* that by that time itself there occurred, formation of rich poetry in Kannada. *Kaviraajamaarga* refers to many prosodic structures, forms of poetry and poets of Kannada. With an aim to the poetry of before tenth century it introduces certain features. While pointing out the defects of ancient poets, *Kaviraajamaargakaara* sternly opposed the Sanskrit-Kannada compound word-formation. *Tatsama* or *Samasamskrita*, equalizing Sanskrit word according to the nature of Kannada, could be accepted. It saves the strength and the purity of Kannada as well as the strength of expression. The process of making *Samasamskrita* is adapting alien words which have no relation with Kannada, to the family of Kannada. Its next stage is *Tadbhaveekarana*. If Sanskrit words are adapted to Kannada with a minor change, it will be called *Samasamskrita*. If they are adapted with a major change, it will be called *Tadbhava*. Behind these two processes, there is a tendency of thinking that Sanskrit is an alien language. The Sanskrit word *samsthaa* has entered Kannada directly by becoming *samsthe*. When it turned to be *santhe*, it became much nearer to Kannada. Sanskrit nouns or any foreign words when entered Kannada, make certain changes either in alien consonants or in themselves. This shows the certain gap, maintained with Sanskrit by Kannada.

All the works on Kannada grammar including *Kaviraajamaarga* and *Shabdamanidarpana* forbid the use of Kannada cases, combined with Sanskrit articles. It is not only the prohibition of grammar, but also not suitable to the nature of Kannada. There are no uses like *Antharnalli* and *Bahirge* in Kannada.

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The practice prevalent in Kannada is the application of compound words formed out of the combination of Sanskrit nouns and Sanskrit articles. The Kannada cases like *Antharangadalli*, *Bahirangadalli* etc. are for Kannada words. Sanskrit words acquire the eligibility of being blended with Kannada cases only after they have been subjected to the process of Kannada's purification. The acceptance of Sanskrit *pratathyaantha* [Sanskrit words ending with Sanskrit cases] too is not allowed in Kannada. In *Manipravaalam* style Malayalam words cling to Sanskrit cases. In Kannada this will never be possible.

The Halmidi edict which was established in the first half of 5th century A.D. is the first available edict in Kannada. The language, used in it is Sanskrit dominated. But, the domination was limited only to Kannada nouns, not to Kannada grammar or identity. There, Kannada and Sanskrit words were blended lightly without affecting severely its acceptance. That means the Kannada writings, available so far have not regarded Sanskrit as a ruler but a helper. Later, more than 25000 edicts in Kannada have been available. More or less, all of them begin from Sanskrit *shlokaas*. But, in writing, there is Kannada which is mixed lightly with Sanskrit. However, there are very less examples of Sanskrit's linguistic attacks on Kannada. *Kaviraajamaarga*, the first book on poetics of Kannada, speaks clearly of the relation to be observed and the gap to be maintained with Sanskrit by Kannada. Sanskrit is required, but it should be blended after making required changes. It should be mixed wherever and however much it is required. In Kannada, Sanskrit need be merged like beads are attached to gold in a chain, not like butter milk, mixed with milk. By pointing out the mistake of ancient poets, this work showed a path to existing and future poets. Thus, it stressed the necessity of maintaining the uniqueness of Kannada along with the acceptance of Sanskrit for the growth of Kannada.

The first available form of poetry in Kannada is *Champu*. It is a combination of poetry and prose. Particularly, Jain poets made use of it. During the 10th and 11th century it reached its peak. Poets like Pampa, Ponna, Janna, Ranna, Nagavarma and many other poets created *Loukika* and *Aaagamika* poetry of the kind of *Champu*. This was the period in which Sanskrit had immense impact on Kannada. Even though there were poetical prohibitions, poets of this age made many ample use of Sanskrit's long vocabulary. This choice of meters and themes is that of Sanskrit. Most of the poets wrote two kinds of poetry each. One is *Loukika* or *mundane*, that is inclusive of mythical themes, the other one is *Aaagamika*, which is about the rise of Jainism. Both the themes demand the assistance of Sanskrit words for their splendid action. Meter is mainly the mixture of *Vrutta* and *Kandapadya*. Even if there is prose in between, it is limited to short explanations. Most of the important Sanskrit *Vruttaas* have been made use of here. The central foundation for emergence of poetry is formed solely from these *Vruttaas*. Therefore, it was partially inevitable for *Champu* literature to accept Sanskrit. Though it seemed much in some area, it was adapted lightly. It worked mainly in bringing grandeur more than simplicity to language. In 12th century, Kannada literature was shifted from Jainism to the religion of *Shaiva*. Shaiva religion, which accepted castism, resisted castes to become *Veeerashaiva*. Both in language and literature remarkable changes occurred. *Veerashaivism* literature avoided the Sanskrit *Champu* style of blending prose and poetry to form vernacular prosodical bonds. The use of contemporary language and the simplification of the language are the uniqueness of

Veerashaiva literature. As a substitute to champu, the mixture of prose and poetry, form of poetry like *Vachana* which possesses the qualities of both prose and poetry was produced. Even though the purpose of *Vachanas* is the expression of experience as well as emotion, the use of Sanskrit decreased considerably. The use of long vocabulary too disappeared completely.

Major portion of Kannada literature, emerged during 10 or 11th century A.D., is of Sanskrit dominated. The prosody, the language as well as the attitude behind the use of language of the age were motivated from Sanskrit. But, by that time, the poeticians have strongly opposed the inconvenient mixture of Sanskrit like a heavy bag on the head of a child. As a result of it, the blending becomes easy irrespective of Sanskrit's great work. It has emerged complementarily to the intension of poetry. *Dharmaamritha*, a champu work, written by *Nayasena*, belonging to the first half of the 12th century has been popularly known to be the first myth on Jainism.

Raghata of Prakrit language has become *Ragale* in Kannada, according to scholars. Though it has its origin from prakrit, it has seen unique by attaining new form. It has made shaiva literature rich with its three main genres of groups of three, four and five prosodical units. Later this prosody of *ragale*, having been influenced by English blank verse, turned to be *Sarala ragale* which has been employed in Kannada epic fragments -*Khanda Kaavya*. The use of Praakrit prosody in place of Sanskrit shows the inclination to subside Sanskrit. *Ragale* could provide a natural path with a little liberal bond of prosodical units, being involved mainly from rigid group of syllables. When compared to champu literature, *Ragale* literature too formed the least use of Sanskrit words and vocabulary as well.

Raghavanka, the poet laureate of the same tradition choose hexameter- a pure Kannada prosody. There are six types of hexa meter. They are prosodic circles, containing six feet. The Vaishnava poets after Raghavanka have made use of hexa meter as sole prosody of the whole epic. Kumaravyasa, who had been well known in the lands of Kannada, employed *Bhaamini Shatpadi* for his epic. Both *Bhaamini* and *Vaardhaka Shatpadi* dominated the major portion of the *Vaishnava* literature. Here too, Sanskrit has not attacked Kannada crossing its limit. Except in descriptions and hymns (*sthothra*), use of Sanskrit words is very less. Regarding the degree in which Sanskrit words should be mixed with Kannada, poeticians say '*Karnam Pramaanam*'. It should be sonorous to hear, but should not be detrimental to linguistic nature of Kannada. This caution is much expressive in *ragale* as well as *shatpadi (hexa meter)*. The instances of exhibition of Sanskrit knowledge, spoiling the beauty of Kannada are very less.

Kannada poets did not use Sanskrit *Vruttas* in accordance with Sanskrit rules of *Vruttas*. They violated *yathi (pause) niyama* while leaving '*Gana niyama*' as it is. Grammarian *Keshiraja* states that *Yathivilanghana* is one of the distinct features of Kannada. *Kaviraaja Maarga* asserts that ancient scholars overcame *yathi*, prominent among *Vruttalakshana* and used *Khandapraasa* (rhymes fragrant) as a substitute though it was a fault from the point of view of Sanskrit. Second letter rhyme of foot is not found in Sanskrit. But, Kannada poets have regarded it along with Sanskrit *vrittaas* an inevitable law in all the genres of prosody. If the ending word of a foot of a *vritta* continues to be in the next foot to have the second letter rhyme, it will be *Khandapraasa*. In Sanskrit *yathi* is essential. It is usual or common in Sanskrit to have a pause and to continue if *yathi* comes in between a

word neglecting its meaning. In Kannada, meaning is essential.

Kannada does not entertain *yathi* to come in a word by breaking it. Kannada has not accepted anything blindly just because of the reason that it is in Sanskrit but only after adjusting it to its nature.

The hymns which covered majority of Sanskrit have not been seen in Kannada. Kannada opted *Kandapadya* for the creation of scriptures. This is an attempt of forming another system, equivalent to Sanskrit, which complies with Kannada. The attitude behind the production of six *Vruttas*, known to be the *Khyatha Karnataka*, in place of Sanskrit *Vruttas* is the vision of this equivalent system.

Vaishnava literature came closer to the mass (common people) in the form of *Keerthana (hymns)*. This kind of literature for which devotion is central came to be called *Daasa pantha*. Through *keerthanaas*, the South Indian style of classical music or the tradition of Karnatic music has evolved. *Daasa pantha* which has grown differently from Sanskrit's devotional literature in form, has brought the philosophy of *Bhaagavatha* tradition to the apprehension of common men through the simple language. Acquiring less Sanskrit and much from Sanskrit, *Daasa* literature after *Vachana* literature has involved as a prime social movement and it rested completely on its vernacular platform.

Major portion of Kannada literature, emerged during 10th century A D, is of Sanskrit dominated. The prosody, the language as well as the attitude behind the use of language of the age were motivated from Sanskrit. But by the time, the poeticians have strongly opposed the inconvenient mixture of Sanskrit like a massive load kept on the head of a child. As a result of it, the blending became easy irrespective of Sanskrit's great wish. It has emerged complementarily to the intention of poetry. *Dharmamrutha*, a Champu work, written by *Nayasena*, belonging to the 1st half of 12th century has been popularly known to be the first myth on Jainism.

The reason for it is the language he used and the question he raised. Sanskrit can be apprehensible only to Sanskrit scholars not to mass. If you write for common people you must write in pure Kannada.

ಸಕ್ಕದಮಂ ಪೇಳ್ವೊಡೆ ನೆರೆ
ಸಕ್ಕದಮಂ ಪೇಲ್ಗೆ ಸುದ್ದಗನ್ನಡದೊಳ್ತಂ
ದಿಕ್ಕುವುದೇ ಸಕ್ಕದಮಂ
ತಕ್ಕದೆ ಬೆರೆಸಲ್ಕೆ ಘೃತಮುಮಂ ತೈಲಮುಮಂ ೧.೪೨

If anything is written in Sanskrit, let it be in Sanskrit only. Why should Sanskrit be mixed with pure Kannada like ghee and oil are mixed? *Nayasena* asks. The opinion that Sanskrit scholars kept literature far from the mass arose from it. Exponents of *Vachana* as well as *Daasa Sahitya* too continued the same opinion. The continuation of that opinion, can also be noted in the creation of *Manorame* by *Muddana* to resist Sanskrit tendency as a representative of the mass.

Jain poetician *Naagavarma II*, who lived during the 5th decade of 12th century, clearly declared that pure Sanskrit words other than *samasanskrita* should not be combined to Kannada words. *Samasanskrita* stay in harmony with the Kannada words. So, there is no prohibition in using them.

In the first half of 13th century *Aandayya*, who wrote *Dharmamrutha*, says ancient poets do not know to write poetry without mixing Sanskrit. And he declares that he would write poetry in pure Kannada so that people can fulfill their wish. He was not at all hater of Sanskrit. But, he had

concern over Kannada. His aim was to execute with only Kannada and *samasanskrita*. That has been achieved by him.

This was really an extraordinary adventure. Words equivalent to Sanskrit words should be formed. A lot of words and Sanskrit nouns should newly be created, without becoming absurd. As the original story was of Sanskrit origin, it had to be observed that its message was not hampered. All these have been elegantly accomplished in *Kabbigara Kava*. It would be better to observe the representation of the awareness of linguistic freedom of that period of time than to regard *Kabbigara Kaava* as written in pure Kannada. As a reaction to the dominance of Sanskrit, the Kannada mind has expressed its objection through original poetry. By this, the status and value of Kannada could be decided in comparison with Sanskrit.

Mahalinga Ranga, a poet belonging to 18th century attacked Sanskrit directly. Is it not enough to achieve salvation by executing simple pure Kannada. 'What is to be gained from Sanskrit?' asks *Mahalinga Ranga*. He does not speak about language but the aim or purpose of language. Own Kannada too possesses the power of expression which the alien Sanskrit enjoyed. Therefore, Kannada poets do not have the poverty to depend on Sanskrit for expression. This is not an enmity with Sanskrit, but a hope for the possibilities of Kannada.

The matter which has to be noted here is that they were not mere the personal decisions, taken by the poets and aesthetician in view of the possibilities of Kannada and the distance to be maintained with Sanskrit. Such decisions were taken on the basis of the opinion of a common man who had taste and curiosity for poetry. *Nandalike Lakshminaranappa*, who lived in 19th century and was known to be the forefather of Modern Kannada, reacts about Sanskrit as a representative of readers in his famous free verse *Shree Ramaashwamedha*. He begins his poetry without using 'shree', which is the symbol of the tradition of Sanskrit poetry. The poetry that has to begin with praising gods begins with description of rainy season. That too is the description of excretion of Time. The poet abandons the traditional technique of a poet narrating a story to a king. *Ramaashwamedha* was framed in the technique of narration in which the poet of king's palace tells his wife a story in the evening of heavy rainy season. Husband was *Muddana* and wife *Manorame*. When the husband reaches from palace, the wife who has been in dejection persists him to tell a story. Rejecting all the heard tales, she accepts 'Ramashwamedha'. Deciding that poetry is unpleasant and prose pleasant, she requests him to narrate the story in prose. Throughout the story, she intervenes intermittently to criticize cautiously the system of narration.

The poet, *Lakshminaranappa* has brought an attractive extent [dimension to his stand] of abandoning the Kannada tradition which had its foundation through the continuation of the Sanskrit tradition by creating character of *Manorame*. Instead of beginning the poetry with the appraisal of a god or *Devatha stuthi*, *Muddana* opens his poetry with the description of the excretion of *Kalapurusha*. Behind this, there is a living urge to write beyond the zone of Sanskrit. The poet has built this poetry also to the interests of an ordinary housewife through *Manorame* who represents such housewives. The criticism, made cautiously through out the poetry by *Manorame*, drives the poetry from the region of Sanskrit scholars to the region of common man of Kannada. Though the subject matter is of Sanskrit, its rewriting is of Kannada. As it is being carried out for Kannadigas, there is no need of posing against Sanskrit.

Lakshminaranappa's stand about Sanskrit is vividly expressed

in the beginning of *Ramashwamedha*. It is also the opinion of the whole Kannada language about Sanskrit. After Manorame has opted the subject matter, Muddana begins the story. It begins with

‘ಸ್ವಸ್ತಿ ಶ್ರೀಮತ್ಸುರಾಸುರೇಂದ್ರ ನರೇಂದ್ರ
ಮುನೀಂದ್ರಫಣೀಂದ್ರಮಣಿಮಕುಟತಟಘಟಿತ’

Immediately Manorame objects. She is conscious about language and communication. She accuses that it is like telling the story of Jains, when the story of Rama is required. Jain Literature, ie. Champu literature is Sanskrit dominated. It can be comprehended only by the scholar, but to the minds of Kannadigas the story has to be told in core Kannada. This is her demand. She ridicules that the use of Sanskrit simply for the exhibition of knowledge is like thrusting rice pudding in to the mouth, through which even water cannot be going down. She also ridicules that the story is told in Sanskrit when even Kannada cannot be understood. In reply, Muddana asserts that like red corals, tied in between black beads in a garland, Sanskrit utterance will appear alternately while the story is narrated in core Kannada. The story continues.

What has been told by Muddana is the final word. The relation between Kannada and Sanskrit is maintained with certain carefulness. To accept nothing from prosperous Sanskrit is stubbornness. If nothing is accepted from Sanskrit, the development of Kannada will not be possible. If the acceptance will across the limit, Kannada will become a subordinate of Sanskrit. On the part of poets, this is obscure. Which and how much to be accepted, should be decided with discretion. Kavirajamargakara of 10th century and Lakshminaranappa of 19th century were determined the limits for accepting from Sanskrit by using the simile of garland. Accepting from Sanskrit is not a guilt. But, it will be a guilt when Sanskrit is accepted with a reason of relegating Kannada to its subordination. Kannada should remain Kannada; Sanskrit should enter Kannada as it is required like red coral in the garland of black beads. Garland is of black beads, but red corals are only for its beauty.

Kannada has accepted much from Sanskrit, but has not grown as its subordinate. It has preserved its uniqueness, and thus developed.

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