

= Western Chalukya literature in Kannada =

A large body of Western Chalukya literature in Kannada language was produced during the reign of the Western Chalukya Empire ( 973 ? 1200 CE ) in what is now southern India . This dynasty , which ruled most of the western Deccan in South India is sometimes called the Kalyani Chalukya Dynasty after its royal capital at Kalyani ( now Basavakalyan ) and sometimes called the Later Chalukya Dynasty for its theoretical relationship to the 6th @-@ century Chalukya dynasty of Badami . For a brief period ( 1162 ? 1183 ) , the Kalachuris , a dynasty of kings who had earlier migrated to the Karnataka region from central India and served as vassals for several generations , exploited the growing weakness of their overlords and annexed the Kalyani . Around 1183 , the last Chalukya scion , Someshvara IV , overthrew the Kalachuris to regain control of the royal city . But his efforts were in vain , as other prominent Chalukya vassals in the Deccan , the Hoysalas , the Kakatiyas and the Seunas destroyed the remnants of the Chalukya power .

Kannada literature from this period is usually categorised into the linguistic phase called Old @-@ Kannada . It constituted the bulk of the Chalukya court 's textual production and pertained mostly to writings relating to the socio @-@ religious development of the Jain faith . The earliest well @-@ known writers belonging to the Shaiva faith are also from this period . Under the patronage of Kalachuri King Bijjala II , whose prime minister was the well @-@ known Kannada poet and social reformer Basavanna , a native form of poetic literature called Vachana literature ( lit " utterance " , " saying " or " sentence " ) proliferated . The beginnings of the Vachana poetic tradition in the Kannada @-@ speaking region trace back to the early 11th century . Kannada literature written in the champu metre , composed of prose and verse , was popularised by the Chalukyan court poets . However , with the advent of the Veerashaiva ( lit , " brave devotees of the god Shiva " ) religious movement in the mid @-@ 12th century , poets favoured the native tripadi ( three @-@ line verse composed of eleven ganas or prosodic units ) , hadugabba ( song @-@ poem ) and free verse metres for their poems .

Important literary contributions in Kannada were made not only by court poets , noblemen , royalty , ascetics and saints who wrote in the marga ( mainstream ) style , but also by commoners and artisans , including cobblers , weavers , cowherds and shepherds who wrote in the desi ( folk ) style . These Vachana poets ( called Vachanakaras ) revolutionised Kannada literature , rejecting traditional themes that eulogised kings and noblemen , and writing didactic poems that were closer to the spoken and sung form of the language . In addition to hundreds of male poets , over thirty female poets have been recorded , some of whom wrote along with their husbands .

= = Background = =

= = = Political developments = = =

Towards the end of the 10th century , a new Karnataka dynasty , called the Western Chalukyas , had come to power by overthrowing the Rashtrakuta Empire of Manyakheta ( modern Malkhed in the Gulbarga district , Karnataka ) . Their earliest inscription is dated to c . 957 and is ascribed to a subordinate ruler , Tailapa II of Tardavadi , later to become the founding king of the empire , in the Bijapur district , Karnataka . An inscription from c . 967 suggests that an unsuccessful rebellion was staged by Chattideva , a local king belonging to the Chalukya family , with the help of the Kadamba chief from the temple town Banavasi . These events , however , paved the way for Tailapa II to launch a successful rebellion against the Rashtrakuta King Karka II with the help of the Kadamba chief of Hangal .

A century before these political developments , the age of great Sanskrit and Prakrit epics and classics had come to an end . This productive period had made available a vast corpus of literature that could be expressed in the local language of Kannada . Kannada , which had flourished both as a language of political discourse and literature in the Rashtrakuta court , found enthusiastic support from the Chalukya kings . The influential Jains , who according to historian A.S. Altekar may have

comprised 30 percent of the population , not only dominated the cultural landscape of 9th and 10th century Karnataka , but were also eager to encourage literature in the local language . According to Professor S.N. Sen , a research fellow at the Indian council of historical research , Kannada literature under the Chalukyas reached a " perfection of form " . Scholars Sheldon Pollock and Jan Houben have claimed that 90 percent of the Chalukyan royal inscriptions are in Kannada , a virtual displacement of Sanskrit as the language of courtly discourse .

= = = Mainstream literature = = =

For a few centuries after Kavirajamarga ( " Royal path for poets " , c . 850 ) , the earliest available Kannada literary work , Jain writings had adhered to Sanskritic models that had been recognised by the state as the path for future Kannada writers , while relegating native poetic forms ( compositions such as Chattana and Bedande ) to subordinate status . The stranglehold that the Sanskritic models had over Kannada literature is best exemplified by Ranna 's lexicon Rannakanda ( 990 ) , where native day @-@ to @-@ day Kannada words had been translated into Sanskrit . This implied that the pure form of the local language was not viewed as equal to Sanskrit , from the cosmopolitan viewpoint . Kannada writings by Jain authors thus used impressive Sanskrit @-@ derived verses interspersed with prose to extol the virtues of their patron kings , who were often compared to heroes from the Hindu epics . While Adikavi Pampa ( Pampa Bharata , 941 ) compared his patron , the feudatory Chalukya King Arikesari , to Pandava prince Arjuna , in Vikramarjuna Vijaya , his version of the Hindu epic Mahabharata , Ranna ( 983 ) found it suitable to compare his patron , King Satyashraya , to Pandava prince Bhima .

= = = Folk literature = = =

The mainstream literary style was to lose popularity during the mid @-@ 12th century Kalachuri rule , due to the rise of revolutionary notions about the social and cultural order . The Veerashaivas , acting in protest , used the pure form of Kannada language in their poems ; moreover , they encouraged writers from lower castes to participate and completely eliminated themes that had been considered formal by the king and the monastery . Thus , written in native metres , in a language close to the spoken form of Kannada , the Vachana poems gained mass appeal . A new religious faith was thereby propagated by the Veerashaivas whose ascendancy is called the " Veerashaiva movement " and their communicative genre , the Vachana . While the Vachana poetry is generally categorised as a part of the pan @-@ Indian Bhakti ( devotional ) literature , such generalisations tend to disguise the very esoteric and anti @-@ bhakti positions taken by many Vachanakaras . The origin of the Veerashaiva ideology and the beginnings of their poetry is unclear . According to D.R. Nagaraj , a scholar on literary cultures in history , modern scholars tend to favour two broad views : integrationist and indigenist . The integrationists , such as L. Basavaraju , trace the source of Vachana poetic tradition to the Sanskrit Upanishad scriptures and the Agama doctrine , though this does not explain why the movement did not blossom earlier or in the neighbouring Telugu @-@ speaking region where radical Shaiva sects were known to be active . The indigenists , such as Chidananda Murthy , M.M. Kalaburgi and G.S. Shivarudrappa , propose a native Karnataka origin of the poetry , though they are yet to fully explain its unique nature .

= = = Other developments = = =

At about this time , adding to pressure from the popularity of the Vachana canon in the northern Kannada @-@ speaking region , the noted Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana ( 1108 ? 1152 ) of the southern Kannada @-@ speaking region converted from Jainism to the Hindu sect of Vaishnavism . The popularity of Ramanujacharya 's philosophy had spread in the Hoysala lands and Srivaishnavism , a sub @-@ sect of Vaishnavism , was in the ascendant . By the late 13th century , the Veerashaiva writers , who were by now writing allegorical inscriptions and biographies of famous Vachanakaras of the 12th century , were in stiff competition with the Jains . The earliest attempts by

the Jains to veer away from traditional puranic ( philosophical ) themes of renunciation are seen in the writings of Hoysala writers Nemichandra and Andayya . Lilavati Prabhandam , a novel written by Nemichandra ( 1170 ) on the topic of love , erotica , and of the victory of Kamadeva ( god of love ) over his arch @-@ rival Shiva , is the first among such writings . It was followed by Kabbigara Kava ( " Poets defender " , 1215 ? 1237 ) by Andayya , also a work depicting a war between Kamadeva and the god Shiva . Despite these efforts , the Jain literary influence was to recede in the coming decades and centuries , being relegated mostly to the coastal Kannada @-@ speaking region . Works of enduring quality were still produced by maverick authors such as Ratnakaravarni ( 1557 ) , though their numbers were fewer .

Contemporaneous to these developments , Nagavarma II wrote his Kannada grammar Karnataka bhashabhushana ( " Ornament of Karnataka language " , 1042 or 1145 ) . A milestone in the history of Kannada literature , it helped consolidate the language as competitor to established languages such as Sanskrit and Prakrit , bringing the local language within the realm of literary cosmopolitanism . Writing a Kannada grammar in Sanskrit language was essential to Nagavarma II , a subtle rebuttal to Sanskritic scholars of the day who may have considered Kannada a language of the common man and its grammar as underdeveloped . In addition to the Chalukya patronage , Kannada poets and writers of this period were popular in the courts of neighbouring kingdoms of the western Deccan . The Hoysalas , the southern Kalachuris , the Seunas , the Gangas and the Silharas are some of the ruling families who enthusiastically used Kannada in inscriptions and promoted its literature .

= = Kannada writings = =

= = = Jain Court literature = = =

= = = = Age of Ranna = = = =

The late 10th century was a period of consolidation for the fledgling empire . Founding King Tailapa II and his successor , King Satyashraya , warred against their neighbours : the Shilharas of south Konkan , the Chaulukyas of Gujarat , the Paramara of central India and the Chola Dynasty of Tanjore . Unaffected by these political developments , Kannada literature continued to flourish in the royal court . The foremost writer of this period was Ranna , who was born to a family of bangle sellers in the town of Mudhol . Ranna is considered by historians K.A. Nilakanta Sastri and Sailendra Nath Sen as one of the " three gems of Kannada literature " along with his seniors , Adikavi Pampa and Sri Ponna . Ranna became the court poet of King Tailapa II and King Satyashraya . In his early days , he was also patronised by the well @-@ known Ganga minister Chavundaraya . Ranna is famous for writing Ajitha purana ( 993 ) , which recounts the life of the second Jain tirthankar Ajitanatha . However , it is in his magnum opus , the work Sahasa Bhima Vijaya ( " Victory of bold Bhima " , also called Gada Yudda or " Conflict of Clubs " , 982 ) that he reaches his zenith of poetic grace while describing the conflict between Pandava Bhima and Kaurava prince Duryodhana in his Jain version of the Hindu epic Mahabharata .

Unlike Pampa who glorifies Arjuna and Karna in his writing , Ranna eulogises his patron King Satyashraya and favourably compares him to Bhima , whom he crowns at the end of the Mahabharata war . He calls Bhima 's adversary Duryodhana mahanubhava ( " a great person " ) . The work contains some of the earliest examples of elegiac verses ( called shoka gita or charama gita ) in the Kannada language , noted among which is one piece that describes the heart @-@ rending lamentation ( called karuna rasa or " sentiment of pathos " ) of Duryodhana on seeing the slain bodies of his brother Duhshasana , his inseparable friend in joy and sorrow , Karna , and Arjuna 's valorous son Abhimanyu . The effect given to the writing , the language , the diction and the style maintained throughout the narration has earned Ranna a place among the most notable authors of Kannada literature . Ascribed also to Ranna is the earliest available dictionary in Kannada

language called the Rannakanda ( 990 ) , of which only eleven verses still exist . His other notable writings were the Chakeresvaracharita and the Parashuramacharitha . According to historian Suryanath Kamath , the latter work , which is now lost , may have been an eulogy of Chavundaraya , whom the poet admired . For his literary contributions , the title Kavi Chakravathi ( " Emperor among poets " ) was bestowed upon Ranna by his patron king .

Another notable writer from the close of the 10th century , Nemichandra , wrote the Kaviraja kunjara and Lilavati ( c . 990 ) with Prince Kavdarpa Deva of Jayantipura ( modern Banavasi , Karnataka ) and Princess Lilavati as the protagonists of the latter poem . Other writers from the close of the 10th century whose works are now lost but have been praised by the Chalukya minister Durgasimha ( 1031 ) are Kavitavilasa ( patronised by King Jayasimha II ) , Madiraja , Chadrabhatta , Kannamayya and Manasija . Inscriptions such as the Kuppatur and Haveri records eulogize popular writers such as Harivarma ( 1070 ) and Narayana Deva respectively .

= = = Early secular writings = = =

According to Kannada scholar R. Narasimhacharya , despite the production of some important secular writings , repeated Chola invasions into Kannada lands in the 11th century may have adversely affected literary production . This situation was brought about by intense competition between the Western Chalukyas and their arch @-@ rivals , the Cholas of Tanjore . Among notable writings , Chandraraja 's Madanatilaka ( " Forehead ornament of passion " , 1025 ) , written in the champu metre , is the earliest available work on erotica in the Kannada language and an adaptation of the Sanskrit Kamasutra by Vatsyayana . The narration is a dialogue between the patron and his wife in posakannada , the most modern Kannada in usage at the time . He was under the patronage of Machiraja , feudatory of King Jayasimha II ( also called Jagadekamalla I ) . Shridharacharya , a Jain Brahmin patronised by King Someshvara I ( also called Ahvamalla or Trailokyamalla ) showed his ability to write on scientific subjects in Jatakatilaka ( 1049 ) , the earliest available writing on astrology in Kannada , citing the Sanskrit astronomer Aryabhata . His other work is the lost Chandraprabha Charite , on belles @-@ lettres .

Chavundaraya II , a Shaiva Brahmin ( Brahmin devotee of the god Shiva ) by faith and a protege of King Jayasimha II , wrote Lokopakara ( c . 1025 ) in the champu metre . It is the earliest available encyclopaedia in the Kannada language , written at times with a poetic touch . It comprises twelve chapters and has found popularity in later references as well . The work is on various topics such as daily life , astronomy , astrology and forecasting of events based on the Indian calendar ( panchanga phala ) , sculpture , construction of buildings ( vastu vichara ) and reservoirs ( udakargala ) , omens , divination of water , preparation of medicine from herbs and plants ( vrikshayurveda ) , general medicine ( vaidya ) , perfumery , cookery and toxicology ( vishavaidya ) . Mentioned in this book is the popular South Indian dish Idli and its preparation by soaking Urad dal ( black gram ) in butter milk , grinding it to a fine paste , and mixing with spices and the clear water of curd .

Durgasimha , the Sandhi Vighrahi ( minister of war and peace ) of King Jayasimha II wrote the well @-@ known Panchatantra ( " The five stratagems " , 1031 ) in champu style , basing it on Gunadhya 's Paishachi language original Brihatkatha . This fable is the first adaptation of the original into a vernacular language of India . Containing sixty fables in all , thirteen of which are original , each is summarised by an ethical moral based on a Jain tenet . Durgasimha also authored the Karnataka Banachatantra , the earliest available commentary in the Kannada language , giving a brief commentary on all the Sanskrit verses he quoted in the Panchatantra . Around this time , Jayakirti ( c . 1000 ? 1050 ) , a Kannada language theorist , who considered the rules of prosody to be the same for Sanskrit and Kannada , wrote the Chandonusasana

There were other notable writers from the latter part of 11th century . Shantinatha , patronised by King Someshvara II , wrote the poem Sukumaracharita in c . 1068 . Nagavarmacharya , a Brahmin Advaita saint of Balligavi , who was patronised by King Udayatidya , a vassal of Chalukya King Someshvara II , wrote Chandrachudamani sataka ( c . 1070 ) in the sataka ( hundred @-@ line verse ) metre . In this centum of verses , where each ends with the term " Chandrachudamani " as

another name of the god Shiva , the author treats on viragya ( ethics of renunciation ) . Other writers whose works are considered lost but have been referenced in contemporary writings are Gunachandra and Gunavarma . Gunachandra , who was admired by King Someshvara II ( also called Bhuvanaika Malla ) , wrote Parsvabhyudaya and Maghanadisvara . Gunavarma , who earned the honorific Bhuvanaika Vira , a title befitting a warrior rather than a poet , is mentioned by grammarian Keshiraja ( c . 1260 ) as the author of Harivamsa . His title identifies him with a Ganga prince called Udayaditya who was a minister and general under Chalukya King Someshvara II . Other writings ascribed to the author are Pushpadanta Purana and Devachandra Prabha Stotra .

= = = = Vikrama era = = = =

The 12th century heralded an age of peace and prosperity . Cultural and literary developments received impetus during the rule of King Vikramaditya VI , a patron of the fine arts . The king , who ascended the throne in 1076 and ruled for fifty years occupies a pride of place in the history of Karnataka . His reign marks the end of the use of Saka Varsha ( Indian calendar , the " Saka era " ) in Chalukya inscriptions and the start of Vikrama Varsha ( " Vikrama era " ) . His court was adorned with some of the most well @-@ known writers of Kannada and Sanskrit literature . Nayasena , whose writings are dated by the scholars D.R. Nagaraj and Sheldon Pollock to the 10th century , and by E.P. Rice and R. Narasimhacharya to c . 1112 , wrote the Dharmamritha , a book containing fifteen stories that belong to the genre of fable and parable . Well known among these stories teaching about Jain tenets are " Yajnadatta and the mongoose " , " Kapalika and the young elephant " and " Serpent , tiger , monkey and the goldsmith who had fallen in the old well " . The writing is one of intense self @-@ interrogation where the author criticises the beliefs of all contemporaneous religions while decrying the contamination in the original Jain beliefs due to external cultural influences , such as the practice of violent and bloody rituals and the caste system .

Brahmashiva , the court poet of King Vikramaditya VI , earned the title Kavichakravarti ( " Emperor among poets " ) from his patron for his writing Samayaparikshe ( " Analysis of the doctrine " , c . 1125 ) . In this philosophical writing , containing touches of propagandist satire and humor , the author seeks to prove the virtues of Jainism superior to all other contemporary religions . Brahmashiva portrays contemporary life and beliefs of the people of the Kannada @-@ speaking region . He criticises Hinduism and the conversion of a Jain temple originally dedicated to the Tirthankar Chandraprabha in Kholapur into a Hindu temple deifying the goddess Mahalakshmi . He expresses reservation regarding the existence of religious cosmopolitanism within a household where family members followed multiple faiths . The author is concerned about the eroding popularity of Jainism in southern India due to the rising popularity of the Veerashaiva movement . Prince Kirtivarma , a younger brother of King Vikramaditya VI , wrote Govaidya ( " Cattle Medicine " ) , the earliest available writing in Kannada on veterinary science , which mixes medicine and magic .

After the death of Vikramaditya VI , his successors , Someshvara III and Jagadhekamalla II continued to support poets and writers . Karnaparya 's account of the life of the 22nd tirthankar Neminatha , the Neminathapurana ( c . 1145 ) in champu metre , includes details of the Hindu epic Mahabharata and of the god Krishna from a Jain outlook . Jagaddala Somanatha 's Karnataka Kalyanakaraka ( 1150 ) , a translation of the Sanskrit writing Kalyanakaraka by Pujoyapada , is the earliest writing on medicine in Kannada . It prescribes an entirely vegetarian and non @-@ alcoholic diet .

= = = = Consolidation of grammar = = = =

Among available works on Kannada grammar , a part of Kavirajamarga ( 850 ) forms the earliest framework . The occurrence of the term purvacharyar in some contexts of the writing may be a reference to previous grammarians or rhetoricians . Though Nagavarma @-@ II is credited to be the author of the earliest exhaustive Kannada grammar , the author mentions his predecessors , Sankavarma and Nagavarma @-@ I ( the extant Chhandombudhi , " Ocean of Prosody " , c . 984 )

as path @-@ makers of Kannada grammar . The exact time when grammarian Nagavarma @-@ II lived is debated by historians . Until the discovery of Vardhamana Puranam ( " Life of Varadhama " , c . 1042 ) written in Kannada by an author who goes by the same name , it was broadly accepted by scholars including E.P. Rice , R. Narasimhacharya and K.A. Nilakanta Sastri that Nagavarma II lived in the mid @-@ 12th century ( 1145 ) and was also the Katakacharya ( " poet laureate " ) of Chalukya King Jagadhekamalla II . However , of late , the Encyclopaedia of Indian literature , published by the Sahitya Akademi ( 1988 ) , and scholars D.R. Nagaraj and Sheldon Pollock concur that Nagavarma II lived in the mid @-@ 11th century and was the poet laureate of Chalukya King Jayasimha II , who had the epithet Jagadekamalla ( " Lord of the world " ) .

Irrespective of when Nagavarma II lived , it is accepted that few scholars in the history of Kannada literature made important contributions in as many subjects as he did . His writings on grammar , poetry , prosody , and vocabulary are standard authorities and their importance to the study of the Kannada language is well @-@ acknowledged . Among his available writings , the historically important Kavyavalokana ( " Treatise on the art of poetry " ) on grammar , poetics and rhetoric is considered path @-@ breaking and contains all the essentials of Kannada grammar . The first section of the book is called Sabdasmriti and contains five chapters dealing with euphonic combinations , nouns , compounds , nominal derivatives and verbs respectively . It is based on earlier works by the Sanskrit grammarians Dandin and Bhamaha . The Karnataka Bhashabhushana , a consolidated and exhaustive Kannada grammar written by Nagavarma II in the Sanskrit language , follows the fundamental framework of the Katantra school of Sanskrit grammar . For his contribution to Kannada grammar , Nagavarma II earned the honorific Sarvavarma ? the name of the noted Sanskrit grammarian of the Satavahana era . His Abhidana Vastukosa ( " Treasury of significations " ) , a lexicon , gives Kannada equivalents of nearly eight thousand Sanskrit words and is considered an achievement which gave Kannada language considerable footing in the world of Sanskrit literary dominance . Modern Kannada poet Govinda Pai proposed that the author of Karnataka Bhashabhushana was a different Nagavarma who belonged to the mid @-@ 12th century .

= = = Bhakti literature = = =

= = = = Early poets = = = =

The meteoric rise of Veerashaivism ( a religious sect which preaches devotion to the god Shiva , also called " Lingayatism " ) in caste @-@ ridden 12th @-@ century Karnataka has historic significance because it involved commoners from the lower strata of society , people who had hitherto been denied access to even basic education . The essence of the movement , also seen in the resulting Vachana poems , was the rejection of temple @-@ based ritual worship and the hegemony of mainstream Sanskritic texts and scriptures . The movement encouraged a monotheistic belief in the god Shiva which , according to Kannada scholar H.S. Shiva Prakash , is a possible influence of the 63 Nayanmars ( poets devoted to the god Shiva , 5th ? 10th century ) of the Tamil @-@ speaking region . The followers of the faith prayed not to a conventional image of a God but rather wore a linga ( symbol of the god Shiva ) on their body . The beginnings of the Vachana poetry ( called Vachana Sahitya ? " Vachana literature " , or Anubhava Sahitya ? " mystic literature " and sometimes Sharana Sahitya ? " literature of the devotees " ) , a unique form of expression in the Kannada language , can however be traced back to the 11th century .

Names of three poets from the 11th century and some of their poems are available . Madara Chennaiah , a cobbler turned saint , is considered by H.S. Shiva Prakash as the first Vachana poet , and was held in high esteem by latter day poets of the 12th century , including Basavanna . Only ten of Chennaiah 's poems , expressing his resentment of the caste system in metaphors taken from the cobblers ' trade , are extant today . Dohara Kakkaiah is the second poet . A dalit by birth , his six available poems are confessional in nature , a theme seen in the later poems of Basavanna . Devara Dasimaiah ( or Jedara Dasimaiah , 1040 ) is better known because a hundred and fifty of his

poems are available . Written in a deft and concise language of proverbs and metaphors , his poems encourage monotheistic belief in the god Shiva . Dasimaiah 's wife Duggale qualifies as Kannada 's first women poet , though only a few of her poems are available .

= = = = Rebel literature = = = =

In mid @-@ 12th century , the Kalachuris successfully warred against their overlords , the Western Chalukyas , and annexed their capital Kalyani . During this turbulent period lasting three decades ( 1153 ? 1183 ) , Veerashaivism gained popularity . According to H.S. Shiva Prakash , the Kalachuri period is one of the high points of medieval Kannada literature . Basavanna ( or Basava ) , a social reformer and the prime minister of Kalachuri King Bijjala II , is generally regarded as the inspiration behind this movement . Allama Prabhu , Chennabasava , Siddharama , Akka Mahadevi , and Kondugoli Keshiraja are other well @-@ known poets among several hundred in this cadre .

A centre of religious discussions called Anubhava Mantapa ( " Hall of experience " ) in Kalyani became the conclave where devotees gathered to discuss their mystic experiences . Here , they expressed their devotion to Shiva in simple poems called Vachanas . These were spontaneous utterances of rhythmic , epigrammatical and satirical prose emphasising the worthlessness of riches , rituals and book learning . Many of these poems are anonymous , but the authors are identifiable by the unique divine name of the god Shiva that is invoked in the poem .

Basavanna

Born to Brahmin parents in the town of Basavana Bagewadi , Basavanna ( 1106 ? 1167 ) rejected the upanayanam ( " ritual thread ceremony " ) and left home for Kudalasangama , a holy place at the confluence of the Krishna and Ghataprabha rivers in Bagalkot district , Karnataka . According to historian P.B. Desai , it was here , during his tutelage under the saint Ishanyaguru , that Basavanna had visions of his life 's purpose . The life of Basavanna marks a milestone in the history of Karnataka state , India . A towering personality , his zeal and socio @-@ cultural achievements in the realm of peace and equality of mankind have brought about enduring changes in society .

Information about his life and achievements come from the many Kannada writings , the earliest of which were written just after his death . Hoysala poet Harihara 's Basavarajadevara ragale is the first known biography on Basavanna . Vijayanagara poet @-@ writer Bhima Kavi 's Basavapurana ( 1369 ) , Singiraja 's Amala Basavacharite ( 1500 ) , Vijayanagara minister Lakkanna Dandesa 's Shiva Tatwachintamani ( 1425 ? 1450 ) are some of the important sources . The cornerstone of Basavanna 's philosophy was " work @-@ worship is heaven " , the rejection of mere worship of God and the acceptance of one 's own body as a temple of God . Basavanna strongly advocated a life of complete commitment to work . As a poet , he finds a pride of place in Kannada literature . His deftly written poems end with the word " Kudalasangama " which literally means " God of the confluence of two rivers " , the poet 's version of the god Shiva . About 1 @, @ 300 such poems have survived , and have been described by H.S. Shiva Prakash as lyrical , satirical , deeply contemplative and self @-@ critical .

In one satirical poem , Basavanna decries the hypocrisy of a snake charmer and his wife , who on their way to find a bride for their son cancel the journey when they come across a bad omen ? another snake charmer and his wife . Though Basavanna himself was a minister under the patronage of the king , some of his poems betray his contempt towards kingship and deep devotion to the god Shiva . A poem by Basavanna :

Allama Prabhu

Allama , also known as Allama Prabhu ( lit , " Allama the master " ) was a mendicant saint @-@ poet who took to the path of asceticism after the untimely death of his wife Kamalate . He was born into a family of hereditary temple performers and was himself an expert on the drum ( called maddale ) in Balligavi , a town of great antiquity in the Shivamogga district , Karnataka . Wandering around grief @-@ stricken by his wife 's death , he came across a saint called Animisayya who initiated him into asceticism .

Ascribed to Allama are 1 @, @ 321 extant poems , each of which end with the word " Guhesvara " ( lit , " Lord of the Cave " , a form of the god Shiva ) , for it is said Allama found enlightenment in a

cave . Allama 's cryptic poems , though full of kindness , are known for their satire , mockery , invective and rejection of siddhis ( occult powers ) . H.S. Shiva Prakash compares Allama 's poems to the Koans in Japanese Zen poetry . According to D.R. Nagaraj , Allama 's mystic poems are in a category all of their own and do not qualify as bhakti poems , which are typically characterised by transparent devotion .

While Basavanna 's zeal and influence led to the formation and popularity of the Veerashaiva movement in Kalyani , it was Allama who was the undisputed spiritual authority presiding over the gatherings of the devotees . Chamarasa , a well @-@ known 15th @-@ century Kannada writer in the court of Vijayanagara King Deva Raya II wrote Prabhulinga Lile ( 1430 ) , an account of the preachings and achievements of Allama ; it was translated into the Telugu and Tamil languages at the behest of his patron king , and later into the Sanskrit and Marathi languages . In the story , Allama is considered an incarnation of the Hindu god Ganapathi while Ganapathi 's mother , Parvati ( Shiva 's consort ) , takes the form of a princess of Banavasi . A notable anthology called the Sunyasampadane ( " The achievement of nothingness " , 1400 ) was compiled on the life of Allama and gives details about his interaction with contemporary saints . A poem by Allama Prabhu :

Akka Mahadevi

Prominent among the more than thirty women poets was Akka Mahadevi . Born to a merchant family in the town Udatadi ( or Udugani ) in the Shivamogga district , and possibly married against her wishes to a feudal chief called Kausika , she renounced worldly pleasures , opting for a life of devotion and asceticism . She is often compared to other such notable female saint @-@ poets of Hinduism as Andal , Lalleswari and Meera Bai , and is considered one of the prominent female poets of the Kannada language .

The 430 short poems written by her , in a language that depicts her love for her divine lover " Channa Mallikarjuna " ( lit , " Beautiful Mallikarjuna " , a name for the god Shiva ) , and the 15th @-@ century anthology , the Sunyasampadane , are the main sources of information about her life . Her poetry is characterised by scorn for physical possessions and detachment from worldly affairs . A popular poem written by her describes the life of a silk worm which spins a cocoon , becomes entangled in the threads , and eventually dies because it cannot extricate itself ? the silk worm is compared to a person and the silk threads , to worldly desires . In a poem of puns , the poet prays that her god , whom she describes as the " Lord of fragrant Jasmines " , may cut through the cocoon of desires so she may become free like a butterfly .

In addition to poetry , she is credited with two short writings , Mantrogopya and Yogangatrividhi , the latter written in the native tripadi metre , describing the various stages of spiritual enlightenment . Tradition has it that Akka Mahadevi preferred to wear no clothes , a form of renunciation which in her own words was the " most exalted spiritual state " . She died while still in her twenties in a plantain grove in the holy city of Srisailam . A poem by Akka Mahadevi :

Other poets

Basavanna 's nephew , Chennabasava , is more popular as a strategist and a theologian . Apart from authoring some notable and lengthy Vachana poems , he wrote on yogic experiences in a book called Mantragopya . He is known to have been the manager of the gatherings and the Mahamane ( " great house " ) of Basavanna . Credited to Siddharama , another influential devotee and a native of Sonnalige ( modern Sholapur , Maharashtra ) , are writings in tripadi metre and 1 @,@ 379 extant poems ( though he has claimed authorship of 68 @,@ 000 poems ) . His poems were influenced by Basavanna 's ideology and convey rejection of blind beliefs , the caste system , and sexual discrimination .

Artisan poets included Molige Maraiah , a wood cutter ; Madivala Machayya , a washerman ; Ambigere Chowdiah , a ferryman ; Madara Dhooliah , a cobbler ; Hendada Mariah , a toddy tapper ; Turugahi Ramanna , a cowherd ; Kannadi Remmitande , a mirror maker ; and Revanna Siddha , a shepherd , as but a few in a long list of poets . Poets Dakkeya Bommaiah , Bahuroopi Chowdaiah , Kalaketaiah and Nageya Maritande were ritual street performers and their poems reflect images from their trade .

Several women poets made important contributions including : Basavanna 's sister Nagalambike and his two wives , Gangambike and Neelambike , though Neelambike seems to have been the



more prolific . Some female poets were wives of male poets in the Veerashaiva congregation . Notable among them are Satyakka , whose poems compare in quality to those of Akka Mahadevi , Kelavve ( a dalit poet ) , whose poems scorn at the upper caste people , Mahadevi and Lingamma , who wrote poems in a mystic language , Amuge Rayamma and Akkamma , who penned poems on the hypocrisy of religious pretences , Kadire Remavva ( a spinner ) , who employed a cryptic language called bedagu in her poems , and Muktayakka , who is known for her debates with the patron saint Allama himself . Other names worthy of mention are Lakkamma , Ketaladevi , Guddavve and a princess called Bontadevi .

= = = = Decline = = = =

Challenging the very core of the caste @-@ based society , the Veerashaivas conducted a marriage between an upper caste Brahmin bride and a lower caste Shudra groom . The resulting confrontation between rebellious Veerashaivas and the conservative upper classes lead to the assassination of King Bijjala II and the eviction of most devotees , including Basavanna , from Kalyani . The successors of King Bijjala II were weak , prompting Chalukya Someshvara IV , ruling from Annigeri , to attempt rebuilding his empire by invading Kalyani in 1183 . Though his invasion was successful , his overall efforts failed and the dynasty was ended by the Seuna rulers who drove Someshvara IV into exile in Banavasi in 1189 . Though these turbulent events caused a setback to the Veerashaiva gatherings and creation of poems , the movement had set roots in the Kannada soil and regained popularity in the 15th century under the patronage of the rulers of the Vijayanagara Empire .

= = Literature after the Chalukyas = =

The post @-@ Chalukya period is characterised by the popularity of Shaiva and Vaishnava devotional writings , though secular and courtly topics written in native metres continued to flourish . Native metres in vogue were the shatpadi ( six @-@ line verse ) , the tripadi , the ragle ( rhymed couplets ) and the sangatya ( compositions meant to be sung to the accompaniment a musical instrument ) . Overall , Kannada writings began to change from marga ( " formal " , due to Sanskrit influence ) to desi ( " vernacular " ) and become more accessible to the common man .

This change is apparent in the writings of the Hoysala court poets , some of who are noted for pioneering works in native metres . The Veerashaiva poet Harihara , one of the most prominent poets of the medieval era , established the ragale tradition with his biography of Basavanna ( Basavaraja Devara ragale , 1160 ) , the earliest available biography of the social reformer and of the Kannada language as well . His nephew Raghavanka established the shatpadi metre in his unique and original narration of the story of King Harishchandra called Harishchandra Kavya ( 1200 ) . Sisumayana is credited with introducing a new composition called sangatya ( 1232 ) in his allegorical poems Tripuradahana ( " Burning of the triple fortress " ) and Anjanacharita . Some Jain authors continued the champu tradition , such as Janna , immortalised by his writing Yashodhara Charite ( 1207 ) , a unique set of stories in 310 verses dealing with sadomasochism and transmigration of the soul . The earliest well @-@ known Brahmin writers also emerged during the late 12th century and wrote on themes ranging from Vaishnava faith ( Rudrabhatta 's Jagannatha Vijaya , 1185 ) to secular treatises on poetics ( Kavi Kama 's Sringara Ratnakara , on poetic sentiment and flavor ) .

After the fall of the Kalachuri empire , the Vachana poetic tradition halted temporarily . However , by the 14th century , the Veerashaivas who held influential positions in the Vijayanagara Empire were exerting their influence , especially during the reign of King Deva Raya II ( or Proudha Deva Raya ) . Although this period is not as famous for the proliferation of the Vachana poems as the 12th century was , contemporary writers adopted the preachings of the saints and devotees of the bygone era and made them the protagonists of their writings . Having found a rallying point to spread their faith , they began an era of commentaries , anthologies and biographies . Famous among biographies were Bhimakavi 's Basavapurana ( 1369 ) , Singiraja 's Mala @-@ Basavapurana ( or

Singirajapurana , 1500 ) on the life of Basavanna , Chamarasa 's Prabhulingalile ( 1425 ) on the life of Allama Prabhu and Virupaksha Pandita 's Chenna Basavapurana ( 1584 ) , an account of Chennabasava . Among a long list of anthologies , four versions of the Shunyasampadane are the most well @-@ known . The first version , completed in 1400 by Shivaganaprasadi Mahadevaiah , was written in the form of a dialogue between the protagonist , saint Allama Prabhu , and other well @-@ known Veerashaiva devotees . Later versions were compiled by Halage Arya ( 1500 ) , Gummalapura Siddhalingayati ( 1560 ) and Gulur Siddhaveeranodaya ( 1570 ) . Writing Vachana poems was popularised again from the mid @-@ 16th century , though Kannada language had to wait till the 17th century to discover its greatest modern poet in this genre . Sarvajna ( lit . " The all knowing " , 16th or 17th century ) , a mendicant poet @-@ moralist and social reformer , left an indelible imprint on Kannada literature with his didactic poems , numbering about 2 @,@ 100 in all . Written using the simple native tripadi metre to instruct the country folk , these poems cover a vast range of topics , from caste and religion to economics and administration , from arts and crafts to family life and health . Sarvajna 's poems constitute some of Kannada 's most popular works .

Four noted Brahmin writers of the Vijayanagara empire , Kumara Vyasa , Timmanna Kavi , Kumara Valmiki and Chatu Vitthalanata proliferated the shatpadi metre in their versions of the Hindu epics . Inspired by the Vachana writers who used the song @-@ prose medium to write their poems , the Haridasa poets used genres such as the kirthane ( musical compositions with two refrains ? composition based on raga , or tune and tala , or rhythm ) , the Suladi ( rhythm @-@ based ) and the Ugabhoga ( melody @-@ based ) to convey their devotion to God . Their contributions to the south Indian classical music ( Carnatic music ) is well acclaimed , Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa being the most popular poets of this cadre . Purandaradasa was the most prolific Haridasa poet who wrote in the ragale metre and also earned the honorific Karnataka Sangeeta Pitamaha ( " Father of Carnatic music " ) . Kanakadasa was versatile in many native metres . His Mohana tarangini is in the sangatya metre , Nalacharita and a book of morals for children called Haribhakti @-@ sara are in the shatpadi metre .