REDISCOVERING KARNATAKA

Text by M.V. KAMATH

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA *in association with* VIKAS PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT LTD

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Karnataka

The road to Paradise begins in Karnataka—and ends there. There is nowhere else to go. It is, as the poet says, *cheluva Kannada Nadu*. The word *cheluva* defies clear definition. It suggests beauty, grace, at-homeness. In Karnataka, a graceful girl is a *cheluve*, one who is pleasing, who radiates charm, contentment, peace. The state's theme-song says: *Udayavagali namma cheluva Kannada Nadu*. May the lovely land of the Kannadigas arise. The people of Karnataka do not take their land—or themselves—for granted. The romantic in them always strives for the ideal and like all ideals, it is a moveable feast. To say that the land is already beyond comparison is to invite comparison. To wish it to be is to live eternally in hope. Readily would they agree with Shakespeare who said in a different context:

> If I could write the beauty of your eyes
> And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
> The age to come would say: 'This poet lies;
> Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces'.

But they have, they have. And in myriad ways. In the voluptuous sculptures of Halebid and Belur; in the domes and minarets of Bijapur and Bidar and in the soaring columns of the *barakaman*; in the floating music of Mallikarjun Mansur and the dancing rhythm of Karnataka's artists. To savour Karnataka, one must experience Karnataka in all its phases. To lie down by the warming seas and feel the white foam flying is to experience Karnataka; to trek through the green fields of Kanara with the wind-swept rains splashing against one's face is to experience Karnataka. To stay awake on a moon-lit night in the groves of casurina and watch the speckled clouds is to experience Karnataka. To watch the sunset over the western sea from a vantage point on the Ghats is to get intoxicated on Karnataka. Criss-cross Karnataka from west to east, from north to south, traversing through copse and cliff, river and rock and it is an experience everlastingly to savour. The skies, it would seem, are of a deeper blue, the earth a redder red and the cotton of north Karnataka a whiter white. In Karnataka, superlatives come easily to mind.

"How do I love thee? Let me count the ways" wrote Browning. How does one love Karnataka? The land explodes in beauty at every turn of the road. But one

does not have to love Karnataka. Karnataka loves you. It clasps you gently by the hand and leads you to its many secret bowers. Other states cloy the appetites they feed but Karnataka makes hungry where most she satisfies. A whiff of Mysore *mallige* suffices to rouse the most distraught heart to raging romance. It is scent of jasmine which lies lightly in the air like a just-remembered dream. It is Karnataka.

Karnataka is divided into three distinct regions, each with its distinct geography, its distinct culture and its distinct ethos. The coastland of Karnataka is about 200 miles long and 8 to 12 miles broad in the north and 30 to 40 miles wide in the south. Lulled by the gentle zephyrs in summer but lashed by the furious rain-bearing winds during the monsoon, Kanara has been celebrated in poerty and song. To hear these lines recited:

Banthai, beesutha banthai
Tenkana galiyu Konkana seemege
Banthai, banthai, banthai

(To Konkan land, the winds have come, blowing furiously from the south they have come, the western winds, they have come, they have come!), is almost to feel the whip-lash of the south western'r knifing through the fields of paddy, sending ripples through the numerous rivers and ponds that liven the land. This is where the unforgiving seas scud scarily against the black basalt, where once the Greeks came and then the Arabs in their dhows and then the Portuguese in their galleons and then the red-coated British with their arms. Shut your eyes and fly back through the pages of history. Do you hear the swish-swish of paddle as Portuguese oars lance through the laughing waters and the grudge-grudge of broken oaths muttered in a foreing tongue? Can you hear the languorous songs of the Arab sailors as they greet the setting sun? Look up and watch the speckled kingfisher fisher do an avian minuet in the brittle air or a sand-piper strut cockling on the wet sands. This is the coastland where Tipu Sultan's great father, Hyder Ali built a chain of forts to guard the land. And it is off these forts that Captain Kidd started his ignoble career only to later transfer his activities to the Caribbean.

Coastal Karnataka, area-wise is not large; at its widest it is not even fifty miles. But as a place it holds you in the margin of your mind, its red soil matching the burnt redness of Mangalore tiles that adorn housetops everywhere. Watch its fisherwomen walk daintily with a head-load of sparkling fish to the market and it is sufficient to send an artist rushing to his canvas; watch its boats sliding disdainfully through the angry waves, their sails full, their oars resting and a doleful song on the sailors' lips and you know Kanara.

This lowland region, often flooded during the monsoon is traversed by several transverse ridges and spurs of the Western Ghats. In some places, the bare laterite hills and high forested spurs even reach the shores of the Arabian Sea. And then there are the rivers, oh, the rivers of Kanara. The Kali, Gangavali-Bedti, Tadri, Sharavati and down south still the Netravati, with their beginnings high up in the Ghats flow turbulently westward to the sea, bursting their banks during the monsoon, but flowing gently during summer reach their pre-ordained destination without a whisper of a complaint, it seems, as they pass villages and towns, with the inevitable small port at their mouth-ends. Once these were prosperous and thriving towns, Karwar and Kumta, Honavar, Ankola and Bhatkal, Malpe and Mangalore. Today they remain picturesque reminders of another time, save Mangalore which is today bursting with activity, is modern port inviting ships

from every country.

Mangalore was built for trade and commerce. Once it imported red dye from Muscat, cotton fabrics and clarified butter from Surat and Kutch, manufactured cloth from Bombay, salt from Goa, silks from China and sugar from distant Mauritius. And it exported rice and pepper, areca, sandalwood, turmeric, teak and cassia. It still exports many of these, in addition to the iron ore from Kudremukh the tallest peak from the Western Ghats. Surely John Masefield must have some port like Mangalore in mind when he wrote.

> Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack
> Batting through the Channel in the mad March days
> With a cargo load of Tyne coal,
> Road-rail, pig-lead
> Firewood, iron ware and cheap tin trays.

The Western Ghats run like a giant's immobile backbone, roughly in a north-to-south direction and parallel to the seashore, generally some 2,000 to 3,000 ft above sea-level, sinking in the middle part to about 1,000 ft but rising menacingly to over 5,500 ft in the south. The western slopes of the Ghats are characterised by tremendous scarps, wild canyons and upgraded valleys. This is one of the wettest regions in India and the world, next only to Meghalaya way up in India's northeast where lies Cherrapunji, the rainiest spot on earth. But Agumbe, in the Ghats is not all that behind and takes in a hefty 750 centimeters of rain in a bare four months. And not far away, the pilgrim town of Sringeri gets around 500 centimeters.

This we know as Malnad—the home of the forests where the bamboo flourishes, wild and free, where grow teak and rosewood and where roam the elephant, the stately gaur and the long-tailer langur, the swift deer and the deadly tiger, burning bright in the forest of the night. This, too, is the home of the pepper and the cardamom, storehouses of the sharpness and fragrance of the Indian sun. Malnad is truly the giver of life for all Karnataka. The Ghats themselves serve as watershed. But for them the monsoon winds would undoubtedly have flown across the arid land, oblivious of its need for water and out toward the Bay of Bengal. Thanks to the Ghats we have prosperity on the coastlands, rich forests in Malnad and rivers flowing both west and east, to the east rivers such as the Krishna, the Ghataprabha and the Malaprabha. Clearly, the great heights and the location of the Ghats have influenced the climate and vegetation of Karnataka. It is no accident that about 18 per cent of the land in Karnataka is under forests. The rivers in the east, unlike the coastal rivers, are not unhappily, navigable because of the upgraded valleys through which they pass resulting in large water-falls and occasional rapids. But the falling torrents of the Kaveri, the Ghataprabha and the Sharavati have their uses: they have been harnessed to generate hydro-electric power, the "white coal" of the south where black coal is hard to come by.

The third and most striking region of Karnataka is what flows eastwards from the Ghats, an elevated stretch that always seems to have been there, a piece of the oldest land on earth, the Gondwana Plate which broke up at the beginning of geological time to become what are now the Deccan Plateau, South Africa and Australia.

To see the rocks scattered in piles, especially in northern Karnataka is to be impressed by the fecundity and power of Mother Nature. Old they are: a thousand million years old, if one can grasp the vastness and immensity of that figure and

older than the Himalayas or the Andes, older than man who came long after time, rain, earthquakes and sun had softened their contours and trimmed their terror. Yet there they are, sometimes rock on yellow rock, boulder over brown boulder, belonging to the Archaean Age and yet strangely enough belonging to modern man, but seemingly mocking at him, Ozymandias fashion. One can almost hear Mother Nature whisper! "Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" But plenty beside them remain. Round the formidable rocks, boundless and bare, often lie a tank here, a coconut grove there, tributes to the ingenuity of man who, over the millennia, learnt to trap the rains to collect life-giving water. Think of the Sravanabelegola tank not far from where the towering Gomata looks with unblinking eyes towards eternity and one gets the feel of this marvellous land that will no doubt, still be there, long after man has gone.

In its own unpretentious way this is a dazzling land, the cradle, as it were, of Hindu architecture. Were there no such rocks, would there have been such temples whose profusion from north to south have made them the open workshops for sculptors? Badami, Aihole, Pattadakal, Belur, Halebid, Somanathpur... here sculptors unknown and known like Jakanachari have carved from yielding rock the liquid forms of dancing figures. Not in marble soft but in granite firm have Karnataka's sculptors sung the praises of the Lord. Glory be unto them.

To spend a day, far away from town and marts in the vastness of this spreading land is another way to know Karnataka. There is a nip in the air before the sun rises. Dewdrops glisten on the sparse grass. There is a solemn stillness in the gathering light. The sun rises, harsh, cruel, unrelenting; only an occasional cow with silver tassles and coloured ribbons on its horns moos disconsolately. Then, just as swiftly, the sun dips over the horizon in a splash of crimson. Swiftly the night descends in secret and in silence. Another day has gone.

There is almost nothing that does not grow in Karnataka or cannot be grown. Of crops, rice is the most important growing in the loamy alluvium of the coastland and in the irrigated areas of the eastern plateau, while cocoanut is the chief crop of the sandy coastal soils, though a Mysorean will tell you with evidence to back him, that it is grown a hundred miles inland as well to produce kernel and water that is, in fact, sweeter. Jowar and ragi are grown in poorer soils. Oilseeds, especially groundnuts, are grown in the eastern districts of north Karnataka and in the transitional zone of Mysore, wheat around Dharwar and Bijapur. King Cotton reigns supreme in the black soil belt and tobacco is the cash crop of Belgaum district. Coffee is grown in Coorg and tea in the Nilgiri Hills. Spices are grown in Sirsi and Siddapur talukas. In summer, south Kanara is a riot of fruit and one can have the pick of as many as 26 varieties of mangoes alone, from the humble Neelam to the royal Bennet Alphonso. Each household is a veritable orchard with mango trees, banana, chickoos, mangostein, jackfruit and the luscious, kidney-shaped cashew from which *feni*, a popular drink among the working classes, is often made.

Of trees, the most common are the banyan and the peepul, the tamarind and the neem—the tamarind, especially a contributory mouth-waterer to many curries. And, of course, the sandalwood, increasingly getting rare and for that reason costly, but without which both poetry and rituals would be poorer. And let us not forget the Gul Mohar, the Flame of the Forest that in May adds to any landscape a glory of rainbow colours with a profligacy so uncharacteristic, they say, of Kannadigas!

Scholars like Manjeshwar Govind Pai have argued on how Karnataka came to get its name but somehow unanimity has eluded them. One theory holds that the name comes from *kari nadu*—land of the black soil and black soil indeed is to be found in north Karnataka. Another speculation is that it is the Sanskritised back-formation of the words 'Kannaadu' or 'Karunadu' meaning again 'black country' or 'beautiful country'. Beautiful it is, for sure. There is reference to Karnataka in Old Kannada literature. Thus, Nagavarma II (AD 1145) wrote, among other works, *Karnata bhasa bhusana* but the earliest inscriptions merely mention some of the geographical divisions of Karnataka like Banavase with its 12,000 villages, Gangavadi with its 96,000, Panunugal (500), Puligere (300) and Belvola (300). Banavasi was called Vaijayanti, Panunugal is modern Hangal and it is interesting to note that in the 12th century AD Dharwad was a small village called Daravada and included in the Kundur 500 division. Kundur, incidentally, is the ancient name of modern Narendra, which is about five miles from Dharwad and which, by an accident of fate, is now only a very small village in Dharwad Division!

It has already been stated that the land of Karnataka is about the oldest in the world and various episodes from mythology, legend and folklore in the early literature of India give us a fairly direct clue to the periods of history Karnataka must have passed through. Thus, the myth of Agastya's drinking of the waters of the ocean and that of the bending of the Vindhyan mountain to a lower height throw light on what happened at the end of the Nummulitic Period of the Tertiary Era. It marks the advent of the new period which caused a complete severance between India and Africa. It was about this time that the Arabian Sea and the Himalayas make their appearance. It is thenceforth that the early growth of vegetation, the advent of reptiles—always the reptiles first!—and then of bigger animals lead to the early man and his associates in the post-Tertiary Period.

It is the feeling of being the first when the world as we know came to be so stabilised that, no doubt, has contributed to the unshakeable belief among Kannadigas that they are at the very epicentre of the universe!

A popular story-poem thus says of the region:

> Dharani mandala madhyadolage
> Mereyuthiha Karnata deshadi

(Karnataka basking in glory right in the middle of the world body!) Basked in glory, especially in the medieval period, Karnataka certainly has. Few regions of India have had more valorous kings, more dynamic dynasties or greater interface between the rulers and the ruled than Karnataka. We can skip the story of the pre-historic man and his slow but steady progress towards civilisation, and come straight to the Mauryan Period when Karnataka must have formed the southern end of Asoka's mighty empire. Legend has it that the great Chandragupta Maurya came all the way from Magadha to Shravanabelgola after laying down his kingship. The Mauryan sway over Karnataka is evidenced by the edicts of Ashoka discovered at places as far away as Kopbal, Maski, Siddapur, Jatinga-Rameswar and Brahmagiri. The Siddapur edicts were addressed to the officials at Isila by the Ayaputa (Aryaputra) and Mahamata (Mahamatra) at Suvarnagiri thus clearly indicating that Isila with its surrounding region near Siddapur was included in the Mauryan Empire.

After the Mauryas, Karnataka was held by the Andhras who ruled over a vast territory from the Godavari River in the north to the Pennar in the south. Indeed, Karnataka has since been described as the land from the Godavari to the Kaveri: *Kaveriyindama godavarivaramirda Naadu*.

After the Andhras comes a period when the history of Karnataka makes the history of many western nations seems like fairy tales! Names of dynasties and dynastic rulers trip over the tongue in rapid succession. The Andhras are succeeded by the Pallavas who, however, did not last long. In any event, they had held sway over only a small part of Andhra territory. At this point in history we come across a young Brahmin, who had come to the *Ghatikasthana* of Kanchi to prosecute his studies, only to find time to carve out a kingdom for himself. His name? Mayura Sharma. The dynasty? Why, the Kadambas, of course. From the Chandravalli Inscription we learn of the brilliant successes of this Mayura Sharma and of the battles he fought and the dynasty he initiated. Among his successors was Kadamba Mayuravarman. It is with his rise that we date the political career of Karnataka which, in the course of centuries, developed into a strong power to be reckoned with and became ultimately the meeting ground of many nationalities and races during the Vijayanagara Period (between the 14th and 16th centuries AD).

One great dynasty succeeded another. The Kadambas were followed by the Chalukyas of Badami under Pulakeshin I, but it is his grandson, Pulakeshin II that is remembered for his victories. He was the first Karnataka sovereign to establish an empire south of the Vindhyas and to proclaim himself the sole lord of the entire Deccan, including both Karnataka and the Telugu country. Huien Tsiang, the Chinese pilgrim visited his Court in about AD 640 and has recorded the life of those times. Pulakeshin II like a true Emperor received a Persian Ambassador and exchanged letters with the King of Persia Khusru II. Certainly, during the Chalukyan sovereignty, Karnataka became a political power to be reckoned with by contemporary rulers of India and foreign nations alike. The Chalukya Court patronised, as was proper in those times, renowned poets of the age like Damodara, Bharavi and Ravikirti, the last of whom is extolled in the Aihole *prashasht* (inscription) as "inspired in poetry by Kalidasa and Bharavi" (*Kavitasrita Kalidasa-Bharavi kirttih*).

The eighth century AD saw the decline of the Chalukyas and the rise of a new dynasty, the Rashtrakutas. It was one of the early Rashtrakutas, Krishna I who constructed the famous Kailasa Temple at Ellora, easily one of the wonders of that, or subsequent, period. A name that shines for ever among the Rashtrakuta rulers is Amoghavarsha Nripatunga (AD 814-880), a king who patronised poets and philosophers and was himself no mean poet. At a time when elsewhere in the world kings were crowned and dethroned, if, meanwhile, they did not die or were killed in battle, Nripatunga ruled for 65 long years, a record of sorts. In Britain, only an Elizabeth I and later Queen Victoria can be mentioned in the same breath as Nripatunga. The earliest extant work in Kannada, the *Kavirajamarga* (The Royal Road to Poetry) was composed at his Court, inaugurating what may be called the Classical Age of Kannada literature. The work itself refers to a *palagannada* (Old Kannada), warning aspiring writers to avoid its archaisms, mentioning, in passing, the existence of dialectical variations.

The death of Pulakeshin II after a staggering defeat at the hands of the Pallavas is the start of a chain of battles and the rise and fall of kings with monotonous regularity. Karnataka could not have known much peace and the land, surely, must have been ravaged. For some two hundred years, the Rashtrakutas and the

Chalukyas fought each other until we come to the most illustrious ruler among the later Chalukyas of Kalyana, Vikramaditya VI in whose Court flourished the famous poet Bilhana. One of Vikramaditya's acts of pride was the establishment of a new Era beginning his own name in the years AD 1076. This Vikramaditya ruled for fifty years. After his death, the Chalukya kingdom lingered for a few more years until it came to an end in AD 1198. But for a gap of some 220 years (AD 753 to 973) when the Rashtrakutas were in possession of their territory, the Chalukyas held what one historian has described as "beneficient sway" over the entire Karnataka region for a period of about 400 years (AD 542 to 1198), to the point that to speak of the Chalukyas is to speak of the cultural heritage of the Kannada people.

The contribution of the Chalukyas was more in the cultural than in the political field. The rulers were patrons of art, literature, sculpture and architecture. One of the famous styles of Indian architecture is the Chalukya style which was further embellished by the Hoysalas, subordinates to the Chalukyas themselves, in the breath-taking temples at Halebid and Belur. We hear of Gunda, on whom the Chalukya Queen Lokamahadevi bestowed the title of Tribhuvanacharya for his great skill in constructing the Virupaksha Temple. Another Queen, Achala, seems to have founded a new school of dancing. In a real sense, the Chalukyan Period is the Golden Age of Karnataka. We come now to the last of the early dynasties, the Hoysalas, prior to the rise of the Vijayanagar Empire. We remember the Hoysalas as much for their love and encouragement of the arts as for their acumen in administration which was partly borrowed from the Gangas and the Chalukyas. The State, remarkably enough, was not a theocracy and never at any time did the priestly influence militate against the right and just exercise of kingly duty. The king was the protector of faiths and religious toleration was the norm though tensions existed between Vaishnavism and Jainism, Buddhism and Saivism. Yet, royal favour was equally distributed among followers of all faiths in the sure belief that any predilection to any one faith would seriously cloud kingly catholicity and undermine the very basis of society. One historian has noted that the secret of successful government lay in the generous treatment of the people and the formidable power of *samantas* and other nobles at Court coupled with the king's fears of a possible revolt of the *janapada*. The Hoysala king was advised by his Council of Ministers—the *panchapradhans*—which was composed of tried and trusted men of experience, but kingship itself was hereditary. It has been said that the exaltation of the Council of Ministers in the Hoysala Era is its most outstanding feature.

The Hoysala kings also went on another track. Power rested on the *Saptanga* which included the king, his ministers, his allies, the territory over which he ruled, his fortresses, treasury and the army. To strengthen these, the kings contracted marriages from princely houses allied to them, though one of the queens was designated *pattadarasi* whose son alone was rightful heir to the throne. One of the Hoysala kings is known to have married 384 "well-born" women representing different races such as Andhra, Simhala, Karnata, and Lata. The Chief Queen of Vishnuvardhan, the justly famous Shantaladevi, was always associated with the king in administration and with the *panchapradhans* in making grants. Shantaladevi's name is also associated with the building of temples and the encouragement of the arts. For some seven hundred years from the sixth to the twelfth century AD the genius of Karnataka had overworked and spent itself and for the next two hundred years, we do not hear about kingly exploits but rather of saints and composers of the highest order. The next splurge in political activity starts in the year

AD 1336 during the reign in Britain of Edward III. Robert Swell in his classical work, *A Forgotten Empire*, has suggested that that is the year when the history of ancient India closes and the modern begins. It was in AD 1336 that the foundation of the city and kingdom of Vijayanagar was laid. When Vijayanagar sprang into existence, the past was done for ever and the monarchs of the new state became lords and overlords of the territories lying between the Deccan and Sri Lanka.

This was no miracle but the natural result of the persistent efforts made by the Muslims from up north to conquer all of India. When these invaders reached the Krishna River, the Hindus in the south, stricken with terror, combined, gathered in haste to the new standard and while the decaying old states crumbled, fought round the Vijayanagar banner and the fighting kings of this new state became the saviours of the south and held back the Muslims for two centuries and a half. At its height, the Vijayanagar Empire was a thing to behold. Abdur Razzak and the Portuguese traveller Domingoes Paes have left us vivid accounts of the heydey of the Empire. The greatest of the Vijayanagar kings was Krishnadevaraya (1509 to 1530) of the second dynasty. After his death, the Empire lasted until 1565 when at the decisive battle of Talikota, his successor was defeated by a Muslim confederation. From that day till the rise of Hyder Ali, Karnataka draws a blank. Kannadigas had become a spent force, bereft of their splendour.

KANNADA LITERATURE

Ask any schoolboy in Karnataka to name three great Kannada poets and it is more than likely, even certain, that he will name Pampa, Ranna and Ponna. They are Karnataka's Great Immortals.

It is not that there were no other Kannada poets before them or after. But the trio gave to Kannadigas their pride and their glory. They vivified their language. Nripatunga's *Kavirajamarga* (AD 850) is the earliest extant work in the Kannada language. But Nripatunga himself referred to Kannada works before him making it clear that Kannada had already established itself as a literary language. But *Kavirajamarga* set the trend. The work is written in Old Kannada with a grandeur all its own. Nripatunga was to be followed by Asaga who has to his credit eight works in Sanskrit but he wrote in Kannada, too, and though his *Karnata Kumara Sambhava* is not available, some of his stanzas survive as quotations in other works like the *Kavyavalokana* of Nagavarma (AD 1145).

But Pampa (AD 942) strides into the tenth century, a giant among poets. His has been the most venerable name in Kannada literature even after the lapse of many centuries. Other great poets have dazzled the Kannada skies, but Pampa's pre-eminence has never been questioned. His ancestors followed the Vedic religion, but he himself was a Jain. It is remarkable how much Kannada owes to Jainism and certainly Pampa is a most noteworthy example.

Like all scholars of his times, Pampa was deeply read in Sanskrit classics and Prakrit literature. He was intimately familiar with the stories told in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Importantly, he was learned in Jain philosophy and hagiology and a historian has said that "treatises on music, dancing, painting, medicine, politics and economics, erotics and embroidery and other fine arts had claimed his earnest attention". This was a Michelangelo with words.

He was thirtynine years old when he composed his *Adipurana*; he was then a poet in the court of Arikesari II, a prince of the Chalukya family, but he was beginning to make his mark. A few years later he produced *Vikramarjuna Vijaya*, otherwise known as *Pampa Bharata*. These two works are the glory of Kannada

literature and keep Pampa as a star apart.

The *Adipurana* is a religious poem narrating the pilgrimage of a soul towards perfection and its final attainment. If Pampa had written nothing else but this one single work, he would still be one of the Immortals. It is true that the poet inherited the basic theme from Jinasena II who had written the first version of *Adipurana* in Sanskrit. What Pampa did was to abridge the work and endow it with artistic form and generally tightening up the narrative and make it available in Kannada. Soaring in his imagination, Pampa has lavished on this work not only his learning, vast as it was, but his emotion as well. *Adipurana* is the ultimate in man's quest for spiritual salvation.

What followed, *Pampa Bharata*, is a work of even vaster magnitude. Here Pampa had a wider canvas to paint: Vyasa's *Mahabharata*, no less. The heroes were of epic proportions. The central story was of universal appeal. For once, it seems, the Mahabharata's scope was matched by a poet's genius. Pampa poured all his talents into the re-telling of a tale that has been immortalised in song and verse and dance in India down the centuries. Pampa was fascinated by the intensely human drama of hate and love and fear, agony and ecstasy and the sheer moral grandeur of the *Mahabharata*. In Vyasa's telling the story, however, there is no central character. Every hero plays his part and is gone. The story lives, but is diffuse and somehow does not hold together. This was unacceptable to Pampa. The poet held Vyasa in high respect, bordering on adoration but even in his humility, Pampa decided that he must recast the theme with focus on one man, the mighty Arjuna. In Arjuna he saw all that was bold and strong and chivalrous. Of the Pandavas, Arjuna alone rings true to Pampa. So he called his work *Vikramarjuna Vijaya*, the victory of the mighty Arjuna. Again and again, in this recounting of the *Mahabharata*, Arjuna comes forward, a true knight in shining armour. Pampa's lines flow like Ganga in its majesty, silvery and sonorous, and very uplifting in the process. This is Pampa, the poet and there is none like him. In his hands, it is Arjuna, not Yudhishtira who is crowned king after the battle of Kurukshetra is over and the Pandavas emerge victorious. And it is Arjuna's consort, Subhadra, who wears the Queen's diadem, not Draupadi. Forgotten is Bhima who engages Duryodhana in the Battle of Maces (*Gadaa Yuddha*) and is a contributory cause to the Pandava victory as is Draupadi who suffered most of the insults at the Kaurava Court. Many have whispered that *Vikaramarjuna Vijaya* is aesthetically, if not factually, unsatisfactory. But no matter. We are concerned here with grandeur and *Vikramarjuna Vijaya* is suffused with grandeur. If there is one other character with whom Pampa sympathises, it is Karna. When Pampa describes Karna's death, we weep with him. Karna the steadfast, Karna the loyal, Karna the eternally truthful: Arjuna pales in comparison with his half-brother, Kunti's son by Surya. Pampa, the poet recognises in Karna much more than physical prowess. He sees in him what others have seen in that tragic hero: moral grandeur.

If Pampa saw in Karna the moral hero, he equally saw in Duryodhana the tragic hero. The hero who has failed himself and therefore failed the world. There is sorrow in Pampa as he describes what Duryodhana has brought upon himself. And he makes us share his sorrow.

Many critics of Pampa have seen in *Vikramarjuna Vijaya* a certain downgrading of Krishna. This may have been—and surely was—deliberate; but equally surely it could not have been due to any lack of veneration for the Great Charioteer. Pampa is just not enamoured of Krishna as many later writers of the Bhakti School were. We must remember the times. It was during the period of Jain ascendance in Karnataka and the stress was more on the Thirthankaras than on

Vaishnavism. We may also remember that in one or two places, Pampa describes Krishna as *Ajita* (the Unconquerable). Considering that Ajita also is the second Thirthankara of Jainism, it would indicate that Pampa was investing the character of Krishna with an aura of sanctity. But neither Pampa's departure from the original *Mahabharata* of Vyasa, nor his somewhat cavalier discard of many of Vyasa's accepted heroes takes away from *Vikramarjuna Vijaya* its massed impact. Pampa is, and remains, the father of Kannada Poetry and its enduring master.

Ponna was a contemporary of Pampa and was Court poet to Krishna III and enjoyed the munificence of his imperial master, who bestowed on him the title of *Kavichakravarti* (Emperor of Poets). For an Emperor of Poets, Ponna has not done too well by posterity. There is evidence that he was a scholar of great merit. He could not possibly have risen in the Court of Krishna III without the scholarship to back him. He is known as the author of *Bhuvanaika Ramabhyudaya* which is the Ramayana re-told in fourteen chapters. But we know of it largely from hearsay: the work has never been recovered. Ponna is better understood from two other works of his, the *Santipurana* and the *Jinaksaramale*; as a poet he suffers at the hands of his critics by being damned with faint praise. But Ponna perhaps asked for it. He seems to have an extraordinarily high opinion about himself, spurred, no doubt, by his pre-eminence in Court. He was influenced by Kalidasa, two hundred of whose verses he translated into Kannada and, in the process, calling himself a much better poet than Kalidasa himself, a bit of license that sounds childish were it not that it comes from an Emperor of Poets. Interestingly enough though Ponna (AD 950) was contemporaneous with Pampa, the two seem to have studiously avoided mentioning each other. If there was any rivalry between them, it was well contained and was certainly not meant for public comment. Somehow, Ponna comes through in grey colours not quite the poet he thought he was, nor yet the poet we wished him to be. D.L. Narasimhachar, an authority on Ponna, as on Old Kannada Literature, put it in a nutshell when writing about the poet. He said: "One cannot help feeling that he lacked the poetic heart and our final judgement of his powers is bound up with the recovery of his other work". Which is possibly to say never!

Ranna, the last of the triumvirate—we will discuss Jaimini separately—was born in AD 949 at Mudovolal which is modern Mudhol. Like Pampa, he too, belonged to the Jain faith. By profession he was a bangle-seller and we presume that he knew how to make them as well. It is to the credit of his times that he could give up his ancestral profession and take to the study of Sanskrit, Prakrit and Kannada literature, a sure way to attract royal notice and hopefully, favour. Ranna certainly made his way to the Imperial Court of Tailapa (AD 973-997) and his son Satyashraya (AD 997-1009), and distinguished himself with three major works, *Parushurama Charita*, *Ajita Purana* and *Sahasa-Bhima Vijaya*, the last of which is better known as *Gadaa Yuddha*. He also wrote *Chakreshwara Charita*, but this, along with *Parushurama Charita* have been lost in the womb of time. Ranna is primarily known for *Gadaa Yuddha* which by itself is enough to give him a place in the history of Kannada literature.

If Pampa took Arjuna as his hero, Ranna, it would seem, set about to maintain the balance by taking Bhima as his main character. Ranna's focus, however, is considerably narrow. He takes for his theme the final fight between Bhima and Duryodhana towards the evening of the eighteenth day of the Mahabharata war. The battle is almost the last; all that remains is for it to be wound up. Bhima, swearing vengeance, is thirsting to kill his main rival. Tensions have risen to fever pitch. It is now, now, now.

The *Mahabharata* is full of dramatic episodes. Bhishma taking to his bed of arrows; the killing of Drona; the heroism of Abhimanyu; the slaying of Karna. Each is a theme of epic grandeur. To isolate the fight between Duryodhana and Bhima and name it as the most dramatic is perhaps, not quite fair. And yet there is to this struggle a certain poetic justice. The wicked Duryodhana has to die. Draupadi has to wet her hair in his flowing blood. The final blow by Bhima's mace has to be delivered to Duryodhana's thigh. Ranna rises fully to the occasion. If you have tears to shed, he seems to say, shed them now. Strangely enough, though Ranna's chosen hero is Bhima, it is to his foe Duryodhana that our sympathies flow in their fullest measure. It is the sympathy for genius perverted, talent inwardised and virtue sullied. Duryodhana's death, in the end almost self-willed, comes like the setting of a brilliant sun. After that, all is silence.

It needed a Pampa or a Ranna to tell the story and it fell to Ranna to tell it in the full plenitude of sorrow and splendour. D.L. Narasimhachar compares Ranna's style to that of Milton or Dante, lofty in theme and sobering in effect. Another, but lesser comparison will be with Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustom* with Rustom unknowingly killing his only and long-lost son, on the sands by the river Oxus. One sorrows in vain for the tragedy unfolding before our eyes and weeps for what is not. We remember Shelley's immortal "Ode to a Skylark": "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought".

Gadaa Yuddha falls in that category. The words are haunting and the tragedy Himalayan. It is the grand finale to the *Mahabharata*. After that it leaves the reader limp and numbed. What has to be, has to be.

When Ranna died for many it seemed the sun had set on Kannada literature. But it is to the lasting credit of Karnataka that the night was not long nor unlit by lesser luminaries.

The three Gems—Pampa, Ponna and Ranna—were gone, but the lamps that they had lit continued to burn. Changes were coming on the literary scene. Old Kannada itself was being transformed into Middle Kannada and a wide gap was being noticed between the spoken language and the language of the poets, Old Kannada.

Jainism still held sway in Karnataka and the literature of that period is full of the lives of the Thirthankaras. Looking back now we can see the full panoply of literary activity between AD 1150 to 1400. If Herodotus set the stage of later writers, the Three Gems laid the trend for several generations to come. The lives of Thirthankaras, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana were the mother lodes that could for ever be mined. Nemichandra (AD 1170), Bandhuvarma (AD 1200) and Mahabala Kavi (AD 1254) each wrote a work on Neminatha, the 22nd Thirthankara. But Nemichandra's work ends with the slaying of Kamsa by Krishna and is incomplete and rightly called *Ardha Nemi*.

Much of the literary works of these three centuries were meant for popular consumption and are not distinguished for their literary merit. The accepted form was the *champu kavya* and even romances were written in that style. Thus Nagavarma I in his *Kadambari*; thus Nemichandra (AD 1170) in his *Lilavati*. There were works on mathematics and science like Rajaditya's *Vyavahara-Ganita* (Calculations for Every Day). *Karnata Kalyana Karaka* by Jagaddala Somanatha (AD 1150) was an extensive work on Ayurvedic medicine and Ratta Kavi (AD 1300) wrote a work called *Ratta Mata* on, of all topics, meteorology, summarising the then known information on the formaton and varieties of clouds, rainfall, earthquakes, underground water, even thunder and lightning. Mangaraja wrote *Khagendra Mani Darpana* (AD 1360) on several kinds of poisons and their antidotes.

A scholar of Kannada will recognise other names like Harihara, Nagavarma II and Keshiraja whose *Shabdamanidarpana* is a comprehensive grammar on Old Kannada. It is said that Shabdamanidarpana is the "Bible" of Old Kannada and an invaluable key to the treasures of Old Kannada.

And there were still others who were known in their times but today end up as footnotes. The Age of Giants was dead. We have to come to the end of the nineteenth century for a resurgence of writing in Old Kannada, quaint though it seems in retrospect. And while Lakshminaranappa (better known as Muddanna) will always be honoured for his brilliant *Adbhuta Ramayana* and *Rameshwamedha*, the age of great poetry, indeed of any form of literature ended with the Three Gems. Virashaiva literature, the *vachanas* of Basava, for instance, is an entirely different thing, not to be compared with the vaulting poetry of the old masters. However, the *champu* was having competition from "*tripadi*" often called the most "native" of all Kannada meters, the form "in which even today the sons of the soil express their hopes, aspirations and frustrations, the form in which mothers lull their children to sleep..."

The most popular *tripadis* are those used by Sarvajna in his *Neeti shataka*. Sarvajna perhaps is the quintessence of Kannada folk wisdom, unsurpassed by anyone before or after him. Interestingly enough, so little is known about this brilliant satirist of the 16th-17th century. Sarvajna (All-knowing) was not his real name; it was a pseudonym, and it fitted him well indeed. He wrote about a thousand verses and they are household lines quoted in any literate home. Sarvajna's *tripadis* deal with a wide variety of subjects, including commonsense philosophy, religion, love, hate, friendship and God. Consider this:

Kallinali, manninali, mullina moneyalli
yalli nenedalli shiva nirpa ava ni
niddalli iruva sarvajna.

(In stone, in mud, in the point of a thorn, whenever he is thought of, there is Shiva. He is there wherever you are, says Sarvajna).

Or

Sarvantharamiyu orva nembuva tatva
nirdhishtavagi iruthire mokshavu
sarvarige sulabha sarvajna

(If only we realise that God is everywhere and He is One, then Liberation is easy for everyone, says Sarvajna).

That is high philosophy, put in simple words and in easily assimilable language. Sarvajna is never abstruse. He is the peoples' philosopher.

Sarvajna states that charity is never wasted and that what one gives, one gets back in return in abundance.

Kottiddu thanage bacchittiddu pararinge
kottaddu kettithenabeda adu munde
kattihudu butthi sarvajna.

(What you give is all yours, what you have kept hidden is taken by others, never say that what you have given is lost because that is what is kept for you in the end, says Sarvajna).

He has something to say about wifely qualities:

Becchana maneyage vecchakke honnagi
ichcheyanu ariva satiyage swargakke
kichchu hachchenda sarvajna.

(Endowed with a home of warmth and with enough money to spend, and if blessed with an understanding wife, who would care for the Heavens? Set fire to it, says Sarvajna)

Sarvajna, the moralist has a word for the hedonist and the pleasure-seeker:

Anya sathiyanu kandu thanna heththavalendu
mannisi nadeva purusharige iha paradi
munna bhayavilla sarvajna.

(The man who treats another man's wife as his own mother and holds her in respect has nothing to fear either in this life or the next, says Sarvajna).

Sarvajna had a word of praise for everyone who lived the Right Life but could come down heavily on wrong-doers, no matter who they were. A scholar has suggested that during Sarvajna's life-time there were probably no Buddhists in Karnataka because while there are many references to all other sects—Brahmins, Jains, Turks and others—there are none to Buddhists, in Sarvajna's sayings. And interestingly, Sarvajna makes no references to contemporary writers either!

If Sarvajna wrote in *tripadi* (three lines), the six-line stanza *shatpadi* was chosen by another great poet, Naranappa of Gadag for writing his version of the Mahabharata. Naranappa's impact on the Kannada people is analogous to the influence of the Tulsidas Ramayana on the people in the Hindi belt. Naranappa called himself Kumara Vyasa and it is a measure of his power of communication that it is said:

Kumaravyasanu hadidanendare Kaliyuga dwaparavaguvadu.

(Where Kumara Vyasa to sing, our sordid times would be transformed into the Heroic Age). Kumara Vyasa was the anchor of his times (AD 1400) and till the dawn of modern Kannada literature it was he who was held as a model by other poets, among them Lakshmisha (1550) whose *Jaimini Bharata* has a deserved place in Kannada literature.

THE VEERASHAIVAS AND BASAVA

Of all the saints and singers, writers and poets of Karnataka, the one who dared the most and paid the most was Basava.

Basava was the pure rebel, the Martin Luther of Karnataka who had not merely the courage of his convictions but came to his convictions through spiritual grace. If centuries before Christ, Gautama the Buddha could decry casteism and ritual, Basava in the twelfth century outdid the Buddha.

He was born a Brahmin. That was both his strength and his weakness. Strength because only a Brahmin could dare brahminic rituals. Weakness because it made him a target of hatred of the conservatives. From his boyhood he seems to have been in open clash with his elders on the relevance of rituals. Like the Buddha

who spent several years at Banaras before he came to appreciate the emptiness of asceticism, Basava went to Kudala Sangama (the confluence of the Krishna and the Malaprabha rivers) to study the Vedas, the Agamas and the sastras, only to come to believe in the fruitlessness of all metaphysics.

Between his discovery and his decision to clean up religion as then practised, fell no shadow. Basava saw that the purity of Faith was marred, on the one hand, by a multitude of Gods and minor deities, by spirits, totems and taboos and, on the other, by a variety of rites and observances, penances and sacrifices, most of which were devoid of any meaning, and were pursued in a spirit of superstition at the cost of true devotion. As he saw it, his task was to purify and revitalise the Faith and lead it in the direction of devotion. There was to be no longer any division between religion and life in the world; the Divine was to flow into all activities of man's life. Work was worship; work was liberation. As he put it, *kayakave kailasa*. Basava took a dim view of sacrifices: of a hapless goat brought for sacrifice, he says:

> Hapless goat, cry out to them that with worldly worded words,
> found for thee pretexts to bleed. Wail before the chanting Vedantins, mourn
> before the listening Shastrins. Kudala Sangama shall verily do thee justice for
> thy grief.

He has contempt for the men who performed goat sacrifices.

> Habbakke thanda harakeya kuri
> Thoranake thanda thaliru meythu
> Kondarembudanariyade bendolahoreya
> hoythu! andande huttitthu; andande konditthu
> kondavarulidare Kudala Sangama deva!

(The sacrificial lamb brought for the festival ate up the green leaf brought for the decorations. Not knowing a thing about the kill, it wants only to fill its belly: born that day, to die that day. But tell me: did the killers survive, O Lord of the Meeting Rivers?)

It was in this spirit that Basava strove for social reform. The people among whom he lived were riddled with caste, but Basava saw no differences between man and man, the rich and the poor, between an upper caste Brahmin and a low caste pariah. In his eyes all were the same. For this he was later to pay the price all social reformers are called upon to pay.

But in the city where he was the confidante of King Bijjala, his call for social equality found ready response. He gave his learned discourses in what came to be known as the *Anubhava Mantapa*—the Religio-Mystic Academy or the Academy of Experience. The Mantapa was open to anyone who cared to attend it, regardless of birth, sex or position. Whoever came enjoyed equal status. We are told that among those who came to the august assembly were men of diverse trades and professions like Machayya the washerman, Ketayya the basket-weaver, Chaudayya the oarsman and Appanna the barber. And presiding over the Mantapa was an even greater leader, Allama Prabhu. It was Allama Prabhu who gave to Basava the spiritual strength, the backing necessary to buck the Establishment. And did he buck it!

The Vedas failed because
They could not weigh.
The Sastras failed because
They could not seize
The Puranas failed because
They could not prove
When the elders failed
Because they did not know themselves
And were consumed by their own brains,
How could they know thee, O Guheswara!

—Allama Prabhu

That was strong medicine. But if he was strong in his denunciation of the hypocrites, in his own life he was humility personified. He prays to his god of the Confluent Waters—and it is one of the most beautiful of prayers:

The rich build temples unto Shiva
But poor me! what can I do!
My legs are my pillars
My body itself the temple;
My head the golden cupola,
For hear me, O Lord,
What *is* must go; what *was* endures.

There is deep philosophical content in Basava's sayings—*vachanas*—which have come down to us over the centuries. Basava believed in good works and good deeds.

The root is the mouth
of the tree; pour water there
at the bottom
and, look, it sprouts green
at the top.

The Lord's mouth is his moving men
feed them. The Lord will give you all.

You'll go to hell
if knowing they are the Lord
you treat them as men.

As for him, he'll give to anyone who comes to him, unasked, unsought. He tells the Lord of the Confluent Waters:

Out of your eighty-four hundred thousand faces
put on just one
and come test me, ask me.

If you don't come and ask me
I'll swear by the names of your elders.

Come in any face and ask me,
I'll give
my Lord of the meeting rivers.

In the truest sense Basava was the Great Liberator. He was a Minister under the King and accustomed to exercising power, but he let the strength of his convictions tested in the marketplace of ideas—the *Anubhava Mantapa*. So great was his fame, that people from all over the India flocked to hear him, like Urilingadeva from Maharashtra, Nannayya from Orissa, Sivalenka Manchanna from Banaras and Moligeya Marayya with his queen from distant Kashmir. King and commoner, Brahmin and untouchable, men and women, they all came, listened, and were changed. It was only when Basava's precepts were put into practice and a Brahmin maid who had embraced the Veerasaiva Faith married a cobbler's son that all hell broke loose in Kalyana and the conservatives, now directly challenged, got the king to put the married couple to cruel death. Basava left Kalyana to return to Kudala Sangama and there to join his Lord of the Confluent Waters. But his bold, brave spirit lives in the faith that he founded. Basavanna—Basava, our brother—lives in the daily lives of Veerasaivas, as he should. Blessed be His name!

Basava not only made a tremendous impact on the social mores of his times, but on the literature as well. There is a certain masculine strength in the sayings—*vachanas*—of Basava. They are valuable not only for their ethical content but for rich insights they provide into Basava's personality. He repeatedly proclaims the inconsequence of the material world. He recalls another saying about the mercurial quality of the mind:

manavemba markatava thadeyalarenu Deva!

(I cannot withstand this monkey of a mind, O Lord!). Basava talks of the fleeting mind as a monkey on the bough, jumping from one branch to another, never resting at one given place. He is aware of what temptations come in the way of the Seeker: "Thou hast spread before me a green pasture for lascivious temptation. How can the beast in me discriminate? It is decoyed by the greenness". And he is all too aware of the pitfalls of subtle flattery. "Here am I, impaled on a spike of gold, beaten by strokes of fulsome flattery. And all for my pleasure. I basked in praise and warmed both sides. Woeful me! I am pierced through and through and am writhing in pain. O justice of Heaven, save my praise, if thou mean well by men!"

One often thinks of Basava as Moses, Buddha and Gandhi combined! Of all the things in the world, he was most afraid of temptation. "I fear not the reptiles' impetuous onset, nor the fury of the flames threatening to consume me. The pointed poniard has no terror for me. But of one I am afraid and that is the mortal dread of another's wealth and of another's woman".

The *vachanas* are a solid contribution to Kannada literature. They broke for the first time the restrictions imposed by metre while, at the same time, bringing in sharp focus the essence of an idea in the language of the common man. Basava not only broke social conventions: he broke literary conventions as well to achieve freedom from poetic conceits.

Antarangadalli adagittendare bhavakke pujyavalla
Bahirangadalli adagittendare kriyabaddhavalla!

(If you say He is lodged within you, he is beyond the spirit's worshipping! If you say he dwells without you, well then he is not bound by outer acts!) Basava was

followed by his disciples and they spoke the language he spoke: the language of the heart as the language of the common man. Hence, obviously, their tremendous appeal. As A.K. Ramanujan has said in his free translation of the *vachanas* in *Speaking of Siva*, these poets were not bards or pundits in a court, but men and women speaking to other men and women. "Vachanas are a literature in spite of itself, scorning artifice, ornament, learning, privilege: a religious literature, literary because religious; great voices of a sweeping movement of protest and reform in Hindu society; witnesses to complicated ecstasy in gifted literary men".

Inevitably, with the passing away of Basava, another poet arose who had to write about the great rebel. Harihara who wrote about Basava chose another form of writing : the *ragale*. Thus was Kannada literature being enriched.

FOLK LITERATURE

Among the delights to savour in Kannada is its folk literature, rich in wisdom and richer in imagination. No one can tell with any degree of certainty who composed the songs, but on a still night, in the heart of rural Karnataka, one may hear the faint sounds of these songs as they are sung to the simple timing of a village tabor. Consider the following:

Nanondu heluthini neenondu helanna
Ganjamada huduga kempanna hadiddu
yedeyalli gnta hodedhanga.

(I'll give you a song; give me one in return. What Kempanna, the youth from Ganjam sings, sticks in the heart like a stake!)

Or the song of the daughter-in-law at her wearisome round of duties in her new home:

Attiya maneyaga aravatthu gangala
Belagathenatthi baibyada thavaravaru
saramuttha madi salavyara

(In my mother-in-law's household brass dinner plates are sixty in number. I'll scrub and wash them until all of them shine clean and bright; please don't chide me, madam mother-in-law. Let me tell you, however, my own people have been looking after me as I was a necklace of pearls!)

There is the song of the mingled pleasure and pain caused by casual bickerings between husband and wife:

Ganda hendira jagala gandha theedidhanga
Ningaaka niru yeredhanga hiriholeya
Gangavva sagi haridhanga

(Friction between husband and wife is nothing other than the rubbing of paste of sandalwood on your body. It is like the showers of water poured on the holy *lingam* and like the Ganges in high flood rushing briskly forward!)

The folk literature covers every aspect of life. There is the guileless fervid faith of the newly-married bride in her husband:

Yellelli nodidare nallananthavarilla
hallu nodidare havala nallana
sollu kelidare samadhana

(Search where you like, you will find none to equal my good lord. Are they his teeth that I see? No, they are corals. As my good lord's prattle falls into my ears, I grow peaceful and assured.)

There is the leave-taking by the father as he sees his daughter depart to her husband's home for the first time.

Hennu makkala kaluvi kannigi nir thandu
Sanna selledale musugaki hadedappa
hennu sakenda jalumakke

(When the daughters departed after their wedding, the father's eyes got filled with water. Hiding his face behind the cover of his small upper cloth, he sighed: "Oh, the agony of bearing female children!)

One of the most delightful is the dalliance between a damsel and a rural Don Juan:

Hogodari thadedenanthane, nanollenanthini
kadaga gidaga thandenanthane, nanollenanthini
kadaga gidaga naniduvangilla, kai thiruvangilla
nan barangilla nin bidangilla, hogodari thadedenanthane!

(I'll watch and waylay you, says he. I won't be yours, says I. I'll buy you bracelets and trinkets, says he. I don't want them, say I. I won't wear your bracelets and trinkets, my wrist will not turn, say I. I'll not come to you; you'll not let me alone, say I. I'll watch and waylay you, says he!)

Sometimes a riddle is proposed—and answered:

Nari kannadavanele, vayyarada jane, kannadavanele.
Nirage huttodu, nirage belevodu
Niru biddare nanu kettanembodu...
uppu matthallavenu?

(Lady, give me the answer, witty coquette, give me the answer. What is it that gets born in water and grows in water, but screams: 'I am lost if water touches me?' The answer is: salt, isn't it so?)

The wife is equal to the occasion and teases her husband, to provoke laughter among the rural folk gathered to hear this raillery:

Vobbange kaikotte, vobbange kalukotte
vobbange seereya selediteе gandayya.
Yavonge kaikotte, yavange kalukotte
Yavonge seereya selediteе bhandenne?
Balegarange kaikotte, akasalege kalukotte
Madivalange seere selediteе gandayya!

(I gave my hand to one, my leg to another and doffed my sari to the third, teases the wife. To whom have you given your hand, to whom your leg and to whom have you given your sari? you foul woman, questions the husband. And the wife laughingly replies: "I gave my hand to the bangle-seller, my leg to the goldsmith and my sari to the washerman!)

MODERN KANNADA LITERATURE

Kannada literature, in its early stages, was influenced by Sanskrit and Prakrit; in the nineteenth and early twentieth century it was influenced by English until it finally came into its own.

There are varieties of Kannada and even an amateur Prof. Higgins can accurately guess the geographical origins of a Kannadiga the moment he opens his mouth to speak.

There are four varieties of spoken Kannada and this division is widely accepted as accurate. One is the Kannada spoken in the districts of Mysore and is considered the sweetest of them all. Another is the language spoken in coastal Karnataka, in the two Kanara districts, bookish, drab and often mixed with Tulu and Konkani words. The third is Dharwad Kannada, hard, masculine and yet not without its own special attraction. The last is what is known as Gulbarga Kannada with a liberal admixture of Marathi and Urdu words.

Each variety has its own lot of poets and writers and its own devoted readership. To compare and contrast them is not only to invite ridicule, but censure as well. They come from different social milieu. The mother tongue of the large majority of the people in coastal Karnataka is not Kannada but Tulu, Konkani and even Malayalam. To them, Kannada is their "second" language, a language they learn at school but do not often use in their day-to-day concourse when they will revert to their mother tongues. And yet there is no denying their genuine devotion to a language that can, in some ways, be said to be alien to them. It was Manjeshwar Govind Pai who wrote:

> Taye bara mogava thora kannadigara matheye
> harasu thaye suthara kaye namma janma datheye!

(Come, mother, show us your face of mother of Kannadigas, bless us, mother, protect us you who gave us birth).

And wrote M.N. Kamath, another Kanara poet:

> baralemage janma ninnudaradale thaye
> doreyalemaganudinavu ninnadiya seve!

(May we born in your womb, mother, may we always get the opportunity to serve you!)

And though Kempu Narayana's *Mudramanjusha* (AD 1823) is considered a landmark in the transition from medieval to modern Kannada, for the crystallisation of the new movement, V.K. Gokak gives credit to another Kanara poet Muddanna for his *Ramashwamedha*, a 'novel' epic.

The contribution of Kanara writers to the growth of Kannada is inestimable especially in the field of grammar. Toward the end of the 19th century, Bolar

Ramakrishnayya published his first book on Kannada grammar. Then come a series of writers still concerned with grammar, men like Panje Mangesh Rao, Airodi Shivaramayya and Pandit Shivarama Udupa, to be followed by others like Ugran Mangesh Rao and H.A. Padmanabha Rao. Could this obsession with grammar among a people whose mother tongue is not Kannada be the result of a desire to gain mastery over a language not entirely their own?

There is majesty in the writing of several of them. M. Govinda Pai has been called "a neo-classicist". Pai was a purist. Gokak has said that Pai's diction, like B.M. Shrikantiaih's "derives its purity and strength from the 'cloth of gold' woven by the Kannada poets through the centuries". To many, Pai's *Golgotha* (the last days of Jesus Christ) and *Vaishakhi* (dealing with the life of Buddha), written in blank verse has the epic dignity and classical grace of Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustom*.

The roster of Coastal Karnataka writers is as long as it is distinguished. Panje Mangesh Rao, Muliya Thimmappayya, M. Govinda Pai, Kadengodlu Shankar Bhatta, Sediyapu Krishna Bhatta, Mundkur Narasinga Kamath (better known as M.N. Kamath), Padukone Ramanand Rao, M. Gopalakrishna Adiga, B.H. Shridhar, Jnanpith Award winner Kota Shivarama Kamath, K. Kinyanna Rai are only a few of them.

Panje wrote for children and some of his poems are household lines like his delightful translation of "Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are!"

minugele minugele nakshatra
nanagidu chodyavu bahuchitra

It was Panje, again who wrote *Tenkana Gali*—the Wind from the South—probably the most vivid descriptive song of the monsoon:

Gidagidadim chelu gonchalu minchalu
midiyanu hannanu udurisi kedarisi
yedadali baladali keladali neladali
paduvana modava bettake ghattake
hodedattuva kolminchanu yeragisi
jadimale surivol birumale baruvol...
beesutha banthai,
tankana galiyu konkana seemege
banthai banthai banthai.

The poet here is describing how the wind from the south—the monsoon wind has come to the Konkan coast with its thunder and lightning, swishing through trees and terrorising the hills. To get its full flavour it has to be recited loudly. Of all the Coastal Karnataka writers, Karanth stands out like Everest among the Himalayan peaks. An extraordinary man of disparate talents, he has been short story writer, essayist, dramatist, novelist, encyclopaedist, educationist, writer of travelogues, director of films and vivifier of *bayalata*, also known as *yakshagana*. It is hard to pick and choose the best from Karanth's many works though *Marali Mannige* (Back to the Soil) had the sweep and breadth of Galsworthy's *Forsythe Saga*.

In retrospect it is not so amazing to realise that so many of the early Kannada writers in the modern period seem indebted to English which served as an inspiration to them. B.M. Shreekantiah's *English Geetegalu* are translations of a number of lyrics from Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, though such is Shreekantiah's mastery over

Kannada that the translations have the strength of original compositions! Another poet indebted to English is K.V. Puttappa (Kuvempu, as he is known) who was clearly inspired by English poetry to the point of borrowing ideas, imagery and phraseology from it. But to say that he was indebted to English poetry is not to condemn him as an imitator. His originality comes through in such classic works as his *Ramayana* and *Chitrangada*—the latter a long narrative romance which contains passages of moving beauty. Puttappa shares with Karanth, Dattatreya Bendre and Masti Venkatesh Ayyangar the distinction of being a Jnanpith Award winner, the Indian equivalent of the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Bendre is the Dharwad Kannada product *par excellence*. He has been called the "wizard" of modern Kannada poetry and his *Gari* (Feathers), *Wurthi* (Icon) and *Sakhi Geeta* (Song of the Beloved) continue to echo in the hearts of his numerous admirers. A poet who was not afraid to mix the spoken word of the day with words sanctified by ancient usage—a remarkable feat by itself—he was, in a very real sense, the people's poet because he spoke and wrote in their language, though his rendering and continuation of *Meghadoota* rivals Kalidasa on his own ground. In some of his lyrics like *Hakki haruthide nodidira?* (Behold, The Time-Bird Flying) Bendre reaches heights unscaled by others in modern Kannada poetry. It is impossible to do full justice to the range and depth of Kannada literature unless one writes an encyclopaedia. Names flicker before the mind's eye like fore-flies in a tree on a dark night shedding their benevolent and soft light on the surrounding darkness. There is the inimitable V. Sitaramiah whose *Songs, Light and Shadow* or *Grapes and Pomegranates* marks him out as a poet apart, for his purity of thought and felicity of expression. Rajaratnam, whose *Purusha-Saraswati* (Male-Minerva) uses the Anglo-Kannada medium with telling effect. But one can't speak about Rajaratnam without mentioning in the same breath T.P. Kailasam (1884-1946) who should be properly spoken of as an actor and dramatist but the like of whom there is none in Kannada literature. He wrote prodigiously and on a variety of subjects. Just an enumeration of his writings leaves one's breath away. He wrote in the local dialect, indeed gave that a high status. *Bandwalvilladabadayi, Tollu Gatti, Nammclabbu...* here is a man who created a revolution in Kannada dramatics and had he lived long enough, surely would have merited a Jnanpith Award himself. Then there is Madhura Chenna whose *Madhura Geeta* expresses what the words say.

Who was the first to write the novel in Kannada? Govind Pai has credited Rentl Venkatasubbarao as the first novelist with his *Kesari Vilas* (1895). But we need not quarrel over firsts. He was quickly to be followed by Gulwadi Venkatrao with *Indirabai* (1899) but the names that come uppermost to mind as the earliest novelists are those of Galaganatha and Venkatacharya.

By then Bengali had become a major source of inspiration to many Indians and soon there were translations of *Ananda Mutt, Devi Choudhurani* and *Visha Vriksha*, to name only a few titles.

The novel as a form of literature then quickly caught up with poetry and soon we had a whole host of writers, beginning with M.S. Puttanna, A.N. Krishna Rao (*Sandhyaraga*), V.N. Gokak (*Ijjodu*), Devudu (*Antaranga*), Mugali (*Baluri*). We have the epic novel: consider A.N. Krishna Rao's *Nata Sarvabhowma* or V.K. Gokak's *Samarasave Jeevana.*

In no department of literature has Kannada fallen behind times since the thirties. The politics of the times have interested K.S. Karanth, M.R. Srinivasa Murthi, A.N. Krishna Rao, Shriranga, K.V. Iyer, Mirji Anna Rao, Tarasu, Basavaraja Kattimani, V.M. Inamdar. Other names crop up like those of Gorur

Ramaswamy Ayyangar, Vyasaraya Ballal, Beechi, Krishnamurthi Puranik, S.L. Bairappa, Shantinath Desai, U.R. Ananthamoorthi, A.K. Ramanujam, and lest this writer be accused of male chauvinism, we also have to mention Anupama Niranjan (whose husband Niranjan himself is a writer of distinction), M.K. Indira, Jayalakshni and Gita Kulkarni. In recent times the names of Girish Karnad (*Tughlaq*) and Yeshwant Chittal (*Shikari*) have become household names as well. Karnad, besides, has distinguished himself as an actor of no mean reputation.

Actually, by the late forties, what we know of as modern Kannada literature had come of age, the foundations having been well laid in the twenties and thirties. Some of the finest writings came early enough, like V.K. Gokak's *Samudrageethegalu* (1940). They came to a fruition with Goapalakrishna Adigas *Nadedu Banda Dari* (1952). Some of the earliest writers were multi-linguists and were even familiar with French, German and Greek literature, apart, of course, from English. Among Indian languages they were on intimate terms with Marathi and Bengali. They were widely-read men of great culture and some of them, at least, had been exposed to alien cultures and had travelled to distant lands. Their writings, indeed, reflect a certain amount of eclecticism, and the influence, apart from that of the English poets, of dramatists like Bernard Shaw and Ibsen. Kannada writers seem to have been greatly fascinated by Greek drama and we have translations of *Antigone*, *Ajax*, *Oedepus Complex*. And Shakespeare has been a great favourite.

They have all given their best and fullest, essayists, dramatists, lyricists, biographers, even science writers. Their name is legion.

For long decades the dramatic and histrionic tradition in Karnataka was maintained and carried through by *Yakshagana* or *Bayalata*. It is important to remember the conjunction of the two: dramatics and histrionics. For *Yakshagana* is a happy mixture of dance, drama, music and folk art, the like of which combination it is hard to find elsewhere in the world. It was, when cities and townships had yet to come into existence in Karnataka, essentially rural entertainment and it stayed that way, a Sleeping Beauty, asleep for urban dwellers till a Prince Charming, in the person of K. Shivarama Karanth gave it the kiss of life.

It had its Masters, like Kunjal Sheshagiri Kini, Haradi Krishna Ganiga and Janwarkatte Gopalakrishna Kamath. The cognoscenti will also recognise names like Kuble Sundar, Biliyoor Krishnamoorthi, Sakkattu Lakshminarayanayya and Nilavar Ramakrishnayya. These men—and *Yakshagana* always had an all-male cast—kept the tradition alive with great devotion, commitment and concern, despite dwindling patronage from temples and rich landlords, till Karanth took it upon himself to resuscitate a dying art. And that is a success story by itself.

Yakshagana is only one form of dramatic entertainment, even though it is of a high order. Karnataka is rich in folk dances and some 142 forms have been isolated and studied which indicates the richness of a culture that has come down from centuries. Some of these are associated with worship like, *Bhootharadhane* and *Nagamandala*, some with spring and other festivities like *Deepavali* but each is closely associated with a particular area and reflects the local ethos. Neither urbanisation nor modernisation have sufficed to kill them, indicating their deep roots in the social consciousness of the people.

Yakshagana originally was a field-play: *bayalata*, as it is otherwise known. The players were farmers, artisans and land-owners and were part of the village society with its own traditions, to protect and preserve. A make-shift platform would be raised on a field which had been cleared of stubble. The play would have been announced well in time for villagers to foregather. There would be elaborate

preliminaries before the actual play would start late at night and it would often go on till the early morning hours.

Most of the *Yakshagana* themes were inevitably lifted from the great Epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata and that tradition has continued. Purists would consider it sacrilege to do a contemporary theme in a *Yakshagana* style. As it is, Karanth has been criticised for allegedly departing from the use of traditional musical instruments and banishing the extempore dramatic dialogues—criticism which does not seem to have affected him in the least. Karanth who has been an innovator in many fields does not seem to have affected him the least. Karanth who has been an innovator in many fields does not believe that there is much virtue in sticking to "traditions" when new traditions can be built into the system. And he has many supporters who concede that he has enriched what has been handed down to the people. What is more, Karanth has fought for and won international recognition for *Yakshagana*. In one of his more sarcastic moments he has been heard to say that in India no art would be recognised until it has gained recognition abroad. *Yakshagana* has certainly found enthusiastic acceptance in Europe, the United States, the Soviet Union and parts of Asia including Indonesia and Japan.

But serious theatre can be said to have established itself in Karnataka with Garuda Sadashiv Rao's *Paduka Pattabhisheka* which invariably played to sold-out audiences. Garuda has become legendary. With success assured by his early forays, Garuda went on to secular themes like *Vishama Vivaha* and a historical play *Echchama Nayaka*. Yet another name to be reckoned with in Kannada drama is Gubbi Veeranna. That was at a time when it was customary for men to play female roles as well, a tradition Kannada theatre had in common with Marathi theatre.

Early support to Kannada drama came from an expected source: the Mysore rulers. It was under the patronage of Chamaraja Wodeyar that the first Chamaraja Karnataka Nataka Sabha was established which was to put on board translations of *Shakuntala*, and even of *Othello* under the name of *Shoorasenacharithe*. The historical play always was in great demand like Gundappa's *Vidyaranya* and Masti's *Talikote* dealing with the fall of the great Vijayanagara Empire, a powerful tragedy along Shakespearean lines. The need for social plays was filled in by Huylgol's *Shikhsna Sambhrama* and D.R. Bendre's *Tirukara Pidugu* (The Epidemic of Beggars). But the truly great enricher of Kannada drama remains T.P. Kailasam, who, with his subtle blending of realism and idealism gave a powerful push to Kannada theatre. His plays range from pure parodies like *Shoorpanakha* to scathing attacks on society like *Tollu Gatti* (Hollow and Solid).

Then other plays come to mind. A.N. Krishna Rao's *Ahuti*, Karanth's *Garbhagudi* (The Innermost Shrine) and *Dharma Sankata*, Gokak's *Jananayaka*, B.M. Srikantiah's *Ashwatthaman*, and Adya Rangachar's *Hari-jan-vara*.

Among the knowledgeable it is generally accepted that the very first drama company was the one set up by Avalagatti Venkannachar called Halasagi Nataka Sangh. Established in 1878 it specialised in mythological themes and put on board plays like *Virata Parva, Shrimati Parinaya, Madalasa Parinaya* and *Draupadi Vastrapaharana.* In 1886 was established the *Thanthupurastha Nataka Mandali*, its troupe including such well-known stars of that period as Gopinathrao Joshi and Ramachandra Bhau. Though several theatrical groups came into being and after years of precarious existence died slow deaths, they have left behind them happy memories. Among them must be mentioned Ratnavali Theatre Co whose star was M.V. Varadachar, a name remembered to this day. Varadachar ran his company

for over two decades putting on board such popular plays as *Ratnavali*, *Shakuntala*, *Nirupama*, *Manmathavijaya* and *Bhakta Prahlada*. Till Varadachar came on the scene Kannada plays, like Hindi films of a later date were chockful of songs that had no bearing on the theme of the play. It was established convention that songs must be sung whether they had any relevance to the unfolding story or not. Varadachar was the first to re-order theatrical priorities. But if Varadachar set new guidelines to dramaturgy, it was Muhammad Peer who raised Kannada drama to new heights. Almost single-handedly as it were, he kept his Chandrakala Nataka Mandali (1930-37) going, with some outstanding performances in *Buddha*, Shah Jehan and, one of the most talked about plays, *Sansara Nauka*.

Varadachar, Veeranna, Mohammad Peer, Hiriyannayya and his son Master Hirannayya...their lights glitter, never to fade. Themes have changed, but the theatre endures. The idiom is contemporary and if the stress today is more on satire and less on acting, no matter. *Lanchavatara*, *Nadubeedi Narayana* and plays of that genre will continue to draw crowds—and happy laughter.

The voodoo against women acting on the stage was first broken by Gangubai Guledagudda in the early years of the twentieth century. It was something quite daring for the times. But Shivamoorthiswami Kanabargimata who was responsible for it was nothing if not daring and innovative. He introduced the turntable, hired a dynamo to provide electric lights and in many ways was far ahead of his times. Under Shivamoorthiswami's guidance, the theatre came alive.

While music, drama and literature have flourished in Karnataka, the same cannot be said of dance, which is remarkable considering the royal patronage extended to it during the days of Vijayanagar Empire. The scene shifted to Tamil Nadu, though efforts were not wanting to induce some of the great teachers of the early twentieth century to migrate to Mysore. The Maharaja of Mysore, Krishna Raj Wodeyar III was the one to induce Chinnayya Pillai, the elder among the Pandanallur brothers to come to Mysore and establish his own school.

Till then the Bharata Natyam tradition was largely continued by *Devadasis* attached to the many temples in Karnataka, but when that was forbidden by law, the *Devadasis* fell on hard times. It was left to Vidwan Muthayya Pillai and Vidwan Kittappa to resuscitate interest in Bharata Natyam after they settled in Bangalore. Later still came the efforts of U.S. Krishna Rao under whom such well-known dancers as Indrani Rehman and Sonal Mansingh had their training. Today, Shanta Rao carried on the great tradition. It was of Shanta Rao that Yehudi Menuhin said that for him she was "the concentrated embodiment of the whole gamut of Indian expression in all its richness and subtleties, as in all its extraordinary fantasy and discipline". When Shanta Rao dances, one critic was to say, he was truly reminded of the words of *Natanam Adinar*:

> Thus danced the Lord:
> Long, long ago in the Golden Hall of Tillai
> The three worlds assembled to watch His dance
> And the gods gathered all around
> Adi-Sesha swayed in ecstasy, the earth trembled.
> Thus danced the Lord,
> So He dances!
> And His dance brings the world to salvation.

But when it comes to music, Karnataka stands out, one without a second. Till the 14th century, India, both north and south, had a common musical tradition.

The differences between music in the north (Hindustani) and the south (Carnatic) began to crystallise between the 13th and 14th centuries. After that Carnatic music came into its own.

Credit is usually given to Vidyaranya for establishing the Carnatic branch of Indian music, along the same time that he inspired the brothers Hukka and Bukka to found the Vijayanagara Empire. The Empire did not last for more than two hundred and fifty years. But the "Empire of Music" that Vidyaranya established has not only lasted but promises to go on for ever and ever. It is the pride and heritage of every Kannadiga. Vidyaranya wrote a treatise on Carnatic music called *Sangeeta Sara* no copy of which is available but awareness of which is available in numerous quotations in the works of others who followed him. With the downfall of the Vijayanagara Empire Carnatic music fell into temporary eclipse for lack of royal patronage. The Carnatic tradition was fostered in Tamil Nadu till first Hyder Ali and later his son the warrior Tipu Sultan came to bestow on Carnatic musicians their special favour. Then Carnatic music returned to its ancient home, Karnataka, now to stay for ever. What the violin is to western music, the *veena* is to Carnatic music. There are many varieties of the *veena*, but howsoever it comes, its music is sweet to the ears. Of this instrument it has been said: *Veene, veene madhure, veene prema sakhi, yenna jotheyaliru sumukhi* (Veena, O lovely-sounding Veena, Beloved Companion, stay with me, O sweet-faced one!). For sweet-faced one the Veena certainly is and when its sweet sounds fall on tuned ears, it is sheer nectar from a musical heaven.

After the defeat of Tipu Sultan and the re-instatement of the Wodeyar family on the Mysore throne, Carnatic music got fresh impetus and a new lease of life, first under Krishna Raja Wodeyar III and later under his successors. The earliest to make their mark were the four brothers Sambayya, Kalahasthayaa, Venkataramayya and Atmaramayya. There were others who followed in their great tradition: Savyasachi Ayyangar, whose real name was Srinivasa Ayyangar, Veene Shamanna and his disciples like Veena Padmanabhayya, Karigiri Rao, Veene Lakshmiranayappa and Chintamani Subbarao. But the two who brought special distinction to Carnatic music are Subbanna and Sheshanna. It was Sheshanna who established conclusively that Mysore is the home of Veena. Later it was that Sheshanna's disciples like V. Shrikantayyar and Narayanayyar continued the tradition of their *guru*, to the point that it is fair to say that Mysore and Veena, like Mysore and Mallige (jasmine) are spoken of in the same breath. Srikanta Iyer was a disciple of Veena Subbanna. A prominent disciple of Veene Sheshanna was Venkatagiriyappa of Mysore whose outstanding disciple is V. Doreswamy Iyengar, the best known Veena player of the Mysore tradition today.

Mysore gave birth to yet one other great musician: Bidaram Krishnappa. Krishnappa's parents had gone to Mysore during the time of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III from their home in South Kanara district as part of a Yakshagana troupe and set up their new establishment (*bidar*) in the capital. As new comers to Mysore they were known as people of the *bidar* and when Krishnappa grew up, the name *bidar* stuck. He became Bidaram Krishnappa.

Krishnappa had lost his father at a very young age and he and his elder brother made a precarious living by singing devotional songs before the city's Anjaneyaswami Temple, taking in whatever the devotees gave them as offerings. But recognition came soon after. He was employed by Shri Chamarajendra Karnataka Nataka Sabha under the patronage of the Maharaja himself on a salary of five rupees a month. Struck by the young man's talents, a patron of arts, a merchant prince by name Sahukar Thimmayya arranged for Krishnappa getting a proper

musical education under no other than Sheshanna himself. It was not long after that Krishnappa became *Asthan Vidwan*—Court Musician. Krishnappa had his own disciples chief of whom are T. Chowdiah, T. Puttaswamayya and B. Devendrappa. Krishnappa died in Mysore in 1931, respected and honoured by the people.

Amazingly enough it is Karnataka that has given in recent years four of the top-most exponents in Hindustani music, a tribute as much to the musical environment of the state as to the catholicity of the tastes of the Kannadigas. Mallikarjun Mansur is from Dharwad, Gangubai Hangal from Hubli, Bhimsen Joshi from Dharwad again and Basavaraj Rajguru from Hubli. Bhaskar Buwa Bakhle taught music at the training college at Dharwad for some time. Besides Mansur, Gangubai, Joshi and Basavaraj—all names to be reckoned with—one remembers Kumar Gandharva (Shivaputra Komkali), a pioneer of the *avante garde* generation of vocalists, Sangameshwar Gurav, popular as the sweet-voiced exponent of the *Kirana gayaki* and Shyamala Bhave, another vocalist and researcher. Among the younger musicians are Panchakshari Swami Mattigatti, a disciple of Mansur, Narayan Deshpande and Madhav Gudi, taught by Bhimsen Joshi, Krishna Hangal (daughter of Gangubai) and Somnath Mardoor who studied under Rajguru.

Music flows in the veins of Kannadigas; it is part of their very being; when you hear the soft tuning of the veena, you may be sure there is Kannadiga about to play on the strings the eternal music of his ancestors. It was V. Sitaramiah who said: "...But the long range value preference, the pride and grateful memory of Kannada poets has been, by and large, for tolerance and the arts of peace". No words were more truly said.

Karnataka, indeed, has been singularly blessed with musicians, poets and saints and sometimes these three have blended, as in the case of the Dasas, with a distinction. The word "Dasa" means "servant". It is used in the sense of Servant of the Lord. The Dasa movement started in Karnataka when its fortunes were sliding down and, the impact of Islam was being felt in town and countryside. The Dasa movement served as a cement to keep Hinduism alive and united when it was in great danger of being corroded.

The movement made a slow beginning around AD 1500 with Shripada Raya but soon began to gather momentum. Not all the Dasas were from Karnatak. Some like Narahari Thirtha came from Orissa, but the lights they lit threw their benevolent shine in far away places. Chaitanya and Nityananda of Bengal came to Vijayanagar to listen to the Dasas and imbibe their spirit of *bhakti*—devotion. The sheet-anchor of Dasa spiritualism was indeed *bhakti* and they sang their way to salvation.

The Dasas were not blind to what went on around them. They were as much devotees of the Lord—they worshipped God as Vishnu—as they were critics of men. Critical as they were of the shibboleths and conventions in society—and in this they are close to the Virashaivas—they were equally critical of their own shortcomings. They did not reject life, they accepted it for what it was, as we shall see in the songs they composed.

There is a certain robustness in the songs they composed, it is said, spontaneously. Their great appeal to the people, indeed, was their very spontaneity. They would wander from place to place, singing uninhibitedly the Lord's praise. To listen to the songs of the Dasas is to hear the Hebrews raise their voice to Jehovah in the Psalms. Indeed, some of the songs that the Dasas composed have an eerie likeness to the psalms such as:

The Lord is my shepherd
And I shall not want.
He shall feed me in green pastures
And lead me forth beside the waters of comfort...
Yea, though I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
for thou art with me...

Sometimes the Dasa chides God for his indifference; at other times he is all praise. But always he surrenders to Him in humility. And because the Dasa sang from his heart, his words go straight to the heart.

We have come to think of the Dasa and their followers as *Dasa koota*—the Fellowship of God's Servants. There were many *dasas* like Sripadaraya, Vyasaraya, Purandara, Kanaka, Vijaya, Gopala and Jagannathâ. Their lives and work ran parallel to those of some of the great mystics elsewhere in India like Chaitanya, Jnaneshwar, Surdas, Tukaram and Narsi Mehta. But we remember best two of them, Kanaka and Purandara Dasa.

There are many legends associated with the Dasas, especially Purandara Dasa and Kanaka Dasa. Kanaka was a shepherd by caste and was born in Bada, in the district of Dharwad. He had chosen a military career but legend says that God appeared to him and commanded him to be a Dasa. So great was his devotion that he was initiated into service by the great religious perceptor Vyasaraya. Kanaka travelled throughout the length and breadth of Karnataka, singing songs of devotion and in due course came to Udupi, on the west coast. His one ambition was to gain entrance to the Sri Krishna Temple and sing before his Lord, but the temple priests would not allow him, as he was a low-caste Dasa. Undeterred, Kanaka Dasa stood outside the temple walls and continued to sing, knowing in his heart of hearts, that the Lord would listen. Legend has it that Lord Krishna was so moved that he turned on his pedestal to face Kanaka so he can be seen. Moved by Divine Grace, there was only thing that the conservative priests could do: they made an opening in the wall so that Kanaka could feast his eyes on his Lord. The window exists to this day and is aptly called *Kanakana kindi* (Kanaka's Window). And to mark the event the temple authorities have since then built a statue to Kanaka under a canopy.

But it is Purandara Dasa who has been called the Dasa of Dasas—the Servant of Servants. Born in Purandargad in Poona District in AD 1484, he was a 'saraf'—a goldsmith. Legend has it that he was very miserly and lacking in any generosity. To teach him a lesson—and to turn him to godly ways—the Lord took on the form of an old Brahmin and visited Purandara's house in his absence and begged for dole for his son's marriage. It was a plea that could not be refused. Purandara's wife thereupon took off the only piece of jewellery she had—her nose-gay—and gave it to the Brahmin who promptly went to the jeweller's shop to sell it. Purandara immediately recognised it as belonging to his wife and quickly disposing of his customer, he returned home to upbraid his wife.

There was no way the woman could explain the loss of her nose-gay and she decided to take poison. But even as she was lifting the cup she heard the nose-ring fall into it from above. Filled with heavenly joy, she picked it up and handed it over to her irate husband.

An unbeliever still, Purandara rushed to his shop only to discover that the nose-ring that only a few moments ago he had kept in safe-keeping was missing. He got the message and there and then decided that he would give up all worldly

possessions and become a Dasa. He is credited to have burst into song at once and later composed as many as 4,75,000 songs which is a bit of hyperbole for if it were true, he would have had to compose some thirty songs a day non-stop for forty years and even a God-filled Dasa could not have wrought such a miracle.

Kannadigas would readily recognise many of his songs that burst, at times, with religious fervour and at other times would be filled with worldly wisdom. Of Purandara Dasa's works, the distinguished writer and Jnanpith Award winner Masti Venkatesha Iyengar has said: "They (the songs) indicate a mind familiar with the world and its ways and inclined as much to see without as within. Wide knowledge, deep experience and a great love of humanity are visible in them. Great is their range".

The temptation to quote from Purandara Dasa is irresistible. He is a household name in Karnataka and one has only to mention the opening line for some one to sing the rest. Some of the best songs in the Kannada language are those sung by Purandara Dasa.

Yadava ni ba yadukula nandana
Madhava Madhusudhana baro

(Come, O Madhava, Madhusudhana, son of the Yadu clan, come!)

Mooruthiyanu nilliso
Yenna hridaya kamaladolu
Vodagi neneyuvanthe...

(Fix the image of the Lord imperishably in the lotus of my heart.)

Kandu kandu niyenna
Kai biduvare Krishna...

(Why are you letting me down, O Krishna, even while you are watching me?)

Sometimes Purandara Dasa is angry with his Lord and demands:

Karunakara ninembuvudyathako
Bharavaseyillenage...

(Why should I call you Lord of Mercy when I have no faith in you?)

At times Purandara is not sure anybody can help him when the burden of his own past is so heavy:

Na madida karma balavanthavadare
ni maduvudeno hariye?

(If the burden of my past *karma* is so strong, what on earth can you do to help me, O Lord?)

That theme keeps recurring in Purandara's song, a refrain that reflects his belief that as we sow, so must we reap.

Arena maduvaru
Arindalenahudu
Poorva janmada vidhiyu
yenna bennabidadanaka

(What can anyone do, what can anyone say, when the *karma* of my past life stays close to me?)

There are moments when Purandara accuses the Lord of playing with life:

Aparadhi nanalla
Aparadha yenagilla
Kapata nataka suthradhari ninu...

(I am not the guilty one, there is no guilt associated with me. You are the one who pulls the strings of this False Drama that is life!)

Then there are moments of repentance:

ninyako ninna hangyako
ninna namada bala
vondiddare sako.

(Why do I need you, why should I care for you, when all I need is the power of Thy Holy Name!)

There is a plea for mercy, as Purandara remembers his past:

Daya mado Ranga, daya mado
Ninna dasanu nanu
Halavu kaladinda ninna
Hambala yenage

(Have mercy on me, O Lord, have mercy on me; I am your servant; I have been seeking you for days on end.)

He sees glory in the Lord as nowhere else:

Eee pariya sobagava
devarali na kane

(Such brilliance have I seen nowhere but in my Lord.)

There are times when he is dismayed at what he sees around him and wails:

Satyavantharigidu kalavalla
Dushta janarige subhiksha kala

(This is no time for men of Truth; this is when Evil prevails.)

Purandara has a word of advice to those suffering from the arrogance of power:

Snanava madiro
Jnana thirthadali
Nanu ninembahankarava
bittu

(Take a dip in the ocean of wisdom, giving up the concepts of 'you' and 'I'.)

But some of the songs that are most popular are descriptive:

Jagadoddharana
Adisidaleshoda
Jagododdharana
Maganendu thiliyutha
Sugunantha Rangana,
Adisidaleshoda

(Yoshada, Mother of Krishna, believing He was her son made play with the Blessed One.)

Yet the song most heard in Kannada homes on an evening when the lady of the house lights the household lamps and offers her prayer is the one that has rung true down the corridors of time, welcoming home the Goddess of Prosperity:

Bhagyada Lakshmi baramma
Nammamma ni saubhagyada
Lakshmi baramma...

(Of Goddess of Prosperity, O Mother of ours, come home to us.)

Purandara Dasa's invocation to the Goddess of Prosperity is beautiful. May she come, he prays, as softly as butter grows out of buttermilk, to the tinkle of toe-bells, scattering gold in her wake. It is sung to *Madhyamavati raga, adi tala*, as many other of Purandara's songs are.

ADMINISTRATIVE LANGUAGE

Rich in its literature, its prose and poetry, Karnataka has made Kannada the official language at all levels of administration. Additionally, it has formed a Kannada Kavalu Samithi (Watchdog Committee) to oversee that this decision is effectively implemented throughout the State. The teaching of Kannada is now compulsory in all schools and over 5,000 Kannada teachers have been appointed in Urdu and other non-Kannada schools in 1983.

This is not to say that Kannada had been neglected in the past. There have always been many famous institutions in Karnataka which have devotedly worked for the promotion and development of Kannada language, literature and culture. It is true that the promotion of Kannada gathered momentum under the leadership, strangely enough, of western scholars like Reeve, Ziegler, Moore, Ankerson, Moegling, Kittel, Rice and others and due credit will have to be given to the Basel Mission Press in Mangalore which was one of the earliest—if not the very first—to print in Kannada and popularise the language through excellently printed and bound books. The Basel Mission Press, in fact, was considered in the

early twentieth century as the acme of printing excellence.

Kannada got a further fillip through such associations as the Karnataka Bhashojjeevini Sabha (1886), Sanskrit Vidyashala (1889), Oriental Library (1887) which were supported by the then Maharajas of Mysore. These institutions helped to develop a sense of pride among Kannadigas for their language and literature. Gradually, old Kannada poetry began to see print in journals like Karnataka Grantha Male (Garland of Kannada Volumes) and Kavya Manjari. Printing work was undertaken by the Graduates Trading Association Press, Mysore, Dharwad Press, Vichara Darpana Press, V.B. Subbiah & Sons and other establishments.

In Bombay Karnataka Ramachandra, Hanumantha Deshpande raised and nurtured an organisation called Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha in 1890 and this was to publish a periodical called *Vagbhushana* beginning 1896. The Sangha itself published in the first ten years of its life as many as 25 books and Vagbhushana itself, during its twenty three years of its existence carried 61 works in print. Among those who were responsible for the growth of the Sangha were names now largely forgotten, men like Venkataranga Katti, P.G. Halakatti, Sakkaribalacharya (Shanta Kavi) and D.N. Mulabagal. It is a matter of interest that the famous Kannada novelist Galaganatha wrote his first novel *Padmanayana* for submission to a prize-winning competition arranged by the Sangha. In many ways the Vidyavardhaka Sangha can be called the very first organised body that worked for the cause of Kannada. In another four years the Sangha will celebrate its centenary.

Strangely enough it took almost a quarter of a century after the founding of the Vidyavardhaka Sangha for the Mysore State to follow suit and this came about as a result of the efforts of Sir M. Visvesvaraya, then Dewan. It was at his suggestion that a resolution was placed before the annual meeting of the then famous Sampadabhyudaya Samaj in 1914 calling for state support to Kannada. The resolution said:

> An autonomous body (a *parishad*) recognised by the Government has to be formed to provide encouragement to authors of books in Kannada and that the Sampadabhyudaya Samaj should recommend to Government that it would be in the fitness of things to grant special favours to that *parishad*.

The resolution carries the words "Karnataka" and "Parishad" and it is clear that these two words gave birth to the name Karnataka Sahitya Parishad. In accordance with the resolution, a meeting was called on May 5, 1915 in the Government High School, Bangalore which was attended by enthusiastic delegates from Belgaum, Bombay, Madras, Dharwad, Bellary, South and North Kanara districts. The Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha of Dharwad and Karnataka Sabha of Bombay also sent their representatives. Also present were editors of *Karnataka Vrutta*, *Dhananjaya* both of Dharwad, *Sachitra Bharat Patrike* of Hubli, *Swadeshabhimani* of Mangalore and *Vrittanta Patrike* of Mysore. As a results of their deliberations was formed the Karnataka Sahitya Parishad with an impressive list of aims and objects. The Parishad was expected:

- to help write or commission the writing of scholarly works on grammar, history and dictionaries in the Kannada language.
- to publish technical glossaries fit to be used in Kannada books relating to modern sciences.
- to encourage writers in Kannada to write books covering subjects like Philosophy, Natural Sciences, History and Literature and to publish them.

— to think and decide on all points of discussions relating to Kannada language and literature.
— to translate outstanding works from other languages and publish them.
— to revise and publish old classics and collected works of the history of Karnataka and to collect objects that reveal the conditions of olden times in a museum.
— to publish Kannada periodicals containing scholarly articles regarding improvement of Kannada language and development of Kannada literature.
— to encourage Kannada authors by way of purchasing books written by them.
— to grant honoraria to Kannada and Sanskrit scholars who are engaged in basic research pertaining to Kannada language and literature.
— to bring all matters pertaining to Kannada language and literature to the kind consideration of respective governments.
— to open Kannada reading rooms and libraries in all Kannada-speaking regions, as far as possible and
— to invite prominent Kannadigas at a particular place, periodically and to arrange meetings and lectures by competent scholars.

In 1985, the Parishad is 71 years old and going strong. Among those who helped it in its formative years are Sir M. Visvesvaraya himself, Sardar M. Kantharaj Urs, Rajamantrapraveena, H.V. Nanjundayya, Rao Bahadur M. Shamrao, R. Raghunath Rao, R.M.S. Puttanna, Karpura Srinivasa Rao, V.S. Achyuta Rao, B. Krishnappa, R. Narasimhacharya, Cha Vasudevayya, Kavitilaka Ayyashastri, Mudaveedu Krishna Rao, Keruru Vasudevacharya, Huruli, Bhima Rao and Aloor Venkata Rao.

The Karnataka Sahitya Parishad, over the years, has undergone many changes, inevitable in the circumstances. For one thing, it is now known as the Kannada Sahitya Parishad. For another, it is broad-based, as a result of the unification of all Kannada-speaking areas. Besides, the Parishad has grown in stature and the public indeed looks to it for guidance in all matters relating to the Kannada language, literature and culture. It has held nearly sixty conferences. It conducts various examinations like Kannada Sahitya Pariksha, Gamaka Shikshana and Gamaka Proudha Shikshana training for Kannada typing and stenography.

Side by side with the Parishad, other associations, too, have done their bit for the fostering and growth of Kannada, like the Central College Karnataka Sangha (1918) which was responsible for publishing *Prabhuddha Karnataka* and over 50 books, the Maharaja College Karnataka Sangha (1927) which also has to its credit many titles and the Shimoga Karnataka Sangha (1930) whose publications include such distinguished works as K.V. Puttappa's *Raktakshi*, and *Panchajanya*, G.P. Rajaratnam's *Gandugodali*, N. Kasturi's *Paataaladalli paapachchi* and A.N. Murthi Rao's *Hagaluganasugalu*. Likewise, Karnataka Sanghas set up in other centres like Mandya, Chikamagalur, Nagpur, Gulbarga, Raichur, Surpur and Rangampet too have quietly served the cause of Kannada literature.

And, talking of societies, mention must be made of the Mythic Society (1909) originally started by an English scholar F.H. Richards and later supported by a galaxy of other scholars like Rev. Tabard, the historian S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar, Rao Bahadur M. Shama Rao, A.V. Ramanathan, S. Srikantiah, S.S. Subba Rao, Prof Radhakumud Mukherjee, C. Hayavadana Rao,Dr H. Krishna Shastri and Dr M.H. Krishna, whose purpose was to mark out the origins and development and the history of urbanised Indians, the Karnataka Itihasa Samshodaka Mandala (Karnatak Historical Research Society) founded by the late Aluru Venkata Rao to

carry out historical research, the Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs (1915) set up in Bangalore and the Indian Institute of World Culture (1945), also in Bangalore, which has a library of 35,000 rare books.

KANNADA JOURNALISM

When did Kannada journalism come into being? By common consent, it is agreed that it was *Mangalore Samachar* that set the trend, way back in 1843, a good fourteen years before what is known as the Sepoys' Mutiny, or the First War of Independence. It was Mangalore again which had the first daily, the *Suryodaya Prakashika* (1888) which subsequently became a weekly, was shifted to Bangalore and died in the early years of the twentieth century. Its editor was B. Narasinga Rao. A monthly, *Subuddhi Prakasha* was being published in Belgaum in 1849 and continued till 1856 at least. It was royal patronage in Mysore that was responsible for the establishment of *Vrittanta Bodhini* (1856) in Bangalore and *Karnataka Prakashika*. The latter incurred official displeasure and folded up by the end of the nineteenth century. The names of Bhashyam Tirumalacharya and Bhashyam Bhashyacharya are associated with this journal. By 1880 most of the cities that are now part of Karnataka had their own journals. Scholars remember *Gnanabodhaka* published from Belgaum, *Vichitra Vartamana Sangraha* published from Mangalore in 1862, *Kannada Sala Patrika* published from Belgaum again in 1865, M.S Puttanna's *Hitabodhini* published in Mysore in 1882 as a monthly which was supported by that Grand Old Man of Mysore, M. Venkata Krishnayya who was also responsible for getting out publications like *Vrittanta Chintamani*, a weekly, *Saadhvi*, *Paura Saamajika Patrika* and *Sampadabhyudaya.*

Kannada journalism was still undeveloped in the first quarter of the twentieth century despite some brilliant magazines published in different parts of what now is Karnataka. There is Thirumala Tatacharya Sharma's *Vishwa Karnataka* (1920), Alur Venkar Rao's *Jayakarnataka* (1918), Kerodi Subba Rao's *Shri Krishnasookti* (1906), Hanuman Das's *Madhuravani* (1912), M.V. Ramanuja Iyengar's *Aryamatha Sanjeevini* and *Kavya Kalanidhi*, Galaganath's *Sadbodha Chandrike* (1907) and Maasti Venkatesh Iyengar's *Jeevana.* Pandit Taranath published a monthly called *Prema*, G.S. Krishna Rao his *Naguva-Nanda, Katha Chandrike, Vrittanta* and *Anandakanda.* Hardekar Manjappa published *Dhanurdhari* and *Khadi Vijaya* which enraged Mysore royalty.

There has been an explosion of Kannada journalism since independence. But that is another story.

THE PHILOSOPHERS

If North India has been the home of the basic Scriptures of Hinduism, South India has been the birthplace of all the three great systems of Vedanta, providing the structural underpinnings to Hindu philosophy. Their founders are Sankara, Madhwa and Ramanuja, propounders each of Monism, Dualism and Qualified Dualism (*Advaita, Dwaita* and *Vishishtadwaita*).

In point of time Sankara came first, (AD 788), Ramanuja next (AD 1017) and Madhwa last (AD 1238). Sankara was born in what is today a village in Kerala, Ramanuja in Tamil Nadu and Madhwa in the Tuluva tract of coastal Karnataka. But it reflects to the catholicism of the Kannada mind that all three could establish their hold in Karnataka.

Sankara was hardly thirtytwo when he attained liberation from this world and yet, in that brief span of time he travelled extensively throughout India, setting

up monasteries in all the four corners of the country, a remarkable feat at any time but particularly so that a time when communication was at its most primitive. Roads were non-existent or very poor where they existed and Sankara did most of his travel on foot. But he went as far north as Kashmir and as far east as Puri and in the west he established a centre at Dwarka. But wherever he went he acted as the Great Synthesiser.

To understand Sankara, one must understand the times in which he lived. Politically India in the eighth century AD was divided into a great number of small states. There was no one single, central unifying force, political or otherwise. Jealousies, rivalries and parochialism marked the political face of the country. Culturally, too, the land was torn asunder by centuries-old conflicting claims of Vedic and non-Vedic ideals of life. Controversies were endemic. Intellectually, the atmosphere was filled with the dust of innumerable wrangles among scholars. The country was, as it were, waiting for a Sankara to bring order out of chaos in the cultural and religious fields. If Hinduism exists today, it is said with slight exaggeration, it is because of the early efforts of Sankara to consolidate the various views then in existence.

For one thing, he saw no basic conflict in the worship of various deities or god-heads and to eliminate the conflict that then existed, he wisely codified popular Hinduism and grouped all the gods and goddesses under six main streams of worship. They are: Shaiva (worship of Siva), Vaishnava (worship of Vishnu), Shakta (worship of the mother goddess Shakti), Saura (worship of Surya, the Sun God), Ganapatya (worship of Ganesha) and Kaumara (worship of Kumara). He taught that all these six paths of prayer—Bhakti darshanas—are not mutually in conflict but are for the choice of the worshipper striving to reach God. It is for this that Sankara is known as the *Shanmata-sthapana Acharya*—the Teacher who established the six-fold forms of worship. Sankara's strength did not lie in destroying existing forms of worship but in effecting an acceptable synthesis of them. He even made use of the doctrine of Maya as preached by the Buddhist and has been criticised in some quarters as a crypto Buddhist (a *prachchhanna* Buddha). What, in effect he did was to turn the tide of Buddhism in favour of the Vedantic religion.

According to Sankara's philosophy, the Brahman alone is real and the self. The visible universe is only an illusion—*maya*. This has been summed up in the aphorism *Brahma satya jagan mithya*. Sankara stated that the Ultimate Reality or the Brahman is without any qualities or attributes for how can the Great Unknown be described in terms of the known? The Brahman alone had existence and this universe was one and the same as the Brahman. The individual soul has no independent existence and is part of Brahman and this, again, he summarised in one of the great philosophical concepts—*Aham Brahmasmi*—I am Brahman!

This colossal concept—I am God!—argued with great logical precision is what gives Advaitism (Monism) its special cutting edge. Brahman was indefinable: He was Not This, Not This, but That. Sankara wrote prodigiously; one wonders when he found time to do all that, considering the magnitude of his travels and the organisational work that accompanied it. He argued with the scholars of his time and won them over. Mandana Mishra of Mahishmati and his wife are believed to be among the many to surrender to Sankara.

He wrote commentaries on Vedanta or Brahma Sutras; he wrote a commentary on the Gita itself, popularly known as *Sankarabhasya*. His other works include *Dakshinamurthy stotra*, *Ananda Lahari*, *Viveka Chudamani*, *Soundarya Lahari* and *Prabhuddha Sudhakara*. He composed many devotional poems in simple Sanskrit and it is a rare Brahmin house where *Bhajagovindam* is not recited! About Sankara, the

famous scholar Dr T.M.P. Mahadevan wrote: "Though he (Sankara) is primarily known as the greatest exponent of *Advaita Vedanta*, Sankara was nevertheless the Acharya *par excellence* who cleansed the Hindu faiths of excrescences that had gathered round them due to accidents of history, and taught each aspirant to follow the way suited to him".

Scholars have often wondered why Sankara had selected Sringeri, in Karnataka, as his pontifical seat, because today, it is Sringeri that has pride of place among the Sankara monasteries. Tradition tells us that Sringeri attracted the attention of Sankara because of its holy and peaceful air, where everybody, including birds, beasts and snakes lived in amity. The story is that during his search for a permanent headquarters, Sankara came to the Tunga River on whose banks he found a snake tending a frog and he took it as a sign that this is where he should establish his seat. There are indications that before his arrival, Sringeri was the stronghold of the Jains and indeed the temple in Sringeri is built on the Chalukyan style of architecture. Sringeri, incidentally, is also famous as the place where the sage Rishyasringa did penance. Sankara surely did not stumble on Sringeri by mistake. He must have been aware of its past history, in addition to its then beauty. That beauty and peace still envelope the environment of the town and temple.

Ramanuja came upon the scene almost two centuries after Sankara and indeed did his early studies under Yadavapraksha, a great *Advaita* teacher from Kanchi, then, as even now, a major centre of learning. Ramanuja soon began to disagree with the views of his teacher and took to studying on his own. It was then that note was taken of his saintly character and profound scholarship by the head of the Sriranga monastery, Yamuna. Yamuna wanted Ramanuja to be his successor as head of the monastery and sent one of his disciples, Mahapurna, to persuade Ramanuja to migrate to Srirangam. Mahapurna, it is said, initiated Ramanuja, who till then was a *grihastha*—a married man—into Shrivaishnavism. Thereafter, Ramanuja renounced the worldly life, became a *sanyasi* and in due course succeeded Yamuna as head of the Srirangam monastery. It was during this period that Ramanuja wrote his *Shribhasya*, rejecting the Adwaita philosophy under which he had been brought up. Reaction to his apostacy was swift. Tradition again has it that he was persecuted by the then Chola monarch who was a Shaiva and Ramanuja was forced to flee his home and go to Karnataka where he was received with the dignity and honour befitting a great savant and saint. It was here that he received not only refuge but royal patronage as well. Vishnuvardhana, the Hoysala king became a convert to Shrivaishnavism which inevitably helped in the establishment of the religion on a firm footing throughout Karnataka.

At first the Master lived in a place called Tondanur but later he went to Melukote where the beautiful Cheluvanarayana Temple was subsequently built.

Ramanuja lived even longer than the Buddha, if accounts are to be believed and was 120 years old when he died (AD 1137). He must have been the most loved and respected man of his times with a large and substantial—and devoted—following among kings and commoners. The basis of his teachings were the *Prasthanathraya*—the triple canon—consisting of the Upanishads, the Brahmasutras and the Gita. Ramanuja held that Vishnu is the deity of supreme worship, accompanied by Shri, or Lakshmi, who represents Divine Grace, which is why the philosophy he advocates is called Shrivaishnavism. He considered Lakshmi as mediator between Man and God. God is *saguna Ishwara*—one with attributes—and He is *parama Purusha* or the Highest Individual. Human beings derived their reality from God and *moksha* was a state of fellowship with Him.

Ramanuja advocated self-surrender to God. He called it *sharanagati*—taking refuge in Him. This implied following the Will of God, not crossing Him and his Purpose, believing that He will save, seeking help from Him and Him alone and yielding up one's spirit to Him in all meekness. Commenting on the importance of this doctrine in Vishishtadwaita, Prof. Hiriyanna writes: "The inclusion by Ramanuja in his doctrine of a means to salvation which is accessible to all, explains the wide popularity it has always commanded; and the social uplift of the lower classes to which it has led is of great value in the history of India".

In propounding his doctrine of *sharanagati*, Ramanuja delved deep into the Upanishads to discover in them what he called *Nyasa vidya* which lays the foundation for a religion of self-surrender. The term "nyasa" indicates putting away all effort directed by self-interest and placing the burden of salvation at the feet of the Lord (*bhara nyasa*). 'Nyasa' is the same as in "sanyasa" which means laying down a burden, except that the 'sum' in 'sanyasa' lays stress on the unconditionality of man's surrender to God. It is a categorical and not a hypothetical surrender and it is total, with no bargaining possible.

What did self-surrender imply? Self-effacement, for one. The 'I' was totally annihilated. The absolute giving of oneself to God, for another. This is not, however, the same as the Advaitic *brahmasmi*—I am Brahman. Brahman and the individual are two separate entities. The nature of the concord between the individual and Brahman has been described by Rabindranath Tagore in *Sadhana*: "In the music of the rushing stream sounds the joyful assurance 'I shall become the sea'. It is not a vain assumption; it is true humility, for it is the truth. *The river has* no other alternative. On both sides of its banks it has numerous fields and forests, villages and towns; it can serve them in various ways...but it can have only partial relations with these and however long it may linger among them it remains separate, it can never become a town or a forest. But it can and does become the sea". This has been described as the *parama pada*, the highest state of our being.

But here we see an interesting contradiction. In the act of supreme surrender, Man made God his prisoner (*bhakta paraadheena*). As Gurudev Tagore put it very aptly: "one comes from freedom into bondage, the other from bondage into freedom". Man was in bondage, but the moment he surrendered himself totally to God, he obtained his freedom and put God into bondage whereas God who was 'free' now become the servant of his devotee! Prof. Yamunachar put it this way: "God of His own sweet and sovereign will pledges Himself for our salvation. He binds Himself for our sake and we by total surrender fetter Him further. Between God and the souls of men, there is thus a love-exchange of relationship and responsibility. In this process God steps down from His heaven to reach the abode of man and comes nearer to him than his hands or feet, provided that he keeps the door of his heart open and unoccupied by unworthy objectives. The only true objective of human life is ardent love for the Highest. It is the true, the good and the highest end of human life".

No wonder it caught the imagination of the people. It was a beautiful concept and was easily understood even by the least sophisticated. There was no abstruse philosophy involved here. One merely had to pursue the path of total devotion to be accepted by God. One of the most distinguished Kannada poets, Lakshmisha was a Shrivaishnava. So easily assimilable was Ramanuja's philosophy that it encouraged the building of Vaishnava Temples such as the one at Belur. And many works also came to be written on Srivaishnavism.

The last of the three is Madhwa, born in AD 1238, a hundred years after

the passing away of Ramanuja which would give sufficient time for Shrivaishnavism to thrive and prosper. Madhwa, interestingly, was born in coastal Karnataka which, because of the intervening western ghats, had always been cut off from mainstream Karnataka. Indeed it was only in the forties of the twentieth century that roads between coastal Karnataka and up-country Karnataka were opened up. One can well imagine the conditions in the early thirteenth century!

Ideas have legs, a statesman has said, and it is a measure of the power of ideas that the *dwaita* philosophy advocated by Madhwa should have crossed all natural barriers and spread not only deep into the interior but elsewhere in India.

Madhwa—or Shri Madhavacharya—was earlier known as Ananda Thirtha and he studied with a teacher known as Achyutapreksha. Tradition describes him as an incarnation of Vayu and that in his previous births, he was born as Hanuman and Bhima, which is stretching imagination a bit. What is more relevant is that Madhwa established a school of thought that set him out as an original mind of great distinction.

Significantly, like Ramanuja, Madhwa, too, first studied under an *Advaitin* —a Monist. Just as Ramanuja repudiated his teacher, so did Madhwa; but the teacher gave in to the taught, astounded by his disciple's virtuosity.

Like Sankara, Madhwa travelled widely, touching both Varanasi and Badrinath. At Kalinga, he won over Narahari Teertha, the Royal Regent, to his creed. There is here another parallel with the life of Ramanuja.

Madhwa wrote as many as thirtyseven works which include *Gita Bhasya, Gita Tatparya Nirnaya, Mahabharata Talparya Nirnaya, Mayavad Khandana* and *Vishnu Tatwa Nirnaya.* His logic was impeccable to the point that the learned Dr Das Gupta in his *History of Indian Philosophy* could say that "the logical and dialectical thinkers of Vishishtadwaita are decidedly inferior to the prominent thinkers of the Sankara and Madhwa schools".

But the point is not whether any one school is inferior or superior to others—each school has its own fervid devotees—but that Madhwa could come up with some refreshingly fascinating concepts about God and Man. Madhwa recognised what are known as the *panchabhedas*—the Five Differences—which he put down as follows: between God (*paramatman*) and Man (*jivatman*) between God and Matter (*jada*); between Man and Matter; between one individual soul and another and between one Matter and another. Madhwa would not go with Sankara's thesis of *Maya* (illusion) and held that the world was real, not illusory at all. Madhwa conceded that Vishnu was *sarvottama* (Supreme) but he did not oppose the worship of Siva and other deities as Ramanuja did, only Madhwa considered them as lesser Gods.

Madhwa held that God or the Supreme Being is the one and only independent substance (*swatantra*) in Spinoza's sense of the term. All else, such as *prakrit, purusha, kala, karma, swabhava* were *paratantra*. The dependence between the *swatantra* and *paratantra* was metaphysical and fundamental to the very being and becoming of the Finite which could never outgrow it. No doubt the dependent real existed from Eternity, but they did not do so in their own right but the sufferance of the Supreme. They were not existing *despite* the Lord but *because* of Him.

Madhwa took a realistic view of the material world. It *existed*, therefore it was. Or better still, it exists, therefore it is. However, it depends upon the Supreme. It is the theatre for the eternal struggle of Man to discover his own self and dedicate it to the Supreme. He is therefore obliged to perform his duties, secular and spiritual, in a spirit of dedication and thus try to make his way to self-realisation.

In the second place Madhwa recognised the *individuality* of the self. Every sentient being has its own individuality and the ideal is not the liquidation of the personality, but its enrichment. In the third place, according to Madhwa, the Universe consists of both good and evil. To argue that everything around us is good is to engage in enormous self-deception.

Madhwa had laid the foundation for his interpretation of Vedanta and it took his successors to build a mighty edifice on it. This was first done by Akshyobhya Tirtha by his public disputation on the "Tat Tvam Asi" test with another great philosopher, Vidyaranya. He won the debate and the Madhwa system attained historical recognition as a new *darshan, Sarvadarshanasangraha.* Akshyobhya Tirtha was followed by Jaya Thirtha (1365—88)and Shri Vyasaraya (1478—1539). As Prof. B.N.K. Sarma has pointed out, these two elaborated the Dwaita System "to the highest pitch of technical perfection of the scholastic devices of *Nyaya—Vaisheshika* logic...".

Though Madhwa himself was a product of coastal Karnataka, the greatest critical expositor and standardiser of his thought lived in northern Karnataka, in Eragola and Malkhed and the greatest dialectician of the System came from south Karnataka, in what was formerly Mysore. And from elsewhere came hosts of the Dwaita System's major and minor commentators, glossators, saints and psalmists. Some carried its message to regions beyond Karnataka, to Maharashtra, Gujarat, Orissa and Bengal. The system ushered in the popular bhakti movement known as the *Dasa Kuta.* It produced a great religious revival and enriched the Kannada language through devotional literature much as the Veerashaiva movement did. It also helped in the blossoming of Vaishnavism in distant Bengal. And there is no questioning its influence of the *bhakti* cult in Maharashtra through the common link of devotion to God Vittala of Pandharpur.

Three great men—and three major streams of thought. It had happened nowhere else before, or, for that matter, after. In that sense, the 9th to 13th centuries were decades of great mental and spiritual development and Karnataka's contribution to it has not been rivalled elsewhere. There have been saints and savants elsewhere in the country. Nivritti, Namdeo, Potana, Muktabai, Eknath, Tukaram, Kabir, Tulsi Das, Mira Bai....but none of them gave intellectual stimulus as these philosophers did to Hindu thought. They are unique.

VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE

The flowering of Karnataka culture was seen during the height of the Vijayanagar Empire. The Empire had inherited the administrative traditions of the Hoysalas, Kakatiyas and Pandyas. It improved upon them. Under the Vijayanagara kings, the arts and sciences flourished. So did religion. Krishnadevaraya, the greatest of the Vijayanagara kings was devoted to the Madhwa saint Vyasa Tirtha. Devaraya II built a mosque in the capital, Hampi for his Muslim soldiers. The Portuguese missionaries who visited the court of Venkata II at Chandragiri were so well-received by the Emperor that they even entertained ideas of converting him to Christianity. Barbosa, the traveller, wrote:"The King allows such freedom that every man may come and go and live according to his own creed without suffering any annoyance and without enquiry, whether he is a Christian, Jew, Moor or heathan".

Patronage was extended to all religions and places of worship were built serving all cults whether it was Shaivism. Virashaivism, Jainism, Shrivaishnavism or the Madhwa school. The temples at Lepakshi, Tadapatri, the Kamakshi of Kanchi and

the thousand-pillared *basti* at Moodabidri in south Kanara were all built during this period. Old temples were expanded to include towers—*Rayagopuras*—and audience halls (*sabha-mantapams*). Architecture flourished. Percy Brown has called Vijayanagara art as "the supremely passionate flowering of the Dravidian style". Art was not forgotten either. Paes, another traveller, speaks of the painted walls of the Vijayanagara kings. The ceiling of the *kalyanamantapa* of Virupaksha temple was decorated with paintings depicting the ten re-incarnations of God and other religious motifs. So splendorous was the capital of the Empire that another visitor, Abdur Razaak was to write that "the pupil of the eye has never seen a place like it and the ear of intelligence has never been informed that there existed anything to equal" to Hampi.

Such was Hampi's prosperity that Barbosa recorded that there was a brisk trade in jewels, diamonds, pearls and silk brocades. Paes was stunned by what he saw and warned his readers that he had no words "to express what I saw". The Vijayanagar Empire may be said to be the pinnacle of the glory that Karnataka achieved. After its fall, Karnataka was never to see anything like that again.

ISLAMIC CONTRIBUTION

Islam came to the south in the fourteenth century and flourished under the Bahmani and Adilshahi kingdoms, for some three hundred years. Islam was later to provide two rulers, Hyder Ali and his son Tipu Sultan but their reign did not last for more than four decades. In the circumstances the major Islamic contribution to Karnataka was during the Bahmani and Adilshahi periods.

In architecture, the Bahmanis established what came later to be known as the Deccani style which reached its height under the Adilshahis. The earliest of the buildings is the Uami Masjid (1367), a vast building 216 ft in length and 176 ft in breadth. The Adilshahi buildings were of three kinds; places, mosques and mausoleums. The Ibrahim Rauza and the Gol Gumbuz belong to the last class. One of the most beautiful places, built by these sultans is the Gagan Mahal with its 62 ft wide arch providing an inspiring look to its audience hall. Ibrahim Rauza, completed in 1622 has been called the Taj Mahal of the Deccan. Fergusson has said that it excelled "anything of the sort on this side of the Hellespont". The Rauza was completed by Ibrahim II; his successor, Muhammad wanting to excel the Rauza, raised Gol Gumbuz, a gigantic mausoleum occupying 18,000 sq ft area. Its dome is the largest in India and the fourth largest in world. The architecture is in the *pancharatna* style, a square building with a large dome surmounting it at the centre and four minarets in the four corners, seven-storeyed and octagonal. Tall arches supported the central dome.

The Muslim rulers also specialised in building strong forts, as at Gulbarga and Golconda. Though the rulers were Muslims, they were by and large tolerant men and a large part of their army consisted of Hindu marathas. It has been stated that they were helpful in the construction of the Narasimha Temple at Bijapur and the Sideshwar Temple at Athani. It was during this period that Narahari Kavi or Kumara Valmiki from Toraver near Bijapur, wrote the *Torave Ramayana* in Kannada. And Ibrahim I wrote one of the first books in Urdu, the *Kitab-e-Nau-Ras*, a treatise on music.

The Islamic contribution to the composite Karnataka culture is primarily in the field of architecture, both religious and secular, as witnessed in the numerous palaces (Gagan Mahal, Tarkash Mahal, Chini Mahal and Nagina Mahal) and mausoleums. The Jami Masjid closely resembles the great mosque at Cordova in

Spain, except that it shows the influence of Hindu architecture also.

CHRISTIAN IMPACT

Christianity did not come to Karnataka as the religion of conquerors, but rather that of missionaries and, in the circumstances, the reaction to it was not the same as it was towards Islam. Christianity was accepted, as Jainism or Buddhism was in their time without raising much alarm. As early as 1328 there were some 10,000 converts to Christianity in the two Kanaras. Christians were accepted and treated with equal honour in the Vijayanagar Court. Franciscan missionaries came to the Kanaras in 1521 (five years before the First Battle of Panipat signalling Mughal entry into India) and set up churches in Ullal Feringhipet and Mangalore. One of the earliest works on Christianity was written by Father Joachim Miranda and was called *Riglo Jesu*. It was written in Konkani. This was followed by Father Stevens' work *Kristav Puran* in 1614. By the eighteenth century Christianity was well established all over Karnataka. In the Kanaras alone there were twentyseven Churches around 1783. The Milagres Church in Mangalore is one of the oldest in Karnataka.

The early Christians were Roman Catholics and it was only after the British established their suzerainty in Karnataka that Protestant Missions came on the scene. But there is evidence that even during the reign of Haidar Ali, protestants missionaries were active. One of the first was Rev Frederick Schwartz, belonging to the Danish Lutheran Mission, of whose presence was noted around AD 1800. The Basel Mission established its foothold in Karnataka first in Mangalore in 1834 and later in Dharwad in 1837. Other Missions like the Wesleyan followed.

After the first flush of enthusiasm for conversion was over, the various Orders and Missions gave themselves whole-heartedly to the cause of education. The Society of Jesus set up the St Aloysius College in Mangalore in 1879 and about the same time, the Apostolic Carmelites set up the St Agnes Colleges for Women. Father Muller established the Homeopathic Hospital in 1891 at Kankanady, near Mangalore. For many decades, the best printing work was done by the Basel Mission Press also in Mangalore. Karntaka has much reason to be grateful to Christian societies for their pioneering work in the area of education and communication. The schools and colleges they set up acted as leaven to produce a more egalitarian society. Christians may not have distinguished themselves in music, theatre, dance or achitecture, but they brought the benefit of modern education to generations of Kannadigas. That is their special contribution and no mean one at that. They were also responsible to a large measure for bringing the outside world to Karnataka. The translation of the Bible into Kannada gave a further fillip to the language. And the first Kannada dictionary was compiled by Rev Ferdinand Kittel. It would be diffcult to quantify the impact of Christianity on Karnataka, but there is no gainsaying the fact that the schools and colleges they founded provided the state with the infrastructure so necessary to build a modern India. Today in Karnataka there are about 5,50,000 Catholics and 1,00,000 Protestants. Among Kannadiga Christians who have distinguished themselves in politics is Joachim Alva, his daughter-in-law Margaret Alva and Oscar Fernandes, parliamentary aide to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Both Margaret Alva and Oscar Fernandes are Members of Parliament.

GREAT KANNADA WOMEN

Some of the greatest women in Karnataka in the earliest days belonged to and

were raised in the Jain faith and later the Veerashaiva faith. One of the earliest is Akka Nagamma (12th century), sister of Basaveshwara and mother of Chenna Basaveshwara. Another was Akka Mahadevi, the great mystic. Her rapturous songs give us a feeling of her glowing personality. There are very few women saints who can be compared to her. Her devotion to her personal god, Lord Channamallikarjuna was total: "Let me beg from door to door; let no one give me alms. Even if anybody offers me anything, let it fall down before I take it. Let the dog eat it before I would pick it up from the ground, my Lord Channamallikarjuna!". Her *vachanas* are poetry of the highest order and judged by any standards, they stand very high in world literature, whether mystical or secular.

Karnataka owes much to Shantaladevi, a Hoysala Queen AD 1108 who did so much to encourage the arts and literature of her times. Her life has been celebrated by C.K. Nagaraja Rao in a book worthy of her name. There have been other queens in later years famous for their military or administrative talents like Chand Bibi or that great warrior queen Kittur Chennamma who fought the British to the very end and became a legend in her own lifetime and a source of perennial inspiration to Kannadigas. She was to die in prison in 1829.

But it is in the arts of peace and accompanying social reform that women of Karnataka have excelled. We have the example of R. Kalyanamma (1894–1965) who was married when she was barely ten years old, became a 'widow' three months later, struggled to give herself an education and edited a distinguished monthly called *Saraswathi*. Or Jatti Tayamma (1862-1947), the celebrated Bharata Natyam dancer who was an institution much like Balasaraswathi was in Tamil Nadu. Or Venkatalakshamma, another celebrated dancer. We have writers like Kodagina Gauramma (1912–1939), Gangubai Guledgudda, stage artist, Yashodhara Dasappa, a follower of Mahatma Gandhi and noted social worker, Umabai Kundapur, another social worker, Jayadevi Tai Ligade with over two dozen books in Kannada and Marathi to her credit and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya whose range of activities has embraced theatre, art, politics and social welfare. They have shed lustre on the Karnataka scene.

In the field of music few have excelled Gangubai Hangal, daughter and grand daughter of famous musicians. Gangubai's daughter Krishna Hangal Shastri too is famous in her own right. Gangubai's career stretches from 1924 when she was asked to sing the welcome song at the Belgaum session of the Indian National Congress. She has sung in every important city in India and before partition she has sung in Peshawar, Lahore and Karachi. A poet has described her with complete justification as Sangeeta Gangadevi.

It is somewhat unusual for Kannadigas to be proficient in western music though the late Chamarajendra Wodeyar, last ruling prince of Mysore was a geat patron of western music and had one of the best collections of western musical records in the country. But one who has made her mark is Louella Lobo Prabhu from Mangalore who has distinguished herself as a pianist and composer and a TV artiste.

WESTERN INFLUENCE

It was inevitable that Karnataka should owe so much to western thinkers and missionaries—once the British came on the scene following the convincing defeat of Tipu Sultan at the Battle of Srirangapattana in 1799. To this day Thomas Munro is remembered for the revenue reforms he ushered in the Kanaras and which were held as a model for decades after. The British gave to Karnataka what

it had lacked for centuries: stability and peace. They were wise in asking Tipu's Prime Minister Poornayya, for example, to continue as Prime Minister to Krishna Raja Wodeyar III whom they had installed on the Mysore throne. It was an act of statesmanship.

There were many westerners, both British and European, who gave their best to the country they served. Apart from Munro, there was Philip Medows Taylor (1808-76) who was a combination of administrator, archaeologist and novelist. Ferdi and Kittel is a household name. Kittel's (1832-1903) Kannada-English dictionary was the first systematic effort in that direction. He began his epochal work in 1872 and completed it in 1892, presenting his 70,000 word dictionary to the Basel Mission. Tubingen University gave him a doctorate for this massive work. Later Kittel also wrote *A Grammar of the Kannada Language* in English and died a happy man only after he saw the book in print.

Another great westerner to serve Karnatak is John Faithful Fleet (1847-1917) who was a civilian in the old Bombay Presidency and wrote several scholarly papers for the Royal Asiatic Society on Pali, Kannada and Sanskrit inscriptions.

If Karnataka could boast of great rulers in the medieval period, it was lucky to have some very enlightened rulers in the post-Tipu Sultan period. Tipu himself was a remarkable ruler and the British historians have not done enough justice to him. He was first and foremost a patriot and a nationalist; he was free from narrow sectarianism and gave liberally to Hindu Temples. He held the Monastic Order at Sringeri in high regard and contributed to the Monastery and Temple's upkeep. After his death, the British handed over the administration of Mysore consisting of nine districts to Chamaraja Wodeyar VIII. He was succeeded by Krishnaraja Wodeyar III under whose reign Mysore gained the reputation of being an enlightened state. Krishnaraja Wodeyar III was lucky in a series of excellent Diwans among whom are counted P.N. Krishnamurthy, V.P. Madhav Rao, M. Visvesvaraya, Kantaraj Urs, Albion Bannerjee and Mirza Ismail. Of these, Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya and Mirza Ismail are best remembered.

Visvesvaraya (1860-1962) was a far-sighted administrator who was responsible for several innovations in Mysore. An engineer by profession he began the industrialisation of the state and was instrumental in setting up Mysore University. During his dewanship he took up important irrigation and railway projects and turned Mysore into a model state and the envy of others.

Princes are out of fashion and have been so since India became free, but it is necessary to remember that in their time, certainly in Mysore, they played a notable part in the building of a new society. Not to give them their due is to be mealy-mouthed indeed. They had their foibles, but royal patronage to the arts meant a great deal to the artists themselves and to society in general. Standards of excellence were laid down, howsoever empirically, and to be an *asthana vidwan* meant something and while princes had become an anachronism by 1947, Mysore has every reason to be proud of its early rulers. In many ways they set the pace for progress in multiple fields and not merely in economic development. Indeed, they were the engines of progress. Their enlightened rule attracted the attention of others and it was no surprise that the Institute of Science should have been set up in Bangalore where men of the eminence of C. Venkata Raman and Homi Bhabha worked, and men of lesser eminence had their training.

Today, Bangalore is the hub of industry in south India.

Bangalore, a critic has said, is a self-conscious city. But that is not without reason. At one time it was called the Garden City of India and garden city it indeed was. At the entrance to Bangalore's famous garden Lal Baug (laid by no

less than Tipu Sultan) are signs written large as life: *Devaalayavi huvina thotam* (Temple is this Garden of Flowers) and *kai mugidu volage ba, idu sasya kashi* (Enter Ye Clasping Thy Hands in Prayer; this is Kashi of the Kingdom of Vegetation!). It is a measure of the respect that Bangaloreans show to flowers and gardens that a sign should say to those entering one of its premier gardens that they are about to enter the holy of holies!

Once Bangalore boasted of a pleasant climate, but times have changed. And so, too, has the climate. Many attribute this to the ruthless cutting down of trees and the indiscriminate growth of concrete jungles. That is true in part. Bangalore is the fastest growing city in India—and it is still growing, though the Janata Government now in power is showing signs that it is alive to the situation. For all that, the gul mohurs have become dusty and slimy. Slums are making their appearance in the unlikeliest of places. The population itself has expanded by a mind-boggling 75 per cent between 1970 and 1980.

The growth of the population has been in step with the growth of industries in the city and its surroundings. Once Bangalore was considered the home of scientific research. This was the city chosen to be the home of the Indian Institute of Science which had as its earliest Director no other than Sir Chandrashekhara Venkata Raman, India's one and only Nobel Prize winner. Today Bangalore promises to be the home of Technology where everything from watches to airplanes are manufactured. And Karnataka itself ranks sixth in economic development among all the states of India. A growing number of private sector companies are prospering in the conducive industrial climate of Karnataka and many of them are in Bangalore. The Electroporcelains Division of Bharat Heavy Electricals is in the city as are SAN Engineering & Locomotive Co and Armsel. Several leading Public Sector Undertakings of the Union Government, too, are in Bangalore such as Hindustan Machine Tools, Bharat Electronics, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Indian Telephone Industries Ltd. The ITI was started with a subscribed share capital of Rs 5 crores and had about 3,650 employees including 200 women. Today it has developed into one of the largest units of its kind in the East and has begun exporting its products and know-how on a turnkey basis to many developing countries and even to the United Kingdom and Australia! It is supporting an industrial estate of small and medium scale ancillary units manufacturing and supplying a vast array of components which were originally imported. Bangalore is a modern city in many ways, but if it does not have the patina of a Bijapur or a Bidar, it has the gloss of a Silicon Valley town. Bangaloreans like to think of themselves as go-getters. Certainly the myriad scooters that weave madly through the thoroughfares give the impression of a people maddeningly on the move! The fire of technological revolution and dynamic innovation in Karnataka had been lit as early as two centuries ago by that far-sighted ruler, Tipu Sultan who saw in state support of industry the means of national progress. But he did not live long to push his ideas through. It was left to M. Visvesvaraya who was appointed Chief Engineer to Mysore in 1909 to get the state going. It was at his instance that the first Mysore Economic Conference was held in 1911. One major outcome of the conference was the establishment of a separate Department of Industries and Commerce and also the birth of the concept of the Public Sector. Long before leaders of post-independence India conceived of the importance of State initiative in setting up industries Mysore had provided a model. Thus, the Mysore Chrome Tanning Co was set up in 1908, the Government Sandal Oil Factory in 1918, the Government Soap Factory also in 1918, the Iron and Steel Works in Bhadravathi in 1923 and the

Krishna Rajendra Mills in 1924. By the early 20th century Mysore State (now part of the larger Karnataka) had as many as 26 major industrial concerns. Presently, Karnataka has over 400 large and medium scale industries and over 40,000 small scale units involving an investment of over Rs.11,220 crores and a work force of over 300,000 men and women.

Karnataka has long been known for its silk, handicraft, handloom and leather products. Not many know that Karnataka alone produces about 80 per cent of the country's silk or that Shimoga, in southwest Karnataka, is the areca capital of India. To conserve and promote the rich tradition of the state's earliest industries, the government of Karnataka has formed several corporations such as the Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation, the Karnataka Handicrafts Development Corporation, the Karnataka Leather Industries Corporation and the Karnataka Handloom Development Corporation. To wear a traditional Mysore silk sari is the height of sophistication. To drink the coffee produced in Karnataka (which, incidentally, produces over 50 per cent of the country's total coffee output) is to savour Karnataka, in its rich brown mellowness. Coffee served in a proper Udupi Restaurant, with or without milk, but preferably with thick cow's milk and served in silver or stainless steel tumblers is to be a real connossieur! No coffee, goes a saying, is as good as what is served in Karnataka. The coffee beans have to be roasted and ground in a handmill and then comes the art of decoction. It is not every country that can make a ceremony of making coffee, but Karnataka does! Interestingly, it was an Arab holy man, Baba Budan, who brought the first coffee seed to India and to Karnataka. His tomb is venerated, along with the adjoining shrine to Lord Dattatreya, by Hindus and Muslims alike. The Hindus worship Lord Dattatreya and Muslims venerate Baba Budan, but both appreciate good coffee and without a good brew of coffee how can any day start in Karnataka?

Sugarcane is yet another crop which is abundantly grown in Karnataka around its Mandya district. Molasses, an important by-product of the sugar industry, is used in the manufacture of industrial alcohol, chemical acetates etc. Bagasse from processed sugarcane is used by the paper industry.

The manufacture of paper, as a matter of fact, is an older industry in Karnataka. The state has two well-known paper manufacturing units. The Mysore Paper Mills at Bhadrawathi is one of the oldest paper mills in the country producing about 75,000 tonnes of paper per annum and the West Coast Paper Mills at Dandeli produces about 60,000 tonnes per annum. There is a smaller plant, the Mandya National Paper Mills at Belagola whose production is only about 8,000 tonnes.

In a sense, these are what may be called "traditional" industries. The more modern industries deal with chemicals and fertilizers and the Mangalore Chemicals and Fertilizers, a state enterprise, marks the entry of Karnataka in the all-encompassing world of petro-chemicals. AMCO and UB-MEC manufacture batteries and MICO's spark plugs and fuel injection pumps have won international recognition for their purity of standards. VIKRANT and FALCON have been engaged in the manufacture of tyres and the state already has two-wheeler manufacturing units like Ideal Jawn, Karnataka Scooters and Chamundi Mopeds. And Sipani Automobiles manufacture the well-known Dolphin Cars.

Spearheading the field of sophisticated electronics industry is Karnataka's "Electronic City" situated about 20 kms from Bangalore. KEONICS, the Karnataka State Electronics Development Corporation was set up to assist entrepreneurs in this fast developing industry and currently it produces equipment for both consumer and industrial needs.

The Keonics Electronic City is the only one of its kind. It is a manufacturer, a promoter, a disseminator of electronic technology, a supporter of the small scale entrepreneur, a shelter for small scale industrial units. The State Government has given Keonics its full backing. Already it is active in the areas of entertainment electronics, telecommunication, instrumentation and control and radio communications. Over 30 per cent of India's production of electronic goods will be here. The current production of electronics in Karnataka is about Rs 400 crores out of the total of all-India output of Rs 1,360 crores. It is estimated that by the end of the Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90) Karnataka alone will account for about Rs 1,600 crores of production! The target is 1 million TV picture tubes to be manufactured at Bidar, 10 million integrated circuits per annum at Electronics City itself, 10,000 sq metres PCBS at Doddaballapur, VHF/UHF communication equipment at Hubli-Dharwad, 12 million quartz crystals at Electronic City, 100,000 hybrid microcircuits at Jigani in Anekal Taluk and 5,00,000 telephone instruments per annum at Gulbarga. The proposed new investment should create 1,63,000 new jobs in Karnataka.

Karnataka has been a pioneer in the field of hydro-electric generation for the past 82 years. The first of its kind in the country, the Karnataka Power Corporation Ltd (KPCL) was formed in 1970 for the construction, operation and manufacture of power projects and already at has several achievements to its credit, like:

— Commissioning of the 5th Unit of the 135 MW capacity at Nagarhari Power House in March 1983.
— Commissioning of the 6th and last Unit of the same Power House in March 1984.
— Stepping up of construction activity at Supa Dam—the main reservoir for Nagjhari Power House of Kali Project. An all-time record was set during 1983-84 by concretising 2,03,000 cubic meters which enabled KPCL to bring the level of the dam to 526 meters to impound 35 TMC of water which would yield additional energy of 790 million units.
— Conducting boiler light up of Unit I in Raichur Thermal Plant.

By 1988–89, four years from today (1984–85) the total installed capacity in MW would be 3094 MW up from 2367 MW. At this rate, the power famine in Karnataka would be a thing of the past.

One of the little known facts about Karnataka is that it produces all the gold that India produces. This was formerly mined at Kolar Gold Fields, but today, the ancient gold mines at Hutti, in Raichur District, continue to yield a rich haul of the yellow metal. In centuries past, miners had worked down to a depth of over 600 ft. (about 183 meters). One estimate is that the Hutti Mine is over 1900 years old! For centuries, the Mine remained inoperative but between 1902 and 1919, nearly 7,400 kgs of gold were obtained at Hutti from very rich ore at an average yield of 19 gms/metric tonne. The industry again closed down in 1920 owing to technical difficulties and lack of funds. But re-started after 1947, Hutti has produced 27,395 kgs of gold between September 1948 and March 1984 at an average recovery of 6.84 gms/metric tonne. Production for 1984 was about 68.42 kgs of gold per month.

Karnataka, in the circumstances, is rich in minerals and its product list is as long as it is valuable. It includes asbestos, bauxite, kaolin, chromite, dolomite, feldspar, iron ore, kyanite-sillimanite, limestone, manganese ore, magnesite,

quartz, talf (soapstone) vermiculite mica, black granite, multi-coloured granite and ruby corundum. To exploit these, the government of Karnataka established the Mysore Minerals Ltd (MML) in 1966. The company presently operates 24 open cast mines, one underground mine and four granite quarries all over the state and has so far cumulatively produced 7.2 million tonnes of various minerals and ores, has exported 1.25 million tonnes of manganese ores to Japan, South Korea and Spain. During 1983-84, the company recorded aggregate sales of Rs. 9.1 crores and made a profit of Rs. 1.5 crores, declaring a dividend of 15 per cent.

Karnataka attracts industries as Vienna attracts music-lovers. One reason is the establishment of a Single Window Agency on June 1983. The uniqueness of this Agency is that this is an informal gathering of all the agencies concerned with industrialisation and the meetings are chaired by different persons on rotation basis, making the Agency a collective decision forum. The decisions taken at the Single Window Agency are then followed up at the individual institution level, thus cutting down the gestation period for establishment of new medium and large industries. The Agency has so far cleared (1984) 186 industrial cases which, in course of time, catalyse investment to the extent of Rs 55,527 lakhs providing employment for more than 34,657 people.

Indeed, the Janata years have been years of solid achievement. In its very first year of being in power, the Janata Party brought about a sea-change in the socio-political ethos of the state. Job opportunities have been created that did not exist before. All able-bodied persons between the ages of 18 and 60 are provided with employment during any season of the year. Widows get pensions. Working women get maternity allowances. The services of 20,000 daily wage workers in the Public Works Department were regularised at one stroke. In 1984, some 1.82,657 families, including 41,750 belonging to Scheduled Castes and Tribes, were given aid under the Integrated Rural Development Programme.

Some of the steps taken by the Janata Government are impressive by any reckoning. The voting age was reduced to 18 to enable youth to exercise their franchise.A Lokayukta (Ombudsman) was appointed to ensure clean and efficient administration. A five year scheme at a cost of Rs. 100 crores has been undertaken to provide drinking water for *every* village. During 1983 16,000 wells were dug to meet the most elementary needs of the people, needs that had never before been met. A major plan to help the very, very poor is *Antyodaya* —the dawn of a better life. Under this plan five families in each village are identified for assistance under the *Antyodaya* scheme—a wholly novel concept.

Other positive moves to change the face of the state both physically and in terms of individual prosperity and betterment:

— Relief to farmers to the extent of Rs 100 crores by way of waiving of loan repayment, subsidies on dry wells etc.
— Increase in the number of mobile veterinary clinics to take care of sick livestock.
— Afforestation of 54,000 hectares of land and distribution of 12 crore saplings.
— Appointment of the second Backward Classes Commission and collection of evidence to provide more facilities to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
— Bringing of more land under irrigation. The government spent Rs 120.37 crores on this project in 1983 alone.
— Appointment of the first-ever Minorities Commission.
— Act passes to abolish the Devadasi System.

— Grant of 75 lakhs for encouraging cultural activities in the state.
— Encouragement to the Indian Systems of Medicine and the creation of 50 new mobile clinics to take medical attention to rural areas.
— Increase in the price paid to the levy paddy per quintal from Rs 130 to Rs 165.

The production of 6.5 million tonnes of foodgrains in the pre-monsoon season during 1983 has been unprecedented. It is 1.7 million tonnes more than the previous year's yield. The government can easily take credit for it—if not wholly, surely partly—for it provided to the farmers, especially small farmers, seeds and fertilisers at subsidized rates. The farmers were also offered the know-how for dry-farming. The supply of oil seeds and pulses to the farmers for sowing doubled in 1983 over the previous year.

Just as importantly, the government of Karnataka bought 56,000 tonnes of rice, 10,000 tonnes of *ragi* (millet) and 10,000 tonnes of *jowar* in the open market through the Taluk Agricultural Produce Market Committees in order to prevent distress selling on the part of the farmers.

The farmer is the backbone of Karnataka as of India and needs help especially when he is in distress. That will explain the government's decision to exempt payment of interest to 7.62 lakh farmers totalling Rs. 27.19 crores and the reimbursement of this amount to the Cooperative Societies from the state exchequer. That will also explain continuation of Crop Insurance in selected talukas in 1984 in respect of paddy, jowar, ragi and groundnut. A sum of Rs 22.14 crores was disbursed as loans to farmers through Primary Land Development Banks in 1983-84. And provision was made in the 1984-85 budget of Rs 51 lakhs for giving assistance to the farmers who were given land under the Land Reforms Programme and to tenants under the Negilu Bhagya (Plough Prosperity) Scheme. As one critic said, never before in the history of Karnataka has so much been done to so many in so little time.

Thus, in 1983 alone, 80,000 house sites were distributed to those who did not have any land and 60,000 houses were built thereon. But what has struck a welcome chord in villages is the provision of water. By 1984, some 21,839 villages out of 26,826 villages in the state could be grateful that there is at least one source of *safe* drinking water. Some 4,000 villages facing acute drinking water shortage had been identified for taking remedial action. This is taking government to the people.

The trick has been to set clear priorities and stick to the programme. What the Janata Government did was to put an end to the earlier practice of starting new irrigation projects while those already sanctioned remained incomplete. Now the people could have satisfaction that what has been undertaken is completed and that what is needed—water—is made available where it is most needed. The Bennitore Scheme for providing drnking water to Gulbarga town had been pending. This is now in the process of completion. "Nowhere else", wrote a perceptive student of contemporary Karnataka, "is the success of the Janata Government more visible than in the sectors of rural development, removal of poverty among the weak and backward classes, and among women and children". Karnataka has always been ahead of many states in the matter of education. And yet the need was felt for bettering standards and for providing access to more students to an adequate education. To that end, more than 3 lakh students were given free text books and writing material. More than 14 lakh children were provided with a mid-day meal where once they would have gone hungry. So great is the demand for education that thanks to the encouragement given by the

government, some 54 lakh children registered their names in primary schools in 1983-84. The government aim is to provide free education to children between the ages of 6 and 14 years, as directed by the Constitution of India, and thereby wipe off illiteracy from the state.

But a scheme worthy of applause is the establishment of an *Akshar Sena* (Literacy Army) under which some 2,000 pre-primary schools are to be launched every year. In 1983-84 government launched 6,400 such schools to offer informal education.

Side by side with these plans, the Government's Department of Social Welfare has been implementing the Integrated Child Development Scheme to provide supplementary nutrition to 7 lakh pre-school children, nursing mothers and pregnant women. The target for 1984-85 is 13.56 lakh beneficiaries. This has necessitated recruitment and training of large number of workers and supervisors. a task that has been successfully completed. Urban areas, of course, have not been neglected though, understandably, greater emphasis has been on traditionally neglected rural areas. Thus, the Bangalore Development Authority has taken measures to create a Green Belt around the city of Bangalore and to ensure the maintenance of open spaces around dwellings. In the city itself, children below the age of 12 years can travel free and high school students above 12 years as well as students attending college get concessional passes. And for the first time in the country, a training programme in Journalism and Film Industry has been inaugurated for 40 Scheduled Caste students. They will be offered reasonable sums of money to launch their own small newspapers.

Special attention is meanwhile being paid to the development of the Kannada film industry and the amount of subsidy given to a Kannada feature film has been raised from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1.50 lakh for black and white films and from Rs 1.50 lakh to 2.50 lakhs for colour films. Off beat Kannada films are to be given a special subsidy of Rs 3.00 lakhs per film. The state government has also recommended to the Union Government that the film industry should be treated like any other industrial enterprise for the purpose of the grant of loans.

The film industry came rather late to Karnataka, but already in 1929, a studio known as the Surya Film Company had been set up in Malleswaram, Bangalore where an estimated 30 to 40 silent films reportedly had been shot. The best known silent film was *Mrichchakatika* based on a Sanskrit drama by that name and was directed by Mohan Bhavnani who was to become the first head of the Films Division after India became free. Those who took part in the film were to become celebrities in many fields in subsequent years like T.P. Kailasam, Narayana Shastri, D.K. Bharadwaj, G.K. Nanda, B.S. Rama Rao, Dr M. Sivaram, Kamala Devi and Enakshi Rama Rao.

Gubbi Veeranna, the celebrated Kannada stage actor was also to make a big hit in the celluloid world. He set up the Karnataka Picture Corporation and in collaboration with Devudu Narasimha Shastri produced two films: *Hari Maya* and *His Love Affair*. Soon after, the company wound up.

Then came a series of popular films: *Sadarame* (1935), *Sansara Nauka* (1936) and in 1941, *Vasantasena*. But it was a false dawn. The Kannada film had yet to establish itself as a popular medium of cinematic expression. R. Nagendra Rao directed a film called *Jathaka Phala* in 1953. This was followed in 1954 with *Bedara Kannappa* starring Raj Kumar. By 1964 Karnataka was producing about 15 to 20 films in Kannada. In 1957 R. Nagendra Rao's *Premada Puti* won a Silver Medal at the national film festival. After that Kannada film industry never looked back. A series of notable films followed *School Master* (1958), *Kittur Rani Chennamma* (1960),

Sanskara (1971), *Sankalpa* (1973), *Vansha Vriksha* (1972), *Kaadu* (1974), *Chomana Dudi* (1975), *Hansa Gite* (1975), *Tabbaliya Ninade Magane* (1977) and others. By the late seventies Kannada films had taken the art to new heights. What began uncertainly with actresses like Enakshi Rama Rao had gone through all the phases of development to produce films of international merit. It would have gladdened the hearts of the early pioneers, including producers, directors and stars. Kannadigas remember with affection the names of Ashwatthamma, Malavalli Sundaramma, Basavaraja Mansoor, B. Jayamma, Vasudeva Girimaji, Kemperaj Urs, Lakshmi Bai and Kamala Bai, M.V. Subbayya Naidu, K.S. Ashwath and Harini.

New stars were twinkling in the skies by the seventies like Snehalata Reddy, Bindu Jayadev, L.V. Sharada, Padma Kumta, Ananta Nag, H.L.N. Sinha. New Directors too were coming on the scene including Girish Karnad, Puttanna Kanagal, B.V. Karanth, P. Lankesh, Pattabhiram Reddy, M.B.S. Prasad and G.V. Iyer, searching for new themes and new social horizons.

By 1980 Karnataka had produced over 600 films in Kannada among which B.V. Karanth's *Chomana Dudi* and Girish Kasaravalli's *Ghatashraddha* won top national awards. Though the film industry had begun late and shakily in Karnataka by the late seventies it had finally come into its own.

In a sense there has been a phenomenal growth of the arts in Karnataka and not just in the realm of cinema. We may never know who sculpted the Gomata with his ethereal smile, standing strong and silent at Shravanabelegola but we know who sculpted the beautiful Gomata at Dharmasthala—Ranjal Gopala Shenoy, now old, bent and tired, but his gnarled fingers still capable of creating flowers out of stone. There are men of science: Raja Ramanna and U.R. Rao who have made substantial contributions in their chosen fields. Among Kannada writers in the English can be named R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, not to mention A.K. Ramanujam whose *Speaking of Siva* has been published as a Penguin Classic. Raja Rao has spent most of his life abroad, especially in France and the United States as had Ramanujam who is currently Professor in the Department of Linguistics Anthropology and South Indian Languages and Civilisation at the University of Chicago. Another Kannadiga to win name and fame is R.K. Laxman, the cartoonist whose work won him several awards, including the prestigious Magsaysay Award.

Among artists, Kattingere Krishna Hebbar stands out prominently. Hebbar has exhibited all over the world and won numerous awards. In 1976 Mysore University conferred on him an honorary D. Litt. Among photographers, T.S. Satyan and T.S. Nagarajan have distinguished themselves. Satyan was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India in 1977. Among photographers of animals there are probably very few to better M.Y. Ghorpade whose *Sunlight and Shadows* is a classic of its kind. His photographs have won several awards, including the 1977 Australian Museum Award for his photograph *Tusker in the Rain*. He was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain (FRPS) and the Excellence de la Federation Internationale de L'Art Photographique (EFIAP) in 1976.

Karnataka comes to you in a never-ending stream of sights and sounds, in its beaches and fields, its rocks and hills, it flowers and forests. There is a enchantment in the wave-washed beaches whether at Karwar, Thandrabail or Suratkal as there is in the green woods of Bandipur. It is a land where, in Shakespeare's words one would naturally find "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stone and good in everything". Centuries ago, a Kannada poet spoke of the Kannada landscape in liquid sounds, that to this day

echo and re-echo in the hearts of all Kannadigas. Wandering aimless in the forests of *malenad* one is again reminded of Shakespeare's lines: "Are not these woods more free from peril than the envious court?" Indeed they are. All that one hears is the twitter of the birds as they fly from tree to tree or the incessant chatter of monkeys or the occasional growl of a wild animal. Ghorpade, in his book *Sunlight and Shadows* refers to a village in Karnataka where the people protect the painted storks which nest there every year. One suspects that the Kannadiga's talent for toleration extends even to birds and beasts. In Karnataka the term *sarva dharma samabhava* (equal reverence to all religions) surely takes in the religions of our dumb friends, as well.

No two places in Karnataka are alike; each has its history (*stala purana*) and its pride. You start at Udupi on the west coast, seat of Madhwacharya where Kanaka Dasa sang and where thousands of pilgrims come very year to visit the temple dedicated to Lord Krishna. Not far away is Prajakshetra, birthplace of the great Madhwa himself, a charming village where the master lived and exhibited his extraordinary learning even when he was a child. The house where the saint was born is beside two hillocks; on one is a temple to Chamundi as Mahishasura Mardini, whom Madhwacharya worshipped. South Kanara is full of holy places: Subramanya is one, Dharmasthala is another, the latter, a meeting point of Jains and Hindus and sometimes of Christians and Muslims too, where Hinduism loses its caste consciousness and the priests at the Siva Temple are Madhwas and the *dharmadhikari* of all temples is a Jain! Then there is Moodabidri, with its thousand-pillared temple and one of the richest treasure troves full of jewels.

Talk of holy places and the mind flows to places like Sringeri by the river Tunga where peace is a way of life and Tunga flows softly, without even a murmer, or to Melkote, built on the rocky hills, Yadugiri, overlooking the Kaveri valley and where, every year thousands attend the *Vairamudi* festival. Talakad, an ancient city on the left bank of Kaveri, some 45 kms from Mysore, is famous for its lost temples, more than thirty of which are under hostile sand, and only one, that to Narayana can barely be seen and can only be opened to the public with great difficulty. The deity of the temple, Sri Narayana is eight feet in height and stands on a pedestal. The only temple left unsubmerged is that of Vaidyeswara, built of granite in the Dravidian style.

Somnathpur about 48 kms from Mysore is famous for its temple, built, so legend has it by none else than Jakanacharya the famous sculptor and architect of the Hoysala kings. Like many temples in Karnatak, the temple at Somnathpur too is close to where the rivers Kaveri and Kapini meet. But one has to stand in front of the Virupaksha Temple in Hampi to feel the awe-inspiring presence of God. This is where the great emperor Krishnadevaraya prayed and the temple still stands, a reminder of Karnataka's greatest days, worship continuing to be offered by devotees who come from far and wide. In Hampi, too, is the stunning image of Ganesha, standing 12 ft. high not far from the other idol to Ugra Narasimha, 22 ft. high, testimony to the faith and devotion of a by-gone generation.

The Vijayanagar Empire came to a sad end after the Battle of Talikota just as the kingdom of Tipu Sultan after the battle of Shrirangapattana. Shrirangapattana serves to remind us of a brave people and a brave ruler and the ruins of that old city are a grim reminder of freedom lost as of valour won. After the battle the moat round the fort was found filled with over 10,000 bodies and it was after great searc that the body of Tipu himself was found, still warm and regal in death. Temples and forts, ruins and relics, they too reflect the Karnataka that was and shall ever be.

R.K. Narayan described the route he took to see Karnataka as the Emerald Route. And how right he is! The best ever advice on how to write was given by the King to the White Rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland*.

"Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?" asked the White Rabbitt.

"Begin at the beginning," the King said gravely, "and go on till you come to the end: then stop".

The problem for this writer is when to stop for there is so much to tell, and there is no end.

To be asked to writer about the cultural history of Karnataka is to be asked to drain the Indian Ocean with a thimble. The task will never be accomplished. For culture is something more than the expressed aspirations of a people whether through their history, their music, dance, drama, theatre, art and sculpture. Culture is the sum total of all human activity whether in times of war and peace or during periods of vast stagnation. Karnataka has seen periods of stagnation and yet during those gray years saints and commoners have kept their spirit alive through praise of the Lord. Witness thereof is the *dasa sahitya.*

There is no such thing as a Kannada culture because it is subsumed in the larger Indian culture where goodness, decency, hospitality, friendliness, tolerance and understanding coupled with scholarship and the reaching out to the Unknown are a way of life. And yet, there are some things uniquely Karnatakan, like the great temples of Hoysala kings, the sheer devotion of the Veerashaivas, the rugged wisdom of the *Vachanas,* the logic of a Madhwa, the splendour of the Jog Falls and the incomparable music of a *vina.*

We may be charmed by the earthly good sense of D.V. Gundappa's *Manku Thimma* or the sweet romanticism of K.S. Narasimha Swamy's *Mysore Mallige* as we may be of the majesty of Kannada poetry. We may be swayed by the self-abnegation of the Jain monks such as Nandisena to whom reference has been made in a seventh century inscription which gives the entire flavour of a race:

> "Fleeting are the treasures of beauty, wealth and power, like streaks of lightning or like the dew. I see the Supreme Truth and I do not desire earthly existence. So saying, the celebrated sage Nandisena, strong of mind, took *sanyasa* and set out to the abode of Gods.

Mind the words: "strong of mind". This was not a weakling giving up his all because he could not enjoy or was incapable of enjoying worldly treasures. He was strong of mind and knew what he was giving up. It is a quality that a Mahatma Gandhi would have admired, and which invites admiration thirteen centuries after the words were carved on stone.

There have been many others in later centuries, "strong of mind" who gave up much by way of worldly treasures to follow the cause of their conscience. In our own times there have been men like Karnad Sadashiva Rao who struggled for the uplift of the Depressed Classes long before it became fashionable to do so. We can think of others labouring in other vineyards of whom Kannadigas are so proud, men like Aloor Venkatrao or Gangadharrao Deshpande or Mudaveedu Krishna Rao. They did so not for glory or the fruits of labour but because to labour was good and was its own award. We may not see another General Thimayya whose martial prowess was no less than his deep sense of fairness and after whom roads have been named in India and abroad. Gen. Thimyya, like Gen. Cariappa before him, represents the martial tradition of Kodagu, a hilly district famous for its soldiers as for its roasted coffee, a whiff of which can send home-

sick Kannadigas to raptures.

It was another kind of rapture that stirred Kumara Vyasa as he stood, head bowed and a song on his lips before the presiding deity of his home town, Gadagina Veeranarayana, the same rapture that in another time and place was shown by Kanaka Dasa as he sang in front of the Sri Krishna Temple. Gadag has a place in Karnataka's history of saints and writers—and it is not surprising that in the medieval age they were one the same—as had Udupi. That is why in Karnataka's theme song we describe the country as *Gadugina Veeranarayanana beedu*—the home of Veeranarayana of Gadag. Karnataka, the home of saints and savants, remembers her saints and savants and the Gods they worshipped. They are the warp and woof of its whole being. Without them it is just a stretch of land where men fought and are for ever forgotten.

Karnataka is a land to be fondly remembered. Sing with Kannadigas their lovely lyric, tune up the *vina*, heavenly of musical instruments and let your voice soar up to the skies:

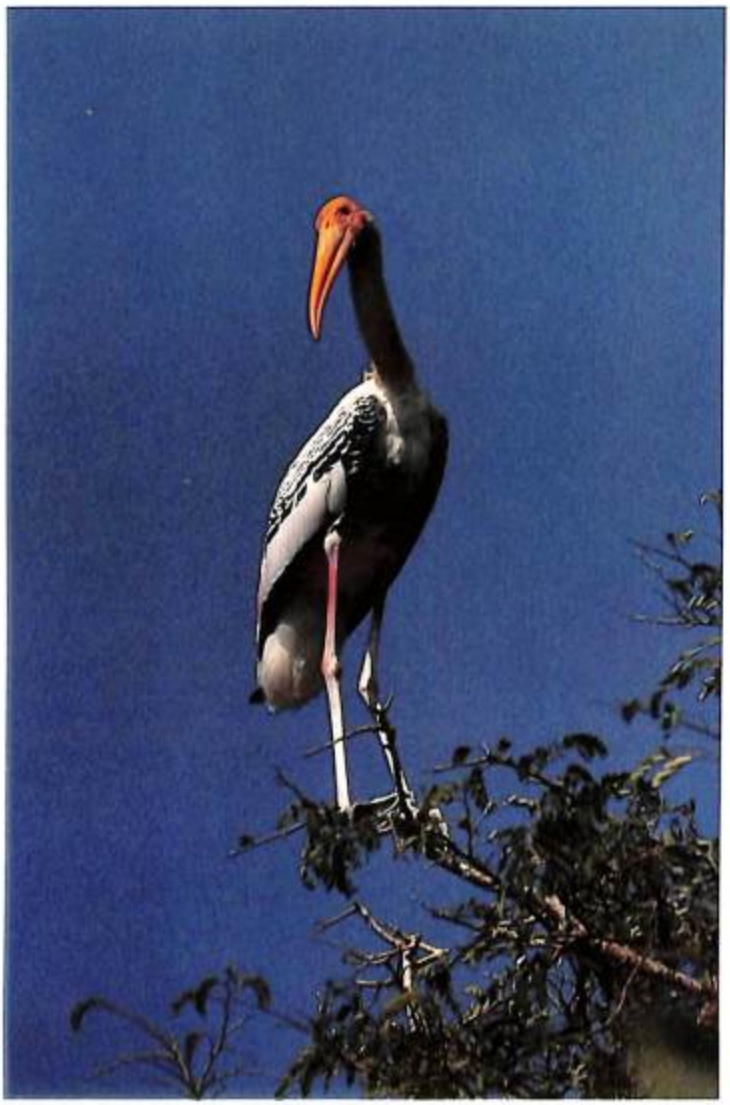
Udayavagali namma cheluva kannada nadu
Jakkanana shilpa kale adbhutada kirugoodu...
kavagaduveena veera narayanana beedu
udayavagali namma cheluva kannada nadu.

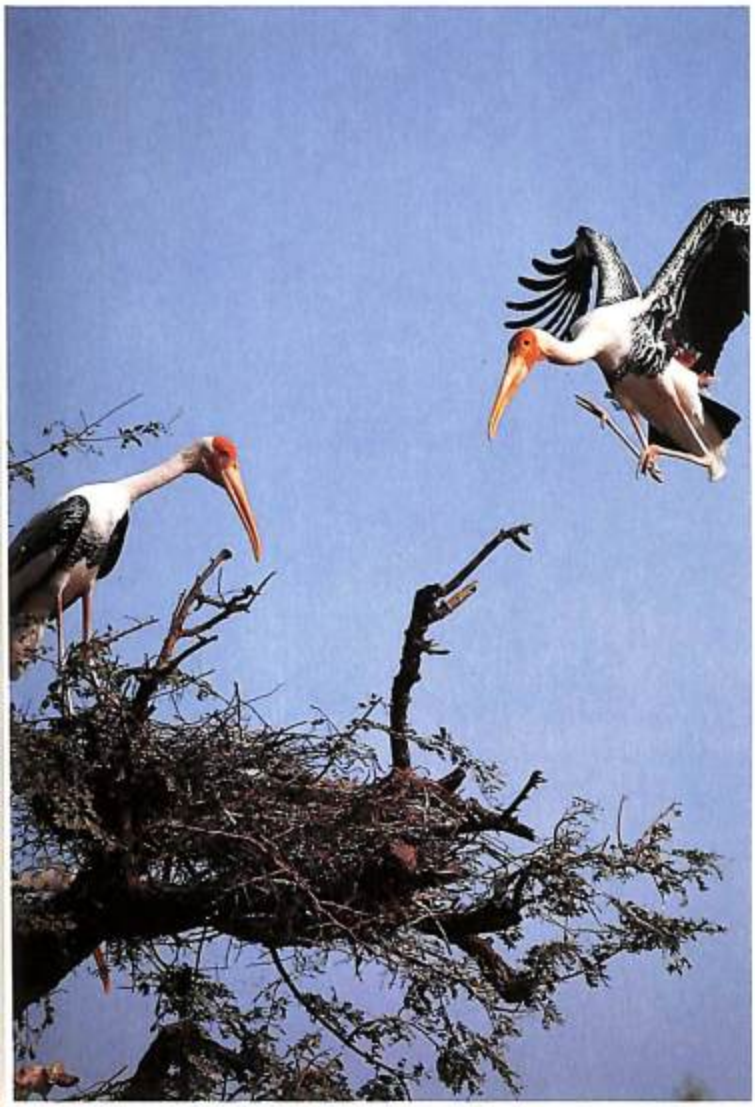
M.V. KAMATH

2 Flowering t

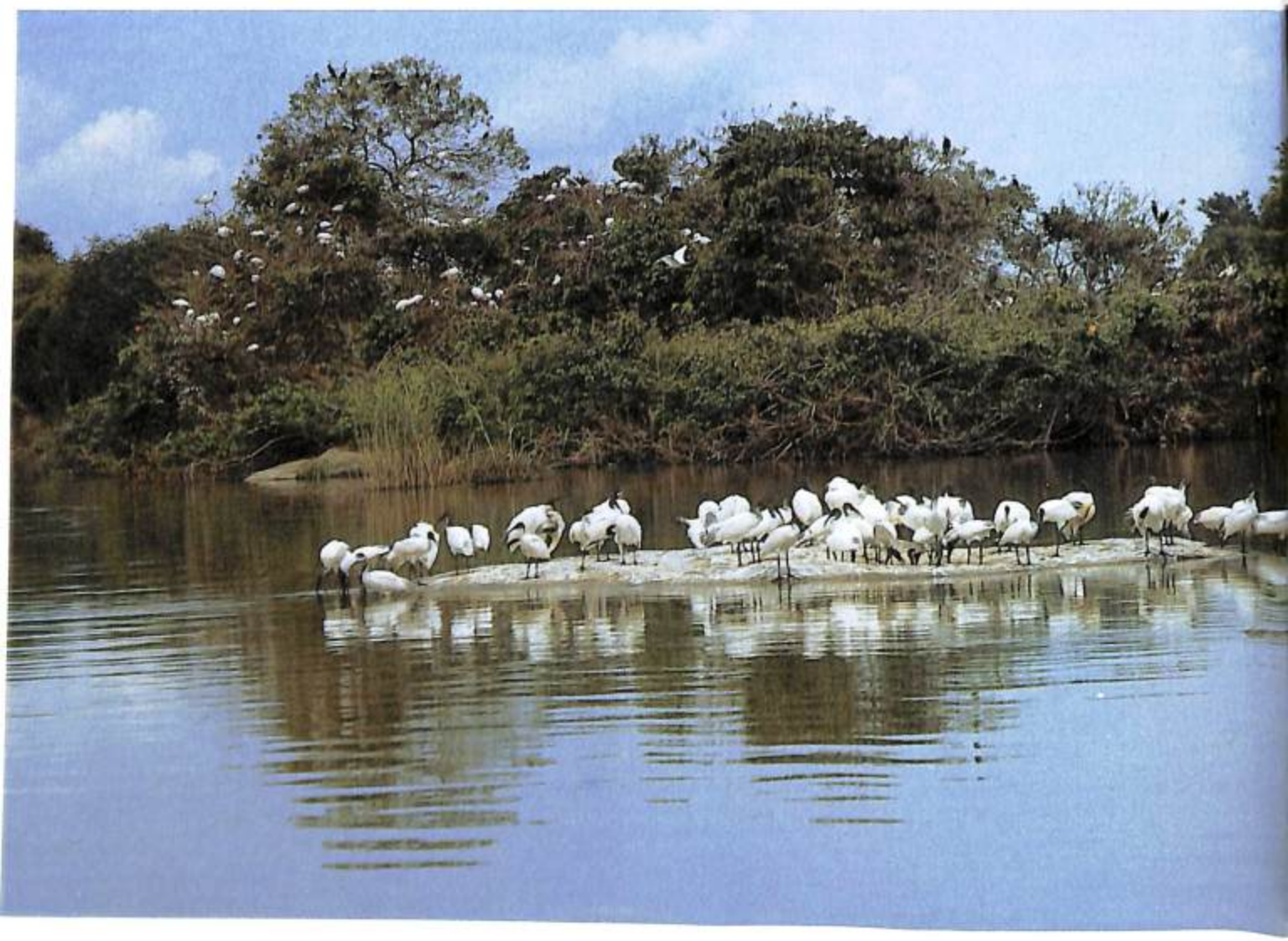
3, 4 Malnad flowers

5 Birds' sanctuary at Ranganathittu



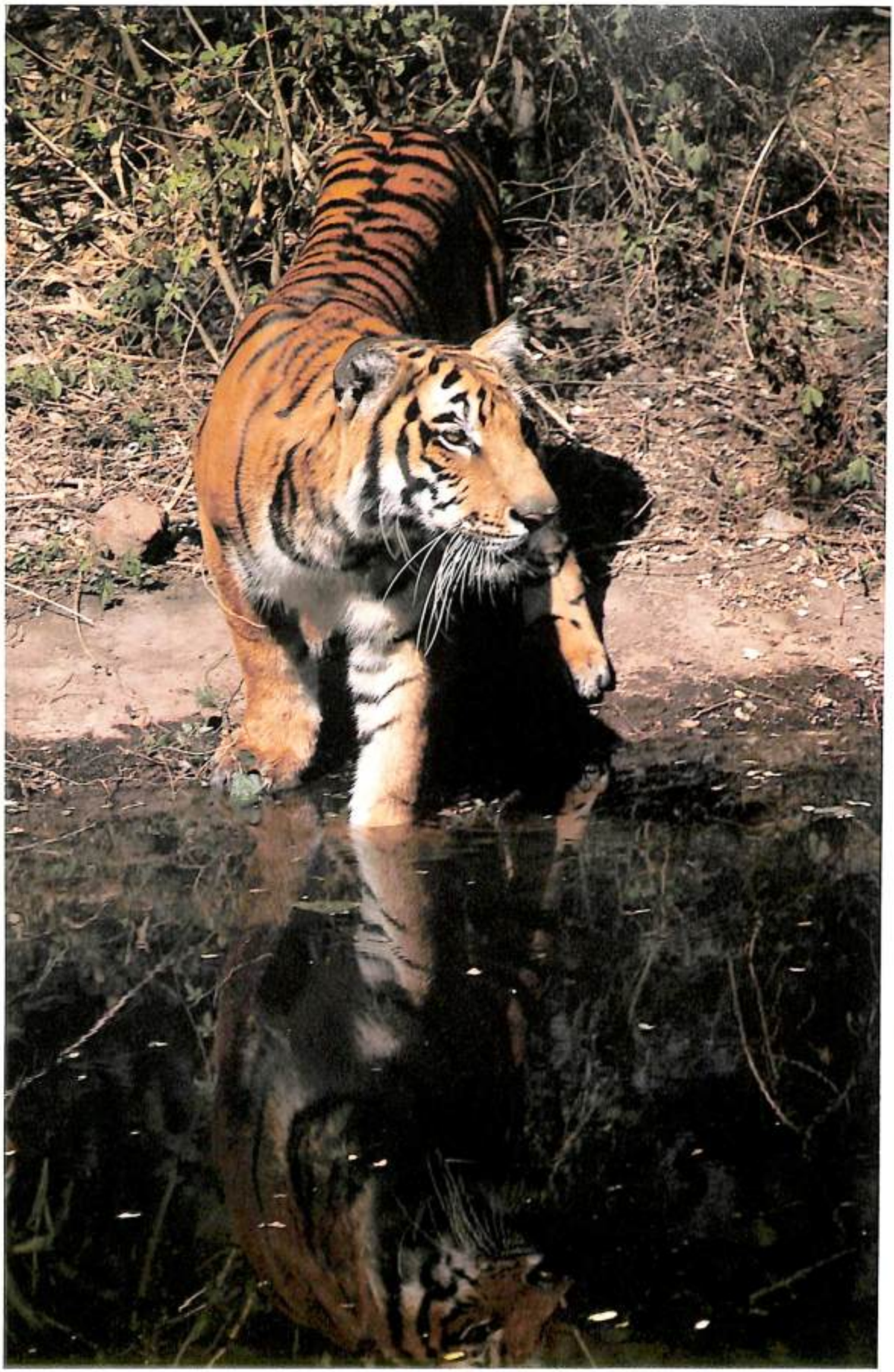


6-9 Birds at Ranganathittu



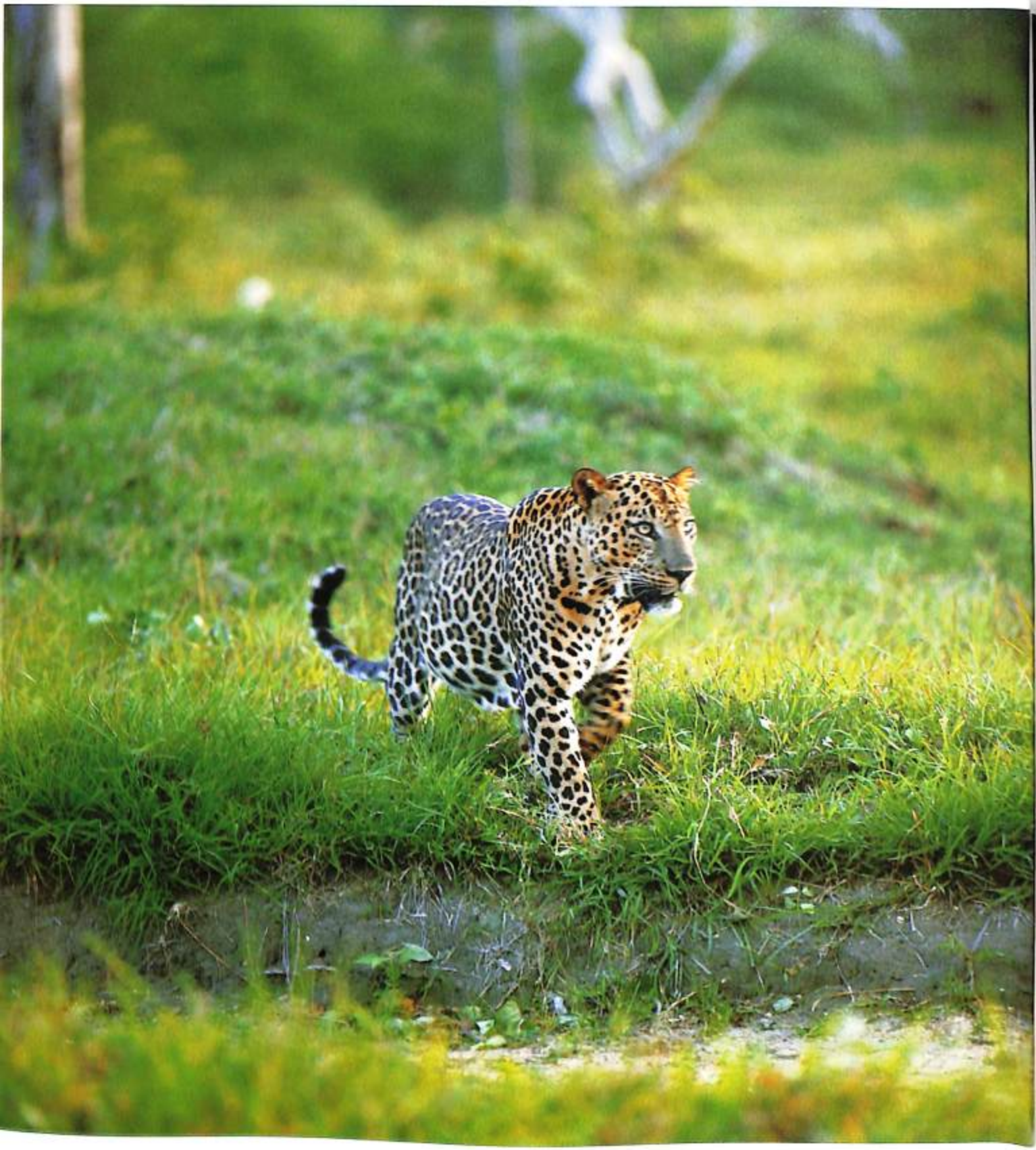
10 Another view of Birds' sanctuar

11 Peacock

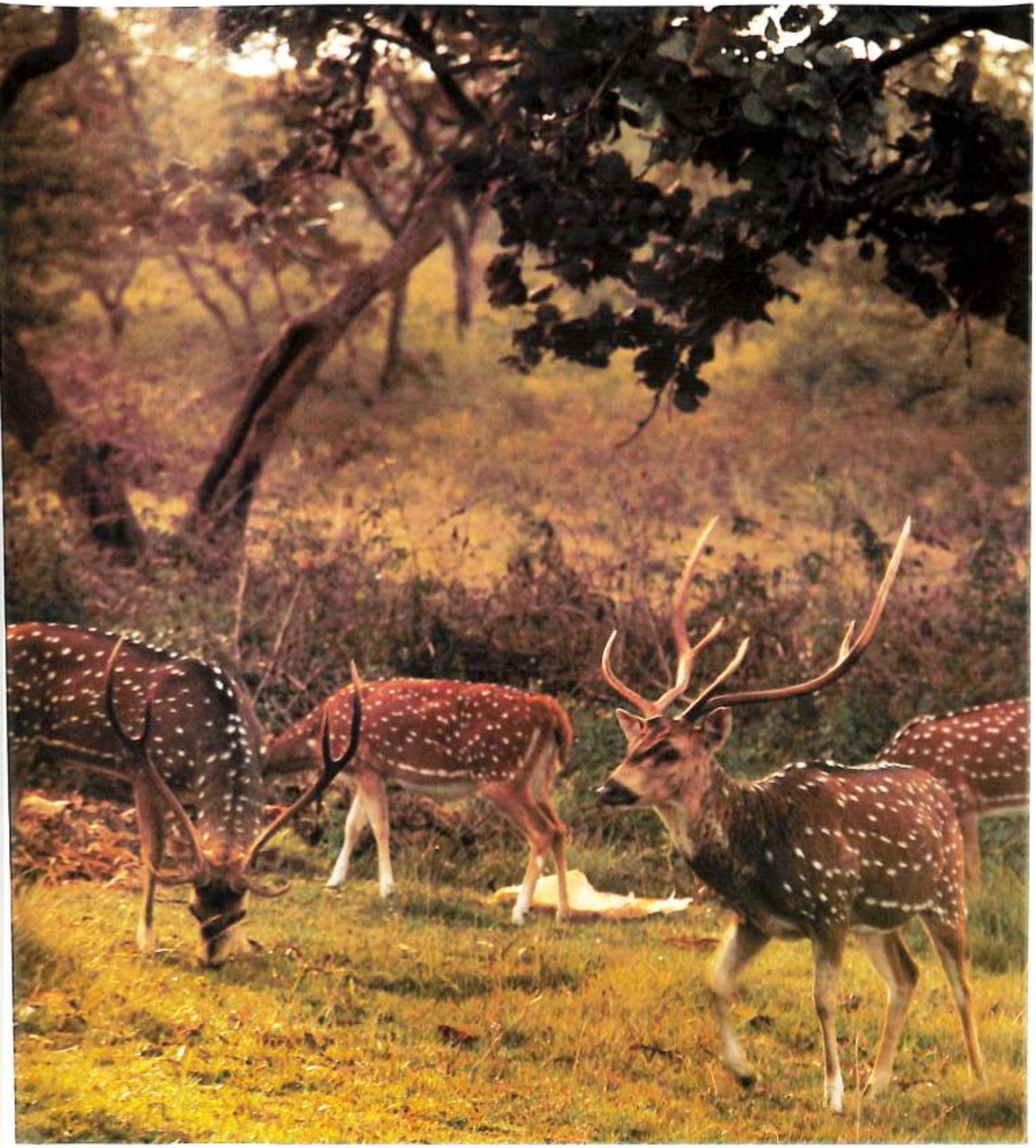


12 Tiger at Bandipur

13 Tigress



14 Leopard on the prow



15 Spotted deer at Wildlife Sanctuary, Bandipur

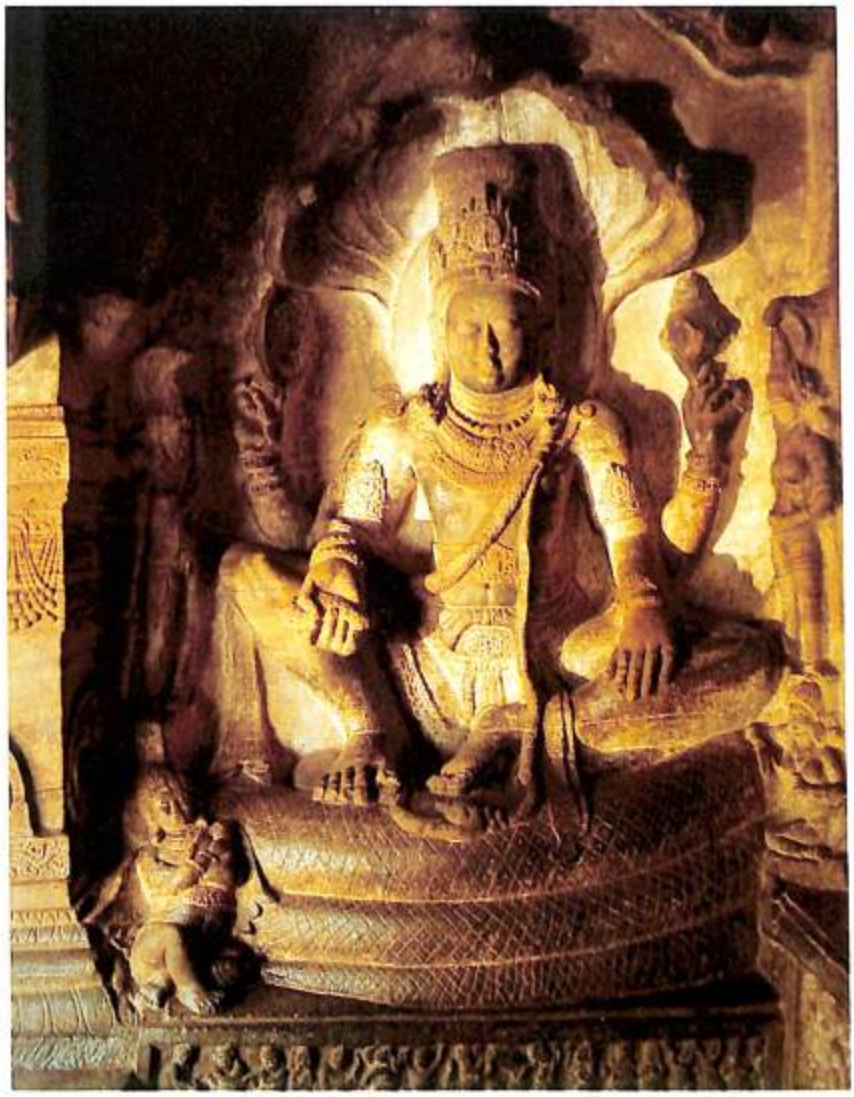
17 Indian bis

18 Bonnet Macaque

19 Early Chalukyan architecture, Pattadak

20 Papanatha Temple, Pattadakal

21 Rock cut cave at Badar



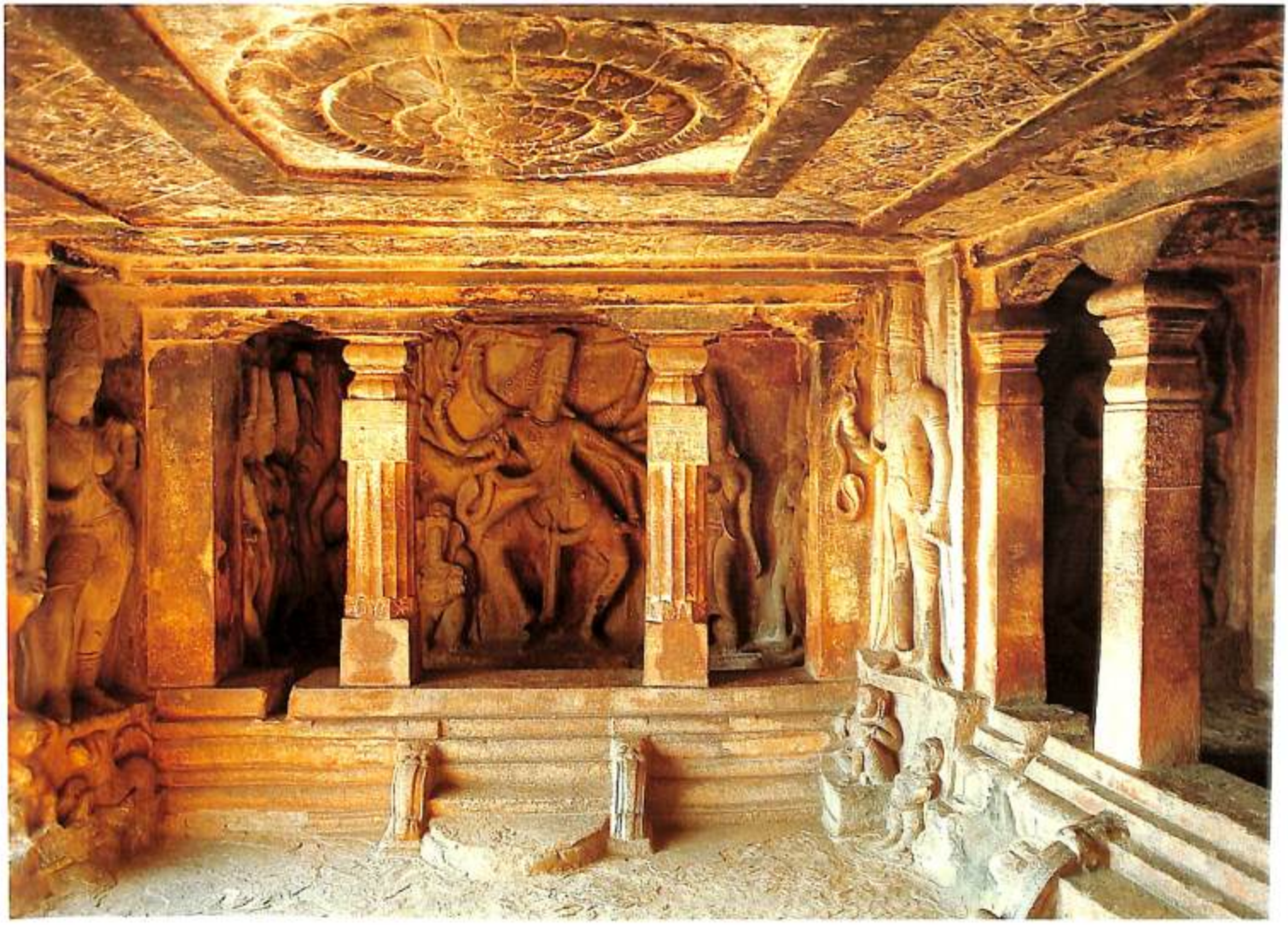
22 Vishnu on Anantha, Badami

23 Amorous couple, Badami

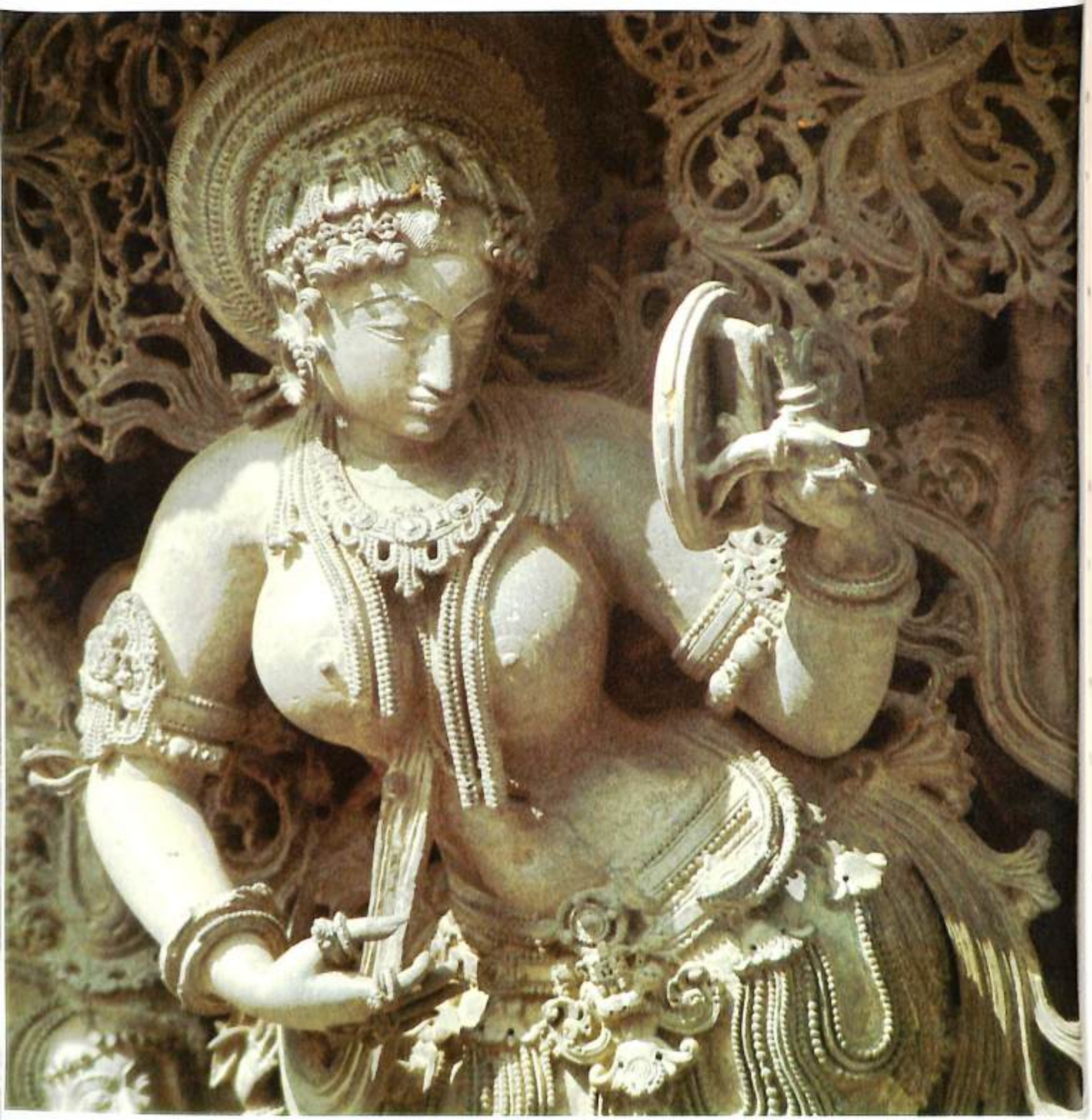
24 Mallikarjuna temple, Pattadakal

25 Vishnu — Trivikram
Vaishnava cave,
Badami

26 Ceiling of a temple,
Badami



27 Ravala Phadi cave, Aihole



30-31 Sculptures of Madanikas, Belur

32 Natyasaraswati, Belur

33 Lakshminarayana, Belur
34 A view of sculptures at Halebid

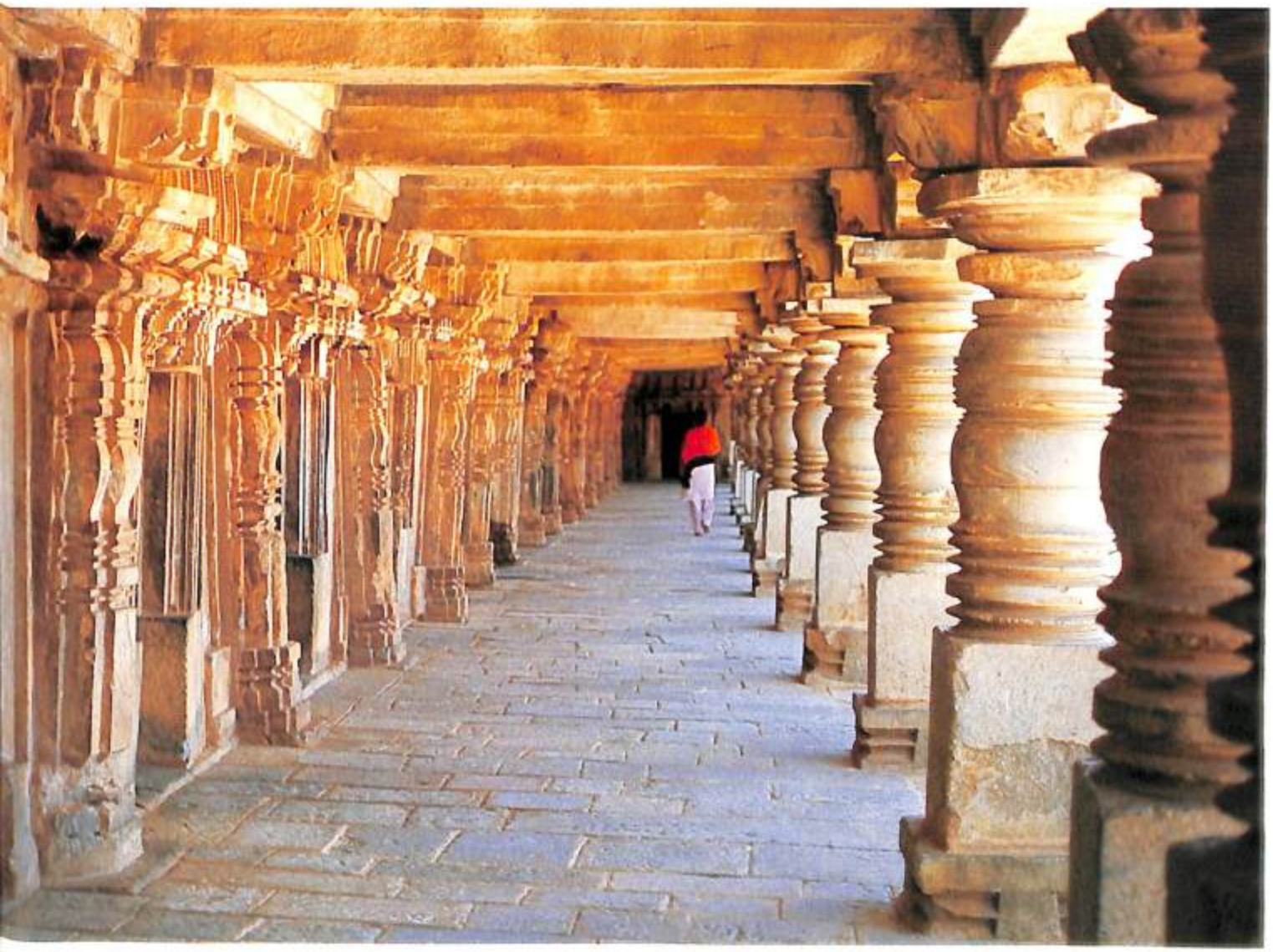
35 Hoysaleswara temple — an exterior view, Halebid

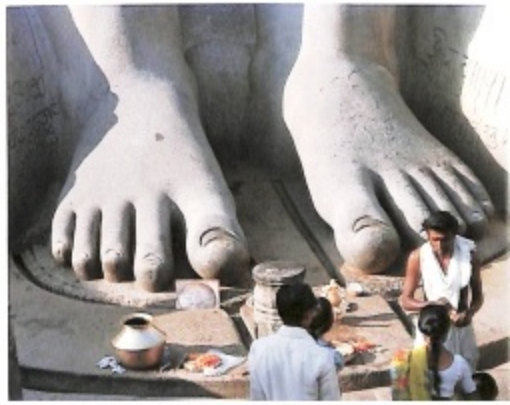
36 Sculptures on the exterior of Hoyasala temp

37 Ganesha, Halebid

38 Keshava Temple, Somanatha

39 Pillared corridor, Somanathapur
40 Another magnificent view of Keshava temple

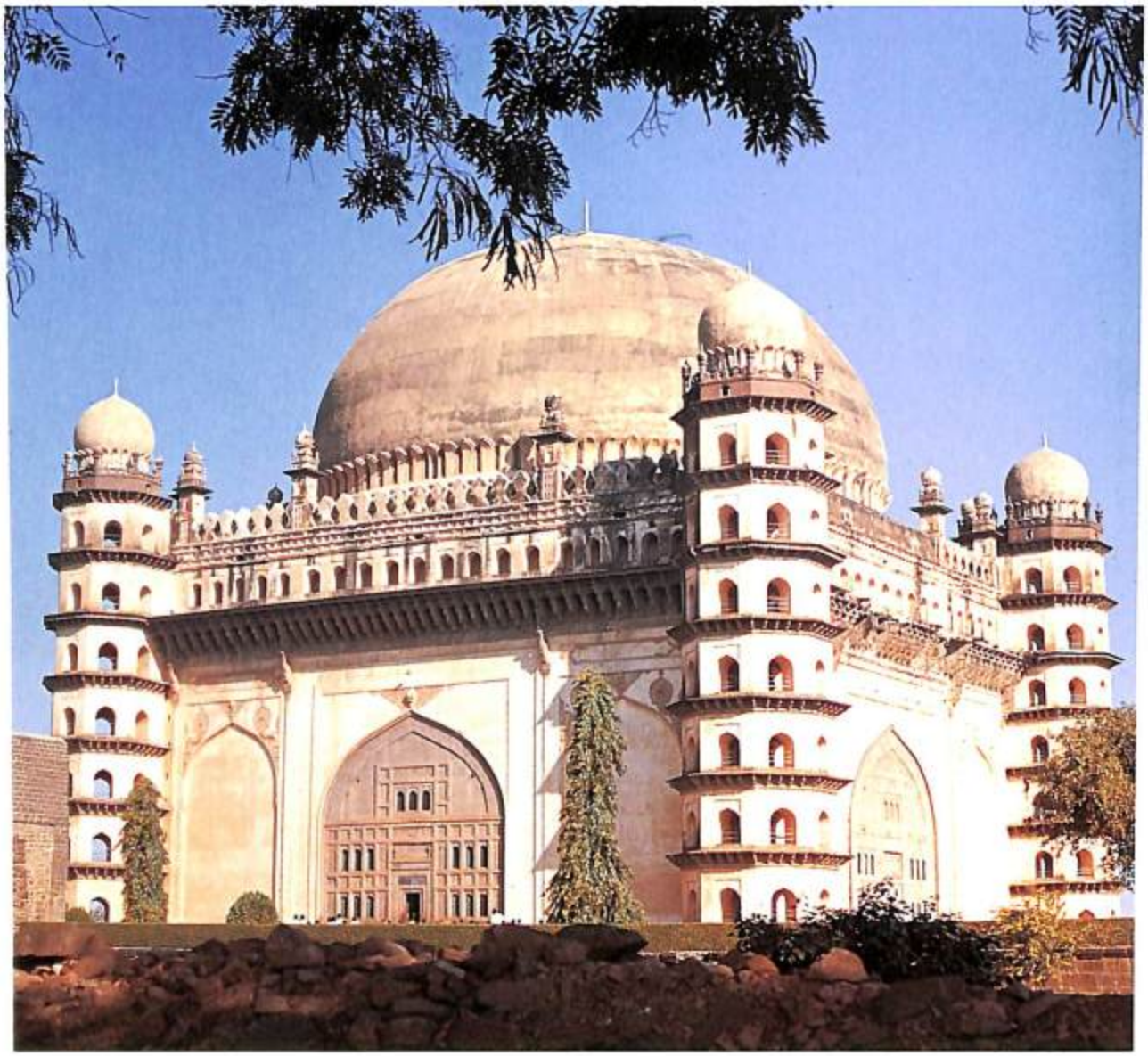




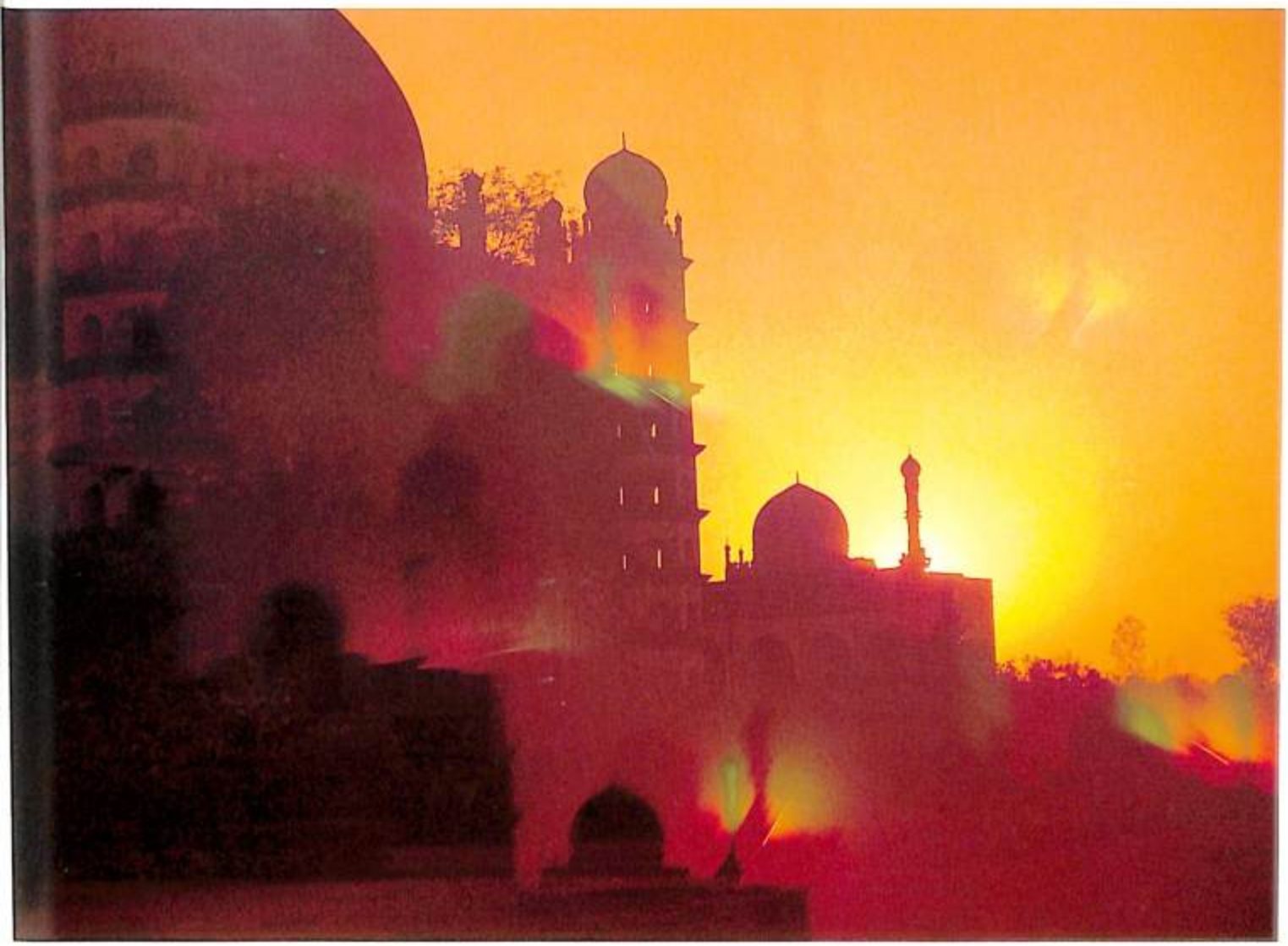
41 Gommateswara, the great Jaina statue a Sravanabelagola
42 The smile
43 Feet of Gommateswara

44 Sculptured pillars of Hajara Rama, Hampi
45 Ugranarasimha at Hampi

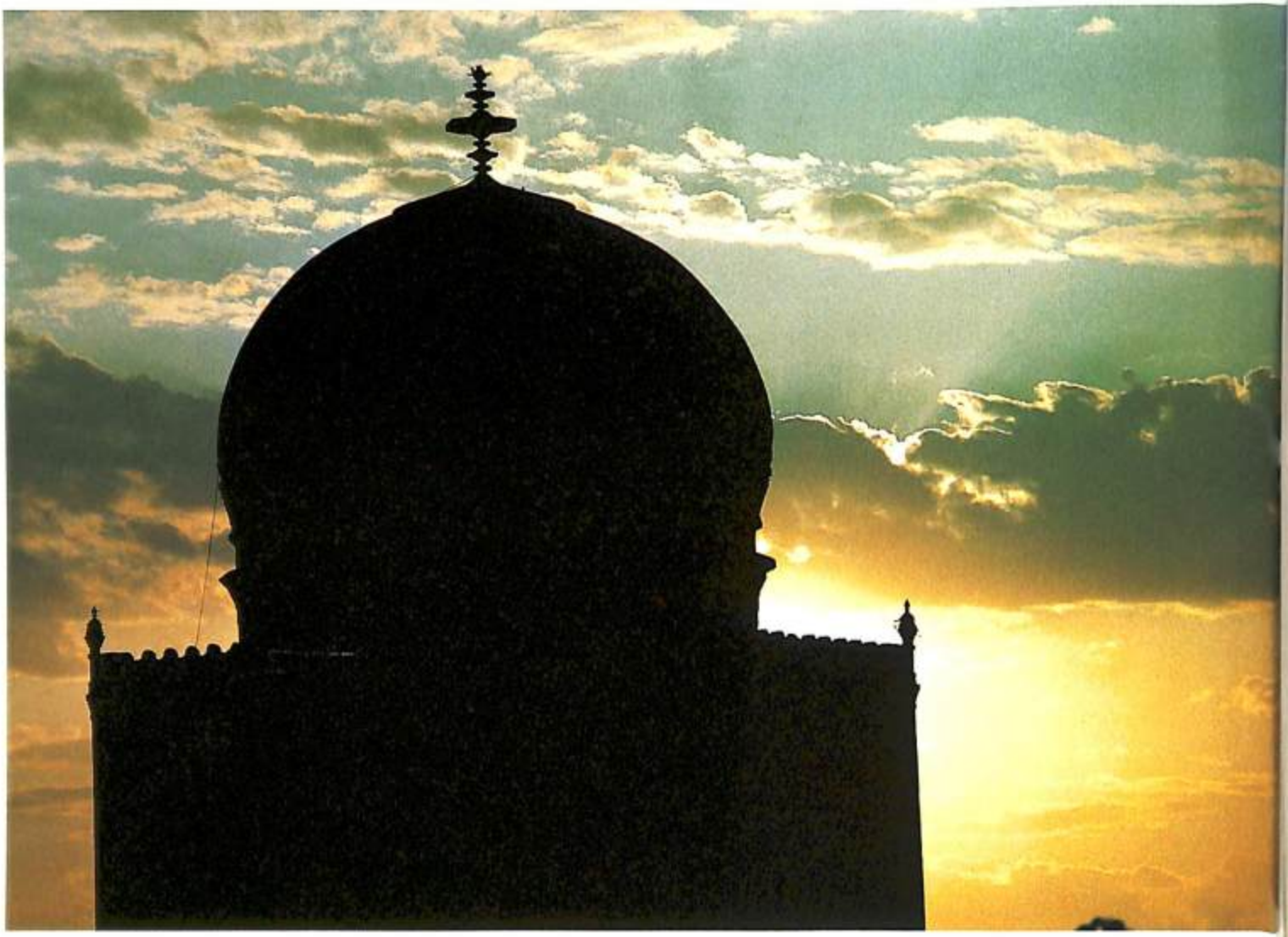
46 Gol Gumbaz, Bijapur



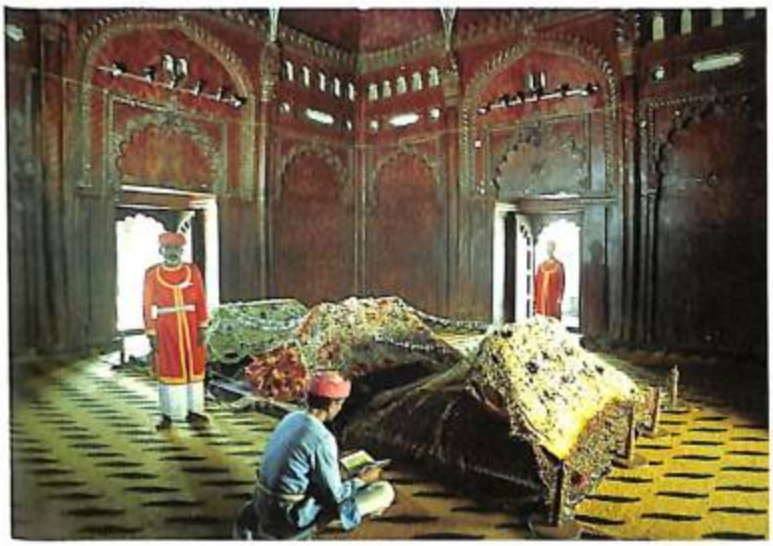
47 Gol Gumbaz — Another view

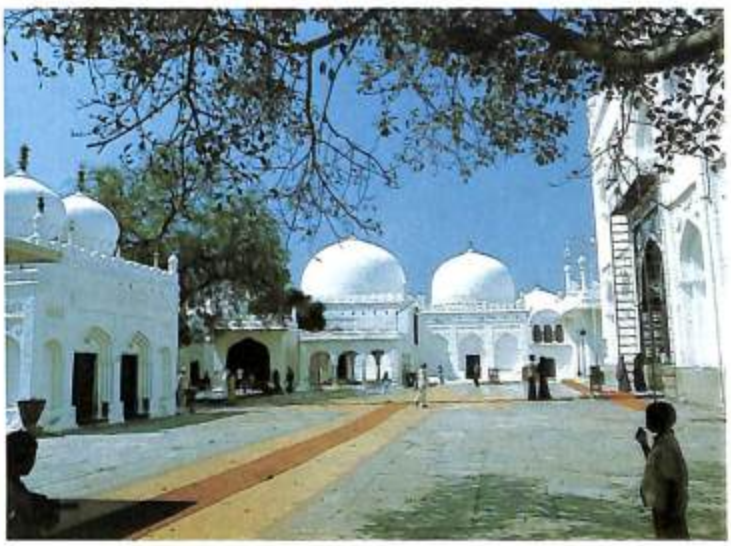


48 Silhoutte view of Gol Gumbaz



49 Mausoleum near Bid





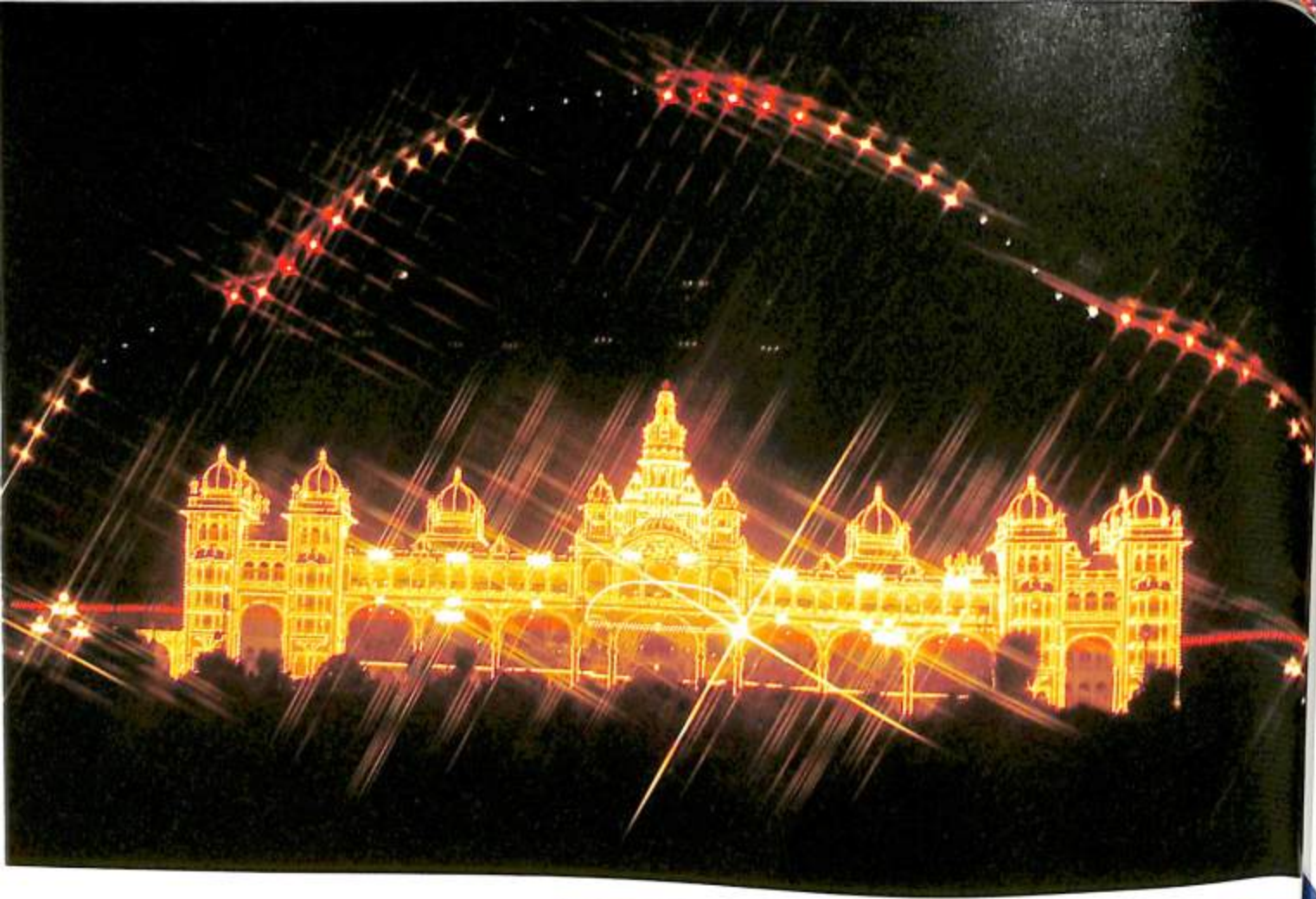
50 Gumbaz, Srirangapattana
51 Dariya daulath, Srirangapattana
52 Mausoleum of Hyder and Tippu Sultan, Srirangapattana
53 Dargah of Khwaja Bandenawaz, Gulbarga

54 Keerthinarayana temple, Talkad
55 Kempegowda Tower, Bangalore

56 Nandi at Chamundi Hills

57 Peacock throne at Mysore Pal

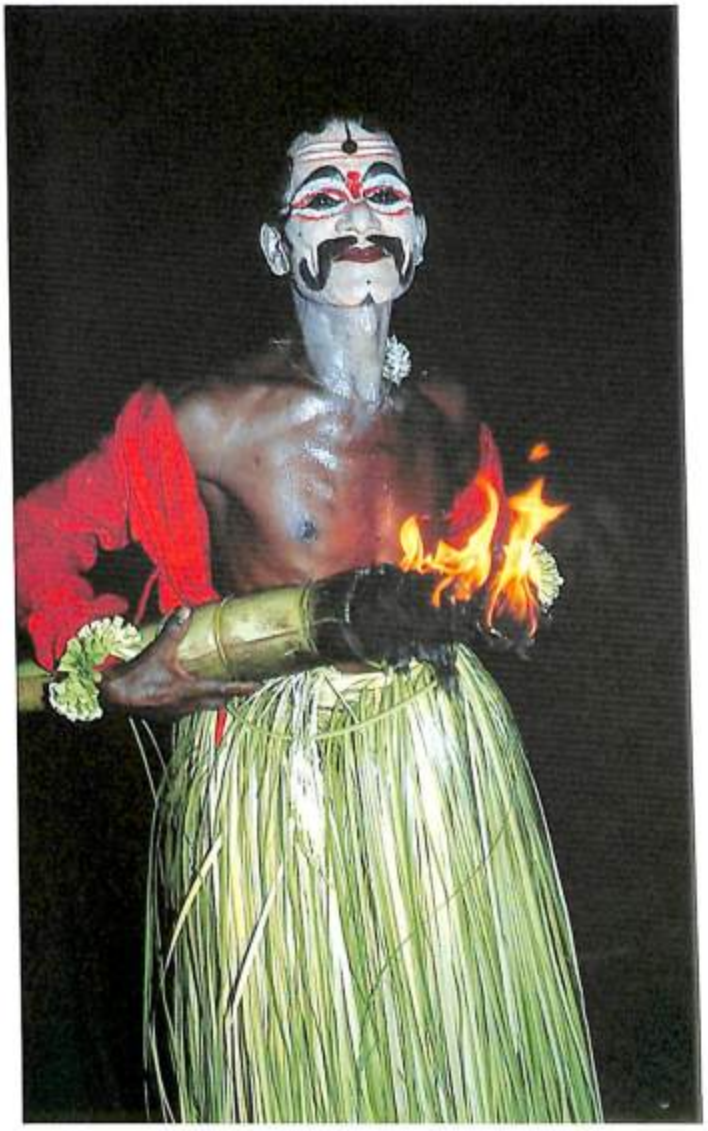
58 Entrance to Mysore Palace



60 Mysore Palace, illuminated
61 Vidhana Soudha, the seat of Karnataka Government
62 Vidhana Soudha, illuminated

63 Lalitha Mahal
Mysore

64 Pooja to Nagamandala
65 Procession of deity at Boothasthana



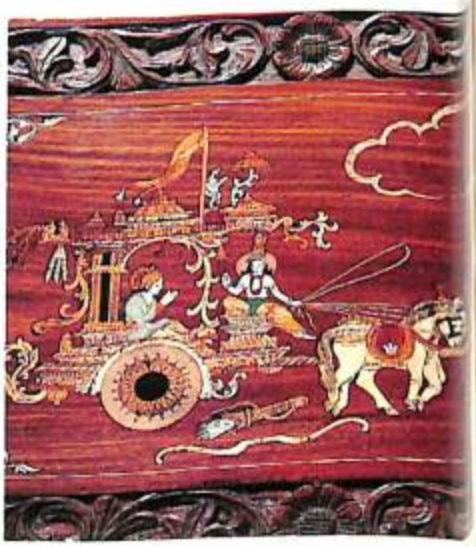
66-68 Bhutas — Spirit worship in Dakshina Kannada

69-72 From Yakshagana, the dance drama

73 Bharatanatyam dancer
74 Dollu Kunita — A form of folk dance

75 Tribal community — Bettada kurubas
76 Kambala — the popular buffalo race in Dakshina Kannada

77-82 Handicrafts of Karnataka

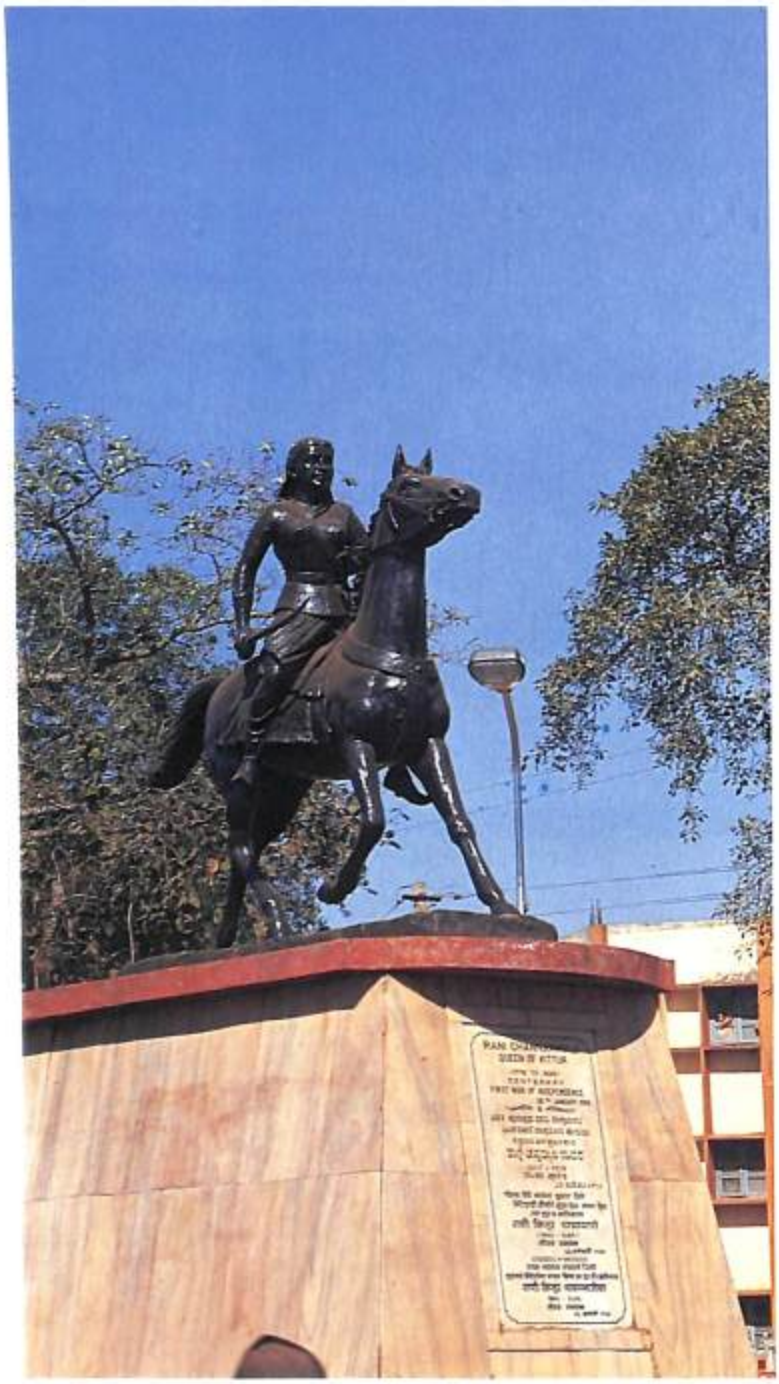


83 Huttari dance — people in Kodagu dressed in traditional robes

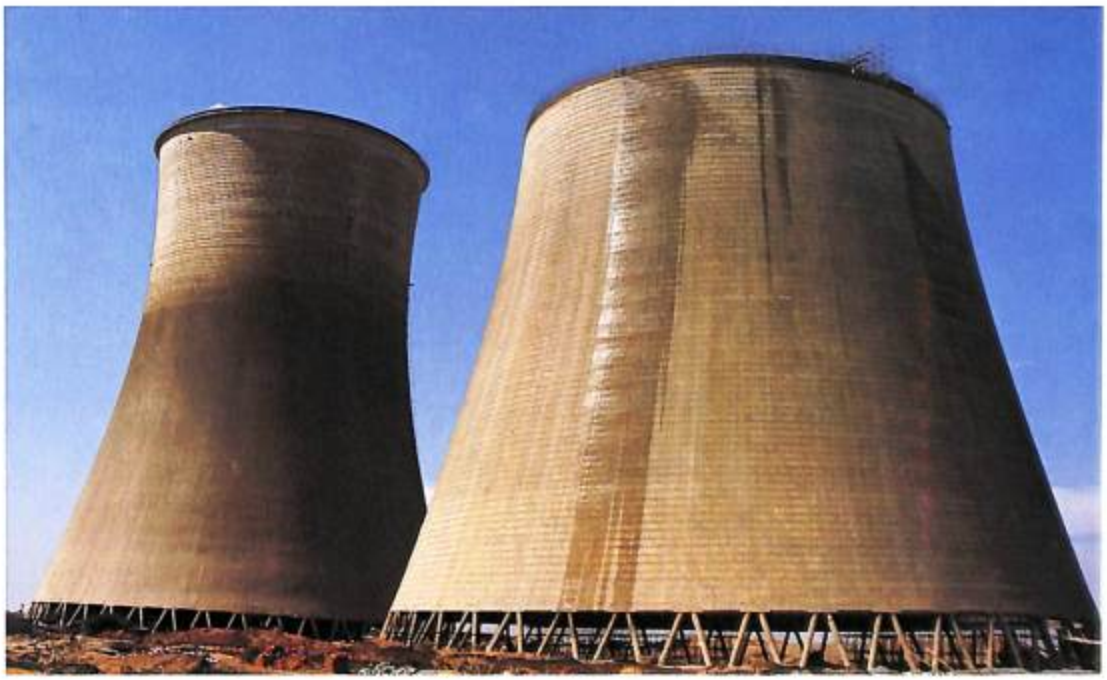
84 A colourful fountain

85 Fountain in the garden city of Bangalor

86 Race Course, Bangalore



87 Statue of Kittur Rani Chennamma, Belgaum
88 M.G. Road, Bangalore



89 A Modern plant
90 Thermal plant at Raichur

Overleaf
91-92 Coastal landscape, Dakshina Kannada
93 Bullock carts on the way to market
94 A view of Mangalore Harbour

96 Village girls carrying water pots
97 Artesian well in Bidar District
98 Lambani woman

99 A paddy field

100 Girl in a cotton field
101 Areca palm

102 Sunset in Western Ghats