

Contribution of Puliyur S. Purushothaman Namputhiri to Sanskrit Literature

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Sanskrit is a grand position there in the history of Malayalam literature. Number of Sanskrit texts were either interpreted or translated into Malayalam. This includes both scientific and literary books. The Scientific writings in Malayalam flourished through the following commentaries, translations or autonomous works. Vadasseri Parameswaran Namputhiri, Kelallur Nilakanta Somayaji, Suryadevayajvav, Khatigopa were wrote commentaries in Āryabhaṭā's Āryabhaṭīya and they were also wrote many other Śāstra grantha-s. Kaikkulangara Rama Warriar, Putumana Comatiri, Kumaraganaka, Damodaran Namputhiri, Narayanan Namputhiri, Govindaswami, Thalakkulathu Bhattathiri, Purayannur Parameswaran Namputhiri etc were very famous commentators in Śāstra texts. Thus there are a lot of commentaries and translations of Scientific texts written in Sanskrit.

Many Sanskrit literary works were translated into Malayalam. Bhagavat-gīta of Kannasapanicker, Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa of Keralavarmma Valiyakoyi Thampuran, Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa of Vallathol Narayana Menon, Purāṇasañcika of Vallathol, Ṛgvedaparibhāṣa etc are the important translated works. The translations of Sanskrit poetry helped in the growth and development of Malayalam poetry. Bhāṣāṣṭapati of Ramapurathu Warriar is a remarkable translation of Jayadeva-s Gītagōvinda. Kunchan Nambiyar wrote Pañcatantra in kiḷippāṭṭu style. A.R.Rajaraja Varma translated Kalidasa-s Meghasandēśa and Kumārasambhava and Kundur Narayana Menon translated Raghuvamśa and Neelakandha Dikshith-er-s Anyāpadeśaśataka. Sasthamangalam Ramakrishna Pillai reproduced Raghu-

vamśa in kiḷippāṭṭu style. G.Sankara Kurupu produced an independent work known as Meghachāyā. Sardar K.M,Panicker translated Kumārasambhava, Narayana Paṇṭita wrote Sanskrit commentaries on Raghuvamśa and Kumārasambhava respectively. The two great translation of Mahākāvya-s were written by Vallathol. They are Grāmasoubhāgya and Bodhisatvāpadāakalpalata.

In the above discussion we know that the general condition of the literary scenario in the medieval Kerala. Writers of that time very proficient in handling various subjects. They were well known in both Sanskrit and Malayalam. Their works came to light through in many articles in journals, books, news papers, periodicals etc. The rich tradition of Sanskrit that prevailed in Kerala in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Puliur,S,Purushothaman Namputhiri ,one of the literary genius was born during this age.

Puliur.S.Purushothaman Namputhiri was a great scholar in scientific and literary field. He took much effort to translate number of astrological works in to Malayalam. In literature, his famous work is the translation of Srī Harṣā's Naiṣadhīyacarita. The Sidhāntadīpika commentary of Āryabhaṭīya is his another important work .He composed a gaṇita treatise named as Gaṇitanirṇaya. In this work he developed new gaṇita system. He tried his hand in writing almost all types of literature like poetry, drama, novel, Sanskrit muktaka-s, their translations, samasyāpūraṇa, akṣaraśloka etc.

Family details

Puliur.S.Purushothaman Namputhiri was born on 25th February 1889 at Peruvellil illam . Peruvellil Subrahmanyam Namputhiri was his father, He was an expert in Mathematics, invocation and Tantra. Sridevi Antharjanam, daughter of Muthedattu Vasudeva Girvana Kaviraja was his mother. She was a good scholar and was proficient in Purāṇās, Mathematics and poetry. Purushothaman Namputhiri married Parvathi Antharjanam in 1908. After nine years of their marriage the first child is died and his wife died in 1918. Later he agreed for a second marriage due to the compulsion from Ezhuntholiyillathu Purushothaman Bhattathiri.

Thus he married Savitri Antharjanam of Maṭavūr Thuravallūr Maṭham. He had two daughters namely, Parvathi and Savithri. Both of them had got equal talent in poetry and music.

Teachers

Puruṣoṭhamaṇ Nampūthiri learned the basics of Sanskrit from his grandfather Vasudeva Girvana Kaviraja. After that he tried to understand the Ṣodaśa culture which is demanded by his clan. When he attained the age of 16, he learned gaṇita and jyotiṣa very well. He never went to school for learning. After the death of his grandfather in 1893 his uncles namely, Narayanan Potty and Kunjupotty taught him poetry and drama. He started Pañcāṅgagaṇita at an early age of 16. Thereafter he was able to acquire the knowledge of Śāstrās from many eminent scholars. Palakkad Krishna Sastri taught him logic and grammar. Thazmaṇ Prabhakaran Tanthri taught him hymns and Tantra. He learned Jyōtiṣam from Mūthedathu Kuñjupōṭṭy and Chennithala Nenthrapalḷil Rāmanāśān. From Kośseri Manakkal Rāman Nampūthiri, he learned Architecture and Mathematics. For studying Vedās, he became the disciple of Thōttuparambath Pathmanābhan Nampūthiri. The high scholarship in logic and vyākaraṇa was gained from the famous scholar and poet Eṇykāṭṭu Kottārathil Rājarājavarma . Thus Puruṣoṭhamaṇ Nampūthiri mastered various disciplines from different teachers to become an expert in all those fields.

Teaching and Disciples

Nampūthiri started teaching at an early age. A number of students studied under him. Astrology, Poetry, Drama and Alankāra were the favorite subjects handled by him. He taught Naiṣadham and Jyōtiṣam in an excellent way. He could teach the whole 22 cantos of Naiṣadha with out looking the commentaries. Thuravūr Vāsudeva Bhattathiri, Pandnad P R Gopala Warriar , Mannar K.S. Raghavakuruppu, Āttuvāśseri Nāṇu Jyotsyar, P.P.Nārāyaṇaṇ Nampūthiri, Takazi Rāma Warriar, Karakuḷam Kṛṣṇaṇ Potty, Kumāranallūr Cakrapāṇi Warriar, Puliyaṛ Śūlapāṇi Warriar, Kottara Gopālakkuruppu, Kaṇṇamangalam Koccurumuri Jyots-

yar, Peṅṅukkara Śaṅku Jyotsyar, Koccumuri Keśavan Jyotsyar, Kollam Kṛṣṇa Pilla Jyotsyar, Cempazanti Koccunārāyaṇan Jyotsyar, Toṭṭāśseri Govindan Nampūtiri, Tekkum bhāgam Bāhuleyan Jyotsyar, Tazavā. P.N. Gōpālan Jyotsyar, C.V. Parameśwara Bhaṭṭatiri, Vaṭakke Cennās, Kunnantānam Rāmakṛṣṇa Kuru- pu, Prof. Jacob Mathew Cemmarappiḷli, Svarṇattu Warriar, Payyannur Nambīśan, Śūranāṭ Kuñjan Pillai, Vāzamāveli Parameśwara Bhaṭṭatiri, Tazavā Vengatṭak- kal Śankaran Nampūtiri, Valiya Perimbuza Kumaru Jyotsyar etc.

Friendship

Puliur was an independent scholar, poet and critic. He was efficient in writing poetry and prose both in Malayalam and Sanskrit. He maintained warm friendship with many of the eminent scholars of that time. They include Ullur. S. Parameswara Iyer, Vallathol Narayana Menon, Kumaran Asan, Kerala Kalidasan, Kerala Panini, Pandalam, Vadakkumkur, Kundur, Nalappadan, Gramam, Kuttipuram, Kottaram, Karayamvattam, Punnassri, P.U. Krishna warrier, Kanippayyur Sankaran Namputirippad, C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, Agamananda swamikal, Karaku- lam M Krishnan potty, Amsi Narayana Pillai etc. He communicated with them through letters written in Malayalam and Sanskrit.

Society

Purushothaman Namputhiri always maintained good relationship with his clan and society members. He even wrote poetry on praising the companionship of the youth of his village . He worked in co-operation with the Yogakṣema sabha.

Public writings

His writings appeared in all the news papers and magazines like Āryakesari, Kavitaṅvilāsini, Bhāṣāpōṣiṇi, Bhāṣāśārada, Kavana Koumudi, Keralānandini, Su- janānandini, Sumangali, Vidyāvinōdini, Keraḷīyayjōtiṣamāsika, Malayāli, Ma- layāla Manorama, Malayāla Rājyam, Māthrubhūmi, Śāñcarācāryar, Ker- alābhimāni, Bhāgyōdayam etc.

Degrees and Honours

Considering the tremendous and great knowledge on Astrology and Sanskrit Jyōtiṣapariṣat awarded him a degree or title called 'Gaṇitavidwanmaṇi.' From Ayodhya Sanskrit kāryālaya got degrees like Sahityamaṇi and Jyotiṣapaṇḍitar. He worked as an examiner for a period of three years in the Mahopādhyāya exam of the Astrological division of Sanskrit college Trivandrum. He was also a member of a committee to select Astrological scholars in Trivandrum Sanskrit College along with P. R. Parameswara Panicker, V. R. Menavan and N. Gopala Pillai.

Astrological Contributions

He is considered as an important figure in Astronomy. He developed a lot of modern principles in the field. He translated a number of astrological works and also wrote number of commentaries. From 1910 onwards he took his effort to publish a faultless Pañcāṅga every year. He got an important place among the astrological scholars in the assembly held both in and outside Kerala. He always gives satisfactory and detailed reply to the questions raised by the Devaswam Commissioners office regarding the muhūrtham and so on. He was also an editorial member of Astrological monthlies published from Chengannur and Cherppu.

He observed the celestial movement at night and thereby he tried to understand the position of planets and stars. From 1925, he was able to use hour-glass which helped to understand minute variations in time. He published a commentary for Muhūrtapadavi in 1912 known as Sarvārdhabodhini. From 1913 he started Pañcāṅga gaṇita and successfully completed the Pañcāṅga-s up to 1960.

Literary Compositions

Puliur's contributions to literature is countless. He wrote commentary to numerous Sanskrit texts. He took much effort for the translation of Sanskrit Mahākāvya named Naiṣadhīyacarita. He wrote books on the request and compulsion of his friends. Some books are written in unexpected conditions. Poems, muktaka-s, Samasyāpūraṇa-s etc were included in his writings. He used to write letters to his friends. These letters too had high literary quality.

Character

Short temperedness is one of the remarkable characteristics of Puliur. He was such a daring personality and expressed his views openly to anyone. This characteristic trait owed him number of enemies in his personal life. He had got enough confidence in his abilities. Glimpses of personal life like diseases etc. can be seen in his writings. He mentions about the severe poverty and the pathetic condition of his family in his poem named - 'Ātmakadha'

"Sṛṣṭicca daivamaśanattinu pārilārkkum
mutṭikkayilla vaziveccu koṭukkumallō
ōlappazampura tulōm citaltinnu varṣa-
kālattu cōrnozuki bhitti polinjuvīṇu."

Death

From childhood onwards Puliur suffered from various diseases. He was tortured by diseases like Rheumatics, Piles, Cataract etc. We can find some references to his ill health from his writings . The life of this bright scholar came to an end on 21 November 1959.

More than fifty works are written by him. They are,

Literary compositions

Sanskrit poetry:

Āśvalāyanacaṅgu, Svakuṭumbacarita

Translations:

Naiṣadhiyacarita, Viśākhavijayamahākāvya,

Sangītakeṭucarita, Udayavarmacarita

Commentaries:

Amarakōśasarvasva(Ist kāṇṭha), Naḷōdaya

Malayalam poetry:

Jīvita rahasya or Daivavidhi, Bāṣpapūra, Vāmana, Ātmakatha

Anthology:

i. Kavanahārāvali: Mātṛsmṛti, Ekādaśībhajanasamgha, Kalyāṇāghoṣa (Bible), OruAnumodna, Candrōpāmbha, Pūntānam Nampūtiri, Mālati, Tengu, Premalekhana, Bhāṣāsaṅgītaketu carita, Udayavarmacarita, Vāmanan(Istpart), Nampūtirimāroṭu, Ānappiṇakka, Swajanavirodha, Atyāhita, Svātantrya, Cilatavacintakal, Svakuṭumbacarita, Vicāralahari, CintāTaranga, Virakti, Yāthāsthitika Manōgati

ii. Stōtrarātnāvali

Āṭṭakkatha and Thullalpāṭṭu :

Gaṇeśodbhava, Amśumatīswayamvara, Svāhāsudhākaraī

Novel and Drama:

Ammukkutty, Durāgraha

Religious works :

Śōṇādri kṣetra mātmya, Bhakti samvardhana Śataka, Devīprārdhana

Śāstric works :

Original work : Gaṇita nirṇaya

Commentaries:

Āryabhaṭīya, Bṛhatsamhita(Vārāhīsamhita), Bṛhatjātakapaddhati, Mādhavīya, Kṛṣṇīya, Śrīpatipadhati, Muhūrtapadavi, Strījātaka, Sārāvali, Pañcapakṣīsāstra, Praśnānuṣṭāna paddhati, Sūryasidhānta, Praśnādarśa, Jyotiṣasāra samgraha I&II, kālāmṛta

Other compositions -

Stray verses, Samasyāpūraṇa-s, Citrapraśna-s, Sāhitya ratna.

His important works are the translation of Śrī Harṣa-s Naiṣadhīyacarita, the commentary of Āryabhaṭa-s Āryabhaṭīya and his independent gaṇita work Gaṇitanirṇaya. Here is a brief description of his important works,

Bhāṣānaiṣadha

Naiṣadhīyacarita, written by Śrī Harṣa, is one of the pañcamahākāvya-s in Sanskrit. Śrī Harṣa set out to study and with the aid of the Cintāmaṇi mantra . The

extant work contains twenty-two cantos but tradition carries it further to the length of sixty or one hundred and twenty.

Though Naiṣadhīyacarita has got number of Sanskrit commentaries; Kaikulaṅgara Rāma Warriar wrote a commentary for this work. But none tried to translate this into Malayalam. Puliur wrote a complete translation of this work and named it as Bhāṣānaiṣadha, it is published in three parts. The poetic style of Puliur is simple and wonderful. Kuñjikkuttan Thampurān, Dr. Godavarma and other such scholars were tried in translations of Naiṣadhīyacarita, but unfortunately they pulled themselves from this difficult job. Puliur did this work, when he taught Naiṣadha to his students. He took three years for completing the 22 cantos of Naiṣadha. The first part holds the cantos up to 7. Cāntos 8 to 16 are included in the second part and the rest of them are in the third.

Śrī Harṣa himself know about the difficulty of Naiṣadhīyacarita. At the end of his work he say that,

"ग्रन्थग्रन्थिरिह क्वचित्क्वचिदपि न्यासि प्रयत्नान्मया
प्राज्ञमन्यमना हटेन पठिती मास्मिन्खलः खेलतु।
श्रद्धाराद्धगुरुश्लथीकृतदृढग्रन्थिः समासादय-
त्वेतत्काव्यरसेर्मिमज्जनसुखव्यासज्जनं सज्जनः ॥"

[Naiṣadhīyacarita, Canto-22, page-997]

Puliur translate it in the following way:

"grandhagrāndhiyakkīṭaykkīṭil mana:pūrvam varuttī; kaṭa-
nandhan paṇṭitanennuraccitu paḍiccerkkaḷicīṭolā
santoṣattoṭu sajjanam gurukaṭākṣattāl driḍagrāndhitan-
bandham viṭṭu rasōrmi tannil muzukisoukhyam labhikkum driḍam."

Puliur was appreciated by many scholars like Vadakkumkur Raja Rajavarma Raja, Ullur, Vallathol, E .V .Rāman Namputiri, Sahitya Panchanan, Naduvathachan Namputhiri, Narayana Pillai, etc. for his translation.

Translating Naiṣadham is not an easy task. The richness of ideas, vastness of the text, the style and vocabulary used in this Sanskrit Mahākāvya made the translation of Śrī Harṣa's Naiṣadhīya Carita very difficult. Puliur is the only Keralite who translated Naiṣadha completely into Malayalam. Presently ver

have the patience or possess the knowledge and experience to understand the ancient Mahākāvya-s. Such gifted and talented personalities are very rare in the present world.

Gaṇitanirṇaya

Gaṇitanirṇaya is an independent treatise in Jyotiṣa written by Puliur in Sanskrit. It is considered as the masterpiece composition of Puliur. Parahita pañcāṅga, Vākya pañcāṅga, Dṛgsidha pañcāṅga are the systems that existed in Kerala. Even though Ketakīgrahaṅgaṇita came into force, astronomers in Kerala followed the Parahita system except V.P.K.Pothuval, K.V.A.Ramapothuval in North and Puliur Purushothaman Namputhiri in South. They strongly stood for Ketakī system. Thus in 1938 Puliur Purushothaman Namputhiri published a book named 'Gaṇitanirṇaya' which was accepted by most of the scholars and astronomers of that time. Puliur Purushothaman Namputhiri alone used modern gaṇitam for constructing Pañcāṅgam. Puliur wrote this mathematical treatise, Gaṇitanirṇaya, under the advice and encouragement of Brahmaśrī Tripurānanda Bhārati.

The defects of parahitasiddhānta was first described by Parameśvarācārya, who lived in the 14th century, in his book 'Dṛggaṇita'. According to him position and movement of the celestial bodies should be learned based on 'dṛk' and timely changes should be made to it. But his theory was not accepted by many scholars. Ācāryas followed the parahitasiddhānta by knowing its limitations and defects. In 18th century the author of Praśnamārga supported Dṛkgaṇita and he wrote:

‘यदा यश्चैव सिद्धान्तो गणिते दृक्समो भवेत्।

तदा तेनैव मार्गेण जातकं गणयेत् सुधीः।।

Modern scientific advancement in science and technology helped to analyse the movement of planets more precisely and accurately. During this period Keplers theory got much popularity and acceptance. Astronomers sought the aid of modern machines for analyzing the celestial movements which they had done with naked eyes. They accepted the western calculations and thus a new chapter in Dṛkgaṇita evolved. The first person to test this in India is Vengadaketakar of

Bāgalkōtu. He wrote a minute Dr̥kgaṇita treatise named 'Ketakīgrahagaṇitam' in 1936. The speciality of this system is the mingling of newly founded system and Kerala gaṇita style.

Gaṇitanirṇaya contains ten chapters known as 'adhikāram' with Pañcabōdhapr̥kāśika commentary.

First stanza of Gaṇitanirṇaya is,

'गणेशगुरुभारतीद्ब्रुहिण भास्करश्रीपतीन्
वराहपरमेश्वरार्यभटलल्ल मुञ्जालकान् ।
प्रणम्य पितृमातृमातुलपितृव्यमातामहान्
गुहं गणितनिर्णयं लघु क्रोम्यहं संग्रहान् ॥

[Gaṇitanirṇaya, chapter-1, stanza-1]

Āryabhaṭīya-

Āryabhaṭīya was written by Āryabhaṭa. This mathematical treatise is divided into four pādā-s namely Gītikāpādā, Gaṇitapādā, Kālakriyāpādā and Gōḷapādā. Āryabhaṭīya deals with both mathematics and astronomy. It contains 121 stanzas .

Numerous commentaries were written in many languages like Sanskrit, Telugu, Malayalam, Marathi etc on this brilliant work. Many commentaries came in Sanskrit. Commentaries of Bhāskara-I, Prabhākara, Someśvara, Sūryadevayajvā, Parameśvara, Yallaya, Nīlakaṇṭha Sōmayāji, Raghunātha Rāja, Mādha-va, Bhūtivīṣṇu, Ghaṭīgopa and Kodaṇḍarāma in Sanskrit are remarkable. Puliur's commentary is regarded as a tremendous and excellent commentary ever published in Malayalam.

In order to compare and explain Āryabhaṭa-s theory, Puliur quotes examples from Sūryasidhānta, Karaṇapadhāti, Gaṇitasāram, Sphuṭanirṇyam, Laghubhāskarīyam, Līlāvathi etc. This is one of the works of Puliur which marked a breakthrough in his carrier. His deep knowledge of Astronomy can be seen in this endeavor. The commentary begins with commentator's margaḷācaraṇa along with the margaḷācaraṇa in the original text.

Original,

'प्रणिपत्यैकमनेकं
कं सत्यां देवतां परं ब्रह्म ।
आर्यभटस्त्रीणि गदति
गणितं कालक्रियां गोलम् ।* [Āryabhaṭīya, Gītikāpāda, stanza-1]

Commentator's Maṅgalācaraṇa,

'विविधप्रहगणगोलब्रह्माण्डाधारयष्टिरव्यग्रा
परदेवता सदा नःपायात् परमेश्वरी पराशक्तिः ।
प्रणिपत्य गुरुन् वार्णी गणनाथं गुहं प्रहान्
व्याख्यामार्यभटीयस्य कुर्वे सिद्धान्तदीपिकाम् ॥

Unpublished Works of Puliur

Ammukutty (Novel), commentary of Amarakōśasarvasva, commentary of Kālāmṛtam, Commentary of Naḷodayam, Svāhāsudhākaram (Tuḷalppāṭṭu), Durāgraham (Drama), Āśvalāyana cadangu (Sanskrit poetry)etc. are Puliur-s unpublished works.

Puliur mainly took much effort for translating and writing commentaries on the scientific and literary Sanskrit texts. He would have gained more popularity if he had written more independent compositions. He never expected any return from any of his works. While his contemporary writers became famous by writing and publishing independent works, Puliur spent his whole life for the understanding and spreading of the scientific knowledge that is found in the ancient Sanskrit texts. During that time people were not interested in scientific texts. They used to read literary books more than the scientific texts. Hence writers mainly focused on literary creations. But some writers like Puliur worked hard for make the scientific texts popular among the common man. Studies on Puliur and his works cannot be found. Puliur had led a lonely life. The poem Svajanavirodha expresses the dislike of his family members.

Unfortunately Puliur's writings did not have much popularity and acceptance in the society . Probably some characteristic traits of him the reason for that.

He openly and boldly expressed his ideas and opinions to everybody and was short tempered too. But these personal traits should not become a hurdle in the studying the works of this great scholar. Thus it is very necessary for the coming generations to bring out and acknowledge the efforts of great scholars like Puliur.

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