

Tikkana

Tikkana (or **Tikkana Somayaji**) (1205–1288) was born into a family of Shaivite family during the Golden Age of the **Kakatiya** dynasty. He was the second poet of the “Trinity of Poets (**Kavi Trayam**)” that translated **Mahabharatamu** into **Telugu** over a period of centuries. He is the first well known poet in the world. **Nannaya Bhattaraka** was the first, though he translated only two and a half chapters. Tikkana translated the final 15 chapters, but did not undertake translating the half-finished **Aranya Parvamu**. The **Telugu** people remained without this last translation for more than a century, until it was translated by **Errana**.

Tikkana is also called **Tikkana Somayaji**, as he has completed the **Somayaga**.

1 Religious conflict

Tikkana was born in **Nellore** during the **Shiva Kavi** period (see **Shivakavi Trayamu**, the **Trinity of Shaivite Poets**), when the new religions **Shaivism** and **Vaishnavism** were spreading in **Andhra**, resulting in conflict between these two groups as well as between the two established religious groups, **Buddhism** and **Jainism**. At this juncture, Tikkana attempted to bring peace between the warring **Shivaites** and **Vaishnavites**.

2 Political situation

Although most of the **Northern India** came under **Muslim** rule, the strong **Kakatiya**, **Chalukya** and **Chola** empires in the South prevented the **Muslim** onslaught. Emperor **Ganapatideva** (1199–1261) of **Kakatiya** dynasty brought all the **Telugu** kingdoms under his rule for the first time. Consequently, the clashes between smaller kingdoms came under control making way for the prosperity and development of art and literature.

Tikkana was the **Prime Minister** (hence the title **Tikkana-matya**) of **Manumasiddhi**, the king of **Nellore** and a descendant of **Kakatiya** dynasty. When **Manumasiddhi** was dethroned by his cousins, Tikkana visited **Orugallu** (the capital of **Kakatiya** dynasty and today's **Warangal**) to request the help of the **Ganapatideva**. The Emperor gave him a grand welcome in **Warangal** and restored **Nellore** throne to **Manumasiddhi**.

Tikkana dedicated his first literary work **Nirvachanottara Ramayanamu**, to **Ganapatideva**. In this work he narrated

the later part of **Ramayanamu**, the story of **Sita's** banishment to forests and the birth of **Lava** and **Kusa** to **Sita** in the forest. Later, Tikkana translated **Mahabharatamu** and dedicated it to **Hariharanadha**.

3 Writing style

The specialty of his style of writing is that it is mostly **Telugu**, unlike **Nannayya** whose work was mostly **sanskritized**. Tikkana used **Telugu** words even to express very difficult expressions and ideas. He used **Telugu** words and parables extensively. He is titled **Ubhayabashakavimitrudu**, as his poetic style pleases both **Sanskrit** and **Telugu** poets.

4 Examples

The flavor of **Telugu** national similes spice up his poetry, e.g., *madugu jeerayandu masi daakintlu-* as if pure white **cheera** (**sari**) is touched by soot, *paalalo badina balli vidhambuna-* like the lizard in the milk, *neyvosina yagni bhangi-* like the fire in which **neyyi** (**clarified butter**) was poured, *mantalo midutalu chochchinatlayina-* fate of locusts flew into the fire, *kantikin reppayu bole-* like the eyelid for the eye, *nooti kappa vidhambuna-* like a frog in the well, etc.

5 Philosophy

During the reign of Emperor **Ganapatideva**, **Shaivites**, **Vaishnavites**, **Jains** and **Buddhists** were fighting among themselves. The emperor arranged for religious meetings to control this religious intolerance. Tikkana participated in those religious meetings and defeated the **Buddhist** and **Jain** participants and established **Hinduism**. During this time he proposed the unity of God. He preached that **Lord Shiva** (**Hara**) and **Lord Vishnu** (**Hari**) were one and that the apparent differences in names were made up and were untrue. This philosophy is known as “**Hariharaadvaitamu** (the **Unity of Hari and Hara**)**Hariharanadhudu** called him **Thikka Sharma** please dedicate to me.” To firmly establish this principle, Tikkana translated **Mahabharatamu** into **Telugu**. This was a great contribution to the peace and unity of **Telugus**, who were fighting bloody religious wars among themselves.

6 Other works

Tikkana's other literary contributions include *Vijayase-namu*, *Kavivaagbandhamu*, *Krishnasatakamu*, etc. Though he was second to Nannayya in attempting to translate Mahabharatamu and second poet among the Trinity of Poets, he is second to none in his political, religious and literary accomplishments.

7 Legacy and depictions in popular culture

There is a library named after him in Guntur. It is maintained by a committee headed by Machiraju Sitapati and Kurakula Guraviah, an ex-corporator. In 2013 they celebrated 100 years of the library's functioning.^[1]

8 See also

- Kavitrayam
- Telugu literature

9 References

- [1] <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Vijayawada/a-monument-preserving-legacy-of-tikkana/article5721999.ece>

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