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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

WE are delighted to present the Vol.5- Issue 6 of *Chronicle of Humanities & Cultural Studies* (CHCS) with valuable contributions from reknowned scholars of India. The journal is run by 'Centre for Humanities & Cultural Studies', Kalyan. It is a brilliant off shoot of the Mahatma Gandhi Education & Welfare Society, Narwadi, Dist. Parbhani. It has been established with the mission to contribute to the education and welfare of the society to empower individuals for the better future.

We are confident that the issue will be useful for readers, critics and researchers. We are grateful to all our contributors for their responses.

We gratefully acknowledge the guidance and help received from various persons during the completion of this issue. We thank all the members of our advisory board and editorial board.

CHCS is a refereed journal, published bi monthly (Six issues in a year). In order to make *CHCS* self-sustaining, we need your support and patronage. As our well-wisher/friend/patron we urge you to enroll new members for the journal. In turn, we assure you that we will not compromise on quality in matters of content and production

Our next Issue will be published in January 2020. We hope you can make it successful with your valuable contributions.

We hope you enjoy this month's reading and as ever, if you have any questions or comments, please contact us at: chcskalyan@gmail.com .

- Dr. Kalyan Gangarde



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AN APPRAISAL OF RAJA RAO'S *KANTAPURA*

S. N Kadam

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Kanthapura (1938) is first novel of Raja Rao. It is the story of how Gandhi's struggle for independence from the British came to a typical village Kanthapura in Southern India. The dramatic and vivid tale told by the old woman Rangamma evokes the spirit of India's traditional folk-epics and puranas. The Indo-Anglian novel reflects more or less the same patterns of growth as the novel in the regional languages. With the advent of the Gandhian Movement, along with the political consciousness, the creative sensibility stood classified under the impact of ideas and events of contemporary history, the novelists turned their attention from representational art to symbolism, from the usable part to the contemporary reality and the complex destiny of Indian

The novel is of a 'sthalapurana' by an old woman of the village, Achakka. Kanthapura is a traditional caste ridden Indian village which is away from all modern ways of living. Dominant castes like Brahmins are privileged narrate in the form to get the best region of the village whereas Sudras, Pariahs are marginalized. The village is believed to have protected by a local deity called Kenchamma. Though cattiest, the village has got a long nourished traditions of festivals in which all castes interact and the villagers are united.

The main character of the novel Moorthy is a Brahmin who discovered a half buried 'linga' from the village and installed it. A temple is built there, which later became the centre point of the village life. All ceremonies and festivals are celebrated within the temple premises.

Hari-Kathas, a traditional form of storytelling, was practiced in the village. Hari-Kathas are stories of Hari(God). One Hari-Katha man, Jayaramachar, narrated a Hari Katha based on Gandhi and his ideals. The narrator was arrested because of the political propaganda instilled in the story.

The novel begins its course of action when Moorthy leaves for the city where he got familiar with Gandhian philosophy through pamphlets and other literatures. He followed Gandhi in letter and spirit. He wore home spun khaddar. Discarded foreign clothes and fought against untouchability. This turned the village priest, a Brahmin, against him who complained to the swami who was a supporter of foreign government and Moorthy was ex-communicated. Heartbroken to hear it, his mother Narasamma passed away.

Bade Khan was a police officer, a non Hindu of Kanthapura. He was brought and supported by the coffee

planters who were Englishmen. Considered as an outsider, Bade Khan is an enemy of the people who refuses to provide shelter to him.

After the death of his mother, Moorthy started living with an educated widow Rangamma, who took part in India's struggle for freedom. Moorthy was invited by Brahmin clerks at Skeffington coffee estate to create an awareness among the coolies of the estate. When Moorthy turned up, Bade Khan hit him and the pariah coolies stood with Moorthy. Though he succeeded in following Gandhian non violence principle, the incident made him sad and unhappy.

Rachanna and family were thrown out of the estate because of their role in beating Bade Khan. Meanwhile, Moorthy continued his fight against injustice and social inequality and became a staunchest ally of Gandhi. Taking the responsibility of the violent actions happened at the estate; Moorthy went on a three day long fasting and came out victorious and morally elated. Following the footsteps of Gandhi, a unit of the congress committee was formed in Kanthapura. Gowada, Rangamma, Rachanna and seenu were elected as the office bearers of the committee and they avowed to follow Gandhi's teachings.

Fearing the greater mobility of people of Kanthapura under the leadership of Moorthy, the foreign government accused him of provoking people to inflict violence it and arrested him. Though Rangamma and Rachanna were willing to release him on bail, he refused. He was punished for three months rigorous imprisonment.

While Moorthy spent his days in prison, the women of Kanthapura took charge of the struggle for freedom. They formed Women's Volunteer Corps under the leadership of Rangamma who instilled patriotism among the women by presenting the historical figures like Laxmi Bai of thansi, rajput princess, Sarojini Naidu etc... Moorthy was released later and he came out as strong as he was. People thronged at his house were dispersed peacefully.

Dandi March, Picketing of Boranna's toddy grove were other activities led by Moorthy after his release. Arrest of the satyaghis, and police brutality to women became a part of the everyday life of the people in Kanthapura. Atrocities against women added miseries of the people. In the last part of the novel, it is mentioned that people of the village were settled in Kashipur and Kanthapura was occupied by people from Bombay.

Rather than being a traditional novel with a neat linear structure and compact plot, *Kanthapura* follows the

oral tradition of Indian sthala-purana, or legendary history. As Raja Rao explains in his original foreword, there is no village in India, however mean, that has not a rich legendary history of its own, in which some famous figure of myth or history has made an appearance. In this way, the storyteller, who commemorates the past, keeps a native audience in touch with its lore and thereby allows the past to mingle with the present, the gods and heroes with ordinary mortals.

The story is narrated in flashback by Achakka, a wise woman in the village. She, like her female audience (whom she addresses as "sisters"), has survived the turbulence of social and political change which was induced by Mohandas K. Gandhi's passive resistance against the British government. Achakka provides a detailed picture of the rural setting, establishing both an ambiance and a rhythm for the novel. It is clear that her speech and idiomatic expression are meant to express a distinctively feminine viewpoint an extraordinary achievement for a male Indo-English novelist. Achakka quickly creates a faithful image of an Indian way of life, circumscribed by tradition and indebted to its deities, of whom Kenchamma, the great and bounteous goddess, is made the village protectress. She is invoked in every chapter, for the characters never forget that her power resides in her past action. It is she who humanizes the villagers, and their chants and prayers ring out from time to time.

The narrator establishes the parameters of the story within old and new legends. While Kenchamma and Siva are remembered for their marvelous feats and interventions in human affairs, analogies are sometimes drawn with contemporary figures such as Gandhi who serve to turn fact and history into folklore, and who provide the motive for political struggle. At the beginning, while there are simply rumors of Gandhi's activities, the villagers follow their customary routines. Then, Moorthy, a young, dedicated Brahmin, inspired by Gandhi, returns to Kanthapura to propagandize the cause of the Indian National...

The story shows the birth of new ideas in old India. The arguments against change which in the Gandhian sense is a change of soul and not simply of caste or social function are made forcefully by reactionaries who point to the disorder, corruption, and arrogance of pre-British rule. As the old government man puts it, the British have come to protect dharma, or duty. Playing upon raw fear in the populace, the antinationalists argue that reform will mean the eventual corruption of castes and of the great ancestral traditions.

Although this novel does not have the profound philosophical nature of *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), Rao's most massive novel, its thrust is certainly didactic in that it glorifies the idea of revolt. It is surprising, indeed, that the author was not incarcerated for his views.

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