



THE
BEE
IN THE LOTUS FLOWER

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This talk was originally delivered as a ‘Type in 20’ session at TypeCon, Denver CO, in August 2015. During that presentation, the English translations of the four Indian texts were read by Jeff Kellem, Marian Bantjes, Kent Lew, and Diane Collier, to whom I am very grateful. Those translations were edited for performance purposes; the versions given here are as they appear in the Murty Library editions.

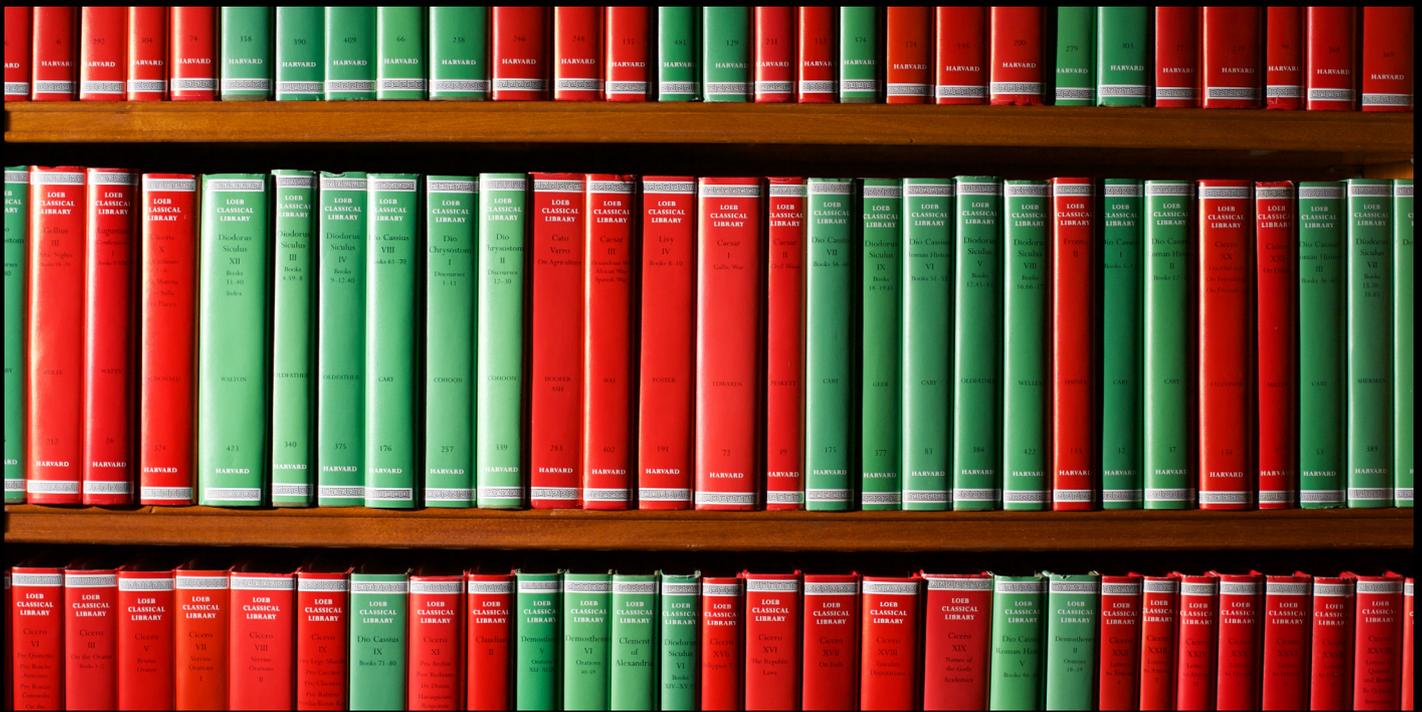
Photographs of Loeb and Murty Library volumes are used with permission of Harvard University Press. The Linotype Devanagari drawings shown on page 7 are in the collection of the Department of Typography at the University of Reading, UK.

रात्रिर्गमिष्यति भविष्यति सुप्रभातम्
भास्वानुदेष्यति हसिष्यति पद्मजालम् ।
इत्थं विचिन्तयति कोशगते द्विरेफे
हा हन्त हन्त नलिनीं गज उज्जहार ॥

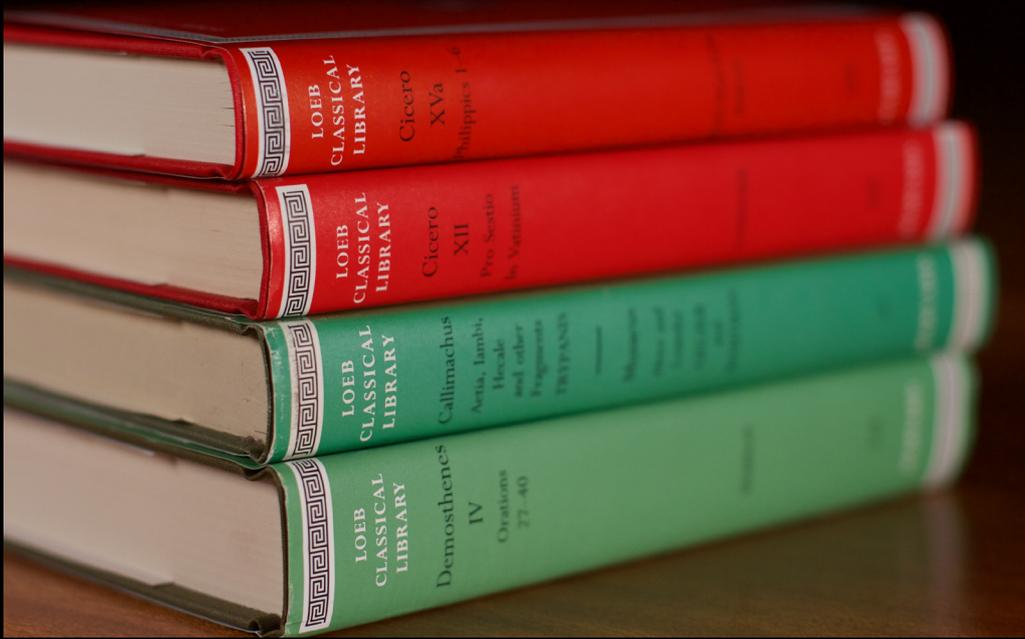
*rātrirgamiṣyati bhaviṣyati suprabhātam
bhāsvānudeṣyati hasiṣyati padmajālam.
itthaṃ vicintayati kośagate dvirephe
hā hanta hanta nalinīm gaja ujjahāra.*

We will come back to this, because it is not the beginning of the story.

The story, in fact, has many beginnings, some of them three millennia old, when the first Hindu and Buddhist religious texts were written down. We pick one beginning and proceed, but we also return, and begin again from another place, following these narratives as they come together — as Bhāgīrathī and Alaknanda, Māndakini and Dhauliganga come together as Ganges —, because that's the sort of story this is.



The story begins in one place a little more than a hundred years ago. If you studied what is called 'Classics' at school or university, the colour-coded books of the Loeb Classical Library will be immediately familiar to you: green for Greek and red for Latin. Generations of students have first encountered Homer's Iliad and Caesar's account of the Gallic wars in these tidy bilingual editions. William Heinemann published the first volumes in 1912, and since 1989 Harvard University Press has produced them at a rate of four or five per year.



Loeb Classical Library:
founded and endowed by
the German-born American
banker James Loeb c.1912

Each book consists of the edited Greek or Latin text with a facing English translation, and the format of the Loeb Library has inspired that of several similar series: the I Tatti library of renaissance literature and the Dumbarton Oaks series of mediaeval texts — also published by Harvard University Press —, and NYU Press' recent and excellent classical Arabic library.

‘... if Indian education and scholarship continue along their current trajectory, the number of citizens capable of reading and understanding the texts and documents of the classical era ... will very soon approach a statistical zero.’

Sheldon Pollock
Crisis in the Classics

IN OCTOBER 2004, AFTER AN ELECTORAL SWEEP IN THE SPRING parliamentary elections brought it unaccustomed influence over the ruling coalition in Delhi, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the Dravidianist party of the state of Tamil Nadu, demanded that the United Progressive Alliance declare Tamil a classical language—which it did, apparently the first such declaration by a national government in recorded history. Sanskrit was soon granted classical status, without external pressure, but the floodgates were now open to other language activists to seek classical status, and they proceeded with passion to petition the central government on behalf of Kannada (2006), Telugu (2007), and Malayalam (2009).¹ This is not the classical language debate India should be having, however: there is something other than status to worry about—and to worry about deeply.

At the time of independence in 1947, India was home to scholars whose historical and philological expertise made them the peer of any in the world. They were the heirs of the longest continuous multicultural literary tradition in the world, and produced editions and literary and historical studies of texts in Apabhramsha, Assamese, Bangla, Braj/hausa, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Persian, Prakrit, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu—the list could go on because the list of Indian languages goes on—that are still used today. Two generations later their works have not been replaced not because they are

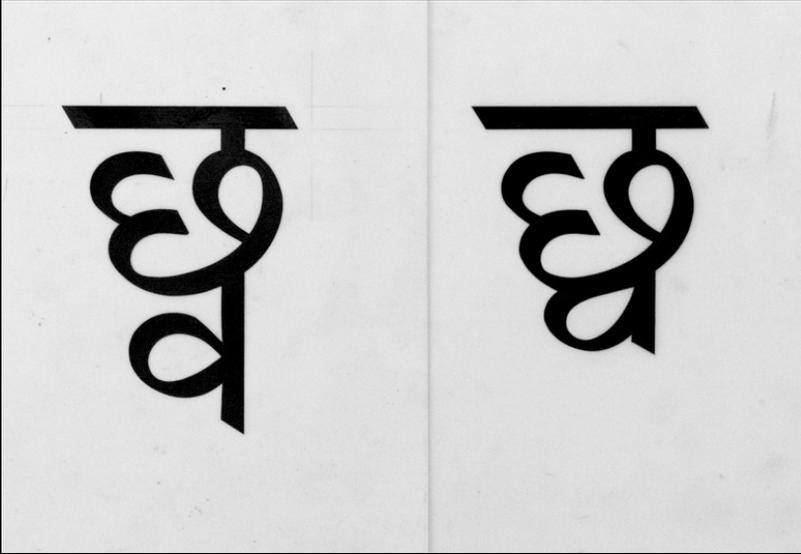
I would like to thank Robert Goldman and Pratap Bhanu Mehta for criticisms and suggestions, as well as audiences at the Indian Academy of Sciences in Bangalore, the University of Texas at Austin, the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, the University of Calicut, and St. Stephen's College in Delhi, where I presented earlier versions of this essay.

The story also begins more recently, with concerns expressed in — among other places — an urgent essay entitled ‘Crisis in the Classics’ [↗](#) by the Sanskrit scholar Sheldon Pollock, published in the New School journal *Social Research*, in 2011. Pollock’s essay is both a trenchant analysis of what constitutes the pre-modern literary heritage of India and its importance, and a call for action in response to a possible crisis now facing that heritage: the risk that

India is about to become the only major world culture whose literary patrimony, and indeed history, are in the custodianship of scholars outside the country: in Berkeley, Chicago, and New York; Oxford, Paris, and Vienna. This would not be healthy either for India or for the rest of the world that cares about India.



And the story begins in earnest with one response to such concerns, which is the Murty Classical Library of India, made possible through an endowment from Dr Rohan Murty to Harvard University Press to publish, in bilingual editions, the pre-modern texts of the Indian subcontinent: Hindu epics, Mughal histories, Buddhist dialogues, Sufi lyrics, and all the rest. The model of this series is, once again, the venerable Loeb Classical Library, but the scope of the project in terms of the breadth of historical periods — more than three thousand years — and the number of cultures, languages and writing systems involved is vastly greater.



Linotype Devanagari *chva* conjunct drawings:
l. c.1975 design for film setting, Matthew Carter;
r. c.1983 revised modernised form for digital
setting, Linotype UK letter-drawing studio,
overseen by Fiona Ross.

Lastly, for my purposes, the story begins — as I am sure many good stories do — with Matthew Carter in his back garden in Cambridge, Massachusetts. On this day a few years ago, he is chatting over the fence with his neighbour, who happens to be editor-in-chief at Harvard University Press, and she tells him that they have recently undertaken to publish a new series of books, and asks him if he knows anything about typography for Indian languages. And Matthew immediately replies, ‘You need to talk to Fiona Ross’.

क

देवे ना तोमाय, जेनो इतिहास बड़ई कृपण;
कत लाङ्गना, खाटुनि गिसेछे लेखकेर हाते
या अनुरागी चित्त की, गति समुझै नहिं कोइ ।
ज्यों-ज्यों बूढ़ै स्याम रंग, त्यों-त्यों उज्जलु होइ ॥

क

ਸੁੰਏ ਬਨ ਵਿਚ ਲੁੱਟੀ ਸਾਈਆਂ, ਸੂਰ ਪਲੰਗ ਨੇ ਘੇਰੀ ।
ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਠੰਗ ਜਗਤ ਦੇ, ਜਿਹਾ ਲਾਵਣ ਜਾਲ ਚਫੇਰੀ ।

क

ధిల్లఁ గిరీఠీఁ బాశుపతదివ్యశరాఢ్యునిఁ జేయు
బోలఁ బయోజపీఠి మునిముఖ్యులు గొల్వఁగ
கடுங்கதிரர் திருகலின் நடுங்களுர்
எய்தி ஆறுசெல் வருத்தத்துச்

क

क

So, we have a story. It has its beginnings, and now it has a middle, which is the part that I am showing today: the new Indic typefaces that Fiona and I have made for the Murty Library, and the first five books, which were launched in Delhi, Jaipur, London, and Washington earlier this year.

To date, we have created types in five Indian scripts: Bengali, Devanagari, Gurmukhi, and Telugu, which Fiona and I designed together, and a Tamil type designed by Fernando Mello. I am currently working on Sanskrit and Marathi language extensions to the Devanagari, and a new font for the Kannada script. The types are designed to balance with Henrik Kubel's Antwerp, which is used for the English translations, introductory matter, and notes. As the first volume in each language is published, the corresponding font is made available under a no-fee license for non-commercial use.

BULLHE SHAH
ਬੁੱਲ੍ਹੇ ਸ਼ਾਹ
SUFİ LYRICS

Edited and Translated by Christopher Shackle



MURTY CLASSICAL LIBRARY
OF INDIA

LYRICS

ਤੂੰ ਮੁੱਢ ਬਹੁਤ ਕੁਚੱਜੀ ਸੈਂ, ਨਿਰਲੱਜਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਨਿਰਲੱਜੀ ਸੈਂ
ਤੂੰ ਖਾ ਖਾ ਖਾਣੇ ਰੱਜੀ ਸੈਂ, ਹੁਣ ਤਾਈਂ ਤੇਰਾ ਬਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ

ਅਜ ਕਲ ਤੇਰਾ ਮੁਕਲਾਵਾ ਏ, ਕਿਉਂ ਸੁੱਤੀ ਕਰ ਕਰ ਦਾਅਵਾ ਏ
ਅਟਕਿਠਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਾਵਾ ਏ, ਇਹ ਭਲਕੇ ਗਰਮ ਬਚਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ

ਤੂੰ ਏਸ ਜਹਾਨੋਂ ਜਾਏਗੀ, ਫਿਰ ਕਦਮ ਨਾ ਏਥੇ ਪਾਏਗੀ
ਇਹ ਜੋਬਨ ਰੂਪ ਵੰਜਾਏਗੀ, ਤੈਂ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ

ਮੰਚਲ ਤੇਰੀ ਦੂਰ ਦੁਰਾਗੀ, ਤੂੰ ਭੋਟੈਂ ਵਿਚ ਜੰਗਲ ਵਾਲੀ
ਔਖਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਪੈਰ ਪਿਆਦੀ, ਦਿਸਦੀ ਤੂੰ ਅਸਵਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ

੧੦ ਇੱਕ ਇਕੱਲੀ ਤਨਹਾ ਜੁਲਸੋਂ, ਜੰਗਲ ਬਰਬਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਲਸੋਂ
ਲੈ ਲੈ ਤੋਸ਼ਾ ਏਥੋਂ ਖੁਲਸੋਂ, ਉਥੇ ਲੈਣ ਉਧਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ

ਉਹ ਖਾਲੀ ਏ ਸੁੱਜ ਹਵੇਲੀ, ਤੂੰ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਸੋਂ ਇਕ ਇਕੱਲੀ
ਓਥੇ ਹੋਸੀ ਹੋਰ ਨਾ ਬੋਲੀ, ਸਾਥ ਕਿਸੇ ਦਾ ਬਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ

ਜਿਹੜੇ ਸਨ ਦੋਸਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਜੇ, ਨਾਲ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਜਦੇ ਵਾਜੇ
ਹੋ ਕੇ ਗਏ ਖੇ-ਤਮਤੇ ਤਾਜੇ, ਕੋਈ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਇਤਬਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ

ਕਿੱਥੇ ਹੈ ਸੁਲਤਾਨ ਸਿਕੰਦਰ, ਮੌਤ ਨਾ ਛੱਡੇ ਪੀਰ ਪੈਗੰਬਰ
ਸੱਭ ਛੱਡ ਗਏ ਅਡੰਬਰ, ਕੋਈ ਏਥੇ ਪਾਇਦਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ

ਕਿੱਥੇ ਯੂਸਫ ਮਾਹ ਕਿਨਆਨੀ, ਲਈ ਜਲੈਖਾਂ ਫੋਰ ਜਵਾਨੀ
ਕੀਤੀ ਮੌਤ ਨੇ ਓੜਕ ਫ਼ਾਨੀ, ਫੋਰ ਉਹ ਹਾਰ ਜ਼ਿੰਗਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ

LYRICS

From the start you were completely undomesticated, you were the most shameless of the shameless. You kept eating and filling yourself with food, and still you have no sense.³

Soon it will be time for you to be taken away.⁴ Why are you asleep and full of pretense? You must meet strangers you have never seen. This bustling market will not be here in the morning.

You will depart from this world, and will not set foot here again. You will lose your youth and beauty. You are not going to remain in the world.

Your destination lies far away. You must wander through jungles and deserts. It will be difficult to get there on foot, and you do not look like a rider.

You will be on your own, and will travel completely alone. You will wander lost in jungles and deserts. You will leave here with your own supplies. You will not be able to borrow anything there.

That desolate mansion is empty, and you will live there all by yourself. There will be no one to be your friend.

There will be no one to rely upon for company. Those who were kings of countries, and who had bands playing for them, have departed without their thrones and crowns. There is no trusting in this world.

Where is the emperor Sikandar?⁵ Death has not spared saints or prophets. All have left their pomp and show behind. No one is here permanently.

Where is Yusuf,⁶ the moon of Canaan? Zulaikha⁷ has taken her youthful beauty away with her. In the end, death made her perish. Her finery will not be restored.

The Sufi lyrics of Bullhe Shah were written in Punjabi in the 18th Century. The poems exist in manuscript in at least three different scripts, but are published in the Murty edition in Gurmukhi, the most common means of writing Punjabi in modern India. Bullhe Shah's lyrics are an exuberant expression of mystical love, frequently expressed — like the Biblical *Song of Solomon* — in terms of romantic longing. The context is that of Islam, but also with reference to Hindu mythology.

ਅੱਸੂ ਲਿਖੂੰ ਸੰਦੇਸਵਾ, ਮਤ ਵਾਚੇ ਮੋਰਾ ਪੀ
ਗਮਨ ਕੀਆ ਤੁਮ ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ, ਜੋ ਕਲਮਲ ਆਇਆ ਜੀ
ਅੱਸੂ ਅਸਾਂ ਤੁਸਾਡੀ ਆਸ, ਸਾਡੀ ਜਿੰਦ ਤੁਸਾਡੇ ਪਾਸ
ਜਿਗਰੇ ਮੁੱਢ ਪਰੇਮ ਦੀ ਲਾਸ, ਦੱਖਾਂ ਹੱਡ ਸੁਕਾਏ ਮਾਸ
ਸੂਲਾਂ ਸਾੜੀਂ ਆਂ
ਸੂਲਾਂ ਸਾੜੀ ਰਹੀ ਬੇਹਾਲ, ਮੁੱਠੀ ਤਦੋਂ ਨਾ ਗਈਆਂ ਨਾਲ
ਉਲਟੀ ਪਰੇਮ ਨਗਰ ਦੀ ਚਾਲ, ਬੁੱਲ੍ਹਾ ਸ਼ਹੁ ਦੀ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਭਾਲ
ਪਿਆਰੇ ਮਾਰੀ ਆਂ

In Assu I will write a message; perhaps my beloved will read it. Why did you set out when I was restless to see you?

In Assu my hope is in you, and my heart is in your keeping. The core of my heart bears the marks of love. From the beginning it has been scarred by love. My sufferings have consumed my flesh and bones. I am destroyed by pains.

Destroyed by pains, I am beside myself. I was ruined when I did not go with you. The ways of the city of love are perverse. Bullha, I will search for the lord. I am slain by the beloved.

[Translated by Christopher Shackle.]

THERIGATHA
POEMS OF THE
FIRST BUDDHIST WOMEN

Translated by Charles Hallisey



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pañcakanipāto

aññatarā

- 67 paṇḍavīṣatīvassāni yato pabbajitā ahaṃ
nāccharāsaṅghātamattam pi cittassūpasamajjhagam.
- 68 aladdhā cetaso santinā kāmāraḅavassutā
bāhā paggayha kandantī vihāraṃ pāvīsinā ahaṃ.
- 69 sā bhikkhunīṃ upāgacchīṃ yā me saddhāyikā ahu
sā me dhammam adesesi khandhāyatanaadhātuyo.¹
- 70 tassā dhammaṃ supitvāna ekamante upāvīsinā
pubbenivāsaṃ jānāmi dibbacakkhu visodhitam.
- 71 ceto pariccañāṇā ca sotadhātu visodhitā
iddhi pi me sacchikatā patto me āsavakkhayo
chalabbhīṇā sacchikatā kataṃ buddhassa sāsanam ti.²

48

POEMS WITH FIVE VERSES

The verses of a certain nun

- It's¹ been twenty-five years since I renounced
but not for a moment, not even a finger's snap,
did I experience stilling of my mind. 67
- With no peace in my heart, dripping with sexual desire,
I entered the monastery, wailing, my arms outstretched. 68
- I approached the nun,
she seemed like someone I could trust. 69
She taught me the dhamma
about what makes a person
about the senses and their objects
and about the basic elements that make up everything.²
- Hearing the dhamma from her, I came to her side, 70
I know my previous lives,
and the eye that can see the invisible is clear.
- I know the ways of my heart, now I hear clearly. 71
Powers beyond normal are known at first hand,
the depravities that ooze out from within are wasted away,
the six powers³ attained, the teaching of the Buddha
is done.

49

The Therigata is an extraordinary collection of writings by early Buddhist nuns, composed in the Pali language about 2,600 years ago. This volume of the Murty Library is unusual in that the text is published in a romanised transliteration, rather than in an original Indian script. The reason for this is twofold: the Pali language is not associated with any single script, but was written in a variety of Indian and Southeast Asian writing systems; today, there are no native readers of Pali. Support for transliteration of Pali — and of personal names and terminology from other languages — required extending the diacritic support in a custom version of the Antwerp roman and italic fonts.

The poems of *The Therigata* are among the oldest extant writings by women, and are often in the form of dialogue between those at different stages of the path to enlightenment. In contrast to the exuberance of Bullhe Shah's Sufi mysticism, the message here is of transformative asceticism.

sāhaṃ etādisaṃ katvā vyaśanaṃ kāmahetukaṃ
na taṃ paccāgamiśāmi nibbānābhiraṭā sadā.

raṇaṃ karitvā kāmaṇaṃ sītibhāvābhikaṅkhiṇī
appamaṭṭā vihaśāmi teśaṃ saṃyojanaḅkhaṃye.

aśokaṃ virajaṃ kHEMAṃ ariyaṅ caṭṭhaṅgikaṃ uḅuṃ
taṃ maggaṃ aṇugacchāmi yena tiṇṇā maheśino.

*On account of the urges of the senses,
I have ruined so much.
I will not go back to that again,
now I always take my delight in nibbana.*

*Longing to become cool,
I did battle with the urges of the senses.
I will live diligent
while the shackles of those urges pass away.*

*I will go on that path
by which great sages have reached nibbana.
It is griefless, faultless, full of peace, straight,
the noble eightfold path.*

[Translated by Charles Hallisey.]

ALLASANI PEDDANA
అల్లసాని పెద్దన
THE STORY OF MANU

Translated by
Velebati Narayana Rao and David Shulman



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క బ్రాహ్మణుఁ డింద్రియవశగతి
జిహ్వచరణైక నిష్ఠణ చిత్తజనిశితా
జిహ్వగముల పొల్లి చెడు
బ్రహ్మనందాధీరాజ్య పదవీమ్యతుఁడై.

ప అనిన సత్రైజవ యక్కఱకరి పలుకుల కులికి గఱిగఱిం
గఱవఁ గరికరిం జెఱకువిలకాఁడు పరఁగించు విరిదమ్మి
గెరకలు నెఱకులఁ జఱకుకుచఱకుకునఁ గఱఁడినఁ
గఁడుం గెరలి పరిణత వివిధ విమధతరుజనిత
మధురమధురనం బానుమదంబు నదఱునం
జిడిమిన నెఱుంగక మదనపారునైసఁ జదురునం
గదియ గమకించు తిమురునం గెమరెత్తాయంపు
మదంబునను ననన్యకన్యాసాహస్య
లావణ్యశ్రీభామదంబునను నొంటిపాటునం గంఠికిం
త్రియంఁడై తంగేటిజాంటిపందంబునం గెండుఁడనం
జెఱుంగకకుఱుంగఁడున్న యమ్మన్వీనురవరకుమారు
తారుణ్యవృక్షంబులం జేసే తన వైదగ్యంబు
మెఱయఁ గలిగె నని పల్లవింబు సుల్లంబు
సుల్లానంబునం గదురు మదంబున నొనరించక
చంచలదగ్గంచలప్రథ లతని ముఖాంబుజంబునం
బొలయ వలయమణిగణచ్చాయాకలాపంబు లుప్పరం
బెగయఁ గొప్ప వక్కంజెక్కుయ జక్కవగిప్పులుం
బోని గమ్మిగుప్పులుం బొమ్మిట్లు కుంకుమరసంబునం
బంకిలంబులగు హారముతాతారంబుల నఖ
కేరకంబులం గీటి తీరువడం జేయుచుఁ బతిత
వనతదుకుసుమకేరంబులు రాల్చు నెపంబునం

A Brahman lost in his senses is prey to the sharp arrows
of the love god, who is skilled at leading one astray.
Such a man will be ruined, falling from the path
that leads to the kingdom of pure joy."

When he said that, the woman was shaken by his cruel words.
The love god was shooting an unbroken stream of arrows
that cut into her tendermost places. She was enraged. She
was so drunk on the honey of those heavenly trees that
even if you pinched her, she wouldn't notice. She was proud
enough to face even the killer of desire himself in hand-to-
hand combat, and she had the full pride of youth and incom-
parable beauty, unknown among women. She'd found an
innocent, handsome young man, as easy to take in as the
honey of the *taigedu* flower, and because of him she could
show off all her graces. Her mind was dancing with joy. She
was completely confident, unhesitating. She cast flashes
from the corners of her tremulous eyes straight on to his
face. She raised her hands high, so that the light from her
bangles lit up the sky as she straightened her hair. With her
fingernails she scraped off spots of saffron that dotted the
necklace of pearls on her breasts, big and round as *akravāka*
birds. As if to shake off filaments of flowers fallen from the
trees in the forest, she slipped the end of her sari off her
breasts. She was looking sternly in every direction in order to

The Story of Manu by the 16th Century poet Allasāni Péddana is the epic masterpiece of Telugu literature, so it is all the more extraordinary that the Murty edition is the first translation of this text into any other language. The poem tells of Svarochisha Manu, the ruler of the previous cosmic age and, hence, a kind of prototype of the heroic human. It also a treatise on kingship, reflecting the reign of the poet's patron, Krishnadevaraya, ruler of the last of the great pre-modern Indian states.

సరభస జయధాటీ చండవేదండకోటీ
కరవమధు హిమానీ కంపితాశావధూటీ
పరమహిత హసంతీభావభాగ్నూరితేజః
పరుష దహనకీలా ప్రస్ఫురచ్ఛక్రవాళా

*The elephants you captured on the battlefield
are spraying such heavy mist from their trunks
that space itself would be shivering
but for the flames of your valor that warms
the whole world, like a burning brazier, all the way
up to the towering mountains at the edge of the earth.*

[Translated by Velcheru Narayana Rao and David Shulman.]

SURDAS
सूरदास
SUR'S OCEAN
POEMS FROM THE
EARLY TRADITION

Edited by Kenneth E. Bryant
Translated by John Stratton Hawley



MURTY CLASSICAL LIBRARY
OF INDIA

SUR'S OCEAN

२६८
माई^१

यह मधुपनि की रीति, माई...
नीरस जानि तजत पिन भीतरि
नवल कुसम रस भीति, माई...
जिन के संगि होइ^२ कैतव चित
बच्यौ आवै परतीति, माई...
हमहि छाडि बिरमे कुबिजा सौं
आए^३ न रिपु^४ हू जौति, माई...
जिनि पतियाहु मधुर सुनि बातें
लागे^५ करण समीति, माई...
सूरदास स्वाम^६ संग ऐसौ^७
ज्यौ भुस पर की भीति, माई...

२६९

जिनि चालौ अलि बात पराइ
कोउ^१ न कहे सुनत समुझत कोउ
या^२ ब्रज की रति जाति हराइ
जानै समाचार सुष^३ पायो
मिलि कुल की आरति बिसराइ
भलै संग बसि^४ भई भली मति
भलै ठौर पहिचानि कराइ

454

THE BEE MESSENGER

268

This is simply the way bees behave:
when they know there's no nectar, their love for nectar
sends them in an instant to some new flower.
Why then believe what is said by someone
who consorts with cheating hearts like these?
He's left us behind and bedded with that hunchback—
conquered the enemy, yes, but failed to return.
So don't pay heed when you hear sweet words
that are uttered merely to please. 5
Surdas says, With the Dark One, you're dealing
with walls being built on straw.

269

Honeybee, don't urge on us something alien.
Now that the Passion of Braj has been stolen,
no one here can talk or hear or think.
We know the news, and we're happy to learn
that his family's anguish is forgotten.
It's good he has good company, good his mind's improved,
good he's introduced to the best society,

455

It is impossible to summarise the breadth of the devotional songs that make up *Sur's Ocean*, the fifth of the initial volumes of the Murty Library. Some 8,000 extant poems are ascribed to the blind poet Surdas, of which the Murty edition presents 433 that are known to date from his lifetime in the late 1500s. They represent the epitome of early Hindi religious poetry, refashioning familiar Hindu narratives in ways that merge the mythic with the personal.

सुपने हू तौ दषिये जौ
नैननि नीद परै
बिरहिनी ब्रजनाथ बिनु कहि
का उपाव कौ
चंद मंद समीर निसि दिन
सेज सदन जरै

कहौ क्यों हू भांति मेरौ
मनु न धीर धरै
करत जतन अनेक तिन ते
कछुक चाड सरै
सूर सीतल कृष्ण बिनु कहि
कौन दाघ हरै

*In dreams she would see him, that lonely woman,
if she could sleep to dream,
but what can she do to make that happen
now that the Lord of Braj has gone?
Moonlight and gentle breezes night and day
in flame her couch, her home,
until she asks, "Is there no way out,
no way to let my heart endure?"
So many times she's tried and tried,
but somehow nothing sets her free.
Tell me, says Sur, besides Krishna's cooling balm
what can take her burning away?*

[Translated by Kenneth E. Bryant.]

গিয়েছ লিখে সূর্যকরোজ্জ্বলা মকরসংক্রান্তি প্রাণে একটি মোরগের কাহিনী অন্ধকারে জলের কোলাহল

কলম, তুমি কত না যুগ কত না কাল ধরে
অন্ধরে অন্ধরে
গিয়েছ শুধু ক্লাস্তিহীন কাহিনী শুরু করে।
কলম, তুমি কাহিনী লেখো, তোমার কাহিনী কি
দুঃখে জ্বলে তলোয়ারের মতন ঝিকমিকি?

কলম, তুমি শুধু বারংবার,
আনত করে ক্লাস্ত ঘাড়
গিয়েছ লিখে স্বপ্ন আর পুরনো কত কথা,
সাহিত্যের দাসত্বের ক্ষুদিত বশ্যতা।
ভগ্ন নিব, রপ্ত দেহ, জলের মতো কালি,
কলম, তুমি নিরপবাদ তবুও গালাগালি
খেয়েছ আর সয়েছ কত লেখকদের যুগ,
কলম, তুমি চেষ্টা কর, দাঁড়াতে পার কি না।

হে কলম! তুমি ইতিহাস গিয়েছ লিখে
লিখে লিখে শুধু ছড়িয়ে দিয়েছ চতুর্দিকে।
তবু ইতিহাস মূল্য দেবে না, এতটুকু কোন
দেবে না তোমায়, জেনো ইতিহাস বড়ই কুপণ;
কত লাঞ্ছনা, খাটনি গিয়েছে লেখকের হাতে
যুমহীন চোখে অবিশ্রান্ত অজস্র রাতে।
তোমার গোপন অশ্রু তাইতো ফসল ফলায়
বহু সাহিত্য বহু কাব্যের বৃকের তলায়।
তবু দেখ বোধ নেই লেখকের কৃতজ্ঞতা,
কেন চলবে এ প্রভুর খেয়ালে, লিখবে কথা?

The first volumes to be set in the new Bengali and Tamil fonts will be published in subsequent years, along with those using dedicated Sanskrit and Marathi versions of the Devanagari. You are among the first people outside of the project to see these typefaces. The Murty Bengali is currently expected to be released in January 2017...

கடுங்கதிர் திருகலின் நடுங்களுர் எய்தி
ஆறுசெல் வருத்தத்துச் சீறடி சிவப்ப
நறும்பல் கூந்தல் குறும்பல உயிர்த் தாங்கு
ஐயை கோட்டத் தெய்யா வெருசிறை
வருந்துநோய் தணிய இருந்தனர் உப்பால்

வழங்குவில் தடக்கை மறக்குடித் தாயத்துப்
பழங்கட னுற்ற முழங்குவாய்ச் சாலினி
தெய்வ முற்று மெய்ம்மயிர் நிறுத்துக்
கையெடுத்த தோச்சிக் கானவர் வியப்ப
இடுமுள் வேலி எயினர்கூட் டுண்ணும்

நடுவூர் மன்றத் தடிபெயர்த் தாடிக்
கல்லென் பேரூர்க் கணநிரை சிறந்தன
வல்வில் எயினர் மன்றுபாழ் பட்டன
மறக்குடித் தாயத்து வழிவளஞ் சுரவாது
அறக்குடி போலவிந் தடங்கினர் எயினரும்

கலையமர் செல்வி கடனுணின் அல்லது
சிலையமர் வென்றி கொடுப்போ ளல்லள்
மட்டுண் வாழ்க்கை வேண்டுதி ராயின்
கட்டுண் மாக்கள் கடந்தரும் எனவாங்கு
இட்டுத் தலையெண்ணும் எயின ரல்லது

தணிய
இளைசூழ்
வேட்டுவ வரி
தலையெண்ணும்
துறைப்பாட்டுமடை

...and the Tamil a year after that. The Murty Kannada typeface is currently in development, and there will doubtless be other scripts added as the work of the editorial board extends to more and more of India's diverse linguistic and literary heritage.

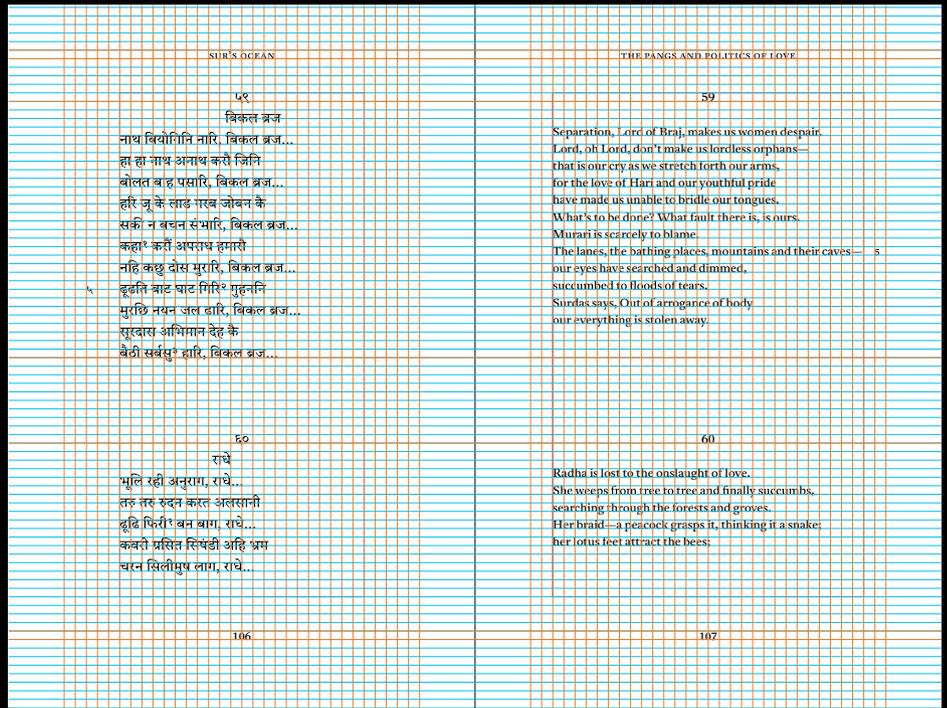
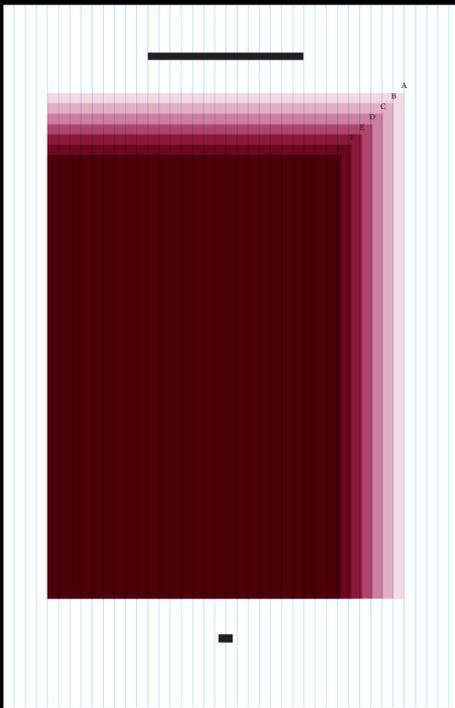
So: a story with beginnings, and a middle in healthy progress. But the story doesn't have an end — or, at least, one that we can see — because this is a publishing programme, like the Loeb Classics, that is designed to outlive everyone now working on it, to run a hundred years and more.

रात्रिर्गमिष्यति भविष्यति सुप्रभातम्
भास्वानुदेष्यति हसिष्यति पद्मजालम् ।
इत्थं विचिन्तयति कोशगते द्विरेफे
हा हन्त हन्त नलिनीं गज उज्जहार ॥

Which brings me back at last to this Sanskrit proverb:

*Night will be over, there will be morning,
The sun will rise, and the lotus flower will open.
While the bee inside the lotus flower was thinking this,
The plant was uprooted by an elephant.*

The moral is an obvious one, about the folly of presuming to know what the future holds. But when I first read it, I also found myself identifying with the bee, not so much in his botanical reverie, but with the limited focus of his worldview. It is the focus of someone who spends a lot of time looking at a Bezier curve, shifting it 1/1000ths of an em to the left, and then shifting it back again. Several times. It is the worldview of someone who leans in too closely to look at his computer screen, and then wonders why his distance vision isn't what it used to be.



For this worker bee, the Murty Classical Library of India provides a salutary opportunity: to step back and consider the daily detailed work of type design in the context of a project that will outlive him. Type designers reasonably expect that their types might continue to be used after they have died, but seldom have the opportunity to consider how, or to see the beginnings of that future use today.

I expect that Rathna Ramanathan may have had similar thoughts while she was designing the brilliantly flexible grids that allow so many different kinds of texts in so many different scripts and languages to be balanced on the page. And I suspect all the people involved in the project have had moments in which the extraordinary richness and sheer scope of the Indian texts rushes into their work like sunlight into the narrow confines of a slowly opening flower.

रुयि

Note 1. All seven stylistic set features covered in this document involve relationships of marks and shapes above the head line stroke. To simplify the context sequence definitions, all subscript marks should be ignored when identifying sequences for processing. Most of the subscript marks occurring in Gurmukhi script are atomically encoded, but three are <blwf> shaped substitutions of virama (0A4D) + letter combinations. The latter require that checking for the beginning of a sequence must take these into account by checking for a preceding virama to determine whether the letter takes a subscript form (ignored) or is full form (stylistic set may apply).

<blwf> shaping to subscript sequences to ignore:

0A4D 0A30 #g.Virama g.Ra
0A4D 0A35 #g.Virama g.Va
0A4D 0A39 #g.Virama g.Ha

Atomically encoded subscripts to ignore:
0A41 #g.SignU

By0 mhr kE pUt, jB y
ãanMde sb log, gokul
pUrb pUre pu~y, ropI
lOn niz\$ bl soId, kI
DaE sb êj nair, shj
pihrE n0tn cIn, kajr
kMcuik itlk illaq, s
kMkn kMcn Tar, mMgl
ãpne ãpne mer, inksI

EXCERPT FROM THE CONVERSION SPECIFICATION

This table shows word examples some of the more complex that may occur in the *Sur's Ocean* text, involving many-to-many substitutions, or combinations of these.

Jaisalmer original	Hex original	Hex target
बटुआ	0062 0071 0026 00E5 0061	092C 091F 094
और	00E5 0061 0045 0072	0914 0930
गः	00C2 0067 003A	095A 0903
कुर्सी	006B 0026 0073 0049 0052	0915 0941 093
राष्ट्रवादी	0072 0061 02C7 0061 0064 0049	0930 093E 093 0935 093E 092
विरुद्ध	0069 0076 003C 00C1	0935 093F 093 0927
ख्रिष्टान	0069 00D1 00FF 0061 006E	0916 094D 093 091F 093E 092
ननर्शिय	006E 006E 0069 0078 0052 0079	0928 0928 093 092F

And if they're like me, they also worry a bit about the elephants. This is a project that has already involved serious technical challenges, both in the preparation of the texts for publishing, and in the typesetting. We've had to create algorithms to convert from multiple non-standard text encodings to Unicode, and I expect there will be more of this sort of thing. We've had to script work-arounds to limitations in existing Indic layout engines. As each text is prepared for typesetting, we run conjunct frequency analysis on it, but it seems every time I look at a Sanskrit book I find some conjunct I've not previously encountered and which the Murty Sanskrit font might need to display, sometime in the next hundred years.

As time goes on, I suppose the technical issues will gradually be resolved, and the number of new character combinations needing to be supported in the fonts will dwindle from a steady trickle to an occasional drip. Still, the long view encouraged by this project prompts questions about how one ensures continued quality over such a long project, after the people who began the work are gone. Presuming the technology of book production — or even the notion of what a book is — will not stand unchanged for the next hundred years, how will the work we are doing now translate to new technologies? Who will be responsible for that, and will they understand what we were trying to achieve? I've only just begun to think about these questions, and about the kinds of institutional arrangements that might provide an answer to them.

Like the bee in the lotus flower, I would be foolish to presume to know the future...



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Karsten Luecke · Victor Gaultney

...but experience has taught me to expect elephants.

Thank you.