



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1998-99





## KATHA SCHOOL OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Katha School of Entrepreneurship has, as usual, seen exceedingly excellent results. Our teachers, work with creativity and initiative, coupled with dedication and patience, have drawn the praise of all visitors who have visited Katha-Khazana this year.

### HIGHLIGHTS-

- **A certificate programme in Managing Small Business and Entrepreneurship (CMSBE)** was organised - two Workshops were held - one in June and/the other in December.
- **An exhibition** was opened where items stitched by KSE students were kept for sale. 13 students have become self employed and are earning reasonably well.
- **Creche:** Free medical check-up by Dr S Srinivasan. Had to generate resources, as the allotted fund was not sufficient. Fifty children received daycare and nutrition.
- **Preschool:** At preschool, 268 children were shifted to formal Government and private schools and 35 students have been shifted to Non-Formal Education. Lady Irwin College students did a medical check up and conducted a survey among students on the deficiency of vitamins and protein. The children visited the Dolls' Museum and the Children's Park. A Diwali mela was organised to celebrate Diwali. Govardhan Puja, Bhai Dooj, Christmas and Id were also celebrated. Nutritious food was provided to the children throughout the year. One drum, 200 glasses, game equipment, toys and books were purchased for the children. Mrs. Suvasini donated 22 sweaters on the occasion of the death anniversary of her grandfather.
- **Nonformal education Centre:** Students motivated community during the Pulse Polio programme to provide polio drops to the children. In November, the Children celebrated "Bal Saptah". This Consisted of various events designed to bring out the creative talents in the children, like poem writing, extempore speech competition, debates, etc. The Kanchi team conducted workshop for the NFE children. An ENT health camp was organised. The children visited the Mother Dairy; Rail Museum, Bal Bhawan and historical monuments - arranged by CCRT. The students took part in a painting competition held at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. A reporter from "The Times" of London interviewed the children between the age group of 6 to 8 years. 263 students achieved good results in admission test conducted at government schools. They were admitted to various classes in the primary section according to their eligibility. Two of our students won consolation prizes at the on the spot painting competition arranged by the Association for the Advancement of the Deprived. The Social Science Lab took up the project "My Delhi". All the NFE students were involved in this project, One group gathered information about various newspapers available in Delhi, another group observed all around carefully to find out about various occupations a third group produced details about the leaders – past and present – and a fourth group collected information about the national movements like the Salt Satyagrah, etc. The group of older children focused on the history of Delhi. The children even highlighted the famous markets in Delhi. Students prepared charts, composed write-ups and drew pictures of the monuments. They had a session on early man. They talked about various countries. They discussed about various festivals. They also talked about social evils like pollution on Diwali due to the burning of firecrackers.





- **Phulwari:** Mentally challenged and spastic children received speech therapy and physiotherapy. They are able to make toys from clay and colour them too.
- **Katha Open School:** Three students of Bakery and Confectionery course and 7 from the Electricals course have found jobs. 113 students trained by our Cutting & Tailoring centre are trying to become self employed. The Open School celebrated Sanitation Week. Decoration of walls of Katha Khazana building and white washing of all labs was done and the volunteers from Cross-Cultural Solutions painted blackboards. Two students have scored 1st division. Entrepreneurship Workshops were held.
- **Tutorial Support:** The students received help to cope with their formal school syllabus. Leela secured 1st position in her class in the CBSE exams. 122 students have secured 1st divisions in the formal schools.
- **Computer Centre:** IGNOU's Outreach Programme was started. Out of six students who appeared for the NOS certificate exams, 4 scored distinction and two got first division. 13 students have been able to secure jobs as computer operators and data entry operators.
- **Vocational Electricals:** The students learnt to install earthing system for diesel and electric generators, wiring for electric oven and fixing and repairing light textures.
- **Vocational Bakery:** One of our students, Anju Singh, secured distinction in the NOS exams.
- **Teacher Training Programme:** Trainees conducted surveys on the number of unemployed handicapped people living in Govindpuri slum clusters. They also informed the community about the vocational courses and other facilities available at our centre.
- YMCA recruited six trainee teachers from our Teacher Training Programme for their adult education programme. Two volunteers from the US, Martha Jane Hedy and Susan Developed a training module on nursing skills and conducted classes for the teacher trainees.

**Shakti Khazana:** Maa Mandal meetings were held regularly.

- Street plays and puppet shows were organised.
- German Embassy provided equipment worth Rs.3.2 lakhs for our Income Generation Programme for Women (IGP).
- Khazana Women's Cooperative (a component of IGP) received orders from IGNOU, American Women's Association, Tata Infotech, nearby Government schools, local shops, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, etc. Earnings in the cooperative's bakery unit ranged between Rs.1500 to Rs.2700 per month Whereas in Rasoi it ranged between Rs.1700 to Rs.2000 per month.





- A Workshop on baking nutritious biscuits using Vitamin 'A' rich red palm oil was conducted by Ms Thomas, a lecturer at lady Irwin College, Delhi.
- Food & Nutrition Board: Government of India provided food processing training to a group of twenty women.

An important meeting was organised for the staff working for KSE and Shakti Khazana at our field project centre, Katha-Khazana. In this meeting teachers came up with the need to involve fathers in the education of their children.

- Networking with other NGOs/organisations:
- With National Open School. The NOS has given the accreditation to Katha to run vocational certificate courses and also to conduct examinations.
- Katha networked with lady Irwin College, Delhi to conduct workshops and surveys
- With IIT Delhi to orient 1st year students about the issues before our state and society and about the work NGOs are going.
- With Indian Institute of Foreign Trade to conduct Entrepreneurship Workshop and -to develop a diploma course in Foreign Trade in Hindi in four Modules for KSE students. The course commenced in January 1999.
- With Indira Gandhi National Open University. IGNOU has made KSE one of its partners to run centers for their Computer Literacy Programme.
- With National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT) to conduct viva test for the students of our Teacher Training Programme.
- With Centre for Culture Research Training (CCRT) to organise educational trips for our students children who are associated with our inducement programmes.
- With State Council of Educational Research Training (SCERT) and other NGOs to come forward with plans to promote elementary education among the illiterate.
- With Dr B R Amar College. Two students of the Bachelor of Social Work course are attached to KSE every year. They help in planning and organising educational visits, maintaining of records of mentally challenged children, inducing working children into education and publishing the immunisation programme in the community.
- With Vidhya Niketan Senior Secondary School to collect used woolen clothes, rugs and other materials for our students and the community.
- With Sardar Patel Vidyalaya to collect old books for our students and other community children.
- With neighbouring government schools sell the products prepared by Khazana women's Cooperative and to provide tutorial support to their weak students.
- With Pariwar Sewa Sansthan to conduct workshop on health of women for the Maa Mandal.
- With CASP and Scope Plus to admit their students from the Sangam Vihar and South Deihi slums in the Katha-IGNOU Computer Literacy programme.
- With Alairppu conduct entrepreneurship Workshop.
- With Ankur to evaluate the theory papers of our Teacher Training Programme and to conduct entrepreneurship Workshop.
- With Tata Infotech Ltd to get their help for our computer courses.





- With Mother Dairy to organise plant visits for our students.
- With Taj Mahal Hotel to conduct a workshop for KSE students interested in catering management.
- With YMCA for the placement of six trainee teachers and, to hold a contest for our children.
- With Overseas Training Programme, UK to give social development training to its scholar, Ms Kate Richardson for a year.

## KANCHI INITIATIVE

### KATHA NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TRANSLATION

Kanchi is an effort to enrich linkages between the people of India through translated literature and to forge sustainable, cross-cultural links through academics. Through its various activities, this programme generated a great deal of enthusiasm and serious interest in Amritsar, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur and Vellore amongst school and college students and the faculty. Katha conducted a series of intensive workshops on “Teaching Translation” and “Approaching Literature through Translation”.

**KATHA BARANI:** Library Workshop - 10<sup>th</sup> September 1998 at IIC Conference Room, New Delhi with the objective of looking at libraries as a Centre of Creativity and build a positive interface between students. The resource persons, were Sunanda Bhattacharjea, Meera Balachandran, M. Vijaylakshmi, Kalpana Dasgupta and Savita. A teacher, a librarian and a student each represented 32 schools and colleges. The students, teachers and librarians alike experienced a melting of barriers and merging of boundaries. All the groups came up with a number of very positive suggestions/solutions as a result of the synergy created during the.

**THE SIXTH KATHA COLLOQUIUM:** The Sixth Katha Colloquium was held on 11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> December 1998 at ISI Conference Room; New Delhi. The literary Workshop was organized to bring together eminent writers, translators, editors, academicians of 14 languages and the Katha Award winners of 1998 to explore, discuss and share common concerns and burning issues of politics of translation. Renowned linguist, Shri Helmut Nespital, Author Bharati Mukherjee from University of California, Berkley and Prof Clark Blaise from the Writers workshop, Iowa, USA helped to coordinate the Workshop. Special invites were prominent Hindi writer Krishna Sobti and Urdu writer, Joginder Paul. There were interactive, intensive and lively debates.

**KATHA'S ACADEMIC PUBLISHING PROGRAMME. APPROACHING INDIAN LITERATURE THROUGH TRANSLATION:** 22<sup>nd</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> September 1998 at Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla. The coordinators of the Katha Academic Regional Centres, Editors of the ALT (Approaching Literature through Translation) and coordinators from Katha participated. Some of the objectives were to evolve academic programmes for awareness of cultural specificity in literary texts for greater understanding of cultural diversity, bring professionalism in the art of translation and design courses to help make education a humanizing force in the society. The pooling in of ideas by all the editors while the work on the volumes



under the ALT Publication Programme was still in progress was very beneficial. The coming together of the publisher, the academia, and the translator was extremely useful. This Workshop was a step forward for this programme to get onto the Universities.

**CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS:** Between 16<sup>th</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> May 1999 - a series of seven workshops was conducted at Khanna with the objective to evolve a curriculum for the staff of Katha Khazana, sensitizing them to issues of gender, environment and health. 26 teachers participated and reflected on their present work and the directions to choose.

**CULTURE LINK WORKSHOPS:** These workshops were organised to encourage teachers/students to participate in the process of creating and enjoying stories and making them aware of cultural realities at various levels.

**Workshop 1** – Venkateswara College, New Delhi - 11<sup>th</sup> November 1998 – 42 students and teachers from nine colleges participated. The resource persons were Piyas Chakraharti, Raj Kumar Jha and Vijaya Ramaswamy.

**Workshop 2** – Janaki Devi College, New Delhi - 5<sup>th</sup> February 1999 - 60 students and 60 teachers participated. The resource persons were Mridula Garg and Emilie Collier.

**Workshop 3 to 7** – Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi – 12<sup>th</sup> February – 19<sup>th</sup> March 1999 - A workshop series consisting of 5 Workshops was conducted. The resource persons were Sukrita Paul Kumar, GJV Prasad, Devender Issar, Devendra Satyarthi, Joginder Paul, Promodini Verma, Rai Kumar Jha, H Shiva Prakash, Madhu Prasad, Mridula Garg and Vandana Shiva. 20 students from IIFT participated.

**Workshop 8** – IIT, New Delhi - 27<sup>th</sup> March 1999 - Students of IIT participated and the resource persons were GJV Prasad, Rajendra Yadav and Raj Kamal Jha. At the end of the workshop the participants were quite familiar with the role of literature in bringing about social change. Particularly the comparative study of fiction and newspaper as tools to bring about the change was quite interesting.

## FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS

**Workshop 1** – Delhi Public School, Mathura Road, New Delhi - 13<sup>th</sup> May 1998 - 70 teachers from the primary classes participated. The resource persons were Alka Shankar, Rupali, Jaya, Smita and Sumana. The participants found the workshop an enjoyable and enriching experience. They found the group activities to be relevant and hoped that they too would be able to incorporate the methods used by the resource people in their classrooms.

**Workshop 2** – Mother's International School, Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi - 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1998. 37 Language and Social Science Teachers from the primary, middle and secondary school participated. Some of the objectives of the Workshop-were to offer orientation to language and social science teachers in more love ways of teaching, to acquaint the teachers with the use of story as a method to impart knowledge, to make them realize how transmitting messages through the form of the story is more effective since it ensures greater attention and interest of the student. The teachers considered the use of narratives a very good method to impart knowledge.





**Workshop 3** – Blue Bells School, New Delhi - 5th January 1999 - Some of the objectives were to initiate the teachers to recognize, watch, enjoy and interact with the one childhood each child has and to lay an emphasis on the process both in working with children and in the training of adults as educators.

**Workshop 4** – DPS Rohini, Mathura Road, New Delhi - 24th March 1999. The objective here was to plan activities for the development of children's emotional intelligence and to incorporate regional and folk methods of adult-child interplay. 20 primary school teachers participated. It was a very responsive and motivated group of teachers, committed and concerned about the holistic growth of the children.

**Workshop 5** – in Bangalore. Participants were teachers from Kumarans School, Sri Rama Vidyalaya, Hombegowda Girls' High School, Jyothi Nivas College and NMKRY College for Women. The workshop was aimed at during out the “working hypothesis” of teachers regarding language learning and literary appreciation, questioning on strengthening them as the case may be and discussing the potential of translation as a technique in teaching languages.

**39 workshops** were conducted during August 1998 to February 1999 in Bangalore.

**7 workshops** were conducted during August 1998 to February 1999 in Amritsar

**Workshop 1** – DAY Public School, Lawrence Road. Amritsar – 6th & 7th November 1998

**Workshop 2** – DAY Public School, Amritsar – 21st November 1998

**Workshop 3** – DAY Public School, Amritsar – 21st November 1998

**Workshop 4** – Bhatiya Vidya Bahwan, Amritsar – 28th November 1998

**Workshop 5** – DAY Public School, Amritsar – 28th November 1998

**Workshop 6** – MKD DAV Public School, Neshta, Attari – 30th November 1998

**Workshop 7** – DAY Public School, Amritsar – 5th December 1998

23 Workshops were conducted in Chennai during August 1998 to February 1999,

3 workshops were conducted in Delhi during August 1998 to February 1999

## **CAREERS IN TRANSLATION**

**Certificate Course** for Students. One course was conducted in Delhi during the period April 1998 to March 1999.

**Workshop 1** – Gargi College, New Delhi – 14th November to 6th December 1998. The main objective of the workshop was to equip the students with specialised translation skills. 14 students and teachers from the college participated. The resource persons were Raj Kumar Jha, Wagish Shukla, Uma Chakravarti, Anvita Abbi, R S Gupta, Harish Narang, Kamleshwar, Chandana Dutta, Nandita Aggarwal, Amal Allana, Meenakshi, Bharat, Mahasweta, Geeta Dharmarajan.

## **WORKSHOPS IN THE NORTH EAST**

**Workshop 1** - CIEFL Regional Centre, Shillong – 7th to 17th September 1998. 30 college and university students participated. It was hoped that this course would enable the students to approach translation







methodically and systematically. The resource persons were SS Diengdoh, JC Mahanti, KC Baral, EN Lall, Rebekah Tham, R Sachdeva, Bonomali Goswami, S Lamare, Chitra Dutta, Dr Gonglah, P Jingham, PP Dhar, Isadalang P Laitlang.

**Workshop 2** – Kohima, Nagaland - 2nd to 7th November 1998. The workshop focused on the need and importance of translation in forging cultural bonds, the sessions aimed at the technical aspects of translation. Resource persons were academicians from various departments.

### **TRANSLATION AND MEDIA**

**Workshop 1** – This course was conducted during the period August 1998 to February 1999.

**Workshop 2** – NMKRV College for Women, Jayanagar, Bangalore – 10<sup>th</sup> October 1998 to 8th November 1998. 37 undergraduate students from various colleges participated. This course explored the nature of the relationship between translation and the mass media. Resource persons were BC Ramchandra Sharma, Nagabhushan Swamy, Venkatesh Murthy, TN Sitaram, HS Parvathi, Yamuna Raja Rao, Vanamala Vishwanathan, Sucheta Pai, Surendranath, HS Raghavendra Rao, Laxmi Chandrashekhar, SRRamakrishna, Girish Rasaravalli, Pramod Muthalik, Nagamani S Rao, Lee Cataldi, Prathibha Nandakumar.

In Mumbai one certificate course was conducted during the period August 1998 to February 1999.

**Workshop – SNTD** – 7th January 1999 to 27th January 1999. The course was aimed to initiate the translator-participant on the theory and practice of translating and editing prose narratives and poems. The resource persons were Keerti Ramachandran, Yashodara Deshpande, Maitrya, Mitra Parikh, Dr. Kudchedkar and Dr. Ramakrishnan. The participants were postgraduate and M Phil students, teachers from colleges of the SNTD Women's University and Mumbai University and journalists. The course helped to create a core group of translators who were equipped to attempt translations of stories and poems from regional languages of their choice into English.

### **TEACHING TRANSLATION**

Certificate course for university/college teachers - two such courses conducted during August 1998 to February 1999.

**Workshop 1** – Mayurbhanj Seminar Hall, NEHU – 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> August 1998. The workshop was targeted at raising awareness among college and university teachers on the importance of translation, select material for translation, edit and review translation and identify difficulties in this area. 20 teachers from the colleges of Kohima, Silchar, Shillong, University departments of NEHRU and Nagaland participated. The resource persons were N Hasan, MM Agarwal, EN Lall, Jc Mahanti, KS Lyngdoh and N Malia.

**Workshop 2** – Staff College, Guwahati – 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> January 1999. The workshop was targeted at raising awareness among college and university teachers on the importance of translation, select material for translation, edit and review translation, identify difficulties in this area and the importance of translating short stories and their use as study material. 27 teachers and research scholars participated. The resource persons were Hiralal Dourah, Hiren Gohain, DN Bezbarouah, A Lais, Hiren Dutta, GP Sharma, Prof Acharya, Mitra Phukan, Atulanda Goswami and Padipta Borgohain.

### **CERTIFICATE COURSE IN TRANSLATION FOR UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE TEACHERS.**





And in **Mumbai**, two courses were conducted during August 1998 and February 1999

**Workshop 1** – SNTD - 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> November 1998 - 35 Faculty and senior students of Mumbai University, SNTD University and IIT participated. The resource persons were Geeta Dharmarajan, Sujit Mukherje, Meenakshi Mukherjee, Shiri Kudchedkar, Dilip Chitre, Mukta Rajadhyaksha, Yashodara Deshpande, and Maitrya. The objective was to open up the minds of young students of literature in India to the exciting world of Bhasha Literatures and to encourage research as well as translation of these literatures.

**Workshop 2** – SNTD - 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> February 1999 – Faculty and senior students of Mumbai University, SNTD University and IIT participated. The resource persons were Aniket Jaawar, CS Lakshmi, Ranjit Hoskote, Jatin Wagle and Kirti Ramachandra. The workshop aimed to explore the issues and problematic of translators from various Indian regional languages into English and also to explore the immediate questions that practicing translators have relating to the cultural and structural situation of source and target languages. One recurrent idea that got established was the need to have a combined approach of theory and practice in discussing translation.

### **Chennai**

**Certificate** course for university/College teachers

**Workshop 1** – Department of English, Stella Maris College, Chennai – 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> December 1998. The participants in these workshops were those who were interested in the area of translation. The resource persons were Seetha Srinivasan, Lee Cataldi, Prema Seetharam, Meenakshi Shivram, Nirmal Selvamony, Srividya Natrajan, Seethalakshmi and Rajam Krishnan. The participants felt equipped to cope with problems as a translator.

**Workshop 2** – Department of English, Stella Maris College, Chennai – 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1999. The participants in these workshops were those who were interested in the area of translation. The resource persons were Nirmal Selvamony, Kamala Vishwanathan, Dr. Mangai. The participants felt equipped to cope with the problems as a translator.

### **Bangalore**

A 3-day seminar on Modern Indian literature and a series of half-day seminars in active collaboration - with the university PG centre and two other colleges conducted.

**Seminar 1** – Bangalore University Campus – 8<sup>th</sup> January 1999 – 30 students from Bangalore University participated

**Seminar 2** – Central College – 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January 1999 – 120-150 students and teachers from 3 postgraduate centres participated.

**Seminar 3** – Sheshadrimran College – 6<sup>th</sup> March 1999 – 30 students and teachers participated.

**Seminar 4** – Jyoti Nivas College, 13<sup>th</sup> March 1999 – 70 students and teachers participated.

The Bangalore University has introduced a paper on Modern Indian literature and these seminars aimed to equip the participants with the necessary scholarship and critical apparatus. The seminar helped in





generating lively debates linking the Curriculum with issues of Life & Living, giving our inquiry a holistic, interdisciplinary trust.

## Delhi

**Workshop 1** – Sanskriti - 6th March 1999 – for academicians, editors, translators, writers and reviewers. The objective of this workshop was to encourage a dialogue to discuss the various aspects of translation. 36 participants from all the above-mentioned fields participated. The interface of the translators, writers, editors, reviewers and academics brought them face to face with the problems and challenges faced by the other. The issue of creative translation as Opposed to literal translation was also taken up seriously.

Under the Shishya initiative 197 workshops were conducted during April 1998 and March 1999. The Workshops were conducted in the six Katha Academic Centres: Delhi, Amritsar, Shillong, Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore.

## Tamasha!

**Tamasha!** Was relaunched in March 1998 with a small grant from Ford Foundation. Shri Soli Sorabjee released Tamasha! at the Tamasha! mela at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

**Workshops** organised in schools all over Delhi have reiterated our belief that Tamasha! is a big hit with children. Tamasha! is no longer a rural child's magazine. It is a magazine that helps a child know herself and her world. It takes BIG ideas on sustainable living, water and energy management, family well being, culture and entrepreneurship to children, through lively stories, fantasies, real life incidents and other innovative means.

**Tamasha!** continues to be at the core of creative and fun ways of learning that is being used in Khazana, our centre for nonformal education, and in Katha's Sishya Initiative that hopes to help teachers make learning relevant and fun for children across the country.

Unfortunately we could not bring out subsequent issues of Tamasha! Because of several constraints.

## **Dhammak Dhum!**

In March 1998, we brought out the pilot issue of Dhammak Dhum! a fun book for children in the age 4+ was launched. We are looking for fund:, to bring out this magazine well, as there seems to be a need for something Indian and attractive for preschoolers.





# KATHAVILASAM

Katha Vilasam has consistently continued to follow up on its goal by striving for excellence, both as far as writers and translators are concerned. Last year, a great amount of research into texts and their translations and extremely fruitful workshops set the ground for some well-researched and eminently readable volumes for publications. The following books were published during the year:

- VISIONS REVISIONS Vol 2
- KATHA PRIZE STORIES 7
- MAPPING MEMORIES
- BAZDEED (Urdu fiction)
- SEPARATE JOURNEYS
- SLEEPWALKERS
- THE BEST OF RAJA RAO
- THE ESSENCE OF CAMPHOR
- WORD AS MANTRA: The Art of Raja Rao
- KATHA PRIZE STORIES 8

**VISIONS REVISIONS Vol 2** is a collection of short fiction in twelve regional languages translated into English for the Second Katha Translation Contest 1996-97, held in association with the British High Commission, British Council Division.

## Reviews of VISIONS-REVISIONS VOL 2

Most of the stories are good reading and they ought to be so since Katha is meticulous about story selection. But my personal favourite is the Gujarati story. Tautly wrought, well-compressed, full of “mood”, this is a story of the eternal triangle, of a woman in love with a married man. It is beautifully underwritten, from the point of view of the other woman whose mature age impels her to sad and inconclusive reflections about the predicament of human relationships. The story has been well-translated, as are the rest.

– *M Vijayalakshmi, The Book Review, June 1998*

Everyone knows that Katha’s doing, a fine job building bridges between regional subcultures. Visions Revisions is proof. Twelve stories, translated from twelve Indian languages into English, paint a portrait of India that is in places interesting different ... The translations are all equally good though some are more equal than others.

– *Neelum Saran Gaur, Indian Review of Books, May 1998*

Reviewing an anthology of translations of short stories in regional languages is a difficult business- and Visions Revisions 2 (Katha) is one such. How does one begin to analyse a collection whose linguistic homogeneity is in direct contrast to its thematic and cultural diversity? However, despite the fact that the content of each story (originally articulated in a regional language) is linguistically distanced, a uniform language certainly helps. The reader is provided with a thread to journey through myriad stories from India’s rich multilingual fabric. In the final analysis, both the original and the translation stand on trial. And both the vision and the revision equally compel the reader’s attention, one for content, the other for expression ... Visions Revisions 2 is a rich blend of twelve regional stories translated into English and it transports the reader to every imaginable social context of the country, on occasions even outside it. This volume brings to our doorstep those vignettes of Indian life not all of us are privy to. **And given the**





credibility **Katha** enjoys, one can rest assured that the collection is a careful selection made from a range of regional fiction which the lay reader might never have access to ... *Visions Revisions 2* represent quality translations. And even as the reader is unable to encounter the visions first hand, the revisions go a great distance in that direction.

– *Shobori Ganguly, The Pioneer, March 1998*

There's so much of a haunting greatness in vernacular literature that one feels like being a linguist and lapping up all of it. Since it's only a dream exercise and never to be fulfilled, the best one can do is rely on honest translations. And **Katha** should be lauded for offering us the gate pass to such a happy savouring session. Its compilation of award winning English translations of regional literature is simply something to be treasured. The second collection retains all the loveable qualities of the former.

– *S G, The Statesman, Calcutta, 1998,*

**In this age of factionalism, to read a book like *Visions Revisions 2* is reassuring,** especially if you were beginning to wonder if there is any point in holding on to the idea of India as one country. The stories are from twelve different parts of India. **Katha's** collection of writings, chosen from its second translation contest, show dearly that the essence of India is one, no matter which language it is expressed in. The volume makes for easy reading. Though it is normally agreed upon- that something is always lost in translations, a lot of effort seems to have gone in to retain the basic-flavour of each linguistic and cultural tradition ... On the whole, *Visions Revisions 2* is a good collection of stories from India, enjoyable and interesting.

– *Neena De, Business Standard, March 19, 1998*

**KATHA PRIZE STORIES VOLUME 7** is a compelling collection of sixteen stories from Asomiya, Bangla, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Tamil, and Urdu.

#### Reviews of KPS 7

... worthy additions to what is fast becoming a rich store of Indian literature in translation. With **Katha Prize Stories Volume 7**, **Katha** Continues its diligent dismantling of the barriers between "mainstream" and "regional" literature in India ... the stories in *Volume 7* are thought provoking and imaginative, and a few sparkle especially bright.

– *Latha Anantharaman, Biblio, March - April 1998*

**Painstakingly selected by a jury of distinguished writers and scholars,** it shows evidence of having been subsequently edited with love and diligence. This makes the volume a rare intellectual and emotional treat. Indeed, this volume comes as yet another proof of the fact that **Katha** has become a dependable deliverer of the best short fiction from India in the various languages every year. The collection embraces a wide variety of concerns endeavouring to unveil hidden depths of the human mind. Couching this volume are brief, biographical entries on the writers with sensitive insights into the responses of both the writer and the translator to the story. This makes the volume a worthwhile peek into the "backstage" of the immensely fecund world of literary creation in the bhashas. More than anything else, the **Katha** awards and their publication thus, encourage a participative impulse in the reader, involving him in the search for the best. This is, once again, a reminder that there is no dearth of raw material for creativity in India and also that there is abundant talent waiting to tap it. Though rooted in different linguistic spheres, these stories do not merely celebrate the local and the particular. Rather, invigorated by the vitality that these roots give, they successfully deal with common human preoccupations and predilections, nudging the reader to turn his eye both inward and outward.

– *The Hindustan Times, October 24, 1998*





**Crowded With Talent.** Katha has done it again, has presented for our delectation a stimulating selection of stylish Indian fiction translated into English ... it's Brilliant. Sixteen excellent translations of memorable stories packed tightly in a magenta overcoat. **I have to admit that almost all the stories are favourites for different reasons.** A grand collection indeed. The translators have obviously laboured with love. Their work is admirable, sensitive, evocative and subtly nuanced as I'm sure the originals are. Katha deserves a round of applause for continuing to give writers in Indian languages much-needed exposure, unearthing a cache of talented translators and revealing the wealth and diversity of literature that lies hidden and unappreciated in this amazing land of ours.

– *Jaya Banerji, Indian Review of Books, April 16 – March 15 1998*

**All the stories in this collection are representative of the wide diversity of Indian cultures, habits and customs** and reveal the depth of talent available in our country. Katha's attempt to showcase this talent is laudable.

– *The Statesman, Monday, February 9, 1998*

*Katha Prize Stories Volume 7* edited by Geeta Dharmarajan and Meenakshi Sharma continues one of the most important publishing initiatives in recent years ... The volume is **superbly produced**, which makes it a welcome change from the unattractive get up of most books of translation in the country. The writers featured in the collection includes such established names as Prem Prakash, Vailehi and Baldev Singh while newer talents include Nazir Mansuri, Brinda Charry and Phul Goswami. Another significant feature of this volume is the dominance of women writers. Something for Mr Rushdie to mull over perhaps.

– *The Telegraph, January 2, 1998*

... **Katha has commendably applied the mountain-will-come-to-Mohammed adage to bring the richness of India's literature to English habitues, in a manner uniquely its own.** That is, sensitive translations of representative fiction writing in regional languages ... *Katha Prize Stories Volume 7* continues the task of keeping India in touch with itself via the creativity of its contemporary short story; writers. For the most part, taken together the curiously timely yet timeless tales paint a mesmerising picture of India in her awesome diversity, reflected in the varied concerns of her people.

– *Economic Times, Sunday, February 8, 1998*

“The Whale” by Nazir Mansuri (*Volume 7*), for instance, has been translated with such finesse from the Gujarati by Nikhil Khandekar – and it must have been a ferociously difficult task, given the fact that the whole story depends upon its descriptions of the locale for its effectiveness, and the locale is pretty specialized – that is difficult to believe that it wasn't written in English. Katha also considers fiction originally written in – English and *Volume 7* contains one of the best specimens that I have read for some time, “The Sisters,” written by Brinda Charry ... And to think we would have never got to read any of them, if it wasn't for Katha. But the far bigger tragedy? We wouldn't have known what we were missing.

– *Roopa Pai, Bookwonn, August 1998*

Katha's collection to short stories are a treasure, once again. Each annual volume is a collector's item bringing together, within the pages of a single publication, English translations of the best short fiction of the previous Far in all the major Indian languages. **It used to be said that Indian language writing translations could never adequately capture the quality and spirit of the original. Year after year Katha has been triumphantly proving this proposition wrong. The boom in the last few years in English translations of Indian fiction - all the big names in Indian publishing have got into the act – owes much to Katha's trail blazing effort.** In making Indian short fiction accessible to Indians themselves, in enabling





literary enthusiasts in each language region to discover what their counterparts in other parts of the country are currently reading and writing about, *Katha's* contribution is invaluable. And, unlike almost all the other publishing houses where the quality of releases have fluctuated wildly, *Katha* has shown impeccable taste. Both in its choice of stories and in the quality of its translations, it has consistently upheld high standards ... all manage to convey what is essential for a good translation: the flavor of the original ... "Topi" ... is one of the finest stories I've read in my life.

– *The week*, February 22, 1998

**Sound, phonetically aflame English translations have become the distinguishing trait of the *Katha* series.** This volume doesn't disappoint. The rich and vital sounds, dialects and peculiar flavours of various regions are astutely preserved ... the gifted raconteurs seem wholly clued into the grammar of gripping fiction ...

The absence of literary ornamentation and the gratifying synthesis of emotion and expression characterize almost all the introspective stories about loss and restoration.

– *Subhash K Jha, India Today*, January 26, 1998

**The *Katha* volumes are an accessible celebration of the Indian experience in its diversity** ... And one thing that the *Katha* series can always be commended for is its faithful adherence to the original text ...

*Katha* has several other achievements, the most important one being the cultivation of a whole new readership for translations of contemporary short stories drawn every year from Indian languages. Which is affirmed by the fact that each of the six previous volumes is into reprints ...

... ***Katha* has filled a huge vacuum** ... As the noted Hindi litterateur Bhisham Sahni pointed out while releasing the present volume, "Translations are vital for any meaningful study of literature, for there's a limit to the number of language you can learn."

... the present volume, too, is a medley of voices, all distinct and complementary to each other. *Katha* is a celebration of the diversity of the Indian experience. If Brinda Charry's "Sisters" sounds real: it is only because this is a refreshing Indian story with a very Indian use of the English language. It has been presented with its original sounds intact ...

"Sheesha Ghat," Naiyer Masud's disturbing tale of critical handicaps, for instance, yields as much meaning as the reader infuses into it. It must surely have been one of the most difficult stories translate. Not that the others are any easier to reproduce. Sanjay Sahay's brilliantly detailed Hindi short story about the corrupting influence of authority in Bihar, "Topi," Khalid Javed's poignant Urdu tale "Bure Mausam Mein", which appears as the "Season of Fever"; Phul Goswami's revealing study of contemporary Assam, "Co-Travellers" ("Sahajatri"); and Nazir Mansuri's innovative Gujarati tale about the fishing community, "Bhuthar" ("The Whale"), must all have been a translator's nightmare. But most of them have done well enough to be able to communicate the distinct richness of the voices of different regions.

**Considering that the collection opens up to most of its reader's worlds that wouldn't otherwise exist for them, the publication of each *Katha* volume is a happy event.** And as Bhisham Sahni would readily testify, the readers are the richer for it.

– *Ashish Shanna, The Express Magazine*, February 8, 1998

*Katha* has been consistently bringing the latest in Indian fiction. *Katha Prize Stories Volume 7* ... carries this tradition forward ... Each story describes a different world, yet speaks of something universal. They draw heavily from immediate surroundings for both the setting and the imagery, which gives them a very Indian





flavour. At the same time, they present a view of what lies beyond the apparent. They are like excerpts from life, magnified to allow the intricacies to come through. Together, the kaleidoscopic view of these “worlds” brings home the concept we know as India.

**The translations ... have done justice to the original works. They keep the “untranslatable” untranslated, retaining the story’s original flavour .**

**... Katha offers a window to the contemporary literature scene in the country, and peeping, which has always been tempting, here actually proves exciting.**

– *Paritosh Bansal, Business Standard, Tuesday, February 3, 1998*

**Katha has done more for Indian writing in translation than what has been achieved by the efforts of Sahitya Kala Akademi and other such Government aided bodies put together.** The December compilation of the “best short fiction published” during the year has become a much-awaited annual literary event ... **Katha definitely has carved a niche for itself in the West, more specifically certain Universities abroad where it has been included as primary reading in their syllabi.** Such popularity can, however, be counterproductive. Indian readers exiled from the vernacular tradition can do without any souped-up version of what constitutes “Indian writing.” It needs to be added that these apprehensions are not founded on material fact, and **the present collection bears testimony to the rigorous and fair selection procedure followed by Katha.**

The sixteen stories that adorn *Katha 7* highlights the freedom “mother-tongue” writers enjoy over Indian writers writing in English. There is no conscious effort to “root” their narratives on a self-consciously created Indian milieu. There is therefore, in their writing, a quality of universal reference ... And yet, this universal quality filters out of a consciousness that is local and rooted. Which explains the recurring motifs of poverty, loneliness of women, disaffection with the system, family relations, etc. Both these features – universality and local consciousness – counterpoise each other in helping the collection escape trite generalizations.

Naiyer Masud’s “Sheesha Ghat” is possibly the most difficult in the selection. Along with “The Whale,” it is among the more symbolic and complex of these stories. Created with a great lyrical quality that is preserved in translation, there is a haunting, almost magical balance in the tale, especially in the interplay of symbols and in the interaction between extraordinary characters.

Over all, *Katha 7* impresses. If you like reading quality fiction, you can read it without apologizing for not being able to read the original. The translations are quality, non niche efforts, with Katha doing what it does without compromising integrity for regional and such like considerations. Readers of *Katha 7* will eagerly await *Kama 8*.

– *Debraj Mookerjee, The Pioneer, Saturday, January 8, 1998*

*Katha Prize Stories Volume 7* ... comes as yet another proof that Katha has become a dependable; deliverer of the best short fiction from India in the various Indian languages every year. The collection embraces a wide variety of concerns endeavouring to unveil hidden depths of the human mind.

– *Meenakshi Bharat, The Hindustan Times, Sunday Magazine, October 25, 1997*

**MAPPING MEMORIES or BAZDEED**, (a collection of original Urdu fiction) presents the rich composite culture of the subcontinent through compelling translations.





## Reviews of MAPPING MEMORIES

This exquisitely produced collection of fifteen Urdu short stories has been fastidiously and lovingly put together in accordance with the laudable editorial principle of capturing the “human predicament in the subcontinent” and telling “the tale of the shared cultures nourished by India and Pakistan.” The connecting threads, the stories reveal, are many. Bound by a common history, distinguished Pakistani and Indian writers contribute to the erection of the edifice of a composite, shared culture. All the stories are written after 1960 in Urdu, and all dwell on issues of widespread contemporary significance ...

The stories offer a scintillating variety of styles from the traditional to the experimental; from the realistic to the symbolic. Delving deep into inherited traditions of the folk story and the fable, they range from the utterly simple narrative pattern of “Joy” and “The Cow” to the complex fabulist magic realism of “The Pale Dog.”

How true the translations are to the original Urdu can perhaps only be judged by a reviewer who is familiar with both the languages, Urdu and English. But no reader of this volume can fail to respond to the vitalising spontaneity of the translations. With apparent effortlessness, the translators have accomplished a marvellous job in capturing the idiosyncratic resonances of the spoken language.

Much care has gone into the final packaging of the volume. Each story is neatly prefixed with a photograph and a short write-up on the author. The volume has been beautifully and painstakingly sheathed with an apt cover of a photo-text-sculpture installation by Sheba Chhachi, and reproductions of four colour prints of paintings and images on a quilt cover. All carry the basic positive editorial message of connections. This studied singleness of approach finally succeeds in imbuing the collection with a commendable integrity.

– Meenakshi Bharat, *The Pioneer*, June 1998

All the stories in the collection, from the serious to the light-hearted, the poignant to the bizarre, the surreal to the frightening, are well etched vignettes that transcend, all caste and language barriers to create a language of its own.

– D B, *The Statesman*, June 29, 1998

The affinities between India and Pakistan are brought out in the literature. Both countries share a common sensibility, language, nostalgia mythology and culture

– *The Asian Age*, March 1998

India and Pakistan: bound by common past and a contested afterlife. The stories explore the forced rupture in a composite culture.

– *The Pioneer*, April 1998

Mapping Memories (in English) and Bazdeed (in Urdu) are the fruits of a project sponsored by UNESCO. “Dedicated to the people of India and Pakistan,” it is “seen as one more bridge between the two neighbouring countries, built through Urdu fiction and the many shared memories.”

– UNESCO, June 1998

... Katha’s invaluable contribution to contemporary Indian literature lies in making us aware of these hitherto unknown talents.

Undoubtedly the greatest problem that needs to be overcome in this kind of exercise concerns the quality of translation. I sometimes feel that a good translation is so much more difficult to achieve than a piece of original writing. The lack of liberty, the need to be completely faithful to the spirit of the source language and yet produce the same quality of writing as the original is indeed a challenge.

This challenge has been met quite successfully in this volume, the different flavours and nuances of the original stories seem to come through quite well in translation. Undoubtedly one of the best stories, “Honour” by Qurratulain Hyder, has been translated by the author herself





The richness of Urdu language and literature, its poetic quality, and use of metaphor in the ancient tradition of the Indo-Persian art of storytelling – dastangoi – are reflected in many of the stories.

– Veena Kilam, *Indian Review of Books, January 16 – February 15, 1999*

**SEPARATE JOURNEYS** is a unique collection demonstrating the vitality and versatility of Indian writing today. Ranging from the passionate to the poignant, the personal to the universal, these fifteen stories are a moving testament of the human spirit. “It is sheer serendipity that the stories all happen to be by women.”

### Reviews of **SEPARATE JOURNEYS**

... these stories evoke distinct local/regional world views, different spheres of consciousness, specific ways of understanding human experience. And yet the differences are recognizably Indian (what constitutes Indianness, is thankfully, outside the scope of this reviewer’s job). More significantly, all the stories are written by women, and though excellent in a variety of different ways they seem to intersect at a common point, the pivot on which the collection is built ...

Each story makes, or attempts, a separate journey: a journey of transformation, of crossing over boundaries of gender. What society has organized as strictly male or strictly female is separate, only perhaps by a hair’s breadth and the stories effect a stepping across into a space where the self hovers/in between and is neither man/nor woman ...

... for sheer range and quality, and a feel of Indian literature today, the book is definitely in the “should read” category.

– Rohini Mokashi-Punekar, *The Book Review, January-February 1999*

The fifteen stories in this collection are all of such high standard that is difficult to choose a few to mention in a short review. Only a couple of them are by “men writers” (yes, I’m floating this idea) and most of them are in their translated form. The translations are excellent and the editor has ... applied a commendably tough and accurate editing pen ...

... truly every story in this collection deserves attention.

– Zai Whitaker, *Indian Review of Books, December 1998-January 1999*

... *Separate Journeys*, an anthology of stories by women writing in nine of India’s major languages. The book inaugurates a project which aims to make available, to British readers, full-length works by South Asian writers and to bring together fictions produced in different linguistic and cultural contexts. In her introduction, the editor, Geeta Dharmarajan, stresses the diversity of her contributors’ work, and even questions and idea of an “Indian” literature; yet her selection reveals a pattern of echoes, resonances and related trajectories pointing to the common concerns of modern Indian writers, and it highlights what some see as women’s determination to shed the confining garments of decency in which they have been clothed by male critics.

– Aamer Hussein, *Times Literary Supplement, May 28, 1999*

**Collections are in. But *Separate-Journeys* (compiled by Geeta Dharmarajan) is one that’s very, versatile.** The book has the choicest of short stories by people like Anita Desai, Ashapura Devi, Mahasweta Devi and Kamala Das ... the authors chosen in the book are all popular in their own right and the stories by them are all time favourites.

... a reader specially the one who has heard about all these authors, but can’t read them – is thankful for Dharmarajan’s, effort. **The book in English gives him a taste of the literature written in many languages** ... Those looking for access to every popular Indian writing often feel frustrated because the very language



that's made the stories their worth bars him from reading. So when he has competent translators retaining the sense of the language and the literature what more can the reader ask for?

After reading *Separate Journeys* one also feels that the very diversity that differentiates the stories, also loops them together, sensuously, delicately. "It's like some bright colours cajoled into each and every fibre by varying hands and minds."

Each separate journey takes us places we have been to, each of us in our own unexplored ways ... **In the poignant telling of each story, Indian literature once again reigns supreme. One looks forward to many more of such collections.**

– A C, *The Statesman*, May 25, 1998

... **splendid showcase of short stories by Indian women writers.** This collection features stories by the likes of Mahasweta Devi, Kamala Das, Mamoni Raisom, Goswami and Versha Das and have been translated by some very competent translators ... The drawings by T Vaikuntam impart a visual unity to the book.

– *The Telegraph*, April 24, 1998

**SLEEPWALKERS**, the first book in the Katha Perspectives series, is Joginder Paul's much acclaimed novella about migration simple, suggestive and subtle, this makes for a satisfying read. Also included in this volume are two excellent Urdu stories chosen by Paul which unravel astonishingly dissimilar responses to the theme of religious morality as well as essays by eminent critics that give this volume an added dimension.

### Reviews of SLEEPWALKER'S

A great deal has been written, especially in the short story genre, about the trauma and anguish of Partition. Yet strangely, not enough has been written about what followed. The Partition of the country did not end in a cul de sac. Life went on. Those who made their way to "their" side of the boundary went on to make new lives for themselves in their new homeland. Save for the occasional academic studies and commemorative surveys such as the recent 50 years of independence brouhaha there has been no attempt to tell the story of the migrant, that strange rootless creature caught between two worlds till time and circumstance force him to have an identity of his own.

Joginder Paul, himself a migrant from Sialkot who forged a new life for himself in India, captures the essential duality of the migrants psyche. At home and yet not fully at ease, living in the present yet constantly looking back at what once was, upwardly mobile yet never fully secure, they are the victims of history.

In Joginder Paul's hands this story of migration has been told against a Pakistani background, but it could equally well be set in India or East Germany or for that matter anywhere in the world where people have been uprooted from their land and planted, like alien seeds, in a new sometimes hostile, sometimes indifferent land. **Sleepwalkers** (Khwabrau in the Urdu original) is an allegorical tale of two cities the real Lucknow (or Nukhlau as old-time Lucknow-wallahs would have it) left behind in India and the transplanted city created by homesick migrants in the heart of Karachi, Pakistan. Come night, the streets and alleys, squares and marketplaces of this transcreated city throng with a motley bunch of sleepwalkers. During their waking hours, these immigrants, destined forever to carry the tag of "mohajirs," somehow keep their demons at bay, but in their sleep they flit through their city of dreams like ghostly apparitions. They are the strangers in their own home, a homeland they fought long and hard for. Can there be a greater misfortune than not feeling at home in your own house?" This is the question that gnaws away at their consciousness night and day and it is to assuage this sense of maddening dislocation that they walk





the streets of their beloved Lucknow-in-Karachi, drawing upon a brotherhood of similarly displaced souls. “This is Lucknow ... Tilting their caps in the Lukhnavi style, several streets converge upon the square all at once, as if the whole world were flocking there. When not an inch of space remained in Ameenabad, the mohajirs spread themselves around it. And in this way, all of Lucknow in Karachi was peopled. Not just the old city, but also the new one born from the womb of the old was soon spreading its spirit of playfulness over the suburbs. They say people come and go, places stay where they are. But, in this case, the mohajirs had transported an entire city within the folds of their hearts. With some came the bricks of their homes, intact. Some brought a whole *galli*, and others transported the bustling main road beyond the *galli* – whatever they could contain in their hearts!”

This Lucknow is no mere product of a single fertile imagination; it is the coming together of an entire way of life, given shape and colour by a collective consciousness.

The intricacies of “pure” Urdu (for they will have none of the Punjabi or Sindhi Urdu spoken by the locals), the flavour of Malihabadi mangoes, the complexities of culture or *tehzeeb*, the names of *gallis* and *mohallas* and *chowks* all have been faithfully reproduced, grafted as it were on a fully grown tree and expected to produce a fruit and blossom that will match if not excel the original. But can such a miracle happen? Obviously not, for just ‘as surely as a neem tree can not yield mangoes, no amount of cultural exclusion can make an imaginary paradise be mistaken for the real.

The issue of real and make-believe is wonderfully juxtaposed in the central character of Deewane Maulvi sahan. Unable to cope with the trauma of leaving his beloved city, he finds refuge in a harmless madness, a delusion that he has nurtured deep inside his mind and within the walls of his Nawab Mahal, the epitome of Lukhnavi culture in a strife-torn city of bombs and Kalashnikovs. But reality comes stealthily creeping into Deewane Maulvi sahan’s world of make-believe when a bomb shatters his home and kills most of his family. With his sanity restored he wants to go home, to his real home, the one he had left behind in Lucknow, till his grandchildren remind him, “**But this is Lucknow. Bade Abbu!**” And so the question ‘of real and imaginary continues. What is real, what is not ... it is all a state of mind.

Throughout this amazing tale of the real and the imaginary, what is and what was, paradise lost and paradise regained only to be lost again, there is a compassion, a sense of complete empathy with these troubled, night-walking souls.

Joginder Paul has obviously trod similar ground and experienced at first hand the bewildering uncertainty of the migrant sensibility.

**The translation by Sunil Trivedi and Sukrita Paul Kumar has all the tartness and piquancy of the original. Reading the novels in English, one feels truly in a world transported, not created or re-created as most translations attempt to do.**

Also included in this, the inaugural volume of the *Katha Perspectives*, are two short stories chosen by Joginder Paul “The Goatherd” by Ashfaque Ahmad and “A Palace in Paradise” by Sajid Rashid.

The two stories reveal in two distinctive ways dissimilar responses to the same themes, that of religious morality. While the former reveals a faith that is innate, almost a way of life, in the latter religion is a deterrent in the way of social legitimacy and career advancement. The two stories, so different in style and approach, are similarly occupied with the truth of religion at its core.

– Rakshanda Jalil, *The Hindu*, Sunday, June 7, 1998



This collection is multi-faceted and worth buying. The translators give the reader a taste of the richness of Urdu literature ...  
– S C, *The Statesman*, *June 1, 1998*

A powerful story of the “mohajir migration to Pakistan - of nostalgia and re-creation of a beloved past, of a sane madness and insane reality.  
– *The Pioneer*, *April 1998*

**THE BEST OF RAJA RAO.** Put together by Makarand Paranjape, this classic, the fourth in the Kalha Qassics series, offers the choicest samplings of Raja Rao’s works ranging from short stories and extracts of novels to nonfiction, richly invested with his understanding of history, politics and philosophy. The volume also offers photographs from Rao’s personal collection, samples of his handwriting and a map depicting the dates, places and events which are of importance in his life. Shri H Y Sharada Prasad released. **The Best of Raja Rao** on the 9th November 1998 at the Sahitya Akademi Auditorium. Very close associates of Katha gathered for this special occasion. The release was followed by a prayer by Vidya Rao, an introduction to Raja Rao’s works by Makarand Paranjape and readings from the book.

#### Reviews of **THE BEST OF RAJA RAO**

... as is evident from Katha’s anthology of his writings, Rao’s work is unique in breaking through English mannerisms of word-stitching to forge Indian speech and rhythm of action. No one, perhaps, has written a novel like *Kanthapura* (his first) using the narrative method employed in the Puranas. His narratives have interminable conjunctions, paraphrases, digressions, debates. But the quest is single-pointed: What is Truth? How can man be one with God? Katha’s collection, then, is an introductory peek-a-boo into a world Rao has created in sixty years. It encompasses continents and histories, in all excerpt from *The Serpent and the Rope*, it stretched from Aix to Benares, the “surreal city” that epitomizes India. is a confluence of meanings: “You never know where reality starts and illusion ends; whether the Brahmins of Benares are like the crows asking for funereal rice balls, saying “caw-caw”; or like the sadhus by their fires, lost in such beautiful magnanimity, as though love were not something one gave to another, but what one gave to oneself. And yet when you looked up you saw the lovely smile of some concubine ... When you see so many limbs go purring and bursting on the Ghats by the Ganges, how can limbs have any meaning?” Or for that matter writing. Rao’s is a useful, sincere answer.

– Jitendra Pant, *The Express, Magazine*, *February 21, 1999*

The writer who brought Indian English to the forefront is early as the 1930s with his classic, *Kanthapura*, recently celebrated his ninetieth birthday **Katha, the premier literary organization celebrated this occasion with The Best of Raja Rao – brilliant anthology of his selected weeks which brings to the reader extracts from his representative works like *Kanthapura*. *The Serpent and Pope*, “The Policeman and the Rose,” “Comrade Kirillov,” “The Chessmaster and His Moves.” More importantly, it lays bare his philosophy of writing and his skillful blend of the European tradition with the Indian style to create a distinct body of work which was quintessentially native ...**

Today, when literary seminars are agog with postulations on the new generation of writers, there is hardly a murmur about Raja. Obviously, an acute case of indian an anesia, which might be cured through Katha’s endeavours to reclaim a lost legacy.

– N K, *The Sunday Times of India*, *November 15, 1998*





... a judicious mix of vintage Raja Rao ... Makarand Paranjape, self-confessed worshipper of the writer and his writings, seems to have deployed adequate discipline in making the selection. In his introduction, he has sought to interpret and analyse Rao's writings from a fresh perspective, which not only adds hitherto unseen dimensions but also provides introspective meaning. The selection, it seems, in some unintended way, draws attention to Raja Rao's short stories ...

Paranjape rightly senses the valiant attempt as a deliberate departure from the famous style and concern in "Comrade Kirillov," probably the least understood and read work by Raja Rao and the shortest of his narratives ...

**Makarand Paranjape must be complimented for making this remarkable selection, the reading of which will expose the reader to the world of the author because his "sweep is so staggering, Rao delves into almost the whole of Indian history, from the invasion of the Aryans to the advent of British rule." A must for any student of Indian English writing, and an admirer of Raja Rao.**

– Suresh Kohli, *The Hindu*, Sunday, March 7, 1999

... it is a Katha Classic endeavour, a sincere and well-researched compilation with an extensive and intensive introduction ... All ... the excerpts in this compilation reveal snatches of ... brilliance ... as an introduction to more in depth reading, the compilation is a laudable effort.

– D B, *The Statesman*, Monday, January 25, 1999

This collection offers some of the best of Raja Rao's works, ranging from short stories and extracts of novels to non-fiction like history, politics, philosophy.

– *The Pioneer*, Saturday, December 19, 1998

**THE ESSENCE OF CAMPHOR** is a collection of ten shore stories by Naiyer Masud is the first ever selection in English translation. Naiyer Masud is a scholar of Urdu and Persian Studies, who retired as Professor of Persian Studies from the University of Lucknow. He is a recipient of the Presidential Certificate (If Honour (1977) awarded to him for his "outstanding contribution to Persian." Shri Shamsur Rahman Farooqi released the book on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1998 at the India International Centre. It was followed by readings from the Urdu original by Masud Sahab and from the translation by Baran Rahman. After the readings, there was an informal discussion between Masud Sahab and Faruqi Sahab on the craft of writing.

### Reviews of **THE ESSENCE OF CAMPHOR**

Each narrative evokes old world Lucknow, where he has lived all his life ...

Shamsur Rahman Farooqi, that sensitive Urdu critic ... once told Muhammad Umar Memon - who has edited the collection with an inspired flock of translators - that Masud's stories go nowhere. "they're like dreams." **Go, submerge yourself in his fictional maze. His stories, fragments of a dream really, work - as Kafka would say - quite like an "axe for the frozen sea inside us."**

– Suclipta Datta, *Oudook*, January, 25, 1999

In what is the first ever translation of Naiyer Masud's original Urdu short stories, the old world charm of Lucknow is recreated for the readers.

– *The Pioneer*, November 14, 1998

Naiyer Masood's enigmatic fictional universe is refreshingly unlike anything else in Indian fiction.

The Essence of Camphor, the first collection of his Urdu short stories to be made available in English translation by Katha, is an enigma wrapped in layers of sparse yet inviting prose, which reveals only what



the author chooses to unravel. Masood stands quite apart from the class of contemporary fiction writer in that his narrative is seemingly directionless. Much like the essence of camphor, his world is to be visited and experienced, rather than recognised and understood.

Even in translation, you can soak in the atmosphere. Though his is an unmistakably fictional world, it is peopled with characters who have a grace and simplicity untouched of the demeaning complexities of contemporary life ...

The uniqueness, of the writer's craft is reinforced in all the ten stories that form the collection ...

... it is the atmosphere that haunts you long after you are through with reading. The stories yield as much meaning as the reader infuses into them.

**Katha deserves a warm hug for having brought him to the English reader with minimal distortions.**

– Ashish Sharma, *The Express Magazine*, November 29, 1998

The *Essence of Camphor* by Naiyer Masud is a collection of short stories which is a perplexing departure from the mainstream Gerber and style of 'short stories' ...

Entirely underivative and unlike anything that preceded them, in the history of Urdu fiction, these stories are in a class by themselves. They are different from the work of the early Romantics and didactics on the one hand, and social realists such as Munshi Premchand, and the progressive writers such as Sajjid Zaheer, Krishan Chandar and Ismat Chughtai, on the other.

Each narrative of this collection evokes the old worldly ... charms of Lucknow. All that through different protagonists who, although the centre of everything, are often able to maintain a kind of elevating objectivity. For example the Ittar manufacturer in the first story *The Essence of Camphor*: Camphor here alludes to the elusive, delicate, perishable elements of human life, which can only be retained essentially, not materially. The story has phosphorescence texture to it. And this shimmering quality persists through out the book.

Words are selected with extreme care not for their meanings, but for their predisposition to evoke silence and stillness in which [the] elusive becomes self-evident. There is nothing arbitrary about these stories although they do not exactly function on a particular line of happenings. Most of the narrations are hanging prose, in vacuums of abstractions.

Psychological time is ticking with audibly a stillness itself is in a constant state of flux, the tendency of the human mind is to fathom and move on. But Masud's narratives work as a reminder against completion and closure. One experiences things in dynamic movements not as objects with fixed perimeters, in a state of repose or quiescence. So one cannot be done with them and move on. Circularity has no terminus.

Finishing one of his stories ... does bring ... a continual engagement with the unsaid and the ineffable, a blurred image of which may be preserved in memory. **Translation work is also specially commendable. Such translations would be a very optimistic gesture for those regional masterpieces in anonymity. Katha is bringing up some exquisite works of regional languages into the wider arena of English language readership. Also commendable is the quality of translation.**

– Reviews

**WORD AS MANTRA:** The Art of Raja Rao,' the second volume of works on Raja Rao coincided with The Best of Raja Rao: A Kama Classic. Katha published this book in association with the University of Texas at Austin where Raja Rao had previously served as professor of Philosophy. The book was published on the writer's 90th birthday.

This collection brings together some of the best and lost recent international scholarship on Raja Rao.





Edited by Professor Robert L Hardgrave Jr, *Word as Mantra* provides diverse critical as well as personal perspectives on Raja Rao – the writer, the teacher, the philosopher the man and commemorates the coming of age of Indian English writing.

### Reviews of WORD AS MANTRA: THE ART OF RAJA RAO

*Word as Mantra: The Art of Raja Rao* is a collection of essays ... [which] comprises recent scholarship on Raja Rao by distinguished scholars ... The two books ... complement each other and are a good initiation for reader and scholars concerned with a search for meaning in life.

– Alka Tyagi, *The Asian Age*, January 24, 1999

The *Word as Mantra* brings together the art of Raja Rao. – *The Pioneer*, Saturday, December 26, 1998

**This is a collection of some outstanding international scholarship on Raja Rao.** The book offers a range of critical and personal perspectives on Rao. – *The Pioneer*, Saturday, December 19, 1998

Mr Sharada Prasad, who released the book *Raja Rao - A Katha Classic*, brought by Sahitya Akademi and Katha to coincide with the author’s ninetieth birthday, described the book as “the best tribute to one of India’s best writers in English.” – *The Hindu*, Tuesday, November 10, 1998

**KATHA PRIZE STORIES vol 8** featured fourteen languages and fifteen stories. Maithili was introduced for the first time in KPS8. Shri Amar Nath Sehgal, renowned muralist and sculptor released the book on 13th December 1998 at the India International Centre, New Delhi. The release was followed by the Award ceremony where almost all award winners, were present. Prior to the release a two-day workshop was organized for the award winners who came from different parts of the country to participate in the Katha Colloquium held on 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> December 1998 at the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.

### Reviews of KPS VOL 8

... the final product is a rich tapestry of present-day India, woven with the intricate and diverse patterns that constitute the-fabric of this country, not necessarily echoing a oneness of a mythical commonality but preserving the unique qualities that make up the fibre of a specific language. The themes are varied -and wide-ranging - feminist, revolutionary, dalit ...

For the very first time Katha has given us the pleasure of reading a translation of the oral literature – orature as it is called nowadays - of the **Kunkna Dangi Adivasis ... from Gujarat**. “The Tale of Raja Manasinha and Rani Salavan” narrated originally by Dahyabhai Vadhu is a wonderful tale of princes and princesses and their adventures, so beautifully woven and so creatively translated that the very beginning enchants us ... **A must read for all those stuck on Disney tales - here’s something so refreshing, and at the same time so familiar, that it leaves us begging for more.**

**This is but an appetizer of what this volume actually contains. It is a collection that is rewarding in its choice of stories, the wide variety of language it sources, not to mention the wonderful readability it sustains, without in any way losing the individual character of each specific language literature. Go out and get it!**

– N Kamala, *Indian Review of Books*

Over the past eight years, the *Katha Prize Stories* series have undoubtedly more than established the importance of regional fiction. Its publishers can justifiably take credit for creating a growing interest in regional/literature. Now, the Katha team has brought out another volume, the new *Katha Prize Stories*.





volume, that strays clear of the beaten track and establishes' the immense talent waiting to explode on the literary horizon, It explores, for the first time, arange of ideas – the man-woman relationship, folk literature of dalit sentiments-and the feminist viewpoint.

**Some of the stories leave you with a haunting feeling, while some shock you into accepting the harsh realities of life. Still others talk about compassion. Each story is a short journey but leaves one asking for more.**

Oral literature have always been part of India's culture, but the tradition is gradually fading away. **In an attempt to retain some of these folk traditions and dialects, Katha has gone through a process that few can sustain. It has established that popular language literature is still alive and has takers.** Unfortunately, translations have to be most often in English.

Jayant Bendre's story "May We Be the Way the Lord Meant Us to be," is a chilling account of urban terrorism. The arms of the mafiosi are long and through his seemingly simple story about a family in Mumbai, he shows the extent to which innocent lives are destroyed by terrorism.

S Diwaker with, "Who Knows How to Live" talks about the cross that a family bears every generation. **The most ambitious translation is the story of Raja Manasinha and Rani Salavan, which was sung by the Kunkna Dangi Adivasis of Gujrat and translated from that dialect into Gujarati by Dayabhai Vadhu a Kunkna tribal himself ... one thing that stands out is the rich cultural heritage of the tribe.**

– Suchitra Behal, *The Hindu Sunday, January 17, 1999*

The vibrancy and vigour of an oral narrative, so closely rooted in the soil, are never dissipated even as the readers are transported into exotic kingdoms and heavenly courts. Sheer lyricism emanates out of every twist and turn of the tale, despite its -iron framework of rules, motifs and established orders. **Katha's initiative is particularly praiseworthy because it gives to the readers a piece of little tradition at a time, when the new generation is looking westward for inspiration.**

Inclusion of an oral folk story is just one amouamany "firsts" achieved by Katha this year. For the first time a Maithili story is included ...

**... the Volume 8 is a winner, leaving very little scope for caviling.**

Fourteen short stories, culled from thirteen. Indian languages, present a breathtaking range of forms and content. Despite the diversity of locales and setting – urban, rural, ethereal, cross-border trademark India is never to be missed in each one of them. The skirmishes between castes and communities, subjugation of the downtrodden, the loneliness and angst of the aged, fiendish designs of the political manipulator, survival of humanism even in the heart of darkness – the frames which build the social mosaic of present-day India run through the anthology. **The Multiplicity of approaches to storytelling which characterize this volume, establishes the short story as the most promising and popular genre in almost all the regions ...**

**The process of selection of these stories is a year-long grind, involving myriad of imaginative minds. No wonder, it showcases the best that Indian literature has to offer in 1997.** Barring a few patches like Kashmir, North East other than Assam, the whole Indian society finds expression in these stories. If the editor's note be our guide, with the projects in hand, these parts will soon be mirrored in the future volumes. Given the quality of the present stories, that is something to look forward to.

– Chinmay Kumar Hota, *Sunday Times, January 24, 1999*

**Fourteen different ways of looking at India. All authentic, all insightful, all comprehensible.** And though it's the eighth volume in as many years, Katha has taken many more turns to get at the heart of the ethos it





relives. There's no denouement in the process, only more of sharing of the rich diversity of our storytelling experiences.

India comes alive in eminently readable translations for the benefit of the English reader. The collection is disturbing, heartwarming, nostalgic, resigned, hopeful, and full of despair by turns. If the quality of short stories selected for translation is anything to go by, Indian fiction in its various regional flavours seems to be doing just fine. And for the first time, *Katha* also includes an oral fable of the Kunkna Dangi Adivasis of Gujarat ...

**Those of us who're tired of poorly edited and badly proofed Indian publications in English will particularly find *Katha Stories* a delight. Read it.** – *The Express Magazine, December 27, 1998*

In a country like India, both enriched and fractured by its multilinguality, *Katha's* latest volume of prize stories-in-translation is a generous offering ...

... there are moments of pure joy ... perhaps the loveliest of which is Sriramana's "Mithunam" translated by Syamala Kullury ...

[One should approach the volume with] a desire to taste varied sensibilities and styles ...

– *Mitali Saran, Business Standard, January 26, 1999*

**Like *Katha's* previous volumes, this one puts together from regional languages stories with a fascinating range of idea and topics.** Fourteen stories explore diverse issues yet an underlying theme, that of survival, can be detected. Survival is explored through the dynamics of human relationship, be it a relationship between parents and children or between strangers. Another important thematic intervention is that of survival in the situation of urban violence. A novel attempt has been made in this volume: a written presentation of a living oral tradition from Gujarat. This is an interesting and important addition as it records for posterity traditions, which may otherwise die ...

***Katha* has brought the English-reading audience closer to regional language literature. One hopes this will eventually make international readers too focus on Indian literature beyond Indo-Anglian writing.**

– *Urmi A Goswami, India Today, January 25, 1999*

The *Katha* awards instituted eight years ago present a fascinating range of ideas and topics – philosophical questions, larger existential problems, social values, man-woman relationship and most elusive rasas – hasya and sringara.

These short stories also present a varied range of style from folk to oral literature, subaltern, feminist and experimental writings. The stories give an insight, where the media reports do not fully present the picture of real problems, and try to find a solution.

– *The Pioneer, December 14, 1998*

#### **KATHA-THE BRITISH COUNCIL DIVISION SAARC TRANSLATION CONTEST**

*Katha* and The British Council Division of the British High Commission had conducted two All India Translation Contests in 1993 and 1996-97. They elicited a good response. The winning translations were published as *Visions Revisions* vols 1 and 2. Encouraged by the positive response to this unique endeavour, *Katha* put forward a proposal to the British Council Division for organizing a South Asian Translation Contest encompassing the SAARC nations of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The British Council agreed to the proposal and work commenced on this vast project.

The procedure that is being following is:



Katha selects a short story each in 20 languages from the subcontinent. The stories are selected after an exacting process of nomination, shortlisting and selection. Contestants are given the choice to choose from one to three stories to translate into English. They register by paying a registration fee. Katha then sends them the stories in the chosen languages to translate into English. They are given around two months to translate and submit the translations.

The translations are judged scrupulously in three phases - preliminary screening, which will be mostly in-house with the help of volunteers; screening by resource people who will check the translations for readability, fidelity to the text, etc. and the final adjudication by judges from the SAARC countries. The prizewinners will be awarded and the translations published in a volume.

## Katha Vachak

The research done by this project resulted in the retelling and translation of the stories by Pemchand, Ismat Chughtai and Mahasveta Devi. They were published in the form of colourful books for the adult neoliterate. They are:

**ARJUN**

**PANCH PARAMESHWAR**

**DOHAATH**

## Saat Sahelia

The research and teaching/learning material development by this project resulted in the publication of a primer on gender and development - Stree Shakti - in four languages, namely, Hindi, English, Kannada and Malayalam. This primer was also published in the form of a workbook. It would enable the teachers working with groups who do not speak these four languages to translate the text from any of the four languages into the language of the group.

## The House of Tamasha!

The following seven books were brought out under this project.

**PRINCESS WITH THE LONGEST HAIR**

A picture book with a fascinating tale of the Princess with the Longest Hair. Suitable for the age group of 7 to 10 year olds. Vandana Bist has done the exquisite illustrations for the book. She received the first Chitrakala Award for this book.





### **CROCODILE AND OTHER STORIES**

Exciting stories by Shankar, Subhadra Sen Gupta and others. Suitable for 7 to 10 year olds.

### **ON A SUNNY SHINY NIGHT AND OTHER POEMS**

Exciting poems by Rosalind Wilson, Mari Evans, Safaar Hashmi and Geeta Dharmarajan. Suitable for 7 to 10 year olds.

### **REACH FOR THE MOON!**

Stories, poems and information on the universe. Suitable for 7 to 10 olds.

### **THE ELEPHANTS CHILD AND OTHER STORIES**

General stories by well-known Indo-Anglican writers like Rudyard Kipling and Indian writers like Sukumar Ray and others. Suitable for 7 to 10 year olds.

### **TIGERS FOREVER AND OTHER POEMS**

Poems by well-known Indian poets like Ruskin Bond, Rabindranath Tagore and so on. Suitable for 7 to 10 year olds.

### **THE WORLD AROUND US!**

Stories, poems and information on environment. Suitable for 7 to 10 year olds.





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