

# *Pramlocha*

**AMBASHANKAR NAGAR**

Translated by  
**Jaikishandas sadani**

**BHARATIYA VIDYA MANDIR**

the

int-

ned

;

of

ing

ics;

res,

and

vey

try

this

ew

and

ble

der

Dr.

The

as

ian

ore

the

and

hra

ndir

Ltd.

## INTRODUCTION

Indian literature is full of Puranic Lore which convey the profound thoughts of our culture. They aptly express the social, ethical and spiritual ideals cherished by the people of yore. One such story is Pramlocha.

While I was engaged in the research of Hindi manuscripts in Gujarat, I came across few shlokas-verses in the 'Kandopakhyan' or the lore of 'Kandu'. These shlokas narrate the story of Maharashi Kandu and the celestial nymph Apsara Pramlocha. I had heard about Menaka, Urvashi, Rambha, Tilottama and others, but the name of Pramlocha was a new addition. I became curious to know more about her. On further reading of puranas I learnt that the story of Pramlocha is also found in *Brahma Purana* and *Vishnu Purana*. In the second section 178th chapter of *Brahma Purana*, while stating the importance of Purushottam Khetra, the region near about the Godavari river, Brahma refers to the intense austerily of Muni Shardula Kandu. Indra, being scared of this severe penance, sends the heavenly nymph Pramlocha to vitiate his austerity. Maharashi Kandu is enticed by her and is infatuated by her alluring love, for a very long time. One day while seeing the setting sun Maharashi Kandu becomes aware of this deluding infatuation. This results in his very strong self-indignation. He again resumes his penance on the holy region of Purushottama Kshetra near by the Godavari river.

The first section of 15th chapter of *Vishnu Purana* also narrates the story of Kandu and Pramlocha and their further relationship with the Prachetas and Marisha. Prachetas mar-

ried Marisha, the daughter of Kandu and Pramlocha. Daksha Prajapati is their son. From them commences the creation by conjugal couple. In other puranas also there is a similar story only with slight variation, namely the sleep of delusion of infatuated Maharashi Kandu is increased from 709 years, 6 months and 3 days to 8000 years.

In this Purana Katha I was mainly attracted to that specific moment of enlightenment of Rishi Kandu when he woke up from the sleep of delusion. On waking he felt that the duration of 8000 years was much lessr than four prahars or 12 hours. The purport of the Puranic story may have been to expound the importance of Vaishnava Bhakti or devotion and the sanctity of the Purushottam Khetra. But the real purpose of this poem is to show the profound depth of the innate-traits or Sanskars of man. It is these Sanskars that make a man truly great. In some adverse moments, the blazing embers of Sanskars may be darkened by the covering of ashes but they are not extinguished. With a little blowing of air they become enlivened again. It is this awakening of Sanskars that make a man divine, that is Nara into Narayana.

There are many such episodes in the Puranas where in hundreds of years appear to man as hardly a moment. At times in an inkling he experiences several births. In the Puranas there is a story of a Brahmana named Gadhi, who left his wooden sandals 'Khadau' and clothes on the banks of the river Ganges and went for bathing. He just took a dip and no sooner he came out he said he had lived three consequitive lives in this small span of time. Though he saw that his clothes and khadau were lying on the bank as he had left them.

sha  
on  
lar  
on  
rs,  
hat  
he  
hat  
our  
ay  
kti  
ra.  
nd  
ese  
se  
ed  
ed.  
It  
hat  
in  
At  
he  
ho  
ks  
a  
ee  
aw  
he

Such stories are in vogue not only in our country but in foreign lands as well, wherein the speed of time is either elongated or shortened in duration. In America there is a popular story of "Oisen-Nive" in "Lands of the ever Young" There I happened to see the similarity of this love story with that of 'Pramlocha'. These are universal stories. They convey knowledge of space and time in depth. This aspect in particular inspired me to write this poem 'Pramlocha'.

In conclusion I would like to elucidate that though the basis of this story is a lore from the Puranas, those who seek the puranic import in this poem may feel a little disappointed. Because other than the names of the people and the places nothing is very puranic in the poem. The story is certainly puranic but it has been presented with modern meaningfulness both in idiom and expression. Not only this but at places the puranic beliefs have been beseted or assailed. To cite an example, in a fit of anger Maharashi Kandu says that woman is the cause of the fall of man and censures her a lot. The Puranic Pramlocha listens to his vehmence, bows down, trembling, terribly scared and dijected and accepts what he says in fear lest she should be cursed by him. Being pregnant the embryo in her womb melts and falls like sweat on the leaves of trees as she runs away to her celestial abode. In due course it is born as their daughter Marisha. But in this poem Pramlocha, the heroine is a dynamic woman of self-respect who upholds the glory of womanhood. She fearlessly counters all the allegations made by Kandu and tells him Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha are for fulfillment of human life or Purushartha. She thereafter exhorts him to cast aside all his misconceptions regarding their love and thus relieves him of all the self-

indignation which had torched him.

In the Puranas Maharshi Kandu, goes in for austerity again in the Purushottam Kshetra, after enlightenment. He raises both his arms and penances a lot repeating Brahma Mantra for attaining Moksha or permanent liberation. But in this poem Maharshi Kandu gives up penance for individual redemption and prays for welfare of entire mankind. He becomes initiator of the future human race and leader of the nation. Hence though the story is puranic it is not completely so. Similarly though it is modern it is not entirely so either. Rather it is a happy blend of both.

I am grateful to the scholars and friends who have been appreciative and enriched me by their useful suggestions. The sketches by the brush of the Gujarat's great artist late Sri Jagannath Ahivasi have added to the sublimity of the book. I pay my humble obeisance to him.

In conclusion I would like to thank Sri Jaikishandas Sadani who is a well renowned translator. He has translated in English verse 'Kamayani' and 'Ansu' of the famous Hindi poet Jaishanker Prasad and selected verses of Surdas. I am happy that he has translated this poem in English and made it easily available for non-hindi readership. It is said about translation if it is beautiful it is not faithful and if it is faithful it is not beautiful. I have read this translation and I am happy that it is both beautiful and faithful. I am confident, the English readers will be quite satisfied with its English version.

'Shivam" Saraswatinagar,  
Ahmedabad-380015

- Ambashankar Nagar