

VENERATION TO THE ELDERS

ŚIVAKŌṬYĀCĀRYA'S VADḌĀRĀDHANE

Edited by
D.A. Shankar



Veneration to the Elders

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Śivakōṭyācārya's *Vaḍḍārādhane* (*Veneration to the Elders*) is the earliest extant prose work in Kannada language written by Śivakōṭyācārya during 940 CE. This classical text reflects the oral tradition of narrating stories of legendary religious ascetics based on the *gāhās* which were taken from *Bhagavati Ārāghanā*. This is a peculiar but commendable way of presenting stories of the senior and respectable ascetics combining oral and written styles of narration. Thus, *Vaḍḍārādhane* stands as an excellent example for an ancient classical text, fit for linguistic and cultural study. Each story in this collection, is wonderful in its own way. Generally, religious stories do not evoke interest but present a series of dull events. However, this text is full of incidents depicting human values, ways of wicked people, self-imposed vows, violence and non-violence and human life with all types of experiences.

Another distinguishing feature of *Vaḍḍārādhane* is that there is not a whiff of intolerance towards other religions or faiths or sects and this is most remarkable when we recall that most of our early writings indulge in belittling doctrines of faiths other than their own. This positive attitude, in a sense, makes this religious text absolutely liberal and almost secular.

Vaḍḍārādhane is now rendered into contemporary English by a team of writers and linguists.

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MANOHAR

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A Note from the Kannada Language Chair

Instituted in November 2015 by the Department of Kannada and Culture, Government of Karnataka, Kannada Language Chair of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi is dedicated to promote excellence in teaching, researching and publishing on language, literature and culture of Karnataka in all its multilingual and plural manifestations. The Chair encourages comparative studies across a wide range of domains and also aims at disseminating knowledge of Kannada language, literature and culture both at national and international levels.

The Chair has taken up translation projects with the objective of rendering into English a whole gamut of classical and non-classical Kannada texts of seminal nature. This process has been initiated with the translation of three major tenth century texts – *Kavirājamārgam* of Srīvijaya, *Sāhasa Bhīma Vijayam* of Ranna and *Vaḍḍārādhane* of Sivakōṭyācārya. The first two are already published and available for readers worldwide.

The current book *Vaḍḍārādhane* of Sivakōṭyācārya is undoubtedly one of the finest prose writings of Classical Kannada age and belongs to the ninth century AD. The 19 Jain stories are a collection of shared cultural artifacts that provide a sense of meaning about human existence. Each story of this collection attempts to answer ‘big’ questions such as why are we here?, what is our relationship to the world around us? And how are we related to one another? As against folktales, these stories, like Buddhist Jātaka tales are written down instead of being communicated orally and the storyteller has become invisible. While the role of the storyteller is always apparent for oral narratives, the identities and circumstances of those who originally set words to paper, or who later selected and edited those

words, are often obscured in organizing these tales, giving readers the impression that the written stories somehow came directly from, or were authorized by, a single, divine source. Hence, stories like these are unchangeable. However, such a conception of traditional storytelling texts does nothing to devalue traditional religious texts, but simply allows us to appreciate them in a different context.

The modern world is not suffering from the lack of good literature, good art, good theatre, and good music. But they are suffering from the silent, shameful conspiracy which has bound them together as enemies of humanity. Literature is suffering from the fact that it is not the primary moving force in their lives. Reading of certain texts like this, one can help to shape our lives and give meaning to them.

Translating a classical text like *Vaḍḍārādhane* into English is a challenge beleaguered with difficulties. Leading scholars of classical Kannada, Pof. R.V.S. Sundaram, Prof. Shubhachandra and Dr. H.S. Komalesha have jointly accepted this challenge and made the translation possible. Eminent critic, Prof. D.A. Shankar has edited it and wrote an insightful preface. I thank all of them for their industriousness and commitment. This may inspire other scholars to translate such classical texts.

I am thankful to Manohar Publishers & Distributors for taking this onerous task of publishing this daring translation of a monumental Kannada classical text.

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Preface

I think it is wise to stay with the wise and, therefore, without getting involved in the nitty-gritty of the place and the title and the question of authorship, I choose to stay with the considered judgment of scholars of repute that, for all practical and literary purposes, the title of our text is *Vaddaradhane*, the author's name Shivakotyacharya and the date of its composition is about CE 920. This almost generally accepted view makes *Vaddaradhane* the most ancient extant work in Kannada and equally significant, it makes *Vaddaradhane* the earliest creative prose work in Kannada. It also needs to be remembered that *Vaddaradhane* is, in an important sense, the inaugurator of a tradition of writing which combines in itself, in a pre-eminently creative embrace, religion and literature, ethics and aesthetics and pleasure and spiritual illumination. Pampa, the first great Kannada poet, is the finest exemplar of this glorious tradition.

Vaddaradhane is a collection of nineteen stories narrated by Shivakotyacharya and these stories have their source in the eleventh century *Brihatkatha Kosha* of Harishena in Sanskrit. Each story is preceded by a *Prakrit Gabe* which prescribes most succinctly the theme of the story that presents the details whatever. These *Gabes* are in the first century *Bhagavathi Aradhana* of Shivakoti.

Each of the central characters in here is a Purusha Simha, a man-lion or a heroic figure and each is a hero-religious who attempts heroically to earn for himself *Moksha* or final liberation absolute. But in this attempt to realize this wish there are various and several obstacles and each related either to the body or the mind or the soul and each in the relation to final, absolute liberation.

The struggle is basically a struggle human has in an inalienable part of actual living of a human being. What the individual

goes through is similar to or identical with the struggles are the tribulations one sees in *Everyman*, facing, resisting and overcoming temptations of the flesh and the spirit.

I choose 'Annikaputra', the shortest story in this collection, as an illustrative text but before that I would like to draw the attention of the reader to the introductory part of the text. The writer, in the true Indian authorial tradition bows to Sri Vardhamana, offers him salutations and then presents his intention with which he writes the text:

I bow to Vardhaman Jina who is an embodiment of that knowledge which is absolute and who, to all the three words, is like a mirror which reflects this pure consciousness untouched by any impurity.

And I narrate the stories of great men who through severe penance triumphed over twenty two kinds of obstacles which come in the way of one who strives after *moksha* or final, absolute liberation from all worldly fetters.

The story of Annikapura is the shortest in this collection and its prose is remarkable: sentences are short and simple and clear with hardly any rhetorical flourishes:

In Jambu Dwipa is located Bharata and in Bharata there is Magadha and to its north is Madhura. Its king is Prajapala whose wife is Suprabhe and they live happily enjoying all desired sensual pleasures. In the same town there is Dhanadatta, a Vaishya, who owns a large caravan and has a prosperous business. His wife is Dharani and they have a son called Dhanadeva.

Sometime later Dhanadeva, with a large caravan, carries a huge treasury, goes to south Madhura and there he comes across a royal Vaishya merchant called Tilaka Shresti whose wife is Nande and they have eight daughters among whom the youngest is the loveliest and is named Annika and she is given in marriage to Dhanadeva. They live there for a short time. Dhanadeva is busy buying and selling and makes a big fortune, much bigger than what he has brought with him. A little later Annika gives birth to a baby boy and he is called Annikaputra or the son of Annika. The boy, in the course of time, grows and becomes a handsome young man.

Time passes by and one day Damasuri, a sage with powers to look into the future, comes to the town and gives discourses on religion and dharmic values.

Dhanadeva goes to the sage and asks how long he is going to live. The

sage says, 'You have a small number of years to live.' After listening to this prediction, Dhanadeva abandons all worldly desires, parts from his parents and relatives and friends and like a Jain *Savana* studies all scriptures that need to be studied and then goes on a pilgrimage. Desiring to visit the Ganga region he gets into a boat and, as the boat moves up the river there rises a huge wild wind and the boat drowns. But Annika's son is unperturbed and unaffected and calmly accepts his fate and, standing in *Kayotsarga* position, gives up his wife and attains to the position of a *Kevali*.²

The pattern we see in this story is virtually the pattern of the each story we have in the collection.

In the midst of a life of luxury and pleasure, there suddenly happens a traumatic and transforming change for which there isn't any logical or rational explanation and yet the transforming change rings authentic and right psychologically. The change simply happens silencing all kinds of mundane enquiry. It rather resembles the illogical way in which things happen in folklore or mythology: a parrot foretells the future, a good man turns wicked and a rascal of a man becomes a sage overnight. There is no room here for a why or a how; it simply happens and it is there for all to see and comprehend slowly, magical it certainly looks like and yet is in a subtle way truer than the true.

Although *Vaddaradhane* is a collection of *Dharmic* stories which are focused on *Jnana*, *Darshana*, *Charitra* and *Tapas* or penance which help a human being realize ultimate liberation from all the shackles of living, it presents a world with which we are familiar: the actual, in fact, is the life-breath of these stories and not the abstract tracts or examples of lived truth, although it is those which make *Vaddaradhane* a unique kind of a religious literary text.

We have in the world of *Vaddaradhane*; kings and queens who live a sensual and luxurious life, and fondly pursue erotic pleasures; sons of righteous parents take to evil ways and live a wicked life; Vaishya merchants who own large caravans, have fleets of ships, cross the seas, buy and sell, lend money at interest and earn huge wealth; thieves are there who steal sheep and gold and there is a constabulary to catch and punish them; like Gajakumara there are men given to voluptuous living and there are scholars who know

the four *Vedas*; lustful men are here who murder in order to possess another man's wife; and there are colonies of prostitutes and courtesans along with whom are presented ordinary men like carpenters and fisher folk. Our familiar world is here with all its charms and eccentricities and peculiarities.

In terms of geography, we roam a vast area of land and the characters play out their life in Ayodhya, Magadha, Videha, Rajagriha, Hastinapura, Pataliputra, Saurashtra and Karahata down south. One encounters the whole of India.

There are here *Yakshas*, *Khecharas*, *Vidyadharas*, *Vyantaras* and various kinds of animals and birds: the mythical world existing lives by the side of the realistic one, happily!

It is an amazingly rich world and absolutely realistic and naturally the storytelling, the narrative styles too are realistic.

Although the primary aim of the stories is to enlighten men and make them move towards *Moksha*, they are in no sense didactic as the structure of the stories is dramatic and what is said is said representationally. The reader, in the process, accesses a world of normal human activity, full of normal human passions and follies, likes and dislikes. But the ostensible, the intended aim does not get weakened. On the contrary it gets reinforced as everything is acted out in normal human surroundings. And, sometimes, against a historical background as in the stories of Chanakya and the Nandas.

To cite an instance of dramatic rendering of human feelings and thoughts, one can look at incident presented in the story of Vrishabhasena Bhattara. King Pradyota has set out to capture a wild elephant but he misses his way and is tired and exhausted and is very thirsty. He sits near a well whose water he cannot reach and there comes the village headman's beautiful daughter, Jinadatte, to fetch water and on seeing her the following dialogue ensues. 'Ah, young lady will you pour some water for me to drink?' 'I shall do so.' And looking at the handsome young king, she draws water and pours into the outstretched palms of the king. He keeps drinking the water poured and keeps looking at her face and the water keeps flowing from the pot but his thirst is not slaked. He looks into her eyes and smiles and asks: 'Why do you tease me with your smile; can't you give me water without teasing me.' She smiles and steps

back to go to her father. It is a short little dramatic scene. *Vaddaradhane* is full of such lively incidents, far too many to be written about in this short introduction.

Another distinguishing feature of *Vaddaradhane* is that there is in it not a whiff of intolerance towards other religions or faiths or sects and this is most remarkable when we recall that most of our early writings indulge in belittling doctrines of faiths other than their own. This very positive attitude, in a sense, makes this purely religious text absolutely liberal and almost secular and this, it is possible to say, has made the Jaina view here non-militant and understandingly acceptable.

I hope that Shivakotyacharya will from now on speak to the non-Kannada speaking world as he has been to us these one thousand years.

I am grateful to Professor R.V.S. Sundaram who made it possible for me to profitably re-visit *Vaddaradhane* after a lapse of nearly two decades. I owe him and his team of translators many thanks.

D.A. SHANKAR



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A Note on Transliteration

Transliterating a regional text like *Vaḍḍārādhane* varies from transliterations of Sanskrit texts, which do not fit the case of old Kannada and other Dravidian languages. Since Kannada, like other Dravidian languages, has both long and short letters, ē and ō are employed to differentiate them.

There are special letters like 'ḷa' (retroflex lateral sound different from 'la'), 'ṛa' (trill different from the alveolar flap 'ra') and a peculiar sound 'ḷa', now pronounced as 'ḷa' and found frequently in Old Kannada (called 'raḷa').

The *anusvāra* which is governed by certain rules in Sanskrit is pronounced as 'm'. But the *anusvāra* replaces all nasals in Kannada, which confuses the reader who is unable to distinguish between the masculine singular ending ('n') and neuter singular ending ('m'). If the *anusvāra* is used for all nasals, the singular 'ān'(I) and plural 'ām'(We) would be written in the same way, adding to the confusion. Hence, we have retained the original pronunciation of the sounds. Nasals are represented by their respective symbols ('ṅ' for velar, 'ṇ' for palatal, 'ṅ' for retroflex and 'n' for alveolar or dental nasal) while 'm' is used for both the labial nasal 'm' as well as the *anusvāra* which is pronounced as 'm' even in the case of Sanskrit and Prakrit texts.



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Introduction

Vaḍḍārādhane (Veneration to the Elders) is the earliest extant prose work in Kannada language. It is one of the most important classical texts in Kannada which has attracted the attention of many scholars. There is much discussion about the authorship, title of the book, language and style of this work. A passage from the work was quoted for the first time by K.B. Pathak way back in 1883.¹ The passage was mentioned as the one quoted from Rēvakōṭyācārya's prose work. D.L. Narasimhachar published three stories titled *Sukumāra Svāmiya Kathe*, *Bhadrabāhu Baṭṭārara Kathe* and *Vidyuccōranemba Ṛṣiya Kathe* in *Kannada Sāhitya Pariṣatpatrike* in 1931 with an introductory note under Rēvakōṭyācārya.² In 1939 the same scholar published the story of Sukumāra Svāmi and the author was mentioned as Śivakōṭyācārya.³ Then, in 1949, all the 19 stories of this classical text were edited and published by D.L. Narasimhachar in a book form titled *Vaḍḍārādhane*.⁴

J.F. Fleet noted the title of this work as *Upasarga-kēvaligāla Kathe*.⁵ It was D.L. Narasimhachar who decided upon *Vaḍḍārādhane* as its title and the author of the work as Śivakōṭyācārya.⁶

There are no sources of information in the text for determining the date of its composition. Unlike the earliest extant work in Kannada, *Kavirājamārgam* (ninth century CE), in which a list of contemporary or earlier poets is provided,⁷ *Vaḍḍārādhane* does not provide any information about the contemporary or earlier literary scene in Kannada. Surprisingly, *Vaḍḍārādhane*, a great work of religious and cultural importance, and its author, were not mentioned in any contemporary or later works in Kannada. K.B. Pathak and other scholars proposed different dates but D.L. Narasimhachar, after consideration of lexical and grammatical usages in the text,

proposed 940 CE or even earlier part of the tenth century CE as its probable date.⁸ This conjecture of D.L. Narasimhachar seems to be cogent, but considering the linguistic, cultural and religious features of the text it is most probable that the work belongs to the earlier decades of the tenth century CE. It is also to be noted that in all probability, the explanation of the *gābhās* and narrating the stories in Kannada should have been in oral tradition even earlier to tenth century and the present text is an attempt to bring it as a written text.

Studies on *Kathākōśas* associated with *Bhagavatī Ārādhana*, a Prakrit text of first century CE, establish the origin and development of stories based on *gābhās* present in the above work. A.N. Upadhye observed that the nineteen stories in *Vaḍḍārādhane* were based on verses in *Bhagavatī Ārādhana* of Śivakōṭyācārya. The nineteen *gābhās* are in the *Kavaca Adhikāra* in the *Bhagavatī Ārādhana*. The same text is the source for narrating the life-histories of legendary religious heroes. There are other similar texts Sanskrit and Prakrit like *Bṛhatkathā Kōśa* of Hariṣeṇa and *Ārādhana Kathākōśa* of Nemidatta, which are in the form of *Kathākōśas*.

Vaḍḍārādhane reflects the oral tradition of narrating stories of legendary, religious ascetics based on the *gābhās* which were taken from *Bhagavatī Ārādhana*. This is a peculiar but commendable way of presenting stories of the senior and respectable ascetics combining oral and written styles of narration. Thus, *Vaḍḍārādhane* stands as an excellent example of an ancient classical text, fit for linguistic and cultural study.

Scholars like D.L. Narasimhachar,⁹ A.N. Upadhye,¹⁰ B.K. Khadabadi,¹¹ and Hampa Nagarajaiah¹² contributed to the studies of *Vaḍḍārādhane* taking into consideration various aspects present in the text.

Broadly speaking, *Vaḍḍārādhane* represents veneration to elders. The stories reflect the way in which life-achievements of elders should be narrated in a simple style. It is surprising that such an ancient text had been composed in a simple old Kannada style to reach the religious minded people of the day. In Jaina context, *Ārādhana* is not just paying respect to elders but it is a status achieved through right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. It is stressed again

and again through the *gābhās* at the beginning of the stories but also as a part of the portrayal of the achievements of the Jaina ascetics. The meaning of *Ārādhana* offered by A.N. Upadhye is noteworthy:

Ārādhana consists in firm and successful accomplishment of ascetic ideals, namely, Faith, Knowledge, Conduct and Penance, that are laid down in Jainism; in maintaining a high standard of detachment, forbearance, self-restraint and mental equipoise at the critical hour of death; and in attaining spiritual purification and liberation.¹³

Each story in *Vaḍḍārādhane* conveys a message. It has a great lexical value for its presentation of many Jaina technical terms and also of several old Kannada usages. Hundreds of place names and personal names used in this text help us to prepare a dictionary of names which have historical and cultural value. It also reflects the Indian way of naming persons, places, animals, mountains and lakes.

The stories have certain stylistic features suggesting the narration of such life-histories particularly in oral tradition. Kings in these stories rule over a city in a country in the *Bharata* land of *Jambu* island. The ascetics wander following the rules of staying with for one night in the village, five nights in the city, ten nights in the forest. They travel through villages (*grāma*), cities (*nagara*), fort towns (*khēḍa*), walled towns (*kharvāḍa*), border towns (*maḍamba*), port towns (*paṭṭana*) and coastal cities (*drōṇāmukha*). The ascetics are endowed with *avadbījñāna* (clairvoyance knowledge) of visualizing the past and the future. There are several other instances where Jaina customs and traditions are introduced. The text is a source material to know different religious practices, vows and ways of respecting elders. The stories give us an idea of social events of the day like crimes, punishments, marriage customs, life style of merchants and many other events of socio-cultural importance. In the story of *Sukumārasvāmī*, Vainayika steals paddy in the market-place. Vaika measures sixty *ballas* of paddy as twenty. A king rewards *Virapūrṇa*, keeper of the king's cows, with ten cows and three thousand *khaṇḍugas* of paddy. A merchant from *Ratnadvīpa* brings precious blankets valued at a lakh *dinars* each. Such interesting events are common in all the 19 stories of *Vaḍḍārādhane*.

There are several super-natural motifs in the stories making them

very close to folk tales. *Vidyābharas*, *kinnaras*, *yakṣas* and other demi-gods frequently appear on the scene. *Brahmarākṣas* and other super-natural beings appear and exhibit their magical powers.

Birth and death are represented in different ways, both natural and super-natural. Priyasēna, in the story of Sukaśālasvāmi, dies after struck by a thunder-bolt. Priyadarśana was bitten by a snake and died. Sukīrti stabbed herself to death. *Samādhimaraṇa*, *prāyōpagamana* and other ways of inviting death and re-birth are very common. Priyadarśana was reborn as an elephant. An elephant called Malaya-sundara was reborn as Kubērakānta, the son of Vijaya, a minister of Atiratha. Sanatkumāra and many other kings, moved by the illustrations and remarks of sages, develop aversion to worldly pleasures and receive initiation. After becoming ascetics, these sacred people endure hundreds of diseases and other afflictions. It is astonishing to know that these sages tolerate extreme pain while their body is burning in fire, stand on a burning rock and meditate, practice severe austerities, adopt the vow of *sanyasana*, accomplish the *Ratnatraya* and achieve the state of *Ārādhana*.

This wonderful text throws light on many historical and legendary events. It gives an account of famine in the north and the migration of ascetics to the south. Bhadrabāhu leads a party of eight thousand ascetics to the south. There is a mention of Kālbappu and Bhadrabāhu entering the place with his party of ascetics.

There are descriptions of naked ascetics, spreading of the school of half-clothing, divisions of *Jina-kalpa* and *Sthavira* as a part of story-telling in this text making room for further study of Jainism and its history.

Each story in the *Vaḍḍārādhane* is wonderful in its own way. Generally religious stories do not evoke interest but present series of dull events. However, this text is full of incidents depicting human values, ways of wicked people, self-imposed vows, violence and non-violence and human life with all types of experiences. There is a story in which a king, Agnirāja, weds his own daughter (The story of the sage Kārtika). There is a story in which a thief called Vidyuccōra shows all his skills in various branches of thievery (The story of the sage Vidyuccōra).

Vaḍḍārādhane gives us immense scope to undertake historical, geographical and place-name studies. There seems to be some

confusion in collecting information and presenting it in the text, but there is every possibility to make further investigation. For example, the text uses two names of Maurya emperors namely Candragupta Maurya and Samprati Candragupta. Pāṭalīputra and Ujjēni are mentioned as capital cities. The details given in *Vaḍḍārādhane* show that it is the earliest literary work in Kannada to record the Bhadrabāhu-Candragupta tradition.

Vaḍḍārādhane stands as a representative symbol of old narrative style in Kannada. With instruction and entertainment being the nature of presentation, *Vaḍḍārādhane* is undoubtedly an excellent example for blending religion with artistic presentation and clever mixing of oral and written styles. It is considered to be a landmark in the growth of early classical Kannada literature.

Our translation is based on the text edited and published by D.L. Narasimhachar. There are attempts to simplify the old Kannada style of the text and render it into a modern Kannada text. There are also attempts to translate salient parts of the text into English as a part of research work¹⁴ and also to present a simple translation omitting the *gābhās* and *ślōkas*.¹⁵ Our translation is faithful to the old Kannada text, following and retaining, the original flavour as far as possible.

This type of work needs a collaborative effort. The translation has been done with mutual understanding, discussion and fascination towards the great work which has a unique place in the history of Kannada literature. We are thankful to Professor D.A. Shankar for reading and making useful modifications in the translation. We thank Manjula Murali for undertaking the DTP work. We profusely thank Professor Purushothama Bilimale, Kannada Language Chair at Jawaharlal Nehru University and Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi for undertaking this publication.

Notes

1. 'An Old-Canarese Inscription at Torgal', *Indian Antiquary* XII: 95-6.
2. Vol. XVI-3
3. *Kannaḍa Sābhitya Pariṣatpatrike*, Vol. XXIV-4.
4. Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Bangalore, 1949.

5. *Indian Antiquary* XII: 99.
6. Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Bangalore, 1949.
7. Sri Vijaya, 2017, *Kavirājamārgam: The Way of the King of Poets*, 1, 29, 32, translated by R.V.S. Sundaram and Deven Patel, Delhi: JNU and Manohar.
8. *Kannada Sābitya Pariṣatpatrike*, vol. XXIV-4.
9. *Vaḍḍārādhane*, 1949, Bangalore: Kannada Sahitya Parishat.
10. Introduction to *Bṛhat-kathā Kōśa*, 1943, ed. A.N. Upadhye, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
11. *Vaḍḍārādhane: A Study*, 1979, B.K. Khadabadi, Dharwad: Karnatak University.
12. Hampa Nagarajaiah, 1999, *Vaḍḍārādhane-samagra adhyayana*, Bengaluru: Abhinava, 2nd edn., 2016.
13. Introduction to *Bṛhat-kathā Kōśa*, 1943, ed. A.N. Upadhye, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
14. *Vaḍḍārādhane: A Study*, 1979, B.K. Khadabadi, Dharwad: Karnatak University.
15. *Vaḍḍārādhane* (English Translation of Classical Kannada Stories). 2016, Dharwad: Karnatak University.