CHAPTER 1

LIFE AND WORKS OF KUNJUNNI RAJA
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Sanskrit was the medium of scientific and religious discourses in Ancient India. It has been furnished with solid contributions to the system of knowledge. The rich tradition and the scientific linguistic structure have made the language unique. Sanskrit possesses a vast source of original texts representing various genres of Epistemology. The realization of this fact led to the opening of Indology by western scholars.

Sanskrit research necessitates indepth traditional knowledge and the awareness of modern methodological devices. The accurate proportion of the above elements is also decisive in moulding the critical acumen of a researcher.

Sanskrit education played a pivotal role in shaping Kerala’s cultural tradition. The influence of Sanskrit can easily be traced out in the growth of Malayalam language and literature. There are so many erudite scholars and genius writers in the literary history of Kerala those enriched by the richness of Sanskrit. In this matter the contribution of various Royal families of Kerala is remarkable. The scholars and poets like Kunhikuttan Thampuran, A.R.Rajaraja Varma
and Kerala Varma Valiya koyil Thampuran are best examples in this regard. K.K.Raja the well known Malayalam poet and C.Kunhan Raja, the leading Indologist, represent this category. K.Kunjunni Raja (Raja), the eminent academic personality can be considered as the latest in this group. His life was almost dedicated to gain knowledge. His two theses *Indian Theories of Meaning (ITM)* and *The Contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature (CKSL)* are still authentic works in the respective fields.

**Life of Raja**

Raja was born on 26th February 1920 at Kumarapuram Palace, Naṭathara, Thrissur in central Kerala, as son of Kavutampuratti (Manolppadu) and Mundoor Kaipparambu Kavillathu Neelakandhan Namputhirippad. He was the only brother to 5 sisters. He has two elder sisters namely Ammini and Parvathi. The younger sisters of Raja were Kavu, Kanchana and Kochukutti.

K.K.Raja the famous Malayalam poet was the uncle of Raja. C.Kunjan Raja was another uncle of Raja and he belongs to Chittanjoor Royal family. Both K.K.Raja and Kunhan Raja, influenced Raja very much in his intellectual literary and cultural pursuits. The former influenced the *sahādayatva* in Raja and the latter highly motivated the
researcher in Raja. The wife of Raja was Santha who belongs to Paliyam family, associated with Cochin Royal Family. They have two daughters and two sons – Radhika, Lalitha, Girish and Sreekumar.

**Early Education**

The members of Royal family were fortunate to get Sanskrit and English education. Raja got the formal education of Sanskrit, as a system of tradition. He was keen in seeking knowledge from very early days. In his boyhood days he was called Mi¶ukkan which means brilliant. This reflects the emergence of brilliance and scholarship in him.

After the traditional education, he joined Moorkanikkara School for his primary education. His secondary education was at St. Thomas High School, Thrissur. In 1937, he passed matriculation with first class and first rank. His uncle K.K.Raja was a teacher at St.Thomas High School. Raja stayed with K.K.Raja till he completed B.A. Degree.

He took his bachelor’s degree in Mathematics from St.Thomas College Thrissur, with first class and first rank, in 1941. He chose Sanskrit for his higher studies and got post graduation in it. He has realized the possibilities and potentialities of this language by this time.
Raja himself admitted this fact in an interview, published in a Malayalam Daily.¹

After graduation in Mathematics he passed B.A.(Hons) examination in Sanskrit from Presidency College, Madras in 1943 with first class and first rank. In 1944 Raja took M.A. Degree in Sanskrit and Diploma in German in the same year with distinction from University of Madras.

Kunhan Raja was then Sanskrit Professor at University of Madras. He was a well known scholar in Oriental studies. He Raja was the supervising teacher of Raja for his first doctoral thesis titled *CKSL*. It was in 1943, Raja became a research scholar in the Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras and in 1948 Raja was awarded Ph.D Degree. Even after 65 years, it is still an authentic research work in the field without any change in the findings of Raja.

Raja started his second doctoral work with the scholarship of British council in the School of Asian and African studies at London University. When he was working at School of Oriental and African Studies, Prof. John Brough, gave guidance to him in this regard. The book *ITM* is the result of this research. This work aims at in
summarizing the various principles on semantic thought in Indian knowledge systems, in the light of emerging modern linguistic doctrines. This doctoral work is the only example of the best possible fusion of traditional and modern knowledge in Sanskrit śāstra based on perfect methodology.

**Professional Life**

Before joining London University for his second doctoral work in 1952, Raja worked as Sanskrit Lecturer in various Govt. Colleges for about 5 years (1948-52). They are Govt. College Chittoor, Maharajas College Cochin, University College Thiruvananthapuram and Victoria College, Palakkad.

In 1953, Raja joined the University of Madras as senior Lecturer in the Department of Sanskrit. This continued till the year 1958 when he was promoted as Reader in the same Department. In the year 1969 Raja became Professor and Head of the Department and continued until his retirement in 1980.

**Interventions in Academic fields**

Raja has associated with various research institutes. He was an active member of several advisory boards, review committees and
different academic bodies constituted by Governments and Universities. He was a member in several committees constituted by State and Central government pertaining to Sanskrit Studies.

He was the Honorary Director of Adayar library and research centre for a long period from 1980 to 2002. As a member of the editorial board, he edited *Brahmavidyā – The Adayar Library Bulletin (ALB)* volumes 44 to 64. Actually he was associated with the Research activities of Adayar library since 1951.

Raja was non residential senior fellow of Dravidian Linguistic Association (1980 -81). He had worked as Honorary Professor *Śāstra cūḍāmaṇi* scheme of the Govt. of India in Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute during the period 1981-82.

Raja worked for various research publications and journals. He was the joint editor of *ALB* in the year 1951. He was the member of its editorial board from 1955 and edited its volumes 44 to 64. He was editorial board member of the *Foundations of Language Netherlands* (Volume 1–12) and the *Studies in Language Netherlands* (Volumes 1–2). He was the chief editor of *Annals of Oriental Research (AOR)* published by University of Madras, from 1972 to 1988. He was the
honorary correspondent of Prācī-jyoti the journal published from Kurukshetra University. He was the editorial board member of Saṃskṛta manīśā, Banaras.

Raja was the member of various Boards and Panels. They are the advisory panel of the Central Board of Film Censors, Advisory Board for Sanskrit of Sahitya Akademi, Government of India, Grants Committee for Sanskrit, Government of India and the like. He was member of many important committees constituted by the Government of India for allied bodies like the University Grants commission, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, etc.

Raja was the member of the governing body and research committee of Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute. He was also the member of Academic council and the Senate of the University of Madras. He was the chairman of Board of studies in Sanskrit and correspondent for Oriental Research Institute (1972-80) of the University of Madras. He was the Member and Chairman of several Boards of Studies of several Universities in India.

Raja got associated with several research institutes in India and abroad. He was the Honorary Secretary of Madras Linguistic Circle
during the period 1963 to 72 and became the president in 1977. He worked as the life member of Linguistic Society of India, Dravidian Linguistics Association, Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute and Madras Kerala Samajam. The other institutes related to him are Madras Sanskrit College, the Sanskrit Akademi, the Samskrita Ranga, Music Akademi, Deccan College, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Samskrita Sahitya Akademi and Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan.

Raja has presided over several significant research seminars and conferences. In 1956 he was the president of research session of All Kerala Sahitya Parisad. In 1958 he presided over the Sister language session of its silver jubilee conference. In the world Malayalam conference held at Trivandrum in 1977, he chaired the Philosophy session. He was the secretary to the classical session (B) of the international congress of Orientalists, held at New Delhi in 1963.

Raja represented Govt. of India in the International Conference on Human Science of Asia and North Africa held at Mexico in the year 1976. He was the external Examiner of the Universities of Malaya and Kwalalumpur in the year 1977. He visited Poland in 1979 as an expert of Indian theatre. He visited and gave lectures to West German Universities like Heidelberg, Marburg and Hamburg Universities. Raja
was a regular participant in the sessions of conference, Linguistic Society of India and Dravidian Linguistic Association. Several research scholars worked under him and awarded with Ph.D degree. Raja evaluated several doctoral theses pertaining to Sanskrit, Theatre, Linguistics and Malayalam; both from India and Abroad.

**Intellectual Friendships**


His association with Sanskrit scholars of Kerala like P.C.Vasudevan Elayath, M.P.Sankunni Nair, K.P.Narayana Pisharadi, N.V.Krishnawarrier, R.Vasudevan Potti, Kuttkrishna Marar, Kalakkathu Govindan Nambiar, V.Panoli, Achyutha Poduval, etc gave him an opportunity to edit and publish several unpublished Sanskrit works, and also to prepare *Samskritasāhityacaritram* for Kerala Sahitya Akademi, Thrissur.
Raja had close contacts with the foreign scholars also. John Brough was his supervising teacher at London University. Some of the other foreign friends are JDM Derret, S.Mayeda, J.Gonda, Fritz Staal, G.Cardona, Ludo Rocher, Christian Lindtner, A.K.Warder, Danniel H.H. Ingalls, J.M.Masson, Asko Parpola, Francis Zimmermann and the like.

**Awards and Honours**

Raja was awarded with the certificate of honour by President of India for his life time contribution to Sanskrit in 1996. The title *Kāvyabhūṣaṇa* was given by Kerala Sanskrit Akademi, Thrissur in 1993. In 2002 Madras Sanskrit Akademi honoured him with the title *Darśanakalānidhi*. He was given the honorary degree *Vācaspati* in 2002 by Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeta, Tirupati. Raja was awarded the title *Panḍita Ratna* by Viswa Samskrta Pratisthan Kerala Kendra. Kerala Sanskrit Akademi, Thrissur, honoured him with *Sahitya Nikasha Puraskar* in the year 1997.

**Works of Raja**

Earning and Sharing of knowledge was the one and only objective of Raja’s life. The works of Raja bear solid proofs for this. *Rājasudhā*, the sixtieth birthday Felicitation volume, published in 1982 in honour of Raja, lists 29 works of him. It was in 2005 Raja passed-
away in the age of 85. He was a perfect academician till his memory became weak in 2002. The works like Ānandavardhana, Śrīśaṅkarācārya and Mīmāṁsa Contribution to Language Studies are published after Rājasudhā. Actually the number of his works comes to 38. It also seems to be incomplete.

Raja’s works includes theses, editions, translations, collection of articles, monographs, pamphlets, and travelogues. He is associated with nine volumes of New Catalogus Catalogorum (NCC), in the capacity of Sub Editor and Editor.

There are hundreds of research articles and books reviewed by him. These reviews of authentic nature appeared regularly in ALB and Journal of Oriental Research (JOR) for long time.

*The Contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature*

*CKSL*, the first thesis of Raja was submitted to University of Madras in the year 1947. It is the most authentic work on Sanskrit literature belonging to Kerala.

The significance of *CKSL* is its focus on regional Sanskrit. It is a trend setter in Sanskrit research. The thesis examines the depth and
roots of regional traditions in Indian sub-continent. Contribution of Andhra, Tamilnadu, Gujarat, etc, has been studied in the same line by different scholars following the path of CKSL.

Other two works already existed in Malayalam on the literary history of Kerala – Keralasāhityacaritraṃ (KSC) of Ullur S. Parameswara Iyer and Keralīya saṃskṛtasāhityacaritraṃ (KSSC) of Vadakkumkoor Rajarajavarma Raja. Definitely they have their own relevance but the methodological and scientific academic approach of Raja made CKSL a unique authentic work.

Raja has adapted a particular methodology in this thesis. According to the social system existed in Kerala, Sanskrit and its contributions was closely related to Royal families. The chapter division of CKSL is based on prominent persons belonging to Sanskrit and Royal families of Kerala those have decisive role in the propagation of Sanskrit. Bilvamaṅgala, Melpūtīr Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa and Rāmapāṇivāda are discussed separately. Kulaśekharas of Mahodayapuram, The Kolattiri Royal family, Zamorins of Kozhikkode, Cochin Royal family, Travancore Royal family were thoroughly examined in this work.
It is notable that Raja belongs to Kumarapuram palace, a branch of famous Royal family called Thalappilli. Since Raja experienced the deep rooted tradition of Sanskrit as a member of Royal family, adapted the method of categorization of Sanskrit works on the basis of Royal families.

**Indian Theories of Meaning**

*ITM* is another major contribution of Raja. The work is the second doctoral theses of Raja, submitted at London University. The famous linguist John Brough was his research guide.

The work summarizes Indian thought on śābdabōdha in the light of Semantics, the branch of Modern Linguistics. Raja mainly discusses the various theories of communications based on Buddhist Philosophy, Logic (Nyāya), Vyākaraṇa and Pūrvamīmāmsa and Poetics. Raja says ‘The study of mine owes its inspiration to the suggestion and encouragement of Professor John Brough of the School of Oriental and African studies, London, under whose direction and guidance I studied as a British council Scholar for two years from 1952 to 1954.’

Raja has expressed the objective of this study that ‘The purpose of this work is to bring out in a systematic form the linguistically relevant
views on the different aspects of meaning given by the various schools of thought in Ancient India.13

The theory of sphōta, anvītābhidhāna and abhihitānvaya are thoroughly examined with the tools of Linguistics. The conditions of knowing the meaning of a sentence – ākāṅkṣa, yogyatā and saṃnidhi and the layers of Meaning – Primary meaning, metaphor and suggestion – also have been analysed in it.

Short Works of Raja

1. Ānandavardhana (biography)
2. Astrology and Mathematics in Kerala
3. The Language of Poetry
4. Mīmāmsā Contribution to Language Studies
5. Kutiyattam an Introduction (monograph)

Brief accounts of the above works are given here:

1. Ānandavardhana

Ānandavardhana is a biographical work on the life and works of Ānandavardhana, the great critic of Sanskrit. Ānandavardhana’s, theory of Dhvani is a milestone in the history of Sanskrit Poetics. Most important is that, the theory comprises of the whole elements of poetry and puts forward pure aesthetic concepts.
There are six chapters namely:

1. Ānandavardhana: Life and works
2. Ānandavardhana as a Poet
3. The Dhvani theory
4. Ānandavardhana and Aesthetics
5. Language of Poetry: Vyañjanā

Raja also included the English translation of Dhvani Saṅgraha and cites samples of Ānandavardhana’s writings in this work.

2. Astrology and Mathematics in Kerala

Astrology and Mathematics in Kerala is a short work but significant in content. This monograph lists the major astronomers of Kerala. The work thoroughly examines the rich Kerala tradition of Astronomy and Mathematics.

3. The Language of Poetry

In the book The Language of Poetry the author discusses the nature of poetic language in general and the problem of communication in particular. To this the tools of Modern Stylistics have
been utilized and the prominent concept of Indian Poetics has been subjected. The discussion put forward the salient linguistic features of Sanskrit which made Sanskrit poetically possible.

4. *Mīmāṃsā Contribution to Language Studies*

Raja does not perceive *Mīmāṃsā* as mere Metaphysics, branch of vedic rituals. He considers this branch of Philosophy as full of live linguistic observations. This monograph elaborately discusses such views like Kumārilabhaṭṭa’s theory on foreign loan words, theory of sentence meaning etc. This short work can be considered as an appendix to *ITM*.

5. *Kutiyattam an Introduction*

This is a monograph published by Sangeet Nataka Akademi, New Delhi. It was originally published in the journal *Saṃskṛta raṅga*. The study touches almost all the technicalities of Kutiyattam by quoting plenty of verses.

**Edited Works**

Textual criticism is a branch of significance in Sanskrit research. Raja has edited and translated many Sanskrit texts. The problems in textual criticism are pointed out by him in an article in *Rājasudhā*.4
The books edited by Raja are:

1. *Uṇādikośa* of Vedāntimahādeva
2. *Ṛtuvarṇana* of Durlabha with commentary
3. *Uṇādimanidīpikā* by Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita
4. *Mukhabhūṣaṇa*
5. *Ārṣaprayogasādhutvanirūpaṇa*
6. *Naiṣadhānanda* of Kṣemīśvara (with A.K.Warder)
7. *Pratimānāṭataka* (English Trans. with N.V.Krishnawarrier)
8. *Chandrāloka* (English Trans. with N.V.Krishnawarrier)
10. *Siddhāntapañjara* of Vināyaka (with E.R.Sreekrishna Sarma)
11. *Haṭhayougapradpika of Svātmārāma*

Raja translated *Saṅgītaratnākara* of Śāraṅgadeva (Volume 4 Chapter on Dancing) in English with Radha Burnier. In the introductory pages of *Pratimānāṭaka*, there is a reference of English translation of *Śākuntala* of same authors. But this book has not been traced out.

Malayalam books

1. *Bhāṣācintakaḥ* (collection of articles)
2. *Bhāṣāgaveśaṇam* (collection of articles)
3. *Bhāṣādarśanavuṃ Caritravuṃ* (collection of articles)
4. *Indiayile Vidyābhyāsa Punassāṃvīdhānaṃ* (Translation of Zakir Hussain’s *Educational Reconstruction in India*)

5. *K.K.Rājāvinte Kavitaka!* (compiled)

6. *Londonil* (Travelogue)

7. *Samskṛtasāhityacaritraṃ* (ed. With M.S.Menon)

8. *Śrīśaṅkarācāryar* (Biography)

1. **Bhāṣācintakaḷ**

This work of Raja is an anthology of eight essays in Malayalam. As the title of the work indicates it comprises of Raja’s thought on language. *Bhāṣācintakaḷ* is the first book of Raja that discusses the topics of Linguistics in Malayalam. *Dhvani*, the relation of śabda and artha (word and meaning), language and reality, the relation of poet and the reader, the theories of sphoṭa and apoha are being discussed in it. Raja always points out the possibilities of language. The important thing is that the discourse on language was almost new in Malayalam at that time. Raja could present all these scholarly matters in such a manner that easily digest even to a common reader.

2. **Bhāṣāgaveśaṇaṃ**

The book as its title suggests focusing on the linguistic discourse in Dravidian languages like Malayalam. The work is made meaningful by an excellent introduction by N.V.Krishnawarrier, the
famous poet, linguist and scholar in Malayalam. N.V.Krishnawarrier points out the scarcity of such works in Malayalam and establishes the relevance of Raja’s work.

Many aspects of Linguistics study have discussed in this work. The author throws light on the new developments in those areas of this discipline. The study of language, the magic of language, the history of Malayalam language, Malayalam and Sanskrit, the Sanskrit words those have meaning change in Malayalam, the language of Children, the article of Ellis on language of Malayalam and the research of Dravidian languages are the topics dealt with in this book. Each and every topics presented in an interesting manner that attracts not only the scholars but also the ordinary readers.

3. **Bhāṣādarśanavum Caritravum**

*Bhāṣādarśanavum Caritravum* is a collection of research articles in Malayalam published by Kerala Bhasha Institute in 2000. This work comprises of eight notable articles as follows:

1. Language
2. Modern Linguistics
3. The comprehension of sentence meaning
4. The theories of *sphoṭa* and *śabdabrahma*
5. The language of poetry
6. Linguistics and the language of poetry
7. The language of poetry and the literary criticism.
8. *Kavi* and *sahṛdaya*

The article on ‘Language’ (*Bhāṣa*) is a reproduction of an article from *Bhāṣāgaveśaṇam*. Modern Linguistics provides a detailed historical and descriptive account of knowledge. The major attraction of the work is its analysis on poetic language. Raja was always vigilant on the communication of poetry.

4. **Indiayile Vidyābhyāsa Punassaṃvidhānaṃ**

Zakir Hussain was a famous educationalist, thinker and was the first minister of Information and broadcasting in Independent India. He was the president of educationalists appointed in the National Educational Meet held in Vardha in the year 1973. He paved the foundation to Gandiji’s basic educational project.

The present book is the Malayalam translation of Zakir Hussain’s *Educational Reconstruction in India*. It was a series of talks in memorial of Sardar Vallabhayi Patel, delivered in Vijnanbhavan New Delhi, in 1958, and was broadcasted by All India Radio later. Raja
translated the book in such a manner that can easily digest even to a common reader.

The work includes innovative ideas on education that has specific role in forming Indian Educational Philosophy. Personality, stages of development and the totality meant by education are discussed. The vocational aspect of education was also taken for discussion.

5. **K.K. Rājāvinte Kavitakal** (comp)

Raja edited and compiled this work to pay homage to his *Kuñcu Ammāvan*, Raja believes that he was the man who led to the whole fortunes in Raja’s life. Hence this work is dedicated to his uncle’s memory. K.K.Raja was a famous Malayalam poet who has contributed beautiful philosophical, devotional and romantic poems to Malayalam.

The introductory pages of this work is made meaningful with the poems of G.Sankararakkurup, V.K.Govindan Nair and Vyloppilli Sreedhara Menon; the autobiographical note of Joseph Mundasseri, the introductory note of Ullur.S.Parameswara Iyer and a detailed study of K.K.Raja’s poems by M.Leelavathi. Raja presented a biographical sketch of his uncles in it.
6. **Londonil**

*Londonil*, the travelogue written by Raja bear some significance. It is the one and only peace of pure literature among his works. The book is a collection of the memories of his London days. The book throws light on the culture, politics and ecological peculiarities of London. The work was published in the year 1956. S.K.Pottekkat the veteran writer of Malayalam concentrated on writing Malayalam travelogues in the same period. In the year 1947, the first travelogue of S.K.Pottekkat has come out. *Londonil* is a remarkable travelogue on the life and culture of the capital city of England in Malayalam. The simple style of narration adopted in this work is quite interesting. The sense of humour, critical approach and *sahādayatva* of the author will provide a pleasant reading experience.

7. **Samskṛtasāhityacaritraḥ (Vol. I & II)**

The history of Sanskrit literature is very vast. The work *Samskṛtasāhityacaritraḥ* in Malayalam comprises it in a nutshell. Raja and M.S.Menon edited the book in a skillful manner.

Kerala Sahitya Akademi published *Samskṛtasāhityacaritraḥ* in order to issue an authentic and exhaustive history of Sanskrit
Literature. It includes various articles of literature. The first volume is
dedicated to vedic literature. Among sixteen articles, six are written by
Raja. The first article on Sanskrit language written by Raja is significant.

The second volume on Classical Literature consists of eighteen
articles. There are seven articles written by Raja on various topics.
The article on the literature of edicts is notable. As Raja states in the
introduction of the work, the authors of these articles have analyzed
and assessed the Sanskrit literary works with historical and
sociological perception.

8. Śrīśaṅkarācāryar

Raja was familiar with all the types of literature. In his works
Śrīśaṅkarācāryar – the biographical sketch of the great philosopher
is remarkable one. The work is divided into twenty chapters

The book put forth a different approach in biographical writing.
The first chapter is dedicated to summarise the story of Śaṅkaravijaya
kāvya. Then the author focuses the legends and other proofs. The
different incidents in Śaṅkara’s life were depicted in following chapters.
The author subtly enlists the works of Śaṅkara and remember to note
its acceptance of scholars as his own works. A detailed discourse on
Advaitavedānta also makes biography worthy. Last chapter speaks on Śaṅkaravijaya works and other books on the life of Śaṅkara.

**New Catalogus Catalogorum**

It is an alphabetical register of Sanskrit and allied works and authors. It is a prestigious and big project of University of Madras, Started in 1935. Raja was the associate editor of 3 volumes of NCC (Vol. 3,4,5) with V.Raghavan as Chief editor. He was the editor of Volumes VI, VII, VIII, IX, X & XI.

**Encyclopedia**

The Vth volume of *Encyclopedia of Indian philosophy – the philosophy of grammarians* is edited by Raja along with Harold G Coward.

Its part one comprises 5 topics:-

1. Historical resume
2. Metaphysics
3. Epistemology
4. Word of Meanings
5. Sentence
As a man of keen intellect Raja spent most of his life time for reading, writing and generating knowledge. There are plenty of book reviews, introductions and articles of attractive topics of him. It is not practical to include or assess all of them in a single, time bounded research work.
Notes

3. ibid., Intro. p. XI