Abstract: V. Raghavan (1908-1979) was a great Indologist and a Sanskritist per-excellence. He has shown sufficient interest in the literature of Rabindranath Tagore, so much so that he edited and compiled numerous pieces of Sanskrit translations of Tagore in the volume Samskrita- Ravindram published by Sahitya Akademy, New Delhi in 1966. In this volume he himself has translated into Sanskrit two plays of Tagore- Vālmīki Pratibhā and Naṭī Pūjā. Raghavan is a sound Sanskrit poet himself. He was famous as an instant poet. Hundreds of original verses in Sanskrit in the form of stotras and supravāta prayers to his credit prove his poetic heart. He has also Sanskritised some poems of the West. Therefore it would be interesting to see how he translates the lyrics of Rabindranath used in his plays and poems. At present we take Naṭī Pūjā, a play of Rabindranath and see how the Sanskrit translation of Bengali lyrics in it are capable of going parallel with the art and idea of Rabindranath.

Key words: Indologist, Sanskritisation, lyrical expression, classical language, lucidity

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V. RAGHAVAN’S LYRICAL EXPERIMENT WITH NAṬĪ PUJĀ:

In the beginning of the play the mendicant Upāli comes to the stage and reflects on the sunrise in the morning. She sings a lyric of three lines which seems to be a lyrical expression but not exactly a metered lyric. As we find Raghavan has then very close in his translation with the original expression-

पूवगगनभागे दीप्तं जातं सुप्रभातं तहुणारुणागे।
शुभशुभयो महूर्तोधर्यं तारुं कुरु तम्,अमृतेन पुरय तम्॥

Here most of the words are found in the original Bengali. Therefore, Raghavan’s translation has been very smooth. Here ‘यातम्’ was ‘हइल’ in Bengali. Bangla ‘आज’ is done as ‘अ’ and ‘के जागे’ has been ‘को जागरिति’. Rest of the words are found in the original writing. Thus we feel that if any modern language uses highly Sanskritised words then it is easy to make its Sanskrit translation. In another place the character Śrīmatī sings a lyrical verse-

नशीथे क5 कये गेल मने क5 जान क5 जान।
से +क घुमे से +क जागरणे,
+क जान +क जान।

Somebody has told her something and has gone away but Śrīmatī does not remember his words. She also does not know whether she was sleeping or was awake when he left. Here the meaning of the verse vibrates with a soft and lyrical feeling. Raghavan has been able to catch that feeling beautifully in Sanskrit but still the original Bengali verse has a different grandeur and serenity. Here the word ‘रहः’ in Sanskrit is used for the Bengali word ‘मने’. The rest has been an exact translation. But still the translation seems more labored for a simple Bengali expression -
Same is the case in another verse where the beauty of the spontaneous expression of Tagore has been thwarted a bit in Raghavan’s exercise in Sanskrit when Rabindranath writes-

वाँधन केन भूषणवेशे तोरे भोलाय
हाय अभागी!
मरण केन मोहन हेसे तोरे दोलाय,
हाय अभागी!  

Raghavan translates it as-

बन्धो भाति कुतस्ते
भूषणवेषण हन्त भुगधुभाग्ये।
मरण मोहयति त्वां
दोलायां ते स्मितेन दुभाग्ये॥

However here Rabindranath’s word ‘अभागी’ has been creatively translated as ‘भुगध- दुभाग्ये’. The simplicity of the word ‘अभागी’ has been majestic with the word ‘दुभाग्ये’.

Tagore’s word ‘दोलाय’ is an action of the Death. But Raghavan has changed it tactfully as a noun – ‘डोला’ in locative singular.

However in another scene Śrīmatī sings a lyric of five verses where Raghavan has successfully tried to reflect the mind of the original poet. We present here the last one. Tagore writes-

से कि वाजे वुके मम,वाजे कि गगने,
कि जानि,कि जानि !

Here Raghavan translates it-

किं तद्धवनति में चिल्ले किन्नू तद्गगने तथा ।
धवनतीह,न जानामि,नैव जानामि किन्नू तत्॥
Here Raghavan not only makes a beautiful and exact translation but he also fills a gap in the second line on the demand of the anuṣṭup meter. Buddhist religion and philosophy is accepted as the background of the play Naṭī Pūjā. So very befittingly Tagore used Pāli phrases in some lyrical expressions. Lokeśvarī-a character in the play says in the first scene-

‘महाकारणिको नाथो हिताय सववनाणिं
पूर्ववा पारसी सववा पत्तो समवधिहक्तमम्॥

It is translated by Raghavan as follows-

महाकारणिको नाथः सवप्राणिहिताय सः।
सवपारमितापूत्या प्राप्तः सवोधिन्तमाम्॥

Tagore’s lyrics are artistic but pouring of the human heart. It is therefore not very easy to translate them into another language and yet preserve the same feeling with the same depth. However, Raghavan has to many extent been successful in preserving those feelings in Sanskrit. Vāsavī, a character in the play, says about the kindness of the Lord Buddha in the following verses-

तुम्ही कि एसेक्ष मोर दारे
खुँजिते आमर आपनारे?
तोमारी ये डाके
कुसम गोपन हते वाहिराय नगन शाखे शाखे,
सेड डाके डाके आजी तारे।
तोमारी से-डाके वाधा भोले,
श्यामल गोपन प्राण धूलि अवमृण खोले।
से-डाके तोमारी
सहसा नवीन उषा आसे हाते आलोकेर झारी,
देय साढा घन अन्धकारे।

Raghvan translates it in the following manner-

हार्तमागम: कि मे मार्गायन् हदयं मम।
Tagore’s ‘आमार आपनारे’ has been creatively translated into Sanskrit as ‘हृदयं मम’.

However the second line has much more excellence in the Bengali original. ‘शयमল गोपन प्राण,’ in Bangla should be ‘हरित प्राण गोपिनी’, ‘आलोककेर झारि’ in Bangla is a noun which cannot be exactly translated in the form of verb like ‘आलोकधारां वर्षन्ती’. However, it must be reminded that Sanskrit has many limitations in expressing the thoughts present in the local languages.

Similarly in the second Act Śrīmatī pays benediction to the Lord Buddha in Pāli –

YO sālaśīsinnā varevadhimūlā
Mārass sanā mahāti vijetoḍa
Samvādī māgachī anantāyaṇo
Lokuttamāṁ tā pannamāṁ vuddhān ॥

It is beautifully translated into Sanskrit. In closeness of such translation is probably because Pāli is closer to Sanskrit than Bengali.

On the other hand when there is the use of Sanskrit words in the Bengali lyrics there Raghavan is very smooth in his Sanskrit expressions. In the same Act Śrīmatī leads a song-
रङ्गदाहर वहिन्ज्वाला,
नमि नमि नमि से भैरवे।
काल-समुद्रे आलोर यात्री
शून्ये ये धाय दिवसार्थि।
धाक एल तार तरड़गेरि,
वाजुक वक्ते वझभेरी
अकूल प्राणेर से उत्सवे।

It is Sanskritised by Raghavan in the following way-

बन्धुप्रेमस्य संप्रप्तं साधनं सांतं मया।
तीरं सन्त्यज्ञ यामध कृत्वा सांराविणं महत॥
जयमाला करे यस्य रौद्रो दाहकरी तथा।
वहिन्ज्वाला,नमस्तस्मै भैरवाय नमो नम मः॥
आलोकयात्रिको याति दिवसेषु च रात्रिषु।
शून्याभिमुखेन सतमिन् समुद्रे कालनामनि॥
आहवानं तारमायाति तरड़गेभ्यः, तथा धवनि।
वझभेरीवक्तसोआसो, अपारो जीवनोत्सवः॥

Here Raghavan uses the same words but not in the place used by Tagore. But still the rhythm and the meaning are protected to a satisfactory level.

However, it is very much true that the lucidity of expression and the depth of meaning in many lyrics of Tagore cannot be matched by any translation. A translation cannot reach the deepest feelings seated in the original writing.

Here we give an example of another lyric sung by Śrīmatī in the Third Act. V. Raghavan tries his best in its translation—

पथि गमन आहवयो मा पश्चात्तिलम्बमानां, कथं यामि।
आयाता निबिदनिशा पथि रेखा बत गता तिरोधानम्॥
अपसारय घोरतमो भव्यति तद्वृत्तम् ॥

यावत्कालं यामि प्रयामि तावत्--यदि मनस्तेःस्वित ||

एहि मया सह पाश्वं, भवं यतः पृष्टतो यायात् ||

अयममहागच्छामि त्वं नासि श्वो दिने रात्रि ||

But its Bengali original is far more heart touching-

पथे येते डेके छिले मोरे,

पिछे पड़िए आमि याव ये किरे !

एसे निविड रिशि,

पथरेखा गेछे रिशि ,

साड़ा दाओ,साड़ा दाओ आँधारेर घोरे ।

भय हय पाछे घुरे घुरे

यत आमि याइ तत याइ चले दूरे ।

मने करिआछ काछे,

तवु भय हय पाछे

आमि आछ तुमिनाई काळि निशिमोरे ।

However this does not prove that Sanskrit language cannot match the simplicity and lucidity of modern languages. Let us go to another lyrical expression of Śrīmatī in the Third Act, where Rabindranath writes in five lines-

परशुरातन तोमारि चरण,

लइनु शरण लइनु शरण,

या-किछु मलिन, या-किछु काळो

या-किछु विरूप होक ता भालो,

घुचाओ घुचाओ सव आवरण ।

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But its Bengali original is far more heart touching-

पथे येते डेके छिले मोरे,

पिछे पड़िए आमि याव ये किरे !

एसे निविड रिशि,

पथरेखा गेछे रिशि ,

साड़ा दाओ,साड़ा दाओ आँधारेर घोरे ।

भय हय पाछे घुरे घुरे

यत आमि याइ तत याइ चले दूरे ।

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या-किछु विरूप होक ता भालो,

घुचाओ घुचाओ सव आवरण ।

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Here V. Raghavan equals Tagore’s lyrical majic-

चरणस्पर्शरत्नं ते शरणं यामि,याम्यहम्।
यत्किन्निधिन् मलिनं क्षूरं सर्वं विलयमेतु तत्॥
यक्षद् विरुं प्रभवति तत्ततं सम्यक्तवमेति च।
धुनीहि विधुनीहि त्वं सर्वमावरणं मम॥

In this way we can also go to many other lyrics in Naṭī Pūjā to show that although Sanskrit is a royal, classical and majestic language. It has enough power to catch up to the deeper and simpler feelings expressed in modern languages like Bangla if the translator is a Pundit as well as a dexterous poet like V. Raghavan.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:

2. Ibid. p. 259.
4. Ibid. p. 298.
15. Ibid, p. 290.