

Miracles, Myths and Words Vishvanath Khaire

1. Jñānadeva's Background

Jñānadeva, Marathi saint poet, yogi and philosopher, was born in Alandi, on Indrayani, a tributary of Bhima, one of the major rivers of Maharashtra in Western India. The rivers rise from a lofty mountain range in the west and flow eastwards in the extensive trap rock region in channels stabilized between substantial plateaus. Excavations at various riverbank sites have revealed some fairly developed agricultural habitations dating back to the 18th century BC. Some of them have shown links with the reputed Indus civilization, considered the most ancient in India.¹

The next available historical 'records' of the region are the Ashokan edicts (3rd century BC.), one in the coastal strip west of the mountains and one in the plateau in the east. Almost immediately followed the first of the series of impressive cave monuments in the solid trap rock, of which the tradition continued upto the tenth century AC. These were executed for the votaries of Buddhism, Jainism, Vedic and Puranic Hinduism in different periods. The unique feature of these excavations – chiseling the sculpture of the deity, the temple and the attendant precincts, all from one mount, has been alluded as the model for the practice of devotion, in a philosophical verse by Jñānadeva.²

Many of these monuments are located near trade routes of internal as well as overseas commerce, that were in use from ancient to medieval times. Quite a few of these are overlooked by forts on nearby promontories usually flanked by almost intractable rock-cliffs. Those provide with heavy gateways, secret passages tunnelled upto the top, massive bastions and the like, were considered invincible. Jnanadeva the yogi poet has used an extensive metaphor of the conquest of such a fort, in describing the yogic practices for conquest of the mind.³

It has been shown that at the cave monument sites, old rude cults are also existing and are worshipped to this age by faraway rural groups. The existence of similar cults at the forts would indicate that the forts have been safety havens of antecedent cultures in the hilly regions. The primitive cults and the caves for wandering ascetics would appear to fill the gap between the excavated cultures and the Asokan edicts.⁴

The sect of wandering ascetics known as *Nātha Pantha* owed allegiance to Śiva, considered as their prime guru. The votaries were known in Maharashtra as *kānphāṭe jogī* (torn-ear medics) from their pierced ears, carrying rings as sign of enunciation by the guru. Jñānadeva has described his spiritual genealogy in this sect, upto his brother and guru Nivr̥ttināth.⁵

He has however been considered the saint patriarch of Vārkarī's, devotees of the god Vithobā of Pandharpur on the river Bhīma in the east. Rural and urban householders of all castes have been walking from all parts of Maharashtra, twice every year, for pilgrimage to Pandharpur and back, since before Jñānadeva to the present day. His verses are mass chants during the walks and his writing are read out and listened to, with devotion.⁶

2. Jñānadeva's Literature

Jñānadeva is traditionally taken to have been born in 1275 and gone into meditative communion (*samādhi*) in 1296. During this short span of life he produced the monumental poetical works by which he is really known to the Marathi speakers.

His magnum opus was *Jñāneśvarī*, the Marathi commentary on the *Gītā*, running into about nine thousand verses in the popular *ovi* meter. Both as poetry and philosophy, this work has been held to be the acme of perfection by the learned and commoners alike. With incomparable humility, the poet repeatedly maintains that the splendid exposition is all due to the grace of his guru, the brother. He also declares that he has taken guidance from the earlier commentators. Yet his exposition is so replete with analogies, metaphors and imageries from contemporary life, that the philosophy of the *Gītā* almost receives new content at his deft hands. The devout as well as the lay reader is led away by the tender beauty of his language almost to the point of getting lost in the poetry rather than reaching the core of his philosophy.

The *Anubhavāmṛta* meaning 'the elixir of the experience' is a quintessential poem of eight hundred *ovi* verses, dealing with the spiritual experience of the devotee in which ultimately the knower, the knowledge and the known all become one. In this work too, the poet's flair for analogies and metaphors from the world around awaken the reader to unimagined subtleties of physical as well as spiritual experience.

Sixty-five *ovi* verses given the title *Cāṅgadeva Pāsaṣṭī* supposedly addressed to Cāṅgaveda, possessed of superior powers through yoga but uninitiated into the sublimity of devotion.

Numbering about a thousand, the abhanga poems are favourite recitation for *Vārkarīs*. They do not propose to be philosophical and often lean towards the tradition of folklore. While being easy to go with, they too lead the believer into devotion and the spiritual joy of devotion. The basic philosophy is the same as in the other three works.

All these works have come down through copies made by hand, by the members of a populace in which literacy was microscopic. Mass circulation was mainly by word of mouth in pilgrimage, fairs and day to day modes of religious communication like discourses, *kīrtans* and week- or month long sessions of reading aloud complete works like the *Jñāneśvari*. In the tradition-and-caste-bound society of the times, learning was restricted to Brahmins, and even for them spiritual learning was confined to Sanskrit. The works of Jñānadeva and some of his predecessors had thrown both restrictions to the winds. The illiterate masses, till then being led by tradition alone, in their devotional practices, were now provided with a philosophy in their own idiom. They were avidly learning it - in the traditional manner, by word of mouth.

Over the centuries, the masses have continued to perform the two annual pilgrimages, chanting the verses and carrying the footprints of Jñānadeva, from his samadhi at Ālandi to his favourite god at Pandharpur. The literate and the thinking have been religiously or critically reading the elevating classics, following the dictum of the 13th century saint poet Nāmadeva : 'One should experience at least one *ovi* of Jñāneśvari'. This was one of the first books lithographed in the

19th century. It was the favourite of outstanding Maharashtrians like justice Ranade and Vinoba the disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. It provided them with a large content of their models of life.

3. The Miracles of the Saint

While Jñānadeva's works -are so extensively known among the Marathi speakers, his life story is barely known only from traditions. Even his life span has been a constant subject of debate though the most popular belief has been that all the outstanding literary output was the achievement of a child Prodigy, alongwith this conviction, popular tradition holds that there were a number of episodes in the saint's life, in which his role was nothing short of the miraculous. These are briefly narrated below.

3.1 Jñānadeva's father had recanted from renunciation into the householder's state, after which the four children were born. The children were therefore denied the social status of Brahmins. They approached for appeal to the acknowledged authorities in paithan. Before them Jñānadeva proved his prowess by making a water-carrier he-buffalo recite the Veda.⁷

3.2 Cāṅgadeva, a yogi reputed to have lived 1400 years, rode a tiger for conveyance. He sent messengers to Jnanadeva to inform his arrival. The foursomes were basking in the morning sun sitting on a wall. For setting out to welcome the yogi, Jñānadeva commanded the wall to move; and the wall obliged.⁸

3.3 As part of the tribulations forced on them, Mukṭā the younger sister was divested of the earthen pot and fuel required for baking a wheat bread delicacy. To the weeping girl, Jñānadeva offered his back to serve as the baking pan and heated it by yogic fire, of which the flames came out of his mouth.⁹

3.4 On way back from Paithan, the children saw a boy's body on a funeral pyre. Jñānadeva breathed life into the boy, who grew to become Jñānadeva's scribe to take down verses of the Jñānesvari.¹⁰

These narratives are contained in the 18th century compendium *Bhaktavijaya* (The Devout's Victories) which is based on a 16th century Hindi composition of similar content. The contents purport to be life stories of devout saints, in *ovī* verses, composed by a believer for the believers. Episodes of miracles performed by the saints or by Divinity for the saints are contained in every chapter.

4. Genesis of Miracles

The miraculous in many of them is based on words in the names of the devotees. Thus, about Nāmadeva, a contemporary of Jñānadeva, it is narrated that he was born from a shell (shimpala) picked up by his father from the Bhīmā river. This is obviously connected with 'shimpi' meaning 'tailor', the caste in which Nāmadeva was born. When he became an ardent devotee of Vithobā, to the neglect of worldly duties, the god sent wealth in '*goni*' (sack) to his mother 'Goṇāī' in response to her irate complaints. The construction of miracles through words of similar sounds

and dissimilar meanings, is a familiar device employed in ancient literatures of all societies. The words had to be somehow connected or associated with the character in the narrative.¹¹

For Jñānadeva's 'miracles' the words were passed down via the handwritten copies and the oral transmission through generations over five centuries. Those were days of limited literacy seldom going beyond the three R's required for ordinary living. Neither the writing nor the reading of the pithy but numerous verses of the genius could be devoid of flaws or in strict accordance with his original delivery. The errors in transcription would be compounded by the errors in comprehension and oral transmission. This would give rise to interpretations at will by the imaginative faithfuls. The wide discrepancies in the redactions followed by different *Vārkarī* authorities and their interpretations of them provide ample instances of his process. By reasoning objectively on these lines, we can trace the originating sources of Jñānadeva's 'miracles' in the texts of his poetic works.

4.1 The genealogy of the he-buffalo would go back to a concluding verses in the Jñāneśwari. This verse traces his spiritual ancestry to Śiva. The verse runs : "Then, the one born in the line of Śiva, son(like) to Nivṛttī Nātha, Jñānadeva made the indigenous (local idiom) adornment to Gītā." For this the correct meaning to be correctly taken, the grammatically correct word in the beginning should have been *māheśa* with the sibilant and not with the retroflex syllable. If hasty writing of the world in Nagari script slightly curls down the headstroke towards the headline, the word would become mahiṣa with retroflex ṣ. And that means a he-buffalo and the first line would mean : "Then, the once born in the line of the buffalo", and not of Śiva. The garbled meaning would derive by reading Jñānadeva as the causal agent, equating Gītā to the Veda and subconscious derision of *Brāhminic* recitation as the drone of a he-buffalo.¹²

4.2 A historian of marathi literature has cited an abhanga ascribed to Jñānadeva in support of the actual occurrence of miracle of the walking wall : "If God does it, whatever may not happen? A river may be crossed by a stone afloat.. With legs sprouted, walls will walk; mount Meru and the moth will weigh the same.. Says Jñānadeva, the impossible happens,-the guru's grace unites one with the great Brahma". If a learned historian could does believe Jñānadeva to be the maker and not mere narrator of the impossible rightly ascribed to God, the lay devotee of the age of belief could do so as well and with greater conviction.¹³

4.3 A verse in the *Anubhavāmṛta* refers to the consumption of non-knowing (avidyā) with itself as the fuel thrust into the flame of knowledge, resulting into the residual ashes of realization. The first two lines mention the body being made fuel and entered into the fire. A layman who does not follow the metaphorical string of verses in their true import, imagines this to be referring to a yogi whose body itself becomes fuel to the internal fire. With implicit faith in Jñānadeva's yogic powers, he ascribes the phenomenon to the saint-person and weaves a suitable narrative around it.¹⁴

4.4 The personal name Satcidananda occurs in the concluding portion of Jñāneśwari. The word as a common noun, however, occurs some 168 verses earlier in the same chapter with the epithet 'sadeha' (corporeal). The reference is properly to the words of the dialogue of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, that are considered 'sat-cit-ānanda' incarnate. The three constituent terms referring to the spiritual good, the supreme, and the joy, are dealt at length in the *Anubhavāmṛta*. Verses like the

following three could help in building up the miracle by deriving the imagined meaning given thus : “Sateidananda had been split. The three brothers’ feet were moving but bereft of joy. Then, presenting face to the face, and walking up to the sleeping (Sateidananda), showing to his sight the Seer, they took to their path in silence”. Needless to say, this is NOT the proper meaning of the verses at all. It is, however, parallel to the content of the narrative of the miracle.¹⁵

5. Miracles and Myths

These narratives are essentially “mythical stories”. They would loosely be called “myths” even in academic writing. It is, however, necessary to distinguish between ‘myth’ and mythical story’. Myth is the principle element or the character in the mythical story. The mythical story is a narrative or story “that is believed to be true” in faith and not on the basis of concrete evidence, historical or otherwise. The mythical story is a narrative concerning one or more myths that may be conceptual (e.g. superior power) or corporeal (e.g. hero, villain and the rest). The Myth is therefore, not the literal content of the mythical story of cultural history. The first step in such interpretation should be to find out the myth(s) underlying or contained in the story.

In the narratives of Jñānadeva’s miracles, the Myth is not the hero that is Jñānadeva, for his historicity is attested by the literary output bearing his name as the author, that has come down to us. The myth is in the concept of supernatural power acquired by a yogī or saint. The supernatural power was manifested in the performance of acts bringing about physical events which do not seem to follow the generally known laws of nature.

That myth in turn was a product of the belief of the masses in his written word. They implicitly believed the description in the *Jñāneśvari*, of a person deflecting away from yoga, and being reborn in a house of piety. He, it says, ‘is endowed with omniscience in the tender young age; and with the acquisition of that unflinching wisdom, his mind secretes the nectar of the letters and all the self-sustaining disciplines spring from his speech.’ The masses believed that Jñānadeva himself fitted to this description of a yogic prodigy of that sort.⁶

The seeds of the description lie in the text of the *Gītā* (6.40-43). But its expression came before the masses from *Jñāneśvari*. In the same way, the practice of Hatha Yoga was appearing before them, in the votaries of Nātha Pantha and not from the aphorisms of Patañjali.. Those aphorisms contain affirmations to the effect that concentration of the mind’s faculties in special ways leads to acquisition of various exemplary powers.¹⁷

6. Myths and Words

The yoga of Patañjali in its turn, is said to have its roots in the Upaniśads and back again in the Ṛg Veda. To quote : “In a late hymn of the Ṛg Veda we read a class of holy men different from the Brāhmins, the “silent ones; (munis), who wear the wind as a girdle, and who, drunk with their own silence, rise on the wind and fly in the paths of the demigods and birds..”¹⁸

It is obvious that the author *believes* that the vedic hymn refers to ‘holy men’ treading this earth, who yet have acquired the miraculous power of ‘rising on the wind and flying in the paths of birds’. We have then reached the oldest source of ‘words’ believed by the illiterate and the learned alike. And those words convey the existence of supernatural power in some human beings. Here is the *myth*.

The hymn referred to (10.136) called *Keśi Sūkta*. The hymn of the ‘Hairy One’, describes an object or personage that appears possessed of an attachment which resemble the flowing beard of the human male. The word *muni* no doubt occurs in the hymn which has given rise to the belief and the myth. The text however contains many physical descriptions as well, which cannot apply to a human being, be he an ascetic or someone else.¹⁹

The first verse makes the statement that ‘this brightness or heavenly body is called Keśi’ The second tells us that they ‘get into motion like the wind’. The fourth describes how Keśi ‘moves in the atmospheric region, viewing objects in the west’. These descriptions raise before our eyes, the picture of a heavenly body, moving in rarefied form like that of the wind glowingly traversing the universe, spread over the space between the east and west seas.

This heavenly body turns out to be the ‘comet’, the vast bright apparition that appears hairy on account of the spread of its ‘tail’. The word ‘comet’ is from Greek ‘kometes’, the hairy one, which is exactly similar to ‘Keśi’ in Vedic Sanskrit, The Greek word came into use as a common noun, in which the analogy with human hair remained a matter of fact only. The Sanskrit word ‘keśi’ became a metaphor for comet, the common noun for it being, ‘ketu’.²⁰

The ‘live’ metaphor was, however, the ‘muni’, the ascetic with his tresses and beard. Keśi and Muni, both became myths for the comet, in the hymn, the physical aspects associated with the comet were described in statements made with Keśi or Muni as the subjects. The verbs and predicates, also often metaphorical were applied to any of them at will. The poet cannot be faulted, for he had all the while the comet in mind. It is the latter-day interpreter who is in error of taking the literal meaning as applicable to ascetics, and referring to a totally different aspect (‘silence’) of their conduct, which has little in common with the hairy Keśi. The hymn is a mythical narrative, an ode to the physical phenomenon of comets, and not a statement of the superior power of ascetics on earth. It certainly alludes to their attributes, with the object of describing the comets as ‘celestial ascetics’ of the starry heavens.²¹

7. Myth, Fact and Truth

The *Keśi* hymn contains statements but no narrative about the ascetics who constitute the ‘live metaphor’. Mythical stories could be and have been built, in which the ascetics, like Vishvāmitra, have been made the characters or heroes. The stories carried in themselves, metaphors in the characters as well as their actions or roles in the various episodes. Just as Keśi in the hymn were taken to be ascetics in the true sense of the term, so were the stories taken to be true, of true ascetics in some bygone past.

The dictionary meaning of metaphor can be referred, to understand metaphor in the narrative : ‘Application of name descriptive term or phrase to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable (e.g. a glaring error, food for thought. Leave no stone unturned); **mixed metaphor** : combination of inconsistent metaphors (this tower of strength will forge ahead); {from *meta* (*phero* : bear) : transfer}.’ In this definition, the ‘name’ applies to ‘an object’, and the ‘descriptive term’ to an ‘action’. The mixed metaphor combines the (metaphoric) name of one object with the descriptive term for another's action. The inconsistency in the mixed metaphor is often obvious. But a narrative with mixed metaphors would be faulted mainly for its figures of speech, not for the truth of its statements.²²

A metaphor and the narrative based on it, may be well thought and elaborately worked out. Homeric similes are good examples of such metaphors, A large number of metaphors, particularly by the ancient, were based on implusive ‘feel-thought’ which perceives gross similarities and analogies to construct metaphors. The real object and the metaphoric are compared for shape, colour, sound or anything else. So the glowing object in the sky was metaphorised as a bundle of hair, moving in the sky. Or it was compared to an ascetic and the ‘hair’ in the earlier metaphor were compared to a garment tied round the waist by an invisible girdle of wind. The glowing object’s ‘action’ of movement was combined with the metaphoric ascetic’s course and likened to the attribute of flying, of the wind and birds. All this gave rise to the ‘complex metaphors’. A complex metaphor brings together the metaphoric name of one object with the metaphoric or proper descriptive term for the action of another metaphoric or real object. If the objects and actions are in plural numbers, the complexity will be increased. The hymn of the comet contains complex metaphors, leading to the statement that, ‘ascetics fly like birds in the sky’.

This mythical statement can be analysed for its truth value with the help of Plato’s discussion of truth and falsehood in “The Sophist”. Plato takes two statements made by ‘putting together a thing with an action by means of a name and a verb’. They are : ‘Theaetetus sits’ and ‘Theaetetus flies’, concerning the same Theaetetus. Plato then assigns the characters to them : the first is true, the second is false; statement that states things different from the things that are.²³

The judgement of falsehood on the second statement is correct in the case of a real Theaetetus. If, however, Theaetetus in the second statement is metaphorical and not real, it could also assume the appearance of being true. The common man who knows of Theaetetus, only from the metaphorical statement (without knowing that it is metaphorical) will believe that Theaetetus possesses the flower of flying. And indeed, if the referent of the metaphoric Theaetetus has, in fact, an attribute analogous to flying, the statement may not be considered false even by the philosopher.²⁴

Statements composed of complex metaphors are thus prone to be taken as true; they engender belief in things different from the things that are. Mythical stories, being composed of complex metaphors in nouns and verbs, do not lend themselves to easy grasp of the things that are and the things that are not. They have been taken to be true on the strength of belief.

8. Metaphor and Belief

The ambivalence of a mythical statement is partly the result of the nature of the word itself. The word is mere signifier and does not concretise the thing or the action that it signifies. A word that is used as metaphor by a speaker is signifying ‘the thing that is not’, to the speaker, but some different ‘thing that is’, to the listener.

Jñānadeva, the great master of metaphor as poet, has, as philosopher, brought out the imperfection of the word in his *Anubhavāmṛta*. His refrain is : The word is a mighty useful entity as mnemonic; but it is no mirror to the unknown. By itself it cannot produce a semblance of what is concrete, even though with its assistance even the blind can perceive, because its sound is heard by the ear.²⁵

Plato who employs the metaphor of the cave to explain the philosophy of forms, defines word as a vocal sign, used to signify being or nature which is a ‘form’ (eidos), and also to stand for an existing thing. The interplay of this shift of reference from the world of forms to the world of things is reflected in the imprecision of terms used in his expositions. And he used words aplenty in dialogues as the medium of his expositions. Yet he denounced poetry, as the imitator of things that are themselves shadows.²⁶

Aristotle, on the other hand, writes in his ‘Poetics:’ ‘Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else. It is a great thing, indeed, to make a proper use of these poetical forms, as also of compounds and strange words But the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilar.’ He defines words, as tokens or signs, of mental affectations that are likenesses of things. Metaphors would therefore be further removed from the things as they are.²⁷

Aristotle also tells us that, ‘...Diction becomes distinguished and non-prosaic by the use of ...strange words, metaphors. ...But a whole statement in such terms... will be ...a riddle... if made up of metaphors. The very nature, indeed of a riddle is this, to describe a fact in an impossible combination of words (which cannot be done with the real names for things, but can be with their metaphorical substitutes)’.²⁸

A song containing a series of statements made ‘in an impossible combination of words’ carries the name-stamp of Jñānadeva. It starts with a verse which can be translated as: ‘On the tip of a thorn, stood three towns/ Two desolate, one would stay not’. This was followed by similar triads, of which two would not form and one would not exist. The last verse means, ‘Says Jñānadeva : you will not fathom this without the help of a guru’. On the strength of this, serious scholars have derived overtly spiritual or mystic meanings from those statements. As a matter of fact, songs of the same content are found in South Indian languages, sung by children as an interminable riddle describing other such triads connected by very thin threads.²⁹

In the Greek tradition, there is an exact parallel to this riddle : ‘A man who was not a man threw a stone that was not a stone at a bird that was not a bird sitting on a twig that was not a twig. ‘In the ‘Republic’ Plato refers to this as the children's puzzle about a eunuch throwing a pumice stone at a bat sitting on a reed. He calls such statements, ‘ambiguous, neither one thing nor the other, belonging to the fluctuating intermediate realm apprehended by the intermediate faculty, of belief.’³⁰

Narratives built up of statements of complex metaphors, impossible combinations of metaphorical words, and the like, give us mythical stories. They fall in the realm apprehended by belief. To the extent that the myths (as metaphors) are based on facts or phenomena of the universe, they are first steps towards the realm of knowledge. Even the knowledgeable have their own realms or areas of belief. Jnanadeva deals with devotion at great length. As examples he cites stories from Indian mythology. One of them, for example, relates how the great elephant of the gods was caught by the leg by a crocodile and was freed as a result of his devout prayers to Viṣṇu, the foremost god. Aristotle says that ‘tragedy’ adheres to the ‘historical names’ for an aesthetic reason, ‘because what has happened is absolutely possible and therefore convincing’. Taken together these two quotations show that the mythical stories in Homer’s epics were believed to be true, by the great exponent of logical reasoning. This would not appear as a contradiction if it is realised that reason and belief are complements in the totality of the human mind. Both the faculties function mainly through the medium of words. They are also the creators of words.³¹

It is now generally held that the conceptual capacity that creates language is coeval with the emergence of Homo sapiens as primates in the evolutionary scale. Some sort of speech for social communication did exist even among the lower primates. Attachment of meaning to sounds or to a group of them is, however, the speciality of humans. That forms the capacity for creating words or language. It is equipment for living and is given by the parents to the young child. The infant possesses the ability to recognise faces almost from the first days. The ability to pick up and reproduce language from the human environment appear at one and a half to two years of age. To a small extent, the child can make his own language, but its major acquisition comes from the parents. This consists mainly in the naming of things, in accordance with the sounds received and repeated, *on trust, as* units of meaning. Though expressed in sounds, words are essentially conceptual.³²

The phenomena of the universe make impressions on the mind. They are so regular that the concept of rationality is almost ingrained with the human mind. Acquisition of empirical knowledge by the growing individual develops this innate rationality. Observed similarities between things or phenomena also aid in the formation of concepts. All these concepts are expressed in words. The rationality of phenomena in the universe such as cause-and-effect relationships find expression in words. So also the similarities and differences between things or phenomena. Thinking itself starts getting verbalised. As a result, words almost become equated with the things they signify.³³

Extraordinary phenomena or things are not understood in the rational mode. The mind then takes recourse to perceiving their similarities to known entities. In expressing those similarities in words, metaphors are born and then the myths. There was rationality perceived in the regular

ity of the sun, moon, stars and even planets (the wanderers) in the sky. An irregularity like the comets appearing in the sky with an impressive spread, led to the metaphor of a hairy entity, live or inert, around which mythical stories were built. Believers sought rationality in them, rationalists dubbed them as phantasies. It was all a war fought with words, in the arena of words.

Miracles and myths have been created with words. That. Perhaps, is no wonder. For, word was the first Myth. Word was the Mataphor on Sounds.³⁴

NOTES

1. The name of the language of Jñānadeva's writings is given as *marhātī*, which is also an adjective meaning 'open, clear, unclosed'. The adjective applies to die country as well, as the plateaus and steep hillsides do not support vegetation and many districts in the rain-shadow of the mountain present a bare visage. The name 'Mahārāṣṭra' as a sanskrit compound meaning, 'great nation', appears to have been formed from the adjective '*marhāta*', resulting in the change of meaning also. This can be called a 'phonational metaphor'.
2. The verse is form Anubhavamrita, Ed. V.D. Gokhale 1967.
देवो देऊळ परिवार । कोरोनि किजे डोंगर । तैसा भक्तिव्यवहार । कां न करावा । ७४२
3. The conquest of the yogic fort, *yoga-durga*, is described in jñāneśvari 12.46-57. The Sanskrit word *durga* is explained as one, 'difficult to go to'. More correctly, it appears to be Sanskritisation of the SI (South Indian) words *туру*, *turuvu*, *turugu*, '*tunnel, bore*'. The Marāthi word *gada*, 'fort' is related to 'pit, cave'. Mahārāṣṭra has over 450 forts remains. Notably the Tamil poem, Tirukkural Ck. 75 describes hill fort s likethose in Maharashtra, the like of which, Tamil country has none.
4. For example, villagers of the fisherman (koli) cast from coastal areas across the mountain hold fairs for the goddess Ekvīra at Karle, the famous Buddhist cave complex. The timber arch supports there are carbon-dated to the 2nd - 3rd century BC.
5. Jñāneśvarī 18.1730-37.
6. The cult of devotion is traditionally held to have originated in South India and developed in Karnāṭaka and Mahārāṣṭra. The word *varakari* should be from Tamil *varam*, 'song of devotion'. The town of Pandharpur is derectiy south of Paithan, the capital of first-century Sātavāhana kings, and more importantly, meeting point of ancient trade routes towards north and south India. Precious stones from Sri Lanka should have passed through Pandharpur and Paithan to Mohenjo-daro. The name pandharpur is related to Tamil paṇḍri, 'hog; the constellation Pleiades (*krttikā*)'. Vithobā (*ithuba* in rural speech), the akimbo god, appears to have developed from an original 'god-of-the-crossing': Tamil *itu* means 'narrows' and '*kol*' is a barge pole, leading to the name *koli*, 'boatmen', the local original

devotees of the god For the last thousand years the god has been identified with Vishnu, and mainly the Krishna incarnation of his.

7. रेडियां तुम्हां नाही भेद । तरी याचे मुखीं बोलवा वेद । ९.६१ । ... ऐसें बोलतां त्वरित । नवल वर्तलें अति अद्भुत । न्यायपूर्वक श्रुति बोलत । महिषीपुत्र तेधवां । ९.६३ । भक्तिविजय
8. मग बैसले होते भिंतीवरी । तीस आज्ञा केली ते अवसरीं । ऐकोनि ज्ञानदेवांची मात । नवल अद्भुत वर्तलें । ९.१९४ । बैसले होते जियेवरी । ती भिंतीचि चालली अति सत्वरीं । ९.१९५ । भक्तिविजय.
9. मग योगधारणा करूनी । ज्ञानदेवें पेटविला पंचाग्नि । ज्वाळा निघती मुखांतूनी । आरक्त नयन दिसताती । ९.१७९ । जांबूनद तप्त सुवर्ण । तैसी पाठ आरक्तवर्ण । ९.१८० । मग मुक्ताईस म्हणे ज्ञानेश्वर । मांडे करावे पाठीवर । ९.१८१ । भक्तिविजय.
10. शके बाराशतें बारोत्तरें । तें टीका केली ज्ञानेश्वरें । सच्चिदानंदबाबा आदरें । लेखकु जाला । १८.१७९२ । ज्ञानेश्वरी.
11. तों भीमातटीं वाहत । शिंपला अकस्मात देखिला येत । दामशेटीनें जातजात । घेतला सत्वर तेघवां । ४.३२ । ...कीं छपन्न कोटी यादवांत । वैष्णव वरिष्ठ उद्धव भक्त । तेविं शिंपियाचे वंशांत । नामा निश्चित आवतरला । ४.१७३ । ...सुवर्णहोनांची भरुनि गोणी । गरुडासी म्हणे चक्रपाणी । वृषभरूप तूं धरुनी । चाल सदनीं नामयाच्या । ४.१०४ । भक्तिविजय.
12. तें माहेषान्वयसंभूतें । श्रीनिवृत्तिनाथसुतें । केलें ज्ञानदेवें गीते । देशीकार लेणें । १०.१७८४ । ज्ञानेश्वरी
13. देव करी तरी काय न होई । दगडाचेनि नई तरिजेले । सूर्यकिरणांवरी मुंगियांची हारी । अग्नीचे पाठारीं पीक होय । फुटोनियां पाय चालतील भिंती । मेरु मशक येती सम तुका । ज्ञानदेव म्हणे अघटित घडे । गुरुकृपा जोडे परब्रह्म । - ल. रा. पांगारकर : 'मराठी वाङ्मयाचा इतिहास'.
14. आंगाचेनि इंधनें दाहांशु । उठोनि ज्ञानाग्निं प्रवेशु । करी तेथें भस्मलेशु । बोधाचा उरे । १७० । अनुभवामृत.
15. तेयांचे बिसाट शब्द । सुखां म्हणों यंति वेद । सदेह सच्चिदानंद । कां न व्हावे ते । १८.१६२४ । ज्ञानेश्वरी. येरव्हीं सच्चिदानंद भेदें । चालली तिन्ही पदें । परी तिन्हीं उणीं आनंदे । केलीं जेणें । २२६ । ... ना ना मुखा मुख दावुनी । आरिसा जाय निगौनि । कां निजैले चेवउनि । चेवविते जेवि । २४३ । तैसा सच्चिदानंद चोखटा । दाउनि द्रष्टेयासि द्रष्टा । मग तिन्हीं पदें निघति वाटा । मौनाचिया । २४४ । अनुभवामृत.
16. ऐसी निजपुण्याचिया जोडी । वाढिन्नली सर्वसुखांची कुळवाडी । तिये जन्मे तो सुरवाडीं । योगच्युतु । ६.४४६ । ... तैसी दशेची वाट न पांता वयसेचिया गावां न येता । बाळपणीं चि सर्वज्ञता । वरी तयातें । ६.४५१ । तिये सिद्धप्रज्ञेचेनि लाभें । मनचि सारस्वतें दुभे । मग सकळ शास्त्रें स्वयंभें । निघति वाचे । ६.४५२ । ज्ञानेश्वरी.

17. ततः प्रातिभश्रवणवेदनादशस्वादवार्ता जायन्ते । ३.३६ । ते समाधावुपसर्गा व्युत्थाने सिद्धयः । ३.३७ । पातञ्जल योगसूत्र.
18. The Wonder That Was India – A.L. Basham, 8th Impression, 1989.25
19. The hymn can be translated as follows: Keshi holds fire, water, heaven and earth; he brightens the hole of his space; this brightness is called ‘keśi’ (1). The keśi are hermits grit with winds and clad in unclean tawny skins. As they have attained the state of the gods, they move with the motion of wind (2) ‘Led into ecstasy by our life of hermits, we have reached the ethereal state. What you mortals see, are just our bodies’, they say (3). He moves in the middle region, observing the panorama of the universe, He is live sage from god. Wind’s horse friend of wind, sage sent over by god, friend sent for doing good. He reaches both the seas, the one in the east and the one in the west, (5). Treading in the trails of apsaras, gaṇḍharvas, and the antelopes of skies, keśi is the knower of the skies, friendly, agreeable and exhilarating (6). Wind churned and earth the inflexible pounded, to extract that which he drank from the pot of position, with Rudra (7)
20. The word Ketu means ‘a bright appearance, an apparition, comet’. This hymn depicts the comet as a benevolent messenger from god. In Varāhamīhira’s Brihatsamhita in the chapter on the comets, barely two varises attribute benevolence to some, against thirtyfive that talk of their evil effects. This aspects is evident in the allophonic Tamil word *ketu*, ‘to be destroyed, to run away defeated.’
21. Similarly, the popular image of ascetics cursing people, is contained in the Tamil word *muṇi*, ‘to be angry with’. The Sanskrit explanation of muni from mauna, ‘silence’, appears to be deductive rather than linguistic.
22. Concise Oxford Dictionary.
23. “Sophist” 262E – 263B; ‘Plato’s Theory of Knowledge’ F. M. Comford, (1979) p. 309-310
24. For most Indians, the statement, ‘Hanumān flies’ has a ring of truth. The character of the monkey named Hanumān in the Rāmāyaṇa is believed to have had the power of flying across the sky. It has been possible to decipher the myth of Hanumān. The monkey, a hairy creature, is a metaphor for the comet Like in the Vedic hymn above, the mythical monkey can expand and contract at will, and can fly towards the sun, over the ocean, and across the country to the Himālayas and back. The word *vāl* means ‘tail’ in Sanskrit and Tamil. And *vālar* in Tamil, mean ‘monkey’ and ‘celestial being’ respectively. We can visualize the process by which the metaphor and myth would have been developed. The episodes in the mythical narrative correspond to, the comet’s head always facing the sun and the tail growing and vanishing erratically, during its passage towards and away from the sun.
25. बाप उपेगी शब्दु । जो स्मरणदानीं प्रसिद्धु । अमूर्ताचा विशदु । आरिसा नोहे । २८८ । पाहते आरिसा पाहे । येथें नवल काइ आहे । परि दर्पणें येणें होये । न पातेही पाते । २८९ । अनुभवामृत.

26. pp. 305, 306, 307, - as per Note 23. Concluding pages of 'Republic' as per Note 30 below.
27. Aristotle : 'The Art of Poetry', Translated by Ingram Bywater. Oxford University Press Twelfth Impression 1991. pp. 71-72, 78
28. As per 27, p. 75.
29. काट्याच्या अणीवर । वसले तीन गाव । दोन ओसाड । एक वसेचिना । This riddle has been dealt as a mythical narrative, in : Vishvanath Khaire 'भारतीय मिथ्यांचा मागोवा 'संमत प्रकाशन, पुणे p. १० - १५, १४८ - १५० (the Tamil folk - song)
30. 'Plato : The Republic 'A new Translation, by H D P Lee, Te Penguin Classics 1955. p. 243.
31. Aristotel (as per 27), Preface by Gilbert Murray, p. 12-13.
32. 'By that time (three years of age) a child perceives, remembers, and trusts fully the existing norms, and reproduces what it has learned, 'The origin of the Human Race' by V.P. Alexeev, Progress Publishers Moscow, 1986. - p. 197,
33. 'The sphere of empirical experience is one of elementary direct knowledge, or rather not so much knowledge as acquaintance with are simplest properties of objects, the reperition of natural processes, and the course of human life.' Note 32 -p. 231
34. 'The Original Greek term for myth (mythos) denotes "word" in the sense of a decisive, final pronouncement. It differs from logos, the word whose validity or truth can be argued and demonstrated. Because myths present extraordinary events without trying to justify them, people have sometimes assumed that myths are simply unprovable and false stories and thus have made myth a synonym for fable.' "Myth and Mythology" -p. 492, Vol. 12, Encyclopaedia Britannica 15th Ed. - The *Sanskrit word 'mithyā'* meaning 'falsely, untruly' is related to '*mithas*', 'to or from or with each other, mutually'. The 'word' as communication is mutual excellence. Expounding rājasa knowledge, Jñānadeva employs the metaphor of the grand plan of mithyā that goes on, outside the precincts of the temple of true knowledge, exhibiting the three states of worldly existence.' तैसैं स्वज्ञानाच्चिये पौळी- । बाहिरिं मिथ्याचां महाखेळीं । तिहिं अवस्थांचिया बाहाळी । दावी जें जीवा । १८.५३८ । ज्ञानेश्वरी.
