

Poetry Series

**Sarvajna**  
**- poems -**

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# Sarvajna(16th Century)

Sarvajña (Sanskrit for "all-knowing", Kannada: ????????) was a Kannada poet, Pragmatist and Philosopher. He is famous for his pithy three-lined poems which are called tripadis, "with three padas, three-liners", a form of Vachanas. He is also referred as Sarvagna in modern translation.

## <b>Early Life</b>

The period of Sarvajña's life has not been determined accurately, and very little is known about his personal life. Based on studies of his literary style and the references of later writers, historians estimate that he may have lived during the first half of the 16th century. Some references in his works indicate that his real name was Pushpadatta - Sarvajña appears to have been his pseudonym. His father was a Shaivaite Brahmin and his mother was a Shudra widow named Mali. His father met his mother at a place in present day Dharwar district in Karnataka on his way to Benares on a always upheld the wisdom of pastoral life in rural areas and tried to persuade villagers to give up superstition, meaningless customs and traditions.

## <b>Tripadis</b>

Sarvagna grew up as a wandering monk creating the Tripadis,the famous threeliners.In all, about 2000 three-liners are attributed to Sarvajna. Popular because of their alliterative structure and simplicity, they deal mainly with social, ethical and religious issues. A number of riddles are also attributed to Sarvajna.

Channappa Uttangi was awarded the Kannada Sahitya Sammelana prize in 1949 for his groundbreaking work on Sarvajna.

## <b>Some Examples</b>

Being a monk, he says how he became an "all-knower" in one of his tripadi.

Sarvajna-nembuvanu garvadind-adanvane  
Sarvarolagondnu nudi-galitu vidyeya-  
parvatave aad noda Sarvajna

"All-knower has not become All-knower merely out of vanity  
he learnt one bit of information from everyone  
and became a veritable mountain of knowledge"

chittavillade guDiya suddare falavEnu? : ?????????????? ?????? ?????????? ??????????  
ettu gANavanu hottu tA nityadali : ?????? ?????? ?????????? ??????????  
sutti baNdaNte sarvajna : ??????? ??????? ??????????

Meaning : Circling around the temple without devotion without dedication is as useless as an ox circling around a mill.

Elu kotiye koti, Elu lakshave laksha ??? ?????? ??????, ??? ?????????e ????  
Elu savirada Eppattu vachanagala ??? ?????? ?????????? ???????  
Helidanu kela Sarvajna ?????????? ??? ??????????

" Over all meaning is Saravajna has said 70707070 vachanas (Tripadi)"

Majjige illada oota : ?????????? ?????? ??  
Majjanava kaanada lajjegetta : ??????? ?????? ??????????????  
hennanthe Sarvajna : ?????????? ??????????

" Dinner without butter milk is like a woman without finesse".

saalavanu koMbaaga haalOgaruM UnDante, - ??????? ??????? ??????????????????  
saaliganu baMdu keLuvaaga - ?????????? ?????? ???????  
kibbadiya keelu muridante sarvgjna - ?????????? ?????? ?????????????? ??????????

"Sweet as milk and nectar it is to get a loan  
..but when the creditor comes after you,  
..its painful as a broken ribcage"  
"A drunkard is like a pig.  
The poor pig, however, is helpful.  
The drunk is worse and useless."  
"Wearing marks of ash,  
if one goes to heaven,  
a donkey (that rolls in ash) sure goes."

# Better Befriend A Barking Dog

1

Better befriend a barking dog  
Than be friends with a Tamil,  
Crocodile's mouth is safer  
Than thorn tree shade.

2

Force fruit green mango by squeezing;  
Profit from peddling your wares by foot;  
Pain eyes from crying for the dead  
Are all in vain.

3

A town without fellowship;  
A house without children;  
A merchant without records;  
Walkways to woe.

4

Donkey is not for riding;  
Whore is not for heirs;  
Think Before you Jump  
Naked into the lake.

5

A meal without salt;  
Wife without breasts;  
Chewing the tip of a sugarcane;  
Are all insipid.

Sarvajna