

## Shoonya and Bayalu Buddha to Allama

Shoonya sampadane is a Kannada work that collects a large number of Vachanas [a kind of poetic prose] that are connected as dialogues centered around the great mystic Allama with other Shaiva mystics led by Basavanna. And Allama adorns the throne of Shoonya simhasana. Here Shoonya is both the highest state and the method of reaching it through exchange of words that zero in on the mystic experience which is beyond words. Brahma Advaita shiva and shoonya are used together here in these dialogues. The pure state of emptiness is here referred to as 'Bayalu' also. Bayalu in kannada also means space. But it is not an element as Akasha is in Orthodox Hindu Philosophy. Shoonya and Bayalu have their counter(?) correlatives as Nishshoonya and Nirb(v)ayalu. But neither of them are to be taken as mere metaphysical entities.

Shoonya as understood in the Vachanas bear close resemblance and deep connections to Shoonya as explained by Nagarjuna in his famous Madhyama karikas. The Shaiva mystics of Karnataka who spoke in the simple language of the masses communicated the Philosophy of Nagarjuna in the tone of Buddha. Hence the mystic leader of this 12<sup>th</sup> century movement, Allama's words sound like Zen poetry.

My paper seeks to view the Kannada Vachanas of 12<sup>th</sup> cent with the mystic traditions that confronted the Shoonya, very often misrepresented as a logical entity. It also suggests how Buddhism was absorbed into Shaiva tradition without mentioning the name of Buddha as against Vaishnavas who made Buddha an avatar of Vishnu.

A shorter form of the paper dealing only with the mystic nature of the concept of Shoonya to its philosophical explanation and return to the mysticism of Kannada Shaiva school will be presented in the conference. A more detailed paper will consider other connected points.