

CH.3 - RANGA'S MARRIAGE

By-Masti Venkatesha Iyenger

Introduction of the Author

Maasthi Venkatesa Iyengar (June 6, 1891 – June 6, 1986), popularly known as **Masti**, was an administrator, professor and a popular writer in Kannada language. He obtained a master's degree in English literature (Arts) in 1914 from Madras University. Initially he worked for 26 years in the Mysore Civil Service. He later resigned in protest as he was not made a minister but his junior was made one. Right from an young age he wrote both in English and in Kannada; more than 123 books in Kannada and 17 in English. His literary works covered novels, poetry, drama, criticism, journalism and largely short stories. His first work was *Rangana Maduve* (meaning marriage of Ranga) in 1910 and the last work was *Maatugara Ramanna* (meaning talkative Ramanna) (1985) both in Kannada. For his contribution to Kannada literature he was given the epithet *Maasti Kannadada Aasti* meaning “Maasti is Kannada's Treasure”. The Maharaja of Mysore Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar honoured him with the title *Rajasevasakta*. He won the prestigious Jnanpith Award, the highest honour for literature in India, in 1983 for his novel *Chikkavira Rajendra* a story on the last Raja of Kodagu.

Introduction to the lesson

The story revolves around Ranga, the accountant's son who got the opportunity to go out of the village to study. The narrator takes you through a journey where he changes Ranga's perception about marriage, how he staged their union with the help of a Shastri and what role English has played in their village. The entire story involves funny instances and references for the narrator has made sure your mind stays occupied with the story.

Summary-1

Ranga's Marriage, by Masti Venkatesh Iyengar, is a story about a boy who returns to his village after receiving education in English medium from Bangalore. The boy is the son of the accountant of the village. They live in the village Hoshali in Mysore. The boy when returns, the whole village floods over him to see if there is any change in his personality. However, to their dismay, he still has the same eyes and mouth and everything else. He did the traditional namaskar and all dispersed.

The story is a first person narrative and a major portion of the story is in flash back. The speaker directly addresses the reader. The narrator is a neighbor of the protagonist. He introduces the story with a difference by first giving a detailed description of their village Hoshali. He praises the mangoes from his village. He asks the reader if he/she has ever heard of the village. He replies to the question himself, for the village was not located in any of the maps for the English babus and the ones in our country forgot to put it there. Then he introduces Ranga, the protagonist, in a time ten years ago. Ranga had gone to Bangalore for studies and returned home after six months. It was the time when English was a language not popular and a few people used it. All used to converse in Kannada. All the villagers arrived at Ranga's place and began scrutinizing him. To their dismay, he was still the same old Ranga and they left disappointed. However, the narrator stayed back and shared a few jokes with the boy and then left. Later in the afternoon, Ranga arrived at the narrator's home with a few oranges. The narrator judged the boy and felt it appropriate to marry such a well educated and humble boy. However, Ranga had no plans to settle as a married man. He put his views on marriage in front of the narrator that he wanted to get married to a girl who is mature and someone Rangappa could admire.

Ranga left after the discussion and the narrator decided then that he would get the boy married. Determined, he began considering Rama Rao's niece Ratna as a suitable bride for Ranga. She was from a big town and knew how to play veena and harmonium. He came up with a plan. He asked Rama Rao's wife to send Ratna to his place to fetch some buttermilk. So she came on Friday wearing a grand saree. He requested Ratna to sing and sent for Ranga. Ranga reached the narrator's place and stopped outside the room as he did not want to disrupt the singing but was curious to see her face so peeped in. Ratna noticed the stranger and stopped abruptly. Ranga came in and the girl left.

Curiously he inquired about the girl and narrator cleverly played at his words. He told Ranga that the girl was married off a year ago and noticed the disappointment flaring Ranga's face. He was infatuated to the girl. The narrator was happy as his plan was working. As his next step, the next day the narrator took Ranga to an astrologer who he had already tutored what to say. It was the meeting with the astrologer when the narrator's name is disclosed. Shyama, he was. The astrologer pretended to read the natal chart of Rangappa and declared that the boy was in love with a girl who had a name of something found in the ocean. Shyama said it could be Ratna, Rama Rao's niece. Ranga's smile was not hidden from Shyama. But the girl was married!

The narrator took the boy to Rama Rao's home and asked him to wait outside. When he came outside he confirmed that the girl was not married, that there had been some confusion. After all, the narrator had to come up with something. Even Ranga then admitted that he had been attracted to the girl. Later a conversation between the astrologer and the narrator is described as how the astrologer says that though the narrator had given him clues, he could have found it all out by himself through astrology.

The story moves forward ten years, or to say, returns to the present. Rangappa came one day to the narrator, inviting him at his son Shyama's third birthday. Obviously, Ratna and Ranga had been married. And now they have a three years old son whom Ranga named after the narrator.

Summary-2

It all begins when Ranga, the accountant's son comes back to his village Hosahalli after six months. He had gone to Bangalore to pursue his studies, which to mention, not many in the village get this opportunity. The whole village gets excited to see Ranga and thus, they gather around his home only to see how he would have changed. The narrator has beautifully elaborated about their village Hosahalli and how every authority responsible forgot to mention it in the maps. Moving on, he admires Ranga and wants to get him married but to his dismay, Ranga has very different views about marriage at that point. The Narrator stages the entire union of Ranga and Ratna, Rama Rao's eleven year old niece. The girl has a very sweet voice and can play Veena and harmonium. At first, the narrator tells him that she is married to see how it affects Ranga. As expected, Ranga was disappointed. The narrator then manipulated the village Shastri to say things in his favour. He then took Ranga to visit him where he predicted that Ranga has a girl on his mind and her name resembles something found in the ocean. Shyama, the narrator guesses her name to be Ratna but again, she is married. On their way back, they confirmed that Ratna is not married only to find Ranga happy and full of hope. On the other hand, the Shastri disagreed on having staged anything predetermined. He claims to have said whatever his predictions showed. However, at the end, Ranga and Ratna are happily married with a three- year old son named after the narrator. Ratna is also pregnant with another child. To conclude, the narrator makes sure that he didn't bore his readers.
