

## Ranjit Singh Rangeela

While in Punjab, Dr. Ranjit Singh Rangeela moves in *kurta pyjama* to look like an ordinary rural Punjabi Sikh with flowing white beard; doesn't resemble a linguist who heads a research group of Indian Grammatical Traditions and Semiotics at the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore. His informal style of speaking adds to the mystery of his colourful personality. GNDU didn't enroll him for his Ph D. and he couldn't join Punjabi University even after his selection. Why? He doesn't mince words.

To be one of the internationally recognized linguists of India is quite a growth. His strength lies in his convictions. Noam Chomsky, the famous linguist and philosopher visited India in 1974 to deliver Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Lecture and Delhi University invited him to confer an honorary degree. Noam chose to go straight to Dept. of Linguistics and walked into research scholars' room. "How do you do young boy?" "Don't call me boy, I'm your critic", was the curt reply of Rangila. Correspondence till date continues the relationship.

The caliber of Rangila's research has got him enthusiastic reviews. One of his works is widely used as reference book and has served as model for dozens of Ph Ds in Asia and Europe. *Indian Congress on Knowledge and Language 1975* is most acclaimed milestone in his organizing ability. Scholars from thirteen countries like US, Spain, South Africa, and Yugoslavia took part in the Congress. Chomsky confirmed his participation, but had to later regret his inability.

In Rangila's own words he is "trying to conceptualise the ideas that should formulate correlation between human creations and behaviour." His thrust is to explore *whether something is existentially available or not*. To locate the basic potential of humans he talks of *the Geo-mentals*: anything that is harmonized through two fundamental coordinates; 'earth' and 'truth'. With earth as coordinate one is placed in whole of the

space and cosmos while truth coordinates actuality and esthetic geometry of Consciousness.

Poetry, linguistics and semiotics are, to him, open windows to philosophy and their articulations excite him. His work starts with pre-birth human being. It extends the subtle vision of Bhartharihari, and is sourced through Gurbani. To Bharthari everything comes and happens with a *Safota* or a *Beeja*, a flash. Rangila analyses the stages and processes that transform this *Beeja* into what he calls a 'conceptual tree'. For him it is important to understand the onset point, the progression and the direction in which something grows to become. This led him to study Hargobind Khurana extensively.

Rangila discovers continuity in the development of Indian thought and finds a subtle dialogue between Panini's Ashtadhyayi and Guru Nanak's Mool Mantra. Both creations are crafted on a single principle of 'not using the verb'. Rangila also finds a conceptual interaction between the two. Mool Mantra is about Ek Onkar, Satnaam, Karta Purkh ...; and whole of Guru Granth Sahib presents an expansion of this *Karta*. Similarly Panini's Sutra Paath is the expansion of 'sound' and is operational through *Karta*. Rangila is also trying to build parallels and connections between ancient Tamil theoretician Tholkappiar and Panini to establish linkages between identities and ideas.

A vibrant student of Dr. Pandit and an ardent admirer of illustrious Dr. Harjit Singh Gill, Ranjit Singh Rangeela is Punjab's intellectual ambassador to South India.