

## GOVINA HADU (SONG OF COW)

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The different forms of folk narration include Songs, ballads, epics, dramas etc. But 'Songs' are most effective 'folk' form. The oral tradition flowed from 'mouth' to 'mouth' in the form of songs is known to be much richer and meaningful, in Kannada folk world. The famous epics like 'Mahabharata' and 'Ramayana' were originally passed on orally, in the form of Songs in early days.

Basically the folk Songs are sung by common people, men and women at the time of their work. Marriage ceremonies, travelling time and some other occasions either happy or sad were the 'subject' of the songs and the main feelings of human being, like love, affection, nature, goodness, god, children etc. But most of the folk songs tell us how to live the life in good way, that is the 'values' of life.

Best example of such kind of Songs is "Govinahadu". This is a widely known Kannada folk song with the very important 'value' of life i.e., "TRUTH". The brief explanation of the song goes thus:

In the region of 'Karnataka' there lived a cow **herd** by the name "Kalinga". One beautiful morning, as usual, the cowherd woke up early, and took the cows to field for grazing. He sat under a tree, started playing his flute. He pleased his cows by playing the flute. The music that was coming out his flute, sounded like he was calling each cow by its name "Oh "Gange, Gowri, Thugabhadra, kamadhenu, you come". The cows on hearing his loving sweet call came and surrounded him and let their milk flow in to the pots.

When the pots were filled with milk, the cowherd guided the cows towards the forest. Where they feasted on the tender green grass, and drank water in the river. Then the cow herd called them back and all cows started going back to the home, keeping steps with the tinkling bells around their necks.

In the middle of sprawling mountain range, there lived a tiger, which was very hungry for a whole week and was hiding at the entrance of the cave. He heard the sound of cows going home. He was very happy that he is going to get a meal and he immediately attacked on cows with lightning speed and with thunderous roar.

The frightened cows ran with fear, scattering in each and every direction. And got away from the reach of the tiger. The tiger enraged at the sight of the cows escaping looked around and look at the lonely cow walking slowly, unaware of the tiger. The

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tiger, having found the prey, stood in the path of the cow and blocked the passage of the cow “Punyakoti” and tiger said himself “I found my food today”

The tiger confronted Punyakoti and said “ Hey you cow, you are my prey. I will break your neck, bite your head off and Suck your blood”.

Punyakoti requested the tiger “Lord tiger, I have a child at home, let me go and feed my baby, and will return to you after”.

“I have found my meal when I am hungry. If I let you slip away, and you will never come back” said the tiger.

Then the punyakoti answered

“Truth is my Mother,  
Truth is my Father,  
Truth is my Friend and relative,  
If I have not kept my word  
God will never forgive me  
‘I will promise you tiger, that  
I will come back soon”

The tiger accepted the request and allowed Punyakoti to visit her baby.

Then the cow hurried to home, to see the calf and feed her. Punyakoti told the calf “Come my child, drink my milk for the last time, I was attested by a tiger who wants to eat me. He gave an opportunity to feed you and bid fare well, I have promised to return to him”

Then the calf cried, and said “mother, who will take care of me? By whose side shall I sleep at night? Who will give me milk?”

Then Punyakoti addressed to other cows “My sister and my aunts, please take care of my orphan child as your own and treat with kindness”

“My son I have to go to tiger, I cannot break my promise. This day our relationship will end.”

Punyakoti walked calmly towards the cave and called about the tiger. “Oh tiger, here I am as I promised I have made sin, by having kept you hungry and waiting long time, delay no more, your food is here, Warm blood is flowing through my heart and there is plenty of meat, come and eat”

On hearing these words of punyakoti, the tiger was surprised; a great transformation came upon the tiger. He said “you are a divine being; I cannot will and eat you, Now you are like my elder sister, If I eat you the god kill not forgive me”. The tiger with tears in eyes, threw himself down from the mountain and died.

This popular Kannada Song, looks simple but filled with the great “values” of life, mainly the “Truth”, Truth is the inner Soul of this song.

In the story Punyakoti, many got escaped from going to tiger, but she opted to go to the tiger, to keep the ‘promise’ by this she held that “keeping the word’ is above all, Even ‘life’ is smaller than ‘Truth’ She believed that if we go away from the path of “truth”, god will never accept us. For the sake of ‘truth’ and for “keeping the word”, we must be ready to even to lose our life, this is the best ‘value’ of good life.

The child asked the mother Punyakoti that with whom I sleep? Who will give me milk? when she left. Then Punyakoti asked other cows to look after the orphan child

with kindness. This too is a big 'value'. Taking care of others as our own is integral part of human life. Showing kindness to others at the time of their difficulties is the basic "value" of good life.

At the end of the story the tiger really transformed and died by refusing to kill the cow.

This clearly demonstrates that if we go in the path of 'truth' and "goodness", we can change anybody in the world and the god always lies with the people who are going in the 'true' path. This is one simple example of our folk songs filled with 'values'. Hundreds of such songs are available in our tradition. This shows that how rich are our 'folk songs' when it comes to the "value".