

## Questions for Sirius J. Libeiro, translation of *The Seekers* by Gautamiputra Kamble

Welcome everyone. This is Jessica Zu. I'm an assistant professor of religion at University of Southern California at Dornsife and a New Books Network host in Buddhist Studies. Today, we are very lucky to have Sirius Libeiro to talk with us about his English translation of a collection of short stories, *The Seekers (Parivrajak)* by the award-winning Marathi writer, activist and educator, Gautamiputra Kamble, published by Blaft Publications in 2026 (<https://www.blaft.com/products/the-seekers>), and is now available for purchase on amazon.

**Short bio:** GAUTAMIPUTRA KAMBLE is an award-winning Marathi writer. His background in literature and philosophy informs his interests and activism—he is the editor of *Secular Vision* magazine, coordinator of the Secular Art Movement, and President of the Secular Movement and Secular Education and Research Institute, Sangli, Maharashtra. He has also served as the President of Phule-Ambedkar Shahu Teachers Association, Kolhapur. *Parivrajak (The Seekers)* was first published in Marathi in 2004; it has featured in curricula for post-graduate courses and civil service examinations in Maharashtra.

Sirius Libeiro is a translator based in Mumbai, India.

**Intro Question:** Welcome Sirius. Thank you for writing amazingly insightful yet super readable and extremely engaging artistic re-rendering of Gautamiputra Kamble's mind-bending stories. I call it mind-bending because it reflects back to us how much our minds are already bended by graspings onto delusional extremes of either eternity or nihilism. Part of me thinks of this as Zen Koan or Chan Gong'an; part of me thinks of it as Haraway's SF; "SF—science fiction and fantasy, speculative fabulation, speculative feminism, and string figures. SF kept politics alive." So Gautamiputra's mind-bending tales reflect back to us our own deluded minds, so we can liberate our imaginations from the fixations of being or non-being; and opening up emancipatory world-making—building relational freedom, relational nondomination, making kins, not babies.

I'd like to start our interview with the traditional New Books Network question: could you please tell us a bit about yourself and, how and why you came to translate this unconventional work?

**Sirius :** Sure. Hello, Jessica. It's really great to be here today, and thank you for inviting me to discuss this book. Also, greetings from Gautamiputra. Ideally, both of us would have been here together, to discuss the book, but April's a busy month, because we just had Phule Jayanti and Ambedkar Jayanti's coming up, and Gautamiputra has been traveling a lot.

I can start by talking about myself.

As you mentioned, *The Seekers* is my first full-length book in translation. The way I got into translation was when I was in graduate school, in Philadelphia. During the pandemic, like a lot of people, I was stuck during the lockdown, and I happened to have access to a lot of material in Marathi. I started translating as a hobby. But then I really got into it, and after a

while, I realized that I enjoyed it tremendously. When I came back to India in 2022, I decided that I would like to do translation with the intention of getting it published.

About *The Seekers*: It would be important to explain the context to how this book came about. As you mentioned, Bluff Publications is the publisher for the book. Blaft had originally started a project for an anthology of anti-caste speculative fiction in 2024. Until now, a lot of anti-caste fiction within the subcontinent has tended to be very realist, and they were very curious about what a different form of fiction would look like, or a different form of anti-caste writing. It was a fantastic project, a first of its kind initiative. The anthology included translations from established writers in Indian languages, and also a call for newer and younger writers to write for the first time. A translation of Parivrajak, the titular story from this book was also selected for the anthology.

Another unique thing about the anthology is that Blaft ran a Kickstarter or a crowdfunding project to get this book out. And they gathered enough pledges/money, way above what they needed to just get the basic anthology in print.

While that was going on, I had read the remaining stories in Gautamiputra's book, and I realized that I was holding something very unique in my hands. I kept telling Rakesh, the editor at Blaft, that we needed to get the book out. The five stories sort of dovetail into each other, conceptually, intellectually, and also in terms of form.

When we had raised enough funding, even Rakesh was on board, *The Anthology of Anticaste SF*, came out in December 2024, and in 2025, I began working on *The Seekers*.

An interesting thing about this book is that the first draft was done within a month and half. After that I visited Gautamiputra in Sangli, which is about an overnight journey from Mumbai in Maharashtra, and he hosted me. I stayed in Sangli for a week, and we discussed the translation along with the original text in Marathi. The first draft took a month, and the edits and re-edits took around 6 months. The book was ready to go to print in October last year, and it finally came out in November, 2025.

**Thank you Sirus for sharing with us.** So your artistic recreating of Gautamiputra's SFs consists of five stories. One translator's note and one author's notes, and quite a few illustrations. Some of the main themes, without giving away the stories too much, are humans turned into rock/stone sculptures and vice versa, the speakable and the unspeakable. But, **I want to start our questions with the cover art and the illustrations.**

**The cover art is by Sanjeev Sonpimpare, and the illustrations are by various artists, let me just name them here: Suresh Pandit, Vaishali Patil, Mogganlal Shravasti, and Balasaheb Patil.** We won't have time to go through every illustration. But may I ask why you chose this cover art by Sanjeev Sonpimpare (I love it, just a line of footsteps and a broken inscripted pillar)? Also the last illustration, a calligraphy by Balasaheb Patil, I think it's *Parivrajika* in devanagri script. Could you please tell us a bit more about the processes

of collecting and gathering and designing all these artworks together? And your own role in making this artistic rendering possible?

**Sirus:** The art in the book is very close to my heart.

I forgot to mention this in the beginning, but even though Gautamiputra is not here, he has shared his responses to the questions you will be asking today. I firmly believe that his voice and words are a part of this interview just as much as mine are, as the translator.

We do have him present, albeit in the written form, with us today.

There is a lot of art in the book: there's the cover art, then each story has an accompanying sketch/illustration art at the beginning. It's a mix of abstract, evocative, black and white. I find it very hard-hitting. The artwork accompanying the stories, was already part of the Marathi version of the book. I wasn't sure if Blaft Publications would be okay with adding the sketches to the English version as well, both in terms of wanting to and the finances working out.

But I asked Rakesh if we could, because art would really add value to the stories. You've read the book, and you must know how much the stories themselves are about various artforms. I was happy when Rakesh readily agreed to add them to The Seekers as well.

When it came to the cover art, we were at a loss for a while. It was very difficult to capture something so diverse, intellectually deep, while making it attractive for readers. I am not very familiar with art, but I knew I wanted it to be something different, something unique. We did a couple of rounds of usual cover art styles, but it didn't appeal to me or Gautamiputra. I asked him if we could create something for the book. He agreed.

Gautamiputra and I met Sanjeev Sompimpare, and Gautamiputra suggested his thoughts about the components for a painting. Sanjeev agreed, and within two days we had a painting, which was used as the cover for The Seekers. Now, I would like to read Gautamiputra's response to the question about the cover art.

Gautamiputra: I was thinking about what the possible cover art for The Seekers could look like. I have been associated with Kalapushpa Movement (in Sangli) and Secular Art Movement since the beginning and have a lot of friends who are painters and artists. In fact, the art accompanying each story in the original Marathi edition was contributed by different artists with the movement.

The concept for the cover art for The Seekers is mine, and has been created by Sanjeev. A 'Seeker' is someone who searches, and the bare footsteps in the painting represent that search. And they traverse difficult terrain towards a broken pillar. This pillar is none other than the one raised by Emperor Ashoka at Gautam Buddha's birthplace. The inscription on it states that in the twentieth year of his coronation, Priyadarshi Raja (Beloved of the Gods: the royal title for Emperor Ashoka) visited this spot, and this stone pillar is being erected here so as to share this information with everyone. Further, since the Buddha was born here, Lumbinigram has been exempted from all eight taxes that are due to the Emperor.

The inscription on the pillar is very important: it historicizes Buddha. It makes him a real person instead of being a fictional/imagined character. Also, a search for Buddha is not a search for a religion, rather, it is a search for rationalism, for a morality, for secularism, and for a revolutionary philosophy. These ideas are in line and consistent with the content of the book.

**Many thanks Sirus for sharing your insight.** This work is truly a collective achievement of a collective leadership that is at the same time inviting all readers and listeners to weave themselves into this collective make of a new world grounded in care and friendship.

The first story is a meta-fiction, titled “the story of a story” in which the protagonists refuse to say a single word while the writer frantically tries to write something. Let me just read this part at the end of this story, a conversation between the writer and his friend

“I handed him my written pages.

As expected, he glanced at my work and said,

“arrey, you say they’ve remained untouched by words and stories. Fine! Why don’t you craft a narrative using words which have never been used for any characters until now? if you can manage that, this man and women will enter your story like rock sculptures—intricate and striking. Of this, I am certain.”

My friend shoved the pages back in my hand. He left, leaving me with a challenge and a call to action....”

How can we make sense of this Koan? How do you write about what’s beyond words?

**Sirus:** I would like to read Gautamiputra’s response first and then add my thoughts about the story.

**Gautamiputra:** When I was a student, I had read an English book titled ‘Six characters in search of an Author’ (Luigi Pirandello). Based on that, I thought about ‘A writer in search of characters’. But how should these characters be, then? They’d would have to be untouched by the words of other writers, and be un-depicted in anyone else’s writing.

In short, this story is about the process of writing a story.

**Sirus:** For me this story sets the stage for the remaining stories in the collection. What is striking for me is that even though the writer/author in the story is clearly a stand-in for Gautamiputra, the story itself is very aware of the power of stories and the abilities of writers to wield the truth. The part where the author threatens/warns the man that he’d write a story so powerful that the fictional reality will seem real and the man would doubt his own version of his own life. It clearly indicates the ability of literature to shape reality, and is also a qualifier to how we must engage with literature.

The whole thing about writing using words never-before-used is one of the fundamental projects of the book. Gautamiputra has a background in life-long activism, along with a

close engagement with Marathi literature and Philosophy. He regularly mentions Ludwig Wittgenstein as being one of his influences, amongst others. It tells us how attentive Gautamiputra is to language. According to Gautamiputra, traditional religious epics and scriptures exert a tremendous influence on literature and arts in South Asia. It sounds obvious now, but it was only after he had articulated it so clearly that I couldn't unsee it anymore. Then to write something truly different and new would have to break out of the traditional mold and standard references within literature and language. The world, the language, the characters, the form, all of it would seem and feel different and uncanny to read. They would be the sort that would not have been depicted in Marathi literature (or perhaps in other Indian language literature too) before.

And the man and the woman we encounter in the first story, we run into them again in the other four stories as well, although in different forms. They are same and still different, as are the subjects that they engage with in each story.

**Many thanks Sirus for** clarifying this important point for our listeners.

**Now the core story of this collection, "Parivrajak"** which gives the collection its title "the seekers" but for Buddhist studies scholars Parivrajak typically means "one who goes forth" who wanders about—definitely not a Buddhist monk/nun. But then in the story itself, about a woman Anisha searching for a two-legged person/man; a man Naiser searching for a "living stone", and the living stone turns out to be about the story of the Buddha's going forth: let me just quote this part p. 39, one version about the Buddha's going forth, the unconventional one "He resolved to go out alone. I will search for reasons, he thought. Reasons why people, who flounder in pain like fish out of water, are so eager to fight. Reasons why people are keen on making enemies even at death's door. I will find an explanation for these paradoxes, and also a way to resolve them". At the end of this story, Anisha asked

"so tell me: what was the real reason for the prince's renouncement? Was it his anguish at seeing the old, the sick, the destituted, and the dead? Or was it his refusal to pick up arms in the water dispute?"

Naiser's answer "It does not matter *why* the prince renounce it all. What matters is what he did afterwards."

"otherwise, anyone who gave up their worldly possessions would have been immortalized inside this hill as living stone"

"*anyone*—even the likes of you and me"

Sirus: This was the first story I read from the book, and the first story that was translated for the Blaft Anthology. It is a two-parter. The first part is about a man and a woman on a search, having abandoned their homes for distinctly different reasons. And they meet each other by chance and become travelling companions. As they travel together, the first part really fleshes out the sheer power of tradition and customs and its ability to shape and inhibit human behavior.

The second part of the story is about origin-stories. The man and woman find a cave filled with numerous stone statues and there are multiple origin stories about the person depicted in the stone. However, Gautamiputra is not very concerned about which origin story is real. Rather he prioritizes something else.

**Gautamiputra:** One of the themes/sub-plots of the story, 'Parivrajak', is the discovery of the world-famous caves in Ajanta. There are many statues of Buddha, and in some instances that representation is symbolic rather than outright imagery. In a sense, all of it is history. And history is/should be mostly dead; except that people in the present bring it into the contemporary moment and breathe life in it. Therefore, history is alive. It is living. And since histories are primarily kept alive through inscriptions, statues, and symbols, these artefacts, are 'living stones'. They continue to inspire and guide countless people in their present moment.

In the story, the intricate statue is that of Buddha. There are multiple legends about why Siddhartha (Buddha) renounced his home. But what we know is that there was a conflict between the Shakyas and the Koliyas over the waters of the Rohini river. And they prepare to annihilate the other through war. Siddhartha doesn't agree with this. He says that they should arbitrate instead of fighting. But that Shakyas don't listen to him. Then, Siddhartha vows to search for the reason why humans become enemies with each other. And he did it. There is a famous gatha (verse) about it.

*Na hi verena verani  
sammantidha kudacanam  
averena ca sammanti  
esa dhammo sanantano*

Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. It is appeased only by loving-kindness. This is an ancient law.

That is to say, enmity doesn't destroy enmity. Only loving kindness does that. I feel that instead of debating/arguing about *why* Sidhartha renounced his world, it is far far more important to look at what he did, and what he found, afterwards.

**Sirus:** I think what Gautamiputra is trying to question how we think about history and underscores the things that we ought to be focusing on.

**Many thanks Sirus for such intriguing insight.** The next story continues our search for the living stone and life, the slippery boundaries between the two. It involves two guys Monark and Idfra, travelling to find some huge sculptures, hence the title "Shilpasan". But the story they tell about the shilpasan is about a girl named Sanruta born in a family of sculpturers, her uncle, her study of the art of dancing, her loneliness, sun-gazing, her pursuit for artistic excellence in dancing in sculpture making ... but also about meaning of life, But at the end of the story, when Monark asked Idfra about this shilpasan, Idfra says "Arrey, this shilpasan exists. It is very real. Turn around: we can still see it. But as for its origin story—if someone asks you about it, you can tell a different story than the

one I told you. And, if I ever accompany someone else here, I might narrate something else entirely.”

**Sirus, this comment plays into the whole question that weaved the stories together here: what's real,** the stone or life? What's truth? Something touchable like the stone sculpture or the stories we tell each other that only lives in the moments when we tell them?

Sirus: Shilpasan has led to mixed reactions since the book came out. Some people love it, some thought this was their least favorite, and some reported that they would just drift off or get lost. I totally get that: it is a story within a story within a story. The nestedness can be disorienting. But as I was reading it in Marathi, I thought of the oral tradition of telling stories, where narratives tend to be packed within each other. Also, Gautamiputra has clearly drawn inspiration from the Jataka tales in his writing. There is always a moral or a lesson at the end of each story.

One of the things Gautamiputra mentioned to me in Sangli which made its way into the translation was that people attribute all sorts of stories to things, and if that thing was a stone sculpture or a painting there would be many many origin stories. And he has tried to examine the process itself in Shilpasan.

Apart from that, the story also touches upon the point of artistic arrogance, and hegemony of knowledge. Who decides the curriculum? What is to be taught? And what does it mean to be alive? Through Sanruta, who is a protagonist of sorts, we see her trying to belong, find herself, even as she flits between feeling alive and turning to stone. It is important to mention here that even though the story (and other stories too) might seem magical at first, Gautamiputra is careful to explain everything within a rational embodied framework. I will read Gautamiputra's response to your question now.

Gautamiputra: The core focus in Shilpasan is the process of myth-making or myth-creation. The details of the same legend are as varied as the number of people narrating it. This is a very important feature of myth-formation. The myth-creation process is a seamless and imperceptible mixture of fiction, history, and fact: which results in an astounding and magical reality. My story examines and presents these processes.

Sirus: As I mentioned, with Shilpasan, he's trying to really look at how stories become what they are over time, narrated by different people. Another thing I would like to mention for your listeners is how Gautamiputra has experimented with character names in the book. All the names in the book sound odd-but-familiar to the ear, and it is intentional. One of my favorite examples is that of Idfra in Shilpasan. Now Id-fra is an inversion of Freud, which is Fra-id in Marathi.

Once we know that, the character and his words achieve a different meaning. When Idfra talks about the truth being beneath the surface: for me, it became about the sub-conscious (the story's, the world's, and the writer's).

I can't claim to have grasped all the facets and references in Shilpasan. Everytime I re-read it, I find something new in it. It is a story that keeps giving.

**Thank you Sirius** for shedding light on such an important philosophical paradox. **In the interested of time, let's move onto the next story**, "Tales of Viroopnagar" literally means the deformed city. Without giving away too much, it's about a city and its citizens debating about the ritual sacrifice of a calf every year, the public showdown of knowledge between the priest-rtvij, and an arhat (an enlightened Buddhist teacher). The story didn't end too well, because we saw two opposing groups willing to kill each other's group—but then the city burst into flames, p. 117 "Fire has no friends—only fuel. And the flaming buildings mercilessly pulled everything around them into their destructive blaze." When reading this part, I don't think it's talking about ancient mystical cities at all, it's us, right now, going through war and fire. But the end of this story harks back to Attadanda sutta (one of the core discourses when the buddha explained about his going forth)—this passage you left untranslated

Attadanda bhayam jatam, janam passatha medhagam  
Samvegam kittayissami yatha samvijitam maya  
Phandamanam panjam disva macche appodake yatha  
Annemanehi byaruddhe disva mam bhayamavisi

Fear arises from taking up the rod; behold the people at strife.  
I shall proclaim the sense of urgency, as it was experienced by me.  
Seeing people floundering like fish in a pool with little water,  
Obstructing one another—seeing this, fear entered me.

This sutta harks back to the second story "**Parivrajak**"—**where** the second reason given about the Buddha's going forth is about seeing people killing each other for water—and the story ends with the arhat chanting another sutta about violence and nonviolence (vera, avera)—please tell us more about your decisions NOT translating these Pāli texts, maybe this also have something to do with the larger frame of this collection, what's speakable & unspeakable?

Sirius: As I mentioned before, Gautamiputra has experimented with names of characters and places in the book. And it applies to story titles as well. Viroop could mean deformed, extremely different/unique, or even beautiful in some sense. And it is the uncertainty of meaning that adds complexity to the history of the place.

It is difficult to read "Tales of Viroopnagar" and not think of the events unfolding in the world right now. It is extremely relevant in our present moment. However, Gautamiputra is focused on looking at conflicts between ideologies and philosophies rather than between people. He looks at ideologies that underpin acts of violence or oppression and then counters it with an alternative.

About leaving some parts translated. Even when the original book came out in Marathi, even the most avid Marathi readers struggled with some of the Marathi, Pali, and Sanskrit words that were used in the stories. I think it is closely related to Gautamiputra's project of highlighting lesser known or sidelined cultural histories. I was cognizant of this feature of the stories as I translated the book.

In 'Tales of Viroopnagar' there are verses in Sanskrit and a few in Pali which have been left untranslated. However, I mention resources in my translator's note if someone would like to read the translation for those sections. The decision to leave them untranslated was informed by multiple considerations. Some of them I have already mentioned: highlighting forgotten cultural histories, people encountering unknown/lesser-known words even in the original version etc. That aside, I felt that effect of those sections was palpable in the translated text, even if the exact meaning remained unknown. I wanted the sounds of these words to remain as is, rather than rendering them in English.

Now, I will read out Gautamiputra's comments on the story.

Gautamiputra: 'Tales of Viroopnagar' is part of ancient India's history. When faced with natural disasters, the residents of Viroopnagar come together to protect their town. However, the same residents are ready to kill each other over the question of whether a Kalvad (a calf) should be sacrificed or not. There is also a struggle between the violence of non-Buddhist philosophy and ahimsa (non-violence) of Buddhist philosophy. Eventually, the philosophy of non-violence emerges as being more effective. Today, we are seeing all sorts of big and small conflicts and wars all around the world. The only solution to this is non-violence based on rationalism and intelligence. That is why it is often said, No to Yuddha (war), yes to Buddha!

Sirus: Another thing that I find striking about this story is how clear-eyed the narrative is about the role of leaders and the influence they exercise in pushing people towards violence (no matter what the cause). In the end, it is the people, not the leaders, who realise the wrong they have committed and walk away from it.

**Many thanks for sharing with us Sirus.** Personally, I see this story as the story of our time, it we are all helpless fish struggling to kill each other while our pool is drying up ☺ And the last verse is still relevant, " For never in this world is hatred appeased by hatred; It is appeased by non-hatred. This is the eternal law." Otherwise, we'll just repeat the myth of redemptive violence—the extremely stupid idea that somehow only just, good violence can end bad, unjust violence—without ever reflecting for a moment that how do you make sure the good, just violence will NOT reproduce the oppressive structures sustained by bad unjust violence that you just tear down. It's sad, it reminds me of a famous quote from Candrakirti, the 8<sup>th</sup> CE Madhyamaka philosopher commentin on Nagarjuan's Mulamadhymakakarika, (quoted from p. 140 of [Svyambhuvyakarana](#)),

One may obtain even oil from sand, pressing with effort;  
And a thirsty person may drink from mirages;  
At some point, while wandering about, one may find a hare's horn;  
But one may not please the mind of a stubborn, foolish person.

**In the interest of time, let's give our attention to the last story,** "The search for the sixth sense," the protagonist of this story is Nikay, and again, there's always other stories within this story. Nikay is talented but born untouchable, throughout his life, he mastered mathematics, music, dance ... driven by his quest for the sixth sense, a way to see music or hear a painting ... but it's also about various discrimination he experienced during this journey of learning. For example, while learning nrutya (art of dancing), his teacher one day shared this "Pay attention: I will now demonstrate the mudras of the four divisions of society" (p. 167). Which made Nikay "felt like molten lead was being poured in his ears." And at some point, p. 177, Nikay remembered what his uncle told him "*The Summit of morality has barely enough space for two legs, and lust is the most beautiful thing in this world...*" another Koan that harks back to the conversation about the two-legged and four-legged people in the first story. But I also wanna draw the listeners attention to the ending of this story, when the woodcutter-cum-arhart compares Nikay's search for the sixth sense with early Buddhist texts on why the Buddha refuses to answer questions like "who created the universe? When? What happens after we die?" (p. 180). And I love this comment by the woodcutter, speaking to Nikay:

"But it's not just you. There are many others who continue searching for a non-existent black cat in a dark room. And as long as people seek such things, there will always be those who jump up, exultant, shouting 'I have found it!'"

This, for me, sums up many human stupidities past, present, and unfortunately, foreseeable future. **Sirus could you please unpack a bit the profound philosophical insight embedded in this story?**

Sirus: This is my favorite story in the collection. And just to share a trivia about word-play and meanings, the word Nikay can mean chapter or a collection or an assemblage, which is fitting given how the character moves through life collecting skills in a variety of artforms. It was a unique take on the coming-of-age genre. Gautamiputra has shared a detailed response to this final story, and it perfectly encapsulates some of its key lessons.

Gautamiputra: The final story in the collection, 'The Search for Sixth Sense' tries to present a very important philosophy of Buddha. Even during Buddha's time, there were many learned sages and ascetics who spent their entire lives in pursuit of futile questions. Buddha, at the onset, divided questions into valid and invalid questions. Then, he concluded that the answers to invalid questions are also invalid. The search for the sixth sense in the story is an example of an invalid search. Even Buddha was asked invalid questions like, is the universe finite or eternal? But since even responding to this question would be invalid, he chose silence, and then gave an explanation for his silence.

The second important point in the story is the centrality of humanity. Humanity is superior to all arts, philosophies and ideologies.

And the most important component in the story is the show the arhat and the woodcutter to be the same person. It is a lesson for religious authorities around the world: no matter

how prestigious and important your position in your religion, you must earn your own living. And if possible, you should support those who need help. The woodcutter-arhat is a poignant example of this.

In mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had given a detailed explanation on this issue in his writings about Buddha's teachings.

I have weaved together all these ideas in my story.

**Fascinating indeed, Sirus** We've taken a lot of your time. Is there anything else in the book that we didn't have time to discuss here but you'd like to highlight for the listeners and readers? I mean, we skipped the conclusion, which is a succinct summary of the main points of your book.

**Sirus, Last Q:** Before we part our ways, I'd like to ask one last traditional New Books Network question, what are you working on now?

Sirus: I continue to interact with Gautamiputra over a variety of projects. Just like I did for this interview, I translate Gautamiputra's responses into English, get them approved by him, and then share it with the interviewer/podcast host/journalist etc. Apart from that, I am working with him to translate his second book of fiction, *Jayanti* (2022). Parivrajak/Seekers took him 12-13 years to finish, and *Jayanti* took almost 20 years. It's a fascinating look at the changes in Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations, as seen through the eyes of 'Dhamma Kranti', who attends a Jayanti every ten years. It is a fascinating chronicle of Jayanti undergoing drastic changes, and through that, it is also a snapshot of the Ambedkarite movement in India (at least in Maharashtra). Another project is related to *The Seekers*: one of the characters in the book is based on a real life person, who led a fascinating life, and was closely known to Gautamiputra. Currently, I am working on biography of this person. Hopefully I will be able to share more sometime soon.

**End:** Thank you so much for your time here, for recreating these amazing stories in English for us, for sharing many insights that we have to process further and should review periodically. I'm looking forward to reading your new work soon.

Before we leave, my dear Listeners, I highly recommend using this collection in the classroom, on any course about Buddhist literature, modern literature, SF and emancipatory worldmaking, philosophy and literature, this is a treasure trove. The stories are fascinating and about the right length. Perfect for undergraduate classrooms. And the pdf copy is only \$5.33 on the Blaft Publications website.