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# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

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**S.K. Pottekkat's *Twelve Stories***

**Translated into English by K. Parameswaran  
- A Review**

**Binu George**

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Courtesy: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S. K. Pottekkatt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S._K._Pottekkatt)  
S. K. Pottekkat (1913-1982)

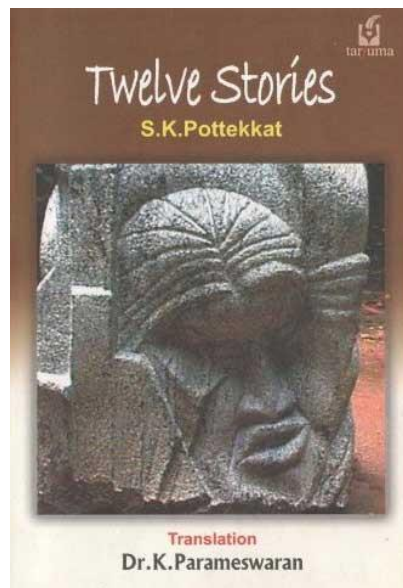
S. K Pottekkat, winner of several awards including Kendra and Kerala Sahitya Academy Awards, and a Jnanapith Award, is a prolific writer who represents a nation, especially a generation with its great literary saga. Pottekkat, who marked his entry into literary field with the publication of *Rajaneethi* in 1930, played various roles in his life as a

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teacher, traveller, writer (novels, travelogues, short stories, essays, poems, plays), and a Member of Parliament. His works, especially his short stories, are already translated into many vernacular and foreign languages.



In this book *Twelve Stories* (Tarjuma; 1 edition May 7, 2011), the lasting beauty of the Malayalam romantic age and the aesthetic value of twelve of Pottekkat's short stories are brought to the readers by Dr. K. Parameswaran. The first impression that lingers in the mind of a reader after relishing these stories would be the line from Keats: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever".

Every translation requires and demands extraordinary talent and dedication to the original work and to create a replica of an existing art work in the texture of another language needs extra care and pain. In his work of translation, Parameswaran is seen truthful to the core of the original and has succeeded in bringing up the original flavour intended by the creator of these stories. Of course, one cannot expect the same intensity of beauty and passion that one enjoys from the original language while reading the translation of any text. One can witness how the unique qualities of Pottekkat, such as element of surprise, dramatic quality, style that oscillates between realism and lyricism, social commitment, humanism, romance, and suspense are nevertheless kept intact surprisingly in these translated short stories.

The word picture of Malathi, the heroine of *The Night Queen* and the features of Nayadi, the beggar in *The Old Coat*, where there is the description of "a face that resembled desiccated coconut" highly suggest the powerful colloquial expressions in Malayalam.

The craftsmanship of Pottekkat in story telling is imbibed by Parameswaran with exceptional skill in the translations of *The Camel* especially in the portrait of the protagonist, and the love stories like *The Statue* and *The Underground River*. Lampoons against caste system and colonialism, sharpened with simple but artistic precision, are meticulously shot in stories like *The Silk Dress*, *The Timepiece*, *On the Dal Lake*, and *An African Fable*. All these characteristics add more beauty to this collection.

In this collection a *sahrudaya* can encounter characters and ambiance from different parts of the world for which one owes much to the traveller in the story-teller.

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The few printing errors we notice may be eliminated in the next edition.

Parameswaran is on the victory stand and the readers would be grateful to him for taking them back to the reminiscence of romanticism, rustic life, joyful elements of different cultures and its people with their ordinary and beautiful but hard life. In this collection, one is taken to the terrains of fantasy and reality just as Dostoevsky reflected: “nothing is more fantastic than reality itself”. The narrative techniques, images, and story line perfected by Pottekkat envisaging all sorts of readers are safe in the hands of Parameswaran in the translation thanks to his expertise in both languages and as a linguist. Parameswaran’s mastery of Malayalam and English helps us enjoy the fine stories of Pottekkat.

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