



ICTS

INTERNATIONAL  
CENTRE *for*  
THEORETICAL  
SCIENCES

TATA INSTITUTE OF FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH

## ICTS Colloquium

Title : The Life of Harishchandra: A Story in Song

Speaker : Vanamala Viswanatha, Azim Premji University, Bangalore

Date : Monday, February 26, 2018

Time : 3:00 PM

Venue : Emmy Noether Seminar Room, ICTS Campus, Bangalore

Abstract : "*The Life of Harishchandra* is my English translation (published in the Murty Classical Library of India Series, Harvard University Press, 2017) of a 13th century Kannada masterpiece titled *Harishchandra Charitra*, written by Raghavanka of Hampi. Raghavanka's text, the first poetic rendering of one of ancient India's enduring legends, narrates the tale of King Harishchandra whose commitment to truth is put to test by the mighty sage Vishvamitra. But the king refuses to yield despite suffering utter deprivation and loss, thus acquiring the title Satya Harishchandra, a symbol of truth.

This powerful kavya, written in the shatpadi meter in Kannada, has remained in the hearts of the laity over 800 years because of the oral tradition which has disseminated the text through music and theatre. This text has been popularized by an art form unique to Karnataka called Gamaka, which renders the text as a moving lyric, enhancing the power of the poetry. This multi-modal presentation recounts the life of Harishchandra using the Kannada text, discusses the challenges of its English translation, and renders some verses in the gamaka tradition."