

**PAGE ONE**

## **Manache shlok in German all set to change hearts, mould minds**

*City-based Vinita Mahajani spent two years translating Samarth Ramdas' works for European market*

**Anuradha Mane**

**Pune, December 19:** FOR years, Manache Shlok, a compilation of 205 verses, written by Samarth Ramdas, has been a rich source of inspiration for Marathi readers. Now, Germans can read its universal philosophy. For, Manya Verlag, a Munich-based publication house has published Giestesverse Aus Indien von Samarth Ramdas, the German translation of the book, by city-based Vinita Mahajani.

"In spite of popular interest in contemporary India there is not much available in the form of direct translations. Many translations from modern Indian literature are second-hand translations via English, which lose the original flavour and at times are plainly faulty. Therefore, we want to bring out direct German translations from Indian languages," says Dr Robert J Zydenbos. He is the director of the department of Asian Studies at the Institute of Indology in Munich University.

Mahajani, a PhD in German literature, has translated the book from Marathi to German over a period of two years. "I translated two shlokas everyday. At the Frankfurt Book Fair, indologist Eva Glasbrenner and Robert Zydenbos noticed the book," says Mahajani. They sought her permission to publish and distribute the book in Germany. The publication, will also offer the original printed book for sale on the net, via their website.

Advertisement

Glasbrenner admits the kind of interest the book will create among the German readers is difficult to predict. "There is interest in Indian culture, religious and philosophical thought. We want the work to touch the readers," she says. The book priced at 10 euros is already available in India for Rs 100.

For Mahajani, the efforts were huge. "Samarth Ramdas speaks about following the path of spirituality alongside doing justice to other worldly responsibilities. His teachings would appeal to anyone. I had to be thorough with my research and maintain the rhyme," she says.

As for the publishers, what appealed to them was the effort that went into making this Marathi work accessible to German readers. "Not only is it a direct translation, but she has added a simple introduction with some elementary information about Samarth Ramdas and footnotes in the translation that elucidate aspects of Indian mythology that are unknown to the average European reader. Such additions enrich the literary content of the book," says Zydenbos.

This book may just be the first in line for others that the publication house plans to make available to the German readers. "We want to spread good material in print about India and Indian culture. These may be books written by non-Indian authors in German, or also in English," says Glasbrenner.