

Issue 15  
Dec 2019

Knowledge beyond time

# इवलन्ति



## Images of the Sacred Feminine

In Buddhist tantra, abstract philosophical ideas are represented as goddesses.

## Does Hinduism Connive at Corruption?

Indians were respected world over for their honesty. What ails us now?

## Yoga and Human Personality

Personality development is the transcendence of the five *kośa*-s.



*Bi-annual  
magazine of  
India's culture  
& knowledge  
traditions*

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## Editor's Notes

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, the metaphysician extraordinaire, wrote, "The most crushing indictment of (modern) Education is that it destroys all capacity for the appreciation of Indian culture. Speak to the ordinary graduate on the ideals of the Mahabharata - he will hasten to display his knowledge of Shakespeare; talk to him of religious philosophy - you find that he is an atheist of the crude type common in Europe a generation ago... talk to him of Indian art - it is news to him that such a thing exists... He is indeed a stranger in his own land."

He is indeed a stranger in his own land - these words are as crushing as they are true. No great nation was ever built by petty minds with no vision, no knowledge of their roots and no self-confidence. It is, therefore, that Amrita Darshanam (ICSS) conceived of SAMVIT, a bi-annual magazine, to create a window for young minds to look into the rich cultural past of India.

In this issue, we continue the series that were introduced previously – “The Wonder that is Sanskrit”, “Ancient Indian Linguistics”, “Wisdom of the Eternal Veda-s” “Yoga – Ancient and Contemporary Perspectives”, “On the Meaning of *Mahābhārata*”, and “*Śabdātattvam*”. To this list are added six new series: “Fundamentals of Buddhist Tantra”, “Prosody in Sanskrit Literature”, “Ayurveda – Traditional Systems of Health & Healing”, “Fundamentals of Spirituality”, “Hinduism Today”, and “Nature-Cure”. Further, we are greatly privileged to publish two invited contributions from very renowned scholars in this issue: Dr. Madhavi Godbole, Dr. Shilpa Sumant and Dr. Nirmala Ravindra Kulkarni. In the students’ section, we are introduced to the life of one of the last *devadasi*-s, the reign of the Gupta-s, and the *Thirukkural*.

We hope you enjoy this issue.



**ON THE COVER**  
Bronze figurine of  
a green Tara full of  
wisdom

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## AMMA'S WORDS

# Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī

*On 23 August 2019, on the occasion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, Māta Amritānandamayī addressed the audience and spoke about the līla-s of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who — even today, centuries later — shines as the guru of the world.*

**T**oday is the sacred day when Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa took avatāra on this earth as the embodiment of strength and beauty. He gave this world the message of courageous action and pure love in all its fullness. The Sanskrit word avatāra has a meaning other than “incarnation”, and that is “tīrtha” – holy place or holy water. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the holy water that washes away the impurities of the mind. The mind becomes pure. True knowledge awakens. The dark-hued one, dressed in yellow raiment, wearing a peacock feather

in his hair – he still shines as the protector of *dharma* and the *guru* of the world.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *līla*-s attract one and all – from little children to the elderly. They captivate the educated and uneducated alike. Centuries have passed, yet that attraction persists, undiminished. To this day, the Bhagavān plays his *līla*-s in millions and millions of hearts. Śrī Kṛṣṇa was born with a smile on his face. He smiled throughout his life and finally gave up his body with a smile. He was not attached to anything





– like butter floating in water. He did every action without the notion of doer-ship.

Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, who was eternally free, was born in a prison cell. This symbolises the state of every human life. Each soul is essentially free – whole and complete. However, not realising this wholeness, we are born and live in this prison cell. This prison cell is nothing but the thought that we are this body. Bhagavān was also born into a body but the difference was that Bhagavān never forgot his completeness. He was born to release others from the notion that they are mere physical bodies.

Not long after Bhagavān was born, both his parents, Vasudeva and Devakī, became unchained. This symbolises that when love for God takes birth in the human heart, it will not be long before the person is liberated from the misery of birth and death. When Kṛṣṇa was born in the prison cell, the guards fell into a deep sleep and the prison doors opened by themselves. Vasudeva was able to step out easily with infant Kṛṣṇa – unseen by anyone – and walk across the Yamuna River to Ambadi. The guards symbolise our five senses. When love for God is born within an individual, all his senses come under his control. Then the mind will not wander in search of external comfort. This is the reason why Vasudeva was able to cross the Yamuna so effortlessly. A real devotee is not a slave to anything. In fact, he becomes the emperor of the world.

We know that Kṛṣṇa was very fond of butter and that his favourite *līla* was to steal butter from the homes of the *gopi*-s. Even though butter is present in milk, in order to extract the butter, the milk has to be turned into buttermilk, and the buttermilk has to be churned. The butter symbolises that which is dearest to Bhagavān: *parābhakti* – supreme devotion. At present, our *bhakti* is tainted with desires. Today we are ruled by our likes and dislikes, selfishness and ego. Only when these impurities are removed will our *bhakti* become mature and turn into *parābhakti* – supreme devotion. Amma prays to the Paramātmā that the hearts of her children are filled with supreme love for the Bhagavān. 🙏

# Faculty's Articles





SERIES: FUNDAMENTALS OF  
BUDDHIST TANTRA

## Images of the Sacred Feminine

*In tantric Buddhism, the images of goddesses are representations of abstract philosophical ideas. Therefore, meditation on the forms of goddesses is — in actuality — a contemplation of the concepts they represent; a means to transform the psychophysical reality of the sādḥaka.*

BY DR. PRANSHU SAMDARSHI

**G**ODDESSES occupy a primary position in the Buddhist pantheon. They personify the highest spiritual goal – the Buddhahood. They are of different types and may broadly be classified into two categories – the first, a representation of the cosmic power in a feminine form, and the second, a representation of the highest truth, the attainment of liberation. The former goddesses are invoked for worldly aims – protection from diseases and enemies, pursuit of knowledge, for mental purification, etc. – and the latter, often called “female Buddhas”, include goddesses such as Prajñāpāramitā, Vajrayoginī, Nairātmyā, etc.

Tantric Buddhist texts such as *Manjuśrīmūlakalpa*, *Sādhnamālā* and *Niṣpannayogāvalī* discuss many goddesses who fulfil specific functions – for example, Sitātapatrā is the guardian against supernatural dangers; Jānguli protects against harm by snakes and poison; Parṇasavari is a healing deity; Vasūdhara bestows wealth and abundance, Uṣṇīṣavijayā confers long life and a fortunate rebirth; Cundā inspires and supports spiritual practices; Prajñāpāramitā is the symbolic representation of the Mahāyāna scriptures known as the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*.

Tārā is the most prominent goddess of the Himalayan Buddhist tradition. She is one of the principal examples of a female Buddha who attained enlightenment. According to Tibetan tradition, prior to her enlightenment, she was a Bodhisattva and was promised that after she attained awakening, she would appear in a female form for the benefit of all living beings (Rinpoche 1999:21). Therefore, as a fully awakened Buddha in the *tantra* tradition, Tārā is invoked for attaining enlightenment. Tārā is visualised in her different emanations such as Ekajaṭā or Ugratārā – her wrathful forms (*raudra-rūpa*). Her benevolent (*saumya*) forms, White Tara (Sītātārā) and Green Tara (Śyāmātārā), are very popular amongst the Buddhist traditions of Nepal and Tibet.

### Iconography

The iconography of goddesses in tantric Buddhism has two facets: an esoteric one, which can be deciphered from tantric texts through the teachings of learned monks; another facet comprises of popular devotional practices and rituals practiced by lay adherents. It is also commonly accepted in the tantric literature that the deities do not have a fixed form and may appear according to the visualizations of the practitioner. The deities are thus referred to as mind-made formations (*manomaya-kāya*) of the practitioner's

own consciousness. Depending on the specific enlightened qualities that they embody, the goddesses may have peaceful or wrathful appearances. The *sādhana*-s prescribed for these goddesses are meant to destroy or transform the habits of the mind, often by unconventional methods.

### Sādhana

Visualization is a major component of tantric practices. Most of the tantric goddesses are visualized with multiple heads, arms, and legs – representing the multifunctional nature of an enlightened mind which they symbolize. They have key identifiers such as postures, hand gestures or colors to indicate their identity and symbolism. As these goddesses embody Buddhist ideals, their iconic forms are created as tools for visualisation-based practices. For the *sādhaka*-s of *tantra*, during their visualization practices, the images of these deities serve as a prototype to create mental images and then the practitioner imagines himself as becoming one with the deity.

In the Tibetan tradition, Buddhist *tantra* is classified into four divisions: *kriyā*, *caryā*, *yoga* and *anuttarayoga tantra*. The diverse array of practices related to goddesses are also categorized accordingly. In *kriyā* and *caryā tantra*, goddesses are visualized as external entities and their practices consist of devotion and rituals; on the other hand, *yoga* and *anuttarayoga tantra* employ goddesses embodying the more advanced yogic practices. *Anuttarayoga tantra* is further divided into *māṭṛ-tantra* and *pitr-tantra*. The former consists of self-visualization practices – the practitioners visualize themselves as the central meditational goddess of an elaborate, elegant *maṇḍala*. It also consists of yogic practices dealing with the systems of the central wind channel of the subtle body in order to gain the subtlest level of blissful awareness (Gyatso 2000:202-13).

### Vajrayoginī

Vajrayoginī is one of the most popular meditational deities of *māṭṛ-tantra*. Conceptually, she is an embodiment of wisdom (*prajñā*), and represents the feminine aspect of one's innate nature and the clarity of *viveka*. She is one of the most often cited deities in tantric texts and there exists several *stotra*-s dedicated to her in different tantric texts.

Chinnamundā is one of the forms of Vajrayoginī in which she manifests as a three-bodied form (Benard 2010:74-75). Chinnamundā, which literally means severed-headed, is the self-decapitated form of Vajrayoginī. In this unusual form, Vajrayoginī appears with her two attendant-yogini-s, Vajravarṇanī and Vajravairochanī.

The practitioners visualize their navel as an opened white lotus surmounted on a red solar disk. On its top is the *bīja mantra* of Vajrayoginī – *hrīm*. This *bīja mantra* transforms into the yellow coloured Vajrayoginī who is holding her own severed head in her left hand and a scimitar in her right hand. Three streams of blood spurting out from her severed body is falling into the mouth of her severed head and into the mouths of the two *yogini*-s, Vajravarṇanī (blue in colour) to her left, and Vajravairocanī, (yellow in colour) to her right, both of whom hold a scimitar and a skull cup in their left and right hands respectively. Their hair is dishevelled. At the background is the very frightening cremation ground.

The esoteric meaning of this 'awful' depiction of the goddess is a yogic practice which is related to the three major wind channels (*nāḍī*) of the subtle body commonly known as *lalanā*, *rasanā* and *avadhūtī* in Buddhist *tantra*. The practice manual of Vajrayoginī, *The guide to Dākinī Land*, states that the inner winds are special subtle energy that flow through channels when the mind is engaged with an external object or activity (Gyatso 2000:218). The wind that flows through the left and right channels is impure and causes the



Fig. 1



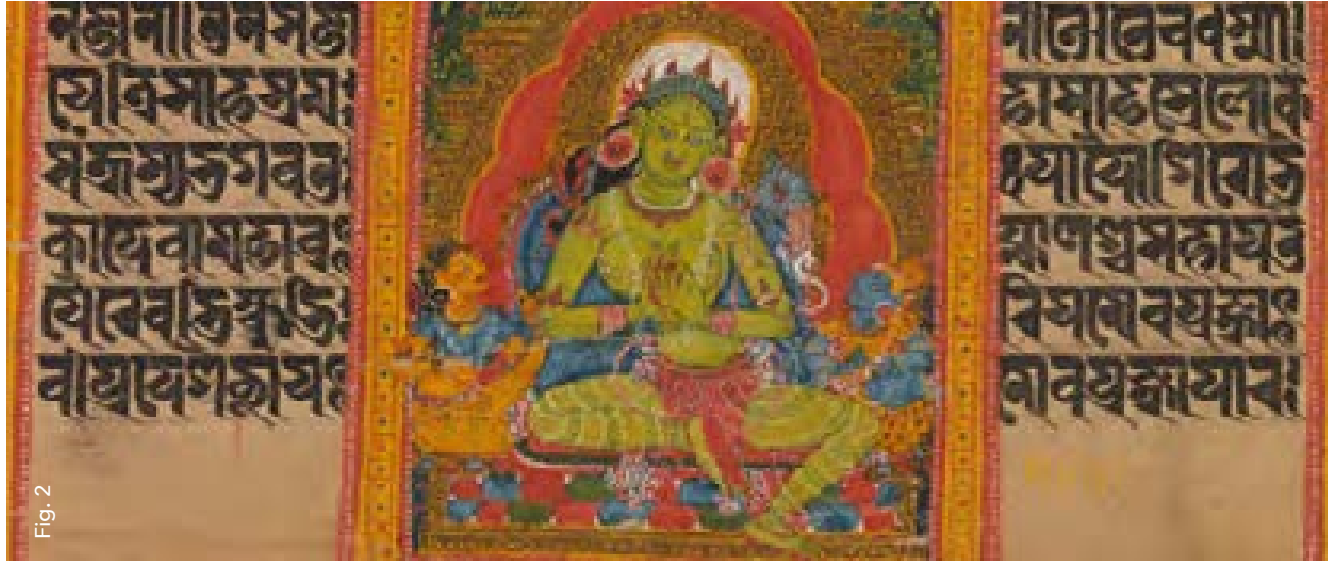


Fig. 2

false notion of the self-intrinsic existence of the phenomenal world, obscuring the experience of lucidity-light-emptiness (*prabhā-svara-śūnyatā*). When the central channel, which is pure in nature, is invoked, the practitioner experiences the falling off of the false notion of selfhood (*ātmagrāha*) which gives rise to the wisdom of great bliss and the two (left and right) wind channels continue to exist, drawing their source from the central channel.

This yogic *sādhana* has been portrayed in the anthropomorphic representation of Chinnamundā Vajrayoginī in which she represents the central wind channel while her two attendants represent the left and right auxiliary channels. The five energy-nodes (*cakra*) that pass through the central wind channel are also labelled as tantric goddesses.

From the analysis of the iconography of the Vajrayoginī image, it can be observed that the symbolism of *tantra* has a profound practical base. Like any research procedure in which experimental facts are correlated with mathematical symbols to work out a mathematical model, tantric masters also discover practices by experimenting with their own psyche and the results obtained from their experiments are given a schematic form. This scheme, which is modelled as an anthropomorphic figure, represents yogic practices in an abstract manner.

However, tantric texts are silent on or speak metaphorically about these symbols to avoid their trivialization. A deeper understanding of tantric iconography reveals that much of the symbolism of *tantra* has been derived from a profound practical basis which is often esoteric in nature. Tantric manuals suggest that the figures are not icons of beings, but they are icons of ideas. With their literature encoded in symbolism and their practices veiled in secrecy, most often, such iconography is improperly assessed by people who are unaware of these esoteric concepts. Thus, in tantric Buddhism, the concept of goddesses appears in the framework of non-theism, which means that there is no external supreme being, and hence all religious symbols, rituals and doctrines have conventional utility rather than being the ultimate truth. 📖

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SERIES: THE WONDER THAT IS SANSKRIT

## Amaruśatakam

*A hundred poignant verses on love and heartbreak — sometimes tender, sometimes playful and passionate, hinting sometimes of divine transcendence.*

BY ARJUN BHARADWAJ

**A** **MARUŚATAKAM** is a collection of *mukata-s*, i.e., independent verses believed to have been composed by a king of Kashmir, Amaru (or Amaruka). Just as is with any work of classical literature in India, it is hard to estimate the exact time period in which the work was composed. We can infer from the works of later poets and aestheticians who have quoted from the *Amaruśatakam* that it was composed certainly before the 10<sup>th</sup> century C.E.

The *Amaruśatakam* consists of about a hundred '*muktaka-s*', as suggested by the word '*śatakam*'. However, most recensions contain more than a hundred verses and there may be several stray verses that were added into the work in the years after its composition. The verses neither follow a pattern in their content nor do they thread together a bigger story. They are isolated, independent and self-complete pertaining to a particular episode with their primary theme as *śṛṅgāra*, i.e., love.

#### Inspiration and Influence

The *Amaruśatakam* is a product of a long tradition of compositions which have had *śṛṅgāra* as their primary *rasa* (sentiment). The *Gāhā Sattasāi* ("*Gāthā-Saptaśatī*" in Sanskrit) is one such compilation of verses called *gāhā-s* in different dialects of Prakrit and composed by poets across the country in different periods of time. The compilation was prepared by the Śātavāhana King, Hāla, in about the first century C.E. It is likely that the inspiration for many of the verses contained in the *Amaruśatakam* is derived from these *gāhā-s*.

The *Amaruśatakam* has played an important role in influencing several later poets and compilers of verses. The following collections contain a few verses directly picked from the *Amaruśatakam* or are presented with modification in ideas (these works have been compiled in the years following the composition of the *Amaruśatakam*):

1. *Subhāṣitaratnakośa* by Vidyākara, one of the oldest compilations of *subhāṣita-s*
2. *Saduktikaṇṭhāmṛtam* by Śrīdharadāsa
3. *Subhāṣitāvalī* by Vallabhadeva
4. *Sūktimuktāvalī* by Jalhaṇa



Traces of Amaruka's influence, both in style and content, can be in the works of later poets such as Śrīharṣa, Bhavabhūti and Rājaśekhara too.

#### Praises for *Amaruśatakam* in the Indian Literary Tradition

"*Amarukakaverekaḥ ślokaḥ prabandhaśatāyate*", says an anonymous aesthetician, suggesting that a single verse penned by the poet Amaruka is equivalent to a hundred complete works penned by other poets. Along similar lines, Ānandavardhana, the celebrated author of the *Dhvanyāloka*, says -

*muktakeṣu prabandheṣviva rasabandhābhiniveśinaḥ kavayo vartante |*  
*yathā hyamarukasya kavermuktakāḥ śṛṅgārarasasyandinaḥ prabandhāyamānāḥ prasiddhā eva |*  
*(Dhvanyālokaḥ, 3.7)*

"There are poets whose *muktaka*-s are filled with *rasa*, just as longform poems (*prabandha*-s) do. For instance, the *muktaka*-s composed by the poet Amaruka are known to equal several *prabandha*-s".

#### Commentaries on the *Amaruśatakam*

There are seven commentaries written on the work that have been recovered from the manuscripts thus far:

1. *Rasasañjīvinī* by Arjunavarmadeva
2. *Śṛṅgārādīpikā* Vemabhūpāla
3. A commentary by Rudradeva
4. A commentary by Ravicandra
5. *Śṛṅgāratarāṅgiṇī* by Sūryadāsa
6. *Rasasañjīvinī* by Śeṣarāmakṛṣṇa
7. A commentary by an anonymous author

Among the commentators, Arjunavarmadeva is the most well known as sentences from his commentary have been quoted by several literary aestheticians belonging to later periods. He is supposed to have belonged to the lineage of the kings of the Mālava region and is said to be the son of Subhaṭavarma. From the manuscripts of the commentary found, it is inferred that he belonged to the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century C.E.

Vemabhūpāla is believed to have been a king of Kerala and it is said that he belonged to the *sūdra-varṇa*. Not much is known about the rest of the commentators. Śeṣarāmakṛṣṇa was probably a scholar from Kashi.

Amaruka is supposed to be a king of Kashmir, but there is no reference to him in the *Rajatarangini*.

#### Legends surrounding the Composition of the *Amaruśatakam*

There are several legends relating to the author of the *Amaruśatakam* and the reason behind its composition. While the *Mādhaviya-śaṅkaravijayam* narrates one version of the story, Ravicandra has another tale to tell in his commentary on the *Amaruśatakam*.

According to Ravicandra's version, Śankarācārya (circa. the 8<sup>th</sup> century C.E.), who went to debate with Maṇḍanamiśra in Mithilā, was asked questions about *śṛṅgāra* by the latter's wife, Śāradā (Ubhaya-Bhārati according to other versions), who had taken the role as the judge of the debate. Śankarācārya, who had taken to *sanyāsa* at a young age, had no experience of *śṛṅgāra* and was unable to answer her questions. He did not want to speak on a topic without having had direct experience of the same. Thus, Śankarācārya



“Unlike other belief systems which have abhorred desire as sin, Indian civilization, rooted in sanātana-dharma, has celebrated it.”

decided to perform *parakāyapraveśa* (i.e. entering the body of another) and entered the (almost) dead body of the King Amaruka. (Other popular versions say that Śankarācārya had been to Kashmir for his *digvijaya* and there, he was challenged to explain *śṛṅgāra*. He thus entered the dead body of Amaruka). Having thus donned the body of another, Śankarācārya played lustful sport with hundreds of women. It was then that he got inspired to write a hundred verses on *śṛṅgāra* in the name of Amaruka. Once he left Amaruka's body, people taunted him by calling him a fraudulent *sanyāsi*. To undo the accusation, Śankarācārya supposedly wrote a commentary on the *Amaruśatakam* explaining each verse from the lens of *vairāgya/śānta-rasa*. The episode also metaphorically suggests that all *śṛṅgāra* should finally end in *śānta*, the resultant/residual rasa ('*pariṇāma-rasa*', according to Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*).

#### The Place of Śṛṅgāra in a Person's Life

While many schools of thought tend to look down upon 'kāma' as the first among the *aṛiṣadvarga* (the six internal enemies), leading to the other five, one should also keep in mind that the *Dharmaśāstra*-s have also defined *kāma* as a cardinal value, i.e., a *puruṣārtha*. *Kāma* (desire) is the third of the *puruṣārtha*-s, though not in hierarchy. Kṛṣṇa has declared in the *Bhagavad-gītā* "*dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu kāmo'smi bharatarṣabha*" (*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.11). Essentially, his words can be understood as - "*Kāma*, which is aligned to *dharma*, is divine too". Unlike other belief systems which have abhorred desire and sex as sin, Indian civilization, rooted in *sanātana-dharma*, has celebrated it. If not, there wouldn't have been texts formalizing the nature of desire and creative works (either in words, stone or paint!) solely based on *śṛṅgāra*. It is not without reason that *śṛṅgāra* is hailed as the *rasa-rāja* - the king of the *rasa*-s, in the Indian tradition. While *rasa*-s such as *vīra*, *adbhuta*, *bhayānaka* and *bībhatsa* cannot be sustained for long, one can go into a lot of detailing in *śṛṅgāra*.

#### The Nature of the Work, Amaruśatakam

The beauty of the *Amaruśatakam* lies in its detailing of *vibhāva*-s (causes) and *anubhāva*-s (effects) connected with the *sthyāyi-bhāva* (predominant emotion) of *rati*, from which the *śṛṅgāra-rasa* emanates. The poet employs both *kavi-nibaddha-prauḍhotki*, i.e., the characters speaking their perspectives and *kavi-prauḍhokti*, i.e., the poet narrating events and sequences in his own voice. *Śārdūlavikrīḍitam*, *vasantatilakam*, *mālinī* and *sragdharā* are few of the meters used by the poet, with a lion's share taken by *śārdūlavikrīḍitam* - a meter which renders itself very conveniently to the nature of the Sanskrit language and can accommodate dialogue verses. One can find all the varieties of the *aṣṭa-nāyikā*-s (predominant kinds of heroines) in the work.

#### Benedictory Verse

*jyākṛṣṭibaddhakhaṭakāmukhapāṇipṛṣṭha-  
-preṅkhannakhāṃśucayasamvalito'mbikāyāḥ |  
tvāṃ pātu mañjaritapallavakarṇapūra-  
lobhabhramadbhramaravibhramabhṛtkaṭākṣaḥ ||*



Ambikā's hand pulls the bowstring using the *khaṭakāmukha* gesture; the beauty of her dark eye-ball merges with the radiance of her fingernails, each embellishing the other; and the combination thereof, looks like intoxicated bees that are attracted towards the young sprouts of flowers that adorn her ear. May such captivating glances of Ambikā protect us!

The verse is strangely deceiving at the first glance! A collection of poems which are to have *śṛṅgāra* as its theme has begun with a prayer to Devī who has the bow-string stretched, suggesting *vīra-rasa*, i.e., valour! However, on a close examination, we see a trace of underlying *śṛṅgāra* here, namely the comparison to bees getting attracted to the flower on her ear. Moreover, it is *vīra* that protects *śṛṅgāra*!

#### A Sample Verse

*"kva prasthitāsi karabhoru ghane  
niśīthe?"  
"prāṇādhiko vasati yatra janaḥ priyo  
me!"  
"ekākinī vada katham na bibheṣi bāle?"  
"nanvasti puṃkhitaśaro madanaḥ  
sahāyaḥ !"*

The poet has beautifully accommodated a conversation in this verse. A lady is heading out of her house on a dark night in search of her lover and a stranger (or perhaps a neighbour) picks up a conversation (of concern) with her -

"Where are you headed to, O beautiful one!"  
"To the place where my beloved, greater than my own life, resides."  
"You are going all alone! Tell me, how are you not scared, my dear?"  
"Ah! I have Madana (cupid) with his bow stringed and arrows ready, protecting me from behind!"



Fig. 4

What seems like an everyday conversation here, actually has *rasa-dhvani* within it. The verse suggests *śṛṅgāra-rasa* and in Ānandavardhana's view, among the categories of *dhvani*, the *rasa-dhvani* is the highest. The lady, who is an *abhisārikā* (a kind of heroine who goes out in the search of her beloved), says that she is 'driven by love'; love is personified here by Madana. Moreover, her love is going to protect her along her way and has given her confidence in her activity!

It is the conversational verses that form the most interesting part of the *Amaruśatakam*. It is fascinating to see how the poet accommodates elaborate and intimate conversations within the framework of a *śārdūlavikrīḍitam* or a *sragdharā*. The verses have inbuilt theatrical aspects in them and render themselves beautifully for an audio-visual presentation.

The next episode in the series will throw light upon some more verses from the *Amaruśatakam*. 📖

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SERIES: ANCIENT INDIAN LINGUISTICS

# Aṣṭādhyāyī: Form and Content

*Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī, the rule-book on Sanskrit grammar, is a text that packs a maximal semantic payload into the smallest possible syntactic space, a 'minimal syllabary'.*

BY MANISH RAJAN WALVEKAR

**I**N THE PREVIOUS ARTICLE, we dealt with a general introduction to Pāṇini, the grammarian extraordinaire. Let us now turn to Pāṇini's style and the structure of his work, the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. In this article, the following points will be covered:

1. Structure of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*
2. Content of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*

#### Structure of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*

A distinguishing feature of Pāṇini's work is its *sūtra*-format. *Sūtra* means thread. Pāṇini has described the complete Sanskrit language in a thread of approximately 4000 aphorisms. He has framed his observations of the prevalent Sanskrit language in the shortest possible sentences. In the fewest possible words, these *sūtra*-s capture completely the structure of Sanskrit language, dealing with the core meaning and remaining omnidirectional. This *sūtra* style is one of the epitomes of ancient Indian intelligence.

For instance, the *sūtra*, '*iko yaṇaci*', is like a short mathematical aphorism that conveys this meaning – "if the vowels 'i', 'u', 'ṛ', 'ḷ' occur at the end of a morpheme/word, and are followed by a morpheme/word that begins with a vowel, then they must be replaced by the consonants, 'y', 'v', 'r', 'l', respectively". Isn't this truly '*alpākṣaram*-

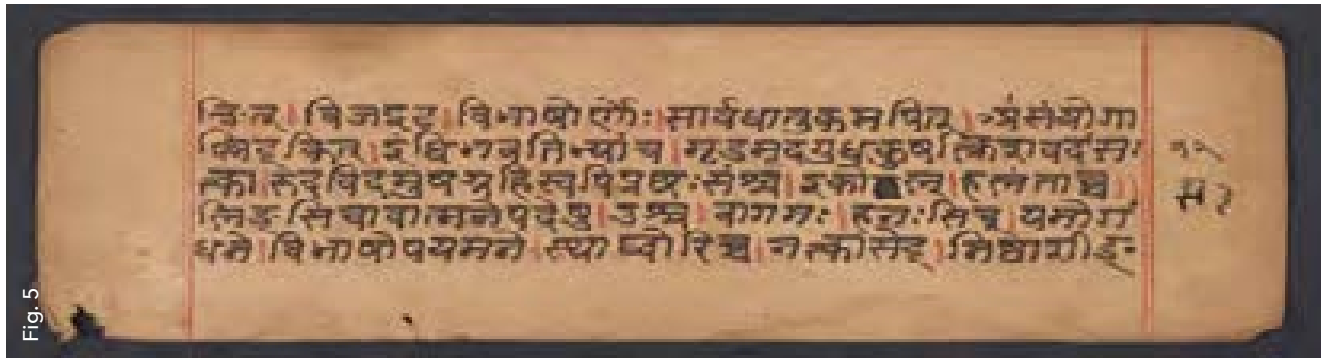
*asandigdham*' (minimum syllabary)? Each *sūtra* can be expressed as a grammatical formula in the form, 'a → b (c) [a is or becomes b in the environment of c]' (Bhate 2002: 14). In the example cited above, the *sūtra*, '*iko yaṇaci*', can be expressed thus: *ik* → *yaṇ* (ac). Here, '*ik*' refers to the vowels, 'i', 'u', 'ṛ', 'ḷ', and '*yaṇ*' refers to the consonants, 'y', 'v', 'r', 'l'. This is a metarule of Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. After decoding this, other metalinguistic rules can be applied.

The *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is a formidable and difficult text because of its challenging metalinguistic form. Unless a student is well-versed with its structure and pattern, he will not be able to decipher its meaning. This interdependence is presumed and very essential. On the other hand, its structure enables memorization speedily and this is another distinguishing feature of Pāṇini's treatise – its mnemonic form. In modern terminology, we can assert that the text has codified its contents so it is a mnemonic model, not a mere academic one.

Another significant method used by Pāṇini is the usage of *anuvṛtti* (ellipsis). "Each and every word in an aphorism continues in the subsequent *sūtra*-s unless it is blocked by an incompatible word" (Bhate 2002: 17) – this is the principle of *anuvṛtti*. The functioning of the *anuvṛtti* can be understood if we



*Pāṇini upholds a very important principle of grammar: language is and should be like a flowing river; grammar, on the other hand, should be like the shore/bank of the river. Neither the shore nor the river should overpower each other. Both must go hand in hand.*



venture deeper into the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. We can see how its flawless and mathematical structure conveys Pāṇini's intent. There are ample coding-decoding techniques in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. One needs to acquire their knowledge before proceeding to learn the text. This is the reason why the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is called as 'vyāghramukhī gauḥ' (tiger-faced cow).

#### Content of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*

Pāṇini has described two divisions of *pada*-s (words) – *subanta*-s (nouns) and *tiñanta*-s (verbs) – and in the first two chapters of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, he has described their relation in a sentence. He has dealt with the formation of verbs from their verbal-roots in the third chapter. In the fourth and fifth chapters, he has described the *padasiddhi*-s using *prātipadika*-s [roots of nouns]. Chapters six and seven discuss the *prakṛti-pratyaya* formations of *subanta* and *tiñanta* words along with their accentuation patterns. And finally, in the eighth chapter, Pāṇini has elucidated the *saṁnihita pada*-s and the patterns of their pronunciation and accentuation. The major areas in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* can be summed up as follows:

- *Samjñā-paribhāṣā* [Terminologies and metarules]
- *Svara* and *vyañjana* [Vowels and consonants]
- *Upasarga* [Prefixes]
- *Kriyāpada* [Verbs]
- *Kāraka* [Relation between noun and verb in a sentence]
- *Vibhakti* [Suffixes]
- *Ekaśeṣa* and *saṁāsa* [Compounds]
- *Kṛdanta* [Participle]
- *Taddhita* [Secondary derivatives]
- *Nāmadhātu* [Verbs derived from nouns]
- *Āgama-ādeśa* [Metarules]
- *Svara* [Accentuation]
- *Sandhi* [Sound changes that occur at morpheme or word boundaries]

These are the general contents of Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. It is important to note that Pāṇini has not overlooked the meaning of words while dealing with their form. Time and again, he implies the meanings of the different *prakṛti-pratyaya*-s. He has not given an exhaustive list of *prātipadika*-s – it is certainly beyond human capacity to enumerate and record the same – but he has listed verbal-roots. When we go

deeper into the subject-matter of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, we comprehend that he has always given precedence to spoken-language over its grammatical counterpart. His grammar is more descriptive than prescriptive. He upholds a very important principle of grammar: language is and should be like a flowing river; grammar, on the other hand, should be like the shore/bank of the river. Neither the shore nor the river should overpower each other. Both must go hand in hand. Pāṇini's analytical and hierarchical approaches can be seen in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* everywhere. Patañjali, the celebrated author of the famous commentary of *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, namely *Mahābhāṣya*, pays homage to Pāṇini in a poetic way –

*pramāṇabhūta ācāryo  
darbhāpavitrapāṇiḥ śucāv avakāṣe  
prāṇmukha upaviśya mahatā yatnena  
sūtram praṇayati sma tatrāśakyam  
varṇenāpy anarthakena bhavitum kiṃ  
punar iyatā sūtreṇa |*  
(MBh I.39.10-12)

The authoritative teacher, holding the sacred *darbha* grass in his hand and sitting in a pure place facing east, produced the rules of grammar with great effort. As such, it is not possible that even a single sound would be meaningless, let alone a whole rule.

[trans Deshpande 2011:64]

We will deal with the language described by Pāṇini in the upcoming article. 🇮🇳



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## Significance of Chandas in the Veda-s

*Chandas (prosody) is indispensable to the chanting of Vedic mantra-s. The Veda-s declare that he who chants mantra-s properly (with chandas) attains eternal prosperity, and he who does not, incurs sin.*

BY DR. SHREEHARI V. GOKARNAKAR

**C**HANDAS, one of the six auxiliary disciplines (Vedāṅga-s) of the Veda-s, has an important role in the study of Veda-s. The six Vedāṅga-s are Śikṣā (phonetics), Kalpa (ritual), Vyākaraṇa (grammar), Nirukta (etymology), Chandas (prosody) and Jyotiśa (astronomy).<sup>1</sup> It is said that the disciple who studies the Veda-s along with the Vedāṅga-s attains greatness in the *brahmaloka*.<sup>2</sup> In the Veda-s, Chandas represents the feet of the *veda-puruṣa* (the personified form of the Veda-s).<sup>3</sup> It is, in fact, the foundation of the Veda-s. It plays a crucial role in chanting the hymns. Knowledge of Chandas facilitates the attainment of heaven, fame and long life. It is meritorious. It brings prosperity and is auspicious.<sup>4</sup> He who knows Chandas becomes united with it and attains eternal prosperity after death.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, if anyone chants or imparts a mantra with insufficient knowledge of the seer of the mantra, its metre, its deity and its application, he incurs sin.<sup>6</sup> Such a person is called a *mantrakaṇṭaka* by Sadguruśiṣya in his commentary on the *Sarvānukramaṇi*, the *Vedārthadīpikā*.

In Vedic Literature, many stories are narrated to illustrate the significance of Chandas. A few examples are as follows:

1. According to the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* (5.6.6.1),

*prajāpatir-agnim-acinuta sa kṣarapavir-bhūtvā tiṣṭhantaṁ devā bibhyato nopāyan te chandobhir-ātmānam chādayitvopāyan tacchandas ām chandas tvam |*

“Once, all the gods wanted to meet Prajāpati Brahmā. However, his body was surrounded by a raging fire. Hence, to reach Brahmā, all the gods covered their bodies with Chandas.”

Here, Chandas is metaphorically represented as a chariot. We see such a representation elsewhere too:

<sup>1</sup> śikṣā kalpo vyākaraṇaṁ niruktam chandasāṁ ca yaḥ | jyotiśamayanaṁ sāstraṁ vedāṅgāni ṣaḍeva tu |

<sup>2</sup> tasmāt sāṅgam ashītyaiva brahmaloke mahīyate | (Pāṇini Śikṣa 42)

<sup>3</sup> chandaḥ pādau tu vedasya (Pāṇini Śikṣa 41)

<sup>4</sup> svargyaṁ yaśasyam-āyusyaṁ punyaṁ vṛddhikaraṁ śubhaṁ | kīrti-mṛgyaṁ yaśasyaṁ ca chandasāṁ jñānam ucyate | (Rk Prātiśākyā 18.62)

<sup>5</sup> chandasāṁ vicayanaṁ jānan yaḥ śarīrād vimucyate | chandasāṁ eti sālokyam-ānantaḥ śrīyam | (Nidānasūtra 1.1.7)

<sup>6</sup> aviditvā ṛṣim chando daivataṁ yogameva ca | yo adhyāpayet japed vāpi pāpiyān jāyate tu saḥ | (Bṛhaddevatā 8.136)



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

*sobravīt prajāpatiś-chandāmsi ratho me bhavata | yuṣmābhir aham etam adhvānam  
anusamcarāṇīti | tasya gāyatrī ca jagatī ca pakṣāvabhavatām | uṣṇik ca triṣṭup ca praṣṭyau  
anuṣṭubh ca paṅktiśca dhuryau bṛhatyovodhirabhavatām | sa etaṁ chando-ratham āsthāya  
etam adhvānam anusamacarat |*

“Once, Prajāpati Brahmā said to Chandas to become his chariot and carry him. At his command, the *chandas* Gāyatrī and Jagatī became the wings (of the chariot). The *chandas* Uṣṇih and Triṣṭubh became its reins. The *chandas* Anuṣṭubh and Paṅkti became its horses and the *chandas* Bṛhatī became its carriage. They together formed the chariot and carried Prajāpati.”

(Ananta 2007: 36)

2. According to a description in the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* (14.2),

*devā vai mṛtyor-bibhyatas-trayīm vidyām prāviśamste chandobhir-ātmānam-ācchādayann yad-  
ebhir-ācchādayams-tac-chandasām chandas-tvaṁ |*

“The gods were once afraid of death; hence, they entered the threefold *vidyā*. At that time [while entering], they covered themselves with Chandas and hid there.”

3. In the *Aitareyāranyaka* (2.5), there is a mantra:

*chādayanti hi vā enaṁ chandāmsi pāpāt-karmaṇo yasyām kasyāmścid diśi  
kāmayate |*

“Whoever offers sacrifice to any of the [eight] directions are protected from sinful acts [possible] from that particular direction by Chandas.”

4. According to the *Śatapatabrāhmaṇa* (7.5.2.60),

*gāyatreṇa chandas ā tvā chādayāmi | traiṣṭubhena chandas ā tvā chādayāmi | jāgatena chandas*

*ā tvā chādayāmi |*

“The performer of sacrifice is protected only because of Chandas.”

As per another reference in the same text, Lord Brahmā created this world and became free from the fear of death. At the time, he was very hungry. The gods offered him food in the form of Chandas, and he was content with that food. In this way, the gods were satisfied by Chandas and Chandas by the gods.

Further, the same text refers to *chandas* as the animals of the gods – they carry sacrifices to the gods:

*paśavo vai devānām chandāmsi | tad yathedaṁ paśavo yuktāmanuṣyebhyo vahanti | evaṁ  
chandāmsi yuktāni devebhyo yajñam vahanti |*  
(Śat. Br. 1.8.2.8)

These (*chandas*-animals) are seven in number. They are in the form of seven domestic and seven wild animals, and all of them were created by Prajāpati:

*sapta vai chandāmsi sapta grāmyāḥ paśavaḥ saptāraṇyās-tān-evaitad-ubhayān-prajanayati |*  
(Śat Br. 1.1.6.16)

5. According to the *Kauṣītakibrahmaṇa*,

*te abruvan āṅgirasā ādityān | kva stha kva vaḥ sadbhyo havyam vakṣyāma iti | chandaḥ su  
ityabruvan | gāyatyām triṣṭubhi jagatyāmiti tasmācchandas su sadbhya ādityebhya āṅgirasā  
prajā havyam vahanti |*  
(Kauṣī. Br. 7-9.11.8.172)

“Āṅgirasā-s asked the Āditya-s, ‘Where are you? How should we carry the offering of the *sadas* to you?’ The Āditya-s replied, ‘In Chandas.’ Accordingly, the Āṅgirasā-s offered the offerings for the Āditya-s in the Gāyatrī, Triṣṭubh and Jagatī *chandas*.”

The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* states that the seven metres – Gāyatrī, Uṣṇih, Anuṣṭubh, Bṛhati, Paṅkti, Triṣṭubh and Jagatī – are the seven horses of the Sun (Viṣṇu. Dha. P. III, 97.12). In the *Bhagavadgītā*, Chandas are referred to as the leaves of the eternal *aśvattha* tree.<sup>7</sup> This indicates that Chandas are innumerable. Furthermore, Kātyāyana states that the entire Sanskrit Literature is in the form of Chandas.<sup>8</sup> The *Nāṭyaśāstra* states that not a single word can exist without Chandas, and no Chandas can exist without words.<sup>9</sup> Even speech is speechless without Chandas, states Yāskācārya.<sup>10</sup> From the above references, it can be gleaned that Chandas is remarkably significant in Vedic Literature, and indeed, indispensable to Sanskrit poetry. We will delve deeper into the subject in the next article. 📖

<sup>7</sup> ūrdhvamūlam adhaḥ śākhā aśvattham prāhur-avyayam | chandāmsi yasya parṇāni yastam veda sa vedavit | (Bhagavadgītā 15.1)

<sup>8</sup> chandomūlamidaṁ sarvaṁ vāṅmayam | (Chandonuśāsana. Appendix 5)

<sup>9</sup> chandohīno na śabdosti na chandaḥ śabdavarjitam | (Nāṭya. Śā. 14.47)

<sup>10</sup> nācchandasi vāgucaratī iti | (Nirukta. 7.2)

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# Āpastambīya Kalpasūtrās

(cont.)

*Kārīrīṣṭi, a Vedic sacrifice, if performed correctly, will bring forth rains to the parched Earth — for beyond even the sphere of science, lies the realm of the Veda-s.*

BY DR. U K V SARMA

**I**N THE PREVIOUS ARTICLE, a general introduction to *Kārīrīṣṭi* was given. Its schematic procedure will now be elaborated upon.

To commence the performance of the *Kārīrīṣṭi*, a Brahmin, who is a *nityāgnihotrī* (one who performs daily sacrificial rites), is invited with his wife. He is known as the *yajamāna* of the *Kārīrīṣṭi*. The *yajamāna*, having finished his daily rites, and accompanied by his wife, does the *saṅkalpa* (a resolve) that he is going to perform the *Kārīrīṣṭi* for rains. It is mandatory for the wife to accompany the *yajamāna* to initiate the sacrifice. Four priests, each well versed in at least one of the four Veda-s, play specific roles in the conduct of the sacrifice as enunciated in the scriptures. The number of the *ṛtvik*-s (priests) may vary depending upon the sacrifice to be performed. In general, *kāmyeṣṭi*-s entail four *ṛtvik*-s – *hotṛ*, *adhvaryu*, *brahmā* and *āgnīdhra*. The *hotṛ* recites mantra-s from the *Ṛgveda* while the *adhvaryu* performs the ritual as detailed in the *Kṛṣṇayajurveda*. The *brahmā*, besides chanting mantra-s from the *Atharvaveda*, observes the whole sacrifice to ensure its flawless conduct and the *āgnīdhra* assists in offering the oblations. In a *Kārīrīṣṭi* (a *kāmyeṣṭi*), four *ṛtvik*-s conduct it for the *yajamāna*.

After the consecration of the three altars, viz.,

*gārhapatyāgni*, *āhavanīyāgni* and *dākṣiṇāgni*, the *adhvaryu* adds the fuel to the fires as he is the chief priest of the sacrifice. Then, the *yajamāna* and his wife, uttering the mantra, "*mārutamasi marutāmojopām dhārām bhindhi*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 2-4-7) as specified in *Āpastambaśrautasūtra*, wear black clothes with black fringes/borders, to symbolically represent the dark clouds which are the carriers of water to pour upon the Earth. It is described here that the wind that blows from the western direction is obstructive for the arrival of rains whereas its motion from the eastern direction is conducive for rainfall. Hence, the *adhvaryu*, uttering the mantra, "*ramayata marutaśśyenamāinam...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 2-4-7), represses the wind-god coming from the western direction and humbly invokes the same to blow from the eastern direction uttering, "*ehi vāta* - Oh! Wind! come near".

A black horse (*kṛṣṇāśvaḥ*) is brought and kept standing in the east, facing the western direction. The *adhvaryu* then approaches the horse and squeezes the horse very hard with the black cloth while reciting the mantra, "*abhikranda stanaya garbhamādhā...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 3-1-11), so that the horse neighs loudly. If it neighs or shakes or excretes, it is to be understood that it will rain.



It is then that the oblations are offered to *Agni*, the fire-deity, while reciting a set of eight mantra-s beginning with "*purovāto varṣanjinvarāvṛtsvāhā...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 2-4-7). Since these oblations involve eight offerings, uttering eight mantra-s each time, this set of offerings is known as "*upahomāṣṭakam*" (eight by-oblations). Then, having spread a *kṛṣṇājina* (skin of a black antelope) inside the altar, flour of either dates or bamboo rice is poured onto it. Then, an appropriate quantity of black honey (*kṛṣṇamadhu*) is mixed with this flour to make three balls of the mix which will be separately wrapped in three lotus leaves. Then, uttering the mantra, "*vṛṣṇo aśvasya sandānamasīti...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 2-4-7), the ends of the *kṛṣṇājina* are lifted up and tied with a black string.

A cart, having three long pieces of timber as (three) roofs, is placed near the junk heap. Rendering the mantra, "*devā vasavyā...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 2-4-8), the *kṛṣṇājina*, prepared thus, is tied to the first roof on the first day. It remains fastened that day and

night. If it rains during that time, the three lumps of the mix (inside the *kṛṣṇājina*) are offered the following day by which the sacrifice gets concluded. If it doesn't rain, the same *kṛṣṇājina* is tied to the middle roof on the second day, while reciting the mantra, "*devāśśarmaṇyā...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 2-4-8). It remains fastened that day and night. If it rains during that time, the three lumps of the mix are offered the following day by which the sacrifice gets concluded. If it doesn't, rendering the mantra, "*devāssapītaya...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 2-4-8), the same *kṛṣṇājina* is tied to the last roof on the third day. It remains fastened that day and night. If it rains during that time, the three lumps of the mix are offered the following day by which the sacrifice gets concluded.

If there is no rain during this time – not even on the fourth day – then, on the fifth day, the priests prepare another offering made of black rice known as *puroḍāśa* for the three deities *Agni* (fire), *Marut* (wind) and *Āditya* (sun) as they are the only deities capable of giving rains. The mantra-s beginning with

"*tvantya cidacyutāgne...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 3-1-11) are recited while offering the *puroḍāśa*. During this, all the priests wear black turbans, black garments with their *yajñopavīta*-s (sacred threads) hanging around their necks (the hanging position of which is known as *nīvīta*), and perform the ritual.

After offering the *puroḍāśa* thus, the three balls of the mix that are inside the *kṛṣṇājina* are taken out, and the *kṛṣṇājina* is placed on the junk heap. It is now, at the time of *upahomas*, uttering the set of three mantra-s beginning with "*divācittamaḥ kṛṇvanti...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 2-4-8), the three balls are offered in the fire altar, each ball with a mantra at a time. Then the priests meditate on the smoke that rises from the burnt offerings, uttering the mantra, "*asitavarṇā harayassuparṇā miho...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 3-1-11).

An unbaked black earthen pot, which is kept near the junk heap, is filled with water, while the mantra "*srjā vṛṣṭim...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 2-4-8) is being uttered. If it breaks, then it signifies that it will rain.

The *adhvaryu* then approaches a black sheep that is tied either to the prop of the cart or a post. He sprinkles water upon it to make the divination on it as was done to the black horse earlier. Then, he places a clump of *punarnavā* or *varṣāhū* plant (hogweed) near the junk heap and offers libations of cow-ghee on it uttering the mantra, "*unnambhaya prthivīm...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 2-4-8). Sometimes, water is poured instead of ghee. Then, he offers the same into the *āhavanīya*-fire. All the priests meditate on the smoke that rises from the burning plant, uttering the mantra, "*hiraṇya keśo rajaso...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 3-1-11). The smoke thus generated is favorable to cloudy weather and production of rains. Finally, uttering the mantra, "*ye devā divibhāgā...*" (Tai. Kṛ. Ya. Saṃ. 2-4-8), the *adhvaryu* shakes the *kṛṣṇājina* on the *āhavanīya*-fire with its neck upwards.

As a token of gratitude for performing the *Kārīrīṣṭi*, the black cloth, the black horse and the black sheep are given as gifts to the four *ṛtvik*-s. That is how the *Kārīrīṣṭi* of the five days duration gets concluded.



## Conclusion

*Kārīrīṣṭi*, belonging to the class of *kāmyeṣṭi*-s, is a well-known sacrifice that is widely performed for obtaining rains when a society suffers a prolonged scarcity of water due to the lack of or significantly low rainfall for a long time. There are innumerable witnesses for the advent of rains during or post this sacrifice. Science can perhaps explain how the smoke emitted from a sacrificial altar causes clouds to pour forth water or how the sacrificial ingredients such as *ājyam* (cow-ghee), *havis* (specific offerings such as *puroḍāśa* etc.), *samidha*-s (specific pieces of wood) etc., purify the atmosphere, or how a proper recital of Veda-mantra-s has benefits like appeasing the mind of listener and things suchlike. But beyond the sphere of science lies the immense faith of *sanātana dharma* that inspires *āstika*-s to perform the sacrifices as enjoined in the scriptures in order to protect themselves and satisfy their needs and desires.

*Dharmo rakṣati rakṣitaḥ.* 📖



Fig. 9

# Alchemy in Ancient India

*Despite the mystic images that the word “alchemy” brings to our minds, it has played a pivotal role in the history of medicinal science in India.*

BY DR. VINEETH. PK & DR. LEKSHMI. C.S

**P**ARACELTUS, one of the most influential medical scientists of early modern Europe, famously said, “Although alchemy has now fallen into contempt – and is even considered a thing of the past – the physician should not be influenced by such judgements”. Paracelsus’ words remind us of a golden era of alchemical science. Little is known to the West about Indian alchemy; yet, it is a science that has a protracted history in India. Alchemy’s long and scientific-spiritual tradition lies hidden in our ancient classical scriptures.

The history of Indian alchemy can be traced to the Indus Valley civilisation. According to David White’s *Rasavidya*, alchemy in India started as an attempt to find a transmutation process to convert base metals into gold, to prepare an elixir of life to achieve immortality. “Born in the heavens, born in the sea, brought on from the river, this shell, born of gold, is our life elongating amulet”, says the *Atharvaveda*. Gold was regarded as an elixir of life, and lead was considered as the dispeller of sorcery in the *Atharvaveda*. To a student of Hindu medicine and alchemy, the *Atharvaveda* is of special interest as it is the earliest repository of information on the subject. In *Atharvaveda*, there are hymns known as *bhaiśajyāni* to cure diseases and possession by spirits, and hymns known as *āyusyāni* to secure

health and long life; this later became the foundation of *rasāyana*, the Sanskrit equivalent of alchemy (P.C. Ray).

Indian alchemy derives much of its flavour from the tantric cult. An important name in this tradition is Nāgārjunācārya, a Buddhist monk who, in ancient times, ran the great university dedicated to the study of alchemy, the Nāgārjunasāgara. It is believed that Nāgārjuna discovered a method to convert mercury into gold. In *Rasaratnākara*, Nāgārjuna’s tantric manual (Mahāyāna school), is a reference to Prajñāparāmīta appearing before him in a dream and revealing to him the ingredients of this method/recipe (consisting of steel, copper, mica, pyrites, etc.).

Nāgārjuna’s *Rasaratnākara* is one of the earliest extant works of Indian alchemy, dated to the seventh or eighth century C.E. According to Indian mythology, mercury is symbolic of Śiva’s semen – the creator’s power of creation – particularly in alchemy. So it is that the alchemist makes a *liṅga* of mercury and places it in the Eastern direction (Ray 1902:117). The *liṅga* is symbolic of the procreative and creative power, and mercury is its essence. Perhaps this mythological conception of Śiva who personifies immortality is a late, post-Vedic invention by Śaivite-s







Fig. 11

who are considered as the pioneers of alchemy in India.

*Rasārṇavakalpa* is another work that contains considerable material on alchemical processes and mercurial preparations, and throws adequate light on the alchemical (iatro-chemical) practices of India in the 11<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Its arrangement of its contents in “kalpa-s”, and its frequent reference to tantrik rites (profane and otherwise), suggests that this work lies in between the *Rasaratnākara* and the *Rasārṇava*. Its different *kalpa*-s focus on the powers of different substances to bring about the transmutation of base metals like copper or lead into gold or silver, and to bestow material immortality to human beings.

P.C. Ray regards Alberuni as an authority of alchemy in India in the 11<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Alberuni speaks of the system as well-recognised; he discusses the use of alchemy and mercury primarily in medicine. He mentions Nāgārjuna who occupies a position in Indian alchemy comparable to that of Jabir Ibn Hayyan in Islamic alchemy. Alberuni’s cursory reference to Nāgārjuna and ‘minerological alchemy’ suggests that the *rasāyana* at the time was like that of Caraka’s period, and herbo-mercurial preparations

were not (yet) popular in medicine or gold-making. At a later period, these preparations assumed much importance and popularity, and *rasāyana* – through the employment of mercury and other metals in medicine – became almost exclusively used for rejuvenation processes. Rejuvenation thus became a unique feature of Indian medicine.

It is rather clear that a vast knowledge of chemistry was acquired during the tantric period in India, and by the 13<sup>th</sup> century C.E., Indian alchemists were acquainted with a large variety of acids, alkalies, salts, etc. It is interesting to note that knowledge of practical chemistry in India in the 13<sup>th</sup> century C.E. (or earlier) was far more advanced than that of the same period in Europe.

In his article (2008), Atul Sethi quotes certain strong evidences for the prevalence of alchemy in India during the medieval period – primarily two inscriptions on the walls of the Birla temples at New Delhi and Varanasi. Both the inscriptions narrate two alchemical experiments that were conducted in the 1940s in which mercury was converted into gold with the help of herbal ingredients. The purpose of detailing these experiments on the walls of the

Birla temples must be to create awareness about the vast alchemical knowledge possessed by ancient Indian ṛṣi-s. According to researchers, if indeed such experiments were successfully conducted, they would have to be types of low-energy nuclear-reactions that take place at room temperature – popularly termed ‘cold fusion’, a concept that modern science refuses to accept.

Mahadeva Srinivasan, former Associate Director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), who was among the first to conduct research in this field in India and is now one of the country’s foremost advocates of cold fusion, claims that this kind of alchemical conversion is perfectly possible. The basis of his confidence lies in the research conducted between 1989 and 1994 at BARC which yielded positive results. The physics of these reactions remains a mystery. Recent research conducted by a Japanese physicist, Yoshiaki Arata, has made some headway; and a demonstration conducted by Arata in 2008 has reported a high degree of reproducibility. This raises hopes that cold fusion reactions can perhaps become a reality.

We can be proud of the fact that while Europeans merely had an idea of the “philosopher’s stone”, Indian alchemists had advanced theoretical and practical knowledge about the science of alchemy and its medicinal application for rejuvenation and longevity. Even if this forgotten science has lost its popularity in the current world, it reminds us of the innumerable possibilities of this magical science in the field of chemistry and medical science. ☞

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Fig. 12





SERIES: FUNDAMENTALS  
OF SPIRITUALITY

# Path to Spirituality

*Spirituality is an attempt to experience a higher truth — a pure existence unencumbered by narrative; and the way to it is fourfold: prayer, remembrance, devotion and surrender.*

BY DR. NIBEDITA BANERJEE

**S**PIRITUALITY is a broad concept with room for many perspectives. However, in general, it is an attempt to connect ourselves with a higher truth – with something extraordinary. It involves moving beyond the physical appearance of things. It involves venturing deep into the process of understanding how our lives unfold. Spirituality helps to attain peace in our day-to-day lives, and in times of difficulty. A spiritual outlook increases our patience in times of difficulty and brings a sense of gratitude in times of ease.

Spirituality is basically individual-centric and not a mass practice like religion. Every religion has a spiritual component for the attainment of peace – a person may find peace through her association with a church, a temple, a mosque, a synagogue, or anything else, but to achieve peace, some medium is needed. Traditionally, such a medium has four fundamental components:

1. Prayer
2. Constant remembrance
3. Devotion
4. Surrender

## Prayer

For achieving spirituality, prayer is the first step. We should start our day by chanting a prayer. Morning is considered as the best time for chanting prayers because our minds are fresh and pious. We can therefore offer our prayers very humbly with a heart brimming with love and affection for the Creator. A heart full of love and devotion creates a state of vacuity within and allows the divine grace to flow in. Prayer is the mode through which we establish our link with the Divine. It is the essential and unfailing means to success.

It is possible to offer our love to God through various *bhāva*-s like paternal sentiment (*pitṛ bhāva*), friendly sentiment (*sakhya bhāva*), etc. However, the best way is that of a lover and her beloved. If we think ourselves to be a lover and take God to be the beloved, then a point will come when God will become the lover and we, the beloved.

### Constant remembrance

*nigṛhīṭasya manasaḥ śravaṇādau tadguṇaviśaye ca samādhiḥ samādhānam*

(Vedāntasāra: 23)

Constant remembrance is an important component of spirituality. Our mind is always engrossed in material life and we think about God only in deep distress and misery. This is because of our attachment to worldly interests – we are entangled in the *māya* of desire.

The state of constant remembrance comes through practice. To cultivate the practice, we should try to focus on Him during leisure hours, irrespective of the place we are in. We must think that God is omnipresent and try to think of Him for as long as possible. Eventually, it will become a habit, and the time of uninterrupted remembrance will increase.

Almost in every religion, before we begin any important work, it is customary to remember God. But this is only a matter of formality – we never dedicate the work to God in the real sense and thus, we remain very far from Him. However, the main purpose of the custom is to be in touch with Him during all mental and physical activities. We must be connected to Him during all our daily activities. It is, indeed, difficult to frequently remember Him amidst our numerous worries and anxieties created due to worldly attachment and responsibilities. However, through practice and experience, we can realize that even in the face of all worldly worries and engagements, it is easy to remember Him. If all our actions and work can be treated as a duty entrusted by the divine, then the goal can be easily fulfilled.

It is useful to treat our *guru* – who is in the ultimate state of realization – as God. If we dedicate everything to our *guru* even as we go through our daily schedule, we will get good results in a short time. While performing daily duties, we can imagine that the *guru* is doing it. For example: while having breakfast, we can imagine that our *guru* is breaking the fast, or when we are working at office, we can imagine that the *guru* is doing our work. We should, of course, understand that ultimately, it is the *guru* within ourselves who is enjoying the work. If we continue such a practice, we will surely be in a state of constant remembrance and our actions will create no impression, and cease to make *saṁskāra*-s.

### Devotion

Devotion or *bhakti* is defined as “love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person, activity or cause.” In a spiritual sense, it means worship, reverence, or devotion to the Supreme Being. Devotion comes when we acquire efficiency in constant remembrance – it is a natural development of spirituality. According to the *Bhagavadgītā*, single minded devotion to the Supreme Being is the best and surest way for attainment of the state of self-realization:

*jñāna-yajñena cāpy anye  
yajanto mām upāsate  
ekatvena pṛthaktvena  
bahudhā viśvato-mukham*

(Bhagavadgītā 9.15)

Devotion involves rituals consisting of *carya* and *kriyāpāda*-s which are meant to ground the devotee’s heart in divine love. In matters of spirituality, it is considered that devotion is a fire which burns the trash of worldliness and extracts the gold of peace and helps us reach the absolute state. This burning process has three stages.



In the first stage, the fire is rather weak, and gives out thick smoke due to lack of air (dedication). In the second stage, there are occasional bright sparks with lesser smoke. In the third stage is a bright burning flame with almost no smoke and it is in this stage that devotion can burn anything to ash in a moment.

### Surrender

*gurūpadiṣṭa-vedānta-vākyeṣu viśvāsaḥ  
śraddhā*

(Vedāntasāra-24)

Surrendering ourselves to the Supreme Being is the surest way to achieve the goal of spirituality. The feeling of surrender must develop automatically within us and cannot be forced upon the mind. Even in this step, a *guru* has an important role to play. Self-surrender is a state of complete resignation to the will of the *guru*. Traditionally, disciples have been classified under two categories – the *manmat* and the *gurumat*. The disciples who approach the *guru* with worldly desires such as relief from misery, desire for wealth, etc. are called *manmat*. Their devotion depends on the fulfilment of their desires, and their submission lasts as long as they are hopeful of the satisfaction of their desires. Such disciples have minimal obedience to the *guru*, and hence, surrender is not possible for them. *Gurumat*, on the other hand, are those disciples who obey the commands of the *guru* in all matters and try to submit to his will in all possible ways. When a disciple deeply understands the great attainments of the *guru* in spirituality, she feels inwardly inclined to follow his biddings. Obedience to *guru* is the first and most important step for submission.

When we surrender, the stage of negation begins. After complete negation of all senses and faculties (proceeding through elementary rules of devotion), one begins the process of self-surrender. Surrendering ourselves to the great Supreme Power begins the process of attracting a constant flow of the highest divine grace from Him. The practitioner will become completely subservient to the will of that Power.

In the next article, we will look deeper into the different components of spirituality. 📖

# Does Hinduism Connive at Corruption?

*Historically, Indians were respected the world over for their truthfulness and honesty. Unfortunately, in post-independence era, corruption in India has multiplied because of the divorce of Hinduism from education and public life.*

BY PRAMOD KUMAR

**I**N HIS BOOK titled, “*Chanakya’s New Manifesto: To Resolve the Crisis within India*”, Pavan Varma attempts to stereotype the Hindu religion and its millions of followers as morally loose and “corruption friendly”. He writes,

“... in Hinduism, there is no binding or universal code of conduct that gives unequivocal primacy to the moral dimension... Hindu tradition, for all its philosophical loftiness, has always allowed for a convenient response to the moral imperative. Ethics are conceptually grounded in a utilitarian framework where there are no uncontested definitions of right and wrong... In the pursuit of the desired goal, morality is not so much disowned as it is pragmatically devalued.”

(Varma 2013: 127-128)

What is put forth above is not the Hindu view of ethics but the author’s own (distorted) understanding of it based on the dubious translations and interpretations<sup>1</sup>. The Hindu framework of ethics is unambiguous and brilliantly graded to ensure

<sup>1</sup> Varma quotes liberally from the British scholar, Richard Lannoy’s work, “The Speaking Tree, A Study of Indian Culture and Society”.

that people from all walks of life, irrespective of their status, can adhere to ethical and moral norms with conviction. *Dharma* is not an undefined and ephemeral ideal, but a universal principle of morality and ethics based on common sense. ‘Do unto others as you would have them do to you’ is the common denominator of this universal ethical framework.

However, one encounters complex situations in daily life in which right and wrong will have to be interpreted with *viveka*. A soldier on a battlefield cannot practice *ahimsa* because his moral imperative in the role of a soldier is to defend his country and his people. A doctor who is called upon to perform a surgery cannot absolve himself of his responsibility in the name of practicing *ahimsa* because the life of the patient is dependent on it. Therefore, interpretation becomes important, but interpretation of *dharma* is not a license to subvert ethics.

*Mahaṛṣi* Patañjali, in his *Yogasūtra*-s, defines five values – *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satya* (truthfulness), *brahmacharya* (continence), *asteya* (non-stealing) and *aparigraha* (minimal material possessions) as the ‘universal great vows’:

*jāti-deśa-kāla-samayān-avacchinnaḥ  
sārvabhōma mahāvratāḥ*  
(*Yogasūtra* 2.31)

Patañjali emphasizes that these values are to be practiced by every human being – irrespective of caste, country, period, time or other distinctions. Such unambiguous declaration of universal moral values can be found in all Hindu scriptures from the Veda-s to the Purāṇa-s. However, the necessity for interpretation of *dharma* was recognized and that is why we have a genre of sub-texts called the *dharmaśāstra*-s which help us interpret and analyse *dharma*. Any injunction or interpretation which is not in consonance with the universal laws or values espoused in the *śruti* texts (Veda-s and Upaniṣad-s) is rejected. To claim then that Hinduism does not have a well-defined framework of ethics and morals or that it encourages a mindset which is conducive to corruption is not merely an oversight but a gross distortion intended to devalue the Hindu religion.

Historically, Indians were respected the world over for their truthfulness and honesty as records of foreign travellers reveal. The Arab traveller Muhammda Al-Idrisi tells us that a large number of Muslim merchants visited Nahrwara (Anahilavada) because the people were “noteworthy for the excellence of their justice, for keeping up their contracts, and for the beauty of their character”. Marco Polo records that “You must know that these Abraiaman (a distortion of the word Brahmin) are the best merchants in the world, and the most truthful, for they would not tell a lie for anything on earth... If a foreign merchant entrusts his goods to them, they will take charge of these and sell them in the most loyal manner, seeking zealously the profit of the foreigner and asking no commission except what the foreigner pleases to bestow.”

Paul Johnson, a columnist for the *Forbes* magazine, makes this stunning analysis of the character of Hindu emigrants:

“It is the nature of the Hindu religion to be tolerant and, in its own curious way, permissive. Under the socialist regime of Jawaharlal Nehru and his family successors, the state was intolerant, restrictive and grotesquely

bureaucratic. That has largely changed (though much bureaucracy remains), and the natural tolerance of the Hindu mind-set has replaced quasi-Marxist rigidity... India’s economy for the first time is expanding faster than China’s. For years, India was the tortoise, China the hare. The race is on, and my money’s on India, because freedom – of movement, speech, and the media – is always an economic asset... When left to themselves, Indians (like the Chinese) always prosper as a community. Take the case of Uganda’s Indian population, which was expelled by the horrific dictator Idi Amin and received into the tolerant society of Britain. There are now more millionaires in this group than in any other recent immigrant community in Britain. They are a striking example of how far hard work, strong family bonds and a devotion to education can carry a people who have been stripped of all their worldly assets.”  
(Johnson 2004)

Corruption in India multiplied by leaps and bounds in the post-Independence era not because of Hindu religion but because education and public life in India became divorced from Hinduism in the name of secularism. It is sad that English educated Indians like Pavan Varma have a poor understanding of their own roots and ethnic character than neutral observers like Paul Johnson. 🇮🇳

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# Yoga and Human Personality

*Personality development in the system of yoga is an exploration of the five kośa-s, their transcendence to realize the Self — the substratum of the personality.*

BY DR. SRIPAD H. GHALIGI

**Y**OGA — as a means of refining the different aspects of human personality<sup>1</sup> — was commonly accepted in the ancient schools of Indian philosophy. In recent times, different yogic practices<sup>2</sup> have gained popularity in the fields of therapy, psychology, and personality development.

The term 'personality' comes from the Latin root, *persona* — mask or character in a drama. In the lexicon of psychology, 'personality' is simply an umbrella term for the capacities, habits and attitudes of a person which distinguish him from another person. According to the Oxford dictionary of psychology, "personality is the sum total of the behavioral and mental characteristics those are distinctive of an individual". In the system of yoga, on the other hand, 'personality' is not simply the distinctiveness of an individual; instead, it is five-fold in nature, elaborated in the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* as *pañca-kośa*<sup>3</sup>. So, personality development in the system of yoga is an exploration of the five *kośa*-s, their transcendence to realize the Self — the substratum of the personality. Patañjali, in the second chapter of his *Yogasūtra*,

expounds the nature of the Self which, in reality, is unchangeable, but appears to take on the changing colors of the mind (*Yogasūtra* 2.18).

The philosophy of yoga analyzes human personality in terms of gross, subtle and causal. Accordingly, the first sheath of the *pañca-kośa* corresponds to the gross aspect, and it is called as the *annamaya-kośa* (physical sheath). It is the medium through which we experience the waking state. It is sustained by *anna* (food) and is susceptible to the six modifications or *śad-bhāva-vikāra*. The subtle aspect of the personality comprises of three sheaths — the *prāṇamaya* (vital sheath), *manomaya* (mind sheath) and *vijñānamaya kośa*-s (intellectual sheath). It is the medium through which we experience the dream state. It is not discernable to the sense organs. It is the storehouse of mental dispositions, thoughts, emotions, intentions, etc. — the "personality" of modern psychology is conditioned by this subtle body. Further, the causal sheath corresponds to the *ānandamaya-kośa*. It is the medium through which we experience the state of dreamless sleep, *suṣupti*.

A highly developed personality is one who has realized the gross, subtle and causal sheaths of the personality, is aware of its limitations, and uses them with discretion to attain the higher goals of



Fig. 15

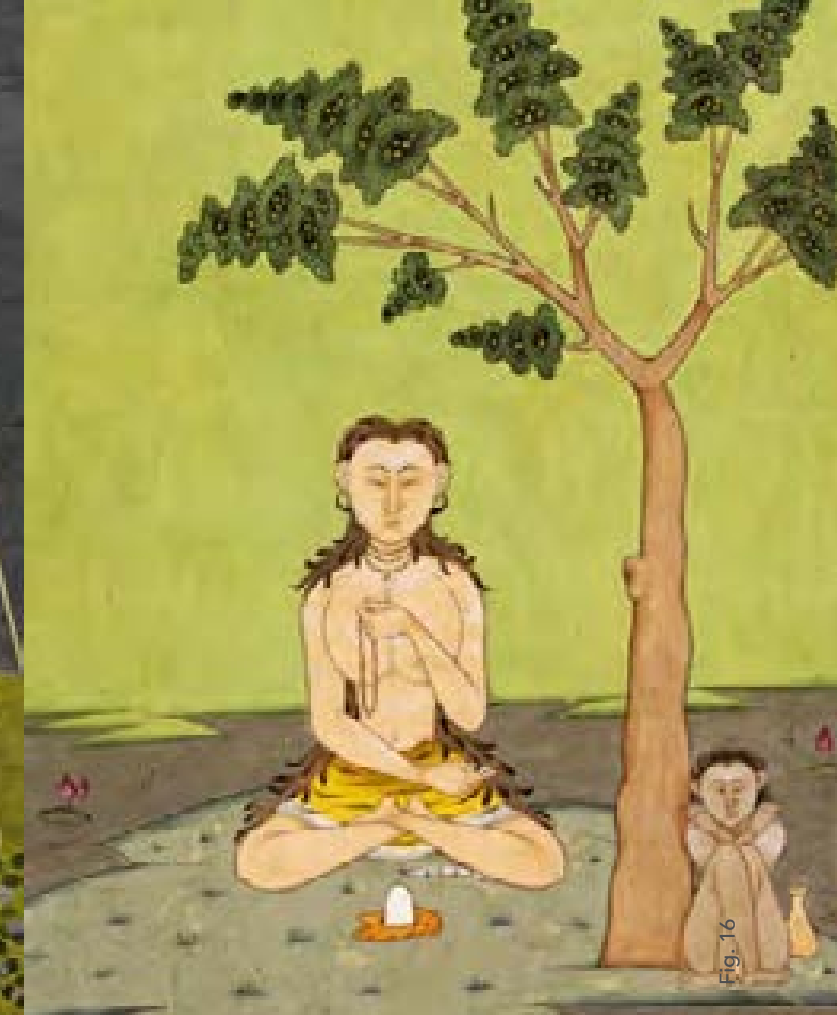


Fig. 16



Fig. 17

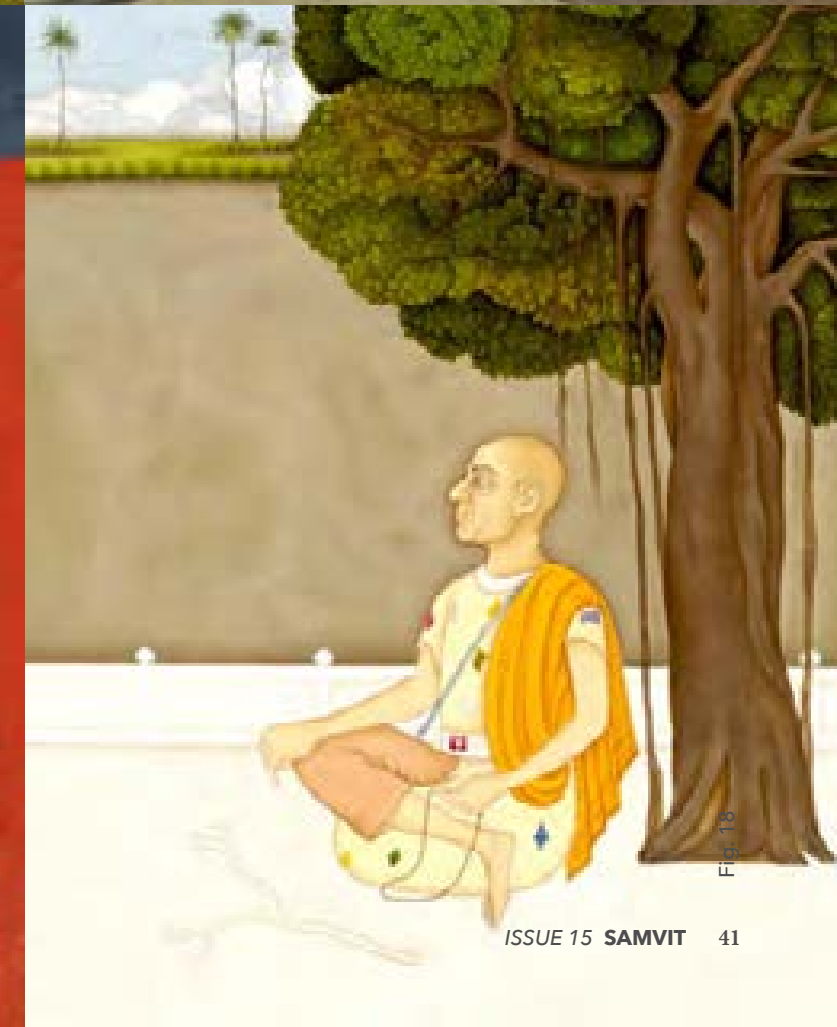


Fig. 18

<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that according to the fundamental principles of yoga, personality development is only ancillary to attain the ultimate purpose of life, *mokṣa*.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'yoga' includes a wide spectrum of practices unveiled by ṛṣi-s.

<sup>3</sup> *Kośa*, literally, means "cover" or "sheath" — called thus because they cover/veil the Consciousness/Self.

*A highly developed personality is one who has realized the gross, subtle and causal sheaths of the personality, is aware of its limitations, and uses them with discretion to attain the higher goals of life.*

life. The *Bhagavadgītā* describes such a personality as *sthitaprajñā* (one of steady wisdom) or *triguṇātīta* (one who has transcended the three *guṇa*-s). Indeed, he is a real *yogī*, a perfected personality. A *yogī* possesses the *daivī-sampat* (divine qualities) that the *Bhagavadgītā* enunciates – purity, braveness, spiritual aspiration, self-control, generosity, devotion, truthfulness, endurance, compassion and humbleness.

On the other hand, an under-developed personality is he who possesses the *āsuri-sampat* (demonic qualities) enunciated in the *Bhagavadgītā* in the chapter of *daivāsura-sampad-vibhāga-yoga* – imperviousness to spiritual values, inability to distinguish between righteousness and unrighteousness, purity and impurity, truth and untruth, etc.

*Yogasūtra* also says that the root cause for personality problems is *kleśa*-s (afflictions) which are five in number: *avidyā*, *asmita*, *rāga*, *dveśa* and *abhiniveśa*. Of them, the first – *avidyā* – is the basis for the other four. *Avidyā* is mistaking the non-eternal, impure non-Self to be the eternal, pure Self. It is the ignorance of the true nature of reality. *Asmita* is the mistaken identity of the Consciousness with the instruments of cognition – the senses of perception, intelligence and ego, etc. When Consciousness

identifies itself with its instruments, it appears to become impure, and is confined by its limitations. *Abhiniveśa* is the strong desire for life, which flows on by its own potency and is established even in the knowledgeable. *Rāga* is desire and attachment, and *dveśa* is hatred/aversion. These *kleśa*-s are a chain of cause and effect, and they distort the personality and prevent the discovery of the true Self.

*Yogasūtra* prescribes comprehensive practices – complete with theoretical understandings – to cater to everyone. Accordingly, the first step towards developing one's personality is introspection and identifying the root cause of problems in one's personality. In the *Yogasūtra*-s, the deterrents of a healthy personality are called *antaraya*-s – primarily psycho-physical in nature. They are – diseases, slowness, uncertainty, negligence, laziness, infatuation to objects of the senses, erroneous perception, failure to attain any higher stage of abstraction, and instability in the state when it is attained. In the second chapter of *Yogasūtra*, Patañjali writes that *kriyāyoga* will help to overcome these deterrents. Further, he prescribes *tapas* for strengthening willpower<sup>4</sup>, *svādhyaya* for purifying

<sup>4</sup>The *tapas* of the body include offering reverential worship to the gods, to the learned, to the teachers, and to the wise men, purity, straight-forwardness, continence, and non-violence; the *tapas* of the speech include uttering words that are non-agitating, truthful and kind. Serenity, gentleness, silence, self-control, and purity of emotions are the *tapas* of the mind.

and strengthening the intellect, and *īśvara-praṇidhāna* to strengthen emotions.

*Yogasutra*'s system of *aṣṭāṅgayoga* (eight limbs) – *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi* – is a systematic method to strengthen one's personality and further, to transcend it. *Yama* is non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence and non-acquiring. These are universal social values which contribute towards the harmony of the society. *Niyama* is cleanliness of the body and mind, contentment, austerity, study and devotion to god – these are centered around the individual and are essential for personal growth. *Āsana* is physical postures, and *prāṇāyāma* is regulation and mastery over breath. Both cater to the well-being of the physical body. *Pratyāhāra* is detachment

of the sense-organs from the modifications of the mind (that arise due to contact with external objects). *Dhāraṇa* leads to meditation and further, to *samādhi*. From the practice of *aṣṭāṅgayoga*, destruction of impurities takes place. From this arises spiritual illumination which gradually increases and finally results in the experience of reality.

The principles advocated by yoga for the development of human personality are verifiable in practice – although they are essentially centered around the individual, their manifestations in outward life can be subjected to scientific study and verification. Thus, yoga is not merely a matter of scholarly discussion; it offers a comprehensive, practical and balanced method for transforming personality. 🧘



Fig. 19





SERIES: ON THE MEANING  
OF MAHĀBHĀRATA

## An approach to the *Mahābhārata*

*Mahābhārata is not simply a social or a political enterprise but is a magnificent work that illustrates the nature of dharma in its alignment to the ultimate purpose of life.*

BY MANJUSHREE HEGDE

**"ARMS AND THE MAN I SING"** – so run the opening lines of Virgil's *Aeneid*. These few words reflect, wrote Paul Cantor, the whole essence of the traditional subject-matter of (ancient) epic poetry: warfare and politics. In his words,

"...Homer and Virgil... they do single out the warrior's life as the central theme of epic poetry. Even Shakespeare, with his wider range as a poet, focuses his serious plays, his histories and tragedies, on public figures and the central political issue of war and peace... The traditional concept of epic and tragedy as the supreme genres and the pinnacle of literary achievement effectively placed political life at the center of poetic concern."

(Cantor 2007: 375)

Perhaps it is true of Western Epics. Perhaps it is not. What is certain is that it does not reflect of Sanskrit *kāvya*-s – and certainly not of the *Mahābhārata*<sup>1</sup>. For Vyāsa's *Mahābhārata* is, first and foremost, a *kāvya* – and *kāvya* – like the other arts – is/was considered a magnificent means of spiritual refinement in India. In order to understand the *Mahābhārata*, then, the text must be situated in its own context – that of Indian arts.

Indian art is essentially spiritual in nature – in its creation, in its existence, and in its purpose. All art in Indian aesthetics is considered as a path for realization of the Ultimate Reality. In the beginning of the *Citrāsūtra* (*Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*), a standard text of an Indian artist, it is stated that the purpose of art is to show the grace that underlies all of creation, to help one on the path towards reintegration with That which pervades the universe. So, it opens with King Vajra asking sage Mārkaṇḍeya, "How could one make a representation, in painting or image, of the Supreme Being who is devoid of form, smell and emotion, destitute of sound and touch?" To this, Mārkaṇḍeya explains, "The entire universe should be understood as the modification (*vikṛti*) of the formless (*prakṛti*). The worship and meditation of the Supreme is possible for an ordinary being only when the formless is endowed with a form; and that form is full of significance." So, the artisan tries to see the material world around him as a manifestation of the Universal Spirit and tries to capture the intrinsic unity

<sup>1</sup> If Homer, for example, addresses, a transcendent problem, showing us what makes life finally impossible – in the words of one writer, "the universality of human doom" – Vyāsa poses the more difficult question: What is it that makes life possible?



and harmony of the whole of creation. In E. B. Havell's words, "Indian art, soaring into the highest empyrean, is ever trying to bring down to earth something of the beauty of the things above." (Havell 1928:24) Imitation of nature, then, – which, to a Hindu, is *māyā*/illusion– is not an aim at all. In the words of Burne-Jones, "(art) is the power of bringing God into the world – of making God manifest" (Wildman et al, 1998:22).

In *kāvya*, the experience of *rasa* – *rasāsvādāna* – is equivalent to the "tasting of God". The word '*rasa*' is traditionally used, (a) relatively, in the plural, with reference to the various, usually eight or nine, distilled emotional conditions which may constitute the theme of a given literary work (b) absolutely, in the singular, with reference to the interior act of tasting flavor un-particularized. We are here concerned only with the second usage of the word, the experience of *rasa*. Coomaraswamy defines it thus:

"The *sthāyi-bhāva* is brought to life as *rasa* because of the spectator's own capacity for tasting, not by the character or actions of the hero to be imitated (*anukārya*), nor by the deliberate ordering of the work to that end (*tatparatvataḥ*). Competence depends on purity or singleness (*sattva*) of heart and on an inner character (*antara-dharma*) or habit of obedience (*anuśīla*) tending to aversion of attention from external phenomena; this character and habit, not to be acquired by mere learning, but either innate or cultivated, depends on an ideal sensibility (*vāsanā*) and the faculty of self-identification (*yogyatā*) with the forms (*bhavana*) depicted (*varṇanīya*). Just as the original intuition arose from a self-identification of the artist with the appointed theme, so aesthetic experience, reproduction, arises from a self-identification of the spectator with the presented matter; criticism repeats the process of creation."

Coomaraswamy (1934:51)

In other words, the aesthetic experience is an inscrutable and uncaused spiritual activity, that is virtually ever-present and potentially realizable, but not possible to be realized unless and until all affective and mental barriers have been resolved, all knots of the heart undone, and it is necessarily admitted that the experience arises in relation to some specific representation. It is characterized by a state of lysis (*viśrānti*), an immersion in the aesthetic-object to the exclusion of every other thing (*vigalitavedyāntaratayā*), without, that is, having any mental movement, any extraneous desire (in other words, no obstacle, *vighna*)<sup>2</sup>. In other words, *rasāsvādāna* is *yoga*, also called *nivṛtti*, *laya*, *samāpti*, and *samādhi* – and this is said to be equal to tasting of God (*brahmānanda sahodara*)<sup>3</sup>. Capturing perfectly the true essence of the *Mahābhārata* in his magnum opus, *Dhvanyāloka*, Ānandavardhana wrote,

*mahābhārata'pi śāstra-rūpaṁ kāvyacchāyānvayini vṛṣṇi-pāṇḍava-  
virasāvasānavaimanasyadāyinīm samāptim upanibadhnatā mahāmuniṇā vairāgya-  
jananatātparya-pādhyānyena sva-prabandhasya darśayatā mokṣa-lakṣaṇaḥ puruṣārthaḥ śānto  
rasaśca mukhyatayā vivakṣā-viśayatvena sūcitah |*

*Dhvanyāloka* 4.5 vṛ

"Again, in the *Mahābhārata*, which has the form of a didactic work although it contains poetic beauty, the great sage who was its author, by his furnishing a conclusion that dismays our hearts by the miserable end of the Vṛṣṇis and Pāṇḍavas, shows that *the primary aim of his work has been to produce a disenchantment with the world* and that he has intended *his primary*

<sup>2</sup> *Vighnaḥ* is itself defined thus: *vighnanti vilumpanti kartavyam iti vighnaḥ ādhyātikādayo anavadhānadośādayastrividhopaghātataḥ tadadiṣṭhātāraśca devatāviśeṣāḥ* i.e. primarily as a lack of attention (*anavadhāna*).

<sup>3</sup> *Brahman*, Bhartṛhari said, is nothing but the overcoming of the knots of "I" and "mine" – *mamāham iti ahamkāra-granthi-samatikramaṇamātram brahmaṇaḥ prāptiḥ*.



*subject to be liberation (mokṣa) from worldly life and the rasa of peace."*

(trans Ingalls)

Unfortunately, twenty-first century studies of the *Mahābhārata* are mostly focused on the topic of folk and vernacular versions of the Pāṇḍava story in which the hegemonic discourses of patriarchy and social hierarchy of Vyāsa's *Mahābhārata* are contested or resisted in a variety of subaltern and/or regional retellings. Modern critics of Vyāsa's *Mahābhārata* fixate on identifying elements of hegemonic and comprehensive regimes of patriarchal dominance in the text, and address only issues of gender, power, hierarchy and authority in it. Located within the aims of art in the Indian tradition, it can be seen that the *Mahābhārata* is not simply a social or a political enterprise, but a magnificent work that illustrates the nature of *dharma* in its alignment to the ultimate purpose of life. Kunti's parting words of advice to Yudhiṣṭhira may be taken as its nutshell:

*dharma te dhīyatām buddhir manas tu mahadastu ca |*

*Mahābhārata* (Bh.P. 15.17.21)

"Let thy reason be fixed on *dharma*; let thy mind be ever great." ☞

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# Jīvājīva in Pāṇinian Grammar

*The classification of jīvājīva (living & non-living entities) in the sūtra-s of the Aṣṭādhyāyī is an interesting subject that throws light upon how consciousness is understood by grammarians.*

BY DR. NAVEEN BHAT

**V**EDĀNTIN-S assert that the world is only names and forms: *nāmarūpātmakam jagat*. Daṇḍī, in his *Kāvyādarśa*, writes that without *śabda*, Word, the three worlds would be doomed to eternal darkness<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, the *śāstra* which discusses language (Vyākaraṇa) must be precise and careful in handling words – for they illuminate the world of objects. Such precision is a characteristic feature of Pāṇinian grammar.

The aphorisms of Pāṇini are primarily based on how language is used in the world<sup>2</sup>. In its effort to describe language correctly, Pāṇinian grammar becomes rather complicated in certain sections. For example, the *ṇatva-prakaraṇam* and *ātmanepada-prasmaipada-prakaraṇam* are very complex topics in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. Generally, the rules of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* are applicable universally with only a few exceptions. But in the complex *prakaraṇa-s* – like the aforesaid *ātmanepada prakaraṇam* – there are more exceptions than general rules.

In this article, we will investigate the distinction of *jīva* (living) and *ajīva* (non-living) entities as employed in

the *sūtra-s* of Pāṇini.

## Prāṇi-aprāṇi

In 12 *sūtra-s* of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, Pāṇini has used the word “*prāṇi*” to denote living entities<sup>3</sup>. For example, consider the *sūtra*, *dvandvaśca prāṇi-tūrya-senāṅgānām* (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 2.4.2) which singularizes the *dvandva samāsa* (compound) occurring between a set of animal limbs or a set of musical instruments or a set of army-divisions. In this *sūtra*, the term “*prāṇyaṅga*” denotes the limbs of an animal, and the word “*prāṇī*” denotes the animal itself. It is, therefore, clear that the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* has different grammatical rules for living and non-living entities. Further, it is also clear that the Sanskrit language itself has differences in application of suffixes for *prāṇī* and *aprāṇī* (living and non-living) entities.

## Cittavat kartā

Another instance of the distinction between living and non-living entities appears in the section of *ātmanepada prakaraṇam*. In this section, verbal roots (*dhātu-s*), which are the fundamental elements of Sanskrit verbs, are divided into three types: *ātmanepadī*, *parasmaipadī* and *ubhayapadī*.

*Ātmanepadī dhātu-s* are employed for the actions that are performed for one’s own self, *parasmaipadī dhātu-s* are employed for the actions that are performed for others, and *ubhayapadī dhātu-s* are employed for the actions that are performed for either one’s own self or for another person. Such a classification is a rather peculiar feature of the Sanskrit language and a rather complicated one. The commentators of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* have made great attempts to make this section comprehensible to students of grammar – to explain why a *dhātu* is *ātmanepadī* or *parasmaipadī*; nevertheless, it remains rather incomprehensible.

In the case of *ubhayapadī dhātu-s*, the general rule is that the intention of the doer (*karṭṛ*) decides the nature of the *dhātu*: if the fruit of the action is intended to gratify the doer, then the *dhātu* becomes *ātmanepadī*; otherwise it becomes *parasmaipadī*. For example, the sentence “*caitraḥ pacati*” means “Chaitra cooks for others”, but the sentence “*caitraḥ pacate*” means “Chaitra cooks for himself”. Here the root, *pac* (to cook), is *ubhayapadī* in nature. It may become *ātmanepadī* or *parasmaipadī* depending on the intention of the doer. This is the general rule – but there are many exceptions to it.

*Aṇāvakarmakāt cittavat karṭṛkāt* (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.3.88) is an exception to the afore-stated rule. According to it, in certain conditions, if the fruit of the action is intended to gratify the doer himself, the *dhātu* becomes *parasmaipadī* (instead of *ātmanepadī*). In this case, since the doer plays a key role (it is his

intention that decides the nature of the *dhātu*), the question of whether the doer is living or non-living acquires great significance. Examples of non-living doers include the flowing river, the blowing wind, the moving clouds, etc. Living-doers include animals, birds, human beings, etc. Non-living doers cannot intend their actions for their own self or for others, but living-doers can. In this *sūtra*, the word “*cittavat*” is used to describe a living *karṭā*. Literally, “*cittavat kartā*” means “conscious doer”. In the other words, *cittavat* includes all beings with cognition. Interestingly, this classification excludes plants because according to tradition, plants are not considered as fully evolved entities.<sup>4</sup> In only one *vārttikam* of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* are plants considered alive: the *vārttikam* for the *sūtra gatibuddhi...* (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.4.52) – *bhakṣerahiṃsārthasya na* – states explicitly that consumption of plants qualifies as *hiṃsa* or violence because plants are alive and can feel pain. In many other *sūtra-s*, the term *acitta/acittavat kartā* is used – directly or otherwise.

## Manuṣya-Amanuṣya

Further, there are *sūtra-s* that specifically employ human *karṭā*. There are approximately 13 *sūtra-s* that employ the term “*manuṣya*” (human) or “*amanuṣya*” (non-human) to prescribe different grammatical functions for each of them. For example, *amanuṣya-karṭṛke ca* (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 3.2.53) is a *sūtra* that prescribes the addition of the suffix *ṭak* to the verbal root *han* when the doer of the action is not a human being.

## Conclusion

The classification of *prāṇi-aprāṇi*, *jīvājīva* and *manuṣyāmanuṣya* is a requirement of the Sanskrit language itself – Pāṇinian grammar simply caters to this need. This is an interesting and curious subject that has not received sufficient academic attention. It is important to further investigate this subject; perhaps research in this direction will shed light on how grammarians understood consciousness. ₹

<sup>4</sup> This is evident in the *Nyāsa*, a commentary on *Kāśikā*, in the *sūtra*, *budha-yudha-naśajan*. (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.13.86). While explaining the example given by the *kāśikākāra*, the commentator opines that *padma* (lotus flower) cannot be a *cittavat kartā*.

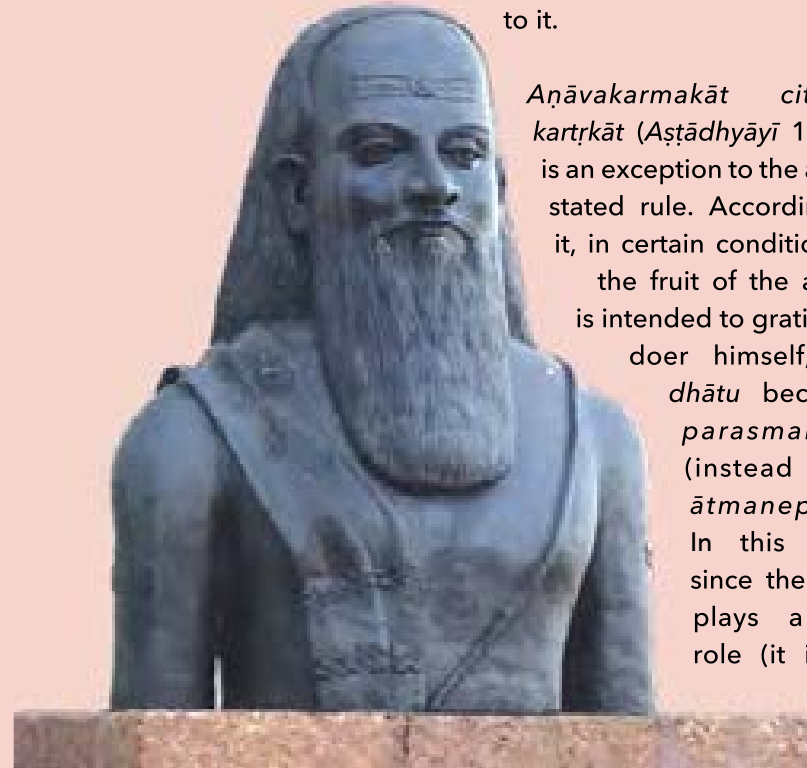


Fig. 22

<sup>1</sup> *idamandhaṃ tamaḥ kṛtsnam jāyeta bhuvanatrayam | yadi śabdāḥ vayam jyotirāsamsāram na dīpyate ||*

<sup>2</sup> *Mahābhāṣyam* sets language-usage as a parameter to testify the Paninian rules: *lokātaḥ - yathā loke tathā vyākaraṇe* (as it is in the world, thus it is in Vyākaraṇa), and *na yathā loke tathā vyākaraṇe*.

<sup>3</sup> According to *Nyāsakāra* (author of the commentary on *Kāśikā*), such a classification excludes plants – he cites the example of *prāṇabhṛjīti-vayovacana-gotrādibhyo aṇi* (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 5.1.129) here.





SERIES: NATURE-CURE

## Introduction to Naturopathy

*Naturopathy is a way of our life, not merely a method to prevent or treat diseases.*

BY DR. PRIYANKA SOMASUNDARAN

**NATUROPATHY** is a drugless system of medicine. It is a holistic way of treating diseases through naturally available resources like *agni* (fire), *jala* (water), *pṛthvī* (earth), etc. It can be defined as a system of developing oneself on the physical, mental, moral and spiritual planes of living, in harmony with the constructive principles of nature. In this article, we will investigate the basic principles of nature-cure/Naturopathy.

### Basic Principles of Naturopathy

1. *Aṇḍathil ullathey piṇḍam, piṇḍathil ullathey aṇḍam.*

According to the philosophy of Naturopathy, the human body is made of *pañca-mahā-bhūta-s* (*ākāśa*, *vāyu*, *agni*, *jala*, and *pṛthvī*) which are, indeed, the basis of the entire creation. The whole universe is considered as a macrocosm, identical to the microcosm that is the human body. Whatever cosmic energy is present in this universe is also present in the infinitesimal human body. According to Naturopathy, diseases occur due to imbalance of the *pañca-mahā-bhūta-s*. Therefore, by recreating the balance between the five elements in the body, the state of well-being can be restored.

2. Unity of disease and unity of cure  
Naturopathy treats the body as a whole. For all

diseases, the causes and the treatments are deemed to be only one (except in traumatic/emergency conditions). The primary cause of diseases is the accumulation of morbid matters; and the primary cure for all diseases is the elimination of morbid matters.

### Theory of Toxaemia

According to the principles of Naturopathy, the primary cause for diseases is the accumulation of unwanted waste in the body. When the vital eliminative organs – the large intestine, the lungs, the kidneys and the skin – fail to perform at optimal levels, the body slowly exhibits the symptoms of diseases – cold, cough, fever, headache, diarrhoea, indigestion, etc. These diseases are the body's natural way of elimination. If drugs or medications are used to suppress them, it worsens the stage of the diseases. In fact, all chronic diseases are outcomes of wrong treatments, or suppression of the body's natural processes of elimination.

Microorganisms like bacteria, virus and fungi enter and survive in the body only when favourable atmospheres are given for their establishment. The "germ theory of disease", the currently accepted scientific theory for diseases, states that the growth of pathogens are established when appropriate

*Naturopathy is a system of treatment which recognises the existence of the vital curative force within the body.*

fertile soil (morbid matters) are provided to them. Therefore, the removal of waste morbid matters from the body is the primary cure for all the diseases.

### Theory of self-healing

Primarily, there are two methods of treating a disease: (a) Combative (treating the disease), and (b) Preventive (healing the disease).

The philosophy of the combative method of treating diseases is to kill the germs and cure the disease. The procedure is to wait until the acute or sub-acute diseases fully develop, and then to subdue them with drugs, vaccines, or surgical operations. The combative method fights disease with disease, toxins with toxins, and germs with germs. This inner war creates dead particles which are termed as 'morbid matter' or 'foreign material' in Naturopathy. The morbid matter or dead particles become the hall mark for chronic diseases and ultimately, organ failure.

The preventive/healing method of treating diseases strongly advocates that the human body has the power to recuperate; it has self-healing power. According to the manifesto of British Naturopathic Association, "Naturopathy is a system of treatment which recognises the existence of the vital curative force within the body". This vitality is the innate healing force within each of us. It preserves and promotes health, and prevents and cures diseases. When our way of life is contrary to the natural way of living, the body's innate power of healing gets weakened, and this leads to poor health and makes it vulnerable to different ailments. To revitalize the vital force and strengthen the innate healing mechanism is one of the primary principles of Naturopathy.

Naturopathy believes in treating the root, not the branches or manifestation of the diseases. For example, instead of addressing the pain of a simple headache, Naturopathy attempts to find the reason/ root cause of the headache and treat it accordingly.

According to Naturopathy, the main cause for all diseases are,

- Lowered vitality,
- Accumulation of morbid matters/foreign materials in the body, and
- Abnormal composition of blood and lymph fluid.

Nature is the greatest healer. The human body has the power to prevent itself from becoming diseased, and also to regain health if it becomes unhealthy. The main reason for losing health is lowered vitality. At any stage of a disease (acute, sub-acute or chronic), improvement of one's vital energy will prove to be a permanent solution to it. If one's vitality improves, one can face and heal any kind of disease.

### Basic treatment in Naturopathy

The principle of naturopathic modalities is simply the removal of morbid matters. This is achieved by using *pañca-mahā-bhūta-s*, and is planned in accordance with the nature (*prakṛti*) of the individual body.

#### 1. Fasting and diet therapy

"Fasting therapy" is voluntary abstinence from food for constructive purposes. 2500 years ago, the father of medicine, Hippocrates, wrote, "Food is medicine; medicine is food." The principles of fasting therapy play a cardinal role in Naturopathy. During fasting, complete rest is given to the digestive system; the digestive and vital energies are conserved and diverted to eliminate toxins

from the body, thus using them for constructive purposes.

"Diet therapy" is defined as providing appropriate food – liquid/solid/semi-solid – made of organic components, without inorganic or artificial flavours, at the appropriate time.

#### 2. Hydrotherapy

*Jala* (water) is considered as a panacea, a universal remedy. It can be used in different ways to treat different kinds of diseases. Few examples of hydrotherapy modalities are,

- Baths (hip bath, immersion bath, spinal bath, asthma bath, jacuzzi, underwater massage, etc.)
- Packs and compress (abdominal pack, chest pack, kidney pack, pelvic pack, etc.)
- Aquatic exercise/Pool-therapy
- Douches (general-circular douche, local douche-liver douche, abdominal douche, etc.)

#### 3. Massage therapy

Massage therapy is the scientific and therapeutic manipulation of the soft tissues of the body for normalizing the tissues by manual technique. This manipulation of the soft tissues is done by experts (*masseur*) by using medicated herbal oils.

#### 4. Mud therapy

The healing properties of mud have been recognized since ancient times. By understanding the composition of different kinds of mud, different diseases can be cured. For example, moor mud is composed of humic acid, fluvic acid, minerals, vitamins, trace elements, and amino acids. When this mud is heated, these elements get released, and this is used as an analgesic to relieve pain in arthritis.

In addition to the above mentioned modalities, Naturopathy uses many other modalities like herbal therapy, magneto therapy, colour/chromo therapy, acupressure and acupuncture, helio therapy/sun therapy, etc. In conclusion, Naturopathy is a way of our life, not merely a method to prevent or treat diseases. "Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished". 🌿







Fig-24

## INVITED CONTRIBUTION

# Ūrdhvapuṇḍra-vidhi in Vaiṣṇavism

*Ūrdhvapuṇḍra increases steady devotion in Nārāyaṇa; it bestows the grace of Viṣṇu and the merit of bathing in all holy places; it purifies the one who wears it and becomes a means of emancipation.*

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**ŪRDHVAPUṆḌRA** is a vertical mark made with *gopīcandana* on the forehead by the Vaiṣṇavaits. This mark distinguishes the Vaiṣṇavaits from the Śaivaits who apply a horizontal mark on their forehead. Both the marks – whether vertical or horizontal – are auspicious. It is because of the marking style that the *ūrdhvapuṇḍra*<sup>1</sup> is very important in Vaiṣṇavism. It is elaborated in the Vaiṣṇava treatises beginning with the Vaiṣṇava Upaniṣad-s (VaiU) and Vaiṣṇava Āgama-s. This article studies the material regarding *ūrdhvapuṇḍra-vidhi* in Vaiṣṇava treatises.<sup>2</sup>

## Source

The five Upaniṣad-s which deal with the *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* ritual are the *Vāsudeva Upaniṣad* (VāsU), the *Ūrdhvapuṇḍra Upaniṣad* (ŪrdhvaU), the *Kātyāyana Upaniṣad* (KātyāU), the *Gopīcandana Upaniṣad* (GopīU) and the *Nārada Upaniṣad* (NārU).<sup>3</sup> Of these

<sup>1</sup> It is hard to discuss about the first occurrence of *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* because the chronology of Sanskrit texts is a challenging task. Vaiṣṇava Upaniṣad-s, Vaiṣṇava Āgama-s and Vaiṣṇava Purāṇa-s discuss the *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* ritual. However, the chronology of these texts is a separate topic of research. The date and antiquity of the Vaiṣṇava Upaniṣad-s (approx. 1<sup>st</sup> CE to 15<sup>th</sup> CE) is also a separate topic of research. Hence, sidestepping this topic, we focus here only on the actual ritual aspects of the *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* ritual discussed in Vaiṣṇava Upaniṣad-s.

<sup>2</sup> The translation of the original Sanskrit passages is by the authors.

<sup>3</sup> Following the Upaniṣadic tradition, we find dialogues among different individuals regarding the ritual. In three Upaniṣad-s, viz. *VāsU*, *GopīU* and *NārU*, Nārada is inquisitive to know the path to the ultimate goal of life. Vāsudeva is the preacher in *VāsU* and *GopīU*, while Lord Brahman is the preacher in the *NārU*. Latter is the preacher, and Kātyāyana is the inquisitive in *KātyāU*. Sanatkumāra is the inquisitive, and Lord Varāha is the preacher in the *ŪrdhvaU*.

Upaniṣad-s, the *NārU* is available only in fragments of the theme presently concerned with. Among the Vaiṣṇava Āgama-s, *Nārada Pāñcarātra*, *Pauṣkara Saṁhitā* and *Pārameśvar Saṁhitā* (*PāraS*) deal with the *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* ritual. However, *Nārada Pāñcarātra* and *Pauṣkara Saṁhitā* discuss very briefly the *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* ritual.

**Material used for Ūrdhvapuṇḍra**

All the five Upaniṣad-s prescribe *gopīcandana* as the material for *ūrdhvapuṇḍra*. However, they do not explain what this substance is. The material seems to be very well known and popularly used in the tradition. Nevertheless, it is explained that in the absence of *gopīcandana*, one can use the clay from the earth where *tulasī* is planted (*tulasīmṛd*).<sup>4</sup> *Gopīcandana* is also known as *śvetamṛd* and *viṣṇucandana*.

The sporadic references from Āgama texts add a few more details regarding *gopīcandana*. *PāraS* 2.134<sup>5</sup> and 11.50<sup>6</sup> mentions the substance for the ritual of *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* as *śvetamṛd*. Along with *śvetamṛd*, *PāraS* 3.8.10 mentions *candana*, *valmīkamṛd* and *tulasīmṛd* as the material for making *ūrdhvapuṇḍra*.<sup>7</sup> *Ūrdhvapuṇḍra* is marked with white colour, while the *tilaka* which is drawn in *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* can be of three different colours – red from *valmīkamṛd* is for one who wishes wealth; yellow from *candana* is for one who wishes tranquillity; and black from *tulasīmṛd* is for one who wishes liberation.<sup>8</sup>

**Origin of Gopīcandana**

*GopīU* records three different statements about the origin of *gopīcandana*:

1. *Gopīcandana* originated from the union of Lord Kṛṣṇa with the *gopī*-s.<sup>9</sup>
2. The *kuṁkuma* (saffron) known as *gopīcandana* was collected by the great gods at the time of water-play in Dvāravatī (Dwarika) and was anointed on the bodies of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the *gopī*-s.<sup>10</sup>
3. *Gopīcandana* originated from the union of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the form of supreme soul and the *gopī*-s in the form of sacred scriptures. These scriptures were born due to Lord Brahmā's boon. The supreme soul as Puruṣottama or Lord Kṛṣṇa incarnated from the scriptures as the son of Vasudeva in Mathura.<sup>11</sup>

Lastly, *GopīU* gives the materialistic description of *gopīcandana* in metaphysical language as follows:

“The supreme soul got inflected by illusion. From the union of the supreme soul with illusion, there arose the five elements, including the fragrant Earth. From different molecules of the Earth, the yellow clay arose. That clay is known as *gopīcandana*”.<sup>12</sup>

*ŪrdhvaU* states that Vainateya brought the essence of milk from the *kṣīrābdhi*.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, the

Upaniṣad quotes that the *gopīcandana* originated from the body of Lord Viṣṇu and is identified as white clay.<sup>14</sup> Hence, this white clay must have originated by that essence of milk.

*VāsU* states that the essence which is anointed every day on the body of Lord Kṛṣṇa by *gopī*-s transforms into *gopīcandana* after it is washed from his body. Such essence, being deposited in the *cakratīrtha*<sup>15</sup>, being yellow in colour, results in merits and subsequently becomes the means of emancipation<sup>16</sup>. The same origin of *gopīcandana* is quoted in the *GopīU*.<sup>17</sup>

Āgama-s do not give any explanation regarding the origin of *gopīcandana*.

**Explanation of the word gopīcandana**

*GopīU* explains the term in three different ways:

1. The meaning of *gopī* is protector as it protects the world from hell and the great fear of death. *Candana* means the object of satisfaction, as it is the cause of the greatest joy due to the union with the supreme soul.<sup>18</sup>
2. *Gopī*-s are the wives of Viṣṇu and *candana* is the bliss of their union with the supreme soul. The wives of Viṣṇu are illusions such as *prakṛtī*, *mahat*, *aham*, etc. – they bring about the existence, continuance and dissolution of the material world. Viṣṇu is the supreme soul. Those who anoint themselves with *gopīcandana* acquire the knowledge of the supreme soul as their minds are purified due to the removal of their sins.<sup>19</sup>
3. The word *gopīcandana* consists of five letters as *go*, *pī*, *can*, *da* and *na*. One who knows the importance of these five letters, does not get dissolved into the five elements, or in other words, he does not die, and attains immortality.<sup>20</sup>

The ritual of applying the *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* and its significance will be dealt with in the next article. 🙏



<sup>4</sup> *Gopī-candana-vāribhyām-ūrdhvapuṇḍram vidhiyate | yo gopīcandanābhāve tulasīmūlamṛttikām* (*VāsU*. 406.23)

<sup>5</sup> *parvatāgrādaṁ jātayā śvetamṛtsnayā* (*PāraS*. 2.134)

<sup>6</sup> *śvetamṛtkalpītenaiva hyūrdhvapuṇḍreṇa bhūṣitāḥ* (*PāraS*. 11.50)

<sup>7</sup> *ājānupādau prakṣālya hastau cāmaṇibandhanāt | pūrvoktena vidhānena samācamyordhvapuṇḍrakaiḥ || candanādyaiḥ sugandhairvā dharmakṣetre viśeṣataḥ | parvatāgre nadīre sindhutīre tathaiva ca || valmīke tulasīmūle praśastā mṛttikā dvija |* (*PāraS*. 3.8-10)

<sup>8</sup> *vaśyārthī raktayā śricchan pītayā śāntikāmikaḥ | śyāmayā mokṣakāmī ca śvetayā cordhvapuṇḍrakam ||* (*PāraS*. 3.10-11)

<sup>9</sup> *kṛṣṇagopīratodbhūtaṁ pāpaghnaṁ gopīcandanam* (*GopīU*. 69.3-4)

<sup>10</sup> *kuṁkumaṁ kṛṣṇagopīnām jalakṛīḍāsu sambhṛtaṁ | gopīcandanamityuktaṁ dvāravatīyām sureśvaraiḥ|| kṛṣṇagopījalakṛīḍakuṁkumaṁ candanairiyutaṁ* (*GopīU*. 69.5-7)

<sup>11</sup> *śrīkṛṣṇākhyaparam brahma gopīkāḥ śrutayo'bhavan | etatsambhogasambhūtaṁ candanaṁ gopīcandanam* (*GopīU*. 69. 20-21)

<sup>12</sup> *atha māyāśabalitabrahmāsittataśca mahadādyā brahmaṇo mahāmāyāsamīlanātpamcabhūteṣu gaṁdhavatī pṛthivyāsīt | pṛthivyāśca vaibhavanāvabhedāḥ pītavarṇā mṛdo jāyante* (*GopīU*. 67.14-16)

<sup>13</sup> *kṣīrābdhitaḥ śvetadvīpe kṣīrakhaṇḍān vainateya ānīya ...* (*ŪrdhvaU*. 63.3)

<sup>14</sup> *śvetamṛddevipāpaghne viṣṇudehasamudbhave* (*ŪrdhvaU*. 63.13)

<sup>15</sup> In modern day, *cakratīrtha* is identified in three different places. First is near Tiruvannamailai, second is near Jagannatha temple, Puri, and third one is near Dwarika. On the testimony of the preceding verse, the *cakratīrtha* mentioned here must be near Dwarika: *dvārakāyām mayā pratiṣṭhitaṁ candanaṁ kuṁkumādisahitaṁ* (*GopīU*. 65.20)

<sup>16</sup> *mamāṅge pratidinamāliptaṁgopībhiḥ prakṣālanādgopīcandanamākhyātaṁ madaṅgalepanaṁ puṇyaṁ cakratīrthāntaḥsthitam cakrasamāyuktaṁ pītavarṇaṁ muktisāadhanam bhavati* (*VāsU*. 405. 19-20)

<sup>17</sup> *GopīU*. 66.1-4.

<sup>18</sup> *gopī kā | kā nāma samrakṣaṇī | kutaḥ samrakṣaṇī | lokasya narakāt mṛtyormahābhayācca samrakṣaṇī | candanaṁ tuṣṭikaraṇam | kimtuṣṭikaraṇam | brahmānandakāraṇam* (*GopīU*. 67.1-3)

<sup>19</sup> *gopyo nāma viṣṇupatnyastāsām candanam āhlādanam | kaścāhlāda eṣa brahmānandarūpaḥ | kāsca viṣṇupatnyo gopyo nāma jagatsṛṣṭisthityantakāriṇyaḥ prakṛtimahadahamādyā mahāmāyāḥ | kāsca viṣṇuḥ param brahmaiva viṣṇuḥ | kaścāhlādo gopīcandanasamśaktamānuṣāṇām pāpasamharaṇācchuddhāntaḥkaraṇānām brahmajñānaprāptiḥ* (*GopīU*. 67.6-10)

<sup>20</sup> *gopītyagra ucyatām | candanaṁ tu tataḥ paścāt | gopītyakṣaradvayam | candanaṁ tryakṣaram | tasmādakṣarapañcakam | ya evaṁ vidvān gopīcandanaṁ dhārayedakṣayaṁ padamāpnoti | pañcatvaṁ na sa paśyati | tato'mṛtatvamaśnuta iti* (*GopīU*. 67.1-3) (Significance of these five letters could be stressed.)





Fig. 26

## INVITED CONTRIBUTION

# Identifying Manuscripts Correctly

## A Case of *Pāraskara Gr̥hya Paddhati*

*If manuscripts are wrongly identified, their correct identity can be ascertained with the help of various constituents of the manuscripts, the pratika-pāṭha-s and the ritual patterns specific to them.*

### BY DR. NIRMALA RAVINDRA KULKARNI

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**I**mportant catalogues of different libraries are descriptions of unpublished manuscripts of ritual commentaries. The primary purpose of such descriptive catalogues of manuscripts is to record the exact title of the text and to describe it in a general way, citing its beginning and its end. The exact title of the manuscript is sometimes written on the cover page or/and at the beginning. Its beginning may also record general titles like *ādhānapaddhati*<sup>1</sup>. However, the specific branch of the Veda that it is a part of is not generally mentioned. In such cases, if the cataloguer is well informed of the Vedic corpus, he will attempt to identify the Vedic branch of the text. In some cases, he may incorrectly identify certain texts – and in this way, many manuscripts emerge with mistaken identity. I encountered the *Pāraskara Gr̥hya Paddhati* (PGP) through such a mistaken identity. In the present article, I will explain the remedial measures that I undertook to ascertain the parent branch of the manuscript.

### Mistaken Identity of the *Atharva-gr̥hya-paddhati*

During 1998 – 2004, I was working on the section of *strīkarmāṇi* of the *Kauśika Sūtra*. In order to get a better understanding of the text, I was in search of other manuscripts that explained the rituals of the *Atharvaveda*. In my search, I came across an unpublished manuscript titled *Atharvagr̥hyapaddhati*<sup>2</sup> (AGP) of Vāsudeva Dīkṣita (Nawathe 1994). I was astonished to read mantra-s

<sup>1</sup> A manual describing ceremonious placing of sacrificial fires.

<sup>2</sup> MS no. 1/1884-86 Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune

from the Śukla-yajurveda in an Atharvanic text – but I assumed that this was because of the general knowledge-exchange between the Atharvaveda and the Śukla-yajurveda. However, I was rather shocked to read a description of the upanayana ceremony which contained a sentence,

amukasya gotrotpanno’ham triḥpañcaikapravaro’ham amukapravaro’ham  
mādhyandinaśākhīyo’ham yajurvedādhyāyī aham amukaśarmāham bho vaiśvānara  
abhivādayāmi.

This sentence was proof that the text belonged – without doubt – to the Yajurveda corpus, not the Atharvanika corpus. I followed certain other methods to ascertain its identity. Some of the methods can be applied to any text of mistaken identity. Other methods may be specific to the grhya commentaries.

Methods to Ascertain Identity of Manuscript

1. Identifying the title of the text as known in the manuscript

The title of the text is generally recorded on the cover page, at the end of the chapters or in the colophons. For example, the title Atharvagrhyapaddhati occurs on the cloth-cover of the manuscript – it is labeled by a cataloguer of the library. The title rarely occurs on the top margin. Whenever it occurs on the top margin, it seems to be written in a different hand other than that of the scribe. It resembles the handwriting recorded on the cover-page.

The manuscript of Atharvagrhyapaddhati begins abruptly on the second folio. Therefore, the title of the text is not recorded in the beginning. Also, it is incomplete and consists of only two kāṇḍa-s. The chapter ending of the first kāṇḍa is, “iti dīkṣita-vāsudevaviracitāyām grhyapaddhatau prathamam kāṇḍam samāptam.” This gives us the information that the title of the text is “Grhyapaddhati”, and its author is “Vāsudeva Dīkṣita”. The chapter ending of the second kāṇḍa is, “iti vāsudevaviracitāyām grhyapaddhatau dvitīyam kāṇḍam samāptam.” This tells us that the title of the text is “Grhyapaddhati”, and that it sauthor is “Vāsudeva”.

Because the text is incomplete, it does not contain a colophon. Conventionally, the complete title or an abridged title of the manuscript is written on the margins. In this manuscript, the margins read the parallel title as “Vāsudevī”.

Based on these three constituents of the manuscript – the beginning, the two chapter-endings – one can safely conclude that the manuscript knows the text simply as “Grhyapaddhati” and not as Atharvagrhyapaddhati. The manuscript also knows the text as “Vāsudevī”– here, the author is the focal point rather than the subject matter.

Thus, close scrutiny of various constituents of the manuscript is the first step towards demystifying the mistaken title. Yet, here, the title “Grhyapaddhati” or “Vāsudevī” is a general title – it does not specify the Vedic śākhā of the text. The Vedic śākhā of a ritual text – śrauta or grhya – can be ascertained with the help of mantra-s.

2. Ascertaining the Vedic Śākhā through Mantra-s

Ritual texts employ Vedic mantra-s in various rites. The mantra-s from their own school are cited with pratika-pāṭha. On the other hand, the mantra-s from other schools and those composed by the sūtrakāra (sautra-mantra-s) are cited in sakala-pāṭha. The mantra-s quoted in pratika pāṭha in the AGP are from the



Śukla-yajurveda and they completely match in sequence with the Pāraskara-grhya-sūtra (Bakre 1992), the only grhyasūtra shared by the Kāṇva-s as well as Mādhyandinīya-s. Thus, with the help of the mantra-s, one can say with certainty that this text belongs to the Śukla-yajurveda, not the Atharvaveda. Further internal analysis of the texts enhances the possibility of ascertaining the śākhā of the text. In case of the manuscript of the AGP, I have further examined two rituals.

3. Ascertaining the Vedic Śākhā through Ritual Patterns

Śrautasūtra-s and grhyasūtra-s often mention three homa-s – jaya, abhyātāna and rāṣṭrabhṛt. All three are optional and ancillary to the main Vedic ritual. They are introduced in the tradition so that the yajamāna becomes prosperous. The rituals that make the yajamāna win riches are the jaya-s; those that enhance his wealth are the abhyātāna-s; and those which take hold of the riches are the rāṣṭrabhṛt-s. Among these, the pattern of abhyātāna homa is instrumental in deciding the Vedic śākhā of a ritual text – its description in the trayī tradition differs from that of the Atharvaveda.

Sr No.	Features	Ātharvaṇika	Śukla-yajurveda	AGP
1	No. of mantra-s	17	18	18
2	The first mantra	savitā prasavānām adhipatiḥ sa māvatu (Atharveda-śaunaka 5.24.1)	Agnir bhūtānām adhipatiḥ sa māvatu (Taittirīya-saṃhitā 3.4.5.1)	Agnir bhūtānām adhipatiḥ sa māvatu
3	Anuṣaṅga (refrain)	asmin brahmaṇi asmin karmaṇi asyām purodhāyām asyām pratiṣṭhāyām asyām cityām asyām akūtyām asyam āśiṣy asyām devahūtyām svāhā	asmin brahmaṇi asmin kṣatre’ syām āśiṣyasyām purodhāyām asmin karmaṇy asyām devahūtyām svāhā	asmin brahmaṇi asmin kṣatre’ syām āśiṣyasyām purodhāyām asmin karmaṇy asyām devahūtyām svāhā
4	Context	Ājyatantra of the śāntika and pauṣṭika rituals	Vivāha ritual	Vivāha ritual



Thus, we can see that the pattern of *abhyātāna homa* described in the AGP matches with that of the *Śukla-yajurveda*, not the *Atharvaveda*.

Another ritual I investigated is *āvasthyādhāna* – the placing of *āvasathya* as *grhya* fire. In the *śrauta* tradition of the Rgvedin-s and Kṛṣṇa Yajurvedin-s, the following five fires are to be established in the *yajñśālā*: *āhavanīya* (in which the oblations are offered), *gārhapatya* (in which food is cooked), *dakṣiṇāgni* (in which ancestral libations are offered, rice for *dakṣiṇā* is cooked), *sabhya* (fire placed in the main hall of the house), and *āvasathya* (fire placed in the guest room).



Fig. 28

However, in the *Śukla-yajurveda* tradition, the *āvasathya* fire is treated as *grhya*; it is to be established ritually. It is not merely a different name of a *grhyāgni*, but it has an important place in the life of a householder who follows the tradition of the *Śukla-yajurveda*. This is a mark of difference in the two traditions. At present, I do not know the practice of the Atharvavedin-s. However, the texts of the *Śukla-yajurveda* discuss *āvasthyādhāna*. The manuscript of the AGP describes the placing of *āvasathya* after marriage or after the division of the ancestral property.<sup>3</sup> Thus, this text treats the *āvasthya* fire as *grhya*.

Therefore, with the help of a thorough study of the rituals, one can ascertain the Vedic *śākhā* of a manuscript. In conclusion, the mistaken identity of a manuscript can be demystified with the help of various constituents of the manuscripts, the *pratīka-pāṭha*-s and the ritual patterns specific to them. ❧

<sup>3</sup> *caturthyuttarākāle dāyavibhāgakāle vā*

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# Students' Articles

# Balasaraswati

*The last empress of the devadāsi tradition, Balasaraswati was one of the greatest bharatanāṭyam dancers of yesteryears. Her legacy leaves us spellbound even today.*

BY SHWETA AMIRAPU

THE renowned *kalāvati* and *nṛtyaśālī*, Balasaraswati, was born in a family that boasted of seven successive generations of female artists of the greatest order – the enigmatic traditional matrilineal lineage of *devadāsi*-s. It is said that traditional dancers always belonged to traditional families of *devadāsi*-s who were the custodians of music and dance<sup>1</sup> for centuries. God’s servants, as they were called, the *devadāsi* women were greatly respected in society and considered auspicious, because they were the designated brides of deities; they were prohibited from wedlock with mortals.

In 1880, dance declined because the British refused to acknowledge it as an art form, and found the idea of women performing in public revolting. So, the families that patronized the *devadāsi*-s were not given wages under the British rule; this led to the degradation and the ultimate downfall of the *devadāsi* community, and dance lost its sanctity. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a movement to abolish the system of *devadāsi*-s and in 1947, this community was legally abolished.

Balasaraswati continued to dance even after *devadāsi*-s were banned, and no new *devadasi*-s

entered the field of music and dance. She struggled with modernization and the inescapable reality of being born in a *devadāsi* family – the people of her own city (Madras) considered her dance as rather indecent because of the portrayal of *śṛṅgāra rasa*; yet, she rose as a star amidst the social prejudices that existed in her time.

Balasaraswati was born on 13 May 1918 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. A seven year old Bala faced the audience for the first time for her *araṅgeṭram* (ceremonial debut) in the courtyard of the Kamakshi Amman temple in Kanchipuram. It is said that aeons ago, in this same courtyard, the great T. Papammal had danced. Little is known of Papammal, but Dhanammal, who came five generations later, was a veena virtuoso, and it was she who insisted that Bala, her granddaughter, learn music. Jayammal, Bala’s mother, who was a singer herself, braved the risk of finding a *guru* for her daughter despite the brickbats and criticisms of the society and let her daughter become who she was meant to be – the finest dancer of all time. They faced hostilities from the upper classes and her mother was hauled over the coals for letting her daughter carve out a dancing career for herself; but she stood her ground.

Bala’s love for dance was kindled by Mylapore Gowri

Ammal who was her mother’s *guru*. Each day, Bala practiced dance for five hours, and trained vocally for two-and-a-half hours, and as luck would have it, she caught people’s eye at a very young age. She had a very unique style and her *abhinaya* played a key role in enhancing what she wanted to convey to the audience through *bhāva*-s matching with the *rāga*-s and *tāla*-s. In an interview, she told filmmaker Satyajit Ray that Uday Shankar, a world renowned Kathak dancer, attended her performance in Kolkata in 1934 (where she danced to the National anthem), and it was he who insisted that she perform at the All India Music Conference which introduced her to the world-stage. Eventually, her subtlety and dedication to the art form took her places and won the hearts of audience across the world.

Since her early childhood, Balasaraswati longed to perform before the *mūrti* of her beloved Kṛṣṇa in Udupi – and when she got the opportunity to perform *kṛṣṇā nī begane bāro* in front of Udupi Kṛṣṇa, she was delighted that her childhood dream had been fulfilled and that Lord Kṛṣṇa had finally seen her dance. She performed this piece innumerable times during her career, and it became one of the best-known compositions in her repertoire.

*Here was bharatanāṭyam  
done in full  
magnificence and here  
was a dancer such  
as one rarely had  
opportunity to see.*

Merce Cunningham, a modern dancer, first witnessed one of Bala’s concerts in the United States in 1962,

and he said in an interview, “She came out on a small makeshift stage, stood for a moment or two, looked about and moved her feet slightly causing the ankle bells to tinkle. Shortly, the musicians started the play and she began. The transformation in the dance was instantaneous and vivid. It was as though illumination came out from all angles as one. Here was *bharatanāṭyam* done in full magnificence and here was a dancer such as one rarely had opportunity to see.” In 1963, Bala gave eight solo recitals in Edinburgh in front of great musicians like M.S Subbalakshmi and Ravi Shankar. This triumph led her to teach the *bharatanāṭyam* in many foreign universities. Her own brothers, Ranganathan and Vishwanathan, taught South Indian music (drums and the flute) in the United States. In their spare time, they would come back to their hometown and the three of them would lead a quiet life outside of their careers.

Soon after giving her first performance in the United States, Bala invited her daughter, Lakshmi, to assist her in teaching and thus began the formal training of her protégé which would ensure her dance legacy would be carried forward. At this juncture, she established a dance school to train young aspirants in the purest form of *bharatanāṭyam*. Lakshmi’s devotion and support enabled Bala to continue to teach and perform. In her time, she won many awards and accolades including the Sangita Kalanidhi award from Madras Music Academy, the Sangeet Natak Akadami Award, the Padma Vibhushan in 1977, etc. When asked of her retirement plans, she always laughed and said that music would always be a part of who she was and that she would continue to dance until her limbs gave way. On 9 February 1984, at the age of 66, she bid adieu to this world.

The timeless charm and subtlety of her art knew no frontiers. When she let her eyes speak to interpret any *padam* or *varnam* that she danced, everything else became immaterial because she was able to convey not only the meaning of the dance, but also the emotion of the music. The last empress of the *devadāsi* tradition, Bala was the personification of *bharatanāṭyam* and a true *sādhaka* in every sense. Her legacy leaves us spellbound even today. ■

<sup>1</sup> Formally called *sadir*, later renamed as *bharatanāṭyam*





# The Gupta Era

*Historians compare the golden age of the Gupta-s to the brilliant Periclean Age of Greece, Augustan Age of Rome and Elizabethan Age of England.*

BY ROSHITH SAJEEV

**T**HE Gupta-s are believed to have ruled India from around the third century C.E. to the sixth century C.E. from the capital of Pataliputra. The Gupta era has been hailed as the “Golden Age”, the “Classical Age”, the “Age of Efflorescence”, the “Age of Renaissance”, the “Age of Indian Revivalism”, etc. because it started a new era in Indian history. During this period, some of the world’s best philosophy, astronomy, and sciences were produced. The uniqueness of the Gupta-s has led historians to compare it with the brilliant Periclean Age of Greece, Augustan Age of Rome and Elizabethan Age of England.

## Origin

Before the Gupta era was a period of great political instability in India. The political disintegration that followed the dissolution of the Kuśāna Empire continued to the beginning of the fourth century C.E. The Kuśāna-s still ruled over Western Punjab but had ceased to exercise any authority further east. The Śāka-s ruled over Gujarat and parts of Malwa, but their power was rapidly on the decline. The rest of Northern India was divided into a number of smaller kingdoms and autonomous tribal states. The time was perfect for a great Indian military leader to take charge and create a mighty empire, and such a leader arose from a petty ruling family called the Gupta-s.

The origin and early history of the Gupta-s is not very clear. Many officials, queens, kings and other ranks of people with the name “Gupta” are mentioned in old records (especially of Śuṅga and Sātavāhana period), but it is not known if they bear any connections with the Gupta clan or if they are unrelated – the latter is, albeit, more probable.

The first three rulers of this clan were Mahārāja Śrīgupta, his son, Mahārāja Ghaṭotkacagupta, followed by his son, Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Chandragupta. The fact that the third ruler was given the (higher) title of Mahārājādhirāja is not insignificant. We can assume that Chandragupta was more powerful than his predecessors and greatly extended the ancestral kingdom.

## Śrīgupta and Ghaṭotkacagupta

The extant Gupta records do not mention anything beyond the names and titles of the first two Gupta rulers. Thus, we have no definite information about the exact status of the locality where they ruled. The title “Mahārāja” was often used by feudal chiefs and it is possible that both Śrīgupta and Ghaṭotkacagupta were subordinate to a paramount ruler. But currently, we know of no such paramount ruler of the time. On the other hand, independent rulers were also known to bear the title “Mahārāja”, and it is not unlikely that

the first two Gupta kings were independent, though their kingdoms were not very large.

Some information about Mahārāja Śrīgupta is given in the accounts of Chinese pilgrim, I-tsing. I-tsing, who travelled in India around 671 – 695 C.E., claims in his accounts that a king named Śrīgupta built a temple for Chinese pilgrims. Some scholars identify this king to be the founder of the Gupta dynasty, and they locate the said temple in Magadha. However, there are certain discrepancies in this account – I-tsing places Śrīgupta about 500 years before his time. Further, there is no evidence to prove that the said temple is in Magadha. The rough location and distance given in the account suggests that the temple might be located along the Western borders of Northern or Central Bengal.

We do not know anything of Śrīgupta's son and successor, Ghaṭotkacagupta, but in some records<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Two records of Vākāṭaka queen, Prabhāvatī Guptā, daughter to Chandragupta II

he is said to be the first king of the Gupta dynasty. This suggests that he may have been a notable ruler.

#### Chandragupta I

There may be ambiguities regarding matters of Śrīgupta and Ghaṭotkacagupta, but it is beyond doubt that Chandragupta's rule took the family name to great heights of glory – the gold coins of the Gupta Era stand testimony to it. The coins show the names and figures of Chandragupta and his wife, Kumāradevī, on the front, and a goddess on a lion with "Lichchhavis" inscribed by its side on the back. Kumāradevī was a Lichchhavi princess; their son, Samudra Gupta, is also known as "daughter's son of the Lichchhavis". There are speculations that this marriage was arranged for political purposes – to expand the kingdom – or for social reasons – to win the favour of the society.

There is little reliable information about Chandragupta's rule. To justify the imperial title of Mahārājādhirāja, we can infer that his kingdom

was considerably large in extent, and enabled his son, Samudra Gupta, to launch his conquest campaign that led to the foundation of a mighty empire. According to a passage mentioned in the Purāṇa-s, he ruled over Sāketa (Awadh), Prayāga and Magadha (Southern Bihar). Though there are no definitive evidences, we can assume that Chandragupta's kingdom comprised nearly the whole of Bihar and portions of Bengal and Awadh.

It is generally assumed that the widely known Gupta Empire, which began on 26 February 320 C.E., was founded by Chandragupta I to commemorate his ascension to the throne. Although this is a very likely possibility, we cannot discard the possibility that this date commemorates Samudra Gupta's ascension to the throne. Depending on the possibility that we consider, we can deduce the approximate time of rule of the kings, so this point of time acts as a pivot for references. If we assume Chandragupta ascended the throne in 320 C.E. it puts Ghaṭotkacagupta to around 270 C.E. On the other hand, if we assume

Samudra Gupta ascended the throne in 320 C.E., we will have to push Śrīgupta's rule further back (which puts it in the same time frame as that mentioned by I-tsing).


Considering the vagueness and uncertainty of information regarding the early history of the Gupta-s, it is wise not to indulge further into the subject. Currently, we can say with certainty that around the end of the third century C.E., India was split into a number of small independent states. Two states were united by a marriage alliance between Kumāradevī, the Lichchhavi princess, and Chandragupta I (grandson of Śrīgupta and son of Ghaṭotkacagupta). He ruled over a considerably large kingdom which included almost the whole of Bihar and also parts of Uttar Pradesh and Bengal. His assumption of the higher imperial title of Mahārājādhirāja (higher than Mahārāja which was assumed by his predecessors) and also possibly founding an entire era to commemorate his coronation in 320 C.E., signifies the power he held during his time. 



Fig. 30



# Thirukkural

*In the popular work, Thirukkural, the great sage Thiruvalluvar laid down the ideals of dharma, artha and kāma. By following these ideals correctly, one may attain the fourth puruṣārtha, mokṣa.*

BY PALANIAPPAN S

**T**HIRUVALLUVAR is a celebrated Tamil poet and philosopher whose contribution to Tamil literature is very significant. He is believed to have lived sometime between the third century B.C.E. and the first century B.C.E. He was born either in Thiru Mylai (Mylapore), Chennai, in Tamil Nadu, or in Madurai, the capital of the Pāndya-s. He is regarded as an *avatāra* of Brahṁā. The other names of this great sage are Valluvar, Mudharpāvalar, Deivapulavar, Mādhānupaṅgi, Nānmuganār, Nāyanār, Dhevar, and Perunāvalar.

Thiruvalluvar's wife, Vāsukī, was a chaste and devoted woman, an ideal wife, who never disobeyed the orders of her husband but always carried them out implicitly. Thiruvalluvar showed that a person can lead the life of a *gr̥hastha* (householder) yet lead a divine life at the same time; he showed people that there is no necessity to leave family and become a *sanyāsin* to lead a life of purity and sanctity. All his wise sayings and teachings are in a book of ethics called *Thirukkural*.

## Thirukkural

*Thirukkural* is extremely popular. It is also known as *Muppāla*. It contains 1330 couplets which are divided into three main chapters called as *aram* (*dharma*), *porul* (*artha*) and *inbam* (*kāma*). Thiruvalluvar does

not speak about *mokṣa* because according to him, if a man practices *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* correctly, he becomes worthy of attaining *mokṣa*. In this treatise, there are a total of 133 sections that consist of 10 couplets each. The first 38 sections are about ethics (*aram*), the next 70 are about political and economic matters (*porul*), and the remainder are about love (*inbam*). After the Bible, this work is the second most translated book in the world. It has also been translated to Sanskrit by S.N. Sriramadesikan who published the translation in 1961.

## Significance of Gr̥hasthāśrama

Various stories of Thiruvalluvar's life are prevalent among people. According to one of the stories, some disciples of Thiruvalluvar enquired with curiosity: "O great sage, which *āśrama* is better, *gr̥hastha* or *sanyāsa*?" Thiruvalluvar did not answer his disciples immediately; he simply kept quiet. He wanted to teach them the importance of *gr̥hasthāśrama* by example. One morning, Thiruvalluvar was eating cold rice. He said to his wife, "O Vāsukī, the rice is very hot. Bring a fan to cool it". At that time, Thiruvalluvar's wife was drawing water from the well. She immediately left the rope and ran towards him with a fan to cool the rice. She didn't ask her husband, "How can the cold rice be hot? Why do you want a fan now?". She simply obeyed his commands.



Fig 31

*The life of an ideal householder is in no way inferior to that of the sanyāsin who is treading the path of nivṛtti and austerity in the Himalayan caves and each is great in his own place, time and circumstance.*

The vessel that contained the water was left hanging half-way in the well, unsupported, on account of her *pativrata dharma śakti*. The disciples noticed this phenomenon and the noble conduct of Vāsukī and were simply struck with wonder.

On another occasion, Valluvar called his wife in the afternoon and asked, “Bring a lamp immediately, O Vāsukī! I am stitching the cloth. I am unable to see the eye of the needle. I cannot pass the thread properly”. Vāsukī implicitly obeyed his word. She did not say to her husband, “It is broad daylight now. Why do you want a lamp? You can see the eye of the needle clearly”.

The aspirants were much inspired by the ideal life of sage Thiruvalluvar and the exalted conduct of Vāsukī. They were deeply impressed by the practical and exemplary life led by Thiruvalluvar and Vāsukī. They learnt the lesson that the life of an ideal householder was in no way inferior to that of the *sanyāsin* who was treading the path of *nivṛtti* and austerity in the Himalayan caves and each was great in his own place, time and circumstance. The disciples took leave of the saint and quietly left the place with profound satisfaction.

Through this story, we understand that if the husband is an ideal person with noble qualities, if he is a *guru* to his wife, and if the wife is loyal and humble towards her husband, then both can create heaven on Earth. *Manusmṛti* 3.60 states,

*santuṣṭō bhāryayā bhartā bhartrā  
bhāryā tathaiva ca |  
yasminnēvakulē nityaṁ kalyāṇaṁ  
tatra vai dhruvam ||*

In a family where the husband is happy by his wife’s behavior, and wife is happy by her husband’s behavior, there surely resides welfare.

#### Learnings from Thirukkural

In Tamil, ‘*thiru*’ means ‘*śrī*’ and ‘*kurral*’ is the name of a metre (*chandas*) in which there are two lines - the first line has four words and the second line has three. Following are two *kurral*-s:

*maṇatukkaṇ māsiḷlan ādal aṇaitṭaran  
āguḷa nīra pira*  
(Kurral 34)

Spotless be thou in mind!  
This is the only virtue;  
All else, mere pomp of idle sound  
No real worth can claim

We can draw parallels from Sanskrit tradition also:

*yatkṛtaṁ śuddhamanasā sa dharma  
iti kathyatē |  
yacchuddhirahitaṁ karma  
kēvalāḍambarārthakam ||*  
(Dharmavaiśiṣṭyam)



Whatever is done with pure mind is called ‘*dharma*’. Whatever actions performed with impure thoughts is only to brag.

*anbum araṇum uḍaitṭāyin ilvālkai  
panbum payanum adu*  
(Kurral 45)

If love and virtue is the household reign,  
This is of life the perfect grace and gain.

Parallels from Sanskrit tradition:

*gārhasthyajīvanam*

*yatsyātsnēhadharmasamanvitam |  
tadēva sārthakam lōkē taddhi  
gārhasthyamucyatē ||*  
(Gārhasthyam)

Where life is full of affection and moral responsibilities with righteous deeds, that is the real ‘married life’ in this world.

#### Conclusion

In this way, the couplets in *Thirukkural* are still relevant in today’s scientific and competitive world. If a person follows these ideals completely, he can create happiness and peace of mind in his life. Some couplets from the *dharmakāṇḍa* of *Thirukkural* will be dealt with in the next article. 📖



# Centre Snap

## 21-day Textual Workshop on Manuscriptology & Paleography

(6 – 26 May, 2019 at Coimbatore Campus)

Amrita Darshanam (ICSS), in collaboration with the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM), Govt. of India, organized a basic-level 21-day workshop on Manuscriptology and Palaeography. It was conducted by 13 renowned scholars including Dr. Dileep Kumar Rana, Dr. Siniruddha Dash, Dr. C. M. Neelakandan, Dr. Nitrmala Kulkarni, Dr. P. Visalakshy, Dr. Muraleemadhavan, Dr. Soma Basu, etc. 36 participants from across the country studied the Brāhmī, the Śārada, the Newari, the Nāgari, the Nandīnāgari and the Granthā scripts. Additionally, the workshop covered aspects of critically editing texts and their cataloguing, history of writing, basic conservation and storage of manuscripts, the use of information technology in manuscript preservation and research, etc.



## 3-day Workshop on Tantric Traditions of India

(2 – 4 August, 2019 at Bengaluru Campus)

Amrita Darshanam (ICSS) conducted a three-day workshop on “Tantric Traditions of India”. Two prominent academicians in the field of tantric studies, Dr. Shaman Hatley, Associate Professor, Asian Studies and Religious Studies, University of Massachusetts Boston, USA, and Dr. Michael Slouber, Associate Professor, South Asian Studies, Department of Global Humanities and Religion, (formerly Liberal Studies) Western Washington University, USA, delivered lectures on different themes. There was a special lecture on the Buddhist-tantra tradition by Dr. Pranshu Samdarshi (Assistant Professor, Amrita Darshanam, Bengaluru). Focused on Śaiva-Śākta tantric traditions, along with the tantric forms of Buddhism and Jainism, this workshop explored various aspects such as the historical development, textual sources, ritual, philosophies and social contexts of tantric traditions that have influenced the cultural and religious landscape of India. More than 30 participants from across the country attended the workshop.



## 4-day Workshop on Temple Architecture and Iconography (Level 2)

(17 – 20 October, 2019 at Bengaluru Campus)

A four-day workshop on “Temple Architecture and Iconography (Level 2)” was conducted by Amrita Darshanam (ICSS). It was a follow-up to the three-day “Temple Workshop (Level 1)”, which was organized by the Centre in January 2019. The resource persons for the workshop were Dr. M. S. Krishnamurthy, Dr. Manoj Gundanna and Mr. Rangarathnam Gopu: all doyens in their fields of expertise. Detailed insights into the art and architecture of the Pallava Temples and their chronological development were provided along with an overview of the inscriptions and lives of the kings who built the temples. “Blood Buddhas”, a documentary on the stolen artefacts of India, produced by India Pride Project, was screened as part of the workshop. Mr. Nikhil Singh Rajput, the director of the documentary, interacted with the participants about this national issue. The workshop also included a one-day site visit to Bhoganandishwara Temple on the outskirts of Bangalore. The workshop was attended by 50 participants from across the country.



## 1-day Workshop on Indian Mathematical Heritage

(8 November, 2019 at Coimbatore Campus)

Amrita Darshanam (ICSS), in association with Indic Academy, organized a one-day workshop on “Indian Mathematical Heritage”, for the students of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham and the general public. The topics covered in the workshop included

- (1) Introduction to Bhaskaracharya’s Lilavati,
- (2) Number theory and Combinatorics from Pingala’s Chhandasshastra, and
- (3) Introduction to Vedic Maths.

It was conducted by Sri Chandrabas Halai, who has made great efforts to popularize traditional science and mathematics in schools and colleges. The workshop was attended by approximately 300 participants.



# Upcoming Events

## 3-day Workshop on “Textual Criticism” (14 – 16 February, 2020 at Coimbatore Campus)

Amrita Darshanam will organize a three-day workshop on textual criticism. It is rather common knowledge that most texts of Sanskrit traditions are uncritical editions and their compositions/manuscript-traditions are not a subject of serious research. This workshop which will educate scholars (particularly young scholars) in the different methodologies and practices of preparation of critical editions, to equip them with the latest tools and methods of philology.  
Resource Person: Prof. Dominic Goodall, Professor (Directeur d'études) at the École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO, “French School of Asian Studies”), co-editor with Dr. Marion Rastelli of the Viennese dictionary of tantric terminology.



Fig. 33

## 3-day National Seminar on “Development of Pramāṇa Theories And Systems of Logic in Buddhism” (28 Feb, 29 Feb & 1 Mar, 2020 at Bengaluru Campus)

The main objective of this seminar is to collaborate with the contemporary scholars and researchers of Buddhist logic across India and create collective sessions containing in-depth deliberations and reflection upon the ancient Buddhist tradition of logic-theory (*nyāya-śāstra*), epistemology (*jñāna-mīmāṃsā*) and science of causes (*hetu-vidyā*). The intense discussions on these topics during this seminar will be of interest to not only the Buddhist scholars but also for historians of philosophy in general. There will be some special sessions of this seminar that will be dedicated to the Sanskrit works on the theory of *pramāṇa* (valid cognition) that were developed in the Buddhist tradition. Around 15 renowned scholars such as Prof. Pradeep P Gokhale, Prof. S. R. Bhatt, Prof. Ambika Datta Sharma, Prof. Tashi Tsering, Prof. Sachchidanand Mishra, and Prof. C. D. Sebastian, etc. will present papers on allied topics in this seminar.



Fig. 34

## 3-day National Seminar on Tantric Traditions of India (27 – 29 Mar, 2020 at Bengaluru Campus)

Tantric traditions are of different types – Hindu, Buddhist, Jaina, and folk religions. The Hindu *tantra*-s are divided into Śaiva, Śākta, and Vaiṣṇava. The purpose of this seminar will be to discuss the general features of the different important tantric traditions of India; its origin, philosophy, cosmology, rituals, and the broader social aspects of Tantrism.  
Since most of the *tantra* texts are subject to distortion or misrepresentation today because the original intention of the sacred aspects of these traditions is not popularly known, organizing this seminar will be an invaluable source of understanding the traditionally-grounded approach to *tantra*.

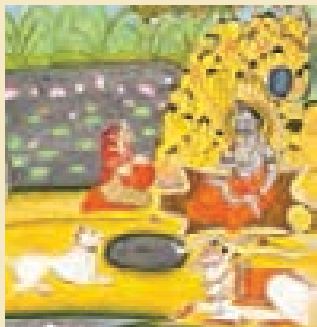


Fig. 35

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- Fig. 3 Unknown. ca. 1780. *Ragini Desi Megh, from a Garland of Musical Modes (Ragamala)*. India. Yale University Art Gallery. <https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/83948>
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- Fig. 5 Pāṇini. 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries. *Ms. Coll. 390 Item 246 Aṣṭādhyāyī*. India. [http://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0002/html/mscoll390\\_item246.html](http://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0002/html/mscoll390_item246.html)
- Fig. 6 Indian Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications & Information Technology. 2004. *A commemorative postage stamps on 'Panini'*. India. <http://postagestamps.gov.in/Stamps2004.aspx>
- Fig. 7 Unknown. 16<sup>th</sup> century. *Brahma*. Nurpur, Punjab Hills, Northern India. Ross-Coomaraswamy Collection. <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/149171>
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- Fig. 9 Unknown. Unknown. (A) *Hindu puja, yajna, yagna, Havanam in progress*. India. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:\(A\)\\_Hindu\\_puja,\\_yajna,\\_yagna,\\_Havanam\\_in\\_progress.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:(A)_Hindu_puja,_yajna,_yagna,_Havanam_in_progress.jpg)
- Fig. 10 Unknown. 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Nagarjuna and Aryadeva as Two Great Indian Buddhist Scholastics*. Kham Province, Eastern Tibet. Rubin Museum of Art, C2006.66.167. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nagarjuna\\_and\\_Aryadeva\\_as\\_Two\\_Great\\_Indian\\_Buddhist\\_Scholastics\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nagarjuna_and_Aryadeva_as_Two_Great_Indian_Buddhist_Scholastics_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)
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- Fig. 18 Unknown. ca. 1750. *Ascetic*. Murshidabad, India. <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O405475/painting-unknown/>
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- Fig. 23 Unknown. ca. 1867. *Common sawwort (Serratula tinctoria): two flowering stems and two separate leaves of different forms. Colour nature print by H. Bradbury*. India. <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/tdqgb76w>
- Fig. 24 Unknown. Unknown. *Wood painting 2, Crafts Museum, New Delhi, India*. India. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wood\\_painting\\_2,\\_Crafts\\_Museum,\\_New\\_Delhi,\\_India.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wood_painting_2,_Crafts_Museum,_New_Delhi,_India.jpg)
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