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Knowledge beyond time

saṃvit

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Amaruśatakam

A hundred poignant verses on love and heartbreak – tender, playful, transcendental.

Epidemics in Āyurveda

Ancient texts of Āyurveda describe epidemics – their symptoms, cures and preventive measures.

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Editor's Notes

Edith Hamilton wrote, "When the world is storm-driven and the bad that happens and the worse that threatens are so urgent as to shut out everything else from view, then we need to know all the strong fortresses of the spirit which men have built through the ages." We are in the midst of a great crisis now. While we look for cures and vaccinations and measures to cope with it, it is perhaps profitable to learn of the fortresses that the Indian civilization has built through the ages; the Indian way of life – whether the simple 'Namaste', or the practice of washing hands, or vegetarian-food, or yoga or meditation, or other sustainable ways of living – has a lot of offer in times of this unprecedented crisis. SAMVIT was conceived in order to bring to the forefront the Indian Knowledge Tradition. This impetus seems ever more relevant today. While the world looks for new directions, for peace in the midst of chaos, we may find that COVID-19 has unexpectedly allowed us to conceive of possibilities of other ways of being in the world that have been lost or that we have falsely come to believe are impossible, thanks to the amnesia enforced by the insistent universalizations of Western modernity.

In this issue, we have added two new series to the regular series of articles: "Yoga: From Philosophy to Practice", and "Fundamentals of Advaita". It is a privilege to publish three invited contributions from very renowned scholars in this issue: Dr. Mugdha Gadgil, Prof. Ragahvan Payyanad and Dr. Manjusha Gokhale. We are also greatly honored to publish the interview of the renowned grammarian, Prof. Saroja Bhate – we are grateful to her for granting us her valuable time.

We wish our readers health, wellness and safety.

ON THE COVER
Unknown. c.1780-1800. *Gaudi Ragini, page from a Ragamala series.* Rajasthan, India. https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1975.40.

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AMMA'S WORDS

COVID-19: Courage in Crisis

On 23 March 2020, as the world faced the novel COVID-19 pandemic — the most challenging crisis since the Second World War, one without parallel in the recent past — Amma delivered a message to infuse courage in the hearts of her children.

Amma knows that my children are living in fear of the Coronavirus. Amma is thinking of all of you, and praying for all of you. This is the time for you to exercise extreme caution and alertness; it is the time to respond with courage, self-control and unity. Amma knows that my children are afraid; but fear is not useful now. What is needed is caution and alertness. Courage is the primary thing. With courage, you can overcome anything. So, abandon fear and gather courage. The antivirus that can kill this virus is courage. Courage is our mind's antivirus. If you befriend *Dhairya Lakṣmī* (Goddess of Courage), you will gain the strength to face and overcome anything. Every citizen should exercise *śraddhā* [attention and alertness] like a soldier on the battle line. My children, pray for the souls of those who have passed on and for the peace of mind of their families.

Three years ago, Amma felt a disaster was imminent in 2020. To alleviate this, Amma conceived the "White Flower Meditation for World Peace & Divine Grace" two years ago. But we cannot completely avert what is imminent – we will have to experience some of its effects. Amma has explained this meditation technique, and we have been practising it for the past two years – thereby benefiting the world. Children, Amma requests everyone to regularly practice this meditation once or twice a day for the benefit of the entire world.

Everything exists in the form of waves or vibrations. Last century, the French designed the Concorde – a jet that can fly at supersonic speeds. Its sonic boom is so powerful that its shockwaves can damage buildings. Similarly, the sound of a song is transmitted in waves or vibrations. Everything exists in the form of waves or vibrations. The type of vibration generated by anger is different from that generated by a mother showing affection for her child, which is different from that generated by love, and different from that generated by lust. With diligent effort and by the vibration of our prayers, we may be able to resist this virus. Prayer with saṅkalpa [deep intention] has a significant effect.

There is a rhythm to everything in creation – an undeniable relationship between the entire universe and every living creature in it. The universe is like a vast interconnected network. Imagine four people holding the four corners of a net. If the net is shaken at one corner, the vibrations are felt in the other corners. Similarly, whether we are aware of it or not, all of our actions – individual or as a group – reverberate throughout the universe. That is why Amma repeatedly says that we are not

individual islands but we are links of a common chain. Therefore, don't wait for others to change before you do. You can change the outside by changing yourself inside. Imagine a person living on the 10th floor of a building sees the ground floor on fire and hears a person calling to him for help; now if he thinks to himself, "It is the ground floor that is on fire, so it is not my problem, why should I worry about it?" it would be complete foolishness. The fire on the ground floor will soon rise upwards consume him. In a similar way, someone else's problem today will become our problem tomorrow. When the virus first surfaced in China, everyone thought it is China's problem, not ours. Eventually, didn't it turn out to be our problem? If we are alert and exercise caution and diligence, we will be able to protect ourselves and prevent this disease from spreading.

What should my children do? Imagine we break our leg. We may have to stay in our room for two to six months. We don't think of this as a burden because we know it is necessary for our leg to heal. Similarly, we must practice isolation, sanitation and extreme caution to help us gain the strength to fight the virus. Those who have contracted the virus shouldn't be afraid. Simply adhere to the quarantine and ensure that you do not spread it to others. Stay in your room. If you develop any symptoms, inform the proper authorities and seek help.

There are currently 3,000 people living in Amritapuri Ashram. There are Indians and also people from many nations living here. In the ashram, we are strictly adhering to the government's regulations and not allowing anyone from outside to come inside. Even if someone who lives here goes out, they are not allowed to return for many days. These rules were put by the government, and we have complied. During this time, Amma is receiving her children who have not left the ashram. This is the time of the year when the ashram residents get an opportunity to share their problems with Amma. Amma calls each person and listens to their problems. Usually, every year, Amma sets aside about 25 days for this. Following all the government guidelines, Amma comes out for daily meditation and prayer. The rest of the time is set aside for listening to the problems of the residents.

In India, the Central and the Kerala State Governments have been very alert and proactive in addressing the pandemic. That is why we have been able to resist it so far. Let us pray sincerely and practice due diligence and caution so that it is contained and doesn't spread further. Let us protect and save ourselves. We are ourselves the light or darkness in our paths. We are ourselves the thorns or flowers on our paths.

There is a limit to human effort. However carefully we may drive, a careless driver can crash into us. For anything to bear its intended result, the factor of grace is needed. A proper effort is needed first. But for it to succeed, we require grace. Prayer is essential to receive this grace.

Now my children have understood that life is only in the present moment. Even our next breath is not in our hands. Our real lifespan is determined by how well we use the present moment. Because that is where life abides. Amma always says that my children have to know themselves. Know yourself and pray for the world with awareness, enthusiasm and peace. Each day, sit in your room for some time and chant the mantra "ॐ *lokāḥ samasthāḥ sukhinoḥ bhavantu*". This is a good practice during these times.

Finally, Amma has no words to express her profound appreciation and gratitude for the dedicated health workers all over the world who are caring for those affected by this virus. She simply bows down before their selflessness and attitude of service.

May grace bless all my children. 🕉

Faculty's Articles

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

AMARUŚATAKAM is a collection of *mukata*-s, i.e., independent verses, believed to have been composed by Amaru (or Amaruka), a king of Kashmir, before the tenth century C.E. The current article presents selected verses from this Sanskrit work.

Although the verses are independent of each other, they can be strung together into a story-board as a series of events from the life of a hero and his heroine. The characters which appear as a part of the work have no names. They can be any 'Tom, Dick and Harry' or any 'Julia, Beth or Eliza'. To use the Sanskrit equivalent, they are *kaścit-kāntaḥ* or *kācit-kāntā*-s. The poet has neither delimited them to super-natural/über-natural human personalities, nor does he attribute them to a royal lineage, as is the usual practice in Sanskrit literary tradition. They are just common folk. Through this, the poet has successfully achieved what Indian aestheticians call *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, i.e., universalization. In other words, the emotions move beyond the particular and move towards the universal. Though the cultural context of the verses is quite different from today's world, their emotional context is something everyone can relate to even today. The work stands as a testimony for the fact that fundamental human emotions have not changed over the millennia, though what causes them (*vibhāva*) and the way they are expressed (*anubhāva*) are functions of space and time.

Every verse of the *Amaruśatakam* is self-contained and self-complete and narrates a particular incident connected with a hero and his beloved. The verses have *śṛṅgāra* (romantic love) as the fundamental *rasa* and auxiliary ones such as *karuṇa* (pathos) and *vīra* (valour) come in to bolster the *śṛṅgāra* as per the needs of the context. Here are a few examples:

In the following verse, the heroine has probably admonished the hero and he stands alone outside the house, dejected. One of the heroine's maids speaks to her:

> *likhannāste bhūmiṃ bahiravanataḥ prāṇadayito.*
> *nirāhārāḥ sakhyaḥ satata-ruditocchūṇa-nayanāḥ |*
> *parityaktaṃ sarvaṃ hasita-paṭhitaṃ pañjaraśukai-*
> *stavāvasthā ceyaṃ visraja kaṭhine! mānam-adhunā ||*

> *The poet has successfully achieved what Indian aestheticians call sādhāraṇīkaraṇa, i.e., universalization. In other words, the emotions move beyond the particular and move towards the universal.*

A rough equivalent of the above verse in English prose would be:

> *"There he stands, as though writing on the ground with his toes, his head bent down – your beloved! Your maids (and friends) are without food (and ornaments), constantly cry with their eyes bulging out. The caged pet birds, have given up laughter and speech! Pray give away your current state [of anger] and your ego, O stone-hearted one!"*

It is to be noticed that the heroine's temperament has not merely affected her beloved person, but also her close friends. What's more, her pet bird is also able to feel her state of mind and it has given up its very nature! The *bhāva* of the heroine is translated into *anubhāva*-s around her. Traditionally, Indian heroines are known to draw on the ground with their feet or count the petals of a flower in their hand when they are shy or embarrassed. Here, it is the hero who has reduced to such a state. The poet brings in a change of roles, thereby bringing novelty in his poem.

The next verse is a piece of advice given to the heroine by her friend:

> *aṅgulyagranakhena bāṣpasalilaṃ vikṣipya vikṣipya kiṃ*
> *tūṣṇīṃ rodiṣi kopane bahutaraṃ phūt-kṛtya rodiṣyasi |*
> *yasyāste piśunopadeśa-vacanairmāne'tibhūmiṃ gate*
> *nirviṇṇo'nunayaṃ prati priyatamo madhyasthatām-eṣyati ||*
>
> *"What is the use of wiping away drops of tears constantly with the tip of your nails? You are weeping softly now. You will soon end up lamenting uncontrollably if you keep lending your ear to ill-advice and rumour. If your beloved loses his composure and turns indifferent to you without heeding to any of your appeals, you will end up suffering all the more!"*

The heroine has probably heard a rumour about her husband's illicit affair and has believed it. She has probably abused him verbally, and is sobbing because of the breach of trust. Her mature friend advises her to stop believing in news that floats around, and warns her of the consequences. The poet subtly suggests that this female friend of the heroine knows the heart of both her friend and the hero very well and is able to give an unbiased and objective advice.

In the next verse, the heroine is annoyed with the hero for some reason and wishes to avoid his company altogether. It is left to the imagination of the connoisseur to interpret this as an instance of the heroine's fake anger as well. The hero comes home and tries to share the couch/swing on which the heroine is seated, tries

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

to embrace her and to engage her in a conversation. The manner in which she avoids all advances made by the hero is interesting:

> *ekatrāsana-saṃsthitiḥ parihṛtā pratyudgamād-dūrata-*
> *stāmbūlānayana-cchalena rabhasā'śleṣo saṃvighnitaḥ |*
> *ālāpo'pi na miśritaḥ parijanaṃ vyāpārayantyāntike*
> *kāntaṃ pratyupacārataś-caturayā kopaḥ kṛtārthī-kṛtaḥ ||*
>
> *"The heroine avoided sharing her seat with the hero by getting up to welcome him, even as she saw him at a distance; as he tried to embrace her, she pretended to bring him tāmbūla and slipped away from his attempts at embracing her; as he tried speaking to her, she avoided him by pretending to speak to her maids (to arrange for his hospitality). Thus, she gave the hero the impression that she is being a good host and in reality, brought fructification to her anger."*

The phrase *kopaḥ kṛtārthīkṛtaḥ* is quite a special one – it is a case of *upacāra-vakratā*, a kind of oblique expression that is a mix of personification and transferred epithet. In Greek literary aesthetics, this is roughly an equivalent of a *hypallage*.

The three verses discussed above are rich in *rasa-dhvani*, i.e., they suggest the sentiment of *śṛṅgāra*, though they do not explicitly bring the word. There is a tinge of *vipralambha* in all the verses and each has a different kind of heroine among the eight *aṣṭanāyikā*-s (types of heroines). The first one has a *kalahāntaritā*, the second a *vipralabdhā* and the third, a *khaṇḍitā*.

The final verse of this episode is a curious case of privacy infringement and embarrassment for a couple.

> *dampatyor-niśi jalpator-gṛha-śukenākarṇitaṃ yadvacaḥ*
> *tat-prātar-guru sannidhau nigadataḥ śrutvaiva tāraṃ vadhūḥ |*
> *karṇālaṃbita padma-rāga-śakalaṃ vinyasya caṃcvāḥ puro*
> *vrīḍārtā prakaroti dāḍima-phala-vyājyena vāg-bandhanam ||*
>
> *"A pet parrot, which heard the intimate conversations of a couple at night, went around the house next morning uttering everything it had heard in the presence of the rest of the family. The heroine who heard the parrot was extremely embarrassed (and wanted to shut its mouth). She picked out a ruby from her ear ring and placed it in the beak of the parrot, which (mis-)took it for a pomegranate seed and shut its mouth (probably, chewing it)".*

The pet parrot has played the role of a hidden camera or a secret microphone of today in publicizing the private conversations of a couple. One can imagine how bashful and helpless the heroine might have felt when she realised that all the elders and children of the family had learnt of the sweet and romantic nothings that she had exchanged with her beloved. She tricked the naughty (and innocent) parrot into believing a ruby to be a pomegranate seed and quickly found a solution to the problem!

In yet another episode, the hero is going away on a long journey from home. The heroine wishes to see him off with a smile, but cannot control her tears of sorrow:

> *yātāḥ kiṃ na milanti sundari punaścintā tvayā mat-kṛte*
> *no kāryā nitarāṃ kṛśā'si kathayatyevaṃ sabāṣpe mayi |*
> *lajjāmantharatārakeṇa nipatatpītāśruṇā cakṣuṣā*
> *dṛṣṭvā māṃ hasitena bhāvimaraṇotsāhastayā sūcitaḥ ||*
>
> *"Don't those who depart always return? Sweet creature, you fret and are wasting away…. I stammered through tears. She stared blankly swallowing her own emotion. Shame lay across her dark pupils. Then a dry desperate laugh said it all – she intended to die."*
>
> [*trans*. Schelling]

The verse delineates a delicate emotional switch from *saṁbhoga* to *vipralambha śṛṅgāra* – the hero and the heroine, who were together, are at the brink of getting separated. It is interesting to note that the heroine *nipatatpītāśruṇā cakṣuṣā* – literally, "drinks back tears into her eyes". Though it is physically impossible to do so, the poet suggestively says how difficult it must have been for her to swallow her sorrow and to put up with the new reality – separation from her beloved. She forces a smile upon her face, merely to mask her heartfelt intention to give up her life as the hero is gone. The verse also suggests that the hero is more important to her than her own life!

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

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SERIES: AYURVEDA — TRADITIONAL SYSTEMS OF HEALTH & HEALING

Epidemics in Āyurveda

Ancient texts of āyurveda like Suśrutasaṁhitā and Carakasaṁhitā describe janapadodhvamsa (epidemics), their symptoms, the modes of contagion and also the measures to deal with them.

BY DR. P. RAMMANOHAR

In classical Āyurvedic literature dating back to centuries before the Common Era, we find descriptions of epidemics. In Sanskrit, epidemics are called *janapadodhvamsa* (that which is likely to affect/destroy large human-settlements). The third chapter in the *Vimānasthāna* of the *Carakasaṃhitā* deals exclusively with this topic. It raises an important question:

> *api tu khalu janapadōddhvaṁsanam ēkēnaiva vyādhinā yugapad-asamāna-prakṛty-āhāra-dēha-balasātmya-sattva-vayasāṁ manuṣyāṇāṁ kasmād bhavatīti ||*
>
> *"How do people of different body constitutions, lifestyle, diet and genetic inheritance become afflicted with the same disease?"*

The text answers thus:

> *prakṛtyādibhir-bhāvair-manuṣyāṇāṁ yē'nyē bhāvāḥ sāmānyās-tad-vaiguṇyāt samānakālāḥ samāna-liṅgāśca vyādhayō'bhinirvartamānā janapadam uddhvaṁsayanti| tē tu khalvimē bhāvāḥ sāmānyā janapadēṣu bhavanti; tad-yathā- vāyuḥ, udakaṁ, dēśaḥ, kāla iti ||*
>
> *"Climate, air, water and land can become a common medium through which the same disease can affect a large human-settlement."*

Today, the world has come to a standstill due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Suśruta was perhaps the first whistleblower to warn us about the possibility of epidemic outbreaks like COVID-19 which primarily affect the respiratory system. *Suśrutasaṃhitā*, an ancient textbook of surgery in Āyurveda, describes illnesses that manifest as epidemics, affecting the respiratory system time and again, presenting symptoms of fever, cough, breathing difficulty, rhinorrhoea, headache and even anosmia.[1] The clinical presentation of diseases described in the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* is strikingly similar to epidemics that exhibit severe respiratory symptoms – SARS, Ebola, MERS, Swine Flu and even COVID-19. Dalhaṇa, the commentator of this text, specifies that the causative agent of such diseases enters the human body through nasal passages.

[1] *viṣauṣadhi-puṣpa-gandhēna vā vāyunōpanītēnākramyatē yō dēśas-tatra dōṣa-prakṛtyaviśēṣēṇa kāsa-śvāsa-vamathu-pratiśyāya-śirōrug-jvarair-upatapyantē ||*

When Dalhaṇa comments on the passage on the symptoms of the epidemic manifesting respiratory illnesses caused by airborne transmission, he lists a very interesting symptom – *gandhājñāna* or anosmia.[2]

Anosmia has been reported in COVID-19 patients. Writes Prof. Claire Hopkins, President of British Rhinological Society, "There is potential that if any adult with anosmia but no other symptoms was asked to self-isolate for seven days, in addition to the current symptom criteria used to trigger quarantine, we might be able to reduce the number of otherwise asymptomatic individuals who continue to act as vectors, not realizing the need to self-isolate". Post-viral anosmia is one of the leading causes of loss of sense of smell in adults, accounting for up to 40% cases of anosmia.

Viruses that cause common cold are known to also cause post-infectious anosmia, and over 200 different viruses are known to cause upper respiratory-tract infections. Corona viruses are thought to account for 10-15% cases. It is therefore perhaps no surprise that the novel COVID-19 virus would also cause anosmia in infected patients. There is already good evidence from South Korea, China and Italy to show that significant number of patients with proven COVID-19 infection have developed anosmia/hyposmia. In South Korea, where testing has been more widespread, 30% of patients testing positive have had anosmia as their major presenting symptom in otherwise mild cases. This lends strong support to the assumption that the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* was referring to viral infections in this context.

The *Suśrutasaṃhitā* also describes the modes of contagion: repeated physical contact (*gātrasaṃsparśāt*), inhalation (*niḥśvāsāt*), eating together (*sahabhojanāt*), sharing a bed (*sahaśayyāsanāt*), contact with clothes, garlands (*vastramālyānulepanāt*), etc.[3] The importance of social distancing to prevent the spread of epidemic diseases is hinted at in this ancient medical text. *Sthānaparityāga* or abandoning the places of human activity is mentioned by Suśruta as the first and foremost measure in mitigating an epidemic. This reminds us of the stringent measures like lockdown that we have been forced to take in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Italian language, the

[2] *anyē tu kāsa-śvāsētyādi-pāṭham-anyathā paṭhanti-'kāsa-śvāsa-pratiśyāya-gandhājñāna-bhrama-śirōrug-jvaramasūrikādibhir upatapyantē' iti, vyākhyānayanti ca tatra nāsārandhrānugatēna vāyunā kāsa-śvāsa-pratiśyāyagandhājñāna-bhrama-śirōrujaḥ||*

[3] *prasaṅgād-gātra-saṁsparśānniśvāsāt sahabhōjanāt | sahaśayyāsanāccāpi vastramālyānulēpanāt ||*
kuṣṭhaṁ jvaraśca śōṣaśca nētrābhiṣyanda ēva ca |
aupasargikarōgāśca saṅkrāmanti narānnaram ||

Fig. 3

word quarantine means forty days, and refers to the practice of isolation to prevent contagion in the middle ages. This practice is said to have been discovered by Avicenna, the Arab physician. However, such principles in the mitigation of epidemics are mentioned in classical Āyurvedic texts composed centuries before the Common Era. Quarantine was also practiced in the ancient civilisation of Nepal nearly a thousand years ago. To contain and prevent the transmission of infectious diseases, it was a standard cultural practice for people to self-isolate themselves after traveling to distant places. The Newars of ancient Nepal travelled long distances for trade. As they moved about in far-off places and mingled with different types of people, most of them would come back sick with diseases. In order to prevent such diseases from spreading to the community, it was a customary to self-isolate before returning to their homes. Once they showed signs of health, the chief priest would examine them and subject them to a purification ritual before sending them to their homes. The self-quarantine routine was an important part of Nepali Culture during the Malla Dynasty and was practiced until the last century.

The word *kṛmi* in Sanskrit means that which migrates from one location to the other. This term covers pathogenic organisms in general, but also includes microbes. The existence of microbes was clearly documented in classical Āyurvedic texts. For example, a type of *kṛmi* is thus described: *saṁsthānam-aṇavō vṛttāścāpādāśca, sūkṣmatvāccaikē bhavantyadṛśyāḥ* (minute, without feet and invisible to the naked eye). It is interesting to note that these organisms were classified into two types: natural (*sahaja*) and pathogenic (*vaikārika*).[4] Cakrapāṇi, the commentator of *Carakasaṃhitā*, says that the natural organisms and microbes living in the human body are innumerable and cannot be counted (*aparisaṅkhyeya*). This is perhaps a very early allusion o the human microbiome. Modern studies have confirmed that many herbs used in Āyurveda against *kṛmis* (*kṛmighna*) have anti-viral and anti-bacterial activity.

> *From the Āyurvedic point of view, an epidemic comes with a deep message — we have to mend our ways and find sustainable ways of living and a deeper connection with the universe, practice compassion towards other living forms, to other human beings and to Mother Earth herself.*

It would be pertinent to ask what medical measures Āyurveda has advised to deal with epidemic diseases. The *Carakasaṃhitā* says that we will need highly potent medicines to deal with an epidemic, and that effort has to be taken to collect and process such medicines before the epidemic scales up. The text advises that as soon as an outbreak is anticipated, people should be administered medicines that enhance their immunity.[5] The importance of bolstering one's immune system to survive an epidemic was emphasized in Āyurveda.

However, Āyurveda informs us that epidemics are not merely diseases that can be handled by medical interventions. The texts emphasize that the root cause of an epidemic outbreak is *adharma* or unsustainable ways of human thought and action that damage the plant and animal life around us, the environment around us and the natural resources available on our planet.[6] From the Āyurvedic point of view, an epidemic comes with a deep message. The message is that we have to mend our ways and find sustainable ways of living and a deeper connection with the universe, practice compassion towards other living forms, to other human beings and to Mother Earth herself. For this reason, many spiritual practices and compensatory actions are recommended in the Āyurvedic texts (apart from medical measures) for mitigation of the epidemic.[7] In the aftermath of an epidemic, humans can reflect and introspect and find ways to restore the lost harmony within their own selves, the people and living forms around them and the universe itself.

[4] *anyatra sahajēbhya ityanēna śarīrasahajāstvavaikārikāḥ krimayō viṁśatērapyadhikā bhavantīti darśayati|*
[5] *caturṣvapi tu duṣṭēṣu kālāntēṣu yadā narāḥ|*
bhēṣajēnōpapādyantē na bhavantyāturāstadā||12||
yēṣāṁ na mṛtyusāmānyaṁ sāmānyaṁ na ca karmaṇām|
karma pañcavidhaṁ tēṣāṁ bhēṣajaṁ paramucyatē||
rasāyanānāṁ vidhivaccōpayōgaḥ praśasyatē|
śasyatē dēhavṛttiśca bhēṣajaiḥ pūrvamuddhṛtaiḥ||

[6] *sarvēṣāmapyagnivēśa! vāyvādīnāṁ yadvaiguṇyamutpadyatē tasya mūlamadharmaḥ, tanmūlaṁ vā'satkarma pūrvakṛtaṁ; tayōryōniḥ prajñāparādha ēva |*
[7] *tatra, sthāna-parityāga-śānti-karma-prāyaścittamaṅgala-japa-hōmōpahārējyāñjali-namaskāra-tapōniyama-dayā-dāna-dīkṣāb-hyupagama-dēvatā-brāhmaṇa-guru-parair-bhavitavyam, ēvaṁ sādhu bhavati ||*

SERIES: ON THE MEANING OF MAHĀBHĀRATA

Gṛdhra-Jambuka-Samvāda

The struggles of the Pāṇḍava-s — their wars, their victories, their losses and their sufferings — lead to one central theme: that peace, quietude, and tranquillity are the summa bona of human life.

BY MANJUSHREE HEGDE

IN HIS WORK ON POETICS, *Sāhitya Darpaṇa*, Viśvanātha Kavirāja classified the *Mahābhārata* as an '*ārṣa mahākāvya*' (SD VI 561-562) – primarily a *prabandha-kāvya* that evokes the *śānta rasa*: the struggles of the Pāṇḍava-s – their wars, their victories, their losses and their sufferings – lead to one central theme: that peace, quietude, and tranquillity are the *summa bona* of human life. In agreement with Ānandavardhana and Mammaṭa, Viśvanātha quoted the following passage from the *Mahābhārata* as an example of *artha-śaktyudbhava dhvani*:

alaṁ sthitvā śmaśāne'smin
gṛdhra-gomāyu-saṁkule
kaṅkālabahāle ghore
sarva-prāṇi-bhayaṁkare (*Mahābhārata* 12/149.8)

This is a description of a scene in the cemetery where the affectionate kin have brought the dead body of a child for burial. Let us look into the context of this passage:

duḥkhitāḥ kecid ādāya bālam aprāpta-yauvanam |
kula-sarvasva-bhūtaṃ vai rudantaḥ śoka-vihvalāḥ ||
bālaṃ mṛtaṃ gṛhītvā atha śmaśāna-abhimukhāḥ sthitāḥ |
aṅkena aṅkaṃ ca saṃkramya rurudur bhūtale tadā ||

"*One day, a grieving family brought the body of their young son to a cremation ground. The boy, light of their lives, had barely reached his youth before he'd passed away. Passing him from lap to lap, they cried sitting on the ground*"[1].

It is a very tragic scene: a *brāhmaṇa* had begotten a child after great difficulties, but the child had died prematurely due to infantile convulsions. In great grief, the deceased child was brought to the crematorium, and there the family sat, with heavy hearts, unable to tear themselves away from the body of their child. Their

[1] Translations, by K.V. Mohan

Fig. 4

lamentations brought a vulture – a long-time resident of the cremation ground – to the scene. To the grieving family, the vulture said thus:

> *saṃpaśyata jagat sarvaṃ sukha-duḥkhair adhiṣṭhitam |*
> *saṃyogo viprayogaḥ ca paryāyeṇa upalabhyate ||*
> *gṛhītvā ye ca gacchanti ye anuyānti ca tān mṛtān |*
> *te api āyuṣaḥ pramāṇena svena gacchanti jantavaḥ ||*
> *karma-anta-vihite loke ca astaṃ gacchati bhāskare |*
> *gamyatāṃ svam adhiṣṭhānaṃ suta-snehaṃ visṛjya vai ||*
>
> "*O Men, learn that the whole world goes through joys and sorrows in turn. Union and bereavement follow each other. Those who carry the bodies of their loved ones, and those who grieve beside them, will themselves pass on when their time comes. [Therefore, do not grieve]. It is evening, and the sun is setting. Return to your homes safely before dusk; your bond with your son has ended.*"

These are, indeed, wise words from the vulture. Man is mortal, and death, inevitable – life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one. The *śāstra*-s proclaim repeatedly, "*anityāni śarīrāṇi, nityaṃ saṃnihito mṛtyuḥ*" – these bodies are temporary, and death is always near. The vulture reminded the family of the eternal truths of the *śāstra*-s, and gently asked them to move on. The family saw the truth of his words, and prepared to return, when suddenly, a black jackal appeared out of a nearby burrow. It beheld the scene unfolding, and reprimanded the family thus:

> *ādityo ayaṃ sthito mūḍhāḥ snehaṃ kuruta mā bhayam |*
> *bahurūpo muhūrtaḥ ca jīveta api kadācana ||*
> *yūyaṃ bhūmau vinikṣipya putra-sneha-vinākṛtāḥ |*
> *śmaśāne putram utsṛjya kasmāt gacchatha nirghṛṇāḥ ||*

Fig. 5

> *na vaḥ asti asmin sute sneho bāle madhura-bhāṣiṇi |*
> *yasya bhāṣita mātreṇa prasādam upagacchatha ||*
>
> "*You fools! The sun still shines! This is a time for hope, not fear! Anything can happen in the right moment, perhaps he may still rise! How can you so cruelly abandon this young boy, throwing away all your affection! Just some time ago, even his very babblings were your greatest boon, and now, you leave without the slightest care?*"

The jackal accused the family of having no affection for their child – their hearts must be made of steel, he said, for they so easily spread a few blades of *kuśa* grass on the ground, and abandoned their darling to it. Surely, even animals bear more affection to their offspring? "How, indeed, can you go away, casting off this boy of eyes large as the petals of the lotus, and handsome as a newly-married youth washed clean and adorned with floral garlands?" he cried. Hearing the jackal's words, the family was overrun with grief and rushed back to sit beside the boy's corpse.

Now, the vulture told them,

> *pañca-bhūta-parityaktaṃ śūnyaṃ kāṣṭhatvam āgatam |*
> *kasmāt śocatha niśceṣṭam ātmānaṃ kiṃ na śocatha ||*
> *kiṃ karişyatha śocitvā mṛtaṃ kim anuśocatha |*
> *sarvasya hi prabhuḥ kālo dharmataḥ samadarśanaḥ ||*
>
> "*This corpse has become one with the five elements. It is empty of life, and I even see rigor mortis setting in. Why do you grieve for it, you fools? Why don't you grieve for yourselves? What will you do, grieving for this dead heap? Time is the ruler of all, and levels all with an equal eye.*"

The vulture berated the family for bidding the words of a jackal of little intelligence. He quoted the *śāstra*-s that proclaim the theory of *karma*: weal or woe is dependent on the acts of a previous life, he said. The son is not bound by the acts of the sire, or the sire by those of the son. Bound by their own acts, good and bad, all have to travel by this common road. The vulture advised the family to cast off sorrow, to leave the child and go their way – because it is the doer alone who must enjoy the fruit of his acts, good or bad.

The jackal, equally well-versed in the *śāstra*-s, said:

> *yatno hi satataṃ kāryaḥ kṛto daivena sidhyati |*
> *daivaṃ puruṣakāraḥ ca kṛtāntena upapadyate ||*
> *anirvedaḥ sadā kāryo nirvedāt hi kutaḥ sukham |*
> *prayatnāt prāpyate hy arthaḥ kasmād gacchatha nirdayāḥ ||*
>
> "*One must put forth effort by all means. If then Fate wills it, it will succeed. Only when exertion meets destiny is the right fruit produced. One must always be hopeful – what is the point of despondency? You can succeed only by effort, you hard-hearted fools, where will you go from here?*"

The jackal chided the family for their weak affections – "Alas!", he cried, "I had supposed that great is the

> *At every stage of the conversation, the vulture and jackal were both perfectly logically consistent, and made very well-supported arguments — it is only in the end that we realize that both were motivated by selfish intentions.*

grief felt by men indulging in loud lamentations for the death of a child and for the corpse on a crematorium, like that of kine bereft of calves. Today, however, I understand what the measure of grief is of human beings on earth. Witnessing their great affection, I had shed tears myself. [It seems however, that their affection is not strong]". The jackal told the family to not turn their backs upon their son – the perpetuator of their race, their blood – so heartlessly.

The verbal duel between the jackal and the vulture continued for a long time [for almost a hundred verses], delving into the depths of the subtlest philosophies. It is then that Vyāsa clinched the argument with a twist in the tale:

sva-kārya-dakṣiṇau rājan gṛdhro jambukaḥ eva ca |
kṣut-pipāsā-pariśrāntau śāstram ālambya jalpataḥ ||
tayoḥ vijñāna-viduṣoḥ dvayoḥ jambuka patriṇoḥ |
vākyaiḥ amṛta-kalpaiḥ hi prātiṣṭhanta vrajanti ca ||

"The vulture and the jackal were both hungry and arguing with their own selfish end in mind. They knew the śāstra-s, and spoke beautifully, making the family go hither and thither."

The vulture couldn't see at night, and so he wanted the family to abandon the child immediately so he could satisfy his hunger. The jackal, on the other hand, could not possibly fight off the vulture during day-time, so he wished for the family to stay until nightfall, so that he could later eat the corpse in peace. At every stage of the conversation, the vulture and jackal were both perfectly logically consistent, and made very well-supported arguments – it is only in the end that we realize that both were motivated by selfish intentions.

This episode is quoted by most aestheticians as a perfect example of *artha-śaktyudbhava-dhvani*. Ānandavardhana, while speaking of the occurrence of an "aftertone" variety of suggestion in the *prabandha* (a larger work), gives as his example this passage. Abhinavagupta explains how these suggestions culminate in the suggestion of the flavour of peace – *sa cābhiprāyo vyaktaḥ śāntarasa eva pariniṣṭhitām prāptaḥ*. To me, this *samvāda* reflects the astuteness of the author himself – Vyāsa – who lays bare the two-faced nature of mind and politics. He shows us that the mind can quite literally be the devil's advocate – an agent of diabolical sophistry that can argue any point and the opposite with equal conviction, an imp that delights in self-contradiction. Although it is full of sound and fury, Vyāsa shows us that ultimately, it signifies nothing.

In the next article, we will explore certain other important episodes of the *Mahābhārata*.

SERIES: ANCIENT INDIAN LINGUISTICS

Sanskrit in the Aṣṭādhyāyī

Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī has potential to interest not just philologists or linguists but also anthropologists and psychologists!

BY MANISH RAJAN WALVEKAR

PĀṆINI'S ***AṢṬĀDHYĀYĪ*** is acclaimed across the world as the foremost and the most perfect grammatical text of a language. Interestingly, the name "*Aṣṭādhyāyī*" was not bestowed by Pāṇini – he simply authored this great treatise, laying a strong foundation to the Indian *darśana*-s, and left it at that; it was at a later period that Patañjali, in his *Mahābhāṣya*, named it the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* – the "eight-chaptered book". Patañjali bows down to a humble Pāṇini:

> *"pramāṇabhūta ācāryo darbha-pavitrapāṇiḥ śucāvakāśe prāṅmukha upaviśya mahata yatnena sūtrāṇi praṇayati sma | tatrāśakyaṁ varṇenāpyanarthakena bhavituṁ kiṁ punariyatā sūtreṇa?"*
>
> (*Mahābhāṣya* 1.1.1)
>
> *"The ācārya (Pāṇini), who is authority incarnate, with the sacred darbha grass in his hands, sitting in a pure location facing the East, produced the rules with a great mental effort. In those rules, it is impossible that even a single sound would be meaningless, let alone an entire rule".*
>
> [*trans.* Deshpande-Bhate 1998:15]

In the previous two articles, we discussed briefly an overview of the Pāṇinian system. In this article, we will look at the language described by him. Before we delve into the topic, we must remember, in Prof. Bhate's words, "Although it is well-known that Pāṇini wrote a grammar of the Sanskrit language, he has nowhere declared it so. Neither he mentioned the word '*saṁskṛta*' in connection with a language nor has he used any other name for the language he described" (Bhate 2002: 49).

Pāṇini's grammar is considered as an ancillary to the Veda-s (*Vedāṅga*). But does it comprehensively deal with the Vedic language? The answer would be categorically negative. The *Aṣṭādhyāyī* contains approximately 4000 *sūtra*-s[1]; of these, a mere 250 rules deal with the Vedic language. Therefore, one cannot rely entirely upon the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* to study a Vedic text. The Vedic language is archaic and is characterized by nuances and a spontaneity of expressions. Joshi remarks, "Instead of coming to grips with the tough forms of the Vedic grammar, Pāṇini has, very often, tried to explain away the apparent anomalies by just referring to the archaic form of the Vedic language (*candasi bahulam* and so on)" (Joshi 2009: v). So, a criticism is often made against the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* that it is not entirely

[1] There is no critical edition of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* available.

thorough. However, it must be remembered that Pāṇini's goal was only to describe the prevalent language – his description of the Vedic language is incidental. Further, it has been observed by several scholars that Pāṇini's description is of only the North-Western dialect of Sanskrit. This is rather true; the language of this region was extremely respected in the Vedic literature: "*udīcyāṁ ha diśi prājñatarā vāg-udyate | udañca eva yānti vācaṁ śikṣituṁ yo va tata āgacchati tasya śuśrūṣanti*" (Bhate 2002: 49). Prof. George Cardona writes, "Pāṇini refers in his *Aṣṭādhyāyī* to certain features of speech that are attributed to Śākalya. In particular, some of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* rules concern aspects of Śākalya's dialect as reflected in his *padapāṭha* to the *Ṛgveda*. These *sūtra*-s are of interest in connection with aspects of Sanskrit dialects at the time of Pāṇini and his predecessors..." (Deshpande-Bhate 1998: 123).

Pāṇini has given a detailed description of verb-forms, nouns, etc. An example of his minute observation is seen in his description of forms like *rājanvān* and *rājavān*. A good reign by a noble king is termed as *rājanvān*. On the other hand, the word '*rajavān*' asserts its opposite meaning. It is stated in the *sutra*, '*rājanvān saurājye*' (8.2.14). Kālidāsa, in his masterpiece *Raghuvaṁśa* (6.22), lauds the reign of King Aja saying:

> *kāmaṁ nṛpāḥ santi sahasraśo'nye rājanvatīmāhuranena bhūmim | nakṣatratārāgrahasaṃkulāpi jyotiṣmatī candramasaiva rātriḥ ||*
>
> "*Granted that there are other kings by thousands; but the earth is said to have a pious ruler in him (Aja) alone. True that the aight is crowded with constellations, stars and planets; but it is by reason of the moon alone that it has light (is illumined).*"

Here, we can observe the usage of the word '*rājanvatī*'. Another example is that of the verbal-root, *yaj* (to perform a *yajña*), an *ubhayapadī* verbal-root. If the *yajña* is performed for one's own sake, then the verb acquires an *ātmanepada* form; if it is performed on behalf of someone else/for someone else, it acquires a *parasmaipada* form.

Although Pāṇini has given more emphasis to morphology and syntax, he has also given sufficient attention to semantics. It is often wrongly claimed by several scholars that Pāṇini did not consider semantics, but this is not correct. Indeed, semantics is the back-bone of Pāṇini's grammar. For instance, consider the word *kākapeyā*. Literally, it means 'that which can be drunk by crows'; but according to Pāṇini's rules of *samāsa*, this word refers to a river with very less water (that can only be drunk by crows to quench their thirst). Prof. Bhate quotes another example: "The long range of as many as eight words conveying the meaning 'flat-nosed' is as follows: *avaṭīṭa*, *avanāña*, *avabhraṭa*, *nibiḍa*, *nibirīsa*, *cikina*, *cipiṭa*, *cikka*." (Bhate 2002: 63).

Interestingly, Pāṇini has also displayed a sound knowledge of human psychology and human behavior. For example, in the *taddhita* section of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, he has described how we fight, show compassion, express gratitude, feel shame, etc. Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* thus has potential to interest not just philologists or linguists but also anthropologists and psychologists. It is only apt then that Patañjali uses epithets like *ācārya*, *bhagavān*, *analpamati* for Pāṇini!

We will further delve into the text in the forthcoming articles.

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SERIES: YOGA — ANCIENT AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

Karmayoga and Kriyāyoga

Karmayoga of the Bhagavadgītā and kriyāyoga of the Yogasūtra-s purify the mind and prepare the individual to achieve the ultimate goal of self-realization.

BY DR. SRIPAD H. GHALIGI

PATAÑJALI'S *YOGASŪTRA*-S and the *Bhagavadgītā* are two texts that aim at the holistic growth of an individual and the society. *Yogasūtra*-s is an exposition of the philosophy and the practice of yoga in a systematic, logical way. *Bhagavadgītā* is the quintessence of the principles of the Upaniṣad-s.

The *Bhagavadgītā* primarily advocates *karmayoga* and the *Yogasūtra*-s primarily advocates *kriyāyoga*, both of which are practicable. They are intended to purify the mind and prepare the individual to achieve the ultimate goal of self-realization. These same principles can be used to transform the attitude of an individual.

In modern psychology, "attitude" is defined as a stable, long-lasting predisposition to respond to certain things in a certain way. It has a cognitive, affective and conative aspect. In Sanskrit, an equivalent term is '*dṛṣṭiḥ*'. It is said, *yathā dṛṣṭiḥ tathā sṛṣṭiḥ* – as vision, so creation: the world is created (experienced) in the way that it is beheld, i.e., according to one's own attitude. *Dṛṣṭiḥ* is concerned with looking at the world with the right perspective. *Samyak-dṛṣṭiḥ* (right-attitude) will contribute towards the individual's growth and harmony. Right attitude is required not only for managing worldly affairs with minimum friction, but also to reach perfection in spirituality.

A person's attitude is influenced by his thoughts, emotions and experiences. Some of these thoughts/emotions/experiences may be superficial – at the level of *vṛtti* (modifications); some may be *saṁskāra*-s (impressions); but most of them are *vāsanā*-s (deep-rooted impressions). In order to transform an individual's attitude, transformations are required on all three levels – from gross to subtle, from the superficial to the deeper levels. *Karmayoga* and *kriyāyoga* – as illustrated in the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Yogasūtra*-s – are effective tools for this.

Conceptually, *karmayoga* and *kriyāyoga* are rather the same – *kriyā* is a synonym for *karma*; so *kriyāyoga* can be considered as a synonym of *karmayoga*. It consists of *tapaḥ* (austerity), *svādhyāya* (study) and *īśvarapraṇidhāna* (surrender of the fruits of work to God). The *Bhagavadgītā* speaks of three types of *tapaḥ*: *śārīraṁ* (related to the body), *vāṅmayaṁ* (related to speech), and *mānasaṁ* (related to the mind). According to the *Gītā*, *śoucham* (one of the five *niyama*-s in the *Yogasūtra*-s), *brahmacharya* and *ahimsā* (two *yama*-s of the *Yogasūtra*-s) are considered as *śārīraṁ-tapaḥ*. *Satyam* and *svādhyāya* (two *niyama*-s), and one of the *yama*-s are considered

> *Kriyāyoga must continue as the natural/ default attitude of the sādhaka even as he reaches higher states of dhyānayoga. The Bhagavadgītā states that karma is not merely a preparatory step, that it is necessary for all the stages of yogasādhana.*

as *vāṅmayaṁ-tapaḥ*. The practices enunciated in *mānasaṁ tapaḥ* of the *Bhagavadgītā* are discussed in the *Yogasūtra* that discusses *tapaḥ*. So, the principles and practices are rather identical in the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Yogasūtra*-s.

Kriyāyoga is considered as a preliminary step to *dhyānayoga* – it purifies and prepares the body and the mind. Generally, *sādhana*-s (instruments/ means to ends) are disposable when the ends are achieved. But this is not the case with *kriyāyoga* – *kriyāyoga* must continue as the natural/default attitude of the *sādhaka* even as he reaches higher states of *dhyānayoga*. The *Bhagavadgītā* states in the beginning of the 18th chapter that *karma* is not merely a preparatory step, that it is necessary for all the stages of *yogasādhana*.

Generally, *karma* refers to actions done by the body, mind and intellect. However, in the context of the *Gītā*, this word acquires a special meaning. Natural actions – *naisargika-karma* – such as eating, breathing and sleeping are discarded in the present context; so are *asat-karma* (wrong actions) like *anṛtavacana-cauryāhiṁsādi* – speaking untruth, stealing, violence, etc. There are three types of *sat-karma* that must be performed according to the *Gītā* – these are the purifiers. These must be performed without attachment/desire for reward. *Sat-karma* may be performed in two ways:

1. *kāmyaṁ karma*: These are *sat-karma*-s that are performed with certain expectations/attachments. For example, if a sick man wants to become healthy, he may perform *karma*-s like *dhanvantari homa*, *āyuṣyahoma* and *japa*; these are *kāmyaṁ karma*.
2. *akāmyaṁ karma*: These are *sat-karma*-s that are performed without desire for fruits/attachment. *Akāmyaṁ karma* yields *cittaśuddhi* (purification of *antaḥkaraṇam*). According to the *Yogasūtra*-s also, *kriyāyoga* helps to dissolve man's five *kleśa*-s. The *Bhagavadgītā* states that *yogi*-s perform actions without attachment for the purpose of self-purification.

Karma becomes *karmayoga* i.e., a means of liberation, when it is performed under these conditions:

1. only *sat-karma* (like *yajña*, *dāna*, *tapas*) is performed, and *asat-karma* (stealing, telling lies) is avoided.
2. actions must be performed in accordance to one's *varṇāśrama dharma* (place, time and resources – mental and material) without desire for fruits, without a sense of ego, with faith (*śraddhā*), without attachment (*asaṅgaḥ*), with dexterity (*kuśalatā*), with equanimity (*samatā*) and finally, as an offering to *iśwara*.

According to the *Yogasūtra*-s also, a mind purified by *karmayoga* becomes qualified for *dhyānayoga*. Action is the foundation for he who wishes to mount the peak of *yoga*. Complete withdrawal from actions establishes a person in *yoga*. This can be explained in three steps as follows:

1. *bāhya-karma-vistāraḥ*: Performance of external actions specified in the *Gītā* like *yajña*, *dāna* and *tapas* and those specified in the *Yogasūtra*-s like *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyāhāra*.
2. *bāhya-karma-saṅkocaḥ*: Continuation of only internal (mental) activities in the form of meditation – also called as *samprajñātasamādhi*.
3. *mānasa-karma-tyāgaḥ*: Complete cessation of internal and external activities – also called *asamprajñātasamādhi*.

However, a wise man established in the Self, having transcended actions, should not perplex the mind of the ignorant who is attached to actions. By himself performing the right actions, he must encourage the ignorant to perform his duties correctly. In the *Yogasūtra*-s, the idea of the continuation of *karma* after the attainment of *cittaśuddhi* is not explicitly stated. However, in the fourth *pāda* of the text, in the discussion of a *yogi*'s *karma*, the idea is hinted at. Here, it is stated that the *karma* of yogi-s is neither black nor white – we can take this to mean that the *yogi* performs actions, but the nature of his *karma* is different.

Thus, *karmayoga* and *kriyāyoga* – as expounded in the *Bhagavadgītā* and *Yogasūtra*-s – can serve as effective tools to transform the attitude of an individual. Furthermore, they can lead the individual to the higher realms of spirituality and consequently, the attainment of fulfillment in life.

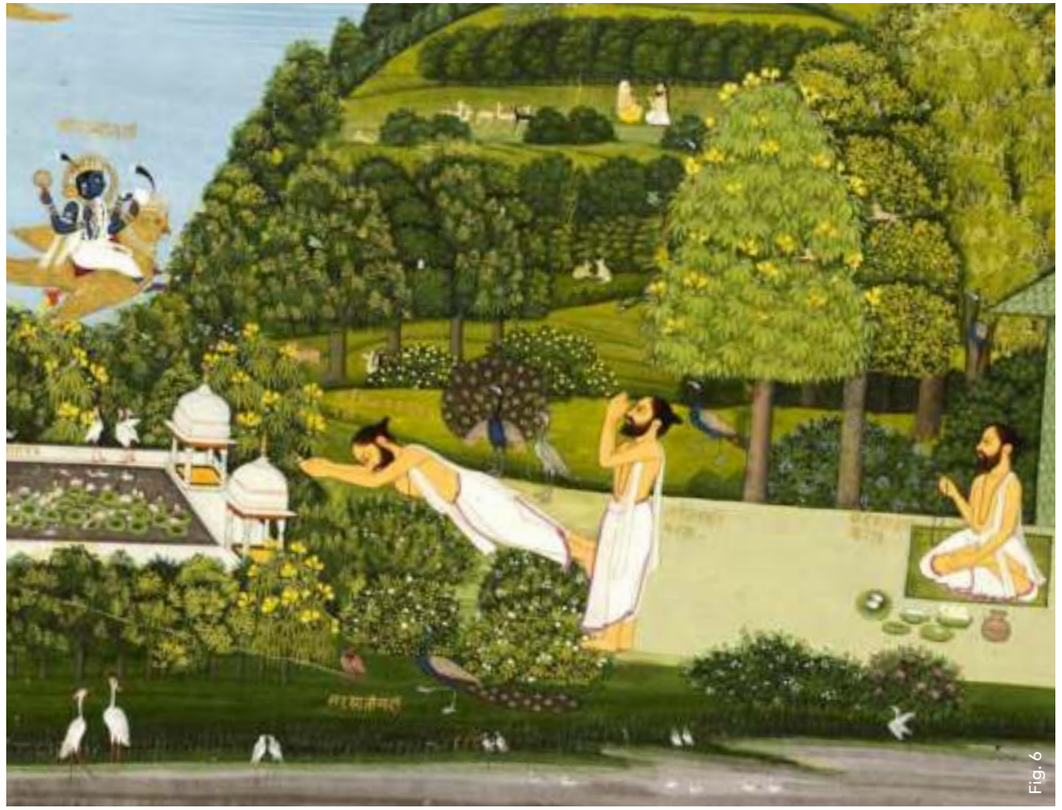

Fig. 6

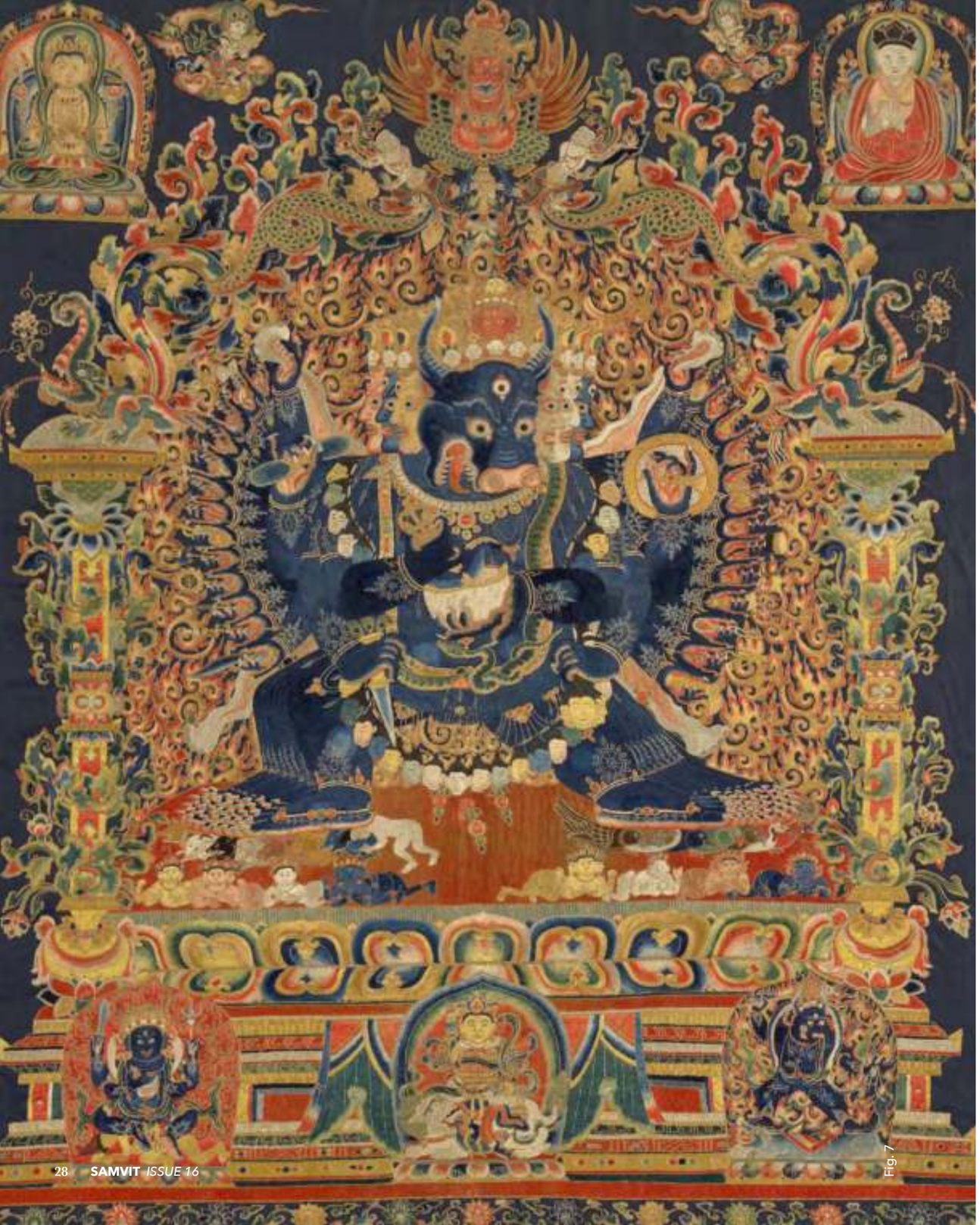

Fig. 7

SERIES: FUNDAMENTALS OF BUDDHIST TANTRA

Buddhist Tantra
through the Western Lens

The study of Buddhist tāntric traditions must not be divorced from their context and practice — otherwise, gross misconceptions are bound to persist in academia.

BY DR. PRANSHU SAMDARSHI

A majority of Indian scholars of the 19th and 20th centuries came to know their own country and tradition via the West. They inherited erroneous theoretical frameworks about their culture and religion that defined the European imagination. This was a reason why many Indian scholars could hardly be appreciative of their own heritage. They approached it with the curiosity of an impulsive onlooker – not with reverence.

The orientalist discourse of the 19th century was simply the Western explorers bringing "exotic findings" to light – findings that belonged to the "mysterious" and "dark" Eastern world. The oriental discourse was designed in such a way that it could only support Western sensibilities. For the Easterners, the forgetfulness of their own selves – their culture, its hoary past – became obligatory to partake in this oriental renaissance.

Tāntric Buddhism and Orientalist Tropes

Within the colonial paradigms, the Buddha and his *dharma* were seen from a Western perspective. European scholars fashioned Buddhist doctrines largely in their own image. According to their conceptual frameworks, objectivity, rationality, scientific temperament, etc. were absent in the Buddhism that survived in different parts of Asia. For example, the famous German-Swiss writer, Hermann Hesse, was disgusted with Theravāda Buddhism of Sri Lanka "where the beautiful and bright Buddhism has degenerated into a true rarity of idolatry". L. Austine Waddell's *Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism* declared that in Tibet, Mahāyāna was reduced to a cult of demonical Buddha.

Therefore, the quest of discovering the "original" Buddhism became crucial for oriental studies. This quest was heavily biased and had its grounding in racial prejudices. In order to establish colonial hegemony, oriental scholars used pseudoscientific methods to deprecate indigenous traditions and principles.

Rajendra Lal Mitra (1824-91) of Kolkata was a famous scholar who worked on Sanskrit Buddhist literature of Nepal. Though he faced racist bashings from his Western counterparts, his concern for Buddhist studies and its neglected texts led him to collaborate with another Bengali colleague, Haraprasad Shastri. Though these scholars had a sympathetic view towards Buddhism and its philosophy, when it came to the tāntric

traditions of Buddhism, due to the lack of traditional knowledge and understanding, these scholars chose an over-literal interpretation of the texts and failed to apprehend meaning in the practices of Buddhist *tantra*. Rajendra Lal Mitra was troubled by his readings of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. In his *Introduction of Sanskrit Buddhist Literature*, he propounded that the tāntric practices are, "the most revolting and horrible that human depravity could think of... would doubtless, be best treated as the ravings of a madman."

For many Indian scholars, even the scholastic works of Mahāyāna philosophy – such as works of Nāgārjuna or Dinnāga – did not make much sense. Due to their training under European pedagogy, they often unconsciously shaped their ideas according to Western thought-processes. This influence was so pervasive that even the scholars from traditional centres of learning were deeply affected.

Non-Indian Origin Theory of *Tantra*

The interpretive conundrums presented by European scholars lead the Indian scholars of the 20th century to develop a discourse that advocated for the non-Indian origin of Buddhist *tantra*. Saint-scholars such as Swami Vivekananda were unable to comprehend tāntric antinomianism. He concluded that *tantra* came from Mongols and Tibet. He stated, "Indian Buddhists imitated the Tibetan and other barbarous customs of religion and assimilated their corruption, and then introduced them into India." Haraprasad Shastri also proposed the non-Indian origin theory of *tantra*. This extra-Indian-origin theory was later propounded in a more scholarly manner by P. C. Bagchi. He wrote:

> *"[A] number of foreign elements were introduced in the tantra, most probably, between the 8th to 12th century, when communication with Tibet, China, and Mongolia became brisk. But these cults lost their exotic character, as they fitted well, in the logical sequence, into a completely integrated system."*
>
> Bagchi (1989: 23)

Fig. 8

> *For as long as the work of art appears to us in any way exotic, bizarre, quaint, or arbitrary, we cannot pretend to have understood it.*
>
> — Ananda Coomaraswamy

This non-Indian origin theory of Buddhist *tantra* was continued by Haraprasad Shastri's son, Binoytosh Bhattacharya. His works on Buddhist iconography reflect that he derived his epistemological assumptions from Western scholars such as William A. Foucher. In his remarkable compendium on Buddhist *tantra* iconography, which later became a guiding text for the next generation of scholars, he has treated tāntric tradition as magical ritualism and sorcery. He unhesitatingly accepted that tāntrism was of foreign origin. In his famous work on the history of esoteric Buddhism, he declared, "the introduction of the *śakti* worship in religion [of Buddhism] is so un-Indian that we are constrained to admit it as an external or foreign influence." On very similar lines, the advocates of modern Hinduism could not conceive the philosophical profundity of Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Śākta *tantra*. They blamed this "degeneration" of their "pure religion" to Buddhism.

In the late 20th century, scholars such as Gopinath Kaviraj (1887-1976) and Thakur Jaideva Singh (1893-1986) endeavoured to work upon some of the obscure *tantra* texts of Kashmir Śaivism. Gopinath Kaviraj acknowledged that it was a mistake to treat Buddhist *tantra* as a downgraded practice and accepted it as a "spiritual tradition of a high order." He cautioned scholars not to denounce its doctrine as hideous or immoral. Prior to these scholars, Ananda Coomaraswamy considered *tantra* to be a topic worthy of its own study.

Conclusion

Invariably, the traditional expressions of Buddhist *tantra* have been suppressed and overly dominated by Eurocentric baggage. Most scholars have been preoccupied with their own speculative notions and have ignored the voices in which the tāntric tradition has expressed itself. It is unjust to study a vibrantly living religion apart from its traditional practitioners. In order to overcome the damaging understanding of Buddhist tāntric system, the tāntric treatises need to be studied and analysed with a fresh perspective. No discipline should be concerned with only collecting data – it must endeavour to understand the context. As Ananda Coomaraswamy has pointed out, "For as long as the work of art appears to us in any way exotic, bizarre, quaint, or arbitrary, we cannot pretend to have understood it." Therefore, unless Buddhist *tantra* is studied without bias, encompassing the perspective of tradition, misconceptions are bound to persist in our academia.

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SERIES: NATURE-CURE

Hydrotherapy

Water can be used to cure most diseases and to also prolong life. It accomplishes the aim of every physician: to achieve the greatest amount of good at the least expense of vitality.

BY DR. PRIYANKA SOMASUNDARAN

In the previous article, we learnt that Naturopathy – the drugless system of medicine – treats diseases through naturally available resources like *agni* (fire), *jala* (water), *pṛthvī* (earth), etc. In this article, we will delve into the use of the element, water, in Naturopathy.

In Indian tradition, Varuṇa is considered as the God of Waters – his vehicle is *makara* (a sea-creature), and weapon, *pāśa* (noose). Water can be used to cure most diseases and to also prolong life. In Naturopathy, the method of treating diseases using water is called 'Hydrotherapy'. Primarily, water owes its value as a therapeutic agent to three remarkable properties: (a) solvent properties (water is a universal solvent), (b) capacity to absorb and communicate heat (through water, heat is communicated to the body, or abstracted from it), and (c) capacity to change from solid to liquid to gaseous form. In its internal use, the thermic effects of water are supplemented by its solvent and nutrient properties. In its external use, mechanical effects are added to its thermic effects.

The physiological and therapeutical effects of water were documented by a renowned Naturopath, Dr. J. H. Kellogg. Dr. Kellogg established a laboratory for the systemic and scientific study of hydrotherapy – he devised instruments for this purpose, and recorded the results of his experiences of 25 years in his sanitarium, The Battle Creek Sanitarium. In this treatise titled "*The Uses of Water in Health and Disease*", he has made an attempt to present a comprehensive view of scientific hydrotherapy in its varied physiological and therapeutic aspects. He writes, "The aim of the faithful physician should be to accomplish for his patient the greatest amount of good at the least expense of vitality; and it is an indisputable fact that in a large number of cases, water is just the agent with which this desirable end can be obtained."

Conditions for Hydrotherapy

Depending on the following conditions, the application of the universal solvent can be modified:

A. temperature of the water
B. duration of the treatment
C. mode of application
D. physical and mental state of the patient

Let us look into each of these conditions:

A. Temperature of the Water

Water, at different temperatures, has different effects on the body. It can be used as an excitant to stimulate the vital processes of the body; it can be used as a sedative to suppress the vital functions of the body. Primarily, it can be used at seven different temperatures to get different effects. They are listed below:

- Very cold: 32° to 55° F
- Cold: 55° to 65° F
- Cool: 65° to 80° F
- Tepid: 80° to 92° F
- Warm: 92° to 98° F
- Hot: 98° to 104° F
- Very hot: 104° F and above

B. Duration of the Treatment

In Hydrotherapy, the duration of the treatment plays a very crucial role – this varies according to the condition of the patient:

- Very short duration: 3 sec to 30 sec
- Short duration: 30 sec to 3/5 min
- Long duration: 5 min to 20 min
- Prolonged duration: 20 min to 45 min

C. Mode of Application

Hydrotherapy can be provided through various modes such as baths, packs, compresses, douches, irrigation (internal or external) and affusions:

(i) Bath: A confined tub or a large container is used to immerse maximum/particular parts of the body with appropriate temperature of water for a defined period of time to get a favourable effects over the individual.

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Few examples include hip bath, spinal bath, immersion bath, sitz bath, arm bath, leg bath, vapour bath, hot-air bath, electric-light bath, cold-plunge bath, graduated bath, brand bath, surge bath, effervescent bath, continuous bath, etc.

(ii) Packs: Multiple thin layers of cotton-cloth, soaked in water of appropriate temperature, is used to cover particular parts of the body for an appropriate period of time. Examples include chest pack, abdominal pack, trunk pack, pelvic pack, wet-sheet pack, sweating pack, dry pack, hot-blanket pack, leg pack, spinal pack and throat pack.

(iii) Compresses: Thick multi-folded cloths/sponges/other suitable mediums are used as a compress to apply water at a particular temperature to particular parts of the body. Examples include hot/cold compress, evaporating compress, irrigating compress, proximal compress, alternative compress, revulsive compress and cephalic compress.

(iv) Douches: Douches are single or multiple columns of water directed against a particular part of the body. They are classified in three ways:

- According to internal organs: cerebral, cerebro-spinal, pulmonary, cardiac, gastric, enteric, hepatic, splenic, renal, genito-urinary, articular and muscular.
- According to the form: horizontal jet, vertical jet, broken jet, filiform jet, percussion douche, circle or multiple circle douche, needle douche, scotch douche and massage douche.
- According to the part of the body: cephalic, dorsal, lumbar, thoracic, epigastric, hypogastric, abdominal, plantar, perineal and anal.

(v) Irrigation: Irrigation is used for the skin and the mucous-membrane. In this method, water is allowed to flow over the surface of the body or over the mucous-membrane through small rubber tubes such that the stream of water is regulated according to the requirement. Either hot, cold or alternate applications may be made. Primarily, irrigation is used for the ear, eye, nose, throat, stomach, bladder, uterus, vagina and rectum.

(vi) Affusions: The pouring of the water (at appropriate temperature) over a particular part of the body is called affusion; this may either be local or general.

D. Physical and Mental State of the Patient

Individual cases must be carefully considered. The following factors should be observed before the administration of any hydrotherapy modalities:

- patients' physical aptitude and temperament
- idiosyncrasy towards water
- power of calorification
- ability to endure heat/cool temperatures
- mental state of the patient

Effects of Hydrotherapy

Is water an excitant or a sedative or is it neutral? The answer is, water can be anything – it can stimulate the functions of the tissues of the body (generally or locally), or it can reduce/inhibit the functions of the body (generally or locally), and further, it can also sedate the bodily-functions (generally or locally). A careful study shows that in general, the effects of water – as an excitant and a sedative – are as follows:

A. Excitant Effects

The excitant effects of water are as follows:

(i) Emmenagogic Effect: This is the stimulation of the functions of the uterine/uterus. It is useful in the cases of amenorrhoea, PCOD, pelvic inflammatory diseases, menorrhagia, metro menorrhagia, etc. It can be produced by the following hydriatic applications:

- cold hydriatic applications over the abdomen or lower abdomen or inner thigh
- short and sudden cold applications to the mammary glands (breasts)
- hot vaginal douche
- alternate hot and cold hydriatic applications to the breasts, inner thighs and lower abdomen

(ii) Vesicle Excitation: This is the stimulation of the functions of the urinary bladder. It is used in cases of motor insufficiency of the bladder, atonic bladder, and problems related with retention of urine. It can be produced by the following hydriatic applications:
cold douche to the feet and lower abdomen
short and sudden cold hydriatic applications to the lower back or inner thigh region

B. Sedative Effects

The sedative effects of water are as follows:

(i) Analgesic Effects: This reduces the level of pain in the body. It is useful in cases of muscle/bone related pain-conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, osteo-arthritis, sciatica, etc. It is achieved by the hot and prolonged application of analgesics like hot, local douche, hot, localised compress, dry-packs applied for a prolonged duration, graduated douche, etc.

(ii) Antispasmodic Effects: This will reduce the rigidity or spasm of the muscles. It is useful in cases of muscular cramps, calcium deficiency, etc. It can be produced by:

- neutral (97° to 95° F) fan douche
- hot bath
- hot compress over the spasmodic area
- (in case of constipation) hot enema, fomentation to abdomen and hot sitz bath

In the next article, we will explore the use of other elements in Naturopathy.

SERIES: YOGA — FROM PHILOSOPHY TO PRACTICE

On the Meaning of Yoga

Yoga is a unique system which focuses equally on theoretical philosophy and practical applicability. Yogic techniques can be practiced by anyone irrespective of age, gender, race, religion, caste, and nationality — the effects and benefits of yoga are universal.

BY B. SENTHIL KUMAR

INDIA has a rich and diverse philosophical tradition. According to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the oldest of these constitute "the earliest philosophical compositions of the world." It includes both orthodox (*āstika*) systems – *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Sānkhyā*, *Yoga*, *Pūrva Mīmāṁsā*, and *Uttara Mīmāṁsā* – and heterodox (*nāstika*) systems – Buddhism, Cārvaka and Jainism. Possibly through the association with the six *darśana*-s, the term *darśana* by itself has also come to mean "philosophy" in contemporary Sanskrit. Through its derivation from the verbal root *dṛś*, "to see," *darśana* in connection with these systems also implies "vision," "view," and even "insight" or "realization". The purpose of each philosophical system is the same – to understand and unite with the ultimate truth. Different philosophies denote different pathways that lead to the same destination – they allow every individual to choose a path best suited for his/her interest/nature/capacity/proclivity, and lead each to the same destination, i.e., Brahman.

Yoga is one of the *ṣaḍ-darśana*-s. Lord Śiva, also called Ādinatha Bhairava, is accepted as the primordial founder and propounder of all the techniques of yoga. Yājñavalkya says *hiraṇyagarbho yogasya vaktā nānyaḥ purātanaḥ* – "none other than *hiraṇyagarbha* is the earliest propounder of yoga". The genesis of yoga is the Veda-s. The word "yoga" occurs in the Veda-s in various senses such as yoking, harnessing, connection, achieving the unachieved, etc. As a tradition, yoga is far from monolithic. It embraces a variety of practices and orientations, borrowing from and influencing a vast array of Indic religious traditions. In the centuries after the Vedic period, a number of texts were written on the *yoga-śāstra*: *Bhagavadgītā*, Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*-s, *Haṭhayogapradīpikā*, *Śivasaṁhitā*, *Gheraṇḍasaṁhitā*, *Yoga Yājñavalkya*, *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*, etc. Of these texts, Patanjali's *Yogasūtra*-s is universally considered as the most authoritative text.

In the current scenario, when we utter the word "yoga", it conjures different ideas in the mind. Largely, it is associated with *āsana*-s (postures), breathing-techniques, and even simply sitting on the mat with one's eyes closed. This popular perception, determined in large part by the commodification of yogic techniques, remains for the most part that of a program of physical fitness, largely divorced from its historical and spiritual roots.

In traditional yogic texts, the word has a wide range of meanings. Primarily, it is derived from the Sanskrit root, *yujir*, meaning to connect, to join, to yoke.

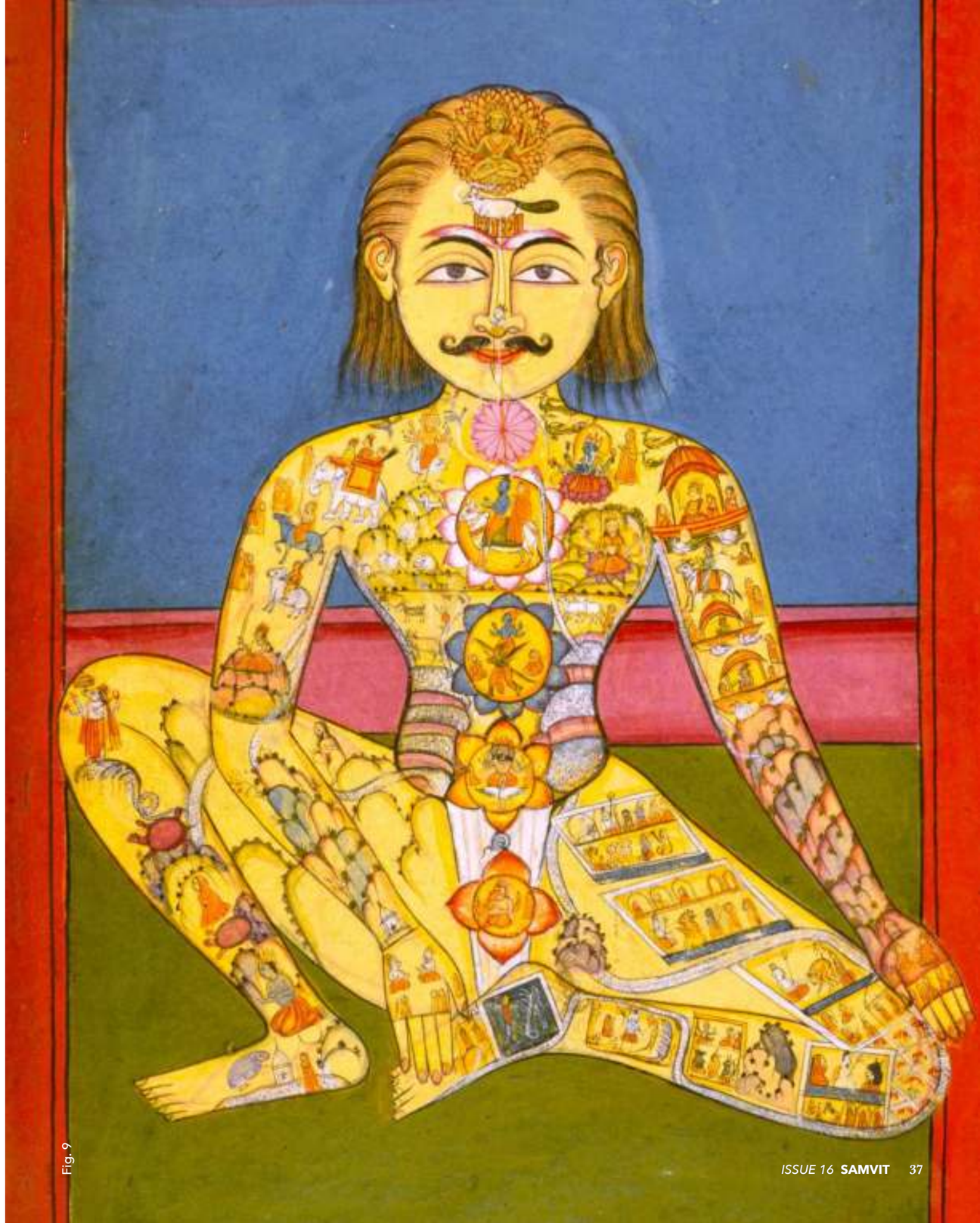

Fig. 9

Yoga, cursorily, is a method to unite the body, mind and soul, and ultimately, to unite the *jīvātman* with the *paramātman*. Let us explore the different ways in which this word has been defined in the different traditional texts.

The *Amarakośa* (also known as *nāmaliṅgānuśāsanam*) has listed five different meanings for the term "yoga":
a. *sannāhanam* (preparation) – it is a preparation to achieve a higher goal. The great teacher of yoga, Krishnamācārya, interprets *sannāhanam* as "protection".
b. *upāyam* (means) – it is a tool or means that will help one to reach the ultimate goal.
c. *dhyānam* (meditation) – it is continuity of thought about a singular object without any disruption.
d. *saṅgati* (movement) – it is a practice that will facilitate movement towards higher states. It is also a movement away from *duḥkha* (suffering).
e. *yukti* (intelligence) – it is the ability to act/react in an optimistic manner in any given situation.

Yoga Yājñavalkya defines yoga as the union of the *jivātman* and the *paramātman*. It is the convergence between the individual consciousness and the supreme Self. In Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*-s, yoga is defined as *citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ* – it is the elimination of the modifications of the mind/mental activities. Thus, yoga, in Patañjali's view, signifies a way whereby the endless chain of thoughts comes to rest in *samādhi*. Vyāsa, in his commentary on *Yogasūtra*-s, wrote, *yogah samādhiḥ*, which means it is a state of equipoise, a state in which the mind acquires complete and perfect stillness by converging its activities in a single pointed focus on an object/concept. Thus, yoga attempts to direct the activities of the mind towards a selected object and sustain the focus exclusively for a certain period of time without any distraction.

According to the *Siddhasiddhāntapaddhati* (1.69), the first syllable of the word "*haṭha*" in *haṭhayoga* means the sun, and the last syllable, the moon, so *haṭhayoga* is an amalgamation of the two existing energies in us – the sun (heat) and the moon (coolness). We find yoga defined in primarily three different ways in the *Bhagavadgītā*:


Fig. 10

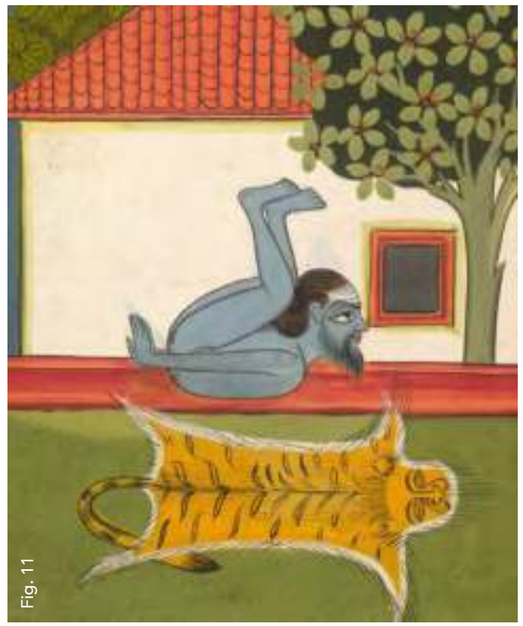
Fig. 11

a. *samatvam yoga ucyate* (*Gītā* 2.48) – it is the maintenance of the state of equanimity of the mind at all times, situations and places. It is a state of equipoise (*samatva*).
b. *yogah karmasu kousalam* (*Gītā* 2.50) – yoga is skillfulness in action.
c. *duḥkha-saṁyōga-viyōgaṁ yoga saṁjñitam* (*Gītā* 6.23) – yoga is the state of mind which is completely disconnected from suffering. The complete verse describes this state thus, "When that is attained, no other attainment is ever greater than it; one remains undisturbed even in the wake of severest misery; that state is ever untouched by grief."

The Gītā also discusses different types of yoga – *bhaktiyoga*, *karmayoga*, *jñānayoga* or *rājayoga*, *dhyānayoga*, etc. Interestingly, *ācārya* Rāmanuja, in his commentary on the *Gītā* (2.45), defines yoga thus: a*praptasya praptih yogam* – the attainment of that which is not attained. Further, he states that yoga is a tool to attain self-realization. Yoga also implies "luck" in Tamil language.

Different types of people can choose different yogic practices/techniques according to their inclinations – each technique helps to still the mind and attain the state of *samādhi*. The only prerequisite for any yogic practice is *vairāgya* (non-attachment) and *abhyāsa* (practice). Without these twin requirements, no practice/technique can be called yoga. Conversely, if one has attained *vairāgya* and *abhyāsa*, it matters not whether one further continues any other practice like meditation, mantra-recitation, etc.

The uniqueness of the yogic system is its strong footing in both philosophy and practice – the two are like the twin sides of a coin, equally important. Further, yogic techniques can be practiced by anyone, irrespective of age, gender, race, religion, caste, and nationality – the effects and benefits of yoga are universal. It can perhaps be said that yogic techniques are like instruments and the textbooks of yoga are like users' instruction manuals for practitioners. In order to use this instrument correctly, then, the guidance of a guru is necessary. Only then will the practice be *sarvāṅga* (complete/holistic); otherwise, it will be an *aṅgabhaṅga sādhana* (incomplete).

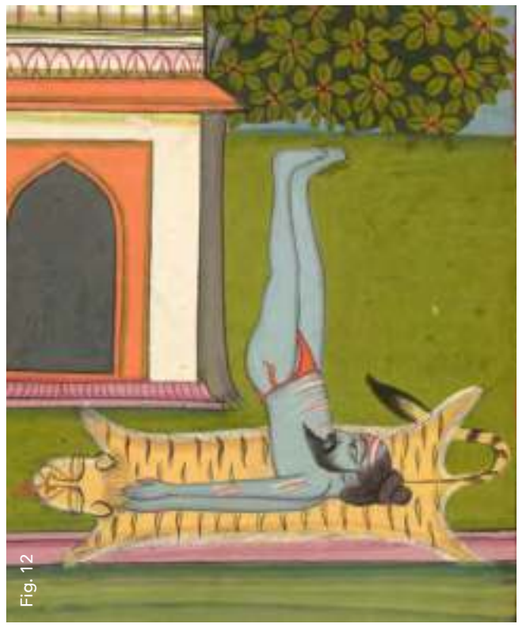
Fig. 12


Fig. 13

SERIES: ŚABDATATTVAM

Repha

The syllable, "ra", referred to as "repha" in the Sanskrit language, enjoys a unique status among varṇa-s, but it has not been critically investigated into.

BY DR. NAVEEN BHAT

VARṆA-S or the letters of a language are its foundational elements – they form words and words form sentences which ultimately convey the desired meaning. *Spoṭavāda*, the semantics of Sanskrit grammar, discusses in great detail the importance of *varṇa*-s and the meaningfulness of syllables. Syllables are of great significance in grammatical and non-grammatical discussions of Sanskrit literature. Pāṇinian grammar examines the *utpatti-sthānam* (place of origin) and the *prayatna* (palatal effort) of every syllable. *Pāṇinīya Śikṣā* explains the method of *varṇotpatti* (origin of syllables) in great detail.[1] Besides their grammatical significance, *varṇa*-s are greatly valued in spiritual practices – each *varṇa* represents a deity. For example, the varṇa-s "*ya*", "*ra*", "*la*", and "*kha*" represent *vāyu*, *agni*, *pṛthivī* and *ākāsha* respectively, and are used to invoke and gratify the deities in rituals. A similar idea is echoed in a *subhāṣita* – *amantram akṣaram nāsti* (*Subhāṣitaratnākaraḥ* 233-29) – every syllable is equal to a mantra.

In Sanskrit, all *varṇa*-s are pronounced with the suffix "*kāra*" – like, "*a-kāra*", "*ma-kāra*", "*sa-kāra*", etc. The *vārttika*, *varṇāt-kāraḥ*, which is an addendum to the Pāṇinian *sūtra*, *rogākhyāyām ṇvul bahulam* (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 3.3.108), governs the addition of this suffix to all *varṇa*-s – with the only exception of the letter, "*ra*". Unlike the other *varṇa*-s, the suffix "*ipha*" is added to this by the *vārttika*, *rādiphaḥ*. Therefore, "*ra*" is referred to as "*repha*" (*ra+ipha*) in the literary works of Sanskrit. *Rādiphaḥ* finds strict application in Sanskrit grammar. Yet, there are a few verses that employ "*ra-kāra*" instead of "*repha*" – for example, *rakārādīni nāmāni* in the *Padma Purāṇa* and *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇam*.

Both *vārttika*-s are validated in the great commentary of *maharṣi* Patañjali, the final authority on Pāninian grammar. Yet, there is no significant discussion on this exceptional suffix, "*ipha*", in the protracted tradition of Sanskrit grammar – except for a readily available answer, *śabdaśakti svabhāva* (the innate nature of syllables), this has not been explored much. Therefore, this article attempts to discuss the unique features of the *repha*.

Pronunciation

Ra-varṇa is pronounced through the contact between the tongue and the roof of the mouth (*mūrdhā*). This is rather difficult to pronounce for early learners. It is often noticed that a baby trying to speak for the first time faces great difficulty in pronouncing this sound – either independently or within a compound; the "*ra*" usually gets pronounced as "*la*". Difficulty in pronouncing "*ra*" is ubiquitous and not limited to Indian languages – in fact, there are several training centres to teach the correct pronunciation of this letter.

Ra Pratyāhāra

Pratyāhāra is a prominent feature of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* – it is the bringing together of several letters by mentioning only the first and the last letters for the sake of brevity. Pāṇini employed 42 such *pratyāhāra*-s by taking a particular letter and associating it with a mute final letter (*anubandha*) of the 14 *Śivasutra*-s, with a view to include all letters beginning with the letter uttered and ending with the letter which precedes the mute letter. It can be said that the practice of using such abbreviations was in existence before Pāṇini. The term "*pratyāhāra*" is not actually used by Pāṇini; it is found in the *Ṛk-tantra* – *pratyāhārārtho varṇonubandho vyañjanam*. Pāṇini has not given any definition of the term *pratyāhāra* – he has simply given the method of forming them, and has himself profusely used them.

Of the 42 *pratyāhāra*-s, 41 have consonants as their mute letters. The only exception is the "*ra*" *pratyāhāra* which employs a vowel as its mute letter. The "*ra*" *pratyāhāra* includes two letters – "*ra*" and "*la*". The utility of this pratyāhāra is very limited; yet it is sanctioned and validated by the *Mahābhāṣyam*. Perhaps coincidently, yet very strikingly, the constituents of *ra pratyāhāra* ("*ra*" and "*la*") commonly share phonetic interchangeability between them – for example – *romaśaḥ-lomaśaḥ*, *karmaṣaḥ-kalmaṣaḥ*, etc. This interchangeability is also supported by the rule, *ralayorabhedaḥ*.

On the other hand, the Prākṛta language – while adopting Sanskrit words – ignores all the *repha* sounds in a compound that contains this letter, and doubles the subsequent letter instead.[2] For example, *arka-akka*, *karma-kamma*, etc.

Repha and Vowels

In the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, the *sūtra*, *nājjhalau* (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.1.10), prevents homogeneity (*sāvarṇyam*) between vowels and consonants. But interestingly, the consonants "*ra*" and "*la*" are homogenous with the vowels "*ṛ*" and "*ḷ*" respectively. "*Ḷṛ*" is used very rarely – perhaps only the root "*kḷṛp*"– while "*ṝ*" is used widely. The *Mahabhāṣyam* discusses the *repha* as an integral part of the vowel "*ṛ*" under the *sutra*, *raṣābhyām noṇaḥ samānapade* (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 8.4.1).

Variants/Allophones of *Repha*

There are no variants of the *repha* in the Sanskrit language, but its variants are found in south Indian languages. The *repha* is the only *avargīya* (non-classified) consonant to have variants. In these languages, there are two types of the *repha* – one is similar to the Sanskrit *repha*, and the other is peculiar to each language; in Kannada, for example, the second *repha* is identified as *śakaṭa repha*.

Śithila-dvitva

According to the rule, *saṁyoge guru* (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.4.11), a *laghu* (short) syllable is treated as *guru* (long) if the letter subsequent to it is a compound. Chandasśāstra (Piṅgala's *sūtra*, *prahre vā*) makes an exception to this rule in the case of the compounds, "*pra*" and "*hra*" – if either the compound "*pra*" or "*hra*" follows a *laghu* syllable, the *laghu* is treated as a *laghu*, instead of a *guru*. We see examples of this in the works of poets like Kālidāsa[3], Māgha[4] and Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri[5], etc. We also see the application of this rule in the works of *haḷe* (old) Kannaḍa. A keen observation tells us that *śithiladvitva* (soft-duality) is a rather natural occurrence.

Conclusion

The attributes of the *repha* discussed here show that this syllable, "*ra*", enjoys a special status in most languages. This topic, albeit of great importance, has not been critically investigated into. It is hoped that this article will lead to further research in this direction. ॐ

[1] *ātmā buddhyā sametyārthān mano yuñkte vivakṣayāmanaḥ kāyāgnimāhanti sa prerayati mārutam* (*Pāṇini Śikṣā* 6)

[2] *sarvatra lavarām avandre* (*haimaṁ prākkṛta vyākaraṇam*)

[3] *sā mañgalasnānaviśuddhagātrī grahītapratyudgmanīyavastrā* (*Kumārasambhava* 7.11)

[4] *prāptanābhihradamajjanamāshu* (*Śiṣupālavadha* 10.60)

[5] *rājñām madhye sapadi jahriṣe* (*Nārāyaṇīyam* 813)

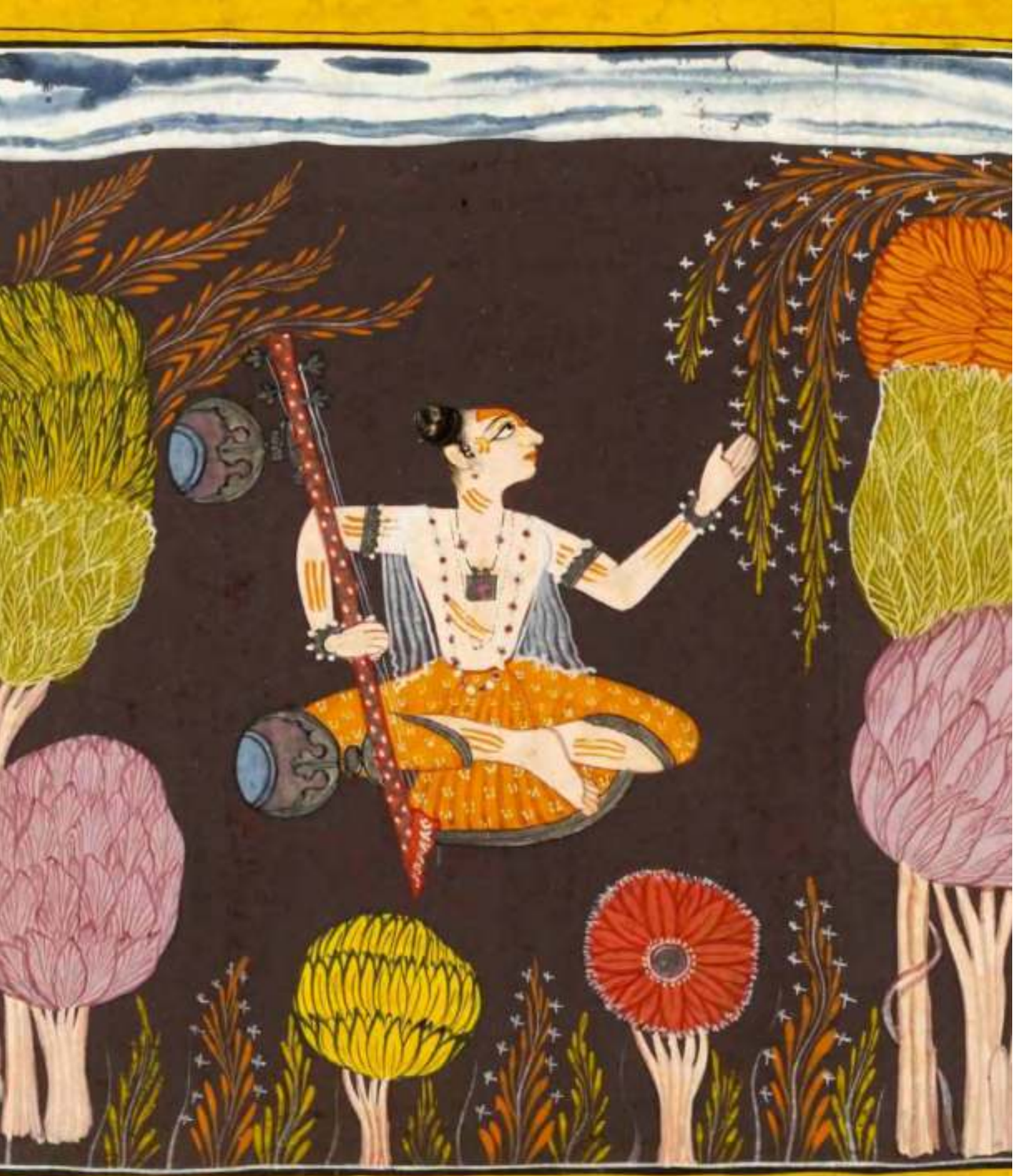

Fig. 14

SERIES: PROSODY IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE

Prosody in Poetics

Chandas bestows upon poetry charm, sweetness and melody. The study of Chandas broadens the view of the poet and the connoisseur, and leads to the experience of rasa, the ultimate rupture.

BY DR. SHREEHARI V. GOKARNAKAR

IF William Wordsworth defined poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings... [taking] its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility", Bhāmaha defined *kāvya* as *śabdārthau sahitau kāvyam* (*kāvya* is that in which words and their meanings are intended); Viśvanātha, in his *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, defined *kāvya* as *vākyam rasātmakam kāvyam* (a sentence that depicts *rasa* is *kāvya*). *Kāvya*, in Sanskrit literature, maybe of three types – *gadya* (prose), *padya* (metrical compositions), and *campū* (combination of prose and poetry).

Importance of Chandas in Poetry

The knowledge of meters (Chandas/prosody) is essential for any *kāvya* – *gadya* or *padya*; but it is the *padya-kāvya* which bears the advantageous feature of meters. Chandas bestows upon poetry *subhagatā* (charm), *mādhurya* (sweetness) and *geyatā* (melody). It provides a structure for the words to be laid upon, and sets a limit for expression. The combination of long and short syllables provides tempo and rhythm to the *kāvya* and makes the expression sonorous and attractive. Hence, *padya-kāvya* can be hummed and enjoyed again and again. It gets carved on the mind. It is commonly experienced that *padya-kāvya*-s are easier to remember than *gadya-kāvyā*-s. Hence, a larger number of poets resorted to write *padya-kāvya*-s. Further, Chandas is conducive to produce the ultimate effect of poetry (*rasa*) – through the assistance of prosody, poetry leads the connoisseur to the experience of *rasa*, the ultimate rupture or bliss.

Because Chandaḥśāstra is a Vedāṅga, it is not included in Sāhityaśāstra (poetics), but it is a prerequisite for any poet. Bhāmaha, in the *Kāvyālaṅkāra*, states that those who wish to write *kāvya* should regard the following as essential: grammar, meters (i.e. the science of meters), the nature of words (for conveying the primary and secondary sense), meanings of words, the *itihāsa*-s, the ways of the world, logic and the arts.[1] Daṇḍin remarks that prosody is a boat for a reader who desires to cross over the ocean of poetry.[2] Mammaṭa, in the first chapter of his *Kāvyaprakāśa*, describes *kāvya-kāraṇa*-s (causes of poetry) as follow:

> *śaktir-nipuṇatā loka-śāstra-kāvya-ādi-avekṣaṇāt* |
> *kāvyajña-śikṣayā-abhyāsa iti hetus-tad-udbhave* || (*Kāvyaprakāśa* 1.3)

[1] *śabdaś-chando-abhidhāna-arthaḥ itihāsa-āśrayaḥ kathāḥ* | *loko yuktiḥ kalās-ca-iti mantavyā kāvyavaikharī* || (*Kāvyālaṅkāra* 1.9)
[2] *sā vidyā naus-titīrṣūṇām gambhiram kāvya-sāgaram* || (*Kāvyādarśa* I.12)

Accordingly, there are three causes of *kāvya*: *śakti* (seed of poetry), *nipuṇatā* (proficiency) and *abhyāsa* (practice). Proficiency in poetry (*nipuṇatā*) is acquired through a detailed study of the ways of the world, by studying the science of meters, grammar, lexicons, arts, etc. and also by studying the compositions of great poets.[3] Here, Mammaṭa considers Chandas as one of the significant tools of *kāvya*.

Thus, we see that Sāhityaśāstra promotes the study of Chandas as a requirement for creating flawless poetry. Poetry without flaws is considered very important by rhetoricians and grammarians. For example, Bhāmaha writes, "Not being a poet does not lead to evil or disease or punishment. But being a bad poet is, according to the wise, nothing less than death."[4] Rājaśekhara writes, "Instead of being a bad poet, it is better not to be a poet; because a bad composition seems to be a death rattle."[5] Maharṣi Patañjali states, "A single word, well-understood and well-used, becomes wish-fulfilling on earth and in heaven. (On the other hand) a word wrongly used results in *adharma* (unrighteousness)."[6] To improve the quality of compositions, then, rhetoricians have discussed the flaws/defects of *kāvya*-s that one can avoid.

Faults in Meters according to Bhāmaha

Mammaṭa, in his *Kāvyaprakaśa*, defines defect (*dośa*) in poetry as that which represses its principal meaning.[7] Bhāmaha lists two faults related to meters, viz., *yatibhraṣṭa* and *bhinnavṛtta*.[8]

Yatibhraṣṭa/bhagnayati

That (composition) which is not in consonance with the norms of the use of words and caesura (pauses/*yati*) in metrical compositions is called *yatibhraṣṭa*.[9] Bhojadeva, in the *Śṛiṅgāraprakāśa*[10], and the *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa*[11], and Keśavamiśra, in the *Alaṅkāraśekhara*, call this defect as *bhagna-yati*.[12] For instance, consider,

vidyudvantas-tamāla-asita-vapuṣa ime vārivāhā dhvananti || (*Kāvyālaṅkāra* 4.1)

"*These clouds, which flash lightning, which are dark as the Tamāla trees, are making sounds (of thunder).*"

This is a composition in the meter *sragdharā* which consists of 21 syllables in each stanza; here, the *yati* (pause) must be given after every seven syllables. However, in the above composition, the caesura falls after the eighth syllable (between the '*a*' and '*si*' of '*asita*'). This is faulty.

Bhinnavṛtta/bhagnacchandaḥ

This defect of "wrong choice of meter" occurs because of improper distribution of the number of long and short syllables.[13] Consider the following:

[3] *lokasya sthāvara-jaṅgamātmaka-loka-vṛttasya śāstrāṇām chando-vyākaraṇa-abhidhāna-kośa-kalā-catur-varga-gaja-turaga-khadga-ādi-lakṣaṇa-granthānām kāvyānām ca mahākavi-nibandhānām, ādi-grahaṇa-ādi-itihāsa-ādinām ca vimarśanād vyutpattiḥ* | (*Kāvyaprakāśa* 1.3)
[4] *na-akavitvam-adhamāya vyādhaye daṇdanāya vā* | *kukavitvam punaḥ sākṣāt-mṛtim-āhur-manīṣiṇaḥ* || (*Kāvyālankāra*)
[5] *varam-akavih na punah kukavis-syāt* | *kukavitā hi socchvāsam marnam* || (*Kāvyamimāṁsā* 12)
[6] *ekaḥ śabdaḥ samyag-jnataḥ suprayuktaḥ svarge loke kāmadhug-bhavati, duṣprayuktaḥ punar-adharmāya sampadyate* | (*Mahābhaṣya*, *Paspaśāhnika*)
[7] *mukhyā-artha-hatir-doṣaḥ* | (*Kāvyaprakaśa* 7.49)
[8] *śabda-hīnam yati-bhraṣṭam bhinna-vṛttam visandhi ca* | (*Kāvyālaṅkāra* 4.1)
[9] *yatiś-chando-adhirūdhānām śabdānām yā vicāraṇa* | *tad-apetam yati-bhraṣṭam-iti nirdiṣyate yathā* || (*Kāvyālaṅkāra* 4.24)
[10] *asthāna-viratir-yatra tat yati-bhraṣṭam* | (*Śṛiṅgāraprakāśa* Chapter 9, p.336)
[11] *asthāne viratir-yasya tat-tu bhagnayati-iti-iṣyate* | (*Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* 1.27)
[12] *bhagna-krama-yatic-chando ….* | (*Alaṅkāraśekhara* 2.1)
[13] *guror-laghoś-ca varṇacya yo/sthāne racanā-vidhḥ* | *tan-nyūna-adhikatā vā-api bhinna-vṛttam-idam yathā* || (*Kāvyālaṅkāra* 4.26)

bhramati bhramara-māla kānaneṣūnmadāsau |
virahita-ramaṇīko'rhasyadya gantum || (*Kāvyālaṅkāra* 4.26)

"*This intoxicated garland of bees is roaming round the forest. You, who are separated from your lover, should start now to go (to her).*"

This is addressed to a man who is separated from his lover during winter. Here, a deficiency of two syllables is observed in the last quarter. Bhojadeva in the *Śṛiṅgāraprakāśa*[14] and in the *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa*[15], and Keśavamiśra in the *Alaṅkāraśekhara*[16], call this defect *bhagnacchandaḥ*.

Faults in Meters according to Mammaṭa

Mammaṭa, in the *Kāvyaprakāśa*, discusses three types of "marred meters" or *hatavṛttam*.[17] It is explained as, *hatam lakṣaṇa-anugame-api aśravyam, aprāpta-guru-bhāvānta-laghu, rasa-anuguṇam ca yatra tat hatavṛttam*.[18] They are as follows:

***Aśrāvyam* (Unmelodious)**: Here, the composition may technically be correct, but unpleasant to the ear. For example,

amṛtamamṛtam kaḥ sandeho madhūnyapi nānyathā
madhuramadhikam cūtasyāpi prasannarasam phalam |
sakṛdapi punaḥ madhyasthaḥ san rasāntaravijjanaḥ
vadatu yadihānyat svādu syāt priyādaśanacchadāt || (*Kāvyaprakāśa* 7.215)

[14] *chando-bhaṅgavat bhinna-vṛttam* | (*Śṛiṅgāraprakāśa* Chapter 9, p.336)
[15] *bhagnacchanda iti prāhur-yac-chandobhaṅgavat-vacaḥ* | (*Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* 1.27)
[16] *bhagna-krama-yatic-chando ….* | (*Alaṅkākaśekhara* 2.1)
[17] *pratikūla-varṇam-upahata-pluta-visargam visandhi hatavṛttam* | (*Kāvyaprakāśa* 7.53)
[18] *Kāvyaprakāśa* 7.53.

Fig. 15

> *Even a fool can easily attain the four-fold aims of human life through kāvya.*
>
> **— Daṇḍin**

This is in the meter *hāriṇi*. In the first line, the word "*amṛtamamṛtam*", and the phrase "*yadihānyat svādu syāt*" in the fourth line, though formally correct, are not pleasant to the ear.

Aprāpta-guru-bhāvānta-laghu: Here, the last syllable of the foot of the poem is not elongated. For example,

> *vikasita-sahakara-tārahāri*
> *parimala-gunjita-punjita-dvirephaḥ* |
> *navakisalaya-cāmara-śrīr*
> *harati munerapi mānasam vasantaḥ* || (*Kāvyaprakāśa* 7.217)

Here, the meter is *puṣpitāgrā*. This is a half-symmetrical meter which contains 12 syllables in the first and the third stanzas and 13 in the second and the fourth. In this meter, all the last syllables are supposed to be elongated, but, the first quarter ends with "*hāri*" which is not elongated as per the requirement.

Rasānanuguṇam: Here, the meter chosen may not be in harmony with the *rasa* depicted. For example,

> *hā nrupa hā budha kavibandho vipra-sahasra-samāśraya deva* |
> *mugdha-vidagdha-sabhāntara-ratna kvāsi gataḥ kva vayam ca tavaite* || (*Kāvyaprakāśa* 7.221)

Here, the meter is *dodhaka*, suitable for comic-sentiment (*hāsya*). But here, it has been used to evoke the tragic-sentiment, *karuṇa*.[19]

Viśvanātha mentions the same three defects in his *Sāhityadarpana* (7.5). Most rhetoricians – by and large – describe five defects of meters in *kāvya*-s, albeit their examples differ.[20] It is however possible that readers may not find the said defects as "defective". Ultimately, the knowledge of faults in meters makes it easier to create flawless compositions.

Conclusion

The study of prosody broadens the view of a poet and the connoisseur. Śrī Rādhā Dāmodara Gosvāmī says, "Without knowing the characteristics of the different meters, those who read poetry in public places, are cutting their own heads without realizing it."[21] Daṇḍin remarks, "For those who wish to sail into the deep ocean of poetry, Chandas is like a gigantic boat."[22] Ultimately, *rasa* is the most significant aspect of any composition. In order to achieve this, the poet must use the correct meter. The study of Chandas is therefore very important.

[19] *dodhakavṛttam hasyocitam karuṇe nibaddhamiti doṣaḥ* | (*Kāvyaprakāśa* 7.221)
[20] *Sāhityakaumudi* 7.5
[21] *Chando-lakṣaṇa-hīnam sabhāsu kāvyam pathanti ye manujāḥ* | *kurvanto'pi svena sva-śiraś-chedam na te vidyuḥ*|| (*Chandaḥ Kaustubha* 1.4)
[22] *sā vidyā naur-vivikṣūṇām gambhiram kāvyasāgarm* | (*Kāvyādarśa* 1.12)

SERIES: FUNDAMENTALS OF ADVAITA

Darśanamāla

Śri Nārāyaṇa guru's Darśanamāla is a rare poetic work that details the fundamentals of Advaita Vedānta. It was composed to oblige a request for an easy but profound text that outlines the principles of the śāstra.

BY DR. ANAND S.

IN the annals of history, seldom do we come across philosophers who also were radical social-reformers. Śrī Nārāyaṇa Guru or Nāṇu (hereafter referred as Gurudeva) was such a philosopher – propagating the principles of Advaita Vedānta through his compositions in Malayalam and Sanskrit – and a social-reformer – campaigning extensively against social inequalities and discriminations.

Gurudeva was born in 1855 in Chempazhanty (near Trivandrum) to an Īzhava (*avarṇa*/outcast) couple, Mādan āśān[1] and Kuṭṭiyamma. Initially, he pursued his education in a *gurukula* in his hometown under Mūtta Pillai. After his mother's death, he moved to central Travancore and learned the Veda-s, Upaniṣad-s, Sāhitya and Nyāya under a Sanskrit scholar, Rāman Pillai āśān. Later, he returned to his hometown and started a school for the local children of the village, and earned the moniker, "Nāṇu āśān". In the following years, Gurudeva fought to impart the Upaniṣadic principle, *tattvamasi* (that thou art) to everyone, irrespective of caste. In a society afflicted with caste-related atrocities, Gurudeva's efforts at social reforms were like water for a parched throat – his determination led to social-awakening and consequently, the uplifting of the oppressed classes in Kerala.

Social-reform

Gurudeva's social-reform activities are a plenty. For example, in 1888, Gurudeva chose to consecrate an idol – a stone from the banks of a river – inside a temple in Aruvippuram, a village near Trivandrum. When Brāhmin priests questioned his authority to conduct such a priestly work, Gurudeva silenced them by saying, "The Śiva idol installed here is not a Brāhmaṇa Śiva, it is an Īzhava-śiva."[2] In 1927, Gurudeva consecrated a mirror inside a temple in Kalavancode, a small village in the Alappuzha district of Kerala. The resolve behind the consecration was inscribed on the mirror as "Om Śānti". This is popularly known in Malayalam as *kannāḍi pratiṣṭha*. In Kerala, there are now 45 temples that he consecrated – most of them are simply slabs/mirrors with inscriptions; they stand different from conventional deities but they impart higher philosophical doctrines. This is illustrated by a famous dialogue between Gurudeva (***G***) and Śri Vāgbhaḍānanda (***V***), known for his rigorous philosophical argumentation. Vāgbhaḍānanda was opposed to the ritualistic culture and idol worship,

[1] *āśān* is the term used to denote a teacher of the traditional village *gurukula*-s of Kerala.

[2] In Kerala, the concept of caste was made complex by addition of innumerable regional variations. The hierarchy of caste in the descending order was Brāhmaṇa or Nambūtiri, Nair, Īzhava or Chowan, Pulaya, Kurava and Nāyādi.

Fig.16

and favored a rationalistic presentation of the Advaitic doctrine. The dialogue is as follows:

> ***V***: *Since you are an advaitin, I wanted to visit you. You are constructing temples and supporting idol worship. How do both go together?*
> ***G***: *People want temples and I believe it would at least ensure some cleanliness among them.*
> ***V***: *Since you are an advaitācārya, it is your obligation to call out to the mass to propagate your theory.*
> ***G***: *I tried earlier, but no one seemed to hear my call.*
> ***V***: *Temple worship is strongly opposed by us since it is incompatible with the doctrine of advaita.*
> ***G***: *I too support you in this regard.*
>
> Bhaskaran (2017:90-91)

Another example of Gurudeva's commitment towards the oppressed class: the public road near the Mahādeva temple at Vaikom (kingdom of Travancore) restricted the entry of members of the lower castes. Gurudeva boldly walked on it and triggered the famous Vaikom *satyāgraha* in 1924, an agitation against untouchability. Later, this agitation led to the issuance of the "Temple Entry Proclamation" that allowed entry to the people of the lower caste into temples and public roads.

Darśanamāla

Gurudeva's literary compositions are mostly in Malayalam and Sanskrit. They are of diverse genres – *darśana*, *prabodhana*, *devatāstuti*, *anuvāda*, *prārthana*, etc. Of his *darśana* compositions, the *Darśanamāla* has captivated the minds of spiritual aspirants, devotees, Vedāntic enthusiasts and academicians alike. Versified in a lucid style, the *Darśanamāla* presents the fundamentals of Vedānta descriptively. Its ten chapters display an analytical approach that helps to avert the complexities and confusions that arise through *avidyā* and imparts the right *darśana*. Topics like *māyā*, *adhyāsa*, *jñāna*, etc. are dealt with in detail and the work concludes with a description of *nirvāṇa*, the ultimate goal of life. Perusing the verses of the *Darśanamāla*, one would surely recognize it as the divine elixir extracted by churning the ocean of the *Prasthānatraya*.

Gurudeva on "Unreality of the *Prapañca*"

> *Lack of ātmajñāna (knowledge about one's own Self) indeed is the cause of all the worries.*
>
> – *Darśanamāla* 1.7

Gurudeva, in his *Darśanamāla*, explains the unreality of the *prapañca* (world). The *prapañca* was created by Īśvara in a way that every *jīva* is afflicted with the *ṣaḍripu*-s (the six enemies – *kāma*, *krodha*, etc.). The vastness and multitude of the *prapañca* instigates wonder in the mind of every *jīva*. But contemplation upon its changing nature will help to recognize its unreality. Such a realization will lead to *niścayātmikā buddhi* – the right knowledge regarding the permanence of *ātman*.

Śri Mātā Amṛtānandamayī *devī* said, "The *prapañca* is like a seed which comprises both the real and the unreal. Real is the *ātman*, the awareness within us; but the perceived world, including one's body, changes and perishes, hence it is unreal" (Paramatmānanda, 2003:71). In the *Darśanamāla*, Gurudeva writes: "The *prapañca* was non-existent prior to creation and like a magician, Īśvara created *prapañca* by his *saṅkalpa*. Creation existed within Īśvara in the form of *vāsana*-s and this manifested like a dream. Since there is no reality for the objects occurring in a dream, the whole *prapañca* is illusory and Īśvara is the only reality" (*Darśanamāla* 1.1-3). This is along the lines of the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* (2.7.1): "Prior to creation, the *prapañca* was nonexistent (from a *pāramārthika*-perspective[3]) and the multifarious world was created (from a *vyāvahārika*-perspective) from the nonexistent." Therefore, from the perspective of the absolute truth, there is no *prapañca* that exists as separate from Brahman. Gurudeva writes, "If the *prapañca* is considered to be real, and yet, its existence is dependent on the Brahman, the logical fallacy, *ātmāśraya*[4] occurs; further, the *prapañca* cannot be understood to be self-dependent since it results in the fallacy *asambhava*." (*Darśanamāla* 2.6).

The *prapañca* is unreal; hence, arguments about its creation and dissolution is futile. *Ācārya* Gauḍapāda, in his *kārikā*-s, denies the existence of the *prapañca* by propounding *ajātivāda*. He opines, "The non-dual *ātman* is the only reality and the notions of *sṛṣṭi*, *sthiti* and *laya* are illusory and occur through the power of *māyā*... like the vision of objects in a dream occurring through *māyā* has no reality, the objective world in the waking state is unreal. It is the mind that manifests as the world." (*Gauḍapādakārikā* 27-30).

Realizing the unreality of the *prapañca*, transcending mental dualities, a spiritual aspirant strives for Self-realization. In the words of *ācārya* Śaṅkara, "*bodho'anya-sādhanebhyo hi sākṣān-mokṣaika-sādhanam*" (*Ātmabodha* 2). Therefore, awareness and knowledge about one's own Self is the only means to liberation.

In the forthcoming article, we will discuss Gurudeva's exposition on the nature of *māya*, and the ways to overcome it and tread the path to Self-realization.

[3] Advaita Vedānta considers three notions of reality viz. *pāramārthika*, *vyāvahārika* and the *prātibhāsika*, which means absolute, empirical and the ephemeral respectively.

[4] Nyāya-śāstra discusses various logical fallacies that could occur while stating a definition – *avyāpti* (being too narrow), *ativyāpti* (too broad) and *asambhava* (impossible). *Ātmāśraya* (self-dependence) is another logical defect that leads to circularity.

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INVITED CONTRIBUTION

Silver
and the World of Rituals

According to Indian mythology, hiraṇya — gold and silver — are produced from the deity, Agni; gold is the seed of Agni-devata, and silver is his tears. So it is that gold is considered auspicious, and silver is inauspicious. In the world of rituals, then, silver is accorded a secondary position.

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USE of metals in any civilization is a decisive factor in its history. Ancient Indian literature can play an important role in shedding light on the use of metals in ancient Indian civilization. The present paper discusses the usage of metals in rituals in ancient India with reference to Vedic and post-Vedic ritual texts.

Precious Metals

Vedic Saṁhitā-s (S) like *Vājasaneyi* enlist a number of metals in a sacrificial context[1]. In the Vedic period, it seems that the word "*hiraṇya*" could refer to both gold and silver. The commentator Mahīdhara explains *hiraṇya* as both gold and silver[2]. Further, he separates these two metals from the others by using the term "*akupya*". *Kupya* refers to any base metal but gold and silver[3]. So *akupye* (in dual form) means gold and silver. Thus, the Sanskrit term "*hiraṇya*" seems to denote both gold and silver in the Vedic times; further, they were considered different than the other metals. However in the post-Vedic period, classical Sanskrit language has continued to use the word "*hiraṇya*" only for gold.

[1] 18.13: "*aśmā ca me mṛttikā ca me… hiraṇyaṃ ca me ayas ca me shyāmaṃ ca me lohaṃ ca me sīsaṃ ca me trapu ca me yajñena kalpantām.*"
[2] Comment on *Vājasaneyi* S 18.13: "*… hiraṇyaṃ suvarṇaṃ rajataṃ vā 'draviṇa akupyaos ca ity abhidhānāt'.*" Also see *Amarakośa*, 2nd Kāṇḍa Vaśyavarga, v.91
[3] Monier-Williams 1964: 291

Gold has always been coveted by Indians in the past and the present. For example, a seer from *Ṛgveda* (6th *maṇḍala*) exclaims that gaining ten golden balls from Divodāsa is the most delightful gift.[4,5] According to mythology, gold is considered to be the seed of the deity, Agni[6]. Hence, gold was the most preferred metal in Vedic rituals. In general, gold occupied the first position in the hierarchy of metals. Against this background, what was the position of the other *hiraṇya* or *akupya* i.e. silver? Let us explore the Vedic and post-Vedic references in a ritual context to find an answer to this question.

Terms denoting silver

Rajata, *raupya* or *rūpya* and *durvarṇa* are some of the commonly used terms to denote silver in Sanskrit[7]. However, the Saṁhitā texts[8] use the expression "*rajataṃ hiraṇyam*" to denote it, as interpreted by modern scholars.

Mythological background

The story of the origin of silver is found in the following famous *arthavāda* (justification)[9]:

The gods and the demons were in conflict; the gods, in anticipation of the contest, deposited their desirable riches in Agni so that if the demons were to defeat them, their treasure would remain safe. However, Agni coveted the wealth and fled with it. The gods, having defeated the demons, pursued Agni in order to recover it. They fought violently to take it from him, so Agni wept. The story tells us that because Agni lamented (*arodīt*), his name became Rudra. The tears that were shed by him became silver. Since tears represent sorrow, silver represents sorrow. Therefore, silver is not a suitable gift, because it originated from tears. If a person gifts silver on strewn grass (*barhis*) in a Vedic ritual, the texts warn that there will be lamentation in his house before the year is over:

> "*… tad devā vijitya avarurutsamānā anv āyan tad asya sahasā aditsanta sa 'rodīt yady arodīt…yad aśrvaśīyata tad rajataṃ hiraṇyam abhavat. hiraṇyam adakṣiṇyam aśrujaṃ hi yo barhiṣi dadāti purā asya saṃvatsarād gṛhe rudanti. tasmād barhiṣi na deyam …*"
> (*Taittirīya Saṁhitā* 1.5.1.2)

[4] 47.23: "*daśāśvān daśa kośān vastra adhibhojanā. daśo hiraṇyapiṇḍān divodāsād asāniṣam.*"
[5] E.g. SB. 5.2.3.6. In *Rājasūya*, when a sacrificial bread for dual deity Agni-Viṣṇu is offered gold is given to the priests as sacrificial gift.
[6] *Taittirīya* B. 1.1.3.8: "*… āpo varuṇasya patnaya āsan. tā agnir abhy adhāyat. tāḥ samabhavat. tasya retas parāpatat. tad hiraṇyam abhavat. …*"
[7] *Amarakośa* 2nd *Kāṇḍa*, *Vaśyavarga*, v.96
[8] E.g. *Taittirīya* S 1.1.5.1
[9] Translation is done by the author.

In this passage, we find the phrase "*rajataṃ hiraṇyam*". It is translated by modern scholars as "white gold", but it is usually understood to be silver. We find another phrase, "*harita-hiraṇya*" – this may be translated as pure gold[10]. Reference to white-gold or silver-gold (*rajata-hiraṇya*) is also found in the writing of the famous archaeologists, Raymond and Allchin. They opine, "Much of the Indus gold is of light colour indicating a high silver content, or rather that it is unrefined electrum" (Allchin 1965: 284). This supports the usage of the term in the earlier Vedic texts.

If we compare the above myths woven around the origin of gold and silver, we find that both are produced from the deity, Agni, through different forms. Gold – the seed of Agni – is indicative of fertility and continuation. Vedic Indians revered the phenomenon of continuity, so gold was considered to be auspicious. On the contrary, silver originated from the tears of Agni and so it symbolized distress. Hence, the Vedic Indians looked upon silver negatively.

The imagery regarding silver shows some change in later Brāhmaṇa (B) texts like *Śatapatha* (*SB*) and *Jaiminīya* (*JB*). Here, silver represents the moon/night. For example, the *JB* describes a *prāyaścitta* related to *Agnihotra*. In this rite, one has to hold a piece of silver symbolizing the moon/night:

> *"abhyudiyāt kiṃ tatra karma kā prāyaścittiḥ? etasmāt dha vai viśvedevā apakrāmanti yasy āhavanīyam anuddhṛtam abhyudeti. sa darbheṇa rajataṃ hiraṇyaṃ prabadhya purastād dharet. tac candramaso rūpaṃ kriyate. rātrer vā etad rūpam. tad rātre rūpaṃ kriyate."*
>
> (*JB* 1.63)

Identification of silver with the moon and the starry night can be easily understood on the basis of its appearance.

[10] E.g. *Kāṭhaka* S 10.4: *"agnaye vaiśvānarāya dvādaśakapālaṃ nirvaped … brahmavarcas kāmas tasya **haritaṃ hiraṇyaṃ** madhye kuryād **rajatam** upariṣṭāt …"*

Usage of silver in rituals

In order to understand position of the silver in the world of rituals, we shall now examine the actual ritual-related data from Vedic texts and post-Vedic texts such as the *Purāṇa*-s (P). We can classify its usage as follows:

(a) Silver in combination with gold

Silver is frequently mentioned with gold. For example, the *Kāṭhakasaṁhitā* describes a ritual for attaining food, prosperity and the lustre of Vedic knowledge. A person desirous of any of these shall prepare a sacrificial bread on twelve pot-sherds for Agni Vaiśvānara. Gold (*harita-hiraṇya*) shall be inserted inside it as its core. Then, silver (*rajata*) shall be placed above it and it shall be covered (to keep away from oneself) with ash. The ash removes the impurity or harm from the silver[11]. Here, we see that the negativity associated with silver is reiterated.

In some Vedic rituals, a silver plate is placed below and a golden one is placed above certain things. For example, in a *Rājasūya* ritual, the *adhvaryu* places a silver plate below the seat of the sacrificer and a golden plate above his head. The silver plate is placed in order to protect him from death[12]. According to *SB* 12.8.3.11, during the *Sautrāmaṇi* rite, a silver plate is kept under the left foot of the sacrificer and a golden one is kept under his right foot. The latter is said to symbolize lightening and the former symbolizes hail. Thus, he is protected from these two adversities.

Sometimes, the usage of silver follows the usage of gold. In *Aśvamedha*[13], for example, an offering is given to the deity, Savitṛ Āsavitṛ. Here, silver is the priest's fee. However, it is preceded by an offering to another deity, Savitṛ Prasavitṛ, where gold is gifted to the priest. This is done in order to maintain the variety of colours. This kind of variety is a prerequisite for choosing a horse for the sacrifice.

[11] 10.4: *"yat rajataṃ tat saha bhasmanā apohati. śamalagṛhīto vā eṣa yo alaṃ brahmavarcasāya san na brahmavarcasī bhavati. śamalam eva asmād apahanti."*
[12] *Maitrāyaṇī* S 4.4.4: *"… diśa enaṃ vy āsthāpayati … vyāghracarma viveṣṭayati … mṛtyoḥ pāhi iti rajataṃ rukmam adhastād upohate mṛtyor vā etad rūpaṃ yad vyāghro …"*
[13] SB 13.4.2.10

As mentioned already, silver is compared to the moon and the night and gold is identified with the sun and the day. In the *Agnihotra* rite, if the *āhavanīya* fire is not lifted from *gārhapatya* fire before the sun-set, then it is done so by holding a piece of gold in front of the fire. However, if *āhavanīya* fire is not lifted from *gārhapatya* fire after the sun-rise, then it is done by holding a piece of silver in front of the fire. So the association of silver and gold with the moon and the sun respectively was established in the world of Vedic rituals. Falk assigns another representation to the combination of gold and silver articles in the Vedic sacrifice[14].

Purāṇa-s implement the grouping of silver and gold in a different way. For example, for a vow named *Rohiṇī-candra-śayana*, the *Padmapurāṇa* enjoins the worship of the moon and his consort, Rohiṇī. One has to make the moon of silver and Rohiṇī of gold[15]. In another vow named *Pūrṇimā-vrata*, a golden image of Brahmā and a silver image of Sāvitrī, his wife, are prepared[16]. Sometimes figures are made by using gold and silver for different body-parts[17]. For example, in the *Jyeṣṭha-pañcaka-vrata*, the worship of Balarāma-Kṛṣṇa-Subhadrā is prescribed. Gifts of this vow include a cow adorned with gold on its horns and silver on its hooves[18]. A similar cow is to be gifted to attain heaven according to the *Agnipurāṇa*[19].

(b) Silver used independently

Ritualistic independent usage of silver is rare in Vedic times. In the *Pravargya* ritual, some sand is

[14] Falk 1991: 111
[15] *Uttarakhanda* 32.43: *"tadvat ca rohiṇīṃ kuryāt sauvarṇāṃ rājataḥ śaśī. …"*
[16] *Padma P. Sṛṣṭikhanḍa* 7.10-23: *"… brahmāṇaṃ kāñcanaṃ kṛtvā sāvitrīṃ rājatīṃ tathā."*
[17] *Agni* P.211.24-27: *"… mṛtyuṃjjayaṃ sam uddiśya dadyād āyur vivardhaye. pumān kṛṣṇatilaiḥ kāryo raupyadantaḥ suvarṇadṛk."*
[18] *Skanda* P. 2.2.32.26-68: *"ata ūrdhvaṃ pravakṣyāmi vrataṃ tad jyeṣṭhapañcakaṃ … ācārye dakṣiṇāṃ dadyāt suvarṇaṃ dhenum eva ca. svarṇaśṛṅgīṃ raupyakhurāṃ …"*
[19] 210.30-31: *"svarṇaśṛṅgī śaphaiḥ ropyaiḥ suśīlā vastrasaṃyutā. kāṃsyopadohā dātavyā kṣīriṇī gauḥ sadakṣiṇā. dātā asyāḥ svargam āpnoti vatsarān romasamṃitān."*

Fig. 17

spread to the north of *āhavanīya* fire and below it, a plate of *rajata-hiraṇya* is placed for two purposes: to protect the *Pravargya* from demons, and to keep the earth separated from the heated and glorious *Pravargya*. The logic of using silver is that it is white, and the earth too is white, so it is protected by silver (the principle of like produces like is applied here). For the former purpose, however, the text describes silver as the seed of Agni (instead of gold) and hence, it can drive away the enemies.

In later period, silver is independently prescribed on some occasions as desirable gifts. Thus, silver is to be gifted in order to attain strength according to the *Śivapurāṇa*[20]. *Matsyapurāṇa*[21] narrates a special use of silver. According to it, silver was produced from Śiva's eyes and therefore, it is a favourite of the manes. So, in *śrāddha* rites, silver vessels are used for offering them *arghya*, *piṇḍa* and *bhojya*.

[20] 1.15.49: "*raupyaṃ reto abhivṛddhy artham …*"

[21] 17.23-24: "*… tathā arghyapiṇḍabhojyādau pitṛṇāṃ rājataṃ matam. śivanetrodbhavaṃ yasmāt tasmāt pitṛvallabham. amaṅgalaṃ tad yatnena devakāryeṣu varjayet.*"

However, these vessels are strictly avoided in worship of deities because silver is inauspicious. Thus, the origin of silver continues its association with the eyes of a deity and its unfavourable position continues. This can be also observed as a supporting evidence in the evolution of Vedic Rudra into post-Vedic Śiva.

(c) Silver replaces gold

Usage of silver as a replacement of gold is very rare in the Vedas[22]. However, the Purāṇa-s have unhesitatingly prescribed it. For example, the *Garudapurāṇa* 1.133.3-17 and 134.1-6 depict the worship of Goddess Durgā in nine different forms on the ninth day of the bright fortnight (*śuklapakṣa*) in the month of Aśvina. These idols can be made of either gold or silver[23]. *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*[24] narrates the performance of a vow during the four rainy months. For this, one has to worship the mouth of an elephant made of gold, but a poor man may worship an idol made of silver if he cannot afford the gold. Thus, silver seems to be a choice for those who cannot afford gold. One can find many more examples of silver replacing gold. We must note that this change perhaps occurred when the social conditions became more compelling than the scriptural norms.

(d) Silver in accompaniment of other metals

Sometimes, silver is used along with metals like copper, iron, etc. In the three offerings of *Upasad* rite, iron is the first offering, silver is the second and gold is the third. This represents the three cities of demons (made of these metals) which were won by the gods after using these metals in this way[25]. So when a sacrificer wants to win a battle, this is imitated. Some instances can be found in the Purāṇa texts too. A vow related to god Kṛṣṇa is undertaken on the eight day of the dark fortnight in the month of Śrāvaṇa. In this, one must make figures of Yaśodā and infant Kṛṣṇa for worship. It can optionally be made of '*tri-loha*' i.e. by mixing gold, silver and copper[26].

[22] One example from the Veda-s is discussed above under "Silver used independently".

[23] E.g. *aṣṭamyāṃ nava gehāni dārujāny ekam eva vā. tasmin devī prakartavyā haimī vā rājatāpi vā.*

[24] *Uttaraparva* 33.2-7: "*sauavarṇaṃ gajavaktraṃ kṛtvā… mṛnmayāny api pātrāṇi vittahīnas tu kārayet. heraṃbaṃ rājataṃ tadvad vidhinā anena dāpayet.*"

[25] *Maitrāyaṇī* S 3.8.2: "*ayaḥ prathamāyām avadhāya juhoti rajataṃ madhyamāyāṃ haritam uttamāyām etad vai bṛhaspatiḥ devānāṃ pūr jayan akarod yatra puraṃ yudhyeyuḥ tatra etābhir juhuyāt…*"

Conclusion

The following observations can be made:

Silver is recognized commonly as *rajata* in Sanskrit language. *Rajata-hiraṇya* from Vedic texts is commonly interpreted as silver by modern scholars. However, it raises a question: can it be said that in the Vedic era, this phrase represented gold with high content of silver?

Ritualistically, in the Vedic age, silver was used in various forms, for various purposes – piece, disks, plates, vessels, and in the post-Vedic rituals, worship and vows, it was used in the form of idols, as replicas of things like flowers or trees, etc. In both Vedic and post-Vedic times, silver was mostly used in combination with gold or some other precious things rather than individually. Ultimately, silver had a secondary position in the world of rituals due to its mythological origin. However, as the times changed, it could replace gold due to its affordability factor. This phenomenon throws light on the history of Vedic and post-Vedic religion. It also displays that religious norms may become flexible with changing times. ॐ

[26] *Padma P. Uttarakhanda* 32.34-42: *… dviniṣkamātraṃ kartavyaṃ yadi śaktis ca vidyate. trihohenaiva kartavyaṃ sauvarṇena athavā punaḥ.*

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INVITED CONTRIBUTION

Teyyam:
Of Rituals and Myths

The cult of teyyam is a part of the native religion of North Kerala. The world-view of the teyyam-rituals is very unique to it — it blends in elements of Tantra to form a complex method to invite/invoke a deity and obtain its blessings.

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THE cult of *teyyam* is a part of the native religion of North Kerala. The term "*teyyam*" has two meanings: ritual performance[1] and deity[2]. In its latter usage, there are more than 300 *teyyam*-s (deities). Most of them are deified humans who did much for their community/society, and perhaps died for its cause. They are offered ritual performances annually, or at any time that a devotee wishes to offer it as a vow. In its former usage (i.e. as a ritual), each *teyyam* has a myth behind it which narrates the life and history of the particular deity. This myth is sung/narrated during the *teyyam* performances. The natives believe that the presence of a deity/divine-power is not in shrines – it must be brought through performances. Therefore, the night-long ritual performances – which sometimes extend into the day – are an entreaty to the deity to appear before the shrine/inside the shrine, to possess the body of the *teyyam*-performer who is made-up to look like the concerned deity. When the deity takes possession, the performer is no longer the individual – he is transformed into the deity. In this article, we will attempt to understand the worldview of the people who participate in the *teyyam*-ritual through an intrinsic approach i.e., through their own eyes.[3]

[1] An example of usage is, "*teyyam* in Muchiloṭṭu *kāvu* is today."
[2] An example of usage is, "Yesterday night, I saw Pottan *teyyam* in my dream."

Cosmology in *Teyyam*

According to the cosmology of the *teyyam*-rituals, there are three worlds – *Melulakam* (upper-world), *Pātālam* (under-world) and *Idavilokam* (the world in between the two). *Melulakam* is the world of Śiva, Pārvati, and Sūrya (Sun). *Kailāsam* is situated here, and from here, Śiva blesses the creation. This is the seat of diseases, this is the place of receiving boons.

Idavilokam is beneath *Melulakam*. Humans reside here. According to mythology, the creative-egg, "*Om*" (*praṇavam*), placed in the trunk of Gaṇapati, broke into two halves – the upper half of the broken egg became the sky and the lower half became the Earth. Earth has four boundaries in the form of mountains in each of the four directions: in the east is the *Udayakūlaparvatam*, in the west is the *Aṣṭakūlaparvatam*, in the north is the *Śrīmandiram Mahāmeru* and in the south is *Kālakūṭaparvatam*. Two birds – *Gaṅgākola* and *Rājajaṭāyan* – met and mated in the *Aṣṭakūlaparvatam*; *Gaṅgākola* laid seven eggs that hatched to form the sea and the shore and the mountain and the cities. Two fishes –Viṣṇu and Śiven – were cut, and their scales rose up to form the stars, and the scales that fell on Earth became fireflies. *Idavilokam* is divided into three *manḍala*-s or zones: the mountains (where the *Pulideivam*-s reside); the coastal region (where *Cīrba* resides); between the two is the *Dārikan-koṭṭa* (Dārikan's fort). *Vetālam* (a revenant) lies on *Idavilokam* with his head on the *Udayakūlaparvatam* and feet on the *Aṣṭakūlaparvatam*. His midriff rests on *Śrīmandiram Mahāmeru* and his hands rest on *Kālakūṭaparvatam*.

Beneath the *Idavilokam* is *Pātālam*. It is very dark here and it is here that the *Nāga*-s reside, in *nāgamaniputtu* (anthill), ruled by *Nāgarājavu* (the king of serpents). *Pālkadal* (ocean of milk) is a part of *Pātālam*.

If the sun lights the *Melulakam*, the stars and fireflies light the Earth; there is no light at all in *Pātālam*.

[3] Dr. Alan Dundes, the famous folklorist, writes that folk-traditions can be understood only in an intrinsic way. In his words, "Among others, we are the folk."

We also hear of a fourth world, the *Asuralokam* (the world of demons) – there are references to the *devata*-s descending in chariots to *Idavilokam* via the *Asuralokam*, so it is supposed to be located in between *Melulakam* and *Idavilokam*. Moreover, Dārikan was a resident of *Asuralokam* before he was cursed to come down to *Idavilokam*.

According to mythology, movement across the four worlds is not easy. While the residents of the *Melulakam* can travel to the lower worlds[4], there are no references of movement of serpents of the *Pātālam* to *Idavilokam*/*Melulakam*, or references of humans ascending to *Melulakam*.

Invoking the Deity

According to the *teyyam*-narratives, a deity does not reside permanently in any particular abode of its own; its presence must be invoked. *Teyyam*-deities can inhabit two types of places: *asthānam* and *sthānam*. *Asthānam* is where the deity first made an appearance, and *sthānam* is where it may be invoked and propitiated. *Asthānam* can only be one, whereas *sthānam*-s may be multiple. In order to invoke a deity's presence in a *sthānam*, the following rituals are performed:

The *kolakkaran* (performer) first prepares a divine wooden stool where it is believed that the deity will make its appearance. The stool is called *velliśrī-pīṭham* and is placed inside the shrine (or outside, if there is no permanent shrine). On it, a folded red cloth (called *kolaviri*) and white cloth is spread, and the *tiruvāyudham* (the divine weapon) is placed on it. *Kolam*-s[5] are drawn before the *velliśrī-pīṭham*. The *kolakkaran* then recites the invocatory verses which narrate the life-story of the deity in short, and describe its arrival to the *sthānam*. The invocatory verses are called *varavili*. Then, *toṭṭam*-s (ritual songs in praise of the deity) are sung.

If the deity is pleased with the *kolam* and the *toṭṭam*-s, it enters the *velliśrī-pīṭham* and then the *kolam*. The kolam is now said to be transformed into a *teyyam* – only now does it acquire the power to bless/counsel. Further, the deity manifests its presence in two persons: the *kolakkaran* and the *komaram* (oracle) who both become possessed. In certain undefinable circumstances, the deity may enter a human-body – this is called a *darśanam*. The deity shares its power part by part – to the *nandarvilakku* (the divine lamp kept inside the shrine), to the *mutirha* (offerings for *teyyam*). The power in the lamp enters into the lighted *kodiyila*[6], to the *aniyaravilakku* (lamp kept inside the green room) and the *meleri* (the ritual pyre). On account of this, the *toṭṭam* becomes possessed as it receives the lighted *kodiyila*. The power of the deity is transferred entirely through the *tiruvayudham* (weapon of the deity).

After the rituals, the deity goes back to the *pīṭham* (from the *kolam*) and then back to wherever it came from. Just as the power of the deity enters the body of *kolakkaran* part by part – until it attains completion – it also goes back in parts. The deity is sent to different places through the *tiruvāyudham*. Myths assert that the deity can appear temporarily in trees[7] where the *nāgam*-s and *bhūtam*-s reside. Sometimes, a fraction of its power may remain unnoticed in the *kolakkaran*. A ritual is conducted to remove this power to the inner part of the shrine through coins and rice – this is called *teyyam padi kudidūṭṭal*.

[4] For example, *devata*-s can pass through *Idavilokam* to reach *Pātālam*.
[5] *Kolam*-s are the physical forms of *teyyam*-s.
[6] A piece of plantain leaf – containing rice, beetle leaves, areca nuts – is handed to the person doing the rituals – this is called the *kodiyila*. It is of two kinds: the first is given to the *kolakkaran* initially, and another, with lit wicks, is handed to him later which makes the *kolakkaran* possessed with the concerned deity.
[7] The tree is functionally similar to the *pīṭham* – the deity first comes to the tree and then enters the *kolam*.

Life after Death

After death, a person may become a *pretam* (ghost) or a *teyyam* (deified). According to tāntric conception, virtuous men go to *mahākāśam* upon their death, whereas the ordinary men go to the ancestral world. Those who meet with disastrous deaths linger on in this world for a period of time, until the Tantri brings back the *jīva* from *mahākāśam*, installs it into *pratiṣṭha*, from where it reaches the *kolam* of the *teyyam* as the situation demands.

If a deity possesses a *pretam*, then his/her Earth-bound relatives will see bad omens. In such a case, the deity must be transferred to a person who is fasting, and subsequently cleared off in water. If a person has died in association with a deity, then the *pretam* resides in the deity itself. In such a case, the deity must be brought into a human by the performance of *āvāhanam* and further, a ritual to send the *pretam* to the ancestral world must be conducted; this is called *tilāhavanam*. Although the ritual is tāntric in nature, it is a part of *teyyam*.

Conclusion

The tāntric conceptions differ very much from the worldview of the *teyyam*. For example, there is no connection between *Melulakam*, *Idavilokam* and *Pātālam* (*teyyam*) and *Mahākāśam*, Earth, and the ancestral world (*tantra*); the invocation of the *teyyam* through *varavili* is different from the *āvāhanam* and *sthāpanam* of Tantra. Yet, the two rather contradictory practices come together in the folk-ritual of North Kerala. What elements are intrinsic to the rituals and what were added at a later time period is a subject that invites further research.

INVITED CONTRIBUTION

Sahagamana (Sati) in Indian Tradition

Sahagamana — the self-immolation of a widow on her husband's pyre — was practiced in the Epic-period for various reasons such as extreme love, gratefulness, faith of reunion in heaven, guilt, helplessness, fear, grief, etc.

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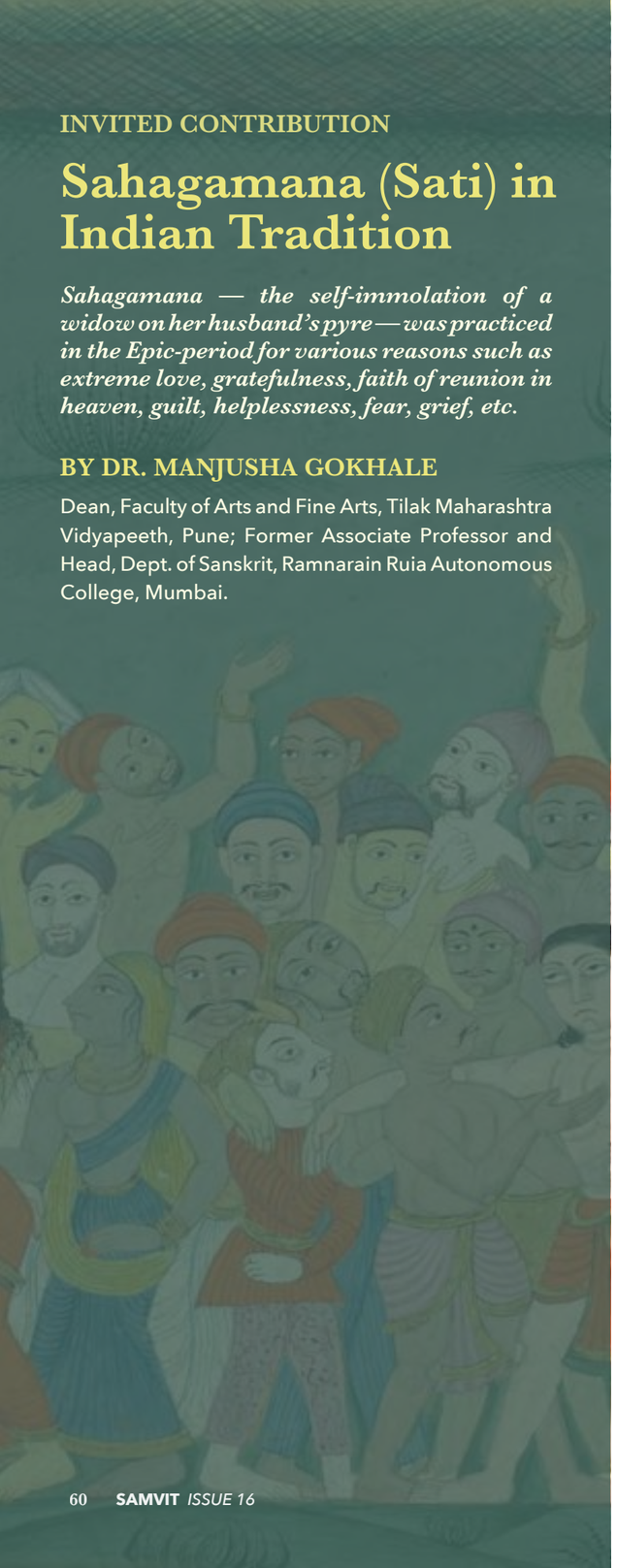

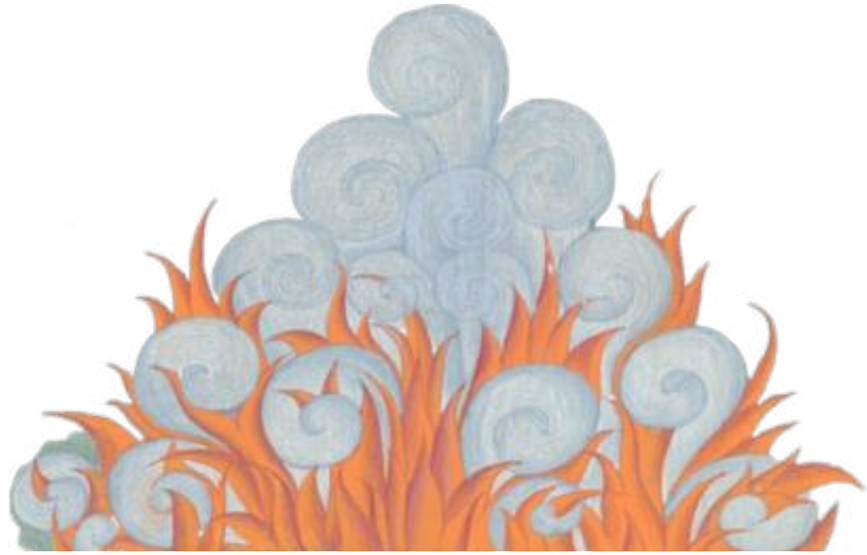

THOUGH the word "*sahagamana*" literally means "to go together", it has traditionally been used to imply a widow's accompaniment of her deceased husband to heaven – by letting her body be burnt on the same pyre on which her husband's corpse is burnt. There are synonyms for the term "*sahagamana*" – "*sahamaraṇa*", "*anugamana*", and "*anvārohaṇa*". The terms "*anugamana*" and "*anvārohaṇa*" imply either "ascending the pyre, following the corpse of the husband" or "ascending the pyre with some object such as the footwear of the husband when the husband is already cremated elsewhere (and thus following him to heaven)".

The first reference to a widow's *sahagamana* is found in the *Ṛgveda* (X.18.8) and in the *Atharvaveda* (XVIII3.1):

> *udīrṣva nāryabhi jīvalokaṃ gatāsumetamupa śeṣa ehi |*
> *hastagrābhasya didhiṣostavedaṃ patyurjanitvamabhi saṃ babhūtha ||*
> (*Ṛgveda* X.18.8)

Here, *sahagamana* is only up to the funeral pyre of the deceased husband, and not to the other world. Scholars have opined that the practice of *sahagamana* must have been prevalent in the prehistoric times, but it was extinguished in the Vedic times (Kane 1997:625). It can be said that the Vedic society not only opposed the ancient custom, but also positively modified it. In the above vedic *mantra*, *sahagamana* is observed symbolically – the chaste wife has accompanied the husband till the end of his last journey in this world. She has fulfilled all her duties as a *sahadharmacāriṇī*. The word "*janitvam*" indicates that she has given birth to progeny and thus has achieved the ultimate purpose of marriage. Hence, now, instead of immolating herself, she must step back into the active life with the help of relatives and well-wishers. The *mantra* consoles her, encourages her by bringing a ray of hope, and also implies that her kinsmen should support her in living her life further.

Neither the Veda-s nor any passage from the ancient Smṛti-s enjoin *sahagamana*. The first clear mention is found in *Viṣṇusmṛti* (25.14), a text belonging to the third century C.E. (Mehendale 2001: 156). But the practice seems to have been rejuvenated, at least to some extent, since the fifth century B.C.E., because it is found in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and the plays of Bhāsa.

Sahagamana in the *Rāmāyaṇa*

After the death of Daśaratha, Kausalyā declares that with her husband's body on embers, she will enter the fire (*Rāmāyaṇa* II. 66.12):

> *sāham adyaiva diṣṭāntaṃ gamiṣyāmi pativratā |*
> *idaṃ śarīram-āliṅgya pravekṣyāmi hutāśanam ||*

It is noteworthy that though she declares thus, she does not actually opt for *sahagamana*. It is in extreme grief and despair – due to the death of her husband on the one hand and the dismissal of Rāma to the forest on the other – that she declares that she will get immolated. Thus, this declaration is a spontaneous outburst on her part. The incident brings forth two noteworthy points:

1. The custom of *sahagamana* was prevalent during the time of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as Kausalyā was very well aware of the same. But it can hardly be called a popular practice, as Kausalyā – or any other queen of Daśaratha – did not opt for it.

2. A lady could resort to *sahagamana* if she so wished (due to unfavorable/sudden/terrible circumstances). Self-immolation could be her first, immediate reaction; but it was not compulsory for her to keep her word.

In the *Uttarakāṇḍa* of the Valmīki-*Rāmāyaṇa*, Vedavatī narrates to Rāvaṇa the episode of her mother opting for *sahagamana* when her father was killed by a demon (*Rāmāyaṇa* VII. 17.15):

> *tato me jananī dīnā taccharīraṃ piturmama |*
> *pariṣvajya mahābhāgā praviṣṭā havyavāhanam ||*

The reason for her choice here seems to be twofold: she had boundless love for her husband due to which she felt very much distressed and miserable. Further, she was frightened of the demon and felt helpless to protect her chastity. The adjective "*dīnā*" used in the verse possesses all these meanings, i.e. distress, misery, helplessness and fear.

There are no references to *sahagamana* regarding the widows of the *rākṣasa*-s.

Sahagamana in the *Mahābhārata*

Mahābhārata records the account of the *sahagamana* of Mādrī (Ādi. 116). However, Mehendale has pointed out that Mādrī's ascent on the same pyre as her husband is rather doubtful but her self-immolation upon Pāṇḍu's death is certain (Mehendale 2001: 76-185). So, the term "*sahagamana*" can be used in her case without hesitation. Further, having seen Pāṇḍu die, and having heard the incident narrated by Mādrī, Kuntī resolved for *sahagamana*. Being the eldest wife of Pāṇḍu, she believed it her right to opt for *sahagamana* (*Ādi*. 116.23-24). It seems that in the case of a deceased person with more than one wife, the eldest one claimed the "honor" of *sahagamana* as she claimed all other honors while her husband was alive. But Mādrī opposed her and resolved for *sahagamana*. She put forth three reasons:

1. Pāṇḍu, being lustful, was approaching Mādrī when he met his death. His lust, therefore, remained unfulfilled. If she did not follow him now, he would remain unsatisfied in the abode of Yama (*Ādi*. 116.26):

> *māṃ cābhigamya kṣīṇo'yaṃ kāmād bharatasattamaḥ |*
> *tamucchindyāmasya kāmaṃ kathaṃ nu yamasādane ||*

Thus, Mādrī felt that it was her foremost duty to follow him to the other world in order to satisfy him.

2. Mādrī herself was lustful and not at all satisfied (*na hi tṛptāsmi kāmānām – Ādi*. 116.25). So she wanted her satisfaction at least in heaven.

3. She did not think herself capable of treating Kuntī's sons as her own sons, while she was sure that Kuntī would care for all children with equal love.

Among all these reasons, the third one must have proved the most convincing for Kuntī. The first reason suggests that Mādrī possessed a deep sense of guilt and it was amplified due to Kuntī's harsh words against her. She perhaps saw self-immolation as a fit punishment. She perhaps further feared that she would receive such criticism and abuse from all her kinsmen throughout her life. Perhaps her children would also abuse her in future. So, she perhaps felt it is better to die than to stay alive.

There are two verses recorded in the Bhandarkar edition of the *Mahābhārata* which bring forth another reason for Mādrī's resolve and it is very important in the social context. After the death of her husband, a widow may not be able to live a chaste life – her mind may lose control. Even the behavior of her kinsmen may change towards her. In such situations, her behavior may be unrighteous. Hence it is better for a widow to end her life than to stay alive:

> *na caiva tādṛśī buddhir bāndhavāśca na tādṛśāḥ* | (*Ādi*. 12.60)

> *tathā hi vartamānāṃ māmadharmaḥ saṃspṛśenmama* | (*Ādi*. 116.27)

It is pointed out that a widow never gets even a bit of happiness, hence it is worthy to opt for *sahagamana*:

> *mṛte bhartari nārīṇāṃ sukhaleśaṃ na*

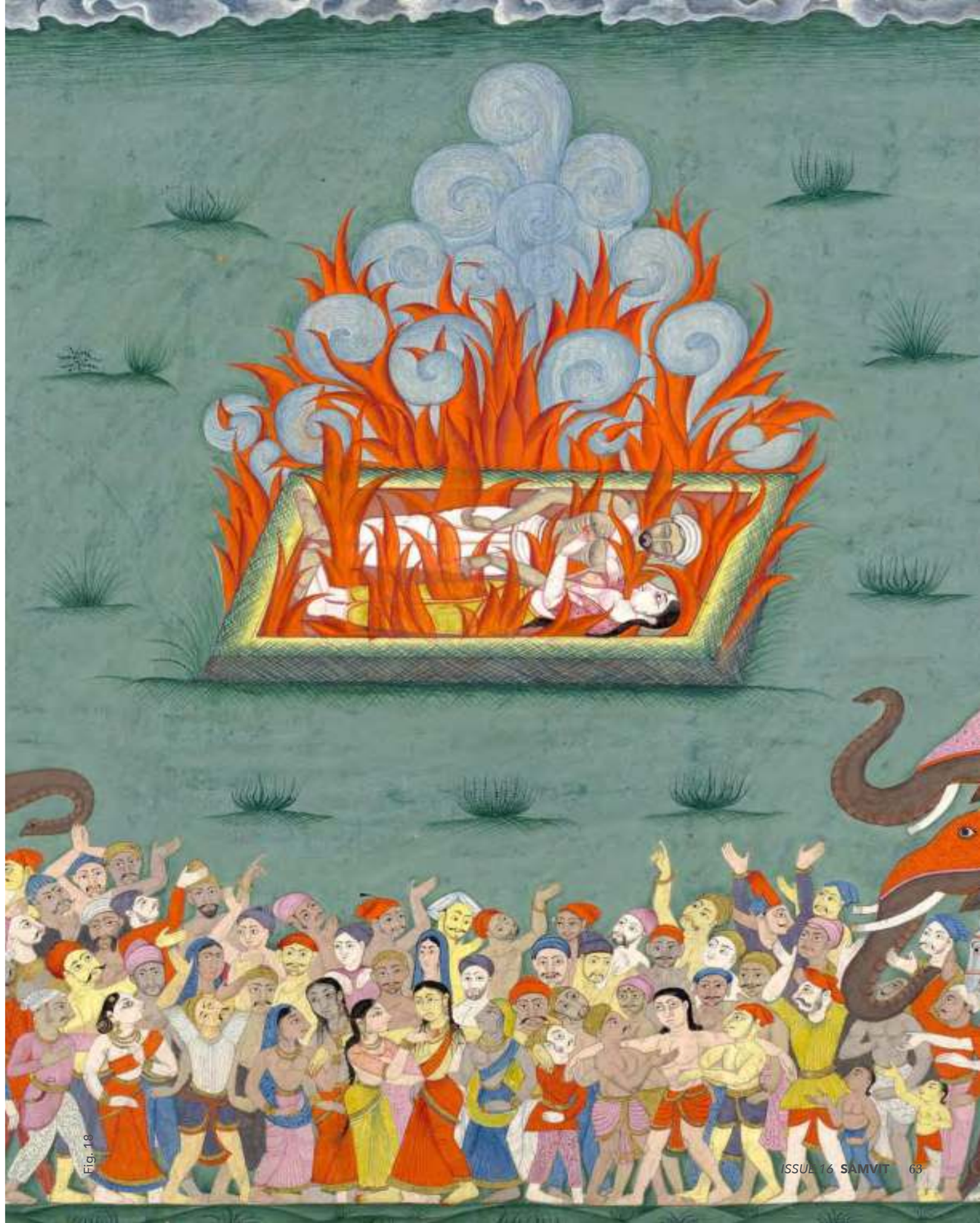

Fig. 18

vidyate | (*Ādi*. 146.19 {1610})

Bhadrā, the wife of Vyuṣitāśva, also opines that a widow though alive, is actually not alive, because her life becomes extremely miserable:

> *patiṃ vinā jīvati yā na sā jīvati duḥkhitā* |
> *patiṃ vinā mṛtaṃ śreyo nāryāḥ kṣatriyapuṅgava* || (*Ādi*. 112.19-20)

Śāntiparva also records the same reason:

> *śocyā bhavati bandhūnāṃ patihīnā manasvinī* | (*Śānti*. 144.2)

Thus, perhaps due to fear of a miserable life, widows opted for *sahagamana*.

In the story of Kalmāṣapāda being cursed by a brāhmaṇī, she gave the following reason why she wanted to opt for *sahagamana*: she was engaged in sexual union with her husband when he died prior to her satisfaction. So she wanted to follow him and achieve satisfaction in the other world (*Ādi*. 173.13,20).

Śāntiparva speaks of a female pigeon opting for *sahagamana*. The pigeon is grateful to her husband for he fondled her with love, consoled her with sweet words, and honored her very much. She thinks that husband is superior to father, mother and son. Hence, according to her, every lady must resort only to her husband:

> *mitaṃ dadāti hi pitā mitaṃ mātā mitaṃ sutaḥ* |
> *amitasya tu dātāraṃ bhartāraṃ kā na pūjayet* ||
> *nāsti bhartṛsamo nātho na ca bhartṛsamaṃ sukham* |
> *visṛjya dhanasarvasvaṃ bhartā vai śaraṇaṃ striyaḥ* || (*Śānti*. 144.6-7)

Thus, gratefulness towards the husband can also be a driving force behind *sahagamana*.

In the account of Kīcakavadha, *Virāṭaparva* records that Kīcaka's attendants wanted to burn Sairandhrī along with Kīcaka, because the latter desired sexual pleasure with her, and that desire ought to be accomplished even though he was dead:

> *athavā neha hantavyā dahyatāṃ kāminā saha* |
> *mṛtasyāpi priyaṃ kāryaṃ sūtaputrasya sarvathā* || (*Virāṭa*. 22.6)

The king consented to this because these attendants were very brave and the king could not afford their anger (*Mah. Virāṭa*. 22.8). Thus *sahagamana* was permitted due to social pressure.

Mausalaparva of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* record that four wives of Vasudeva (Devakī, Rohiṇī, Madirā and Bhadrā), Revatī (wife of Balarāma) and primary wives of Kṛṣṇa (Rukmiṇī, Gāndhārī, Śaibyā, Haimavatī and Jāmbavatī) entered the fire after the disaster in Dvārakā; but at the same time, many other wives of Kṛṣṇa did not opt for *sahagamana*. [c.f. *Mahābhārata*, *Mausalaparvan*, 8.18,24, 70-72; *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, 5.38.2,3,4,6]

It seems that the custom was more popular among the Yādava race than other Kṣatriya-s.

These are few references to *sahagamana* found in the *Mahābhārata*. On the other hand, there are ample references to the widows who never opted for *sahagamana*. No reference to *sahagamana* is found even in *Strīparva* regarding the war-widows.

In the next article, we will look into the practice of *sahagamana* in the Classical Sanskrit literature.

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Students' Articles

Onake Obavva

Onake Obavva heroically laid down her life protecting her kingdom. She is celebrated as one of the bravest women in the annals of Indian history, alongside other women-warriors like Kittūr Rāṇi Cennamma, Abbakka Rāṇi, and Keḷadi Cennamma.

BY K SMITHA SHREE

OBAVVA was the wife of a common soldier in the army of the Chitradurga Nāyaka-s, whose job it was to stand guard on the watchtower of the great fort of Chitradurga of Karnataka. Obavva single-handedly fought the army of Hyder Ali with simply a pestle, and protected her kingdom. In Kannada, a pestle is called '*onake*'. To honor the courageous Obavva, the word '*onake*' was prefixed to her name; she is now renowned as "*onake* Obavva", celebrated as one of the bravest women in the annals of Indian history, alongside other women-warriors like Kittūr Rāṇi Cennamma, Abbakka Rāṇi, and Keḷadi Cennamma, etc.

Not much is known about *onake* Obavva's life. It is believed that she belonged to an ordinary family of butchers who led an adventurous life in the forest, tackling wild animals, hunting, killing, and selling the meat; so, bravery perhaps flowed through Obavva's veins. There are many legends of her unflinching courage. Once, a cowherd of her village, who had taken the cows for grazing, was attacked by a wild animal. Terrified, the cowherd came running to the village, crying for help, but all the villagers stood shell-shocked, not one of them came forward to scare the wild beast away. Obavva, then a little girl, took a sickle in her hand, marched towards the forest with the cowherd, fought against the beast and scared it away.

Not only was Obavva brave, she was also kindhearted. Once, when her village was hit by cholera, Obavva went to every house and served everyone whole-heartedly for many days and nights. Furthermore, she was very beautiful. She married Kalanāyaka, a young man of a butcher's family of her village, who served as a watchman of the great fort of Chitradurga.

At the time (around 18th C.E.), Chitradurga was ruled by Madakari Nāyaka. The Nāyaka community initially served as *pāḷegara*-s (subordinates) of the great Vijayanagara Empire; later, they claimed their (independent) rule over the region. During the time, Hyder Ali, one of the most powerful military leaders, was conquering the neighboring kingdoms, but he had failed to conquer Chitradurga for Madakari Nāyaka was extremely talented in strategic warfare. In fact, the title, 'Madakari', was bestowed upon him because he once courageously tackled a wild elephant that had created havoc in the kingdom, and successfully brought it under control.

After multiple failed attempts, Hyder Ali decided to enter the fort of Chitradurga through indirect methods. Towards the northern side of the fort was a small hole – so small that only one person could enter at a time – that led inside the fort; on this side of the fort lived Kalanāyaka with his wife, Obavva. His job was to keep watch from the watchtower of the Chitradurga fort and blow the *raṇakahale* to warn the army at the first sign of attack. Hyder Ali's army watched a woman who sold curds entering the fort through the small hole; they also learnt that Kalanāyaka regularly stepped down and left the fort unguarded during lunchtime. So, Hyder Ali decided to attack the fort of Chitradurga through the small hole of the fort – his army would enter one by one through the hole, and once inside the fort, they would launch the attack.

One day, Kalanāyaka returned home for lunch. To get drinking water for her husband, Obavva took an earthen pot and went to the nearby pond. The place was utterly silent, when suddenly she heard the enemy-soldiers' murmurings in Urdu. She wondered if it was Hyder Ali's army entering through the hole in the fort. When her doubts were confirmed, she ran back home to inform her husband. She saw that he was eating lunch, and she did not want to disturb him. So, she decided to take up her husband's responsibility, to fight the enemies on her own. She armed herself with a pestle and stood beside the hole. When the first soldier entered the fort, crawling through the hole, Obavva hit him on his head with the pestle, crushed his skull, shoved the lifeless body aside, ready for the next hit. One after another, Obavva aggressively crushed the skull of the enemy and dragged each body aside, and soon, a heap of corpses lay beside her.

In the meantime, her husband came in search of Obavva, and was shocked to behold his wife, a caring motherly woman, soaked completely in blood, a pestle in her hand, fiercely breaking the enemy soldier's head into pieces, and a pile of lifeless bodies next to her. Without wasting time, he alerted his army, and the soldiers of the fort rushed to Obavva's help. When Kalanāyaka's army saw Obavva and the pile of bodies next to her, they were shell-shocked. Obavva, realizing that help was at hand, relaxed her pestle, but before Kalanāyaka's army could launch a counter-attack, a few enemies had entered the fort, and they stabbed Obavva from behind. Obavva, the great warrior-woman, a fiery fighter, heroically served her nation and laid down her life.

Madakari Nāyaka, paying the highest respect for her bravery and service, named the hole that she had guarded as "*Obavvana-kiṇḍi*". The Government of Karnataka commemorated her contribution by naming the sports stadium in Chitradurga as "*Vīra-vanithe-onake-obavva* stadium", and also established a specially trained squad of women-constables called *Obavva-pāde*. Many musical compositions are devoted to her, and a few movies are made on her life. The pestle that she wielded is preserved till today by her descendants in Chitradurga.

Obavva remains an epitome of the courage and bravery of every Indian woman, and her name will remain evergreen in the history of India. Obavva's glorious tale will never fail to inspire every Indian girl to serve the nation.

Fig. 19

Fig. 20

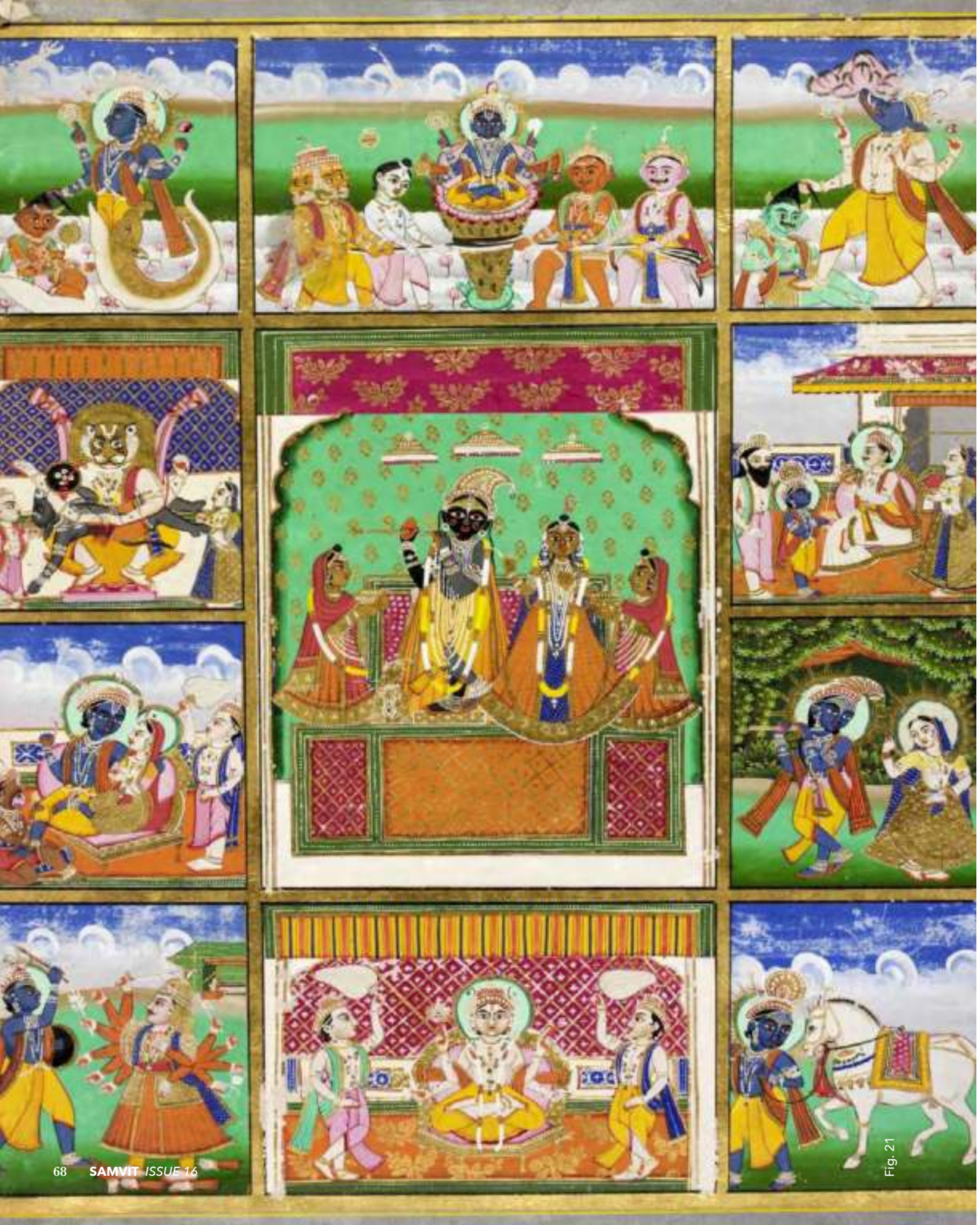

Fig. 21

Of Science and Spirituality

Science and spirituality are tools to understand the truths of the world and the Self. Hinduism is a unique religion that uses them together to create symbolic stories that lead one to understand the creation and the Creator.

BY SAI PADMESH

THE HUMAN BRAIN is like an organic computer; it receives input through the sense organs and gives output through the different organs of the body. Indeed, it has its own "memory", and its own "connecting wires" (neurons). Like every computer, the brain also has a "root program"/ "algorithm" through which it processes everything. It seems to me that the brain's root program is "Despise chaos. Create order." If the brain does not know or understand the answers for certain phenomena, it formulates its own answers; it cannot accept chaos, so it tries to create order. For example, when the mysteries of nature were not explained by science, the brain showed us a solution in the form of God. When we wondered why tides occur, the brain conceived of Poseidon or Varuṇa. When we wondered about our existence, the brain conceived of a God who created this world. Every religion has its own story of creation, its own Gods, and its own reasons for the creation of this world. So it is that when science logically answered these questions, the Gods started to disappear. When it was understood that tidal waves are the result of the moon's force of attraction, Poseidon had no reason to exist.

Then, the question arises: is God not required in a world where science is the overlord? The answer, I think, is no, God is required; otherwise, science will induce us to believe that there is no higher power than us, that the entire universe is in our control. Religion, on the other hand, acknowledges that there is a Divine force beyond our understanding, and this induces a sense of humility in us.

In a broader sense, both science and religion are tools to view/understand the Self and the world. Like every tool, the intention of the doer decides how it will be used. Both science and religion have been used for constructive and destructive purposes. But what if both these tools were to be used together? Hinduism is a unique religion that combines both to understand creation and the Creator. Every story of Hindu mythology has a scientific, albeit hidden, meaning. Let us look into a few of such stories.

Braḥmā

Once, there was a king named Kakudmi who ruled over Kuśasthalī. He had a daughter, Revatī. Revatī was so beautiful and accomplished that when she came of age, Kakudmi could not find a groom worthy of her on Earth. So, he went with her to Braḥmaloka to seek Braḥmā's help to find a suitable husband for her. When they arrived in Braḥmaloka, Braḥmā was enjoying a Gāndharva-musical performance, so they waited patiently for the performance to finish. Then, Kakudmi, bowing down humbly, made his request to

Brahmā, and presented a shortlist of potential suitors for Revatī. Braḥmā laughed and told him that the list was obsolete. He explained to Kakudmi that time runs differently on different planes of existence – in the short time that they had waited in Braḥmaloka, 27 *catur-yuga*-s had passed on Earth.

In scientific terms, this phenomenon is called time-dilation: time is affected by gravity. Where the gravitational force of a place is greater than that of the Earth, time slows down. For example, time runs slower for a person standing on the surface of the Earth than for a person in orbit around the Earth. The difference is, of course, minuscule. An extreme case would be that of a black hole where the gravitational pull is so high that for an object at the edge of a black hole, time will appear to stand completely still.

Braḥmaloka is no black hole, but it could be a place with very high gravitational pull. In fact, according to the Hindu units for measurement of time, the exact difference between one day on Earth and one day in Braḥmaloka is approximately 4.32 billion human years – the exact age of the universe! Coincidence?

As for Revatī, she and her father returned to Earth in time for Viṣṇu's incarnation as Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. She married Balarāma, and the story ended happily.

Viṣṇu

The *daśāvatara* (ten *avatāra*-s) of Viṣṇu is a series of stories of his incarnation on Earth to vanquish evil and uphold *dharma*. Every Hindu knows these stories but very few know that they symbolize the Darwinian theory of evolution.

According to the Darwinian theory, life started in water. Parallelly, the first *avatāra* of Viṣṇu is Matsyāvatāra (fish). Next in line were amphibians – animals that could survive both on land and in water: Viṣṇu's Kūrmāvatāra (turtle). Varāhāvatāra (boar) represents the creatures which evolved to survive only on land. The next two *avatāra*-s, Narasiṁha (half-lion, half-human) and Vāmana (dwarf), represent a transitional period where creatures were evolving a perfect body for survival. Further, the first humans used primitive tools like axes and knives; Viṣṇu's *avatāra* as Paraśurāma wields the axe. After the human body evolved to perfection, further evolution was that of the tools humans used. So Rāmāvatāra is seen with a bow, and Balarāma with a plough. Enjoyment, delight is a great leap in human evolution, and music is the most ancient and simplest form of entertainment; it is no wonder that Kṛṣṇāvatāra holds a flute in his hands.

Kalki-*avatāra* is predicted as the tenth (future) incarnation of Viṣṇu. In most images, Kalki is depicted with a shining armor, wielding a sword, riding a horse. My understanding of Kalki-*avatāra* is different. If further evolution is that of the tools we wield, then I see technology as the farthest step of evolution. With prosthetic parts for the human body, nanomachines in our bloodstream, and fully functional, 3-D printed organs, technology is perhaps slowly creating the most evolved form of the human body. For me, Kalki-*avatāra* is not a knight in shining armor; he is rather a cyborg with the power to sustain *dharma* in this modern world!

Śiva

Lord Śiva is often depicted as Naṭarāja performing the *ānanda-tāṇḍava* (dance of bliss). The *mūrti* of Naṭarāja is scientifically significant. In this depiction, Naṭarāja holds a *ḍamaru* (drum) in his upper right hand which signifies the creation of the world through sound. In fact, it is said that the sounds that emanated from Naṭarāja's *ḍamaru* are the basis for the Sanskṛt language. Further, he holds fire in his upper left hand which characterizes destruction. Both hands are shown at the same level/on the same line which shows that creation and destruction are equally important. This is significant because according to the second law of thermodynamics, the total entropy/degree of randomness of a system increases with time (except for ideal cases). So, dispersion of molecules and energy requires destruction. For example, all organisms consume matter as food, convert it to energy, and dissipate it back into the universe as heat. Creation happens because to efficiently create more chaos, there needs to be order. So, creation is equally important as destruction!

The lower right-hand of Naṭarāja shows *abhaya-mudrā*, fearlessness, ensuring stability in the world and protection from Śiva. The lower left-hand points towards his feet. His right foot is pressed downward, expressing *tirobhāva* or the illusion of life, whereas, the left foot is drawn upwards, depicting *anugraha* or release from the illusions of the world, towards enlightenment. The right leg is exactly at the middle of the *mūrti*, which shows *sthithi*, or the preservation of a state. Also, he holds down a demon, Āpasmāra-puruṣa, a representation of ignorance.

Naṭrāja's *ānanda-tāṇḍava* represents the cosmic dance of every atom of this universe that undergoes chaotic motion for the universe to exist. It is thus symbolic of the balance in order and chaos that sustains the universe. No wonder then that CERN has a statue of Naṭarāja installed in its premises!

Conclusion

Unlike other religions, Hinduism is flexible in its approach towards God. Every plant, animal, book, tool, star and planet has a religious significance. It is no surprise then that Indians, who were experts in the fields of science, mathematics and literature, were able to link philosophy with every subject. When other religions saw science as their enemy, Hinduism welcomed it with open arms to create beautiful stories encoded with scientific knowledge. Ancient Indians knew that everything in this universe is inter-connected and is a part of the ultimate divine essence – Brahman. Like our ancestors, we must use both tools to understand Truth, to realize the Self and the world.

Fig. 22

Gurjaḍa Appārao

A renowned poet, writer, dramatist, and researcher, Gurjaḍa Appārao was known for his works in Telugu — he was a "literary enfranchiser" who gifted literature to common men. His efforts at social reformation brought him fame as a revolutionary writer.

BY SIDDARTHA MALLADI

GURJAḌA APPĀRAO, a renowned 19th century poet, writer, dramatist, and researcher, is known for his works in Telugu literature, theatre and arts and also his social reformist efforts. His full name is Gurajaḍa Veṅkaṭa Appārao. He was born on 21 September 1862 to Veṅkaṭa Rāma Dāsu and Kausalyammā in the village of Rāyavaram near Yelamancili in Viśākapaṭṭanam, Andhra Pradesh. He completed his matriculation in 1882, and obtained a degree in Faculty of Arts (F.A.) in 1884. After completing his studies, he was employed as a teacher in Maharaja (M.R.) High School.

Gurjaḍa Appārao occupies an unrivalled position in the history of Telugu literature. His poems are modern, relevant – in fact, the era of modern Telugu literature finds its origin in his writings. He created new forms of literature and invented new rhythms in poetry – his literary works are the best examples for modern progressive writing in Telugu. Among the vast collection of his literary works, his short stories are the most important. Although there were short stories in Telugu before Appārao, they did not quite fulfil the criteria of modern short stories. So, the credit of creating a new genre in story-telling in the modern sense – i.e., stories with a social purpose – goes to Appārao.

Gurjaḍa was a born story-teller – even his well-known poems are but stories. His poetic works like *Pūrnamma*, *Kanyaka*, *Lavaṇarāju Kala*, *Damon* and *Pythias* are actually stories; he made old stories new and created new ones to compete with them. Three of his lyrical tales – *Lavaṇarāju Kala*, *Kanyaka*, *Damon* and *Pythias* – have known sources while *Pūrnamma* seems entirely his own creation.

All of his works were eye-openers to his readers. *Lavaṇarāju Kala* criticized the caste-system and the practice of untouchability firmly, calmly. *Kanyaka* and *Pūrnamma* encapsulated his views about the social order and ideal womanhood. *Damon* and *Pythias*, based on an old Greek story, commented on the notion of ideal friendship. These stories are told in the least decorative language; there's nothing new in the stories, but their dramatic dialogues mark the artistic genius of Gurjaḍa. All his stories – the comic (*Damon* and *Pythias*), the tragic (*Pūrnamma*), the philosophic (*Lavaṇarāju Kala*) – are essentially idealistic and objective. Further, these stories comment on social issues, giving him a unique identity amongst all other authors.

> *deśamunu premiñcumanna*
> *mañci annadi peñcu manna*
> *vaṭṭi mātalu kaṭṭi pettoi*
> *gaṭṭi mel talapettavoi*
>
> *Love the country, brother*
> *Promote that is good hither*
> *Stop loose talk all together*
> *Think to do solid help, brother*
>
> *- Appārao*

Gurjaḍa's significant contribution to Telugu literature began after he was thirty years old. At that point of time, the society was entrenched in the practices of child marriage and dowry. The humanitarian that Gurjaḍa was, he addressed this issue in his first Telugu writing – he wrote a *drāma* so that it could reach the common people. This play was called *Kanyāśulkam*. It was staged for the first time in 1892 and published in 1897. It was hugely successful and was hailed as a significant milestone in the history of Telugu literature. It is, indeed, the greatest play written in recent times in Telugu.

The first modern short story in Telugu is Appārao's *Diḍḍubaṭu*. He is considered as the father of modernism in Telugu literature. It appeared in *Andhra Bhārati*, a Telugu monthly, in February 1910. He wrote only five short stories, of which *Mī Perimiti?* (What is your name?) is hailed as the best short story till date.

Appārao has written in English too. His first published English poem was *Śāraṅgadhara*. Mostly, his poems were published in local magazines and periodicals, but they drew even the attention and appreciation of Mahārāja Ānand Gajapati (of Vijayanagaram).

Gurjaḍa Appārao is today renowned for his efforts at bringing about a social revolution. Although there were many revolutionists in his time – like Kaṇḍukuri, Rāyaprolu – none of them were revolutionary writers. Gurjaḍa Appārao is regarded as the first revolutionary writer of Andhra Pradesh. Just as Lenin depicted the teachings of Marx into reality, Gurjaḍa transformed Giḍugu Ram Murthy's theories into literary creations.

In conclusion, we can say that Gurjaḍa Appārao was an unparalleled author of all times. He was the *guru* of many later poets like Śrī Śrī, Arudra and many more. He died in the year 1915, suffering from poor health. Though one of the leading poets of his time, Gurjaḍa began to live only after his death. He still continues to live in hearts and minds of the people. Śrī Śrī proclaims, "Footprints of Gurjaḍa show us the path for the future". Arudra, who is also considered as a revolutionary writer of Andhra, says, "Gurjaḍa is the *guru*." His devotion to Gurjaḍa is evident in his book, *Gurjaḍa Gurupīṭham*. Gurjaḍa Appārao is considered as "literary enfranchiser" who gifted all literature to common men. He also holds titles like *Kaviśekhara* and *Abhyudaya Kavitā Pitāmahuḍu*. His name in the Indian literary tradition is an unfading one.

Fig. 23

Śravaṇa Beḷagoḷa

Gommateśvara's statue at Śravaṇa Beḷagoḷa superbly conveys what Bāhubalī, one of the greatest tīrthaṅkara-s, stood for. Further, it is a significant pilgrimage center that attracts thousands of devotees throughout the year.

BY SAI MANISH S &
SHREEKAR BHARADWAJ ARAVETI

ŚRAVAṆA BEḶAGOḶA is a significant religious place for Jain *sādhu*-s since ancient times. The prefix "*śravaṇa*" in "Śravaṇa Beḷagoḷa" is derived from the Sanskrit word, "*śramaṇa*", which means "Jain-ascetic". It is said that in the third century B.C.E., the great sage, Bhadrabāhu, migrated here from Magadha with 12,000 Jain *sādhu*-s. Legend also tells us that Emperor Chandragupta Maurya, a disciple of Bhadrabāhu, spent his last years in penance in Śravana Belagoḷa.

On the Vindhyagiri hills of Śravaṇa Beḷagoḷa stands the majestic statue of Gommateśvara – a sight that inspires in us awe and bliss. Gommateśvara, also known as Bāhubali, was the son of Ṛṣabhanātha, the first Jain *tīrthaṅkara*. Ṛṣabhanātha had many sons of whom Bāhubali and Bharata are prominent. Bharata succeeded his father to the throne, and was given a major portion of the kingdom; Bāhubali, on the other hand, was given a small portion of the kingdom, Aśmaka, in South India. It was Bharata's desire to become a *cakravartī*, and hence, he started conquering innumerable territories with the help of his *cakra* (a powerful weapon). When he returned to his capital, victorious, his weapon, the *cakra*, refused to enter the capital. At first, Bharata could not understand the reason for this; but when he gave it some thought, he understood that the kingdom of Aśmaka was unconquered and therefore, the *cakra* was not satiated. He therefore marched his armies towards Aśmaka to defeat Bāhubali. Fearless Bāhubali gathered his army and met Bharata in the battlefield.

A war between the two powerful brothers would surely be catastrophic. Therefore, the ministers of the kingdom pleaded with the two brothers to desist from war. They suggested alternative ways in which they could settle the matter between them – *dṛṣṭi-yuddha*, *jala-yuddha*, *malla-yuddha*, etc. Bāhubali defeated Bharata in them all. A humiliating defeat left Bharata in a terrible temper, and he resolved to use his *cakra* against Bāhubali. Remarkably, the *cakra* had no effect whatsoever on Bāhubali. Bharata looked upon his brother entirely awestruck. Bāhubali, on the other hand, was overcome with for his brother – he gifted him his kingdom, and left.

This incident had a profound effect on Bāhubali – he forfeited everything he owned and became an ascetic, resorting to meditation. He stood under a tree for an entire year, meditating. His concentration was such that he entirely forgot about the world around him – creepers grew on his body, an anthill formed around him, but nothing shattered his concentration. He attained *kevala-jñāna* and returned later to show

Fig. 24

the right path to the world. Recognizing his brother's attainment, Bharata, in his devotion, erected a colossal statue of Bāhubali at Pondanapura which became a very important and holy place to Jains.

Legend tells us that this statue, erected by Bharata, was found by Cāmuṇḍa Rāya, a feudatory chief of king Rājamalla. Cāmuṇḍa Rāya's mother had heard about the colossal statue of Bāhubali at Pondanapura from the Jain text, *Ādipurāṇa*, and wished to visit it. With her son, she left to Pondanapura and reached the Vindhyagiri hills. That night, she had a dream in which Goddess Padmāvatī told her that the statue of Bāhubali was situated on the hill worshiped by Rāma and Rāvaṇa. In order to find this hill, her son would have to face the southern direction and shoot an arrow – the statue would be found where the arrow landed. The next morning, Cāmuṇḍa Rāya's mother asked him to follow the instructions, and it was thus that the beautiful statue of Bāhubali was found.

It is rather common to find Jain monoliths around India, Burma and Tibet, but this statue of Bāhubali is one of the biggest and most popular monoliths in the world. While legend tells us that Cāmuṇḍa Rāya found this statue, epigraphical evidence suggests that he built it, perhaps in the 10th century C.E. (there is some ambiguity on the specificities of its dating).

The statue is 17 meters in height, and has no support from the waist-above. Legend has it that the original plan was to build a statue twice its height. It is carved out of a large light-grey granite, perhaps from the rocks of the Vindhyagiri hills, for it is difficult to imagine the means of transporting such a gigantic monolith from elsewhere at the time.

The statue depicts Bāhubali performing penance in the nude in the posture of *kāyotsarga* (a yogic posture). In this posture, one stands erect with legs close together, arms hanging down, and eyes in *nāsikāgra dṛṣṭi* (looking directly down at the nose), completely engrossed in self-contemplation. Bāhubali is said to have meditated in this posture for a year, motionless, and it was during this time that creepers grew around his legs.

The statue has a very natural look to it. Bāhubali is depicted to have broad shoulders, arms hanging straight down on the sides, with thumbs pointing upwards, and the waist comparatively small. Though the structure appears proportional, one would notice, upon keen observation, that the legs from knee-down are rather dwarfed. A highlight of the statue is the serene expression on Bāhubali's face – it makes the colossal structure seem very impressive. There is no doubt that the sculptor who sculpted the face was an extremely skilled one. Bāhubali's hair is curled in spiral ringlets and the ears are longer than usual. These features enhance the beauty of the face. There is no support above the thighs – and up to this point, an anthill (with serpents emerging out of it) provides a firm base to the statue. Creepers are seen on the legs and the arms, culminating in the upper part of the arm as a cluster of berries. This creeper is identified by Jains as *mādhavī* or *kāḍu-gulaguñjī* (Gaertnera remosa). The pedestal of the statue is designed to represent an open lotus and upon this, the sculptor has drawn a scale corresponding to 3 feet and 4 inches. Interestingly, the scale near the left foot corresponds with French meter. This scale was perhaps used to layout the work because we can see that the scale is divided into three equal parts where there is a mark resembling a flower.

This colossal figure has stood for over a thousand years without a scratch – as if just chiseled out by the sculptor. Though the image is not the first of its kind, it is bigger than most others (even bigger than any statue found in Ramses of Egypt). The magnificence of the image is second to none, and its location atop the hill makes it more beautiful. The statue very aptly conveys what Bāhubalī stood for. Not only is this a valuable piece of architecture, but this is a deity that is worshiped even to this day. Many a pilgrim (not only Jains) come here to relieve their burdens before Bāhubali.

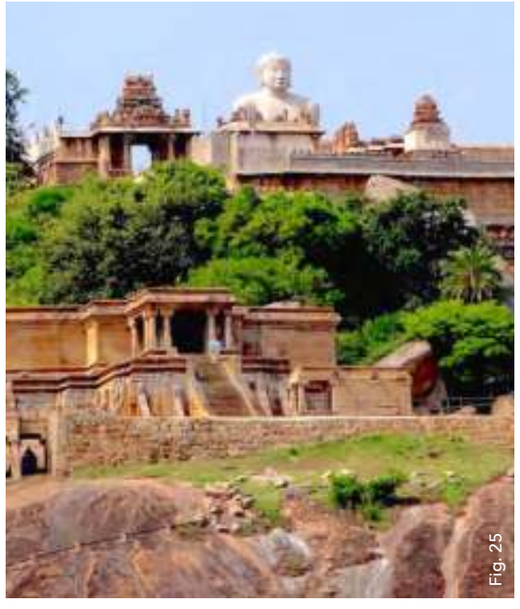

Fig. 25

This magnificent structure has inspired many other such structures like the monoliths at Karkalla, Venura, Gommatagiri, Dharmasthala, etc. One must surely visit it in one's lifetime. ॐ

Fig. 26

The Difficulty of Being Good

Are "outliers" made by talent/dedication, or by fortunate circumstances? Do circumstances make men, or is it vice-versa?

BY NIRMAL KARTHIKEYAN

IN HIS BOOK *'OUTLIERS'*, Canadian journalist and author, Malcolm Gladwell, proposes a theory: that "outliers" – "the best and the brightest, the most famous and the most successful"– are made, not simply by talent/dedication, but also by fortunate circumstances. A case-in-point in his book is Christopher Langan, a man with an IQ of 195, who did no more than run a horse-farm in rural Missouri because of the dysfunctional circumstances he grew up in. Gladwell argues that while men with lesser IQ have been employed as Professors in reputed institutions, Langan spent most of his years as a rancher because of a singular lack of opportunities. In this article, I'd like to look at the life-choices of famous men, and the circumstances/situations that lead them to it, to understand if circumstances make men, or if it's the other way around.

Adolf Hitler

We have all heard of Adolf Hitler – a man whose actions and ideologies are almost universally regarded as evil, a man who radicalised thousands of German and Austrian youth, a man who was instrumental in grouping the Axis powers – often against the will of the citizens and sometimes even the leaders of the countries in question – into warring against the Allied nations; a man who was the lead perpetuator of the Holocaust – his actions leading to the death of an estimated 5.5 million Jews and 19.3 million prisoners of war. In the words of historian Ian Kershaw, "Never in history has such ruination – physical and moral – been associated with the name of one man."

Hitler had a difficult childhood – he was subject to brutal treatment at the hands of his martinet father, a strict disciplinarian who expected his children to obey his orders without question. After the crash of the economy in the aftermath of World War I, Hitler grew up in abject poverty, and its utter misery led him to adopt a harsh, survivalist mentality – he writes in his autobiography, "I owe it to that period that I grew hard and am still capable of being hard". As a young boy, he idolized priests, and wanted to become one himself for quite some time. At school, he found the "solemn pageantry of the high mass and other Catholic ceremonies", "quite intoxicating" – it left a deep impression upon him, an impression which ultimately proved to be fatal for the Jews.

In his youth, Hitler discovered his artistic talents, and took off to study fine-art in Vienna against his father's will – and it was here that he was indoctrinated into German nationalism and anti-semitism through sermons and rallies held by power-hungry politicians looking for young recruits. An Austrian by birth, Hitler was not compelled to participate in the war as a German soldier; yet, he chose to do so, and won the appreciation of his superiors. When Germany was defeated in the World War I, he vowed to avenge his loss by ruining the "November criminals" – the civilian leaders who signed the armistice. From this juncture, Hitler went on to join the Nationalist Socialist German Workers Party, rose up its ranks quickly, was chosen as the Chancellor of Germany in the year 1933, and the rest, as they say, is history.

This leads us to an important question: can Hitler's unfortunate circumstances justify his terrible actions? It was certainly not a good period for a child to grow up in. Hitler had a troubled and authoritarian father, who often flogged and verbally abused him. He grew up on a pension and later, an orphans' fund, after his mother died of breast cancer. He was brainwashed by scheming politicians, and was deeply affected by Germany's defeat in World War I. With no formal education, he was forced to stay in the army after the war, where he was tasked with infiltrating the Workers Party – where again, he was subjected to radicalization.

But weren't there other men who grew up in similar situations – often in poorer circumstances – and yet, became humanitarians? Yes, Hitler grew up in a volatile nation in times of poverty and turbulence, but so did millions of other Germans, many of whom became war heroes, doctors, spies; they risked their lives every day – unnamed and unrewarded – to stay true to their ideals. Many loyal Germans, sickened by the prosecution of innocent Jews, put their own lives at stake to provide Jews with food and shelter.

Fig. 27

Hitler had other options: he could have chosen art over politics; he could have taken the problems of his nation to the League of Nations; he could have had dialogues to re-acquire the land that was lost in the Treaty of Versailles. But he *chose*, of his own accord, to plunge the already ravaged nation into a long and bloody war that ultimately led to his downfall and the death of several million honest, good-willed men all over the world.

Examples from India

In the annals of our very own Indian history, we come across tales after tales of men and women who remained true to their dharma in the gravest circumstances – men and women whose stories refuse to perish after centuries, whose ideals are still relevant to us in the 21st century. Let us take a look at few such examples.

No article about ideals can be complete without the inclusion of one of India's greatest epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Here, we see the example of King Daśaratha – the son of King Aja and Queen Indumatī – who was a wise and just king, capable of assisting even Lord Indra in his wars with the *asura*-s. This valiant king, when faced with his wife's demand to banish Rāma, chose to grant it, even though he knew that the pain of separation from his beloved son would kill him. He chose to uphold *dharma* by keeping his promise to her – a promise that he had made when

Fig. 28

she had saved his life in the battle with the *asura*, Sambara.

Lord Rāma, too, an able son to succeed his noble father, abdicated the throne that was his, and undertook a tough and perilous fourteen-year exile to honour the promise his father had made to Queen Kaikeyī. Lakṣmaṇa, his faithful brother, chose to accompany Rāma, since his mother, Sumitrā, had entrusted him with the duty of protecting/supporting Rāma. Sītā, Rāma's wife, also chose to accompany him to the forest, albeit after convincing an initially unwilling Rāma to take her with him. She told him,

> "*O son of an illustrious monarch, a father, a mother, a brother, a son or a daughter-in-law, all enjoy the fruit of their merits and receive what is their due. It is only the wife who actually shares the fortunes of her husband. When you depart this day for the dense forests which are difficult to penetrate, I shall walk ahead of you crushing under my feet, all the thorns that lie on your way*."

King Bharata, in his turn, refused to ascend the throne of Ayodhyā, and instead, placed Rāma's *pāduka*-s on the throne, and himself lived in a small hut outside Ayodhyā – consuming a diet similar to what Rāma might eat in the forest, dressed in bark-clothes that Rāma might wear in the forest. In the fourteen years that he governed Ayodhyā from his hut in Nandigrāma, Bharata could have easily succumbed to the temptation to continue his rule; instead, he chose to surrender the reigns to Rāma when he returned from his exile.

In our tradition, suffering is accepted as a just consequence of one's past actions. Our tradition exhorts us to focus – even in grim situations – on what is to be done, instead of ruing about the unfairness of the situation. The *Gītā* says,

> "*Be intent on action,*
> *not on the fruits of action;*
> *avoid attraction to the fruits*
> *and attachment to inaction!*
> *Perform actions, firm in discipline,*
> *relinquishing attachment;*
> *be impartial to failure and success, this equanimity is called discipline.*"

It is this attitude that has helped so many Indians to bear untold amounts of pain and hardships and yet, become *mahāpruruṣa*-s.

Then there are characters on the other end of the spectrum: Rāvaṇa, the ruler of Laṅkā, was a *brāmaṇa*, and a great devotee of Lord Śiva. He was well-versed in the Veda-s and the art of playing the *vīṇa*. In fact, his ten heads signify his knowledge of the six *śāstra*-s and the four Veda-s. He is said to have authored a treatise on astrology – the *Rāvaṇa Saṁhiṭa* – and another on medicine, the *Arka Prakāśa*. Despite this, he chose to succumb to his attraction to Sītā, rightfully the wife of Rāma.

I'd like to conclude by saying that the final thought, the intent, the action and the fruit of the action belong only to the person in context – the circumstances may play a role, but do not decide the action. It depends, of course, on how each of us sees the debate – do circumstances justify the actions or do they not? Every man has his own beliefs, and human civilization has come to where it is because of its ability to accept alternate realities and opinions. The final opinion, then, is left to you, the reader.

Durga Bhagwat

Durgabai's writing is like life itself — full of emotions of happiness and sorrow, anger and compassion, joy and disgrace, obscene and pure. It inspires writers to be like her — conscious and fearless.

BY SOURABH SOORAJ

THE history of Marathi literature is replete with legends like P.L. Deshpande, Kusumāgraja (V.V. Shirwadkar), V.S. Khandekar, etc. Yet, one writer stands out of them all – not only for her extraordinary proficiency and creativity in writing, but also for her social activism. Her name is Durga Bhagwat.

Durga Bhagwat was born on 10 February 1910 in Indore in a *karhāḍe* Brahmin family. She lived with her aunt, Sitabai Bhagwat – whose immense collection of books and reading habits greatly influenced her – and her sister, Kamala Sohon, who went on to become the first woman scientist of India. Her father was a scientist who discovered how to make ghee from oil. Durgabai was also trained by her grandmother's brother, Rajaram Sastri Bhagwat, a veteran Sanskrit scholar and social activist.

As a college student, Durgabai was greatly influenced by Gandhiji's thoughts. Once, she heard a speech by Gandhiji, and immediately contributed her gold bangles to his cause. She dedicated a year of her college life to the Indian National Movement.

Durgabai was a radical thinker. In 1932, to immerse herself in new experiences, she went into the jungles of Madhya Pradesh – Sagar, Bilaspur, Durga, Raipur – and lived with tribes like Goṇḍa, Baigā, Porku, Kāṇvā. She studied their cultures and religious practices, their languages, beliefs and traditions, their stories and songs.

When she was 32, she met with an unfortunate accident while cutting poisonous yam and became bedridden for six years. Undaunted, Durgabai found inspiration in her everyday life. As she lay in bed, she observed the beauty of the gradual change of seasons – this invoked the writer in her and led to the creation of one of the most legendary works in Marathi literature, the *Ṛtucakra*. The patient yet powerful, calm yet merciless depiction of the change of seasons in this work spoke vividly to the readers.

Durgabai was concerned that the society was unaware of and neglected lesser known cultures of the *ādivāsī*-s, and contributed extensively towards the understanding of folk-culture. Her doctoral thesis was titled, "*The Synthesis of the Hindu and Tribal Cultures in the Central Provinces*". She wrote a treatise on Marathi folk-culture – *Lokasāhityācī rūparekhā* – which chronicled folk-traditions of cooking, performing arts, *ovī*-s, etc. Today, *Lokasāhityācī rūparekhā* is considered as a primary source of Marathi folk-culture. She also chronicled other folk-traditions – Muslim marriage songs, tantric literature, *tamāśā* and *lāvaṇī* of the *Mahāra*-s (a community of Maharashtra), folk deities, philological description of words prevalent in the folk-culture, etc.

She regularly wrote articles for various Marathi newspapers and magazines – these were later compiled into one of her most famous books, *Paisa*. Her article on *Jñāneśvarī*, the Marathi commentary on the *Bhagavadgīta* (written by the Marathi saint, Jñāneśvara), is among her finest. Her writing on the *Mahābhārata* – *Vyāsaparva* – is a highly intelligent work, rooted in reality, and raising important questions.

A polyglot, Durgabai spoke French, German, Marathi, Sanskrit and Pali. An important field that she worked on was Buddhism – it was Durgabai who brought Buddha and his teachings to the attention of the Marathi people. She translated many stories of Buddhist literature into Marathi. She translated Ravindranath Tagore's *Loka-Sāhitya* into Marathi. Interestingly, she also translated Henry David Thoreau's books into Marathi. Her books on *asvala* (bears), *kadaṁba* (botany), etc. show her vast knowledge in diverse fields. Durgabai even tried her hand at Marathi theatre known as *tamāśā*. These works prove Durgabai's ability to stretch beyond her comfort zone.

> ***A writer must not fall into the traps of rewards of the government — if a writer is restricted, it is the death of writing itself, she warned.***

Durgabai's writing is aesthetic, rich in references, full of sentiments, ardent and passionate. It truly touches the essence of life; rather, it is like life itself – full of happiness and sorrows, inspired by the colorful emotions of anger and compassion, joy and disgrace, its obscenity and purity. For her, writing was *dharma*. She always fought for the freedom of writers, well-illustrated by her support of writers like Vitabai Mangu, and her refusal to accept the honor of the *Padmaśrī* – India's third highest civilian honor – and the *Jñānapīṭha*. She argued that a writer must not fall into the traps of rewards of the government – if a writer is restricted, it is the death of writing itself, she warned. She urged writers to be conscious, fearless, and never to resort to cowardice.

Durgabai was active in the social affairs of the country. In 1975, she was one of the primary figures who opposed Indira Gandhi's Emergency. She openly criticized Indira Gandhi in the 'Marathi Sāhitya Saṁmelana'. To show her opposition, she fasted for three days. Fearlessness and passion for freedom were in the genes of Durga Bhagwat.

Durgabai's life stretched beyond the ordinary. She often said that a person is like a creeper which when left in solitude, begins to grow at its own pace and eventually matures into a beautiful vineyard. When the mind is left in solitude, it matures beautifully, she said.

Durgabai remained independent throughout her life – remaining unmarried, and not depending on anyone to the very end, she inspired herself when she was alone and helped others when in company. In 2001, at 91 years of age, Durgabai's eyesight and hearing started deteriorating. In an article, she said, "My eyesight and hearing are failing, but I am happy because I only see and hear the things I want to."

Her soul merged with the *pañca-mahābhūta*-s on 7 May 2002. Thus ended a nearly century-long chapter of history of one of the greatest literary icons of India. Durgabai played a huge role in inculcating Indian culture in the minds of the Marathi people and her influence remains with us even today – Marathi literature will never be the same without Durgabai and neither will its people. Indeed, her life is a message to us – a message that you and I, as individuals, can make a difference.

INTERVIEW

Prof. Saroja Bhate

BY MANISH RAJAN WALVEKAR, VISHNU K, SACHIN VERMA, RITWIK LAL

Prof. Saroja Bhate is an internationally renowned scholar of Sanskrit grammar. She was Former Head and Professor, Dept. of Sanskrit and Prakrit languages, University of Pune; Former General Secretary, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune; Former Visiting Professor, University of Oxford; Former UGC Visiting Fellow, Humboldt University, Berlin. She has been imparting the knowledge of Pāṇinian grammar to students for more than half a century. Among the many prestigious awards that have been conferred upon her, the most distinguishing ones include 'The Sanskrit Pandit Award' by the Honourable President of India, and the 'Veda Vyas Sanskrit Award' by UGC.

The following is an excerpt from a discussion between the faculty and students of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetam, Bengaluru, and Prof. Saroja Bhate (henceforth SB).

STUDENTS: You are a renowned scholar of Sanskrit grammar. Can you talk a little about the initial stages of your Sanskrit Studies? What brought you to it? What features of the language attracted you to it?

SB: It is rather difficult to choose a singular feature of the language that attracted me to it. As far as I can remember, I have loved the language since my childhood – even when I did not know it was called Sanskrit! It started with my learning of Sanskrit devotional *stotra*-s from my father – I was so enamoured by the sonority and rhythm of the language (*dhvani-mādhurya*) that I took a keen interest in learning and reciting the *stotra*-s – just for enjoyment! When the people around me began to appreciate and praise my rather perfect recitation, my interest in it grew.

Formally, I was introduced to the language in the eighth-grade. I got the highest marks in Sanskrit in the terminal examination, and my teacher was supremely happy with my performance. Sanskrit became my first love!

So, both factors – emotional and practical – contributed to sustain my interest in Sanskrit. I mustn't deny that good marks and high ranks were factors that furthered my interest in Sanskrit. Yet, more importantly, I came under the spell of its beauty and rich content. Also, my maternal grandfather was a Sanskrit Pandit, so maybe there is a genetic reason for this love?

STUDENTS: It is widely regarded that Pāṇini, the author of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, anticipated – by more than 2,500 years – the idea of a computer program – both in form and spirit. Can you elaborate on this?

SB: Yes, indeed! This has been remarked upon by great professors of Sanskrit like Prof. George Cardona, Prof. Paul Kiparsky, Prof. Hartmut Scharfe, etc. Rick Briggs, a NASA scientist, wrote in his famous article about Sanskrit grammar, "it is tempting to think of them [Sanskrit grammarians] as computer scientists without hardware… Their analysis of language casts doubts on the humanistic distinction between natural and Artificial Intelligence (AI)". Prof. Scharfe wrote, "*Aṣṭādhyāyī* was not a device to create Sanskrit sentences, but was an iconic representation of the sacred language. And what does this icon consist of? A computational structure". Elaboration on this would be a topic for a series of lectures.

Before I put forth my idea, I must admit that my knowledge of computer science is limited, so I will limit my description to its basics. A computer is defined as a programmable electronic device that can store, retrieve and process data. Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is rather like a computer in the same manner – it has these three parts; it is a generative or derivational model which consists of grammatical formulae that are composed in code language. It has a two-pronged approach to linguistic data: that of analysis and synthesis. So, it has an "input-feature" which breaks down the linguistic components to their smallest units for analysis, and an "output-feature" which gives ready-to-use Sanskrit sentences; between the two "features" is the "program" with operational rules defined by Pāṇini! So, the structure of Pāṇinian grammar is comparable to computer programming.

STUDENTS: A living language is dynamic – it adapts itself to different places and time periods. Do you think that the crystallized grammatical structure of the Sanskrit language has worked against its dynamic nature?

SB: My straight answer is, no, not in the least. It is a myth that the growth of Sanskrit is arrested by its grammar. We must first understand what it means for a language to be dynamic. According to me, a language is dynamic if it consists of three things – energy, movement and change. Sanskrit has all the three qualities. It is a very unique language

because it is very ancient, yet a living language. In the last 2,000 years, since Pāṇini defined the rules of Sanskrit grammar – or rather, since he "tied" the language to his rules – a vast amount of literature has been produced in the language. Just in the last century, a voluminous body of literature has been written in this language, including poetry, drama and commentaries on scientific treatises. The Sanskrit literature that is available to us is just the tip of the iceberg. An estimated 10 million manuscripts of Sanskrit literature languishes behind dark doors, waiting to see the light of the day. Further, the variety of content in Sanskrit is also immensely wide – religious, philosophical, literary, scientific... Several genres/forms – from the most concise *sūtra* style to the most prolific epic-style – exist in Sanskrit.

Scholars like Prof. Sheldon Pollock and Dr. Kapila Vatsyayana have highlighted the flexibility and adaptability of Sanskrit. I remember Prof. Pollock's article, "*Sanskrit Cosmopolis*" – it describes why Sanskrit reigned supreme in South-East Asia in the first millennium of the Common Era. According to Pollock, all the inscriptions found in South and South-East Asia during the first millennium are in Sanskrit – there is not a single Prakrit inscription. Sanskrit was the medium of literary expression. Pollock states that the language facilitated expressions that were not available in any other language. Sanskrit can express the content of any time, any region and any society. Prof. Pollock calls it a "cosmopolitan language".

Pāṇinian grammar gave the language stability, grace and dignity. Consider the difference between a freestyle dancer and a Bharatanāṭyam dancer; Sanskrit is like the latter – a well-structured language, yet a natural language. Its structure is its own; Pāṇini simply highlighted the inbuilt structure and system of the language.

STUDENTS: Why is Sanskrit the best language adaptable for Computer Science? What may be the future of Artificial Intelligence (AI) if it is incorporated in this field?

SB: Let me quote Rick Briggs again. He writes, "Among the accomplishments of Sanskrit grammarians, there can be a method for paraphrasing Sanskrit in a manner that is identical not only in essence but in the form with the current work of Artificial Intelligence". So, it is not the language, but the method of paraphrasing – the *śābdabodha* technique – which is comparable to AI. Briggs further explains that this technique of sentence-analysis can be employed in machine translation. So, we must dispel the myth that Sanskrit language "is the best for Computer Science".

Sanskrit *śāstra*-s like Nyāya, Vyākaraṇā and Mīmāṁsā – if they are thoroughly studied – can contribute immensely to the field of AI. A specific area where Pāṇini's grammar can guide those working in the field of AI is that of the analysis of emotional and sentimental impact of a sentence (attitudinal import). Pāṇini attaches different emotive meanings – like curiosity, appreciation, anger, contempt, etc. – to certain morphemes. This model can be used to match particular emotions with particular linguistic units in a language. I do believe that the Pāṇinian formalization of the emotional content of expressions will lead to a great leap in the area of AI.

STUDENTS: You often quote Prof. S.D. Joshi: "Read Pāṇini in the light of Pāṇini". Could you elaborate upon this?

SB: Prof. Joshi was a man who had a unique approach to Pāṇinian grammar – a blend of the traditional and the modern. His writings show his independent and critical method of interpreting Pāṇini. Though he was thoroughly trained in a traditional *pāṭhaśāla*, he never hesitated in challenging traditional expositions that he did not agree with. His twelve volumes of translations of some *āhnika*-s of the *Mahābhāṣya* have contributed immensely to the study of Pāṇini's grammar. However, over time, Prof. Joshi became disillusioned with his work on the *Bhāṣya* and began, instead, to work on the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. In his introduction to the first volume of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, he wrote that he is convinced that the *Bhāṣya* is of very little help to understand Pāṇini.

Somehow, when I was studying the *Siddhāntakaumudī* with my guru Pt. V. Bhagwat Śāstrīm, I was plagued by the same feeling. This feeling became more intense when I started studying the *Bhāṣya*. I began to question the interpretations imposed upon Pāṇini.

Let me illustrate with an example: the very first *sūtra* in the *Siddhāntakaumudī* is *halantyam*. For a clear understanding of the term "*hal*", commentators offer two interpretations of the rule: "*hali antyam*" and "*hal antyam*". Also, they recommend the repetition of the *sūtra*. Now, is this intended by Pāṇini? These superimpositions of the commentators' logic are motivated by their approaches to the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* – for them, the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is a pedagogic model (which it is not). But the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is an expert model – it is not meant for *bālānāṁ sukhabodhāya*! It is not a digest; it does not aim at teaching the Sanskrit language.

I quote Scharfe: "Pāṇini's aim was to create an iconic structure of Sanskrit rather than to create Sanskrit sentences and for this, he chose computational or mathematical models". I fully agree with Scharfe. My recent studies of some of the commentaries have further confirmed my understanding.

I give you one more example: Pāṇini writes, *anekāl-śit-sarvasya*. Patañjali proves that the mention of "*śit*" in the *sūtra* is redundant. Later, he justifies its mention by extracting a *paribhāṣā* from it. But elsewhere, he rejects outright the mention of an *anubandha* "*ś*" and replaces it with his own. How is it that he does not try to defend/justify Pāṇini's usage of "*ś*" here? Why don't the commentators adopt the *paribhāṣā*, "*sthitasya gatiścintanīyā*"? Prompted by such questions, I have been trying to understand Pāṇini in his own light.

to be cont...

Centre Snap

8-day Workshop on Navya-Nyāya Language

(23 – 31 December, 2019 at Coimbatore Campus)

Amrita Darshanam (ICSS), in association with Rishi Rina Trust, organized an 8-day workshop on Navya-Nyāya Language and Methodology. The classes were taught by Prof. V.N. Jha, Former Director, Centre of Advanced Study in Sanskrit, Pune University, and Prof. Ujwala Jha, Professor and Director, Centre of Advanced Study in Sanskrit, Pune University. Using the text of *Tarkabhāṣā* as a basic text, an introduction to the methodology and techniques of Navya Nyāya was taught. Approximately 30 delegates participated from different parts of the country.

4-day Workshop on Temple Architecture and Iconography (Level 3)

(1 – 4 February, 2019 at Bengaluru Campus)

Amrita Darshanam (ICSS) conducted a four-day workshop on "Temple Architecture and Iconography (Level 3)". The resource persons were Dr. M.S. Krishnamurthy, Former Professor and Chairman, Department of Studies in Ancient History and Archeology, Mysore; Dr. Manoj Gundanna, Archeologist; Ar. Prof. Madhusudhanan Kalaichelvan, Chief Curator of Swarajya Heritage, Bangalore. Detailed insights into the art, architecture and chronological development of the Cola Temples were provided along with an overview of the inscriptions and lives of the kings who built the temples. The evolution of permanent stone structures from wooden structires was described in parallel with the development of Buddhist architecture. The contributions of the Noḷambā, Gaṅgā and the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasties for temple construction were discussed at length. There was also an exclusive session on the influence of the *purāṇa*-s on temple sculptures. The workshop also included two site visits – to Nageśvara Temple at Begur, and Kolāramma Temple, Someśvara Temple and the Avani Temple complex near Kolar. The workshop was attended by about 60 participants from across the country.

3-day Workshop on Textual Criticism

(14 – 16 February, 2020 at Coimbatore Campus)

Amrita Darshanam (ICSS), organized a three-day workshop on "Textual Criticism". It was conducted by Prof. Dominic Goodall, Director, École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), and Dr. S.A.S. Sarma, Research Officer, EFEO. They demonstrated practically how painstakingly the textual-critic must collect as many manuscript-copies of a work as possible and go through and tally the collated manuscripts to bring to life the variety and variations of each text. The participants worked on:

1. A portion of the 10th chapter of the *Śivadharmottara* (a seventh century work transmitted in a large number of manuscripts, particularly from Nepal)
2. An unpublished chapter of the *Sarvajñānottaratantra* (a seventh century work whose transmission, mostly in Southern manuscripts)
3. A section of the *Raghuvaṃśa* with the tenth century commentary of Vallabhadeva as transmitted in manuscripts from Kashmir
4. A case of codex unicus: Brahmaśambhu's tenth-century ritual manual surviving in a single manuscript in Calcutta.

More than 30 delegates from across the country participated in the workshop, and learnt the method of creating a veritable thesaurus of a textual tradition.

3-day National Seminar on Development of Pramāṇa Theories and Systems of Logic in Buddhist Tradition

(28 February, 29 February & 1 March, 2020 at Bengaluru Campus)

Amrita Darshanam (ICSS), in collaboration with Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR), conducted a 3-day National Seminar on Development of Pramāṇa Theories and the Systems of Logic in Buddhist Tradition. Leading academics in the field of Buddhist philosophy – Dr. Kuntala Bhattacharya, Prof. Mangala R. Chinchore, Prof. Dilipkumar Mohanta, Prof. Arvind Kumar Rai, Prof. Sachchidananda Mishra, Prof. C. D. Sebastian, and the traditional Tibetan monastics – Abbot of Sera Mey Monastery, Serme Khen Rinpoche Geshe Tashi Tsering, participated and presented their scholarly papers on various topics such as "The Significance of Nāgārjuna's *Vigrahavavyāvartanī*", "The Epistemic Turn in *Yogācāra*: Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti", "*Upāya-kauśalya-hṛidaya-śāstra*: An Inquiry", "The Dissemination of the Buddhist *Pramāṇa* Tradition in Tibet", "Nāgārjuna on Negation (*niṣedha*): A Note", etc.

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Fig. 5 Unknown. 1820. *Hindu funeral*. India. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hindu_funeral.jpg.

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Fig. 7 Unknown. Early 15th century. *Vajrabhairava*. China. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/39742?searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&ft=buddha&offset=880&rpp=80&pos=893.

Fig. 8 Unknown. Late 18th century. *A Buddha with a Pancharaksha Goddess, Folio from a Pancharaksha (The Five Protective Charms)*. Nepal. https://collections.lacma.org/node/249272.

Fig. 9 - Fig. 13 Unknown. Early 19th century. *Oriental MSS. Sapta Chakra, Asanas and Mudras (Hata yoga)*. India. https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/asanas-and-mudras#.

Fig. 14 Unknown. c. 1700-1710. *Goda Raga*. Kulu, Jammu, India. http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O120640/goda-raga-painting-unknown/.

Fig. 15 Unknown. c. 1720-1740. *Krishna Fluting in the Forest*. Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. https://www.harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/216985?position=7.

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Fig. 19 Pavithrah. 2011. *View of lake inside fort Chitradurga*. India. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:View_of_lake_inside_fort_Chitradurga.jpg.

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Fig. 24 Ananth, H. V. Unknown. *Shravanabelagola Bahubali wideframe*. India. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shravanabelagola_Bahubali_wideframe.jpg.

Fig. 25 Ananth, H. V. Unknown. *Shravanabelagola Hillview*. India. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shravanabelagola_Hillview.jpg

Fig. 26 Pratyeka. Unknown. *Panorama of Chandragiri Temple Complex, Shravanabelagola, Karnataka, India*. India. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Panorama_of_Chandragiri_Temple_Complex,_Shravanabelagola,_Karnataka,_India.jpg

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Fig. 28 Unknown. c. 1830. *Rama, Sita and Lakshmana in the Forest, page from the Ramayana (Tales of God Rama)*. Pahari, India. https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1989.332.

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