

The sixth paper is 'Gaṇapatikirtanas of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar'. A luminary in the firmament of Sanskrit and music, Muttusvami composed twenty-five songs and an important treatise on the various forms of Ganesha in Tiruvarur. Various forms of Ganesha as well as hymns to the god are mentioned. Moreover, the personality, charms, dress, decoration, qualities, and colour of various Ganeshas are also delineated.

In the seventh paper, 'Two Gaṇapatīs in Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar's Songs', Gaṇapati is glorified. The author has given the English rendering of Muttusvami's songs on Maha and Uchchhishtha Gaṇapati, along with critical comments on particular words, Puranic allusions, iconographical details, and esoteric concepts. This paper highlights the value of Muttusvami's contribution to the theoretical and practical aspects of the *upasana* on Gaṇapati.

In the eighth article, 'Śrī Viśvanāttam Bhaje'ham-Caturdaśa Rāgamālikā—A Study', Dr Janaki has given different parts of Muttusvami's song with its fourteen different ragas! The author also discusses the contribution of Muttusvami's ancestors to Carnatic songs and music. The article has such depth that one is amazed at the author's vast scriptural and non-scriptural learning.

The ninth article is 'Navagraha Kirtanas of Śrī Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar'. Here Dr Janaki deals with the worship of the *navagrahas*, nine planets. A diagram gives the various divisions and the symbols associated with each level. She renders the hymn into English and discusses it from different angles. Astrological charts and their remarkable sacred meanings are also included.

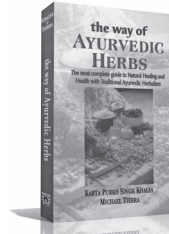
The tenth paper is 'Indian Classical Dance and Temple Tradition'. The scriptures are considered authoritative sources not only of religion and ethics but also of the cultural way of life. Etymologically, the term *abhinaya* means that which brings an object near. Bharata's *Natya Shastra* (8.7–8) takes *abhinaya* to mean all elements that bring out the full emotional and contextual import of the representation. It refers to the four categories of the spoken word, bodily gestures, make-up, and emotional involvement. Photographs related to dance, drama, Shiva puja, and mudras are included in this section.

The next article is 'Citations in the *Bṛhaddēśī*'. The *Bṛhaddēśī* is an ancient manuscript with musical contents, unique in the history of music. Dr Janaki presents here the text and general methodology of music. The first section of the manuscript is missing and from this available text Dr Janaki shows that the author of the manuscript was Matanga.

The last article is the remarkable 'Contribution of Tamil Nadu to Sanskrit—Alaṅkāra, Saṅgita and Nāṭya Śāstras'. In this paper Dandin, of the ancient Kanchipuram of the seventh century, is referred to as a pioneer. Nearly twenty-five ancient and modern writers have commented on his *Kavyadarsha*. Dr Janaki informs us that large chunks of this work have been incorporated in the Sinhalese work *Siya-bas-lakara*, or *Sviyabhasalankara*, of King Silameghasena (c.830–51). A Tibetan version of the work with Mongolian commentaries is also known. This section is replete with deep historical findings and insights, showing Dr Janaki's profound scholarship. A general index enhances the book, which is a great contribution to the scholarly world of Indian music.

Prof. Suchitra Ray Acharyya

Department of Sanskrit, Calcutta University



### **The Way of Ayurvedic Herbs**

Karta Purkh Singh Khalsa  
and Michael Tierra

Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 41 U A  
Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi  
110 007. 2010. xxi + 365 pp. ₹ 295.

**W**e all fall ill sometimes and look out for fast cures. Allopathy grants us relief, though most of the time it also produces some side effects. Medicines are given to cure the ills and also the effects of medicines. Gradually, our bodies get dependent on medicines, which are but a collection of chemicals. This is a sad state of affairs, for people become victims of various medical drug-induced ailments. The production of medicines has a bad effect on the flora and fauna as well. Recently, there has been a depletion in the number of vultures due to eating of animal carcasses containing the drug paracetamol. The worst part is that all this is happening while nature has given us a

bounty of medicines in trees and plants all around us. Only we do not recognize them. India is home to one of the most ancient and advanced systems of medicine, called Ayurveda, the science of life. Even complicated surgeries were perfected in this system. Unfortunately, thanks to the neglect of Sanskrit education, this knowledge lies hidden in ancient texts. With its true practitioners dwindling in numbers, Ayurveda is far from regaining its true position as a mainstream system of cure.

Rising medical costs and increasing awareness about the ill-effects of Allopathic medicines has led to more and more patients seeking alternative systems, Ayurveda being one such. However, what these patients find mostly is some luxury retreats offering pseudo-Ayurveda rather than the proper system of treatment. This has reinforced the belief that Ayurveda is not a complete system of medicine but something bordering on the cure by quacks. Old Ayurvedic treatises should be made accessible both to the medical fraternity and common readers to help them have a glimpse of the vastness and depth of this system. The present book does exactly this.

While the name of the book underlines the importance of herbs in Ayurveda, the basic principles of this science are given clearly and briefly. Ayurveda is based on the concept of five basic elements: space, air, fire, water, and earth. The interactions of these elements with human beings and their surroundings are the basic premise of this system. Each person is unique in Ayurveda and there is no generic cure. The three *doshas*, imbalances, called *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha* need to be in proper proportion, else diseases cause havoc. These concepts are explained lucidly. Ayurvedic anatomy; the seven types of *dhatu*s, tissues; the thirteen *agni*s, fires; and the three *malas*, toxins, are outlined. The diagnosis in Ayurveda is highly personalized and starts from determining the type of the body the patient has. This is followed by an external and internal examination, along with an eightfold and a tenfold examination. Detailed questionnaires for these examinations have been provided, and the main characteristics of such overview have been described.

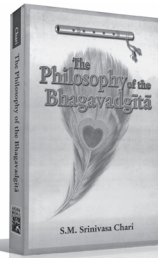
Food plays a crucial part in the health of an individual. Detailed guidelines regarding the type

and quantity of food to be taken is also given in this book. Different foods have been prescribed for persons having different *doshas*. The role of fasting and detoxification in Ayurveda is stressed upon, and methods of detoxification have also been given. The good effects of some common food items and vegetables are described. A description of various methods of treatment in Ayurveda is followed by a detailed Materia Medica of Ayurveda. Also given are non-herbal and mineral medicines, Ayurvedic formulas, and Ayurvedic home remedies. Some specific diseases and their treatments have also been discussed. We are taught how to integrate Ayurvedic herbs and foods into our daily lives and the relation between Ayurveda, kundalini, and yoga is also explained.

This book contains some valuable appendices that present a synopsis of therapies, a list of vegetable juices helpful in detoxification, and even recipes of some Ayurvedic delicacies! A glossary clarifies technical terms and the bibliography, index, and endnotes make the work useful for serious students, practitioners, and researchers. With so much information packed in a compact volume, it truly is 'the most complete guide to natural healing and health with traditional Ayurvedic herbalism', as the subtitle of the book claims. It is a welcome addition to the slowly increasing literature in English about Ayurveda. Such guidebooks help bring back Ayurveda to its lost glory.

Swami Narasimhananda  
Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata

## BOOK RECEIVED



### **The Philosophy of the Bhagavadgītā** S M Srinivasa Chari

Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers,  
PB 5715, 54 Rani Jhansi Road, New  
Delhi 110 055. Website: [www.mrml-books.com](http://www.mrml-books.com). 2005. xxvi + 294 pp. ₹ 575.

The author of this scholarly work examines the commentaries of Acharya Shankara, Ramanujacharya, and Madhvacharya, and also consolidates the various ethical, theological, and philosophical ideas scattered in the Bhagavadgita.