

Samvit



Knowledge beyond time

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Editorial

“No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden.”

Thomas Jefferson

The above quote, as is aptly spoken by Thomas Jefferson, compares culture to a ‘garden’. The garden means heaven whose gardener is the divine lord himself. Such is the importance of culture and history in our lives that it is compared to the purest imagination of the mankind. AMRITA is an institution of professional excellence, but why this exigent prominence to cultural and historical importance of India is being brought out to you at regular intervals? This is a question that we should ask ourselves consciously. The answer lies in the fact that engineering, banking, science, law etc. are noble pursuits necessary for sustaining life; but culture, poetry, and history are things that we live for as we are the members of human race, filled with passion and love.

So Samvit is a sincere effort to remind all the readers to reflect upon the vast, rich, culture they belong to. This provides us with a niche in the world that prompts us to say that we are proud Indians; because we belong to a legacy that is honourable, diversified and respected. This could be reflected upon to gain back our confidence. It is hereby guaranteed that as you go ahead, read and comprehend this journal you will bloom anew. Winding up with a beautiful quote from John Keats.

“Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced.”



“Children, today our minds have become like potted plants. If a potted plant goes without being watered, it begins to wither. Similarly without adhering to our observances and disciplines we won’t be able to bring our mind to control. We must lead our lives according to our guru’s instructions. Once the mind is totally under our control, there is nothing to fear. Viveka has dawned within us and will guide us.”



“Whenever I have read any part of the Vedas, I have felt that some unearthly and unknown light illuminated me. In the great teaching of the Vedas, there is no touch of sectarianism. It is of all ages, climes and nationalities and is the royal road for the attainment of the Great Knowledge. When I am at it, I feel that I am under the spangled heavens of a summer nights”

Henry David Thoreau

(1817-1862)

Of Sangam Age

Methil Devika

A year ago, during one of my lecture-demonstrations on the nuances of Mohiniyattam, a European spectator queried if Mohiniyattam had any connection with a feminine dance form that he had seen in the west-coast of Australia. I clarified with an instant 'NO'. I said that we did have common practices with South-east Asia but certainly not Australia.

The South Indian dance forms trace their mythological as well as technical origins from the treatise called the Natyasastra. The Natyasastra has compiled the common dance codes that existed nearly 2000 years ago in Eurasia, South-east Asia and India. But one usually forgets that it is the Sangam literature that provides a much richer corpus for tracing the origin of Indian rhetoric, poetic, music, fine art and dance.

The Sangam literature belonged to Tamizhagam and was compiled between 2000 B.C. and A.D. 300. It was a collection of works by eminent writers that were approved by the ruling kings through their committees. Any person who wrote could hand over his work to the committee that consisted of scholars. The scholars pursue the work and see if it has followed the required norms of poetry, grammar or ethics and if they were really impressed they would include it into the Sangam compilation. What made the Sangam literature unique was that it was meant to be preserved through centuries. The Sangam epoch lasted thousands of years, covered the reigns of five hundred kings and included the work of thousands of poets.

A few of the prominent Sangam works are, Koothanul (the science of acting), Panchamarabu (five anthologies), Tolkappiyam (earliest work on grammar), Pathupaattu (10 idylls), Ettuthokai (8 anthologies) and the later Sangam epics called Manimekhalai, Chilapatikaram, and other religious and philosophical works.

The works give a vividly detailed account of the Chola, Pandya and Chera dynasties. The Chola capital was Poompuhar and it was a seaport with ships bringing merchandise of pearls, gems, spices and horses. The enormous Chola gate bore the tiger's stamp and every export and import had the tiger's seal. There were wide roads and people of all sects predominantly Dravidians, Buddhists, Jains and the later Vedic Brahmins co-existed. The Roman Ionians called Yavanas and the Greeks called mlechas served the Chola's court. Kannagi and Kovalan, the protagonists of Chilapatikaram were Buddhists and the author, Ilango Adigal was Jain. There was great amount of religious tolerance and harmony. There were kings, chieftains, monks, vellala (merchants) and paanar (musicians) In the evenings people made merry at the beaches- the waters believed to cleanse them off their daily sins.

The poems are initially naturalistic and gradually became ethical and religious. They are not only beautiful but give a detailed imagery of the landscape, flora and fauna. The songs of love and war are segregated into the five landscapes of kurinji (hills), mullai (jungle), paalai (desert), neythal (ocean tract) and marutam (paddy fields). The behavior of love and lovers change according to the landscape. While women of the mountains were more patient, those of the paddy-fields were sulky.

Love in Sangam is divided into kalavu (pre-marital courtship or eloping) and karupu (love after marriage). The consequences of kalavu were marriage or death. Death in the sense that the maiden would either marry her lover or prefer to die. In later poems one would find the maiden's desire to return to her lover in another space/birth. The idea of transmigration of the body is brought in by the vedic-seers/Aryans who came to Tamizhagam. Pre-marital courtship was allowed by the parents and the maiden decided who she would marry when and where. The marriage rules were introduced much later where the men were foreigners and did not keep their word.

Muruga the war-god was the chief Dravidian God . Kotravi was the war-goddess and there was no idol worship. In the later Sangam works we find mention of the Aryan Gods Vishnu and Lakshmi. Buddhism brought with it worship of animals, renunciation and vegetarianism.

One finds mention of bards called paanar, dancers called viraliyar and actors called koothar . The Pathupaattu are songs asking the bards to go

find themselves a good patron in a particular king. The present ragas find their genesis in the panns of the Sangam age. The dances are of the outset secular and spontaneous, rather then ritualistic and finally systemized. The first organized dance concert is seen in the arangetrukathai (chapter on Madhavi's arangetrum) of Chilapatikaram where Madhavi's dance training, practice regimen, and the styles of dances and her recital repertoire are greatly elaborated. In Chilapatikaram there is mention of kootha chakkian (Chakkyar) performing in front of prince Cheran Senguttavan.

In Tolkappiyam, there is a chapter on the eight rasas or sentiments. Tolkapiyam is believed to have been written before Natyasastra. The names of the rasas are different although their explanations are similar. The determinants leading to these rasas are mentioned in Tolkapiyam. An interesting reference is of the determinants leading to the nakai rasa which is the equivalent of haasya or laughter. It mentions the babbling of lunatics, blooming words of babies and the tamil spoken by Aryans as causing mirth and leading to the nakai rasa.

People believed in justice, otherwise why would Kannagi go storming into the king's court and burn the whole city of Madurai in order to avenge her husband's death. There are interesting anecdotes. A man has two wives. The second wife is holding the first wife's child. By mistake it slips from her hands and falls into the well. In utter despair, she throws her own child into the well. The images are realistic and spontaneous in the Sangam works. An old mother hears that her son has been killed in war. In anxiety she runs to his body to see if he had been killed from the front or from the back. She is happy to see that he had been hit from the front as he has died a brave warrior. For if he had been hit from behind (in case he was fleeing in fear), her sorrow at having given birth to a coward would be graver than his death.

Many historians have referred to Southern India as the cradle of human race. Researchers have proven that Tamizhagam was in existence 15000 years ago. Sir W.W. Hunter in his 'History of India' writes that peninsular India or the country of the South was geologically distinct from the Indo-Gangetic plain. After the submergence of the original Tamizhagam and emergence of the Himalaya, the land lying between the latter and Cape Comorin became one and came to be called India.

Recently I read that Tamizhagam is the remains of a former continent which stretched continuously to Africa in the space now occupied by the Indian Ocean in the West , to Australia in the south covering Lanka, and to Kamaschatka in the east. This means that if the European spectator that I was mentioning in the beginning of this article were to ask me his question again, I just might have to say 'YES'.



Methil Devika

Methil Devika is a practitioner of Mohiniyattam and research scholar at Bharatidasan University. She works as lecturer for the Post Graduate Department at the Kerala Kalamandalam Deemed University and has disseminated the art form widely through SPIC-MACAY. She won the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar from Kendra Sangeeta Nataka Akademy (2007). The Devadasi National Award from the Government of Orissa (2010), and the Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Akademy Award (2010). She qualified the UGC/NET eligibility for lectureship in performing arts in the year 2000 after her post graduation in MA (Dance)/Rabindra Bharati University Kolkatta and MBA (Madras University). Empanelled with the ICCR, she has a fellowship from the Ministry of Culture.

Sharpening The Human Mind Through Ashtavadhanam

Meenu G
S5 ECE B

There is a story of a child named Narendra. Once, while his teacher was taking class, Narendra was very busy talking to his friends in the back bench. He was telling something very interesting that his friends ignored the teachings of their master and listened to him. The teacher who found out the disturbance to his class started asking questions about what he was teaching to the people who were not listening to him. At last when he asked Narendra, he answered his all questions and also told him at which part he stopped! It's quite amazing that a small child was able to concentrate on talking and teachings at the same time. How many of us have wondered about possessing such an ability of multitasking so that we could have completed our job in hand effectively? Then, we must understand that the very basic need to attain this, is high power of concentration. This helped that child to become the great cultural ambassador of India, Swami Vivekananda.

People use the word 'concentration' freely. But very few have understood its true meaning and the importance residing inside it. It's a key which, when combined with will and perseverance, can open all the doors and lead to success in any endeavor-material or spiritual. The value of an individual is proportionate to the value of his attention. Usually when people talk of concentration, they imply keeping the mind steady on one thing at a time. But it is quite possible to develop power of double, triple and multiple concentration. India gave birth to a powerful art called 'ashtavadhanam' that helps one to concentrate on multiple things.

Avadhanam is a literary performance from the very ancient days in India. It originated as a Sanskrit literary process and is revived by Kannada and Telugu poets in modern times. It involves the partial improvisation of poems using specific themes. It requires immense memory power and tests a person's capability of performing multiple tasks simultaneously. All the tasks are memory intensive and demand an in-depth knowledge of literature and prosody. The tasks vary from making up a poem simultaneously to keeping a count of bell ringing at random. No external memory aids are allowed while performing these tasks except the person's mind. Avadhanam can be considered as the 'Divide attention' (clinical model of attention) as it is the highest level of attention and it refers to the ability to respond simultaneously to multiple tasks or multiple task demands.

In the process of Avadhana, the Avadhani has to undergo critical analyzation of various questions a human mind can pass through in different stages of one's life. He must answer the questions, step by step, in extempore metrical compositions in accordance with the specifications given by the people who had developed the above mentioned queries. The number of scholars who ask the questions may be eight, a hundred, or a even a thousand. If the number is eight, then the performance is called 'Ashtavadhana' or 'Eight-Fold Concentration' and the person is called Ashtavadhani. If the number is hundred it is called Shatavadhana and in case of thousand it is called Sahasravadhana. The scholars who ask the questions to Avadhani are called Prachakas or questioners. The first person to ask the question is called 'Pradhana Prachaka'. He is the same as any other Prachaka except that he asks the questions first. The questions asked are primarily literary in nature. The prachakas can optionally place additional constraints. Though it is not stated explicitly, conformation to Chandas(poetic meter) is mandatory. Avadhani should answer them in the form of a poem. The questions generally consists of a description given in prose and the avadhani has to express it as a poem. The additional restrictions placed by the Prachakas can be anything like asking the Avadhani not to use a given set of alphabet in the entire poem, to construct only a particular type of poem (with the same 'Vritha' or 'Alankara') etc.

The entire performance demands from the Avadhana - a great power of concentration, a powerful memory, spontaneous creativity, imagination, poetic ability and quick thinking. For the spectators too it is a very fulfilling, enriching and enjoyable experience. An Avadhani must possess a great competence in handling a variety of subjects, a sharp intellect, a strong self-confidence, and a whole wide knowledge of the Shastras. Apart from his literary expertise and dexterity, the ability to entertain the audience is

also necessary. For this a pleasing personality, a sense of humor and a melodious voice are some important factors.

During Ashtavadhanam, the Avadhani divides his attention on eight different topics to deal with the eight different items. When the Avadhani handles a particular item he keeps that part of brain alert. He has to be very careful to see that no part get mixed up with another. Sometimes, there may be a lapse in the Avadhani's concentration. This could happen when a difficult question is put to him, if there is a commotion in the Sabha(meeting hall), or when the questioners are not sympathetic but hostile. Such dangers have to be recognized in prior to the act and the performer has to take necessary actions in advance.

Avadhana's have been practiced in different fields. Based on the field where the main stream performance happens, Avadhana can be classified into numerous types. Poetry is the main subject of Kavitavadhana and in Sangitavadhana it is music. Vaidyavadhana takes medical science as its main subject and Jyotisavadhana deals with astronomy and astrology. In Ghantavadhana bells of different sizes are used to test the concentration of the Avadhani. In case of Hastacalani, Nayanajasna and Chotikavadhana, the movements of the hands, the eyes and the snapping of the thumb respectively are the means used by the questioners. Chaturangavadhana is concerned with chess and Ganitavadhana deals with mathematics. In an Ashtavadhana eight scholars ask the Avadhani questions on eight different items related to a particular subject like literature, music or medical science etc .

The origin of the art of concentration can be traced back to the oral tradition of learning Vedas. From, this oral tradition developed various ways of reciting the Vedic mantras in order to memorize them perfectly. The Veda learner is called the Avadhani. Simultaneously several types of games developed which were played by the Avadhani to help them to learn Veda more effectively. With this tradition, perhaps several types of Avadhana or feats of concentration originated. Later Avadhanas were incorporated into the poetic tradition and Avadhana developed as a literary activity or sport.

The real age of Avadhana starts in eighteenth century. The whole of eighteenth and nineteenth century is called the Golden age or Prachinayuga of Avadhana. This is the time when Avadhana took a new turn and reached its pinnacle. The Navayuga or the new age of Avadhana starts with the beginning of twentieth century. This is the time when large number of scholars involved in the art form started stepping back. Gradually, the art of Avadhana began to decline. However it has not completely disappeared and there is still a few Avadhanis in Sanskrit and Telugu, who keep this great tradition alive even in this era of Kaliyuga.

India, in course of time developed a rich culture. A civilization, so dynamic as this in general, is a multitude of power tools. Among these are the facilities of the weapon Sanskrit language and the basis of a vast culture which gives prior importance to human values and emotions. While the power of concentration is basis to all self-realizations and success in material and spiritual field, Sanskrit on the other hand has been a major instrument through which the whole event expressed itself. Though it is true that there is a gradual decline with time; India is at the threshold of self-awakening. It is obvious that the age of secrets will unfold once again. Glimpses of the historical art form Ashtavadhanam together with the insight into Sanskrit language shows us not only the man's possibilities of exploring the human mind but also the amazing power of concentration and priceless nature of language of Gods, the language that have shaken India's past, one hopes will once again help the future.



Vikramasila-The Forgotten Dream University

Sudha Nair
Aashritha L S
S3 ECE

Our India was once referred to as “The Golden Bird”, not just because of its material riches but also because of its intellectual wealth. She has been a mother, from whom many new inventions and ideas which are now prevalent in the world, have been born. We had many world renowned centres of learning and scholars from across the globe competed among themselves to get admitted into one of these seats of learning. Can you believe that the idea of conducting entrance examinations originated right from these ancient institutions?! Vikramasila Vihara was one such university which followed this method for admitting new students from around the world.

Sri Vikramasila Vihara, founded by king Dharmapala was erected on a suitable site, a hillock on the banks of the holy Ganges in Northern Magadha [modern day Bihar].The Vihara was constructed following a well calculated design. A strong outer wall decorated with artistic work surrounded the Vihara, at the centre of which was erected a temple adorned



with Mahabodhi images. The complex comprised of 108 temples in all. Even the total number of staff recruited, adds up to 108, which could have had some special significance, 108 being a sacred number according to the Hindu tradition. The University came to have 6 colleges each housing 108 teachers and a central hall called the “House of Science” with its 6 gates opening on the 6 colleges. On the walls of the University were also painted portraits of Pandits eminent for their learning and character.

Teaching was controlled by a board of eminent teachers and this board is stated to have administered the affairs of Nalanda University. Vikramasila is said to have had 6 “Dvara-Panditas” (Sanskrit: ‘Dvara’ meaning doors or openings and ‘Panditas’ meaning Scholars) or ‘Gatekeepers’ who were the most erudite of its scholars. They guarded all the 6 entrances to the University and asked questions to the scholars. The scholars had to prove that they were worthy to obtain admission to the University by answering the questions put forth to them by the well versed scholars at the gates-similar to the modern entrance exams of today! This was to ensure that admission to the University would not be easy and its standard of scholarship was not lowered. The President of the University was always the most learned and religious sage. Its founder was Buddha-Jnana-Pada.

The history of Vikramasila can be traced from the accounts of some of its famous scholars and teachers. The famous Chinese traveller Hiuen-Tsang was a student of Vikramasila for several years and had penned down a comprehensive account of the rules and regulations and daily life and studies of the students, on the basis of his first-hand knowledge. Pragnakaramati, Vagisrava, Ratnakara and many other Gatekeepers of the Vihara wrote several famous works, some of which are in Tibetan or were translated to Tibetan.

Dipamkara was the greatest of Indian Scholars who worked as missionaries in foreign countries. Here’s the story of how Dipamkara, popularly known as ‘Acharya Atisa’ went to Tibet :

The Tibetan Monk Nag-tsho was deputed by the Tibetan King to Vikramasila for the purpose of inducing its great scholar, Atisa, to come

to Tibet and take charge of the Buddhist propaganda in that country. Nag-tsho arrived at the gate of the monastery in the evening and when the gate could not be opened under its rules, he found shelter for the night at a Dharmasala at the gate. The gate was opened in the early morning and Nag-tsho proceeded to the Tibetan House of the monastery meant for the residence of its Tibetan students. At the Tibetan House, Nag-tsho saw its senior monk, Gya-tson who advised him to be a resident pupil of Sthavira Ratnakara, who was also the chief of Atisa himself although Atisa had the highest reputation for learning and character. For the next day was fixed a congregation of 8,000 monks of all classes at Vikramasila. The more distinguished monks were given reserved seats. The Raja of Vikramasila (The King of Magadha) was given an exalted seat. But none of the monks, old or young rose from the seat to mark his arrival. But all the monks including the king rose from their seats when the learned monk Vira Vajra and Atisa entered. In the next few days, the Tibetan messenger saw Atisa distributing alms and food to the poor and was much impressed by his charity. Atisa was also very much moved by the great trouble and expenses repeatedly borne by the Tibetan for his sake and decided to accompany him to Tibet. He asked the Tibetan messenger to wait for 18 months so that he could finish his work on hand. At the time of his departure for Tibet, Atisa handed over charge of the various offices he had held to the monastic authorities. His guide Nag-tsho packed the travelling baggage of the party in 60 loads which were carried by 30 bullocks. Before leaving, Atisa, in his usual spirit of charity and self sacrifice distributed the Tibetan Gold brought to him as a present for his deputation in four parts-the 1st part were given to his Acharyas, the 2nd to President Ratnakara, who was to use it for the benefit of the whole clergy of the monastery. The 3rd was sent to Vajrasana who was to endow religious services there. Finally, the 4th part was given to the King for distribution among the general Buddhist samghas of the country. On reaching Tibet, he was received by a “Song of Welcome by the people” and conducted to the king by an escort of 300 horsemen. It is really interesting to note that on his first setting foot on Tibetan soil, Atisa was entertained with the national drink of Tibet which was ‘Tea’. The Tibetan monk offering this drink to the Indian guest described it thus : “Venerable sir, it is called Cha....We do not know that the Cha plant is eaten but the leaves are churned and mixed with Soda, Salt and Butter in warm water and the soup is drunk. It has many properties.” It was thus that the use of Tea spread from Tibet to India.

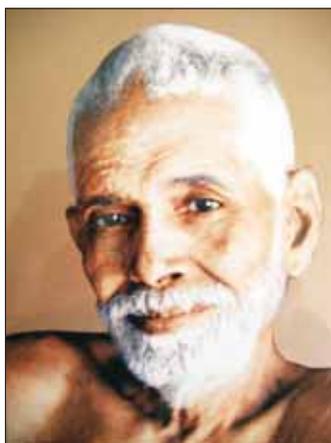


The prodigies of piety and learning The Vikramasila University produced, and the profound contributions they made to knowledge and religion by their numerous writings practically built up the culture and civilization of other countries.

This temple of learning met its end at the hands of the Musalmans. Greater number of inhabitants of the place were Brahmans many of who were all slain by them, after which great books on Hindu religion came under their observation. On becoming acquainted with the contents of those books, it was found that the whole of that fortress and City was a College, and, in the Hindu tongue, they called a college Bihar (Vihara). This is how the City of Magadha got its modern name Bihar! After its destruction, Vikramasila’s glorious history was hidden away in the Tibetan books.

Nan Yar?(Who Am I?)

Pooja Babu
S5 ECE



Introduction

Before reading this excerpt, we need a little introspection. Let's go back to the spiral ebb of our childhood times when questions, too modest of this kind, was a twinkle to our yet-unborn-intellectual mind. When we were kids, we probably have wondered, 'Why is the sky blue?', 'Who showers rain?', 'Why does the cuckoo sing back?' but 'Who am I?' wasn't usually one of them. Back then as kids all of us were more occupied with the spectacle of nature, its unfathomable whims; we were much like those

kittens with little cute eyes looking at every single morning as if it was the first time. But now, we have almost debarred all our senses from such little fixtures of life that has gifted us the subtle feel of integrity. Most of us go to college, learn all the logic, master the mysteries of calculus without ever discovering how our own minds function. All we know about it is, that it executes some spectacular mental acrobatics; but we fail to recognize what sustains the complex rhythm of life inside it and what is it that dwells in its deeper recesses and animate everything. And somewhere, at some juncture of thoughts, amidst the reality structuring mechanisms of consciousness, we stand with the question which we never wondered as a kid-"Who am I?" because by then we were explicitly conditioned to mouth the answer saying 'D/o or S/o Mr. and Mrs.' But now as we are wise enough not to get drugged by the 'conditional ideas', we start giving the question a cerebral reasoning because it was all what calculus has taught us. But would that work? Certainly no! Since here again we are trying to refute a theory or doctrine; something from the conditional ideas itself. The substratum has not changed. Now we sit, all dazed, looking for help. And this is where this excerpt comes to our rescue, to undo the misty picture of unreality and give a sense of direction. This excerpt is slightly abridged and is taken from the teachings of the great spiritual master Ramana Maharshi, compiled by Sri. M. Sivaprakasam Pillai.

Who Am I? (Nan Yar?)

1. Who am I?

The gross body which is composed of the seven humours (dhatus), I am not; the five cognitive sense organs I am not; the five vital airs, prana, etc., which perform respectively the five functions of in-breathing, etc., I am not; even the mind which thinks, I am not; the nescience too, which is endowed only with the residual impressions of objects, and in which there are no objects and no functioning's, I am not.

2. If I am none of these, then who am I?

After negating all of the above-mentioned as 'not this', 'not this', that Awareness which alone remains - that I am.

3. What is the nature of Awareness?

The nature of Awareness is existence-consciousness-bliss.

4. When will the realization of the Self be gained?

When the world which is 'what-is-seen' has been removed, there will be realization of the Self who is the seer.

5. Will there not be realization of the Self even while the world is there (taken as real)?

There will not be.

6. Why?

The seer and the object seen are like the rope and the snake. Just as the knowledge of the rope which is the substrate will not arise unless the false knowledge of the illusory serpent goes, so the realization of the Self which is the substrate will not be gained unless the belief that the world is real is removed.

7. When will the world which is the object seen be removed?

When the mind, which is the cause of all cognition and of all actions, becomes quiescent, the world will disappear.

8. What is the nature of the mind?

What is called 'mind' is a wondrous power residing in the Self. It causes all thoughts to arise.

Apart from thoughts, there is no such thing as mind. Therefore, thought is the nature of mind. Apart from thoughts, there is no independent entity called the world. In deep sleep there are no thoughts, and there is no world. In the states of waking and dream, there are thoughts, and there is a world also. Just as the spider emits the thread (of the web) out of itself and again withdraws it into itself, likewise the mind projects the world out of itself and again resolves it into itself. When the mind comes out of the Self, the world appears. Therefore, when the world appears (to be real), the Self does not appear; and when the Self appears (shines) the world does not appear. When one persistently inquires into the nature of the mind, the mind will end leaving the Self (as the residue). What is referred to as the Self is the Atman. The mind always exists only in dependence on something gross; it cannot stay alone. It is the mind that is called the subtle body or the soul (jiva).

9. What is the path of inquiry for understanding the nature of the mind?

That which rises as 'I' in this body is the mind. One would discover that heart is the place of the mind's origin. Of all the thoughts that arise in the mind, the 'I' thought is the first. It is only after the rise of this that the other thoughts arise.

10. Thoughts appear wending like the waves of an ocean. When will all of them get destroyed?

As the meditation on the Self rises higher and higher, the thoughts will get destroyed.

11. Is it possible for the residual impressions of objects that come from beginningless time, as it were, to be resolved, and for one to remain as the pure Self?

Without yielding to the doubt "Is it possible, or not?" one should persistently hold on to the meditation on the Self. There are not two minds - one good and the other evil; the mind is only one. It is the residual impressions that are of two kinds - auspicious and inauspicious. When the mind is under the influence of auspicious impressions it is called good; and when it is under the influence of inauspicious impressions it is regarded as evil.

12. How long should inquiry be practiced?

As long as there are impressions of objects in the mind, so long the inquiry "Who am I?" is required. As thoughts arise they should be destroyed then and there in the very place of their origin, through inquiry.

13. What is the nature of the Self?

What exists in truth is the Self alone. The Self is that where there is absolutely no "I" thought. That is called "Silence". The Self itself is the world; the Self itself is "I"; the Self itself is God; all is Siva, the Self.

14. What is non-attachment?

As thoughts arise, destroying them utterly without any residue in the very place of their origin is non-attachment.

15. Is it not possible for God and the Guru to effect the release of a soul?

God and the Guru will only show the way to release; they will not by themselves take the soul to the state of release. In truth, God and the Guru are not different. One can know oneself only with one's own eye of knowledge, and not with somebody else's. Does he who is Rama require the help of a mirror to know that he is Rama?

16. Is it necessary for one who longs for release to inquire into the nature of categories (tatvas)?

Just as one who wants to throw away garbage has no need to analyze it and see what it is, so one who wants to know the Self has no need to count the number of categories or inquire into their characteristics; what he has to do is to reject altogether the categories that hide the Self. The world should be considered like a dream.

The Mysterious Dholavira

Anand M
S 5 ME

"Dholavira has indeed added new dimensions to the personality of Indus Valley Civilisation."

-R.S.Bisht, Joint Director General (Rtd.), Archaeological Survey of India

Dholavira lends its name from a modern day village south of it. Originally known as 'Kotada-timba', the landscape has the remains of the Indus valley civilization. The site was discovered by J.P. Joshi in the late 1960's. It is one of the five largest Harappan sites. It is considered as one of the grandest cities of its time. It has been under excavation since 1990 by the Archaeological Survey of India. There were 13 field excavations between 1990 and 2005. The excavation brought to light the urban planning and architecture, and unearthed large numbers of antiquities such as seals, beads, animal bones, gold, silver, terracotta ornaments, and pottery and bronze vessels. Archaeologists believe that Dholavira was an important Centre of trade between settlements in south Gujarat, Sindh, Punjab and Western Asia.

It is characterized by monumental architecture, massive fortifications, elaborate water management and meticulous town planning with unique features. The notable proportions in architecture are as follows:

- The city's length (east-west axis) and width (north-south) are precisely in a ratio of 5 : 4;
- The castle's proportions follow the city's ratio of 5 : 4;
- The castle's northwest corner is located on the city's main NE-SW diagonal;
- The citadel (castle and bailey together) has a ratio of 1 : 2;
- The middle town's length and breadth are in a ratio of 7 : 6;
- The ceremonial ground's proportions are 6:1.



Architecture and material culture

Estimated to be older than the port-city of Lothal, the city of Dholavira has a rectangular shape and organization, and is spread over 250 acres. Like Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, the city was built to a pre-existing geometrical plan, of three divisions – the citadel, the middle town and the lower town. The acropolis and the middle town had been further furnished with their own defence-work, gateways, built-up areas, street system, wells and large open spaces. The acropolis is the most carefully guarded complex in the city and forms the major portion of the south-western zone. The towering "castle" stands in fair insulation, defended by double ramparts. Next to this stands a place called 'bailey' where important officials lived. The most striking feature of the city is that all of its buildings, at least in their present state of preservation, are built of stone, whereas most other Harappan sites, including Harappa itself and Mohenjo-Daro, are almost exclusively built out of brick. Dholavira is flanked by two storm water channels; the Mansar in the north, and the Manhar in the south.

Reservoirs

"The kind of efficient system of Harappans of Dholavira, developed for conservation, harvesting and storage of water speaks eloquently about their advanced hydraulic engineering, given the state of technology in



the third millennium BCE" says R.S.Bisht, Joint Director General (Rtd.), Archaeological Survey of India.

The ancient city of Dholavira boasts of the unique and sophisticated water conservation system of channels and reservoirs, the earliest found anywhere in the world and completely built out of stone. Dholavira had massive reservoirs that were extensively used for storing fresh water brought by rains or to store the water diverted from the nearby rivulets. Reservoirs are cut through stones vertically. Reservoirs skirted the city while the citadel and bath are centrally located on raised ground. A large well with a stone-cut trough to connect the drain meant for conducting water to a storage tank is also found. Bathing tank had steps descending to the water level.

Seal making

Some of the seals found at Dholavira, contained only animal figures, without any type of script and it is suggested that these types of seals represent early conventions of Indus seal making.

Hemispherical constructions

Seven Hemispherical constructions were found at Dholavira, which were constructed over large rock cut chambers. Having a circular plan, these were big hemispherical elevated mud brick constructions. Two of the excavated structures were designed in the form of a wheel, one with spokes and the other without spokes. They contained innumerable burial items of pottery. These hemispherical structures bear similarity to early Buddhist stupas.

The Archaeological Survey of India, which conducted the excavation, opines that "The kind of design that is of wheel with spokes and wheel without spokes also remind one of the 'Sarara-chakra-Citi' and 'sapradhi-rata-chakra-Citi' mentioned in the 'Satapatha-Brahmana' and 'Sulba-sutras', which belong to a much later period".

Coastal route

Dholavira is considered as a linking port to various places both inside and outside the Indus valley civilisation.

Language and script

The Harappans spoke an unknown language and their script has not yet been deciphered. It is believed to have had about 400 basic signs, with many variations. The direction of the writing was generally from right to left.

Sign board

One of the most significant discoveries at Dholavira was made in one of the side rooms of the northern gateway of the city, and is often called the Dholavira Signboard. The Harappans had arranged and set pieces of the mineral gypsum to form ten large symbols or letters on a big wooden board. At some point, the board fell flat on its face. The wood decayed, but the arrangement of the letters survived. The inscription is one of the longest in the Indus script.

Belur, The Jewel Of Indian Architecture

Jayashree
S7 EEE

Can you ever imagine burying an entire place under sand to protect it from invaders? Well, as the story goes, that was one of the ways, the natives of Belur adopted to protect their mother land, when Malik Kafur and his troops invaded the Hoysala Kingdom.

Belur was once the capital of the Hoysala Kingdom before it was moved to Halibedu. Belur is set on the bank of river Yagachi earlier known as Velapuri. This landscape was filled with lush greenery and embossed with magnificent shrines and monuments, which of high architectural significance. This enchanting land was referred aptly as 'Vaikunta on earth'. This place is now situated in the Hassan district of Karnataka.

The Hoysala Kingdom was established by the legendary Sala. He had killed a tiger in an encounter to protect the life of his Guru and his countrymen. Interestingly the tiger became the symbol of the Hoysala kingdom. Sala extended his kingdom by annexing the surrounding areas belonging to Chola rulers in subsequent wars.

Let us gaze upon some impressive architectural structures of Belur and its awe inspiring legacy. One has to look at Chenna Keshava temple to understand and appreciate the artistic genius of this man made wonder. Just as we are dazzled by the grandeur of this majestic structure, one can't help but ask "What is the story behind this structure?"

King Vishnuvardhana had a dream about Lord Keshava during his nightly sojourn at the Babu Budan Forest. He decided to construct temple to glorify the Lord Keshava. There is an interesting sub-tale in this story, as the King constructed the temple for Lord Keshava alone, it is believed that the Lord himself travels to forest to meet his consort during night. The daily ritual of submitting a pair of fresh sandals to Lord adds credence to the espoused story.

The sanctum is star shaped and the hall is cross structured with an opening to the East. The architectural significance of the sculptures bestowed the status of a museum to the temple. Each sculptured figurine requires a detailed study of art. Quoting the words of James Fergusson "The amount of labour, indeed, which each facet of the this porch displays

is such as, I believe, never was bestowed on any surface of equal extent in the world; and though the design is not of the highest order, it is elegant and appropriate and never offends against any good taste'. The artistic greatness of the temple can be seen in its basement friezes, railings, pierced stone screens and bracket images. In the railings a prominent pattern of flowers springing from a creeper is depicted. On these flowers, scenes of Mahabharata and Ramayana are portrayed. On the middle panel of the first screen to the south of east doorway, there is engraving of a king with long hair, trimmed beard, twirled moustache and festooned with ornaments; on the left to the king, queen is seated and the royal couple is intently listening to the chief seated beside. Queen's intervention in court matters is noticeable. The basement friezes includes elephants and other animals in the battlefield, in different moods whereas the bracket figures are that of the 'Madanikas' or the structures of Mohini. These carvings are chiseled out in soap stone and this makes even minute details of the sculpture visible and beautiful.

Kappe-Chennigaraya temple, Soumyanayaki, Andal and other Vaishnava manifestations surround the main temple. The Kappe-Chennigaraya is to the south of the main temple built under the orders of Santaladevi, the chief queen of Vishnuvardhana. Though comparatively less decorative it resembles the main temple in its structure and contains finely carved images of Ganesa, Saraswati, Lakshmi-Narayana, Lakshmi, Sridhara and Durga in the form of Mahishasura-mardhini. It is believed that Dasoja and Chavana (a father-son duo) were the major architects of Chenna-Keshava temple hailing from Balliganve.

The 42 feet high Gravity pillar, which stands without any support, the carved image of Krishnaraja Wodeyar, Garudagambha and Garuda, are the other engravings of interest in this temple complex.

Belur is one such place where a person is intently reminded about his past, the very realization of what he is and what he can be. Our ancestors' legacy keeps on prompting us to keep on going forward.. We have to take the lead and shape our destiny.



Mriga pakshi Shastra

Arun Balakrishnan
Research Associate

As children we have all grown up with stories from Panchatantra and Jataka tales. These short stories which used animal and bird characters, apart from being rooted to sound morals, never failed to pique our intellect. Upon revisiting these stories, we might notice that to every character from the animal kingdom, a characteristic behavioural trait was assigned, throughout different narratives. While an ass was but dull-witted and hardworking, the cat was sly, the fox cunning and the cow and elephant were just gentle beings. Rather than dismissing this as random coincidence, a simple observation of some of these animals is proof enough that they display these definitive traits.

In the case of us humans - homo sapiens, we acknowledge that despite the physical traits being similar, no two individuals are identical in all respects. Akin to that different animals of the same species can behave differently. But, their basic nature may not change drastically; for example a tiger will always be a carnivore and not otherwise. Nevertheless the personality of different tigers could be different. Mriga Pakshi Shastra by Hamsadeva is one such book which explores this aspect and many others of animals and birds. This work is significant in terms of the extensive study and observation of animal lives, carried out at in an age hundreds of years before the onset of modern zoological aids like still or video photography.

Hamsadeva has classified the animals based on their physical appearance and then describes their temperament and traits, which he appears to have arrived at as a consequence of their physical traits. Although the reader may find his detailing and observations on animals like cows, sheep, etc very extensive, it may seem like a pretty easy thing for him to do, considering these were animals to be found in every household in those days. But what is indeed amazing is that he gives those very same details when it comes to describing wild animals such as lion, tiger and elephants in their natural habitat, which were the pristine jungles of India. About lion, the simha he notes first its yellow colour skin with white back, long tail and very thick mane, not to mention his almighty roar. Later goes on to describe in much detail about the beasts' preying, mating rituals and temperaments during different times of the year.

These close-quarter scientific observations of the wild beasts make one marvel at his means and methods of acquiring them. It certainly is above our imagination, having been accustomed to watching adventurers on television, making their many forays into the wild, backed up by considerable crew and gadgets. One has to ponder on this, while keeping in mind that during the 13th Century A.D. (around when the book seems to have been written), the forest cover in India was significant. Details of certain species of fauna mentioned in the book cannot be even verified today, many of them already being extinct. Some others remain severely endangered.



Mriga Pakshi Shastra categorises animals and birds based on their nature as 'Rajas'-ic and 'Tamas'-ic; the 'Sattc'-ic guna or goodness can be attributed only to the humans. He further classifies the 'Rajas' trait into *Rajasa-Uttama*, *Rajasa-Madhyama* and *Rajasa-Adhama* and similarly 'Tamas' into *Tamasa-Uttama*, *Tamasa-Madhyama* and *Tamasa-Adhama*.

	Rajas	Tamas
Uttama	Lions, Elephants, Horses, Bulls, Cows, Swan, Geese, Garuda birds (eagles), Parrots, Cuckoos, Pigeons, Peacocks, etc.	Camels, Wolves, Dogs, Cocks, Wagtails and Sky Larks
Madhyama	Tigers, Deer, Goats and Hawks	Eagles, Cranes, Kaushika birds (owl), Plava birds (pelican), Tittiri birds (partridge), Kukubha birds (pheasant), Lava birds (quail), Koyashti birds (red wattled lapwing) and Harita birds (yellow footed green pigeons)
Adhama	Hyenas, Rhinoceroses, Bears and Buffaloes	Ass, Boars, Monkeys, Jackals, Cats, Rats, Hares, Crows, Herons and Darwaghata birds (woodpecker)



The interesting feature of this book is that unlike in modern science a lion is not just a male or female. Lions according to Hamsadeva come in six variants namely - Simha, Mrigendra, Panshaya, Haryaksha, Kesarin and Hari. Similarly tigers(3), bears(3), rhinos(2), elephant(13), bulls(7) and many more animals are described.

Behaviour of birds have also been documented in a similar manner by Hamsadeva, Swan(7), eagles(3), hawks(2), crows(12), etc. Still noteworthy is how he again goes onto explain the sub-species in each species of a particular bird. He describes the mating season, conception, period of full birth prior to birth of the young ones, description of the young ones and their growth, distinction by colour, behaviour and species the nature and characteristic of the female, longevity, and formerly mentioned distinction by gunas. The names that Hamsadeva has attributed to the beasts can be compared to their names mentioned in the great epic, Mahabharata. In a book published by the Asian Agri-History Foundation on the Mriga-Pakshi Shastra, this parallel has been drawn. Dr. Nalini Sadhale, in this book, compares Hamsadeva's classification of animals with other notable works like the Purushasukta of Rigveda which bases classification on dwelling place of animals, Smritis and Puranas which classifies based on the theory of creation and Jainas classifies based on number of sense organs.

The first official English translation of Mriga-Pakshi Shastra from Sanskrit was published in 1927 by M. Sundaracharya and V. Krishnaswamy. The translation itself failed to make an impression on renowned ornithologist Dr. Salim Ali, who in the 16th Azad Memorial Lecture (1978), talks about the 'not so scientific' approach of Hamsadeva.

Even though modern zoology has moved in a direction very different from the approach taken by Hamsadeva, his contribution nonetheless was not trivial, but unfortunately has been forgotten. The english translation of his eminent work and its reproductions are all that the generation of today have to learn of the contributions of the India's long forgotten zoologist Hamsadeva.

Hanuman

Sucheth Sunil
Aparna R Shreedhar

Many things in Hanuman's character attracts us! Being Rama's greatest devotee, he performed great feats of valour and physical strength, had the greatest will power and performed his actions with admirable thoroughness. Here I have analyzed various phases in the life of this great soul including the good as well as the not so good things about him.

We all know about how Hanuman (Vayuputra) had tried his strength against the sun god when he was a child and how he received various boons from various Gods on being blessed by the Sun God. But when he began to misuse these boons to mar the performance of the yagas, the Rishis cursed him, viz., he would not remember his strength until somebody reminded him. Even Sugriva, his friend did not know this fact about Hanuman. When Bali and Sugriva fell out and became enemies the reason why Hanuman did not show his full strength and kill Bali was because he was not aware of it. There are about three or four places where this weakness of Hanuman seems to have come upon him. When Bali chased Sugriva, who was followed by his four ministers including Hanuman, through out the world, Hanuman suddenly remembers about a hill called Risyamukha, just opposite Kishkindha, where owing to a curse, Bali or anybody sent by him would have his head burst into thousand pieces if he ventured into it. Hanuman had forgotten this at first. He remembered it later and that was what saved them all.

There was another occasion when he failed. It was when Bali was killed and Tara (Bali's wife) had come to the field of battle and was crying. Hanuman comes there bravely and tells Tara, "Give these monkeys proper orders. Get control over Angada (Tara's son). Have Bali cremated and then see your son anointed, and when you observe him seated on the throne, you will rejoice and forget Bali's death." But Hanuman was supposed to be scheming for Sugriva succeeding Bali. This was another case where a strange lapse of memory occurred. Or maybe Hanuman was stricken with remorse and thought that the proper thing to do was to pass the crown on to the lawful heir. But Tara being wise and prudent rejected Hanuman's advice saying that, "Angada is nothing to me and seeing him on the throne is of no concern to me. Besides, when Bali has passed away, Sugriva succeeds to his authority. Over me, over this kingdom, and over the fortunes of Angada himself Sugriva presides."

Another instance of Hanuman's forgetfulness was during the famous incident on the battlefield when Ravana had hurled his unerring spear, sakti at Lakshmana and it had got stuck in his chest. He (Lakshmana) lost consciousness and fell prone on the ground. That is when Sushena remembers the famous curative herbs on Sanjivani Hill and after describing the herb in detail, he asks Hanuman to go and get it. Hanuman does the leap without any trouble, but when he searches on the hill-top he forgets the exact description and is unable to find the exact herb. This is why he carries the hill itself to Sushena and thus enabling Lakshmana's revival.

Now let us move on to some of the failures that Hanuman experienced. One of the instances where the reputed skill of this great person (Hanuman) failed was when he was talking to Sita in Ashokavanam. She expresses her misgivings to Hanuman; she wonders whether it was right for her to live and cause anxiety to the great brothers or whether it would be best for her to take her life and save trouble for so many. Hanuman convinces her successfully that she would be taken away from the clutches of this demon king Ravana. But when Sita expressed her hesitation about Rama and Lakshmana crossing the sea and about the monkey army overcoming her oppressors, Hanuman offers to take her to Ram right away. He forgets that, unwilling to be detected by anyone, he had reduced himself to a very small size. Sita being a nice lady, gently laughed at him. On feeling a little insulted, Hanuman assumed his strong, real form. He asked Sita, "You think you can't trust your slender body to me? I am strong enough to uproot the whole of this Lanka, take all the hills in it, and the men and women upon it, everybody including Ravana, and put them across the sea." This was ofcourse a little exaggeration on his part. But in modern days, when any person becomes a warrior and steps into the battlefield, in order to psyche themselves to fight, they have got to say some absurd things,

to claim that they were all-powerful and could bring the enemy down to grief. Hanuman didn't have any enemies but he had some critics. So he had to exaggerate a bit. But Sita still refuses. She says that if Hanuman took her from here, the Rakshasas would follow him and he would have to fight them while over the water. Even if he successfully does so, it was not right on her part to willfully touch any other person other than her husband Rama. She agrees that Ravana did touch her but that was when she was not the mistress of herself. She felt that Rama must come there, destroy Ravana and his family, and show the world that nobody dares to insult Rama's greatness or glory with impunity. Only then her rescue should follow. Hanuman was convinced with Sita's argument and said, "I know my strength and that's why I made the offer. Do not think I had any other motive." Here Hanuman was glad to have failed, for Sita convinced him of the right course.

But in spite of his forgetfulness, failures and other weaknesses put together, Hanuman was still great. His great achievements were impossible to measure by ordinary standards. Moving on to the exploits of Hanuman, one of his main achievements was the great leap he took across the sea to Sri Lanka. Jambavan, wishing to induce Hanuman to undertake the great leap across the water reminds him of what he did as a baby. He tells Hanuman, "You do not know about yourself. We want your *yojnas*." Thus, Hanuman realizes his true power and takes the leap across the sea. On reaching Lanka, and after an elaborate search for Sita, he meets her. After his conversation with her, rather than going back, he decides to do some mischief! He draws the attention of the guardians of Lanka and even kills one of Ravana's sons' who was known to be a great warrior. Finally when he was caught by Indrajit by the Brahmastra, he was taken to Ravana's presence. When they thought they had him well bound, the period of the Brahmastra's potency got over, and he shook himself free and sat before Ravana. He initially pretends to be a humble emissary of Sugriva; but then speaks defiantly to Ravana. Angered by his insolent manner, angry Ravana orders Hanuman's tail to be set on fire. Hanuman leaps around the city and burns down the entire city before returning to Rama. This leap and his subsequent wonderful achievements in Lanka was his first major exploit.

The next exploit was when Indrajit had aimed the Brahmastra at the whole of Rama's army. They were all hit and lay prone on the ground. Then after dark, two people were still wide awake - Vibhisana and Hanuman. Vibhisana had never been struck at all and Hanuman felt the ill-effects only for a short time. They came together and as they went around, they came upon Jambavan who was struggling hard. On recognizing Vibhisana's voice he asked if he had seen Hanuman anywhere. Without answering to his question Vibhisana asked back why he asked him only about Hanuman. Jambavan in response to this said, "If Hanuman is alive, then the whole army will come back to life. But if he is dead, then, though we are all alive, we are as good as dead. Without him we are perfectly worthless." On hearing this Hanuman discloses himself and falls at Jambavan's feet. Jambavan feels that he is born again. He mentions four herbs of miraculous potency and asks him to bring them. These included the herb which revives the dead, another that heals the wounds caused by arrows, another that restores the proper colour when the body has been discoloured by approaching death and the herb which joins the severed parts of the body. Hanuman then takes the leap to the Himalayas and searches for the four kind of herbs. But the herbs became invisible when they got to know that someone was coming for them. When he found that they were not to be seen, he had no option but to shift the mountain to the battlefield. Vayu blew the scent about and as it struck the nostrils of the dead monkeys, they revived and sat up. Rama and Lakshmana came back to life too. It was only because of Hanuman that the whole army came back to life.

Another exploit of Hanuman was his second flight to the Himalayan mountain. It was because of this act of his that Lakshmana was revived with the medicinal herb. Hanuman performed extraordinary feats of strength on the battlefield as well. Not only did he kill Ravana's son Aksha, but also three Rakshasas, Devantaka, Trisiras and Nikhumbha.

Shareera → Human Body!

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The human body or Shareera, as described in Ayurveda literature, is extraordinarily brilliant and logical. Indian literatures have detailed descriptions of human body components and its functions. The structures are named and numbered based on their functions at physiological (normal) and pathological (abnormal) grounds.

There are similarities between the contemporary sciences in certain aspects. The current scientific anatomy has reached microscopic level of understanding the human body, which is of great help in dealing with many pathological conditions, but the search for that subtle element which is the cause for the existence is never ending. In Ayurveda the importance is given for the gross understanding of the human body rather than microscopic. The gross understanding was achieved only after exploring the subtleness of human body.

The Shareera is that in which the continuous process of metabolism happens. This is the place where the basic fundamental elements accompany each other, rationally, for the proper function of the shareera and for healthy living. It is the place where the soul resides and provides the means to attain liberation by following Dharma.

Each Ayurvedic text has a separate section for the description of the Shareera, which includes both the Anatomical and Physiological features.

In Sushruta Samhita, Sharira Sthana, comprising ten chapters, has a detailed explanations of topics like evolution; embryology, personality, and most vividly explained is the Anatomical structure of the human body. The names given to the structures have a relationship with their functions. To understand the formation and functions of each structure many similes have been used.

In the fifth chapter named Shareera Sankhya Vyakarana, all the anatomical structures and its numbers are listed. The enumeration begins from the gross level.

The list of structures and their numbers.

Twacha - 7 layers - Skin and its layers

Kala - 7 - differentiation between two tissues

Ashaya - 7

Dhatu - 7 - Basic fundamental tissues

Sira - 700 - Vascular structures

Peshi - 500 (20 extra in females) Skeletal Muscles

Snayu - 900 - Ligamentous/Fibrous structures

Sandhi - 210 - Joints (between bones and soft structures)

Marma - 107 - Vital and vulnerable areas

Dhamani - 24 - Pulsating vessels

Srotas - 9 - Excretory passages

Kandara - 16 - Fibrous / Ligamentous structure

Jaala - 16 - Network of Structures

Kurcha - 6 - Flattened tendinous structure

Rajju - 4 - Rope like structures

Sevani - 7 - Sutural joints

Sanghata - 14 - Confluence of Bones

Seemanta - 14 - lines over the Skin where Confluence of Bones are present.

Aantra - 2 - tubular structures

Asthi - 360 - Bones

All these structures are enumerated along with their detailed description. Each structure is explained with its location and how many types are present in the human body.

The Anatomical concepts explained in Ayurvedic texts are acceptable even after scientific evaluation and practical application.

Continuation of page 9

Hanuman received appreciation from Rama in various situations. In their first encounter itself, in Kishkindha, the two brothers met Hanuman for the first time. Hanuman was in the guise of a scholar. His talk of a few minutes created a tremendous impression in the mind of Rama. He said to Lakshmana, "For one to speak as this person has spoken, one must know all the three Vedas and have them at command. Although he spoke for long, he has not made a single error. He seems to be a great master of elocution. His speech wins my heart and delights my soul. If a man can talk like Hanuman, he can bring down to his knees even the most implacable enemy. There is no danger he will not face, no enemy he will not encounter; nothing that he will not face to perform services to his master".

Like most people engaged in tasks of great difficulty, Hanuman swayed between moods of confidence and pessimism. Sometimes he felt he could accomplish what he had undertaken and at other times he was disposed to question his capacity to fulfill his obligations.

When Hanuman returned to Rama with Sita's message, Rama was so happy and he said that, "What another man could not even think of doing, Hanuman has actually performed for me." He also told Hanuman "I can't give you a suitable reward for bringing me this heavenly message. But I can give you myself; here is my body; I will embrace you tight; I will hug you." Hanuman attained his salvation at that moment.

After Vibhishana's coronation and final farewell, Rama didn't give anything to Hanuman. He gave Sita a garland of pearls. After wearing it for a while, she looked around amongst the gathering and then gave it to Hanuman. What more could Hanuman ask for? Then, when others were given leave, Hanuman stood up before Rama and said to him, "Please give

me this blessing, that my affection for you never diminishes. Do not allow me to think of any other person or to divide my affection between you and any other person. I want to live as long as your great name is preserved amongst the sons of men. Let me be your devotee forever." To this Rama replies, "Let it be as you wish. As long as my story is told amongst men, your kriti shall form a part of it. And may your life last also." Thus, Hanuman is still remembered whenever we refer to Ramayana.

There were also times when Hanuman's pessimism was converted into hopeful optimism. One such instance was when Hanuman reached Lanka he shrank his body to the size of a cat and started looking around for Sita. He was transgressing the moral code by feasting his eyes upon Ravana's women. Initially he felt, "My fate has led me to this place where I have to see the women of another person lying about and sleeping, the sight inevitably is causing me to think unworthy thoughts. I have not done this before, but I am obliged now to do this improper thing." But then he thinks, "What harm is there? Yes, I have seen the women of Ravana, but I can say conscientiously that my mind is not in any way affected. The senses project themselves and fasten upon particular objects only if the 'manas' directs them to do so. But my manas is fully under my control. I have come here to look for Sita. The natural thought is that she might be found amongst these women. So I have to look for her here." With this thought, he searches every nook and corner for Sita.

Thus we can see that there is a lot we can learn from Hanuman. As students, we should try to inculcate qualities like hardwork, determination, will power and dedication to the master (Guru); qualities that were found in abundance in him. We may encounter failures in life, but we must consider them as stepping stones to success! We must move on with this positive attitude in life.

JAI HANUMAN

Question and Answer session with Amma

Q. Amma, will there come a time when everyone in the world is good?

Amma: My children, if there is goodness, evil will exist as well. Suppose a mother has ten children. Nine of them are good as gold and only one is bad. That one bad child is enough to ruin all the others. But because he is there the others will be compelled to call out to god. There can be no world without opposites.

Q. Will God forgive us for the mistakes we made?

Amma: He will forgive us up to a point, but not beyond that. He will forgive us for whatever mistakes we make unknowingly, because, after all, we aren't aware of those mistakes. But if we knowingly do what is wrong, He won't tolerate it beyond a certain point. Then He will punish us. The little baby calls it's father 'Dada'. The father knows that the baby is calling him and he laughs. But if the child continues to call his father 'Dada' when he is old enough to know better, his father won't laugh anymore; he will spank him. In the same way, if we act erroneously knowing fully well that what we are doing is wrong, then God will certainly punish us. But even that punishment is a form of grace. God may punish a devotee even for a small mistake so that he will again commit a similar error. That punishment comes from God's boundless compassion for the devotee and is meant to save him. It's like a light in the dark.

Q. Amma, is it unavoidable that we have to suffer for every mistake we have made?

Amma: We have to accept punishment even for small mistakes. Even Bhishma had to suffer the consequences of his mistake. He just stood there and watched while Draupadi was being disrobed, didn't he? Though he knew that Duryodhana and his brothers would never listen to reason, he should at least have reminded them of their Dharma. But he didn't. He just kept quiet. He should have advised those evil doers about their Dharma regardless of whether or not his counsel would be heeded. Because he didn't utter a word against, he became a partner in their wicked deed. It was because of this that he later had to lie on a bed of arrows. Watching

an unrighteous act that you know is against Dharma, while keeping your mouth shut is the greatest form of unrighteousness. That is the conduct of a coward, not a person of courage. Let no one who commits such a sin think they can escape.

Q. Amma, is selfless service possible only if one believes in God?

Amma: My children, only someone with faith in God can truly serve others selflessly. But if a person who has no religious faith is really able to serve others selflessly and forgive others for their mistakes and shortcomings, then it doesn't matter whether or not he has any faith. Those who are able to do real selfless service without believing in God are worthy of our deepest respect.

Q. Amma, it is said that God makes us do everything. Does it also mean that God is making us do the wrong things also?

Amma: Son, that is true for someone who is convinced that everything is God's work. In that case, we should be able to see that everything is given to us by God, both when we enjoy the fruits of our good actions and when we suffer the punishment for our mistakes. God isn't responsible for our mistakes- we are. Say that a doctor prescribes for us a body-building tonic. He tells us how much to take and how often. If we ignore his instructions and drink the whole bottle at once, and if our health is ruined as a result, what is the point of blaming the doctor? Similarly, if we drive carelessly and then have an accident, can we blame the gasoline? How, then, can we blame God for the problems that are caused by our own ignorance? God has made it perfectly clear to us how we should live on this earth. It is useless to blame Him for the consequences of our not having followed His instructions.

continuation of Nan Yar (Who am I) page 5

17. Is there no difference between waking and dream?

Waking is long and a dream short; other than this there is no difference. Just as waking happenings seem real while awake, so do those in a dream while dreaming. In dream the mind takes on another body. In both waking and dream states thoughts, names and forms occur simultaneously.

18. What is happiness?

Happiness is the very nature of the Self; happiness and the Self are not different. When the world disappears, i.e. when there is no thought, the mind experiences happiness; and when the world appears, it goes through misery.

19. What is wisdom-insight (jnana-drshiti)?

Remaining quiet is what is called wisdom-insight. To remain quiet is to resolve the mind in the Self. Telepathy, knowing past, present and future happenings and clairvoyance do not constitute wisdom-insight.

20. What is the relation between desirelessness and wisdom?

Desirelessness is wisdom. The two are not different; they are the same. Desirelessness is refraining from turning the mind towards any object. Wisdom means the appearance of no object. In other words, not seeking

what is other than the Self is detachment or desirelessness; not leaving the Self is wisdom.

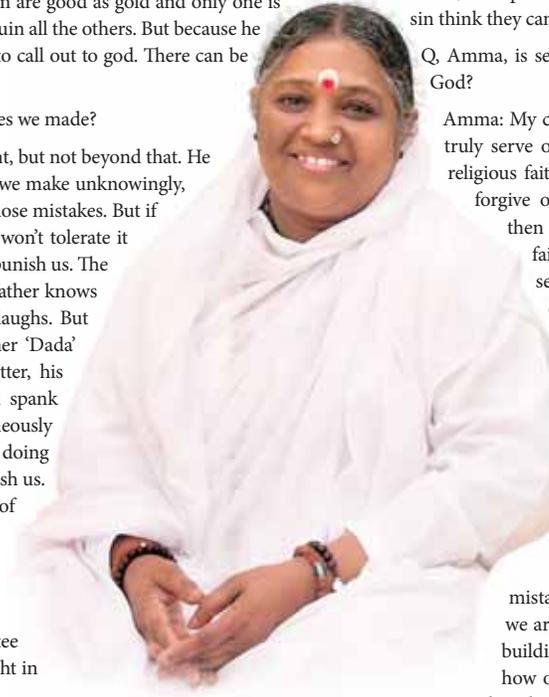
21. What is the difference between inquiry and meditation?

Inquiry consists in retaining the mind in the Self. Meditation consists in thinking that one's self is Brahman, existence-consciousness-bliss.

22. What is release?

Inquiring into the nature of one's self that is in bondage, and realizing one's true nature is release.

SRI RAMANARPANAMASTU

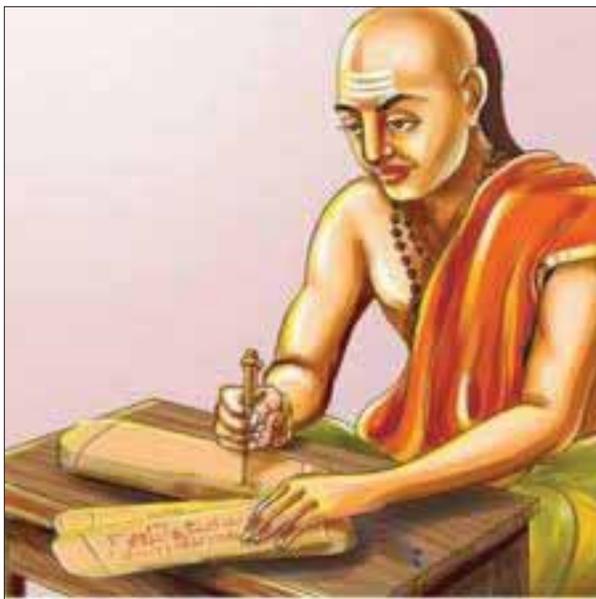


Kautilya's Arthashastra

Lt. Col. K. Krishnan Nair(Retd) (CIR)

Kautilya or Chanakya, as he was sometimes called, was by all standards a very powerful personality. Like all such men he was a controversial figure in his time and continues to be so to modern historians. Historically we identify him as the author of the Arthashastra and as being the architect of the Mauryan Empire. He was a great patriot who had the interest of the country at heart. He was a politician, administrator and statesman par excellence.

Modern scholars are not agreed upon the date and authorship of the Arthashastra in its present form. Its date, according to various conflicting views, fluctuates between the 4th century BC and the 3rd century AD. There does not seem to be any historical evidence to suggest an exact date. Like all other ancient works, the Arthashastra must have passed through the hands of many copyists. There is a group of historians who date it during the Mayurian period while there are others who feel it was produced during a later period. A compromise solution has been put forward by Dr A L Basham. He suggests that it is certain that the work, as we know it today, is pre-Guptan and is in all probability an elaboration of Kautilya's original work produced during the Mauryan period. Whatever may be the historical jugglery taking place regarding its dating and authorship, the Arthashastra as we know it today is acknowledged as the monumental work of Kautilya. He dominated the entire field of statecraft just as Shankara dominated the much more crowded field of philosophy.



Nevertheless his work was completely forgotten for centuries and the only sign of its existence was a reference to it in a few famous works like the Panchatantra and Neethisara. It was brought out of oblivion in 1905, when a Sanskrit scholar, Rudrapratap Samashastry of Mysore came across a manuscript of the work, in the Oriental research Institute, Mysore. He was the librarian of the Institute and later became its curator. The manuscript was in Sanskrit in the grantha script and not in the devanagari. Dr Shamashastry transcribed, edited and published the Sanskrit version of the Arthashastra in 1905. He later published an English edition in 1915. Few more manuscripts were discovered subsequently by other scholars

interested in the subject. It is evident that the original had many scripted copies which found their way to the then existing centers of academic excellence for scholarly analysis.

Kautilya's masterly treatment of political and economic ideologies in his Arthashastra, makes it abundantly clear that the science of statecraft must have been studied and developed over a very long period. He does not take credit for being a pioneer in this discipline; rather he is frank enough to admit to collecting and compiling the theories of earlier masters and giving, at the same time, his own views on them from the practical stand point of political and social expediencies. It is interesting to note that he opens his treatise with salutations to two distinguished political thinkers, Sukra and Bhraspati. He also refers to four or five well known schools of thought and more than a dozen celebrated authors.

The reference to so many earlier authors indicates intense intellectual activity in the field of political science and economics. Unfortunately none of the earlier works referred to by Kautilya have survived after the appearance of his own authoritative work and the ravages of time. The earlier works seem to have been eclipsed by the eminence of Kautilya's work which continued to be the standard text on these subjects ever since.

The variety of topics dealt with in the Arthashastra indicates that Kautilya's brand of political science was not just theoretical; but contained practical policies to be implemented by the rulers. It is literally a manual for good governance, the basis for which was always sound economics and social justice. The Arthashastra gives the reader an excellent picture of the socio-economic life of the citizens of the Mauryan Empire. The contents of Kautilya's Arthashastra fully justified its name.

Kautilya advocates moderation, whether in the exercise of power by the state or in the pursuit of sensual pleasures. Applying this principle in the field of social morality, he proposes to penalize over indulgence in sensual pleasures as also untimely abstinence or asceticism. Kautilya is also opposed to excessive attachment to Dharma, Artha or kama. In short, he is against any form of extremism in matters spiritual, temporal or sensual. In spite of this idea, he believes in the overriding importance of economics in all human endeavors. To him both spirituality and sensuality are rooted in economics.

The ideal of a balanced life, Kautilya believes, can be achieved through discipline, self-control and certain other virtues. He says that discipline could be natural or inculcated through self-effort and education. He also gives much importance to control of the senses. To him, self-victory and equanimity can be attained by restraining sensual pleasures, anger, greed, vanity, haughtiness and joy. All these are designated as enemies of mankind. He believes that life is certainly not meant to be joyless and dull. He lays great emphasis on moderation in all aspects of life. His paradoxical life, imbued with fanatical fervor in fighting the Nandas, single minded devotion in setting up the Mauryan dynasty, aversion to power or pelf in leading a life of renunciation in a mud hut in the cremation grounds, created a wealth of legend and lore that finds mention in many ancient Hindu, Jain and Buddhist literatures. His Arthashastra is truly an omnibus covering political science, and is also a manual of practical dos and don'ts, for kings and rulers of his day, in the art of good governance and administration, most of which suitably modified could be relevant even today.

Reference: Kautilya's Arthashastra, Basics and Essence by N. S. Manadiar

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