

Reproduced by Sabinet Gateway under licence granted by the Publisher (dated 2016).



UNIVERSITY OF DURBAN–WESTVILLE

N i d ā n

JOURNAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
HINDU STUDIES & INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

EDITOR:

Professor T.S. Rukmani

BOARD OF CONSULTING EDITORS:

1. Prof R.K. Sharma
President International Association of Sanskrit Studies.
2. Prof V. Venkatachalam
Vice-Chancellor Sampurnanand Sanskrit University Varanasi, India.
3. Prof Arvind Sharma
McGill University Montreal Canada.
4. Prof K.L. Sheshagiri Rao
University of Virginia USA.
5. Prof Christopher Chapple
Loyola Marymount University California USA.

Nidān

Journal of the Department of
Hindu Studies & Indian Philosophy

University of Durban-Westville

Volume 7

December 1995

Articles published in *Nidān* have abstracts reflected in Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory, New Jersey, USA, also in *Periodica Islamica*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia as well as the Index to South African Periodicals.

Views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Editor, the Consultant Editors or the Department of Hindu Studies and Indian Philosophy

ISSN 1016 – 5320

Published and printed by

The University of Durban-Westville
Private Bag X54001 Durban 4000

CONTENTS

	Page
Āyurveda and the Care of the Aged: An Ethical Perspective <i>Srinivas Tilak</i>	1
R C Zaehner's Concept of the Wickedness of Evil in Early Hinduism – A Critique <i>J G Desai</i>	21
Environmental Ethics as Enshrined in Sanskrit Sources <i>T S Rukmani</i>	30
Vedic Claims of the Pāñcarātra and the Vaikhānasa Āgamas <i>Pratap Kumar</i>	42
Summary of the Symposium on: Hinduism and Human Rights <i>M Naidu</i>	57
Book Reviews	
Rekha Jhanji, Aesthetic Communication, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1985, pp 141 <i>J G Desai</i>	60
T S Rukmani, Shankaracharya, New Delhi Publications Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1994, pp 88 (Price Rs 22) <i>Swami Saradananda</i>	63

ĀYURVEDA AND THE CARE OF THE AGED : AN ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Srinivas Tilak

This paper focuses on the ethical implications of the typical attitudes toward old age and aging with reference to the care of the aged in the classical Hindu medical tradition (*Āyurveda*). It presupposes that since medical ethics is shaped significantly by old age and aging, any discussion concerning it must be framed with reference to the reality of human aging and its consequences. This paper, is accordingly, guided by the following set of questions:

- 1) Is age a morally relevant characteristic? If so, are there significant moral requirements owed to old people because they are old?
- 2) What is the rightful place of the elderly in society and culture? Do the aged infirm have a moral right to care and welfare if they did not produce anything themselves? What is the moral basis for asserting or denying claims of this kind?
- 3) What is the human worth of the elderly? Do they have rights to care deriving from their former service to others and their long experience of life?

This paper argues that the classical Hindu medical tradition (*Āyurveda*) answers such questions in an ambivalent manner. The general thrust seems to be that age per se is only one of the three morally relevant characteristics; the other two being gender and class. Care is morally owed to people for their productive potential and for service they may have rendered or continue to render to the state and the community. In developing this stance *Āyurveda* relies on the *Dharma Śāstras* (Moral Digests) for proposing appropriate hygiene (*svasthavṛtta*) and a code of proper conduct (*sadvṛtta*) for everyone involved in the dispensing of care (*śuśrūṣā*): the physician (*vaidya*), the patient (*ātura*), and his/her family and community. In the process interesting notions of health and disease emerge, clarifying how their inputs factor into the proper range and scope of care-giving in *Āyurveda*.

Another important issue underlying the presence of ethic in *Āyurveda* is whether disease is an objective biological state explainable and verifiable by objective criteria alone, or alternatively, whether disease is also relative to social and cultural values. *Āyurveda* seems to acknowledge that both disease and its treatment or prevention are conditioned by socio-cultural and religious factors. It, therefore, seems to include more penetrating reflections upon medical ethics than the casual reader might suspect.

This paper tries to identify and collect some scattered allusions in *Āyurvedic* literature to such ethical guidelines dealing with the role and duties of the physician with particular reference to the care of his aged patients. It initiates a discussion which might serve a basis for building a coherent ethic in the Indian medical tradition. This is a somewhat unusual procedure for analysis of moral discourse, but it is dictated by the fact that no actual examples of extended arguments, either by physicians or by philosophers, are available in the Indian intellectual tradition.

The principal source of reference for this paper is the *Caraka Saṃhitā* (*Ca*), the oldest surviving medical compilation attributed to Caraka, who is said to have been a physician at the court of King Kaniska (100 C.E.). Where warranted, reference is also made to two other relevant medical compilations – the *Suśruta Saṃhitā* of *Suśruta* (400 C.E.) and the *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* of *Vāgbhata* (*Ah*) (600 C.E.).

Ethical Basis of Health and Caring

Āyurveda is traditionally defined as the science of assuring a long and healthy life till a ripe old age. The term is significant from both the gerontological and ethical perspectives. While *āyur* implies a long and healthy life span; *veda* refers to the science and technique of assuring it by submitting to a virtuous life style leading to spiritual liberation.¹ The term *Āyurveda*, by extension, designates a healthy, long life, which is a "good", for which one should actively strive at every stage in one's life. It thus posits a clear distinction between a healthy, happy life (*sukhāyu*) and a healthy, morally "good" life (*hiṭāyu*).² Health is a moral obligation incumbent upon every individual. Health, in fact, correlates virtue. Furthermore, positive, good health is a matter of moral duty and obligation, which is consciously and willingly chosen.³ It cannot be left to chance, fate or luck. Even ascetics are not exempt from the responsibility of maintaining good health.⁴

Health in *Āyurveda* has one more important nuance; it implies ability to diligently execute assigned duties and tasks and reproduce as a responsible member of the family and community. The healthy person is one who produces prescribed ritual and moral merit (*dharma*), material goods (*artha*), emotional and sexual joys and satisfaction (*kāma*), and spiritual liberation (*mokṣa*) in that order, in a given stage of life. Health as ability to bear progeny destined for labour force impinges more particularly on women whose activities as wives, and mothers are crucial in a community's reproductive agenda. *Āyurveda*, therefore, incorporates special sections dealing with the health of women who are pregnant or nursing their infants.⁵

Since medical enterprise is viewed more as a means of preserving health rather than curing diseases, *Āyurveda* lays much emphasis on dietetics as well as proper moral behaviour as means of insuring continued health even in old age. In fact, Caraka devotes four long chapters to these concerns in the section entitled "*Sūtra Sthāna*." Elsewhere he traces ill health to unwholesome diet and improper moral behaviour, which is traced to culpable insight (*prajñāparādha*), which is believed to lead to various errors of judgement resulting in the derangement of the balance of the three humours (*doṣa*) and the subsequent manifestation of diseases.⁶ Disease is understood as a process of degeneration and inflammation, which is coeval with the passage of time and aging.⁷ If it is not treated in time, a disease may lead to further deterioration and ultimately death of the sick individual. The wise and morally good persons, therefore, are those who avoid the intake of unwholesome food and thereby avoid premature ill health, old age and death. They are, for this reason, held in high esteem by the people.⁸

Care and its Delivery (Śuśrūṣā)

The act of caring incorporates various health techniques and related moral decisions which render it an ethical enterprise. Caring is the outcome of four intervening agents and their prescribed actions: the physician, patient, medicaments, and the nursing attendant.⁹ Every decision pertaining to care (giving or receiving) involves the complex interplay of value sets of these four agents.

The importance of ethics in Hindu medicine, therefore, cannot be reduced to pious appeals to its practitioners, but rather, a necessary and productive basis for evaluating and delivering health care. In moral philosophy sentiments alone are not enough; evoking of compassionate sentiments does not inform us about the right thing to do in a given situation.

Āyurvedic ethics, therefore, is grounded in certain key virtues, which are seen as habits and dispositions that may enable a person to reason well. To find appropriate and legitimate ethical principles and categories for developing a sound health care delivery, Caraka and other writers on *Āyurveda* turned to the *Dharma Śāstra* texts, which prescribe age, class, and gender-specific injunctions designed to encourage a virtuous life (*varṇāśramadharmā*).

The process of delivering health care in *Āyurveda*, therefore, reveals certain morally implied assumptions about the nature of (1) health care and its delivery, (2) the patient-physician relationship, and (3) the ideal and good healthy life. Health care and its delivery presume a somatic view of disease and health. To that extent the physician rules supreme since he is the one who "saves life."¹⁰ Yet, the medical enterprise of health care is also posited in functional terms since disease is viewed as inability to function effectively and efficiently in society. The etiology of disease is traced to significant deviation from a prescribed ritual or social norm prescribed for that particular individual. This invests the sick (and, therefore the dysfunctional being) with typical social meaning of being deficient in a particular value.

Health and illness, then, become not merely somatic conditions of individuals; they are also defined and institutionalized through their social nexus and structure. Whether one is formally designated healthy or ill bears significantly on the performance of one's social tasks and standing. Medicine and health care delivery become a set of interesting roles fulfilling a specialized function within an encompassing set of social roles. Though it is recognized to have roots in biological causes, what gets labelled as illness is a function of social and ritual precepts originating in the doctrine of *karma*.¹¹

Ethical issues in relation to health care and its delivery, therefore, presuppose both a physical and social nexus and are discussed in terms of the ideal relations between the physician and his patient and family. What the physician is asked to do morally is to be based on his insight as a physician as well as his perception of the relevant social roles. His education and training is intended morally to qualify the future physician for his profession. More broadly, health care becomes a function of a particular set of relationships established by a community to attend to the quality of life and to promote the well being of its members. Medical ethics then raises the question of where the primary focus of health care might be. Is it with the physician or with the patient? *Āyurveda* seems to imply that both are equally implicated since both are moral agents.

Responsibilities of the Virtuous Physician

Various passages in the *Caraka Saṃhitā* list specific virtues which the physician is urged to cultivate. Altruism, charity and compassion toward the sick, figure prominently in these lists.¹² In one of the most humanistic statements in Indian medical literature, the physician is urged to put the welfare of the patients before his own material interests. Vāgbhaṭa similarly lists benevolence, beneficence, conscientiousness and compassion as the virtues to be developed by the physician.¹³ In striving to save lives, the physician was expected to follow his assigned duty (*dharma*); by building up a rich practice, he could achieve material prosperity (*artha*); and by the satisfaction which he obtained from curing those whom he loved and respected and by acquiring renown for his cures, he served the goal of emotional satisfaction (*kāma*).¹⁴ His social status was very high in that he was acknowledged to be the thrice born (*trija*), and, as such, superior to any twice born (*dvija*).¹⁵

The physician was eulogized as a *dātā* (donor) which implied the power, freedom or competence to determine and give. He was to consider his patients as his own sons and treat them accordingly. As donor, the physician's act of "giving life" generated in the recipient a sense of obligation and indebtedness. Ritually, therefore, the physician was ranked above the patient, who was a recipient (of care). The physician was also acknowledged to be a significant agent of social change and welfare.¹⁶

Caraka believes that medicine may be practised as a profession by all for attaining virtues, wealth and pleasures. It may be taken up with a view to leading a comfortable life and for self-protection by treating and caring for those in power. A physician is always respected by those in power and the learned.¹⁷ The *Caraka Saṃhitā*, accordingly, outlines a code of medical etiquette with a view to establish and preserve a distinct and professional identity and dignity of the physician. He should look healthy and dress modestly. He must not be addicted to drinks. In his dealings with the patients the physician must be serene, self-controlled and detached. He must not have any dealings with the female members of the patient's family. Any matters pertaining to the patient must not be disclosed to others. Even if he were to observe the signs of approaching death of his patient, the physician should not disclose them without having been requested to do so.¹⁸

A genuinely qualified physician is a saver and extender of life (*prāṇābhī-sāra*). He possesses excellent theoretical and practical knowledge and experience and is skilled in his art. He comes from a noble family, is

self-controlled, and possesses all the necessary equipment. One is not to challenge such a virtuous physician even if he does not happen to be upto date in the science of medicine. However, one who poses to be an expert should not be spared.¹⁹

Ethical Dilemma of the Physician

The health care-related obligations imposed by the *Caraka Saṃhitā* on the virtuous physician (and the patient), are usually framed as positive or negative injunctions. The latter seem to exhort perfection in the performance of prescribed duties in that they come without exception – "Let not the physician harm, hurt or insult the sick." Such an injunction exhorts the physician to abstain from doing certain harmful actions. It does not require him to do any particular thing.

Positive injunctions require some demonstrable and affirmative action, and as such, have a different and more problematic status. "Let the physician treat (every) sick, poor and the elderly," would be an instance of this type. But in real life the physician cannot be benevolent to every sick, poor or elderly (though he can perhaps refrain from abusing or insulting every sick, poor or elderly person). So the duty of caring for all disadvantaged persons cannot be "perfectly" fulfilled in the way the duty not to hurt or insult them can be.

In the context of the care of the aged, this is where the ethical dilemma of the virtuous physician surfaces. Ideals espoused in the text books can only be taken as normative, and not as having been universally applied. In general, virtues in the Indian tradition tend to be praiseworthy character traits for persons in a given stage in life. By themselves, therefore, they are not always conducive to the intended right actions. Being a virtuous physician need not necessarily guarantee virtuous action. A virtuous physician, for instance, did not always know how benevolent he ought to be toward a particular patient who may be poor and/or elderly, or both. Since they were guided by virtue-based ethical guidelines phrased in positively or negatively worded injunctions, physicians could, in practice, lapse into self righteous and self-justifying egotism.²⁰

What account of obligations toward the sick is given by a virtue-based Ayurvedic medicine? There is evidence to suggest that the virtue-based ideal code of the medical profession was not necessarily lived as envisaged in Caraka. In classical times there eventually emerged three types of practising

physicians. First, there was a small group of physicians who had grown very wealthy and prosperous. They were well versed in the science and art of medicine and could afford to practice it as a charity. They probably came nearest to the ideal of the physician who saves life (*prāṇābhisāra*) expounded in medical texts. A larger number of physicians practised medicine as a profession and operated in urban centres. Since they charged high fees for their services the poor and the elderly could not approach them. A small number of physicians were employed in charitable institutions operated by the public bodies or the state governments. They worked on fixed salaries and were not allowed to consult patients privately.²¹

All kinds of wandering pseudo-physicians, imposters, and quacks also advertised their profession and sold their services (*chadmacarāḥ*). Others relied heavily on the tribal or folk medical lore. Still others dispensed prescriptions based on mercury which were coming into vogue in classical India.²² It appears that such unethical practitioners of medicine always existed since the medical texts refer to them constantly and pass severe strictures on them.²³ Another passage indignantly warns that it is better to die than to be treated by a physician ignorant of the science of medicine.²⁴ Imposters wandering in the garb of a physician are compared to the messengers of death who stalk their prey in the manner of the bird-catchers laying their traps. A wise patient is warned to avoid such selfish impostors and killers who take on the noble profession of medicine only to earn their livelihood by unethical means.²⁵

Not surprisingly, the *Arthaśāstra* recommends a stricter control of the medical profession and a heavy fine for negligence in duties. A passage in the *Suśruta Samhitā* suggests that the physician had to acquire royal sanction (*rājānujñatā*) to practice, which Dalhana, the twelfth-century commentator interprets as a measure to prevent quackery. However, though he was subject to legal penalties at least in theory, there are no recorded instances of a physician being prosecuted. The *Viṣṇudharma Smṛti* merely prescribes a repenting ritual.²⁶

Responsibilities of the Virtuous Patient

Good health and a long life are only possible when life is lived responsibly by following the prescribed ethical guidelines. *Āyurveda* assures that such an individual will live for one hundred years free of all diseases and will avoid untimely death.²⁷ Such a person who faithfully performs virtuous acts will attain (after death) the excellent abode of good souls. Toward that objective

Caraka prescribes a comprehensive personal hygiene (*svasthavṛtta*) and a code of proper conduct (*sadvṛtta*), which everybody is admonished to practise.²⁸ Gaṅgādhara, in his gloss on the relevant passage defines *svasthavṛtta* as the process whereby the person stands in his/her own natural healthy state of being through self effort and care. Cakrapāṇi's gloss renders it as that which makes one free from disease by maintaining the state of equilibrium of the seven bodily components (*dhātus*). Health, longevity, and wealth cannot be obtained, admonishes Suśruta, by those who do not subscribe to these rules of personal hygiene and ethic.²⁹ The point is driven home by Caraka with an appropriate simile:

A wise person should be vigilant about his duties towards his body like an officer-in-charge of a city towards his city or a charioteer towards his chariot.³⁰

A similar appeal is made in an urgent tone in yet another passage:

One desirous of ensured longevity for himself, should always make an attempt for his well-being as if surrounded by adversaries who are bent upon destroying his health.³¹

"Self care through vigilant effort", thus, is a very important plank of *svasthavṛtta* and *sadvṛtta*. It is to be maintained by engaging in the daily and seasonally adjusted health-inducing regimen (*dinacaryā* and *ṛtucaryā* respectively), which extends from approved social relations, sleeping and sex patterns, diets, drugs, medicinal smoking, satiating basic somatic and psychic drives, physical exercises, to periods of rest and solitude.³² Rejuvenation (*rasāyana*) and revitalization (*vājīkaraṇa*) therapies, which involve the administration of specific recipes with a view to promote a long, healthy and vigorous life and ward off premature old age belong to a class of practices known as *nimittacaryā*.³³ Although the supervision of a qualified physician is recommended, the *Caraka Saṃhitā* lists many prescriptions which an individual may easily incorporate in his/her daily life in the seasonally adjusted regimen. The principle idea underlying these two therapies is that an appropriate diet (*āhāra*), when supported by a sane life style, in conformity with the prescribed code of moral behaviour (*sadvṛtta*), will activate the rejuvenatory force (*vāja*) with which every individual is endowed. *Vāja* is said to combat the bodily erosion caused by the aging process by replenishing the bodily matter that would otherwise be lost with the passage of time.

The *rasāyana* (rejuvenation) treatment is said to procure, for the individual undergoing it, various beneficial and positive changes in all the seven bodily

elements (*dhātus*) beginning with the most fundamental of them i.e. *rasa* (nourishing fluid). This therapy is said to help prevent premature old age, minimize the negative and adverse consequences of old age that manifest themselves naturally in due course of time and help the individual to diligently strive for the prescribed ends in life (*puruṣārthas* or *eṣaṇas*).

Furthermore, the rejuvenation therapy is said to produce various miraculous results on the aging body and mind. According to Caraka, it preserves youthful vigour, disperses stupor, torpor, fatigue, exhaustion, indolence and weakness. It tones up flabby muscles and sagging organs, stimulates digestion and maintains a wrinkle-free, lustrous skin.³⁴ According to Suśruta, the rejuvenation therapy, in addition to delaying the onset of old age, also guards the subject against the approaching senility and physical deterioration.³⁵

Caraka defines revitalization (*vājīkaraṇa*) as a process whereby man may acquire, like the horse, the capacity to have repeated sexual relations with woman.³⁶ By implication, man with a diminished sexual vigour is deemed to be aged! For Suśruta, it is a recipe that can rectify the depleted or scanty production of semen (*śukra*), a natural consequence of aging, as well as its deficient or poor quality resulting from the deranged humours.³⁷ But everyone must cultivate certain ethical and cultural traits and norms in order to be eligible for the revitalization treatment. He must be *ātmavān* (aware of and respectful to the presence of self within) and *jitendriya* (with restrained senses). He must adhere to the prescribed *svasthavṛtta* and *sadvṛtta* routine and a specific diet.³⁸ The purpose of the revitalization therapy is to enable such a person to obtain a son (*apatyakara*) in his old age if he was unable to procreate a son in his young age.

Caraka also recommends a rejuvenatory prescription solely based on the cultivation of some 25 ethical virtues and practices (*ācāra rasāyana*). They include:

1. repetition of holy chants and giving of alms
2. revering gods, cows, brahmins, teachers, seniors and the village elders
3. commitment to non-violence, compassion and moderation through developing balanced habits
4. acquiring knowledge of meteorology and nosology (the science of compounding medical prescriptions).

Any individual who cultivates such a mode of behaviour will reap all the benefits of the rejuvenation treatment without submitting to that therapy proper. Should he, in addition, undergo the regular rejuvenation therapy under the supervision of a qualified physician he will profit from all the good effects of the rejuvenation treatment promised in the medical texts.³⁹

The Āyurvedic teaching that everyone is morally responsible for promoting health through self care and effort has clear cross-cultural scope and application. In modern times, self care is emerging across the world as an innovative and challenging dynamic within the health care system generally and within geriatric ethics specifically. In the past the medical profession alone was deemed to be totally responsible for the health of the patients. This custom is now slowly giving way to a general consensus that the responsibility for health maintenance also resides with the individual. This reversal of trends resulting in the promotion of self care movement has elicited theories from many health professionals. Self care is defined by one group of scholars as: a process whereby a lay person can function effectively on his/her own behalf in health promotion and illness prevention and in disease detection and treatment at the level of primary health resource in the health care system.⁴⁰

The self care movement based on such lines attempts to incorporate both the personal health behaviour and the social skills of lay persons to aid in the acquisition of proper health care. It is based on the understanding that patients who are active rather than passive, maintain their own health status, even in old age, through personal behaviour and health practices.

Ethical Dilemma of the Elderly Patient

Āyurvedic texts view aging to be *kālaja*, that is, aging is initiated and sustained by time (*kāla*) from the moment the five basic elements (*bhūta*) and the self (*ātma*) come together to produce life. Old age, as the epiphenomenon of the general life process (aging), manifests itself in due course of time.⁴¹ As such, aging of the body is an unstoppable, irreversible and inevitable process. No therapy can arrest it or cure the diseases, disabilities, and discomforts engendered by it. Potentially, therefore, any geriatric therapy may only delay the onset of old age and/or help manage and cope with the stresses of aging. From an ethical perspective, the relevant issue is – (1) to what extent is an individual responsible for his/her illness which may be traced to that individual's particular life style? and (2) to what extent the individual himself/herself or some other party should be made to

accept the burden of illness or the costs of treating diseases associated with old age?

Caraka's answer presumably would be that there is no general moral entitlement to health care simply on the criterion of old age.⁴² He, however, seems to recognize a claim to care in the event of "premature aging", which is viewed as "disease". Labelling aging a disease is one way of identifying a condition, which is deemed to be controllable and manageable (within certain limits) with the help of a proper preventive therapy such as *rasāyana*. Typical geriatric therapies of rejuvenation and revitalization therefore may be construed only as coping mechanisms of (1) delaying aging, (2) preventing premature aging or impotence and, (3) providing energy to be able to accomplish the prescribed tasks in old age provided the therapy is undertaken as a prophylactic measure in one's first stage of life (*brahmacarya*).⁴³ Under certain extenuating circumstances man may undergo them while he is a married householder and without a son but in any event they must be completed before he leaves that stage.

To speak of premature aging as a disease would also entail some notion of its being improper. The sense of impropriety, however, cannot be based on aging being unusual, since everybody grows old. Only "premature aging", under the circumstances, may be judged unusual when it occurs in an individual prior to its usual occurrence in most humans. The Ayurvedic category of "premature aging", thus appears interesting from a cross-cultural perspective because it, advocates that elderly individuals need not be abandoned as useless but given proper treatment so that they may resume and maintain their roles as useful members of society.⁴⁴

Discussion

The foregoing analysis suggests why *Āyurveda* may be seen as a system of medicine embodying its own (however incipient and inadequately defined) ethics. The injunctions pertaining to virtuous physician and patient and their respective responsibilities with reference to health care cannot be said to constitute an enforceable code of conduct. Rather, it comprised scattered ethical rules which probably originated directly from the interaction between the physician and his patients. On two contentious points, however, it is quite clear and unambiguous – who has access to what level and kind of care and how to allocate limited resources toward it.

"All the prescribed medicaments are not available to all human beings" observes Caraka in a starkly realistic vein; at the same time diseases cannot but attack even the poor (which term often serves as an euphemism to designate the elderly). In the event of an emergency, therefore, whatever drugs or diets are easily available should be used by patients according to their capacity and ability.⁴⁵ Therapy, even though required, should not be administered, advises Caraka, to those who are incapable of meeting their expenditure or to those whose strength, flesh and blood have diminished excessively (again, an euphemism for the elderly) or to those who have no respect for the physician.⁴⁶

As a professional, the physician, thus, was subject to two diverging motives: altruistic and egotistic. To what extent should the interests of the society outweigh action on behalf of an individual patient? When the physician's care-providing skill falls short, what ought to be done on a patient's behalf? And what does it mean to act on behalf of a patient who refuses the treatment suggested or required? To that extent, he was motivated both by ethical standards as well as by the wish to attain success. He also wanted to see his own reputation enhanced by the successful treatment of his patients. How far, should a physician go in being an agent for himself, a medical entrepreneur or a craftsman?⁴⁷

Caraka advises the physician not to waste his time on patients with incurable diseases or who are old.⁴⁸ The reason given for this practice is that while there is the possibility of producing genuine improvement or even cure in the case of middle-aged or younger patients, the degenerative diseases of the aged are not curable.⁴⁹ Medical care offered to such elderly would, at best, amount to battling degeneration on even terms and ultimately merely slowing down the rate of decay. The medical care of the elderly is not seen as being productive of sufficient value to meet a physician's efforts. It is also prudent to refuse to treat any terminally ill patients, since having patients die while under one's care would be injurious to the physician's standing, success and reputation.⁵⁰ Under the circumstances, it is better that they treat patients who can really profit from medical care. The physician is, therefore, advised to consider carefully the patient's means and age. Exceptionally, he might provide his services for nothing.

It must, however, be stressed that this seemingly callous approach is not crassly egotistic; rather, it appears utilitarian. Right medical intervention is that which results in the best health care for the larger community. Such guidelines are proposed with reference to the obligations of the physician to the overall community, not to particularly needy individuals within that

community. Caraka thus seems to ponder on the physician's dual allegiance – to himself and to his patients – and finally leans in favour of the former. Though benevolent altruism is expected of the physician, he is also expected to define his own as well as his patient's interests. In the process Caraka only succeeds in promoting what has been called "a coercive ethic."⁵¹

As for the patient, Caraka's position on the issue of access to health care, whether for the elderly or the non-elderly, is that care is primarily a matter of ritual status and means. Since only the high priests (*brāhmaṇa*), ruling elites (*kṣatriya*) and rich merchants (*vaiśya*) had the means to pay the physician's fees, they deserved the best possible care. The poor, who generally included more elderly, were to be left to their own devices when it came to health care. In other words, the individual's social status, gender, and age would determine whether or not he/she had access to care.⁵²

The care of the aged in *Āyurveda* appears to be informed by a future oriented ethics. Present actions are justified in terms of the alleged future pay-offs.⁵³ The rejuvenatory treatment, when undergone in youth, will assure healthy old age in the distant future. But the elderly have less future than those in younger age groups. This perspective is related to the typical Indian attitude toward death. Death in prime life is pitied; but death in old age is seen liberating. In the utilitarian ethics promoted in *Āyurveda*, the rightness or wrongness of health-related actions and policies then, depends upon the future consequences of the present actions. Future is morally significant, as was past. It is morally justified and rational to weigh future consequences of present actions even though they may be quite hypothetical. It is also quite rational to take into consideration more remote consequences equally with the more immediate ones.

The duty to prolong unhealthy life does not, however, appear to have strong roots in *Āyurveda*. The idea that a physician must prolong every life at any cost does not have a clear cut mandate in Indian tradition. Human life is an important good, and there is a duty to respect it; but it is not an ultimate good, and it should not be preserved at all costs. Treatment is required as long as it is fitting, but it is expendable if it becomes useless or if it involves grave burden for oneself or another. This has had important repercussions to the inextricable problem of distributing scarce resources such as medical care to those who are poor or aged or both.

Consistent application of utilitarian principles which allocate the time, energy, and skills of the physician, nurse and the attendant to the benefit of

the non-elderly, would run counter to those moral sensibilities that have guided the twentieth century gerontological ethics. For instance, until recent times, modern medical profession thought it unfair not to give equal treatment to those near death or dying. The utilitarian formula had fallen out with modern times and lacked champions in the contemporary religion or moral philosophy.

However, more recently, the spiralling cost of health care has aroused concern about the economic impact of care for the increasing number of the elderly everywhere in the world. In the long run, this is likely to give rise to both overt and hidden rationing of resources and, therefore, of care. There are thus both ethical and legal ramifications to the allocation of health care resources on the basis of age. One modern scholar has argued for limiting life-extending care on the basis of age. His thesis is that emphasis should be shifted from acute medical care to other forms of care such as appropriate family/community support and improved long term self care.⁵⁴

The implication of such a stance for the allocation of health care resources to elderly people is that they should not have access to the same medical services as are available to the general population. The use or non-use of such services, however, is to be determined on a case-by-case basis. The rapidly growing numbers of elderly people in the world is likely to lead to a question of whether the aged will demand or need more than their fair share of the scarce resources. The utilitarian ethics of elderly health care implied in the classical Hindu medical texts would seem to reject any special consideration for allocating more than their share to which the sick elderly are entitled.

Under the circumstances, the Āyurvedic regimen of self-care involving *dinacaryā*, *ṛtucaryā*, *svasthavṛtta* and *sadvṛtta* is likely to prove of practical cross-cultural interest. Like Callahan, the traditional Āyurvedic views on elderly health care seem to make a clear distinction between age as a medical/technical criterion and age as a person/patient-centred criterion. Both seem to reject the former on the grounds that age is not, by itself, a justifiable indication for withholding or withdrawing treatment. However, as an important element in the biography of a patient, both argue that age can and should be considered as one factor among others in the determination of appropriate care and treatment.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arthaśāstra* (Sanskrit & Hindi), 2 Vols. Edited by Raghunath Singh, Varanasi: Krishnadasa Academy, 1983.
- Aṣṭāṅghrdayam* (The Core of Octopartite Āyurveda). Compiled by Vāgbhāta with the commentaries *Sarvāṅgasundara* of Arundatta and *Āyurvedarasāyana* of Hemadri, 7th ed. Edited by Harisastri Paradkar, Varanasi : Chaukhamba Orientalia, 1982.
- Basham, Arthur, "The Practice of Medicine in Ancient and Medieval India", In Charles Leslie (ed), *Asian Medical Systems: A Comparative Study*, 18–43, Berkeley : University of California Press, 1976.
- Callahan, Daniel, *Setting Limits : Medical Goals in Aging Society*, New York : Simon and Schuster, 1987.
- Caraka Saṃhitā* (With the *Āyurveda Dīpikā* Commentary of Cakrapāṇidatta), Bombay : Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1952.
- James, F. Chiders, "A Right to Health Care", *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, Vol 4, No 2, (1979), 132–147.
- Engelhardt, H Tristram, "Is Aging a Disease?" In Robert M Veatch (ed) *Life Span : Values and Life-extending Technologies*, 184–194, New York, Harper and Row, 1979.
- Gurjar, G K, "Āyurveda and Code of Right Conduct (*sadācāra*)", *Nāgārjuna*, Vol 22, No 5, (Jan 1979), 118–123.
- Levin, L S et al, *Self-care : Lay Initiatives in Health*, New York, Prodist, 1976.
- Mhaskar, K S ed., *Svasthavṛttam*, (Sanskrit, Hindi and Marathi) 2 Vols, Bombay, Board of Research for Āyurveda, 1954.
- Parsons, Talcott, "Definitions of Health and Illness in the Light of American values and social structures", In E G Jaco (ed) *Patients, Physicians and Illness*, 120–144, 1958 reprint, New York, Free Press, 1979.
- Pellegrino, Edmund, "Toward a Reconstruction of Medical Morality : The Primacy of Profession and the Fact of Illness", *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 4, 1979, 32–56.
- Sharma, P V, *Indian Medicine in the Classical Age*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Vol 85, Varanasi, Chowkhamba, 1972.

Sharma, P V, *Caraka-Saṃhitā*: Critical Notes (Incorporating the commentaries of Jejjata, Cakrapāni, Gaṅgādhara and Yogīndranātha Vol 3 (Sūtrasthāna to Indriyasthāna), Jaikishnadas Āyurveda Series, No 36, Chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 1985.

Shelp, Earl E (ed), *Virtue and Medicine : Explorations in the Character of Medicine*, Dordrecht, Holland, D Reidel and Co., 1985.

Szasz, Thomas, *The Theology of Medicine*, New York, Harper Books, 1985.

Suśruta Saṃhitā (With the Commentary of Dalhana), Bombay, Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1948.

Tilak, Srinivas, *Religion and Aging in the Indian Tradition*, Albany, N Y, State University of New York Press, 1989.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ah.su.	Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayam "Sūtra Sthāna"
BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era
Ca.	Caraka Saṃhitā
Ca.ci.	Caraka "Cikitsā Sthāna
Ca.ind.	Caraka "Indriya Sthāna
Ca.ni.	Caraka "Nidāna Sthāna
Ca.śā.	Caraka "Śārīra Sthāna
Ca.sū.	Caraka "Sūtra Sthāna
Ca.vi.	Caraka "Vimāna Sthāna"
Su.	Suśruta Saṃhitā"
Su.ci.	Suśruta "Cikitsā Sthāna
Su.śā.	Suśruta "Śārīra Sthāna
Su.Sū.	Suśruta "Sūtra Sthāna"

ENDNOTES

1. Ihakhalvāyurvedaprayojanam – vyādhyupasrṣṭānām vyāparimokṣaḥ, svasthyasya parirakṣaṇam ca (Su.sū.1:14). Āyuh kāmaya mānena dharmārthasukhasādhanam Āyurvedopadeśeṣu vidheyāḥ paramādarāḥ (Ah.sū.1:2).
2. ...samarthānugatabalavīryayaśaḥ paurusparākramasya... sukhamāyurucyate... hitaiṣiṇaḥ...sa – tyavādinaḥ... vṛddasevinaḥ... hitamāyurucyate (Ca.su.30:24).
3. Nityam hitāhārasevī samīkṣyakāri viṣayeśvasaktaḥ Dātā samaḥ satyaparaḥ kṣamāvānoptasevī ca bhavatyarogaḥ (Ah.sū.4:37).
4. Dharmārthakāmamokṣāṇāmārogyam mūlamuttamam (Ca.su.1:15; see also Ah.sū.2:47). Aristotle's treatment of the role of physiology and by implication of medicine in the formation of virtue is also suggestive in this context. He held that the goal of medicine is not only health, but the improvement of individual moral conduct through the improvement of moral judgement.
5. See Chapter entitled, "Mahatīgarbhākṛāntīśārīram" in Ca.sa. Also Ah.śā. chapter one; Su.śā. chapter three.
6. Dhīdhṛtismṛtīvibhraṣṭaḥ karma yat kurute'śubham prajñāparādham taṁ vidyāt sarvadoṣaprakopaṇam (Ca.sa.1:102). Yaccānyadīdṛṣam karma rajomohasamutthitaṁ prajñāparādham taṁ śiṣṭā bruvate vyādhikāraṇam (Ca.śā.1:108).
7. Kālasypariṇāmena jarāmṛtyunimittajāḥ rogāḥ svābhāvīkāḥ dṛṣṭāḥ svabhāvo niṣpratīkriyāḥ (Ca.śā.1:115).
8. Ahārasambhavaṁ vastu rogāścāhārasambhavāḥ hitāhitaviśeṣācca viśeṣaḥ sukhaduḥkhayoḥ (Ca.sū.28:45).
9. Bhiṣagdravyānyupasthātā rogī pādacatuṣṭayaṁ Guṇavat kāraṇam jñeyaṁ vikārvyupaśāntaye (Ca.sū.9:3).
10. Ca.sū.29:4.
11. Nirdiṣṭam daiṣaśabdena karma yat paurvadehikaṁ Hetustadapi kālena rogāṇāmupalabhyate Na hi karma mahat kiñcit phalaṁ yasya na bhujyate Kriyāghnāḥ karmajā rogāḥ praśamaṁ yānti tatṣayāt (Ca.śā. 1:116, 17).

12. Maitrī kārūnyamārteṣu śakye prītirupekṣaṇam
Prakṛtistesu bhutesū vaidyavṛttiścaturvidheti (Ca.sū.9:26).
13. Ah.sū.2:20–27.
14. Ca.sū.30:29.
15. Śīlavān matimān yukto dvijātiḥ śāstrapāragāḥ
Prāṇibhir guruvat pūjyaḥ prānācāryaḥ sa hi smṛtaḥ (Ca.ci.1:4.51) (A
variant reading has *trija* in place of *dvija*).

According to Yogīndrasena, upon completion of his medical
training, a *dvija* is elevated to the status of a *trija*. Basham (1976)
observes that the physician formed a recognized craft group, not yet a
caste, but often following the profession of their fathers and fore
fathers.
16. Dharmārthadātā sadṛśastasya nehopalabhyate
Na hi jīvitadānādhi dānamanyadvīśiṣyate (Ca.ci.1:4.61).
Bhiṣagapyātūrān sarvān svasutān iva yatnavān (Ca.ci.1:4.56).
Śarīram sarvathā sarvam sarvadāveda yo bhiṣak Āyurvedam sa
kārtsnyena veda lokasukhpradaṁ (Ca.śā.6:19).
17. Ca.sū.30:29.
18. Maraṇāyeha rūpāṇi paśyatā'pi bhiṣagvidā
Apr̥ṣṭena na vaktavyam maraṇam pratyupasthitam (Ca.ind.12:62).
19. Sadvṛttair na viḡṛhñīyādbhiṣagalpaśrutairapi
Hanyāt praśnāṣṭakenādavitarānsvāptamāninaḥ
(Ca.sū.30:78). See also Ca.sū.9:6; 18.
20. The Chinese pilgrim I-Tsing, who visited India in the seventh
century C.E., has recorded the plight of the poor and the sick, who
(on the ground of expense) were cut off "from the ford of life." While
the rich could buy expensive medicaments, the poor passed away
with the morning dew (Takakusu 1966, 133, 129).
21. see Sharma 1972, 9.
22. Sharma 1972 *ibid*.
23. Bhiṣagchhadmacarāḥ santi santyeke siddhasādhitāḥ
Santi vaidyaguṇairyuktāstrivadhā bhiṣajo bhuvī (Ca.sū.11:50).
24. Varamātmā hatō'jñena na cikitsā pravartitā... (Ca.sū.9:15).

25. Ca.sū.30:10–12. An interesting satirical passage on the medical profession is to be found in eleventh century Kashmiri poet Kṣemendra's *Narmamālā* wherein the physician is depicted as a dangerous quack, interested only in making money out of his patients. He is greedy for honour and unprincipled, victimizing the vulnerable and defrauding the helpless.
26. (see Sharma 1972, 8).
27. (Ca.sū.8:31).
28. Tacca nityam prayuñjīta svāsthyam yenānuvartate
Ajātānām vikārāṇāmanutpattikaram ca yat (Ca.sū.5:13).
... ātmahitaṃ cikīrṣatā sarveṇa sarvaṃ sarvadā smṛtimāsthāya
sadvṛttamanuṣṭheyam (Ca.sū.8:17). Ca.sū.8:18–34 go on to list
more than one hundred positively and negatively phrased injunctions
designed to promote the moral character of the physician and the
patient.
29. Su.ci.24:133.
30. Nāgarī nagarasyeva rathasyeva rathī yathā
Svaśarīrasya medhāvī kṛtyeṣvavahito bhavet (Ca.sū.5:103).
31. Nityaṃ sannihitāmitram samikṣyātmanāmātmavān
Nityaṃ yuktaḥ paricaredicchannāyurantivaram (Ca.sū.17:119).
32. See Ca.sū. chapters five and six; Su.sū.46:446–532; Ah.sū.2:1–19
for *dinacaryā*; Ca.sū. chapter six; Su.sū. chapter six; and Ah.sū.
chapter three for *ṛtucaryā*.
33. See Ca.sū. chapter seven, and Ah.sū. chapter three for discussion of
nimittacaryā.
34. Dīrghamāyuh smṛtim medhāmārogyam taruṇaṃ vayah
Prabhāvarṇasvaraudāryaṃ dehendriyabalaṃ paraṃ (Ca.ci.1:1.7).
35. Su.ci.27:3–6.
36. Yena nārīṣu sāmartyam vājivallabhate naraḥ
Vrajecābhyadhikam yena vājikaraṇmeva tat (Ca.ci.2:4.51).
Alpasattvasya tu kleśairbādhyamānasya rāgīnaḥ
Śarīrakṣayarākṣārthaṃ vājikaraṇamucyate (Ah.sū.40:5).
37. Su.sū.1:11.

38. Ca.ci. chapter 2, sections 2 and 3.
39. Ca.ci.1.4:30–35.
40. Levin et al (1978, 17).
41. Kālasya pariṇāmena jarāmṛtyunimittajāḥ rogāḥ svābhāvikāḥ (Ca.śā.1:115).
42. For the sake of comparison, see Daniel Wikler (1987) where the theme is developed from the modern ethical standpoint.
43. Cakrapāṇi's commentary on Ca.śā.1:114, 115.
44. Compare with Talcott Parson's (1979) argument that labelling people sick puts them within the sick role and confers on them medical attention. Similarly, by labelling them sick, one might expect to ameliorate the condition of those who are prematurely aged.
45. Ca.sū.15:18–21.
46. Ca.vi.3:45, see also Ca.sū.15:23.
47. Ca.sū.1:135. The early Greek physician, too, was moved by the ethic of a good craftsman. By doing the job well, he could distinguish himself in the public's eye from the charlatan or quack (see Edelstein 1979, 40–41).
48. Ca.sū.15:20–21.
49. Compare with the declaration of Aquinas (*Summa theologiae* 2:2.7.1.1) that physicians are not obligated always to treat the destitute, or else they would have to put aside all their other patients and occupy themselves entirely with treating the poor (see Pegis 1945).
50. Arthavidyāyāsohānimupakrośamasamgraham Prāpnuyāt vaidyo-yo'asādhyam samupācaret (Ca.sū.11:8).
51. Szasz (1985, 4).
52. Ca.sū.15:19–21.
53. Ca.śā.1:90–91.
54. Callahan (1987). See also Ley (1987).

R C ZAEHNER'S CONCEPT OF THE WICKEDNESS OF EVIL IN EARLY HINDUISM – A CRITIQUE

J G Desai

Introduction

R C Zaehner states in his book *The City within the Heart* in a chapter he calls *The Wickedness of Evil* that the Western world is attracted to Eastern mysticism for the following main reasons.

With the increasing breakdown of traditional Judaeo-Christian religion the concepts of evil and sin are gradually fading from the consciousness of the West because they are regarded as old-fashioned taboos. Concurrently there is a general breakdown of moral values thanks to science and technology.

In order to restore some sense of sanity and order to the scattered lives of Western people "the mystic East has been called in to redress the 'over-rational' imbalance."¹

Influences of Mysticism

However, Zaehner warns that it is seldom realized that in embracing the Eastern religions such as Hinduism the Western youth is unwittingly exposed to certain evil influences ostensibly cloaked in what is being promoted in the Eastern faiths as ecstatic mystical experience.²

As an illustration of his main thesis Zaehner discusses at some length the influences that entered into shaping the psychopathic personality of criminal and libertine Charles Manson, the American "mystical" leader of a band of acolytes who had committed some heinous murders in California,³ including the film star Sharon Tate, the pregnant wife of director Roman Polanski.

Zaehner argues that there is very little to choose between the prophetic tradition of the Judaeo-Christian faiths and Eastern mysticism since both are equally baneful to the life of morals as they teach the way of the wickedness of evil.⁴

He exempts early Buddhism from criticism for the simple reason that the Buddha taught neither the Zoroastrian-Semitic doctrine of metaphysical dualism between God and Satan or, from Zaehner's point of view what is worse still, the doctrine of a vengeful God who unleashes His capricious fury against innocent victims who are not His chosen people.⁵

Ironically Zaehner states that he himself subscribes to the principle of radical dualism between God and the Devil. This is curious inasmuch as he at the same time roundly condemns the doctrine.⁶ However, he feels that by comparison, the notion of a supremely all-powerful Deity who brooks no rival to the throne is far more pernicious since evil must somehow be centred in this antinomian God who is a "totality of inner opposites." The reference here is to the Old Testament Yahweh whom Zaehner calls "this savage God."⁷

It is this amoral God, Zaehner goes on to say, that has "revealed himself in the Bible and the Koran" and who demands unquestioning submission to His will, worship of His person, and the carrying out of His commands however repugnant this might be to the soul sense (as is the case with the hapless Saul who "is literally driven mad for his pains").⁸

Value Judgment

This God again can hardly commend himself to morally sensitive modern souls who, being persuaded by the ethics of "relative moralism"⁹, would hesitate to pass any value judgment upon God and His ways.

But Zaehner does pass value judgment on Yahweh and also on Lord Kṛṣṇa of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* for, as he holds, they are one and the same God.¹⁰ Thus theism in whatever form becomes suspect. Furthermore he links the *Upaniṣads* as well to the discussion, since for him they too reflect the inversion of moral standards.

That the Upaniṣadic doctrine of the Absolute *Brahman* is not the same as the theistic one, does not deter Zaehner. He advances a different set of objections, this time from the human end. That is, Zaehner argues, it is not so

much the commands of an omnipotent God that humans should obey in fear and trembling, as much as it is what the Upaniṣadic mystics actually teach humanity regarding the moral sense. Moreover, for him, what the mystics teach from what they divine of the arcane purposes of the Absolute is hardly edifying ethically. Therefore, the unwary sympathiser of mysticism fares no better than those who still seek comfort from traditional Christian monotheism.

Thus Zaehner writes off all religions except early Buddhism as they corrupt evilly.¹¹ According to him one would be better off by dispensing with any religion that teaches the metaphysics of God or the impersonal Absolute. Such a one-sided interpretation and pessimistic view of religion is simplistic and misleading. Religion, whatever its faults and inconsistencies, cannot be so lightly disposed of. It has been a power of good and a tower of strength for millions down the ages. Of particular note is the witness of so many saintly men and women of all cultures whose dependence and love of God or devotion to truth hardly reflect the evil that lurks at the heart of Zaehner's Supreme Being.

Zaehner's choice of Manson to illustrate his thesis is by contrast unfortunate. Manson, given his background, understood and interpreted the religious texts he came across through jaundiced eyes in order to suit his nefarious purposes. It is scarcely surprising that being the son of a prostitute (an unfortunate circumstance, psychologically crippling to so many), given over to drugs (LSD), a misfit and rebel of society since childhood, he would exaggerate or read out of context those texts that held an appeal to his "satanic" impulses. But Zaehner is sure that "on his own premises Manson was scarcely illogical and "had won his flash of (mystical) enlightenment."¹² This of course raises the question of "whose premises constitute logical standards?" For Zaehner would have us believe that Manson is a mystic and his acts are in keeping with the venerable tradition of Hindu mysticism.¹³ We shall advert to this point in the sequel. Since the focus of this article is on his criticism of Hindu mysticism it would be apposite at this stage to point to his views on the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.

The Upaniṣads

Since the world is an illusion so is the finite sense of personality, and since the illusory plane is one of strife between good and evil, "man's supreme good is to realize himself as the Absolute", by suppression of the ego.¹⁴

When the desired goal is attained the mystic has the realisation of the non-difference between good and evil:

"Such a man is not worried by the thought why did I not do good? Why did I do evil."¹⁵

Manson seems to have echoed this sentiment of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* in the words: "If God is one what is bad?"¹⁶

The other point Zaehner makes comes from his commentary on the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*: when the mystic is established in the realization of the Absolute he carefully distinguishes between good and evil and advocates evil by spurning the good.

Criticism of Zaehner's Views

The *Taittirīya* passage in question cannot be said to render metaphysical justification for ethical indifferentism, the blurring of the distinction between good and evil and thus promoting the latter. What it illustrates is the freedom from torment and anguish that the mystic's riven soul had experienced in the state of ignorance or the state before divine grace. It is in the transcendental state alone that all doubts and discords are resolved for it is lifted above every kind of empirical dealing. There has to be in it relief from the sense of sin and guilt because nothing less than the transcendent divine can give it. Thus if the negative sense is not shaken loose then the end result of mysticism would be a futile exercise.

The *Kauṣītaki* passage, Zaehner quotes, makes out that Indra who represents the Supreme Being overcame and destroyed the *asuras* (demons) such as the Paulomas, Tvaṣṭṛ, Kālankāñjas etc. It signifies symbolically the victory of good over evil. Further in the text, the reference to the fact that a man of knowledge "loses nothing that is his, even though he should slay his mother or father,.... steal or procure an abortion"¹⁷ when taken literally appears compromising on account of its extravagant language. However, the idiom and its import in the description were intelligible to the seekers of metaphysical wisdom and culture during Upaniṣadic times. They were not deluded into thinking that immoral conduct was respectable. For Deussen, descriptions of this nature mean that the mystic's "good and evil deeds come to nought; they are no longer his deeds, simply because he is no longer an individual."¹⁸

The *Upaniṣads* as a whole, far from promoting wanton licence, insist rather that ethical standards are complied with, since they constitute the prerequisite for *mokṣa*. A teacher in the *Taittirīya* exhorts departing students to cultivate the speaking of truth and the practice of virtue (*dharma*), which includes charity, modesty, respect and sympathy. Reverential respect should be shown to parents, teacher and guest.¹⁹

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Yājñavalkya teaches that familial relations, including love between husband and wife, and social relations as well as worldly transactions would degenerate into a species of selfish morality if all these were to be seen apart from the inner spiritual Self which sustains and animates them. And the same *Upaniṣad*

"tells us that when the individual soul...is embraced by the all-embracing spirit he attains his proper form in which his desire is fulfilled..., in which his desire is the spirit..., he is without desire (akāmam), apart from grief (śokāntaram)."²⁰

Therefore the really important point is to ask: why would those who labour so hard for the truth, attaining which is not possible without ethical discipline as a precondition, suddenly become exemplars of the inversion of moral values?

The Bhagavad-gītā

Zaehner's criticism of the *Gītā* takes on a somewhat different route. It is God (Kṛṣṇa) who commands Arjuna to kill (Zaehner uses the word murder) even though the latter, conscience stricken, objects. In other words it is not God but humans who have the true sense of ethical propriety.

Thus Kṛṣṇa, likened to the thundering Yahweh, is cast in the role of villain as he exhorts Arjuna to commit the vile act of murder – not genocide as in the case of the Old Testament God – but certainly no less excusable.

Even if we leave aside the *Gītā*'s interpreters such as the pacifist Mahatma Gandhi who treated it as an allegory, it is still possible to show that Zaehner's view is not the only definitive conclusion that can be arrived at. Why Kṛṣṇa's advice to Arjuna to fight and kill his enemies for the protection and promotion of the common weal should be condemned as being of murderous intent is beyond comprehension. In fact Zaehner himself concedes that Kṛṣṇa attempts to "persuade Arjuna to fight in an admittedly just war." His

objection however is to the fact that "the kill count....was to reach what must be a record total of 1,660,020,000 dead."²¹

Whatever the truth of this computation the fact remains that Arjuna has to do his duty but in the right spirit, as a *karma-yogin*, however painful it looked to him in the circumstances. The cardinal issue revolves around *dharmā* as the opening verse of the *Gītā* tells us. The world is *dharmā-kṣetra* and as such it pertains to the spiritual evolution of individuals within the wider context of societal living.

But Zaehner would have us believe that by implication – of his view of divine madness (Kṛṣṇa) and human sanity (Arjuna) – the worldly situation of strife and struggle is further exacerbated by the intrusion of God into human affairs bringing along with it divine sanction of murder.

The main arguments he advances for his position are: Firstly, as the Absolute alone is true reality, human life and death and also reincarnation are "meaningless and an illusion".²² And so unethical human actions are of no consequence from the point of view of the Absolute – that is, on the absolute plane. Secondly, he cites the *Gītā*-doctrine that one who discerns the inevitability of birth and death should have no cause for grief when he kills others. Thirdly, though the Law of *Karma* holds sway on the relative plane, matching consequences to their deeds, murder does not matter as the Law falls away in the case of those who perform their tasks without the sense of doership, in the calm spirit of non-attachment to the fruits of action.

Such views are hardly fair to the *Gītā*'s spirit of comprehensive charity, compassion and love, despite the fact that God is also just and the Law of *Karma* is the instrument of His justice. In fact the Law of *Karma* by embodying the principle of retributive justice places the responsibility for action fairly and squarely on human agency so that the divine reality is exonerated from the charge of perpetration of mindless savagery. When Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to wage war against evil-doers it is an instance of his compassion and love for the many innocent (*sādhus*) who groan under the burden of oppression and persecution. Zaehner however insists that the *Gītā* teaches that "once you have truly got rid of all sense of ego, you will find that you can murder to your heart's content and feel no remorse at all: you have passed beyond good and evil."²³

It is hard to understand why a person "who has got rid of all sense of ego" and who has "passed beyond good and evil" will still harbour murder in his heart. Zaehner then totally misrepresents the *Gītā* position.

Commenting on the *Gītā* text (2.26) Radhakrishnan has this to say:

"The inevitability of death, however, cannot justify murders, suicides or wars. We cannot desire deliberately the death of others, simply because all men are bound to die."²⁴

Zaehner conveniently ignores the elements of positive ethics presented in the *Gītā* in order to declare that its concept of God is amoral. For example the *Gītā* in several ways extols the merits of a virtuous life by clearly drawing the distinction between the demoniac and the pious kind of human characteristics.

In (18.42) Kṛṣṇa points to such qualities of serenity, self restraint, purity and forgiveness as hallmarks of the brahmins and of heroism, vigour and generosity of the *kṣatriyas*.²⁵

In (18.31–32) Kṛṣṇa teaches that the intellect that "makes a distorted grasp of *dharma* and *adharmā*" and which "regards *adharmā* as *dharma* and views all things in a perverted way" are rājasika and tāmasika respectively and so should be abjured.²⁶

Especially instructive is Chapter 16 in which the evil-doers who "given over to egoism, power, insolence, lust and wrath" are condemned. When lust, anger and greed²⁷ are considered as being the triple gateways to hell, there can be no doubt as to Kṛṣṇa's position in ethics since these enter as the essential components of the murderous intention. The matter is finally clinched in the *Gītā* conception of duty as the expression of the principle of *loka-saṃgraha*, duty undertaken for the sake of the welfare of society.

Conclusion

Zaehner's diatribe against mystical religion in Hindu thought and practice as productive of much evil is unsustainable. Where religion has been perverted to selfish ends it points to its abuse. In any case the mystical expression in religion represents the highest type of spirituality known in all continents and ages. The noble qualities of self-sacrifice, love and compassion

represented to a transcendent degree in the lives of mystics, give the lie to Zaehner's criticism that mystics are malingerers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Zaehner, R.C., *The City within the Heart*, Mandala Books, Unwin Paperbacks, London, 1980.

Swami Chidbhananda, *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, Tapovan Series, Tirupparairurai, 1976.

Radhakrishnan, S., *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, Allen and Unwin Pvt. Ltd., London, 1956.

Radhakrishnan, S., *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1940.

ENDNOTES

1. Zaehner, R C, *The City within the Heart*, 1980. p 27.
2. *ibid*, p 32.
3. *ibid*, p 35.
4. *ibid*, pp 32–38.
5. *ibid*, p 30.
6. *ibid*, p 34.
7. *ibid*, p 30.
8. *ibid*, p 31.
9. *ibid*, pp 34–35.
10. *ibid*, p 29.
11. *ibid*, p 30.
12. *ibid*. p 44.
13. *ibid*, p 36.

14. *ibid*, p 35.
15. *ibid*, p 36.
16. *ibid*, p 44.
17. *ibid*, p 36.
18. Hume, R.E., *The Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads*, 1988, p 321.
19. *ibid*, p 281.
20. Radhakrishnan, S., *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, 1940, p 96.
21. Zaehner, R.C., *ibid*, p 37.
22. *ibid*, p 37.
23. *ibid*, p 37.
24. Radhakrishnan, S., *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, 1956, p 110.
25. Swami Chidbhavananda, *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, 1976.
26. *ibid*.
27. *ibid*.

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AS ENSHRINED IN SANSKRIT SOURCES

T S Rukmani

Environmental ethics has come to stay and can be reasonably predicted to be one of the primary concerns well into the next century. The consciousness of the global system as one unit, interconnected, inter-related and interdependent to make a whole needs no more to be argued. There are ministries in practically every country assigned specifically to look after problems related to environment and ecology. There are even political parties wedded to the cause like the Green Parties in Germany, Belgium and other countries. Conferences addressing themselves to environmental and ecological issues are no more rarities. While this new-found wisdom appears to belong to the latter part of the 20th century it was an attitude which informed many cultures till not so long ago. It will be good to remind ourselves that human beings first joined this drama of life on Planet Earth only about 4 million years ago. There was already life on earth by then – life in the form of many distinct species of flora and fauna.

The beginnings of human civilisation and culture is only a mere 12,000 years old-pretty young in global terms. It is said that already ninety percent of all living organisms that ever lived on the surface of the earth, since life first originated, have gone extinct.¹ It is reasonable to assume that some of this could be due to Nature's own design but increasingly it is the exploitation of natural resources indiscriminately by humans that is threatening the quality of life on this planet Earth. While there must have been a symbiotic relationship between all life forms during the long journey of life, something psychological happened in the minds of humans with "the invention of James Watt's steam engine in the year 1773",² the year that heralded the advent of the Industrial Revolution. Since that momentous event the entire model of progress is that governed by the logic of that revolution. "For better or for worse, the underpinnings of the Industrial Revolution and its ethos-distorted and mutilated a thousand times-continue to this day to define our visions of progress, development, and good life, and even of the meaning of human existence in the universe".³ If one were to talk in terms of paradigm shifts one could say that it was with the advent of the Industrial

Revolution that the Cartesian world-view got firmly entrenched in the psyche of the Occident (to begin with at any rate). Man's dominance over nature was taken for granted and "the Cartesian partition has penetrated deeply into the human mind during the centuries following Descartes"⁴ as mentioned by Heisenberg. This model of development did serve initially to better the lives of thousands of people and what was lost in quality by serving the long assembly lines was never realised till it was too late. Today the results of this mechanistic world-view are there for all to see – the production of a human being who is in conflict with himself\ herself. I would like to analyze what appears to be the paradox of the human situation today before arguing that one way of resurrecting, at least partially, the sanity of the human being is to go back to a holistic approach or world-view.

Man is a social animal, but he\she is also a person with strong individualistic tendencies. How far and how much of society can the human being absorb so that it does not come into conflict with his\her individual creativity or expression of his\her individuality? I am aware that this can have many answers. For the purposes of this paper however I would like to argue that the mechanistic world view is certainly not one of the answers. Of course one could turn around and say that this is hind-sight as the beginnings of this world-view were as much clothed in euphoria and excitement when it occurred like perhaps any other view. While agreeing to that we must be able to discard what is detrimental to human growth even though it is a hind sight. After all one can only extrapolate from the present; such indeed is the human predicament.

What has a mechanistic, scientist mode of thought done for society? Society at large, as we know, does not take part in the adventure of life known as scientific research. While every single individual in some way or the other is affected by the technological advancement that comes in the wake of scientific advances the zeal of participation in making one's own destiny is completely missing. One talks about a "technologically advanced society" and not of a "technologically advanced individual". Some individual scientists in the vast population of humans might probably have some satisfaction in his\her individual achievements; but for the vast majority of humans, technological progress is faceless and comes to be, without the individual gaining any confidence for this technological advancement. On the other hand, the rate of technological advancement is so fast that, but for a very small minority, vast majorities are losing confidence in themselves as they are not able to keep up with the rate of progress in any area; say, for instance, in computer technology. So what is that we find? We find famine in

the midst of plenty – individuals who in spite of having everything they possibly can need to lead a comfortable existence, are devoid of the zest for life and living. This results in boredom and frustration; trying to conform outwardly while feeling totally alienated from within. We are all familiar with this phenomenon and this is the result of a one sided advancement which failed to take into view the aspirations and demands that the individual as a whole seeks.

Social scientists in other parts of the world, particularly in the East have, on the other hand, tried to evolve a holistic mode of interaction within oneself as well as with society as a whole. The ancient Indian classification of the goals of life as that of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa* and fitting those into the four stages of life called the *āśramas* or places of residence is a serious attempt one would think of addressing the integration of the individual into the fabric of society. The basic difference in this paradigm as opposed to that of the mechanistic one is indeed obvious. I must hasten to add, however, that one is not making absolute value judgments here. The tapestry of life and society is made up of many colours like politics, economics, legal systems, health institutions and so on. To be able to arrive at a social ordering which can really be ‘holistic’ is therefore perhaps an ‘impossible possibility’. For instance what could be an ideal political solution may not be the ideal for human expansion. Thus a benign dictator could perhaps be a good political model to a bad democracy elected by an uninformed populace. But surely we cannot therefore argue that one should opt for a dictatorship form of government. While poverty and education could be effectively taken care of by a collective form of dispensation the price paid in terms of individual freedom could be incalculable. It therefore appears that in fragments one can possibly come up with what can be a holistic model but viewed in a totality of human situations it may not be so. Within that framework it appears to me that the *puruṣārthas* and *āśramas* of the ancient Indian social scientist is an attempt to fit the individual and society into a holistic relationship with one another as well as into nature as a whole. It therefore fits into the new paradigm of viewing the whole globe as a network of relationships.

Let us examine some of the underpinnings of this world view. The first and foremost is its concept of *dharma*. *Dharma*, though an ethical construct, cannot be described in terms of absolute right and absolute wrong or absolute good and absolute evil. The very definition of *dharma* as something that sustains the individual both within himself and within society is significant. Anchored in the broader framework of the R̥gvedic *Rta* which signified the physical and moral world order in broad terms,⁵ *dharma* took on new meanings and associations as society changed, sometimes overturning the

original meaning itself. For instance, in modern India in most regions in the North, *dharma* has come to mean religion though in its early history, religion is nowhere seen to be its meaning. But the stress on *dharma* being the basic moral value of an individual was to ensure an ethical dimension to society in its various institutions.

Dharma had two faces – one called the *pravṛtidharma* and the other called the *nivṛtidharma* – i.e. an active participation in the world and the other a withdrawal from the world even when in the midst of activity. This is a refrain running through the gamut of ancient Indian thought and literature. As early as the *Īsopaniṣad*⁶ it is spelt out in clear terms which since then has been refined and polished further and further in other texts like the *Gītā*⁷ and given expression to by poets like Kālidāsa⁸ and others. This is already echoed in the *brahmacarya* code prescribed as a common *dharma* for all individuals. It heads the list of the social institutions as one of the stages of life i.e. the stage of *brahmacarya*. What is learnt in this stage is then practised as the twofold *dharma* (the *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*) in the householder's stage (the *gṛhastha*) which being the pivotal structure or backbone of society gave a vision to society as a whole. A combination of the two attitudes will thus be in the interest of society as a whole. It is thus a holistic approach to both the individual's development and societal concern. In this matrix, the level of progress will not be measured in terms of GNP only, for qualities like satisfaction and contentment are not measured in the GNP calculations.

"A person who puts a voluntary restraint on consumerism derives his full satisfaction even without having access to all consumer goods whereas someone else who does not put such restraints, would feel dissatisfied with the absence of some consumer goods. To measure satisfaction only in terms of consumption expenditure or income, for both these categories of people, is not consistent with the concept of welfare in *Dharmaśāstra*."⁹

Another dharmic concept which deeply reflects on both the individual and society is that of the five debts which a person (householder) is supposed to honour in his every day life in keeping with the holistic world view. The stress on the individualistic mode of behaviour so far may give the impression, as indeed it has done, that this approach is ego centered and does not take care of society as a whole. This indeed is a misunderstanding of the concepts so far discussed. By positioning the individual in a historical context and pointing out his/her connectedness at the macro-level the five fold debts, to some extent, helps to correct that imbalance.

Thus the first of these debts called the *brāhmaṇa-ṛṇa* is the debt one owes to one's heritage in which are included the entire learning and scholarship of a culture. By situating an individual in a temporal-historico-cultural mode of being, one is cut down to size and made to realise one's place in the whole. Nobody invents or plays a role directly in one's past heritage; one can only be thankful for what one inherits and move on from there. The second is the debt one owes to the gods called the *deva-ṛṇa* – again pointing to the place of the human in the whole drama of existence; to the elements and other factors which seem to take control of our lives. This is brought into sharp focus during natural calamities like floods, earthquakes etc. What better lessons can humans have for emphasising his limitations in absolute terms in the whole drama of life and instructing him in humility! The third debt or *pitr-ṛṇa*, is what one owes to one's ancestors. These three take care of the cultural and family memories. The next two *manuṣya-ṛṇa* and *bhūta-ṛṇa* concern directly the lived world – hospitality to all living beings. These five debts while emphasising the concept of self-denial or *brahmacarya* one referred to earlier, also place the individual squarely in society and the world at large.

It is usually said that one understands a people better through its literature and its cultural expressions like architecture and temple structures, music, drama and dance. I would therefore try to briefly touch upon some aspects of this vast ancient literature, both sacred and secular, to find out if indeed this paradigm was ever believed in and practised as part of its social philosophy.

Before passing on to the spoken or written texts I would like to quickly comment on some aspects of temple architecture and other art forms in India which brings into broad relief the points I was trying to make earlier. For instance, in a temple one can traverse from the centre or *garbhagṛha* of the temple outwards or vice versa in order to understand its structure. The imagery can be that of the centre from which the individual emerges, going through the *prāsādas*, *mandapas* and various halls which increasingly place him in the world outside conveying its worldliness through the rich profusion of carvings. These carvings portray the whole of the universe in the three regions and thus the statement in the *Agnipurāna*: "The body of the temple is *prakṛti*."¹⁰ This all encompassing, holistic approach in art forms is illustrated in ample measure by the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, in the very nature of the dance forms and in Indian classical music. The common metaphors in all these art forms represents the circular. Thus we come across commonly and naturally circular motifs like the wheel, the lotus, the *pradakṣiṇa* of the *prakāra* and so on. While there is a centre to the circle, the circle itself is not

circumscribed and has no definite beginning or end. An individual represented by the centre is conscious of the circumference and its unbounded nature – thus aware of the whole world and the world beyond. It is this philosophy which defines all art forms and which is brought into sharp focus in a vivid manner in any classical music concert even today.

Going back to the spoken and written word to find out if one can find support for these ideas, I have already referred to the nature of *ṛta*, conceptualised in the *Ṛgveda*. This is well known and so is the *mantra* for peace which is all encompassing. Peace and prosperity is not beseeched only for mother earth, but for the intermediate regions and the sky as well.¹¹ *Bhūh*, *bhuvah* and *svah* – the three regions of earth, intermediate space and heavens were the subject matter of a large number of the discussions in the *Upaniṣads*.¹² Many of these utterances include the three well known regions in their categories of thought and eventually synthesise that grand vision into a mathematical whole from which nothing can either be reduced or added in an absolute sense.¹³ It is this holistic vision that also led to that acme of philosophical thought the *Advaita Vedānta* of which Śāṅkara was the great exponent.

Let us now look at the *Atharvaveda* which unfortunately is a *Veda* which has been neglected for too long. The *Pṛthvīsūkta* of the *Atharvaveda*, for instance, in its 63 verses, corroborates the *ṛta* concept of the *Rgveda* and emphasises that truth or *ṛta*, (moral and physical order), sacrifice, dedication, creative energy, and perfect knowledge are what support and uphold mother earth.¹⁴ In this enumeration one notices qualities both at the micro and macro levels. By playing upon a mutuality of interests it seems to suggest that if things are well ordered at the micro level it will also reflect itself at the macro level. In other words, the emphasis is on taking care of the whole as an unit by following some basic values. Some could turn around and comment that one is reading too much into this *sūkta* – may be some thing which is not there even. But the following verses in the same *sūkta* may perhaps dispel that misgiving; thus while verses 23–27 use a holistic language to talk about the flora and fauna and all that is there on this earth¹⁵ verses 28 and 30 pray for non-injury and non-pollution of the waters and the atmosphere.¹⁶

If we leave the domain of the spoken word and come to later literature there is ample evidence to indicate the continuity of this awareness. At a simplistic level one notices that almost all the gods and goddesses in Hinduism has his or her own *vāhana* (vehicle) which can sometimes be an animal like the lion, sometimes an inferior animal like a mouse (rodent) and sometimes a bird like a peacock.

Besides the *vāhanas* of divinities, trees and plants and flowers have a sacred status in Hinduism and it is interesting to recall that Śrī Kṛṣṇa mentions in the tenth chapter of the *Gītā* that amongst trees he is the *aśvattha* itself.¹⁷ The neem tree is even today associated with the cult of Mariamma and the *bilva* leaf and fruit are Śiva's favourites. Hinduism has a special place for life giving waters. Thus the rivers have been put on a pedestal and worshipped as life givers. It is well known that rivers are generally pilgrim centres and the reverence that Mother Gaṅgā or Gaṅgāmāyī commands is legendary. There are many legends associated with this holiest of the river systems which again is true of other rivers and seas as well.

Many of the literary works like the *Mahābhārata*, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, *Mahākāvya*s etc. have the whole universe as their canvas. In fact one of the criticisms of the Sanskrit plays, as opposed to that of the Greek plays, is its lack of coherence as to time and place. The Sanskrit plays traverse all the three regions and all times and deal with nature as a whole. There is an earnest attempt to look at life as a whole in these texts. Thus the *MBH.* describes itself as an *arthaśāstra*, *dharmāśāstra*, *kāmaśāstra* and *mokṣaśāstra*. The wisdom that life is one whole and has to be approached as such, informs these works. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* also describes itself as an encyclopedia which deals with topics of the seven worlds.¹⁸ That at least one of the classical forms of dance has almost 500 *mudras* to describe the various forms of flora and fauna, denizens of the three regions, and almost all natural phenomena, brings out this philosophy very vividly. It is also significant to observe in this context that, according to literary critics, a great piece of literature can only qualify to be called a *kāvya* (a classical work) when it contains sections devoted to the description of nature as a whole.

It is significant to notice that even in the earliest period of literary activity one set of books were called the *Āraṇyakas* i.e., those which came up in the forests, surely due to deep reflection in sylvan surroundings. The *Vanaparva* in the *MBH.* and the *Āraṇyakāṇḍa* in the *Rāmāyaṇa* are set exclusively in the forests and one of the four stages of residence referred to earlier is called *vānaprastha* or residence in the forest. Thus nature at its best in the shape of forests is interwoven into the very fabric of ancient Indian literary and artistic activities.

Whether it is the plays of Bhāsa, or of Kālidāsa or of Bhavabhūti, one notices that this sensibility towards nature and its living beings as a whole has been retained in their works as well. A large part of the action in these plays takes place in the forests and the penance groves not as if they are removed from the normal life of the people but very much as part of the general life of all

people. Thus the first act of Bhāsa's *Svapnavāsavadatta* opens in the forests and we are informed that Padmāvati, the princess, had come to the forest to pay her respects to the queen, her mother, who was residing in the hermitage.¹⁹ Forests and hermitages were part of the general scene and there was nothing strange if even members of the royal family took up residence in the forest. The *vānaprastha āśrama* and maintenance of forests and hermitages mutually enriched each other.

Preservation of forest groves and hermitages were always considered one of the prime duties of the king. There was free access to these hermitages to all people as is clear when Bhāsa says "a hermitage is common to all people."²⁰ Even though hunting was considered a kingly sport the area in and around the hermitage was protected. Thus Duṣyanta in the first act of *Abhiññānaśākuntalam* promptly stops his hunting when informed about the presence of the *āśrama* in his vicinity; he enquires after the comforts of the sages in the *āśrama* in the fifth act and makes it a point to go out of his way to pay his respects to sage Mārica on his way back from Indraloka in the seventh act.

The fourth act of *Abhiññānaśākuntalam* is uniformly considered as the best act of the play and it is set entirely in the *āśrama* of Kaṇva. Śakuntalā herself is pictured by Kālidāsa as a child of nature²¹ and Tagore sees in Śakuntalā "the development of flower into fruit, of earth into heaven, of matter into spirit." When in the fourth act Śakuntalā bids farewell to the plants and animals in the *āśrama* they come alive as real persons, not in any way inferior to human beings. That a young bride about to leave for her husband's home not only thinks of each and every plant and animal in the forest, but has time to go around and take leave of them cannot be dismissed as just a poetic fancy. It has to satisfy the viewers and the audience cannot be taken for granted. Kālidāsa himself has set rigorous standards for himself when he says right at the beginning of the play that only when the learned are happy will he consider his work fruitful.²² Śakuntalā is encouraged and helped in this task by Kaṇva and the other inmates of the *āśrama*; thus we can only conclude that it was a natural behaviour on the part of Śakuntalā. Prof Wilson is said to have noticed this "tender attachment to objects of nature" by the authors of these Sanskrit poetical works. Thus in the fourth act the trees come alive and shower Śakuntalā with many gifts. Describing her love for the plants, trees and animals Kaṇva says²³ "This Śakuntalā who will not try to drink water unless you all have first quenched your thirst, she who though fond of decoration will not pluck your tender leaves out of affection, For whom your first blossoming of flowers is an occasion for celebration that Śakuntalā is today leaving for the home of her husband, May you all bid her farewell".

If we turn our attention to Bhavabhūti's *Uttararāmacaritam* we find that the description of Janasthāna, in act two, depicts a picture of harmony in nature where everything exists in an atmosphere of mutual respect.²⁴

By pinpointing the disrespect shown to Surabhi (the divine cow) as the reason for Dilīpa not having an heir, Kālidāsa accords a status equal to that of a human being to an animal. This is further reinforced when Dilīpa and Sudakṣiṇā look after the cow Nandinī at great risk to their own lives.²⁵ Even the story of the birth of the *śloka* metre which burst forth from Vālmīki's mouth on seeing the plight of a grief stricken bird emphasises this empathy to all living creatures.²⁶

A tribute to this holistic vision of the ancient sage and the Upaniṣadic lore is paid by J C Bose on his great discovery of life in plants. He says: "It was when I came upon the mute witness of these self-made records and perceived in them one phase of a pervading unity that bears within it all things – the mote that quivers in ripples of light, the teeming life upon our earth and the radiant suns that shine above us – it was then that I understood, for the first time, a little of that message proclaimed by my ancestors on the banks of the Ganges 30 centuries ago. They who see but One in all the changing manifoldness of this universe, unto them belongs Eternal Truth, unto none else". Coming from a scientist of Bose's calibre this is indeed a great tribute to the holistic vision of the ancient Indian sage.

I have tried so far to contrast two modes of world views. One which grew within the city and the other which was nurtured in the forests, as Tagore once remarked. This is not an argument for going back to the past which of course is illogical One is only trying to present the wisdom inherent in an alternate mode of development which tries to interpret development in a holistic manner. Schumacher called it " a technology with a human face". Any thinking individual now realises that development in fragments will eventually end up as a mockery of development itself. Thus the neo value-oriented economists have started talking about a holistic model of development. Any development must take care of the whole for it is important to realise that there is an optimum index for every system or structure and 'deviations from this size that result from maximising any single variable – profit efficiency or GNP for example, will inevitably destroy the larger system.'²⁷

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sanskrit Sources

1. *Ṛgveda*
2. *Atharvaveda*
3. *Īśopaniṣad*
4. *Taittirīyopaniṣad*
5. *Bhagavadgītā*
6. Bharata – *Nāṭyaśāstra*
7. Bhāsa – *Svapnavāsavadatta*
8. Bhavabhūti – *Uttararāmacaritam*
9. Kālidāsa –
 - i. *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*
 - ii. *Raghuvamśam*

Other

1. Capra Fritjof *Uncommon Wisdom* Flamingo Edition London (1989).
2. Kramrisch Stella *The Hindu Temple* Vol II Motilal Banarsidass Delhi (1976).
3. Matilal B K (Ed) *Moral Dilemmas in the Mahābhārata* Indian Institute of Advanced Study Shimla (1989).
4. Spretnak Charlene and Capra Fritjof *Green Politics* Paladin Grafton Books London (1984).
5. Sohoni S Shrinivas *Pṛthvisūkta* (Trans.) Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Delhi (1991).

ENDNOTES

1. Sehdev Kumar Working Paper No 15. How Natural is Nature? IIAS Shimla India (1986).
2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.*
4. Capra Fritjof *Uncommon Wisdom* p 19.
5. Paper by T S Rukmani in B K Matilal (Ed) *Moral Dilemmas in the MBH* pp 23ff.
6. *Īśopaniṣad* 1.
7. *Bhagavad Gītā* II.47.
8. *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* Act VII.
9. V R Panchamukhi unpublished paper 'The Relevance of Dharmaśāstra in modern times'.
10. *Agni Purāna* LXI.25 mentioned in Stella Kramrisch *The Hindu Temple* Vol II p 300.
11. *dyauḥ śāntirantarikṣam śāntiḥ pṛthvī śāntirāpaḥ śāntiroṣadhayaḥ śāntiḥ vanaspatayaḥ śāntirviśvedevāḥ śānti brahmaśāntiḥ sarvaśāntiḥ śāntirevaśāntiḥ samā śāntiredhi.*
12. *Taitti. Upaniṣad* V.1 and 2.
13. *pūrṇamadah pūrṇamidam, pūrṇād pūrṇamudacyate; pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya, pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate.*
14. *AV. Pṛthvisūkta* XII.1.
15. *AV. XII. 23–27.* May this Earth whose herbs and waters have been selected by the celestial creatures make me also fragrant and pleasant to others. Let none bear ill will against us.
May the earth which imbues men and women with good fortune and good appearance and gives fleet footedness to the horse and the deer and strength to the elephants, May this Earth imbue us also with radiance, let none be averse to us.
Boulders, rocks, stones, dust, particles, all these form the Earth's crust; the Earth is golden within. May the Earth support us. I hail the earth (as symbolising creative energy and the spirit of our culture). We invoke the Earth upon which foliage and trees are firmly held, unthreatened, the Earth which is equipped with all good things in a stable environment of harmony.

16. *ibid.* XII. 28–30. In daily life, on Earth, whether we are sitting, standing or in motion, may our activity be such as would never cause injury or grief.
O Earth may only pure waters flow for our bodies. May all the water of Earth remain pure and unpolluted. May harmful substances be away from us. May only good action occur at our instance.
(Translation by Shrinivas S Sohoni).
17. *Gītā* X.26.
18. *Nāṭyaśāstra* I.116.
19. *Svapna* – I.6.
20. *ibid.*
21. (Goethe, the German poet, who read the *Abhiñhāna*. in translation was so impressed by the character of Śakuntalā that he described her thus).
Would'st thou the young years' blossoms and the fruits of its decline.
And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured, feasted, fed,
Would'st thou the Earth and Heaven itself in one sole name combine?
I name thee 'O Śakuntalā' and all at once is said.
22. *Abhi.* I.2.
23. *ibid* IV. 9.
24. *Uttara.* II. 20, 21.
25. *Raghu.* I. 76 and 79.
26. *Uttara.* II.5.
27. Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra *Green Politics*, p 80.

VEDIC CLAIMS OF THE PĀÑCARĀTRA AND THE VAIKHĀNASĀ ĀGAMAS¹

Pratap Kumar

In order for a tradition to be authoritative and orthodox, it tends to claim its origins from as ancient a source as possible. Almost all the Indian traditions do this in their own way. This is also true of all the sectarian Hindu traditions in that they all tend to claim their origins from the ultimate source, namely, the Vedas. The origin of the Vedas themselves has been a question of great importance both within the Indian tradition as well as outside the Indian tradition, namely, in the Indological scholarship in the West. While the non-Brāhmanical traditions, such as Jainism and Buddhism rejected the supernatural claims to the origins of the Vedas, the Brāhmanical traditions have affirmed unequivocally the supernatural origins of the Vedas. Although the Mīmāṃsakas² did not admit the theistic arguments of the other Brāhmanical traditions, they unequivocally affirmed the eternity of the Vedas on the basis of their being "*svataḥprāmāṇya*" and thus of "*apauruṣeya*" (non-human) origin. Nevertheless, for much of later Hinduism, the supernatural origin of the Vedas is unquestionable. Thus, it is on this unquestionable authority of the Vedas that even the subsequent Āgamic traditions of India lay claim to their sanctity and legitimacy.³ Both the Pāñcarātrins and the Vaikhānasas claim such Vedic origins to their respective traditions. In the following essay, the claims of the Pāñcarātra and the Vaikhānasa Āgamas to the Vedic Orthopraxis are examined on the basis of, among other Āgamas, the *Jayākhya Saṃhitā* (JS) of the Pāñcarātra Āgama corpus (PA) and the *Ānanda Saṃhitā* (AS) of the Vaikhānasa Āgama corpus (VA).

Pāñcarātra Claim to the Vedic Orthopraxis Textual References

Not only within the PA texts but also in the other post Vedic texts, references are found regarding the PA tradition. In all these references, attempts are made to place the PA tradition on a par with that of the Vedic tradition. The most classic text that is often quoted in support of the PAs is the following:

"This great Upaniṣad known as the Pāñcarātra is associated with the four Vedas, accomplished by Sāṃkhya and Yoga, delivered from the mouth of Nārāyaṇa and heard by Nārada."⁴ this text is further supported by other texts from *Īśvara Saṃhitā* (IS) 1.10; 1.43; and *Śrīpraśna Saṃhitā* (SS). In JS, Viṣṇu says that he himself is the "lost Veda" (*praṇaṣṭavedadharmoham* – 2.61). The reference in JS is only to a general term of "Veda." (JS.2.55, 63). But both IS and SS refer to the Ekāyana branch of the Vedas.⁵ Bhattacharya points out that the Ekāyana branch was identified with the Kanva Śākha of the *Śuklayajurveda*.⁶ Reference to the Ekāyana śākha also occurs in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (CU).⁷ It is further pointed out that Utpala in his *Spandapradīpikā* refers to the Ekāyana branch of the Veda.⁸ Bhattacharya's analysis of Utpala's *Spandapradīpikā* shows that Utpala had identified three "distinct groups of the PAs – "Pāñcarātraśruti", "Pāñcarātra Upaniṣad", and "Pāñcarātra Saṃhitā."⁹

In most of the above references, one thing that is unequivocally affirmed is that the Lord Viṣṇu himself is the author of the teachings of the PAs and that he taught them to Nārada, who in turn taught them to Śaṅḍilya, and thus the chain goes on. The reference in the *Mahābhārata* (*Mbh.*) qualifies the PAs as "mahopaniṣad" which is associated with all the four Vedas (*caturvedasamanvitam*) revealed from the mouth of Lord Viṣṇu to Nārada.

There are also several references made outside the PAs claiming either equality with the Vedas or affirming the authenticity and validity of the rituals performed according to the PAs. References are also made in other Puranic literature, such as *Varāha-*, *Bhāgavata-*, *Brahmāṇḍa-*, *Kūrma* and *Skanda Purāṇas*. All these references attempt to elevate the PAs to the level of the Vedas.

Tracing the Antiquity of the Pāñcarātra Ritual

Another way of finding proof for the validity of the Pāñcarātra tradition is to argue in favour of its antiquity. The traditional scholars in India use various materials to argue for the antiquity of the tradition in question. One such is the inscriptions. On the basis of the Bhilsa inscription Vāsudeva worship has been traced to the second century B.C.E.¹⁰ The second type of source is the historical records of the ancient travellers. On the basis of Megasthenes' accounts the existence of the two sects, namely, Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva, has been shown, and thereby arguing for an implicit suggestion that the Pāñcarātra also did exist by then.¹¹ Another source that is looked at is the subsequent *Smṛti* literature. Evidences from Pāṇini, Patañjali and the

Mahābhārata, specially, the *Bhīṣmaparvan*, and the Nārāyaṇīya section of the *Śāntiparvan* are quoted.¹² From the Vedic sources, the *Aitareya-* and *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇas* are cited. Among the non-Brāhmanical sources, the citations include the Sarvāstivāda and the Vijñānavada schools of the Mahāyana Buddhism. Some Dravidian (Tamil) sources, such as the *Silappadikāram* and the *Paripāḍal* are also cited.¹³

Many of the texts and sources referred to above do not go back to a period earlier than the second century B.C.E. This means that, on the basis of textual evidence, it is difficult to argue that the Pāñcarātra tradition is directly in the Vedic line. All that these references indicate is that at least by the second century B.C.E. the Pāñcarātra tradition is widely known. But the question of its origins still remains unanswered. In this context, the connections between the *Āgama* tradition and the *Śramaṇa* tradition and perhaps the *Vrātya* tradition is worth exploring. However, it is beyond the scope of this essay.

Finding Analogues between the Pāñcarātra and the Vedic Genres

The voluminous extent of the total number of PAs is often a very favoured argument by the traditional scholars to equate the PAs to the Vedic corpus. Otto Schrader lists about two hundred and ten, and suggests that the total number of PAs could be more than that figure. Nevertheless, the traditional scholars, in their zealous pursuit of the PAs, tend to argue that the total number of *ślokas* must be more than one and a half million. The other more interesting argument is to take the definition of "*Samhitā*" from the *Pauṣkara Samhitā*, which says that any work extending to twelve thousand *granthas* can be called a *Samhitā*.¹⁴ Furthermore, analogous to the division of the Vedas, the PAs are also divided into four groups: *Āgama*, *Mantra*, *Tantra*, and *Tantrāntara*.¹⁵ Again like the *Śruti* and *Smṛti* literature, the PAs are also divided as the "revealed" (*Divya*) and the "traditional" (*Munibhāṣitā*).¹⁶ The *Sātvata-*, *Pauṣkara-* and *Jayākhyā Samhitās* are considered to be of the *Divya* class, while all the other PAs are treated as of the *Munibhāṣita* class. Another implicit way of affirming the Vedic Orthopraxis is to prescribe ablutions to be done in the places, rivers, etc., which are known for their association with vedic rituals. Thus the *Jayākhyā Samhitā* explicitly alludes to the rivers Gaṅgā, Yamunā, and to places, such as Prayāga, etc. (JS.9.26, 31).

Vaikhānasa Claims to Vedic Lineage

The case of the Vaikhānasa seems to be a little more direct than that of the Pāñcarātra. As mentioned earlier, these comments on the Vaikhānasa are primarily based on my study of the *Ānanda Samhitā* (AS). The AS begins

with the *śloka*- "Salutations to that Vikhanas, the knower of all the meaning of the Vedas, by whom the entire ritual (*karman*) belonging to the *śruti* and *smṛti* is prescribed."¹⁷ the first part of the *śloka* – "*śrautasmārtikam karma...*" at once flags off the intention of the author that the Vaikhānasaśūtras comprise the entire *Śruti*, *Smṛti*, and the *Karma Mīmāṃsā*. The same *śloka* also occurs at (2.81).

The entire second chapter of the AS deals with the line of the Vedic sages. It mentions about the transmission of the Vedic branches to various sages. The line of the sages begins with the erstwhile Vyāsa and connects it to the sage Vikhanas in an interesting way. AS presupposes a stage when the entire Veda was undivided. Thus it begins by saying that Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana (Vyāsa) divided the mountain called Veda (*vedaparvatam*) into four parts and taught them to four of his disciples – Sāma Veda to Jaimini, Atharvaṇa Veda to Sumantu, Ṛg Veda to Gālava, and Yajurveda to Kuśāgradhī (Kuśāgrabuddhi), and set the traditions of the Udgātr, Brahman, Hoṭṛ and Adhvaryu respectively. For our purposes we need not elaborate the entire lineage but look at the way the name of Vikhanas is connected to the Yajurveda school. It says that Kuśāgradhī taught Yajurveda to five of his disciples – Yājñavalkya, Survaṇa, Jābāli, Vaidika, and Suhrattu. Here is the first twist! Kuśāgradhī becomes vexed with the proud Yājñavalkya and demands him to return all that he had learned from him. Yājñavalkya obeys his teacher and returns all the Yajurveda portion that he received from his teacher and goes to perform *tapas*. The portion that Yājñavalkya returned was received back by Kuśāgradhī in the form of Tittiri birds¹⁸ (hence Taittirīya). Meanwhile, Yājñavalkya obtains the grace of Sūrya and requests him to teach him that Yajurveda which was not taught to any one else. Then Sūrya, impressed by Yājñavalkya's desire, teaches him the Yajurveda of the Vājīśākha. Then Yājñavalkya teaches it to seven disciples – Kanva, Kuśika, Ūrva, Śānta, Tapana, Kaṭha and Vimala. They in turn divided each of theirs into two and taught it to their disciples. Jaṭila, Vetas, Tajña, Jahnu, Garga, Ṛju, Aṃbara, Suvrata, Māṭhara, Cakra, Piṅgala, Vimlāsaya, Bhāṇḍaka, Sukhadhī and Śambhu are the fourteen. They also in turn subdivide and teach to their disciples and finally the total number reaches one hundred (excluding Yājñavalkya). Now, here is the second twist. So far we do not really come across the name of Vikhanas in the second chapter of the AS. But the author of AS for the first time inserts a *śloka* which speaks of a branch of the Yajurveda which was even earlier than the Taittirīya school. And this is known as the Vaikhānasa school. It says that prior to the division of the Vedas there was a branch (*śākha*) called Vaikhānasa belonging to the Taruskanda of the Yajurveda. It is this branch of the Yajurveda that Sūrya taught Yājñavalkya.¹⁹

Elaborating on the subdivisions of the various branches of the Vedas, the AS lists the following branches as part of the Yajurveda sūtras – "Bodhāyanīyam (Bodhāyana subsequently defects and goes to the Taittirīya school, Cf. AS 2.79–80), Śaṅḍilyam, Āgastyaṃ, Pañcakāṭakam, Vaikhānasam, Bharadvājam, Satyāśādam, Śākalam, Mādyandinām, Kaundīnyam, Lokāksikam, Kuśīdakam, Kātyāyanam Vādūlam, Agnivaiśyakam" (AS 2.65–66). The AS also identifies the distinction between the Vaikhānasa branch of the Yajurveda and the Taittirīya branch of the Yajurveda. Whereas the former has five parts and is of white (*pīta*) complexion, the latter has seven parts and is of black (*kr̥ṣṇa*) colour. (AS 2.71–72). AS also says that the Yajurveda is of three kinds – Vaikhānasa (pure), Taittirīya (impure), and Vājasaneyā (pure) (AS 2.74).

Kuśāgradhī School Yajurveda of Taittirīya branch	Sūrya School Yajurveda of (Vājīśakha) Vaikhānasa branch	Viṣṇu-Nārāyana School (Yajurveda) of Ekāyana branch Pāñcarātra
--	---	--

It further points out that the Yajurveda, which Yājñavalkya learned from his first teacher was pure before he "vomited" it out on the demand of his teacher. It became polluted and impure after it was taken back by his teacher and given to other disciples (AS 2.77–78). Therefore, the Taittirīya branch is considered by the Vaikhānasa school as impure.

However, nearly four decades ago, W. Caland pointed out that the Vaikhānasa branch does indeed belong to the Taittirīya branch of the Yajurveda. He says,

In the verses with which Mahādeva introduces his commentary, called the *Vaijayanti*, on the *Srauta sūtra* of *Hiranyakeśin*, he informs us that a certain Muni in the shape of a partridge (*tītiri*) accepted the Yajurveda from its author, *Vyāsa*. On this *Veda Baudhāyana*, in order to preserve its meaning, composed a *Sūtra* of too great length (or unwieldiness, *atigaurava*); thereupon *Bhāradvāja* did the same, and after him *Āpastamba* composed his well-known *Sūtra*. Then came *Hiranyakeśin*, who put together another *Sūtra*; after him *Vādhūla* composed his *Sūtra* which originated in Kerala-land (or Malabar), and the last was the meritorious *Sūtra* of the Teacher of the Vaikhānasas.²⁰

This points out that, although the *Sūtra* composed by the teacher of the Vaikhānasas is derived from the Taittirīya branch of the Yajurveda, it is

supposed to be the superior one compared to the other preceding ones. Caland also brings to our attention another citation. He says,

There is, however, another tradition according to which the Taittirīya-śākha of the Black Yajurveda was split up into two śākhās: the Aukheyas, or Aukhīyas, and the Khāṇḍikīyas, whilst the Caranavyūha of the Śabdakalpadruma enumerates as caranas of the Taittirīya-śākha: Āpastambins, Baudhāyanins, Satyaśādhi Hiranyakeśas and Aukheyas. In his introduction to the Śrauta-sūtra of the Viakhānasas, the commentator Veṅkateśa has the following remarkable stanza: *yena vedārthavijñeyo lokānuḡraha-kāmyayā; praṇiṭaṃ sūtram aukheyam tasmai vikhanase namaḥ*.²¹

The stanza that Caland cites does admit that the *Vaikhānasa Sūtra* is also referred to as the Aukheya-sūtra which is part of the Taittirīya branch of the Black Yajurveda. Incidentally the reference to the Aukheya also occurs in the (AS 8.13) with reference to the ritual known as *garbhacakram*.²² Since *garbhacakra*, according to the AS, is only for the Vaikhānasas, the reference to Aukheyas here must indicate the Vaikhānasas and no one else. The Vanaukasas in the text, perhaps, refers to the Pāñcarātrins.

The above discussion in AS § 2, on how the Vaikhānasa branch of the Yajurveda comes into being, reveals some inner workings of how subsequent sectarian branches of Hinduism have maintained their Vedic Orthopraxis. In its general approach to the Veda, the AS takes it as a whole and undivided, to start with. In that sense, the Yajurveda that Yājñavalkya learned at the beginning was, indeed, part of that "whole Veda". Therefore, the AS makes sure that its purity is affirmed. In other words, although Yājñavalkya "vomited" it out and went to another school (to none other than Sūrya), it was still considered pure at the time of his learning. Also, at that point it was still part of the "whole Veda." But, by his act of vomiting it out, he makes it impure and not fit for *śrauta*, *smārtaka*, etc., rituals. Both Yājñavalkya's "defection" from his earlier teacher, and also the defection of his own student back to Taittirīya school seem to reveal some rather interesting dynamics of ritual control.

Vaikhānasa's Attitude Towards Pāñcarātra

In general, the Vaikhānasa's attitude is reflected in the following *śloka*: "Among the twice-born, the Vedic path is the supreme path. All rituals must be performed according to the Vaikhānasa rules."²³ Since Vaikhānasa is the supreme Vedic path, the twice-born ones must perform rituals only by the

Vaikhānasa rules. Having said this, the fourth chapter in AS raises the questions such as who is a Vaikhānasa, and what is his importance and superiority, and among all the Brāhmanas why a Vaikhānasa is superior? (AS 4.1). Obviously these questions, as we see in the later chapters, are raised in light of the Pāñcarātra claims to Vedic Orthopraxis.

In response to the above questions, the AS affirms that the sage Vikhanas was created by Brahmā, at the request of Viṣṇu, before the beginning of creation in order to teach the meaning of the Vedas to the ignorant people (4.8–10). After Vikhanas, other sages, namely, Bṛṅgu, etc., were also created. Vikhanas and the other sages were, then, considered sons of Viṣṇu. Thus, while Brahmā is their direct teacher, Lord Viṣṇu himself is their father (4.33). This establishes a direct divine lineage of the Vaikhānasa teachers. It is precisely on the basis of the divine lineage that AS makes a distinction between the born-Vaiṣṇavas (*garbhavaiṣṇava* = lit. "womb- Vaiṣṇavas" – Vaiṣṇavas while they are in the womb itself) and the non-born-Vaiṣṇavas. The Vaikhānasas are considered the *garbhavaiṣṇavas* (4.51a). By virtue of the observance of a ritual called "*Viṣṇu Bali*"²⁴ at the time when the child is still in its mother's womb, the child is considered "*garbhavaiṣṇava*" (8.3). AS describes three kinds among the bearers of *cakra* and *śāṅkha* (symbols for a Vaiṣṇava): the first one is the one who bears them (*cakra* and *śāṅkha*) from birth (*garbhacakrāṅkana*), the second is the one who receives them through *nyāsa* rituals (*nyāsacakrāṅkana*), and the third one is a non-Vaikhānasa and receives them through *mudāna*, *mudra*, etc., rituals (*taptacakrāṅkana*). The *garbhacakrāṅkana* is for the Vaikhānasa, the *nyāsacakrāṅkana* is for those who practice *vanasthāśramas* (those who dwell in the forest – the Bhāgavatas), and the *taptacakrāṅkana* is for the rest of the non-Vaikhānasas²⁵ (8.1, 13). The Vaiṣṇavas are of four categories: *anādivaiṣṇavas* (Vikhanas et al), *ādivaiṣṇavas* (the followers of the Vaikhānasa school), *avāntaravaiṣṇavas* (Pāñcarātrins) and *bhāgavatavaiṣṇavas* (the non-Brāhman Bhāgavatas) (8.14–15). Really, there are only three categories, that is to say, the first two are of the same group. But in order to give the first sages the distinction of their being the divine descendants, they are called the "beginningless Vaiṣṇavas". Accordingly the Vaiṣṇava tradition is also divided into three categories: the Vaidika (the Vaikhānasas), Tāntrika (Pāñcarātrins) and Bhakta (the non Brāhman Bhāgavatas) (8.20–22).²⁶ The three groups have their respective Āgamas: Nigama for the Vaikhānasas, Tantra for the Pāñcarātrin and Miśrama (mixture of both) for the Bhāgavatas (8.23). The *dīkṣā* ceremony also varies accordingly for the three groups: the Vaikhānasas are initiated while they are in the womb of the mother (*Garbhatapta Dīkṣā*),²⁷ the Pāñcarātrin are initiated at the time of *upanayana* (hence, it is called *Bahistaptacakra Dīkṣā* – external), and the Bhāgavatas are

initiated through ritual bathing (Nyāsatapta Dīkṣā) (8.28–29). Thus, the Pāñcarātra ritual is external and the Vaikhānasa ritual is internal (8.35). In the context of the description of the *garbhacakra* (Viṣṇubali) ritual, the commentator of AS claims that even the Śrīvaiṣṇava teacher, Rāmānuja,²⁸ was initiated while he was in the womb of his mother.

The Vaikhānasas are called the Nigamāḥ (because Vikhanas originated from Viṣṇu directly), and the Pāñcarātrin are called the Āgamāḥ (followers of Āgama which is revealed by Viṣṇu). Both the Vaikhānasas and the Pāñcarātrin have their independent scriptures. The AS asserts that those who follow the Vaikhānasa scriptures go to the realm of Viṣṇu (Viṣṇuloka) permanently, while those who follow the Pāñcarātra scriptures have rebirth (9.5–7).

While claiming the Vedic Orthopraxis, the Vaikhānasas identify the Pāñcarātra as Tāntric. It relegates the status of the Pāñcarātra to something that can provide, as it were, temporary liberation. It, however, admits that the Pāñcarātra was taught by Lord Viṣṇu himself (*bhagavataivoktam*) (14.41). The AS lists the Pāñcarātra along with Buddhism, Śaivism, Ārhata, Pāśupata, Kāpāla and treats all of them on the same level (14.42). In the same chapter (AS 14), the AS, however, slightly modifies its tone and admits again that the followers of both Vaikhānasa and Pāñcarātra are to be considered Vaiṣṇavas (14.52).

Yāmuna's Āgamaprāmāṇya – Pāñcarātra Response

By relegating the Pāñcarātrin to a secondary status and placing them side by side with the Buddhists and the other groups, the question that the Vaikhānasas have raised is not merely one of orthopractic status of the Pāñcarātrin, but coupled with it comes also a sociological consideration, namely, whether the Pāñcarātrins were really authentic Brāhmins or not. The term "Vedic" seems to assume a sociological connotation synonymous with the term "Brāhman." Even though the Vaikhānasas are willing to admit, rather uncomfortably, that the Pāñcarātrins are also Vaiṣṇavas, there seems to be an indirect sociological judgement made against them. No wonder that Yāmuna's *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (AP) deals directly with the question of whether or not the followers of Pāñcarātra are orthopractic Brāhmins. Being an orthopractic Brāhman and coming from a respectable *gotra*, Yāmuna had

both the courage and the Vedic resources to defend Pāñcarātra as an authentic and orthopractic tradition. Commenting on the *Āgamapramāṇya*, Neel says,

It was written by a learned and cultured (*śiṣṭa*) Brahman whose Vedic credentials could not be effectively denied, but who was also open to the Pāñcarātra Tantric tradition and was ready, willing and able to do vociferous battle on its behalf against some prestigious Smārta Brāhman opponents who detail at length its non-Vedic origins and associations.

He adds,

Yāmuna writes with a sense of self-assurance and confidence, with a sophisticated philosophical skill and with a command of the Vedic sources that simply could not have been faked nor acquired easily or quickly – they must represent the fruits of generations of cultivation and training.²⁹

In Yāmuna's AP also, the term "Vedic" clearly assumes a sociological connotation synonymous with the term "Brāhman". There are two kinds of arguments that Yāmuna develops in defense of the Pāñcarātra. One is a theological argument, and the other is a sociological argument. The two types of argument, however, are not so clearly distinguished, and the two almost coalesce into each other. Yāmuna begins his theological argument with a discussion on the *pramāṇas* (*śabda*, *pratyakṣa*, etc., from # 4–12); from # 13–16 the argument switches to the sociological concerns (the Brāhmanical status of the Pāñcarātrin is discussed); from # 17–119 it again switches to theological points, such as, consecration (*dīkṣā*) and other sacraments; from # 120–134 the discussion moves to sociological questions; and finally, # 135–139 deal with the questions relating to *nirmālya* and *nivedya* offerings. Although the theological questions are important, for the purposes of this essay I shall limit myself only to the sociological questions, as they directly bear on the sociological judgement made by the Vaikhānasa school in the AS. It, however, appears that Yāmuna's theological argument is mainly to establish the sociological status of the Bhāgavata Brāhman. This becomes obvious in the way he uses the valid *pramāṇas* such as *pratyakṣa*, etc., to establish the orthopractic status of the Bhāgavata Brāhman.

In 13–16 Yāmuna identifies two classes of Bhāgavatas, namely, the *vaiśyavrātyas* and the *devalakas*. Whereas the former group of Vaiṣṇavas belong to the lowest of the twice born castes and are excluded from the sacraments, such as initiation, etc., the latter group performs worship in the

temples for their living. This latter group is of two kinds, *karmadevalakas* and *kalpadevalakas*, both of whom are not properly consecrated (Yāmuna, # 133).³⁰ The third group is called the Bhāgavata Brāhmins. Although the third group does certain duties like "cleaning of the way to the idol, the preparation for worship, offering, daily study and meditation" they must be distinguished from the *vṛātyas* who also do similar things. The duties of the Bhāgavata Brāhmins are analogous to those in the case of the Jyotiṣṭoma sacrifice.³¹ The fourth group is the *śiṣṭa* (orthodox) Brāhmins who are placed on a par with the sages Bhṛgu, Bharadvāja, Dvaipāyana, et al. They perform the rites of "temple building, erection of idols, prostration, circumambulation and particular festival ceremonies, just as they perform the *agnihotra* and other rituals enjoined directly by Scripture."³²

In the *Āgamaprāmānya* of Yāmuna, the objector treats all the practitioners of Pāñcarātra rituals on the same level, and rejects them as Bhāgavatas of the lowest class by pointing out that the external appearance can be deceitful – "for we see them (hair-tuft, sacred thread, etc.) worn illegally by blackguards, outcastes and the like."³³ But Yāmuna, on the other hand, is trying to make a distinction between the Bhagavatas of Brāhmaṇa origin and those of non-Brāhmaṇa origin. As Neevel points out, he does have great difficulty in defending the case of the *devalakas* (see Yāmuna, # 16). Yāmuna's defense of the Pāñcarātra tradition is based on the following sociological grounds : 1) the Pāñcarātra Tantras are not invalid because the followers of that tradition do not reject the Vedas as done by the Jains and others (Yāmuna, AP #117); 2) Pāñcarātra Tantras are accepted by those who are qualified for the Vedic rites (Yāmuna, AP #118); 3) if the Pāñcarātra Tantras are invalid because they are accepted by the Bhāgavatas, "then the scriptural statements of the Ekāyana śākha and the Vājasaneyya śākha and the means of knowledge – Perception, Inference, etc., would also be invalid since the Bhāgavatas accept those too!; 4) the Brāhminhood of the Bhāgavatas is supported on the basis of their recollection of their *gotras*. In the *Āgamaprāmānya*, Yāmuna's main preoccupation seems to be to establish the orthopractic status of those Brāhmaṇas who follow the Pāñcarātra rites. In this scheme of the defense of the Pāñcarātra tradition, establishing the Brāhminhood of the followers of the Pāñcarātra rites is closely linked with the defense of the Pāñcarātra tradition. That is why he takes great pains in trying to convince his opponents about the orthopractic status of the followers of the Pāñcarātra. In trying to convince his opponents, he draws his support from the valid means of knowledge, such as *pratyakṣa*, etc. Basing on *pratyakṣa*, he argues,

Thus there can be Perception of brāhminhood; for when we keep our eyes open we note, immediately upon observing the particular differentiate

of the genus brāhminhood, that the brāhminhood is quite clearly noticeable in those who belong to the families of the different *gotras* – Vaśiṣṭha, Kāśyapīya, Śaṭhamarṣaṇa, etc., – who are pure in their conduct, and who display the sacred thread, upper cloth, hair-tuft and muñja grass girdle.³⁴

Nevertheless, his defense of the Bhāgavatas of Brāhmana origin seems to be based largely on the *gotra* or lineage in which they are born. Thus, he constantly refers to the *gotras* such as Nārada, Śaṅḍilya, Bhṛgu, Bharadvāja, et al to authenticate the background of the Bhāgavatas of Brāhmana origin.

Seen from the broader sociological context in which the Vaikhānasas were trying to look down upon the Brāhmanas who were following the Pāñcarātra rites along with the Vedic rites, Yāmuna's preoccupation with the question of the orthopractic status of the Bhāgavata Brāhmanas makes sense. Establishing the Orthopraxis of the Bhāgavata Brāhmanas becomes central to the upholding of the Pāñcarātrā tradition.

This raises an important question whether the acceptance of a ritual tradition is dependent on the social status of the people who participate in it. Both the *Ānanda Samhitā* and the *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (AP) seem to establish the idea that a ritual tradition's validity is dependent upon the social status of the participants in that tradition. While the AS attempts to establish its lineage all the way back to the Vedic sages, the AP tries to show that the Brāhmana Bhāgavatas belong to the *gotras* which are traceable to the Vedic lineage. Both the groups claim Vedic origin in their own way. The Vaikhānasas try to show that their tradition is drawn from the *Śukla Yajurveda*, and the Pāñcarātrins claim Vedic origin through a lost branch of the Veda called the Ekāyana śākha. But at the sociological level the question is – who is a properly consecrated Brāhmana? And much of the battle is fought on the sociological field. For instance, the story of the Vaiṣṇava boy mentioned in the AS (5) illustrates the struggle between the Vaikhānasas and the Pāñcarātrins for ritual control in the temples during the medieval times in the Coḷa kingdom in South India.³⁵ Rāmānuja's exile from the Cola kingdom during the eleventh century C.E. is also another example of how the Vaiṣṇavaites and the Śaivaiteites fought for the control of the temples by influencing the kings. The fact that in both the AS and the AP social status has been given prominence in validating the scriptures shows that while theologically speaking one does argue for the revealed (*a priori*) status of a scripture, from a sociological standpoint, the validity of scriptures is really *a posteriori*, i.e. depends on one's social status. In other words, scriptures

generally arise within specific sociological and cultural milieus notwithstanding their higher theological claims. Unpacking their respective sociological backgrounds often enables us to reconstruct their historical meanings and interpretations. It enables us to understand how various traditions have interacted with each other, how they have assimilated each other, and how they have accommodated each other's points of view.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPY

Ānanda Saṃhitā, With a commentary in Sanskrit and summary in Telugu by Rompicarla Bhaṭṭar Parthasārathi Kṛṣṇamācārya, Edited by D Śeṣācārya, Īgavāripālem, Andhrapradesh : Śrīvaikhānasa Publishers, 1924.

Gonda, J, *Medieval Religious Literature in Sanskrit*, Weisbaden : Harrasowitz, 1977.

Jayākhya Saṃhitā, Ed. by E Krishnamacharya, Baroda : Oriental Institute, 1967.

Neevel, Walter G, Jr. *Yāmuna's Vedānta and Pāñcarātra : integrating the classical and the popular*, Montana : Scholars Press, 1977.

Padmanabhan, S. *Pādma Saṃhitā*, Pt. 2, Madras : Pāñcarātra Pariśodana Pariśad, 1982.

Shrader, O F, *Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and the Ahibudhnya Saṃhitā*, 2nd edition, Madras : Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1973.

Smith, H D, *The Smith Āgama Sanskrit Books and Manuscripts Relating to Pāñcarātra Studies : A Descriptive Catalogue*, Vols I and II, New York, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 1978.

Vaikhānasasmārtasūtram, Translated by W Caland, Calcutta : Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1929.

van Buitenen, J A B, *Yāmuna's Āgamaprāmānya*, Madras : Rāmānuja Research Society, 1971.

Varadācāri, V, *Āgamas and South Indian Vaiṣṇavism*, Madras : Prof M Rangacharya, Memorial Trust, 1982.

ENDNOTES

1. Pāñcarātra and Vaikhānasa are two ritual traditions that are followed by the Vaiṣṇavas both in the south and in the north of India. Both claim their origins from the Vedas. Most of the ritual texts belonging to these two ritual traditions seem to have been composed in the south. A great number of these texts belong to a period anywhere between eighth and fifteenth centuries of C.E.
2. The Mīmāṃsakas were the first interpreters of the Vedas and laid down the rules of interpretation. They did not think it was necessary to posit the idea of an agent of creation and an author of the Vedas mainly because for them the vedic orthodoxy did not depend on a superhuman agent but rather on the notion of *śabda* being self authenticating.
3. The ritual tradition called the Āgama is quite an ancient one, and provided an alternative ritual tradition to that of the Vedic tradition. According to the available historical and archeological sources, the tradition existed as far back as the Gupta period in India (c.400 C.E.), perhaps, even earlier. Much of the later Hinduism derived its ritual tradition from the Āgamas. Each sectarian tradition has its ritual tradition based on their Āgamas. Thus the Śaivaites have Śaiva Āgamas; the Vaiṣṇavaites have Vaiṣṇava Āgamas (Pāñcarātra and Vaikhānasa; the word Saṃhitā is also used for the Āgamas); the Śāktaites have Śākta Āgamas (also known as Tantras).
4. idam mahopaniṣadaṃ caturvedasamanvitam; sām̐khyayogakṛtaṃ tena pāñcarātrānuśabditāṃ nārāyaṇamukhodhṛtaṃ nārado'srāvayat-punaḥ; (Mbh.13.348.62–63).
5. vedamekāyanam nāma vedānāṃ śirasi sthitam (SS 1.); eṣa ekāyano vedah prakhyātaḥ sarvato bhuvī (IS 1.43).
6. See Jayākhyā Saṃhitā, ed. by E Krishnamacharya, (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1967). Introduction, p 6. Bhattacharya refers to the work of Nāgeśa, Kāṇvaśākhāmahimāsaṃgraha, a MS copy found in the Madras Government Oriental Library Triennial Catalogue, III.1.B. p 3299.
7. ṛgvedaṃ bhagavo'dhyemi yajurvedaṃ sāmavedamatharvaṇaṃ caturthamitihasapūrāṇaṃ pañcamaṃ vedānāṃ vedam pitryam rāśiṃ daivaṃ nidhiṃ vākovākhyamekāyanam (Chāndogya Upaniṣad. 7.1.2; cf 7.1.4; 7.2.1; 7.5.2; 7.7.1.).

8. pāñcarātraśrutau api yadvatsopānena prasādāmāruhet plavena vā nadīm taret tadvacchāstreṇa hi bhagavān śāstā'vagantavyaḥ. Op. cit., JS Edited by Krishnamacharya (1967), p. 7. Spandapradīpikā, (Vijayanagaram Sanskrit Series, p 2; cf. pp 40, 29, 35, 8, 22).
9. Loc. cit.
10. Krishnamacharya. Op.cit., p 13.
11. Loc. cit.
12. Ibid., pp 13–14.
13. Ibid., p 15.
14. Ibid, p 11.
15. Loc. cit.
16. Ibid, p 12.
17. śrautas-mārtikam karma nikhilam yena sūtritam, tasmai samasta vedārthavide vikhanase namaḥ. (AS 1:1)
18. It is interesting to note that in one of the Kāśmīr texts (Nīlamatā 7th Century CE) the Tittiri is identified as a name of Nāga. Nāgas in the above text are not necessarily snakes, but rather they are perceived as tutelary deities who dwell in the ponds and rivers.
19. vedānām vyasanādyam tu prāgrūpam militam mahat; tām tu vaikhānasīm śākhām yajurveda tarorviduḥ. (AS. 2.55)
20. *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtram*, translated by W Caland, (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1929), Introduction, p ix.
21. Loc. cit.
22. aukheyānām garbhacakram nyāsacakram vanaukasām; vaikhānasān vinanyeṣām taptacakram prakīrtitam.
23. vaidikaḥ paramo mārgo dvijātīnām viśeṣataḥ; vaikhānasena vidhinā sarvaḥ karma samācaret. AS. 3.28.
24. In this ritual, the child in the mother's womb is ritually offered to Viṣṇu as a sacrificial offering. The child, henceforth, belongs to Viṣṇu. By virtue of being a garbhavaiṣṇava, he is considered superior, even if he were ayogyā (not knowledgeable in the Vedas) (8.12). For a detailed description of the ritual see chapter 10 of AS.

25. The Bhāgavatas and Pāñcarātrins are referred to by this category.
26. The AS makes a distinction between the Pāñcarātrins and the Bhāgavatas.
27. The Vaikhānasas have another alternate method called "*antastapta*" (internal as opposed to the external *cakras* which is a method for the Pāñcarātrins (8.31).
28. Cf. Footnote on AS 10.9. Rāmānuja, the Śrīvaiṣṇava teacher, is depicted in the *Divyasūricaritam* (a biography of the early Śrīvaiṣṇava teachers) as having perpetuated the Pāñcarātra Āgamas in the South Indian Vaiṣṇava temples during his life time (10th–11th century CE). Although he followed the Pāñcarātra tradition, he is accorded a higher brāhmanical status than the other Pāñcarātra Vaiṣṇavas. In fact Yāmuna's defense of the Pāñcarātra tradition is mainly based on the fact that Nāthamuni, Yāmuna and Rāmānuja came from a higher Brāhmaṇa group and yet followed the Pāñcarātra tradition.
29. Walter V Neevel, Jr. Yāmuna's Vedānta and Pāñcarātra: integrating the classical and the popular, (Montana : Scholars Press, 1977), p 29.
30. Cf. van Buitenen's translation, p 113.
31. Yāmuna. *Āgamaprāmānya*, # 129 (translation by van Buitenen), p 109.
32. Ibid. # 119 (van Buitenen, p 100).
33. Ibid. # 14 (van Buitenen, p 10).
34. Yāmuna. AP. # 125 (van Buitenen, p 104).
35. For a discussion on ritual control see P Kumar, "Religious Institutions: Ritual and Power Dynamics in India" in *Journal for the Study of Religion*, Vol 6, No 2, September 1993, pp 69–89.

SUMMARY OF THE SYMPOSIUM ON : HINDUISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

M Naidu

The Department of Hindu Studies and Indian Philosophy had the privilege of hosting a symposium on "Hinduism and Human Rights" on 11 July 1995 in the Senate Chamber of the University of Durban-Westville which came as a grand finale to the academic sessions of the World Hindu Conference. Presided over by the Head of the Department, Professor T S Rukmani, the panel itself comprised several eminent scholars – Prof Venkatachalam (Vice-Chancellor of the Sanskrit University, Banaras, India), Prof Sheshagiri Rao (University of Virginia – USA), Dr Srinivas Tilak (University of Concordia – Canada) and Dr Balambal (University of Madras – India). The Keynote address was delivered by Swami Agnivesh who being a staunch advocate of Human Rights himself, lent an added aura to the academic proceedings.

The academic programme itself, pivoting on the issue of Human Rights was of focal interest, especially within the new political climate of South Africa with the demise of the structures of apartheid and the tabling of an interim constitution based on the United Nations declaration of Human Rights. The urgency for substantial change in order to redress the disparities in the social realities between the different races and between the different genders, precipitated the Department to revisit these issues in an academically co-ordinated programme.

The symposium, open to academics and the lay public alike drew an appreciative audience, again underpinning, not merely the relevancy of issues of fundamental rights but also the application of Hindu religious structures and authority on such issues.

Swami Agnivesh in his opening address spoke of a radically transformed perspective, beckoning a challenge to the hitherto established social, cultural, political and religious traditions. Drawing from his experiences as a human rights activist amongst the rural populace of India and having

participated in the United Nations conferences on Human Rights issues Swami Agnivesh's call was for a sense of critical consciousness to be articulated by all people of the world in their demand for basic human rights. He addressed himself to many problems chief amongst them being the empowerment of women, conscientisation on the part of both genders of society to basic human rights, child abuse and bonded labour. There was a lively debate generated by these topics and Swami Agnivesh went on to answer the numerous questions from an audience that was clearly elated to hear of a radical stance being spelt out by a saffron clad individual.

Speaking of what Denise Ackerman refers to as the "dilemma of religious theories not rhyming with religious practices" Swami Agnivesh on the point of abortion, called for a need to recognise the fundamental dignity and rights of the pregnant woman over even the fundamental rights of the unborn foetus. Although not sanctioning indiscriminate abortion on demand the Swamiji speaking as a Hindu, was emphatic about the rights of the woman concerned. The Swamiji's call was for a consonance of religious theory as well as praxis.

Prof Rao continued the debate by deliberating on the Indian constitution and drawing attention to the religious freedom enshrined in the secular state of India. The difficulty that one faces between theory and praxis in this context figured vigorously in the discussion that followed.

Dr Srinivas Tilak brought in an altogether new dimension to the debate by stressing on the transformation of human personality through *prāyaścitta* or atonement for wrongs committed, enshrined in Hindu practice. This, as opposed to punishment, was a human right which should be looked into for its benevolent possibilities. Dr Tilak also read out the 'Hindu Constitution of Human Rights' in Sanskrit along with its English translation which was prepared by Professor G C Pandey of Allahabad India and Prof A Sharma of Montreal Canada. A number of interesting points came up for discussion and the audience, in general, was surprised to note the great concern for human dignity and freedom that Sanskrit sources displayed.

Dr Balambal articulated in simple terms the social disparities between the genders as observed in India. She brought to mind Ms Ackerman's words, who speaking at the World Conference on Religion and Peace footnoted the title of a talk as "Putting Women on the Agenda". Ackerman had this to say regarding gender disparity,

"We have no social history of gender equality to draw on. Whether our roots are European, African, Middle Eastern or Asian, the social construct all our societies have in common is patriarchy. Our religious traditions are intertwined with our historical and social contexts. The one draws from the other."

The final address by Prof Venkatachalam stressed among other issues, the notion of individual responsibility forming an indispensable adjunct to individual rights. This relational identity between responsibility and right also drew an empathetic response from the audience. A lively discussion on the insistence of individual responsibility by Hindu law makers as opposed to their demand for the rights of an individual ensued.

The symposium itself was highly successful in terms of providing the medium for discussing contemporary issues of fundamental rights. The kind of questions posed by the audience underpinned the fact that the issues had been both lucidly and provocatively dealt with. Functioning on several levels, the programme served to allow the academics to place theoretical constructs to the social issues, while functioning at the lay level of answering the fundamental question, 'What does Hinduism have to say about the different aspects of basic human rights?'

Book Review by J G Desai

Rekha Jhanji, *Aesthetic Communication*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers PVT. Ltd., 1985, pp 141

This book on Aesthetic Communication originated out of the author's own doctoral dissertation which was awarded by the University of Paris X Nanterre in 1975.

In the Preface Rekha Jhanji states that the need to bring out a book dealing with aesthetics theory from the twin perspectives of Western and Indian cultural values arose out of her following observation. Firstly, it is unfortunate that very little work on a comparative basis has been attempted. Secondly, where the attempt has been made it has been more often than not flawed by a Western bias.

It is thus gratifying that her book represents a timely effort to break the East-West dichotomy. Rekha Jhanji's essential thesis is that despite some important differences between modern European and traditional Indian art theories, the West and India still share some common ground which they could exploit for mutual benefit. In fact art lovers in general everywhere and not merely the professional art critic will find much in this book to interest them.

The book with its six chapters and an illuminating Introduction traces the evolution of aesthetics theory in Indian history from ancient times to the onset of the Mughal period. Her comments on art forms that existed from R̥g-Vedic times through to the age of the Purāṇas and epics show how seriously India valued the cultural role of aesthetics communication.

As part of her approach Rekha Jhanji has omitted to trace the historical development of art in the West. Perhaps this is a shortcoming of the book. However, she has amply made up for this through opting for a method of presentation whereby she adopts the novel approach of reviewing the problem of aesthetics theory in Indian art from the vantage point of the critical standards of judgment that obtain in the field of aesthetics in the modern West. Such an approach has the merit that those acquainted only

with Western art forms and art theory will be afforded an opportunity to compare and contrast the insights of these two traditions.

It is not possible in a review such as this to comment fully upon the many nuances of art theory which the author discusses with insight and facility of style. Among Western art critics discussed are Hegel, Kant, Freud, Sartre, E Delacroix, P Kaufmann, Russell, M Weitz, S Langen and M Dufrenne. Rekha then launches into an examination of the views of the traditional Indian art theoreticians, luminaries among whom are Mārkaṇḍeya, Ānanda-varhdhana, Abhinavagupta, Bharata, Padmapāni, Vātsyāyana, Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa and several others. Comments by modern Indians such as Coomaraswamy, Mukherji S, Raja K, Ray N, Shah P, who are familiar with both Eastern and Western traditions, enhance the value of the book.

Among the themes discussed in the book are the nature of the art object, the artist's intention, aesthetic symbols and their relation to reality and the value of works of art to the beholder.

The author maintains that the current Western approach to art expression has tended to become a "formalist tradition" which espouses the sentiment of art for art's sake. This contrasts radically with the traditional Indian approach which the author calls the "divine weltanschauung". The religious motive also dominated the European landscape during the middle ages. The author rightly points out the essential differences in the metaphysical views of the two traditions, and the effect that they have produced on art creativity.

An interesting feature of the book is the attempt to examine the notion of a unique and free individual. The distinct perceptions of Europe and India in this regard make for interesting reading. Valuable also is the discussion of the impact on India of the currently regnant Western forms of art theory and communication, one of whose important symbols reflects science and the technological functionalism that goes with it.

Because Indian art has remained largely traditional, modern Western influences are having an important bearing on the *RASA* theory of art, and the concept of the *GUNAS*. For example in Indian art forms, because of the role of philosophy and religion, aesthetic experience was always analysed in terms of detachment and disinterestedness. The old classification of all objects as well as the human personality in terms of the *Gunas* of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* is being looked at with fresh eyes under the impact of the West.

However, the views of those who objected to the inclusion of the *ŚĀNTA-RASA*, the sentiment of tranquility, in the *RASA* theory, are not adequately treated. Also the author's discussion of the *GUṆA* concept leads her to make far too many references to the *BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ*.

On the whole, however, the book is to be warmly recommended to anyone who evinces even a remote interest in all things artistic.

Book Review by Swami Saradananda

T S Rukmani, Shankaracharya, New Delhi Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1994 pp 88 (Price Rs 22)

Śaṅkarācārya (820 A D) was one of those spiritual luminaries whose multi-faceted life has left a permanent impact on the Indian psyche. As a child prodigy, a mystic, philosopher, writer, missionary and motivator for organized religion (*mutts*) Śaṅkara stands as one of the greatest figures in the history of world religion. However, his pre-eminent position is due to the fact that he is the unrivalled propounder of the *Advaita Vedānta*, the non-dualist interpretation of the Vedic teachings. The rapidity of his activities and the prolific nature of his literary works makes him a difficult person to comprehend. Rukmani, however, rises to the occasion. As a Sanskrit scholar devoted to the study of *Advaita Vedānta* for a number of years, Rukmani displays the competence to deal with many aspects of *Advaita* in this compact book.

The first part of the book contains hagiographical details. Academic scholars generally shy away from this area, as authentic historical information is sparse or shrouded in controversies. Rukmani draws some elements from history, but her leanings are towards the *Śaṅkaravijayas* or the traditional accounts of Śaṅkara's life enunciated by various authors. For the scholar, the *Śaṅkaravijayas* have their defects in respect of chronology and the mythological elements embedded in them. However, they have their value. Apart from their literary beauty and depth of thought, they also contain some specific cultural subtleties required for an understanding of the life of Śaṅkara.

Despite these positive points, the *Śaṅkaravijayas* with their stress on mythological narratives, are always a problem to any scholar. The trouble comes when mythological accounts are taken as being meticulously factual. By following a middle path in her approach to these accounts, Rukmani neither avoids or does she become dogmatic over any of its controversial theories. This is a recognition of the truism that no scholar writing on Śaṅkara can avoid references to the many extant *Śaṅkaravijayas*. In the hagiological part, Rukmani puts forth skilful arguments from literary sources regarding the historical date of Śaṅkara. She uses Dharmakīrti (the pre Śaṅkara Buddhist scholar quoted by Śaṅkara in his *Upadeśasāhasrī*) and

Vācaspati Miśra (who must have lived after Śaṅkara to have written the *Bhāmati*, his famous commentary on Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya*) to lock Śaṅkara within a historical period.

Rukmani provides reasonable arguments for the four *mutt* theory vis-a-vis the important Kanchi *Mutt*. The Kanchi *Mutt* is not generally recognized by the Śaṅkara Order of *Sannyāsins* (*Dasanāmī Order*), yet the importance of this *Mutt* cannot be neglected. Rukmani suggests 'whether the *mutts* where four or more than four, so long as they do not become issues on which the respective votaries start abusing and attacking the adherents of other theories, it should not really matter. In fact by the association of Śaṅkara's name to a *mutt*, if it is able to fulfil the needs of a community in ways that Śaṅkara had visualized, why should it be a bone of contention at all?' (p 14). Rukmani's leanings are towards accepting the Kanchi *Mutt*. She introduces T M P Mahadevan's strong findings in favour of this.

The second part of Rukmani's work which deals with the *Advaita* as expounded by Śaṅkara, is an astute presentation of the origins and development of this philosophy from the Vedic times down to Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara. The clear but dense arrangement of relevant information in this section would require careful study. For Śaṅkara, Consciousness (*Brahman*) is a singular with two different natures – 'intrinsic' and 'accidental' to use Rukmani's terms. Many critics are of the notion that Śaṅkara is totally other-worldly and that he emphasizes the 'intrinsic' (*nirguṇa brahman*) to the exclusion of the 'accidental' (*saḡuṇa brahman*) through the process of intuition (*pratyakṣānubhūti*). Rukmani is careful to point out that this is a confusion in understanding Śaṅkara. *Brahman* is the Supreme Reality. The world rests on *Brahman* as an appearance (*māyā*) with name and form (*nāma-rūpa*). The world is neither totally real nor completely false. Ignorance (*avidyā*), through not perceiving both the 'intrinsic' and the 'accidental' for what they stand for, accounts for the ontological confusion. There is no unbridgeable chasm between the world and *Brahman*. In Śaṅkara's view each must be seen in perspective for a fuller understanding of *Advaita*. Rukmani ably brings these essential features out with well structured arguments.

The book, though small, is a useful addition to the existing works on Śaṅkara. The hagiographical part may be read with deep interest by the layman and perhaps even the scholar, the second part is meant for the scholar alone. In this respect the book has an understandable dichotomy which is a reflection of the life of Śaṅkara on the one hand and his literary works on the other. The book is a synthesis of these elements.

NIDĀN

Journal of the Department of Hindu Studies & Indian Philosophy

CRITERIA FOR SUBMISSION AND ACCEPTANCE OF PAPERS

1. Papers should be pertinent to any aspect of Hinduism or Indian Philosophy, and should not exceed 6000 words.
2. Papers will be subject to evaluation by referees drawn from a source of local and international scholars in the above specialized areas.
3. Each paper must be prefaced by an abstract of approximately 100 words, setting forth the gist of the paper.
4. Gender discrimination should be avoided in the paper, unless it is necessary for the sense intended.
5. Notes should be rendered at the end of the paper and not as footnotes.
6. The author's full name, address, title, qualifications and present position, must be supplied on a separate page.
7. Each paper must be accompanied by a signed declaration to the effect that the paper is the original composition of the author. Such a declaration should be rendered on a separate page.
8. Publication of papers submitted cannot be guaranteed. Further, an article which is accepted for publication, may be held over for publication in a subsequent issue of the Journal.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Southern Africa R15,00 or equivalent in All other countries US \$ 20.