

# YOGAKSHEMAM *Newsletter*

Bulletin of Yogakshemam (association law 1901)

May 2001

Edition : English website

N° 05

## **Sthula Sharira- Sukshma Sharira**

All living beings have a double body, one that is visible, the dense (solid) body (*sthula sharira*), and another one called subtle body (*sukshma sharira*). The first one is dead-still, non thinking and perishable. The second one, apparently insignificant, subsists until liberation. As a wagon is driven by a skillful coachman, the subtle body feels affection for the solid body and conducts it from within. The subtle body stirs up desires from nothing and annihilates those desires that had already taken shape. He appears like a child who has fun at modeling clay figurines to destroy them the next minute.

The subtle body is enslaved by mental constructions and becomes liberated rejecting them. One calls "spirit" the entity that considers: " here is my body, here are my limbs,..." The spirit is named "*jiva*" because it is living, "*buddhi*" because it is thinking, "*ahamkara*" because it takes in everything as his. These are various names for just one same thing. When the spirit captures the light of truth, it becomes the enlightened intellect; when it rejects any sort of identification with the solid body, it achieves the supreme liberation.

In meditation, the subtle body, moved by its own desires, can wander as much in the abode of the gods with an enlightened intellect as in the abode of men entangled in the darkness of illusion.

When the subtle body is in the abode of gods, it can stay there for long like a honey-bee immersed in the calyx of a lotus flower. When it wanders in the world of men driven by its imagination, then the beauty of its body will wither away and like a ripe fruit it will fall to the ground as its imagination will become exhausted.

Thus don't fall in the thick sleep of ignorance

T.K. Sribhashyam

## **Letter from the editor committee**

For technical reasons, Yogakshemam Newsletter No. 4 has reached you with great delay. We appreciate your patience. Yogakshemam Newsletter is a means of communicating the traditional Indian values to you as well as to your students and to all those who appreciate the Indian culture and philosophy. Just like with the Ashvattha tree, every subscriber is a branch which not only nourishes the trunk, but also the other branches. Every reader is like a leaf. And the more leaves there are, the more branches there will be. Each one of you should nourish the trunk and protect the roots. We sincerely thank you for your support.

## SUMMARY:

- **Editorial: Sthula Sharira – Sukshma Sharira** – Sri T.K. Sribhashyam
- **Andal’s Thiruppâvai** – Sri T.K. Sribhashyam
- **The incarnation of Ânjaneya** – Sri Badarinath
- **Svatha or the characteristics of health** - Sri Gopalakrishna Rao
- **Technical sheet – Gastroduodenal Ulcer** – Doc. Nancy Carpentier and Sri T.K. Sribhashyam
- **Devotion and the Christian religion** – Isabelle Ott
- **Ashvatha, the banyan tree** – Sri T.K. Sribhashyam
- **Joy and sadness** – Indian tale
- **Bhagavad Githa and Yoga** – Sri T.K. Sribhashyam
- **Ghruta in the rituals** – Smt. T. Alamelu
- **Ayurvedic Recipe – Ghrutam or ghee**
- **Textboxes:** excerpts from Râmâyana

“How would you conduct yourself when you come across gods of other religions?”  
“You should rather ask: How would the gods of other religions behave if they would see you?”

Sri T Krishnamacharya

### Andal’s Thiruppâvai

Excerpts from an exclusive commentary by Sri T.Krishnamacharya

*Oh! Krishna, you who enjoy the bliss of sleep on the hillocky breast of Nîla; Oh! Goda, you who offered courageously floral garlands to Krishna, after adoring your own tresses; Oh! Goda, you who found forcefully and enjoyed His love; Oh! Goda, you who awakened the lion in Krishna, enticed and imparted to dependence.*

*Oh! Goda, I offer my salutations again and again.*

*Poem 1. It is a full moon day of the Margali month, auspicious one indeed. We shall have a bath, won't you, girls of jubilant Ayarpadi, where you live cheerfully abounding in riches, adorned with dazzling jewels?*

*Nârâyana, son of Nandagopâla who is alert to protect us, wielding a sharp spike;*

*Lion cub of Yashâdha, with charming eyes, the infant having dark colour, sunny face, handsome eyes, pleasant as moon;*

*Sure He shall grant us our desire. Do indulge and engage yourself in the ritual. You will be respected by the people of this world.*

*Oh! Girls, listen and consider.*

Andâlu composed Thiruppâvai in Tamil, the language of Tamil Nâdu, replete with a poetic beauty which itself has the capacity to bring forth the devotion. Thiruppâvai is an appeal to women to be immersed in devotion. Andâlu has chosen the most sacred month of the year. Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Githa tells Arjuna that among the months of the year, he lives in Margali or Mârga Shîrsha. This month falls in December and January. Since the Vedic times, taking a 'river bath' during this month is considered a sacred duty, an act which make the devotees 'immersed in the Lord'.

Andâlu while calling the girls to have a Mârgali bath is not just asking them to dip themselves in the river, but dip themselves in the devotion of God. She advises them to be adorned with jewels because to be one with God is a feast and the girls should be bedecked as a bride. Andâlu's love for Krishna had no limits. She wanted all women to share her love to Lord Krishna and be united in Him as they would be with their husband. It was her ultimate goal. It is for this self-less goal that her poetic appeal earned the status of Veda. It is also for this reason that Thiruppâvai is sung in all Vaishnava temples.

She calls Krishna as Nandagôpala, the shepherd-boy carrying a spike and always alert to protect the sheep and cows from the attacks. She assures the girls to be fearless as Krishna would protect them as a shepherd does with his spike.

The aim of bhakti is divine association. The month of Margali is the opportune time. Andal in the very first hymn mentions the goal to be achieved and the means to be applied. The goal is God while the means are the 'margali bath' or the complete spiritual immersion. God Nârâyana (Vishnu) is often referred to as pond and souls as 'Lotus dwelling in a pond'. Margali bath is a means to become like Lotus.

The material wealth we own and enjoy in this world are transient. They delude us and are capable of ruining us completely. But the wealth coming from devotion to God is stable and far superior.

Andâl compares the jewels of girls to knowledge (jnâna), devotion (bhakti) and detachment (vairâgya). She provides these fundamental attributes of soul (âtma) to girls 'adorned with dazzling jewels'. Incidentally, in Indian tradition girls and women should be adorned with jewels not only all the time, but also when they go to temples or when they do prayers. Their jewels should contain precious metal, precious stones and a cotton thread (symbolizing knowledge, devotion and detachment).

Ego and passion are hindrances to achieve God. To cross over them, she says 'indulge and engage in the ritual'.

Nârâyana is the name of Vishnu and of Krishna. He is the one who protects Nara, the mankind. The word Nârâyana itself is so powerful that it is considered as a mantra; a very important and inseparable one for the devotees of Vishnu. Om namo nârâyanâya is called the ashtâkshari mantra, since it has eight eternal sound-letters (akshara). Om is the individual soul, na (negation) is the involvement in the means, ma is the ego, nârâyana is the Supreme God, and âya final result. Incidentally, this is the only mantra which women could recite with om. Veda forbids women to om, in view of the creative power they have.

Finally, Andâl reminds women folk that they would be respected by the people of the world if they indulge in this spiritual bath. In India, we see men engaged in all religious activities giving a feeling that only men have a right to rituals. The spiritual power in women is like live charcoal covered with ashes. It is not visible to the outside world yet ever alert. So people think that women have neither the spiritual power nor do they have a right to achieve God. Just as the live charcoal should be fed lest it fades and disappears once for all, so too women should feed their devotion. By this very first hymn, Andâlu recalls all women to engage in this ritual so that their spiritual or divine power is kept alive and that the outside world which values only the external appearance respect them

**The incarnation of Anjanéya (the monkey-god)**  
*Priest Badarinath, Ramanjaneya temple, Bangalore*

Salutations to Lord Râma. Salutations to Anjanéya.

At the foot of the Meru mountain, lived the king of monkeys Kesara and his wife the queen Anjana. In the forest lived an elephant: Shankhabala. Shankhabala pestered travellers who crossed the forest as well as the ascetics living in the forest. On the occasion of the visit of the great wise-man Bharadvaja, this elephant charged the wise-man from behind. Seeing this, the monkey Kesara got down from the tree and stood between the wise-man and the elephant. There was a big battle and the elephant was killed by Kesara. Very grateful, the wise-man Bharadvaja, asked Kesara to make a wish. Very modest, Kesara said he wished to have a son who would become one of the greatest worshippers of Vishnu. Very happy with that wish, Bharadvaja told Kesara that he would get a son out of the strength of Vayu (the wind-god).

Kesara and Anjana often proceeded to a pilgrimage to Sheshachala (on one of the seven Thirupathi mountains in the south of India) to meditate on Vishnu (Thirumaladhisha, the lord of Thirumala) and Varaha (Vishnu embodied as a wild-boar). On the occasion of one of these pilgrimages, the day of full moon of the month of Chitra (April), Anjana gave birth to a son.

As he was born from Anjana, Kesara named him Anjaneya (= born from Anjana). As he had a long chin, his mother named him Hanumantha. As Bharadvaja had said that the child would be the embodiment of Vayu, his parents named him Maruthi (originated from Maruth, another name of the wind-god).

Anjaneya is a master of linguistics, the archetypal sanctimonious man of Rama, having a great intelligence, power, compassion and the sense of diplomacy. He is a great philosopher and an acute psychologist.

He is one of the important characters of the Ramayana epic. He is also present in the Mahabharata epic, he protects Arjuna's cart by being on his battle-flag. He shall be eternal as long as the wind-god shall exist.

It is said that a place without Anjaneya is just a place of misfortune. In India, even the most remote village has a temple dedicated to Anjaneya. In the big cities it is not unusual to find several temples dedicated to Anjaneya. Praying Anjaneya allows to avoid all sorts of obstacles. The favorite day of Anjaneya is Saturday. Indians offer prayers and other presents on that day in particular.

*May Anjaneya protect the Yogakshemam Newsletter readers.*

*"The one who commits evil always ends up harvesting the bitter fruits of his acts, as surely as the tree blossom with flowers at the return of the season"*

*Râmâyana XXIX.3*

## **Svastha or the characteristics of health**

Dr. Gopalakrishna Rao, Bangalore (Practitioner of ayurvedic medicine)

If in general health is defined as absence of characteristics of illness, Ayurveda offers a much broader definition. The purpose of our life does not stop here, mankind has a much more important aim: to find his soul and to unite it with the Creator or God. Health as it is conceived by Ayurveda is only a means. Vâgbhatta, one of the great Ayurveda Masters, says: “the characteristics of health (svastha) include the equilibrium of : the Dôsha (fundamental cellular tissues), the Mala (the body waste), as well as the satisfaction of the senses, of the mind and of the soul”

Equilibrium of the Dôsha (sama dosha): The functions of Vatha, Pitha and Kapha should be in equilibrium. These three Dôsha are like a fortress around our existence, constantly exposed to aggression. All influence on these Dôsha immediately affects our body, our sensory activities and our mind. Sushrutha, the Master of Vâgbhatta, says that “illness is simply the imbalance of the Dôsha”.

Equilibrium of the metabolism (sama agni): digestion, absorption and assimilation of digested food should be equitable. This equitable measure is the function of the corporal fire. A deficiency or an excess of these functions (digestion, absorption and assimilation) creates illness. Sushrutha says: “the root cause of all illness is Manda Agni”.

Equilibrium in the activity of Dhatu and Mala (sama dhâtu mala kriya): the physiological proportion of the 7 Dhatu (Rasa, Raktha, Mâmsa, Medas, Asthi, Maija and Shukra or Retas) must constantly be maintained in order to support the health of the body. In the same way the activities of the three Mala (feces, urine and sweat) have to be perfectly adapted to the metabolism of the body.

The satisfaction of the senses, of the mind and of the soul (Prasanna âtma indriya manâ): This is really the specificity of Indian medicine. That is to say that there is no health without satisfaction or contentment of the senses and the mind and without contentment in relations to oneself. It is easier to reduce the pain level when feeling satisfied by the senses, the mind and the soul. On the other hand, pain caused by the senses, the mind or the soul does not support the sensation of physical well-being.

Therefore it is necessary to give as much importance to acquiring and maintaining contentment as one gives to fight bodily illness.

### **Technical Sheet : Pathology and specific pedagogical indications for Yoga**

- by Doc. Carpentier Nancy, medical doctor, in collaboration with her teacher Sri T.K.Sribhashyam

- Free hand translation

Sheet No. 2: Gastro duodenal ulcer

Definition:

An ulcer is by definition a loss in substance of the mucous coating, having little tendency for cicatrisation. An erosion remains superficial and attains only the superficial mucous coating, whereas the ulcer attacks the different layers of the wall of the organ. The term "gastro duodenal ulcer" designates a group of ulcerous diseases of the upper part of the digestive tube, affecting mainly the stomach and the part nearer to the duodenum (designates the first part of the duodenum). About 10% of the European population is affected by this disease.

Physiopathology:

General:

Gastro duodenal ulcer occurs when the aggressive properties of the acid secretion outweigh the protecting defense properties of the gastric secretion produced by the duodenal mucous membrane. The acid secretion of the stomach has an extraordinarily corrosive property. Only the gastric and duodenal proximal mucous membrane has the capacity to resist. No other tissue has this property, which explains, under certain conditions, the susceptibility to ulceration of, for example, the mucous membrane of the esophagus or of the small intestine.

Gastric ulcer:

This ulcer affects the stomach wall in depth. It is usually associated with a zone of gastritis (inflammation of the gastric mucous membrane) around the ulcer. Depending on which zone of the stomach it develops, it can become cancerous. This type of ulcer rarely recurs.

Duodenal ulcer:

This type of ulcer is often chronic and recurring. It is in most cases round and most often it has a diameter of less than one centimeter. It is deep and well delimited. It deeply penetrates the different layers of the wall of the duodenum. It does not become cancerous.

Principal symptoms of gastric ulcer:

It causes pain in the epigastria which often reduces through food intake. This pain hardly is relieved by anti acid medication. The pain is sharp and intense, often described as "sharp as a knife". It can irradiate into the dorsal region. Often there is loss of appetite and sensation of nausea between the meals. This type of ulcer has the tendency to bleed.

Principal symptoms of duodenal ulcer:

It causes sharp pain in the epigastria like a burning or a cramp. This pain arises usually one and a half to two hours after a meal. It can also arise at night. It calms down easily by food intake and anti acid medication. The appearing of the pain is related with the daily schedule of food intake. This type of ulcer shows little clinical signs and can therefore exist undetected for a long time.

Etiology:

We will take up only those causes the knowledge of which allows a yoga teacher to give useful advices to the student, without ever wanting to replace the doctor.

Excess of acid secretion for duodenal ulcers in general. Insufficient secretion by the mucous membrane for gastric ulcer.

Genetic factors

Tobacco

Alcohol

Nutrition

Stress

Certain emotional state of mind like chronic anxiety, depression....

Reflux of bile and pancreatic secretion

Development of the bacillus *HELICOBACTER PYLORI*. This germ likes to multiply itself in the mucous membrane of the stomach. It favors chronic gastritis and delays cicatrisation of mainly duodenal ulcers.

Delay in the gastric drainage favors gastric ulcer

The caustic property of certain medication like anti inflammatory

#### Treatment:

Nutritional measures and food hygiene

Medical prescription to neutralize or inhibit acid secretion of the stomach

Gastric surgery in extreme cases

*(to be continued)*

There is nothing easier to find than people's talk to please you. But, somebody who extends a beneficial advice, even if it is unpleasant, and somebody who agrees to listen to it, here is what is rare to find.

Râmâyana XXXVII

### **Devotion and the Christian religion (1)**

– Isabelle OTT, Pastor, President of the Synodal Council

The word devotion appears in the Christian tradition under the term of "piety".

In the Old Testament, piety is expressed by the word *khésed* – a comprehensive concept covering the application of heart and will in the service of God. Another word – *îrâh*, meaning fear and respect – is also used to convey this same idea. While the word piety hardly features in the Old Testament, the French translation of the Book of Hosea, chapter 6, verse 6, puts this word in God's mouth "J'aime la piété et non les sacrifices" (King James' translation of the Bible: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifices").

Within God's people, both heart and soul should be fired by a single inspiration: to live and respect the Eternal. This is united by definition in the existence of the nation and of individuals: should devotion lose its grip, the future as a whole is compromised.

In the New Testament, Jesus does not pronounce the word "piety", but his whole teaching and personality tend to encourage the blossoming of genuine piety in all whom he approaches. The term is found in the Epistles of Paul the Apostle in particular, as if to give substance to the various elements (faith, love, gratitude, adoration, obedience, etc) of the new life in Jesus Christ. The disciple's glory will live through his resemblance to the Master, as a model of piety.

Christian piety can be defined as a spiritual state which focuses on the Lord Jesus Christ with the aim of achieving saintliness: this requires will and a certain amount of effort.

If sanctification is regarded as a divine gift to Man, piety can be conceived as the appeal for this gift, its assimilation and implementation. Thus, as the reformer Calvin put it, devotion is a receptive yet active state in which the will of Man makes itself at all times the organ of the will of Christ that in turn gives Man the strength to do his duty in a given situation.

Piety is not alien to the accomplishment of any duty. Because it tends to lead Man towards perfection through union with God, it is thus the beginning, middle and end of life in a Christian existence (to be continued).

### **Ashvattha, the sacred banian tree**

*Sri T.K. Sribhashyam*

Commenting on the Bhagavad Guitha (XV.1), Sri Ramanuja said: "The tree Ashvattha, named *Samsara*, with its roots that go upwards and its branches that go downwards, is indestructible and everlasting". *Samsara* means the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. This sequence is compared here to a tree. Its roots go upwards because it draws its source from Brahma who is above the seven worlds. Its branches go downwards because it ends with those living on earth. It is indestructible because it cannot be cut being by nature a continuous flow. Its leaves are the *Veda* because the rites carried out to realize our wishes support the growth of that tree *Samsara*. Indeed, the tree develops and expands thanks to its leaves.

That tree has its main roots in the world of Brahma and its peak in the human world. Its secondary roots stretch downwards, into humanity, and are the consequences of the actions that attach us to the creation. Thus the consequences of the actions that attach us to the created world submit us to its ascendancy, deep root us in this world. The support of this tree is the ignorance that consists of confusing our deep self, our soul, with what it isn't. While the origin of this tree is the attachment to this world, detachment from the pleasures of this world would cause its destruction.

In Srimad Bhagavata, Sri Krishna explains to his dear friend Uddevalla the important signification of trees: "See how these noble beings, the trees, live entirely for others' well being. They are themselves exposed to rain, heat, humidity and other phenomena while they protect us. Whoever would search their support would never end disappointed. They satisfy the volitions of men and other creatures with their leaves, their flowers, their shadow, their bark, their roots, their branches, their bole, their sweet smelling sap, their ashes,...One man's life in this world makes sense and is useful inasmuch as his energies, his wealth, his intelligence and his speeches are used for the wellbeing of others.

In Mundaka Upanishad, the being is represented by a tree, but two birds are perched on the branches of the tree. The bird on the lower branch is *jivathman* busy tasting the sweet and sour fruits of pleasure and pain. The bird on the upper branch, immobile, absorbed in serene contemplation is *paramathman* (the supreme soul), the detached testimony. Seeing the majestic calmness of the upper bird, the lower



bird moves slowly towards it. In the end he realises that it is at one with it. Just like *jivathman* realizes in the end its oneness with *paramathman*.

## **Joy and sorrow**

### **An indian story**

Once a king asked his philosopher: Is it possible to experience joy and sorrow at the same time? The philosopher nodded his head and said that it was possible. The king asked for immediate proof. The philosopher said that he could not prove immediately and requested to wait. The king had great faith in the philosopher, so he said he would wait. The philosopher took a piece of paper and wrote something on it, folded it carefully and gave it to the king. "Please don't open it until I tell you" he told the king.

With the passage of time the incident was forgotten by the king, but not the philosopher. The queen gave birth to a son. There were great rejoicings and festivities in the entire kingdom. The king was in his happiest moods. The philosopher went to the palace to meet the king who received him with great joy. He asked the philosopher to choose a name for the child. The philosopher ignored the question and said: "O king, the time has come for you to open the slip of paper I gave you long ago. Please read it in secret". The king was annoyed. The philosopher insisted that he read it immediately and without delay. In a resigned manner, the king retired to his room, assured himself that he was all alone and took out the slip of paper. As he opened the paper, he felt a queer sensation and a sense of mystery engulfing him. He wondered what could have been written. He read the only line written on it. The beaming joy of fatherhood disappeared. Anxiety and worry replaced the enthusiasm and cheer that had embraced him. The king realized: Yes, it is possible to experience sorrow in the mind of joy.

What had the philosopher written? "O king, like everything else in this world, even this moment will fade away."

When the king came back, the philosopher asked him to keep the slip of paper. With the passage of time, the child-prince growing up, the king forgot the incident, but not the philosopher. After some years, the news came that the king's enemy had laid siege to the kingdom and was poised to attack from all sides. The king's men were taken unaware. The enemy forces were much larger in size and had sophisticated weapons. The king was worried and anxious. The philosopher once again came to the palace and whispered to the king: "O king, do you remember that piece of paper?"

At once, the king became alert. Yes! Even this moment will pass away; this anxiety, this calamity is not going to haunt me and the kingdom eternally. Joyously he embraced the philosopher. Even in the deepest depths of gloom he had discovered the ray of hope and cheer. With redoubled energy he went out, met the troops and got ready for the war. And indeed, the danger did pass away.

For what is eternal in this panorama of the ever-changing world ?

## **Bhagavad Githa and Yoga (1)**

T.K.Sribhashyam

Etymologically, the word Yoga can have three definitions: yujir yoge to join, yuj sammâdhau, i.e., the root yujir, to join, and the root yuj, in the sense of cessation of mental states or one-pointedness, and yuj samyamane, i.e., yuj in the sense of controlling. In the Githa, the word yoga is used in many senses. Here the word yoga is derived from yujir yoge or yuj to join, with which is connected in a negative way the yuj in the sense of controlling anything to that to which it is joined. 'Joining' naturally implies disjunction from some other thing. When a particular type of mental outlook is recommended, the Githa used the word buddhi-yoga which simply means that one has intimately to associate oneself with a particular type of wisdom. When one has to associate oneself with the obligatoriness of the performance of duties, the Githa uses the word karma-yoga. The word yoga is also used in the sense of fixing one's mind either on the self (atman) or on God.

In the Githa VI.2, it is said, "What is called cessation (of desires for fruits of action) is what you should know, O Pândava, as Yoga: without renouncing one's desires one cannot be a yogin."

Such a dissociation from the fruits of desires is to be supplemented by the performance of duties at the preliminary stages; and it is only in the higher stages, when one is fixed in yoga that meditative peace can be recommended. Unless and until one succeeds in conquering all attachments to sense-objects and actions and in giving up all desires for fruits of actions, one cannot be fixed in yoga. This naturally involves a conflict between the higher self and the lower, or rather between the real self and the false; for while the lower self always inclines to pathological and prudential motives, it has yet within it the higher ideal.

Man is both a friend and a foe to himself, if he follows the path of his natural inclinations and the temptations of sense-enjoyment, he takes the downward path becoming an enemy to his own higher interests. The duality involved in this conception of a friend and a foe, and of conqueror and conquered naturally involves a distinction between a higher self (paramâthman) and a lower self (âtman).

The conquest of the lower self makes him the friend while the failure to conquer his own passions and self-attachments make himself his own enemy.

The implication of the word yoga in the Githa is that even if the lower self gravitates towards the lower ideals, yet the power of self-elevation is inherent. (to be continued)

### **Ghruta in the rituals**

- Smt T. Alamelu

"Let us proclaim the name of ghruta, let us support him with our homage in this sacrifice. Take our sacrifice here to the gods!" – Rig Veda 4.58.

For reasons unknown the word Ghruta has been translated into English as 'ghee'. The method of preparation is given in page 15 of this number.

The root word ghru means 'sprinkle' or 'luminous'.

In Vedic rituals, homa is an act of 'pouring' ghruta into the duly consecrated fire. The act of pouring accompanied by a mantra is called âjya. It is a worship in the form of offering oblations, a sacrifice to the Vedic Gods.

According to Hindu religious tradition, the Supreme God ordained, at the beginning of creation, that gods (like Indra, Varuna, Agni...) and human beings would maintain and sustain themselves through sacrifices. Human beings were to satiate the Gods through sacrifices and the Gods in return would bestow on human beings rains, food and other things needed to live a prosperous life, because these gods controlled the various forces of the nature. "Oblations offered in fire reach the Sun and from him comes rain." (- Manu Smruthi 6.76).

Human beings need light and heat to sustain themselves in life. The Sun (surya) and the Fire (Agni) are the two sources for these. The sun is not under human control, but the fire is. So, ancient sages decided to protect and maintain Agni (the fire god) with respect and worship it.

All offerings that is poured into a duly consecrated fire is called 'havis'. Barley, wheat, rice, rice cakes, rice balls, milk, curd, ghee, sesame, coconut, jaggery, honey etc. are offered as havis. In special cases, some specific animals or organs of animals are offered as havis.

Agni is the most important part in Vedic sacrifices. Agni is called havyvahât (one who carries havis) because he carries havis to various deities, acting as mediator.

Âjya or ghruta is the most important part in all sacrifices. Ghruta is not the fat of any animal, but of cow's milk. Sprinkling of ghruta keeps the fire luminous. It is used as fuel to stimulate the kâshta (twigs of banyan tree) used in sacrifices.

Ghruta is also one of the basic food requirement of those who chant vedic Mantra, because it keeps the vocal chords free from phlegm and clears the lungs of all impurities.

When the kâshta burns in rituals, the smoke which is inhaled by people assembled enter all the sheaths through Anna Maya Kosha and purifies the body, the mind and the soul.

## **The page of Srimathi T. Namagiriammal**

(Wife of Sri T. Krishnamacharya)

### **Ghrutam, ghee**

Ingredients:

500 g butter, unsalted

Cooking time: 30 minutes on low heat (gas cooker)

Melt the butter on a low heat in a 2 litre stainless steel pan. Stir from time to time with a ladle so that the melted butter does not cook over! After a quarter of an hour, the melted butter will separate into two parts: a transparent part and a white granular part. (from this moment onwards more stirring is required as the granular part will turn

brown very fast and the ghee can easily get burnt). The granular part will progressively turn brown and settle on the bottom of the pan. In the meantime prepare, for example in the sink, some cold water. Continue stirring and keep on observing the colour of the part at the bottom of the pan. As soon as it turns light brown, switch off the heat and immediately cool down the pan in the previously prepared cold water. Be careful not to let water drops fall into the pan.

After cooling the ghee, filter with a muslin cloth and keep in the refrigerator. It can be kept for approximately one month.

You will get 370 g of ghee out of 500 g of butter. The granular part is not edible.

Benefits: gives intelligence, splendour, power of procreation, force and longevity. It is an anti-poison; it increases the memory, removes inflammation and excrescences. Produces Medas, brings relief to pathologies of the eyes. It is used in all pathologies without any contraindication.

In case of food poisoning or alcohol intoxication, drink one cup of ghee (in liquid form) mixed with 3 spoons of sugar. In case of congestion of the lungs with children: massage their chest with ghee.

In case of bleeding at childbirth: put the on the abdomen, the upper part of the thighs and the area of the loins and the sacrum and massage in the direction of the navel.