Madhu Khanna, Ṛta: *the Cosmic Order*, New Delhi, D.K. Printworld, 2004

The book under review – an anthology of seminar papers on the theme *Ṛta*: the Cosmic Order and Chaos – contains a series of essays focused primarily on aspects of the cultural milieu of ancient India with occasional forays into new sciences and into other traditions, particularly Chinese. Scholars of various disciplines examine the concept of *Ṛta* in this volume.

Originality of the book is to be found in its structure. Authors chose to articulate the book into three related sections to explicate the multifaced concept of *Ṛta*.

Essays in the first section examine different notions of cosmic order in ancient cultures, such as Iranian (pp. 41-44) and Islamic (pp. 71-79). Modern interpretations of the Veda are given through writings of Aurobindo, Coomaraswamy, K.C. Chattopadhyay and P.V. Kane (pp. 35-39) and scientical approach to the concept of order leads to the physics (pp. 13-34), astronomy (pp. 49-69) and molecolar biology (pp. 61-79). Papers in the second section of the volume deal with the cultural construction of the order. The social order stands as the primarily symbol of the cosmic order through the medium of the narrative context (pp. 109-124). On the one hand, the notion of order is a human product, and it is variously expressed and recreated by human activities, such as in Gandhian (pp. 147-152) and Confucian perspec-

tives (pp. 153-174). On the other hand, culture imposes its own logic on individual consciousness through notions of truth (pp. 97-108).

In the third section, every essay posits the interralationship between search and interpretation of ordering principle in the arts. Particularly, the first paper analyses the correspondences between cosmic geometry and ancient cities (pp. 177-209) in Harappan and Chinese areas. Others examine the aesthetic experience related to the notion of cosmic harmony (pp. 211-292). Attention is also given to the musical experience as representation of the regularity of the cosmos (pp. 293-312).

The authors' choice of a thematic orientation suggests the complex role of the *Ṛta* in indian thought. This book is not homogeneous whatever. So different approaches to the theme make it dispersive. However, Indologists and non specialist readers will find many helpful remarks since the book has more to offer than its title suggests.

Marianna Ferrara

REINHARD WENDT, *An indian to the Indian? On the Initial Failure and the Posthumos Success of the Missionary Ferdinand Kittel (1832-1903)*, Wiesbaden, Harrossowitz, 2006

More than a biografy, this volume presents a singular case of authentic dialogue between cultures through the talent and life of the german missionary Ferdinand Kittel (1832-1903).

The twelve articles presented here deal with Kittel's experiences in India and present the reasons for which Kittel is popular in Karnataka and almost unknown in Germany. The anthology reconstructs the life of this clergyman according to whom the true evangelisation requires accomodation and assimilation. Following Paul's teaching, Kittel tried to become an indian to the Indian, as the title suggests. He recognized the importance of shaping the form of the message. Selected documents (pp. 9-110) show Kittel's efforts to foster a Christian-Kanarese literature in verse, such as stories from New Testament in hindu metre (pp. 231-253). Here it is evident that Kittel

made Kanarese language a tool of evangelisation. It is also evident that the Mission Committee was disappointed about Kittel's ideas. In spite of this, Kittel pursued his strategies of inculturation.

Some essays in this collection explore and describe Kittel's life (pp. 111-129), the historical and socio-cultural contexts in which Kittel was working in India (pp. 131-193) and in Europe (pp. 195-230). Others focus on Kittel's range of activity in pubblication matters: books of songs of prayer, indigenous prosody and local melodies. An article of particular interest suggests that Kittel's idea for using music to gain attention contributed to the growth of Carnatic music in Karnataka (pp. 255-299). Remaining essays deal with Kittel's abilities to listen, learn and understand. Here attention is given to the specific discourse formation prevalent in 19th century German Protestantism. Maybe Kittel's passion for languages was partly due to the fact that linguistic studies were considered important and facilitated (pp. 301-311). However that may be, it is a fact that Kittel became so fascinated by the language, that he concentrated on linguistic work. He contributed to the shaping of an official language in the state of Karnataka, to Indology and Dravidian philology (pp. 313-340).

Marianna Ferrara

GYULA WOJTILLA, *History of* Kṛṣiśāstra. *A History of Indian Literature on Traditional Agriculture*, Wiesbaden, Harrossowitz, 2006

Kṛṣiśāstra, as the author says, can be defined as the science of agriculture (p. 12) or theoretical and pratical knowledge concerning agriculture and related subjects (p. 13). One can thus understand *Kṛṣiśāstra* historically as perhaps ancient man's agriculture experience that met the theoretical knowledge of Brāhmaṇas. According to the author, *Kṛṣiśāstra* takes form as a literary genre and applied science in the process of scientific refinement, improving in methods, techniques and tools by theoretical knowledge. In the first section of the book (pp. 11-19) the author develops his ideas, tracing out the role of the priests and the weightiness of the brāhmaṇical tradition on codi-

fying the 'little tradition' about cultivation, cattle, alimentation. Firstly, Brāhmaṇas are considered to be responsible for the sanskritisation of the weather-wisdom depositated in vernacular proverbs and songs. Secondly, they contributed to differentiation bertween agricultural and horticultural activities (p. 15). It means that the history of *Kṛṣiśāstra* is to be found between the 'great tradition' and the 'little tradition'.

The second section of the book (pp. 21-62) and the following appendices list a collection of Sanskrit and vernacular texts on *kṛṣi* which show, according to the author, the importance of the folkloristic literature on surviving of *Kṛṣiśāstra* (p. 19). Datas are gained from handbooks and bibliographies, but any translation is given.

Marianna Ferrara

Digital Tēvāram/kaṇiṉ it tēvāram, with the complete English gloss of the late V.M.Subrahmanya Ayyar (IFP) and furnished with a full concordance of the Tamil text accompanied by 6 hours of MP3 audio recordings (illustrating all the 24 paṇ-s), various maps (showing all the 274 talam-s) and other related material.
General editor: Jean-Luc Chevillard, Associate editor: S.A.S. Sarma, Institut Français de Pondichéry-Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, n.d.

The *Tēvāram* constitutes the first 7 books of the *Tirumuṟai*, the Tamil Śaiva canon of devotional texts considered the Tamil *Veda*. It consists in about 800 hymns composed by the Mūvar, the great trio of Śaiva mystics and poets and also the most famous of the Nāyaṉmār: Tiruñāṉacampantar, Tirunāvukkaracar or Appar, and Cuntaramūrtti (VII-IX cent. A.D.). Early expression of vernacular *bhakti*, the *Tēvāram* shows a special attention to pilgrimage to holy places and originates a sacred geography where the god is considered as belonging to each particular place. This *corpus* of sacred hymns is of immense literary, religious, social and historical value for the life of Tamil people, and therefore the appearance of this *Digital Tēvāram* is an important event and is particularly welcomed.

The genesis of the work lies in the decision to accomplish an English translation project of *Tēvāram* that started in Pondichéry in the seventies and resulted in an unpublished manuscript of about 3500 pages containing an English rendering of the hymns, authored by the late V.M. Subrahmanya Ayyar. The above English version of the *Tēvāram* together with the Tamil text forms the bulk of the CD-ROM.

The text of 798 hymns is based on the *Tēvāram* edition by T.V.Gopal Iyer and F.Gros, published by the Institut Français d'Indologie of Pondichéry in 1984-1985, and is in the *paṇmuṟai* order i.e. collecting the hymns by their musical mode. The English rendering (a pre-translation) of the *Tēvāram*, written by the late V.M.Subrahmanya Ayyar in 1976-84, is in the *talamuṟai* order i.e. classifying the hymns according to the places mentioned and sung in them. It is copiously annotated, the notes recording variant readings and discussing textual and prosodic problems, or translation issues.

Most conveniently both the arrangements of the hymns in the *talamuṟai* order and in the *paṇmuṟai* order are simultaneously available, and it is also possible to simulate the content of smaller collections of the texts.

The arrangement in the *paṇmuṟai* order is accompanied by an audio section containing information on the musical modes (more than 20) used as an organizational principle for the hymns and hyper-linked to the relevant texts. The section is composed by 109 audio recordings (totally about 7 hours) of 63 hymns interpreted by several performers and in different styles, illustrating the today variety of the vocal rendering of them.

The arrangement in the *talamuṟai* order is accompanied by more than 100 digital maps. They show the location of all the sacred places sung in the *Tēvāram* and allow the user to locate the various sites mentioned in the hymns. All of the maps are electronically linked by hyperlinks to the hymns referring to the places and some of them are zoomable maps.

Impressive is the patient, demanding, meticulous description that accompanies this topographic material, a substantial contribution in its own right. In order to precisely identify and locate the sites, for each of them are indicated the modern and the traditional name, all the administrative specifications concerning it, district and taluk where it

can be found today, old administrative location, nearest railway station, location and name according to Umāpati Civācāriyar's *Tiruppatikkōvai* (which is the basis for the arrangement of the *talamuṟai*), reference in the *Madras Annual Report of the Epigraphist*, links to zoomable and non-zoomable maps and to a Draft route map, total number of hymns devoted to the site and link-reference to the hymns themselves. A virtual pilgrimage with an identifier referring to the site position inside the *talamuṟai* allows the user to experiment a virtual tour of all the places recognized by the tradition. An alphabetical list of the traditional names of the sites is appended, with a list of clickable shortcuts towards the various possible initial syllables of those names. A page contains also various miscellaneous information on place names and administrative divisions of Tamil Nadu. All is rounded off by 269 pictures of 31 shrines in their present conditions, that reinforce the feeling of atmospheric richness.

A very useful section of the work is devoted to concordances, and contains in alphabetical order the occurrences (about 200 000) of all the word-forms (about 45 000) recurring in the *Tēvāram*, each linked with the corresponding passage both in the T.V.Gopal Iyer's edition and the English rendering of the hymns. This constitutes a pre-dictionary of the *Tēvāram*. A Technical vocabulary contains various technical explanations – mostly on prosody – given by V.M.Subrahmanya Ayyar. An Incipit-s list is added, showing the first lines of all the hymns. A V.M.Subrahmanya Ayyar biography sketch is complemented by pertinent illustrations and photographs, and an essential bibliography is also provided.

As to the technical requirements, the CD-ROM contains data in HTML format and has been tested on PC running Windows XP and Macintosh running OS X. The only software needed is a browser accepting frames; however some of the pages containing zoomable maps can only be accessed by users having SVG compatible browsers. The data being multilingual by nature, a font installation process might be required.

Many persons have assisted the Editor and the Assistant editor in the preparation of the *Digital Tēvāram* and they are listed in the Credits page. To all of them and in particular to the organizers Jean-Luc Chevillard and S.A.S. Sarma, an unstinted measure of praise is

due for this solid, reliable, minutely detailed, comprehensive CD-ROM. It contains a vast amount of data made easily accessible and of great practical value for all the scholars interested in Tamil Śaiva devotional literature. It is a very important contribution to the study of the *Tēvāram*.

Emanuela Panattoni

G.DEVANEYAN, *Nostratics – The Light from Tamil according to Devaneyan*, transl. By P.Ramanathan, Chennai, The Tirunelveli South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society Ltd., 2004.

The book here reviewed is an English translation of 24 essays G.Devaneyan (alias Pavanar, 1902-1981) wrote in Tamil and published in "Centamilccelvi" (Cennai) from 1977 to 1980. In these essays he intended to show how thousands of words ultimately traceable to 22 basic Tamil individual words and to 2 Tamil group names for "cat" and "fire" spread to many language families other than Dravidian, including Indo-European. He pursued the idea that Tamil is the mother of all Dravidian languages, is the base from which the Indo-European languages branched off many millennia ago and is the language nearest to the proto-language of man, i.e. the "Mother-Tongue" or "Proto-world language". In the Introduction (p.8) the translator P.Ramanathan states that to a large extent the kernel of Devaneyan's theories was already presented by R.Caldwell in his *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages*, 1856, and attempts to place Devaneyan's work in the context of the developments in the fields of "Mother-Tongue" studies and Nostratics in the past 150 years and in the light of current developments in the fields of Macro-language studies, of the origin and spread of *Homo sapiens sapiens* and of prehistoric archaeology. He also hopes that the present book will advance research in these studies. A bibliography is provided at the end of the Introduction.

Emanuela Panattoni

Isabella Nardi, *The Theory of* Citrasūtras *in Indian Painting. A critical re-evaluation of their uses and interpretations*, London and New York, Routledge, 2006

This well documented and stimulating study propounds a new approach to the Sanskrit literary corpus on *citra*, painting. These texts, which can either be autonomous treatises or form part of a broader work, are here collectively referred to as *citrasūtras*, treatises on painting. The book investigates such a literature, from the first extant documents probably belonging to the Gupta age, the *Citralakṣaṇa* of Nagnajit (preserved in the Tibetan version) and the relevant sections of the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, to comparatively late works like the *Śilparatna* of Śrī Kumāra (end of the 16th century). It expounds the theories on measurement, proportions, stances, iconography, preparation of colours and so on related by these texts; and it compares texts with the practice of contemporary traditional painters, met by the author in Tanjore and in various sites of Rajasthan and Orissa. Sanskrit texts primarily referring to sculpture are also taken into account, in the opinion that a sharp separation of the theories concerning painting and sculpture would be "unhelpful and misleading" (p. 2), and not justifiable from the traditional Indian point of view. Allied subjects are also examined, such as poetics in connection with the theory of *rasa*. According to the author, the word *citra*, though generally translated as "painting", should be understood in a more general and abstract meaning as "mental image". And here we come to the main thesis of this book. The modern scholarly approach to the *citrasūtras* has generally interpreted these texts as prescriptive, as giving rules to be literally followed by craftsmen. As a matter of fact, this kind of approach has proved to be rather unsatisfying. As the author argues, "The fallacy of regarding and interpreting the *citrasūtras* as prescriptive texts is suggested by the many contradictions that appear in the study of the *citrasūtras* and in particular by the discrepancies between textual images and extant painting"(p. 3). In the author's opinion, the *citrasūtras* should actually be viewed from a different perspective, as giving "*suggestions* [author's italic] rather than rules" (p.2); "texts do not contain strict rules but rather suggestions, possibilities or ways of reasoning" (p. 36). Thus, for a correct analysis of their content, they

should be considered as theoretical frameworks collecting, at various ages and places, facets of a tradition continuously remoulded by the living crafts. The author also draws attention to the fact that some often-quoted ideas and notions on Indian art, derived from the works of authoritative scholars of the 20th century, appear to be very imprecise in the light of a new careful reading of the *citrasūtras*.

Cinzia Pieruccini