



BOOK REVIEW

Indian Plantlore – Beliefs, Myths & Legends, 2020, D.A. Patil, LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 17, Meldrum Street, Beau Bassin 71504, Mauritius, ISBN: 978-620-2-91786-5, pp. 256, 5.91 x 8.66 inches, Soft bound, (€ 82,90)

Since the dawn of civilization, plants have been adored not only with devotion but have been affectionately fondled and almost treated as members of a family. Man has been fascinated by nature since he evolved from his primitive ancestors. No doubt, to start with, he hunted for food mainly by killing the wild animals, but if there was anything on which he could depend with any confidence towards its availability, it was the plant. Not only the fact that a large number of plants provided him with food, but also the fact that they provided him with curative medicine and shelter, were perhaps the reasons why he worshipped them rather than the animals which also gave him food.

There are several examples where the plants have been explained as the companion of humans. In old Indian scriptures, famous poet like Kalidasa mentions about the Vanadevatas, who had been companions of Sakuntala in the forest, almost shedding tears when she left her sylvan home for her residence in the palace of her husband, the king, and hastened to give her presents of silken garments and jewels worthy of a princess. In 'Ramayana' when Sita was abandoned by Lakshmana in the forest at the command of Rama, Sita's sorrow stirred the trees and plants, and along with animals and birds, they too expressed their grief by shedding flowers like large drops of tears. In the Vishnusahasranama, Vishnu is mentioned as the very embodiment of imposing trees like *Udumbara*, *Asvattha*, *Asoka* and *Nyagrodha*.

Plants played an important role in the mythology of Indian people. The plants are mentioned in the sources of religion and mythology, mythological sagas, fairytales, proverbs, beliefs and magical rituals. In the written sources the worshipping of natural objects as well as phenomena (sky-lights, earth, fire, water, thunder, plants, animals and even rocks) are often mentioned. The worshipping of natural objects and phenomena is a characteristic feature to most

of the older religions. It's actually connected to the religion itself and the mythology.

The present book is a beautiful collection of Indian plantlore. It comprises excellent information on man – plant relationship gathered from Vedas, Puranas and other great epics like Ramayana, Mahabharata and several other scriptures. Author has made all efforts to include data from written record, published epics, archaeological sites, caves, temples, religious shrines belonging to all religions, castes and tribes of India. A total of 132 plant species are mentioned in the book. Vernacular names of plants in various languages are given. The detailed information on various aspects of plants indicates that the author has left no stone unturned in providing detailed information from various sources. Really it must have been a difficult task to gather such a vast information. A large number of legends associated with plants indicate that there was an intimate man – plant relationship in the past. Several beliefs, taboos and totems associated with plants are very interesting. Through the book one can learn about the association of several Indian Gods, Goddesses and other deities with plants. The information given in the book provides an insight into the diversity of ways in which different cultural groups use the bio-resources. A long list of references indicates about the authenticity of information given. The book would have been more attractive if the photographs of mentioned plant species would have been given.

In view of above comments, the author deserves high appreciation for bringing out an informative book on Indian plantlore. It would be an important document for researchers who would carry out further work.

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