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ANNAM̄ BAHU KURVĪTA

*Recollecting the Indian Discipline
of Growing and Sharing Food in Plenty*

JITENDRA BAJĀJ

MAṄDAYAM DODDAMANE ŚRĪNIVĀS

India today suffers from an extreme scarcity of food. The country reached a state of near famine within a few decades of the coming of the British, and we have remained in that state ever since. Indians today consume one third less of staple foods compared to the people in almost any other part of the world, and cattle and animals in India get almost no grains or roots at all. Yet we have chosen to believe that we grow more food than what we need.

India was never so callous about scarcity and hunger. Growing an abundance of food and sharing it in plenty, annabāhulya and annadāna, have always constituted the essence of dhārmika living for us. Annabāhulya and annadāna are in fact at the foundation of dharma; all else, even the search for mokṣa is built on this foundation.

This book is a recollection of this great Indian tradition of abundance and sharing. Based on the highly regarded texts of Indian civilizational identity, the śruti, itihāsas, purāṇas, and dharmasāstras, the book presents a compelling glimpse of the intensity with which Indians have thought about annabāhulya and annadāna. And, in the process it offers a fresh understanding of the essence of Indian civilization.

This book has been placed at the feet of some of the foremost ācāryas of India, who have blessed the effort and expressed the hope that India shall soon anchor herself again in the dharma of annabāhulya and annadāna. The book carries maṅgalāśāsanas of the following ācāryas:

Śrī Jagadguru Śaṅkarācārya of Śrīgerī Śāradā Pīṭha

Śrī Kaliyan Vānamāmalai Jīyar Swāmīgal

Śrī Jagadguru Śaṅkarācārya of Purī Govardhana Pīṭha

Śrī Tridaṇḍī Śrīmannārāyaṇa Jīyar Swāmījī

Śrī Pejāvāra Maṭhādhīsa Śrī Viśveśatīrtha Swāmījī

Śrī Paramahaṁsa Śrī Vāmadevaḥ Mahārāj

Śrī Jagadguru Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī Kāmakōṭi Pīṭha



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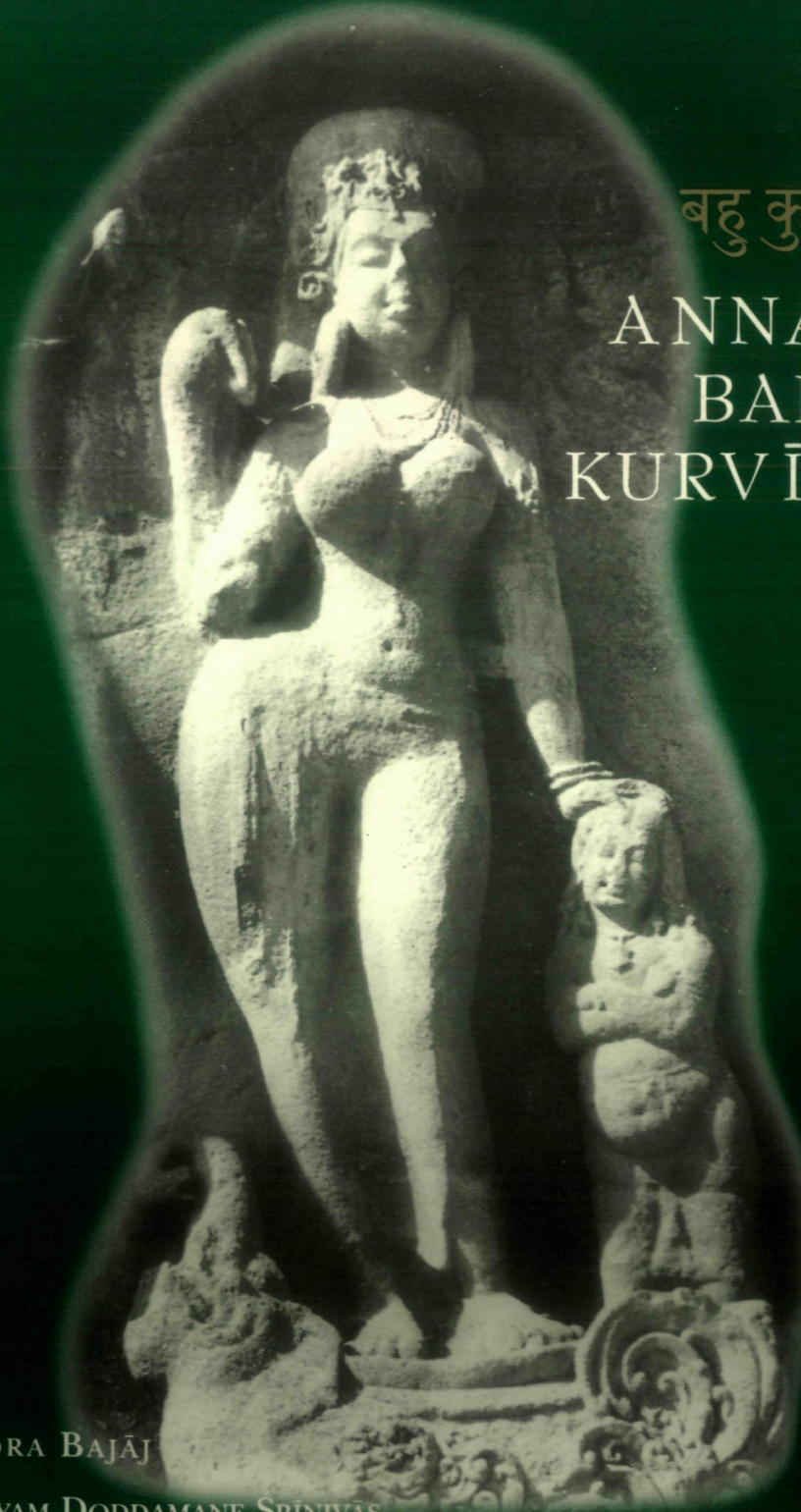
ANNAM̄ BAHU KURVĪTA.

RECOLLECTING THE INDIAN DISCIPLINE
OF GROWING AND SHARING FOOD IN PLENTY

BAJĀJ
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अन्नं
बहु कुर्वीत
ANNAM̄
BAHU
KURVĪTA

CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES MADRAS

In the task of nation building it is the spirit and willingness of the people alone that matters. The tools and resources can always be created once a nation decides to move ahead towards its goal with self-confidence and determination. We displayed such intensity of spirit and determination in the first half of this century, when under the leadership of Mahātmā Gāndhī we harnessed all our energies for a great national effort.

But, after achieving independence, we somehow lost the spirit and determination which Mahātmā Gāndhī had evoked in us, and slipped once again into the debilitating habits of mental sloth and mechanical imitation acquired during the long years of bondage. For nearly fifty years now, we as a nation have been living a spiritless existence, trying mindlessly to imitate and catch up with the west, and meanwhile to somehow cope with the present. We have made no real effort to understand our situation or that of the world around us, and have been moving according to whatever seems fashionable at any given time, or whatever is being purveyed as the panacea for the ills of all nations in the international market-places, or perhaps according to whatever is forced upon us by the structures and institutions left behind by the British.

It seems that we have to start afresh. We have to somehow rekindle the spirit and determination that builds nations. For that to happen it is essential that we acquire a clear overview of ourselves and our position and role in the world of today.

Centre for Policy Studies has been founded to initiate this effort of comprehending the Indian situation and to help in formulating a polity that shall provide all Indians with the challenge and the opportunity to get into the task of nation building with an abiding passion.

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