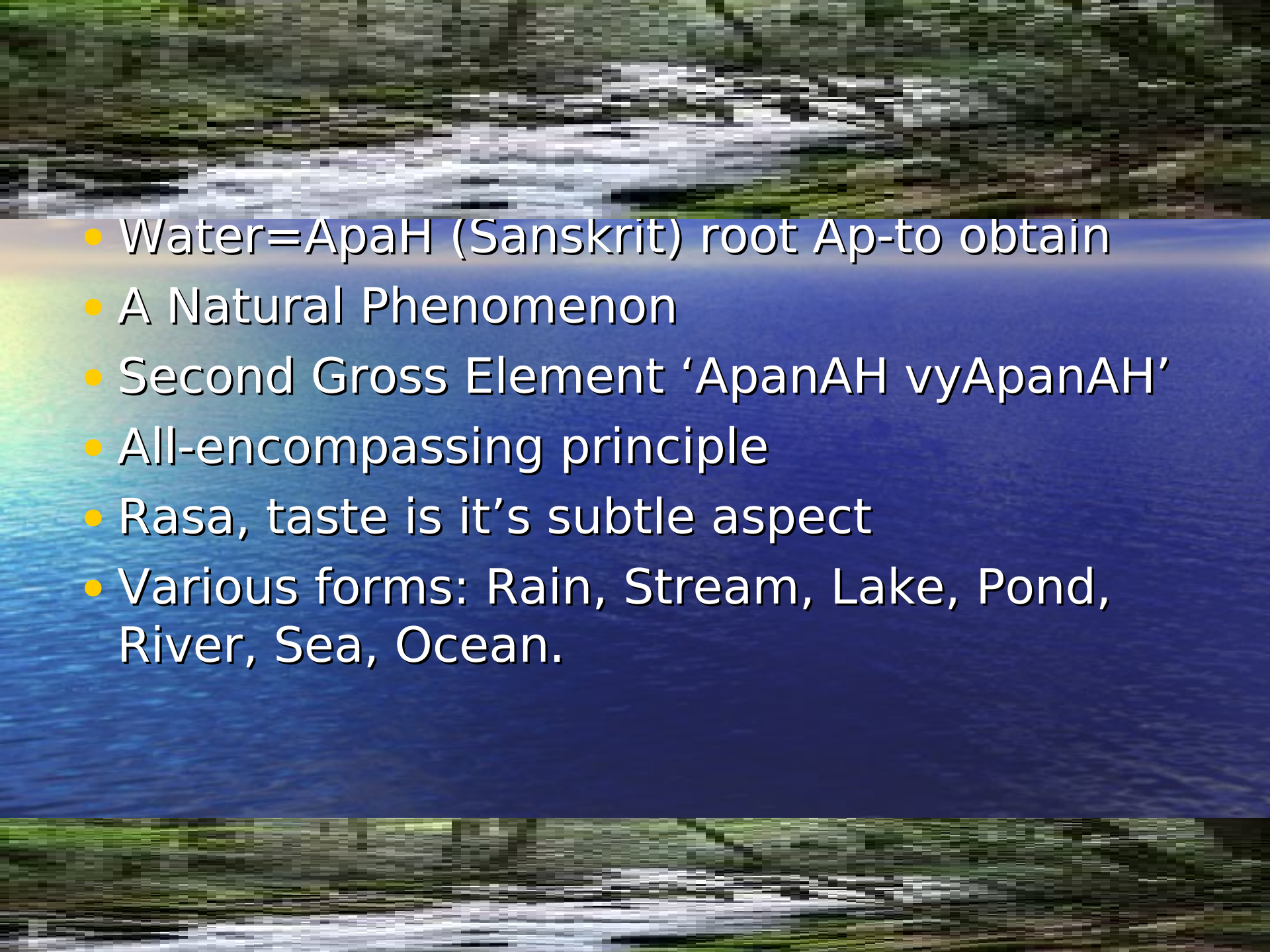


APOTHEOSIS OF WATER AND ITS INEVITABILITY IN INDIAN CULTURE

Dr. Gauri Mahulikar
Reader, Department of
Sanskrit
University of Mumbai

- 
- Water=ApaH (Sanskrit) root Ap-to obtain
 - A Natural Phenomenon
 - Second Gross Element 'ApanAH vyApanAH'
 - All-encompassing principle
 - Rasa, taste is it's subtle aspect
 - Various forms: Rain, Stream, Lake, Pond, River, Sea, Ocean.

Apotheosis = Deification

- Purity- Cleanses physical and spiritual dirt
- Sanctity- Holiness attached
- Creativity – Nasadiya Sukta
- Efficacy – Udavajra magical missile
- Concept of Tirtha and Tirthankar

Water and Gods

- Aja Ekapad – Sun
- Ahirbudhnya – Cloud Vrtra Ahi Ananta
- Apam Napat – Lightning
- Indra – Releases Water from Vrtra
- Agni –Resides in Water (Fire Water Union)
- Visnu,Brhaspati and Maruts – Assist Indra

Rain = Parjanya

- Rgveda glorifies Parjanya as a deity
- It's the divine semen impregnating the naked earth.
- The Seeder, fructifier of plants
- Sat. Br. 2.3.4.1 'Viryamapah'
- Called 'Jivan' Life-sustaining principle
- Thundering kills evils (RV,V.83.2,9)

as



Different Reservoirs of Water

- Ponds
- Pools
- Wells
- Lakes
- Rivers
- Oceans

Rivers



- Wash off dust, dirt and impurity
- Purifiers, sanctifiers
- Healing, life-bestowing principle
- Halo of supernatural
- Living units. Have guardian deities
- Anthropomorphic. Rivers=Maidens/Wives
- Mermaids, Dancers, Mothers, Goddesses

Mother Goddess

- Payas = Milk, sustaining
- Called Nadlmatrka
- Nadlmatrka region
- Associated with Nagas
- Shrines at river side
- Purifies physically and mentally



Restrictions and Taboos

- No Nude baths in Rivers
- Disregarding the guardian deity
- 'Ciraharana' of Gopis in Bhag. Purana
- 'Shakambhari' is worshipped by Gopis
- No Excretion in River

Rivers = Cursed Nymphs

- Pattern is set. Ascetic-austerities-Indra worried-sends a nymph- sage curses her-turns into river- mitigation- join major river
- Maharashtra- Mula, Mutha Nira
- Marry kings on contract
- Santanu – Ganga
- Samvarana - Tapi

Harmful aspect of rivers

- Associated with Yaksa
- Called 'sati asra'
- Protected by 'Mhasoba', 'Joting', 'Vetal'
- 'Oto bharane' to pacify the wrath
- Consist of green bangles, coconut, rice-grains, piece of cloth, betel nut etc.
- At new canal, dam, irrigation plant, flood

Zoo morph of river

- Cow most frequent
- Myth of Godavari in Andhra Pradesh
- Myth of Go-da-vari in Brahma Purana
- Other zoo morphs = fish, tortoise, nagas

Water and Culture

- What is Culture
- Inevitability of water in samskaras
- What is Samskara
- Names and Number
- From birth till death, various rituals

Ritual Details

- Samkalpa
- Acamana
- Arghya
- Padya
- Abhiseka
- Snana

Ritual Bath

- Purification
- Story of Katha and Revati
- Story of sage Chyavana
- Bridal bath
- Graduation bath
- Avabhrthasnanana after sacrifice
- Washes all impurities

Other Cultures

- Judaism – Mikveh – Ritual bath
- Islam–Namaz – cleaning hands, feet, head
- All mosques have water source
- Christianity – linked with Baptism
- Jesus baptised by John the Baptist in river Jordan

Abhiseka from Ghata

- Importance of Ghata or Kalasa
- Fertile fluid
- King Yuvanasva's conception (Bhag.P.)
- Used in pacificatory rites like, Grahasanti. Putrasanti etc.
- Used to remove evil-eye
- In the absence of snana, abhiseka

Festivals

- Important feature of any culture
- Social get togethet
- Harvest festivals
- Associated with rainy season
- Nagapancami
- Onam, Pongal, boat races
- Pola – worship of bull, friend of farmer
- Simhastha Kumbha Millions gather without invitation

Homage to Water

- RV.VII.49.4 (Hymn praising water)
- Yasu raja Varuno yasu Somo
- Visve devah yamurjam madanti
- Vaisvanaro yasvagnih pravistah
- Ta Apo Deviriha mamavantu.

Cult of Rivers

- Holy places of pilgrimage
- Bath or dip in Tirtha
- Associated with gods