

Ethnobiological Analysis from Myth to Science: II. *Samudra Manthana*, A Symbolic Chronological Process for Re-establishment of the Human Ecology

S.N. Padhy, S.K. Dash, Ratnaprava Mohapatra and K.K. Panigrahy

KEYWORDS *Samudra Manthana*. Retrieve of Divine Treasures. Re-establishment of Human Ecology

ABSTRACT The mythic event of *Samudra Manthana*, which is depicted in *Kurma Puraana*, was a process of churning of cosmic ocean in order to retrieve certain divine treasure lost during *Pralaya* (dissolution). The myth says, the Gods on one side and the demons on the other, wound the snake *Ananta* as rope around the mountain *Mandana* as the *churning* stick to carry out the process, which did Lord *Vishnu* in his *Kurma Avataara* (Gigantic tortoise) support. There was emergence of twelve precious objects (such as : 1. *Airaavata* – the Moon; 3. *Dhanus*- the bow; 4. *Dhanvantri* with *Amrit*- the physician Gods with elixir of immortality; 5. *Koustuva*- the priceless gem; 6. *Paarijaata*- the wish fulfilling tree; 7. *Rambhaa*- the heavenly nymph; 8. *Surabhi*- the mother cow; 9. *Suraa*- the wine; 10. *Shree*- the Goddess of wealth and beauty; 11. *Ssankha*- the white conch shell and 12. *Uchchaissrabaa*- the white stallion with seven heads) with huge amount of *Visha*- the fiery poison. The scientific introspection of the myth reveals that the whole process and the precious subjects emerged out of it, are symbolic representation to explain the whole event such that: “Dissolution has occurred as a natural phenomenon followed by loss of ecological homeostasis; in course of time slowly and systematically (due to interaction of progressive and retrogressive forces) the nature got re-established; the release to poison is attributed as a caution not to opt any violent or untoward action against nature and for non-sustainable use of it.”