

## PREFACE

A major void in the field of vedic studies is the absence of an edition of the four songbooks (gānas: Grāma-geya, Āraṇyaka or Candrasāmāni, Ūha, Ūhya or Ūṣāni) belonging to the old Jaiminīya school of Sāmaveda. The principal impediment to such an endeavor is the lack of complete understanding of the syllable notation employed by Jaiminīya gāna manuscripts. For the past few years the notation has been comprehended only in the broadest outline; its relationship to present-day oral traditions has remained tantalizingly enigmatic. A possible correlation between the symbols and the highly complex chants (sāmans) of the Nampūtiri brahmans, native to Kēraḷa, was reported in my Sāmavedic Chant (1977); but, due to the arcane nature of the subject and to the limitations of time and materials, only a very brief and spotty account of the correspondence could be given. The present book offers a detailed examination of the Jaiminīya notation as it pertains to Nampūtiri Sāmaveda, the oldest chant tradition on earth.

I am extremely happy to acknowledge the assistance of those who have made the study possible. For supplying me with required manuscript materials I am deeply grateful to Prof. Asko Parpola (University of Helsinki), Śrī K. N. Sahasranāma Aiyar (Koṭuntirappulli village, Kēraḷa), the India Office

Library (London), and the University of Utrecht Library (The Netherlands). Necessary tape recordings of Nampūtiri Sāmaveda, as sung by Śrī Muṭṭattukkāṭṭu Iṭṭi Ravi Nampūtiri and Śrī Tōṭṭam Śaṅkaranārāyaṇan Nampūtiri, were graciously furnished by Prof. E. R. Sreekrishna Sarma (Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati). The Greenwood-Leflore Public Library (Greenwood, Mississippi) has helped me considerably by permitting use of its microfilm readers. Special thanks are due my parents, who maintained an atmosphere conducive to research on such a weighty subject.

It is my fervent hope that this decipherment will expedite publication of the Jaiminīya sāmans, important musical masterworks of ancient India, in their entirety.