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पुराणम्—PURĀṆA

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वसन्तपञ्चम्यङ्कः

[January 22, 1980

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सरस्वती-स्तवनम्

ब्रह्मस्वरूपा परमा ज्योतीरूपा सनातनी ।
सर्वविद्याधिदेवी या तस्यै वाण्यै नमो नमः ॥

यया विना जगत् सर्वं शश्वज्जीवन्मृतं सदा ।
ज्ञानाधिदेवी या तस्यै सरस्वत्यै नमो नमः ॥

यया विना जगत् सर्वं मूकमुन्मत्तवत् सदा ।
वाग्धिष्ठातृदेवी या तस्यै वाण्यै नमो नमः ॥

हिमचन्दनकुन्देन्दुकुमुदाम्भोजसन्निभा ।
वर्णाधिदेवी या तस्यै चाक्षरायै नमो नमः ॥

विसर्गबिन्दुमात्राणां यदधिष्ठानमेव च ।
इत्थं त्वं गीयते सद्भिर्भारत्यै ते नमो नमः ॥

यया विनाऽत्र संख्याकृत् संख्यां कर्तुं न शक्नुते ।
कालसंख्यास्वरूपा या तस्यै देव्यै नमो नमः ॥

व्याख्यास्वरूपा या देवी व्याख्याधिष्ठातृदेवता ।
भ्रमसिद्धान्तरूपा या तस्यै देव्यै नमो नमः ॥

समृत्तिशक्तिर्ज्ञानशक्तिर्बुद्धिशक्तिस्वरूपिणी ।
प्रतिभाकल्पनाशक्तिर्या च तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

—(Brahmavaivarta P., Prakṛti-Kh. 5. 10-17)

NOTE ON THE SARASVATĪ-STAVANA

In this *stavana* or eulogy sage Yajñavalkya eulogises Goddess Sarasvatī. The importance of this *stavana* is that Sarasvatī has been represented here as the power of speech and also the speech itself (*vāk*, *vāṇī*, *bhāratī*) as well as the presiding deity of speech (*vāg-adhiṣṭhātr-devī*); she is all the knowledge and also the presiding deity of knowledge and its various sciences (*sarvavidyādhivevī* and *jñānādhivevī*). Then, she also presides over all the letters of an alphabet (*varṇādhivevī*), *visarga*, *bindu* and *mātrā-s*. Without her aid one cannot even count numbers and so she is the presiding deity of numbers, and also assumes the form of numbers (*Kāla-saṁkhyā-svarūpā*). Thus, she presides over all the various works of knowledge and different sciences, which are and may be composed by learned authors. She also assumes the form of a commentary (*vyākhyā-svarūpā*) and also presides over it (*vyākhyādhīṣṭhātrī*). Then, she is herself both the aspects of knowledge—wrong knowledge and the right or valid knowledge—(*bhramasiddhānta-rūpā*). That is to say, knowledge whether it is wrong or right, whether it is in the form of fallacy or illusion (*bhrama*) or a right conclusion or an admitted truth (*siddhānta*)—all that is Goddess Sarasvatī.

Letters (*varṇa-s*), *visarga*, *bindu* and *mātrā-s* belong to speech, whether written or spoken; fallacious and right knowledge comprises all knowledge, and hence all speech and knowledge is Sarasvatī herself and also presided by her. All (this speech, acquisition of knowledge and knowledge expressed through speech) may be regarded as the functions of mind which it (the mind) performs with its inherent powers called mental powers or faculties such as the power of memory (*smṛti-śakti*), power of knowing (*jñāna-śakti*), power of understanding (*buddhi-śakti*), genius (*pratibhā*) and power of imagination (*Kalpanā-śakti*)—all this is the form of Sarasvatī herself. This all-embracing conception of Goddess Sarasvatī in the sphere of speech, knowledge and mind (an instrument of speech and knowledge) has been so vividly brought out in this *Sarasvatī-stavana*, which inspires us to sublimate and even deify human speech and knowledge and all the psychological faculties and functions of mind. A man who regards speech, knowledge and mind as divine gifts and

has a veneration and respect for them, regarding these as the real divine aspects and manifestations of Goddess Sarasvatī on the human plane is a real devotee and worshipper of Sarasvatī. Only such a man can truly eulogise Goddess Sarasvatī. Sage Yajñavalkya was really such a person. Hence, the eulogy (*stuti*) sung by him with an inspired mental attitude is really worth studying, so that it may also inspire us and lead us towards the real devotion of Sarasvatī so that we may be fit persons to sing the praise of Goddess Sarasvatī. Without realising this divine aspect of speech, knowledge and mental faculties in our life the singing of the praise (*stuti*) of Goddess Sarasvatī may be a mere lip-eulogy and may not lead us to our desired goal. This is the lesson which may be derived from this *stavana* of Sarasvatī reproduced here.

— Anand Swarup Gupta

LILĀ IN THE BHĀGAVATA PURĀNA

By

CLIFFORD G. HOSPITAL

[अत्र श्रीमद्भागवतमहापुराणे वर्णितानां भगवतो लीलानां विवेचनं कृतम् । ब्रह्मसूत्रस्य 'लोकवत्तु लीलाकैवल्यम्' (२.१.३३) सूत्रस्य व्याख्यानं आचार्यैर्बहुविधं प्रस्तुतम् । जगतः सर्गोपासनं संहारश्च ब्रह्मणो लीलाविलास एव । वस्तुतो भगवतो लीला तस्य नैसर्गिकं विलसनमेवास्ति । अस्यां लीलायां न कोऽपि बाह्यो हेतुः । प्रारम्भे लेखकेन लीलापदार्थस्य विविधार्थाः स्पष्टीकृताः । अनन्तरं भागवतपुराणानुसारतो भगवतः कृष्णस्य बाललीलासुरसंहारगोपीक्रीडनादिकानां विविधलीलानां संक्षेपतो विमर्शो विहितः ।]

The idea of play is a very important one in the history of Hindu thought. The earliest major text where the word "līlā" occurs is the *Brahmasūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa, which predates BhP by up to a thousand years. All of the major commentators on the *Brahmasūtra* discuss the use of the word as it occurs in 2.1.33 : *lokavat tu līlā kaivalyam* : "But as in ordinary life, creation is mere sport,"¹ and virtually all agree in interpreting this on the analogy of kings who are completely fulfilled, and who therefore play, not to fulfil some hidden inner need, but as a spontaneous act.

[Śaṅkara] uses the example of breathing which goes on without reference to any extraneous purpose, merely following the laws of its own nature. So also creation proceeds from the nature of the Supreme without reference to any purpose.²

The idea is that creation is not something that God needs to do. It is not a sign of incompleteness in God. To talk of God's incompleteness would be inherently contradictory; God does not need to create. So, in order to preserve the nature of God, one emphasizes that he is independent of his act of creation. It is perhaps in keeping with this that BhP says the Lord is self-fulfilled

1. See S. Radhakrishnan, *The Brahma Sutra* (New York : Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 362.

2. *Ibid.*

(*ātmārāma*),³ not attached to his creation or to his devotees. In all this, the connotation of *līlā* is merely negative. It is a safeguarding of the Lord from imperfection.

There is clearly a considerable development from this view of *līlā* to the use of *līlā* as part of the compound *Rāmalīlā*, a word used to designate dramas which re-enact the events of the life of Rāma. The term is, as Norvin Hein has indicated,⁴ directly related to the use by Tulasīdās in the *Rāmcāritmānas* of the term *Harilīlā* ("play or sport of Hari"). Tulasīdās uses this as a generic term for the activity of Viṣṇu in his incarnation as Rāma, and it is this account of Rāma's life in the *Rāmcāritmānas* which forms the basis of the drama known as *Rāmlīlā*. Here the focus of *līlā* is the activity of God not in the creation of the world, but rather in his incarnations.

Another aspect of later Vaiṣṇava understandings of *līlā* can be seen in the writing of Baladeva, a Bengali Vaiṣṇava of the eighteenth century. As Radhakrishnan indicated, when Baladeva comments on the word *līlā* in the *Brahmasūtra*, he interprets it as a spontaneous expression of joy.

Baladeva makes out that *līlā* or sport is the overflow of the joy within. As in ordinary life, a man full of cheerfulness on awakening from sound sleep dances about without any motive or need but simply from the fullness of spirit, so is the case with the creation of the world by God.⁵

There are in these two examples, three important shifts in the connotation of *līlā* from that found in the *Brahmasūtra* as interpreted by earlier commentators :

- (1) *Līlā* may refer to incarnation rather than to creation.
- (2) The *līlā* of the Lord in his incarnation is something that the devotee might well imitate in dramatic activity.
- (3) The *līlā* of God is not merely purposeless activity; rather it is spontaneous and joyous self-expression.

3. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (Bombay : Venkatesvara Press, 1910) 10.33.20. Hereafter abbreviated as BhP.

4. Norvin Hein, *The Miracle Plays of Mathura* (New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 1972), p. 70.

5. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

In relation to the development of all three of these ideas, the BhP is a crucial text, so that the BhP understanding of the idea of play merits careful study.

It should be noted at the outset that there are other words than *līlā* used in BhP for this idea of play or sport. The most common of these are derivatives of *krīḍ* and *vi + √hr̥*. The term *līlā*, however, is the one that develops as a powerful motif for conceiving the significance of the activity of God.

As in the *Brahmasūtra*, the link of the concept of *līlā* with the activity of God in the cosmic process is quite important in BhP. A frequently recurring formula refers to the three phases of creation, preservation, and destruction of the universe (*udbhava-sthāna-nirodha*;⁶ *udbhava-sthiti-laya*;⁷ *sarga-sthiti-samyama*;⁸ etc.). Not infrequently this is linked with the idea of play. BhP 1.10.24 refers to the Lord who in his play (*ātma-līlayā*) creates, preserves and destroys the universe and is not attached to it. Often the motif occurs in hymns like the following :

I bow down to the endless one,
of enduring power, of pure deeds,
of imperishable self—
who, in his play,
executes the creation, preservation and destruction
of the universe
by means of the *guṇas*.⁹

What the implications of the term *līlā* are in the context of these formulae is impossible to say, for there are no clues given. One's estimate here will have to depend upon other evidences. A piece which suggests a view similar to that of the *Brahmasūtra* is BhP 6.15 where the sages Aṅgiras and Nārada are explaining to King Citraketu—who is weighed down with grief at the death of his son—that relationships in one lifetime do not endure beyond that life : all things pass away. There follows a verse which serves to give a basis for not clinging to the things of the world.

6. BhP 2.4.12.

7. 3.9.14.

8. 7.8.40.

9. *Ibid.*

By means of beings
 who are created by him
 and who are not independent,
 the Lord of beings creates, preserves and destroys
 the beings of the universe—
 indifferent, like a child.¹⁰

The argument here is somewhat similar to that in which *līlā* is used to point up the indifference, and hence perfection, of God. It develops its implications, however, not for the perfection of God, but for the life of man. The idea is that if God is not attached to the universe—that is, it fulfils no purpose for him—the devotee also should not be attached to it; his attachment should be elsewhere.

This is in keeping with many of the BhP's expressions about liberation. But BhP also views Bhagavān as Lord of the cosmic process and we shall attempt later to understand the relation of that to the concept of *līlā*.

The link of the idea of play and the idea of *avatāra* occurs in texts earlier than BhP. In both H and ViP the childhood activities of Kṛṣṇa are described in terms which suggest their playfulness.¹¹ But no wider implications are drawn from this fact. In BhP, however, the playfulness of the Lord has spread far beyond the childhood of Kṛṣṇa. One can get some idea of the vast embrace of *līlā* through consideration of a word which appears in BhP as a technical term for the *avatāras* of the Lord. They are called *līlāvatāra*. Although there is no explanation of the meaning of this term, in one section where it is used, the context is enlightening: in 2.7 there is a list of twenty-four *avatāras* which are introduced as *līlāvatāras*.¹² In the list the idea of play occurs three times: *vihāran* (v. 28), *salīlām* (v. 32), and *krīḍan* (v. 33). All refer to events in the life of the youthful Kṛṣṇa. Within the wider context of BhP 2.6 and 2.7, *līlāvatāra* stands in contrast to two other terms: first, *ādyo 'vatārah....parasya* ("the primordial *avatāra* of the Supreme One")¹³ which is then described in a series that begins with *puruṣa*

10. 6.15.6.

11. See the translations by H. H. Wilson and M. N. Dutt of *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 5.6-14 and *Harivamśa* chapters 61-63.

12. 2.6.45.

13. 2.6.41.

and goes through the beings and elements that make up the universe; and second, when the account of *līlāvātāras* is complete, Brahmā mentions some more specialized beings and concepts related to the phases of cosmic process, and these he calls *māyā-vibhūtis* :

At the time of creation,
 there is *tapas*, myself, the nine *ṛsis*,
 and those who are the lords of creatures;
 then in the time of maintenance
 there is *dharmā*, Viṣṇu, Manu,
 the kings of the gods and the kings of earth;
 at the end,
 there is *adharmā*, Hara and the *asuras*
 subject to anger.
 These are the *māyā-vibhūtis*
 of that supremely powerful one.¹⁴

In BhP 2.6 and 2.7 then, there is a theological attempt to place the *avatāras* of the Lord in the context of his other manifestations. There are thus three basic kinds of manifestations : the primal *avatāra*, his manifestation as the cosmic Puruṣa, the universe deriving from Puruṣa; the supernal manifestations of his *māyā* seen in the principles which are characteristic of, and the beings who are associated with the different phases of the cosmic process; and the *avatāras* called *līlāvātāras*.

The distinguishing of the direct manifestations of the Lord in an embodied form as *līlāvātāras* reflects a theology developing within the whole of BhP. For in this short account of *līlāvātāras* the play is made explicit in the activities of Kṛṣṇa; in the broad scope of the Purāṇa also, while there are suggestions of the idea in accounts of other *avatāras* it is in Kṛṣṇa that the fullness of this *līlā* is seen.

In the account of *varāha* the use of *līlā* occurs in reference to both of the central activities, the slaying of the Daitya Hiraṇyākṣa (3.13.32) and the raising of the earth from Rasātala (3.13.47).¹⁵ As the end of the account is reached, there is a formal recapitula-

14: 2.7.39.

15. See also 4.7.26.

tion in which the slaying of Hiranyākṣa is called a *mahādbhutaṃ vikrīḍitaṃ* (3.19.37), and later the raising of earth from Rasātala and the slaying of Hiranyākṣa are together referred to as *līlā* (3.20.8).

In relation to the *nṛsiṃha avatāra*, there is a hymn to Hari sung by Prahlāda at the slaying of Hiranyakaśipu.

The playing of this blessed Lord
by means of these beautiful *avatāra*
is for the protection and well being of the universe
and for his own personal enjoyment.¹⁶

There is also a formal conclusion to the story of *nṛsiṃha* in which it is described as 'the lion-play of the primal person.'¹⁷

In the accounts of *kūrma* and *matsya* the word used to express the idea of play is one often used for water sports—*vi + √ hr̥*. At the beginning of the account of the Tortoise, Hari is pictured as 'desirous of sporting by means of the churning of the ocean, etc.'¹⁸ Similarly at the beginning of the story of the Fish (8.24.31).

Within the extended account of *matsya* the word is used again, and it also occurs at 8.24.54 and 2.7.12 in summary statements about the Fish.

In the account of the churning of the ocean, before the Lord actually assumes the Tortoise form, he is pictured as taking Mount Meru and placing it in the ocean to be used as a churning rod.

Having with *līlā*
lifted the mountain on to Garuḍa
with one hand,
and having himself mounted Garuḍa,
he proceeded to the ocean
surrounded by the hosts of *suras* and *asuras*.¹⁹

An intriguing aspect of this description is that it prefigures the raising by Kṛṣṇa of the hill Govardhana, also performed 'with *līlā*. (10.25.19).

16. 7.9.13b : *kṣemāya bhūtaya utātmāsukhāya cāsya vikrīḍitaṃ bhagavato rucirāvatār.ih.*

17. 7.10.44 : *ādīpuruṣasya mṛgendralīlām.*

18. 8.6.17.

19. 8.6.38.

The account of the Dwarf (*vāmana*) does not associate directly the action of the Lord with *līlā*. But just after the central action of the three steps has been undertaken the Lord is addressed by the wife of Bali Vindhyaṅgalī (8.22.20) : 'The three worlds have been created by you, O Lord, for the purpose of play'. It seems almost inconceivable that this does not also have undertones suggesting the playfulness of the Lord in taking his three strides. It is the manifestation of the Lord as the cosmic *puruṣa* in the account of the three strides which most easily lends itself to an association of the general idea of the world created by the Lord in play, and this more specific one of the Lord's play in his *avatāras*. And finally, the Rāma story which is not told in great detail in BhP, probably because the author of BhP is clearly much more interested in Kṛṣṇa, the link with *līlā* is still made (9.11.20).

Clearly, then, there is a quite studied attempt on the part of the BhP author to link these *avatāras* with the idea of play. But we are given little indication here of what is implied in the use of *līlā* and its equivalents. In order to begin to understand what is being expressed in these earlier *avatāras*, we must look, as we have said, at the life of Kṛṣṇa for it is here that the ramifications of *līlā* become clearest. It is here also that the activity of God is spoken of as Kṛṣṇa-*līlā*²⁰ and the *līlā* of Bhagavān²¹ and the references are clearly to the activities of Kṛṣṇa among the pastoral people of Gokula-Vṛndāvana. It is the childhood and youthful play of Kṛṣṇa which enlivens the BhP vision of the activity of God as *līlā*. W. G. Archer, in *The Loves of Krishna*, points to a change that comes over Kṛṣṇa after his move to Mathurā.

All these incidents provide a clue to Krishna's nature. They illustrate his attitudes, confirm him in his role as protector and preserver and show him in a new light—that of a guardian and upholder of morality. He is still a fervent lover, but his love is sanctioned and formalized by legal marriage. Moreover, a new respect characterizes his dealings with Brahmans and his approach to festivals. Instead of the young revolutionary, we now meet a sage conservative. These changes colour his final career.²²

20. 10.11.33; 10.35.1.

21. 10.30.14.

22. W. G. Archer, *The Loves of Krishna in Indian Painting and Poetry* (London : George Allen and Unwin, 1957), p. 63.

Archer argues that the writer of BhP is happier with the later Kṛṣṇa—and that he strives hard to bring the character of Kṛṣṇa to be finally more in line with accepted moral patterns. Walter Spink similarly pictures the writer breathing a sigh of relief when he finally moves from Vṛndāvana to Mathurā.

The evidence, however, is not so clear as Archer and Spink indicate. The writer of BhP is certainly concerned about questions of morality or *dharma* and there is a wrestling with the moral problem of Kṛṣṇa's relationship with the *gopīs* at the time when he joins with them in the *rāsalīlā*. It is also true that the interest in the sexual phase of *līlā* with the *gopīs* is developed much more in later writings. Nevertheless, the BhP develops very imaginatively the materials related to Kṛṣṇa's childhood and youth, and these developments affect profoundly the more abstract ideas of *avatāra* and *līlā*.

In BhP there are often short summaries of events that are told in extended form elsewhere in the purāṇas. Often one can get some clues about which of the extended materials are most important for the BhP poet from looking closely at such summaries. In 3.2, there is one such short account of the life of Kṛṣṇa at Vraja. The emphasis is largely on his childish playfulness: Kṛṣṇa played (*vyaharad*) while tending the calves in company with the cowherd boys (v. 27); he displayed his childish activities for the inhabitants of Vraja (*kaumārīṃ darśayamś ceṣṭāṃ ... vrajaukasām*) (v. 28); he amused himself playing his flute. Also, (v. 30),

Like a child his playthings (*kriḍanakān*),
he smashed with *līlā*
the *asuras*
who assumed different forms at will,
having been commissioned by King Kāṃsa.

There is also mention of the taming of Kāliya (vs. 31-32), the raising of Govardhana (vs. 32-33),²³ and Kṛṣṇa enjoying himself (*reme*) with the *gopīs* (v. 30).

See also Walter M. Spink, *Krishnamandala: a Devotional Theme in Indian Art* (Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1971), p. 92.

23. The people are protected by the mountain which is said to resemble a play-umbrella (*gotralīlāpatreṇā*).

Given the incidence of words denoting play in this summary section, we are not surprised to find that in the fuller account in the tenth book, the BhP poet delights in telling about the playful activity of the child Kṛṣṇa and his older brother Balarāma. Living in this pastoral setting, they delight the women of the village by hanging on the tails of the calves and being dragged around (10.8.24), by untying calves, by stealing curds and milk and butter (10.8.29). Not always is Kṛṣṇa's activity mischievous. At times the emphasis is simply on the unaffected free activity of the little child—his dancing and singing, his tossing his arms about (10.11.8-9).

The styles of play change with time. It begins by being something which takes place in the presence of the *gopīs*, and particularly of his foster-mother Yaśodā, as he plays in and around the house. But then the scene shifts. Kṛṣṇa is old enough to go off with the other boys and he plays in company with them.²⁴ Soon the move to Vṛndāvana is made; and then in time they become cowherd boys whose task is to tend the calves (hence Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are called *vatsapālau*).²⁵ Their play is of a different style.

Sometimes playing on a flute,
 sometimes shooting with slings,
 sometimes stamping on the ground
 with feet adorned with little bells;
 sometimes pretending to be cows and bulls
 and imitating their cries,
 they fought one another.²⁶

Again and again the picture is presented of the idyllic life of the cowherd boys in Vṛndāvana.

Some played flutes
 other blew horns
 some sang with the black bees
 other hummed with the cuckoos.
 They chased the shadows of a flock of birds
 and followed the wild geese;

24. 10.11.12-13.

25. 10.11.37.

26. 10.11.39-40.

they stood still with the cranes,
and danced with the peacocks.²⁷

At this stage Kṛṣṇa is surrounded by other cowherd boys, as he had formerly been surrounded by the *gopīs*. A new dimension is added to the story when it is revealed that these cowherd boys are really deities.

For Kṛṣṇa dancing
some sang;
and others
making music with flutes
and clapping hands
praised him.
The gods
who had disguised themselves
in being born as cowherds,
taking the form of cowherd boys,
gave praise to Kṛṣṇa and Rāma—
like actors applauding the leading actor.²⁸

Later, the scene shifts again, and Kṛṣṇa is surrounded once more by *gopīs*. The play takes on a sexual aspect as Kṛṣṇa steals their clothes while they bathe in the Yamunā, and dances with them the *rāsālīlā*, by the light of the autumn moon. In the course of the account of the *rāsālīlā* there is yet another listing of the activities of Kṛṣṇa—and they are called *līlās*. The context in which it occurs is this: Kṛṣṇa disappears from the *gopīs*, and in their anguish they begin to imitate his *līlās*. The events which they imitate are: Kṛṣṇa's sucking the breast of Pūtanā; his overturning and shattering of the cart; his being carried off by the demon Trinivarta; his slaying of the *asuras* Vatsa and Baka; his playing the flute while others around him say, "Well done!"; his charming walk (*lalitām gatim*); his taming of Kāliya; his quenching of a forest fire; his being tied up by Yaśodā after he had stolen butter.²⁹

Some of these features clearly have to do with childish play and pranks. Others, however, appear to be related more to the ideal of the military hero—the protector Lord who continually slays

27. 10.12.7-8.

28. 10.18.10-11.

29. 10.30.15-23.

demonic, troublesome creatures. It is difficult at first sight to understand how these can be thought of as *līlā*. Yet when we look at the detailed accounts of some of these we find that the writer has included the idea of *līlā* in the accounts.

As noted, *līlā* is used in 3.2 in connection with the defeat of *asuras*, and the raising of Govardhana. In the detailed account of the raising of Govardhana, *līlā* is used again and again. Kṛṣṇa's action is a response to the plea of his cowherd friends for protection from the wrath of Indra, which is manifesting itself in a massive tropical thunderstorm. Kṛṣṇa is at the time a child of seven. His action is likened to the activity of a child at play.

“This is my firm resolve”

He said this.

Then, taking Govardhana with one hand

Kṛṣṇa held it up with *līlā*

as a little child

holds up an umbrella.³⁰

When the storm is eventually over, Kṛṣṇa replaces the mountain “with *līlā*”.³¹ In the following chapter the cowherds give expression to the amazement and fear which they feel at witnessing such a remarkable event.

“How could this seven-year-old

hold up with *līlā*,

in one hand,

the foremost of mountains—

like the king of elephants

holdig a lotus ?”³²

And the story concludes with a reiteration of this theme.³³

The image of the child playing with the umbrella obviously attracted our poet. No doubt this is because it is so germane with the characteristic ideas he is trying to express. Kṛṣṇa is a child at play with all the artlessness and joyousness characteristic of the child. Like a child playing at being king, Kṛṣṇa holds up as an

30. 10.25.19.

31. 10.25.28.

32. 10.26.3.

33. 10.26.25.

umbrella this mountain which is able to shelter all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, human and bovine.

Part of the point of the use of *līlā* then is that the raising of Govardhana is 'child's play' to Kṛṣṇa. And this appears to be a hidden agenda in much of the use of *līlā* in accounts of the Lord's heroic acts (*vikramalīlā* as they are called in 9.24.64). These draw upon a motif that can be seen in other stories about Kṛṣṇa : when Yaśodā looks into Kṛṣṇa's mouth after he has been stuffing it with earth and sees there the entire universe; when she tries to tie him down with rope in order to curb his mischievous acts, that no amount of rope will hold him; when the baby Kṛṣṇa smashes a cart under which he has been placed by kicking it with his feet; when he, bearing all the worlds within him, dances upon the heads of the snake Kāliya. In each case a contrast is drawn between the smallness of the child and his greatness and power as Lord of the universe.

In order to appreciate how this contrast works in BhP it is necessary to look at *līlā* from another angle.

One of the first things one notices as one reads of the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa is that there are always people around him and they are responding to him emotionally. He charms them, delights them, gives them pleasure. The *gopīs* laugh at his pranks and all the people of the village are full of joy. The responses pictured are what one would expect of any mother or father on beholding the infectious playful activity of his or her child. The remarkable point here is that we find a crowd of people all attracted to Kṛṣṇa in a similar fashion : all seem to respond to Kṛṣṇa as if he were *their* son. One even begins to suspect that the cowherds and *gopīs* love Kṛṣṇa more than they love their own children and such an idea is given direct expression in the story of the hiding of the calves and the young boys who tend them. This is done by the god Brahmā who shuts them up in a mountain because he hopes to see some charming marvel performed by Kṛṣṇa. And Kṛṣṇa obliges. For a whole year by means of his *māyā* he carried out a most marvelous deception creating a whole series of replicas of boys and calves. There is a description of the affection of mothers for children and cows for calves and it is rendered in poignant fashion in the picture of milk oozing from breasts and udders.

Moreover.

The affection of the inhabitants of Vraja
towards their children
throughout the year
gradually increased beyond measure
becoming as it had been solely
towards Kṛṣṇa.³⁴

Joy and delight, love and affection comprise one style of response towards the child Kṛṣṇa. There is, however, another style which ranges through wonder and amazement to agitation and fear. It is evident in a number of episodes we have mentioned : Kṛṣṇa's smashing the cart; Yaśodā's attempt to tie him down with rope; his holding aloft of the hill Govardhana. In general it is the heroic deeds, the manifestation of the powerful Lord of the universe, which lead to a response of amazement or fear.

Frequently it is suggested that this fear or amazement is due to ignorance on the part of the cowherds and the *gopīs*—they do not realize who Kṛṣṇa is.³⁵

It might thus appear that amazement is a lower level response to Kṛṣṇa's activity, a natural response of the ignorant in the face of the remarkable and startling deeds of the divine child. Yet knowing does not necessarily reduce amazement and fear as one can see from the experience of Yaśodā, when she sees in Kṛṣṇa's mouth the entire universe. Yaśodā's response to this magnificent and intense vision is to shake with terror, and then to worship the Lord who has for a moment lifted the veil of *māyā*. Yet soon the Lord envelops her again in *māyā* which is "of the nature of affection for her son".³⁶ In this case fear is the result of knowing, and love, no less authentic a response to the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa, a result of her ignorance.

Whether the people in Gokula-Vṛndāvana know who Kṛṣṇa is, is unclear in BhP. At times there are suggestions that they do not. And, gradually one comes to realize that whether they know

34. 10.13.26.

35. See for example 10.7.10.

36. See 10.9.17-19.

or not is irrelevant. The important thing is that they respond to him in delight and love, in awe and wonder.³⁷

What we see then is an interplay between the *līlā* of God in the forms of child and youth and the response which this *līlā* calls forth in his devotees. And the devotional aspect is further underlined by the fact that both amazement and love can lead into a recounting of the tales of Kṛṣṇa (10.11.58) or singing songs about the *Kṛṣṇalīlā* (10.11.33, 10.25.33). Not only do *gopīs* and cow-herd boys join in such acts of devotion; even heavenly beings—*devas*, *sadhya*s, *siddhas*, *gandharvas*, *caraṇas*—praise Kṛṣṇa, showering him with flowers. Sometimes, however, the songs are the product of *duḥkha*, the pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa. For if to see his play arouses affection and delight, a logical extension is that to be with him is the source of greatest joy, to be absent from him the source of deepest anguish :

“When they were separated from him,
a moment was
like a hundred *yugas*.”³⁸

Separation does not have, however, a merely negative connotation. When Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the *gopīs* just before he danced the *rāsalīlā* with them, they engaged in a frenzied search for him. The intensity of their love was so great that they sang songs about him, and acted out the great events of his life, his *līlās*. When Kṛṣṇa returned he explained to them that he refrained from being attached to his friends who are attached to him, in order to maintain the intensity of their attachment.³⁹ We find, therefore, a continual interplay between Kṛṣṇa's being with the *gopīs* (when they are caught up in the ecstasy of seeing his play,

37. It is important to see here that the response of those around the child Kṛṣṇa is an extension of the natural response of parents—and in the Indian context of the raising of children within an extended family, this may include a number of parental figures—towards the delightful and amazing play of their children. What parent has not spent hours chuckling at childish pranks? What parent has not had that vision of all the worlds encompassed in the mouth or the whorl of an ear or the finger-dance of his/her child?

38. 10.19.15-16.

39. 10.32.20.

looking at his beautiful form, touching his hands and his feet), and his absence from them (when they are caught up in a similar tough painful intensity in which they recreate his presence, as it were, by mediating on him, singing songs about his *līlā*, acting out his *līlā*).

Two motifs intimately tied to this aspect of a special relationship between the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa, and worthy of attention as aspects of his *līlā* are Kṛṣṇa's flute and the *rāsailā*.

The flute is often there in accounts of Kṛṣṇa's play with the cowherd boys⁴⁰ but it is used most powerfully in relation to the *gopīs*. It is the sound of the flute which is the first sign to the *gopīs* who have been pining for him all day while he has been away minding the cattle, that the boy Kṛṣṇa is returning. They rush out to meet him.

Kṛṣṇa with eyes like lotus petals—
 the reciting and hearing of whose deeds is meritorious—
 being praised by the cowherds following him,
 entering Vraja
 along with his elder brother.
 His looks were dusty with cowdust;
 he was decorated with wild flowers and peacocks feathers
 and with beautiful glances and endearing smiles;
 and he played on his flute
 as his praises were sung by his followers.
 The *gopīs*, their eyes longing to see him,
 ran out to meet him.
 Having drunk, with their eyes
 resembling black bees,
 the honey of the lotus-like face of Mukunda,
 the women of Vraja
 gave up their anguish (*tāpam*)
 born of separation.⁴¹

But if the flute is significant as the first sign of Kṛṣṇa's presence, a presence they cannot resist, it is soon the flute itself which is irresistible. As with the other *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa, the playing of the flute arouses in creatures wonder, love, infatuation. Peacocks

40. 10.15.2.

41. 10.15.41-43a.

dance, goddesses lose all self-respect, cows stand caressing Kṛṣṇa in their minds, their eyes flowing with tears. All creatures are delighted, captivated by the sound of the flute. This, at least, is the way the *gopīs* see it. For the two occasions when the theme of the flute is presented with greatest poignancy are in *adhyaayas* 21 and 35, and in both cases it is a part of the intense contemplation by the *gopīs* of the *līlā* of the absent Kṛṣṇa.

The sound of the flute also arouses the desire of the *gopīs* for Kṛṣṇa. It is clear that the love is of an erotic style (10.21.3-4).

Then the women of Vraja
heard the song of his flute (*veṅugītām*)
arousing desire.⁴²

And some in Kṛṣṇa's absence
related his exploits to their friends.
Calling to remembrance
the activity of Kṛṣṇa,
they attempted to describe it
but were not able.

For their minds, O king,
were distracted
by the intensity of their desire.

The flute is a powerful motif in BhP because it becomes a symbolic focus of the modes in which the Kṛṣṇalīlā work.

The *rāsālīlā* or *rāsakṛīḍā*⁴³ is usually regarded as the climax or culmination of all the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. There is good reason for thinking this, for it brings together many of the aspects we have seen associated with *līlā*.

At the beginning of the story, the song of Kṛṣṇa, or perhaps of Kṛṣṇa's flute, which arouses desire (*kāma*) for him, draws the women to him. BhP dwells upon the suddenness with which they leave their homes and families—everything which is normally important to them—in order to be with him. The intensity of their desire is

42. The word translated 'desire' is *smara*, an epithet used as a name of Kāma, the god of love or desire. In 10.35.3 the views of the sky-roaming deities are also pictured as having 'their minds pierced by the arrow of Kāma (*kāmamārgaṇasamarpitacittāḥ*).

43. 10.29.33.

emphasized by Kṛṣṇa's telling them to go back to their homes again. Their rejection by him brings them to grief and anger; and also to a reiteration of their intense desire kindled by the sight of him. And although King Parīkṣit intimates that the *gopīs* perceive Kṛṣṇa as a lover (*kānta*) not as Brahman,⁴⁴ yet they say to Kṛṣṇa,

You, O Lord, (*Īśe*)
are the most beloved,
the friend and Self (*ātman*)
of embodied beings.⁴⁵

They refer to themselves as devotees, and continually they mention the feet of Kṛṣṇa which are in BhP a powerful focus of the devotee's attention.

But then the theme of separation is introduced. Their desire is increased in intensity when Kṛṣṇa disappears from them. In his absence, they spend a great deal of time looking for him. As they search frantically, they talk incessantly about Kṛṣṇa's beautiful form and lotus feet and about the beauties of his flute.

The climax of events is in the *rāsa krīḍā* itself. Here Kṛṣṇa dances with the women in a circle dance, and by means of his *yogamāyā* he increases the number of his forms so that each of the women is aware that she is dancing with Kṛṣṇa. Later he plays with them in the Yamunā and then wanders on the river bank.

Perhaps the most notable aspect of this *līlā* is the sexual component. In much of the earlier *līlā*, this is not so obvious; though increasingly throughout the BhP account of the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa one becomes aware of a sexual aspect. A major precursor of the *rāsa* dance is the hiding of the clothes of the young *gopīs* when they are bathing in the Yamunā River. The attitude of the wives of the Brahmans towards him seems very similar. At the stage of the *rāsa* dance, however, the sexual aspect becomes quite overt to the extent that King Parīkṣit is troubled by it. If the Blessed Lord descended with a part of himself (*aṁśena*) for the establishment of *dharma*, and for the suppression of *adharmā*, how, he wonders, does he act so adharmically?⁴⁶ The answer is given in two parts. The first is

44. 10.29.15.

45. 20.30.22.

46. 10.33.30.

that gods do deviate from the path of virtue (*dharma-vyatikramah*). Yet for them it is not sin, as devouring everything is not a sin for fire. That is, there are some beings who transcend the whole *dharma-adharma* complex. So, (10.33.34),

How much less will he
the Lord of all beings—
of animals, mortals, and divine beings,
of all that are to be ruled over—
conform to what is proper or improper.

The Lord of *māyā*, he transcends *māyā*; the Lord of *dharma*, he transcends consideration of *dharma*. It is clear that the question of sexual morality hardly applies to the One who indwells the *gopīs* and their husbands—and indeed all embodied beings. The second part of the answer takes us into a different set of ideas (10.33.37) :

In order to show grace to all creatures,
having assumed a human body
he engages in such playful activity.
He who listens to accounts of this play
becomes his devotee.

Kṛṣṇa's erotic play with the *gopīs*, like that of other *līlās*, has no selfish motive in it, for he is self-fulfilled. His descent is motivated by his desire to manifest his grace. Central to understanding this activity is the realization that this play calls forth in those who see it and experience it, fear, wonder, joy, pleasure, affection, desire—all forms of attachment to Kṛṣṇa.

There are later Indian writers who develop from these accounts a definite gradation of relationships with Kṛṣṇa, from that of a servant through to that of a lover. Nothing so definite can be seen in BhP. Nevertheless, Kṛṣṇa is pictured as utilizing and redirecting the natural affections of human beings in order to draw people to him. It is particularly the natural affections of women—of a mother to her child, of a girl to her lover—that Kṛṣṇa manipulates. That is not to say that there is exclusive concentration on the women, for all of the inhabitants of Vraja are witness to the playfulness and beauty of Kṛṣṇa. The young friends of Kṛṣṇa certainly derive great joy from being with him. But it is the women who are infatuated by the infant, the toddler, the cowherd boy, the young

adolescent. It is they in whom one sees the deepest and most intense attachment and joy. And there is a perceptive awareness of the twofold direction of female sexuality—towards the child and towards the lover—and of the continuity between these. It is the deep emotions which are associated with these basic sexual drives that are evoked by the Lord as playful child and playful youth.

There is perhaps in BhP gradation of a different kind, noticeable when one compares the earlier *avatāras* with the Kṛṣṇa *līlā*. One is hardly aware of devotees surrounding these earlier *līlās*; occasionally the gods are there, but we become aware of them only when they engage, say, in a final hymn of praise to Bhagavān.

In BhP there is a massive interest in the activity of Kṛṣṇa as *līlā* and in human response to it. This interest flows over to the other *avatāras* so that they too are seen as *līlā*; and this new vision results in the concept of *līlāvatāra*. The idea of play continues to be used in relation to the process of the creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe; and the concept occurs so frequently that it seems almost impossible that the cosmic process is not being imbued with the joyous spontaneity of the Lord. Nevertheless, as the play of God it is clearly in the background: *līlāvatāra* does *not* refer to God's activity in the cosmic process. Again, that Bhagavān is Lord of all, the one who is responsible for the cosmic process, is a backdrop to all other aspects of his *līlā*; for in part the enchantment of the play of the child Kṛṣṇa, its remarkable effect on us, is achieved through our encounter with his power as cosmic Lord.

But the central interest of the BhP poet is in bringing the devotee to see the enchanting play of the *līlāvatāras* and above all in unveiling the Kṛṣṇa-*līlā*, that play in which Bhagavān draws all to himself in devotion.

POPULAR LIFE AND BELIEFS AS REFLECTED IN THE PURĀṆA-S

By

SURES CHANDRA BANERJĀ

[अस्मिन् निबन्धे विदुषा लेखकेन पुराणेषु वर्णितानां सामान्यजीवन-संबन्धिविधधारणानां विवरणं प्रदत्तम् । पुराणेषु प्रचलितपञ्चविषयाणामतिरिक्तं नानाविधा अन्येऽपि विषया वर्णिताः सन्ति । तेषु भौषज्य-अभिचार-दण्डनीति-वर्णाश्रमव्यवस्थादिविषया प्राधान्येन सन्ति । अत्र लेखकेन एतादृशानेकविषयाणां परिचयस्तत्तत्पुराण-निर्देशपूर्वकं प्रदत्तः ।]

The Purāṇas are encyclopaedic in character. Besides the traditional five topics, they deal with a number of other subjects like architecture, sculpture, music, painting, astronomy etc. They are not divorced from the realities of life so that quite a lot of popular beliefs and practices are referred to in these works. We shall briefly set forth below some such beliefs and practices.

Goblins are supposed to reside in an empty house, delivery house and cemetery (*Vāyu* 69.271).

Agni purāṇa 315 contains *abhiçāra* or black magic like causing paralysis, delusion, control, uprooting from one's residence, killing etc. A few specimens are given here. After drawing the figure of tortoise on a birch-leaf, one should place certain *mantras* on its face or legs. On its back there should be the name of the enemy. Then sprinkling water and remembering the enemy's name the ground is to be struck by the left foot. This will ensure paralysis of the enemy. The death of the enemy is sure if the enemy's name is written on a birch-leaf and worshipped with the *mantra* 'Om Kuñjarī brahmāṇī' in a cemetery.

The same Purāṇa mentions (1.40) some herbs etc. of strange potency designed to activate *mantras*. Various processes are mentioned for acquiring skill in snake-charming, safe delivery of children, acquisition of a son etc.

It refers to some *mantras* for various purposes. It was believed that a diagram named *Śakti-cakra* enabled one to know the evil in-

fluence of Saturn. The wearing of a talisman, with a special *mantra*, in the hand or neck was believed to baffle even the stroke of a missile.

The *Viṣṇudharmottara* and *Matsya* (243) state that the trembling, dance, smile and weeping of a god's image is very inauspicious.

The *Matsya* (228) and *Agni* (263-78 etc.) mention pacificatory rites for pacifying angry planets and protection against various dangers. The rite, called *Saumya*, was believed to cure consumption.

At some places, we find traces of non-Aryan influence on certain matter in the Aryan society. One such instance is the *Śafarotsava* on the Daśamī day of Durgāpūjā. Some Smṛti Digests, on the authority of the *Kālikā purāṇa*, hold that it consists in mud stinging at one another and, with the body covered by creepers and leaves, abusing mutually in filthy language.

Among the crimes, prevailing in the Purāṇic society, are the beating of a Brāhmaṇa by a Śūdra, theft, homicide, sexual relation between a man of a lower caste and a woman of a higher one, destruction of a house, destruction of a grazing field, administering poison, seduction of queen etc.

For certain offences the limb concerned of the offender used to be cut off, e. g. Śūdras beating a Kṣatriya, perjury, sale of impure meat, making counterfeit coins, spreading treason, beating the spiritual preceptor, cutting off limbs of a dead body.

In special cases, life imprisonment was ordained, e. g. Śūdra beating a Brāhmaṇa. A month imprisonment was ordained for stealing the rope or pot from a well meant for the public, turning the current of water on a wrong course and for cruelty towards animals. It was a punishable offence to help a prisoner in escaping.

The position of Śūdras and other low class people deserves notice. It is generally stated that they are dependent on the three higher castes. At some places (e. g. *Vāyu* 8.163-71) their occupation is stated to be labour and craft. By dint of merit and power they could rise to an exalted position. For example, Mahāpadma, born of a Śūdrā, came to be a ruler. At one time, Śūdras acquired the status of Vaiśyas (*Vāyu* 57. 51-53). The social status described in connexion with Kaliyuga is miserable. In the *Bhaviṣya* (44.32,

Śūdras are divided into *Sat* and *Asat*. The former used to live by honest means, refrained from drinks and meat. From the *Vāyu* (86.1-12) Śūdras appear to have eaten beef. A mixed caste, called Ajīva, is mentioned in *Vāyu* 69.281-8.

Dasyus, distinct from Śūdras, are stated to have robbed people of clothes and cattles. Mlecchas also are mentioned.

The prevalence of slavery and trading in slaves are referred to (e. g. *Vāyu* 88.85-9).

There are many references to premarital sexual union, illegitimate children etc. The seduction of his preceptor's wife, Tārā, by Soma, the birth of Purūravas from the illegal union of Budha and Ilā, birth of Bharadvāja from the union of Bṛhaspati and his sister-in-law, these indicate moral laxity.

The Purāṇas contain many references to music, vocal and instrumental, and dance.

The Purāṇas refer to food and dress of the people of that age. Besides *Surā*, the common drink, there is mention of *Kaśya*. It is said that Kaśya is so called as he drank this wine.

Long hair and dishavelled beard appear to have been objects of contempt. Piśācas are described as having long hair and staggy beard (*Vāyu* 69.273).

The Purāṇas give us a picture of the economic life of the people. The Purāṇic society betrays a miserable economic condition of the sacerdotal class. This is not unnatural. With the growing popularity of Buddhism people in large number embraced that religion. The result was decline in the income of the priests. Therefore, they devised many *vratas* which held out prosperity and happiness in this world and beyond. It was ordained that liberal gifts in *vratas*, including such daily necessities as rice, salt, umbrella, sandal etc., were conducive to great merit.

Regarding taxation, one-sixth of the autumnal crop and one-eighth of the crop of the rainy season were fixed as revenue (*Agni* 223.26-27; *Viṣṇudharmottara* 2.61.60-61). Of rural fruits, flowers and fuel etc. a portion called *bhoga* was the king's due.

On commercial commodities two kinds of tax were levied; one on indigenous and foreign goods and the other as ferry charge.

On indigenous goods the rate of tax was one-twentieth (*Agni* 223. 23; *Viṣṇudharmottara* 2.61.53-56). One-fifth was levied on animals. One-sixth was the rate with respect to gold, perfumes, medicinal herbs, liquid substances, root-fruits, flowers, leaves, vegetables, grass, bamboo, things made of bamboo, earthen vessels, stone, honey, meat, ghee etc. (*Agni* 223.27-29). On labourers the rate was one day's work gratis for the king; this was in respect of skilled labourers. Those who lived by physical labour had to work without wages so long as they got food. Besides Brāhmaṇas, women and sages were exempted from taxes (*Agni* 223 25).

The king used, in some cases, to lend money to people at easy interest (*Agni* 253.66).

INDRA IN THE VIṢṆU PURĀṆA*

By

SHRINRYU OKUDA

[जापानीभाषातोऽनूदितोऽस्मिन् निबन्धे विदुषा लेखकेन विष्णुमहापुराणे इन्द्रस्य स्वरूपस्थानमहत्त्वादिकविषयाणां विवेचनं प्रस्तुतम् । इन्द्रस्य वैदिकसाहित्ये सर्वातिशायि महत्त्वं वर्तते किन्तु शनैः शनैः विष्णुना सवातिशायि महत्त्वं प्राप्तम् । पुराणेषु इन्द्रस्याभ्यर्हितत्वं लुप्तं जातम् तस्यस्थाने उपेन्द्रो विष्णुः पूज्यतमो बभूव । अत्र लेखकेन विष्णु-पुराणस्थानेकाख्यानानाम् आधारेण एतत् प्रतिपादितम् ।]

In the Ṛgveda, Indra is described as the storm god and the ideal warrior. He is one of the main objects of people's prayer and admiration. During the Brāhmaṇa period, when the ritualistic tendency became more pronounced Indra's position was passed on to Prajāpati and then to Brahmā. In the course of time, people began to pursue the new Absolute who could bestow them the Supreme Peace, as well as satisfy their worldly desires, the highest of which was to be born in Heaven. In the Epics, Viṣṇu and Śiva, the two new Absolute, affect the pantheon of the ancient gods, Brahmā, Agni, Yama, Indra etc.¹ In the purāṇa-s and similar literature, this religious tendency grows even stronger. Thus Indra offers a good example of the common law that the pantheon is inevitably affected when the social and religious background changes.

The Viṣṇu purāṇa, as evident from its name, is a work of the Vaiṣṇava sect. As it is comparatively faithful to the so-called five purāṇic characteristics, it is considered one of the earliest purāṇa-s. Its main topic is, of course, the worship of Viṣṇu. But along with that, the importance of asceticism and the practice of yoga, the respect of dharma, the worship of Kṛṣṇa and other topics are also in-

* Appeared in : *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, Tokyo, vol. XXVI, No 1 (Dec. 1977), pp. 397-400. Translated into English from Japanese by Hisayoshi Miyamoto, Senior Research Scholar in Indian Philosophy, Varanasi.

1. See E. W. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 77.

troduced. All these subjects are reflected, of course, in the episodes in which Indra appears.

In this article, putting aside the worship of Viṣṇu, I will gather together and introduce the stories in which Indra appears, in order to confirm the aforesaid principle. Indra is described in these episodes as intent on defending his throne; he always plays a humiliating role. But at the same time he also gets respect as king of the three worlds (triloka), the supreme status of the saṃsāra-loka. It seems to me that the introduction of Indra into these topics, who is commonly acknowledged to have the highest position in three worlds, shows the intention to authorize their importance.

First, we note Indra's *fear and powerlessness before ascetics or yogins*. *V.P.I. 9* describes the curse pronounced by the sage Durvāsas; this constitutes the introduction of the myth of churning of the ocean. Having offended the sage Durvāsas who is practising the vow of insanity (unmattavrata), Indra is deserted by prosperity (śrī) and is cursed to perish along with the three worlds.² The gods are defeated by the Daityas.

In *V. P. I. 11*, Indra hinders Dhruva's asceticism or yoga practice.³ This episode appears in the story of Dhruva, who achieves the position of Polestar, as he has satisfied Viṣṇu. In this story Indra hinders Dhruva in many ways, through his māyā, but without any success. On the contrary, he is burnt by Dhruva's ascetic heat and asks Viṣṇu for help.

In *V. P. I. 15*, seeing the sage Kuṇḍu's asceticism, Indra sends the apsarases Pramlocā to hinder the achievement of his asceticism.⁴

2. According to Wilson, this episode of the curse is not described in the Matsya-purāṇa, the Harivaṃśa or in texts earlier than these. See H. H. Wilson, *The Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Calcutta, 1961, p. 66, fn. 8.
3. In the Mahābhārata, Dhruva is the Polestar, one of the Vasu-s, also called Auttānapāda. Such a myth, however, is not available in the Mbh. See Hopkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 75, 183 etc.
4. This episode is the introduction to the myth of the birth of Marīṣā, Pracetas's wife and Dakṣa Prajāpati's mother. In the Mbh. and Rāmāyaṇa there is an episode in which Indra, for fear of asceticism, sends apsarases to Dadhīca, Viśvāmitra, Śaradvat Gautama etc. See Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

In *V. P. IV. 7.4*, realizing that King Kuśāśva has been practising asceticism to get a son like Indra, Indra, for fear, becomes Gādhi Kausika, King Kuśāśva's son himself.

In *V. P. I. 21.29ff*, in the episode describing the origin of the Maruts' name (*mā rodīḥ*), it is narrated that Indra could enter Diti's womb, as her asceticism, undertaken to keep her body pure for 100 years, had been broken.⁵

From these episodes one can see how asceticism or yoga practice is highly valued. Asceticism or yoga practice is one of the best means to get the supernatural power and to admire gods, and consequently to get boons. When this asceticism or yoga practice is turned toward Viṣṇu, then naturally the mundane desires and even final liberation can be achieved. So such episodes are found in many places of the Viṣṇu purāṇa.⁶

Next, Indra's *battle against the demons*. This is a main theme since olden times, but in the V. P. it always brings disgrace on Indra, as in the myth of churning of the ocean; also in *V. P. II. 7*, where Indra, having been defeated by the demons, asks Viṣṇu for help. Here the episode is thus described : King Purañjaya, who is Viṣṇu's part-incarnation, sits on the hump (*kakud*) of the ox-shaped Indra and destroys the demon. Therefore that Purañjaya gets another name, Kakutstha.

In *V. P. IV. 9*, too, a battle against the demons is described, but, it is interesting to point out, that Viṣṇu does not appear here. At the time of battle, gods and demons consult Brahmā and Brahmā announces that the victory will fall to the side which is allied with King Raji. King Raji imposes a condition that, after having won the battle, he should become king of that victorious party. The demons tell King Raji that since this is the battle for their King

5. This episode is not available in the Mbh., but in the Rām., and the HV. See Hopkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 134, 96.

6. In the Mbh., too, asceticism is a means of receiving divine benefits. See Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 68. In the myth of Dhruva, the seven sages, including Marīci, teach that, by satisfying Viṣṇu, one can achieve not only the position of Indra but also final liberation and the yoga practice is a way of praising Viṣṇu. The ascetic's supernatural power is seen in the episode of the sage Saubhari, *V. P. IV. 2* etc. The yoga practice is explained in detail in *V. P. VI. 7*.

Prahlāda, they cannot accept such a condition, and they don't want to say one thing and do another in any form (na vayam anyathā vadiṣyāmaḥ' nyathā kariṣyāmaḥ). Then they leave. Meanwhile, the gods accept Raji's condition and win the battle through his help. But Indra, by means of tricks, becomes King Raji's son and keeps the throne. After the death of King Raji, his real sons request the throne according to the custom (ācāra). Confronted with Indra's rejection, they have a battle with him and obtain the throne. Having seen Indra's miserable condition, the priest Bṛhaspati performs a ritual which perplexes the intelligence of Raji's sons and also increases Indra's energy. Because of this, King Raji's sons began to oppose the Brahmins (brahmadviṣaḥ), to abandon the law (dharmatyāginah), and to run counter to the doctrine of the Veda-s (vedavādaparāṅmukhah). Indra, then, could destroy such people as they had turned their faces away from law and custom and in such a way he restored his throne. In this episode, we can understand that the law is the key issue of the battle.

A similar attitude toward law is also seen in the myth of Viṣṇu's Māyāmoha incarnation, described in *V. P. III. 77*, although in this case Indra does not appear directly. In the battle between the gods and the demons, the gods were defeated. The reason for this defeat is that the demons observed their own caste laws (svavarṇa-dharmābhiratāḥ), followed the Vedas' tenets (vedamārgānusāriṇah), and pursued asceticism (tapasānvitāḥ). Māyāmoha, then, preached heterodoxy to them, and thereby caused the abandonment of the true law and custom. The law of castes, the law of āśrama-s etc. are described in detail from *V. P. III. 8*.⁸ We can say that the ancient Indian way of thinking toward the law is reflected in these episodes.

The next noticeable episode in which Indra appears is about his *rivalry with Kṛṣṇa*. In *V. P. V. 10ff*, Kṛṣṇa prohibits people from worshipping Indra and makes them worship the cow and the mountain Govardhana instead. Indra is enraged at this and sends a storm,

7. This episode refers to Jainism and Buddhism. Viṣṇu's incarnation as Buddha is mentioned in Bhāgavata purāṇa I.3.25 and XI.4.22, and further, heterodoxy is attributed to Indra in IV. 19ff.

8. In the introduction of this part it is said that respect for the law is a way of worshipping Viṣṇu.

but Kṛṣṇa protects the cattle and people, so Indra is defeated. Then Indra meets Kṛṣṇa secretly and praises him for his strength and gives him the title of Upendra and Govinda.

In V. P. V. 30ff, the battle for the Pārijāta tree is described. At Indra's request, Kṛṣṇa destroys Bhauma Naraka and recovers Aditi's earrings. When he goes to heaven with his wife, Satyabhāmā, to hand the earrings over to Aditi, he receives a welcome. Seeing the Pārijāta tree in Indra's garden, Satyabhāmā asks Kṛṣṇa to take it home. But as Indra prevents Kṛṣṇa from taking it, a war breaks out between Kṛṣṇa and the gods who were led by Indra. Kṛṣṇa defeats all the gods and wards off even Indra's vajra. At this Indra says that he is not ashamed of having been defeated by Kṛṣṇa who is God himself and praises him. On the other hand Kṛṣṇa asks for forgiveness as he, just a mere man, opposed Indra, the king of gods, and wants to return the Pārijāta tree and the vajra. Indra accepts only the vajra and offers Kṛṣṇa the Pārijāta tree.⁹

In these two episodes we can see the same pattern : Kṛṣṇa's rivalry with Indra—Indra's counteroffensive—Indra's defeat—ratification by Indra that Kṛṣṇa is Viṣṇu and vice versa. This pattern certainly indicates the process of introducing Kṛṣṇa worship into Viṣṇu worship. But it is interesting to note how in the V. P.—as we have seen above—Kṛṣṇa apologizes for having opposed Indra. We think that such humble submission is unsuitable to the character of the Viṣṇupurāṇa. This seems to indicate that at least this part of the Viṣṇupurāṇa was composed in the early stages of the process of the introduction. The title of 'Upendra' given by Indra may give another clue to this since it may be considered to mean a minor or inferior Indra.¹⁰

We have thus gathered and presented here the episodes in which Indra appears. They can be grouped, as we have seen, from

9. In the Bhāg. P. (X. 59) it is briefly described how Kṛṣṇa took it by force. This is also mentioned in Mbh. (B. O. R. I.) V. 128.48; VII. 10.22-23. See Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 464, fn. 1. In HV. (B. O. R. I.), 92 this rivalry is not described.

10. See Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 421, fn. 2. In the Bhāg. P only the title Govinda is mentioned. See Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 204,210.

three points of view. It is evident, in fact, that besides Viṣṇu worship these episodes are connected with the importance of asceticism, yoga practice and law, and with Kṛṣṇa worship. All these elements are means both of achieving mundane desires and of getting final liberation. Indra, who stays at the supreme stage of the saṁsāra loka, is the living symbol of mundane happiness. So, when the ultimate goal of life is final liberation, Indra's relatively lower position is inevitable.¹¹

NOTE

Text used : Viṣṇupurāṇa with Commentary of Śrīdharaswāmi, Calcutta, 1882. (Abbreviation : V. P.)

Reference book, not mentioned in this article, but helpful : J. Gonda, *A Note on Indra in Purāṇic Literatures, Selected Studies*, Vol. IV, Leiden. 1975.

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11. In V. P. II. 6 we can even read the following passages :
 "To be born in the world of gods is a symptom of re-birth", "As long as the residents of the world of gods are alive, the residents of the hell will not perish" and again
 "To obtain the position of Indra is an obstacle for the man desiring to get final liberation."

PURĀNIC PARAMPARĀ*

By

G ORGIO BONAZZOLI

[अस्मिन् निबन्धे पुराणेषु निर्दिष्टानां पौराणिकपरम्पराणां विमर्शः कृतः । पुराणेषु तत्तत्पुराणानां वक्तृश्रोतृपरम्पराया निर्देशो वर्तते । अस्मिन् क्रमे पुराणेषु अवस्थात्रयं वर्तते । प्रथमावस्थायां पुराणस्य परम्परायां कोऽपि देवो वर्तते तदनन्तरं कोऽपि ऋषिस्तदनन्तरं व्यास-सूतक्रमो भवति । किन्तु इदमवस्थात्रयं सर्वेषु पुराणेषु न वर्तते । कामुचित् परम्परामु देवाभावः, कामुचित्परम्परामु च ऋषेरभावः । अत्र लेखकेन एतत् सर्वं सप्रमाणं विवेचितम् ।]

Almost all the purāṇa-s contain a list of gods, ṛṣi-s, muni-s etc. through which they justify their origin and passing on the tradition through the centuries. *Padma P. V. 2. 53 cd* includes such concept of handing over or *paramparā* in the etymology itself (*nirukti*) of the word 'purāṇa':

पुरापरम्परां वष्टि पुराणं तेन तत् स्मृतम् ।

“‘Purāṇa’ is so called because it is concerned with the handing over of the past (*purā*).’

So, in some cases at least, tradition can become an important element for understanding the nature of the purāṇa-s.

The problem we want to face here can be put in a simple way: Who did first narrate the purāṇa-s according to the purāṇa s themselves and who did hand them over in course of time? Even if we are not inclined to give credit to the purāṇic statements—it is not our concern here at present—yet they are worth studying; they seem, indeed, to contain valid material for further research.

The first immediate traditional answer which can be given to the above problem is found in such purāṇic statements like the one available in *Matsya P. 53.70 ab*, for instance:

* Editions of the purāṇa-s used in this article:

Agni (ASS); *Kūrma* (Crit. Ed.); *Garuḍa* (Jivānanda); *Devī-Bhāgavata* (Mor Ed.); *Nārada* (Veñk.); *Padma* (ASS); *Brahma* (Mor Ed.); *Brahmāṇḍa* (Veñk.); *Brahmavaiivarta* (ASS); *Bhaviṣya* (Veñk.); *Bhāgavata* (Gitā Press); *Matsya* (Jivānanda); *Mārkaṇḍeya* (Jivānanda); *Linga* (Mor Ed.); *Vāyu* (Veñk.); *Viṣṇu* (Gitā Press); *Skanda* (Veñk.); *Siva* (Veñk.).

अष्टादशपुराणानि कृत्वा सत्यवतीमुतः ।

‘Satyavatī’s son (Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana) after composing the eighteen purāṇa-s....’

in *Brahmavaivarta P. II. 5.26 ab* :

तदा वेदविभागञ्च पुराणानि चकार ह ।

‘Then he (Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana) divided the veda-s and composed the purāṇa-s etc....’

or in *Devī Bhāgavata P. I. 1.3*. अष्टादश पुराणानि कृष्णेन मुनिनाऽनघ
“O faultless, the eighteen purāṇa-s (were composed) by the muni
Kṛṣṇa”.

The purāṇa-s, indeed, are traditionally conceived as Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana’s products.¹ I have already examined this point in another issue of this same Bulletin² and I have come to the conclusion that the statements about Vyāsa’s authorship of the purāṇa-s are part of a larger attempt made by purāṇic authors to fix a purāṇic canon and in that light they have to be considered here also. Now I add that those very texts which attribute such an authorship to Vyāsa contain also other elements which should be carefully investigated. The first element to be considered is the purāṇic claim that even before Vyāsa the purāṇa-s were narrated by Brahmā to the *muni-s*.

1. See Baladeva Upādhyāya, *Purāṇa Vimarśa*, Chowkhamba Vidyābhavan, Vārāṇasī, 1965, pp. 63ff; Giridhar Śarma Caturvedi, *Purāṇa Pariśīlan*, Bihār Rāṣṭrabhāṣā Pariśad, Patna, 1970, pp. 63 ff.; Krishnamani Tripathi, *Purāṇa Paryālocanam* (Gaveshātmako Bhāgaḥ), Vārāṇasī, 1976, pp 80f.

विभज्य वेदं च तदर्थाज्ञातं चक्रे परामृश्य पुनः पुराणम् ।

तदीयमर्थं च विकृष्य चक्रे यो भारतं तत्र मनो ममास्ताम् ॥

(Jagadīśacakra-vartikṛtā Mahābhārataṭīkā Sabhāparva, Asiatic Society Catalogue, Calcutta, v. 3404, quoted in V. Raghavan, *Homages to Vyāsa*, All-India Kashiraj Trust, Vārāṇasī, 1963, p. 13). Verses with similar meaning are common among paṇḍits and people.

2. See The Dynamic Canon of the Purāṇa-s in *Purāṇa*, Vārāṇasī, Vol. XXI, No. 2 (July, 1979), pp. 116-166.

पुराणमेकमेवासीदस्मिन् कल्पान्तरे नृप ॥ 24 cd
स्मृत्वा जगाद च मुनीन् प्रति देवश्चतुर्मुखः ॥ 25 ab

(*Skanda P. V. 3.1.24 cd-25 ab*)³

‘The purāṇa was one during this kalpa, O king; the four-faced god remembered and sang it before the muni-s’.

So even before Vyāsa intervened to narrate his purāṇa, Brahmā had already sung it to the muni-s. In fact the position of the purāṇa-s about their first recitation and handing over is rather complex. Each purāṇa is careful to name the sources of a specific *kathā* or of the whole purāṇa. Leaving aside, now, the *paramparā* of the single *kathā*-s, we consider only the *paramparā* of each purāṇa as a whole.⁴ Even in this case, however, several purāṇa-s give more than one list never completely matching one another. From these previous considerations it appears how difficult it is to find an agreement among the purāṇa-s about who first recited them and who handed them over till the present form was reached. The following Table I gives the actual situation of the purāṇa-s about their *paramparā*. I have divided the lists in three layers; the justification for such a division will appear later.

Table I examines seventeen purāṇa-s but gives thirty-eight lists of *paramparā*, none of which, except *Brahmaṇḍa P. 1.135ff* and *Vāyu I. 1.1 ff* agrees with any other.⁵ A certain convergence, however, can be found if we consider only the names of Vyāsa, Sūta, Śaunaka of the third layer, which appear in twenty-nine lists, Brahmā or synonyms of the first layer, which appear in twenty lists and Nārāyaṇa-Nārada of the second layer, in eleven lists. So each layer has at least one name which is common to several purāṇa-s.

3. See other parallel texts like *Padma P. V.1.38cd*; *Matsya P. 53.7cd* etc.
4. For the *paramparā* of the whole purāṇa see Table I, for single *khaṇḍa*-s see *Skanda P. I.1.1ff*; *II.1.1ff*; *II.8.1.12ff* etc., for single stories see *Kūrma P. II.1.15ff* etc. The three sets of interlocutors of which speaks H. P. Shastri, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Government Collection...* Vol. V. Purāṇa Manuscripts, Calcutta, 1928, p. XC, and which are visible at the beginning of many *kathā*-s are also a particular case of *paramparā*.
5. *Brahmavaivarta P. I.1* and *IV. 133*, listed together, have in fact a difference in the last name, being Sūta in *IV. 133* and Sauti in *I.1*; the former list, moreover, does not contain the name of Vyāsa.

TABLE I

Agni		Kūrma			Garuḍa		
(1.2 ff.) Viṣṇu Agni	(1.18) ¹ Brahmā Deva-s	(II. 44. 141f)	(II. 44.143ff) Brahmā	(1.3 ff) Garuḍa	(1.11ff) Brahmā	(2.5 ff) Viṣṇu Rudra-Brahmā-sura-s	(2.7 ff)
Vasiṣṭha	Nārāy- ana Nārada Gautama Parāśara	Sanaka-Sanatkumāra		Kaśyapa	Dakṣa-Nārada-Bṛghu etc.		
Vyāsa (Śuka, Paila etc.) Śūta Śaunaka		Devala Pañcasikha	Vyāsa Śūta muni-s	Śūta Śaunaka etc.	Vyāsa Śūta	Vyāsa Śūta	Vyāsa

(1) Agni 1.13 is to be interpreted in the light of 1.18.

Garuḍa	Devī Bhāg.		Nārada		Padma			Brahma	Brahmāṇḍa	
(3.7ff) Hari Hari	(I. 1.1ff) Brahmā	(XII.13.1ff)	(I.1.15ff)	(I.92.1ff)	(I.1.25ff) Hari Brahmā	(V. 1.2ff) Prabhu	(V.1.43ff) Brahmā	(1.3ff) Pitāmaha	(I. 1.8ff) Prajāpati	(I.1.35ff) Brahmā
Kaśyapa Rudra		Nārāyaṇa Nārada	Sanaka (Sanāt- kumāra I. 2.1) Nārada	Sanāt- kumāra Nārada	Nārada	Ṣaṭkuliya			Vasiṣṭha Parāśara Jātūkarṇya	Māta- riśvan muni-s
	Vyāsa Sūta Śaunaka	Vyāsa King	Vyāsa Sūta Śaunaka	Sūta	Vyāsa Sūta Śaunaka	Sūta Ugraśravas	Vyāsa Śaunaka	Vyāsa Sūta	Dvai- pāyana 5 disc. (Sūta etc.) ṛṣi-s	Dvai- pāyana Sūta

Vāyu		Brahma- vaiv.	Bhaviṣya	Bhāgavata	Matsya		Mārkaṇḍeya
(I.1.1ff) ²	(II. 41. (45f,51)	(I.1.59ff = IV. 133. 28ff.)	(I.1.99ff)	(XII.13.19ff) cf. XII.12.56 Nārāyaṇa Brahmā	(1. 5 ff.) Gadā- dhara Bhagavān (called Viśva- rūpin in 290.1)	(53.1ff) Viśvātman Brahṁā (Matsya-Vājirūpa)	(1.1. ff.)
Brahmā	Vāyu Brahmā	Kṛṣṇa Brahmā	Brahmā Śaṅkara iVṣṇu				
Māta- riśvan		Dharma Nārāyaṇa Nārada	Nārada Śakra Parāśara	Nārada		Manu muni	Mārkaṇḍeya birds
Dvai- pāyana Sūta	Rṣi-s Kṛṣṇa Dvaip. Sūta	Vyāsa Sūta (Sauti)	Vyāsa Sumantu	Vyāsa Śukadeva Parikṣit Sūta	Sūta Śaunaka	Vyāsarūpa Sūta muni-s	Jaimini

(2) In the salutation I. 1.7-8 the following names are mentioned : Vasiṣṭha, Jātukarṇya, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana

Linga		Viṣṇu	Skanda		
(I.1.5. cf. also II. 53.38ff.)		(I. 1.1ff)	(II.1.1ff)	(VII. 1.1.27f)	(VII. 1.2.17, 20ff)
Brahmā			Brahmā	Pinākin Pārvati (Brahmā) Ṣaṅ- mukha	Viśvātman Ma tsya Brahmā
Nārada		Pulastya Vasiṣṭha Parāśara	Nārada	Nandi Kumāra	Manu muni-s
	Vyāsa Sūta muni-s muni + Nārada	Sūta	Vyāsa Sūta Śaunaka	Vyāsa Roma- harṣaṇa Naimiṣeya other ṛṣi-s	Vyāsa

The three layers have been prepared to make the scheme more intelligible; they seem, however, to correspond really to three layers of purāṇic tradition; the first refers to the revealing deity, the second one to the different traditions of *muni-s* and *ṛṣi-s* and the third one to Vyāsa and his disciples. These three layers, besides being separate in time,⁶ seem to fulfil also different purposes in the handing over. The following *śloka-s*, although referring to the particular story of Prahāda, seem to reflect the function of the three layers in all the purāṇa-s.

सूत उवाच

कश्यपेन पुरा ज्ञातं कृतं व्यासेन धीमता ।

ब्रह्मणा कथितं पूर्वं व्यासस्याग्रे स्वयं प्रभोः ॥

तमेव हि प्रवक्ष्यामि भवतामग्रतो द्विजाः ।

(Padma P., II. 1. 4-5ab)

6. The problem of time in these *paramparā-s* is a complex one and would need a separate study. It is enough here to hint at the fact that each layer contains in itself, as in perspective, several *kalpa-s*, as it is apparent in the list of the 28 Vyāsa-s who appear, one by one, every Dvāpara. The problem of time, anyway, is no matter of this article.

‘Sūta said :

In front of you, O dvija-s, I will proclaim just what was known by Kaśyapa in ancient times, made by sage Vyāsa, narrated previously by Brahmā in front of Vyāsa, the Lord himself.’

The three layers are here clearly qualified, each one having its own function : the story, it is said, was *narrated* by Brahmā, was *known* to Kaśyapa, and was made up or *composed* by Vyāsa. So the first layer constitutes the moment of revelation and the deity is the agent; the second one stresses the acquaintance Kaśyapa—somehow symbolizing *ṛṣi-s*, *muni-s*, *prajāpati-s* etc.—has got, which implies the handing over; the third one lastly specifies the role of Vyāsa as the ‘doer’, the systematizer, arranger or composer, which is a privileged role befitting Vyāsa because he had heard the story from Brahmā himself and he himself is the Lord. The lines quoted above indeed presuppose the existence of another person, the actual speaker, who is Sūta. It is in fact he who will narrate the story in the purāṇa. This presence of Sūta in the above lines indicates on the one hand that the third layer is a composite one, in it in fact we meet with Vyāsa and Sūta at least. On the other hand it gives a hint towards the actual composer of the purāṇa-s as we read them now. In other words the above mentioned *śloka-s* not only mention the revealing deity, the handers over and the Vyāsa-s or compilers but pose the problem of Sūta i. e., the actual reciters of the purāṇa as they are at present.⁷ This third layer, therefore, needs particular attention.

1. Viṣṇu versus Brahmā as revealing deity

First of all let me point out that, although in this article I shall refer to Brahmā as the revealing deity, I do not take any definite stand about his revealing role. In fact, the purāṇa-s while speaking of Brahmā affirm that they were ‘remembered’ (*smṛtam*)⁸ by him as if it were a mental process referring to him only. On the other hand, the fact that he speaks or sings them out seems to imply that we are in the presence of a revelation.

7. I refer here to the anonymous authors who introduce the interlocutors and who seem to claim the same rank of Sūta-s, since they speak in first person, cfr. *Kūrma P.* I.1.1ff; *Padma P.* I.1.1ff etc.

8. See पुराणं सर्वशास्त्राणां प्रथमं ब्रह्मणा स्मृतम् ॥
(*Skanda P.* V:1.23cd; *Matsya P.* 3.3ab etc.)

Brahmā appears as a first revealing deity in fourteen lists and as second in five. Viṣṇu, instead, is first in nine lists and is never placed as second. Moreover, in some lists where Viṣṇu comes first, he is in 'direct competition' with Brahmā. As several purāṇa-s have more than one list, it never happens, if we except Brahmavaivarta and Bhāgavata purāṇa-s, that a purāṇa contains only lists with Viṣṇu as first; there is also always at least one list where Brahmā is first. The Brahmavaivarta purāṇa can help us understand why Viṣṇu is never second, while Brahmā can slip from the first place to the next one. It is known that the Brahmavaivarta purāṇa has substituted the central figure of Brahmā (or Brahman) with Kṛṣṇa.⁹ The process, indeed, is not of mere substitution of Brahmā/Brahman with Kṛṣṇa but it is a superimposition through assimilation of Kṛṣṇa to Brahman. This process of superimposition, in which Brahmā is substituted by Viṣṇu and not Viṣṇu by Brahmā, explains for the Brahmavaivarta, and hints at for the others, why in our *paramparā*-s Brahmā can slip to the second place, while Viṣṇu (or synonyms) is only first. The case of the Bhaviṣya purāṇa where Viṣṇu is third is easily explained as soon as we realize that in this list all the three gods of the so-called Trimūrti enter into the picture. What matters in it is the first god, the other two are mentioned to complete the series, and their order has no importance. We can, therefore, deduce that whenever in our lists there has been an evolution in tradition it must have been through a substitution of Brahmā with Viṣṇu; in other words, it is Viṣṇu who superseded Brahmā and not viceversa. K. Rüping has showed that at least in some cases Brahmā has superseded Viṣṇu.¹⁰ We shall find a confirmation of this statement also in our study a little further on. But such a substitution anyway did not touch the lists of purāṇic *paramparā*. The two aspects, then, should be kept in mind and should induce us to be prudent when we have to examine a case of evolution from one tradition to another.

Śiva (or synonyms) instead is put in the first place only once, in the Skanda purāṇa. It seems that the Śaivite were not much

9. See A. S. Gupta, The Apocryphal Character of the Extant Brahmavaivarta purāṇa, in *Purāṇa, Vārāṇasī*, Vol. III, 1 (Jan., 1961), pp. 5 ff.

10. K. Rüping, *Amṛtamanthana und Kūrma-Avatāra*, Ein Beitrag zur puranischen Mythen- und Religionsgeschichte, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1970, pp. 24-28.

interested in purāṇic arrangement. A small sign of this can also be the fact that the colophons themselves, which developed at the time of transcription of the purāṇa-s, very rarely call an *adhyāya* “Śiva (or synonyms) *māhātmya*”, even when in fact Śiva is praised or is the central figure of the *adhyāya*, while there are many ‘Viṣṇu *māhātmya*-s’, even when Viṣṇu is not the only person praised in that *adhyāya*.¹¹ From this we can conclude that among the purāṇic systematizers only few were Śaivite. We have, of course, intervention of Śaivite authors on previous Brāhmanic or Vaiṣṇavite texts¹² but either they were not interested in purāṇic arrangement¹³ or their intervention took place when such problems were of no interest to anybody.

2. Second layer : muni-s and ṛṣi-s

Between the revealing deity—Brahmā or Viṣṇu—and the last systematizers of the purāṇic material—Vyāsa etc.—there is a series of persons who are here classified as *muni*-s and *ṛṣi*-s¹⁴ but who can also be Brahmā’s sons i. e. Sanaka, Sanatkumāra etc.; minor forms of deities like Dharma, Mātariśvan; *Prajāpati*-s like Kaśyapa and Dakṣa. The name that recurs more often is Nārada, sometimes in connection with his guru Nārāyaṇa. As both Nārāyaṇa and Nārada had their *āśrama* on the Himālaya s, the insistence on these names can imply the importance the Himālayan source has in the purāṇa-s.¹⁵

11. Śiva Māhātmya is found very rarely, cf. Śivamāhātmya-khaṇḍa of the Sūta Saṁhitā of the *Skanda purāṇa*; *Brahma P.* 37, cf. also 40; *Bhaviṣya P.* III.4.14; *Saura P.* (ASS) 46, cf. also 48,64 and a few others. Brahmā māhātmya-s practically do not exist.
12. The *Kūrma purāṇa* is an example of Śaivite influence on a previous Vaiṣṇavite text and the relation between the *Vāyu* and the *Brahmāṇḍa* shown below is an example of Śaivite influence on a previous Brāhmanic text.
13. When the *purāṇa*-s have been classified according to the three *guṇa*-s, the *purāṇa*-s dealing mainly with Śiva were assigned the *tamo*guṇa; no Śaivite author seems to have reacted to such a classification which was somewhat diminishing the prestige of their purāṇa-s.
14. Vyāsa also was considered a *muni* (cf. *Devī Bhāgavata P.* I.1.3) or a *ṛṣi* (cf. *Mahābhārata* I.1.17).
15. See Giorgio Bonazzoli, *Places of Purāṇic Recitation According to the Purāṇa-s*, to be published shortly.

This multitude of unconnected names seems to mean that the purāṇic tradition which will be later organized by Vyāsa, stems from various sources, persons and places. Each purāṇa could claim its own distinct *paramparā* or even show two or more different traditions all converging at the end into Vyāsa and his disciples, the only real exception being the Mārkaṇḍeya purāṇa. There seems to be, however, a selection in tradition; most of the names given in the *paramparā*-s, indeed, can be gathered under three categories, namely Brahmā's *mānasputra*-s, *saptarṣi*-s and Vyāsa-s. If this selection stresses the role of Brahmā in the early purāṇic tradition,¹⁶ it means, however, that the purāṇa-s themselves claim to have several and different sources. Not only but from an examination of the places where the purāṇa-s claim to have been recited, we can point out some of the ancient purāṇic sources. Now, the purāṇa-s say that they were composed at Puṣkara, at one Himālayan *āśrama* like Badarikāśrama, Siddhāśrama, Gaṅgādvāra etc., at Kurukṣetra and at Naimiṣāraṇya.¹⁷ I have proved elsewhere¹⁸ that Puṣkara seems to be linked with Brahmā i.e. with the moment of revelation, Kurukṣetra and Naimiṣāraṇya with Vyāsa and his school, while the *ṛṣi*-s and the *muni*-s seem to figure in connection with the Himālayan currents. Even at Puṣkara, however, the place of the revealing stage of the purāṇa-s, lived *ṛṣi*-s and *muni*-s;¹⁹ that means that the first

16. Although Viṣṇu comes as a revealing deity in some lists, yet the importance of Brahmā in purāṇic composition is indisputable.
17. The following are the passages where the places of purāṇic recitation are mentioned : *Agni* 1.2 (Naimiṣa); 1.6 (Badarikāśrama); *Kūrma* II.44.142 (Gaṅgādvāra); *Garuḍa* 1.3 (Naimiṣa); 2.2 (Badarikāśrama); 2.10 (Kailāsa); *Devī Bhāgavata* 1.2.27 (Naimiṣa); *Nārada* I.1.3, cf. 28 (Naimiṣa); I.1.15,24 (Siddhāśrama); *Padma* I.1.6 and V.1.10 (Naimiṣa); V.2.44 (Prayāga); V. 1.47,95 (Gaṅgādvāra); V.16.5 (Puṣkara); *Brahma* 1.3 (Naimiṣa); *Brahmāṇḍa* I.1.17 (Kurukṣetra), cf. I.1.37 (Naimiṣiṃya); *Brahmavaivārta* I.1.1 (Naimiṣa); I.1.60-63 (Goloka, Puṣkara, Jāhnavitāte, Siddhakṣetra); *Bhāgavata* I.1.4 (Naimiṣa); *Matsya* 1.2 (Naimiṣāraṇyavāsinaḥ); *Liṅga* I.1.4-8 (Naimiṣa); Vāyu I.1.11 (Kurukṣetra), they are Naimiṣāraṇyagocara in I.1.12 and Naimiṣiṃya in I. 1.141; *Śiva* I. 1.1 (Prayāga); *Skanda* I. 1.12; II. 1.1 etc. (Naimiṣa); II. 1.7 (Jāhnavitāte); II. 8.1.8 (Kurukṣetra); VII. 1.27; VII. 3.4 (Kailāsa).
18. cf. fn. 15.
19. see, for instance, *Padma P. V. 16. 51 cd.*

stage is pervaded, so to say, by the second one. Moreover Vyāsa, Sūta and Śaunaka talk to *ṛṣi*-s both at Kurukṣetra and at Naimiṣa ²⁰ So the second layer is in contact with the third one also; it is somehow omnipervadent. It stretches, indeed, over to the first layer, because any revealing deity needs a recipient and such recipients are the *ṛṣi*-s and the *muni*-s. Besides, it extends upto the third layer because Vyāsa and his disciples receive purāṇic tradition from them. So they are somehow only receivers as far as they stretch over to the first stage and they are active and transmitting elements as far as they continue the tradition in the next stage. The *ṛṣi*-s and the *muni*-s, then, are the connective tissue of all the three layers; they receive the purāṇic tradition, they preserve it and they pass it on. *Mārkaṇḍeya P.* 45.23 puts them in connection with the veda-s also specifying that *ṛṣi*-s were dealing with the veda-s properly, while *muni*-s were concerned with purāṇic tradition.

वेदान् सप्तर्षयस्तस्माज्जगृह्णस्तस्य मानसाः ।

पुराणं जगृह्णन्त्या मुनयस्तस्य मानसाः ॥

‘The seven *ṛṣi*-s, then, his mental (sons), took grasp of the veda-s; and the *muni*-s, his mental (sons), took first grasp of the purāṇa-s.

In fact, in the texts such a distinction does not appear clearly, while the unity of vedic and purāṇic tradition is here easily noticeable, as in the quoted *śloka* the *saptarṣi*-s and *muni*-s are both considered Brahmā’s *mānasaputra*-s.

3. Vyāsa-Sūta-Saunaka

The Vyāsa-s²¹ represent in purāṇic tradition, even in the purāṇa-s themselves, one of the many purāṇic sources. They were, in fact, the final arrangers i. e. the composers of the purāṇic *samhitā*. According to several purāṇa-s²² in each Dvāpara of the seventh Varāha *kalpa* a Vyāsa appears and the name of each one of them is given. Although these lists of names do not agree with one another, yet they confirm the widely spread tradition that the Vyāsa-s

20. see fn. 17.

21. On Vyāsa-s see Baladeva Upādhyāya, *op. cit.*, pp. 63 ff; Giridhar Śarma Caturvedi, *op. cit.*, pp. 58 ff

22. cf. *Kūrma P.* I. 50.1ff; *Devī Bhāgavata P.* I. 3.19 ff; *Brahmāṇḍa P.* I. 2.35.116 ff; *Vāyu P.* II. 41.58 ff=*Brahmāṇḍa P.* III. 4.58ff; *Vāyu P.* I. 23.109 ff; *Liṅga P.* 24.12 ff; *Viṣṇu P.* III. 3.5 ff; etc.

are responsible for the arrangement of the veda-s.²³ In this connection a remark becomes necessary. There are at least ten lists²⁴ of the twenty-eight Vyāsa-s, which are put in direct connection with the division of the veda-s done by them, in which there is no mention of any activity of Vyāsa-s about the purāṇa-s. There are, instead, other four lists of Vyāsa-s irregular in number,²⁵ which do not mention any activity of Vyāsa about the veda-s but stand for a list of purāṇic *paramparā*, as if each Vyāsa had transmitted the purāṇa-s to the next one. This seems to presuppose that a previously existent list of Vyāsa-s, arrangers of the veda-s, was utilized by purāṇic authors for their purpose. This would imply that Vyāsa was first a title applied to a vedic arranger and then it was extended to a purāṇic compiler or composer. So the name Vyāsa was purposely applied to purāṇic authors to mean the direct connection of the purāṇa-s with the veda-s. A closer examination of this process, in fact, leads us to see how the purāṇa-s had been conceived as a completion of the veda-s. The following well-known *śloka* affirms it openly :

इतिहासपुराणभ्यां वेदं समुपबृंहयेत् ।
बिभेत्यल्पश्रुताद् वेदो मामयं प्रहरिष्यति ॥

(*Brahmāṇḍa P. I-1.1.171*)

‘The veda is completed with itihāsa and purāṇa. The veda fears little knowledge, (as it thinks) “this will turn me out”.’

Bhāgavata P. III. 12.39 cd and others affirm that itihāsa-purāṇa is the fifth veda. The identification of the Vyāsa-s, the arrangers of veda-s, with the compilers of the purāṇa-s was the next step on this same line. Proceeding further some purāṇa-s identified the twenty-eight Vyāsa-s of the veda-s, who were spread in each Dvāpara yuga of twenty-eight *kalpa*-s with the purāṇic *paramparā*, which presupposes direct handing over and, therefore, contiguity in time. All this confirms that the introduction of Vyāsa in the purāṇic arrangement aims, as we have said, at pointing out a direct connection between the veda-s and the purāṇa-s.

23. see, for instance, *Nārada P. I. 1.17 ff.*

24. see V. Raghavan, *op. cit.*, scheme after p. 52.

25. They are : *Brahmāṇḍa P. III. 4.4.58ff* (the Vyāsa-s are 31); *Vāyu P. II. 41.58 ff.* (they are 30); *Viṣṇu P. I. 8.43ff.* (they are 24); *Skanda P. 1.2.40.203 ff* (they are 26).

The third layer of Table I, besides Vyāsa, contains usually two other names, i.e. Śaunaka and Sūta. Now, Śaunaka according to tradition is a descendant of Bhṛgu i.e. he is a Bhārgava²⁶, one of those priests who, according to V. S. Suktankar²⁷ and others are responsible for the Mahābhārata tradition. The Bhārgava-s, moreover, were Atharvan-s²⁸, continuators and enlargers of the ancient vedic tradition. Śaunaka, therefore, serves as an ulterior determination of the role of Vyāsa. This latter meant, in the purāṇic arrangement, the relation of the purāṇa-s with the veda-s. Śaunaka in his turn, specifies that the veda in which the purāṇa-s enter is the Atharvaveda. On the other hand, the name of Śaunaka and the Bhārgava-s—as well as Vyāsa, naturally—²⁹ is linked to the Mahābhārata.³⁰ Śaunaka then not only constitutes a joining point of the purāṇa-s with the Atharvaveda but also with the 'ītihāsa'.

Sūta, finally, represents the bardic stream,³¹ i.e., a more popular current which collects the new suggestions coming from larger and larger circles of population. In fact, if the veda-s were barred from śūdra-s and women as well as from bad brāhmaṇa-s, the purāṇa-s, instead, were for everybody.

अल्पायुषोऽल्पबुद्धीश्च विप्रान् ज्ञात्वा कलावथ ।
पुराणसंहितां पुण्यां कुरुतेऽसौ युगे युगे ॥20॥
स्त्रीशूद्रद्विजबन्धूनां न वेदश्रवणं मतम् ।
तेषामेव हितार्थाय पुराणानि कृतानि च ॥21॥

(Devī Bhāgavata P. I. 3.20-21)

26. see Baladeva Upādhyāya, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-50; Vyāsa is also in direct relation with Bhṛgu cf. *Vāyu P.* 1.1.36.

तस्मै भगवते कृत्वा नमो व्यासाय वेधसे ।
पुरुषाय पुराणाय भृगुवाक्यप्रवर्तिने ॥

27. see A. D. Pusalker, *Studies in the Epics and Purāṇas*, Bombay, 1951, pp. 92, 104, 111f.
28. *Matsya P.* 51. 10; cf. Baladeva Upādhyāya, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.
29. cf. V. Raghavan, *op. cit.*, passim; see *Matsya P.* 53.70

अष्टादशपुराणानि कृत्वा सत्यवतीसुतः ।
भारताख्यानमखिलं चक्रे तदुपबृंहितम् ॥

30. see. for instance, *Mahābhārata* I. 1.1 ff.
31. See P. L. Vaidya, *Harivaṃśa*, vol. I, Introduction, Poona, 1969, pp. XXXIX ff.

‘Knowing that the brāhmaṇa-s during Kali yuga have short and little mind, he makes every yuga the sacred purāṇa-samhitā. (20)

Hearing the veda-s is not meant for women, sūdra and bad brāhmaṇa-s. Purāṇa-s were made just for their benefit. (21)’

Such an attitude was not displayed by all the purāṇic authors. *Kūrma P. I. 1.11*, for instance, restricts purāṇic narration only to good *dvija-s*. The presence of Sūta in the *paramparā*, however, and the fact that really Sūta-s enter very often as narrators in the purāṇa-s warrant that purāṇic literature will always be open to large circles of people.

So this third layer seems to be particularly rich in suggestions about purāṇic tradition; it says, in fact, that the purāṇa-s are in direct connection with the veda s, particularly with the Atharvans, that they are linked to the Mahābhārata and lastly that they are always open to new suggestions coming from popular traditions. The presence of some other names in the third layer, like Ugraśravas and Parīkṣit, stresses only the link the purāṇa-s have with the Mahābhārata; they, in fact, stand in place of Śaunaka, as is clear from the Table. As for Sumantu of the Bhaviṣya purāṇa’s *paramparā*, Śukadeva in the Bhāgavata’s and others, whatever their meaning might be, their presence in this third layer does not invalidate the conclusions reached above.

A particular problem is represented by the parallel *paramparā-s*. Sometimes there are two different traditions coalescing in the same purāṇa, as in the case of Padma purāṇa, where I. 1.2ff give as *paramparā* Hari, Brahmā, Nārada, Vyāsa, Sūta, while V. I. 2ff have the sequence Svayambhū, Ṣaṭkulīya, Sūta, Śaunaka. In this and similar cases we can suppose that the purāṇa has gathered two or more different sources, which stemmed from different authors or different areas. This would be a particular case of a common trend of the purāṇa-s, which are works composed from different sources. But there are other cases in which the purāṇa-s claim to have been narrated somehow parallelly by different persons to different listeners. *Kūrma P. II. 44.143* says that the purāṇa was narrated by Brahmā to Śaunaka and Sanatkumāra; from Śaunaka then it passed to Devala and later to Pañcaśikha; from Sanatkumāra, instead, it went to Vyāsa, Sūta and the *ṛṣi-s*. *Agni P. 1.18cd-19ab* say even more clearly :

विष्णुनोक्तं यथा मह्यं देवेभ्यो ब्रह्मणा पुरा ॥
तथा ते कथयिष्यामि ।

‘As in olden times it was narrated to me by Viṣṇu and to the gods by Brahmā, so I shall narrate to you...’

In neither case we are informed how transmission took place; both traditions had their own purāṇa which was similar to the other and yet different. These parallel *paramparā*-s seem to show at least that the differences in purāṇic tradition are not only due to different sources which contributed to form it, but they depend also on the different ways the same purāṇic topic is narrated.³² The process then seems to be similar to the one we see in the veda-s where the different *śākhā*-s were mostly based only on different *paramparā*-s with small variants.³³ The purāṇa-s, we know it definitely, very often do not claim to present new subjects but only to re-narrate what is already known.³⁴ The parallel *paramparā*-s, therefore, bear witness to a process of unification which is so clearly visible in the whole purāṇic tradition.

PURĀṆASAMHITĀ-S

To understand better the process of the purāṇic *paramparā* we have to analyse another feature of our texts, namely their composite character. They are said to be ‘*pañcalakṣaṇa*’ or ‘*daśalakṣaṇa*’³⁵; some of them claim to have ‘*catuspāda*-s’³⁶ exactly like the veda-s, they moreover affirm to be ‘*nānārtha*’-s or ‘*nānākathā*-s’³⁷

32. cf. *Brahmāṇḍa P.* I. 2.35.67cd; *Vāyu P.* I. 61. 59cd

पाठान्तरे पृथक्भूता वेदशाखा यथा तथा ॥

33. cf. *Mārkaṇḍeya P.* 45. 21

पुराणसंहिताश्चक्रुर्वहुलाः परमर्षयः ।
वेदानां प्रविभागश्च कृतस्तैस्तु सहस्रशः ॥

34. cf. यथाश्रुतम् *Padma P.* V. 1.26cd; *Devī Bhāgavata P.* I. 3.1ff, यथाधीतम् *Bhāgavata P.* I. 3.45cd etc.

35. For ‘*pañcalakṣaṇa*’ see *Agni P.* 1.14; *Kūrma P.* I. 1.12; *Garuḍa P.* 2.28; *Viṣṇu P.* III. 6.24 etc. For ‘*daśalakṣaṇa*’ see *Bhāgavata P.* II. 10 1 ff; XII. 7.8 ff; *Brahmavaivarta P.* IV. 133.6-10; *Bhaviṣya P.* III. 4.25.219-220.

36. see *Vāyu P.* I. 61. 59a; *Brahmāṇḍa P.* I. 1. 38ff; cf. *Nārada P.* I. 109. 1ff.; also the colophons of the *Pūrvakhaṇḍa* of the *Nārada* and of the *Brahmāṇḍa purāṇa*-s divide the purāṇa into *catuspāda*.

37. see *Nārada P.* I. 92. 5.

etc. Besides, many purāṇic texts refer to the purāṇa-s as 'purāṇa-samhitā'³⁸. This last definition seems to be particularly meaningful and it is worth deeper attention. The expression 'purāṇa-samhitā' can be found in the colophons as a description of a purāṇa, as in the *Skanda purāṇa*, *Reva Khaṇḍa*, *Kūrma Purāṇa*, *Bhaviṣya purāṇa* etc. it can refer to a single purāṇa or to an *adhyāya* only, as in the *Skanda purāṇa*, *Revā khaṇḍa*, 1.3 53.³⁹ But in its more comprehensive meaning it describes all the eighteen purāṇa-s as a whole, as in *Brahmāṇḍa P. II. 34 21*⁴⁰ etc.

Viṣṇu P. III. 6.15 and others⁴¹ explain what a *purāṇasamhitā* is composed of, namely *ākhyāna-s*, *upākhyāna-s*, *gāthā-s*, *kalpaśuddhi* (or *kalpajokti* or *kulakarma*). From the same purāṇa (I. 1.29-30) we know that these *samhitā-s* existed before Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana, i.e. before the eighteen purāṇa-s. If we give credit to the above definition, these *samhitā-s* gathered several topics, which had stemmed out in different periods; according to *Nārada P. I. 92.5* a *purāṇākhyāna* can be 'nānakalpasamudbhava', which implies that the origins of a purāṇa should be traced in different periods.

Besides the four ingredients mentioned above (i.e. *ākhyāna-s* etc.) we can perhaps find other hints for understanding the content of these *purāṇasamhitā-s*. In several places we see that the whole content of a purāṇa or of a single *adhyāya* is called *purāṇākhyāna* or even simply 'purāṇa'⁴². From this fact and from the word 'purāṇa-samhitā', we can gather that the word purāṇa can be a short form of both *purāṇākhyāna* and *purāṇasamhitā*. We can, therefore, even say that a *purāṇa (-samhitā)* is made of *purāṇa (ākhyāna)-s*.⁴³ This lead us on the one hand to be careful when we find the word 'purāṇa' in the text, and on the other to realize that, according

38. see *Brahmāṇḍa P. II. 34.21*; *Vāyu P. I. 60. 21*; *Viṣṇu P. III. 6 15*; *Devī Bhāgavata P. I. 1.6*; I. 2.37; I. 3.24ff; *Nārada P. I. 1. 16*; II. 82. 35 cd; *Padma P. II. 125. 38*; *Liṅga P. I. 1.11ab*; *Skanda P. VII. 1.1.4, 30...*

39. cf. also *Viṣṇu P. I. 1. 30*; *Nārada P. II. 82. 34-35* etc.

40. cf. fn. 38.

41. cf. fn. 38

42. cf. *Nārada P. I. 1. 36*; I. 92. 3; *Brahmāṇḍa P. I. 1.7c*; *Vāyu P. I. 1.6*.

43. The problem is very complex in fact, because even a single purāṇa can be formed of several *purāṇasamhitā-s*, see *Śiva Purāṇa*.

to the purāṇa-s themselves, the purāṇic texts reached Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana and even his ancestors already in a composite form. *Mārkaṇḍeya P.* 45.21 says openly that the *purāṇasamhitā-s* were made by the *ṛṣi-s*.

The problem needs further consideration. Although indeed the purāṇa-s claim that *purāṇasamhitā-s* existed even before Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana, yet they also clearly affirm that in the beginning purāṇa was only one. “*Purāṇam ekam evāṣīt*” is a kind of refrain repeated very often.⁴⁴ In this connection two theories are introduced in the purāṇa-s themselves to explain how from one purāṇa eighteen developed.⁴⁵ One affirms that the one purāṇa of a hundred crores of *śloka-s* narrated by Brahmā was reduced to four hundred thousand *śloka-s* by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana and then divided into eighteen by him. The other theory states that Vedavyāsa composed a *purāṇasamhitā* which he recited to his disciples, three of whom composed in their turn their own *samhitā* and so on. From all this one thing at least is clear : Vyāsa is a turning point in the purāṇic evolution. Until him the purāṇa-s have no names; either they are mere *purāṇākhyāna-s* or, if they are already *purāṇasamhitā-s*, they have no specific name. The first time they get a name they are called ‘*Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*’,⁴⁶ which can mean perhaps ‘universal purāṇa’ or ‘purāṇa dealing with the Brahmāṇḍa.’ According to *Skanda P.* VII. 1.2.8 the Brahmāṇḍa purāṇa of which we speak now has still one hundred crores of *śloka-s* and, therefore, its name does not yet refer to any particular purāṇa, but rather to the original purāṇa not yet divided into eighteen. Even at the time of Romaharṣaṇa the *purāṇasamhitā* that Vyāsa’s disciple receives from his guru is still nameless⁴⁷. The names will be given as we proceed in time when the *samhitā-s* multiply and slowly begin to

44. cf. *Nārada P.* I. 92.2; *Matsya P.* 53.4; *Skanda P.* V. 1. 23; VII 12.8 etc.

45. see A. S. Gupta, Purāṇa-s and their Referencing, in *Purāṇa, Vārāṇasī*, Vol. VII. 2 (July, 1965), pp. 323-326.

46. cf. *Kūrma P.* II. 41. 13cd; *Nārada P.* I. 109. 30f; *Skanda P.* VII. 1.2.8; but the lists of the eighteen purāṇa-s give Brahma purāṇa as first supported also by *Viṣṇu P.* III. 6. 20 and *Brahma P.* 245.4; only *Vāyu P.* 104 (cf. also *Devī Bhāgavata P.* I. 3.2) puts the Matsya purāṇa as first while *Bhaviṣya P.* III. 3. 284 puts the Viṣṇu purāṇa.

47. cf. *Viṣṇu P.* II. 6.16; *Bhāgavata P.* XII. 7. 5-7.

differentiate, first only in their diction⁴⁸ and then more and more in their subjects, order and even purpose.⁴⁹

The purāṇa-s say also something more about this turning point so important in the history not only of the purāṇa-s but of the entire Indian culture. We are insistently informed that Vedavyāsa (or one of his disciples) attended to a twelve-year-long sacrifice at Naimiṣa at the beginning of Kaliyuga and that then purāṇa-s were narrated or re-narrated.⁵⁰ The somewhat official beginning of the purāṇic era takes place, therefore, in occasion of a sacrifice, at the dawn of the Kaliyuga⁵¹. Sacrifice can be considered the natural place where the purāṇa-s were narrated, whether we speak of the vedic 'purāṇa'⁵² or of the new 'purāṇasamhitā-s.' In this association of the purāṇa-s with the Naimiṣa *sattra* we can see perhaps also a kind of ideal continuation of the vedic era—centred on sacrifice—into the purāṇa-s, which claim to be 'vedasammīta'.⁵³ So both because sacrifice is the natural place for *kathā*-s and because of purāṇa-s being 'pañcamo veda',⁵⁴ the Naimiṣa *sattra* constitutes the most meaningful frame for the beginning of the purāṇic era.

The purāṇa-s, although rooted in the veda-s and going back to very ancient times, want to be useful to the people of Kaliyuga. The eighteen purāṇa-s which began their development from Vedavyāsa are meant indeed to meet the needs of the fourth age. Although, in fact, the Vyāsa-s are said to appear 'dvāpare dvāpare

48. cf. *Vāyu P. I.* 61. 59cd.

49. Compare *Matsya P.* 53.4 with *Nārada P. I.* 92. 22.

50. cf. *Kūrma P.* 1.2; *Matsya P. I.* 1.5; *Devī Bhāgavata P. I.* 2.33. The *Mahābhārata* has also the same background, cf. *Ādi-parva* 1. 1 ff.

51. प्राप्ते कलियुगे घोरे (*Śiva P. I.* 1. 12a)

52. The controversy about the way the vedic purāṇa was linked with the sacrifice can be seen in P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Poona, Vol. 5, 1962, pp. 865-867. Beyond the polemics, however, it remains that purāṇa-s both in vedic times and later were in connection with a sacrifice, even if sometimes the purāṇic *kathā*-s were distinct from the *kathā*-s narrated during the sacrifice.

53. cf. *Brahmavaivarta P. I.* 1. 7, 160 and also *Vāyu P. I.* 1. 9b; *Brahmāṇḍa P. I.* 1. 1. 10b.

54. see *Skanda P. V.* 3. 1. 18; *Bhāgavata P. III.* 12. 39 cd etc.

sadā,⁵⁵ their activity and their influence is in Kaliyuga, that is 'kalpāntare'⁵⁶, during this age.⁵⁷

From all this it seems that we can gather the following statement from the purāṇic texts : whatever was the previous situation of the purāṇa-s (or purāṇa) before Vedavyāsa, from his times downwards the purāṇa-s meet the needs of the people living in Kaliyuga. Their teaching, however, is not new, it is linked to the veda-s, to the ancient ṛṣi-s and muni-s, it comes directly from Brahmā or Viṣṇu and their content is already a part of the ancient tradition. But only with Vedavyāsa we can speak of a purāṇic era, whence only the ancient anonymous purāṇa begins to take different names to fit different needs in different situations of time and space.

REDUCTION AND DIFFERENTIATION OF PARAMPARĀ-S

The parallel *paramparā-s* already considered above can help us now to understand another fact in the purāṇa-s. Four purāṇic passages, namely *Agni P.* 272, *Matsya P.* 53, *Nārada P.* I. 92ff, *Skanda P.* VII 1. 2.28ff contain the summary of all the eighteen purāṇa-s. I have already shown in another article⁵⁸ that these summaries should be considered as an attempt to fix a purāṇic canon and therefore represent the purāṇa-s at a particular point of their evolution and should not be taken as if they were the authentic representations of the original purāṇa-s. A confirmation of this statement is also found in the part of such summaries dealing with the *paramparā-s* of each purāṇa. Table 2 shows them as they appear in the four above mentioned purāṇa-s, and gives also the reciters of the single purāṇa-s as available in *Bhaviṣya P.* III. 3.28.8. The Table shows, first of all, that there are three distinct traditions, one represented by Agni, Matsya and Skanda purāṇa-s, the other represented by the Nārada purāṇa and the third by the Bhaviṣya. This fact leads us to think that the lists of *paramparā-s* have also their own tradition like many other purāṇic topics. Moreover, the changing of *paramparā* in the last two passages implies most probably also a change in purāṇic content. This is another proof that it is dangerous to rely on such texts to judge

55. cf. *Nārada P.* I. 92. 24; *Devī Bhāgavata P.* I. 3. 18 ff. etc.

56. cf. *Matsya P.* 53. 4.

57. अस्मिन् युगे *Brahmāṇḍa P.* I. 2. 34. 11a.

58. The Dynamic Canon of the Purāṇa-s, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-142.

TABLE II
Purāṇic Paramparā

Purāṇa-s	Acc. to <i>Matsya</i> 53 (=SK. VII. 1.2.28ff)	Acc. to <i>Agni</i> 272	Acc. to <i>Nārada</i> I. 92 ff.	Acc. to <i>Bhav.</i> III. 3.28.8ff
1. Brahma	Brahmā-Marīci	Brahmā-Marīci	Vyāsa	Brahmā
2. Padma	—	—	Pulastya-Bhīṣma/Vyāsa	Brahmā
3. Viṣṇu	Parāśara	Parāśara	Śaktija-Maitreya/Vyāsa	Parāśara
4. Vāyu	Vāyu	Haripriya/Vāyu	Vāyu	Vyāsa (<i>Śiva Purāṇa</i> and <i>Vāyu Purāṇa</i>)
5. Bhāgavata	—	—	2nd Skandha by Vyāsa 6th Skandha by Vyāsa	Śukra
6. Nārada	Nārada	Nārada	1. Bhāga by Sanaka 2. Bhāga by Sanandana-Nārada 3. Bhāga by Sanatkumāra-Nārada 4. Bhāga Sanātana- Nārada	—
7. Mārkaṇḍeya	Mārkaṇḍeya	—	Jaimini-Mārkaṇḍeya	Mārkaṇḍeya
8. Agni	Agni-Vasiṣṭha	Agni-Vasiṣṭha	Anala-Vasiṣṭha	Aṅgiras
9. Bhaviṣya	Caturmukha-Manu	Bhava-Manu	Brahmā-Manu/Vyāsa	Mahādeva

10. Brahmavaiv.	Sāvarni-Nārada	Sāvarni-Nārada	Sāvarni-Nārada/Vyāsa	—
11. Liṅga	Maheśvara/Brahmā	Maheśvara	Hara-Brahmā-Dharma etc...Vyāsa	Taṇḍin
12. Varāha	Viṣṇu-Kṣoṇi	Viṣṇu	—	Mārkaṇḍeya
13. Skanda	Ṣaṇmukha	Skanda	Brahmā, Vyāsa, Ṣaṇmukha, Sthāṇu, Skanda	Śiva
14. Vāmana	Caturmukha	—	Pulastya-Nārada-Vyāsa- Romaharṣaṇa-Naimiṣiya	Vyāsa
15. Kūrma	Janārdana (Kūrmārūpin) ṛṣi-s	Kūrma	Hari (Kūrmārūpin)-ṛṣi-s	Vyāsa
16. Matsya	Janārdana (Matsyarūpin) Manu	Matsya-Manu	Vyāsa	Vyāsa
17. Garuḍa	Kṛṣṇa	Viṣṇu	—	Hari
18. Brahmāṇḍa	Brahmā	Brahmā	Parāśara-Brahmā-Marīci-people- Vasiṣṭha-Śaktisuta-Jātūkarnya-Vyāsa	Taṇḍin (<i>Nṛsiṃha purāṇa</i>) Vyāsa

whether a purāṇa is ancient or not, is spurious or original. We have seen above that several purāṇa-s have their own *paramparā*. Now if we compare the *paramparā*-s available in the single purāṇa-s with those given in Table II we see that they rarely match one another. Sometimes the five cited passages have a list of names shorter than those of the purāṇa-s, some other times they offer a completely new list different from those given in the purāṇa-s. This implies that the content of the purāṇa-s had also changed and, even more, that the cultural and traditional background which had produced that content was somewhat transformed and altered. The process which is visible in the substitution of Brahmā with Viṣṇu (or synonyms) as a revealing deity in the purāṇic transmission or in the substitution of a temple deity (or *mūrti*)⁵⁹ with another in the actual religious practice, is also visible in the substitution of a purāṇic *paramparā* with another. This practice to change the list of the *paramparā* according to the content, however, lasted only sometime. The fact that the list of the *paramparā* in three of the above mentioned passages has become traditional, points to the fact that the list had acquired an importance of its own and needed not correspond to the purāṇic content. We have cases, indeed, in which the content is changed while the *paramparā* remains unaltered.⁶⁰ In fact many additions were inserted in the purāṇa-s when the interest for the list of *paramparā*-s had already disappeared.

The shifting from one *paramparā* to another, indeed, does not imply necessarily a change of content. We have examples of a *kathā* narrated with the same words in two different interlocutors.⁶¹ From a difference of *paramparā*, then, not always can we conclude a difference in content, and this applies not only to single stories as it might appear from what has been said but also to the whole

59. It is not uncommon to see *liṅga*-s of Śiva in the temples being substituted with a statue of Rāma. I can remember here the temple of Saṅgameśvara at Assi in Vārāṇasī, where such change took place very recently. See also Gayāmāhātmya, Introduction, in *Purāṇa*, Vārāṇasī, Vol. XXI. 2 (July, 1979), p. 7.

60. see A. S. Gupta, *op cit.*, for the Brahmavaivarta purāṇa.

61. Good examples can be discovered in W. Kirfel, *Das Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa*, Leiden, 1927, *passim*.

purāṇa.⁶² The changes in the *paramparā*, however, hint at a change in the cultural and religious background of a purāṇa. The same fact narrated in a dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī will reveal a Śaivite composer, narrated in a dialogue between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa will reveal a Vaiṣṇavite author. Most probably the story itself will have different details in the two versions due mainly to the different religious trends of the two authors.

THE VĀYU AND THE BRAHMĀṆḌA PURĀṆA-S

An example of the importance the *paramparā* can assume in the purāṇa-s is found in a comparison between the Brahmāṇḍa and the Vāyu purāṇa-s. Although some authors affirm that the two purāṇa-s were distinct from the very beginning,⁶³ it seems more sensible to accept Kirfel's and others' statement that the actual Brahmāṇḍa and Vāyu were originally one single purāṇa, which split into two in course of time.⁶⁴ It seems that one of the reasons for such a division is to be found in the purāṇic *paramparā* which is different in the two purāṇa-s.

When one begins to examine the differences between the Brahmāṇḍa and the Vāyu one is tempted to see whether such differences refer also to the main deity in the two purāṇa-s. The name 'Vāyu purāṇa' induces us to think that its main deity is Vāyu, while 'Brahmāṇḍa purāṇa' can suggest that its most important god is Brahmā. And supposing, then, that in one purāṇa Vāyu is the chief revealer and in the other it is Brahmā, one is immediately tempted to see what was the main deity in the original purāṇa, to discover whether it was the god Vāyu who took the place of Brahmā or viceversa. It may, however, be disappointing to find out that almost always the main deity of one purāṇa coincides with that of the other. The existing differences, which can be easily discovered are too few to suppose that a substitution of the main deity in one of the two purāṇa-s can be the real cause of the splitting into two of the original one. Let us see some examples.

62. The comparison between the Vāyu and the Brahmāṇḍa purāṇa-s which will be made below supports this statement. See also the changes that took place in the Kūrma purāṇa which from vaiṣṇavite became śaivite through the substitution of the main deity with another one and the change of interlocutors.

63. see Baladeva Upādhyāya, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

64. W. Kirfel, *op. cit.*, p. X ff.

Vāyu P. I.1.185 says :

अतश्च संक्षेपमिमं श्रृणुध्वं महेश्वरः सर्वमिदं पुराणम् ।

‘And, thereafter, listen to the summary : all this purāṇa is Maheśvara’. *Brahmā I.1.174* has exactly the same śloka but substitutes Nārāyaṇa for Maheśvara.

In another place the *Vāyu purāṇa* describes Maheśvara with the attributes of *Brahmā* :

महेश्वरः परोऽव्यक्तश्चतुर्बाहुश्चतुर्मुखः ।

(*Vāyu P. I. 1.42ab*)

‘Maheśvara is supreme, the unevolved, with four arms and four faces’, or again it attributes to Maheśvara actions which are usually referred to *Brahmā* :

प्रधानं पुरुषं चैव प्रविश्याण्डं महेश्वरः ।

(*Vāyu P. I 5.12 ab*)

‘Maheśvara indeed having entered Pradhāna, Puruṣa and the egg...’ Sometimes there is also a small bit of polemics, as in *Vāyu P. I. 1.184* :

तस्यापि जगतः स्रष्टुः स्रष्टा देवो महेश्वरः ।

‘God Maheśvara is creator also of the creator of this world.’ Some more examples can be gathered but not many indeed. Against them instead we could collect a long series of instances in which the two purāṇa-s have exactly the same words and use the same deity, Maheśvara or *Brahmā*, according to the situation. From all this we can deduce only that the *Vāyu purāṇa*, which innovates in many places the *Brahmāṇḍa*, was written or readjusted by an author who preferred Maheśvara to *Brahmā*, even if usually he did not interfere with the original text to change it. The real difference between the two purāṇa-s, therefore, does not lie here. A deeper split can instead be found when we look at the *paramparā*. Let us note first of all that both purāṇa-s claim in their colophons to be “*Vāyuprokta*”, narrated by *Vāyu*. But if we examine the texts we discover that *Vāyu* is an interlocutor only in the *Vāyu purāṇa* and only in those parts which are different from the *Brahmāṇḍa*, i e., those peculiar to it. These parts, which are now found only in one purāṇa, should perhaps be considered belonging to the original purāṇa, that is to say that they have not been added by the *Vāyu purāṇa* after the splitting; they have been rather removed by the *Brahmāṇḍa*. It is this last purāṇa, moreover, not the *Vāyu*,

that is interested in the purāṇic canon; it contains the theory of purāṇic composition in the *anukramaṇikā* (I. 1.), while it is absent in the Vāyu; its colophons go over and over a division in *catuṣpāda* etc. which is not made by the Vāyu. Both purāṇa-s, however, have an *adhyāya*—Vāyu P. I. 60 and *Brahmāṇḍa* P. I. 34—which deals with purāṇic origin and its handing over. Both the *adhyāya*-s have the same text with minor variants, but the purāṇic *paramparā* is very short as it is not the main concern of the author of that *adhyāya*. The fact that the content of this *adhyāya* is not mentioned in the Vāyu's *anukramaṇikā* of *adhyāya* I. 1 can support the conclusion that the Vāyu purāṇa for this *adhyāya* was influenced by the *Brahmāṇḍa*. Moreover, the latter contains in *adhyāya* I. 1 a *paramparā* ascending to Vasiṣṭha and the ṛṣi-s, while such a tradition is almost meaningless in the Vāyu. Everything leads us to conclude that the whole matter dealing with purāṇic arrangement is alien to the original Vāyu; this matter entered the purāṇa under the influence of the *Brahmāṇḍa*. Seeing the importance the god Vāyu has in the *adhyāya* peculiar to the Vāyu purāṇa and in the colophons of both the purāṇa-s, one is amazed to realize that in the purāṇic *paramparā*-s of both the purāṇa, Vāyu is not mentioned. The amazement is even greater when we think of the Vāyu purāṇa in which the name 'Vāyu' is present even in the title. Instead of Vāyu there is Mātariśvan, a synonym of Vāyu, but his presence does not seem to justify the absence of the name Vāyu in the *paramparā*. In places where we would expect Vāyu, Brahmā comes into the picture as he is the usual revealing deity in *adhyāya*-s dealing with purāṇic arrangement in other purāṇa-s too. Brahmā, however, is no interlocutor in the Vāyu and *Brahmāṇḍa*, and this seems to be meaningful. Only one who was interested in purāṇic systematization could have added such a name which was the common one for many other purāṇa-s without any real correspondence in the actual text. It is perhaps to be attributed to the *Brahmāṇḍa*'s authors and not the Vāyu's. The situation of the two purāṇa-s would also reveal, then, a counteraction of Brahmā's followers on previous texts, which in this case were most probably śaivite if we keep in mind what has been said above. This case, then, is a confirmation of what was proved by K. Rüping for the Padma purāṇa. This makes us curious to find out how widespread are the remnants of this Brāhmanic reaction in the purāṇa-s. The four summaries of

all the purāṇa-s mentioned above are unanimous in saying that the Vāyu purāṇa was spoken by Vāyu. About the Brahmāṇḍa purāṇa, instead, they are split into two traditions, one considering Brahmā as the original speaker and the other accumulating a long list of handers over, the longest in these summaries, in which Brahmā occupies only the second place. The described situation seems to imply that at the time of the composition of such summaries the Vāyu purāṇa had still Vāyu as the most important narrator, while for the Brahmāṇḍa the situation was still fluid. On the other hand these very summaries can induce us to think that the two purāṇa-s had nothing in common. Had we only the purāṇic *paramparā*-s we would arrive at a conclusion different from Kirfel's. From them, indeed, it appears that the Vāyu purāṇa was distinct from the Brahmāṇḍa and then it was assimilated to it under the influence of a strong current of purāṇic systematizers active in the Brahmāṇḍa purāṇa. This consideration seems sufficient to prove, then, that the actual purāṇic *paramparā*-s of the Vāyu and the Brahmāṇḍa were not present in the original purāṇa and that they were introduced slowly first in Brahmāṇḍa and later in the Vāyu. Their presence in purāṇa-s, which have a great part of their text identical, shows that the split into two different purāṇa-s of the original one took place mainly under the influence of different traditions. The lists of *paramparā* simply reproduce and bear witness to the fact. It seems even that we can deduce something more. In fact, in the four passages above mentioned, the *paramparā* (and perhaps, then, also the text) of the Vāyu purāṇa is definitely settled, while the *paramparā* of the Brahmāṇḍa is still in the process of transformation. The lists, therefore, seem to witness the very moment of the split of the single purāṇa into two; in fact one of them, the Brahmāṇḍa, is still under transformation.

The purāṇic *paramparā* then, as we have examined it, has proved to be very useful in understanding some purāṇic facts. Through it, indeed, we have discovered an unsuspected structure of the purāṇa-s. According to the purāṇic authors themselves the actual purāṇa-s are in fact *samhitā*-s of composite character. They are the result of a long process of unification. The ancient *purāṇa-khyāna*-s of the vedic times increased and developed enormously. The *ṛṣi*-s were in the main responsible for this growth. They took the matter from the vedic times or directly from a revealing deity

and in different places and in different times they handed it over from one generation to the other. The Vyāsa-s who had been active as systematizers of the veda-s took over also the purāṇa-s. They organized the several *purāṇasamhitā-s* available in different places into an organic body; the original purāṇa which had split into hundreds of rivulets was gathered again in eighteen big rivers. The Bhārgava-s were very active in such work so as to constitute a link that joined Atharvans' vedic tradition with the *purāṇa-itiḥāsa*. The ṛṣi-s who, in their turn, had been very active in ancient times, were reduced to the role of mere listeners from Vyāsa onwards. In their place the Sūta-s, i. e. the bards, introduced their own more popular poetical vein and extended the purāṇic tradition to all the classes of people. The purāṇa-s which had received a strong systematization at the time of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana and Romaharṣaṇa began again to increase their matter under the influence of time and place. But the work done by the arrangers had to remain for ever. The purāṇa-s will be only eighteen, because so it was fixed at the time of Vedavyāsa and disciples. The *paramparā* alone will change so that each purāṇa can have different 'editions' according to the different traditions. But slowly also this attention to the *paramparā* will disappear; the purāṇa-s will continue their process of growth without any fixed *paramparā* but only under the limits of the eighteen great boundaries fixed at the time of Vyāsa.

PAITĀMAHA-YAJÑA AND THE ORIGIN OF SŪTAS AND
MĀGADHAS ACCORDING TO VIṢṆUPURĀṆA

By

MADHUSUDAN M. PATHAK

[अस्मिन् निबन्धे विष्णुपुराणानुसारतः पृथोरुत्पत्तिः सूतस्य
मागधस्य चोत्पत्तिर्विवेचिता । ऋषीणां पैतामहे यज्ञे वेनशरीरात्
पृथोरुत्पत्तिर्जाता । सूतमागधानां चोत्पत्तिस्तस्मिन्नेवाहनि जाता । सूत-
मागधौ स्तुतिकर्माणि नियुक्तौ । निषादानामणि चोत्पत्तिर्वेनशरीरत एव
संजाता । एतत्सर्वं लेखकेन वर्णितम् । अश्वमेधयज्ञमेव पैतमहयज्ञ-
मित्यमि लेखकेनोहितम् ।]

The race of Sūtas is very highly celebrated in the Purāṇas. They are widely known as the reciters of Itihāsa-Purāṇas i.e. the Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and the eighteen Purāṇas.

The Viṣṇupurāṇa has a complete, detailed account of the origin of Sūtas.

This has a reference to the episode of king Vena and Emperor Pṛthu.

As it is narrated in Viṣṇupurāṇa I. 13, Vena was the son of king Aṅga and Sunīthā, the daughter of Mṛtyu. The Purāṇa further tells that owing to the vices of the grand father, this son of Sunīthā viz, Vena became wicked. He ordered that all the sacrifices in honour of several deities, which were being performed upto that time should be stopped and all the sacrifices should be performed in his honour as none else but he alone deserved the right to sacrificial share.¹ He declared that he was the Lord of sacrifices.

1. अभिषिक्तो यदा राज्ये स वेनः परमर्षिभिः ।
घोषयामास स तदा पृथिव्यां पृथिवीपतिः ॥
न यष्टव्यं न दातव्यं न होतव्यं कथञ्चन ।
भोक्ता यज्ञस्य कस्त्वन्यो ह्यहं यज्ञपतिः प्रभुः ॥

Viṣṇupurāṇa (Gita press edition)
I. 13.13-14.

On hearing this strange order from the king the sages said,² “O King, please hear what we say for the benefit of your own self, your subjects and your kingdom. We will perform a long sacrifice in honour of Lord Hari, who is in fact the Lord of sacrifice, and as a fruit of such a sacrifice, He will descend in a partial incarnation at your place.”

But this appeal of the sages fell flat on the ears of the arrogant and proud king. He insisted that his orders must be carried out, and as a result the infuriated sages threw bladefish pieces of Kuṣa and the king Vena collapsed together with his vanity. Then as a sort of corollary to the execution of the king, there arise a great uproar among the people on account of their being dragged to the position where there was no king to rule over them. The sages thought for a while as to how that gap should be filled in. They churned the left arm of the deceased king, and out of it a dwarfish, black person sprang up, who resembled a charred trunk of a tree and having a small face. He asked the sages as to what he was expected to do. The sages asked him to sit down (ni ṣīda) and hence he was called Niṣāda.³

The information supplied here by Viṣṇupurāṇa I. 13.33-36 is very important from the cultural point of view. It contains a clear reference to the origin and habitat of the aboriginal people of India. The name Niṣāda is explained here in quite unequivocal terms. It appears that the word is derived from नि + √सद् which

2. भो भो राजन् शृणुष्व त्वं यद्वदाम महीपते ।
राज्यदेहोपकाराय प्रजानां च हितं परम् ॥
दीर्घसत्रेण देवेश सर्वयज्ञेश्वरं हरिम् ।
पूजयिष्याम भद्रं ते तस्यांशस्ते भविष्यति ॥

Viṣṇupurāṇa I. 13.16-17

- 3 ततः संमद्य ते सर्वे मुनयस्तस्य भूभृतः ।
ममन्थुरुहं पुत्रार्थमनपत्यस्य यत्नतः ॥
मध्यमानात्समुत्तस्थौ तस्योरोः पुष्वः किल ।
दग्धस्थूणाप्रतीकाशः खर्वाटस्योऽतिह्रस्वकः ॥
किं करोमीति तान्सर्वांस विप्रानाह चातुरः ।
निषीदेति तमूचुस्ते निषादस्तेन सोऽभवत् ॥
ततस्तत्सम्भवा जाता विन्ध्यशैलनिवासिनः ।
निषादा मुनिशार्दूल पापकर्म्मोपलक्षणाः ॥

Viṣṇupurāṇa I. 13.33-36

means 'to sit'. He was ordered by the sages to sit down, as they might have felt that the fellow was entirely useless and it was not worth their while to take any work from him. Further the Purāṇa narrates that the Niṣādas residing on the hilly regions of Vindhya mountain were the descendants of that primal Niṣāda who was produced from the churning of the left arm of the corpse of king Vena. It is further said that all the evil elements of Vena thus got out of his form, in the shape of Niṣāda. His body became pure, and when after that the sages churned the right arm of the dead king, Pṛthu was born. Of course here it is not quite easy to nod in affirmation at this fantastic account of birth of Pṛthu given by Viṣṇupurāṇa. It is a matter of serious medical research to decide as to how such a process of procreation can be feasible. For our purpose it is sufficient to take for granted that Pṛthu was thus born out of the body of his father, and thus he was a posthumous child.

The sages went on with their sacrificial session.

Pṛthu was anointed and his coronation ceremony was performed on the same day in presence of Brahmā and several other sages. There was a mark of the discus (Cakra) of Viṣṇu on the right palm of Pṛthu. This was a sufficient proof for his being a partial incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu⁴. This mark of the discus of Śrī Lord Viṣṇu is found on the palm of every universal emperor, and the efficacy of this mark is such that he becomes unvanquishable even by gods.

This remark of Viṣṇupurāṇa is important from the cultural point of view and it describes a mark on the human body and its efficacy too.

Now it is stated in this very context that just as Pṛthu was born during the Paitāmaha sacrifice, similarly on the day when Soma is pressed, Sūta and Māgadha were also born,⁵ Sūta was born on the ground where Soma was being pressed.

4. हस्ते तु दक्षिणे चक्रं दृष्ट्वा तस्य पितामहः ।
 विष्णोरशं पृथु मत्स्यां परितोषः परं ययौ ॥
 विष्णुचक्रं करे चिह्नं सर्वेषां चक्रवर्तिनाम् ।
 भवत्यव्याहृतो यस्य प्रभावस्त्रिदशैरपि ॥

Viṣṇupurāṇa I. 13.45-46

5. तस्य वै जातमात्रस्य यज्ञे पैतामहे शुभे ।
 सूतः सूत्यां समुत्पन्नः सौत्येऽहनि महामतिः ॥
 तस्मिन्नेव महायज्ञे यज्ञे प्राज्ञोऽथ मागधः ॥

Viṣṇupurāṇa I.13.51-52

The sages told these Sūta and Māgadha to sing the eulogy of king Pṛthu. They also said that it was the most proper work for both of them.

This command of the sages created a difficulty for Sūta and Māgadha. King Pṛthu was born on the same day, and so it was difficult for them to sing his eulogy as his exploits and adventures were not known to them. To this the sages replied that they might sing his praise as a powerful benevolent emperor, keeping his good qualities in mind.⁶ That is to say they were asked to sing about the future qualities and merits of the king.

Here also there is a glaring discrepancy. Just as Pṛthu was born on that day, these Sūta and Māgadha were also born on the same day. So how was it that they were asked to compose the eulogy of king Pṛthu when their age was of some hours only? Looking to the present stage of knowledge it is difficult to decide about this point, it can be settled only when a complete critical edition of this Purāṇa is brought out. It is a happy thing that the project of preparing a critical edition of this Purāṇa is under progress at the Oriental Institute, Baroda.

This whole account is narrated and discussed at length by Dr. R. C. Hazra in his introduction to the translation of Viṣṇu purāṇa by H. H. Wilson.⁷ He writes "From this story it is evident that in early days the Sūta and the Māgadha, like the journalists of the present age, played a very important role in keeping the powerful rulers constantly alive to the merits and defects of their administration and thus worked as a great check on their activities. In fact, they were the kingmakers in as much as they constantly reminded the kings of the many virtues they were to possess and the kings, on their part, always bore in mind the high ideals for attaining success in administration. But the function of the Sūta and Māgadha seems to have changed in later times with the deterioration of their position in society. In Kauṭilya's Arthśāstra

6. करिष्यत्येष यत्कर्तुं चक्रवर्ती महाबलः ।
गुणा भविष्या ये चास्य तैरयं स्तूयतां नृपः ॥

Viṣṇupurāṇa I. 13-56.

7. Hazra R. C Introduction p. e. Viṣṇu purāṇa a system of Hindu Mythology and Tradition. Punthi Pustak Calcutta, 4, 1961.

(V. 3; XIII. 1) we find the "Paurāṇika, Sūta and Māgadha" as given a very high position in the royal court like the Kārtāntika (foreteller), Naimittika (reader of omens), Maurutika (astrologer) and others and allowed to draw a salary of one thousand Paṇas, but they are said to have been employed for giving wide publicity to the power of the king to associate with gods throughout his territory, and, in foreign countries, for spreading the news of gods appearing before the conqueror and of his having received weapons and treasure from heaven. This statement of Kauṭilya shows that in his days the Paurāṇika, Sūta and Māgadha, were still connected with politics and required to help their king in maintaining internal peace and order and external grip. But in later times there was further deterioration in the position of Sūtas and Māgadhas, who came to be looked upon merely as wandering bards reciting the Purāṇas for the spread of the composite Dharma professed by these works but having no state support or claim for Vedic study."

From the above discussion it can be easily understood that the birth of King Pṛthu and the origin of the Sūta and Māgadha took place during the sacrificial session of the Paitāmaha Yajña. So it is worthwhile to know what is meant by Paitāmaha Yajña?

Dr. R. C. Hazra, while elaborating the point further writes, "from a study of the Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, Manusmṛiti and the Purāṇas we learn that the Vedic god Prajāpati, who was regarded as the father of creation and as Svayambhū (self-born), came later to be identified with god Brahmā, the creator. As the nine mind-born sons of this god (Brahmā) were entrusted by their father with the work of creation, they came to be known as "nine Brahmās" (nava Brahmāṇaḥ) and consequently the original Brahmā was called 'Pitāmaha' (grand-father) in relation to the created beings. Now, in the Tarittirīya-brāhmaṇa, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, and some other works of the Vedic literature we are told the horse (asva) originated from Prajāpati's eye which had swollen (asvayat) and had consequently been discarded by him, that it was Prajāpati who produced all the sacrifices including Aśvamedha, and that after creating these sacrifices he assigned them to relevant gods but kept the Aśvamedha for himself. So there is little scope for doubt that it was the Aśvamedha (Horse sacrifice) which, being thus a Prajāpatya Yajña was also called Paitāmaha Yajña. This identification

8. Ibid p. e.

of the Aśvamedha sacrifice with the 'Paitāmaha Yajña' finds strong support in a statement of the Viṣṇudharmottara, an early work of the 5th Century A. D., in which the ancient Paitāmaha Yajña, from which the Paurāṇika Sūta sprang up, has been called 'Hayamedha' in the following verse :

tasya paitāmahe yajñe hayamedhe purātane /
 āptoryāmasya sūtyehñi sūto jātaḥ parantapa //

(Viṣṇudharmottara I. 109. 13b-14a)⁹

This detailed discussion about the identification of Paitāmaha sacrifice presented by Dr. R. C. Hazra, supplies a necessary clue to the comprehension of the form of that sacrifice as well as the origin of the myth of the birth of Sūta.

But at the end of this discussion he writes, "Consequently the statements made in the said story of the Viṣṇu purāṇa are wrong and were clearly due to a confusion arising from want of knowledge about the actual meaning of the term 'Paitāmaha Yajña'.

This statement of Dr. R. C. Hazra seems to be ambiguous as he has not referred here as to which statements of Viṣṇupurāṇa occurring in the context of the story of the birth of Pṛthu and Sūta and Māgadha are wrong. Under these circumstances his affirmation that all the statements of Viṣṇupurāṇa in this context are wrong seems to be an outcome of hypercriticism on his part.

9. Ibid, p. f.

THE BEHEADING OF GAṆEŚA

By

PAUL B. COURTRIGHT

[अस्मिन् निबन्धे भगवतो गणेशस्य शीर्षच्छेदस्य हस्तिशिरःस्था-
पनस्य च कथाया विवेचनं विविधपुराणानामाधारेण प्रस्तुतम् । पुराणेषु
अन्येषु च हिन्दुग्रन्थेषु भगवान् गणेशो विघ्नविनाशको सर्वविधमङ्गल-
प्रदायकश्च वर्णितः । भगवता शिवेन केनचित्कारणेन तस्य शिरःच्छेदः
कृतः तस्य स्थाने गजस्य शिरः स्थापितम् । अत्र आसां कथनां
विवरणं प्रदायानेकविधसमाधानं कल्पितम् ।]

Gaṇeśa is the elephant-headed son of Śiva and Pārvatī. He is the leader of Śiva's attendants, or gaṇas, from which he derives his name. He is the bestower of success and the destroyer of obstacles that threaten the auspicious completion of any undertaking. He is the guardian of the temple threshold, the deity who is to be worshipped before all others in rites and at the outset of new actions. He is the popular lord of practical life; a childish, tricksterish, yet formidable character.

Gaṇeśa's most distinctive characteristic is his elephant head. It is the subject of a number of myths in the Purāṇas, as well as many tales in the folklore of Hinduism. How did he acquire such a curious form? How does his elephant head, and the events which lie behind his receiving it, contribute to his meaning as a religious *persona* in the Hindu pantheon?

The broad outlines of Gaṇeśa's story are familiar. He gained his elephant head because Śiva, in a moment of anger when Gaṇeśa blocked the door and prevented him from gaining entrance into Pārvatī's bath, cut off his head and, at the importuning of Pārvatī, replaced his severed head with that of an elephant. Thence he came to be recognized as the lord of Śiva's troops and the deity to be worshipped for the overcoming of obstacles.

The mythology of Gaṇeśa's beheading has prompted some to see striking similarities and differences with the myth of Oedipus. The central event of the myth, the beheading and restoration, is a frequent one in other Hindu myths and draws upon the ancient

Indian sacrificial tradition for its force and meaning. The figure of the beheaded and restored Gaṇeśa, the mutilated son of Śiva and Pārvatī, is among the most popular of Hindu deities, a popularity which may, in part, derive from his role as a mediating figure between his mother and father and as an advocate who assists the devotee in the successful resolution of undertakings. The purpose of our inquiry here is to explore the meanings of Gaṇeśa as a mythological and religious figure through the analysis of a number of myths in which his story is told.

Gaṇeśa loses his head and gains an elephant's head

Gaṇeśa makes his appearance in the post-Epic period and a number of Purāṇic stories give varying accounts of his birth and beheading. One version has it that Śiva made him by combining the four elements : earth, air, fire, and water, in order to create a being who would help the gods and brahmins remove obstacles from their undertakings just as the demons had them removed from theirs (*Varāha Purāṇa* 23.2-14). Others say that Pārvatī made Gaṇeśa by rubbing the surface of her limbs and bringing into being a child out of that substance in order to amuse herself (*Matsya Purāṇa* 145.500-505; *Padma Purāṇa*, Śṛṣṭikhaṇḍa, 45.444; *Skanda Purāṇa* 6.214.4-5; *Vāmana Purāṇa* (Venk. 28.56-59); and still others tell of how she made Gaṇeśa out of her bodily dirt in order to protect the privacy of her bath from Śiva's intrusions (*Śiva Purāṇa* 2.4.13.14-26; *Skanda Purāṇa* 3.2.12.10-14). The means and material out of which Gaṇeśa is created vary among the different variants of the myth, yet one theme remains constant throughout; Gaṇeśa's appearance in the world is not the result of Śiva and Pārvatī's sexual union. Such a union would bring disaster, as the gods tell Indra, "If their sexual intercourse were to be completed, that child which would be born as a result of their union would be imperishable." (*Vāmana Purāṇa* 28.35) Indeed, as Śiva explains to Pārvatī, he has no need for children, "I am not a householder, so I have no use for a son Householders need sons and wealth, a wife is necessary for him in order to have sons, and sons are necessary to give offerings to the ancestors. But I am not subject to death, so I have no need for a son." (*Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa* 2.60.10-14) Hence, Gaṇeśa's birth, like that of his brother Skanda, takes place by unnatural means from one or another of his parents.

Most of the variants of Gaṇeśa's birth and beheading link the two events closely together. Gaṇeśa is no sooner made than he is mutilated. The linkage of the symbolism of birth, beheading, and restoration is necessary in order for the figure of Gaṇeśa to work as a religious symbol. In the midst of these stories, we find themes of incestual desires, symbolic castration, oedipal conflict, mediation of oppositions, and initiatory symbolism. But we are getting ahead of the story. We must first consider the myths themselves in greater detail.

According to the account in the *Varāha Purāṇa*, the gods appealed to Śiva to create a being who would remove obstacles from their efforts and place them in the way of the demons. After reflecting on what form such a being might take, Śiva combines the elements: earth, air, fire, and water, infusing them with his own divine energy [*tejas*].

Then a glorious creature took form having a blazing face, illuminating all the directions, a great youth. Endowed with all the qualities of the great lord (Śiva) himself, he was like another Rudra incarnate. As soon as he was born he captivated the gods with his beauty, radiance, form and shape, this noble one. Seeing the supreme form of this noble child, Umā looked at him with an unblinking eye. Then the lord, seeing the fickleness which is the natural condition of women, became angry, thinking that the beautiful form of the youth was deluding to the eyes. So he cursed the god Gaṇeśa saying, 'O little boy, you will have an elephant's head and a pot belly. Your sacred thread will be made of snakes.' Thus he cursed him, being overcome by sharp anger. (*Varāha Purāṇa* 23.10-19).

In this myth Śiva creates Gaṇeśa as a favour to the gods without any participation on Pārvatī's part. The text stresses that Gaṇeśa was identical to Śiva in appearance. He only gets into trouble when Pārvatī looks at him "with an unblinking eye"; that is, when she is unable to take her eyes off him, regarding him in a lustful, incestuous manner. When Śiva realizes that in creating a double he has created a rival, he curses him to be one who has an elephant's head and pot belly. The transfer of head constitutes at least an implicit beheading.

Another version of this myth appears in a translation by Vans Kennedy, which he attributes to the same source although it does not appear in either the Bibliotheca Indica or Ānandāśrama editions. Kennedy's version reverses the key elements in the myth.

Śiva looked at Pārvatī, and whilst thinking how he could effect the wishes of the gods, from the splendour of his countenance there sprang into existence a youth shedding radiance all around, endowed with the qualities of Śiva, and evidently another Rudra, and captivating by his beauty the female inhabitants of heaven. Umā, seeing his beauty, was excited with jealousy, and in her anger pronounced this curse, 'Thou shalt not offend my sight with the form of a beautiful youth; and therefore assume an elephant's head and a large belly, and thus shall all thy beauties vanish.' (Vans Kennedy, *Researches into the Nature and Affinity of Ancient and Hindu Mythology* (London : 1831), p. 353).

In this version it is Pārvatī who curses Gaṇeśa to have the elephant's head because she is jealous of his erotic appeal to the other females in heaven. Here she is the one facing the rivalry rather than Śiva. The hint of incestual feelings we saw in the previous myth seems to be obscured in this variant by the ferocity of Pārvatī's response to Gaṇeśa's beauty. Behind the reversal of these two myths lies the common theme : Gaṇeśa's appearance is problematic to his parents from the outset and he poses a danger for the very persons for whom he ought to be a blessing.

A more well-known myth of Gaṇeśa's birth and beheading elaborates the theme of the erotic appeal of the son to his mother and the jealousy of the father. The violence from the father to the son, which is muted in the first myth we considered, and absent in the second, is made explicit here. The story is as follows :

Once while Pārvatī was scrubbing her limbs and looking at the dirt which had come out from the scrubbing, she took it in her hand and from it she made an image [*pratimā*] and saw that it was very beautiful. When she had endowed him with life [*jīva*] he stood up in front of her and asked his mother, 'What shall I do according to your instruction?' Pārvatī said, 'When I take my bath, you stand in the doorway, taking your axe and other weapons. As long as you

remain in the doorway, make sure there is no obstacle to my bathing.' When he had been instructed in this way by the great goddess, he stood in the doorway with all his weapons.

At that moment the great lord Śiva arrived there, and he had it in his mind to enter the house. Gaṇeśa, who was standing in the doorway, did not allow him to enter. Then the great lord became angry and they started to fight with one another. As both of them engaged in battle, each wanted to kill the other. Gaṇeśa struck the great lord with his axe, and then the great lord, raising his trident, struck him and cut off his head which fell to the ground. When Gaṇeśa collapsed on the ground there arose a great lamentation throughout the world. When Śiva saw that Pārvatī was so bereaved by this the great lord thought to himself, 'What have I done?'

Just at that moment he saw the elephant demon, Gajāśura, there. Seeing him, he struck off his head and made the child whom Pārvatī had created arise along with the other attendants [*gaṇas*] who were standing around him. Then he gave him the name Gajānana, the Elephant-Headed One, and all the gods and sages who were assembled there were elated and praised him. (*Skanda purāṇa* 3.2.12.10-24; see also *Śiva purāṇa* 2.4.13-20).

In this myth we find a number of important additional elements; the setting of the myth in Pārvatī's bath and its doorway, Gaṇeśa's creation from the substance rubbed off Pārvatī's body, and the conflict in the doorway between Śiva and Gaṇeśa. The setting in the bath introduces the theme of nakedness and sexuality—most bathing scenes in Hindu mythology take place in rivers and we can interpret the material out of which Gaṇeśa is created as a form of Pārvatī's seed, or perhaps she makes Gaṇeśa out of dirt much the way his images are made from mud for use in his annual festival. By stationing Gaṇeśa in the doorway to her bath, she gives him privileged access to her nakedness, and as the story continues, denies it to Śiva. The violence perpetrated upon Gaṇeśa by Śiva is explicit, but even here it is muted to a certain extent by the fact that Śiva was unaware that Gaṇeśa was any more than an insignificant servant. It is only when he sees Pārvatī's reaction that it dawns on

him he has done anything wrong. Then he attempts to put things back together, so to speak, but in a rather ad hoc manner. The myth draws upon another story in which Śiva defeats the elephant demon and takes his head and skin as a garment. (*Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* 4.27.98-191; *Śiva Purāṇa* 2.5.57; *Skanda Purāṇa* 4.2.68).

Śiva's aggression toward Gaṇeśa apparently creates difficulties for the mythographers as much as it does for Pārvatī, for a number of variants of the myth attempt to transfer the onus of Gaṇeśa's beheading away from Śiva and place it elsewhere. In the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, the story appears dressed in Vaiṣṇava clothing. At the moment in which Śiva and Pārvatī are making love they are interrupted by Kṛṣṇa, who is disguised as a brahmin mendicant. As they offer him hospitality, he disappears and reappears in the form of an infant lying in their bed. Then Śiva and Pārvatī, astonished by the turn of events, bring the child for the inhabitants of heaven to see, and the god Śani, the inauspicious lord of suicides, appears to pay his respects. But Śani refuses to look at the child, saying to Pārvatī that he is under a curse from his wife that anything he looked at would be destroyed. She had cursed him because he had failed to make love with her during her period of fertility, preferring instead to practice asceticism. Pārvatī and all the heavenly maidens laugh at Śani's story and she insists he look at her child

At that instant Śani's glance severed the child's head. The headless body lay in Pārvatī's lap covered with blood and the head went immediately to Goloka and merged with Kṛṣṇa (*Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* 3.11.10ff)

The story continues that Viṣṇu came to the rescue by going to the north and taking the head from the king of the elephants (Gajendra) as he lay faint from sexual exhaustion. He returns with the elephant head and places it on the shoulders of the child, and Pārvatī revives him. She then curses Śani to be a cripple, and only after the gods plead with her to be merciful because she insisted Śani look at her child even after he warned her about his curse does she modify her earlier action and render him merely lame.

In this version of the story we see the act of beheading shifted from Śiva to Śani, though destruction through the use of the eyes is one of Śiva's favorites, as when he destroys Kāma or beheads

Dakṣa with his third eye. But even Śani is relieved of the burden of blame to some extent, since he was acting under a curse and Pārvatī demanded he look at Gaṇeśa. By passing the act of beheading from Śiva to Śani and introducing the story of the curse and Pārvatī's insistence, the myth diffuses the blame for the act and mutes the father-son conflict, which was more apparent in the earlier myth. Finally, by placing the whole story in the context of Gaṇeśa as an *avatāra* of Kṛṣṇa and having Viṣṇu be the one to restore Gaṇeśa with the elephant head, Śiva's role as father/aggressor is further blurred.

This same myth is built upon in another variant. Here Śiva creates Gaṇeśa out of a piece of Pārvatī sari in order to compensate her for not conceiving a child with her in the normal manner. She brings the child to life and holds him to her breast. Śiva, seeing her love for the child, says :

'Goddess, I gave you a son made out of cloth to tease you, but he became a true son by your good fortune. What is this miracle? Give him to me and let me see; he has indeed become a real son, but his body was made out of cloth; when did life enter it?' As he said this, Śambhu, the lord of the mountain, took his son in hand and laid him down; and he looked at him carefully and minutely, inspecting all his limbs with an accurate scrutiny. But then, remembering the flaw of his birth, Śaṅkara said to the goddess Pārvatī, 'This son of yours was born with an injury wrought by the planet of suicides, and therefore your son will not live for a long time, but in a very short time an auspicious death will come to this short-lived son. The death of one who has acquired virtues causes the greatest sorrow.' As Śambhu, the maker of the child, said this, the boy's head, which was pointed toward the north, fell from Śiva's hand. (*Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa* 2.60.35-41 trans. by Wendy O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths* (New York : 1975), p. 265).

In this myth, the story of Śani's curse is used to make Gaṇeśa's beheading inevitable and get Śiva off the hook. As the myth continues, it is Nandin who travels off to the north and fights Indra for his elephant vehicle, Airāvata, whom he beheads and brings back to Śiva, who, in turn, places it on the shoulders of Gaṇeśa. In this version, Śiva emerges as the one who brings

Gaṇeśa back to life as the elephant-headed one. At the conclusion of the story he gives Gaṇeśa dominion over his *gaṇas* and Gaṇeśa grows up to become a great ascetic.

One final myth deserves comment in this context, because it introduces some additional important variations. It is the story of Gaṇeśa's battle with Paraśurāma. In this version Gaṇeśa stands guards at the door to Śiva and Pārvati's bedroom as they are inside making love. Paraśurāma arrives fresh from his defeat of the sons of Kārtivīrya made possible by the magic axe which Śiva had given him. Gaṇeśa refuses him entrance to their bedroom, arguing that it is bad karma for anyone to see others making love. Paraśurāma insists on entering, and a battle ensues. Enraged, Paraśurāma prepares to throw his axe.

When Gaṇeśa saw that the axe was the same one which his father had given to Paraśurāma, and not wanting it to be thrown in vain, he received the blow from the axe on his left tusk. When the axe broke his tusk it fell to the ground, drenched in blood like a mountain struck by lightning. All the earth along with the oceans and islands were shattered by the falling of the tusk, and they began to shake in fear. When Śiva and Pārvati heard all the noise they came and saw Gaṇeśa whose trunk was twisted and he had only one tusk. Pārvati asked Skanda what had happened, and he told her everything in front of Paraśurāma. She became angry and said to Śiva. 'This Paraśurāma, your disciple, has become like a son to you. Earlier he had gotten lustrous armor and weapons from you which made him able to conquer the triple world. Now he has completed this conquest and brought you an offering (*dakṣiṇā*) in the form of the tooth of your son. No doubt you will appreciate this. Now protect this best pupil of yours; you are his great *guru* and he will do all your chores around the house. As for me, I am no longer in your favor and I will not stay here. I will take my two sons (Skanda and Gaṇeśa) and go to my father's house. Good people treat even the son of a slave as their own son, but you have said nothing on behalf of your son.'

(*Brahmaṇḍa-Purāṇa* 2.3.42.3—2 3.43 17)

This version replaces the beheading with the breaking of the tusk, Paraśurāma replaces Śiva as Gaṇeśa's antagonist at the

doorway. But Śiva's aggressive role toward Gaṇeśa survives in the story in the form of his magic axe and his refusal, apparently, to speak up on Gaṇeśa's behalf. Pārvatī directs her anger not at Paraśurāma, but at Śiva.

Gaṇeśa and Oedipus

In these myths a number of themes emerge common to all the variants we have considered : birth from one parent followed by aggression from the other, conflict between Śiva and Pārvatī resulting from sexual jealousy, and, at least in most cases, resolution of the conflict by restoration of Gaṇeśa with the head of an elephant and dominion over Śiva's *gaṇas*. It is primarily on the basis of the themes of father/son aggression, mother/son attraction, and mutilation that the parallels with the myth of Oedipus are so intriguing.

The classical oedipal situation of aggression directed to the father by the son, and incestual desire from the son to the mother, is rearranged in our myth. Here we have erotic desire between mother and son thwarted by the aggression of the father or his surrogate, followed by alienation between father and mother, followed by restoration of the son in a deformed and non-erotic manner. With the son being made heir to the father's power (but not his erotic power), and reunited in an acceptable manner with the mother in the form of the celibate leader of the *gaṇas*.

If we take Gaṇeśa's beheading and de-tusking to be symbolic castrations, as Leach¹, O'Flaherty², Goldman³, and others have, then it would appear we have a reversal of the classical Oedipus story : the father destroys the son in order to prevent an incestuous relationship between the mother and son, yet the father rehabilitates the son in a mutilated and ascetic form which reconciles him with the mother and himself. Insofar as myths give imaginative form to unconscious projections of culture, the myth would seem to say :

1. Edmund Leach, "Pulliyar and the Lord Buddha : Aspects of Religious Syncretism in Ceylon," *Psychoanalysis and the Psychoanalytic Review*, 49 (1962), pp. 80-102.
2. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Śiva* (London : Oxford University Press, 1973) pp. 211-12.
3. Robert Goldman, "Fathers, Sons and Gurus : Oedipal Conflict in the Sanskrit Epics," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 6/4 (Dec. 1978) pp. 371-72.

mother's love for sons is dangerous, potentially excessive and incestuous. Fathers must cut their sons off from their mothers, not destroying them but transforming them into non erotic defenders of culture. The erotic dimension is not eliminated, for Gaṇeśa receives a compensatory phallus in the form of the elephant trunk, but it is transformed through asceticism into power to clear away the obstacles which adhārmic desires place in one's way.

Gaṇeśa can take his proper place in the pantheon only after he has confronted his father by identifying with his mother, and subsequently defeated in that confrontation and rehabilitated in such a way as to leave him empowered and reconcile the conflicts between all concerned.

But, lest we leave Śiva to carry all the blame for Gaṇeśa's beheading/castration, let us take another look at Pārvatī's role. Some of the myths give her a devious part to play. Once she has created him she places him in jeopardy either by making him guard the doorway to her bath, by insisting that Śani look at him even though she knows about the curse, or by cursing him herself. Conversely, although Śiva or his surrogates are the explicit aggressors toward Gaṇeśa, they are so either unwittingly or under conditions of duress. This more subtle level of the myth would suggest Pārvatī plays a more ambivalent role in the story than we might have thought. She becomes an accomplice in her son's symbolic castration. Kakar has suggested that the myth expresses the infantile fear of castration by the "bad mother" (Sudhir Kakar, *The Inner World* (New Delhi : 1978), p. 100ff). The restitution of Gaṇeśa commits him to the sacrifice of his male 'otherness,' his ego. While Gaṇeśa is compensated for his pains with an enlarged *liṅga*, he nevertheless remains chaste. Even in the story of his marriage or his consorts, it is clear that these feminine figures are śaktic emanations and not erotic figures with whom he has sexual relations. Indeed, one Maharashtrian folktale has it that the reason Gaṇeśa never married is that he has never found a wife as beautiful as his mother. (Edward Moor, *Hindu pantheon* (London; 1810;), p. 100) So, the incestual element remains, in a disguised and legitimate form, in Gaṇeśa as the elephant-headed, celibate son.

Pārvatī knows she will not get a son from Śiva in the normal manner, so she must trick him into giving her a son by making a child by herself whom she places in conflict with him, and, after

Śiva has destroyed him, she forces him to restore the son on pain of separation. The myth of Gaṇeśa's birth and beheading takes us to the center of the conflict between eroticism and asceticism in Indian culture. The mother makes the son, with the unwilling participation of the ascetically-inclined father, and looks to him as a source of forbidden erotic pleasure; yet she must repress this by rendering him safe. She does this by conspiring unconsciously, as it were, with the father to mutilate the child and rehabilitate him in a form which is simultaneously non-erotic but powerful and protective. As a mythic figure, Gaṇeśa emerges as a mediating, liminal, character. He serves to separate and unite his parents. He is Śiva's son, but only by virtue of adoption; he is Pārvati's son, but only partly for now he owes his head—the locus of action, knowledge and speech—to his father. He has been defeated by his father (sacrificed to the super-ego father represents), but he has been restored and legitimized by that same father. He is mutilated and asexual, yet he is powerful and no actions can be brought to fruition without his help. Behind this incongruous image of the elephant-faced child god, a fundamental psychological and cultural paradox is displayed and mediated.

A ritual analogue : the upanayana ceremony

The myth of Gaṇeśa can also be read to reflect an initiatory structure. We can see this by comparing the transformation of relations which take place in the myth with those which occur in the *upanayana saṁskāra*, the rite of passage for twice-born Hindu males whereby they are placed in the care of a religious teacher [*ācārya*] and attain the status of *brahmācārin*.⁴ This rite can be briefly summarized as follows : the boy who is to be initiated shares a final meal with his mother, after which he is bathed, his head shaved, and dressed in the loin cloth of an ascetic. He then utters vows of commitment to be obedient to his teacher and promises to remain chaste until he has completed his period of apprenticeship. The teacher then invests him with the sacred thread, gives him a

4. *Sāṁkhyaṇa Gṛhya Sūtra* 11.1ff; *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 1.20ff; *Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra* 11.2.17ff; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 11.5.4.1-18. See also : R. B. Pandey, *Hindu Saṁskāras* (New Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass, 1969 rp); Jan Gonda, *Continuity and Change in Indian Religion* (The Hague : Mouton, 1965); Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson, *Rites of the Twice-Born* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1920).

yogin's staff, instructs him in sacred speech [*mantra*], and teaches him how to kindle the sacred fire. Finally, the initiate makes a symbolic pilgrimage to Kāśī and returns home this time to beg from his mother in the manner of ascetics.

In both the *upanayana* rite and the myth of Gaṇeśa we begin with the son and mother sharing a private relationship : Gaṇeśa the playful creation of his mother, and the boy receiving food directly from his mother apart from the elder males of the household. The father, or father surrogate—in the case of the rite it is the teacher—cuts him away from the bonding with the mother through removing the head or shaving it, both actions serving to remove his erotically threatening potential. The father figure then gives the child a name, an emblem of power transformed from infantile-erotic to ascetic in the forms of the elephant head and the yogin's staff--each of which can be seen as a kind of detached phallus. Then the father gives the son his paternal inheritance; for Gaṇeśa it is the lordship over obstacles, and for the *brahmācārin* it is the inheritance of sacred knowledge and access to it through sacred, mantric speech. Finally, the boy is returned to the mother, but now at a chaste and safe distance—out of reach of any incestuous longings from either. The violence of separation of the son from the mother, which in the myth is vividly portrayed although the identity of the perpetrator of it is disguised in various ways, in the ritual is even more obscured. In the rite we do not see an elaborate battle scene acted symbolically between the son and the father or his surrogate. But when the boy moves from eating with his mother and crosses the threshold to where the male elders receive him and render him naked, shaved, and redressed and remade, so to speak, in the image of the ideal of *brahmācārya*, we can see that an implicit dismemberment takes place even in the ritual. Because the ritual concentrates on the transformation which takes place in the boy, the conflict between the mother and father and the incestual potential between the mother and son, which was so apparent in the myth, is submerged in the rite.

What is common to the myth and the ritual is its initiatory structure. The process of creation, mutilation and restoration at hands of the father—at least according to most of the variants—and the empowerment in the context of the ascetic ideal, is a process which Gaṇeśa and the initiate share. Insofar as this rite of passage

articulates the transition from 'nature' to 'culture' in Levi-Strauss' sense of those terms, then Gaṇeśa belongs to the whole tradition as its premier, even heroic, embodiment of that primary transformation. His story is every twice-born Hindu male's story. He is the protean figure, whose very form displays brokenness yet wholeness, the desire for children yet the dangers of children; and by undergoing this process of dismemberment and restoration he has the capacity to mediate the contradiction between maternal love and paternal rejection, maternal separation and paternal reconstitution. Out of that mediation comes his power to mediate, in the realm of action, between intention and consequence in his role as the lord of obstacles.

Toward the religious meaning of Gaṇeśa

Now a great deal more can and needs to be said about Gaṇeśa and his particular mythic identity, than can be said here. There are additional dimensions to the symbolism of beheading and re-heading which draw upon the Brahmanical ritual tradition going back to very early times. There are comparisons to be explored between the ritual myth of the dismemberment and distribution of Puruṣa (*Rg Veda* 10.90) in which the body of the god serves as the universe itself. Indeed, one Purāṇa even describes Gaṇeśa's body as the universe (*Liṅga Purāṇa* 81.31-35). There are a number of other beheading stories, such as Indra's beheading of Namuci and Śiva's beheading of Dakṣa, which need to be explored; as well as other myths of mutilation and castration. There is, of course, the symbolism of the elephant itself. The elephant is that animal which is overpowering yet gracefully domesticated, which moves back the threshold between the wild forest and the settled village, and which serves as the principal piece of artillery in warfare just as his sculptural representations protect and uphold the temple boundaries against demons. The elephant showers rain on Lakṣmi for her bath just as the elephant-like grey monsoon clouds bring the sustaining and destructive rains in their season. In contrast to these aggressive and fecundating and perhaps masculine roles, the elephant carries strong feminine associations in Indian culture. In the *Kāma Sūtra* (Ch. 1) women are classified as deer, mare, or elephant according to the size of their *yonis*. Manu advises the bridegroom to 'wed a female free from bodily defects, who has....the gait of a goose [*haṃsa*] or an elephant' (*Manu* 3.10); and Bhartṛhari

imagines a beautiful woman as having thighs which rival the elephant's trunk. (Barbara Stoler Miller, *The Hermit and the Love-Thief; Sanskrit Poems of Bhartṛhari and Bilhaṇa*, (New York : 1978) p. 87). So, the elephant appears in the Hindu context as a sexually ambiguous creature; and Gaṇeśa, as the elephant-headed, celebrate child, combines into his *persona* and appearance those oppositions of masculine and feminine, child and ascetic, broken and whole, overpowered and powerful.

So what are we to make of this curious deity? The myths of his origins and beheading carry multiple meanings, to be sure. Through his appearance in myth and icon we see him as a figure brought into the world and a set of relations fraught with ambivalence. We see him made, unmade and remade into a creature of great mediating power and popular appeal. When we compare the initiation of Gaṇeśa into his position as the lord of obstacles with that of the initiation of the twice born Hindu male, we see the ways in which the procession of god and man move along parallel routes. In Gaṇeśa there is to be found an important religious model, for he was the one who comforted and protected his mother, performed his appointed tasks [*dharma*], and underwent his misfortunes to reemerge reconstituted with the power to remove all impediments which create suffering. As Kakar suggests, 'he is the god for all psychic seasons who comes to represent a plurality of psychic propensities.' (Sudhir Kakar, *The Inner World*, p. 101) In identifying with Gaṇeśa, the devotee takes into himself the structure and process which Gaṇeśa contains in his mythology and iconography. For the devotee to undergo his own sacrificial surrender, and reconstitution, as Gaṇeśa did, is to achieve a religious transcendence and release from a reality inadequately comprehended and lived. As the Maharashtrian poet, Tukarām, put it, 'If we want to enjoy God, we should lop off our head from our body and hold it in our hands when the body has been sacrificed to God, says Tuka, all worship has been accomplished.' (*Abhang* 3414, 3171)

A SURVEY OF SANSKRIT SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF VĀRĀṄASĪ

By

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[अस्मिन् निबन्धे विदुष्या लेखिकया पुराणेषु निबन्धग्रन्थेषु च वर्णितस्य काशीमाहात्म्यस्य विवरणं प्रदत्तम् । वाराणस्या माहात्म्यं पुराणेषु इतरग्रन्थेषु च व्यापकरूपेण वर्णितं वर्तते । विविधनामभिः ख्याताया अस्याः पुर्याः माहात्म्यप्रतिपादकानां तत्तद् ग्रन्थानां परिचयः प्रामाण्यं निर्माणकालादिकमत्र लेखिकया संक्षेपेण संकेतितम् । संक्षेपेण अत्र वाराणस्यास्तत्तद्ग्रन्थानामाधारेण विवरणं प्रदत्तम् ।]

The city of Vārāṅasī—called Kāśī (The “Luminous”), Avimukta (The “Never-Forsaken” of Śiva), Ānandavana (The “Forest of Bliss”), and Rudravāsa (The “Dwelling Place of Śiva)—has been described and praised in Sanskrit literature for over thousand years. This is a survey of the major places in which the myths and hymns of the city occur, particularly in the Purāṅic corpus and in the *nibandha* literature which gathers Purāṅic verses together topically in digest form.

The genre of literature which will be discussed here may broadly be termed *māhātmya*—“praise” or “glorification”. The nature of this genre, which is found so prominently throughout the Epics and Purāṅas, has not yet been examined with the close scholarly attention it deserves. While that is not the goal of this particular study, a brief statement about this type of literature may be useful. There are many subjects of *māhātmya*. A *māhātmya* may focus upon a place, such as Vārāṅasī; upon an auspicious time, such as the month of Śrāvaṅa; a deity, such as Viśveśvara Śiva; or a ritual activity, such as pilgrimage (*tīrthayātrā*) or the giving of donations (*dāna*). A *māhātmya* ordinarily contains description and exposition of the place, the deity, or the activity being praised, as well as laudatory hymns (*stutis* or *stotras*) and a statement of the benefits and fruits (*phalaśruti*) of visiting that place, honoring that ritual. Each place, each deity, each observance is extolled and praised as if it were the greatest of all. The nature of *māhātmya* thus calls to mind Max Müller’s description of Vedic religion as

“kathenotheism”—praising and worshipping one god at a time. Likewise, there is but one subject of *māhātmya* at a time, and what is praised occupies full center-stage for its moment of recognition. The interpretation and understanding of *māhātmya*, therefore, requires the scholar to develop a suitable hermeneutic that takes into account its nature as a literature of high praise.

Of the many subjects in the *māhātmya* style in the Purāṇas, none is as vast as the subject of *tīrtha*, the sacred “fords” or “crossings” which have long been the goal of pilgrims. And of these *tīrthas* none has been treated as extensively as the city of Vārāṇasī; or Kāśī. The *māhātmya* literature on Vārāṇasī found in a great number of Purāṇas, ranges in length from the one hundred chapters of the *Skanda Purāṇa*’s famous *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* to one or two chapters in other Purāṇas. Some of the city’s *māhātmyas* are very much like those of other *tīrthas*, while others stand out as the praises of Kāśī alone. Since this place is so broadly articulated as a *tīrtha* the investigation of the *māhātmyas* of this one place may well provide some significant insight into the nature and structure of *tīrthas* more generally.

Purāṇic Sources

The Kāśī Khaṇḍa. The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is the most celebrated and extensive of the Sanskrit Kāśī *māhātmyas*. It contains one hundred chapters and about 10,000 verses, making it about half as long as the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is one of seven *Khaṇḍas*, “sections”, of the present *Skanda Purāṇa*. Although it is technically part of this voluminous Purāṇa, the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* has also moved and been translated independently through the centuries, gaining fame, for example, in the Tamil south.¹

The *Skanda* is the most immense of the Purāṇas, and its ungainly bulk seems to have shifted and changed somewhat over the centuries. The present version of seven *khaṇḍas* was also once divided into six *saṃhitās*. In the *saṃhitā* version, the *Sanatkumāra Saṃhitā* was the longest, and it included the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* as one of its twenty-five *khaṇḍas*.²

1. See V. Raghavan, “Tamil Versions of the Purāṇas,” *Purāṇa*, Vol. II, Nos. 1 and 2, July 1960.
2. R. C. Hazra, *Studies in the Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, University of Dacca, Bulletin No. XX., 1940, pp. 159-160.

The date of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is uncertain. Lakṣmīdhara, writing the *Tīrthavivecana Kāṇḍa* in the twelfth century, included verses of a *Skanda Purāṇa mātmya* in his compilation of verses on Kāśī; however, he does not mention the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* by name and the passages of the *Shanda* he quotes do not correspond to any part of the present *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. All that is known, therefore, is that Lakṣmīdhara had access to a section on Kāśī from the *Skanda Purāṇa*. Later compilers of digests, such as Mitra Miśra, Vācaspati Miśra, and Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, do cite the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* by name, however. Having examined the passages they cite, Hazra concludes very generally that much of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is older than 1300 and that very little of it could be considered earlier than 700³.

Other scholars have also conjectured as to the era of this work. H. H. Wilson wrote, "There is every reason to believe the greater part of the contents of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* anterior to the first attack upon Banāras by Mahmud of Ghazni."⁴ FitzEdward Hall challenged Wilson's assertion, writing caustically: "It would be interesting to be put in possession of a single reason out of those to which the Professor alludes."⁵ Hall, however, does not venture an alternative dating.

The modern scholar, Kuber Nath Sukul, also doubts a very early date for the work. Sukul conjectures that the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* was set down in its present form not before, but after the early Muslim incursions. According to Sukul, this would be not simply after the early eleventh century incursions of Mahmud of Ghazni, which could scarcely be considered anything more than raids; but after the more serious attacks of the forces of Mahmud of Ghur, which brought about the downfall of the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty in the late twelfth century. He ascribes the complete *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* to about 1350, citing the evidence of the text itself in which both old and new locations of certain shrines are mentioned.⁶ The new

3. Hazra, pp. 165, 326.
4. Horace Hayman Wilson, *The Vishnu Purāṇa : A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition*, 1840. Reprint of 3rd edition, Calcutta : Punthi Pustak, 1972, pp. xlv-xlv.
5. FitzEdward Hall, Preface to M. A. Sherring, *Sacred City of the Hindus : An Account of Banaras in Ancient and Modern Times*, London : Trübner and Co., 1868, p. xxxii.
6. Kuber Nath Sukul, *Vārāṇasī Vaibhava*, Patna : Bihār Rāstrabhāṣā Pariṣad, 1977, pp. 278-279.

locations, of course, would be the sites where those shrines were re-established after their destruction. The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* was set down, according to Sukul, by way of "summing up what was there in Kāśī before."⁷

It is clear that if that *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* had been available, even in part, in Lakṣmīdhara's day he certainly would have known it and utilized it in his digest. After all, he lived much of his life in Vārāṇasī. Along with Gāhaḍavāla patrons, he regarded Kāśī highly as both a political and religious center. On the other hand, it seems to this writer unlikely that the literary care and attention lavished upon the many shrines of Kāśī would have arisen from the era of ruin and debilitation that followed the attack of Mahmud of Ghur's general Qutb-ud-din-Aibak in 1194. The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* makes no mention of Muslim invaders or the destruction of holy sites. It seems plausible, therefore, that much of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* came into existence during the brilliant era of the revivalist Hindu empire of the Gāhaḍavālas, even though its final compilation may have been later. In Lakṣmīdhara's time the work would have been in process of formulation and, thus, too new to have been included in his digest. The heyday of the Gāhaḍavāla empire, however, would have been the natural climate for the growth of such an extensive eulogy to Kāśī, even if its completed form came later.

Kāśī Khaṇḍa, wide-ranging in its content, contains a great deal of mythology, both local and all-India in character. Many of the great Purāṇic myths are told in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* and are set in the matrix of Kāśī's own lore. For example, the entire work begins with the story of the sage Agastya's trip to South India to tame the Vindhya mountains which had risen up to block the course of sun. In this version of the myth, Agastya lived originally in Vārāṇasī and left the sacred city only with much mourning. His journey to the south, sometimes seen as a mission of Sanskritic Indo-Aryan culture, provides occasion for him to relate to his wife, Lopamudrā, the tales and glories of their beloved Kāśī. Finally on Śrī Saila mountain they meet up with Skanda, who is dwelling there in exile from Kāśī. This sets the stage for the rest of the *Khaṇḍa* in which Skanda is the interlocutor, relating to Agastya and Lopamudrā the tales of Kāśī which he himself had heard from Śiva and Pārvatī.

7. Kuber Nath Sukul, personal communication.

In the course of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* one finds such well-known myths as the fiery appearance of the *liṅga* of light, decapitation of Brahmā by Śiva, the wandering penance of Śiva as the skull-bearing Bhairava, the sacrifice of Dakṣa, and Durgā's battle with Mahiṣa. In addition to such widely-told myths, the work contains many place-specific myths of Kāśī, especially the great cycle of stories connected with Śiva's exile from the city during the reign of King Divodāsa and his long struggle to regain the city by sending the various gods, one by one, as emissaries. Other famous local myths recount the origins of such celebrated sites as Maṇikarnikā Kuṇḍ, Dasāśvamedha Ghāt, and Kedāreśvara temple. Indeed, virtually every *liṅga* and every *kuṇḍ* is described with some mythic statement of its ancient origin.

In addition to its myths, the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* contains scores of specific *māhātmyas*, eulogizing the power of the city itself or of some particular *liṅga* within it. By way of illustrating these powers, there are dozens of didactic stories. There are also many ritual sections which are oriented specifically to the worshipper or the pilgrim. Daily, fortnightly, monthly and yearly cycles of pilgrimage, worship, and bathing are described. Finally, the text contains geographical information. There are several chapters in which literally hundreds of *tīrthas* and *liṅgas* are located in relation to one another. In chapters 83 and 84, the list proceeds along the riverbank, naming in turn each *tīrtha* from Asi *saṅgam* north to Vireśvara and then from Ādi Keśava south to Vireśvara. The great account of sites in chapter 97 begins in the north and moves gradually southward through the city. This type of detailed geographical description gives a vivid picture of the extent of the city's religious structure in the twelfth century.

The Kāśī Rahasya. Today's printed version of the *Kāśī Rahasya* published by Radhakrishna Mor in 1958, is billed as the third part of the appendix (*pariśiṣṭa*) to the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*. However, the attribution of this *māhātmya* to the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* is questionable, since it is not generally found as a part of the Purāṇa's text. The Purāṇa itself, in the form we now know it, is said to be one of the latest.⁸ Perhaps for this reason an appendix of this sort could still be attributed to it. Why this work should

8. Hazra, p. 166.

be appended to a Vaiṣṇava Purāṇa is something of a "rahasya" in itself; however, the work seems to be a deliberate attempt to establish Kāśī as the sacred ground of both Viṣṇu and Śīva, which may well account for its appearance in this context.

This work, containing twenty-six chapters, is quite different in tone and content from *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. It contains very little geographical information and no *māhātmyas* of specific *liṅgas* or *tīrthas*. The *māhātmya* is of the city as a whole. Although its various sanctuaries are mentioned, they are not lauded separately.

Generally speaking, this Rahasya is more spiritual in its understanding of Kāśī. Indeed, *rahasya* means "secret teaching." It is in this work that the city itself is most often conceived as a great *liṅga* of light and that the mystical identity of the city with Brahman is made.⁹ This vision of Kāśī as the geographical manifestation of the Supreme overshadows sectarianism in the *Kāśī Rahasya*. The work's theology is of Hari-Hara, both Viṣṇu and Śīva, and the city is called Harikṣetra as well as Harakṣetra.

In addition to having a mystical orientation, the *Kāśī Rahasya* is preoccupied with the question of sins and the *prāyaścitta*, "atone-ment," for sins. Pilgrimage to Kāśī is itself a *prāyaścitta* for sins committed elsewhere. For sins committed within the *kṣetra* several *prāyaścittas* are discussed, including the rebuilding of old or ruined temples (*jīrnoddhāra*) and the circumambulation of the *kṣetra* on the Pañcakrośī Road. This work contains the only major Purāṇic *māhātmya* of the circumambulation of the city, the Pañcakrośī Yātrā.¹⁰

Characteristic of the *Kāśī Rahasya* are the many didactic stories which illustrate its *māhātmyas*. Indeed, the hearing of such stories is commended to the reader or listener as a valuable, transforming religious practice.

Kāśī Kedāra Māhātmya. As the title indicates, this work praises the southern sector of Kāśī called Kedāra, with its famous Kedāreśvara *liṅga*. The work begins with a review of the types of scriptures: *śruti*, *smṛti*, the Purāṇas, the Upapurāṇas, and the Āgamas.

9. *Kāśī Rāhasya* 7.65 and whole of chapter 17, for example.

10. The Pañcakrośī Māhātmya is in chapter 9-11 of the *Kāśī Rāhasya*.

But some secrets are held apart from these sources and are to be found only in the *khilas*, the "supplements" to the scripture. The *Kāśī Kedāra Māhātmya* is such a *khila*, according to its own accounting. Its date is perhaps as late as the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

This work contains thirty-one chapters of *māhātmya* and myth. In the first chapter (1.57ff) the myth of Kedāra's appearance in the Himālayas is related, and in chapters 19-21 the saga of Kedāra's manifestation to King Mandhātā in Kāśī is told. The *māhātmya* contains variations of a number of myths which are familiar in other Kāśī *māhātmyas*, but here they are related explicitly to Kedāra. The tank at Kedāra is called Ādi Maṇikarṇikā ("Original Maṇikarṇikā") and its story is told; Dasāśvamedha's origins are linked to Brahmā's propitiation of Kedāra in Kāśī (ch. 1), and the myth cycle of King Divodāsa, including tales of his previous life, is told in the Kedāra context. The tenth chapter of the *Kāśī Kedāra Māhātmya* contains the famous hymn, the "Śiva Mahimnastotra" by the poet Puṣpadanta.

Brahma Purāṇa 11; Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa 67; and Vāyu Purāṇa 92. These three Purāṇas all contain the mytho-historical account of the rivalry over the generations between the Kāśīs and the Haihayas, two tribal groups of ancient India. King Divodāsa of the Kāśīs was finally forced to leave the city of Vārāṇasī on account of a curse delivered by a *rākṣasa* named Kṣemaka. The city then fell into the hands of the Haihayas until it was retrieved generations later by a descendant of Divodāsa. Religiously, the account mentions the thousand-year occupation of the city by *rākṣasas*. In the *Brahmāṇḍa* and *Vāyu* accounts they are called *gaṇas* or *gaṇeśas*. These two also contain what was probably a later recasting of the myth: the *gaṇas* or *gaṇeśas* were deliberately sent by Śiva for the purpose of expelling Divodāsa from the city, for he had chosen it to be his own capital on earth.

Both the *Brahmāṇḍa* and *Vāyu* are said to be among the earliest Purāṇas.¹¹ According to Hazra, the *Brahmāṇḍa*, which follows the

11. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and Sexuality in the Mythology of Śiva*, Harvard University Ph. D. Dissertation, Appendix IV, : "The age of the Purāṇas," p. 806. In this Appendix Dr. O'Flaherty has compiled all the various Purāṇic studies, both Indian and Western, into a very useful table of dates. On the basis of her work she

Vāyu precisely in this account, was not originally separate from the *Vāyu*.¹² Patil, who has studied this *Purāṇa* most extensively, concludes that the *Vāyu* reflects an age in which Śiva Maheśvara was supreme, and the many *yakṣās*, *vināyayas* (*gaṇeśas*), and *nāgas* were being brought under the Śaiva umbrella.¹³ In other words, the *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa* along with it began to reach their present form in the early centuries of our era. This ambience of rising Śaivism is certainly reflected in the recasting of the above myth.

The *Brahma Purāṇa* is generally held to be a much later *Purāṇa*.¹⁴ The fact that it includes this ancient myth-history, which probably dates from a time even before the *Brahmāṇḍa/Vāyu* version, substantiates the notion of continuing *Purāṇic* evolution over a long period of time.

Matsya Purāṇa 180-185. The best known shorter *māhātmya* of the city is the five-chapter "Avimukta Māhātmya" of the *Matsya Purāṇa*. According to Hazra, the *Matsya* as a whole agrees very closely with the *Vāyu*, which it seems to follow, particularly through its chapters on kings and genealogies, which he dates at the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century.¹⁵ Other chapters, particularly on *smṛti*, seem to have been borrowed by the *Padma Purāṇa* and must, therefore, have been completed before 900 A. D., the date he mentions as the latest for most material in the *Padma*.¹⁶

In dating these particular chapters (180-185), Hazra is somewhat contradictory. In one place he states that they are earlier than the *māhātmya* in the *Kūrma Purāṇa*, which he dates at 700-800.¹⁷ Elsewhere he states that the Śaiva character of these chapters makes

has then made some tentative groupings of her own, listing the *Purāṇas* in five eras, from 300 A.D. to 1400 A.D. Both the *Brahmāṇḍa* and *Vāyu* are placed in the 300-500 A. D. category.

12. Hazra, p. 18.

13. D. R. Patil, *Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa*, 1946, Reprint, Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass, 1973, pp. 187-188.

14. O'Flaherty, p. 806. She places it in the 1000-1200 grouping.

15. Hazra, pp. 25-32. O'Flaherty places this *Purāṇa* in the 300-500 grouping.

16. Hazra, p. 40.

17. Hazra, pp. 73-74.

them no earlier than 700, and their quotation in the *nibandhas* makes them no later than 1075.¹⁸

The *māhātmya* is told by Śiva to Pārvatī as he shows her the lovely groves of his chosen abode, Avimukta. (The name Avimukta is used throughout). It opens with the story of the *yakṣa*'s son whom Śiva and Pārvatī saw doing *tapas* as they surveyed the holy *kṣetra*. The austerities of this *yakṣa* in Śiva's sanctuaries and his devotion to Śiva again demonstrate the gradual inclusion of *yakṣas* within the Śaiva fold.

The myths contained in these chapters are few: Śiva's wandering penance, skull-in-hands, which ends at Kapālamocana in Kāśī, where the skull of brahmanicide drops from his hand; Vyāsa's near-curse of the city and his subsequent exile, during which he was allowed to visit Kāśī only four days a month.

For the most part, however, this is a classic *māhātmya*, touching on all the major themes of Kāśī's sanctity, greatness, and power, and mentioning many of the city's major *tīrthas* and *liṅgas*. It closes with the first mention of the five famous river *tīrthas* of Kāśī: Dasāśvamedha, Lolārka, Keśava, Bindu Mādhava, and Maṅikar-nikā.

Kūrma Purāṇa I.29-34 : II.31. This *Purāṇa*, like the *Matsya*, has several distinct phases in its historical development. Beginning as a Vaiṣṇava *Purāṇa* in the sixth century, it seems to have been recast by the Śaiva Pāśupatas in the eighth or ninth centuries, or even later.¹⁹ The above chapters, placed by Hazra in the eighth or ninth centuries²⁰, are probably from a somewhat later date, on account of the explicit mention of the Viśveśvara *liṅga*. Viśveśvara, while very popular in Vārāṇasī, did not gain mention in *Purāṇic* sources until a rather late date, after the twelfth century, when it began to replace Avimukteśvara as the most famous *liṅga* of the city.

In *Kūrma Purāṇa* I. 29-34, called the 'Vārāṇasī Māhātmya,' Vyāsa is the speaker. In chapter 28, just before the passage begins,

18. Hazra, pp. 45-46.

19. Hazra, p. 71. See A. S. Gupta, "Introduction" to *The Kūrma Purāṇa*, critical edition, Vārāṇasī : All-India Kashi Raj Trust, 1972, especially pp. vii-xi for a fuller discussion.

20. Hazra, pp. 73-74.

he is describing the Kali Age to his pupil Arjuna. In this age, he says, Śiva alone should be worshipped, and he goes off to Vārāṇasī to worship Śiva. Beginning the chapter 29, Vyāsa tells to Arjuna and other disciples the *māhātmya* of Vārāṇasī as it had been told to Pārvatī by Śiva. Chapter 30 continues with the *māhātmya* of Omkāreśvara and Kṛttivāseśvara, two great *lingas* of ancient Kāśī. In chapter 31 Kapardīśvara is praised and in chapter 32, Madhya-meśvara, both important Purāṇic *lingas*. In chapter 33 Vyāsa visits various secret and sacred precincts of Kāśī. (Prayāga, Gayā, and Kedāra are listed among them, but these are those *tīrthas* as they exist in Kāśī. The other *tīrthas* listed are also Kāśī *tīrthas*, such as Svarlīna, Pitāmaha, Kapilatīrtha, Goprekṣya, Upaśānta, Trilocana, Lokārka, and Kapālamocana.) Having done these rounds, Vyāsa returns to Viśveśvara and worships. The *māhātmya* ends with a brief account of how Vyāsa lived in the city until, having received no alms on his daily rounds, he flew into a rage and nearly cursed it. As punishment for this lapse, the goddess expelled him, permitting him to live in the city only on the 8th and 14th days of each fortnight.

Kūrma Purāṇa II. 31 follows a discussion of the sin of brahmanicide and contains the story of the expiation for this grievous sin at Kapālamocana. This accounting of the myth includes the story of Brahmā and Viṣṇu's argument over supremacy, the appearance of the fiery *linga* of light, Brahmā's slander of Śiva, the creation of Kāla Bhairava to slice off Brahmā's head, and Kāla Bhairava's wandering expiation, which ends at Kapālamocana in Kāśī, where he is released from the sin of brahmanicide.

Padma Purāṇa. This Purāṇa is one of the latest. O'Flaherty places it in her last grouping (1200-1400), although Hazra allows that sections of it may be as early as 900.²¹

There are several chapters of the *Padma* which contain *māhātmyas* and myths related to Kāśī. The first is *Padma Purāṇa I (Ādi Khaṇḍa)*. 33-37. These chapters parallel almost exactly those from the *Kūrma Purāṇa* I. 29-33. *Padma* chapter 33 contains a powerful, but general, *māhātmya* of the city; chapter 34 deals primarily with Omkāreśvara and the five-fold worship of god there; chapter 35 tells of Kapardīśa on the banks of the Piśācamocana *tīrtha*; chapter

21. O'Flaherty, p. 806; Hazra, pp. 107-127,

36 concerns Madhyameśvara; and chapter 37 lists a great many other Kāśī *tīrthas* and *līngas*.

Padma Purāṇa V (Śṛṣṭi Khaṇḍa). 14 contains a long account of the episode in which Brahmā's head is cut off by Śiva. The expiation for the deed is recounted, ending with the *māhātmya* of the Kapālamocana "Release of the Skull" *tīrtha* in Kāśī.

Padma Purāṇa VI (Uttara Khaṇḍa). 235-236 contains the story of the *muni* Mṛkaṇḍu's pilgrimage to Kāśī with the four aged "mothers" (his wives before renouncing the household *āśrama*). As they set out, going slowly on account of their old age, he sings the hymn "For those who have no place to go, Vārāṇasī is the place to go," also found in KKh 32.74ff. Their round of pilgrimage in Vārāṇasī is described in detail. The names Viśvanātha and Viśveśvara are prominent, thus supporting the late date of the Purāṇa. The mothers established *līngas* in each of the four directions and one of them, Marudvatī, gives birth to Mārkaṇḍeya. They then die in Kāśī and receive the *tāraka mantra* in their ears. The following chapter contains the famous story of Mārkaṇḍeya's bout with the God of Death. The boy takes refuge in the *līnga* which becomes known as Mṛtyuñjaya—"Conqueror of Death".

Padma Purāṇa VI (Uttara Khaṇḍa). 278 tells the story recounted in the *Bhāgavata* and *Viṣṇu Purāṇas* of King Paṇḍraka and his ally the King of Kāśī and their fatal encounter with Kṛṣṇa.

Vāmana Purāṇa 3.26ff. The extant version of this Purāṇa is from the eighth to eleventh centuries.²² The Purāṇa is concerned primarily with the *tīrtha* of Kurukṣetra and its *māhātmya*. It contains only a few verses of interest to the study of Vārāṇasī. The section under consideration begins with an accounting of the name Vārāṇasī: the Varāṇā River flowed long ago from the right foot of the primeval *puruṣa* and the Asi flowed from the left. Between them stretched Vārāṇasī.

The subsequent verses bear much in common with the imagery and the *double-entendre* of the opening verses of the *Kuṭṭanī-*

22. Hazra, p. 80. See A. S. Gupta, "Introduction" to *The Vāmana Purāṇa*, critical edition, Vārāṇasī: All-India Kashi Raj Trust, especially p. xxiv, ff. for a discussion of the textual issues relating to the extant *Vāmana* text.

matam in which Vārāṇasī is described.²³ Since the *Kuṭṭanīmatam* belongs to the eighth century, we may presume that this *māhātmya* is from after that time. (It is possible, but not likely, that the author of the *Kuṭṭanīmatam* borrowed his ideas from the Purāṇa).

Elsewhere, the Purāṇa mentions some of the major sites of Vārāṇasī. They are, like those of the *Matsya*: Dasāśvamedha, Lola Ravi (Lolārka), Keśava, and Avimukta. These are definitely among the first great sanctuaries of the city. The mention of Avimuktesvara qualifies this section of the Purāṇa for an early date, perhaps in the eighth or ninth century.

Liṅga Purāṇa 92. From a very early time there seems to have been a *māhātmya* of Vārāṇasī associated with the *Liṅga Purāṇa*. Over the centuries, however, both the *Liṅga Purāṇa* and the nature of its Vārāṇasī *māhātmya* have changed. In the case of this Purāṇa the change did not amount to alteration or minor recasting, rather the Purāṇa seems to have changed almost totally. The *Liṅga Purāṇa* quoted by Lakṣmīdhara in the twelfth century *Tīrthavivecana Kāṇḍa* bears little resemblance to the present *Liṅga Purāṇa*. The Vārāṇasī *māhātmya* quoted by Lakṣmīdhara contains a multitude of specific names and a few brief *māhātmyas* of all the major *liṅgas* in Kāśī. The version of the *Liṅga* used by Lakṣmīdhara was also quoted by later *nibandhakāras*, such as Vācaspati Miśra. As late as the sixteenth century it seems to have been used, but today it is lost to us except as we know it in the *nibandhas*.

The *Liṅga Purāṇa* we have today is not of a very recent date, however. Hazra estimates that this, too, must have a certain antiquity. It probably began to emerge in the seventh century and was nearly complete by the eleventh.²⁴

The Vārāṇasī *māhātmya* constitutes chapter ninety-two of this extant Purāṇa. It praises Avimuktesvara as the greatest *liṅga* of Vārāṇasī. The fact that Viśveśvara is not mentioned seems to substantiate an early date for the Purāṇa. The trio to be visited by

23. *Vāmana* 3.30-39. Compare, for example, *Vāmana* 3.38 with *Kuṭṭanīmatam* 11. The opening verses (3-19) of the *Kuṭṭanīmatam* contain the elaborate description of Vārāṇasī to which we refer.

24. Hazra, p. 95.

the pilgrim, according to this Purāṇa, is Avimukteśvara, Triviṣṭapa (Trilocana), and Kāla Bhairava. Many other *tīrthas* and *liṅgas* are explicitly mentioned: Gopreška, Kapilāhrada, Svarlineśvara, Madhyameśvara, Kedāra, to note but a few. Others *tīrthas* are said to come to Avimukta on pilgrimage, including Kuruṣetra, Naimiṣa, Puškara, Prayāga, and the sixty-eight great *liṅgas* of India.

The initial description of Avimukta as a paradisaic forest grove closely parallels the opening of the *Matsya Purāṇa mähātmya* and many of the subsequent verses of *mähātmya* are identical with *Matsya* verses.

The emphasis of the *Liṅga Purāṇa* as a whole is on the spiritual and mystical significance of the *liṅga*, focusing repeatedly on the mythology and imagery of the *liṅga* as a pillar of light. This particularly Śaiva conception of the significance of the *liṅga* as the symbol of Sadā Śiva or Brahman has had a great impact on the most transcendent visioning of Kāśī as an immense *liṅga* of light.

Nārada Purāṇa, Uttarabhāga 48-51. These chapters of the *Nārada Purāṇa* contain a *mähātmya* of Kāśī told by the sage to Queen Mohinī. The topics treated are common to Kāśī *mähātmyas* in the Purāṇas: the measurement of the *kṣetra*; the great reward of dying in Kāśī; the various *liṅgas* (with special attention to Kṛttivāseśvara, Avimukteśvara, and Omkāreśvara); the various *kuṇḍas* and *nadīs* in the city; the various *devīs* and *caṇḍikās*; the greatness of the River Gaṅgā; and, especially, the greatness of Pañcanada *tīrtha* along the Gaṅgā, with its famous Vaiṣṇava temple, Bindu Mādhava. The *mähātmya*, like the Purāṇa as a whole, has a somewhat Vaiṣṇava cast. The city is called, for example, *muktidām vaiṣṇavīm purīm* (II 48.11). In addition, the *mähātmya* is distinctive for its reference to Maṇikarṇikā as a *śmaśāna* (II. 48. 67), which is the only such direct reference in the Purāṇas. Elsewhere, Maṇikarṇikā is called a *tīrtha* and a *kuṇḍa*, but is not said to be a *śmaśāna*.

The *Nārada Purāṇa*, according to Hazra, is to be dated from the late ninth to the late tenth centuries, with a somewhat later date ascribed to the Uttarabhāga, chapters 38-82, in which the section under consideration is contained.²⁵ From the Kāśī *mähātmya* one can affirm that chapters 48-51 are post-twelfth century. It is

25. Hazra, p. 131.

clear from a close study of these chapters that the author of this portion of the Purāṇa had the twelfth century *nibandha* of Lakṣmīdhara at his disposal. For example, the *Nārada Purāṇa* (II. 49. 47-55) tells the story from the old *Līṅga Purāṇa*, cited by Lakṣmīdhara, in which the *rākṣasas*, carrying the *līṅga* through the night sky, drop it over Avimukta when they hear the cocks crow, signaling the morning (*Tīrthavivecana Kāṇḍa* pp. 108-109). Were the story told on its own, we would have no way of knowing that the author of the Purāṇa did not repeat it from its original source. However, following the story, the *Nārada* continues to follow the text of the *Tīrthavivecana Kāṇḍa*, picking up lines from the next two entries in the digest, a selection from the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and one from the *Skanda Purāṇa* ! Even the untrained eye would see it as a clear case of plagiarism, in which the *Nārada* author has, in effect, strung together in his own work three consecutive entries from an earlier anthology. This is apparently typical of the entire Purāṇa, which Hazra says is "more a compilation than an original work."²⁶

Śiva Purāṇa, *Koṭirudra Saṁhitā* 22-23. The *Śiva Purāṇa* is not included in all the major Purāṇic listings of the Mahāpurāṇas, although today it is generally accepted as a Mahāpurāṇa. It is of a more recent date than the *Līṅga* to be sure. O'Flaherty dates it between 1000 and 1200.²⁷

The first of these two chapters of the Koṭirudra Saṁhitā contains a beautiful mythological statement of creation, beginning with the one supreme Śiva who split into Śiva and Śakti, or Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Although there was the original pair, no *place* yet existed. Kāśī was therefore created as the place for Puruṣa's *tapas* and from that eternal place the rest of creation proceeded.

The second chapter is a *māhātmya* of the *līṅga* of light, Kāśī-Viśveśvara. The gradual replacement of Avimukteśvara as the great *līṅga* of Kāśī is visible in this chapter. The prominence of Viśveśvara indicates a late date in perhaps the twelfth century for this *māhātmya*.

Bhāgavata Purāṇa X. 66; *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* V. 34. These two Purāṇas contain a common account of King Pauṇḍraka, who accused Kṛṣṇa of falsely claiming to be an *avatāra* and who claimed to be an *avatāra*

26. Hazra, p. 133.

27. O'Flaherty, p. 806.

of Vāsudeva himself. Kṛṣṇa took up the challenge of Pauṇḍraka and met him in battle. The King of Kāśī came to Pauṇḍraka's aid, and both of them were beheaded by Kṛṣṇa in the battle that ensued. Kṛṣṇa hurled the King Kāśī's head into the city of Vārāṇasī. When the King's son sought revenge against Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa burned down the city of Vārāṇasī.

These accounts clearly reflect a tradition of ancient rivalry between the clan of Kṛṣṇa's followers and the Śaiva kingdoms further east. According to the tradition, that was back before the Mahābhārata war. According to what we know of Hindu religious history, it was probably in the several centuries before the time of Christ when Kṛṣṇaite and Śaivite movements began to gain force. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, one of the earlier Purāṇas, preserves this tradition, and its account was probably used in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* some centuries later.

Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa VII-VIII. In these chapters of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* the story of the righteous king Hariścandra is told. The story is well known : The king gave away all he owned to the *brāhmaṇa* Viśvāmītra as a ritual gift. When pressed by Viśvāmītra to pay him *rājasūya dakṣiṇā* for his own coronation, Hariścandra had no further resources to draw upon. He went to Vārāṇasī with his wife and son, sold the two of them into slavery and sold himself into bondage to work in the cremation grounds in order to pay the *dakṣiṇā*. When his own son died of snake-bite, the righteous king was still so truthful and so scrupulously honest that he insisted he ask his *caṇḍāla* master for permission to cremate himself along with his dead son.

This ancient tale which explicitly associates Kāśī with one of India's most revered kings is not told in the *Kāśī Khṛṇḍa*, but popular legend in Banāras today associates dozens of sites with Hariścandra—from the cremation grounds to the place where his son was bitten by the snake.

Agni Purāṇa CXII. This short chapter in the *Agni Purāṇa* speaks of Banāras as the abode of the goddess Gaurī, never-forsaken by Śiva. It mentions the measurement of the sacred *kṣetra*, which extends from the Asi to the Varāṇā Rivers and lists several of the city's most important *tīrthas*, including Hariścandra, Amṛtakeśvara, Jāpyeśvara (Jñāna Vāpī), Mahālaya, Candreśvara, Kedāra, and Bhairavā.

The Nibandhas

The *nibandhas* are digests of Purāṇic verses compiled by various medieval scholars on the diverse topics of the Dharmasāstra. It is easy to understand why such digests were desirable, for the Purāṇas are voluminous and materials on any one subject might be found in dozens of places. The *nibandhas* provided topical indices to the traditions of the Purāṇas. Often the *nibandhakāras*, the “makers of *nibandhas*,” explained and commented upon the texts as well. Many of these *nibandhas* concerned *tīrthas* and pilgrimages.

Tīrthavivecana Kāṇḍa. This is one of the fourteen part of the great *Kṛtya Kalpataru*, “The Wishing Tree of Duties,” described by its editor K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar as “the most important as well as the most complete digest (*nibandha*) of Dharmasāstra that has come down to us.”²⁸ Indeed, the *Kṛtya Kalpataru* has fourteen parts, only one of which is concerned with *tīrthas*. The others deal with all aspects of *dharma* from *dāna* (ritual giving) to *śrāddha* (death rites) to *rājadharmā* (the duties of kings). The enormous work is organized after the pattern of Manu’s *Dharmasāstra*, treating the same topics in virtually the same order, reflecting a progression through the stages of life (*āśramas*). The fact that pilgrimage, *tīrtha-yātrā*, has a major place in the *Kṛtya Kalpataru* shows a great leap in the significance ascribed to pilgrimage from the time of Manu, when it had almost no place at all within the discussion of *dharma*.

The author and compiler of this great digest was Lakṣmīdhara a very influential figure in the history of Vārāṇasī. Lakṣmīdhara was the judge and scholar who became chief minister to the great Gāhaḍavāla king Govindacandra in the early twelfth century. The king is said to have ruled from 1104-1154, and the *Kṛtya Kalpataru* was undertaken at the explicit command of the king during that time. Aiyangar estimates that it probably began to come out about 1110. What little we know of Lakṣmīdhara indicates that this scholar and ethicist was the most powerful man in the kingdom. Not only was he the most formidable authority of the age on *dharma*, he also seems to have been an example of what he knew. He was generous in public works, such as building rest houses for

28. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, Preface to Bhaṭṭa Lakṣmīdhara, *Kṛtya Kalpataru*, Vol. 1, *Brahmacāri Kāṇḍa*, Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1948, p. 1.

pilgrims, and, although the king was generous in donations, he himself as a scrupulous *brāhmaṇa* accepted no gifts (*pratigraha*).

Lakṣmīdhara's pioneering work was held in great reverence by the later compilers of digests and scholars of *smṛti*. As Aiyangar remarks, "Almost every writer of *nibandhas* after his day used Lakṣmīdhara's work as a quarry from which to extract the materials for building his own edifice of *Dharmaśāstra*."²⁹ Elsewhere he says that the great scholar was so thorough, concise, and reliable, so spare in interjecting his own opinions, that later authors took Lakṣmīdhara's silence on a rule or omission of a passage as a rejection of its authenticity.³⁰

The *Tīrthavivēcana Kāṇḍa* is an indispensable tool for the study of *tīrthas* and pilgrimages in India. It gathers up the Purāṇic traditions of the twelfth century and gives us at least one dividing line for dating the various *tīrtha mātmyas*. The work begins with a discussion of *tīrtha-yātrā vidhi* "pilgrimage traditions." Here he quotes the *Māhābhārata* on the nature of pilgrimage: its significance as a substitute for sacrifice, its accessibility even to the poor, its interior as well exterior nature. He quotes the long passage on the importance of making an interior pilgrimage to the "*tīrthas* of the heart." (Mhbh. 13.111.2-21) By beginning his exploration of sacred places with a discussion of the inner preparation and faith of the pilgrim, Lakṣmīdhara sets a lofty ideal for pilgrimage: pilgrimage ought to include both the earthly *tīrthas* and the *tīrthas* of the heart. Lakṣmīdhara's example in this respect is followed by both Vācaspati Miśra and Mitra Miśra in their respective digests.

After this brief introductory section, Lakṣmīdhara takes up the various places of pilgrimage, beginning with Vārāṇasī, which receives the most extensive attention, taking almost half of the digest. It is followed by a substantial section on Prayāga, and by briefer sections on the Gaṅgā, Gayā, Kurukṣetra, Puṣkara, Mathurā, Ujjain, Narmadā, Badarikāśrama, and other *tīrthas*. Like later *nibandhakāras*, Lakṣmīdhara does not attempt to deal equally with all *tīrthas*, but rather concentrates on a few. The work ends with a short chapter on the *Mahāpatha Yātrā*—the final walk-unto-death

29. *ibid.*

30. *op. cit.* Editor's Introduction, p. xiv.

into the Himālayas based upon the final pilgrimage of the Pāṇḍavas in the *Mahābhārata*.³¹

In his section on Vārāṇasī, Lakṣmīdhara quotes the various Purāṇas available to him in his day. He quotes at greatest length from the *Liṅga Purāṇa*, although not the extant *Liṅga Purāṇa*, and *Matsya Purāṇa*. He also cites the *Skanda* and the *Brahma Purāṇas*. What he cites from the *Skanda*, however, is brief, and there is no indication that the author knew of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. We have speculated above that the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* was probably in the making during his day. The combined sources cited by Lakṣmīdhara name about 350 *tīrthas* in Vārāṇasī alone, most of them enumerated in the *Liṅga Purāṇa* which he quotes.

Tīrthacintāmaṇi. This is part of a large *nibandha* of Vācaspati Miśra, a scholar of Mithilā who lived in the fifteenth century (1450-1480) and compiled the *Smṛti Cintāmaṇi*, "The Magical Wishing Jewel of the Tradition."

The opening of this work closely follows that of the *Tīrthavivecana Kāṇḍa*, with quotations from the *Mahābhārata*, the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, and the *Brahma Purāṇa* on the nature of pilgrimage and the manner in which it should be performed. The five places which he then treats most extensively are Gayā, Puruṣottama (Purī), Prayāga, Kāśī, and the Gaṅgā. Other *tīrthas* are mentioned more briefly. The regional bias of this work is Eastern, therefore it is not surprising that about two-fifths of it is devoted to the exaltation of Puruṣottama, the great *tīrtha* at Purī in Orissa.

Vācaspati Miśra's treatment of Vārāṇasī is concise and contains no surprises. He does, however, quote from the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* twice, and he is the first *nibandhakāra* to do so.

Tīrtha Prakāśa. The author of this work is the great seventeenth century *nibandhakāra* Mitra Miśra, whose compendium of Dharmasāstra, the *Vīramitrodaya*, is the only *nibandha* which exceeds

31. This is a suicide pilgrimage. The subject of ritual suicide at Kāśī and Prayāga is discussed at length in the digests. For the most part it is not condemned, although it is disapproved of for those with dependent families. See Kane's discussion of this, *History of Dharmasāstra*, Vol. IV, pp. 604-614. See also *Tīrthavivecana Kāṇḍa* pp. 258-265, *Tīrthacintāmaṇi*, pp. 47-52, and *Tristhalīsetu*, pp. 47-55.

Lakṣmīdhara's in sheer bulk. Aiyangar writes, however, that it is sometimes diffuse and indiscriminate in the authorities selected for quotation.³² Mitra Miśra was from a Gwalior family and wrote this digest under the patronage of the court at Bundelkhaṇḍ.

The *Tīrtha Prakāśa* is but one section of the *Vīramitrodaya*. Following Lakṣmīdhara, he begins with general discussion of pilgrimage and the inner disposition and faith of the pilgrim. His introductory discussion of *sāmānyatīrthadharmā...* "general *tīrtha dharmā*"... continues at some length. He takes up the rituals of pilgrimage in greater detail than does Lakṣmīdhara, discusses the times for pilgrimage, the fruits of pilgrimage, and then proceeds to the discussion of particular *tīrthas*. He begins with Kāśī and then discusses the various *tīrthas* in much the same order as did Lakṣmīdhara. In his Kāśī section, however, he quotes the Jābāla and Rāmatāpanīya Upaniṣads at the outset and includes quotations from the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, as well as the *Kūrma*, *Matsya*, *Brahma*, *Liṅga*, and *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇas*. He also quotes the *Kṛtya Kalpataru*.

Tristhalīsetu. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, the author of this digest, was another of Kāśī's famous scholar-statesmen in the line of Lakṣmīdhara. Living in the sixteenth century, he was active in the religious life of Kāśī during the last years of the Delhi Sultanate presided over by the Lodis. At the beginning of the century many of the city's temples must have been destroyed, for during most of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's own lifetime the Viśveśvara temple lay in ruins. In his *nibandha* he advised pilgrims to do reverence to the place where its *liṅga* had been, even though the *liṅga* had been hauled away and destroyed.³³ It was Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa who finally oversaw the rebuilding of the temple in 1585. One can well imagine that this man, so faithful and determined even amidst the ruins of the sacred city, was a great inspiration to all Banāras in his day.

Despite adversity the intellectual tradition of Banāras flourished with new vigor in the sixteenth century, and among Banāras scholars of the day Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa was surely a leader.³⁴ In addition to the *Tristhalīsetu*, he wrote several other works on Dharmaśāstra including two works on death rites, the *Antyeṣṭi Paddhati* and the *Jīvatsrāddha Prayoga*.

32. Aiyangar, *op. cit.*, Editor's Introduction, p. 4.

33. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, *Tristhalīsetu*, Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, No. 78 Poona, 1915, p. 208.

34. Śrī Gopināth Kavirāj, *Kāśī ki Sarasvata Sādhanā*, Patna : Bihār Rāstrabhāṣā Pariṣad, 1965, pp. 14-42.

The *Tristhalīsetu*, "The Bridge of the Three Sacred Sites," is not part of a larger *nibandha*, but stands on its own and carries the principle of selectivity in discussing *tīrthas* to an extreme. He deals with only three : Kāśī, Prayāga, and Gayā. They are the three great *tīrthas* of central North India. Although he begins with Prayāga, his treatment of Kāśī is much more extensive, taking at least two-thirds of the book. He quotes nearly all the Purāṇas on Kāśī, beginning with a general *māhātmya* of the city. He surveys a great variety of topics including conduct of a person who lives in Kāśī, the question of sin and atonement for sin in Kāśī, the vow never to leave Kāśī (*kṣetrasannyāsa*), the rites to be performed in Kāśī, and the city's auspicious times. Then he surveys and comments upon the literature on the various *tīrthas* within Kāśī—Maṅikarnikā, Jñāna Vāpī, Viśveśvara, Omkāreśvara, and so forth. This is followed by a survey of the various special times, organized according to the progression of the days of the fortnight, then the days of the week. Finally he discusses atonement for sin in Kāśī and the question of death in Kāśī (pp.290-316). This final discussion of death and liberation in Kāśī is one of the longest parts of the *Tristhalīsetu* and one into which Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa frequently interjects himself as commentator and interpreter.

Other Sankrit Works

Kāśīmṛtimokṣa Vicāra/Kāśī Mokṣa Nirṇaya. This work is attributed to Sureśvarācārya, the Advaitin pupil and follower of Śaṅkara. This "Discussion of Mokṣa in Kāśī" contains fifteen verses with commentary and supporting quotations by the author. Taking a philosophical perspective on the great faith-claim "Death in Kāśī is Liberation," the author attempts to answer questions and objections put by philosophical inquirers. The work has been translated into Hindi with explanatory notes by Pt. Ambika Datta Upādhyāya.

Jābāla Upaniṣad. The first two sections of this *upaniṣad*, identify the eternal soul (*ātmā*) with that which is sought out and served in Avimukta. When pressed about the location of Avimukta, the teacher reveals that it is between the Varāṇā and the Nāśī in the place where the nose and eyebrows meet, where heaven touches earth. This mystical interpretation of Avimukta is quoted and discussed by the author of the *Kāśī Mokṣa Nirṇaya* and is referred to by Śaṅkarācārya in his commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*.

Gaṅgā Laharī. "The Gaṅgā's Waves" is a hymn to the River Gaṅgā written by the seventeenth century poet Jagannātha, who

was patronized by the Mughal emperor Shāh Jahān and his son, Prince Dārā Shikoh. His involvement with the court and his love affair with a Muslim woman resulted in his rejection by caste *brāhmaṇas*. According to legend, when Jagannātha was snubbed by the *brāhmaṇas* in Banāras, he called upon the Gaṅgā to accept and sanctify him. He is said to have composed the *Gaṅgā Laharī* as he sat atop the steps of the Pañcagaṅgā Ghāṭ with his beloved. At each of the fifty-two verses, the Gaṅgā rose one step until she touched the very feet of the lovers and they, purified, disappeared into her embrace.

Kāśī Tattva Bhāskara; Kāśī Yātrā Prakāśa. These two works are representative of a genre of books, both in Hindi and Sanskrit, which serve as guidebooks for the religiously observant pilgrim to or resident of Kāśī. The first work begins with a *māhātmya* of Kāśī, consisting of both Sanskrit verses and Hindi exposition. This is followed by a description of the daily, weekly, and yearly rites, pilgrimages, and festival days. The yearly observances are listed, month by month, beginning with Caitra. The particular temples and *līngas* which are exalted, each in turn, throughout the year are listed and praised. The second work, the *Kāśī Yātrā Prakāśa*, is organized by pilgrimage cycles rather than by times. The pilgrimages around the Antargṛha, to the nine Gaurīs, to the 56 Gaṇeśas, to the twelve *ādityas*, to the twelve *līngas* of lights, etc., are described.

Here we have surveyed some of the sources for the study of Vārāṇasī in Sanskrit literature and indicated very briefly their contents. The sources are many, and together they present one with thousands of lines of mythical, ritual, geographical, theological, hymnic, and historical material. The study of these sources will require a variety of hermeneutical tools. Some of this material is carefully detailed and essentially descriptive, such as the geographical sections of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, and must be studied accordingly. Some of it is mythological, but some is a mixture of myth and history requiring extensive consideration in the context of wider Purāṇic histories and genealogies. Some of it is a literature of praise, necessitating consideration in the light of a sophisticated understanding of the nature of *māhātmya*. Finally, some of it is close to what, in a Western context, would be considered theology, articulating an understanding, not of a deity, but of a luminous *place* which has been significant as a "place of crossing," a *tīrtha*.

A NOTE ON KĀTYĀYANĪ

Kātyāyanī is a famous name of goddess Durgā which is often cited in Purāṇas, and Śākta literature. However it is not well known in those literatures how this name was attributed to the goddess. The name owes its origin to Kātyāyana. Kātyāyana was descendant of Kata.¹

In the Purāṇas and the epic though the name is very popular yet its meaning is not given. Only in the Vāmana Purāṇa we get an episode in connection with the birth of the goddess which explains the meaning of the name as well as its relation with Kātyāyana. According to the Vāmana Purāṇa (Ch. 19), defeated by demon Mahiṣa, the gods, headed by Brahmā, approached to Lord Viṣṇu who was sitting with Lord Śamkara. They informed the two great gods about their defeat and miseries caused by demon Mahiṣa. Hearing this the two great gods were very much enraged. Brahmā and other gods also became very angry. From the enraged faces of the gods issued lustres of high potency and the effulgence issued from each god separately became united in the shape of a peak of the mountain. This episode happened in the vicinity of the hermitage of sage Kātyāyana who also created his own lustre and augmented the heap of lustre by his own effulgence. This lustre-heap was changed in the form of a holy woman :

ततोऽनुकोपान्मधुसूदनस्य

सशंकरस्यापि पितामहस्य ।

तथैव शक्रादिषु दैवतेषु

महद्भि तेजो वदनाद् विनिःसृतम् ॥6

तच्चैकतां पर्वतकूटसंनिभं

जगाम तेजः प्रवराश्रमे मुने ।

कात्यायनस्याप्रतिमस्य तेन

महर्षिणा तेन उपाकृतं च ॥7

1. It should be mentioned that कात्यायनी was also the wife of Sage याज्ञवल्क्य. See Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Up. II.

याज्ञवल्क्यस्य द्वे भार्ये वभूवतुः । मैत्रेयी कात्यायनी च । तयोर्हि मैत्रेयी ब्रह्मवादिनी बभूव स्त्रीप्रज्ञैव हि तर्हि कात्यायनी ।

तेनर्षिसृष्टेन च तेजसा वृतं
 ज्वलत्प्रकाशार्कसहस्रतुल्यम् ।
 तस्माच्च जाता तरलायताक्षी
 कात्यायनी योगविशुद्धदेहा ॥8

It is further said that the *Tejas* created by Sage Kātyāyana was most excellent and the goddess became famous by the name of Kātyāyanī.

तर्थाषितेजोत्तममुत्तमं महन्-
 नाम्ना पृथिव्यामभवत्प्रसिद्धम् ।
 कात्यायनीयेव तदा बभौ सा
 नाम्ना च तेनैव जगत्प्रसिद्धा ॥19. 13

The goddess appeared in the Āsrama of the Sage Kātyāyana and the lustre issued from him was prominent in the goddess.

Here it should also be noted the story of the appearance of the goddess from the lustres of the gods is given in the *Devībhāgavata* (V. Ch. 8) and *Saptaśatī* (Chs. 2-4) of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* in detail but the mention of Kātyāyana is not found there.

—Ganga Sagar Rai

ACTIVITIES OF THE ALL-INDIA KASHIRAJ TRUST
(July-December, 1979)

Varāha Purāṇa Work

While the adhyāya-s with their critical apparatus are given to the press for printing and their proofs are being corrected, the Appendices are also actively prepared. The work proceed contemporaneously on different appendices which are distributed among the paṇḍits. At present the following work has been done :

1. Critical Notes on the most interesting or difficult points of the text of the Varāha Purāṇa. They have been written for the adhyāyas 1 to 50.
2. The Śloka-Index cards have been prepared fully, arranged in alphabetical order and numbered.
3. The Subject-Concordance of the Varāha Purāṇa with the other Purāṇas and the Mahābhārata has also been written for the adhyāyas 1 to 100.

Purāṇa Pāṭha and Pravacana

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa was recited in the Śrī Padmanābha Temple of Rāmnagar by Śrī Kāmadeva Jhā from 28 October to 4 November, 1979. Discourses were given by the well-known and much venerated Svāmi Karpātriji. His Highness Dr. Vibhūti Narain Singh also attended to the discourses.

Veda Pārāyaṇa

The text of the Śukla Yajurveda, Kāṇva Śākhā, i. e. its Saṁhitā, pada, krama, jaṭā, ghana, prātiśākhya parts were recited from memory by Śrī Lakṣmikānta Purāṇic, while the Śrotā was Śrī Bālakriṣṇa (Bālajī). The recitation was held from 25 June to 8 August, 1979 in the Prabhu Nārāyaṇeśvara Temple of the Śivalā Palace in Vārāṇasī. This recitation enters in the project of the All-India Kashiraj Trust, which as one of its objects has the promotion of the Indian Culture. At the completion of the scheduled Pārāyaṇa the usual Dakṣiṇā was given to the Pārāyaṇa kartā and the Śrotā.

सर्वभारतीय काशिराजन्यासस्य कार्यविवरणम्

(जुलाई-दिसम्बर १९७९)

वराहपुराणकार्यम्

वराहपुराणस्य समीक्षितमूलपाठेन सह पाठसमीक्षोपकरणं मुद्रणार्थं मुद्रणालये वर्तते मुद्रणकार्यं च प्रारब्धं वर्तते । परिशिष्टनिर्माणकार्यमपि त्वरया संपाद्यमानं वर्तते । विविधपरिशिष्टानां निर्माणकार्यं विविधपण्डितैः समकालमेव क्रियमाणं वर्तते । अद्यावधि अधोनिर्दिष्टं कार्यं पूर्णं वर्तते—

१. प्रथमाध्यायतः पञ्चाशदध्यायं यावन् महत्त्वपूर्णानां दुरूहाणां च अंशानां पाठसमीक्षात्मिका टिप्पणी लिखिता जाता ।
२. श्लोकार्धसूची अक्षरानुक्रमेण पूर्णा वर्तते ।
३. प्रथम अध्यायतः १०० अध्यायं यावद् वराहपुराणस्य इतरमहापुराणैः सह महाभारतेन च सह विषयसाम्यकार्यमपि पूर्णं वर्तते ।

(२) पुराणपाठः प्रवचनं च

२८ अक्टूबर १९७९ दिनाङ्कादारभ्य ४ नवम्बर १९७९ दिनाङ्कं यावत् रामनगरस्थे पद्मनाभमन्दिरे एतद्विषये विष्णुपुराणस्य पारायणं पण्डितकाम-देवज्ञामहोदयेन कृतम् । विश्वविश्रुतैः पूज्यचरणैः स्वामिकरपात्रमहाभागैश्चत्वारि दिनानि यावत् प्रवचनं कृतम् । तत्र भवन्तो महाराजाः काशिनरेशा डा० विभूतिनारायणसिंहमहाभागा अपि प्रवचनेषु उपस्थिता आसन् ।

(३) वेदपारायणम्

जटाक्रमघनप्रातिशाख्यादिभिः सह शुक्लयजुर्वेदस्य काण्वशाखायाः पारायणं पण्डितलक्ष्मीकान्तपौराणिकमहोदयेन कृतम् । श्री बालकृष्ण (बालाजी) महोदयः श्रोता आसीत् । एतद् वेदपारायणम् आषाढ-श्रावणमासयोः २५ जून दिनाङ्कादारभ्य ८ अगस्त १९७९ दिनांकं यावद् वाराणसीस्थस्य शिवालाभवनस्य प्रभुनारायणेश्वरमन्दिरे संपन्नम् । एतद्वेदपारायणं सर्वभारतीयकाशिराजन्यासस्य प्राचीनविद्यासंस्कृतिसंरक्षणस्योद्देश्येषु समागच्छति । परायणसमाप्ती पारायणकर्त्रे श्रोत्रे च यथानिर्दिष्टा दक्षिणाः प्रदत्ताः ।

Purāṇa Goṣṭhī

Under the auspices of the All-India Kashiraj Trust a Seminar on Purāṇas (Purāṇa Goṣṭhī) was organized at Shivalā Palace of the Trust on 8th July 1979. His Highness Mahārāja Dr. Vibhūti Narain Singh presided over the Seminar. In the beginning the Vedic Vasanta Pūjā was performed. The Vedic Brahmins recited the Vedas according to different modes of the vedic recitation. Scholars took interest in the vedic recitation and asked the vedic reciters to recite again the different modes. Mahārāja Kumār Śrī Anant Narain Singh distributed Dakṣiṇā to the vedic Paṇḍits. After the vedic Vasanta Pūjā the Purāṇa Seminar started with Maṅgalā-caraṇa and Vyāsa Vandanā. The annual report of the Purāṇa Deptt. was placed before the audience by the editor and discussion started. Scholars present were Prof. Lallanji Gopal, Prof. Rewa Prasad Dwivedi and Prof. Vishwanath Bhattacharya of Benares Hindu University, Dr. Vagish Shastri, Research Director of Saṃpūrṇānand Sanskrit University, Prof. Amar Nāth Paṇḍey and Prof. Raghunāth Giri of Kashi Vidyapith and many distinguished scholars of the city such as Prof. Baladeva Upādhyāya, Major S. L. Dar and Pāṇḍit Vishwanāth Shastri Dātār. The Vyāsa Purāṇimā number of the Purāṇa Bulletin was presented to His Highness by the editor. On this occasion a new book entitled 'Nārada Purāṇa—A Study' was released by the Mahārāja, Dr. Vibhūti Narain Singh. At the conclusion Mahārāja Dr. Vibhūti Narain Singh thanked the scholars for their attendance. At the end Prasāda was distributed.

**Scholars and Distinguished Persons who Visited the
Purāṇa Department**

1. Dr. A. K. Narain, Professor of History and South Asian Studies University of Wisconsin, U. S. A. (Formerly, Principal, College of Indology, Dean, Faculty of Arts, B. H. U., Vārāṇasi)—on 6.7.1979.
2. Allen W. Thrasher Deptt. of Asian Language and Literature, University of Washington, U. S. A.—on 27.7.1979.
3. Renald Kogloff, Montreal, Canada—on 4.8.1979.
4. Barron and Rima Holland of Monterey, California, U. S. A. They wrote on the visitors' book : 'We are very happy to visit your excellent institution. You are doing a great service in preserving the great texts of popular Hinduism, —on 13.8.1979.

पुराणगोष्ठी

सर्वभारतीयकाशिराजन्यासस्य तत्त्वावधाने न्यासस्य शिवालाभवने ८ जुलाई १९७९ दिनाङ्के पुराणगोष्ठी आयोजिता आसीत् । तत्र भवन्तः काशिनरेशा महाराजा डा० विभूतिनारायणसिंहमहोदया अध्यक्षतां कृतवन्तः । प्रारम्भे वैदिकवसन्तपूजा संपन्ना । वैदिकब्राह्मणैः पारायणस्य विविधरीतीरनुसृत्य वेदपाठः कृतः । उपस्थिता विद्वांसः पारायणे अतीव रुचिं प्रदर्शितवन्तः पुनः पुनः श्रवणाय प्रार्थितवन्तश्च । महाराजकुमारेण श्री अनन्तनारायणसिंहेन वैदिकब्राह्मणेभ्यो दक्षिणाः प्रदत्ताः । वैदिकवसन्तपूजानन्तरं पुराणगोष्ठी प्रारब्धा । प्रथमतो मङ्गलाचरणं व्यासवन्दना च जाता । सम्पादकेन 'पुराणम्' पत्रिकाया व्यासपूर्णमाङ्कः न्यासस्याध्यक्षेभ्यो महाराज डा० विभूतिनारायणसिंहमहोदयेभ्यः समर्पितः । सम्पादकेन पुराणविभागस्य वार्षिकं कार्यविवरणं विदुषां समक्षं प्रस्तुतम् । एतद्विषये विद्वद्भिः विवेचनं प्रारब्धं केचिदुपयोगिपरामर्शा अपि प्रदत्ताः । उपस्थितेषु प्रमुखविद्वत्सु पं० बलदेव उपाध्यायः, प्रो० एस० एल० दर, काशिकहिन्दुविश्वविद्यालयस्य प्रो० लल्लनजीगोपालः, डा० रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी, डा० विश्वनाथभट्टाचार्यः, सम्पूर्णानन्दसंस्कृतविश्वविद्यालयस्य डा० वागीशः शास्त्री, पं० विश्वनाथशास्त्रीदातारः, काशीविद्यापीठस्य डा० अमरनाथपाण्डेयः डा० रघुनाथगिरिः प्रमुखा आसन् । अस्मिन्नवसरे तत्र-भवद्भिः काशिनरेशैः डा० विभूतिनारायणसिंहमहोदयैः न्यासस्य 'नारदपुराण-एस्टडी' नाम्नः नवीनग्रन्थस्य प्रकाशनोद्घाटनमपि विहितम् । अन्ते महाराजैः समुपस्थितविदुषः प्रति धन्यवादाः प्रदत्ताः । प्रसादवितरणानन्तरं गोष्ठी विसर्जिता ।

(५) पुराणविभागे आगता विशिष्टजना विद्वांसश्च

१. डा० अवधकिशोरनारायणः—विसकान्सिन, यू० एस० ए० विश्वविद्यालये इतिहासस्य दक्षिण-एशियाविद्यानां च अध्यक्षः (पूर्वं एष महाभागः काशिकहिन्दुविश्वविद्यालयस्य भारतीमहाविद्यालयस्य प्राचार्य आसीत्)—६.७.१९७९ दिनांके ।
२. एलेन डब्ल्यू० ग्रैशर—वासिगटन, यू० एस० ए० विश्वविद्यालये एशियन भाषायाः साहित्यस्य च प्राध्यापकः—२७.७.१९७९ दिनाङ्के ।
३. रेनाल्ड कोग्लोफ—माण्ट्रियल कनाडा इत्यत्रत्यः—४.८.१९७९ दिनाङ्के ।
४. बैरन तथा रोमा होलैण्ड—माण्टेरी कैलिफोर्निया, यू० एस० ए० इत्यत्र वास्तव्यौ—तौ दर्शकपुस्तिकायां लिखितवन्तौ—आवां भवतां विशिष्टसंस्थानम् आगत्यातीव तुष्टौ । भवन्तः प्रचलितहिन्दुधर्मस्य ग्रन्थानां संरक्षणेन महतीं सेवां कुर्वन्ति । १३.८.१९ ९ दिनाङ्के ।

5. Roberto Donatoni, University of Milan, Italy. 'I am glad to have the opportunity to behold the magnificent and impressive work done by this institution. I think it will be of outstanding importance and usefulness for future generations of scholars.'—on 13.8.1979.
6. Sri Gaurinath Shastri of the Paurāṇic and Vedic Research Institute of Naimisharaṇya—on 15.9.1979.
7. About 50 eminent epigraphists who attended the conference organised by the American Institute of Indian Studies were received by His Highness Mahārāja Dr. Vibhūti Narain Singh at tea. The Scholars saw the publications of the trust and spoke highly of it—on 20.12.79.

Rāsa Līlā

As usual for the last several years, the Rāsa Līlā was performed under the auspices of the All-India Kashiraj Trust, in the Prasiddha Garden of Rāmnagar from 27 July to 7 August, 1979. Many devotees and enthusiastic people attended to the religious performance for the whole period. The actors of the Rāsa Līlā, who had come from Mathurā-Vrindāvana as usual, contributed a lot with their skill and fervour to keep alive the enthusiasm of the audience. His Highness Dr. Vibhūti Narain Singh also attended to the performance daily.

Rāma Līlā

This year the Rāma Līlā, which is celebrated under the auspices of the All-India Kashiraj Trust with the financial help of the Government of India, was duly performed during the month of Āśvina, i. e. from Ananta Caturdaśī (5 Sept., 1979) to Āśvina Pūrṇimā (5 October, 1979). The Mahārāja of Benares, Dr. Vibhūti Narain Singh attended to the performance daily. Thousands of people attended also to the re-enacting of the deeds of Rāma done by the skillful amateur actors of Rāmnagar and Kāśī who transmit their art from generation to generation in their own families. Hundreds of sādhus from all over India flock to Rāmnagar in this period to attend the Līlās of Rāma. To them a free ration (bandāra) of food is given daily for the whole month, during which

५. रीवर्टो डोनाटोनी—इटलीदेशस्य मिलानविश्वविद्यालयस्य “अस्मिन् संस्थाने क्रियमाणं शोभनं प्रभावोत्पादकं च कार्यं दृष्ट्वा प्रमुदितोऽस्मि । मम दृष्ट्या एतत्कार्यं भविष्यत्काले विदुषां कृते अतीवोपयोगि अति-महत्त्वपूर्णं च भविष्यति ।” १३ ८.१९७९ दिनाङ्के ।
६. श्रीगौरीनाथशास्त्री—संपूर्णानन्दसंस्कृतविश्वविद्यालयस्य भूतपूर्वोप-कुलपतिः—१५.९.७९ दिनाङ्के ।
७. अभिलेखविद्यासंबन्धिसम्मेलनस्य प्रायः पञ्चाशत् संख्याकाः प्रतिनिधयो दुर्गे न्यासस्याध्यक्षैस्तत्रभवद्भिः काशिनरेशैर्महाराजैः डा० विभूति-नारायणसिंहमहोदयैः लघ्वाहारेण सत्कृताः । तेषु डा० डी० सी० सरकार-डा० कृष्णन् महोदय-डा० ब्रजेन्द्रनाथशर्मप्रभृतिभिर्विद्वद्भिः पुराणकार्यस्य महत्त्वं प्रतिपादितं कार्यस्य प्रशंसनं च कृतम् । प्रतिनिधिभ्यः ‘पुराणम्’ पत्रिकाया नूतनोद्भूः उपायनीकृतः ।

रासलीला

रामनगरस्थे ‘प्रसिद्ध’ नामके उद्याने पूर्ववर्षेष्विव अस्मिन्नपि वर्षे सर्व-भारतीयकाशिराजन्यासस्य संरक्षणे जुलाईमासस्य २७ दिनाङ्कादारभ्य ७ अगस्त १९७९ दिनाङ्कं यावत् रासलीला अभिनीता । बहुसंख्याका धार्मिका भक्ता रासलीलां दृष्टवन्तः । रासलीलाप्रदर्शका यथापूर्वं मथुरावृन्दावनतः समागताः । दर्शकाणां परितोषाय प्रदर्शकैः कौशलेन स्वकलाः प्रदर्शिताः । तत्रभवन्तः काशिनरेश महाराजा डा० विभूतिनारायणसिंहमहोदयाः प्रतिदिनं रासलीलां प्रेक्षयांचक्रुः ।

रामलीला

सर्वभारतीयकाशिराजन्यासस्य प्रबन्धे सम्पाद्यमाना रामलीला अस्मिन् वर्षे अनन्तचतुर्दशीदिनादारभ्य (५ सितम्बर १९७९ ई०) आश्विनपूर्णिमादिनं (५ अक्टूबर १९७९ दिनाङ्कं) यावत् सम्पन्ना । महाराजा डा० विभूतिनारायणसिंह-महोदयाः प्रतिदिनं रामलीलायामुपस्थिता आसन् । रामलीलायाः दक्षाः कला-काराः रामनगरस्थाः समीपवर्तिकाशीस्था वा सन्ति । इमे कुलपरम्परया स्वकलां रक्षन्ति रामलीलादर्शकाणां परितोषार्थं प्रदर्शयन्ति च । रामलीलां द्रष्टुं भारत-वर्षस्य विविधप्रदेशेभ्यः शतशः साधवः समागच्छन्ति रामनगरम् । साधुभ्यो मासपर्यन्तं भोजनसामग्री निःशुल्कं प्रदीयते । अस्मिन् भोजनसामग्रीवितरणकार्ये

also some members of the staff of the Purāṇa Deptt, help in such distribution. The presence of the sādhus to the Rāmalīlā and their enthusiasm contribute to give a colourful and devotional atmosphere to the performance. The open air representation is performed in a large area in different spots changing with the places of Rāma's deeds. At the end of the Rāmalīlā the actors were received by H. H. the Mahārāja of Benares, who gave them due respect and food along with the Dakṣiṇā

Kumārī Anurādhā Kapoor, a research student of Leeds University, U. K., came to study the Rāmalīlā for the whole month and stayed at the Palace Guest House with her mother. She is doing her doctorate on Rāmalīlā.

For the first time this year the Mahārāja Kumār participated at the līlās on the elephant for the last few performances.

The Chairman receives their Majesties the King and Queen of Nepal

On 23rd September, 1979 His Highness Mahārāja Dr. Vibhūti Narain Singh, Chairman of the Trust threw a luncheon party in honour of His Majesty the King Mahārāja Vir Virendra Vikrama Dev of Nepal and Her Majesty the Queen of Nepal. On this occasion many dignitaries were present. The Mahārāja presented the Purāṇa publications of the Trust to the King. The King accepted this present with keen interest and reverence.

Chairman Elected as President of Vishwa Sanskrit Pratiṣṭhān

Due to decaying conditions of Sanskrit language and literature Scholars all over the world were pondering to adopt the methods for the restoration and uplift of this ancient and valuable language. In the centenary year of the Mother of Pondicherry this attempt got a new momentum when by the centenary organizing committee a Sanskrit sub-committee under the Chairmanship of His Highness Mahārāja Dr. Karan Singh of Jammu and Kashmir was formed. This sub-committee held about hundred seminars all over the world. Finally in the Conference held at Allahabad on 25th January, 1979 on the occasion of Magha fair it was decided that a Vishwa Sanskrit Pratiṣṭhān be established with headquarters at Vedapuri, Pondicherry. This organization will work as an apex to different Sanskrit organizations



H. H. Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singh presenting the Purāṇa publications to
His Majesty King Virendra of Nepal

पुराणविभागस्यापि केचन पण्डिताः साहाय्यं कुर्वन्ति । साधूनामुपस्थिति-
रुत्साहश्च रामलीलां भक्तिभरिताम् आकर्षणयुक्तां च करोति । अस्मिन् वर्षेऽपि सर्वे
साधवो भोजनसामग्रीं गृहीतवन्तः । एषा रामलीला अति विस्तृते क्षेत्रे विविध-
स्थलेषु संपाद्यते । एषां स्थलानां नामानि रामचरितेन संबद्धानि सन्ति ।
रामलीलासमाप्तौ काशिनरेशैः महाराजैः रामनगरदुर्गे भोजनेन दक्षिणाभिः
सत्कारेण च रामलीलापात्राणि संयोज्य संतोष्य विसर्जितानि ।

अस्मिन् वर्षे अन्तिमेषु कतिपयेषु दिवसेषु महाराजकुमारः रामलीलायां
गजारूढो भूत्वा रामलीलावलोकनं कृतवान् ।

यूनाइटेड किंगडमदेशस्य लीड्सविश्वविद्यालयस्य शोधछात्रा कुमारी
अनुराधाकपूर महोदया रामलीलाध्ययनार्थं रामनगरमागता । एषा स्वमात्रा सह
रामनगरदुर्गस्थिते अतिथिभवने मासं यावत् स्थिता । एषा महोदया रामलीला-
विषये 'डाक्टरेट' पदवीं प्राप्तुम् शोधं करोति ।

न्यासस्थाध्यक्षैः नेपालाधीश्वराणां सम्मानम्

न्यासस्थाध्यक्षैस्तत्रभवद्भिर्महाराजैः काशिनरेशैः डा० विभूतिनारायण-
सिंहमहोदयैः २३ सितम्बर १९७९ दिनाङ्के वाराणस्यां नन्देश्वरभवने तत्र
भवतां महाराजानां नेपालनरेशाणां श्रीवीरेन्द्रविक्रमसिंहदेवानां तत्र भवतीनां
श्री नेपालमहाराज्ञीनां सम्माने भोजनं प्रदत्तम् । अस्मिन् अवसरे महाराजा
नेपालनरेशाः, नेपालाधिपस्य महाराज्ञी अन्ये च विशिष्टा जना उपस्थिता
आसन् । तत्रभवद्भिः काशिनरेशैर्नेपालनरेशेभ्यः सर्वभारतीयकाशिराजन्यासस्य
पुराणप्रकाशनानि उपायनीकृतानि नेपालनरेशैरतीवप्रेम्णा श्रद्धया च तान्यु-
पायनान्यङ्गीकृतानि ।

न्यासाध्यक्षा विश्वसंस्कृतप्रतिष्ठानस्य अध्यक्ष नियुक्ताः

संस्कृतभाषाया साहित्यस्य चावचीयमानयाऽवस्थया जगतः विद्वांसो
दुःखिता आसन् तस्य संरक्षणार्थं विकासार्थं च चिन्तापरा आसन् श्रीअरविन्दा-
श्रमस्य मातुः शताब्दीवर्षे मातुः शताब्दीसंयोजकसंस्थया काश्मीराधिपस्य
श्री डा० कर्णसिंह महाभावस्याध्यक्षतायामेका संस्कृतोपसमितिर्नियुक्ता ययादे
भारते विदेशेषु च शतगोष्ठीनामायोजनं विहिम् । २५ जनवरी १९७९ दिनांके
अनया समित्या प्रयागे एकस्यविश्वसंस्कृतस्यायोजनं कृतम् । अनेन सम्मेलनेन
निर्णीतं यद् संस्कृताभिवृद्धये संस्कृतसंस्थानामधिष्ठातृ रूपेण विश्वसंस्कृत-
प्रतिष्ठानस्य स्थापनं भवेत् ।

Now the Vishwa Sanskrit Pratiṣṭhān has started working and the Chairman of the Trust His Highness Mahārāja Dr. Vibhūti Narain Singh has been selected its first President. The first meeting of its executive was held at Nadesar on Oct. 13-14, 1979 where many resolutions for the uplift and promotion of Sanskrit were adopted. His Highness has issued a statement for the all side help for the propagation, membership and financial assistance to the Pratiṣṭhān.

Śrī Devadatta is organising Secretary of the Pratiṣṭhān.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SISTER TRUSTS

Mahārāja Prabhu Narain Singh Physical Cultural Trust

On the occasion of the birth day of the Mahārāja Kumār Śrī Anant Narain Singh, sports of the boys of the local schools were organized. The usual competitions took place on 28 November, 1979 and then, because of the rain on the next days, they were completed on 6 December, 1979. The local junior and primary schools took part in the sports with great enthusiasm and competitive spirit. The students of the Vidyāmandir Pāṭhasālā and the Mahārāja Kumār himself took part in all the sports. Judges were Śrī Aśok Kumār Singh, Virendra Kumār Sharma, Principal of Balvant Singh Degree College, Gaṅgāpur and Mr. Śrīcandra Datta on 28 November and also the P. S. Commander of police in addition of the first previous two on 6 December, 1979. On 28 November the sports took place inside the palace while on 6 December they were organized in the grounds adjacent to the Fort. The prizes were distributed by the Mahārāja Kashirāj. The Trust popularizes cricket by holding cricket matches on sundays on P. A. C. ground.

MAHĀRĀJA BANARAS VIDYĀMANDIR TRUST

Vedic Bālaka Vasant Pūjā

On Wednesday 29 November, 1979 in the morning a vedic Bālaka Vasant Pūjā was performed by sixteen Vedic students under 15 years of age from Vārāṇasi. They recited by heart the vedic mantras in the Devī Mandir with due ceremonial rites. Dakṣiṇā was given to them after the Pūjā and the children were fed.

Painting Competition

1. On 3 December 1979 a painting on spot competition was organized among the students of the local schools for art-painting. Three hundred children took part in the competition. Prizes were distributed among the children.

अधुना विश्वसंस्कृतप्रतिष्ठानस्य स्थापनं जातम् । सर्वभारत यकाशिराज-
न्यासस्याध्यक्षास्तत्रभवन्तः काशिनरेशा डा० विभूतिनारायणसिंहमहोदया अस्य
प्रतिष्ठानस्याध्यक्षा नियुक्ताः । श्रीदेवदत्तः प्रतिष्ठानस्य कार्यसचिवो नियुक्तः ।
अस्य प्रतिष्ठानस्य कार्यसमितेः प्रथमा सभा १३-१४ अक्टूबर १९७९ दिनांयोः
काश्यां नन्देश्वरभवने जाता यत्र संस्कृतस्याभ्युत्थानार्थं बहवः प्रस्तावाः
पारिताः । प्रतिष्ठानाध्यक्षैस्तत्रभवद्भिः काशिनरेशैः प्रतिष्ठानस्य सर्वविध-
साहाय्यार्थमेकं वक्तव्यमपि प्रदत्तम् ।

सहयोगिन्यासानां कार्यविवरणम्

महाराजप्रभुनारायणसिंह फिजिकल कल्चरल ट्रस्ट

महाराजकुमारस्य श्रीअनन्तनारायणसिंहस्य वर्धापनदिवसावसरे अनेन
न्यासेन स्थानिकपाठशालानां बालकानां कृते दिनद्वयात्मिका क्रीडाप्रतियोगिता
आयोजिता आसीत् । नियमतः २८ नवम्बर १९७९ दिनाङ्के क्रीडा प्रारब्धा जाता ।
किन्तु २९ नवम्बर १९७९ दिनाङ्के घोरा वृष्टिर्जाता अतः ६ दिसम्बर १९७९
दिनाङ्के एषा क्रीडाप्रतियोगिता अन्तिमरूपेण समाप्ता । स्थानिकप्राथमिकपाठ-
शालानां लघुमाध्यमिकपाठशालानां च विद्यार्थिनः अस्यां प्रतियोगितायामतीवो-
त्साहेन स्पर्धया च सम्मिलिता बभूवुः । प्रथमदिननिर्णायकेषु श्रीअशोककुमारसिंहः,
महाराजबलवन्तसिंहमहाविद्यालयस्य प्राचार्यः श्रीवीरेन्द्रकुमारशर्मा तथा
श्री एस० सी० दत्तः आसन् । ६ दिसम्बर १९७९ दिनाङ्के श्री अशोककुमारसिंहः,
श्री श्रीशचन्द्रदत्तस्तथा पी० ए० सी० रामनगरस्थस्य सेनानायकः निर्णायका
आसन् । २८ नवम्बर दिनाङ्के प्रतियोगिताः दुर्गं सम्पन्नाः ६ दिसम्बर दिनाङ्के
च इमाः प्रतियोगिताः दुर्गसंलग्ने 'खन्दक' प्राङ्गणे सम्पन्नाः ।

महाराजबनारस विद्यामन्दिरन्यासः

वैदिकबालकवसन्तपूजा

२९ नवम्बर १९७९ दिनाङ्के बुधवासरे प्रातःकाले वाराणसीवासिभि-
रूनपञ्चदशवर्षीयैः षोडशवैदिकैः वैदिकवसन्तपूजा संपादिता । तैः देवीमन्दिरे यथा-
विधि कण्ठस्थं वेदपाठं कृतम् । पूजानन्तरं तेभ्यो दक्षिणा दत्ता बालकाश्च
भोजिताः ।

चित्रकलाप्रतियोगिता

१. ३ दिसम्बर १९७९ दिनाङ्के 'तत्कालचित्रकला प्रतियोगिता'
स्थानिकपाठशालानां छात्राणां कृते आयोजिता आसीत् । त्रिशतसंख्याका बालकाः
प्रतियोगितायां समाविष्टा आसन् । बालकेभ्यः पुरस्काराः प्रदत्ताः ।

2. A painting competition was held among the local potter artists on 3 December, 1979. Eleven artists competed for the wall paintings of the external walls of the Museum in the Fort, Rāmnagar. The subject of the pictures was almost always a religious one, dealing mainly with Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and Śiva. Rs. 101/- were given as first prize, Rs. 75/- as second, Rs. 65/- as third. Consolation prizes of Rs. 50/- each were also distributed to all the other artists.
3. On the same date a competition of wall-painting was organized also for the students of the Fine Art Deptt. of the Banaras Hindu University. The paintings were done on the walls of the Vidyāmandir courtyard in the inner part of the palace. Some of them were depicted in modern style. Rs. 51/- were given as first prize, Rs. 45/- as second and Rs. 20/- to all the other artists.

The Head of Deptt. of fine Arts B. H. U. judged the paintings.

Bāla-śāstrārtha

Under the auspices of Mahārāja Banaras Vidyāmandir Trust an intellectual competition among students (Bāla-śāstrārtha) on Nyāya was organized on 7 December, 1979, in which the students of the Vidyāmandir and Udyāna Pāṭhasālās took part. The Mahārāja Kumār Śrī Anant Narain Singh also participated in the competition. Some of the most important paṇḍits of the town were present, among them Śrī Jayaram Shastri Shukla of the Vidyāmandir Pāṭhasālā was the Niyāmaka (Supervisor), while Swami Krishna Swami, Dr. Ramchandra Shastri Hoshmane of the Saṅgaveda Vidyālaya and Pt. Viśvanāth Shastri Dātār of the Sāmpūrṇānanda Sanskrit Viśvavidyālaya were the judges.

Reception at Palace

A group of about 50 Epigraphists from all over the world were received by the Chairman of the Trust, Dr. Vibhūti Narain Singh on 20 December, 1979 in the Vidyāmandir ground. They were offered sweets and tea. The Scholars were in Rāmnagar for an international Seminar on 'Indian Epigraphy : Its bearing on Art History', organized by the American Institute of Indian Studies (AISS) in Rāmnagar. The Director General of Archeology, Govt. of India, Delhi, Prof. D. C. Sircar, Prof. K. G. Krishnan, Chief

२. तस्मिन्नेव दिने स्थानिककुम्भकाराणां कृते चित्रकला प्रतियोगिता आसीत् । रामनगरदुर्गे विद्यामन्दिरसंग्रहालयस्य बाह्यभित्तीनां चित्रणे एकादश कलाकाराः संलग्ना जाताः । चित्रस्य विषयः प्रायेण रामकृष्णशिवादिदेवानां चरित्राङ्कनमुद्दिश्य धार्मिक एवासीत् । एकाधिकशतरूप्यकाणां प्रथमः पुरस्कारः गोपालनाम्ने पञ्चसप्ततिरूप्यकाणां द्वितीयः पुरस्कारः मुञ्जीलालाय रघुनाथाय च पञ्चषष्टिरूप्यकाणां तृतीयः पुरस्कारः दयाशंकराय शेषेषु सर्वेषु प्रत्येकेभ्यः पञ्चाशदरूप्यकाणां सांत्वनापुरस्काराश्च प्रदत्ताः ।

३. तस्मिन् एव दिने काशिकहिन्दुविश्वविद्यालयस्य चित्रकला महा-विद्यालयस्य छात्राणां कृते अपि भित्तिचित्रकलाप्रतियोगिता आयोजिता आसीत् । एतत् चित्रणं विद्यामन्दिरप्राङ्गणस्य भित्तिषु संजातम् । तेषु केचन आधुनिक-कलायाः प्रदर्शनं कृतवन्तः । एकपञ्चाशदरूप्यकाणां प्रथमपुरस्कारः पञ्चचत्वारिंशद्रूप्यकाणां द्वितीयपुरस्कारः चत्वारिंशद्रूप्यकाणां तृतीयपुरस्कारश्च प्रदत्ताः । कलाविभागस्य विभागाध्यक्षो निर्णायक आसीत् ।

बालशास्त्रार्थः

७ दिसम्बर १९७९ दिनाङ्के महाराजबनारसविद्यामन्दिरन्यासस्य संरक्षणे न्यायविषये बालकानां शास्त्रार्थः संपन्नः यस्मिन् विद्यामन्दिरपाठशालायाः उद्यानपाठशालायाश्च छात्राः समाविष्टाः । महाराजकुमारः श्री अनन्तनारायण-सिंहोऽपि शास्त्रार्थे समाविष्टः । नगरस्य केचन विशिष्टा विद्वांसोऽपि उपस्थिता आसन् । तेषु विद्यामन्दिरपाठशालायाः प्राध्यापकः पण्डितजयरामशास्त्रीशुक्लः नियामक आसीत् श्रीकृष्णस्वामी (पूर्वं पण्डितगणपतिशास्त्री हेब्बार इति नाम्ना प्रथितः), पं० रामचन्द्रशास्त्री होशमने तथा पं० विश्वनाथशास्त्री दातारः निर्णायका आसन् ।

दुर्गे अभिनन्दनम्

विश्वस्य विविधभागेभ्य आगता प्रायः पञ्चाशत्संख्याका अभिलेखशास्त्र-विशेषज्ञाः रामनगरदुर्गे न्यासस्याध्यक्षैः काशिनरेशैस्तत्रभवद्भिर्महाराजैः डा० विभूतितारायणसिंहमहोदयैर्विद्यामन्दिरप्राङ्गणे सत्कृताः । तेभ्योऽल्पाहारश्च प्रदत्तः । एते विद्वांसः 'अमेरिकन इन्स्टीच्यूट आफ इण्डियन स्टडीज' संस्थया आयोजिते 'भारतीयाभिलेखशास्त्रं—तस्य कला—इतिहासे प्रभावः' इति विषयके सम्मेलने आगता आसन् । भारतशासनस्य पुरातत्त्वविभागस्य भू० पू० निदेशकः, डा० डी० सी० सरकारमहोदयः, आर्कालाजिकल सर्वे आफ इण्डिया संस्थया

Epigraphist, Archaeological Survey of India and various Directors of Archaeological Deptts of States attended the Seminar. During the reception the Purāṇa Deptt of the All-India Kashiraj Trust put a stall with all the publications of the Department. Several Scholars showed keen interest in the publications of the critical edition of the Purāṇas, of the Bulletin and of the other studies published by the All-India Kashiraj Trust. All the paṛḍits of the Purāṇa Deptt. attended the reception.

MAHĀRĀJA KASHINARESH DHARMAKĀRYA NIDHI

The Trust gives donations to several religious and cultural institutions such as the Viśva Hindu Sammelan, Girvāṇavāgvar-dhanīśabhā of Vārāṇasī. The Trust gives medals and prizes in the Benares Hindu University, Saṃpūrṇānanda Sanskrit Viśvavidyālaya, Kashinaresh Degree College (Jñānpur) and various other Colleges. The Trust is also running the following educational institutions.

1. Mahārāṇi Ramratna Kumvari Sanskr̥ta Pāṭhaśālā Rāmnagar

The school imparts Sanskrit education since 1923 A. D. when it was established by the then Mahārāṇi. The teachings at present go upto the Uttara Madhyama (High Secondary) examination of Saṃpūrṇānanda Sanskrit Viśvavidyālaya, Vārāṇasī. The School is being re-organized by Pt. Dāmodara Jhā.

2. Mahārāja Balvant Singh Degree College—Gaṅgāpur

This college was established in September, 1972 at Gaṅgāpur (Dt. Vārāṇasī), the birth-place of late Mahārāja Balvant Singh, founder of the Kashirājya at Rāmnagar. The college has eleven class-rooms and a hall and imparts education in Arts upto the Degree examinations of the university of Gorakhpur in Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, English, Economics, Political Sciences, History, Psychology, Sociology, Education, Geography and Indian Culture.

In 1979-80 session 79 students are admitted in B. A. Part I. The College has also a large library and play grounds. Special care is given to poor and destituted students. Famous professors from other places are also invited to deliver lectures to the students.

3. Rājā Mānasārām Law College, Rājātālāb

This college was established in November, 1973 at Rājātālāb which is at a distance of about 15 Km. from Vārāṇasī. It is affiliated to the Gorakhpur University. In 1979-80 session 121 students are admitted in LL. B. Part I. The members of the staff are five.

अभिलेख विभागस्य प्रधानः डा० के० जी० कृष्णन् महोदयः तथा प्रान्तीय-शासनानां पुरातत्त्वविभागानां बहवः अध्यक्षः समागता आसन् । अस्मिन् अवसरे सर्वभारतीयकाशिराजन्यासस्य पुराणविभागेन पुराणविभागस्य प्रकाशितग्रन्थानां प्रदर्शनं विहितम् । आगतविद्वद्भिः पुराणसंस्करणे 'पुराणम्' पत्रिकायाम्, अन्येषु च ग्रन्थेषु स्वरुचिः प्रदर्शिता । अस्मिन् अभिनन्दनोत्सवे पुराणविभागस्य सर्वे विद्वांस उपस्थिता आसन् ।

महाराज काशिनरेशधर्मकार्यनिधिः

एष न्यासो विश्वहिन्दुधर्मसम्मेलन-गीर्वाणवाग्बर्धिनीसभा वाराणसी प्रभृतिभ्यः बह्वीभ्यः धार्मिकीभ्यः सांस्कृतिकीभ्यश्च संस्थाभ्यः साहाय्यं प्रददाति ।

एष न्यासः काशिकहिन्दुविश्वविद्यालये, सम्पूर्णानन्दसंस्कृतविश्वविद्यालये ज्ञानपुरस्थे काशीनरेशमहाविद्यालये अन्यासु च संस्थासु पदकानि पुरस्कारांश्च प्रददाति । एष न्यासः अधोनिर्दिष्टानां विद्यालयानां सञ्चालनमपि करोति—

१. रामनगरस्था महारानी रामरत्नकुँवरि संस्कृतपाठशाला

१९२३ ख्रिष्टीयवर्षे तत्कालीनया महाराज्ञ्या संस्थापितेषा पाठशाला संस्कृतस्य शिक्षणं प्रददाति । संप्रति पण्डितदामोदर झा महोदयः अध्यापनं करोति । एषा पाठशाला सम्पूर्णानन्दसंस्कृतविश्वविद्यालयस्य मध्यमाकक्षापर्यन्तं शिक्षाप्रदानं करोति ।

२. महाराज बलवन्तसिंह महाविद्यालयः

एष महाविद्यालयः सितम्बर १९७२ वर्षे वाराणसीमण्डलस्य गङ्गापुर-नामके स्थाने स्थापितः । इदं स्थानं वर्तमानकाशिराज्यस्य संस्थापकस्य श्रीमतो बलवन्तसिंहमहाराजस्य जन्मस्थानमस्ति । महाविद्यालये एकादशकक्षाणि एकं विशालं कक्षं च वर्तते । महाविद्यालये गोरखपुरविश्वविद्यालयस्य स्नातककक्षाणां कलासंकाये हिन्दी-संस्कृत-उर्दू-आंग्लभाषा-अर्थशास्त्र-राजनीतिशास्त्र-इतिहास-मनोविज्ञान-समाजशास्त्र-शिक्षाशास्त्र-भूगोल-आदिविषयाणां शिक्षणं भवति ।

१९७९-८० वर्षस्य सत्रे एकोनाशीतिच्छात्रा बी० ए० प्रथमवर्षे प्रविष्टाः सन्ति । महाविद्यालये एकः समृद्धः पुस्तकालयः क्रीडाङ्गणं च वर्तते । निर्धनेषु निराश्रितेषु च छात्रेषु विशेषमवधानं दीयते । भाषणार्थम् अन्यस्थानानां विख्याता अध्यापका अपि आहूयन्ते ।

३. राजा मनसाराम विधिविद्यालयः, राजातालाब

एष महाविद्यालयः नवम्बर १९७३ वर्षे अक्षयनवम्यां तिथौ वाराणसी-नगरतः पञ्चदश किलोमीटर दूरे राजातालाबनामके स्थाने स्थापितः । अस्मिन् महाविद्यालये गोरखपुरविश्वविद्यालयस्य एल-एल० बी० परीक्षार्थं प्रशिक्षणं भवति । अस्मिन् १९७९-८० सत्रे एल-एल० बी० प्रथमभागे १२१ छात्राः सन्ति । अत्र पञ्च अध्यापकाः अध्यापनं कुर्वन्ति ।

GAYĀ MĀHĀTMYA

Edition critique, traduction française et introduction
par Claude Jacques.

Institut français d'Indologie—Pondichery, 1962.

(translated into English by Giorgio Bonazzoli with
permission of the "Institut français d'Indologie—
Pondichery).

(Continued from last issue)

True, Vivien de Saint-Martin on his map of Magadha⁹⁸ puts a Dharmāraṇya to the north of Gayā; but he does not give any reason. It is certain in any case that he does not rely on *Si-yu-ki* for doing that, because Hiuan-tsang does not mention a Dharmāraṇya.

The problem of Dharmapṛṣṭha or Dharmaprasṭha is much more difficult. The first difficulty comes from the fact that even the text of *Mahābhārata* is not clear in this context. Two and a half *śloka*-s are missing in a great number of the MSS that V. S. Suktankar has used to prepare his edition and specially in all the southern manuscripts. They are also missing in the *Padma-purāna*, which generally reproduces the northern manuscripts⁹⁹, and in the *Kṛtyakalpataru*.¹⁰⁰ Under these conditions it can be asked if these *śloka*-s are not due to a later interpolation. If we suppose that they are really part of the original *Mahābhārata* then the following is stated : one should first go into the Dharmapṛṣṭha, fetch water up in a well situated there and do a *tarpaṇa*, one should enter the Mataṅga āśrama, then one should touch (or sprinkle) a statue of Dharma—this reading is not available in all the manuscripts—lastly one should resort to the *tirtha* of Brahman, before going towards Rājagṛha. If we now take the *Gayā-māhātmya*,¹⁰¹ we realize in fact that towards the Dharmāraṇya there is the Mataṅgavāpī, a temple of Mataṅgeśa, a *tirtha* of Brahman and a well. But this *tirtha* and this well are mentioned only in some manuscripts of the *Gayā-māhātmya* and they are not mentioned in the editions of the *Vāyu-māhātmya*, whose text was possibly fixed before that of the isolated *Gayā-māhātmya*. Then, again following the *Gayā-māhātmya* one should leave the Dharmāraṇya and should go to greet Dharma, then the Mahābodhi tree. In the whole passage, the *Gayā-māhātmya* lacks completely transitions but according to what we can see today, it is quite clear that the Dharmāraṇya and Bodh-Gayā cannot be confused as being one place, as Barua improperly thinks. The Dharmāraṇya, the Mataṅgavāpī and the Mataṅgeśa temple are situated in the peninsula formed by the confluence of Mahānadī and Līlājan, called Nairāñjanā by Buddhists. Bodh-Gayā is situated at about three kilometres from there

98. *Memoire analytique sur la carte de l'Asie centrale et de l'Inde...* par Vivien de Saint-Martin, Paris, 1858.

99. See further, pp. 38 ff.

100. See further, pp. 45 ff.

101. VII. 29-33.

and on the other bank of the Līlājan. In fact, what led Barua into error is that he is convinced that Dharma is here the same as the Buddha. Nothing allows us to affirm it. God Dharma is sufficiently attested in this area of Gayā so that there is no need for this supposition. On the other hand, I have not found in any dictionary the term *dharma* as designating the Buddha. Lastly, it is not known if the Hindus used to go in pilgrimage to Bodh-Gayā in early times. Barua¹⁰² writes : In connection with Dharmapṛṣṭha, however, the Epics extol the merit of touching Dharma (*dharmam abhisamṣṛīṣya*), which would be meaningless if not interpreted as signifying an image of the Buddha. Why then is there no statue of God Dharma ? This god is celebrated throughout the *Mahābhārata* without any attempt of any sort anywhere to assimilate him to the Buddha. One cannot then take seriously Barua's hope of dating this text bearing in mind that there is no representation of the Buddha before the Gandhāra art epoch.

It is possible, therefore, to consider Dharmāraṇya and Dharmapṛṣṭha as one place, provided that we do not put it at Bodh-Gayā. This hypothesis could also be corroborated by the fact that a Dharmapṛṣṭha near the Mataṅgavāpī is mentioned in the *Smṛticandrikā*.¹⁰³ But there is still another hypothesis regarding this Dharmapṛṣṭha and in my opinion more probable. The several readings of the *Mahābhārata* and *Gayā-māhātmya* suggest that there could have been a mixing up of indications in the two texts. The Dharmapṛṣṭha of the *Mahābhārata* was possibly identified later with the actual Dharmāraṇya and then *śloka-s* were introduced in the *Mahābhārata* where Mataṅga enters into the picture. On the other hand, this Brahman *tīrtha* which is never mentioned as being in the proximity of Dharmāraṇya could be added into *Gayā-māhātmya*. But where should then the Dharmāraṇya be placed ? Re-reading the *Mahābhārata*, we find that the pilgrims come from Benares and go immediately to Rājagṛha. Coming from Benares, they have passed in front of Akṣaya-vaṭa, then they bathe in the Mahānadī or Phalgu.¹⁰⁴ After having completed a part of their pilgrimage, they go to Yonidvāra, which can be identified doubt-

102. *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

103. See further, pp. 47-48

104. See above, p. 10,

lessly with the actual Brahmayoni¹⁰⁵ then they once more go to the Phalgu before leaving Gayā. As they go then to Rājagṛha it is much easier to think that they make for the north. Had they gone to the actual Dharmarāya, their way would have taken them compulsorily to Gayā, and it is at that moment that one would expect the last bath in the Phalgu. But we have seen¹⁰⁶ that Hiuan-tsang has pointed out a *tīrtha* at 30 li to the north of Gayā. I have supposed that could be the *brahmaṇas tīrtham* of the *Mahābhārata*, the actual Brahmakuṇḍa. This one is situated at the foot of a hill nowadays called Pretaśilā, whose sides—I am told—are populated with Dharma-Yama archers. Let us now note here that the priests of this hill are called *Dhāmin*, without any doubt “those of Dharma”¹⁰⁷. It is then perhaps not too audacious to suppose that this hill was called Dharmapṛṣṭha.

I have then to note some blanks in this chapter 83, of *Mahābhārata*, particularly that of Viṣṇupāda, which is the most sacred and renowned of modern Gayā. P. V. Kane¹⁰⁸ reproaches Barua for concluding from the fact that in this chapter there is no mention of the Viṣṇupāda that this temple did not exist at the time when this part of the *Mahābhārata* was written. P. V. Kane thinks that the *argumentum a silentio* has no value, and he tries to show that the here given description of Gayā is not necessarily complete and that the list of *tīrtha-s* is not exhaustive. Particularly, he points out that at the time of the pilgrimage by Aṅgiras the three *tīrtha-s* which are there mentioned for Gayā are present only in this chapter. There is in fact the following *śloka* :

aśmapṛṣṭhe gayāyām ca niravinde ca parvate /
tṛṭiyām krauñcapadyām ca brahmahatyām viśudhyate//¹⁰⁹

Let us note first of all that the commentary of Nilakaṇṭha cannot be utilized. He identifies aśmapṛṣṭha with Pretaśilā, he

105. Brahmayoni is the name of the hill, probably formerly called Gayāśiras. It is also the name of an anfractuosity in a rock situated at the top of this hill.
106. See above, p. 25.
107. Renou has kindly informed us that *dhāmin* derives in fact from *dhāma(n)*, “abode”. This remark deprives our thesis of an argument. Our thesis, however, does not seem to be less tenable.
108. P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra*, vol. IV, Poona, 1953, pp. 648-650.
109. *Mahābhārata, Anuśāsanaparvan* (XIII), edited by R. Kinjawadekar, Poona, 1933, ch. 25, śl. 42.

glosses mount Niravinda with 'sukhagandhahīna' and for him the Krauñcapadī is the place where there are Viṣṇu and the other gods' foot-prints.

The *Kṛtyakalpataru* quotes this very *śloka* under the following form.¹¹⁰

muṇḍapṛṣṭham Gayāṁ caiva nairṣṭam devaparvatam/
tṛtīyāṁ krauñcapādīm ca brahmahatyā vimucyate//

and it is again found in the *Garuḍa-purāṇa*¹¹¹ under this form:

Gayāyām muṇḍapṛṣṭhañ ca aravindañ ca parvatam/
tṛtīyāṁ krauñcapādañ ca dṛṣṭvā pāpaiḥ pramucyate//

Probably in these conditions the difficulty of the verse comes from its being very corrupt. Nīlakaṇṭha is tempted to explain an incorrect *śloka* according to what he could know about Gayā.

This having said, we should also note at the same time that the *tīrtha*-s are enumerated in this chapter in considerable disorder and that at least another *tīrtha* of Gayā is displaced. The Brahmasaras, which is mentioned in *śloka* 58, is described in the same terms as in chapter 82 of the *Vanaparvan* (*tathā brahmasaro gatvā dharmāraṇyopaśobhitam*). In fact, one cannot rely on this chapter, where the interpolations are surely numerous, and where too many great centres of pilgrimage are missing, as Kurukṣetra. We know that not all the *tīrtha*-s of Gayā are necessarily gathered in the list given by the *Vanaparvan* in chapter 82. The name of Gayāśīras, which was very important, is particularly missing (but not the Brahmayoni, which is at its top). It is anyway quoted elsewhere. The silence on the Viṣṇupāda at Gayā instead is absolute. Moreover, in the texts having a date, that is in the Middle-Ages compilations, it will be found neither in the *Kṛtyakalpataru* nor in the *Smṛticandrikā*, and it will be necessary to wait for the *Tīrthacintāmaṇi* to find it described. We shall see later why we have to think that the Viṣṇupāda, mentioned in the *Nirukta*, should not be confused with that of Gayā¹¹². It is childish to try to find it by all means and therefore to discover it under the *sāvītram padam*, as

110. *Kṛtyakalpataru*, *Tīrthavivecanakāṇḍam*, G. O. S. no. XCVIII p 172.

111. LXXXIII. 47.

112. See further.

J. C. Ghose does in his article on 'Antiquity of Gayā'¹¹³. Why should have the name of this foot-print been concealed under a false name? Under these circumstances, the *argumentum a silentio* rejected by P. V. Kane retains all its strength. One could hardly explain otherwise what kind of silent conspiracy prevented Gayā's most sacred point to be ever mentioned for more than a millennium. It is easy to find evidence from what is quoted in the *Purāna-s*—it is still not found in the *Garuḍa-purāna* whose *Gayā-māhātmya* is very important—because they can hardly be dated. It seems that for this we should adopt R. C. Hazra's¹¹⁴ prudent method and rely on the Middle-Ages compilations, which are much surer from the date point of view. We can then almost affirm that the Viṣṇupāda did not exist at Gayā at the time when this passage of the *Mahābhārata* was composed.

The Rāmāyaṇa

The *Rāmāyaṇa* makes only a very short reference to Gayā in *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, ch. 107.¹¹⁵

śrūyate dhīmatā tāta śrutir gītā yaśasvinā /
 gayena yajamānena gayeṣveva *pitṛn* prati //11
 punnāmno narakād yasmāt pitarāṃ trāyate sutaḥ /
 tasmāt putra iti proktaḥ *pitṛn* yaḥ pāti sarvataḥ //12
 eṣṭavyā bahavaḥ putrā guṇavanto bahuśrutāḥ /
 teṣāṃ vai samavetānām api kaścid gayāṃ vrajet //13
 evaṃ rajarṣayaḥ sarve pratītā raghunandana /
 tasmāt trāhi naraśreṣṭha pitarāṃ narakāt prabho //14

The king Gayā is here associated with the town Gayā and, on the other hand, the town is clearly in relation with the cult of the dead. But we can note that the *śloka-s* ascribed to king Gayā, the *śloka-s* 12 and 13, are very common in the whole literature concerning Gayā. The first one is found, with some variants, in the *Mahābhārata* (I. 68.38 and 220.14) and in *Manu* (IX. 138) particularly. The second one, in slightly different form, but still recog-

113. Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, vol. XXIV, part III, sept. 1938.

114. *Studies in the Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, Calcutta, 1949.

115. We have used the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki, with three commentaries called Tilak, Shiromanī, and Bhooshana... edited by S. S. K. Nudholkare, Bombay, n. d.

nizable, is available also in the *Mahābhārata* (III. 82.85) and in several *purāṇa*-s. On the other hand, it is difficult not to realize the accidental character of this reference to Gayā. These four *śloka*-s are badly linked with what precedes and what follows. In fact, Rāma explains why he cannot sit on the throne, and recalls the promise formerly made by Daśaratha to his bride. These four verses seem to be led by 'pitaram trāhi dharmajñā' of *śloka* 10, where 'trāhi' is to be understood as 'free our father (by being faithful to his word)' and not 'free our father (from hell)', as what follows can let us think. Moreover, Rāma continues by asking of Bharata to go to Ayodhyā, forgetting completely Gayā. A *śloka* of the *Gayā-māhātmya* (IV. 27) tells us meanwhile that Bharata had come to Gayā while Rāma was in the forest. It is perhaps an answer to these four verses. Be that as it may, these *śloka*-s seem really to be a late interpolation; they have, therefore, for what concerns us, a very limited interest.

But the fact that there is practically no mention of Gayā in the *Rāmāyaṇa* is to be remembered, since Rāma is several times mentioned in the *Gayā-māhātmya*, particularly in chapter IV (*śl.* 16-20), where he gives origin to a *tīrtha* by bathing in the Mahā-nadī with Sītā; and in chapter VII (*śl.* 74-79), where we are told that he performed a *śrāddha* on Rudra's foot-print. On the other hand, two hills preserve his souvenir at present time, Rāmaśilā hill and Rāma-Gayā hill. All these souvenirs are more recent than the *Rāmāyaṇa*; they date no doubt from relatively recent times, when the cult of Rāma was widespread in India.

GAYĀ AND THE PURĀṆA-S

The *purāṇa*-s deal abundantly with Gayā, the sacred town; none of them passes over it completely in silence. But it would be too long and tedious to examine all the quotations which can be found in these texts. We shall content ourselves with examining the most noteworthy passages.

Padma-purāṇa—The *Padma-purāṇa* devotes 20 *śloka*-s to Gayā¹¹⁶. These *śloka*-s reproduce those found in the *Mahābhārata* (III. 82). M. V. Vaidya has shown¹¹⁷ that the *Padma-purāṇa* has

116. *Padma-purāṇa*, Ānandāśrama, Series, no. 131, Poona, 1893, I. 38. 2-22.

117. *Tīrtha-Yātrā* in the *Āraṇyakaparvan* and the *Padma-purāṇa*, in *A Volume of studies in Indology*, presented to Prof. P. V. Kane, Poona, 1941, pp. 530 ff.

taken this passage from the *Mahābhārata*. His contention is quite convincing, so there is no need of any further comment. The readings of the *purāṇa* are, usually, the same as those available in the Bengali manuscripts. The most interesting variant is perhaps the one which gives *brahmāraṇyopavesitam* (śl. 5), in place of *dharmāraṇyopasobhitam* which is found most frequently in the *Mahābhārata*. This variant confirms us in the opinion that the Dharmāraṇya spoken of in the epic is not a very important place as its name is easily modified. It has, moreover, nothing to do with the one which can be seen at present. The omission of two *śloka*-s and a half¹¹⁸ can also suggest that these *śloka*-s were added later, owing to an interference with the *Gayāmāhātmya* text.

Brhan-nārādīya-purāṇa—The *Nārada-purāṇa* devotes 246 *śloka*-s distributed in 4 *adhyāya*-s to its *Gayāmāhātmya*. Unluckily for our purpose, this important passage concerns only the literary history. In fact, it is a borrowing and, what is more, from a text of late period, the *Tīrthacintāmaṇi*. In order to compose its *Gayāmāhātmya*, the *purāṇic* author reproduces in the same order the *śloka*-s of the chapter of the *Tīrthacintāmaṇi* dealing with Gayā. He has left out naturally all the glosses not written in verses, which leads sometimes to incoherence. On the other hand, the comparison between the two texts proves that it is the *Nārada-purāṇa*, that is the borrower, and not vice versa.

Varāha-purāṇa—The *Varāha-purāṇa* has no *Gayāmāhātmya*, properly speaking. But there is a chapter, the 7th, which tells us a legend referring to the pilgrimage to Gayā. Varāha narrates here to Dharaṇi that Raibhya went to Gayā to pay honour to his ancestors. While he was applying himself to a *tapas*, Sanatkumāra appeared to him and narrated the story of king Viśāla which is available in the *Gayāmāhātmya* of the *Vāyu-purāṇa*, ch. VIII, *śloka*-s 8-16¹¹⁹, but in different words, which excludes direct borrowing, and in a little more circumstantial way. Then, after saying that Gayā derived its fame from the presence of *Gadādhara*, Sanatkumāra disappeared. Raibhya then hails *Gadādhara* with a *stotra* different from that of *Gayāmāhātmya*, vv. 25ff. It is not at all necessary to think that this legend has some connection with the cult of

118. cf. above, p. 32-33.

119. It is also available in the *Garuḍa-purāṇa* and the *Agni-purāṇa*.

Gadādhara. Indeed, the few *śloka-s* said by Sanatkumāra in praise of this god are very loosely linked with the preceding legend. This legend, therefore, can be much older than the context in which it is inserted. On the other hand, it must have been relatively popular, because it is narrated in several different works and it is given here in such terms that exclude any reciprocal borrowing.

Skanda-purāṇa—The *Skanda-purāṇa*, although late, is very interesting for our study on Gayā. B. M. Barua gives first of all the quotation from the *Nāgara-khaṇḍa*, which he must have read very quickly, as the facts are not exactly as he reports. There are first of all the following *śloka-s* which are an answer to some *ṛṣi-s* who were asking for a description of the *tīrtha-s* of Camatkārapura, alias Ānandapura, capital of Hāṭakeśvarakṣetra :

pañcakrośapramāṇena kṣetraṁ brāhmaṇasattamāḥ /
 āyāmayāsataś caiva camatkārapurottamam //
 prācyām tasya gayāśīrṣaṁ paścimena hareḥ padam /
 dakṣiṇottarayōś caiva gokarṇeśvarasamjñitau //¹²⁰

We see, first, that this is not exactly a replica of Gayā : there is certainly a *Gayāśīrṣa* and a *Hareḥ pada*, but they are orientated in a completely different way. Moreover the two Gokarṇeśvara-s are not available at Gayā. Further, in chapter 24, there is a *māhātmya* of the Viṣṇupāda corresponding to Hareḥ pada. Its origin, however, is linked back, as Barua says, to the legend of the *asura* Bali and of Vāmana. That is enough to show that this Viṣṇupāda has no relation with that of Gayā. The Viṣṇupadī coming forth from the Viṣṇupāda is elsewhere rightly called Viṣṇupadī-Gaṅgā, but that flows far from Gayā. It is, besides, noteworthy that the name itself of Gayā is never met with in the *māhātmya* of the Viṣṇupadī-Gaṅgā.

On the other hand, it is just Gayā that is dealt with in the legend of the origin of the Gayāśīrṣā or Gayāśiras. In this legend one learns that king Vidūratha, being asked by three *preta-s* to free them, went on the Gayaśiras at Gayā and there he had *śrāddha-s* performed. But two *preta-s* only were liberated in this way as the third one, Kṛtaghna, had perpetrated too big a crime to be pardoned so easily. The king, not knowing what to do, asked of

120. *Nāgara-khaṇḍa*, 17. 3 and 4.

Kṛtaghna the means for liberating him and he answered :

camatkārapure bhūpa śrīkṣetre hātakeśvare /
āste pāmsubhir ācchannaṁ kaler bhītaṁ gayāśiraḥ //¹²¹

This Gayāśiras, therefore, appears in history after the Gayāśiras of Gayā, as it had been concealed under dust owing to its too great efficiency. This shows in any case that Camatkārapura tries to compete with Gayā not by making the eulogy of its Viṣṇupāda, but by trying to show the superiority of its Gayāśiras. Perhaps the explanation is that at the time when this *māhātmya* was written, the Viṣṇupāda at Gayā had not yet reached that celebrity it has nowadays. The only famous place which one could try to find for competing with it was the Gayāśiras. If we accept that, it might be possible then, as suggested by B. M. Barua, that this later Gayāśiras was created to avoid too long a journey for the pilgrims. But it is even more likely that this replica of the Gayāśiras was not made for a humanitarian aim. Those who have tried to launch it, without much success it seems, had rather seen in it a source of profit. This is not on the other hand the only example.

There is, in fact, in the *Skanda-purāṇa* a *Gayāmāhātmya* of which B. M. Barua does not speak, which is, nevertheless, not negligible. It constitutes the chapters 57, 58 and 59 of the *Āvantya-khaṇḍa*. We wonder at first, along with Vyāsa (57. 3 and 4), to discover Gayā at Avanti, but a *śloka* informs us :

evaṁ Vyāsa gayātīrthaṁ purāvantyāṁ pratiṣṭhitam/
paścāt tu kaikaṭe jātam yatra saṁnihito'suraḥ //¹²²

So then in Avanti would have existed a Gayā, whose presence is pointed out only by the *Skanda-purāṇa*, to our knowledge. Moreover, this Gayā would be a kind of prototype of which the Gayā of the Kīkaṭa-s would be only a copy. This Gayā would be, or it would have been near Mahākālavana, that is Ujjaini¹²³. In fact, the description given of this *tīrtha* enlightens us in a singular manner :

yatra gayā mahāpuṇyā phalguś caiva mahānadi /
puruṣottamagirīreṣṭho yatra buddhagayā smṛtā//¹²⁴

121 Nāgara-khaṇḍa, 19. 25.

122. Āvatya-khaṇḍa, 59. 10.

123. Āvantya-khaṇḍa, 57. 25.

124. This half-*śloka* has 17 syllables.

tathaiṅdyagayā khyātā triṣu lokeṣu viśrutā/
 viṣṇoḥ ṣoḍaśapadītīrtham gadādharaṅvīrmitam//¹²⁴
 sarvāpāpāharā puṇyā yatra prācī sarasvatī/
 mahāsuranadī proktā yatra tiṣṭhati puṇyadā/
 nyagrodhas cākṣayo nityaḥ purā prokto maharṣiṅnā/
 tatraiva sā śilā proktā pretamokṣakarī śubhā//¹²⁵

First of all, we have to note the absence of Gayāsiras which is named only once in these chapters in the well-known half-*śloka* 'pañcakrośam gayākṣetraṁ krośam ekaṁ gayāsiraḥ'. Nothing shows that Gayāsiras existed in the Gayā of Avantī. We have then a quite modern description of Gayā, where the Gayāsiras has lost all its importance. And it is not difficult to see which one has tried to copy the other, when we are told that Buddha-Gayā is on Puruṣottamagiri near Ujjain! This mention of Buddha-Gayā, moreover, as well as the mention of ṣoḍaśapadītīrtha makes it certain that this text is completely recent, as it is the only place, besides the travellers-reports of the last century where we find them mentioned under this name. As for Buddha-Gayā, it seems that there is here one of the rare evidences of this word in Sanskrit literature. In fact, the dictionaries of Böhtlingk-Roth quote this word only for referring to different works on Buddhism written by Europeans, so that it is difficult to say at which moment this term appeared. It seems, however, that this happened at a very late period.

The ṣoḍaśapadītīrtha is not mentioned in the *Gayāmāhātmya*; but this *tīrtha* gathers all the *pada-s* quoted in the *Gayāmāhātmya*, chapter VII, *śloka-s* 52 to 63. It is not certain, however, that all these *pada-s* were once all gathered in only one place, as they are today. On the contrary, certain hints lead us to think that they, or at least some among them, were scattered all over the territory of Gayā.

One can realize the importance of the *Skanda-purāṇa*. We have seen that the two passages we have studied cannot be placed in the same epoch, the first one being incontestably older than the second. Unluckily we cannot be more specific. We think, however, that in two quite different moments of history, the fame of Gayā was great

125. *ibid.* 57.29 to 33; cf. also 58. 4 and 5.

enough to make people think of creating a replica of it in Indian regions quite distant from Bihar.

Garuḍa-purāṇa—The *Garuḍa-purāṇa* also has been passed over in silence by B. M. Barua. We shall see, however, that the chapters 82, 83, 84, 85 and 86 of this purāṇa are important, not only for their length, but also for the new elements they supply.

Chapter 82 relates a legend of the *asura* Gaya considerably different from the *Vāyu-purāṇa*'s. The *asura* Gaya performs a *tapas* which disturbs the gods. They take shelter in Viṣṇu, who tells them that everything will be in order when the *asura* lies down. One day, Gaya went to pluck lotuses on the Ocean of Milk to do a *pūjā* to Śiva and he lay down there in the country of the Kikāṭa-s. When Viṣṇu killed him with his club, a certain number of gods gathered around his body. Viṣṇu then declared that the territory delimited by the body of the *asura* Gaya will be holy. Brahman, therefore, came there to perform a sacrifice and gave rich fees to the sacrificers. As later on the brāhmaṇa-s showed too much avidity in the sacrifices to Dharma, Brahman took back what he had given them, but he established them as priests of Gayā.

One can see the differences with the legend narrated in chapter 2 of *Gayāmāhātmya* of the *Vāyu-purāṇa*. We should say, however, that there are considerable differences between the edition we have used¹²⁶ and the translation of M. N. Dutt. On the other hand, Brahman, who tells the story, informs us at the beginning that he will tell it briefly.

In spite of that our *asura* is here śaivite, the *asura* does not shake and the legends of Gayā and of Brahman's sacrifice are clearly separate. This last difference seems to show indeed that the *Gayāmāhātmya* of the *Garuḍa-purāṇa* is antecedent to the *Vāyu-purāṇa*'s. Other indications will corroborate this hypothesis.

Chapter 83 gives the list of a certain number of holy spots at Gayā. Chapter 84 shows how to do the Gayā pilgrimage in 5 days. It presents several analogies with chapter 7 of *Gayāmāhātmya* of the *Vāyu-purāṇa*. Chapter 85 gives us the *mantra*-s to be recited on Pretaśilā: they are same as the ones we have in chapter 6 of the *Gayāmāhātmya*. Finally, chapter 86 gives us some topographical

126. Jibananda Vidyasagara, Calcutta, 1890.

details and a list of deities present at Gayā. A detailed survey of these chapters will show again that this *māhātmya* is earlier than the *Vāyu-purāṇa*'s. There we can also notice the absence of the Viṣṇu-pada. We are told only that one has to perform a *śrāddha* on the Gayāśīrṣa 'devarudrapadādiṣu'; it is then Rudra's foot which is made to stand out. *Ādi* includes perhaps Viṣṇu's foot-prints, as the 'padatraye' of the next *śloka*. But it is not specified and consequently one can deduce at least that the Viṣṇupada had no great importance at the time when this *māhātmya* was written.

Agni-purāṇa—If the *Gayāmāhātmya* of the *Garuḍa-purāṇa* has very clear indications of being older than the *Vāyu-purāṇa*, that of the *Agni-purāṇa*, on the contrary, can be easily declared more recent. The *Agni-purāṇa* devotes 3 chapters to extoll Gayā: chapters 114, 115 and 116. The first one tells us the legends of Gayā. They are in actual fact the same as those of the *Vāyu-purāṇa* but summarized. The difference, which, in our opinion, is very important, is that these legends are now perfectly in order. Consequently, the legend of Dharmavrata and Marīci is given from *śloka* 10, where 'śilā devamayī' is introduced. In the same way, the legend of Viṣṇu's club is inserted in the story, at *śloka-s* 26 and 27. The next chapter sketches out the five-day-pilgrimage. Chapter 116 gives the rites to be performed at a certain number of other spots. It could be considered in this case also as an excerpt, better ordained, of the *Gayāmāhātmya* of the *Vāyu-purāṇa*.

Vāyu-purāṇa—Besides the last eight chapters we have already seen, the *Vāyu-purāṇa* speaks of Gayā several times¹²⁷; these few passages can be compared with the *Gayāmāhātmya* of the same *purāṇa*. Never *asura* Gaya, but *rajarṣi* Gaya comes into the picture. There is a reference to a Viṣṇupada, but it is a mountain, and in spite of what V. R. R. Dikshitar says in his *Purāṇa Index*, this Viṣṇupada is surely not that of Gayā. There is also a long passage on Gayā, but it is given only in H. N. Apte's edition¹²⁸. Besides the fact, then, that this passage is present only rarely, it seems to be also corrupted. Quotations of the *Gayāmāhātmya* are available, but they are often mutilated and badly linked with one another. This passage then cannot be much utilized. We see that there are some things only referring to Gayā in the *Vāyu-purāṇa*, if we except

127. ex. g. 77. 96-110; 80. 45; 85. 19.

128. 83. 12-44.

the *Gayāmāhātmya* at the end. The latter is, in the opinion of everybody, a piece which was attributed later to what is, without any doubt, the oldest *purāṇa*.

GAYĀ AND THE MEDIEVAL COMPILATIONS

With the medieval compilations at last we arrive at texts which are dated or which can be, at least, approximately dated. The pieces of information given by this kind of texts will be, then, extremely precious for our history of this holy place.

Kṛtyakalpataru—The *Kṛtyakalpataru* of Lakṣmīdhara is the oldest of these large medieval compilations. Its influence on the authors of following centuries was surely very great. In the later works, indeed, the *Kalpataru* is quoted like the *purāṇa-s* or the *Mahābhārata*, for instance. Lakṣmīdhara wrote his work between 1100 and 1150 A. D., probably during the second quarter of the 12th century, says Kane¹²⁹. Lakṣmīdhara was minister of Govindacandra, king of Kanauj. We believe C. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, who writes¹³⁰: ‘It is improbable that Lakṣmīdhara lacked personal knowledge of Gayā and its local traditions and customs or of its treatment in the *Purāṇas*, which were then in repute. When he omits to mention rules now in vogue, it is not unsafe to presume that either they came into effect after his time, or that he rejected their validity and declined to notice them in a work of authority.’ We realize then that we can consult him with confidence. In part 8 of his work, called *Tīrthavivecanakāṇḍam*, he devotes a long chapter to Gayā. After a short quotation from *Matsya-purāṇa*, he gives a great part of chapter 7 of the *Varāha-purāṇa*, with the story of Viśāla. At the end of this legend there are even the last *śloka-s* where the Gadādhara is mentioned, but it is possible that they have been added subsequently¹³¹. After a *śloka* from the *Brahma-purāṇa*, comes the legend of *preta-rāja* and the merchant according to the *Vāmana-purāṇa*¹³². This legend is available also in the *Gayāmāhātmya-s* of the *Garuḍa*,

129. *Hist. of Dharmasāstra*, I., p. 317.

130. *Kṛtyakalpataru* of Bhaṭṭa Lakṣmīdhara, edited by K. V. R. Aiyangar, GOS, vol. 98, Baroda, 1942—Introduction, p. lxxxvi.

131. cf. below, p. 49.

132. *Vāmana-purāṇa*, 79. *śl.* 64, 65, 67 and 69b to 73.

Vāyu and *Agni purāṇa-s*. There are then two short quotations from the *Vāyu-purāṇa* and the *Bṛhaspatismṛti* and again a long quotation from the *Vāyu-purāṇa*¹³³. Evidence of some foot-prints is also available, specially those of Mataṅga in Bharatāsrama and those of Mahādeva on Muṇḍapṛṣṭha; and that confirms our hypothesis¹³⁴ that originally these foot-prints were scattered all over the territory of Gayā. They must have come very likely from Bodh-Gayā. We note the absence of the *Viṣṇupada* in this passage as in the whole chapter of the *Kalpataru* devoted to Gayā. The Muṇḍapṛṣṭha seems to have the importance it has in the *Gayāmāhātmya* of the *Vāyu-purāṇa*, i. e. it seems to be in fact the central point of the Gayākṣetra¹³⁵. The object of cult on this hill, then, would have not been the *Viṣṇupada*, but the *Mahādeva-pada*. On the other hand we find the names of the ponds Kanakhala and Uttara-mānasa, probably also of Dakṣiṇamānasa, which is called simply Mānasa, a term glossed in *Tīrthacintāmaṇi* with Dakṣiṇamānasa. The information 'udīcyāṁ muṇḍapṛṣṭhasya' which is used to assign Kanakhala its place is rather vague, but it is taken by the *Gayāmāhātmya* of the *Vāyu-purāṇa* in 7.7. We would put this Kanakhala in the same place where it is nowadays, i. e. at the centre of Dakṣiṇamānasa pond.

After this important quotation from the *Vāyu-purāṇa* come those of the *Mahābhārata*, and first of all the excerpts of the three *tīrtha-yātrā-s* already examined above. About the *Pulastya-tīrthayātrā* the same remarks can be made as the ones we made about the similar passage in the *Padma-purāṇa*¹³⁶. The third one is very much curtailed : in fact, in the *Kalpataru* only śloka-s 9 to 14 are available; in short, Lakṣmīdhara has suppressed the whole story of the great sacrifice of king Gaya. It is not because he considers that legends present no interest as, previously, he has given two legends. Why then has he done this suppression? We can suppose that at the beginning of the 12th century, the Gayāsura

133. *Vāyu-purāṇa*, 77. śl. 96b to 100, 101 to 104, 105, 106, half śloka not found, 108a and 109. Small mistake in Hazra, *Purāṇic Records*, p. 272, in connection with the *Tīrthacintāmaṇi*, which reproduces the *Kalpataru*.

134. cf. *supra*.

135. cf. *Gayāmāhātmya*, I. 22; V. 42, 43, 51; VII. 28, 83; VIII. 24 where this seems particularly clear.

136. cf. *supra*.

legend was getting established. It was not so solid as to be narrated but at the same time it had enough substance to make people forget a little this great sacrifice. This is only a supposition, but no other reason can be found that could have induced Lakṣmīdhara to make such a suppression, it being granted that it is not likely he could ignore the legend. Moreover, he quotes again the *Mahābhārata* and gives exactly the one *śloka* and a half which alludes to this sacrifice¹³⁷. But it is only to explain the presence of Sarasvatī at Gayā. Let us note, by the way, that Lakṣmīdhara's quotation is defective; he had to put a note to make it intelligible. At last, the *Kalpataru* gives one more *śloka* from the *Mahābhārata*, which we have studied at pag. 35 and to which then we shall not revert again.

The *Kalpataru* ends its chapter on Gayā with a certain number of short quotations. The *Vāmana-purāṇa*¹³⁸ informs us that the *asura* Prahlāda had come to Gayā to see Gopati, bathe in Brahman's pond and do his duty towards his ancestors. The *Matsya-purāṇa*¹³⁹ tells us that Gaurī calls upon Gayā Maṅgalā. The *Narasīṅha-purāṇa* and the *Yājñavalkya, Viṣṇu, Yama* and *Vasiṣṭha smṛti*-s are also quoted. These short excerpts do not call for any particular remark.

*Smṛticandrikā*¹⁴⁰—Instead of selecting a certain number of references on Gayā from different places of Sanskrit literature, as Lakṣmīdhara had done, Devaṇabhaṭṭa, author of the *Smṛticandrikā* quotes in the first part only a long passage of an *Ādi-purāṇa* that Hazra¹⁴¹ has shown to be different from the one available nowadays. According to P. V. Kane¹⁴² the book should be dated around 1200 A. D. and not after 1225 A. D. The *Smṛticandrikā* then is almost one century younger than the *Kṛtyakalpataru*. We are a little astonished to see that Devaṇabhaṭṭa speaks of Gayā in his *Āśaucakāṇḍa* rather than in the *Śrāddhakāṇḍa* where

137. *MBh*, IX. 38.20 and 21.

138. *Vāmana-purāṇa*, 83. *śl.* 4 and 5.

139. *Matsya-purāṇa*, 13. 35.

140. cf. *Smṛticandrikā, Āśauca Kāṇḍa*, edited by R. Sharma Sastry, Oriental Library Publications, Skr. Series, No. 56, Mysore, 1921.

141. *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, Calcutta, 1958, pp. 301 and 350.

142. *Hist. of Dharmasāstra*, I. 346.

we could expect it. It does not seem to be different from the *Kalpataru*, but its author perhaps was no well acquainted with contemporary Gayā. Possibly he relied on an ancient text. The *tīrtha*-s, however, have multiplied in number in the sacred place. We see also appear the five-day *yātrā*, which will be found in all the later descriptions. On the first day, rites at *Uttara-Mānasa* are performed; on the next Dharmaprṣṭha is reached and a dip is taken in the Mataṅga-vāpī; on the third day, one goes to Brahman's pond; on the fourth to the Gayāśīras and on the fifth one goes towards the Akṣayavata. This is only a scheme, but it has been preserved till our days.¹⁴³ Later only new material will be filled in by creating again new *tīrtha*-s. We note, by the way, that there the Dharmaprṣṭha is associated with Mataṅga-vāpī, which shows confusion between Dharmaprṣṭha and Dharmaraṇya¹⁴⁴. We note also that the mention of *kūpa* and *yūpa* clearly indicates the remembrance of a sacrifice of Dharma.

The rest of this long chapter is apparently in disorder. There are some *śloka*-s found in the *Gayāmāhātmya* of the *Vāyu-purāṇa*, chapter 1, there is a great part of the portion consecrated to Gayā in the chapter 82 of the *Āraṇyakaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, again there are some *śloka*-s traceable here and there, and finally a certain number of verses which seem to be original. Still no trace of the Viṣṇupada is found, but the verse saying that the *pada* of Mahādeva is on the Muṇḍaprṣṭha. Among the new *tīrtha*-s we point out the mango trees mentioned in a verse found word for word in *Gayāmāhātmya* VII. 40 and 42¹⁴⁵; the Vaitaraṇī with a rite for giving a cow, which is mentioned in the same work, VIII. 26; a Māṣapada, signalled also by *Garuḍa-purāṇa*, 38.51; the Puṣkariṇī and the Suṣumnā, rivers or ponds, mentioned afterwards, but without much importance. The second part is built up of short sentences of which no source is given and which say who has the right to perform *śrāddha*-s at Gayā.

143. This is even the more curious since already the *MBh* extolled the two-fortnight stay at Gayā.

144. cf. above p. 32 ff.

145. A line, p. 199, begins with *gopracāra* and ends with *brahmakalpitāḥ*, and the editor was not able to read the intervening words. It can be easily recognized as the *śloka* 40 of *adhyāya* VII in *Gayāmāhātmya*.

Tīrtha-cintāmaṇi—With the work of Vācaspati Miśra, we reach the second half of the 15th century¹⁴⁶. The *Tīrthacintāmaṇi* devotes to Gayā one *prakāśa* out of five¹⁴⁷. Vācaspati Miśra, like Lakṣmīdhara, whom he employs, was from Mithilā. He also must have had a deep knowledge of Gayā. Any omission in his work will look remarkable.

The *Tīrthacintāmaṇi* begins its account reproducing the *Kṛtya-kalpataru* without any change. The second quotation, however, is new; it gives chapter 82 of the *Garuḍa-purāṇa* narrating the legend of the *asura* Gaya. We note that it is the first time the *asura* appears in a dated text. After *Garuḍa-purāṇa*, it quotes the *Varāha-purāṇa* according to the *Kṛtyakalpataru* as it says. However, it does not reproduce the first *śloka* which, indeed, did not have great interest, nor the last ones, which gave the name of Gadādhara; they were, on the contrary, extremely interesting. Why does Vācaspati not have these *śloka-s*? He knew perfectly well that Viṣṇu was honoured in the form of Gadādhara at Gayā, because he had just quoted the *Garuḍa-purāṇa* which gave an account of it. The solution to this problem is perhaps that these *śloka-s* have been added to the *Kalpataru* later. We have to be cautious about the presence of Gadādhara at Gayā since the 12th century. The rest copies in full the *Kṛtyakalpataru*; the variants are very minor.

The second part of the chapter of the *Tīrthacintāmaṇi* devoted to Gayā is equally very important as it gives the complete rites of the pilgrim at Gayā. To describe them the author depends almost exclusively on the *Vāyu-purāṇa*, by quoting abundantly the *Gayā-māhātmya* of this *purāṇa*. The divisions it introduces, as well as some of its commentaries, contribute to clarify and specify a text which needs it very often. We should remark that the *Gayāmāhātmya* of the *Agni-purāṇa* does not yet enter into the picture, whereas the other *purāṇa-s* we have studied previously are all quoted. (The *Skanda-purāṇa* describing other 'Gayā-s' than the one of Bihar has to be left out). This tends to confirm what we have said regarding the recent character of this *māhātmya*.

146. Kane, *Hist. of Dharm.* (I, 399-405), agrees with another author to give 1450 to 1480 A. D. as date of his literary activity.

147. *Tīrthacintāmaṇi* of Vācaspati Miśra, edited by Kamala Krishna Smrititirtha, Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta, 1912, pp. 268 to 338.

We have seen that the pilgrimage of Gayā is done in five days, following the *Smṛticandrikā*, which quotes an *Ādi-purāṇa*. Those five days are here preserved, but the number of *vedī-s* to visit is much increased. Besides, two more days are added at the beginning of the pilgrimage, during which are performed rites at *tīrtha-s* nowadays controlled by the *Dhāmin* priests, despised rivals of the *Gayāvāls*. At that time these *tīrtha-s* must have already been distinguished clearly. Vācaspati Miśra indeed explains first the rites of these two days and then he begins again from the first day, as if these days were not reckoned. The first day rites are performed at Pretasīlā, which is the actual Rāmasīlā—its position near the Mahānādī does not leave any doubt about it—and at Kākabali, which is near this hill. The next day one resorts to Pretaparvata, which is the present Pretasīlā and to Brahmakuṇḍa. We shall see that nowadays one starts with Pretasīlā; and this is simply due to the change in the name of the hills.

We cannot enter very minutely into the rites of the Gayā pilgrimage in this introduction; we shall be content with making some remarks. The second day (in fact, the fourth one) one resorts to Dharmāraṇya and ends this day near the Mahābodhi tree. But here we do not find the *mantra* which is available in the *Vāyupurāṇa*. While the rites at the other *vedī-s* are described with many details, here no explanation is given. It is surely not an exaggeration, therefore, to say that in this period the rites at Bodh-Gayā were substantially reduced. On the fourth day the rites are performed at the *pada-s* on the Gayāsīras. We find that here the *Tīrthacintāmaṇi* quotes the *Vāyupurāṇa*, which puts the Viṣṇupada first, but it comments saying that the *Garuḍa-purāṇa* gives the Rudrapada in first place and therefore the first *śrāddha* is to be offered first on the Rudrapada, then on the Viṣṇupada, etc. This shows, it seems, that the primacy of the Viṣṇupada was not yet fully established and that at the time of Vācaspati Miśra, we are at a great turning point in the history of Gayā. We can note again that on the Gayāsīras a good number of *pada-s* are lacking, namely, the ones quoted in the śloka-s 59,60 and 61 of chapter 7 of the *Gayāmāhātmya* and 'all the others' hinted together at 61b without naming them.

After the fifth day Vācaspati speaks of all the other *tīrtha-s* of Gayā. He quotes without any interruption great part of chapter VIII and chapter IV of the *Gayāmāhātmya*. This can indicate that

these two chapters were only one at the beginning and have been divided later on. This Chapter IV gives the text we have published, not the one we have put in the appendix. We see that the geography of Gayā, which is explained by following the limbs of the *śilā*, is already well established, but no legend comes as yet to explain this division of the holy place into *śilā*'s feet and hands. If the legend existed, it was surely completely independent from the *asura* Gaya's, otherwise Vācaspati would have alluded to it, but he does not. Or at that time, as for Viṣṇupada, the legend of the *Vāyupurāṇa* was not yet sufficiently established as to be given as traditional. We see then the great importance of the *Tīrthacintāmaṇi*. It is the first dated work giving the *Gayāmāhātmya* of the *Vāyupurāṇa*, which probably was not yet very ancient, as one could venture to correct it with another *purāṇa* on a point which at present is so important, namely the primacy of the Viṣṇupada. It is also the first work which presents an almost modern Gayā; the changes intervening later will be only about details.

Tīrthasāra of the Nṛsimhaprasāda—Some years after the *Tīrthacintāmaṇi*, a certain Dalapati Rāja (name or title ?) wrote the *Nṛsimhaprasāda*, comprehensive encyclopedia on *Dharmasāstra*; a part of it is devoted, as is normal, to *tīrtha-s* : the *Tīrthasāra*¹⁴⁸. As the book was written in the Deccan, it deals with *tīrtha-s* both of the south and of the north, and that is its great peculiar characteristic. Gayā is described rather at length. One realizes, however, that the author had no personal knowledge of the places, but only a knowledge acquired from books. He introduces, however, some innovations in the quotations. Unfortunately, the manuscript edited by Sūrya Nārāyaṇa Śukla must have been not very correct, as a mistake, particularly, is noted which cannot easily be ascribed to the author. Two passages are quoted, one as belonging to *Śiva-purāṇa*¹⁴⁹, the other one to the *Bṛhaspatismṛti*. On examination they appear to be chapter 7 of the *Varāha-purāṇa* but very badly mutilated. It is unthinkable that this mistake comes from the author; it must come from an inversion of pages in a manuscript. Several works are quoted for the first time : particularly the *Kālikāpurāṇa*, the *Saura-*

148. cf. P. V. Kane, *Hist. of Dharm.*, I, pp. 406-410; the *Tīrthasāra* was published at Benares in the *Saraswati Bhavan Texts*, No. 62, in 1936.

149. The manuscript has, in fact, 'māvarāṇe' which the editor interprets as *Śivapurāṇe*.

purāṇa and the *Kūrma-purāṇa*, as well as the *Vahni-purāṇa*. As for the last one, Hazra has shown¹⁵⁰ that it was a work completely different from the *Agni-purāṇa* whose *Gayāmāhātmya*, however, has not yet appeared in the texts. At the end of the chapter dealing with Gayā, the *Tīrthasāra* quotes two passages from the *Mahābhārata* which could not be traced. They have an astonishingly modern character and possibly they do not belong to the great epic.

As far as Gayā is concerned, therefore, the *Tīrthasāra* shows, through the length devoted to this holy place, that its reputation was great; it nevertheless brings us nothing new, except a certain number of false quotations.

*Tristhalīsetu*¹⁵¹—Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, author of the *Tristhalīsetu* among other works, belonged to a very famous family of Benares; he wrote his works between 1540 and 1570¹⁵². The fact that he wrote a book on the three great pilgrimages usually associated together, namely Banaras, Prayāga and Gayā, along with the fact that he was living in one of these places and in the region of the other two, vouch for the correctness of what he describes. In his book is found one of the longest descriptions of Gayā and its pilgrimage. He adds some quotations to those of his predecessors, but he also comments more extensively. Although he quotes, as the others, the chapter of the *Garuḍa-purāṇa* giving the legend of the *asura* Gaya, he narrates also the legend of the same *asura* according to the *Vāyu* and *Agni-purāṇa*s by making short quotations and summarizing the rest. It is the first time that this legend appears in a dated text; it is also the first time that we come across the *Gayāmāhātmya* of the *Agni-purāṇa*. As for the way itself of the pilgrimage, there are some modifications. It is specified for instance, that one should perform a *śrāddha* at the Mahābodhi tree, relying for this upon the authority of the *Agni-purāṇa*. In the text itself of the *Vāyu-purāṇa* appears the *mantra* to be recited on that very spot. The Viṣṇupada is put first as in the *Tīrthacintāmaṇi*, but the *Garuḍa-purāṇa* is quoted to this effect that one has to start from the Rudra-pada. The evolution, however, follows its own course; so this half *śloka* of the *Agni-purāṇa* is again added :

kramato'kramato vāpi gayāyātrā mahāphalā

150. *Purāṇic records*, pp. 139-140.

151. Edited by G. S. Gokhale, ASS., No. 78, Poona, 1915.

152. cf Kane, *Hist. of Dharm.* I, pp. 419-421.

This leaves, therefore, the pilgrim completely free. We are not very far now from Viṣṇupada being granted absolute supremacy. We also see that the *pada-s* have multiplied; Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, in fact, not satisfied with giving the list of the *Vāyu-purāṇa*, adds that of the *Agni-purāṇa*.

The Tīrtha-prakāśa and the later compilations :—

The *Tīrtha-prakāśa*¹⁵³, a part of Mitra Miśra's *Vīramitrodaya*, is the last among the big compilations dealing with Gayā. This work dates back to the beginning of the XVIII century and repeats, but without copying it, what the previous authors have said. The innovation is expected; it is the final consecration of the Viṣṇupada. After repeating what his predecessors have said, Mitra Miśra adds :

vastuto vāyupurāṇarītyā karaṇe gāruḍakramo na grāhyaḥ¹⁵⁴

The pilgrimage of Gayā starts here also with what was the Preta-śilā which is now the Rāmaśilā and the surrounding *vedī-s* whereas nowadays it starts with the Pretaparvata: the rites at Rāmaśilā are performed only on the next day.

The last works in Sanskrit we could consult are Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita's *Tristhalīsetu* and Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa's *Tīrthenduśekhara*¹⁵⁵. They are short and late treatises—respectively *circa* 1625 and *circa* 1700—which do not add anything new to our study, first because of their conciseness and also because the pilgrimage of Gayā as it is described by the *Tīrthaprakāśa* has an almost modern aspect.

So we see the first-rate interest offered by these medieval compilations which are too often neglected. Thanks to them we can follow the evolution of the pilgrimage of Gayā, whose aspect at the beginning of the 12th century was completely similar to what the Mahābhārata says, and which has changed little by little until it assumed its present form. They have helped us also in dating approximately a certain number of chapters of the *purāṇa-s*. We do not obviously claim to have given an exhaustive list of all the references of these texts to Gayā: this would have been impossible and most probably it would have not offered great interest.

153. Edited by Paṇḍit Viṣṇu Prasād, *Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series*, Nos. 239 to 242, 247 and 248, Benares, 1917.

154. p. 419.

155. Published together in one volume in *Saraswati Bhavana Texts*, Nos. 65-67, Benares, 1936.

GAYĀ AND THE SAMHITĀ-S

Barua¹⁵⁶ quotes a good number of excerpts from the *saṃhitā-s* where Gayā is often mentioned. The Viṣṇupada is quoted only once, but it is in the part in prose of the *Viṣṇu-saṃhitā*, which is considered one of the most ancient. The quotation of Barua is as following:¹⁵⁷ 'atha Puṣkareṣvakṣayaśrāddham, evam eva Gayāśīrṣe, Akṣayavaṭe, Viṣṇupade, Phalguṭīrthe.'

In fact if we refer to the text, the situation is sensibly different¹⁵⁸. Barua has forgotten to put the points of suspension where he should have put them. In the edition we use, we see that *Gayāśīrṣe* and *Akṣayavaṭe* are in lines 5 and 6, *Phalguṭīrthe* in line 9 and *Viṣṇupade* only in line 16! In this chapter we have then a list of *tīrtha-s* among which Barua has chosen what he wanted. Moreover, it is not apparent why he has not put in his list *prabhāse* (line 10), *agastyāśrame* (line 14), *uttaramānase* (line 15), *mataṅgavāpyām* (line 16), which are *tīrtha-s* also available at Gayā as well as those given by him. In this way it is clear that we can by no means rely upon this passage of the *Viṣṇu-saṃhitā* for any proof whatsoever regarding Gayā and the Viṣṇupada. The only thing which can be deduced is that a Viṣṇupada existed in India, in the time when this text was written; nothing shows that it was situated at Gayā.

VEDA AND NIRUKTA

Now that things have been a little clarified chronologically we would like to study two small but particularly troublesome problems. They concern some references to a Gayā available in the *Veda-s* and a reference, which seems to be correct, to our centre of pilgrimage.

The name of Gayā in fact is not unknown to the *Ṛg-veda*: Gaya, Plati's son, is indeed the author of two hymns¹⁵⁹. His name is also found in the *Atharva-veda* (I.14.4), where is introduced

156. *op. cit.*, pp. 65 to 69.

157. p. 65, note 1.

158. We have used the *Dharmaśāstrasamgraha*, edited by Jivānanda Vidyāsāgara Bhaṭṭācārya, Calcutta, 1876. The passage that interests here is at p. 160.

159. *R. V. X.* 63. 17 and X. 64. 17.

an 'incantation' (Brahman)¹⁶⁰ of Asita, Kaśyapa and Gaya. It is perhaps going quite far to deduce, as Kane does, that Gaya was a 'wonder-worker or a sorcerer'. In any case we cannot follow him when he says: 'It is not difficult to imagine how a sorcerer, Gaya, could have been transformed into Gayāsura later on¹⁶¹. We have seen that the *asura* Gaya appeared very late in time and that he does not derive from king Gaya, who besides is Amūrtarajas's son, not Plati's. Gaya was a current name. It is possible that the existence of a *ṛṣi* Gaya could have some influence in the working out of legends connected with the town of Gayā, but it has not been at all proved. That does not imply in any case that Gayā existed at the time when the mentioned *ṛṣi* is supposed to have lived. Let us then take note of the existence of this *ṛṣi*, but let us not draw any conclusion referring to the history of the pilgrimage of Gayā. No doubt the most ancient reference to what could be the holy place is available in Yāska's *Nirukta* (12.19). Commenting on the famous verse of *Rg-Veda* I.22.17 :

idaṁ Viṣṇur vicakrame tredhā nidadhe padam.

Yāska writes: '...tridhā nidhatte padam/pṛthivyām antarīkṣe divīti śākapūñih/ samārohaṇe viṣṇupade gayaśirasīy aurnāvābhah//

In the last words one recognizes two of the most famous *vedī*-s of the present Gayā: the Viṣṇupada and the Gayāśiras. *Samārohaṇa* is glossed generally as *udayagiri*¹⁶²; now at Gayā exists indeed an *udyantaparvata*; we can suppose then, that it is here a question of an allusion to the holy place. However, a certain number of considerations make us think that it is a question of a purely accidental coincidence.

Let us note first of all that none of the numerous commentators and, more recently, the publishers of *Nirukta*, has thought of the town of Gayā. All follow Durgācārya's commentary, who glosses the three words in the following way:

Samārohaṇe—udayagirāv udyan padam ekaṁ nidhatte/ viṣṇupade madhyamīndine'ntarīkṣe/ 'viyad viṣṇupadam vā tu puṁsyakā-

160. *Atharvaveda saṁhitā*, trans., by W.D. Whitney, T. I., p. 16.

161. *Hist. of Dharm.*, IV. p. 645.

162. There are some difficulties in understanding *samārohaṇa* as a name of place. Renou has made us notice that it is completely unusual that a name of action with such a clear suffix is used as a name of place.

śāvihāyasi' ity amarah/ Gayaśirasy astagirau ity aurnavābha ācāryo manyate¹⁶³. So we see that these Viṣṇu's steps have been understood as the course of the sun through the sky. This is not the place to discuss whether it is right to consider Viṣṇu as a solar form: we take note that this does not pose any problem to the commentators. But we are of course obliged to see that it is an interpretation and not a translation and that this interpretation serves only to conceal the commentator's embarrassment. We can surely think that *samārohaṇa* translates the rising of the sun and *viṣṇupada*, understood as abode of Viṣṇu, indicates the position of the sun at zenith, but how can we understand *gayāśiras* as 'the mountain of the West'? It is, however, in this way that L. Sarup translates in his edition of the *Nirukta*.

On the other hand, the historians of Gayā draw this commentary on their line and see in it a first description of the pilgrimage place. But *samārohaṇa* cannot be the name of a place. Moreover, as far as the dated texts are concerned, as we have seen, there is no mention of *Viṣṇupada* at Gayā before the Tīrthacintāmaṇi by Vācaspati Miśra, i. e. in the second half of the 15th century A. D. Neither the *Tīrthavivecanakāṇḍa* of the *Kṛtyakalpataru* nor the *Smṛticandrikā* make the slightest allusion to it exactly like the *Mahābhārata*¹⁶⁴. Under these conditions, we are really compelled to think that, if here a real place is referred to—which is not certain—this place was not in the territory of Gayā. As for *Gayāśiras*, it is in fact known since the *Mahābhārata*, but is it reasonable to consider it as the mountain of the setting sun—as by the fact that Gayā is in question we are not prevented from thinking that it can refer to solar Viṣṇu—this hill which is in eastern India and which is hardly distinguishable from so many similar hills surrounding it?

It remains true, however, that the union of these three terms in the same sentence is extremely disturbing. Barua¹⁶⁵ admits

163. Yāska Muni, *The Nirukta* ... with the *Niruktavivṛti* commentary and exhaustive notes of Muhund Jhā Bakshi. Critically ed. by M. J. B. Bombay, 1930, p. 506.

164. See above the answer to P. V. Kane.

165. *op. cit.*, pp. 40 and 41.

that the *Viṣṇupada* must be the zenith. But, regarding Gayāśiras, he writes : 'Consistently with vedic mythology, one can say that Gayāśira, the 'Gaya's head' is the same term as Gayāsuraśira, the head of the demon Gaya'. It is here, then, in the Vedic legend of the demon Gaya and in the Vedic allegory of Viṣṇu's three strides and Auruṇāvabha's interpretation thereof that we can happily trace the nucleus of the magnified legend of the Gayāsura in the *Vāyu* and the *Agni purāṇas*'. A little before, Barua had confused the demons Namuci and Vṛtra with Gaya; but Gaya, in vedic literature, is a *ṛṣi*, and he is never considered a demon. Finally, the three strides of Viṣṇu are never mentioned in the *Gayāmāhātmya*.

J. C. Ghose¹⁶⁶, in an article on the antiquities of Gayā, partly depends upon this passage of *Nirukta*. First of all he thinks he can identify the *Sāvitra pada* of the *Mahābhārata* (III. 82.81) with the *Viṣṇupada*, considering Savitr and Viṣṇu as the Sun. In a previous article¹⁶⁷ he had shown that the *Viṣṇupada* was situated at the borders of Gurdaspur and Kangra districts, on a hill at the foot of which flowed the Vipāśā. Moreover, not seeing in *Gayāśira* other than *gaya*, he interpretes it as the equivalent of *grha* 'abode' and thinks that the Gayāśiras was the Sun's abode, from which it went out in the morning to make its course and into which it entered in the evening once it had accomplished its work. And as he discovers another *Viṣṇupada* on mount Niṣadha, thanks to two references of the *Vāyu* and the *Matsya purāṇa*-s, he concludes immediately that the Gayāśiras of Gayā is the Sun's point of departure (*samārohaṇa*), that the *Viṣṇupada* is on the hill we have seen, and that the Gayāśiras is a mountain of the Hindukush. It is useless to point out that chronology does not enter in the least Ghose's interests ; cleverness is good for everything.

What we can deduce in any case from these different views is that in India there were numerous *Viṣṇupada*-s. We have seen above that the simplest way of interpreting the name *gayāśiras* was to follow what Buddhaghosa says and to translate it as the 'Elephant's head'. Consequently nothing compels us to link this vague *Nirukta*'s passage with the history of Gayā. The antiquity of

166. *Antiquity of Gayā*, in *J. B. O. R. S.*, vol. XXIV, part 3, Sept. 1938.

167. *Viṣṇupādagiri*, in *Indian Culture*, vol. I, No. 3, Jan. 1935.

Gayā is largely proved by the hints given by the pāli canon. It is not necessary, therefore, to venture into the *Nirukta* from which nothing can be concluded under the circumstances without a good deal of imagination.

OTHER INDICATIONS

We have put under this heading certain number of references that we could find both in literature and in inscriptions. Such pieces of information are partly sure and dated.

Ānandagiri, author of the *Śaṅkara-vijaya*¹⁶⁸, describes the passage through Gayā of Śaṅkara in the following words : Gayāyam īśānādidasānam kṛtvā.

Much more interesting are the references of the *Rājataranṅinī* by Kalhaṇa. Gayā is mentioned twice, during the reigns respectively of Abhimanyu (A. D. 958-972) and Harṣa (A. D. 1089-1101) :

Kāśmīrikāṇām yaḥ śrāddhaśulcocchettā gayāntare /
so'py eramantakaḥ sūraḥ parihāsapurāśrayaḥ //
baddhvā mahāśilām kaṇṭhe vitastāmbhasi pātitaḥ /
svadurnayaphalam devyāḥ prakopenānubhāvitaḥ //

VI. 254, 255

Hatvā gayāyām sāmantam ekam anyam niveśya ca /
kāśmīrikāṇām cakre sa śrāddhaśulkanivāraṇam // VII. 1008

In both cases then it is a question of somebody who has relieved the Kāśmiris from the taxes they had to pay for going on a pilgrimage to Gayā. Under the circumstances it is not a question of the fees to the Gayāvāls, but of a tax levied on the pilgrims by the local government. Such a tax was still in existence during the 19th century and has to be paid even nowadays in some centres of pilgrimage, like Tirupati. We are sure that our Gayā is mentioned here, since in the second quotation, the hero, Kandarpa, according to the previous *śloka* was at Vārāṇasī and he had returned there according to the *śloka* 1010. We have then here the certainty that in the middle of the 10th century, the pilgrimage was very important, as it could attract pilgrims from as far as Kashmir and in numbers sufficient to justify an order which exempted them from the tax.

Very important is also the visit to Gayā by Caitanya. It is known that it is in this place of pilgrimage that he met with his

168. *Śaṅkara-vijaya* of Ānanda Giri, Bibliotheka Indica, Calcutta, 1868, p. 235.

guru and was converted. We can remark that it is from this period that the Viṣṇupada cult began to have real importance as the compilations we have studied above seem to prove. It is very probable that a relation of cause and effect exists between the journey, the importance of Caitanya and Viṣṇupada's ascent to its apogee.

We note at last this passage from the *Ayīn-i-Akbarī*¹⁶⁹ about Gayā; 'Geya, the place of Hindoo worship, is the sircar (of Behar); they call it Birhm Geya, being consecrated to Brahma...'

Buchanam-Hamilton had already pointed out numerous inscriptions at Gayā and he got translated a certain number of them. He had also said that the inscriptions were not generally in their original place, as stones of ancient monuments had been used for building new monuments. A certain number of the discovered inscriptions are Buddhist; they hardly interest us here. Moreover, very few among those which remain give reference to exact spots of Gayā. We see then that the epigraphic sources are meagre, even if they are not worthless.

In an article on Bodh Gayā¹⁷⁰, Th. Block has published an inscription available on a stone at present at the Indian Museum of Calcutta. On this stone are carved the three gods Sūrya, Śiva and Viṣṇu. It is interesting to note that the central figure, Śiva, has a stick; it is therefore a Paśupati. The inscription has 9 lines; it reminds us that in the 26th year of the reign of Dharmapāla, a *liṅga caturmukha* was erected in the pleasant residence of the Lord of Dharma for the benefit of the descendants of *snātaka-s* who lived at Mahābodhi. At the same time a very deep pond was excavated, similar to the Viṣṇupadī at the cost of 3000 drammas. This inscription gives us a certain number of interesting pieces of information. Let us first note that the date given by Th. Block, A. D. 850 to A. D. 950, has to be slightly shifted back. In fact, the chronology proposed by Cunningham in *A. S. I.*, vol. III, p. 34, is roughly followed at present; this would give approximately 815 as a date for this

169. *Ayēn Akbery*, or Akbar's regulations ... transl. from the original Persian ... by F. Gladwin, Calcutta, 1897, p. 398.

170. Th. Bloch, *Notes on Bodh-Gayā*, III, *Brahmanical worship at Bodh-Gayā*, in *A. S. I.*, *Annual Report*, 1908-1909, pp. 148 ff.

inscription. We have to notice on the other hand a great mistake. He translates 'puskarinī ... viṣṇupadīsamā' as 'a ... tank ..., similar to the impression of Viṣṇu's foot (at Gayā; *Viṣṇupadīsamā*, 1.5)'. Viṣṇupadī is one of the synonyms of Gaṅgā; it is evidently a pond equivalent to the Gaṅgā. This fact then does not avouch in any way for the existence of the Viṣṇupada at Gayā in the 9th century. But it is interesting to know that in 815 there were *snātaka-s* at Mahābodhi (i. e. Bodh-Gayā), who seem to have lived happily together with the Buddhists, and that these *snātaka-s* were *Pāśupata-s*. *Dharmēśa* represents probably the Buddha; this stele was perhaps in one of his temples. We have not to wonder, however, over this good reciprocal understanding; Hiuan-tsang had already mentioned it.

Another interesting inscription has been published by Kielhorn in *Indian Antiquary*¹⁷¹ It is not dated, but Kielhorn makes us note that the writing is a kind of *devanāgarī* which seems to have been current in the 12th century A. D. In fact this inscription is of Yakṣapāla who seems to have reigned about 1070-1080¹⁷². We note by the way that Kane¹⁷³ makes a slip while attributing this inscription to Nayapāla's reign (*circa* 1040), after reading too quickly Barua's book. The momentous passage of the inscription is the following:

maunādityasahasraliṅgakamalārdhāṅgiṇanārāyaṇadvī (sto)-
meśvaraphalgunāthavijayādityāhavayānām kṛtī/ sa prasādam
acīkarad diviśadām kedāradevasya ca khyātasyottaramānasasya
khananam sattram ta(thā) cākṣaye// 12

The exact translation of this verse, as well as its interpretation, seems to be just that of Kane, who corrects those of Barua and of Kielhorn. However, he also translates *sattra* as 'hall of charity'. But in this case we have trouble in translating *akṣaya* which can apply only to *sattram*. It is much simpler to translate *sattram* as 'ritual session', which could surely have taken place on the platform of the Akṣayavatā. The *Kṛtyakalpataru* quoting the *Vāyu-purāṇa* already speaks of the Uttaramānasa. Had it come into existence

171. *Indian Antiquary*, T. XVI, p. 63 ff.

172. cf. *Bihar through the Ages*, p. 320.

173. *Hist. of Dharm.*, IV, 650-651.

in 1070, this would have been hardly possible. We have, as well, to adopt Kane's idea that the pond already existed and that Yakṣa-pāla had it only dug once more and rearranged. The names of the deities to whom a temple should be dedicated show the great variety of gods available at Gayā.

Equally interesting is the inscription of which Cunningham gives the translation and copy in A. S. I. 174. It is dated Samvat 1516, i. e. 1459 A. D. First of all are mentioned the footprints of Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, Ādigadādhara, Phalgviśvara and of Caṇḍikā, as well as of Vradhna (which is probably a wrong reading for Brahman), of Indra and Vahni, who live on the Dharmasīlā. In verse 16 we are informed that a certain Chaudhari Sūryadāsa has done a pilgrimage with his family to Prayāga, Kāśī and Gayā and that near Gadādhara he had given 1000 cows to the brāhmaṇa-s and 'made Gayā free for three years'. Cunningham makes us note that this expression is rather obscure. According to him it must allude to the taxes which the pilgrims had to pay, and about which we have already heard in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*¹⁷⁵.

We note also an inscription, among many others, found at Jabalpur¹⁷⁶. Its verse 33 says:

prabhāsaḡokarṇaḡayādītīrtheṣv ānṛṇyam āpadya surādivarye/
śaivam vṛataṁ kīrtisīvād babhāra samagram ugrād upamany-
uvad yaḡ //

At last we point out as a reminder the great inscription found at Bodh-Gayā and published in *Asiatic Researches*¹⁷⁷. The information it gives would be perhaps interesting if it had the least chance of authenticity, but it has been for long recognized that it was a forgery. It carries the mark of the period which produced it. We read in fact: 'Once upon a time the illustrious Amara, renowned amongst men, coming here, discovered the place of the supreme Being, Bood-dha, in the great forest.' In Vikramāditya 1005, i. e. 949, Bodh-Gayā had not to be discovered as place of the

174. A. S. I. vol. III, p. 129; plate XXXVII.

175. See above.

176. C. I. I., vol. IV, part 1, pp. 331-340.

177. *Asiatic Researches*, vol. I, 1806 (1st ed., 1798), p. 284 f. Translation of a Sanskrit inscription copied from a stone at Boodha Gaya by Wilmot, 1785, translated by Charles Wilkins, Esq.

Buddha, because Buddhism was still flourishing. It was not the same in 1785; Bodh-Gayā then was only a ruin and the name of Buddha was there almost completely forgotten.

On the whole, we see that we cannot get out much from epigraphic sources. The future perhaps will make us discover other inscriptions. A good deal of luck will be needed so that these inscriptions may be interesting for our history of the pilgrimage.

Before examining European reports on the Gayā pilgrimage, it is as well to summarize what we could see till now about the history of the holy place. We could not discover any thing referring to Gayā before the Buddha but its evidence as an important pilgrimage in his time warrants that it existed already before. At the moment we see it for the first time in history, it is essentially a *tīrtha*, i. e. a bathing place. Besides, there were perhaps certain sacred points, but we cannot affirm it. The *Mahābhārata* shows us the pilgrimage centre quite widened and gives us a list of already important holy spots. The origins of Gayā remain, however, unknown. The sacrifices are performed there on a particularly pure ground. It is just for this reason probably that the territory of Gayā has been chosen by the king Gaya for his great sacrifice. During the 4th century A. D. Gayā disappeared from the map of pilgrimages; Fa-hien sees only ruins. The city, however, rises again from its own ashes. The pilgrimage seems to be quite alive when Hiuan-tsang passes near the town in the middle of the 7th century. Its importance becomes again great, as the *Rājatarāṅginī* warrants that it was resorted to from regions as distant as Kashmir in the 10th and 11th centuries. Nevertheless, the pilgrimage remained as it was at the time when the *Mahābhārata* was written, as Lakṣmīdhara uses the epic to describe its spots. Only pools consecrated to Sūrya seem to have been dug in addition. The *Smṛticandrikā* explains how to do the pilgrimage in five days and shows the presence of new sacred spots.

What was the great god of Gayā at this time? It is very difficult to say, but it is proved in any case that Viṣṇu is completely absent, if we considered that the mention of Gadādhara in the *Kṛtyakalpataru*¹⁷⁸ has been added later. Yama-Dharma was honoured in sacred spots which were, as it seems, on the outskirts of Gayā and in Gayā itself. Brahman had also a great importance

178. *op. cit.*, p. 166; cf. above, p. 45 ff.

but he must have been already ousted partly by Śiva. In fact, the references to Pitāmaha are not very clear; even today it is never sure whether Brahman or Śiva enters into the picture. What is certain is that Pitāmaha as well as Prapitāmaha is represented under the form of *liṅga*. The cult of Śiva surely became the most important very early; it is possible that this god was adored under the form of Paśupati. We have already pointed out¹⁷⁹ the stele described by Th. Block recalling the establishment of a *liṅga caturmukha* at Bodh-Gayā. On the other hand, the list of the Brāhmaṇa-s who had helped Brahman in his great sacrifice on the body of the *asura* Gaya as it is found in the *Vāyu-purāṇa*¹⁸⁰ reminds us quite closely of the incarnations of Śiva as they are described, for instance, by the Viśuddhamuni in his *Ātmasamarpaṇa*. Many of these names are found also in the description of the *avatāra-s* of Śiva available in the *Vāyu-purāṇa*. At last, we wonder to see the *Gayāmāhātmya* having such an outright vaiṣṇavite character attached to the *Vāyu-purāṇa*, which gives the theories of the Pāśupata school. None of these arguments is final, we know it, but at the same time they can corroborate a hypothesis probably never verifiable.

In the 12th century, the legend of the *asura* already existed, no doubt, but it had not yet been accepted by the priests. Let's note that at Pithapuram, a small town of Andhra Pradesh, the feet of the *asura* Gaya are honoured, and the legend tells us that Gaya was killed by Śiva¹⁸¹. This legend may go back to a period when Gayā was a śaivite centre. If our hypothesis is correct, it might have been for an indirect influence of the Paśupati, holder of a staff, that Viṣṇu as Gadādhara was introduced, when Gayā, or better, its priest, became vaiṣṇavite.

Between the *Smṛticandrikā* and the *Tīrthacintāmaṇi*, Gayā became vaiṣṇavite; this is a fact, but we do not know in what manner this took place. One thing, however, should be kept in mind : the *Gayāvāl-s*, the most important and powerful caste of brāhmaṇa *purohita-s* of Gayā, refer themselves to Mādhva and claim to have

179. cf. above, p. 59.

180. cf. p. 21 of our edition, where the list of the *avatāra-s* of Śiva is given.

181. cf. *Madras district Gazetteers, Statistical appendix with a supplement to the district gazetteer (1907) for Godavari district*, by K. N. Krishnaswami Ayyar, Madras, 1935, p. 389.

come from the south¹⁸². An anthropological study would tell us perhaps something about their origin. But it is interesting to think that it is after a Mādhva reform that Gayā became what it actually is. In fact, in the *Gayāmāhātmya* there are certain things which are in compliance with Mādhvācārya's thought. Such is for instance the following explanation of the host of temples of Mahādeva at Gayā :

kalau māheśvarā lokā yena tasmād gadādharaḥ
liṅgarūpo' bhavat taṁ ca vande śrīprapitāmahaṁ¹⁸³

The *liṅga* representing Prapitāmaha, then, can be adored because everything is Viṣṇu; the form of *liṅga* is only a concession to the Maheśvara-s of the *kali* age. The *brahmaloka* as a supreme reward, so frequently found in the *Gayāmāhātmya*, can also be considered as a result of the Mādhva influence.

Following the *Tīrthacintāmaṇi*, it is in this light that we have to see Gayā. The legends refer to Viṣṇu, supreme God, but the sacred spots remain what they were previously, i. e. under the names of different gods and very rarely of Viṣṇu. The Viṣṇupada makes a timid appearance. There is a five-day *tīrtha-yātrā* to which two days are added at the beginning during which are performed rites at the Pretaśilā, the Pretaparvata and the Brahmakuṇḍa. These names appear there for the first time; we remember that we could recognize in the Brahmakuṇḍa the fountain signalled by Hiuan-tsang at 30 *li* north of Gayā. It is possible that these places were inserted into the Gayā pilgrimage only very late. Still at present they are the property of the Dhāmins, who form a special caste much despised by the Gayāvāl-s and moreover much poorer. Their role, however, is not negligible; their rites have the purpose of transforming into *pitṛ-s* all the ancestors who can still be *preta-s*. Only after that, the *śrāddha-s* later on performed at Gayā are fully efficacious. This is so true that if a pilgrim comes two or several times to Gayā, he is advised to go the first time to the Pretaparvata and to the places which belong to the Dhāmin-s, but he is excused from this part of the pilgrimage when he returns to Gayā afterwards. The last important date for Gayā was undoubtedly the coming of Caitanya. It is in fact from this time, it seems, that the Viṣṇupada was considered as the most sacred place of the pilgrimage centre,

182. cf. L. S. S. O'Malley, *Gayā Crāddha and Gayāvāts*, in J. A. S. B., 1903.

183. *Gayāmāhātmya*, VII. 96.

along with the *tīrtha* of the Phalgu. The *Tīrtha-prakāśa* is the last work in Sanskrit presenting a complete description of the holy city; it simply comments and specifies what can be read in the *Gayā mahātmya* of the *Vāyu-purāṇa*. The later modifications the pilgrimage underwent will be noted while following the Europeans' reports.

Before examining these reports, we would like to quote this *śloka* which enters so often into the picture when it is a question of Gayā's antiquity :

Ayodhyā mathurā māyā kāśī kāñcī avantikā/
purī dvārāvati caiva saptaitā mokṣadāyikāḥ//

This *śloka*, which is generally dated 8th century A. D. has been used to prove that the importance of Gayā has been for a long time strictly local¹⁸⁴. Whatever we have seen till now serves to invalidate this thesis. It is certain that the *argumentum a silentio* cannot be validly maintained here. In effect, as D. C. Sircar¹⁸⁵ says : 'It is certainly impossible to believe that Prabhāsa, Puškara and Prayāga, which are not mentioned in the verse, attained all-India importance after the seventh century.' On the other hand, it is good to remember that one never does only the Gayā pilgrimage, but the pilgrimage to Kāśī, Prayāga and Gayā. We have seen above¹⁸⁶ two works devoted to these towns designated with the name *Tristhalī*. We can think that when one town is mentioned, the other two are by this very fact also implied. It is possible, however, that during the 8th century Gayā had not yet recovered its importance of yesteryear. But it cannot be concluded from all this that Gayā had never had importance in the previous centuries.

THE EVOLUTION OF GAYĀ FROM XVIII CENTURY TO PRESENT TIMES

The first European document on Gayā is the report Buchanan-Hamilton made on behalf of the East Indian Company in 1811-13. It is a document of the greatest importance, too little used, which

184. This is Hara Prasad Śāstri's opinion, given in *Bengal District Gazetteer, Gayā*, by L. S. S. O'Malley, Calcutta, 1906, reproduced very often. This hypothesis is adversed in the article *Gayā* in *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India* by D. C. Sircar, Delhi, 1960, which we shall partly follow.

185. *op. cit.*, p. 225.

186. *Tristhalīsetu* of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, p. 41 and *Tristhalīsetu* of Bhaṭṭojī Dikṣita, p. 42.

has been only recently published by the Bihar and Orissa Research Society¹⁸⁷. Sixty years later Monier-Williams went to the holy city and published an article in *Indian Antiquary*¹⁸⁸, which adds little to what Buchanan-Hamilton had said. Then we have the District Gazetteer of Gayā published in 1906, which has been recently continued by the Government of Bihar¹⁸⁹. We shall add finally some remarks we could do on the spots at the time of a visit to Gayā in 1959.

Before studying these documents, we shall point out that Father Dubois devoted a chapter of one of his works to tell the story of the Asura Gaya as he found it in an old manuscript written in Kannara language¹⁹⁰. It is a completely aberrant legend, where the 'giant' Gaya frightens all the gods, including 'Krishna', who tells him: 'I come, mister giant, to ask the favour of your powerful protection.' He indeed was afraid of the *asura* and he did not feel safe in Vaikuṅṭha. He imposes his conditions on Viṣṇu by saying that he wants Gayā to become a pilgrimage place where people come for releasing their ancestors from the torments of Naraka. The *asura* then says: 'Viṣṇu, you have come here holding in your hand you arm *tchacara*, you will bear for ever the name of *Godadary*, or bestower of the goods'. *Godadary* is here evidently a corruption of *Gadādhara*. Viṣṇu, moreover, is so called because he hold not the *cakra* but the *gadā*, or club. There are very few conclusions to be drawn from Father Dubois's legend, which he puts at the top of his article and which shows what people thought at the beginning of the 18th century in the area of Mysore: 'The temple of Gayā, situated in the province of Behar, on the banks of the river Mahā-Nady, is doubtlessly the most famous of all the rivers of India. It is resorted to by a huge crowd from every province.'

187. *An Account of the districts of Bihar and Patna in 1811-1812* by Francis Buchanan, n. d.; Montgomery Martin had largely utilized Buchanan's manuscripts to write his book, *The history, antiquities, topography and statistics of Eastern India*, London, 1838.
188. Śrāddha ceremonies at Gayā, *I. A.*, Tome V, 1876, pp. 200 ff.
189. *Bihar District Gazetteers, Gayā* by P. C. Roy Choudhury, Patna, 1957.
190. J. A. Dubois, *Exposè de quelques uns des principaux articles de la theogonie des Brahmes ...* Paris, 1825, pp. 106 ff.

Buchanan's report has the advantage over the Sanskrit texts of presenting us a much more vivid picture of the pilgrimage centre. He first narrates very accurately the legend of Gaya with many details. The list of the brāhmaṇa-s created by Brahman for help in his sacrifice¹⁹¹ is consistent with the one we give in our edition and not with the one given in *Gayāmāhātmya* of the *Vāyu-purāṇa*. This number of 14 ancestors is rather recent and can be explained with this information given by Buchanan¹⁹²: 'Old Gayā has been often attacked and sometimes plundered. The scarcity of the place would have been no security against Mahratta rapacity; and when these invaded the district, the priests boldly formed themselves into 14 companies, to each of which was intrusted the defence of an entrance into the town. Except at these entrances the houses and a few walls formed a continued barrier, and the projecting angles, and small windows of the houses formed a strong defence, so that the Mahrattas were on all occasions repulsed. Many zemindar Brahmans and other war-like persons retiring to the town with their families and effects, gave a great addition to the power of the priests'. These big houses and the doors of the old town are still visible in a southern rampart of the town¹⁹³. There is no doubt, we think, there we have the origin of these 14 Brāhmaṇa-s ancestors of 14 families of Gayāvāl-s.

Another interesting piece of information of our author is the one relating to the taxes to be paid by pilgrims in order to be allowed to do their pilgrimage. Before Law, who was the tax-collector at Gayā when Buchanan went, the pilgrims arriving at Gayā were extorted by several small officers or by certain land-owners, who had established by their own accord a sort of toll. Law put order in all that and established a tax which varied according to the importance of the places visited by the pilgrims¹⁹⁴. Thus four classes of pilgrimages were fixed: the first two allowed to the pilgrims only the visit of the Phalguṭīrtha for the first class and of the Phalguṭīrtha and the temple of Viṣṇupada for the second. The fourth class allowed to resort to 45 holy

191. *op. cit.*, p. 98.

192. *op. cit.*, p. 96.

193. cf. plate XVII, Nos. 1 and 2.

194. This tax has been abolished, we have been assured, some time before Indipendence.

places, i. e. to do the complete pilgrimage¹⁹⁵. As for the third class, it allowed the visit of 38 holy places. If compared with the fourth one, in the third are missing the places belonging to the Dhāmin-s (Preta-śilā and Rāma-śilā) and the *Viṣṇupada* as well as other less important places. It is extremely surprising to see that even at the beginning of the 20th century, certain pilgrims could omit the *Viṣṇupada*. It is possible that there were still, at that time, certain *purohita-s* who followed the *Gayā-māhātmya* of the *Garuḍa-purāṇa* and who, therefore, did not recognize the *Viṣṇupada*. This is in any case the only explanation we could find for the suppression of the spot which had already been considered for long time as the most holy place of Gayā.

Monier-Williams gives a list of 50 *vedī-s*, to which he adds again other sacred spots. But this list can be perhaps easily divided into two parts : the first including 45 *vedī-s* and ending at the Akṣayavaṭa. This first part is slightly different from the longer list given by Buchanan. It seems that here the informant of Monier-Williams follows the *Gayāmāhātmya* very closely¹⁹⁶. He gives in particular five places for the Dhāmins—namely the Rāmaśilā, the Rāmakuṇḍa, the Kākabali, the Brahmakuṇḍa and the Pretaparvata, instead of only the two given by Buchanan. The reports of these two authors will help us to specify certain things. In effect we see that the Rāmakuṇḍa, which is at the foot of the Rāmaśilā, even if it existed at the time of Buchanan, seems not to have had any sacred character. On the contrary, Monier-Williams signals it as a *vedī*, and such it is till nowadays. This Rāmakuṇḍa then should not be mistaken for the Rāmahrada spoken of by the *Gayāmāhātmya*. It seems, indeed, that the legendary spot of Rāma's feats is not this hill of Rāmaśilā, on which Buchanan and Monier-Williams agree to tell us it was called in a recent past Pretaśilā; but it is the hill of Rāma-Gayā, which is on Phalgu's right bank, facing the temple of *Viṣṇupada*. The Rāmahrada spoken of by the *Gayāmāhātmya* is therefore what nowadays is, and already since Buchanan's time was, called *Sitakuṇḍa*, which is a part of Phalgu's river-bed during the

195. We have described a pilgrimage to 48 *vedī-s*, as it is done nowadays. Cf. Appendix III.

196. The same informant gave him a completely aberrant account of the legends, though he pretended to narrate the story of the *Gayāmāhātmya*.

rainy season. The praise of Rāma on the hill of Rāmaśilā is therefore recent. The evolution continues, as we could see at the top of the hill a footprint of Rāma recently made on cement. In fact, it is not mentioned by Buchanan, who describes this hill very accurately, nor by the Gazetteers¹⁹⁷. On the other hand, the Pretaśilā, big prominent rock 3 metres high approximately, which was the principal object of veneration at the time of Buchanan has been almost completely neglected in favour of marks made supposedly by Brahman on the rocky soil of the hill some metres from there. It seems that the *dhāmin-s* claimed their fees from the pilgrims near this rock, following a rite similar to the one followed for the Gayāvāl-s; the pilgrim washes the feet of the priest, then this one ties the thumbs of his client with a small garland and he will untie them only after they have agreed on the amount of the fees. This does not seem to be practised at present by the *dhāmin-s*.

The other places at Gayā have sometimes been modernized but they have not been greatly changed. Buchanan's report can be an excellent guide to the town and to the Gayā pilgrimage.

As we have come to the end of this introduction, can we now try to solve an often discussed problem, namely the problem of the date of the *Gayāmāhātmya*? We can in fact give the date of its first appearance in a dated compilation, that of the *Tīrthacintāmaṇi* around 1450. But the *Gayāmāhātmya* was not yet fixed at this time. Nothing seems to have been added or modified since the *Tīrthaprukāśa*, rather the interpretation of certain passages would have changed. On the whole, the problem of the date of this text does not have much interest. We could follow roughly the evolution of the Gayā pilgrimage since very remote times. Gayā has preserved a little bit of each period through which it has passed. At present

197. The Gazetteer of 1957 could have hinted at it naturally; but it has normally reproduced the pieces of information of the Gazetteer published in 1906; rarely it has improved it. The description it gives of the *Pretaparvata* reproduces, for instance, the one appeared in the Gazetteer of 1906, which is completely aberrant.

there are some adaptations in Hindi of this *Māhātmya*, the last aspect of this work which never stopped changing along the centuries. From this point of view we can say that Gayā is a little image of India which is said to be always unchangeable and really referring to the most ancient traditions, but which one sees changing every day and which, like all the other countries, never stopped evolving.

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