

(XXXII)

Mandara, Chandrasekhara, Himalaya, Suvela, Malaya and Bhashma. From the summits of these mountains have sprung many more covered with grass and creepers. Above that lotus is another lot of six petals and four mouths named Bhima. Within it is the region called Bhuva. Here Vishnu resides with Lakshmi and Saraswati. Its another name is Vaikuntha. On the south of Vaikuntha is Golaka where Krishna and Rādhikā live. Outside it and in its interior are lustrous regions where Indra and other celestials reside.

Thus we see that the topography of Tantras is mythological in character like that of Puranas.

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THE
MAHĀNIRVĀNA TANTRAM,
OR
THE TANTRA TREATING OF THE
FINAL EMANCIPATION:

CHAPTER I.

ON the romantic summit of the foremost of mountains,* blazing with gems of various kinds, filled with various kinds of trees and shrubs and eloquent with the notes of innumerable feathered tribes; perfumed with the odours of blossoms of every season; exceedingly beautiful to behold; fanned by cool and bland breezes laden with fragrance; ringing with the sweet and solemn strains of music raised by beves of Apsarās;† spread with shadows cast from trees furnished with steady shades; glossy and graceful of aspect; with its groves resonant with the music of swarms of mad Kokilas; ever ranged by the Prince‡ of seasons in com-

* This refers to the mount Kailasha supposed to be situate beyond the range of the Himalayas. According to Hindu mythology Siva lived on this beautiful mount.

† Celestial nymphs.

‡ *Vis.*, Spring. His retainers are the *Kokila* the black bee, the vernal breeze, ect.

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pany with his retainers; thronging with Siddhas,* and Chāranas,† Gandharvas‡ and Gānapatya§—there the Divine Pārvati, desirous of the welfare of the worlds, bending in humility and looking at him steadfastly thus addressed Siva, of a complacent countenance, sitting taciturn, effulgent;—the Preceptor of the universe embracing the mobile and immobile; the fountain of all good,—filled with unceasing delight;||—that ocean of the ambrosia of mercy; with a complexion white as camphor or the Kunda (flower); surcharged with the pure quality of Sattwa Goodness;¶ pervading all space, with the cardinal points for his clothing; ** the refuge of the distressed; and the Lord of Yogis dear to their hearts; adorned with a circle of matted locks sprinkled with particles

* A sort of demi-god or spirit, inhabiting with the Vidyadharas, Munis etc the middle air or the region between the earth and sun.

† Panegyrist of the gods.

‡ Celestial songsters. It is evident that the Devas of the ancient Hindus were a higher order of beings inhabiting a region other than the earth where men lived. The Charanas, Gandharvas and Apsaras were attached to their court. They could and used to come down on earth and mix with men of their own accord. It is significant therefore that the Aryan Rishis believed in one God and their Devas, which are wrongly interpreted as gods, were simply a class of beings much more spiritually advanced than men. That such a class of beings do not still exist we have no right to contradict.

§ Worshipers of Ganapati or Ganesha.

|| *Sadanandam* Another meaning is: *He that delights the pious.*

¶ According to the Hindu system of Metaphysics there are three Gunas or universal tendencies which pervade the entire universe; namely Sattwa or the organizing tendency; Rajas or the Self-centering tendency; Tamas or the disorganizing tendency. It is the first that makes a celestial being and it is the last which makes a beast. It is by the prevalence of the first in him that a man becomes a god on earth and by that of the last he becomes a brute.

** As described in Hindu Mythology Siva used to go about generally naked. He was a great Yogin who used to eschew every sort of worldliness. The expression here, stripped of metaphor, means *naked*.

of the waters of the Gangā; garnished with ashes; holding his heart in perfect control; wearing a wreath of serpents and bearing human skulls; with a triad of eyes; the sovereign of the three spheres; equipped with the best of tridents,* capable of being easily satisfied;—all knowledge—the bestower of the boon of emancipation; without a diversity of designs; and free from all sorts of sufferings,—without a sense of difference; incapable of being apprehended by the illiterate; the author of good to all; the god of gods; enjoying immunity from every species of bodily suffering (1—10). And the auspicious Pārvati† said:—“O lord of celestials, O Lord of the universe, O lord of mine, O fountain of mercy, I am at thy disposal, O chief of the deities; and I always carry out thy behests (11). Without thy permission I cannot say aught. If thou cherishest the least kindness for me, and if I have a place in thy affection, then I will speak out what worketh in my mind (12). O mighty master, save thee, who is there in this true world, that can remove my doubts; and who, further, is omniscient and who is conversant with every department of knowledge (13)?”

Thereat the auspicious Sadāsiva said:—“O thou of high wisdom, O my beloved, speak out what thou hast to say. To thee will I unfold everything, even if the matter be one which should be carefully concealed; and which should not be revealed even to Ganeca or to the Generalissimo—Skanda.‡

* *Trishulavaradharinam*. And it may also mean: ‘He that holds the trident and the boons i. e. He bestows boons on those worthy of them.’

† According to the mythological account Pārvati was the daughter of the mountain-chief Himalaya. It is very difficult to explain the real state of things that happened many centuries before. The most rational interpretation of the mythological incident is, if it is not an allegory, that a great Yogin, by the name of Siva, married the daughter of a king who reigned somewhere over the Himalaya.

‡ A name of Kartikeya who was the commander of the celestial army.

What is there in the three spheres worthy of being concealed from thee (14—15)? O goddess, thou art my another form: difference there is none between thee and myself.* Omniscient as thou art, dost thou not know this, that thou askest me, as if thou art really ignorant (16).” Hearing these words of the Deva, the chaste Pārvati, well-pleased, bending low in humility, questioned Sankara, (in the following speech) (17). And the auspicious Adit† said: “O mighty one,‡ O lord of every being, O thou who art the foremost of those cognisant of religion, formerly by thee almighty one, ranging the heart of Brahmā, having mercy (on mankind), were revealed the four Vedas,§ exhaustively expounding every variety of religion,—and laying down rules for the regulation of the different orders Varnas|| and Asramas¶

* Another reading is *Matsarupa*, you resemble myself.

† Another reading is *Mahāsatyaparā kramā*: ‘of great and infallible power.’

‡ The word in the text is *Bhagavan* which literally means *one possessing six sorts of wealth* namely prosperity, energy, fame, beauty, knowledge and absence of attachment for worldly objects. It is generally used as a common word for addressing a deity or one of advanced spiritual culture.

§ There are four great scriptural works of the Hindus namely Rik, Yayush, Saman and Atharvan. Originally there was only one Veda which was subsequently arranged into four by a great Rishi who obtained the surname of Veda-Vyasa for this compilation. The Vedas are divided into two parts *viz.*, Mantra or prayers and Brahmanas or the ritualistic portion consisting of some of the Upanishadas which constitute the theosophy of the Vedas.

|| *Varnas* refer to the four castes, namely the Brahmanas or the ecclesiastical caste, Kshatriyas or the warrior caste, Vaishyas or the merchantile caste and Sudras, the serving class.

¶ A religious order of which there are four kinds referable to the different periods of life; 1st that of the student or Brahmachari; 2nd that of the house-holder or Grihasta; 3rd that of the anchorite or Vana-prastha; 4th that of the beggar or Bhikshu.

(18—19). In the Krita age,* on earth pious men pleased the deities and the ancestral manes, by means of acts—*yoga*, sacrifices etc.,—prescribed therein (20). At this age the men recited the Veda, practised contemplation, performed austerities, brimmed over with kindness for all, and made gifts (to the needy). And they kept their senses under perfect control, were endowed with great strength, and possessed of pre-eminent prowess, and had eminent vigor and manliness (21). And regularly resorting to temples, although mortal, they were a little lower than the Devas. And they were truthful and steadfast in their vows and followed the true religion at the same time that every order pursued its own morality (22). And the kings were of infallible acts, and addressed themselves, heart and soul, to the protection of the people. The men used to regard the wives of others as if they had been their mothers; and the sons of others as if they had been their own and every one looked on the property of another as if it were a clod of earth.† And ever abiding by the path of righteousness, every order observed its proper duties (23—24). And none was given to lying,—and every one was careful (in his acts). And no one was given to thieving, oppressing others, or entertaining evil designs (25). And the men were not under the influence of envy,—nor were they swayed by excessive anger or undue covetousness. And they were not lustful. And all were possessed of honest hearts, and were always inspired with the spirit of delight (26). And the earth overflowed with every species of grain; and the clouds poured in proper seasons. And the kine

* According to the Hindu Sastras there are four Yugas or cycles. These cycles are continually revolving one after another. They are called Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali. The first consists of 4000 divine years with 400 for each junction; the second of 3000 with 300 for each junction and the third of 2000 years with 200 for each junction.

† Exactly a similar sloka occurs in *Chāṇakya Sataka*.

yeilded milk, and the trees were furnished with fruits (27). And premature death there was not; or famine or disease. And the women were buxum and happy, ever healthful, and endowed with energy, grace and excellent virtues. And shunning infidelity, they were devoted to their husbands (28). And the Brāhmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaiṣyas and Sudras, were every one occupied in the observance of their distinctive avocations; and every order, performing sacrifices agreeably to the ordinance prescribed for it, attained final emancipation. When Krita had been turned and Tretā set in, when men were incapable to compass their welfare by performing rites according to the Vaidika prescription; and when men, with their hearts distracted with anxiety, were incompetent to perform Vaidika rites arduous and desiderating no common labor and exertions,—and when, ever ill at ease, they found it as difficult to perform them as to omit them clean, thou, witnessing this doctrine of religion, didst deliver, from unrighteousness bringing sorrow and suffering in its train, people weak in asceticism and the study of the Veda, by displaying on earth works in the form of Smritis* treasuring up the sense and significance of all the Vedas (29—33). On this awful ocean of this world, who is there, save thee, that is the sustainer, protector and deliverer, that is the disposer of their destinies, and that brings about their well being even as a father. Then on the arrival of Dwāpara, when all righteous acts prescribed by the Smritis had fallen into neglect, when one half of righteousness had disappeared (from the world), and when men were wrought up with disease and anguish, they were rescued by thee through instructions conveyed in Samhitā† (34—36). When (at

* The Scriptures of the Hindus are divided into two classes namely (1) *Srutis* or what is heard such as the Vedas and Upanishads, (2) *Smritis* or what is recollected as the Code of Manu and various other works based on the exposition of the Vedas.

† Compilations going under the generic name of *Purāna*, etc.

length) the sinful Kali arrived, bearing away every vestige of religion, rife with iniquitious deeds, and deceitful practices, and alluring people to acts of wrong and outrage, the Veda ceased to be of any efficacy. How could people retain any recollection of the Smritis. And such a time, O lord, the many Purānas, abounding in various chronicles and pointing out various ways, cannot help meeting with destruction. Then men will set their face against religious observances, set all order at naught inebriated with strong drinks, and always intent upon iniquitous practices. And they will be libidinous, covetous, wily, cruel, harsh-tongued, and deceitful (37—40). And they will be short-lived, evil-disposed, and a prey to sickness and sorrow. And they will be reft of grace, and weak of limb; and mean, and ever given to ignoble acts (41). And they will associate with the base, steal other's goods, indulge in calumny, oppress people, delight in detraction, and practice cunning (42). And they will commit adultery, banishing all fear* of sin. And they will be poor, and squalid and woe-begone; and poverty and disease will be their portion forever (43). And the Vipras will resemble the Sudras in their practices. And neglecting *Sandhyā*† and worship, they will perform priestly offices for those unworthy of the same. And they will be covetous,‡ of wicked ways (44). And given to impious acts, they will be untruthful, illiterate, haughty, and fraudulent. And they will sell their daughters, be without regeneration up to their sixteenth year, and disregard vows and austerities (45). And they will be engaged in worship and the repetition of religious formulæ with the view of deceiving others. And they will be heretical, deem themselves

* Another reading is *Papāh Sankabhaya Vivarjjitah*. (And they will be) sinful, and defy fear.

† Morning, noon and evening prayers.

‡ Another reading is *Ajayyājakamuka*, coveting priestly offices under those unworthy of them.

learned, and be void of regard and veneration (46). And they will feed on abominations, be of foul ways, and dependant on others, serve Sudras and partake of their board, and lust after their wives (47). And influenced by the greed of gold, they will allow their wedded wives to be with the low and their sole mark of Brahmanahood will consist in their wearing the holy thread (48). And they will observe no rules in respect of meats and drinks, etc., nor will they distinguish between things that ought to be eaten, and what ought not. And they will perpetually revile the scriptures and always busy themselves in worrying pious people (49). And they will not so much as cast a thought after holding righteous converse. (At this period) for the salvation of creatures, thou hast created Tantras—Nigamas* and Agamas,†—capable of securing pleasure‡ and emancipation (unto mankind), and furnishing them with the processes of securing fruition through Mantras§ and Yantras|| dedicated to (various) gods and goddesses (50—51). In these thou hast described various Nyāsas¶ and characteristics of creation, sustention, etc. Therein thou hast also at length treated of *Baddhapadma*,§

* The Vedas collectively by which people go to God.

† A Sastra or work on sacred science in general supposed to be of divine origin. A Tantra describing the origin and protection of creation and inculcating the mystical worship of Siva and Sakti.

‡ Another reading is: *Bhaktimuktikarāṇi* inspiring people with reverence, and bringing about their deliverance.

§ A mystical verse is the *mantra*.

|| An implement or apparatus for *Tantrik* worship.

¶ Mental appropriation or assignment of various parts of the body to tutelary deities accompanied with certain prayers and gesticulations. It is a process of Yoga of passing air through nostrils.

§ These are the various postures of a Yogin. Before we explain the particular posture mentioned here, we will give an account of the Hindu system of Yoga. This will help our readers to understand clearly many technical passages they will meet later on—

and other attitudes,—as well as the Paṇu, Vira, Divya and

मन्त्रयोगो लयश्चैव राजयोगो हटस्तथा ।

योगश्चतुर्विधः प्रोक्तो योगिभिस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥

From this text it appears that there are four kinds of Yoga : they are :—

(1) *Mantra-Yoga*.—Means the mental concentration brought about by the process of repeating mentally *Pranava Om* and other sacred texts of the *Sruti* as well as by the constant mental adoration of the Supreme Deity.

(2) *Laya-Yoga*.—There are three kinds of forces in a man's nature, viz., higher, middle and lower. By a certain process a man realizes the middle force by the exercise of the other two forces.

(3) *Raja-Yoga*.—Concentration of the mind through the suppression of vital airs.

(4) *Hatha-Yoga*.—Concentration of the mind through various physical processes. The *Asanas* come under this head. They constitute one of the eight stages of Yoga which are :—

यम-नियमासनप्राणायाम-प्रत्याहार-धारणा-ध्यान-समाधयो-

ष्टावङ्गानि ॥

(1) *Yama* or self-control ; (2) *Niyama* or regulations ; (3) *Asana* or various postures in which a Yogin is to sit when he engages in meditation ; (4) *Pranayama* or suppression of vital airs ; (5) *Pratyahara* or the withdrawal of the organs of senses from their object ; (6) *Dhyana* or meditation ; (7) *Dharana* or mental concentration ; (8) *Samadhi* or the state of the mind in which the devotee and the object of devotion are unified.

Now *Padma* is one of the *Asanas* or postures in religious meditation sitting with the thighs crossed, one hand resting on the left thigh, the other held up with the thumb on the heart : the eyes directed to the top of the nose. The following account of *Asanas* (postures) occurs in *Siva Samhita* chapter III, 84—87.

"There are eighty-four kinds of postures laid down in the Scriptures. Of them the Yogin should select four, *Siddha*, *Padma*, *Ugra* and *Sastika*" (84).

With care a Yogin should place his feet on his organ of procreation : he should fix his vision on the space intervening the two eye-brows.