


KĀMAKALĀ VILĀSA

WITH THE COMMENTARY OF
NATANĀNANDANĀTHA

TRANSLATED WITH COMMENTARY
BY
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BY
PUNYĀNANDANĀTHA

TRIPURĀ  TALLIKĀ

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



Table of Contents	2
Preface	4
Introduction.....	7
Verse 1.....	9
Verse 2.....	12
Verse 3.....	14
Verse 4.....	15
Verse 5	17
Verse 6 & 7.....	18
Verse 8.....	21
Verse 9	23
Verse 10.....	25
Verse 11.....	26
Verse 12.....	27
Verse 13 & 14.....	29
Verse 15, 16 & 17.....	32
Verse 18.....	34
Verse 19.....	35
Verse 20	36
Verse 21.....	38
Verse 22, 23 & 24	40
Verse 25	43
Verse 26 & 27.....	45
Verse 28	49
Verse 29 & 30.....	50
Verse 31.....	52
Verse 32	53
Verse 33	54
Verse 34	55

Verse 35	56
Verse 36	58
Verse 37 & 38	59
Verse 39	61
Verse 40	62
Verse 41	63
Verse 42	64
Verse 43	65
Verse 44	66
Verse 45	67
Verse 46	68
Verse 47	69
Verse 48	70
Verse 49	71
Verse 50	72
Verse 51	74
Verse 52 & 53	75
Verse 54	79
Verse 55	80



PREFACE



The Kāmakālāvīlāsa is an important work in Śrīvidyā by Puṇyānanda an adherent of the Hādimata, who is also the commentator on the Yoginīhṛdaya, a section called Uttaracatuṣṭatī of the great Vāmakeśvara Tantra. The same Catuṣṭatī as also the Pūrvacatuṣṭatī have commentaries by Bhāskararāya. The Kāmakālāvīlāsa which means the spreading or emanation or evolution of the Kāmakālā that is the Supreme Triangle formed of the Bindu and Visarga, of Prakāśa and Vimarśa, of Śiva and Śakti, of the 'I' (*Aham*) and 'This' (*Idam*) or Universe is, in the supreme sense, the Śiva-Svarūpa and Śakti-Svarūpa. To put it quite shortly Kāmakālāvīlāsa is the evolution of the One in its twin aspect as changeless Consciousness (*Cit* or *Samvit*) and changing Power (*Cit Śakti* and *Māyā Śakti*) into the multiple universe. This evolution is represented by the greatest of Yantras—the Śrīyantra figured on the cover and in a separate Plate showing in colours its several Cakras extending from the Point or Bindu (called Sarvānandamaya), the Supreme Śiva Śakti in the centre, to the outermost section of the Cakras the Bhūpura which is called Trailokyamohana.

The Śrīcakra or Śrīyantra is the Yantra of Lalitā or Trīpurasundarī the Devatā of Śrīvidyā. Every Devatā has his or her Yantra. A general but by no means exhaustive list of the Yantras is given in the Tantrasāra of Kṛṣṇānanda of which there are several editions published in Bengal.

Lalitā is the Supreme Śakti aspect of the Brahman the Aniruddhasarasvatī (the all-spreading and Itself Unlimited Power). It is claimed by great Kaulas, among whom may be mentioned the great Naiyāyika commentator Bhāskararāya, that this aspect of the Brahman is recognised in the Vedas and that among others the Mantra, *Catvāraḥ īm bibhrati kṣemayantah* (Ṛg Veda V. 47. 4) has reference to Her.

The Kāmakālā is the first display of activity in the Brahman Substance after Pralaya when the Devī holds absorbed in Herself all the 36 Tattvas of which the Universe in all its variety is composed. She is then *Kavalīkṛta-nibhēsa tattva-grāma-svarūpiṇī*. She remains for some time in this state holding within Herself all the Tattvas until rest is disturbed by the desire or will (*Kāma*) to create. The movement or stress of this Desire manifests as the Kāmakālā. Puṇyānanda has here described the unfolding of the Kāmakālā according to the Hādimata.

All Tantras have referred to the Kāmakālā. The Gandharva Tantra, which is a work of great authority and of philosophic thought, speaks (Ch. XXX) of the three aspects of Kāmakālā. The first which is, it says, the Sthula or gross aspect—that in which She is meditated upon as something outside the Sādhaka (Bāhyabhāvanā). The only text of the Gandharva Tantra available to me at the moment is unfortunately defective so far as the account of this aspect is concerned. It states that the Sun Bindu is Her face, the Moon and Fire Bindus are Her two breasts, and Her womb or Yoni is Hārdhakālā. Dr. Bhandakar in the account he gives of the Kāmakālā (Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism, p. 145) does not seem to have understood the scheme. He appears not to be familiar with the technical terms and has not followed the commentator Lakṣmīdhara whose text he had before him and as a result he has made some errors. Thus he says that *Ha* is called Ardhakālā or half part, whereas the half of *Ha* is Kālā. Again the Devī is not in Herself "Aham" for the latter is the Sakala aspect of the Brahman.

I have referred elsewhere to his translation of the term Bindu as "Drop". Bindu is here not a "Drop" but a technical name for a particular state of Śakti; namely, Ghanībhūta Śakti. The Symbol of the Point is well known in both East and West. Here it is a Metaphysical Point of Energy about to manifest.

The term is fully explained in my “Garland of Letters.”

The Sādhaka is directed to realise his identity with the Kāmakaḷā. This aspect is alluded to in V. 19 of the Saundaryalaharī, a beautiful poem the authorship of which has been unanimously attributed by all great commentators such as Rāghava Bhatta, Bhāskara, Lakṣmidhara and others to the great Śaṅkarācārya, though present day Orientalists, both Indian and Western, incline to cast doubt upon the traditional account of its authorship. The Saundaryalaharī in verse 11 speaks of the Śrīcakra also. The second aspect of Kāmakaḷā which is spoken of as Subtle (*Sūkṣma*) and inward (*Āntara*) is that in which She is the Devī Kuṇḍalinī like a luminous flash of lightning extended from the Mūlādhāra through the six centres to the Brahmaṇḍa. See my “Serpent Power”. She is to be meditated upon as half of Ha in the lotus of a thousand petals. This Kāmakaḷā is also active (*Jāgati*) in all that is moving and motionless. The third aspect of Kāmakaḷā is called Mantratanu (Mantra body) also Trayīmāyī as existing in everything. In this aspect Sāmaveda is Her face; Ṛk and Yajus are Her two breasts and the Atharvaveda is the Hārdhakaḷā. “The Kāmakaḷā (the text proceeds) is the One highest (Turīya) Brahman Itself.” The Tantrāntara Tantra quoted in the Sarvullāsa speaks of one Bindu as the state of Laya; two Bindus as the state of creation (*Śṛṣṭi*); three Bindus as the state of continuance (*Sthiti*) and the return to One Bindu as the state of Laya (absorption) when the Devī is as the Vāmakeśvara Tantra says, *Kabalī-kṛta-niḥśeṣa tattva-grāma-svarūpiṇī*. The Śyāmā-rahasya quotes from the Śrīkrama Tantra a full account of Kāmakaḷā.

The Śrīcakra is described in great detail in the Tantrarāja of the Kādimata the first eighteen chapters of which form Vol. VIII of this series. It also forms the subject of the Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava Tantra which has been published by the Ānandāśrama Press of Poona. For a general description of the Cakras the reader’s attention is drawn to the Introduction to Vol. VIII.

The aim of the Sādhaka of Lalitā is to realise his identity first with the Yantra and Mantra and then with Lalitā or Tripurā, the Mahāśakti Who is the

creator and director of the universe and Who ultimately withdraws creation within Herself. Some form of Union with the Ultimate Real or *Sat* is the aim of all the different classes of Sādhakas of the Hindus. In Chap. VII of the Gautamiya Tantra, greatly venerated by Vaiṣṇavas, the Sādhaka is directed to realise that “he is Kṛṣṇa (*Ahaṁ Kṛṣṇaḥ*) and no one else (*na cānyo’smi*)” that “sorrow is not his portion (*na śokabhāk*) and that “he is Sat Cit Ānanda”. It is also there said that the bar between Kṛṣṇa and the Sādhaka can be removed by Kṛṣṇa’s wish.

The Śākta Sādhaka seeks to realise the identity of himself with the Mantra, the Yantra, the Guru and the Īṣṭadevatā for they are all Brahman. *Sarvaṁ khalvidam brahma*. Lalitā is the Brahman as the active principle in creation. When Her Power is fully evolved the Śākta seeks Her alone. It is She Who, visible through Her Manifestations, counts for him. [*Tasyām pariṇatāyām tu na kaścit para iṣyate*].

“Pure (*Vimalā*) Cit Śakti of the Lord is Caitanya”. Bhāskara in commenting on the text above says that the Cit Śakti, which is inherent in the Paracit (*Paracinnīṣṭhā*), accepted by the Upaniṣads, is by reason of the multitudinousness of Her aspects called Māyā. Her evolution (*Pariṇāma*) is called creation (*Prapañca*) and this creation is Cidrūpā, or a form of Consciousness in the sense of Cit. That being so it is real. [See my book “Reality”.] This does not conflict with Monism since Śakti and Śaktimān are incapable of separation. Further on he says that the Śākta does Sādhana of Śakti because without Śakti the Subtle (*Sūkṣma*) Śiva has neither name (*Nāma*) nor the power of manifestation (*Dhāma*). So there can be no duty to one who is nameless nor can such a one help the Sādhaka in attaining Nirvāṇa. Bhāskara follows the Kādimata. But both the Kādi and the Hādi are agreed that by the worship of Śrīcakra is meant the Sādhana whereby the identity of the knower (*Jñātā*), the means of knowledge, and knowledge (*Jñāna* i.e. Yantra which is the body of both the Devī and the Sādhaka) and the object of knowledge (*Jñeya* i.e. *Tripurā*) is realised. The Tantrarāja (xxxv. 6) says:

*jñātā svātmā bhavēj jñānam arghyam jñeyam
bahih-sthitam śrīcakra-pūjanam teṣāṃ ekīkaraṇam
īritam.*

The meaning of this is that the Svātmā or self of the Jīva or Sādhaka is the Jñātā or knower. Jñāna knowledge and means of knowledge is the body of Jīvā which is the Yantra and offering (*Arghya*) and Jñeya or object of knowledge is what is “outside” (*Bahih-sthitam*) by which is meant the Devī Who to the ordinary man is something other than himself. The worship of Śrīcakra is done to effect a union with, or to realise the identity of, these three. There are some slight differences between the accounts of the Śaktis as given in the Kāmakālāvīlāsa and Tantrarāja Tantra. These will be pointed out in the Introduction to the second part of the Tantrarāja Tantra now in preparation. It has been alluded to in the Introduction to the First Part.

There are some who today believe that the feminine aspect of the Brahman is unknown in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. But this is quite erroneous. Thus in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* we come across the texts ‘*Tadatkṣta*’ ‘*Seyam Devataikṣata*.’ The first text by the word ‘*Tat*’ speaks of the Brahman as neuter or nirguna. The second speaks of the Brahman as feminine (*Sā iyam*). The function is the same, namely, that of Īkṣaṇa prior to creation. There are many other texts which might be cited such as the celebrated Devī-Sūkta.

In fact for man the second is the more important of the two. As already stated, in dissolution (*Pralaya*) the Devī is what remains—that is what the universe is in its essence (*Svarūpiṇī*)—after all the Tattvas (*Tattva-grāma*) have been completely (*niḥśeṣa*) swallowed up (*Kavalīkṛta*) or absorbed by Her. Then the verse continues “when however She

is fully evolved (*Tasyām pariṇatāyām*) from out this state in which the universe lies absorbed as mere tendency or potentiality, then no other Supreme (*Kāscit para*) that is the changeless Niṣkala Śiva is desired or thought of (*Iṣyate*). This, says the commentator Bhāskaraṛāya, is the Śakta’s point of view, for the Niṣkala or Sūkṣma Śiva has neither name nor manifestation and there is neither any duty towards, nor benefit from, Him. What Divinity may be in Itself, apart from Its governance of the universe, is of no practical concern to those who form part of it. The Śaktisangama Tantra (1-3) establishes the identity of the Kāmakālā—this first creative movement with the Praṇava.

A text of this work was obtained in Kashmir but it was found to be defective; another manuscript was then secured from the valuable collection of Tantras in the Andul Rajbati which is more reliable and forms the basis of the present edition. When the present text, the publication of which has been somewhat delayed, was going through the Press, another edition in Sanskrit was published in Triplicane (Madras) which contains some valuable additional illustrative citations which are not to be found in the manuscript from which this edition has been printed. I have added some further notes and given the references to the Śruti and other texts quoted by the commentator Natanūnanda Nātha.

The Kāmakālāvīlāsa is of great value in Śrīvidyā because of its clear and succinct account, from the Hādi standpoint, of the initial development of Śakti and of the great Śrīyantra, and is now translated for the first time.

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INTRODUCTION



Kāmakalāvīlāsa is an ancient and authoritative work on Śrīvidyā by Puṇyānandanātha. It was first published in 1918 by the Kashmir Government as No. 12 in its Sanskrit Publications Series with a commentary from the pen of Mahāmahopādhyāya Mukundarāma Śāstri of the Research Department of that State. In 1921, Sir John Woodroffe published it with a fuller commentary by Sri Natanānandanātha. A second edition has been long overdue and is now brought out. It is much to be regretted that that veteran Tantric scholar is not in our midst now to contribute to this edition the benefit of his ripe experience and deep knowledge in this field of sacred literature.

As he has well pointed out in his Preface to the first edition, “What Divinity” may be in itself, apart from its governance of the universe, is of no practical concern to those “who form part of it” and there can be “neither any duty towards nor benefit from Him” conceived of as unrelated to the world of Name and Form. Any substance, be it gold or mud, has no inherent name or inherent form of its own but when we seek to have relationship with it, it must be clothed in some name and some form. We are therefore concerned with God not in His abstractness but in His practical aspect as in relationship to the world of our experience.

God as the ultimate reality transcends all distinctions and is therefore neither a *He* nor a *She* but is best expressed by the neuter word Brahman. But conceived as the cause of the universe, it is clothed with a father-mother aspect, the static non-active principle being considered as the father and the dynamic active principle being considered as the mother. Both are aspects of the same reality but seem to split it up into two. Where a person stands before a mirror, it is true that he does not undergo any change but a duplicate person appears instantaneously in the mirror. That reflected person is essentially not different from the original person

and yet is not identical with him. The former is evanescent seeming while the latter is true Being. Similarly at the beginning of creation, God the ever changeless Being “desired” to be a ever-changing seeming. The absolute Being took on the role of relative becoming. This desire and its fruition brought on the entire universe of name and form. The subject self conceived of itself as an object of its own cognition. The ‘I’ became the ‘this’. This initial desire impulse responsible for the creation of the world is given the name of Kāma. The desireful supreme entity is known as Kāmeśvara and his active desire as Kāmeśvarī. The entire universe is the outcome of the union of these two primary parents. Though this truth is never lost sight of, more importance is given to the mother aspect in Devī worship.

The numeral six is a reality but is an abstract mental concept essentially independent of the particular things to be counted. The concept is the same for all who can conceive of it and is not limited by any considerations of country or language. The sound that is produced when the word six is pronounced has really nothing to do with the conception of the numeral but is only a sound-symbol of that concept used for the purpose of expression in the English language. As languages and dialects vary, the sound symbols also will vary though the concept may remain the same. The concept is intangible while the sound symbols are certainly tangible. Again, the figure 6 which appears in uniting has really nothing to do with the sound produced when the word six is pronounced, much less with the abstract concept behind it. The figure 6 is but a form symbol of that concept. As in our experience we are attaching more importance to the ear and the eye than to the other faculties of sensation, we clothe every concept with a sound symbol and with a form symbol so that we can through them relate ourselves to the abstract concept which alone is real.

Similarly when we conceive of Godhead or any aspect of it, we have necessarily to give it a sound symbol and a form symbol. The conceptual reality is known as Devatā, the sound symbol as Mantra and the form symbol as Yantra. It is said that the Devatā is the life principle, the Mantra its subtle body and the Yantra the gross body. The Archā or Image ordinarily used for worship is a still grosser body.

In the Vedic and Tantra literature, symbols in sound and in form have been prescribed as can most appropriately and accurately represent the Devatā. The ancient seers have pointed out that, just our body of flesh and blood though seemingly inert is permeated by the life principle in us in every particle of it, so does the Devatā permeate the Mantra and the Yantra appropriate to that Devatā. Any the slightest variation therefore either in the sound of the Mantra or in the form of the Yantra will effect a corresponding change in the concept of the Devatā and may possibly do great harm. In this Kāmākālāvīlāsa, the Devatā dealt with is the highest conceivable one, namely the Divine Mother Tripurasundarī; Her Mantra is the Pañcadaśakṣari and Her Yantra is Śrīcakra. The intimate relationship between the Devatā, the Mantra and the Yantra is brought out in this book in several ways and the devotee is asked to identify himself with them as a necessary step towards the ultimate realisation.

The commentator Natanānandanātha is a disciple of Sankarānanda and Nāthānanda and is the author of several works besides a commentary on Yoginihṛdaya. He refers in his commentary itself to Saccidānanda Vāsanā and Cidānanda Vāsanā as his works. Only extracts from the commentary are reproduced in the English translation. The commentary is simple, explanatory and very useful in understanding the text and is replete with

quotations from cognate literature. All the same the treatise will remain a closed book to the lay reader. As the commentator has pointed out more than once, the details and the method of worship are really matters to be learnt only after acquiring the requisite competency and getting initiation from a knowing Guru.

In this volume is included Śrī Nāthānavaratnamālikā of Maheśānātha with the commentary of Bhāskararāya the leading authority on Tantric worship. Under the guise of Guru stotra, the author has analysed our life breaths in various ways and has pointed out their correspondence with the details of the Mantra and the Yantra. This work is more cryptic and less intelligible to the uninitiate. The commentary on the first stotra mentions that the stotra consists of *ten* ślokas and the tenth śloka which gives the Phalaśruti refers to the previous ślokas as being compiled by Bhāskararāya himself. This has to be somehow reconciled with the preamble to the tenth śloka and with the colophon which attribute the authorship to Maheśānātha.

The publication of this book making its contents available to all and sundry does not and cannot dispense with the two indispensable conditions of competency and initiation already referred to. To those who have them not, the contents may seem to be meaningless jabber. So is a book on integral calculus to a history student. The publication however is useful in creating in the reader an interest which in course of time may ripen into earnest endeavour to appreciate and realise the eternal truths taught here.

Srirangam
11-6-53

R. KRISHNASWAMI AIYAR



VERSE 1



sakala-bhuvanodaya-sthiti-laya-maya-līlā-vinodanodyuktaḥ |
antarlīnavimarsaḥ pātu maheśaḥ prakāśamānatanuḥ ||

May the great Lord, who is ever wakeful in the blissful play of the repeated acts of Creation, Maintenance and Dissolution of all the worlds which issue from Him, protect ye. He is mere illumination (*Prakaśa*). Merged in Him is Vimarśa (*Śakti*).

COMMENTARY

Here the honoured Yogī Puṅyānanda wishing to instruct in the Mantra, Cakra and worship of Tripurasundarī, the presiding Devatā over all Vidyās¹, speaks in the first place of Her form as Kāma-kāmeśvarī².

Who is ever wakeful... issue from Him

(*sakalabhuvanodaya-sthiti-laya-maya-līlāvinodanodyuktaḥ*). *Udaya* or rising or springing up or appearance is Creation (*Sṛṣṭi*); *Sthiti* or continuance is Maintenance; *Laya* is absorption or Dissolution (*Nāśa*) of all the worlds (*Sakalabhuvana*)³. These three (*Sṛṣṭi*, *Sthiti*, *Laya*) imply *Nirodha* and *Anugraha*, as by *Trivṛtkaraṇa*, *Pañcīkaraṇa* is meant. He is wakeful in this pleasant play (*Līlā*) which consists of many of these five kinds of action which relate to the world (*pañcavidhakṛtyam hi jaganniṣṭham*), whilst the play is that of the Lord (*līlā tu pārameśvarī*).

Worlds (*Bhuvana*). That which comes from Him is *Bhuvana* (*bhavatyasmāt iti bhuvanam*). Therefore the word *Bhuvana* qualified by ‘all’ (*Sakala*) signifies all the *Tattvas* beginning with Śiva and ending with *Kṣiti*, because the *Tattvas* have their origin from, continue through and disappear in Brahman. So *Śruti* says (*Taitt. Up. 3.1.1*):—‘That from which these Bhūtas were born, by which after being so born they live, to which they go and into which they enter; know that well, for that is Brahman.’

Wakeful (*Udyukta*). By ‘wakeful’ is meant that He willed and inclined towards Creation (*saṅkalpa-viśiṣṭa-lakṣaṇa-sṛṣṭimukha*). *Śruti* says (*Chā. Up. 6.2.1*):—‘Oh gentle one! At first there was merely this Being (*Sat*), which is One without a second, Brahman.’ Also ‘May I be many and born as many;’ and thus He made Himself into the world as it exists within Himself. By this is meant that the acts of creation are for the Lord merely His play and are not necessitated (*na prayojanam*). So it has been said—‘By His mere wish He throws out and withdraws the universe in its entirety.’ Also it is elsewhere said—‘The Great Lord having drawn on Himself the picture of the world by the brush which is His own Will is pleased when looking thereon.’ *Śruti* also says—‘As the spider throws out and takes back its thread, so Īśvara projects and withdraws the universe.’ Thus the one great Lord becomes the material cause (*Upādāna*) from out of which the world is made, as says the Text, ‘May I be many.’ The Vāmakeśvara Tantra also says—‘When She is fully developed (*Parinatā*) there is no further

¹ *i.e.* either the fifteen Nityās or all Mantras.

² United Kāmeśvara and Kāmeśvarī.

³ *Sakalabhuvana* – the Universe with all its parts consisting of the 36 *Tattvas*.

need of Him for Creation'⁴ (*Nityāśodaśikā*, IV.5). By this is meant the inseparateness of the world from the *Svarūpa* (own form) of Brahman.

That being so it may be asked what is the *Svarūpa* of the Brahman as transcending the world. The author therefore says—

Merged in Him is Vimarśa (*Antarlīna-vimarśa*). Vimarśa is experiencing 'This' (*Idam*), and 'This' (*Idam*) is the universe (*Prapañca*). By *Idam* is meant the world created by Paramātmā. In the passage in the *Taittirīya Śruti* which begins with 'From the Ātmā originated Ākāśa, and ends with 'This the tip of the tail is completion (*Pratiṣṭa*);' the word 'this' (*Idam*) is the world as object of experience (*Prapañca-parāimarśa*). By the word '*Idam*' is indicated the universe (*Prapañca*) as contrasted with Brahman (*Brahma-pratīyogibhūta*). So it has been said—'Dissolving (*Pralayang kurvan*) in the *Aham* (I) the *Idam* (This) which is its correlative.' *Antarlīna-vimarśa* means that within Him is dissolved *Vimarśa* or *Prapañca* which is above spoken of. The significance of all this is that

the Paramātmā Who is supreme Bliss and supreme Illumination and within Whom is the experience of perfect 'I-ness' (*Paripūrṇāham-bhāvabhāvanā-garbhita*) withdraws into Himself the manifold universe. *Vimarśa* may also mean the experience (*Parāimarśa*) that 'I am the uncreated cause of the Creation, Preservation and Dissolution of the Universe.' So it has been said by Nāgānanda: '*Vimarśa*' is the experience that "I am the uncreated one (*Akṛtimo'ham*)" in the form 'of the universe (*Viśvakāreṇa*), in the manifestation of the universe (*Viśvaprakāśena*) and in the absorption of the universe (*Viśvasamhāreṇa*).'

Merged (*Antarlīna*). By merged is meant inward-facedness (*Antarmukhatvam*)⁵, *Antarlīna-vimarśa* thus refers to Him whose experience of full I-ness is inward-turned. The Svachchhanda Tantra says: 'That inward-faced-ness (*Antarmukhatva*) which is the state of omniscience and the like ever is⁶, because it is detached from⁷ any object'⁸.

He is mere Illumination (*Prakāśa-mātra-tanuḥ*)⁹. This means that Parabrahman who is the Supreme

⁴ 'This is a translation of the second line of IV.5 of *Nityāśodaśikā* (part of *Vāmakeśvara*). The verse runs thus:

*kavaītkṛta-niśeṣa tattva-grāma-svarūpiṇī
tasyām pariṇatāyām tu na kaścit para iṣyate*

At the time of dissolution all the *Tattvas* are absorbed into Her and She remained in Her own form (*Svarūpa*). When She is fully developed there is no further need of Him for creation.

By the 'Tattvas' according to *Puṇyānanda*, *Bhāskararāya* and others is meant the 36 *Tattvas*. *Lakṣmīdhara* interprets it to mean the five *Tattvas*. That is, the Universe is the creation of Parā (Śiva) and Parā (Śakti). Under His influence She works and when Her work is completed there is no further need of Him for that purpose.

⁵ Consciousness is either looking inward (*Antarmukha*) or outwards (*Bahirmukha*). The first indicates the supreme experience, the second world experience. Therefore the essence of becoming as universe is the conversion of one into the other. Consciousness is given "another" direction, strictly an outer direction, because the supreme experience is beyond all relations.

⁶ *that is*, is not destroyed.

⁷ *or*, independent of.

⁸ *that is*, is transcendent.

⁹ *lit.*, His body or substance is mere Illumination.

Lord and transcends all, is nothing but Illumination (*Prakāśaikasvabhāva*). Such is His nature¹⁰.

The Kāṇva¹¹ says: ‘The Devas worship that which is the deathless One (*Amṛta*)¹², which is verily Itself Life¹³ and the Light of Lights.’ The Katha says: ‘There shines nor Sun, nor Moon, nor stars. There flashes no lightning. What need have we then to speak of Fire. All luminaries derive their light from It. By Its light all is illuminated.’

Āgama also says: ‘The innermost Light which is Light Itself is the imperishable (*Anapayini*) Parā Vāk¹⁴.

Illumination (*Prakāśa*). By illumination is meant the experience of I-ness (*Aham-rūpa-vimarśa*) indicated in the words ‘wish,’ ‘know’ ‘do’ and the like in the first person singular¹⁵. Here it is said of Para Brahman as united with the five Śaktis of All-mightiness, All-knowingness, All-activity, All-completeness, All-pervadingness. It may be said that if the Sun and other bodies have the power of illumination, then why should the Brahman alone

be called Paramātmā? To meet this the latter is called the Great Lord (*Maheśa*). He is Great (*Mahān*) because neither space nor time limits Him; and He is Lord (*Īśa*) because He has the power to control all. The Śirah Śruti¹⁶ says: ‘The Eater (*Sambhakṣah*) eats all. He constantly creates, maintains and dissolves. Therefore He is called the Great Lord (*Maheśa*). The Mahānārāyaṇa¹⁷ also says: ‘That *Svara*¹⁸ which is uttered in the beginning and end of the Veda is that in which Prakṛti is merged (*Prakṛti-līna = Prakṛtyātmaka*)¹⁹. He Who is beyond, is Maheśvara.’

Protect ye. He has this power. Mantra is so called, because it protects or saves by thinking (*Manana*) on it (*Mananāt trāyate*). Puṇyānanda says: ‘May Parameśvara protect ye’. Protection is one of the powers of Paramātmā. May the Great Lord who is Illumination (*Prakāśa*) protect ye. The Ācāryā²⁰ has also power to illuminate, Mantra also has the power of illumination. Therefore the unity of the Devatā, Guru, and Mantra is here shown.



¹⁰ *lit.*, body.

¹¹ One of the recensions of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.

¹² This word is derived from *na* (not) *mṛta* (death)

¹³ Āyuh

¹⁴ The supreme ‘Word’. See A. Avalon’s “*Garland of Letters*.”

¹⁵ ‘I wish,’ ‘I know,’ and so forth.

¹⁶ *The Atharva Śira Upaniṣad*

¹⁷ *The Atharvaṇa Upaniṣad* of that name.

¹⁸ Om

¹⁹ The two are one, as stated in *Nityāśoḍaśikhā*

²⁰ Guru



VERSE 2



sā jayati śaktirādyā nija-sukha-maya-nitya-nirupa-mākārā |
bhāvicarācara-bījam śiva-rūpa-vimarśa-nirmalādarśaḥ ||

She the Primordial Śakti who excels all and who in Her own true nature is eternal, limitless Bliss, is the seed (*Bīja*, that is, source or cause) of all the moving and motionless things which are to be, and is the Pure Mirror in which Śiva experiences Himself.

COMMENTARY

He here says that the Source of all is also Our Supreme Lady.

She the primordial Śakti who excels all (*sā jayati śaktirādyā*). By this is meant that Our Supreme Lady (*Parā bhāṭṭārikā*) Mahātripurasundarī is above all.

She (*Sā*). By this is meant the Tripuā spoken of in all the Upaniṣads, in whom are the 36 Tattvas beginning with Śiva and ending with *Kṣiti*; who is in the form of all the universes (*Sarva-prapañcātmikā*) and is also beyond them (*Taduttīrṇā*). This is the meaning of the name Tripurā as given by the great Yogīs, Knowers of the true tradition (*Satsampradāyavid*). She who is above (*Purā bhūtā*) the three Lights (*Tribhyas tejohyaḥ*), that is, “Sun”, “Moon” and “Fire” (explained later) is called Tripurā. Her supremacy is proclaimed everywhere in many Śrutis and Smṛtis. It is She who is denoted by **‘She whose true nature is eternal, limitless Bliss’** (*nija-sukha-maya-nitya-nirupa-mākārā*). *Nija* means natural (*Svābhāvika*). By *Sukhamaya* (Bliss) is meant in whom there is no sorrow. *Nityā* is being at all times (*Trikāla*, i.e. past, present, future). *Nirupama* is ‘incomparable’, as there is nothing with which She can be compared. Such is Her nature (*Ākāra*. that is, *Svarūpa*). She is

the unlimited, uncreated Brahma-bliss (*Ātmānanda*). *Śruti* says that the Brahman who is transcendent Bliss is in all and above all.

The *Chāndogya* (7.2.3 says: ‘That which is the Immense (*Bhūmā*) that is Bliss (*Sukha*). There is no Bliss in the little. The Immense is Bliss itself. Every endeavour should be made to know the Immense.’ Having so said it proceeds. ‘There where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, knows nothing else, that is the Immense (*Bhūmā*).’ It thus describes the Brahman who is Perfect Bliss (*Aparicchinnānanda*).

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* says, that ‘other beings enjoy (*Upajīvantī*) only a fragment (*Mātrā*) of this Bliss.’ It thus says that all other beings are but drops (*Viprut*) in the ocean Brahma-bliss.

The seed of all... which are to be (*Bhāvicarācarabījam*). *Bhivi* is that which is about to and will come. She is the Cause of all moving and motionless things which will be and which are.

The *Katha Śruti* says (5.2.12): ‘The one Controller (*Vaśī*) of all who is the Inner Self (*Antarātmā*) of all created beings (*Sarva-bhūta*) transforms His unity (*Ekam rūpam*)¹ into many.’

¹ Some read *Bīja* (seed) for *Rūpa* (form).

Āgama also says: ‘When She the Supreme Power (*Paramā Śakti*) who is in the form of the universe (*Viśvarūpiṇī*) sees² her own impulse towards becoming (*Sphurattā*), then the Cakra³ comes into being. As the great tree exists as potency⁴ in the seed of the Bata tree⁵, so does this moving and motionless world exist in the seed in the heart (*Hṛdayabījastham*) (of the Lord)’.

It may be said that as it is not possible for Śiva to create without Śakti nor for Parā Śakti without Śiva, how can She be said to be ‘the seed? To meet this it is said that **She is the pure mirror in which Śiva experiences Himself** (*Śivarūpa-vimarśa-nirmalādarśaḥ*) The *Svarūpa* or nature of Śiva is ‘I’ or *Ahaṁ* (*Śivasya svarūpaṁ ahaṁ ityevaṁ ākāraṁ*). The experience (*Vimarśa*) again of That (*Tasya vimarśaḥ*) is the experience of ‘I-ness’ (*Ahaṁ ityevaṁ rūpaṁ jñānam*). This pure mirror makes manifest this knowledge (*Tasya brakāśane nirmalādarśaḥ*).

The sense may be thus illustrated. A handsome king looking at his reflection in a mirror which is before him knows ‘I am he who is thus reflected.’ So Parameśvara looking at His own Śakti (*Svātmaśakti*) who is within himself (*Svādhīnabhūtā*) knows his own nature (*Svāsvarīpam*) as ‘I am all’ (*Paripūrno’ham*). If there be nothing before the mirror then there is nothing to be reflected. Similarly if the Parāśakti were not united with *Paraśiva*, She could not produce the universe (*Prapañca*) which is within Herself. Therefore the world cannot be created by Śiva alone nor by Śakti alone. It is by both of them that all the Tattvas are produced.

Āgama says: ‘Without Śiva there is no Devī. Without Devī there is no Śiva. As between moon and moonbeam there is no difference, so there is no difference between Śiva and Śakti.’



² *Paśyēt*, that is, creatively produces, and, in the form produced, experiences.

³ The first Cakra in the Śrī Yantra, as to which see *Yoginīhṛdaya*, Ch. 1, vv. 9, 10.

⁴ Śakti.

⁵ *Ficus indica*.



VERSE 3



*sphuṭaśivaśaktisamāgamabījāṅkurarūpiṇī parāśaktiḥ ।
aṅutararūpānuttaravimarśalipilakṣyavigrahā bhāti ॥*

The Supreme Śakti is resplendent. She is both the seed (*Bīja*) and sprout (*Angkura*) as the manifested union of Śiva and Śakti. She is very subtle. Her form is manifested through the union of the first letter of the Alphabet (*A*) and the Vimarśa letter (*Ha*).

COMMENTARY

Now some say that the experience (*Vimarśa*)¹ ‘I am all’ (*Paripūrṇo’ham*) is the Brahman. Then how can it be said (it is argued) that the experiencer (*Vimarśaka*, that is, He who is conscious of being the supreme ‘I’) is the Brahman. The verse is written to meet this difficulty.

Supreme. Here by Supreme (*Parā*) is meant Tripurasundarī as She is before creation (*Prakṛtya*). She is so called because Śruti speaks of Her as ‘Consciousness, Bliss, Will, Knowledge, Action (*Cidānandecchajñānakṛyārūpā*).’

She is both the seed and sprout (*Sphuṭa-śiva śakti-samāgama-bījāṅkura-rūpiṇī*). She is the manifested (*Sphuṭa = Vyakta*) union of Śiva and Śakti and is therefore both the seed and the sprout. For it has been said: ‘From the seed the sprout and from the sprout the seed.’ She produces in their order all the Tattvas beginning with *Śiva tattva* and ending with *Kṣiti tattva*.

Śiva. Here by the word ‘*Śiva*’ is meant *Jñāna śakti* because *Śiva tattva* is inherent (*Adhiṣṭhāna*) in *Jñāna Śakti*; and by the word ‘*Śakti*’ is meant *Kriyā Śakti*, for *Śaktitattva* is inherent in *Kriyā Śakti*. It must also be noted that She who is *Cidānandasvarūpā* effects the creation of the universe by *Jñāna* and *Kriyā*.

Subtile. She is also further spoken of as very subtile (*Anuttara-rūpā*, that is, of very subtile form). *Śruti* says, ‘Verily more subtile than the subtile is eternal Beingness (*Sattva*), Thou verily art That.’ Āgama

also says, ‘the Devī is smaller than the smallest (*Aṅū*) and greater than the greatest.’

Her form is manifested... letter (Ha) (*Aṅutararūpānuttara-vimarśa-lipi-lakṣya-vigrahā*). By *Aṅutara-lipi* is meant the letter before which there is no other, and that is the letter *A*. By *Vimarśa-lipi* is meant the last letter which is *Ha*. By the union of *A* and *Ha* (*Ahaṁ = I*) Her Self (*Vigraha = Svarūpa*) becomes known (*Lakṣya = Visible*). The sense of these words is that the *Parā Śakti* is ‘I-ness’ (*Ahamātmikā*) within whom (i.e. between the letters *A* and *Ha*) are all the letters of the alphabet (*Antar-garbhita-samasta-varṇa-kadambaka*). Her form is the fifty letters beginning with *A-kāra* and ending with *Ha-kāra* (*Akārādi-hakārānta-pañcāśad-akṣara-rūpiṇī*). She is the Mother (*Janayitṛī*) of all the universe consisting of *Varṇa, Pada, Mantra* and of *Kalā, Tattva, Bhuvana*. She is the supreme object of veneration (*Parā bhāṭṭarikā*, the innermost self of all things (*Samasta-bhūtāntarātmā*). Everywhere in the Vedānta She appears spoken of as ‘I’ (*Ahamahamityevākareṇa*). This is what has been said in this verse. So it has been said in the Kāṇva śruti; ‘This Brahman verily in the beginning was. It knew Itself (*Tadātmānam eva veda*), ‘I Brahman am.’’ ‘*A* is Brahman, from That came *Ahaṁ* (i.e., I).’ The worship of *Ātmā* is the meditation ‘I am all’ (*Pūrṇāhaṁ-bhāva-bhāvanā*), and should be kept very secret. *Śruti* enjoins that it should be learnt only from the mouth of the Guru.

¹ *Paripūrṇo’ham iti vimarśam eva Brahma*. Reference is made to the experience as a state contrasted with that of which it is a state.



VERSE 4



*paraśivaravikaranikare pratiphalati vimarśadarpaṇe viśade |
pratirucirucire kuḍye cittamaye nivīśate mahābinduḥ ||*

Upon the mass of the rays of the Sun Paraśiva being reflected in the pure Vimarśa-mirror, the Mahābindu appears on the Citta wall illumined by the reflected rays.

COMMENTARY

The author being desirous of describing the Kāmakalā in the form of all the letters, commences in this and the following three verses to speak of Her letter-hood: (*Akṣra-svarūpa = Brahma-svarūpa*).¹

Mass of the rays of the Sun Paraśiva (*Paraśiva-ravikaranikare*). *Paraśiva* is the adored Lord Paramaśiva who is mere Prakāśa (*Prakāśaika-svabhāvaḥ*). The mass of His rays (*Karāḥ = Karāṇāḥ*) is the pure (*Viśuddha = Nirmala*) *Vimarśa*-mirror (*Vimarśa-darpaṇa*). *Vimarśa* is the Śakti or movement (*Viśphurāṇa śakti*)² which is limitless (*Anavadhikākārā*). So it is said in (*Pratyabhijñā*): ‘She is *Sphurattā* (*Sā sphurattā*). She is here compared to a mirror because of Her thereby manifesting Herself (*Sva-svarūpa-prakāśatvāt*)³.

Reflected. By ‘Reflection’ (*Prati-phalana*) is meant seeing one's own self (*Sva-svarūpāvalokana*). When the self is seen by reflection in this way, then ‘Mahābindu appears on the Citta wall’ (*Cittamaya = Jñānaika-svarūpa*) which is beautifully illumined.⁴ The Citta is compared to a ‘wall’ (*Kuḍya*) because on it appears (the reflection of the) Mahābindu. In ordinary experience we see that if a mirror is kept facing the sun, the rays after being reflected therefrom appear on any wall nearby as a luminous spot (*Bindu*) produced by the rays of the sun. In the same way when Parameśvara who is Prakāśa (*Prakāśa-rūpa-parameśvara*) comes into connection with Vimarśa which is like a mirror (*Darpaṇavat-svasvarūpa-vimarśa-sambandhe jāte*), there shines forth the Mahābindu who is Parameśvara as *Pūrṇo’ham* - ‘I am all.’

¹ That is, Her svarūpa as the substance of all the letters. Cf.
*a-kāraḥ sarva-varṇāgrayaḥ prakāśaḥ paramaḥ śivaḥ
ha-kāro’nt yaḥ kalārūpo vimarśakhyaḥ prakīrtitaḥ*

² *Sphurāṇa* is a common term in these Śāstras. The word means impulse, vibration, throbbing, pulsation, quivering and then springing up, breaking forth, blossoming, starting into view, expanding and lastly flashing, glittering, sparkling manifestation, in short, both as impulse towards and as fact.

³ *Sva-svarūpa-prakāśatvāt* may also mean – Because She makes manifest the svarūpa of Brahman (*Sva = Brahman = Ātman*) in Her as in a Mirror.

⁴ That is, by the rays reflected back on it.

Śruti also says: ‘Oh gentle one, this Being alone there was in the beginning, the one, non-dual Brahman alone⁵. That said: ‘May I be many and be born.’⁶ Also ‘She this Devatā said’⁷: This Brahman alone there was in the beginning, That knew Itself as ‘I (*Aham*) am the Brahman’. ‘He said (and thought), truly I shall create these worlds (*Lokas*).’⁸ Texts in *Śruti* like these say that the Parabrahman who is looking towards (*Abhimukha*) His own Śakti (*Svātmasakti*) is the Cause of the universe.⁹

Āgama also says: ‘When She the Paramā Śakti¹⁰ sees Her own Sphurattā, there comes into being the Cakra.’

In *Pratyabhijñā* also it is said: ‘She the *Sphurattā* is the great Being-ness (*Mahāsattā*) beyond time and space (*Deśa-kāla-viśeṣiṇī*).’¹¹ It is She who is spoken of as the essence of all (*Sārataya cokta*) in the Heart of the Supreme Lord.



⁵ *Chā.*, 6-2-1.

⁶ *Chā.*, 6-2-3.

⁷ *Chā.*, 6-3-2.

⁸ *Aitareya*, 1. 1.

⁹ He contemplates and assumes Power.

¹⁰ *Yoginīhṛdaya*, 1. 9.

¹¹ She limits, that is, is beyond both.

VERSE 5



cittamayo'haṅkāraḥ suvryaktāhārṇasamarasākāraḥ |
śivaśaktimithunapiṇḍaḥ kavalīkṛtabhuvanamaṇḍalo jayati ||

Ahaṅkāra, which excels all and is the massing together of Śiva and Śakti and the fully manifested union of the letters *A* and *Ha*, and which holds within itself the whole universe, is Cit.¹

COMMENTARY

In this verse he describes the notion of “I-ness” (*Ahaṅbhāva*) which arises from the gaze of Śiva upon His own luminous Śakti. *Ahaṅkāra* is the *Vimarśa* which is ‘I-ness’ (*Yoyam aham-ahamityeva vimarśaḥ*). *Ahaṅkāra* is the cause (*Karaḥ = Kāraṇa*) of the experience of ‘I-ness’ (*Āhaṅbhāva-vimarśa*) which manifests (*Vyañjaka*) on the uprising (*Udbhūta*) of the experience which is self-recollection (*Atmasmaraṇa*). *Ahaṅkāra* such as this excels all. So it has been said, ‘In the *Aham* experience (*Ahaṅbhāva Prakāśa*) rests in Itself (*Ātmā-viśrānti*).’²

Cit (*Chittamaya*) is mere *Jñāna* (*Jñānaika-svabhāva*).

Manifested (*Suvryaktāhārṇa-samarasākāraḥ*) owing to the Form which is produced by the combination of the letters *A* and *Ha*, each giving rise or making manifest the other (*Parasparodbhūtarūpau*).

Union (*Samarasa = Eka-lolībhūta*) or the union in the form of *Ahaṅkāra* of these two letters in which each desires to be united in an equal degree with the other.

Massing together of Śiva and Śakti (*Śiva śakti-mithuna-piṇḍa*). Śiva = *Prakāśa*, Śakti = *Vimarśa*. These are the two who make the divine Husband and Wife (*Divya-dāmpati-maya*). The union of these two, in which they desire to be united in equal degree, is *Śiva śakti-mithunapiṇḍa*. *Ahaṅkāra* for reasons implied in what is aforementioned contains within it (*Kabalīkṛta*) the sphere (*Maṇḍala*) of the universe (*Bhuvana*). By *Bhuvana-maṇḍala* is meant all that is composed of 36 Tattvas. The meaning, by the rule of *Pratyāhāra*, is that from the union of *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa* which is *Ahaṅkāra*, within which are the many letters of the alphabet, emanates the whole universe consisting of Word (*Śabda*) and its Meaning (*Artha*). So also says *Śruti*³: ‘The letterless (*Āvarṇa*) full of meaning (*Nihitārtha*) by union with Śakti in various ways generates many letters (*Varṇa*)’. In another Upaniṣad⁴ occurs this text: ‘Who art thou? ‘It is I (*Aham*) the reply: All this is surely I (*Aham*). Therefore the term ‘*Aham*’ or ‘I’ denotes all things (*Sarvābhīdhānam = Sarva-vācakam*).’



¹ *Chittamaya*. Or the verse may be translated –“*Ahaṅkāra* is *Cittamaya*. The form (*Aham*) is the manifested union of the letters *A* and *Ha* or the coupled Śiva and Śakti in massive union which even endures after the universe has been withdrawn into Itself.”

² *Prakāśasyātma-viśrāntir ahaṅbhāvo hi kīrtitaḥ*

³ *Svet.*, 14-1.

⁴ *Nṛsīrṇha-Uttra*, 7.



VERSE 6 & 7



*sitaśoṇabinduyugalaṁ viviktaśivaśaktisaṅkucaprasaram |
vāgarthasṛṣṭihetuḥ parasparānupraviṣṭa vispaṣṭam ||*

*bindurahaṅkārmā raviretanmithunasamarasākāraḥ |
kāmaḥ kamaṇīyatayā kalā ca dahanenduḥvighraḥ bindū ||*

The two Bindus, white and red, are Śiva and Śakti, Who, in their secret mutual enjoyment, are now expanding and now contracting. They are the Cause of the creation of Word (*Vāk*) and Meaning (*Artha*), now entering and now separating from one another. Bindu which is Ahaṅkāra (*Ahaṅkārmā*) is the Sun which is the union of these two (white and red Bindus). The Sun is Kāma, which is so called because of its desirableness; and Kalā is the two Bindus which are Moon and Fire.

COMMENTARY

Having described in V. 4 in the passage 'The Mahābindu appears on the Citta wall', the Svarūpa of the Bindu he now describes Kāmakalā.

The two Bindus white (Sita) and red (Sona) are Śiva and Śakti playing in secret with one another, that is, in mutual enjoyment the one with the other (*Vivikta-śiva śakti = Anyonya-viharaṇaśīle śiva śakti*), now contracting or closing together¹, now opening out as the creation of the universe (*Prasaraḥ = Jagat-sṛṣṭirūpo vikāsaḥ*).

The Cause of the creation of Vāk and Artha (*Vāgarthasṛṣṭihetuḥ*); By *Vacaḥ*² is meant all the sounds *Parā, Paśyantī* and so forth; and by *Artha* is meant the 36 *Tattvas* beginning with Śiva and ending with *Kṣīṭi*. The creation of these the creation of the world (*Jagat*) of six *Adhvās*.³

It has been said, Oh Deveśi, in Thee who art Cit (*Cidāmani*) are the six Adhvās, namely *Varṇa, Kalā, Pada, Tattva, Mantra* and *Bhuvana*.⁴ These two Bindus which enter one another and separate

(*Paras-parānupraviṣṭavispaṣṭam*) are the united white and red Bindus (*Sita-śoṇa bindu-yugalam*) which are known as Kāma-Kāmeśvarī, the divine Husband and Wife. The great secret here is this. On the authority of *Śruti*, 'He who is supreme (*Para*) is Maheśvara'. And the supreme Lord (*Parameśvara*) who is the first letter (*A*) which generates all sounds of the Vedas and so forth attains the state of Bindu (*Bindu-bhavā*) after having entered *Vimarśa Śakti* who is His own body (*Svāṅgabhūtā*) and in whom (*Śakti*) all the universe (*Prapañca*) is dissolved. Thereafter the *Vimarśa Śakti* also enters into the *Prakāśamaya Bindu* which is within Herself. On that the (*Miśra*) Bindu becomes ready for action (*Ucchūna*). From that Bindu issues *Nādātmikā Śakti*⁴ within whose womb are all the *Tattvas*, who is all energy (*Tējomayī*) and in seed form (*Bījarūpā*) and subtile like the tip of a hair and assumes the form of a *Śṛṅgāṭaka*.⁵ In this way *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa* which are the *Svarūpa* of *Nāda* and *Bindu* assume body as

¹ *Samkucan = Mukūli bhavan*, i.e. closing like a flower.

² Plural of *Vāk*.

³ See Woodroffe's "Garland of Letters", Chapter on the Śadadhvās.

⁴ *Nādātmikā Śakti*, i.e., *Śakti* as *Nāda* Cf. Woodroffe's "Garland of Letters".

⁵ A triangular pyramidal figure.

‘I’ (*Ahamī*). In the same way, of the pair, one, namely *Vimarsā*, is the Red Bindu, and the other, *Prakāśā*, the White Bindu, and the union of the two is the mixed (*Miśra-rūpa*) and all powerful (*Sarvatejomaya*), the *Svarūpa* of which is the Paramātmā (*Paramātmā-svarūpa*).

Śruti also says: ‘*Āvarṇa* (letters) which is full of meanings (*Nihitārtha*) by union with Śakti in various ways generates many letters.’

He further elucidates these three Bindus by speaking of them as *Ahamkārātmā* and so on. The (mixed) Bindu which is (composed of the Red and White Bindus (*Binduḥ sita-rakta-svarūtpaḥ*) is one with the combined first letter *A* and the last letter *Ha* (*Sphārarūpaha-kāra*) between which are all the other letters. The *Kāra* in *Ahamkāra* signifies that *A* and *Ha* are letters according to the Sūtra ‘*Vārṇāt kāraḥ*.’ This Bindu is therefore the union of the two letters *A-kāra* and *Ha-kāra*, which signify the union of *Prakāśā* and *Vimarsā* (*Ētan-mithuna-samarasākāraḥ*). The union of these two divine Husband and Wife (*Divya-dampatirūpasya*) is their mutual helpfulness (*Samarasaḥ = Ānukulyarṇ*) in entering into or co-operating with one another. This mutual action is in the very nature (*Ākara = Svarūpa*) of the Bindu. The Sun is the Mixed Bindu (*Miśra* bindu), being the union in the manner stated of the White and Red Bindus (*Sita-śoṇabindu-samarasī-bhūtaḥ*).

In ordinary experience also (*Loke’pi*) the mixed character (*Miśra-rūpatvam*) of the Sun is spoken of, because it is said that He enters into and issues out of Fire and Moon. Śruti says: ‘So does Fire enter into the risen Sun. In the evening again the Sun enters into Fire.’⁶

The word *Amāvāsya*⁷ is so called because the Sun and Moon are in conjunction (*Amā = with, Vasataḥ = are*). Therefore the entrance of the Sun and the

Moon into one another is well known. The Sun consequently is the mixed (*Miśra*) Bindu.

Kāma. That He is the object of adoration (*Upasyā*) is shown by the word ‘*Kāma*’, *Kāma* is that which is desired (*Kāmyate*) by the great Yogīs, who know the Supreme Reality (*Paramārtha*) as being their very Self (*Svātmatvena*). The reason for their doing so is given when its desirableness (*Kamanīyatva*) is spoken of, since all beauty is desire.

The *Chāndogya Upanṣad* (speaking of the *Puruṣa* in the Sun) says: ‘Golden-bearded, golden-haired, all gold from the tip of the nails.’ The Īśāvāsya also says: “He the Paramātmā, radiant, bodiless (*Akāya*), imperishable one, without subtle body, without material body,⁸ pure (*Śuddha*), beyond Dharma and Adharma, pervades all.”

The same *Upanṣad* says: ‘That most beneficent form of Thine, that do I see by Thy grace. That *Puruṣa* (in the *Āditya-maṇḍala* whose body is the *Vyāhrtis*) He I am.

By describing Kameśvara as beneficent the author praises his greatness (*Mahimā*).

Kalā. *Kalā* is *Vimarsā śakti*.

Bindus which are Fire and Moon (*Dahanendu- vigrahau-bindū*). The meaning of this is that *Vimarsā Śakti* is in the nature of Fire and Moon (*Agni-Soma-rūpiṇī*).

Mahātripurasundarī who is in both these and inseparable from Kameśvara is the collectivity of the Bindus and is *Kāmakalā*. In all Agamas it is proclaimed that She is the object of adoration. So it has been said: ‘When white Śiva is in red Śakti, Parā being pierced by Śambhu, then such red Śambhu is in Śakti as Paratattva. When red Śiva is in white Śakti, then is the state of Paraśambhu and such red Śiva in white Śakti indicates Saccidananda.’ And again it is said, ‘Oh Paraśive, I

⁶ In day time the Sun absorbs the light of fire and in the evening with the disappearance of the Sun other lights appear.

⁷ *Tithi* of the new moon.

⁸ *Asnāvīram*: veinless.

make obeisance to Thy supreme Kalā, whereof the upper Bindu is Thy Face, two other Bindus are Thy two breasts, and Nāda bindu (that is *Hārdakalā*)⁹ is the place of Raśanā (*Nāda bindu-raśanā guṇāspadam*).¹⁰

‘The Bindu which is above *E-kāra*¹¹ is the Sun and Her Face and below are placed Fire and Moon, Her two breasts, and the Kalā which is half of *Ha-kāra* is her Yoni.’

The *Nityāṣoḍaśikā*¹² says: ‘Having made the *Bindu* the Face and below it the two breasts and below it again half of that which follows *Sa*,¹³ meditate upon it¹⁴ Has downward turned.’

All this is very secret.

The gist of all this is that the excellent Yogīs, the great Maheśvaras, constantly worship the mother Mahātripurasundarī who is Kāmakālā, the collectivity of the three Bindus in the radiant, imperishable and all-pervading Brahman (*Bindu-traya-samaṣṭī-rūpadivyākṣara-rūpiṇī*), whose very Self is the Bliss which is *Prakāśa* (*Prakāśānanda-sārā*), and who is in the nature of complete I-ness (*Purṇāhamtārūpiṇī*), within whom is the seed (*Vīrya*) of the endless mass of letters (*Anantākṣara-rāśi*) and great Mantras (*Mahāmantras*).

The *Vijñāna-bhaṭṭāraka* also says: “By passing through the different Maṇḍalas (of the Śricakra) where the gross letters (*Sthūlavarna*) are rising up to Arddhendu, Bindu, Nādānta¹⁵ and to the Śūnya in the *Bindu-rūpa cakra*, one becomes Śiva.”¹⁶



⁹ See next note.

¹⁰ The place of the Waist-chain; the Yoni being there.

¹¹ The *Bīja* formed by the union of *A-kāra* which is *Prakāśa* and *I-kāra* which is *Ichā śakti*.

¹² I-20.

¹³ i.e., *Ha*.

¹⁴ i.e., the triangle.

¹⁵ For these terms see Woodroffe's *Garland of Letters*.

¹⁶ The gross letters in Vaikarī form are in the outer *Maṇḍalas* and passing through the subtler forms of *Śabda*, the *Śabda-brahman* and then *Śūnya* is attained.



VERSE 8



*iti kāmakalā vidyā devīcakramātmikā seyam ।
viditā yena sa mukto bhavati mahātripurasundarīrūpaḥ ॥*

Now this is the Vidyā of Kāmakalā which deals with the sequence of the Cakras of the Devī. He by whom this is known becomes liberated and Mahātripurasundarī Herself.

COMMENTARY

Having thus explained the nature of Bindu (*Bindu-svarūpaṁ*) he says that the fruit of this knowledge and worship is *Brahmabhāva*.

Now (*Iti*). That is, after what has been described in the previous paragraphs.

Vidyā of Kāmakalā. Kāmakalā is Mahātripurasundarī. By Her Vidyā is meant Jñāna regarding Her; and to complete the sense, it is said that this knowledge consists in knowing the sequence of the order of arrangement of the Cakras in Her Śricakra.

Sequence or Order (*Krama*). By this is meant the order in which the Cakras, Mantras and Devatās are placed, beginning from Sarvānandamaya till all is fully manifest.

He by Whom (*Yena*). The suggestion is that the man on whom the grace of Śakti has fallen (*Śaktipāta*: descent of Śakti) is drawn into enquiry concerning the Brahman and meditates and becomes liberated after attainment of knowledge.

Known (*Viditā*). Mastered through sitting at the feet of the Guru and so forth.

Becomes liberated (*Mukto bhavati*). He, the great Yogī, enjoys (*Viharate*) and is yet able to free himself of all desire, after having conquered the whole world through his consciousness (*Bhavana*) ‘I am always the full and whole I’ (*Paripūrṇāham-bhāva*).

So it has been said in *Pratyabhijñā*: He who is fully instructed in the greatness (*Aiśvarya*) of the Lord by *Vidyās* is massive Consciousness (*Cidghana*) and is verily liberated¹.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*² says: ‘Men think that by Brahavidyā we shall be all in all³. Now, what is that which when it is known, we become all-knowing?’

In the end⁴ he becomes Mahātripurasundarī Herself, that is, our Supreme Lady (*Parā-bhaṭṭārikā*).

Śruti says: ‘They enter the Supreme Light of Tripurā (*Traipuraṁ dhāma*)’; also ‘the knower of the Brahman is the Brahman’. The *Chāndogya* says⁵: ‘He alone who sees thus, who meditates thus, Who knows thus, he verily is drawn to the Ātmā, has loveplay with the Ātmā, and is united with Ātmā

¹ *Cidghana* is the Brahman. The sense of the text is that man becomes Brahman Itself. Cf. ‘He who knows the Brahman is Brahman’.

² 1-4-9.

³ The text begins, “Seekers after Brahman say.”

⁴ *Ante’pi*, that is, after death.

⁵ 7-25-2.

which is Bliss Itself (*Ātmā-rati*, *Ātmā-kriḍā*, *Ātmamithuna*, *Ātmānanda*).

In the *Svacchanda Tantra* also occur texts like the following – ‘When (the *Sādhaka*) is united in the

same abode with his Devatā⁶, then for him there is no more birth or death. He attains the state of true Devotion and becomes the Lord of the Universe (*Cakra*):



⁶ *That is*, here Tripurā.



VERSE 9



*sphuṭitādaruṇād bindornādabrahmāṅkuro ravo vyaktaḥ |
tasmād gaganasamīraṇadahanodakabhūmivarṇasambhūtiḥ ||*

From the Red Bindu about to create arose sound¹ (*Ravaḥ*) which is the Nāda-brahman sprout.
From that (Sound) came Ether, Air, Fire, Water, Earth and the Letters of the alphabet.

COMMENTARY

Here the Yogī Puṇyānanda after having realised within himself (*Ātmatvena anubhūya*) the Primordial Sundarī² whose name is Kāmakalā, now speaks of the origin of the world from the Bindu before Creation (*Prakṛta bindu*) which is the Highest Reality (*Paramārtha*) as also of Her spreading forth (*Vilāsa*) as Devatā, Mantra and Cakra.

From the Red Bindu about to create

(*Sphuṭitādaruṇād bindoḥ*) *Sphuṭita* = *Ucchūna*, that is, 'swelling', 'pregnant',³ which has been previously described.

Sound which is the Nādabrahman sprout

(*Nādabrahmāṅkuro ravaḥ*). *Nāda* is the sound (*Varṇa*) which is the cause of the origin of all sounds.⁴ This is the Brahman which is Nāda-brahman. This is the Producer (*Aṅgkura* = *Utpādaka*). So it has been said: 'One *Avarṇa*⁵ which is *Nāda* (*Nādātma*) is divided into all letters. As it never disappears⁶ it is called *Anāhata*⁷. This is Śruti.'

Vyoma, Bindu, Nāda. This is the order.⁸ Sound (*Rava*) which is the sprouting Nāda-brahman becomes manifest in the form *Paśyanti* and so

¹ That is, the creative movement which as sensed by the ear is experienced as physical sound.

² *Sundarī* = a beautiful woman. Here it is the Devī. All Devīs are beautiful, the Devī Tripurasundarī being the most beautiful of all. See a Dhyāna of Her in Chapter I, vv. 138-152, *Nityāṣoḍaśīkārṇava*.

³ The state of immediate readiness to produce.

⁴ And, therefore, of everything else, for all things have a common origin.

⁵ *A-kāra* is the first of all letters and is *Prakāśa* and *Paramaśīva*. But this is *lakṣaṇārtha*, that is, after the universe is produced the first letter *A* indicates the Brahman. But the *Brahma-svarūpa* is *A-varṇa* in the negative sense, that is, letterless and soundless (*niśśabda*). *A-varṇa* here is undifferentiated Power which manifests as the particular letters and other particulars of the universe.

⁶ *Lit.*, 'always is', that is, during the Kalpa. All creative activity is withdrawn at *Pralaya* when Power is one with the Powerholder (*Śaktimān*).

⁷ *Āhata* struck, and *anāhata-śabda* is that sound which is not caused by the striking of two things together, that is, by contact of matter. It is Eternal Power.

⁸ Ether originates from the self-dividing or 'bursting' *Bindu*, on which self-division there was *Nāda*. That is, *Nāda* is the productive action which manifests as the produced *Vyoma* and the rest. Cf. *Arṇabāstotra*, v. 4.

forth. It is proved⁹ that the mass of sound is the Śaktis *Parā, Paśyantī* and so forth. This sound (*Śabda*) is the origin of the five *Bhūtas*, Ether, Air, Fire, Water, Earth, and the letters beginning with *A*

and ending with *Kṣa*. From *Nāda bindu* issues the entire world. *Śruti* also says¹⁰: ‘From *Akṣara*¹¹ originates this universe.’



⁹ Later, in Verse 20.

¹⁰ *Muṇḍaka*, 1-7.

¹¹ *that is*, Brahman. The word means both ‘letter’ and ‘imperishable’.



VERSE 10



*atha viśadādapi bindorgaganānilavahnivāribhūmijaniḥ |
etatpañcakavikṛtirjagadidamaṇvādyajāṇḍaparyantam ||*

The White Bindu also is the origin of Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. The Universe from the most minute to the Brahmā-spheroid consists of these five Vikṛtis.

COMMENTARY

Having spoken of to the all-pervadingness (*Sarvātmatva*) and all-creativity (*Sarva-sratṛtva*) of the Red Bindu he now speaks of the sameness of the White Bindu and Red Bindu, because of the inseparateness of the former from the latter.

White (*Viśada*), All-illuminating (*Sarvaprakāśa*). It is from and into this Bindu, which has been previously described, that the appearance and disappearance of the Endless Brahmā-spheroids composed of the five *Bhūtas*, Ether and the rest take place.

So *Śruti* says ¹: ‘In which all the Beings (*Bhāvas*) disappear and having disappeared become manifest again and then again and again disappear like bubbles.’

In this way it is established that from Brahman, which is the White and Red Bindus, which are *Prakāśa*, and *Vimarśa*, all this (universe) originated.

Āgama also says: ‘I bow to the *Mahāpiṭha* ² of *Samvit* ³ which is Śiva and Śakti (*Śiva-śakti-padāśraya*)⁴ wherefrom emanate countless world-rays⁵ made manifest (*Vilasita*) or flashed forth by Creative Will (*Ichā śakti*).



¹ *Cūlikā-Up.*, 8

² A word which here conveys the sense of a place of great sanctity.

³ That is, *Para-jñāna*.

⁴ *Lit.*, the refuge which is the feet or place of Śiva and Śakti.

⁵ From the Effulgent Consciousness imaged as a Mass of Light which is all Wisdom and Power, rays shoot forth which are the worlds, as, it is said elsewhere, sparks from the great central fire.



VERSE 11



*bindudvitayam yadvadbhedavihīnam parasparam tadvat |
vidyādaivatayorapi na bhedaśo'sti vedyavedakayoḥ ||*

As the two Bindus are indistinguishable and inseparable, so also are Vidyā the indicator (*Vedaka*), and Devatā, the indicated (*Vedyā*).

COMMENTARY

Having spoken of the inseparateness (*Abheda*) of the two Bindus he now says that similarly there is oneness of the Mantra and the Devatā.

Two Bindus (*Bindu-dvitaya*) - 'The two Bindus previously mentioned which are in the nature of *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa* (*Prakāśavimarśātmakam*). As these two are inseparable, the wise say that Śiva and Śakti are one *Tattva*'. The two are blended, the one with the other (*Parasparāśliṣṭa*). In the same way there is not the slightest distinction between *Vidyā* which is the indicator (*Vedaka* = *Vācaka*) and the Devatā which is the indicated (*Vedyā* = *Vācya*).

Vidyā is the Mantra of fifteen letters (*Pañcadaśakṣarī*) and **Devatā** is Mahātripurasundarī.

So it has been said in *Śrī Tantra-sadbhāva*: 'All Mantras consist of letters (*Varṇātmaka*). They again, O beloved, are at base Śakti. Śakti again is *Māṭṛkā* and She again is Śivātmikā. She the *Māṭṛkā* who in the world appears possessed of the energy and Brilliance of the Supreme (*Paratejah-samanvitā*) pervades all this universe beginning from Brahma and ending with *Bhuvana*.'



VERSE 12



vāgarthau nityayutau parasparam śaktiśivamayāvetau |
sṛṣṭisthityabhedau tridhā vibhaktau tribījarūpeṇa ||

Word (*Vāk*) and its meaning (*Artha*) are always united. They are Śiva and Śakti which are three-fold as Creation, Maintenance and Dissolution, and as the three Bijas.

COMMENTARY

He here wishes to say that the world arises out of the inseparable *Nāda bindu* couple, and therefore says that that Couple of its own wish differentiated themselves.

Word and its meaning (*Vāk* and *Artha*). *Vāk* is in the form of *Varṇa*, *Pada*, *Mantra* (*Varṇa-pada-mantra-rūpa*), *Artha* is *Kalā*, *Tattva* and *Bhuvana*¹ (*Kalā tattva-bhuvanātmā*). Such is the form of Śiva Śakti, because, as *Śruti* says, out of *Śabda* (*Vāk*) and *Artha* which are *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa* (*Prakāśa-vimarśātmaka*), the whole world consisting of six *Adhvās* (*Ṣadadhvātmaka*) originated. They are therefore always united (*Nityayutau* = *Nirantara-samsaktau*) and not casually or accidentally so, like a jar and picture which may be put together. If the union were merely accidental, then the ordered universe would not exist. These two go through the three-fold changes of *Creation*, *Maintenance* and *Dissolution* (*Sṛṣṭisthity-laya-bhedau tridhā-vibhaktau*).

Creation, Maintenance and Dissolution. By *Creation* (*Sṛṣṭi*) is meant the appearance of all the *Tattvas* beginning with *Śiva* and ending with *Kṣiti*. *Stṭhiti* is the Maintenance thereof, and *Dissolution* (*Laya*) is their reunion with, or return to, that which at base they are (*Svātma-sākṣātkāra*). These three (functions) are from, in and into the *Ātmā*. So it has been said by the honoured Abhinavagupta²; ‘Creation, Maintenance and Dissolution are (all)

within the *Ātmā* (*Svātmagāh*) in their own nature (*Svarūpatvena*). These two (*Vāk* and *Artha*) are mutually (*Paraspara*) united *Śiva* and *Śakti* (*Śivaśakti-mayau*) and forms of *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśā* (*Prāśkaśavimarśa-svarūpau*), the activity of these two being of one and the same thing (*Ubhayoḥ eka-kṛttvāt*), just as in the case of fire and the function or Śakti of burning (*Vaḥni-dāhakatvavat*) there is no difference (*Tattvāntara*).

As an honoured teacher also says: ‘The identity (*Tādātmya*) of these two is everlasting (*Nityam*) like that of Fire (*Vaḥni*) and Śakti or power which burns (*Dāhaka*).’

Āgama also says: ‘As We two are the Self of the World (*Jagadātmatvāt*) We two are one with it. By reason of Our identity with one another We are at all times the life of the world (*Jagadprāṇa*).’

Threefold (*Tridhā-vibhaktau*). The united *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa* are divided in three ways (*Vibhaktau* = *Prthag-bhūtau*). These three ways or forms are the three *Bijas*. The three *Bijas* are *Vāgbhava*, *Kāmarāja* and Śakti Bija. The meaning of this is that Mahātripurasundarī who is Brahman as *Kāmakalā* composed of the three Bindus collectively (*Bindu-traya-samaṣṭi-bhūtā*), is the object of adoration of all.

The *Vāmakeśvara*³ says: ‘Tripurā is known by the three *Tattvas* (*Tattvatraya-vinirdiṣṭā*) and is the

¹ These six constitute the six *Adhvās* (see *Garland of Letters*), of which the first three are in *Vāk* and the remaining three in *Artha*.

² *Ācārya* of the Kāsmīra School.

³ *Nityāṣoḍaśikā*, IV, 1 6-19.

threefold Śakti of the three letters (*Varṇa śakti-trayātmikā*)⁴. *Vāgīśvarī* which is Jñāna śakti is in *Vāgbhavabīja* and is *Mokṣa-rūpiṇī* or Liberation itself, that is, grantor of Liberation. *Kāmakalā* is in *Kāmarāja* (Bīja) which is Kriyā Śakti (*Kriyatmikā*) and *Kāmarūpā* (as *Kāma* or Will, that is, grantor of

desires). *Ichhā* which is the *Parā Śakti* is *Śakti Bīja* and is *Śiva-rūpiṇī*⁵. Such is Devī Mahātripurasundarī who is the three *Akṣaras* (*Bījas*), who loosens the bondage to this world, and is known by the tradition handed down by the line of Gurus to their disciples (*Pāramparyeṇā vijnātā*)’.



⁴ The Varṇas or letters here are the three Bījas.

⁵ *Śiva-rūpiṇī* = *Dharmapradā*, giver of *Dharma*.

VERSE 13 & 14



*mātā mānaṃ meyaṃ bindutrāyabhinnabījarūpāṇi |
dhāmatrayapīṭhatraya-śaktitrayabhedabhāvītānyapi ca ||*

*teṣu krameṇa liṅgatrītayaṃ tadvacca māṭṛkātrītayaṃ |
itthaṃ trītayaṃ purī yā turīyapīṭhādibhedinī vidyā ||*

Knower, Knowing, Known are the three Bindus and forms of the Bija. The three Lights, the three Pīṭhas and the three Śaktis are that by which they (the Bindus) are known.¹ In these again in their order are the three Liṅgas as also the three Māṭṛkās. She who is this threefold body is the Vidyā (*Devī*), who is the fourth Pīṭha (*Turīya-pīṭha*), and the root of all differentiation (*Ādibhedinī*).

COMMENTARY

He here commences to make the *Vidyā* (*Mantra*) of fifteen letters by describing certain details immanent (*Antargata*) in the three divisions (*Khaṇḍa*), *Vāgbhava* and others.

Knower (*Mātā*) is the Lord (*Īśvara*) who knows.

Knowing (*Mānaṃ*) is the *Vidyā* whereby He knows (*Avagatisādhana-bhūtā vidyā*).

Known or Object of knowledge (*Meya*) is *Mahātripurasundarī* who is to be known (*Jñāyamaṇa*).

Forms of the Bija are these three, namely Knower, Knowing and Known divided into three separate Bindus (*Bindu-traya-bhinnabīja-rūpāṇi*).

The three Bindus are those already described, namely Red, White and Mixed. The *Bija* is divided into these three Bindus. The *Bīja* is the *Nirvāṇa-Bījā* which is the collectivity of all the three Bindus (*Sarva-samaṣṭi-bhūta-nirvāṇākhyam*). By “form” (*Rūpa*) is meant that they manifest the Bija (*Tadrūpāṇi = Tatprakāśakāni*). The sense of the above is that She who is the Supreme transcendent Light (*Param-jyotiḥ*) which is Consciousness (*Cit*),

Bliss (*Ānanda*), and the massive *Ātmā* (*Ghanātmā*) with the experience of *Ahaṃbhāva* or “I-ness” (*Sarvātītā-cidananda-ghanātmānubhava-rūpahaṃbhāva-śālinī*) enjoys Herself in the form of experience in which there is Knower (*Māṭṛ*), Knowing (*Māna*) and Known (*Meya*) (*Māṭṛ-māna-meya-bhāvaṃ anubhūya viharati*).

The *Kāṇva*² says: ‘This *Ātmā* there was alone in the beginning as *Puruṣa*. He saw and saw nothing outside Himself. “He I Am” (*So’haṃ asmi*): Thus first did he say. Thereupon arose ‘*Ahaṃ*’. Therefore even now a person on being accosted first says, ‘It is I’ (*Ahaṃ ayaṃ*) and then gives his individual name.’

The meaning of the passage is: The *Ātmā* is the supreme Lord. ‘*Idam*’ is the visible Universe. ‘In the beginning’ means first. ‘He was’, that is, with the Universe within himself. Therefore, that *Paramātmā* having seen as Himself (*Ātmatvena*), the Universe, with Himself (*Svātma-sātkṛta-prapañcam*) did not see any other; that is, He saw nothing beyond Himself, because He had withdrawn all things into Himself. At that time He

¹ Knower, Knowing and Known are the three Bindus which are forms of the *Nirvāṇa Bija* or *Mahābindu* the collectivity of all three. The three Bindus again are the three lights, three *Pīṭhas*, three *Śaktis*, three *Liṅgas* and three *Māṭṛkās*. That is, these are their various aspects.

² *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 1-4-1.

showed Himself as 'I am the universal form' (*Svasādhāraṇa-rūpa*), that is, 'I am the experience which is continuous (*Akhaṇḍa*), Massive (*Ghana*), Being (*Sat*), Consciousness (*Cit*), and Bliss (*Ānanda*) (*Akhaṇḍa-saccidānanda-ghanātmānu-bharvo'ham*)'. In the beginning, that is, before creation He enjoyed himself, that is, he showed (*Prādarśayat*) Himself to Himself. Thereupon arose 'Aham' (I) (*Aham-nāmābhavat*). Because thus Brahman shows His own self (*Svarūpa*) to Himself as 'I' (*Aham*), this is itself the name of Brahman. Therefore even in this world if a person be accosted he answers first 'It is I' (*Aham*) and thus giving his *Brahmasvarūpa*³, he next gives his other⁴ name. These distinctions of Knower and the like are seen to derive from the Brahman as we can perceive by examining ourselves.

The *Catuśśati*⁵ says, that the Supreme Energy (*Param-tejaḥ*), which is transcendent (*Atītam* which is beyond the *Bindu*) is *Svasamvit* (= *Svetara-viśyakam jñānām* = knowledge, the object of which is nothing other than Self). Its characteristic is manifestation (*Udayātmakam* = *Udayaika-svarūpam*, *śadbhāva-vikāra-rahitam*). By Its mere wish (i.e. by mere *Īkṣaṇa* without being dependent upon or having recourse to any other being or thing), it made the world picture (*Viśva-mayollekhaḥ* = *jagadātmakam citram*). It is allpervading (*Viśva-rūpa* = *Sarvātmaka*) Consciousness (*Caitanya*) pleasing Itself in its own blissfulness⁶. Such is *Ātmā* (*Ātmano rūpam*). Its light is contracted (*Samkucat-prabham*) in Its evolution as Knower (*Mātr*), Knowing (*Māna*), Known (*Meya*) and true Knowledge (*Pramā*).

³ That in which he is one with *Brahman*.

⁴ Individual.

⁵ i.e., *Nityāśoḍaśikā*, VI-49-51.

⁶ i.e., its blissfulness is not the result of anything outside Itself.

⁷ *Pūrṇaśaila* and *Jālandhara*. These reflect and are *Vṛtti* of *cit*.

⁸ That is, *Jñāna* and *Kriyā-Śaktis*.

⁹ Namely *Bāṇa*, *Itara* and *Para*.

¹⁰ The *Trikona* of that name. See *The Serpent Power* by Sir John Woodroffe.

¹¹ *Nityāśoḍaśikā*, Ch. I-VI.

Three Lights (*Dhāma-traya*).

These are the three Maṇḍalas of Moon, Sun, Fire.

Three Bījas (*Bīja-traya*).

These are *Vāgbhava* and others.

Three Pīthas (*Pītha-traya*).

These are *Kāmagiri* and others⁷.

Three Śaktis (*Śakti-traya*).

These are *Ichā* and others⁸.

They (*Bindus*) are known (*Bhāvita*) under these three aspects (*Bheda*). These are forms of the Mahābindu (*Mahābindumaya*). Therefore in these three Lights and others there are in their order (*Krameṇa* = *Ānupūrvyā*) the three *Liṅgas*, viz., *Svayambhu* and the others⁹, the threefold *Mātrkā* classified as *A*, *Ka*, *Tha* and the rest¹⁰. Tripurā who is in the form of and is the collectivity of all things (*Tat-samaṣṭi-rūpā*) is the *Parā śakti* who appeared, and hence it is said 'She who is the threefold body' (*Ittham tritayapurī yā*). Her body is threefold in manner hereinbefore described. She is therefore the highest or *Fourth Pītha* (*Turīya-pītha*) as the basis (*Bhū*) wherefrom appears and into which disappears the whole universe which is threefold (*Trividhāt-maka-sarva-prapañcavirbhāva-bhūḥi*). So the *Catuśśati*¹¹ says: '(I bow to) *Mātrkā* who is *Pītha-rūpiṇī*'.

She who in this way is the *Turīyapīthā* and is the root of all differentiates Herself (*Ādibhedinī*). She within whom is the endless mass of Tattvas produced by Her own will (*Svecchayā udbhāvitānanta tattva-kadambinī*) is in Herself (*Svātmany-eva*) continuous impartite (*Akhaṇḍa*) *Samvit*.

An honoured sage (*Abhiyukta*) has said: ‘Because the Devī created the three forms (*Trimūrti*), because She is before all (*Purobhava*), because She is in the form of the three (*Trayīmayī*)¹², because even after dissolution of the three worlds She

recreates them again, the Mother's (*Ambikā*) name is appropriately Tripurā.’

In the *Catuśśati*¹³ She is spoken of as the Devī Tripurā who is Knowledge as Supreme experience itself (*Svasamvit*).



¹² *i.e.*, the vedas consisting of *Karma*, *Upāsanā* and *Jñāna* *i.e.*, *Khāṇḍas*, not, as usually stated, *Ṛk*, *Yajus*, *Sāman*.

¹³ Ch. V-41



VERSE 15, 16 & 17



*śabdasparsāu rūpaṃ rasaganthau ceti bhūtasūkṣmāni |
vyāpakamādyam vyāpyam tūttaramevam krameṇa pañcadaśa ||*

*pañcadaśākṣararūpā nityā caiśā hi bhautikābhimatā |
nityāḥ śabdādiguṇaprabhedabhinnāstathānaya vyāptāḥ ||*

*nityāstithyākārāḥ tithayaśśivaśakti samarasākārāḥ |
divasaniśāmayyastāḥ śrīvarṇāste'pi tadvayīrūpāḥ ||*

Sound, Touch, Form, Taste, Smell these are the subtle Bhūtas. (Of these) each is the producer (*Vyāpaka*) of that which follows (*vyāpya*), and thus taking them all in their order there are fifteen properties (*Guṇas*).

The Nityā (*Tripurā*) who is (the Mantra) of fifteen letters is known as She appears in the Bhūtas (*Bhautikā' bhimatā*). She is surrounded by the fifteen Nityās¹ who are distinguished by the different properties, (*Guṇas*) of sound and so forth (*Śabdādi-guṇa-prabheda-bhinnāḥ*).

The (fifteen) Nityās represent the (fifteen) lunar days (*Tithyakārāḥ*). The lunar days again are the union (*Samarasa*) of Śiva and Śakti. They consist of days and nights. They are the letters in the Mantra and have the double nature of Prakāśa and Vimarśa.

COMMENTARY

He has spoken of the creation of the five Bhūtas in the passage: 'From that came Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth.' He here commences to speak of the nature (*Svarūpa*) of each of the Devatās who are one with (each of) the letters of the great Mantra by a description of the *Guṇas* of the first created five Bhūtas.

Sound (*Śabda*) is the *Guṇa* of *Ākāśa*, **Touch** (*Sparsā*) of *Vāyu*, **Form** (*Rūpa*) of *Tējas*, **Taste** (*Rasa*) of *Apas*, **Smell** (*Gandha*) of *Prthvī*. These *Guṇas* from *Ākāśa* to *Prthvī* increase by one and thus fifteen *Guṇas* are obtained². As there are fifteen different *Guṇas* the *Śrīvidyā* is of fifteen

letters. In other words, She who is the own form (*Svarūpa*) of the Mantra appears as such. Therefore the fifteen letters are Her form (*Rūpa*).

She is known as She appears in the Bhūtas (*Bhautikā' bhimatā*). She is on this account worshipped as in or in relation to Her bhautika aspects (*Bhūta-sambandhitvena iṣṭā*). As the *Guṇas* which emanate from Her are fifteen in number, so the letters of the *Vidyā*³ are fifteen. The *Nityā* whose form is that (*Mantra*), who is the *Svarūpa* of that (*Mantra*), is unmoving, changeless and supreme (*Kūṭasthā*); Just as the ocean is that in which appear and disappear the waves, bubbles

¹ Devis, who are to be distinguished from the supreme Nityā Tripurā.

² That is *Ākāśa*, has one *Guṇa*, namely *Śabda*; *Vāyu* has two viz., *Śabda* and *Sparsā*; and so on.

³ *Mantra*.

and froth, so She is That in which all the Tattvas appear and disappear. So the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* ⁴ says: ‘This great Being (*Bhūta* = *Brahman*) is endless and without limit and is massive knowledge. It evolves from Itself these *Bhūtas* as *Devas*, men, and so forth, and, withdraws them also, that is, withdraws these forms of Itself.’

In the *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad* also it is said: ‘That in which all forms of experience (*Bhāva*) disappear.’

He next speaks of the sixteenth *Nityā* who is *Kūtaśthā* as being of fifteen limbs (*Avayava*), as in the fifteen lunar days (*Tithi*) which are the fifteen *Devatās*, and as in the form of the Mantra of the fifteen letters.

The fifteen Nityās represent the (fifteen) lunar days *Nityāstithyākārāḥ*. The *Nityās* are in the form of the lunar days. These are the *Nityās* beginning with *Kāmeśvarī* and ending with *Citrā*. They are in the form of the lunar days (*Tithyākārāḥ*), that is, they are *Devatās* who are the *Tithis* (*Tithyabhimāninyāḥ*). The *Tithis* also begin with *Pratīpat* and end with *Pūrṇimā*.

The lunar days again are the union of Śiva and Śakti (*Tithayaśca Śiva-Śakti-samarasākārāḥ*), or in other words, they are the united form of *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa*. They are therefore of the form of day and night. *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa* are day and night.

So it is said in *Cid-vilāsa*: ‘She the Night makes all the worlds sleep. He the Day is verily the waker-up of all.’

These *Tithis* again are the letters in the *Vidyā* (*Śrī varṇāḥ*) being in manner aforesaid fifteen in

number. They have further the double forms, that is, they are likewise (*Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa*) (*Prakāśa-vimarśa-rūpāḥ*). This *Vidyā* of fifteen letters has been enunciated in *Śaunaka-Śākhā* of the *Atharva-veda* by the Mantra, which runs ‘*Kāmo yoniḥ kamala*’ and so forth. Some say that this *Vidyā* is also shown in the fifth *Maṇḍala* of the *Rgveda* in ‘*Catvāra-īm bibhrati kṣemayantaḥ*’ and so forth.

The sense of all this is that this *Parā śakti* who is both *Prakāśa* (*Śiva*) and *Vimarśa* (*Śakti*) and appears as the five *Bhūtas* (*Prakāśa-Vimarśa-mayī and Pañca-bhūtātmika*), becomes by a progressive increase of *Guṇas* the *Mantra* of fifteen letters, the fifteen *Tithis*, and is manifest as the fifteen *Devatās* (*Devatā-svarūpiṇī*).

So *Āgama* says: ‘There is some, only one Supreme *Maheśvara* whose name is *Prakāśa* and the name of whose *Śakti* is *Vimarśa*, She is called *Nityā* by the wise. She the *Devī* whose name is *Vimarśa* becomes fivefold as Ether (*Ākāśa*), Air (*Anila*), the Sevenflamed (*Saptārciḥ*) Fire, Water (*Salila*) and Earth (*Avaniḥ*). By the increase of *Guṇas*, one by one, She reaches the number of the *Tithis* (fifteen). The *Devī* who is *Vimarśa* (*Vimarśa-rupīṇī*) is known as the sixteenth (*Ṣoḍaśī*). The *Parameśvarī* who is *Mahātripurasundarī* undergoes these sixteen forms, the last of which is *Citrā*. She spreads Herself all over the (*Cakra*). The subject is only here hinted at. It should be known from One’s own *Āgama*. He who worships these *Devis* one after the other day by day, from *Pratīpat* to *Pūrṇimā* attains, oh beloved, good fortune (*Saubhāgya*).’



⁴ 2-4-12.



VERSE 18



*ajvyañjana bindutraya samaṣṭibhedaivibhāvītākārā |
saṭtrimśatattvātmā tattvātītā ca kevalā vidyā ||*

The Vidyā which is composed of the three Bindus¹, the vowels and consonants collectively and separately, is both immanent in and transcends the 36 Tattvas and is by Herself alone².

COMMENTARY

Here the author wishing to strengthen what has previously been said says that the *Devatā* is immanent in and transcends the Universe, so also does the *Vidyā*.

The **vowels** (*Svara*) are the letters beginning with *A* and the consonants (*Vyañjana*) are the letters beginning with *Ka*.

The three Bindus (*Bindu-traya*) are the three Bindus which make *Anusvāra* and *Visarga*. These taken either singly or in a group make Her body (*Vibhāvītākārā* = *udbhāvītā-svarūpā*).

She is thus in the 36 Tattvas (*Ṣaṭtrimśat-tattvātmā*) that is, Her body is made up of the *Tattvas* beginning with *Śiva* and ending with *Kṣiti*, and She also transcends them (*Tattvā-tītā ca*), for She is the place and origin of all the *Tattvas* (*Tattva-saṅgha-samudāyasthānatvāt*). She is therefore **alone** (*Kevalā*), because there is nothing besides Herself (*Sva-vyatiriktasya abhāvāt*).

Such is the *Vidyā* of fifteen letters (*Pāñca-daśākṣarī*).

The divisions of its parts are as follows. The honoured Puṇyānanda, a strong adherent of *Hādi-vidyā*³, speaks of this *Vidyā* as a whole, that is, as

immanent in the *Tattvas* (*Tattvātmakatva*) and transcending them (*Taduttīrṇatva*) of this *Vidyā*.

In the first part *Vāgbhava* contains five vowels and seven consonants, that is, twelve letters. In the second *Kāmarāja* there are six vowels and eight consonants, in all fourteen letters. In the third Part known as *Śakti* there are four vowels and six consonants. The total of all these make 36 letters which are the limbs⁴. This *Vidyā* as an entire whole surpasses all (the 36) *Tattvas* (*Sarvatattvātikrāntā*). This is everywhere well established and known (*Prasiddhā*).

Śruti says that *Kādi* also possesses the double quality (*Ubha-yātmakatva*) that is, as immanent and transcendent and as collective and individual (*Vyaṣṭi-samaṣṭi-rūpatvam*). The difference between the two is that in the first part of *Hādi* there are five vowels and seven consonants, whereas in the first part of *Kādi* there are seven vowels and five consonants. So that in both *Vidyās* the total in the first section is equally twelve each. Both *Vidyās* therefore possess the double character. The method relating to the worship of both the *Vidyās* should be learnt from the mouth of the Guru.

¹ i.e., *Bindu* and *Visarga*.

² *Kevalā* = *Ekā* = *Advitīyā*: that is one without another.

³ There are three *matas* or forms of worship, viz., *Kādi* (*Kālī-kula*), *Hādi* (*Śrī-kula*), and *Kahādi*. See Sir John Woodroffe's Introduction to the *Kādimata* portion, *Tantrarāja Tantra*.

⁴ The grand total is thus 15 vowels and 21 consonants = 36 letters.



VERSE 19



vidyāpi tādr̥gātmā sūkṣmā sā tripurasundarī devī |
vidyāvvedyātmakayo-ratyantābhedamāmanantyāryāḥ ||

Vedyā is also like this – She is the subtle Devī Tripurasundarī. The Great Yogīs have ever taught the inseparateness of the Vidyā and the Vedyā.

COMMENTARY

He here speaks of the twofold aspect (*Uphayātmakatva*) of Devatā and of the oneness of Mantra and Devatā.

Vedyā (= she who as the subject of knowledge is sought to be known), She whose *Svarūpa* is *Cit* and *Ānanda*, She is “**Like this**” (*Tādr̥gātmā*-like the Mantra She is immanent in the Tattvas (*Tattvātmikā*) and in the universe *Viśvātmikā*) and is beyond and transcends both (*Taduttīrṇā*).

Subtle (*Sūkṣmā*). By this is meant She who cannot be subdivided, who cannot be defined (*Paricchettum aśakyā*).

She (*Sā*) is used to indicate the fact that She is recognised (*Prasiddhā*) in all Vedāntas.

Tripurāsundarī - She is so called because She is Tripurā and Sundarī (beautiful). She is Tripurā because She produces all things which are in a threefold state (*Tridhāvasthita-samasta-vastu-pūraṇāt*), and She is Sundarī because She is the adored of Yogīs (*Sarva-yogī-bhirupāsyatvena*) and also because of Her charmfulness (*Sprhaṇīyatvāt*). The word Tripurā has previously been defined. The *Svarūpa* of the Devī is clear Illumination (*Svacchaprakāśa-rūpa*). She is the Parāvāk whose play is

creation and the like of the universe (*Viśvasya janānādi-kriḍārūpā*).

The Great Yogīs... Vidyā and Vedyā (*Vidyā-Vedyātmakayor atyantābhedam āmanantyāryāḥ*). All Yogīs beginning with Parameśvara (*Āryāḥ* = *Parameśvara-pramukhāḥ sarva-yoginaḥ*) establish or uphold (*Pratipadayanti*) the eternal (*Atyanta Sarvakalika*) inseparateness (*Abheda = aikya = oneness*) of Vidyā, that is, the Mantra of fifteen letters, and *Vedyā*, that is, Tripurāsundarī. So it has been said in *Catūsṣatī*¹: “Whatever Śakti is spoken of as being in any particular category (*Padārtha*), that Śakti is the Devī Sarveśvarī (the Śakti of Śiva), and He who is with Her is the Great Lord (*Maheśvara*). She the Vidyā who is *Bhūta-guṇātmikā*² spreads Herself out by the fifteen letters of which Her mantra is composed and which is divided into groups of five (which are of *Vāgbhava*), six (which are of *Kāmarāja*), and four (which are of *Śakti*) letters³. According to the number of vowels and consonants (of which her Mantra consists) She is of 37 aspects (*Sapta-triṃśat prabhedinī*). By these 37 aspects or variations She appears as 36 Tattvas. The Vidyā Itself should be thought of as the State of Śiva Himself which excels all Tattvas⁴.

¹ *Nityāṣoḍaśikā*, Ch. VII, VV. 31 -34.

² That is, She is *Bhūtas* and *Guṇas*, or rather these are in Her.

³ *Aṣkara* = imperishable entities.

⁴ *Tattvātītā-svabhāvā*. *Sva* = Śiva; *Svabhāva* is the State or *Bhāva* of Śiva and as such it excels all Tattvas. The Devī is that.



VERSE 20



*yāsantaroharūpā parā maheśi tribhāvitākārā |
spaṣṭā paśyantyādi trimātrkātmā ca cakratām yātā ||*

She whose inner nature is beyond mind is the Meheśi as Parā. It is She again who is known in three different aspects when manifest as the three Matrās, Paśyanti and others and evolves Herself into the Cakra.

COMMENTARY

Having previously spoken of the oneness of the Vidyā and Devatā the author wishing to speak of the identity with one another of *Cakra* and *Devatā* now proceeds to speak of the mode in which the Cakra originated (*Cakrotpatti-prakāra*). “**She whose inner nature is beyond mind**” (*Ya sāntaroha-rūpā; antara = antāḥ-karaṇa* or mind); *ūhaḥ* (= *Vitarkaḥ = Itthamiti-paricchedarahitaḥ* is that which cannot be described as this or that). The sense is that She is beyond mind and speech (*Avāñ-mānasa-gocaratvāt*) and therefore cannot be expressed in the words of the Vedāntas¹. The Maheśi is the Cause of all (*Sarva-kāraṇa-bhūtā*) as the ground (*Bhūmi*) wherefrom all the 36 Tattvas from *Śiva* to *Prthivī* proceed and that is why She is

called *Parā* the highest or who excels all (*Sarvotrīṣṭā*).

*Śruti*² says:

“[He has no body nor has He any organ of sense. There is no one seen who is equal to or greater than Him.] His Śakti is Parā who is heard of (in the Vedas) as of many aspects and immanent in Him (*Svābhāviki*) as Kriyā śakti united with Jñāna and Bala.”

Also elsewhere³: “That from which words along with Manas being unable to reach return (baffled).”

Āgama also says: “Parāvāk (Supreme Word) which is within (i.e. unmanifest) is verily Light-in-Itself (*Svarūpa-jyotireva*)⁴ and perishes not (*Āpāyini*).

¹ That is, She is beyond the scope of the highest form of human learning and can be realised by Sādhana alone by the man who deserves to be called *Vidvān*.

Cj.: *nistattvā kāryagamyā' sya śaktir māyā' gniśaktivat,
nahi śaktim kvacit kaścit budhyate kāryataḥ purā.*

(*Vidyāraṇamuni-Pañcadaśi*, 2.47)

Also:

*na śilpādijnānayukte vidvacchabdah prayujyate,
mokṣaikahetuvidyā sā śrīvidyā nātra saṁśayaḥ.*

(*Brahmāmāṇḍapūrāṇa*: Cf. Lalitā Trisati - Vāṇivilās Edition - pp. 294)

² *Śvetāśvatara* VI. 8. The portion within brackets has not been quoted in the commentary. “Is seen” (*Dṛśyate*) is explained by Nārāyaṇa to mean “realised by argument” (*Yuktyā upa-labhyate*). “Bala” here says Bhāskara (under *Nityāśoḍaśikā*, VI. 9) implies *Ichā* (*Balaśabdasya icchā-paratvam*).

³ *Taittirīya* (2. 4. 1, 2. 9. 1); *Brahma* 3.

⁴ That is, the Brahman light.

When Her own form is seen (*Yasyām dṛṣṭasvarūpāyām*) all duty ceases.”⁵

This same (Śaiva) Parā Śakti so described (*Evambhūta-lakṣaṇā*) is again known in three different aspects. That is what is said in the passage **when manifest &c. &c. Paśyantī and others** (*Spaṣṭā paśyantyādi-trimātrkātmā*). By “Manifest” (*Spaṣṭā*) Her first appearance as something objective is meant. By the expression “and others”: Madhyamā and Vaikharī are intended. It is She Who as Vaikharī which is power of expression

(*Abhilāpa-svarūpiṇī*), is the Śakti which is in the form of the mass of fifteen letters (*Pañca-dasākṣara-rāśimayī*)⁶ and in all the many different words used in the Vedas and Tantras and in ordinary life. So it has been said in *Subhagodayavāsanā*: “Parā as Paśyantī is the creeper born in the earth,⁷ as Madhyamā. She is the fragrance from the flower-bunch and as Vaikharī She is the letter of the alphabet (*Akṣa-mālā*). Thus does She excel all.” In this wise, as Trimātrkā, She becomes the Cakra that is, becomes one with the Cakra of three parts⁸.



⁵ *Adhikāro nivartate* i.e. the question of competency does not apply to such a man. He becomes free from all observances.

⁶ The Mantra of fifteen letters is given in *Tripurā-mahopāśad*, 8.

⁷ *Bhū-janma* = Earth-born i.e. born in the Mūlādhāra.

⁸ There are nine Maṇḍalas in the Śrīcakra divided into three parts of three sections each. The three parts may be *Sṛṣṭi*, *Sthiti*, *Laya* corresponding with *Paśyantī*, *Madhyamā*, *Vaikharī*.



VERSE 21



*cakrasyāpi maheśyā na bhedaśo'pi bhāvvyate vibudhaiḥ ।
anayossūkṣmākārā paraiva sā sthūlayośca kāpi bhidā ॥*

The wise know no difference between the Maheśī and the Cakra. Parā Herself is the subtle form of both these (Devatā and Cakra). There is no difference between the two in the gross form also.

COMMENTARY

In this verse he emphasises what has been previously said in the statement that the wise see no difference or distinction whatsoever between the *Cakra*, consisting of the nine sections (*Āvarṇā*) beginning with *Trailokya-mohana* and ending with *Bindu* wherein *Sundarī* abides, and *Sundarī* Herself Who is the presiding (*Adhiṣṭhatrī*) Great Lady (*Maheśī*) therein. This is so because the Śricakra is the form (*Rūpa*) of the Śrī *Sundarī*.

Śruti¹ says: 'Alone She was at first. She became nine-fold'.

The *Vāmakeśvara*² demonstrates this non-difference in the passage beginning: '[The five Śaktis produce and the four Fires withdraw]. From the union of the five Śaktis and the four Fires there arises the Cakra. [When the Supreme Śakti sees Her own becoming (*Sphurattā*) then there arises the Cakra], and ending with 'The *Cakra* is the form

(*Rūpa*) of the Kāmakalā in that it is the going forth (*Prasāra*) of the Supreme Reality (*Paramārtha*).'

He speaks of the oneness of these two (the *Cakra* and the *Devatā*) in their subtle form (*Sukṣma-rūpa*) by which is meant that which cannot be defined. The Śricakra in its subtle form is the *Bindu*. Its indefinableness is clearly shown in the passage: 'In the Supreme *Ākāśa* which is the *Bindu* (*Baindave paramākāśe*) and so on.' The indefinableness of the *Devatā* has also been shown in the verse beginning: 'The *Vidyā* (object of knowledge) is also like this (*Tādṛgātmā*)'. In the same way there is no difference between the two in their gross form. The grossness of the *Cakra* is in expansions beginning with the *Trikona* (triangle) and ending with the *Caturasra* (square), and the grossness of the *Devatā* is in Her gradual unfolding from *Tripurāmbikā* to *Tripurā śakti*.³ The *Cakra* and the *Devatā*, who are as above described, cannot be separated. He gives a

¹ *Tripurā-mahopaniṣad*, 3. The meaning of the Text is – She was One as in *Bindu cakra* and became ninefold in the nine triangles of which the Śricakra consists.

² *Nityāṣoḍaśikā*, VI-8-24. The portion within the brackets has not been quoted by the Commentator, but added by the Translator to make it more intelligible to English readers. By "own" is meant "inherent".

³ The nine *Cakras* of which the Śricakra is composed are presided over by the Devī under nine different names, indicative of Her nine different aspects. These names are – (1) *Tripurā*, (2) *Tripureśvarī*, (3) *Tripurā-sundarī* (4) *Tripurā-vāsinī*, (5) *Tripurā-śrī*, (6) *Tripurā-malinī*, (7) *Tripurā-siddhī*, (8) *Tripurāmbikā*, (9) *Mahātripurasundarī*. The first of these is in the Bhūpura and the last is in the Bindu. The *Āvaraṇa Śaktis* of each of these are classed as (1) *Prakatā*, (2) *Guptā*, (3) *Guptatarā*, (4) *Sampradāyā*, (5) *Kulakaulā*, (6) *Nigarbhā*, (7) *Rahasyā*, (8) *Atirahasyā* and (9) *Parāpara-rahasyā*, respectively.

reason for it when he says that *Parā*, whereby is meant *Ādiśakti*, is the subtle form of both these.

The *Catuśśati* says⁴: ‘The Mother of the origin of the three Lokas is both gross and subtle’. There is thus no difference between these two (*Cakra* and *Devatā*) for the wise.

*Śruti*⁵ also says: ‘All this verily is the *Brahman*’. Also⁶: ‘All men vanquish him who thinks that all things are outside the *Brahman*’.

The author himself says (V. 36): ‘When She, this *Maheśī Parā*, unfolds as the *Cakra*’. Thus it is established that the **Cakra** is the **form** (*Rūpa*) of the *Devatā*.



⁴ *Nityāṣoḍaśikā*, IV -4.

⁵ *Chāndogya*, 3-14-1.

⁶ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 2-4-6.

VERSE 22, 23 & 24



*madhye cakrasya syāt parāmayam vindutattvamevedam |
ucchūnam tacca yadā trikoṅarūpeṇa pariṇatam spaṣṭam ||*

*etatpaśyantyāditritaya nidānam tribījarūpam ca |
vāmājyeṣṭhāraudrī cāmbikayānuttarāmśabhūtāḥ syuḥ ||*

*icchājñāna kriyāśāntāścāitāścottarāvayavāḥ |
vyastāvyaastatadarṇadvayamidamekādaśātma paśyantī ||*

The Centre of Cakra is Parā (*Parā-maya*). This is Bindu tattva. When It becomes ready to evolve (*Ucchūna*) It transforms and manifests as a triangle. This (triangle) is the source of the three (Śaktis, namely) Paśyantī and others and is also the three Bījas. Vāmā, Jyeṣṭhā, Raudrī, Āmbikā and Parāśakti are one portion (of the Śricakra)¹. Icchā, Jñāna, Kriyā and Śāntā are the other portion². (These make nine). The two letters (*A* and *Ha*) taken separately and collectively make with the foregoing nine the eleven-fold Paśyantī³.

COMMENTARY

He here desires to speak of the Śricakra composed of nine triangles (*Nava-yonyātma*) which is the manifestation (*Vikāsa-rūpa*) of the Śaktis *Parā*, *Paśyantī* and the rest. He first speaks of the Bindu called Sarvānandamāya which is *Parāśakti* (*Parā śakti-maya*).

Cakra. By this is meant the Cakra of nine triangles (*Nava-yonyātma*) and by **Centre of the Cakra**, Bindu tattva. Bindu-varūpa has been already explained. The word **This** (*Idam*) signifies that It is in Itself (*Svasākṣātkṛtam*) *Parā* or *Para-śakti-svarūpa*. When this Bindu tattva manifests then there is the Triangle. He therefore says **When it becomes ready to evolve.** (*Ucchūnam tacca yadā*). The meaning is that when under the influence of the *Adṛṣṭa* of creatures the Baidava Tattva is about to evolve. It transforms Itself into a triangle which is of the shape of a *Śṛṅgāṭa* (*Trikoṅa-rūpeṇa*

pariṇatam spaṣṭam) and the product of the union of *A* (*Anuttarānanda*) and *I* (*Icchā*). So it has been said: ‘When Citi which is *Anuttarānanda* is united with *Icchā Śakti*⁴ there is a triangle which has the beauty of the joy of Creation (*Visargāmōda-sundaram*), Its light being dimmed as *Mātr*, *Māna*, *Meya* and *Pramā*. Its form is that of a *Śṛṅgāṭa* or Triangle’.

This triangle is the source of the three Paśyantī and others (*Paśyantyādi-tritaya-nidānam*) that is, the three Śaktis *Paśyantī*, *Madhyamā* and *Vaikharī* there originate. It is the Śaktis *Icchā*, *Jñāna* and *Kriyā* which change into the three Śaktis *Paśyantī*,

¹ *Anuttarāmśa-bhūta* = *lit.* First part. These are the five inverted triangles or Yonis of the Śriyantra.

² *Uttarāvayavāḥ*. These are the triangles with their apex upwards in the same.

³ *Ekādaśātma paśyantī*.

⁴ That is, A + I = E. The tip of Ekāra is formed like a triangle. The *Subhagodaya-vāsanā* cited in the Madras Ed., p. 6 says that the three Śaktis *Icchā* and others indicate the creation etc. of creatures (*Paśu*).

Madhyamā and *Vaikharī*. So it has been said in Vāmakeśvara Tantra (*Nityāśoḍaśikā*, vi. 38-40)⁵:

“She is then *Ichhā śakti* manifesting as *Paśyantī* (*Paśyantīrvapuṣā sthitā*). Similarly as *Jñāna śakti* She is *Jyeṣṭhā* and *Madhyamā Vāk* in the form of a straight line (*Ṛju-rekhā-mayī*) and protector of the universe. This same *Śakti* (*Parā*) as *Kriyā* (*Śakti*) is *Raudrī* and *Vaikharī Vāk* in the form of the body of the universe (*Viśvavigrahā*) and as that of a luminous triangle (*Śṛṅgāṭa-vapurujjvalā*). At the time of Dissolution and Her return journey (*Pratyāvṛtti-krameṇa*) She reassumes the state of Bindu (*Baindavam rūpaṃ*).”

The Triangle is the Svarūpa of the three Bijas⁶ Vāgbhava, Kāmarāja and Śakti which are the three sections (*Khaṇḍa*) of the whole.

*Śruti*⁷ also speaks of:

“The three Puras⁸ (Bindus) which move the Universe (*Viśvacarṣaṇī*) along three paths are placed the letters *A, Ka*, wherein *Tha*⁹ wherein again abides the impenetrable transcendent greatness of the *Devatās*.” These and other similar texts in *Śruti* speak of the celestial *Śṛṅgāṭa-pīṭha* wherein abide the *Mātṛkā* (Mantra) of three sections which is the source wherefrom arise all Mantras. The Vāmakeśvara Tantra (*Nityāśoḍaśikā*, VI, 48) also says:

“All these¹⁰ are denoted by (*Vācyā-rūpāṇi*) the complete Mantra of three Bijas (*Bījatrītaya-yukta*) both singly and collectively¹¹. The Triangle containing three Bijas, the three Śaktis, the three Liṅgas is the imperishable Kāmakalā.”

He next says that the Bindu tattva which becomes the Śricakra of nine Triangles (four of which are upward and (five) downward turned is also the adorable *Parā* (*parā-bhaṭṭārikāmayaṃ*). He mentions *Vāmā*, *Jyeṣṭhā*, *Raudrī* and *Ambikā* by name and by the particle *ca* (**also**) he implies *Parā Śakti* and says that these are the five Śaktis indicated by the five reversed triangles which are the first portion (*Anuttarāṃśabhūtaḥ* = *Anuttarāṃśāḥ*), of the Śricakra; whilst the Śaktis *Ichhā*, *Jñāna*, *Śāntā* are the **other portion** or the four triangles with their apex upward. (*Uttarāvayavaḥ* = *Ūrdhvarmukha-trikoṇa-catuṣṭaya-tūpāḥ*).

The meaning of this is that *Vāmā*, *Jyeṣṭhā*, *Raudrī*, *Ambikā*, *Parā Śakti*, as also *Ichhā*, *Jñāna*, *Kriyā*, *Śāntā* are unfolding stages of *Parā* (*Parā-vīlasana-rūpāḥ*). These nine Śaktis are the nine triangles in the Śricakra. This has been fully dealt with in the Vāmakeśvara Tantra (*Nityāśoḍaśikā*, Ch. VI) in the passage which begins “When the *Paramā Kalā* wishes to see the *Sphuraṇa*” and ending “*Vaikharī* the body of the Universe”¹².

⁵ The two lines preceding are not given in the Commentary; vv. 36-40 describe the evolution of *Paramā Kalā* or *Parā Śakti*:

“When *Paramā Kalā* wishes to see the *Sphuraṇa* (desire to create), of *Paramaśiva* then She assumes the form of *Ambikā* and is called *Parāvāk*. When She is about to manifest (*Sphuṭī-kartum*) the universe then in its seed state, She is *Vāmā* and is so called because She throws out (or vomits; *Viśvasya vamanāt*). She then assumes the form of a goad (which is of crooked form)”.

⁶ Namely, *Aim*, *Klīm*, *Sauḥ*.

⁷ *Tripurā-mahopaniṣad*.

⁸ i.e. *Tripurā*.

⁹ That is, the letters of the alphabet is in the *A-Ka-Tha* triangle. This is formed by three Bindus between each of which there are 16 letters forming the sides of the triangle. At the corners of the triangle are the remaining three letters *Ha*, *La*, and *Kṣa*.

¹⁰ That is *Liṅgas* mentioned in the preceding verses namely the four *Itara*, *Bāṇa*, *Svayāmbhu* and *Parama*.

¹¹ *Kula-kaulamayāni*. *Kula* = *Mātṛ*, *Māna*, *Meya*, that is *Svayāmbhu*, *Bāṇa* and *Itara-Liṅgas*. *Kaula* is the collectivity of these three or *Parama-liṅga*.

¹² See the passage quoted *ante*, p. 180.

The two letters taken separately and collectively

(*Vyastā-vyasta-tadarṇa-dvayam*). By Vyasta is meant individual (*Vyaṣṭi-rūpaṁ*) and *Avyasta* is collective (*Samaṣṭi-rūpaṁ*). That is the two letters (*A* and *Ha*) which are the first and the last of the alphabet hold as in a vice between them all the letters of the Alphabet which are the mother of all Mantras within which two letters again is the Experience (*Bhāva*) of complete 'I-ness' (*Pūrṇā'ham*) which is the union of Prakāśa and Vimarśa or Bindu tattva the eternal Kāmakalā. All this is well established in the Upaniṣads.

Here Para-brahman as complete 'I-ness' is to be known as united with His consort and as the doer of all actions: so the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (1.4.1) says:

“This Ātmā there verily was in the beginning”¹³ and thereby establishes that the Parabrahma-svarūpa is complete and transcendent 'I-ness' (*Pūrṇa-parāhamīta-maya*) and union of celestial Wife and Husband. The text proceeds in the passage quoted below to show that It shines forth as the creator of all Tattvas:

“He verily did not enjoy. For one (who is alone) does not enjoy. He desired a second. He verily was like woman and man in close embrace. He made

this Self of His into two. Thereafter arose Husband and Wife”¹⁴ and so on.

So also in another place in the same Upaniṣad (1-4-17) occurs the following Text:

“This Ātmā verily was alone in the beginning. He desired 'May there be wife (*Ḍyāyā*) of mine'. May I be born as many. May I have possessions (*Vitta*). May I do acts. This verily is His desire (*Kāma*)” and so on.

Texts like these show the Brahman as united with His consort.

The two letters (*A* and *Ha*) already described will, if taken together and carefully considered, be seen to have eleven aspects. The Śaktis Parā to Śāntā are ten if considered individually and are collectively one. Therefore Bindu tattva is **elevenfold** (*Ekādaśātmaka*) and is the cause of Paśyantī Śakti. *Śruti* (*Chāndogya* 3-14-1) says:

“All this verily is Brahman, from which all comes, in which all lives, into which all returns. Therefore adore It with mind free from either attachment or avarice.”

In this way the inseparateness of Cause and Effect is established.



¹³ See Verse 13 *ante* commentary.

¹⁴ sa vai naiva reme tasmādekākī na ramate sa dvitīyamaicchat | sa haitāvānāsa yathā strīpumāsau sampariṣvaktau | sa imamevātmānaṁ dvedhā'pātayattataḥ patiśca patnī cābhavatāṁ



VERSE 25



*evam kāmakaḷātmā tribindutattvasvarūpavarṇamayī ।
seyam trikoṇarūpaṃ yātā triguṇasvarūpiṇī mātā ॥*

In this way the united Kāma and Kalā are the (three) letters whose own form (Svarūpa) is the three Bindus. It is She who is the Mother manifest as the three Guṇas as (Triguṇa-svarūpiṇī) and who assumed the form of the triangle.

COMMENTARY

He next wishes to speak of the mode of creation of the Cakra wherein are the Cakras of eight triangles, ten triangles and so on, and before doing so explains the origin of the triangular Cakra which precedes them all.

In this way (*Evam*). That is in manner already described.

The united Kāma and Kalā (*Kāmakaḷātmā*). By Kāma is meant Parama-siva who is pure Illumination (*Prakāśaika-svabhāvaḥ*) and is the first letter which is *A*¹, and Kalā signifies Vimarśa the last of letters (*Ha*). This dual character (*Ubhayātmatva*) indicates the possession of experience of complete ‘I-ness’ which is its true nature (*Svābhāvika-paripūrṇahambhāva-sālitvam*). This has been fully explained in verse 7. The Kāmakaḷātmā who as previously described is “**the (three) letters whose own form (Svarūpa) is the three Bindus**” (*Tribindu-tattva-svarūpavarṇamayī*). The three Bindus are the Red, White and Mixed Bindus previously spoken of. Bindu tattva is the Bindus previously described. The three letters, by which is meant the Vāgbhava and other Bijas, are forms of the three Bindus. In the *Rahasyāmnāya* (Śiva addressing the Devī) says:

“Know this, that the beautiful Śṛṅgāṭa which is Thy very self (*Svātma-śṛṅgāṭa*) is made up of three Bindus mixed, white and red. It is ancient (*Prāṇa*)

and is the Praṇava itself. It can be known by the three lines (which compose it). It is pure knowledge (*Samvinmātra*) and is of the nature of Śiva. The red is self-sustained (*Nirādhāra*). The other (white) is its beloved and their union is the mixed Bindu. In the Union is the pure state which is Nirvāṇa”. **It is she** (*Sā iyam* = she (is) this). By *Sā* (She), the author draws the attention of his reader to Her who is the supreme reality as the experience of the massive Bliss which is Cit (*Cidānandaghana-rasa-paramārthā*) and who is the essence of all the tradition (*Sakalm-nāya-sārabhūtā*)² and by *Iyam* (This), he as it were points Her out as the One who is being experienced (*Anubhūyamānā*) as the Ātmā who witnesseth (*Ātmā-sākṣitvena*) by great Yogīs who are immersed in the feeling of their identity with the Universe (*Viśvāhambhāvanā-sālibhiḥ*) and is **Manifest as the three Guṇas** (*Triguṇa-svarūpiṇī*). She is Icchā, Jñāna, Kriyā which appear (in the Paśu) as the three Guṇas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. It is through these Guṇas as instruments that She effects Creation and the like. She is therefore the **Mother** (*Mātā*) the one Creatrix of all the World. She is also the Parā Śakti who transcends all the Tattvas (*Sarva-tattvātītā*) for *Śruti* (*Aita. I-I.*) says:

“This Ātmā alone, verily, was in the beginning”.

Assumed the form of the triangle (*Trikoṇa-rūpaṃ yātā*) that is she changed into the form of a triangle

¹ *Anuttarākṣarātmā*.

² *That is*, it is She to whom all the *Āmnāyas* point.

as a result of the union of the supreme Bliss symbolised by the letter *A* with *Ichhā*, Creative Will, symbolised by the letter *I*. This is the Cakra³ of triangular form which is most secret and called *Sarva-siddhi-pradāyaka* or that which accomplishes all.

The wise know no difference between the Maheśī and the Cakra. Parā Herself is the subtle form of both these (*Devatā* and Cakra). There is no difference between the two in the gross form also.



³ The first triangle which contains the Bindu which is the first transformation of Bindu.



VERSE 26 & 27



*ekā parā tadanyā vāmādivyaṣṭi mātrsrṣṭyātmā |
tena navātmā jātā mātā sā madhyamābhīdhānābhyaṃ ||*

*dviividhā hi madhyamā sā sūkṣmā sthūlākṛtisthitā sūkṣmā |
navanādamayī sthūlā navavargātmā ca bhūtalipyākhyā ||*

She who is next (to *Parā*) is Paśyantī the Creative Self (*Sṛṣṭyātmā*) out of which originated the individual mothers (*Vyaṣṭi-mātr*) *Vāmā* and others. By reason of this She became ninefold form (*Navātmā*). She the mother *Madhyamā* is as shown by her two names of two kinds (*Dviividhā*), namely, subtle (*Sūkṣmā*) and gross of form (*Sthūlākṛti*). As subtle She is ever existent and the nine sounds (*Navanāda-mayī*); as gross She is the nine groups (of letters) and bears the name of *Bhūtalipi*.

COMMENTARY

He next speaks of Paśyantī who is a manifestation of *Parā* as of ninefold aspect (*Navātmaka*) in the form of the *Cakra* of nine triangles (*Navā-yoni-cakrātmanā*).

“**She who is next**” (*Tadanyā*). That is Paśyantī who is the manifestation of *Parā* (*Parā-vikāśabhūtā*) is the **Creative Self out of which originated the individual mothers *Vāmā* and others** (*Vāmādivyaṣṭi-mātrī-srṣṭyātmā*) or in other words She is the nine Śaktis beginning with *Vāmā* and ending with *Śāntā* (*Vāmādisāntāntaśakti-navakamayī*). It is on this account that the mother (*Mātā* = *Jananī*) is of ninefold aspect (*Navātmā*), that is, she becomes the *Cakra* of nine triangles which is the Cause of the appearance of the group of Śaktis beginning with *Vāmā* and ending with *Śāntā*.

Vāmā is so called because she as producer of the universe (*Viśva-janayatrī*) throws out the Universe of five elements (*Prapañca*) which is within the *Śṛṅgāta* (*Śṛṅgāṭāntaḥ-sthita-prapañca-vamanāt*). *Jyeṣṭhā* is all-beneficent; *Raudrī* destroys or dispels all ailments and *Āmbikā* grants all things desired.¹ So it has been said:

“*Vāmā* (is so called) because of (Her) throwing out the Universe, *Jyeṣṭhā* (is so called) because she is beneficent (*Śivamayī*), *Raudrī* destroys all disease and burns up² (the fruit of) all actions (*Dogdhrī cākhila-karmaṇām*)”.

Of *Āmbikā* the *Pratyabhijña* says that “She the impulse to becoming (*Sphurattā*) is pure Being (*Mahāsattā*)”. She is therefore *Parāvāk* who excels all (*Sarvātisāyini*) and sees Her own impulse to manifestation which is Her own and full Self. (*Parupūrṇa-svarūpa -svātma-sphuraṇāvalokana-caturā*).

The *Vāmakeśvara* (*Nityāṣoḍaśikā* vi. 36) also says:

“When the *Paramākālā* sees the impulse to becoming (*Sphuraṇa*) of the *Ātmā* then she assumes the form of *Āmbikā* and is called *Parāvāk*.”

The Śaktis *Ichā*, *Jñāna* and *Kriyā* take the forms *Paśyantī*, *Madhyamā* and *Vaikharī* (*Paśyantī-madhyamā-vaikharī-rūpāḥ*). This has been stated in detail in the *Vāmakeśvara* (*Nityāṣoḍaśikā*) in the verses quoted in commentary to verse 22 *ante*.

¹ Verses 26-28 are quoted by Lakṣmidhara in his Commentary to the *Saundaryalaharī*, v. 34 and he reads them differently.

² The text is *Dogdhrī* = She who milks or brings forth, but probably is a mistake for *Dagdhrī* = She who burns up.

Śāntā is Śakti as Consciousness (*Cinmayī Śakti*) who is all pervading (*Nirāṅkuṣā*): For *Śruti* speaks of “the transcendental (*Niṣkala*) actionless (*Niṣkriyā*) and tranquil (*Śāntā*).”³

He next speaks of the ninefold character (*Navātmatkatva*) of Madhyamā. Madhyamā is the state of Union (*Samarasāvasthā*) of Parā and Paśyantī. She is visible or realisable by Yogīs whose minds are inward turned (*Antarmukha*). This Śakti is **by Her two names** (which describe Her function) **of two kinds** (according to Her functions). She is either **Sthula (gross) or Sukṣma (subtle)**. As subtle She can be apprehended by the power of Samadhi. As gross She is capable of utterance as letters of the alphabet alike by the learned and illiterate. As subtle She is ever-existent⁴ (*Sthitā = Sarvādā-vartamānā*) and as such She is the nine sounds or Nādas (*Navanāda-mayī*). As gross She is the nine groups of the letters of the alphabet (*Navavargātmā*).

The sense of the above is this:

When the Great Mother Kuṇḍalinī who contains many kinds of sound does in consequence of the breath being restrained leave the place of Mitrāvaruṇa⁵ and after piercing the lotuses of Svādhiṣṭhāna and others goes upward to reach the place of Paramaśiva who is on the lotus of twelve petals. She is experienced by the great Sādhakas of Śiva⁶ when in Samādhi as their very own self (*Svātmatvena*). She is the nine sounds (*Navanāda-mayī*). This will be understood from the following text from the *Hamsopaniṣad*:

“We shall now make clear the meaning of Haṁsa and Paramahaṁsa to the Brahmācārin who has controlled his inclination (*Śāntā*) who has controlled his senses (*Dānta*) and who is devoted to

his Guru. This Haṁsa pervades all bodies like fire in wood and oil in sesamum seed. Knowing it, one reaches not death. The anus should (first) be contracted, then the air should be led upwards⁷ and made to go round the Svādhiṣṭhāna three times, it should then be made to go through Maṇipūra and Anāhata and the airs (*Prāṇān*) should be stopped in the Viśuddha Cakra. The Ājñā Cakra and then the Brahmaṁdhra should be meditated upon. Whilst so meditating (the Sādhaka) should constantly think of himself as the Trimātra (*Omākāra*). He should next meditate upon Nāda, as extending from the Mūlādhārā, which Nāda is like pure crystal (*Śuddha-sphaṭika-samīkāśa*) for this is verily Brahman the Paramātmā.” By this the Upaniṣad teaches that the Svarūpa of the Mūlakuṇḍalinī, who pervades the body from the Mūlādhārā to the Brahmaṁdhra, is Nādātmaka.

The text in a later passage says:

“When Haṁsa becomes dissolved into (*Lina*) Nāda then (arises the state which is) *Turyātīta*, *Unmanā* (mindless) and *Ajapopasamhāra* (= cessation of breathing).”

Nāda is divided (by this Upaniṣad) as follows:

“Sound arises of ten kinds. Ciṇī is the first, Ciṇī-ciṇī is the second. The third is bell sound (*Ghaṅṭā-nāda*). Sound of conch shell (*Śamīkha-nāda*) is the fourth. The fifth is the sound from a stringed instrument (*Tantrī-nāda*). The sound of cymbals (*Tāla-nāda*) is the sixth. The seventh is the sound of a flute (*Veṇu-nāda*) and eighth that of a kettledrum (*Bherī-nāda*). The ninth is the sound of clay-made drum (*Mṛdaṅga*) and the tenth the sound of thunder (*Megha-nāda*). After the ninth has been experienced the tenth⁸ should be practiced. The mind dissolves in that. When the mind is so

³ *Śāntā* is the state of absolute quiescence when there is no activity or motion; *Samarasāvasthā* is the state in which two are in a state of absolute and complete absorption the one by the other.

⁴ *That is*, of course during the *Kalpa*.

⁵ *That is*, Mūlādhāra.

⁶ Mahāmāheśvaras – These are Sādhakas who have attained a high degree of perfection – adepts.

⁷ *That is*, from the Mūlādhāra.

⁸ The tenth is Param-Brahma.

dissolved when Saṁkalpa and Vikalpa⁹ cease when merit and demerit¹⁰ are burnt then there appears (*Prakāśate*) Sadā-śiva who is Śakti (*Śaktyātmā*), Omnipresent (*Sarvatrāvasthita*), Light itself (*Svayam-jyotiḥ*), Pure (*Śuddha*), Illumined (*Buddha*), Eternal (*Nityā*), Stainless¹¹ (*Nirañjana*), and Tranquil (*Śāntā*).

“**She is the nine groups of the letters**” (*Nava-vargātmā*). The nine groups are A, Ka, Ca, Ṭa, Ta, Pa, Ya, Śa and Ḷa¹².

By **sthula (gross)** is meant that she is within the range of all ordinary experience (*Sarva-viśaya-vyavahāriṇī*).

Bhūtalipis are manifested letters (*Bhūtās ceti lipayaśceti*). The existingness (*Bhūtatvam*) of the letters consists in their capability of being uttered or expressed by particular efforts (*Ceṣṭā*). The production of these letters again is merely mechanical (*Tac-ca kalpanāmātram eva*) for the letters themselves are energies (*Tējorūpa*) and therefore Śakti (*Śaktyātmaka*). The Devī (*Madhyamā*) bears the name or designation (*Āghya*) of these.

The *Tantra-sadbhāva* also says:

“The Mātṛkā who (manifested) in this world in inseparable relation with (*Samanvitā*) the Supreme Light (*Para-tejaḥ*), pervades all things from Brahmā to the worlds. (She) O adored of the Suras (= *Devas*)

pervades the whole universe as Nāda. Beloved, (She is) like the letter *A* in all letters. I shall now speak so that Thou mayest clearly understand it. The Śakti who is Supreme (*Parā*), Subtle (*Sūkṣmā*) and Formless (*Nirākārā*) is asleep coiled round the Bindu in Mūlādhāra¹³ like a serpent. There also is asleep the self-controlled (*Yamī*) Great Yogī who knows and desires nothing. With Her belly distended by the Moon, Fire, the Stars, the fourteen Worlds (*Bhuvanāni caturdaśa*) She is in a swoon as if poisoned. Awakened by the Great Sound (*Paraṇa ninādena*) and churned by the fire in Her belly, She becomes free from Her bondage (*Bandhana*) and conscious (*Jñāna-rūpiṇī*). The churning¹⁴ is circular in movement and continued in the body of the Śakti till She wakes up. When the first unfolding or Division (*Bheda*) takes place Bindu attains the state of Nāda. Thus (or by this) Kuṇḍalī, the Subtle Time (*Kāla-sūkṣmā*) is awakened. The Bindu which comes after (*Uttaraḥ*) Śakti (Nāda) is the Lord (*Prabhu*) who is the four Kalās¹⁵ (*Catuṣ-kalāmaya*). In the middle part or second stage of churning (*Madhyamanthana-yogena*) there is straightness (Ṛjutva i.e. a straight line) which is Jyeṣṭhā Śakti beautifully placed between two Bindus. The imperishable Kuṇḍalī (*Amṛta-kuṇḍalī*) is led by Vaikharī to the Bindu-nāda state (*Bindu-nādatva*)¹⁶. She is (then) known as Lākinī¹⁷ between the two Bindus. She is then Tripadā (Third step) and spoken of as Raudrī.

⁹ The state of selection and rejection, of this and that of all variety; in short, ordinary finite experience.

¹⁰ Puṇya and Pāpa.

¹¹ *That is*, one in whom there is no doubt, the perfect experiencer.

¹² This according to the commentator. Others divide the vowels into two groups and exclude the last.

¹³ In the text the word is “*Hyd Bindu.*” But this is possibly a mistake for *Mṛd Bindu*, by which is meant the Svayambhu-liṅga in Mūlādhāra which is the region of Earth = Pṛthvī = Mṛd. Here the cosmic Mūlādhāra is spoken of.

¹⁴ *That is*, the cosmic *manthana*.

¹⁵ *Nivṛtti, Pratiṣṭhā, Vidyā, Śanti.*

¹⁶ *That is* the place where the first Bindu is.

¹⁷ *Lakinī = Raudrī; Ḍākinī = Brāhmī; Rākinī = Jyeṣṭhā or Vaiṣṇavī.*

She is (also) called Rodhinī because she obstructs the path of Liberation (*Mokṣamārga-nirodhanāt*)¹⁸. Aṁbikā's form is that of a portion of the moon, – She is Ardha candrikā, the half-moon. The Parā Śakti who is one does in this way appear as three. From them¹⁹ as thus distinguished (*Ābhyo*

viviktābhyah) have originated the nine group of letters (*Navavargakah*) which are associated (*Yuktāḥ*) with them. It is she (*Parā śakti kuṇḍalī*) who is thought of in nine ways being indicated by the nine groups (*Nava-vargopalakṣitā*)²⁰.



¹⁸ As it were a barrier preventing what is above descending and what is below ascending and straying away from the true path. Or the reading may probably be *Bodhinī* and *Nibodhanāt*.

¹⁹ The three Śaktis Vāmā etc.

²⁰ The text seems in part correct. Madras edition throws no light on the right reading, but quotes the passage practically in the same terms.



VERSE 28



*ādyā kāraṇamanyā kārya tvanayoryatastato hetoḥ |
saiveyaṃ na hi bhedaḥ tādātmyaṃ hetuhetumatodīṣṭam ||*

The first (i.e. subtle Madhyamā) is the cause (*Kāraṇa*) and the other (i.e. gross Madhyamā) is the effect (*Kārya*). Inasmuch as such is (the relation) between these two, therefore the latter (i.e. the gross) is the (same as the) former (i.e. the subtle). There is verily no difference between the two), for the identity of cause (*Hetu*) and effect (*Hetumat*) is axiomatic (*Diṣṭa*).

COMMENTARY

The subtle Madhyamā which is the cause of the Madhyamā of gross form is one with the latter and that is stated here.

“**The first**” (*Ādyā*) i.e. the one first spoken of (*Pūrvoktā*), whereby is meant the subtle (*Sūkṣmā*) Madhyamā already described. She is **the cause** (*Kāraṇa*) because she precedes the other (*Anyā*). This latter is gross (*Sthūlā*) i.e. **the effect** (*Kārya*) because it emanates from the other (*Tājanyatvāt*). As there is this relation of cause and effect between these two (*Anayoḥ*), namely, the subtle and gross Madhyamā, therefore, **the latter** (*Iyam*) is **the**

former (*Sa = She*). There is no difference (*Bheda*) between the two. **Identity** (*Tādātmya* = that in which there is neither difference nor non-difference) is the characteristic of **Cause** and **Effect**, as we see in the case of mud and the (mud-made) pot ¹. *Śruti* (*Chāndogya* 6. I. 4) also says:

“O Gentle one, by one lump of clay all things made of clay are known. The variation is in names given to it when spoken of. The clay alone is real.”

The same thing becomes different only as an object of speech. When anything is spoken of it becomes of two kinds.



¹ e.g. A mud-pot becomes mud and pot.



VERSE 29 & 30



*śaśasapavargamayam tadvasukoṇam madhyakoṇavistārah |
navakoṇam madhyam cetyasmmisciddīpadīpate daśake ||*

*tacchāyā dvitayamidam daśāracakradvayātmanā vitatam |
taṭacakavarga catuṣṭayavilasana vispaṣṭakoṇa vistāram ||*

The Cakra of eight triangles which is constituted of the letters Śa, Ṣa, Sa and the Pa-varga is an expansion (*Vistāra*) of the middle triangle. These nine triangles together with the Bindu make the ten (*Daśaka*) which are lighted by the light of Cit (*Cid-dīpa*). The two lights (*Chāyā-dvitayam*) of these ten are spread forth¹ as two Cakras, of ten triangles each, of which the inner set of ten triangles display the Ta-varga and Ṭa-varga and the outer of ten triangles display the Ca-varga and Ka-varga.

COMMENTARY

He next speaks of the appearance (*Āvirbhāva*) of Vaikharī Śakti by a description of the Cakra of eight triangles and other Cakras (all) which are the going forth (*Prasaraṇā*) of the Light and Energy (*Tējas*) of the middle triangle (*Madhya-śrīṅgāṭa*).

The Cakra of eight triangles is called *Sarva-roga-hara* (All-disease-destroyer). The eight triangles of which it consists are the eight letters namely the letters Śa, Ṣa, Sa and the five letters of the Pa-varga. It is an expansion (*Vistāra = Vikāsa*) of the **middle triangle** (*Madhya-trikoṇa*). The **nine triangles** (*Navakoṇa*) are the middle triangle and the eight triangles (here spoken of); these **together with the Bindu** (*Madhyam ca*) make a group of ten (*Daśaka*). This group of ten is illumined (*Dīpita*) by the **light of Cit** (*Cid-dīpa*), that is, it is lustrous with the rays which surround Tripurā – the Mother seated in the Bindu Cakra (*Bindu-cakrā-dhirūḍhāmbā*) who is

Light Herself (*Tējomūrti*). So it has been said *Nityāṣoḍaśikā*. VI. 14):

“The Bindu is the seat of union of the Fire of final Dissolution and Citkala”². In this way the ten and their **two lights** (*Chāyā-dvitayam = Kānti-dvitayam*) are spread out. By **the ten** (*Daśaka*) is meant the aforementioned three Cakras³ which are a mass of light (*Tējorāsi-maya*). *Chāyā* here means *Kānti* (Lustre, light).

These two lights become **spread forth** (*Vitata*) as the **two Cakras of ten triangles (each)**. These are the inner and outer Cakras of ten triangles each which also are of boundless brilliance (*Niravadhika-Tējo-maṇḍala*). **The two lights** (*Kānti-dvitaya*) relate to these two. The two Cakras are called *Sarvarakṣākara* (All-protector) and *Sarvārtha-Sādhaka* (All-accomplisher). By **Spread** (*Vitata*) is meant evolved (*Pariṇata*). So it has been

¹ *Vitatam*. Bhāskararāya who cites portions of these two verses in his commentary to VI. 16 of *Nityāṣoḍaśikā* reads *Drṣṭam* (seen). The two lights are the two Cakras of ten triangles each. There are in the whole Yantra 43 triangles.

² *Baindavāsana-samrūḍha-samvartānala-citkalām*. *Baindava = Bindu*. This Bindu is the *Āsana* by which is meant that it is the source of the inclination of seeing (*Īkṣaṇātmaka-vṛtti*): On this is seated the union of *Samvartānala* and *Cit-kalā*. By *Samvortānala* is meant the Fire of *Pralaya*, the all-devourer *Kālāgni-rudra* and *Cit-kalā* is Tripurā (Bhāskararāya).

³ *Bindu, Trikoṇa, Vasukoṇa* (eight triangles).

said (*Nityāṣoḍaśikā*. VI, 15: “The Cakra of ten triangles is the form of the manifested light of the nine triangles”⁴. The ten letters of the Ta-varga and

Ṭa-varga are the triangles in the inner Cakra of ten triangles and the ten letters of Ca-varga and Ka-varga are the triangles in the outer Cakra.



⁴ *Nava-trikoṇa-spurita-prabhā-rūpa-daśāarakam*. The nine triangles taken individually and collectively with the Bindu make ten.



VERSE 31



etaccakracatuṣkaprabhāsametam daśārapariṇāmah |
ādisvaragaṇagata caturdaśavarṇamayam caturdaśāramidam ||

The light of these (the first) four Cakras is the fully evolved (second or outer) Cakra often triangles. (Then) appeared the Cakra of fourteen triangles wherein are the fourteen vowel letters beginning with A.

COMMENTARY

The lights of these (first) four Cakras (*Etaccakracatuṣka-prabhā-sameta*). The four Cakras are Bindu, Trikoṇa, eight-triangled and inner ten-triangled Cakras. The second or outer Cakra of ten triangles is here described as the **fully evolved (second or outer) Cakra of ten triangles** (*Daśārapariṇāmah*). This second ten-triangled Cakra is united (*Sameta = Samyukta*) with the light of the first four Cakras, that is the light of the four Cakras spreads over this Cakra on account of its proximity to the others. So it has been said (*Nityāśoḍaśikā. VI. 17*):

“United with the light of the four Cakras is the evolved (Cakra).”

In this verse is also described the appearance of the Cakra of fourteen triangles wherein are the fourteen **vowel letters beginning with A**. This Cakra is called *Sarva-saubhāgya-dāyaka* (Grantor of all-prosperity).





VERSE 32



*parayā paśyantyāpi ca madhyamayā sthūlavarnarūpiṇyā |
etābhirekapañcādaśākṣarātmikā vaikharī jātā ||*

Parā, Paśyantī and Madhyamā in her form or aspect as (the unuttered) gross letters, –
by these three is produced Vaikharī who is the fifty-one letters of the alphabet.

COMMENTARY

After giving a description of the Cakras beginning with the Bindu and ending with the Cakra of fourteen triangles, he here speaks of the appearance of Vaikharī Śakti. The Nature (*Lakṣaṇa*) of Parā and other Śaktis has already been described. What is said here is that Vaikharī¹ who is all-sound (*Sarvaśabdātmika*) is the creatrix

(*Nirmātri*) of the entire universe (*Akhilaprapaṅca*) which is composed of the collectivity of the letters (*Akṣara-rāśimaya*) beginning with *A* and ending with *Kṣa*. Vaikharī has been spoken of (*Nityāṣoḍaśikā*. VI. 40) as pervading the universe or as the “world-form (*Viśva-vigrahā*).”



¹ *Madhyamā* as *Sūkṣmā* is *Navanāda-mayī* and as *Sthūlā*, *Navavargātmā*. The letters are formed as *Madhyamā* but unuttered. See vv. 26 and 27 *ante*, *Madhyamā* as the unuttered gross letters in the evolution of speech is the stage immediately preceding *Vaikharī*.



VERSE 33



*kādibhiraṣṭabhirūpacitamāṣṭadalābjaṃ ca vaikharīvargaiḥ |
svara-gaṇa samuditametaddvayaṣṭa dalāmbhoruham ca saṃcintyam ||*

The eight groups of letters beginning with the Ka group which are Vaikharī Śakti are on the petals of the lotus of eight petals and it should always be borne in mind that, this, the lotus of sixteen petals has on its petals the (Śaktis which are the) vowel letters.

COMMENTARY

He here says that the two Cakras, *Sarva-saṃkṣobhaṇa* (All-moving)¹ and *Sarvāśā-pari-pūraka* (Fulfilling all hopes)² are composed of the Vaikharī letters (*Vaikharī-varṇātmaka*).

Are Vikharī Śakti. By this is meant that these, **the eight groups of letters** (*Aṣṭa-vaikharī-vargāḥ*) the first of which is the **Ka = group** (*Kādi*) *Vaikharī śakti* (*Vaikharī śakti-svarūpāḥ*).

The lotus of eight petals. (*Aṣṭa-dalābja*). This is the *Sarva-saṃkṣobhaṇa cakra*. **This the lotus of sixteen petals has on its petals the vowel letters**

(*Svara-gaṇa-samuditam etad dvyāṣṭa-dalāmbhoruham*). The vowel letters (*Svara-gaṇa*) are the letters *A* and others, sixteen in number which are (*Samuditam = Samyag-bhāvitam*) the petals of the sixteen-petalled lotus.

This (*Etat*). By this we are to understand that the author points to something visible (*Pari-dṛśyamānam*).

Should always be borne in mind. (*Saṃcintyam*) that is, should be meditated upon (*Sarvadā bhāvanīyam*).



¹ Or it may be All-moulding.

² Or it may be Filling-all space.



VERSE 34



bindutrāyama yatejastritaya vikāraśthitāni vṛttāni |
bhūbimbatrayametata paśyantyādītrimātrvisrāntiḥ ||

The (three) circles¹ are the transformations (*Vikāra*) of the three lights emanating from the three Bindus. These are the circles in the Bhūpura (*Bhū-bimba-trayaṁ-etat*). The three mothers Paśyantī and others² here rest.

COMMENTARY

The (three) circles (*Tāni vṛttāni*). These are the circles which surround the Cakras of fourteen triangles, the lotus of eight petals and the lotus of sixteen petals.

Three Bindus (*Bindu-traya*). These are the previously spoken of red, white and mixed. Bindus.

The three lights (*Tejaś-tritaya*) are of the substance (*Tanmaya*) of the three Bindus as they proceed therefrom.

By speaking of the three circles as the three lights the Cakra is shown to be composed of the threefold division of Moon, Sun and Fire (*Soma-sūryānala-trikhaṇḍamaya*); so *Āgama* says:

“The *Mātrkā Cakra* is of three divisions consisting of Moon, Sun and Fire.”

By **transformations** (*Vikāra*) we have to understand the three circles of the three Bindus and their lights. In these circles abide the Śaktis³ *Aṇimā* and others, *Brāhmi* and others and *Sarva-saṁkṣobhiṇī* and others.

The three mothers Paśyantī and others here rest (*Paśyantyādi-tri-mātr-visrāntiḥ*). The meaning of this is that the three Śaktis, Paśyantī, Madhyamā and Vaikharī are up to this place luminous (*Vijṛṁbhamāṇā*), that is, they function from the Trikoṇa to the Bhūpura. This has been fully dealt with in the *Vāmakeśvara (Nityāṣoḍaśikā, VI. 36-40)*.



¹ The three lines are according to some immediately outside the sixteen-petalled lotus.

² *i.e.* Madhyamā and Vaikharī.

³ As to the place of these Śaktis there are divergent views.



VERSE 35



*kramaṇaṃ padavikṣepaḥ kramodayastena kathyate dvedhā |
āvaraṇaṃ gurūpaṃktidvayamidamambā padāmbujaprasaram ||*

Movement is either Pada-vikṣepa¹ or Kramodaya and is therefore said to be of two kinds, namely, the Śaktis² who surround Her and the line of Gurus. These two are the movements of the lotus feet of the Mother (*Amba-padāmbuja-prasaraḥ*).

COMMENTARY

After having fully described the Śricakra of Mahātripurasundarī he, in fifteen verses (35-49), speaks of the group of Śaktis in the Cakra which surround Her (*Āvaraṇa-cakrāntargata śakti-nikurumba*) and of the Guru maṇḍala which is near Her, as the unfolding (*Parīṇati*) of the body or limbs (*Avayava*) of the Devī.

Movement (*Kramaṇa*). The word literally means walking (*Pada-krama*). Motion is effected by *Pada-vikṣepa* or by *Kramodaya*.

By **Padavikṣepa** is meant the power of Sundarī to produce countless Śaktis who are the countless millions of Her rays. *Śruti* (*Aruṇopaniṣad*) also says:

“The rays which are Self-originated are what made bodies (*Śarīrāṇi*).” *Bhairava-yāmala*³ also says:

“In the Bindu united with Sadāśiva is the Maheśvarī who creates, maintains and withdraws the Worlds (*Jagadut-patti-sthitisarīnhāra-kāriṇī*) and is beyond the Tattvas (*Tattvātītā*). She is Light itself (*Jyotī-rūpā*) and transcendent (*Parākārā*). O Śive! emanating from Her body are rays in thousands, two thousand, hundred thousand, ten millions, hundred millions there is no counting

their great numbers. It is by and through Her that all things moving and motionless shine. O Maheśānī! It is by the light of this Devī that all things become manifest. There is nothing which bereft of Her light can be manifest. Without the creative thinking (*Citi*) of Her who is Cit (*Cid-rūpā*) and Śiva Śakti this moving and motionless world would of a certainty be enveloped in Darkness (*Āndhyaṃ āpadyate nūnam*).

“O Maheśvarī! of the countless millions of rays which are Moon, Sun and Fire (*Soma-sūryānalātmanā*) there are three hundred and sixty which are spread throughout (*Vyaśnuvānāḥ*) the Brahmāṇḍa which is in the midst thereof. Fire has one hundred and eight. Sun one hundred and sixteen and Moon one hundred and 36 rays. O Śaṃkarī, these illumine the macrocosm (*Brahmāṇḍa*) and the microcosm (*Piṇḍāṇḍa*) also. The Sun (illumines) the day, the Moon the night, and Fire the twilights (morning and evening): thus is time divided (*Prakāśayantaḥ-kālāmste*): therefore these three (Sun, Moon and Fire) are time (*Kālātmakās-trayaḥ*). Three hundred and sixty days make a year and Śruti⁴ says that Mahādeva who is

¹ The forms of *Kramaṇa* are explained in the commentary which follows. *Pada-vikṣepa* literally means “step” in a defined direction. *Kramodaya* = gradual expansion and unfolding in all directions.

² *Āvaraṇaṃ* i.e. *Āvaraṇa-Śaktis*. These obstruct men from seeing the Devī like a patch of cloud which is much smaller than the sun yet prevents it being seen.

³ Lakṣmīdhara in his commentary on *Saundaryalaharī* v. 24 points out that the passage in *Bhairava-yāmala* beginning: “It is by the light of this Devī” explains the Śruti text which says “There is no sun, no moon” quoted under verse 1 of this book.

⁴ See *Śāṅkhayāma-Āraṇyaka* I. *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa* 1. 6. 2.

lord of creatures (*Prajāpati*) is the year (*Hāyanātmā*).”

By **Kramodaya** is meant going forth (*Prasaraṇa*) of the Devī as the Guru maṇḍalas⁵ of the Divya, Siddha and Mānava groups whose number is endless and whose nature is illumination (*Prakāśātmaka*). **Śaktis who surround Her.** *Āvaraṇam* (= anything that surrounds or encloses or prevents the view) is used in the text to signify the countless Śaktis abiding in what are commonly called Āvaraṇa Cakras of the Devī. By **line of Gurus**

(*Gurupaṅktiḥ*) is meant the circle or Maṇḍala of Gurus (as above described). These two are the going forth (*Prasara = Prasaraṇa*) or efflorescence (*Vijṛmbhaṇa*) of the lotus feet, that is, feet which are (*Śrī pāda yuga*) of the Mother Tripurā.

So it has been said:

“The light (*Mahaḥ = Tejāḥ*) of Tripurā is (it is so declared) divided in many million ways but in the midst of these shines transcendent Mahātripurasundarī Herself.”



⁵ Cf. *Bhāvanopaniṣad*. I. *Śrī guruḥ sarva-kāraṇabhūta-śaktiḥ*. The Guru is the Śakti, the Cause of all; also see *Tantrarāja* (XXXV. 2) (Kādimata) *Gururādyā bhavoc-chaktiḥ* – The Guru is the primordial Śakti.



VERSE 36



*seyam parā maheśī cakrākāreṇa pariṇameta yadā |
taddehāvayavānām pariṇatirāvaraṇadevatāssarvāḥ ||*

When She, this all-excelling Great Queen changes into the form of the Cakra, then the limbs of Her body change into Āvaraṇa devatas.

COMMENTARY

The author now speaks in an orderly form of the mode of Her going forth (*Prasāra-prasaraṇī*).

She, this (*Seyam*). By this the author emphasizes that She is the mass of continuous and endless light and energy (*Aparic-chinnānanta-tejo-rāśi-mayī*).

All-excelling (*Parā = Sarvotkr̥ṣṭā*) Great Queen (*Maheśī*). By this is to be understood that She is conscious of Her all-embracing imperial dominion (*Sāmrājya*) and powers (*Sam̐pad = Vibhūti*), that She is Bliss eternal, boundless and immense and that She is adored by countless millions of Yoginis.

Into the form of the Cakra (*Cakrākāreṇa*). By Cakra here is meant the Śricakra made up of nine Cakras the first of which is Bindu and the last *Trailokyamohana*. This is the Cakra which is spoken of (*Nityāśoḍaśikā*, VI. I3) as “the Cakra of nine Cakras wherein are nine different Mantras.” Changes into (*Pariṇameta*). That is when “She sees the Sphurattā of the Ātmā,¹ by which is meant when She sees the Ātmā who is complete Bliss and changes or assumes another form. (*Pariṇameta = Ākārāntaram āvaheta*).

Limbs of Her body change into

(*Taddehāvayavānām pariṇatīḥ*). Her body (*Deha*) is a mass of light (*Tējahpunjātmaka*). The limbs (*Avayava*) of the body are the rays. ‘Change’ is assumption of another state or condition (*Pariṇatīḥ = Āvashāntarāpattīḥ*).

Here the surrounding Devatās (*Āvaraṇa-devataḥ*) are the countless Śaktis such as the groups of *Vasīnī* and others, *Aṇimā* and others who are part of the ocean of Consciousness-bliss (*Cidānandasamudrātmaka*). The countless millions of Śaktis appear and disappear like bubbles (*Budbuda*) on the face of the ocean.

Śruti² says:

“That in which all beings (*Bhāvaḥ*) disappear and from which those which disappeared reappear again and again disappear and grow again like bubbles.”

Also *Āgama* (*Nityāśoḍaśikā* VI. 55) says:

“Such is the Tejas (Light and Energy) of which the Cakra is composed, the Śaktis therein being like heaving waves.”



¹ *Nityāśoḍaśikā* VI. 10 and *Yoginīhṛdaya* I. 10.

² This is seemingly *Cūlikopaniṣad* v. 18 but the reading is slightly different from the printed text.



VERSE 37 & 38



*āsīnām bindumaye cakre sā tripurasundarī devī |
kāmeśvarān kanīlayā kalayācandrasya kalpitottamsā ||*

*pāsān kuśekṣucāpa prasūnaśarayañcakāñcita svakarā |
bālāruṇāruṇāṅgī śaśibhānu kṛśānu locanatritayā ||*

She (who is) Devī Tripurāsundarī abides in the Bindumayacakra. (There) She is seated in the lap of Kameśvara, a digit of the moon is placed by Her as an adornment on Her forehead. She holds in Her hands the noose, the goad, the sugarcane bow and the five flowery arrows. She is red like the rising sun. The Moon, the Sun and the Fire are Her three eyes.

COMMENTARY

Before giving an account of the Āvaraṇa-Śaktis, namely, Vaśinī and others he here describes the nature (Svarūpa) of the Chief or Principal Devatā (Mūladevatā) .

By the **Bindu-maya cakra** is meant the Supreme Ether (Paramā-kāśa). The Bindu has elsewhere been spoken of as Paramākāśa (Baindave paramākāśe). The Bindu is called Sarvānandamāya cakra (Cakra of All-bliss).

By Cakra is meant the Pīṭha in which She may unite and enjoy with the Ātmā. (Ātmā-saṅkramaṇa-viharanārha-pīṭha).

Śruti says:

“Wherein She moved that became the Cakra.”¹

“**Abides in**” (Āsīnā) that is She is shining above the Bindu (Bindū-pari-pradeśe virājamānā). “**She (who is) Devī Tripura-sundarī**” (Sā Tripurāsundarī-Devī.) The pronoun She (Sā) is used here to impress on the mind the fact that She is the Tripurāsundarī who is not limited by space or time (Deśakālākāranavācchinnā) is the very Self of That

(Tat-svarūpiṇī) and adorable (Sprhaṇīya) as She is the Cause of all (Sarvakāraṇatvena).

She is seated in the lap of Kameśvara

(Kāmeśvarānka-nīlayā). By lap (Aṅka) is meant the left thigh. Her abode or seat is the left thigh of Kameśvara who is the Lord adored by all (Śrīnātha). So it has been said in Bhairava-yāmala:

“The knowledge (Vidyā) of the greatness (Kalā = Vibhūti) of Para śakti is in the form of the Śricakra (Śrī cakrākāra-rūpiṇī)². In the middle of it is the place of the Bindu and in it is the Supreme Lady. She is united (Samprktā) with Sadāśiva and is beyond all Tattvas (Sarva-tattvātigā) and ever-existent (Satī). O Īśvarī! The Cakra of Tripurāsundarī is the universe itself (Brahmānandākāram).”

Devī. This word means that She enjoys Herself (Vinodini) in the work (Vyāpāra) of Creation and the like of the universe.

A digit of the moon is placed by Her, as an adornment, on Her forehead (Kalayā candrasya kalpitottamsā). The digit (Kalā) is the one which is the life of the universe (Viśva-jīvinī). The word

¹ Yād ea caṅkramat taccakramabhavat. The word “cakra” is derived from the root kramu = to move, to step out, to evolve or emanate.

² According to another reading of this text, the first portion of the translation would read thus: Kalā (= Hārda-kalā) = Vidyā (i.e. the Mantra of 15 letters) = Parā śakti who assumes the form of, or manifests as, the Śricakra.

Kalpita, that is, placed (used) shows that the region of the Moon (*Candra-maṇḍala*) is merely an accessory (*Upakaraṇa*) for enjoyment of Bhagavatī.

Noose (*Pāśa*) represents *Icchā śakti* (*Icchā śakti-svarūpa*) which is the bondage causing the distinction between the individual self and the Supreme Spirit (*Svātma-rūpa-bheda-bandhana*).

Goad (*Aṅkuśa*) represents *Jñāna śakti* which is the means (*Upāya*) whereby the difference (*Bheda*) between Sva (Brahman), and Rūpa (Form) is destroyed. **The sugarcane bow and the five flowery arrows** (*Ikṣcāpa-prasūna-śara-pañcaka*)

represent *Kriyā śakti* which is cause (*Sādhana = lit. instrument*) of attachment (*Avarjana*) to things (*Ākāra lit. Forms*) outside one's self (*Svabhīna*)³. The sense of this is that it is the Śaktis – *Icchā*, *Jñāna* and *Kriyā* which in obedience to Her behest assume the forms of *Pāśa* and the like and remain in Her service (*Tadupāsanam ācaranti*).

So the *Vāmakeśvara* (*Nityāṣoḍaśikā* VI. 53) says:

“The resplendent one holding in her hand the noose (*Pāśa*) which is Will (*Icchā śakti*), the goad (*Aṅkuśa*) which is Knowledge (*Jñāna śakti*) and the arrows and the bow which is Action (*Kriyā śakti*).”



³ As to *Pāśa*, *Aṅkuśa*, bow and arrows compare *Bhāvanopaniṣad* 21-24.



VERSE 39



tanmithunam guṇabhedā dāste bindutrāyātmake trayakṣe |
kāmeśī mitreśa pramukha dvindvatrayātmanā vitatam ||

That couple (Kāmeśvara and Tripurāsundarī) are in the triangle which is constituted by the three Bindus (*Bindu-trāyātma*) and by reason of change of aspect (*Guṇabhedāt*) she assumes the form of three other couples the first of which is Kameśī-Mitreśa¹.

COMMENTARY

The author here speaks of the celestial couple who is the very self of the Guru-maṇḍalas (*Guru-maṇḍala-svarūpa*) of the Divya, Siddha and Mānava lines (*Ogha*) of Gurus who are seemingly different but not really so (*Aviśeṣa-bheda-bhinna*) **That couple** (*Tanmithunam*). By the word “That” it is to be understood that the couple Kāma-kāmeśvarī recognised in all Upaniṣads is here meant.

The meaning is that it is in the Supreme Spirit (*Paramātmā*) which divides Itself into Female and Male and enjoys as the couple (*Mithuna-rūpeṇa viharatī*). Śruti also (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 1. 4. 3) by the text which begins “He verily did not enjoy because one cannot enjoy” speaks of the Brahman who

within Itself enjoys as the paired male and female (*Mithunātma-viharaṇaśīla*).

Āgama (*Rahaśyāgama*) also says that Paramaśiva who is the paired or united (*Mithunī-bhūta*) *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa* brought down (*Samavata-rayat*) all the Tantras:

“Sadāśiva Himself remaining in the positions of (both) Teacher (*Guru*) and Disciple (*Śiṣya*) by words cast in the form of questions and answers brings down Tantra (on Earth).

The couple (*Mithuna*) who are the united Kāma and Kāmeśvarī assume the forms of *Mitreśanātha-Kāmeśvarī*, *Uddiśanātha-Vajreśvarī* and *Saṣṭhīśanātha-Bhagamālinī* as the three pairs (*Mithuna*) of the Divya, Siddha and Mānava lines (of Gurus)².



¹ Tripurā is in the centre Bindu. The surrounding Three Bindus make the inverted triangle. In the single Bindu at foot She is Guru of the *Tretā yuga*. In the upper right Bindu She is the Guru of the *Dvāpara yuga* and in the upper left Bindu of the *Kali yuga*.

² See *Tantrarāja* (Vol. VIII, Tāntrik Texts) Chap. I. 7. and Chap. II.

Under V. 52 *post*; the names of the three Gurus and their Śaktis are given differently. Possibly one or the other portion of the text is incorrect.



VERSE 40



*vasukoṇanivāsinyo yāstāḥ sandhyāruṇāvāsinyādyāḥ |
puryaṣṭakamevedaṁ cakratanossam̐vidātmano devyāḥ ||*

Those that abide in the Cakra of eight triangles are Vaṣini and the others¹ who are red like the evening sun. This (Cakra of eight triangles) is the eight-fold (subtle) body, of the Devī, which is the Cakra and the Self thereof is the Supreme Experience (*Sam̐vid*).

COMMENTARY

From here onwards he describes the form and nature (*Svarūpa-bhāvana*) of the surrounding Devatās (*Āvaraṇa-devatāḥ*) “**Those that abide in the Cakra of eight triangles**” (*Vasukoṇa-nivāsinyāḥ*). The Cakra of eight triangles is the Cakra called *Sarva-rogaḥara* (All-disease-destroyer). The eight Śaktis **Vaṣini and others** abide in this Cakra. They are powerful to grant the bliss arising from the experience of complete ‘I-ness’ (*Pūrṇāhambhāva-dāna-samarthāḥ*). It is because they are able to give the experience of complete ‘I-ness’ that this Cakra is Rogahara. For it has been said:

“The sense of imperfection is disease and the source misery.” (*Apūrṇam-manyatām vyādhiḥ kārpanyaika-nidānabhūḥ*). These Śaktis shine like the evening sun and are therefore described as **red like the evening sun** (*Sam̐dhyāruṇāḥ*). The Devī is

the **Supreme Experience** (*Sam̐vidātma*) by which is meant that Her own form (*Svarūpa*) is Knowledge-in-Itself. *Śruti* (in reference to the Brahman) speaks of “Being (*Satyam*), Knowledge (*Jñānam*) and Eternity (*Anantam*)”.

Āgama says that the “Devī Tripurā is Svasam̐vid”. By **Devī** is meant that She in Her desire “to be many” is playfully moving about and active (*Viharaṇa-svabhāvā*).

The Cakra of eight triangles Is the eight-fold (subtle) body of the Devī (*Cakratanoh puryaṣṭakam*) in the form of the Śricakra (*Cakratmikā*). By Cakra is meant the Śricakra. The subtle body (*Puryaṣṭaka* = Eightfold body) is so called because of the eight which compose it. They are as the *Svacchanda Tantra* says:

“Citi, Citta, Caitanya, Cetana, Indriya karma, Jīva, Kalā and Śarira.”²



¹ These Śaktis, are called *Rahasya-yoginīs* (see *Nityāṣoḍaśikā* VIII. 162) because they are subtle.

² Different stages of Cit Śakti: Bhāskaraṛāya in his commentary on *Nityāṣoḍaśikā* VIII, 160-164 enumerates what constitute the eightfold *Sthūla* body of the Devī. They are (1) *Karmendriyas*, (2) *Jñānendriyas*, (3) *Manas* etc., (4) *Prāṇas*, (5) elements *Viyat* etc., (6) *Kāma*, (7) *Karma* and (8) *Tamas*.



VERSE 41



*tadvīṣayaṁvṛttayastāḥ sarvajñādisvarūpamāpannāḥ |
antardaśāranilayālasanti śaradindusundarākārāḥ ||*

As for Her powers, they having assumed the forms of Sarvajña and others abide in the inner ten-triangled Cakra. They are beautiful like the autumnal moon.

COMMENTARY

Her powers¹ (*Viṣaya-vṛttayah*) are in close proximity to the Cakra of eight triangles.

They (*Tāḥ*). By this is emphasized their well-known power (to assist the Sādhaka) to maintain the identity of his self and the (Supreme) Ātmā (*Svātmaikyarūpa-rakṣaṇa-dhāriṇītvēna prasiddhāḥ*)² **Having assumed the form of**

Sarvajña and others (*Sarvajñādisvarūpam āpannāḥ*) these powers become the ten Śaktis *Sarvajñā* and others and abide in the Cakra of ten triangles known by the name of *Sarva-rakṣākara*. They are called *Nigarbha-yoginīs*³ and are white and clear **like the autumnal moon** (*Śaradindusundarākārāḥ*).



¹ *That is*, they are the inner Cakra of ten triangles.

² This Cakra is so close to the Bindu. He who realises them is near to Self-realisation.

³ The expression *Nigarbha* has been defined by Bhāskararāya under VII. 48 and VIII. 157 *Nityoṣoḍaśikā*.



VERSE 42



tadvāhyapañktikoṇeṣu yoginyassarvasiddhidāḥ pūrvāḥ |
devīdhīkarmendriya-viṣayamayā viśadaveṣabhūṣādhyāḥ ||

The Yoginīs in the series of angles outside this (last) are those the first of whom is Sarvasiddhiprada. They are the objects of the Jñānendriyas and Karmendriyas of the Devī and are adorned with white raiment and ornament.

COMMENTARY

In the series of triangles outside this (last) (*Tadvāhyapañkti-koṇeṣu*). By “this” is meant *Sarvarakṣākara cakra*, outside which is the Cakra called *Sarvārtha-sādhaka*. (Accomplisher of All-aims).

In the series of angles (*Pañkti-koṇeṣu*). By this we are to understand that the angles of the triangles of which the *Sarvārtha-sādhaka cakra* is composed are in proximity to the triangles of the *Sarvarakṣākara cakra*. The Yoginīs in this Cakra (*Sarvārtha-sādhaka*) are called *Kula-kaulas*¹ and they are the ten Śaktis *Sarvasiddhipradā* and others.

They are the objects of the jñānendriyas and karmendriyas of the Devī (*Devī-dhī-karmendriya-viṣaya-mayāḥ*). These ten Śaktis are the objects of sense perception such as sound is of hearing and the like. They are clad in white raiment and their adornment is also white (*Viśada-veṣa-bhūṣādhyāḥ*). The sense of this is that these Śaktis are inseparable from or identical with (*Abheda-rūpāḥ*) the Mantra, the Devatā and the Sādhaka’s² self and are white, clad in white raiment and grant Siddhi.



¹ Cf. *Nityāṣoḍaśikā*. VIII. 151-55.

² That is, they help the Sādhaka to realise his identity with the Mantra and the Devatā.



VERSE 43



*bhuvanāra cakra bhavanādevīmanukaraṇa vivaraṇasphuragāḥ |
sandhyāsavarṇavasanaḥ sañcintyāssaṁpradāyayoginyaḥ ||*

Those (Śaktis) who have their places in the Cakra of fourteen triangles are the unfolding movements of the fourteen instruments (of mind and senses) of the Devī. They are clad in garments (red) like the evening sun and are the Sampradāya-yoginīs and they should be meditated upon as above.

COMMENTARY

This Cakra of fourteen triangles is called Sarvasaubhāgya-dāyaka (Giver of All-prosperity). The **fourteen¹ instruments** (*Manu-karaṇa*) of the Devī are five of Jñāna (*Pañca-jnanendriyāṇi*), the five of Karma (*Pañca-karmendriyāṇi*) and *Manas, Buddhi, Ahaṁkāra, Citta*. **Unfolding Movements** (*Vivaraṇa-sphuraṇaḥ*). The movements (*Sphuraṇaḥ*) of the senses are in the **Cakra of**

fourteen triangles (*Bhuvanāra cakra*) as the **Śaktis** therein. The Devī Herself is in this Cakra as the fourteen Devatās who are Her fourteen instruments. The Śaktis or Devatās are *Sarvasaṁkṣobhiṇī* and others. They are called *Sampradāya-yoginīs* because they are forms of the Ādi śakti (*Ādi śakti-mayatvena*). **They should be meditated upon** as unmanifest (*Avyakta*).



¹ The word Manu is used for 14 and Bhuvana is used for the same number. There are 14 Manus and 14 Bhuvanas.



VERSE 44



*avyaktamahadahāṅkṛtitanmātra svīkṛtāṅganākārāḥ |
d̥viradacchadanasarojejayanti guptatarayogīnyah ||*

Avyakta, Mahat, Ahaṅkṛti and the (five) Tanmātras having assumed womanly forms abide resplendent in the lotus of eight petals. They are known as the Guptatara-yoginīs.

COMMENTARY

By **Avyakta** (unmanifest) is meant the *Avyakta tattva* i.e. *Prakṛti*, by **Mahat** or *Mahat tattva* is meant Buddhi and by **Ahaṅkṛti** is meant *Ahaṅkāra tattva*. The **Tanmatras** are the five Tanmātras of Pṛthivī and others. These make eight. These eight have in this Cakra assumed womanly forms (*Svīkṛtāṅganākārāḥ*). They are forms of the Devī (*Devyātmikā*).

They are called *Guptatara-yoginīs* because they are within¹ (*Antaraṅga-bhūtā*) the *Mūla-devī*. These eight Śaktis who are *Anaṅga-kusumā* and others abide in the Cakra of eight petals which is called *Sarvasaṅkṣobhana*. **Abide resplendent** (*Ĵayanti*) i.e. they are there excelling all (*Sarvotkarṣeṇa vartante*).



¹ *Antaraṅga* = *lit.* comprehended; inseparable.



VERSE 45



bhūtānīndriyadaśakam manaśca devyā vikāraśoḍaśakam |
kāmākarsīnyādiśvarūpataḥ śoḍaśāramadhyāste ||

The Bhūtas, the ten Senses and Mind (*Manas*) are the sixteen variations (*Vikāra*) of the Devī. As Kāmākarsīṇī and others (*Kāmākarsīnyādiśvarūpataḥ*) they dwell in the lotus of sixteen petals.¹

COMMENTARY

By **the Bhūtas** is meant the elements of “Earth” and others (*Prthivyādīni*). The ten senses are the sense of perception and action (*Jñāna-karmobhaya-lakṣaṇa*). These fifteen and **Mind (Manas) are the sixteen variations of the Devī** which are in the Cakra of sixteen petals which is

called *Sarvāśā-pari-pūraka*, as the sixteen Śaktis *Kāmākarsīṇī* and others (*Kāmākarsīnyādi-śoḍaśa-saktyākāreṇa*). In the Cakra called *Sarvāśā-pari-pūraka* (Fulfiller of All-hopes)² dwell the *Gupta-yoginīs*, *Kāmākarsīṇī* and others who are the vowels (*Svarātmikāḥ*).



¹ Cf. *Bhāvanopaniṣad*, (Rk. 13).

² Or, that which fills up all the points of compass, that is, all space.



VERSE 46



mudrāstrikhaṇḍayā saha saṁvinmayyassamucchitāssarvāḥ |
ādimahī grhavāsābhāsābālārka kāntibhissadrśā ||

All the Mudrās including Trikhaṇḍā are Saṁvit and excel all. They are in the first (innermost) section of the Bhūpura and resemble the young sun in their lustre.

COMMENTARY

Including Trikhaṇḍā (*Trikhaṇḍayā saha*) that is, along with the Trikhanda Mudrā. **Are Saṁvit** (Saṁvinmayī) *i.e.* inherent in Cidghana, Massive Consciousness or Brahman (*Cidghana-niṣṭhāḥ*).

They...Bhupura. (*Ādimahī-grhavāsāḥ = Ādimacaturasra-nilayāḥ*) that is they abide in the first or innermost section of the square which is called *Mahī-grha*, (*Bhūpura* and the like).¹

That the Mudrās are of the nature of Saṁvit is shown in the following text:

“Mudrā moves in the Ether or Cit (*Cid-vyomacāriṇī*). *Khecari Mudrā* is the state of Śiva (*Śivāvasthā*).

The ten Mudrās *Sarva-saṁkṣobhiṇī* and the rest are great Śaktis who dispel fear and give great Bliss or happiness. So it has been said:

“Mudrās are so called because they free men from (the evil influences of) Grahas and the like and destroy the many bonds (which enslave men)²”

These Mudrās are the Queens (*Adhiṣṭhāna-nāyikā*) of the nine Cakras beginning with the square (*Caturasrāḍī*) and ending with the Bindu (*Baindavānta*). This has been dealt with in the Vāmakeśvara (*Nityāṣoḍaśikā*, VI. 57-71)³ where it is shown how *Cit Śakti*, when She makes manifest and cognises the Universe as “This” on Herself as the basis assumes the forms of the several Mudrās there mentioned.



¹ This Bhūpura consists of three sections as the following verses show.

² ‘To free’ is in Sanskrit ‘*Muc*’ “Dissolve”, “Destroy” is *Drāva-yanti* in Sanskrit and is derived from the root *Dru* = to dissolve, fuse. In the passage quoted from *Nityāṣoḍaśikā*. ‘*Drāvayṇa*’ is used in the sense of “fusion.”

³ The commentator quotes only the beginning and end of the passage. The Mudrās require a more full treatment and that is why a brief summary is given here.



VERSE 47



*ādhāranavakamasyā navacakratvena pariṇatam yena |
navanāthasaktayo'pi ca mudrākāreṇa pariṇatam yena ||*

Her nine Ādhāras¹ are transformed (*Parīṇata*) into nine Cakras. The Śaktis of the nine Nāthas therefore also become changed into (*Parīṇata*) the forms of the Mudrās (*Mudrākāreṇa*).

COMMENTARY

The **nine Ādhāras** are *Akula*², *Mūlādhāra*, *Svādhiṣṭhāna*, *Maṇipūra*, *Anāhata*, *Viśuddha*, *Lambikā*, *Ājñā* and *Bindu*. These are the Ādhāras of the Devī in the sense that She as the Upāsaka

(*Upāsaka-svarūpiṇī*) possesses these. Similarly the (nine) Śaktis of the nine Nāthas become the nine Mudrās.



¹ *That is*, The centres. Ādhāra means a “support”; Mūlādhāra = root support.

² The red lotus of thousand petals below the Mūlādhāra corresponding to the white *Sahasrāra* lotus. Cf. *Bhāvanopāniṣad* (*Rk*—13): ‘*Ādhāranavakam mudrā-śaktayaḥ*’ and Bhāskararāya’s note thereto.



VERSE 48



*asyāstvagādi saptakamākāraścaivamaṣṭakam spaṣṭam |
brāhmayādīmāṭṛrūpaṃ madhyamabhūbimbametadadyāste ||*

Her seven Dhātus skin and the rest and Her form manifest as the forms of the eight Mothers Brāhmī and others. They dwell in the middle Bhūbimba.¹

COMMENTARY

Seven Dhātus skin and the rest. (*Tvagādi-sapta-dhātavaḥ*). These seven Dhātus of the Devī and Her form (*Ākāra*) assume the shape of **the eight**

Māṭṛkas Brāhmī and others and abide in the middle section of the Bhūpura (*Madhyamā-bhūbimba-niketanagāḥ*).



¹ *Bhūbimba* = the disc or circle of the *Bhūpura* which is the square and forms the base of the Śricakra. These Śaktis are in the middle circle. The *Bhāvanopaniṣad* (*Rk*—12) says: *Kāma-krodha-lobha-moha-madamātsarya-puṇya-papamayā brāhmyādyāṣṭaśaktayaḥ*. And the *Tantrarāja* also says: *Urmayaḥ puṇyapāpe ca Brāhmyādyā mātarāḥ smṛtāḥ*.



VERSE 49



aṇimādisiddhayo'syāḥ svīkṛtakamanīya kāmīnūrūpāḥ |
vidyāntaraphalabhūtā guṇabhāvenāntyabhūniketanagāḥ ||

Her (eight) Powers, Aṇimā and others, assume the forms of beautiful young women¹ and are attainable by other practices (*Vidyās*). Being of secondary nature they are in the last (lowest) section of the Bhūpura.

COMMENTARY

Her (*Asyāḥ*) i.e. of the Parameśvarī **Her (eight) powers, Aṇimā and others** (*Aṇimādibhūtaḥ*). These are the eight *Siddhis* or *Bhūtis* the first in enumeration of which is *Aṇimā*. These are in the form of beautiful young women (*Kamanīya-kāmīnūrūpāḥ*).

Attainable by other Vidyās (*Vidyāntara-phalabhūtāḥ*) that is, these *Siddhis* or great powers are the fruits attainable by the practice of other *Vidyās* such as Haṭha-yoga and others.

Being of secondary nature (*Guṇabhāvena*).² These not being of a nature as important as the Highest Aim which is *Mokṣa* are to be considered negligible and ultimately discarded (*Guṇa-bhāvena* = *Upasarjanī-bhāvena*). **Are in the last section of the Bhūpura**, (*Antyā-bhūniketanagāḥ*). That is they are in the lowest (of the three) sections of the square. By worshipping Paramātmā in this manner the Sādhaka becomes the Great Lord (Parameśvara) Himself.



¹ The *Bhāvanopaniṣad* (*Rk.* 11 says):

Niyatiḥ śṛṅgārādayo rasā aṇimādayaḥ

and the *Tantrarāja* also says:

Śrīcakre siddhayaḥ prokta rasā niyatīsamūtāḥ.

² The word *Guṇa* is here used to mean “Secondary” or “Subordinate” as opposed *Mukhya* which means “Chief” “Foremost”.

VERSE 50



*paramāndānubhavaḥ paramagurunīvīśeṣabindvātmā |
sa punaḥ krameṇa bhinnāḥ kāmeśatvaṃ yayau vimarsāmsāt ||*

Parama Śiva who is the Lord and is one with the Bindu experiences the highest Bliss. It is He who in his Vimarśa (Śakti) aspect becomes gradually differentiated and assumes the form of Kāmeśa.

COMMENTARY

Having in manner described explained the stages of the unfolding of the Cakra (*Cakra-krama*) which is but a manifestation of Kāmakaḷā (*Kāmakaḷāvilāsanarūpa*), he now in his kindness towards his disciples commences to describe the series of Gurus beginning with Paramaśiva in four verses of which this is the first. For a true knowledge of the Cakra, the Devatā and Mantra can be gained by knowing the succession of Gurus who are Parameśvara (*Parameśva-rātmaka-gurukrama-jñāna-bhāvena labhyate*).

“Experiences the highest Bliss” (*Paramānandanubhavaḥ*). That is, He is the One who has the knowledge or experience (*Anubhava = Jñāna*) which excels all other bliss (*Parama = Sarvotkṛṣṭa*). This Ānanda or Bliss consists in experience as complete ‘I-ness’ (*Pari-pūrṇāhambhāva*). Śruti also says “other creatures experience a fragment of this Bliss”¹

Parama Śiva who is the Lord and is one with the Bindu (*Paramaguru-nirviśeṣa-bindvātmā*). By Parama Guru is meant the First Guru (*Ādinātha*) who is Parama Śiva. The Bindu is one with Him. (*Nirviśeṣa = Abhinna*), The Bindu is the Kāmakaḷā (*Kāmakaḷārūpa*). He whose Self (*Ātmā = Svarūpa*) is the Bindu is the Parama Śiva who is the First Lord or Guru (*Ādinātha-rūpī Paramaśivaḥ*).

The Upaniṣads contain various texts like the following: “Bliss is Brahman” (*Tait. 3-6.*) “Brahman

is Truth (or Being), Knowledge and Eternal” (*Tait. 2-9-1*). “To the (Brahman who is) pure Cit (*Cinmātra*), All-seeing (*Sarva-dṛṣṭā*), All-witnessing (*Sarva-śakṣī*), All-absorbing (*Sarva-grāṣa* = All devouring) who is the Adored of all (*Sarva-premāspada*), who is in Itself Being (*Sat*), Consciousness (*Cit*) and Bliss (*Ānanda*) dependent on nothing (*mītra*) and massive Experience (*Ekarasa*)”, (*Nri. Uttara. 5-8*); and again “This Ātmā is pure Being (*Sanmātra*), Eternal (*Nitya*), Knowledge (*Buddha*), Pure (*Śuddha*), Truth (*Satya*), Free (*Mukta*), devoid of Māyā (*Nirañjana*) and Omnipresent (*Vibhu*), Non-dual (*Advaya*), Bliss (*Ānanda*), Supreme (*Para*)” (*Nri. Uttarā 9-9*).

They lead to the conclusion that it is the very merciful Parameśvara, the supreme Truth as massive Consciousness and Bliss and as both Prakāśa and Vimarśa (*Cidānanda-ghana-paramārtha-prakāśa-vimarsātmā*) who divided His own Self into the Bindus making Kāmakaḷā and became Kāma-kāmeśvarī and other couples who are the Divya, the Siddha² and Mānava lines of Gurus. He thus becomes the whole body of the Gurus (*Guru-maṇḍalātmā*) and protects such as are truly devout. This is the sense. Śruti also says: “He is this Ātmā. The Ātmā verily is this Śakti. She is the Becoming (*Bhāva*) and non-Becoming (*Abhāva*), the Being and non-Being.”

¹ *Etasyaivānandasyānyāni bhūtāni mātrām upajīvanti (Bṛhadāraṇyaka 4-3-32).*

² *Siddha*—These form the second class of Gurus in all Tantras. Different schools or Sampradāyas have different names for the Gurus of the three classes.

If *Parama-guru-nirviśeṣabindvātmā* be read as two words as *Parama-guruḥ* and *Nirviśeṣa-bindvātmā* then the meaning will be that the Paramaguru which is another name for Ādinātha is the transcendent (*Nirviśeṣa-Niṣprapañca*) Bindu who is indicated by (*Lakṣaṇa*) Sat, Cit and Ānanda. So it has been said:

“The Supreme Ether—(*Ākāśa*) which is the Bindu which is transcendent (*Niṣprapañca*), is Sat, Cit and Ānanda, One without a second (*Nirabhāsa*), in whom there is no distinction of subject and object³ (*Nirvikalpa*) and is imperishable (*Nirāmaya*).”

The Parameśvara who is like this did Himself become (*Abhūt*) the *Gurumaṇḍala* the first of whom is Kāma-kāmeśvarī. “**It is He**” (*Saḥ punaḥ*). It is the Paramātmā already spoken of, who by

degrees (*Kramena*) becomes differentiated (*Bhinnaḥ*) in the manner to be later shown as the Divya and Siddha classes from His Vimarśa part (*Vimarśāmśāt*). By Vimarśa is meant His own Śakti as Kāmakalā. By part (*Aṃśa*) is meant half of this.

Assumes the form of Kameśa (*Kāmeśatvaṃ yayau* = Changed into the state of Kāmeśa). That is He himself became Kāmarāja. The sense of this is that it is the Paramātmā who of His own will divided His own self into Kāma and Kāmeśvarī and as the Teacher (*Guru*) and the Disciple (*Śiṣya*) brings down all Tantras. *Śruti* (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 1-4-3) also says:

“He divided this Ātmā into two; thereby arose Husband and Wife”.



³ Knower and object of knowledge.



VERSE 51



*āsinaḥ śrīpīṭhe kṛtayugakāle guruśśivo vidyām ।
tasyaidadau svaśaktyaikāmeśvāryai vimarśarūpiṇyai ॥*

Śiva the Guru who abides in the Uḍḍiyānapīṭha did in the Kṛta Yuga impart the Vidyā to Her, His own Śakti the Vimarśa-rūpiṇī Kāmeśvarī.

COMMENTARY

In this verse he further discusses what has been stated in the preceding verse. By ‘**Siva**’ is meant the Paramātmā who is the author of all (*Sarva-pravartaka*). Guru is he who instructs in Jñāna (*Jñānopadeṣṭā*). So it has been said that “the Guru is means (of success).” (*Gurur upāyah*); also¹:

“The word ‘*Gu*’ signifies darkness and the word ‘*Ru*’ signifies that which dispels it, Guru is so called because he dispels darkness.”

Who abides in the Uḍḍiyānapīṭha. (*Āsinaḥ śrīpīṭhe*). By this is meant that the abode of Śiva is the Uḍḍiyānapīṭha within the innermost triangle.

In the Kṛta Yuga (*Kṛta yuga-kāle*). By this we are to understand that it was in the beginning of Kṛta or Satya Age that Śiva imparted the knowledge of the Vidyā. By Vidyā is meant the Vidyā which is fully established in all Upaniṣads and whereby a man can realise his oneness with the Ātmā (*Ātmaikya-pradāyini*).

Did impart (*Dadau*). Fully instructed (*Upadideśa*). **Her, His own Śakti** (*Tasyāi svaśaktyai*). The force of the pronoun “Her” is to press on the reader’s

attention the fact that it is She who gives boundless happiness to all creatures (*Sarva-bhūtānām, niravadhi-kānanda-dāyini*). His own Śakti (*Svaśakti*). By this we are to understand that it is She who enables the Lord to manifest His own Being (*Svasva-rūpa-satta-sampradātri*). So it has been said:

“Even the Supreme if disunited from Śakti is unable to do anything. O Parameśāni! He is capable (of action) if He is united with Śakti.”

Vimarśa-rūpiṇī. She is so called because She is the Supreme Śakti which is (*lit.* is the resting place of) the supreme manifesting Bliss. (*Anuttarānanda-viśranti-sthāna-bhūta śakti-para-rūpiṇī*). So it has been said, (*Samketa-paddhati*) “The letter *A* is the first of all and is Prakāśa and the Supreme Śiva and the letter *Ha* is the last which is Kalā and is called Vimarśa.”

Kāmeśvarī. She is so called because She at all times and in every way grants all objects of desire (*Sarvābhiṣṭa-praddāyini*) and is one with one’s own Ātmā (*Svātmabhūtā*).



¹ *Kulārṇava Tantra XVII. 7.*



VERSE 52 & 53



seyāyamitrasamjñām sthāneśān jyeṣṭhamadhyabālākhyān |
citprāṇaviśayabhūtān tretāyugādikāraṇatrigurūn ||

bījatritayādhipatīn parīkṣya vidyām prakāśayāmāsa |
etairodhatritayām samanugrhītam gurukramo viditaḥ ||

She who is the Queen of the (three) places¹ and bears the appellations of the Eldest, the Middle or the Second and the Youngest and who is the object of enjoyment of Parama Śiva assumed the name of Mitradeva. It is She who having first purified the Gurus (by initiation) revealed the Vidyā to them who are the seeds of the (three) Ages (*yugas*) the first of which is Treta and who are the Lords of the three Bījas. It is by these (three Gurus) that the three groups or classes (*Ogha*) are maintained. Now has been said the order of the Gurus (*Guru-krama*).

COMMENTARY

The tradition (*Sampradāya*) relating to the Gurus may be put thus:

True that these two (Kāmeśvara and Kāmeśvarī) are of equal high degree (*Samatattvau*) and are identical (*Samau*) and Śakti ‘is ever young (*Ajarā*) and the Cause of the universe (*Viśvayoni*) and the Śāṅkhāyana branch (of the Ṛgveda) has said “primeval śakti is red (*Aruṇā*)² the mother of the universe (*Viśvajanyā*)” yet Parama Śiva who was desirous of revealing His secret system (*Rahasyatantra*) containing the essence of all the Upaniṣads did so by the aid of Kāmeśvarī Herself who is the Cause of all (*Sarvakāraṇa rūpiṇī*): as is shown by the expression “ *Viśva-yoni* or *Viśvajanyā*.”

After the creation of the universe in the First (*Ādi* i.e. *Satya* or *Kṛta*) Age abiding as He was in the *Uḍḍiyāna-pīṭha* which is replete with the Bliss of His own Illumination (*Prakāśānanda-sāramaya*) He under His name Śrī Caryānandanātha instructed

the adorable Lady who is one with Him in the rules relating to Śrīvidyā (*Śrīvidyā krama*). He Himself says:

“Verily do I adore the Great centre of the Cakra which is supreme Bliss and the innermost essence of Prakāśa and Vimarśa (*Anuttara-vimarśaika-sāra*) and pure experience (*Samvīn-maya*).”

She in the Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali Ages did in the forms of the Gurus mentioned below introduce the very secret system of Śiva (*Śāmbhava Tantram*). The order of the Gurus is as follows:

To understand the gem of Śrīvidyā (either of) two lines of (*Samtāna*), may be followed. They are the line of Kāmarāja and the line of Lopāmudrā. The line of Kāmarāja is to be found in every form of Vidyā (*Sakala-vidyānu-saṁdhyavicchinna*) and this has been said by even the Gurus of old. They say that the line of Lopāmudrā runs in sections (*Vicchinatayā pravartate*). There are in this seven Gurus of the Divya class four of the Siddha class

¹ The three angles of the triangle (*Kāmakalā*).

² The colour of the Rajas Guṇa of Kryā Śakti. The text quoted above is from the *Tripurā-mahopaniṣad* but greatly mutilated though the sense is not. It is the second half of the 14th Ṛk of that Upaniṣad and runs thus: —*Samapradhānu samasatitvau samojare tayoh śaktirajarā viśvayoniḥ*. As quoted in the text it is not quite correct.

and eight of the Mānava class³. The order of the Divya class is as follows. In the beginning of the Kṛta Age, Parama Śiva Himself who abides in the *Uḍḍiyāna-pīṭha* and is one (*Vimriṣṭa-tanu*) with Mahātripurasundarī who is His own Śakti (*Svātma-saktyākhyā*) is the first Guru under the name of *Śricaryanāndanātha*. So it has been said:

“She who is the body of Kāmarāja abides in the Uḍḍiyāna-pīṭha which is in the middle of the (first) triangular Cakra in a soundless state (*Asvarakāratām prāpya tryaśra-saṅketam adhyagāt*).”

At the apex of the inner inverted triangle which is *Kāmarūpa-pīṭha* abides Śrīmad Ūrddhvadevanātha who is the Guru of the Tretā Age and is one with Kāmeśvarī the presiding Devatā of Vāgbhava Bija. So it has been said:

“She who is at the apex of the inverted triangle is Kāmeśī abiding in *Kāmapīṭha*.”

At the right hand corner of the inner triangle which is the *Ĵalandhara-pīṭha* is *Ṣāṣṭhadevanātha* who is the Guru of the Dvāpara Age and who is in a state of inseparable union (*Militasvarūpa*) with Vajreśvarī who is (the presiding Devatā of) *Kāmarāja Bija*.

So it has been said:

“At the right-hand corner of the triangle which is the *Ĵalandhara-pīṭha* is Vajreśī”.

At the left hand corner of the middle triangle which is the *Pūrṇagiri-pīṭha* is Mitradevanātha who is the Guru of the Kali Age and is one with Bhagamālinī who is the Devatā of the Śakti Bija there. So it has been said:

“Bhageśī who abides in the *Pūrṇa-pīṭha* is in the left corner of the triangle”.

Mitreśadeva did in the beginning of the Kali Age bestow his grace on the venerated Lopāmudrā and Agastya, the couple refulgent for their great devotion (*Tapas*). Particulars about the seven who compose the Divya class can only be known from the Guru.

We now follow the text.

She (Sā). By this the aforementioned beloved (*Prāṇa-nāyikā*) of Parama Śiva is meant. She assumed⁴ the name of Mitradevanātha. Here the mention of Mitradeva implies the Gurus of the Tretā and Dvāpara Ages. She in turn becomes the Gurus of the Tretā and other Yugas and continues the tradition.

Lady or Queen of the three places (*Sthāneśa*). That is She is the presiding Devatā (*Īśa = Adhiṣṭhātrī*) of the apex, the right and left corners of the middle triangle where She abides as Kāmeśvarī, Vajreśvarī and Bhagamālinī respectively.

Bears the appellations of the the Eldest the Second and the Youngest. (*Jyeṣṭha-madhya-bālākhyā*). Jyeṣṭha means Eldest or most excellent. By this expression Śrīmad Ūrddhvadevanātha is meant. By Middle (*Madhya*) or Second Śrī Ṣāṣṭhadevanātha is meant and by Youngest (*Bāla*, which means a boy) is meant Śrī Mitradevanātha. The Devī bears these names.

The object of enjoyment of Parama Śiva (*Citprāṇa-viśaya-bhūta*). By *Cit-prāṇa* is meant Parama Śiva because, He is the Svarūpa of Cit and is Prāṇa itself (*Prāṇarūpa*).

The *Māṇḍukya Śruti* (1, 7) says:

“The wise think of the non-dual Śiva who is quiescent (*Śāntam*) and in whom the universe is

³ The *Lalitārcana-mañjarī* gives the names of the Gurus as follows. The seven of the Divya class are (1) Paraprakāśānandanātha, (2) Para Śiva-nandanātha, (3) Para-śaktidevyāmbā, (4) Kauleśvarānandanātha, (5) Śuklādevyāmbā, (6) Kuleśvaranandanātha, (7) Kameśvaryāmbā. The four Gurus of the Siddha class are (1) Bhogānandanātha, (2) Klinnanāndanātha; (3) Samayānandanātha, (4) Sahajanāndanātha; the eight of the Mānava class are (1) Gaganānandanātha, (2) Viśvānandanātha, (3) Vimalānandanātha, (4) Madanānandanātha, (5) Bhuvānandanātha, (6) Nīlānandanātha, (7) Ātmānandanātha, (8) Priyānandanātha. Those of the first mentioned class should be worshipped behind and the other two on Her left and right respectively.

⁴ Cf. *Tantrarāja* XXXV:

Gurur ādyā bhavec chaktiḥ sā vimarsāmyī matā.

also *Bhāvanopaniṣad* 1:

Śriguruḥ sarva-kāraṇabhūta śaktiḥ.

absorbed (*Prapañcōpa-samarī*). He is not inner or subjective cognition (*Antahprajñam*) nor is He outer or objective cognition (*Bahihprajñam* i.e. enjoyer of the gross world) and He is not between these two states (*Nobhayatah-prajñam*)⁵. He is not massive knowingness (*Prajñāna-ghanam*). He knows not nor is any thing unknown to Him. He is unseen. He is not the subject of (pragmatic) knowledge (*Avyavahāryam*). He is beyond the scope of the senses of action (*Agrāhyam*). He has no attributes (*Alakṣaṇam*) and is incomprehensible and cannot be described (*Avyapadeśyam*), but is the essential experience of one Self (*Ekātmapratyaya-sāram*). He is deemed to be the highest (*Caturtham* = lit. Fourth). He is the Ātmā. He should be known.” Śiva is thus Cinmaya according to *Śruti*.

In the same way *Śruti* speaks of Him as *Prāṇamaya* also. The *Chāndogya* (7-15-1) says:

“As the spokes (of a wheel) are fixed to the hub so is every thing fixed on to this Prāṇa. Prāṇa moves by Prāṇa (i.e. by its own Śakti). Prāṇa gives Prāṇa for the propagation of Prāṇa (*Prāṇāya*). Prāṇa verily is father, Prāṇa is mother, Prāṇa is brother, Prāṇa is sister, Prāṇa is preceptor (*Ācārya*)”.

The Devī is the object of enjoyment (*Viśayabhūtā* = *Bhogyabhūta*) of Parama Śiva who is as above described. So it has been said: “This Deva ever wishes to have the pleasure of playing with this Devī.”

The Supreme Lady of adoration (*Parābhāṭṭārikā*) who is as above described, revealed (*Prakāśayāmāṣa*)⁶ the Vidyā to the three Gurus who are the seeds of the three ages beginning with Tretā as has already been described.

The words *Sthāneśa*, *Jyeṣṭha-madhya-bālākhyā* and *Cit-prāṇa-viśaya-bhūtā* may be read in the plural accusative to qualify *Trigurun*. The interpretation will in that case also be as given above.

The Lords of the three Bijas (*Bija-trītayādhipatīn*)

The three Bijas are Vāgbhava and others. They are the Lords (*Adhipatī*) in the sense that these Bijas indicate them. These three kinds of Gurus (*Trīvidha-deśikān*) the Devī first purifies (*Parīkṣya* = *Śodhayitvā*). By Vidyā is meant the Ādividyā which issued from the lotus mouth of Parama Śiva and is the Cause of all causes. The Devī **revealed the Vidyā**. By this we are to understand that She instructed (*Upadideśa*) the Gurus in the Vidyā.

Here by the statement, **Revealed the Vidyā having purified them**. (*Parīkṣya vidyām prakāśayāmāṣa*), we are to understand that the most excellent Guru who is Sadāśiva (*Śrī Sadāśivātmā*) instructs in this path which is in accordance with immutable tradition (*Sat-saṁpradāya-siddham*), the disciple who has for a long time done Ātmopāsana, has controlled his inclination (*Śāntā*), has conquered his senses (*Dānta*) and seeks initiation (*Upāsana*). So it has been said:

“O Great Queen, it is after initiation that the Guru should give instruction relating to Sādhana of the Vidyā”.

Initiation (*Dīkṣā*)⁷ is of three kinds namely *Āṇavī*, *Śākṭeyī* and *Śāmbhavi*. It grants union (*Sāyujya*) with Śiva. In *Āṇavī Dīkṣā* the special articles of worship are necessary. There is also needed intense devotion to, and Tarpaṇa and Dhyāna of, the Parā-Devatā. Śakta initiation is for the attainment of Siddhi by the Sādhana of that particular Śakti for the worship of which a disciple is qualified. So it has been said:

“When the Guru perceives that the disciple is ready for Sādhana of (any form of) Śakti he should then initiate in that (Śakti) alone without hesitation. This is called Śākṭeyī Dīkṣā”.

Śāmbhavi Dīkṣā has been thus described:

“*Śāmbhavi Dīkṣā* is that which by the mere grace of the Guru makes manifest the Śiva state (*Śivatā-*

⁵ That is, He is not the state between Jāgrat and Svapna.

⁶ ‘Cf. *Tantrarāja* (Tantrik Text vol. VIII) ch. 1. v. 8:

Tayā tair bhuvam tantram kalpe kalpe vijrīmbhate.

(She, the Devī, age after age reveals Tantra through them (the Gurus).

⁷ The *Gandharvatāntra* speaks of *Māntrī*, *Śakti* and *Śāmbhavī*.

vyaktikāriṇī)⁸ and produces the Bliss of Śiva. The preceptor and the disciple should be selfless and without worldly desires or motives.”

In the absence of any such initiation there can be no competency for Sādhana. Initiation to be fruitful should be the outcome of mere grace of the preceptor unmixed by any motive. The preceptor is bound to initiate even at his own expense if the disciple though qualified for initiation is unable to incur it. If the Guru himself is also unable to procure the necessary articles then he should do it in a concise form. So it has been said:

“The Guru should himself with his own money initiate the poor. He should liberate the disciple by Dikṣā and use dūrvā grass and water if nothing more can be had.”

The conclusion we thus arrive at is this—that it is only he who is fully initiated who is competent for Brahma-vidyā. It has already been said that initiation becomes effective by propitiation (*Samtarpaṇa*) of the Para Devatā. Samtarpaṇa or propitiation can be done by the offering of oblations of particular kinds of liquid substance used in particular Ages. For it has been said: “(Oblation) of Devatās however is by nectar.” The

liquid substance is wine which is like excellent nectar. With this alone can offering be made to Para Devatā, like *Soma* in Agniṣṭoma sacrifice.

Now if it be said that there is prohibition in texts like this: “The Brāhmaṇa should not drink wine nor should he eat flesh,” we reply that we do not say that oblation to the Para Devatā should be made by transgressing prohibitions applicable to particular cases and prompted merely by one’s own desire. In what we have said we are convinced that this Śāmbhava Darśana is based upon the teachings of the Upaniṣads. Now it may be said “what about the prohibition?” The answer is that this prohibition applies to the man who is uninitiated. For the initiated the best way of offering oblation to Devatā is to make it with wine. In the Śāmkhyāyana Śākhā which is extracted from the ocean-like Ṛgveda, it is stated that divine dignity and dominion can be attained by the worship of the Ādisundarī thus⁹:—

“Those, who after having fully realised Her offer oblations (to Her) in the Śricakra which is inseparable from their body, with wine which has been converted by purification into nectar,¹⁰ become delirious in the excess of their joy, dwell in the high region where there is neither pain nor sorrow and enter the Supreme Light of Tripurā.”



⁸ According to another reading “*Śivatādātmyādayini*” which means that which brings about a sense of inseparateness with Śiva.

⁹ *Tripurā-mahopaniṣad*. Rk. 7.

¹⁰ The text has ‘*Surayā*’ but Bhāskara reads ‘*Sudhaya*’ and the latter reading has been adopted in the translation.



VERSE 54



*udītaḥ puṇyānandādīti kāmakaḷāṅganāvilāso'yam |
paraśivabhujāṅga bhāvākaraṣaṇaharṣāya kalpate nityam ||*

This is the end of the description by Puṇyānanda of the playful movements of the beautiful woman Kāmakaḷā which ever attract the desire of the amorous Para Śiva.

COMMENTARY

This is the end (*Iti*), The particle “*Iti*” indicates the end of the book composed by Puṇyānanda (*Udītaḥ puṇyānandāt*). The literal meaning of the expression is “as arisen from Puṇyānanda” the author. **Playful movements of the beautiful woman Kāmakaḷā** (*Kāmakaḷāṅganā-vilāsaḥ*). By Kāmakaḷā is meant Vimarśa-sakti who is inseparable (*Avinābhūtā*) from Kameśvara. She is the beautiful woman (*Aṅganā*) whose Vilāsa or amorous movements appear as the form of the Cakra, the Āvaraṇa-Devatās and the like. These amorous movements which have been caused by seeing Her beloved (*i.e.* Para Śiva) always (*Nityam*) attract the mind or heart (*Citta*) of the amorous (*Bhujāṅga = Rasika*) Para Śiva whose nature is pure Illumination (*Prakāśaika-svabhāva*) by producing in Him an excess of desire (*Bhāva = Rāga*).

If “*Bhāvākaraṣaṇa-harṣāya*” be read for “*Bhāvākaraṣita-cittāya*” then the meaning will be

that the sight of the playful movements produce in the amorous Para Śiva that gladness which accompanies the experience of the emotion of love. In ordinary life (*Loke'pi*) the sight of the amorous movements of the beloved produces in the mind of the gay lover a sense of gladness which is accompanied by the sentiment of love (*Śṛṅgāra-bhāva*). In the same way the play (*Vilāsa*) of Kāmakaḷā who is Cit Śakti which express itself in the way She walks (*Padavikṣepa*) and in other movements (of Her body) produces infinite gladness in Para Śiva who is facing towards and looking at Her who is His own Śakti.

The name of this book is **Kāmakaḷāvilāsa**. It is written by and therefore has emanated from (*Udītaḥ*) Puṇyānanda. This book always gladdens Para Śiva.





VERSE 55



cintāntaraṅga gataralastr̥ṣṇāsaliḥ prapañcavārāśiḥ |
yadanugraheṇa tīrṇastasmāi śrīnāthanāvīkāya namaḥ ||

Obeisance to the venerated Lord the boatman (Śrīnāthanāvīka) by whose grace I have crossed this Ocean of Wandering, the waters of which are desire (*Tr̥ṣṇā-salīḥ*) and the surface whereof is restless with the waves of anxiety (*Cintā-taraṅga-capala*).

COMMENTARY

*iti śrīpuṇyānandaviracitaḥKāmakalāvīlāsaḥ
samāptaḥ.*

This is the end of Kāmakalāvīlāsa written by
Śrī Puṇyānanda Yogī.

“**Ocean of wandering**” (*Prapañca-vārāśi*). By
Prapañca is meant Saṁsara or wandering which
is ocean-like (*Vārāśiḥ = Vāridhiḥ*).

May good be (*Śubham astu*). This is the end of
Cidvalli composed by Śrī Naṭanānandanātha.



