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VAIṢṆAVISM, ŚAIVISM
AND MINOR RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS

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(Uttara) Kaulas worship the organ of a living beautiful woman. The Kaulas worship their goddess by offering to her, and themselves using, wine, flesh, honey (Madhu), fish and such other things. The Samayins, of course, abstain from such practices. There are even Brāhmaṇas, who secretly profess the doctrines of the Śākta school and worship the goddess Tripurasundarī in accordance with the Pūrva-Kaula or Uttara-Kaula way. There are no distinctions of caste when the worship of the Bhairavīcakra is going on. Men of all castes become Brāhmaṇas, but they resume their own castes when the worship is over¹). There are several more innocent and decorous modes of worshipping the goddess under the names of Lalitā and Upāṅgalalitā mentioned in the ordinary religious books. The worship of the latter comes off on the fifth lunar day of Āśvina and of the former for the first ten days. The latter, when so worshipped by women, wards off widowhood²).

XIV. The Sect of Gāṇapatyas.

§ III. Rudra had his hosts of Maruts, who were called his Gaṇas, and the leader of these Gaṇas was Gaṇapati. The name Rudra, as we have seen, was generalised and signified a number of spirits partaking of the character of the original Rudra; and so was the name Gaṇapati generalised and meant many leaders of the Gaṇas, or groups. Another name, Vināyaka, denoting a spirit also came into use. In the AU. Rudra is identified with many gods or spirits, and among these there is one called Vināyaka. In the MBh. (Anuśāsanaparvan 151, v. 26) Gaṇeśvaras and Vināyakas are mentioned amongst the gods, who observe the actions of men and are present everywhere; and again (57) Vināyakas are said to remove all evil from men when praised. Gaṇeśvaras, or Gaṇapatis, and Vināyakas are here represented, as the former are in the Śatarudriya, many in number and present everywhere. In the Mānavaghyasūtra (2, 14) is given an account of Vināyakas. They are four in number. And their names are (1) Śalakaṭaṅkaṭa, (2) Kūsmāṇḍarājaputra, (3) Usmita, and (4) Devayajana. When possessed by these a person pounds sods of earth, cuts grass, and writes on his body, and sees in dreams waters, men with shaved heads, camels, pigs, asses, etc., and feels he is moving in the air, and when walking, sees somebody pursuing him from behind. Again, when possessed by these, Princes Royal do not obtain the kingdom, though qualified to govern. Girls do not obtain bridegrooms, though possessed of the necessary qualities. Women do not get children, even if otherwise qualified. The children of other women die. A learned teacher qualified to teach does not obtain pupils, and there are many interruptions and breaks in the course of a student. Trade and agriculture are unsuccessful. A person, who shows such signs of being possessed by Vināyaka, is made to go through the ceremony of bathing in waters brought from four places and with a little earth from four different quarters thrown into them. After bathing oblations of mustard oil

¹) Aufrecht's Oxf. Cat. p. 92, n.

²) See Hemādri, Vratakhaṇḍa.

extracted afresh should be offered to the four Vināyakas in a ladle made of the wood of the Udumbara tree and poured over the head of the individual. Then food of many sorts, rice, husked and unhusked, flesh, and fish, cooked as well as raw, pulse of various kinds, etc. should be put into a basket and the basket placed on the ground where four roads meet, the ground first being covered with Kuśa grass. Then certain deities including evil spirits are invoked, and a wish expressed that they may be satisfied, and, becoming so, satisfy the worshipper, etc. This is the ceremony which frees the persons haunted by the Vināyakas.

Yājñavalkya in his Smṛti (I, 271 ff.) gives the same ceremony and frequently in the same words. But the ceremony appears in a somewhat more developed or complicated form. He begins by stating that Rudra and Brahmadeva appointed Vināyaka to the leadership of the Gaṇas, (i. e. made him Gaṇapati) and assigned to him the functions of raising difficulties and obstructions in the actions of men. In the Smṛti one Vināyaka is only addressed, but instead of the four names occurring in the Sūtra six are given, viz. (1) Mita, (2) Sammita, (3) Śāla, (4) Kaṭaṅkaṭa, (5) Kūṣmāṇḍa, and (6) Rājaputra, and these are said to be six different names of the one Vināyaka. After the basket with various kinds of food has been prepared, directions are given to make an obeisance to Ambikā, the mother of Vināyaka.

The form of the ceremony contained in the Sūtra is unquestionably more ancient than that contained in the other work. But the difference between the two shows that during the period that had elapsed between the composition of the Sūtra and that of the Smṛti, the four Vināyakas had become one Gaṇapati-Vināyaka, having Ambikā for his mother. It will thus be seen that, in his own nature, this last god is an unfriendly or malignant spirit, but capable of being made friendly and benignant by propitiatory rites. In this respect, he resembles Rudra himself. That the Vināyakas had come to be objects of faith before the Christian era, may be taken to follow from the occurrence of the ceremony mentioned above in a Gṛhyasūtra. But the one Gaṇapati-Vināyaka, the son of Ambikā, was introduced into the Hindu pantheon much later. None of the Gupta inscriptions which I subjected to an examination on a former occasion ¹⁾ contains any mention of his name or announces any gift or benefaction in his honour. But in two of the caves at Ellorā, there are groups of images of Kāla, Kālī, the Seven Mothers or Śaktis, and Gaṇapati ²⁾. These caves are to be referred to the latter part of the eighth century. So that between the end of the fifth and the end of the eighth century the Gaṇapati cult must have come into practice, and the Smṛti of Yājñavalkya must have been written not earlier than the sixth century. Another inscription and an old relic which indicate the prevalence of the worship of Gaṇapati are found at a place called Ghaṭiyālā, 22 miles north-west of Jodhpur. There is a column there, on the top of which there are four images of Gaṇapati facing the four quarters. In the opening sentence of the inscription

¹⁾ See my 'Peep into the Early History of India'; Journ. Bo. Br. Roy. As. Soc. Vol. XX, pp. 356 ff.

²⁾ In Rāvāṇa-ki-khāi, in the circumambulatory passage and Rāmeśvara temples See Cave-Temples by Fergusson and Burgess.

engraved on it an obeisance is made to Vināyaka. The date of the inscription is Vikrama-Saṃvat 918 = A. D. 862¹⁾.

When and how the god came to have the elephant's head, it is difficult to determine. The images in the cave-temples at Ellorā have that head, and Bhavabhūti also in the beginning of the eighth century describes him, in the opening stanza of the Mālatīmādhava, as possessed of such a head. Rudra-Śiva and the gods allied with him were connected closely with forests and wild places, in which elephants also were found. The hide worn by Rudra and by his consort also in one of her forms was the hide of an elephant, and it perhaps suited the fancy of some men to place the head of that animal over the body of a god originally mischievous. Gaṇapati's reputation for wisdom is, I believe, to be attributed to the confusion between him and Bṛhaspati, who in RV. II, 23, 1 is called Gaṇapati. Bṛhaspati, of course, is the Vedic god of wisdom, and is called the sage of sages.

§ 112. Six varieties of the Gāṇapatya sect are mentioned by Ānandagiri, or Anantānandagiri as he is sometimes called, in his Saṅkaradigvijaya as well as by Dhanapati in his commentary on the corresponding work of Mādhava. The first consists of those who adore Mahāgaṇapati. Mahāgaṇapati is, according to them, the creator, and he alone remains when Brahmadeva and others have been destroyed at the time of the dissolution. He should be meditated upon as possessed of his peculiar face with one tooth and as embraced by the Śakti. By his own wonderful power, he creates Brahmadeva and others. One, who repeats the original Mantra and meditates on this Gaṇapati, attains supreme bliss. The name of the person who expounds these doctrines to the Ācārya is given as Girijāsuta.

Another interlocutor follows. His name is Gaṇapatikumāra, and he adores Haridrāgaṇapati. He takes his stand on RV. II, 23, 1, and makes out this text to mean "We meditate on thee who art the leader of the group of Rudra, Viṣṇu, Brahman, Indra and others, and art the instructor of sages, Bhṛgu, Guru, Śeṣa and others, the highest of all who know the sciences, the greatest lord of the Brahmans engaged in the creation of the world, i. e. adored by Brahman and others in the work of creation and others". He should be worshipped and meditated on as being dressed in a yellow silken garment, bearing a yellow sacred thread, having four arms, three eyes and his face suffused over by turmeric ointment, and holding a noose and an elephant-goad and a staff in his hand. He who worships the god in this form, obtains emancipation. Gaṇapati is the cause of the whole world, and Brahmā and others are his parts. The worshipper of this Gaṇapati should bear, on both of his arms, the marks of Gaṇapati's face and one tooth impressed upon them by a heated iron stamp.

Then came Herambasuta, who was the worshipper of Ucchiṣṭagaṇapati. The followers of this variety resort to the left handed path (Vāmamārga), which probably was set up in imitation of the Kaula worship of Śakti. The form of Gaṇapati meditated on is very obscene. There is no distinction of caste among the followers of this sect.

¹⁾ Ep. Ind., Vol. IX, pp. 277 ff.

No restriction is to be observed, such as marriage imposes, and promiscuous intercourse is allowed and also the use of wine. The follower should have a red mark on his forehead. All the ordinary ceremonies, such as twilight adorations (Saṃdhyāvandana), are left to a man's own will.

The followers of the other three Gaṇapatis, Navanīta, Svārṇa, and Saṃtāna, worship their god, they say, according to the Śruti. But since Gaṇapati is adored in the beginning of every religious act, he is the chief god and all the other gods are parts of him and should be worshipped as such. They regard the whole world as Gaṇapati and adore him as such.

Since the god Gaṇapati-Vināyaka was introduced about the sixth century, it is questionable whether these several sects existed at the time of Śaṃkarācārya. The imprinting of the face and the tooth of the God on the arms was a custom common to them with the Mādhva Vaiṣṇavas, though it is hardly indicative of the period in which the sect arose. But the worship of Gaṇapati without reference to any particular sect is practised by nearly all Hindus at the beginning of any religious ceremony and on special occasions. His image made of clay is worshipped with great pomp in the Marāṭha country on the fourth lunar day of the month of Bhādrapada (September), and at Chinchwad near Poona there is a special establishment for the exclusive worship of that god.

XV. Skanda or Kārttikeya.

§ 113. Another god whose worship was extensively practised in ancient times, but is now rare, is Skanda or Kārttikeya. The general belief is that he was the son of Śiva and Pārvatī. But in the Rāmāyaṇa he is represented as the son of the god of fire and Gaṅgā (I, chap. 37). The foetus was thrown by Gaṅgā on the Himavat mountain, and it was nourished by the six stars constituting the constellation of Kṛttikā (Pleiades) and was thus called the son of the Kṛttikās or Kārttikeya. In the MBh. (Vanaparvan, chap. 229) also he is represented as the son of Fire, but the mother was Agni's true wife Svāhā, who had assumed the forms of the wives of six Ṛṣis, whom Agni loved. But here he is called the son of Śiva also, as Agni is a form of that god. There are other stories connecting him with Śiva and Pārvatī as his parents. But whatever the legend may have been, there is no question that he was connected with Śiva, and was the leader of one of his Gaṇas. There is a Liṅgāyat tradition reported in the section on that sect that he was a founder of a Gotra, and was a form of Śiva himself. His having the peacock for his vehicle is also consistent with his connection with Śiva, as peacocks are found in forests of which Rudra and his attendants were gods. His being the leader of the army of the gods was an idea probably suggested by his being the leader of a Gaṇa of Rudra. And in historical times he has been associated with Śiva. Under P. V, 3, 99, Patañjali mentions the images of Śiva, Skanda and Viśākha as being worshipped in his time. On the reverse of the coins of the Kuṣana prince Kaniṣka, there are figures with their names