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Hindoos, Volume 3

William Ward

Excerpt

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A VIEW
OF THE
HISTORY, LITERATURE, AND RELIGION
OF
THE HINDOOS.



PART I.

History.

CHAP. I.—SECT. I.

AT the close of the preceding kŭlpŭ,^a Vishnoo was sleeping on the waters of the deluge, and from his navel had grown a water-lily : from this flower sprang Brŭmha, who, in the form of Narayŭnŭ, created, by his word, Shŭnŭkŭ, Sŭnatŭnŭ, Sŭnŭndŭ, and Sŭnŭt-koomarŭ ; but these persons embracing a life of austerity, mankind did not propagate ; in consequence of which Brŭmha, to obtain the blessing of the gods on the work of creation, applied himself to severe austerities ; and continued them for a very long period, but without effect ; till at length he burst into a flood of tears : from these tears a number of titans arose, and his sighs gave birth to the god Roodrŭ. At the request of his father, Roodrŭ continued the work of creation ; but in his hands it dragged on so heavily,

^a A grand revolution of time.

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that Brūmha was obliged to resume it.^b he created water, fire, æther, the heavens, wind, the simple earth, rivers, seas, mountains, trees, climbing-plants, divisions of time, day, night, months, years, yoogūs, &c. He formed Dūkshū by his breath; Mūrēcchee and Ūtree proceeded from his eyes; Ūngira from his head; Brigoo from his heart; Dhūrmū from his breast; Sūngkūlpū from his mind; Poolūstyū from the air in his body; Poolūhū from the air which is inhaled into the body; Krūtoo from air expelled downwards, and Vūshisht'hū from the air which produces deglutition. After this, in the night, he assumed a body possessing the quality of darkness, and created the giants; then assuming, in the day, a body possessing the quality of truth, he created certain gods, and, in the evening, the progenitors of mankind; he next assumed a body possessed of the quality which stimulates to activity, and created men. To this succeeded the creation of birds, cows, horses, elephants, deer, camels, fruits, roots, with all other animate and inanimate substances, forms of verse, &c.; yūkshūs also, and pishachūs, gūndhūrvūs, ūpsūras, kinnūrūs, serpents, &c. to all of whom he appointed their proper work. Perceiving however that men did not yet propagate, he divided his body into two parts, one of which became a female, Shūtū Rōōpa, and the other a male, Swayūmbhoovū.^c

The earth still remained covered by the waters,^d and Swayūmbhoovū, anxious to obtain its emersion, addressed himself to the powers above. As the first act of divine

^b What a striking contrast does the perplexity of these creators form to the divine fiat—"Let there be light, and there was light!"

^c See the Koormū pooranū.

^d It may seem unaccountable that Brūmha did not first raise the earth, and then create the beings who were to occupy it; but the Hindoo histo-

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favour, he obtained a boat, containing the védüs, into which he, together with his wife, and Ülürkü and Markündéyü, two sages who had survived the deluge, entered; they bound the vessel to the fins of a fish, (an incarnation of Vishnoo,) and then prayed to Brümha for the emersion of the earth. As the reward of their devotions, Vishnoo, assuming the form of the boar, with his tusks drew the earth from the waters, and fixed it, according to some shastrüs,^e on the thousand heads of the serpent-god Ūñütü; while others declare,^f that it remains suspended in the air by the invisible hand of God.

I know not where to introduce better than in this place the following description of the earth. The earth is circular and flat, like the flower of the water-lily, in which the petals project beyond each other: its circumference is 4,000,000,000 of miles. In the centre is mount Sooméroo, ascending 600,000 miles from the surface of the earth, and descending 128,000 below it. It is 128,000 miles in circumference at its base, and 256,000 wide at the top. On this mountain are the heavens of Vishnoo, Shivü, Indrü, Ūgnee, Yümü, Noiritü, Vüroonü, Vayoo, Koovérü, Eeshü, and other gods. The clouds ascend to about one-third the height of the mountain. At its base are the mountains Mündürü, Gündhü-madünü, Vipoolü, and Sooparshwü; on each of which grows a tree 8,800 miles high. On each side of the mountain are several countries divided by ranges of mountains, the farthest of which is bounded by the salt sea. All these countries

rians declare, that the work of creation was performed in one of the higher heavens, untouched by the waters of the deluge, and that the creatures were afterwards let down to the earth.

^e The pooranüs and poetical works.

^f The writer of the Söoryü-siddhantü, and other astronomers.

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are called Jumboo-dwēēpū. The Hindoo geographers further add, that beyond this sea are six other seas, dividing from each other, in a circular form, six other countries, as Plūkshū-dwēēpū, surrounded by Ikshoo, the sea of sugar-cane juice; Shalmūlū-dwēēpū, by Soora, the sea of spirituous liquors; Kooshū-dwēēpū, by Ghritū, the sea of clarified butter; Krounchū-dwēēpū, by Dūdhee, the sea of curds; Shakū-dwēēpū, by Doogdū, the sea of milk; and Pooshkūrū-dwēēpū, by Jalarnūvū, a sea of sweet water. Beyond all these countries and their circular seas is a country of gold, as large as the rest of the earth; then a circular chain of mountains, called Loka-lokū; and then the land of darkness, or hell.^g

To this description may be added the situation of the heavenly bodies: The firmament is of equal dimensions with the surface of the earth; the earth is 800,000 miles distant from the sun, the space between which is called Bhoovūr-lokū, and is the residence of the siddhūs.^h The distance from the sun to the moon is 800,000 miles. At the total wane of the moon this planet is in a perpendicular line with the sun, by which the light of the moon is prevented from descending to the earth. The distance from the moon to the constellations, still ascending, is 800,000 miles: 1,600,000 miles above this, is the planet Mercury (Boodhū); 1,600,000 miles above Mercury is Venus (Shookrū); 1,600,000 miles above Mercury is Mars (Müngülū). At the same distance, ascending, is Jupiter (Vrihūs-pūtee); 1,600,000 miles beyond him, is Saturn (Shūnee); and 800,000 miles above Saturn is Ursa major, the seven principal stars, the heavens of

^g See the Markündēyū-pooranū and Shrēē-bhagāvūtū.

^h A race of demi-gods.

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seven rishees;ⁱ 800,000 miles above these is Dhroovü, the polar-star. The space from the sun to Dhroovü is called Sürgü-lokū. At the destruction of the world, the earth, and every thing between it and this star, is destroyed: 8,000,000 miles above Dhroovü, the chief gods reside. Beyond this is the residence of the sons of Brümha, ascending 16,000,000 of miles. Still higher, 3,200,000 miles, is the residence of the regents of the quarters and other sons of Brümha. The highest elevation, the residence of Brümha, is 4,800,000 miles above the last-mentioned heaven.^k Some affirm, that all these regions also are destroyed at the time of the dissolution of the world.

Descending now to the earth, let us pursue the course marked by the pooranüs, and trace the progress of human events as laid down in these writings:

Swayümbhoovü, from the védüs found in the boat, formed the work known at present by his name,^l and governed the world by the laws which he had thus compiled. After some time he gave himself up to a life of devotion, and placed his eldest son, Priyü-vrütü, on the throne, who married a daughter of Vishwü-kürma, the Hindoo Vulcan, by whom he had thirteen sons, and one daughter. Six sons embraced an ascetic life, and the others governed the seven divisions of the earth under their father, who gave Plükshü-dwēpü to Médha-tit'hee; Kooshü to Jotishman; Krounchü to Dootiman; Shakü to Bhüvyü; Pooshkürü to Süvülü; Shalmülü to Vüpooshman, and Jümboo to Agnidhrü. After reigning 1,200,000,000

ⁱ Canonized saints.^k See the Bramhü-pooranü.^l The institutes of Münoo.

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years, Priyū-vrītū placed his youngest brother, Oottanū-padū, over his seven sons, abandoned the world, and, by the power of devotion, obtained celestial happiness. Oottanū-padū was succeeded by his son, Drūvū, who reigned 36,000 years, and then had a separate heaven assigned him, as the reward of his virtues. Ootkūlū, the son of Drūvū, reigned a short time, and then embraced the life of an ascetic; his son, Vūtsūrū, had five children, the eldest of whom, Pooshparnnū, succeeded to the kingdom, and was followed by his eldest son, Vooshtū. His son, Chūkshooshū, at the close of his reign was exalted to the state of a mūnoo, and was succeeded in the kingdom by Oolmōōkhū, the eldest of his eleven sons. After him reigned Ūrgū, whose son, Vénū, was so abandoned that his father, through grief, renounced the world, and retired to a forest. Vénū forbade the exercise of all the usual offices of religion, and directed that worship should be paid to him alone; but, being cursed by Doorvasū and other sages, he died. The kingdom being left without a sovereign, the sages produced from the dead body of Vénū two children, a son and a daughter: the son's name was Prit'hoo, who is spoken of as the first Hindoo king, those who had preceded him being considered rather as patriarchs than kings. Prit'hoo divided his kingdom into separate provinces, taught his subjects the use of agriculture, manufactures, &c., and raised his empire to the highest state of prosperity. At length, having performed the sacrifice of a horse one hundred times, he placed his son, Vijitashwū,^m on the throne, and, entering a forest, obtained celestial happiness. Ūbhidhanū, the next monarch, had six sons; the eldest, Vrishūdū, who suc-

^m This son conquered Indrū, the king of heaven, and hence obtained this name.

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ceeded to the kingdom, married the daughter of the sea, and was famous for his religious austerities. His ten sons had all one name, Prūchéta ; were all married to one female ; and all reigned at once ; their son Dūkshū was the last of the race of Oottanū-padū. After the extinction of this race, the seven sons of Priyūvrūtū governed alone the kingdoms which had been assigned to them.

Médhatit'hee, the sovereign of Plūkshū, had seven sons, Shantūbhūyū, Shishirū, Sookhodūyū, Nūndū, Shivū, Kshémūkū, and Dhroovū. He divided his territories into seven parts, which were distinguished by the names of his sons, to whom he had assigned them : they were separated by seven chains of mountains, called Gomédū, Chūndrū, Narūdū, Doondoobhee, Somūkū, Soomūna, and Voibhrajū ; and by seven rivers, Ūnootūpta, Shikhēē, Vipasha, Tridiva, Krūmoo, Prūsrita and Sookrita.

Vūpooshmanū had also seven sons, Shwétū, Rohitū, Jēēmōōtū, Hūritū, Voidyootū, Manūsū, and Sooprūbhū, among whom he also divided his kingdom, which contained the same number of mountains, rivers, &c. as that of his brother. The bramhūns in these countries were light coloured ; the kshétriyūs, red ; the voishyūs, yellow, and the shōōdrūs, (as might be expected) black.

The sovereigns of Kooshū, Krounchū, and Shakū, had each seven sons, among whom they divided their kingdoms, which were separated by seven mountains and seven rivers, like the other dwēēpūs.

In these five dwēēpūs the manners of the tréta-yoogū

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always prevail; the people live to the age of 5000 years; nor do they then die through disease, which is unknown here. Beside men and giants, gods, celestial choiristers, satyrs, &c. reside here.

Shūvūlū had two sons, Mūhavēētū and Dhatūkēē. His kingdom was divided by a circular chain of mountains, 400,000 miles high. The eldest son obtained the central part of the kingdom, and gave his own name to it: his subjects lived 10,000 years; were of one cast, and were distinguished for their virtue: in short, they were equal to the gods. They worshipped God only in the mind.

Agnēēdhṛū divided Jūmboo-dwēēpū into nine parts, and distributed them among his nine sons born of a celestial courtesan, viz. Nabhee, Kingpoorooshū, Hūree, Rooroo, Hirūmūyū, Rūmyūkū, Ilavritū, Bhūdrū-shivū and Kétoomalū. These nine sons married the nine daughters of Sooméeroo. Nabhee, whose history we shall now trace, had a son named Rishūbhū, who married Jūyūntēē, a virgin presented to him by the king of heaven, and by whom he had a hundred sons, eighty-two of whom became bramhūns, and nine hermits. The other nine were Bhūrūtu, Koosha-vūrttū, Ilavūrttū. Mūlūyū, Kétoomalū, Bhūdrū-sēnū, Indrū-sprik, Vidūrbhū, and Kēēkūtū. Rishūvū divided his kingdom into nine parts, but gave the whole to his eldest son Bhūrūtū: who, however, retaining the nominal supremacy in his own hands, gave eight parts to his brethren, while he governed only one part, which received the name of Bharūtū-vūrshū, or the country of Bharūtū, and embraced the whole of India from the Himalūyū mountains to the sea.

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Description of India.^a In the centre are Mütsyü, Kōormükütü, Koolya, Kashēc,^b Ūyodhya,^c Ūt'hürva, Külingü, Mäsükü, Vrikü, Médümatrü, Mandüvyü, Shallü, Pashükü, Oojjinanü, Vätsü, Kamyü, Käatü, Yameonü, Mädhü-sarüyöötü, Shöörüsénü, Mat'hoorü,^d Dhüraaränyü, Jotishikü, Söörügrēevü, Gochü, Shükü, Voidéü, Panchalü, Sünkütü, Künkümarootü, Kalükootü, Pashünü, Kapisht'hükü, Kooroo, Vahyü, Oodooswürü, Jünü, and Hüstina.^e

In the east are, Chandrü-poorü, Khüsü, Mügüdhü, Shi-
vee, Moit'hilü, Büdünü-düntoorü, Prag-jotishü,^f Pooro-
shadükü, Poornotkütü, Bhüdrü-gourü, Oodüyü, Kashayü,
Ménükü, Ūmbüsht'hü, Tamüliptü, Ekpadüpü, and
Vürdhümanü.

In the south-east are, Büngü,^g Jüt'hürü, Mōölükü
Chédee, Oorvü-kantü, Andhrü,^h Vindhyü, Vidürbhu,
Narikélü, Dhürmü-dwēepü, Ilika, Vaghrü-grēevü, Troi-
poorü, Nishüdü, Kütüküst'höönü, Düşharnü, Hürikü,
Nündü, Kakolü, Ūluka, and Vürnüşhüvürü.

In the south are, Lünka,ⁱ Karajinü, Kélikü, Nikütü,
Mülüyü,^j Dürddoorü, Kürkotükü, Bhrigookükshü, Kon-
gügü,^k Shüvürü, Vénna, Ūvüntēc, Dasü-poorü, Mühēc-
kütü, Kurnatü,^l Gonüdü, Chitrü-Köötü, Chölü, Kolügi-
ree, Kroünehü, Jütadhürü, Nasikü, Yojünü, Voidöoryü,
Kolü, Chürmü-püttü, Günü-rajyü, Krishnü, Gourü,
Rishübhü, Singhülü, Kanchēc, Trilingü,^m Koonjürü, and
Kookshee.

^a See the Markündéyü pooranü.

o Benares.

^p Ramü's capital. Oude.^q Krishnú's capital.^r A place near Delhi.^s Jünük-poorü.^t Assam.^u Bengal.^v Telinga.^w Ceylon. ^x Malabar.^y Konkünü.^z Carnata.^{aa} Telinga.

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In the south-west are, Kambojū, Pūnhūvū, Vūrūva-
mookhū, Sindhoo, Souvērū, Anūrttū, Vūnita-mookhū,
Yavūnū, Sagūrū, Shōōdrū, Kūrūnū-prodhūyū, Vūrūvūrū,
Kiratū, Parūdū, Shūndū, Parshéshwūrū, Kūlū, Choo-
chookū, Hémūgirika, Sindhookalū, Roivūtū, Sourashtrū,
Dūrūdū, and Mūharnūvū.

In the west are, Mūniméghū, Kshooradree, Khūnjūnū,
Ūpūrantū, Hoihūyū, Shantikū, Ūhiprūst'hū, Konkūlū,
Pūnchūnūdū,^d Vūrūnū, Parūdū, Tarūkshoo, Vahyūngū-
tū, Sarvūrū, Sashmūvéshtūkū, Ekékshūnū, Shūshū-roohū,
Dēērgūhū-grēēvū, and Chōōlikū.

In the north-east are, Mandūvyū, Toot'hara, Ūshmū-
kalanūlū, Hūla,^e Chūrmūbūnga, Oolōōka, Moorookōō-
ma, Phūlgoonū, Morū, Goorakūlika, Dēērgūhū-roma,
Vayū, and Rūt'hūjūnū.

In the north are, Himūvanū, Koilasū, Dhūnooshman,
Vūsooman, Krounchū, Koorūvū, Kshoodrū-vēēnū, Vūsū-
toyū, Koikéyū, Bhogū-prūst'hū, Yamoonū, Ūntūr-dwēēpū,
Trigūrtū, Ūgnijya, Sarjūna, Ūshwū-mookha, Dōsévūkū,
Vatūdhanū, Shūrūdhanū, Pooshkūlū, Vūnūkoiratū,
Ūnoolomū, Tūkshūshēēla, Mūdrū, Vénookashūrū, Dūn-
dūkū, Pingūla, Kūlūhū, Bhōōtipoolūkū, Kolahūkū,
Shatūlū, Hémūtalūkū, Jūshomūtēē, Gandharū, Kūrūsū,
Gūrūdū, Youdhéyū, Shamūkū.

In the north-west are, Kinnūrū, Pūshoopalū, Kēēchū-
kū, Dūrūdū, Shūvūlū, Koolūta, Vūnūrashtrū, Brūmhū-
poorū, Vūnūvadyū, Vishū, Koulindū, Prūgyūbūlū,
Dūrūva, Ūnnūjēēvūkū, Ekūpadū, Khūsū, Swūrnū-
bhoumū, Yūvūnū, Hingū, Chēērūpravūrūnū, Trinétrū,
Pourūvū, and Gūndhūrūvū.

^d Punjab.^e Governed by a queen.