A. INTRODUCTION

1. THE RESOLUTION OF MYTHOLOGICAL CONTRADICTIONS

Paradox is the very heart of Śaiva mythology. Although the apparently contradictory strains of Śiva’s nature may well have originated at different times and places, they have resulted in a composite deity who is unquestionably whole to his devotees; this is why the Hindus accept and even glorify what might otherwise seem a meaningless patchwork, a crazy quilt of metaphysics. Yet the paradoxes are occasionally as confusing to the Hindu as to the outsider, and this perplexity is often directly expressed by characters within the myths, as well as being indirectly evidenced by the myth-maker’s frequent muddling of myth components whose relationships are unclear to him.

In spite of this, one must avoid seeing a contradiction or paradox where the Hindu merely sees an opposition in the Indian sense—correlative opposites that act as interchangeable identities in

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1 This paper and the one to follow in a later issue form a summary of a Harvard dissertation soon to be published in book form with more extensive examples of each mythological theme and more detailed translations from the Sanskrit sources.
essential relationships. The contrast between the erotic and the ascetic tradition in the character and mythology of Śiva is not the kind of “conjunction of opposites” with which it has so often been confused; *tapas* (asceticism) and *kāma* (desire) are not diametrically opposed like black and white, or heat and cold, where the extreme presence of one automatically implies the absence of the other. They are in fact two forms of heat, *tapas* being the potenti- ally destructive or creative fire that the ascetic generates within himself, *kāma* the heat of desire. Thus they are closely related in human terms, opposed in the sense that love and hate are opposed, but not mutually exclusive.

Claude Lévi-Strauss has said, “It is the nature of myth to pro- vide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction.” 2 Based as they are upon a paradox, many of the Śaiva myths may be analyzed in terms of Lévi-Strauss’s oppositions and resolutions; the mediating principle that tends to resolve the opposi- tions is, in most cases, Śiva himself. Among ascetics he is a libertine and among libertines an ascetic; conflicts which they cannot resolve, or can attempt to resolve only by compromise, he simply absorbs into himself and expresses in terms of other conflicts. Where there is excess, he opposes and controls it; where there is no action, he himself becomes excessively active. He emphasizes that aspect of himself which is unexpected, inappropriate, shatter- ing any attempt to achieve a superficial solution of the conflict through mere logical compromise.

He is able to mediate in this way because of his protean charac- ter; he is all things to all men. He merely brings to a head the extreme and therefore least reconcilable aspects of the oppositions, which, although they may be resolved in various ways on the divine level, are almost never reconcilable on the human level. This is in fact the very *raison d’être* of the myth; 3 according to Lévi-Strauss, “the extreme positions are only imagined in order to show that they are untenable.” 4 In this way, the image of the married ascetic functions as a negative truth about one possible way of resolving the paradox at hand; and the image of Śiva, by

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expressing the extreme and therefore untenable position, illustrates the contradiction inherent in the social facts, the difficulty in human terms of reconciling conflicting moral injunctions.

The expression of contradiction is significant in itself, even without the possibility of resolution, for the problems are difficult to understand and to face, and the myth brings them to a level at which they can be manipulated, just as the unconscious disguises in dreams those elements of experience that cannot be dealt with directly. It is the function of the myth to admit the failure of society to reconcile essential contradictions. The myths make the Hindu aware of the struggle and of its futility; they show him that his society demands of him two roles which he cannot possibly satisfy fully—that he become a householder and beget sons, and that he renounce life and seek union with God. The myth shows the untenable answer arrived at by compromise—the forest-dweller with his wife—and suggests a solution finally in the re-examination of the nature of the two roles, of the presence of each in the other, so that a balance may be sought without any of the unsatisfactory accommodations necessary in real life. The myth makes it possible to admit that the ideal is not attainable.

One irrational answer to the insoluble problem occurs in an explicit form at many points in the myths where reason is trapped: the excuse of bhakti, of devotion of the worshiper toward the god and of the god toward the worshiper, a compelling love which overcomes all rational barriers. Although this is a fairly late solution, it merely makes explicit a tendency which is implicit in the earlier versions as well: the tendency to appeal to the emotions to transcend a rational impasse. This can justify both sides of Śiva’s nature; he is hard put to explain his asceticism, since he shares none of the goals of human ascetics, being himself immortal, “released,” and the god who grants boons to ascetics; therefore, he attributes his activity to bhakti. Thus, in spite of the fact that love for a woman is ostensibly incompatible with the goals of asceticism, Śiva is said to perform tapas in order to win the love of Pārvatī,7 in order to keep the universe alive, for the sake of his devotees. Similarly, Śiva’s sexual activity is rationalized in spite of his ascetic commitments; after arguing against marriage for a

5 Ibid., pp. 27–29.
7 Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa (Bombay: Gujurati Printing Press, 1913), 22.34–43. Skanda Purāṇa (Bombay: Venkaṭesvara Steam Press, 1887), 1.1.21.15. Hereinafter, all Purāṇas will be cited by particular name alone after the first reference (e.g., Mahābhāgavata).
yogi, Śiva concedes to the gods: “Nevertheless, I will do what you ask, for the benefit of the world. Though the practice of marriage is not suitable for me, as I delight only in tapas, nevertheless I will marry for the sake of my devotees.” Pārvatī herself says to Śiva, “You are the best among yogis, but out of pity you have become intent upon love-making.” It is pity alone that can transcend the austere logical purity of Śiva and introduce a merciful sentimentality. Only the emotional involvement, the pity of the gods, causes them to forget that they are above it all—as metaphysics demands—and reduces them to the human level—as mythology demands.

Even when logic can reconcile tapas and kāma, ascetic and householder, the desire to have it both ways remains; Śiva proves to Pārvatī that there is no logical reason for him to have a son, as a mortal man must have; she replies, “What you say is true, but nevertheless I wish to have a child. I long for the kiss of a son’s mouth.” That “nevertheless” is the mythopoeic and philosophical nexus of the cycle of countless versions of myths, told and retold in an eternal search for the impossible solution. The myth expresses the need that can never be fulfilled, that is always just out of reach on one side or the other, even in the world of the gods.

2. THE PARADOX: ŚIVA THE EROTIC ASCETIC

Since Western scholarship first became aware of Hindu mythology, the character of Śiva has remained an enigma. Only a small portion of the corpus of ancient Śaiva mythology has been translated from the Sanskrit; with this inadequate representation, it is not surprising that the mythology of Śiva was considered contradictory and pradoxical, for only the two ends of the spectrum were seen. Śiva the Creator and the Destroyer, Life and Death, the coincidentia oppositorum—this much was accepted as consistent with Indian metaphysical thought, and the apparent sexual ambiguity of the god was considered simply one more aspect of a basically ambiguous character or a result of the chance historical assimilation of two opposing strains. In the absence of critical
Editions or translations of the Śaiva Purāṇas,12 with their rich variety of myths, the problem was never properly considered, and the very fact of its paradoxical nature was taken as an accepted quality of Śaiva thought on which further speculation could be based. René Grousset explained in terms of Śiva’s ability to reconcile all contradictions the apparent conflict between his character as god of the liṅga, or phallus, and his fame as the ascetic who consumed with the fire from his third eye the god of love, Kāma.13 But R. C. Zaehner expresses the enduring enigma of Śiva: "Permanently ithyphallic, yet perpetually chaste: how is one to explain such a phenomenon?"14

The problem was intensified by uncertainties regarding Śiva’s place in the historical development of Hinduism. Failure to connect him with the Vedic gods Indra, Prajāpati, and Agni* led to the assumption that the sexual elements of his cult were “non-Āryan,” or at least non-Vedic;15 and clear correspondences between Śaiva myths and Tantric cult16 led others to seek the origins of Śiva’s sexual ambiguity in this comparatively late development.† Yet what is striking about the problem is that it extends from the period of the Vedas and even earlier, from the prehistoric civilization of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappā, through the development of Tantrism, to the religion of present-day India.

Ancient Hindus as well as modern have been hard put to explain the Śaiva phenomenon. In a Sanskrit poem dating from perhaps A.D. 900, one of Śiva’s own hosts muses upon his master:

If he is naked what need then has he of the bow?
If armed with bow then why the holy ashes?
If smeared with ashes what needs he with a woman?
Or if with her, then how can he hate Love?17

12 The Purāṇas are Sanskrit texts composed between 300 B.C. and A.D. 800 for the most part, with considerable later additions and much material from an earlier date as well.
* See Section E (Part II).
15 The Vedas are sacred texts composed in an archaic form of Sanskrit; the Rg Veda, the oldest and most important, reached its present form around 1200 B.C. The Atharva Veda, a collection of magical incantations not directly related to the Vedic sacrifice, was composed several centuries later.
16 The Tantras are esoteric texts relating to the rites of certain cults which flourished from about the sixth century A.D.
† See below, Section D.

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This paradox underlies one of the greatest Śaiva myths:

The demon Tāraka usurped the power of the gods, and it was fated that he could only be slain by a son born of Śiva and Pārvatī, the daughter of the mountain Himalaya. But Śiva was constantly performing tapas and had no desire to marry; Pārvatī came to serve him in his mountain hermitage, but he took no notice of her. At length, Indra, the king of the gods, sent Kāma, the god of desire, to excite Śiva; though Kāma succeeded in releasing one of his flower arrows toward Śiva’s heart, Śiva maintained control of his emotions and burnt Kāma to ashes with the flame which shot forth from the third eye in the middle of his forehead.

Pārvatī then laid aside her royal garments and ornaments and performed such great tapas that Śiva resolved to marry her. He came to her in disguise and catalogued in great detail the faults of the god to whom she was devoted, but she remained steadfast. Śiva then revealed himself and their marriage took place.

When, after some time, the love-making of the couple had failed to produce the son needed by the gods, Indra sent Agni to interrupt Śiva and Pārvatī. He succeeded in this but was cursed by Pārvatī to bear the fiery seed of Śiva; unable to bear this torture, Agni placed the seed in the river Ganges, where it was found by the wives of the Seven Sages, known as the Kṛṣṭikās. From the seed a child was born, named Skanda or Kumāra, who slew the demon Tāraka in battle.18

In one version of this myth, when the gods propose the match to Himalaya, he objects: “It is said that Śiva lives without attachments, and that he performs tapas all alone. How then can he


interrupt his trance, and how could he marry any woman but Sātī [his wife in a former incarnation], who is dead?"19 Explicit reasons for Śiva’s behavior are given in the course of the myths, but the metaphysical arguments are both secondary and subsequent to the story line of the myth; if philosophy could resolve the problem at the start, there would be no need for the myth to mediate between the two opposed facets; the myth takes over where philosophy proves inadequate. Śiva himself is said to be troubled by the ambivalence in his character, for, when Kāma wounds him, shattering his trance and stirring his desire, Śiva muses, “I dwell ever in tapas; how is it then that I am enchanted by Pārvatī?”20 Only involvement in the eternal cycle of the myth can reveal—even to the god himself—the answer to this question.

3. THE RESOLUTION OF THE AMBIVALENCE OF ŚIVA IN THE TEXTS

The solution is not an arbitrary construction of armchair scholarship, meaningless to the creators and preservers of the myths. Throughout Hindu mythology, the so-called opposing strands of Śiva’s nature have been resolved and accepted as aspects of one nature. They may be separated in certain contexts, and are frequently confused and misunderstood even by the tellers of the tales, but in every age there have been notable examples of satisfactory resolution. The Śiva of Brahmin philosophy is predominantly ascetic; the Śiva of the Tantras is predominantly sexual; but even in each of these, elements of the contrasting aspect are present, and in the myths—which form a bridge between rational philosophy and irrational cult—Śiva appears far more often in his dual nature than in either one or the other.

As early as the Atharva Veda hymn to the brahma-cārīn (chaste student), there is a detailed description of a sage with whom Jarl Charpentier has identified Śiva himself, the great ascetic creator but also the great liṅga-bearer, who spills his seed upon the earth.21 The first explicit reference to Śiva in his ambiguous sexuality appears in the Mahābhārata:22 "Whose semen was offered as an

19 Kālikā 42.71–77.
20 Skanda 1.1.21.70.
22 The Mahābhārata is the great epic of India, 200,000 lines composed between 300 B.C. and A.D. 300; the Rāmāyaṇa, the second epic, is much shorter, deals primarily with the adventures of Rāma, an avatar of Viṣṇu, and was composed during the same period.
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oblation into the mouth of fire, and whose semen was made into a golden mountain? Who else can be said to be a naked brahmacārīn with his vital seed drawn up? Who else shares half his body with his wife and has been able to subjugate Kāma?”23 The seed spilt creatively and contained in chastity; the ultimate act of desire (androgynous union) and the conquest of desire—the essence of Śaiva mythology is in this passage.

The concept persists throughout the Purāṇas: Śiva says that if he marries, his wife must be a yogini (female ascetic) when he does yoga, and a lustful mistress (kāmini) when he is full of desire.24 The sage Nārada describes Śiva: “On Kailāsa mountain, Śiva lives as a naked yogi. His wife, Pārvatī, is the most beautiful woman in the universe, capable of bewitching even the best of yogis. Though Śiva is the enemy of Kāma, and is without passion, he is her slave.”25 So completely are the roles of ascetic and lover combined that the myth-makers themselves confuse them; in the story of the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī, the Seven Sages say to her: “How can you enjoy the pleasures of the body with an ascetic [yati] like him, so terrifying and disgusting?” But in another version of this same text they say: “How can you enjoy the pleasures of the body with a husband [pati] like him, so terrifying and disgusting?”26 The sense remains the same in both readings, for the two roles are being compared and in fact interchanged.

A similar combination of roles appears in the myth of the Pine Forest, in which Śiva comes in disguise to a group of sages who are practicing violent asceticism with their wives; when the sages, accusing him of seducing their wives, castrate27 him by a curse, Śiva reveals himself to them and teaches them to worship his fallen liṅga.28 In one version of this myth, the sages’ curse is

23 MHB XIII, Appendix 1, #5, 47–50.
24 Śiva 2.2.16.39; also Kālikā 9.49–50.
25 Śiva 2.5.18.44–51.
27 Throughout this paper, “castration” will refer to the mutilation of the phallos as well as or instead of the testicles.
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this: “If we have served Śiva from our birth with tapas, then let the liṅga of this libertine fall to the earth.”

Thus they swear by Śiva the ascetic to destroy Śiva the erotic, not realizing that the two are one. This is implicit in other versions of the myth as well, for the sages use the tapas of Śiva (their fiery curse) against the lust of Śiva (his liṅga), and must be punished before they are able to realize the unity of the two powers.

For the yogi himself, using Śiva as his model, the god might appear in either aspect according to the worshiper’s need: “The yogi who thinks of Śiva as devoid of passion himself enjoys freedom from passion; the yogi who meditates upon Śiva as full of passion himself will certainly enjoy passion.”

Nor was this choice limited to the initiated; a popular hymn to Śiva in Orissa says, “He is the much beloved husband of Gaurī [Pārvatī] and the only object of adoration by the ascetic.”

It would seem that this ambiguity is comprehensible and acceptable to Hindus of various ages and beliefs, notwithstanding its apparent logical contradiction and the difficulties which arise when its implications are literally applied to an actual or mythological social situation.

4. THE ICONIC RESOLUTION OF THE PARADOX: THE ITHYPHALIC YOGI

Sir John Marshall noted in the prehistoric Indus civilization a seal on which was depicted a male god whom he identified as a prototype of Śiva; the figure is seated in a posture of yoga and has an exposed, erect phallus. There is good reason to support the identification of this figure with Śiva, but even if this is not accepted, the seal is evidence of a very early correlation between asceticism and sexuality. The image of the ithyphallic yogi persists throughout Hindu sculpture as an attribute of Śiva.

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29 Haracaritacināmanī 10.74–75.
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The ambiguity of its connotation is possible because, although the erect phallus is of course a sign of priapism, in Indian culture it is a symbol of chastity as well. The basic expression for the practice of chastity is the drawing up of the seed (ardhvaliṅga); but, by synecdoche, the seed is often confused with the liṅga itself, which is "raised" in chastity. Thus the Mahābhārata gives Śiva the epithets ārddhvaliṅga and ārdhvaliṅga, "he whose seed is raised up, whose liṅga is raised up."35 Even without this confusion, the image of the erect phallus is in itself accepted as representative of chastity; when the seed is drawn up, Śiva is a pillar (sthānu) of chastity;36 yet the pillar is also the form of the erect liṅga: "It is in this form of the Lord of Yogins that he becomes Sthānu or of liṅga form."37 Moreover, in the context of the Hindu philosophy of sexual powers, Śiva’s chastity is the source of his erotic power, and so the erect phallus can represent both phases.

In Sanskrit literature, Śiva is often described as ithyphallic, particularly in the Pine Forest myth.39 Frequently this condition is equated with a state of chastity;40 the commentary on Śiva’s Mahābhārata epithet states the rationalization of the ithyphallic state as chaste rather than erotic: "He is called ārdhvaliṅga, because the lowered liṅga sheds it seed, but not the raised liṅga."41

The ithyphallic condition has been attributed by some, not to priapism, but to the Tantric ritual of seminal retention;42 to a certain extent, this technique may be considered a manifestation of yogic chastity, but Śiva’s raised liṅga is symbolic of the power

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33 MHB XIII.17.45.
34 Matsya 4.30–32; Skanda 7.2.9.5–17.
36 See below, Section B.
37 MHB XIII.17.45, –.74, –.83; XIII.146.17; X.7.37; Liṅga 1.20.61; Padma 5.17.57.
38 Śiva, Dharmasamhitā 10.79; Vāmana 43.71.
39 MHB XIII.17.58; VII.173.83–84, –.92; XIII.146.10–17.
40 Mahābhārata, with the commentary of Nilakaṇṭha (Bombay: 1862), XIII.17 45–46.
42 See below, Section D 4.
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to spill the seed as well as to retain it.|| Thus Alain Daniélou writes:

Shiva, the god of eroticism, is also the master of the method by which the virile force may be sublimated and transformed into a mental force, an intellectual power. This method is called Yoga, and Shiva is the great yogi, the founder of Yoga. We see him represented as an ithyphallic yogi. . . . Assuming the various postures of Yoga, Shiva creates the different varieties of beings. . . . Then in the posture of realisation (siddhāsana) he reintegrates into himself all the universe which he has created. It is in this posture that he is most often represented. His erect phallus is swollen with all the potentialities of future creations.43

The yogi here gathers up his creative powers, retaining the promise of future creation in the form of the erect phallus, the embodiment of creative tapas.

For the image retains its primary, more natural significance, as is clear from the statues of the ithyphallic Śiva embraced by Pārvatī;44 it may symbolize actual, as well as potential or sublimated, eroticism. In a myth told among the Lanjhis Saora, it is said that a woman found an amputated phallus, and, “thinking it to be Mahadeo’s [Śiva’s] liṅga, took it home and worshiped it. At night she used to take it to bed with her and use it for her pleasure.”45

In a similar manner, a female figure carved on the temple at Konarak is clearly using a stone Śiva-liṅga as a sexual device,46 an act which seems to be explicitly prohibited in the lawbooks.47 The wives of the Pine Forest sages touch Śiva’s erect liṅga,48 as does Pārvatī in a well-known sculpture;49 his erect phallus is adorned sometimes with red chalk and bright white charcoal and sometimes with bracelets as he dances erotically in the Pine Forest.50

In this way, the image of the ithyphallic yogi retains its ambiguities in myth, icon, and cult, simultaneously representative of chastity and sexuality.

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43 Daniélou, op. cit. (n. 34 above), p. 42.


48 Skanda 7.3.39.10.

49 Daniélou, op. cit., p. 32.

50 Brahmacāṇḍa 2.27.12; Padma 5.5.45.
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B. SEX AND ASCETICISM IN INDIAN RELIGION

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF CHASTITY AND CREATIVE "TAPAS"

Chastity was characteristic of Indian asceticism from the very start. The Upaniṣads say that one may realize the Self by practicing tapas in the forest, free from passion;\(^{51}\) a Purāṇa passage states: "The 88,000 sages who desired offspring went South and obtained graves; but the 88,000 who did not desire offspring went North and obtained immortality."\(^{52}\) In a late version of the story of Viṣṇu’s avatar as a boar, Śiva appears in a characteristic role, that of the ascetic who rescues a man from the troubles arising from marital involvements:

Once long ago, when the Earth was in danger of drowning in the cosmic floods, Viṣṇu took the form of a boar and saved her. Śiva then said to him, "Now that you have accomplished the task for which you assumed the form of a boar, you must abandon that form. The Earth cannot bear you and is becoming exhausted; she is full of passion, and she has become heated in the water. She has received a terrible embryo from you, who will be born as a demon harmful to the gods. You must abandon this erotic boar form." Viṣṇu agreed with Śiva, but he kept the form of a boar and continued to make love to the Earth, who had taken the form of a female boar. Many years passed, and the Earth brought forth three sons, and when Viṣṇu was surrounded by his sons and his wife he forgot all about his promise to abandon his body. The sons played together and shattered all the worlds, but even though Viṣṇu knew of this, he did not stop them, for he loved his sons; his passion for his wife grew greater and greater. Finally he remembered his promise and begged Śiva to kill him; Śiva took the form of the mythical karabha beast and killed Viṣṇu and his three sons, and the essence of Viṣṇu was freed from the boar form.\(^{53}\)

Deluded by involvement with a woman and children, Viṣṇu finds himself unable to do what he knows to be right; and though he wishes to be freed of his body—as the sage wishes to escape from rebirth—he needs the help of Śiva, the great ascetic, to enlighten him.

Although in human terms asceticism is opposed to sexuality and fertility, in mythological terms tapas is itself a powerful creative force, a generative power of ascetic heat. In a late Rg Vedic creation hymn, it is from tapas that the One is born, and in the Atharva Veda hymn to the brahmaçārin, the chaste sage creates by

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\(^{51}\) Mundaka Upaniṣad 1.2.11; Chāndogya Upaniṣad 5.10.1–6; in One Hundred and Eight Upaniṣads (Isha and Others), ed. Wāsudev Laxmāṇ Śāstrī Pāṇṭikar (Bombay: Nīrṇaya Sāgara Press, 1913).


performing tapas in the ocean.\textsuperscript{54} In the Brāhmaṇas,\textsuperscript{55} Prajāpati, the Creator, assumes the brahmācārin’s role:

Prajāpati was alone here in the beginning. He desired, “May I exist, may I reproduce myself.” He exerted himself and performed tapas, and when he was exhausted and heated the waters were created from him. For waters are born from the heated Man. The waters said, “What is to become of us?” He said, “You shall be heated.” They were heated and created foam. For foam is born in heated water.\textsuperscript{56}

The creative power of heat, particularly when placed in water, is the starting point in all of these cosmogonic myths; from tapas, Prajāpati proceeds to create fire, light, air, sun, moon, dawn, etc.\textsuperscript{57}

2. THE SEDUCTION OF THE ASCETIC

The ascetic must remain chaste to generate tapas: this belief underlies the famous Mahābhārata myth of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, whose chastity is able to produce rain:

King Lomapāda was guilty of a transgression against a Brahmin, and so Indra\textsuperscript{#} sent no rain in his land. The king’s ministers advised him to bring to the palace the sage Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, who had lived in complete chastity in the forest all his life, and had never seen a woman. They said, “If Ṛṣyaśṛṅga may be enticed and lured into your kingdom, Indra will send rain to you immediately.” The king sent a prostitute to the forest, who served Ṛṣyaśṛṅga and plied him with garlands, drinks, and embraces, until he was overpowered with love for her, emotionally aroused and maddened with passion. Although his father warned him against such “demons,” the young sage followed the prostitute to the women’s quarters of the palace, and the rain fell. King Lomapāda gave his daughter, Sāntā, to Ṛṣyaśṛṅga in marriage.\textsuperscript{58}

The Epic states that Ṛṣyaśṛṅga’s purity and chastity give him the power to bring the rain,\textsuperscript{59} and although the prostitute embraces him, she does not actually seduce him. Even when he is overcome by her charms, he invites her to perform tapas with him, and later he describes her to his father as a particularly delightful sort of

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Rg Veda} [\textit{Rig-Veda Sanhita}], with the commentary of Śāyaṇa, ed. Max Müller (6 vols.; London: William H. Allen, 1890–92) X.129.3; Atharva Veda XI.5.5, –7, –10, and –26.

\textsuperscript{55} The Brāhmaṇas are sacred texts elaborating upon the details of the ritual of the Vedas; they were composed from 800 to 500 B.C.

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Satapatha Brāhmaṇa} of the White Yajur Veda, with the commentary of Śāyaṇa, ed. Satyavrata Śāmasvami (Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica, 1903) 6.1.3.1–2; cf. \textit{Aitareya Brāhmaṇa}, with the commentary of Śāyaṇa, ed. Kāśīnātha Sāstry Āgās (Poona: Anandāsrama Sanskrit Series #32, 1896) 10.1.5 and 11.6.4.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Kausitaki Brāhmaṇa} [Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa], ed. Gulbarṣya Vajāṃkara Chaya (Poona: \textit{Ānandāsrama} #65, 1911) 6.1; and \textit{Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa} of the Black Yajur Veda, with the commentary of Śāyaṇa, ed. Rajendra Mitra (Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica, 1859), 2.2.9.1.

\# See Section E 2 (Part II).

\textsuperscript{58} MHB III.110.17–36; –111.1–22; –112.1–18; –113.1–12.

\textsuperscript{59} MHB III.110.3 and –25–26.
ascetic, with beautiful “rosaries” (garlands) and “matted locks” (long hair perfumed and bound with gold). This is the ascetic viewpoint reduced to the absurd.

On the other hand, there is much to suggest that he is in fact seduced, and that it is his fall from chastity, rather than his unbroken chastity, that brings the rain; he must be “enticed,” rather than summoned by royal command in order for the rain to fall, and he is so overpowered with love for the prostitute that he in no way resists her enticements but follows her to the palace. Leopold von Schroeder considered the myth the reworking of a generation rite in which sexual union actually took place, the union itself causing the rain; this simple analogy works on the principle of sympathetic magic. Von Schroeder’s view is substantiated by the Buddhist version of the tale:

Isisinga [Ṛṣyaśṛṅga] performed such great tapas that Sakka [Indra] was shaken and determined to break down his virtue. For three years he sent no rain, advising the king of Benares, “Send your daughter Nalinikā to break the virtue of Isisinga and it will rain; for his fierce tapas has caused the rain to stop.” She went to him and enticed him, and he thought her to be some marvellous ascetic. His virtue was overcome, his meditation broken off, and he made love to her. Then she ran away from him, and Sakka sent rain that day. Isisinga longed for Nalinikā, still thinking that she had been an ascetic, until his father returned and realized from Isisinga’s report that a woman had broken his virtue. He told his son, “This was a female demon; you must always avoid them,” and Isisinga then returned to his meditation.

This version shows the classical pattern of the myth of the ascetic seduced by a prostitute, an important theme in Indian literature, as, indeed, in many other literatures. Indra appears as the enemy of the ascetic whose chastity is a threat to rain and

60 MHB III.111.10, -112.1-18.
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fertility, not a source of it; he brings about the seduction of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga just as he causes Kāma to assist Pārvatī in the seduction of Śiva. After the seduction, the ascetic returns to his meditation; the phases of chastity and sexuality alternate.

In terms of the general pattern, this Buddhist version would seem to be older than that of the Mahābhārata, the theme of the seduced ascetic being more basic in India than that of the incorruptible ascetic. Moreover, the Rāmāyaṇa version of the myth tends also to support the suggestion of von Schroeder; for, although it tells the story in much the same way as the Mahābhārata, it introduces it with a statement that Ṛṣyaśṛṅga was sent for in order to perform a sacrifice for King Daśaratha to obtain a son—an indication of the sage’s own sexual powers. In the tale of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, as in the story of the temptation of Śiva by Pārvatī,** there seems to be a very real ambiguity about the success or failure of the seduction. In fact, it is the combination of the two—the sage’s original steadfastness and his eventual surrender—that produces the desired result, but different versions emphasize one aspect or the other to produce an apparent paradox.

Except in the more ribald versions of the theme, and sometimes even there, the ascetic learns something of value from his contact with the woman of the world; an important path of communication is established between the two opposed world views. The necessity for a prostitute as the partner of the ascetic is not merely a result of the metaphysics of the conjunction of opposites, of the representatives of tapas and kāma, but in part a consequence of the simple logistics of the necessary plot: after his experience with the woman, the ascetic must be free to return to his yoga, in order to avoid the problems attendant upon the combination of asceticism and marriage. The one woman who can allow him to do this is the prostitute, who is sexually free just as he is, moving below the morals of conventional Hinduism just as he moves above them. Much of the Ṛṣyaśṛṅga story resembles the tale of Enkidu in the Gilgamesh Epic; Enkidu had lived in chastity among the animals in the wilderness until a harlot was sent to tame him so that he could become human and gentle enough to befriend Gilgamesh. The Hindu ascetic must be “tamed” as well, and it is Śiva himself

64 Mahābhāgavata 22.34–43; Matsya 47.113–127 and –.170–213; Padma 5.13.257–313; Vāyu 2.35–36; Śiva 2.3.17.19–22; Saura 53.48; Kumārasambhava 3.4; MHB V.15.2–25.
** See Section G 1–4 (Part II).
66 Epic of Gilgamesh, Tablet 1, column 3, lines 42 ff., Heidel edition.

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—taking the place of Indra, as he often does—who usually undertakes this task, to remind the yogi of the need to participate in the world of the flesh as well as the world of the spirit.††

3. CHASTITY AND THE LOSS OF CHASTITY

In the attempt to combine and give full value to the experiences of the two worlds, the myth ofṚṣyaśṛṅga comes to terms with a problem central to Hindu mythology: Both chastity and the loss of chastity are necessary for fertility. The earliest expression of this conflict appears in an obscure hymn of the Rg Veda,67 a dialogue between the sage Agastya and his wife Lopāmudrā:

1. [Spoken by Lopāmudrā]: "For many years I have exhausted myself and now I have become old. Age wears away the beauty of bodies. Men should go to their wives." [Sāyaṇa, the commentator, notes that the wives also practise tapas.]

2. "The pious sages of ancient times, who conversed about sacred truths with the gods, ceased [from the performance of tapas] for they did not find the End. [Sāyaṇa: Without achieving success in brahmacarya [chaste study] they died.] Women should go with their husbands."

3. [Spoken by Agastya]: "Not in vain is all this toil, which the gods encourage. We must undertake it with all efforts. By this we will win the race that is won by a hundred artifices, when we unite together as a pair." [Sāyaṇa: "We will win the battle of sexual intercourse when we procreate in the proper way"—in this way he accedes to the sexual union that she spoke of.]

[According to von Schroeder, ritual intercourse took place here, between the recital of verses 3 and 4.68 Karl Geldner says that "the enjoyment of love will be masked here with various images." ]

4. [Lopāmudrā]: "Desire for the bull who roars and is held back [Sāyaṇa: he holds back his seed as he practises chastity] has overcome me, coming upon me from all sides." [The poet]: Lopāmudrā entices the man; the foolish woman sucks dry the wise man.

5. [Agastya]: "By this Soma which I have drunk, in my innermost heart I say: Let him forgive us if we have sinned, for a mortal is full of many desires."

6. [The poet]: Agastya, digging with spades [Geldner: "A new image for the enjoyment of love"], wishing for progeny, children, and strength, nourished both paths [Sāyaṇa: kāma and tapas], for he was a powerful sage. Among the gods, he found fulfilment of his desires.

In this complex and intriguing hymn, Agastya’s position is unclear and yet crucial. A traditional Indian interpretation is expressed in the Brhaddevatā: “The sage began, from desire of secret union, to talk to his wife, the illustrious Lopamudrā [sic], when she had bathed after her period. With the two stanzas she expressed what she wished to do. Then Agastya, desiring to make

†† See Section H 1 (Part II).

67 Rg Veda I.179.
love to her, satisfied her with the two following stanzas."\textsuperscript{70} The statement that Agastya himself desires the union seems to be based upon the third verse as well as the fourth, which the Brhad-devatā attributes to Agastya; Lopamudrā merely convinces him to break his chastity sooner than he had intended. Yet the verse of expiation seems to indicate that Agastya has been persuaded to violate his vow. Hermann Oldenberg suggests that the circumstances might have been such that Agastya’s “holy purity” was not actually violated—that she might have approached him while he was asleep, for instance;\textsuperscript{71} this would imply that the drinking of the Soma was an expiation for the mere desire, rather than the act, but it seems more likely that actual, conscious union did take place. In spite of the expiation, von Schroeder maintains that “what they did was not a sacrilege but a richly blessed act, and it is rewarded, rather than punished”; and he notes that intercourse in fertility rites is especially powerful when performed by one who has practiced chastity until then.\textsuperscript{72}

Here is the core of the matter: it is necessary to amass powers of fertility by the practice of chastity, and then to put them to use by the breaking of that very vow; the views are complementary, not opposed. Jakob Wilhelm Hauer saw in the Agastya hymn two “quite opposed concepts of ecstatic practice,” the praise of chastity (verses 1–3) and the praise of intercourse as a source of power and fertility (verses 4–6).\textsuperscript{73} The verses cannot be divided quite so neatly; both views appear throughout the hymn, constantly readjusting the balance. The poet of the hymn speaks with disdain of the foolish woman who sucks the wise man dry, an instance of the traditional misogyny of the Indian ascetic tradition, but he also notes that Agastya found strength and power by nourishing both paths, chastity and fertility. The hymn speaks of sin and expiation, but it speaks too of the winning of the race and the fulfilment of desires among the gods.

In the Mahābhārata version of the myth of Agastya, the sage desires to break his vow of chastity and in fact has difficulty in persuading Lopāmudrā to break her vow:

The chaste sage Agastya was asked by his ancestors to marry and procure offspring to perform the death rites for them in perpetuity. Agastya created


\textsuperscript{71} Hermann Oldenberg, “Ākhyāna-Hymnen im Ṛg Veda,” ZDMG XXXIX (1884–85), pp. 65–68.

\textsuperscript{72} Von Schroeder, op. cit., pp. 159, 161–62.

\textsuperscript{73} Jakob Wilhelm Hauer, Die Anfänge der Yogapraxis im Alten Indien (Berlin: W. Kohlhammer, 1922), p. 38.
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a beautiful woman whom he caused to be born as the daughter of the King of Vaidarbha, named Lopamudrā. When Agastya asked the king for her, the king was unwilling to give her to him, but Agastya threatened to burn everything with the power of his tapas, and Lopamudrā herself asked to be given to Agastya. He then asked her to discard her ornaments and to dress herself in rags, bark clothes, and deer-skins; then they practised tapas together. When he saw her shining with her tapas, the sage asked her to make love with him, but she said,ashamed, “I will not approach you dressed in the rags of asceticism, for this ochre robe must not be made impure in any way. But dress me and yourself in heavenly ornaments, and I will come to you.” He argued that if he used his powers of tapas to obtain riches it would destroy his ascetic powers, but she was adamant. After various adventures, Agastya succeeded in fulfilling the conditions, and Lopamudrā bore him a great son.74

Several elements of the Rṣyaśrīṇa tale may be seen here: the princess comes to the ascetic at the command of her father, to avoid a curse (here, the threat of tapas is a direct force of fire, replacing the indirect drought of the Rṣyaśrīṇa tale); she performs asceticism with him and exchanges ascetic garments for royal ones (having first changed from royal to ascetic at his request), as Rṣyaśrīṇa mistakes royal ones for ascetic. The force of the Vedic hymn of Agastya is retained, although the roles are somewhat reversed; the combined forces of chastity and sexuality produce a son.

4. THEEROTICE APPEAL OF THE ASCETIC

What is striking about the Mahābhārata reworking of the Agastya hymn is the passion which Lopamudrā stirs when she becomes a female ascetic (a role which, according to Sāyaṇa, she plays in the Vedic hymn); in the earlier version, it is Agastya’s ascetic status which excites her: “She desires the bull who is held back.” In either direction, the force is clear and psychologically valid: the ascetic, whose chastity generates powers of fertility, becomes an object of desire, in part merely because he is forbidden. A tale illustrating this point is told about Pūran, the disciple of the great yogi Gorakh Nāth:

Pūran performed tapas for thirty-six years. When Gorakh Nāth was about to make him a saint, one of the disciples said, “Test him first by making him beg alms from Rāṇī Sundrān [“the Beautiful Queen”].” Pūran went there, covered with ashes, and a handmaiden told the Queen, “A handsome yogi with red eyes has come here. He will not accept alms from anyone but you. When I saw his beauty I fainted.” When the Queen saw Pūran, she said, “I would kill the faqr that rubbed the ashes on you. Why should you be a saint? Be my husband.” Pūran returned to Gorakh Nāth with the alms, whereupon his ears were pierced in the ceremony that made him a saint. But the Queen went to Gorakh Nāth and said, “If you are a true guru,

74 MHB III.94.1-27, -.95.1-24, -.97.17-25.
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give Pūran to me as alms.” Gorakh Nāth told Pūran to go with her, and when they were alone she said, “Be my husband; don’t be a saint, for Gorakh gave you to me for alms.” Pūran stayed with her for four hours and then left her. Broken hearted, the Queen said to Gorakh, “Give him to me or I will kill myself; or at least make me a disciple too, so that I may remain with him.” But Gorakh said, “He whose clothes are red and whose mind is clear never returns from the wilds. Is a yogi anyone’s friend?” And the Queen killed herself. 75

The yogi and the princess; the woman’s offer to do asceticism with him; the ultimate return to the wilderness—these are familiar themes. His asceticism is a challenge to her, as Agastya’s is to Lopāmudrā, Rṣyaśrīga’s to the prostitute, Śiva’s to Pārvatī. The intentional wrongheadedness which sometimes underlies this phenomenon can be seen in the words placed in the mouth of a Buddhist monk in a satirical play: “Ah, how delightful is the touch of this Kapālinī [ascetic woman of the Śaiva Kapālin sect]! Often have I ardently embraced widows . . . but such rapturous emotions were never excited as by touching the rising breasts of this Kapālinī.” 76 A widow is the epitome of the sexually taboo Hindu woman; the sin of sexual contact with her is exceeded only by the consequences of incest, and intercourse with a female ascetic is a crime tantamount to incest. 77

But the appeal of the ascetic is best understood in terms of powers rather than of morals. “The yogin becomes as strong and beautiful as a god, and women desire him, but he must persevere in chastity; on account of the retention of semen there will be generated an agreeable smell in the body of the yogin.” 78 By “drawing up his seed,” the yogi preserves all his powers, particularly, of course, those he is explicitly holding in, sexual powers.

5. THE EROTIC POWERS OF THE ASCETIC

Even in the Kāmasūtra, the textbook of erotic science and hence ostensibly opposed to the ascetic establishment, this concept, so basic to all Hindu thought, emerges: The successful lover is one who has conquered his senses and is not excessively passionate; he obtains his powers by brahmacarya and great meditation. 79 The chaste ascetic is not only sexually attractive; he is sexually active. Many of the central images of sculpture at Khajuraho are of a

76 Prabodhacandrodaya of Kṛṣṇamitra (Bombay: Nirṇaya Sāgara Press, 1898), III.18.
77 Nāradaṃśrti [The Institutes of Nārada], with the commentaries of Asahāya et al., ed. Julius Jolly (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1885), 12.73-75; Viśnusūrti [Institutes of Viṣṇu], ed. Julius Jolly (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1880), 36.7.
79 Kāmasūtra of Vatsyāyana (2 vols.; Bombay: Venkaṭēśvara, 1856), 7.2.55-57.
couple engaged in the sexual act while both have their legs folded in the yogic "lotus seat"; in the philosophy of Tantric yoga, even the solitary meditation of the yogi in the lotus seat produced an internal sexual experience, the union of Śiva and the goddess Kuṇḍalini within the yogi's body: "The maithuna [intercourse] of this divine couple produces amṛta [the elixir of immortality], which overflows the yogin's body and bestows on him a state of supreme bliss."  

Ascetics appear throughout Hindu mythology in creative and erotic roles. When Brahmā wishes to create the worlds, he procures as his wife the female ascetic Śatarūpā and engages in intercourse with her; her yoga is her creative power. The women of the Pine Forest use their tapas as an erotic power, for when they are overcome with passion for Śiva they say, "You must consent to our desires, for we are female ascetics and we do what we wish, whether we are naked or clothed." In the Hindu lawbooks, a brahmačārin or ascetic, in the sense of one who has completed a vow of chastity, is said to be a particularly suitable bridegroom.

The paradox only arises when sexual powers are actually used by a man who is supposedly practicing chastity at that time, as in the Khajuraho sculptures or in the character of Śiva, simultaneously yogi and priapic god. Various solutions are offered on various levels: Hindu society divided the life-span into separate ages with a type of sexual activity appropriate to each; Śaiva mythology substitutes for this the principle of cycles alternating in a manner roughly parallel to the different "ages"; another solution, applied in the mythology to common yogis as well as to Śiva himself, is to allow the ascetic to make use of his powers in various ways other than by the actual sexual act which constitutes the technical breaking of his vow. These solutions, none of them entirely satisfactory, will be discussed at length below.

6. SEXUAL PLEASURES AS THE REWARD FOR ASCETICISM

One example of the division into temporal cycles is the belief that the yogi gains by his chastity not only sexual powers but the right

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80 Anand, op. cit. (n. 44 above), Pl. xxxvi, entitled "A Yogic posture of the Kaula cult."
82 Śiva, Dharmaśaṃhitā 10.126.
†† See below, Sections C and D; also Section H 2–4 and Section I (Part II).
to use them; Agastya wins Lopāmudrā by means of the threat of his tapas, a force which he also uses to satisfy the conditions under which she will allow him to enjoy her. Śiva says to Pārватī, “By tapas one wins kāma,” and this concept appears often in passages encouraging the practice of tapas. The belief that beautiful women await one in heaven is old; a funeral hymn of the Atharva Veda beseeches the funeral fire not to burn up the phallus of the dead man, for this reason. The apsaras-es, celestial prostitutes, are the particular reward of the ascetic, just as their earthly counterparts are his frequent temptation in mortal life. The apsaras Urvasī says to Arjuna, “All the men of Pūru’s race that come here delight us through their ascetic merit, and they do not transgress by this.” The theme is popular in court poetry:

His culminating fruit
of no little asceticism in past lives is this:
that after showing all her charms
in a hundred motions taught by love,
a fair one lies now in his loving arms,
the seal of sleep upon her loosened limbs.

The temporal division in this is clear: sensual pleasures follow asceticism. The other phase of the cycle appears in the concept of tapas as expiation for sexual transgressions and as a means to restore sexual powers. 

But often the erotic and ascetic experiences are in fact considered simultaneously. The structure of Sanskrit and the conventions of Sanskrit verse are such that large elements of a poem, and indeed whole poems, may be construed in either of two entirely different ways. One such punning verse may be read in either the ascetic mode [śānta] or the erotic mode [śṛṅgāra]:

Ascetic: Do tapas somewhere on the sandy bank of the Narmadā river,
O you whose heart is peaceful, confident one, firm one.
What other action is there that brings a blessing in this world,
than to unite with the highest Self?

Erotic: In summer, when my heart is stirred and emboldened,
I pursue a play-mate and enjoy the lust of love.
What other action is there that brings pleasure in this world,
than to unite with another man’s wife?

83 Skanda 6.257.11.
86 Atharva Veda IV.34.2.
87 MHB III, Appendix I, #6, 120–21.
89 See Sections I and I 1 (Part II).
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The spirit of this verse is hardly devotional, and it brings up the question of the intention behind the myths of the seduced ascetic. The poet Bhartrihari cast aspersions on the concept of *apsaras*-es won by asceticism:

You cheat yourself and others with your lies,
Philosopher, so foolish-wise,
In that you state
A celibate
Has greater grace to win the prize.
Are there not heavenly nymphs beyond the skies?90

It should be evident that there is a serious and ancient tradition for ascetic practices to culminate in erotic rewards, but there are also many myths in which the aroused ascetic is simply a dirty old man to be mocked; when the ascetic himself is the active party in the seduction, as in the *Mahabharata* tale of Agastya, the myth often shades off into a closely related folk theme: the false ascetic who uses his *tapas* as a pretext with which to obtain lustful rewards.

7. THE HYPOCRITICAL ASCETIC

The jurist Ápastamba remarked, “The billy-goat and a Brahmin learned in the Vedas are the lewdest of all beings.”91 This opinion was shared by Buddhists and Europeans92 and prevails to the present day in India.93 Śaiva ascetics in particular are depicted as “foolish, illiterate, voracious, lecherous, and scoundrelly”;94 Mahendravarmān’s *Mattavilāsa* (“The Madman’s Dalliance”)95 is a lengthy satire on the excesses committed by Śaiva ascetics, and tales of this type abound in Indian literature.96 The philosophical basis for the sexuality of yogis does not automatically justify

every breach of the vow of chastity; the Bengali saint Caitanya remarked: "I can never again look upon the face of an ascetic who has had anything to do with a woman. The senses are weak, and are attracted toward worldly things; even a wooden image of a woman can steal the mind of a sage. . . . Those false ascetics are contemptible."97

This is clearly based on a feeling quite opposed to the satirical spirit of the literary condemnations; as a true ascetic, one who knows the ideal, Caitanya objects to the charlatans who give them all a bad name. This attitude underlies many versions of the Pine Forest myth: Śiva, the true ascetic, exposes the weakness of those ascetics who pretend to imitate him but who lust for their wives and are not truly dedicated.98 Yet Śiva himself is often pictured as a hypocritical ascetic. The Pine Forest sages actually call him a false ascetic,99 an accusation substantiated by the accompanying description:

When Śiva failed to be satisfied by making love to Pārvatī, he then went naked into the Pine Forest in the guise of a madman, his līṅga erect, his mind full of desire, wishing to obtain sexual pleasure with the wives of the sages.100

Śiva himself confesses to being a false ascetic when he replies to the taunts of the sages’ wives:

The women: "You are the foremost of wantons; how can you wander begging without embarrassment?"

Śiva: "There is no expedient but wandering as a beggar in order to reveal my own songs, gazes, and words among women in different places."101

In a story of one of the many quarrels between Śiva and Pārvatī, she accuses him of ascetic hypocrisy:

Śiva and Pārvatī were playing at dice, and she won from him all his ornaments and even his loincloth. Then all the hosts and attendants were embarrassed and turned their heads away, and Śiva was ashamed and angry. He said to her, "All the sages and gods are laughing at me; why have you done this? If you have won, at least let me keep my loincloth." But Pārvatī laughed and said, "What need have you for a loincloth? You went naked into the Pine Forest and seduced the wives of the sages, with the pretext of begging; and then when you had gone they gave you great honor. The sages there caused your loincloth to fall; therefore you must cast it off now, for you have lost it at dice anyway."102

98 Haracaritacintāmaṇi 10.3–32; Yāgīvaramāhātmya 27b.10; Vāmana 43–44; Darpadalana 7.17–71; Saura 69.
99 Śiva, Dharmasamhitā 10.187.
100 Ibid., 10.78–80.
101 Upatikṣāvallabha, Bhikṣūjanakāvya (Bombay: Kāvyamālā Series #12, 1895) 9.13.
102 Skanda 1.1.34.116–30.
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Śiva's role of the false ascetic in the Pine Forest is supported by various other stories in which he behaves similarly.

Once, Śiva saw some beautiful women and āpsaras-es and was overcome by desire for them. He invited them to go far away in the sky with him. Pretending to do tapas, the god in fact intended to make love to them.\(^{103}\)

The god may use his real asceticism as a false pretext—even to achieve a goal to which his asceticism legitimately entitles him.

This confusion is due to the ambivalent attitude toward asceticism in Hindu society; although from the time of the Upaniṣads much lip service was paid to the ascetic, a large branch of conventional Hinduism always maintained a very real hostility toward renunciation. The Śaiva ascetic was considered a desipser of Vedic rites and religious institutions,\(^{104}\) and his mere existence was a slur upon the conventional society which he rejected. The non-Vedic Vṛātya ascetic was classed with the dregs of society, such as incendiaries, poisoners, pimps, spies, adulterers, abortionists, atheists, and drunkards.\(^{105}\) Fringe members of society could find a comparatively respectable status among the Śaiva sects; this led to a general decline in the moral reputation of Śaivas.\(^{106}\) Ascetics were frequently employed as spies, and spies masqueraded as ascetics,\(^{107}\) giving them all a bad name; by extension, Śiva himself was eventually condemned as the author of their rites. In this manner, Śiva derived his reputation as a great smoker of Bhang (marijuana) from the yogis, who to this day are said to indulge in the use of drugs.\(^{108}\)

8. THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCREATION

The most frequent and compelling objection to asceticism is based upon its conflict with the deep-seated Hindu belief in the importance of descendants, a belief central to Indian thought from the time of the Vedas to the present day. The Vedas certainly did not revere celibacy;\(^{109}\) Lopāmudrā summed up Vedic opinion when

\(^{103}\) Padma 5.53.1–2.
\(^{105}\) MHB V.35.39–41.
\(^{107}\) Arthaśāstra 1.11.13–20; 2.35.13; etc.
\(^{109}\) Maganlal A. Buch, The Principles of Hindu Ethics (Baroda, 1921), p. 3.
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she said, "Men should go to their wives." This injunction was elaborated by the time of the Epic in the form of the rtugamana, the duty of a man to make love to his wife during her fertile period.\textsuperscript{110} By ignoring the fertile period, a man commits a sin which leads him to Hell;\textsuperscript{111} it is the ancestors' request for descendents which causes Agastya to seek the hand of Lopāmudrā. To this day, it is believed in India that a man who dies childless will become a ghost,\textsuperscript{112} for a son is responsible for the ceremonies upon which the peace of his dead ancestors depends.

The basic obligation to the manes is cited by Śiva as an excuse for him not to beget a son, as he is immortal and has no ancestors,\textsuperscript{113} but this is one of many instances in which the god willingly submits to the mortal situation. The Śiva Purāṇa says, "The man without a son has an empty house, and his tapas is cut off,"\textsuperscript{114} thus denying to the ascetic both the pleasures which he has voluntarily abandoned and the very goal for which he has sacrificed them. This may seem merely spiteful, but its application in several myths reveals the logic of it in Indian terms:

The sage Mandapāla followed the path of the sages who have drawn up their seed in chastity; he practised tapas, conquered his senses, and finally abandoned his body and went to the world of the manes. But there he did not receive the fruits of his tapas, and he saw many people without rewards there, though they had mastered asceticism. He asked the reason for this and was told, "Men win these fruits by performing the rituals, mastering brahmacarya, and begetting progeny. If a man has mastered tapas and performed the rituals, but has no children, he does not obtain the reward; but beget children and you will enjoy the eternal fruits." Upon hearing this, Mandapāla, knowing the fecundity of birds, immediately went and begat four sons upon a bird-woman, Jaritā. Then he abandoned them and took another wife, Lapitā, on whom he begat many sons. In time he returned to Jaritā, and, though both wives were jealous, he lived with them and with his many sons.\textsuperscript{115}

In this myth, chastity is not in itself considered bad, but merely insufficient; the ascetic takes pains to remedy the deficiency and reaps the promised reward in the end, though he experiences many of the problems typical of the attempt to combine the ascetic life with marriage—quarrels with his wife and the loss of his sons. Similar stories are told of other sages;\textsuperscript{116} the ascetic Prajāpati

\textsuperscript{111} Mārkandeya 14.4.
\textsuperscript{113} Bhaddharma 2.60.10–15.
\textsuperscript{114} Śiva 3.14.32.
\textsuperscript{115} MHB I.220.5–17; 224.1–32.
\textsuperscript{116} Devībhāgavata 1.1.4 ff.; Brahma 34.62–73; MHB I.41.1–30; I.42.1–20.
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(primeval creator) named Ruci was begged by his ancestors to marry, but he preferred detachment and retirement from worldly actions. Convinced at length, he did tapas, obtained an apsaras for his wife, and begat a son upon her. Even though Ruci agrees to marry, he obtains his wife by the very method that endangered his ancestors—by the practice of tapas—and his wife is the traditional partner of those ascetics who for any reason break their vow of chastity: she is an apsaras. Thus Ruci manages to satisfy both traditions somewhat, to beget a son and still remain an ascetic.

9. The Prajāpati and His Ascetic Sons

An important series of myths dealing with primeval creation rejects tapas as a creative method, but even in this context, the one who makes creation ultimately possible is Śiva, the lord of ascetics, who usually appears in his anti-ascetic, androgynous form, even though his appearance is a reward for Prajāpati's tapas:

Brahmā created many creatures; when they failed to increase and Brahmā began to worry, a voice said, "You must create by means of sexual intercourse." But as Śiva had not yet created the race of women, this was not possible. Then Brahmā performed tapas, and Śiva came to him in his androgynous form; the woman then became separate and gave Brahmā a sakti [female creative power]. She herself re-entered Śiva's body and disappeared; Brahmā was very happy, and creation proceeded by intercourse.

In another version of this myth, the woman is considered to be Brahmā's daughter, with whom he commits incest, and the man is not Śiva but Kāma. The pattern of the myth allows for the assistance of either the great yogi (who here appears in his sexual aspect) or the great god of desire (to assist Brahmā who in this case is himself considered the great yogi) in order to strike the balance of creative forces:

Once when Brahmā wished to create he brought forth sons mentally. He told them to perform creation, but they disregarded their father's commands and went to do tapas. Then in anger Brahmā, the great yogi, created the eleven Rudras [forms of Śiva] and more sons, and then he created a son, Kāma, and a beautiful daughter, sixteen years old. Brahmā said to Kāma, "I have made you for the sake of the pleasure of a man and a woman. Invade the hearts of all creatures by means of yoga, and you will delude and madden them always." Having given magic arrows to Kāma, Brahmā looked at his daughter to give her a boon, but at this moment Kāma

117 Mārkaṇḍeya 92.1–26; 93.1–48; 94.1–38; 95.1–7.
118 Śiva 3.3.1–29; Śiva, Vāyavyasamhitā 7.15–7.17; Vāyu 1.9.61–86; Viṣṇu Purāṇa (Gorakhpur: Gītā Press, 1962), 1.7.1–19; Padma 5.3.155–72; Mārkaṇḍeya 47.1–17; cf. Dessigane, Les Legendes, #63, pp. 82–83.
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decided to test his weapons, and he pierced the great yogi with his arrows and incantations, so that Brahmā fell in a faint. When he regained consciousness and saw his daughter before him, Brahmā was determined to enjoy her, and he began to pursue her. She sought refuge with her brothers, the ascetics, who spoke angrily to their father, saying, “What is this disgusting act that you are bent upon, wishing to enjoy your own daughter?” Then Brahmā was so ashamed that he abandoned his body by means of yoga, and the girl, seeing her father dead, wept and killed herself as he had. But Viṣṇu then appeared and revived them both, giving the girl in marriage to Kāma, to become Rati, goddess of sexual pleasure.119

In this version, the “Rati” which was merely an activity in the earlier version is personified as a goddess, the wife of Kāma, just as Kāma himself appears in place of generalized sexual intercourse. Brahmā dies and is revived by Viṣṇu, a pattern typical of creator gods; in other versions of this story it is Śiva who revives him,120 but here Śiva’s place is taken by Viṣṇu because Śiva himself is represented both by “the great yogi” (Brahmā) who is shot by Kāma (as Śiva is shot later in the myth) and by the ascetic sons who revile Brahmā for his act of incest as Śiva usually does.##

In another version of this creation myth, which incorporates the first story, Śiva appears more explicitly in a double capacity of yogi and erotic god:

Brahmā began creation by meditation, but darkness and delusion overcame him. His mindborn sons were all yogis, passionless, devoted to Śiva, but they did not want to create. So Brahmā did tapas in order to create, but he did not succeed. . . . He begged Śiva to help him in the work of creation. Śiva agreed, but the creatures that he made were immortals like himself, and they filled the universe. Brahmā said, “Do not create this sort of creatures, but make them subject to death.” Śiva said, “I will not do that; create such mortals yourself, if you wish.” Then Śiva turned away from creation and remained with his seed drawn up in chastity from that day forth.

Brahmā then wished to create by means of sexual intercourse; he did tapas for Śiva, who appeared in his androgynous form and gave Brahmā the śakti.

Brahmā then began the process of creation by intercourse. He divided himself into a man and a woman; the woman was Śatarūpā and the man was Manu. Śatarūpā did tapas and obtained Manu for her husband. Together they begat the race of mortals.121

Most of the creative themes are here: The yogi Śiva appears as the object of the tapas of the sages and of Brahmā and as the god who refuses to create, maintaining his chastity; but as the erotic god, Śiva neglects to reward the ascetic sons, and he himself appears as the androgyne and produces creatures who fill the

119 Brahmavaivarta 4.35.31-73, -.101-02.
120 Vāyu 1.25.6 ff.; Līṅga 1.22.17 ff.; Kūrma 1.10.17-39.
## See Section F 1 (Part II).
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universe. Creative methods alternate similarly, intercourse replacing tapas and being replaced in turn; the final creation is by a combination of the methods: Śatarūpā first uses tapas to obtain her husband and then procreates sexually with him.

10. THE TWO FORMS OF IMMORTALITY

Throughout the mythology, whether or not tapas is accepted as a valid means of creation, it is practiced for another goal: immortality, freedom from rebirth. In the Vedas, tapas is able to accomplish the chief desideratum, fertility; in the Upaniṣads, tapas is the means to the new goal, release (mokṣa or muktī). Both are forms of immortality, both promising continuation of the soul without the body—mokṣa giving complete freedom of the soul (or absorption into the Godhead), progeny giving a continuation of the soul’s life in the bodies of one’s children. Thus from the earliest times there was a choice set before the worshiper; even in the hymn of Agastya and Lopāmudrā, the poet speaks of the goal which is won by both paths, and the Purānic myths may be read as an attempt to reap the rewards of both worlds in this way.

One passage in Āpastamba praises chastity as the way to immortality,122 but another states, “You create progeny and that’s your immortality, O mortal.”123 If one cannot have it both ways, one can at least succeed by the path particularly suited to the individual; the poet Bhārtṛhari expressed this view:

> In this vain fleeting universe, a man  
> Of wisdom has two courses: first, he can  
> Direct his time to pray, to save his soul,  
> And wallow in religion’s nectar bowl.  
> But, if he cannot, it is surely best  
> To touch and hold a lovely woman’s breast,  
> And to caress her warm round hips, and thighs,  
> And to possess that which between them lies.124

The choice is not always so free; one is limited by natural propensities and svadharma, the individual’s particular place in Hindu society. The god Indra was once enlightened by Śiva and left his wife in order to devote himself to tapas; his wife, Śaci, at length persuaded him to return to her and to rule his kingdom, in order to fulfil his own role, his svadharma as king of the gods.125

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122 Āpastamba 2.9.23.4.  
123 Ibid., 2.9.24.1.  
125 Brahmavaivarta 4.47.152–60.
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In discussing this myth, Heinrich Zimmer wrote of “the re-establishment of a balance. . . . We are also taught to esteem the transient sphere of the duties and pleasures of individual existence, which is as real and vital to the living man as a dream to the sleeping soul.”126 It is the function of Indra—and of Śiva—to maintain this balance, to defend the fulness of life against the negation of metaphysical emptiness.

In the myths, this balance is expressed, not in a static form, but in a constantly shifting adjustment, mingling elements of the ascetic and conventional traditions in ever narrowing contrasts, approaching but never quite reaching a solution. The Śiva Purāṇa sums up in metaphorical terms the resolution of the two paths and the two goals, the yogic fire and the elixir of love: “He who burns his body with the fire of Śiva and floods it with the elixir of his śakti by the path of yoga—he gains immortality.”127

C. ASCETICISM AND FERTILITY IN THE CLASSICAL HINDU SOCIAL SYSTEM

The tension which is manifested in metaphysical terms as the conflict between the two paths to immortality, between mokṣa and the dharma of conventional society (in particular, the dharma of marriage and procreation), appears in social terms as the tension between the different stages (āśrama-s) of Hindu life. These four stages provide a superficial solution in temporal terms: first one should be a brahmacārin (chaste student); then grhaṇa (married householder); then vānaprastha (the man who dwells in the forest with or without his wife); and finally the sannyāsin (the ascetic who has renounced everything). There is little disagreement about the value of the first stage, for it does not preclude any of the others; the peculiar nature of the third stage will be discussed below.*** The basic conflict remains between the second and fourth stages, the householder and the ascetic, who represent the two basic paths.

1. THE ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE THE HOUSEHOLDER AND THE ASCETIC

In praising the ascetic life, the Upaniṣads condemn the values of the householder: One must overcome the desire for sons and live as a mendicant.128 This is the ascetic “party line,” a direct contra-

126 Heinrich Zimmer, Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization (Bolingen Series #6; New York: Pantheon, 1946), p. 22.
127 Śiva 7.1.28.19.
*** See below, Section C 2; also see Section H 1 (Part II).
128 Brhadaranyaka Upaniṣad 3.5 and 4.4.22.
diction of the conventional religious view represented by such stories as the *Mahābhārata* tale of Sudarśana, who became a householder, thinking, “As a householder I will conquer death.”

According to the lawbooks, which represent primarily the conventional ethics, a man has three debts to pay: He owes sacrifice to the gods, children to his ancestors, and the study of the Vedas to the holy sages; if he does not pay these debts and seeks Release instead, he is condemned to Hell.

The mainstream of Hinduism attempted to reassure the members of each group that by fulfilling the *dharma* of that group—necessary for the survival of the system as a whole—they would still be able to reap the rewards of other groups as well. The jurists incorporated the ascetic “heresy” and added its goals to those of the conventional life. The Epics state that a married man may comply perfectly with the laws of chastity by abstaining from intercourse with his wife except during her fertile season; by this he gains the merits of a true *brahmacārin*. A similar equation appears in another lawbook: “The begetting of a son by the husband is [equivalent to] the experience of the forest-dweller stage.” In this way, the values of asceticism were absorbed into conventional society.

At the other end of the spectrum, the yogi could extend his worldly involvement almost limitlessly without renouncing any aspect of the ascetic life. The self-controlled yogi may even be a householder and still attain Release if he remains unattached to household affairs; the intention is all-important in this context. Thus Brahmā says to the Pine Forest sages, “You live in a hermitage but you are overcome by anger and lust; yet the true hermitage of a wise man is his home, while for the man who is not a true yogi even the hermitage is merely a house.” And this is the philosophy behind much of the Tantric sexuality of the later Purāṇas: one may perform the *act* of sexual intercourse without losing one’s purity, as long as the *mind* remains uninvolved.

Thus the two kinds of thought may meet on either side of the line—the householder may embrace the philosophy and even the

129 MHB XIII.2.29–40.
131 MHB XII.214.10; III.199.12; cf. *Rāmāyaṇa* I.8.9.
133 *Śiva Samhitā*, last 3 verses; cited by Briggs, *op. cit.* (n. 63 above), p. 49.
134 *Vāmana* 43.87.
1†† See below, Section D 3.
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chastity of the ascetic, or the ascetic may go so far as to take a wife and become a householder.\(^{135}\) The same text which teaches a man that he must overcome the desire for sons and become a sage goes on to say that before attaining final Release he must also overcome the desire to be a sage.\(^{136}\) Similarly, one must absorb the wisdom of both desires; the ideal for Hinduism in general was a fully integrated life in which all aspects of human nature could be of value.\(^{137}\)

2. THE FOREST-DWELLER: AN INADEQUATE COMPROMISE

The third stage, that of the forest-dweller, is the most complex, for it is here that the two traditions meet, in the married ascetic. The main factor distinguishing the forest-dweller from the sannyāsin was that the former was allowed to have a wife; to counteract this, the forest-dwellers were said to practice a more violent kind of tapas, where the sannyāsin-s could, if they wished, merely practice restraint.\(^{138}\) Yet even here there is some confusion, for some lawbooks grant the forest-dweller the alternative of leaving his wife to the care of his sons.\(^{139}\) The textbooks are unanimous, however, in their belief that it was better to go into the forest without a wife.\(^{140}\) Even if the sage does take his wife with him, he is advised to avoid her as much as possible, or, in the words of the Abbé Dubois, “to use the privileges of marriage with the greatest moderation.”\(^{141}\) Several lawbooks state that the forest-dweller should live in complete continence, with his seed drawn up;\(^{142}\) if he has intercourse with his wife, due to his desire, his vow is ruined and he must perform expiation.\(^{143}\) The jurist Kullāka allowed the forest-dweller to go to his wife “at the prescribed times,” that is, during her fertile period;\(^{144}\) this is a dispensation similar to that allowed to the householder.

This is a delicate compromise, and one which the mythology

\(^{135}\) Briggs, op. cit., p. 34.

\(^{136}\) Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad 3.5.


\(^{138}\) Kane, op. cit., II, 928–29.

\(^{139}\) Manu 6.2–3; Kurma 2.27.1–17; Vaikhānasasmārtasūtram, ed. by W. Caland (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1927), 9.5; cf. Kane, op. cit., II, 918.


\(^{141}\) Dubois, op. cit., pp. 505 and 508.

\(^{142}\) Yājñavalkyasmiṃti (Poona: Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series #46, 1904), 3.44; Vāsiṣṭha 9.5; Manu 6.26; Vaikhānasasmārtasūtram 9.2–5.

\(^{143}\) Kurma 2.27.16–17.

\(^{144}\) Cited by Kane, op. cit., II, 920.
never accepted. Physical chastity can be regulated, but in this realm it is the elusive chastity of the mind that is put to the test. A famous and typical story illustrating this problem is the tale of Jamadagni:

The ascetic Jamadagni did tapas for many years; then, by the gods' command, he went to the king and asked for the hand of the princess Reṇukā in marriage. Having obtained her, he went back to his hermitage with her and they performed tapas together for many years, during which five sons were born to them. One day when the sons were out gathering fruit, Reṇukā went to bathe, and in the river she saw a king sporting with his wife. Then Reṇukā was overcome with desire for him, and because of that transgression she fainted. She recovered and returned to the hermitage, but as soon as her husband saw her, devoid of her holy luster, he knew that she had lost her virtue. He was furious, and when he had reviled her he asked each of his sons in turn to kill her; the first four refused, but the youngest, Rāma, took an axe and killed his mother, for which his father praised him highly, offering him a boon. Rāma asked that his mother be revived, and this was granted.145

The sin, committed in mind alone, is so slight in proportion to the punishment that, setting aside the possibility that this may be a somewhat Bowdlerized account of Reṇukā's transgression (an unlikely possibility in the light of the Epic's general disinclination to mince words), it seems necessary to seek the true fault in the situation itself; not only in the troublesome presence of the wife, but in the sons as well, whose birth to ascetics is a constant problem in the mythology.

The situation of the married ascetic is one of compromise, and this is never the Hindu way of resolution, which proceeds by a series of oppositions—for example, the yogi and the married man—rather than by one entity which combines the two by sacrificing the essence of each. Hinduism has no "golden mean"; it seeks the exhaustion of two golden extremes, rather than the arbitration of a middle ground. The yogi in myth is very closely bound up with normal existence,146 but at the same time entirely divorced from it; this made sense to the Hindu in a way that the forest-dweller compromise never did. As a metaphorical mediation, the third stage remained valuable, and so it is the focal point of most of the yogi-householder stories; but as a way of life it was rejected,147 even forbidden.148

145 MHB III.116.1–18.
146 Gonda, op. cit., p. 287.
148 Kane, op. cit., II, 928–29.
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D. SUBLIMATION AND THE TRANTAS

On the human level, as well as the divine, one solution to the conflict between sexual and ascetic behavior was to equate them completely, playing upon the basic function of power which they do in fact share, qualifying sexual activity in such a way as to make it entirely yogic in its application. This solution underlies the Tantric theory of sublimation, by which desire itself, subjected to ascetic discipline, is used to conquer desire. The conventional ascetic viewpoint opposes the method of sublimation; desire must be conquered by chastity, by firmness, by resistance to temptation; as Śiva himself explains, “The desire for desires is increased rather than assuaged by the enjoyment of them, just as a dark flame is increased by oblations poured upon it.”149 But desire may also be channeled and controlled, not by undisciplined license, but by careful application of sexual stimuli; this is the basis of Tantrism, the influence of which is strong in the later strata of Śiva mythology.

I. SEXUAL SATIETY: THE “LIŅGA” IN THE “YONI”

When Kāma has aroused Śiva by shooting him with the arrow of Fascination, Śiva resolves to marry Pārvatī in order to cure himself of the disease born of desire;150 he says, “I burn day and night because of Kāma; I will find no peace [śanti] without Pārvatī.”151 The particular symbolism which expresses this cure is that of the liṅga and the yoni (the female sexual organ); although in the myths the origin of liṅga worship is sometimes ascribed to a curse, it is more frequently the result of measures taken to cure Śiva of his destructive sexual fever. When the Pine Forest sages castrate Śiva, his fiery liṅga moves throughout the earth and the underworld and heaven, burning everything before it like a fire, troubling the universe until the sages propitiate Śiva and Pārvatī agrees to receive the liṅga in her yoni form.152 The solution to Śiva’s dangerous sexuality is not to impose chastity upon him—as the sages attempt to do, and fail, merely exacerbating the danger—but to satisfy him; in certain extreme situations, the only possible control of desire is release. Lust remains a threat to religion only until it is answered; the Goddess says to Śiva, “My lord, having made love with you for many years, I am satisfied,

149 Liṅga 1.86.23.
150 Brahmānda 4.30.84.
151 Mahābhāgavata 24.33.
152 Nilakanṭha on MHB XIII.14.228–31 (Bombay); Śiva 4.12.17–52.
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and your mind has withdrawn from these pleasures. I wish to know your true nature, that frees one from rebirth.”

2. YOGA AND “BHOGA"
The terms yoga and bhoga (sexual enjoyment), representing the extremes of the two paths, appear often in Tantric texts:

If a man is a yogi he does not enjoy [sensual pleasures]; while one who enjoys them does not know yoga. That is why the Kaula [Śaiva Tantric] doctrine, containing the essence of bhoga and yoga, is superior to all [other doctrines].

The Tantra goes on to explain this central doctrine: “In the Kaula doctrine, bhoga turns into yoga directly; what is sin [in conventional religion] becomes meritorious; samsāra [worldly life] turns into mokṣa.” To a certain extent, this is a simple conjunction of opposites, enhanced by a felicitous assonance (bhoga-yoga, bhokṣa-mokṣa)—the sort of proposition which is not uncommon in the crude system of the Tantras; but it contains the seed of metaphysical as well as psychological truth, and this is developed in the mythology.

The application of this doctrine to Śiva, the greatest of yogis and the greatest of bhogin-s (i.e., those who indulge in sexual enjoyment) is obvious. Śiva is the narrator of most of the Tantras, explaining them to Pārvatī, and he himself is usually regarded as the author of their doctrine. Bhairavānanda, a Śaiva yogi who appears in a play by Rājaśekhara, sings this verse:

Gods Vishnu and Brahm and the others may preach
Of salvation by trance, holy rites and the Vedies.
'Twas Umā's [Pārvatī's] fond lover alone that could teach
Us salvation plus brandy plus fun with the ladies.

As propounder of this doctrine, Śiva is also the greatest of its examples. Brahmā cites this in criticism of Śiva when Śiva has censured him for his attempted incest; Brahmā says that Śiva considers himself to be a wise yogi and a bhogin with conquered senses.

153 Śiva 2.2.23.7–8.
155 Kūlārṇava Tantra II.24; cf. Hathayogaprādīpika of Svātmaramayogīndra, (Bombay: Bombay Theosophical Publication Fund, 1815), 3.94.
156 Anand, op. cit., p. 40, citing Arthur Avalon.
158 Śiva 2.2.10.25.
3. Temptation and Indifference

It is significant that Śiva, even when a bhogin, has "conquered senses"; this distinguishes him from the mere libertine and justifies his achievement of perfection. Controlled release, not complete license, is the Hindu solution to the problem of lust. When this is attained, then the devotee who indulges in sexual pleasures is saved rather than damned by them: "He who thirsts for pleasure in order to enjoy it becomes addicted to desire [kāmin]. But the sage who partakes of sensual pleasures as they happen, with a detached mind, without desire, he becomes free of desire [akāmin]." This is the justification which Śiva uses frequently in the Purāṇas to retain his status as a yogi while participating in sexual experiences urged upon him by the gods: he does it, but he does not enjoy it. Physical involvement without emotional involvement makes him even a greater yogi than he would be if he merely remained forever in his meditation. For this reason, Śiva is said to have conquered Kāma, not in spite of the fact that Kāma first stirred his senses greatly, but because he was greatly aroused. By conquering his incipient desire—that is, by burning up his Kāma—he shows his control.

This kind of self-temptation underlies the episode in which Śiva allows Himālaya to bring Pārvatī to him when he is performing tapas; Śiva receives her, not because he is a false ascetic, but because he is so great an ascetic that he is in no danger from women, or so he thinks.

Because of his respect for Himālaya, Śiva accepted his daughter, even though he realized that her beauty was a source of great passion, an obstacle to anyone meditating upon tapas. For this is even greater firmness, to be able to remain firm when there is an obstacle; the tapas that is done in a place without obstacles is greatly increased when done in a place with obstacles. . . . Śiva received her even though she was an obstacle to his meditation, for those whose minds are not disturbed even when temptation is near—they are truly firm.

Thus Pārvatī taunts him to prove his invulnerability by exposing himself to her temptation, saying that if he is truly beyond the power of women, he will have nothing to fear from her presence. Similarly, Gorakh Nāth sent Pūran to beg alms from the beautiful

159 Gopāla Uttara Tāpini Upanisad, 15; in Vaiṣṇava Upaniṣads, with the commentary of Sri Upaniṣad Brahma-yogin, ed. Pandit A. Mahadeva Sastri (Adyar Library Series #8; 2d. ed.: Adyar Library, 1953).
160 Śiva 2.3.18.45.
161 Kālikā 43,35–40; Kumārasambhava 1.56.
162 Śiva 2.3.13.21.
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Queen, and even to be her slave for four hours, as the test of a true ascetic.\(^{163}\)

The importance of this kind of temptation has been noted by Edward C. Dimock in the Sāhajiyā sect of Bengal:

It is necessary to transform desire into true love, or prema, before ritual union can be effective. And the Sāhajiyās consider that chastity, especially under extreme temptation, has the power to transform desire into love. \ldots Desire, called kāma, is dangerous only when it is considered as the end. The truth is that kāma is the beginning.\(^{164}\)

In physiological terms, the “extreme temptation” is the erotic stimulus that stirs the seed so that it can rise through the spinal cord to the brain.\(^{165}\) The initial impulse to chastity, which is always visualized as an active state, a method, is a sexual impulse.

4. THE RETENTION OF THE SEED

Eventually, the Tantras refined this doctrine to allow the man who had conquered his desires to perform the sexual act itself, merely retaining his seed to demonstrate the complete control of his senses; this is an extreme variation upon the theme of temptation. The upward motion of the seed—as in the figure of the ithyphallic yogi—represents the channeling of the life forces themselves:

The method of the Guru at this stage is to use the forces of Pravritti (active sexuality) in such a way as to render them self-destructive. The passions which bind (notably the fundamental instincts for food, drink, and sexual satisfaction) may be it is said so employed as to act as forces whereby the particular life, of which they are the strongest physical manifestation, is raised to the universal life. Passion which has hitherto run downwards and outwards (often to waste) is directed inwards and upwards and transformed to power.\(^{166}\)

In order for this ritual to be effective, it was essential that the yogi restrain his seed, for, as Mircea Eliade remarks, “Otherwise the yogin falls under the law of time and death, like any common libertine.”\(^{167}\) In Tantric terms, this is what distinguishes the false


\(^{164}\) Dimock, op. cit., pp. 53, 155, 16 and 157.


\(^{167}\) Eliade, op. cit., pp. 267–68.
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ascetic ("any common libertine") from the true yogi, as Śiva insists that he is distinguished from the other targets of Kāma.\textsuperscript{168} The seed must be rechanneled, not held motionless; this is in keeping with the mythological concept of power which cannot be destroyed but must be set in motion in a safe direction. Other texts substantiate this idea with descriptions of the control of the seed after it has actually been emitted.\textsuperscript{169} In the mythology, this takes the form of numerous incidents in which the seed of the yogi is swallowed, or cast into a sacrificial fire, or disposed of in other unnatural ways, as, for example, Śiva’s seed is swallowed by Pārvati or Agni, or infused into the wives of the Seven Sages.\textsuperscript{170}

One interesting result of the technique of coitus reservatus is that the yogi is able thus to combine the alternating phases of sexuality and chastity just as Śiva does in his symbolic aspects, restoring his spent powers even as he spends them.\textsuperscript{171} Śiva himself is noted for his ability not only to draw up his seed in chastity but to draw it up in sexuality as well, to make love to Pārvati for many years without shedding his seed.\textsuperscript{172} Eliade has seen in the technique of seminal retention the attempt to recover the primordial powers that men had before the Light was dominated by Sexuality; by defeating the biological purposes of the sexual act, one ceases to act in instinctual blindness like other animals.\textsuperscript{173} The conquest of the biological purpose of the act corresponds to the yogi’s conquest of the emotional purpose of the act—that is, desire.

In the mythology of Śiva, the restraint of the seed serves a double purpose; on the one hand, it makes possible the birth of the son needed by the gods, a son who must not be born in Pārvati (because the combination of her great powers with those of Śiva

\textsuperscript{168} Śiva 7.1.24.43-45.


\textsuperscript{170} Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 13.9; Brhaddevatā 5.97; MHB XIII, Appendix 1 #5, 48–50; Haracaritacinākāmani 9.196; Kathāsaritsāgara 3.6.81; Kumārarāmabhava 1.51, 10.54; Brahmanda 3.1.30–40; 4.3.99–100; Brahmavaivarta 3.8.19–35, 8.33–88; 3.9.1–26; Matsya 158.33; 159.1; Padma 6.12.25; Līṅga 1.15.17–19; Saura 6.64–70; 62.5–12; Śiva 2.4.2.46; Śiva, Dharmasamhitā 10.132–50; Skanda 1.2.29.117–18; 5.1.34.62–66; 6.246.19–20; Vāmana 54.45; Vāyu 2.4.21–39; Elwin, op. cit., p. 293.

\textsuperscript{171} MHB XIII.83.45–47; Rāmāyaṇa I.35.6–13; Kumārarāmabhava 8.8; Brahma- vaivarta 3.1.22, 24; Kālīkā 48.46–47; Śiva 2.4.1.24; 2.4.2.1; 2.5.22.41–42.

would produce a son of unbearable force), but who must be inspired, as it were, by Śiva’s union with Pārvatī; that is, Śiva must make love to Pārvatī in order to stir the seed up, but he must not place it in her. By separating the functions of eroticism and fertility in this way, the technique of coitus reservatus also allows Śiva to maintain his ambivalent status of yogi and lover.¹⁷³

Yet the emphasis on Śiva’s restraint of the seed as a justification for his sexual involvement is too simple and cannot be made to bear the burden of the resolution. In the first place, Tantric methods are later than the ambiguous myths of Śiva; and, in the second place, perhaps the most important of all the aspects of Śiva, and one of the oldest, is his role as the giver of the seed, which derives from his early identification with Brahmā and Agni, as well as with Kāma himself. This aspect of the mythology of Śiva will be discussed in the course of the second half of this paper.

¹¹¹ See Section I 2 (Part II).
¹⁷³ Agrawala, op. cit., vi; Bharati, op. cit., p. 296; Watts, op. cit., p. 96.