INTRODUCTION

Two anthologies entitled *Hindu Scriptures* have previously appeared in the Everyman series alone, that of Nicol MacNicol in 1938 and that of Professor R. C. Zaehner in 1966. Now that I come to add a third it is perhaps not inappropriate, paraphrasing P. G. Wodehouse, to express the modest hope that it will be considered worthy of inclusion in the list of the Hundred Best Books of that title.[1]

The texts in the anthology are arranged in chronological order and this Introduction explains the reasons for their inclusion, sets them in context, and briefly characterizes their contents. Much of the last anthology has been retained unchanged, but cuts have had to be made to accommodate portions of three previously unrepresented works: the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti*, the *Kiraṇa-Tantra*, and the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*. With this new selection the principal aim has been to broaden the book's scope. Most would hesitate to define what is and what is not Hindu scripture, and many may quibble with what I have presumed to include, but a good case can be made for including more than just the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and the Vedic corpus, to which the selections of both previous editors were restricted.

Apart from the new translations one or two extra portions from works that featured in the previous selections have also been added in an attempt to make the selections from the earliest material more representative of what they contain. Professor Zaehner perhaps tended to exclude from the early Upanishads passages that conflicted with his reading of them as centred on a *philosophia perennis*, and some of these have been restored. From among the Vedic hymns, he has included only ones which point forward to later developments, and this weakness has been remedied by supplementing his selection with three more hymns from the *Ṛg-Veda*. The bias in his selection is explained when we know his understandable, but by no means universally held views on the Vedic corpus (p. v):

it is generally agreed that only a relatively small portion of it is of abiding importance and interest; and this portion is the latest in time, – what is called the *Vedānta* or 'End of the Veda', which means those speculative treatises in prose and verse known as the *Upanishads*.

The Vedic corpus

Veda is a Sanskrit word meaning 'knowledge' and is commonly used either to refer to the entire Vedic corpus of literature or to one of the four collections with its dependent prose literature: the *Ṛg-Veda*, the Veda of hymns; the *Yajur-Veda*, that of sacrificial formulas; the *Sāma-Veda*, that of chants; and the *Atharva-Veda*, most of whose hymns are magical spells and incantations. The latter is the latest collection and is often, even in later times, not included among them (hence its separate enumeration in *Yājña-valkya-Smṛti* 1:101 and omission in *Bhagavad-Gītā* IX.17 and 20). The earliest parts of these collections, the hymns, were remarkably faithfully preserved for centuries by oral transmission even long after scripts developed for writing Sanskrit. This feat was achieved not just by pupils learning by rote and repeatedly reciting the texts as composed, but also by their learning and reciting texts with the words rearranged in the repetitive patterns. The most complicated of these devices, intended to secure the textual transmission from all error, is called the *ghanapāṭha* ('dense text') in which the order of words is ab, ba, abc, cba, abc, bc, cb, bcd, etc.

Numerous recensions of each collection of the Vedic corpus developed, many of which have now been partially or entirely lost. Each collection was divided into the following four groups of material: Saṃhitā, Brāhmaṇa, Āraṇyaka and Upanishad. The Saṃhitā of each collection contains its hymns or mantras, which form the earliest stratum of Vedic literature.[2] (The term Veda has in recent times been incorrectly used to refer to this part of each collection alone.) The Brāhmaṇas, which are perhaps the earliest examples of sustained prose writing in an Indo-European language, are attached treatises that enjoin and describe rituals and relate aetiological myths about them. Forming the end of the Brāhmaṇas are the Āraṇyakas ('Forest Books'), probably so called because their material was too secret and too dangerous to be taught except in the forest. The oldest of the Upanishads are

embedded in the Āraṇyakas and usually form their concluding portion.[3] The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upanishad, 'the big forest-book-Upanishad', is both an Āraṇyaka and an Upanishad and forms the last part of the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, a Brāhmaṇa of the White *Yajur-Veda*; the *Chāndogya Upanishad* forms the concluding part of the *Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa* belonging to the *Sāma-Veda*.

The earliest entries in this anthology are hymns from the one surviving recension of the Saṃhitā of the *Ṛg-Veda*, universally acknowledged to be the oldest collection of Vedic hymns. The dates of composition of the hymns of the Vedas, the dates of their organization, whether their composers were recently arrived in North India or long-settled nomadic tribals of Indo-European origin or mixed descendants of such Āryan settlers and indigenous peoples – all these issues are hotly debated, and the attendant problems of interpreting linguistic and archaeological evidence are far from solved. An influential traditional view of these questions is that of the Mīmāṃsakas, adherents of the orthodox atheist school of thought that was devoted to the exegesis of Vedic scripture. These held that the Veda was eternal and without author. They disregarded the pointers in the Vedas to human authorship and to strata of composition, and they justified their position with the help of a fourfold categorization of scripture: injunctions to perform Vedic ritual (*vidhi*); mantras, the use of which necessarily accompanies ritual; names (*nāmadheya*); and *arthavāda*, praise of ritual comprising explanatory material, exhortations to perform it, and aetiological myths. Whatever they classified in this last category they were not obliged to understand to be literally true. The views of recent Indological scholarship are various; but a consensus shared by many[4] is that an Āryan invasion took place in the second millennium BC; that the oldest hymns, those of the *Ṛg-Veda*, were composed between 1300 and 1000 BC; that the Brāhmaṇas and early prose Upanishads were composed between 800 and 500 BC; and the verse Upanishads, between 500 and 200 BC.

The religion of the earliest poets of the *Ṛg-Veda* was polytheistic – like that of other Indo-European peoples – and it contains hymns to a large number of deities, most of whom are powers of nature: Agni (fire), Parjanya (rain), Vāyu (wind), Uṣas (dawn), etc. These powers are partially personified in the hymns; that is to say the attributes of the forces or things that they are or represent

are often mixed up in the immediate context with anthropomorphic attributes. The most completely anthropomorphic and the most lauded deity of the *Ṛg-Veda* is Indra, to whom about a quarter of its 1028 hymns are addressed. He is a warrior hero associated with storms and praised for his destruction of semi-anthropomorphic demons. The legends about these demons, indeed all mythology in the *Ṛg-Veda*, can be gleaned only from often obscure allusions and are never related. (This may have to do with the structure of the hymns, in which each stanza can stand by itself as an independent unit of sense.) After Indra the most prominent deity is Agni, the god of fire, and this reflects the importance in the religion of the Vedic hymns of sacrifice, in which Agni is the messenger and mediator between gods and men. By the time of the Brāhmaṇa literature the sacrifice was conceived of as indispensable for sustaining the cosmos. Another crucial deity of the sacrifice is Soma. Soma is a liquid pressed in bowls and passed through a woollen filter from a plant that may have been Ephedra, but whose identity has been debated from the beginnings of Vedic research. (In Classical India, long after the Vedic age, other substances were used as substitutes of Soma in the rituals.) It is the favourite drink of the immortals, particularly of the valorous Indra, and is often identified with the moon, which, when full, is said to be brimming with the ambrosial liquid. Hymns to Indra, Agni and Soma did not feature in the previous selection and translations by Edgerton and by Wendy Doniger have been supplied here.

In what are assumed to be later hymns we can observe the tendency to attribute ever greater qualities to the particular deity being addressed. If this were isolated, then it might have been supposed to be incipient monotheism; but different gods are praised for disproportionate and overlapping powers. It is a logical impossibility that each should be as powerful as claimed. This modified polytheism has been called henotheism. Professor Edgerton[5] distinguished two kinds of henotheistic hymn: that in which other deities are identified with, and so absorbed into, the deity being addressed (*Ṛg-Veda* II, i); and that in which such a plethora of attributes or attributes of such a kind are ascribed as could belong only to a single all-powerful deity (*Ṛg-Veda* II, xii).

Professor Zaehner's selection from the *Ṛg-Veda* predominantly contained hymns that point forward to later developments. Thus

he includes the hymn to Rudra (II, xxxiii), a minor storm deity at the time of the composition of the hymns, but subsequently of vast importance as Śiva, the central deity of monotheistic sects such as the Śaiva Siddhānta (a sect represented in this anthology with the *Kiraṇa-Tantra*) and a popular focus of devotion outside them too, and a hymn to Viṣṇu (I, cliv), whose importance also grew enormously after the Vedic period and who reappears in this anthology in his incarnation as Kṛṣṇa, both in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*. He also included a number of cosmogonic hymns from the tenth and last section (*maṇḍala*) of the *Ṛg-Veda*, which, though it contains some old material, is agreed by many to be the latest part of the Saṃhitā. Instead of composing paeans to the older deities of the pantheon, in whom they have perhaps lost faith, the authors of these hymns speculated about the origins of the universe and addressed their praises to functional deities responsible for its creation. Hymns of this kind are those to Viśvakarman, 'creator of all' (X, lxxxi and lxxxii); to Puruṣa, 'primal man' (X, xc); and to Prajāpati, 'lord of offspring' (X, cxxi).

From the *Atharva-Veda* Professor Zaehner included further examples of such speculative gropings towards a first principle of the universe. Magical charms, imprecations, amulets, pleas for self-protection and for the destruction of enemies in fact make up the bulk of that collection. This combination of magical spells for small personal goals with speculation about cosmogony might at first seem odd; but Edgerton has asserted that it is a natural corollary of the view of the authors about the nature of knowledge and of their motivation for seeking it: he suggests that the quest for knowledge is not motivated by interest in it for its own sake, but by a desire for attaining power. Knowledge of a thing is conceived of as a means of gaining magical power over it and this, he suggests, underlies the mystical identifications that we also find in the literature of the Brāhmaṇa period:

> We want to control, let us say, the breath of life, in ourselves or someone else (perhaps an enemy); so we earnestly and insistently identify it with something that we *can* control, and the trick is turned.[6]

The hymns of the *Yajur-Veda* and *Sāma-Veda*, sometimes referred to as liturgical collections, are not represented in this anthology. Those of the *Sāma-Veda* are almost all taken from the

Ṛg-Veda – distinctive of the *Sāma-Veda* is that its hymns are sung with elaborate chants. A large number of the hymns of the *Yajur-Veda* are also from the *Ṛg-Veda*, but there they are organized from the point of view of their relevance to sacrifice.

The Upanishads

Of the thirteen Upanishads included in the last Everyman edition only six have been retained here: the two early prose Upanishads, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya*, which belong to the last phase of Brāhmaṇa literature, and four slightly later verse Upanishads, the *Īśā*, the *Kaṭha*, the *Māṇḍūkya*, and the *Śvetāśvatara*. Some of the archaic passages – omitted from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* by Zaehner – that are more typical of an earlier phase of Brāhmaṇa literature have been restored. This means that the present selection of Upanishads is similar to that of Nicol Macnicol's Everyman edition of 1938 (he included the first five of these in toto). Having to oust the Upanishads that Professor Zaehner added is indeed regrettable but space is thereby made for representatives of other, later genres of scripture.

As an admirer of the Upanishads, Professor Zaehner admits to finding certain archaic passages embarrassing and has not hesitated to remove them. In Professor Edgerton's felicitous words, 'the dry bones of the Vedic ritual cult frequently rattle about in them in quite a noisy fashion and seriously strain our patience and our charity';[7] nevertheless it is important that they are represented, because they go some way towards explaining the context from which the mystical ideas of the Upanishads grow. The first such passage is the very first section of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*: here parts of the world are identified, on grounds that are not obviously discernible, with parts of the horse destined for sacrifice. Such identifications are characteristic of an earlier phase of Brāhmaṇa literature, in which all manner of deliberations about sacrifice are gathered together. At first sight groundless, they make sense – when understood in the light of Edgerton's above-quoted remarks about knowledge being conceived of as a means of gaining power – as a rationale of how the immensely prestigious horse sacrifice brings the universe under the control of the sacrificer. The quest for knowledge of the universe that characterizes the Upanishads, may be understood in a similar light:

> The Upanishads . . . seek to know the real truth about the universe, not for its own sake; not for the mere joy of knowledge; not as an abstract speculation; but simply because they conceive such knowledge as a short-cut to the control of every cosmic power.[8]

It should be emphasized that this is by no means the only way of looking at the Upanishads: Professor Zaehner quotes from *Chāndogya* VII, xxv

> This [Infinite] is below, it is above, it is to the west, to the east, to the south, to the north. Truly it is this whole universe.
>
> Next the teaching concerning the ego.
>
> I am below, I am above, I am to the west, to the east, to the south, to the north. Truly I am this whole universe.
>
> Next the teaching concerning the Self. The Self is below, the Self is above, the Self is to the west, to the east, to the south, to the north. Truly the Self is this whole universe.

and he has this to say about it (p. viii–ix):

> Now this may not sound particularly sensible to the modern mind, but it does express what so-called 'nature mystics' experience and try to describe. The barrier between subject and object seems magically to melt away, and experiencer, experience and the thing experienced seem to merge into one single whole: the One indwelling the human spirit realizes its own identity with the same One which is the unchanging ground of the phenomenal world outside. This is the lesson tirelessly rammed home in the Upanishads: it is an expression of something that cannot be logically formulated, but can only be hinted at in paradox . . .

Nonetheless Edgerton's view that the quest for knowledge is a quest for power is a convincing attempt to explain what motivated the thinkers of the early Upanishads – it accounts for the oft-repeated assertions of the power that knowledge brings:

> Whoso thus knows that he is Brahman, becomes this whole [universe]. Even the gods have not the power to cause him to un-Be, for he becomes their own self. (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* I, iv.10)

> It has been said: 'Since men think that by knowing Brahman they will become the All', what was it that Brahman knew by which he became the All? (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* I, iv.9)

> This sacrifice is fivefold; cattle are fivefold; man is fivefold; this whole universe is fivefold, – everything that exists. Whoso thus knows wins this whole universe. (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* I, iv.17)

> In whatever family there is a man who has this knowledge, the family is called after him; but whoever sets himself up in rivalry with him, withers away; and after withering away, he finally dies. (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* I, v.21)

> He who knows this great and strange being (*yakṣa*), the first-born, [who is] the truth and Brahman, overcomes these worlds.
>
> 'Could he be overcome who thus knows that this great and strange being, the first-born, is the truth and Brahman?'
>
> '[No,] for Brahman is Truth.' (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* V, iv)

> Just as [a clod of earth] would be smashed to pieces on striking a solid stone, so too would anyone who bears ill-will towards one who knows this or who does him harm, be smashed to pieces, for he is a solid stone. (*Chāndogya* I, ii.8)

> But whoever thus knows these five fires is not defiled by evil . . . Pure and clean, he reaches the world of the good and pure (*puṇya*), – whoever thus knows, whoever thus knows. (*Chāndogya* V, x.10)

Further assertions of the corresponding impotence of ignorance could be similarly listed:

> '. . . he is the "Person" of the Upanishads about whom I question you. If you do not tell me who he is, your head will fall off.'
>
> But Śākalya did not know him, and so his head did fall off. And robbers made away with his bones, thinking they were something else. (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* III, ix.26)

Furthermore, Professor Edgerton's analysis makes logically cohesive what other writers assume to be disparate and jarring:

> There is much in the *Upanishads* which belongs to their own time. This has a historical interest, but not the spiritual value that belongs to all times.[9]

and more pointedly

> In a few passages the Upanishads are sublime in their conception of the Infinite and of God, but more often they are puerile and groveling in trivialities and superstitions.[10]

The salient characteristic of the early Upanishads is the quest for a basis for the world. This is found in brahman – a word which in the language of the Ṛg-Vedic hymns seems to have meant 'sacred knowledge' or that in which sacred knowledge is expressed, 'sacred hymn'; but brahman shifts in meaning so that it becomes identified with the origin of the universe (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* I, iv.10–11), with all the gods (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* III, ix.1–9), with everything in the universe (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* I, iv.10), with the soul of the universe (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* II, v), and with the soul of the individual as the universe in microcosm (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* III, iv.1). In spite of its being in everything, it is beyond understanding:

> This Self – [what can one say of it but] 'No, no!' It is impalpable, for it cannot be grasped; indestructible, for it cannot be destroyed; free from attachment, for it is not attached [to anything], not bound. It does not quaver nor can it be hurt. (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* III, ix.26)

But in sleep this absolute is attained:

> When a man is properly (*nāma*) asleep (*svapiti*), then, dear boy, is he suffused in Being – he will have returned to his own (*svam apīta*). That is why it is said of him '*svapiti*, he is asleep'; for he will have returned to his own (*svam apīto bhavati*). (*Chāndogya* VI, viii.1)

and it is attained in moments of intense experience:

> Just as a man, closely embraced by his loving wife, knows nothing without, nothing within, so does this 'person', closely embraced by the Self that consists of wisdom (*prājña*), know nothing without, nothing within. That is his [true] form in which [all] his desires are fulfilled, in which Self [alone] is his desire, in which he has no desire, no sorrow. (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* IV, iii.21)

It is on the ground of such and other assertions from this latest phase of Vedic literature (the Vedānta) that the philosophers of the monist school of Advaita Vedānta defended their position that the universe is one and that the plurality of the empirical world is illusory. The most famous writer to apply in his exegesis of scriptures the monist tenets of this school was Śaṅkara (fl. c. 700 AD[11]). By these thinkers the empirical world came to be called such names as *avidyā*, 'nescience', and *māyā*, 'cosmic illusion'.[12]

But the Upanishads do not always support monism, because they are not systematic treatises expounding and defending a single world view. There are points on which they contradict both each

other and themselves. Thus, in spite of its clearly monistic passages, the *Chāndogya* also has this to say of liberation (VIII, xii.1–3):

> For sure this body is mortal, held in the grip of death. Yet it is the dwelling-place of the immortal, incorporeal Self. [And this Self,] while still in the body, is held in the grip of pleasure and pain; and so long as it remains in the body there is no means of ridding it of pleasure and pain. But once it is freed from the body, pleasure and pain cannot [so much as] touch it.
>
> The wind has no body. Clouds, thunder and lightning, – these too have no body. So, just as these arise from [the broad expanse of] space up there and plunge into the highest light, revealing themselves each in its own form, so too does this deep serenity arise out of this body and plunge into the highest light, revealing itself in its own form. Such a one is a superman (*uttara puruṣa*); and there he roves around, laughing, playing, taking his pleasure with women, chariots, or friends and remembering no more that excrescence [which was] his body.

Furthermore, some of the later Upanishads, such as the *Śvetāśvatara* and the *Kaṭha*, introduce ideas that are characteristic of Sāṅkhya thinkers. These dualists held that souls and matter are radically different, that souls become involved in the evolutes of matter, mistakenly identify with their bodies that are made up of those evolutes and are then trapped in earthly existence. They enumerated twenty-three evolutes of matter: the intellect (*buddhi*); the sense of self-identity responsible for the mistaken identification of the self with what is material (*ahaṅkāra*); the mind; the ten faculties of sense and action; the five subtle elements (*tanmātra*); and the five gross elements. These, together with souls (*puruṣa*) and matter itself, were known as the twenty-five principles (*tattva*). In *Kaṭha* III.10–11 a number of these are listed, admittedly not exactly as they are in the mature school, and in *Śvetāśvatara* I.4 numerology appears that has often been claimed to be distinctive of Sāṅkhya thinkers.[13] Some assert that certain key ideas of the Sāṅkhyas appear in embryo in the earliest Upanishads: thus seventeen of the principles might be said to be discernible in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* II, iv.11; and *Chāndogya* VI, iv is said to describe what became the three *guṇas*, the strands of light/good (*sattva*), passion/activity/redness (*rajas*), and darkness/delusion (*tamas*) –

strands which, according to the Sāṅkhyas, pervade the entire material world.

Another important feature of these two Upanishads is their theism. In the case of the *Śvetāśvatara*, this is focused on the minor Vedic deity Rudra/Śiva (IV.12–22). The *Śvetāśvatara* in fact bears signs characteristic of a particular theistic cult, that of the Pāśupatas. This ascetic cult of Paśupati (Śiva as lord of animals or bound souls) was open to Brahmin males who had had Vedic initiation; but those who joined it were referred to as *atyāśramin*, 'beyond the orthodox walks of life' (for which see *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* 1:1 and note ad loc.), because they withdrew from ordinary life and imitated Rudra, by such practices as bathing in ash. *Śvetāśvatara* VI.21 proclaims that it is the teaching of the sage Śvetāśvatara to *atyāśramins* (which Zaehner, following Śaṅkara's obfuscating gloss, translates 'those who had gone furthest on the ascetic path'). They held that only Rudra could rescue souls from the fetters of worldly existence. The *Śvetāśvatara* repeatedly mentions fetters (I.8, I.11, IV.15, IV.16, V.13, VI.13) and the image of the net (*jāla*) (V.3, III.1), which is a Pāśupata synonym for primal matter. The term *māyā* also occurs in this sense (IV.9 and 10) – a usage transmitted to the cult of the Śaiva Siddhānta whose tenets are described below in the section on the *Kiraṇa-Tantra*. The Pāśupatas' life of asceticism culminated in withdrawal to a cremation ground to meditate on five Vedic mantras and to achieve thereby uninterrupted consciousness of Rudra. They held that the qualities of Śiva would pass into them at death. It is a moot point whether the *Śvetāśvatara* represents an early stage of development of what eventually became Pāśupatism or whether it is a work that draws on and modifies the ideas of an already developed Pāśupata cult.

It remains to draw attention to one more nexus of ideas, one that has appeared since the period of the Vedic hymns but has already become well established by the time of the redaction of the Upanishads and is deeply rooted in all subsequent Indian thought, including the religious systems of the heterodox Jains and Buddhists – the belief in a cycle of rebirth determined by previous actions.

The earliest term that presupposes such a cycle is *punarmṛtyu*, 're-death'. This occurs in Brāhmaṇa literature and is still in use in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (I, ii.7; I, v.2; III, ii.10; III, iii.2). The *Chāndogya* (V, x) gives a fascinating early account of the supposed mechanics

of metempsychosis, and both early Upanishads make clear the causal link between good and bad action and good and bad rebirth (*Chāndogya* V, x.10 and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* IV, iv.4–5). In subsequent Indian thought the virtually unquestioned belief is that humans are tied to what might, unless corrected, be an unending series of rebirths, and this was invariably perceived as an evil. All subsequent heterodox and orthodox soteriologies, however they defined their final goal – proximity to Viṣṇu in his heavenly abode, Vaikuṇṭha; identity to Śiva in powers of knowledge and action; disjunction of the spirit from the material – conceived of it as a liberation from this painful and potentially endless round of birth and death. The commonest term for this transmigration, *saṃsāra*, is first attested in this sense in the verse Upanishads (*Kaṭha* III:7; *Śvetāśvatara* VI.16).

The Categories of śruti *and* smṛti

We have so far discussed what is accepted by the orthodox to be part of the fundamental canon of 'Hindu Scripture', the Veda. This corpus is often referred to as *śruti*, 'hearing'. *Smṛti*, 'remembering', designates scripture of a lower order that, from an orthodox perspective, is authoritative only where it does not contradict *śruti*. *Śruti* is accorded vast respect and is of enormous intrinsic interest. But the veneration in which it has been held by subsequent Indian thinkers has not meant that all the ideas expounded therein were believed, studied, or even understood as intended by its authors and redactors. Many of those who asserted the absolute authority of the Veda – such as the Mīmāṃsakas, mentioned above – denied even that it had author or beginning. For some, it might even be argued, the significance of the content of scripture was in inverse proportion to the reverence they accorded it. No apology then need be made for widening the scope of the selection to include more works of *smṛti*. The previous editors included one work of this category, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*; and this Zaehner was at pains to stress had almost the status of *śruti*, indeed the colophons of many of its manuscripts call it an Upanishad.

The boundaries of *śruti* are clearly defined, for it refers to the Vedic corpus and no more; but *smṛti* is an elastic category in which different thinkers included different texts. The commentator Vijñāneśvara (ad *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* 1:7) would have it include

only treatises on moral law (*dharmaśāstra*); but the text of the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* itself probably intends to define *smṛti* with its enumeration of authorities in 1:3 (the first member of the list comprises *śruti*):

> The Vedas, together with the Purāṇas, the [system of logic and natural philosophy called] Nyāya, the [exegetical school of] Mīmāṃsā, treatises on moral duty (*dharmaśāstra*), and the [six classes of work that are] necessary auxiliaries (*aṅga*) [to the Veda, namely pronunciation, prosody, grammar, word-derivation, astronomy and ritual (*kalpa*)] are the fourteen bases of knowledge and moral duty (*vidyānāṃ dharmasya ca*).

Even in this relatively full list the epics of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which many would without hesitation include, are not mentioned, and it is left to a commentator, Viśvarūpa, to explain that they are to be understood under Purāṇas. Prosody, grammar and the like serve to perpetuate the accurate transmission of the Veda; the inclusion of treatises on such subjects that relate only indirectly to the core agenda of scripture – theology, soteriology, and morality – demonstrates that renderings of the term *smṛti*, such as 'secondary scriptural revelation', are not wholly satisfactory. In this anthology three works of *smṛti*, are represented: the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti*, and the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*.

The Bhagavad-Gītā

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (hereafter *Gītā*) is a tiny portion of the vast epic, the *Mahābhārata*, 'the great history of the descendants of Bharata'. Two sides of a family, the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, are drawn up ready for war over their disputed kingdom after a failed attempt made by Kṛṣṇa, who is Viṣṇu incarnate, to sue for peace. The *Gītā* consists of a discourse between Arjuna, the third of the Pāṇḍava brothers, and Kṛṣṇa, who is acting as his charioteer. The dialogue is relayed by the minister Sañjaya to the blind king of the Kauravas, Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Standing on his chariot between the warring factions arrayed for battle, Arjuna loses conviction in the war that is about to begin, and Kṛṣṇa persuades him that he must fight.

Some scholars have suggested that the whole *Gītā* is an early interpolation, others – on grounds of its length being inappropriate

to the dramatic context or of philosophical inconsistencies – suggest that only parts of it have been interpolated. The *Mahābhārata*, in which it is embedded, is a text of many layers transmitted in a number of regional recensions, and it is often impossible to assert with certainty what is early and what is late in it. These speculative doubts are not considered here and the *Gītā* is treated as a unitary composition of the last half of the first millennium BC.

After the scene has been set in the first chapter, Kṛṣṇa argues that Arjuna should not shy away from battle, that killing is not really killing, because souls are indestructible:

> Who thinks that he can be a slayer,
> Who thinks that he is slain,
> Both these have no [right] knowledge:
> He slays not, is not slain.
>
> Never is he born nor dies;
> Never did he come to be, nor will he ever come to be again:
> Unborn, eternal, everlasting he – primeval:
> He is not slain when the body is slain. (II.19–20, cf. *Kaṭha* II.19)

He reminds Arjuna (II.31–7) that it is his duty (*svadharma*) as a Kṣatriya, a man of the estate of warriors and kings, to fight. (For the occupations of the estates see *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* 1:119–20.) He impresses upon Arjuna that he must act in accordance with the duties of his estate, but with utter disregard for the fruits of his actions (II.47). This ideal of dispassionate performance of enjoined action is taken to a logical extreme:

> Better one's own duty (*dharma*) [to perform], though void of merit,
> Than to do another's well:
> Better to die within [the sphere of] one's own duty:
> Perilous is the duty of other men. (III.35)

After this direct treatment of Arjuna's dilemma about whether to fight, Kṛṣṇa embarks on a number of theological and soteriological digressions, in the course of which he grants Arjuna a vision of himself as supreme God (Chapter XI).

In the Upanishads there is no sign of the emerging prominence of Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu (he is addressed as Viṣṇu in XI.24 and 30), and his unprecedented appearance in the *Gītā* as omnipotent all-pervading God is mysterious. It might in part be accounted for by

the fact that the highest of the 'footsteps' of the minor Vedic solar deity, Viṣṇu, (for which see *Ṛg-Veda* I, cliv) was conceived of as the highest point in the universe and thus a goal in the after life.[14] Viṣṇu later came to be identified with numerous mythical figures (commonly ten incarnations (*avatāra*), including that as the Buddha) of whom Kṛṣṇa and Rāma are the best known, and the *Gītā* contains verses that enable later theologians to accommodate these:

> For whenever the law of righteousness (*dharma*)
> Withers away, and lawlessness (*adharma*)
> Raises its head
> Then do I generate Myself [on earth]. (IV.7)

As in the *Kaṭha* and the *Śvetāśvatara* Upanishads, much of the speculation in the *Gītā* about the universe is in terms that are characteristic of the school of the Sāṅkhyas (XIII.5 lists the bottom twenty-four principles of the Sāṅkhyas in random order, III.43 lists some of them in the standard hierarchy, and many passages (e.g. Chapter XIV) deal with the three strands (*guṇa*) that pervade the material world), but the *Gītā* does not give a reasoned and consistent presentation of the Sāṅkhya cosmos as described in the works of the mature school. This is not just because the *Gītā* is not a systematic work. The strict dualism between souls and matter and the absence of a personal god, both defining features of the classical school of the Sāṅkhyas, are not characteristics of the *Kaṭha* and *Śvetāśvatara* Upanishads either – and those are among the earliest sources in which categories associated with the Sāṅkhyas appear – and so we should not expect to find them in the *Gītā*.

According to the Sāṅkhyas, as we have seen above, souls, which are by definition sentient and inactive (V.8–9), become (unaccountably) involved with insentient, active matter (III.28) and mistakenly identify themselves with it. Souls are passive observers of the transformation of matter that is the universe (XIII.29); it is their involvement in this transformation that condemns them to a potentially endless cycle of death and rebirth in the material world (XIII.21); and they attain release (*brahman*) by knowing their essential difference from matter (XIII.23 and 30). In the classical school of the Sāṅkhyas souls are numerically distinct both in the world and in release from worldly existence. In the *Gītā* this is not the case: Brahman, the world-absolute of the Upanishads, is identified (V.24–6) with *nirvāṇa*, a term for liberation shared

with Buddhism, and Brahman and *nirvāṇa* are said to be in or on Kṛṣṇa (VI.15, VI.30, XIV.27), who is that of which there is nothing higher (VII.7), and who is the father who inseminates Brahman, the womb (XIV.4). Although Kṛṣṇa *is* everything (VII.19), the *Gītā* does not assert, as, for instance, does the *Chāndogya*, (VI, viii–xvi), that the individual self *is* the universe, but that

> In the region of the heart of all
> Contingent beings dwells the Lord,
> Twirling them hither and thither by his uncanny power (*māyā*)
> [Like puppets] fixed in a machine. (XVIII.61)

and

> In the world of living things a [minute] part of Me,
> Eternal [still], becomes a living [self],
> Drawing to itself the five senses and the mind,
> Which have their roots in Nature. (XV.7)

Furthermore, the state of ultimate release is not consistently described: in VI.15 and XIV.26–7 it is said to be *nirvāṇa* or Brahman, which is in Kṛṣṇa; in XVIII.68 *Kṛṣṇa* speaks of souls coming to himself; in XVIII.55 and XI.54 of them entering himself; but in XIV.1–2 he states

> . . . On knowing this all sages, when they passed on hence,
> Attained the highest prize.
>
> With this wisdom as their bulwark
> They reached a rank [in the order of existence] equivalent to (*sādharmya*) my own;
> And even when [the universe is once again] engendered, they are not born [again] . . .

Kṛṣṇa teaches (III.3) two ways to attain liberation: that of the means of knowledge (*jñānayoga*), which is accompanied by the renunciation of action, and the means of dispassionate action (*karmayoga*), in which people perform what is enjoined for them without any interest in the fruit that it brings them. Knowledge of the truth of the doctrines discussed above is salvific (as we saw in XIII.23), and so too is the course of dispassion in action that Kṛṣṇa commended to Arjuna when he first started to persuade him to act. This is because there is no binding force in the power

of actions themselves; it is attachment to the fruits of actions that makes those actions bind men to future rebirths. Although the *Gītā* acknowledges that knowledge is salvific and, in places, commends ascetic withdrawal from the world and restraint of the faculties to achieve this knowledge (VI.10–14), Kṛṣṇa is much more emphatic in his recommendation of dispassionate action. Asceticism, renunciation of all action, and the path of gnosis are highly respected ideals in India; but the *Gītā*'s message is that people can remain active in the world and yet be detached and reap the rewards of renunciation:

> Not by leaving works undone
> Does a man win freedom from the [bond of] work,
> Nor by renunciation alone
> Can he win perfection['s prize].
>
> Not for a moment can a man
> Stand still and do no work;
> For every man is powerless and forced to work
> By the 'constituents' born of Nature.
>
> Whoso controls his limbs through which he acts
> But sits remembering in his mind
> Sense-objects, deludes himself:
> He's called a hypocrite.
>
> How much more excellent he all unattached,
> Who with his mind controls [those] limbs,
> And through those limbs [themselves] by which he acts
> Embarks on the Yogic exercise (*yoga*) of works!
>
> Do thou the work that is prescribed for thee . . . (III.4–8)

Some remarks are called for on what yoga is and the man who practises it, the yogin. The terms are very variously translated, because they can convey a number of related ideas. Yoga became the name of a classical system of exercises of control and asceticism intended to culminate in liberation or in some supernatural goal. (It is developments from this that may be familiar to many from evening classes.) In the *Gītā* yoga is frequently used to mean 'way, means' (e.g. III.3) or 'exertion, effort'. When it stands on its own (not in compound) it is commonly an ellipsis for *karmayoga*, the way of dispassionate action (e.g. II.48 and VI.2). There is a

common core to these meanings: yoga is a sustained, disciplined effort that leads to the attainment of something.

In addition to these means of knowledge and action, and transcending them, Kṛṣṇa preaches devotion (*bhakti*) to himself. As Hardy has pointed out,[15] the word *bhakti* in demonstrably early texts means no more than a mild predilection for material things, such as places and sweetmeats; but in the closing verse of the *Svetāśvatara*, as in the *Gītā*, the word is used of an individual's feeling towards God. Hardy further argues that *bhakti* in the *Gītā* has an 'intellectual tenor' and is dependent on the concentration of the mind in yoga. In other words, it cannot be argued that the use of the word *bhakti* in the *Gītā* reflects the existence of the sort of passionate, emotional devotionalism that pervades the chapters of the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* (at the end of this anthology) and that has come to be implied by the term *bhakti*. Nevertheless, some sort of *bhakti* (which might in this context be cautiously rendered 'loyal devotion') has attained importance: it is repeatedly commended (VI.47, IX.13–15 and 30) and the work closes with a final affirmation that it is salvific:

> And now again give ear to this my all-highest Word,
> Of all the most mysterious:
> 'I love thee well.'
> Therefore will I tell thee thy salvation (*hita*).
>
> Bear Me in mind, love Me and worship Me
> (*bhakta*),
> Sacrifice, prostrate thyself to Me:
> So shalt thou come to Me, I promise thee
> Truly, for thou art dear to Me.
>
> Give up all things of law (*dharma*),
> Turn to Me, thine only refuge,
> [For] I will deliver thee
> From all evils; have no care. (XVIII.64–6)

The Law Book of Yājñavalkya

Treatises on law and duty (*dharmaśāstra*) are the fundamental texts of the scriptural category of *smṛti*, indeed for some (such as *Vijñāneśvara* ad *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* 1:7 cited above) the only ones. The most prestigious and widely authoritative is that of the first

man, Manu; but the genre is here represented by what is the next most prestigious, and perhaps more often actually followed authority, the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti*. The principal reason for its selection here is that it is a concise work and one that is more systematically ordered by theme. It is divided into three large sections: 1) that on conduct (*ācāra*), which outlines the social order, describes the essential life-cycle rites, and gives the modern reader an impression of daily concerns and occupations; 2) that on legal proceedings; and 3) that on penitential rites of reparation. This last section also covers rules about impurity, acceptable infringements of rules during times of emergency, and rules for forest ascetics (*vānaprastha*) (who still maintain sacrificial fires) and for renunciates who have internalized the fires (*yati* or *sannyāsin*). It seemed preferable to give large, unbroken, coherent units of text from the first and third sections of the less prestigious *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* than to attempt to anthologize the *Manusmṛti*, the law book of Manu, in which the themes here represented are often more diffusely treated and scattered through the work. Furthermore, good English translations of Manu's law book are widely available; but of the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* the only complete and reliable translation is that of Adolf Friedrich Stenzler into German, published in 1849.

Dating the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* is problematic: it is not intended to be an original work – much of it is a concise and reordered presentation of the material of the law book of Manu – and its claim (3:110) that it was taught by the sage Yājñavalkya of Books 3 and 4 of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* is a pious fiction. It is probably to be placed in the first two centuries of the Christian era.[16]

Most of the works included in this anthology have been selected in order to trace the emergence and development of doctrines of theology, soteriology and cosmogony. The *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* has no bearing on these, but it addresses another side of Indian religiosity. It is with justice frequently asserted that orthopraxy (correct behaviour), rather than orthodoxy (correct opinion), is often of greater significance as a criterion for determining religious allegiance in India. Definitions of Hindu orthodoxy are necessarily minimal, because such a plethora of beliefs are possible: about the most that can be said is that orthodoxy requires lip-service to the authoritativeness of the Veda. Orthopraxy, however, is exhaustively codified in the many treatises on law (*dharma*) and in their commentaries. These too are not unanimous: what people practise

is defined by their caste, family, adherence to a particular Vedic school, etc.; but they are perhaps more unitary than the plethora of soteriologies that are contained within Hinduism, and so might be more usefully employed in attempted definitions of what Hinduism is.

It should be stressed that the treatises on *dharma* do not give a timeless representation of the way things were and are; they give an ideal model – a model that in part describes the way things are and in part prescribes the way they should be. Many of the prescriptions of the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* have long not been followed. Keeping the Vedic fires, for instance, and performing the sacrifices that that entailed, was extremely expensive and time-consuming. Today almost no one keeps them and there are indications that it was not common even at the time of the redaction of the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti*.[17]

An Indian technical treatise typically begins with a proclamation of the topic, the aim of studying the treatise, how this is achieved (*sambandha*), and, equally importantly, who is entitled to study it (*adhikārin*). In Indian religion this notion of *adhikāra*, both the right and the duty to perform something, is crucial. Kṛṣṇa's teachings in the *Gītā* made clear that sanctioned behaviour is not defined by absolute moral laws, nor general principles modified to suit differing situations, but that it is particular to each person, their status and their position: Arjuna is a slighted warrior and therefore he must fight. Much religious practice was not conceived of as a matter of free choice, personal conviction or conscience, but was determined by status, wealth, birth. It might be said that the same is true of all religion, that high-church Anglicans, for instance, tend to be born to their religion; but, even if this is conceded, it is true in a much stronger sense in Indian religions. Conversion to Christianity and Islam are open to all; but studying the Veda and keeping Vedic fires is possible only for those of the three highest estates, and is in practice the preserve of Brahmins. It is this fact that is the basis of the entire brahminical social order.

> *Śruti* is eternally true and infallible. It tells men what to do. Since it is the prerogative of brahmins to learn and interpret it, all authority (on ultimate matters) rests with them. At an early stage, brahmins made the easy transition from saying that the Vedas are authoritative to saying that whatever is authoritative is in the Veda . . . Nor is it necessary – or even plausible – to posit a brahmin conspiracy to

account for this change: it was a transition which occurred as an unintended consequence of constantly invoking the authority of a very large and only partially intelligible body of texts, to which in any case very few people had access.[18]

The *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* explains some of the fundamental divisions of the brahminical social order and codifies the behaviour of those in these divisions. Few of Yājñavalkya's pronouncements are moral laws of universal application (a rare example would be 1:122); they are precepts for particular persons in particular positions. These are what the assembled sages ask to hear in the first verse of the work. The injunctions are most frequently third-person singular optatives: 'he should perform this'. When, as is usually the case, the subject is not made explicit, the injunction is generally directed at the male Brahmin who is the head of his own household. In addition to following such social religion, determined by position, individuals might also practise other observances and have a personal devotion to a particular deity.

It has been stated that sanctioned behaviour is conceived of as specific to people and not universal, and that the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* is a terse work, the redactors of which attempted to treat what is handled in the comparatively prolix and haphazardly organized law book of Manu, but systematically and concisely. Its concision means that it cannot list all the injunctions governing all people of every part of India and of every family, and that it must be imprecise. But this imprecision is probably not just motivated by considerations of space; to an extent it may be deliberately cultivated in order that the text accommodate a range of possibilities and thus remain broadly authoritative. Thus of the rite of tonsure (1:12) Yājñavalkya says nothing but that it 'should be performed according to family [practice]', leaving entirely open the details of how the hair should be cut, whether one, two, three or five tufts are to be left, and in what year of the child's life it should be performed.

Details of behaviour specific to castes and families are too much for a broadly authoritative text such as the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* to take into consideration. For such details, and for accurate descriptions of the performance of rituals, the reader would have to turn to commentaries, to works describing rituals specific to particular Vedic schools of transmission and to ritual manuals of lesser or more localized authority. Accordingly the translation relies heavily

on the commentators, and their suggestions frequently appear in the notes, even where they may appear to be at variance with the intentions of the redactor(s). It is evident, for instance from their conflicting identifications of animals and plants in the discussion of food that may and may not be eaten (1:172–8), that they were far removed in time and place from the redaction of the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti*; but they are closer than the modern reader. It is evident too that they have sometimes distorted the text and made it yield meanings that are most unlikely to have been intended (see for instance 1:52–3 and the notes thereon); but even there their interpretations are valuable, because they show how the text was adapted to new needs and made consistent with itself and with other sources. To call it distortion suggests that such exegesis is a conscious and deliberate perversion of the intended meaning of the text; but the commentators' inventive interpretations may often proceed from the belief that the text is authoritative, and so where it appears inconsistent with itself, with other authorities or with facts, this inconsistency can only be apparent and must be shown to be so by correct interpretation. In this commentators are assisted by the fact that the language of technical treatises in Sanskrit can be far removed from natural idiom.

It was as interpreted by its commentators that the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* came to be applied to litigation and to daily life. Its high status and widely accepted authoritativeness have been further secured by one particular commentary, the *Mitākṣarā*, 'of measured syllables' (the work is not metrical; what is meant is that it is not prolix), by Vijñāneśvara, who wrote between c. 1100 and c. 1120 AD.[19] Quite apart from other arguments for the indispensability of commentaries, Vijñāneśvara's commentary deserves attention because it came to be regarded as a high authority in its own right, particularly for its interpretation of the legal section of the text. For this reason I have almost invariably accepted Vijñāneśvara's readings, frequently adopted his interpretations, and, except where the notes specify otherwise, I have followed the text of an edition of his commentary.[20] This has obviated many text-critical difficulties. Commentaries are invaluable to an editor, because they show the works they explain frozen at a particular place and time in their transmission. Thus those of Aparārka and Viśvarūpa (also consulted for this translation) frequently comment on a substantially different text of the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* from that known to Vijñāneśvara.[21]

The Kiraṇa-Tantra

One text has been chosen that cannot be included either in the category of *śruti* or in that of *smṛti*, and that is the *Kiraṇa-Tantra*. Although it preaches a heterodox and heteropractic cult, there are good reasons for its inclusion. The main currents of Indian religion are often said to be Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism (or Brāhmanism); but listings from within the Indian tradition differ widely: the first two categories they would include, perhaps further subdivided, but they would not recognize the last. In its place various soteriologies and schools of thought might be enumerated, but three streams are commonly separated out: Vedic orthodoxy, and those of the heterodox Vaiṣṇavas, and Śaivas.[22]

The terms Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva refer here to those initiated into sects whose scriptures claim the authorship of Viṣṇu and Śiva, and not simply to uninitiated devotees of Viṣṇu and Śiva. (Such devotees are perhaps more commonly referred to in primary Indian sources respectively as Bhāgavata and Māheśvara.) From the perspective of an orthodox Mīmāṃsaka (see p. xi), both Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas, and not just Buddhists and Jains, were heterodox (*vedabāhya*) and to be shunned by the law-abiding (see *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* 1:130). But there is good reason for including them in Hinduism, for while the Jains and Buddhists rejected the authority of the Veda outright, the Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas did recognize the Veda, albeit as lower scriptural revelation. Both Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas (and most particularly the latter) increasingly asserted that their tradition was congruent with, though it transcended, orthodox Vedism; but in early scriptures, such as the *Kiraṇa-Tantra*, no concession is made to Vedism. Both outwardly observed the requirements of Vedic social religion, even though they held them to be soteriologically irrelevant. Thus a frequently quoted[23] Śaiva scriptural passage proclaims:

> Thus he should not transgress even in thought the [rules of] conduct appropriate to his estate and walk of life. Once he has attained the initiation that is [becoming identical to] Śiva, he remains in whichever walk of life he was, and should protect the Śaiva teachings (*śivadharmam*) [there].

Furthermore they used the Vedic ritual framework as a paradigm for their own; many tantric rites had elements calqued upon Vedic ones, in which the efficient parts of the ritual, i.e. the mantras,

were taken from tantric scriptures instead of from the Vedic corpus; tantric versions of the Gāyatrī and tantric life-cycle rites beyond that of initiation were devised; and the Vedic syllabus could be supplanted with a tantric one at times when recitation was enjoined. Unlike the Vedic corpus, that of the Śaiva Siddhānta was accessible also to those outside the three highest estates (*Kiraṇa-Tantra* 1:10 and note ad loc.). Tantric initiation was what qualified and bound followers to its study.

The term tantra is popularly supposed to refer to the magical acquisition of supernatural powers and pleasures by means of transgressive rites involving sexual intercourse and the consumption of meat and alcohol. The word need carry no such connotations. It is used of works that are not religious (e.g. the *Pañcatantra*, a compendium of didactic fables) and appears also in the titles of orthodox treatises (such as Kumārila's *Mīmāṃsātantravārttika*). In this anthology tantra refers to a body of non-Vedic scriptures which preach initiation into a cult and post-initiatory rituals using non-Vedic mantras. The magical acquisition of supernatural powers by means of elaborate rites with tantric mantras is also a characteristic of tantric sects; but in the Śaiva Siddhānta, to which the *Kiraṇa-Tantra* belongs, such magical power-mongering has been largely sublimated by the striving for salvation.

There is a huge variety of such sectarian scriptures and, had there been more space, more might have been selected to represent that variety. In this edition the first seven chapters of the *Kiraṇa-Tantra*, a tantra of the Śaiva Siddhānta, are given. The Śaiva Siddhānta is a label that is commonly applied both to a pan-Indian dualist Śaiva school, whose scriptures and exegetical treatises are exclusively in Sanskrit, and to a later South Indian school, much of whose authoritative literature is in Tamil. The South Indian school developed from the pan-Indian one and differs from it in that it compromised the tenets of early scriptures of the Śaiva Siddhānta by succumbing increasingly to conformity with Vedism (in particular to the influence of the orthodox school of Advaita Vedānta), and by laying increasing stress on the importance of devotion to God. The term is used here to refer exclusively to the old pan-Indian Śaiva Siddhānta.

The old Śaiva Siddhānta has, in the past, mistakenly been subsumed within the later one and called South Indian, and its scriptures (called variously *tantra*, *āgama* or *siddhānta*) have often

been wrongly distinguished from tantras. Both these misconceptions can be refuted: among the principal exegetes of the original Śaiva Siddhānta are Kashmirians (from the far North); manuscripts of the scriptures have been transmitted in Nepal and Kashmir as well as in South India; their colophons in manuscripts both in the South and in the North almost invariably refer to them as tantras; and they are also cited as authorities by exegetes of transgressive Śaiva tantras, such as Abhinavagupta, who clearly regarded them as a branch – admittedly an exoteric and therefore relatively inferior one – of the authoritative canon of Śaiva tantra. Their doctrine is in fact closely related to that of the tantra which Abhinavagupta regarded as the highest revelation of the entire Śaiva canon, the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra*.[24]

It was remarked above that the Śaiva Siddhānta has often been said to be South Indian. The pan-Indian character of the early sect has been obscured, because almost all the extant works that bear the names of the twenty-eight principal scriptures of the Śaiva Siddhānta have been substantially altered or entirely rewritten in South India.[25] This took place either later than, or beyond the knowledge of, the latest Kashmirian exegetes of the sect, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha and his son, Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha (tenth century AD).[26] The *Kiraṇa-Tantra* is however one of the very few extant tantras that are demonstrably early, because it has been transmitted both in Nepal and in South India, and because its earliest extant commentary is by the Kashmirian Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha, mentioned above. The *Kiraṇa-Tantra* cannot be precisely dated, but it was probably composed between the fifth and the eighth centuries AD.

One of the reasons for the selection of the *Kiraṇa-Tantra* is that its essential doctrines are gathered together and set forth succinctly in its first few chapters. The whole work consists of a dialogue between Garuḍa, the mythical bird on whom Viṣṇu travels, and Śiva, his teacher. Compared with interlocutors in other tantras Garuḍa asks searching questions that probe genuine problems. Only the first seven chapters are translated here – the remaining fifty-seven have been omitted. The excluded chapters deal with cosmology, ritual, architecture, religious observance, yoga, and all that relates to the sect's religious practice and behaviour.[27] Unlike the preceding texts in this anthology, the *Kiraṇa-Tantra* attempts in succinct, sometimes cryptic language to present and defend a systematic theology and soteriology. Often it is too compressed

and the modern reader is obliged to rely heavily on the commentators.

Technical treatises in Sanskrit are extremely terse and the train of thought is often difficult to follow. Sometimes they are no more than concatenations of elliptically expressed key ideas whose real purpose is mnemonic: that is to say they are intended to be read with the assistance of a learned teacher or, failing that, commentary, whose exegesis is afterwards remembered whenever the brief statements of the original work are called to mind. The *Kiraṇa-Tantra* is not such a skeletal treatise, but parts of it are written in the style characteristic of such treatises and so I have been liberal with square brackets, basing most of my insertions on the interpretations offered by Rāmakaṇṭha, Tryambakaśambhu and Siṃharāja, commentators on the *Kiraṇa-Tantra*. But their suggestions have sometimes been ignored, because they distort the text, obscuring the most natural interpretations of certain verses in order to obviate perceived inconsistencies.

Composed by Śiva the *Kiraṇa-Tantra* must be cogent, consistent with itself (and with the body of other scriptures of the Śaiva Siddhānta) and replete with meaning. This last consideration inspires a good commentator like Rāmakaṇṭha to read significance into every syllable. In 1:11 Śiva is described with the phrase 'the diadem of his crescent moon quivering'. Such a phrase is commonplace in descriptions of Śiva, but Rāmakaṇṭha explains that it indicates that Śiva's head shook with surprise at the ignorance of his questioner, Garuḍa, whom Rāmakaṇṭha has shown by similarly ingenious strategies to be a Śaiva initiate.

As will be clear from the above, a fine commentary such as Rāmakaṇṭha's is much more than an exposition of the primary meaning of a text: it fills out the frequent ellipses that are characteristic of the compressed 'telegraphic' style of Sanskrit technical treatises; and it makes every phrase of the work resonate with meaning.

The Śaiva Siddhānta inherits from the Sāṅkhyas the notion of a universe fundamentally divided into sentient souls and insentient matter. All souls are potentially omnipotent and omniscient, just as Śiva is, but they are bound by three physical bonds: innate impurity (*mala*), primal matter (*māyā*) and past actions. Primal matter is goaded into action, at Śiva's instigation, to generate all the principles (*tattva*) that make up the material universe and the

bodies into which souls transmigrate. Once embodied, the souls reap the rewards of past actions and commit further actions that bind them to further births in the material universe (1:19–20). Like the beginningless sequence of the chicken and the egg, this process has no original cause – past actions are beginningless (3:7–8). Śiva alone is beginninglessly free of bonds (2:3–5). It is out of compassion alone that he instigates the periodic creation of the universe out of primal matter, because souls can only use up the rewards of their past actions by experience in the material universe (4:26–8).

At a full initiation into the Śaiva Siddhānta the soul of the initiand is ritually removed from his body by means of mantras and made to experience immediately the rewards of all his past actions that would accrue to him in different embodiments in various worlds (7:25–7).[28] It is only the past actions that sustain him in his present life whose rewards are not instantly destroyed (6:19). Śiva himself, although all-pervading, does not directly involve himself with primal matter, and so it is through deputies, the chief of whom is called Ananta, that he creates, administers and resorbs the universe. These deputies are souls along the path to the realization of their own innate omnipotence. Other Hindu deities are conceived of as such souls invested with office by Śiva. Mantras, through which initiation is achieved, are also souls invested with office, so too is the particular Śiva who teaches the *Kiraṇa-Tantra* to Garuḍa.[29]

The following excursus upon lists of constitutive principles of the universe may seem unnecessary and unnecessarily complex; but some explanation is required and, although impatient readers may skip over it now, they may be grateful for it when they come to grapple with the opaquely incomplete treatment of the structure of the universe in the text. The Śaiva Siddhānta inherited the structure of its dualist ontology from Sāṅkhya thinkers. These held the soul to be the topmost principle, fundamentally different from that of matter (*prakṛti*) and all the principles derived from matter. Those derived principles were the intellect (*buddhi*); the principle of self-identity (*ahaṃkāra*); the eleven faculties of sense and action (the mind, the ears, skin, eyes, tongue, nose, mouth, hand, anus, reproductive organs and feet); the five subtle elements (sound, touch, form, taste and smell); and the five gross elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth). The tantras of the Śaiva Siddhānta modified this structure in two ways: they added principles to the

top, demonstrating that the Sāṅkhyas had correctly grasped the nature of only the inferior levels of the universe, and they attempted to place worlds inherited from older Śaiva scriptures on the levels of these various principles (*tattva*). The latter change meant that the *tattvas*, in some contexts, approximate to levels or strata of reality in which various worlds are placed, rather than to elements or constitutive principles of the universe. Once again, the scriptures of the Śaiva Siddhānta differ widely in their allocations of worlds to principles, and in some cases no allocation is made at all.[30]

In the post-scriptural Śaiva Siddhānta of the commentators a consensus was reached that there were altogether thirty-six principles (*tattva*). Five of them – Śiva, his power (*śakti*), his two aspects of Sadāśiva and Īśvara, and pure knowledge – constitute the pure universe above primal matter. The remaining thirty-one principles make up the impure universe. The latter, in order of their evolution from the first, primal matter, are: limited power to act (*kalā*), limited power of knowledge (*vidyā*), passion (*rāga*), time, binding fate (*niyati*), and then all the principles of the mature Sāṅkhya listed above, but with two modifications: firstly, the Sāṅkhyas' top category, the soul, became that of the bound soul (because the Śaiva Siddhānta holds the free soul to be equivalent to Śiva), and secondly, that of matter (*prakṛti*) became a redundant lower duplication of primal matter (*māyā*).

No demonstrably early extant scripture of the Śaiva Siddhānta has exactly this list of principles. In Chapter 8 of the *Kiraṇa-Tantra* (in which the world systems of the Śaiva cosmos are distributed among the different principles) not only are no worlds allocated to the principles of the five subtle elements and of the eleven faculties – in fact no tantra places worlds in these – but no principles intervene between that of ether and the sense of self-identity (*ahaṃkāra*).[31]

Following the eighth chapter, the sequence of the *Kiraṇa-Tantra* is as follows: the formless (*niṣkala*), Sadāśiva, Īśvara, pure knowledge, primal matter, limited power to act (*kalā*), time, binding fate (*niyati*), limited power of knowledge, passion (*rāga*), secondary matter (*prakṛti*), the principle of the constitutive strands of the material world (*guṇa*), intellect (*buddhi*), the principle of self-identity, and the five gross elements. This yields a total of nineteen; but there are later (22:51) declared to be thirty-six. We can reach this number by adding the eleven faculties and five subtle elements

(mentioned in 4:23) and either the bound soul (8:125) or Śiva's power (8:139).

What the above demonstrates is that there is no consensus in the scriptures about: 1) how many *tattvas* there are; 2) what their order is; 3) exactly what they are – in some cases they are better rendered 'principle', in others 'reality level'[32] (in the case of the *tattva* of the bound soul and the uppermost *tattvas* of the pure universe neither of these translations is adequate); and 4) which worlds belong in which *tattvas*.

The first chapter of the *Kiraṇa-Tantra* begins with a eulogy of Śiva, enumerating a number of his mythical deeds. This opening is unusual given that the Śaiva Siddhānta held such mythology to be of no importance, and the commentators claim these myths are metaphors for the ways in which Śiva brings about salvation. Thereafter the first chapter explains the sequence in which an ordinary soul is linked to the evolutes of primal matter that make up the psycho-physical entity capable of worldly experience. The second chapter is devoted to explaining the different functions of impurity and primal matter, that they are quite separate things, and why it is that impurity is not counted among the evolutes of primal matter. Chapter 3 begins with a discussion of what the bonds of the soul bring about and an assertion of their beginninglessness; it concludes with a discussion of the unknowability of Śiva as he is at the highest level of reality.

In spite of being all-pervasive, Śiva is unapproachable, because he is formless. This is why he manifests himself in the relatively coarse forms that give their names to the upper principles of the universe. The fourth chapter explains the role of Śiva's chief deputy, Ananta, in stimulating primal matter to generate the universe. Chapter 5 explains the prerequisites for the performance of salvific initiation. According to the *Kiraṇa-Tantra*, two equally powerful past actions that ripen simultaneously and are thus ready to produce their rewards can cause a blockage of experience and prevent an individual from consuming the fruits of his past actions. Śiva then releases a shaft of his power to remove the blockage. Only when this has occurred should a person be initiated. That it has taken place can be inferred from an initiand's devotion to Śiva. Chapter 6 explains that the Śaiva Siddhānta preaches different codes for those initiates incapable of following all that is enjoined for normal initiates. It concludes with an explanation of the effects of initiation. The seventh chapter discusses mantras and expounds

the position that some of them are Śiva, some are his power, and some are individual souls which he has invested with power and office.

The text of Vivanti's edition[33] has been followed, but modified on the basis of twenty other manuscripts and of two extra commentaries unknown to her. These modifications have been listed at the end of the *Kiraṇa-Tantra*.

The Bhāgavata-Purāṇa

The Purāṇas are large compendia, mainly mythological, and written for the most part in simple narrative metre (*anuṣṭubh*, the metre also of the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti*, the *Kiraṇa-Tantra* and of most of the *Gītā*), and in straightforward, sometimes slightly debased, Sanskrit. They are a genre of scripture to which women and those of the lowest of the four estates of Hindu society (Śūdras) were not denied access, and they give a portrait of popular religiosity through the ages. They belong to the category of *smṛti* (*Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* 1:3); but, with notable exceptions, scholars long ignored them, partly because of their popular character, partly because of text-critical problems, and perhaps partly because they disapproved of them:

> Of all false religions that of the Purans is perhaps the most monstrous in its absurdities – a stupendous memorial to the easy credulity of an imbecile race.[34]

> It [Puranism] is a long chain of gross fables, disjointed and indefinite, huge, wild, and fragmentary, having no distinct and tangible object to fulfil, and totally at variance in its several parts. Every detached story may have a deep, hidden, and even moral meaning if you please; but all the fables together make a discordant system, unintelligible and bewildering, for which it is impossible to entertain any but a mean and contemptible opinion. The instructions which it professes to give are useless, where they are not scandalous and criminal. The only things clearly to be understood, are the profane songs, the obscene ceremonies, and the other indecencies connected with the prescribed festivals.[35]

The chroniclers of British India turned to the Purāṇas, in the absence of other materials, as defective historical sources, and they too were were eloquent about their shortcomings:

> Doubtless the original Puranas contained much valuable historical matter; but, at present, it is difficult to separate a little pure metal from the base alloy of ignorant expounders and interpolators.
>
> . . . in the East, in the moral decrepitude of ancient Asia, with no judge to condemn, no public to praise, each priestly expounder may revel in an unfettered imagination, and reckon his admirers in proportion to the mixture of the marvellous. Plain historical truths have long ceased to interest this artificially fed people.[36]

It is commonly asserted that a Purāṇa must treat of the following five topics: creation of the world; recreation (after periodic destruction); the genealogies of gods and heroes (*vaṃśa*); the periods named after particular progenitors called Manus (*manvantara*); the deeds of the gods and heroes (*vaṃśyanucarita*). Many Purāṇas do not follow such an agenda. (The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* (in II.10:1 and XII.7.9) gives two different, but overlapping, lists of ten topics.) They do predominantly contain mythology and cosmology; but many also fill the role of popular encyclopaedias and have amassed a wealth of material from technical treatises on all manner of subjects. The *Agni* and *Garuḍa Purāṇas*, for example, duplicate much of the legal material from the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti*. The Purāṇas are also a vehicle for sectarian religion. They often have much in common with sectarian tantras, but with the important difference that the religious practices they teach remain *vaidika*, 'congruent with orthodox Vedism'. This means that they do not preach initiation into tantric cults and that their rites use *vaidika* mantras – that is to say ones not actually drawn from the Vedic corpus (*śrauta*), but not drawn from tantras either.[37] Much of what they contain may have been written by those with sectarian tendencies who wished to give some respectability to heterodox ideas, while still remaining within the fold of Vedic orthodoxy.

Although they contain early material, it is often impossible to date a Purāṇa, or even to place within it material that is relatively late or relatively early. Printed versions of the same Purāṇa often diverge widely. In certain cases it seems that originally independent Purāṇic works came to be called books or sub-sections of other well-known ones, and thus, although transmitted quite separately, they have come to be printed as parts of the Purāṇas to which they ascribe themselves, or have even come to supplant them. A clear case is that of the *Skandapurāṇa*.[38] As with tantras of the

Śaiva Siddhānta, the title was used as a locus of attribution for suitable material while the original work was forgotten. Because Purāṇas contain such a mixture of material from different periods, and because manuscripts and printed versions diverge so widely, it is sometimes asserted[39] that they are oral or epic literature in a perpetual state of flux and that it is therefore not only impossible but methodologically incorrect to try to make definitive editions of them. As they are always undergoing composition in transmission, it is argued, 'they do not belong in books'.[40]

The same has been said of the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*; but most admit that this work is a South Indian creation and that it possesses, more perhaps than any other Purāṇa, a distinctive and extremely literary style – features of which are its archaizing language, metrical variety, and its alliterative and assonantal word-play – and that that is consistently maintained throughout the work. This homogeneity, and the relative paucity of substantial variations in its textual transmission, suggest that it was composed at one place and time. Rocher – presumably as a corollary of his view that all Purāṇas undergo composition in transmission – does not approve any of the suggested datings of the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, but presents a table of them that ranges from 1200 BC to 1300 AD. But, following Hardy,[41] (who demonstrates that the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* drew on South Indian devotional poetry in Tamil composed by singer-saints called the Ālvārs), we may assign the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* to the ninth or tenth century AD.

The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* has been selected for this anthology not only to represent the Purāṇa genre (of which – because of its homogeneity, relatively late date, and poetic diction – it is not entirely typical): it also illustrates a much more developed form of devotionalism than that found in the *Gītā*. In the latter devotion to Kṛṣṇa is of an intellectual kind; in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* however, the devotion described is intense and emotional. Here the cowherd women are by turns racked by the insupportable pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa, and overpowered by the bliss of union with him, and the descriptions of their emotions are characterized by a heady sensuality quite alien to the *Gītā*. The passionate devotionalism of the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* had an incalculable impact on religiosity across the entire subcontinent. It found expression in personal devotional poetry by singer-saints in the vernacular tongues of every part of India, and their poems are still revered and sung by devotees today.

The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, like the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and the Upanishads, is not a systematic work of soteriology: much of the work has an unmistakably non-dualist tenor; and yet it contains passages devoted to expounding the Sāṅkhya system, and others, (such as the section translated here), which emphasize above all else the salvific grace of God and the transcendent importance of devotion to him. It is a mark of the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*'s great popularity and importance that thinkers of very different persuasions have commented upon it, and thereby drawn it over into their own camp.[42]

The chapters translated are not the earliest account of Kṛṣṇa's dallying with the cowherd women, the Gopīs, but they are the most famous, and they have been the subject of a great deal of discussion by later theologians. Some were troubled by the moral problems that they throw up; others relished their emotional intensity and poetry and regarded them as a focal scripture for their theology of devotion and aesthetic delight. The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* declares from the outset (I.1:3) that it is intended to be relished:

> Aesthetes, you who love the flavour of poetry! Ah, drink again and again at this vessel of juice that is the Bhāgavata, this fruit that has fallen to earth from the mouth of Śuka,[43] full of liquid nectar, from the wish-fulfilling tree of the Vedas.'

Of all the translation in this volume, this may be the least successful, because it is impossible to capture and convey in English the beauty of the original. The Sanskrit verses are replete with alliterative and assonantal textures and all manner of word-play, and are composed in a variety of elaborate metres. With more time and skill I might have attempted a metrical translation; but this prose translation serves, I hope, to convey the story and some flavour of the original.

The story that frames the bulk of the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* is that of the death of King Parīkṣit. Parīkṣit is cursed to die within seven days by Śṛṅgī, the son of a sage called Śamīka. He withdraws to the Ganges to fast to death and there meets the learned sage Śuka, the son of Vyāsa, and takes the opportunity to question him. What Śuka teaches Parīkṣit constitutes the main body of the Purāṇa, and that is why the chapters translated here take the form of a conversation between Śuka and the king. The text consists of twelve books (*skandha*), the tenth and most

popular of which narrates the life of Kṛṣṇa. In the *Mahābhārata* we learn of Kṛṣṇa only as an adult; the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* narrates also the episodes of Kṛṣṇa's early life.

Kṛṣṇa was born to Vasudeva and Devakī, but he did not grow up with them. Vasudeva, the son of a king of Mathurā called Śūrasena, turned to cattle-tending, and at his father's death the throne passed to Ugrasena, a man of the same clan. Ugrasena was ousted and imprisoned by his violent son, Kaṃsa, the brother of Devakī. At the marriage of Kṛṣṇa's parents Kaṃsa heard a disembodied voice warning him that he would be killed by Devakī's eighth son. Kaṃsa imprisoned the couple and murdered their offspring as they were born. Their seventh son, however, was miraculously transplanted into the womb of Rohiṇī, another wife of Vasudeva's, and that son was Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, Balarāma. When their eighth son was born, Vasudeva was able to escape miraculously, swap the baby for a female child born to the cowherd woman Yaśodā, and return to the prison. Thus Kṛṣṇa also came to be known as the son of Nanda and Yaśodā, who brought him up in Gokula among the cowherds of Vraja. When he discovered the deception, Kaṃsa sent many demons to dispatch Kṛṣṇa, but, to the astonishment of Gokula, each was vanquished. Throughout a childhood packed with incident Kṛṣṇa's pranks, his butter-thieving, and his beauty maddened and delighted the cowherd women, the Gopīs.

When all other means to kill Kṛṣṇa had failed, Kaṃsa invited him to a festival in Mathurā. A wrestling contest was arranged, from which Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa emerged victorious, and Kṛṣṇa then killed the enraged Kaṃsa and became the ruler of Mathurā. Thereafter he was kept busy with affairs of state and never returned to Gokula. Before he left for the court, he spent the nights of an autumn moon singing, dancing and making love to the captivated beauties of Vraja. Their impassioned pleas for his return during every day of his absence fill many verses here and later in the book:

> Each second seems an aeon, when you wander the forest by day and we do not see you, and when [in the evening at your return] our eyes look up at your beauteous face with its curling locks, how stupid [the creator seems,] who gave us lids over our eyes. (X.31:15)

More than the bliss of union, it is the agony of separation from God that is at the heart of the devotionalism of the *Bhāgavata-*

Purāṇa, and it will be clear from the following summary that the Gopīs are given frequent opportunity to express this agony: In X.29 Kṛṣṇa decides to make love to the Gopīs and calls them with music. When they arrive he sends them back to their families. They plead not to have to leave and all go together to the banks of the Yamunā, where Kṛṣṇa disappears. In X.30 the Gopīs wander the forest searching for him, asking the trees where he has gone and imitating him. One Gopī Kṛṣṇa took away with him to another part of the forest; but she grew conceited at this high favour and Kṛṣṇa again disappeared. In X.31 the Gopīs sing Kṛṣṇa's praises and beg for his return. In X.32 Kṛṣṇa reappears; they go to the bank of the Yamunā, and the Gopīs reproach him for not loving them in return for their love. In X.33 Kṛṣṇa multiplies himself and they dance the dance called the Rāsa.

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References

1 P. G. Wodehouse in his preface to *Summer Lightning* (Herbert Jenkins, 1929).
2 This paradigm does not apply to all the Vedas: the *Taittirīya* subrecension of the Black *Yajur-Veda* in fact contains mantras and Brāhmaṇa portions in its Saṃhitā, its Brāhmaṇa and in its Āraṇyaka.
3 There are many later works calling themselves Upanishads, often assigned to the *Atharva-Veda*, which do not properly belong to the Vedic corpus.
4 See e.g. Jan Gonda, *Vedic Literature (Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas)*, (Harassowitz, 1975), pp. 20–5.
5 Franklin Edgerton, *The Beginnings of Indian Philosophy* (Allen and Unwin, 1965), p. 18.
6 ibid. p. 22.
7 ibid. p. 28.
8 ibid.
9 Juan Mascaró, *The Upanishads* (Penguin, 1965), p. 45.
10 Robert Ernest Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads Translated from the Sanskrit* (Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 70.
11 Thus A. J. Alston, *Śaṅkara on the Absolute* (London: Shanti Sadan, 1980), pp. 42–3.

12 *Māyā* in the Upanishads (and in *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* 29:1) actually means something more like 'supernatural power', and occasionally (*Śvetāśvatara* IV.10) 'primal matter', foreshadowing the use of the term in the Śaiva Siddhānta.

13 In fact many of the numbers there are still a riddle. Some identifications were suggested by E. H. Johnston, 'Some Sāṃkhya and Yoga conceptions of the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*' in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1930, pp. 855–78.

14 Thus Franklin Edgerton, *The Bhagavad Gītā* (Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 133–4.

15 Friedhelm Hardy, *Viraha-Bhakti: The early history of Kṛṣṇa devotion in South India* (Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 25–8.

16 This conclusion is reached after a review of the evidence by P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra* Volume I, Part I of the revised and enlarged second edition (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1968), pp. 442–7.

17 Verse 2 of Chapter 3, for instance, speaks of cremation being performed with the household fire, as though that were the norm, and only afterwards makes clear that those who kept the Vedic fires were to be burnt with those instead.

18 Richard Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism: a social history from ancient Benares to modern Colombo* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988), pp. 33–4.

19 Thus P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra* (Volume I, Part II of the revised and enlarged second edition; Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1975), pp. 607–9.

20 Narayan Ram Acharya (ed.), *Yājñavalkyasmṛti of Yogīśvara Yājñavalkya with the Commentary Mitākṣarā of Vijñāneśvara* (Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1949). Other editions consulted for their commentaries were: *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* with the commentary of Aparārka edited by the Pundits of the Ānandāśrama and published by Hari Nārāyaṇa Āpaṭe (Poona: Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, 1903); T. Ganapati Sastri (ed.) *The Yājñavalkyasmṛti With the Commentary of Viśvarūpācārya* (Trivandrum, 1921–2, and reprinted Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1982); Nārāyaṇa Śāstrī Khiste and Jagannātha Śāstrī Hośiṅga (ed.) *The Yājñavalkya Smṛti With the Commentary of Mitra Miśra's Vīramitrodaya and Vijñāneśvara's Mitākṣara* (Benares: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1930).

21 As with almost all literature in Sanskrit, the understanding of the text of the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* could be much improved by a full collation of the manuscripts of the work and of its commentaries. A compari-

son with the sections of the *Agni* and *Garuḍa Purāṇas*, which have incorporated large portions of the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* at an early stage in the work's transmission, must also prove fruitful.

22 The observations in this paragraph were made by Professor Sanderson in a course of lectures at All Souls' College, Oxford in 1992–3.

23 e.g. ad *Tattvasaṅgraha* 38 and 57 and ad *Mokṣakārikā* 146 and 151 in Vrajavallabha Dvivedī (ed.) *Aṣṭaprakaraṇam* (Varanasi: Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, 1988).

24 See Alexis Sanderson, 'The Doctrine of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra', pp. 281–312 in Teun Goudrian (ed.) *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism: studies in honor of André Padoux* (State University of New York, 1992).

25 The case for the relative lateness of most extant *siddhāntas* is argued in Hélène Brunner's 'Jñāna and Kriyā: Relation between Theory and Practice in the Śaivāgamas', in Teun Goudrian (ed.) *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism: studies in honor of André Padoux* (State University of New York, 1992), pp. 1–59.

26 Professor Sanderson has pointed out to me that a passage from Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary on the *Mataṅgapārameśvara-tantra* (the summary verses ad 23:85) is cited in Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka* 8:428–34b. This means that he can tentatively be dated between c. 950 and 1000 AD. For the terminus post quem see Alexis Sanderson's review of N. R. Bhatt, *Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama (Kriyāpāda, Yogapāda et Caryāpāda), avec le commentaire de Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha. Édition Critique* (Pondicherry, 1982) in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies,* 48 (London, 1985).

27 For a detailed summary see Hélène Brunner, 'Analyse du Kiraṇāgama' pp. 309–29 in *Journal Asiatique*, CCLIII (Paris, 1965).

28 The worlds are conceived of as plateaux of existence (like our own world) in which souls become embodied and are thus capable of the experience that alone consumes the fruits of their past actions.

29 According to Rāmakaṇṭha he is the lord of a world in the upper crust of the egg that englobes this and other worlds in the principle of earth, which is the lowest of the principles evolved from primal matter. Other Hindu cosmologies describe nothing beyond the worlds inside this egg.

30 The *Rauravasūtrasaṅgraha* demonstrates its antiquity because it has not attempted any such correlation and because it lists (10:98–101) only thirty rather than the canonical thirty-six principles – the work is printed as the *vidyā pāda* of the *Rauravāgama*, edited by N. R. Bhatt. (Pondicherry: Publications de l'Institut Français d'Indologie,

1961). The structure of the cosmos can affect the mode of initiation, because the soul's stockpile of actions must be purified through initiation in all the worlds and in all the principles in which those stored actions are to bear fruit.

31 These sixteen principles are also singled out in certain early sources of Sāṅkhya thought as non-productive modifications (*vikṛti*) of the other eight material principles (*prakṛti*), e.g. *Mahābhārata* 12.294.27–9 and 12.298.10–15 (Edgerton, 1965 pp. 310 and 323).

32 Both these translations are those of Professor Sanderson, who is attempting a stratigraphy of early Śaiva scriptures partly on the basis of their discrepant lists of principles and world-systems.

33 Maria Pia Vivanti (ed. and trans.), *Il Kiraṇāgama* (Naples: Istituto Orientale di Napoli, 1975).

34 Anonymous, 'Puranism; or the popular religion of India', *Calcutta Review*, 24, 1855, p. 223; quoted in Ludo Rocher, *The Purāṇas* (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 1986), p. 8.

35 Anonymous, art. cit., pp. 229–230.

36 James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (originally published 1829–32), edited by William Crooke (London, 1920; reprinted, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971), p. 30.

37 Such Paurāṇic mantras often take the form of the name of a deity in the dative preceded by the sacred syllable *oṃ* and followed by the word *namaḥ*, 'homage'.

38 Early Nepalese manuscripts (one dated to the ninth century AD) of the original *Skandapurāṇa* have been identified, an entirely different work from what has hitherto been printed under the title of *Skanda-purāṇa*. See R. Adriaensen, H. T. Bakker and H. Isaacson, 'Towards a Critical Edition of the *Skandapurāṇa*', in *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 37 (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994) pp. 325–31.

39 See, for example, Ludo Rocher, op. cit., pp. 49–67.

40 ibid. p. 53

41 op. cit. pp. 486–8.

42 Except where stated the text translated is that of Jagadīś Lāl Śāstrī (ed.), *Bhāgavata Purāṇa of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa with Sanskrit Commentary Bhāvārthabodhinī of Śrīdhara Svāmin* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983). The other commentaries consulted and referred to here are the fourteenth-century *Bhāgavatacandrikā*, 'moonlight upon the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*' of Vīrarāghava (edited by A. V. and T. C. Narasiṃhācārya, Madras: Ānanda Press, 1910); the *Padarat-nāvalī* (fifteenth century) of Vijayadhvaja, (edited by Bhāvācārya Aṣṭaputra, Bombay: Gaṇapatakṛṣṇājī Press, 1868); the

Toṣaṇīsāra of Kāśīnāthopādhyāya (Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1895); the *Subodhinī*, 'which makes easy to understand' of Vallabhācārya (1479–1531). The last is printed as an appendix to James D. Redington, *Vallabhācārya on the Love Games of Kṛṣṇa* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983). For the dates of the commentators I have followed Ganesh Vasudeo Tagare, *The Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, Part I (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass), pp. lxvi–lxviii.

43 Śuka is both the narrator of the bulk of the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* and a word for a parakeet. As the commentator Śrīdhara points out, a fruit that has been tasted by a parakeet is 'as sweet as nectar'.