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Concept of kundalini in Shiva Samhita: The ancient hatha yogic text

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Abstract

The Shiva Samhita is one of the major texts on hatha yoga the other two being Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Gheranda Samhita. Written in Sanskrit, it is in form of an address by hindu deity Shiva to his consort Parvati. It is one of the most comprehensive as well as democratic text on hatha yoga. Some are of the opinion that it was composed in 17 th century whereas James Malinson opines that it was composed in or around Varanasi before 1500 CE. Divided in five chapters the Shiva Samhita covers information regarding Nadis, Prana, Types of Prana, Ways to attain success in yoga, Persons suitable for yoga, Symptoms of eligible yoga aspirants, Signs of a person whose nadis have been purified, Obstacles in yoga practice, Asanas, Nadi sodhana pranayama, Mantra yoga and Anahat sounds etc. In this article attempt has been made to describe the concept of kundalini, the serpent power, as depicted in this text.

Keywords: Meru, Brahmanda, Ida, Pingala, Sushumna, Nadi, Kundali

Introduction

As per Shiva Samhita there exists a triangular shaped, beautiful yoni in the pericarp of the mooladhara lotus which is hidden and kept secret. Goddess Kundalini like the form of electricity in a coil remains in it. The coils are three and a half in number looking like a serpent and whose abode is at the mouth of Sushumna. The creative force of the world is represented by this kundalini energy which is always engaged in creation.

The different chapters focuss on different aspects as follows; First chapter-liberation methods and philosophy, Second chapter-nadis, fire and jiva, Third chapter-winds in body, guru, four stages of yoga, elemental visualization and asanas, Fourth chapter-eleven mudras, Fifth chapter-obstacles, four type of aspirants, shadow gazing, esoteric centres, kundalini energy, the seven lotuses and mantra. In this article description of the concept of kundalini as depicted in the text Siva Samhita has been attempted.

World and body

Trailokye yani bhutani sarbani dehatahe

Merum sambestya sarbatra byabarah prabartate

There are many types of beings in three worlds. All such beings are also to be found in the body which is surrounding the meru. These are engaged in their respective functions.

Body is Brahmanda (Microcosm)

Brahmanda sangyake dehe yathadesam byabasthita

Meru srunge sudharasmiiiiirbahirastakalayutaha

This body is known as Brahmanda (microcosm) which literally means the mundane egg).On the top of the spinal cord there exists which has rays of nectar endowed with eight kalas having the shape of a semi-circle.

The Ambrosia

Bartateahasmisamsoapi sudha barsatyadhomukha

Tatoamrutam dwidha bhutam yati sukhmam

Having its face downwards the nectar is raining day and night.The ambrosia is further subdivided into two subtle parts.

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Ida, Pingala, Sushumna, Ganga, Sun and Moon

*Ida margena pustartham yati mandakini jalam
Pushnati sakalam deha midfa margena nischitam*

One channel is known as Ida and similar to the waters of the divine Ganges-, this ambrosia flows to nourish the whole body by passing through the channel of Ida.

*Esa piyusarashmirhi bama parswe byabasthitaha
Apara sudha dugdhabho hathat karsati mandalat
Madhyamargena srustyartham merau sanjati
chandramaha ll*

The ray of the moon is like milk and it resides on the left side. There exists other ray which is as brilliant as the purest milk and this is the fountain of great pleasure. This enters through the middle path which is nothing but Sushumna channel into the spinal cord in to create moon.

Position and action of the Sun

Meru mule sthita suryaha—

The Sun exists at the bottom of the meru having twelve kalas. The right side path is known as Pingala and in this path the lord of creatures carries the fluid through its rays having an upward movement.

*Piyusa rasmi nirjasam dhatuncha grasati dhubam
Samira mandale suryo bhramate sarba bigrahe.*

The vital secretions are swallowed by it. Along with the atmosphere, the sun makes its movement through the whole body.

*Esa surya para murti nirbanam dakhine pathi
Bahate lagna yogena srusti samhara karakaha.*

Pingala is another form of sun which is the right side vessel. This is capable of giving Nirvana to the being. The sun is the lord of creation and destruction and makes movement in this vessel through auspicious ecliptical symptoms.

The nerves

*Sardha lakhya trayam nadyaha santi dehantare
nrunam
Pradhanabhuta nadyastu tasu mukhaschaturdasaha.*

There are 35000 nadis in the human body and out of them, the principal nadis are fourteen in number.

*Susumne pingala cha gandhari hasti jihvika
Kuhuhu saraswati pusa sankhini cha payaswini
Barunyalambusa chaiba biswodari yasantwini
Etasu tisro mukhyaha syuhu pingaleda susumneka.*

Sushumna, Ida, Pingala, Gandhari, Hastijihvika, kuhu, saraswati, pusa, sankini, payaswini, varuni, Alumbusa, Viswodari, and Yasantwini are the names of few nadis. Among these nadis Ida, Pingala and Sushumna are the principal nadis.

*Tsrusveka susumneba mukhya sayogi ballava
Anyastadasrayam krutva nadyaha santi hi dehinam.*

Sushumna nadi is the highest of all the nadis and most favourite of the yogis. All other vessels work like subordinate to it in the body.

*Nadyastu ta adho baktraha padmatantunibhaha
sthitaha
Prusthbamsam samasritya soma suryagni rupini.*

These principal nadis (vessels) have their mouths facing downwards.

Like thin thread of lotus these vessels appear and are all supported by the vertebral column representing the sun, moon and fire.

*Tasam madhye gata nadi chitra sa mama ballabha
Brahmarandhrancha tatreiba sukhmat sukhmataram
subham.*

Chitra nadi is the innermost of these which my beloved (says

Lord Shiva) Out of all the hollows the subtlest one is called Brahmarandhra.

*Panchabarnojwala sudha sushumna Madhya
charini*

Dehesyopadhirupa sa sushumna Madhya rupini.

Chitra is brilliant with five colours and pure in nature. It moves in the middle of Sushumna. This Chitra nadi is the vital part of body and also centre of Sushumna nadi.

*Dibyamargamidam proktamamrutanandakarakam
Dhyanamatrena yogindro duritougham binasayet.*

This is called Heavenly Way in scriptures and which imparts the joy of immortality. By the great Yogi destroys all sins by contemplating on it.

The Pelvic Region

*Gudattudvayam guladurdhvam medhattu dvayam
guladadhaha*

Trikona bartate yonih sarba tantresu gopita

The adhara lotus contains a pericarp where the triangular, good looking yoni is hidden.

*Tatra bidyullatakara kundali paradebata
Sardhatrikara kutila sushumna marga samsthitaha.*

The goddess Kundalini is of the form of electricity in a coil which resides in it. It has a number of three coils and a half which looks like a serpent existing in the mouth of Sushumna.

Conclusion

As explained there are 35000 nadis in the body. Out of these different nerve channels or vessels main are Sushumna, Ida, Pingala and also Chitra. Chitra nadi is the vital part of body which is at centre of Sushumna nadi. Ida nadi is similar to divine Ganges and Pingala nadi is equivalent to Sun God and giver of nirvana. Kundalini is of the form of electricity in a coil. It is like a three and half coil looking like a serpent. The abode of kundalini is at the base of the spine in the pelvic region covering the mouth of Sushumna. In this classic text of yoga lord Shiva explains the body system, different channels and existence of goddess kundalini to goddess Parvati. By proper practice and grace of guru one can awaken this divine energy and get enlightenment.

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