

The Saundaryalahari

The *Saundaryalahari* (Flood of Beauty), traditionally ascribed to Shankaracarya, is one of the principal texts of Shakta Tantrism, known all over India. The text, translation, and notes are from:

The Saundaryalahari; or, Flood of Beauty — traditionally ascribed to Sankaracarya, edited and translated by W. Norman Brown (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958).

Transliteration of Devanagari:

a A i ii u U R RR L e ai o au M H
k kh g gh n
c ch j jh ñ
T Th D Dh N
t th d dh n
p ph b bh m
y r l v
Sh sh s h kSh

1

**shivaH shaktyA yukto yadi bhavati shaktaH prabhavituM
na cedevaM devo na khalu khushalaH spanditum api |
atastvAmArAdhyAM hari hara virañcyAdibhir api
praNantuM stotuM vA kathamakRta puNyaH prabhavati ||**

If Shiva is united with Shakti, he is able to exert his powers as lord;
if not, the god is not able to stir.

Hence to you, who must be propitiated by Hari, Hara, Virañci, and the other gods,
how can one who has not acquired merit be fit to offer reverence and praise?

2

**taniyAMsaM pAnsuM tava caraNapankeruhabhavaM
virañciH saMcinvanviracayati lokAnavikalam |
vahatyenaM shauriH kathamapi sahasreNa shirasAM
haraH saMkShubhyainaM bhajati bhasinoddhUlanavidhim ||**

The tiniest speck of dust from your lotus feet

Virañci (Brahma) collects and fashions into the worlds in their entirety;

Sauri (Vishnu's serpent) barely supports it with his thousand heads;

Hara shatters it and uses it to dust himself with as ashes.

3

**avidyA nAmantastimirami hirad diipa nagarii
jaDAnAM caitanyas tabakamakaranda srutiharii |
daridrANAM cintAmaNi guNanika janma jaladhau
nimagnAnAM daMShTrA muraripu varAhasya bhavatii ||**

For the ignorant you are the island city of the sun,
for the mentally stagnant you are a waterfall of streams of nectar flowing from bouquets
of intelligence,
for the poor you are a rosary of wishing-jewels; for those who in the ocean of birth
are submerged you are the tusk of that boar (Vishnu) who was the enemy of Mura, your
ladyship.

4

**tvadanyaH pANibhyAm abhayavarado daivatagaNam
tvamekA naivAsi prakaTita varAbhiityabhinaya |
bhayAttrAtuM dAtuM phalamapi ca vAñcAsamadhikaM
sharaNye lokAnAM tava hi caraNAveva nipuNau ||**

Other than you the host of gods grant freedom from danger and gifts with their hands;
you alone make no overt gesture of gift and immunity;
for to save from danger and to grant a reward even beyond desire,
O you who are the refuge of the worlds, your two feet alone are adequate.

5

**haristvAmArAdhya praNatajanasaubhAgyajananiM
purA nArii bhUtvA puraripumapi kShobhamanayat |
smaro'pi tvAM natvA ratinayanalehyena vapuShA
muniinAmapyantaH prabhavati hi mohAya mahatAm ||**

Hari, after propitiating you, who are the mother of welfare for folk bowed in worship,
once became a female and agitated him (Shiva) who is the enemy of the cities;
Smara (Kama) himself, after bowing to you with his body that is worthy of being
caressed by the eyes of Rati,
has the power to produce illusion within even mighty sages.

6

**dhanuH pauSHpaM saurvii madhukaramayii pañca vishikhA
vasantaH sAmanto malayamarudAyodhanarathaH |
tathApyekaH sarva himagirisute kAmapi kRpAM
apAngAtte labdhyA jagad idam anango vijayate ||**

His bow is made of flowers, the bowstring of bees, five are his arrows,
Vasanta (Spring) is his adjutant, the Malaya breeze his war chariot,
and yet, by himself, O daughter of the snow mountain, when but a bit of compassion
he has got from a side glance of yours, the Bodiless One (Kama) conquers this world

entire.

7

**kvaNat kAñciidAmA karikalabha kumbha stana bharA
parikShiinA madhye pariNatashraccandravadanA |
dhanuur bhANAnpAshaM sRNimapi dadhAnA karatalaiH
parastAdAstAM naH puramathiturAho puruShikA ||**

Banded with a tinkling girdle, heavy with breasts like the frontal lobes of young elephants,¹
slender of waist, with face like the full moon of autumn,
bearing on the palms of her hands bow, arrows, noose, and goad,
let there be seated before us the pride of him who shook the cities.

8

**sudhA siMdhormadhye suraviTapavATii parivRte
maNid diipe niipo pavanavati cintAmaNi gRhe |
shivAkAre mañce paramashiva paryankanilayAM
bhalanti tvAM dhanyAH kati cana cidAnanda lahariim ||**

In the midst of the Ocean of Nectar, where covered with groves of heavenly wishing trees is the Isle of Gems, in the mansion of wishing jewels with its grove of nipa trees, on a couch composed of the four gods Shiva [and the others], your seat a mattress which is Paramashiva —
some few lucky ones worship you, a flood of consciousness (cit) and bliss (ananda).

9

**mahiiM mUIAdhAre kamapi maNipUre hutavahaM
sthitaM svAdhiShThAne hRdi marutam AkAsham upari |
mano'pi bhrUmadhye sakalamapi bhittvA kula pathaM
sahasrAre padme saha rahasi patyA viharasi ||**

¹ Remark: The poetic metaphor in this stotram that compares Her breasts with the frontal lobes on the forehead of an elephant that swell in rut is like that in the Tamil classic tirukkuRaL, verse 1087:

**kaTâak kaLirrinmêr kaTpaTâm mâtar
paTâa mulaimêl tukil**

The cloth that covers the firm bosom of this maiden is like that which covers the eyes of a rutting elephant.

*As veil o'er angry eyes
Of raging elephant that lies,
The silken cincture's folds invest
This maiden's panting breast.*

The earth in the muladhara, the water in the manipura, the fire situated in the svadhishthana, the air in the heart, and the ether above it, the mind between the eyebrows—in short, having pierced the entire kula path, in the thousand-petaled lotus you sport in secret with your lord.

10

**sudhA dhArAsaraush caraNayugalAntarvigalitaIH
prapañcaM siñcantii punarapi rasAmnAyamahasa |
avApya svAM bhUmiM bhujaganibha madhyuShTavalayaM
svamAtmAnaM kRtvA svapiShi kulakuNDe kuhariNi ||**

With streams of nectar flowing from between your feet
sprinkling the universe, recreating through the power of reciting the sacred texts that
produce the six (cakras which had been dissolved when Devi regressed to the
sahasrara by the kula path),² again
you reach your own abode and into the form of a serpent in three and a half coils
you convert yourself and sleep in the kulakunda hollow.

11

**caturbhiH shriikaNTaiH shivayuvatibhiH pañcabhirapi
prabhinnAbhiH shaMbhornavabhiriti mUlaprakRtibhiH |
trayash catvAriMshaddasudalakalAshratrivalaya
tirikhAbhiH sArdhaM tava caraNakonAH pariNatAH ||**



By reason of the four triangles called srikanthas and the five triangles called shivayuvatis,
which are pierced by the bindu and constitute the nine basic triangles of the shricakra
called mulaprakrtis,

² Note: The translation of rasamnayamahasa is conjectural. Lakshmiidhara reads -sah (abl.) and understands the expression to mean 'from the region of the moon' (candrasakashat) and adds in explanation: rasamnayamahashabdo yamaleshu kalanidhau prasiddhah, rasasya sudhaya amnayo gunanam adhikyam iti yavat tadatmakam mahah ksntir yasya sa rasamnayamaha iti vyutpatteh. Kaivalyashrama calls the rasamnayah six directions or stations (sthanani) of the universe: east, south, west, north, zenith, nadir. Bhaskararaya Makhin in the Varivasyarahasya in a passage generally echoing this part of the Saundaryalahari, in describing the ascent to the sahasrara and the return, says (2. 105-106) that Devi causes the stream of amRta to flood the regions of the vyoman [sky] and the shashimandala and then, intoxicated by a draught of that amrta, returns to her own place to enter into sleep: svayam api tatpanavashan matta bhutva punash ca tenaiva / margena paravrttya svasmin sthane sukham svapiti. (For text and English translation see Varivasya-rahasya of Sri Bhaskararaya Makhin with his own commentary, 'Prakasa,' edited with English translation etc. by Pandit S. Subrahmanya Sastri, Adyar, 1948, The Adyar Library Series, No. 28).

forty-three — along with the lotuses of eight and sixteen petals (outside the triangles) and the three circles (outside the lotuses) and the three lines (outside the circles) — angles of your dwelling place are evolved.

12

**tvadiiyaM saundarya tuhinagiri kanye tulayituM
kaviindrAH kalpante kathamapi viriñci prabhRtayaH |
yadAlokyautsukyAdamaralalanA yAnti manasa
tapo bhirdupprApAmapi girishasAyujuypadaviim ||**

To equal your beauty, O daughter of the snowy mountain,
master poets, Viriñci and the rest, can scarcely succeed;
the heavenly courtesans, when they have glimpsed it, through their longing to enjoy it
pass in imagination
to identity with the Mountain-dweller (Shiva), who is hard to attain even by ascetic
practices.³

13

**naraM varShiiyAMsaM nayanavirasaM narmasu jaDaM
tavApAngAloke patitamanudhAvanti shatashaH |
galaddeNii bandhAH kuca kalasha visrasta sicaya
haThAttruTyaktAñcyo vigalita dukUIA yuvatayaH ||**

A worn-out old man, distasteful to the sight, sluggish in love's art,
if he but fall within a side glance from you, there run after him by the hundreds,
with hair ribbons flying loose and clothes slipped from their jar-like breasts,
young women, their girdles violently bursting and their garments dropped down.

14

**kShitau ShatpañcAsha dvisamadhika pañcAshad udake
hutAshe dvAShaShtish caturadhika pañcAshad anile |
divi dviHShattriMshan manasi ca catuHShaShTiriti ye
mayUkhAsteShAmapy upari tava pAdAmbujayugam ||**

In earth (muladhara) fifty-six, fifty-two in water (manipura),
in fire (svadhishthana) sixty-two, fifty-four in air (anahata),
in ether (vishuddhi) seventy-two, and in mind (ajña sixty-four — these (360) are
the rays; above them (in the sahasrara) is the pair of your lotus feet.

15

**sharaj jyotsnAshubhrAM shashiyutajaTAjUTa mukuTAM
varatrAsatrANA sphaTikaguTikA pustaka karAm |
sakRnna tvA natvA kathamiva satAM saMnidadhate**

³ The heavenly courtesans, desirous of enjoying Devi's beauty, can at best only imagine themselves identical with Shiva so as to enjoy it while he is enjoying it.

madhu kShiira drAkShA madhuriINA bhaNitayaH ||

Bright as the autumn moonlight, wearing a crest of plaited and coiled hair with the moon on it,
with your four hands respectively bestowing gifts, granting freedom from fear, holding a crystal rosary and a book,
if to you as such the good should bow only once, how would they fail to have utterances laden with the sweetness of honey, milk, and grapes?

16

**kaviindrANAM cetaH kamala vanabAIAtaparuciM
bhajante ye santaH kati cid aruNAmEva bhavatiim |
virañci preyasyAstaruNatara shRngAra laharii
gabhiirAbhir vAgbhir vidadhati satAM rañjanamamii ||**

As the loveliness of the morning sun to open the lotus clusters of the minds of the master poets —
our lady Aruna (the glowing red) — those rare wise ones who worship you as such, with utterances profound with a flood of the ever fresh passion of Virañci's beloved (Sarasvati),
give delight to the wise.

17

**savitrii bhirvAcAM shashimaNi shilAbhanga rucibhir
vashinyAdyAbhistvAM saha janani saMcintayati yaH |
sa kartA kAvyAnAM bhavati mahatAM bhangi subhagair
vacobhir vAgdevii vadana kamalAmoda madhuraiH ||**

The inspirers of utterances, who are bright as slivers of moonstone,
Vasini and the others — whoever contemplates you with them, O mother, becomes a fashioner of noble poems, with aptly phrased expressions, sweet with fragrance from the lotus mouth of the Queen of Speech (Sarasvati).

18

**tanucchAyAbhistetaruNataraNi shrii saraNibhir
divaM sarvA murviim aruNimanimagnAM smarati yaH |
bhavantyasya trasyadvana hariNa shAliina nayanAH
sahorvashyA vashyAH katikati na giirvANagaNikaH ||**

The beauties of your body are like paths of splendor from the fresh sun;
whoever brings to mind the sky and the whole wide earth immersed in a red glow from them —
there would be among the heavenly courtesans, whose eyes are as shy as the timid forest deer,
scarcely one unsubjected to his spell, Urvashi included.

19

**mukhaM binduM kRtvA kucayuga madhastasya tadadho
harArdhaM dhyAyedyo haramahiShi te manmatha kalAM |
sa sadyaH saMkShobhaM nayati vanitA ityatilaghum
trilokiimapyAshu bhramayati raviindu stana yugAm ||**

Conceiving the dot (in the syllable hriiM) as your face, the part below that as your pair of breasts, and the part below the latter as the (female) half of Hara,⁴ whoever, O queen of Hara, should so meditate upon your element of Manmatha (Kama, Love), in a moment drives women to distraction — this is but a slight thing. But he also suddenly flusters the cosmic Woman, who consists of the three worlds and bears the sun and moon as her breasts.

20

**kirantiim angebhyaM kiraNa nikurambAmRta rasaM
hRdi tvAmAdhatte himakarashilA mURtimiva yaH |
sa sarpANAM darpaM shamayati shakuntAdhipa iva
jvarapluShTAn dRShTyA sukhayati sudhA dhArasiraya ||**

Diffusing from your limbs nectar in innumerable rays, an image of moonstone — whoever fixes you so in his heart, just as the king of birds (Garuda) tames the pride of serpents, with a glance streaming with showers of nectar, he assuages those inflamed with fever.

21

**taDillekhAtanviiM tapanashashivaishcAnaramayiiM
niShaNNAM ShaNNAmappyupari kamalAnAM tava kalAM |
mahApadmATvyAM mRditamalamAyena manasa
mahAntaH pashyanto dadhati paramAhlAda lahariim ||**

Slender as a streak of lightning, composed of the essence of sun, moon, and fire, situated above the six lotuses (cakras), the manifestation of you in the forest of great lotuses, those with mind free of stain and illusion who view it, mighty ones, experience a flood of supreme joy.

22

**bhavAni tvaM dAse vitara dRShTiM sakaruNAM
iti stotuM vAcchan kathayati bhavAni tvamiti yaH |
tadaiva tvaM tasmai dishasi nijasAyujyapadaviiM
mukunda brahmendra sphuTa mukuTa niirAjitapadAm ||**

"Do you, O lady (bhavani), extend to me, your slave, a compassionate glance!" — when one desiring to praise you utters the words "you, O lady",⁵

⁴ Punningly, as half of the conjunct forms of ha and ra.

at that moment you grant him a state of identity with you,
with your feet illuminated (as in the evening waving of lights before a god's image) by
the crests of Mukunda (Vishnu), Brahma, and Indra.

23

**tvayA hRtvA vAmaM vapurapari tRptena manasA
shariirArdhaM shaMBhoraparamapi shanke hRtamabhUt |
tathA hi tvad rUpaM makalam aruNAbhaM trinayanaM
kucAbhyAmAnamraM kuTilashashicUDAla mukuTam ||**

After you had stolen the left half (of the hermaphrodite form of Shiva) but your mind was
still unsatisfied,
the other half, too, of Shambhu's body was taken by you, I think;
and so your form is all red and has three eyes,
is slightly bent with a pair of breasts and is incircled with the sickle of the moon.

24

**jagatsUte dhAtA hariravati rudraH kShapayate
tiraskurvannetatsvam api vapuriishastirayati |
sadApUrvaH sarvaM tad idam anugRhNAti ca shivas
tavAjñAmAlabya kShaNacalitayor bhrU latikayoH ||**

Dhatr (Brahma) creates the world, Hari preserves it, Rudra destroys it.
Nullifying this triad, Isha (into whom the triad has merged) conceals even his own form
(in Sadashiva),
and Shiva as Sadapurva (the primeval) approves this entire process,
having caught the command of your creeper-like eyebrows as they flickered for a
moment.

25

**trayANAM devAnAM triguNa janitAnAM tava shive
bhavet pUjA pUjA tava caraNayoryA viracitA |
tathA hi tvatpAdodvahana maNi piiThasya nikaTe
sthitA hyete shashvanmukulitakarottaM sa mukuTAH ||**

The three gods born of your three gunas, O mate of Shiva —
worship offered at your feet would be worship of them;
for before the jeweled footstool which supports your feet
they ever stand with crests formed of their hands joined like buds.

26

**virañciH pañcatvaM vrajati harirApnoti viratiM
vinAshaM kiinAsho bhajati dhanado yAti nidhanam |**

⁵ There is a pun in this statement, for the words "you, O lady" (bhavani tvam) also mean 'may I become you'. A worshiper wins Devi's grace and achieves identity with her when he utters these words.

**vitandrii mAhendrii vitatirapi sammiilitaddashA
mahAMsahAre'sminviharati sati tvat patirasau ||**

Virañci dissolves into the five elements, Hari ceases to exist,
Kinasha (Yama) suffers dissolution (vinasha), Dhanada (Kubera) goes to destruction
(nidhana);
even the total of mighty Indra's (thousand) eyes grows weary and closes —
in that great dissolution, O devoted wife, that husband of yours (alone) is visible.

27

**japo jalpaH shilpaM sakalamapi mudra viracana
gatiH prAdakShiNyakramaNamashanAdyAhutividhiH |
praNamaH saMveshaH sukha makhilamAtmArpaNa dRsha
saparyAparyAyastava bhavatu yanme vilasitam ||**

Let my idle chatter be the muttering of prayer, my every manual movement the execution
of ritual gesture,
my walking a ceremonial circumambulation, my eating and other acts the rite of sacrifice,
my lying down prostration in worship, my every pleasure enjoyed with dedication of
myself,
let whatever activity is mine be some form of worship of you.

28

**dadAne diinebhyaH shriyam anisham AshAnusadRshiiM
amandaM saundarya prakaramakarandaM vikirati |
tavAsmin mandArastabakasubhage yAtu caraNe
nimajjan majjiivaH karaNa caraNaiH ShaT caraNatAm ||**

Ever granting to the needy wealth equal to their hopes,
untiringly scattering an abundance of beauty like the honey of flowers,
bestowing blessings like a cluster of coral-tree blossoms — in that foot of yours let
my being, immersing itself, reach a state like that of the six-footed (bee plunged into a
flower) by means of the six senses as though they were feet.

29

**sudhAm apyAsvAdya pratibhayajarAmRtyu hariniiM
vipadyante vishvo vidhi shatamakhAdyA diviShadaH |
karAlaM yat kShveDaM kavalivataH kAlakalanA
na shaMbhos tanmUlaM tava janani tATanka mahima ||**

Though they have drunk the nectar which wards off danger, old age, death,
all the gods who dwell in heaven perish, Vidhi (Brahma), the Hundred-Sacrificer (Indra)
and the rest;
the fact that, after swallowing the fearful poison, extinction by Time⁶

⁶ For kalakalana 'extinction by Time', cf. Bhgavad Gita 10:30 and Isvara Gita 7:16 and see the notes by P.-E. Dumont, *L'Isvaragita* (Baltimore and Paris, 1933), p. 101, and F. Edgerton, *Bhagavad-Gita*, Part I

does not befall Shambhu, O mother, has its cause in the power of your ear-ornaments.⁷

30

**kiriiTaM vairiñcaM parihara puraH kaiTabhabhidaH
kaThore koTiire skhalasi jahi jambhAri mukuTam |
praNamreShveteShu prasabham bhiyAtasya bhavanaM
bhavasyAbhyutthAne tava pariJanoktir vijayate ||**

"Keep off Viriñci's crown in front of you! The Kaitabha-crusher's (Vishnu's) hard crest you will trip over! Look out for the diadem of Jambha's enemy (Indra)!" while these gods lay prostrate, you impetuously arose, as there came to your mansion Bhava (Shiva) — whereupon this warning rang out from your retinue.

31

**catuH ShaShTyA tantraiH sakalam abhisaMdhAya bhuvanaM
sthitas tattat siddhi prasavapara tantraiH pashupatiH |
punas tvan nirbandhAdakhila puruShArthaika ghaTanA
svatantraM te tantraM kShiti talam avAtiitarad idam ||**

After he had been controlling the entire universe with the sixty-four tantras, which are subordinate, each producing its separate accomplishment, Pashupati further, at your insistence, the tantra which alone effects all human purposes, this, your tantra, which is absolute, brought down to earth's surface.

32

**shivaH shaktiH kAmaH kShitiratha raviH shiitakiraNaH
smaro haMsaH shakrastadanu ca parA mAra harayaH |
amii hRllekhAbhistimRbhir avasAneShu ghaTitA
bhajante varNAste tava janani nAmAvayavatAm ||**

Shiva, Shakti, Kama, Kshiti; then Ravi, Shitakirana, Smara, Hamsa, Shakra; and after them Para, Mara, Hari — [the sequences of syllables represented by] these [three groups], when completed at their respective terminations with the three syllables hrng, as letters become the components of your name, O mother.⁸

(Cambridge, Mass., 1944, Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 38), p. 185. These scholars understand the expression kalah kalayatam to mean "Parmi ls forces qui poussent (qui pressent, qui contraignent) je suis le Temps" and "I am Time of the impellent forces." Lakshmidhara on the Saundaryalahari passage in dealing with kalakalana says: kalena avasanakalana kalana avacchedah, maranam iti yavat.

⁷ "Power of your ear-ornaments": A Hindu widow wears no ornaments; the implication here is that so long as Devi does not discard her ear-ornaments she cannot become a widow; hence Shiva's existence is perpetuated.

⁸ The mantra designated in shlokas 32 and 33 is considered to be the heart of Srividya and is that indicated in the shloka 31. Each of the names refers to a syllable. The twelve syllables of the mantra as indicated in shloka 32 are divided into three groups, the first of four syllables, the second of five syllables, and the third of three. At the end of each group the syllable hrng (or hrim) is to be appended. The result is a series of

33

**smaraM yoniM lakShmiiM tritayamidamAdau tava manor
nidhAyaike nitye niravadhi mahAbhoga rasikAH |
japanti tvAM cintAmaNi guNanibaddhAkSha valayAH
shivAgnau juhvantaH surabhi ghRta dhArA huti shatau ||**

Smara, Yoni, Lakshmi, some place this triad at the beginning of your mantra,⁹
O eternal one, tasting boundless intense bliss,
and mutter the mantra to you, using rosaries of wishing-jewels as beads,
while making offerings in Siva's fire with hundreds of oblations consisting of streams of
ghee from Surabhi (the heavenly wish-cow).

35

**manas tvAM vyoma tvAM marud asi marut sArathir asi
tvam Apas tvAM bhUmis tvayi pariNatAyAM na hi param |**

fifteen syllables. It is understood that a sixteenth syllable is to be added to these fifteen, but this is to be communicated by the guru to an adept only in secret. One school says that Shiva represents ha, Shakti sa, Kama ka, Kshiti la; hence the first group would be hasakala, to which must be appended hrng, giving us hasakalahrng. The second part of the mantra, in similar fashion, is hasakahalahrng, and the third part is sakalahrng. The sixteenth, secret, syllable was communicated to me, with some slight reluctance, as shrim. The whole mantra then became: hasakalahrng hasakahalahrng sakalahrng shrim.

⁹ The variant form of the mantra mentioned in shloka 33 attaches the values of ka e ii to the names Smara, Yoni, Lakshmi, and the first group of syllables would be kaeiihRng. Otherwise the mantra is the same. But other schools have still other interpretations of the symbolism of the names. For an exposition of the mantra in the variant form of shloka 33 and using hrim instead of hrng see C. Sankara Rama Sastri, Srividya Khadgamala (Madras, Sri Balamanorama Press, 1954). The same form of the mantra is discussed by Bhaskararaya Makhin in the Varivasya-rahasya, pp. 1. 9 ff.

[There is a more up-to-date study of the Srividya mantra in *Auspicious Wisdom: The Texts and Traditions of Srividya Sakta Tantrism in South India*, by Douglas Renfrew Brooks (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 81-113. For example, the Srividya mantra is correlated with the Rgveda's Gayatri mantra as follows:

ka = tat = KAmeshvara = Brahman
e = savitur varenyam = KAmeshvarii = (Shakti)
ii = bhargo devasya dhii- = Shiva
la = mahii = Earth
hriiM = dhiyo yo naH pracodayAt = MAyA

ha = tat
sa = savitur (Three syllables = Three words of the Mantra)
ka = varenyam
ha = bhargo devasya dhii- (One syllable=Six syllables)
la = mahii
hriiM = dhiyo yo naH pracodayAt

sa = tat savitur varenyam
ka = bhargo devasya dhii-
la = mahii
hriiM = dhiyo yo naH pracodayAt]

**tvameva svAtmAnaM pariNamayituM vishvavapuShA
cid AnandAkArAM shiva yuvati bhAvena bibhRShe ||**

You are mind, you are space, you are wind, you are the (fire) for whom the wind is charioteer,
you are the cosmic waters, you are the earth; when you are evolved into these forms there is nothing more.
You only, to effect evolution of yourself in the form of the universe,
O young bride of Shiva, through your very nature bear the form of consciousness and bliss.¹⁰

36

**tavAjñA cakrastaM tapana shashi koTi dyuti dharam
paraM shaMbhuM vande parimililatapArshvaM paracitA |
yam ArAdhyam bhaktyA ravi shashi shuciinAm aviShaye
narAloke loko nivasati hi bhAlokabhavane ||**

Located in your Ajña cakra, shedding a light equal to that of ten million suns and moons, the supreme Shambhu I worship, embraced on his left side by supreme consciousness (paracit, that is Devi as the Cit Shakti);
when worshiping him with devotion, in a region beyond the range of sun, moon, and fire, the world dwells in a realm which receives no light yet is flooded with radiance.

37

**vishuddhau te shuddha sphaTika vishadaM vyoma janakaM
shivaM seve deviimapi shiva samAna vyaniniim |
yayoH kAntyA shashi kiraNa sArUpya saraNiM
vidhUtAntar dhvAntA cakoriiva jagatii ||**

In your Vishuddhi, where he is clear as flawless crystal, parent of the ether, Shiva I worship, and Devi too, equally active with Shiva;
in the lovely splendor of those two, which travels a course like that of the moon's beams, the world, with her inner darkness dispelled, seems like a female cakora bird (which drinks moonlight).

38

**samun miilat saMvit kamala makarandaikarasikaM
bhaje haMsadvaMdvaM kim api mahatAM mAnasacaram
yad AIApAd aShTAdasha guNita vidyA pariNatir
yad Adatte doShAd guNam akhilaM adbhyaH paya iva ||**

Subsisting only on honey from wisdom as though it were an opening lotus (the Anahata), that pair of hamsas (Shiva and Devi) I worship, as they glide over the minds of the great

¹⁰ Devi is described as consisting of both the external material universe (sat) and the inner properties of consciousness (cit) and bliss (ananda). She is, therefore, saccidanana. In a somewhat similar context Bhaskararaya Makhin in the Varivasya-rahasya 2.108 describes Devi as vishva, cit, and Ananda.

ones (as though over Lake Manasa);
from their ululations evolve the eighteen sciences;
they separate all the valuable from the worthless as hamsas drink apart milk and water.

39

**tava svAdhiShThAne hutavaham adhiShThAya nirataM
tamiiDe saMvarta janani mahatiiM tAM ca samayAm |
yad Aloke lokAndahati mahati krodha kalile
yadArdrA dRShTi shishiram upacAraM racayati ||**

The fire residing permanently in your Svadhishthana,¹¹
the Samvarta (fire) that I praise, O mother, and its mighty Shakti called Complementary;
when his fierce gaze filled with anger is burning up the worlds,
your glance, moist with pity, provides a cooling antidote.

40

**taDitvantaM shaktyA timira paripanthi sphuraNaya
sphurannAna ratnAbharaNa pariNaddhendra dhanuSham |
tava shyAmaM meghaM kamapi maNipUraika sharaNaM
niSheve varShantaM hara mihira taptaM tribhuvanam ||**

Flashing with lightning from his Shakti, who is a radiance to check the gloom,
and bearing a rainbow of sparkling ornaments composed of many kinds of jewels,
he (Pashupati) seems to be a dark cloud abiding only in your Manipura;
it I worship as it sheds its showers upon the three worlds sun-scorched by Hara.

41

**tavAdhAre mUle maha samayayA lAsyaparasyA
navAtmAnaM vande navarasa mahA tANDava naTam |
ubhAbhyAm etAbhyAm ubhaya vidhim uddishya dayaya
sanAthAbhyAM jajñe janaka jananiimaj jagad idam ||**

In your Muladhara, accompanied by his Shakti called Complementary, who concentrates
on the feminine lasya dance,
Navatman (Soul of the nine aesthetic sentiments)¹² I worship, who dances the great
masculine tandava dance informed with the nine rasas (aesthetic sentiments);
from these two, as they engaged in their common rite and with compassion
were filled, was born this world, having them as father and mother.

¹¹ Shlokas 39 and 40, in the order here used, reverse the usual order of the Svadhishthana and Manipura cakras as they are found in current Tantric teaching. Many manuscripts have the usual order. But the order of the Saundaryalahari is unmistakable; see the order of the cakras in shloka 9 and the order of the elements generated in the cakras as presented in shlokas 14 and 35.

¹² The commentators vary widely in interpreting the word navatman. Besides the interpretation adopted in this translation they give "soul of Shiva's nine vyuhās" (kala, kula, naman, jñāna, citta, nada, bindu, kala, jiiva), "soul of Shakti's nine vyuhās" (vama, jyeshtha, raudri, ambika, iccha, jñāna, kriya, shanti, para) "soul of the nine elements of the shriicakra" (the four shriikanthas and the five shivayuvatis; cf. shloka 11). See also in Sastri & Ayyangar's Adyar edition, p. 139.

42

**gatair maNikyatvaM gagana maNibhiH sAndra ghaTitaM
kariiTaM te haisaM hima giri sute kiirtayati yaH |
sa niiDeyac chAyAc churaNa shabalaM candra shakalaM
dhanuH shaunAsiiraM kim iti na nibadhrAti dhiShaNAm ||**

Studded with the gems of the sky (the constellations) as though they were jewels,
whoever praises your golden crown, O daughter of the snowy mountain,
would he not, on seeing it shaped like the crescent moon and varicolored from the insets
of nestling beauties,
conceive it to be the rainbow?

43

**dhunotu dhvAntaM nas tulita dalitendiivara vanaM
ghana snigdhaM shlakShNaM cikura nikurambaM tava shive |
yadiyaM saurabhyaM sahajam upalabdhum sumanaso
vasantyasmin manye vala mathana vATii viTapinAm ||**

Let there dispel our inner darkness the cluster of full-blown blue lotuses,
which is the mass of your hair, thick, sleek, smooth, O wife of Shiva;
to gain its intimate fragrance, blossoms
from the trees in the garden of Indra the crusher of Vala seem to abide in it.

44

**vahantii sindUraM prabalakarii bhAratimira
tviShAM vRndair bandiikRtam iva naviinArka kiraNam |
tanotu kSheM nas tava vadana saundarya laharii
pariivAha srotaH saraNir iva siimanta saraNiH ||**

Bearing a mark of vermilion so that the impenetrable darkness of your thick locks
with the hosts of their beauties makes it seem like an imprisoned ray of the new-risen
sun,
may there bring welfare to us, as though the flood of beauty of your face
had a channel to flow in, the streak which is the part in your hair.

45

**arAlaiH svAbhAvyAd alikalabhasashriibhir alakaiH
pariitaM te vaktraM parihasati pankeruha rucim |
darasmere yasmin dashana ruci kiñjalka rucire
sugandhau mAdyanti smara mathana cakShur madhulihaH ||**

With naturally curly locks as beautiful as young bees
encircling it, your lotus-like face shames the beauty of the lotus;
in it, when it smiles slightly, shows in its white teeth the brightness of lotus stamens,
and breathes a sweet perfume, the eyes of Smara's vanquisher revel like bees.

46

**laIATaM lAvaNya dyuti vimalam AbhAti tava yad
dvitiiyaM tanmanye mukuTa shashi khaNDasya shakalam |
viparyAsanyAsAd ubhayam api saMbhUya ca mithaH
sudhA lepa syUtiH pariNamati rAkAhimakataH ||**

Your forehead, which shines beautiful and pure in its brilliance,
I take to be a second half-moon to the half-moon in your crest;
if the two were transposed, put together, and joined,
then cemented with nectar as though with an unguent, they would become a soma-filled
full moon.

47

**bhruvau bhugne kiM cid bhuvana bhaya bhanga vyanini
tvadiiye netrAbhyAM madhukara rucibhyAM dhRtaguNe |
dhanurmanye savyetaraka gRhiitaM ratipateH
prakoShThe muShTau ca sthagayati nigUDhAntaramume ||**

When your eyebrows are slightly arched, O you who are devoted to banishing the fear of
the worlds,
and strung with your two eyes, which are like bees,
I think I see the Lord of Passion's bow gripped in his left hand,
his wrist and fist concealing the hidden middle (of the bow with its string), O Uma.

48

**ahaH sUte savyaM tava nayanam arkAtmakatayA
triyAmAM vAmaM te sRjati rajanii nAyakamayam |
tRtiyA te dRShTir daradalita hemAmbuja ruciH
samAdhatte saMdhyAM divasanishayor antaracariim ||**

Your right eye, because it has the sun as its essence, gives birth to the day;
your left eye, which has the moon as its substance, produces the night;
your third eye, which resembles a golden lotus slightly opened,
creates the twilight intervening between day and night.

49

**vishAlA kalyANii sphuTarucir ayodhya kupalayaiH
kRpAdhArA dhArA kim api madhurA bhogavatika |
avantii dRShTiste bahunagara vistAra vijayA
dhruvaM tattannAma vyAvaharaNa yogyA vijayate ||**

Far-extending (vishala), Auspicious (kalyani), its sudden beauty Uncontested (ayodhya)
by blue lotuses,
a Shower (dhara) of streams of compassion, Honeyed (madhura),
as it were, Fortunate (bhogavatika),

Helpful (avanti), Victorious (vijaya) over an array of many cities is your glance;
forever does it prevail, conforming to the characteristic of each separate (city) name.¹³

50

**kaviinAM saMdharbastaka makarandaika rasikaM
kaTAkSha vyAkShepa bhramara kalabhau karNayugalam |
amuñcantau dRShTvA tava nava rasAsvAdataralAv
asUyAsaMsargAd alikanayanaM kiMcidaruNam ||**

Intent upon relishing the nectar of poets' flower-like compositions is
your pair of ears; your two eyes diverted toward them with sidelong glances like two
young bees
do not forego them, eagerly hovering to savor the nine flavors (sentiments).
When it sees (the two eyes), the third eye, from a rush of jealousy, becomes a bit red.

51

**shive shRngARArDrA taditaramurave kustanaparA
saroShA gangAyAM girisha carite vismayavatii |
harAhibhyo bhiiTA sarasiruha saubhAgya jayinii
sakhiiShu smerA te mayi janani dRShTiH sakaruNA ||**

Tender with passion toward Shiva, disdainful of others,
wrathful toward Ganga, amazed at the exploits of Girisha,
fear-stricken by Hara's serpents, victorious over the loveliness of the lotus,
smiling toward your companions is your glance, O mother, and to me it is full of
compassion.

52

**gate karNAbhyarNaM garuta iva pakShmANi dadhatii
purAM bhettush citta prashama rasa vidrAvaNa phale |
ime netre gotrAdhara pati kulottaMsa kalike
tavA karNA kRShTa smara sharavilAsaM kalayataH ||**

Extending as far as your ears, with the eyelashes as feathering,
having tips (phala) whose effect (phala) is to dissipate the sentiment of tranquility in the
breast of him who destroyed the cities,
these two eyes of yours, O crowning bud of the mountain king's family,
have the appearance of Smara's shafts full drawn to your ears.

53

**vibhakta traivarNya vyatkarita niilAñjanatayA
vibhAti tvan netra tritayamidam iishAnadayite |
punaH sraShTuM devAn druhiNa hari rudrAnuparatAn
rajaH satvaM bibhrottama iti guNAnAM trayam iva ||**

¹³ Lakshmidhara remarks that these eight adjectives, besides indicating names of cities, also designate kinds of glances which women employ.

It has three separate colors and by reason of the blue antimony eyesalve (representing the primordial ocean)
the triad of your eyes here, O beloved of Ishana, shines forth
as if to recreate the gods Druhina (Brahma), Hari, and Rudra, who were obliterated in the great dissolution,
and wears, in bearing rajas (red), sattva (white), and tamas (black), the triad of the gunas.

54

**pavitriikartuM naH pashupati parAdhiina hRdaye
dayA mitrair netrair aruNa dhavala shyAma rucibhiH |
nadaH shoNo gangA tapanatanayeti dhruvamamuM
trayANAM tiirthAnAm upanayasi saMbhedam anaghe ||**

To purify us, O you whose heart is devoted to Pashupati,
by means of your compassionate eyes, which are red, white, and dark,
of the rivers Shona (the golden), Ganga (the white), and the daughter of the sun (Yamuna, the dark), unfailingly
you provide a conjunction of three goals of pilgrimage, O sinless one.

55

**aparNe karNe japa nayana paishunya cakita
niliyante toye niyatam animeShAH shapharikAH |
iyAM ca shriir baddhac chada puTakapATaM kuvalayam
jahAti pratyUShe ca vighaTayya pravishati ||**

O Aparna, alarmed lest they be maligned (for inferior beauty) by your eyes which (are so long as to seem to) mutter tales in your ears,
the shapharika fish ever hide unwinking in the water,
and Shri here, when the blue night lotus folds up the cover of its petals like a door at dawn, deserts it, and at night, when it reopens, enters it.

56

**nimeShonmeShAbhyAM pralayam udayaM yAti jagatii
tavetyAhuH santo dharaNi dhara rAjanya tanaye |
tvad unmeShAj jAtaM jagad idam asheShaM pralayataH
paritrAtuM shanke parihRt animeShAs tava dRshaH ||**

From the closing and opening of your eyes the earth is dissolved and created,
so say the wise, O daughter of the mountains' king;
this world, which had its creation entire from the opening of your eyes — from dissolution
as if to save it, your eyes refrain from closing.¹⁴

¹⁴ For a discussion of the idea that the existence of the universe depends upon the opening of Devi's (or Brahma's) eyes while their closing causes its extinction, see W. N. Brown in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 67 (1947), p. 209-214 (especially p. 213-214).

57

**dRshA drAghiiyasyA daradalita niilotpalaruCA
daviyAMsaM diinaM snapaya kRpayA mAm api shive |
anenAyaM dhanyo bhavati na ca te hAniriyatA
vane vA harmye vA samakaranipAto himakaraH ||**

With your long-extended eye, which is like a slightly opened blue lotus,
O wife of Shiva, in compassion bathe even me, distant and wretched;
by that bathing this person becomes rich, and through such a small thing there is no loss
to you;
the cooling moon sheds its beams alike on grove and palace.

58

**arAlaM te pAlIi yugalam agarAjanyatanaye
na keShAM Adhatte kusuma sharakodaNDa kutukam |
tirashciino yatra shravaNa patham ullanghya vilasan
apAngavyAsango dishati sharasaMdhAna dhiShaNAM ||**

O daughter of the mountains' chief, the curved pair of your lines (eyebrows)
who would not take to be a wondrous show of the flower-arrowed god's bow,
while appearing to leap transverse to it along the path to the ears
your long side glance of love gives the effect of drawing an arrow?

59

**sphuradgaNDA bhoga pratiphalita tATankayugalaM
catush cakraM manye tava mukham idaM manmatha ratham |
yamAruhya druhyatyavani ratha markenducaraNaM
mahAviuro mArAH pramathapataye tvaM jitavate ||**

With the pair of your circular earrings reflected in the shining expanse of your cheeks,
your face here I take to be the four-wheeled chariot of Manmatha,
mounted on which he attacked him who had mounted the earth as his chariot with the sun
and moon as wheels;
Mara, the great hero, attacked the lord of the Pramathas, who had conquered himself
(through asceticism).

60

**sarasvatyAH sUktiir amRta laharii kaushalahariiH
pibantyAH sharvANi shravaNa culukAbhyAm aviratam |
camatkAra shlAghA calita shirasaH kuNDalagaNo
jhaNatkArais tAraiH prativacanam AcaShTa iva te ||**

The sweet songs of Sarasvati,¹⁵ which bring welfare in waves of nectar,
as you constantly drink them with your ears as though they were hollowed hands, O wife
of Sharva,
and nod your head in time in wonder and delight, your ear ornaments
with their high-pitched tinkling seem to give an equivalent response.

61

**asau nAsA vaMshas tuhina giri vaMsha dhvajapaTi
tvadiiyo nediiyaH phalatu phalam asmAkamucitam |
vahannantar muktAH shishiratara nishvAsa ghaTitAH
samRddhyA yastAsAM bahir api ca muktA maNidharaH ||**

O banner on the staff of the mountain's lineage (vamsha), may that nose-tube (vamsha)¹⁶
of yours bear very near to us the fruit which we desire;
inside, it holds pearls created by your cool breath,
and because these are so abundant it also supports some pearls outside.

62

**prakRtyA raktAyAstava sudati dantacchadaruceH
pravakShye sAdRshyaM janayatu phalaM vidrumalatA |
na bimbaM tad bimba pratiphalana lAbhAdaruNitaM
tulA madhyAroDhuM katham iva vilajjeta kalayA ||**

For the beauty of your lips, which are red by nature, O you with lovely teeth,
I shall try to proclaim a match. Let the coral bear fruit!
Would not the red bimba fruit, which is further reddened when (as you bite it) it receives
a reflection from their disk (bimba),
be somewhat embarrassed at being compared with them in any degree?

63

**smita jyotsnAjAlaM tava vadana candrasya pibatAM
cakorANAm Asiid atirasatayA cañcujaDimA |
ataste shiitAMshor amRta lahariim amlarucayaH
pibanti svacchandaM nishinishi bhRshaM kAñcikadhiyA ||**

As they drank the net of rays from the smile of your moonlike face
the cakoras' beaks grew sated from the oversweetness;

¹⁵ This shloka can be taken to refer to Devi's songs rather than Sarasvati's, and some commentators take it so, including Laksmidhara. It would then mean: "The sweet songs [of yours], which bring welfare in waves of nectar, Sarasvati constantly drinks through her ears as though they were hollowed hands, O wife of Sharva; as she nods time with her head in wonder and delight, her ear-ornaments with their high-pitched tinkling seem to give a response to you." Devi's mastery of words and song are celebrated elsewhere in the poem: shlokas 16, 17, 64, 66, 69, 75, 100. The interpretation which makes Devi the listener, which is adopted in our translation, shows a situation analogous to that in stanzas 50 and 66 (which latter seems to support both interpretations).

¹⁶ The bamboo by a poetic conceit is considered to bear pearls inside its stem (vamsha).

and so, because they want something tart, the stream of nectar from the cool-rayed moon they drink each night to their fill at their pleasure, as though it were fermented rice water.

64

**avishrantaM patpur guNagaNa kathAmreDana japA
japA puShpacchAyA tava janani jihvA jayati sA |
yadagrAsiinAyAH sphaTika dRShad acchacchavimayii
sarasvatyA mUrthiH pariNamati mANikyavapuShA ||**

Unweariedly muttering (japa) in repetition tales of your Lord's many achievements, your tongue, O mother, lovely as the China rose (japa), is supreme; as Sarasvati sits at its tip, her beauteous crystal-clear form changes until it looks like a ruby.

65

**raNe jitvA daityAnapahRta shirastraiH kavacibhir
nivRttaish caNDAMshu tripurahara nirmAlya vimukhaiH |
vishAkhendropendraiH shashi vishada karpUrashakala
viliiyante mAtas tava vadanatAm bhUlakabalaH ||**

After conquering the Daityas in battle and still in armor but with helmets doffed, when they had returned and had averted themselves from the remnants of the destruction of the three cities which were like the hot-rayed sun,¹⁷ Vishakha (Skanda), Indra, and Upendra (Vishnu), (seeing as cooling antidotes) the bits of betel, with flakes of camphor white as the moon, falling from your mouth, O mother, snatched them up.

66

**vipaccyA gAyantii vividham avadAnaM pashupates
tvayArabdhe vaktuM calitashirasA sAdhuvacane |
tvadiiyair mAdhuryair apalapita tantrii kalaravAM
nijAM viiNAM vANii niculayati colena nibhRtam ||**

While she (Sarasvati) was singing to the vina the sacred heroism of Pashupati and you (Devi) with head nodding in time began to give applause, when the clear notes of its strings were outdone by your sweet tones, Vani (Sarasvati) softly slipped her lute (vina) into its case.

67

**karAgreNa spRShTaM tuhinagiriNA vatsalatayA
giriishenodastaM muhuradharapAnAkulatayA |
karagrAhyaM shaMbhornukuravRntaM girisute
kathaMkAraM brUmastava cibukamaupamyarahitam ||**

Touched with his finger in fatherly affection by the lord of the snowy mountain

¹⁷ and punningly, from the remnants of the sacrifice offered to Tripurahara (Shiva), the scorcher.

(Himalaya),
tilted up repeatedly in the passion of the kiss by the lord of the mountains (Shiva),
a handle to the mirror of your face fit for Shambhu to grasp, O daughter of the mountain -
how shall we describe your matchless chin?

68

**bhujAshleShAnnityaM puradamayituH kaNTakavatii
tava griivA dhatte mukha kamala nAlashriyam |
svataH shvetA kAlAgarubahala jambAlamalinA
mRNAlIi lAlityaM vahati yadadho hAralatika ||**

Constantly horripilated (in joy) from the embrace of him who vanquished the cities,
your neck here has the beauty of a stalk for your lotus face.
Though naturally white, yet now dark from the thick mud-like paste of black aloes,
the pearl necklace below your neck has the grace of the tender filaments on a lotus stalk.

69

**gale rekhAstisro gatigamakagiitaikanipuNe
vivAhavyAnaddha triguNa guNasaMravyA pratibhuvaH |
virAjante nAnAvidhamadhura rAgAkarabhuvAM
trayANAM grAmANAM sthitiyamasiimAna iva te ||**

The three creases in your neck, O you who are skilled without compare in the triple art of
singing theme, ornament, and song,¹⁸

¹⁸ M. Alain Daniélou, Director of the Adyar Library and distinguished authority on Indian music, has given me the following note on this shloka:

For gatigamakagitaikanipuna I suggest "expert in singing the theme, the ornaments, the songs"; for raga "musical modes"; for grama "basic scales." The meaning of the term gati is given by most commentators as alapa, i.e. the prelude or exposition of the theme of a raga: gatih alahaH (Gaurikanta); gati alapena ragasamdarbhah (Dindima); gati kahiye alapa (Gaurishamkar, Hindi commentary). An anonymous commentator (Adyar Library MS 11, D7) gives tenaka, which also means "the first exposition of the theme sung on the syllables 'tena, tena'." The meaning given by Laksmidhara, who takes gati as referring to the two kinds of music marga and deshi (traditional and popular), does not appear justifiable. In any case the authority of Bharata cannot be invoked since Bharata does not divide music in marga and deshi. I suggest that the authority of Bharata is brought in (by Laksmidhara) only in regard to the number of gamakas as fifteen. The term deshi is, however, known in that sense to Nandikeshvara in his Bharatarnava as well as to Matanga (Brhaddeshi). Sharngadeva, whom Laksmidhara otherwise quotes, takes gati as an equivalent of laya "tempo" (slow or fast): evam mishrair layais tu param trayam drutamadhyadikam gatitrayam bhavatu (Kalinatha comm. on 4. 185-199). On the other hand Pundarika Vitthala takes gati to mean the "altered" form of notes in opposition to sthiti, which is their natural position. He uses gati as a synonym of shruti or microtonal "interval"; thus gandhara, which has two shrutis, rising by one shruti becomes trigatika. Being associated (in our shloka) with gamaka "ornament" and gita "song" gati seems most likely to mean alapa (the vocal presentation of the musical theme without words). The text would then mean "expert in singing the theme, the ornaments, the songs." "Intervals (shruti)," however, would be another acceptable translation of gati. Laksmidhara's meaning seems unlikely in association with the other two terms.

By gamaka is meant the ornamentation of the notes, any variation of pitch used to make the sound more expressive. The number of gamakas varies according to authors but fifteen is a commonly given number: svarasya kampo gamakah shrotcittasukhavahah . . . pañcadasaite parikirtitah (Sharngadeva, Sangita

which correspond to the number of strands in the triple thread knotted on your neck at the time of marriage,
shine forth so that for those mines of manifold sweet musical modes,
the three kinds of basic scales, they seem to be lines for defining the respective limits.

70

**mRNAliimRdviinAM tava bhuja latAnAM catasRNAM
caturbhiH saundaryaM sarasijabhavaM stauti vadanaiH |
nakhebhyaH saMtrasyan prathamamathanA dandhakariposh
caturNAM shiirShANAM samamabhaya hastArpaNadhiyA ||**

Of your four creeper-like arms soft as the filaments on a lotus stalk
he who was born in a lotus (Brahma) praises the beauty with his four heads;
terrified because his first (or fifth) head was destroyed by the nails of him (Sadashiva)
who is Andhaka's foe,
he hopes to win from them (your four hands) simultaneously gestures of immunity for his
four remaining heads.

Ratnakara 2.3.87-89); in commentaries on the Saundaryalahari: gamakam sthayisvarasya paritah samcarah (Gaurikanta); gamako mukhyanadasya paribhavo rasatmakah (ibid.) "expressive fluctuations of the main sound"; gamakah sthayisvarasya punahpunahposhanam (Dindima) "coming back again and again to the main note"; gamak kahiye sthayi ras ko sarvatahsamcar (Gaurisamkar, Hindi) "a constant variation from the main expression." Gita means a song, a musical composition or piece. Laksmishara quotes the Sangita Ratnakara 3.2 saying that the song (gita) has two components, the words (matu) and the melody (dhatu). Other commentaries take gita to mean "musical composition" (prabandha): gitam prabandharudhartham rañjana raktir ishyate (Gaurikanta); gitam samucitartha prabandhasamdarbhah (Dindima); git kahiye prabandh (Gaurisamkar).

All commentaries agree that the term raga refers to "musical modes." Grama was the name given to the three different tunings of the harp, probably originally referring to the three genera of Greek music: diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic. The three gramas are known as shadja, madhyama, gandhara. In the available literature this meaning is already obsolete. Bharata appears to take the sa grama and ma grama as the two main forms of the diatonic, that is, the Pythagorean diatonic (arrived at by consonance of fifths) and the Harmonic diatonic. The three basic scales cannot be the scales obtained by taking as starting point the note by which they are named, since in each grama each note can be taken as tonic to form plagal scales or murchanas. Most writers declare that the third scale, the gandhara grama, has gone to the abode of the gods, since it is no longer found on earth. Present-day traditional music knows only the shadja grama. The commentary of Kaivalyashrami mentions the three gramas as shadja, madhyama, and pañcama grama. The last name is most unusual. Gaurishamkar in his commentary quotes as a "sangitashastra" the Gitalamkara attributed to Bharata, a work with a very special terminology rarely mentioned in other works on music (the reading is almost exactly that given in the Natyacudamani 188): nanyavarto 'tha jimutah shubhako gramakas trayah | shadjamadhyamagandharas trayanam janmahetavah ||.

Gaurisamkar says: madhur manohar nishad rshabh adi sapta svarom mem sambaddha jo rag vasant gaud gurjari adik tin ki ankur utpatti ki bhu yane khani haim. Laksmidhara: gramashabdah samuhavacakah svaras tredha samhatah shadjagramo madhyagramo gandharagrama iti. (Regarding the three scales [grama], shadja is now current in our world, madhyama used to be current in it, gandhara had existed only in heaven or as some say has ceased to be in vogue on earth and has gone to heaven).

For the triple thread in marriage, see Margaret Stevenson, Rites of the Twice Born (London: Oxford University Press, 1920), p. 82; Laksmidhara also reports use of the triple thread.

71

**nakhAnAm uddyotair nava nalina rAgAM vihasatAM
karANAM te kAntiM kathaya kathayAmaH katham ume |
kayA cidvA sAmyaM bhajatu kalayA hanta kamalaM
yadi kriiDal lakShmii caraNatalalAkshAruNadalam ||**

Surpassing the glow of the newly opened lotus with the lustre of their nails,
tell us how we, O Uma, can describe the loveliness of your hands;
or let the red lotus claim similarity in some small degree,
provided its petals have gained additional redness from the lac on the soles of Lakshmi's
feet as she sports upon it.

72

**samaM devi skanda dvipavadanapiitaM stana yugaM
tavedaM naH khedaM haratu satataM prasnutamukham |
yadA lokyAshankAkulita hRdayo hAsajanakaH
svakumbhau herambaH parimRshati hastena jhaTiti ||**

O Devi, the pair of your breasts simultaneously sucked by Skanda and the elephant-faced
one (Ganesha),
may it remove our distress, its nipples ever flowing;
on seeing it, with heart confused by doubt, inciting laughter,
Heramba (Ganesha) suddenly touched the two bosses on his forehead with his trunk.

73

**amU te vakShojAv amRta rasa mANikya kutupau
na saMdehaspando nagapati patAke manasi naH |
pibantau tau yasmAd aviditavadhU saMgama rasau
kumArAvadyApi dviradavadana krauñcaldalanau ||**

Those breasts of yours are ruby jars of nectar (amrta);
there is not a flicker of doubt of this in our mind, O banner of the mountain king;
wherefore the two (sons of yours), drinking from them and never having tasted the sweet
drink of intercourse with women,
the elephant-headed one and the crusher of Mount Krauñca, are still children.

74

**vahatyamba stamberama danujakumbha prakRtibhiH
samArabdhAM muktAmaNibhiramalAM hAralatikAM |
kucAbhogo bimbAdhara rucibhirantaH shabalitAM
pratApavyAmishrAM puravijayinaH kiirtim iva te ||**

O mother, originating in the forehead bosses of the elephant demon Stamberana (who
was slain by Shiva)
are the pearls strung as the flawless necklace
which the curve of your breasts makes appear speckled within by reflections from your

lower lip, red as a bimba,
like the clear glory of the city-conqueror mixed with his glowing valor.

75

**tava stanyaM manye dharaNi dharakanye hRdayataH
payaHpArAvAraH parivahati sArasvata iva |
dayAvatyA dattaM draviDa shishurAsvAdya tava yat
kaviinAM prauDhAnAmajani kamaniiyaH kavayitA ||**

The milk of your breasts, O daughter of the mountains, I think is as if from your heart
there flowed an ocean of the milk of poesy;
when the Dravida child tasted this as you gave it to him in compassion,
he became the poet laureate of the master poets.

76

**hara krodha jvAlAvalibhir avaliiDhena vapuShA
gabhiire te nAbhiisarasi kRtasango manasijaH |
samuttasthau tasmAdaca latanaye dhUmatika
janastAM jAniite janani tava romAvaliriti ||**

With his body limned with a line of flame from Hara's wrath,
the mind-born one (Kama) entered the deep pool of your navel;
thence, O daughter of the mountain, there arose smoke like a creeper;
this, O mother, folk know as the line of your abdominal hair.

77

**yad etat kAlindii tanutara tarangAkRti shive
kRshe madhye kiM cijjanani tava tadbhAti mudhiyAm |
vimardAd anyonyaM kucakalashayor antaragataM
tanUbhUtaM vyoma pravishadiva nAbhii kuhariNiim ||**

That (line of abdominal hair), O spouse of Shiva, which looks here like a tiny ripple on
the blue Yamuna,
a slight thing at your slender waist, O mother, appears to those of pure insight
as if, caught between your jar-like breasts as they rub against each other,
the wide sky, squeezed thin, were entering your cavernous navel.

78

**sthira gangA vartaH stana mukula romAvali latA
kala vAlaM kuNDaM kusumashara tejo hutabhujah |
rater lilAgAraM kim api tava nArbhAti giriJe
bila dvAraM siddher girisha nayanAnAM vijayate ||**

A whirlpool of the Ganga become motionless; for the creeper which is your line of
abdominal hair and terminates in your bud-like breasts

a cistern of your element (of love);¹⁹ a pit for the sacrificial fire of the splendor of him
(Kama) whose arrows are flowers;
a bower for passion's sport — as some such your navel, O mountain-born,
appears, the entrance to a cave where Girisha's eyes (like a yogi) may achieve their goal.

79

**nisargakShiiNasya stana taTabhareNa klamajuSho
naman mUrternAbhau valiShu shanakais truTyata iva |
ciraM te madhyasya truTita taTinii tiira taruNA
samAvasthAsthemno bhavatu kushalaM shailatanaye ||**

Slender by nature, wearied from the burden of your overhanging breasts,
with bent form that seems to be cracking slightly at the navel and the abdominal creases -
ever to your waist, which no more than a tree on the trembling rim of a torrent
has any stability, may there be safety, O daughter of the mountain.

80

**kucau sadyaH svidyat taTa ghaTita kurpAsabhidurau
kaShantau dormUle kanaka kalashAbhau kalayatA |
tava trAtuM bhangAdalamiti vilagraM tanubhuVA
tridhA naddhaM devi trivali lavalii vallibhiriva ||**

When your breasts, which had suddenly burst your bodice as it met their sweating curves,
two golden jars, were rubbing against your armpits at his (Kama's) forcing,
Kama, trying to save your waist from breaking, O Devi,
bound it, three-folded as it is, triply as with withes of the laval creeper.

81

**gurutvaM vistAraM kShitidharapatiH pArvati nijAn
nitambAdAcchidya tvayi haraNarUpeNa nidadhe |
ataste vistiirNo gururayamasheShAM vasumatiiM
nitamba prAg bhAraH sthagayati laghutvaM nayati ca ||**

The lord of the mountains, O Parvati, weight and width from his own
buttocks (punningly, mountain spurs) cur off and bestowed on you as dowry;
hence the entire earth this wide and weighty

¹⁹ The conjectural reading and translation (kala "love's or Kama's element") is based on an idea taken from Bhaskararaya Makhin's Varivasya-rahasya and his commentary (2.164; text with translation in Adyar Library edition, p. 123). The text reads: bijan mulam mulotkshetrasyantahstabahyavistarau | yady apy anayoh samyam pradhanyam athapi cantarangasya ||. The commentary reads: bijat kamakalarupad dhanyadirupac ca | mulam vrkshapado mantrash ca | kshetrasya sharirasya kedarasya ca | yady apy anayoh samyam bijajanyatvavisheshat; tatha 'pi "antarangasashe bahyangasahitavrkshanashah, bahyangamatranashe 'pi na vrkshasya na va 'ntarangasya nashah" ity asya prasiddhatvad iti bhavah. The translation is: "Out of the seed (Kama-kala-bija) evolves the root (Mula-mantra); out of the root (Mula-mantra) evolve the parts of the plant (human body), above and below the soil (external and internal). Though both of them are of equal importance, more importance has to be attached to the subsoil (internal) parts."

expanse of your buttocks conceals and outweighs.

82

**kariindrANAM shuNDAH kanaka kadalii kANDa paTaliim
ubhAbhyAm UrubhyAm ubhayam api nirjitya bhavatii |
suvRttAbhyAM patyuH praNatikaThinAbhyAM girisute
vijigye jAnubhyAM vibudhakari kumbha dvayam api ||**

The trunks of lordly elephants and a cluster of golden plantain stalks,
both alike your ladyship has excelled with your pair of thighs;
with your two well-rounded knees, O daughter of the mountain, calloused from
prostrations before your husband,
you have also surpassed the pair of temporal bosses on (Airavata) the elephant of the
gods.

83

**parAjetuM rudraM dviguNa sharagarbhau girisute
niShangau janghe te viShama vishikho bADham akRtA |
yad agre dRshyante dasha sharaphalAH pADayugalii
nakhAgracchadmAnaH suramukuTa shANaika nishitAH |**

To conquer Rudra, O daughter of the mountain, a pair of doubly arrow-filled
quivers the god who uses an unequal number of arrows (Kama) has surely made of your
two shanks;
at their ends appear ten arrow tips, which on your pair of feet
masquerade as toenails preeminently sharpened by whetstones composed of the crowns
of prostrate gods.

84

**shrutiinAM mUrdhAno dadhati tava yau shekharataya
mamApyetau mAtaH shirasi dayayaA dhehi caraNau |
yayoH pAdyaM pAthaH pashupati jaTA jUTa taTinii
yayor lAkShA lakShmiir aruNa hari cUDamaNi ruciH ||**

Your two feet, which the apexes of the holy scripture (the Vedanta) wear as their crest,
these, O mother, in your mercy set upon my head as well;
the water in which they are laved is the stream in Pashupati's matted hair,
the lustrous lac on them is the glory of the red jewel which is Hari's crest.

85

**namovAkaM brUmo nayana ramaNiiyAya padayom
tavAsmai dvandvAya sphuTa rucira sAlaktakavate |
asUyatatyantaM yad abhihananaAya spRhayate
pashUnAmiishAnaH pramadavana kankeli tarave ||**

Reverence we voice to that eye-delighting pair of your feet,

whose manifest beauty has been enhanced with liquid lac;
when it (the kankeli) yearns for a kick from that pair of feet,²⁰ jealous beyond measure is
the lord of creatures at the kankeli (ashoka) tree in your pleasure grove.

86

**mRShA kRtvA gotra skhalana matha vailakshyanamitaM
lalATe bharTARAma caraNa kamale tADayati te |
cirAdantaH shalyaM dahana kRtam unmulitavata
tulAKoTi kvANaiH kilikilitam iishAna ripuNA ||**

When feigningly he called you by a false name and then bowed in embarrassment,
and your lotus foot struck your lord on his forehead,
then, pulling out the thorn long suffered in his heart from the fire (of Shiva's third eye),
the enemy of Ishana (Kama) peeled out his triumph in the tinkling of your anklets.

87

**himAnii hantavyaM himagiri taTA krAnti caturau
nishAyAM nidraNAM nishi ca parabhAge ca vishadau |
paraM lakShmii pAtraM shriyam atisRjantau samayinAM
sarojaM tvat pAdau janani jayatash citram iha kim ||**

In the snow it perishes, but they are capable of treading upon the slopes of snowy peaks;
at night it folds in sleep, but they are bright by night as well as by day;
it is only a vessel to receive Lakshmi (shri, prosperity), but they shower prosperity (shri)
in profusion upon your suppliants —
what wonder is there here, mother, that your two feet surpass the lotus?

88

**padaM te kAntiinAM prapadamapadaM devi vipadam
kathaM niitaM sadbhiH kaThinakamaThiikarparatulAm |
kathaM vA bAhubhyaM upayamanakAle purabhida
yadAdAya nyastaM dvaShadi dayamanena manasa ||**

Your forefoot, O Devi, which is the abode of beauties and no place for harshnesses —
how could the wise compare it with the hard shell of the female tortoise?²¹
Or how could the city-wrecker, at the time of marriage, with his two hands
take it and inconsiderately set it on the rough millstone, he whose heart is
compassionate?

89

²⁰ In spring the ashoka tree, filled with a longing due to its pregnancy (dohada), blooms only when kicked by a beautiful young woman; see articles by Maurice Bloomfield (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 40, 1920, p.1-24) and K. R. Pisharoti (*Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, vol. 3 no. 2, December 1935, p. 110-124).

²¹ It is a poetic cliché to compare a woman's forefoot to a tortoise shell.

**nakhairnAka striiNAM karakamala saMkoca shashibhis
tarUNAM divyAnAM hasata iva te caNDi caraNau |
phalAni svasthebhyaM kisalayakarAgreNa dadatAM
daridrebhyo bhadram shriyam anisham ahnAya dadatau ||**

With toenails that are like moons to make the heavenly women fold their hands in
homage as though they were lotuses (which fold in the moonlight),
your feet O Candi, seem to mock the heavenly wishing trees,
which give fruits with their finger-like branches only to the well-to-do,
while the former (your feet) continuously and promptly grant blessing and wealth to the
poor.

90

**kadA kAle mAtaH kathaya kalitAlaktakarasaM
pibeyaM vidyArthii tava caraNanirnejanajalam |
prakRtyA mUkAnAm api ca kavitaAkAraNatayA
yadAdhatte vANii mukha kamalatAmbUla rasatAm ||**

Tell me, mother, when in proper season the lac-mixed
water in which your feet have been laved I may drink, eager for knowledge,
which water, from its quality of turning even born mutes into poets,
has the character of betel juice from Vani's lotus mouth.

91

**padanyAsakriiDA paricayam ivArabdhumanasash
carantaste khelaM bhavana kalahaMsA na jahati |
suvishpe shikShAM subhaga maNimañjiira raNitac-
chalAd AcakShANAM caraNa kamalaM cArucarite ||**

As though with minds intent upon cultivating the art of graceful step,
the kalahamsas of your household go swinging along and do not stray from
your lotus foot, which in its fine carelessness, with a pretense of jingling its charming
jeweled anklets,
delivers instruction to them, O you with elegant gait.

92

**arAIA kesheShu prakRti sarala mandahasite
shiriiShAbhA citte dRShadiva kaThorA kucataTe |
bhRshaM tanvii madhye pRthur urasijArohaviShaye
jagat trAtuM shaMbhora jayati karuNA kA cid aruNA ||**

Curly of hair, naturally straightforward in her gentle smile,
delicate like the shirisha in her mind, firm as a rock in the curves of her breasts,
inexpressibly slender in her waist, wide in the regions of her breasts and hips,
let her, the compassion of Shambhu, the ineffable (shakti) Aruna, be victorious to save

the world.

93

**purArAterantaH puramasi tatastvaccaraNayoH
saparyA maryAdA tarala karaNAnAmasulabha |
tathA hyete niitAH shata makha mukhAH siddhi matulAM
tava dvAropAnta sthitibhir aNimAdyAbhir amarAH ||**

You are the purdah queen of the cities' enemy (Shiva); hence at your feet it is impossible for those of unsteady senses to gain the goal of doing worship; thus it is that these gods, with him who performed the hundred sacrifices (Indra) at their head, attain their incomparable magic power along with Anima and the rest, whose place is outside your door.²²

94

**gatAste mañcatvaM druhiNa hari rudreshvara bhRtaH
shivaH svacchacchAyA ghaTita kapaTa pracchada paTaH |
tvadiiyAnAM bhAsAM pratiphalana lAbhAruNatayA
shariirii shRngAro rasa iva dRshAM dogdhi kutukam ||**

Druhina, Hari, Rudra, and Ishvara, as servants, form your couch; Shiva, as a counterfeit bedspread, normally of clear white sheen, becomes red from receiving the reflection of your glow and as though he were the erotic sentiment incarnate draws wonder from your eyes.

95

**kalankaH kastUree rajanikara bimbaM jalamayaM
kalAbhiH karpUrair marakatakaraNDaM nibiDitam |
atastvad bhogena pratidinamidaM riktakuharaM
vidir bhUyo bhUyo nibiDayati nUnaM tava kRte ||**

The moon's spot is musk; the night-maker's disk, composed of water, is an emerald casket packed with camphor slivers, which are the moon's sixteen digits; hence when this each day becomes an empty cavity from your use Vidhi (Fate, Brahma) again and again promptly fills it for your sake.²³

96

**svadehodbhUtAbhir ghRNibhir aNimAdyAbhir abhito
niShevye nitye tvAmahamiti sada bhAvayti yaH |
kim AshcaryaM tasya trinayana samRddhiM tRNayato
mahAsaMvartAgnir viracayati niirAjanavidhim ||**

²² The shloka seems to mean that neither the siddhas nor the gods, Indra and the rest, have access to Devi, yet all gain their exceptional magic power (siddhi) merely by standing at Devi's door.

²³ A day of Devi seems to be equivalent to a month of human time. The camphorated water is for Devi's feet (Lakshmidhara calls it pannira 'footwater').

With the rays Anima and the others that spring from your own body surrounding you on all sides,
 O you who are eternally to be worshipped, whoever thus constantly meditates upon you with the thought "It is I" —
 what wonder is it that before him, who counts as grass the riches of the three-eyed one (Shiva),
 the fire of the universal dissolution performs the evening light-waving ceremony?

97

**kalatraM vaidhAtraM katikati bhajante na kavayaH
 shriyo devyAH ko vA na bhavati patiH kairapi dhanaiH |
 mahAdevaM hitvA tava sati satiinAm acarame
 kucAbhyAm AsangaH kuravaka taror apy asulabhaH ||**

How many poets have not possessed Vidhatr's wife (Sarasvati)?
 Or who with any riches at all does not become lord of the goddess Shri?
 Except for Mahadeva, O true wife (sati), first among true wives (satinam),
 an embrace from your breasts is unattainable even for the kuravaka tree.²⁴

98

**girAm Ahur deviiM druhiNa gRhiNiim Agamavido
 hareH patniiM padmAM harasahacariim adritanayAm |
 turiyA kApi tvaM duradhigamaniHsiima mahima
 mahAmAye vishvaM bhramayasi parabrahma mahiShi ||**

The knowers of the Scripture (agama) speak of Druhina's wife (Sarasvati), the goddess of speech, as you,
 Padma (Lakshmi), the wife of Hari, as you, the mountain's daughter (Parvati), Hara's mate, as you,
 you are an ineffable fourth beyond these three, hard to reach, with power unbounded (by space, time, cause and effect, substance),
 O great power of creation (mahamaya), O wife of the supreme brahman (Sadashiva), you put the universe through its revolution of appearances.

99

**sarasvatyA lakShmyA vidhi hari sapatno viharate
 rateH pAtivratyaM shithilayati ranyeNa vapuShA |
 ciraM jiivanneSha kShapita pashu pAsha vyatikaraH
 parabrahmAbhiravyaM rasayati rasaM tvad bhajanavAn ||**

As a rival of Vidhi and Hari, he sports with their wives Sarasvati and Lakshmi,
 with his charming form he loosens Rati's devotion to her husband,
 long living, he dissolves the union of soul and bond
 and savors the sweetness called supreme brahman — he, your devotee.

²⁴ The same conceit exists of the kuravaka as of the ashoka tree; see note to shloka 85.

**pradiipa jvAlAbhir divasakara niirAjana vidhiH
sudhA sUteshvandropala jala lavair arghya ghaTanA |
svakiiyair ambhobhiH salila nidhi sauhityakataNaM
tvadiiyAbhir vAgbhis tava janani vAcAM stutiriyam ||**

No more than a ceremony of light-waving before the sun with lamp-flames (which have the sun as their source),
only an offering of water with liquid drops from the moonstone to the moon which is the very source of nectar,
nought but a rite of gratification with his own waters to the ocean which is the depository of floods,
is this my hymn of praise, O mother of speech, composed with words that come from you.

Appendix 1

**samAniitaH padbhyAM maNi mukuratAm ambaramaNir
bhayAd antarbaddha stimita kiraNa shreNi masRNaH |
dadhAti tvad vaktraM pratiphalitam ashRAnti vikacaM
nirAtankaM candrAn nijahRdaya pankeruham iva ||**

The jewel of the sky (the sun) has been converted to a jeweled mirror by your feet and from fear (of the brilliance of your face) has retracted and stilled the multitude of its rays so that it stays mild;
it holds your lotus face reflected as though it were the freshly opened lotus of its own heart untroubled by the moon (before which the lotus closes).

Appendix 2

**samudbhUta sthUla stana bharam urashvAru hasitaM
kaTAKShe kandarpaH kusumita kadamba dyutivapuH |
harasya tvad bhrAnti manasi janayAm Asa madano
bhavatyA ye bhaktAH pariNatir amiiShAm iyam ume ||**

A bosom heavy with the massive breasts that have developed on it, a sweet smile, love in a sidelong glance, a figure with the beauty of a blossoming kadamba — Madana has created a counterfeit of you in Hara's mind;
this is the final evolution of those who are your ladyship's devotees, O Uma.

Appendix 3

**nidhe nitya smere niravadhi guNe niitinipuNe
nirAghAta jñAne niyama paracittaika nilaye |
niyatyA nirmukte nikhila nigamAnta stuti pade
nirAtanke nitye nigamaya mamApi stutim imAm ||**

O treasure, ever smiling, with qualities that have no limitations, skilled in politic conduct,
of unimpaired wisdom, constantly abiding in those whose minds never deviate from the
rules,
independent of necessity, the object of praise in all the Upanishads,
not subject to fear, eternal, approve this my hymn of praise.