

PĀNDURĀṄGĀṢṬAKAM

This hymn in nine verses in the Bhujāṅgaprayāta metre is on Pāṇḍuraṅga, the form of Viṣṇu in the shrine at Paṇḍarīpura (modern Pandarpur) in the Maharashtra State. There is an interesting anecdote relating to this deity and to a devotee of that deity, namely, Puṇḍarīka.

Puṇḍarīka was born to Jañudev and Mukṭābai. After his marriage he began to consider his own parents as hindrance to his prosperity and happiness. He felt it a sheer waste to spend anything for their well-being. There was no limit to his unkind attitude. He had decided to drive them out of the house and had asked them to go. Luckily at that time, there came a group of devotees on pilgrimage to Kāśī. They invited Puṇḍarīka's parents to accompany them. They gladly accepted the invitation.

After they had left, Puṇḍarīka, proud of his wealth, also had the desire to go to Kāśī. He engaged two horses to carry him and his wife to Kāśī. On their way to Kāśī he had to cross the party with his parents and took no notice of them. Soon the two reached the outskirts of a hermitage. Even before they entered it they had a strange sight. Rohidas, a dutiful cobbler was attending upon his parents. To their enquiry about the distance to Kāśī he could not give any reply. All that he knew was the service he rendered to his parents.

They were spending the night there. Puṇḍarīka heard some jingling noise and could not sleep. He saw some ugly female figures who were frightful to look at. They bathed in the nearby waters and came out in fascinating divine forms. He begged them to disclose their identity. They all despised him as the worst sinner and asked him to get away from there.

After being beseeched by him they told him that they were the three sacred rivers Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī, Who regained Their original forms after They were freed from the sins which had clung to Them because of the sinful bathers in those rivers. They, moreover told him on enquiry, that the sacredness of that place is due to the steadfast devotion of Rohidas to his parents. Puṇḍarīka then realised the great harm he had done to his parents and, immediately repaired to his parents and arranged for their comfortable pilgrimage to Kāśī.

After returning to his place, he was constantly attending upon his parents. Once Lord Kṛṣṇa came to bless him along with Rukmiṇī and was at his doorstep. Then Puṇḍarīka was engaged in doing his service to his parents. Without even turning his head, Puṇḍarīka threw a brick for the Lord to stand upon till he had finished his service to his parents. The Lord then granted Puṇḍarīka's request to stay permanently on the brick in order to bless the humanity.

The hymn given below opens with a reference to this episode. We find this story in the Pāṇḍuraṅgamāhātmya assigned to the Bhaviṣyottarapurāṇa. The place also was known as

Puṇḍarīkapura, on account of this incident having taken place there. The name of Pāṇḍuraṅga is a Samskritized form of Pandarga (Pandarge) which was the old name of Pandharpur.

The other term Viṭṭhobā is a contracted form of the Marathi expression 'viṭkar ubā rahā' meaning 'be standing on the brick'. The term 'Viṭṭhala' is derived as vidā = jñānena (by knowledge), ṭhān = śūnyān (dispirited, ignorant), lāti = rakṣati (protects). He receives those without knowledge to bestow His grace on them.

महायोगपीठे तटे भीमरथ्या वरं पुण्डरीकाय दातुं मुनीन्द्रैः ।
समागत्य तिष्ठन्तमानन्दकन्दं परब्रह्मलिङ्गं भजे पाण्डुरङ्गम् ॥ १ ॥

mahāyogapīṭhe taṭe bhīmarathyā
varaṁ puṇḍarīkāya dātum munīndraiḥ,
samāgatya tiṣṭhantamānakandaṁ
parabrahmaṅgaṁ bhaje pāṇḍuraṅgam.

I worship that Pāṇḍuraṅga, Who has the characteristics of the Supreme Brahman and Who is the source of happiness. He has come to this spot on the bank of the river Bhīmarathī which is a great seat of yogic prowess, and is standing here along with great seers in order to confer boon on Puṇḍarīka.

तडिद्वाससं नीलमेघावभासं रमामन्दिरं सुन्दरं चित्प्रकाशम् ।
परं त्विष्टिकायां समन्यस्तपादं परब्रह्मलिङ्गं भजे पाण्डुरङ्गम् ॥ २ ॥

taḍidvāsasaṁ nīlameghāvabhāsam
ramāmandiraṁ sundaraṁ citprakāśam,
param tviṣṭikāyāṁ samanyastapādaṁ
parabrahmaṅgaṁ bhaje pāṇḍuraṅgam.

I bow to that Pāṇḍuraṅga, Who has the characteristics of the Supreme Brahman. He has dress brilliant like the lightning, and has the colour of the blue clouds. He is the abode of Goddess Ramā (Lakṣmī). He is handsome and is (verily) the effulgence of consciousness. He is the Highest Who has firmly placed His feet on the brick.

The reading 'param' has been taken instead of 'varam' as it is more appropriate.

प्रमाणं भवाब्धेरिदं मामकानां
 नितम्बः कराभ्यां धृतो येन तस्मात् ।
 विधातुर्वसत्यै धृतो नाभिकोशः
 परब्रह्मलिङ्गं भजे पाण्डुरङ्गम् ॥ ३ ॥

pramāṇam bhavābdheridaṁ māmakanām
 nitambaḥ karābhyām dhṛto yena tasmāt,
 vidhāturvasatyai dhṛto nābhikośaḥ
 parabrahmaṅgam bhaje pāṇḍuraṅgam.

I salute that Pāṇḍuraṅga, Who has the characteristics of the Supreme Brahman. Since He has held His waist with His two hands, He seems to declare, 'For my devotees, the ocean of worldly life is this measure (depth) alone'. In order to provide an abode for (Lord) Brahmā He has produced the flower in his navel.

Often people suffering in the worldly life feel that they are completely lost. But God seems to assure that worldly life is only waist deep by standing in that pose placing his hands on the waist.

स्फुरत्कौस्तुभालङ्कृतं कण्ठदेशे
श्रिया जुष्टकेयूरकं श्रीनिवासम् ।
शिवं शान्तमीड्यं वरं लोकपालं
परब्रह्मलिङ्गं भजे पाण्डुरङ्गम् ॥४॥

sphuratkaustubhālankṛtaṁ kaṅṭhadēśe
śriyā juṣṭakeyūrakāṁ śrīnivāsam,
śivam śāntamīdyam varam lokapālam
parabrahmalīṅgam bhaje pāṇḍuraṅgam.

I adore that Pāṇḍuraṅga, Who has the characteristics of the Supreme Brahman. He is adorned by the sparkling gem Kaustubha around the neck and by the armlets of rare charm. He is the abode of the Goddess Śrī. He is benevolent, calm and worthy of adoration. He is the excellent Protector of the world.

Kaustubha is the name of a celebrated gem obtained with thirteen other jewels at the churning of the ocean and worn by Lord Viṣṇu.

शरच्चन्द्रबिम्बाननं चारुहासं
लसत्कुण्डलाक्रान्तगण्डस्थलाङ्गम् ।
जपारागबिम्बाधरं कञ्जनेत्रं
परब्रह्मलिङ्गं भजे पाण्डुरङ्गम् ॥५॥

śaraccandrabimbānanam cāruhāsam
lasatkuṇḍalākṛāntagaṇḍasthalāṅgam,
japārāgabimbādharam kañjanetraṁ
parabrahmalīṅgam bhaje pāṇḍuraṅgam.

I worship that Pāṇḍuraṅga, Who possesses the characteristics of the Supreme Brahman. His face resembles the autumnal moon and His is a captivating smile. His cheeks are covered by shining ear-rings. His lips are red like the bimba (fruit) and hibiscus flower. His eyes are like lotuses.

The autumnal moon shines bright without any impediment. The Lord with His captivating smile is compared to the autumnal moon. The bimba fruit on account of its red colour is often used as a simile for the lips.

किरीटोज्ज्वलत्सर्वदिकप्रान्तभागं

सुरैरर्चितं दिव्यरत्नैरनर्घैः ।

त्रिभङ्गाकृतिं बर्हमाल्यावतंसं

परब्रह्मालिङ्गं भजे पाण्डुरङ्गम् ॥ ६ ॥

kirīṭojjvalatsarvadikprāntabhāgam

surairarcitaṁ divyaratnairanarghaiḥ,

tribhaṅgākṛtiṁ barhamālyāvataṁsaṁ

parabrahmaṅgam bhaje pāṇḍuraṅgam.

I salute that Pāṇḍuraṅga, Who has the characteristics of the Supreme Brahman. His crown illumines all quarters and He is worshipped by the celestials with invaluable divine gems. He stands in the three-bend posture and He wears peacock feathers and garlands.

The reading 'anargha' has been taken instead of 'anarghya' because of the popular usage, although the two words mean the same.

विभुं वेणुनादं चरन्तं दुरन्तं
स्वयं लीलया गोपवेषं दधानम् ।
गवां वृन्दकानन्दनं चारुहासं
परब्रह्मलिङ्गं भजे पाण्डुरङ्गम् ॥७॥

vibhuṁ veṇunādaṁ carantaṁ durantaṁ
svayaṁ līlayā gopaveṣaṁ dadhānam,
gavāṁ vṛndakānandanaṁ cāruhāsaṁ
parabrahmalīṅgaṁ bhaje pāṇḍuraṅgam.

I adore that Pāṇḍuraṅga, Who has the characteristics of the Supreme Brahman. He is the all pervasive one, sporting in the sound of lute. He spells the end to the wicked. He wears the dress of a cowherd and brings great delight to herds of cows. He has an attractive smile.

The bewitching smile and the luring sound of His lute and the simple attire of a cowherd are assuring that He may be approached by anyone without any reservations.

अजं रुक्मिणीप्राणसञ्जीवनं तं
परं धाम कैवल्यमेकं तुरीयम् ।
प्रसन्नं प्रपन्नार्तिहं देवदेवं
परब्रह्मलिङ्गं भजे पाण्डुरङ्गम् ॥८॥

ajam rukmiṇīprāṇasañjīvanaṁ taṁ
paraṁ dhāma kaivalyamekaṁ turīyam,
prasannaṁ prapannārtihaṁ devadevaṁ
parabrahmalīṅgaṁ bhaje pāṇḍuraṅgam.

I praise that Paṇḍuraṅga, Who has the characteristics of the Supreme Brahman. He is Unborn One Who has revived as it were, the life of Rukmiṇī. He is the Supreme Effulgence and He is the One Ultimate and fourth state and beatitude. He is gracious, removing the distress of those seeking refuge under Him. He is the Lord of lords.

स्वयं पाण्डुरङ्गस्य वै पुण्यदं ये
पठन्त्येकचित्तेन भक्त्या च नित्यम् ।
भवाम्भोनिधिं तेऽपि तीर्त्वान्तकाले
हरेरालयं शाश्वतं प्राप्नुवन्ति ॥९॥

svayaṁ pāṇḍuraṅgasya vai puṇyadaṁ ye
paṭhantyekacittena bhaktyā ca nityam,
bhavāmbhonidhiṁ te'pi tīrtvāntakāle
harerālayaṁ śāśvataṁ prāpnuvanti.

Those who steadfastly and with devotion always read (this hymn) on Pāṇḍuraṅga which dowers merits, cross the vast ocean of mundane existence and at the end reach the Eternal Abode of Lord Hari.