

# Tantrum Magick

by Phil Hine

The following is the notes for a workshop which was held at the London Ananke conference of Global Ritualism and Magick on the 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1999.

This workshop demonstrates some ideas which have recently come up in the work of the *Ganna Chakra* – the Tantric magical group that I work in.

Basically, it starts from two related premises:

That gods & goddesses – and by extension – Guru-figures – don't always behave in the ways that we might expect them to, and

The Ganas – the horde of hobgoblins, spooks and spirits who accompany Shiva.

There seems to me to be a general perception that 'spiritually advanced' beings – or if you like, people who are 'making progress' in their magical development - have somehow 'conquered' their egos – so that they appear calm, placid, and not given to outbursts of temper, irrational behaviour – that they have 'overcome' their passions – or have worked with them to the extent that they can 'control' or 'subdue' them – at least in public or everyday social situations.

Of course, this isn't always the case – examples such as Aleister Crowley and Dadaji spring to mind – and when we look at Deities, we can find numerous examples of 'Gods behaving badly' in ways that draws disapproval even from their fellows. Shiva is a good example (or a bad example, if you prefer) for those of us seeking to pursue a tantrik lifestyle.

Although Shiva is called the great Yogi, he is, in the myths, always throwing 'wobblies'. Here are some examples.

It is told that the god Daksha, Parvati's father, held a big bash – a sacrifice, and invited all the gods and sages to come along. He did not invite Shiva however, since he did not approve of his wild ways. Shiva turned up with his Ganas in tow and started a big fight.

There's also a myth related to the birth of Ganesha which says that Ganesha was originally created by Parvati to act as her doorkeeper – the guardian of her threshold. Shiva turned up one day and Ganesha tried to throw him out. Shiva was outraged, summoned his Ganas, and again a huge battle ensued. Ganesha held his own against Shiva, his ganas, and the other gods. It was only when Vishnu created an illusion to distract Ganesha that Shiva managed to knock his head off. Parvati was in turn pissed off at this and started on Shiva herself. She only agreed to peace when he agreed to restore Ganesha to life, which he did, using an elephant's head.

What does come across from Indian myths is that there is a link between the expression of passion – particularly rage – and creation.

In some creation myths, Rudra is born from the 'wrath of Brahma'. Further, it is said that

Brahma, following his own unsuccessful attempts, insisted that Rudra create living creatures (i.e. mankind) but refused, creating mind-born sons – a host of turbulent spirits. In some traditions, Rudra's response to Brahma's order that he create living beings subject to death, was to plunge into water and castrate himself! So Brahma made Daksha the creator of all living things. When Rudra emerged from the water and saw the living creatures, he tore off his penis and went off to practice asceticism. It is said that he roared and flames shot forth, and ghouls, ghosts and other spirits appeared.

Other examples include Durga, Kali, etc.

### **The Ganas**

Which brings us round to the Ganas – the Hooligans of Heaven. The Ganas are basically hosts of spirits who accompany Shiva (and some of the other deities). Some of them dwell on Mount Kailasa – Shiva's Abode – whilst some of them – the more wild ones, live in the cremation ground.

Some of the Ganas were beings whom Shiva had defeated in battle, others were sages, and it is clear that some devotees of Shiva could aspire to becoming Ganas themselves.

Siva explained his liking for cemeteries to Uma when she asked him the reason for his dwelling in cremation grounds, which were full of hair, bones, and skulls, jackals and vultures, and the smoke rising from corpses, when he had so many beautiful residences. Mahesvara, the Great Lord, replied to the Goddess that in the past he had been looking for a long time for a pure place to dwell in. He could not find one, was frustrated, and out of anger against procreation he created the terrible pishachas, flesh-eating ghouls and goblins, and the rakshashas, intent on killing people. Out of compassion and to protect people and alleviate their fear, however, he kept these ghosts and fiends in cremation grounds. Since he did not want to live without the bhutas and ganas, he chose to live in a cemetery. The brahmins worshipped him in daily sacrifices, whereas those who desired liberation took the terrible Rudra vow. Only heroes (vira) could stay in such a place. It was not fit for seekers of long life or the impure. None but Rudra could free people from fear. When the ghosts stayed with him, they caused no harm.

This image of Shiva in the cremation-ground, surrounded by ganas, ghosts, goblins and ghouls, offers a paradigm for his devotees. In essence, the heroic devotee, by practicing the rites of the cremation-ground, emulates Shiva and becomes one of his family (Kula?) of ganas.

It's also clear from the myths that Shiva creates Ganas as expressions of his passions. Here's some examples:

### **The Jalandhra Myth**

In the myth of the Daitya king Jalandhara, Jalandhara sends Rahu with a message to Shiva, demanding that he surrender Parvati to Jalandhara. Shiva was angry at this message, and this anger took the form of a terrible creature which sprang from his brow. It had the face of a lion, flaming eyes, a body which was dry and rough to the touch, long arms and a tongue which lolled with anger. The creature rushed at Rahu, ready to devour him. Shiva apparently said something

along the lines of "we don't shoot the messenger" whereon the gana pleaded to Shiva that it was tortured by hunger. Shiva told the gana that if it was so hungry, it should eat its own flesh. This the gana did, until only its head was left. Shiva, pleased with such devotion, appointed the gana as his door-keeper, ordering that it create terror for all wicked people. Shiva also ordained that the gana be worshipped along with his worship, and gave it the name Kirtimukha.

Jalandhara was furious when he heard what had transpired and commanded his army of daityas to besiege Mt. Kailash. A fierce battle broke out between the daityas and the ganas. But each time that a daitya was killed, it was revived immediately by their preceptor, Shukra. The ganas told Shiva about this and he was furious. A terrible form called Kritya came forth from his mouth. Her calves were as stout as trees and her mouth was huge and deep like a mountain cavern. She rushed upon the battlefield and began to devour the enemy. She was so big and strong that a push from her breasts uprooted trees and the earth split beneath her feet. She picked up Shukra, stuffed him into her vagina, and vanished. When Shukra was seized, the daityas were frightened and were scattered from the battlefield.

In a related myth, Andhaka, king of the Daityas, is defeated by Shiva and made into a leader of his ganas. This is however, somewhat complicated by the fact that Andhaka is a son of Shiva & Parvati, born when Parvati, in play, placed her hands over Shiva's eyes. The contact of her hands over his eyes brought forth perspiration, from which was born a terrifying-looking creature. Ungrateful, with a bad temper, blind, deformed, and black in colour. He had hair all over his body, matted locks, and behaved like a madman. Shiva named this being Andhaka and ordered his ganas to guard him. Shiva was later approached by the daitya Hiranyaksha, who performed many penances in order that Shiva grant him the boon of a son. Shiva gave Hiranyaksha Andhaka to be his adopted son. Vishnu, in his form of Varaha the Boar, warred with and finally destroyed Hiranyaksha, crowning Andhaka as chief of the daityas.

In another version of the Jalandhara myth, Shukra is swallowed by Shiva himself. Shukra spent hundreds of years wandering round in the belly of Shiva. Finally he resorted to the Yoga of Shiva and, after repetition of a special mantra, assumed the form of Shiva's semen and emerged out of the god's body through his penis. He bowed to Shiva and Parvati accepted him as her son. Shiva made him a chief among his ganas.

All this gave me some ideas about how one could approach working with the Ganas.

Basically, the Ganas can be viewed as expressions of our desires – not so much conscious desires (i.e. they are not, in my view, like servitors who carry out statements of intent) – but our unconscious or fleeting desires which we are rarely aware of, may be reluctant to acknowledge and hesitant to act upon.

A tantrik ideal is to live spontaneously, in a state of non-suppression. It strikes me that, in order to achieve this we perhaps need to be more in touch with our desires – particularly those which we might be reluctant to acknowledge, as they don't fit our self-image.

### **Dattatreya Rite Outline**

The meditation we're going to do is an 'opening meditation' which the Gana Chakra has

worked with a lot. It's basically a progressive identification with Dattatreya as an avatar of Shiva. It usually ends with a meditation before a firepit. This time, however, as you sit and meditate, instead of suppressing or letting go of any thoughts or desires which enter your mind, try and project them out of yourself so that they take on the form of ganas – leaping and cavorting around you.

You might find that some Ganas might try and fight each other, or play with each other or copulate to spawn new forms between themselves. The idea here is that you are accepting these parts of your being – not suppressing them or attempting to control them, but acknowledging and honouring them.

If, during this time, there is a Gana that attracts your particular attention, observe how it moves around – if there is a characteristic gesture or movement which it makes, feel free to copy it. If it has a name to give you, or a sound it makes, then vocalise it.

We'll close this meditation with an HUMMM – so join in when you hear it. HUMM is a mantra sometimes associated with 'banishing'.

### **Ideas for Developing Gana Work**

Externalising ganas can be done anywhere – as un-self-consciously as picking your nose. You could also identify with Shiva and enter into dialogue with a Gana, or identify with a particular gana and enter into dialogue with a conflicting one.

The physical expression of ganas brings up issues relating to taboos and what is socially acceptable. The ancient sadhus such as the Aghoris and Pasupatas deliberately courted the disfavour of others by behaving badly. We have to be prepared to take the responsibility for letting our Ganas out.

It also strikes me that having a tantrum could lead to a tantrik version of seething – so let's have one!