

From Mandara in this mountain-range Arjuna ascended to Indra's heaven conveyed there by Mātali in Indra's chariot, after he had first sung this beautiful hymn to the mountain . . . » Then follows the hymn glorifying Himavant.

According to Fausbøll Īiva is most often in the Mahābhārata called Mahādeva, the great god. He dwells on the holy Himavant. Here on the ridge of Himavant the mighty master always sits, shining like the fire at the end of a Yuga. In other places he is recorded to be found on a horn of the mountain Meru, called Sāvitra, or on Mount Mandara. »The Himavant mountains hold the highest place amongst all the mountains in the world, they are praised as being divine, holy and loved by the gods and they are protected by Rākshasa's and Piçāca's. From them the ascent is made, through the air, up to Svarga-heaven with the Nandana forest, the home of the inhabitants of heaven, the Deva's. The high Kuvera enjoys a fourth part of Meru's treasures and he gives a sixteenth part to mankind. South of Mount Nīla and on the north side of Meru lies the holy northerly Kuru-land where the Siddhas dwell . . . Among Himalaya's many great and small mountains Kuvera chose Kāilāsa (also called Hemakūṭa) and Gandhamādana as his favourite dwelling place . . . The whitish-yellow Kāilāsa is 6 Yojana's high; and a gigantic jujube tree is found there. It is likewise covered with lovely woods, rivers, lakes and caves. Here Kuvera was installed by Brahmā himself in dominion over all riches and over Rākshasa's, Yaksha's and Gandharva's, and he rejoiced greatly. At the entrance to Kāilāsa there is a golden gate . . . His (Kuvera's) river is the beautiful Mandākinī, the first of rivers whose waters are decked with golden lotuses, that resemble the sun. His lotus-lake, Nalinī or Jāmbūnada-saras, the golden lake is called Alakā. It is full of divine, fragrant, golden Sāugandhikā lotuses and all sorts of aquatic birds, surrounded by lovely woods with thick trees and climbing plants. Its water is clear and cool, and has an ambrosial taste . . . His city is called Alakā . . . His assembly-hall . . . is as bright as the peaks of Kāilāsa, and its white sheen eclipses even the splendour of the moon.»<sup>1</sup>

In the Mahābhārata Brahmā is described under the name of Mānasa, and is sometimes also called Puruṣa. The Gandharvas are said to reside near the lake Mānasa and on Mount Niṣadha.<sup>2</sup>

Only as glimpses or mere names do the eternal mountains of Himalaya, Meru and Kailas, and the sacred lake Manasarovar light up the interminable and very dull stories of the *Ramāyāna*. I am giving a few examples of this kind of very vague geography. Rāghava is said to have »proceeded leaving on his left side the junctions of four roads . . . and reached after all the family dwelling of the king, with its palatial tops piercing the sky, looking beautiful, resembling a mass of clouds, white as the celestial cars and high as the hill Kāilāsa, and with sporting houses

<sup>1</sup> Ibidem p. 147, 183, et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem p. 58 and 127.