

In the introduction of the *Mānasa-khaṇḍa* Janamejaya addresses the *Sūta* desiring to hear of the creation of the world and its state subsequent to that event and the *māhātmyas* of the great *tīrthas* or places of pilgrimage. We need only to quote a passage which is of special interest to us in connection with the lake. The *Sūta* tells the legend of *Himāchala* to Janamejaya. *Dattātreyā Ṛishi*, one of the seven human incarnations of *Vishnu*, after his visits to *Himāchala*, went to *Kāçi* (Benares) and proclaimed the glories of *Himāchala* to the *Rāja Dhanvantari*. They talk of the *tīrthas*, and the sage glorifies *Himāchala* . . . »that *Himāchala* where *Çiva* lived and where *Gangā* falls from the foot of *Vishnu* like the slender thread of a lotus flower and where the *Ṛishis* worship and where the *Çiva* lingas are numerous. I behold *Māna-sarovara* and there in the form of the *rāja-hansa* (royal goose) dwells *Çiva*. This lake was formed from the mind of *Brahmā*, therefore was it called '*Mānasa-sarovara*'. There dwell also *Mahādeva* and the gods, thence flow the *Sarayu* (here probably *Karnali*) and other (female) rivers and the *Çatadru* and other (male) rivers.¹ When the earth of *Māna-sarovara* touches anyones body or when anyone bathes therein, he shall go to the paradise of *Brahmā*, and he who drinks its waters shall go to the heaven of *Çiva* and shall be released from the sins of a hundred births, and even the beast who bears the name of *Māna-sarovara* shall go to the paradise of *Brahmā*. Its waters are like pearls. There is no mountain like *Himāchala*, for in it are *Kailas* and *Māna-sarovara*. As the dew is dried up by the morning sun, so are the sins of mankind dried up at the sight of *Himāchala*. At *Māna-sarovara*, the king, *Bhagīratha*, performed the austerities by which the holy *Gangā* was produced and *Vasishṭha* obtained the *Sarayu*. The country around this holy lake is called *Mānasa-khaṇḍa*.» Concerning the creation of *Māna-sarovara* we read: »The sons of *Brahmā*, *Marīchi* and *Vasishṭha* and the rest proceeded to the north of *Himāchala* and performed austerities on *Kāilāsa*. There they saw *Çiva* and *Pārvatī*, and there they remained for twelve years absorbed in mortification and prayer. There was then very little rain and little water, and in their distress they went to *Brahmā* and worshipped him. Then *Brahmā* asked what their desire might be. The *Ṛishis* answered and said. — 'We are engaged in devotion on *Kāilāsa* and must always go thence to bathe in the *Mandākinī*; make a place for us to bathe in'. Then *Brahmā* by a mental effort formed the holy lake of *Mānasa*. The *Ṛishis* returned and rejoicing at the success of their journey again engaged in mortification and prayer on *Kāilāsa* and worshipped the golden ling which rose from the midst of the waters of the lake.»

khaṇḍa, — there exists in India a *Rāmaçilamāhātmya*, professing (but such professions are very untrustworthy) to belong to the *Mānasa-khaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāna*. But no such *Mānasa-khaṇḍa* appears to exist in manuscript or print. Atkinson's version must have been made especially for him from some unknown manuscript.» From Atkinson's reference to Sir John Strachey this seems indeed to have been the case.

¹ Atkinson adds the explanation that the *Çatadru* is *Satlej*, »which rises in the *Rākas* lake, which is itself connected with the *Māna* lake.»