

The Whole Trip from the 13th Day to the 361st Day to Yamaloka

So in this article we continue from the previous article called "What to do from the cremation day to the 13th days ceremony". In this article we shall be discussing what happens when the soul leaves the residence after the 12/13th day puja and his/her 348 day journey to Yamaloka.

Once the presiding Pundit had eaten his share of the Prashad and leaves after the puja on the 12/13th day, the Yamadutas (the {dutas} messengers of Lord Yamaraj) then escort the soul which is called the Pindaja Sharira (a body made out of Pindas), in the southerly direction to Yamaloka (the Planet of the Lord of Death). Below is the account from the Garuda Purana of what happens for the next 348 days journey through' the 16 cities the soul has to pass through'.

Garuda Purana Preta Khanda Chapter 5

Verses 81-82 "Lord Vishnu said, O Garuda, I shall now tell you how people go to Yama's abode. On the 13th day, after Shravana – Karma (Sapindi rites), he is captured by Yama's attendants. He is led in the way like the caught-up monkey."

Verse 83 "The body attains a form like air. Born out of Pinda it assumes a shape different from the one born from the womb of the mother."

Verses 84-85 "88,000 yojanas {1 yojana = 8 miles (13 km)} long is the distance between the mortals and Yama's worlds. 200,5 he covers daily. So in 348 days he reaches Yama's city, being dragged by Yama's servants"

Verse 91 "Which is heated by a burning sun, is infested by dogs and flies, which echoes with the howling sounds of jackals, he is dragged by Yama's messengers."

Verse 93 "Thus as his body is eaten, torn asunder, pierced, he suffers immensely."

Verse 94 "There are 16 cities along this way. Now hear about them."

Verse 95 "Yamya, Sauripura, Nagendra-bhavana, Gandharva, Shailaagama, Kraunca, Kroorapura, Vicitra-bhavana, Bahvapada, Duhkhada, Naanaa-kran-da-pura, Sutapta-bhavana, Raudra, Payovarshana, Shitaadhya and Bahubheeti – these are the 16 cities not seen by you.

Verse 96 "Firstly he goes to Yama saying, 'O son, o son' he cries painfully remembering his own misdeeds."

Verse 97 "He reaches that city on the 18th day. There is Pushpabhadrariver and a good looking tree."

Verse 98 “He wants to take rest there but Yama’s servants do not bide him to do so.”

Verse 99 “Here on earth, whatever is given by his sons, the pindas, and so forth due to affection or kindness he eats the same and then he goes to Sauripura. As he goes he cries being beaten with clubs.”

Verse 101 “King Jangama rules in that city who can assume any shape at will”

Verse 102 Whatever is offered to him in the three fortnights together with the oblation of water, he eats and drinks. He is then stuck with clubs.”

Verse 103 “Neither daily gifts were given nor pastures made, nor the sacred books such as the Vedas and Dharma sastras offered in charity nor the Puranas heard. Now, O body, you suffer for your acts of omission”

Verse 104 “Having eaten the rice balls offered by the relatives in the second month, he moves further.”

Verses 105-106 “As he goes onward he laments being struck with the sword. “A fool that I am, I have lost everything to others. I obtained manhood by virtue of accumulated merit”. Then he reaches Gandhamaadana in the third month.”

Verses 107-108 “There he eats the rice-ball. Then he goes further. As he goes further he laments being beaten by Yama’s emissary. O body, suffer for whatever you have done.”

Verses 109-110 “He reaches Shailaagama in the 4th month. There stones rain upon him continuously. Having eaten the 4th monthly oblation he moves. As he moves, he is struck again with the stones by the messengers.”

Verses 112-114 “In the 5th month, he goes to Kroorapura. Having eaten the rice balls and drunk water by his relatives he goes to Kroorapura. As he goes, he laments, being struck with spears. “O mother, O father, O brother, O sons, O wife. I was advised by you. I have reached this state.” As he laments thus Yama’s servants say to him.

Verse 115 “Where are your mother, you father, wife, sons, friends, o fool. Now suffer the results of your evil activities. All sinners go by this ancient path”

Verse 117 “In less than six months he reaches Kraunca and having eaten the rice-ball and drunk water he rests there for a while and then leaves for Vicitra nagara.”

Verse 118 “As he goes, he laments being struck off with spear heads by Yama’s emissaries.”

Verse 120 “Vicitranaagara is ruled by King Vicitra. Being satiated with the six monthly rice-ball he moves further”

Verse 122 He laments “Do my brother, son, parents or any one exist who may take out a sinner like me falling in the ocean of distress”

Verse 123 “As he goes, there in the way is Vaitarani, it is 100 yojanas long, full of pus and blood.”

Verses 124-125 “There are the boatmen. They say, “give me the liberal fee”(i.e. if the person has performed the Go-daan prayer – the gift of a cow to a Brahmin), if he has gifted the Vaitarani cow, he can get into the boat and cross the river. But if he has not gifted the cow, he is brushed aside by the boatmen and has to swim across the river.”

Verse 126 “While swimming in the river he is bitten by birds with sharp beaks, like crows, cranes, ants and so forth. The gift of the cow at the time of death serves for the relief of the deceased.”

Verses 127-128 “The gift of the cow destroys all sins and affords all facilities. The deceased goes to Bahvaapada in the 7th month. After partaking in the 7th monthly offering made by the relatives he reaches Bahvaapada, where he laments being struck with the iron club.”



Yamaloka

Verse 129 “Neither you have offered gifts nor gave oblations nor performed penance nor undertook bath nor rendered a good act. So O Foolish creature, now suffer for whatever act you have done.”

Verses 130-132 “In the 8th month, after eating the rice ball and drunk water, he goes to Naanaa-kranda-pura. Being struck with pebbles there, he says, “Where are those sweet dishes by my wife.” In the 9th month he eats his rice-ball in Naanaa-krana-pura.”

Verses 133-135 “Then he laments in many ways. In the 10th month he reaches Sutapta-bhavana. Thus moving, he laments in the way being struck with ploughs. “Where the massaging of my feet by my sons and where the dragging of my legs by the thunder like hands of messengers. He then eats the rice ball given in the 10th month together with the offering of water oblation.”



Lord Yamaraja (the Lord of Death)

Verse 136 “At the end of the 11th month he goes to Raudra-pura. As he goes to Raudra-pura he laments being struck in the back.”

Verse 138 “There he eats the rice ball given by his relatives and then he goes to the city called Payo-Varshana.”

Verse 140 “At the end of the year he eats the annual Shraddha offered by his relatives.”

Verse 143 “Having partaken of the annual shraddha there, he goes to Bahubhooti. He has assumed by this time a body composed of the essence of his merit accruing from the gift of rice-balls.”

Verses 145-149 “He then reaches the city of Yama nearby. It is forty yojanas in measurement. There are 14 doorkeepers called Shravanas. There very soon among Death and Time, he sees Lord Yamaraja with red eyes, looking fierce and dark like a heap of collyrium, with fierce jaws and frowning fiercely, chosen as their lord by many ugly, fierce-faced hundreds of diseases, possessing as iron-rod in his hand and also a noose. The creature goes either to good or bad state as directed by him.”



Chitragupta of the left and Yamaraja seated on the throne.

Verses 150-154 “A sinner goes to a bad state. Those who have given umbrella, shoes and shelter see Lord Yama as gentle-faced with earrings and with a shining chest. In the shraddha of the 11th and 12th month many brahmanas should be feasted because then the deceased is very hungry. He, who does not perform the needful while alive, suffers afterwards.”

It is noted that throughout the souls journey to Yamaloka, the soul is sustained by offerings made on earth by the family of the deceased in the form of Pindas and Tarpana (libations of water). So one will ask how do we know that the deceased will receive these offerings. Lord Vishnu explains

to Lord Garuda in the Garuda Purana chapter 18 Verse 27 “Lord Varuna receives those gifts and hands them to Suryadeva; from Suryadeva the deceased person obtains these offerings in the form of energy.”

At the end of the 348 day journey to Yamaloka the soul enters the court of Yamaraja (see the picture above). Here Yamaraja consults with Chitragupta (see picture below) the recorder of all ones deeds. So Chitragupta reads out from the great register of worldly deeds called the Agra Sandhaanee aka The Akashic Records, the wrongful and the good actions the soul had performed in his/her lifetime. The information obtained through the services of the Shravanas and Shravanees. They watch what you do in your time on Earth.



Lord Chitragupta – The keeper of one's records.

Shree Yamaraja decides by which path and through which door the soul will enter his domain, East, West, North or South.

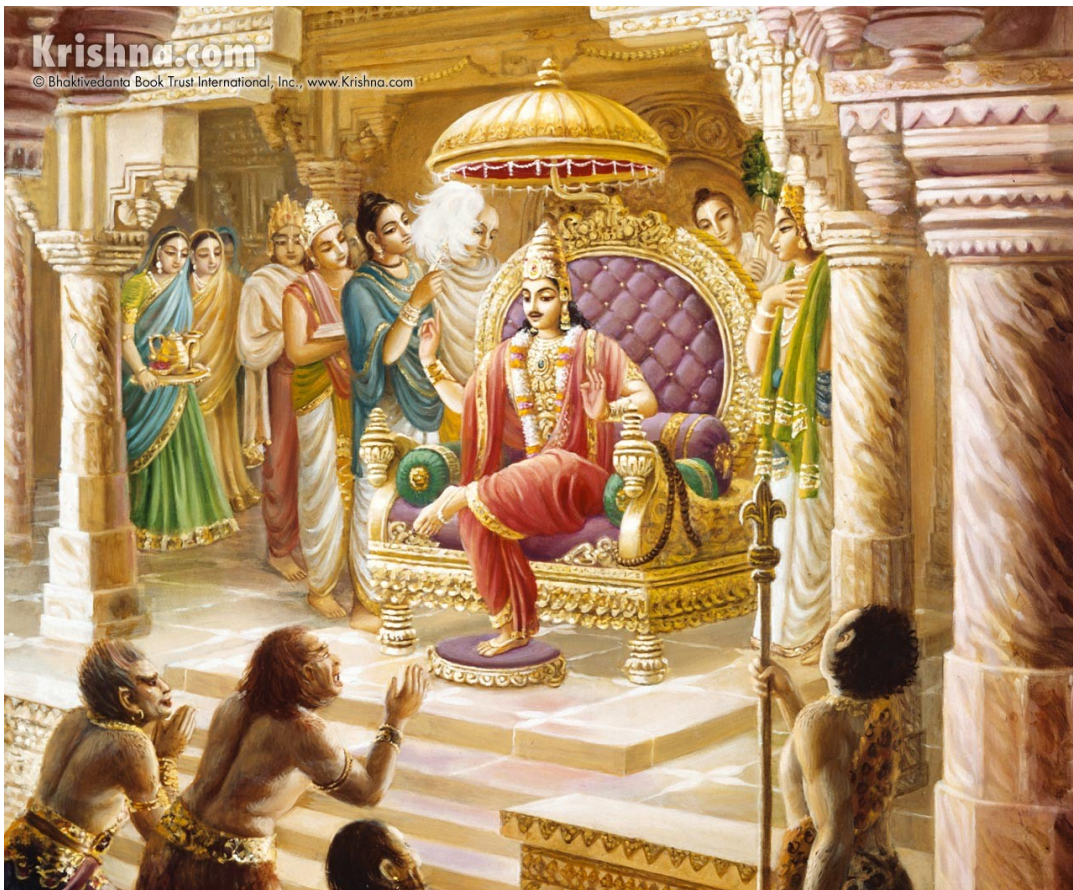
The good people enter by the East Gate. Those who during the rainy seasons give gifts or provide shelter to the homeless, those who serve their mothers and fathers and teachers, those who read religious books and the Puranas, worshipers of Lord Shiva and of the deities, pure minded people enter through the East Gate.

The West Gate (Pashchim Marga) is for the worshipers of Lord Vishnu, Those who read scriptures, make japas of Gayatri, who practice non-violence, non-stealing, agni hotra or havan ceremony, who recite the Vedas, who practice Brahmacharya, ascetics, renunciates, who have the attitude of non-attachment (vairagya) and who have spiritual knowledge, enter through the West Gate

The South Gate is for the sinners who suffer the worst tortures in hell of the Vaitarani river that holds boiling hot blood and flesh.

Lord Yamaraja then metes out justice by condemning those who committed terrible sins to a hellish existence of pain, torture and suffering. Those who were virtuous and performed only noble and righteous deeds are raised to the status of Pitrs and sent to the heavenly planets to reap the awards of their good actions.

After both categories of souls have experienced sufficient pleasure or punishment appropriate to their individual karma, they must then return to Earth to once again repeat the cycle of birth and death until the ultimate goal of self-awareness or self-realization is achieved which is called KRISHNA PREMA – the Love of Shree Krishna.



Lord Yamaraja and the Yamadutas

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