

If in this temple a man gives a single farthing, his merit is greater than if he gave a 1000 gold pieces elsewhere. Again, if in this temple a person is able to condemn life so as to put an end to himself, then he is born to eternal happiness in heaven.

Before the hall of the temple there is a great tree <sup>61</sup> with spreading boughs and branches, and casting a deep shadow. There was a body-eating demon here, who, depending on this custom (*viz., of committing suicide*), made his abode here; accordingly on the left and right one sees heaps of bones. Hence, when a person comes to this temple, there is everything to persuade him to despise his life and give it up: he is encouraged thereto both by the promptings of the heretics and also by the seductions of the (*evil*) spirit. From very early days till now this false custom has been practised.

Lately there was a Brâhman whose family name was *Tseu (putra)*; he was a man of deep penetration and great learning, of lucid wit and high talent. This man coming to the temple, called to all the people and said, "Sir, ye are of crooked ways and perverse mind, difficult to lead and persuade." Then he engaged in their sacrifices with them, with a view afterwards to convert them. Then he mounted the tree, and looking down on his friends he said, "I am going to die. Formerly I said that their doctrine was false and wicked; now I say it is good and true. The heavenly Rîshis, with their music in the air, call me. From this fortunate spot will I cast down my poor body." He was about to cast himself down when his friends, having failed by their expostulations to deter him, spread out their garments underneath the place where he was on the tree, and so when he fell he was preserved. When he recovered he said, "I thought I saw in the air the Dêvas calling me to come, but now by the

<sup>61</sup> This tree is the well-known of worship at Allahâbâd (Cunning-  
*Akshaya Vata*, or "undecaying ban- ham).  
yan tree," which is still an object