

C H A P T E R VI

MYTHOLOGY
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The vedic religion is based upon the conception of nature-worship. At first the god is hardly differentiated from the physical phenomena which it represents and slowly clothed with moral attributes and endowed with a character wholly divine can be traced. Thus we see the Dyaus as the broad bright sky; the Maruts, the deities of the storm; Indra, the god of the rain-cloud, who became the mighty warrior and champion of heaven and Agni the god of fire later on getting an individual and abstract existence.

Lack of individuality is conspicuous in vedic gods. Thus Dawn, Sun, Fire, have the common features of being luminous, dispelling darkness and appearing in the morning and thus it becomes difficult to define the characteristics

pertaining to individual gods. Apart from this, certain essential traits as brilliance, power, beneficence are attributed to all gods in common and these common features tend to obscure what is distinctive in each god and lead to the identification of one god with another. Thus praying lord Agni, the seer identifies him with Varuṇa, Mitra, Indra and others¹ and it becomes very difficult to give a definite outline of any god in particular. The tendency towards abstract personifications can be seen in the later hymns in the nature of Aditi, the immensity; Prajāpati, the lord of creatures; Hiranyagarbha, the golden germ and others.

In the period of the Brāhmaṇas, a ceremonial type of worship was developed and a growing insistence of rigorous precision in the observance of the niceties of rites and sacrifices marked the epoch. In the Āraṇyakas, the hermits believed themselves capable to supercede the gods and to obtain from them any gift at will by the practice of intense meditation and prolonged self-mortification. The line of thought on nature and being of god in the upaniṣads as opposed to the Brāhmaṇas is speculative and mystical and the great systems of Indian philosophy carry forward and develop it.

The importance of the great epic poems and the

1 Rv. (5-3).

purāṇas of India for the history of religious thought and its bearing upon the Hindu conception of god is very great as they are the popular possession of the inhabitants of every village as well as of great towns and the centres of pilgrimage. The names of their heroes and heroines are on the tip of tongue throughout India. The tone and tendency of this literature is towards a rich polytheism which has enriched the land with innumerable gods and goddesses. By the time of the epics and the purāṇas, the phenomenal side of the gods was greatly obscured. Anthropomorphism went to such an extent that even Sun and Moon were garbed as human beings in dress, talk and action.

In the mythology of the Brahma-purāṇa there are various categories of gods. Some gods such as Viṣṇu and Śiva are of primary importance. The god Sūrya occupies an independent section. Brahmā is the narrator of the purāṇa and the purāṇa takes its name after Him. The gods Indra, Yama, Agni are of secondary importance and the gods Dattātreya, Gaṇeśa, Agni, Soma, Varuna, and Kārtikeya occupy a minor position in the pantheon of the Brahma-purāṇa.

There can be no limit to the pantheon when constantly new images invoke new personifications. Thus Maru is anger personified and Kamadeva is the feeling of love incarnated. Sometimes the gods are created out of purely physical aspects. Thus jvara was created out of the perspiration of Gaṇeśa's body and the Mātṛs were the creation of lord

Siva's perspiration. The semi-divine beings like the Yakṣas, the Siddhas, the Gandharvas, the Kinnaras and others are always mentioned in connection with some primary deity. Among the goddesses, Pārvatī is described at length in association with lord Siva, and there are stray references to Aditi, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī. The Brahma purāṇa lays special emphasis on the worship of Subhadrā with Lord kṛṣṇa and Balarama. It does not mention Rādhā. The outstanding feature of the mythology of the Brahma-purāṇa is that it presents a long eulogy of the river Godāvarī, deifies it and describes its miraculous powers. Worship is extended to the Nyagrodha tree and it is identified with lord Viṣṇu. The pitṛs are also deified and worshipped.

In the Br. P., the gods are described as being well-versed in the śāstras, knowing the way to attain mokṣa and meditating on the highest principle. They are parivrāḍas, attain yoga and meditate on veda (51.18-21). Their abode is the golden peak of the mountain Meru and it is also inhabited by the siddhas, Vidyādhara, Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Devas, Dānavas, Gandharvas, Serpents, Nymphs, Gaṇas of gods, Sages, Guhyakas, Siddhas, Supṛṇas, Maruts, Śādhus, Kāśyapas, Prajavaras, Valakhilyas and others (45.5-7). The function of these semi-divine beings is either praying the lord, showering flowers, blowing the conch, serving the lord and protecting

the sacrifice (108,19-20). When not directly interested in the human affairs to the point of descending to earth, either to partake of a sacrifice or to intervene in worldly matters, the gods reside in sky where they live in courts of their own 'on top of the sky', in the third heaven or gather at the halls of their colleagues.²

Besides gods, the Br. P. deals with demons as enemies of gods and men and it narrates the stories regarding sages who helped kings and gods in the performance of sacrifice and various other matters.

VISNU

Introduction

In the Rgveda, Visnu occupies a subordinate position and his only anthropomorphic traits are the strides, which, as a solar god, he takes across the heavens.³ He traverses the three worlds in three strides referring probably to the Sun in the heavens through the three stages of rising, culminating and setting, or the three steps with which he encompassed the universe. He is closely related to Indra, but his connection with kṛṣṇa is still obscure.⁴ In the Brāhmanas,

3 Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, P. 37.

4 Weber, IA XXX. 284 f., MIRE., Vol. II, P. 811 f.

the position of Viṣṇu remains much the same as before; he is regarded as the equal of the other gods, not yet their superior. It should, however, be observed that in the Brāhmanas, Viṣṇu is repeatedly identified with the sacrifice, an honour which he shares with Prajāpati, and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa ascribes the dwarf-incarnation to Prajāpati and the Taittīriya Brāhmaṇa ascribes the boar incarnation to Prajāpati. But general opinion ascribes the related feats to Viṣṇu in his tortoise and boar incarnations. In the older portions of the Mbh., Viṣṇu is little more than a hero; in others he is represented as paying homage to Śiva, while in the latest portions of the poem, he is regarded as the most exalted deity. In Rāmāyaṇa and the Vaiṣṇava purāṇas, he is exalted to be the supreme spirit. The Brahma purāṇa is chiefly a Vaiṣṇava purāṇa and exalts Viṣṇu as the supreme deity, though it assigns a high rank to lord Śiva also and once states the liberal view that really speaking there is no distinction between lord Viṣṇu and lord Śiva and that they are two aspects of one and the same divinity (56.64-72).

Physical Description

Viṣṇu, in the Brahma purāṇa, is described as follows: He has thousand heads (45.40; 213.12) thousand

eyes.⁵ The eyes are compared to lotus (68.28, 178.29). They are wide like the lotus-leaf (178.123) and he shines like the lightening (68.53). He has thousand mouths (213.12), thousand tongues (213.13) and thousand hands (213.12). He is also said to have four hands (45.65; 68.30). He has a sign of Srivastā on his chest (45.41; 64; 68.31; 178.24). Srivastā is a particular curé of hair on the breast of Viṣṇu-kṛṣṇa and other divine beings and it may be classified under the well-known outward tokens of the status of cakravartin 'Universal sovereign' or Mahāpuruṣa. The explanation of the name is given as 'Sṛī's favourite abode'. As an auspicious sign it has nine angles, this number often occurs in connection with precious or auspicious objects, powers and ceremonies related to warfare etc.⁶ Viṣṇu is said to have thousand feet (45.40; 178.156; 213.12). He is tall (178.151) and very strong (68.50). His complexion is blue like the petal of a blue lotus (45.62). He is also called Śyāma (68.44). His brilliance is like that of a cloud full of water (45.41) and he is compared to an atasi flower (178.121).

5 45.41; 128.155; 213.12. The reading 'Sasasra' seems to be a variant of 'Sahasra' in the last reference.

6 Gonda, Early aspects of Viṣṇuism, PP. 96 ff.

Dress and Ornaments

He wears yellow clothes (45.65, 68.44, 178.124) and decorated himself with Vanamālā, hāra, keyūra, mukuta and angada (45.65, 68.30, 178.123-124). Elsewhere he is said to wear thousand didems (213.13). He applies divine Candana to his body (178.125).

Weapons

He wields Sankha, Cakra and Gadā (45.65). His Sudar-shana Cakra is terrible and the chief among all the weapons. It is white like the kunda flower, Moon, garland and Milk of the cow (68.45,46). The Pāñcajanya Sankha is garlanded with thousand garlands and perturbs the whole world with its sound (68.47). His Kaumodakī Gadā is terrible, brings to an end all the evil factors, demons and daityas. It is formed of burning flames and is unbearable even for gods (68.48,49). The Śaraṅga bow has the lustre of Sun and the arrows are like the rays of the Sun (68.49,50). He is well-versed in all the śāstras (68.21) and bears Sarasvatī on his tongue (122.71).

Elsewhere it is said that Agni is his mouth, kṣiti his feet, Sun and Moon his eyes, the sky together with its directions his ears and body, heaven his head, the directions his eyes, Vāyu his mind, waters born out of his perspiration

(56,16,17), Stars the pores of his skin, oceans abounding in jewels his clothes, bed and abode (56.27-29). Again it is said that the brahmins are his mouth, the ksatriyas his hands, the vaiśyas his thighs and 'sūdras are his feet (56.22, 23). He is also called bahubāhu, urupāda, bahukarṇa and aksisirsaka (122.72).

Consort and Abode

He is called lakṣmībhartā x (136.6) and she remains engrossed in his service (109.41). As she is the abode of lotuses, Viṣṇu is called Padmālayākānta (65.51).

As water is his abode, he is called Nārāyaṇa (56,12, 60.25). Nārāyaṇa is an ancient and dignified epithet which has been applied to various Hindu gods. It is not the name of any distinct Hindu divinity. The world is believed to be a patronymic, derived from 'Nara', 'man', so that it means 'Son of man', but it is not known of whom it was originally used.⁷ The Rv.,⁸ the Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa,⁹ the kātyāyana śrautasūtra,¹⁰ and the Mahānārāyaṇa upanīśad (11.IX.1) relate the word Nārāyaṇa with Puruṣa and at a much later date,

7 ERE., Vol., 9, P. 184.

8 X.20.

9 XII.iii.4.1; XIII.VI.1.1; 2.12.

10 XXIV. vii. 36.

in the Taittirīya Samhitā of the black Yajurveda (vii.1.5.1) it was suggested that the word was derived from narāḥ (the waters are called nārāḥ, for they are sprung from Nara) and ayana (moving). As in Greek thought, the world has arisen from waters is one of the earliest theories of Hindus and hence forward most Hindu writers preferred this secondary derivation of the word,¹¹ and the Br. P. also follows the same line. He resides in the Kṣīrasāgara (45.60, 126.24) and he sleeps on the serpent Śeṣa (45.60). He is also said to reside in the Viṣṇu and the Br. P. provides a beautiful description of Viṣṇuloka (A.68). The nymphs Ghrīṭācī, Menakā, Rambhā, Sahajanyā, Tilottamā, Urvāśī, Nimlocā, Vāmanā, Mandodarī, Subhagā, Viśvācī, Vipulānanā, Bhadrāṅgī, Citrasenā, Pramlocā, Manoharā, Ramā, Candramadhya, Subhānanā, Sukeśī, Nīlakesī, Manmathadīpinī, Alambūṣā, Mīrakesī, Māñjiksthārā, Kratusthalā, Varāṅgī, Pūrvacitti, Parā, Paravati, Mahārūpā, Śaśilekhā, Subhananā, Mattavāranagaminī, Bimbosthī, Navagarbhā and others entertain lord Viṣṇu by dancing and playing the musical instruments (68.60,67). The status of Viṣṇu is unmodifiable, Viraja, Pura, devoid of the contact of worldly parlance and higher than the Brahmaloḥka (59.79,80).

¹¹ Manu, 1.8-10.

Particular Attributes

Lord Viṣṇu is called Hari, Śaṅkara, Vāsudeva, Deva, and kṛṣṇa (8.65). Govinda, Madhusūdana, Śrīdhara, Keśava, Mādhava, Vāmana, Varāha, and Trivikrama (60.39-41, 61.14,15, 39,40).

Philosophical Epithets

Some philosophical epithets are ascribed to him. Thus he is called Avyakta, Suddha, Nitya, Sāśikarāparāpa, Sarvajñu, Paramātmā, Hiranyagarbha, gross as well as subtle, Ajara, Amara, Akṣaya, Avyaya, one as well as many, Sarvajña (1.21-27), sat as well as asat (23.42), Nirguṇa, Śānta, Sanātana (45.61-63), Kūṭastha, Acala, devoid of bhāva and abhāva, all pervading, beyond prakṛti (45.66,67), the ātman of all, Omnipresent, endless, Brahmārūpa, Urukrama and one controlling the wheel of time (56.43,44). He is known from the vedas (126.25). He is higher than Pradhāna, Buddhi and the senses (181.22). He is avyākṛta mūla prakṛti and the vyākṛta world (23.43). He is acyuta (122.70) and is called Bhūtapāvyakta, Bhūtakṛt, Bhūtabhṛd and Bhūtabhāvāna (178.133,135). He is also called Kṣetrajña, Kṣetrabhṛt, Kṣetri, Kṣetrahā, Kṣetrakṛd, Kṣetrātman, Kṣetrarohita, Kṣetrastā (178.135). He is also called Guṇālaya, Guṇavāsa,

Gunāśraya, Guṇavāha, Guṇabhoktr, Guṇārāma, and Guṇatyāgi (178.136). He is Rk, Yajus, and Sāman (178.143). He is day, night, Vatsara, Kāla, Kāsthā, Mūhūrtā, Kṣana, Lava (178.145,146), etc. He is called Jagadbīja, Jagadhāma, Jagatsāksi (178.128) and Jagatpati (68.28). The historically important fact here is that he is lauded with the vedanta epithets.

Various Forms

In different continents, he is worshipped in different forms. Thus it is said that in the Plakṣadvīpa, he is worshipped in the form of Soma (20.19), in Sālmadvīpa in the form of Vāyu (20.32), in the Kuśadvīpa in the form of Brahmā (20.40), in Krauñcadvīpa in the form of Rudra (20.57) and in the Śākadvīpa in the form of Sun (20.72). His dharma is said to possess different colours in the different yugas. Thus it is said that his dharma becomes white in the Kṛtayuga, Śyāma in the Tretāyuga, Red in the Dvāparayuga and Kṛṣṇa in the Kaliyuga (56.40,41). Desire, anger, joy, fear and moha are his other forms (56.29,30). He has a sacrificial form which is lauded at great length. It consists of Savana, Hotā, Havya, Pavitraka, Veda, Dikṣā, Samidh, Sruvā, Sruk, Soma, Jūpa, Musala, Prokṣaṇī, Dakṣiṇāyana, Adhvaryu, a brahmin knowing the recitation of Sāmans, Sadasya, Sadana, Sabhā, Yūpa, Cakra, ~~Dhruva~~ Dhruva, Darvī, Caru, Ulūkhala, Prāgvamsa, Yajñabhūmi, Sthandila,

Kusa, Mantra, sacrificial share, somabhoktā and hutārci and he is called Agrāsanabhoji. The constant identification of Viṣṇu with the sacrifice is a special feature of the Brāhmanas. Gonda¹² discusses at length the relation between lord Viṣṇu and sacrifice and concludes, 'The Parallelism between the objects and presumed effects of the all-important ritual, the mighty means of securing the fulfilment of any desire on the one hand and the activity of a god who was believed to obtain, for men and other beings. Control of those powers which were considered to be of vital importance, and to prepare the way for the representatives of fertility and productivity on the other, might have led to an early identification of that divine power and activity which was denoted by the name of Viṣṇu and the mighty instrument in the hands of the priests.' Elsewhere it is said that lord Viṣṇu has four forms. The first is known by the name Vāsudeva. It is near as well as far and has a white complexion. It is always pure. Its nature is indescribable. The second form is called Sesa. It holds the earth on his head and is the Tamasa form of lord Viṣṇu. The third form arises out of the Sattva quality of lord Viṣṇu, maintains the

12 Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, P.40.

13 J. Gonda, Aspects of early Viṣṇuism, PP.77-80.

world, establishes dharma, destroys the demons and protects the gods. The fourth form lies in the ocean on a big serpent and remains engrossed in creating the world. Rajas is his main quality (180.18-24).

His Functions

The primary function of lord Viṣṇu is the maintenance of the world but it is said that he created god Brahmā whose primary function is the creation of the world. Thus it is said that when at the beginning of a Kalpa, all the moving and non-moving beings were destroyed, when the gods, Gandharvas, daityas, Vidyādhara and Uragas were absorbed in darkness. When nothing was distinguishable on account of all-pervading darkness, lord Viṣṇu created lord Brahmā from his navel-lotus at the end of his Yoganidra.¹⁴ Elsewhere it is said that lord Viṣṇu created water from which a golden egg came out and out of it, lord Brahmā emerged (I.38-40). This conception seems to have arisen from the ancient belief of the one or primordial being resting on or emanating from the primeval waters, where Hiranyagarbha, identified with Prajāpati and, in later times, with Brahmā, is said to have arisen in the beginning from the great water which pervaded the universe.¹⁵ According to the popular Indian belief the

¹⁴ 45.26-30, 213.28, 29.

¹⁵ Rv. 10.121, 129; 82.6.

the god Viṣṇu goes to sleep for a period of four months on the 11th day of the bright half of Āṣāḍha but the Brahma-purāṇa states that lord Viṣṇu goes to sleep for a thousand yugas and at the end of that he manifests himself in order to perform his functions (213.24,25). From the olden times, the term nabhi was almost exclusively used in connection with very potent conceptions, powers or divinities associated with the same sphere of interests and activities as Viṣṇu and the gods or goddesses connected with him. It is a remarkable fact that, in post-vedic times, the navel-lotus should have been transferred to one deity, viz. Viṣṇu.¹⁶ At the end of the Kalpa, all beings together with lord Brahmā merge in lord Viṣṇu (I.60,62). Lord Viṣṇu helps Prakṛti and Puruṣa in retaining their relationship. The power of lord Viṣṇu forms the pradhāna and the puruṣa, it maintains their equilibrium and at the time of creation, it disturbs them (23.29,32). The four vedas spring from him and lord Nārāyaṇa consists of all the things in the world (60.26,33).

Visnu and other Gods

After having been Indra's assistant and younger brother and playing a secondary part for the mighty god who fights Vṛtra, in the vedas, the relations between these two

¹⁶ Gonda J., Op.Cit., P.89.

gods undergo a radical change in the epic period,¹⁷ Visnu becomes the typical fighter for the gods, assuming a superior position and being called the god who is over Indra-Atindra.¹⁸ The Br. P. provides many references when Indra being afraid of his enemies approach lord Visnu for protection. Demons and similar evil beings which in earlier times were regarded as special enemies of Indra are eventually combated and destroyed by Visnu. Thus when the gods were harassed by the demon Taraka, they at first worshipped lord Visnu and on his advice approached Himalaya and requested him to practice penance to have Uma as his daughter who in future might marry lord Siva and be the mother of Kartikeya who would slay the demon Taraka.¹⁹ Similarly, when the gods were confronted by the danger from the demon Bali, Visnu took the form of a dwarf and saved them (A.73). Similarly, Visnu cut off the head of the daitya Rahu when he drank the neectar after taking the form of a god (A.106). Visnu killed the demon Sardula and brought back Suvama, the daughter of lord Siva, who was carried away by the demon (129.64-69). The demon Sambara, a sort of replica of Vrtra, who in the Rv. is vanquished by Indra,²⁰ is said to be killed by Visnu in

17 Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, P.140, 204 etc.

18 Ibid.

19 A.71; also cf. Matsya A.147-159, Brahmanda IV.11.7, III.10.49, IV.30.103; Vayu 72.47; Padma P. Srsti kh.42; Linga P.1.71; Mbh. Karnaparva 24.7; Kumarasambhava .

20 Macdonell, *Vedic mythology*, P.161; Rv.7.99.5 - he is defeated by Indra and Visnu.

the Brahma purana (134.10-13). Similarly, it is said that lord Visnu killed the daityas who carried away the cows of the gods (131.16-20). Elsewhere it is said that Visnu killed the demons Hiranyakasipu and the demon Ambarya in his Nrsimha incarnation (A.149,156).

Indra worships Visnu and Siva when he is confronted with the doubts regarding his frequent dethronement (122.68-88). Lord Visnu kills the demon Mahasani when Indra requests him to do so (129.94-100). Again it is said that Indra obtained the kingdom of the three worlds by praying lord Visnu, and therefore lord Visnu was called Govinda according to the etymology. Indram gam avindayat (122.95-97).

The relation of lord Visnu with Siva is very significant. Though, Visnu is considered to be the supreme god, he is said to worship lord Siva. Thus Visnu is said to have received back his cak^ura which was swallowed by Virabhadra, an attendant of lord Siva, by praying to lord Siva (122.95-97).

The Brahma purana relates an interesting anecdote about the quarrel between Brahma and Visnu regarding their relative superiority. It states that when they were quarrel-
ing in order to establish their individual supremacy, a Siva-
linga ar^use between the two and the divine speech declared
that whosoever would find out its end, would be considered as

superior over the other. Both of them were unable to find out the end, and thereupon Visnu declared his ignorance, but Brahma spoke lie with his fifth head and he was cursed by lord Siva (A.135).

Visnu's role as a beneficent god is also very prominent in the Br.P. Dhanvantari attained the status of Indra on praying lord Visnu (122.44-47). When the penance of the sage Kandu was disturbed by the nymph Pramloca, he prayed lord Visnu and attained him (A.178). Visnu is the highest among all the Adityas and is the lord of all (69.11,12). Once it is said that lord Indra and others practice penance on account of his fear (109.41,42). By praying lord Visnu the sage Maudgalya obtained prosperity (A.136).

INCARNATIONS

Theory of Incarnation

The theory of incarnation plays a very important part in medieval and modern Hindu religion as taught in the puranas and similar works.²¹ As Visnuites chiefly worship Rama or krsna the two incarnations of Visnu, it would be proper to examine the incarnations of Visnu and to comprehend the nature of incarnation as conceived in India.

²¹ cf. Gita, IV.7.

The theory of incarnation presupposes the recognition of Visnu as a supreme god, the creator and the ruler of the universe, the upholder not only of the cosmic, but also of the moral order of the world. When the enemies to this rule endanger the order of the world, the god incarnates himself for the purpose of defending it.²² Thus the Brahma purana says: Whenever there is a decline of law and an increase of iniquity, then I put forth myself in a new birth.²³

Number of Incarnations

Originally, therefore, the number of these appearances of births seems to have been regarded as indefinite and the Brahma-Purana goes to the extent of saying that there were 1,000 incarnations of lord Visnu (213.20)²⁴, but theological speculation tended to fix the number of incarnations and also to define more clearly their relation to the supreme god. Thus after making the above statement, the Brahma purana starts relating the incarnations, with a starting remark of considering lord Brahma as a manifestation of lord Visnu (213.31). It then continues to mention the

22 ERE, Vol. 7. P. 193.

23 Yada Yada hi dharmasya glanirbhavati Sattama
Abhyutthanamadharmasya tada tmanam srjamyaham
56.35,36²⁵; for a slightly different reading
vide 180.26,27.

incarnations Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Dattatreya, Jamadagnya, Rama, Kesava and Kalki, which is now to come (A.213). It is noteworthy that in this place the incarnations are called Pradurbhava 'manifestation' and not avatara, though at another place (180.39), they are called the avatara, which has become a current term.

The Brahma purana mentions the following incarnations: Matsya,²⁴ Kurma,²⁵ Varaha,²⁶ Nrsimha,²⁷ Vamana,²⁸ Dattatreya,²⁹ Parasurama,³⁰ Rama,³¹ Krsna,³² Kalkin³³ and some others like Sesa,³⁴ Hayasiras,³⁵ Puskara,³⁶ and Buddha.³⁷ Further, it states that in the different varsas, Visnu is worshipped in different forms. Thus in the Bhadravarsa, he is worshipped as Hayasiras, in Ketumala as

24 60.2; 18.57,58; 61.24; 71.11; 122.68,69; 147,163.28-30, 179,18,20; 180.27-32; 184.16; 213.76-79.

25 18.57,58,71.11; 122.68,69; 163.28,30; 178.173-175; 184.16.

26 18.57,58,61.24; 71.11; 122.68,69; 163.28-30; 178.173-175; 179.18,20; 180.27-32; 184.16; 102.23; 213.32-42.

27 58.4-5; 61.24; 122.68,69; A.147; 163.28-30; 179.18-20; 180.27-32; 184.16; 213.76-79.

28 61.24, 73.22,122.68-69; 184.16; 213.80-106.

29 180.27-32; 203.106-112.

30 180.27,32; 213.113-122.

31 122.68,69; 180.27,32; 213.124-153.

32 Adh. 180-213.

33 122.68,69; 213.164-168;

34 56.20.

35 8.57,58; 122.68,69.

36 213.31.

37 122.68,69.

Varaha, in Bharata as Kurma, in Kurupradesa as Matsya, and in the form Visvarupa, he is worshipped everywhere (18.57-58). Elsewhere it is stated that the body of a brahmin is protected by the various forms of god. Thus Jamardana protects the head, Varaha the hands, Kurma the back, krsna the heart, Nrsimha the fingers, the lord of speech the mouth, Garudavahana the eyes, Dhanesa the ears and the lord Bhava protects all the sides (163.29-31).

Description of various Incarnations

The Brahma purana deals at length with some of the incarnations.

Matsya:- The fish which in the Satapatha-brahmana (I.8.1.1) delivers Manu from the flood appears in the Mbh.³⁸ as a form of Prajapati, becoming in the puranas an incarnation of Visnu.³⁹ The Brahma purana states that Matsya was the first incarnation of lord Visnu, and when he was incarnated as Matsya, he was known as Matsyamadhava (60.1-2).

Kurma:- In the Satapatha-Brahmana,⁴⁰ Prajapati about to create offspring becomes a tortoise moving in

38 iii. 187 ± 12474 ff.

39 Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, P.

40 SB, 7.5.1.5 ; TA I.23.3.

primeval waters and in the puranas, this tortoise is an avatara of Visnu who assumes this form to recover various objects lost in deluge.⁴¹ The Brahma purana does not provide a detailed description of this incarnation.

Varaha:- The myth of Varaha incarnation can be traced to the vedic literature. Its purport is that Visnu having drank Soma and being urged by Indra, carried off hundred buffaloes and a brew of milk belonging to the boar, while Indra shooting across the mountain slew the fierce boar.⁴² It is developed in the Taittiriya Samhita,⁴³ Satapatha Brahmana⁴⁴ and the Taittiriya Brahmana.⁴⁵ In the post-vedic mythology of the Ramayana and Puranas, the boar which raises the earth has become one of the avataras of Visnu.⁴⁶ In the Ramayana,⁴⁷ Brahma and not Visnu, is represented as taking the form of a boar.

The Brahma purana states that this incarnation of

41 Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, P.

42 Rv. I.61.7; 8.66.10.

43 TS. 6.2.4. 2.3.

44 I.4.1.2.11.

45 I.1.3.5.

46 Macdonell, Op.Cit., P.41.

47 II.110; Hopkins, Op.Cit., P.147.

lord Viṣṇu is vedapradhāna and is of the form of sacrifice. Brahma is his head, the day and night are his eyes, the cities are his mouth, Yūpa is his jaw, sacrifice is his teeth, Agni is his tongue, Haviṣya is his nose, Sruvā is his belly, the Prāyascittas are his nails, the animals his knees, the vedas are his feet, Kuśa his pores, Vēdi his back, Homa his līṅga, Oṣadhi his seed, Udgata his intestine, Vēdi his antarātman, Mantras his buttocks, Somarasa his blood, Haviṣya his smell, Havya and Kavya his speed, Prāgvamśa his body, dakṣiṇā his heart, Sāmaveda his voice, Yajña his nature, Haviṣya his smell, Upakarma his necklace, Pravarga his ornament, various metres his path, the secret upaniṣads his seat, the srutis his ornaments. His penance is very great. He is Satya, and Dharma and is endowed with sri and dikṣas and is a great yogin and has the nature of a great sacrifice. The shadow of Prthvī always remains with him in the form of a wife and he was manifested above the waters like a bejewelled peak.⁴⁸ The whole earth with its oceans, mountains, forests and cities was drowned in the ocean. The Varāha form having thousand hands entered the ocean, and held the whole earth on his jaw and saved it from his disaster (213.32-42; 180.27-32; 56.20). Narakāśura was born to Prthvī when lord Viṣṇu touched her in the Varāha incarnation. Narakāśura was

48 213.32-42.

afterwards killed by lord Viṣṇu in his incarnation as lord kṛṣṇa (202.23-25). Elsewhere it is stated that Viṣṇu brought out the pitṛs from the river koka in his Varaha incarnation (A.219). When the demon Sindhusena carried the sacrifice to Rasātala lord Viṣṇu took the form of Varaha and brought back the sacrifice to the earth (79.8-16). The reason of Viṣṇu taking the form of a tortoise and of a boar seems to be that his primitive worship had been of a theriomorphic character, at least with some class of people.⁴⁹

Nṛsiṃha:- The incarnation of Narasiṃha, or the man-lion, stands by itself. It refers to a popular legend of Viṣṇu killing in the form of a man-lion, the demon Hiranyakasipu - a legend which is once alluded to in the vedic literature, viz. Taittīriya Aranyaka (X.1-6).

The Br. P. states that after the Varaha incarnation, lord Viṣṇu assumed the shape of a creature half-man, half-lion, to deliver the world from the tyranny of a demon called Hiranyakasipu. His colour, thunder and lustre are like those of a dark cloud. When the demon Hiranyakasipu became invincible, lord Nṛsiṃha emerged from the pillars of his assembly-hall and killed him and the whole of his retinue with his claws. He killed the daityas abiding in the

49 BRE, Vol. 7, P.193.

Rasātala, sky, forests and at other places. His nails were stronger than the thunderbolt and there were long hair on his neck and face (56.20, 213.80-106). He is unconquerable, Aprameya, indescribable, the king of animals and the bestower of enjoyment and liberation (56.12-16, 58).

Vāmana:- This incarnation's origin lies in a legend developed from a mythical feat of Viṣṇu frequently mentioned in the Rv., viz. the three strides with which he measured the three worlds.⁵⁰ In the Aitereya Brāhmaṇa (6.15) it is related that Viṣṇu and Indra, engaged in conflict with the Asuras, agreed with the latter that as much as Viṣṇu could stride over in three steps should belong to the two deities. The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa (1.2.5) refers to the dwarf form of Viṣṇu. This Brāhmaṇa story forms the transition to the myth of Viṣṇu's dwarf incarnation in the post-vedic literature.⁵¹

Dattātreyā:- The reference to Dattātreyā as an incarnation is available since the epic period. The Brahmapurāṇa states that lord Viṣṇu was incarnated as Dattātreyā in the form of the son of the sage Atri (130.31). He is full of forbearance and he was incarnated at the time when the vedas were destroyed, the sacrifices had disappeared, the four

⁵⁰ Rv. 1.155.6

⁵¹ Macdonell, Op.Cit., P.41.

castes had intermingled, the righteousness had waned and iniquity had superceded, truth had disappeared and untruth had fullfledged, and when the subject wavered. He brought the atmosphere of righteousness together with the vedas, religious rites and sacrifices and he brought the four castes in their proper order. He gave a boon to Kārtavīrya Arjuna that he would rule the whole earth (213.106-112). He taught the Yoga with eight āngas to the sage Alarka (180.26-38).

In some parts of India, a saint Dattātreya is worshipped as combining the Hindu Trinity in himself.⁵²

In the upanīṣad, it is said that Dattātreya was the gift of lord Maheśvara to the sage Atri as a result of his being pleased with his austere penance. For the reason that he was given to Atri by Maheśvara, he was called Dattātreya. But in purāṇas, Dattātreya is Viṣṇu born, a son to Atri and Anasuya, their other two sons being Soma as a result of Brahmā's blessing and Durvāsā as a result of Siva's blessings. But Dattātreya incorporates within himself all

52 Monier Williams, Indian Wisdom, P.327, f.n.; For details vide 'Dattātreya' by Shri H.S.Joshi, a thesis accepted for the Ph.D. Degree in Sanskrit, M.S.University of Baroda, 1959.

the attributes of the Trinity.⁵³

Parasurāma:- The story of Parasurāma, as told in the Mahābhārata⁵⁴ has no reference to Viṣṇu, but the first book of Rāmāyana, which is a later addition to the epic, contains a continuation of Parasurāma's story, according to which the hero was in possession of Viṣṇu's bow and met the young Rāma, son of Daśaratha, expressly to subdue him; but the latter, who had already broken Śiva's bow, now bent Viṣṇu's bow and deprived Parasurāma of his glory. This legend, apparantly a late invention, would be absurd on the supposition that both Rāmas are incarnations of Viṣṇu, since then the god would humiliate himself, but it shows that Parasurāma had, in popular tales, been brought into some connection with Viṣṇu; and this circumstance together with the name Rāma, which he shares with the more famous incarnation of Viṣṇu, may have facilitated his reception in the series of incarnations of that god.⁵⁵

The Brahma purāṇa clearly distinguishes the incarnation of lord Viṣṇu as Parasurāma from that of Daśarathī Rāma. It states that in this incarnation, lord Viṣṇu was born as the son of the sage Jamadagni and descendant of Bhṛgu. He cut the

53 Shri Jaya Chamarajendra Wadiyar Bahadur - Dattātreya - the way and the goal, P.74.

54 Mbh. iii. 115; xii.49.

55 ERE, Vol. 7, P.194.

thousand hands of Kārtavīrya Arjuna and cleared the earth twenty-one times of the kṣatriya class. In order to expiate his sins, he performed a horse-sacrifice and gave much dakṣiṇā and he gave the whole earth together with elephants, horses and chariots to the sage Kaśyapa. Even at present, he practised a severe penance on the mountain Mahendra, for the welfare of the world.⁵⁶ Thus it seems proper to conclude that the origin of this incarnation lies in the idea of restraining the kṣatriyas from arrogating dominion over the Brahmanical caste.

Rāma:- The incarnation of Rāma seems to be an incarnation in the making, for in the original parts of Rāmāyana, viz. bks. ii-vi, the poet regards his hero as essentially human, and seems entirely to ignore his divine character. The latter, however, is fully, acknowledged in bks. i and vii, which by common consent of all critics are declared to be later additions. Therefore, between the composition of the original work and the addition of these later parts the belief that Rāma is an incarnation of Viṣṇu must have arisen and gained universal assent. Before that time Rāma had been an epic hero, but the Rāmāyana seems to have made him immensely popular. Since the poet has described

⁵⁶ 213.113-122; also cf. Vanaparva 11071, Sānti 1707, Adi 272-280, Udyoga 7142.

him as the best of men, the most dutiful son and loving husband, as possessed of every virtue, in short, as an ideal man, he became the favourite of the people at large and so the subject of veneration. Thus it is not difficult to imagine that the epic hero became a popular god, and that in order to account for his divine dignity, notwithstanding his human character, he came to be regarded as one of the manifestations of the highest god - as an incarnation of Viṣṇu.⁵⁷

The Brahma purāṇa distinctly eulogises him as an incarnation of lord Viṣṇu. It states that in the twenty-fourth yuga lord Viṣṇu divided himself into four parts. In order to grace the world, to establish righteousness and to control the demons, lord Viṣṇu was born in the form of the four sons of Daśaratha. Rāma is described as Syāma, young, having red-eyes, brilliant, long-armed, strong, having the back as strong as that of a lion and mitabhāṣī. His wife is Sītā who was Laxmī before her incarnation as Sītā. Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa went to the forest and practised penance for 14 years. Residing in the Janasthāna, he worked for gods and killed Ravana and his army. He also killed the demons Vali, Lavaṇa, Mārīca, Subāhu, Virāḍha, Kabandha, and others. His arrows were like the sparks of fire and lightening and they

57 ERE, Vol.7, P.194.

were as effective as the thunderbolt of Indra. In the sacrifice conducted by Janaka, he showed his valour by breaking the bow of lord Śiva. After that he performed ten Asvamedhas and completed them without any obstruction. Rāma ruled the world for 10,000 years and the Br. P. gives a peaceful account of Rama's reign, popularly known as Rāma-rajya. After completing hundred sacrifices, Rāma went to heaven. He was the jewel of Ikṣvāku family (213.124-158).

Elsewhere he is glorified as a powerful hero but his being an incarnation of lord Viṣṇu is not mentioned. Thus it is said that Rāma built a great bridge over the ocean, killed Rāvana, brought back Sītā and purified her through fire but being blamed by some anāryas, he abandoned her near the hermitage of Vālmiki, after some days when Rāma performed a horse-sacrifice, Lava and Kusa, the sons of Rāma appeared there and sang the whole Rāmāyana. Rāma consecrated them and embraced them. The monkeys Sugrīva, Hanumān, Aṅgada and Jāmbavān came there and all of them went to the river Godāvarī and worshipped lord Śiva (A.154). Elsewhere it is said that after reigning the world for a long time, Rāma attained the status of lord Viṣṇu (176.50). There it is said that he killed the demons Mahodara, Prahasta, Nikumbha, Kumbha, Narantaka, Yamāntaka, Mālādhyā, Mālyavān, Indrajit, Kumbhakarna

and Ravana. He consecrated Bhārata and Satrughna on various kingdoms and coronated Sugrīva on the throne of Kiśkindhā and made Angada his Yuvarāja (176.40-48). Elsewhere it is said that Rāma was born to Daśaratha by the grace of the sage Rṣyaśṛṅga and he saved his father Daśaratha from the hell into which he had fallen as a result of committing the sin of a brahmin-murder (A.123).

The question of the incarnation of Rāma has been thoroughly examined by Dr. Yacobi in his book *Das Rāmāyana*. He remarks:- 'The remarkable change in Rāma's position from an epic hero to an incarnation of Viṣṇu which took place between the redaction of the original Rāmāyana and the addition of its first and last books, does not appear to be the result of a slow development of religious ideas, but seems to have been caused by the application to him of a theory already fully established. In other words, it is not likely that the theory of incarnation was first suggested by the story of Rāma, in all probability there was already another similar incarnation of Viṣṇu acknowledged by the people of India. This must have been his incarnation as Kṛṣṇa, since the preceding incarnations seem to have had little importance as far as popular religion was concerned. Kṛṣṇaism, in this sense, prevailed in India probably centuries before the

beginning of our era, while Rāmaism, so popular from the 10th century A.D. downwards is a comparatively later development.⁵⁸

Kṛṣṇa:- During the Brāhmaṇa period, Prajāpati, the creator was believed to assume, various forms as that of a boar and a tortoise in order to rescue the creation in times of distress. After him came Nārāyaṇa and he was identified with Viṣṇu, the slayer of demons. About the end of the vedic period a popular deity, Vasudeva, came to be acknowledged as a form of Viṣṇu. Now the race of the Yādavas, whose clans were settled both in the north and in the west of India, revered as their tribal hero kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, who had the renown of having been an earnest seeker of religious truth. It can be assumed that about this time the worship of Vāsudeva as a form of Viṣṇu had become the popular religion of the same people who worshipped their tribal hero and that both kinds of worship influencing each other intermingled in such a way that kṛṣṇa was believed to be a manifestation of Viṣṇu - in a word, a human incarnation of the supreme god.⁵⁹ Jacobi, further states that the widespread worship of kṛṣṇa as a tribal hero and demi-god, and his subsequent identification with Nārāyaṇa

⁵⁹ Ibid., P.196; vide also Wlater Ruben, Krishna, Konkordanz und kummentar Der Motive seines Heldenlebens, Istanbul, 1943.

gave birth to the theory of incarnation and therefore the incarnation of Viṣṇu as Kṛṣṇa is the most important one for the origin and development of the theory of incarnation.⁶⁰

The Brahma purāṇa provides a myth which connects his incarnation bodily with lord Viṣṇu. When lord Viṣṇu was implored by the gods to save the earth from the oppression of her enemies, Nārāyaṇa plucked out two of his own hairs, a black and a white one. Descending to the earth and entering the womb of Devakī, the black hair was born as kṛṣṇa, and the white hair was born as Baladeva. It is to be noted that this myth makes Baladeva also as an incarnation of Viṣṇu, though, he is also said to be an incarnation of Śeṣa, the snake-god (A.181). Heri kṛṣṇa is said to be a partial incarnation⁶¹ of lord Viṣṇu. Elsewhere it is said that the incarnation of Viṣṇu as kṛṣṇa is for the welfare of the world and that he killed many demons like Śālva, Caidya, Kamsa, Dvivida, Ariṣṭa, Vṛṣabha, Keśī, Pūtana, Kuvalayāpīḍa, Cānūra, Mustika and Narakāśura. He also cut the thousands hands of the demon Bāṇa (213.159,164). As the details about kṛṣṇa are given in the following pages, here he is not discussed at length.

60 ERE, Vol. VIII, P. 196.

61 Colophon, A.181.

Buddha:- The Brahma purāṇa does not provide with a description of Buddha as an incarnation but just mentions his name in the list of incarnations.

Kalkin:- He is yet to appear for the welfare of the world. He is to be born as Kalki by the name Viṣṇu-yaśas in the village Sambhala.⁶²

Monier Williams⁶³ has rightly concluded, 'looking more closely' at the ten incarnations, we may observe that in the first three Viṣṇu is supposed to be present in the body of animals, and in the fourth to take the form of being half animal half human, this last may be regarded as a kind of link, the object of which is to prevent too great abruptness in connecting the deity with the higher forms of worldly existence. From the mixed manifestation of half a lion, half a man, the transition is natural to that of a complete man. The divine essence passing into human forms commences with the smallest type of humanity, represented by a dwarf. Thence it rises to powerful sages and mighty heroes who deliver the world from the oppression of evil demons and tyrants whose power increases with the deterioration of mankind during the

62 213,164,165; also cf. Viṣṇu P. IV. 24.

63 M. Williams, Indian Wisdom, PP.334 ff; cf. also Rāmaṇuja quoted in Edinburgh conference Report IV.P.179 and T.E. Slater quoted in the 'Gods of India; P.108' by E.O. Martin, vide also Radhakrishnan's Kalki..

four ages. In the final manifestation, which remains to be entirely rooted out. We see in all this the working of the Hindu idea of transmigration. Even in Manu's time, it was an accepted dogma that the souls of men, popularly regarded as emanations from deity, might descend into the bodies of animals, or rise to those of higher beings. It was therefore an easy expansion of such a doctrine to imagine the divine soul itself as passing through various stages of incarnation for the delivery of the world from the effects of evil and sin and for the maintenance of order in the whole cycle of creation.'

This theory of incarnation has become immensely popular and is being applied in many cases even now. When a local saint has a proper shrine where he is worshipped, and his fame continues to increase, a legend is sure to be fabricated which declares him an avatara of some god or Rsi.⁶⁴ Thus the worship of Sai-bābā has become very popular.

As regards his worship, it is said that one should remember him in the waters as waters are his abode. Especially at the time of taking a bath, one should meditate on him with a holy feeling and should perform his nyasa (60.34,35).

64 ERE, Vol. VII, P.197.

One who worships him with japa, homa and arcana, who remembers lord Viṣṇu day and night and who recites the Vāsudeva-mantra 'Om namo nārāyaṇāya' never falls in hell (22.41,60.23). Elsewhere it is said that lord Viṣṇu should be worshipped with tāntrik mantras (61.45,46). The knowers of veda perform sacrifice in his honour (56.32). Out of all the expiations, remembrance of lord Hari is the best one. After committing sins, a sinner who remembers lord Hari only once, gets freedom from sons (22.38).

The details regarding his worship as 'Nārāyaṇa', as 'Jagannātha' and as 'kṛṣṇa' together with Balarāma and Subhadrā are given under the title 'worship' of chapter VII entitled 'Religion'.

Thus Viṣṇu impersonates the higher evolution, the upward tendency of the human spirit. He represents several great and far-reaching religious ideas. In the increasing flux and change of all things, he is their preserver; and although he is one of the highest gods, he has constantly revisited the earth either in animal or in human shape.⁶⁵

The kṛṣṇa problem is one of the most interesting and important topics in the domain of Indian literature and

⁶⁵ Lyall, Asiatic studies, ii. 306.

history and many oriental scholars,⁶⁶ have contributed their views regarding the problem.

According to traditional history as given in the purāṇas, kṛṣṇa belonged to the sātva-seet of the Yādavas, who formed the lunar dynasty, and was 94th in descent from Manu.⁶⁷ However, some purāṇas represent kṛṣṇa as coming from the solar dynasty.⁶⁸ The Br. P. states that kṛṣṇa belonged to the lunar race of the Vṛṣṇi family of the Yādavas (12.50, 196.23, 24). Thus both the solar and the lunar dynasties claimed kṛṣṇa as their own.

In the Rgveda,⁶⁹ Kausītaki Brāhmaṇa,⁷⁰ and Chāndogya upaniṣad,⁷¹ kṛṣṇa is referred to as a vedic seer, as a human personality. Pāṇini⁷² indicates that Vāsudeva and Arjuna, originally kṣatriya heroes, were raised to the ranks of gods before his time and Patañjali⁷³ shows that they had attained divinity by his time. In the oldest nucleus of the Mbh. there are clear references to the human

66 Important books and Papers on kṛṣṇa problem, see Pusalkar A.D., Epic and Purāṇic Studies, P.49.

67 Pargiter, AIHT, PP.102-17; 144 ff.

68 Hari. II.38.36.

69 Rv. viii.35.3.4.

70 XXX.9 - Kausītaki Br.

71 Ch. up. III.17.6.

72 Pāṇini IV.3.96; IV.3.98, Jacobi ERE, VII, P.195; Bhandarkar, Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism., P.4; Raychaudhari EHVS, PP.30-31.

73 Mahābhāṣya on 2.3.36, 3.1.26 and 3.2.11.

character of kṛṣṇa. In the later portions, he is represented as a semi-divine being, whereas the parts of the epic that come still later, regard kṛṣṇa as the supreme god.⁷⁴ The purāṇas also present various stages in the definition of the human hero kṛṣṇa. Thus the Br. P. states that when lord kṛṣṇa performed wonderful deeds like Kālīyadamana, Govardhana-dhāraṇa and the killing of Pralamba, in the form of a cowherd boy, the simple-minded villagers were perturbed and began to doubt about his human personality and said that one who performed deeds as were difficult to be performed even by the gods, cannot merely be a simple mighty human being and that surely kṛṣṇa was either a god or a danava or a yakṣa or a gandharva; and kṛṣṇa, though representing an incarnation of Viṣṇu, assures them that he was neither a god, nor a gandharva, nor a yakṣa, nor a danava, but he was simply their brother (189.2-12). Thus here one can see a happy blending of the divine and human elements in śrī kṛṣṇa's character, the divine element predominating while performing the wonderful deeds and the human element prevailing while assuring the villagers.

Among the purāṇas, the Harivaṃśa, Brahma, Viṣṇu, Bhāgavata and Brahmavaivarta deal exhaustively with the life

74 Mbh. V. 79.5-6.

of kṛṣṇa and the accounts in the different purāṇas are not only inconsistent but mutually contradictory. After critically examining some incidents of kṛṣṇa's life, Ruben has come to the conclusion that the original supplement (khila) of the Mahābhārata was much shorter than the present khila Harivaṃśa, that the original Harivaṃśa is the oldest purāṇa, and that the original archetype of the Harivaṃśa has been better preserved in the Brahma.⁷⁵ Different scholars arrange the order of purāṇas in different ways. Viṣṇu - Harivaṃśa - Bhāgavata - Brahmavaivarta,⁷⁶ Harivaṃśa - Brahma - Viṣṇu - Bhāgavata - Brahmavaivarta,⁷⁷ Brahma - Viṣṇu - Bhāgavata - Brahmavaivarta,⁷⁸ etc. Tadpatrikar⁷⁹ critically evaluates the different accounts of kṛṣṇa given in the purāṇas and shows that only the Brahma and Viṣṇu have a common text, and that the former has an account older than the Viṣṇu.

75 JAOS, 61 PP. 115-127; JRAS, 1941, PP. 247-256.

76 Tattvabhāṣana, kṛṣṇa and the Gītā, P. 56.

77 Durgashankar Shastri, Purāṇa Vivecana, PP. 133.5.

78 Ruben, Festschrift Thomas, PP. 188-203.

79 Kṛṣṇa problem, PP. 276-277.

Besides these, the Padma, Agni, Bhāgavata and Brahmavaivarta deal at some length with the kṛṣṇa story, and the Harivaṃśa, truly as the supplement of the Mbh., goes over the entire puranic story and omits all the references to the Mahābhārata story. The Bhāgavata combines both the epic and purāṇic accounts. The Brahmavaivarta is a late work and mainly glorifies Rādhā.⁸⁰

As regards the much discussed⁸¹ problem of the identity of kṛṣṇa and Vāsudeva, the Brahma purāṇa provides that Vasudeva and kṛṣṇa were one and the same person (179.11) and that the deification of Vāsudeva kṛṣṇa and his identification as an incarnation of Viṣṇu were complete before the composition of the Brahma purāṇa (179.12). Another much debated problem regarding Vāsudeva-kṛṣṇa is his identification with Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu. Nārāyaṇa and Viṣṇu were originally names of distinct deities, but later on they were identified.⁸² The Brahma purāṇa clearly identifies them. As the deification of kṛṣṇa and his identification with Viṣṇu as his avatara find full expression in the Bhagavadgītā, it might be taken to date at least since the pre-buddhist period.⁸³

80 Pusalkar A.D., Epic and Purāṇic Studies, P.61.

81 Ibid., Bhandarkar, Op.Cit., P.49.

82 Bhandarkar, Op.Cit., PP.44-48; Durgasankar Sastri, Vaisnavadharmāno Samkṣipta Itihāsa, PP.84-87.

83 Pusalkar A.D., Op.Cit.

As kṛṣṇa's life in Gokula is not given in the Mahābhārata and some earlier texts, some scholars take them to be later additions. Dhruva thinks the purāṇic and Mahābhārata stories of kṛṣṇa to be a blending of poetic fancy and historical facts and seeks philosophical and symbolical explanations for most of the exploits of kṛṣṇa in childhood.⁸⁴ Some stories as the approach of Earth to the gods and the promise of god to be born for her relief (A.181), exaggerated accounts of some of the miraculous feats of child kṛṣṇa (A.184-192). Fight between Indra and kṛṣṇa for the Pārijāta tree (A.203-204) etc. are evidently added after the deification of kṛṣṇa was complete. As the accounts given in the purāṇas constitute important landmarks for the development of the kṛṣṇa myth and the evolution of the Vaiṣṇava religion, a detailed analysis of the account as given in the Brahma purāṇa is worth representing.

In the olden times, the sage Garga had prophesized that lord Viṣṇu would take an incarnation at the end of the twenty-eighth Dvāpara age (196.26,27; 176.52,53; A.181) and accordingly, when the earth was oppressed by the evil forces, she approached gods, and lord Viṣṇu consented to take birth as kṛṣṇa (A.181). Thus Devakī, the wife of Vasudeva, gave

84 Dhruva A.B., Āpaṇo Dharma, PP. 752 ff.

birth to lord kṛṣṇa in the middle of night on the eighth day of the black half of a month in the rainy season (381.44, 182.11). Before the birth of kṛṣṇa, Kamsa, the son of Ugrasena, had usurped the Mathurā throne and had imprisoned Vasudeva and Devakī (181.34). Relying on the prophecy of Nārada that Devakī's eighth child would kill him, Kamsa used to kill the children of Devakī (181.31-35). Kṛṣṇa was born in the prison cell at Mathurā, but immediately after birth, was removed to Gokula, and by the power of lord Viṣṇu, all the prison warders and Yaśodā fell asleep during the transfer of kṛṣṇa from Mathurā to Gokula (182.20-25). In the veda, the Ṣuṇ, in the form of Mārtanda, is the eighth son born of Aditi, and his mother casts him off, just as Devakī, who is at times represented as an incarnation of Aditi, removes Krishna. -(A. Barth, The Religious of India, P. 173.) He was brought up in Gokula as the child of Nanda and Yaśodā, whose daughter was substituted for kṛṣṇa, and the baby daughter an incarnation of Yogamāyā, was later killed by Kamsa who on reaching heaven declared to Kamsa that the person who was destined to kill him had already been born (182.27-31).

As a child, kṛṣṇa appears to have been extraordinary, and he passed through many a crisis.⁸⁵ He was once attacked by Putanā who had the power to kill children while nursing

⁸⁵ Pusalkar A.D., Op.Cit., P.68.

them at her breast. But kṛṣṇa pressed her so hard that immediately she fell dead (184.7-10). Putanā has variously been given as a female nurse a fearful bird and a terrible giantess.⁸⁶ Suśrūta⁸⁷ mentions Putanā as a fatal children's disease. Dhruva⁸⁸ interprets the Putanā story to mean that the benevolent power of the Almighty is superior to the power of the diseases harassing young children. Thereafter, while he was kept beneath a cart by his mother, he overturned it by the stroke of his foot (184.23). Once while tied to a mortar with a rope round his waist in order to prevent him from playing mischief, kṛṣṇa tried to extricate himself from the rope and began to drag the mortar after him till it stuck fast amid two Arjuna trees, which eventually were uprooted and fell down. As the rope was tied round his waist, he was called Dāmodara (184.35-39,41,42). On account of the onrush of evil omens and hundreds of troubles, the cowherds in a body left Gokula for Vṛndāvana and soon settled there (184.44-51). In Vṛndāvana, kṛṣṇa subjugated Kālīyā, a Nāga chōḥf and released him on the condition of his leaving that place with his tribe (A.185). Bhagwan Das⁸⁹ takes the subjugation of Kālīya to represent reign over five senses. Kṛṣṇa and

⁸⁶ Pusalkar A.D., Op.Cit., P.68.

⁸⁷ Uttaratantra, Ch. 27.37.

⁸⁸ Āpāno Dharma, P. 758.

⁸⁹ Kṛṣṇa, P.59.

Balarāma killed the demons Dhenuka and many others who had the faces of donkeys (A.185). Kṛṣṇa used to gather his friends in the forest and played many a game, during the course of which Balarāma killed Pralamba, an Asura, who joined them dressed as a cowherd boy (187.1-30). On kṛṣṇa's advice, instead of celebrating the worship in honour of Indra current among the herdsmen, they performed the Giriyajña in honour of the mountain Govardhana. There was a heavy rainfall when the herdsmen were engaged in their new sacrifice and kṛṣṇa protected them by holding the mountain Govardhana on their last finger, the rainfall being the result of Indra's wrath (187.42-50, A.183). Lord kṛṣṇa himself received all the oblations as he himself took the form of the great mountain and together with the herdsmen worshipped his second form (187.59,60). According to Dhruva⁹⁰ the Govardhana story shows us the world surrounding us as superior to Indra in the sky and should be regarded as Īśvara. On seeing kṛṣṇa's power, Indra came there and consecrated him as Indra of cows 'Gavāṃ Indre' - Govinda - sprinkling him with the water pouring from the trunk of Airāvata. Then kṛṣṇa played the famous Rāsa with the gopīs and the Brahma purāṇa represents, Rāsa as a maddening love of youthful maidens for a young man (A.189). Kṛṣṇa then killed the demon Arīṣṭa who came to Vṛndāvana in the form of a bull (189.47-59).

⁹⁰ Apāno Dharma, P. 759.

Kṛṣṇa's extraordinary exploits and wide fame reached the ears of Kāṁsa and he planned to kill ~~them~~ through his wrestlers. He sent Akrūra as an envoy to Vṛndāvana with an invitation to kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to visit his court and attend the wrestling bouts (190.10-15). Before starting for Mathurā, kṛṣṇa killed the demon Keśī and was known as Keśava (190.43). Then, according to the message of Kāṁsa, kṛṣṇa and Balarāma started for Mathurā to visit the court of Kāṁsa and attend his wrestling bouts. On their way, kṛṣṇa astonished Akrūra by showing him his two forms (192.34-66). Soon after reaching Mathurā, kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had an affray with the washerman of Kāṁsa and as he denied to give the clothes demanded by them and spoke undignified words, kṛṣṇa killed him (192.70-72). Then he granted the wish of flower-man to attain prosperity (193.1-12). Kṛṣṇa turned Kubjā into a beautiful maiden as she applied the anointments prepared for Kāṁsa to kṛṣṇa and Balarāma (193.30). In the main tournament kṛṣṇa and Balarāma killed the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa (193.62), kṛṣṇa killed the wrestlers Caṇūra (193.67) and Toṣala (193.63) and Balarāma killed the wrestler Muṣṭika (193.74). Kṛṣṇa also killed the tyrant Kāṁsa (193.78). He then bowed down to his parents Vasudeva and Devakī and reinstated Ugrasena on the Mathurā throne (194.9). Kṛṣṇa sent Vāyu to bring the

Sudharmā Sabhā from Indra and gave it to Ugrasena (197.15-18).

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma then left for Avantipura near Kāśī for their education at the hermitage of Sāṇḍīpani and they learnt all the lores within sixty-four days. After that they killed the demon Pañcajana who had carried away the son of the sage Sāṇḍīpani, made a weapon of his bones, went to Yamaloka conquered Yama and gave the son to the sage Sāṇḍīpani as Gurudaksina (A.195). Enraged at Kamsa's death, Jarāsandha, his father-in-law and ruler of Magadha, invaded Mathurā with a large army a number of times, but kṛṣṇa repelled the invasions and he defeated Jarāsandha for 21 times (A.195). In order to protect the people from the danger of Kālayavana, the lord of Yavanas, kṛṣṇa built the city of Dwārakā and sent the people there. After that he went to Mathurā and seeing him without weapons, Kālayavana followed him, kṛṣṇa concealed himself in a cave. Kālayavana followed him and kicked a man sleeping in the cave thinking him to be kṛṣṇa. The man who was sleeping was the great Mucukunda and Kālayavana was burnt by the fire emanating from his eyes (196.16-23). Kṛṣṇa then married Rukmiṇī, the daughter of Bhīṣmaka, the Vīdarbha king, whom her brother Rukmi intended to marry to Śiśupāla (A.199). The famous story of the Syamantaka jewel is also given by the Brahṃa

purāṇa. Kṛṣṇa wanted the Syamantaka jewel which was in possession of the king Prasenjit. A lion killed Prasenjit and carried away the jewel with him. As kṛṣṇa wanted the jewel, people suspected kṛṣṇa to be the killer of Prasenjit. Kṛṣṇa traced out the whole thing and found that Jāmbavan had got the jewel after killing the lion. Kṛṣṇa fought with Jāmbavan, got the jewel and married his daughter Jāmbavatī. He then gave it to Satrajit to whom it originally belonged and married his daughter Satyabhāmā. Akrūra got the jewel from Satadhanvā who had obtained it by killing Satrajit. By the power of Yoga, kṛṣṇa knew that the jewel was with Akrūra. Without any hesitation, Akrūra gave the jewel to kṛṣṇa who gave it back to him (16.28-47), (17.1-40). It is curious to note that the story of the Syamantaka jewel does not occur in the regular kṛṣṇa-story but is given separately.

By Rukminī, kṛṣṇa had a son Pradyumna who afterwards killed Sambara (A.199). The other children of kṛṣṇa and Rukminī were Cārudeśa, Sudeśa, Cāradeha, Suśeṣa, Cārugupta, Bhadracāru, Cāruvinda, Cāru and a daughter Cārumatī. Besides Rukminī, kṛṣṇa had other seven chief queens. Their names are: Kālindī, Nagnajitī, Jāmbavatī, Rohinī, Suśīlā, Satyabhāmā and Lakṣmānā (201.1-5). Kṛṣṇa then killed the demon Mura

and burnt his 7,000 sons. He then killed the demons Haya-grīva and Pañcajana (202.17-21). Kṛṣṇa killed the demon Narakā, married his 16,000 wives and took into possession all his wealth (202.32-35, 204.13). For the Parijata tree, kṛṣṇa had a terrible fight with Indra and other gods and eventually Indra gave the tree to him (A.203,204). Kṛṣṇa had a terrible fight with Bāṇāsura and lord Śiva as Bāṇāsura had captivated Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna, who had gone to Bāṇa's city to enjoy with Usā, the daughter of Bāṇa (A.206). Kṛṣṇa killed Vasudeva, the king of Paundra who wrongly believed himself to be an incarnation of Viṣṇu (A.207). Kṛṣṇa had the sons Sāmba by Jāmbavatī, Bhadravinda by Nāgnajitī, Samgrāmajit by Śaibya, Vṛka by Mādri, Gātravān by Lakṣmenā, and Śrṅga by Kālindī. In all he had 8,800 sons (205.1-5). Kṛṣṇa relieved the earth by destroying the evil forces, then he thought of destroying his own dynasty. Once the Yādavas went to Prabhāsa to perform religious rites. There they enjoyed themselves and drank heavily. From hot words they came to blows and with the erakā grass which had grown there and which was as sharp as thunderbolt, they fought with each other and killed each other (210.36-47). The relation between the erakā grass and the musala is provided by Brahma purāṇa in the famous anecdote of Sāmba and musala. Once the sages

Viśvaṁitra, Kaṇva and Nārada had come to the great tīrtha Pinḍāraka. The Yādava princess wanted to poke fun of them. So they garbed Sāmba in the dress of a pregnant woman and asked the sages as to who would be born to Sāmba. The sages knew the trick and cursed them that Sāmba would give birth to a musāla which would bring an end to the whole Yādava dynasty. Accordingly, a musala was afterwards produced from Sāmba and Ugrasena pierced it into powder and threw it into the great ocean from where it grew in the form of the grass erakā. A portion of the musala remained and could not be powdered, that too was thrown in the ocean and was devoured by a great fish; which afterwards reached the hands of a hunter who made an arrow out of the portion of musala which at the end became the cause of the death of lord kṛṣṇa (210.6-15). After the great mass-acre of Yadavas at their own hands, kṛṣṇa sent his charioteer Dārūka to Hastināpur with the news and a message to Arjuna to come to Dwārakā to look after the women and children. He himself consoled the wailing women and children, and asked them to await Arjuna's arrival and then to accompany him to Hastināpur as Dwārakā was destined to be swallowed by the sea (210.53-58). Kṛṣṇa was hit by the arrow of a hunter Jarā who mistook him for deer, kṛṣṇa assured him that he would attain heaven and

he passed away (A.211). Pusalkar⁹¹ states that from the name of the hunter, viz. Jarā it can be inferred that kṛṣṇa died of old age. Arjuna came to Dwārakā, took with him the remnants of the Yadu family, and installed Vajra, the only surviving grandson of kṛṣṇa on the throne of Mathurā, but on his way to Mathurā, the wives of kṛṣṇa were carried away by the Ābhīras (213.1-21). Vyāsa consoled Arjuna that he need not repent, since the fate of the wives of kṛṣṇa was destined to be so by the curse of the sage Aṣṭāvakra in their previous birth (213.30-95). This, in short, is the life of kṛṣṇa as given by the Brahma purāṇa.

His description gives us an idea of his beauty. He has beautiful hair and beautiful eyebrows (42.46). His eyes are lustrous and beautiful like lotus (49.8, 21, 12). He is also called Padmapatrāyatekṣaṇa (50.43, 59, 74-77, 176.22-24), Puṇḍarikākṣa (177.23; 182.12) and Prafullapadmapatrākṣa (191.20). He has a pretty and long nose (42.48). His face is compared to a lotus (191.21, 51.14). He is also said to have four faces (49.6). He has good teeth (42.48), a cheerful smile and his lower lip always shines on account of the smile (42.48, 191.21). He has red nails, (191.21). His

91 Pusalkar A.D., Op.Cit., P.74.

chest is wide and big and it is marked by the sign of śrī and vatsa (191.20, 50.43, 182.12).

His complexion is said to be of various types. Sometimes it is described like the blue cloud and hence kṛṣṇa is called by various epithets like Nīlameghābha (49.7), Prāvr̥ṇmeghapratikāśa (51.16), Nīlajīmūtasamkāśa (59.75) etc. Sometimes it is said to be like a lotus and moon and the epithets kṣīrodajalasamkāśa (59.76), Phullendīvarapatrābha (182.12) and Phullanīlotpaladalachhavi (191.19) and Vimalaścandrasannibha (59.76) are applied to him. He wears yellow clothes (191.22, 51.10, 176.24) Mukuta and aṅgada (42.47, 49.19) ear-rings (42.47), Vanamālā (49.20, 191.22), white lotuses in ears (191.22).

He holds plough in his hand (49.6). The plough is a special weapon of Balarāma but here it is ascribed to kṛṣṇa also. His special weapons are Sudarśana Cakra, Pañcajanya conch, Kaumodakī Gadā, Śārṅga bow and a sword (50.43, 49.19, ~~51~~ 51.14; 59.77). His banner has the sign of a bird or of a fish (59.77, 49.3). The idol of kṛṣṇa is described as Suklavarṇābha, Śāradendusamaprabha, Āraktākṣa, Mahākāya, Sphaṭavikaṭamastaka, nīlāmbaraḍṇara, Kuṇḍalaikadhara and gadāmusāladhārin (50.49, 56).

Not only in his description does kṛṣṇa resemble Viṣṇu to a great extent but most of his epithets also are common to those of Viṣṇu. Thus he is called by some particular epithets as Govinda, and Mādhava ((16.25,33), Vāsudeva (16.29), Purusottama, Sankarṣaṇa, Dharaṇīdhara (49.2), Ratikānta, Aniruddha, Jagannātha and Madhusūdana, Tridaśārcita, Viṣṇu, Narasimha (49.1-11). He is called by the names of other gods as Brahmā, Śiva, Indra and Yama (51.4). He is called the husband of Kamalā, the destroyer of Kāṁsa, Aṛiṣṭa and the dānavas (55.21,22). He is called Upendra (188.35), Sūrya, Dhātā, Vidhātā, Indra, Varuṇa, Kubera, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, Brahmā, Paśupati, Aryama (199.55,56).

He confers boons and is dear to gods (49.20,21). He kills the enemies, gives prosperity, destroys sins and protects the people (51.2, 10.16). He is earth, water, fire, air, sky, mind, Ahaṁkāra, Buddhi, Prakṛti, sattva, puruṣa, higher than puruṣa, Vāṇakhyā, Prajāpati, Asura and everything that constitutes the moveable and immovable (55.23-35). In Satyayuga, he is known as Hari, in gods he is known as Vaikunṭha, and in men he is known as kṛṣṇa (179.70,71). He resides within all the beings and the past and future are framed according to his instructions. In sacrifice the

oblations are offered to him (193.82,83). The reason of his birth is his lila (206.42).

Some philosophical epithets are ascribed to him. He is citsvabhāva, nirañjana, devoid of bhāva as well as abhāva, nirlepa, nirguṇa, the best, kūṭastha, acala, dhruva, devoid of all the limitations, and advaita. He has two aspects the formless and the one having a form. But even the gods do not know his formless aspect (49.1-22). He is called Ādya, Isānu, Niṣkala, Sanātana, beyond Śabda and Guṇa, Nirlepa, Nirguṇa, Sūkṣma, Sarvajña, Vibhu and avyaya (51.10-12). He is Kūṭastha, Śāsvata, Aja and Śānta (55.32-35). He is called Akṣaya, Nirvikāra, Nirmala, Nityatrupta, and Nirāmaya (179.65-75). By establishing him in one's heart, one crosses the avidya of Yogamāyā (191.13,14). He is Śabdasvarupa, Vijñānasvarupa and Havisvarupa (192.49). People have ātma-buddhi in anātman things on account of his māyā (203.11).

He was highly respected and his words were carried out (17.36). One who being engrossed in his dharma meditates on him crosses all the māyā and attains liberation (203.12,13). The triple function of creation, preservation and destruction of the world is also ascribed to him (212.63) with his various forms he protects the world and taking the form of a Sun, he destroys the world at the time of Pralaya (192.57). According

to Barth⁹² kṛṣṇa is a solar deity Grierson⁹³ also finds connection between the religion preached by kṛṣṇa and Sun-worship. But Keith⁹⁴ has refuted their views and has shown that no original solar character can be ascribed to kṛṣṇa and the very name kṛṣṇa speaks seriously against the solar theory.

As regards the problem of identifying Vāsudeva-kṛṣṇa with the Gopāla-kṛṣṇa, it should be stated that the Brahma purāṇa represents a stage when the legend about the cowherd kṛṣṇa must have already been current and his identification with Vāsudeva-kṛṣṇa been effected. In the Nārāyaṇīya section of the MBH, the avatāra of Vāsudeva is mentioned for the destruction of Kāṁsa but of none of the demons whom the cow-herd kṛṣṇa killed in the cow-settlement, whereas in the statement of the Brahma Purāṇa (181.8-12) the avatāra of kṛṣṇa is meant to destroy all the demons that appeared in the cow-settlement as well as of Kāṁsa. In this respect, the Brahma purāṇa is at par with the Harivaṁśa,⁹⁵ the Vāyu P.,⁹⁶ and the Bhāgavata P.⁹⁷

92 Religions of India, PP. 382, 466-7.

93 Indian Antiquary, 1908, P.171.

94 cf. Raychaudhari H.C., Materials for the study of the Early History of the Vaiṣṇava sect., P.43.

95 vv. 5876-5878.

96 98, vv. 100-102.

97 II.7,

The name Govinda given to kṛṣṇa occurs in Āita and other parts of the Mbh. It is an ancient name being derived by a vārtika on P.III.1.133. In the Ādi parvan of the Mbh., the etymology is given as the form of a boar who found the earth (go) in the waters which he agitated. The origin of the name may be traced to this legend but most probably Govinda is a later form of Govid, which in the Rv. is applied to Indra as a founder of the cows. The Brahma purāṇa gives two etymologies - 'Indrām Gāṃ Avindyat' as Indra got the world from him and 'Gavām Indra', therefore, he is called Govinda.

Sesa and Balarama

Serpent worship arose from the fears entertained about the deadly effects of snake-bites.⁹⁸ The serpent-cult is very ancient and is referred to in the Taittiriya Samhitā,⁹⁹ Kathaka Samhitā¹⁰⁰ and Vājasaneyī Samhitā.¹⁰¹ Fergusson¹⁰² traces serpent worship in the nations of antiquity, such as in Egypt, Judea, Greece etc. It occurs very frequently in the Mbh.¹⁰³ The purāṇas are full of the shrines of serpents

⁹⁸ Kane P.V., HDS, II. II, P. 823.

⁹⁹ iv. 2.8.3.

¹⁰⁰ 16.16

¹⁰¹ 13.6-8.

¹⁰² Tree and Serpent worship (1868).

¹⁰³ Ādi 35,123.71; Wdyoga 103, 9-16; Anuśāsana 150.41.

and the Brahma purāṇa states that the snakes are the sons of Kasyapa and Surasā and Kadrū. Surasā gave birth to thousand serpents-sarpas and Kadrū gave birth to thousand Nāgas, the chief of whom were Śeṣa, Vāsuki, Takṣaka, Airāvata, Mahāpadma, Kambhala, Asvatara, Elāpatra, Saṅkha, Karkotaka, Dhanāñjaya, Mahānīla, Mahākarna, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Balahoka, Kuhara, Puṣpadamstra, Durmukha, Sumukha, Saṅkha, Saṅkhaṇḍa, Kapila, Vāmana, Nahuṣa, Saṅkharomā, Mani and thousand others (3.96-101).

Garuda is their enemy (A.90) and devours them whence it has been interpreted that the Nāgas represent darkness which is dispelled by Śun. When Brahma divided the kingdom, he made Vāsuki, the king of Nāgas and Takṣaka, the king of serpents (4.7). Serpent worship continues to this day particularly in South India, and the serpents are worshipped on the 5th of the bright or half of Śrāvana called Nāgapañcamī. India possesses more varieties of serpents than any single country in the world and the toll of life taken by snake bites is very heavy as compared with any other country.¹⁰⁴

In the Av.,¹⁰⁵ the names of some mythical serpents, viz. Takṣaka, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Airāvata occur. In the Mahābhārata¹⁰⁶ the names of the serpents that support the earth, viz.

¹⁰⁴ Kane P.V., Op.Cit.

¹⁰⁵ Av. VIII, 14.14.16.

¹⁰⁶ Anusāsana Parva 150.41; Udyoga 103.9-16; Adi 35; 123.71.

Vasuki, Ananta and others are introduced and Sesa (Ananta) has been promoted to a higher rank, and he is represented as supporting the earth on his expanded hoods, and he has become a servant of Visnu, who rests on him while sleeping in the ocean.

The Br. P. also deals at length with Sesa and describes him as follows. The Tamasa form of lord Visnu resides in Pātāla. The Siddhas call him Ananta. He has thousand heads. On his hoods there are thousands of jewels and through them all the directions are shining. He is decorated by swastika-shaped ornaments. One Kundala is shining in his ears and the head is decorated by Kirita; and the neck shines by a necklace of jewels. He shines like a white mountain. He wears blue clothes and white garlands. He remains intoxicated and in his one hand, he holds musala, whereas the other hand rests on hala. The serpent wives apply the Hari-candana to him and by his breaths all the directions become fragrant. He lives at the root of Pātāla and bears the whole world on his head. In order to mind the well-being of the world, he takes away the power of all the demons. At the time of Pralaya, Rudra - the destroying power - comes out of his mouth in the form of flames and destroys the three worlds. He maintains the gods, the asuras, all the beings and all the

worlds. The gods and the devārshis offer worship to him. Even the gods cannot describe the greatness of his strength, nature, appearance and brightness. The whole world appears red on account of the rays emanating from the jewels worn by him. When the lord Ananta yawns, the whole world together with the mountains, oceans and forests begins to swing. As even the gandharvas, nymphs, siddhas, kinnaras and serpents are unable to find out his end he is called Ananta, the symbol of eternity. The sage Garga obtained the knowledge of the Jyotiṣśāstra by worshipping the lord Ananta.¹⁰⁷ Elsewhere it is stated that he was the lord of Pātāla. When the demons drove him out, he prayed lord Śiva, obtained a Śula from him, killed the enemies and regained the lordship of Pātāla. A fruit Bilva grew on the path from which he went to lord Śiva and from it the river Ganges emerged.¹⁰⁸ Manināga is the son of Sesa and the Brahma purāṇa relates how Manināga worshipped Śiva in order to get freedom from the danger of Garuḍa (A.90). Thus it can be seen how the Brahma purāṇa deifies Sesa and how many epithets and attributes later on ascribed to Balarama, considered to be his incarnation, are attributed to him.

107 21.13-28.

108 A.115.

Balarāma

Bhandarkar¹⁰⁹ provides with a passage of Niddesa which mentions the religious prevailing in the fourth century B.C. among which there is a mention of the worship of Balarāma along with kṛṣṇa. An inscription found at Ghosundi in Rajputana¹¹⁰ also proves the worship of Vasudeva in 2nd century B.C. In the inscription No.1 in the large cave at Nanaghat,¹¹¹ the names of Saṃkarsana and Vāsudeva, in a dvandva compound, occur along with those of the other deities in the opening invocation. In the Nāṭyāṇīya section of the Mbh., Saṃkarsana is mentioned as form of Vasudeva.¹¹² In ch. 344 of the same section Saṃkarsana is given as the individual soul and Bhandarkar¹¹³ concludes that the idea of a religion of devotion of Vāsudeva arose in earlier times, but it received a definite shape when Vāsudeva revealed the Gītā to Arjuna and led to the formation of an independent sect, when his brother and grandson were associated with him as his forms presiding over certain psychological categories, or as persons created by him for the purpose. That sect became conterminous

109 Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, P. 3.

110 Ibid., P.4,

111 Ibid., P.5.

112 Ibid., P.8.

113 Ibid., P.11.

with the race of the sātvas. The Br. P. acknowledges Balarāma as an avatāra of Viṣṇu and gives him due importance as the elder brother of kṛṣṇa besides mentioning his worship with kṛṣṇa and Subhadrā at Konārka. Even at present, Balarāma is worshipped at Mathurā and there is a celebrated temple in his honour where he is worshipped by the name of Dauji. The idol of Balarāma holds a cup in his hand, a cup meant for wine to which his addiction is famous. Behind him there is a shrine of serpent Śeṣa of whom he is considered to be an incarnation. Even at present he is worshipped as Vrajarāja in the northern India.

He is considered to be an incarnation of Śeṣa (181.39) as well as of Viṣṇu. It is said that after the incarnation of Rāma, Viṣṇu snatched out two hair - one black and another white - from his body, the black hair was incarnated as lord kṛṣṇa and the white hair was incarnated as Balarāma. Thus Balarāma too, like kṛṣṇa, is considered to be an amsāvatāra of Viṣṇu.¹¹⁴ He was the seventh child of Vasudeva and Devakī but on account of the fear of Kāṁsa he was dragged from Devakī's foetus and was afterwards transferred to the womb of Rohiṇī. Therefore, he is known as Saṁkarṣana (181.39-42). This story is apparently invented in order to make him a

114 181.17, Mbh. Bom. ed., I. 197.33.

brother of kṛṣṇa, probably the two popular gods Govinda-Vāsudeva and Baladeva were closely connected, and, after the former was identified with the Rajput hero kṛṣṇa, the latter came to be regarded as his brother.¹¹⁵ A similar transfer of an embryo is told by the Śvetāmbara Jains of Mahāvīra, who was transferred from the womb of Devanandā to that of Trisalā.

The Brahma purāṇa gives his description as follows: His eyes are like the lotus (50.51,52). He has a face prettier than Moon (58.21-26). His hands are long (191.24, 25). He wears blue clothes and beautiful ornaments and in his neck, he wears a Vanamālā (192.36-38). He is very tall and like the mountain Kailāsa surrounded by clouds on account of his blue dress (192.24,25). His body is fair like Kanda flower (192.36,38). He is called Gaurāṅga, Kṣīravarṇa, Nīlajimūtasannibha, Atasipaṣpasamkāśa (50.45,46,51,52). He wears one Kuṇḍala (54.21-26) and is decorated by Swastika (50. (17.79) 45-46). He holds plough, muśala/and cakṛa (50.51,52). He is called Lāṅgalin (17.19). He is the husband of Revatī, the daughter of king Revata and he had two sons, Niṣatha and Ulmūka by her (7.29-39; 50.45,46, 108.19). In the Mbh.,¹¹⁶ the sons of Balārama are mentioned but not as his sons by

¹¹⁵ ERE, Vol. VII, P.195.

¹¹⁶ Bom. ed. 2.34.6.

Revati. He is called Ananta because not even the gods, the dānavas, gandharvas, yakṣas, vidyādhara and uragas are able to know end (50.45,46). Here he is identified with Sesa, who too as previously shown was called Ananta. He is divine and the bestower of all the desired things (50.51,52). He is dear to the devotees and is worshipped by the gods and he is unconquerable (58.31-36). He is the lord Sesa himself who holds the earth (A.208). He is the Ātman of all, subtler than subtle, cause of the whole world, a precedent of all the causes, the advitiya ātman, the ātman of the world and aprameya (187.22-26).

The following anecdotes are given regarding Balarāma. Satadhanvā had the jewel Syamantaka. Śrī kṛṣṇa killed him in order to get it but found that Satadhanvā had not it then in his possession. When śrī kṛṣṇa related this to Balarāma, Balarāma was not prepared to believe that kṛṣṇa had not got the jewel and refused to believe ~~the~~ Śrī kṛṣṇa's statement. He broke all the relations with kṛṣṇa and entered Mithilā. There he was highly respected by all. Duryodhana went to Mithilā and learnt the gadāvidyā from Balarāma. Kṛṣṇa then pleased him and brought him back to Dwārakā (17.20-28). Balarāma killed the donkey faced demon Dhenuka (A.186). In

a game called Harikrīḍana, a demon called Pralamba disguised himself as one of the playmates, carried Balarāma at his back and began to fly. Realising his trick, Balarāma pressed him with all his weight and force which the demon was unable to bear and hence the demon had to abandon the disguise and thereupon Balarāma killed him with his fist-blows (187.1-30). Balarāma and kṛṣṇa killed the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa (193.30). Balarāma killed the demon-wrestler Muṣṭika (193.65). He also killed Sunāmā, the brother of Kāṁsa (193.77).

Balarāma is famous for his addiction to wine. Varuṇa sent the wine Varuṇī to Balarāma for a drink. Balarāma drank it to his heart's desire and being intoxicated ordered the river Yamunā to come to him as he wanted to take a bath. As the river Yamunā did not come, he dragged her with his plough (A.198). He defeated the kings Paṇḍraka, Dantavakra, Vidūratha, Siśupāla, Jarāsandha, Śālva and others when they followed kṛṣṇa while he was carrying away Rukmiṇī (199.7). On the occasion of the marriage of Aniruddha with his granddaughter, Rukmi invited Balarāma for gambling. Rukmi was an expert in gambling and Balarāma lost much wealth. The king of Kalinga mocked at him. Being irritated, Balarāma staked one crore mudras, Rukmi played his turn and Balarāma won but Rukmi protested saying that he had not consented to the game.

Upon this the divine speech declared that even though Rukmi did not say anything about the betting, Rukmi's playing his turn amounted to giving consent to the bet, and that therefore, Balarāma had won the bet. But Rukmi did not even then accept the ruling so Balarāma got angry and killed Rukmi by throwing at him the Aṣṭaṇḍa. He also broke the teeth of the king of Kalinga and killed all the kings who were partisans of Rukmi (202.11-25). Balarāma killed the army of Bāṇāsura when there was a terrible fight between kṛṣṇa and Bāṇāsura (206.30). Sāmba was attempting to kidnap Lakṣmāṇā, the daughter of Duryodhana. Thereupon Duryodhana and others caught hold of Sāmba. Balarāma went to Hastināpur and requested to release Sāmba. When they did not comply with the wish of Balarāma, he shook the city with his plough and thereupon Duryodhana and others released Sāmba (A.208). Once when Balarāma was in the company of his wife Revatī, a monkey Dvivīd threw a slab of stone on him and Balarāma killed him with his fist (A.209). At the time of death, Balarāma went into Samādhi whereupon a serpent emerged from his mouth and entered the ocean and the serpent was worshipped by the Siddhas and the Uragas (210.50-53). The Br. P. deals at length with the worship of Balarāma along with kṛṣṇa and Subhadrā and the mode of his worship is described in the

section 'Worship' of Chapter VII on 'Religion'. Elsewhere it is said that one who worships Balarama gets the desired rewards and becoming free from all the sins, goes to Viṣṇu-loka (58.21-26). According to Tarapada Bhattacharya,¹¹⁷ Balarama is more associated with Rudra or Śiva as their characteristics agree in many respects. Rudra is regarded as a god of agriculture in the vedas and so does Saṃkarsana's emblem 'Mala' indicate. Balarama is associated with Naga and so is Śiva. Both Rudra and Balarama ~~are~~ are known to have been great drunkards. The Mbh. also does not mention him as an avatāra, but refers to sātva^{ta} as an avatāra in his place. Saṃkarsana was thus a god of the Rudra-Śiva cult and later on incorporated into Vāsudeva cult by identifying him with kṛṣṇa's brother Balarama. Balarama-worship^{is} referred to in the benedictory ~~of~~ stanza of Bhāsa's famous drama Svapnavāsavadattam.

SIVA

Introduction

The history of Śiva has undergone many vicissitudes. He was the supreme god of the proto Indians and was worshipped

¹¹⁷ The Cult of Brahmā, P. 109.

by them. The early vrātyas in the proto-Indian period worshipped the triad consisting of Śiva, Murugaṇ and Ammā corresponding to Śiva, Subhramanya or Kārtikeya and Pārvatī respectively. He was held by the proto-Indians both as a philosophical entity, and as a god to be meditated upon.¹¹⁸ However, with the advent of the vedic period, the vedic bards tried to present a new personality before us by introducing the character of Rudra. As Rudra, he is a minor god in the Rgvedic pantheon.¹¹⁹ He is described there as a malignant as well as a beneficent deity. The euphemistic epithet Śiva 'auspicious', which begins to be applied to him in the Rgveda, grows more frequent in the later vedas, till it finally becomes his regular name in post-vedic mythology. Thus the next effort of the Āryans mainly lay towards causing an amalgamation of the two gods, viz. Śiva and Rudra respectively. In the later Samhitās he along with Viṣṇu becomes one of the two great gods of the brahmins.¹²⁰ The Vājasaneyī Samhitā¹²¹ mentions such epithets of god as Girīśa, Paśupati, Kapardin, Śarva, Bhava, Śiva and also as wearing hide-skin garments, and in the Av. he is elevated to a higher platform.¹²² In the

¹¹⁸ Karmarkar A.P., The Religions of India, Vol.1, P.38.

¹¹⁹ Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, P.76.

¹²⁰ Keith, Religion of Veda & ups., P.143.

¹²¹ Ch. 16.

¹²² Bhandarkar, Vaisnavism, Saivism, P. 148.

period of Brāhmanas, the power of Rudra is at its height. The gods are afraid of him lest they be killed by the god.¹²³ It is, however, in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad that Śiva stands alone in the field as the supreme god and the germs of Bhakti which manifested themselves at that time were mostly directed towards him.¹²⁴ But this Upaniṣad is not a sectarian work and there is no evidence in the work of the existence of a Śaivite sect which worshipped Śiva as its favourite god.¹²⁵ The Grhyasūtras also do not provide evidence to the existence of a Śaivite sect.¹²⁶ From the days of Patañjali onwards, the existence of some Śaiva sects can be taken for granted.¹²⁷ In the earlier portions of the Mbh., both the sects, viz. Śaivites and Vaiṣṇavites exist without much antagonism between them but in the later part of the epic such antagonism is clearly traceable. The history of Śiva during the epic and purāṇic period is of deep interest. In the epics, the formation of the basis of the future mythology takes place. Śiva is now brought into direct contact with the other Brāhmanic gods. The working of the purāṇic writers looks as if a

123 Keith, Ibid.

124 Bhandarkar, Op.Cit.

125 Ibid.

126 Apte V.M., Social and Religious life in the Grhyasūtra.

127 Bhandarkar, Op.Cit.

continuation of what is contained in the epics. The old characteristics of Siva during the Indus valley period are attributed to the new personality of Rudra-Siva. Thus the epic and puranic Rudra is a combination of the vedic and non-Vedic notions. Hence the early notions of Siva as a dancer, an ascetic and a yogin, a god of the Himālayas, one possessed of three eyes and others, are all endowed to the Siva-Rudra of the vedic and Brahmanic period. It should be borne in mind that all these elements are not an innovation but they are introduced only as a matter of revision of the past.¹²⁸

Though, the Brahma-purāṇa is considered mainly to be a Vaiṣṇava purāṇa, still it does not aim at the exclusive worship of Viṣṇu. On the contrary, it deals at great length with lord Siva and considers him at par with Viṣṇu. The following is the picture of Siva as obtained from the Brahma purāṇa.

Siva is called Vikṛtarūpa (34.100), Dhūrjati (35.1), Nīlāhita (35.1), Vīlohita (40.13), Śūcīromā (40.61), and Śikhaṇḍī (40.79). He is said to have three heads (40.11) or thousand heads.¹²⁹ The Moon rests on his head and hence the

¹²⁸ Karmarkar A.P., Op.Cit., P.62.

¹²⁹ 40.30; 115.7; cf. Mbh. vii. 80.54 f., iii 39.74 f.

epithets Śasikhandamaulī (110.104), Candrārdhakṛtasekhara (34.1), Bāleṇḍamaulī (78.58, 59.15) etc. are applied to him. The crescent on the forehead of Śiva is a mere development of the early representative of the so-called 'Trisūla-horn' placed on the head of Śiva during the proto-Indian period.¹³⁰ His head is either fully shaved or half shaved (37.14). He keeps matted hair. He is said to have three jatās (40.11). He has a blue braid or a golden braid (40.16). Elsewhere it is said that he keeps his hair loose and they are wet with the water of the river Ganges that rests on Śiva's head (40.33, 39). His hair is of yellow colour (40.37). The epithet ūrdhvakeśa is also applied to him (40.61).

He is said to have three eyes of which one is in the forehead¹³¹. According to Monier Williams,¹³² the third eye and the crescent Moon on it marks the measuring of time by months. According to father Heras,¹³³ the idea of three eyes was so well-known that the only mention of his three-eyes¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Karmarkar A.P., Op.Cit., P.71.

¹³¹ 43.43, 40.11, 37.12, also cf. Av.II.2.7; Vs. 16.7.

¹³² Religious Thought and Life in India, P.80.

¹³³ The Religion of the Mohenjō Daro people according to Inscriptions, J.U.B., Vol.I, PP. 1-29.

¹³⁴ Marshall John, Mohenjō Daro & Indus Civilization, Vols. I-III, London, 1931, No.449.

as found in the inscriptions, revealed to those people the idea of the supreme being.¹³⁵ He is also said to have a thousand eyes (37.4, 40.31). His eyes are said to be deformed (40.3). The colour of his eyes is said to be white, yellow, black or red (40.35). The sun and Moon constitute his eyes (37.12, 40.82). His eyes are like lotuses (40.79).

He has big ears (40.4). The other epithets describing his ears are Śaṅkukarna, Kumbhakarna, Gajendrakarna, Gokarna and Śatakarna (40.4,5). These seem to be the Rākṣasa characteristics. In the south, his fane as Gokarna was known as holy.

When ~~the~~ lord Siva appeared before Pārvatī in an ugly form, he presented himself with a broken nose (35.5). He has a terrible and big mouth. In his mouth, Kālāgni resides (40.65). He is said to have a thousand tongues (40.5). His tongue is said to be sharp like a sword (40.23). He is called Damstrī (40.23). He has terrible teeth (40.23). His face is pleasant like a Moon (40.74). His throat is said to be blue and hence the epithets nīlakanṭha (109.31) and nīlagrīva (40.13) are applied to him. The term nīlakanṭha

¹³⁵ Marshall, No.8.

for the first time appears in the Śatarudrīya.¹³⁶ His beard is yellow (40.61). His shoulders are as strong as those of a bull (40.15). He has ten hands (40.21). He has a big belly (40.61). He is also said to have hundred bellies (40.5). He has a thousand feet (40.30).

His complexion is a red like that of the rising Sun (40.31). Elsewhere he is said to be Śaratkundenduvarcasa (59.14,15). Possibly the attribution of a white complexion to Siva may be due to the fact that the Brahmins of Kashmir, who are almost as fair as the Europeans, were the first worshippers of Siva. Then as his cult passed southwards the god naturally received a complexion more in keeping with that of his worshippers or it may be that white and black, like day and night, symbolised the close connection and succession of the destroying and regenerative principles. Siva's wife Pārvatī is often called Gauri, the pale-coloured.¹³⁷ He is said to wear no clothes (38.36,37) or to wear the skin of a lion (59.14,15), or that of a black deer (40.37), or that of an elephant (A.124). He applies white bhasma (40.22, 59.14,15) and saffron (A.108). He is called Vyālayajñopavītin

136 Vājasaneyī Samhitā, 16.7.

137 Monier Williams, Op.Cit., P.80.

(40.37). He is called Candratilaka (35.4). Dharma and Karma are his ornaments (A.40). A serpent adorns his neck. It denotes the endless cycle of recurring years.¹³⁸ He also wears a necklace of bells and hence the epithets ghaṇṭakī and ghaṇṭī are applied to him (40.66). He likes the garland of Kāṇṭikāra flowers (40.72). He also wears a ~~gka~~ garland of skulls and a sūtra of kapālas (37.7). The practice of offering human victims to Śiva was long in vogue since the proto-Indian period. This may be the reason why Śiva and Kālī are always represented as wearing the necklace of skulls.¹³⁹ The kāpālikas and the kalamukhas are called the wearers of skulls.¹⁴⁰ He rides on a bull (40.15, 73), the Nandi, the lord of cows (127.59). In the epics¹⁴¹ and purāṇas¹⁴² the stories regarding the origin of bull as a vehicle of Śiva are given. The study of iconography¹⁴³ proves that the ideas of the association of the bull with Śiva must have arisen in or somewhere round about the territory of the Mahāvṛṣas, situated in the north-west of India. And as Father Heras observes, the idea must have travelled far and wide in

138 Monier Williams, Op.Cit., P.80.

139 Karmarkar, A.I. P. 70.

140 Meier J., Original Sanskrit texts, Vols. I-V.

141 Mbh., Anuśāsana 112.30; Rām. Uttarakāṇḍa, 16.17.

142 Śiva Purāṇa, Uṣṭara Satarudrīya Saṃ., Adh.3, Līṅga P. Pūrvārdha, 47 ff., Kūrma P. Uttarakāṇḍa, A.42.

143 J.N.Banerjea, Development of Hindu Iconography, P.121.

India during the regime of the Kushan and Pallava rulers.¹⁴⁴ Eventually the story must have for the first time been introduced in the Mbh. Dharma constitutes the nature of the bull (40.81).

As Siva is constantly engaged in battle with mighty demons like Pura, Tripura and Andhaka, he is armed with special weapons suited to his warlike deeds. The name of his bow is Pinaka (34.5, 129.68,69). He holds Trisula (40.11, 34.5) or ~~three-pointed~~ trident, thought by some to denote his combining in his own person the three attributes of creator, destroyer and Regenerator.¹⁴⁵ He is also said to have a thousand sulas (40.31). He wields gadā (40.51), danda (40.12, 65,79), arrows (40.51), bows (40.51), a non-descript weapon called Khatvāṅga (40.51), consisting of a kind of staff with transverse pieces surmounted by a skull,¹⁴⁶ mudgara x (40.51) and sword (40.10). His banner is of white colour (40.18) and has the emblem of a bull (34.6, 75.25). The bull as his vehicle may appropriately constitute the emblem of his banner.¹⁴⁷ The sign of Sun also constitutes the emblem of his banner (40.14). This shows lord Śiva's connection with Sun. He

¹⁴⁴ Heras, Op.Cit.

¹⁴⁵ Monier Williams, Op.Cit., P.81.

¹⁴⁶ Monier Williams, Op.Cit., P.81.

¹⁴⁷ also cf. Mbh., Anuśāsana parva, 112-30.

He produced the sound 'Hum Hum' (40.27). He plays the musical instrument by mouth (40.20). The Tumbī and Viṇā are dear to him (40.23). He also possessed a ghanta (40.26).

He is called Tryambaka (40.11). This epithet which is commonly applied to Śiva in the post-vedic literature is already applied to Rudra in the vedic texts,¹⁴⁸ and also once even in the RV.¹⁴⁹ The meaning seems to be one who has three mothers in allusion to the three-fold division of the universe.¹⁵⁰ No three mothers are known but this may be derived from the Rudra-Agni conception as in the RV., Agni has three mothers.¹⁵¹ The simplest explanation of Tryambaka may be that Śiva has not the three mothers but three mother goddesses - Umā, Gaurī, Kālī, who are called Ambikās, each originally an ambā or mother.¹⁵² The other meanings suggested are 'having three rivers' as Ganges is, and Umā may be the river; or ambakā = śrṅga and hence the lord Śiva himself might be addressed as a mountain having three peaks, or ambā = pupilla thus agreeing with the traditional meaning of the god having three eyes.¹⁵³

Some general epithets like Deva, Devadeva, Mahādeva,

148 VS 3.58; SB. 2,6; 2,9

149 RV. 7. 59.12

150 Macdonell, Vedic Mythology; Grasmann Trans. of RV. 10.155

151 RV. 3.56.5

152 Hopkins, Epic Mythology, P.220.

153 Hopkins, Ibid.

the best one, lord of lords, Parameśvara, Svayambhū, (34.1-6; 99-101), Bhaktavatsala (94.27-30), Prabhu, Purāṇapuruṣa, Paramadeva, Lokaguru, Devavara, Devesa, Kārūṇyakara, Pāpahara, Iṣṭadeva, Maṅgaladāyaka, Jagannātha, Sarvakāmaprada and Varada (34.1-6, 122.195-206, 124.94-97, 109.21-31), Rudra (34.1-6, 123.195), Bhagamkṛa, Someśa, ūmeśa, Vighñeśvara, Nandinātha (123.196.206), Vāgīśa, Vedatrayekṣaṇa, Godharalaksmīśa, sarva, Yajñeśa, Bhāskara, Viteśa, Siddheśa (124.94-97), Bhīmanātha (173.39), Bhūtanātha, Kālātman and Tridhāmā (109.21-37) are applied to him. He is called Bhava, Rudra, Sarva and Paśupati (40.10). In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (1.7.3.8) these are given as the names of Agni. Sarva, Bhava, Rudra, Paśupati etc. were really different gods of different regions, but owing to some common characteristics they were identified with one another and ultimately with vedic Agni. But even though they were identified with Agni, these names were also the names of Śiva and the Indus valley remains perhaps indicate that 'Paśupati' existed before the vedic Agni. We cannot now say that these names were at first applied to vedic Agni and then became Appellations of the later god Śiva.¹⁵⁴ He is the lustre of the lightening, thunder of the clouds, lion among the animals, praṇava among the mantras, vajra among the weapons, and satya among the vows. He is identified with

¹⁵⁴ Tarapada Bhattacharya, The Cult of Brāhma, P. 80.

various feelings like desire, dveṣa, rāga, moha, śama, kṣamā, vyavasāya, dhairya, lobha, kāma, krodha and jaya. It is also said that the colours green, red, yellow, blue, white, kapila, brown and black belong to him (40.48-50,55). He is dānapara (100.19-21), remover of poverty and unhappiness (122.195-206), and Annadātā (40.40). He is called Kilakila, Kubja, Kuṭila, Canda, killer of enemies and ugra (40.16-21). He is Kāmada as well as Kāmāyana (40.38) and Bhairava.¹⁵⁵

The knowers of Brāhmaṇa invoke him by the ups. and he is worshipped by the Trisuparna re and the Śatarudrīya Saṃhitā of Yajurveda. Many of the epithets given in the Śatarudrīya Saṃhitā are given in the Brahma purana also. He is Gāyatrī, Ōmkāra, Prāṇa, Apāna, Samāna, Udaṇa, Vyāna, Unmeṣa, Nimeṣa, Hunger and Thirst. He is the progenitor of past, present and future. He is Bhavarloka, Bhurloka, Svarloka, Brahmāvarta, Śurāvarta and Kāmāvarta (37.15-21). He is phala, deśa, kāla, karta, datā, pratidinhi and dāna (75.8-13).

Some philosophical epithets are given to him. He is called Ajara, Amara, Vibhu, Avināśī, (36.39-41), Sukṣma, Ananta, Anādi, Nitya, Samasta, Aparā, Akṣaya, Avyaya, Nitya, Kṣara (122.195-206), Anāmaya (124.133), non-dual, independent

155 37.4, missing in 'ga' ms.

(129.68,69); śuddha, Buddha, Ādi, madhya and anta, the Ātman of all (37.15.21), birthless, omniscient, the sākṣī (75.8-13), acintyarūpa and Idya (122.195-206) and Akhilātman (117.17), Cidrūpa, ānandamaya, satsvarūpa (122.79-82), Sadasadpraneta, Sadasadvyatīta (122.195-206) and his form constitutes of sat, cit and ānanda (124.133), higher than the highest (36.39-41), kriyā, kāraṇa, kārya, kartā, asat as well as sadasat (37.15-21), pradhāna, creator of prakṛti, higher than prakṛti and the enjoiner of prakṛti (37.15-21), Puruṣa, Saṃkhyāpradhāna and lord of Yoga (37.15-21). He is known by the vedas and is the sākṣat Brahman (173.39), the lord of the four ~~xxx~~ puruṣārthas (40.35) and carācaresā (34.99-101), Yajñesvara, lord of Havya and Kavya (122.195-206). Like Viṣṇu, Śiva is also described as having the Yajñesvararūpa. Thus he is called Kṛtā, Hotṛ, Huta and Homya, Svēhā, Svadhā, Vasatkāra and also Samdhātā, Vidhātā, Dhātā and Nidhātā (37.15-21). In wood, he is fire; in flowers he is fragrance; in seeds, he is tree; in stones, he is gold and in all the beings he is Ātman (130.21-31). He conjoins puruṣa and prakṛti and is the creator of kārya and kāraṇa (37.2). He is śuddha and Buddha (40.32) and is called Sthāna (40.76).

Śiva is styled as a Yogin par excellence. Śiva is

represented in a seated yogic posture on some of the proto-Indian seals. Hence the idea of Siva as an ascetic is current since the proto-Indian period.¹⁵⁶ In the Brahma purāṇa he is called the lord of yogins and destroys the yoga of the daityas (40.36,37.12). He practises penance in waters. He keeps his mind in tranquillity and bestows prosperity as a result of practising Yoga (37.15-16). Siva's connection with waters is interesting. The place of Varuna as a water-god was at a later period to some extent assumed by kṛṣṇa and Siva. During the 5th and 6th centuries A.D., on the arrival of the White Hūnas in Gujarat and Kathiawad, the sea began to influence these new comers as is shown by the fīṣame gathered round Siva in his form as Somanātha with his shrine at Somanātha. Siva is worshipped at river junctions,¹⁵⁷ or the connection of Siva with waters might have been given in direct antagonism to that of Viṣṇu as Viṣṇu too has direct connection with waters, the ocean being his abode. He is said to perform Sandhyā and other five religious practises daily (40.33). He performs the six karmans and the three karmans (40.33) and regulates the various dharmas of castes and Āśramas (40.34).

156 Karmarkar A.P., Op.Cit., P.73.

157 J.Tod, Annals of Rajasthan, ed. Oxford, 1920, i.18, ii. 704.

He is the creator of the world, the regulator of the world and its final aim (94.27-30, 124.94-97). As he is the cause of the destruction of the world, he is called Krathanakartā (37.15-21). He creates Pralaya (37.15) and creates the world in sport (130.21). He is Viśvodbhava¹hija-rūpa, Viśvagoptā and Viśvapati (122.195-206). Though, in various purāṇic passages Śiva is described as the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the universe, during the period of the epics and purāṇas, Śiva is mainly made to function in the capacity of the destroyer, whereas Brahmā and Viṣṇu are allotted the first and the second functions. Cemeteries and burning grounds are his favourite haunts; imps and demons are his ready servants, and ferocity and irascibility, on the slightest provocation, constitute his normal condition of mind.¹⁵⁸

Śiva is the best architect and the progenitor of all the artisans (A.40). In order to regulate the world, he divided the vedas and has made a propaganda of gāthās, smṛtis, and purāṇas and all of them have the nature of śabda (75.8-13). Though, the lord Śiva creates, protects and destroys the world by his Maya, he is not attached to it (129.68,69).

¹⁵⁸ Monier Williams, Brahmanism & Hinduism, P.82.

There is nothing higher and greater than him. The anadi tattvas like kartṛtva, dātṛtva, mahatva, prīti, yaśas and sām̐khyā are situated in him (130.21-31). He is the lord of moving and non-moving worlds (97.20-23). He is the highest among all the Rudras (69.15). None can equal lord Śiva in bestowing the desires (115.6-9). He protects the people with his eight forms. All people act according to his desire and only the learned men can know his greatness (97.20-23). He is the lord of the sacrifices. People sing the rathāntara sām̐an in his honour and the adhvaryas give a share to him in the sacrifice (39.40). Though living the life of a sādhu, he is a gṛhastha and he gives gifts (37.14). Those who are afflicted by the troubles of the world get peace by worshipping lord Śiva and Pārvatī (107.55, 108). Those who are patient, who have no desires and whose minds are concentrated on him, go to him (A.110). People worship him with five great sacrifices. They are amply rewarded and enter the divine region with a tranquil mind on attaining him, people have a Samatvabuddhi for the duals, viz. Śoka, Moha, Jarā, Mṛtyu and hunger-thirst (122.74-82). People worship him with Gayātrī. The worshippers of Sun worship him in the form of Sun (40.6,14). It reflects on the connection of Śiva with Sun. By worshipping lord Śiva, even a foolish man goes to heaven. The fruits of all the

great things like sacrifice, knowledge, penance, dhyāna, homa and others consists of a permanent devotion for the lord Śiva (122.74-82). He gives freedom from the worldly parlance (117.7-17). By the grace of lord Śiva, one is established in the highest world (56.68). He is the refuge of the world and a ladder to attain the final liberation (122.74).

Pārvatī, the daughter of Himavat, was the spouse of Siva. Himavat practised severe penance and by the grace of sage Kasyapa, he had a daughter Aparṇā. As she observed fasts for many days, her mother Menakā tried to avert her from doing so by the words 'u mā' and from that time onwards she was known as Umā. Being satisfied by her penance, Brahmā declared that she would get the husband of her desire and eventually she married Mahādeva (37.78-98). In her former birth, she was Satī, the eldest among the daughters of Dakṣa. She burnt herself at the indignation of Śiva being not invited at the sacrifice performed by her father Dakṣa. It was her jealousy which roused Śiva to destroy Dakṣa's sacrifice. Mahādeva himself says that it is the custom to exclude him from sacrifice and seems to be indifferent, till Umā rouses him. Here it is noteworthy that only Dadhīci seems to worship him. She is as beautiful as Moon. The Br. P. further gives detailed description of

Pārvatī's marriage with Śiva (36.70). The Br. P. narrates how Pārvatī formed a conspiracy with Vināyaka and Jayā to bring down Ganges from the head of lord Śiva (A.74). He is called Umāpriyakara and Ambikānātha (34.1, 37.3, 40.38). Ambikā, a post-vedic name of Śiva's wife, is mentioned for the first time in Vājasaneyī Samhitā (3.5) appearing here, however, not as Rudra's wife but as his sister Uma and Pārvatī, the regular names of Śiva's wife seem first to occur in the TĀ. and the Kena-Up.¹⁵⁹

He lives on the mountain.¹⁶⁰ He is called Girīśa and Giritra 'lying on a mountain', probably because the thunderbolt that he hurls, springs from a cloud, which is often compared to a mountain and on which he was believed to dwell.¹⁶¹ He is said to reside on the Jyotisthala peak of the mountain Meru which was studded with Jewels. Mohenjo Daro inscriptions mention the white mountain (Himālaya) as the place of residence of Śiva. Further the Śatarudriya refers to Rudra-Śiva as Girīśa, Giritra, etc. Eventually this idea must have later on developed itself. And it is thus that Śiva is endowed with the Kailāsa as his abode.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Macdonell, Vedic Mythology.

¹⁶⁰ 34. 99-101; Vs. 16.2-4.

¹⁶¹ Bhandarkar, Op.Cit., P.146.

¹⁶² Karmarkar A.P., Op.Cit., P.69.

He is living with the Ādityas, Vasus, Asvinīkumāras, Kubera with Guhyakas, Sukrācārya and Sanatkumara and others (39.4-8). The Rākṣasas, Piśācas and Pārṣadas sat near him. The Mbh.¹⁶³ and Purāṇas¹⁶⁴ give a detailed description of the Gaṇas of Siva. Pārvatī sat by his side and Gaṅgā served him (39.4-8). Elsewhere he is said to reside in the cemetery (38.36,37). He is also called Aniketa (38.36, 37). Ocean is also considered to be his abode (40.88). As great rivalry was going on between Siva and Viṣṇu, ocean, the abode of Viṣṇu might have been described as the abode of Siva too. He is surrounded by the naked Gaṇas (38.36,37). He is the destroyer of Pramathas (40.15). He lives in the beings residing in ocean, river, mountains, caves, unapproach-able places, cow-settlements, four paths, old houses, directions, between Indra and Sūrya, in Rasātala and in the places where elephants, horses and chariots are kept (40.93, 96).

He is the highest among all the deities and his fame and prosperity are unattainable (39.5,40). Neither Brahmā nor Govinda nor the sages are able to know his greatness (40.83). The form of a child in the lap of Uma, he

¹⁶³ Sautika parva, Adh. 7.

¹⁶⁴ Skanda P., Brahmakhaṇḍa, Dharmāranyakhaṇḍa, 3.12 ff., Prabhāsakhaṇḍa 4.87 ff., Kāśikhaṇḍa, 53.

paralysed all the gods (36.29-35). He is the protector of gods and demons. He is Brahmā and Indra. In his reside Moon, Varuṇa, Sun, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Br̥haspati (40.57). In all the vedas, it is said that Brahmā is the creator, Viṣṇu the maintainer and Śiva the destroyer (130.21). Yama cannot kill the devotees of Śiva and Viṣṇu. Once lord Śiva killed Mr̥tyu and Yama when they tried to take away the life of the devotee of lord Śiva (94.39-41). He lives in the form of Rudra, Vasu, Āditya and Asvinīkumāras (37.16). Brahmā and others are like his servants (34.99-101). Once lord Śiva had a terrible fight with lord kṛṣṇa in helping Bāṇāsura (A.206). The sage Apastamba declares to the sage Agastya that though all gods are the aspects of one thing, still lord Śiva should be worshipped as he was liberal in granting the boons (A.130). He is considered to be so liberal that when pleased, he grants things which one does not deserve and hence the epithet Ayuktadātā is applied to him (110.101-106).

He threw Daśānana beneath the Rasātala by his thumb, gave Bāṇa the power to conquer his enemies (110.100-107). He drank the poison which emerged from oceans when the gods and the Asuras churned it (112.4). The blue colour of the throat of lord Śiva is associated with the drinking of the poison in Purāṇas. He burnt Kāmadeva when he tried to

disturb him (112.6). He is called Tripurāri, Tripurahantā and Purāri (43.65), (57.3), (34.1-6), (40.11). It seems that the number three is a favourite with lord Śiva as he is called Trijāta, Trisīrsa, Trisūla, Tryambaka, Tripuraghna (40.11), though, he is described in terms of Sahasra (40.26, 30,31) also, a number favourite of lord Viṣṇu. He killed the demon Andhaka (A.129). He is also called Puramdara (122.205). He destroyed the eyes of Bhaga (57.3, 40.68) and broke the teeth of Pūṣan.¹⁶⁵ He destroyed the sacrifice by taking the form of a hunter when the sacrifice was running away in the form of a deer (39.75,76; 37.9). In many Purāṇas, Śiva is said to have destroyed the sacrifice of Dakṣa (A.109). He moved the mountain Kailāsa (A.100) and removed the trouble of the Pramathas (37.8,9). He is called kṛsnakesāpahārin (37.8,9). He received the falling Ganges on his head (A.73). By the grace of lord Śiva, a dead child became alive in the kingdom of king Śveta (A.59). The sage Śūkra got the Mṛtasamjīvanīvidyā (A.95); Śeṣa, the lord of Pātāla got a Śula to kill his enemies (A.115). The sage Dattātreya obtained the knowledge of Ātman (A.117).

165 (37.9). It should also be mentioned that when Brahmā promised protection to demons against the gods by his fifth head having the shape of that of a donkey, lord Śiva cut off it off and held it. This might be the reason why he is called a bearer of skull in hand. A. 113.

Devāpi, the son of the Purohita of the king Bhara was able to bring back the king Bhara with his retinue from Rasātala (A.127). Kubera obtained a boon (A.97). On seeing the third eye of lord Siva, Mahimā was born to the king Prācīnabarhis and he composed the Mahimna Stotra in his honour (A.153). Revatī, the wife of Kāṭha, regained beauty (A.122). Naga, the son of Sūrasena, the king of Pratiṣṭhāna-pura, got freedom from his curse and regained a human form (A.111). A maiden Pippalā got freedom from the curse of being a river and regained her original form on worshipping Siva (A.132). He was so great that even the greatness of the sacrifice cannot equal him (110.101-106).

Lord Siva protects the world with his eight forms.¹⁶⁶ In his capacity of having eight forms, he is identified with the Sun.¹⁶⁷ The Tāmasa form of lord Siva was worshipped. One Viśvarūpa meditated on the Tāmasa form of lord Siva. He lighted the fire in a terrible Kuṇḍa, sat on it and meditated on the lord. He then threw himself in the fire as an oblation to lord Siva (A.273). Siva's Ardhanārīśvara form is also alluded to in the Brahma pūrāṇa (129.70-80). The idea of Ardhanārīśvara was current

¹⁶⁶ 97.2.23; Śākuntala I.1.

¹⁶⁷ For details regarding the identity of Siva and Sun, vide Karmarkar A.P., Op.Cit., PP. 40-41.

among the proto-Indians.¹⁶⁸ Father Heras¹⁶⁹ observes that this is the same as the deity found in Sumer, with the name of Ama-a-half-man (proper left) and half-woman (proper right) which seems to be the original idea of the Hindu image of Ardhanārāśvara.

Rudras:- Siva is represented with eleven armlets in the Indus valley period.¹⁷⁰ Eventually the number seems to have attained a sanctity of its own. In the Rv. they are considered to be the father of the Maruts, are closely associated with vasus, visvedevas and Ādityas and make eleven of the thirty-three gods. The Mbh.¹⁷¹ and purāṇas¹⁷² give the lists of Rudras, though the names differ. The Br. P. states that Rudra was created out of the anger of Brahmā¹⁷³ and that Rudras are the sons of Kasyapa and Surabhi. The names given are Ajaikapada, Ahirbudhnya, Tvastā, Hara, Bahrūpa, Tryambaka, Vṛṣākapi, Sambhu, Raivata, Sarva and Kapāli. They were born by the grace of lord Mahādeva.¹⁷⁴

168 Karmarkar A.P., Op.Cit., P.42; The Brahma Purāṇa relates an interesting story about the ardhanārāśvara form of lord Siva. It states that as Viśākha, i.e. Kārtikeya wanted to sit in the lap of his mother as well as his father at the same time, lord Siva took the ardhanārāśvara form and satisfied his desires. 110.100-106.

169 Heras, Op.Cit., P.42.

170 Karmarkar A.P., Op.Cit., P.76.

171 Mbh. Śānti P. A.207.20.

172 Br.P.3.46-48; Harivamśa I.1.41; Brahmāṇḍa Madhyabhāga 3.69; Bhāgavata VI.6.17-18, Padma P. sṛṣṭikhanda 37,83; Matsya 5.29-30; Kūrma, Pūrvabhāga A.10; Siva P. Uttara Satarudra Sam. 18,24-25, Saura P.26.26; Vāmana P. A.5; Viṣṇu P. 1.7.11-2; Mārkaṇḍeya 52.2. ff.

173 I.45.

174. 3.46-48.

The expressions Ajaikapāda and Ahirbudhnya occur in the Rgveda.¹⁷⁵ In the opinion of Karmarkar,¹⁷⁶ Ekapād is indicative of the image standing on one leg in the Indus Valley period. As Śiva was a yogin par excellence, he might have been described as Ekapād, it being a posture adopted as a process of penance and the expression Ahirbudhnya throws light on the close association of Śiva and the Nāga, which was supposed to be in the depths of the world, or the later Pātāla.

Virabhadra:- Virabhadra is said to have been born from the anger of lord Śiva and taking the form of a lion, he destroyed the sacrifice of Dakṣa (39.75-77). From his pores he created many rudras and on account of them darkness prevailed on all the sides and the lustre of Sun and Moon became dim (39.40-58). Virabhadra is a favourite deity of the Kurumbhas, a tribe of hunters and shepherds in Souther India.¹⁷⁷ Virabhadra destroyed the sacrifice of Dakṣa with the help of Bhadrakālī, who too was created out of Pārvatī's wrath (39.72).

Jvara:- He is said to have been created out of the perspiration of lord Śiva's forehead. When lord Śiva

175 RV. X.65. 13, 66.11; AV, IV. 1.6; Pāraskara G.S. 2.15.2

176 Karmarkar A.P., Op, Cit., P.77-78.

177 Hewitt, 'Ruling Races etc.' I, P.136.

was irritated with Dakṣa, He wanted to destroy the sacrifice of Dakṣa and the sacrifice being afraid took the form of a deer and started running away in the sky. Śiva took bows and arrows and followed him. At that time Jvara arose from his perspiration and he is described as Hrasva, Atimātra, red-eyed, yellow-bearded, terrible, urdhvakeśaḥ, Atiromāṅga and Sonakarna, having a terrible or bad colour and wearing red clothes. He burnt the sacrifice and the gods were afraid of him and ran away in different directions. The earth began to tremble and lord Brahma then declared that he would be known in the world by the name of Jvara (39.77-87).

Manyu:- In the R̥gveda, Manyu, wrath is a personification suggested chiefly by the fierce anger of Indra and is invoked in two hymns.¹⁷⁸ He merged from the third eye of the lord Śiva. His form is made up of brilliance. He is the puruṣa in men, Ahaṁkāra in all the beings and the anger of all. He is Indra, Varuṇa and Lokapāla. He is within all but no one knows him. He is Rudra and Śiva and all the moving and non-moving things are pervaded by him. The gods conquered the demons with his help. He is a representative of lord Śiva and burns everything with his brilliance at

¹⁷⁸ Rv. 10, 83, 84.

the time of destruction. At the time of destruction, he holds all the weapons, increases joy and conquers everything (162.20-29).

Hari-Hara:- The concept of Harihara also seems to have come in vogue side by side with that of the Hindu trinity. The purāṇas refer to it.¹⁷⁹ The Brahma-purāṇa also mentions how Indra worshipped Harihara when he was very worried about his three dethronements (A.122). The various purāṇic passages show how both the gods Hari and Hara are the same, though, two in the outward appearance. From the passages of the Mbh., it becomes clear that the appellations of the one are attributed to the other. There are many scriptural representations and shrines of Harihara in Southern India.¹⁸⁰

The mode of worship of lord Siva is discussed under the section 'worship' of Chapter VII on 'Religion'.

KĀRTIKEYA

Among the post-vedic gods, a deity of high ranks is Kumāra or Kārtikeya also called Skanda and Mahāsena. The

¹⁷⁹ Harivamśa II, 129.40; Skanda VII, 2,17,185; Liṅga, Pūrvārdha, A.96, Nāradya Mahā. P. 83.23.

¹⁸⁰ Karmarkar A.P., Op.Cit., P.67.

popularisation of the cult of Śiva involved a process of syncretism, the adoption of various local gods as his manifestations. Skanda, the deity of the same class, who was the family god of some west-Indian dynasties, now under the name of Subhramanya is most popular in South India, where his association with the mother-goddess shows that he is connected with non-aryan cult.¹⁸¹ It is a cult special to the Tamil and Malagalam peoples.¹⁸² He is first mentioned in the Chāndogya upanishad vii. 26.2, where he seems to be identified with Sanatkumāra. Hopkins¹⁸³ surmises that skanda is not a late addition to the epic but a god rapidly increasing in importance, as the epic expanded or more particularly as the Śiva-cult expanded. H.Jacobi¹⁸⁴ infers that Kumara as the lord of army was introduced as a new god probably due to a change in the government of India where instead of the king holding both the offices, viz. ruler in peace and leader in war, the office of a general became distinct.

The myth of the birth of Kumāra is variously

181 BG 1, Pt.ii, PP.180,287; Oppert 303, 370.

182 ERE, Vol. 12, 442.a

183 Epic Mythology, P. 227

184 ERE, Vol. ii, P. 807.

related,¹⁸⁵ his father being given as Śiva (81.2) and Agni (82.10, 3.40), his mother as Umā (81.2), Gaṅgā (82.10) and various other minor deities like the wives of the sages (42.6) and others. These rival claims to parentage had to be settled and this was effected by the assumption of a sort of joint parentage, and by making some of the female deities his nurses or adoptive mothers.¹⁸⁶ The strange myth about the birth of Kumāra appears to be best interpreted on the assumption that in different parts of ~~the~~ ~~the~~ India there were several popular godlings of the war-god type and that there have been combined into ~~the~~ Kumāra, the war-god common to all Indians.¹⁸⁷ For there are three variants or alter-egos of Kumāra, viz. Viśākha, Śakha and Naigameya and the Br. P. identifies Viśākha (81.4) with Kārtikeya who is known to have received popular worship.¹⁸⁸

Some myths are related about Kārtikeya in the Brahma Purāṇa. When the gods were oppressed by the danger of the demon Tāraka, they requested Agni to relate the danger to Śiva. Thereupon Agni took the form of a Parrot and with great hesitation went to the place where lord Śiva was in

185 Mbh. iii. 225 ff., ix.44 f., xiii.84 ff., Rām. i.36 ff.

186 128.23; ERE. Vol. II, P. 807.

187 ERE. Vol. II, P.807.

188 Patañjali ^{va} ad Pāṇini, V.3.99.

privacy with Pārvatī. Lord Śiva released his virile-semon^e in Agni who being unable to bear it released it in Kṛttikās on the bank of the divine river and the child that was born to them was known as Kārtikeya (128.1-25; 3.41). Elsewhere it is said that the Agni drank the virile semon of lord Śiva and kept it in the wives of the seven sages excepting Arundhatī. They released their foetus in the Ganges where they were mixed up by the wind and out of them a child with six-faces was born, who was destined to kill the demon Tāraka (82.1-12). Therefore, he is called Kārtikeya, being a son of the six Kṛttikās, the wives of the sages; Śanmukha, because he was born with six faces, the foetuses of the six wives being gathered together. Gāṅgeya, as the foetuses were released in Gaṅgā; the son of Śiva as the semon-virile originally belonged to Śiva and Agniputra as Agni drank the semon-virile of Śiva.

Among the feats of Kārtikeya is mentioned the most important one, viz. the destruction of the demon Tāraka (81.2). A disgraceful story is related about Kārtikeya, viz. After the destruction of Tāraka, lord Śiva and Pārvatī were pleased with Kārtikeya and asked him to enjoy at his will. Kārtikeya took an undue advantage of the parent's^(s) advice and enjoyed with the wives of gods, and the gods complained to

Pārvatī about her son's misdeeds, and when, inspite of Pārvatī's insistence to check himself, Kārtikeya was unable to resist his lust, Pārvatī took the form of every god-wife and when Kārtikeya saw the form of his mother everywhere, he took a strict vow of considering every female as his mother (82.1-15). Further it is said that when lord Śiva did not release Gangā, Pārvatī took in confidence Skanda and Ganeśa for the matter of Gangā's release (74-15). Kārtikeya is said to be defeated by Pradyumna and Garuḍa when he helped lord Śiva in his fight with lord kṛṣṇa (206.26) and he killed Yama in the fight. These and other myths are related about Kārtikeya in other works.¹⁸⁹

The Brahma purāṇa further states that a holy place, viz. Kārtikeyatīrtha or Kumāratīrtha on the bank of the river Godāvarī is dedicated in honour of Kārtikeya approaching which one gets good family and beauty and even great sins like those of approaching the wife of a teacher are expiated (81.20,21).

A līṅgāyat tradition reports that he was a founder

189 Vanaparva A.223-226; Anuśāsanaparva A.85; Matsya P. V. 27, 53.61, 159.4.18; 160.10-26, 260.19,45-51; Bhāgavat XI.4.17, Viṣṇu I.15.115; Vāyu 66.24, 72.35-46, 72.48-50; Brd.P.III, 3.24, 10.35,48; IV.30.39, 99 to the end, Nais XI.50.

of a gotra and was a form of lord Śiva himself.¹⁹⁰ On the reverse of the wins of the Kuśāna Prince Kaniska, there are figures with their names in Greek letters of Skando, Mahāsena, Kumāro and Bizago.¹⁹¹ In the year 414 A.D. a gallery in the temple of Swami Mahāsena was built by Dhruvasarman at Bilsad.¹⁹² Several observances and vows in the name of Kumāra and Kārtikeya are mentioned in Hemādri's Vratakhanda and the worship of that god has not become obsolete even at the present day.

In Siam, a great festival was celebrated in honour of Kārtikeya and pleiades who fostered him. It took place at the time of the Moon's conjunction with this star-cluster i.e. shortly before full-Moon. It was a fire-festival in agreement with Kārtikeya's legendary birth from fire. Similarly a worship is offered in honour of Kārtikeya in southern India on the full-Moon day.¹⁹³ The Brahma-purāṇa also states that one who takes a bath at Krttikātīrtha is the Krttikāyoga of the Kārtika month gets the merit of all the sacrifices and becomes a religious king (82.15,16).

190 Ehandarkar, Vaiṣṇavism, P.214.

191 JBBRAS, Vol, XX, P. 385.

192 Ibid., P. 395.

193 ERE., Vol. V, P.888.

GANAPATI

His worship starts from the paurāṇic period and except in one legend mentioned in the northern recension of the Mbh., he does not appear in the epic literature.¹⁹⁴ The leader of Gaṇas or the hosts of Maruts of Rudra was called Gaṇapati. Gradually, the name Gaṇapati was generalised and meant many leaders of the Gaṇas or groups. Another name Vināyaka also came in use. In the Atharvasīras upanishad, Rudra is identified with many gods, among whom one is called Vināyaka.¹⁹⁵ In the Mbh.,¹⁹⁶ many Gaṇeśvaras and Vināyakas are mentioned. In the Mānavagr̥hyasūtra (2.14) and the Yājñavalkyasmṛti (I.271 ff.) an account of Vināyakas is given but the difference between the two shows that during the period that had elapsed between the composition of the sūtra and that of smṛti, the four Vināyakas had become one Gaṇapati-Vināyaka, having Ambikā for his mother.¹⁹⁷ The ceremony occurring in the Gr̥hyasūtra mentioned above suggests that the Vināyakas were the object of faith before the christian era but the one Gaṇapati-Vināyaka, the son of Ambikā, was introduced in the Hindu pantheon much later.¹⁹⁸

194 JRAS, 1898, P. 380 ff.

195 Bhandarkar, Vaiṣṇavism, P.210.

196 Anuśāsana 151, V.26 & V. 57.

197 Bhandarkar, Op.Cit.,

198 Ibid.

There are groups of images of k̄ala, k̄ali, the seven mothers or śaktis and Ganapati in the caves at Ellora and the caves are to be referred to the later part of the eighth century.¹⁹⁹ Thus it seems that the Ganapati-cult must have come into vogue between the end of the fifth and the end of the eighth century. In another inscription dated Vikrama Samvat 918 corresponding to A.D. 862, ~~dated~~ found at a place called Ghatiyālā, 22 miles north-west of Jodhpur an obeisance is made to Vināyaka.²⁰⁰

About his birth, the Br. P. states that Pārvatī created him by meditation. Many gods came to see the newborn child Gaṇeśa. Ignoring his mother's advice, he had grasped Moon in his hand from his father's forehead. As he sucked the milk profusely out of a childish jealousy that his brother Kārtikeya might not get more of it, Pārvatī called him Lambodara (114.4-18). Elsewhere it is stated that he was created out of the dirt (97.22).

As he pleased the lord Mahādeva by the play of his anklets, he gave him the status of the lord of the Gaṇas. He is also said to have pleased his mother by music, dance and humorous talks (97.22).

199 Cave-Temples by Fergusson & Burgess.

200 Bhandarkar, Op.Cit.

In one hand he holds the Vighnapāśa and on another shoulder he keeps an axe and when he does not receive homage, he throws obstructions. He is said to have thrown obstructions in the deeds of his mother. He is very proud of his own capacity. His vehicle is a rat. It is probably more than a coincidence that the rat is a totem of at least one dravidian tribe, the oraons (276 ERE, Vol.VI, P. 178). He is called Ambikānandana, ādideva and Gaṇeśvara. In all the rites, all the deities, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahesā worship him, meditate on him and bow down to him. None can equal him in bestowing the desired fruits. Thinking thus, even lord Śiva worshipped him before killing Tripura. Meditating on him, all the animated beings get the desired fruits. In the works dealing with Dharma, Artha and Kāma, he should be worshipped first. The merit of his worship never decreases. According to the way of worship, one gets the fruit of worshipping him. The gods and the deities worship him daily (114.4-13).

Pārvatī asked Gaṇeśa to bring down the Ganges from the matted hair of lord Śiva as she did not like the increasing affection of lord Śiva for the Ganges. Gaṇeśa thought out a plan through which he made the sage Gautama to bring the Ganges on earth from the locks of hair of lord Śiva

(74.76-88, A.175). Gaṇeśa throws obstructions in the way of one who goes for the pilgrimage of the Ganges as he does not like Śiva's affection for the Ganges (A.176). These and other myths are referred to in other works.²⁰¹

Thus Gaṇeśa is considered to be the leader of the Gaṇas, or attendants on Śiva, and first appears in Hindu literature as a creator of obstacles, and as such, hindering success.²⁰² Thus though primarily he was worshipped to induce him to abstain from impending but in modern practice, he is looked upon as a ^{remover} ~~remover~~ of difficulties, the god of wisdom and the guardian of the public ways.

He is called Gajavaktra (175.37). It is difficult to determine ~~him~~ how the god came to have the elephant's head. The images in the cave-temples at Ellora have that head and Bhavabhūti in the beginning of the eighth century describes him with that head in *Mālatīmādhava*. Bhandarkar²⁰³ infers that as Rudra-Śiva and other gods allied with him were closely associated with forests where elephants were

201 Bhāg. III.41. 37-41, 42.2 & 33, 43. 18 & 31, Brahmanḍa IV.27.72-104; 44.67; III.67.55; Matsya 23.38 & 84; 54. 524, 533-41, 250.25; Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā 2.6.1; Brahmanvaivarta 3.8; Lōṅga 105, Padma sṛṣṭi 43, 63, Yājñavalkya 1.27, Matsya 153; Gaṇeśa P. 2.137; I.81-106; 1.44.45; 2.138-148, I.61, I.15, 2.73-83, I.92, I.13-15.

202 Hopkins, *Rel. of India*, P.451.

203 Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and other minor religious systems.

found, it perhaps suited to the fancy of some men to place the head of that animal over the body of a god originally mischievous.

His image stands in every well-to-do Hindu house and there are numerous temples in his honour scattered all over India. His image is also found in temples dedicated to Siva. Every Hindu book commences with the words 'Ganēśāya namaḥ'.

In Travancore there are special shrines called homapuras, in which homas, or sacrifices are daily offered to Ganēśa for the prosperity of the country.²⁰⁴ His image of clay is worshipped with great pomp in the Maratha country on the fourth lunar day of the month of Bhādrapada and at Cichawad near Poona there is a special establishment for the exclusive worship of this god.²⁰⁵

His symbols of the rat and the elephant connect him with some local theriolatory, but he is now independent, and though he is a member of the Śaiva group of deities, he has become almost non-sectarian, and all sects agree in doing him honour as the god of luck.²⁰⁶

204 ERE. Vol. VI, PP. 175

205 Bhandarkar, Op.Cit.

206 IA XXX. 255 f., also A Getty's study entitled 'Ganēśa'.

Six varieties of the Gaṇapatya sect are mentioned by Ānandagiri in his Saṃkaradigvijaya and by Dhanapati in his commentary on the corresponding work of Mādhava.

BRAHMĀ

Brahmā, known as Prajāpati, in vedic times, is celebrated in Rv.²⁰⁷ as the creator of heaven and earth, of the waters and of all that lives, who was born as the one lord of all that is, the one king of all that breaths and moves, the one god above the gods, whose ordinances all the gods and beings follow, who embraces with his arms the whole world with all creatures.²⁰⁸ Here he is praised as a supreme lord. In Av. and Vs. and regularly in the Brāhmaṇas, he is recognised as the chief god. In the sūtras,²⁰⁹ Prajāpati is identified with Brahmā. In the place of this chief god of the later vedic mythology, the philosophy of the ups. put the impersonal Brahmā, the universal soul of the absolute.

The views of Sri Tarapada Bhattacharya²¹⁰ regarding the Brahmā cult are original and noteworthy. He states that

207 Rv. X. 121.

208 Macdonell, Op.Cit.,

209 Āsvalāyan G.S., 3,4, etc.

210 The Cult of Brahmā, 1957, PP. 184-186.

in the pre-vedic days when religion and magic were inseparably connected, there were various forms of Rātra cults in which the gods worshipped were Water, Earth, Fire, Air and Ether. Some worshipped any one or two and so on of these, regarded as creators of the world. The worshippers of Earth gave rise to the worship of the Mother goddess and later on to the Śākta or Tāntric religion. Gradually these religions gave rise to the idea of a single creator - Brahmā. The old god of the water - worshippers was perhaps known as Nārāyaṇa and he was now identified with Brahmā. The worship of Dharma, Śiva, Sūrya and other minor gods was also gradually assimilated by the Brahmā cult. The śrāddha cult was also thus amalgamated. It is probable that the worship of the gods known to the early vedas also existed in the pre-vedic period. Besides the god or goddess of Earth, even a Water - god, a Fire god (pre-vedic Agni), a Wind god, and Vyoma were worshipped. They were the Rātra gods. But, for reasons, now unknown, gradually the cult of sacrifices arose in India and many of the old gods were incorporated in the vedas, but their worship was to be performed in the form of sacrifice. Hence followed a great religious schism, the vedic people forming one group and the worshippers of the old Brahmā (Rātra gods) continued their worship in the old method. The vedic gods were called Divā (from which arose the world

'Deva') and the gods of Brahmā cult were known as 'Rātra' gods - which was symbolised as the struggle between Devas and Asuras. The Brāhma or Rātra cults were for a long time regarded as Ashura or non-orthodox in character chiefly followed by the lower class people in some parts of India. But even then the old religions gradually changed the character of the vedic religion. In eastern parts of India, from Brahmāvarta and Kurukṣetra to Orissa, where the vedic cult spread gradually and slowly, the majority of the people followed the Brāhma cult. In the north-west the great personality of Krishna Vāsudeva gave rise to the Vaiṣṇava Vāsudeva Pañcharatra cult. In Eastern India arose Jainism and Buddhism which gave a death blow to both the vedic and the non-vedic cults, including that of Brahmā. But Buddhism fell a prey to the old religions and Vaiṣṇavism became the predominant religion. Along with that arose the worship of Śiva, Śakti goddesses, Sun and other gods, which gave rise to the modern form of Hinduism. The Vaiṣṇava religion assumed the form of the Bhāgavata-Pañcharātra religion, and the religious sects arose out of the five gods of the old Brahmā cult. But Brahmā totally disappeared. Thus we find Krishna being called 'Bhagwan' himself or Nārāyana or Śiva. The vedic sacrifices were forgotten. But the old beliefs in

image-worship, ancestor worship, free worship, sanctity of water, the old exclusiveness among the prehistoric sects in the form of the caste system, the sacred places of Brahmā and Siva, all survived in the Indian religions. The philosophy of the Rātra cult gave rise to the Sāṃkhya, the vedic sacrifice, whose power was called Brahman (after Brahmā) gave rise to the Upaniṣads and Vedānta philosophy. But the Sāṃkhya was followed by all religious sects. Many problems of Indian philosophy, religions and art may thus be solved if further investigation is carried out about the Brāhmā-cult.

The Brahma-purāṇa takes its name after Brahmā who is its narrator. But the Brahma-purāṇa does not give as high a position to Brahmā as it has given to Viṣṇu and Śiva. The Brahma-purāṇa describes him as follows:

He is called Svayambhū (I. 37.40). At the same time he is also said to have emerged from the navel-lotus of lord Viṣṇu at the end of his Yoganidra (45.29-39). Again, it is said that the cause which is Avyakta, Nitya and Sadasad and which is called Pradhāna, from it the lord created a Puruṣa who created the world. He is Brahmā. He is then called Adya, Susūkṣma and lord of the world (1.27). From him he created the waters first and from it the Virya was created, from the waters an egg emerged which was of golden

colour and in it Brahmā created himself. After living there, lord Brahmā divided the egg into two parts, viz. sky and earth and in between them he created the sky. The whole earth was surrounded by the waters. Then he created Kāla, Manas, Vācā, Kāma, Krodha and Rati. Then he created the seven Mānasa-Sons, Marīci, Atri, Angirasa, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasiṣṭha. Then he created Rudra out of his anger. Then he created Sanatkumāra and Skanda. After that he created lightening, clouds, rainbow and birds. After that he created Rcs, Yajus, Sāmans, and Sādhyas. Then Brahmā divided his body into two parts, one half constituting the female form. Both together created all the beings (I.33-52). From that time onwards, the sexual intercourse between man and woman has started (45.29-39, A.161). Mythological and theosophic notions inherited from the vedic period have been combined with notions of later origin - genealogic legends, the evolutionary system of Sāṃkhya and the scheme of the ages of the world - in order to give a rational theory of the origin and development of the world in harmony with the teaching of the vedas.²¹¹

It appears that some numbers were looked upon as having a special significance and it is probable that the

²¹¹ ERE., Vol. IV, P. 1596.

fancy ascribing various numbers of hands and heads to the gods was a result of such belief. Brahmā is also said to have four heads and hence the epithet Chaturmukha is applied to him (26.31). But the Brahma-purāṇa also alludes to the fifth head of Brahmā which was cut off by lord Śiva.²¹² It has been stated that Brahmā having five heads perhaps refers to a mixed form of Brahmā-Śiva. The story of Śiva's Brahmasiraśchedaka mūrti also refers to Śiva's cutting off the fifth head of Brahmā. Śiva's epithet Kapālahasta (39.7) probably refers to his cutting off the head of Brahmā and holding it in his hand. The figure at Bodhagayā of Dharmesā or Champesā of the Pāla period may also be that of a mixed god of this type.²¹³ He is called Hiranyavarna (I.40). He is always surrounded by gods, dānavas, gandharvas, yakṣas, Vidyādharas, uragas, munis, siddhas and nymphs (26.31). His lustre cannot be measured (I.24). He is also called Padmakesarasamkāśa (45.29). Besides the seven Mānasa-sons referred to above, he had five daughters, Sāvitrī, Gāyatrī, Śraddhā, Medhā and Sarasvatī (102.1,2). As regards his rising from the navel-lotus, there is a myth in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka²¹⁴ which relates that, when the universe was

212 113.3; cf. also Matsya P. III. 39.40.

213 Tārāṇada Bhāṭṭācārya, Op.Cit., P.94.

214 T.Ā. I. XXIII. I.

still fluid, Prajāpati alone was produced on a lotus-leaf.

He is called Ādideva (9.24), Jagannātha, Jagadyoni, Jagatpati, Jagadvandya, Jagadādhāra and Īsvara (26.31). He is Sānātana (9.24,25), Avyaya, lord of the worlds and Pañca-bhūtasamāyukta (45.30). He is the knowār of past, present and future.²¹⁵

The Māyā form of Brahma is aja and is red and black in colour. She keeps her hair loose. Kāma constitutes her nature. She infatuates the three worlds. She is called Mahesvarī and Mahāmāyā and is very proud of her greatness (134.6,10).

The main function of Brahmā is creation. By mental powers, he created the sage Atri, Yoni-Bhūtas, Sthūla-bhūtas, Sūkṣmabhūtas, all the four types of beings, Māricas, sages, gods, pitrs, Yakṣas, Vidyādhāras, rivers, men, monkeys, lions, birds, Jarāyujas, andāgas, śvedāgas, udbhijas, Brāhmanas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, sūdras, antyajas, mlecchas, trna, gulma and ants (45.29-39).

The Brahma purāṇa describes Brahmā in the capacity of a bestower of boons. Thus Brahmā granted a boon to Bali that he would be a great yogin and that no one would equal

²¹⁵ 122.53; cf. Ram. 7.54.32.

to him in strength (13.32-34). When Pārvatī practised penance, Brahmā granted her a boon that she would get a husband of her desire (34.98). At the same time, Brahmā was unable to tolerate injustice and cursed the deserving. Thus when Saraswatī enjoyed with Purūravā for many years without Brahmā's knowledge, he cursed her that she would be a river in the Mṛtyuloka and would be seen at some places and would not be seen at other places (A.101). Many a times, Brahmā helped the other gods and the sages. Thus in the Svayamvara of Umā, Brahmā came with the retinue of yogins and Siddhas and performed the rites of marriage of Śiva with Umā (36.4, 134,135). Again, when the Moon refused to give back Tārā to Bṛhaspati, Brahmā meddled in the matter and brought the reconciliation (9.24,25). Elsewhere it is said that Brahmā took the form of a maiden and infatuated the demons who obstructed the sacrifice (134.5). The relation of Brahmā with Viṣṇu is noteworthy. At the beginning of a kalpa, when many demons wanted to kill Brahmā, he prayed lord Viṣṇu and killed the demons (A.156). Elsewhere it is said that Brahma was dependent on Viṣṇu (I.24) and that at the end of a kalpa, all the gods with Brahmā enter into Nārāyaṇa (5.61).

The Br. P., further, relates some disgraceful

~~episodes about him~~

(Note page 579 is bound ^{before} ~~after~~ page 578)

During the later epic, his superiority is set aside in favour of Visnu or Śiva²²⁰ and the temples of Brahma are now very few and far between the most well-known being that at Puṣkara. There is a temple of Brahma in the Idar State and another at Sadhi in the Padra district of the Baroda State.²²¹

SUN

Solar worship has been described as the real religion of India, As India is a land flooded with Sunshine and as every phase and function of life is dependent upon the kindly warmth of the Sun and his destructive power is felt in the uttermost extremes of heat, it should be man's primary business to win his favour and placate his wrath.²²²

Sūrya as the orb seen in the sky is a vedic deity. He is the most concrete of the solar deities, his connection with the luminary never being lost sight of.²²³ He is called the lord of eyes;²²⁴ and beholds all the beings and their good and bad deeds.²²⁵ He is the father of Asvins²²⁶ and of Yama²²⁷ and Manu. Sun was worshipped as Sūrya, Mitra,

²²⁰ Hopkins, Op.Cit., P. 192.

²²¹ Kane P.V., Hist. of Dh.S., Vol.II. II. P.724.

²²² ERE., Vol. 12, P. 83.

²²³ Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, P. 30.

²²⁴ Av. 5.24.9

²²⁵ Rv. I.50.7; 6.51.2; 7.60.2; 61.1, 63.1.4.

²²⁶ Rv. 10.17.2

²²⁷ Rv. 10. 14.5, 17.1.

stories about lord Brahmā. While performing the marriage rites of lord Śiva, the virile-semon of Brahmā fell on seeing lord Śiva touch the thumb of Pārvatī for the performance of marriage rite and from it the Vālahilyas were created. Brahmā was abashed but lord Śiva gave him a water-pot consisting of holy waters for expiation (A.72). Another story relates how Brahmā grew passionate for his eldest daughter and followed her in the form of a deer when she was running away in the form of a female deer. Lord Śiva took the form of a hunter and threatened to kill Brahmā. Thereupon Brahmā refrained from following her (A.102). A similar myth is told in RV.²¹⁶ and is several times referred to in the Brāhmanas.²¹⁷ The basis of this myth seems to be two passages of the RV.²¹⁸ in which the incest of a father with his daughter is referred to and an archer is mentioned.²¹⁹ Another myth relates how when a dispute arose between Brahmā and Viṣṇu regarding their superiority over each other, Brahmā spoke lie with his fifth head that he had seen the end of the Jyotirmaya linga of lord Śiva (A.135).

216 RV. 10.61.

217 Aitareya Br. 3.33; Satapatha Br. I. 7.4, Pañcavimsa Br. 8.2.10.

218 I.71.5; 10.61. 5-7.

219 Bergaigne, La Religion Vedique, 2,169; Oldenberg, sacred books of the East, 46, 78, f.

Savitr, and Pusan in vedas. Though, all of them represented basically the same phenomenon, yet they were considered to be distinct deities as their concepts revealed different powers of the Sun. Especially, he is revered as Savitr, the giver and sustainer of life, who each morning awakes the universe and men from sleep. Another is Mitra, perhaps the most ancient cult of all,ⁱⁿ which he is associated as a member with an early triad, symbolised by the sacred syllable Om, the triad being Agni, Vāyu and Mitra. He is involved^k also as Pusan, the guardian and preserver of the cattle, the companion of travellers, and guide of the soul on its perilous^o way to the lower world. In later times these several Sun-gods were merged in one and he continued to be worshipped as a Sun-god even after the rise of the supreme gods.

In Rv.²²⁸ and the Kausītaki Brāhmaṇa upaniṣad,²²⁹ he is prayed for the removal of sins. Āsvalāyana²³⁰ insists upon reciting the Gāyatrī at the time of worshipping the Sun. Even at present, every religious Hindu begins his day with the recitation of Gayatri. Khādira²³¹

228 (VII, 60.1; 62.2)

229 II.7

230 III.7.4-6.

231 IV. 1.14 & 23.

prescribes the adoration of Sun for the enjoyment of riches and for the attainment of fame. In the seventh century, Mayūra prayed lord Śiva with 100 stanzas and in the eighth century, Bhavabhūti eulogised lord Sun in his *Mālatīmādhava*. Thus the Sun has been adored since the vedic times for the removal of sins and the bestowed of riches, & food, fame, health and other blessings.²³²

In the mythology *Sūrya* is the son of *Dyaus*, the wide spreading sky but according to the *Brahma-purāṇa*, he is the son of *Aditi* and a myth is related regarding his birth and how he came to possess the name *Mārtanda*. *Aditi* gave birth to gods but the *Daityas*, *Dānavas*, the sons of her co-wives *Diti* and *Danu*, troubled them. Therefore, she prayed lord Sun and requested him to be her son. During the period of pregnancy, she observed several *vratas*. Her husband scolded her saying that she was killing the child by observing fasts. At that very time, she gave birth to a child and the divine speech declared that as *Kāśyapa* had charged *Aditi* with the words 'Tvayā Māritam Andam' the child would be known as *Mārtanda* (32.9-45). In the fight with the *daityas*, they were burnt by the Sun's

232 Bhandarkar, Op.Cit., P. 152.

rays and the gods obtained their sacrificial share and Sūrya is also said to have enlivened Sampāti and Jatāyu, the sons of Aruna and Garuda, when they burnt their wings while going near the Sun (A.166).

Another myth is related about the family of the Sun. Viśvakarman, who is regarded as Prajāpati, gave his daughter Samjñā to the Sun for wife. She bore him two sons Mapu Vaivasvata and Yama and one daughter Yamunā. Now the splendour of the Sun was so great that Samjñā could not bear to look on him. She, therefore, substituted for herself 'Chāyā' her shadow, and thus deceiving her husband, she went to her father's house, but as Viśvakarman was determined to send her back to her husband, she fled in the shape of a mare to the Uttarakurus. Meanwhile Chāyā bore to the Sun two sons, Sāvarnī and the Planet Saturn, and a daughter the river goddess Tapatī also called Vistī. Chāyā preferred her own children to those of Samjñā and thus the Sun detected the fraud committed by his wife. He went to Viśvakarman and asked him to reduce his splendour so that Samjñā (also called Usā) might bear his light. Viśvakarman, therefore, put him on his lathe and pared down the body of the Sun. The Sun, learning from Viśvakarman, the retreat of his wife, went in the shape of a horse to the land of the Uttarakurus. There he met Samjñā and from their nostrils were produced the two

Asvins (A.6, 32.49-81, A.89). These and other myths are related in other works²³³

In the Brahma purāṇa, he is described as follows: Lord Sūrya shines on a white lotus (28.30). The association of the Sun with the lotus seems to rest upon the natural observation that the flower opened when the Sun rose and closed at Sunset, so as to suggest to the primitive mind the idea that the flower might be the residence of the Sun during its nocturnal passage through the under world, or that it might be the revivifier, resurrector, or regenerator of the fresh or refreshed Sun of the next day.²³⁴ His eyes are yellow (28.30) and he is decorated with ornaments and is very beautiful (28.31) and he has two hands and ~~xxx~~ his complexion is red. His clothes are like a red lotus (28.30).

Further it is said that he is worshipped by 108 names. Some of them are Sūrya, Aryamā, Bhaga, Tvastā, Pūṣan, Arka, Savitā, Ravi, Gabhastimān, Aja, Kālā, Mrtyu, Dhātā, Prabhākara, Prthvī, Āpa, Tejas, Kha, Vāyu, Soma, Brhaspati, Sukra, Budha, Angāraka, Indra, Vivasvān, Diptāmsu, Suci, Sauri, Sanaiscara, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Skanda,

²³³ Mbh. Ādi Parva 66-27, 67-35; Bhāg., 6.6.8-13; Harivamśa 1-9, Viṣṇu 3-2, Varaha 20; Vāyu 84; Padma 5-8; Matsya 11, 124; Mbh. Vanaparva 164, Anuśāsana 145.

²³⁴ ERE., Vol.8.

Vaisravana, Yama, Vaidyuta, Agni, Jāṭharāgni, Aindhana, Tejahpati, Dharmadhvaja, Vedakartā, Vedāṅga, Vedavāhana, Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara, Kali, the resort of ^{all} the Gods, Kalā, Kāsthā, Muhūrtā, Kṣapa, Yama, Kṣanā, Samvartakakara, Aśvattha, Kālacakra, Vibhāvasu, Puruṣa, Śāsvata, Yogī, Vyakta as well as avyakta, Sanātana, Kālādhyakṣa, Prajādhyakṣa, Viśvakarmā, Tamonuda - the remover of darkness, Varuṇa, Sāgara, Aṃśa, Jimūta, Jīvana, Arihā, Bhūtāśraya, Bhūtapati, bowed down by all the worlds, creator, devourer of all the things, Alolupa - one who has no temptations (This is an epithet of Śiva applied to Sun),²³⁵ Ananta, Kapila, Bhānu, Kāmada, Sarvatomukha, Jaya, Viśāla, Varada, Sarvabhūtaniṣevita, Mana, Suparna, Bhūtādi, Sighraga, Prānadhārana, Dhanvantari, Dhūmaketu, Ādideva, Aditiputra, Dvadaśātma, Ravi, Dakṣa, Pitā, Mātā, Pitāmaha, means of ~~having~~ getting heaven, progeny and liberation, Trivistapa, Devakartā, Prasāntātmā, Viśvātmā, Viśvatomukha, Carācarātma, Sūkṣmātmā, Maitreya and merciful (33.34-45). One who recites these names gets the desired results (33.48-49).

There are twelve general names of the lord Sun, viz. Āditya, Savitā, Sūrya, Mihira, Arka, Prabhākara, Mārtanda, Bhāskara, Bhānu, Citrabhānu, Divākara and Ravi (31.15,16).

235 Hopkins, Epic Mythology.

Sūrya possesses twelve names for each of the months of the year, viz. Viṣṇu, Dhātā, Bhaga, Pūsan, Mitra, Indra, Varuna, Aryamā, Vivasvān, Amsuman, Tvastā, and Parjanya (31.17) and it is said that Viṣṇu shines in Caitra, Aryamā in Vaiśākha, Vivasvān in Jyestha, Amsuman in Āśāḍha, Parjanya in Śravana, Varuna in Praustha, Indra in Āśvīyujā, Dhātā in Kārtika, Mitra in Mārgaśīrṣa, Pūsan in Pausa, Bhaga in Māgha and Tvastā in Phalgun (31.19-21). Another list of 21 names is given reciting which one gets freedom from sins, and it bestows health, wealth and prosperity (31.34-35). The names are Vikartana, Vivasvān, Mārtanda, Bhāskara, Ravi, Lokaprakāśaka, Śrīmān, Lokacakṣu, Mahesvara, Lokasakṣi, Trilokesa, Kartā, Hartā, Tamisrahā, Tāpana, Tapana, Śuci, Saptāśvavāhana, Gabhastihasta, Brahmā and one who is bowed down by all the gods (31.31-33). The derivation of the word Vivasvān is given in the Śatapatha-Brahmana where it is said that Āditya Vivasvat illumines (vi-vaste) night and day. Vivasvān goes back to the Indo-Iranian period being identified with Vivanhvant, of the father of Yama.

After creating the Prajāpatīs and other beings, the lord Sun divided himself into the forms of twelve Ādityas. The form known as Indra destroys the enemies of gods. Dhātā is a Prajāpati and creates various beings. Parjanya resides

in clouds and showers rain. Tvastā resides in vegetables and herbs. Pūṣan stays in food, Aryamā in all the deities, Bhaga in all the beings, Vivasvān resides in fire and helps the digestion of food. Viṣṇu the destroys the enemies of gods. Ansumān gives happiness to all by residing in Vāyu. Varuna resides in waters and maintains all the beings. Mitra practices penance for the welfare of all. The Sun pervades the whole earth by his twelve forms(30.24-39).

Some philosophical epithets are applied to him. He is without beginning and without end. He is eternal, indestructible, dhātā and vidhātā (30.8-11). He is the Ātman of all, the lord of all the beings, the basic essence of the three worlds, the Prajāpati and the highest deity (31.3) He has a form which is nitya, endowed with knowledge, acintya, avijñeya, Alakṣya, Avyaya, anādi and ananta. It is beyond sacrifices, beyond vedas and beyond the worlds (33.19-21). He is the creator, maintainer and destroyer of the worlds. He is called Kāla and his nature is constituted by the rivers, mountains, oceans, lightening, rainbow, pralaya, creation, the things manifested as well as not manifested (33.12-13). He is the Ātman of all the moving and non-moving beings (110.220-221).

Functions

He pours the rain, maintains the beings, gives light to the world, measures time and divides the seasons (31.4-9).

In different seasons, the Sun shines by different colours. In spring, it is Kapila, in Grīṣma, it is golden, in rainy season, it is white; in Autumn, it is yellow, in Hemanta, it is red like copper, in Śisīra it is red (31.12,13).

The different forms of Sun have different numbers of rays. Thus it is said that Viṣṇu shines with 1,200 rays, Aryamā with 1,300 rays, Vivasvān with 1,400 rays, Ansumān with 1,500 rays, Parjanya with 1,400 rays, Varuṇa with 1,300 rays, Tvastā with 1,100 rays, Indra with 1,200 rays, Dhātā with 1,100 rays, Mitra with 1,000 rays, and Pūṣan with 900 rays (31.22-26).

He is higher than the gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. Since they are known through veda whereas the lord Sun is directly perceptible (30.19). There is no god higher than him (30.7). He is the first cause of all the beings. He is Brahmā, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Prajāpati, Vāyu, Indra, Soma, Vivasvān and Varuṇa (33.11). Ṛk and Yajus and Sāmāns constitute his form and he is also known by the name Om (32.15,16). He is

the life of all the beings, gods, gandharvas, rākṣasas, sages, kinnaras, siddhas, uragas and birds (33.10).

It is said that the form of the Sun known as Mitra is indestructible, unmodified, manifested as well as unmanifested, and eternal. It is the upholder of the world and the highest abode. It is birthless. The past, the present and the future are established in him. It is the father and mother of all the beings (30.41-43). Mihira is the Sanskritised form of the persian Mihr, which is a corruption of Mithra, the avestic form of the vedic Mitra. The cult of Mihira had originated in Persia and it extended itself upto Asia Asia minor and even Rome and the proselytising energy which characterised its first adherents must have led to its extension towards the east also and of this extension the figure of Mihira on a coin of kanīśka is an evidence.²³⁶

Bhandarkar opines that there were six classes of the devotees of Surya who interpreted the vedic hymns as setting forth the greatness and the supremacy of the lord Sun. These sects were devoid of any trace of the foreign influence but from the early centuries of the christian era such an influence contributed to the growth of the Sun-worship in northern India. In the Brhatsamhitā (60.19), Varāhamihira

236 Bhandarkar, Op.Cit., PP. 151 ff.

expressly tells that the installation and consecration of the images and temples of the Sun should be caused to be made by the Magas which shows that the Magas were the special priests of the Sun-god. There is a legend in the Bhavisya-purāṇa (Ch.139) which relates how Sāmba brought Magas from Śākadvīpa and installed them as priests of the temples he had constructed in honour of Sun. A reference to Sāmba and Magas is found in an inscription at Govindapur in the Gayā district dated Saka 1509 = 1137-38 A.D. and in Rajputana and other provinces, the brahmins of that name are found.²³⁷ These Magas are the Magi of the ancient Persia and Alberuni speaks of the Persian priests Magas existing in India.²³⁸ As the Indians had been familiar with the foreigners Śakas since the 2nd or the 3rd century B.C., the idea of associating Magas with Śākadvīpa must have arisen as they too were foreigners like the Śakas.²³⁹ Thus the worship of the Sun was brought into India by the old Persian priests Magi but at whose instance and under what circumstances it is difficult to say. The story of Sāmba was prevalent in the first half of the 12th century.

237 Bhandarkar, Op.Cit.

238 Sachau's trans. Vol.I, P.21.

239 Bhandarkar, Op.Cit.

Bhandarkar makes a survey of all the records available on Sun-worship and opines that the Mihira cult was introduced into India from Persia and the construction of temples is also a foreign influence and this cult is entirely different from the Saura systems. Gradually, the Magas were assimilated and hinduised by the new cult and became indistinguishable from the other Hindus and formed only a separate class.

The evidence of the copper plate grant of Harsavardhana styling his father, grandfather and great grandfather as the great devotees of Āditya proves that the Sun-cult, probably made up of a mixture of the indigenous and foreign forms prevailed in the beginning of the sixth century and was professed by great princes.²⁴⁰ The Brahma purāṇa mentions Mihira (30.41-43) in the names of the Sun and emphasises the Mitra form of Sun (31.15).

Not many temples dedicated to Sun have survived. That at the koṇārka in Orissa is the best known and architecturally of the great interest. The Brahma purāṇa eulogises the worship of Koṇāditya in the holy temple of koṇārka situated in the Aundradesa on the northern shore of the Lavana ocean (A.28). It is, however, neglected and in ruins and

240 *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol.I, PP. 72-73.

attracts no worshippers. There is another temple at Gayā and a small but much frequented shrine at Benaras where the fire-sacrifice is offered in honour of the Sun.²⁴¹

The Brahma purāṇa deals with Sun-worship in Chs. 28-33. Hazra has made a comparable study of the Saura upapurāṇas and states that many verses are found common to Brahma P., Sām̐ba P. and Bhaviṣya P. and it shows definitely that the Brahma P. borrowed these common verses from the Sām̐ba P. and that some of the verses of the Brahma P. originally belonged to some other source is shown by the fact that though in Brahma P., ch. 28 Brahma ~~being~~ begins, at the request of sages, to describe the place of Koṇārka or Koṇāditya situated in Utkala on the northern shore of the salt-ocean, in chs. 29-33 he is found to describe, Mitravana situated on the bank of the Candrasarit mostly in the same verses as found in the Sām̐ba P. and the Bhaviṣya P., no mention being made by him of Koṇāditya, of Utkala, or of the ocean in the chapters.²⁴²

For the mode of Sun-worship, refer to the section on 'Worship' of chapter VII on 'Religion'.

241 ERE, Vol. XII, P. 34.

242 Hazra R.C., Studies in the upapurāṇas, Vol. I.

At the present day worship is performed in honour of Suraj Nārāyana. All pious Hindus revere the rising Sun, and he is invoked when the pilgrim bathes in the sacred rivers and at other domestic rites.

INDRA

Indra is the favourite national god of the vedic Indians. He is celebrated in 250 hymns. As the name, which dates from the Indo-Iranian period and is of uncertain meaning, does not designate any phenomenon of nature, the figure of Indra has become very anthropomorphic and much surrounded by mythological imagery, more so than that of any other god in the veda. He is primarily the thunder-god, the conquest of the demons of draught or darkness and the consequent liberation of the waters or the winning of light forming its mythological essence.²⁴³

By the time of purāṇas, the importance of Indra waned and in the Brahma-Purāṇa he is a deity of secondary importance constantly searching the help of either lord Viṣṇu, Śiva, Brahmā or some great sage in order to ensure safety from the demons and other forces.

He has thousand eyes and a beautiful form. He

²⁴³ Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, P. 54.

wears a necklace and mounts the famous elephant Airāvata (36.8-10). Saci sits by his side and Jayanta adorns his lap (140.6-4). In the Svayaṃvara of Umā, he comes with great pomp (36.8-10). He is surrounded by gods and is praised by Siddhas and Saṃnyas. Apsarasas sing and dance and wave fans round him (140.6-8). He wields thunderbolt in his hand (124.5) and the thunderbolt is the weapon exclusively appropriate to Indra.²⁴⁴ He is called Śakra, Maghavān (10.20), Mahendra & Varada, Jisnu (140.6-8), (124.5), Purandara (10.26), Vṛtrahā, Namucihaṇṭā, Purambhettā and Gotravid (124.5).

The court of 'hall' of Indra is the rendezvous of the other gods and this is called Sudharma and by lord kṛṣṇa's order Vāyu carried it to Dwārakā when Ugrasena was coronated and at the end of the Yādava family, it was given back to Indra (115.14,15; 212.7). According to Hopkins²⁴⁵ the 'halls' is a late description in epics, a supposition favoured by other evidence of the same character regarding their inhabitants - perhaps a loan from the Jains, who have a heaven and gods called Saudharma.

Indra is the lord of clouds and waters and in order

²⁴⁵ Epic Mythology, P. 58.

to please him, the Indrotsava was celebrated.²⁴⁶ He protected the sacrifice of Dakṣa (A.108,109).

Many anecdotes are related about Indra in the Brahma-purāṇa. He killed the demon Namuci by the foam of the ocean (A.124). He was thrice deprived of his throne once on account of the sin of killing Vṛtra, next for the sin of killing Sindhusena and thirdly when he seduced Ahalyā in the garb of the sage Gautama.²⁴⁷ The sage Gautama cursed Indra to have a thousand signs of female organ on his body but on being prayed by Indra, the thousand signs turned into the form of eyes and hence he was called Sahasrākṣa (A.87). Indra asked lord kṛṣṇa to protect Arjuna who was a part of himself (A.188). He pierced the foetus of Diti into 49 pieces at the advice of the demon Maya and the Maruts were born from them. Thereupon Diti cursed him ~~x~~ that he would be dethroned and would be defeated by a woman and the sage Agastya cursed him that he would have to show his back in the battle (A.124). Indra deceived Rāji by flattering him and thus deprived him of becoming the king of gods (A.11). There was a terrible fight between Indra and lord kṛṣṇa for the Pārijāta tree and consequently Indra had to give the tree to lord kṛṣṇa (A.188). By the killing of Vṛtra, Indra was

246 187.35-40; cf. also Indrādhvaja ceremony in Kausikasūtra & Brhatsamhitā, Ch.43.

247 122.49; also cf. Śaiv. Br. i.1.19-20.

polluted with the heinous sin of Brahmanicide and he fled in great terror to the end of the world. There he entered water, and concealed himself in the fibre of a lotus. After many years, he was purified by the water of the river Gautamī (A.96). In the Mbh.²⁴⁸ it is stated that Brhaspati cleansed him by a horse-sacrifice from the brahmahatyā which was distributed amongst women, plants, etc.

In the Rgveda and the Brāhmanas there are innumerable stories which relate the intrigues of the gods with married women e.g. of Indra with the wife of Vṛṣanāśva²⁴⁹, with Apalā Atreyī,²⁵⁰ etc. The conduct of the gods is not here made a matter of reproach and adultery is not much considered from the ethical point of view. It is because the brahmin is in possession of the secret whereby he can inflict harm, that therefore, man must refrain from illicit intercourse with the wife of a brahmin.²⁵¹ In the Brahma purāṇa, it is said that when the sage Gautama entered his hermitage when Indra was in the company of Ahalyā, Gautama's wife, Indra out of the fear of the sage became a cat and was afterwards cursed by the sage (A.122)

248 V. 11 ff.

249 Rv. I.51.13, combined with Sātyāyana Brāhmaṇa by Sāyana, Śādvimsa Br. I.1.16; Maitrāyaṇīsamhitā 11.5.5

250 Rv. viii.91 & Sātyāyana Br. iv.1.15.

251 Śatapatha Br. XIV,9.4.11; Brhadāranyaka VI.4.12; Pāraskara Grh.Sū., I.11.6; Encycl. Vol.I, P.128.

Indra in the brahmanical mythology is the ruler of heaven and represents the kṣatrōya or warrior class. Indra is always afraid lest some saint should by severe austerities wrest his power from him, and when there is a danger of this kind, he sends one of the Apsaras, or heavenly nymph, to seduce the saint from his ascetic exercises. Thus the Brahma-purāṇa states that Indra sent the nymph Pramlocā to disturb the penance of the sage Kanḍu (A.178). Still he is regarded as the powerful lord of heaven and the chief of the gods, but in comparison with the supreme gods - Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva - he, like the remaining gods, occupies but a second rank.

Though, there are no temples of Indra, at least in modern times, his images and niches dedicated to him are met with in temples of other gods and so he may be said to receive a kind of indirect worship.

ARJUNA

When the ancient gods ceased to appeal to the masses of the people in that form in which they were represented in the veda, the same god under a particular aspect became in some cases popular, and was hence regarded as a separate

god, demigod, or as a hero connected somehow with the original god. A popular godling, with functions similar to those of an ancient god, grew up as a kind of duplicate of the latter, or if he was not accepted as a god proper, he came, by the anthropomorphic influence of the epic poetry, to be regarded as a hero, whose resemblance to the ancient god was explained by the assumption that he was an incarnation of that deity.²⁵²

Thus, Arjuna is, in the Brahma purāṇa, represented as an incarnation of Indra and Indra personally requests lord kṛṣṇa to protect Arjuna as he was a part of his own self. He calls Arjuna a very brave personality and asks kṛṣṇa to take his help in his function of destroying the evil factors. Lord kṛṣṇa also ensures Arjuna's safety to Indra (188.40-46). According to the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa,²⁵³ Arjuna is a mystical name of Indra and he was according to Pāṇini²⁵⁴ worshipped just as Vāsudeva was. But Arjuna is one of the principle heroes of the Mbh.²⁵⁵ and is intimately connected with Indra.

252 ERE, Vol. II, P.804.

253 II, 1.2.11

254 IV. 3.98.

255 iii. 41 ff.

Further, it is related that before lord kṛṣṇa passed away from the world he had instructed Arjuna to take care of his wives, and to install his grandson Vajranābha on the throne (211.2). On the passing away of lord kṛṣṇa and Balarama, Arjuna performed the funeral rites and installed Vajranābha on the throne. He then took the widows of lord kṛṣṇa with him and was passing with them through Pañcānada. Here he was confronted by the Ābhiras. They fought with him and defeated him. Arjuna to his great dismay found that he had lost his prowess and the skill of using his favourite bow Gāṇḍīva. He found himself unable to save the widows of lord kṛṣṇa whom the Ābhiras successfully kidnapped. Deeply ^{trissu}deserted by the catastrophe, he resorted to Vyāsa for consolation (212.1-12, 14-33).

MARUTS

In RV., there are said to be storm-gods, the sons of Rudra and Prṣṇī,²⁵⁶ also often called Rudras, a group of thrice seven or thrice sixty deities, the constant allies of Indra in his conflicts.²⁵⁷

In the Br. P. an anecdote is related regarding their birth. In the war between gods and daityas, when

256 I.39. 4.7; I. 23.10; AV. 5.21.11.

257 RV. 3.35.9; 6.17.11; I.165.11.

many sons of Diti had been slain, she asked her husband Kasyapa of a son who should kill Indra, and Kasyapa granted her request on the condition that she should strictly observe purity during the period of her pregnancy. Once, however, she slept without washing her feet (elsewhere it is said that she slept facing the north at the time of twilight), Indra availed himself of this opportunity, and entering Diti's womb, cut into seven pieces the child with which she was pregnant. When the seven parts began to weep, Indra asked them not to do so by the words 'Mā rodih' (elsewhere 'Mā ruta'), and again cut each piece into seven pieces; and hence they were called Maruts and became a troop of 49 gods. On seeing this Diti and the sage Agastya cursed Indra, and Kasyapa worshipped Siva who granted a boon that wherever Indra gets a share, the Maruts would be the first Partakers and that they would be the constant helpers of Indra and no one would be able to vanquish Indra when he is helped by the Maruts. ~~This and other anecdotes regarding~~ (3.110-123, 124.17-26). This and other anecdotes regarding Maruts are given in other works.

258 Rām. I.46 f., Bhāg. VI. 18.19, 23-27; VIII.13.4; VI.10.17, IX.2.28; 20.35-9; X.25.7; XI.6.2; II.3.8; VI.5.31; Brahmandā III.5. 79,90,99,104; III.7.20; 61.46; IV.2.27, 197; III.10.110; Matsya 6.47; 163.22-3; Ch.7.8.4; 9.29; 23.35; 36.1; 49.15; 25-30; 58.33; 132.3; 137.18, 172.14-44; 174.32; 191.117; 246-60; Vāyu 99.139-51.

YAMA

Yama in RV. is a deified hero and is considered to be the chief of dead. In RV., it is implied that he is a god though, however, expressly he is not called a god but only a king who rules the dead.²⁵⁹ In the Brahmanical mythology he has become the ~~xxx~~ dreaded god of the nether world, the sovereign of the demons, and the regent of the south (24.4). He is the son of the Sun-god Vivasvat, brother of Manu and Yamunā (6.8). In the RV. it is said that his father is Vivasvat²⁶⁰ with whom Saranyu is mentioned as his mother.²⁶¹ In the Brahma-purāṇa it is said that Samjñā or Usā was his mother (6.7, 89.3-5). Yama is many a times called by his patronymic Vaivasvata.²⁶² The trait of Yama being called by his patronymic Vaivasvata is Indo-Iranian for in the Avesta Vivanhavant, as the first man who pressed Soma, is said to have received Yama as a son in reward.²⁶³

His vehicle is the bull (94.16). He is the guardian of the world (94.32). All men are afraid of him and practice brahmacharya due to his fear. Due to his fear

259 Rv. 9.113; 10.14, 1a 94.4

260 Rv. 10.14.5

261 Rv. 10.17.1

262 Rv. 10.14.1, Br. P. 6.22, 89.5.

263 Roth, ZDMG, 2, 218.

people behave properly, perform the religious rites, observe fasts, go to the forests, drink Soma, give annadāna and godāna and the mumuksus discuss the Brahmapada(125.23,24).

Several myths are related regarding Yama in the Brahma purāṇa. It is said that as Chāyā who was replaced by Samjñā, Yama's mother, preferred her own children to those of Samjñā, Yama was unable to bear it and raised his foot to kick Chāyā but Chāyā cursed him that his foot would fall. When Yama explained the matter to his father, his father modified the curse by saying that though the foot might not fall down, it would be eaten by worms and insects (6.23-29). Once on seeing the unhappy condition of a Vaisya family over the death of their child, Yama gave up his work of killing and practised penance but on the advice of Sun, he resumed his work (A.86). When Mr̥tyu tried to take away the life of Śveta, a devotee of Śiva, he was killed and on hearing about his death, Yama was very angry and a terrible fight ensued between Yama and Nandi and Vināyaka and at the end Kārtikeya killed Yama. The gods Viṣṇu and others approached Śiva and Śiva enlivened him with condition that Yama would have no control over Śiva's devotees (A.94). Here Yama and Mr̥tyu are distinguished and the superiority of Śiva over Yama is emphasised. * Yama pacified the enmity between owls and

pigeons (A.125). His messengers fetch the souls of dying men and lead them to Yama's hell where Citragupta, the recorder, reads the account of their deeds, and the god sits in judgment upon them. The Brahma purāṇa provides a terrible description of Yama's hall and the way that leads to it (A.214,215). Many details about Yama are given in other works too.²⁶⁴

AGNI

In the Rgveda, he is the personification of the sacrificial fire. He is therefore the god of the priests and the priest of gods. The vedic conceptions of Agni are partly retained and occasionally revive in later mythology.

In Brahma purāṇa it is said that he is the husband of Svēhā. He is the enjoyer of sacrifices. He is the mouth of gods. He is the first god, takes the offerings to gods and is a messenger of gods. He is a means to perform the sacrifice and has a visible form. The deities enjoy

²⁶⁴ Rv. 10.14.5, 10.17.2, 10.10, 10.14.1, 58.1, 60.10, 164.2, 1.35.6, 10.135.4, 10.14.10, 10.135, AV.8.3.13, Kausitaki up. 4.15, Maitrayaniya 6.36, Brhaddarāṇyaka 1.4.11, 3.9.21, Śatapatha Br.2.2.4.2, Taittiriya 3.3.8.3, Harivaṃsa 1.9, Matsya 11.9.11, 12.17; Padma P.Śrīsti khanda 8; Vāyu P. 2.22.32, Pātāla khanda 39; Bhaviṣya P. Brahma khanda 53; Skanda P. 2.4.11, 3.2.4, Yājñavalkysmṛti 1.2.59, Anuśāsana 161.76, Mitākṣara 3.2.55, Naiṣadha xii.17, XXII.205; XIX. 46,47.

the offerings through him. He resides within the body in the form of the bestower of food (125.15-17, 98.15). By the grace of other gods, Agni gained the power to go everywhere (49.17). He is called Jātavedas, Brhadbhānu, Saptārci, Nīlālohita, Jalagartha, Samāgarbha, Yajñagarbha, and Vibhāvasu (98.17-18), Hutaśana, Havyavāhana (128.16,17). At the time when the gods were confronted by the danger of Tāraka, they sent Agni to lord Śiva to reveal the danger and as lord Śiva was in privacy with Pārvatī at that time, he threw the virile-semen into Agni who had arrived there in the form of a parrot and as Agni was unable to bear it, he threw it into Kṛttikās from which Kārtikeya was created and the remaining portion was thrown by Agni into his wife Svāhā from which the children Suvarṇā and Suvarṇa were created who were married to Saṃkalpā and Dharmarāja respectively (128.1-28).

KAMADEVA

Originally Kama is desire - not of sexual enjoyment only, but of good things in general, - and as a personification of desire he is invoked in AV.²⁶⁵ but in its another hymn,²⁶⁶ he is already conceived as the god of ~~sexual~~ sexual love, in which function only he is known to later mythology.

265 Av. IX. 2

266 AV. III. 25.

Māyāvatī brought him up. The latter, however, was Ratī, who had assumed the form of Māyāvatī in order to deceive the Asura, and thus to cause his destruction by Pradyumna. Eventually, Pradyumna kills Śambara and married Māyāvatī.²⁶⁷ These and other stories about Kāma are given in other works too.²⁶⁸ Apparently Pradyumna is but a variant of Kāma, or to be more accurate, a god of love popular in those tracks of India where the worship of kṛṣṇa prevailed.²⁶⁹ Kāma has also been identified with Māra, the tempter and devil of Buddhist legend; hence, in later Sanskrit, Māra becomes a synonym of Kāma.²⁷⁰ He is still the subject of a mystery play in South India.²⁷¹

SOMA

Soma, as an intoxicating plant of N.W. India which was pressed and allowed to ferment (Skr. *Su*, 'Press', Soma 'the pressing'), is supposed to be the *Asclepias acida* or *sarcostemma viminalis*, the expressed juice of which produces a peculiar astringent, narcotic, and intoxicating effect. As such it was regarded as a divine power, and as in Mexico

267 A.200; *Harivamśa* 9263 ff.

268 *Bhāgavata* III.12.26; VIII.7.32; X.55; XI.4.7; *Viṣṇu* V.27-28, *Matsya* 154. 209-239; 7.13; 100,329; 261.53-6; 191.110; 3.33; 4.12-21; 23.23.

269 ERE. Vol. II, P.808.b

270 Ibid.

271 E.Thurston, *Castes and tribes of S.India*, iv,399 ff.

and Peru the octri and similar intoxicating plants were deified, so in India and in Persia the Soma, identical with the Zarathushtrian haoma, was regarded as a god.²⁷² Before the end of the Rv., the yellow plant became esoterically identified with the yellow swelling and water-cleansed Moon, and in some of the latest hymns of the Rv.,²⁷³ there is no question that ~~some~~ means the Moon. From this time onwards Soma was thus used in two senses, either of the divine plant or of the Moon-god, until as in the epics, unless expressly the plant, the word Soma means the Moon.

In the Brahma purāṇa, Soma is considered to be the Moon and is the son of Atri. An interesting story is given regarding its birth. The sage Atri practised a penance called Anuttara for 3,000 divine years. During that period, his virile-semen went on the upper side and came out of his eyes and it began to brighten the ten directions in the form of the Moon. When the Moon was thus falling, Brahmā sat him on his chariot and the sons of Brahmā as well as other sages began to pray him. Being pleased, he spread his lustre in all the directions for the welfare of the world and went round the world for 21 times. At that time from his lustre, corn and other things maintaining the world were created. Then the Moon practised penance for many

many years and lord Brahmā got pleased with him and made him the king of herbs, seeds, water and brahmins (IX.1-12). Elsewhere it is said that he was made the king of sacrifices and penances (4.2). Then the Moon performed a Rājasūya in which he gave a dakṣiṇā of lakhs of things. The nine goddesses Śinī, Kuhu, Dyuti, Puṣṭi, Prabha, Vasu, Kīrti, Dhṛti and Lakṣmī attended him and he worshipped all the gods and sages (9.13-17). He was married to the 27 nakṣatras, daughters of Dakṣa, i.e. the 27 mansions of the Moon and their children were of immensurable lustre (3.59). Elsewhere it is said that Soma married Ausadhis (A.119).

A disgraceful myth is related about Soma. He carried off Tārā, the wife of Brhaspati, though Brahmā bade him restore her to her husband. Ūśanas, the teacher of the Asuras and the enemy of Brhaspati, Rudra and Āṅgiras sided with Soma in the conflict between them and the gods. At last Soma was compelled to give up Tārā. After some time she gave birth to a boy whose parentage was doubtful; and she declared, when coerced, that he was the son of Soma. The boy was named Budha (the Planet Mercury), who afterwards married Ilā, daughter of Manu. Their son was Purūravas with whom lineage of lunar kings begins (9.13-36). Brhaspati cursed the Moon to have a spot and a crooked form (152.27-29).

Soma is once said to be Amṛta and the Br. P. states that one who takes a bath and gives dāna at Somatīrtha goes to heaven (119.19). An interesting story is related about Soma, the favourite drink of gods (A.105). Soma was in the possession of Gandharvas. The gods wanted it and so gave Saraswatī to the Gandharvas and took the Soma from them. Afterward Saraswatī also returned to the gods without the acknowledgement of the Gandharvas and the Brahma purāṇa lays down a rule that as Saraswatī - the speech - had returned to the gods without the knowledge of the Gandharvas, Whenever there is a sale of Soma, one has to speak slowly.

The moon plays an important part in the ancient belief about the life after death. The souls of the dead are supposed to go to the Moon, and assembling there cause her waxing. At full Moon, the Moon sends some spirits on to the world of Brahmā - Devayāna - and sends the rest as rain down to the earth to be born again - Pitryāna.²⁷⁴

Though, he was a deity of great holiness, he seems scarcely to have received popular worship as a separate god; at least no temples seem to have been dedicated to him.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ Deussen, Eng.Trans., System Des vedānta, 1833, PP.392, 409, 475.

²⁷⁵ ERE., Vol. II, P.805.

VISVAKARMA

Viśvakarman, 'all-creating', appears as the name of an independent deity, to whom two hymns²⁷⁶ of the last book of the Ṛgveda are addressed. In the Brāhmaṇas,²⁷⁷ Viśvakarman is expressly identified with the creator Prajāpati, while in post-vedic mythology he appears, doubtless owing to the name, as the artificer of the gods.

In the Brahma purāṇa, he is called the best among the architects (50.40-43). He constructed the idols of kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Subhadra, for the king Indradymna (50.48). He protected the sacrifice of Dakṣa (108.19,20).

TVASTR

He is one of the obscurest members of the vedic pantheon.²⁷⁸ He is a skilful workman producing various objects showing the skill of an artificer.²⁷⁹ In the Brahma purāṇa he is said to have constructed the whole city of god for the sage Atri. He is there called the creator of beings, all-pervading and Viśvakarmā (140.12-18). In the Rv. he is also the ancestor of the human race in so far

²⁷⁶ Rv. 10.81,82.

²⁷⁷ SB. 8.2.1.10; 3.13; AB 4.22.

²⁷⁸ Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, P.117.

²⁷⁹ Rv. I.85.9; 3.54.12.

as his daughter, Śaranyā, wife of Vivasvat, becomes the mother of the primeval twins Yama and Yamī.²⁸⁰ In the Brahma-purāṇa, too, he assumes the role of a practical father advising her daughter Samjñā to go back to her husband Sūrya as she had left him on account of his unbearable lustre (6.16, 89.10). Eventually, Tvastā pared the Sun on his lathe and lessened his brilliance. He is there called Prajāpati (6.39, 89.42).

ASVINS

Next to Indra, Agni and Soma, the twin deities named the Asvins are the most prominent in the RV. and though they hold a distinct position among the deities of light and their appellation is Indian, their connection with any definite phenomenon of light is so obscure, that their original nature has been a puzzle to vedic interpretes²⁸¹ from the earliest times; and this obscurity makes it probable that the origin of these gods is to be sought in a pre-vedic period.²⁸¹

The Asvins have lost, in Brahmanical mythology, whatever cosmical element they had in the hymns of the Rgveda. They continue to be regarded as beautiful youths

²⁸⁰ 10.17.1.2, 5, 42.13.

²⁸¹ Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, P.49.

(6.45) and physicians (6.44). The Br. P. relates an anecdote (6.41-45) regarding their birth from Sūrya and Samjñā. Samjñā was practising penance in the form of a mare in the Uttarakurus. Sūrya approached her in the form of a horse and from their nostrils were created the two Asvins hence called Nāsatyas (6.44). Another epithet applied to them is Dasra (6.44). In the Rgveda also the epithets Dasra 'wondrous' and nāsatya are applied to them the latter generally explained as 'not untrue' (Nā^asatya), but other etymologies, such as the 'savers' have been proposed.²⁸² These two epithets in later times became the separate proper names of the Asvins.

Elsewhere, it is stated that they were created in the river Godāvarī from the mouths of Sūrya and Uṣā (89.36).

SANAISCARA

Sanaiscara is said to be the son of Sūrya and Chāyā (6.20, 89.14). Sanaiscara is said to have obtained the position of the Planet-Saturn (6.50). / It is said that he killed the demons Asvattha and Pippala who troubled people in the form of brahmins (A.118). References to Sani are met with in other works also.²⁸³

282 Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, P. 49.

283 Visnudharmottara I.106; Kalikā 18; Skanda 5.2.50; Mārkaṇḍeya 105.25; Padma P. Uttara khanda 33.

VARUNA

Varuna is the greatest of the vedic gods besides Indra. He dates from an early period, for in name he is probably identical with the Greek 'Οὐρανός,' and in character he is allied to the Avestic Ahura Mazda. In veda, he is the chief upholder of the moral and physical order.²⁸⁴ With the development of Prajāpati as creator and supreme god in the later vedas, the importance of Varuna waned, till in the post-vedic period he retained only the dominion of the waters as god of the sea.

In the Brahma-purāṇa he is said to be the lord of waters and his daughter was married to king Janaka. He seems to be a great philosopher and gave a discourse on the comparative superiority of enjoyment and liberation to king Janaka and Yājñavalkya (A.88). His constant association with Mitrā in RV. is not much alluded to in the post-vedic mythology but ~~sacrifices~~ in the Br. P. it is stated that Many performed a sacrifice, With a view to obtain a son and he offered an oblation in the name of Mitrāvaruna and from their amsa, a maiden Ilā arose from the sacrifice who married Budha and propagated the lunar race (7.3-6). The Brahma purāṇa relates an interesting story how on account of the fear of

284 RV. 8.42.1, 7.61.4, 5.62.1.

the daitya Mahāśani, Indra agrees to serve Varuna. A demon Mahāśani defeated Indra and started to conquer Varuna but Varuna gave him his daughter Vārūnī and saved himself. Being requested by Varuna he released Indra on condition that thenceforth Indra should be ready to serve Varuna (A.129). Elsewhere Vārūnī is said to be the goddess of wine and Varuna advises her to go to Balarāma whose favourite drink was wine and who after drinking her snatched the river Yamunā with his plough. There she is addressed as Madirā and as one which ^{to} the beloved ^{at} all the times (198.1-5). Varuna possesses a miraculous umbrella which pours the rain and the Br. P. states that it was in the possession of the demon Naraka. Kṛṣṇa killed him and got the umbrella (202.10,34). He is called a king (88.9) an epithet frequently applied in the Rv.²⁸⁵ and it is said that Varuna sent a garland of unfading flowers to Balarāma (198.16).

VĀYU

Vāyu, the god of wind, is not a prominent deity in the Rgveda, and under his more anthropomorphic form, he is chiefly associated with Indra. Since the invisible element of wind does not lend easily itself to anthropomorphism, scarcely any myths are told of Vāyu; nor did the god

285 4.24.7.8, 10.132.4, 2.27.10, 5.85.3, 7.87.6.

receive popular worship. In the Br.P., It is said that on being asked by kṛṣṇa, he brought the 'Sudharmā Sabhā' from Indra for the king Ugrasena (194.14-17).

HANUMĀN

With the monkey-god Hanūmān, India claims to be the chief home of the cult of monkeys. It has been argued that this cult is not primitive, but has been borrowed from some wild tribe; and this conclusion is based on the fact that there are no traces of worship of the monkey in the veda, same so far as Vṛsākapi²⁸⁶ may be regarded as the object of such.²⁸⁷

In the Brahma purāṇa, he is said to be the son of Vāyu (157.22). Ramachandra calls him as his brother and asks him to dispose of the Sivalinga established by him (157.11,22). Elsewhere it is said that Hanūmān was the son of Vāyu and Anjanā who was the wife of the monkey Kesari and who by her best limb also was a monkey originally. She was a nymph but through the effect of a curse she was deformed. Hanūmān takes her to the river Godāvarī and she gets her original form (84.2,3,17). There Hanūmān is called Vṛsākapi.

286 Rv. X.96.

287 cf. the conflicting views of Bergaigne, *Religion védique*, ii. 270-272; Oldenberg, *Religion des veda*, 172-174; Geldner, *Vedische studien*, ii.22-42; Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, iii 278 .

287^a ~~These~~ details regarding Vṛsākapi, vide Shah D.P. "Vṛsākapi in the Rv.", Jo I, Vol. VIII, No. 1, (Sept. 88).

NANDI

Nandi, the divine bull, is the vehicle of lord Siva and his idol is always placed facing lord Siva in the temples constructed in the honour of lord Siva. In the Brahma purāṇa, it is stated that he carried away the divine cows and but on being asked by the gods, he returned her to them (91.6-9).

KUBERA

Kubera is mentioned in the Atharvaveda as chief of the 'good people' (Puṇyājana), or other people (itarajana) and as concerned with concealment. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa and in later vedic texts he is mentioned as king of the Rākṣasas, and in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka (1.316) he is mentioned as the lord of wishes and as possessor of a wonderful car (apparently the later Puṣpaka). In later mythology, he is the king of the Yakṣas as well as of the Kinnaras and Guhyakas, while the Rākṣasas are the subjects of his half-brother, Rāvaṇa.

According to Brahma purāṇa, he is the son of Viśravaś, grandson of Pulastya, Prajāpati's son (97.2,15). It is said that Viśravaś had two wives, by the former he had one son, Kubera; the latter was a Rākṣasī, and by her

he had three sons, viz. Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Vibhīšana. Kubera was the lord of Laṅkā and possessed the aeroplane which was given to him by lord Brahmā, but being advised by the mother, Ravana fought with Kubera, defeated him and expelled him from Laṅkā, made it his own capital. Kubera, then by the advice of Pulastya, went to the river Gautamī and worshipped lord Śiva, and obtained from him the boon of being the lord of treasures (A.97). References to Kubera are met with in other works also.²⁸⁸

SĀGARA

He is the god of sea, the lord of rivers and jewels. The mountains, demons and nectar are held by him. Lord Viṣṇu resides with Laxmī in the ocean and nothing is impossible for him (172.6,7,9,10). It is said in the Brahma-purāṇa that the river Ganges divided herself into seven parts and merged in the ocean (172.18).

GODDESSES

The Brahma-purāṇa does not propagate Śāktism as a cult but it eulogises Pārvatī; and refers to Lakṣmī,

²⁸⁸ Bhāgavata IX.2.32-33; IV.1.37; 11.33; X.50-56, I.9.3, IV.12.1-9, Vāyu 40.8, 47.1, 70.38, 97.2, 69.196, 70.41; Brahmāṇḍa II.18.1-2, 35.94, 36.218, III.7.254 & 331, 8.44, 72.2, IV.15.22; Matsya 121.2-3, 137.32, 148.84, 150.50-108, 153.179, 180.62, 47.30, 55.32, 189.4.11, 191.85, 261.20.2, 133.63; 138.25, 140.41, Mbh. Vana 275, 276; Udyoga 136; Salya 48, 47; Sabhā 10, Rāmāyaṇa Aranya 15.22; Uttarakāṇḍa 13; 15; Devī Bhāgavata 12.16; Padma Svarga 16; 3; Bhaviṣya Brahma 124.

Saraswatī, Ausadhis, Mātr̥s, Yogamāyā, Suvarnā, Aditi, Subhadrā, Virajā, Mātā and other goddesses. It deals at great length with the river-goddess Godāvarī.

In the vedic literature down to the Grhyasūtras no female goddess of predominant power is mentioned. Such names as Rudrānī and Bhavānī are available but they do not show a belief in the existence of an independent powerful goddess. But we see that one whole hymn is addressed to Durgā in the Mbh.²⁸⁹ which shows that at the time when it was inserted in the Mbh., Durgā had acquired an importance of a powerful goddess. In the Br. P., it is said that Śakti is the mother of Brahmā, Viṣṇu & Mahesā (131.47).

PĀRVATĪ

Siva's consort Rudrānī or Mrdānī is known by many names as Devī, Umā, Gaurī, Pārvatī, Durgā, Bhavānī, Kālī, Kāpālīnī, Cāmunda and others. She is a very prominent figure in the classical mythology.

According to the Br. P., Pārvatī, in her former birth, was the eldest among the eight daughters of Dakṣa,

²⁸⁹ Bhīsmaparvan, ch. 23.

and was known as Satī. She was married to Tryambaka and when her father did not invite her husband to his sacrifice, she felt insult and threw herself in the fire and died.²⁹⁰ Himālaya practised severe penance and obtained Satī as his daughter. As she observed several fasts, Menākā tried to avert her by the word 'U mā' and thenceforth she was known as Umā.²⁹¹ She practised severe penance in order to attain Śiva as a husband. Once lord Śiva took an ugly form and appeared before her but she knew his identity through yogic powers and welcomed him (35.1-7). Lord Śiva created an illusion before Pārvatī of a child struggling to be released from an alligator. The alligator agreed to release the child on the condition that she should give the merit of her penance to him. When Pārvatī expressed her willingness to do so, the alligator released the child and showed her his real form (35.35-61). The Svayanvara of Umā with Śiva was celebrated with great pomp and all the gods had participated in it (A.36, A.72). Śiva's wooing and wedding of Pārvatī and their conjugal life and conversation are often introduced and often narrated at great length, yet always in wholly human fashion.

290 34.9-26; 109.1-11; Padma sr̥ṣṭi khaṇḍa 29, 5; Śiva P. Śataradriya Samhitā 3, 25; Bhāgavata Sk. 4, A.5; Devī Bhāgavata 7-30; Skanda 6.77; Vāyu 1.30; Kālikā 18; Naiṣadha IV. 45.

291 34.73-98, Bṛahmaṇḍa III.19.8-13; Vāyu 72.7, 11-2.

In the Brahma-purāṇa, lord Śiva himself eulogises Pārvatī. It is said that when the evil factors like sin, greediness, poverty, moha and other worldly pains superceded in the world lord Mahādeva was astonished and asked Pārvatī to find out a solution. At that time, she was called Lokamātā, the protector of all, the highest succour of all, the essence of prosperity and the pratisthā of the world. She was also called Bhūka, Samādhi, Vānī and Buddhi. She is beginningless and endless; and in the form of Vidya she protects the three worlds. On being thus addressed, Pārvatī smiled and merged half of her body into that of Śiva. Her equality of rank with her husband is naïvely expressed in the dual form of Śiva, viz. the ardhanārīśvara, of which one half is male and another half is female. She then sprinkled the ground with the perspiration of her fingers and from it were manifested Dharma, Lakṣmī, dāna, the highest type of rain, the quality sattva, corn, flowers, fruits, śāstras, weapons, tīrthas, forests and the moving and the non-moving worlds. The whole world became sinless through his power and all the devotees worship the non-dual form of lord Śiva and Śakti (129.70-80).

Elsewhere it is said that she is the beloved of lord Śiva. All the beings give dāna of food and practice penance in her honour. Her fame is very great and even

Indra wants her favour. She pervades the whole earth and purifies it. She is the beautiful power of lord Śiva. She is said to be pretty like a Moon. She is the goddess of speech and bestows the pleasure of senses. By taking her name one gets bliss. It is said that in order to purify the minds of men, she took the form of the river Ganges and on account of this Vibhūti of lord Śiva, one gets the rewards of righteous life (75.16-21). In order to mind the welfare of the world, Pārvatī takes as many forms as those of the lord Śiva (75.24).

She is the cause of the creation of the three worlds, and is the mother of gods and Asuras. She is called Parā Prakṛti in the purāṇa (36.24-26). She is of the form of prakṛti and helps the lord Śiva, the cause of the world, in the creation in the form of a wife (36.41-42). This has been supplied with a philosophical justification, being a popularised version of the sāṃkhya principle of the union of the soul of the universe - puruṣa - with the primordial essence prakṛti. On this theory, the belief is more closely connected with Saivism than with any other religious system, originates in philosophical Brahmanism, and traces back its history through Brahmanism to the earliest vedic conceptions.²⁹² She is called Buddhi,

²⁹² Monier Williams, *Brahmanism & Hinduism*, 80.ff.; H.H. Wilson, *i.* 241. f; Wadell, *Buddhism of Tibet*, P.129, f.

Prajñā, Dhṛti, Medhā, Lajjā, Puṣṭi, and Saraswatī (71.21-23). She is also called Bhavānī (109.52).

As Śiva is the lord of the mountains, Girīśa, so is his spouse lady of the mountains - Pārvatī. According to purāṇic mythology she is the daughter of Himālaya, but in the Kena Upaniṣad, where she is first mentioned, Umā Haimavatī, appears as a heavenly woman, conversant with Brahman. Apparently, she was originally an independent goddess, or at least a kind of divine being, perhaps a female mountain-ghost haunting the Himālayas; and was later on identified with Rudra's wife. A similar mountain-goddess had her home in the Vindhyas, she was of a cruel character, as might be expected from a goddess of the savage tribes living in those hills. Her name is Vindhyavāsinī and she too is identified with Śiva's wife. It can safely be concluded that several goddesses from different parts of India and worshipped by different classes of people have in course of time, been combined into one great goddess, the spouse of Śiva, who was adored as his Śakti or energy.²⁹³

Even at present Gaurīvrata is observed with great festivity in the month of Āśāḍha in Gujarāt and it is

293 ERE., Vol. II, P. 813.

believed that Gaurī or Pārvatī observed the same vrata in order to attain Śiva.

LAKSMI

She is the consort of lord Viṣṇu, but she seems originally to have been an independent deity impersonating beauty and wealth. According to classical mythology, she rose from the ocean when the gods and demons churned it for the production of nectar and thence she was made over to Viṣṇu.

In the Brahma-purāṇa, it is stated that a great quarrel took place between Lakṣmī and the goddess of poverty called Daridrā regarding the superiority over each other. Daridrā accuses Lakṣmī that she is always associated with sinners, wicked men, political personalities, cruel, wicked, piśanas, greedy, anārya, kṛtaghna, violators of righteousness and the traitors. She also accuses Lakṣmī of fickle nature and popularly as Fortune, she is the fickle goddess who stays nowhere long. But at the end of this quarrel the river Godāvarī declares the superiority of Lakṣmī over Daridrā and states that nothing is possible without her and that she pervades everything in the world. She pervades all the splendour like Brahmaśrī, Tapahśrī, Yajñaśrī, Kīrti, Dhanāśrī, Yaśāśrī, Vidya, Prajna, Saraswatī, Bhukti, Mukti,

Smṛti, Lajjā, Dhṛti, Kṣamā, Siddhi, Tuṣṭi, Puṣṭi, Śānti, Mahī, Ahaṁsakti, Auśadhis, Śruti, Vibhāvarī, Dyaus, Jyotsnā, blessings, fortune, Vyāpti, Māyā, Usā and Śiva (A.137). Śrī seems to have become a deity from an abstraction, just as occasionally abstract names as Hrī, Dhṛti, Kīrti etc. are used as the names of gods and goddesses.²⁹⁴

SARASWATĪ

From being a river goddess in the RV., she became the goddess of wisdom and eloquence and as such she is most frequently invoked by the poets of classical Sanskrit literature. She has been identified with vāc 'speech' and as such she is the wife of Brahmā.

The Br. P. relates that as Saraswatī secretly enjoyed with Pururavaḥ and had a son Sārasvata by him, when lord Brahmā came to know about this he cursed her to be a river but on being requested by her, the curse was modified that she would be seen at some places and would not be seen at other places. This is the reason why Saraswatī disappears in many places. But the Brahmā-purāṇa calls her as the daughter of Brahmā and divine river (A.101). Once

²⁹⁴ ERE., Vol. II, P. 808.

the gods played fraud with Gandharvas by taking from them Soma in exchange of Saraswatī and afterwards took away her too.²⁹⁵ She is regarded as the guardian deity by the people of Kāśmīra.²⁹⁶

YOGAMĀYĀ

It is related in the Brahma-purāṇa that Viṣṇu descended into the Pātālā and asked sleep to keep the six sons of Hiranyakasiṇi in the foetus of Devakī and they would be killed by Kansa, after that the seventh child would be born of lord Viṣṇu's own aṃśa and would be known in the world as Saṅkarsana as he was to be taken to Rohinī's foetus after dragging him from Devakī. Lord Viṣṇu would take birth as the eighth child of Devakī on the eighth day of the black half of Śrāvaṇa and he instructed Yogamāyā to take birth as the daughter of Yaśodā on the ninth day. She would be carried away by Vasudeva and Kansa would throw her, on a slab of stone and she would attain her original place. Then lord Indira would consider her as ^{his} ~~her~~ sister. Then she would kill Sumbha and Niśumbha and other thousand daityas and she would be worshipped at many places (A.181.38-43).

She is called Yoganidrā, Mahāmāyā of lord Viṣṇu,

²⁹⁵ A.105, cf. Aitareya.Brāhmaṇa, I. 27.

²⁹⁶ Stein, Kalhana's chronicles of Kāśmīr, ii, P. 286.

Bhūti, Sannati, Kīrti, Mānti, Prthivi, Dhṛti, Lajjā, Puṣṭi, Usā, Ājyā, Durgā, Vedagarbhā, Ambikā, Bhadrā, Bhadrakālī, Kṣemyā and Kṣemāṅkarī. She was worshipped by wine and meat and she always fulfilled the desires of men (181.37, 49.53). In the Harivamśa,²⁹⁷ a similar account is given.

SUBHADRĀ

She is the sister of Vasudeva, has a Rkma colour, is beautiful and has all the good qualities. In Brahma-purāṇa, she is worshipped along with kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. The colour of her idol was golden. She had eyes like lotus, she wears the clothes of variegated colours and she is decorated with ornaments. She goes everywhere, She is called Kātyāyanī, Jagaddhātṛī, Varadā, Sīvā and engrossed in the welfare of all the beings.

ADITI

She is a purely abstract deity in the RV. whose main characteristic is the power of delivering from the bonds of physical suffering and moral guilt.²⁹⁸ She, however, occupies a unique position among the abstract deities owing to the peculiar way in which the personification seems to have come about. She is the mother of the

²⁹⁷ 3236 ff.

²⁹⁸ RV. I.24.15, 4. 12.4, 5.82.6, 2.27.14; 7.93.7; 10.87.18.

small group of deities called Ādityas, often styled 'Sons of Aditi'.

In the Brahma-purāṇa, it is said that she is the daughter of Dakṣa and was married to Kasyapa (3.25,51). But according to the older mythology of the R̥V., Aditi is the mother of Dakṣa as an Āditya,²⁹⁹ though in a cosmogonic hymn,³⁰⁰ she is said to be his daughter as well as his mother by the reciprocal generation which is a notion not unfamiliar in the RV.³⁰¹ In the Brahma-purāṇa also she is said to be the mother of the twelve Ādityas, viz. Viṣṇu, Śakra, Aryamā, Dhātā, Tvastā, Pūṣan, Vivasvān, Savitā, Mitra, Varuṇa, Amsa, Bhaga (3.57,58). When the demons defeated her sons, she prayed lord Sun and obtained him as her son Mārtanda after practising severe penance (A.32). The demon Narakāśura had robbed Aditi of her earrings. Lord kṛṣṇa defeated Narakāśura and deprived him of the earrings. He then went to the heavens and returned the earrings to Aditi. Thereupon Aditi granted him a boon that he would ^{be} invincible in the world and granted another boon to Satyabhāmā that she would never get either old age or ugliness (203.22-24). These

299 2.27.1

300 10, 72.4,5.

301 Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, P.121.

and other myths are found in other works.³⁰²

GĀYATRĪ

In the Br. P. it is stated that she is the mother of all the vedas. She is very holy and destroys sins (67.17). Gāyatrī is a mantra³⁰³ dedicated to Sun and is to be recited in the Sun-worship. She is the first of metres.³⁰⁴ Gāyatrī seems to be a thorough identification of the verse and goddess.

VIRAJĀ MĀTĀ

In the Brahma-purāṇa it is said that Virajā Mātā is the mother-goddess Brahmanī and she resides in the Virajaksetra in the Utkalapradesa. One who worships her saves her seven families and goes to Brahmaloṇa (42.1-2).

KSUDHĀ

The Brahma-purāṇa states that this goddess emerged out of the mouth of death. She has a terrible form. Her

302 Vājasneyi 29.60, 13.43, 49; Taittīriya 7.5.14, AV. 13.1.38, Mbh. Vana 135; Anuśāsana 83, Wdyoga 48; Bhāgavata VI.6.25, 18.9; 6.38-39; IX.1.10; VIII.13.6; VIII.Chs. 16 & 17, VIII. 18.1-12; X. 3.42, 59.39; Brahmāṇḍa II. 33.17; III. 3.56, 117; 71.200; III.72.22; 73-75; III. 7.277-94, 465; Viṣṇu F.15.124, III.1.42; Matsya 172.5; 138-20; 171.55-8; VIII 23.4, 21, 27; 244.9-48; Vayu 96.46; 66.55; 60; 55, 69.92.

303 RV. iii. 62.10 - tat savitur vareṇyam bhargo devasya dhīmahi | Dhiyo yo nah pracodayāt |

304 Mbh. 14.44.5. f.

nature is constituted of anger and she troubles the sinners (85.8-14).

AUSADHIS

In the Brahma-purāṇa, it is stated that they are the mothers of the world. The sacrifice, Svādhyāya and religion are established in them. All the diseases are removed by them. They produce the food and protect the animals (119.1-4). They are having the form of Brahmā and Prāṇa (120.10). Soma is their husband.³⁰⁵

MĀTRS

The Br. P. states that at the time of war between gods and demons, the drops of perspiration fell from Śiva's body and from them the Mātr̥s emerged. The place where they emerged was called Mātr̥tīrtha and they were worshipped by gods and men. They killed all the daityas and they are worshipped along with lord Śiva (112.12,13).

In general, it is said that the goddesses Śrāddhā, Puṣṭi, Tuṣṭi, Śānti, Lajjā, Sarasvatī, Bhūmi, Dyaus, Sarvarī, Kṣānti, Uṣā, Āśā, Jayā, Mātī, and others attended the sacrifice of Dakṣa (109.15,16) and the goddesses Śīni, Kūhū, Dyuti, Puṣṭi, Vasu, Kīrti, Dhṛti and Lakṣmī attended the Rājasūya

³⁰⁵ also cf. Brahmāṇḍa III. 1.28, IV.7.72; 14.6; 20.46, Matsya 93.53, 179.9-32, 41.39.

sacrifice of Soma (9.16). The goddesses Kīrti, Prajñā, Medhā, Sarasvatī, Buddhi, Mati, Kṣānti, Siddhi, Mūrti, Dyuti, Gāyatrī, Sāvitṛī, Maṅgalā, Prabhā, Mati, Kānti, Nārāyaṇī, Śraddhā, Kauśikī, Vidyut, Saudāminī, Nidrā, Rātri, Māyā, surrounded lord Viṣṇu (68.56-58).

One might wonder as to why the Brahma purāṇa has devoted a long portion consisting of 105 Adhyāyas (A.70.175) to the glorification of the river Gautamī. But from olden times, the rivers have always been given the greatest importance in India. The Āryans divided the land into two types: Devamātrka, the land where agriculture depends on rain and nadīmātrka, the land where the agriculture depends on river. The region of the Punjab was called Saptasindhu and that between Gaṅgā and Yamunā was called Antarvedi. Instead of describing the parts of the country with reference to mountains and hills it was customary ~~wik~~ to designate the various parts of the country with reference to the rivers, e.g. it was said 'Godāvaryāḥ dakṣiṇe tīre' or 'revēyāḥ uttare tīre'. Some brahmins take the name of their family after the names of the rivers. Thus the Sārasvata brahmins are so called after the name of the river Sarasvatī. The paṇḍas living on the banks of the river Gaṅgā feel proud when they are being called by the names 'Sons of Gaṅgā'. A king is considered to be the king in his right sense when he is

consecrated by the waters brought from the four oceans and seven rivers. Even in the ordinary daily worship an Indian mind prays all the rivers to purify his small water-pot.³⁰⁶

Whenever an Indian goes for a pilgrimage, he never forgets to visit the rivers. When a man dies, he is supposed to cross the Vaitarani river. Thus ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ life as well as after death, an Indian's life is associated with the rivers. All the poets beginning from the seers of the vedic age to Vyāsa, Vālmīki, Suka, Kālidāsa, Bhavabhūti, Ksemendra and Jagannātha have composed the poems in glorification of the rivers. Every river represents a flow of culture.

From the above discussion, one can get an idea of the importance attached to the rivers in ancient India. Even now it becomes a problem for the Government when the malevolent aspects of the great rivers Brahmaputrā, Kosī, Ganges and others bring disaster to the various regions of India. Even in the present sophisticated era, it is not unusual to find high dignitaries of the state offering pūjā to rivers when laying the foundation of big river-projects.

In vedic literature, the river Godāvarī is not referred to.³⁰⁷ The traditions about Bavari residing in

306 Gange ca Yamune Caiva Godavari Saraswati |
Narmade Sindhu Kaveri Jale'smin Sannidhim Kuru ||

307 Kane P.V., Hist. of Dh. S., Vol. IV, P. 707.

the vicinity of Alakā on the Godāvarī are found.³⁰⁸ There are numerous references to Godāvarī in epics and purāṇas but it is in the Brahma purāṇa that Godāvarī and the subsidiary tīrthas on it have been lauded at great length. The Brahma purāṇa generally refers to Godāvarī as Gautamī. It is stated by the Brahma purāṇa that the Ganges to the south of the Vindhya mountain is called Gautamī and that to its north is Bhāgīrathī (78.77). It is said to be 200 ~~yajnas~~ yojanas long and there are three crores and a half of tīrthas on it (77.8-9). A bath in the Godāvarī when Jupiter enters the sign of Leo has been regarded even upto the present day as very meritorious.³⁰⁹ The Brahma purāṇa says that three crores and a half of tīrthas that exist in the three worlds come for a bath in the Godāvarī when Jupiter is in Leo and that bathing in the Bhāgīrathī every day for sixty thousand years confers the same boon as a single bath in the river Godavari when Jupiter is in the Zodiacal sign Leo (175.83,84; 152.38,39). Jupiter is in Leo for one year once in twelve years. Crowds of pilgrims throng at Nasik in their thousands from all parts of India in the Simhastha year.³¹⁰

308 Suttanipāṭa, S.B.E., Vol.X, Pt.II, PP.184 & 187.

309 Dharmasindhu, P. 7.

310 Kane P.V., Op.Cit., P. 711.

The Brahma-purāṇa eulogises her in the following way. She is called Pāvānī, Paramārtihārīnī, Śreyaskarā, Pāpaprataṛdīnī, Śāntīrūpā, Śāntīkarī, Maṅgalā, Śubhā, Aghanāśīnī (85.8-10). She is Jalodbhūta and Maheśvara-jalodbhavā (85.8). She is called Dāridryanāśīnī (85.16) and she is also called Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Vaiṣṇavī and Tryambakā (85.12,13). She is the beloved of lord Śiva and is held by him on his head. She is the goddess of rivers, destroys sins, is worshipped by the three worlds, gives the desired fruits, is Brahmamayī, and emerges out of the feet of Viṣṇu and the locks of the hair of lord Śiva (119.9-12). She is a boat in crossing the meaningless worldly parlance (131.29). She is Viśveśvari, Yogamayā and Abhayadāyīnī (131.30). She is Devanadī, greater than the great and lord of the world. She is worshipped by Brahmā, Iśa and others and the sins are destroyed by remembering her (72.3-6). She purifies the three worlds, has a divine form, applies divine ointments, and is called Sarasvatī, Jagaddhātṛī, Jagajjādyaharā, Viśvajananī and Bhuvaneśvarī (164.43.45).

Various anecdotes are related to glorify the river Gautamī. It is said that by worshipping the river Gautamī, the sins were expiated. Once the gods sent Agni to relate the danger of the demon Tāraka to lord Śiva. At that time lord Śiva was in privacy with Pārvatī. Agni took the form

of a parrot and went there. On knowing that Agni was observing them, Pārvatī was very abashed. Śiva was all wrath and threw his virile-semen into Agni which was unbearable to him. He threw it into two parts in his wife from which the twins Suvarṇa and Suvarṇā were born. As there was the 'Anyonyaretavyatiṣaṅgadoṣa' in the case of the twins, they took the forms of various gods and goddesses and enjoyed freely with them. On seeing this, the gods approached Agni and all of them worshipped the river Gautamī and the children were expiated (A.123). On praying the river Gautamī, a brahmin Ajīgarta^{was}/released from hell when he had sold his son Śunahśepa due to his inability to maintain the family (A.150). A brahmin Sanājjāta was enjoying with his mother Mahī, both being unaware of the identity of each other. When the sage Gālava revealed their relationship both of them went to the river Gautamī and purified themselves by taking a bath in it (92.2-48). A bird Ciccika had two mouths on account of the bad deeds in his past birth and it had no happiness in the present birth. The king Pavamāna took him to the river Gautamī and by taking a bath in it, it went to heaven (A.164). A brahmin Gautama was freed from the sin of gambling by taking a bath in the river Gautamī (A.170). Madhucchandā, a Purohita of the king Śāryāti revived the king Śāryāti by praying the river Gautamī

as he had entered fire on the bank of the river Gautamī to enliven the wife of Madhucchanda (A.138). A hunter who had killed a female-pigeon went to heaven in an aeroplane after taking a bath in the river Gautamī (A.80). Even such grave sins as approaching the wife of one's teacher are expiated by taking a bath in the river Gautamī. Lord Indra was freed from the sin of brahmin-murder by the sprinkling of the water of the river Gaṅgā (A.96). Pṛthuvrāva, son of Kaksivān, got freedom from his triple debts by taking a bath in the river Gautamī (A.99).

The river Gautamī is also said to pacify the effects of curse. The sage Gautama had cursed his wife Ahalyā to become a dry river as Indra had enjoyed with her after taking the form of the sage Gautama. Ahalyā regained her original form on joining the river Gautamī (A.89). Anjanā and Adrikā, the mothers of Hanūmān, were deformed on account of some curse. They got the original beauty on praying the river Gautamī (A.84). A Havyaghna who had become black on account of some curse, regained his fairness on being sprinkled by the water of the river Gautamī (A.133). Kasyapa had cursed his wives Suparna and Kadru to become rivers as they had violated his instructions to be observed during their pregnancy. On praying the river Gautamī, they

regained their original form (A.100). Kadrū was cursed to be blind as she laughed at a sage in the sacrifice. She too regained her eyesight by the grace of the river Gautamī (A.100).

Gautamī is said to fulfill the desires. Harṣana, son of Sūrya and Chāyā, worshipped Gautamī and made his parents happy (A.165). A brahmin Vṛddhagautama had married a lady older than himself. As some sages poked fun at their difference in age, they prayed the river Gautamī and she became younger (A.107). The Ausadhis got their desired husband Soma on worshipping the river Gautamī (A.119). Once the Āngirāsas started practising penance but as they had not taken the permission of their mother before starting it, their penance did not entail any fruit. They worshipped the river Gautamī and became the Vyāsas (A.158). By praying Gautamī, Pramati released his father from prison (A.171) and lord Viṣṇu killed the demoness Kāṅkālīnī who was troubling Āsandīva (A.167). By worshipping Saraswatī on the bank of the river Gautamī, Parāśu went to heaven (A.163). The river Gautamī declared the superiority of Lakṣmī over Daridrā when there was a dispute between them (A.137). Gautamī granted a boon to Kanva that no one would suffer from hunger in his family (A.85). The dāna given at Daśāśvamedha-tīrtha on the bank of Gautamī gives endless merits (A.83).

The Brahma-purāṇa relates anecdotes regarding the origin of the river Ganges. Brahmā performed the marriage ceremony of lord Śiva. On seeing lord Śiva touching the foot of Pārvatī during the performance of some rite, Brahmā's virile-semen fell and the Vāṅkhilyas were created from it. Brahmā was very abashed but lord Śiva gave him a Kamaṇḍalu full of holy waters and in it lord Śiva established Gaṅgā by remembering it (A.72). The Brahmā offered the arghya from his Kamaṇḍalu into four directions and the water falling in the southern direction was received by ~~that~~ Śiva, that falling in the north was received by Viṣṇu, that on the west was received back by Brahmā and that on the east was received by the sages (A.73). By praying lord Śiva, one part was brought by the sage Gautama from the locks of hair of lord Śiva (A.74,75) and the second part was brought by Bhagīratha (A.73).

DEMONS

The people of India, particularly the forest tribes and the lower castes, from the eradic to the grave, are oppressed with a feeling best described as demonophobia - the belief that they are haunted by evil spirits of all kinds, some malignant fiends, some mischievous elves, to whose agency are attributed all kinds of sickness and misfortune.

Their worship is a worship of fear, the higher gods, particularly in the opinion of the less intelligent classes, being regarded as otiose and indifferent to the evils which attack the human race, while demons are habitually active and malignant.³¹¹

The evil spirits can be classified in two groups. The non-human spirits or fiends and the human spirits or the bhuta, preta and pisacas. The non-human spirits or fiends are endowed with superhuman powers, and possess material bodies of various kinds, which they can change as they ~~live~~^{live} and which are subject to destruction. As free agents they can choose between good and evil, but a disposition towards evil preponderates in their character.³¹² The so-called Asuras, Dānavas, Daityas and Rākṣasas belong to this group, "all personations of the hostile powers of Nature, or of mighty human foes, both which have been eventually converted into superhuman beings." This group as a whole seems to have been derived from pre-animistic beliefs, the worship or dread of 'powers', the ~~the~~ vague impersonations of the terror of night, hill, cave or forest. In contradistinction to the fiends or non-human

311 ERE., Vol. IV., P.601.

312 G.Oppert, Original inhabitants of Bhāratavarṣa or India, 515 ff.

spirits, there are the malignant spirits of men, which for various reasons cherish feelings of hostility to the human race, and, if not expelled or propitiated, to endless mischief. But as the Brahma purāṇa does not deal with them, the discussion here would pertain to the first class alone.

Probably the earliest Sanskrit expression for a 'demon' is Asura and though this word is used in the later literature as a general term for evil demons of malignant disposition, it was originally restricted to beings of a god-like nature, and even applied to the gods themselves. In the R̥gveda, the word Asura is used as an epithet of ~~Indra~~ and other deities and is especially an attribute of the ancient deity Varuṇa, who is first an impersonation of the vault of heaven, and then identified with the supreme being. In Avesta Ahura is the name of the highest god. In the Taittirīya Saṃhitā it is said that Prajāpati created ~~them~~ with his breath. In the Śātapatha Brāhmaṇa the seventh Manu is made to produce gods, asuras and men. On the other hand, in the veda various orders of evil beings are spoken under the name of Dasyūṣ,³¹³ Rākṣasas,³¹⁴ Yatudhānas,³¹⁵ Piśācas,³¹⁶ and Paṇis.³¹⁷ In the

³¹³ 3.4.56

³¹⁴ Rv. 7.104; 10.87

³¹⁵ Rv. 10.87

³¹⁶ Rv. I.133

³¹⁷ Rv. 6.20.4; 39.2; 10.108; 7.9.2; 4.58.4; I.151.9.

Rāmāyana constant mention is made of beings hostile to gods and men called Rākṣasas. The purāṇas are full of the stories related to demons and the Brahma-purāṇa extensively deals with Asuras, Dānavas, Daityas and Rākṣasas.

The Br. P. recognises four types of demons, viz. Daityas, Dānavas, Rākṣasas and Asuras. The sons of Diti were called Daityas and those of Danu were called Dānavas. Apart from this some other demons who are not the progeny of either Diti or Danu have also been given the names of Daityas and Dānavas e.g. Ariṣṭa is called a Daitya (189.46-58) and the demon Mitha though not mentioned in the genealogy of Danu is designated as Dānava (127.7-8). Sometimes a demon is called Daitya as well as Asura e.g. Saṃbara is called the lord of Daityas (134.16) as well as an Asura (199.12).

The genealogy of Daityas and Dānavas is given in the Br. P. as follows: Diti, the daughter of Dakṣa was married to Kasyapa and she had two sons Hiranyakāśipu and Hiranyākṣa and a daughter Simhikā who was married to Vipracitti. Hiranyakāśipu had four sons, Hrāda, Anuhrāda, Prahrāda and Samhrāda. Hrāda had two sons Śiva and Kāla.

Prahrāda was given the kingdom of Daityas and Dānavas (4.5). Virocana was born to Prahrāda and Bali was the son of Virocana. Bali had hundred sons of whom Bāṇa was the eldest. They practised penance and the names of some of them were Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Sūrya, Candramā, Candratāpāna, Kumbhanābha, Gardabhākṣa and Kuksi. The sons of Hiranyākṣa were learned and strong. Their names were Bharbhara, Sakuni, Bhūtasantāpāna, Mahānābha³¹⁸ and Kālanābha. Samhrāda gave birth to Nivātakavacas, and they had three koṭi sutas and resided at Manivati. They too were indestructible by gods and eventually Arjuna killed them (3.90-92).

Danu gave birth to hundred sons by Kasyapa. They were brave, strong and practised penance. The names of some of them were Dvimūrdhā, Śaṅkukarna, Hayasīras, Ayomukha, Sambara, Kapila, Vāmana³¹⁹ Marīci, Maghavān, Ilbala, Svasrūma, Vikṣobhana, Ketu, Ketuvīrya, Satahrda, Indrajit, Sarvajit, Vajranābha, Ekacakra,³²⁰ Tāraka, Vaiśvānara, Pulomā, Vidrāvāṇa, Mahāśīras, Svarbhānu, Vṛṣapārvā and Vipracitti. As the progeny of all these is innumerable

318 3.73; Mahābhāga acc. to 'kha'.

319 After Vāmana, the 'kha' ms. adds Mūka, Hunḍa, the sons of Hrāda, Marīca, Sunda, Saramāṇa & Sarakalka.

320 3.77, 'Ekavaktra' according to ms. 'kha'.

it is indescribable. The daughter of Svarbhānu was Prabhā, that of Pulomā was Śacī; that of Hayasīras was Upadītī; that of Vṛṣaparvan Sarmisthā and those of Vaiśvānara, Pulomā and Kālīkā.

The progeny of Marīca consisted of 60,000 dānavas and there were other 1,400 danavas belong^{ing} to Hiranyapura. These along with Paulomas and Kālākeyas were indestructible by gods and by the grace of lord Brahmā, Arjuna killed them. Vipracitti, the son of Danu married Simhikā, the ~~daughter~~ daughter of Diti and by the samyoga of Daitya and Dānava elements thirteen best types of Dānavas were born. They were very brave and were called Saimhikeyas. They were called Vamsya, Salya, Nala, Vātāpi, Namuci, Ilbala, Svasruma, Añjika, Naraka, Kālanābha, Saramāna and Svarakalpa. They had hundred and thousands grandsons. Though the above mentioned sons of Diti are called Daityas, the Maruts whom Diti gave birth were called gods and though originally they were meant to kill Indra (3.109-122), eventually they became the greatest helpers of Indra.

Elsewhere it is said that at the time of milching earth, Madhu was the milcher of Asuras, their milk was consisted of Maya, Virocana was their calf and their vessel

was made up of iron; the milcher of Rākṣasas was Raṣatnābha,^a blood was their milk, Sumālī their calf and skull their vessel (4.104,106). There is no clear line of demarcation to distinguish in groups Rākṣasas, Asuras, Piśācas, etc. though the Piśācas are too mean and low to be confused with demons of the highest type. The Nāgas, though distinct from Asuras, are as a group affiliated and usually mentioned by their side.

The meaning of the terms Daityas, Dānavas, Rākṣasas and Asuras as given by Monier Williams is as follows: The Rākṣasas³²⁰ are sometimes regarded as produced from Brahmā's foot, sometimes with Rāvana as descendants of Pulastya, elsewhere they are styled children of Khasā or Surasā, according to some they are distinguished into three classes, one king of a semi-divine benevolent nature and ranking with Yaksas, etc. another corresponding to Titans or relentless enemies of the gods, and a third answering more to nocturnal demons, imps, fiends, goblins, going about at night, haunting cemeteries, disturbing sacrifices and even devouring human beings. This last class is the most commonly mentioned. Their chief place

320 Monier Williams, Sanskrit English Dictionary, P.871.

of abode was Lankā in Ceylon. The Dānavas³²¹ are a class of demons often identified with the daityas or Asuras and held to be implacable enemies of gods or devas; the daityas³²² are known as the sons of Diti; and the Asuras are regarded as children of Diti by Kasyapa, as such they are the demons of the first order in perpetual hostility with the gods, and must not be confounded with the Rākṣasas or imps who animate dead bodies and disturb sacrifices.³²³

As regards their general description it would be said that they were ugly and deformed. The names Śanku-karna (A.3), Ekākṣa (213.90) etc. suggest that they were deformed. Many a times they were animal-shaped. The names Kūrmakukkuṭavaktra, Śaśolūkamukha, Kharoṣṭravādāna, Varāhavadāna, Mārjārasikhivaktra, Nakramesānana, Gojāvimahiṣānana, Godhāsallakivaktra, Kroṣṭuvaktra, Ākḥudarduranaktra, Vrkamukha, Makaravaktra, Krauñcavaktra, Aśvānana, Kharamukha, Mayūravādāna, etc. suggest it (213.93-97). They live in Rasātala, mountains, oceans, rivers, villages, forests, sky, air and Jyotirloka (149.4,5). They wore various types of dresses and decorated themselves with garlands and ointments. They ~~were~~ wore didems, ear-rings, turbans, kirīṭa and

321 Ibid., P. 474.

322 Ibid., P. 497.

323 Ibid., P. 121.

wore the skin of elephants and black deer. They were also called Nīlakavāsas. They had broad cheeks. They wielded various weapons like Śataghñī, Cakra, Muśala, Bhīṇḍipāla, Aśva yantras, Āyudhas, Śūla, Ulūkhala, Paraśvadha, Pāśa, Mudgara, Parigha and great slab stones. They had long hair, their necks were like Kambū and some of them were lustrous (213.90-99).

Some Daityas were religious. The Br. P. states that the great demon Bali was indestructible by gods and he protected the kingdom with righteousness and there were no troubles in his kingdom. He was a great devotee of Viṣṇu and when the gods approached Viṣṇu to protect them from Bali, Viṣṇu said that Bali was too dear to him to be killed and therefore lord Viṣṇu took the form of Vāmana and made him the king of Rasātala (A.73). Some demons practised severe penance. Hiranya, the ancestor of the daityas practised great penance and got the power to remain indestructible by gods (139.11,12). Meghahāsa, the son of Rāhu practised severe penance in order to revenge the death of his father who was killed by the gods when he tried to have a portion of the neectar that was obtained after churning the ocean. The gods pacified him and placed Rāhu in the sky and made Meghahāsa the king of Nairṛta direction

(A.142). By the power of penance, the demon Hiranya-
kasipu had obtained the power of remaining invincible,
lord Viṣṇu took the form of Nṛsiṃha and killed him (A.149).

The main work of the demons was to obstruct the
sacrifices of sages, kings and gods. Thus Sindhusena, a
great demon, defeated the gods and carried away the sacrifice
to Rasātala. Thereupon lord Viṣṇu took the form of Varāha,
killed him and brought back the sacrifice (79.8-15). A
demon Hiranyākṣa obstructed with his retinue ~~to~~ the sacrifice
of king Priyavrata, thereupon the sage Vasistha killed them
with his rod (A.103). Mānca & Subāhu obstructed the sacrifice
of brahmins, so Rāma killed them (213.133). The Rākṣasas
Aśvattha and Pippala were the sons of the Rākṣasa Kaiṭabha.
They obstructed the sacrifice of Agastya, took the form of
Brahmins and devoured the other brahmins. Lord Śaṃī under-
stood their trick and applying the principle of 'Tit for Tat'
ate them away (118.11,12). The dānava Mitha obstructed
the sacrifice of king Ārṣṭiṣeṇa and carried away the king
together with his retinue to Rasātala. Thereupon Devas
Devāpi, the son of Purohita, prayed lord Śiva and brought
them back (A.127). The tendency to obstruct the sacrifice
went to such an extent that a demon was named Havyaghna and
he was given a boon by lord Brahmā to devour the sacrifice

at his will. His whole family was black in colour by the curse of lord Brahmā. When he obstructed the sacrifice of the sage Bharadvāja and ate the sacrificial cake, Bharadvāja asked him about his blackness and on knowing from him about the curse sprinkled the water of river Gautamī and he became fair (A.133).

Another function of the demons was to fight with the gods. Generally, the demons were very strong and the gods were always defeated. Indra fell helpless before the strength of demons and they had to approach either Brahmā, Viṣṇu or Śiva for protection. Thus the demon Tāraka had a boon of lord Brahmā that he would remain invincible. Even lord Viṣṇu expressed his inability to defeat him. Thereupon the gods approached Himālaya and with the help of Kāmadeva disturbed the penance of lord Śiva and married lord Śiva with Pārvatī, the daughter of Himālaya and requested them to create a son who would kill the demon Tāraka (A.71). Another story tells that Māhāsani defeated Indra and asked his father Kṛiṇya to look after him. Then he attacked Varuṇa but Varuṇa gave him his daughter and on Varuṇa's advice, he released Indra and asked Indra to consider Varuṇa as his lord. This shows how powerful the demons were and how Indra had to agree with them (A.129).

Namuci was a great enemy of Indra and a terrible fight took place between them. Indra eventually cut the head of Namuci with the foam (129.4-6). A daitya Āmbarya was invincible and he was the lord of Daṇḍaka. He possessed a strong army and a terrible fight ensued between him and lord Nṛsiṃha and at the end of it lord Nṛsiṃha killed him (149.10.12). As a boon was granted to Rāvaṇa, he was unconquerable, ^{by} Gods, Rākṣasas, Yaksas, Rakṣas; he was very brave and was always surrounded by a koṭi rākṣasas. He was black like collyrium and brave like a lion (213.129-135).

Disturbing the penance of some sage also constituted one of the mischiefs of the demons. A great Asura took the form of a beautiful maiden and disturbed the penance of king Dhanvantari (122.8-15). When lord Brahmā sent his Maya to distract the attention of the demons who were obstructing the sacrifice of the sages, Śambara, the lord of daityas, devoured her (134.9-11). There was another Rākṣasa by the name Parasu. He had a deep hatred for sacrifices and brahmins. He had the capacity to take various forms according to his liking. Sometimes he took the form of a brahmin, or of a tiger, or of a god or of an animal or of a woman or of a deer or of a child. He took the form of a brahmin and went to the sage Śākalya and expressed his desire to devour the sage but he saw lord

Viṣṇu in the form of the sage and refrained from killing him (163.7-10).

Sometimes the gods befriended demons. Thus an interesting story relates how after killing Namuci, Indra by the use of a trick, befriended Maya, the brother of Namuci, who wanted to revenge his brother's death. Afterwards Maya advised Indra to pierce the foetus of Diti which contained a son who was meant for killing Indra (A.124). Rāvaṇa was a great devotee of lord Śiva (A.143). Bāṇa was a great devotee of lord Śiva and when kṛṣṇa came to fight with Bāṇa, lord Śiva and Kārtikeya fought with kṛṣṇa on behalf of the Asura Bāṇa (A.206).

In the life of lord kṛṣṇa, he had to face many demons. In his childhood, he killed Putanā, a demoness who killed children (184.7-10). Again, he killed the demon Aṛiṣṭa, who had come to him in ^{the} form of a bull (189.46-58). He also killed Keśī (190.29-37), Dhenuka (186.4), the donkey formed. The Asura Naraka was born to Pṛthvī by lord Viṣṇu in his Varāha incarnation (220.23). Lord Viṣṇu killed him in his incarnation as lord kṛṣṇa and took away all his possessions and married all his 16,000 wives (220.30.35). Narakāśura was very powerful. He was the king of Prāgjyotiṣapura. He had imprisoned the daughters of the daityas, siddhas and kings, had in his possession

the Chhatra of Varuna, the Maniparvata, the Mandara mountain, and the ear-ornaments of Aditi (202.8-11). Again, lord kṛṣṇa killed the dāitya Mura and his 7,000 sons, Hayagrīva and Pañcajana (202.18-19). Lord kṛṣṇa killed another demon by the name Pañcajana who had carried away the son of sage Sāṇḍīpani to the ocean and after killing him made a conch Pañcajanya out of his bones (194.27,28). Pradyumna, the son of lord kṛṣṇa killed the Asura Sambara who was had thrown him in the ocean after the sixth day of his birth (200.2,3,19).

Elsewhere it is said that lord Viṣṇu in his different forms killed the various demons, Hiranyakaśipu (180.28), Tāraka (179.21-24), Kālanemī (179.25), Vipracitti (180.29), Madhu and Kaiṭabha who wanted to kill Brahmā and who had emerged out of his ear (180.37). Kālanemī was again born as Kamsa, the son of Ugrasena who was killed by kṛṣṇa (A.181). In his incarnation as Rāma, lord Viṣṇu killed the demons Yamahasta³²⁴ Prahasta, Nikumba, Kumbha, Narāntaka, Yamāntaka, Mālādhya, Mālikādhya, Indrajit, Kumbhakarna and Rāvāṇa (176.44-46). As Lavaṇa had become too impudent on account of a boon, Rāma killed him (213.137). Rāma freed Virādhā and Kabandha from their state of being

324 'Mahodara' according to 'ka' ms.

demons as they had obtained that form due to a curse though originally they were Gandharvas (213.140). In his Vāmana incarnation, lord Viṣṇu killed the demons Vipracitti, Śiva, Śaṅku, Ayahśaṅku, Ayahśiras, Aśvasīras, Hayagrīva, Ketumān, Ugra, Vyāgrā, Puṣkara, Aśvapati, Prahrāda, Kumbha, Samhrāda, Śaṭha, Kupatha, Krōdhana, Kratha, Brhatkīrti, Mahājihva, Śaṅkukarṇa, Mahāsṡvāna, Dīptajihva, Arkanayana, Mrgapada, Namuci, Śambara, Vikṣara, Garīṣṡha, Varīṣṡha, Pralamba, Naraka, Indratāpana, Vātāpi, Ketumān, Asilomā, Pulomā, Bāṣkala, Pramada, Mada, Svamiśra, Kāḷavadana, Karāla, Keśi, Ekākṣa, Candramā, Rāhu, Śambara, Śvāna and others (213.82-90).

Thus it could be said that the Br. P. gives a fairly broad idea of demonology as it extensively deals with the Dānavas Hiranyaka, Mitha, Dhenuka, Pralamba & Lavaṇa; the Daityas Bali, Tāraka, Maya, Namuci, Hiraṇya, Śambara, Hiranyakaśipu, Āmbarya, Madhu, Kaitābha, Keśi, Pañcajana and Mura; the Rākṣasas Sindhusena, Aśvattha, Pippala, Havyaghna, Rāvaṇa, Paraśu, Virādha, & Kabandha; and the Asuras Tama, Namuci, Śambara and Naraka.

SAGES

Asceticism in India is under the definite and strong sanction of religion. India has always been the

home of asceticism, and from the very earliest times, this feature of Indian life has attracted attention. The sanction of religion to asceticism was given by the example of the greatest saints and heroes of old, and of the gods themselves, who are represented as enduring self-inflicted tortures for thousands of years in order to attain supernatural or enhanced power. The Ṛsis of old, the demigods of legend and story, the dwellers in heaven as well as on earth, engaged in the practice of tapas to secure dominion for themselves, or to confound their foes. In the doctrine of the four Āśramas asceticism was made an integral part of the orthodox Hindu life; and it became the duty of every Hindu, as advanced age overtook him, homeless and a wanderer to chasten himself with austerities. Formally this was to be done for the sake of detaching himself from earthly ties, and of realising union with Brahman. And a religious motive was thus supplied for that which in itself was a welcome release from responsibility, care and the minute requirements of an elaborate social code.³²⁵

The general characteristics of the sages are tranquility of mind, freedom from kāma, krodha and dveṣa,

325 ERE. Vol. II, PP. 90-91. For details vide also Dr. Sharma's Thesis entitled 'Brahmanical Asceiticism', Poona Oriental Book Agency.

devoid of saṅga, Ahaṁkāra, a tendency to mind the welfare of all the beings, predominance of the sattva quality, a passion for practising penance, and an intense desire to know the highest being (56.24-25).

The Br. P. states that there were different groups of sages in different Manvantaras. Thus it relates that the seven sons of Brahma, viz. Marīci, Atri, Angirā, Pulaha, Kratu, Pulastya and Vasistha were the sages of the Svāyam-bhuva manvantara and they resided in the northern direction (5.8,9). The Mahārṣis of the Svārocisa manvantara were Aurva, Stamba, Kasyapa, Bṛhaspati, Datta, Atri and Cyavana (5.11,12). In the Uttama manvantara, the sages were the seven Vasisthas, the sons of Vasistha, and Urjās, the sons of Hiranyagarbha (5.16,17). The sages of Raivata manvantara were Devabāhu, Yadūdhra, Vedasīras, Hiranyaromā, Parjanya; Urdhvaabāhu, the son of Soma; Satyanetra, the son of Atri (5.20,21). The sages of the fourth Tāmasa manvantara were Kavya, Prthā, Agni, Jahnu, Dhātā, Kapivān, Akapivān (5.25,26). The sages of the sixth, viz. Cākṣuṣa manvantara were Bhṛṅgu, Nabha, Vivasvān, Sudhāmā, Viraja, Atināmā and Sahisnu (5.29,30). The sages of the Vaivasvata manvantara were Atri, Vasistha, Kasyapa, Gautama, Bharadvāja, Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni (5.34,35).

The Br. P. then states that the sages are meant for the maintenance of Dharma and protection of the world. At the end of every manvantara, four sages go to Brahmeloka and other four sages take their place (5.39-41). Further it enumerates the would-be-sages of the future manvantaras. The sages of Sāvāṇī manavantara would be Parāśurāma, Vyāsa, Ātreya, Asvatthāmā, the son of Drona born in the Bharadvāja family; Śaradvān born in the family of Gautama, Galava born in the Kausika family and Aurva, the son of Kasyapa (5.43-45). Thus it could be surmised that the existence of the sages for the maintenance of righteousness was very important.

Some sages were very learned, and had studied all the śāstras. Thus Vyāsa is highly eulogised. About him it is said that he was well-versed in all the śāstras, expert in vedas and vedāṅgas, the composer of the Mahābhārata the speaker of purāṇas and Āgamas, engrossed in the welfare of all the beings, meditating on Adhyātma,³²⁶ and best among the intelligent (26.6,7). He knew the past, the present and the future (26.26). He is also praised for composing the Brahma purāṇa (A.245). The great sages (26.9-14) like Kasyapa, Jamadagni, Bharadvāja, Vasiṣṭha, Jaimini, Dhaumya, Markandeya, Vālmīki, Viśvāmitra, Śatānanda,

³²⁶ missing in ms. 'kha'.

³²⁷ The sages after Vālmīki are missing in ms. 'kha'.

Vatsya, Gārgya, Āsuri, Samantu, Bhārgava, Kaṇva, Medhātithi, Māṇḍavya, Vyavana, Dhūmra, Asita, Devala, Maudgalya, Trṇayajña, Pippalāda, Samvarta, Kauśika, Raibhya, Maitreya, Harita, Sāṇḍilya, Vibhāṇḍa, Durvāsā, Lomaśa, Nārada, Parvata, Vaiśampāyana, Gālava, Bhāskari, Purāṇa, Suta, Pulastya, Kapila, Ulūka, Pulaha, Vāyu, Devasthāna, Caturbhuja, Sanat-lumāra, Paila and kṛṣṇa went to the sage Vyāsa to have the solution of their doubts regarding worldly parlance.

Elsewhere (A.145) it is said that the sages Mārkaṇḍeya, Bharadvāja, Vasistha, Atri, Gautama, Yājñavalkya, Jābāli and other Munis were the propagators of śāstras and proficient in vedas, vedāṅgas, purāṇas, Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā. They ~~at~~ discussed with lord Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva as to whether karma was higher or jñāna was higher and came to the conclusion that as nothing can be attained without performing an action, karmaṇa should be given the prime importance. Again it is said that when the Munis killed the king Vena as he behaved in an unrighteous way, the sages Vāmadeva and others approached the sage Kapila who was a knower of the highest essence, engrossed in penance and vrata and who was cruel as well as kind-hearted and asked him as to what they should do and the sage advised them to ^{rub} ~~cut~~ the arm of Vena out of which ^{Prthvi}, the righteous, would be created (A.141). The sage Āpastamba asked a very interesting

question to the sage Agastya (130.5-14) as to who among the three gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva was the highest and the sage Agastya's remarkable answer establishes the identity and non-difference of the three gods and thus blends the theories of many - ~~was~~ with the theory of one god, and finally concludes by saying that the forms of the three gods are different and as regards forms, the vedas are the authority but regarding the formless, there is only one, non-dual and no other. Still, however, for the sake of getting success, one should worship lord Śiva. Once it is said that the sages Sanaka and others know the inner secret of Vedānta (129.69). Bāhlika, the son of Kaṇva, was well-versed in vedas and vedāṅgas (148.4). Sunahṣepa, the son of Ajīgarta, was a knower of Brahman (151.3). The god Dhanvantari was born to Dhanu as a result of severe penance and he learnt the Āyurveda from the sage Bharadvāja and divided it into eight parts and taught it to his pupils (11.36-38). Elsewhere it is said that the sages like Vasistha, Jabāli, Yājñavalkya, Angirā, Dakṣa, Marica who were devoted to Viṣṇu, others like Śātātapa, Śaunaka, Deva-rāta, Bhṛgu, Agni, Vesya, Atri, Marici, Manu, Gautama, Kausika, Tumbāru, Parvata, Agastya, Mārkaṇḍeya, Pippḷa and Gālava who were engrossed in the practice of Yoga and the sages Vāmadeva, Angirasa and Bhārgavaś who were proficient

in smṛti, śruti and purāṇas worshipped the river Godāvarī (154.2-4). The sage Sāṇḍīpani was an expert in Dhanurveda and lord kṛṣṇa and Balarāma learnt it from him (194.22-25).

The sage Kapila was considered to be a manifestation of lord Viṣṇu and the fire emanating from his eyes burnt the progeny of king Sagara (8.55,56). The sage Nārada was considered to be the best among the Devarṣis (69.70).

The performance of sacrifice was one of the main functions of the sages. Thus many sages had gathered together in the Naimiṣa forest for the performance of the sacrifice that was to last for twelve years (I.11). The sage Ātreya performed sacrifices with the help of many sages and at the completion of all of them, he obtained the power to move everywhere (140.2-4). The sage Bharadvāja performed a sacrifice and offered the sacrificial cake for the Agnisomīya and the Aindrāgna and then he transformed the black form of the demon Havyaghna into a fair one by sprinkling the water of the river Gautamī on him. The sages Vasistha and others performed a sacrifice on the bank of the river Godāvarī (134.2).

Another main function of the sages was to mind the welfare of the world. When being harassed by Rāhu,

the Sun was falling on earth the sage Prabhākara blessed him and saved the world from the calamity of darkness (13.8-14). When it did not rain in the kingdom of Kāśī, the sage Svaphalka was called and after his arrival, it began to rain (14.4-8). When the unrighteous Vena harrassed the people, the sages killed him and created Prthu out of his right hand (4.42,49; 2.21). The mountain Vindhya was rising higher and higher and in order to avert the calamity, the sage Agastya went near him and asked ~~from~~ him a promise that he would ^{not rise till his} ~~never~~ return. Ultimately he never returned and the mountain remained in the same position (118.3-5).

Sometimes the sages helped the gods. In the marriage of lord Śiva with Pārvatī, the sages Vasistha, Agastya, Paulastya and Lomaśa had gone to the Himavān mountain (72.3). The sages Mandavya, Vasistha, Gautama, Agastya, Atri, Kasyapa and others consecrated Indra in order to free him from the sin of brahmin-murder. The sages Māṇḍavya, Vasistha, Gautama, Agastya, Atri, Kasyapa and others consecrated Indra to free him from the sin of a brahmin-murder (96.21). Dadhīci gave his bones to gods in order to prepare a weapon, out of them (A.110). Dadhīci was a great devotee of lord Śiva and was very enraged when Dakṣa did not invite him in his sacrifice (39.28,29). When

Indra was dethroned for the third time owing to his undesirable union with Ahalyā, he went to the sage Brhaspati for advice (122.51). When Saramā spoke lie about the theft of dogs to Indra, Brhaspati found out the truth and held Saramā to be the cause of the whole thing (131.9-13). The sage Maudgalya was a staunch devotee of lord Viṣṇu and lord Viṣṇu manifested himself to him every day (136.5,6). When there was a great famine in the world, the sage Gautama supported the world and the gods by the power of his penance (74.27-30). When lord Śiva concealed the river Ganges in his locks, Parvatī requested Skanda and Gaṇeśa to find out a way through which Śiva would release her. At that time also Gaṇeśa thought that none was capable of bringing the Ganges down except the sage Gautama (74.39-42). Finally the sage Gautama prayed lord Śiva and brought the river Ganges on earth (A.75). The sage Sveta was a devotee of lord Śiva and when on the completion of his life Yama came to take away his life, lord Śiva fought with Yama, killed him and reanlivened him on the condition that Yama would not have any control over the devotees of lord Śiva (A.94). At the time of famine, the sage Viśvāmitra forced Indra to pour rain (A.93).

The sages served as the Purohitas of the kings and advised them on all the important matters. By the grace

of the sage Vasistha, king Sagara obtained sons (78.10),
 By the favour of the sage R̥syasr̥nga, king Lomapāda had the
 son Caturāṅga (13.38) and king Daśaratha had the famous
 four sons, viz. Rāma and others (123.84). All sages acted
 as Purohitas in the sacrifices and helped the kings. Thus
 the sage Kaśyapa acted as a Purohita in the performance
 of the ten Asvamedhas of the king Bhauvana (82.3).
 Vasistha acted as a Purohita in the sacrifice of king
 Priyavrata (103.3) and Dakṣa (109.14) in the reign of
 the king Daśaratha (123.5). ~~and~~ The sage Madhucchandā was
 a Purohita in the reign of king Śaryāti and he accompanied
 him when he started to conquer the world (138.3,4). When
 the king Aila was very distressed on account of the separa-
 tion from Urvaśī, the sage Vasistha consoled him (151.12-16).
 The sage Viśvāmitra taught Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa the great
 Māheśvarīvidyā, Dhanurvidyā, śastravidyā, Astravidyā,
 Laukikīvidyā, Rathavidyā, Gajavidyā, Aśvavidyā, Gādāvidyā
 and the recitation of mantras (123.97,98) and gave them
 divine weapons (213.142). By the advice of the sage
 Uttanka, the sons of king Kuvalāśva killed the demon Dhundhu
 and the sage Uttanka granted them boons (7.74-85). King
 Indradyumna performed a sacrifice with great pomp after
 calling the priests who were experts in the performance
 of sacrifice (47.35-36).

The lives of Pious sages stamped deep impression on the lives of people. Many sages were revered for their holy lives. The sages practised severe penance and restrained their senses. Thus the sage Atri practised penance called Anuttara for 3,000 divine years and his virile-semen manifested in the sky in the form of Moon, and the tears falling from his eyes brightened the ten directions (9.2.6). Sage Viśvāmitra, the son of King Gādhī was a great ascetic and he became a great Brahmarsi (10.55-60). He had many famous sons like Devarāta, Kātyāyana, Hiranyākṣa, Renu, Renuka, Kacchapa and Hārīta; and they were the promulgators of the gotras Paṇini, Babhrā, Dhyānājapya, Pārthiva, Devarāta, Śālankāyana, Bāskala, Lohitāyana. Hārīta and Śālankāyana and Bāskala, Lohitāyana,³²⁸ Hārīta and Aṣṭakāḍya-jana (10.58-63). The sage Śākalya practised severe penance on the mountain Śuohra (163.4). The Siddhas like Sanandana and others meditated on kṛṣṇa with concentration on the tip of their nose (193.42). The sage Kāṇḍu practised severe penance but he was disturbed by the nymph Pramalocā (A.178). The penance of the sage Viśvāmitra was also disturbed by Menakā (147.6,7). There is an interesting example of Aṅgīrasas who though practised severe penance did

328 The name Lohitāyana and the following are according to ms. 'ka'.

not get success as they had not asked the permission of their mother before practising it (158.8-11). The sage Nārada is considered to be the best among the Devarsis (69.70). Sage Rciika was very ~~very~~ righteous and has the power to create sons according to his liking (A.10).

The sages were unable to bear adharma and cursed those who barred the proper path of action. Thus when Sāmba and his friends wanted to poke fun of the sages Viśva-mitra, Kaṇva and Nārada and had garbed Sāmba into the role of a pregnant woman, they cursed them that Sāmba would give birth to a musala which would bring disaster to the whole Yadu family (A.210). Another anecdote relates that when the nymphs Rambhā, Tilottamā and others satisfied the sage Astāvakra he granted a boon to them that they would get lord Puruṣottama as their husband but when they laughed at his crooked limbs, he cursed them that they would be carried away by the Dasyūś (212.79-84). When Indra enjoyed with Ahalyā after taking the form of her husband Gautama, the sage Gautama cursed him to have a 1,000 signs of female organ on his body and cursed Ahalyā to become a dry river (87.59). King Kārtavīrya gave his whole kingdom in dāna to Agni and Agni devoured it. In this disaster, the hermitage of the sage Āpava was also burnt, so he cursed Kārtavīrya that he would be killed by an ascetic brahmin

Parasurāma (13.192,197). When Pippalā, the sister of Viśvāvasu poked fun of the sages at a sacrifice, they cursed her to be a river (132.3). Kadrū was cursed to pose one eye as she poked fun of the sages (100.28).

Sometimes the gods had to intervene in the matters of sages. Thus when Soma carried away Tārā, the wife of sage Brhaspati, lord Brahmā brought the reconciliation between the two (9.19-25).

Many a times the sages grew jealous of each other and a great rivalry arose among them. Thus the rivalry between the sage Vasistha and the sage Viśvāmitra is famous (147.5). A sage Kanva was very envious of the prosperity of the sage Gautama and he prayed the river-goddess Godāvarī in order to attain prosperity (A.85).

About the sages Vasistha, Atri, Pulastya, Angirā, Pulaha, Kratu, Bhrgu and Marīci who were the sons-in-law of Dakṣa, it is said that they were religious, great yogins, observed vratas and meditated on Brahman (34.16,17), and that the sages Bhrgu, Atri and Pulaha worshipped Sun (33.17).

Some sacred places were ascribed to the Rsis.

Thus Prabhāsa, Bhārgava, Agastya, Nara, Nārāyaṇa, Vasistha, Bharadvāja, Gautama, Kasyapa, and Manu were called the ārsatīrthas after the names of the sages (70.37,38).

Various anecdotes are given in the Br. P. regarding different sages. Thus it is said that in the marriage of lord Śiva with Pārvatī, Brahmā's semen-virile fell on seeing the beauty of Pārvatī and from it the sages Vāṅkhilyas were created (72.18,19). The sage Atri obtained the power to move at his will everywhere by the performance of the sacrifice and he went to Indraloka and then asked Tvaṣṭā to construct a similar Indraloka for himself. He enjoyed the pleasures but when he was confronted by the troubles of the dānavas, he requested Tvaṣṭā to destroy the Indraloka (A.140). Elsewhere it is said that Atri worshipped Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahesvara and requested them to be his sons. Later on they were born to him as Datta, Soma and Durvāsā (A.144). The sages Angirasas saved people when the earth devoured them (155.4). Lord Viṣṇu protected the sage Mārkaṇḍeya at the time of the great deluge (A.53). By the grace of lord Śiva, the dead child of the sage Kapālagautama was reenlivened (59.8). The sage Yājñavalkya had discussions with the king Janaka regarding Bhukti and Mukti (88.5-15). When Brahmā created Ahalyā, he had a problem before him as to who should be given the charge of

bringing up Ahalyā, He selected the sage Gautama and later on married Ahalyā to him (87.5,6,29). The sage Galava was well-versed in vedas and vedāngas and he showed the proper way of behaviour to Sanājjāta and his mother (92.40,41). The sage Māṇḍavya consecrated Indra in the country Malavā (96.18,19) King Hariścandra asked the sages Nārada and Pārvata about the importance of a son in one's life (104.4-14). A sage Veda was a great devotee of lord Śiva (169.4). The seven sages came with their wives to see the merging of the river Gaṅgā into the ocean (A.172) and divided the river Ganges into seven parts and called the seven parts after their seven names, viz. Vāsisthī, Dakṣineyī, Vaiśvāmitrī, Vāmadevī, Gautamī, Bhāradvājī, Ātreya and Jāmadagni (173.3-5). The sage Viśvāmitra explained the philosophy of Karma to Viśvarūpa (173.10-25). Lord Viṣṇu in his incarnation as the sage Dattatreya taught the Aṣṭāṅga Yoga to the sage Alarka (183.31,32). The sage Vasiṣṭha drank the semen-virile of lord Śiva and deposited it in the six wives of the seven sages after excluding Arundhatī. Afterwards a child with six faces was born who later on killed Tāraka (82.1-12). When the sage Jahnu did not accept the river Ganges as his

wife, she drowned the sacrificial altar of the sage.

Thereupon, the sage was all wrath and he drank the Ganges.

Being requested thereupon by other sages, he accepted her

as his daughter and thereafter she was known as Jāhnavī

(10.14-21, 13.82-88).