

APPENDIX III

THE RIDDLE OF THE TRIMURTI

To say that Hindu Religion is made up of sects is no less true than to say that Hindu Society is made up of castes. But not half the attention paid to the study of castes has been paid to the study of sects. This is as unfortunate as it is strange. Sects have played as great a part in India's history as castes have done. Indeed some sects just as some castes have made the history of India what it is.

The sects which make up the Hindu Religion are of course legion. It is impossible to explore the origin of all and compare and contrast their cults within the compass of a chapter. All that can be done is to take the most important ones and to present some of problems connected with them. The most important of these sects in the history of India have been three, one believing in the cult of God Brahma, second believing in the cult of Vishnu and the third believing in the cult of Shiva or Mahesha. The following are some of the questions, which cannot but puzzle the student who has studied the origin and history of these cults.

The Chula-Niddessa a Buddhist treatise refers to various sects which were at one time prevalent in India. Classified on the basis of creeds and cults they may be listed as follows:

I CREEDS

Serial No.	Name of the Sect	Essence of the creed
1	Ajivika Shravaka ¹	.. Ajivika ²
2	Nigatta Shravakas	.. Nigautha ³

¹ Shravaka means a disciple.

² Mendicants following special rules with regard to livelihood.

³ Mendicants who are free from all ties and hindrances.

This Riddle may be read along with the Riddle No. 11 which deals with The Rise and Fall of Gods. This title 'The Riddle of the Trimurti' however does not find place in the original Table of Contents, nor was it available in the MS received by the Govt. This copy has been spared by Shri S. S. Rege—Ed.

I CREEDS—*contd.*

Serial No.	Name of the Sect	Essence of the creed
3	Jatil Shravakas	.. Jatila ¹
4	Parivrajaka Shravakas	.. Parivrajaka ²
5	Avarudha Shravakas	.. Avarudhaka

II CULTS

Serial No.	Name of the Sect	The deity which is worshipped
1	Hasti Vratikas ³	.. Hasti ⁴
2	Ashva Vratikas	.. Ashva ⁵
3	Go Vratikas	.. Go ⁶
4	Kukur Vratikas	.. Kukku ⁷
5	Kaka Vratikas	.. Kaka ⁸
6	Vasudeo Vratikas	.. Vasudeo
7	Baldeo Vratikas	.. Baldeo
8	Purna Bhadra Vratikas	.. Purna Bhadra
9	Mani Bhadra Vratikas	.. Mani Bhadra
10	Agni Vratikas	.. Agni
11	Naga Vratikas	.. Naga
12	Suparna Vratikas	.. Suparna
13	Yaksha Vratikas	.. Yaksha
14	Asura Vratikas	.. Asura
15	Gandharva Vratikas	.. Gandharva
16	Maharaja Vratikas	.. Maharaja
17	Chandra Vratikas	.. Chandra
18	Surya Vratikas	.. Surya
19	Indra Vratikas	.. Indra
20	Brahma Vratikas	.. Brahma
21	Deva Vratikas	.. Deva
22	Deesha Vratikas	.. Deesha

¹ Mendicants who twist their hair on the head.² Mendicants who escape from society.³ Vratika means a devotee.⁴ Elephant.⁵ Horse.⁶ Cow.⁷ Dog.⁸ Crow.

Comparing the cults of the three Gods with the cults of the various Gods mentioned in the list, two conclusions are obvious. One conclusion is that the cults of Vishnu and Mahesha are new fabrications, later in origin than those mentioned in the Chula Niddessa. The second conclusion is that all the old cults have disappeared. Searching for the causes of this strange phenomenon it is quite clear that New Cults could not have come into being unless the Brahmins had taken up the cause of propagating these new cults. Similarly old cults could not have disappeared if the Brahmins had not ceased to propagate them. The question that puzzles the student of history is why did the Brahmins fabricate these new cults? Why did they give up the old cults? The question not only puzzles but staggers the student when the God that has vanished in this revolution is no other than Indra. Indra is a Vedic God. He is the greatest of the Vedic Gods. The Brahmins worshipped Indra and praised him as the supreme God for hundreds if not thousands of years. What made the Brahmins give up Indra and become the devotees of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh? Were the reasons for transfer of loyalties by the Brahmins spiritual or commercial?

Who is this Shiva whom the Brahmins adopted as their God in preference to Indra? The story of Daksha Prajapati's Yajna and the part played by Shiva throws great light on Shiva. The story is that somewhere in the Himalayas king Daksha was performing an Yajna. This Yajna was attended by all Devas, Danavas, Pishachas, Nagas, Rakshasas and Rishis. But Shiva absented as Daksha did not give him invitations. Dadhichi one of the Rishis scolded Daksha for his failure to invite Shiva and to perform his puja. Daksha refused to call Shiva and said "I have seen many of your Rudras. Go away, I don't recognize your Shiva." Dadhichi replied "You have all conspired against Shiva, take care, your Yajna will never reach a successful finish." Mahadeo coming to know of this created a Rakshasas from his mouth and this Rakshasas destroyed the Yajna started by Daksha. This shows that there was a time when Brahmins refused to recognize Shiva as the God to be worshipped or it shows that Shiva was against the Yajna system of the Brahmanas.

The difference between the Aryans and the Non-Aryans was cultural and not racial. The cultural difference centred round two points. The Aryans believed in Chaturvarna. The Non-Aryans were opposed to it. *The Aryans* believed in the performance of Yajna as the essence of their religion. The Non-Aryans were opposed Yajna. Examining the story of Daksha's Yajna in the light of these facts it is quite obvious that Shiva was a Non-Vedic and a Non-Aryan God. The question is

why did the Brahmins, the pillars of Vedic culture, adopt Shiva as their God?

The third question that puzzles the student is the reformation and transformation which the Brahmins have made in the original format of Shiva and Vishnu.

The Hindus are not aware that Shiva is a non-Vedic, non-Aryan God. They identify him with God Rudra mentioned in the Vedas. So that to the Hindus Rudra is the same as Shiva. Now in the Taittiriya Samhita of the Yajur-Veda there is a hymn in praise of Rudra. In this hymn Rudra i.e. Shiva is described as the lord of thieves, robbers, dacoits, as the King of the degraded, of potters and blacksmiths. The question is how did the Brahmins venture to accept this king of thieves and robbers as their supreme God?

There is another reformation in the character of Rudra which the Brahmins have made while accepting him as their God Shiva. In the Ashvalayan Grihya Sutra the proper way of worshipping Rudra is prescribed. According to it the worship of Rudra was to be the sacrifice of a bull. The Sutra gives details of the season, and the Nakshatra for performing this sacrifice. It tells the householder to select the best bull from the stable. It prescribes its colour. It recommends that it should be fat. It should be consecrated with rice water or barley water. Then it should be slaughtered and offered to the Rudra addressing him by all his names and his tail, hide, head and feet should be thrown into the fire. Evidently Rudra was a 'himsak' God to whom animal sacrifice was necessary. Shiva on the other hand has been an Ahimsaka God. He is not offered animal sacrifice. Question is what compelled the Brahmins to make Shiva give up his meat diet and be a vegetarian.

Hindus all over India accept without shame or remorse the virtue of Linga Puja—Phallus worship. This phallus worship is associated with Shiva and it is commonly held that the true way of worshipping Shiva is to worship the Shiva Linga. Was Linga puja always associated with Shiva? Some very interesting facts are brought to light by Prof. Dandekar in his essay on "Vishnu in the Veda". Says Prof. Dandekar:

"The most significant word in this connection is *Sipivista*, which is exclusively employed in the Veda with reference to Vishnu. The passages where the word occurs in RV (VII. 99.7; VII. 100. 5-6) seems to have been kept obscure with a purpose. The Vedic poets evidently sought to make a guarded and casual reference to that aspect of Vishnu's personality which was indicated by the word, *Sipivista*. Many attempts have been made to explain the word, but few satisfy the requirements of philosophy and none brings out the

true nature of Vishnu. It is not possible to separate philologically the word Sepa (*Penis*) from sipi. Other similar *idg.* forms are Sipha (a root pkt. chepa, lat. oippus, seipio (staff) etc. Even Nirukta (V. 7) seems to be vaguely supporting this view though its further explanation is not clear. Added to that word is a form from the root viz., thus making the whole word mean ‘the changing phallus; the swelling and diminishing penis’. We may now easily understand why the Vedic poets speak in such guarded and obscure way about this form of Vishnu. In this connection it is very significant to note what Nirukta (V. 8-9) says of this name of Vishnu: The word sipivista has thus unmistakably preserved Vishnu’s ancient phallic nature. There are also many other incidental references to Vishnu in the Vedic hymns and ritual, which clearly associate him with the notion of fertility, productivity and self life.”

“One of the obscure features of the Vedic Shraddha-ritual is that the Angustha, without nail, is to be dipped into the offering intended for the *pitars*. This action is accompanied by an invocation to Vishnu. The Angustha is undoubtedly a symbol of the phallus. Vishnu is, in this rite, clearly connected with the phallic aspect of the Vedic ritual. In later literature we find Vishnu actually identified with the thumb. In the I.S. passage (VI. 2.4.2) we find another piece of evidence in this regard. Vishnu’s entering into the mother earth is a symbolical description of a fertility rite. The words, *Tanvardhanah*, used with reference to Vishnu’s (VII. 99.1; VIII. 100.2) may further be understood to be indicative of his phallic nature. Vishnu is significantly identified, in later literature, with Hiranyagarbha, and Narayana. Vishnu’s close connection with Sinivali (AV. VII. 46.3), the ‘broad-hipped’ divinity protecting the feminine sex-functions, throws considerable light on this aspect of Vishnu’s personality. According to the Sankhyana-grahyasutra (I. 22.13), the Mantra (X. 184.1) accompanies the garbha-ceremony, thus suggesting that Vishnu is the efficacious protector of the embryos. In AV (VII. 17.4), Vishnu is clearly connected with sex-functions. The two epithets of *Vishnu Nisiktapa* (VII. 36.9) ‘protector of the semen’, and *Sumajjani* (I. 156.2) ‘facilitating easy birth’ speak for themselves. The word, *Paumsya* ‘manly vigour’ is significantly used with reference to Vishnu in RV (E. 155.3-4). In the Vrsakapi-hymn (X. 86), Indra is said to have been exhausted, when a bold, lascivious monkey administered to him some medicine, through which Indra regained his manly power. This Vrsakapi is identified, in later literature, with Vishnu, the word-being also mentioned as one of his names “in the Vishnusahasranama.”

On the evidence produced by Prof. Dandekar phallus worship was in its origin connected with Vishnu. In the Puranas we do not find the Phallus worship associated with Vishnu. In the Puranas it is associated with Shiva. This is a most astounding transformation. Vishnu who was from the beginning associated with the Linga worship was dissociated from it and Shiva who had no association with the Linga worship has come to be identified with it. Question is what made the Brahmins dissociate Vishnu from Linga worship and fasten it on to Shiva?

There remains the last and the important question. It relates to the inter-relations of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha.

Nothing probably sums up so well the inter-relations between Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha as does the story of the birth of the God Dattatraya. Briefly the story is that one afternoon when Sarasvati, Laxmi and Parvati, the wives of the three Gods were sitting together chit-chatting, Narada, the sage on eternal tour, came to visit them. In the course of the conversation a question arose as who was the most chaste woman in the land. Narada held out that Anusuya the wife of Rishi by name Atri—as the purest and most chaste woman. This was violently disputed by the three, each one of whom claimed to have that title. Narada disproved their claim by recounting the many acts of adultery which one of them was guilty of. They were silenced but they became very angry. They wanted to retrieve their position *vis-a-vis* Anusuya. In their wisdom they decided that the only way by which this could be done was to have Anusuya seduced to illicit intercourse. Having decided upon their plan of action the three women told to their husbands when they returned in the evening what Narada said about them in the afternoon and scolded them by saying that they were the cause of their wives humiliation. For if they had committed adultery with Anusuya she and they would have been on the same level and Narada would not have found cause to humiliate them. They asked their husbands whether they cared for their wives and if they did were they not in duty bound to proceed forthwith to invade the chastity of Anusuya and to pull her down from the high pedestal of purity and chastity on which Narada had placed her. The Gods were convinced that what was suggested by their wives was their duty and that they could not shirk the task.

The three Gods started on an expedition to rob Anusuya of her honour and marched on to the hutment of Atri. The three Gods disguised themselves as three Brahmin Mendicants. When they arrived Atri was away. But Anusuya welcomed them and prepared food for them. When the meal was ready she asked them to sit and partake of

the meal. The three Gods replied that they would take food at her house only if she agreed to serve them food in a naked condition. The rule of hospitality in ancient India was that Brahmin guest must not depart dissatisfied. Everything he asked must be given to him. In obedience to this rule Anusuya agreed to serve them naked. While she was serving food to them in this naked condition Atri arrived. On seeing Atri the three Gods who were taking food with Anusuya standing naked took the form of new born babes. The three Gods in the form of babes were placed by Atri in a cradle. In the cradle their bodies having become integrated into one and their heads having remained separate there arose the God Dattatraya who has one body and three heads representing the three Gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha.

The story has a stink of immorality in it and the close of it may have been deliberately designed so as to cover up the actual fact of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha having outraged Anusuya to lower her down to the level of their wives. Be that as it may the story illustrates the view once prevalent among the Hindus that three Gods Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha were co-equal in status and their functions are complimentary and not competitive. They were spoken of as forming Trimurti—three in one and one in three, all sustaining the world, Brahma by creating it, Vishnu by preserving it and Shiva by destroying it.

This state of harmony did not last long. The Brahmins who were the propagandists of these three Gods divided themselves into three camps each becoming devoted to one to the exclusion of the other two. The result of this was a systematic campaign of vilification and degradation by the Brahmins devoted to one God of the other Gods.

It is interesting as well as instructive to note what the Brahmins have done to Brahma. There was a time when the Brahmins raised Brahma to the highest pinnacle of power and glory. They presented him as the creator of the Universe—the first Prajapati. He was their sole supreme God. The Brahmins had developed the theory of *Avatar* which holds that God when necessary incarnates into different forms, human or animal. This they use for twofold purpose, firstly to elevate the supremacy of a God in whom they are interested and secondly to reconcile the conflict between Gods as different personalities.

The Brahmins have run riot with this theory of *Avatar* and different Puranas have given different lists of Avatars as will be seen from the following:

	According to Hari Vamsha	According to Narayani Akhyan	According to Varaha Purana	According to Vayu Purana	According to Bhagwat Purana
1	Varaha	Hansa	Kurma	Narasinha	Sanatkumar
2	Narasinha	Kurma	Matsya	Vaman	Boar
3	Vaman	Matsya	Varaha	Varaha	
4	Parshuram	Varaha	Narasinha	Kurma	Nara-Narayan
5	Rama	Narasinha	Vaman	Sangram	Kapila
6	Krishna	Vaman	Parshuram	Adivaka	Dattatraya
7		Parshuram	Rama	Tripurari	Jadna
8		Rama	Krishna	Andhakarh	Rashabha
9		Krishna	Buddha	Dhvaja	Prithi
10		Kalkin	Kalkin	Varta	Matsya
11				Halahal	Kurma
12				Kolhahal	Dhanwantri
13					Mohini
14					Narasinha
15					Vaman
16					Parshuram
17					Ved Vyas
18					Naradeo
19					Rama
20					Krishna
21					Buddha
22					Kalkin

These Avatars are all said by these Puranas to be the Avatars of Vishnu. But to begin, with when the Avatars had begun to be coined the story of the two Avatars—of the Boar¹ and the Fish²—which in later times given to Vishnu was given by the Brahmins to Brahma. Again even when the Brahmins admitted Shiva and Vishnu as co-equal with Brahma they maintained the supremacy of Brahma over Shiva and Vishnu. The Brahmins made him the progenitor of Shiva³ and propagated the view that if Vishnu⁴ became the preserver of the world it was because of the command of the Brahma. With the plurality of Gods, conflicts between them were always present and some God to act as Arbitrator and settler of disputes was necessary.

¹ Ramayana—Quoted in Muir's Sanskrit Texts Vol. IV p. 33.

² Mahabharata—Vana Parva & Linga Purana—Muir *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

³ Vishnu Purana—Muir *Ibid* p. 392.

⁴ Ramayana—Muir *Ibid* p. 477.

Puranas are full of such conflicts, even wars among Gods. There were conflicts between Rudra and Narayana¹, between Krishna and Shiva². In these conflicts the Brahmins have made Brahma the Arbitrator.

The same Brahmins who elevated Brahma to such pre-eminence turned against him, started degrading him and mud-slinging him. They started propagating the view that Brahma was really inferior to Vishnu and Shiva. Contrary to their previous utterances the Brahmins said that Brahma was born from Shiva³ and some said that he was born from Vishnu⁴.

The Brahmins completely inverted the relation between Shiva and Brahma. Brahma was no longer the God who could give salvation. The God who could give salvation was Shiva and they reduced Brahma to the position of a common devotee worshipping Shiva and Linga in the hope of getting salvation⁵. They reduced him to the position of servant of Shiva by making him the charioteer of Shiva⁶.

The Brahmins did not stop with degrading Brahma. They villified him in the worst manner possible. They broadcast the story of his having committed rape on his own daughter Sarasvati which is repeated in the Bhagwat Purana⁷:

“We have heard, O Kshatriya, that Svayambhu (Brahma) had a passion for Vach, his slender and enchanting daughter, who had no passion for him. The Munis, his sons, headed by Marichi, seeing their father bent upon wickedness, admonished him with affection: ‘This is such a thing as has never been done by those before you, nor will those after you do it,—that you, being the lord, should sexually approach your daughter, not restraining your passion. This, O preceptor of the world, is not a laudable deed even in glorious personages, through imitation of whose actions men attain felicity. Glory to that divine being (Vishnu) who by his own lustre revealed this (universe) which abides in himself,—he must maintain righteousness’. Seeing his sons, the Prajapatis, thus speaking before him, the lord of the Prajapatis (Brahma) was ashamed, and abandoned his body. This dreadful body the regions received, and it is known as foggy darkness.”

The result of this degrading and defamatory attacks on Brahma was to damn him completely. No wonder that his cult disappeared from the face of India leaving him a nominal and theoretical member of the Trimurti.

¹ Mahabharat Shanti Parva Quoted in Muir Vol. IV. p. 240.

² Mahabharat Shanti Parva *Ibid.* p. 279.

³ Mahabharat Anushasan Parva—Muir *Ibid.* p. 188.

⁴ Bhagwat Purana—*Ibid.* p. 43.

⁵ Mahabharat quoted in Muir’s Sanskrit Texts Vol. IV p. 192.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 193.

⁷ Muir’s Sanskrit Texts Vol. IV p. 47.

After Brahma was driven out of the field there remained two parties of Brahmanas, one engaged in favour of Shiva and the other engaged in favour of Vishnu. Let us see what they did as protagonists of their rival deities. Neither party succeeded in driving out the cult of its rival God. The cult of Shiva and the cult of Vishnu have continued to exist and flourish. Notwithstanding the many cults that have subsequently come into existence they have not been eclipsed. This is largely due to the propaganda and counter-propaganda carried on by the Brahmin protagonists of Shiva and Vishnu. How well matched the propaganda and counter propaganda was, can be seen from the following few illustrations.

Vishnu is connected with the Vedic God Sun. The worshippers of Shiva connect him with Agni. If one has Vedic origin the other must have Vedic origin as well. One cannot be inferior to the other in the matter of nobility of origin.

Shiva must be greater than Vishnu and Vishnu must not be less than Shiva. Vishnu has thousand names¹. So Shiva must have thousand names and he has them². Vishnu has his emblems³. So must have Shiva and he has them⁴.

In the performance of deeds of glory the propaganda in favour of one is fully matched by counter-propaganda in favour of the other. One illustration of this is the story regarding the origin of the holy river Ganges⁵. The devotees of Shiva attribute its origin to Shiva. They make it take its origin from Shiva's hair. But the Vaishnavas will not allow it. They have manufactured another legend. According to the Vaishnavite legend the blessed and the blessing river flowed originally out of Vaikunth (the abode of Vishnu) from the foot of Vishnu, and descending upon Kailasa fell on the head of Shiva. There is a two-fold suggestion in the legend. In the first place Shiva is not the source of the Ganges. In the second place Shiva is lower than Vishnu and receives on his head water which flows from the foot of Vishnu.

Another illustration is furnished by the story which relates to the churning of the oceans by the Devas and the Asuras. They used the Mandara mountain as the churning rod and huge serpent Shesha as a rope to whirl the mountain. The earth began to shake and people became afraid that the world was coming to an end. Vishnu took the Avatar of Kurma (tortoise) and held the earth on his back and prevented the earth from shaking while the churning was going on.

¹ See Vishnu Sahasranama.

² They are mentioned in the Padma Purana.

³ See above.

⁴ They are (1) Flowing Ganges (2) Chandra i.e. Moon and (3) Shesh (snake) and (4) Matted hair.

⁵ Moore; Hindu Pantheon pp. 40-41.

This story is told in glorification of Vishnu. To this the Shaivites add a supplement. According to this supplement the churning brought out fourteen articles from the depth of the ocean which are called fourteen jewels. Among these fourteen a deadly poison was one. This deadly poison would have destroyed the earth unless somebody drank it. Shiva was the only person who came to drink it. The suggestion is that Vishnu's act was foolish in allowing the rivals the Gods and Demons to bring out this deadly poison. Glory to Shiva for he drank it and saved the world from the evil consequences of the folly of Vishnu.

Third illustration is an attempt to show that Vishnu is a fool and that it is Shiva who with his greater wisdom and greater power saves Vishnu from his folly. It is the story of Akrurasura¹. Akrur was a demon with the face of a bear, who, nevertheless, was continuously reading the Vedas and performing acts of devotion. Vishnu was greatly pleased and promised him any boon that he would care to ask. Akrurasura requested that no creature, then existing in the three worlds, might have power to deprive him of life, and Vishnu complied with his request; but the demon became so insolent that the Devatas, whom he oppressed, were obliged to conceal themselves, and he assumed the dominion of the world; Vishnu was then sitting on a bank of the Kali, greatly disquieted by the malignant ingratitude of the demon; and his wrath being kindled, a shape, which never before had existed, sprang from his eyes. It was Mahadeva, in his destructive character, who dispelled in a moment the anxiety of the Vishnu.

This is countered by the story of Bhasmasura intended to show that Shiva was a fool and Vishnu saved him from his folly. Bhasmasura having propitiated Shiva asked for a boon. The boon was to be the power to burn any one on whose head Bhasmasura laid his hands. Shiva granted the boon. Bhasmasura tried to use his boon power against Shiva himself. Shiva became terrified and ran to Vishnu for help. Vishnu promised to help him. Vishnu took the form of a beautiful woman and went to Bhasmasura who became completely enamoured of her. Vishnu asked Bhasmasura to agree to obey him in everything as a condition of surrender. Bhasmasura agreed. Vishnu then asked him to place his hands on his own head which Bhasmasura did with the result that Bhasmasura died and Vishnu got the credit of saving Shiva from the consequences of his folly.

The rivalry and the consequent enmity among these Gods is best illustrated by the legend as to which of them is the first born. The story as related in the Skand Purana² says that one time Vishnu lay

¹ The story is told in Vishnu Agama and is quoted in Moore's Hindu Pantheon pp. 19-20.

² Quoted in Moore's Hindu Pantheon pp. 17-18.

extended asleep on the bosom of Devi, a lotus arose from his navel, and its ascending flower soon reached the surface of the flood, Brahma sprang from that flower, and looking round without any creature on the boundless expanse, imagined himself to be the first born, and entitled to rank above all future beings; yet, resolved to investigate deep and to ascertain whether any being existed in its universe who could controvert his pre-eminence, he glided down the stock of the lotus and finding Vishnu asleep, asked loudly who he was ? 'I am the first born' answered Vishnu; and when Brahma denied his primogeniture, they had an obstinate battle, till Mahadeo pressed between them in great wrath, saying 'It is I who am truly the first born. But I will resign my place to either of you, who shall be able to reach behind the summit of my head, or the soles of my foot. Brahma instantly ascended; but having fatigued himself to no purpose in the regions of immensity, yet loath to abandon his claim, returned to Mahadeo, declaring that he had attained and seen the crown of his head, and called as his witness the first born cow. For this union of pride and falsehood, the angry God ordained, that no sacred Shiva rites should be performed to Brahma and that the mouth of cow should be defiled. When Vishnu returned, he acknowledged that he had not been able to see the feet of Mahadeo, who then told him that he was the first born among the Gods, and should be raised above all. It was after this Mahadeo cut off the fifth head of Brahma who thus suffered the loss of his pride, his power and his influence.

According to this story Brahma's claim to be the first born was false. He was punished by Shiva for making it. Vishnu gets the right to call himself the first born. But that is allowed to him by the grace of Shiva. The followers of Brahma had their revenge on Vishnu for stealing what rightfully belonged to him with the help of Shiva. So they manufactured another legend¹ according to which Vishnu emanated from Brahma's nostrils in the shape of a pig and grew naturally into a boar—a very mean explanation of Vishnu's avatar as a boar.

The rivalry among these Gods had taken the shape of rivalry among traders and results in indecent abuse of Shiva by Vishnu and of Vishnu by Shiva.

Such are the facts about the Trinity and its subsequent history.

There is nothing new in the conception of Trinity.

The conception of Trinity is an old one, older than Yaska. To reduce the chaos of innumerable Gods the early Brahmins were engaged to select some Gods and to make them pre-eminent over the rest. The number of such pre-eminent Gods was fixed at three. Of these Agni

¹ Quoted by Moore, *Ibid.* p. 184.

and Surya were two. For the third place there was rivalry between Vayu and Indra. Consequently one finds the Trinity of Agni, Indra and Surya or Agni, Vayu and Surya. The new trinity is identical in its conception with the old though different in its personnel. Every member of this Trinity is new. It seems after the first Trinity was dissolved no new Trinity existed for a considerable time. In the Chulla Nidessa there is mention only of Brahma Vratikas. There is no mention of Vishnu Vratikas or Shiva Vratikas. This means that at the time of the Chula Nidessa the cult of Vishnu and the cult of Shiva had not come into being. They were later on added to the cult of Brahma and constituted into a Trinity. Several questions rise in one's mind when one considers the part played by the Brahmins in the evolution and confounding of the Trinity.

The first that arises is the faithlessness of the Brahamins to their Gods, the easy manner in which they abandon one set of Gods for another. In this connection one is reminded of the Jewish priests and Nebuchad-Nez-Zar.

“Neb-U-Chad-Nez-Zar¹ the king made an image of gold, whose height was three score cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits he set it up in the plain of Du-ra, in the province of Bab-y-lon.

“2. Then Neb-u-chad-nez-zar the king sent to gather together the princes (satraps), the governors (deputies), and the captains (governors), the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Neb-u-chad-nez-zar the king had set up.

“3. Then the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Neb-u-chad-nez-zar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Neb-u-chad-nez-zar had set up.

4. “Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages.

5. That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Neb-u-chad-nez-zar the king hath set up;

6. And whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

7. Therefore at that time, when all the people heard, the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and

¹ Old Testament—Daniel Chap. 3. verses 1-23.

worshipped the golden image that Neb-u-chad-nez-zar the king had set up.”

8. Wherefore at that time certain Chal-de-ans came near, and, accused the Jews.

9. They spake and said to the king Neb-u-chad-nez-zar, “O King, live for ever.”

10. “Thou, O King, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image.”

11. “And whoso falleth not down and worshipping, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”

12. “There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Bab-y-lon, Sha-drach, Me-shach and A-bed-ne-go; these men, O king, have not regarded thee; they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

13. “Then Neb-u-chad-nez-zar in his rage and fury commanded to bring O Sha-drach, Me-shach, and A-bed-ne-go. Then they brought these men before the king.

14. Neb-u-chad-nez-zar spake and said unto them, “Is it true, O Sha-drach, Me-shach, and A-bed-ne-go, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?”

15. “Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well; but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?”

16. Sha-drach, Me-shach, and A-bed-ne-go, answered and said to the king, “O Neb-u-chad-nez-zar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.”

17. “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.”

18. “But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

19. “Then was Neb-u-chad-nez-zar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Sha-drach, Me-shach and A-bed-ne-go; therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

20. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Sha-drach, Me-shach, and A-bed-ne-go and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

21. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Sha-drach, Me-shach, and A-bed-ne-go.

23. And these three men, Sha-drach, Me-shach, and A-bed-ne-go, fell bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace."

Why did the Brahmins give up the first Trinity? There is no indication that they were compelled to forswear those Gods. Was it love of gain or lucre?

The second question is why did the Brahmins who became the votaries of the three Gods follow the principle of live and let live? Why was one sect bent on destroying the other. There was no doctrinal difference between these sects worth the name. Their theology, cosmology and philosophy were all one and the same. The riddle becomes all the great. Was this sectarian quarrel political? Did the Brahmins make religion a matter of politics? Otherwise what is the explanation of this quarrel?

