ORIGINAL SANSKRIT TEXTS
ON THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY
OF THE PEOPLE OF INDIA,
THEIR RELIGION AND INSTITUTIONS.

COLLECTED, TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH,
AND ILLUSTRATED BY REMARKS,

BY
J. MUIR, D.C.L., LL.D.,
LATE OF THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE.

PART FOURTH.
COMPARISON OF THE VEDIC WITH THE LATER REPRESENTATIONS
OF THE PRINCIPAL INDIAN DEITIES.

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sentations given of the most popular divinities became not only at variance with the characteristics ascribed to their prototypes in the Vedas, but even in some respects different from the descriptions which occur in the older Puranas themselves.

These successive mutations in Indian mythology need not occasion us any surprise, as they merely afford another exemplification of a process which may be remarked in the history of all nations which have given free scope to thought, to feeling, and to imagination, in matters of religion.

In carrying out the plan just sketched, I shall, first of all, quote the texts in the Vedic hymns which refer to the creation of the world, and to the god Hiranyakarshna or Prajapati; these shall be succeeded (2) by passages from the Brahmanas, and (3) by quotations from the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the Puranas having reference to the same subjects.

I shall then proceed in a similar order with the various texts which relate to the gods Vishnu and Rudra, with occasional notices of any other Indian deities whose history it may appear desirable to illustrate.

CHAPTER I.

TEXTS FROM THE VEDIC HYMNS, BRAHMANAS, AND PURANAS, ETC., RELATING TO THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE, AND TO THE GOD HIRANYAKARSHA, PRAJAPATI, OR BRAHMA.

SECT. I.—Texts from the Rig-veda regarding the creation and Hiranyakarsha.

SPECULATIONS ABOUT CREATION.—Rig-veda, x. 129.

R. V. x. 129, 1 ff.—Na asad asad na sad sad tadattah na asad rojo
no eva para yat | kim avarte kah kasya karmah ambha kh kim asad
yahan gahana babhiram | 2. Na mrityur asad anritam na tarhi na ratrya
aham asat prakatah | asad avatam svadhaya tad ekam tasmad khyad
na para bhikshamane | 3. Tama asat tamast gaham agre aprakatah
sakalesvaram a idam | tuchhyaena abhe aphaleh yad asat tapasa tad
mahina jyatakikam | 4. Kamas tad agre samamavatadih manasa reto
prakamah yad asat | sato bandhun asati nirvandha kri prabhya
karya mantah | 5. (Vaj. S. xxxiii. 74) Tiratthana vilato rasim nimam

1 The Vishnu Purana, i. 2, 21 ff., quotes (from some source which is not indicated) a verse which seems to be in some degree founded on the text before us and employs it in support of the Sankhya doctrine of Pradhana: Veda-vida-vida vipra nitya Brahma-vaidyam | pashanti va tam svibham Pradhana-pratisadham | 22. Nahi
na ratir vai nahi na bhoomir nasi tama jyatev abhi na ed 'yugat | svatvi-rupaya
buddhiapasa avahyam ekam pradhana-kshata pramaham Pradhana prashchit | "Brahma
learned in the texts of the Veda, firm supporters of its principles, repeat the
following statement establishing the doctrine of Pradhana: 22. "There was neither
day nor night, neither sky nor earth; there was neither darkness nor light, nor
anything else. There was then the One, Brahma in the form of Pradhana, the Male,
incorporealizable by the ear, or other senses, or by the intellect."

2 These words are quoted by Kulluka or Manu, i. 5, of which passage this may
be the germ.

3 In the passages which I shall quote from the Sistapatra Brahmana, etc. further
on, we shall see that the creative acts of Prajapati are constantly said to have been
proceeded by desire: as 'bhamayat, "he desired," etc.
adhaś eva datā upari eva datī | vietābhāś āsāṃ māñāvāṃ āsāṃ vedaḥ
arastā pravyatiḥ parastāt. 6. Kā naṃ veda kā taḥ pravechāt kuta djātā
cuta iṣaḥ viśeṣaḥ iṣiḥ | ātvā deva deva visaṃjñena atāḥ kā veda yata
abhiḥśaḥ | 7. Iṣaḥ viśeṣaḥ yata abhiśāya yadi vā daśe yadi vā na
yo aṣṭiḥṣaḥ paraṃ vayaṃ sa āṅga veda yadi na veda

"There was then neither nonentity, nor entity; there was no atmosphere, nor sky beyond it. What covered [all?] where was the reclosure of each thing? was it water, the deep abys? 2. Death was not then, nor immortality; there was no distinction of day or night: That One breathed calmly, with vietābhāś (nature); there was nothing different from It [that One] or beyond It. 3. Darkness was then; originally enveloped in darkness, this universe was undistinguishable water; the empty [manas] which was concealed by a huis [or by nothingness] was produced, single, by the power of austerity (or heat). 4. Desire first arose in It, which was the first germ of mind. This the wise, seeking in their heart, have discovered by the intellect to be the bond between nonentity and entity. 5. The ray which shot across these things,—was it above, or was it below? There were productive energies, and mighty powers; Nature (vedābhāś) beneath, and Energy (pravyati) above. 6. Who knows, who here can declare, who has sprung, whence, this creation? The gods are subsequent to its formation; who then knows from what it arose? 7. From what source this creation arose and whether [any/one] created it or not,—He who in the highest heaven is its ruler, He knows, or He does not know."

See Professor Müller's translation of this remarkable hymn, his enthusiastic appreciation of its merits, and his remarks in regard to its age, in his "History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pp. 559-566; and Professor Goldstücker's observations on the same subject in his "Pāṇini," pp. 144f.

VIŚVAKARAM, —ṚG-VEDA, X. 81 and 82.

Ṛ. V. x. 81, 1 ff. (=Vāj. S. 17, 17-23).—Ya ima viśte bhuvanatī
ejhata piṭhāt hata nyuṣiṣṭāt piṭhā naḥ | sa dhīṁśa dvāijnām iṣṭamāṇā

* See Boehtlingk and Roth's Lexicon under the words śāśa and maṇकa.
* Oh Rinier, see schuf oder nicht. Boehtlingk and Roth's Lexicon, under the root ḍas (p. 908).