CHAPTER VI

Visé Devas in Smrtis and Nibandhas

a) data from Smrtis and Nibandhas

The next important class of literature which I propose to study is the Smrti literature. The three main topics with which this literature deals are Acara, Vyavahara and Praya-scitta. It is the Acara section with which the VD in all likelihood may be related. Smrtis are closely connected with the Sruti. According to the Pūrva Mīmāmsā view-point, the injunctions in the Smrtis presuppose the authority of some Smrti. The religious rites prescribed in the Sruti have the Kalpasūtras as their main source, because the Kalpasūtras are generally regarded as the reflections of the Smrti injunctions. Historically speaking the Kalpasūtras, particularly the Grhya and Dharmasūtras may be said to have represented the developments in the religious, cultural and social conditions which prevailed in the Vedic period.

It is expedient to take a survey of the position of the VD in the Smrtis as a type of literature. The chronology of the Smrti - literature, however, poses some problem. This literature is understood to have been composed during a rather long range of period. The Manusmruti and the Yajnavalkyasmruti are the most important Smrti-texts which were composed probably at the beginning of the christian era. There are, however, many more Smrtis which were composed in a later period ending probably with the tenth or eleventh century A.D. The religious practices related with the VD however have hardly under-
gone a revolutionary change.

A large mass of Nibandha - literature pertaining to the Hindu Dharmaśāstra was composed during the Smṛti period and also in a later period ending with the 17th century A.D. The commentaries written on major Smṛti-texts also bear the character of a Nibandha. Even though the Nibandhas may have taken note of the social and cultural developments in contemporary India, they, like the late Smṛtis, have essentially followed the religious tenets prevailing in the tradition. Therefore there is no harm if we take stock of the position of VD in the entire Smṛti and Nibandha literature composed during a period of many centuries.

**Vaisvadeva rite** - In Smṛtis and Nibandha texts the Vaisvadeva rite is prescribed to be performed by every householder each day at the time of noon-meal. According to some teachers the Vaisvadeva-balis are to be offered in the evening also. Manu(i.121)\(^{(1)}\) says that in the evening, when the food has been prepared, the householder's wife should offer Bali without reciting the mantras. Yājñavalkya(i.103)\(^{(2)}\) has also prescribed similarly. In chapter IV, on the Kalpasūtras we have noted that ĀśvAGS. i.2.1 has laid down this rite. In this rite cooked food is offered on the domestic fire to the VD among other deities. (see also Bṛhatparāśaro Smṛti 4.167).\(^{(3)}\) The Vaisvadeva rite is so called because in it oblations are offered to all (many) deities. It is also a fact that the VD themselves are one of the deities whom oblations are offered. cf. Smṛticandrika ii.575.9-10.\(^{(4)}\)
The Brahmajñā, one of the five Mahayajñās is also invariably mentioned in the Smṛtis and Nibandhas. Since these texts simply repeat what is prescribed in the sūtras, only a passing reference to that rite is adequate.

Śrāddha-rite - The Śvāddha is an important domestic rite in which the VD are invoked and which therefore is dealt with in the Kalpasūtras, Smṛti and Nibandha texts and Purāṇas. These texts have prescribed many types of Śrāddha depending upon the occasion, time, place and person involved therein. Excepting a few types like Ekoddhiṣṭa and Ābhyudayika or Nāndī Śrāddhas, the VD are generally invoked and honoured in a Śrāddha. We have therefore particularly taken that part of Śrāddha which concerns the VD. The details about the various Pitṛs (and Mātṛs), their invocation and honours and prayers offered to them are generally outside our periview. They may be referred to only in relation to the VD. We therefore need not enter into the details of any type of Śrāddha.

The Śrāddha rite as prescribed in the Sūtra texts and mentioned in the Epics, particularly in Mahābhārata has already been studied. The main items of a Śrāddha as prescribed in the Sūtra-texts naturally continue to exist in the rite prescribed in Smṛtis and Nibandhas. It would therefore be sufficient for our purpose to restrict ourselves to the additional information contained therein.

We have already seen that gods represented by the VD are invoked and honoured in a Śrāddha. There is also some difference between the rituals to be observed in respect of
the Devas and the Pitṛs. The Manusmṛti states the purpose of inviting the VD in a Śrāddha. An important point to be noted in the Śrāddha rite is that it commences with the invocation of the VD and also ends with their honouring. Manu says, "the rite for the VD which precedes the rite for the Pitṛs is for their support. For the protection of the Pitṛs, the rite for the VD should be introduced as the preceding one. The Rakṣasas snatch away the Śrāddha which is devoid of protection. One should perform the Śrāddha rite as preceded and succeeded by the one for gods (i.e. the VD). A Śrāddha rite should not begin nor end with a rite for the Pitṛs. One who desires to perform a Śrāddha as beginning and ending with a Pitṛ-rite suddenly perishes with his progeny."(5) The Pitṛs who are departed are afterall human beings. They are incapable to protect themselves from the attacks of the evil spirirts when they come down in this world to recieve food and honour from their descendants. Only with the help of gods they can sustain themselves. It is the duty of the gods to give them protection from both the sides of the entire rite.

From the Gṛhyasūtras downwards the number of the Brāhmaṇas representing the Viśve Devas has been two, or even four, six etc. The continues in the Smṛtis and Nibandhas. The number of Brāhmaṇas representing the Pitṛs is to be odd-three, five, seven. Whatever may be the number of the Pitṛs, the Brāhmaṇas representing the VD would always be two.(6) There is another option, namely that the VD and the Pitṛs may be represented by one Brāhmaṇa each. This option of course indicates the decline in the tradition. Tradition has assigned names to the two Viśve Devas who are represented by the Brāhmaṇas. The names are
different in different types of śrāddhas. Thus in the Iṣṭi-śrāddha their names are Kratu and Dakṣa. In the Nandīmukha śrāddha Satya and Vasu, in Kāmya śrāddhas Dhūrī and Locana in Parvaṇa śrāddha, Purūrava and Ārdra; and in incidental śrāddhas Kāma and Kāla. (7) The order of names in a pair is sometimes inverted in some cases.

From the Vaikhānasa Gṛhyaśūtra downwards, the term Viśvedeva is sometimes used as a single name with a - ending. This indicates that the name of the VD was accustomed to be used as a single unit reflecting a fixed character of the deity. In the context of śrāddha, the collective deity came to be designated as a duel one. The duality of the deity may be accounted for the presumption that the two parts granted protection to the Pitṛs from both the ends of the rite. Just as the pair of deity together is taken to be VD, similarly each single constituent of the deity was understood to be the collective deity.

The Pitṛs whom śrāddha is offered bear a spiritual character also. śrāddha is offered to three consecutive Pitṛs from the father (or mother) backwards, Vasu, Rudra, and Āditya respectively reside in the three generations. When the householder offers śrāddha, he does not offer merely to Pitṛ etc., but to those in whom the gods Vasu etc. reside. These gods themselves gratified by the worship offered by the householder delight the Pitṛs and grant boons to the householder and his family. (8) Here the words Vasu, Rudra and Āditya are singular in number. Basically, they are plural—eight Vasus,
eleven Rudras and twelve Ādityas. The Vasus reside on the earth, the Rudras in the mid-region and the Ādityas in the heaven. These regions are successively distant from each other. These distances correspond to the three generations of Pitṛs whom Śrāddha is offered. Now the Vasu, Rudra and Āditya who reside in the Pitṛs are related also to the VD. We have already seen that in the Rgveda where the VD are mostly deemed as a group of gods praised and prayed side by side with other deities, they are sometimes described as comprising the vasus, Rudras and Ādityas. In the Śrāddha rite, the VD are associated with the Pitṛs within whom Vasu, Rudra and Āditya reside. This co-existence of Vasus, Rudras and Ādityas among the VD and the Pitṛs is remarkable. It indicates a mystical relationship (bandhutā) between the gods and Pitṛs.

The Śrāddha rite is discussed in more or less details in the various Smṛtis e.g. Likhitasmṛti 29; Vṛddhagautamasmrṭi 578.20; सतातपस्मṛṭि 2.11; Laghvāśvalāyanasmṛṭi 20-23; Brhatparāśarasmṛṭi 2.63; Caturvargacintāmaṇi III.i.131-142; Nirṇayinsindhu pp. 279-290.

Caturvargacintāmaṇi has made a noteworthy statement with regard to the Śrāddha-rite. It reproduces the names of the VD as recorded in the Mahābhārata and says that in a Śrāddha all these names of the VD should be mentioned in the relevant case-form whenever an occasion arose. (9)

The VD are also casually referred to in certain religious rites other than the Śrāddha. Thus in a rite of temporary installation and worship of Śivalinga, the Ācārya invokes the
VD among several other deities to be present on the Sarvato-
Bhadra Pīṭha. Similarly in the Kōṭihomavidhi, prescribed
in the Brhatparāśarasmṛti (11,25) there are offerings of
firesticks besmered with curds, honey and ghee to the VD and
other deities. No attempt has been aimed at here to record
exhaustively the references to the VD in the religious rites.
In such references also the VD are generally found to be a
collective deity assuming a definite character.

(b) Conclusion:

The Smṛtis and Nibandhas prescribe in their Ācāra
section, the rites which a householder has usually to perform.
The Vaiśvadeva rite is to be performed at every morning meal
and also in the evening. The rite is called Vaiśvadeva
"intended for all (many) deities" and at the same time it
includes the offerings (on the fire as also a bali) to VD as
a separate deity. In the different types of śrāddha, except
the Ekoddiṣṭa and the Abhyudayika or Māndiśraddha. The libations
to the Pitrā are to be preceded and also succeeded by the
offerings to the VD, Manusmṛti informs that the offerings
to the gods i.e. to the VD are intended to protect the
libations to the Pitrā from both the ends of the rite from the
attacks of evil spirits and demons. Even if the number of
brahmans representing the ancestors (three, five, seven etc.).
The brahmans representing the VD are only two. Their names
are different in different types of śrāddhas. Out of the two,
one would protect the śrāddha from one end and the other one
from the other. Not only the two brahmans represent the
collective deity VD, but even each one of the two represent
them. The three generations of the ancestors are presided over respectively by Vasu, Rudra and Āditya, residing respectively on the earth, in the midregion and in heaven. It may be remembered here that the VD as a separate group of gods are sometimes described in the Rgveda as comprising the Vasus, Rudras and Ādityas. Thus the Vasus, Rudras and Ādityas who are related to the VD are also said to be residing in the ancestors at the Śrāddha.

The Caturvargacintāmani has, while laying down the Śrāddha-rite, taken note of the sixty two names of the VD mentioned in the Mahābhārata.
Notes

1) सायं (बलसय सिद्धय पन्थयन्त्र नालीं हरेत।)
    वैस्यदेवं हि नामेनल आयं प्राणविधिये Manu Sm. 3.121

2) देवैंमधू हृदायाचे चबुदात भूतबाळं हरेत।
    अनेन भूमि ध्रुवामल्लानीस्मय निमित्ते Yajñasya Sm. 1.103

3) यास्चनेत्र्यै पवित्रतं तन होमो विधीये।
    आयाने: मोहसमल्लो ती विश्रे देवात्मरो।
    धन्वन्तरी: कुंभकन्तस्तु मानि: प्रजापति:।
    ....कुमाराः विजयन्तम परीशायं सर्वत्रं प्रवर्तिनम् BrParāsya Sm. 4.167

4) वैष्णवः करः तन युक्तसं तस्मिनिये विदेव देवता स्वयं।...नती
    वैष्णवादेवकं Sm. 3/4/2 (Andria) ii. 575.5-10

5) वैदिकादेत् विश्वानीला पितृकार्यं विशेषाय।
    तैवं हि पितृकार्यं पूजामात्यमेव स्वतं।|| 20311
    शामार्गायेत तु श्रवः तैवं नियोजिते।
    राजार्या विनवाप्याने एवमार्गावाजीनम् || 20411
    देवायनं तदहेतु पिन्यायमेन न लयवेत्।
    पिन्यायमेन लहमा: तीसरे नस्त्यानि मात्राय: Manu Sm. 3.203-205

6) हृदः देवे व्रतः अयः पिन्य उदगोकणमेव आ।
    मातमहानामःपः स्वं तनं व वैष्णवाकिम Yajñasya Sm. 1.228
    Comm. by Balambhati: सर्वपासंपूर्णा विन्यायावै व्रतेव पिटृड्ये
    मातमहादेवे न वैष्णविकं पृथ्वी तन्मणो कल्याणम्| Also
    Yajñasya Sm. 1.229.270

7) तस्म आदिविद्वान विन्यायानिवेदनमाह श्रद्धा: —
श्रीप्राप्तं कलुद्धं संकीर्तनं वेदवेदविके।
नान्दीमुखं सत्यनसूर कामेष्ठ च धुरितोत्तमं॥
पुरुषवान्तकी श्रेय पात्रेण समुदाहतं।
निन्नतिः कामकालन्त्वं सर्वत्र कीर्तितं BalamBhatti11.508-2(011.228)
हेमाग्रावादित्यपुराणं—
विष्णुवेदें अनुदर्शः मावत्रित्विषु कीर्तितं।
निमयं नान्दीमुखं आसं कामस्तो च पैदं॥।
नवान्नममि येदं कामकालिः सर्वेच सि।
अपि कथणने सूर्यं कामां च धुरितोत्तमः॥
पुरुषवान्तकी श्रेयं वष्टं दशफलं पात्रं—संकाररत्नमाग्नि धु. ७९७'।
एकोढिः देवहीनम्। श्री तन्र बिन्धेदेविनिन्दवतथापि नवाद्रिः द्रादसा—
मालिके च कामकालिः पैदं, नवाद्रिः दशाहिनि नवामिः हु षाँद्रू।
निन्नतिः संकीर्तनं २८०.२
8) कसुरुश्रादितिनिस्तुता: पितरः श्रादेवता:।
प्रोपयाति मनुशानां पितृ-अवधिन तर्पितं: Yaj. Rasm. 1: २६४
मितातिः न देवस्त्रिदाय: भवे श्रादेष्टामि संप्रदायानुसूति विनादें—
श्रादेष्टुच्यले सि भचित्तातुवशयदेवतात्सहिता एव। यथा देवदत्तादेवश्चरे नारीमाणां नामालम्बां किं शारीरिकुस्त आत्मान उत्कले एवाधिष्ठिता—
उदेशेऽसहिता (व देजस्त्रिदाय: पिनादिस्काधुपुर्च्यले। अनन्दाधिष्ठातुदक्षाःन्तर्वाद्य: पुनादेश्यंदिनेश्यान्नन्तर्घम: तप्ता: मध्ये: सातापि देवदत्तादेवश्र्चरे
तपितृतिः ककूच्छ पुनामीति फलेन संयोजनानि।
9) अधैर्यां विवेचनां नामायुच्यते। तत् नाबन्महामाने—
... सदा कृतिरिष्पित्मा च पुण्यायु पावस्तया।
शास्त्रेदाश: समुहय दिव्याभावानुपर्णवा कैसे ।
विश्ववान् कौमिन्दा फ्राहान्बी कौमिन्दानु कृत्य एव ।
विश्ववर्ग: समुहय तृतीयस्थान सुविशेषथाने नामत:।।
समुहय यूर्यस: साहित्यी रत्नामा पुज्यक्षकः।
उष्णीसमाओ नमोदास्य विन्दुदीपितेरेनः।।
असुहन: सुविशेषय समावेरे शंकुरोमवः।
ईशः करो कृतिदर्शना शुभको विद्यामक्कलः।।
गाणित: पंचवीपमा प्राचीनराज्यानुसार।।
सन्तक-सीमकर्या विश्वकृति कविरेवः।।
अनुगेता सुगः: पन्ना चतुर्थ एव एवः।।
कीमान्य साविकोयमः दुर्गोमा प्रथमः।।
आतिकर्मी प्रति श्रद्धावत: अंजुमंजलं।।
शैलागम्: परमाणी धारोणी श्रुपतिनरथः।।
सजीवी विकरे नैव विश्वेदवा: सनातनः।।
कोण्टलसि महामाण कालस्य गतिगीत्यः।।
एते व महामाणोत्सव सहकृतादिनानांतो विश्वेदवा: कथोक्तिनामि:।।
संकुच्युगिक्तनामेः: प्रतिपदार्थ संप्रकारं साध्यं समुख्येन विनिमयः।।
—पुर्वकर्णिनामाणि: ॥ १४२ ॥

10) अवधार्य: सहतीमेन्सैं देवनवात्सायेत/सत्यव श्राह्यम्। ्कृत्यानि विक्रेतु...अन्नातैः
कम्या...विश्वायनां पितृन रागान...— निर्णयसिद्धः २४४.९-१०
11) कोरिहोमावरीः: आयनभागाहुःतुविहा नवरुत्या न हेम्येन आदिनाम...।
विश्वेदवा...स्वविश्वकृतं तथा य शरिमुद्धुतानन्तो सामियं शैव यालिकः।
हीमेनेद्व B1 ParāSm. ॥ २५ ॥