VI. Conclusion

After studying all these deities, demons, sages and many other divine beings major and minor, we could draw some outcome, though we have to leave many points for further studies. Summary and outcome of the chapters of the main body are as follows:

In the first chapter of the main body, viz., ‘The Trimūrti’, each member of the Hindu triads, who are presently worshipped, is observed separately.

In the first sub-chapter ‘Brahmā’ following things are discussed: (i) The Creators in the Vedas (ii) Brahmā and the Brahmas in Pāli texts (iii) Brahmā and the Lord of the Creations in the Epics.

(i) The Creators in the Vedas: The Vedic creation myths are broadly centered round three sets of creators. The first is that of the primeval divine giant who created the world out of self-immolation. This is compared to the Chinese giant Pangu. The second is related to the fabricators or the creators of the abstract frame of the universe. In this Viśvakaṁśa and Tvaṣṭṛ are clubbed together. Prajāpati is also discussed in this group. The third types are not creators specifically but their greatness gives them that position. They randomly indulge in the work of creation.

Outcome of this small section is: There are some similarities between the two mythologies, viz., Indian and Chinese. We may safely assume that these
similarities are present due to the influence of one on the other. Since Chinese creation myths are chronologically later than the Indians it is likely that they were influenced by the Indian myths.

(ii) Brahmā and the Brahmās in Pāli texts: This part is chiefly a discussion pertaining to the question, ‘From when was Brahmā called a Creator?’ The Brahmās often appear in connection with the Buddha, perform significant roles in Buddhism, but they are different personalities from Brahmā as the Creator. The Mahābrahmās exist to serve and help the Buddha and the monks, and also to divert the rigid brāhmaṇas and commoners to Buddhism. This section is concluded that the idea of Brahmā as the Creator God might have started from Pāli literature, or at least, approximately from the time of the Buddha, by a process of negative references by the Buddha.

(iii) Brahmā and the Lord of the Creation in the Epics: Brahmā as The Creator God, in the Mahābhārata, acquires an established position as the Creator, though he does not enjoy this title alone. Brahmā is believed to be the Creator who played a vital role in the work of creation with the help of many assistants. There is one Brahmā the Creator, and there are many other Prajāpatis, the Lords of creation.

In the second sub-chapter ‘Viṣṇu’, the problem of Viṣṇu’s diverse aspects has been pursued from different angles, i.e., from the angle of Vedic adjectives and epithets of Viṣṇu, such as, sīpīvīṣṭa, kucara, bṛhat śarīram, ārūgāya vṛṣṇi etc. Viṣṇu’s relationship with Śivālī, the fertility goddess, has also been closely studied. These results are again compared with the Chinese thought, especially with the ancient Yin-Yang theory. From the study, an important outcome has been
drawn that Viṣṇu could be either a sun-god or a fertility deity or sacrificial god, at the same time he is not merely a god of fertility nor is he a total sun god. Then, we have discussed if this aspect could indicate that Viṣṇu might have been a stream of bright and active energy like Yang that pervades the entire universe, and the goddess Sinīvālī like Yin, the dark and passive energy, though they have different names.

The third sub-chapter Śiva (Rudra) is a comparative study. The epithets of Rudra, such as, girīṣanta, giritra, girīṣa, āranyāpati, vanapati, stenapati, paricarapatī, bānavān, prathamaḥ daivaḥ bhīṣaj, paśupati etc.; and also his physical attribute: vyupakeśa (disheveled hair), nilagrīva (blue-necked), śitikantha (white-throated), etc., prove that Rudra-Śiva was a mountain deity. This aspect of Rudra-Śiva as a mountain deity is compared with certain concepts and characteristics of Korean mountain deities in some legends. The study has pointed to many common facts and differences. It also mentions the peculiarities of the mountain deities of different regions. This study has also drawn a conclusion that the figure of Vedic Rudra and some part of the Epic Śiva were, at least for some period, deities of the mountain. It is suggested that the greatness of Śiva in the later period might have accumulated from the career of Rudra as a mountain god, as the mountain gods are essentially connected directly with the livelihood of people.

The second chapter of the main body, ‘The gods connected with natural elements, and deified abstract concept’, is divided into two separate parts, i.e., (1) The gods connected with natural elements and, (2) deified abstract concept.
The first sub-chapter ‘The gods connected with natural elements’ is focused chiefly on the several less dealt with, and un-dealt with aspects of Agni. From that study we have drawn a conclusion that Agni was almost a unique deity, who alone can provide us several valuable understandings about the ancient society. We came to know that apart from his chief trait, Agni possesses following points: (i) The ordinary fire: Though the sacrificial fire is predominant throughout the Rgveda, the secular fire is also not neglected. (ii) The fire of love or kāmāgni: Agni is also considered as a deity who fulfils the desire of beings. Many times Agni stands for passion or lust. Especially in Atharva Veda Kāmāgni means ‘fire-like lust’. (iii) The forest fire: In the Rgveda the forest fire is extolled in fairly considerable measure. When Agni is being sung as forest fire, a much more lively and picturesque poetic imagination is seen than in that of the sacrificial fire. In this case the figure of Agni is more fierce, mighty and speedy. (iv) The agriculture fire: From the description of the forest fire, a very valuable piece of information can be taken out. Some verses of the forest fire show that those fires are not accidental but intentional ones, ignited in order to procure agricultural land. (v) The digestive fire: The fire or natural heat of the stomach, which is the principal element of digestion, has been equated to Agni even from the Vedic period. (vi) The funeral fire: Another of Agni’s very important role in the Vedas, more frequently in the Atharva Veda, is to administer the funeral ceremony. Due to this function of purification and carrying of the dead body to the other world, Agni is often connected with Yama. (vii) The non-believers of fire: It is noteworthy that the verses which deal with the non-believers in the Rgveda are mostly in the hymns of Agni and Indra. These non-believers are expressed not only in a single word, but are with various words, such as, pīyati, andhā, adeva etc. In the Mahabhārata, the words adeva or adevī or adevayu do not occur, but the word anāhitāgni, ayajvā and nāstika are mentioned in their place. Their literal
meaning is one who does not kindle the śrauta fire, one who does not perform sacrifice and one who does not believe in god. However, in its actual sense their meanings are one and the same, viz., a faithless one or a heretical one. The term nāstika occurs several times in the Mahabharata. The relevant words for adeva or nāstika in Pāli literature can be micchādiṭṭhika or aṇṇatitthiya, one who has misconceptions or the adherent of another sect or a non-Buddhist.

The second sub-chapter, 'Deified abstract concept' is a study of the concepts, viz., desire and death in Indian mythology. It is chiefly focused on showing how Kāma, Yama and Māra are related to each other. The two notions, ‘desire and death’, are regarded as the two most important meditative objects, and also they are considered as separate entity, and it seems that they continued their separate individual journey for a long period till they met in the Buddhism under the very significant name Māra. The Evil Māra is compared with various Hindu deities and also with the Christian Devil, Satan.

In the Vedas, ‘desire and death’ are not directly related to ‘cause and effect’. There is no concept which says desire is evil or desire is a cause of death. It appears that there is no visible connection between the two. Desire does not meet death, though it is quite apparent that they walk the same trail. ‘Desire and death’ are therefore said to be clearly two different entities. In the Vedas, no desire, including sexual lust, is denigrated on the contrary it is propagated. As desire (Kāma) is said to create the world, desire is the positive creative power or Kāma is a creator. It is also said that beings are created owing to the holy death of Yama, the king of the dead. Death takes place for the sake of further creation. Therefore, death also is positive creative power or Yama the first dead is a
creator. Thus, in the Vedas, both ‘desire and death’ are not negative forces but they are generative powers.

In the Epics, however, ‘desire and death’ clearly have a ‘cause and effect’ relation. Death is the strongest evil, and this evil is said to start from desire which may be sexual sometimes. Death also is considered as time (kāla) or destiny. Death is fated, hence it is a toy in the hand of destiny or of the gods who play with the fate of men. Desire in this period, on the practical side, is considered to be one of the three worldly goals, which a man should follow throughout his life. On the philosophical and mythological side, desire is conceived as tumult due to which death has come into existence. Again, desire is represented mythologically as god of love, however, this deity himself is not connected with death, except death due to lovesickness. ‘Desire and death’ are closely connected. Desire brings death and it is the direct cause of death. Desire is no more a creative force, but it is a negative, destructive power. Kāma is a destroyer. Death is not for creation but it is for negative destruction. Yama too is a destroyer.

In Pāli literature, death is evil and destructive, and as the Buddhist dharmā is essentially a method for diverting and transforming the natural phenomenon of desire, there is no scope for pursuing desire. It is said that desire is an indirect cause of death, as desire causes a man to have a solid form. In Buddhism desire is evil and also desire leads one to death. Therefore, in Pāli, desire, being an indirect cause for death, is a negative destructive power, and death also does not work as positive. Therefore, death is a negative destructive power. However, there is no such deity in the Buddhist mythology corresponding to Kāma or god of desire, except some aspect of the Devil Māra. The death-god Yama is chiefly a judge for the dead. He is neither a destroyer nor a creator.
The third chapter of the main body, ‘Indra and other gods (Varuṇa, Kubera)’, is study of three deities, i.e., Indra, Varuṇa, and Kubera. Different types of rulership and faith of the said deities have been elucidated.

**Kubera** first appears in the Atharvaveda as a chief of the tribe called *itarajanás*, the other folks, which used to snatch away the wealth of Aryans. In Pāli literature he (Vessavaṇa) appears as a faithful follower of the Buddha, and the lord of the *yakkhas*. Kuvera is one of the four regent gods who rules the North (Uttarakuru) where there are all kinds of prosperity. The chapter compares the Vedic tribe *itarajanás* and the *yakkhas* who are mentioned in the *Āṭānatiya sutta* in Dīg. The personalities of the *yakkhas* and firm faith in Kuvera (Vessavaṇa) are also dealt with. The conclusion of this part is that, Kuvera’s rulership over his followers is practical, material, concrete and tangible. Therefore, in his case, instead of the word ‘devotee’ the word ‘follower’ or ‘subject’ should be applied. For, his rulership is not ‘sovereignty’, but limited to the ‘kingship’ over certain beings who specially belong to him just as the subjects of a king of a particular kingdom. In the case of his followers too because of the unfailing punishment meted out to them for any transgression and equally reward for good act, they dare not break the rules and orders of their ruler.\(^1\) Perhaps due to this kind of practical reasons Kubera’s rulership might have continued for the longer period than the other two deities, i.e., Indra and Varuṇa.

\(^1\) e.g., in Meghadūta, a *yakṣa*, who carried out his duty neglectedly was cursed to be separate from his newly married wife for an year.
Varuṇa, in the Vedas, is the wise, omniscient, functional god of eternal order, particularly legal order, and he is commonly understood to be the greatest god among the Vedic pantheon by the side of Indra. However, we come to know that Varuṇa who thus, wields the sovereignty over the whole universe does not have an anti-cult, i.e., avaruṇa cult, while Indra and Agni clearly have it, i.e., anindra and anagni cult, even though there exists clearly a rivalry between Indra and Varuṇa. Varuṇa is also not as frequently invoked to destroy the demons as Indra is. We found the reason for this as: ‘The absolute and unmovable faith given for this god by the devotees is mainly out of fear’. All traces of human weakness that are clearly perceptible in the character of Indra and Agni are conspicuously absent in Varuṇa’s character. Rather than praising him for destroying the demon, the singers begged him to forgive their various sins. Thus, the belief and faith in Varuṇa on the part of the devotees, and the rulership over men on the part of Varuṇa is almost absolute. However, this absolute rulership and dedication was stopped soon after Indra’s ascendancy, perhaps, as it is earlier mentioned in the note, because this kind of feeling is not in keeping with the Indian taste but might be a ‘foreign one’. Thus, the greatest rulership of Varuṇa, in the Vedic period, over the entire world was continued for much shorter period than the other two deities, i.e., Kubera and Indra.

Indra is the most important deity of the Vedas, the most faithful divine being in Pāli literature, and the most mischievous divinity of the Epics. Vedic Indra destroyed and crushed adevas or adevayus i.e., the ‘anti-Indra cult’ and the ‘demons’, and ‘faithless individuals’ without forgiveness. He, in the Vedas, is an object of faith, and receives firm devotion, wins unshakable faith of the so called
devayus and obtains consequent glory and oblation as well. In Buddhist literature the role of this great Vedic Indra is entirely changed from the ‘receiver of faith’ to the ‘server or offerer of faith’. This change has been so smoothly achieved that no trace regarding of his once being the greatest and fiercest god is found. He still is called ‘the ruler of the devas (devānam indo)’ and his rulership over the devas is unchanged and he also still receives honor from human beings. Indra is a kind ruler of the gods who willingly humbles himself down to the Buddha and serves him because of his faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. In this way Indra is the ‘server of the faith’ in Buddhism. Indra in the Mahabhārata is still a ruler of the gods but his faith and confidence are almost lost. He seems to be the king of heaven only in name. Thus, faith and rulership of Indra are the most changeable. His rise and fall is also said to be most dramatic.

The last chapter of the main body is ‘Semi-divine beings, legendary sages and demons’. Meaning, distinction and types of the said beings have been brought out in this chapter. And some un-dealt with sages, such as, Kaṇṭha and Asita from the Buddhist literature have been revalued. It is suggested that the sage Kaṇṭha stood somewhere in the intermediate period between the Ṛgvedic tribal chief Kṛṣṇa and the Epic Vāsudeva.

Apart from the gods one can come across several types of the demons, the semi-divine beings, and the sages in Indian mythology. Some of these stand almost equal to the gods, some are between the gods and men, and some are even above the gods. Their roles and activities in mythology are also different from each other. They are closer to the gods in their appearance and supernatural powers, and nearer to men in their activities and styles. The semi-divine beings function as supporters and entertainer for the gods and they are wonders and fantasies for
men. The demons, having powers equal to the gods, take the role as opponents and adversaries of the gods, and they are terrors for men. The sages, being originally human beings who achieve god-power, are kind of mediators between the gods and men. They are the objects of fear for the gods, and the ultimate aim for meditating men. Out of these various beings, this chapter sheds more light on the sages. The sages selected are: the Vasiṣṭhas, the Bhāradvājas, the Bhrgus. Some of them are from Pāli literature, such as, Buddha, Asita (Devala), and Kaṇha etc. Among them again, more light is thrown on the sage Kaṇha from Pāli literature. For, this sage is almost neglected by the scholars, though his importance in Indian mythology may be un-ignorable. This sage appears to be of a very different type. The sutta says that, he is a very ancient sage, who is said to be the originator of Kaṇhayan clan. He is neither a brāhmaṇa sage nor an admirer of the past or of the present Buddha. He has no connection with Buddhism or even with Brāhmaṇism. In the Vedas, there is no occurrence of either Kaṇhayan (Krṣṇāyana) race or Krṣṇa as a sage or as a divinity. However, one verse of the R̄gveda mentions the fighting of Indra with a demon chief called Krṣṇa, who Kaṇha from Buddhist literature can be compared with and traced back to. This Krṣṇa, of the R̄gveda, is believed, religio-historically to be the leader (religious perhaps) of dark-skinned non-Aryan tribes. This Krṣṇa is believed to be the primary form of the popular god Vāsudeva Krṣṇa in the later period. His account is found also in the Ghata Jātaka but with a little difference.

From the study of the deities above, some general points can be gathered:

(1) As the present work is being pursued using the method of comparative study, viz., of the Vedas, the Pāli literature and the Epics, we could observe that the characteristics of one single deity are far different from one literature to another.
literature. A deity who wielded absolute power in the Vedas, dwindled away, and
fell to a ridiculous state with the passage of time, and a deity who even did not
register his name in the Vedas became a great god in the later period. The deities
have differently appeared according to the religions, e.g., in Buddhist literature all
the deities, great or minor, are subservient to the Buddha and his eminent
disciples.

(2) From a comparison with the deities of the other countries we learnt that many
concepts, ideas and deities are like those of Indians, either due to direct influence
or by coincidence.

(3) Further we have observed that many great gods possess some common traits.
e.g., in the Vedas fertility is considered as very important, hence majority of the
gods possess this quality. Thus, not only the natural fertility deities like Dyaus
and Parjanya etc., but also Indra who was known as a war hero (or thunder god)
has characteristic of fertility, and also Viṣṇu, Śiva and so many other gods possess
fertility as their important quality.

(4) Some particular gods share very similar personalities with each other. Thus,
Viṣṇu and Śiva, the two great gods in the later time, share many qualities with
each other, e.g., the goddess Śiṁūrī who is supposed to be a wife of Viṣṇu in the
AV., is closely connected with Rudra in the VS. Viṣṇu is called a bull in the RV.
and Rudra or Śiva’s connection with a bull later is famous. Both Viṣṇu and Śiva
(or Rudra) are closely connected with mountains, and are called ‘mountain
dweller’.
In this way, the deities are equalized in one stage and differentiated at another time. They are continuously elevated and degraded; even their greatness is differently evaluated according to the time and the literature.