

not historical documentation or archaeological findings, but the main source is written texts. The books that are written chronologically after the Vedas are Brahmanas, Upanishads and Puranas; as well as two great Indian epic, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. They are based on oral narratives during the end of the first millennium BC. All of these written sources – especially two epic books and Puranas- are considered as the main source of inspiration in Hindu. In these sources, there is an analogy for each trait of God such as anger and each of them can be depicted by of the manifestation of god. They were good sources for artists to show such written pattern. Thus, they are considered as the basis of works gradually to transfer these beliefs to the next generation by sculptures and images. Since ancient times till now, new generations

don't know about these texts but they can learn all things about their religion by artworks in the temples and streets and be familiar with Hindu rituals. The main point in Hindu triple gods is that there are no significant changes in them from the past till now. You can see a continuity of manifestation of gods in sculptures and reliefs that are rooted in myths and written stories.

There are signs that are similar in images of gods for example having multiple heads and hands (showing that they are dominant and their abilities are limitless for doing everything), having pearl necklace and other separate signs for each god such as weapons and tools or color of the clothes and make-up that relates to the story of his life and differences in each geographic region and race.

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worships him, too. This symbol indicates that Shiva is the extract of universe.

As previously mentioned for Brahma and Vishnu and you can see in Table 3, sculptures' materials are changed during the time, clothes styles are changed and color is added to the sculptures but signs and features of Shiva are unchanged. Shiva is shown in the 10th row of the table with "Linga" and "Yoni". He has jewels on his head, forehead, neck and ears and there is a snake above his head; flowers and other presents are offered to him. In some images, Shiva is shown in the form of a blue young person who has many jewels on his arm, wrist and chest. There are snakes on his shoulders and arms. Shiva's signs that can be seen in most of images include the third eye on his forehead, trident and a moon crescent on his hair. Shiva has three eyes which represent the brightness of the sun, moon and fire respectively and are considered as the light source of life that has been spread on the earth and sky. In images, his hair braided and adorned with precious gems and a moon crescent is on top of it and is decorated with a crown of leaves of Cassia. He is shown while has a men's earring in his right ear and a women's earring in his left ear. He has decorated with necklace, bracelet, belt and rings for fingers and toes. The main part of his cloth consists of half-shorts which is

very tight and a swing scarf with a sacred thread around his body. He has a drum in his right hand. He has raised the other hand to show that humans should not fear of anything and is sitting on a tiger skin. In some images, he has a cloth of tiger skin.

Shiva signs include: third eye, cobra necklaces, disheveled hair, moon crescent, the holy Ganges, drums, Vibuti (Vibuti means three lines of ashes drawn on the forehead that represents the essence of human evils: ignorance, selfishness and violence), ash, elephants and deer skin, Rudraksha and trident.



Fig. 33. Shiva, Omkareshwar temple, 2007 A. D. in Madhya Pradesh.

Source: www.masterfile.com

Conclusion

Despite of differences in dimensions, details, decorations and materials; gods are the same in different manifestations such as sculptures in caves and ancient temples and temples in today's cities is visual cues and symbols. The reason for this similarity is continuity of the same doctrinal traditions among the followers of the Hindu

religion. The written sources of this religion have always inspired the artists. Since the end point of collecting the last part of the Vedas (about 600 B. C.) until the emergence of the earliest examples of Hindu art; there is a period that we don't know much about its cultural and historical specifications. The main source for this case is



Fig. 27. Shiva, Nageshwar temple, in Jamnagar, Gujrat.
Source: www.tripadvisor.in



Fig. 28. Shiva, Mallikarjuna Swamy temple, in Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh. Source: www.79tube.com



Fig. 29. Shiva, Mahakaleshwar temple, in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh. Source: www.vediyand.wordpress.com



Fig. 30. Shiva, Samadhishwar temple, in Chittorgarh-Rajasthan. Source: www.alamy.com



Fig. 31. Shiva, somnath temple, in Gojarat.
Source: www.wallpaper.marooti.com



Fig. 32 Shiva, tryambakeshwar temple.
Source: www.jyotirlingatemple.com



Fig. 21. Shiva, A temple in Delhi.
Photo: Shohreh Javadi, 2012.



Fig. 22. Shiva, Trimbakeshwar temple in Delhi. 1775 A. D. in nasik, maharashtra. Source: www.desibantu.com



Fig. 23. Shiva, Vaidyanath temple in Deogarh, Jharkhand. Source: www.bullshido.net



Fig. 24. Shiva, Sri-kashi-vishwanath temple, 18th century A. D. in Varanasi. Source: www.alamy.com



Fig. 25. Shiva, Kedarnath temple, 8th century A. D. in Uttarakhand. Source: www.panoramio.com



Fig. 26. Shiva, Bhimashankar temple, 13th century A. D. in Pune, Maharashtra. Source: www.tripadvisor.com

that are mentioned in “Rig Veda”. His name is always shining in a cloud of anger and rage. He is a bloodthirsty and furious god that can destroy the Earth by his movements. Although he issues the order of fever and diseases, he is a healer as well as (Zekrgoo, 1998: 194). Shiva is also the

god of destruction and perdition. He has one of the most complex characters among Hindu gods that carries conflicting tasks such as austerity and act as a householder. His vehicle is white bull named "Nandi". Shiva is the god of birth and reproduction and that's why Linga board

As previously mentioned for Brahma and you can see in Table 2, sculptures' materials are changed during the time and the face of them are changed from a lifeless and mythical figure to a more natural face like human being. On the other hand, their clothes are changed and colors are added to the sculptures. Hence, the signs and features of Vishnu are unchanged.

In Table 2, Vishnu is often shown in the form of a young man with a blue face and body and four hands. He has a large oyster in one hand and a book in other hand. He has a round wand in his third hand and a lotus in his fourth hand. A necklace is shown on his chest and there are bracelets on his wrist and arms. He has a patchwork hat and has some small assistants around him. In some images you can see about 10 avatars around him .

Sometimes he is shown in the form of a black man from pure Hindi-Dravidian race. He is dressed in golden clothes like old kings. His head, neck, hands and arms are adorned with crowns and jewels. But the main signs such as round wand, conch and cane are still in his hands. Because he is the symbol of stability and law and order; he is usually shown as a king who comes up periodically with different faces to the Earth to establish the balance between good and evil forces.

Vishnu signs: his skin has the same color as dark blue clouds. He has four hands (symbol or 4 directions in space and his dominance over the world). He has a lotus leaf, a wand (symbol of illusion), a conch-shaped horn (symbol of sounds of heaven and the sacred words) and a ring or arc (the symbol of knowledge) in his hands. In some images – like the ones in caves- he is lying on a very big snake called “Shesha” which is the symbol of universe periods. In other images, Vishnu is on a roadster like a human-eagle.

Shiva

Shiva is devastating god who can destroy the world and recreate a new world. Shiva is similar to Rudra – an ancient Vedic god . He is somehow a loving god with great kindness to his servants. It is said that he can descend to the Earth in a special form. He helps all people who worship him by intercedes. But Shiva has a destructive role as well. Hindus believe that this kind of destruction is an introduction for recreation and regeneration and rebirth of creatures. In prehistoric times, Shiva was the god of fertility and productivity. They worshiped him because his power of destruction. Various images are drawn from him. There are other names for him and the most famous one is "Dancing Shiva". In some images, there is a third eye for Shiva in the middle of his forehead which is half open. His followers believe that the third eye will open some day and the world will be upside down. Followers of Shiva believe that his hair is the source of the sacred river Ganges.

"Shiva" is similar to “Rudra” both in features and appearance and manifestations. He has many followers among Hindus by inheriting from ancient Rudra. "Rudra" is one of gods



Fig. 20. Shiva, 9 B. C. Source: www.imgur.com

considered as the Brahman manifestation as the creator instead of Brahma. And sometimes he is considered as the material cause of the universe. In the preceding Puranas, Vishnu is the God and he is the creator and preserver of the universe. In his home, multi-horn bulls are agile. In “Rig Veda”, Vishnu is described as an invincible

guardian or supporter. This characteristic led to a conclusion that all super powers to protect and support are belong to him (JalaliNaiini, 2006: 117:122). He comes in different colors, especially white and black and brown and red, blue. In most images, Vishnu is shown as a young man with a cheerful face and four hands (Fig. 8-19).



Fig. 15. Vishnu, Tirupati Tirumala Balaji temple. Source: www.sacredartindia.org



Fig. 16. Vishnu, A temple in Jeypore. Photo: Shohreh Javadi, 2012.



Fig. 17. Vishnu, A temple in Udaipur. Photo: Shohreh Javadi, 2012.



Fig. 18. Vishnu, Rescuing Gajendra temple in Jammu & Kashmir. 8-9 A. D. Source: www. Pinterest.com



Fig. 19. Signs of Vishnu. Source: www.sacredartindia.org

He took much austerity and heat produced from him created the universe. It is clear that these expressions are expressive allegorical (Khavas, 2011) (Fig. 2-6).

As you can see in the table, sculptures' materials are changed during the time and the face of them are changed from a lifeless and mythical figure to a more natural face like human being. On the other hand, their clothes are changed and colors are added to the sculptures. Hence, the signs and features of Brahma are unchanged. In images of Table 1; Brahma is shown as a king with 4 heads to indicate 4 Vedas. This king has a crown. Each head face to a different side. Mainly just three heads of four heads are visible. He has some rings on his arms, wrist and fingers. He has a lotus in one hand and a rosary in the other hand which is the royal insignia to show his power and administration of the universe. Brahma has a container of water in his third hand – water is an essential element in creation and global consistency depends on water. Brahma carries an edition of Veda in his fourth hand. A necklace is hung around his neck and the belt can be seen around his waist. Heads are covered with long

cone-shaped patchwork hats and earrings are hung from his ears.

Manifestations of Vishnu

Vishnu is of the significant gods in “Rig Veda” that is called preserver god and is considered as the connective force between components of the world. He is a very kind god that preserves the universe and ensures the continuity of universe. In recent Hindu religion, he is always considered as the preservative principle. Several hymns in praise of Vishnu and his greatness are mentioned in “Rig Veda”. There are more hymns about Vishnu’s perfection (such as being eternal, being omnipotent, being pure and sublime, omniscience and etc.) in religious texts. He is the symbol of the sun and can pace the seven district of the world in just 3 steps. He can surround everything with his light. We read in first Mandalay, hymn 154 (Rig Veda): “he kept the high place and paced triple zones with long paces. All the creatures have their homes among these three long paces. He can preserve this universe and all creatures in their place by his own power. In some schools of Veda, Vishnu is



Fig. 12. Vishnu, Srirangam Ranganathaswamy temple in Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu. Source: www.natarajank.com



Fig. 13. Vishnu, Jagannath temple in Tiruchirappalli, Odisha. Source: www.Pinterest.com



Fig. 14. Vishnu, Badrinath temple in Uttarakhand. Source: www.hindumeeting.com



Fig. 4. Brahma, A temple in Pushkar.
Source: www.pushkarguide.com



Fig. 5. Brahma, Sirkazhi temple in Tamil Nadu.
Source: www.Alamy.com



Fig. 6. Brahma, iskon temple in delhi-uttar-pradesh.
Source: www.Alamy.com



Fig. 7. Brahma, A temple near Tamil Nadu.
Source: www.youtube.com



Fig. 8. Vishnu, Guimet museum.
Source: www.Flickr.com



Fig. 9. Vishnu, Chaturbhuj temple in khajuraho.
Source: www.alamy.com



Fig. 10. Vishnu, gopuram temple in indiasur.
Source: www.alamy.com



Fig. 11. Vishnu and his avatar. Source: www.pilgrimage-india.com

manifestation of Brahman. And during this era, his manifestations (Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti) had been worshiped and there were various trends for worshiping Shiva and Shakti (instead of worshiping Brahma which is one of the gods in Hindu triad).

E) Since 1800 AD till now is called modern era of Hinduism. In this period, the relationship between the Hindus and the West has increased. This era coincided with political and economic dominance of England over India since the mid-nineteenth century to mid-twentieth century (Khavas, 2011).

Trimurti place in Hinduism

In the heroic period of the quadratic period, Hindu thoughts appeared. In this period, Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (preserver) and Shiva (Destroyer) was considered as monotheism religion in the face of an Almighty Lord and in the way of a poly-theism religion; they were considered as equal gods and in monotheism; they were considered as different aspects of a superior god (Radakrishnan, 1988). Despite of three gods and thousands of other gods in Hinduism, Hindus are in fact monotheistic.

Hindu monotheism believes in God in different shapes of gods from Vedic period to the present time and believes in different manifestations of god and its uniqueness (AzamLotfi, 2014: 19; Javadi 2014). Trimurti in Hinduism means there are three superior gods that are superior to others and have the nature of all ancient gods that have the power by avatar to present on the earth as champions (Ivans, 1994: 64) (Figure 1).

Manifestations of Brahma

Brahma is god of creation and is considered as the almighty creator. There are only 6 temples for him throughout India. He is known as Hindu god of gods that has no activity on the Earth after creating the universe. He is the creator of the objectives of the world (Naas, 1991: 277). In the cosmology of Purana, creation is resulted from the heat of Brahma austerity. Based on MatsiePurana, Brahma came out of lotus flower and asked: “who am I? What is this lotus that has emerged in privacy of infinite horizons and is floating on infinite waters? Perhaps a creature is holding it. Then, he entered the lotus stalk to find its end. After a while, he understood that there is no end. So, he returned and started thinking.



Fig. 2. Brahma, Chennakesava temple in Somanathapura_ Karnataka.
Source: www.findmessages.com



Fig. 3. Brahma, Ceiling of huchchappaiyya-gudi temple in aihole-bijapur. Source: www. Alamy.com

gods. Many changes have occurred in the way of worship for these people during 4 thousand years but most of the people in India are still adhere to this religion and believe in it³.

Most of the Hindu texts include describing major gods and worship customs. Some of them are Vedas (500 BC-1500 BC) and Puranas (400 AD-600AD). They are emerged during Veda era and classical Hinduism era, respectively. Hinduism rituals historical stages include:

A) The prehistoric period of 4000 to 1750 BC that there is no written historical information about that. The only evidence for this era is gain during archaeological excavations in the area of border between Pakistan and India named "Moohanjodaro" (Hill of the Dead) and "Harpe". Numerous artworks (including sculptures) are discovered from these two areas and researchers know them as male and female gods that were worshiped by the people of that time. It seems worship of various gods (Multiple Divinity) was common in that period.

B) The stage of Veda religion that has started about the half of the second millennium BC to about 500 BC. Some significant religious

oral hymns that have written afterwards are religious source for this era. This collection is named "Veda" which means knowledge. The collection of "Vedas" consists of 4 Vedas. The major doctrines and beliefs relating to the gods are mentioned in "Rig Veda" along with some hymns in worshipping them.

C) The stage of classic Hindu that is since 500 BC to 500 AD. General schools of Hindu philosophy are shaped in this era. All of them have one thing in common: "a Hindu should believe that believing in "Vedas" means the origin and the climax of his faith." Hence, quadruplet Vedas and their descriptions (Brahmanas and Openishdhas) are considered as the main pillars of the Hindus' religion and philosophy. In this period, a series of religious sources has emerged.

D) Middle Hinduism or Medieval Hinduism, since 500 AD to 1800AD: Religious sources that emerged during this period include books of philosophical schools triple religions literatures that express the opinions and worship manners. In this period, Brahman is more significant, so that other gods were considered as Maya and illusion. Some Hindus knew them as the



Fig.1. Trimurti, a temple in Alfanta caves, 6th Century AD. Source: www.studyblue.com

Introduction

This paper is a study of Trimurti manifestations in Hindu temples based on existing documents. In general, worship in the presence of avatars has been always very important in Hindus' religious-worshipping traditions. Even today this manifestation can be seen in abandoned temples and cave-temples and a museum in the form of massive stone statues, as well as numerous temples located in residential neighborhoods that are referred by many worshipers. In addition to temples, you can find them at homes, offices and business places.

Brahma is less common in artworks. Although he is the creator god but his power is just limited in the creation framework. There is a few temples for him across India. The low number of temples for this god is related to this fact that he entrusted the universe to Vishnu after creation because his role for creating the universe is over and now he has a less significant role. Preserving the universe which is the main element in this world is due to Vishnu (protector god). According to the Hindu beliefs; he has appeared in the form of terrestrial creatures to preserve universe system. Indian artworks are full of paintings, statues and temples that show Vishnu and his different

terrestrial manifestations.

Shiva is the god of destruction and recreation in every millennium, and preserves the earth and the sky, and destroys the demons, and forgiver of sins and enhancer of the provisions. For this reason, the number of temples for Shiva among Trimurti is in first place. This is consistent with its role in people's daily life. Based on the author's observations; Indian people depend on the temples of this god and people of the North, Center and East of the area were present for worship ceremonies during dawn and sunset. Present temples in India are dedicated for worshipping these two gods- Shiva and Vishnu and their manifestations. These temples are full of statues of gods, pictorial descriptions (in the form of reliefs, sculpture and painting), describing gods' biography and traditions or mythological creatures.

In this study, visual characteristics of the three gods and their manifestations in temples are provided.

The research questions are: What is the Trimurti manifestation feature in Hindu temples? What changes have occurred in these manifestations throughout history?

Hypothesis

The sturdy of Trimurti manifestation in the form of sculptures in Hindu temples from the beginning so far shows that despite many changes in materials, sizes, colors and decorations; the same tradition has been respected in their creation.

Hinduism

Hinduism is the dominant religion in India and more than eight hundred million people of this

country are Hindu. This religion has adopted conflicting approaches to the concept of god along its route. At a time, it has accepted worship of natural manifestations and at another time it has accepted worship of multiple gods, and at another time "Brahman" was the only creature as the universe fact or creator of the universe. In general, the primary basis of modern Hinduism is a combination of worshipping natural manifestations and subjective male and female

Trimurti Manifestation in Hindu Temples*

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Abstract

Human being has been looking for a place to demonstrate "the sacred" from the beginning of his creation. Thus, he created such special places to object the Spirit of God in there. Temples are one of these places.

"Temples" in Hinduism are places for manifestation of "Avatar " of gods. People gather at the temples to obeisance in front of them and offer their votive such as flowers, incense, candy, holy water and so on. These manifestations are seen in the form of different arts such as paintings and sculptures and so on inside the temples. But in this paper, we are just going to study sculptures. During the last centuries, they could be seen in caves and temples but now you can see many of them in present temples, residential areas and Hindu's homes. Hinduism which is the ancient ceremonies of the Indian subcontinent is still the dominant religion of India. Most of the artworks in this subcontinent is somehow related to this religion. Most of the artworks in this subcontinent were related to Buddhist and Hindu sculptures and architecture for centuries (from the third century BC to the 5th and 6th century AD). Temples, stone, metal or wooden statues, reliefs of multiple gods, paintings on the walls of caves and temples can be seen in abundance in different parts of India. Studying them from beginning till now shows that despite many changes that occurred in raw materials, dimensions and decorations; same tradition has been respected in their creation.

In this respect, the main focus is on Trimurti temples. This trinity rooted in Hindi ancient beliefs and represents a new idea of connection and oneness of creation, preservation and destruction that returns to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, respectively. These beliefs can be seen in multiplicity of temples on each of the manifestations so that the multitude of their temples can be justified based on the role that they had played in universe.

This study is based on field observations during travel and library studies to investigate these manifestations. Case examples in this study include Alifan Caves, Ajanta, Ellora and "important temples of Shiva" and "Vishnu" and "Brahma" in various parts of India.

Keywords

Hinduism, Avatar, Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma.