

nous nous trouvons encore à cet égard, que nous avons cru devoir signaler le point de vue auquel une pareille étude devrait être abordée.

EDOUARD MONTET.

The Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society.

2. THE TRISULA.

SIR,—With reference to Mr. Simpson's paper, and the discussion which followed it, I would venture to call attention to some very remarkable coincidences, so remarkable that, even if any interpretation suggested should prove to be wrong, the coincidences themselves must be considered worthy of serious attention.

1, The trisūla bears a very strong resemblance to the ancient ideographs for the fire-stick, as given by Major Conder.

Hittite.



Cypriote.



Cuneiform.



If these be really all correct interpretations, which seems to be generally accepted, the Cypriote form would appear to have preserved the shape from which the others may have been developed.

2. We find in the *Ṣatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (1. 3. 3, vol. xii. p. 87, of Eggeling), that the priest, in dressing the altar for the sacrifice of the new moon, is to lay first in the centre of the altar the wood of the sacred fire (Agni). Round this he is to place three inclosing sticks (paridhis) in the form of a triangle. The mystic interpretation given for this is that those three sticks, representing the three former Agnis, are to protect the new Agni from the thunderbolt (§ 14, p. 88). These three former Agnis are (§ 17, p. 89) the Lord of the Earth, the Lord of the World, and the Lord of Beings. I have tried to show in my paper in this Journal that these really mean the Mother-earth, the Father-god, and the Moon-god. Then the priest is to use a samidh (kindling-stick) to set light to the basis of the triangle; and

then he is to lay the kindling-stick (still traversing the basis) across the wood which is to form the new fire. He will naturally lay it from the centre of the base to the apex. Now the base is to the west of the fire. We thus arrive at the following figure:



3. Now it is very odd that the ideograph or sign for woman in the very oldest Cuneiform inscription at Telloh, as shown in Armiand and Michenseau's *Tableau Comparée des Ecritures Babylonniennes et Assyriennes*, p. 65, is



which is the same shape as the figure formed by the mystic fire (without the central wood of the newer Agni), though it is turned in a different direction, unless the base towards which the middle stick points without touching is supposed to be facing the west.

4. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* itself actually interprets the altar, on which the figure given above has been laid, as a woman (*loc. cit.* vol. xii, p. 63), and Agni, in the centre, is regarded as the womb of the god (*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, Haug, ii. 51). In attempting to represent the opening of this womb for the mystic birth we should get by opening the triangle a symbol very much like the *Trisūla*, and still more like the symbols for the fire-stick above referred to.

5. In the ancient ideographs for 'altar': thus—

TELLOH.



HITTITE.



we have four signs which have not yet been explained. Can they have anything to do with the four Agnis? Those in the Telloh sign seem really to stand for four flames rising from the altar. But in the Hittite sign a flame or smoke seems to rise from the corner of the altar from four fires burning within the altar, while the cross on the Telloh altar would also seem to represent in its four arms four fires or fire-gods.

The whole inquiry shows the historical value of these very ancient symbols. When letters were unknown, and when, even after the discovery of alphabets, writing materials were difficult to procure and preserve, thinkers who wished to preserve their ideas, and priests who were anxious to secure the permanence of a correct ritual, were obliged to use forms easily depicted and remembered. Symbols were invented for this purpose, and were not only the precursors of alphabets, but were used even after alphabets had been invented, as in the Akkadian ideographs (Sayce, Hibbert Lectures for 1887, p. 3). By the use of symbols long trains of reasoning could be conveyed in signs easily drawn and easily remembered. Sacred numbers and myths were also adopted as guides to the memory for similar reasons to those which led to the employment of symbols, only that in myths the pleasure arising from a told story added a charm to the symbolical representation. It was the business of teachers to show the inner meaning underlying all these fossilized truths, and hence arose the exoteric or popular and esoteric or scientific lectures of which we read in the history of philosophy.

J. F. HEWITT.

The Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society.

3. MĀDHAVA AND SĀYAṆA.

The following correspondence appeared in the 'Academy' of the 8th and the 15th March, 1890.

Elphinstone College, Bombay, Jan. 30, 1890.

SIR,—The relation between Sāyaṇa, author of the great commentary on the Rigveda, and Mādhava, to whom the work is dedicated, and who is apparently credited with the authorship in the introductory verses, has been matter of controversy. The late Dr. Burnell was the author of an ingenious theory, according to which Sāyaṇa and Mādhava were only two names for one and the same person. I cannot now refer to Dr. Burnell's book (his edition of the *Vaṅśa-brāhmaṇa*, 1873), but quote Prof. Weber, *Indian Literature* (p. 42, note). "Sāyaṇa," Burnell says, "is the *bhoganātha*