

VASUDEVA OF PANINI IV, iii, 98

On pp. 502 ff. of JRAS. for 1908 the late Professor Kielhorn maintained that the reading *saṁjñaiṣā tatra bhagavataḥ* of Patañjali, referring to the Vāsudēva of the above-mentioned *sūtra*, is a false reading for *saṁjñaiṣā tatrābhavataḥ*, and that Patañjali therefore implies that here the word "Vāsudēva" is merely an ordinary proper name, and is not the name of a god.

The point is of considerable importance for the religious history of India, as, if the *sūtra* does not refer to Vāsudēva as a god, we lose one of the few certain pieces of evidence that we possess as to the age of the worship of the god Vāsudēva and as to the antiquity of the Bhāgavata religion.

In spite of any hesitation aroused by the reading of Patañjali, all doubts are put to rest by the *Kāśīkā*. In its commentary on the *sūtra* this work raises the question as to why Vāsudēva is mentioned at all, when, Vāsudēva being a Kṣatriya, he is provided for by the next *sūtra* (IV, iii, 99), which lays down that the syllable *ka* should be added to the names of famous Kṣatriyas when it is intended to imply that they are an object of veneration. The author replies that this is not the case in IV, iii, 98. Here "Vāsudēva" is not the name of a famous Kṣatriya, but is the name of a certain god (*saṁjñaiṣā dēvatā-viśēṣasya na kṣattriyākhyā*). He goes on to point out that by the ordinary rule "Arjuna", as the shorter word, should have preceded "Vāsudēva" in the *sūtra*. But here the rule is not followed, because the putting "Vāsudēva" first indicates that he is an object of reverence (*abhyarhita*).

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July 20, 1909.