

Peng Shaohui

Shanxi Normal University

China

An Analysis of the Metamorphosis Plots of Indian Mythology

Metamorphosis refers to the transformation between humans and animals, plants as well as inanimate objects. Metamorphosis plots can be found in the myths of all nations all over the world, and Indian myths are no exception. Metamorphosis plots in ancient Indian mythology can be classified into three categories: general transformations, gods' incarnations and reincarnation. General transformations are the most common metamorphosis in mythology. Whether it is a god, a human or a monster, it can metamorphose into other forms. The gods' incarnations are numerous in Indian mythology. Three major gods have repeatedly come down to maintain the order of world. The reincarnation theory is a special product of Indian metamorphosis. The causes of these three kinds of the metamorphoses are different, but they are closely related. Firstly, the original thoughts of the primitives are the fundamental reason, and they thought that there is no clear boundary between man and other natural things. This thought has developed into a philosophical concept of "Brahmatmaikyam", which is not only an important cause of gods' incarnations, but also created the strong tolerance and vitality of Indian culture. Secondly, the primitive view regards soul as the essence of life. By entering the reincarnation cycle, old lives come into new bodies and realize the metamorphosis. The reincarnation of soul developed into a reincarnation system in Indian culture. Both reasons are based on universal primitive thoughts, but after the development and creation of the Indian, they were tagged by Indian cultural characteristics and so distinguished from other nations' systems; at the same time, metamorphosis has become a mythological method for Indians to bridge the gap between its own culture and other cultures and to construct a cultural community.