

## THE PATRON-GODS OF HEALTH AND OF LONGEVITY, CHINESE, GREEK AND INDIAN

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### ABSTRACT

Man needed health as individual but power of reproduction to maintain his race. The early man used single plants to cure his complaints. Thus arose herbalism. To increase his reproductive power he preferred a mixture of drugs. Thus we find two patron gods in all important systems of medicine.

There were two theories: like makes like and Blood=Soul, and Redness is its active principle. In China gold was believed to make the body everlasting. Peach, which is red at the core, became the drug of longevity. Shou - Hshing, the god of longevity, emerges from the Peach. But peach cannot keep long. Then to preserve the body as everlasting, gold would be the drug, and to obtain longevity it would be red cinnabar. But the ideal drug of immortality must represent unity. What is one cannot be separated so that with it body and soul would combine into unity. For it the drug would be, when gold becomes red like cinnabar or cinnabar becomes heat-resistant like gold. The Chinese took gold granules and rubbed them with the juice of a herb of longevity. The resultant was red colloidal gold, in Chinese Chin-I. gold-cum-plant juice. In Fukin dialect Chin-I=Kim-lya. The pre-Islamic Arabs bringing silk for Alexandria learnt of this drug whence Kim-lya=Al-Kimiya; hence the word Alchemy. If herbalism had Shou-Hshing as the patron god, synthetic colloidal gold, or Kim-lya, had Tsao-Chün, as god, the god of furnace. But Chin-I was only brick red. Then they took sulphur, mercury and a little gold and sublimed them. The result was blood-red vermilion with traces of gold. It was called Chin-Tan, gold-cum-cinnabar. It entered Indian medicine as Makardhwaja.

Blood gives two fractions, a volatile vapour which became a bird, later bird-god. The main fraction went underground and became a snake, later snake-god. The Greeks had their snake god Asclepius who was god of herbalism. The pastoral Greeks wanted greater reproduction among their flocks. Herm means an erect stone, a symbol of phallus.

Hermes became phallus god. His symbol is a pair of snakes undergoing reproduction. Asclepius has as his symbol one snake, Hermes has two, which are pairing. Among the Aryans Soma was the god of herbalism curing diseases. Shiva, the Indian counterpart of Hermes. In Chinese we have Shou-Hshing and Tsao-Chün, in Greece Asclepius and Hermes, and in India Soma and Shiva. Shiva is the patron god of alchemy.

## I

The ancient man believed that life came from heaven and with it also health, life's main quality. Likewise knowledge pertaining to health also had the same source. In ancient Mesopotamia, where agriculture began and with it civilization, there were conceived as their respective emblems, Tree of life and Tree of knowledge. Now a drug which was used to preserve health was expected to preserve life and, if this was extended, it would rejuvenate the aged, for the aged as such, could not live very long. Such ideas are to be found in Old Testament. Genesis III : 22 says that "now man takes the fruit of Tree of life (and) will go on living for ever". As there must be rejuvenation to achieve longevity we read in Psalms, 103 : 5 that, "your strength is made new again like the eagle's". Here rejuvenation is implied which however is clearly expressed in Job, 33 : 25 stating that, "his flesh becomes young again and he comes back to the days of his early strength". We realize now that rejuvenation implies longevity. It is to be noted that, Genesis speaks specially of the Fruit-of-longevity and not of a herb. For better appreciation of what follows it may be mentioned, already here, that the fruit of longevity was the pomegranate, due to its red seeds, and its tree was the tree of life. Earlier still the tree of life was the Datepalm. A separate communication

is due to appear on the pomegranate tree as the tree of life. At any rate we have as the same agency one that preserves life and also confers rejuvenation.

We now turn to China. Here there were ascetics or old men, unable to exert and partake in hunting or even in pastoral life, when they became burden upon bread earners. They were excommunicated to get rid of social parasites. Now began solitary life in a forest when the ascetic needed, in the first instance, a drug to acquire physical strength. He came to select ephedra. He was attracted to it by its red fruits. These are edible and a hearty meal upon them proved energizing due to their ephedrine content. There are drugs which do promote physical strength. One such medicinal plant would be the herb of cocain, used by Red Indians of South America working in mines Khat, or *Catha edulis*, would be another employed by the labourers of Yemen who thereby perform prodigies of strength. Ephedra was also used by Aryans who drank its juice thrice a day to remain indefatigable hunters. We can now imagine how the Chinese ascetic must have also 'lived' upon it. Ephedra then was to impart strength and preserve health. Nevertheless there was also to be a drug to assure longevity of life. What then was to be such an agency. It is obvious that an entity rich in soul-content, in fact as soul-concentrate, when

assimilated, would enrich the stock of soul of its consumer and prolong life. Now blood was accepted as soul and redness as active principle or soul-concentrate so that a red substance became carrier of soul and a donor of life-essence. Here came peach as a fruit of life being blood red at the core. Peach then became the donor of longevity so much so that Shou-Hshing, the Chinese god of longevity, emerges from the Peach. We must now admit that with the recognition of Shou-Hshing there was established a regular cult of longevity. In fact there were two distinct means of acquiring longevity, by the breathing exercises of Taoism, similar to the Yoga system of India, and the other of herbalism, where peach became the most important agency. That the Yoga system primarily aims at longevity is not generally known and may be briefly indicated. Basham (1963; 329) informs that 'there is no doubt that the Yogi (ascetic) can remain healthy on a starvation diet which would ruin the system of an ordinary man and he can often survive to a very advanced old age with full use of his faculties'. Thus living in a forest the ascetic had to live with minimum of nourishment and he took to Taoism or the Chinese Yoga system and also sought drugs of longevity among others peach. Thus with asceticism came emphasis on each of these means of prolonging life, by breathing exercises and by drugs of longevity. The ultimate

test of life is longevity so that drugs of longevity were given preference to those that cure ailments and accounts how Shou-Hshing came to be god-of-longevity more than that of health.

Now vegetable substances have this limitation that they decay in a short time. Hence Ko-Hung, the Chinese alchemist, translated by Feifel, (1944;6) says that "cinnabar is superior to the best herb drugs. Vegetable substances will at once turn completely to ashes when burnt. It is quite different from vegetables and thus it enables man to enjoy longevity". Then on the theory that like makes like jade was powdered and taken orally to make the human body stone-hard. It was later superseded by gold which is fire-proof. Turning to agencies for prolonging life there was red-ochre as one of the earliest drugs that man used. Finally came cinnabar which is blood red hence, Cinnabar= Blood= Soul. Briefly stated gold replaced ephedra as donor of strength and health and cinnabar replaced peach as donor of longevity and rejuvenation. Vegetable drugs thus gave in to inorganic substances. Using gold and cinnabar, as two separate substances, there would result a third but easily separable into its parts. On the contrary if gold and cinnabar were to become one substance, what is one, would be inseparable and everlasting. Such a drug would make the consumer's body and soul also

inseparable and the individual must become immortal and remain eternally young. To fuse gold and cinnabar, as one substance became the object with which alchemy started. Either cinnabar had to become fire-proof, like gold, or gold to become red, like cinnabar. Attempts to fuse cinnabar with gold proved futile for cinnabar is sublimable and was easily lost. Then was left the other alternative of turning yellow into red gold. Granules of gold were rubbed with an extract of a vegetable drug of longevity when the final product became red colloidal gold as explained before (1972). According to its make-up it was gold-cum-plant juice. Accordingly the drug was named Chin-I. In Chinese, Chin = Gold and I or Yeh = Plant juice. Hence the resultant was aptly called chin-I, or Gold-cum-plant juice. In Fukin dialect it was pronounced Kim-tya which pre-Islamic Arabs acquired while importing Chinese silk for the Alexandrian market and Arabized it as Kimiya. It means that the first synthetic drug that man made was Chin-I, or Kimiya, Red colloidal gold and it was the first product of alchemy.

We have now to consider human nature as anxious to produce drugs not only technically successfully but also therapeutically effective. The alchemist looked upto Heaven for some god to bless his undertakings. While herbal drugs were selected there was Shou-Hshing, the god of

longevity, so that when mercurials were synthesized it required a special god to bless the man-made drugs. Here came Tsao-Chün, the god of furnance. Mathews (1975) gives as character 6731, Tsao = Furnance and 1715, Chün = Chief, Ruler. Thus Tsao-Chün God of Furnace. We now understand that herbalism had Shou-Hshing and alchemy, Tsao-Chün, one god to preserve the body, the other to rejuvenate and to prolong life.

## II

We may now consider Greek alchemy. There was herbalism before to treat human ailments. Greeks as hunters suffered most from injuries when wounds were the most common trouble. Then drugs were largely required to heal wounds and herbalism became the system of treatment with its patron-god Sclepius, the god-of-healing. We are now to explain what was believed to be the curing principle when herbalism was the system of treatment. The earliest idea of soul was that of breath. Next came blood as soul. This revealed two fractions, one as volatile vapours which rose up to heaven and the other was the main fluid which was red and sank into the earth below. The volatile fraction became bird and the terrestrial fraction snake. These being sanctified there arose a bird-god and a snake god. Sclepius then was a snake-god a terrestrial deity.

In fact the name Sclepius signifies snake. Here we know further that in many a Greek temple a serpent was kept and worshipped. It meant a god, incorporating soul, would be able to donate a quantum of soul which would put new life into the system of the worshipper, be it to gain health or even prosperity. Worship meant soul-worship and the echo of a prayer came as a quantum of soul. Thus Sclepius, a sage, was deified as god and then, as snake-god, whose emblem accordingly became serpent which incorporated soul. To depict such an emblem the serpent was shown coiled round a staff. He could then be easily carried and presented to any assembly of its worshippers. This was the proper advice where in the staff was merely the inert carrier of the snake. Those who could not identify the serpent as soul-incorporate were inclined to assign some significance even to the staff. I believe Schouten (1967) the Dutch author of an excellent book on Sclepius, does not interpret the serpent as soul-incorporate. *Fig. 1* is taken from Merit Students Encyclopedia (1980) showing Sclepius as a young man with a single snake coiled around a staff. Here Sclepius is a god and gods are immortal who are always young. His emblem is a single serpent wrongly identified as Cadaceus. This emblem belongs to Hermes and is traceable to ancient Mesopotamia where there was snake-god Ningiszida, Frankfort 1939; 71) speaks of

'Cadaceus and snake-coil as representations of the god of fertility. In its original form Ningiszida was a pair of intertwined copulating vipers'. Ningiszida was a god and his later emblem has been offered by him as *Fig. 33*, on p. 119, reproduced here as *Fig. 4*. Sclepius had a single serpent while Hermes two and then in the act of reproduction. Generating fertility or fecundity animals of pastoral people would multiply. Sclepius was the god of hunters and a god that heals, while Hermes was the god of pastoral people and one who had to promote reproductivity among domestic animals. *Fig. 1*, which shows a single serpent, is wrongly identified as Cadaceus. Whereas Sclepius is depicted as god and as a young man in *Fig. 1*. Sclepius, as sage, and a veteran in the art of healing, is depicted as an old man in *Fig. 2* which comes from Schouten. Here the serpent is seen coiled around a torch which is source of illumination and becomes the symbol of source of knowledge. Thus the symbol as a whole would be torch-cum-serpent, thereby of knowledge of healing and soul-incorporate, as serpent, the agency of healing. Literature does not explain how Asclepius is depicted sometimes as a young man and others aged. As young he is a god, as old he is a sage. *Figs. 1* and *2* illustrate each of them. Then by now we can say that Shou-Hshing was god of herbalism in China while Asclepius that of

Greece. Shou-Hshing was called god of longevity but not that of rejuvenation at the same time. Asclepius again was only the god-of-health, not of rejuvenation.

The situation improved when alchemy entered Alexandria, which at that time was the main centre of Greek Civilization. Alchemy had two names in Greek, Chemeia and Chumeia. It has recently been explained (1984), supported by previous articles that both these names are loan words in Greek. Chemeia is the Chinese term Kim-lya, Gold-cum-plant juice or gold-making-juice in gold as vehicle, while Chumeia is the best translation of the Indian name Rasayana which signifies, plant-juice-incorporate. Each system, Alchemy and Rasayana, was invented by the ascetic and aimed at rejuvenation which alone would best assure longevity. It appears necessary to explain this emphasis on rejuvenation as actually aimed while instituting the systems Alchemy and Rasayana. As pertaining to Alchemy its main claim continued to be recognized even during the Medieval Ages. The famous English alchemist, John Dustin (quoted by Holmyard, 1957), tried to defend alchemy when it became unpopular due to use of mercurials which are poisonous. He found an occasion to write to Pope John XXII, about 1320 A.D. that, "according to the tradition of all philosophers alchemy makes an old man young

and drive out all sickness of the body". Thus rejuvenation was clearly confirmed as an aim of alchemy. Identical was the case with Rasayana. Alberuni (translated by Sachau, 1888; 1:188), observes that "the Hindus have a science similar to alchemy, called Rasayana. It means drugs mostly taken from plants. Its principles restore health of those who were ill beyond hope and gave back youth to fading old age so that it restored juvenile agility and even the power of cohabitation",-the extract is condensed. Thus what Dustin speaks of alchemy and what Alberuni observed of Rasayana identify the two as each assuring longevity. When such systems of rejuvenation were adopted and duly Hellenized they had to be blessed by some god.

Obviously Asclepius was not a suitable god. Instead came Hermes who was the god of pastoral Greeks. The shepherd and herdsman had to see that their animals breed profusely, hence the emblem of a god of fecundity became phallus. Since Hermes was already a god-of-fecundity, in fact a phallus-god, he was the one most appropriate to become the patron-god of alchemy, aiming at rejuvenation and reviving the powers of fecundity. This at once explains how his emblem, the Caduceus, depicts the phenomenon of reproduction among serpents. Thus we find Hermes, as Phallus-god, had Caduceus as his emblem. Literature shows

many variants of Caduceus. This emblem as promoting longevity best befits medicine. A medical man can not always restore health but in almost all cases he is able to prolong the life of the patient. Hence he prefers an emblem of longevity rather than that of health, which means he prefers Caduceus of Hermes to the single serpent of Asclepius, the god of health. In as much as health and longevity are close to each other as concepts the emblems of Asclepius, the god of health is often unwittingly—identified with the emblem Caduceus, actually that of Hermes, the god of longevity-cum-rejuvenation. *Fig. 3* represents Caduceus and is taken from Schouten, who explains it as having been designed by Hans Holbein and given by Froben in 1551 A.D., *Fig. 3*, further shows bird as soul, the volatile fraction of blood explained already. The two serpents are again soul-gods and their union means fecundity leading to rejuvenation and thereby to longevity. What then would be more welcomed to a physician than for him to see that the life of his patient is prolonged in any case, even if health can not be restored. Thus Caduceus of Hermes, which shows two serpents pairing, came to be preferred to a single serpent, coiled around a staff, belonging to Asclepius. Caduceus however is a Hellenized version of the emblem of Ningiszida, *fig. 4* taken from Frankfort. Here again are two serpents and then coupling, the main

feature also of *fig. 3*. We then find that just as there were two gods in Chinese cult of longevity, one of herbalism, as Shou-Hshing, and another of alchemy, as Tsao-Chün, there were in Greece medicine Asclepius, the god-of-health, followed by Hermes, as god-of-fecundity, in charge of alchemy.

### III

We finally turn to India. Max Muller has shown that when we try to trace the evolution of a god, a source which enables us to follow its stage-wise development would only be vedic Literature. He could start with the kitchen fire of Aryan nomads and show a stepwise progress culminating in Agni as fire-god. The same was not done with Soma because the plant could not be identified at the time. I had to take some twenty years to be able to do some justice to problem of the development of ephedra finally deified as god Soma. Its ephedrine made the Aryan hunters indefatigable. Hence soma supplied a drink which proved to be an energizer-cum-euphoriant. It was consumed thrice a day unlike any intoxicant or hallucinogen. It compares with tea or coffee rather than with alcohol. In the absence of knowledge of other drugs, Soma became panacea. It could "rejuvenate" the middle aged who, if reluctant to remain active, would be considered a burden and exiled as ascetic. To him it proved a

drug of rejuvenation-cum-longevity. The idea of longevity when projected became that of immortality and Soma became a drink of immortality and an agency of resurrection. The plant was also interred with the dead to expedite resurrection. Its evolution then shows all the intermediate stages with its juice Rasa as the active principle. In India there was no ephedra but the ascetics needed a drug of longevity. Then other vegetable drugs were compounded to confer rejuvenation in the first instance and this would naturally prolong life as well. These drugs were called Rasayana but the word also designated the art of rejuvenation. By its claims it became popular and explains how it could be welcomed even in Alexandria. What requires to be remembered is that the god of medicine upto the stage when Rasayana system was instituted, remained Soma or as long as there was herbalism. Even Rasayana drugs were originally of vegetable origin. We have already learnt how Alberuni correctly interpreted Rasayana as a system of rejuvenation recalling the powers of fecundity. Hence there was to be a god associated with fecundity. Shiva was a god of pastoral people in India, long before Aryans entered it. Such a god had to promote fecundity which would multiply animals as the possession of pastoral people. Here again soul would be the active principle but as Soul-Reproductive, which took the

incarnation of a snake-god at the same as phallus-god. Then he came as patron of alchemy, which primarily prepared mercurial drugs, a classic on Indian alchemy, Rasaratnasamuchchaya of about 1300 A.D. requires the alchemist, to quoted by Sir P. C. Ray (1903), to make an amalgum of gold and mercury and shape it into a phallus being the emblem of Shiva and this Phallus is to be worshipped in due form "- text slightly modified, p. 115. We realize that a phallus of mercury meant, the emblem of the science of which Shiva was the patron, and "the science of mercury was communicated by Shiva himself". p. 116.

Ordinarily Shiva would be worshipped as a phallus shaped stone. This could be the exact counterpart of Herm, a stone placed erect as symbol of phallus. Here again we find Shiva = Hermes. Now the alchemist aiming at rejuvenation and fecundity, handled mercury to prepare an aphorodisiac, so that correspondingly it required to worhsip a phallus god when the symbol of phallus in the case of alchemist was made of gold-plus-mercury. These two substances in fact meant gold and cinnabar, the simples used before alchemy and which alchemy finally compounded as Chin-Tan, or cinnabar-gold, or Makaradhwaja in Indian medicine. What has to be emphasized is that the drugs of longevity had to be blessed by a patron god to



enhance faith-cure essential to make them acceptable by the consumer.

IV

With the progress of alchemy, the use of mercurial drugs became most popular as aphrodisiacs for which there seems to be a craze the world over. It explains how in India alchemy came to acquire Shiva as its Patron-god and Hermes that of alchemy at Alexandria. We have now to show that both Shiva and Hermes had been gods with pastoral people and each was a phallus-god. The New Encyclopedia Britannica (1974 : 1047) informs that "Herm is a sacred object of stone connected with the cult of Hermes, the fertility god. Pillars were usually surrounded by the head of Hermes and had a phallus". Jung (1953) in his book, on psychology and Alchemy reproduces a painting on a Greek Vase, where Hermes is depicted with an erect male organ and the pillar also carries on one side the symbol Caduceus, as male and female snakes pairing. Thus a

phallus-god could not be depicted better. The ancient thinker wanted something concrete which, when projected, became abstract and can then appeal as reality. In the absence of a basic concept as something concrete no abstract idea could signify a reality. Creation as something abstract had then to be taken to the act of reproduction and this to the generative organs. Thus phallus became the emblem of creative power. There was nothing profane in deifying phallus. If an insignificant plant of a desert can be deified as god Soma, phallus as an important member of the human system is more worthy of deification. We are bound to accept both a plant-god Soma and a phallus-god Shiva. Shiva is a non-Aryan deity not mentioned as god in Rigveda. But Rigveda does recognize some non-Aryan people as worshipping phallus. Thus, finally we have in India Soma as the god of herbalism and Shiva as the god of alchemy. To summarize there is the following table :

	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>India</i>
God of herbalism	Shou-Hshing (God of longevity)	Asclepius (Snake-god)	Soma (Plant-god)
God of alchemy	Tsao-Chiin (God of furnace)	Hermes (Phallus-god)	God Shiva (Phallus-god)

**S u m m a r y :-**

The ancient man as hunter was troubled mostly by wounds, and treated himself with herbs. Herbalism became the first system of medical art. Love of life induced him to

believe that even the infirmities of old age can be treated when man becomes young and can live for ever. Thus health and longevity both could be achieved by herbalism. In China there was asceticism when the aged

was exiled as solitary denizen of a forest. He was now forced to acquire strength to be able to collect food stuffs from a forest. He believed in two theories, one being like makes like. Accordingly he powdered jade and took it orally to make his body stone-hard. Later he consumed gold which is fire proof whence his body would become everlasting.

The other theory was that Blood = Soul and Redness its active principle so that Redness was soul-concentrate. Peach was blood red at the core and became the drug of longevity and from it emerged Shou-Hshing, the god of longevity. A cult of longevity was thus duly established. In as much as life came from heaven so did health and likewise knowledge - pertaining to health and longevity. Thus the knowledge of drugs was also inspired by gods so that they had to be patron-gods to offer blessings upon his undertaking. Moreover a drug as gift of god would instil faith-cure and thereby enhance its curative property. This explains how systems of medicine had patron-gods. The Chinese ascetic admitted that redness was the curative agent but peach was liable to putrify. On the contrary cinnabar was not only blood-red but also heat-resistant. Its storage life far exceeded that of peach. Then retaining gold to strengthen the body cinnabar was selected to increase the life-span. The use of gold and cinnabar thus

preceded the foundation of alchemy as its antecedent. Now cinnabar can become fire-proof like gold or gold red like cinnabar, what is one would be indissoluble and such a drug would unite body and soul into an inseparable unity whence man must become immortal. This was the theory with which alchemy started.

Then if god of health and longevity was Shou-Hshing, the patron of herbalism, the god of rejuvenation and virility became Tsao-Chün, god of furnace, patron of synthetic drugs made by the use of fire. Thus there were two gods, Shou-Hshing of herbalism, while Tsao-Chün of alchemy, one of health, the other of rejuvenation-cum-longevity. In Greek medicine there was Asclepius, a snake-god, as the god of herbalism and Hermes was the god of fecundity whom the pastoral people worshipped to see that their animals multiplied profusely. Reproductivity then had its own symbol as snakes pairing which was called Caduceus revealing fecundity signifying creative power. It could then donate longevity which is more than conferring healing. All diseases can not be cured but in most cases life of the patient can be prolonged. Thus the appropriate symbol selected was that of longevity rather than of healing which was Caduceus, represented as two serpents in the act of reproduction, generating continuity of life, while Asclepius had for his emblem a single serpent pro-

moting health and merely preserving life. Alchemy claiming rejuvenation in the first instance adopted Hermes as its patron-god. Thus in Greek culture there was Asclepius a snake god as god of health and Hermes a phallus-god as god of longevity. Asclepius corresponded to Shou-Hshing and Hermes to Tsao-Chün.

In Indian medicine there was herbalism with Soma as plant-god. Later arose herbal drugs of rejuvenation called Rasayana. Later came

mercurials with longer storage life and were more effective. They were also aphrodisiacs enhancing fecundity. Now the pastoral people of pre-Aryan India had a god of fecundity as Shiva. Thus in Indian medicine there was Soma, the plant god of herbalism and Shiva, the phallus-god of alchemy. We finally have as equivalents two gods each, chinese as Shou-Hshing and Tsao-Chün, Greek as Asclepins and Hermes and Indian as Soma and Shiva.

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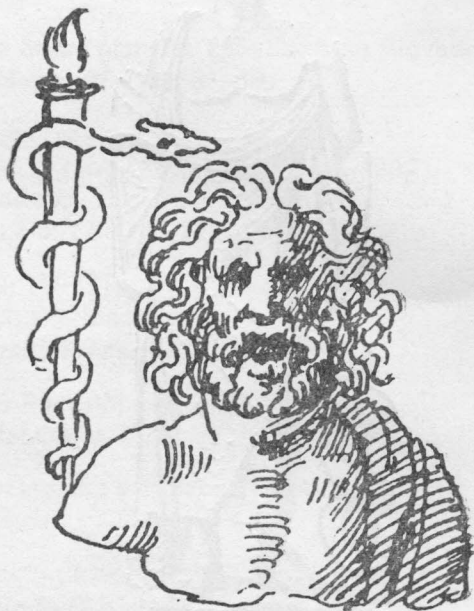
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"A statue of Asclepius, showing the god with his symbolic caduceus. The statue can be seen in the Vatican Museum in Rome."

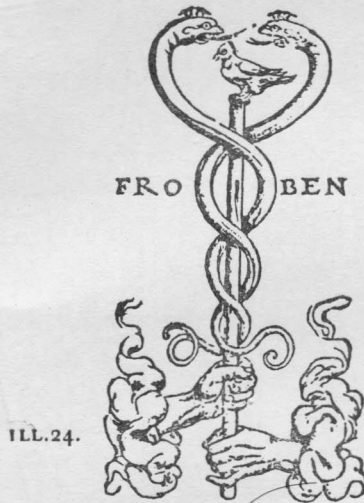
Asclepius as god, with serpent as emblem. He is god of health and of herbalism. As god he is depicted as a Young man. It is taken from Merit Students Encyclopedia (1980).

Fig. 1.



Asclepius as sage. Serpent is coiled around a torch, the source of illumination, here as emblem of learning. As sage he is old being treasure of knowledge. It is taken from Schouten (1967).

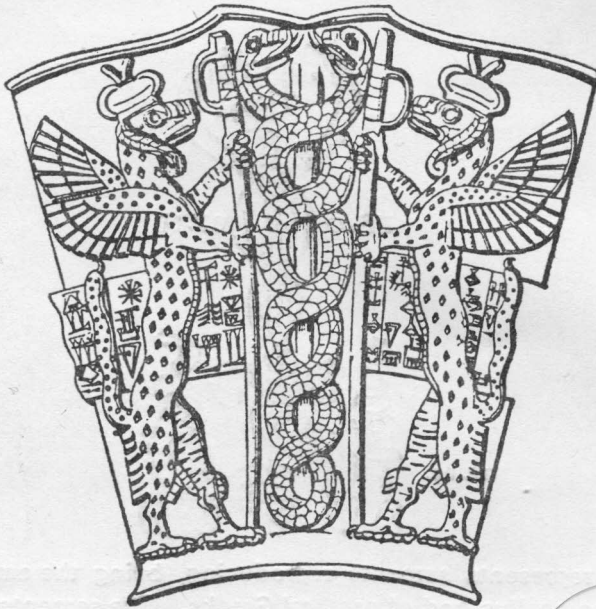
Fig. 2.



Caduceus represents serpents reproducing, being the emblem of Hermes, the phallus-god of pastoral Greeks. The serpents symbolize opposite souls which, by their union, generate life-force to promote longevity. As such it becomes the emblem of medical profession. It comes from Schouten. (1967).

Fig. 3.





Text-fig. 33. Design on a vase dedicated by  
Gudea of Lagash to Ningiszida.

Emblem of Ningiszida, the snake-god of ancient Mesopotamia, as snakes copulating and generating soul-reproductive as life-force. From Frankfort (1939).

Fig. 4.



सारांश

## स्वास्थ्य एवं दीर्घायु संरक्षक देवता—चीनी, यूनानी तथा भारतीय

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मानव को स्वयं अपने लिये स्वास्थ्य की आवश्यकता थी और अपनी जाति के क्रम को आगे चलाने के लिये प्रजनन शक्ति की। आदि पुरुष अपने रोगों के निवारण के लिये एकाकी वनस्पतियों का प्रयोग करता था। जिस से वानस्पतिक चिकित्सा शास्त्र का प्रादुर्भाव हुआ। अपनी प्रजनन शक्ति में वृद्धि हेतु उसने एकाकी औषधियों के स्थान पर उनके समिश्रण से प्राप्त यौगिक को प्राधान्ता दी। अतः हमको सभी प्रमुख चिकित्सा पद्धतियों में दो संरक्षक देवता मिलते हैं।

पहले दो सिद्धान्त प्रचलित थे—सामान्य से वृद्धि और रक्त=आत्मा और रक्तवर्ण इसका क्रीयाशील तत्त्व माना जाता था। चीनी लोगों की यह धारणा थी कि स्वर्ण धातु से शरीर चिरस्थायी बनजाता है। आरूक (आडू या शफतालु) जो भीतर से रक्तवर्ण का होता है दीर्घायु कारक द्रव्य होता है। दीर्घायु के संरक्षक देवता शाव-शिग का उद्गम आरूक से हुआ। किन्तु आरूक को अधिक समय तक रखना सम्भव नहीं। अतः शरीर को चिरस्थायी बनाने हेतु उसके संरक्षणार्थ स्वर्ण उपयोगी द्रव्य होना चाहिये तथा दीर्घायु प्राप्ति के लिये हिंगुल, जो कि स्वभावतः रक्तवर्ण का है। किन्तु अमरत्व प्राप्ति के लिये उत्तम द्रव्य इन दोनों का यौगिक होगा। जिसका कि विघटन असम्भव हो तो ऐसे इस द्रव्य के सेवन से शरीर व आत्मा परस्पर मिलकर एकीभूत होजायेंगे। इस उद्देश्य की पूर्ति के लिये उपयुक्त द्रव्य तब होगा जब स्वर्ण का वर्ण हिंगुल जैसा रक्त होजाये या हिंगुल, स्वर्ण धातु की भाँति अग्निस्थायी बनजाये। चीनियों ने स्वर्ण का जीवनीय वनस्पति के स्वरस के साथ मर्दन किया। जिस से रक्तवर्ण युक्त मर्दित स्वर्ण प्राप्त हुआ, जिसको चीनी भाषा में चिन-आई, वनस्पति स्वरस युक्त स्वर्ण कहते हैं। फूकिन बोली में चिन-आई=किम-ईया

होता है। इस्लाम पूर्व के अरबों को अस्कन्दरिया के लिये रेशमी कपड़ा लाने के दौरान इस औषध का पता चला जिसके बाद किम-ईया = अल कीमिया तथा इस से अलखेमी शब्द बना। यदि वनस्पतिक चिकित्सा शास्त्र का प्रतीक देवता शाव-शिग था तो कृत्रिम विधि से निर्मित इस मर्दित स्वर्ण या किम-ईया का प्रतीक देवता ताव-चुन, भट्टी का देवता था। किन्तु चिन-आई का वर्ण केवल ईट जैसा रक्ताभ था। अतः गन्धक पारद तथा थोड़ी मात्रा में स्वर्ण लेकर अग्निपाक द्वारा इस मिश्रण को उड़ाकर थोड़ी मात्रा में स्वर्ण सहित रक्तवर्ण सिन्दूर प्राप्त किया गया। यह चिन-तान, स्वर्ण युक्त हिंगुल कहलाया। भारतीय चिकित्सा पद्धति में इसका समावेश मकरध्वज के नाम से हुआ।

रक्त के दो घटक होते हैं, उनमें से एक तत्त्व उड़नशील वाष्प होता है जो कि पक्षी बना और बाद में पक्षी देवता। शेष मुख्य घटक भूमिगत चला गया और सर्प बना और बाद में वही सर्पदेवता हुआ। यूनानियों का सर्प देवता एस्केपियस था, जो कि वनस्पतिक चिकित्सा शास्त्र का देवता था। ग्रामीण यूनानी अपने पशुओं के गल्लों में वृद्धि की इच्छा से उनमें प्रजनन प्रक्रिया बढ़ाना चाहते थे। हेर्म का अर्थ होता है एक खड़ा हुआ पत्थर, लिंग स्वरूप एक चिन्ह।

हेर्मस को लिंग देवता कहा गया। इसका प्रतीक चिन्ह प्रजनन प्रक्रिया में संलग्न दो सर्पों की जोड़ी है। एस्केपियस का प्रतीक चिन्ह एक सर्प है। आर्यों में वनस्पतिक चिकित्सा शास्त्र का देवता सोम था, जो व्याधियों का निवारण करता था। भारत में हेर्मस का प्रतिरूप शिव है। चीन में शाव-शिग तथा ताव-चुन, यूनान में एस्केपियस तथा हेर्मस एवं भारत में सोम तथा शिव। शिव को अलखेमी का संरक्षक देवता माना जाता है।