

# Meeting 33: Music in the Véda

Instruments, chants, & songs

Nikhil Surya Dwibhashyam

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# Why a Vēda discussion group?

- What is Vedic literature?
  - Sāmhitā-s
  - Brāhmaṇa-s
  - Others?
- Vēda-s vs. Vedānta, Upaniṣād-s, Purāṇá-s
  - Later monism (ádvāita) vs. earlier dualism
  - Moral–political subtexts
- Modern (religious, scholarly) fixation upon later literature

# What is there to discuss?

- History & linguistics
- Metaphysics of religion
- Exegesis (e.g. western vs. Eastern narratives)
- Moral principles
- Nuances of Śrāutá ritual
- How we can apply Vedic principles to our lives

# Our plans

- Weekly “general audience” meetings on Sundays at 1000 EST
  - Followed by in-depth literature meeting at 1130 EST
- Different topic/aspect/angle discussed every week
- Format:
  - Præsentation
  - Free-form discussion
- Eventually something more
  - Children's books
  - Poëtry collective
  - Documentation
  - Actual rituals

# WhatsApp group

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/IXCQEkhfrcwHI7CNY8Fgat>

# Let's introduce ourselves!

- Briefly!
- Name
- School (if student)
- How you found this group
- Background/interest in Hinduism & Vedic literature

## Some questions to consider

- What was the role of music in Vedic society?
- How was music used in the ritual?
- How did music evolve across the Vedic period?
- What basis might later Indian musical traditions have in the Véda?

# The whole ritual is music

- C<sup>h</sup>ándas
- Yáti
- Derivation from earlier meter
- Éka-ṣruti?



# Music as art

- Kauṣītaka-brāhmaṇa 22.5: Śilpa
  - Nṛtya
  - Gītā
  - Vāditā
- Vāṇīcī? RV 5.75.4

# Instruments in war

- Dundub<sup>h</sup>í: RV 1.28.5, 6.47.29, 6.47.31
- Bákura: RV 1.117.21
- Bákura: RV 9.1.8
- Also bekurā

# Instruments in ritual

- “Jaritṛ”
- Gárgara, god<sup>h</sup>á, píngā: RV 8.69.9
- KS 34.5 and accompanying ŚS: detailed description of Mahāvrata
  - Avag<sup>h</sup>aṭarikā
  - Ghāṭa-karkarī
  - Vāṇá/vāṇí
  - Alābu-vīṇā
  - Kāṇḍa-vīṇā
  - Picc<sup>h</sup>orā

# Civil music

- Āg<sup>h</sup>āṭī: RV 10.146.2, AV 4.37.4
- Musician as a profession, e.g. talavá (VS 30.20), āḍambarāg<sup>h</sup>ātá (VS 30.19), jyākārá (VS 30.7)
- Nīt<sup>h</sup>a: musical mode
- D<sup>h</sup>arma-śāstrá references

# Sāma-vedá

- Demonstration
- Notation
- Basis for later music?

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