

Meeting 2: Yóga, múnis, and orthodoxy

The Vedic predecessors of a classical tradition

Nikhil Surya Dwibhashyam, Rohan Pandey

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Meeting agenda

- (Re)introduction to discussion group
- Today's meeting topic
- Free discussion

Why a Véda discussion group?

- What is Vedic literature?
 - Sámhitā-s
 - Bráhmaṇa-s
 - Others?

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- Vēda-s vs. Vedānta & Upaniṣād-s
 - Later monism (ādvāita) vs. earlier dualism (dvāitā)
- Modern (religious, scholarly) fixation upon later literature

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- Modern (religious, scholarly) fixation upon later literature
- What is there to discuss?
 - History & linguistics
 - Metaphysics of religion
 - Exegesis (e.g. countering western narratives)
 - Moral principles
 - Nuances of Śrāutá ritual

Our plans

- Weekly meetings
- Different topic/aspect/angle discussed in depth every meeting
- Format:
 - Præsentations
 - Free-form discussions
- Eventually something more?

Let's introduce ourselves!

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

Some questions to consider

- What *is* Yóga exactly?
- What forerunners (if any) of what we know today as Yóga can be found in the Vedic religion?
 - To what extent were these forerunners already mainstream?
- To what extent is Yóga a uniquely post-Vedic or even Śramaṇá belief-system?
 - Can Yóga be synthesized with orthodox Vedic tradition?
- What biases in western Indology can be noticed from western analysis of Yóga?
- We'll return to these at the end!

What is Yóga?

- In the Véda-s:

yogá m. (MW)

- the act of yoking, joining, attaching, harnessing, putting to (of horses) (RV)
- a yoke, team, vehicle, conveyance (SB)
- employment, use, application, performance (RV)
- undertaking, business, work (RV, AV, TS)

What is Yóga?

- In the Véda-s:

yogá m. (Graßmann)

- das *Anschrren* des Zugthieres oder Wagens [G.]
- *Anschrung, Fahrt*
- bildlich: das *Anschrren* d. h. *zurüsten, in Thätigkeit setzen* mit G.
- *Unternehmung, Werk*
- mit *kṣéma*: *Arbeit* und *Ruhe*

What is Yóga?

- Etymology: nominal derivation
 - Accent: nōmen āctiōnis vs. agentis

√yuj (MW)

- to yoke or join or fasten or harness (horses or a chariot) (RV &c)
- to make ready, prepare, arrange, fit out, set to work, use, employ, apply (RV &c)
- to fix in, insert, inject (ŚB)
- to turn or direct or fix or concentrate (the mind, thoughts &c) upon (L.) (TS &c)
- to join, unite, connect, add, bring together (RV &c)
- to join one's self to (A.) (RV)

What is Yóga?

- Yóga as broadly understood in classical sense:
 - Discipline of the mind (cf. TS radical)
 - Origins in at least Kaṭ^ho-'paniśád (ca. Budd^há)
 - 1 of 6 Hindu dárṣana-s
 - Expounded in Yoga-sūtra-s of Patañjalí (ca. CE)
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 - Purely haṭ^ha-yóga: from $\sqrt{haṭ^h}$ "force"
 - Even more specifically: ása-na-s
 - Much more modern! Perhaps even Western construct?

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- Point is: all decidedly post-Vedic! or so it seems...

Origins of contemplative tradition

■ Famous creation hymn from ṚV:

N' āsad āsīn · n' ó sád āsīt tadānīm.
Ná 'sīd rájo · n' ó víomā paró yat.
Kīm á 'varīvaḥ? · Kúha? Kásya śárman?
Ámb^haḥ kīm āsīd · gáhanam gab^hīrám?

*The non-being was not, nor was the being then.
The sky was not, nor the heavens beyond it.
What moved it? Whither? In whose shelter?
Were there the waters impenetrable and deep?*

Iyám víśṣṭir · yáta ā bab^húva,
yádi vā dad^hé · yádi vā ná —,
yáv asy' ád^hy-akṣaḥ · paramé víoman,
sá aṅgá veda · yádi vā ná véda.

*He who was there from this creation,
whether he formed it or whether not,
the observer of this (world) in the highest heavens,
he indeed knows, or he knows not.*

—ṚV 10.129.1,7

■ (NB metrical lacuna.)

The Vedic muni-s: ṚV 10.136

- “Yoga and the Ṛg Veda: An Interpretation of the Keśin Hymn.”
 - Werner, K. *Religious Studies*, 1977, vol. 13, 3, pp. 289–302.
- Also written by Mányu! Chronology? Meter?

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Keśí Agnīm, keśí viśám,

keśí bibharti ródasī.

Keśí viśvaṁ súar dṛṣé.

Keśí 'dām jyótir ucyate.

Múnayo vāta-raṣanāḥ

piśāṅgā vasate mālā.

Vátasy' ānu d'hrájiṁ yanti,

yád deváso ávikṣata.

*The long-haired (bears) Agní, the long-haired
(bears) the waters,*

the long-haired bears the Heavens and Earth.

*The long-haired is all the light to see,
the long-haired is called this light.*

The muni-s, with wind for reins,

wear (clothes) soiled tawny.

*They follow the wind's motion
where the gods have entered.*

The Vedic mûni-s: RV 10.136

Únmaditā māúneyena
vâtā á tast^himā vayám.
Śárīr' éd asmākaṁ yūyám
mártāso abhí paṣyat^ha.

Antárikṣeṇa patati
viśvā rūpā 'vacákaṣat.
Múnir devásya–devasya
sāúkr̥tyāya sák^hā hitāḥ.

Vátasy' áṣvo vāyóḥ sák^hā
at^h' o devé-'ṣito múnīḥ.
Ub^hāú samudráv á kṣeti
yáṣ ca púrva ut' áparaḥ.

*Enraptured by mûni-ness
we have mounted the winds.
Our bodies indeed, O ye
mortals, look upon.*

*He flies in the air,
beholding every form.
The mûni is of every god
made the friend for good work.*

*The wind's steed, Vāyú's friend,
is the god-moved mûni.
He inhabits both the oceans
the eastern and the western alike.*

The Vedic muni-s: RV 10.136

Apsarásāṁ Gand^harváṇām
mṛgáṇāṁ cáraṇe cáran
keṣí kétasya viduán
sák^hā svādúr madíntamaḥ.

Vāyúr asmā úp' āman^hat.
Pináṣṭi smā kunannamā
keṣí viśásya pátreṇa
yád Rudrén' ápibat sahá.

*The Apsarás-es', Gand^harvá-s'
and beasts' path following,
the long-haired, knowing the will,
is a friend sweet and most delightful.*

*Vāyú has mixed (the drink) for him.
He pounds the inflexible
when the long-haired has drunk water
from the cup with Rudrá.*

What is Yóga?

- Werner: “The *keśins* as well as the *śramaṇas* were not dissenters from the orthodox religion, but rather the representative of a different tradition.”
 - But what evidence is there for either position?
 - None, in my opinion
- Common pitfall in (especially western) Indology: contradiction vs. synthesis
- See also: the Vrátya-s

Haṭha-yóga in the Véda-s?

- Mudrá-s? Ásana-s?
 - No.
- Breath control? “The Science of Respiration and the Doctrine of the Bodily Winds in Ancient India.”
 - Zysk, K. G. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1993, vol. 113, 2, pp. 198–213.
- Atḥarva-vedá: strong focus on prāṇá
- But is this really Haṭha-yóga?

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