

## Meeting 2: Yóga, múnis, and orthodoxy

The Vedic predecessors of a classical tradition

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# Meeting agenda

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

# Why a Vedā discussion group?

- What is Vedic literature?
  - Sāmhitā-s
  - Brāhmaṇa-s
  - Others?

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  - Later monism (ádvāita) vs. earlier dualism (dvāitá)
- Modern (religious, scholarly) fixation upon later literature

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  - Sáṁhitā-s
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  - Later monism (ádväita) vs. earlier dualism (dvāitá)
- 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 Vedá-s:

## yogá m. (MW)

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

# What is Yóga?

- In the Vedá-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<sup>h</sup>o-'paniṣád (ca. Budd<sup>h</sup>á)
  - 1 of 6 Hindu dárśana-s
  - Expounded in Yoga-sūtra-s of Patañjalí (ca. CE)
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- Yóga as understood in western sense:
  - Purely haṭ<sup>h</sup>a-yóga: from  $\sqrt{haṭ<sup>h</sup>}$  "force"
    - Even more specifically: ása<sup>́</sup>na-s
  - Much more modern! Perhaps even Western construct?

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  - Much more modern! Perhaps even Western construct?
- 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?  
Ámbhaḥ kīm āsīd · gáhanam gabhírám?

*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 babhúva,  
yádi vā dadhé · yádi vā ná —,  
yáv asy' ádhy-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 viṣám,

keśí bibharti ródasī.

Keśí viśvaṁ súar dṛśé.

Keśí 'dām jyótir ucyate.

Múnayo vāta-raśanāḥ

piśāṅgā vasate mālā.

Vátasy' ānu dhrājim yanti,

yád devāso 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 muni-s: RV 10.136

Únmaditā māúneyena  
vātā á tast<sup>h</sup>imā vayám.  
Śárīr' éd asmākaṁ yūyám  
mártāso abhí paśyat<sup>h</sup>a.

Antárikṣeṇa patati  
vísvā rūpá 'va cákaśat.  
Múnir devásya–devasya  
sāúkr̥tyāya sák<sup>h</sup>ā hitāḥ.

Vátasy' áśvo vāyóḥ sák<sup>h</sup>ā  
at<sup>h</sup>' o devé-'śito múnīḥ.  
Ub<sup>h</sup>āú samudráv á kṣeti  
yáš ca pūrva ut' āparaḥ.

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

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

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

# The Vedic muni-s: RV 10.136

Apsarásāṁ Gand<sup>h</sup>arvāṇām  
mṛgāṇāṁ cáraṇe cáran  
keśí kétasya viduān  
sák<sup>h</sup>ā svādúr madíntamaḥ.

Vāyúr asmā úp' āman<sup>h</sup>at.  
Pináṣṭi smā kunannamā  
keśí viśásya pátreṇa  
yád Rudrén' ápibat sahá.

*The Apsarás-es', Gand<sup>h</sup>arvá-s'  
and beasts' path following,  
the long-haired, knowing the will,  
is 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

# Haṭṭha-yóga in the Vedá-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.
- Atṭharva-vedá: strong focus on prāṇá
- But is this really Haṭṭha-yóga?

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