

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?
 - Sāṃhitā-s
 - Brāhmaṇa-s
 - Others?

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- Vedá-s vs. Vedánta & Upaniṣád-s
 - Later monism (ádvāita) vs. earlier dualism (dvāitá)
- Modern (religious, scholarly) fixation upon later literature

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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:
 - Presentations
 - 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 traces of the []
- Is the later Yógic tradition []
- h[]
- 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^ho-'paniṣád (ca. Budd^há)
 - 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^ha-yóga: from $\sqrt{haṭ^h}$ “force”
 - Even more specifically: āsana-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 · gáhanaṁ gabhīrám?

*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 víśṛṣṭir · 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: RV 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 Agním, keśí viṣám,

keśí bib^harti ródasī.
Keśí viśvaṁ súar dṛśé.
Keśí 'dám jyótir ucyate.

Múnayo vāta-raśanāḥ
piśāṅgā vasate málā.
Vātasy' ānu d^hrājīm 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^himā vayám.
Śárīr' éd asmákaṁ yūyám
mártāso abhí paśyat^ha.

Antárikṣeṇa patati
vísvā rūpá 'va cákaśat.
Múnir devásya–devasya
sāúkr̥tyāya sák^hā hitáḥ.

*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.*

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