

Editorial Note

We are now well into the third year of the existence of this journal and we have, by now, some 500 subscribed members. We thank you for your continuous interest. Last year, due to a heavy load of other commitments, I could not get out much. Similarly, some colleagues have postponed their own papers, and for the same reasons. It seems that with all our time saving devices we have less free time each year! This year, however, a number of papers are due to appear.

For much of the same reasons, so far only EJVS 1, issues 1–3 are on the www. Due to still limited time for preparing the html versions I will provisionally put a simplified html version of past articles on the web.

For new subscribers I list previous numbers here:

Vol. 1,

Issue 1: General Announcement (April 1995)

Issue 2: M. Witzel, Looking for the Heavenly Casket (May 1995)

Issue 3: P. Koskikallio, Baka Dalbhya: a Complex Character in Vedic Ritual Texts, Epics and Puranas. (Nov. 1995)

Issue 4: M. Witzel, Early Sanskritization: The Origin and Development of the Kuru State (Dec. 1995)

Vol. 2,

Issue 1: Y. Ikari, On Newly Found Manuscripts of the Vadhula School of the Yajurveda (April 1996)

If you wish, I can forward older numbers on individual request.

Discussion Proposal: The “Aryan Question”

Following a recent email message on this list, I have received quite a number of requests for a discussion of the “Aryan” question, or, to be more precise, the question of an immigration by speakers of an Indo-European language (the Indo-Aryans) into South Asia. Most readers will be aware of the present controversies in India and among western archaeologists about the “Aryan Invasion” (or its absence), sometime in the second millennium BCE.

We had an interesting conference last Fall at Ann Arbor (organized by Madhav Deshpande and Johannes Bronkhorst) where much of this came up for discussion. As I had the occasion to go over most of the relevant literature

recently, I might start the discussion by putting out a summary of the pro and contra positions sometime this summer. We could then enter a discussion of the topic if readers wish.

However, I propose that this is “monitored”, not for content but for the order of topics and their arrangement. For, usually such discussions either become repetitive and / or immediately go off target (especially if someone makes a provocative or less relevant remark on which other participants then expand); consequently, the original topics are completely forgotten.

I therefore propose to number consecutively the points for discussion and ask you for your response. (We will of course add points as the discussion develops).

FAQ page

I also propose to add a page of frequently asked questions (also on our www site). You may have noticed that there are a number of www pages on the net which provide information on the Vedas, including the delightful but entirely fictional Japanese RGVEDA page. This is based on a popular comic book in Japan, where all Sanskrit names appear in Sino-Japanese form (Yasha-Ou, Ten-jiku, etc.) Just take a look at: <http://www.students.uiuc.edu/~a-zhou2/RG/index.html>

However, there also is serious misinformation readily available. To mention an obvious case: items which put the date of the R̥gveda *before* that of the Indus civilization, at 5000 BCE; this is a time when neither horses or chariots nor copper/bronze were yet to be found in the Indian subcontinent, while all of these are quite prominent in the R̥gveda.

We will try to provide well established facts and, as far a possible indeed, a common opinion of specialists in the field. Such opinion is, due to the nature of the scientific enterprise, always due to change, even to change radically at times. But new theories have to come with compelling evidence. More about this in our “Aryan” discussion.

I will begin by presenting some abbreviated, general information on the Vedas, taken from a booklet accompanying tapes of Veda recitation which I prepared a few years ago for the International Foundation for Studies in the Vedas, USA (Rahway, NJ) that I introduced in EJVS 1–4.

MW.