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Table of Contents

The Role and Status of the King's Priest in Kāmbujadeśa

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Abstract

The trans-religious role of ritual power enforced by the king's priest or *purohita* in Kāmbujadeśa elicits new queries. The importance accorded to him in inscriptions, entails a comparative investigation into the office of the priest in India. The paper attempts to understand the forces that led to the rise of his status in Kāmbujadeśa in the context of Tāntric Śaivism and the *devarāja* cult. A comparison of the office in India and Kāmbujadeśa can offer new insights into his religio-political role that has intrigued scholars. The paper hopes to spark a new discussion and contribute to a relevant debate in the field of historical and religious studies.

Key words: Kāmbujadeśa, priest, purohita, devarāja

Introduction*

The influence of Indian civilisation on Kāmbujadeśa[1] (9th - 13th centuries CE) has been variously interpreted, beginning from Cœdès[2] who perceived the kingdom as an Indianized state. J.C. Van Leur concluded the influence of India to be a thin layer over an indigenous tradition.[3] Later, I.W. Mabbett contended that the Indian influence was not thrust upon the Khmers, but was a voluntary adoption[4] while Alexis Sanderson has argued about the tremendous influence of Tāntric Śaivite texts and rituals on religious ideology, kingship and royal practices.[5] Among the many unique aspects of Khmer kingship, the rise of the king's priest (*purohita*) elicits numerous queries about his rise,

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[1] Sanderson defines Kāmbujadeśa "the name given to their territory by the Khmers in their Sanskrit and Old Khmer inscriptions of the Angkorean period." Sanderson 2003-4: 349.
[2] George Cœdès, 1968.
[3] Van Leur, 1955.
[4] Mabbett 1977: 143-161.
[5] Sanderson, 2003-4: 349 462.

authority and status. Despite the importance attributed to the office, the topic has not been fully explored. While Cœdès[6] and Briggs[7] have examined some of his functions, Goudriaan[8] and Sanderson[9] contend that the priests used Tāntric Śaivite texts and performed Tāntric rituals. The dramatic rise of the priest, described in Sanskrit and Khmer inscriptions, induces a comparative investigation into Indian literary evidences that can assist in the inquiry of his changing role in Kāmbujadeśa. I begin by understanding the meaning of the term '*purohita*' in India and hope to analyse the modified usage of the term in the background of Tāntric practices and the god-king or *devarāja* cult.[10]

Terminology

The terms, *purohita, paṇḍita, ācārya, brāhmin, rājaguru* and *rājapurohita*[11] have been used in Kāmbujadeśa for the office of the priest. In India, the *purohita*, was a form of profession for a *brāhmin* to earn his living, who has learned some Sanskrit. However, the term, *purohita*, should not be considered in isolation or as a single priest, but as a member of the *brāhmanical* community. This is not to presuppose that all *brāhmins* were priests or belong to the *brāhmanical* priestly tradition. The *brāhmins* consisted of some powerful priestly families who had the knowledge of the sacred texts and conducted rituals. It appears that in India, the office of the priest was a fluid one, and not the prerogative of only priestly families. A *brāhmin* could be an astrologer who fixed dates and times of rituals and *sthāpanas* of *lingas,* or an officiating priest (*ritvig*) or even a teacher or he could be a priest or a chief chaplain (*rājapurohita*)– *purohita* of the king (*rājapurohita*), a post indispensable for royal power (held by the head priest), or a royal advisor (*rājaguru*).[12] While among the priests, some *brāhmins* functioned as family priests performing religious rites, others were temple priests; still others were attached to kingly power.[13] In regard to the relationship between the *purohita* and the king in India, Heesterman states that it 'was a marriage-like bond'.[14] As a mediator between the king and the gods, the *purohita* (rather, the king's priest, *rājapurohita*) was indispensable. His

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[6] Cœdès 1911
[7] Briggs 1951
[8] Goudriaan 1981
[9] Sanderson 2003-4
[10] Other terms used to describe *devarāja* are *sāmpradāya* (tradition, norm), and *paddhati* (custom inclusive of ritual).
[11] These terms have also been used historically in the Hindu kingdoms in various parts of India, especially in the southern kingdoms. While they are actually different in status and the official nature of the job, they also have been in general conflated in usage by public at large in pre-colonial period. This is because a person performed several roles –as priest (*purohita*), learned consultant in the court (*paṇḍita*), teacher (often the one who taught royal family members in statecraft), royal teacher (*rājaguru*) for specific purposes of advising the royal family), and royal priest (*rājapurohita*). So, one might be doing more than one job, but they are in terms of ranking different within the Brahmin social order.
[12] Michaels 2001 a: 61-77.
[13] Michaels 2001b: 3-16.
[14] Heesterman 1985: 108-127.

ritual and scriptural expertise was essential for performing rites, consecration ceremonies (*pattābhiṣeka)*, building of royal temples, and installation of sacred icons.[15]
The ascendant position attained by the *brāhmin* priests in India was maintained by those who ventured overseas to Kāmbujadeśa where Śaivite priests aligned themselves with royalty. They were well versed in *yajñas*;[16] were *hotṛ* (sacrificers), advisors to the king[17] and even observed Śaiva ceremonies such as *rudraśānti*, initiation (*dīkṣa*), and the royal anointment ceremony (*rājyābhiṣeka*). They consecrated Śaivite icons (*liṅgas*)[18] erected temples,[19] performed the *devarāja* ritual, and moved from place to place giving gifts to temples. Although there were many terms mentioned along with the name of a particular *purohita*, such as *paṇḍita, ācārya, guru, and rājaguru*, and since there is no evidence in the inscriptions of priests for the common public,[20] the term *purohita* refers exclusively to *rājapurohita.* The earliest inscriptional record mentions King Jayavarman II (802-835 CE) who came from Java to Indrapura and nominated the priest Śivakaivalya as his guru and *rājapurohita* (royal priest).[21]

The Tāntric (Brāhmin) Purohita

In Kāmbujadeśa, the terms, *paṇḍita, ācārya,* guru, *rājaguru* and *rājapurohita* were normally associated with Tāntric priests which was not the case in India. This requires an examination of the office of the priest in the context of Tāntrism and the *devarāja* cult. The Khmers received Tāntric Śaivism in two waves – the first during the Pre- Angkorean period, 7th to early 8th centuries CE, and the second from 9th to 14th centuries CE. The first period consisted of followers of the *Atimārga* tradition, with the Paśupatas, the Pancarātrikas, Lakuliśas/ Kālamukhas and Somasiddhāntins; the second period included the practitioners of the *Mantramārga* tradition correspoinding to Āgamic or Tāntric Śaivism, principally that of the Śaivasiddhantikas, the followers of the *Siddhānta*.[22] Inscriptional evidences from Kāmbujadeśa clearly point to the presence of priests belonging to these paths. The early Phnom Preah Vihar inscription of Bhavavarman mentions the royal *purohita,* Vidyapuśpa, as a *Paśupatāchārya*...and Hiranyadāma, the *brāhmin* is said to have taught the Tāntric texts of *Vināśikha, Nayottara, Saṃmoha and*

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[15] Louis Dumont 1970: 62-88.
[16] In the inscription of 889 CE, inscribed during the time of Yasovarman, it is stated that the king performed the Vedic sacrifices of *kôtihoma* and the *yajñas*, for which he gave the priests magnificent presents of jewels and gold. Cœdès 1911: 170-220.
[17] Briggs 1951: 131 ff.
[18] The Sambor inscription of Isanavarman of 627 CE "relates to the appointment of *brāhmana* (*brāhmin*) Paśupata to be in charge of the temple of the *lingam* erected and consecrated by *āchārya* Vidyaviśesha, the *purohita* of the king." Sanderson 2003-4: 380.
[19] Briggs 1951: 132 – 134.
A steel inscription in the temple of Banteay Srei bears evidence that the temple was erected by Yajnavaraha, *guru* of Jayavarman V and his younger brother, Viśnukumara and the temple was dedicated to *Śivalinga*, called Tribhuvanamaheśvara, housed in the sanctum.
[20] Srinivasan 1987: 679-684.
[21] Sanderson 2003-4: 356
[22] Sanderson 2003-4: 435.

Śiraścheda (*Tantrās*) to Śivakaivalya who could perform the ritual *viddhi* in the presence of the *kamraten jagat ta rāja*, which was the royal *devarāja* (ritual) based on the four Tāntric texts.[23]

While Tāntric priests in Cambodia were termed *purohitas, pandits, ācāryas* and *swamis*, in India, Paśupatas were not called *purohitas, panditas, ācāryas* or *swamis* (It was only the Vedic priest who was known as a *purohita*). Secondly, in India, Paśupatas were not known as *rājapurohitas*. The term *rājapurohita* was a term reserved for Vedic priests who were well versed in rituals pertaining to kingship, while *rājagurus* were advisors to the king who understood *rājanīti* or theories of state, and their position was superior to that of the *rājapurohita*. It is reasonable to suggest that Paśupatas, as heretics in India, assumed the role of Vedic priests, as well as *rājapurohitas* and were also in charge of temples in Kāmbujadeśa. If the term *purohita*, meant a royal priest in Kāmbujadeśa as applied to Tāntric priests, then this might have been due to a sociological necessity[24] than a misunderstanding of the term, *purohita.*[25]

Furthermore, the Paśupata priest has been described as a *brāhmin*.[26] He was accorded an eminent position in the brahmanical fold, being well-versed in rites and in the performance of specialized rituals, such as warding off evil before a meeting or a victory ritual before going on a *digvijaya* (victory) tour. He was praised for his knowledge of the *Vedās, Upaniṣads*, Epics, the *Purāṇas*, and adherence to *Dharmaśāstras* and *Arthaśāstra*.[27] One of the pre-Angkor inscriptions provides valuable information about a *brāhmin* who is said to have donated the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and a *Purāṇa* to the temple of Tribhuvaneśvara that he had founded, and made a provision that they should be recited every day.[28] Such an explicit reference to a *brāhmin*, particularly, in inscriptions, is rare in India, as it was assumed that the *purohita* was a *brāhmin*. To ascribe a *brāhmanical* term to Tāntric practioners appears to be a creative adaptation and may be ascribed to the fluidity of the position of the priest. Such a multi-functional role, and superior status accorded by royalty, was partly due to his appropriation of Tantric

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[23] Goudriaan 1981: 36-38.

[24] I would think it is more a sociological necessity as is evident in the more recent migration studies. There is evidence of non-*brāhmin* priests becoming *brāhmin* priests in the context of migration from India to another destination where there is paucity of *brāhmin* priests, e.g., the colonial migrations in the 19th century and early 20th century necessitated this in the various colonies. Also, in the medieval South Indian context many non-*brāhmin* were initiated as *brāhmins*, e.g., the Srivaiśnava and Tamil Saiva temples in the period between 7th to 13th centuries. For instance, in the medieval period Ramanuja, the Srivaiśnava teacher is said to have appointed hill tribal members as priests after having initiated them. That is why in the Srivaiśnava community there is often a difference between Bhattar (temple priest) and Acharya in social ranking within the Srivaiśnava community.

[25] Perhaps the application of the term reveals a change from Paśupata *Atimārga* tradition   of Śaivism to *Mantramārga* in the 8th-9th centuries CE. Sanderson 2003-4: 444.

[26] Sanderson distinguishes between Śaivite and Vedic *brāhmins.* Sanderson 2003-04: 444- 445.

[27] Sanderson 2003-04: 370 -375

[28] Sanderson 2003-04: 380.

rituals, and the performance of the *devarāja* ritual. It is also likely that the priests from India were not *brāhmins,*[29] but it was necessary to assert that they were.[30]

Purohita and the Devarāja Cult

The *devarāja* cult played a central role in the history of the rise of Khmer kingly authority and power. It has been variously interpreted, as a god-king cult, ritual, temple, deified king, etc. According to Mabbett, *devarāja* was not similar to the worship of the king,[31] while Filliozat contends that the term did not refer to the kings of Angkor but to God Siva as 'King of the Gods.' However, the cult appears to be a gradual development, originating from the king being an overlord,[32] to one who accomplished the *siddhi* of success. Later, Khmer kings were identified with their favorite god even during their lifetimes, with either Śiva or Durga, according to their gender,[33] and finally the cult was assimilated into the tutelary gods of Bhadreśvara and Tribhuvaneśvara implying the divinity of kings.[34] In India, although Hindu kingship had been regarded as a divine institution, (as described in the *Manusmriti, Nārada Smriti, Mahābhārata, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and other texts), a comparison of kings to gods did not imply divine kingship or actual divinity of kings, but a king with special qualities and essence, lineage, and virtues. In Kāmbujadeśa the *devarāja* cult was closely associated with the divinity of the king, which imparted politico-religious benefits of legitimacy to kingly power. It was an extraordinary means devised by the priest, when living kings as rulers of the earth became the representatives and part of the divine ruler or *devarāja.* It exalted the status of both the king and the *purohita*, whose genius lay in its creative transformation into an integral system within its kingship.

The Family of the Purohita

It is interesting to find that in Kāmbujadeśa, the office of the *purohita*, apart from being hereditary, could pass down the line of sister's son, which was the case in kingly families as well. In the Sdok Kak Thom inscription of Jayavarman II, of 1053 CE, Hiranyadāma, a *brāhmin* agreed that the right to conduct the "worship of the god should pass from

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[29] Non-Brahmin individuals claiming to be Brahmin priests in a new location is more common than one gives credence to. There are elements common in both Tantra texts and the Atharva Veda, but the two were different and need not be conflated as they belong to completely different periods in history and the comment of White seems a bit exaggerated. Second, Tantra has an independent history of evolution in Kashmiri Saivism and spread to the South and the East.

[30] However, if one accepts the theory by David Gordon White, that there is no difference between Tāntrism and the *Atharva Veda*, particularly in regard to demonology, then, the fluidity in the concept of the *purohita* appears reasonable. White 2012: 145-171.

[31] Mabbett 1969: 202-223. Filliiozat 1966: 95-106.

[32] Cœdès and Dupont 1943-46: 56-154.

[33] Van Naerssen 1976: 296-303.

[34] Briggs 1951: 135-138.

Śivakaivalya to men or women in his maternal line.[35] The priestly families in Cambodia exercised even hereditary rights as well, to provide the religious functionaries. For instance, Atmaśiva who belonged to the family of Śivakaivalya, was the *purohita* of Jayavarman V (968-1000 CE). His *hotṛ*, who belonged to the family of Pranāvatman, was Nārayana, brother of Sankara who had served as a *hotṛ* under Rājendravaman (944-968 CE.). Some of the important priestly families, who were also in the service of the king were the Saptadevakula and Ānanditapura hereditary families.[36] Furthermore, a long inscription recounts the lineage of Śivakaivalya under Jayavarman and his successors till Śadāśiva in Udayādityavarman II's reign (1050- 1066 CE).[37] A further evidence comes from the priest, Śivācarya who descended from the family of Śivakaivalya and furnished hereditary priests. Even more striking is that, Sivāchārya is said to have continued to be a priest for both Jayavarman and Udayādityavarman (1050-1066 CE).[38] We also come across the phenomenon of the *purohita* having marriage alliances with royalty, such as Suryavarman I (1006-50 CE) who took his *purohita* Sadāśiva out of the religious state and married him to a sister of Suryavarman's own queen; on his marriage he is said to have relinquished the hereditary charge of the *purohita* of the *devarāja* cult.[39] Apart from the relation to the kingly families by marriage, the *purohita* was rewarded with valuable gifts, such as a golden palanquin, fans, parasols, royal symbols, servants and lands.[40] Such a pre-eminent position, leads us to investigate into the concept of the royal advisor or *rājaguru*.

The Rājapurohita and the Rājaguru

The *purohita* in Kāmbujadeśa held other important offices as well, such as of the *rājapurohita* and *rājaguru*, which were influential posts in the royal administration.[41] According to Sanderson, the *purohita* was superseded by the *rājaguru* with the introduction of the *Tantrās*.[42] Upon a close examination of the inscriptions, I find the terms, *rājapurohita* and *rājaguru* although mentioned in two separate inscriptions, refer to the same *purohita.*

An inquiry into the conventional meaning of the terms in India, reveals that it was not uncommon in India, to find *purohitas* attached to royalty as *rājapurohitas*. In Nepal, the

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[35] Some scholars believe that the Khmer royal succession was based on matrilineal principle. Chakravarti 1982: 26.

[36] Briggs 1951: 134.

[37] Chakravarti 1982.

[38] Briggs 1951: 145.

[39] Cœdès and Dupont 1943-46: 60.

[40] Sanderson 2003-4: 402-403.
Abhinava Saraswati, the queen of Tribhuvanamalla Vikramaditya VI made a gift of a village to Bellera in Kanne-nadu to Brahmesvarāchārya *paṇḍita* who thereafter had full autonomy over the land which was tax free. Reddy 1983: 112-130.

[41] Cœdès and Dupont 1943-46: 56-154.

[42] Sanderson 2004: 244.

royal priest (*purohita*, *rājaguru*) was the main advisor to the king; but in later medieval period, the *purohita* had a number of political and administrative duties as well, such as consecrating the weapons, elephants and horses in the state army. Hence he was listed among the minsters.[43] While the *rājaguru* was adept in *rājadharma* or duties and functions of kings, a *purohita* was a ritual performer.[44] *Rājagurus* were Vedic teachers and this tradition began during the Epic period, while *Tantrās* were secretive practices that was not related to Vedic rites. However, in Nepal, in the *panjani* list during the pre-Rana period, eight *rājagurus* are mentioned, among whom, are four *purohitas*.[45] Thus it is likely that the *rājapurohitas* had been concerned with religious and ritual affairs of the royal family, such as giving religious advice, performing *puja* (worship) in the palace, and arranging for the rites of passage (*samskāra*), whereas the *rājagurus* had been mainly spiritual and legal advisers. What appears to be revolutionary in Cambodia, is that, Paśupata *sannyasins* or ascetics who practiced Tāntrism, were appointed not merely to the office of *rājapurohita* but also as *rājaguru*. Whether this was a political necessity cannot be ascertained, but it certainly was a reflection of his extraordinary authority.

Case of Divākarapaṇḍita

An eminent priest who is praised immensely in Khmer inscriptions, is Divākarapaṇḍita. The title of *paṇḍita* attributed to Vidyesa, is said to be the standard title for Khmer royal priests or royal officiants.[46] But, in India, generally speaking, the term *purohita* basically meant a priest and the *paṇḍita* was a minister, who had a juridical function.[47] In Kāmbujadeśa, Divākarapaṇḍita was also the *rājaguru and* the *Vraḥ Guru* during the reigns of Suryavarman's royal predecessors and had consecrated the first three kings in this family. During the reign of Harśavarman, Divākara was given the title of *ācārya pradhāna* (chief spiritual teacher).[48] When Divākara officiated at the coronation of Jayavarman VI (1080-1107 CE) he was promoted to the rank of *bhāgavat pada kamrateng anta guru* or lord master guru. It is important to mention that he was awarded honors and possessions, such as the golden palanquins, the most spectacular of which was the temple of Banteay Srei. He presided over yearly ritual sacrifices during the reign of Suryavarman II (1113-1145 CE), performed the *kotihoma*, and that at one point persuaded the king to reinstate the lost territories to a group of priests.[49] Furthermore, in 1136 CE, his image was set up at Wat Phu, and it is said that he even traveled with the king to pilgrimage sites.

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[43] Sarkar and Law 1975: 69-70.
[44] According to Kane, the *purohita* had only religious functions. Kane 1973: 119.
[45] Michaels 2001a: 67-68.
[46] Sanderson 2003-4: 413.
[47] In India the title of *paṇḍita* meant a traditional scholar and he was *rājaguru, rājapurohita* and *paṇḍita* (minister and judge). In the Śukranīti, *paṇḍita* is among the ten advisors of the king. Sarkar and Law 1975: 141-143.
[48] Cœdès and Dupont 1943-46: 146.
[49] Sanderson 2003- 04: 420.

Similarly, Sadāsiva Jayandrapaṇḍita, high priest of the royal Śaiva cult of the *kamraten jagat ta rāja* (*devarāja*) and guru of Udayadityavarman II (1050-1066 CE) is praised for his constant lavish donations to Bhadréśvara and other gods.[50] While royal gifting was a mode of achieving legitimacy, gifting by the *purohita*, probably had a different function. It placed him in a network of relationships and social control with the temple and king. All of them had a community of interest which was conducive to the temple and brought them close in an active transactional relationship. Thus the *purohita* (as a group of priests), who played a crucial role as intermediary, may be said to have created an important network alliance between the community and the gods through the intermediacy of kings.

The Purohita as Minister

Considering the importance of the priest in Kāmbujadeśa and his titles, such as the *ācārya pradhāna, paṇḍita, rājapurohita and rājaguru,* one can only speculate whether he was also a minister at the king's court, by using information from Indian textual sources. As mentioned above, the position of the *rājaguru* in Kāmbujadeśa, was often identified with the *purohita* which was not usually the case in India. If the *rājaguru* and *rājapurohita* are identical, then, it is possible, that the Khmers might have confused the terms. But a close study of another textual evidence, such as the *Rājanīti –Ratnākara* (Hindu political science) of Chandéśvara (based on *Dharmaśastra* and not on the *Arthaśāstra* or *Daṇḍanīti*), it gives us a different adopted term *rājanīti* or royal principle or policy, where the *purohita* was the minister of religion and gives a detailed description of his functions.[51] The text informs us of the administrative set up of the country consisting of sixteen ministers, namely the minister of religion, lord chief-justice, councilors in *sabha* (royal court) appointed for royal policy making, treasury and army; they were commanders in chief, ambassadors and administrators as well. In the text, the king was conceived as god incarnate. It also mentions that the appointment of a new king was made by the minister of religion or *purohita,* and that the ceremony of accession was performed according to Vedic rites.[52] It is possible that a similar or related text was followed in Kāmbujadeśa. Another, more relevant South Indian text of 10th century CE, the *Manosôllasa* of Soméśwara III also provides information about kingship, and royal court during the time of the Chālukyas of Kalyāṇa. The *purohita* to the king, also known as *rājapurohita*, was one of the most important ministers.[53] The text prescribes that he must be well versed in the Vedas, in the principles of administration or *daṇḍanīti* and the performance of rituals. In the kings court, after the entrance of the queen (or queens)

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[50] Sanderson 2003-04: 420. In India, *rājapurohitas* and *rājagurus* donated to temples; they were patrons of religious sites, bestowed land grants and constructed temples. *Rājaguru* even acted as military commanders. Einoo 2009: 267.

[51] Thakur 1989: 307-317.

[52] The text, *Rājanīti-Ratnākara*, refers to some earlier digests of Hindu Political Treatises (Principles of Government), which are not available: *Nāradīya*, an anonymous Rājanīti and Sukranīti, is different from the *Sukranīti* which is now current. Thakur 1989: 312-314; Jayaswal 1936.

[53] R. Basava Raja 1983: 95.

and princes, comes the *purohita* dressed in white, and takes his seat near the princes; then enter the ministers, and feudatories.[54] It is said that Harśvanatha, Kashmirian Guru of the Kalikula also held office as the minister of peace and war under Yasaskara (939-948 CE), performed a ritual to kill his king and other rituals to cause dissension and immobilize, presumably directed against an invading army.[55] Thus it is likely that the *purohita* in Khmer was also a minister of religion.

Regarding the representation of the *purohita* in sculpture, it has been contended that *brāhmins* were depicted on the reliefs of Angkor Wat and Droṇa and Viśvāmitra have been identified.[56] In one of the reliefs which illustrates a royal procession, the *brāhmins* are the only onlookers who do not prostrate themselves before the king. However, not all *brāhmins* were *purohitas* and hence all *brāhmins* did not gain recognition. The onlookers were probably a group of important *purohitas* who were ritual experts and traditional scholars, attached to royalty. It is true that *brāhmins* maintained a powerful hierarchy and the Khmer kings belonged to the *brāhmin* group and as Sanderson states, "Brahmanism...was certainly present among the Khmers, at least within the elite of society."[57] However, it is more likely that only *purohitas* who have been immortalized in inscriptions and who had greater social status, were depicted in bas reliefs.

Conclusion

The evidences from **Kāmbujadeśa** inscriptions has been a valuable source to understand the function of the *purohita*. In this paper I have referred to the '*purohita*' as a group of professional ritual experts and traditional scholars in the court, although it was the chief or head-priest or the king's priest that has been mentioned in the inscriptions as deduced from the translated inscriptions. It appears that the *purohita* as an office and profession in Khmer, was more of a *rājapurohita*, who was a ritual expert and an advisor to the king, and did not preclude the 'titles' of *ācārya* or *paṇḍita*. The varied roles, and offices held by him led to his being ascribed differing 'titles', from being a Paśupata *ācārya* to a *purohita* in 9th century CE who performed the *kotihama* and other *yajñas,* to a *rājapurohita,* who was wealthy, powerful and indispensable. However, priesthood became hereditary during the time of Jayavarman II and the family of Śivakaivalya enjoyed immense power which almost threw the royal dynasty into shade. He was considered indispensable to royalty without whom the gods could not be pleased, and the divine status of the king could not be achieved. If there were marriage alliances between the *brāhmin purohita* and the king's family, they must be viewed in the larger context of the politics of kinship, the legitimation of the lineage and shared authority. It is evident that the *purohita* provided the ideological basis for governance and state.

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[54] At Belgamve, in a Kadamba inscription, there is a reference to the *purohita* presiding over the council of ministers. Basava Raja 1983: 101.

[55] Einoo 2009: 260. He quotes from *Viśnudharmottara* 2.4. 18c-20 b.

[56] Cœdès 1911: 170-220.

[57] Sanderson 2003-04: 400.

Supported by his ingenious *devarāja* cult, which was represented in ritual (time) and architecture (space), he provided a link to the community. It is very likely that he was largely responsible in exalting the status of the king as one who identified himself with the god. Being learned in textual and ritual knowledge, he provided the ideological basis for the legitimation of the ruling dynasty. His multifunctional role as performer of state ceremonies, sacrifices, installation of deities, worship, *devarāja* ritual, with an expertise in recitation of sacred texts, knowledge of astronomy, and royal advice entailed him to a pre-eminent position of being a minister of religion, thereby reinventing the role of the priest. In such a cultural context, the sharing of royal favors, titles and powers between royalty and the priest provides answers to issue of the dramatic rise of the status of the *purohita* who sustained Khmer kingship for centuries.

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The Liṅga and Bronzes of the Perunakar Temple

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Abstract

The primordial Liṅga is prehistoric in its global and proto-historic in the Indian religious setting. As prehistoric artifacts, these seem to have commanded their own symbolism. It was identified with Śiva and was the symbol of worship in Hindu temples all over South and Southeast Asia, maybe c. 500 BCE. Certain question hovering round the worship of the Liṅga such as why it is covered with a cloth and the regional variations of the theme in Tamil literary tradition are examined. However, the main focus is on the unreported bronzes in the Brahmapurīśvara temple at Perunakar (district Kāñcīpuram). These bronzes are related to the cult of the Liṅga; e.g. the bronze of Candraśekhara and the Liṅga juxtaposed. A unique collection of Nāyaṉmār bronzes are brought to light and most of these saints were dedicated to Liṅga worship. The vocabulary obtained from early Tamil literature helps to fix the Liṅga cult within the Hindu religious tradition. The bronzes were appealing to the society and served the needs of temples when gala festivals were celebrated. Besides, they served procession, Tamil *ulā* within the temple or village during *nityapūjā*s and *mahotsava*s.

Keywords: Liṅga – Liṅgdobhavamūrti – bronzes - Candrasēkhara – sthānaka-Śiva – Kaṅkāḷamūrti - Piḍāri – Murukaṉ – Vaḷḷi – Devasenā – Nāyaṉmār – Caṇḍikeśvara

The present article is two-pronged: i) a critique on some questions that hover round the problem of the Liṅga in its pre-historical and historical setting, ii) the unreported bronzes of the Brahmapurīśvara temple at Perunakar. After briefly discussing the problem of Liṅga, I proceed with an examination of the bronzes in the Perunakar temple with a flash-back on its history as revealed in its inscriptions, which again has remained in splendid isolation from the purview of art historians dealing with Cōḻa (Dehejia 1990) or Vijayanagara-Nāyaka art (cf. Michell 1995, Rajarajan 2006).

The Problem of Liṅga

At the outset, I invite the attention of scholars to some recent studies on the Liṅga (Kalidos 2003, Doniger [2010] 2011) in my effort to examine few bronzes of the **Brahmapurīśvara temple at** Perunakar. In fact we have a rich literature on Liṅga studies (Sarasvati 1941, Filliozat 1961, Taddei 1963, Goetz 1965, Srinivasan 1973-74, Bhattacharya 1975, Ferro-Luzzi 1980 & 1987, Asher 1981, Kreisel 1981, Mitterwallner 1984, Dhyansky 1987, Gangadharan 1988, Rajarajan 2002) and a crazy scholar may publish the photo of a naturalistic Liṅga and insert the legend "To Me and Thee" (Kumar 1971: frontispiece); maybe here **"Me" and "Thee" sand for Śiva if the Vedāntic** *mahāvākya* (*Aham Brahmāsmi*, *Vedāntasāra* p. 37) is given the due credence. The Guḍimallam Liṅga/Liṅgodbhavamūrti is considered to be a proto-anthropomorphic representation that is dated either during the pre- or early centuries of the Common Era (Sarma 1982, Kalidos 2003)[1]. Several of the "Liṅga stones" (Caspers 1987: 67-74) in various modes of representation have been reported by scholars in field and few of these date back to the Indic culture c. 2750 BCE (Srinivasan 1984: figs. p. 80) and the pre-Kuṣāṇa or Kuṣāṇa period, touching the brim of the Common Era (Kreisel 1981, Joshi 1984: 47)[2]. Again, the Liṅga "Phallus" was not the © of Indian art and several ancient civilizations all over the world (Bhattacharya 1975: figs.) were familiar with the cult of human genitalia, male and/or female[3] (Choubey1997, Rawson 1981); cf. the Indian Liṅga and Yoni. A historian with far-sight may find the Sun, fire and human genitalia (cf. the Yoni in the *garbhagṛha* of the Kāmākṣī temple in Kāñci – cf. Rawson 1978: figs. 31-33, Kalidos 1990: figs.) were the earliest gods known to mankind.[4] The responsibility of shouldering the Phallic cult need not be imposed on the Indian because it was popular with most ancient civilizations. Are not the Christians committed to "Black

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[1] Doniger's (2011: 490-91) date for the Guḍimallam Liṅga is "between the third and first centuries BCE" and the *Mahābhārata* "c. 300 BCE to 300 CE". That means the Guḍimallam Liṅga is either contemporaneous or anterior to the *Mahābhārata*.

[2] For a prolific illustration and citation on early Liṅgas see Kreisel 1981 (figs. 1-54). This important study is illustrated with more than 50 photographs of Kuṣāṇa and Gupta Liṅgas and *Mukha*-Liṅgas.

[3] Choubey (1997: pl. 36) illustrates an image of Lakulīśa (c. 5th century CE) with fantastic two phalluses and testicles prominently exposed. Rawson (1981: figs. 125, 128-130) brings to light several examples from Japanese Phallic culture.

[4] Cf. the phalluses that were fitted to the monuments in Herculaneum, Naples. When we visited the site in April 2011, the guide told us these were the symbols of auspiciousness; the Sanskrit word *śiva* means "auspicious", "gracious", "favourable" and so on (Monier-Williams 2005: 1074). The word *liṅga* means "a mark", "sign", "emblem" and so on (*ibid.*, p. 901). It is called in Tamil *kuṟi* (*Tēvāram* 1.31.8, *Accōppatikam* 2 in 'Tiruvācakam'), *tāṉu* (*Tēvāram* 1.62.6, *Eṇṇappatikam* 5 in 'Tiruvācakam'), *taṟi* (*Tēvāram* 6.275.1-10) or *kantu* "pillar" (appears in early literature, early centuries CE such as the *Paṭṭiṉappālai l.* 249 & the 400-*Akam* 287 and 400-*Puṟam* 52); cf. Kalidos 2003: See Annexure on "Kantu". Besides we have a reference to *Piṟavāyākkaipperiyōn-kōyil* "Temple of the Unborn Great" in the 5th century Tamil epic *Cilappatikāram* 5. 170 (Jeyapriya 2004: 293, Rajarajan 2016: 81), a reference to *Svayambhū*-(Liṅga), Tamil *cayampu* (*Tēvāram* 4.101.8). He is *Piṟappili* "One without a birth" (*Tēvāram* 6.238.6). The type of Liṅga is also known as *tāṉtōṉṟi* "self-existing"; cf. *tōṟṟaṅkāṇā* "origin not known" (*Tēvāram* 1.24.9). He is without a form; *aru/arūpa* that is opposed to *uru/rūpa* "form" (*Tēvāram* 4.48.7, 6.237.3). The *Periya Purāṇam* (12th century CE) is not the starting point of the Tamil Liṅkam (*Tēvāram* 4.76.4), the Sanskrit Liṅgam (cf. Doniger 2011: 497-98).

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Magic"; create the artificial phallus of Jesus the Christ and the vagina of Virgin Mary and perform symbolic ritual intercourse? The early British missionaries could not be blamed for denigrating phallic worship and even if an American missionary came in the 17th century he would have carried the same pan to underrate the native cultures.[5] One will have to get into the seminaries and boarding schools of these missionaries and see what private life they lead. Therefore, the missionary attitude toward the Hindu gods (Doniger 2011: 499-500) may have to be viewed in the context of their efforts at conversion and not the meaning of the gods of which they understood at that point of time. The same missionaries in course of time accepted the Hindu modes, e.g. Fr. de Nobili branded a European *brāhmaṇa* at the end of the 16th century CE (Kalidos 1976: 242), Fr. Caldwell's 'Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages' 1875 and Fr. G.U. Pope 1900 that translated the *Tiruvācakam* (see Samuel 2012: Chap. I).

A piece of stone or wood (e.g. Pūri) could be made an object of worship by the Hindus through the rituals they perform. First of all, the image is offered a seat to occupy a place of honour: *āsanamsamarpayāmi* "I offer you a seat". The god is then offered a dress to cover his nudity: *vastramsamarpayāmi* "I offer you a garment".[6] The offerings go on increasing, depending on the affluence of the temple or the *yajamāna*. He at least offers *puṣpam* (flowers), *gandham* (sandal-paste), *ābharaṇa*s (ornaments), *darpaṇa* (mirror to check up), *annam* (food, Goddess Annapūraṇi) and so on. Therefore, the *liṅga* that is at least covered by a *kaupīṇa* or *pītāmbara* by human beings is fitted with a bit of cloth in temples if the Liṅga is under worship. It is no wonder the Guḍimallam temple that came under worship after its reconstruction from ruins is fitted with a garment. I invite attention to two images published in which the cult Liṅgas are covered with cloths (Latha 1997: fig. 1, Kalidos 2003: fig. 5 & 2006: II, pl. XCVI-1). In both the cases the Liṅgodbhavamūrti of Tirumeyyam and Liṅga of Kuṉ‌rāṇṭārkōyil are covered with garments that are ritual fittings in all temples under worship. We may not

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[5] i) There was a world of difference in the Christian and Islamic treatment of the Hindu objects of worship. While the Christians made fun of it which was reciprocal, the Muslims committed vandalism. The old *Cambridge History of India* says Muḥammad of Ghazni after ransacking the Somanātha temple, broke the Liṅga to pieces and ordered that be buried in the streets of Ghazni and Bagadad so that the Muslim "believers" could tread on these stones. As a Hindu I may say it is a Liṅga as long as it exists within the precincts of a dark chamber, the holy of the holies. When it is cast out, it is merely a stone. In this respect Caspers 1987 is of great value to estimate the sanctity of the Liṅga. When such an object appears on the gambling board it is merely a stone.
ii) Mutual abuse was common in those days of religious *vātu* (debate) within Vaiṣṇava-Śaiva acrimony. The Vaiṣṇava would ridicule a Śiva saying that he worships the sunni "penis" (*Tamil Lexicon cuṇṇi*) and the Śaiva would retard that the other man is worshipping the *paṉṉi* "pig", a nasty creature.
It is no wonder the Christians made fun of the Hindu gods, not to speak of the Greek and Roman gods of the pre-Christian saga.
[6] Even if an image is stark nude, e.g. Bhikṣāṭana or Kaṅkālamūrti the sky is supposed to be his apparel; e.g. the Digambaras for whom the *dik* is the *ambara* "apparel". For a deep-rooted Vaiṣṇava the Lord Viṣṇu Himself is the garment, *amparamētaṉṉīrē* "Thou the dress, and the water" (*Tiruppāvai* 17). Casually, it may add the apparel never proclaims the man in India.

find such garments in case of the Liṅgas of the Ellora caves or those in the Cālukyan metropolitan zone. I presume one may find such garments in the Mahākūṭeśvara temple at Mahākūṭa because the temple is under active worship. I invite the attention of scholars to Pl. 3 in the present article where the Liṅga with *nāga* over-fit and garments is adjoined by a bronze image of *sthānaka*-Śiva who is decorated with cotton and silken garments (Fig. 3). In a ritual worship the garment is a must; it is not a "chastity belt". It need not be considered a "chaste cloth" (Doniger 2011: 493); *vastra* for a Hindu is *pavitra* "holy"[7], see *Nācciyār Tirumoḻi* (3.1-9). The juxtaposition of the stone Liṅga and bronze Śiva may naïvely suggest their identification with each other. Again, in the Tamil *bhakti* mode, the Liṅga or its semi-manifest *udbhava* form is Mūrtti [Mūrti] (*Tēvāram* 1.97.9), invoked *Uruvē* "Thou, the *Rūpa*" (*ibid.* 6.261.1).

It is difficult to say at what chronological point the Liṅga and Śiva came to be identified with one another; maybe the *Mahābhārata* based on literary tradition (*vide*, note 8) and the Kuṣāṇa if due credence to the several *mukha*-Liṅgas of the period is given; the roots being in the Indic culture. Let us forget the problematic Vedic *śiśnadevatā* (*śiśna* means the "male generative organ" or "a tail" Monier-Williams 2005: 1976) for some time. What was a cylindrical object during the Indic culture was linked with the impression of Paśupati appearing on a seal (Marshall 1931: pl. 94, fig. 11, Hiltebeitel 1978: 769-70, Darian 1978: fig. 32, Doniger 2011: fig. 2) and later identified with the Śiva-Liṅgas (Dhaky 2004: 1-7) of historical times (Latha 2005: pls.5-6, 8-9, 11, 134-136). The identification of the Liṅga cult with Śiva must have crystallized by about the time of the *Mahābhārata* (c. fifth century BCE – Macdonell 1979: 240, Shulman 1986: 104-111) because several of the epithets in the *Śivasahasranāma* attest this fact (Mazumdar 1907: 337-39, Rajarajan 2012a).[8] In spite of all these attempts in historical research, the Liṅga still remains a problem to reckon with both in the Indian and global context. Experts in the field talk of "Female Liṅgam" (Ferro-Luzzi 1980: 45-54,[9] 1981: 439-442; cf. Richards 2004: 54-66) and "Ardhanārīśvara-Liṅga" (Williams 1987: 299-305, cf. Rajarajan 2012). We all repeat or reinterpret what is already told and do not find out the original source of the Phallic cult. The Liṅga alone knows where he generated and his primordiality; the Ādimūlam, cf. the *Nadī-mūlam* and *Ṛṣimūlam*.

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[7] R.K. Parthiban during visit to the Rājendracōḻīśvaram, Periyakuḷam used to offer *vastra* to the images of Aṟupattumūvar (*infra*) on special occasions.

[8] See the *Śivasaharanāma*: Liṅga (Epithet no. 918), *Sthāṇu* (2), *Mahābīja* (84, *Subīja* 89),*Mahāretas* (85), *Svarṇaretas* (golden seed 87), *Mahāliṅga* (389), *Cāruliṅga* (389), *Bījādhyakṣa* (394),*Bījakarta* (395), *Ūrdhvaretas* (578), *Bindu* (806), *Prajābīja* (917) and so on. Few related epithets are *Padmagarbha* (853), *Mahāgarbha* (854), *Brahmagarbha*(855), *Paśupati* (867) and *Prajāpati* (37).

[9] This path-breaking thesis has been commented by scholars such as Arjun Appadurai, Agehananda Bharati, Ronald L. Campbell, Jules de Leeuwe, I.C. Jarvie, Sudhir Kakar, R.S. Khare *et alii*.

Bronzes of the Perunakar Temple

I proceed with the main theme of the article, the bronzes of the Brahmapurīśvara temple (Fig. 1) at Perunakar.[10] In addition to the peculiar *vimāma* in *gajapṛṣṭa* form (Fig. 2) with a semblance to what we find in the Nāgeśvara temple at Kuṃbhakoṇam (Rajarajan 2008: fig. 1), bronzes in the temple are rich that invite attention. The present communication may be treated a compliment to what was earlier published in the *Annali*, Napoli (Rajarajan 2007: 211-16). The bronzes reported are the following: *Sthānaka*-Śiva juxtaposed to the *mūla*-Liṅga, Śiva-*ānandatāṇḍavam*, Śivakāmī, Kaṅkālamūrti, Pi[d]ṭāri, Murukaṉ with Vaḷḷi and Devasenā, an array of the Aṟupattumūvar (Nāyaṉmār 63) and Caṇḍikeśvara. All these bronzes with the possible exception of Naṭarāja (maybe later Cōḻa) could be dated in the post-Cōḻa period; Later Pāṇḍya or Vijayanagara-Nāyaka. To fix this chronological sequence a peep into the inscriptions of the temple may lend a helping hand.

T.V. Mahalingam (1989: 22-25) who has published the inscriptions of the temple notes the place name Peṇṇagaram. Inscriptions in the temple date since the time of Rājarāja II (1146-73 CE)[11] and come down to the Later Pāṇḍya in the 13th century CE. Peṇṇāgaram seems to be later corruption of Perunakar since the latter name is noted in an inscription of Rājarāja II, dated in 1170 CE for the endowment of four *nontāviḷakku* (perpetual lamps) toward which four *kalañcu* of gold was deposited with the temple. The temple was called Brahmīśvaram (ARE 1923, no. 48); cf. the present name Brahmapurīśvara. Few more inscriptions provide for twilight lamps (ARE 1923, nos. 345, 363) down to the time of Kulōttuṅga (12th century CE). Provisions for offerings in the temple were made (ARE 1923, no. 364). A record of the time of Sundara Pāṇḍyadeva (13th century?) notes the name of the temple, Brahmīśvara-muṭaiya-mahādeva (ARE 1923, no. 354). Most inscriptions in the temple provide for lamps or ghee by the gift of gold, money or lands (ARE 1923, nos. 362, 344, 354). Few epigraphs note the festivals (ARE 1923, nos. 352, 353) and daily offerings (ARE 1923, no. 364) such as food to the presiding gods. However, no inscription relating to the foundation of the temple or the donation of *utsavaberas*, i.e., bronzes has been reported. The early occurrence of Cōḻa inscriptions would suggest it came to the limelight during the later Cōḻa period. The bronzes in the temple are likely to have been donated by about the 13th century or later under Vijayanagara-Nāyaka patronage. The evolution of the temple down to the Vijayanagara-Nāyaka is proved by the style of architecture and the iconographical motifs in the *maṇḍapa*s and *gopura*s (Figs. 1-2).

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[10] Perunakar means a "big city". Actually it is a village near Kāñcīpuram, about 22 kms on the way to Vantavāci. Raju Kalidos (1989: 261) invited scholars to the tiny village and its monuments, having studied the temple car some 35 years ago. Two of his doctoral wards, K. Rajendran and K. Raman were awarded Ph.D. for the temples in Kāñci. I had the privilege of visiting the temples several times.

[11] Rājarāja II was the famous builder of the Rājarājeśvaram/Airāvateśvara temple at Tārācuram. Balasubramanian 1979 (cited in Sitanarasimhan 2006: 28) does not bring the Perunakar temple under Rājarāja II.

Liṅga and Candraśekhara

The stone Liṅga housed in the *garbhagṛha* in its cylindrical part is fitted with a five-hooded coiled *nāga* that is conventionally called *nāga*-Liṅga (Kalidos 1989: 70, cf. Ferro-Luzzi 1980: 47) in Tamil folk tradition.[12] The square base of the Liṅga gets embedded in the earth, the octagonal middle section is super-imposed by the Āvuṭai or Yoni and the circular upper alone is visible (Fig. 3). The image under study finds the Yoni covered with the cotton cloth. It is a customary ritual and may not be due to the fact the Liṅga should be covered as human beings hide their genitalia. The juxtaposition of a bronze of *sthānaka*-Śiva that may be called Candraśekhara (see the crescent appearing on the *jaṭamakuṭa* to its left) is suggestive that may serve to identify the Liṅga with Śiva.[13] It is a coveted theme for exaltation in the hymns of the *Tēvāram*; *tūveṇmatyicūṭi* "fitted with the immaculate white moon" (*Tēvāram* 1.1.1). The juxtaposition need not have been done intentionally due to any śāstraic need. It is an accidental occurrence and helps our interpretation. The bronze is also richly decorated with cotton and semi-silk garments.[14] Bronzes actually provide for a dress in their

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[12] The Liṅga in its vertical order is in three geometrical shapes, viz., square-base, octagonal-middle and circular-top that are known as Brahma-*bhāga*, Viṣṇu-*bhāga* and Śiva-*bhāga*. *Vide*, Kalidos 2003a: 173 citing the *Kāśyapaśilpaśāstra* 49. 85 and *Śilparatna* 2. 66. This way the Liṅga is oriented toward the Trimūrti concept; cf. Śiva-Liṅga (Dhaky 2004), Ardhanārīśvara-Liṅga (Williams 1987) and Female Liṅgam (Ferro-Luzzi 1980 & 1981).

[13] Prof. Ferro-Luzzi's 1980 article was of great interest to me and invited my attention to note 5 in her scholarly article; I am not even half her age. I do not know whether scholars have discovered any synonymous word for *śiśnadevatā* in the Indic script. The earliest Tamil word seems to be *kantu* that appears in Caṅkam literature (see notes 4 & 7 above). Arjun Appadurai in his comment says the "Liṅga is Śiva". When the Liṅga was identified with Śiva is the most vital question, maybe during the Epic times; cf. the several epithets in the *Śivasahasranāma* (note 8 *supra*). I am not sure when the words *āvuṭai* and *yōni* appear for the first time in Tamil literature; may not be in Caṅkam lore (cf. Subrahmanian 1990: 95, 724; Seshadri 1990: 94). See the *Peruñcollakarāti*, Vol. II, p. 234 ('Greater Tamil Lexicon', The Tamil University) *āvuṭai* means "desire" and Āvukaṉ "Father". The chronological setting of the terminologies is not discussed in this work. Āvuṭaittēṉ/Āvuṭaiyāḷ is Devī and Āvuṭaināyakaṉ is Śiva. Āvuṭaiyār with a masculine termination *ār* stands for a man and *āḷ* woman. These terminologies are of some interest in the context of Ferro-Luzzi's 1980 discussion. The emphasis here seems to rest on the *ardhanārī* aspect of Śiva; *yoni* embedded in man and not the vice versa (cf. Ferro-Luzzi 1980: 46). Again, the effort to consider the "breast" = *liṅga* is conflicting in the context of the *Cilappatikāram*. Did Kaṇṇaki cut her left breast (= *liṅga*, the masculine sovereign emblem) to destroy Maturai (cf. Ferro-Luzzi 1980: 52-53). It means the feminine needed a masculine *aide de camp* to wreck her vengeance. I am sure the meek Kaṇṇaki is elevated to the status of *aṉaṅku*, Kālī and Mahiṣamardinī due only to the frozen feminine power embedded in her ethos and would have never sought the help of a masculine weapon in her efforts to do away with an evil-king (cf. Kalidos 1993 & Rajarajan 2000). Iḷaṅko, author of the epic finds her the Devī of the *māhātmyam*. Even though the gods offer her their choicest weapons (*Devīmāhātmyam*, *Adhyāya* 2), the *triśūla* that killed Mahiṣa is her own; being a vertical weapon it may be considered a transformed *liṅga*. Kaṇṇaki might be equal of the European Amazon, man-in-woman that need not represent a "feminine *liṅgam*".

[14] The Lord's garments consisted of the following: *Tōluṭaiyāṉvaṇṇapṉpōrvaiyiṉāṉ* (hide as garment, the multi-coloured cover – *Tēvāram* 1.5.4), *māṉuritōluṭaiyāṭai* (the stripped gazelle's hide as garment – *ibid.*, 1.44.2), *pulittōluṭai* (garment of the tiger's hide – *ibid.*, 1.46.7), *attiyiṉuritaṉaiyaḷakuṟappōrttavaṉ* (covered beautifully with the hide of elephant - *ibid.*, 3.294.4; *yāṉaittōlpōrppa*- *ibid.*, 7.18.4), *paṭṭiṭṭavuṭaiyār* (Lord wearing the silk garments - *ibid.*, 4.58.4). The Lord may simply be fitted with a

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original metallic composition (Goetz 1959: figs. pp. 98, 177). Normally *utsavaberas* are fitted with synthetic garments to add to the decoration and āgamic needs, cf. *vastramsamarpayāmi* (*supra*).

Śiva-ānandatāṇḍavam and Śivakāmī

Śiva performing the *Ānandatāḍavam* is likely to be a later Cōḷa image (Fig. 4). It is of the usual typology set within a *prabhāvali*. The Kūttan finds the left leg graciously lifted and the right stamped on Apasmāra. The *parahasta*s hold the *ḍamaru* and *agni*, symbols of creation and destruction. The right *purvahasta* assures protection by the *abhayamudrā*; the left *ḍolahasta* points at Apasmāra, a warning to evil-mongers. The face is oval and the tiara is *jaṭābandha*. Locks of hair spread out on both sides of the face, touching the *prabhāvali* that represents the Cosmos. It is symbolic of the cosmic presence and immanence of the Lord who is beyond time, space, birth and death. Gaṅgā in diminutive form appears on the right side of the spread out tresses; a symbol of perennial affluence and prosperity. The image recalls minding a meaningful hymn in the *Tēvāram* (4.81.4):

> *Kuṇitta puruvamuṅ kovvaiccevvāyir kumiṇ cirippum*
> *Paṇitta caṭaiyum pavaḷampōṇ mēṇiyir pālveṇṇīrum*
> *Iṇittamuṭaiya eṭutta porpātamum kāṇappaerrāl*
> *Maṇittap piṟaviyum vēṇtuvatē yintamānilattē.*

"The eye-brows are bent, the budding smile rests on the red-lips (that resemble the fruit of *kovvai*)[15]; the cold matted locks of hair are spread out, the coral-like mien is smeared with the milk-white-ash; the leg is lifted majestically; if to view these one would like have another birth in the wide world"[16] (cf. Peterson 1991: 118).

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bit of cloth to cover the genitals: *kōvaṇavāṭaiyār* (*kaupīṇa* as garment *ibid.*, 2.214.1). The garment is known as *āṭai* (*ibid.*, 2.214.1), *tuṇi* (*ibid.*, 1.87.5), *kaccai* (*ibid.*, 1.88.8), *kaliṅkam* (*ibid.*, 1.88.10) and so on.

[15] It is an edible fruit, blood-red when ripe and the unripe one is green. The unripe is a nutritious vegetable for the folk in the country side. Its creeper grows in natural environs and is not cultivated.

[16] Normally the invocation pertains to blowing out this mortal coil to reach the stage of no-more-birth and so the Lord is invoked *Piṟapparuttēṇ* "I cut (at the root of human) birth" (*Paṇṭāyanāṇmaṟai* 7 in 'Tiruvācakam') or *Piṟapparukkumpiññakaṇ* (*Civapurāṇam* in 'Tiruvācakam' *l.* 7)" Piññaṇ who severs continuity of birth" (Pope 2003:2). Piññakaṇ stands for the destructive activity of the Lord, "destroyer" (*Tamil Lexicon*, V, 2650). If one wants a birth to view the dance that means it offers *mukti*. That is why Patañjali and Vyāgrapāda prayed to the Lord to permit them see his dance whenever he presents it. See *Tiruviḷaiyāṭar Purāṇam* of Nampi (Episode no. 5).

The lifted leg exposes the bottom of the foot so that one could have a view. In case of god-men and images of the gods the only part of the body that could not be visualized is the bottom of foot, the sole. All other organs, including the genitals, both male and female and the breasts are thrown open in Hindu iconography. Kūttaṉ/Naṭarāja is the only image that allows a devotee to have a view of the Lord's foot and the sole of the lifted leg; also Trivikrama. Nāvukkaracar in a *patikam* (*Tēvāram* 4. 3) of eleven hymns extols the lifted foot at the end of each verse and demands the Lord bless him with a human birth to see the *pātam/pāda* that is beyond the comprehension of powerful *ṛṣi*s:

> *Kaṇṭēṉ avar tiruppātam kaṇṭariyātaṉa kaṇṭēṉ* (*Tēvāram* 4.3.1-11)

> "I have seen the sacred foot; I have seen the known-unknown that could not be seen"

The symbolism of Kūttaṉ/Naṭarāja has been explained in terms of the *pañcakṛtya*s by A.K. Coomaraswamy [1957] and universally acclaimed by all scholars during the past 100 years. In spite of the pioneering revelation, the entire gamut of *Paṉṉirutirumuṟai* may have to be reexamined for a comprehensive review on the subject.[17] Certain queries such as why the Lord lifts the leg will have to be answered with reference to the *bhakti* hymns, dated since the 5th-6th century CE. Most hymns in the *Tēvāram* (totally 8,661) and *Tiruvācakam* (658) have a special bearing on Kūttaṉ,[18] Ardhanārī, Tripurāntaka, and Kālāntaka to kick whom Śiva lifts a leg.

Śivakāmī is supposed to be the consort of the Lord or the Maid who witnesses the dance recital. Several hymns in the *Tēvāram* redundantly say the Lord danced to please the maid; e.g.

> *Kāḷi muṉ kāṇak kāṇiṭai naṭañceyta*...(*Tēvāram* 1.41.5)
> "Dance to be seen by Kāḷī first..."
> *Umaiyōṭuṭaṉāki...āṭum* (*ibid.*, 1.46.10)
> "Dance when Umā was present with the Lord"
> *Taiyalkāṇum*... (*ibid.*, 1.115.6)
> "the Maid views"

The tradition of Devī witnessing the dance of Śiva is rooted in the 7th century literature. Later "Kāḷī", "Umā" or the "Maid" came to be identified with Śivakāmī in the

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[17] The present author has attempted a translation of all the *Tēvāram* hymns bearing on Tillai. Down to the early 14th century Citamparam was known as Tillai or Puliyūr and the Dancer was Kūttaṉ. None of the inscriptions in the Tillai temple induct the names, Naṭarāja and Citambaram. These came in usage after the Sanskrit *māhātmya*s were composed (Rajarajan 2012a).

[18] The *Tēvāram* and *Tiruvācakam* hymns do not deploy the name, Naṭarāja. The near-equal terminologies are *Āṭavallāṉ* "expert in dance" (*Tēvāram* 2.187.3, 4.17.7),*Naṭamāṭiyavēntaṉ* "King who danced" (*ibid.*, 1.30.9), *Kōṉeṉkūttaṉ* "My Dancer is the King" (*Poṟcuṇṇam* 2 in 'Tiruvācakam') and the Vaiṣṇava *Kūttāṭavallaveṅkō* "the King who is the able Dancer" (*Nāciyār Tirumoḻi* 3.6, see Kalidos 1999: 224). The redundant epithet is Kūttaṉ (*ibid.*, 2.240.8, 4.9.10, 5.129.3, 6.253.2, 7.25.9). For a comprehensive list of the epithets see Kalidos 1996: 15-17 and Rajarajan 2014: 197-216.

Tillai/Citamparam temple, accompanying Kūttaṉ/Naṭarāja (Rajarajan 2016a). The image of Śivakāmī in the Perunakar temple seems to be a later addition (Fig. 5). The bronze is wrapped in silk; leaving open the head and hands. The right hand is in *kaṭakamudrā* while the left is *gajahasta*.

Kaṅkāḷamūrti

Kaṅkāḷamūrti is one who carries the *kaṇkāḷadaṇḍa* on his shoulder that appears redundantly in the Pallava sculptural art of Kāñci and one may find it housed in the southwestern sub-shrine of the Kailāsanātha temple. The iconography of the form has been enumerated in śāstraic works cited in Kalidos (1989: 83-84; e.g. *Sārasvatīyacitrakarmaśāstra* Chap. 24, *Sakalādhikāra* of Agastya Chap. 13, *Kaśyapaśilpaśātra Paṭalam* 75, *Śilparatna* Chap. 22 and so on (see Adiceam 1965: 83-111). An iconographic device much akin to Bhikṣāṭana, the only difference is that the Lord carries the *kaṅkāḷadaṇḍa* on his shoulder.[19]

The bronze under study finds the Lord in walking mode, holding the tail end of the *triśūla* with the front left hand and the back right hand held close to the three-pronged head of the trident (Fig. 6). The front right hand carries some eatables for a leaping gazelle and the right perhaps is rested on the head of the dwarf *bhūtagaṇa* that carries the begging bowl on its head. The images should be nude but covered with rich silken cloths. The coiffeur is of some interest as a *jaṭāmakuṭa* peeps above the head and tresses hang on either side of the face that adds an aesthetic appeal to the composition. The dwarf *gaṇa* is fitted with a lower garment within its bronze make-up. Kaṅkāḷa could be linked with the Liṅga because he is mostly nude, exposing the supine *liṅga*. Elsewhere, the damsels in love with him are stark nude; e.g. the Tañcāvūr Art gallery images (Sivaramamurti 1984: pl. XIV).

Piḍāri

This image represents a virulent manifestation of Devī, called Piḍāri or Piṭāri in Cōḻa inscriptions (ARE 1897, no. 28; *SII*, II/I & II, 63). The bronze that is kept close to Kaṅkāḷamūrti represents a four-armed Devī, carrying the *aṅkuśa* and *pāśa* in *parahasta*s (Fig. 6). The front right hand is in *tarjanimudrā* and left *varadahasta*. The face is hallowed by a *jvālamakuṭa*. This is to point out the ferocity of the Goddess. The image is completely covered with silken cloths. The presence of Piḍāri images in the temple would suggest the continuation of a tradition since the time of Cōḻas as she happened

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[19] These are supposed to be the mortal remains of the cast-away *avatāra* masks of Viṣṇu (Sastri 1916: 103), the head of Brahmā or the skeleton of Visvaksena (Kalidos 1989: 83-84).

to their family Goddess, *kuladevtā*; cf. Vijayālaya that erected a temple for Niśumbhāsūdinī in Tañcāvūr (Sastri 1984: 110).

Nearby are found the Āyudhapuruṣa of *triśūla* and a seated image of benign Devī that are casually noted as they appear in Fig. 6.

Murukaṉ with Vaḷḷi and Devasenā

This triplet seems to be a Vijayanagara-Nāyaka addition (Fig. 7). The three images are set within an ornate *prabhāvali* with a *kīrtimukha* at the top and *makara*s with open mouth supporting the arch. In fact the *prabhāvali* is more appealing than the images housed inside. Murukaṉ and his consorts are *sthānaka*. Murukaṉ, the Tamil God of Beauty in his *parahasta*s holds two different types of *vajra*. This redundancy may be due to the fact that the Tamils since very early times worshipped the *vajra* and at the far end of the ancient period there was a temple for the *Āyudhapuruṣa*, called *Vaccirakkōṭṭam* in Tamilnadu (Jeyapriya 2004, citing the *Cilappatikāram*; for Roman transcription of the epic see Rajarajan 2016: 263-398). Vaḷḷi is the Tamil consort of Murukaṉ whose hand the Lord took after a strenuous effort as told in the Tamil *Kanta Purāṇam* of Kacciyappa Civācārya, later half of the 14th century CE (Zvelebil 1974: 186) that provided the food for the musings of Zvelebil 1980 and Shulman 1979. Devasenā, Tamil Tēvacēṉai was the daughter of Indra. The earliest representations of the Lord with his consorts appear in the cave temples of Āṉaimalai and Paraṅkuṉṟam (Kalidos 2006: IV, pl. II. 2). During the later medieval period, Murukaṉ came to be represented with his consorts. In the bronzes under study, Vaḷḷi and Devasenā stand flanking the Lord with the hand on the side of the Lord holding two different flowers, *padma* "lotus" and *nīlotpala* "water-lily", the other in *ḍolahasta*.

Aṟupattumūvar

These are the sixty-three savants of Śiva whose hagiography is told in the *Periya Purāṇam* of Cēkkiḻār, the twelfth *tirumuṟai* (12th century CE), earlier briefed by Cuntarar (8th century CE) in his *Tiruttoṇṭattokai* (*Tēvāram* 7. 39). Traditionally they are taken to be Aṟpattumūvar "the sixty-three"; and Cēkkiḻār tells the annals of "seventy-one". They were devoted to the worship of Śiva and serving the devotees of the Lord. Some (e.g. Caṇṭēcurar/Caṇḍikeśvara, Kaṇṇappa Nāyaṉār) were boisterous in their devotion to the extent that one cut the limbs of his own father that was a nuisance in his worship of Śiva-Liṅga and the other placed his toe on the eye of *Mukha*-Liṅga to offer his own eye to the "Bleeding Liṅga", also offering him the chosen food mixed with meat. All the saints were mostly dedicated to the worship of Liṅga. They came to be deified during the high Cōḻa period (*SII*, II/I & II, 11) and their images installed in most Śiva temples and festivals undertaken in honour during their natal star. Mostly the *Mūvar* (the Three:

Campantar, Nāvukkaracar and Cuntarar) or *Nālvar* (the Four, the *Mūvar* and Māṇikkavācakar) appear in a cloister of the Śiva temples. Big temples accommodate the "63" in a row, mostly stone; e.g. the Rājēndracōḷiśvaram in Periyakuḷam. Affluent temples such as Maturai accommodate the bronzes of the "63". These images are beyond the capacity of art historians for photography. We were lucky enough to photograph the images in the Perunakar temple. Fig. 8 illustrates the cavalcade of the Nāyaṉmār (about 30) standing in two rows. It is not possible to name each of the saints as we were in a hurry to photograph the images.[20] It could only be added few with *kirīṭamakuṭa*s were kings such as Kaḻarrarivār, Kūrruvaṉ, Pukaḻcōḻar, Aiyaṭikaḷ-kāṭavarkōṉ, Niṉracīr Neṭumāraṉ, Kaḻarciṅkar and Kōcceṅkaṭcōḻaṉ. The women mystics were Kāraikkālammaiyār, a nun and Maṅkaiyarkkaraci, a Queen of the Pāṇḍya. The saints hailed from all rungs of society such as *veḷḷāḷar* (peasants and landlords, e.g. Caṇṭēcurar), *brāhmaṇa*s (Ñāṉacampantar), *caṇḍāla*s (Tirunāḷaippōvār), *kirāta* "hunter" (Kaṇṇappar), shepherd (Tirumūlar), potter (Nīlakaṇṭar) and so on. It is interesting to find all these regardless of status are stationed in row. Few of the saints were subjected to ordeal by fire (Nāḷaippōvār) and water (Ñāṉacampantar) but within the temple order all stand in rows without any social discrimination. In fact, these saints fought against the evils that haunted the Indian society such as untouchability and inhuman treatment meted out on the basis on one's birth status. Several western, particularly American scholars (e.g. Vidya Dehejia 1988 & D.D. Shulman 1979) have written on these saints, which subject I do not want to drag in this brief communication. Suffice it to add here a separate image of Caṇḍikeśvara is found among the bronzes (Fig. 9). He stands holding the hands in *namaskāramudrā* with a battleaxe inserted in the upper right arm. The earliest images of Caṇḍikeśvara appear in the cave temples of Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi and Bhairavakoṇḍa and the Kailāsa of Kāñci (Kalidos 2006: II, pl. LXXXVI. 2; IV. II, pls. XXVI. 1, XXXVII. 1-2). Śiva temples of the Cōḻa and later times came to accommodate a separate chapel for Caṇḍikeśvara adjoining the northern wall of the *garbhagṛha*, e.g. Tañcāvūr and Kaṅkaikoṇṭacōḻapuram.

The ancient religions of the world, their histories, the living rituals and the link between these provide food for historians of religion and art for interpretation and reinterpretation. Whenever two historians meet there may be three different opinions. Racial, linguistic and religious affinity or animosity may come on the way if one wants to be pragmatic and adhere to historical objectivism. The result should not be dogmatic even if we are not objective.[21] The way that the Sanskrit *Vedas*/*Vedāṅga*s and Tamil *Tirumuṟai*s are interpreted by scholars with Tamil as mother-tongue and the English-speaking may differ. When one talks of "Ardhanārīśvara-Liṅga", an artifact may be

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[20] For a check list of these saints in the meant order and as listed in the *Periya/Tiruttoṇṭar Purāṇam* see Sitanarasimhan 2006: 126-29.

[21] Raju Kalidos told me in a personal conversation that Burton Stein attended a local History Congress in Erode, Tamilnadu twenty-five years ago. When a Tamil scholar raised the question of "objectivity" in a presentation, Stein simply disposed the question saying "fie with your objectivity".

produced to substantiate the claim. The problem is the "Female Lingam". In some images we may find the half-*liṅga* and half-*yoni*. Do we come across the Indian image of an Amazon fitted with a male *liṅga*? I invite the attention to a recent publication in *Annali*…Napoli illustrating a woman-in-man (Jeyapriya 2006: pls. V-VI, cf. pl. IV). Fig. 3 in Richards 2004 presents a good case for comparison with Jeyapriya 2009 Pls. V-VI. Māṇikkavācakar says Śiva is a man, eunuch and woman: *Āṇō aliyō arivaiyō* (*Poṉṉūcal* 5). Another visualization of the saint is thought-provoking:

Kuṟi yoṉṟum illāta Kūttaṉ (*Accōppatikam* 2)

"The Dancer has no sign (i.e. generative organ)"

That is to say Śiva, the Dancer is neither a man, woman nor eunuch. He has no generative organ. Biologically speaking eunuchs have an organ at least for excretion in between the thighs whether long or short, deep or a minute hole. How say Śiva has no sign? Images of Naṭarāja are fitted with *urdhvamedra* as in the art of Kaliṅga. In other cases the *medra* may be hidden by a garment.[22] Do we find any artifact without the generative organ? What I mean to say is Indian art and philosophies are to be understood in their religious context. I have no "symbolic" explanation regarding the above citation. I may have to consult a deep-rooted Śaiva-Siddhānta *paṇḍita*. If I pass any comment that will degrade me to the status of a half-professor. Therefore, judging Indian images of the gods and goddesses vis-à-vis western philosophical notions such Freudian may have to be done keeping in reserve the Indian literary traditions (Kalidos 2012). It as well applies to Indian architectural forms interpreted in the context of western geometrical theories. Thus, when an American talks of "criminal gods", "demon devotees", "mythical beasts", a Tamil scholar may file an objection regarding the inner meaning of these phrases that appears alien to a Hindu (cf. Rajarajan 2006: 173-77 or Kalidos 1989: 19-34). Some scholars writing of Tamil themes view the Tamil hymns with American spectacles. This might lead to a scholarly cold-war (cf. Kalidos 2006: 141-54). We must read all the vernacular literature, particularly Tamil to grasp the significance of the Liṅga. The concept of Liṅga has obsessed the Indian thought since 2750 BCE to 600 CE. I want to emphasize the idea because the Liṅga was accommodated in the holy of the holies against its anthropomorphic setting, i.e. Somāskanda[23] during the Pallava (c. 700 CE [Rajarajan 2012b: figs. 15, 33, 59-60, 76]) and the Liṅga alone since the Cōḻa period (c. 850 CE) in case of Tamilnadu; I keep in mind the *Ekamukha*-Liṅga in one of the Gupta caves of Udayagiri (Williams 1983: pls. 34-35, Rajarajan 2012b: fig. 3). In any case, Fig. 3 helps us the understand the Liṅga and Śiva are coeval.

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[22] *Medra* also means a "ram" (Bhide 1990: 890) that is *maṟi* in *Tēvāram* (1.41. 1, 6) hymns that the Lord holds in a hand.

[23] Several such anthropomorphic images appearing on the back wall of the *garbhagṛha* have been reported; e.g. Trimūrti (Ellora caves), Somāskanda (Kāñci & Māmallapuram), *Sthānaka*-Śiva (Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa*, Māmallapuram), Vṛṣabhavāhana (New Temple, close to Shore temple, Māmallapuram), Naṭarāja in a grotto (Bhairavakoṇḍa), Dakṣiṇāmūrti (Irunilaṅkōṭu, Kerala) and Caṇḍikeśvara (Kuṉṟāṇṭārkōyil). *Vide*, Rajarajan 2012b: 74-75.

The bronzes reported in this article serve to single out their rarities and add to our existing knowledge on South Indian Bronzes (cf. Gangooly 1915 & Sivaramamurti 1981). If a systematic survey is undertaken more such images could reported that are found in situ. These bronzes were of great relevance to the society during *nityapūjā*s and *utsava*s (cf. *kōṭṭam* "temple", *teyvam* "God[dess]", *paṭimam* "*vigraha*, *pratimā*", *pūppali* "*puṣpāñjali*", *kāppukkaṭai* "talisman", *vēḷvi* "sacrifice" *viḻā* "festival", *kaṭavuṇ-maṅkalam* "*maṅgalāśāsanam*" in *Cilappatikāram* 28.225-233) and taken within the temple or village during *ulā* "procession" to display the mobility of the temple organization. Several literary works of the genre, called *ulā* (e.g. *Tiruvārūr-ulā*, *Tiruvēṅkaṭa-ula*) stands in testimony of this intra-cultural activity, pointing out the relation between the structure of the temple and the images of the gods that they house. The overt symbolism is the temple and its images are not inanimate objects but living beings. Though few bronzes of the Pallavas are reported, it is during the Middle Cōḻa period (10th-11th century CE) that the worship of bronzes as *Utsavamūrti*s acquired momentum. Inscriptions of Rājarāja I (985-1014 CE) and the Cōḻa royal family donated several bronzes with fabulous ornaments to the Śiva temples of which minute details are presented in inscriptions (*SII*, II/I-II). These are pointers of the fact how the society a millennium ago prized these bronzes that was accommodated in a temple but oriented to the society.

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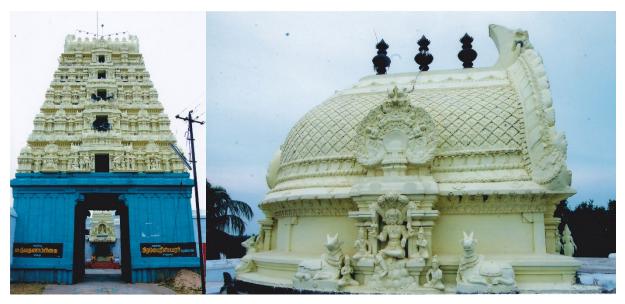
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Figures

1. View of the Temple, Perunakar   2. Vimāna, Brahmapurīśvara Temple, Perunakar (BTP)

3. Liṅga and Bronze of *sthānaka*-Śiva, BTP

4. Kūttaṉ/Naṭarāja, BTP Bronze

5. Śivakāmi, BTP Bronze

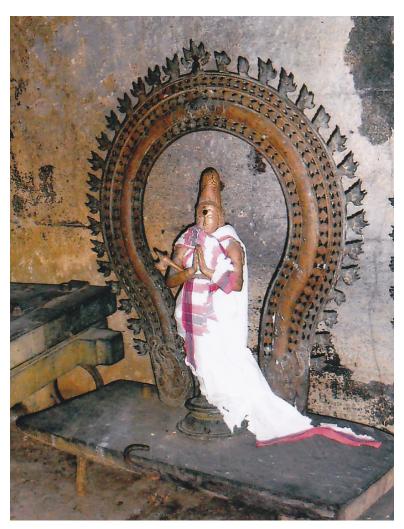6. Kaṅkāḷamūrti & Piḍāri, BTP Bronzes

7. Murukaṉ with Vaḷḷi and Devasenā, BTP Bronze

8. Few among the Aṟupattumūvar, BTP Bronzes

9. Caṇḍikeśvara, BTP Bronze

Northrop Frye and Patanjali

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Abstract

This essay explores the points of contact between the eminent Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye (1912–1991) and Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras.* Early in his academic career Frye wrote a ground-breaking study of William Blake, *Fearful Symmetry*, but his international reputation was based largely upon his comprehensive study of literary conventions, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). Twenty years after its publication the *Anatomy* was the most frequently cited book in the arts and humanities by a writer born in the twentieth-century. During the 1970s he wrote a definitive study of romance, *The Stubborn Structure*, followed by a study of the social context of literature, *The Critical Path.* Toward the end of his life he published two books on the Bible, *The Great* Code and *Words with* Power. The basis of all this writing was a firm and expansive grounding in the Western literary tradition. But with the publication of the 30-volume C*ollected Works of Frye* (1996–2012), which includes his previously unpublished papers (notebooks, diaries, student papers, typescripts of talks), we have begun to see that while Frye was firmly rooted in Western liberal humanism in its Classical and Christian forms, he is more interested in Eastern thought than is commonly imagined. Thus, he was able not simply to engage in worlds outside of what he called his "cultural envelope" but to assimilate Eastern religious principles into his own world view. Eastern influences on his thinking include the Lankavatara and Avatamsaka Sutras, Zen Buddhism, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, Taoism (*Tao-te Ching* and *Chuang-tzu)*, Confucianism (*I Ching*), and Patanjali's yoga. The present paper is an exploration of the relationship between Frye and Patanjali. It seeks to answer the question, what did Frye learn from Patinjali's *Yoga-Sutras*?

Keywords: Frye, Patanjali, Yoga, Zen Buddhism, Confucianism, Tao

When T.S. Eliot was working toward a doctorate in philosophy at Harvard, he studied Sanskrit for two years under Charles Rockwell Lanman. In *After Strange Gods* he reports that he then spent "a year in the mazes of Patanjali's metaphysics" which left him "in a state of enlightened mystification" (39). Frye never studied Sanskrit, but one of the flirtations he had with Eastern religion was with Patanjali, the founder of the Hindu yoga philosophy. Frye owned and annotated the 4th edition of Dvivedi and Sastri's *The Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali*. Little is known of Patanjali. Whether or not he is the same Patanjali

who wrote a celebrated commentary on Panini's grammar is uncertain. He appears not to have authored the *Yoga-Sutras* but to have compiled them. The date of the sutras is unknown, but scholars think the compilation occurred sometime between the second century B.C.E. and the fourth century C.E.—a wide window of more than half a millennium. Although Eliot speaks of the metaphysics of the *Yoga-Sutras*, Patanjali was interested not so much in metaphysics as in spiritual freedom gained through physical practices. Frye had more than a passing interest in the *Yoga-Sutras*, an interest we turn now to explore.

The Eight-Fold Path

A sutra, which literally means a thread, is an aphorism. The literal meaning comes from the fact that the sutras were written on palm leaves, which were sewn together with thread. There are 196 of Patanjali's Yoga-sutras, arranged in four sections. The famous eight-fold path, also known as the eight limbs of yoga, is set down in sutra 29 of section 2. Here are two concise translations of that sutra, along with one that contains a transliteration of the Sanskrit:

> Forbearance, Observance, Posture, Regulation of breath, Abstraction, Contemplation, Absorption and Trance, are the eight accessories of Yoga. (Dvivedi 51)

> Self-restraints, fixed observances, posture, regulation of breath, abstraction, concentration, contemplation, trance, are the eight parts (of the self-discipline of *Yoga*) (Taimni 203).

> The eight limbs of yoga are: the various forms of abstention from evil-doing (yama), the various observances (niyamas), posture (asana), control of the prana (pranayama), withdrawal of the mind from sense objects (pratyahara), concentration (dharana), meditation (dhyana and absorption in the Atman (Samadhi) (Prabhavananda and Isherwood 97).

In the 1940s Frye set out to follow Patanjali's eight-fold path, devoting a number of pages of one of his early notebooks, Notebook 3, "to codify[ing] a program of spiritual life" for himself (CW 13: 32). He does not get beyond the fourth stage—*pranayama*, the control of breathing—but he outlines in some detail what he proposes to do in the first three stages—*yama* (withdrawal from negative habits), *niyama* (concentration and proper timing), and *asana* (meditative exercises and postures) (CW 13: 32–7). What follows is Frye's outline of the first four steps and how they relate to his physical and psychological states. I quote Frye's notebook entries here at the beginning at some length to show the seriousness and scope of his detailed self-analysis:

Yama

First is the stage I call Yama, the attempt to deal with the personal devil, the perverse imp who is the false self-made by habit into an active homunculus or poltergeist. This is a negative stage of withdrawal, of breaking the bad habit, a stage of no pleasure, much priggishness, constant self-inspection & censorship, innumerable defeats, & above all, by itself completely useless. It's the stage of cleansing the temple & driving out the demons, & is, according to Jesus, not only useless but dangerous, by itself, that is.

A weak body & a hypertrophied development of it (I am an intellectual chiefly because I was born cerebrotonic) led me through an unhappy adolescence into a state of chronic irritability, a neurotic fear of being bullied by vulgarity, and a deeply-rooted "sissy" complex. The result is a constant sense of spinsterish outrage fostered by panic & laziness, & fended off only by a relatively comfortable life. Here again is the perverse imp: I dislike a noisy radio not because of it but because of a personal resentment directed at the vulgarity of the person operating it. When I am told the irritating things that most people dwell with most of the time, excessive irritation is inspired in me because the creator of that irritation blends into a resentful memory of the bully I ran away from & wish to hell I'd beaten up. (I never scored a victory, as many children do, & in fact never rose to an occasion: cowardice was bred in me, as it is regularly, by premature, over-active & perverse imagination.) There's no point in detailing confessions, I find: self-knowledge can do without that; but a habit of suppressing irritability & of resisting irritating stimuli (brooding over a slight or a bad review) is the first stage of Yama, & will give what I think is a natural cheerfulness a chance to emerge. A strict mental censorship over sterile & harmful fantasies has to be established.

Irritability with me is both mental & physical. A very hypertrophied love of reading & study (much of which is less genuine than it seems) breeds indolence. A habit of incessant masturbation in adolescence has left me with a lazy, disorganized & ineffectual rhythm of behavior, & the same hypertrophy has made me very ignorant of practical things. I'm unhandy, & shrink from taking the time to learn to be handy, which would be defensible if so much of my study time weren't wasted through centrifugal dissipation of energies & masturbation-substitutes of which solitaire is a current bondage. I am shy & downcast & often associate serenity with a blinkered withdrawal from experience (genuine withdrawal, the pratyahara or fifth stage, is away out of my reach as yet)[1]. The shyness with anyone, especially any man, of forceful personality, is a regular effect of self-abuse. It breeds in me masochistic fantasies of gross social errors & insults & ridiculous behavior which often, even when attributed to others, makes me cringe & wince physically, grimace or, if alone, shout & talk out loud. It also makes me sensitive of hurting others to an absurd

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[1] *Pratyahara* is the imitation by the senses of the mind by withdrawing themselves from their objects. See section 2, sutra 54.

extent, absurd because it's not really kindliness but just fear. Sudden neurotic fears (e.g. of putting letters in the wrong envelopes) may be a special thing, as I suspect it's partly hereditary. A habitual relaxation of the body, untwisting feet, relaxing shoulders, regularizing breathing, stopping the excessive bodily heat which is another by-product of self-abuse & the nervous jerking rhythms of speech, walking (including a good deal of scampering) & various nose & teeth-pickings, seems indicated. Behind all this is the hypertrophied cringing from the dull job, linked with neurotic aversions to dirt, etc. The fight against this latter will have to be reasonable & theoretical at first.

I can understand why devils are usually conceived as a swarm, but to reduce them to definite number (seven traditionally) is a stage in advance, & to make that number one is still another step. I believe in the real (i.e. the mental & present) existence of Poe's perverse imp. Nothing else accounts for my going into a pub by myself or reading a detective story (what on earth have I to do with reading for relaxation?) or any other form of an inconspicuous consumption of time. It's easy enough to catch the imp in operation. I hear a clock tick. If I will not to hear it tick, perversity instantly appears. It may also show itself in retiring to the superego, negative moral virtue being the usual scholar's mate of this priggish stage, but that worries me less at my age than it would have done earlier. The chief thing is to turn a river into the shit, & not try to pretend it isn't shit but something dignified like baser impulses. Misplaced erotic fantasies which have so obvious an origin have to come out, dearly as I love them. Outward habits don't need change: people who are, for instance, preoccupied with their diet usually keep on being preoccupied with their diet. The thing to stop is Ugolino cannibalism: biting my nails & fiddling with substitutes for my penis. The essence of the phase is self-detachment & self-observation: withdrawing the censor to watch the saturnalia, & when possible to guide it, but not leaving a superegocentric Angelo in charge.[2] The interest of the better self in the worse one should be humorous & interested, like a sensible mother, not thrashing the imp like an ascetic, or whimpering & nagging like a religious hypochondriac, or blustering and producing equally childish tantrums of self-hatred, but always trying to keep open the possibility of a wiser view, & never wholly possessed by the karma-soul, even in its charming & coaxing moods. The incessant observation of the naughty child by God is a reality here, & dries up the sources of passion. At least I hope it does: but to the Selfhood novelty & repetition are the same thing (CW 13: 33–5).

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[2] The reference is to the deputy in *Measure for Measure* who stands for inflexible judgment as against mercy. In the end, Isabella, who has been injured by Angelo, begs mercy for him.

Niyama

Niyama, the second stage, is the positive aspect of this, without which the Yama stage is a useless & impossible one. The characteristics of it have been outlined earlier in this book; its key ideas are concentration and timing. By timing I mean what I meant earlier about hitting a middle course between the (Rajas) panicky, flustered, irritable, scratching & scampering rhythm, the kind that predominates when I'm shopping for something unfamiliar, and the (Tamas) dawdling, mooching, yammering, time-wasting & activity I go in for when confronted by a dull job or even a pleasant one.[3] Concentration is an essential part of this. No matter how much I really want to read or write, the part of me that uses those activities as dopes gets restless, walks around, picks up another book with an intense but obviously phony interest, goes out to a restaurant or a pub to "withdraw," or "relaxes" with some other damned foolishness (it's real inertia, so it doesn't want real relaxation like exercise). Of course it really does take time for my job to take shape, & not even the greatest mystics are immune from long stale "dark night" periods. But when the imp (well, it's not really his fault) breaks down & admits what the job is, I should no longer allow myself to be confused by the impossibility of reading everything at once.

I'm proud of my ability to swivel easily from work to distraction, to find ideas crystallizing on streetcars or restaurants, to be relatively undisturbed by yelling children, & the like. I think this ability really is valuable, & should be developed, but concentration when alone should be developed too, as long as no resentment at being interrupted affects me. If I can't always get the sort of thing I used to get with coffee & solitude at 2 a.m., I should get as near it as possible, as often as possible. I find too that concentration & a sense of efficiency in work increase the general competence & assurance of all the rest of my activity: I'm never so confused in behavior as when I think I am thinking & ain't.

Timing in ordinary behavior is a difficult problem and requires constant vigilance, & even vigilance doesn't prevent diverging into panic or laziness. Practice in it should begin with the simplest things: walking, even breathing, but above all speaking. I scamper less in walking than I used to do, but I still scamper a lot in speech. From there I think I can build up a reserve of assurance that should, as Patanjali says, tranquillize my surroundings.[4] I have a tendency to take my physical slightness very literally: I think men do tend to estimate one another's weights & govern their conversations accordingly. Also I'm conscious in any dispute that most men can lick me & I have occasionally wondered if the Japs weren't right in thinking that to

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[3] The references to earlier parts of the notebook are to CW 13: 17–18.

[4] Patanjali does not use this particular phrase, at least in the standard English translations, although he does speak of the tranquil properties that pass into oblivion (section 3, sutra 14). It seems more likely, however, that Frye is referring generally to the psychic state, described throughout the sutras, that is achieved when all external distractions are erased through *samadhi* or concentration.

possess a knowledge of ju-jitsu is essential to maintain the ascendancy of a cultured aristocracy. And if this is a childhood regression, it is still true that the folklore of capitalism continually encourages similar childhood regressions in others. The essence of will power, as far as its outward manifestations are concerned, is a habitual withdrawn calm combined of course with a sharply focussed vision of what one wants. I know that at times my mind is "noisier" than at others, as I say, & I must learn my own techniques for keeping it quiet.

This is yammer. The interference of the true with the false self is, though highly desirable, a tentative & blundering business, as its first real test—making a decision—soon shows. One has to relax & let the divine spark have air to burn, a careful analysis of failures without stewing. I should build up a habit of masterful & rapid reading of difficult books; learn to listen to music when I want to & turn it off when I don't; try to build up a do-ye-next-thynge attitude to any work; planning a day without worrying if the plan is upset except through my laziness; controlling fantasy & checking brooding & worrying; keeping the body relaxed & controlled at all times; study timing of conversation & rhythms of speeches. The purely negative checks of Yama are like the first man who tried to sweep the interpreter's parlour[5] (CW 13: 35–6).

Asana

Asana, the third stage, is connected in Yogi with exercises & postures of meditation. As a great deal of experience seems to be behind these, I suppose they should be investigated, particularly those that go after nervous constipation. Learning to dance, piano lessons, speaking lessons & a summer with a swim every day would be more immediately relevant. My curious difficulty in standing still without great fatigue should be investigated. The point is that no sharp line can be drawn between mental & physical attainment of relaxed & rhythmic concentration. However, I think of this as the expenditure of effort made possible by the preceding stages: it should attain its climax when I'm doing the Guggenheim.[6] (CW 13: 36–7)

On the fourth stage, *pranayama* or breathing, Frye writes, "I find it advisable to change the 'lean' of my breath, as I often catch myself breathing in for a long time, which I think is a symptom of laziness and timidity. We're told that the heartbeat comes under control in later stages, perhaps the adjustment of heart & lungs rhythms is the basis. Ascetic practices are said to be useful in breaking up habit: I should think it more essential to build up habits, & get rid rather of physical fears & phobias"[7] (CW 13: 37).

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[5] The allusion is to one of Blake's last engravings, *The Man Sweeping the Interpreter's Parlour* (ca. 1822).
[6] Frye did not apply for a Guggenheim fellowship until 1950. Because the notebook entries quoted here were written several years earlier than that, he is evidently anticipating his receipt of the fellowship.
[7] For Patanjali on breathing, see section 2, sutras 29, 49–55.

In these confessions it is not so much that Frye wants to reveal everything about his psychic life but rather to arrive at some physical and emotional equilibrium. He yearns for moments of withdrawal and concentrated attention, times when he can turn off what he later calls the incessant babble of the drunken monkey in his mind (CW 5: 161, 326; CW 6: 481). He looks to Patanjali for almost purely personal reasons, feeling that the *Yoga-Sutra* provides sound advice on how to cleanse the temple of his own psyche, to overcome the timidity and irritability of his cerebrotontic self, to repair the weakness of his body, to defeat inertia, to establish a proper, relaxed rhythm in his life. Although he makes his way through only half of the eight stages ("genuine withdrawal, the pratyahara or fifth stage, is away out of my reach as yet") (CW 13: 34). At the end of section 3 of his copy of the *Yoga-Sutras*, Frye wrote in the bottom margin, "how to become God in six easy lessons. Wonder how far anyone actually got" (Dvivedi and Sastri). He seems to be skeptical that anyone actually got through the last two stages. Patanjali nevertheless provides him the occasion to engage in serious self-reflection and critique, and his interest in the posture and breathing exercises of zanzen began early and appears to have continued for some years, as revealed in his annotations in Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. Frye read this book sometime during or after 1978, the year that Willard McCarty gave him a copy. In a notebook from the late 1940s, when he seems especially distressed about his physical state, he enjoins himself to consult books on yoga for advice: "find out what yoga books say to do" (CW 25: 38). He also advises himself "to shift the centre of your sexual gravity to the sex act, & of your human gravity to the human act, the act of kindliness, of Chih-kai [Chik-hai] Bardo, which, like the sex act, depends on timing" (ibid.). Even as late as the mid-1980s, Frye is still writing about yoga as a discipline that would free the mind from a "frozen," material consciousness: "Yoga is the involuntary suppression of the voluntary actions of the mind. We're all born with a natural yoga: we're freed by objective energy and our consciousness freezes it into matter. Matter is mater, the mother. Materialism, dogmatism, the authority of elders and impotent kings, all assist the freezing process. A higher discipline that would freeze the mind could liberate the spirit" (CW 6: 716).

In these cases Frye's interest in yoga has to do with his own physical, moral, and mental habits. The liberation of the spirit can come only after he has got these habits properly regulated.

Sattva

Frye finds analogues between certain Western ethical principles and Patanjali's *sattva*, the ideal of harmoniousness, uprightness, and composure—the noblest of the three *gunas* or fundamental qualities. In Notebook 3 Frye writes:

Patanjali says Sattva, Castiglione (or Hoby),[8] grace and recklessness, Aristotle the mean. All three mean what Samuel Butler means when he speaks of complete knowledge as unconscious knowledge. The first stage of awareness is a "morbid" self-consciousness of which schizophrenia is the opposite, as lunacy is the opposite of creating forms & conditions of existence & atheism the opposite of secular mysticism. Then comes, with practice and a continuous relentless analysis, a gradual overcoming of the rigidity begotten by this self-consciousness (CW 13: 5–6).

Sattva is the mental state of a steady, calm peacefulness. It is an analogue of Castiglione's "grace," Aristotle's golden mean, and Butler's unconscious knowledge. Recklessness seems to be out of place as an analogue of *sattva*. In book 2 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle shows how courage is the golden mean between cowardice and recklessness. But Frye is referring not to Aristotle but to Sir Thomas Hoby's translation of *sprezzatura* as recklessness. "Grace," Frye writes in his essay on *The Courtier*, "is almost impossible to define: it eludes verbal formulation, because 'He who has grace finds grace,' and those who do not have it are unlikely to know what it is. Grace is manifested however in two ways. One is by *sprezzatura*, another untranslatable word conveying the sense of masterly ease, spontaneity, the tossed-off quality that shows nothing of the long practice that has led up to it" (CW 28: 353). It is often translated as nonchalance. The other manifestation, according to Frye, "is by *disinvoltura*, the grace of bodily movements, the repose of the trained athlete" (CW 28: 353). "The role of grace," Frye writes,

> will doubtless become clearer to me later, but at present I feel sure that the abolition of Isvara is an essential preliminary step, that the Indians are right in subordinating the idea of God to the process of spiritual development. Finally, it's possible to get more precise words in Indian thought, to feel however dimly something of the genius of the language in which they occur. Owing to what I suppose is a series of accidents (perhaps it proves the necessity of private judgment) the Gospel is a chaos of vague words (CW 13: 4).

As indicated above, Frye's interest in Patanjali is in using the sutras to assist in unifying his physical and psychological life. Like Castiglione, Patanjali "insist[s] on an absolute identity of mind & body" (CW 13: 5). But there is a speculative side to Frye's interest in yoga that goes beyond Patanjali's *raja* or royal yoga (the eight-step path), and his less personal speculations provide an example of his going beyond the discovery of analogues to a recreation of Eastern philosophical ideas in Western terms. "I seem to be trying," Frye writes, "to interpret as much of the Gospels as possible in Yoga terms" (CW 13: 14–15). Here is one such interpretation:

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[8] A reference to the translation of *The Courtier* by Sir Thomas Hoby, published in 1561.

> The Christian Gospel and Indian Buddhist systems associated with the word yoga seem to me to make sense of this process [of liberation from a fallen world], & perhaps the same sense. The advantage of using the latter is that Hindu Buddhist conceptions have for us fewer misleading associations of ideas left over from childhood, and the thunder of their false doctrines is less oppressive in our ears than the thunder of ours. . . . When Jesus speaks of "righteousness" the word is an English word, per se with moral, ecclesiastical and Christianized Pharisee overtones, translating δικαιοσυνη [justice], which is from Greek legalism and suggests the δικη [trial] of that dismal idiot Euthyphro,[9] and which in turn translates an Aramaic word I don't know translating a concept with a Hebrew background.[10] I have to recreate it into something more like "rightness," but think how clear such a word as Tathagatca[11] is! (CW 13: 4–5).

Tathagata, "the thus-gone one," is the one who has attained supreme enlightenment. Frye is speaking here of Bhakti yoga, the path to the devout love of god. He associates Bhakti with both militant monasticism in Christianity and with Western mysticism, and finds Bhakti to be wanting because it is too partial and fragmentary, too much removed from the world (CW 13: 14–17). It is "the expanded secular monastery I want," Frye announces, adding that "there isn't much for me in high Bhakti, & Jnana if not Mantra . . . is my road" (CW 13: 17, 19). He says little about Jnana yoga, but unlike Bhakti, which relies on intuition and which for Frye remains on the Beulah level of existence, Jnana is the yoga of the intellect, in a Platonic or Shelleyan sense. "Jnana" in Sanskrit means "to know," and it has to do with both general knowledge and spiritual wisdom or illumination. Mantra is the form of yoga that aims to achieve union with God through the repetition of God's name. With the stress Frye puts upon the repetitive rhythm of practice and habit, one can understand how he would be drawn to the principle, at least, underlying Mantra yoga. "Yoga," he says, "attaches great importance to 'muttering' ritual forms (dharani) and to the working word, the mantra or verbum unificum," and the Western analogue he finds is in the discipline of listening to music without any sense of "panic & laziness" (CW 13: 6).

In the distinction between sound and sense Patanjali would be aligned with sense and not with the repetitive rhythms of Mantra yoga. Jnana yoga, the yoga of the intellect, is the form that Frye prefers; Frye's interest in yoga, then, extended beyond Patanjali. The annotated books in his library on yoga are *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines, or, Seven Books of Wisdom of the Great Path*; Chao Pi Ch'en, *Taoist Yoga: Alchemy and Immortality*; Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*; Paramhansa Yogananda,

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[9] The Orphic sectary in Plato's dialogue of that name, whose concern is with religious duty.
[10] The Septuagint ordinarily translates the derivatives of the Hebrew word *ṣdq* ("righteous") and its cognates by the Greek *dikaiosunē*.
[11] In Pali, literally, "the thus-gone one," i.e., the perfected one or the one who has attained complete enlightenment on the way to truth. It was one of the ten titles the Buddha used when speaking of himself or other Buddhas.

Autobiography of a Yogi; Gopi Krishna, *Kundalini: The Evolutionary Energy in Man*; and Ernest Wood, *Yoga*.

The problem Frye has with the yogas of whatever school is, finally, that they have no place for art and no real theory of creation. He thus proposes to develop one, which he calls, reversing Patanjali's terms, Sutra-Yoga. Such a yoga, Frye says, "would be identical with what I have been calling anagogy" (CW 13: 21), a unifying principle that spiritualizes the law (CW 13: 27). He explains the growing interest in poets such as Rilke and Rimbaud as stemming from their having made "a yoga out of art"; they "have employed art as a discipline of the spirit that takes one all the way. Rimbaud is the great denier & Rilke the great affirmer of this aspect of art" (CW 13: 23).

Toward the end of Notebook 3 Frye returns to the sense of calm watchfulness he finds in Patanjali, combining it, in a rare third-person reference to his own approach to the life of the spirit, with the change in consciousness that is always for Frye the end of the universal quest:

> The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thus the unconscious will is not on the same time clock as the conscious one, the S of U [Spectre of Urthona] which is always getting into a dither every time the clock strikes. We must not do things, but let them happen. This is the Chinese wu wei, Keats' negative capability, which imitates Milton's God in withdrawing from the causation sequence and simply watching with prescience. In Frye's thought this faithful watching is the literal apprehension of art, the willing suspension of disbelief which is the prelude to all understanding (at least all detached understanding). What the consciousness can do, perhaps, is take out the obstacles hindering the union of life & consciousness, the Indian yoga, the Chinese Tao (which means "head-going") (CW 13: 61).[12]

The union of life and consciousness is a state of identity. Patanjali writes, "In the case of one the transformations of whose mind have been annihilated, the complete identity with one another of the cogniser, the cognition and the cognized, as well as the entire absorption in one another is brought about, as in the case of a transparent jewel" (section 1, sutra 41; Dvivedi 27). D.T. Suzuki says that in Buddhism "no distinction is made between knowledge and knower" (*Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra*, 141). In his copy of the *Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali*, Frye underlined the word "identity" here and wrote opposite the reference to the transparent jewel this Blakean aphorism: "world in a grain of sand."

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[12] Frye almost certainly remembered the "head-going" etymology from a remark by Jung in *The Secret of the Golden Flower* 97.

Aphorism

The aphorism is a form of prose that belongs to a phase of language between the metaphorical and the descriptive. Deeply discontinuous, it is one of the four "kernels" of prose that Frye writes repeatedly about. Kernels are the seeds or distilled essences of more expansive forms. He often refers to the seeds as kernels of scripture or of concerned prose. The four microcosmic kernels are commandment, oracle, aphorism, and epiphany. Frye sometimes conceives of the kernels as what he calls comminuted forms, fragments that develop into law (from commandment), prophecy (from oracle), wisdom (from aphorism), and theophany (from epiphany).

Frye's notebook entries are themselves examples of discontinuous aphorisms, kernels of what he hopes can be incorporated into longer forms: "I keep notebooks because all my writing is a translation into a narrative sequence of things that come to me aphoristically. The aphorisms in turn are preceded by 'inspirations' or potentially verbal Gestalten. So 'inspiration' is essentially a snarled sequence" (CW 5: 226). While the notebook entries are ordinarily not as brief as an aphorism (they contain about seventy-five words on average), they do consist on the whole of discontinuous reflections. But, as "snarled sequence" suggests, the entries are by no means unrelated to each other. Frye will often devote a succession of paragraphs to a single topic, and he frequently refers to previous sections of the notebook in which he is writing at the time and occasionally to other notebooks.

Frye puts "inspiration" in quotation marks because the actual genesis of the notebook entries is often somewhat mysterious. "I think in cores or aphorisms, as these notebooks indicate, and all the labor in my writing comes from trying to find verbal formulas to connect them. I have to wait for the cores to emerge: they seem to be born and not made" (CW 5: 364). In one of his notebooks for *Anatomy of Criticism*, he speaks of these aphorisms as auditory epiphanies: they are, he says, "involuntarily acquired" and have "something to do with listening for a Word, the ear being the involuntary sense" (CW 23: 142). If the birth of the aphorisms comes from things "heard," the connections among them come from things "seen." Realizing the potential of a "verbal *Gestalten*" or a pattern of continuous argument, Frye says, has something to do "with the spread-out panorama for the eye" (ibid.). But, as the notebooks unequivocally reveal, the pattern of continuity is never achieved without a mighty struggle: once Frye got hold of the building-blocks, "the spread-out performance" was never necessary or even predictable. In his words, "Continuity, in writing as in physics, is probabilistic, and every sequence is a choice among possibilities. Inevitable sequence is illusory" (CW 5: 21). The sequence that Frye eventually achieved in his published work came only after revisions of numerous drafts, sometimes as many as eight or nine revisions.

The kernels as we find them in, say, the Bible "are surrounded by silence. You are not expected to argue with them; you are expected to brood over them and think about them. Similarly with Greek philosophy before Socrates; the pre-Socratic philosophers so

called were really gurus, or spiritual leaders. They would utter various aphorisms like 'you never step twice into the same river,' or 'all things flow,' or 'Don't eat beans,' or something of that kind. When they were said by a Heraclitus or a Pythagoras, again you didn't argue because this was *ipse dixit*; this was what the master had said. You brooded and thought about it" (CW 4: 25–6). Similarly with the sutras of Patanjali. "There are, Frye says, "many books on yoga in India written in continuous prose but they all refer you to the yoga sutras of Patanjali, which are written in tight, gnarled epigrammatic aphorisms, each one of which could be a source of commentary in itself. And there are large vacant spaces between each aphorism" (CW 4: 26).[13] And each one did become the source of an expansive body of commentaries. Transliterated from the Sanskrit, each sutra average about two lines of text, making for about 400 lines of text altogether. The commentaries, which are legion, fill up the "large vacant spaces between each aphorism." And some of the commentaries themselves are expansive. I.K. Taimni's edition runs to 446 pages; Prabhavananda and Isherwood's, 154 pages; Dvivedi's, 121 pages; Tookaram Tatya's, 226 pages. In one of his notebooks on Renaissance literature Frye reports on a lecture he gave "on the opposed styles of religious literature. On the one side is the intensification of sound, most notable in the Koran, which is part of the charm complex, the magical hypnotic repetitive rhythm aimed at taking over the will. Hopkins, the Pearl, a lot of Eliot, especially Ash Wednesday, which is a liturgical poem, and of course liturgy has this quality. Then there's the opposite pole, the Sutra in Patanjali, where the detached statement has a quality of authority requiring the focussing and intensifying of the intellectual response. This is the area of the 'kernels' of aphorism" (CW 20: 358–9).

Many of the contemporary editions of the *Yoga-Sutras* rely on the ancient commentators, such as Vyasa (4th or 5th century C.E.) and Bhoja, the philosopher king and polymath of the 11th century C.E. The sutras were originally intended to be recited; thus, their terseness. But once they came to be written down, the commentaries almost inevitably followed, filling the "vacant spaces" to overflowing. These commentaries constitute the intellectual response to the aphorism.

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[13] Cf. this similar formulation: "Continuous or descriptive prose has a democratic authority: it professes to be a delegate of experiment, evidence, or logic. More traditional kinds of authority are expressed in a discontinuous prose of aphorisms or oracles in which every sentence is surrounded by silence. The Greek philosophers before Plato—Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Anaximander—uttered their sayings and stopped. It was for the disciple to ponder and mediate, not to argue or question as he might with the more linear Socrates. Or again, suppose we wanted to learn something about yoga, a discipline also founded on oral tradition. There are many books on yoga, written in continuous prose, but they all refer us, as a higher authority, to the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. We turn to Patanjali and find ourselves, stylistically speaking, in a quite different world. Every sentence is a gnarled, twisted, knotty aphorism demanding a long period of study, able to carry a whole commentary by itself. Again, it is for the subordinate to explain and qualify. Philosophers, who sometimes grow weary of being contradicted or refuted, have always been strongly attracted to this aphoristic style of unquestioned authority: we find it in Spinoza, in Leibnitz, and as late as Wittgenstein. (CW 19: 233–4)

The Will to Identify

For Frye one of the central archetypal scenes of the intensity of consciousness that arises from the desire to identify is found in the Paleolithic cave drawings, references to which appear on more than thirty occasions in his work. The cave drawings, an example of the meander-and-descent pattern, represent "the titanic will to identify" (CW 18: 346).

> When one considers the skill and precision of these works, and the almost impossible difficulties of positioning and lighting surrounding their creation, we begin to grasp something of the intensity behind them to unite human consciousness with its own perceptions, an intensity we can hardly imagine now. Magical motives, such as maintaining a supply of game animals by picturing them on the cave walls, seem utterly inadequate: for one thing, many of the figures are evidently human beings in animal skins. In any case such caves are the wombs of creation, where conscious distinctions have no relevance and only pure identity is left (CW 26: 215–16).

The cave drawings at Lascaux, Altamira, and elsewhere are an example of what Lévy-Bruhl called *participation mystique*, the imaginative identification with things, including other people, outside the self, or an absorption of one's consciousness with the natural world into an undifferentiated state of archaic identity.[14] In such a process of metaphorical identification the subject and object merge into one, but the sense of identity is existential rather than verbal (CW 6: 503). We see such identification in the shaman with his beast skin acquiring the power of the beast.

Something very similar occurs in section 3, sutra 25 of Patanjali: "By performing *Samyama* on the powers of any animal, the *Yogin* acquires those powers" (Dvivedi 81). In the copy of Patanjali that Frye owned, sutra 25 of section 3 is translated thus: "By samyama with reference to the strength of an elephant he comes to possess the strength of an elephant." In other words, by meditating on a specific animal or object we can gain power over it. This process is quite similar to what Frye sees as the metaphorical principle at work in life: our identity is determined by what we identify with. No concept is more important to Frye's masterful project than identity and the resultant state of possession. Patanjali helped him along the path that led to that sense of possession through identification.

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[14] On *participation mystique* see CW 22: 276–7; CW 5: 16; CW 6: 503; and CW 18: 347. There is no evidence that Frye had read Lévy-Bruhl. His source for *participation mystique* was doubtless Jung, a considerable portion of whose work Frye knew well.

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Abbreviations for Frye's Collected Works

CW 4 = *Northrop Frye on Religion*. Ed. Alvin A. Lee and Jean O'Grady. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2000.

CW 5 = *Northrop Frye's Late Notebooks, 1982–1990: Architecture of the Spiritual World*. Ed. Robert D. Denham. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2000.

CW 6 = *Northrop Frye's Late Notebooks, 1982–1990: Architecture of the Spiritual World*. Ed. Robert D. Denham. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2000.

CW 13 = *Northrop Frye's Notebooks and Lectures on the Bible and Other Religious Texts.* Ed. Robert D. Denham. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2003.

CW 16 = *Northrop Frye on Milton and Blake*. Ed. Angela Esterhammer. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2005.

CW 18 = *"The Secular Scripture" and Other Writings on Critical Theory.* Ed. Joseph Adamson and Jean Wilson. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2006.

CW 19 =*The Great Code: The Bible and Literature.* Ed. Alvin A. Lee. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2006.

CW 20 = *Northrop Frye's Notebooks on Renaissance Literature.* Ed. Michael Dolzani. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2006.

CW 22 = *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays.* Ed. Robert D. Denham. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2006.

CW 23 = *Northrop Frye's Notebooks for "Anatomy of Criticism."* Ed. Robert D. Denham. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2007.

CW 25 = *Northrop Frye's Fiction and Miscellaneous Writings*. Ed. Robert D. Denham and Michael Dolzani. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2007.

CW 26 = *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of "The Bible and Literature.* Ed. Michael Dolzani. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2008.

CW 28 = *Northrop Frye's Writings on Shakespeare and the Renaissance*. Ed. Gary Sherbert and Troni Grande. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2010.

Theories of Rebirth and Nature of Prakṛti: Philosophical Hermeneutics within a Darśana (Philosophical School)[1]

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Abstract

This paper deals with two topics: (1) 'rebirth theories' in Indian philosophy and (2) the problem of reconciling the ultimate nature of 'prakṛti' in Sāṅkhya-Yoga with the sole ultimate reality of 'ātman/Brahman' in the Upaniṣads. An attempt has been made to demonstrate the hermeneutical devices used to legitimise later understandings with older texts by various commentators. Relevant original texts in Sanskrit and commentarial literature on them have been used for this purpose.

Keywords: Sankhya, Yoga, Upanishad, Sankara, Mimamsa, Vedas, Advaita, Karma, Rebirth, Dharma, Ritual

Introduction

Hermeneutics is the science of discovering new interpretations in 'all those situations in which we encounter meanings that are not immediately understandable but require interpretive effort' (Gadamer 1976: xii).[2] This paper briefly traces the history of the development of hermeneutics in the Vedic ritual exegetical tradition which was later appropriated and used with great effect by many branches of Hindu thought, including the philosophical sūtras and the commentaries on them. It will look particularly at instances in which the classical Indian hermeneutic method actually facilitates shifts in the doctrines of rebirth and prakṛti, in the work of Śaṅkara and Vyāsa, respectively. The goal is to reveal the ways in which Indian hermeneutic techniques enabled continuity of tradition on one hand, and also the creative transformation of traditions in response to the need to reconcile multiple

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[2] Serious engagement with Hermeneutics is generally associated with Schleiermacher in the west, while in the Indian Sanskrit tradition there is evidence of an exegetical tradition going back to a hoary past and can be first located in the Brāhmaṇa texts which tried to make sense of the Vedic rituals which had become difficult to understand by the time of the Brāhmaṇas (Pandurangi 2006:14f; Potter 1998:4; Clooney 1993:24, Belvalkar and Ranade 1927:30f). This paper does not engage in any serious comparison between western and Sanskrit hermeneutical theories. Those interested can consult the many papers that touch on that area in the volume Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy edited by D.P. Chattopadhyaya, Lester Embree and Jitendranath Mohanty. The paper by Krishna Roy in that volume also deals specifically with Hermeneutics in the Indian context.

canons. In this subtle commentarial process of transforming the tradition, we can see ways in which the supposed conservatism of hermeneutic processes, as critiqued in Gadamer's own work, is refined by a careful hermeneutic reading of the means by which writers use these techniques to complement tradition with other newer ideas. From a historical perspective, we can observe the pressure of plural traditions operating on these authors, leaving a trace in the hermeneutic methods adopted in their own work.

The Vedas, in the form that have come down to us, are not the composition of one single author nor do they belong to one time and place. Exegesis and hermeneutics being the basis of any religious tradition (Olivelle 1993:7 citing Jonathan Z. Smith), the authors of the Brāhmaṇa texts attempted to make sense of the mantras of the Vedas, which were primarily meant for use in sacrifices (kriyārtha) by using many interpretive strategies like 'etymology, history, mythology or … the assumption of some sort of a mystic correspondence between things' (Pandurangi 2006:40; Raju 1985:16; Ram Gopal 1959:358; Belvalkar and Ranade 1927:39). We can thus consider the authors of the Brāhmaṇas to be the first hermeneuts in the Vedic tradition.

Towards the end of the Vedic Age (ca. 500 BCE–400 CE), a class of literature called the Kalpasūtras which contained the Śrautasūtras (ŚS) (sūtras dealing with Vedic sacrifices), the Gṛhyasūtras (GṛhS) (sūtras dealing with domestic rites), and Dharmasūtras (DS) (sūtras dealing, amongst other things, with worldly customs and customary law or jurisprudence) came into being, composed in short, condensed sentences called sūtras. The ŚS and the GṛhS could be viewed as handy manuals for performance of both Vedic and domestic rituals. These manuals became a necessity, as Chakrabarti mentions, when the procedures of the rituals became too complicated for people to follow. Thus, the Āśvalāyana (Āśv.) ŚS says 'Kalpas have been written by teachers like Śaunaka and others in view of the limitations of man's ability' (tatra puruṣaśaktiparihāram upalakṣya śaunakādibhir ācāryaiḥ kalpaḥ praṇītāḥ, Āśv. ŚS. I.1.1 cited by Chakrabarti in Pandurangi 2006:39). It was in this atmosphere that Jaimini, for whom the Vedas are the ultimate authority in all matters, also composed his Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtras (PMS) (ca. second century BCE). The choice of the word mīmāṃsā for PMS is significant in this connection. Mīmāṃsā and its cognates are found in Vedic literature often meaning deliberation. 'The word mīmāṃsā means discussion, enquiry, deliberation and disputation on some point of doubt or ambiguity for reaching a reasonable solution' (Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī 3.1.6; quoted by Chakrabarti in Pandurangi 2006:37). Ujjvala Jha has pointed out how early texts like the Taittirīya Saṃhitā, Aitareya Āraṇyaka, Bṛhadāraṇya and Chāndogya Upaniṣads use words like vicikitsā in the sense of mīmāṃsā (coming to a conclusion) and mīmāṃsante itself denoting coming to a conclusion after considering doubts (ibid), which indicates an attempt to arrive at an understanding of texts through some reflection which were not easily understood at the surface level alone (Jha in Pandurangi 2006:25–6). The reference to a number of his predecessors by Jaimini in his PMS also lends credence to the view that he had inherited a rich tradition of Mīmāṃsā ideas and rules in the milieu. These rules were systematised over a long period of time and Jaimini brought them together in his PMS (Pandurangi 2006:26)

in a coherent manner for the purposes of making sense of the numerous sacrificial instructions found primarily in the Brāhmaṇas as well as in the ŚS.

The philosophical sūtras that accepted the authority of the Vedas (belonging to the āstika schools) were also composed in this period. As the sūtra style is a condensed form of composition using as few words as possible to convey a lot of meaning, it became necessary for people well versed in those knowledge systems to write commentaries to explain the sūtras themselves. This was particularly necessary for the sūtras of the philosophical texts dealing as they did with questions of metaphysics and epistemology amongst other things. But for these commentators who wrote bhāṣyas on these sūtra texts many of these texts would have been unintelligible. In a sense, commentaries and commentaries on commentaries are themselves testimony to the long hermeneutical tradition that continued to hold sway in the various branches of Sanskrit learning (Olivelle 1993:8). The attempt of every commentator was 'not to reconstruct the [original sūtra] text as the author intended it to be, but rather to decide the best version or the one the writer should have written' [based on the commentator's own understanding of the system] (Raja 1976:10). But what distinguishes the interpretive strategies of the later philosophical sūtra texts and the commentarial literature that followed is that the commentators positioned themselves within a hermeneutic map which had been systematised in the PMS by the second century BCE by Jaimini (Clooney 1993:24). Jaimini's great contribution was the organisation of the technique of interpretation in a five-step model called an adhikaraṇa. An adhikaraṇa proceeds gradually from the text or passage under discussion (viṣaya) which allows more than one meaning/interpretation, to stating the doubt regarding which interpretation could be the correct one (samasyā/saṃśaya). The third step is postulating one meaning and examining how reasonable it is (pūrvapakṣa), which is then discarded as not sound in the fourth step (uttara). This finally leads to the fifth step which is the arrival of the correct meaning called nirṇaya/siddhānta (Roy in Chattopadhyaya 1992:293–4; Pandurangi 2006:16). This methodology later came to be systematised into the six maxims or six liṅgas which can be viewed as the main set of hermeneutical principles within which could be accommodated many subsets. These six rules were broadly understood as ekavākyatā (the unity of meaning between the beginning (upakrama) and end (upasaṃhāra) of a work), arthavāda (embellishments), abhyāsa (repetition), apūrva (novelty), upapatti (method of argument within boundaries) and phala (fruit). They were so general that, when faced with statements that can have opposite meanings, it was possible to find justification for one's point of view using these principles themselves selectively. Thus, yeoman service was done by Jaimini's PMS as well as by Śabara's commentary on it (writen between the second and fourth centuries CE) (Clooney 1993:24), which together provided normative rules of interpretation within its ritual exegesis which was then available for others to follow through their own interpretation.

Bādarāyaṇa's Brahmasūtras (BS), belonging to the same Mīmāṃsā tradition, freely used Jaimini's rules of interpretation to lay down the principles of Vedānta. Clooney has demonstrated how Bādarāyaṇa closely follows the methodology of Pūrvamīmāṃsā (PM) in its construction of the sūtras of the BS, by dividing its chapters (adhyāyas) into pādas (sections) and connecting the pādas themselves

within units called adhikaraṇas in order to maintain an overall theory of ekavākyatā or unity of ideas amongst all the adhikaraṇas and in the text as a whole (1993: 45–58; 59–63). Pandurangi has also pointed out in detail how Śaṅkara follows the hermeneutic principles of PM while explaining the BS to fit his Advaita Vedānta philosophy and the great respect Śaṅkara extends to PM in his BS commentary (1994:415–23). In his interpretation of the BS, Śaṅkara uses the grand Mīmāṃsā principle of coherence of meaning between the start (upakrama) and the end (upasaṃhāra) of an adhikaraṇa, as we will witness in the ekabhavika example (immediate rebirth theory) chosen from the BS for this paper. But Śaṅkara, as opposed to Jaimini, who was mainly concerned with making sense of the Brāhmaṇa and ŚS material, extends the adhikaraṇa principle to cover the Upaniṣads as well (for more see Pandurangi 2006: passim, and Clooney 1993: passim). In the second example chosen in this paper, I try to demonstrate how the depiction of prakṛti as one of the Absolute realities in Sāṅkhya has been brought in line with Upaniṣadic ideas by using these hermeneutic strategies.

Unlike modern western philosophy which reveres 'innovation and individual creativity' and 'underplays the role of tradition and continuity in all creative and critical thought' (King 1999:7), Indian philosophy bases itself on a tradition of previous thinkers. Thus, in Indian philosophy, designated generally as darśana, the 'discovery of new meanings' is very often governed not just by 'speculative inquiry alone' but also by factors that are in consonance with the beginnings of the darśana in the first place. And the origins of a darśana can, as Ninian Smart remarks, ' ... usually go back a very long way, sometimes to disappear into the recesses of unknown antiquity' (Smart 1964:125). All āstika darśanas in Hindu thought also proclaim their allegiance to Vedic sources. Keeping in mind these various factors of the developments of darśana in the Indian context, this paper tries to show the dynamics of meaning change that occur within a philosophical darśana and to reveal how each darśana skillfully negotiates the various levels of meaning, straddling between the demands of reason and developments in societal structures on the one hand, and fidelity to the origins of the darśana on the other.

By the time that the commentarial literature on the different schools of philosophy came into being, the close connection between many beliefs like karma as cause for the effect of a future life in saṃsāra, the acceptance of a sūkṣmaśarīra (subtle body) that travels to another world after leaving the body at death, ethical behaviour involving control of the senses (vairāgya), and acting without a sense of agency for the results of one's action (niṣkāma karma), renunciation of greed, etc., were all well entrenched in the religious and metaphysical beliefs of the Hindus. The path of dharma lived within these various dimensions ensured gradual mokṣa, the highest value to be achieved by a Hindu. There was also the alternative path of total renunciation mentioned in such Upaniṣads as the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (Bṛ.Up. 4.2.22) and the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (Chānd.Up. 5.10.1–2) and also advocated by the Dharmasūtra literature for attaining mokṣa. It is in this milieu that most of the commentarial literature came to be written and we can then appreciate how the same concept, denoted by the same word, can be interpreted differently by the commentators belonging to different darśanas.

The sūtra style allowed the early commentators to exercise their freedom to explain the sūtras in the way they could best make sense within a darśana. Their prime concern was to be faithful to the initial formulation of the metaphysics of the āstika schools they were commenting on. In this enterprise, they were guided by fidelity to the śruti (Vedic corpus) and were influenced by the age they lived in. While some schools exhibit their loyalty to śruti strongly like, for instance, Pūrvamīmāṃsā and Vedānta, others like Nyāya may not outwardly show such evidence. But all the six systems of philosophy will take care not to go counter to the basic Philosophical categories within a Darśana (Philosophical School) śruti utterances and will try to introduce new interpretations within the limits of śruti, thus preserving their āstika status.

Rebirth theories in the Upaniṣads

The Br̥.Up. discusses at great length the process of transmigration of the self into a new body starting from section 4.3.35 and to the end of the third brāḥmaṇa. I give below the translation of the relevant verses: (translations are from Swami Mādhavananda's The Br̥hadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad with Śaṅkara's commentary)

> When this body becomes thin then as a mango ... is detached from its stalk, so does this infinite being, completely detaching himself from the parts of the body, again go ... to particular bodies ... (4.3.36). Just as a king when he wishes to depart ... the leaders of the village approach him, so do all the organs approach the departing man at the time of death, when breathing becomes difficult ... (4.3.38). Then the self departs either through the eye ... or through any other part of the body. When it departs, the vital force follows; when the vital force departs, all the organs follow. Then the self has particular consciousness, and goes to the body which is related to that consciousness. It is followed by knowledge, work and past experience (tam vidyākarmaṇī samanvārabhete; Br̥.Up. 4.4.2).

Following this, the next verse immediately states that the self takes birth in another body almost at once:

> Just as the leech (caterpillar) supported on a straw goes to the end of it, takes hold of another support and contracts itself, so does the self throw this body aside – makes it senseless – takes hold of another support, and contracts itself (evam evāyam ātmedam śarīram nihatya, avidyām gamayitvā, anyam ākramam ākramyātmānam upasaṃharati) (ibid 4.4.3).

The immediate rebirth of the self in another body is supported by Śaṅkara, in his commentary on this verse, which clearly admits the formation of a new body, right after death. Thus he says:

> There [in the new body] the organs, under the sway of the person's past work, are combined so as to manifest their functions (tatra ca karmavaśāt

karaṇāni labdhavṛttīni saṃhanyante) ... When the organs have been arranged, the presiding deities such as fire come to the body to help the organ of speech and so forth. This is the process of the formation of the new body (eṣa dehāntarārambhavidhiḥ) (Śāṅkarabhāṣya (ŚBh.) on Bṛ.Up. 4.4.3).

In the above passages there is a clear indication of the self taking on a new birth (body), in keeping with its karma, almost immediately after the earlier body dies. But we have to note that the Bṛ.Up. also has another version of a person after death, reaching the world of the devas (devaloka) or that of the pitṛs (pitṛloka) and staying in the world of Hiraṇyagarbha or the moon-world (candra) depending, respectively, on whether the path of meditation or the path of rituals had been practiced while alive. The ones who practiced meditation do not return to earth in another life (amī araṇye ... śraddhām ... satyam upāsate te ... brahmalokeṣu ... parāvato vasanti teṣām ... na punarāvṛttiḥ, ŚBh. on Bṛ. Up. 6.2.15); while the ones who followed the path of rituals return to earth, after enjoying the fruits of the ritualistic karma (atha ye yajñena dānena tapasā lokān jayanti te ... pṛthivīm prāpyānnam bhavanti te punaḥ puruṣāgnau hūyante ..., ibid 6.2.16). The Upaniṣad even adds a third category of those who neither follow the path of meditation nor the path of rituals and are condemned to become different kinds of insects. Thus, it is safe to assume that there were many theories in vogue, regarding transmigration, in the religious and philosophical circles by the time of the Bṛ.Up.

It seems that, gradually, the first passage mentioning immediate transmigration into another body almost went out of circulation and it is the second model that has gained sanction and is generally the understanding of punarjanma (rebirth) in Hinduism today. While the belief in an immediate rebirth is still prevalent in other philosophical schools like Yoga, for instance, called ekabhavika by Vyāsa, popular Hinduism believes in the passage to another world and then returning to a birth in consonance with one's past karma, after an interval. One can hazard a guess for this prevalent belief to be due to many influences. One of which could be the tremendous importance that Vedānta ideas and Śaṅkara's commentary on the BS, in particular, acquired in this formative period, i.e. between the composition of the BS (ca. second century CE) to Śaṅkara's time (ca. eighth century CE). Many factors, including perhaps the personality of Śaṅkara, combined to make Śaṅkara's Advaita the most influential thought in the country for a very long time. Scholars have recognised the overpowering influence that Śaṅkara and his teachings had on the tradition (Raju 1985:383). This is clearly visible when all later commentators of Advaita like Miśra, Prakāśātman, and others, adopting diverse interpretations of Advaita, claim to be interpreting Śaṅkara's Advaita in line with Śaṅkara's own thought (Clooney 1993:17–8). Each later commentator is keen to claim that his understanding of Śaṅkara is right and better than those who went before him.

Given the importance of the BS and also the influence of Śaṅkara in the milieu, it was the Advaita ideal which came to be accepted in the tradition which includes the transmigration theory as well. But Śaṅkara did not start the theory and, as we saw above, comments faithfully on the Bṛ.Up. passage that advocates immediate rebirth after death. It is the BS of Bādarāyaṇa that discounted the immediate rebirth theory

and it is Śaṅkara's commentary on the BS that has somehow come to stay in Hinduism. One has to believe that whatever was Śaṅkara's earlier views regarding rebirth, he came to accept this gradual rebirth theory in preference to the immediate rebirth, since his commentaries on Bhagavadgītā 6.41 and 8.25 support the theory of gradual rebirth without referring to the immediate rebirth at all (lokān ... vāsam anubhūya ... vibhūtimatāṃ gṛhe abhijāyate 6.41 ŚBh; tatra candramasi bhavam ... phalam iṣṭādhikārī karmī ... prāpya bhuktvā tatkṣayād nivartate 8.25. ŚBh). Unlike in the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya wherein Śaṅkara brings in alternate views like immediate rebirth as the pūrvapakṣa opinion he is happy to just accept the gradual rebirth mentioned in the Bhagavadgītā under these verses. Surely his stand in the Gītā also helped in cementing the belief in the rebirth of an individual after an interval, rather than immediately after death, in Hinduism.

Our main task, here, is to try and find the reasons as to why the BS itself does not recognise this immediate rebirth and why Bādarāyaṇa opted for the transmigration after a sojourn in other worlds (lokas) ignoring the immediate rebirth. The BS was composed in a milieu where considerable philosophical and polemical activity had taken place and was continuing, not only within the āstika schools themselves but also in interaction with the nāstika schools (those which did not accept the authority of the Vedas), in particular with the Buddhists. The āstika schools, and especially Pūrvamīmāṃsā and Uttaramīmāṃsā (Vedānta) which upheld the sanctity of the Vedas, had a daunting task to hold on to their belief in the Vedas, in the face of rigorous attacks from the nāstikas. There was, therefore, an attempt to find rational explanations for the beliefs already hinted at in the Upaniṣads. It is in this period that the PMS and its commentaries as well as the BS and Śaṅkara's commentary on it were written. These authors were challenged to defend by argumentation the supreme authority of the Vedas. Both Kumārila and Śaṅkara played a crucial role in defending the āstika viewpoints in this important phase of the growth of Hindu thought which is evident in the writings of both the commentators, Kumārila and Śaṅkara (Halbfass 1991:56–7; 60–2; Raju 1985:40; Pandurangi 2006:26). The Upaniṣads already assign a central role for the theory of karma to explain many a metaphysical idea and it is reasonable to assume that it must have also played a crucial role in the development and rethinking of the topic of transmigration as well.

The BS of Bādarāyaṇa has a special place in the philosophical literature of the Hindus and as Potter remarks its views carried great weight in setting the trend for many an idea (Potter 1998:119). Bādarāyaṇa has opted to ignore the immediate transmigration mentioned in the Br.Up. and opted for the return of the self after travelling to other worlds. In BS III.1.8, talking about rebirth, Bādarāyaṇa states that the 'self returns after the actions are exhausted, along with the residual karma, as known from the Upaniṣads and smṛtis, along the path which it followed while going, as also differently' (kṛtātyaye'nuśayavāndṛṣṭasmṛtibhyāṃ yathetam anevaṃ ca). But earlier in III.1.1, Bādarāyaṇa states that for acquiring the next body, the self moves out enveloped (by the subtle elements) (tadantarapratipattau raṃhati saṃpariṣvaktaḥ praśnanirūpaṇābhyām). When we compare this passage with the earlier statement in the Br.Up. (4.4.2), we find that Bādarāyaṇa has introduced two points in these two sūtras. One is the self moving out 'enveloped by the subtle elements' in BS III.1.1 and the other is the return of the self along with 'residual

karma' in III.1.8. It seems that Bādarāyaṇa has substituted 'enveloped by the subtle elements' for 'knowledge (jñāna), karma and past experience (pūrvaprajñā)' mentioned in Br.Up. 4.4.2.

Śaṅkara, the commentator, can only work within the parameters of the sūtra. The mention of the subtle elements presents him with a problem, for elements cannot exist without a support, whether gross or subtle. He has to therefore resolve this by introducing a material basis for the subtle elements. But I am anticipating. Let us first follow the argument as it develops. Since the composition of the BS is much later than the classical Upaniṣads it goes without saying that Bādarāyaṇa must have been aware of them before he composed the BS. Thus, the statements in the Br.Up. regarding rebirth are earlier to the composition of the BS and we have already looked at them. Confronted with Bādarāyaṇa's view in BS III.1.8, Śaṅkara, while commenting on it, does not ignore the earlier view of immediate rebirth as Bādarāyaṇa does, but puts that in the mouth of a pūrvapakṣin. He, without dismissing it, elaborates it, giving voice to alternative views on a topic under discussion.

We will first look at the way Śaṅkara deals with Br.Up. 4.4.2 and then examine the discussion pertaining to the BS passages. Thus, as mentioned, Śaṅkara does not seem to be troubled with the mechanism of rebirth immediately after death described in Br.Up. 4.4.2. According to this passage in the Br.Up. the 'self has particular consciousness then [at the time of death] and goes to the body related to that consciousness'. But the following line, i.e. 'it (self) is followed by knowledge, work and past experience', gives Śaṅkara a scope to bring in the belief about latent impressions, which had probably gained legitimacy by then, i.e. the belief that experiences in the new birth can only come if there are impressions of past experiences present in that consciousness. He further adds that 'the particular consciousness can be understood on the analogy of dreams, in consequence of its past work' (tadā eṣa ātmā savijñāno bhavati svapna iva viśeṣavijñānavān bhavati karmavaśāt). Śaṅkara elaborates ' ... every body has at that moment a consciousness which consists of impressions in the form of particular modifications of his mind (regarding the next life) that are induced by his past work' (antaḥkaraṇavṛttiviśeṣāśritavāsanātmakaviśeṣavijñānena sarvo lokaḥ etasmin kale savijñāno bhavati). He supports the immediate birth by concluding that 'the impressions called past experience, under the control of the person's knowledge and work stretch out, like a leech from the body ... and build another body in accordance with his past work' (jalūkāvat santataiva svapnakāla iva karmakṛtam dehād dehāntaram ārabhate hṛdayasthaiva). Thus, we see there is no reference to the self going to the world of Brahmā or moon-world, through the devayāna or the pitṛyāna in these commentaries on the Br.Up. passages. There is a straightforward transition to the next birth. However, it seems that the introduction of the words 'knowledge', 'work' and 'past experience' in the Br.Up., gave Bādarāyaṇa scope for another interpretation and that is what Bādarāyaṇa seems to do under BS III.1.8, as pointed out earlier.

For a commentator like Śaṅkara, who is already familiar with the Br.Up.'s reference to immediate rebirth, commenting on the BS which ignores it must have been a

delicate task, as he is now faced with a dilemma. The pūrvapakṣa device of stating objections in the voice of an imagined adversary, comes in handy and in his bhāṣya on BS III.1.1 Śaṅkara puts the Br.Up. reference to immediate rebirth like a leech, in the mouth of the pūrvapakṣin. He does not dismiss it and just elaborates it without contradicting the immediate next birth explicitly (nanvanyā śrutiḥ jalūkāvat pūrvadehaṃ na muñcati yāvan na dehāntaram ākramatīti darśayati tad yathā [tṛṇajalāyukā iti Br.Up.4.4.3]. The role of the pūrvapakṣin that commentators service in giving voice to prevalent views on a topic under discussion comes out vividly here. Thus, though the reference to an immediate afterlife is not mentioned by Bādarāyaṇa in BS III.1.1, its prevalence in the milieu is evidenced by the voice of the pūrvapakṣin. There is some discussion on water by Śaṅkara under BS III.1.2, as it plays a prominent part in the funeral rites and symbolises many things.[3] But under III.1.3 and III 1.6, Śaṅkara introduces the concept of support for the subtle elements to move out along with the self, and tries to tie up the material support that the sūkṣmaśarīra (subtle body) needs with its being the support of the potency of rites earlier performed. Thus, Śaṅkara says:[4]

> But since the moving out of the organs is not possible unless they have something as their support, it becomes evident ... water too, which is their material basis, moves out with them, in association with other elements. For the organs cannot either go or stay anywhere unless they have a material support, since this is not noticed in any living creature. And this material support or the waters ... associated with the rites ... become the unseen potency of the rites performed ... and envelope the being who had performed those rites, etc., and carry them to the other world for the fruition of their acts.

We can see, even here, no convincing arguments have been given for the interval to occur between one birth and another.

One has to assume that the ideas introduced by Bādarāyaṇa were powerful in the Vedāntic tradition at the time, as evidenced by the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (Chānd.Up.), for instance, and that it also appealed to his (Bādarāyaṇa's) own way of thinking. The introduction of the 'subtle elements' and the return of the self 'with residual karma' in BS III.1.1 and III.1.8, respectively, by Bādarāyaṇa, under two adhikaraṇas, called as tadantarapratipattau (with reference to obtaining the next body) and kṛtātyaye (after actions are exhausted), respectively, changed the whole theory of rebirth radically from an immediate to a remote or gradual future birth. In this tilt, Bādarāyaṇa's efforts seem to arrive at a coherent meaning (ekavākyatā)

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[3] ...karmasamavāyin yaśca āpaḥ śraddhāśabdoditāḥ saha karmabhir dyulokākhye'gnau hūyanta iti vakṣyati; tasmād api apāṃ bāhulyaprasiddhiḥ. bāhulyācca apśabdena sarveṣām eva dehabījānāṃ bhūtasūkṣmāṇām upādānam iti niravadyam (ŚBh. on BS III.1.2).

[4] (a) sā ca prāṇānaṃ gatir nāśrayam antareṇa sambhavatītyataḥ prāṇagatiprayuktā tadāśrayabhūtānāṃ apāṃ api bhūtāntaropasṛṣṭānāṃ gatir arthād avagamyate; na hi nirāśrayāḥ prāṇāḥ kvacid gacchanti tiṣṭhanti vā jīvato darśanāt (ŚBh. on BS III.1.3). (b) tā āhavanīye hutāḥ sūkṣmā āhūtyo'pūrvarūpāḥ satyaḥ tān iṣṭādhikāriṇa āśrayanti ... tatastāḥ śraddhāpūrvakakarmasamavāyinya āhutimayya āpo'pūrvarūpāḥ satyaḥ tān iṣṭādhikāriṇo jīvān pariveṣṭya amuṃ lokaṃ phaladānāya nayantīti yat (ŚBh. On BS III.1.6).

with the Chānd.Up. statements. The Chānd.Up., thus, does not mention the immediate rebirth of the self but the return gradually to earth of the one who has followed the path of karma.[5] It also advocates water as the material support for the subtle elements[6] and also mentions the self staying in candraloka (moon world) till its karma is exhausted when it returns by the very route by which it went at death (5.10.4). The Chānd.Up. also supports the self coming back with residual karma and describes the kind of birth that the self will attain, depending on its dhārmic or adhārmic past lives (5.10.7).

Bādarāyaṇa found the theory of going to another world, enjoying the results of one's deeds and then coming back to the world for rebirth more logical, perhaps because it was in keeping with the theory of karma. Thus, if agniṣṭoma assures one of svarga, it cannot be falsified by an immediate rebirth but has to attain what it professes to give as a reward for the karma fulfilled. As already noticed, the BS largely leans towards the ideas in the Chānd.Up. and it comes as no surprise that the reference to an immediate rebirth in the Br.Up. goes unacknowledged by Bādarāyaṇa since the Chānd.Up. does not mention it. In fairness to Bādarāyaṇa, however, one can also add that he perhaps gave credence to the theory acknowledged in a number of early Upaniṣads and decided to ignore the ekabhavika mentioned in the Br.Up.

We know that the advocates of karma (rituals) and varṇadharma were powerful in this period of the composition of the philosophical sūtras and their commentaries. The acknowledgement of śabda or āgama (Vedas) as a pramāṇa (testimony) for right knowledge also indicates the hold that rituals held in philosophical circles in the milieu. The elaborate discussion of jñānakarmasamuccaya even in Śaṅkara can only make sense for a society that held rituals in great esteem (Halbfass 1991:55f). It seems that the strong pull of the theory of karma as well as the need to validate the Vedic claims of the results of rituals performed in an afterlife eventually makes Bādarāyaṇa opt for a gradual rebirth after an interval. And by choosing the sojourn of the self in another world before rebirth, Bādarāyaṇa has opened the door for Śaṅkara to legitimise the path of the devas (devayāna) and the path of the pitṛs (pitṛyāna) which are also mentioned in the Chānd.Up. (5.3.2). Śaṅkara thus, following the footsteps of Bādarāyaṇa, uses the Chānd.Up. to defend the gradual rebirth theory and defend it as part of Vedic eschatology. Śaṅkara makes it abundantly clear that he is aiming at maintaining ekavākyatā with such Chānd.Up statements as V.3.3, V.9.1, and V.10.8 and Br.Up. IV 1.1–4 in this context, using the Mīmāṃsā principles like ekavākyatā, arthavāda, upapatti, etc. It is this rebirth view that subsequently holds strong both in philosophical and in religious circles to this day.

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[5] See Chānd.Up. 5.10.1–2, 5.10.3–4, and 5.10.5–6: tasmin yāvat saṃpātamuṣitvāthaitam evādhvānaṃ punar nivartante yathetam ākāśamākāśādvāyuṃ vāyurbhūtvā dhūmo bhavati (ibid 5.10.5).
[6] iti tu pañcamyāmāhutāvāpaḥ puruṣavacaso bhavantīti (ibid 5.9.1).

Ekabhavika theory in the Yoga school

The ekabhavika (immediate rebirth) was, however, not completely forgotten and continues to figure in other āstika darśanas such as Yoga, for instance. There is a lengthy discussion regarding karma and rebirth in the commentary by Vyāsa under Yogasūtra (YS) II.13. This sūtra deals with the results of karma in future lives. In this context, the question is raised as to whether (1) one karma causes one birth; (2) one karma causes many births; (3) many karmas cause many births; and finally (4) many karmas accomplish one birth. After discussing the pros and cons of this speculation, Vyāsa declares that the mixed collection of karma, done between one's birth and death, by arrangement as primary and secondary, come together at the time of death in a single impulse; they then bring about death and also result in one single birth.[7] Vyāsa goes to the extent of using the very word ekabhavika stating 'that karmāśaya is known as ekabhavika, i.e. the cause of one birth'.[8]

Can ekabhavika be understood as 'just one immediate rebirth' can be a question. It is here that the 'hermeneutics of prejudices' that Gadamer talks about so eloquently comes into play (Gadamer 1976). 'Criticism can only function from within a particular tradition and from a historical and cultural perspective' according to King (1999:16). 'The attempt of philosophising without a bias or prejudice is itself a bias or prejudice and we feel that man is perpetually condemned to espouse some values or disvalues' as Roy points out (in Chattopadhyaya 1992:290). I would also add that prejudices can also extend to the way some words are understood by those within a particular traditional, cultural world, while understood differently by those outside it. For instance, according to a couple of western scholars of Indology, ekabhavika need not denote only an immediate rebirth. However, when I mentioned ekabhavika to three Sanskritists (one a grammarian, another a Naiyāyika and the third an Advaita Vedāntin) they all, without fail, understood it to mean an immediate rebirth and even added that it was opposed to punarjanma. I am reminded of what Jamison mentions as the semantic nexus of words and grammatical constructions in this context: 'All words have a complex nexus of associations, of primary and secondary meanings, of habitual collocations available to the speakers of the language and the inhabitants of the culture it expresses' (Jamison 1999:11). Alasdair MacIntyre also draws attention to the cultural context of understanding words and concepts in his book After Virtue (1974:111–13).

I would therefore take the liberty of arguing that the word ekabhavika clearly denotes one immediate rebirth as opposed to the word punarjanma which stands for another birth not necessarily immediate.

Vyāsa makes it clear that by ekabhavika he means 'one immediate birth' by the way he has structured the arguments under YS II.13. Thus, he not only states that 'the mixed collection of good and bad latent deposit of karma done in the interval

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[7] tasmāj janmaprāyaṇāntare kṛtaḥ puṇyāpuṇyakarmāśayapracayo vicitraḥ pradhānopasarjanabhāvenāvasthitaḥ prāyaṇābhivyakta ekaghaṭṭakena militvā maraṇaṃ prasādhya sammūrcchita ekam eva janma karoti (VBh. on YS.II.13).
[8] ataḥ ekabhavikaḥ karmāśaya ukta iti (ibid).

between one's birth and death, arranged as primary and secondary, manifest themselves at the time of death by coming together in one impulse; then bringing about death they result in a single birth' but also adds that the span of life of that birth (āyuḥ) and the kind of experience of that birth (bhoga) are determined by that karmāśaya itself and thus by no other karmāśaya. By also stating further that this karmāśaya which is ekabhavika causes all the three results, i.e. janma (birth), āyuḥ (life-span) and bhoga (kind of experience), it is clear that Vyāsa means a single birth after death by the word.[9] Thus, it is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for the coming into being of the next birth.

There is support for the meaning of ekabhavika as causing a single rebirth in Vācaspati Miśra's understanding of this term in his Tattvavaiśāradī. Miśra derives the word bhavika by adding the affix ṭhan (ika) in the sense of possession (mathvarthīya) and explains ekabhavika to mean 'that which possesses one birth only and not more than one birth'. Pāṇini's sūtra II.1.49 supports this meaning of one birth.[10]

Yoga does not describe the path that the self takes after death, whether it is devayāna, pitṛyāna and so on. It is not overly concerned with the result of sacrifices (1) because Vedic ritual involves violence and (2) because Yoga is primarily concerned with the purification of the mind. However, there is a need to explain Yoga's ekabhavika in the context of its belief in the threefold karma, i.e. sañcita (accumulated), kriyamāṇa (ongoing) and prārabdha (already begun in this life), till the attainment of kaivalya. Vyāsa adopts many strategies to reconcile these different karmas in light of the ekabhavika theory.

Unlike the BS, on which Śaṅkara builds his edifice, Vyāsa does not get much help from the YS in this regard. Vyāsa starts with distinguishing the vāsanās, the subliminal or latent impressions of innumerable lives that lie latent in the citta (mind), from the karmāśaya or collection of good and bad latent deposit of karma done in one's life (YS IV.8–10). It is the karmāśaya or collection of good and bad karmāśaya done in one's life, which gives rise to the immediate next life, even though a caveat is added to say that even this karmāśaya need not all fructify in the immediate next birth and some of them can carry on for an unlimited time.[11] So we now get a scenario where, even though there is an immediate rebirth due to all the karmas done in one lifetime coming together at the time of death, not all karmas done in that lifetime get fructified in the immediate rebirth.

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[9] tacca janma tenaiva karmaṇā labdhāyuṣkam bhavati. tasminnāyuṣi tenaiva karmaṇā bhogaḥ sampādyata iti. asau karmāśayo janmāyurbhogahetutvāt trivipāko'bhidhīyata iti. ata ekabhavikaḥ karmāśaya ukta iti (VBh. under YS II.13).
[10] eko bhava ekabhavaḥ 'pūrvakālaika' ityādinā samāsaḥ, ekabhavo'syāstīti matvarthīyaṣṭhan. (Tattvavaiśāradī under VBh. on YS II.13, p.168) The examples of usage with 'eka' like 'ekanāthaḥ' (having one master) and 'ekabhikṣā' (begging once a day) that Pāṇini gives under Aṣṭādhyāyī II.1.49 all support translating 'ekabhavikaḥ' as one birth.
[11] kleśakarmavipākānubhavanirvartitābhis tu vāsanābhir anādikālasammūrcchitam idaṃ cittaṃ vicitrīkṛtaṃ sarvato matsyajālaṃ granthibhir ivātatam iti etā anekabhavapūrvikā vāsanāḥ. yas tv ayaṃ karmāśaya eṣa ekaikabhavika ukta iti. ye saṃskārāḥ smṛtihetavas tā vāsanāś cānādikālīnā iti (VBh. on YS II.13).

The unfructified karmāśaya can follow any one of the following three paths, says Vyāsa:[12]

> i. Some of them can be destroyed without fruition in future lives. In other words, they cease to exist.
> ii. Some of them can merge with other important action.
> iii. Some will stay dormant for long, till they are overcome by an important action that fructifies in the immediate next life.

While later commentators like Vācaspati Miśra, Vijñānabhikṣu and others will analyse these categories in great detail, Vyāsa just declares that 'Since the place, time, and cause of manifestation (of karma) is not determinable, the course of karma is mysterious and not discernible' and adds that the general rule of one birth (ekabhavika) is not destroyed by the exception; therefore karmāśaya is declared to cause one birth (ekabhavika).[13]

We thus find that the immediate rebirth theory of the Br̥.Up finds a place in the Yoga school of Patañjali. However, I would argue that the powerful position of Advaita Vedānta, both in philosophy and in religion in the milieu, had already decided the issue in favour of the gradual rebirth theory in the minds of the Hindus.

Reconciliation of prakr̥ti as ultimate in Sāṅkhya-Yoga with the Upaniṣads

In the second example, the divided allegiance of āstika Sāṅkhya thinkers to both the Vedāntic texts and the Sāṅkhya world-view, leads to a similar process of hermeneutic reconciliation, in this case through refined metaphysical distinctions in the work of Vyāsa. The Upaniṣads declare that Brahman/ātman (Self/self) is the only permanent, ultimate entity. But we have the school of Sāṅkhya-Yoga advocating the existence of two ultimates, i.e. prakr̥ti and puruṣa, if we can ignore for the time being, the Sāṅkhya-Yoga belief in many puruṣas. This school is convinced of the permanent nature of prakr̥ti for various reasons, but mainly because they believe in the theory of pariṇāma (change) within the broader causal theory of change or effect being an actualisation of what is already there in the cause or kāraṇa. Since change is real here, within those parameters, Sāṅkhya-Yoga accounts for all material products being, in the final analysis, just the eternal prakr̥ti/pradhāna (Sāṅkhyakārikā (SK) 8 & 9). The proof of the existence of prakr̥ti is also traced to anumāna or inference and śabda/āgama (testimony of the Vedas) (SK 6). Thus, SK. summarises the reasons for the belief in an ultimate, insentient prakr̥ti as the necessity for an ultimate cause, limitless and infinite, because the effects are finite and limited.

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[12] yo hi adr̥ṣṭajanmavedanīyo'niyatavipākas tasya trayī gatiḥ. kr̥tasyāvipākvasya vināśaḥ, pradhānakarmaṇyāvāpagamanaṃ vā, niyatavipākapradhānakarmaṇābhibhūtasya vā ciram avasthānam iti (ibid).

[13] tadvipākasyaiva deśakālanimittānavadhāraṇādiyaṃ karmagatir vicitrā durvijñānā ceti. na cotsargasyāpavādān nivr̥ttir iti ekabhavikaḥ karmāśayo'nujñāyata iti (ibid).

Sāṅkhya attributes the products being of a sāttvic, rājasic or tāmasic nature due to the presence of the three guṇas, sattva, rajas and tamas, in varying proportions in individual products. Thus, combining satkāryavāda (the presence of the effects potentially within the cause) with the theory that effects can only have the properties that the cause has, prakṛti is defined as having the three guṇas (SK 11). Another postulate is that the nature of the guṇas being in constant motion, prakṛti is forever in movement.

Now these above characteristics defining prakṛti are not in conformity with the contents of the Upaniṣads which the Sāṅkhya-Yoga also professes to follow. Śaṅkara has discussed this at great length in his commentary under BS II.1.1–12. Sāṅkhya-Yoga has the task of defending its metaphysical belief in the eternal nature of prakṛti without violating the Upaniṣadic stance, which it subscribes to as an āstika school.

SK, as noted above, infers the existence of both prakṛti and puruṣa from inference, and from the testimony of āgama. And prakṛti specifically is inferred from the effects and as the reverse of the nature of the evolved products (SK 9 & 10). But what is interesting is that the SK also has the phrase tadviparītas tathā ca pumān in SK 11, i.e. puruṣa is different as well as similar to prakṛti. While the dissimilarity is obvious, the commentators explain the similarity of puruṣa as follows: prakṛti has no cause, so does puruṣa; both prakṛti and puruṣa are eternal; both are inactive (because of being all pervasive); both are singular; both do not need supports (anāśrita); both do not have parts; both are independent.[14] Commentators like Vācaspati Miśra, Vijñānabhikṣu and others uphold these views by using various interpretive tools. They, thus, try to establish that the metaphysical view of Sāṅkhya-Yoga with regard to prakṛti is not counter to Upaniṣadic reasoning.

For instance, since ātman has been described as eternal due to properties like being all pervasive, singular, partless, etc., they point out that prakṛti also shares those qualities and so argue for its permanent existence. It is the dichotomy of the presence of conscious and unconscious products in nature that has forced these sūtrakāras and bhāṣyakāras to argue in a manner that can reconcile what is phenomenologically available with what connects the phenomena with the ultimate, be it single, dual or multiple.

In the context of discussing what a sequence is, the YS which shares the same belief regarding the permanence of prakṛti as Sāṅkhya, comes up with a different argument for the permanence of prakṛti.[15] The YS and the Vyāsabhāṣya (VBh.) argue that the permanence of prakṛti is not the same kind of permanence as puruṣa. They expand on the statement that a sequence is the counterpoint of the moment which is grasped as such, at the extreme limit of change.[16] This discussion is necessitated in the YS due to the dual nature in which Yoga views kaivalya (liberation). Since one way of viewing kaivalya in Yoga is to state that the guṇas

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[14] ahetumat pradhānaṃ, tathā ca pumānahetumananutpādyatvāt … nityam pradhānaṃ tathā ca nityaḥ pumān … (Gauḍapāda's commentary on SK 11).

[15] kṣaṇapratiyogī pariṇāmāparāntanirgrāhyaḥ kramaḥ (YS IV.33).

[16] kṣaṇāntaryātmā pariṇāmasyāparāntenāvasānena gṛhyate kramaḥ. na hi ananubhūtakrama navasya purāṇatā vastrasyānte bhavati (VBh. on YS IV.33).

have reverted to their state of prakṛti, because they are devoid of any more purpose for puruṣa, it becomes necessary to describe how the guṇas that are constantly in motion can achieve this state of reversal role vis-a-vis a puruṣa that is in no more need of them. So, it brings in the idea that, when the guṇas which were specifically associated with a non-liberated puruṣa has fulfilled its purpose of achieving kaivalya for that puruṣa, there is an end to their sequence with reference to the liberated puruṣa (YS IV.32).

This somehow leads to the necessity of asserting that prakṛti or the final unit of the three-guṇa presence has also a sequence. Vyāsa presents the argument saying that everything has a sequence which, of course, is in consonance with the threefold pariṇāma that Yoga talks about, i.e. dharmapariṇāma (change of characteristics), lakṣaṇapariṇāma (temporal change) and avasthāpariṇāma (change of state) (Rukmani 1981:21–49). Vyāsa then argues that there are two kinds of sequences. The first kind is the uninterrupted flow of moments which is a sequence and is grasped at the conclusion of the limit of the mutation and is seen in impermanent things. Thus, the oldness of a cloth does not come into being at the end, unless it has passed through the moments of a sequence. And then, there is the second kind of sequence seen even in eternal (permanent) things.[17] He further clarifies that this second permanence is of two kinds; one which is the permanence of the immutable puruṣa and two, that which belongs to the permanence of mutation of the guṇas.[18]

Vyāsa has to defend his notion of permanence of prakṛti, as his earlier arguments are not very convincing. So he adds one more reason for permanence, i.e. if the essence of a thing is not destroyed, even if it is constantly changing, then that is permanent.[19] A distinction is drawn between the evolutes like the intellect (mahat), ahaṃkāra and so on, from prakṛti. Evolutes like the intellect, of the nature of the three guṇas, have a sequence and also have an end at the time of liberation. But in the permanent guṇas (prakṛti), the sequence never reaches a limit and therefore there is no end to it.[20] In order to be consistent, Vyāsa adds that even a liberated puruṣa which has its essence not destroyed, experiences a sequence in the very nature of being itself. He adds that this sequence in puruṣa is imagined based on words.[21]

Other commentators like Vijñānabhikṣu and Śaṅkara, the author of the Vivaraṇa (called Vivaraṇakāra in this paper, not to be confused with Śaṅkara the author of the BSBh), have also given their own interpretation of the idea of permanence of prakṛti and puruṣa. Vijñānabhikṣu tries to explain this idea of permanence of both puruṣa and prakṛti as of two categories of permanence. Thus, for Vijñānabhikṣu the general definition of permanence is 'that whose essential nature does not become something

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[17] nityeṣu ca kramo dṛṣṭaḥ (VBh. on YS IV.33).
[18] dvayī ceyaṃ nityatā kūṭasthanityatā pariṇāminityatā ca. tatra kūṭasthanityatā puruṣasya. pariṇāminityatā guṇānām (ibid).
[19] yasmin pariṇamyamāne tattvaṃ na vihanyate tannityam (ibid).
[20] tatra guṇadharmeṣu mahadādiṣu pariṇāmāparāntanirgrāhyaḥ kramo labdhaparyavasānaḥ, nityeṣu dharmiṣu guṇesv alabdhaparyavasānaḥ (ibid).
[21] kūṭasthanityeṣu svarūpamātrapratiṣṭheṣu svarūpāstitā krameṇaivānubhūyata iti tatrāpyalabdhaparyavasānaḥ śabdapṛṣṭhenāstikriyām upādāya vikalpitaḥ iti (ibid).

past; that belongs to both puruṣa and prakṛti' (see also Rukmani 1989:134).[22] The Vivaraṇakāra Śaṅkara explains it as 'In the case of the guṇas also, the essence of illumination, activity and inertia, in the form of pleasure, pain, and illusion is not destroyed. Therefore, these are also eternal while changing.' (see also Rukmani 2001:205–16).[23]

So what we witness in such a hermeneutic exercise is the parameters within which freedom to interpret meanings is being attempted in consonance with the Upaniṣadic understanding (ekavākyatā). The metaphysics of Yoga allows the permanence of puruṣa and prakṛti. However, the Upaniṣadic position is that only ātman / puruṣa is eternal. Thus, a novel understanding of krama as reaching an end is introduced, and the non-destruction of the essence of the guṇas in prakṛti is interpreted as not reaching an end, and that is then what the system advocates as a definition of permanence. This way it preserves the integrity of the metaphysics of Sāṅkhya-*Yoga as an āstika system.*

The Vedic hermeneutic principles of ekavākyatā, apūrva, arthavāda and upapatti can be seen to play a part in such interpretive endeavours. As long as ekavākyatā is preserved, the commentator is free to introduce new ideas (apūrva) and through arthavāda and upapatti uphold the position of the darśana he is commenting on. We see this methodology at play in both the above instances.

Careful attention to these methods can help us to understand the precise sense in which Vedic literature was mediated into new texts as a foundation for developing ideas, bearing on our understanding of the univocity of the tradition as a whole. It also suggests ways in which such examples of Indian interpretative practice in action can help to refine the received notions of hermeneutics as merely charting the continuity of meaning. Here we see how the continued influence of tradition can result not only in doctrinal stasis, but also, in creative transformations that nevertheless retain their adherence to the classical rules. In addition, we see here how inconsistencies and doctrinal shifts can be seen not as flawed reasoning, but instead as instructive insights into the hermeneutic micro-processes of commentary, reflecting skillfully negotiated dual allegiances, by which the ideas attributed to canonical 'Hinduism' have been formed.

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[22] atra cātītatāśūnyatvamātraṃ nityatvasya sāmānyalakṣaṇam iti bodhyam; tac cobhayasādhāraṇam ityāha ubhayasyeti. guṇapuruṣayor ityarthaḥ (Yogavārttika under YS.IV.33).
[23] guṇānām api sukhaduḥkhamohātmatā prakāśakriyāsthitiśilatā ca tattvaṃ na vihanyate. tasmād ete'pi pariṇāmanityāḥ (Vivaraṇa under YS.IV.33).

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Book Review by Sheetal Bhoola, Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Religion, Devotion and Medicine in North India. The Healing power of Sitala. By Fabrizio M. Ferrari. London. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2015, I-xxx, 222 pp.

This book is a detailed account of multi-dimensional perspectives about the goddess Sitala and will hold significance within the arena of religious studies as it is a first of its kind. Other journal publications and books that marginally focus on this goddess tend to be more evasive and ambiguous in their approach to describing the purport for resonating with this particular mother. Ferrari's writings of the goddess Sitala encompasses information from a variety of sources which include narratives, Indian Literature, sacred Hindu texts as well as perceptions from those that engage in healing practices which offer the reader concrete and verified information as to why and for what purpose this particular Goddess has been worshipped.

The book comprises of five in-depth chapters and 36 varying iconic illustrations of the goddess which give the reader an insight into the different visionary forms that the goddess has been presented as across varying communities and villages in India. Each chapter has a focus which collectively culminates to an informative conceptualisation and understanding of this Goddess. The first chapter introduces the Goddess Sitala to us by explaining her presence and purport within Indian literature from the 12th century. The author indicates that ritual instructions during prayer schedules and spiritual songs all pay tribute to this Goddess and information presented in numerous Hindu religious texts were all similar to one another which only emphasises the role of Sitala in Indian Hindu cultures. The Goddess is known and understood to heal children, small pox and the fear of pustular diseases. She is called Sitala because of her 'cooling' power and dominant in all strata's of Indian society.

The second chapter plays a significant role in the arena of literature of Hindu Goddesses. The author presents an in-depth study of the Goddess and her multiple forms are discussed and aligned with her purpose of worship based on information from narratives and not only texts. The third chapter addresses the controversies and the uncertainty of uniformity amongst Indians when it comes to ways in which they express devotion and choose to worship the Goddess. The reasons as to why she is worshipped is discussed and cognisance is made to the opposing reasons that derive from Hindu texts and detailed accounts of narratives of Indians of all classes whom have been engaged in worshipping practices for long periods of time. Animal sacrifices, pilgrimages as well as the fluidity of cultural habits are all brought to the fore within this chapter, once again only reaffirming the dominance of the Goddess Sitala across locality and cultural settings. Other chapters attempt to demystify the myths and varying criticism surrounding the worship of this goddess. The author presents the origins of these myths and the multiple perspectives that have contributed to fictionalised stories. He suggests that the struggle against smallpox as well as healing rituals have never been criticised and is an oriental construct by society which makes this chapter a very interesting read. The fifth chapter consolidates the numerous perspectives presented in this book and in doing so the

processes of homogenisation, the impacts of a globalised society, varying worldly cultural influences, the international locality of Indians and modernisation are all taken into account.

This book explores numerous perceptions which has instigated cultural habits and rituals that have formed around the Goddess Sitala or the small-pox Goddess as originally known. This all-encompassing analysis of the Goddess and her origins to her current status as a form of the Goddess Durga is highly commendable. The information presented in this book has been supported by extensive fieldwork and accurate literature analyses which gives the historical account such great significance. Such a book is of astounding value to not only the religious studies arena, but those that wish to engage in cultural studies and the social sciences at large. Indeed one of the most in-depth recent accounts of a Hindu Goddess that is available today. The book is well formatted and each chapter is segmented accordingly which makes reading easy for the reader. Each of the five chapters comprise of both introductions and conclusive remarks which contribute significantly to the clarity of this text at large. Previous literature about the Goddess Sitala are predominantly journal articles and not books which have been primarily published approximately 25 years ago. Therefore the significance of this book cannot be undermined as more importantly it can offer many the valuable origins and purport of this Goddess. This book will be esteemed and immensely appreciated amongst many scholars globally.