

NUOVA BIBLIOTECA DI STUDI CLASSICI E ORIENTALI

Supplementi alla rivista *Studi Classici e Orientali*

7

Resisting and justifying changes II

Testifying and legitimizing innovation in
Indian and Ancient Greek Culture

ed. by
ELISABETTA PODDIGHE and TIZIANA PONTILLO

DIRETTORE (CHIEF EDITOR)
Cesare Letta (cesare.letta@unipi.it)

VICEDIRETTORI (ASSISTANT EDITORS)
Marisa Bonamici, Saverio Sani, Mauro Tulli

COMITATO SCIENTIFICO (SCIENTIFIC BOARD)
Roberto Ajello, Anna Anguissola, Franco Bellandi, Maria Carmela Betrò,
Marisa Bonamici, Pier Giorgio Borbone, Maria Domitilla Campanile, Antonio Carlini,
Bruno Centrone, Jesper Eidem,
Fabio Fabiani, Margherita Facella, Franco Fanciullo, Rolando Ferri,
Maria Letizia Gualandi, Umberto Laffi, Cesare Letta, Gianfranco Lotito,
Giovanna Marotta, Enrico Medda, Serena Mirto, Claudio Moreschini,
Filippo Motta, Guido Paduano, Lisa Piazzi, Giovanni Salmeri,
Saverio Sani, Mauro Tulli, Biagio Virgilio

COMITATO CONSULTIVO INTERNAZIONALE
(INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD)
Pascal Arnaud (Lyon), Sebastian P. Brock (Oxford), Michael Erler (Würzburg),
Robert A. Kaster (Princeton), Agnès Rouveret (Paris),
Robartus Van der Spek (Amsterdam), Lucas Van Rompay (Duke University NC), Robert
Wallace (Evanston), Nigel Wilson (Oxford), Vincent Zarini (Paris)

REDAZIONE (EDITORIAL STAFF)
Maria Isabella Bertagna, Daniele Mascitelli, Giovanni Mazzini, Andrea Nuti,
Andrea Raggi, Chiara Ombretta Tommasi

<http://www.sco-pisa.it>

Volume pubblicato con il contributo dell'Università di Pisa - Dipartimento di Civiltà e forme del sapere

Resisting and justifying changes II : testifying and legitimizing innovation in Indian and Ancient Greek culture / ed. by Elisabetta Poddighe and Tiziana Pontillo. - Pisa : Pisa university press, 2023. - (Nuova biblioteca di Studi classici e orientali; 7) 306 (WD)
I. Poddighe, Elisabetta II. Pontillo, Tiziana 1. Evoluzione culturale - India 2. Evoluzione culturale - Grecia antica

CIP a cura del Sistema bibliotecario dell'Università di Pisa

L'opera è rilasciata nei termini della licenza Creative Commons: Attribuzione - Non commerciale - Non opere derivate 4.0 Internazionale (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) Legal Code: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode.it>



L'Editore resta a disposizione degli aventi diritto con i quali non è stato possibile comunicare, per le eventuali omissioni o richieste di soggetti o enti che possano vantare dimostrati diritti sulle immagini riprodotte. L'opera è disponibile in modalità Open Access a questo link: www.pisauniversitypress.it

© Copyright 2023 by Pisa University Press
Polo editoriale - Centro per l'innovazione
e la diffusione della cultura - Università di Pisa
Piazza Torricelli 4 - 56126 Pisa
P. IVA 00286820501 · Codice Fiscale 80003670504
Tel.+39 050 2212056 · Fax +39 050 2212945
E-mail press@unipi.it · PEC cidic@pec.unipi.it
www.pisauniversitypress.it

ISBN: 978-88-3339-766-5



Pubblicazione realizzata con il contributo dell'Università degli Studi di Cagliari e del Dipartimento di Lettere, Lingue e Beni culturali – Fondi FFABR (Fondo di finanziamento per le attività base di ricerca)



Opera sottoposta a
peer review secondo
il protocollo UPI

*To the Memory of
Alexander Dubyanskiy, Peter John Rhodes, Jaroslav Vacek*

CONTENTS

Elisabetta Poddighe, Tiziana Pontillo <i>A second stage of our shared research on the topic of resisting and justifying changes in Indian and ancient Greek Culture</i>	9
1. ANCIENT AND MIDDLE INDOARYAN SOURCES	
Duccio Lelli <i>A poet at the assembly: some remarks on a feature of Rudra in the Atharvaveda</i>	21
Paola M. Rossi <i>From conquering the sun to conquering heaven: spatio-temporal cosmographies and sovereignty in the R̥gvedic and Atharvavedic collections</i>	37
Chiara Neri, Tiziana Pontillo <i>The ascetic whom the gods worship: conservative unorthodox meditative traditions in the Vr̥atyakāṇḍa and in the Suttapitaka</i>	89
Edeltraud Harzer <i>Inconvenient truth: three instances of Vr̥atyas' memory erased. Semantic shifts in lexicon in the "Between the Empires" period</i>	135
Diletta Falqui <i>Perception of Vedic ritual semantics in the Mahābhārata</i>	145
Danielle Feller <i>Legitimizing the Brahmins' superior status. Rāmāyaṇa strategies</i>	167
Ariadna Matyszkiewicz <i>Sanskrit tricks in the Jain grand narrative: discursive and literary devices in Jinasena's Ādipurāṇa</i>	189
Cinzia Pieruccini <i>Natural sceneries. Recreating patterns in Sanskrit court plays</i>	205

Chiara Policardi <i>Variations on the elephantine theme: Jyeṣṭhā-Vināyakī, from independent goddess to Gaṇeśa's female form</i>	223
--	-----

2. ANCIENT GREEK HISTORY AND LITERATURE

Giorgio Camassa <i>Dall'immutabilità, su cui vigila la entrenchment clause, alle regole di cambiamento delle leggi I</i>	267
---	-----

Elisabetta Poddighe <i>The Athenians' oaths to use "whatever laws Solon should make" and to change nothing for ten years: should we believe Herodotus' account?</i>	283
--	-----

Valeria Melis <i>Revising the myth in the light of historical changes: the case of Zeus the "tyrant" in Aristophanes' Wealth</i>	331
---	-----

Morena Deriu <i>Conservative and innovative trends concerning pederasty in the Amores ascribed to Lucian (with a look at Roman law on castration and Lucian's satire)</i>	351
--	-----

Paola Pisano <i>ṛbhavaḥ sūracakṣasaḥ: the Sun and immortality in the Vedic myth of the ṛbhus and in early greek wisdom traditions</i>	373
--	-----

3. SANSKRIT TECHNICAL LITERATURE

Tamara Ditrich <i>Possible commonalities linking the Aṣṭādhyāyī and the Abhidhamma: an example of pratyaya / paccaya</i>	403
---	-----

Valentina Ferrero <i>Pre-Pāṇinian occurrences of sarvanāman + akac and Pāṇini's analysis of the meaning of akac</i>	423
--	-----

Davide Mocci, Tiziana Pontillo <i>How to select the right verbal person: a change of perspective between Pāṇini and his commentators</i>	443
---	-----

Anita M. Borghero <i>Fulfilling the venerable prescriptions: some stratagems from the Mahābhāṣya</i>	493
---	-----

Mittal Trivedi <i>Creating the body of the word: understanding the aṅga in the prakriyā of the Siddhāntakaumudī and the Prakriyākaumudī</i>	505
Madhulika Chebrol <i>Eternality and fluidity of Dharma: from Manusmṛti to Manubhāṣya</i>	523
Sudipta Munsī <i>Killing ritually and beyond</i>	545
Monika Nowakowska <i>A matchless match – a case of an exchange on a shared ground: Kumārila and ananvayālaṃkāra</i>	565
Chettiarthodi Rajendran <i>Confronting the iconoclast: Abhinavagupta's strategies to counter Bhaṭṭanāyaka</i>	583
4. MEDIEVAL AND MODERN INDIA	
Lidia Sudyka <i>Varadāmbikā-pariṇaya Campū – the Tuluva dynasty in the eyes of Tirumalāmbā</i>	599
Michał Panasiuk <i>Annadāmaṅgala and changes in the Bengali literature in the 19th century</i>	611
Martin Hříbek <i>Benoy Kumar Sarkar's positive Hindu sociology and political thought: legitimising strategies for the state and the nation</i>	627
Tatiana Dubyanskaya <i>"Made in heaven": Premchand and his predecessors on spiritual union and love</i>	651
Marta Karcz <i>Modern Sanskrit dramas – between tradition and innovation</i>	663

CHIARA NERI, TIZIANA PONTILLO
(Cagliari University)

**THE ASCETIC WHOM THE GODS WORSHIP:
CONSERVATIVE UNORTHODOX MEDITATIVE
TRADITIONS IN THE *VRĀTYAKĀṆḌA* AND IN THE
*SUTTAPIṬAKA****

Abstract

The article aims to examine the way in which *Vrātyas* are considered in the *Vrātyakāṇḍa* of the *Śaunaka Atharvaveda Saṃhitā*, since it is one of the rare works in Vedic literature to view them in a non-hostile manner. A novel comparison of the text will be made with Buddhist Pāli Canon sources which may serve to gain a better understanding of some of the aporias it contains. In particular, the present inquiry will try to single out the specific asceticism at stake and thus concentrate on (1) the oneness and loneliness of *Vrātya* and Buddhist ascetics; (2) the motif of the gradual conquest of worlds (*loka*) as progressively higher stages of ascetic achievement and (3) ascetics' superiority with respect to the gods. The emerging hypothesis is that the *Vrātyakāṇḍa* may have been an ancient vehicle for ascetic doctrines which then developed into both Upaniṣadic and Buddhist thought (and probably into many other ascetic traditions) with their respective peculiarities.

1. *The Vrātyakāṇḍa as an exception*

The common interpretations of the *vrātya* phenomenon as an Aryan, non-brāhmaṇic historical reality¹ often devote just a brief mention to the XV book of the ŚS, i.e. to the book called *Vrātyakāṇḍa* which consists of 18 Paryāyas written entirely in prose². The book is in fact unique among the sources on *vrātyas*, since – with the exception of another brief passage in JUB III 21 (see below, § 2.1) – is the only

* All translations are by the authors, unless explicitly stated. This paper is the result of a joint research work entirely discussed and shared by both authors. Just for the sake of academic requirements §§ 2, 2.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4, 4.1, 5 are attributed to Chiara Neri, and §§ 1, 2.1, 2.2, 3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2 to Tiziana Pontillo. We are deeply grateful to Mark Allon, Frank Köhler, and Paola Rossi for their valuable comments on the present work.

¹ See Bollée 1981; Falk 1986, but also the earliest pioneering works on this subject, such as Bloomfield 1899, Charpentier 1911, and Hauer 1927.

² The contents of this book are only partly contained in the Paippalāda [PS] recension, in PS 18.27-43.

one in which the *vrātya* figure is envisioned as a single ascetic (the so-called *ekavrātyā*), who is highly praised, rather than being object of contempt.³ In the other works, especially in PB, JB, and BSS, the matching plural *vrātyāḥ* clearly denotes a typical IE brotherhood⁴, outside the Brahmanical religious and social context⁵. How can this exception be explained?

The earliest seminal works on the Vrātyakāṇḍa often considered the protagonist of this book as “an idealization of the wandering religious mendicant”. During the recent online symposium (2021) organised by Dominik Wujastyk to discuss Johannes Bronkhorst’s Greater Magadha (2007) hypothesis, 15 years after its first formulation, the convener himself postulated the hypothesis that this text was fruit of a tentative assimilation of the Magadhan culture into the Vedic sphere. Thus, Wujastyk confirmed the extra-brahmanical context of the Vrātyas and explained the discontinuous way in which the Vedic and Sanskrit sources deal with the Vrātyas within a purely “horizontal” pattern of transition from the heterodox Magadhan to the Vedic orthodox culture. Our proposal is instead a so-to-say “vertical” reinterpretation of the *vrātya* phenomenon as a conservative historical reality. Such a proposal stems from the hypothesis that there was a time when *vrātyas* were neither

³ It is noteworthy that 40 out of the total 89 occurrences of the word *vrātya* recorded in the Digital Corpus of Sanskrit [accessed February 2022] are included in the Vrātyakāṇḍa. The other occurrences appear in the Brāhmaṇas, Kalpasūtras, *Mānava-Dharmaśāstra* and *Mahābhārata*. In the latter works, a *vrātya* is a man belonging to a wandering gang, a member of a co-operative group outside the Brahmanical order, or a member of a low caste due to his birth, or even an outcast, because he did not comply with the mandatory observances in the due time, especially the *upanāyana*, i.e. the investiture with the sacred thread. Candotti, Pontillo (2015: 158) advance that an original ethnic or cultural distinctive feature was being slowly transformed into a responsibly committable sin. This plausibly happened against the background of the notion of universality of the śrauta-rules, according to which members of an unorthodox society should however be inserted into the orthodox system by means of some well-conceived ritual stratagem. As for a brief survey of these occurrences, see Pontillo, Dore 2016: 1-5 and bibliography there quoted.

⁴ See Falk 1986: 51-54; 2002; Selva 2019: Appendix I; Edholm 2021a: 17-19.

⁵ As is well known, there are no occurrences of the word *vrātya* in the *Rgveda* but only the cognate lexeme *vrāta* ‘multitude, troop, group, association’ which is ultimately linked with the IE. **wer- / *swer-* ‘to tie, line up’. The term *vrātya* might also have derived from *vrata-* ‘command, observance’, which is ultimately linked with the IE. **wer-* ‘to say’ (Pokorny 1959: 1151; 1162). Mayrhofer (1986-2001: II, 575-576) is for the first etymology, while Falk (1986: 17) combines both etymons and maintains that *vrātya* ‘member of a group’ is derived from *vrāta* ‘group’, which is so called because its leader adopts a certain ‘observational’ behaviour, i.e. one or more *vratas*. We are more oriented to the etymology from *vrāta-* ‘group’ on the basis of Patañjali’s commentary on Aṣṭ. 5.2.21 - see Candotti, Pontillo 2015: 165-166.

despised nor marginalised. In our reconstructive working-hypothesis, the Aryan culture that Bronkhorst (2007) singled out as distant from the brahmanical one, i.e. the so-called “Magadha culture” may not necessarily have originated in that Eastern area of continental India, but rather it might merely have kept an Indo-Aryan pre-brahmanical culture alive. Our proposal for a change of perspective arises both from the emphasis Bronkhorst put on the non-brahmanical matrix of several important ancient Indian institutions, and from the postulation of “an Indo-Aryan immigration to South Asia that preceded the coming of the *R̥gveda* Aryans” (Parpola 2003: 65). Thus, our aim is to reconstruct the assumed common archetype of the Vrātya and Magadhan culture. Within this culture both the so-called heterodoxies and the Brahmanical orthodoxy might have emerged later, and the latter might have marginalised the archetypal culture.

This pre-brahmanical culture might match with the “non-Vedic ascetic-renunciant (śramaṇa) traditions”, which Horsch 1966 identifies with the ascetic *gāthā*-literature (1966). Edholm (2021b: 36-42) recently considered this tradition as the matrix of what he calls “The Song of the Wanderer”, i.e. a set of five aphoristic verses – *gāthās* – composed in the classical *anuṣṭubh-śloka*-metre, contained in the ākhyāna devoted to the story of Rohita and Śunaḥśepa in the seventh book of the AB. This Earlier Indo-Aryan culture might be well represented in both the *Atharvaveda* and the Suttapiṭaka traditions, especially in their heritage of ascetic doctrines: we will thus concentrate on three features of these doctrines which seem to be shared by both these sources.

2. The oneness and loneliness of Vrātya and Buddhist ascetics

Two of our recent articles (Neri, Pontillo 2015; 2016) were devoted to the compound *brahmabhūta* conveying the sense of ‘to become *brahman*’/‘to be brahman-like’⁶, which is attested both in Brahmanical sources such as the *Mahābhārata* [MBh] and the *Bhāgavadgītā* and in several Suttapiṭaka passages. We also examined the phrase *brāhma bhavati* meaning “to become the Brahman” occurring in the Upaniṣads and crucially in the *Vrātyakāṇḍa*. The compound *brahmabhūta* in the

⁶ The second translation is based on *Nirukta* 3.16 (*bhūtopamā*) and on *Mahābhāṣyadīpikā* 1.3.1.3 (*bhūtaśabda upamāvācī*). The past participle *bhūta* combines with a standard of comparison, also in phrases such as the R̥gvedic *meṣó bhūtāh* “like a ram” listed in *Nighaṇṭu* 3.13 and labelled as *bhūtopamā* in *Nirukta* 3.16. The subject of comparison is described as though transformed into its standard. On the multiple option of translations of the compound ending in *bhūta*, see also Schopen 149-151. We are also thankful to Frank Köhler for drawing our attention to this latter article.

Pāli sources is used as an epithet of the Buddha, the *arahats* and anyone who reaches a certain spiritual goal. As explained in the commentarial Pāli literature, the compound *brahmabhūta* means *setṭhabhūta*, i.e. ‘who has become excellent’, a title used for people who have reached a special status because of their qualities and merits (Neri, Pontillo 2016: 136-145). A similar honorific status, as we will see in the next paragraph, is indirectly attributed to the *Vrātya* in ŚS XV 1.3.

2.1. *The unique Vrātya: his loneliness and pre-eminence*

A second feature shared by ŚS XV and some Pāli sources which we intend to consider here is the emphasis placed on the condition of the solitary ascetic, wandering alone, whose epithets are indeed commonly reserved for kings and leaders in general. The ascetic is even capable of exerting a strong influence on a god, namely *Prajāpati*, who in turn seems to engender the ascetic himself as the One, even though this birth is not overtly explained. Let us read the whole first *Paryāya*, which largely matches PS XVIII 27 (see Kim 2021: 750-751).

*vrātya āsīd' īyamāna evā sā prajāpatiṃ sām airayat. sā prajāpati
suvārṇam ātmānān apaśyat tāt prājanayat. tād ekam abhavat tāl lalāmam ab-
havad tān mahād abhavad tāj jyeṣṭhām abhavad tād brāhmābhavad
tāt tāpo 'bhavat tāt satyām abhavad téna prājāyata. sò 'vardhata sā mahān
abhavad sā mahādevò 'bhavat. sā devānām īśāṃ pāry ait sā īśāno 'bhavat. sā
ekavrātyò⁸ 'bhavat sā dhānur ādatta tād evēndradhanūḥ. nīlam asyodāram⁹*

⁷ It is noteworthy that the incipit of PS XVIII 27.1a is even more solemn: *vrātyo vāvedam agra āsīd* ‘in the beginning indeed this universe was the *Vrātya*’.

⁸ We interpret *ekavrātyā-* as a *karmadhāraya* compound, i.e. ‘the *vrātya* who is one’, in the sense of ‘the lone /unique/pre-eminent *vrātya*’. As for the Skt. use of *eka-X* (see also *ekadeva*, *ekaṛṣi*, *ekarāj*) in the sense of “the one who is the X κατ' ἐξοχέν”, i.e. “the one who becomes the paragon of the other people designated as X” see Kershaw (1997: 26-28) where a new etymology for Thor’s name *Einheri* as “the paragon of the warriors” from Germ. **ai-na-* (< IE. **oi-no-* > Lat. *u-nu-* cf. **ai-ka* > Skt. *eka*) + Germ. *heri* < IE. **korios*) is advanced. The accent on the final syllable complies with the general Aṣṭ. rule on compounding accentuation, i.e. Aṣṭ. VI 1.223 *samāsasya [antaḥ 120 udāttaḥ 159]* ‘The final syllable of a compound is high-pitched’. Therefore, we consider this compound as being formed according to the same pattern of *ekavīrā-* ‘the lone hero’/ ‘the paragon of the heroes’, epithet of Indra in RV X 103.1. On the feature of being *éka-* attributed to Indra see Edholm 2021b: 43.

⁹ This genitive pronoun *asya* had been interpreted by Whitney and Lanman (1905: 773) as a neuter form, referred to the neuter *dhānus* ‘bow’ mentioned in the previous verse, and intended as the rainbow, commonly called “Indra’s bow”. However, they explained that ‘its (*asya*) might equally well be “his”.’ We have ultimately preferred this second option, because this pair of attributes *nīla* and *lōhita*, precisely agreeing with *udāra* ‘belly’ and *prṣṭhā* ‘back’ respectively, might refer to the masculine *sā ekavrātyā*.

lôhitam pṛṣṭhām. nīlenaivāpriyaṃ bhrātṛvyaṃ prōrṇoti lôhitena dviśāntam vidhyati – iti brahmavādīno vadanti. (ŚS XV 1)

‘1. There was a Vrātya, just wandering; he put Prajāpati in motion. 2. He, Prajāpati, saw gold in himself; he engendered that. 3. That became the One; that became marked; that became great; that became pre-eminent; that became *brāhman*; that became *tāpas*; that became reality, he came into existence by means of this. 4. He grew, he became great, he became the Great God (*mahādevā*). 5. He reached the lordship of the gods; he became the Lord (*īśāna*). 6. He became the unique Vrātya, he took a bow: this was right Indra’s bow. 7. His belly is dark blue, his back is red. 8. With that which is dark blue he envelops a rival; with that which is red he injures the one whom he hates – this is what say those who speak of the *brāhman*’.

The scene opens on a solitary wanderer, called *vrātya*, who with his action of moving around seems to arouse and animate the god, but, then, this god himself generates a sort of *hiranyagarbhā*- “the golden egg”, the zero-level of the act of creation envisioned as an act of procreation, which develops in the One, by means of which the *vrātya* comes into existence. It is in this “condition of oneness” that the embryo from which the *vrātya* develops is said to become the *brāhman* and is identified with *satyā* and *tāpas*.

The sequence of the actions of being born and giving birth is almost circular and not so far from what Renou has envisioned as a reversible kinship scheme according to which ‘the gods produce their parents’ and ‘no genealogy is permanent’¹⁰. The cosmic scenario resembles the incipit of the renowned hymn RV X 121 which ends with a prayer to god Prajāpati (RV X 121.1ab): *hiranyagarbhāḥ sām avartatāgre bhūtāsya jātaḥ pātir ēka āsīt* ‘The golden embryo evolved in the beginning. Born the lord of what came to be, he alone existed’ (tr. Jamison, Brereton 2014: 1593). But, unlike this *Rgveda* hymn, here the golden entity born from the self of Prajāpati turns into the neuter *ēkam* (and not into a masculine). Moreover, the other neuter singular nominatives in this sentence play the role of predicative with respect to the neuter *tād*, which

This pair might have hinted at a common epithet of god *Śiva*, i.e. *nīlahitā*-. Indeed, the term only appears as Śiva’s epithet from the MBh onward, but it occurs once in RV X 85.28 with the meaning of ‘dark red’ referring to a garment stained by blood and in ŚS IV 17.4, in the sense of ‘blue and red’ said of the fire (whose smoke is blue and whose flame is red). Of course, our interpretative choice was encouraged by the use of two other common epithets for Śiva in the previous sentences, namely *mahādevā* and *īśāna*, both already commonly occurring as Śiva’s/Rudra’s names in the ŚS.

¹⁰ See e.g. Renou 1971: 78.

indicates that which Prajāpati engendered, and by means of which the protagonist of the whole Paryāya comes into existence. Nonetheless, this first series of predicatives, even though they are neuter, already seem to hint at the masculine *ekavrātyá*. In particular *jyeṣṭhá-* as masculine e.g. in PB XVII 4.1-2¹¹ indicates the senior member in the *vrātya* brotherhood, the one who leaves for a *vrātya* life (*vrātyām pravasa-*) and performs the second of the four varieties of Vrātyastomas.

The shift from the neuter pronoun *tád* (third sentence) to the masculine *sá* (fourth, fifth and sixth sentences) seems to closely follow the evolution from embryo to living being, which results in the unspoken, but implied birth of the ascetic *vrātya*, who explicitly grows (*avardhata*) and acquires the pre-eminence that makes him the “*ekavrātyá*”. The act of taking possession of Indra’s bow once again reminds us of the wandering ascetic-warrior figure of Rohita studied by Edholm (2021b) in AB VII, who “grabbed his bow and arrows and escaped into the jungle, where he roamed about for a whole year”. In fact, the ascetic behaviour of the *vrātya* is made even more clear in the following sentence, taken from a passage which will be further discussed below (§ 4).

sá saṃvatsarām ūrdhvó ’tiṣṭhat tám devā abruvan vrātya kiṃ nú tiṣṭhasīti
(ŚS XV 3.1)

‘He stood erect one year; the gods said to him: Vrātya, why do you stay erect?’

Nevertheless, the act of taking Indra’s bow also shows clearly that – albeit perhaps only for a limited time – the *ekavrātyá* is taking over Indra’s role as lord of the gods, since “he is not identified with Indra, he is just taking his place”, as emphasised by Dore (2016: 203).

This assumed competitive context, with no real boundary even between gods and human beings, might have been the inspiring background for the peculiar co-existence in the same text of god Indra’s and Rudra’/Śiva’s attributes, all referring to the *ekavrātyá*. Indeed, he takes possession of Indra’s bow, but is given at least a couple of the epithets usually reserved for Atharvavedic Rudra/Śiva, i.e. *mahādevá* and *īśāna*. Thus, the *ekavrātyá* might result as being the one who achieved a pre-eminent position within the assumed competitive pattern based on ascetic and warrior merits. In fact, at the beginning he is simply called a *vrātya*, but he is then defined as *mahādevá*, *īśāna*, and finally

¹¹ As for the typology of Vrātyastoma-performers in Brāhmaṇas and Kalpasūtras, see Candotti, Pontillo 2015: 169-185.

ekavrātyā. Dore (2015b: 35) maintains that “It is difficult to doubt that this corresponds to the transfiguration of a man into a supreme deity” and that this text “is not intended simply to replace the other myths of creation, but rather, to indicate the path of the Vrātya, who – by re-enacting and actualizing the creative process – assumes the role of Indra and becomes the Ekavrātya.”

2.2. Two other counterparts of the *ekavrātyā* in the ŚS

At this point, a comparison with some verses of ŚS XI 5 where another exceptional ascetic figure is mentioned could be most illustrative. The figure in question is the *brahmacārīn* who, once again, is at the origin of the cosmogony of creation and closely connected to the *brāhman*. Indeed, several scholars have associated the *brahmacārīn* with the *ekavrātyā* and with the Keśin from ṚV X 136¹², and he is now commonly considered as a forerunner of the well-known later figure of the renunciant¹³. He was born from the *brāhman*, but in turn engenders the *brāhman*. Even though the “oneness” is not literally involved – i.e. the stem *éka-* does not occur in this hymn – we assume that the notion of “the gods who become unanimous” in him not only depicts the lordship the ascetic obtains among the gods but rather meaningfully hints at the oneness that the *brahmacārīn* is capable of generating in himself by means of his *tápas*.

brahmacārīṣṇāṃś carati ródasī ubhé tásmin devāḥ sámmanaso bhavanti |
 [...] *pūrvó jātó brāhmaṇo brahmacārī gharmám vásānas tápasód atiṣṭhat |*
ásmājjātám brāhmaṇam brāhma jyeṣṭhám devás ca sárve amṛtena sākám ||
 [...] *brahmacārī janāyan brāhmāpó lokám prajāpatiṃ parameṣṭhinam virājam |*
gárbho bhūtvāmṛtasya yónāv índro ha bhūtvāsuraṃs tatarha ||
 [...] *brahmacārī brāhma bhrājad bibharti tásmin devá ádhi víśve samótāḥ (ŚS*
 XI 5.1; 5; 7; 24)

“The Brahmacārīn goes moving through both heaven and earth, in him the gods become unanimous. [...] Born as first from the *brāhman*, the

¹² See e.g. Bloomfield 1899: 94; Hauer 1927: 324; Heesterman 1964: 25; Dore 2015a. On the Keśin’s extraneousness to the Vedic context see e.g. Crangle 1994: 30-31.

¹³ Kaelber (1981: 78) is persuaded that “the *brahmacārīn*’s career is in large measure a forerunner and legitimizing model for the initially ‘heterodox’ practices of ascetics”. See now Edholm 2021b: 44.

Brahmacārin, clothing himself with the *gharmá*¹⁴, stood up with *tápas*; from him was born the *bráhmana*, the pre-eminent *bráhman*, and all the gods together with immortality. [...] The Brahmacārin engendering the *bráhman*, the waters, the world, Prajāpati, Parameṣṭhin, the *virāj*; after becoming an embryo in the womb of immortality, after becoming Indra, has crushed the Asuras. [...] The Brahmacārin bears the shining *bráhman*. In this all the gods are woven’.

Wandering is confirmed as one of the most typical activities performed by the ascetic figure: the initial pun on the verbal base *car-* also provides a clue about the meaning of the name itself, which seems to explain the essence of the *brahmacārin* as “the one who carries the *bráhman* around” in his wanderings¹⁵. But it is precisely this intimate connection between the ascetic and the *bráhman* that is apparently at the origin of both his divine condition and the unanimousness of the gods within him, especially in terms of all his vital functions as deities. Let us recall the importance of the reference to the *ékam* at the beginning of the *Vrātyakāṇḍa*. This notion also seems to be documented by the renowned *ṚV* X 129, where *tád ékaṃ* is placed beyond the oppositions, beyond every kind of polarity, and before the creation of the multiplicity of the empirical world by linguistic means.

ná mṛtyúr āsīd amṛtam ná tárhi ná rátryā áhna āsīt praketaḥ | ānīd avātām svadhāyā tád ékaṃ tásmād dhānyán ná parāḥ kiṃ canāsa (*ṚV* X 129.2)

‘At that time, there was neither death nor non-death, nor was there a distinguishing mark of day and night. That one breathed by itself, without wind. There was nothing else besides this’.

Indeed, unlike most modern interpreters¹⁶, there is no need to assume that this *ṚV* hymn postulates the existence of a cosmogonic principle

¹⁴ i.e. practicing the observance of the hot-drink (*gharmá-*), which is a crucial observance within the framework of the *vrātyahood*. See e.g. *ŚS* IV 11.6 (very close to *PS* III 25.6’: *yēna devāḥ svār āruruhūr hitvā śārīram amṛtasya nābhim | tēna geṣma sukṛtasya lokāṃ gharmāsya vratēna tápasā yaśasyávaḥ* ‘May we go to the world of merit, desiring glory, by means of the observance of the *gharmá-*, by means of austerities, by means of which the gods, after quitting the body, ascended to heaven, to the navel of immortality’. As explained by Selva (2019: 374), “This stanza explicitly describes the *vratins*’ path consisting of the *gharmasya vrata* as modelled after that of the gods (*devāḥ*), possibly as a spiritual path (“having abandoned the body”), and as aiming at the world of merit (*sukṛtasya lokāṃ*) [...]”. See also Selva 2019: 392-397.

¹⁵ See Neri, Pontillo 2015: 157-164.

¹⁶ A handy list of scholars in favour of this interpretation can also be found in Soressi (1987: 92). More recently Maggi (2006: 1020) translated the second hemistich as

called the “One”. An exception is Soressi, who questioned the analysis of *ékam* in RV X 129.2 as a neuter noun (1987: 91-94). What is noteworthy is in fact the contrast between oneness and multiplicity both in this R̥gvedic hymn and in ŚS XV 1. It is tempting to glimpse the very first step in the future Upaniṣadic philosophy in the emphasis placed on the oneness of the ascetic and in this imagery of the one which, in our opinion, is pure breath, detached from the empirical multiplicity of the perceptible world¹⁷. In other words, *tád ékam* as ‘something breathing by itself, without wind’¹⁸ in the Vr̥atyakāṇḍa might have been a very first insight towards the Upaniṣadic purpose of the *reductio ad unum* and towards the Ātman doctrine. This text could poetically hint at the principle according to which the ascetic could attain immortality, if he were able to remain as that One, without developing into the multiplicity of the perceptible world. This could happen if the several “gods in him become unanimous”, if the several perceptions and the other vital functions remain concentrated within him, and do not expand into the outside world due to their being attracted by the latter¹⁹. He could thus become the “unique” god.

Thus, through the cross-reference to these other two quoted Vedic passages RV X 129 and ŚS XI 5 – both included in sources which Parpola (1983, 2012) considers to be evidence of the earliest Indo-Aryan culture (i.e. older than the family books of the *R̥gveda*), the *ekavr̥atyá*

follows: “Respirava senza vento, autonomamente, quell’única cosa; di altro da questa, di là da questa niente è stato”. Cf. tr. Jurewicz (2010: 46): “That One was breathing breathlessly. With its own will. there was nothing else beyond it”; tr. Jamison and Brereton (2014: 1608) “That One breathed without wind by its independent will. There existed nothing else beyond that”.

¹⁷ As emphasised by Zysk (2007: 105) precisely on the basis of this RV hymn, “Already from the time of the *R̥gveda* [...], there is evidence that the ancient Indians conceived the wind in nature and the breath in living beings to be one and the same thing, imbued with special life-giving powers.” This is explicitly stated in ŚS XI 4.1: *vāto ha prāṇá ucyate* ‘the wind, indeed, is called breath’ and the identification between wind and breath also occurs in ŚS V 9.7 in a series of correspondences between macrocosmic and microcosmic elements.

¹⁸ Jurewicz (2010: 47) notices that “The breathless breath” is different from “the breath known from everyday life experience”, it “embraces all potential oppositions of the future world”.

¹⁹ While the emptiness contained in the cosmic egg, as a space which hides the embryo, the becoming/developing principle is more fecund than the embryo itself, and it is definitely the place (i.e., the cause) of the potentiality of the caused effect: RV X 129.3 *táma āsīt támasā gūlhám ágre ’praketám salilám sárvaṃ ā idám | tuchyénābhv ápihitam yád āsīt tápasas tán mahinājāyataikam* ‘Originally there was darkness hidden in the darkness. This universe was an indistinct wave. Then by the power of heat the one was born, the becoming principle hidden by the emptiness’.

appears to plausibly be the individual human/divine transfiguration of the One (ékam) which on the universal level subsumes all the cosmic elements (fire, sun, sky, waters etc.). On the microcosmic plane, this ascetic is able to re-absorb all his vital functions (sight, speech, hearing etc.), as a great achievement of his self-control²⁰. This conception was already singled out by Fuji (1989: 1002-1) with reference to Prāṇa/Vāyu envisioned as *saṃvarga* ‘gatherer’ in both JUB III 1-2 and CU IV 3. Thus, it is really fascinating to find the following passage in JUB III 20-21 precisely with reference to the *ekavrātya*.

[...] *guhāsi devo 'sy upavāsy [...] sambhūr devo 'si sam aham bhūyāsam ābhūtir asy ābhūyāsam bhūtir asi bhūyāsam. [...] sa vāyum āha yat purastād vāsī 'ndro rājā bhūto vāsi. yad dakṣiṇato vāsīśāno bhūto vāsi. yat paścād vāsi varuṇo rājā bhūto vāsi. yad uttarato vāsi somo rājā bhūto vāsi yad upariṣṭād avavāsi prajāpatir bhūto 'vavāsi. vrātyo 'si ekavrātyo 'navasrṣto devānām bilam apyadhah.* (JUB III 20-21)

‘You are in secret, you are a god, you are blowing; [...] you are a god coming into existence; may I come into existence. You are existence, may I exist. He said to Vayu: “When you blow from the front, you blow as king Indra. When you blow from the South, you are *īśāna*. When you blow from behind, you are king Varuṇa. When you blow from the North, you are king Soma. When you blow from above, you are Prajāpati. You are the Ekavrātya, you are not dismissed: you closed the opening of the Gods”’.

In this Sāmavedic text it is clear that this wind represents the single individuality as a synonym of ātman, but it is envisioned as *prāṇa* ‘vital air, wind’²¹. By taking advantage of the fact that the protagonist of this final achievement is precisely called *ekavrātya* in the JUB, we

²⁰ The *daivaḥ parimarah* in KU II 12-14, which explains “the dying around of the powers”, i.e. the cyclical death and rebirth of the faculties of perception (often called *devas*), might have been inspired by the same belief, as a counterpart of the cycle of cosmic powers i.e. of the deities, in accordance with Bodewitz’s interpretation (2002: 38 fn. 129).

²¹ See also JB II 221, where a puzzling sentence seems to be a sort of commentary on the ŚS passage about the Ekavrātya or its reinterpretation in the plural (a group of *vrātyas* instead of one): [...] *divyā vai vrātyā vrātyām adhāvayan budhena sthapatinā. ta ete ekavrātyām ārchann imam vaiva yo 'yaṃ pavata īśānam vā devam* ‘The divine *vrātyas* ran the *vrātya* expedition with Budha as their *sthapati*. They targeted on the *ekavrātya*-position that is, on the [God] who purifies or on the Lord’. See Candotti, Pontillo 2015: 28-30. This seems to represent a concrete expedition of *vrātyas* aiming at attaining the divine status, but at the same time it might have been a powerful image of the plurality of vital functions and deities which are reabsorbed in the unique

wish to advance here that a similar incipient doctrine based on a high conception of the ascetic life might also have to be recognised in the Vṛātyakāṇḍa, assuming in essence a backdating of the doctrine for the attainment of immortality singled out in the Sāmavedic tradition by Fuji (1989) and Bodewitz (1986).

To sum up, oneness, wandering and asceticism are emphasised in the Vṛātyakāṇḍa as the preferred conditions for gaining a kind of excellence that even makes the ascetic similar to the sun roaming in the sky for one year. That is why this crucial notion of oneness linked to the *ekavrātya* figure might have to be compared with that of the *ekavṛt*, who appears in particular in one of the hymns devoted to the solar figure of Rohita in ŚS XIII 4. The gods once again are somehow “unified” in him.

tām idāṃ nigataṃ sāhaḥ sā eṣā ēka ekavṛd ēka evā || eté asmin devā ekavṛto bhavanti || kīrtīs ca yāśas cāmbhaś ca nābhaś ca brāhmaṇavarcaśam cānnaṃ cānnādyam ca || yā etāṃ devāṃ ekavṛtaṃ vēda || nā dviṭṭyo nā trīṭṭyaś caturtho nāpy ucyate || nā pañcamó nā ṣaṣṭhāḥ saptamó nāpy ucyate || nāṣṭamó nā navamó daśamó nāpy ucyate || sā sārvasmai ví paśyati yác ca prāñāti yác ca ná || [20-21 = 12-13] (ŚS XIII 4.12-21)

‘12. This power has entered him, he is this one, dwelling in one place²², one only. 13. These gods in him become dwelling in one place. 14. Fame,

ekavrātyā, who is the wind, the breath, the ātman who attains the divine status, the Indra-like status.

²² There are only other two occurrences of the *upapadasamāsa ekavṛt* in the ŚS, in a hymn which is unfortunately not so easy to interpret: Whitney’s translation is ‘simple’ – in line with the grammaticalised Skt. use of *-vṛt-* as forming numerical adjectives such as *trivṛt-* ‘threefold, consisting in three parts’. Our proposal, i.e. “dwelling in only one place”, seems to be more fitting to the context. See ŚS VIII 9.25-26: *kó nú gauḥ ká ekaṣṭhī́m kím u dhāma ká āśīṣaḥ | yakṣám pṛthivyām ekavṛd ekartūḥ katamó nú sáh || ekó gauṛ ēka ekaṣṭhī́r ēkam dhāmaikadhāśīṣaḥ | yakṣám pṛthivyām ekavṛd ekartūṛ nāti ricyate* ‘Who is now the cow? Who is the seer who is alone? What is the establishment? What are the blessings? The Yakṣa dwells in only one place on the earth. Which is now the season which is alone? Only one is the cow, only one is the seer who is alone, only one the establishment, in only one way are the blessings. The Yakṣa dwells in only one place on the earth. The season which is alone does not go beyond’. Moreover, to the best of our knowledge, there are two other Vedic occurrences, in which the stem *ēka-* occurs three times, and once again the proposed translation seems to be suitable. See *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā* V 2.3.7: *ékacitīkam cinvīta trīṭṭyam cinvānás ekadhā vai suvargó lokás. ekavṛtaivá suvargám lokám eti* ‘He who piles [a fire] for a third time should pile it in one layer; the world of heaven is in only one way; indeed he goes to the world of heaven by something dwelling in only one place’; ŚBM XIII 2.1.5 ([...] *ékottarā juhoty ekavṛd vai svargó loká ekadhaivainam svargám lokám [...]* ‘He makes oblations in increasing numbers of one: indeed the world of heaven is something dwelling in only one place; he

glory, water, cloud-mass and brahman's splendour and nourishment and good food. 15. Who knows this god [as] that dwelling in one place, 16. not second, nor third, nor even fourth is called, 17. nor fifth, nor sixth, nor even seventh is called, 18. nor eighth, nor ninth, nor even tenth is called; he distinguishes between those that breathe and those that do not'.

The solar figure “as a prototypical solitary wanderer”, often used alongside the heroic imagery, might have been another image of the self who attains immortality by asceticism, by realizing the oneness of all the perceptual faculties in himself by means of the *tápas*. This is described within a framework in which ascetic virtues seem to be closely connected with the access to a pre-eminent position in the universe and perhaps to leadership in the human world. His free roaming in all directions seems in fact to embody the result of his asceticism, which translates into the acquisition of a high position in relation to all other beings. But, in our opinion, what stands out in this passage – as it does in the other two passages from the ŚS analysed above, i.e. ŚS XV 1 and XI 5 – is the capability of a single individual to create a unanimous unity of other beings. This may perhaps be an image of the creation of unity within oneself, if plurality is indeed to be understood, as proposed, as the totality of the individual faculties themselves. This hypothesis might open the way to a reinterpretation of the Vrātyakāṇḍa in a completely different key from any of those used to date.

2.3. The solitary Buddhist ascetic ideal

The Pāli sources also spotlight the figure of the solitary ascetic. However, there are several important differences because, as we have just seen, the neuter *ekám* in the Vedic text is the embryo through which the *vrātya* comes into existence, even though the masculine *ekavrātyá* is also mentioned as an ascetic. In the Canon *eka* is a masculine pronoun, which frequently designates a person, a solitary ascetic; but in the use of this pronoun we find the same striving towards an “absolute dimension” as is found in many *suttas*. In the *Kāḷī-sutta*, for example, a lay

causes him (i.e. the sacrificer) to reach the heaven in only one way'. Elsewhere, *ekavṛt* is commonly interpreted as ‘single’, but the spatial dimension seems to be confirmed in the most ancient occurrences. See ŚBM III 6.3.14 (*grhītvā prastarām ekavṛd barhī stṛṇāti* ‘after taking his sacrificial seat, he spreads a single-layer of altar grass’) and *Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra*, where an *ekavṛtstaraṇam*, i.e. a single spreading of sacrificial grass, is mentioned twice (VIII 2.28 and VIII 7.13). Of course the deverbal nominal stem *vṛt-* could also derive from *vṛ-* ‘to cover’, and not only from *vṛt-* ‘to turn, to live’ and this detail makes the interpretation of our *upapadasamāsa* even more uncertain.

woman asks the Venerable Mahākaccāna to explain the following sentence spoken by the Buddha:

*atthassa pattim hadayassa santim | jetvāna senam piyasāta-rūpaṃ | eko
'haṃ jhāyī sukham anubodhim | tasmā janena na karomi sakkhim | sakkhī na
sampajjati kenaci me ti.* (A V 46).

‘Having conquered the army of the pleasant and agreeable, | Meditating alone, I discovered the bliss, | The attainment of the goal, the peace of heart. | Therefore, I don’t form intimate ties with people, | Nor does intimacy with anyone get a chance with me’. (tr. Bodhi 2012: 1370)

The Buddha points out that by meditating alone, in a solitary way (*eka*), he discovers bliss (*sukha*) and achieves peace of heart and its purpose, namely the awakening. He utters this last sentence with reference to Māra’s daughters who wanted to seduce him, so that the reference to the solitary condition underlines the need for an effort that must be made without distractions and in solitude. Also interesting is the use of “warrior lexicon”, such as for example the verb *jayati* ‘to conquer’ and the word *senā*, ‘army’. The general meaning of the above-quoted sentence is to emphasise the Buddha’s incorruptibility and the freedom from ties (especially sensual ones) that often characterises the ascetic. The meditative practices (here the use of *kaṣiṇas*) play a particular role in this context because later, in the *Kāḷī-sutta* itself, Mahākaccāna will explain them to *Kāḷī* (more on this below).

Another well-known example of this use of *eka* connected with the solitary ascetic condition is mentioned in the famous, and probably very ancient section from the Suttanipāta, the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta* (Sn vv. 35-75)²³. In this passage with 41 stanzas the virtue of living as renouncer is revealed: the whole section is a sort of hymn to the solitary research for the Awakening, traditionally and ideally attributed to a Paccekabuddhas or Pratyekabuddhas²⁴ (see Jones 2014: 165). This solitary path could be compared to a solitary rhinoceros or his horn. In fact, each stanza, except v. 45, ends with the sentence: ‘one should live solitary as a rhinoceros horn’ (*eko care khaggavisāṇakappo*)²⁵.

²³ Other ancient versions of this text also exist in Gāndhārī (see Salomon, Glass 2000) and in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit in the *Mahāvastu* (Mhv I 357-9).

²⁴ For more information on the figure of the Paccekabuddha in the Pali literature see Malalasekera 1899-1973, s.v. *Pacceka Buddha*.

²⁵ According to Thanissaro Bhikkhu 2013: “The refrain in this sutta is a subject of controversy. The text literally says, ‘Wander alone like a «sword-horn», which is the Pali term for rhinoceros. The commentary, however, insists that this term refers

The term *eka* itself is commented on as follows:

eko ti pabbajjāsankhātena eko adutiyaṭṭhena eko taṇhāpahānena eko ekan-tavigatakilesa ti eko eko paccekasambodhiṃ abhisambuddhoti eko. (Pj II [I 64]).

‘Alone consisting in the going forth; alone in the sense of being companionless; alone through the abandoning of craving; alone by being entirely rid of defilements; and alone by having awakened to pacceka enlightenment’. (tr. Bodhi 2017: 419-420).

Thus, this is the celebration of the solitary way, which is characterised by walking away from the world, abandoning social life and all its attachments²⁶. In short, even in this case, we are faced with a lonely spiritual path leading to unity (*pacceka*). Edholm (2021b) proposed an interesting analysis of these Suttanipāta verses in connection with other *gāthā*-verses also found in Vedic, Brahmanic and Jaina literature. He claims that these types of verses belong to a common ideal of the renouncer and share a common background documented by the so-called *gāthā* literature dating back to the earlier (semi-)nomadic phase of Indo-Aryan tribes²⁷.

not to the animal but to its horn, for the Indian rhinoceros, unlike the African, has only one horn. Still, some scholars have noted that while the Indian rhinoceros is a solitary animal, rhinoceros’ horns don’t wander, and that in other verses in the Pali canon, the phrase ‘wander alone like...’ takes a person or an animal, not an animal part, for its object. Thus, for example, in Dhṛp 329 (repeated below), one is told to ‘wander alone like a king renouncing his kingdom, like the elephant in the Matanga woods, his herd’. It’s possible that the rhinoceros was chosen here as an example of solitary wandering both because of its habits and because of its unusual single horn. However, in a translation, it’s necessary to choose one reading over the other. Thus, because wandering ‘like a rhinoceros’ sounds more natural than wandering ‘like a horn’, I have chosen the former rendering. Keep in mind, though, that the singularity of the rhinoceros’ horn reinforces the image²⁸. For a subsequent interesting analysis and discussion particularly of the expression *khaggavisāṇakappo* see Jones 2014. In his opinion this compound may be considered either as having a deliberately ambiguous meaning of a rhinoceros and its horn, or as a single expression simply meaning ‘rhinoceros’.

²⁶ On the importance of wandering in the forests for the Paccekabuddhas, see also Bailey, Mabbett 2003: 166.

²⁷ According to Olivelle (2007: 176-177), also quoted by Edholm (2021: 42), this literature played a crucial role in the transformation of the figure of renunciant in the 1st millennium BCE, and according to “the Song of the Wanderer echoes the earlier (semi-)nomadism of Indo-Aryan tribes, who would alternate between life on the move (*yoga* ‘the yoke, harnessing’, war and raiding) and the peaceful, settled life (*kṣema*)”. For a comparative analysis of this compound see also Neri, Pontillo 2019a, 2019b.

Moreover, returning to the above-mentioned *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta*, several conditions are mentioned and some precisely refer to solitary asceticism and to meditative practices, for example, in verse 42:

*cātuddiso appaṭiḅho ca hoti, santussamāno itarītarena
parissayānaṃ sahitā achambhī, eko care khaggavisāṇakappo.*

‘One is a man of four quarters and not hostile, being pleased with whatever comes one way. A fearless bearer of dangers one should wander solitary as a rhinoceros horn.’ (tr. Norman 1984: 5).

In this stanza, beyond the solitary wanderings (*eka care*) of the ascetic, the imagery of the *cātuddisa* ‘the one who dwells in the four directions’²⁸ emerges, which according to the Suttanipāta commentary indicates the *brahmavihāra* practice:

*bhante cātuddisā ti imassa ko attho ti. catusu disāsu katthaci bhayaṃ vā
cittutrāso vā amhākaṃ n’atthi, mahārājā ti. bhante tumhākaṃ taṃ bhayaṃ
kiṃkāraṇā na hotī ti. mahārāja, mettaṃ bhāvema karuṇaṃ muditaṃ upekkhaṃ
bhāvema, tena no taṃ bhayaṃ na hotī ti vatvā uṭṭhāyāsanaṃ attano vasatiṃ
agamamsu.* (Pj II [I 87])

‘What, does this mean, Bhante, “at home in the four directions?” – “We have no fear or anxiety anywhere in the four directions, great king”. – “How is it, Bhante, that you have no fear?” – “Great king, we develop loving-kindness, compassion, altruistic joy, and equanimity. Hence we have no fear.”’ (tr. Bodhi 2017: 445).

And later the text adds:

*tattha cātuddiso ti catusu disāsu yathāsukhavihārī, ekaṃ disaṃ pharivā
viharatī ti ādinā vā nayena brahmavihārabhāvanāpharitā catasso disā assa
santī ti pi cātuddiso.* (Pj II [I 88])

‘Then *cātuddisa* (lit. ‘whose directions are four’) means that he is one who happily abides in [all] the four directions. *cātuddisa* is also the one whose four directions have been pervaded by the development/the meditative practices of

²⁸ Bodhi (2017: 162) translated these verses thus: ‘At home in the four directions, unrepelled, | Contented with anything whatsoever, | Enduring obstacles, fearless, One should live alone like a rhinoceros horn’.

the divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*) according to the method which begins with “he abides having pervaded a direction”.’

So, the *eka* condition is connected to the meditative effort in the spatial dimension associated with the ancient practice of the *brahmavihāras*, which are pre-Buddhist, being part of a common old Indian background²⁹. The reference to these four directions and the use of the compound *cātuddisa* might at the same time have been referring to “the Vedic ideal of the king as a conqueror of the four directions of space (*digvijaya*)” (see Edholm 2021b: 53). This feature – which we will also find below, § 3.1, in ŚS XV 14 – could be even further evidence of the common matrix of the ascetic wanders.

The word *eka* is also at the core of the etymology of the name of the renowned ascetic figure of the Paccekabuddha to whom the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta* is commonly attributed³⁰. The Paccekabuddha is one who achieves the Awakening but does not become a perfect Buddha (*sammā-sambuddha*), because he lacks the ability (or the will) to preach the Dhamma to others. He is described as a solitary ascetic, frequently silent or of frugal speech, which is why scholars have often likened him to a *muni* who is considered as a counterpart of the ancient Keśin in ṚV X 136 (see e.g. Wiltshire 1990: 295) and often compared with the Vrātya and the Brahmācārin (see above fn. 12).

By using a comparative analysis of these ascetic figures to identify the cultural milieu to which the Buddha belongs, Whiltshire (1990: XII-XII; XVI) envisions the notion of *muni* as “a blanket concept for an ‘enlightened’ being” and formulates the hypothesis that this represents “a proto-Buddha figure who antedated the distinction between *sammāsambuddha* and *paccekabuddha*”³¹. In such a reconstructed framework, he asserts (1990: 293) that the *paccekabuddha* should document a common ascetic tradition out of which the Śramanic Movements of Buddhism and Jainism emerged.

Since the Ekavrātya and the Buddha share several features in common, namely asceticism, wandering, oneness and loneliness, as well as the goal of becoming Brahmā and thus an excellent and unique person, we are also persuaded that in the early period of the Indo-Aryan society,

²⁹ Harvey 2001: 247: “Actually the scriptures acknowledge that *brahmavihāra* practice does not originate within the Buddhist tradition.” Indeed at least three out of the four *brahmavihāras*, namely *maitrī*, *karuṇyā* and *upekṣā*, are present in the later Upaniṣads, in the MBh, in the *yoga-sūtra* and in the Jaina literature, even with some peculiar differences (see Whiltshire 1990: 241-272).

³⁰ See e.g. Bronkhorst 1993: 98; Polak 2011: 163-164.

³¹ See also King 1980: 30; Gombrich 1996: 98.

a prototypical figure of ascetic might have existed before those depicted in the Vedic and Pāli sources. As we search for the “fossils” of this assumed earliest ascetic tradition, we are trying to draw a plausible portrait of this prototype, in particular aiming to trace some possible bases of meditative proto-practices.

3. *Asceticism: the gradual conquest of the worlds (loka)*

Another intriguing part of the Vrātyakāṇḍa which has proved particularly interesting for our comparative and reconstructive purposes is the series of Paryāyas 13-17. The circumscribed aspects of the actions performed by the Vrātya (often subject to the so-called “Vedic identifications” on several levels) that here are compared with some matching features of Buddhist ascetics in the Pāli literature seem to document characteristic traits of very ancient ascetic practices. All result as being measurable in the gradual progress they warrant, and they are consequently materialised in the conquest of successive worlds to which merits progressively give access.

We will concentrate on Paryāya 13 at the end of this chapter, because it is one of the most puzzling passages in the Vrātyakāṇḍa and we hope that the present inquiry will be able to shed some light on the doubts that have crept into its interpretation. Paryāya 14 lists the several directions pursued by the Vrātya in his wandering and recalls the *cātuddisa* (Pāli) solitary wandering ascetic analysed above in § 2.3. Paryāyas 15-17 pay special attention to the breath of the Vrātya ascetic, identified with several entities of the cosmos that might allude to an embryonic method of concentration on the *kaśiṇas* – as we will see below in § 3.4.

3.1. *The directions of the Vrātya's wanderings*

We have just seen the significance of the Pāli image of the *cātuddisa* ascetic, which seems to overlap the *digvijaya*'s striving towards the conquest of the four directions³². In ŚS XV 14 the complex image of the movements of the Vrātya in the four directions and then towards other destinations is regularly followed by the description of an analogous movement on the part of divine beings and the mention of a specific human faculty or a ritual element to which they resort. As a consequence, even though the typical verbal base for ascetics is used to denote his wandering, i.e. *vi-cal-/vi-car-*, the overall scenario is that of a complex military campaign that ends in triumph, and he is envisioned as a

³² As for these cosmographical directions see Rossi's contribution in the present volume.

leader/winner more than as a penitent ascetic. And a third naturalistic interpretation of the multiple travelling of the *ekavrātyā* seems to be on the horizon: his movements might represent the translation of the sun into celestial space. Let us read the first sentence:

sá yát prācīm díśam ánu vyácalan mārutaṃ sárdho bhūtvānuyácalan máno 'nnādám kṛtvā. mánasānnādénānnam atti yá evāṃ véda. (ŚS XV 14 1)

‘When he (i.e. the Vrātya) wandered toward the eastern direction, the troop of Maruts, after coming into existence, wandered, after making the mind their food-eater (i.e., according to a popular Vedic imagery “their leader”). The one who is aware of this, eats with mind that is a food-eater’.

The other eleven sentences of this Paryāya follow the same pattern, as shown in the following chart:

Number of the Sentence in ŚS XV 14:	DIRECTION <i>díś</i>	GOD WHO FOLLOWS HIM (<i>ánu vyácalan</i>)	LEADER (food-eater) <i>annādá</i>
2	Southern	Indra	strength (<i>bála</i>)
3	Western	King Varuṇa	waters (<i>ap</i> pl.)
4	Northern	King Soma	offering (<i>āhuti</i>)
5	the fixed (<i>dh-ruvā</i>) direction, i.e. probably the nadir ³³	Viṣṇu	Virāj metre
6	cattle (<i>paśú</i> pl.)	Rudra	herbs (<i>ōśadhi</i> pl.)
7	ancestors (<i>pitṛ</i> pl.)	King Yama	the call <i>svadhā</i>
8	men (<i>manuṣyá</i> pl.)	Agni	the exclamation <i>sváhā</i>
9	upward quarter (<i>ūrdhvā</i>)	Bṛhaspati	the exclamation <i>vaṣaṭ</i>
10	gods (<i>deva</i> pl.)	Īśāna	anger (<i>manyu</i>)
11	offspring (<i>prajā</i>)	Prajāpati	breath (<i>prāṇá</i>)

³³ See Bodewitz 2000: 187.

12	intermediate directions (<i>an-tardeśá</i> pl.)	Parameṣṭhin	<i>Brāhman</i>
----	--	-------------	----------------

On the one hand, the names of single gods or the group of Maruts who follow the Vrātya in his wanderings seem to create the image of a kind of king's retinue or a troop of soldiers following their leader on a long and complex campaign. On the other, their electing one of their faculties or choosing one of the important elements of the ritual as their leader suggests a progressive reliance on the different potential (bodily or ritual) elements at their disposal, one after the other, in an ascetic practice aimed at self-control. This seems to be a gradual exercise which finds its point of arrival in deferring themselves to the leadership of Brahman.

3.2. Great attention to the breathing

Three Paryāyas are even devoted to the breath of the Vrātya ascetic, a breath which is one and manifold at the same time. It is identified in seven different ways, first of all with the *prāṇa* and then with several entities of the cosmos, namely fire, sun, moon, wind, waters, cattle and all the creatures, in the usual repetitive style so commonly found in the prose sections of the *Atharvaveda*.

Zysk (2007: 107) already noted the deep understanding of the life-breath documented in these passages of the ŚS, which in his opinion derived from “early experiments with asceticism and meditation”. He interprets this particular Vrātya skill as “knowledge and practice of the special ascetic technique of *prāṇāyāma* or breath-control”.

tāsya vrātyasya. saptá prāṇāḥ saptāpānāḥ saptá vyānāḥ. tāsya vrātyasya, yó 'sya prathamāḥ prāṇā ūrdhvó nāmāyāṃ só agnīḥ. (ŚS XV 15.1-3)

‘1. Of that Vrātya, 2. there are seven inhaling, seven exhaling, and seven circulating breaths³⁴. 3. Of that Vrātya, his first inhaling breath, upward by name, is this fire’.

³⁴ Zysk (2007: 107) interprets these three kinds of breath as “inhalation, exhalation, and retention” and as “the three fundamental activities in the ascetic practice of breath-control”. In our opinion, the notion of retention here i.e. a plain reference to *prāṇāyāma* as “holding, controlling, or regulating one’s breath” (Kaelber 1989: 58) cannot be mandatorily assumed, since the passage seems to simply offer an analysis of breathing activity. Of course, there could be other ŚS passages which might hint at the technique of breath-retention. For instance, Zysk (1993: 202) also interprets *prāṇéna tiryāṇ prāṇati* in ŚS X 8.19, which literally means “by breath he breathes crosswise” as “retains his breath” and explicitly comments on the relevant verse by saying that it

The other six sentences of this Paryāya follow the same pattern. After the repeated genitive (*tāsya vrātyasya*), the sequence of *prāṇās* qualified by their progressive ordinal number (from the second to seventh) are mentioned with a specific name for each breath, indicating one of their important features, such as the direction each breath follows, and the relevant identification with a cosmic element or cattle or offspring, as shown in the following chart:

		SPECIFIC <i>PRĀṆĀ</i>	DIRECTION / NAME	IDENTIFICA- TION
ŚS XV 15.4	<i>tāsya vrātyasya</i>	<i>dviṭīya</i>	<i>prauḍho nāma</i> 'pushed forward' by name	sun (<i>ādityāḥ</i>)
ŚS XV 15.5	”	<i>trīṭīya</i>	<i>abhyūḍho nāma</i> 'pushed toward' by name	moon (<i>can- drāmāḥ</i>)
ŚS XV 15.6	”	<i>caturthā</i>	<i>vibhūr nāma</i> 'all-per- vading' by name	wind (<i>pāvamānaḥ</i>)
ŚS XV 15.7	”	<i>pañcamā</i>	<i>yónir nāma</i> 'matrix' by name	waters (<i>āp</i> pl.)
ŚS XV 15.8	”	<i>ṣaṣṭhā</i>	<i>priyó nāma</i> 'dear' by name	cattle (<i>paśú</i> pl.)
ŚS XV 15.9	”	<i>saptamā</i>	<i>aparimita</i> 'unlim- ited'	offspring (<i>prajā</i> pl.)

The next chart shows a further seven identifications between the *apānas* and several important phases of the sacrificial time which are listed in 16. The pattern is similar to that of the previous Paryāya, but there is no specific name for each breath. The chapter opens with the following sentence:

tāsya vrātyasya. yó śya prathamó 'pānāḥ sá paurṇamāsī (ŚS XV 16.1)

'Of that Vrātya, his first exhaling breath is the day of full moon'.

involves a form of breath control". In our opinion, at least the phrase *prāṇām runaddhi* repeated twice – once preceded by negation in ŚS X 10.54-55 actually means "retains the breath".

		SPECIFIC <i>APĀṆĀ</i>	IDENTIFICATION
ŚS XV 16.2	<i>tāsya vrātyasya</i>	<i>dviṭīya</i>	the eighth day after full moon (<i>āṣṭakā</i>)
ŚS XV 16.3	”	<i>trīṭīya</i>	the night of full moon (<i>āmāvāsyā</i>)
ŚS XV 16.4	”	<i>caturthā</i>	faith (<i>śraddhā</i>)
ŚS XV 16.5	”	<i>pañcamā</i>	consecration (<i>dīkṣā</i>)
ŚS XV 16.6	”	<i>ṣaṣṭī</i>	veneration (<i>yajñā</i>)
ŚS XV 16.7	”	<i>saptamā</i>	magnificent gifts (<i>dākṣiṇā</i> pl.)

Finally, a further seven *vyānas* are identified with a partially classic list of the future Brahmanical cosmology that encompasses both its spatial and its temporal dimensions. The first sentence is as follows:

tāsya vrātyasya | yó 'sya prathamó vyānāḥ séyāṃ bhūmih || (ŚS XV 17.1)

‘Of that Vrātya, his first circulating breath is the earth’.

The other six identifications are listed in the following chart:

		SPECIFIC <i>VYĀNĀ</i>	IDENTIFICATION
ŚS XV 17.2	<i>tāsya vrātyasya</i>	<i>dviṭīya</i>	atmosphere (<i>antārikṣa</i>)
ŚS XV 17.3	”	<i>trīṭīya</i>	sky (<i>dīv</i>)
ŚS XV 17.4	”	<i>caturthā</i>	asterisms (<i>nákṣatra</i> pl.)
ŚS XV 17.5	”	<i>pañcamā</i>	seasons (<i>ṛtú</i> pl.)
ŚS XV 17.6	”	<i>ṣaṣṭī</i>	combinations of seasons (<i>ārtavā</i>)
ŚS XV 17.7	”	<i>saptamā</i>	year (<i>saṃvatsarā</i>)

Even though they are so repetitive and one might almost say enumerative, the significant attention these three chapters pay to breath is hard to overestimate, just as it is equally interesting to note the great effort that has been made to match each of the seven breaths with a cosmic or sacrificial entity³⁵. This is especially striking when one considers the fact the number of breaths identified with the seven Ṛṣis

³⁵ According to Zysk (2007: 107) the twenty-one identifications of breath “deal with anatomy and physiology, worship and ritual, and macrocosmic correspondences”.

(*prāṇā vā ṛṣayas*) in ŚBM VI 1.1.1 are most significantly also seven³⁶. In the latter text, the vital airs are considered against a complex cosmogonic and mythic background. Indra is placed as the breath in the middle (VI 1.1.2: *sa yò yam mádhye prāṇāḥ. eṣá evéndras*) of the other six. He kindled the other breaths, but all together they created seven separate persons (*puruṣa*), who once again were transformed into one person made of those seven persons (VI 1.1.3: *etān sapta pūruṣān ékam pūruṣam akurvan*), who is identified with god Prajāpati (VI 1.1.5: *sá eva pūruṣaḥ prajāpatir abhavat*). It seems that the purpose is to capture the unity in the multiplicity, as if one were trying to find the original cause of the universe in the breath of life, which is also recognised as being the basis of the multiplicity of the human universe through a practice of distinctive attention and ability to concentrate on a single point where the plurality merges. It is noteworthy that in the famous ŚS hymn devoted to Prāṇa, the final prayer in ŚS XI 4.26 clearly hints at another unique element (see above) from which everything originates, namely the embryo of waters – mentioned in RV X 121: *prāṇa má mát paryávṛ to ná mád anyó bhaviṣyasi | apām gárbham iva jīvāse prāṇa badhnāmi tvā máyi* ‘O breath, do not turn away from me³⁷, do not become other than me! Like the embryo of waters, to life, o breath, I bind you to me’.

Furthermore, the doubt arises that this lengthy identification of three times seven breaths in ŚS XV 15-17 might be comparable with the so-called *triṣaptīya* hymn, i.e. the very first hymn of this Saṃhitā, in particular with ŚS I 1.1, where the Vedic student wishes that the Lord of Speech (*vācāspati*) would put the powers of “the three times seven that go around wearing all the shapes” (*yé triṣaptāḥ pariyānti viśvā rūpāni bíbhṛataḥ*) into his body, on the first day of his Vedic instruction. A fascinating interpretation of these twenty-one items was advanced by Whitney (Whitney, Lanman 1905: 2) and endorsed and explained with detailed argumentation by Thieme (1985): they might refer to the list of the abstract forms (*ākṛti*) of the linguistic sounds, made up of 8 vowels

³⁶ Seven as the number of breaths also occurs in JB II 225: [...] *athaitā nadaṃ va odatīnām ity uṣṇihā bhājanam ārbhave pavamāne kriyante. tās saptaḥṣarapadā bhavanti. sapta prāṇāḥ. prāṇair eva tat samṛdhyamānā yanti. prāṇesu pratitiṣṭhānti* ‘Now, these verses *nadaṃ va odatīnām* (RV VIII 69.2) etc. which are shared by the Uṣṇih metre are recited during the Pavamāna stotra sacred to the Ṛbhus. Their quarters are made of seven syllables, seven are the breaths, they become successful due to the breaths. They establish themselves in the breaths’.

³⁷ The verbal base of this imperative (*pary-ā-vṛt-*) seems to at least partially denote an idea opposite to that of the *upapadasamāsa ekavṛd* analysed above and which we have chosen to translate as “dwelling in only one place”.

(*a, i, u, ṛ, e, o, ai, au*)³⁸, 4 semivowels (*y, r, l, v*), 5 occlusives (*k, c, ṭ, t, p*)³⁹, 4 spirants (*ś, ṣ, s, h*)⁴⁰. By contrast, the hypothesis that even in ŚS XV 15-17 the three times seven breaths might have hinted at these twenty-one linguistic sounds as phonic emissions of breath clashes with the fact that there the twenty-one items are explicitly divided into three groups classified as *prāṇá, apāṇá, and vyāṇá*, a classification that, at least at first sight, is less suitable to the categories of phonemes mentioned above⁴¹.

3.3. *The worlds conquered by the host of the vrātya*

Following this survey of the selected series of Paryāyas (XV 13-17) analysed in the present chapter – which are all devoted to quite clear features of the ascetic *vrātya*'s life – we will try to re-interpret the first Paryāya (XV 13) of the singled-out series. If we take into serious consideration that ŚS XV 13, which indeed does not include an overt reference to the asceticism, might however have presupposed the topic of asceticism, the general meaning could become less obscure than is generally evaluated. As is well known, Paryāyas 10-13 deal with the context of hospitality. As Gonda (1975: 306) explains, this section “describes

³⁸ Vowel length was disregarded; *!* might have been considered as a sort of allophone of *r* (Thieme 1985: 563).

³⁹ Each occlusive might have represented another four sounds, i.e. the matching aspirated voiceless, non-aspirated voiced, aspirated voiced, and nasal sounds (Thieme 1985: 563).

⁴⁰ The student would therefore have hoped to obtain the ability to memorise, pronounce and enunciate correctly what he was beginning to study (Thieme 1985: 560-1). This interpretation could be well tuned to the following verses, especially the prayer addressed to the Lord of Speech to ensure that the student is not deprived of what has heard (ŚS I 1.4: *mā śrutēna vi rādhiṣi*). Nonetheless, faced with the hypothesis that this passage might be a piece of evidence for the origins of Sanskrit phonetics, Deshpande (1997: 34) noticed that “It is not clear that all the classes of sounds listed by him in order to arrive at the number twenty-one were definitely recognized by the ancient phoneticians in India” and in particular he demonstrates that at least the category of the semivowels was not commonly recognised and it was instead proposed by an innovative scholar coming from the North-eastern region of Magadha, i.e. Hrasva Māṇḍūkeya, as explicitly mentioned in *Aitareya-Āraṇyaka* III 2.1. Of course, Deshpande's argument is decisive in shedding light on the origins of phonetics in ancient India, but it does not invalidate the hypothesis that ŚS I 1 may have alluded to a list of twenty-one sounds, whatever the subclasses within that number were.

⁴¹ *Vice versa* a doubt that the number twenty-one in ŚS I 1 could vaguely allude to the breaths as catalogued in ŚS XV 15-17 and divided into groups of seven as also attested in ŚBM VI 1.1, cannot be entirely excluded. This may however perhaps be a more technical reference to the breath that becomes sound through the phonic apparatus, as intuited by Whitney and well explained by Thieme. However, in both texts the main focus might have been a specific training in how to use breathing or language.

the prospect of blessings held out to a king who receives a *vrātya* as his guest”. These blessings do not really resemble pure gifts. They are instead personal achievements of what one could call coveted fruit for one’s own merit at the end of existence. In ŚS XV 11 the host, by virtue of the hospitality that he offers to the *vrātya*, gains possession of the paths which go to the gods (*devayāna*: v. 3), of waters (áp: v. 4), of what is dear (*priyá*: v. 6), of will (*vása*: v. 8), of pleasure (*nikāmá*: v. 10), and realizes the longer breath (*prānām* [...] *várṣyāmsam kurute*: v. 5). Moreover, if he performs an oblation after receiving permission from the *vrātya* (*vrātyeṇātisṛṣṭo juhóti*: ŚS XV 12.4; 7; 8), he foreknows the path which goes to the ancestors and to the gods (*prá pitryānam pánthām jānāti prá devayānam*: ŚS XV 12.5) and a valid resting-place is left over in this world for him (*páry asyāsmíml loká āyátanam śisýate*: ŚS XV 12.7). Especially significant in this other series of chapters (ŚS XV 10-13) is the last one, where the same scheme of sentence is used five times: the first one is as follows:

tád yasyaivám vidván vrātya ekām rátrim átithir grhé vásati | yé prthivyām púnýā lokás tán evá ténáva rundhe || (ŚS XV 13.1)

‘Now, the one in the house of whom a thus-knowing *Vrātya* stays one night as a guest, obtains, by means of this, the meritorious worlds on the earth’.

The other four sentences speak about somebody who hosts the *vrātya* for a progressively higher number of nights and thanks to this hospitality respectively obtains progressively higher worlds.

ŚS XV 13.2	in the house of whom a thus-knowing <i>Vrātya</i> stays two nights as a guest (<i>dvitīyā rátri</i>)	he obtains the meritorious worlds in the atmosphere... (<i>yé ‘ntárikṣe púnýā lokáh</i>)!
ŚS XV 13.3	...three nights... (<i>trítīyā rátri</i>)	... the meritorious worlds in the sky... (<i>yé divi púnýā lokáh</i>)
ŚS XV 13.4	...four nights... (<i>caturthī rátri</i>)	... the meritorious worlds of meritorious people... (<i>yé púnýānām púnýā lokáh</i>)
ŚS XV 13.5	...unlimited nights... (<i>aparimitā rátri</i>)	... meritorious worlds, truly unlimited... (<i>yá eváparimitāḥ púnýā lokáh</i>)

As is self-evident, the one who conquers successive worlds (*loká*) is not the guest, i.e. the *vrātya* but the host. His merits depend on the hospitality he ensures to the *vrātya* but the guest-host relationship is not so-clear. The hymn gradually passes from the limited world that is gained and close to the human protagonists, to worlds that are further away, up to worlds without boundaries, where the spatial dimension might have overlapped the temporal one. But above all, in this hymn where the *vrātya* is extolled several times as *vidvān*, i.e. as a wise man who is aware of this and that, it is tempting to interpret this passage as explaining that it is the help of such a master/teacher that enables the host to reach an even higher status. In other words, we advance the hypothesis that the successive worlds attained are indeed progressively higher sapiential (and perhaps even meditative – see below) stages. The term *punya* identifies a condition offered as a reward for an action of hospitality and which is realized at different, increasing, cosmic levels until it reaches an absolute and ‘unlimited’ state in terms of time and space (*áparimitā rátrī, áparimitāḥ púnýā lokás*)⁴². A comparable sequence of *lokas* described as matching with several steps in a meritorious progressively higher pattern occurs in KU, where the final goal is to sit on Brahmán’s throne:

sa etaṃ devayānaṃ panthānam āpadyāgnilokam āgacchati. sa vāyulokam sa ādityalokam sa varuṇalokam sa indralokam sa prajāpatilokam sa brahmalokam. [...] sa eṣa visukṛto viduṣkṛto brahma vidvān brahmaivābhipraiti. [...] sá āgacchati vicakṣaṇām āsandīm. [...] tasmin brahmāste. tam itthamvit pādenaivāgna ārohati. (KU I 3-5)

‘After taking the path to the gods, he reaches the world of Agni, of Vāyu, of Āditya, of Varuṇa, of Prajāpati, of Bráhman. [...] This man, who abandoned merits and demerits, who is a knower of Bráhman enters upon Bráhman. [...] He arrives at the throne called *vicakṣaṇā*. [...] On that throne sits Brahmán. Knowing thus he ascends it in front with one foot’.

In this case, it is clear that the wanderer is indeed a deceased man, one among those who depart from this world, who go to the moon (KU I 2: *ye vai ke cāsmāl lokāt prayanti candramasam evat e sarve gacchanti*). The subject is self-evidently eschatological: but this text pre-

⁴² Analogously the *áparimita loká* is mentioned in the *pañcaudana-sava* hymn in ŚS IX 5.22ab = PS XVI 99.8ab associated with the ‘unlimited sacrifice’ (*áparimita yajñá* ŚS IX 5.21cd = PS XVI 99.7cd; ŚS IX 5.22 = PS XVI 99.8ab), both gained by the one who offers the *ajā pāñcaudana*.

supposes that the progress made on earth is preparatory for the afterlife, when the worlds achieved by merit will be enjoyed. The merit acquired is characterised by a specific striving towards wisdom and self-control, culminating in the final self-consciousness of being a temporary entity whose self is the same self of all the beings, who is also the Brahman himself.

ṛtur asmi [...] sambhūto [...] bhūtasya bhūtasyaātmā. bhūtasya bhūtasya tvam ātmāsi. Yat tvam asi so 'ham asmīti (KU I 6)

‘I am a season. [...] I was born [...] as the self of every being. You are the self of every being. I am what you are.’⁴³

At the heart of this reflection on the conquest of successive worlds seems to be the universal search for what is permanent, i.e. what endures beyond material change including death. The doctrine that emerges from these Vedic passages seems to turn to breath/wind as that almost imperceptible element which passes from one place to another and is evidently the *discrimen* between life and death. Significantly the moon imagined as the place where the deceased men are directed is said to swell up in the waxing fortnight because of their breaths: *teṣāṃ prāṇaiḥ pūrvapakṣa āpyāyate*. (KU I 2). In our opinion this is the doctrine which started emerging in the Vṛātyakāṇḍa.

3.4. *Breath and kasiṇas: Theravāda meditative techniques*

The characteristic traits of ancient ascetic practices we have just analysed in ŚS XV 13-17 share some features with some meditative techniques described in the Early Buddhist texts, and perhaps with other historical forms of ascetic or meditative training, such as the *prāṇāyāma* which has been overtly developed in the practice of yoga. Here, we are prompted to only consider the early Buddhist meditation tradition merely because we have singled out other shared ascetic notions conveyed by cognate expressions (analysed above and in some of our other articles) in the Vedic and Pāli canons. However, we assume

⁴³ The following sentences in KU I 6 are devoted to explaining what the phrase ‘*brāhman* is truth (*satyām*)’ means. This is done by means of a popular etymology, which distinguishes between *tyam*, i.e. deities and *prāṇas* (i.e. microcosmic deities) on the one hand, and *sat*, on the other, i.e. everything else. Brahman encompasses both. It is noteworthy that we have found an analogous distinction “between all that breathe and those that do not” in ŚS XIII 4.21 (see above § 1.1.1) referring to the object of an extraordinary knowledge.

that the forms of meditation described in this text could have been developed and used in different ways in other Indian traditions as well.

First of all, the complex identification of the types of breath with the natural elements explained in the Vrātyakāṇḍa seems to be cognate with the tangled Buddhist system of meditative supports called *kaṣiṇas* (in scr. *kr̥tsna-*). These are natural elements and objects (frequently coloured disks) used to develop the concentration and meditative absorptions (*jhānas*)⁴⁴. The practice consists in focusing on one of these objects until, after closing one's eyes, a mental image is retained. The *kaṣiṇas par excellence* are generally: earth (*paṭhavī*), water (*āpo*), air or wind (*vāyo*), fire (*tejo*), yellow (*pīta*), red (*lohita*), blue (*nīla*), white (*odāta*), enclosed space or hole (*ākāsa*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). The use of *kaṣiṇas* is widely explained in the *Visuddhimagga* (see chapters IV and V), but they are also mentioned in the Pāli Canon, although only briefly⁴⁵. One of the more complete formulas is the *Kaṣiṇa-suttaṃ*:

dasa yimāni bhikkhave kaṣiṇāyatanāni. katamāni dasa? pathavīkaṣiṇam eko sañjānāti uddham adho tiriyaṃ advayaṃ appamāṇaṃ. āpokasiṇam eko sañjānāti...pe... tejokasiṇam eko sañjānāti... vāyokasiṇam eko sañjānāti... nīlakaṣiṇam eko sañjānāti... pītakaṣiṇam eko sañjānāti... lohitakaṣiṇam eko sañjānāti... odātakaṣiṇam eko sañjānāti... ākāsakaṣiṇam eko sañjānāti... viññāṇakaṣiṇam eko sañjānāti uddham adho tiriyaṃ advayaṃ appamāṇaṃ. Imāni kho bhikkhave dasa kaṣiṇāyatanāni. (A V 60)

‘Bhikkhu there are ten *kaṣiṇa* bases. What ten? One person perceives the earth *kaṣiṇa* above, below, across, undivided, measureless. One person perceives the water *kaṣiṇa*... the fire *kaṣiṇa*... the air *kaṣiṇa*.. the blue *kaṣiṇa*... the yellow *kaṣiṇa*.. the red *kaṣiṇa*... the white *kaṣiṇa*... the space...the consciousness *kaṣiṇa* above, below, across, undivided, measureless. These are the ten *kaṣiṇa* bases’. (tr. Bodhi 2012: 1380).

In brief the *kaṣiṇas* are the four elements, the four colours, the space and consciousness in the Pāli suttas or the bright light in some other texts. In the *Visuddhimagga* we also find an explicit description of how each *kaṣiṇa* is constructed.

- The earth *kaṣiṇa* is made from clay which has a colour similar to the rising sun (see *Vism* 123) – the earth matches the first *vyāna*-identification in ŚS XV 17.1 and the sun, the second *prāṇa*-identification in ŚS XV 15.2.

⁴⁴ As regards the method of producing *jhānas* by *kaṣiṇas* see also King 1980: 43ff.

⁴⁵ E.g. see A V 46-48, M II 14; D III 268, 290; Nett. 89, etc.

- The water *kaṣiṇa* is made by filling a bowl with clean water (see Vism V 170) – waters are the element matching the fifth *prāṇa*-identification in ŚS XV 15.7.
- The fire *kaṣiṇa* is a flame of a specially prepared fireplace (see Vism V 171) – fire is the element matching the first *prāṇa*-identification in ŚS XV 15.3.
- The air *kaṣiṇa* can be grasped by observing the activity of the wind (see Vism V 172) – and this element is the same in the fourth *prāṇa*-identification in ŚS XV 15.6.
- The light *kaṣiṇa* is produced when the light of the sun or the moon passes through a hole in a wall or circle thrown on the ground, etc. (Vism V 174) – the sun and the moon are the elements matching the second and third *prāṇa*-identifications in ŚS XV 15.4-5.

If one assumes that the attention to breath in the ŚS is a trace of an ascetic process of the reabsorption of vital functions as a great achievement of the ascetic's meditative practice, the way in which ŚS XV 15-17 identifies the twenty-one breaths with the natural elements might have stemmed from the same proto-pattern of meditation. For instance, in ŚS XV 15 the seven forms of *prāṇa* are identified with fire, sun, moon, wind, waters, cattle and offspring; in ŚS XV 17 the sevenfold *vyāna* is identified with other spatial/temporal elements, namely earth, atmosphere, sky, asterisms, seasons, combinations of seasons and years (see above § 3.2).

Beyond these scattered affinities, it is undisputable that there is a shared focus on breathing. Thus, the Vṛātyakāṇḍa devotes an important space to the topic of breathing, classified into three categories, namely *prāṇā*, *apānā* and *vyānā*, i.e. inhaling, exhaling, and circulating breath. In the Pāli Canon the word *pāṇa* (Skt. *prāṇa*) is not used in the sense of a “special breath”, but rather to designate a “living being or creature”⁴⁶. In fact, the notion of breath is preferably conveyed by the word *apāna* and this is central to the meditation technique of mindful breathing or *ānāpāna-sati*, e.g. *Ānāpānasati-sutta* (MN n. 118), *Ānāpānasamyutta* (SN n. 54), *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta* (DN n. 22), *Satipaṭṭhana-sutta* (MN n. 10), the *Mahārāhulovāda-sutta* (MN n. 62) and *Kāyagatāsati-sutta* (MN n. 119). There are numerous studies on mindfulness of breathing and let us not forget the importance of this practice within the Pāli Canon where it is considered a very powerful meditation technique

⁴⁶ See PED s.v. *pāṇa*.

that leads the four *satipaṭṭhānas* to their completion⁴⁷. This technique is also connected to the *jhānas*, for example in the S V 317ff the *ānāpāna-sati* and the *jhānas* are used in order to reach the *nirodha-samāpatti*, or the achievement of cessations, the last stage before the *nibbāna*. This practice is used on different occasions and also for diverse purposes, for example, a part from the field of meditation, the *ānāpāna-sati* is prescribed as a remedy for mental confusion (A III 449: *cetaso vikkhepassa pahānāya ānāpānassati bhāvetabbā* ‘mindfulness of breathing is to be developed for abandoning mental confusion’).

Mindfulness of breathing is also the base for the contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*) and the main part of the typical formula is e.g.:

kathaṅ ca bhikkhave bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati idha bhikkhave bhikkhu araṅṅagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suṅṅāgāragato vā nisīdati, pallāṅkaṃ ābhujitvā, ujum kāyaṃ paṇidhāya, parimukhaṃ satim upaṭṭhapetvā. so sato va assasati, sato passasati. dīghaṃ vā assasanto dīghaṃ assasāmī ti pajānāti, dīghaṃ vā passasanto dīghaṃ passasāmī ti pajānāti, rassaṃ vā assasanto ‘rassaṃ assasāmī’ ti pajānāti, rassaṃ vā passasanto ‘rassaṃ passasāmī’ ti pajānāti. [...] (M I 56)

‘And how, *bhikkhus*, does a *bhikkhu* abide contemplating the body as a body? Here a *bhikkhu*, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect, and established mindfulness in front of him, ever mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out. Breathing in long, he understands: “I breathe in long”; or breathing out long, he understands: “I breathe out long”. Breathing in short, he understands: “I breathe in short”; or breathing out short, he understands: “I breathe out short”. [...].’ (tr. Bodhi 1995: 145-146).

The passage is quite long and includes emotional (*pīti* and *sukha*) and mental elements (*citta saṅkhara*) etc. It is obvious that it is impossible to make a close comparison between this kind of Buddhist passages and the Vṛātyakāṇḍa’s way of dealing with breath, however, the fact that both traditions do not always concentrate on breath-control, focusing instead on breathing and its analysis is in our opinion of crucial importance. In the Vedic texts analysed above (§ 2.1), we have advanced the hypothesis that breath is at the origin of the multiplicity of the perceptible world, and that the purpose of catching the unity in the multiplicity

⁴⁷ S V 331: *evam bhāvito kho Ānanda ānāpānasamādhi evam bhaulīkato cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūreti* ‘It is, Ānanda, when concentration by mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated in this way that it fulfils the four establishments of mindfulness’. (tr. Bodhi 2000: 1782).

might have been at the core of the manifold classification of twenty-one breaths (§ 3.2). An analogous search for the unity in the multiplicity is well documented in the Buddhist mindfulness breathing practice, which should lead the practitioners to achieve a unified mind, and in order to activate this process one must develop a practice of mindfulness.

tasmātiha, bhikkhave, dhammesu dhammānupassī tasmim samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. (M III 85)

‘That is why on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware and mindful having put away covetousness and grief for the world.’ (tr. Bodhi 1995: 946).

It is hard to label this search under “universal categories” and do not assume that it depends on a shared matrix with the above-mentioned Vedic text.

3.5. *The worlds conquered by jhānas*

ŚS XV 13.1-5 (§ 3.3) presents some peculiar elements that can be compared with the meditative absorptions or *jhānas* (Skt. *dhyāna*). They are described in the Buddhist sources as four progressive states called *rūpajhāna* (form-*jhāna*), and four additional meditative attainments called *arūpa* (formless *jhāna*). The *rūpajhānas* are characterised by an *iter* from the concrete to the abstract. According to an ideal pattern they start with the acquisition of some constituents ‘material’ (*aṅga*), i.e. applied and sustained thought (*vitakkha* and *vicāra*), joy (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*), and then some of them are gradually abandoned and the only *aṅga* surviving in the fourth *jhāna* is equanimity (*upekkha*). In this progression, from the second *jhāna* onward, some canonical passages and the Visuddhimagga also reveal the presence of another constituent: concentration on one point (*ekaggatā*). This means that during this process the mind is concentrated and focused only on one object, it is unified, and this aspect could be a possible consonance with the idea of unification emerging in the above-mentioned passages of the ŚBM VI 1.1.1 compared with ŚS XV 1 and XI 5. In any case all this meditative progression allows the attainment of the highest immaterial spheres such as those of non-existence and of neither perception nor non-perception.

Furthermore, the common characteristic of these meditative absorptions is that they correspond to some abodes/worlds (*loka*), which are reached during meditation and after death⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ Gunaratana (1980: 160; see also 232-233) schematises the correspondences between *jhāna* and *loka* in the following way: “Those who have practiced the first

In ŚS XV 13 (see above § 3.3) the sequence of the benefits obtained in hosting a Vrātya started from “the meritorious worlds on the earth” gained by hosting the Vrātya for one night, proceeding towards several other progressively higher *lokas* (atmosphere, sky, worlds of meritorious people), up to the truly unlimited world. Although the names of the worlds reached are different in the sequence of the eight *jhānas*, the powerful concept of a progression of states that become increasingly subtler is found in both passages. The starting point is a concrete element, the earth, which in the Buddhist meditative states appears in the previously-mentioned relevant *kaṣiṇa*, up to a dimension called infinite space (*ākāśānañcāyatana*), infinite consciousness (*viññāṇaṇcāyatana*), nothingness (*ākāśānañcāyatana*) and neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*). It is self-evident that the Buddhist pattern of the eight *jhānas* that match eight progressively higher *lokas* is definitely more elaborate and encompasses more sophisticated states, but it is striking that the latter step in ŚS XV 13.5 consists of *aparimitāḥ pūnyā lokāḥ* “unlimited meritorious worlds”.

Moreover, it is very significant that the worlds attained through the Buddhist *jhānas* are Brahmā’s abodes, and the achievement of Brahman’s throne is the final achievement in KU I 3.5 (compared with ŚS XV 13 in § 3.3).

3.6. *The Vrātyakāṇḍa as a Vedic proto-source for the meditative practices*

Numerous scholars have dedicated books and articles to investigating the origin of Buddhist meditation⁴⁹: here we will focus our attention mainly on an interpretative proposal advanced by Wynne (2007),

jhānas to a minor degree are reborn in the realm of the retinue of Brahma (*brahma-pārisajja*), those who have practiced it to a moderate degree are reborn in the realm of the ministers of Brahma (*brahmapurohita*), and those who have practiced it to a superior degree are reborn in the realm of the great Brahma (*mahābrahmā*). Similarly, practicing the second *jhānas* to a minor degree brings rebirth in the realm of minor luster (*parittābha*), to a moderate degree rebirth in the realm of infinite luster (*appamānābha*), and to a superior degree in the realm of radiant luster (*ābhassara*). [...] Beyond the fine material sphere lie the immaterial realms (*arūpāvacarabhūmi*). These are four in number – the base of boundless space, the base of boundless consciousness, the base of nothingness and the base of neither perception nor non-perception. As should be evident, these are the realms of rebirth for those who, without having broken the fetters that bind them to *samsāra*, achieve and master the four immaterial *jhānas*”. Gethin 1997 made an interesting analysis of these *jhānas*, *lokas* in the Abhidhamma texts, in which he shows how the Abhidhamma texts offer many parallel between the psychological and the cosmological order.

⁴⁹ See e.g. Nakamura 1979, King 1980, Schmithausen 1981, Griffiths 1983, Bronkhorst 1993, Vetter 1988, Bucknell 1993; 2019, Cousins 1996, Polak 2011.

since his assertion that formless meditation states have a Brahmanical origin is particularly interesting for our inquiry. He points out that the Buddha borrows (and modifies) his pattern of meditation from that of two Brahmanical teachers Ārāḍa Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta⁵⁰ and that the Brahmanical and Buddhist ways of meditation are both based on the so-called process of “world dissolution”, i.e. a sort of reversal of cosmogony, a process starting from the most concrete element, i.e. the earth, and ending with the unlimited worlds. Wynne (2007: 37) claims:

“[...] because the parts of the world are equivalent to the parts of the person, humans include everything within themselves. It is exactly this sort of thinking that underlies early Brahminic meditation. From this perspective, it is not surprising that meditative states of consciousness were thought to be identical to the subtle strata of the cosmos”.

In Wynne’s opinion (2007: 33ff.) the evidence of the Brahmanical origin of this correspondence between meditation and cosmology is found in some Brahmanical texts such as MBh XII 187.4, XII 228.13-15, and XII 291.15, whose sequences of natural elements (earth, wind, space, water, etc.) he interprets as the result of some meditative practices. *Vice versa* “There is no similar theoretical background to element meditation in the early Buddhist texts, where the elements appear simply as suitable objects of meditation.” (Wynne 2007: 35). Thus, according to Wynne, the Buddhist meditation map might have derived from Brahmanical cosmology, possibly from some older sources dating back to the *Ṛgveda* time. The process of “world dissolution” that Wynne considers is the crucial idea of the Upaniṣads, where the multiplicity inscribed in the human being, made of all his faculties of perception, of action, etc., is merged into the unique *ātman* and gradually dissolved into the *Brahman*⁵¹.

⁵⁰ According to the well-known story of the Buddha, before his awakening, that is when he was a Bodhisattva, he was extremely dedicated to extreme ascetic practices and could be considered part of that great movement called *śramana*. A famous account tells of his training with two teachers Ārāḍa Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta (e.g. *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta* M I 163-167) and that he was dedicated to extreme ascetism (*Mahāsaccaka-sutta* M I 242-245). After rejecting the most severe practices, the Buddha continued to practice and teach some peculiar types of meditation, and he could still be defined as an ascetic (*samaṇa*) in the sense of the Greek etymology of this term (Gr. *askētēs*, i.e., ‘the one who exercises’).

⁵¹ See Wynne (2007: 24): “In the early Brahminic literature, element meditation is based on the principle that the yogin who wishes to attain union with brahman must simulate the process of world dissolution in his meditative practice. Similar schemes of element meditation are found in the early Buddhist literature, and some of these include

Instead, our proposal does not consider the origin of the above-mentioned map that matches meditation-cosmology as a Brahmanical conception, but rather as an earlier Vedic pre-Brahmanical conception. In fact, we have just advanced the hypothesis (§ 3.3) that ŚS XV 13 documents a background comparable to the renowned pattern of meditative correspondences between *jhānas* and *lokas* and that the achievement of a certain benefit might have represented a mental state, i.e. the possibility of existing in a given psycho-physical condition, ever less belonging to the world of form. Thus, even if this ŚS passage does not contain a specific reference to meditative practices – although the attention to breathing in the following Paryāyas (ŚS XV 15-17) quite clearly seems to be an ascetic element – the mentioned cosmological sequence is similar to a meditative process that reaches specific *lokas* through acquired merits. If we compare this gradual achievement with that of the Buddhist meditative *kaṣiṇa-jhānas* in the Buddhist path and even with the meditative levels of the yoga-Brahmanical context⁵², which essentially depend on a progressive mental training generally led by a teacher, it is quite natural to read the progressive conquest of worlds on the part of the *ekavrātyā*'s host as the effect of a teaching on the part of his guest. In other words, ŚS XV 13 could be interpreted not only as dealing with increasing merits, but also with a special training consisting in a sort of proto-sequence of meditative absorption akin to that described in the Buddhist meditative literature. Thus, this crucial relationship between cosmology and meditative patterns, might be traced back to an archetypal pre-brahmanical ascetic tradition of which both the *gāthā* verses devoted to the renouncers and the Vṛātyakāṇḍa itself could be exceptionally well-preserved evidence within the context of an otherwise generalised *damnatio memoriae* of the Vṛātyas and of all the non-brahmanical cultures.

4. *The ascetic whom the gods worship*

Another interesting aspect that binds the figure of the Vṛātya to that of the Buddha is their relationship with the gods, who unexpectedly of-

the formless spheres. Because there is no doctrinal background for these lists in the early Buddhist literature, it is more likely than not that they have been borrowed from an early Brahminic source⁵².

⁵² Wynne (2007: 39-40) also draws a correspondence between some *arupa jhānas* and some statements of Yājñavalkya made in the BĀU.

ten pay homage to them and ultimately appear to be placed on a lower level than theirs⁵³.

4.1. *Buddhist ascetics' superiority to the gods*

In the Pāli Canon there are many passages in which the Buddha is praised by the gods. First of all in the *Ayacana Sutta*, Brahmā Sahāmpati after his awakening asks the Buddha to teach the Dhamma. The god even genuflects in front of the Buddha and begs him to teach:

atha kho ugato sahampati ekaṃsaṃ uttarāsaṅgaṃ karitvā dakkhiṇa-jāṇu-maṇḍalaṃ pathaviyaṃ nihantvā yena bhagavā tenañjaliṃ paṇāmetvā bhagavantaṃ etad avoca || desetu bhante bhagavā dhammaṃ desetu ugato dhammaṃ. || (S I 137)

‘Brahmā Sahāmpati arranging his upper robe over one shoulder, he genuflected his right knee on the ground, saluted the Blessed One with his hands before his heart, and said to him: ‘Venerable, let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma! Let the One-Well-Gone teach the Dhamma! [...]’ (tr. Bodhi 2000: 232)

Homage by the god is very clear and the idea that the Buddha is able to teach the Dhamma, something that Brahma Sahampati cannot do, is amply emphasised. On other occasions the Buddha was explicitly venerated by Sakka, the king of the god. In the *Satthāravandanāsutta*, when the gods ask Sakka which divinity he honours, he answers:

‘so idha sammāsambuddho | asmiṃ loke sadevake | anomanāmaṃ satthāraṃ | taṃ namassāmi māṭali. (S I 235)

‘The perfectly Enlightened One here | In this world with its devas | The teacher of perfect name | He is the one whom I worship, Māṭali’. (tr. Bodhi 2000: 335)

This idea of the value of the Buddha’s teachings, especially in reference to meditative techniques, is underlined in other canonical passages such as in the *Sandha-sutta* (A V 323-327) where the Buddha describes

⁵³ See Vassilkov 2015: 443: “We should probably take into account that the Buddhism established its own hierarchy of great beings, men who surpassed the old gods, due to their progress on the path to Nibbāna/Nirvāṇa: *arahants* (*arhats*), *bodhisatt(v)as*, *pratyekabuddhas* / *paccekabudhas* etc. The ancient gods and demigods became, in comparison with new superheroes, insignificant background figures”.

and then teaches the gods Indra, Brahman and Pajāpati some meditative techniques⁵⁴ and they pay homage to him with these verses:

*namo te purisājañña namo te purisuttama
yassa tenābhijānāma yam pi nissāya jhāyāsī ti. (A V 325)*

‘Homage to you, o thoroughbred person! | Homage to you, o supreme person! | We ourselves do not understand. | What you meditate in dependence on’⁵⁵. (tr. Bodhi 2012: 1563)

This also shows that the Buddha’s teachings and his meditation are so profound that they are not immediately understood even by the gods that acknowledge his superiority and honour him.

4.2. *Vrātya ascetics’ superiority to the gods*

We have already seen that, in the *Vrātyakāṇḍa*, gods may be influenced by the *ekavrātyā* (ŚS XV 1.1), they may also be obsequious toward him (ŚS XV 3.1) and follow him as a troop (ŚS XV 14.1-12). But in ŚS XV 3 the gods are even presented as *ekavrātyā*’s servants, namely the ones running alongside his carriage, acting as his bodyguards.

*tām āsandīm vrātya ārohat. tāsyā devajanāḥ pariṣkandā āsant
samkalpāḥ prahāyā3 viśvāni bhūtāny upasādah || (ŚS XV 3.9-10)*

‘The *Vrātya* ascended that throne. Of him the legions of gods were the servants; decisions [were] the messengers; all beings the waiters.’

Moreover, the *Vrātya* is explicitly placed in a hierarchical position of clear superiority both to cosmic elements and to the gods. ‘Behind him

⁵⁴ Polak (2011: 53) comments on these stanzas thus: “This verse confirms that the author of the sutta was well aware of the paradoxical nature of the *jhāna* of a thoroughbred. Even the mighty devas are unable to understand the character of this state. I would like to bring attention to the uniqueness of this verse. While the Brahmas of different kinds often appear within the Canon, the presence of Indra (lit. Innda) and Pajāpati is a rarity. Apart from this stanza, Pajāpati is very rarely mentioned in the Suttapiṭaka. The presence of Indra is even more special. In the Vedas, Indra was a king of but in Buddhist mythology, this role is occupied by Sakka”.

⁵⁵ Bodhi translates the expression *nissaya* as “dependent on” and explains it (Bodhi 2012: 1861 fn. 2210), in this way: “*yassa te nābhijānāma yampi nissayāya jhāyāsī*. See MN 22.36, I 140: ‘When the devas with Indra, Brahmā and Pajāpati, search for a monk thus liberated in mind, they do not find that on which the consciousness of one who has thus attained is dependent. Why so? I say that one who has thus attained is untraceable even in this very life’.”

moved *rta* sand *satya* and sun and moon and stars' (*tam rtaṃ ca satyaṃ ca sūryaś ca candraś ca nakṣatrāṇi cānuvyacalan*) according to ŚS XV 6.5. Several gods are defined as his attendants and archers in seven sentences in ŚS XV 5. The following sentence shows the typical structure of all these seven sentences:

tasmai prācyā diśo antardeśād bhavam iṣvāsam anuṣṭhātāram akurvan |
(ŚS XV 5.1)

‘For him (the *Vrātya*) from the atmosphere of the eastern direction they made Bhava archer and attendant’.

	FROM THE ATMO- SPHERE (<i>antardeśāt</i>) of ...	HIS ARCHER (<i>iṣvāsa</i>) AND ATTENDANT (<i>anuṣṭhātr</i>)
ŚS XV 5.2	the southern direction	the archer Śarva
ŚS XV 5.3	the western direction	the archer Paśupati
ŚS XV 5.4	the northern direction	the mighty god (<i>ugra deva</i>)
ŚS XV 5.5	the fixed direction	Rudra
ŚS XV 5.6	the upward direction	the great god (<i>mahādeva</i>)
ŚS XV 5.7	the intermediate regions	Īśāna

Thus, the *Vrātya* is apparently presented as an ascetic whom the gods worship. Nonetheless, if one considers all the aspects of the *vrātyā* ascetic picture surveyed here, it is hard to avoid drawing a comparison between this image of the *ekavrātyā* with his attendants and the well-known similar representation of the king with his attendants in the BĀU. In the latter text the king is indeed the self in the state of sleep, as a prefiguration of the ideal of salvation pursued, free to move around keeping all his vital functions under control.

sā hovācājātaśatruḥ. yātraīśā etāt suptó 'bhūdyā eśā vijñānamāyaḥ pūruṣas tād eśāṃ prāñānāṃ vijñānena vijñānam ādāya yā eṣo 'ntār hṛdaya ākāśas tāsmiñ chete. tāni yadā grhñāty ātha haitāt pūruṣaḥ svāpiti nāma. tād grhītā evā prāṇo bhavati. grhītā vāk. grhītāṃ cākṣuḥ. grhītāṃ śrōtram. grhītāṃ mānaḥ. sā yātraīśā svapnyāyā cāratī té hāsyā lokās. tād utēva mahārājō bhāvaty utēva mahābrāhmaṇāḥ. utēvocāvacaṃ nīgacchati. sā yāthā mahārājō jānapadān grhītvā svē janapadē yathākāmāṃ parivārtetaivāṃ evaiśā etāt prāñān grhītvā svē śārīre yathākāmāṃ parivartate. (BĀU II 1.17-18)

‘Ajātaśatru told him: “When this man was asleep, the Puruṣa which consists of perception, taking possession of perception by means of the perception of

these *prāṇās* (pl., i.e., the senses), lies in that space which is within the heart. While he keeps those (= the senses) under control, the Puruṣa is said to be «sleeping». Then the *prāṇā* (sg., i.e., the breath) is kept under control. Voice is kept under control, sight is kept under control, hearing is kept under control, thought is kept under control. His are the worlds in which he moves in a dream state. He becomes a great king or a great brāhmaṇa. A high or low condition touches him. Just as a great king, keeping the inhabitants of his region under control, goes about in his region at will, so he, keeping his senses under control, moves around in his body at will”.

So, if this doctrine, aimed at making the self as free as a leader who dominates all his retinue, was, as it seems, already emerging in the ŚS, the relationship between the ascetic and the gods may have been part of an important ancient imagery. This of course does not revoke the status of the ascetics thus described, who were probably held in the highest regard in the contexts in which such doctrines circulated *in nuce*, with probably no regard for divine figures who were such by birth and not by merit.

Moreover, at the end of the just quoted BĀU passage the several macrocosmic, microcosmic and theological levels of the reading of multiplicity of the self and the *reductio ad unum* of such a multiplicity is poetically condensed, with reference to worlds, faculties of perceptions and gods.

*sá yáthorṇavābhis tántunocçáred yáthā agnéḥ kṣudrā viṣphuliṅgā vyuc-
cáranty evám evāsmād ātmánaḥ sárve prāṇāḥ sárve lokāḥ sárve devāḥ sárvāni
bhūtāni vyúccaranti. tásyopaniṣát satyásya satyám iti. prāṇā vai satyám téṣāṃ
eṣá satyám.* (BĀU II 1.20).

Just as a spider ascends upwards following its web, just as small sparks spring forth from a fire, so all the senses, all the worlds, all the gods, and all beings spring forth from this self. Its secret identity (*upaniṣad*) is the reality of reality (*satya*). Reality in fact consists of the senses and this self is the reality of them.

5. Conclusions

The Vṛātyakāṇḍa contains several interesting features that are shared by the Buddhist heterodox world (*brahmabhūta*, *eka*, etc.), as well as some plausible traces of an assumed proto-sequence of meditative practices. The latter, on the one hand, loosely reminds us of the *kaśīna-jhāna* pattern and of the meritorious achievement of ‘other worlds’, and, on

the other, consists of awareness of the breath and of the potential that it develops when one is freed from the caging world of senses. This seminal insight will be developed in different ways in the Upaniṣadic speculations, in the *vipassanā* meditative tradition in early Buddhist texts as represented by the sutta texts of Pāli Canon and later in a more refined and precise manner in other Ancient and Medieval Indian meditative traditions.

The gradual conquest of a higher status *via* knowledge and meditative progress and the attribution of equal opportunities to gods and human beings are at the core of both the *Vrātyakāṇḍa* and Buddha's teaching. Both the attention paid to the breath and the ascetic doctrines targeted on attaining immortality prove to be crucial points in the *Vrātya* tradition, but they are not exclusive to the Atharvaveda. In fact, they seem to be shared by other *Samhitās*, especially by the *Sāmaveda Sākhā*, and by the Buddhist *Suttapiṭaka*. It is thus plausible that these features constituted a shared archetype, in the sense of an undocumented layer of the earliest Indo-Aryan thought, from which the Brahmanical and Buddhist traditions later emerged (then slowly diverging from each other). These features might not have been accepted in the Brahmanical orthodox *milieu* and could have determined a crucial change and a consequent marginalisation of these Indo-Aryan pre-brahmanical elements.

At the core of the evidence in the *Vrātyakāṇḍa* seems to have been the concentration on breath as something durable, almost imperceptible, beyond the ties the faculties of perceptions generate in each individual. The fact that this special notion seems to be documented in both the unorthodox tradition – limitedly and preliminarily analysed here through the meditative forms attested in the Pāli Canon – and in the Vedic sources – here only considered through the *Vrātyakāṇḍa* – leads us to assume that some embryonic form of meditation on breathing must have been circulating in the Indo-Aryan world before the celebrated Upaniṣadic doctrine on *prāṇa* emerged and before the very concept of orthodoxy came into being with the Śrauta reform⁵⁶. And this confirms

⁵⁶ In particular the following passage which contrasts what is endowed with a fixed shape, i.e. faculties of perceptions and what is not, i.e. *prāṇa*, might have been not so distant from some sentences found in the *Vrātyakāṇḍa*. See BĀU II 3.1-5: *dvé vāvā brāhmaṇo rūpé mūrtāṃ caivāmūrtāṃ ca mārtyaṃ cāmṛtāṃ ca sthitāṃ ca yac ca. [...] āthāmūrtāṃ vāyūs cāntāriksās caitād amṛtam. [...] ity adhidevatām. āthādhyātmām. idām evā mūrtāṃ yād anyāt prāṇāc ca yās cāyām antār ātmān ākāśā. etān mārtyaṃ. etāt sthitām [...] etāsya mārtyaśyaitāsya sthitāsya [...] eśā rāso yac cākṣuḥ [...] āthāmūrtāṃ prāṇās ca yās cāyām antār ātmān ākāśāh. etād amṛtam, [...]* ‘Two indeed are the visible appearances of the Brahman, the one is endowed with a fixed shape and the other is not, the one is mortal and the other is immortal, the one is stable and

Gonda's (1975: 295) statement, according to which "[...] Atharvanic texts are most important as evidence of older Vedic thought [...] because they are the immediate harbingers of the oldest *upaniṣad* and as such attest to the continuity of the ancient speculative reasonings and reflections."

All in all, the present tentative reconstruction of the pre-history of meditative practices, through a fresh analysis of an obscure Atharvavedic text, leads us to reconsider the relative chronology for the origin of the practice of awareness of breath with respect to the practice of the *jhānas*.

Bibliographic References

Primary Sources

- A *Aṅguttara-Nikāya*, ed. by R. Morris, E. Hardy, 5 Vols., London, 1885-1900.
- Aitareya-Āraṇyaka. The Aitareya-Āraṇyaka*, ed. by A.B. Keith, Oxford, 1909
- AB [*Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*] Śrī Aitareya Brāhmaṇam, 2 Vol. 1-2, ed. by M. Haug (re-edited by S. Jain), Delhi, 2003.
- Aṣṭ. [*Aṣṭādhyāyī*] *The Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini*, 6 Vols., ed., tr. by Ram Nath Sharma, New Delhi, 1987-2003.
- BĀU [*Bṛhadāraṇya-Upaniṣad*] *Eighteen Principal Upaniṣad*, Vol. 1, ed. by V.P. Limaye & R.K. Vadekar, Poona, 1958.
- BŚS [*Baudhāyana-Śrautasūtra*] *The Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, 4 Vols. (Kalāmūlāsāstra series 37), ed. crit., tr. by C.G. Kashikar. New Delhi, 2003.
- CU [*Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*] see BĀU.
- JB [*Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa*] *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa of the Sāmaveda*, ed. by R. Vira, L. Chandra, Delhi 1986 (originally published 1955).
- JUB [*Jaiminīya-Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa*] 'The Jaiminīya or Talavakāra Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa', ed. and tr. by H. Oertel, *JAOS* 16 (1895), 79-260.

the other is mobile. [...] The one which is not endowed with a fixed shape is wind and the intermediate world and this is immortal. [...] That is referring to the deity. Now this is referring to the individual body. The one which is endowed with a fixed shape is just what is other than the breath and other than what is in the space within the individual body. This is mortal. This is stable. [...] The eye is the essence of the one that is endowed with a fixed shape, that is mortal and stable. Now this is referring to what is not endowed with a fixed shape and it is the breath and what is in the space within the individual body. This is immortal [...].

- Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra*: Text with English translation and notes, ed. by Ganesh U. Thite. Delhi, 2006.
- KU [Kauṣītakya-Upaniṣad] see BĀU.
- M *Majjhima-Nikaya* I-III, ed. by V. Trenckner and R. Chalmers, 3 Vols, London, 1993-2004.
Mahābhāṣyadīpikā 1 of Bhartṛhari, Fascicule IV, Āhnika I, crit. ed. by Johannes Bronkhorst. Poona, 1987.
Nighaṇṭu, ed. by H.M. Bhadkamkar, *The Nirukta of Yāska* (with Nighaṇṭu) edited with Durga's Commentary, (Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series, 73), Poona, 1985.
Nirukta see *Nighaṇṭu*
- MBh [Mahābhārata] *The Mahābhārata*, ed. V.S. Sukthankar, S.K. Belvalkar, P.L. Vaidya, 19 Vols. Poona, 1933-1971.
- Pj II *Paramatthajotikā* II (*Sutta-nipāta commentary*), ed. by H. Smith, 3 Vols., London 1916-1917.
- PB [Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa = Tāṇḍya-Mahābrāhmaṇa] *The Tāṇḍyamahābrāhmaṇa belonging to the Sāma Veda with the Commentary of Sāyaṇācārya*, 2 Vols. (The Kashi Sanskrit Series, 59), ed. by A. Ch. Śāstri, and P. Śāstri. Benares, 1935-1936.
- PS *Atharva-Veda Saṃhitā*. Paippalāda Recension based on the ed. by M. Witzel, Leiden 1989, and the ed. by D. Bhattacharya, *The Paippalāda-Saṃhitā of the Atharvaveda*, Vol. 1, consisting of the first 15 Kāṇḍas, Calcutta 1997, electronically ed. by Th. Zehnder (Kāṇḍas 1-5) and A. Griffiths (Kāṇḍas 6-15) Leiden 1998-1999. http://gretil.sub.unigoettingen.de/gretil/corpustei/transformations/html/sa_paippalAdasaMhitA.htm#d1e17455 (accessed February 2022).
- ṚV [Ṛgveda] *Ṛgveda Saṃhitā* with the commentary of Sāyaṇācārya, 4 Vols, ed. by N. S. Sontakke, Ch.G. Kashikar, Poona 1983 [1933-1951].
- S *Samyutta-Nikāya*, ed. by L. Feer, 5 Vols., London 1884-98.
- Sn *Suttanipata*, ed. by D. Andersen and H. Smith, London, 1990.
- ŚBM [Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa] *The Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa in the Mādhyandina-śākhā* with Extracts from the Commentaries of Sāyaṇa, Harisvāmin and Dvivedagaṅga, ed. by A. Weber, Varanasi: Chowkhamba 1964 [1885].
- ŚS [Śaunaka-Atharvaveda Saṃhitā] *Atharvavedasaṃhitā der Śaunakaśākhā*. Eine neue Edition unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Parallelstellen der Paippalādasamhitā, Würzburg https://www.phil.uni-wuerzburg.de/fileadmin/04080400/2021/Anhang_AVS_Text_06.2021.pdf.

[*Taittirīya-Saṃhitā*] *Die Taittirīya-Saṃhitā* hrsg. by A. Weber, Leipzig, 1872.

Secondary Sources

- Bailey, G., I. Mabbett 2003. *The Sociology of early Buddhism*, Cambridge.
- Bloomfield, M. 1899. *The Atharvaveda and the Gopatha Brahmana*, Strassburg. [Repr. 1975, New Delhi].
- Bodewitz, H.W. 1973. *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* I, I-65. *Translation and Commentary with a Study. Agnihotra and Prāṇāgnihotra*, Leiden.
- Bodewitz, H. 1986. "Reaching Immortality According to the First Anuvāka of the Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa", in *Dr. B.R. Sharma felicitation volume*, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan and Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha: Tirupati, 32-42.
- Bodewitz, H. 2000. "Classifications and Yonder World in the Veda", *KZ* 44, 19-59.
- Bodewitz, H.W., tr., 2002. *Kausītaki-Upaniṣad. Transl. and Commentary with an Appendix Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka IX-XI*, in: *Groningen Oriental Studies*, vol. XVI), Groningen.
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu, tr., 1995. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya* (with Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu), Boston.
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu, tr., 2000. *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*, Boston.
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu, tr., 2012. *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Boston.
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu, tr., 2017. *An Ancient Collection of the Buddha's Discourses Together with Its Commentaries Paramatthajotikā II and excerpts from the Niddesa*, Boston.
- Bollée, W.B. 1981. "The Indo-European Sodalities in Ancient India", *ZDMG* 131, 172-191.
- Bronkhorst, J. 1993². *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*, New Delhi.
- Bronkhorst, J. 2007. *Greater Magadha: Studies in the culture of early India* (Handbook of Oriental Studies 2: India, 19), Leiden-Boston.
- Bucknell, R.S. 1993. "Reinterpreting the *jhānas*". *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 16.2: 375-409.
- Bucknell, R.S. 2019. "What is the First Jhāna? The Key question in Buddhist Meditation Theory", in D. Goldston (ed.), *Engaging Asia: Essays on Laos and Beyond in Honour of Martin Stuart-Fox*, Copenhagen, 392-415.
- Candotti, M.P., T. Pontillo 2015. "Aims and functions of vrātyastoma performances: A historical appraisal", in T. Pontillo, C. Bignami, M. Dore, E. Mucciarelli, *The volatile world of sovereignty: The vrātya problem and kingship in South Asia and beyond*, New Delhi, 154-215.

- Candotti, M. P., C. Neri, T. Pontillo 2021, “Vedic dākṣiṇā/Pāli dakkhiṇā. Recovering an original notion behind the later institutional gift”, in E. Poddige, T. Pontillo (eds.), *Resisting and justifying changes How to make the new acceptable in the Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern world* (Nuova Biblioteca di Studi Classici e Orientali. Supplementi alla rivista Studi Classici e Orientali, n° 5), 21-108.
- Charpentier, J. 1911. “Bemerkungen über die Vrātya’s”. *WZKM* 25: 355-388.
- Cousins, L.S. 1996 “The Origins of Insight Meditation”, in Skorupski, T. (ed.), *The Buddhist Forum*, Vol. 4, London, 35-58.
- Crangle, E.F. 1994. *The Origin and Development of Early Indian Contemplative Practices* (Studies in Oriental Religions, 29), Wiesbaden.
- Deshpande, M.M. 1997. *Saunakīya Caturādhyāyikā: a Prātiśākhya of the Saunakīya Atharvaveda, with the commentaries Caturādhyāyibhāṣya, Bhārgava-Bhāskara-Vṛtti and Pañcasandhi* (Harvard Oriental Series 52), Cambridge Mass.
- Dore, M. 2015a. “The pre-eminence of men in the vrātya-ideology”, in R. Leach, J. Pons (eds.), *Puṣpikā: Tracing ancient India through texts and traditions: Contributions to current research in Indology*, vol. 3, Oxford, 48-73.
- Dore, M. 2015b. “The Ekavrātya, Indra and the Sun”, in T. Pontillo, C. Big-nami, M. Dore, E. Mucciarelli (eds.), *The volatile world of sovereignty: The vrātya problem and kingship in South Asia and beyond*, New Delhi, 33-64.
- Dore, M. 2016. “Men’s Relationship with Gods in the Vrātya Culture. An interpretation of AV”, in S. Bindi, E. Mucciarelli, T. Pontillo (eds.), *Cross-Cutting South Asian Studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, New Delhi, 199-223.
- af Edholm, K. 2021a. “Rudra Mahāvīra: Vrātya-Elements in the Vedic Pravargya-Complex”, *Studia Orientalia Electronica* Vol. 9(1), 1-30.
- af Edholm, K. 2021b. “‘Wander Alone Like the Rhinoceros’: The Solitary Itinerant Renouncer in Ancient Indian Gāthā-Poetry”, in Larsson, S. and af Edholm, K. (eds.) *Songs on the Road: Wandering Religious Poets in India, Tibet, and Japan*, Stockholm, 35-66.
- Falk, H. 1986. *Bruderschaft und Würfelspiel. Untersuchungen zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des vedischen Opfers*, Freiburg.
- Falk, H. 2002, “Vom Vorteil des Schreckens: Gesellschaft und Mütterbund in Indien”, in R.P. Das, G. Meiser (eds.), *Geregeltes Ungestüm Bruderschaften und Jugenbünde bei Indogermanischen Völkern*, Bremen.
- Fuji, M. 1989. “Three notes on the *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* 3.1-5”, *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 37, 2: 1002-994 (23-31).
- Gethin, R.M.L. 1997. “Cosmology and Meditation: From the Aggañña-Sutta to the Mahāyāna”, *History of Religions*, 36: 183-217.
- Gombrich, R.F. 1996². *How Buddhism began. The conditioned genesis of the early teachings*, London-New York.

- Gonda, J. 1975. *Vedic Literature* (Samhitās and Brāhmaṇas) (A History of Indian Literature, Vol. I, Fasc. 1), Wiesbaden.
- Griffiths, P. 1983. “Buddhist jhāna: A form-critical study”. *Religion*, 13: 55-68.
- Gunaratana, H. 1980. *A Critical Analysis of the Jhānas in Theravāda Buddhist Meditation*, The American University of Washington D. C.
- Hauer, J.W. 1927. *Der Vrātya. Untersuchungen über die nichtbrahmanische Religion*, Stuttgart.
- Heesterman, J. Cornelius 1964. “Brahmin, Ritual and Renouncer”, *WZKSO* 8: 1-31.
- Harvey, P., ed. 2001. *Buddhism*, Continuum, London-New York.
- Horsch, P. 1966. *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur*, Bern.
- Jamison, S.W., J.P. Brereton, tr., 2014. *The R̥gveda: The earliest religious poetry of India*, 3 Vols., Oxford.
- Jones, D.T. 2014. “Like the Rhinoceros, or Like Its Horn? The Problem of Khaggavisāna Revisited”, *Buddhist Studies* 31.2, 165-168.
- Jurewicz, J. 2010. *Fire and Cognition in the R̥gveda*, Warszawa.
- Kaelber, W.O. 1981. “The ‘brahmacārin’: Homology and Continuity in Brāhmanic Religion”, *History of Religion*, 21, 1, 77-99.
- Kaelber, W.O. 1989. *Tapta Mārga. Asceticism and Initiation in Vedic India*, Delhi.
- Kershaw, K. 1997 [2000]. *The One-eyed God: Odin and the (Indo-) Germanic Männerbünde* (Journal of Indo-European Studies Monograph, 36), Washington, DC.
- Kim, J.S. 2021 – See ŚS.
- King, W. 1980. *Theravāda Meditation: The Buddhist Transformation of Yoga*, Delhi.
- Kloppenborg, R. 1974. *The Paccekabuddha, a Buddhist ascetic*, Leiden.
- Maggi, D. 2006. “Sul ‘vuoto’ in R̥gvedasamhitā X, 129, 3c”, in *Studi Linguistici in onore di Roberto Gusmani*, II, Alessandria, 1011-1022.
- Malalasekera, G. P. 1899-1973. *Dictionary of Pali Names*, London: Pali Text society.
- Mayrhofer, M. 1986-2001. *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindiarischen*, 3 Vols., Heidelberg.
- Nakamura, H. 1979. “A Process of the Origination of Buddhist Meditation in Connection with the Life of the Buddha”, in Dr A.K. Narain (ed.), *Studies in Pali And Buddhism (A Homage Volume to the Memory of Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap)*, Delhi.
- Neri, C., T. Pontillo 2015. “Words Involving the Stem *Brahman-* denoting the Achievement of Super-Human Status in Vedic and Sutta Piṭaka Sources”, *IT* 40 (2014) [2015], 151-194.

- Neri, C., T. Pontillo 2016. "The meaning of the phrase "to become *brahman-*" in Vedic and in the Sutta Piṭaka sources", in T. Pontillo, M. Dore, H. H. Hock (eds.), *Vrātya Culture in Vedic Sources*, vol. II of *Vedic Studies*, Delhi, 84-113.
- Neri, C., T. Pontillo 2019a. "The case of *yogakṣema/yogakkhema* in Vedic and Suttapiṭaka sources in response to K.R. Norman", *JIPh* 47.3, 527-563.
- Neri, C., T. Pontillo 2019b. "On the boundary between *yogakkhema* in the Suttapiṭaka and *yogakṣema* in the Upaniṣads and Bhagavadgītā", *CIS* 21, 139-157.
- Norman, K.R., tr., 1984. *The group of discourses (Sutta-nipāta). Vol. I. with alternative translations by I. B. Horner and Walpola Rahula*, London.
- Olivelle, P. 2007, "On the Road: The Religious Significance of Walking", in Byrsky, M.K., M. Nowakowska et al. (eds.), *Theatrum Mirabiliorum Indiae Orientalis: a Volume to Celebrate the 70th Birthday of Professor Maria K. Byrski (Rocznik Orientalistyczny 60, 2)*, 173-187.
- Parpola, A. 1983. "The pre-Vedic Indian background of the Śrauta rituals", in F. Staal. (ed.), *Agni: The Vedic ritual of the fire altar*, Vol. 2, 41-75, Berkeley.
- Parpola, A. 2003. "From the dialects of Old Indo-Aryan to Proto-Indo-Aryan and Proto-Iranian", in N. Sims Williams (ed.), *Indo-Iranian Languages and Peoples*, British Academy Scholarship Online.
- Parpola, A. 2012. "The Dāsas of the *R̥gveda* as Proto-Sakas of the Yaz I -related cultures. With a revised model for the protohistory of Indo-Iranian speakers", in M. E. Huld, K. Jones-Bley, D. Miller (eds.), *Archaeology and Language: Indo-European studies presented to James P. Mallory*, Washington, D.C., 221-264.
- Pokorny, J. 1959. *Indogermansiches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Bern und München.
- Polak, O. 2011. *Reexamining Jhana: Towards a Critical Reconstruction of Early Buddhist Soteriology*, Lublin.
- Pontillo, T., M. Dore 2016. "Inquiries into Vrātya-phenomenon: an introduction", in T. Pontillo, M. Dore, H.H. Hock (eds.), *Vrātya Culture in Vedic Source. Select Papers. A Panel of Veda and Vedic Literature. Proceedings of the 16th World Sanskrit Conference*, Bangkok-New Delhi, 1-34.
- Renou, L. 1971. *Vedic India* (Classical India Volume 3); English Translation from the French by Ph. Spratt, Varanasi.
- Salomon, R. 1997. "A Preliminary Survey of Some Early Buddhist Manuscripts Recently Acquired by the British Library", *JAOS*, 117, 2, 353-358.
- Salomon, R., A. Glass 2000. *A Gāndhārī Version of the Rhinoceros Sūtra: British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragment 5B*, Washington.
- Schmithausen, L. 1981. "On some aspects of descriptions or theories of "Liberating Insight" and "Enlightenment" in early Buddhism", in K. Bruhn and A. Wezler (eds.), *Studien Zum Jainismus und Buddhismus*, Wiesbaden, 199-250.

- Schopen, G. "The phrase "sa prthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet" in the *Vajracchedikā*: Notes on the cult of the Book in Mahāyāna, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 1975, 147-180.
- Selva, U. 2019. *The Paippalādasamhitā of the Atharvaveda. Of the Three 'new' Anuvākas of Kāṇḍa 17 with English Translation and Commentary*, Leiden University, Università degli Studi di Torino, PhD dissertation.
- Soressi, T. 1987. "éka-. Il concetto di unicità negli Inni vedici", *Studi e Saggi Linguistici* 27, 1-121.
- Thanissaro Bhikkhu, tr., 2013. "Khaggavisana Sutta: A Rhinoceros" (Sn 1.3), translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.03.than.html> (accessed February 2022).
- Thieme, P. 1985. "The first verse of the Trīṣaptīyam (AV, Ś 1.1 ~ P 1.6) and the Beginning of Sanskrit Linguistics". *JAOS* 105, 3 (Indological Studies Dedicated to Daniel H.H. Ingalls), 559-565.
- Vassilkov, Y. 2015. "The Indian hero in heaven and on earth: on the meaning of the word *devaputra*", *IT* 40 (2014) [2015], 433-457.
- Vetter, T. 1988. *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism*, Leiden.
- Vetter, T. 1990. "Some Remarks on the Older Parts of the Suttanipāta", in L. Schmithausen, D.S. Ruegg (eds.), *Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamake: Panels of the World Sanskrit Conference*, Leiden, 36-56.
- Whiltshire, M. G. 1990. *Ascetic before and in the Early Buddhism the emergence of Gautama as the Buddha*, Berlin-New York.
- Whitney, W.D., Ch.R. Lanman, tr., 1905. *Atharva-Veda Samhitā*, translated with a critical and exegetical commentary by W.D. Whitney. Revised and brought nearer to completion and edited by Ch. R. Lanman, Cambridge, MA.
- Wynne, A. 2007. *The Origin of Buddhist Meditation*, London.
- Zysk, K.G. 1993². *The history and evolution of Indian medicine*, New Brunswick-London.
- Zysk, K.G. 2007. "The bodily winds in ancient India revisited", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.)*, 105-115.

Publicato nel mese di marzo 2023 da
Pisa University Press - Polo Editoriale CIDIC - Università di Pisa