THE KĀṆVA BRĀHMAṆAS AND BUDDHISTS IN KOSALA

LAUREN M. BAUSCH

Was Gotama Buddha influenced by Vedic tradition?[1] Bronkhorst (2007) advocates that the Buddha, removed from Vedic revelation and practice, drew inspiration from the ascetic culture of Greater Magadha, whose concepts of the self, rebirth, and karmic retribution influenced parts of the Veda. According to Bronkhorst (2007: 3–4), Greater Magadha refers to:

> the region east of the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā … Greater Magadha covers Magadha and its surrounding lands: roughly the geographical area in which the Buddha and Mahāvīra lived and taught. With regard to the Buddha, this land stretched by and large from Śrāvastī, the capital of Kosala, in the north-west, to Rājagṛha, the capital of Magadha, in the southeast.

He cites Kātyāyana and Patañjali on Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 4.3.105 in the *Mahābhāṣya* as evidence that Yājñavalkya's *brāhmaṇa*s in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* date to the same time as Pāṇini, after the Buddha lived (Bronkhorst 2007: 237–8).[2] He claims that these *brāhmaṇa*s attributed to Yājñavalkya borrowed, and hence introduced to Vedic religion, ideas from Greater Magadha. Considering the numerous Pāli passages that cite Vedic schools and terminology, Bronkhorst (2007: 211) asserts, "nothing whatsoever can be concluded from them as to the Vedic texts known to the Buddha and his contemporaries." In contrast, Gombrich (1996, 2009), Wynne (2007, 2010), and other scholars maintain that the Buddha, familiar with Vedic tradition, employed "skill in means" (*upāyakauśalya*) to teach students from a brāhmaṇical background according to the doctrines with

---

[1] This paper develops material from chapters two and three of my dissertation (Bausch 2015). I am grateful to my advisor, Prof. Robert Goldman, for supporting and encouraging my academic work.

[2] When italicized in this paper, *brāhmaṇa* refers to a subsection. The *Kāṇva Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is divided into *kāṇḍa*s, *adhyāya*s, *brāhmaṇa*s, and *kaṇḍikā*s. When capitalized, Brāhmaṇa refers to a text and, lowercase and without italics, brāhmaṇa refers to a man.

which they were familiar. Wynne (2010: 207–9) considers that the Yājña-valkyakāṇḍa may have originated and circulated as an independent text in the "unorthodox Brahminic circles of 'Greater Magadha'," for which reason Patañjali's interpretation may refer to the time it was first accepted into the orthodox Vedic corpus. Numerous scholars discuss connections between Vedic and Buddhist terms, such as Norman (1992b), Gombrich (1996: 62–72), and Shults (2014). In addition, Wynne (2010: 200–7; cf. 2007: 45–9) argues that in the *Pāsādikasutta* and the *Alagaddūpamasutta*, the Buddha responded to specific ideas from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.[3]

This brief reflection on the recent debate on the early influences of Gotama Buddha shows disagreement between Bronkhorst, who claims that Buddhism derives from a non-Vedic cultural milieu in Greater Magadha, and other scholars – Gombrich, Wynne, etc. – who find evidence in Pāli texts that the Buddha responded to brāhmaṇical ideas and practices. What is missing in this debate is a comprehensive study of how philosophical ideas and religious practices in the Brāhmaṇa texts relate to early Buddhism. Because the Brāhmaṇa texts have not yet been fully explored by scholars, the full impact of Vedic tradition on Buddhism is not yet known. In addition, the regional diversity of Vedic schools should be taken into account. One of Bronkhorst's greatest contributions has been pointing to Greater Magadha as the key area of focus in understanding the origin of Buddhism. Included in the radius of Greater Magadha was Kosala. This paper will show that Gotama Buddha, at least as he is depicted in the *Suttanipāta*, was influenced by and is to be understood in light of Kosalan Vedic tradition.

According to the *Suttanipāta*, Gotama Buddha's hometown was located in the region of Kosala, what is today eastern Uttar Pradesh. In the *Pabbajjāsutta* (Sn 3.1), Gotama Buddha explains his personal background to Magadhan King Bimbisāra, telling him that he hails from a country in Kosala:

---

[3] As evidence against Bronkhorst's position (2007: 215) that Upaniṣadic passages are not quoted in early Buddhist texts, Wynne (2007: 45–9) connects *passan na passati* from D 29 (*Pāsādikasutta*) to BĀU 4.3.23: *paśyan vai tan na paśyati* and *idaṃ diṭṭhaṃ sutaṃ mutaṃ viññātaṃ pattaṃ pariyesitaṃ anuvicaritaṃ manasā* from M 1.136.9–10 (*Alagad-dūpamasutta*) to BĀU 4.5.6: *ātmani khalv are dṛṣṭe śrute mate vijñāta idaṁ sarvaṃ viditam*. Admitting shared language, Bronkhorst (2007: 217) traces the teaching criticized in the *Alagaddūpamasutta* to Greater Magadha.

> King, straight ahead is a country, close to the Himālayas, endowed with
> wealth and vigor, belonging to one native to the Kosalans. They are indeed
> Ādicca by lineage and Sākiya by birth. From that family I have gone forth,
> king, not yearning for sense pleasures.[4]

The above translation follows Bhikkhu Bodhi in rendering *niketin* as
"native" in accordance with the *Paramatthajotikā II* commentary.[5] Bhikkhu
Bodhi (2017: 1468, n. 1326) explains, "The word probably alludes to the
status of the Sakyans as a vassal state of Kosala, but in a way bolsters
their relationship to Kosala." In an account given in the *Majjhimanikāya*,
King Pasenadi of Kosala calls the Buddha a Kosalan.[6] Pāli texts include
Kosala in a list of sixteen countries,[7] but this region was also associated
with a particular Vedic school. Located to the east of the Taittirīyas in
Pañcāla, Kosala was home to the Kāṇvas, offshoots of the Aṅgirasas.
Earlier Kāṇvas composed the first sixty-six hymns of book eight of the
Ṛgveda, in which they are known as singers.[8] Later Kāṇvas were the
heirs to a Vedic tradition, culminating in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*,
that prioritized *muni* philosophy. In contrast to householder-ritualists,
Vedic *muni*s were celibate ascetics.[9] According to Rahurkar (1964: XV),

---

[4] Sn 422–423: *Ujuṃ janapado rāja Himavantassa passato dhanaviriyena sampanno
Kosalesu niketino. Ādiccā nāma gottena, Sākiyā nāma jātiyā, tamhā kulā pabbajito'mhi
rāja na kāme abhipatthayaṃ.* Passages from the *Suttanipāta* are quoted from the PTS
edition edited by Dines Anderson and Helmer Smith.

[5] *Paramatthajotikā II* (p. 385, lines 4–9) glosses, in Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation (2017:
876, 1468), "Saying this, he rejects its rule by a subordinate ruler [*navakarājabhāva*], for a
subordinate ruler is not said to be native. But one for whom a particular country has been
his place of residence by way of succession from early times is said to be native to it, and
Suddhodana was such a king." Norman (1992a: 45, 225) translates, "(belonging to) one
who is indigenous among the Kosalans" and Jayawickrama (2001: 162) translates, "domi-
ciled in the land of the Kosalans."

[6] M 2.124.17: *Bhagavā pi Kosalako, aham pi Kosalako.* See Wynne 2007: 11, 115.

[7] The sixteen *janapada*s listed in Pāli texts are: Aṅga, Magadha, Kāsī, Kosala, Vajji
confederation, Malla, the Cetis, the Vaṃsas, Kuru, Pañcāla, Maccha, Sūrasena, Assaka,
Avanti, Gandhāra, and Kamboja.

[8] For example, verses say to make like Kaṇva beautiful songs (ṚV 8.6.11), the Kāṇvas
sing forth praise (ṚV 8.7.32), remember Kaṇva first among all singers (ṚV 8.9.3), and the
Kāṇvas speak with song (ṚV 8.32.1).

[9] Thieme (1963: 72–9) demonstrates that observing a life of celibacy and asceticism
occurred among married Ṛgvedic seers, such as Agastya and his wife Lopāmudrā
(ṚV 1.179). See also Doniger O'Flaherty's (1973: 52f.) treatment of Agastya and Lopāmudrā,
which Bronkhorst (2007: 82) cites in his treatment of the same. While Agastya is not called
a *muni*, the *Ṛgveda* (ṚV 7.56.8) compares the "raging" minds of the Maruts' troop to a

ṛṣis recited prayers, performed *homa*, and lived the life of a householder, while *muni*s practiced yoga, austerities, renunciation, and wandering mendicancy. Situated on the fringe of both the Vedic heartland of Kuru-Pañcāla and the ascetic center that Bronkhorst labeled Greater Magadha, Kosala was one of the most influential countries, along with Magadha, during the life of the Buddha. Lamotte (1988: 15) describes the Sakyas as "a clan of uncertain origin but which had to a certain degree been subjected to brāhmanical influence."[10] The Kāṇva tradition in Kosala formed part of the cultural milieux in which Gotama Buddha was born and lived for his first twenty-nine years. A testament to the influence of his environment, the Buddha's teachings in the *Suttanipāta* evince traces of the Vedic tradition peculiar to the East.

Vedic *muni*s featured prominently among Kosala's diverse religious adherents, which also included Jains, Ājīvikas, Buddhists, and Nāga, Yakṣa, and tree worshipers (Pathak 1963: 416).[11] The story of King Māthava Videgha in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* recounts that Vedic people settled in the region east of the river bordering the Kosala-Videhas and the Kuru-Pāñcālas.[12] According to von Hinüber (2008: 200), nine of the fourteen brāhmaṇa villages mentioned in the Theravāda Tipiṭaka are situated in Kosala, as compared to four in Magadha and one in Malla. Clearly, Vedic tradition had for some time already been established and continued to flourish in Kosala during the time of Gotama Buddha.

raving *muni* (Jamison and Brereton 2014: II, 949) and the "Munisūkta" (ṚV 10.136) depicts the *muni*s as those, with long hair and wearing rags, who fly through the air. Oldenberg (1988: 221) associates this hymn with asceticism leading to an ecstatic state, even though *tapas* is not mentioned. As will be discussed below, in the last *kāṇḍa* of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Yājñavalkya elucidates how one becomes a *muni* and goes forth begging for alms, without the desire for offspring (BĀU 3.5.1 and 4.4.22). G.U. Thite, in a personal correspondence, describes additional figures in Vedic and subsequent tradition that have been called a *muni*: Nārada, Durvāsas, Pāṇini, Kātyāyana, Patañjali, etc. In his view, they may have been unmarried or after marriage they might have become celibate renunciants; but they were not householders.

   [10] See also Weber 1878: 137–8.
   [11] Especially the *aśvattha*, the *ficus religiosa* or pipal tree.
   [12] ŚBK 2.3.4.8–14; ŚBM 1.4.1.10–17; Thapar, 2013: 137. Interestingly, Eggeling's translation of the Mādhyandina recension (ŚBM 1.4.1.17) states that the Sadānīra River is in between Kosala and Videha, but in the Kāṇva recension, the river separates both Kosala and Videha from Kuru and Pañcāla. Witzel (1987: 195, n. 78) comments on these two readings and advocates the latter.

Advancing the work of Weber, Keith, Mylius, and Caland, Witzel (1987) located the texts of the Vedic corpus according to region. The two extant recensions of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* have been traced to neighboring countries in the East.[13] A major portion of the *Mādhyandina Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* exhibits considerable knowledge of the East, especially Videha, while the compilation and redaction of the *Kāṇva Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is located in Kosala.[14] The Kāṇva recension does not have its own Śrautasūtra or Gṛhyasūtra, but instead boasts the first Upaniṣad, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.[15] Following Caland (1926: 98), Witzel (1997: 316–8) describes how Bodhāyana, originally a Kāṇva from Kosala, meaning that he belonged to the *Śukla Yajurveda*, followed the *mantras* and the rituals of the Taittirīya School of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* when he authored the *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*. This suggests that the Kosalan brāhmaṇas did not see a need to develop their own *śrauta* manual, preferring instead to follow the ritual and esoteric practices bequeathed to them by Yājñavalkya.

In *Greater Magadha*, Bronkhorst draws attention to the Yājñavalkya *brāhmaṇa*s in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. While he acknowledges the other Yājñavalkyakāṇḍas in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (*kāṇḍa*s 1–7 and 13–15 in the Kāṇva recension),[16] they are not included in his argument about the dating of the text according to Sanskrit grammarians (2007: 225).[17] Bronkhorst (2007: 237–8) posits, because the "*brāhmaṇas* of the Yājñavalkya-Kāṇḍa are the only ones surviving in Vedic literature which are exclusively dedicated to recording what Yājñavalkya is supposed to have said," these *brāhmaṇa*s are the only ones intended by Kātyāyana's interpretation of *Aṣṭadhyāyī* 4.3.105.[18] In a footnote (2007: 238, n. 36)

---

[13] Eggeling ([1882] 1963: xxviii) accounts for fifteen to seventeen names of Vājasaneyin schools in different works, though only the Mādhyandina and Kāṇva Brāhmaṇas are extant.

[14] Witzel (1987: 194–9) localized the final redaction of the *Kāṇva Śatapatha Brāh- maṇa* in Kosala. Brereton (2006: 323–4) agrees that during the middle and late Vedic period, the Kāṇva school was situated in Kosala. See also Witzel 1997: 306.

[15] Thite (1979) has argued that the *Kātyāyanaśrautasūtra* is based mainly on the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* in the Mādhyandina recension, but sometimes the KŚS applies the formulae found in the Kāṇva recension.

[16] ŚBM *kāṇḍa*s 1–5 and 11–13.

[17] On the Yājñavalkya section, see Witzel 1997: 317, 333; 1987: 200; 2003: 108.

[18] Kātyāyana on *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 4.3.105: *purāṇaprokteṣu brāhmaṇakalpeṣu yājñavalkyādibhyaḥ pratiṣedhas tulyakālatvāt.*

he wonders how Renou (1948: 75) "missed this point" when declaring, "Il est tout-à-fait improbable, malgré l'autorité de Weber (Ind. Lit. p. 129), que cette expression vise le Yājñavalkya-kāṇḍa de la BĀU." Renou goes on to say that *sūtra* 4.3.105, to which the exception of Kātyāyana refers, concerns the Brāhmaṇa text as a whole (at least the non-Śāṇḍilya part), not the Yājñavalkyakāṇḍa of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. Like Renou, Katre (1989: 464) understands this *sūtra* (*purāṇaprokteṣu brāh-maṇakalpeṣu*) to refer to "Brāhmaṇá (texts) or Kálpa (sū́tras) propagated in ancient times."[19] It seems more likely that the *brāhmaṇa*s intended by Kātyāyana and Patañjali in their commentary on *sūtra* 4.3.105 refer to the Yājñavalkya *brāhmaṇa*s in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* too and not just to the Yājñavalkyakāṇḍa of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, as Bronkhorst claims. Bronkhorst's argument presupposes that the philosophical content of Yājñavalkya's *brāhmaṇa*s in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is both later than ideas found in his *brāhmaṇa*s in the rest of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and interpolated, unrelated to the Brāhmaṇa text, from the culture of Greater Magadha. But this is far from certain.

Vedic specialists, such as Renou (1948: 80–9) and Witzel (2003: 104–6, 133), analyze all of the *kāṇḍa*s attributed to Yājñavalkya and conclude that, even though he plays different roles as a ritualist and philosopher in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and its last *kāṇḍa*, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, overlapping themes and the same personal language between them con- nect back to one and the same person.[20] Other scholars, such as Lindquist (2011), identify difficulties in determining his historicity for sure. It is also possible that the tradition created his authoritative personality overtime, such as Patton (2011: 113) has argued in the case of Śaunaka. In this way, Yājñavalkya, and the historical Buddha too, are known primarily from texts, giving rise to uncertain and contested traditions.

I share the view that the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (including its *Bṛhadāra-ṇyaka Upaniṣad*) presents a single Yājñavalkya connected by shared themes, which he disseminated to different audiences. His students transmitted his teachings in separate circles until the entire text was compiled and then

---

[19] See also *Aṣṭadhyāyī* 4.2.66, 4.2.111; Sharma 2008: 317, 199.
[20] Other scholars who have written on Yājñavalkya include Tsuji, Horsch, Fišer, and Brereton.

redacted for the final time in the last two centuries before the Common Era.[21] Eggeling ([1882] 1963: xxix), who translated the *Mādhyandina Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, posits that Mādhyandina *kāṇḍa*s 11–13 (Kāṇva 13–15) existed separately at one stage. After all, the middle of these three *kāṇḍa*s is called "Madhyama" (the middle one), which only makes sense if this section had been independent. Caland (1926: 105–8), who prepared an edition of *kāṇḍa*s 1–7 of the *Kāṇva Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, agrees, stating that although *kāṇḍa*s 13–15 existed separately for some time, they originally belonged to the Kāṇvas, and were added later to the Mādhyandina recension. Moreover, he suggests that the Śāṇḍilya *kāṇḍa*s (8–12) did not form part of the original Kāṇva Brāhmaṇa. Caland (107–8) notes traces of revision, which would account for differences in linguistic and stylistic features among the various sections. Evidence, Caland reports, of quotes attributed to a Vājasaneyin in Baudāyana and Āpastamba that are not found in either extant *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, indicates that there may have been an original redaction that has been lost, variant recensions, or additional separate parts that circulated among certain groups. And Wynne (2010: 208–9), as mentioned above, argues that chapters three and four of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* circulated in unorthodox brāhmaṇical circles before being appended to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. Moreover, an example given in his comments on *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 4.2.60 indicates that Patañjali may have known two versions of the text.[22] For these reasons, it is difficult to ascertain what exactly Kātyāyana meant.

In this way, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is a composite text, large sections of which are attributed to Yājñavalkya and Śāṇḍilya. The Śāṇḍilya section[23] treats the Agnicayana sacrifice and is believed to have been

---

[21] On the final redaction of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, see Witzel 1997: 317; 2003: 139.

[22] In *Mahābhāṣya* 2.284.15 on *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 4.2.60, Patañjali gives the example of *śataṣaṣṭeḥ pathaḥ*, which indicates bases that begin with *ṣaṣṭhi* and *śata* and end in *patha*. Sharma (2008: 195) gives the example "*śatapathikaḥ* 'he who studies, or knows, the *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*,' etc." Regarding *ṣaṣṭipatha* ("consisting of sixty paths"), Eggeling ([1882] 1963: xxix) acknowledges Weber's suggestion that Patañjali here refers to the first nine books of the Mādhyandina *Śatapatha*, which consists of sixty *adhyāya*s. Weber's conjecture, as Eggeling points out, suggests the possibility that Patañjali was acquainted with a Vājasaneyin Brāhmaṇa that consisted of nine books instead of fourteen.

[23] ŚBK *kāṇḍa*s 8–12; ŚBM *kāṇḍa*s 6–10.

composed further to the west and later added to the Yājñavalkya section.[24] In this article, references to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* are limited to Yājñavalkya's *kāṇḍa*s in the Kāṇva recension, which are associated with the East.

The *muni* ideas and practices described in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* – such as karma, being a lifelong celibate, going forth, practicing asceticism, giving, and begging for alms – share certain themes with ritual practices, especially the Agnihotra, in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.[25] For example, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*'s treatment of the Agnihotra equates the Agnihotra with breath (*prāṇa*), so that as long as one breathes, one performs the offering.[26] A ritualized offering that includes an action as basic as in-and-out breathing – the knowing properly and practice of which is said both to win what is inexhaustible (*akṣīya*) and undying (*amṛta*) and to make one's merit (*sukṛta*) inexhaustible[27] – is headed in the direction of Yājñavalkya's more explicit statements in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* about karma as action in general that yields fruit. The ritual act further involves a mental component that is similar to meditation. The injunction in the Agnihotra for the *yajamāna* (one making the offering) to sit between the *āhavanīya* and *gārhapatya* fires indicates a deliberate effort to pay attention to the exchange between heaven and earth, which the heating and offering in the two fires represent (ŚBK 3.1.11.1–6). The offering first is heated over the *gārhapatya* fire, marking the reception in the physical body of the *yajamāna* of energy stored in the sun, which is said to be the *yajamāna*'s body of past offerings (ŚBK 3.1.9.3).[28] Once heated, two oblations are

----

[24] See Weber 1878: 132–3; Caland 1926: 103–5 and 108; Gonda 1975: 354; Witzel 1987: 197; 1989: 115, 131, n. 72, 179, 195, 204–5; 1997: 314–7 and n. 295.

[25] Renou (1948: 81–9) presents other clues that make it possible to connect Yājñavalkya's roles as ritualist and philosopher, in addition to shared themes, in the ŚB and BĀU. Bodewitz (1976: 5) notes that Pāli texts refer to the importance of the Agnihotra.

[26] ŚBK 3.1.11.6: *yāvad dhy eva yajamānaḥ prāṇena prāṇiti tāvad eva juhoti*. Cf. ŚBK 3.1.4.4 and 1.2.2.7–13, which speaks of installing Agni within and equates the *prāṇa* breath with *āhavanīya* fire and the *udāna* breath with the *gārhapatya* fire. The *Kāṇva Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (including the BĀU) in this paper is quoted from the critical edition prepared by G.W. Pimplapure. The BĀU is *kāṇḍa* 17 in the Kāṇva recension.

[27] ŚBK 3.1.11.6: *sa hānarcchaty akṣīyaṁ ha jayati ya evam etad veda … akṣīyaṁ vā amṛtam ete prāṇās tasya hākṣīyaṁ sukṛtaṁ bhavaty akṣīyaṁ ha jayati ya evam etad veda*.

[28] On the *yajamāna*'s body, see also Jurewicz 2019.

offered into the *āhavanīya* fire, which carries the offerings to the sun, where they are stored. The exchange of offerings – giving and receiving – between the two bodies of the *yajamāna* seems to be an early Vedic mechanism of karmic retribution. Moreover, at ŚBK 3.1.9.3, the ability to see directly the rotating of day and night puts an end to the exhaustion of merit (*sukṛta*) (cf. ŚBM 2.3.3.11–12). In this context, day may refer to the present manifestation of past offerings in the mind, while night represents a covering over embryonic energies from past offerings yet to manifest in consciousness. The rotation of both these elements, much like the rotation of the sun that features prominently in the explanation of the Agnihotra, may have been a precursor to the concept of *saṃsāra*. Such examples illustrate a few concepts and practices in the ritual Brāhmaṇas attributed to Yājñavalkya in which the philosophical content of the *yajña* accords with ideas, like giving and karmic retribution, found in his teachings for a *muni* audience in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.

Janaka's kingdom of Videha thrived during the lifetime of Yājñavalkya, but had declined by the time of the historical Buddha (Oldenberg 1882: 398; Mishra 1981: 139). Considering that Yājñavalkya is believed to have lived at the same time as Janaka, while Videha still prospered, he lived before the Buddha. If one sees his character and the themes of his teaching to be consistent throughout his *kāṇḍa*s in both the Brāhmaṇa and its Upaniṣad, what he taught predates the Buddha. Analyzing linguistic and historical layers in late Vedic and early Buddhist texts, Witzel (2009: 301–2, 310) suggests that a certain period of time separates the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* and Pāli texts, among which sections of the *Suttanipāta* are considered by many scholars to be among the earliest.[29] In his words, "The large majority of the Vedic texts, including the oldest Upaniṣads (BĀU, JUB, ChU) precede him [the Buddha]." Wynne (2010: 209) asserts, "the fact that the *Yājñavalkyakāṇḍa* is set in Videha only makes sense if it was composed when this kingdom had an independent

---

[29] Recent advocates for the antiquity of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* and *Pārāyanavagga* of the *Suttanipāta* include Jayawickrama 1947: 302; Pande [1957] 2006: 51–65; Nakatani 2011: 82; McGovern 2013: 215–31; and Fronsdal 2016: 4–5. Von Hinüber (2001: 63) notes the special linguistic quality of the *Suttanipāta*, which requires further research. Cousins (2013: 106–7), however, does not accept the "special antiquity" of the verse texts.

existence." After Janaka, when the Vajjis surpassed the Videhas, certain early Buddhist texts indicate that Kosala emerged as a major center of political power and *muni* religious activity, as will be seen below.

Yājñavalkya is the first *ṛṣi* recorded in Vedic literature to go forth (BĀU 4.5.1–2; Witzel 2003: 106).[30] According to BĀU 4.5.2, Yājñavalkya told his wife, "Listen, I am about to go forth (*pra+√vraj*) from this place."[31] Note that the Buddha used the past participle (*pabbajito*) of the same verb to express his going forth to King Bimbisāra in *Suttanipāta* 423. That Yājñavalkya and the Buddha use the same verb to describe going forth, one that features in the technical vocabulary of Buddhist monasticism, lends support to the idea that Kosalan brāhmaṇas were in dialogue with Gotama Buddha. The visionary sage Yājñavalkya also spoke of other brāh-maṇa *muni*s going forth using the same verb and other vocabulary familiar to Buddhist discourse:

> Through reciting the Vedas, through the *yajña*, through giving (*dāna*), and through untiring asceticism (*tapas*), brāhmaṇas desire to know *this* [*ātman*]. Having known just *this*, one becomes a sage (*muni*). Seeking this very *loka*, those who go forth go forth (*pravrājino pravrajanti*) … Ever giving up the desire for children, the desire for wealth, and the desire for worlds, then they wander begging for alms (*bhikṣācaryaṃ caranti*).[32]

The practice of begging for alms (*bhikṣā*) was associated with the Vedic student (*brahmacārin*). According to Kane ([1941] 1997: 308–12), "The idea that a brahmacārī must beg for his food and offer fuel-sticks every day was so ingrained in ancient times that the Baud. Dh. S. [Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra] I.2.54 and Manu II.187 (= Viṣṇu Dh. S. 28.52) prescribe that if for seven days continuously a brahmacārī who was not ill failed to offer fuel-sticks and to beg for food he violated his vow and to undergo the same penance as was prescribed for a brahmacārī having sexual inter-course." The *Atharvaveda* (AV 11.5.9), too, mentions begging for alms

---

(*bhikṣā*) along with the *brahmacārin*.[33] Brāhmaṇas who chose to live as a *brahmacārin* for life would have been unmarried, ascetic mendicants. Yājñavalkya's eastern Vedic teaching passed down through the Kāṇva School in Kosala, which included lifelong *brahmacārin*s who begged for alms.

According to tradition, Yājñavalkya directly received the *yajus* formulas from the sun. The genealogy at the end of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (BĀU 6.5.3) asserts, "These *āditya śukla yajus*-formulas were explained by Vājasaneya Yājñavalkya."[34] The *Mahābhārata* (12.306.15–23) corroborates that the sage received the *yajus* formulas from Sūrya. Similarly, in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (3.5.1–30), the sun in the form of a horse (*vājirūpadharaḥ*) appeared to Yājñavalkya, who asked for *yajus* formulas. Note the special relationship between Yājñavalkya and the sun. In *Suttanipāta* 423, the Buddha identifies the Vedic *gotra* of his family as the sun (Pāli *ādicca*, Skt. *āditya*). Moreover, the oldest sections of the *Suttanipāta* call the Buddha *ādiccabandhu* (kinsman of the sun) four times (Sn 54, 540, 915, 1128).[35] That Gotama was considered *ādiccabandhu* suggests an overt gesture to connect him to Yājñavalkya, who received direct transmission from the sun.

According to tradition, Gotama Buddha spent his first twenty-nine years in Kapilavatthu (Bv 97; Lamotte 1988: 16).[36] The *Aṅguttaranikāya* (A 1.276.26) places Kapilavatthu in Kosala.[37] In addition, Bhikkhus Sujato and Brahmali (2013: 93) establish that Sakya was a small republic subject to Kosala. The *bodhisatta* left Kapilavatthu to become a religious wanderer. But after his awakening, he visited Kapilavatthu and passed a great deal of time in Sāvatthī, the capital of Kosala, where according to Theravāda tradition he spent twenty-five monsoon retreats (Lamotte 1988: 20).

---

[33] For a detailed description of the *brahmacārin* in the *Atharvaveda*, see Lubin 2018: 99–101.

[34] BĀU 6.5.3: *ādityā̲nīmā̲ni śuklā̲ni ya̲jūm̐ṣi vājasaneye̲na yājñavalkye̲nākhyāya̲nte*. Cf. Renou 1948: 75.

[35] These passages are in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, *Pārāyaṇavagga*, and the *Khaggavisāṇasutta* of the Sn, but the term also occurs in the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, *Saṃyuttanikāya*, *Vinaya*, *Apadāna*, *Theragāthā*, etc. In addition, Skt. *ādityabandhu* occurs a few times in the *Mahāvastu*.

[36] Bv 26.13–14: *nagaraṃ Kapilavatthu me … Ekūnatiṃsavassani agāraṃ ajjhahaṃ vasiṃ*.

[37] A 1.276.26: *Ekaṃ samayaṃ Bhagavā Kosalesu cārikaṃ caramāno yena Kapilavatthu tad avasari*. See Wynne 2007: 12, 132.

Wynne (2007: 9–16) identifies two teachers who belonged to early brāhmaṇical circles and taught the *bodhisatta* meditative states. One of them was Āḷāra Kālāma, who evidence suggests probably lived near Kapilavatthu in Kosala (Wynne 2007: 12–13, 26).[38] Wynne cogently argues that the Buddha adapted meditation practices from these teachers to instruct brāhmaṇa interlocutors in the *Pārāyanavagga* of the *Suttanipāta*. For example, Wynne (2007: 72) argues that in the "Questions of Upasīva" (Sn 5.7), the Buddha recommends a revised version of Āḷāra Kālāma's practice of "the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*)" (cf. Bhikkhu Bodhi 2017: 59). An introductory verse to the *Pārāyanavagga* (Sn 976) describes Bāvari as desiring the state of nothingness (*ākiñcaññaṃ patthayāno*). In addition to Bāvari's student Upasīva, the Buddha teaches Posāla about *ākiñcañña* in Sn 1115. That Bāvari, a brāhmaṇa said to be from Kosala, is reported to seek *ākiñcañña*, the meditative practice found in the "Questions of Upasīva" that Wynne connects with the teachings of Āḷāra Kālāma in Kosala, suggests that Bāvari may have been connected to the same Kosalan brāhmaṇical circle. In the words of Tsuchida (1991: 87), "It might perhaps be possible to suppose that ākiñcañña was once the common goal for certain groups of Brahmanical ascetics." This shows that the Buddha interacted with and studied under ascetics influenced by brāhmaṇical thought in Kosala.

Geographical references in the *Suttanipāta* locate most of its *sutta*s in or around Kosala and Magadha. Explicit verses and the *nidāna*s – the prose passages added later to contextualize *sutta*s – mention that the Buddha lived among the Kosalans and specify certain locations: Sāvatthī in Kosala (Sn 996), Sāvatthī in the Eastern Grove (*Dvayatānupassanāsutta*), and Sāvatthī at Jetavana Grove (*Vasalasutta*, *Maṅgalasutta*, *Brāhmaṇadhammikasutta*, *Dhammikasutta*, *Subhāsitasutta*, and *Kokāḷikasutta*). In addition to the illustration of a "Kosalan" cart of sesame mentioned in the *nidāna* of the *Kokālikasutta*, the *Vatthugāthā* in the *Pārāyanavagga* depicts Bāvari as a brāhmaṇa ascetic from the delightful city of the Kosalans, i.e. Sāvatthī, who retired to Dakṣiṇāpatha on the banks of the Godāvarī.[39]

---

[38] Wynne draws in particular from the *Ariyapariyesanasutta* (M 1.160–75).

[39] Sn 976: *Kosalānaṃ purā rammā agamā Dakkhiṇāpathaṃ ākiñcaññaṃ patthayāno brāhmaṇo mantapāragū*. In addition to this verse, Bāvari is called a brāhmaṇa at Sn 992,

These references suggest that Kosala was an important setting for the teachings expounded in the *Suttanipāta*.

The questions of Bāvari's students, the young brāhmaṇas sent to question the Buddha, may reflect Kosalan Vedic *muni* teachings learned from their Kosalan teacher.[40] For example, Ajita asks about name and form as a conditioned form of existence, an idea already found in the *Kāṇva Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (ŚBK 3.2.5.1–3).[41] Jayawickrama (1947: 289) considers the questions of Ajita "far too brilliant to be those of an insignificant disciple of a Brahmin from the less-known and least-brahmanised zone of the Dakkhiṇāpatha" and, moreover, "not that of a typical Brahmin youth but that of a mendicant initiated into the Upaniṣadic way of thinking." Puṇṇaka asks the Buddha whether the seers, men, *khattiya*s, and brāhmaṇas performing offerings (*yañña*) crossed over birth and decay; the Buddha responds that because they wished to attain a state of being and were excited by passion for existence, they did not cross over birth and decay (Sn 1043–8). Puṇṇaka's concern for using offerings to cross over birth and decay parallels Yājñavalkya's teaching about the proper use of ritual practice to reach the imperishable (BĀU 3.8.10).[42] Asked about how to cross the flood, the Buddha speaks to Mettagū about the brāhmaṇa who is a master of the Vedas, possessing nothing, and unattached to sensual pleasures (Sn 1059). This description is not suitable for a householder sacrificer, but rather a lifelong *brahmacārin*. Nanda asks whether *muni*s are those who are wise or those who have a particular way of life, and the Buddha answers that *muni*s are those who wander disarming, undisturbed, and without desire (Sn 1077–8). Posāla asks the Buddha about what knowing looks like for someone whose perception of form has disappeared, who has given up the body entirely, and sees that there is nothing internally or externally (Sn 1119). These sixteen brāhmaṇical renouncers are not satisfied with mere household ritual observance, and yet their

---

999, 118, 1028–29. Neumann posits that Bāvari is a representative of the White Yajurveda, since reference is made to a Bādārī in *Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra* 1.7. See Jayawickrama 1947: 287.

[40] Sn 997: *sisse brāhmaṇe mantapārage*; Sn 1006: *sissā soḷasa brāhmaṇā*. Posāla is called a brāhmaṇa at Sn 1008.

[41] Cf. BĀU 1.4.7, 1.6.1, 1.6.3.

[42] This passage will be discussed below.

questions are informed by early brāhmaṇical thought. This includes what
Wynne (2007: 108) sees as the Buddha adapting "old yogic techniques
and ideology" in the dialogues with the brāhmaṇas Upasīva, Udaya, and
Posāla. In addition, Bāvari's students evince familiarity with late Vedic
thought in Kosala. To further elucidate this point, the following para-
graphs look at the depiction of brāhmaṇas in the Pāli canon and in the
Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.

In his study of the Pāli Nikāyas, Tsuchida (1991: 53) categorizes two
groups of brāhmaṇas: first, wealthy Vedic masters living in villages and
towns (*brāhmaṇamahāsāla*) and second, ascetics with matted hair (*jaṭila*).[43]
Interestingly, in the *Suttanipāta brāhmaṇamahāsāla* and *jaṭila* only occur
in the *nidāna* – the prose passages added at a later stage of the compila-
tion's history – of two *sutta*s in the case of the former and one in the case
of the latter. *Brāhmaṇamahāsāla* occurs six times in the prose passages
of the *Brāhmaṇadhammikasutta* and the *Vāseṭṭhasutta*. *Jaṭila* occurs
twenty-four times, but only in the prose passages of the *Selasutta*, where
it always qualifies Keṇiya. They do not occur as a critical category in any
verse of the *Suttanipāta*, save once in the shortened form *jaṭī* (Sn 689).
In general, the brāhmaṇas described in the *Suttanipāta* are not limited to
Tsuchida's two categories.

In a similar way, McGovern and Freiberger demonstrate that the con-
cepts of brāhmaṇa and ritual offering (*yañña*) depicted in Pāli texts can-
not be reduced to one type. McGovern (2013: 206) classifies the contexts
in which "brāhmaṇa" references occur in Pāli episodes throughout the
canon. He found that the term often refers to an ideal human in the oldest
sections of the canon, but later commentarial tradition and the Chinese
translations introduce the idea of a "literal" brāhmaṇa that is contrasted
to the "ideal" brāhmaṇa in the text (McGovern 2013: 274). Freiberger
(1998) provides evidence for Pāli texts attempting either to reject outright
or to fit sacrifice (*yañña*) into the Buddhist doctrinal system.[44] Other

---

[43] See also Gokhale (1980), which lists four categories of brāhmaṇas.

[44] The *Suttanipāta* exhibits notable concern with proper ritual offering (*yañña* and √*yaj*).
The verses in which *yañña* occurs include: Sn 249, 295, 308, 458, 461, 482, 484, 505–6,
509, 568, 978–9, 1043–5, 1047. Various forms of the verb √*yaj* also occur in many *sutta*s.
Krishan (1993) argues that the Buddha repudiated animal sacrifice (*paśughātayañña*,
paśubali, and *paśubandha*), but not other ritual offerings (*yañña*).

scholars – such as Jayawickrama, Katre, Pande, Norman, Gombrich, and Shults – point out specific practices, vocabulary, and ideas shared between late Vedic and early Buddhist traditions.

Understanding how brāhmaṇas are represented in the eastern Vājasaneyin tradition helps to account for the depiction of brāhmaṇas in the *Sutta-nipāta*. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Yājñavalkya establishes the qual-ifications of a brāhmaṇa again and again in ways that seem heterodox. He defines a brāhmaṇa as one who desires to know, who, as mentioned above (BĀU 4.4.22), becomes a *muni* and goes forth (*pra+√vraj*); practicing recitation, ritual offering, giving (*dāna*), and untiring asceticism, the *muni* wanders begging for alms (*bhikṣācaryaṃ caranti*).[45] Yājñavalkya goes so far as to say that to be a real brāhmaṇa, one must know the imperishable. In his words,

> Gārgī, without knowing the imperishable in this world, whosoever performs offerings, offers, or practices austerities [even] for many thousands of years, that which he has is only limited. Whosoever, not knowing the imperishable, Gārgī, departs from this world, is pitiable. Now, whosoever, Gārgī, knowing the imperishable departs from this world, he is a brāhmaṇa.[46]

In addition, Yājñavalkya says that a person who is not besmeared by bad *karma*, who has crossed over all evil, and who is free from dust and doubt, becomes a brāhmaṇa (*brāhmaṇo bhavati*) and reaches the *brahmaloka*:

> Having known this [*ātman*], one is not besmeared (*√lip*) by bad *karma*. … One who is free from offense, free from dust, and free from doubt becomes a brāhmaṇa. This is the *brahmaloka*.[47]

Birth is never mentioned by Yājñavalkya as a condition of class. Instead, he describes the brāhmaṇa as a *muni*.

---

[45] Cf. BĀU 3.5.1: *etaṃ vai taṃ ātmānaṃ viditvā brāhmaṇāḥ putraiṣaṇāyāś ca vit-taiṣaṇāyāś ca lokaiṣaṇāyāś ca vyutthāyātha bhikṣācaryaṃ caranti* ("So, verily knowing the *ātman*, giving up desiring sons, desiring wealth, and desiring *loka*s, brāhmaṇas then wander begging for alms").

[46] BĀU 3.8.10: *yo vā etad akṣaram gārgy aviditvā'smiṃl loke juhoti yajate tapas tapyate bahūni varṣasahasrāṇy antavad evāsya tad bhavati yo vā etad akṣaram gārgy aviditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa kṛpaṇo atha ya etad akṣaraṃ gārgi viditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa brāhmaṇaḥ*.

[47] BĀU 4.4.23: *taṃ viditvā na lipyate karmaṇā pāpakeneti. … vipāpo virajo 'vicikitso brāhmaṇo bhavaty eṣa brahmalokaḥ*.

The Bhagavan's critique on brāhmaṇas and ritual efficacy in the *Sut-tanipāta* seems to have presupposed Yājñavalkya's interpretation of these terms. In the *Vasalasutta* (Sn 1.7), the Buddha famously states that one becomes a brāhmaṇa not by birth, but by actions (*kamma*).[48] He illustrates his point by saying that Mātaṅga, a low caste man, reached the *brahmaloka* (Sn 139).[49] This example reflects what Yājñavalkya says in BĀU 4.4.23 about how a person not besmeared by bad *karma* becomes a brāhmaṇa and reaches the *brahmaloka*. In Sn 795, the Bhagavan defines a brāhmaṇa in this way: "A *brāhmaṇa* is one who goes beyond the limits. Knowing and seeing, nothing is taken up by that one."[50] *Suttanipāta* 803 and 911 further state that a brāhmaṇa has gone to the far shore and does not resort to mental constructing. The brāhmaṇa is a *muni* in Sn 946 or even an *arahat* in Sn 644.[51] The Buddha's idea of what a brāhmaṇa is seems to have been influenced by Yājñavalkya's idea of a brāhmaṇa crossing over evil and being free from dust. Like Yājñavalkya, who states that without knowing the imperishable, performing offerings and austerities is limited, Gotama calls into question the efficacy of such offerings.[52] In the *Brāhmaṇadhammikasutta* (Sn 2.7) and the *Puṇṇakamāṇavapucchā* (Sn 5.4) the Buddha critiques that many brāhmaṇas, having become corrupt, no longer live in accord with the ancient tradition of making offerings. Such examples indicate that the Buddha may have been familiar with Yājñavalkya's teachings.

In the *Sundarikabhāradvājasutta* (Sn 3.4), the Buddha denies being a brāhmaṇa or any other *varṇa* category, saying in Sn 455: "Not a brāhmaṇa,

---

[48] Sn 136: *na jaccā hoti brāhmaṇo … kammanā hoti brāhmaṇo.* Cf. Sn 650: *Na jaccā brāhmaṇo hoti, na jaccā hoti abrāhmaṇo. kammanā brāhmaṇo hoti, kammanā hoti abrāhmaṇo.*

[49] See also Sn 508–9.

[50] Sn 795: *Sīmātigo brāhmaṇo tassa n'atthi, ñatvā va disvā va samuggahītaṃ.* According to the *Mahāniddesa* (p. 100.5–6 and n. 2), a brāhmaṇa is one who has expelled seven things: *Brāhmaṇo ti sattannaṃ dhammānaṃ bāhitattā brāhmaṇo; sakkāyadiṭṭhi bāhitā hoti, vicikicchā bāhitā hoti, sīlabbataparāmāso bāhito hoti, rāgo bāhito hoti, dosa bāhito hoti, moho bāhito hoti, māno bāhito hoti.*

[51] Sn 644: *khīṇāsavaṃ arahantaṃ, tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.* Bhikkhu Bodhi (2017: 47) notes various times in the *Suttanipāta* that the Buddha is called a *muni*, and once even Sakyamuni (Sn 225).

[52] See, for example, Sn 1080.

nor a prince, nor a merchant (*vessāyana*), nor anyone am I."[53] Then, four verses later, he states that he should not not be considered a brāhmaṇa, showing off his knowledge of the Sāvittī (Skt. Sāvitrī). The Buddha says to his Kosalan brāhmaṇa interlocutor: "For if you say that you are a brāhmaṇa and you say that I am not a brāhmaṇa, I will ask you about the Sāvittī, consisting of three quarters and twenty-four syllables."[54] Showing that he has some knowledge of one of the most important Vedic *mantras*, traditionally taught after a year of Vedic studentship, again reinforces Gotama's understanding of Vedic tradition and his implicit relationship to it.[55] Shults (2014: 114–9) shows that while the description of the Sāvittī having three quarters and twenty-four syllables is perfectly in line with Brāhmaṇa texts, it finds no parallel in any Pāli *sutta* text besides the *Suttanipāta*.

There is reason to believe that the Buddha's knowledge of the Sāvitrī connects him to the Vājasaneyin tradition in particular. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* records an early description of the *upanayana* rite, which Kane ([1941] 1997: 268) explains literally meant "leading" the *brahmacārin* (student) to his *ācārya* (teacher) for instruction. According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, a *brahmacārin* was to be taught the Sāvitrī in the *gāyatrī* meter only: *gāyatrīm eva sāvitrīm anubrūyāt* (ŚBK 13.5.4.13, cf. ŚBM 11.5.4.13). The *gāyatrī* meter has three *pada*s with eight syllables each, just as the Buddha described in Sn 457. The *ācārya* bears the student in his womb by placing his right hand on the student; on the third night the student is born as a brāhmaṇa along with the Sāvitrī.[56] Interestingly, the *Śatapatha* does not mention any rules for initiation based on

[53] Sn 455: *Na brāhmaṇo no'mhi na rājaputto, na vessāyano uda koci no'mhi*.

[54] Sn 457: *Brāhmaṇo ce tvaṃ brūsi, mañ ca brūsi abrāhmaṇaṃ, taṃ taṃ Sāvittiṃ pucchāmi tipadaṃ catuvīsatakkharaṃ*. Literally, "… and you call me a non-brāhmaṇa …"

[55] ŚBK 13.5.4.6: *smaitāṃ purā saṃvatsare 'nvāhuḥ*. Although the *Śatapatha* says that the mantra was taught after a year of studentship, ŚBK 13.5.4.7–12 allows the Sāvitrī to be imparted after six months, on the twenty-fourth day, on the twelfth day, sixth day, third day, or even at once.

[56] ŚBK 13.5.4.12: *ācāryo garbhī bhavati hastam ādhāya dakṣiṇaṃ tṛtīyasyāṁ sa jāyate sāvitryā saha brāhmaṇa iti*. Cf. ŚBM 11.5.4.12. The idea of the teacher taking the student as an embryo to be reborn on the third night is also found in AV 11.5.3, as noted by McGovern (2013: 164) and Lubin (2018: 99–100).

varṇa.[57] By showing that Gotama Buddha knows the Sāvittī in the *gāyatrī* meter, the *Suttanipāta* depicts him as familiar with the verse appropriate to Vedic initiation in Kosala. Moreover, he is shown to understand that knowledge of the Sāvittī is a requisite for being considered a brāhmaṇa. While it is possible that the composer(s) of this *sutta* applied their personal knowledge of Vedic initiation to depict the Buddha as operating within Vedic circles, the possibility cannot be ruled out that Gotama Buddha learned this information through being reborn ritually as a brāhmaṇa.[58]

According to Apte (1939: 34), the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā*, *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, and *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* know the famous *gāyatrī* Sāvitrī, ṚV 3.62.10, "only as *one of the many verses* sacred to Savitṛ." In his view, it is the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* that employs the *gāyatrī* Sāvitrī in the rite of initiation. After the *Śatapatha*, not everyone was privy to the *gāyatrī* verse. Kane ([1941] 1997: 302–3) and Smith (1989: 94–5; 99, n. 98) describe how Sūtra literature distinguishes between different Sāvitrī mantras depending on the *varṇa* of the student. Some Gṛhyasūtras prescribe the same verse for all students, but according to other Dharma- and Gṛhyasūtras, kṣatriyas learn the Sāvitrī in the *triṣṭubh* meter (four *pada*s of eleven syllables each), while vaiśyas learn their mantra in the *jagatī* meter (four *pada*s of twelve syllables each). The Buddha's knowledge of the *gāyatrī* Sāvitrī as the mantra connected with becoming a brāhmaṇa corresponds to the initiation rite set forth in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. In addition to this mantra, Gotama Buddha is shown to know another specialized detail of Kosalan Vedic initiation.

In verse 561 of the *Selasutta* (Sn 3.7), the Buddha describes himself as "one who has become *brahman* (*brahmabhūto*)" and the brāhmaṇa Sela asks to practice *brahmacariya* (studentship or the holy life) under him. Norman (1992a: 65) interprets *brahmabhūto* to mean, "Having become Brahmā." He explains, "there seems to be no occurrence in Pāli of the

---

[57] Lubin 2018: 102–4. Lubin entertains the possibility that brāhmaṇas were initiated in ŚBM 11.5.4.16 (cf. ŚBK 13.5.4.16): *brāhmaṇaṃ brahmacaryam upanīya*. However, as a direct object, "brāhmaṇa" here need not presuppose the existence of a brāhmaṇa-birth class and could also be read as the initiated. In the latter sense, undergoing initiation and adherence to *brahmacarya* makes one a brāhmaṇa in the ŚB. I am grateful to Tim Lubin for his personal correspondence with regard to this passage.

[58] On a man being reborn three times in Vedic tradition, see ŚBK 3.2.4.2 and JUB 3.3.1.1–4.

uncompounded neuter word *brahma* in the sense of the Upaniṣadic *brahman*, but the word *brahma* is used in compounds apparently in the sense of 'excellent, perfect'" (Norman 1992b: 195).[59] However, Lindtner (1999: 17) considers that the Buddha meant the neuter *brahman*, not the masculine, and evidence in Kosalan Vedic tradition suggests he may have used this compound to communicate to prospective students that he was qualified to be their teacher. In *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 13.5.4.1 a prospective student approaches his teacher as *br̠ahman*:

> He says, "I have come for *brahmac̠arya*." He presents himself to *br̠ahman* alone. He says, "May I be a *brahmac̠ārin* [implying, may you allow me to become a student]." He submits himself to *br̠ahman* alone.[60]

Note that the Vedic *ācārya* is called *br̠ahman* twice in this passage, both times in the neuter gender, as attested by the *bhāṣika* accent.[61] In Kosalan Vedic tradition, a student approaches his teacher as the very embodiment of Vedic speech, knowledge, and power.

In the verses of the *Suttanipāta*, when a student wishes to take the Buddha as his teacher, he asks to practice *brahmacariya* under him. In Sn 566, Sela asks on behalf of his three-hundred brāhmaṇa students and himself, "May we practice *brahmacariya* under you, Bhagavan."[62] Similarly, in Sn 32 Dhaniya asks on behalf of his wife and himself, "May we practice *brahmacariya* under the Sugata."[63] It is only in the later introductory prose sections that the Pāli stock phrase is introduced:

---

[59] *Paramatthajotikā II* 2.455.7 glosses *brahman* in this compound as *seṭṭha*, meaning "best" or "excellent:" *Brahmabhūto ti seṭṭhabhūto.*

[60] ŚBK 13.5.4.1: *brahmac̠aryam ā̠gām i̠ty āha br̠ahmaṇa e̠vaita̠d ātmā̠naṃ ni̠vedayati brahmac̠āry asānī̠ty āha br̠ahmaṇa e̠vaita̠d ātmā̠naṃ pa̠ridadāti.*

[61] Cf. AV 11.5.5: *jātó bráhmaṇo brahmacārī́,* in which the *brahmacārin* is said to be born from the neuter *bráhman*. In Vedic Sanskrit, the placement of the accent changes the meaning. When the *udātta* accent is on the first syllable, *bráhman* means unmanifest power or sacred speech. When the accent is on the second syllable, *brahmán* means a priest. The *bhāṣika* accent system in the ŚB marks only the *anudātta* (orthographically represented by an underscore), but in the case of *brahman*, it regularly occurs that a preceding *bhāṣika* element forces what would have been an *udātta* to become an *anudātta*. On the meanings of *brahman*, see Brereton 2004 and on the *bhāṣika* accent, see Cardona 1993 and 2015.

[62] Sn 566: *brahmacariyaṃ carissāma Bhagavā tava santike.* Cf. Th 836.

[63] Sn 32: *brahmacariyaṃ Sugate carāmase.* Dhaniya is a cowherd, but his fire is kindled (*āhito gini*) in Sn 18. A Vedic brāhmaṇa who undergoes the Agnyādheya ceremony is called an *āhitāgni.* Such a person maintains the sacred fires and performs the

I go to the Venerable Gotama as a refuge, and to the *dhamma* and the *saṅgha* of bhikkhus. May I receive the going forth (*pabbajja*) under Venerable Gotama. May I receive full ordination.[64]

The verse requests to study under the Buddha follow closely the Vedic custom in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, in contrast to the later prose passages, which reflect a separate Buddhist identity.

The term "brāhmaṇa" occurs in its original Sanskrit form two hundred times in the *Suttanipāta*, whereas *bhikkhu* appears significantly less (169 times). This might be because, as Jayawickrama (1947: 125–6, 281) has shown, the words *muni* and *bhikkhu* in this text are virtually synonymous, with only subtle differences. Speaking of the Buddha in Sn 1063 of the *Pārāyanavagga*, the young brāhmaṇa Dhotaka remarks that he sees a "brāhmaṇa" in front of him (*passām'ahaṃ … brāhmaṇam*). Katre (1931: 35) observed:

The general tone of the Sn is that of respect and deep regard for the brāh-maṇas. The brāhmaṇas, in short, were held in high esteem in this ancient community. Spiritually they represented the most advanced men and so were in a position to benefit quickly from the doctrines of the Buddha.

Brāhmaṇas were not always cast in a favorable light in the Pāli texts, as the *Vasalasutta* (Sn 1.7) illustrates, but usually were in the *Suttanipāta*. McGovern (2013: 247) maintains that the use of the word brāhmaṇa in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* and the *Pārāyaṇavagga* differs from the rest of the Pāli canon. There is a good reason for this. Jayawickrama (1947: 306) has claimed that whereas the early stratum of the *Suttanipāta* takes a general-Indian approach and promotes the generic *muni*'s life of solitude, the later stratum clearly delineates a separate Buddhist identity.[65] If so, the earliest

---

Agnihotra twice daily for his whole life. Performing ritual offerings requires having fresh milk, and for that reason cows. Thus, *āhito gini* suggests the possibility that Dhaniya followed Vedic tradition, although the commentary gives a different explanation for the fires. See Bodhi: 2017: 383.

[64] *Esāhaṃ bhavantaṃ Gotamaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi dhammañ ca bhikkhusaṃghañ ca, labheyyāhaṃ bhoto Gotamassa santike pabbajjaṃ, labheyyaṃ upasampadan ti.* See the prose section at the end of the *Kasibhāradvāja-* and the *Sundarikabhāradvājasutta*.

[65] Jayawickrama categorizes the *sutta*s in the *Suttanipāta* into three layers: (1) "unsectarian" (general Indian, Brāhmaṇic and Upaniṣadic teachings), (2) "sectarian" (meaning Buddhist), and (3) "popular Buddhism," including the *sutta*s on the life of the Buddha.

layer of the *Suttanipāta* attests to the Buddha's early brāhmaṇical fol-
lowers in Kosala.

Tsuchida (1991: 87) mentions that the Buddha, after awakening, began
his teaching career with the intention to instruct his former teachers Āḷāra
Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, whom he says were probably "eminent
Brahmanical hermits," because "they were both 'learned, experienced,
wise and for a long time … had little dust in their eyes' (*paṇḍito vyatto
medhāvī dīgharattaṃ apparajakkhajātiko*)" (M 1.169.34–5; Wynne 2007:
21–2). He goes on to say that these two ascetics "would seem to have both
belonged to the same category of Brahmins as Bāvari and the Kassapa
brothers, although we do not find any textual reference to their ritual activi-
ties." Identifying their mediation practices, however, Wynne (2007: 21–
22, 116) asserts that after his awakening Gotama Buddha considered
Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta to be the "most worthy recipients
of his new teaching," even though he ended up revising their brāhmaṇical
beliefs to teach others.

In addition to his interaction with ascetics influenced by late Vedic
thought, the *Suttanipāta* depicts the Buddha as knowledgeable in Vedic
ritual practices. Returning to the *Selasutta* (Sn 3.7), the Bhagavan thanks the
matted-hair ascetic Keṇiya for his meal in Sn 568, saying, "The *aggihutta*
is the foremost of ritual offerings (*yañña*). The Sāvittī is the foremost of
meters."[66] This shows that the Buddha is familiar with the *agnihotra* ritual
and the Sāvitrī mantra, which he mentions in Sn 568 for the second time.[67]

Jayawickrama describes an early nucleus of floating material, several intermediate redactions
incorporating *sutta*s of popular Buddhism, dialogues, ethics, the life of the Buddha, etc., and
a "final redaction made for the purpose of propagating the Buddhist faith through its
ecclesiastical representative, the Saṅgha." Nakatani (2011: 83) also divided the *Suttanipāta*
into three layers.

[66] Sn 568: *Aggihuttamukhā yaññā*, *Sāvittī chandaso mukhaṃ*. Cf. Vin I 245; Maes 2015:
148–51.

[67] With regard to this passage, Shults (2104: 119) cites the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*
(5.4.12.1), which claims the *trirātra* sacrifice to be the best of sacrifices (*paramás trirātró
yajñā́nām*) and the *anuṣṭubh* to be the best of meters (*paramā́ … chándasām*). Shults
also mentions that a similar poem is found in the one or more manuscripts of, but not in
the critical edition of, the *Mahābhārata*. It begins with the words, "*agnihotramukhā vedā
gāyatrī chandasāṃ mukham*" and ends as a praise to Keśava. He speculates that both the
Mahābhārata and Pāli versions "are derived from forms of praise occurring in Brahman-
ical [oral] texts."

The first time (Sn 457), mentioned above, occurs when the Bhagavan teaches a Kosalan brāhmaṇa about proper ritual offering (*yañña*) and its recipients.[68] Interestingly, the *nidāna* of the *Sundarikabhāradvājasutta* explains that Bhāradvāja had just offered the *aggihutta* and went out in search of a brāhmaṇa to partake in the remains of the offering. Now, this is in line with the Vājasaneyin custom, specified by the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (1.3.1.28), that only a brāhmaṇa is allowed to consume what is not offered in the two libations of the *agnihotra* ritual.[69] This again connects a brāhmaṇa depicted in the *Suttanipāta* with the Vedic tradition in Kosala.

In conclusion, to understand the encounter between Vedic tradition and early Buddhism, we must look, as Oldenberg (1919: 244–5) hinted at long ago, to the Brāhmaṇa texts. The *Suttanipāta* relates a contemporary Vedic ascetic movement and describes the brāhmaṇa on equal terms with the *muni* or *bhikkhu*. Many of the figures located in or associated with Kosala, with whom the Buddha interacts, can be thought of as the later *muni* heirs of the Kāṇva school. Gotama Buddha, as depicted in the *Suttanipāta*, is familiar with Vedic doctrine and meditative practices. His critique of what a brāhmaṇa is presupposes Yājñavalkya's. In addition, the Bhagavan knows about the sacred mantra taught to an initiated *brahmacārin* as well as the conditions for serving as a Vedic *ācārya* in Kosala. In the verses of the *Suttanipāta*, brāhmaṇas treat the Buddha as if a traditional Vedic *ācārya*, *brahman* incarnate, and ask to practice *brahmacariya* under him, using a formula similar to the one prescribed for initiation in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. The practice of begging for alms, which is associated with the tradition that developed around the Buddha's teaching, was first institutionalized by Vedic *brahmacārin*s and adopted by other ascetic groups later. For these reasons, there is a very close relationship, and perhaps even a shared identity, between some of the Kāṇva brāhmaṇas and Buddhists in Kosala represented in the *Suttanipāta*.

---

[68] The *nidāna* states, *Ekaṃ samayaṃ Bhagavā Kosalesu viharati Sundarikāya nadiyā tire*.

[69] ŚBK 1.3.1.28: *ya eva kaś ca piben na tv abrāhmaṇo 'gnau hy enad adhiśrayanti*. Cf. ŚBM 2.3.1.39: KŚS 4.14.11; Dumont 1939: 14.

Bibliography

Primary Sources and Abbreviations

* Pāli passages cited in this paper refer to the PTS editions.

A   *Aṅguttaranikāya.*

Aṣṭādhyāyī = Katre 1989.

AV   *Atharvaveda Saṁhitā*, vol. 2, translated by W.D. Whitney, edited and revised by K.L. Joshi. New Delhi: Parimal Publications, 2015.

Bv   *Buddhavaṃsa.*

BĀU   *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, cited from *Kāṇva Śatapatha*: *A Critical Edition*, edited by Pimplapure. Note that references to the BĀU omit the *kāṇḍa* number, which appears in the edition cited. For example, BĀU 3.5.1 is given instead of 17.3.5.1.

D   *Dīghanikāya.*

JUB   *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* = "The Jāiminīya or Talavakāra Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa," translated by Hanns Oertel, *JAOS* 16 (1896): 79–260.

Kātyāyana, *Vārttika*, cited from *The Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali*, vol. 2, edited by F. Kielhorn. 4th edition. Pune: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1996 (1st edition 1883).

KŚS   *Kātyāyanaśrautasūtra* = *Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra*, vol. 1, translated by G. U. Thite. Delhi: New Bharatiya Book Corporation, 2006.

M   *Majjhimanikāya*

Mahābhāṣya = *The Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali*, vol. 2, edited by F. Kielhorn. 4th edition. Pune: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1996 (1st edition 1883).

Mahāniddesa

Paramatthajotikā II = *Sutta-Nipāta Commentary II being Paramatthajotikā II*, vol. 2, edited by Helmer Smith. London: Pali Text Society, 1917, repr. 1966.

PTS   Pali Text Society

ṚV   *Rig Veda*: *A Metrically Restored Text with an Introduction and Notes*, edited by Barend van Nooten and Gary Holland. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.

ŚB   *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*

ŚBK   *Kāṇva Śatapatha*: *A Critical Edition*, edited by G.W. Pimplapure. 2nd edition. Ujjain: Maharṣi Sāndīpani Rāṣṭrīya Vedavidyā Pratiṣṭāna, 2005.

The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa in the Kāṇva Recension, vol. 1, edited by W. Caland. Lahore: Motilal Banarsidass, 1926.

Passages from the ŚBK are cited from Pimplapure's critical edition.

ŚBM   *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa of the White Yajurveda in the Mādhyandina Recension*, edited by A. Chinnaswami Śāstri, Pattābhirāma Śāstry, and Rāmanātha Dīkṣita. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Prakashan, 2014.

Sn   *Suttanipāta*

Th   *Theragāthā*
Vin   *Vinaya*
Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Etext based on the Bombay edition: Venkatesvara Steam Press,
        1910. Input Sansknet-project.
Viṣṇu Purāṇa, translated by H.H. Wilson. London: John Murray, 1840.

Secondary Sources

Apte, V.M. 1939. "Ṛg-veda Mantras in their Ritual Setting in the Gṛhya Sūtras."
        Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute 1(1): 14–44.
Bausch, Lauren. 2015. "Kosalan Philosophy According to the Kāṇva Śatapatha
        Brāhmaṇa and the Suttanipāta." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley.
Bodewitz, H.W. 1976. *The Daily Evening and Moring Offering* (*Agnihotra*)
        According to the Brāhmaṇas. Leiden: Brill.
Bodhi, Bhikkhu, trans. 2017. *The Suttanipāta*: *An Ancient Collection of the Buddha's
        Discourses Together with its Commentaries*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom
        Publications.
Brereton, Joel. 2004. "Bráhman, Brahmán, and Sacrificer." In Arlo Griffiths and
        Jan E.M. Houben, eds., *The Vedas*: *Texts*, *Language & Ritual*: *Proceedings
        of the Third International Vedic Workshop*, *Leiden 2002*. Groningen: Egbert
        Forsten: 325–44.
—. 2006. "The Composition of the Maitreyī Dialogue in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka
        Upaniṣad." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 126(3) (Jul.–Sep.):
        323–45. Accessed October 22, 2011. http://jstor.org/stable/20064512.
Bronkhorst, Johannes. 2007. *Greater Magadha*: *Studies in the Culture of Early
        India*. Leiden: Brill.
—. 2011. *Buddhism in the Shadow of Brahmanism*. Leiden: Brill.
Caland, W. 1926. *The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa in the Kāṇva Recension*. Lahore:
        Motilal Banarsidass.
Cardona, George. 1993. "The bhāṣika accentuation system." In Georg Buddruss,
        Oskar von Hinüber, Hanns-Peter Schmidt, Albrecht Wezler, and Michael
        Witzel, eds., *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 18. Reinbek: Inge Wezler:
        1–40.
—. 2015. "The Bhāṣika Accent Revisited." *Adyar Library Bulletin* 78–79: 159–
        74.
Cousins, Lance. 2013. "The Early Development of Buddhist Literature and Lan-
        guage in India." *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies* 5: 89–
        136.
Doniger O'Flaherty, Wendy. 1973. *Śiva*, *the Erotic Ascetic*. New York: Oxford
        University Press.
Dumont, Paul-Emile. 1939. *L'Agnihotra*: *Description de l'agnihotra dans le rituel
        védique*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press.
Eggeling, Julius. [1882] 1963. "Introduction." In *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*: *According
        to the Text of the Mādhyandina School*. Introduction and translation by Julius

Eggeling. Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 12. Oxford: Clarendon Press; repr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Freiberger, Oliver. 1998. "The Ideal Sacrifice. Patterns of Reinterpreting Brahmin Sacrifice in Buddhist Texts." *Bulletin d'Études Indiennes* 16: 39–49.

Fronsdal, Gil. 2016. *The Buddha Before Buddhism*: *Wisdom from the Early Teachings*. Boulder: Shambhala.

Gokhale, Balkrishna Govind. 1980. "Early Buddhism and the Brahmanas." In A.K. Narain, ed., *Studies in History of Buddhism*. Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation: 67–80.

Gombrich, Richard. 1996. *How Buddhism Began*: *The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

—. 2009. *What the Buddha Thought*. London: Equinox.

Gonda, Jan. 1975. *Vedic Literature* (*Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas*). Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

Jamison, Stephanie W. and Joel P. Brereton, trans. 2014. *The Rigveda*: *The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*. Vols. 1–3. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jayawickrama, N.A. 1947. "A Critical Analysis of the Pāli Suttanipāta Illustrating its Gradual Growth." PhD diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Jayawickrama, N.A. trans. 2001. *Suttanipāta*: *Text and Translation*. Colombo: Post-graduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya.

Jurewicz, Joanna. 2019. "The Consistency of Vedic Argument." In Lauren Bausch, ed., *Self*, *Sacrifice*, *and Cosmos*. New Delhi: Primus Books.

Kane, Pandurang Vaman. [1941] 1997. *History of Dharmaśāstra*: *Ancient and Medieval Religious and Civil Law*. Vol. 2, Part 1. 3rd edition. Pune: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.

Katre, S.M. 1931. "Early Buddhist Ballads and their Relation to Older Upanishadic Literature." PhD diss., London University.

Katre, Sumitra, trans. 1989. *Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Pvt. Ltd.

Krishan, Yuvaraj. 1993. "To What Extent Buddhism Repudiated Vedic Religion." *East and West* 43(1/4) (December): 237–40. Accessed August 17, 2013. http://www.jstor.org/stable/29757093.

Lamotte, Étienne. 1988. *History of Indian Buddhism*: *From the Origins to the Śaka Era*. Translated by Sara Webb-Boin. Louvain: Institut Orientaliste.

Lindquist, Steven E. 2011. "One Yājñavalkya … Two? On the (Questionable) Historicity of a Literary Figure." In Steven E. Lindquist, ed., *Religion and Identity in South Asia and Beyond*: *Essays in Honor of Patrick Olivelle*. New York: Anthem Press: 69–82.

Lindtner, Christian. 1999. "From Brahmanism to Buddhism." *Asian Philosophy* 9(1): 5–37.

Lubin, Tim. 2018. "The Vedic Student: *brahmacārin*." In Patrick Olivelle and Donald Davis, eds., *Hindu Law*: *A New History of Dharmaśāstra*. New York: Oxford University Press: 98–112.

Maes, Claire. 2015. "Dialogues With(in) the Pāli Vinaya: A Research into the Dynamics and Dialectics of the Pāli Vinaya's Ascetic others, with a Special Focus on the Jain other." PhD diss., University of Gent.

McGovern, Nathan Michael. 2013. "Buddhists, Brahmans, and Buddhist Brahmans: Negotiating Identities in Indian Antiquity." PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara.

Mishra, Yogendra. 1981. *History of Videha*: *From the Earliest Times up to the Foundation of the Gupta Empire A.D. 319*. Patna: Janaki Prakashan.

Nakatani, Hideaki. 2011. "Buddha's scheme for forming noble-minded generalists in society." *Social Science Information* 50(1): 81–103.

Norman, K.R., trans. 1992a. *The Group of Discourses* (*Sutta-nipāta*). Pali Text Society Translation Series No. 45, Vol. 2. Oxford: Pali Text Society.

Norman, K.R. 1992b. "Theravāda Buddhism and Brahmanical Hinduism: Brahmanical Terms in a Buddhist Guise." In Tadeusz Skorupski, ed., *The Buddhist Forum*. Vol. 2. New Delhi: Heritage Publishers: 193–200.

Oldenberg, Hermann. 1882. *Buddha*: *His Life*, *His Doctrine*, *His Order*. Translated by William Hoey. London: Williams and Norgate.

—. 1919. *Die Weltanschauung der Brāhmaṇa-Texte*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

—. 1988. *The Religion of the Veda*. Translated by Shridhar B. Shrotri. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Pvt. Ltd.

Pande, Govind Chandra. [1957] 2006. *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*. 4th edition. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

Pathak, Vishuddhanand. 1963. *History of Kośala up to the Rise of the Mauryas*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Pvt. Ltd.

Patton, Laurie. 2011. "Traces of Śaunaka: A Literary Assessment." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 79(1): 113–35

Rahurkar, V.G. 1964. *Seers of the Ṛgveda*. Poona: University of Poona.

Renou, Louis. 1948. "Les Relations du Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa avec la Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad et la personnalité de Yājñavalkya." *Indian Culture* XIV(4): 75–89.

Sharma, Rama Nath, trans. 2008. *The Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini*. Vol. 4. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Pvt. Ltd.

Shults, Brett. 2014. "On the Buddha's use of Some Brahmanical Motifs in Pali Texts." *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies* 6: 106–40.

Smith, Brian K. 1989. *Reflections on Resemblance*, *Ritual*, *and Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sujato, Bhikkhu and Bhikkhu Brahmali. 2013. "The Authenticity of the Early Buddhist Texts." *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies*. Supplement to Volume 5.

Thapar, Romila. 2013. *The Past Before Us*: *Historical Traditions of Early North India*. New Delhi: Permanent Black.

Thieme, Paul. 1963. "Agastya und Lopamudrā." *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 113(1): 69–79.

Thite, G.U. 1979. "Kātyāyanaśrautasūtra and the Kaṇva Tradition." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 21: 171–9.

Tsuchida, Ryūtarō. 1991. "Two Categories of Brahmins in the Early Buddhist Period." *Memoirs of the Research Department of Toyo Bunko* (*The Oriental Library*) 49: 51–95.

von Hinüber, Oskar. 2001. *Das ältere Mittelindisch im Überblick*. 2nd edition. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

—. 2008. "Hoary Past and Hazy Memory: On the History of Early Buddhist Texts." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 29(2): 193–210.

Weber, Albrecht. 1878. *The History of Indian Literature*. Translated by John Mann and Theodor Zachariae. London: Trübner & Co.

Witzel, Michael. 1987. "On the Localisation of Vedic Texts and Schools (Materials on Vedic Śākhās, 7)." In G. Pollet, ed., *India and the Ancient World*. *History*, *Trade and Culture before A.D. 650. P.H.L. Eggermont Jubilee Volume*. Leuven: Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 25: 173–213.

—. 1989. "Tracing the Vedic Dialects." In Caillat, ed., *Dialectes dans les littératures Indo-Aryennes*. Paris: Publications de L'Institut de Civilisation Indienne 55: 97–265.

—. 1997. "The Development of the Vedic Canon and its Schools: The Social and Political Milieu." In Michael Witzel, ed., *Inside the Texts*, *Beyond the Texts*. Harvard Oriental Series, Opera Minora 2. Cambridge: South Asia Books: 257–348.

—. 2003. "Yājñavalkya as ritualist and philosopher, and his personal language." In Siamak Adhami, ed., *Paitimāna*: *Essays in Iranian*, *Indo-European*, *and Indian Studies in Honor of Hanns-Peter Schmidt*. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers: 103–43.

—. 2009. "Moving Targets? Text, language, archaeology and history in the Late Vedic and early Buddhist periods." *Indo-Iranian Journal 52*: 287–310.

Wynne, Alexander. 2007. *The Origin of Buddhist Meditation*. London: Routledge.

—. 2010. "The Buddha's 'skill in means' and the genesis of the five aggregate teaching: Winner of the 2nd Professor Mary Boyce Award." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 20, no. 2 (April): 91–216.

ABSTRACT

The Buddha was born and raised in the region of Kosala, where thrived the Vedic school of the Kāṇvas. The Kāṇvas inherited Yājñavalkya's teachings in their recension of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. The Vedic influence of the Kāṇvas on early Buddhism is evident in the Buddha's teachings in the *Suttanipāta*. This paper explores evidence for the close relationship between the Kāṇva brāhmaṇas and the early Buddhists in Kosala.