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Vedic elements in the Pāsupatasūtra

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Vedic Elements in the *Pāśupatasūtra*

PETER C. BISSCHOP



The *Pāśupatasūtra* is the foundational text of the Pāśupatas. The present paper addresses two aspects relating to the *Pāśupatasūtra*: 1) the question whether the brahma-mantras taught in the *Pāśupatasūtra* really derive from *Taittirīyāranyaka* 10.43–7 as is generally assumed; 2) the identification of *Atharvaveda Paippalādasamhitā* 17.35.4 as the textual source of *Pāśupatasūtra* 4.10–2.¹ From a broader perspective, the paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of the connections between Vedic and early Hindu religions.

I The Pāśupatas

The name Pāśupata (lit. ‘follower of Paśupati’) tends to be used in scholarship to refer to the earliest known ascetic community of Rudra worshippers.² The Pāśupatas stand at the start of the history of Śaivism and it is no exaggeration to say that all subsequent traditions of Śaivism share, in one way or another, the traits of the cult. The name has in fact been used in a much broader sense throughout Indian history, in particular in inscriptional records, where it may, for example, also refer to a temple priest or a teacher.³ In the present paper I deal with the Pāśupatas in a restricted sense.

The Pāśupata ascetic regimen is known to us from the *Pāśupatasūtra*. The sūtra teaches a set of rules for ascetics whose single object of devotion is Rudra and whose ultimate goal is the end of all suffering (*duḥkḥānta*). The path starts with bathing in ashes (*bhasmasnāna*) and ends with union with Rudra (*rudrasāyujya*). While the sūtra displays strong Brahmanical tendencies, it is unique in prescribing an ascetic path that ultimately transcends the ritual life of orthodox Brahmanism, both in words and deeds. Only male Brahmins who had received Vedic initiation were allowed to take up the Pāśupata regimen, but their subsequent ascetic career involved the breaking of all boundaries and stipulations of Brahmanical life. To paraphrase the words of Sanderson, the Pāśupatas made “unorthodox use” of “orthodox principle[s]” (Sanderson 1988:665); this is what motivated and guided their behavior.

¹In May–June 2015 I joined a few of the *Paippalādasamhitā* reading sessions held in Sasha Lubotsky’s office. We were reading a passage from *kāṇḍa* 17, *anuvāka* 6, prepared by Umberto Selva for his Ph.D. thesis. As chance would have it, the passage was one of fundamental importance for my own ongoing research on the early Pāśupata tradition. I am pleased to be able to present a few of my findings from that reading session in honor of my esteemed colleague. I thank Umberto Selva for generously sharing his draft edition of *PaiS* 17.27–43 with me.

²For a recent general introduction to the Pāśupatas, see Acharya 2010.

³On this matter, see Bisschop 2010.

This is why, in later Śaiva classifications, the Pāśupatas are said to constitute the Atimārga ‘the Path Beyond’.⁴ While the individual who took initiation in the Pāśupata ascetic cult was by definition a twice-born male, coming from a respectable orthodox brahmin family and cleared of all debts, once initiated in the cult he left behind his former orthodox way of life and entered a new community in which a strict new regime was observed. Instead of bathing three times a day in water, the Pāśupata was to bathe in ashes; instead of worshipping the gods and ancestors he was to worship Rudra alone; etc. In the words of PāSū 2.7: *amaṅgalaṃ cātra maṅgalaṃ bhavati* “And here what is inauspicious becomes auspicious.”⁵ Things that are usually prohibited are here prescribed. The regimen ends on the cremation ground (PāSū 5.30: *śmaśānavāsī*), the most polluted of places, where the ascetic is stipulated to live on whatever he finds (PāSū 5.32: *yathālabdhopajīvakaḥ*). Ending his life there, the Pāśupata ascetic attains the end of all suffering thanks to the grace of the Lord (PāSū 5.30: *apramādī gacched duḥkḥānām antam īsaprasādāt*).

2 The Pāśupatas and Vedic tradition: The brahma-mantras

The Pāśupatas’ close ties to the Vedic tradition are discernable in the five mantras that form the concluding part of each of the five chapters that make up the *Pāśupatasūtra*:

1. *sadyojātaṃ prapadyāmi sadyojātāya vai namaḥ, bhava nātibhava bhavasva mām, bhavodbhāvāya namaḥ* |
2. *vāmadevāya namo jyēsthāya namaḥ śreṣṭhāya namo rudrāya namaḥ kālāya namaḥ kalavikaraṇāya namo balavikaraṇāya namo balāya namo balapramathanāya namaḥ sarvabhūtadamanāya namo manonmanāya namaḥ* |
3. *aghorebhyo ’tha ghorebhyo ghoraghoratarebhyaḥ, sarvebhyaḥ sarvaśarvebhyo namas te astu rudrarūpebhyaḥ* |
4. *tatpuruṣāya vidmahe mahādevāya dhīmahi, tan no rudraḥ pracodayāt* |
5. *īśānaḥ sarvavidyānām īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānām, brahmādhipatir brahmaṇo ’dhipatir brahmā śivo me astu sadāśivom* |⁶

These five mantras, the so-called brahma-mantras, are dedicated to Śiva’s five forms as Sadyojāta (PāSū 1.40–4), Vāmadeva (PāSū 2.22–7), Aghora (PāSū 3.21–6), Tatpuruṣa (PāSū 4.22–4), and Īśāna (PāSū 5.42–7). Each respective mantra is introduced with the words *atredaṃ brahma jayet* “Here one should mutter this formula.” There are considerable differences between the version of the *sūtrapāṭha* of the *Pāśupatasūtra*, the version of the *Pañcārthabhāṣya* commentary of Kauṇḍinya, and the version of the *Taittirīyāranyaka* (TaiĀ 10.43–47).⁷

It is generally accepted that these five brahma-mantras have been adopted by the Pāśupatas from the *Taittirīyāranyaka*. For example, Sanderson (1988:665) in his epoch-making article, “Śaivism and the Tantric traditions,” refers to the Pāśupatas’ “silent meditation on five

⁴For an introduction to the division of Śaivism into Atimārga and Mantramārga, see Sanderson 1988. A more detailed study of the interrelations between the Atimārga and Mantramārga is provided in Sanderson 2003–5 [2006].

⁵All quotations from the *Pāśupatasūtra* follow the text and numbering of Sastri’s 1940 edition.

⁶Readings of the *sūtrapāṭha* as printed in Bisschop 2006.

⁷For individual variants in the readings of these three sources, see Bisschop 2006. The version of the mantras in the *sūtrapāṭha* is closer to that of TaiĀ 10.43–7.

mantras of the *Ṛgveda*, the five *brahma-mantras* which in due course of time would be personified as the five faces of Śiva.” Hara (1966:21) writes: “Each chapter [of the *Pāśupatasūtra*] is concluded by quoting verses from the tenth chapter of the *Taittirīyāranyaka*.” On the other hand, more recently Acharya (2011:459) has hinted at a possibly different origin: “These five mantras are found in the *Taittirīyāranyaka*, but this may not be the Vedic source from which they were first adopted by the Pāśupatas.” I would want to go even further and question whether they were adopted from a Vedic source in the first place.

Let us look at what the commentator of the *Pāśupatasūtra*, Kaunḍinya, has to say on the matter. For a long time we did not know his interpretation of the sūtra introducing the first of the five brahma-mantras, the Sadyojāta formula, because the section including the commentary on this sūtra is missing in the Trivandrum manuscript on which Sastri’s 1940 edition was based. This situation has changed with the discovery of one more manuscript of Kaunḍinya’s commentary, the *Pañcārthabhāṣya*, in the Sarasvatībhavana Library in Benares. This manuscript contains the missing portion and has been edited and published by myself (Bisschop 2005). The introduction to the first brahma-mantra, the Sadyojāta, runs as follows (ibid. 544–5):

Having thus completed the chapter it is proper to say:

AND HERE HE SHOULD MUTTER THIS FORMULA.

The word *atra* must be understood to refer to two stages: the manifest and the unmanifest. The word *ca* must be understood in the sense of the conjunction of external and internal ritual actions. *idam* has the sense of ‘the present one’ or of ‘injunction.’ It is this formula that must be muttered, not the Ṛc [verse]s, the Yajus [formula]s or the Sāman [melodie]s, this is the meaning. [It is called] Brahman because of magnitude and because of making strong. Since it makes the practitioner who is muttering strong with/through merit, etc.

We can distinguish the following elements in Kaunḍinya’s interpretation of the sūtra:

1. The word *atra* indicates the use of the mantra. Not in the sense of “at the end of this chapter,” as it has been taken by modern scholars, but with reference to “two stages: the manifest and the unmanifest.” In other words, the Sadyojāta was to be used during the first two stages of the Pāśupata’s five-phased ascetic career.⁸
2. The word *ca* indicates the “combination of external and internal ritual actions.” This probably means that the mantras, which are to be recited mentally, accompany the external ritual activities (*kriyā*) of the first two stages.
3. The word *idam* indicates that the Sadyojāta mantra “must be muttered, not the Ṛc [verse]s, the Yajus [formula]s or the Sāman [melodie]s.” This indicates that for Kaunḍinya the brahma-mantras did not form part of the *Taittirīyāranyaka* of the *Ṛgveda* but constituted a new revelation.
4. The word Brahman is related through a *nirukti* to “magnitude” (*br̥hattva*) and “making strong” (*br̥hmanatva*).

⁸See below for these five stages.

The third aspect of Kauṇḍinya's interpretation suggests that the brahma-mantras were not adopted from the *Taittirīyāranyaka*. According to Kauṇḍinya it is the Sadyojāta mantra that should be recited, not a Yajus formula, and so this brahma-mantra, at least for him, would not have belonged to the Yajurveda.

A similar conclusion follows from his commentary on PāSū 1.17. This sūtra instructs the ascetic to mutter the 'Raudrī Gāyatrī' and the 'Bahurūpī (Rc)'. As the commentary makes clear, Raudrī Gāyatrī here refers to the Tatpuruṣa formula, while Bahurūpī refers to the Aghora formula. Kauṇḍinya's interpretation of the word Gāyatrī is most revealing:

Here [in the Sūtra] the Raudrī is the Gāyatrī. And why is it [called] Gāyatrī? Because the song saves the singer. Or it applies to the Gāyatra meter. Therefore [it is called] Gāyatrī. Here, because of the use of [the word] Raudrī there is a prohibition of Vedic and other Gāyatrīs. And here, because of the word Gāyatrī there is a prohibition of the Sadyojāta [and other formulas devoted to Rudra].⁹

Again we find that a brahma-mantra, in this case the Tatpuruṣa formula, is considered to fall outside the category of Vedic mantras. While it is called a Gāyatrī, it is not to be confused with a Vedic or any other Gāyatrī. This again suggests that, for Kauṇḍinya, the brahma-mantra did not belong to the *Taittirīyāranyaka*.

In the light of the Pāśupata system all of this should not come as a surprise, for if it were the case that the brahma-mantras used by the Pāśupatas had been adopted from the *Yajurveda*, this would imply that the central mantras would not constitute a new or higher revelation. They would therefore not go beyond (*ati-*) what had already been taught by the Vedic tradition. From an Atimārga perspective it is unlikely that the central mantras of the system, the heart of the tradition, would have been adopted from a Vedic source, viz. the *Taittirīyāranyaka*.

All of this brings up a larger issue, viz. the date of the passage of the *Taittirīyāranyaka* (TaiĀ 10.43–7) containing the five brahma-mantras. Some preliminary observations can be made. First of all, the tenth *prapāṭhaka*, also called *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*, contains heterogeneous materials. Not only are the five brahma-mantras cited here as a set (TaiĀ 10.43–7), but there are also various other mantras that hint at a different origin. Among such heterogeneous materials is a list of Gāyatrī mantras addressed to different gods and goddesses, some of which are clearly of late origin (TaiĀ 10.1). Included in this list is for example a Gāyatrī addressed to Vakratuṇḍa-Dantī,¹⁰ no doubt referring to the elephant-headed Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa, who only makes his appearance in textual sources relatively late.¹¹ Similarly, there is a Gāyatrī addressed to the goddess Durgā, including the epithets Kātyāyanī and Kanyakumārī, which would again provide the earliest attestations of these names (cf. Yokochi 2004:16–7). Indeed the transmission of the tenth *prapāṭhaka* shows many variations. There are two main recensions: the Drāviḍa recension, of 64 *anuvākas*, and the

⁹Pañcārthabhāṣya ad PāSū 1.17: *atra yā raudrī sā gāyatrī / gāyatrī ca kasmāt / gītā gītāraṁ trāyata iti / gāyatre vā chandasi vartata iti gāyatrī / atra raudrīgrahaṇāt vaidīkyādīgāyatrīpratiṣedhabh / ibā tu gāyatrīgrahaṇāt sadyojātādīnāṁ pratiṣedhabh /*

¹⁰TaiĀ 10.1: *tatpuruṣāya vidmahe vakratuṇḍāya dhīmahi, tan no dantī pracodayāt.*

¹¹Cf. Törzsök (2004:19): "As numerous studies on Gaṇeśa have shown, this god is a relative late-comer in mythology, even if his cult and image may be dated from around the fourth century of the common era."

Āndhra recension, of 80 *anuvākas*. There is also a *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* belonging to the *Atharvaveda*, divided into 25 *khaṇḍas*. The passages containing mantras to different deities show considerable variation in these recensions; in other words they do not form a stable tradition but have been subject to change over time.¹²

All in all, we can conclude that the date of the part of the *Taittirīyāranyaka* containing the brahma-mantras is highly insecure, with some clear indications of later additions. There is therefore no reason to suppose, *prima facie*, that because the mantras occur in the *Taittirīyāranyaka*, the *Pāśupatasūtra* author must have taken them from this Vedic source. The opposite scenario may in fact be more likely and is also supported by Kauṇḍinya's commentary. Their presence in the *Taittirīyāranyaka* would then rather attest to the impact of the Pāśupatas on the Vedic tradition.¹³

There is one more passage from a supposedly old Vedic source which is relevant to our discussion. The *Maitrāyaṇīyasamhitā* of the *Yajurveda* transmits two of the five brahma-mantras at the beginning and end of the *Śatarudrīya*, the invocation of the hundred forms and powers of Rudra (MaiS 2.9). This could indicate that at least these two mantras, viz. the Tatpuruṣa and the Aghora mantra, have a Vedic origin. However, as in the case of the *Taittirīyāranyaka*, the passages containing these two mantras are suspect. The Tatpuruṣa occurs at the beginning of the *Śatarudrīya* and the Aghora at the end of the *Śatarudrīya*. This beginning and end is missing in the *Śatarudrīya* version of the *Vājasaneyisamhitā*; these parts may therefore well have been added to the *Śatarudrīya* at a later point in time. That this may have been the case is supported by the presence of some demonstrably late mantras in the passage at the beginning of the section. The Tatpuruṣa mantra, which has the form of a Gāyatrī, here heads a list of other Gāyatrīs addressed to various deities. Among them we encounter again a Gāyatrī to the elephant-headed Vināyaka¹⁴ and also one to Gaurī (referred to as Girisutā), Skanda (referred to as Kārttikeya), Brahmā (seated on a lotus), and other Gāyatrīs indicating a late origin of this part of the text. We can conclude that the historical basis of these two mantras in the *Maitrāyaṇīyasamhitā* is pretty unstable as well. Not everything that is found in the Vedas is necessarily old.

3 The second stage of the five-staged career

The path of the Pāśupata ascetic is divided by the commentator Kauṇḍinya—but notably not by the *Pāśupatasūtra* itself (Bisschop 2014)—into five successive stages, which each have their own rules and sets of behavior:

1. In the first stage the ascetic resides in a temple and worships God by laughing, dancing, singing, bellowing like a bull, paying homage, and muttering mantras. He bathes in ashes at sunset, noon, and sundown.
2. In the second stage he goes out into the world and acts under a disguise, without

¹²Varenne (1960:2.119–20) contains a concordance of the different versions. In his edition of the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* Varenne follows the Āndhra recension.

¹³Compare the case of the adoption of Pāśupata material in another Vedic source, the *Atharvavedapariśiṣṭa* (Bisschop and Griffiths 2003).

¹⁴MaiS 2.9.1 (vol. 2, p. 120, l. 13–p. 121, l. 1): *tatkarātāya vidmahe hastimukhāya dhīmahi, tan no dantī pracodayāt*.

showing that he is actually a Pāśupata. He behaves like a madman, pretends to be crippled or asleep, and acts indecently.

3. In the third stage the Pāśupata withdraws to a cave or a deserted house, where he lives on alms and contemplates Rudra all the time.
4. In the fourth stage he goes to a cremation ground and lives on whatever he may find. He does not leave the cremation ground but dies there.
5. Following his death, the soul enters the fifth and final stage, in which he experiences the end of all suffering, is fully joined with Rudra, and obtains all qualities of Rudra. Final release is provided by the grace of God.

One of the most notorious practices of the Pāśupatas is their ritually sanctioned behavior during the second stage. In this stage the Pāśupata is required to behave in an improper manner, in order to provoke accusations about his indecent behavior from the general public. Here it is important to bear in mind that these accusations are ultimately considered to be false, for the Pāśupata is acting in accordance with a vow set by Lord Paśupati himself. It is only that the general public does not realize this. The accusations trigger an exchange of karma. In plain words: the good karma of the accuser is transferred to the Pāśupata ascetic, while the bad karma of the ascetic is transferred to the accuser.¹⁵ Here is the description of the logic as explained in the *Pāśupatasūtra* itself:

avyaktalingī | vyaktācāraḥ | avamataḥ | sarvabhūteṣu | paribhūyamānaś caret | apahatapāpmā | pareṣāṃ parivādāt | pāpam ca tebhyo dadāti | sukrtaṃ ca teṣāṃ ādatte | (PāSū 3.1–9)

“Without displaying his sectarian marks, acting openly, despised, among all beings he should wander while undergoing scorn. His evil is destroyed because of the censure of others. And he gives (his) evil to them. And he takes the merit of their good deeds from them.”

The Sūtra next gives a description of the ascetic’s manner of behavior in this stage:

tasmāt | pretavac caret | krātheta vā | spandeta vā | manteta vā | śrṅgāreta vā | api tat kuryāt | api tad bhāset | yena paribhavaṃ gacchet | paribhūyamāno hi vidvān kṛtsnatapā bhavati | (PāSū 3.10–9)

“Therefore, he should wander like a ghost, or he should snore, or he should tremble, or he should limp, or he should pretend to be love-struck. He should do that, he should say that, whereby he undergoes scorn. For the wise one who undergoes scorn completes his asceticism.”¹⁶

The first scholar to have drawn attention to this ritually sanctioned behavior is Daniel Ingalls in a famous article “Cynics and Pāśupatas: The seeking of dishonor” (Ingalls 1962). As the title of the article indicates, Ingalls drew attention to similarities with some of the practices and notions of the Greek Cynics, who likewise sought public censure. In the final part he looked for the origins of these practices and speculated that “the Pāśupata’s ‘playing

¹⁵On the notion of transfer of merit, see Hara 1994 and Wezler 1997.

¹⁶I have translated this passage in accordance with Kaunḍīnya’s interpretation of the verbs involved.

the lecher,’ ‘acting improperly,’ ‘speaking improperly’” might have its origins in a beast vow. He drew particular attention to the *govrata* in the *Jaiminīya-Brahmaṇa*, which “specifies that the enactor of the bull-vow should have sexual congress in defiance of all human laws, that is, indiscriminately with forbidden members of his family as well as others” and to the *govrata* in the second *sarga* of Kālidāsa’s *Raghuvamśa*, where king Dilīpa follows the *govrata* “by imitating exactly the movements of a released cow for one month: whenever the cow walked he walked, when she lay down he lay down, when she drank he drank, etc.” (Ingalls 1962:295). While recognizing the similarities in the behavior of the Pāśupata and the Cynic, Ingalls refrained from seeing a genetic relation between the two. Rather, in his view, they would have constituted two parallel cults, both springing from a similar source, which he identified as shamanic in nature.

The subject was taken up again more recently by Thomas Oberlies (2000) and Diwakar Acharya (2013). Oberlies identified an important passage in the *Taittirīyabrahmaṇa* (TaiBr 2.3.9.9), which must have provided the model for the Sūtras describing the actions meant to trigger the abuse. TaiBr 2.3.9.9 likewise involves attracting the abuse of others and transferring one’s own bad karma to others. On the other hand, it does not mention the acquiring of the merit of the good deeds of others. Oberlies took this practice to be part of a set of *Kriegslisten*, ‘tricks of war’ meant to bring victory to the one who feigns this weird behavior.¹⁷

Acharya (2013) elaborated further on Oberlies’s findings and reconstructed an archaic form of this part of the Sūtra. This form of the text led him to conclude that in origin it must have described a bull vow (*govrata*), thus again taking up Ingalls’ earlier suggestion. In Acharya’s reconstruction, the archaic form of the Sūtras quoted above would have been as follows (this is based on the parallel with TaiBr 2.3.9.9):

**preva caret | krātheteva | spandeteva | manṭeteva | śṛṅgāyeteva |*

“(The ascetic) should enact thrashing about, he should enact injuring (others), he should enact kicking or twitching of his limbs, he should enact getting agitated/hobbling, he should enact butting.” (Acharya 2013:110)

These actions perfectly describe the behavior of a bull. In the final part of his article, Acharya turned to a passage in the *Pāśupatasūtra*, which teaches that Indra was the first to perform the Pāśupata vow:

indro vā agre asureṣu pāśupatam acarat | sa teṣāṃ iṣṭāpūrtam ādatta | māyayā sukr̥tayā samavindata | (PāSū 4.10–2)

“Indra verily, in the beginning, observed the Pāśupata (vow) among the Asuras. He took from them the merit of the sacrificial acts and of the charities (*iṣṭāpūrta*).¹⁸ He acquired (it) with well-performed magic (*māyā*).”

The same passage was also discussed by Oberlies in relation to Indra’s role as the Vedic warrior deity par excellence. Acharya put two and two together and argued that there must

¹⁷One is reminded of the Knights who say Ni in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, striking terror among the opposing armies by uttering and repeating the sacred syllable Ni.

¹⁸I follow Acharya’s translation of *iṣṭāpūrta*. For a study of the development of the concept, see Sakamoto-Gotō 2000.

have been some Vedic *gorrata* that was performed by Indra. He found evidence for this in an Atharvavedic hymn (*Śaunakasamhitā* 4.11, *Paippalādasamhitā* 3.25), dedicated to the celestial ox (*anaḍutsūkta*): “This hymn speaks about the vow of the draft-ox and relates that Indra assumed the form of a draft-ox and observed ‘the vow’ for the gods” (Acharya 2013:122).

The hymn itself alludes to a myth told in *anuvāka* 6 of book 17 of the *Paippalādasamhitā*. This *anuvāka*, composed not in verse but in prose form, is concerned with the vow of the ox (*anaḍudvrata*). It tells how Indra fashioned the *vajra* to slay Vṛtra and how he observed the vow of the ox. The text concludes with a praise of the vow of the ox. In the conclusion of his article, Acharya argued that the vow of the ox described there must have lain at the basis of the Pāsupata observance.

All of this is very tempting and suggestive, but one would like to see hard proof. In the remainder of this paper I will discuss a passage that, I think, clinches the argument that the *Pāsupatasūtra* indeed reworked the *anaḍudvrata* into the *pāsupatavrata*.

4 The *anaḍudvrata* in *Paippalādasamhitā* 17.27–43

Acharya only dealt with PaiS 17.27–9, but if we look a little further we find a matching parallel precisely for the words quoted earlier about Indra’s performance of the vow in the past. This has major implications for the connection between the two texts and it is worth quoting in full. In PaiS 17.35 we are introduced to a character called Āhīnas Āśvatthi:¹⁹

athāhīnā āśvatthir abravān na tād brāhmaṇaṃ nindāni yād enam aśṛṇon ned iṣṭāpūrtena vi bhavānīti || (PaiS 17.35.1)²⁰

“Then Āhīnas Āśvatthi said: ‘As such, I will not censure (this) brahmin, since he has heard it, lest I should be deprived of the merit of the sacrificial acts and charities.’”²¹

kṛtyā vā eṣā manusyeṣu carati yad anaḍvān yad anaḍudvratī || (PaiS 17.35.2)

“This is indeed witchcraft: he performs (it) among human beings, if he is an ox, if he observes the vow of the ox.”

This passage remains somewhat obscure, but it seems to teach that by being an ox, that is by observing the vow of the ox, among human beings, one performs witchcraft. Alternatively, one might translate: “This is indeed witchcraft: if, being an ox, he performs (it) among human beings, if he observes the vow of the ox.” It may hint at a distinction between divine *māyā* and human *kṛtyā*.²² Next follows a statement about the appropriation of another person’s merit:

ya evaṃ viduṣo (?)sādhu kīrtayatiṣṭam evāśya pūrtam māyāṃ saṃ vṛṇkte || (PaiS 17.35.3)

“He completely appropriates the merit of the sacrificial acts of him who speaks ill of the one who knows thus, (he appropriates) the merit of the charities of him, the magic power.”

¹⁹Not much is known about him. An Āhīnas Āśvatthi features in a few Brāhmaṇa passages, where he is associated with the legend of Keśin Dalbhya (Koskikallio 1999:307–19): JaiBr 1.285, JaiBr 2.100, JaiBr 2.122, and TaiBr 3.10.9.10.

²⁰All quotations of PaiS 17.35 are from Umberto Selva’s draft critical edition. The translation is my own.

²¹For the construction *yāt . . . tāt*, with special reference to this very passage, see Bhattacharya 2004.

²²On *kṛtyā*, see Gonda 1980:235–6 and Goudriaan 1986:450–6.

Following this is the passage that is of central importance to our purposes:

*indro vāgre asureṣṣu anaḍudvratam acarat | teṣām iṣṭam pūrtam māyām *sam *avṛiktā-
nindan hy enam ||* (PaiS 17.35.4)

“Indra verily, in the beginning, performed the vow of the ox among the Asuras. He completely appropriated their merit of the sacrificial acts, the merit of the charities (and) the magic power, for they censured him.”

For a start, there can be little doubt that PaiS 17.35.4 lies at the basis of PāSū 4.10–2:

*indro vā agre asureṣu pāśupatam acarat | sa teṣām iṣṭāpūrtam ādatta | māyayā sukrṭayā
samavindata |*

“Indra verily, in the beginning, observed the Pāśupata (vow) among the Asuras. He took their merit of the sacrificial acts and the charities (*iṣṭāpūrta*). He acquired (it) with well-performed magic (*māyā*).”

The wording is very close, with only a few small but highly significant changes. Most importantly, the key term *anaḍudvratā*, which forms the subject of *anuvāka* 6 of the *Paippalādasamhitā*, has been changed to *pāśupata*. This turns the *anaḍudvratā* into the *pāśupata-vrata*.

The last part of the passage presents several problems and seems to be—at least partly—corrupt. Instead of the *Pāśupatasūtra*’s *māyayā sukrṭayā samavindata* “he acquired (it) with well-performed magic,” the *Paippalādasamhitā* has *māyām samvṛikta*. Bhattacharya’s edition reads an augmentless *saṃ vṛikta*, which may be corrected to **sam *avṛikta*, as has been done by Selva in his edition. There is, however, an additional problem, which becomes particularly clear when we compare the text with the parallel in the *Pāśupatasūtra*. Instead of the instrumental *māyayā*, the *Paippalādasamhitā* has an accusative *māyām*. This makes it the object instead of the instrument of acquiring, thus putting it on a par with *iṣṭa* and *pūrta*. The same is the case in the preceding line, where it is said: *ya evaṃ viduṣo (?)sādhu kṛtayisṣyatīṣṭam evāsyā pūrtam māyām saṃ vṛikte*. Although the acquiring of another person’s magic power (*māyā*) is just conceivable, it does not appear to me very likely. After all, it is Indra himself who performs *māyā* by carrying out the vow of the ox. The theme of Indra’s *māyā* is a constant one in Vedic literature (see, e.g., Oertel 1905, Gonda 1965, Goudriaan 1978:5–15). The instrumental is also suggested by the text’s earlier statement that the performance of the vow among human beings is *kṛtyā* (witchcraft), which may be regarded as the human equivalent of *māyā*. Moreover, *iṣṭa* and *pūrta* form a natural pair, well-documented by the study of Sakamoto-Gotō (2000), and they are never put on a par with *māyā*. The instrumental *māyayā* appears more plausible in this context and it is quite conceivable that the *ya* has simply been dropped in the transmission. If so, the *Pāśupatasūtra* would provide important testimony to an earlier reading that has gone lost in the transmission of the *Paippalādasamhitā*.²³

The conjecture adopted in the last part of the sentence *anindan hy enam* is inspired by the reading of the *Pāśupatasūtra* as well. Bhattacharya’s *editio princeps* (Bhattacharya 2011) reads

²³An alternative solution would be to postulate an adverb *māyām* ‘magically’ or, as Werner Knobl suggested to me at the workshop, to assume a Vedic instrumental *māyā* and emend *māyā*.

anindram hy enam, which can hardly be made sense of syntactically. There is, however, a parallel for this passage in PāSū 4.12, which reads: *nindā hy eṣānindā tasmāt* “for this censure is without censure, therefore.” There can be no doubt that the two passages are related. It is quite plausible that the reading *anindram* in the *Paippalādasamhitā* manuscripts arose under the influence of Indra who is the subject in the preceding part. Removing the *repha* in *anindram* we get *anindan hy enam*, “for they censured him,” thus providing us with the reason why Indra managed to secure the *iṣṭāpūrta* from the Asuras. The phrase has been changed in the *Pāśupatasūtra*, where the censure undergone by the ascetic as he is performing the observance is considered to be non-censure in reality. In other words, the Pāśupata ascetic is regarded to be beyond reproach and manifests his true asceticism by undergoing undeserved, that is to say unreal, censure.

5 Conclusion

What can we learn from this passage? First of all, it shows that Acharya’s postulation that “the *Pāśupatasūtra* statement that Indra observed the Pāśupata vow while he was living among the Asuras” alludes to “the myth narrated in PaiS 17.27–9” (Acharya 2013:124) is correct. On the other hand, his hypothesis that it was the author of the *Pāśupatasūtra* who came up with the idea that Indra was the first to observe the vow and that in this way Indra “was downgraded to the rank of the first observer of this vow” (Acharya 2013:127) needs to be reconsidered. Yes, the *Pāśupatasūtra* makes him the first performer of the Pāśupata vow, but the line about Indra finds its origin in the statement of the *Paippalādasamhitā* that Indra was the first observer of the vow of the ox. In the Vedic context he is not downgraded, but rather presented as the supreme model to follow. Devotion to another more ultimate deity, as in the case of the *Pāśupatasūtra*, does not play a role here.

The *Paippalādasamhitā* thus turns out to be even more relevant than was already estimated by Acharya. It also fits into the broader connections that existed between the Atharvaveda and Pāśupata traditions, which remained over a long period of time, as has been argued in Bisschop and Griffiths 2003. What is lacking in the *Paippalādasamhitā*’s narrative about the origins of the vow concerns the precise nature of the actions of the observer of the vow. For this, the author of the *Pāśupatasūtra* turned to TaiBr 2.3.9.9, a passage first identified by Oberlies. The author of the *sūtra* thus appears to have drawn upon two Vedic sources and, combining them, turned them into something new and truly unheard of before. It is here that the vow has become the “Pāśupata vow.”

Abbreviations

JaiBr = Vira, Raghu, and Lokesh Chandra (eds.). 1954. *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa of the Sāmaveda*.

Nagpur: International Academy of Indian Culture.

MaiS = Schroeder, Leopold von (ed.). 1881–6. *Māitrāyaṇīya Samhitā: Die Samhitā der Māitrāyaṇīya-Çākhā*. 4 vols. Leipzig: Brockhaus.

PaiS = Selva, Umberto. In preparation. *The Paippalādasamhitā of the Atharvaveda: Book 17. A New Critical Edition with Translation and Commentary*.

- PāSū = Sastri, R. Ananthakrishna (ed.). 1940. *Pasupata Sutras with Pancharthabhasya of Kaundinya*. Trivandrum: Oriental Manuscript Library of the University of Travancore.
- TaiĀ = Phaḍake, Bābā Śāstrī (ed.). 1927. *Kṛṣṇayajurvedīyaṃ Taittirīyāranyakam, Śrīmatśāyanācāryaviracitabhāṣyasametam*. 2 vols. Poona: Ānandāśramasamudraṇālaya.
- TaiBr = Goḍābole, Nārāyaṇa Śāstrī (ed.). 1898. *Kṛṣṇayajurvedīyaṃ Taittirīyabrāhmaṇam, Śrīmatśāyanācāryaviracitabhāṣyasametam*. 3 vols. Poona: Ānandāśramasamudraṇālaya.

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