

SHAMANISM IN THE VEDA: THE *KEŚIN*-HYMN (10.136), THE JOURNEY TO HEAVEN OF *VASIṢṬHA* (RV.7.88) AND THE *MAHĀVRĀTA*-RITUAL

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1. Introduction

The Ṛgveda (RV) in general is taken as a source of history of religion, in which almost any early and "primitive" religious forms can be found. The more amazing fact is that exactly the phenomenon of shamanism with its characteristic forms and manifestations - relying on manuals¹ and relevant papers² - is only showing up in a relatively late hymn of the 10th Maṇḍala (10.136). Beside this hymn stands the rather late³ complex of AV., Kāṇḍa 15, dedicated to the *vrātya*⁴, whose appearance and features can be called shamanistic too and who is probably a link to the later *yogin*⁵.

The discussion about the phenomenon "shamanism"⁶ and on the problems which "catalogue of criterion" should be acknowledged or which are its constituent elements is rather a religio-historical, phenomenological and problem and one of definition⁷, each of which is impossible to deal with extensively in this paper⁸.

¹ GONDA (1978), 109; on shamanism in the tribe religions of northeastern India cf. FÜRER-HAIMENDORF (1964), 272ff.

² RUBEN (1939), OGUIBENINE (1968). For further literature cp. GONDA (1965), 266 and 271f. The example of shamanism in South-India presented in HARPER (1957) is without value in spite of the title, because it does not deal with a shaman but with a medium answering questions in trance. Beside the trance there is no other connection with the phenomenon of shamanism.

³ Cp. for instance GONDA (1975), 305f.; HEESTERMAN (1962), 2f.

⁴ For literatur on *vrātya* see GONDA (1975), 305f., note 65.

⁵ HEESTERMAN (1962), 36, note 103, considers just the "*shamanizing techniques*" as connecting elements between the two types.

⁶ Cp. SCHRÖDER (1955), VAJDA (1959), RÄNK (1967).

⁷ See the more historical Definition of FINDEISEN (1983), 21: "*Der Schamane ist [...] ein zum Besessenheitsmagier gewordener jungpaläolithischer Magier*". Rather geographical and phenomenological is ELIADE (1975), 14: "*Der Schamanismus strictu sensu ist ein par excellence sibirisches und zentralasiatisches Phänomen*" and: "*Schamanismus = Technik der Ekstase*". For a more critical position, especially concerning the historical classification cp. VAJDA (1959).

⁸ Reference should be made to the thesis of MOTZKI (1977) who on 17-50 presents several definitions of the term "shamanism" (OHLMARKS, VAJDA, HERMANN, SCHMIDT, LOMMEL, ELIADE, FINDEISEN, SCHRÖDER, de HEUSCH, LEWIS, HULTKRANTZ).

Despite all the religio-historical debates concerning the temporal⁹ and local genesis and structure of shamanism, it seems to be legitimate to consider a certain phenomenon as "shamanistic" if several characteristic features of shamanism can be proved¹⁰, without immediately thinking of original shamanism or the prototype of a shaman¹¹.

As the most important and most essential features of shamanism are here considered - admittedly arbitrarily -¹²:

1. Ecstasy¹³ and its related techniques, sometimes achieved by means of intoxicating drugs.

2. Several forms and rites of initiation, especially ritual killing or / and dismemberment and a following "rebirth".

3. Journey to heaven or to the yonder world¹⁴.

4. The special knowledge of the shaman, often acquired on his journey to the world beyond. This can also be knowledge of curing diseases.

5. The existence and appearance of assistant spirits (often theriomorphic), who appoint the shaman or accompany him on his journey and protect him.

6. Certain cosmological conceptions, such as cosmocentric symbols (*axis mundi*: the world-tree or world-pillar, along which several levels of worlds are arranged).

⁹ This problem does not affect our subject, because it is dealing with periods of time definitely before the RV.

¹⁰ It seems to be problematic in this sense when OGUIBENINE (1968) calls the concept of cosmocentric tree or pillar in the RV a "*symbolisme du type chamanique*". This kind of symbolism is found with too many peoples as to be interpreted as "shamanistic" in isolation from other features.

¹¹ That means escaping the danger to cover over the boundaries of the phenomenon shamanism, which ELIADE (1975), 16, note 1, is warning of. Cp. also the analysis in MOTZKI (1977), 51ff.

¹² The following list avoids deliberately a valuation of the particular items quite usual in the discussion of the phenomenon of shamanism. That is why oppositional or controversial terms as "white shamanism" vs. "black shamanism" (P.W. SCHMIDT vs. ELIADE: vgl. SCHRÖDER (1955), 298ff.), ecstasy vs. trance with the psychologically normal human being vs. hysteria with psychologically ill human being (VAJDA (1959), 458) or a geographical restriction on Siberia an north-eastern Asia (VAJDA (1959), 458) also are not taken into consideration. Examples of shamanism are mostly taken from ELIADE (1975), still the most extensive monography on the phenomenon.

¹³ This is probably one of the most prominent features; cp. the list in MOTZKI (1977), 57.

¹⁴ For the central interpretation presented in this paper (except the excursions) only the journey to heaven is in question (for distinctive and controversial interpretations journey to the yonder world vs. journey to heaven see SCHRÖDER (1955), 300f.).

7. The shaman uses many typical instruments and symbols, and has a distinct appearance. The most important among his instruments is the drum.

8. The transformation into an animal (theriomorphism) on his journey to heaven or to the yonder world.

2. RV.10.136.

RUBEN¹⁵ considers as the constituting element of shamanism the "*charakteristische Götterschau*", in which the shaman "*oder vielmehr eine seiner Seelen, zu den Göttern in deren Himmel hingeht*". He finds this kind of typical journey to heaven in ecstasy of the shaman - at last two characteristic features of shamanism - in RV.10.136¹⁶.

RUBEN¹⁷ was right in emphasizing the shamanistic elements in this hymn, although - in my opinion - not to a sufficient extent, for he fails to point out the linking to later vedic ritual, which shall be discussed below. For that reason in the following I shall discuss once again RV.10. 136.

As is well known, the hymn deals with a long-haired (*keśin*¹⁸) *mūni*, who was - following HAUER - a wild ecstatic, a shamanistic left-over from a period prior to the Vedic with its sacrifices¹⁹. What - according to HAUER - makes the difference between this *mūni* as "*non-brahmanic*" and other ascetics and ecstatics in the RV is the lack of sacrificial or ritual expressions and the lack of the word *tápas*²⁰. The term *mūni* probably characterizes him as an ascetic submitting himself to a vow of taciturnity²¹; in the *dīkṣā* of later periods also, showing many other shamanistic

¹⁵ RUBEN (1939), 166. For RUBEN's conception of shamanism (origin in the range of palaeolithic hunting cultures, journey of the soul, theriomorphism, psychopathological predisposition of the shaman) see RUBEN (1947), 20ff. (not very clear).

¹⁶ RUBEN (1939), 167.

¹⁷ Before and after him others, too (OLDENBERG, HAUER, ELIADE).

¹⁸ For this timeless hairstyle - also of the *Śiva-Saṃnyāsīn* - see ARBMANN (1922), 298f. For *keśin* in later ritual (*rājasūya*) cp. HEESTERMAN (1957), 212ff. (Kap.XXVII); for RV.10.136., esp. 217f. It is a remarkable fact that *Yāska* has a section on the *keśin*, too, in which he cites and explains RV.10.136.1. (N.12.26.).

¹⁹ HAUER (1922), 169. "*Wildestatiker urältester Zeit, der die Entwicklung vom Zauberer zum Opferpriester nicht mitmachte, sondern auf einer Seitenlinie sein Schamanentum, seine opferfreie ekstatische Praxis weiterbildete.*"

²⁰ loc.cit.; DEUSSEN (1922), 62, and OLDENBERG (1923), 40ff.

²¹ Cp. MAYRHOFER (1956 - 76), Vol.II, col.654f., s.v.: a connection with ie. **men-* must be excluded because of the existing *vṛddhi-* and *guna-*formations OIA. *mauná* and Pāli *mona* and because of the possibility of connecting the word with other IE. equivalents.

characteristics (see below), the adept has to remain taciturn²². Beside that indirect concluded shamanistic element of silence there are still - admittedly not by all means conclusive - clues for an initiation-ritual, or at least for shamanistic practices leading to ecstasy. In the hymn appears a nude²³, loam-smearred²⁴ ascetic²⁵. This nudity is interesting in two respects. One is that the *mūni* is distinguished hereby (and also by his hairstyle) from the members of other social or religious groups²⁶; on the other hand the nudity is typical for a certain shamanistic appearance²⁷.

Then the *mūnis* are²⁸ described in 2. as possessed by the gods, rising into the air²⁹. In this condition they are *strictu sensu* ecstasies, for during their journey to heaven they are staying outside of their bodies³⁰.

The *mūni* is intoxicated (*ūnmadita*); together with *Rudra* he drinks a poison. The procedure of production of which and the acting persons are described in detail³¹. That poison is a "narcotic drink, by means of which he [the muni] puts himself into an ecstatic state"³². The term "poison" (*viṣā*) signifies on one side probably the supernatural skills of the *mūni*,

22 The meaning of the taciturnity is, to evolve a increasement of ascetic energy (cp. RENO (1949), 18b., OLDENBERG (1923), 411f., GONDA (1978), 35 and 121. On the ritual silence in general see GONDA (1980), 78f. Similarly in the rain-magic of RV.7.103. 1., the frogs are compared with *brāhmaṇas* speaking again after having kept silence for one year according to their vow (*vratacārin*); for an interpretation of the hymn in direct connection with the *dīkṣā* see HAUER (1922), 68ff., in general the translation of THIEME (1964), 64. Silence as a part of an initial rite is quite common; cp. the old-scandinavian god *Víðarr*, whose taciturnity ((*Snorra-Edda*, *Gylfaginning* 28: *enn þeggli áss*, "the taciturn Ase") is interpreted by de VRIES (1956/57) II, 276, as "initiation-rite in order to prepare the revenge" ("*Initiationsritus zur Vorbereitung der Rache*") of his father *Óðinn* in the decisive final fight against the *Fenris*-wolf.

23 Cf. GELDNER, note.2.

24 Cf. ARBMANN (1922), 298. For smearing the body of the initiat with ashes or chalk see ELIADE (1975), 74.

25 ... *vātaraśanāḥ piśāṅgā vasate ... mālā ...* ("... the wind-girded ones wear brown mud ..."). *Piśāṅgā[h] mālā[h]* do not necessarily mean "die safrangelben Gewänder des späteren Yogin", as HAUER (1922), 170, and GELDNER, note 2b., suggest, but is to be taken literally.

26 Just like the *Digambara*-monk of the Jains was distinguished from a layman and even from a *Svetāmbara*-monk by his nakedness.

27 Cp. ELIADE (1975), 148 and 149: on the ritual girdle of the Escimo-shamans (: *vātaraśana*).

28 In the hymn, there is a change between singular (1., 4.-7.) and plural (2. and 3.).

29 ... *vātasyānu dhrājīm yanti yād devāso ávikṣata* (GELDNER: "... sie gehen dem Zug des Windes nach, wenn die Götter [in sie] hineingefahren sind.") and 5. ... *devēṣito mūniḥ ...* ("... the Muni driven by the gods ...").

30 3. *ūnmaditā mañeyena vātāṃ á tashimā vayām; śáriréd asmākaṃ yūyám mártāso abhí paśyatha* (GELDNER: "Von Verzückung entgeistert haben wir die Winde (als unsere Rosse) bestiegen. Nur unsere Leiber sehst ihr Sterblichen vor euch.")

31 7. *vāyúr asmā ūpāmanthat pināṣṭi smā kunannamā; keśi viśásya pátreṇa yád rudrēṇāpibat sahá* (GELDNER: "Vayu hat ihm (den Trank) angerührt, Kunannamā quetschte (ihn) aus, als der Langhaarige zusammen mit Rudra aus der Schale Gift trankt.")

32 GELDNER on 1a.: "narkotischen Trank, durch den er [der muni] sich in den ekstatischen Zustand versetzt"; also see ARBMAN (1922), 300f.

resisting a substance fatal to a normal human being, and on the other side the choice of the word was quite natural because the whole situation is in the sphere of the ambivalent god *Rudra*, who is causing damage (*viśá*) in addition to having healing³³ abilities³⁴. The important function of the poisonous drink is especially emphasized by its occurrence in embracing position (in 1. and 7.). It seems that the choice of the word *viśá*³⁵ is to indicate the extraordinary position outside of the usual vedic ritual of this intoxicant in opposition to the orthodox *soma*³⁶. There is possibly a hint of an initiating ritual hidden behind the word *viśá*: the adept is suffering a ritual death and is looking down at his body from above in the air (3.)³⁷.

Excursion 1: *Keśín Dārbhya* and *darbha*-grass as an intoxicant

Beside the term *viśá* the text of RV.10.136. does not give any indications of the type of "poison" or of intoxicant. Is it nevertheless possible to speculate about it?

Maybe the younger tradition can help here further. In several passages of the Brāhmaṇas occurs the name *Keśín Dārbhya* or *Dālbhya*³⁸ being a king according to some texts but a *brāhmaṇa* according to others. This confusion of the castes is - presupposing that there exists any connection of this individualized *keśín* with the *keśín* in RV.10.136 - rather understandable in view of the special position of the *keśín* and related religious groups in aryan society³⁹: it was clear that these groups stood outside the original *ordo* of the *varṇas*, but by fitting them into the brahmanic social order it became more difficult to put them into the system; if they were not to be excluded from the community for them as members of a

³³ *Rudra* as the best healer (*bhiśáktama(m)...* *bhiśájāp ...*) in RV.2.33. (cp. GONDA (1978), 86); cp. also 2.33.2. and 12.

³⁴ Cp. HAUER (1927), 324, note 57, who nevertheless is thinking to abstract of a "*kosmische Potenz, die Heil und Unheil wirkt*".

³⁵ There is relatively scarce documentation for this word in the RV (cp. GRASSMANN, Wörterbuch, s.v., whose meaning 1. "Wasser" is following the metaphorizing *Naiganṭhuka* (1.12., Nr.15) and *Yāska*'s explanation of this passage (N.12.24.) (see MAYRHOFER III, s.v.).

³⁶ Although *somá* and its pressing are rather "cultivated", beside the intoxicating and inspiring effect the damaging (OIA. *vṛtrahán* and av. *verəṭrajān*: MACDONELL (1898), 114) and the healing effects are also known (op.cit., 109).

³⁷ For similar rituals cp. ELIADE (1975), 64 (on "*poisonous medicine*" of the north-american Maidu), 134 (the impositionment of careeban shaman-novices), 213, 215 (Siberia) and 381f. on "*ecstasy caused through impositionment by mushrooms*" in central-Asia (iranian influence!). On leaving the body in old Greece cp. RUBEN (1947), 107.

³⁸ MACDONELL / KEITH (1912), 187, s.v. 2. *Keśín Dārbhya*. and SARMA (1968).

³⁹ Like the *vṛātyas* who either totally (cp. HEESTERMAN (1962), 1ff.) or temporally stood outside of the brahmanical social order because of ritual impurity (loc.cit.).

religious group only the highest of the social classes could be considered: *brāhmaṇa* or - in a secularized tradition - *ṣatriya*.

In order to know what the *viśá* of the RV was, one should start with an investigation of the name *dārbhya* (*dālbhya*)⁴⁰: the basic word *darbha* oder *dalbha* does not occur as a *nomen personae* in Vedic literature. It means a sort of grass used within the sacrifice⁴¹. The older vedic literature⁴², however, attributes to it characteristics which would well qualify it as a narcotic or as an intoxicant.

In the RV *darbhá* is a *hapax legomenon*⁴³. In 1.191.3. are numbered - similar in style to the AV⁴⁴ - grasses, which are supposed to protect against poisonous creatures⁴⁵: *śarāsaḥ kúśarāso darbhāsaḥ śairyā utá; mauñjá adṛṣṭhā vairināḥ sārve sākám ny àlipsata*⁴⁶.

Darbhá -grass works as an antidote against snakes and their poison⁴⁷ in AV.10.4: 2. *darbhāḥ śócís tarūṇakam áśvasya vāraḥ paruśasya vāraḥ; ráthasya bándhuram; 3. áva śveta padá jahi púrveṇa cāpareṇa ca; uda-plutám iva dārváhīnām arasám viśám vār ugrám; ... 13. ... dārvim kárikratam śvitrám darbhéṣv asitám jahi* ("2. *Darbha*-grass, brightness,

⁴⁰ Mostly together with *keśin* occurs *dārbhya*; the other cases are later (cp. MACDONELL / KEITH (1912), 354); KS.10.6. has an alternative form *dālbhi*, taught in *Pāṇini* 4.1.95.

⁴¹ Cf. the survey of GONDA (1985), 52ff., on the characteristic usage of *darbhá*. On descriptions and names of *darbhá* cp. MEULENBELD (1974), 561f.

⁴² ZIMMER (1879), 70 ("ein bestimmtes Buschgras"); MACDONELL / KEITH (1912) I., 340, s.v. VIENNOT (1954), 59 identifies without specifications *darbha* with *cynodon dactylon* and the sometimes as synonym used *kuśa* with *poa cynosuroides*. The older descriptions of the plant, however, seem not to fit to the features VIENNOT presents on p.60: "*graminées ... racines traçantes, nature sucrée des racines les rendant propres à un usage pharmaceutique et tiges qui, bien que généralement assez basses dans le cas du darbha, peuvent dans certaines conditions climatiques atteindre des dimensions identiques.*" In the oldest texts *darbha* is rather explained as a plant, whose roots are reaching deep down into the earth until the (cosmic) ocean, endowed with many leaves and stalks. Also unsatisfying is VIENNOT's explanation for the fact that the *darbha*-grass plays such an excellent role in the ritual, because it was important as fodder for cattle breeding tribes growing in even barren areas (60).

⁴³ The later synonym for *darbhá*, *kuśa*, does not occur in the RV, only *kúśara* (see below).

⁴⁴ It is interesting that the tradition looks upon this hymn as an *upaniṣad* or an esoteric hymn; GELDNER discovers indications to the hymn in AV (i.a. 2.32.3.), GONDA (1975), 142.

⁴⁵ *Sāyaṇa*'s commentary (ad 1.): ... *kecid viśadhārā* ... ("... whatever kind of poison-bearers ...").

⁴⁶ GELDNER: "*Die Rohrpflanzen, die Kuśara's, die Darbhagräser und die Śairya's, die Unsichtbaren, die dem Muñja- und dem Viriṇagräs gleichen (?), alle zusammen sind angeschmiert.*"

⁴⁷ Even in later times *Darbha* and *Dārbhya* preserved a remote connection to snakes: according to AB.5.23 (KB.27.4.). the priests are creeping in the beginning of the sacrifice to the *sadas*-hut (*vsṣp* : *sarpa*) and are "*chanting to the verses of the serpent queen [sarparājñī]*" (KEITH), who - here positively interpreted as the earth (*īyam*) - is described as queen over everything and / or everybody that creeps. At the end of the passage in AB.5.23. there is a piece of advice for an unfortunate *brāhmaṇa* to go into the forest and recite the four *hotṣ* holding a bundle of *darbha*-grass pointing upward in order to get fame. In ChU.1.12.4. (see below) one can find a similar content in *Baka Dālbhya*'s vision. Cp. GONDA (1985), 58.

sprout, horse`s tusk, tusk of the spotted one⁴⁸, fellow⁴⁹ of the chariot: 3. smite off, oh white one, with the front and the back foot, the poison [that is] flowing in the water like wood, the fierce water of the snakes⁵⁰. ... 13. ... smite the whitish [one] making a hood, [smite] the black snake into the *darbha*-grasses⁵¹.")

It is alluded here to the helping and positive side of the grass (as a kind of antidote), whereas - if one follows the interpretation given below that the intoxicating drink in RV.10.136 was made of *darbhá* - the intoxicating effect has led to the name *viśá* denoting a substance doing damage to those who don`t know to use it in the proper way. A hint on the intoxicating effect of the *darbhá*-grass is given in AV. 11.6.15.: *pāñca rājyāni vīrúdhām sómaśreṣṭhāni brūmaḥ; darbhó bhaṅgó yávaḥ sáhas té no muñcantv ámhasaḥ* ("We speak to the five kingdoms⁵² of the plants, who have the soma as their best: *darbha*-grass, hemp, barley, *Saha*⁵³ shall rescue us from torment"). It is stated that the plants resolve plagues (*ámhas*), but the reasons for their choice are different: *yáva* is probably mentioned because of its etymologically derived word-magical power⁵⁴; about *sáha* there is almost no information given elsewhere, but it seems very reasonable that it was chosen for the same reason as *yáva*, by its magical meaning "the powerful" derived from from $\sqrt{\text{sah}}$ "to overcome, conquer, win". For hemp (*bhaṅgá*) and *sóma* it is clear that they are intoxicating, so it is probable that *darbha* belongs to this group, too.

In AV.6.43. *darbhá* appears as repulser of wrath: 1. *ayám darbhó víman-yukaḥ svāya cāranāya*⁵⁵ *ca; manyór vímanyukasyāyám manyuśámāna ucyate*; 2. *ayám yó bhūrimūlaḥ samudrám avatīṣṭhati; darbháh pṛthivyā útthito manyuśámāna ucyate* ("This *darbha*-grass doing away with one`s own wrath and with stranger`s - it is called the wrath-remover⁵⁶, wrath-calmer. 2. That one, with its numerous roots reaching down until the sea,

⁴⁸ *Darbhá* here could be a metaphor for *Paiḍvá* (in 5.): all the attributes fitting - with the exception of the *bándhura ráthasya* (see next note) which is a clear hint to the horse - are also fitting for the plant.

⁴⁹ WHITNEY`s conjecture to *vándhura* is unnecessary, if *bándhura* is accepted as a derivation from $\sqrt{\text{bandh}}$ - (see MAYRHOFER 2, 408, s.v.) or even from *bándhu* (loc.cit., s.v. *bandhulah*); the initial accent is also found in other derivations with this suffix (WACKERNAGEL II,2, 862ff.).

⁵⁰ 3b. can totally be taken as object of *jahi*, and the translation becomes anything else but "mechanical" (WHITNEY).

⁵¹ If one accepts the identification of *darbhá* and *Paiḍvá* in 2. and 3., the acc. here must be translated directional: by hitting the snakes into the powerfull grasses, they will die.

⁵² Or: "the royal between the plants" taking *rājyāni* as a collective neutre plural.

⁵³ Because of the context *sáha* has to be - against BLOOMFIELD`s translation - a plant.

⁵⁴ *yáva* : $\sqrt{\text{yu}}$ "to protect" e.g. in AV.6.30.1., 9.2.13., 9.51.1.; together with a group of other magically effective plants in TĀ.4.22.

⁵⁵ Cp. the translations of WHITNEY and BLOOMFIELD.

⁵⁶ Emendation: ... *vímanyukaś ca* ... (WHITNEY, BLOOMFIELD).

the *darbha*-grass, rising from the terrestrial [regions], is called the wrath-calmer."'). Here the tranquilizing effect is clearly indicated, under whose influence one even feels no anger towards strangers. 2ab. is generally considered as a realistic description; it is however also possible, that this account shows the intoxicating⁵⁷, awareness-heightening effect of the terrestrial *darbha*-grass, intensified to a cosmic level so connecting the cosmic regions, that is the earth (*pr̥thivī*) with the ocean below⁵⁸ and with the sky⁵⁹ above.

There are hints about former intoxication by *darbhá*-grass in younger texts, too⁶⁰. Some of the ritual usages of *darbhá* are certainly due to its spread as the holy grass *kat exochen*. What some of these passages have in common is that the magico-religious function of *darbhá* is difficult to understand but as soon as one tries to interpret them with *darbhá* as the original intoxicant as described by the *viśá* in RV.10.136., they make a certain sense. Some examples are:

Darbhá is identified with *amṛta* "the drink of immortality" (TS.5.6.4.2.)⁶¹. It is described as the fire of the plants (*téjas*) in MS.3.6.3⁶². The yet unexplained connection with the waters and their energy⁶³ could indicate that *darbhá* as an intoxicant was taken mixed with water. The "heat of the waters" could be an indication of an intoxicant causing heat and visions.

Connections with shamanistic symbols is present insofar as *darbha* is wrapped around the sacrificial post (*yūpa*)⁶⁴.

Concerning the *soma*-sacrifice AB.5.23. says ... *yam brāhmaṇam anūcānam yaśo narched iti ha smāhāraṇyaṃ paretya darbhistambān ud-grathya dakṣinato brahmānam upaveśya catur hotṛṇ vyācakṣīta* ... ("... if fame doesn't come to a learned brahman - it is said - he should go away into the forest, pull out a bundle of *darbha*-grass⁶⁵, sit with a brahman on

⁵⁷ In AV.8.7.20. together with *sóma* as a remedy against disease (*yákṣmā*).

⁵⁸ Cp. KLAUS (1986), 62f.

⁵⁹ If the cosmic interpretation is accepted, *pr̥thivyá úthito* should have that sense.

⁶⁰ Cp. GONDA (1985), 54ff.

⁶¹ ... (*yát*); *vá asyá amṛtaṃ yád víryà, tad darbhas* ... ("(what) [is] the ambrosia of her [the earth], what [her strength], that [are] the *darbha*-[grasses] ..."). Cp. op.cit., 59.

⁶² ... *tāsāṃ vá etát téjo yád darbhá* ... (".. of them [the plants] the heat are the *darbha*-[grasses]. ..."); op.cit., 60. also TB.2.7.9.: .. *átho apám vá etát téjo várcaḥ, yád darbháḥ, yád darbhapuñjilaḥ paváyati, apám evainaṃ téjasā várcasābhīṣīcati*. (".. and this fire, the energy of the waters are the *darbha*-[grasses]; if one cleanses with bunches of *darbha*, then one sprinkles it with the fire, the energy of the waters"), similar KS.30.10.; in KS.9.16 ... *agnír vaí darbhistambó* ... it is identified with *agni* (op.cit., 73).

⁶³ op.cit., 60f.

⁶⁴ op.cit., 74.

⁶⁵ KEITH translated *ud-√grath-* with "gather [a bunch of *Darbha* grass], points upward, ...".

the left side, and visualize [and recitate⁶⁶] the four hotṛ-priests ...")⁶⁷. The form of citation and the past tense (*iti ha smāha*⁶⁸) seems to indicate a custom handed down from former times, maybe not quite usual in these days. It is striking that the *brahman* goes into the forest, allowing the conclusion of ascetic or esoteric practices⁶⁹. Thereby he receives secret knowledge⁷⁰, the four *hotṛs*⁷¹ - like the adept in a shamanistic *séance*. The *darbha*-grass at first glance is without any obvious function and seems to have only symbolic value. If, however, we assume that it was originally used as an intoxicant, we can understand why it stands here. A similar intoxicating usage of *darbha*-grass is found in the *dīkṣā*: the *yajamāna* is purified with *darbha*-grass; then he is led into the initiation-hut, where shamanistic practices take place⁷² (see below).

A question that still has to be answered is how the *darbha*-grass was used or taken. An indication - again deprived of its original function - is found in AB.7.33.: instead of drinking the usual *soma*, the *yajamāna* in the *rājasūya* drinks from a cup into which two *darbha*-shoots are thrown⁷³. The fact that there are several traits here reminiscent of shamanism makes it all the more possible that this could be a fragmentary relic of an original initiation-rite, where the adept took an intoxicant; for it is striking that in the *rājasūya* as a whole there are still other features reminding us of shamanism: after the drinking from this cup comes the *Keśavapanīya*-

⁶⁶ KEITH, p.248, note 2: "expound"; our translation takes the more original meaning of √cakṣ-, especially because there are other legends about the origin of that kind of sacrificial formulas being visualized by the gods (cp. HILLEBRANDT (1897), 165); cp. also the mentioning of the snake-queen (supra), who visualizes a *mantra* (... *saitaṃ mantram apaśyad* ...).

⁶⁷ Cp. also KS.9.16., where *darbhá* means *agní*; GONDA (1085), 73.

⁶⁸ For that usage of *sma ha* + present tense of perfect cp. DELBRÜCK (1888), 502f.

⁶⁹ See the correspondence to the *tīrtha* of *Darbhi* in the MBh., where *brāhmaṇas* are initiated by observances, formulas and bathing (see below).

⁷⁰ ... *tad yac catur hotṛṇ vyācakṣīta devānām eva tad yajñīyaṃ guhyaṃ nāma prakāśaṃ gamayati* ... ("... when he visualizes the four hotṛs [and recitates them], he has the secret sacrificial names of the gods appear ...").

⁷¹ Cp. AB.5.25.

⁷² AB.1.3. ... *ekaviṃśatyā darbhapīñjūlaiḥ pāvayanti; śuddham evainaṃ tatpūtaṃ dīkṣyanti; dīkṣitavimitaṃ prapādayanti* ... ("... with twenty-one handfull of *darbha*-grass they [the priests] purify him [the *yajamāna*]; this pure one, purified by that [ritual], they consecrate; they lead him to the consecration-hut ...").

⁷³ *tad yatraitāṃś camasān unnayeyus tad etaṃ yajamānacamasam unnayet tasmīn dve darbhataruṇake prāste syātāṃ* ... ("When they [the priests] fill up this cup [with *soma*], he [the *yajamāna*] fills up the cup of the *yajamāna* and into it should be thrown two *darbha*-shoots ..."). For the "regular" form described in the Sūtras cp. HILLEBRANDT (1897), 146f. and HEESTERMAN (1957), 182f. See the connections to the waters (above).

ceremony and between these two parts the king is not allowed to shave or to cut his hair⁷⁴ (observances).

The intoxication with *darbha*-grass seems to have been pushed into the background by the *soma*-ritual through its connections with unorthodox, non-brahmanical circles, and has been reduced to a purely ritual accessory. That practice had been common to a greater extent in former times - as can be shown by traces in the literature, e.g. probably in RV.10.136. Such an originally important and active function could have led to the ritual reality, with *darbha* becoming the "sacred grass", *kat exochen*.

Now let us go back to the "patronymica" derived from *darbhá*: the earliest appearance is RV.5.61.17. The *itihāsa*-tradition offers a legend for this hymn. The name of *Dārbhyá*, however, is only used in the introduction of the story and does not occur later⁷⁵, so that this *itihāsa* does not help to explain the name in the RV-hymn⁷⁶. In any case, stanzas 18. and 19. belong to 17.⁷⁷ and give the first name *Ráthavīti*⁷⁸ for this *Dārbhyá*. It is emphasized as a remarkable fact⁷⁹ that he lives in the mountains⁸⁰ like an ascetic and at the banks of a river⁸¹ / of rivers⁸², just as the hermits of the younger tradition live near fords. There could be a connection with the description of a *tīrtha* in *Kurukṣetra* in the MBh., which is said to have been founded by a *rṣi* of the past, *Darbhi*⁸³ (sic!). Through observances and bathing one becomes a *brāhmaṇa* in this place⁸⁴.

⁷⁴ HEESTERMAN (1957), 212; in general the *darbha*-grass is supposed to help against evil when somebody is getting cut his hairs (GONDA (1085), 82f.). Does this refer to *Keśin* (*Dārbhya*)?

⁷⁵ SIEG (1902), 51f.

⁷⁶ Even SIEG (1902), 62, has no explanation.

⁷⁷ 17. *etāṃ me stómam ūrnye dārbhyāya pārá vaha; gíro devi rathír iva* 18. *utá me vocatād iti sutásome ráthavitau; ná kámo ápa veti me* 19. *eṣá kṣeti ráthavitir maghāvā gómatír ánu; párvateṣv ápasṭaḥ* ("17. Bring my homage away to *Dārbhya*, o night; the songs, o goddess, like the driver of the cart. 18. And speak for me so [having come] to *Rathiviti* who has pressed soma: "My desire doesn't turn away." 19. This generous *Rathaviti* lives along the *Gomati*-streams, retired into the mountains.")

⁷⁸ Only here (see MACDONELL / KEITH (1912) II, 106, s.v.).

⁷⁹ So the otherwise somewhat isolated descriptive stanza 19. makes sense.

⁸⁰ MACDONELL / KEITH, loc.cit.: "probably the *Himālayas*"; cp. also *Sāyana*'s commentary.

⁸¹ *Sāyana* explains: *tīre*.

⁸² MACDONELL / KEITH (1912) I, 238, s.v. *Gomati*: the *Gumti* or her four upper branches (plural!) in *Kurukṣetra*. This could belong to the story in the MBh. (see below).

⁸³ MBh.3.81.133ff.: 136. *samudrās cāpi catvāraḥ samānitās ca darbhīnā; yeṣu snāto naravyāghra na durgatim avāpnuyāt; phalāni goṣahasrāṇāṃ catuṣṇāṃ vindate ca saḥ* ("And by *Darbhi* the four confluences are led together; who is taking a bath in these, o tiger of mankind, that one can not come to disaster, and he finds the fruits of the four thousands of cows [maetaphor for the rivers or waters]."). The different and strange form of the name is probably a mistaken reduction of the "patronymikon" *Dārbhya* (reduction of *vṛddhi* and removal of a "suffix" -a, cp. WACKERNAGEL / DEBRUN-NER, 128, § 38h) occurring twice in the *Vana*(-*Aranyaka*)-*Parva*.

⁸⁴ MBh.3.81.133. *avatīrṇaṃ ca tatraiva tīrthaṃ kurukulodvaha; viprāṇāṃ anukampārthaṃ darbhīnā nirmitaṃ purā* 134. *vratopanayanābhyāṃ vā upavāsena vā dvijaḥ; kriyāmantrais ca samyukto*

If one checks the younger texts on *Keśin Dārbhya* one can clearly see that he is a "somewhat enigmatic figure"⁸⁵, for the passages give strange, sometimes contradictory information about him. However, they can be understood, if one keeps in mind the connections to the *keśin*-hymn in the RV.

It is striking that in several texts *Keśin Dārbhya* is said to have performed a *dīksā*, a ceremony with clearly evident shamanistic features:

JB.2.53. *Keśi ha dārbhyo darbhaparṇayor didīkṣe; atha ha sutvā yājñaseno haṃso hiraṇmayo bhūtvā yūpa upaviveśa; taṃ ha keśi śunīti nāmnābhyuvāda; sa ha cukrodha - sthaviro 'smi pañcālāṃ rājā; sa u vai dīksito 'smi; ko nu mārhen nāmnāivābhivaditum iti; sa hovāca - mā krudhaḥ; abhivaditā tenāsmi, yad aham etasya viśas tvatpūrvo rājāsam; abhivadito vāva te tenāsmi, yad dīksito 'si; iṣṭāpūrtasya tvam akṣitīm vettha; dīksām ahaṃ veda; samprabruvāmahā iti; sa hovāca ...*⁸⁶ ("*Keśin Dārbhya consecrated himself with two darbha-leaves. As he had pressed [the soma], Yājñasena became a golden goose and sat down on the sacrificial post. Keśin addressed him as: "Bitch."; he became angry [and said]: "I am the senior, king of the Pāñcālas; I am that who is consecrated. Who now can me address with [such a] name [bitch]?" He [Keśin] answered: "Do not be angry! Thereby am I greeting you, because I was king to these peoples before you. I [myself] am greeted thereby by you, because you are consecrated. You know the imperishableness of the merit of the ritual rites. I know the dīksā. Let us tell each other*⁸⁷.*' ...*"). If we compare this version with that of KB.7.5.⁸⁸: 1. *athātaḥ kaiśinī dīksā;* 2. *keśi ha dārbhyo dīksito niśasāda;* 3. *taṃ ha hiraṇmayah śakuna āpatyovāca;* 4. *adīksito vā asi dīksām ahaṃ veda tāṃ te bravāni;* 5. *sakṛd ayaje tasya kṣayād bibhemi;* 6. *sakṛd iṣṭasya ho tvam akṣitīm vettha tāṃ tvam mahyam iti;* 7. *sa ha tathety uvāca;* 8. *tau ha samprocāte;* 9. *sa ha sa āsa;* 10. *ulo vā vārṣnavṛddha iṭan vā kāvyah śikhandī vā yājñasenaḥ;* 11. *yo vā sa āsa sa sa āsa; ...* ("*Next the consecration of Keśin. Keśin Dārbhya, being consecrated, sat down. To him*

brāhmaṇaḥ syān na śaṃsayah 135. *kriyāmantravihīno 'pi tatra snātvā naraṣabha; cīṃavrato bhaved vipro dr̥ṣṭam etat purātane* ("133. And there is a remote tīrthā, o scion of the Kuru-family, founded in former times by Darbhi in compassion for brāhmaṇas. 134. With vows, consecration, sacrifice and mantras a twice-born beyond doubt can become a brāhmaṇa. 135. Even if one takes a bath there, without having done sacrifices and not having recited mantras, o bull of mankind, one can become an inspired one, having executed vows: this has been seen in former times."). The tradition here indicates, that in the time of Darbhi one could become a brāhmaṇa only by following observances - similar to the *dīksā*- and *brahmacārin*-consecration; this reminds of an older form of consecration of which AB.5.23. could be an example (see above).

⁸⁵ MACDONELL / KEITH, 187, without citation-marks in SARMA (1968), 241.

⁸⁶ Follow the usual identifications.

⁸⁷ The verb-form *samprabruvāmahai* should be corrupted: cp. KB.7.5. 8. dual *samprocāte*.

⁸⁸ SARMA, op.cit., does not discuss the KB.-version, clearly because it would cause difficulties to her interpretation.

flew up a golden bird and said 'Thou hast not been consecrated; I know the consecration; let me tell it to thee; I have sacrificed once; I am afraid of it perishing; thou dost know the imperishableness of that which once has been offered; it do thou (tell) to me.' He said 'Yes'; they two discussed together. It was he, of Ula Vārṣnivṛddha⁸⁹ or Itant Kāvya of Śikhandin Yājñasena or whoever it was, it was he. ..." (KEITH with slight changes)). If one admits that the two versions go back to a common tradition, one first has to harmonize both before trying to find the kernel. The most outstanding difference between the two versions is that the JB clearly identifies the "golden bird" with Yājñasena while the KB either is not sure whom to identify or indicates that several persons could become the bird. Another important point is the distribution of the speeches: here, that of KB seems to be more natural, while JB should be corrected. The first step is to find a solution for the difficult *taṃ ha keśī śunīti nāmnābhyuvāda* - I would suggest that it should be split into two speeches with an elliptic ductus (... [**sa etaṃ*] *nāmnābhyuvāda*) before making severe emendations⁹⁰: *Keśin* first calls the bird a 'bitch', then the bird addresses him with his name and *Keśin* becomes angry on that; so we get an almost perfect congruence with KB. There is an apparent contradiction here in that *Keśin* is said to already have been consecrated (JB: *didīkṣe*⁹¹, KB: *dīkṣitaḥ*), while the bird in KB maintains that he has not been consecrated (*adīkṣito vā asi*). But this is not so difficult to solve, for the bird obviously wants to say that *Keśin* has not been consecrated in the right way, and this is understandable since it wants to get *Keśin*'s knowledge. What is certain is that after being consecrated, *Keśin Dārbhya* meets a bird and exchanges knowledge with it. According to the JB the bird is a former (dead) king of the *Pāñcālas*, *Yājñasena Śikhandin*⁹², very fitting when we consider that in JUB *Keśin* gets information from the ghost of a dead man (see below). Notice that one of the main characteristics of the *dīkṣā* is taciturnity (cp. the *mūni* in ṚV. 10.136.). In the Brāhmaṇas the *muni Keśin* has been connected with the brahmanical ritual most appropriate to his ancient features and appearance.

The fact that *Keśin Dārbhya* is mentioned in several other places in vedic literature in different contexts⁹³ makes it the more reasonable that he is not an individual person. Rather, the name is a title describing persons with similarities in social status or behaviour. So it is understandable that

⁸⁹ According mss.L. and P.

⁹⁰ As SARMA, op.cit., 243, does in replacing the vocative *śuni* by the vocative *keśi3nn* [?].

⁹¹ Also the fact that he already has pressed the *soma* (*sutvā*).

⁹² An allusive epithet ("wearing a lock or tuft of hair") of the group of the *keśins*? The names in the KB could also be names of former kings - therefore the vagueness of the text.

⁹³ MACDONELL / KEITH, 187, s.v.

in ŚB.11.8.4.1.ff.⁹⁴ and in KS.30.2.⁹⁵ *keśin* is still considered as a name of a group. This is supported by passages where *Keśin Dārbhya* appears beside another *Keśin Sātyakāmi*⁹⁶. In MS.1.4.12. there could be a reflexion of RV.10.136., when *Keśin Dārbhya* teaches the *Gandharvas* and *Apsaras*⁹⁷. In JB.2.122ff. *Keśin Dārbhya* is told by his brahmans *Ahīnas Āśvatthi*, *Keśin Sātyakāmi*, *Gaṅginas Rāhaksita* and *Luśākapi Khārgali*⁹⁸ how to defeat his opponent *Khaṇḍika Audbhāri*.

In PB.13.10.8., *Keśin Dārbhya* is given special knowledge⁹⁹ by a *sāman* and chooses a *purohita*. An extended version of the story is given in JUB.3.29.ff., where *Keśin Dārbhya*, the king of the *Pañcālas*, is instructed by the ghost of his uncle *Ucchaisśravas Kaupayeya* how to look for the right *udgātṛ* for his *dvādaśāha*-sacrifice. He finds him¹⁰⁰ in a cemetery or in a forest but his own brahmans complain about his choice of someone who does not belong to the *Kuru-Pañcāla*. This is similar to JB.1.285. where the former brahman *Ahīnas Āśvatthi* of *Keśin Dārbhya* complains about being replaced by the younger *Keśin Sātyakāmin*. These passages show that in the time of the younger vedic literature, *Keśin Dārbhya* was still connected with special experiences, knowledge and persons outside the normal social order. Together with all the other information, it could well be that the *Keśin* of the later literature still reflects a group of (religious) outsiders as described in the RV, his *dīksā* being very appropriate to the *mūni*.

It is evident from all the earlier texts that *Keśin Dārbhya* cannot be identified as king¹⁰¹; he rather appears as a sage with special knowledge¹⁰² and behaviour in the context of the sacrifice .

The JB notes that the basic word *darbha* is related to the plant, but still maintains the younger vedic interpretation of *dārbhya* as a patronymi-

⁹⁴ On the *keśinḡhapati* there cp. EGGELING, ad.loc., note 1.

⁹⁵ The plural is shown by the verb (... *keśino dālbyasya vaṃśavrasāne ḡhān jagḡhus* ...), so that here we have the "keśins of a *Dārbhya*".

⁹⁶ TS.2.6.2.3.; MS.1.6.5.; JB.1.285., 2.122; cp. SARMA, loc.cit. and BODEWITZ (1990), 161.

⁹⁷ *keśinaṃ vai dārbhyaṃ gandharvāpsarāso ḡrcchan kathā yājamāno yājamānena bhrātṛvyeyaṃ sadḡṃ asity ahāṃ vēdā ity abravīt* ... ("The Gandharvas and Apsaras asked *Keśin Dārbhya*: 'Why art you, the patron of the sacrifice, resembling the rival patron [in the way you sacrifice]?' He said: 'I know [the way one has to sacrifice].' ..."). In the same passage he is disputing with *Ṣaṇḍika Audbhāri* and defeats him (... *tātaḡ keśī ṣaṇḍikam aūdḡhārim abhyabhavad* ...); see the same episod - slightly different - in JB.2.122., which reads the name *Khaṇḍika Audbhāri*.

⁹⁸ Who - according to PB.30.2. - cursed the "orthodox" *Kuṣitaka* and the *Kauṣitakins*.

⁹⁹ *keśine vā etad dālbyāya sāmāvir abhavad* ... ("To *Keśin*, the son of *Dalbha* [sic!], this *sāman* showed itself (in human form). ..." (CALAND)).

¹⁰⁰ The name in PB. is *Alamma Pārijānata*, in JUB. *Prāṭṛda Bhālla*.

¹⁰¹ Expressis verbis only in the younger texts JUB. and JB.

¹⁰² MACDONELL / KEITH, loc.cit.

con¹⁰³. JB.2.100. ... *darbham u ha vai śātānīkīm pāñcālā rājānam santam nāpacāyām cakruḥ; api ha smainam kumārā darbha darbheti hvayanti; tasya haitau brāhmanāv āsatur ahīnā āśvatthiḥ keśī sātyakāmir iti; tau hainam upasameyatuh; sa ha dhyāyan niśasāda; tam hovacatuḥ; kiṃ nu rājanyo dhyāyatīti; sa hovāca - na hi me dhyeyam; pāñcālā vai meme rājānam santam nāpacāyanty api mā kumārā darbha darbheti hvayanti; tad evaitad dhyāyāmīti; tam hocatur - apacitir iti vā ayam yajñakratur asti, tena tvā yājayāveti; tatheti; tena hainam yājayām cakraḥ; sa haiṣu tathāmātram apacitīm jagāma, tad apy etarhi pāñcālā darbhan kuśā ity evācakṣate ("The Pāñcālas did not respect Darbha Śātānīki, who was their king; the boys even called him: 'Darbha, Darbha'. He had two Brāhmaṇas, Ahīnas Āśvatthi and Keśīn Sātyakāmi. They went to him; he sat there thinking. They said to him: 'Why is the king thinking?' He said: 'How should I not think [about that]. The Pāñcālas do not respect me, who is their king, and the boys even call me 'Darbha, Darbha.' I'm thinking about that.' They said to him: 'The so-called Apaciti¹⁰⁴ is that power of the sacrifice. By it we have you sacrificed' 'So be it.' [he said]. They had him sacrificed by it. And he accordingly gained respect under the Pāñcālas, as they now consider the Darbhas to be Kuśa-[grasses]."¹⁰⁵).*

This JB-passage is not easy to understand. Accepting the Jaiminīya-tradition that *Darbha Śātānīki* was the father of *Keśīn Dārbhya*¹⁰⁶, it would not seem to be mere chance that one of the *brahman* of this *Darbha* has the same name as his son, *Keśīn*, and in JB.2.122. is the *brahman* of his son. It looks as if we have here the making of an aitiological story, providing us with an example of the origin of the *apaciti*-sacrifice in the sphere of the gods just explained in the text before. Here, *Prajāpati* creates the *apaciti* because the gods did not respect him and even passed it to *Indra* in the same situation. Therefore, a mortal human also had to be chosen, one who was likewise disrespected by society. This father *Keśīn Dārbhya* must now have a father named. This father is *Darbha*, who must consequently be made a *Pāñcāla*-king, because his son is also a king of this tribe. But because *darbha* usually is the name of a grass, we must account for this strange fact that the tradition also identifies *Darbha* as a human. This is explained by the story in which the king is not respected by his tribe. With the sacrifice he attained respect, and the *Pāñcālas* used

103 op.cit., 241.; Pāṇ.6.4.165. even seems to see *keśīn* as a patronymicon.

104 The *Apaciti*-soma-sacrifices is performed to bring a man honour and respect (KEITH (1925), 338). It is striking that this sacrifice in the system of vedic ritualism is placed in the same group as the *Vrātya-Stomas*. The *iti* after the first *apaciti* indicates that it is used here as a technical term, while the second one only means "respect".

105 Wrong paraphrase in SARMA, loc.cit. ("That is why even now the people of the Pāñcālas call the *darbha* grass by the name *kuśa*.").

106 JB.1.285 and 2.122; cp. SARMA, op.cit., 240.

the name of the king as a normal word for the *kuśa*-grass as in the other Aryan tribes.

So far we have discussed a text-immanent explanation of the story. The question still remains where the kernel of the story lies, and I think it is connected to the *Keśin-Dārbhya*-complex. As a king or noble in this text, as opposed to his usual role as a religious, the *keśin* stands outside of the normal brahmanical ordo and thus is not respected by the normal people. This could explain why the king's name *Darbha* is considered a swearword or a nickname (in the *Pāñcāla*-idiom). The *keśins* used *darbha*-grass or other intoxicating plants, and that may explain why, for the *Pāñcālas*, the name of the plant was pejorative in former times. But after the king's achievement of respect (*etarhi*) it was accepted as a normal cultivated plant.

The original meaning of *Dārbhyá* could be "who has connections to the *darbha*-grass"¹⁰⁷, and this connection could have consisted of a group of *múnis* intoxicating themselves by means of it. Later on, the name is especially used for individuals who are searching for special knowledge in an unorthodox way, particularly through the use of intoxicates.

Another *Dālbhya* is found in KS.10.6., where a dispute between *Baka Dālbhi*¹⁰⁸ (in Ms.D *Dālbhya*) and *Dhṛtarāṣṭhra Vaicitravīrya* on sacrificial problems¹⁰⁹ is described. It is quite reasonable that this *Dālbhya* has something to do with the *Keśin Dārbhya* acting in a similar way in the other Vedic texts. This connection also helps to explain a difficult passage in the Upaniṣads, in which the same name occurs¹¹⁰: ChU.1.12.1. *Athātaḥ śauva udgīthaḥ; tad dha bako dālbhyo glāvo vā maitreyaḥ svādhyāyam udvavrāja. 2. Tasmai svā śvetaḥ prādur babhūva; tam anye śvāna upasametyocuḥ; annam no bhagavān āgāyatu; āsanāyāma vā iti;. 3. Tān hovācehaiva mā prātur upasamīyātetī; tad dha bako dālbhyo glāvo vā maitreyaḥ pratipālayāṃ cakāra. 4. te ha yathaivedaṃ bahiṣpavamānena stoṣyamānāḥ samrabdhāḥ sarpanṭīty evam āsarpuḥ; te ha samupaviśya him cakruḥ. 5. o3m adā3ma; o3m pibā3ma; o3m devo varuṇaḥ prajāpatiḥ savitā2 'nnam ihā2harat; annapate3 'nnam ihā2harā2haro3m iti. ("1. And then the dog-udgītha; there was Baka Dālbhya or [also called] Glāva Maitreya out to study the veda. 2. Him appeared a white dog. To this one¹¹¹ other dogs came together [and said]: "The honorable may chant food forth for us; we are hungry." 3. He told them: "Come to me together tomorrow."; Baka Dālbhya [or also called] Glāva Maitreya waited for that.*

¹⁰⁷ In the broad sense of a "Beziehung oder Zugehörigkeit zum Grundwort" (WACKERNAGEL / DEBRUNNER II,2, 812, §652), where the *vṛddhi* has the same function as the suffix *-ya* (op.cit., 129f., § 39a.). In later periods the word could easily be interpreted as a patronymicon, considering the overwhelming number of words with *vṛddhi* and *-ya* in this group (op.cit., 822, § 660b.). *Pāṇini* also teaches the form *dārbhya* as a patronymicon (4.1.151.). A reflex of this connection is also found in JB.

4. They came creeping [up] as it is said: "[priests] who want to sing the *bahiṣpavamāna*, creep [up] grasping each other's hands." After having sat down they did: "Him! 5. Om! we want to eat, Om! we want to drink, Om! the god *Varuṇa*, *Prajāpati*, *Savitṛ* has brought food here; o lord of the food, do [you also] bring food, bring food, Om!"¹¹²).

This passage can not be separated from ChU.1.2.13.: *tena tam ha bako dālbhyo vidāṃ cakāra; sa ha naimiṣīyānām udgātā babhūva; sa ha smai-bhyaḥ kāmān āgāyati* ("By this [prāṇa]¹¹³ *Baka Dālbhya* did know it [the *udgītha*]; [that's how] he became *udgātṛ* of the *Naimiṣīya*; he chanted forth their wishes for them.").

If both fragments are taken together, the following underlying episode can be constructed: *Baka Dālbhya*, probably still a *brahmacārin*, goes out of the human community (*ud-√vraj-*) to achieve the necessary knowledge to become a *sāman*-priest (*udgātṛ*) by studying (the *veda*: *svādhyāya*)¹¹⁴. While he does so he has an allegorical vision¹¹⁵: the white dog in this vision is *Baka* himself, the future *udgātṛ* of the *Naimiṣīyas*; they are the other dogs who want food in the vision, the fulfillment of their wishes representing their desire. The white dog puts them off for the next day, probably because he is not yet in the possession of the therefore needed knowledge (of the *udgītha*). The next day the dogs come back again and ask for food - and here ends the episode, but the white dog should be able now to fulfill their wishes because he now has the necessary knowledge - like *Baka Dālbhya* in reality.

Here too one can see the shamanistic features: the search of initiating knowledge¹¹⁶ in the loneliness of the forest, the vision, the animals (theriomorphism).

108 MACDONELL / KEITH, II, 236, s.v. *Vaka Dālbhya*, give the wrong passage (30.2).

109 Is the mention of *agnī rudrāvat* a hint to traditions relating to ṚV.10.136.?

110 The explanation of DEUSSEN (1922), 58 and (1897), 83, that this passage is - similar to the frog-hymn ṚV.7.103. - "eine Satire auf die Thätigkeit der Priester und ihre egoistische Endabsicht", doesn't give a found function of *Baka Dālbhya* and of the white dog. Also unsatisfying (and more an incorrect recount of the content of the story than an interpretation is found in RUBEN (1947), p.121: a pack of dogs asking *Baka*, to chant away their hunger with magic.

111 The next part of the sentence *śvā śvetaḥ* and not *Baka Dālbhya* (DEUSSEN) is meant here and in the following. This is also clear syntactically by the full mentioning of the name as a sign of change of the subject in 3.

112 The story seems unfinished having the reader wait for a continuation with reference to the white dog.

113 Or: *akṣara* from 14.

114 To do so one goes out of the view of human sites and recites the *Veda* after sunset (cp. MOOKERJI (1951), 88, u. GONDA (1965), 229).

115 ... *prādur babhūva* ...

116 This creeping up (*√srp-*) of the priests in the *soma*-sacrifice (e.g. AB.5.23.), which may have to do with the skinning of snakes (PB.25.14.4.) could be a hint of an initiation or ritual rebirth.

The above given translation follows the general opinion and identifies *Baka Dālbhya* with *Glāva Maitreya*. It is nevertheless possible that the two names describe two different persons¹¹⁷, for *Glāva Maitreya* also appears in other places¹¹⁸. In both cases there should be a link between the two names, which maybe is the animal-motiv: *Glāva Maitreya* in the PB. is *prastotṛ*¹¹⁹ at a *sattra*, where the snake-*sāmans* play an important role¹²⁰. The purpose of this ritual is reminiscent of the consecration (*dikṣā*), when it is said: 25.15.4. *etena vai sarpā apa mṛtyum ajaryann apa mṛtyuñ jayanti ya etad upayanti tasmāt te hitvā jīrṇān tvacam atisarpanty apahite mṛtyum ajayan ...* ("... By this [ritual] the snakes defeated death. Those who carry out this [ritual] defeat death ; that is why the snakes, having shed their skin, creep beyond [it]. When they have shed it they defeat death ..."). The *Glāva Maitreya* in ŚVB. 1.4.6. too carries out ritual actions which can have shamanistic features: *etad dha smāha glāvo maitreyaḥ prāhne vā adyāhaṃ pāpavasīyasam vyākariṣyāmīti sa ha sma sadasy evopavasathye hany udann āsīno viśvarūpā gāyati* ("*Glāva Maitreya said this: "In the morning I want to divide good and evil. He sang the Viśvarūpa[-verses], sitting in the sadas[-hut] on the day of fasting directed to the north.*"). Now the *sadas*-hut is constructed around a central post¹²¹: a clear reminiscence to shamanistic cosmological conceptions of the axe of the world (*axis mundi*) or the world-tree respectively, a microcosmic representation that is found in many cultures, e.g. the central stake of the tent or in the yurt¹²² of siberian tribes. The usual observances in the *sadas* and their impact¹²³ on the person sitting in the *sadas* are shamanistic in character.

The cited passages of the older vedic literature show the points of contact between *Keśin Dālbhya* and *Glāva Maitreya*: initiation-rituals, achievement of knowledge at a special place, vision with animals involved.

117 In this case *vā* in ChU. expresses uncertainty.

118 Cp. MACDONELL / KEITH (1912) I., 248, s.v.

119 The function as a *prastotṛ* may have been the reason for the name (*Dālbhya*), because in the *soma*-sacrifice the *adhvaryu* passes a handful of *darbha*-grass to the *prastotṛ* (HILLEBRANDT (1897), 129f., KEITH (1925), 329).

120 PB.25.15.1. ... *sarpasāmāni viṣuvati kriyante. ... 3. ... glavaś cājagāvaś ca prastotṛpratihartārau ...* ("... in the middle of the year the snake-samans are carried out ... 3. ... [at this sattra] Glava was the *prastotṛ* and *Ajagāva* the *pratihartṛ* ...").

121 HILLEBRANDT (1897), 127, and BOLLÉE (1956), 31, esp. note 3.

122 ELIADE (1975), 251ff. and esp. the example of a ritual construction on p.185f., corresponding in detail with the construction of the *sadas*: nine notches in the tree : nine roofs at the middle post (BOLLÉE, loc.cit.).

123 Fasting (*upavasatha*, cp. RENO (1943 - 45), 124ff.), sitting beside the fires, which is supposed to increase the inner heat (*tapas*) (cp. BOLLÉE, loc.cit., note 4.). Silence is the main observation of the *brahman* sitting in the *sadas* (RENO (1949), 15ab) and has to be connected with the taciturnity of the ascetics (RENO, op.cit., 17b.).

Considering that and the unreliability of reports on individuals in indian sources it seems rather secondary if *Keśin* and *Glāva* are one and the same person or two individuals who were brought together because they had similar features.

The purpose of this relatively long discussion on *darbha*-grass and the *Keśins* in the younger vedic tradition was to show that there is indeed a connection between the *keśin*(s) in the RV and these personalized *Keśins* elsewhere. It seems likely that the word was a title for people belonging to a special religious group (similar to the *vrātyas*) rather than a nomen proprium. In particular the *Keśin Dārbhya* shows features which can be identified as patterns of shamanism (initiation, achievement of special knowlegde, visions).

The fact that in the oldest descriptions *darbha*-grass can be interpreted as an intoxicating plant makes it the more reasonable that *keśins* - sometimes also called *dārbhya* - originally used the plant in this way and that the *viṣá* in RV.10.136. had something to do with this grass.

In the ŚB it is said that one should buy the *parisrut* - "immature spiritous liquor" (EGGELING) - which is usually described as being made from plants by a long-haired man from the south¹²⁴. This may be a relic of the *keśins* described in our hymn. Does that not mean that some impure intoxicants would have to be bought from a group such as the *keśin*, who were outside the normal social order?

Going back to RV.10.136. the next character requiring some explanation is *Kunamnamā*. The name means either "the badly bending"¹²⁵ or the "ugly crooked"¹²⁶. In general she is interpreted as a demon, and in the hymn she is acting as a kind of auxilliary spirit. Her name could be a folk-etymological transformation of another name, which was thus aligned to the sphere of *Rudrá* and the ecstatic *mūni*. She, together with *Vāyú*, helps the *mūni* to get the ecstasy causing drink. *Rudrá* and *Vāyú* (*Vāta*) are in the same sense - considered from a shamanistic point of view -

124 5.1.2.14. *átha yátra rájānaṃ kṛīṇāti; tád dakṣiṇatáḥ prativeśatáḥ keśavát púruṣāt sísena parisrutaṃ kṛīṇāti ná vā eṣá strí ná púmān yát keśaváh púruṣo yád áha púmāṃs téna ná strí yád u keśavás téna ná púmān aítád áyo ná híraṇyaṃ yát sísaṃ naiśá sómo ná sūrā yát parisrút tásmāt keśavát púruṣāt sísena parisrútaṃ kṛīṇāti.* ("Now when he buys the king (Soma), he at the same time buys for a piece of lead the Parisrut (...) from a long-haired man near by towards the south. For a long-haired man is neither man nor woman; for, being a male, he is not a woman; and being long-haired (a eunuch [?]), he is not a man. And that lead is neither iron nor gold; and the Parisrut-liquor is neither Soma nor Surā: this is why he buys the Parisrut for a piece of lead from a long-haired man." (EGGELING)).

125 MAYRHOFER I, 229, s.v.: "schlecht sich beugende"; WACKERNAGEL II,2, 84: "'sich ungerne beugend" oder "schlimm beugend".

126 GELDNER on 7b.: "häßlich gekrümmte". Certainly wrong are ARBMAN (1922), 300 and HAUER (1927), 325, who consider *Kunamnamā* as a narcotic (?) which is not possible from the formal aspect and the aspect of content: cp. OLDENBERG (1912), 351 ("nicht Neutr.pl.").

auxilliary spirits, even if they belong to the official vedic pantheon according to their names and positions. Gods as auxilliary spirits are understandable if one takes into account that in a collection like the RV - different from the AV - there is no broad scope of introducing inferior and insignificant celestial beings. So it is possible that spirits which aided shamanistic trips to heaven were shifted towards the "orthodox" inventory of gods in the RV, especially when a hymn with heterodox characteristics like 10.136. should be incorporated into the RV. To an ecstatic such as the *keśín* with his poisonous drink there is no vedic god more appropriate than *Rudrá*. That he could not be taken as a simple spirit like *Kunamnamá* or even *Vāyú* or *Vāta* is quite reasonable, considering the increasing importance of this god. That is why only he drinks of the poisonous drink together with the *múni*¹²⁷. As a god who has close connections with the phenomenon "wind"¹²⁸, he should be interpreted in this hymn as the patron or tutelary god¹²⁹ of the *múni*¹³⁰ flying in the wind.

The choice of *Vāyú* and *Vāta* are easily explained by the *múni*'s flying through the air on the winds and are here to be taken as names of the same phenomenon¹³¹. In one place it is said that the *múnis* are mounting the winds¹³², then again the *múni* himself is called the "steed of the wind"¹³³. If it is right, that the *keśín* is an ecstatic of a shamanistic kind, then this term is more meaningful than the otherwise usual meta-physical identifications with animals in the Veda: the ecstatic transforms into the

127 It fits that *Rudrá* (*Vāstavya*) according to a younger myth (SB.1.7.3.1. - 3 and 7.) was excluded from the *soma*-sacrifice and got the wild fruits, left-overs (RV.2.33.5.: ... *áva ... rudráṃ diṣya ...*) and the crude parts of the sacrifice (TS.2.6.3.4. ... *yó 'sritaḥ sá raudró*): cp. MACDONELL (1898), 76, OLDENBERG (1922), 216 and GONDA (1978), 86f. For god *Síva* taking poison or intoxicating substances is documented: cp. ARBMAN (1922), 302f.

128 The connection with the *Maruts*: ARBMAN (1922), 14f., esp. note 3.

129 For the differenc and common places of auxilliary spirit and patron of the shamans see ELIADE (1975), 96ff.

130 Even in appearance *Rudrá* fits to the *keśín*: cp. the epitheton *vyúptakeśa* "with dishevelled hairs" in the *Śatarudrīya* VS.16.29. (ARBMAN (1922), 302). *Mahidhara* is certainly not right in taking *vyupta-* from *√vap* "to shave, cut off" which is proved by the preceding *kapardín* "wearing knotted hair".

131 On the differences between *Vāyú* and *Vāta* cp. OLDENBERG (1923), 227f., GONDA (1978), 51f. For auxilliary spirits appearing in pairs and in animals' form with their names having some semantic connections cp. e.g. the raven *Huginn* and *Muninn* of the Scandinavian god *Óðinn* (ELIADE (1975), 364).

132 3. *únmaditā maúneyena vātān á tashimā vayám ...* (GELDNER: "Von Verzückung entgeistert haben wir die Winde (als unsere Rosse) bestiegen. ..."). The plural *vātān* shows that it is about the phenomenon "wind" in a lesser degree of personification. *Vāyú* however is more personified (singular): 5. *vāyóḥ sakhátho ...* and 7. *vāyúr asmā úpāmanthat ...* This differentiation is as usual: cp. MACDONELL (1898), 81.

133 5. *vátasyáśvo ...*

same animal, which is his auxiliary spirit and "means of transport"¹³⁴ at the same time. Everything fits to the ambivalent relation one can find between this spirit and shaman: on the one side the latter controls and uses the *spiritus familiaris*, on the other side it appears to the observer that he is possessed of the spirit¹³⁵.

In addition to this special skill of flying, the *mūni* also has the knowledge of the (true) form of everything¹³⁶ in the whole world¹³⁷. He knows the thoughts of other beings, of the wild animals, of the *Apsarás* and *Gandharvás*, on whose paths he is walking¹³⁸. Reading thoughts is only an intensified understanding of the language of the animals and other human and non-human beings¹³⁹. The understanding of the language of animals or of non-human beings (and derived indirectly from that: the control over these) is one of the typical features of a shamanistic ecstatic¹⁴⁰.

134 Cp. ELIADE (1975), 101f.

135 ELIADE (1975), 101.; see 2. ... *yád deváso ávikṣata* (GELDNER: "... wenn die Götter in sie gefahren sind.").

136 4. *antárikṣeṇa patati víśvā rūpácākaṣat* ... (GELDNER: "Durch die Lüfte fliegt er, auf alle Gestalten herabschauend; ..."). From this point of view the *mūni* sees and knows all forms in their true shape and resembles in that aspect his patron *Rudrá*, who in AV.11.2. is described as "thousand-eyed" (*sahasráksá*: 3., 7., 17.), controlling the atmosphere (4. ... *antárikṣāya te námaḥ*; 10. ... *táve-dám agrorv antárikṣam* ...), observing the whole earth from there (23. *yó 'ntárikṣe tíṣṭhati víṣṭabhito* ...) and beating from the eastern ocean into the northern (25. ... *sadyáḥ sárvāṃ pári paśyasi bhúmim púrvasmád dhāmsy úttarasmin samudré.*). Cp. also RV.7.46.2. *sá hi kṣáyēṇa kṣámyasya jánmanāḥ sámrāyēna divyásya cétati* ... ("Because he discerns by [his] abode [in the atmosphere], by his sovereignty the terrestrial and celestial creatures ...").

137 5. ... *ubhaú samudráv á kṣeti yás ca púrvā utáparaḥ* (GELDNER: "... Er wohnt an beiden Meeren, am östlichen und am westlichen."). According to GELDNER's note that means: "He is encompasses the whole worlds.". Cp. also HAUER (1927), p.325: "Seine Erlebnisse haben kosmische Weite: ..." and note 61, pointing out AV.15.7.1. and especially 11.5.6., both hymns in the range of ecstatic practices (11.5.26.: *vrātya, brahmacārin*). In 11.5.6. it is expressed quite similar: [*brahmacāry ... dikṣitó dirgháśmaśruḥ*] *sá sadyá eti púrvasmád úttaraṃ samudrāṃ lokān samgr̥bhya múhur ácárikrat* (WHITNEY: "[The Vedic student ... consecrated, long-bearded [sic !]] he goes at once from the eastern to the northern ocean, having grasped the worlds, again and again violently shaping (...) [them]."). This is a hint towards the real meaning of RV.10. 136.5.: the *muni* in ecstasy controls from the utter borders of the world the whole world and by this recreates her again and again (cp. HAUER, op.cit., 327).

138 6. *apsarásāṃ gandharvāṇāṃ mṛgānāṃ cāraṇe cāran; keśi kétasya vidvān sákhā svādūr ma-díntamaḥ* ("Walking on the path of the Apsaras, the Gandharvas [and] the wild animals, understanding [their] thoughts, the long-haired is [their] sweet, intoxicated friend."). The elliptic form of this verse only allows the supplementing of the next syntactical parts, of the genitive plural *apsarás-āṃ gandharvāṇāṃ mṛgānāṃ* for the genitive singular *kétasya*; regards content the nominative *sákhā* even demands it; in the same way the translations of GELDNER and OLDENBERG (1912), 351.

139 See below the function of the drums and kettledrums in the *mahāvratā* which is showing other shamanistic characteristics too; cp. HAUER (1927), 282.

140 Cp. ELIADE (1975), 101 and 103ff. The understanding of the language of animals in ecstasy is a common phenomenon: e.g. the berserkr *Sigmund* and *Sintfiotli* in the Old Norse *Vǫlsunga-saga* 8.

Gandharvās and *Apsarās* are - like *Rudrá* - ambivalent in character¹⁴¹: in the AV they are beings causing damage and serious diseases¹⁴², but also healing from madness¹⁴³. The abode of the *Gandharvá* is the atmosphere (*rājas*)¹⁴⁴ from where he views over everything (and thereby knows everything)¹⁴⁵. In context with the *keśín*, it is an interesting fact that the *Gandharvá* in RV.3.38.6. are called *vāyukeśa*, "wind-haired". The *Gandharvās*, guarding the intoxicating *Sóma*¹⁴⁶, are appropriate to the *múni*, who is in an ecstatic state of intoxication. Considering all these similarities the contact between *keśín* and *Gandharvá-Apsarās* is quite understandable.

The cosmological conception in the hymn are clearly "brahmanized": in 1. the two worlds (*ródasī*) = heaven and earth, sun (*svàr*), in 2. and 3. the wind (*vāta*) as the element¹⁴⁷ filling up the atmosphere (*antárikṣa*)¹⁴⁸ and in 5. an eastern and a western ocean¹⁴⁹. Obviously the hymn has cosmological patterns and ideas which also can be found in younger texts¹⁵⁰. Taking all the cited passages in the Brāhmaṇas, which are supposed to indicate a special relationship of the wind to the sun and to the fire, into consideration a translation of stanza 1., different from GELDNER

141 Cp. GONDA (1978), 100.

142 AV.4.37.

143 AV.6.111.4.: *Apsaras* together with *Indra* and *Bhaga*. It should be born in mind that the relationship between madness (German: *Verücktheit*) and ecstasy (German: *Entrücktheit*) plays an important role for the evaluation of the phenomenon shamanism (ELIADE (1975), 33ff., VAJDA (1959), 460f.).

144 RV.8.77.5. and 10.139.5.; cp. also OLDENBERG (1923), 249f.

145 RV.9.85.12. *ūrdhvó gandharvó ádhi náke asthād víšvā rūpā praticákṣāno asya ...* ("The Gandharva has risen up in the firmament, overlooking all his forms ...").

146 RV.9.83.4.; 9.85.12 and 10.139.5.; OLDENBERG (1923), 250f. In the Brāhmaṇas (see MACDONELL (1898), 136f.) there is occurring a myth about selling *Soma* for the price of the goddess *Vāc* (one gets the power of word through an intoxicating plant). According to older texts the *Gandharva* is guarding *Soma* in a place, where the tree of the world is standing - one of the most typical features of shamanistic cosmology in Old-Indian tradition (see VIENNOT (1954), 27f.). Following the later tradition this tree grows upside down (VIENNOT (1954), 32ff.) - another parallel to shamanism (ELIADE (1975), 259, note 32; cp. also the one-eyed Scandinavian god *Óðinn*, asking and hiding the wise head of *Mímir* under *Yggdrasil*, the ash-tree standing at the navel of the world: Vołospá 28).

147 Cp. KLAUS (1986), 84. According to later texts (e.g. ŚB. 8.4.1.9.) the wind is also located in all three ranges of the world (KLAUS (1986), 85ff.); the wind is the thread (*sūtra*) lined up by the sun (ŚB.8.7.3.10.), and thereby through him one can reach heaven (AB.4.20.21.).

148 The term itself does not occur in the hymn.

149 These are certainly the oceans at the ultimate ends of the world (KIRFEL (1920), 16f.). LÜDERS (1951), 97, in spite of the *kṣeti* in c., interpretes: "Der Sinn muß auch hier sein, daß der ... Muni von einem Ende der Erde zum andern fliegt." It is hard to decide whether these oceans are already the younger conception of the waters encompassing the earth (KLAUS (1986), 77f.) or if they are concrete seas (op.cit., 78).

150 The wind comes from the direction of the sun (ŚB.5.1.2.7.) and goes back to the sun (JB.1.2.5.f.).

is possible: *keśy àgnim keśī viśám bibharti ródasī; keśī viśvaṃ svàr drśé keśídám jyótir ucyate* ("The haired one bears the fire, the haired one [bears] the poison¹⁵¹ into both worlds¹⁵²; the haired one [bears] the sun to everything¹⁵³, in order to look at her: [that is why] the haired one is called light [= the sun].").

Keeping that in mind nevertheless the relation of the *múni* to these parts of the cosmos shows clearly that this is an "experience" different from the normal vedic concepts. To the *múni* in ecstasy the frontiers and limitations between the cosmological ranges have no effect. His ties with the wind bestow him with a freedom of movement, enabling him to live in the utmost points of the world at the same time. He even brings blessings to the world: the sun is visible, because he bears her¹⁵⁴.

Summing up we get the following shamanistic features for RV.10.136.:

1. The *múni* is in an ecstasy effected by intoxicates, he stays out of his body.
2. The described production and drinking of this intoxicating drink reminds us of an initiation, especially because this drink is called poison, i.e. something that only an initiated can take without harm and with the intended effect - the ecstasy and the celestial journey. The poison can, however, also suggest a ritual death. Fitting to an initiation-ceremony is the appearance of the *múni* - smeared with lime.
3. The journey through the sky where the *múni* looks over the whole world.
4. On this journey the *múni* acquires special knowledge: he recognizes the (real) forms of all, knows the whole world, understands the thoughts (= language?) of the *Gandharvās*, *Apsarās* and of the wild animals.
5. The appearance of the (theriomorphic) "auxilliary spirits" *Vāta* and *Vāyú* and of *Kunannamā* accompanying the *muni* on his journey to heaven and helping to press the intoxicating drink. *Rudrá* as his mate in drinking (and companion?) is more patron than spirit.

151 *Agnī* and *viśá* are syntactically equivalent; should be thought of a intoxicate causing heat = fire? Then would be also explained the connection and the final, macro-microcosmic identification of the *múni* with the sun in 1.c. and d.. For these ideas cp. KLAUS (1986), 89ff.

152 Acc.dir.; *viśvaṃ* runs parallel to this accusative not belonging - as GELDNER (note to 1c.) points out correctly - to *svàr*.

153 A neutral singularis collectivus.

154 GELDNER adds to *bibharti* quite appropriate "(in sich)".

6. The cosmological conceptions of the hymn are clearly "brahmanized", but they show a typical independent and almost dominating and controlling relation of the *muni* to the world.

7. The *mūni* with his long hair and his nakedness and dirtiness is reminiscent of ecstatic initiation-rites.

8. Calling the *keśín* a *vāyóḥ áśvaḥ* may be a theriomorphism covered by vedic metaphoric.

Rudra-Siva in his whole historical development is the god of the *yogins* and of the ecstatic ascetics, and he is supposed to have absorbed traits of a non-indo-aryan cultural and religious stratum. Compared to him, *Varuṇa* is a through and through vedic god whose roots go back to the common indo-iranian period. Although certain dark characteristics stick to him he has never been a god of ecstasy and moreover is not connected with a cultus showing shamanistic elements¹⁵⁵.

In my opinion it is possible to show that a group of *Varuṇa*-hymns contain shamanistic elements not for the god but for the religious experience of the poets, who brought forth these hymns, and - what counts more - one can show that these elements were preserved even in the later ritus.

3. RV.7.87. - 89.

This group of hymns RV.7.86 - 89. are, like all hymns in the seventh Maṇḍala, ascribed to the poet-clan of the *Vásiṣṭha*. One can see from stanzas 7.88.1. and 4. that the singer here is *Vásiṣṭha* himself, the name-giving, personified ancestor of the lineage. Especially this series of hymns was characterized as of particular religious depth¹⁵⁶.

In hymn 7.88. can be found a hint on shamanism in general and on ecstasy¹⁵⁷. In 3. and 4. the singer (*Vásiṣṭha*) relates, how he sails out in the sea in a ship together with *Váruṇa*, swings on a swing, sees the sun

155 Even if George DUMÉZIL, in context with his "*idéologie tripartite*", likes to emphasize them as essential features of this god, magic and ecstasy are rather typical of the Germanic god *Óðinn* / *Wodan* (germ. **woʰanaz*), who, according to DUMÉZIL's scheme, corresponds to *Varuṇa*.

156 Cp. DANDEKAR (1970) and SHARMA (1975), 177ff., but already OTTO (1932), for whom the relationship *Vasiṣṭha* - *Varuṇa* is characteristic for the ambivalent connection between a believer and a god. Different LÜDERS (1951), 39, who is speaking of *Mitra* and *Varuṇa* as "*abstrakten Göttern*".

157 A different interpretation - correspondig to his general conception of the god - gives LÜDERS (1951), 313ff. The main purpose of this hymn is for LÜDERS "*den Zorn Varuṇas zu besänftigen*." (p.313)

and the darkness and visits *Váruṇa* in his thousand-doored house (5.). GELDNER, in his introduction to the hymn, summarizes that *Vásiṣṭha* relates how he asked the god to present him the secrets of heaven - light and darkness - and how the god makes him a singer on a joint trip on the Ocean¹⁵⁸. This description is an important point.

Vásiṣṭha together with *Váruṇa* makes a journey in heaven. The ship¹⁵⁹ they are sailing in is at the same time is a swing they are swinging on¹⁶⁰. This ship is the sun¹⁶¹ as is the swing¹⁶². By this "entertainment", *Váruṇa* makes *Vásiṣṭha* a *ṛṣi* and a eulogist (*stotrī*)¹⁶³ - clear references to an initiation¹⁶⁴. *Váruṇa* lets *Vásiṣṭha* see events which usually rest hidden for normal human beings: the sun hidden in the rock, explaining the mysterium of darkness¹⁶⁵. Connected to this passages is also 7.87.4., when *Váruṇa* teaches *Vásiṣṭha* the secret of the 21 names of the cow, information which should only be transferred to next generation as secret

158 "Vas. erzählt, wie er den Gott gebeten habe, ihm die Geheimnisse des Himmels - Licht und Finsternis - vorzuführen, und wie dieser ihn auf gemeinsamer Meerfahrt zum Ṛṣi und zum Sänger gemacht habe (...).".

159 On the ship as a vehicle on shamanistic journey to heaven cp. ELIADE (1975), 217 (siberian) and 341f. (indonesian).

160 3. á yád ruháva váruṇaś ca návaṃ prá yát samudrám iráyāva mādhyam; ádhi yád apám snúbhiś cārāva prá preṅkhá iṅkhayāvahai śubhé kām 4. vásiṣṭhaṃ ha váruṇo nāvya ādhād ... (GELDNER: "Wenn wir beide, (ich) und Varuṇa, das Schiff besteigen, wenn wir mitten ins Meer hinaussteuern, wenn wir über den Rücken des Wassers fahren werden, so wollen wir uns in der Schaukel schaukeln, um zu prangen." 4. Varuṇa hat den Vasiṣṭha ins Schiff gesetzt ...").

161 In stanza 1. called "verehrwürdige[r], tausend Gaben bringende[r] Bulle" (GELDNER). In stanza 2. the sun (*svār*) bears the name "Antlitz des Agni, des Varuṇa" (GELDNER). Calling the sun a ship (KIRFEL (1920), 18, with passages from the AV) suggests itself, if one takes into consideration that according to the younger vedic cosmology the earth should be encompassed by ocean(s) (KIRFEL (1920), 10f. and 15; LÜDERS (1951), 296f.). On other connections of the sun to water cp. KIRFEL (1920), 22f., KLAUS (1986), 67ff., and on the meaning of the younger conceptions for the interpretation of similar passages from the RV see op.cit., 69. The sun however is not referred as a ship any more in the younger texts (KLAUS (1986), 119 - 142).

162 3. ... prá preṅkhá iṅkhayāvahai śubhé kām (GELDNER: "so wollen wir uns in der Schaukel schaukeln, um zu prangen."). More concretely in 7.87.5. ... gṛtso rájā váruṇaś cakra etám divi preṅkhám hiraṇyāyaṃ śubhé kām (GELDNER: "... Der geschickte König Varuṇa hat für sich diese goldene Schaukel zum Prangen an den Himmel gebracht."). Cp. KIRFEL (1920), 18, and LÜDERS (1951), 321.

163 4. ... ṛṣiṃ cakāra svápā mähobhiḥ; stotāraṃ vipraḥ ... ("... by his greatnesses he has made him [Vasiṣṭha] a ṛṣi, the exalted [made him] a eulogist ...").

164 Cp. RENO (1960), 25, ad 4ab.

165 2. ... svār yád áśmann adhipá u ándho 'bhí mā vāpura dṛśāye niniyāt ("... to the sun, who [is] in the stone and [thereby] to the darkness the protector [Varuṇa] shall lead me to see the beauty."). According to GELDNER (notes ad 2.c.d.) sun and darkness here signify: "der Wechsel von Tag und Nacht. ... [áśman] ist der Fels, in dem nachts die Sonne verborgen ist." The given translation follows GELDNER's alternative in the notes. But cp. also LÜDERS (1951), 318f., taking *ándhas* here as in other passages as "Soma".

knowledge¹⁶⁶. GELDNER points out that the cow could be a metaphor for the earth¹⁶⁷. The secret teaching is continued - however not any more in direct speech - in the next stanza, where the cosmological structure (three heavens - three earths - the sun) is explained¹⁶⁸. By learning the secrets on the process of this journey, *Vasiṣṭha* is made *ṛṣi* by *Vāruṇa*¹⁶⁹. In the pattern of the religious structures of shamanism, one can also give a convincing interpretation of the allusions in hymn 7.89., the clear evidence of which is covered by the moralizing parts (refrain in c.d. of stanzas 3. and 5.). Leaving aside these parts, this passage deserves a closer examination. Traditionally the hymn is interpreted in connection to the dropsy of *Vasiṣṭha*¹⁷⁰, which admittedly is not mentioned elsewhere in the RV and so has to be ascribed to a younger tradition. As soon as one is

166 7.87.4. *uvāca me vāruṇo médhirāya trīṣ saptā nāmāghnyā bibharti; vidvān padāsya gūhyā nā vocad yugāya vipra uparāya śikṣan* (GELDNER: "Mir, dem Weisen, hat Varuṇa kundgetan: "Die Kuh führt dreimal sieben Namen. Wer der rechten Spur (des Wortes) kundig ist, soll sie [Anm.2: die Namen] wie Geheimnisse lehren, wenn er dem späteren Geschlecht nützlich sein will.")

167 GELDNER - and with him VELANKAR (1963), 192 - refers to Naigh.1.1., where are listed 21 names for *pṛthivī*, beginning with *gauḥ*. It could also be, that the cow signifies in a broader sense the "primeval matter" unfolding in the cosmogonic process into earth, atmosphere and heaven and these three again divided into three ranges (cp. LÜDERS (1951), 57). The earth described or named as a cow is found also as well in other ie. and non-ie. mythologies: e.g. the north-Germanic cow *Auðumla* (cp. SIMEK (1984), 29b.). A word-magical aspect in this passage is pointed out by LÜDERS (1959), 521ff.

168 5. *tisrō dyāvo nṛhitā antār asmin tisrō bhūmīr uparāḥ śāḍvidhānāḥ; gṛtso rājā vāruṇas cakra etāṃ divī preṅkhāṃ hiranyāyaṃ śubhé kām* (GELDNER: "Drei Himmel ruhen in ihm, drei Erden, die darunter sind, zu sechsen geordnet. Der geschickte König Varuṇa hat für sich diese goldene Schaukel [the sun] zum Prangen an den Himmel gebracht."). Cp. RENO (1960), 24: "Reprise des énigmes" [from stanza 4] and LÜDERS (1951), 57ff.

169 Obviously GELDNER too sees indications of an initiation here, when he calls the showing of sun and darkness a "Schaustück, das die Weihe zum *Ṛṣi* vorbereitet." and notices: "Das Wesen eines *Ṛṣi* besteht darin, daß er die Weltwunder und Göttergeheimnisse mit dem inneren Auge schaut. Die *Ṛṣimachung* wird hier ganz sinnlich geschrieben. Der Gott führt ihm die Wunder persönlich vor und macht ihn durch Anschauen seiner Herrlichkeiten (...) zum Seher." (ad 4b.). See also RENO (1960), 25: "Création d'un *Ṛṣi*, comme résultat d'une initiation."

170 GELDNER, 256: "Der an Wassersucht (...) erkrankte *Vasiṣṭha* fühlt sich in den Schlingen des *Varuṇa* gefangen und sucht sich mit allen Künsten der Sophistik davon loszureden und von jeder bewußten Sünde rein zu waschen." *Sāyana* remarkably does not know anything about dropsy but only annotates to *mṛmmāyaṃ grhāṃ*, that it is the house of *Varuṇa* (*tvadiyaṃ grhāṃ*); this probably goes after the myth also related in BD.6.11.-15.; to stanza 2. (... *prasphurān iva dhṛit nā dhmatō* ...) *Sāyana* only gives the somewhat helpless remark "shaking of fear from you [*Varuṇa*], filled up with wind like a hose ..." and to stanza 3. obviously the mention of the ocean in 7.88.3. (and maybe in 7.87.1. and 6.) is the starting point for his interpretation, that salt water is causing the thirst. It is of course possible that from the same helplessness towards the specifics of the hymn the "dropsy" came involved in the interpretation (the house made of clay = urn or grave (1.), shivering, state of inflation (2.), thirst (4.) seen as symptoms of the disease).

departing from the exclusive "disease"-scheme¹⁷¹, one arrives at the possibility of analyzing 7.89. in the light of "shamanistic" techniques - elsewhere in vedic literature indicated by terms such as *tapas* and *dīkṣā*. The refrain c.d. ... *mṛṣā sukṣatra mṛṣāya* ("... forgive, o thou endowed with good sovereignty, cause forgiveness.") can be ignored in this context as a typical *Varuṇa*-topos - as already pointed out above.

The information, one gets from 7.89.1., 2. and 4. can be interpreted as indicating initial rites: 1. *mó sú varuṇa mṛnmáyam gṛhām rājann ahám gamam ...* 2. *yád émi prasphuránn iva dṛtir ná dhmātó adriṇaḥ ...* 4. *apám mádhye tasthivámsam tṛṣṇāvidaj jaritāram ...* (1. I do not want to go, o *Varuṇa*, into the house made of clay ... 2. when I move like shaking¹⁷², inflated like a hose, o stone-armed¹⁷³ ... 4. thirst has befallen the singer who is standing in midst of the water ...). The "house made of clay" is in GELDNER's opinion the "Urne, in der die Gebeine beigesetzt wurden"¹⁷⁴. Also possible however - and not contradicting GELDNER's opinion - is the interpretation that the "house made of clay" means a clay hut for an initiation or a hut dug into the earth¹⁷⁵ - as in the *dīkṣā* -, in which the initiate retreats. Symbolically it could suggest that, similar to the cosmic journey of *Bṛghu* conducted by *Varuṇa* (see below), the journey to heaven begins with a descent to the underworld¹⁷⁶. There, "in midst of the water", the singer is attacked by thirst, he feels inflated like a dry¹⁷⁷ hose¹⁷⁸ and falls into convulsion (*prasphurán*); thirst, the feeling of

¹⁷¹ More exactly: an interpretation exclusively under the aspect of disease, for "ritual" diseases (and death) of course play an important role in initiation-ceremonies (ELIADE (1975), 43ff., MOTZKI (1977), 87) and could have formed a connecting link to the younger "dropsy"-interpretation.

¹⁷² RENO (1959), 72, translates "*sautillant*", to weak for the context, even toning down in (1960), 27: "*lançant (les pieds) en avant*".

¹⁷³ GELDNER translates "*Herr des Steins*". For this word *adriṇaḥ* none of the usual interpretations and translations give an explanation; GELDNER only remarks: "*adriṇaḥ, sonst nur Beiwort des Indra, fällt hier auf.*" This epitheton certainly must be brought into connection with *ásman* in 7.88.2.: this epitheton could easily be transferred from *Indra*, who in the *Vṛtra*- or *Paṇi*-myth breaks up the rocks for the waters or the cows, on *Varuṇa* as the expert and therefore authority of the sun, who by nighttime is enclosed into the rock or stone. This again underlines the inner connection of the stanzas from 7.87. - 89..

¹⁷⁴ Probably based on the *bahuvrīhi bhúmigr̥ha* in AV.5.30.14. and on ZIMMER's remark ((1879), 407). RENO (1960), 27, points out, that the "house" (*gṛhā*) forms a regular motif in this group of hymns (ad. 7.88.5.).

¹⁷⁵ On the function of caverns (underworld, transgression to another world) in shamanistic initiation-rites cp. ELIADE (1975), 60f.

¹⁷⁶ On rareness of trips to the underworld in indian tradition cp. ELIADE (1975), 398f. A similar sequence of the "journey" is well-known in DANTE's "*Divina comedia*".

¹⁷⁷ For the most parts hoses only can be inflated when they are dry, this fact being contradictory to the symptoms of "dropsy", requiring bloatedness (with some kind of liquid).

¹⁷⁸ See also the well-known comparison of the frogs in RV.7.103.2. with dry hoses.

dryness in spite of humidity, leads to the conclusion that steam-huts¹⁷⁹ were used - as they often are in rites of initiation - to enforce and accelerate the ecstatic state of the initiate.

The meaning of the *dikṣā* is that of a rebirth or new birth of the *yajamāna*; consequently, before a rebirth there is death, dying. This delivers a perfect framework for 7.89.: it seems that here is depicted such a ritual death or burial in an initiation-hut¹⁸⁰ so common and essential in shamanism, after which there is the rebirth of the *ṛṣi*. Even the prohibitive in stanza 1. (*mó ... gamam ...*) does not contradict the forthbrought interpretation: it is clear and also proveable elsewhere that an initiate does not undergo such an initiation deliberately¹⁸¹. Also RV.7.88.5. fits into this context: *kvā tyāni nau sakhyā babhūvuḥ śacāvāhe yād avrkām purā cit; brhāntam mānam varuṇa svadhāvaḥ sahāsradvāram jagamā gṛhām te* ("Where are these our friendships, as we were together without hatred¹⁸² before; I have gone into your huge building, [your] house with a thousand doors, o independent Varuṇa."). The huge building, the house with a thousand doors¹⁸³ is probably identical with the *mṛmāyam gṛhām* in 7.89.1.¹⁸⁴. Because the initiate *Vasiṣṭha* goes into this house only unwillingly (7.89.1.), 7.88.5.cd. goes together with ab.¹⁸⁵ and stanzas 6. and 7., which speak of offences against *Varuṇa* and of inanimosity without any problem - without the contortions of the younger tradition¹⁸⁶; but on the whole it is adapted to the moralizing ductus of the *Varuṇa*-hymns. The problem regarding content can be settled. We refer here to the comparison or even the identification of the house with a thousand doors of *Varuṇa* with a house made of clay. It is a case of early ritual identification, for in the earth-house begins the journey to heaven, being so identified with one of the main points of the vision, the god's house, which could be the rock (*āśman*) of 7.88.2.¹⁸⁷.

The whole complex taken together - including the cosmographical conceptions in 7.87.5. and the symbolism of the numbers in this hymn (7

¹⁷⁹ Esp. indian and north-european, but also found elsewhere (ELIADE (1975), 320f.).

¹⁸⁰ See ELIADE (1975), 74.

¹⁸¹ In real shamanism there is a "vocation" preceding the initiation (ELIADE (1975), 22ff.). MOTZKI (1977), 87, expressively points out, that "die Berufung ... in fast allen Fällen ausgesprochenen Zwangscharakter [trägt]; der Betroffene kann sich den Forderungen der Geister nicht entziehen, ohne daran zugrunde zu gehen."

¹⁸² For *avrkām* cp. HIERSCHE (1965), 168ff.

¹⁸³ *Sahāsradvāram gṛhām* as house of *Varuṇa* is only to be verified here (MACDONELL (1898), 23).

¹⁸⁴ RENO (1960), 26 and 27.

¹⁸⁵ Notice the same tempus *babhūvuḥ* and *jagāma*. For the present *śacāvāhe* together with *purā* cp. HIERSCHE (1965), 170, note 22.

¹⁸⁶ See GELDNER's introduction to this group of hymns.

¹⁸⁷ This is the interpretation of LÜDERS (1951), 318.

names / 6 levels of the world) - leads to an initiation-ritual with clearly shamanistic features¹⁸⁸. In this way one gets a coherent scheme from 7.87. until 7.89., which is of course "brahmanized" and moralizing. It is to be born in mind that *Vasiṣṭha*, as a worshiper or *Varuṇa*, is easily connected with that god he admires most - *Varuṇa*. Thereby the hymns take on some stereotypical or topical characteristics of the *Varuṇa*-hymns: the man's guilt, the punishment and the cords or fetters¹⁸⁹ of *Varuṇa*, and so on¹⁹⁰.

An essential point, which could oppose the above interpretation, is that the typical feature in a shamanistic journey to heaven consists in it being accomplished by the shaman's own power and capability, or with the help of an auxiliary spirit. In RV.7.86.ff., the role of this spirit could only be fulfilled by *Varuṇa*. But this god holds such an eminent position¹⁹¹ in the ṛgvedic pantheon, that he can scarcely be identified with a shamanistic auxiliary spirit. But, at least, in a certain contrast to this objection stands the epithetic hapax leg. *yakṣin* in 7.88.6. bringing *Varuṇa* into the sphere of visions, of ghosts. GELDNER translates "*Geheimnisvoller*", RENOUE "*(dieu) qui régis le mal*" and VELANKAR - not very illuminating - "*lord of the Yakṣas*". All the translations and commentaries¹⁹² try hard to make the word fit into the context they presuppose. The word however seems to be transferred from stanzas depicting the journey to heaven to mechanically moralizing *Varuṇa*-stanzas¹⁹³.

In the same way, the shamanistic seer or initiator *Vasiṣṭha* belongs to the "superstratum"¹⁹⁴ of vedic religiosity, and not to the religiously substratic or heterodox sphere the *mūni* of RV.10.136. has to be counted to. This does not speak against a shamanistic interpretation of the hymns 7.87.,

¹⁸⁸ Cp. the strikingly similar procedure of an initiation of Caribbean shamans: "*Der Novize zittert an allen Gliedern und glaubt, daß die bösen Geister in ihn eingedrungen sind und seinen Körper zerreißen* [in the RV.: thirst and the feeling of being inflated] (*das wohlbekanntes Initiationsmotiv der Zerstückelung des Körpers durch die Dämonen*). Zuletzt fühlt sich der Lehrling in die Himmel getragen und genießt himmlische Visionen (...)" (ELIADE (1975), 134).

¹⁸⁹ Even if ELIADE (1975), 399f., points out the parallels between binding gods and the ropes and lassos of shamans - probably influenced by his sympathy with the theory of DUMÉZIL of *Varuṇa* as a "shamanic" god - the fetters here are only metaphors for the punishment of sins by *Varuṇa*.

¹⁹⁰ That kind of characteristics can also be found in originally shamanistic séances of the altaian tribes; see e.g. the invocation of the *Bai Ülġän* (ELIADE (1975), 191f.).

¹⁹¹ See representatively GÜNTERT (1923).

¹⁹² Cp. e.g. GELDNER, note to 6c., and RENOUE (1960), 26.

¹⁹³ The epitheton *vīpra* also does not fit to this passage, and could be brought in form stanza 4.

¹⁹⁴ Cp. MACDONELL / KEITH (1912), p.274 - 277, s.v. *Vasiṣṭha*. On the position and historical development of *Vasiṣṭha* in Indian religion see DANDEKAR (1970), who sees *Vasiṣṭha* connected with the formation of the later *bhakti*, so putting him clearly into the range of advanced religion. A different view is found in VELANKAR (1963), p.IV, who also points out the magic aspect in the 7th Maṇḍala (p.XIff.). For historicity of *Vasiṣṭha* and for his role in the "*battle of the ten kings*" see SHARMA (1975), for later legends cp. MANI (1975), col.834a. ff., s.v.

7.88. and 7.89., for in every advanced religion, so-called "primitive elements"¹⁹⁵ are found, here being of shamanistic-ecstatic nature and being adopted into the framework of vedic religion, and by this process being reinterpreted.

Before continuing with the discussion of RV7.87.-89. I would like to discuss two other cases of shamanistic journeys to yonder worlds in the younger vedic tradition.

Excursion 2: The journey to the yonder world of *Bhṛgu*

If one speaks of journeys to heaven or to the yonder world in the vedic tradition, one cannot omit the journey to the yonder world of *Bhṛgu*, mainly because up to now this is the only clearly stated and acknowledged example of an ecstatic journey to the yonder world¹⁹⁶, and specifically because there is a close connection to *Varuṇa*, too. Up to this moment no interpretation or translation has pointed out the connection to RV.7.86.ff.¹⁹⁷ However, if one regards the myth from the standpoint of "shamanism", some features which might normally be explained only with difficulties, become clearer, and by selecting out the doubtless younger ritualistic and "ethic" ingredients¹⁹⁸ it is possible to crystallize an "original form" of the myth, bearing the characteristics of an initiation with a trip to the yonder world¹⁹⁹.

The story is found in JB.1.42. - 44. and - with variations²⁰⁰ - in ŚB. 11.6.1.1. - 13.. The question which version is the original, which one is the giving and which one is the taking, has been answered differently²⁰¹, and can only be decided definitely if one conclusive interpretation is tried and simultaneously the kernel of the myth comes out.

As was already emphasized, a journey to the yonder world(s) takes place in the story, being anticipated by an initiation-ritual. The journey however

¹⁹⁵ E.g., there are beside the "Great Tradition" in Chinese Buddhism phenomenons, which can be considered as shamanistic: ZÜRCHER (1982), esp. the example on p.165f.

¹⁹⁶ ELIADE (1975), 399: "*einzig klar bezeugte Fall einer ekstatischen Jenseitsreise*".

¹⁹⁷ Cp. the survey on earlier translations and interpretations, the translation of the JB.-version and the commentary of BODEWITZ (1973), 99 - 109. The translation and interpretation of RUBEN (1947), 254, only uses the ŚB-version and does not strictly follow the text.

¹⁹⁸ See WEBER (1855), 241, DEUSSEN (1922), 292. and LOMMEL (1950), 100.

¹⁹⁹ ELIADE (1975), 399, "[Es] ... *läßt sich noch das Schema einer Initiations-Jenseitsreise entziffern, wie es von ritualistischen Zirkeln wiederaufgegriffen und neu interpretiert wurde.*"

²⁰⁰ Vgl. KEITH (1925), 474, and the summary in BODEWITZ (1973), 101.

²⁰¹ See BODEWITZ (1973), 100ff., who himself considers the ŚB as primary and the JB as secondary (102 and 105, note 2); but cp. BODEWITZ (1990), 23: "*The interrelation between the two passages is not quite clear.*".

is only found in the JB²⁰²: *Bhṛguḥ ha vāruṇir anūcāna āsa; sa hāty eva pītaram mane 'ti devān aty anyān brāhmaṇān anūcānān; sa ha varuṇa ikṣām cakre na vai me putraḥ kiṃ cana prajānāti; hantainam prajāṇāpayānīti; tasya ha prāṇān abhijagrāha; sa ha tatāma; sa ha tāntaḥ param lokam*²⁰³ *jagāma; sa hāmuṣmin loka ājagāma; ...* ("Bhṛgu, the son of Varuṇa, was learned; he thought himself superior to his father, to the gods and to other learned brāhmaṇas; the father Varuṇa realized: "My son does not know anything; well, I will have him know." Then he took his breath; thereupon this one [Bhṛgu] lost consciousness; then this one without consciousness went to the other world; he came to the yonder world. ...")

The hubris of *Bhṛgu* in the story certainly is not original, for both versions do not refer to it again²⁰⁴. In the JB., *Bhṛgu* is called a learned (*anūcāna*²⁰⁵) *brāhmaṇa*, while in ŚB.11.6.1.7. it is emphasized, that *Bhṛgu* is a *brahmacārīn*, a student of the Veda²⁰⁶. It seems, that the ŚB. by that preserved a hint of the original status of an initiate of *Bhṛgu*, for the *brahmacārīn* runs through an initiation-ritual bearing shamanistic features²⁰⁷. This reminds us of the *brahmacārīn*-hymn AV.11. 5.15., where *Varuṇa* is the teacher of a *brahmacārīn* (... *ācāryò bhūtvā vāruṇaḥ* ...). The *brahmacārīn* is called the friend (*mitrā*) [of *Varuṇa*] or *Varuṇa*'s companion *Mitra*²⁰⁸, corresponding to his position in the hymn. It is striking that everywhere, in RV.7.88., in the *Bhṛgu*-myth and in the *brahmacārīn*-hymn of the AV, is indicated a close connection to *Varuṇa*: friend (RV.7.88.6.: *sākhi*, AV. *mitrā*)²⁰⁹, student (AV, derived for *Bhṛgu*

202 *Varuṇa*, punishing the hubris of *Bhṛgu*, the taking of the breath (= vital power) and the terrible visions of *Bhṛgu* - compared to that the ŚB.-version, in which *Varuṇa* sends *Bhṛgu* into different directions, seems like a neutralized copy.

203 In the *Second Revised Edition* of RAGHU VIRA is printed *param loka* which of course should be read *param lokam* (BODEWITZ (1973), 105, Note 4).

204 In JB.1.43. *Varuṇa*, not at all described as angry, only asks *Bhṛgu* after his return: ... *āgas tātā iti; āgām tateti; adarśas tātā iti; adarśam tateti; kiṃ tātā iti* [conjecture: BODEWITZ, 106, note 14] ... ("... "have you arrived, my son?" [asked *Varuṇa*]; "I have arrived, father." [answered *Bhṛgu*]; "have you seen, my son?"; "I have seen, father." ...")

205 BODEWITZ (1973), 102, translates "was devoted to learning", according to his view, that *Bhṛgu* originally (ŚB.) was a *brahmacārīn*, but *anūcāna āsa* here means rather "he was learned" (cp. DELBRÜCK (1888), 380 and 381).

206 ... *tām ha pītovācādhiṣva svādhyāyam kasmān nū svādhyāyam nādhiṣa iti* ... ("... the father [*Varuṇa*] asked him: "Learn your lesson. Why don't you learn your lesson?")

207 Ritual rebirth (AV.11.5.3.; ŚB.11.5.3.16.), the observances of taciturnity, fasting, weakening, sexual abstinence, production of inner heat (*tāpas*, AV.11.5.26.), which are supposed to endow the *brahmacārīn* with a cosmic power (AV.11.5.); cp. OLDENBERG (1923), 410ff., HEESTERMAN (1957), 118f., GONDA (1978), 109f., GONDA (1965), 235, 284ff.

208 There is certainly - in spite of the masc. *mitrāḥ* - an intended ambiguity: friend and *Mitrā*.

209 Also cp. MantraB.2.6.5. (cited after GONDA (1965), 296): *yathā samudram sravantiḥ samavayanti diśo diśaḥ; evam mā sakhāyo brahmacārīṇaḥ samavayantu diśo diśaḥ* ... ("like the rivers from all directions come together to the sea, so [my] friends may come together, the *brahmacārīns*, to me from all directions.")

from ŚB.); starting from this fact, they seem to almost be blood-relatives: *Bhṛgu* becomes the son of *Varuṇa*²¹⁰, just as the *brahmacārin* was sometimes the son of the *ācārya*²¹¹, or was taken for foster son²¹².

It is definitely no coincidence that in RV.7.88. *Varuṇa* accompanies *Vasiṣṭha* on a journey to heaven and in the *Bhṛgu*-myth again it is *Varuṇa* who causes and stimulates the journey to the yonder world, even if he does not accompany the "traveller". In spite of differences in content, both myths show structural parallels: the travel to the yonder world, which in the *Bhṛgu*-myth is multiplied, "systemized" and ritualized in a typical Brāhmaṇa-manner; the allusions to an initiation-rite with disease (RV), subsequently loss of consciousness (*Bhṛgu*), the achievement of special knowledge.

The visions of dismemberment and cannibalism²¹³, interpreted in the *Bhṛgu*-myth as, on the one hand proof of the conception of repayment of the deeds of a relatively early time²¹⁴, and on the other hand taken as a hint of the conceptions of the yonder world, where the situations and relations of this world are reversed²¹⁵, gain a new spectrum of meaning in connection with shamanistic initiation-rites. If one concedes that *Bhṛgu* is carrying out a journey to the yonder world after an initiation on the shamanistic model, then the visions of *Bhṛgu* also show typical shamanistic motifs: the dismemberment²¹⁶ and the river-motif²¹⁷.

²¹⁰ For other references see MACDONELL / KEITH (1912), 109, note 1. and 2..

²¹¹ Cp. ŚB(M).1.6.2.4., respect. ŚB(K).2.5.4.5. (M) ... [*yajñō 'nūcyate*] *pītaivā putrāya brahmacāriṇe* ("... [*this sacrifice*] is taught, [*as*] the father verily [*teaches the sacrifice*] to the sun as a *brahmacārin*.")) or the relationship *Svetaketu* : *Aruṇi* (KU.).

²¹² Cp. MOOKERJI (1951), 101, and GONDA (1965), 231. For GONDA the meaning of the ban on a student from marrying the daughter of his teacher and vice-versa consists in the "right of succession on the strength of spiritual relationship". That may well be, but this ban also shows how pragmatically the father-son-relation between student and teacher was seen: what was forbidden for real blood-relatives (JOLLY (1896), 63),, was also forbidden for foster-sons and those considered as.

²¹³ JB.1.42. *sa hāmuṣmin loka ājagāma; puruṣa eva puruṣam saṃvr̥ścyāthainaṃ jaghāsa; ... dvitīyam hājagāma; puruṣa eva puruṣam ākrandayantaṃ jaghāsa; ... tṛtīyam hājagāma; puruṣa eva puruṣam .tūṣṇīm avyāharantaṃ jaghāsa; .* ("... he went to that world; [there] a man tore apart [another] man and ate him; ... he then went to the second [world]; [there] a man ate [another] man who was screaming; ... he then went to the third [world]; [there] a man ate [another] man who was silent and not speaking ...") The ŚB shows a certain inconsequence and in composition (and swelling of the subject) because the differences between the four cases of cannibalism are not in the same category: in 11.6.1.3. and 4. the way of dismembering is emphasized (3.: ... *parvaśāḥ saṃvr̥ścam parvaśō* ... ("... *hewing off the limbs one by one* ..." EGGELING) and 4: ... *parvaśāḥ saṃkārtaṃ parvaśō* ... ("cutting up their limbs one by one" EGGELING)), but in 5. and 6. - different from JB. - both, those who are eaten and those who eat - are silent, resp. screaming (5. ... *puruṣaiḥ puruṣāṃs tūṣṇīm āsināṃs tūṣṇīm āsinair adyāmānān* ... 6. ... *puruṣaiḥ puruṣāṃs ākrandāyata ākrandāyadbhir adyāmānān* ...).

²¹⁴ Cp. KEITH (1925), 410, 413 and 474; EGGELING SBE.44, XIV and 108, note 3.; different LOMMEL (1950), 100f. and (1950 / 54), 201, BODEWITZ (1973), 100.

²¹⁵ LOMMEL (1950), 99ff. and (1950 / 54).

²¹⁶ For examples see ELIADE (1975), 46ff., 54ff., 62ff.

This myth is certainly the kernel, and is the motivation for the story of the instruction of *Bṛgu* by *Varuṇa* in the *Bṛguvallī* of the *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* (3.3.1.-6.), even if here a *upaniṣad*-like transformation of the contents toward philosophical tendency took place and a shift from the form of a frame-story away from the cruel journey to the yonder world²¹⁸: *Bṛgu* has no visions any more, *Varuṇa* explains to him the meaning of *brahman* only in words. Nevertheless, the hints of the practical means for achieving this knowledge are interesting: *Bṛgu* is supposed to practice *tapas*²¹⁹, and *tapas*, asceticism, has many similarities with shamanistic (initiation-)techniques²²⁰. In still younger times *Bṛgu* is even more reduced and only known as the bearer of special knowledge, as e.g. in the *Yoga(!)-Upaniṣad Cūlikā-Upaniṣad* 11. or in the philosophically important *Bṛgubharadvājasamvāda* in *MBh.* 12.183 - 187²²¹.

Excursion 3: The journey to the yonder world of *Naciketas*

The oldest version of this legend is preserved in the *TB.3.11.8.*, a younger version of the same school in *KU.*²²². It is the aitiological legend of the origin of the *Nāciketasa*-fire of sacrifice, the story of *Naciketas*, the son of the brahman *Vājaśravasa*, who is given to the personification of death, who grants the boy three wishes = questions. *TB.* here shows its originality by the questions of *Naciketas*: 1. asking to return safe and alive to his

217 *JB.1.42.* ... *pañcamam hājagāma; lohita-kulyāṃ ca ghṛta-kulyāṃ ca .prabāhuk syandamāne; ... ṣaṣṭhaṃ hājagāma; pañca nadīḥ puṣkariṇīḥ puṇḍarikīṇīḥ madhūdakās syandamānāḥ ...* ("... he went to the fifth (yonder world), to a creek of blood and a creek of ghee, flowing in a row; ... he went to the sixth (yonder world), to five rivers, flowing into a pond of blue lotus and into a pond of white lotus (filled with) honey-water ..."). For other examples see *op.cit.*, 206, 231, 297ff., 366 (germ. *Haddingus*).

218 RUBEN (1947), 254. RUBEN (253f.) considers the common features of both *Varuṇas* in *ŚB* and *TU* to be the strange way of teaching ("*eigenartige Lehrmethode*") the origin of which is not clear. At least the two stories of the *Brāhmaṇas* can be explained in a structural pattern of "shamanistic initiation with a journey to yonder world" (see below). The connection between both stories (*ŚB*, *TU*) is further supported by the number five (visions of *Bṛgu*, resp. explanations by *Varuṇa*) (BODEWITZ (1973), 101). Another motif transferred from the *Brāhmaṇas* is probably that of "eating" or "food" (*anna*) in *TU.3.3.2.*, which in 7. is carried out in the used style of the younger *anna*-speculations, originating from - "purified" - the cannibalistic visions of the *Brāhmaṇas*. The *ŚB.*, however, does not mention the "eating" but only the dividing (3. and 4.), or uses the more neutral Verb *√ad-* (5. and 6.) like in the *TU.*, where the *JB* has the more rude *√ghās-*.

219 On the value of *tapas* here cp. DEUSSEN (1922), 64.

220 ELIADE (1975), 392ff., and ELIADE (1985), 114ff.

221 See FRAUWALLNER (1953), 124ff. and 266f.

222 DEUSSEN, (1897), 262ff.; KEITH (1925), 499. and 440f. against DEUSSEN's view of the priority of *KU.* over *TB.*

father (*pitaram eva jivann ayāni*); 2. asking about richness and sacrifice (*iṣṭāpūrte*) 3. asking for the conquest of repeated death (*punarmṛtyor apacitim*).

The text reads as follows:

3.11.52. *uśān ha vāi vājāśravasas sarvavedasām dadau; tāsya ha nāciketā nāma putrā āsa; tām ha kumārām sántam; dáksīnāsu nīyāmānāsu śraddhā viveśa; sá hovāca; tata kāsmāi mām dāsyasīti; dvitīyam ṛṭīyam; tām ha párita uvāca; mṛtyāve tvā dadāmīti; tām ha smóthitam vāg abhivadati.*

53. *gautama kumārām íti; sá hovāca; párehi mṛtyór gṛhān; mṛtyāve vāi tvādām íti; tām vāi pravásantam gantāsīti hovāca; tāsya sma tísro rátrīr ánāśvān gṛhé vasatāt; sá yádi tvā pṛcchét; kúmāra káti rátrīr avāthsīr íti; tísra íti práti brūtāt; kīm prathamām rátrim āśnā íti.* 54. *prajām ta íti; kīm dvitīyam íti; paśúmś ta íti; kīm ṛṭīyam íti; sādhuṛtyām ta íti; tām vāi pravásantam jagāma; tāsya ha tísro rátrīr ánāśvān gṛhá uvāsa; tām āgātya papraccha; kúmāra káti rátrīr avāthsīr íti; tísra íti prátyuvāca.* 55. *kīm prathamām rátrim āśnā íti; prajām ta íti; kīm dvitīyam íti; paśúmś ta íti; kīm ṛṭīyam íti; sādhuṛtyām ta íti; nāmas te astu bhagava íti hovāca; váram vṛṇīśvétī; pitāram evā jivann ayānīti; dvitīyam vṛṇīśvétī.* 56. *iṣṭāpūrtāyor me kṣitim brūhīti hovāca; tasmai haitām agnīm nāciketām uvāca; tato vāi tāsyeṣṭāpūrté náksīyete; nāsyestāpūrté kṣiyete; yó `gnīm nāciketām cinuté; yá u cainam evām véda; ṛṭīyam vṛṇīśvétī; punarmṛtyór me `pacitim brūhīti hovāca; tasmai haitām agnīm nāciketām uvāca; tato vāi sópa punarmṛtyúm ajayat.* 57. *āpa punarmṛtyúm jayati; yó `gnīm nāciketām cinuté; yá u cainam evām véda; ...* ("52. Willingly Vājaśravasa gave all his belongings [away]; he had a son called Naciketas; into him as he was was [still] a boy a strong religious feeling entered him when the cows for the sacrifice were led [to the sacrifice]; he said: 'Father! To whom will you give me?'; [he asked] a second, a third [time]; [his father] answered him, seized [by his feelings²²³]: 'I give you to Death.' After he had risen, a voice spoke to him: 'Gautama, [give me] the boy!' he said [to Naciketas]: 'Go to the houses of Death! I gave you to Death.' 'You will go to him, who has gone out.' 'You shalt stay three nights long in his house without eating [anything]. If he asks you: 'Boy, how many nights have you stayed [here]?' 'Three.' shalt you answer. [He will ask:] 'What did you eat in the first night?'; [you shalt answer:] '[Your] offspring.' 'What in the second?' '[Your] cattle.' 'What in the third?' '[Your] good deeds.' [Naciketas] went to him who has gone out and stayed three nights long in his house without eating [anything]. [Death] having come [back] asked him: 'Boy, how many nights have you stayed [here]?' He answered: 'Three.' 55.

223 These feelings - whatever they are - are not anger or wrath but the ambiguous feelings of the father who knows that he has to give his son to death in the initiation-rite but hesitates to do it. That is why Naciketas has to adress and ask him three times and why the voice has to remind him of his duty.

'What did you eat in the first night?'; [you shalt answer:] '[Your] offspring.' 'What in the second?' '[Your] cattle.' 'What in the third?' '[Your] good deeds.' [Then Death said:] 'Homage to thee, venerable. Choose a wish.' 'I want to go to my father alive.' 'Choose a second.' 56. 'Tell me the place²²⁴ of sacrifice and good work.' [Death] told him about this Nāciketa-fire. Thereby his sacrifice and good work were not destroyed²²⁵. - Sacrifice and good work of the one who piles up the Nāciketa-fire, knows it, are not destroyed. - 'Choose a third.' 'Tell me the decrease of repeated death.'²²⁶ [Naciketas] said. [Death] told him about this Nāciketa-fire; thereby he conquered repeated death. The one, who piles up the Nāciketa-fire, knows it, conquers repeated death ...").

The expression *śraddhā viveśa* is striking. In the given context it seems better not to translate *śraddhā* as "faith", but more generally with "strong religious feeling": the boy, the chosen initiate for this rite, is grasped by feelings of devotion, self-abandon, the desire to give himself away²²⁷, and this feeling is so strong that he can not escape it, it seizes him (√viś). The ceremony of the (ritual) death of the boy is not described in the "orthodoxized" form of the story but could have been similar to that of the *dīkṣā*, especially because *śraddhā* stands in close relation to the *dīkṣā* and to *tapas*²²⁸. His father, probably knowing from his own experience what to do in the situation of (ritual) death, tells him how he has to react.

The text shows some clear hints of an initiation rite of the shamanistic type. Even if the constituent element of ecstasy is lacking - as ELIADE points out²²⁹ - it seems clear that *Naciketas* is running through an initiation-ceremony with (ritual) death, being revived (1st wish) and the achievement of special knowlegde (2nd and 3rd wishes) - characteristics so common in shamanism. That it is really an initiation is indicated by the fact that *Naciketas* is called *kumārā* indicating that he is not fully inte-

224 *ksiti* with the comm.. DEUSSENS rendering "die Nichtversiegung" is taken from the following passage (... *nākṣiyete* ...) and of course it is possible that an *avagraha* was elided after *me*, but the passage as a whole is punning with *na-ciketa* and derivations of √kṣi an amiguity of [a-]kṣiti could have been intended.

225 Following the commentary *na-akṣiyetām* 2.du.imperf.pass. This form makes sense, because the phrase still is to be taken to the story (*tasya* against *asya*), before the general statement *nāsyestāpūrté kṣiyete, yó ...* comes, where the present is justified.

226 I.e.: "Tell me how to overcome the cycle of repeated death."

227 This fits to several semantic fields of *śraddhā* KÖHLER (1973) and HACKER (1963) have pointed out. I agree with HACKER, op.cit., 158, against KÖHLERs "Spendenfreudigkeit" (op.cit., 42): *Naciketas* does not want to be given to death because he thinks that he is "des Vaters liebster Besitz" (p.43), but wants to know whom he will be given in the ceremony - and the father already knows to whom he will give him (... *mṛtyāve tvā dadāmi* ...), has already promised death before (... *mṛtyāve vāi tvādām iti*).

228 Cp. KÖHLER, op.cit., 27ff.

229 ELIADE (1975), p.399.

grated into the cult-society of the male adults (sc. *brahmans*) from the very beginning. But Death calls him *bhagavat*, an honorable title and is paying homage to him, after the boy has passed the ceremony of initiation by answering the questions of Death. After that he is ready to receive first permission to go back to this world (1st wish) and then the special knowlegde of the place of sacrifice and good work and how to defeat repeated death (*punarmṛtyu*).

Death is acting as a kind of auxilliary spirit. In TB. *mṛtyu* is not called by his name (*Yama* or *Vaivasvata* as in KU.1.1.5.7.) and so leaves it open to what extent death is already the mighty personified deity and king of the yonder world of the later pantheon.

A very important shamanistic element of the story is the fact that *Naciketas* has not been eating for three nights; even if the text does not speak expressively of ecstasy, after three nights or days of fasting, the experience or vision of one`s own death presupposes the achievement of some special mental stage.

Another passage in the myth which remains unclear outside the patterns of a shamanistic journey to the yonder world is the fact that *Naciketas`* father orders the boy not to eat for three nights - a precondition for achieving the state of death - which he actually does. Asked by Death what he has eaten, however, he answers that in the first night he has eaten death`s offspring (*prajā*), in the second night death`s cattle (*paśú*) and in the third night death`s good deeds (*sādhukṛtyā*)²³⁰.

The fact that the father, *Vājaśravasa*, knows very well what to do in the house of Death shows that he has experienced a similar vision. The father then acts as a kind of advisor in the initiation-ritual, like old shamans towards their students²³¹. DEUSSEN`s interpretation of the father being angry is not justified by textual evidence²³²; *párita* here probably means that he is moved by his feelings when he gives his son away.

As in RV.7.87. we encounter the word *gṛhá* indicating the place where Death resides and this is striking because it could indicate the concrete use

²³⁰ The fact that KU. tries to give a more "reasonable" explanation why death grants three wishes to *Naciketas*, that the boy as a guest had stayed three days unfed in the death`s house (1.1.9.) shows only that this part was not fully understood. *Naciketas`* answers in TB. are reinterpreted in a ethico-ritual sense: because he was not treated properly as a guest, Death`s properties, good deeds and hopes could fade away, so he has to perform penance for this by granting three wishes. The originality of the TB. in this point is already proved by number three, while the KU. multiplies the items by even taking over the term *iṣṭāpūrte* of the 2nd wish of TB. which it does not need because of the change to the more philosophical-metaphysical questions *Naciketas* asks. So DEUSSEN`s opinion that the passage makes no sense (1897, 267, note 4) is not justified.

²³¹ Cp. the examples in ELIADE (1975), 22-33, especially the discussion on inherited and chosen shamanism (30ff.).

²³² (1922), 175f.: "Ihm antwortete [vom Zorn] ergriffen der Vater: "Dem Tod gebe ich dich." -"

of a initiation-hut²³³ in the *Naciketas*-story, making more plausible the above given interpretation of RV.7.87. *mṛṇmayām grhām* .

The interpretations of RV.7.87.-89. presented up to this point can be questioned as a catena of assumptions, esp. because of the lack of direct linguistical references to the phenomenon "ecstasy"²³⁴. There is, however, in the author's opinion, a close and direct connection between certain aspects of the ritual in later periods, which belong clearly to the small range of real ecstatic-shamanistic practices in the framework of brahmanistic ritual²³⁵.

4. Shamanistic elements in the *mahāvratā* and the connections with RV.7.87.-89.

This ritual is the *mahāvratā* or the celebration of midsummer (solstice). The element connecting this ritual and RV.7.87.ff. consists in the swing (*preṅkhā*). HILLEBRANDT²³⁶, OLDENBERG²³⁷ and ROLLAND²³⁸ have indicated this connection, but they were not able to give a satisfying explanation of the symbolic character of the swing, taking it for the sun and not explaining the original motif for its introduction.

More remarkably, the swing in the *mahāvratā* is not explained in the Brāhmanas for the *hotṛ* - AB and KB - but in the Āraṇyakas belonging to the RV²³⁹.

In the author's opinion, the swing is the key for the explanation of some dark features of the *mahāvratā*. However, bringing together this aspect of the ritual with RV.7.87.5. alone does not lead to a satisfying solution, and that is why the earlier interpretations of the *mahāvratā* had to fail in this point.

The swing is the sun, but this is quite natural in the complete framework of a solstice-ritual. Neither this equation nor the identification sun = ship is

²³³ KU.1.1.7. is a younger interpolation (DEUSSEN 1897, 267, note 2 and 3).

²³⁴ E.g. words like *tapas*, derivations from *√mad-*; see however *vīpra* "the inspired, enthusiastic" of *Varuṇa* in 7.88.4. and 6., translated to weakly by GELDNER as "Redekundiger". Better seems to be RENOUS (1959), 72, "inspiré" who considers this hymn as a "vision poétique" (1960), 24.

²³⁵ Cp GONDA (1978), 109; ELIADE (1985), 112ff.; for further shamanistic elements (*tapas*, *dikṣā*) cp. ELIADE (1975), 392 ff.

²³⁶ HILLEBRANDT (1889), 332.

²³⁷ OLDENBERG (1923), 443.: "Auf die Sonne, die im Rgveda (VII,87,5) "die goldene Schaukel am Himmel" genannt wird, scheint es auch zu gehen, daß einer der Priester auf einer Schaukel zu sitzen hat."

²³⁸ ROLLAND (1973), 58.

²³⁹ For a possible reason cp. FRIEDLAENDER (1900), 5.

found in the younger texts²⁴⁰, but there is nevertheless a missing link between the ritual and the hymns of the ṚV. If my above given interpretation of RV.7.88. is right and it is a poetic reference to a journey to heaven (of *Vasiṣṭha*) with shamanistic elements, it is quite natural that these shamanistic practices already expressed in the ṚV were the starting point for the connection of the swing - after all forming a central element of the ritual²⁴¹ - with the *mahāvratā*. This approach does not contradict the *mahāvratā* in its meaning of a solstice-ritual, for it has to be assumed that the ritual as a whole is the result of bringing together different, partly folkloric²⁴² pieces.

There can be no doubt of a connection between the *preñkhá* in ṚV. 7.87.5. and 7.88.3. and the swing in the ritual, for the equation ship-swing-sun in the vedic tradition is singular. This is particularly so if one considers the rareness of references of *preñkhá*²⁴³ and (*pra-*)*ṽiñkh-*²⁴⁴ in vedic texts.

For the appearance of the swing in the ritual one can presuppose the following development:

1. It continues an old ritual or an old ritual element (going back to RV.7.87. - 89).

2. RV.7.87. - 89. were the motif of a late construction of a ritual, being then incorporated into the whole complex of the *mahāvratā*.

If one reconsiders the mentioning of the swing in the older texts referring to the *mahāvratā*, its central position becomes clear at first glance. It is already mentioned in the oldest passages, in the prose-parts of the Yajurveda²⁴⁵ and in the Brāhmaṇas²⁴⁶.

KS.34.5. *āsandīm āruhyodgātā mahāvratēnodgāyati preñkham āruhya hotā mahaduktham anuśamsaty adhiṣṭhāne 'dhiṣṭhāyādhvaryū pratigrṇī-*

²⁴⁰ See the passages in KLAUS (1986), 119 - 142.

²⁴¹ ROLLAND (1973), 55: "... le Mahāvratā se présente comme un puzzle d'éléments hétéroclites, sans unités apparente, regroupés autour d'un noyau central constitué, en l'occurrence, par la "Grande Récitation" (*mahaduktha*) faite par le hotr sur la balançoire." ROLLAND does see the central position of the swing; however, he is not able to explain the original meaning and the origin (p.58). On the even more important position of the *mahāvratā* in older times cp. HILLEBRANDT (1889), 303f.

²⁴² OLDENBERG (1923), 443f.; GONDA (1978), 17 and 161f.

²⁴³ In the ṚV only in 7.87.5. and 7.88.3. Beside older *preñkhá* stands the younger dialectal *pleñkhá* (TS. u. TB.) (WACKERNAGEL I, 220; MACDONELL / KEITH (1912), II, 57, s.v. *pleñkha*).

²⁴⁴ In RV.7.88.3. intransitive. Beside that only used in the ṚV as transitive verb four times, three of whom are to found in the youngest portions (first half of the first and tenth Maṇḍala). The etymology is not clear (MAYRHOFER, s.v.). The rare usage of the root is also emphasized by the confusion of *ṽiñkh-* and *ṽiñkh-* (see WACKERNAGEL I, 104 and esp. *Nachträge*, 58 to 104,12f.). This fact is also shown by the DhP, teaching obvious alternative forms *ikha ikhi* (= *ṽiñkh-*) *ikhi* (= *ṽiñkh-*) (1.144. - 146) *igi* (= *ṽiñg*) (1.163.) with the generalized meaning "*gehen, sich bewegen*" (*gatyartāḥ*) (on the *anubandha -i* for a nasal penultima cp. PALSULE (1961) 64).

²⁴⁵ KS.34.5., TS.7.5.9.

²⁴⁶ JB.2.404. and PB.4.10.

taḥ kūrceṣv itara āsate 'ntariksam vā annam amuto vai pradīyate 'syām prajāyate tad antariksāya jāyate yad antarikṣa āsīnā mahāvratena caranty annādyasyopāptyā atho devasāksya evo pariṣadya yājayanti svargam u lokam ākramamānā yanty ... ("After having mounted the seat, the Udgātr begins to sing with the Mahāvrata. After having ascended on the swing, the Hotṛ cites the Mahaduktha. After having placed themselves [on their places] both Adhvaryus welcome [the others] friendly on the grass-bundles; the others settle down into the atmosphere. Verily, it is from there that the food is given; it is born to the atmosphere, when they, sitting in the atmosphere, celebrate the Mahāvrata to obtain the food; then, after having set down the gods visibly, they let [the priests] sacrifice, and going forth, reach the world of heaven ...").

Similar is TS.7.5.8.5. ... āsandīm udgātā rohati sāmrajyam evā [yājamānāḥ] gachanti, pleṅkham hōtā nākasyaivā pṛṣṭhām rohanti, kūrčāv adhvaryúr bradhnāyaiva viṣṭāpam gachanty, etāvanto vai devalokās tésv evā yathāpūrvām prāti tiṣṭhanty, átho ākrāmanam evā tát sétum yājamānāḥ kurvate suvargāsyā lokāsyā sāmasthyai ("The Udgātr is ascending the seat: [in that way] the patrons of the sacrifice go to all power; the Hotṛ [ascends] the swing: [in that way] they ascend the back of the firmament. On the two bundles the Adhvaryu ascends: [in that way] they go to the highest point of the sun. So, in this order verily, the worlds of the gods stand based on these. This approach verily makes the patrons of the sacrifice to be this bridge for the achievement of the heavenly world.").

The texts speak - in accordance with the number of the priests at the sacrifice - of three seats (āsandī, preṅkha / pleṅkhá, adhiṣṭhāna / kūrca). Among these, only preṅkhá is known in the RV; āsandī is not known before the late Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas²⁴⁷, kūrca is mentioned for the first time in the above cited TS-passage²⁴⁸. This and the fact that the hotṛ, who is competent for the RV, sits on the preṅkha, leads to the conclusion that this seat originally was the only one, later supplemented by the two others in connection with the development of the vedic ritual in order that every priest had his own seat²⁴⁹. This assumption is supported by the fact

247 MACDONELL / KEITH (1912) I, 71, s.v.; it is a remarkable fact that āsandī is also a name for the seat of the vrātya in the AV (cp. ROLLAND (1973), 11f.)

248 MACDONELL / KEITH (1912) I, 177, s.v.

249 Could it be that the āsandī at least in its original form was inserted into the "shamanistic" mahāvratā because of its belonging to the vrātya? The seat of the Adhvaryu should already be considered as a secondary interpolation into the ritual because both old Yajus-texts do not agree on either its form or on its number (KS.: two Adhvaryu on a colorless adhiṣṭhāna, TS.: one Adhvaryu on two (?) kūrca-bundles; the KS. probably gives the older version, TS. the corrupted one). Two Adhvaryu at the sacrifice are a relatively young constellation (cp. OLDENBERG (1923), 384).

that in still younger texts (ŚĀ.1.7.²⁵⁰, AĀ.1.2. 3.+4.) there is only a detailed description of the *preñkha*, but none of the other two.

By swinging the *hotr* mounts to heaven²⁵¹. His swinging in this *sattra*, however, is not the only notice of shamanistic-ecstatic practices and influences²⁵². Another binding link between hymns RV.7.88., 89. and the *mahāvratā* can be seen in the beating of the earth-drum (*bhūmidundubhi*) in the ritual, having its origin in the "clay-house" (*mṛṇmayāṃ grhāṃ*)²⁵³ in 7.89.1. (see above).

It seems to be possible that the earth-drum in the *mahāvratā* is a reduced and symbolically reinterpreted relic of an original initiation-hut, indicated in 7.89.1. with *mṛṇmayāṃ grhāṃ*. Even if this can not be proved, at least this would be an explication for the mysterious earth-drum which up to now has not been interpreted sufficiently at all²⁵⁴.

Another part of the *mahāvratā*, which HILLEBRANDT put into connection with midsummer-celebrations and rain-making magic²⁵⁵, can perhaps also be connected with RV.7.89. Women bear water-jars around the fire to the sound of the drum and then are pouring water into the fire; if now - in our interpretation of RV.7.89.2., the poet is really standing trembling (by heat and sweat?) and dried out like a hose, or, according to stanza 4. is standing thirsty amidst the water, then this could be reminiscent of the similar observances of the *dikṣā*²⁵⁶ and of the fact that in a sweat-hut water is pured into fire or on heated stones.

The usual explanation of the drums in the *mahāvratā* as mere symbols of fertility and thunderstorm is not very satisfying. From a functional point of view, it is rather an instrument of rhythmical sound by which a trance

250 See the detailed description of the construction of the swing following the Sūtra-texts in FRIEDLÄNDER (1900), 27ff.

251 This the normal function in the Brāhmaṇas; however interesting is the use of the word *sētu*, "bridge" in TS.

252 Cp. ELIADE (1985), 112f.

253 Only as a curious interpretation should be mentioned that of BHATT (1982), who thinks that it is a cosmic "black hole", in which *Vasiṣṭha* is drawn who asks *Varuṇa* to be rescued from its fetters (!) in 7.89.

254 HILLEBRANDT (1889), 334, sees in it a symbol of the rain and of the thunder bringing fertility, and ROLLAND (1973), 75, only leaves the somehow helpless statement: "*Mais il ne faut pas oublier que le dundubhi est aussi tambour de guerre.*" Remarkable is the description following the texts in HILLEBRANDT (1887), 127: "*Vor der Achse des rechten Wagens [scil.: the havirdhāna-chart, veiled with tents] werden die vier uparava's, die Schalllöcher, hergestellt, um, wie bei einer bhūmidundubhi, den durch das Ausschlagen des Soma erzeugten Schall zu verstärken.*", placed only three steps from the *sadas* (KEITH (1925), 328), which itself has significant shamanistic elements (middle-post, nine roofs) and resembles the hut used in the *dikṣā*. In the soma-sacrifice the *brahman* sits in the *sadas*, apparently passive (KEITH (1925), 298).

255 HILLEBRANDT (1889), 334.

256 For the *dikṣā* the older description in OLDENBERG (1923), 397ff., KEITH (1925), 300ff.; further: GONDA (1978), 151f. and the bibliographical notes on 372 (Nr.211), ELIADE (1985), 116f.; the relationship to shamanism: ELIADE (1975), 392ff.

can be effected - like the drum of a shaman. If one is ready to accept that interpretation, then the strange earth-drum in question could also be the product of a hybrid development of two originally separated elements: the earth-house (used as a sweat-hut) and the (shamanic) drum. It could also be a mix of several different elements and back-grounds. This same symbolism could have led to their introduction into the *mahāvratā* (drum: symbol of thunderstorm + "shamanistic" instrument; water-jars: symbol of the rain + symbolic part of an older ritual of initiation), especially because there are indeed overlaps between shamanism and rain-magic²⁵⁷.

To give better evidence of the above interpretation, one should take a look at the older texts: KS.34.5. ... *sarvāsu sraktiṣu dundubhayo vadanti yā dikṣu vāk tām tenāvarundhate bhūmidundubhir bhavati yāsyām vāk tām tenāvarundhate* ... ("... in all edges the drums are speaking, whatever speech [scil.: language] is in the directions, from this they get their power; there is an earth-drum: whatever speech [scil.: language] is in the directions, from this they get their power by; ...")²⁵⁸. TS.7.5.9.2. ... *dundubhīnt samāghnanti, paramā vā eṣā vāg yā dundubhau, paramām evā 3. vācam āva rundhate. bhūmidundubhīm ā ghnanti, yaivémām vāk práviṣṭhā tām evāva rundhaté, 'tho imām evā jayanti. sárvá vāco vadanti, sárvasām vācām ávaruddhyā. ...* ("... They are beating the drums together. The highest speech verily is that one being in the drum. They get into power of the highest speech [scil.: language] [beating the drums]. They are beating the earth-drum: whatever speech has gone into it, they get power of it; that is how they, while chanting, are conquering it. Every speech [scil.: languages] they are speaking [then]. For the sake of conquering all languages [they are beating the earth-drum] ...").

These passages are of importance because they show clearly that the goal here was not primarily rain-magic²⁵⁹, but the understanding and achievement of language(s), a capability which plays also an eminent role in shamanism²⁶⁰ and can be connected to RV.7.87.+88.

The drum of the shaman has a symbolic and a technical function. The first one is connected to the world-centre, also symbolized by the central world-tree and similar elements²⁶¹. The drum is a microcosmic counterpart of the shamanistic cosmography; by its help the shaman is

257 These coincidences originate from the secondary magical function of the shaman. For an example of the rain-magic of north-american shamans cp. ELIADE (1975), 292.

258 JB.2.404. ... *antarikṣe dundubhayo vitatā vadanti - yaivāntarikṣe vāk tām eva tenāvarundhate; ...* ("... the drums are reverberating spread in the atmosphere - whatever speech [scil.: language] is in the atmosphere, they get in power of it by that; ...").

259 HILLEBRANDT (1889), 323 and 334.. The interpretation of HILLEBRANDT does only concern drums in general but not the complicated earth-drum, which is proved by the old texts as a relatively old element.

260 Cp. note 140.

261 ELIADE (1975), 168f. For the *axis mundi* and the *yūpa* cp. VIENNOT (1954), 35ff. and 41ff.

able to break through the levels of the world²⁶². The other function is a more technical one: by the rhythm of the drums the shaman falls into trance²⁶³.

But it is not only percussion used by the shamans but also strings²⁶⁴. And in the *mahāvratā* we find strings beside drums and winds. KS.34.5. ... *vīṇā vadanti yā paśuṣu vāk tām tenāvarundhate kāṇḍaviṇā vadanti yausaḍhiṣu vāk tām tenāvarundhate nādītūṇavā vadanti yā vanaspatiṣu vāk tām tenāvarundhate vāṇaś śatatantur bhavati śatāyur vai puruṣaś śatavīrya āyur eva vīryam avarunddhe*²⁶⁵ ... ("... the lutes are speaking: whatever speech [scil.: language] is in the cattle, they get in power of it by that. The cane-lutes²⁶⁶ are speaking: whatever speech [scil.: language] is in the plants, they get in power of it by that. Pipes and flutes²⁶⁷ are speaking: whatever speech [scil.: language] is in the plants, they get in power of it by that. There is a hundred-stringed lute: [by this lute] verily man is endowed with a hundred strengths, gets in power of [long] life an power ...")²⁶⁸.

It is not probable that the whole orchestra cited in KS. belonged to the nucleus of the ritual. As usual with the development of the sacrificial techniques the ritual was enriched and inflated. Probably the original instruments were only the drums, shown indirectly by the *mṛṇmayāṃ gṛhāṃ* of the ṚV. All are numbered in the prose-parts of the younger Saṃhitās²⁶⁹. The younger providence of the instruments other than the drum, however, can also be verified by a more minute analysis of the texts. There is on the one hand the reduced version in TS., only referring to the hundred-stringed *vāṇa* in the first place. In KS. the numbering of the instruments is mechanically constructed after the first part, speaking of the kettledrum (*duṇḍubhi*) and the "refrain" *yā ... vāk tām tenāvarundhate* only occurs with these later instruments, according to the principle of analogical magic²⁷⁰: the materials stand in magic connection with the

262 ELIADE (1975), 169f.

263 loc.cit., 172: "Die Magie der Musik hat die schamanische Funktion der Trommel begründet ..." and "Die magische Musik, die Symbolik von Trommel ... und der Tanz selbst sind alles Mittel zur Durchführung und zum Gelingen der ekstatischen Reise." It is remarkable that ROLLAND (1973), 72, points out exactly the important initiating and inspiring function of music in general and in the *mahāvratā* in special. Interesting are also the reflections on the south-asiatic origin of the north-asiatic drum (ELIADE (1975), 463, n.14).

264 op.cit., 172.

265 TS.7.5.9.2. only slightly different: ... *vāṇāḥ śatatantur bhavati, śatāyuhḥ puruṣaḥ śatēndriya, āyusy evēndriyē prāti tiṣṭhanty ...*

266 Made of the knot of cane (according to MACDONELL / KEITH (1912) I, 146, s.v. *kāṇḍaviṇā*). It may also be a lute (*vīṇā*) with frets (*kāṇḍa*) in opposition to normal lutes.

267 Another point against the originality of the whole orchestra in KS.: winds between strings.

268 Cp. ROLLAND (1973), 73.

269 With the exception of *nāḥ* in a relatively young passages of the ṚV (10.136.7.).

270 Cp. OLDENBERG (1919), 149ff.

speeches, and one achieves the knowledge of these by the use of the instruments. The body of the lute is covered with cow-skin, thus giving the speech of the cattle; a lute made of cane gives the speech of plants, pipe and flute the speech of the trees. This formal monotony is not changed before the text speaks of the hundred-stringed lute (*śatatanur vāna*), which is described in both texts as "existing" and as "speaking" differently from the other instruments. That could mean that it is more original than the other instruments in the text, but younger - provided one accepts the relationship with RV.7.87. - 89. - than the drums. The achievement of power and of longevity (*indriya, āyus, vīrya*) is the usual magic in the Brāhmaṇas, but in our text is no specific *vāc.*

The fact that the *mahāvratā* is a ritual connected with *Indra*, or in later periods with *Prajāpati*, corresponds to the general development of vedic thought and of the vedic pantheon. The "shift" of an original *Varuṇa-Vasiṣṭha*-complex (RV.7.78 - 89.) into a younger ritual dedicated to *Indra* can be explained by the well-known competition of the two gods of which *Indra* finally comes out victorious (RV.4.42)²⁷¹. As a parallel change a complete *Varuṇa*-portion was incorporated into an Indric ritual.

5. Conclusion

It seems that there is a connexion between a series of Vedic songs and a later Vedic ritual thus offering a possible explanation of difficult parts or patterns in both fields. Both the RV and the Vedic ritual are as a whole "brahmanized", but certain structures are better understandable in light of shamanistic phenomena. The most essential shamanistic element, ecstasy, is admittedly only derived through the connexion with later ritual, in which this feature can clearly be seen.

If one takes the verses from 7.87 - 89. speaking in the 1st person singular or 1st person dual representing *Vasiṣṭha* and *Varuṇa* out of their textual environment, describing the characteristics and magic deeds of *Varuṇa* moralistic-urging style in the 1st person plural, one can see that it is the isolated interpretation of these very verses that creates the most difficulties in the exegesis.

A result of the discussion is that the complex RV.7.87. - 89. ordered in a different way and interpreted in the framework of shamanism gives way to an new understanding of these three hymns.

Reasonably arranged and interpreted the contents of the complex can be described as followed:

271 Cp. MACDONELL (1898), 65; GONDA (1978), 81f. For a different explanation see OLDENBERG (1923), 97ff.

1. A preparatory period for the initiate (*Vasiṣṭha*) - maybe in a sweat-hut - under certain ritual abstinences (of eating, drinking) which leads to an extraordinary state (trance ?) (7.89.).

2. Sitting on a swing the initiate falls into trance, in which he makes

3. a journey to heaven, sailing in a ship with his protector and helping spirit, god *Varuṇa* (7.88.).

4. On this journey he achieves special knowledge (7.87.) and thereby is made a seer and singer (7.88.4.).

Parts of this complex have been ritualized and incorporated into the *ma-hāvṛata*-ceremony.

Accepting the presented interpretation one gets - beside the already acknowledged instances RV.10.136. (*keśin*-hymn), the stories of *Bhṛgu* and *Naciketas* - another case of evidence for ecstatic-shamanistic elements not only in the Veda in general but especially for the oldest Indian text handed down to us - elements which find their continuation in features and patterns of the *mahāvṛata*.

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