

BUDDHIST AND VEDIC STUDIES

A Miscellany

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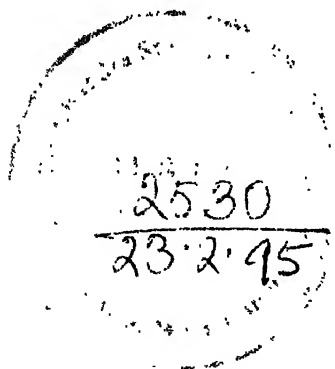
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A Pali Reference to Brāhmaṇa-Caraṇas*

The *Dīgha Nikāya* of the *Sutta Piṭaka* contains some of the oldest dialogues of the Pali Canon, and, of these, the *Tevijja Sutta* (No. 13) belongs to the earliest group. Thus Mrs. Rhys Davids says: 'the *Tevijja* has for me a core of very old teaching, for it shows Śākyan and Brāhmaṇa seeking salvation under the figure of a Way or Path (*mārga*)'.¹ Prof. T.W. Rhys Davids, citing the opinion of Bühler, expressed the belief that the Pali *Nikāyas*, of which the *Dīgha* is admittedly the earliest collection 'are good evidence, certainly for the fifth, probably for the sixth, century B.C. . . . And it is this which gives to all they tell us, either directly or by implication, of the social, political and religious life of India, so great a value.'² A careful analysis of the contents of the *Tevijja Sutta* not only confirms the above view but also makes it highly probable that the early Pali *Nikāyas* reflect religious and social conditions prevailing in India *before* the actual end of the *Brāhmaṇa* literary period when the *Upaniṣads* had not yet assumed the character of independent texts.

This historically important *Sutta* commences with a reference to the sojourn of several distinguished Brāhmaṇa leaders with their pupils at the brāhmaṇa centre of Manasākāṭa in Kosala. The commentator Buddhaghōṣa adds that Manasākāṭa was a pleasant retreat to which at various times influential brāhmaṇas resorted to spend their time in reciting and studying the Vedic *mantras* (*mantra-sajjhāya-karaṇattham*).³ Among such Brāhmaṇa leaders are mentioned Caṅkī, Tārukka, Pokkharasādi, Jāṇussoṇi and Todeyya. It is significant that at least one of these names could be traced in the later *Brāhmaṇa* literature, namely, Tārukka, which, at least phoneti-

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cally, is no other than Tāruḥṣya found as the name of a teacher in the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* (III.1.6) and the *Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka* (VII.19).⁴ The episode begins with a discussion between two young brāhmaṇas, Vāseṭṭha, pupil of Pokkharasādi, and Bhāradvāja, pupil of Tārukṣha, regarding the true way to union with Brahmā (*ayam eva ujumaggo ayam añjasāyano niyyāniko niyyāti takkarassa brahma-sahavyatāya*, § 5). Being unable to settle the dispute (*viggaha, vivāda*, § 8) among themselves, they approach the Buddha who Himself was staying at Manasākata to ask Him for his opinion. The Buddha enquires as to the precise point about which there is difference of opinion between them and Vāseṭṭha replies:

Maggāmagge bho Gotama. Kiñcāpi bho Gotama brāhmaṇā nānāmagge paññāpentī—Addhariyā brāhmaṇā, Tittiriya brāhmaṇā, Chandokā brāhmaṇā, Chandāvā⁵ brāhmaṇā, Bhavyārijjhā⁶ brāhmaṇā—atha kho sabbāni tāni niyyānikāni niyyanti takkarassa Brahma-sahavyatāya? Seyyathā pi bho Gotama gāmassa vā nigamassa vā avidūre bahūni ce pi nānāmaggāni bhavanti, atha kho sabbāni tāni gāma-samosaraṇāni bhavanti evam eva kho bho Gotama kiñcāpi brāhmaṇā nānāmagge paññāpentī—Addhariyā brāhmaṇā . . . Brahma-sahavyatāyāti? (§ 10)

This passage may be translated literally as follows: 'Concerning the (real) path and the false path, venerable Gotama. Although, venerable Gotama, the brāhmaṇas declare various paths—(that is to say) the Addhariya brāhmaṇas, the Tittiriya . . . Chandoka . . . Chandāva . . . the Bavharij(jh)a brāhmaṇas yet do all those [tāni, neuter] saving paths, do they lead to the Brahma-companionship of the pursuer thereof? Just as venerable Gotama, near a village or a hamlet there are many and various paths, yet they all meet together in the village—just in that way all the various paths declared by various brāhmaṇas,—the Addhariya brāhmaṇasetc.,—do they lead to the Brahma-⁷ companionship of the pursuer thereof?'

This, passage, it will be admitted, is important both for its language and for its subject matter. In the first place, the neuter plural tāni referring to the various 'paths' to Brahma-companionship is a curious anomaly if its antecedent is to be regarded as nānāmagge which has the accusative plural ending (-e) of the masculine declension, for this noun (*magga*) is never found in the neuter gender either in Pali or in Sanskrit. Buddhaghosa has noticed this irregular employment of the neuter plural in *sabbāni tāni* referring to *magge* but dismisses

it with the curt remark that it is a case of gender change (*liṅga-vipallāsa*).⁸ Prof. Rhys Davids surprisingly ignores *sabbāni tāni* but commenting on the following *nānāmaggāni* says that the latter is 'noteworthy as a curious change of gender'.⁹ But the neuter plural used in *nānāmaggāni* is obviously due to the influence of the preceding *sabbāni tāni niyyānikāni*, and the real problem, as the Pali commentator has appreciated, is to explain the change of gender in *sabbāni tāni*. Now, change of gender is not an unusual phenomenon in Pali. As Geiger has pointed out,¹⁰ the sense for grammatical gender has already become hazy in Pali, and due to 'syntactical irregularities' masculine and feminine substantives sometimes show neuter inflexional forms and vice versa. However, this kind of gender change is without exception confined to *substantives* only, and not a single case of an irregular change of gender of a pronoun can be adduced from the literature. Moreover, the subject of *niyyanti* can only be *tāni* for *niyyānikāni* never appears in Pali as a substantive but is always an adjective.¹¹ Hence, it cannot be argued that *tāni* is due to the influence of *niyyānikāni*. These considerations rule out the possibility of any syntactical irregularity being the cause of the gender change in *tāni*.

What, then, could have contributed to this surprising anomaly of gender? It may be pointed out here that in Pali as in the Prakrits, idiom and syntax are to a considerable extent governed by popular psychological factors which hardly find a place in a strictly codified system of grammar as that of classical Sanskrit. Instances of morphological, phonological and syntactical irregularities can be adduced from these dialects, which are in the main due to reasons of 'popular psychology'. It is obvious that in the above paragraph, the parenthetical clause beginning with *Addhariyā* is not a negligible factor and could have had some semantic influence on the rest of the sentence. An examination of the meaning of these terms appear to justify such a surmise.

The term *Addhariyā* is derived from *adhvarya* — the denominative verbal base from *adhvara*, sacrifice, from which the usual Vedic derivative is *adhvaryu*¹² and has doubtless the same meaning, i.e. 'follower of the *Yajurveda*'. *Tittiriya* (*Tittiri+ya*) is beyond doubt a parallel form of *Taittirīya*, 'followers of a school of the *Black Yajurveda*,¹³ *Chandokā* represents the Vedic *Chandogāḥ* (hymn-singing),¹⁴ denoting 'the followers of the *Sāmaveda*', with the phonetic confusion of the latter part -*ga* (from the root *gā*) with the frequent

suffix *-ka*. The next term *Chandāvā* which occurs in the majority of manuscripts, although it is dropped, probably for its obscurity, in one Sinhalese and one Burmese manuscript presents a more difficult problem. If any word in the *Brāhmaṇic* nomenclature of the relevant period can be considered to be the original form of this obviously corrupt term, there is no doubt that *Cāndrāyaṇāḥ* found among the Pravara-gotra names, as will be shown below, appears to be the most plausible. This, however, should in the normal course of phonetic development become in Pali *Candānā*, by the well-known contraction of *-āya* to *-ā*.¹⁵ The aspirated *ch* in the Pali *chandāvā* can be accounted for as being due to the influence of the aspirate *ch* in the initial syllable of the immediately preceding *Chandokā*. The only real difficulty in this identification is the substitution of the sound *-v* in the last syllable for the original *-n*. In view of the rather frequent confusion of sonantal sounds (*y, v, r, l, m, n*) in Pali and Prākṛit,¹⁶ and the fact that the term in question is an obscure proper name borrowed from the learned *Brāhmaṇic* vocabulary and incorporated into the popular dialect and thus more liable to phonetic corruption, the suggested etymology may not be wholly unjustifiable. The last term appears in four variant readings listed in the Pali Text Society edition of the text. For its own reading it selects the form *Brāhma-cariya*. The Burmese manuscripts show three different forms: *Bhavyārijjhā*, *Bavhadijjā* and *Cavhadijjā*. Prof. Rhys Davids has adopted the reading *Bavharijā*¹⁷ and has also identified it correctly with the Vedic *Bahvrcāḥ*, the name traditionally accorded to the followers of the *Rgveda*.

From the foregoing discussion of the names of *Brāhmaṇas* occurring in the Pali parenthetical passage the important fact emerges that the author was presumably referring to various schools of *Brāhmaṇas* holding different views as to the path of union with Brahma. To regard these names as merely indicating the classes of *priests*¹⁸ divided according to their functions in the sacrificial ritual would be to miss the author's point altogether. If that were the intention the three names—*Bavharijā*, *Addhariyā* and *Chandokā* would have certainly sufficed, and *Titūriyā*, and *C(h)andāvā* would not have been added, because there were no officiant priests by those names. Moreover, the specific terms *hotṛ* and *udgātṛ* in their corresponding Pali forms should have been preferred. But the author's idea was to indicate that these five schools held different (*nānā*) views regarding the way to union with Brahma. The history of Vedic literature shows

that such schools of ancient Brāhmaṇas did exist holding different views in such matters. In fact we read in an ancient text, the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* (III.2.3) [= *Saṅkhāyana Aranyaka* (VIII.4)], 'That same [Self] the Bahvṛcas formulate in the great *Uktha*, the Adhvaryus in the Fire, the Chandogas in the Mahāvratā rite. They see him in this earth, in heaven, in the air, in the ether, in the waters, in plants, in trees, in the moon, in the constellations: in all beings, Him they call the Brahman.'¹⁹ It is well known that the exegetical works of the followers of these three Vedas, namely, the collections known as the *Brāhmaṇa* texts, contain both commandments (*vidhi*) and explanations (*arthavāda*). As Sāyaṇa points out in his introduction to the *Ṛgveda-bhāṣya*, 'The commandments are of two kinds, either causing something to be done which was not done before, or making something known which was not known before . . . Of the latter kind are all philosophical passages, such as, "Self was all this alone in the beginning."²⁰ This shows that from very early times the Vedic schools in which these explanations and speculations were developed had differences not only in their separate interpretations of strictly ritual matters, but also in their speculative beliefs regarding the method of attaining the Goal. Past investigations, especially the researches of Max Müller,²¹ have established beyond doubt that such schools or communities had grown up among the Brāhmaṇas of Vedic India long before the composition of the *Brāhmaṇa* texts. In fact, with cogent reasoning Max Müller has postulated the existence, during the centuries of the development of Vedic literature, of three classes of such communities or 'ideal successions of teachers and pupils who learn and teach a certain branch of the Veda,'²² which traditionally came to be known as *caraṇas*. In his opinion, the name *caraṇa* should be reserved for 'those ideal successions or fellowships to which all belonged who read the same *śākhā* or recension of the Veda'.²³

First of all, argues this authority, arose the *Samhitā-caraṇas* or those which originated with the texts of the *Samhitās*; secondly, those which originated with the texts of the *Brāhmaṇas*, which he calls the *Brāhmaṇa-caraṇas*; and, thirdly, those which originated with the *Sūtras* called the *Sūtra-caraṇas*.²⁴ He points out further that the first *caraṇa* to grow up must have been that of the Bahvṛcas or followers of the *Ṛgveda Samhitā*, as there is no evidence of the existence at the period of the compilation of that *Samhitā* of *caraṇas* or *śākhās* of the Adhvaryus and the Chandogas, followers of the *Yajurveda* and the

Sāmaveda respectively. 'When the growth of a more complicated ceremonial led to the establishment of three or four classes of priests . . . there must have been a floating stock of brāhmaṇas *dicta theologica*, peculiar to each class of priests'.²⁵ It was the adoption of a *Brāhmaṇa* text by each community that led to the second class, the *Brāhmaṇa-caraṇas*. There was originally only one body of *Brāhmaṇas* for each of the three Vedas; for the *R̥gveda* the Brāhmaṇas of the Bahvṛcas, for the *Sāmaveda* the Brāhmaṇas of the Chandogas, and for the *Yajurveda* in its two forms the Brāhmaṇas of the Taittirīyas, and the more ancient elements of what later became the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.²⁶ The earliest *Brāhmaṇa* text to be put together was naturally that of the Bahvṛcas,²⁷ and the *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra*, which is not later than 250-300 B.C., cites a Bahvṛca Brāhmaṇa nine times.²⁸ This must have been followed soon after by the compilation of the *Brāhmaṇas* of the Adhvaryus and the Chandogas, a state of affairs reflected in a passage in the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* (V.11) which lists these three schools.

There is evidence that the Adhvaryus developed several schools, the earliest of which was known as the Carakas; the Taittirīyas together with the Kaṭhas were but two original sections of these.²⁹ The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* of the *White Yajurveda* is only the 'sacred code of a new *Carana*', which according to tradition, broke away from the Taittirīya school of the Adhvaryus as the result of 'a schism introduced by Yājñavalkya Vājasaneyā'.³⁰ Hence, Keith remarks that the *Brāhmaṇa* portion of the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* must be reckoned among the older *Brāhmaṇa* texts, earlier than the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,³¹ and is to be dated about 600 B.C.³² The omission of the name of this new school in the Pali list is, therefore, not without considerable significance for the relative chronology of the early Buddhist canon and the period of the composition of the *Brāhmaṇa* texts, as we shall see below. A *Brāhmaṇa* of the Chandogas which included *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is referred to in the *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra* (XXII), the *Parāśara-smṛti* (1.38/39.4.28) and by Pāṇini (IV.3.129). Thus it becomes clear that the Pali passage refers to the followers of the *older* schools or *caraṇas* that were distinguished by their separate *Brāhmaṇa* texts and are, therefore, designated *Brāhmaṇa-caraṇas* by Max Müller. The only doubt is about the C(h)āndāvā who, as suggested above, may represent the Candrāyaṇas. Although there is no evidence of a Vedic school so named, the Pravara lists do make mention of Brāhmaṇas with that designation,

both as an *upa-gaṇa* of the Bhṛguṣ and of the Kevala-Aṅgirasas.⁵³ This occurrence may be paralleled by the fact that even the Chandogas appear in the Pravara lists as Chāndogeyas.⁵⁴ It is quite possible, therefore, that there was an older *Brāhmaṇa-caraṇa* by the name of Cāndrāyaṇāḥ which disappeared as such by the time of the conclusion of the *Brāhmaṇa* period.⁵⁵ Probably the reference is to a 'school' that practised the Cāndrāyaṇa ritual fast regulated by the observation of the course of the moon as referred to also in the *Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa* (XVII.13.17). The Pali passage may have included these inasmuch as the followers of such a rite must have regarded it too as a path to union with Brahma.

The general conclusion cannot thus be avoided that the Pali passage in citing these names was referring to *doctrines* held by these various schools of Brāhmaṇas. The 'collective *Brāhmaṇas*'⁵⁶ of the earlier *caraṇas*, as has been indicated above, must have been partly records of such doctrines or *dicta theologica* which are generally referred to in Vedic literature by the neuter plural *brāhmaṇani*. In analyzing the linguistic peculiarities of the Pali passages it was suggested that the 'irregular' neuter plural in the pronoun *tāni* could have been the result of a psychological factor. If it is now suggested that the author had at *the back of his mind* the idea of the several conflicting theological doctrines, *brāhmaṇani*, of the various brāhmaṇa schools, cited in the Pali parenthetical clause and called *Brāhmaṇa-caraṇas* by Max Müller, then it would be easy to justify the use of the neuter plural *tāni* as a case of unconscious psychological influence on syntax. Such a phenomenon is not infrequently met with in the syntax of popular dialects such as Pali. This interpretation receives definite confirmation from the traditional use of the *masculine plural* for the names of the followers of the *older* (*Brāhmaṇa*) *caraṇas* to indicate their respective *works* or *doctrines*. In fact, as Max Müller has clearly shown,⁵⁷ Pāṇini rests his opinion as to the old and the new *Brāhmaṇas* on precisely this usage. 'A book', he says, 'composed by a certain author may be called by an adjective derived by the author's name.'⁵⁸ A book composed, for instance, by Vararuci may be called *vararuco granthaḥ*. If, however, the supposed author was only the promulgator of a traditional body of knowledge and not responsible for its actual composition, it should not be called his *grantha*, but should bear its own title such as *vyākaraṇam* together with an adjective derived from his name.⁵⁹ Thus Pāṇini's own work may be called *Pāṇinīyam vyākaraṇam*. Or, it may be alternatively called

Pāṇinīyam in the neuter singular.⁴⁰ 'But, if the work referred to', insists Pāṇini, 'consists either of Vedic hymns (*chandas*), or of old *Brāhmaṇas* (*purāṇa-prokṛteṣu brāhmaṇeṣu*), then it is not correct to use their derived adjectives in the *singular* (unless we employ secondary derivatives, such as *Taittirīyakam*, *Kāthakam*), but it is necessary to use the *masculine plural*.' It would, therefore, not be correct to use *Taittirīyam* (from Tittiri) or *Taittirīyam brāhmaṇam*, in the sense of an *ancient Brāhmaṇa* promulgated by Tittiri. According to Pāṇini we must speak of 'the Taittirīyas' meaning 'those who study and know the *Brāhmaṇa* promulgated by Tittiri'.⁴¹ Max Müller points out that such an idiomatic plural was only to be expected 'as in those old times literary works did not exist in writing, but were handed down by oral tradition in different communities, which represented, so to say, different works, or even different recensions of one and the same work, like so many manuscripts in later times. It was much more natural, therefore, to say the 'Taittirīyas relate' than to speak of a *Taittirīyam* a work proclaimed by Tittiri, who was perhaps a merely nominal ancestor of the Taittirīyas, or to refer to a Taittirīya *grantha*, i.e. Tittiri's book, which in reality never existed'.⁴² It is of extreme significance in this connection to observe that Pāṇini further lays down that it would be wrong to speak of the Yājñavalkyas in the same sense as we speak of the Taittirīyas, and the works promulgated by Yājñavalkya, although they are *Brāhmaṇas*, are to be called *Yājñavalkyāni brāhmaṇāni*.⁴³ Kātyāyana adds: 'because they are of too recent an origin; that is to say, they are almost contemporaneous with ourselves'. 'Here then, we see', says Max Müller, 'that as early as Pāṇini and Kātyāyana a distinction was made, not only by learned men, but in common language, between old and modern *Brāhmaṇas*'.⁴⁴

The above discussion of the evidence from Pāṇini show, firstly, that the use of the plural masculine forms *Addhariyā brāhmaṇā*, etc., in the Pali indicates that the author was referring thereby to the doctrines or utterances of the promulgators of *ancient Brāhmaṇas*, that is to say, their *brāhmaṇāni*; and secondly, the omission of any reference to Yājñavalkyas or Vājasaneyins (Pali *Yaññavakkā, *Vājasaneyā) is quite in keeping with the chronological position of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. For, if Pāṇini in the fourth century B.C.⁴⁵ and even his successor Kātyāyana, could characterize the *Brāhmaṇas* of the Yājñavalkyas as contemporaneous with themselves, obviously then the author of the *Tevijjā Sutta*, probably in the fifth, or according

to the lowest estimate fourth century B.C., omitted that *caraṇa* either because he preceded it in time or because he was prompted by the same reason as Pāṇini to regard it as a modern school that did not count among the ancient *Brāhmaṇa-caraṇas*. The obvious conclusions that results in regard to the relative chronology of the early Pali *Suttas* and the *Brāhmaṇa* texts, namely, that at least the older *Suttas* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* were composed *before* the end of the *Brāhmaṇa* period when the *Upaniṣads* had not yet come to be regarded as independent texts, is supported by the general observation that no specific reference is made to the *Upaniṣads* either as texts or doctrines anywhere in the Pali *Nikāyas*.

REFERENCES

1. *Wayfarer's Words*, vol. II, p. 601.
2. *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Pt. I, p. xx.
3. *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, vol. II, p. 399.
4. *v. l.*, *Tārksya* in the former passage can also give Pali *Tārukkha*.
5. Omitted in one Burmese Ms. and one Sinhalese Ms. out of six Mss.
6. I have preferred the Burmese *v. l.* to *Brāhma-cariyā* of the *PTS*, text.
7. Here Brahma is masculine; cf. Buddhaghosa, *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, vol. II, p. 400: '*Tassa Brahmaṇo*'.
8. *Op. cit.*, p. 401.
9. *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Pt. I, p. 303, fn. 3.
10. *Pali Literature and Language*, §§76, 78, 7.
11. See references listed in *PTS Dictionary*, *s.v.*
12. Cf. Grassmann, *Wörterbuch zum Rgveda*, *s.v.*
13. Suffix *-ya* being added in the popular dialect to the simple base *Tītiri* without *ṛddhi* instead of *-iya* with *ṛddhi*; see Macdonell, *Vedic Grammar for Students*, § 182.2. This was possible due to the popular syncopated form **Titri*. The *Pali Proper Names Dictionary* cites only *Adhvariya* and *Tītiriya*, the rest being omitted altogether.
14. Keith and Macdonell, *Vedic India*, *s.v.* take *chando* here as 'metre' without justification.
15. Cf. Geiger, *op. cit.*, §27.2.
16. *Ibid.*, § 43-46; Pischel, *Prakrit Grammar*, § 254-56
17. *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Pt. I, p. 303, he does not indicate Ms.
18. Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, footnote 2.
19. Cf. Ranade and Belvalkar, *History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. II, p. 167; Keith (Introduction to *HOS*, 25—*Rigveda: Brāhmaṇas Translated*) opines that this part of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* belongs to about the latter part of the sixth century B.C.
20. See Max-Müller, *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* (1906), p. 342.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 125 ff. 187 ff., 360 ff.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 378; the later confusion of *śākhā* with *caraṇa* has probably led N. Dutt (*Early Monastic Buddhism*, vol. I, p. 10) to regard the Pali terms as referring to 'Vedic Śākhās'.

