

The Philosophical Import of Vedic *Yakṣa* and Pali *Yakḁha*

THE curious term *yakṣa* which makes its appearance for the first time in the *R̥gVeda* and there seems to denote primarily 'the mysterious (*Wunderding*)' has in the later *Sam̥hitās*, *Brāhmaṇas* and *Upanishads* developed several shades of meaning, the most important of which for the early Indian thought is undoubtedly its *philosophical* significance. In its commonest sense, however, seems to be the *mythological* as denoting a species of certain non-human beings, demons, ogres or spirits—a sense found for the first time in the *G̥ṛhya Sūtras* and become popular in Pali literature. Several aspects of its Vedic use have been discussed by Hertel,¹ Boyer,² Geldner³ and others, but its philosophical use as found particularly in the *Upanishads* and early Pali literature has heretofore received no adequate presentation. An attempt is made in the following paragraphs for the first time to trace

1. *Die Arische Feuerlehre* i. 11 ff
2. *Journal Asiatique*, 1906, i. 393ff
3. *Vedische Studien*, iii. 126-143.

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of the *philosophical import* of this term throughout its long history starting most probably in the tenth *maṇḍala* of the ṚgVeda in a cosmic context and developing in the later Saṃhitās, Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣit finally assumed its important rôle as occurring in the early Buddhist *Sutta Nipāta*, and, to appraise its significance for ancient Hinduism and for early Buddhism.

In the ṚgVeda the word occurs several times as a neuter substantive but in none of these instances can the sense be established with any degree of precision and translators differ widely. Sāyana in his commentary gives the fundamental sense of 'the adorable' as being derived from a root connected with *yaj* (sacrifice or worship). He explains *yakṣa* by *yajña*,⁵ *yajā*,⁶ *pūjā*,⁷ *pūjita*⁸ and *pūjya*,⁹ following an earlier tradition already found in Śaṅkara.¹⁰ Even the word *yakṣuḥ* which occurs as a racial name at RV. 7. 18. 6, 19, he regards as derivable from the same root and explains it by "*yajñaśīlah.*" While it is not impossible phonetically to analyse *yakṣa* as *yaj-s-a*, the meaning assigned to it by Sāyana is found to be far from correct in practically every instance cited, and, Sāyana himself gives it quite a different interpretation at least in one instance, *viz.* for *yakṣa* (*-dṛś*) at RV. 7. 16, when he comments on it as '*utsava,*' spectacle. On philological grounds it seems more plausible to regard *yakṣ* as a distinctly separate primitive root as seen in several verbal forms in the Ṛg Veda.¹¹ It is not improbable here we have an obsolete root *yakṣ* originally meaning to *rush after, hunt,* probably related to OHG. *jagôn* as has been suggested by Grassmann and supported by Max Müller.¹² This may have developed in the Ṛg Veda sense of *stirring or moving* (as a living being) that some have seen in it.¹³ I saw an original sense of *fire or brilliance* in *yakṣ* just as in the word *śakṣa*, but this again is conjectural.¹⁴ Whatever the original sense may have been, what appears likely is that the word meant something like 'mysterious flashing thing' later developing into 'mysterious power (magic)' in the ṚgVeda, and in this latter sense bearing a striking resemblance semantically

Yakṣam, RV. 4.3.13; 5.70.4; 7.61.5; *yakṣasya* 10.88.13; *yakṣin* 7.88.6; *yaj* 1.190.4; *yakṣadrś* 7.56.16.

5. On RV. 4.3.13.

6. On RV. 7.88.6.

7. On RV. 7.61.5.

8. On RV. 1.190.4; 5.70.4.

9. On RV. 2.5.1; 10.88.13.

10. On Kena Up. 3.2; Bṛhad. Up. 5.4, "*pūjyam.*"

Prayakṣam (pada text: *pra'yakṣam*) RV. 2.5.1; *prayakṣe* RV. 3.7.1; 3.31.3;

"*Yakṣatiḥ pūjārthah, prayakṣanūtyādau darś'anāt,*" bhāṣya on RV. 10.88.13.

11. Also *prayajyu*, RV. 5.55.1 which may stand according to Max Müller for an earlier form *prayakṣyu* (S.B.E. Vol. XXXII, p. 335).

12. *Vedic Hymns* S.B.E. XXXII, p. 335.

13. See *Petersburger Wörterbuch*, s.v., and Monier Williams, *Skt.—Eng. Dict.*, s.v.

14. See Keith, *Jhā Commemoration Volume*, p. 201.

to the word *māyā*¹⁵ and to *Vapus*¹⁶ and *Kratu*¹⁷ of the R̥gVeda. Just as the word *māyā* signifying 'occult power' is applicable in the R̥gVeda in a good sense generally to gods like Mitra and Varuṇa, or in a bad sense to demigods and asuras,¹⁸ so does the word *yakṣin* (RV. 7·88·6) seem to refer to Varuṇa as 'master of magic'¹⁹ in a laudatory sense, while at RV. 7·61·5 the term is most probably used for 'mystery' in the sense of 'deceit' or 'wile.'²⁰ Perhaps it is this same significance of 'magic power' in the bad sense that is found for *yakṣam* at RV. 4·3·13, and RV. 5·70·4 though Oldenberg and Petersburger Wörterbuch suggest with equal plausibility 'the spirit or ghost of a dead person.'²¹ The compound forms *yakṣa-dyś* (RV. 7·56·16) and *yakṣa-bhṛt* (RV. 1·190·4) are found in verses of too obscure a meaning to yield any clear connotation. The only occurrence in the R̥gVeda of *yakṣa* with any kind of philosophical sense is found in the comparatively late text *maṇḍala* where is found the expression *yakṣasyādhyakṣam*.²² This is undoubtedly to be taken as referring to "*Vaiśvānaram*" (Sāy. "*sūryātmanā agnim*"), as Griffith²³ has construed the verse, and *yakṣa* must in that case refer to *Hiraṇyagarbha* of which the visible manifestation (*adhyakṣam*) is cosmogonically conceived as the Sun.²⁵ This application of *yakṣa* to *Hiraṇyagarbha* (Golden Embryo) is clearly found in the Atharva Veda (=A.V.) as may be seen from the ensuing paragraph.

In the Atharva Veda the word is used with a marked philosophical sense. That it generally refers to the *Hiraṇyagarbha* of the R̥gVeda

15. Cp. *māyā* as the magical power of the asuras, mysterious beings, such as Varuṇa or Mitra-Varuṇa. See Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 24, 156.

16. See RV. 6·66·1 (=marvel); 1·64·4; 6·63·6, (=marvellous show); this meaning of *vapus* makes it parallel to *yakṣa* at RV. 7·56·16 where *yakṣadyś* is glossed by Sāy. with "*utsavasya draṣṭārah*," a sense accepted by Griffith and Wilson in their translations, as well as by Keith in his translation of Taittiriya Saṃhitā 4·3·13·2. An aesthetic sense is also found in the parallel term *citra* in the R̥gVeda (*brilliant*, A.V. 7·61·5).

17. Mitra and Varuṇa, both *māyins* (*Vedic Mythology*, p. 24), are addressed as "*adbhuta-kratu*" (RV. 5·70·4). Indra possessed of magic powers (*māyābhṛt*, RV. 6·47·18) is also called *śata-kratu* (*Vedic Mythology*, p. 58).

18. See Macdonell, *op. cit.*, pp. 24, 156.

19. RV. 6·48·14; 7·28·4; 10·90·10; 147·5. Cp. Keith, *Jhā Com.* Vol. P. 10.

20. "*Na yāsu citram dadṛṣe na yakṣam*"; see Macdonell, *Vedic Reader*, p. 10. Cp. Avestan *cithra*.

21. *Pet. Wörterbuch*: "Gespenst eines Verstorbenen;" cp. *Vedic Hymns*, S.B.E. XLVI, p. 326.

22. "*Vaiśvānaram kavayo jajñīyāso'gnim devā ajanayannajuryam.—Nakṣatraṇāṃ pratnamaminaccariṣṇu yakṣasyādhyakṣam taviṣam bhāntam.*" RV. 10·88·13.

23. *The Hymns of the R̥gVeda*, Vol. IV, p. 284.

24. Sāy. "*yakṣasya pūjyasya devasyādhyakṣam pratyakṣam svāminam vā*."

25. RV. 10·121·3; *Vedic Mythology*, p. 13; cp. RV. 10·121·7, and Chāndogya Upanishad, 3·19·1-3, where the Cosmic Egg (*āṇḍam*) is said to have become *āditya*.

its description. Reference is made²⁶ to "the great yakṣa in the form of a being,²⁷ striding in penance²⁸ on the surface of the water."²⁹ It is identified with Skambha, the Frame of Creation (AV. 10·7·39), and with Varuṇa (AV. 10·8·13; 10·7·17). It is called the eldest Brahma (*jyēsthā*, AV. 7·10·7·36),³⁰ It is said to become active (*ejati*, stirs) in the form of an "impulse" of Virāj in the highest heaven (AV. 8·9·8). It is important to note that the preceding verse (8·9·7) calls Virāj "the father of the world," which suggests that *yakṣa* is Brahman. With the same spirit of inquiry is seen in the poet's search for the highest principle at RV. 10·29·1, "Who is he, the yakṣa on earth, single existent (*ekavṛt*), single in form?" (AV. 8·9·25). The last two epithets implying its monistic nature reminds one of *ekam* at RV. 10·129·2, born of the power of the Cosmic Egg (RV. 10·129·3). This is of course the Puruṣa of RV. 10·90 from whom Virāj is born, who in turn was born from Virāj, "the begetter as well as the begotten." This yakṣa is said to abide in the 'golden vessel.'³² At RV. 10·129·3 *Hiraṇyagarbha* itself was the name applied to the primeval 'lord of the world' beings.³³ It is the *garbha* (primeval Being) itself that is called *yakṣa* in the R̥gVeda. The Atharva Veda pictures the primeval *yakṣa* as being encased within a vessel that is golden (*hiraṇmaye kośe*), which is naturally developed out of the fact that *garbha* by now had begun to take the sense of 'womb,' the place of the embryo. This distinction is clearly seen in all later texts. Chāndogya Upanishad (3·19) clearly distinguishes the shell (*āṇḍa-kapāla*) from the germinal egg (*āṇḍam*).³⁴ The *kośa* of A.V. 10·2·32 is microcosmically regarded as the 'city of Brahma' (*brahama-pura*) after which man is said to be named (*ibid.* 10·2·29), a process of sanctification which is clearly carried out in the Upanishads.³⁵

"*Yakṣadyakṣam bhuvanasya madhye tapasi krāntam salilasya ṣṛṣṭe . . .*" AV. 10·129·3 (=Atharva Veda). Coomaraswamy thinks that *yakṣa* refers to Varuṇa, cp. RV. 10·72·3, *New Approach to the Vedas*, p. 61.

"*mahad yakṣam bhuvanasya madhye*" AV. 10·8·15.

Tapas at RV. 10·129·3, whence *Ekam* was born.

"*Yo vetasam hiraṇmayam tiṣṭhantam salile veda sa vai guhyah Prajāpatiḥ*" AV. 10·129·3. Similarly at AV. 11·2·24 the *yakṣa* (of Rudra) is said to be inside the waters. It regards Rudra as 'the lord (*iśāna*) of this vast world' (2·33·9) and as 'the world' (6·49·10); cp. also "*apṛaketam salilam*" at RV. 10·129·3 whence *Ekam*.

"*dadarṣa prathamam jāyamānam*" RV. 1·164·4.

śaṅkṛishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 1, p. 105. This idea of reciprocal relationship is not uncommon in the RV. cp. *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 12, 122.

"*tasmā hiraṇmaye kośe tryare tripratiṣṭhite tasmā yad yakṣamātmanvat tad āṇḍam viduḥ*" AV. 10·2·32. cp. AV. 10·7·41, "*vetasam hiraṇmayam.*"

At RV. *garbha* always means germ or offspring. Cp. RV. 5·83·1, 7; 6·5·2-3; 121·7, 168·4.

Hiraṇya pātra 'covering the face of *satya*, Bṛhad. Up. 5·15.

Bṛhad. 25·18, Svet. 3·18, Kaṭha, 5·1, Muṇḍ. 3·2·1, 4; '*brahmapura*' at RV. 10·129·3.

It is equated by Śaṅkara with 'the body.' The statement at Chānd, 8·1·5, "*brahma-pura*' is the *ātman* looks like a late 'correction.'

Along with the tendency to separate the golden *kośa* from the *garbha* find in these passages the important conception that the *yakṣa* in the mid-existence, that is to say, the Cosmic Being comes to be 'individualized' within the human body, 'the city of Brahma' just referred to. In real Upanishadic fashion it is said that the "knowers of Brahma (*brahma-vidāḥ*) know well self-ed³⁶ *yakṣa* there is in that golden vessel, three spoked, having three ports" (AV. 10.2.32). Even more advanced is the conception at AV. 10.8.1 where in similar terms the mystic poet says "the knowers of Brahma know what self-ed *yakṣa* there is in the lotus flower³⁷ of nine doors³⁸ covered with three strands."³⁹ It is important to observe that *yakṣa* in these instances refers to the macrocosmic Soul (*Ātman*) described in the preceding verses as 'the young.'⁴¹ This undoubtedly is the (empirical) *brahman* said elsewhere to be in man.⁴² Thus it is seen that in the Atharva Veda the word *yakṣa* is used generally for the macrocosmic Soul or Person (Brahma in its material aspect) and not directly as a term for the microcosmic person, though incipient pantheism is seen in the last two instances cited.

The only other reference to the term *yakṣa* with philosophical significance in the *Samhitā* literature is found in the *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* of the White Yajur-Veda in an important hymn to *Manas* in six verses.⁴³ The significance of this hymn lies in the fact that here for the first time in the whole of *mantra* portion of Vedic literature the cognitive, affective and volitional aspects of Consciousness (*Manas*) are conceived indicating a power of psychological analysis surprisingly advanced for this period.⁴⁵ What is important

36. *Ātmanvat* is undoubtedly the same as *ātmanvī*. Cp. Death (as principle of Cosmic Being) desires "would that I be selfed (*ātmanvī*)" Ś. Br. 10.6.5.1, 7=Br. 1.2.1, 7; Brahma is called *ātmanvī* or "embodied one" at Ś. Br. 14.5.1.13=Br. 2.1.13. Coomaraswamy sees the same idea of the embodiment of the macro-cosmic in *asthanvat* at RV. 1.164.4, *New Approach to the Vedas*, p. 58, implying that "*ātmanvī* here is 'body.' " But *ātman* may even mean *jīvātman* which invests the body, cp. RV. 11.2.10. "*tavedam sarvamātmanvat yat prāṇat prthivīm anu*" where "*ātmanvat*" means "having life" (Ś. Br. = Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa).

37. Cp. Chānd. Up. 8.1.1, "a small lotus flower within the City of Brahma" and Maitri Up. 6.1, "person within the lotus of the heart" (identical with 'the Person in the Sun.')

38. Cp. *navadvāram*, (AV. 10.2.31) applied to the same ("city of gods") indicating that the human body with its nine orifices is meant. (see Whitney, *Atharva-Trans.* H.O.S. VIII, p. 601.

39. Probably the prototype of the 3 *guṇas*. (see Whitney, *op. cit.*, p. 601. Lanman's note, *ibid.*, p. 1045.)

40. "*ātmanam dhīram ajaram yuvānam*", AV. 10.8.44.

41. Cp. "*prathamam jāyamānam*", RV. 1.164.4; *yuvānam* may also refer to child (*garbha*) as implied in "*Hiraṇyagarbha*."

42. "*Puruṣe brahma*," AV. 10.7.17.

43. *Vājasaneyi Samhitā*, 34.1-6 (=VS.)

44. "*yat prajñānam uta ceto dhṛtiś ca*," (*ibid.* verse 3).

45. The significance of this hymn is discussed in detail by Jwala Prasad, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, pp. 152-3.

discussion is the description of Mind as "that which is an unprecedented thing inside of beings."⁴⁶ The word 'unprecedented' (*aḥūrva*) indicates that there is nothing higher than *Manas*, an idea that makes it parallel to *Brahma* which is described similarly as "*aḥūrvaṃ aparavat*" (Ś. Br. 11.1).⁴⁷ It is therefore to be noted that *Manas* here is the macrocosmic mind and not merely mind as the instrument of thinking in the individual.⁴⁸ *Manas* generally denotes Consciousness in the early Vedic literature and was used as a synonym for *Prajāpati* when it is sought to reduce that to something more abstract and less mythological.⁴⁹

The *Brāhmaṇas* the term is found to have developed a further extension of its meaning. The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* of the Black Yajur Veda definitely indicates the macrocosmic nature of *yakṣa* which we have indicated as its characteristic in the Atharva Veda. It is now referred to as the "Universal, Cosmic Being, the Universal Spirit, well-become (*i.e.* excellent)."⁵⁰ The word '*viśva*,' universal, clearly refers to *mahat* of AV. 10.7.39. used as a synonym of *yakṣa*. It is further identified with *Tapas*,⁵¹ though in the Atharva Veda it was through the power of *tapas* that the *Ekam*, the first principle, succeeded⁵² and it was in *Tapas* that the primeval *yakṣa* was said to stride.⁵³ The late⁵⁴ *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa yakṣa* is the cosmic tortoise of boundless length, *Akūpāra Kaśyapa*, revealed by Indra to the ṛṣis⁵⁵ who seek to know something of the kind, and this cosmic tortoise is no other than a form of *Manas* by *Prajāpati*.⁵⁶ In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* the term is clearly used as a manifestation or form of Brahma where *Nāma* and *Rūpa* are the two great '*yakṣas*' of Brahma⁵⁷, and in its late Upanishadic

"*yad aḥūrvaṃ yakṣam antaḥ prajānām*", VS. 34.2.

Cp. "*jyestham brahma*", AV. 10.7.36.

The phrase '*antaḥ prajānām*' indicates the incipient pantheistic tendency which we have referred to above in connection with the AV. The use is metaphysical. Cp. Jwala Prasad, *op. cit.*, p. 154) and corresponds to *manas* as Brahma as at RV. 1.1.1. Cp. Bṛhad. 7.3.1; Tait. 3.1.

Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, p. 554.

"*viśvam, yakṣam viśvaṃ bhutaṃ subhūtam*." Tait. Br. 3.11.1.1, cited in *örterbuch* wrongly as 'Tait. Samhitā,' (s. *yakṣa*).

"*tapo ha yakṣam prathamam sa babhūva*," Tait. Br. 3.12.3.1. *Tapas* appears to be a personification of Fervour, RV. 10.83.84.

"*tapasas tan mahinājāyataikam*," RV. 10.129.3;

"*tapasi hrāntam*," AV. 10.7.38.

Ranade and Belvalkar regard the *Jaim. Br.* as late as Ś. Br. 10.14 (*History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II., p. 36), but Winternitz believes it to be one of the oldest *literature*, Vol. I., p. 191).

Jaim. Br. 3.203, 272. (see Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda* p. 242). Cp. *Jaim. Br.* 7.5.1.5.

Jaim. Br. 11.2.3.5 (11.2.3.4, has parallel to '*yakṣa*' the word '*abhva*.' Cp. RV. 2.33.10, 'mighty force'; 4.51.9. 'monster' lit. 'non-existent.')

portion⁵⁸ it is used for the actualized (*satya*) Brahma which as we shall see in the following paragraph is its application in the Upanishads.

Of the two references to *yakṣa* in the Upanishads the earlier is undoubtedly in the Kena Upanishad, 3.2.12. where in the allegory of the Vedic ignorance of Brahma it is narrated that when "It appeared to them but they did not understand It. 'What wonderful Being (*yakṣa*) is this!' they said. It is needless to point out that the legend is strongly reminiscent of the Jain *Brāhamaṇa* episode about the *ṛṣis* and *Akūpāra*. Just as there the seeker seeking to behold the *wonderful Being* has It revealed to them by Indra here in the Kena allegory it is ultimately to Indra that the *yakṣa* is disclosed as Brahma by the "exceedingly beautiful *Umā*."⁶¹ It is also significant that Śāṅkara⁶² identifies this *yakṣa* with "*mahad bhūtam*," which as we have already seen appears synonymous with *yakṣam* in the Taittirīya *Brāhmana*. The other reference to *yakṣa* is found in a passage in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad* (which is identical with *Śatapatha Brāhmana* 14.8.51), mentioned in the preceding paragraph, where it is asserted: "This verily is That, indeed was That, even the Actual. He who knows that great *yakṣa*, the unborn, as the actual Brahman, conquers the worlds."⁶⁴ There is no doubt that *yakṣa* here refers to the actualized (*satya*)⁶⁵ Brahma, the great (*i.e.* infinite) and first-born.⁶⁷

The identity between *mahad yakṣa* and *mahad bhūta* that we have seen above in the Taittirīya *Brāhmana* and recognized by Śāṅkara is of particular significance inasmuch as the Upanishads describe *mahad bhūta* as the infinite, limitless, just a mass of knowledge."⁶⁸ That this *Bhūta* is the Cosmic Soul (*Ātman*) or actualized Brahma is demonstrated by passages like the *hadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, 4.5.13,⁶⁹ and 2.5.19⁷⁰. It is the cosmic Soul

58. S. Br. 14.8.5.1. (= *Bṛhad*, 5.4).

59. "tan na vyajānata kimidam yakṣamiti" Kena, 3.2 (=15).

60. 'Ṛṣi' in Vedic may sometimes mean 'deva,' cp. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*.

61. Kena, 3.12-14 (=25-26).

62. See Bhāṣya on Kena 3.2 (=15) "kim idam yakṣam puṣyam mahad bhūtam"

63. "viśvam yakṣam viśvam bhūtam subhūtam Tait. Br. 3.11.1.1.

64. "Tad vai tad āsa satyameva sa yo haitam mahad yakṣam prathamajam satyam brahmeti jāyatimālokaṇ." *Bṛhad*, 5.4 = Ś. Br. 14.8.5.1.

65. Śāṅkara: "pañcabhūtātmakam;" cp. *Bṛhad*, 1.6.3; 2.3.

66. "mahat" corresponds to "ananta;" Cp. "mahad yakṣam," AV. 10.8.4.

67. "prathamajam;" cp. "prathamam jāyamānam," RV. 1.164.4; "yuvānāṃ"

AV. 10.8.44; "prathamam" Tait. Br. 3.12.3.1.

68. "mahad bhūtam anantam apāram vijñānaghana eva." *Bṛhad*, 2.4.1.

69. "ayam ātmā nantaro' bāhyaḥ kṛtsnaḥ prajñānaghana eva."

70. "tad etad brahmāpūrvam anaparam anantaram abāhyam ayam ātmā brahmasarvānubhuḥ."

71. The common rendering of "bhūta" by "Being" is dubious. "Bhūta" "Spirit" just as the simple *bhūtāḥ* (pl.) are the "spirits." The Upanishadic "Being (metaphysical) is "sat" as at Chānd. 6.2.

It is breathed forth (*niśvasita*) all creation.⁷² According to Śāṅkara the highest Self,⁷³ identical with the One without a second.⁷⁴ These notions make it clear that *yakṣa* is used in the Upanishads as synonymous with the macrocosmic Person, the universal Spirit or *Ātman* which is the Brahma or vitalized Being.⁷⁵ It is macrocosmic in the original technical use and is applied to the individual self if at all only as a result of the *Bhūtā* correlation, the tendency which ultimately leads to the identification of the Cosmic Soul with the individual.

In the foregoing paragraphs we have endeavoured to present the philosophical sense of *yakṣa* in something like its historical sequence. We have started from the idea of 'sudden flash of light,' 'mystery,' 'magic,' 'power' in the earlier books of the *R̥gVeda* it developed in the late *ṚgVeda* and the *Atharva Veda* into the sense of the great,⁷⁶ wondrous *śakti* was applied to *Hiraṇyagarbha*, the (Cosmic) Golden Embryo, the *Puruṣa*, "the living force enveloped in a shell."⁷⁷ The *Atharva* hymns mark the further development of the term in its application to *Skambha*, the *Ātman* or *Prajāpati* (10.8) which is manifest Brahma. These two hymns led as leading up to the conception of *Ātman*, the macrocosmic aspect of Brahma the fundamental doctrine of the Upanishads.⁷⁸ Important is the use of the term in the *Yajur Veda* (VS.) where it is used for *Manas* or Universal Consciousness as macrocosmic Psychology, also "inside of men" from the microcosmic view-point. It is this last notion of Consciousness that seems to lie at the basis of its Upanishadic use. *yakṣa* connotes *Bhūta* or *Ātman* described as a 'mass of intelligence' (*śakti*) or 'mass of knowledge' (*vijñānaghana*). It is this idea of original, pure⁷⁹ consciousness that seems to be antecedent to the use of Pali *yakkha* (= Skt. *yakṣa*) in early Buddhism, to an examination of the *Yakkha* we may now turn.

The only occurrence of *yakkha* with a philosophical meaning⁸⁰ in Pali is in the *Sutta-Nipāta* in a quasi-technical phrase '*yakkhassa suddhi*.'⁸¹

"śakti" *mahad bhūtasya niśvasitam . . .*" *Bṛhad*, 2.4.10; 4.5.

"paramātmakhyam mahadbhūtam" on *Bṛhad*, 2.4.12.

"tam ekam advaitam mahadbhūtam, ibid.

Chānd. 6.3.2, "Sat" or "Being" entered the three divinities (heat, water and air) separated out name and form (with the living self "*jīvātman*.")

This transition of meaning from 'magic' to 'magic power' and then to 'the self' is an exact parallel in the evolution of "*brahman*," "*Brahman*" first meaning 'magic power' and then 'mysterious force latent in the prayer' and then 'universal consciousness'.

cp. Das Gupta, *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I., pp. 36-37.

Chānd. *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, p. 436.

Whitney, *AV. Trans.*, p. 589; citing Geldner, *op. cit.*, pp. 126 ff.

Śāṅkara: "paramātmanyajare'mare'bhaye 'suddhe'" on *Bṛhad*, 2.4.12.

"prajñānaghana eva" on *Bṛhad*, 2.4.10.

This is due to the P.T.S. *Dict. (s.v.)* for the discovery of the relationship between "*yakkha*" and "*yakṣa*" of the AV. where it is said to be used for the "infinite" ("das lebendige Ding").

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It is to be noted, however, that apart from the popular mythological (mentioned at the beginning) as denoting the species of demons known by name,⁸² the word is also used for 'wonderful being' recalling its Vedic mythological application,⁸³ or "adorable, holy person."⁸⁴ It is in the Aṭṭhakavagga of the Sutta-Nipāta (Sutta II) that the Pāli word *yakkha* (in the above quoted phrase) is used in a purely philosophical context, the other instance which occurs in the obviously later Sundarikabhāradvāja Sutta⁸⁶ of the Mahā Vajrasūtra appearing to be only an echo of the former. In the Kalahavivāda Sutta the Buddha after explaining the process of eliminating the conditioning factors of the manifold experience of empirical existence (*papañca* = Skt. *prapañca*) is made to reply to the interlocutor (curiously enough a self-created form for the Buddha himself!) that "form, happiness and sorrow cease"⁸⁷ for one who is "of neither normal nor abnormal consciousness, neither unconscious nor with consciousness ceased" (874). Then the inquiry is made whether that state is what some metaphysicians call "the purity of the *yakkha*" or whether there is "a purity different from that,"⁸⁸ to which the Buddha replies that there are some who hold that that state of the conscious entity is the highest purity (*sassata*), while others hold that the annihilation of that conscious entity is the goal (*uccheda*), but that the true sage (man) knowing that both are inclined to extremes (*upaniṣṭā*)⁸⁹ does not go into dispute and does not go into renewed existence (*i.e.* *saṃsāra*). Now an analysis of this context leads one to the conclusion that *yakkha* is used with reference to that state of consciousness (*viññāṇa-ṭhiti*)⁹⁰ which is neither normal (*saññasaññā*) nor yet attained to that higher state which is the cessation (*vibhūta*) of consciousness, that is to say, the *nirodha* state of both *saññā* and *vedanā*⁹¹ the threshold, so to say, of Nibbāna. Nibbāna implies the absolute purity⁹² of that final *samāpatti* consciousness, which is the state of the *tathāgata*.

82. This mythological sense develops out of the plural use of original "yakkha" probably meaning 'ghost' or 'spirit' of a dead man as the *Pet. Wörterbuch* has for 'yakkha' at RV. 4.3.13 and 5.74. Cp. "yakkhāni drśyante . . ." Kauṣītaki Sūtra 95. The plural "yakkhāh" occurs for the first time in Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra and Śāṅkhya Gṛhya Sūtra, 4.9.3.

83. "atha ko nāma so yakkho yaṃ annaṃ nābhinandati". Samyutta Nikāya I.5.1.

84. It is used as an epithet of the Buddha (Majjhima I.386); or applied to "devas" (Samyutta I, 122, 205).

85. The Aṭṭhakavagga (Skt. arthaka-varga) belongs to the earliest portion of the Sutta-Nipāta. See Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. II., p. 92.

86. Pūraṇāsa Sutta, according to the Paramatthajotikā.

87. "Kathamsametassa vibhoti rūpaṃ sukhaṃ dukhaṃ vā pi kathaṃ vithi" (873, a-b.)

88. ". . . ettāvaṭ'aggam no vadanti he'ke yakkhassa suddhim idha paṇḍitāsa aññāṃ pi vadanti etto," (875, c-e.)

89. "sassatucchedadīṭṭhiyo nissitā ti nātā" Paramatthajotikā II., 2.554.

90. See Dīgha II., 68; III., 253, 282; Anguttara IV., 39.

91. *Saññāvedayitanirodha* Samyutta IV., 293, 294.

92. Cp. "Suddhim ti suddhim viśuddhim parisuddhim muttim vimuttim parimuttim" Niddesa I., 2.282.

93. "savīraṇ ca antimam dhāreṇi patto sambodhim anuttaram sivaṃ, ettāvaṭ'aggam yakkhassa suddhi tathāgato arahati puraṇāsam," Sutta-Nipāta, 478, c-f.

(*arāhant*.) and is therefore described as the state in which the *yakkha* is purified.⁹⁴ Hence the word *yakkha* refers to the formless (*arūpa*) state of consciousness as characteristic of the last three states of consciousness⁹⁵ (infinitudes) and also in the subtler state⁹⁶ of *nevasaññānāyatana*, but not yet reached *parimutti* or complete emancipation which is *viśuddhi* or perfect purity. That this is the correct interpretation when we cast a retrospective glance at the last meaning of *yakṣa* reached in the Upanishads which we have discussed above. It is well known that in the Upanishads the individual Soul in its highest purity is identified with Being, Infinite Consciousness and Infinite Bliss. This human consciousness when pure is identifiable with Brahma or Ātman which is infinite (cosmic) and is the 'mind-made person' (*manomaya-puruṣa*) said to be of the nature of light, *i.e.*, radiant (*bhāh*, *bhāsatyaḥ*).⁹⁷ It is also said to be indispensible and resplendent (*hiraṇmaya*).⁹⁸ The idea is found in early Buddhism, where the *yakkha*, identical with *mano* or (*mano*-) *viññāṇa*,⁹⁹ is radiant (*paḥassava*) and is undefiled¹⁰⁰ and loses its radiance when defiled.¹⁰¹ The *mano* after passing the fourth *jhāna* when it divests itself of sense-functions is said to be pure (*parisuddha*)¹⁰² and this infinite *viññāṇa* is definitely said to be completely radiant (*viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbato-*¹⁰³ *paḥassava*). It is therefore the purity of *viññāṇa* with the consequent radiance which is mainly implied in the application of the term *yakṣa*. This, however, does not mean for Buddhism the ultimate stage of spiritual evolution, for, to reach that final state the cessation (*nirodha*) of *viññāṇa* has to take place.¹⁰⁴ Hence why the phrase "yakkhassa suddhi" is deliberately employed to imply that the *yakkha* is also to be purified further if final deliverance (*vimutti*) is to be attained.

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i.e. a state beyond 'formlessness'; cp. "etto arūpasamāpattito adhikam." Paramatthajotikā II., 2.553.

akāśānañcāyatana, *viññāṇañcāyatana* and *ākāśañcāyatana*.

"Accantasukhumabhāvappattam saṅkhāraṃ catutthāruḥḥpasamāpattim." Visuddhimagga, Vol. I., p. 337.

Brhad., 5.6.1. (Śaṅkara: "bhāsvara"); Chānd., 3.14.2. (Śaṅkara: "bhāsvara")

Tait. Up. 1.6.1.

See Dīgha I., 21; Buddhaghosā takes "viññāṇa" as "citta." Papañca-sūtra, 2.51.

Anguttara I., 10; Buddhaghosā says that "citta" is "bhavangācitta."

Samyutta V., 92.

Majjhima I., 293; cp. śaṅkara on Chānd. 3.14.2, "bhā dīpti's caitanya"

Dīgha I., 223; "sabbato-paḥam" is the correct reading. See Sumangalavilāsinī, fn. 9. (P.T.S. ed.).

See Dīgha I., 223. "viññāṇassa nirodhena . . ."