The Indo-European Sodalities in Ancient India

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for Paul Thieme

Brotherhoods occupy an important place in the social structure of many peoples. Our knowledge of them as far as the Indo-Europeans are concerned has been deepened during the past forty years particularly by the publications of Höfler, Wikander¹ and Widengren². These authors bring to light tribal, age-group, brotherhoods³ serving social and military functions and devoted to worship of the fallen as well as of warrior gods honoured in orgiastic rites.

In Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen, Höfler rejected the simple allegory-of-nature view traditional to 19th-century writers on the Germanic and Indologist science of religion and tried to bring out an heroic-ecstatic bond between the living and their venerated dead (p. viii). In his opinion, the acts of worship of the dead in this cult entailed a mimed "enhancement of existence" (Daseinssteigerung) in which the masked participants identified themselves with the dead and, being possessed, often ended up behaving like demons themselves.⁴ As the level of culture rose, the more savage impulses receded or changed. In ancient India this development, which is accompanied by a geographical (west-east) shift as well as one in time, manifests itself, as I shall try to show below, in the brotherhood of Indra — the host of the Maruts — from the Vṛātyas to the Mallas and eventually the Buddhist Order. Although they played an important part in the development (as did their neighbours), the Mallas have not attracted much attention hitherto and I therefore intend to examine them more closely in the light of our much fuller knowledge of the Iranian sodalities.

¹ S. Wikander: Der arische Männerbund. Lund 1938.
³ See e.g. H. Schurtz: Altersklassen und Männerbünde. Berlin 1902, esp. Ch. II.
According to Widengren, the designation for a brotherhood is called *haēnā* in Late Avestan (*senā* in Old Indian) within its own tribal community, or *dahyu*\(^5\) by its enemies; the individual member is called LAv. *mairya*, Vedic *mārya*\(^6\). In Iran members of brotherhoods dressed in black, blackened their arms, and wore long hair\(^7\) and a belt (the latter item especially signifying allegiance to the king)\(^8\) — all emblems characteristic of "Männerbündler" in other countries.\(^9\)

In accordance with their naturally tempestuous youth, the groups under discussion often show a propensity to a violence reflected in their religious attitude of heroes and dragon killers (*Ωrāētaona, Kērosāspa; Voroθrāγna; Indra*) as well as in the darker attributes ascribed to certain deities (*Aēsma : Miθra*)\(^10\) held up as ideals to their worshippers. Vedic literature, in which Indra fulfils many of the functions of the Iranian Miθra, supplies parallels to this phenomenon. Indra is a divine hero and dragon killer, a friend of men, the leader of the host of the Maruts — the celestial counterpart of the brotherhoods on earth as their name indicates which is related to *mārya, μετράχων* (a young man in his twenties)\(^11\) and to the war god Mars. Indra challenges the secret societies in their negative aspect of terror gangs such as the Daśyus of the Ṛgveda and probably some of the Nordic berserkers and Indian tigermen mentioned in the ŚB.\(^12\)

The Vṛātyas, known since AV 15, show similar wild characteristics when they set out on their raids with war chariots and in clothes with

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\(^5\) Widengren: *Hochgottglaube*, p. 323.

\(^6\) Wikander, op. cit., p. 82ff.


\(^8\) Widengren: *Feudalismus*, p. 53 and 60.


\(^10\) See Widengren, op. cit., p. 350 and for the two aspects of Mithra, ibidem, p. 100ff.

\(^11\) Menander: *Georgos* 18D defines μετράχων as "young man between ἀγησίς and ἀνήρ".

\(^12\) Nārakaśikāḥ, puruṣavyāygrāh, parimōṣaṇa avyādhiṇyas taskarā aranyesa vājāyam (ŚB 13,2,4,2). On the berserkers see e.g. Höfler: *Kult. G.*, p. 67, esp. 170 note 10 (our reference is perhaps of relevance for the etymology of "berserker") and the same, *Verwandlungskulte*, pp. 54, 109, 161 and 171; further Widengren: *Feudalismus*, p. 54.

black fringes.\textsuperscript{13} Formerly they were thought possibly to be non-aryan,\textsuperscript{14} non-brahmanised tribes of cattle-raiding nomads; their Vṛātyastomas (one-day sacrifices performed by more than one sacrificer), according to this view, emphasized their conversion to Brahmanism. However, the sacrifices take place before the start and after the completion of a raid — a fact which seems rather to characterize them as a solemn vow and magical invigoration on the one hand, as a purification or a confirmation of loyalty afterwards on the other.\textsuperscript{15}

These and other factors not relevant here have recently given rise to the opinion that the Vṛātyas may have been a survival from a social order that had passed away and in which clans kept up the memory of a system of exchange of services with each other. The social and religious centre for male members belonging to different clans was the sabhā; among their gods the initiation daemon Rudra was prominent.\textsuperscript{16} The relation between the Vṛātyas and the sodalities is evidenced by their wearing long hair (JB 2,225) and by the fact that the Vṛātyastoma was celebrated for the first time by the Maruts.\textsuperscript{17}

Furthermore, hymn 14 of AV 15 mentions Indra, Varuṇa, Soma, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Yama, Brāhaspati, Īsāna and Prajāpati: the Vṛātya seems to move out to the “worlds” of these gods in order to be reborn an “eater of food” i.e. in a better way.\textsuperscript{18} It may be noticed that nearly the same list of deities occurs in two passages in the Pali canon; they may, therefore, be assumed to have been worshipped in ancient Magadha,\textsuperscript{19} a region known to AV (5,22,14), yet of ill fame, because its inhabitants were condemned to takmán (‘fever’?).\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{13} This way the Maruts, too, were figured to look like (TŚ 2,4,9,1). Indras black clothes are mentioned in the Mbh (cr. ed.) 1,3,152, his black banner Vaijayanta 3,43,8 (cf. further e.g. WIDENGREN: Hochgottglaube, p. 342f.).
\textsuperscript{16} For further information see G. J. HELD: The Mahābhārata. Amsterdam 1935, p. 240ff.
\textsuperscript{17} References in J. C. HEESTERMAN: Vṛātya and Sacrifice. In: IIJ 6 (1962), p. 17.
\textsuperscript{18} I refer e.g. to J. W. HAUER: Der Vṛātya. 1. Stuttgart 1927, p. 286f. The latest discussion I know of is found in H. W. BODEWITZ: Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa I, 1—65. Leiden 1973, p. 243ff.
\textsuperscript{19} Sāmīyutta-Nikāya I 218f.: Sakka, Pajāpati, Varuṇa, Īsāna (Rudra); Dīgha-Nikāya I 244,25ff.: Inda, Soma, Varuṇa, Īśāna, Pajāpati, Mahiddhi (in Buddhist literature a Garuḍa Prince), Yama;
\textsuperscript{20} Kātyā ŚŚ 22,4,22 and Lāṭy ŚŚ 8,6,8 speak disparagingly especially of the Magadha Brahmīns.
In this context it is not surprising that, during the Mahāvrata ritual (which is associated with the customs of the Vṛtyas)21 "a native of Magadha" (Caland)22 had sexual intercourse on the southern end of the mahāvedi with a pumścalū; the ritual also included a struggle for a he-goat or bull representing the sun, as well as a race of armed men (sam-naddha)23 contending in glory (māhas) and impetuosity (tvāsi). Of the two relevant meanings of mā gadha in the Petrograd Dictionary, 'schimpfliche Bezeichnung des Sohnes einer Kṣatriyā und eines Vaiśya' and 'Lobsänger eines Fürsten', the former may be the appropriate one here24 or perhaps bards used to be sons of certain mixed marriages.25

The Vṛtyas' wild and predatory expeditions link them with European sodalities like Wodon's Furious Host26 whose now harmless remnants survive in our Carnival processions.27 In the eastern provinces of India, their probable habitation when we hear of them, a number of Vṛtyas founded a state; moreover, they exercised influence on Buddhism.28

In early times natural death was not understood, and every decease was thought to have been caused by some malevolent or magical/supernatural power.29 The inference that the dead were able to take revenge was therefore a logical one to draw. Those murderers unwilling to redeem themselves by atonement30 were haunted by the dead in the shape of the brotherhoods, as Höfler, Meuli and others have shown. Usually twice in winter the brotherhoods went round wearing masks — in Upper

21 See Hauer, op.cit., p. 246ff.
23 I see no reason here to follow Caland in his translation 'Gepanzerte' ('mail-clad'). The relevant meanings given by the Petrograd Dictionary are 'gegürtet, gerüstet, schlagfertig; in Bereitschaft stehend' ('girt; equipped; alert, on call')
24 Caland, loc.cit., does not explain his rendering. The poor opinion of the Māgarhas reflects a greater difference in way of living and in the religious domain.
25 E.g. a kind of lower rank sūta, charioteer and herald. The sūta is a half-breed of the two upper classes or the son of a Śūdra and a Kṣatriyā.
26 Höfler: Kultische Geheimbünde, p. 80 et passim.
27 Höfler, op.cit., p. 5 etc.
28 On the relation between Vṛtyas and Buddhists see already A. Weber: Akademische Vorlesungen üUber die Literaturgeschichte des alten Indiens. Berlin 1876, p. 76.
30 Meuli, op.cit., p. 11. One may also think of the grass etc. laid out for St. Nicholas's horse.
Austria even carrying skulls\textsuperscript{31} and so patently identifying themselves with the dead\textsuperscript{32} — and took “revenge” by exacting, amidst imprecations, food and drink\textsuperscript{33} from everyone they happened to meet.\textsuperscript{34}

Similar behaviour is recorded of the Vṛātyas and even the children of European countries at St. Martin’s or at hogmanay. Those showing themselves liberal to the Furious Host are rewarded with riches, and their lands will be fertile.\textsuperscript{35} I would also connect with such practices the insistent appeals of the vagrant Vedic hymnologist to the liberality of sacrificers\textsuperscript{36} and his cursing niggards,\textsuperscript{37} since the kavi can in a way be considered a counterpart of the vrātina\textsuperscript{38} — the pre-brahmanic magician-priest. Both kinds of holy man belong to the domain of the brotherhoods, and, even if the connection is not so evident in the case of the kavi in India, it is at any rate in Iran, where the kavi is mentioned in the same context with sāhar (see below, p. 185) and karapan — another kind of priest\textsuperscript{39} — in Yaś 1,10f.

In our Middle Ages, and for long afterwards, a hoary old giant with a club used to stride ahead of the Furious Host. He is occasionally called “der treue Eckhart” (‘the trustworthy guardian’)\textsuperscript{40} and ordered people out of the road. According to Höfler this figure, whose function in the present-day Carnival may have been taken over by the drum-major, no doubt originates in the cult system of ecstatic processions; he is a kindly, monitory figure, quite different from the mostly mounted leader of the Furious Host.\textsuperscript{41} The example of other benign, white-haired, old men like St. Nicholas, who in the darkest part of the year rides about with one or more black servants handing out rewards and punishments, indicates it would seem to me, that we are faced here with a substitute of the leader of the Host of the Dead and the daemons. A description in the works of Praetorius (1668) hints at a confusion between the two personages.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{33} On drinking in the brotherhoods see Höfler: Kult. G., p. 130ff.; ders., Verwandlungskulte, p. 86 und 112.
\textsuperscript{34} See Meuli, op.cit., Ch. 2 (p. 10ff.); Höfler: Kult. G., p. 120.
\textsuperscript{35} Höfler: Kult. G., p. 126ff.
\textsuperscript{36} RV 1,125,4ff. et passim.
\textsuperscript{37} E.g. RV 1,147,4.
\textsuperscript{38} See Hauser: Der Vṛātya, p. 194ff.
\textsuperscript{39} Widengren: Hochgottglaube, p. 324.
\textsuperscript{40} Höfler: Kult. G., p. 38f.
\textsuperscript{41} Höfler, op.cit., p. 75.
\textsuperscript{42} Höfler, op.cit., p. 18f.
Occidental festivals in the dark period of the year like All Souls, St. Martin’s day, St. Nicholas’ day, Christmas and Carnival originally were — and sometimes still are — commemorations of the dead. They have counterparts in India between the end of September and the beginning of December, viz. Pitṛpakṣa or Sorah Śrāddha, Dipāvali and Balacaturdaśī, with which — as, for example, in the case of Divālī, the festival of light on the 15th day of the dark half of Kārttika (Oct.—Nov.) — celebrations taken over from other rites have been merged.43

In Nepal, which as a cultural borderland of India and a refuge may have preserved traditions that were lost elsewhere, Divālī lasts five days: on the 13th day, “Kāg Bali”, people start worshipping the crows (kāg), the messengers of the god of death, and thereafter the entire celebration is called Pañceak Yama. During the night of Divālī proper, the 15th, women and girls knock at doors — like children in Germany at St. Martin’s. The action is repeated by men and boys during the following night, which ushers in the new year.44 As a matter of fact, the habit of dating the new year from Divālī was introduced, according to tradition, by the Malla king Jayadeva.45

In the Kappasutta of the Jain canon (§ 128), the night of Divālī is said to have been the time when Mahāvīra entered Nirvāṇa; the Mallas, to whom I shall return presently, lit lamps in his honour.46 Commentators on this passage remark that the gods then descended from Mt. Meru with jewel lamps and that the Divālī festival came into being from that event.47 Divālī — writes N. N. Bhattacharyya48 — has a special meaning in Jain religion, and the pomp with which it is celebrated in the north of India owes its main characteristics to the Jains of Gujarat

45 Anderson, op. cit., p. 171.
46 Jam rayanīn ca nām samane Bhagavam Mahāvire [...] savva-dukkhapāhine, tam rayanīm ca nām nava Mallai nava Lecchāi [...] amūvarite pārābhoyaṃ posahovavāsam pāṭṭhavaimsu: “gae se bhūv'-ūjjo, dāv'-ūjjo yaṃ karissāmo”.
47 Śrī-Vīra-nirvāṇa-samaye devā Meru-parvatād ratna-prādīpān latvā āgatāh. Tasnāl loke dipōtsava-parva-dināṃ samjātam (Lakṣmīvallabha’s commentary [Surat 2004] 104a 7f. on Kappasutta § 128). As for the origin of Divālī, the festival at which lamps are lit for the souls of the deceased, see J. J. Meyer, op. cit. II, p. 56f.
12 ZDMG 131/1
and Rajasthan. Whatever the truth about the ultimate origin of Diwālī and about the purpose of lighting lamps for the dead, it can be asserted that we definitely have to do here with an ancient custom which has been preserved by the Indo-European brotherhoods of India in its purest form.

Another relation between the Malla kings and the dead is believed to exist in the Gājī-jātrā in Kathmandu, the festive procession of cows at the end of August and the beginning of September. At that time every family which has lost a member in the course of the year provides a cow to be led past the temples and the royal palace Hanumān Dhokā by the priest of its household accompanied by a little boy dressed up as a yogin, one behind the other. By counting the groups, the ancient kings would have been able to take an annual census of the dead.49

It is now time to say more about the Mallas. They were kṣatriya Vṛātysas (Manu 10,22),50 and their existence in Vedic times is testified to as early as the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa. Indra, it is said there,51 made his charioteer Kutsa, who was born from his thigh and took after him, bald as a punishment after he had found him with Śaci, Indra’s wife. Thereupon Kutsa became the first man of his profession to tie an usṇīṣa round his head. He had intercourse with Śaci a second time, only to be caught again. The third time Indra snapped at him: “Be a mallā (or: Malla?)!” and chased him off.52 This extraordinary passage may preserve the memory of an old relationship between the mallas and Indra. We must now look into the question whether the connections with the brotherhoods demonstrated above find support from Buddhist and Jain literature and whether a satisfactory etymology can be found for the word “mallā”.

As a neighbouring tribe of the Sakyas inhabiting the region northwest of Magadha, we hear of the Mallas from the epic and Middle Indian period onwards. Like the Lichavis and other ethnic groups, they were ruled by an oligarchy of noblemen. As was the case with the Vajjis, their state organization is called gana or samgha.53 They formed two political communities, each with a capital of its own: Kusinārā, where

49 Anderson, op. cit., p. 100.
50 R. Schäfer, Ethnography of Ancient India. Wiesbaden 1954, p. 143 opines that they therefore are “white people who did not follow the Indo-Aryan religion, i.e. Iranians”. See also J. W. Hauer, op. cit., p. 223f.
51 JB III 199f.; Caland: Das Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa [...] , § 198.
52 One would rather expect Indra to tell Kutsa: “be a jhalla” i.e. a kṣatriya outcast.
the Buddha went into parinibbāna, and Pāvā, where Mahāvīra died; both Buddha and Mahāvīra had followers among the Mallas. With great pomp, the Mallas cremated Buddha’s mortal remains and raised stūpas over the ashes. Jinadāsa’s observation, that the Mallas used to burn the corpses of solitary members of the tribe, had some bearing on history, and centuries later Mallas are mentioned by Malayagiri as the highest-ranking bearers. Earlier in this paper (see note 46) I mentioned the nine Mallas who, together with the nine Lecchais, paid a last tribute to the Tṛthakara by lighting lamps. The custom of placing lights near a corpse, however, in itself goes back to Vedic times. It should be remembered that it was especially the Iranian brotherhoods that practised the cult of the dead.

Jinadāsa further seems to record in the ambiguous expression patitam uddharanti that the Mallas had the custom of picking up those of their number who fell in combat. At any rate a kind of obsequies for the fellow member of the tribe seems intended, like the one described by Buddhaghosha concerning the Vajjis. However, the young men of the Licchavis, who are related to the Vajjis, behaved less sociably, for the Licchāvi Mahānāma tells the Buddha that they roamed about in large groups accompanied by packs of dogs, and with bows levelled; they were quick-tempered, rugged and rude, and molested respectable women.

Other accidental and disconnected pieces of information about the Mallas reveal their habit of treating slave girls as common property, and their ardour for sport, e.g. archery, in which Bandhula, the senāpati of the Kosala king in the Bhaddasāla-jātaka, was a champion.

54 Cūrṇi 28,3 on Sūyagaḍaṅga-nijjutti 29.
56 The Lecchais were the vassals of Cetaka — the Vaiśāli king and Mahāvīra’s uncle.
58 For a discussion see the present author’s Studien zum Sūyagaḍa I. Wiesbaden 1977, p. 50 note 98, where to the parallels given Walhall(a) ‘abode (hall) of those fallen (wal-) in battle’ can be added.
59 Sumangalavilāsinī 518,18ff., where among other things it reads about assisting the sick.
60 According to Viyāhapaṇṇatti 7,9,299 (Fol. 319a), the 9 Mallas belong to Benares, the 9 Licchavis to Vaiśāli. Each of these nine chiefs may have borne the title of rājā, as can be inferred from Buddhaghosa: Samantapāsā-dikā 576,4 (Dabbo) Malla-putto ti Malla-rājassa putto.
61 Anguttara-Nikāya III 76,12ff. As a matter of fact the term canda ‘quick-tempered’ is also used by the Śākyan Upāli with regard to his fellow tribesmen.
Above all, however, the Mallas excelled in wrestling, and their name lives on down to the present in Hindi in the sense of ‘wrestler’ or ‘boxer’; but what does the name mean primarily? According to Mayrhofer, it cannot be separated from the mixed caste in Manu; on the other hand, it is impossible to exclude the Dravidian word-family mallan ‘wrestler’ from consideration. The caste designation could originally have been ‘boxer’, yet the question whether also the ethnic name Mallāh (m.pl.) belongs to the same word-family presents greater difficulty, in Mayrhofer’s view. Eventually he does not rule out the ethnic name altogether and believes that the meaning ‘wrestler etc.’ may be a secondary development in Dravidian as well.\(^{63}\)

In my opinion, doubts about the relation between the tribal name and the caste or profession can be removed, if one sets out from Old Indian márya (well attested in the Śāṅkhīṭās, but extinguished in the course of the Vedic period). Márya, according to Grassmann, means ‘junger Mann in der Blüte seiner Kraft’ and is used in the Rgveda especially of the Maruts, Indra and Agni, as well as of men assembled for a sacrificial session, whereas in some passages — as was argued plausibly by Wikander\(^{64}\) — an older meaning, concrete and technical, comes through: ‘member of a brotherhood’; this sense of the word malla subsequently weakens and becomes generalized.\(^{64a}\)

Morphologically, this appears quite possible: OI -\(ry\)- can correspond to MI. -\(ll\)-, for instance in pallaṅka ‘divan, couch, sofa’ (PED). The OI. equivalent paryaṅka ‘bed, couch, sofa, litter, palanquin’ (MW) is attested from the time of the Kaśītaki Upaniṣad onwards and also occurs in epic and in classical Sanskrit; a variant, palyaṅka, is recorded by Pāṇini (8,2,22). Other examples are vipallasā (beside viparyāsa and in the Abhidhammapiṭaka, viparyesa\(^{65}\)) ‘reversal, change (esp. in a bad sense), corruption etc.’ (PED) and postcanonically allā ‘mother’ (CPD) \(\sim\) OI. āryā.\(^{66}\) See also H. Lüders: Beobachtungen über die Sprache des buddhistischen Urkanons. Berlin 1954, § 71. The word mahallaka, however, does not belong to this group, pace Rhys Davids and Steede.\(^{67}\)

\(^{63}\) Kurzes Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen. Heidelberg 1963-.

\(^{64}\) Der arische Männerbund, p. 82f.

\(^{64a}\) Also Bengali joyān/jowān developed the meaning of ‘wrestler’.

\(^{65}\) According to PED viparyesa is a contamination of viparyaya and vipallāsa.

\(^{66}\) Cf. Prākrit olla ‘pati, svāmi’ (PSM) corresponding to ārya and canonical Pāli ayyakā to āryakā. For vallabha \(\sim\) varya + bha see Mayrhofer, op. cit. and for pellai \(\sim\) preryate: Louise Schwarzschild: Notes on some Middle Indo-Aryan Words in -\(ll\)-. In: JAOS 77 (1957), p. 205.

\(^{67}\) Edgerton, BHSD s.v. mahalla.
As to the semantic side of the question I postulate the following development: in the case of the ancestors of the Mallas, as in that of the Harii in Tacitus’ *Germania* (if the name Harii really means ‘soldiers par excellence’) we have to do with a general designation of a single group becoming its proper name without loss of the general sense. I hesitate to decide whether the development from ‘brotherhood member’ into the ethnic name Malla took place at the same time as that into ‘wrestler, boxer’, or whether the name of the profession originated in the ethnic name. Examples of the latter semantic filiation can be found in “Swiss” (Schweizer): ‘mercenaries and ‘specialists in dairy farming and cattle breeding’; “Scythians”: ‘archers on horseback’ in Ancient Greece, and: ‘members of the city police’ at Athens (Liddell & Scott); “Slav”: ‘being one of a people spread over most of Eastern Europe [. . .]’ > ‘slave, person who is the legal property of another [. . .]’ (COD), because in the mediaeval Orient it was mostly the Slavs who were victims of slavery. As Indian examples I would mention Kirāta ‘Name of a degraded mountain-tribe’ > ‘groom, horseman’ (MW), Niṣāda ‘Name of a wild non-Āryan tribe in India described as hunters, fishermen, robbers etc.’ > ‘ferry-man’. Tīvarā ‘jāti-visēga’ and ‘hunter’, Bhilla ‘Name of a tribe’ > ‘one of the 18 guilds’ (Śānticandra 194a 2 on Jambupī 43 ed. Bombay 1920). The converse occurs too, e.g. in Dutch boer ‘farmer’ > the Boers in South Africa.

It is not surprising that we have to do here particularly with boxers or wrestlers, because theirs is a sport which probably played a part in military training; the Spartans were called Σφαιρεῖς ‘Boxers’ in Roman times. In the central Aryan region of Iran wrestling is a very ancient


70 E.g. in the article *Das Streiflicht* in the Süddeutsche Zeitung of Jan. 4th, 1979: “Der Tag der Milch lenkt unseren Blick zur armen Kuh, die heutzutage nie mehr einen Schweizer kennenlernen kann”. Further, the word in question occurs in the compound Kirchsweizer ‘a church helper in Roman Catholic churches’ vulgo called “der rote Mann” after his red uniform (for this information I am indebted to Professor Hegelbacher in Bamberg).

71 *Bṛhatkathāślokasamgraha* VIII 22f. and XI 79 (I owe these two references to Professor Häbler in Münster).

72 An interesting fact in this connection is the transformation, in ancient Albania, of age groups into guilds and companies with strong social bonds; the members of these unions had their meals in common and were under obligation to help each other in life. See J. G. von Hahn: *Albanische Studien* 1. Jena 1854, p. 168.

sport still popular at the present day. Since pre-Islamic times, it has been pursued in traditional form, with the participants wearing a leather belt and leather shorts. They hold on to each other by the belt and each tries to floor his adversary. In Homer, too, at the funeral games in honour of Patroclus, before the contest started the wrestlers were handed a belt and leather thongs to be wound round their knuckles. The aim was the same in Malla and Persian wrestling, although sometimes a successful contestant lifted his adversary off the ground. No belts are recorded, but a loin cloth and a kind of shorts were worn.

The modern Mallas — at any rate in the West of India — apparently diverge from this dress and form of fighting in that they wear textile education of the young Spartans which was to train soldiers, he thinks σφαίρα to mean ‘boxing glove’ rather than ‘ball’, for — he points out — Plato in his Laws VIII 830B makes his Athenian advocate boxing contests with the σφαίρα, instead of with ordinary boxing straps which were worn for less serious boxing. H. Michell: Sparta. Cambridge 1964, p. 338 mentions Chrimes’ book, but rejects his view as improbable because of the ban on pugilism. The meaning ‘boxing gloves’, however, appears already in the 1940 edition of Liddell & Scott.

74 Here the entry pulwān in Yule & Burnell’s Hobson-Jobson may be mentioned. This word deriving from Persian-Hindustani pahlūān which properly means ‘a native of ancient Persia’ — it reads there — is used in the sense of ‘a champion; a professed wrestler or man of strength’.

75 Widengren: Feudalismus, Anhang 3 and compare T. Talbot Rice: Ancient Arts of Central Asia. London 1965, p. 41 plate 32 showing a bronze plaquette from Ordos with men wearing trousers and who try to floor each other.

76 See also Burkert, op.cit., p. 65.

77 Iliad XXIII 653ff., 683.

78 Flooring: KSS 25,124; lifting: Milindapaṇṭha 278,15f.; both take place in the report of the contest between Cāṇūra (Cāṇūra) and Muṣṭika in the Harivamsa (Poona 1936) 2,30,50 and Jātaka IV 82,7 and 12 (there, however, it no longer concerns sport).

79 In the OhaNBhāsa 314 = Pavayanasārōddhāra. Bombay 1922—26, stanza 533 the oggahana-patjaga of the Jain nuns is compared to the tightly bound loin cloth (gādhā-baddha-kakṣaḥ) as Abhayadeva says in his Viyāha-pannatti-tikā. Bombay 1919, 482b 7 on Sūtra 9,33, 385) of the mallas:

paṭṭo vi hoi ekko deha-pamāreṇa so u bhāiyavvo
chāyant’ oggahan’t-antam kādī-bandha malla-kacchā vā


80 Malla-sādoga (Angavijā 9,144 in Punyaviṣaya’s ed. Benares 1957).

81 See the Mallapurāṇa. Baroda 1964, Introduction, p. 27, text 6,39 and 8,55 as well as the plates between p. 24 and p. 25.

82 Like gladiators they box and fight with knuckle-dusters (vajra-muṣṭi) as is shown by illustrations in the Mallapurāṇa (see also ibidem, p. 30); vajra-muṣṭi occurs already in the Harivamsa (Monier-Williams without reference).
shorts and box instead of wrestling.**83** The Modha brahmins**84** are worshippers of Kṛṣṇa to whom, according to the **Mallapurāṇa** (the history of their caste composed about A.D. 1500), they owe the knowledge of their sport.**85** In the **Harivamsa**, Kṛṣṇa, together with his brother Baladeva, defeated and killed the wrestlers Cāṇūra and Muśṭika,**86** and thereafter took the name Mallārī ‘enemy of the Mallas (or: *mallas*)’**87** notwithstanding that or because he was good at wrestling himself.**88** This is not surprising in connection with our present topic, for if we analyze his names and read his deeds as these are attributed to him by the Kuru bards in the badly revised parts of the **Mahābhārata**, we discover another Kṛṣṇa than the one found in the **Bhagavadgītā** — one who is anything but chivalrous. The followers of this Kṛṣṇa were, however, even as late as Saṅkara (8th century A.D.), not deemed orthodox — perhaps because the recollection of the rugged Yādava leader, the Vṛātya (whose personality fits in well with the names Kṛṣṇa ‘the black one’ and Keśava ‘the long-haired one’)**89** was still strong in the Epic.

If my hypothesis of a connection between the Mallas as a people and the prize-fighters of that name is accepted, I should like also to mention here the *malla-kara* — a tax we hear about in mediaeval inscriptions. The central government applied the revenue from it, like that from the *Turuṣka-danda*, to buy off marauding tribes.**90** For both Mallas and

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**83** Mallas contests take place e.g. in the west of India during Daharā (at the beginning of Oct.); see G. **Held**: *The Mahābhārata*. Amsterdam 1935, p. 192; W. **Filchner** and D. **Shrīdhar Marāthe**: *Hindustan im Festgewand*. Celle 1953, p. 143. Wrestling bouts at Divāli as late as the 16th cent. A.D. are mentioned by P. K. **Gode**: *Studies in Indian Cultural History*. 2. Poona 1960, p. 225. Another custom recorded in mediaeval Jain commentaries is described by J. C. **Jain**: “The wrestlers were asked to visit cemeteries on dark nights and offer food to a Bhūta. If they returned victorious they were appointed as king’s wrestlers” (*Life in Ancient India as depicted in the Jain Canons*. Bombay 1947, p. 224). The editions referred to not being at my disposal I could not check Jain’s information.

**84** *Mallapurāṇa*, Introduction, p. 2. *Dvija-malla* is mentioned by **Monier Williams** as a proper name.

**85** Op. cit., Ch. 2.

**86** *Harivamsa* 2,30 (the match takes place without arms, but the strong limbs of the opponents are compared to arms: stanza 32ff. As against in war Kṛṣṇa condemns killing in the ring).

**87** *Harivamsa* 10407 = 2,121,119 in the ed. Poona 1936; this stanza is not found in the crit. ed. See also G. D. **Sontheimer**: *Biroba, Mhaskoba und Khandoba [...]*. Wiesbaden 1976, p. 78; 92.

**88** He is even called *mahāmalla* (*Harivamsa*, loc. cit.). Perhaps also Kṛṣṇa’s appellation “Đāmōdara” points to his activity as a boxer.

**89** See **Hauer**: *The Vṛātya*, p. 227 and **Widergren**: *Feudalismus*, p. 19.

Licchavis, whose destiny in India after the destruction of the latters' state by Ajātasattu in the fifth century B.C. largely eludes our knowledge, are found again in Nepal from early mediaeval times. The Mallas first appear as royal dynasties of the Khasa or Khasiya people in Semjā and Dotī in the West from about A.D. 1000 and continue right into and beyond the 17th century; they rule the Newaris in the Kathmandu valley from circa 1200 to 1768. The two feudal families immigrated from India and were Buddhist, but the explanation of the names is still a problem. In the case of the Semjā kings, Tucci assumes that "Malla" was a kind of title they added to their names in the same way as their predecessors had done with "lDe" or "calla". He also holds the Mallas of Semjā and Dotī to be related, possibly originating from Garhwal near Doti. Between the Nepali Malla and the Malla rulers of Baglung (which lies about 100 miles as the crow flies to the north of Gorakhpur), there is, in Tucci's opinion, no connection.

We shall now leave the Mallas and turn to the name of the religious corporations and of their leader, and to the characteristics of their members. For the Jain and Buddhist Churches as a whole, or for parts of them, we know of two designations: samgha and gāna. Though the Indo-European origin of the latter word is not certain, it is the older of the two and will therefore be treated first. Gāna is used in the Rgveda mainly for the host of the Maruts, in Kātyāyana of the Vrātyas. In the Pali Vinaya it is the technical term for a body or chapter of monks, and with the Jains for a single group of monks.

Sanskrit samgha is clearly younger. According to Viśvēṣvarānanda's Vaidikapadānukramakoṣa it mainly occurs in compounds — at the end
since the time of the Śvetāsvatara-upaniṣad, the Bhagavadgītā and the Atharvaveda-pariṣīṭa, and at the beginning in Pāñini. In the former two texts, saṃgha is used of seers (ŚvetUp 6,21; Bhg 11,21), siddhas etc., whereas in both Pali and Ardhamagadhi literature the word relates to the entire Buddhist or Jain monastic community the Jain saṃgha including also lay members. Among the Buddhists, however, it was originally restricted to the enlightened monks (arhats) of the Founder’s own tribe.

As to the first head of their Church, the Buddhists by calling Gotama ‘Satthā’ — usually translated as ‘the Master’ — continued an old tradition that goes back to Aryan times, for, in ancient Iran, the leader of a sodality was given the title sā(s)tār, and the Vedic equivalent śastra ‘lord’ of men is used of a yajamāna in Taittirīya-saṃhitā 5,7,4,4, whereas in the Epic it means ‘teacher’. In the latter sense also Amg. satthā occurs. Finally, Pali gaṇassa satthā denotes the teacher of a group of heretics.

The religious mendicants show their links with the brotherhoods of old in the fact that, as true representatives of the hungry spirits of the dead, they accept gifts for the latter from their descendants. Here an ancient Aryan belief in the dead continuing their life on earth as ghosts could not only perpetuate itself in competition with the later belief in saṃsāra, but even won itself a place in the new religious picture when ghosts came to play a part in the process of rebirth. Monks thus took over a function which among orthodox Hindus was discharged by priests when they ate the sacrificial food in lieu of the dead. Thus they became the only mediators through whom the needs of the deceased could be satisfied. However, though in another way than the dead, they themselves did not belong to this world either; for they retreated from it after giving up their possessions and leaving their relatives, having themselves shaved, and putting on special garments. The Buddha strictly forbade his monks to wear black clothes as worn by the brotherhoods or any coloured ones other than yellow, but his instructions

100 E.g. used of a Jain teacher in Ayāranga 1,6,4,1.
102 Cf. e.g. Höfler: Kult. G., p. 220 and Verwandlungskulte, p. 206.
103 Vinaya pāli I 306. The dye originally used — dung or paṇḍu-mattikā — not being satisfactory the Buddha allowed other materials viz. roots etc. which are specified by Buddhaghosa (Sp 1126,8ff. ad Vin I 285,36ff.).
were perhaps not followed everywhere. Yellowish (piśāṇga) clothes were already worn by the munis in RV 10,136; the original colour was perhaps ochre which has been in use for the disposal of the dead in various parts of the world since the Middle Stone Age period. In India red, yellow and black were the colours of the dead and their god Yama, who is called pita-vāsasa in Mbh cr. ed. 3,281,8.

The brotherhoods were exclusive groups and the Buddhist order similarly was exclusive to the extent that it condemns any monk who repeats the actual words of the Buddha to a layman as guilty of a Pācittiya — an offence requiring expiation — in the Pali Canon; in the Vinaya of the Sarvāstivādins, he is guilty of a Pātayantika — an offence plunging the trespasser into Hell. Moreover, unauthorized entry into the Sangha is punished by expulsion. Strict rules of admission closely resembling those of secret societies are observed in the full and new moon celebrations already very important in Vedic India. Ordination is preceded by an entrance examination. Thus, in the Kammavacana only able-bodied and sane men are admitted and, on practical grounds, a minimum age of twenty years is laid down.

104 E.g. where brāhmaṇa-gahapatikā abuse bhikkhu silavante saying “ime na mūndakā samanakā ibbha kinthā bandhupādāpaccā” (Majjhima-Nikāya I 334,16); see also my Studien zum Sūyagada. I. Wiesbaden 1977, p. 149 note 56.

105 See L. Watson: Life tide. A biology of the unconscious. London 1979, p. 56ff. Wanderers with ochre or bloodstone coloured garments probably were the Geruyas or, in Sanskrit, Gairikas whom I mentioned in my Studien zum Sūyagada, 1, p. 151. Yellow opiment (haritāla) and red arsenic (manosilā) are used as mortar (marrti) for a relic shrine (cetiya) of the Buddha Kassapa (Dhp-a III 29,3ff.). See also S. P. GUPTA: Disposal of the Dead and Physical Types in Ancient India. Delhi 1972, Introduction, p. 10; 84—91.

106 See e.g. J. J. MEYER: Trilogie. I, p. 83.


111 Vinaya pālī I 86,7ff. (against homosexuals); 89,19ff. (against hermphrodites); 91,18ff. (against persons deformed or affected by serious diseases).

112 Under the pressure of a hunger strike the Buddha finally yielded and consented to an Order of nuns which, however, was hardly able to last out, at least in the Theravāda region. As to fruitless revival attempts in Burma in recent times see my review of M. H. BODE: The Pāli Literature of Burma. In: PII 11 (1969), p. 315ff. Further compare Höfler: Kult. G., p. 250.

113 Vinaya pālī I 78,20ff.; IV 130.

114 Vinaya pālī I 78,30; 93,23. The novitiate commences at the age of fifteen: op.cit. 79,5ff.
whereas elsewhere in Buddhist literature majority is attained at sixteen.\textsuperscript{116}

The age of twenty as a landmark, when adolescents become active soldiers, occurs also among the Spartans who possessed a well-developed bfatherhood system with several specially designated age groups. CHRIMES\textsuperscript{116} established three social levels in the classes of youthful bands (αγέλαι): (1) sons of privileged families from whom the leaders, βο(υ)αγοί were elected; (2) a middle class, and (3) an élite from unprivileged families. This élite was called κάσεν, a collective which Hesychius describes as ‘brothers or cousins belonging to the same αγέλη’\textsuperscript{117} and defines ἥλικιωται ‘equals in age sc. in the αγέλαι’. The κάσεν apparently were clients of the boys of the first families,\textsuperscript{118} adoptive brothers — but not in the legal sense —, as against the καστέγνητοι which means ‘bodily or blood brothers’.

A similar system has been inferred by WIDENGREN in Iran\textsuperscript{119} and may have existed in India, too, since the Rgveda says of the Maruts that they were ‘born at the same time’,\textsuperscript{120} ‘of the same age’,\textsuperscript{121} ‘grown up together’\textsuperscript{122} and that ‘none of them is the eldest, the youngest or the middle one’.\textsuperscript{123} Subsequently, in a victory charm in TS, men are referred to: ‘By Agni […] I trample under foot my foes born before me […]. By Indra […] (I trample under foot my foes) born along (with me) etc. By the All-gods […] (I trample …) born after (me) etc.’\textsuperscript{124} (Keith). Indra, the leader of the Maruts, is implicitly made a celestial equal in age.\textsuperscript{125} The reference to birth at the same time, the significance of which for the persons or things in question is never definitely stated but must have had a meaning, expresses a particularly close bond implicit in common education,

\textsuperscript{116} See PED s.v. vayoppatta and solasavassa (references are from secondary Pāli only).
\textsuperscript{117} οἱ ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς ἀγέλης ἀδελφοῖ τε καὶ ἀνεψιοί.
\textsuperscript{118} CHRIMES, op.cit., p. 110. Beside the κάσεν there are found σωνέραβοι, whose “patrons” were the βο(υ)αγοί and who, therefore, were a much smaller group than the κάσεν.
\textsuperscript{119} Der Feudalismus im alten Iran, Ch. II (esp. p. 53ff.) and III.
\textsuperscript{120} Sākam jātāh (RV 5,55,3).
\textsuperscript{121} Savayasaḥ (RV 1,165,1).
\textsuperscript{122} Samukṣiṭāḥ (RV 5,56,5).
\textsuperscript{123} RV 5,59,6.
\textsuperscript{124} TS 3,5,3 Aevinā devena prtanā jayāmi […] pūrvājān bhrātrvyān […] Indrēṇa devena prtanā jayāmi […] sahajān Viśvebhīr Devebhīḥ prtanā jayāmi […] aparajān […]
\textsuperscript{125} According to Rāmāyaṇa 3,5,17 Indra and all other gods are 25 years of age.
mutual affection, reciprocal assistance etc. Here we are probably dealing, I think, with “congenites” of a higher-ranked person, and with a relationship in which either side has to rely on services of the other. Thus also the utterance of Prince Gotama’s saddle-horse, before its owner set out to become a Buddha, acquires its proper meaning. It is found in a Vimānavatthu stanza that reads: “I, Kanthaka, was born at the same time as Suddhodana’s son in Kapilavatthu, the most excellent town of the Sākiyans”.

Outside the Pali canonical scriptures we find more examples of “congenites”: in the Theragāthā commentary the Bodhi tree, the Bodhisatta’s consort, the state elephant, Kanthaka, the equerry Channa and finally Kāludāyi (a minister’s son and subsequently the most important counsellor of king Suddhodana) are enumerated one after another; according to tradition, they were all born together with the Bodhisatta on the same day and make up a heptad. Perhaps there is a pun here on two meanings of satta, viz. ‘seven’ and ‘being’. Furthermore we read in the Jātaka prose of the cook’s son and the purohita’s son being

126 References from Jain sources are Nāyādhāmmanakahāo 3,49 Jīnadicchāputte ya Sāgaradatta-patte ya saha-jāyāyā saha-vadhipiyā yā saha-pamsukīliyā yā saha-dārā-darise annam-annam anurattā; similarly Vīvīyasutta 5 (in Vaidya’s ed. Poona 1935, § 109) and Vīyāhapannatti 18,10,758 (Suttāgame I 780,13).

Maybe one has to think of the kalyānamitra, too, in this connection, cf. WIDENGREN: Feudalismus, p. 54.

127 Vīmānavatthu 81:15

Aham Kapilavaththusmiṃ Sākiyānam pur-uttame
Suddhodanassa putassā Kanthako saha-jo ahūm

The average age of a horse is 20—25 years and according to tradition the Bodhisatta was 29 when he left his father’s realm to seek enlightenment.


In addition it was remarked that according to the brahmanical domestic rites’ manuals a bride must always be the junior of her bridegroom; a compilation of the sources is found in P. V. KANE: A History of Dharmaśāstra. 2. Poona 1941, p. 434f.


130 Jātaka VI 471,12 (cook’s son); III 238,8 and 391,20; 30,27f.; further V 437,29 (47,8 in my ed. of the Kuṇalajātaka. London 1970) and Mvu III 183,17 (purohita’s son); Ja VI 2,18 (500 sons of nobles); IV 38,26 (sheth’s son) etc. From Jain literature I quote Nāyādhāmmanakahāo 1,8 where king Mahabhala is reported to have entered the Order together with six loyal “congenites”: cha-ppiya-vula-vayamsagā rūyāno (p. 90 line 21 in Vaidya’s ed. Poona 1940) and Vīyāhapannatti 7,9,303 Fol. 320b tells us of Varuṇa
a prince’s “congenites”.\textsuperscript{130} In India as well as e.g. with the Hittites\textsuperscript{131} the cook and the house priest counted as senior palace servants; since professions were hereditary, the same status would one day be shared by their sons as well. The old Indian designation amāṭya, literally ‘fellow resident (of a king)’, which later came to mean ‘minister’, may have arisen in the same way. Finally, when two people belonged intimately together, they were said to have been born and conceived simultaneously, as in the case of Sāriputta and Moggallāna in Dhammapadatthakathā I 88,18ff.; in line 23ff. the pair are said to have the same naming day.

The attribution of a special social function to “congenites” is by no means limited to Iran and India, but also met with in the western Indogermanic world, for Homer (Iliad 18,251) says of Polydamas that he “Εκτορε θεῖον έταξινος, Ιτ άνευ νυκτό and similarly Vergil (Aeneid 10,703) writes

Nec non Euanthēn Phrygium Paradisque Mimanta
aequalem comitem que, unā quem nocte Theano
in lucem genitori Amyco dedit

Further reference may be made to a custom practised in the Netherlands as recently as 1938 when bank books were distributed to all Dutch children born on the same day as the new heir to the throne.

Other characteristics of brotherhoods can only be touched on here. Initially mention was made of the strict mutual ethical obligations between members of brotherhoods. These obligations find a counterpart in the prātimokṣa code, in which violations of monastic rules are listed according to their seriousness. An analogue is encountered among the Jains, who used to impose a notional curtailment in monastic age as a punishment — undoubtedly an echo from the days of age groups. The first question Buddhist bhikkhus still put to strangers is: “How many years have passed since your ordination?”\textsuperscript{132}

A custom of some antiquity was living in the jungle.\textsuperscript{133} This was done for various reasons: temporal (as for initiation) and non-temporal (like āśrams) — peaceful or aggressive. The Buddha refused to adopt as obligatory his cousin Devadatta’s proposal for the Order to live a solitary life under a tree.\textsuperscript{134} Normally, the monks wandered about, but they stayed in a monastery during the rains. As early as Schurtz, the

\textsuperscript{130} Nāganattuṭya who was followed by a friend of the same age into death on the battle-field: ege purise sarisae sarisattae sarisa-vvae.
\textsuperscript{132} Vinaya I 86,24 kati-vasso ‘si tuam?
\textsuperscript{134} Vinaya pāli II 197.
virāma was thought to have originated in the men’s hall (“Männerhaus”). Other brotherhoods that lived in the woods, or left their villages for the forest at the end of the rainy season, included the berserkers of ŚB 13.2,4.2 (see above, p. 173) and those whom we later hear of as Thugs, whose gangs definitely bore characteristics of sodalities. Originally, the Thugs were Hindus (even if by the 19th century many Muslims had joined them), and the religious basis for their way of life looks like an adaptation of the late Vedic myth of the Supreme Being, Prajāpati — or, in the Mahābhārata, Brahmā — who created (the goddess of) Death in order to relieve the earth of its overpopulation, to the brotherhoods’ ancient practice of stealing. Some of these dacoits still stuck to the long hair traditionally worn by the “Männerbündler”, e.g. those mentioned in the canonical prose of the Kunḍalajātaka.

The survivals and further developments of the sodality system discussed above are found in India, when we leave out of account the celestial Maruts, particularly among men in the East, in Magadha. The

135 Schurtz, op. cit., p. 277 (with regard to Burma).
136a See also Widengren: Religionsphänomenologie, p. 605.
137 See Ph. Meadows Taylor: Confessions of a Thug. London (1840) 1967, p. 26ff. (Ch. IV); R. C. Majumdar: Corporate life in Ancient India.
Foona 1922, p. 222f. quoted after Winteritz: Die Vṛāyas. In: Zs. f. Buddhismus 6 (1924/25), p. 49 note 2; Widengren: Hochgottläube, p. 335; G. Pfirrmann: Religiöser Charakter und Organisation der Thag-Brüderschaften. Thesis Tübingen 1970 and, finally, W. Burkert: Homo Necans, p. 93 where the Männerbund is discussed as a community of hunters in the service of a goddess. Up to our days the Baghi rebels frequently led by women have been active as dacoits in the Chambal valley (Central India).
138 See my Studien zum Śuyagada. 1, p. 110f.
139 Widengren: Feudalismus, p. 52.
140 Cf. above p. 173 and the Assyrian warriors, esp. Enkidu whose hairdo is said to have been like a woman’s (Epic of Gilgamesh 1,2,36). Further the pigtail worn by young girls and formerly by soldiers and sailors may be referred to. Kṣemendra mentions bards with hair in disorder (Kalāvīlāsa Ch. 7).
141 KupJ 23,18** corā viya veni-katā which the commentator explains by molīṁ bandhitvā ataviyam ṭhita-corā (35,23). In Jātaka IV 182,2f. Sakka enters the forest paccha-mukhe kese bandhitvā [...] vana-caraka-vesam gaheto. Here we are reminded of Yama who came baddha-mauli and pāśa-hasta, like a Thug, to fetch Satyavant in the forest (Mbh cr. ed. 3,281,8). — A wrestler’s knot is mentioned in the Supāsanāhacarīya 1,7,69
parheī aimasanām niyamsanān nīvida-vīra-ganṭhīe
bandheī malla-ganṭhīe kesā-pāṣāṁ sa-khaggo so
reason is — as was correctly seen by HAUER\(^{142}\) — that the older waves of invaders, to whom the \(\text{Vrātyas}\) belonged, had taken possession already of Magadha before the bearers of Vedic civilisation joined them. It is not surprising, therefore, that this region should show unmistakable traces of the once widespread sodalities. The ancestors of the \(\text{Vrātyas}\) probably were a marginal group already in the Aryan period. In the environment and period described by Vedic literature, the brotherhoods were translated into a supernatural existence in heaven, whilst they were still a reality on earth among the "backward" societies in the East.\(^{143}\) According to CHARPENTIER, the rejection of \(\text{Karna}\) at \(\text{Draupadi's svayamvara}\) even though he had bent the bow (for this was the feature required of the suitors), was due to the arrogance of "Westerners" looking down on the peoples of the east.\(^{144}\) The institutions of the sodality system survived nevertheless in the religious orders and in the aristocratic republic of the Mallas.

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**Abkürzungen**


\(^{142}\) *Der Vrātya*, p. 23.

\(^{143}\) J. CHARPENTIER: *Paccekabuddhageschichten*. Uppsala 1908, p. 133.

\(^{144}\) CHARPENTIER, loc. cit.