

## FINAL EXAM LECTURE OUTLINES

### Lecture Outline: Rig Veda

#### I. Rig Veda

- a) = the oldest literary work of India
- b) composed around:
  - 1. c. 1700-1100 BCE
  - 2. composed in early Sanskrit language
  - 3. Sanskrit = Indo-European language
- c) existed in oral form for many centuries, THEN written down
- d) 1028 hymns to gods, in 10 books (all praising gods somehow)
- e) *rig* ("praise") + *veda* ("knowledge")
- f) Vedic people: composed the *Rig Veda*
  - g) but LATER, *Rig Veda* became:
    - 1. sacred to the Hindus
    - 2. earliest of four *Vedas*
  - g) cf. Israelite scriptures = sacred to Jews and Christians
- all poems, all poetry. several poems that tell different bits of the same myths, so we combine pieces together to achieve the full effect and info
- we are handling the Rig Veda in concurrence with the originating culture: Veda Culture (NOT with Hinduism) - just like we handled the Bible as Israelite culture (NOT Jews or Christian)
- Rig Veda is still a sacred text to people today

#### II. Vedic gods

##### **a) Agni**

- 1. *agni* means: "fire" (cf. Latin *ignis*)
- these two words are "cognate" which just means the words are related
  - 2. binatural (thing + god)
    - binatural in a way that we haven't seen yet
    - he is a tangible thing (fire), and a god
  - 3. Agni is different types of fire: (heat, light)
    - a. natural fire, lightning, sun
    - b. domestic = hearth
- the fire that you keep/burn in your home, "hearth"
  - c. ritual = sacrifice (cf. 1.1)
    - Agni can be described as god of sacrifice since he is fire which is related to sacrifice
    - serves as a hymn to Agni himself
    - d. funereal = cremation
- assoc. with funereal purposes because: need fire to cremate the dead
  - e. poetry (light)
- assoc. with a fire of inspiration, poets of the Rig Veda call on Agni to spark them

##### **b) Soma**

1. deified sacred drink
2. binatural (thing + god)
  - *Soma* = actual drink you can drink AND a god
3. *soma* (drink):
  - a. hallucinogenic drink
  - b. made from an unknown plant (mts.)
- only thing we know is it seems to grow in the mountains, don't know what the plant is or if the plant still exists today
  - c. drunk by gods and priests - special drink!
  - d. assoc. with vitality and immortality (gods)
- seems that priests don't necessarily become gods but partake in momentary god like rituals or momentarily connected with the gods when they drink it
  - e. poetry (vision)
4. EFFECTS:
  - a) associated with fear
    - 1) 8.79.7: "Be kind and merciful to us."
    - 2) 8.79.8: "Do not enrage us; do not terrify us."
- soma is a frightening drink because it makes you do things you might not normally do
  - b) associated with exultation:
    - 10.119.12: "I am huge, huge! Flying to the cloud."
- we suspect that this could be a god talking, that he is transformed - possibly Ingra - could be that when gods consume soma it can make you even more powerful/magical than you already for
  - c) **Indra:**
    1. he is king of the gods
    2. god of thunder AND war
- another storm god associated as king of the gods!
  3. rain, fertility
- connected to rain and fertility since he is the god of thunder/storm god
  4. avid drinker of *soma*
- *drinks it often, thats why we suspect it was him speaking the above quote*
- *likes to drink it and then beat up on monsters or humans*
  5. poet/seer (cf. Agni, Soma)
- poets writing the Rig Veda compare themselves to Ingra who seems to be a poet

### III. Birth/Childhood of Indra (4.18)

- a) dialogue (Indra and mother)
- b) mother = Aditi?; father = Tvashtṛ?
- c) common motif in Indo-European mythology:
  1. child that is somehow kept unborn
  2. child is somehow going to kill his father
  3. compare to Kronos! (in greek Hesiod's Theogony)

COULD BE ON FINAL:

- similar to Kronos because Kronos overthrows his father Ouranos - Kronos was also kept unborn because Ouranos will not let Gaia give birth to her children, Kronos castrated and overthrew his father; difference is Indra's mother won't let Indra be born
  - d) Indra kept in womb (cf. Gaia)
- mother keeps him in there - perhaps because she's trying to protect him from father?
  - e) bursts out mother's side
- Indra doesn't want to be stuck in there so he bursts out! shows that he's special - hero
  - f) kills father
- kills his father after he is out

#### IV. Killing of Vritra (1.32)

- a) Vritra = dragon/serpent (could be demon also, demonic)
- b) holds back all the waters in the world
- c) Indra uses his thunderbolts to kill Vritra!
- d) when Indra kills Vritra: all the rivers in the world are created!

#### COULD BE ON FINAL:

- compare to Tiamat. when Tiamat is killed by Marduk... Tigris and Euphrates rivers are made from her! another example of storm god defeating a dragon like monster

#### V. Sarama and the Panis (10.108)

- a) Sarama = Indra's dog
- b) Panis = demons
- c) Panis live beyond the river Rasa
  - 1. Rasa = encircles heaven AND earth (gods/humans)
  - 2. demons live beyond the river which encircles heaven/earth
  - 3. cf. Okeanos
- Okeanos circles the earth too! (not heaven though)
- d) the Panis stole cattle of the Angirases (family of sages/priests)
- Sarama is trying to get the cattle back
  - e) Sarama tracks down cattle
  - f) resists bribes of Panis
- Panis demons try to bribe Sarama into betraying her master Indra but she resists

#### VI. Creation Myths

- a) **Creation (10.129)**
  - 1. enigmatic
  - 2. primordial waters
- waters seem to already exist - seen in Enuma Elish and Genesis
  - 3. creation somehow initiated
    - a. "What stirred?" (10.129.1)
      - question asked "what stirred?" that started creation!
    - b. "That one breathed" (10.129.2)