

THE ĀITAREYA ĀRAṆYAKA, edited from the Manuscripts in the India Office and the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society, with Introduction, Translation, Notes, Indexes, and an Appendix containing the portion hitherto unpublished of the Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka. By ARTHUR BERRIEDALE KEITH. (*Anecdota Oxoniensia*, Aryan Series, Part IX.) Oxford, 1909.

THE ŚĀṆKHĀYANA ĀRAṆYAKA, with an Appendix on the Mahāvratā. By the same. (Oriental Translation Fund, New Series, Vol. XVIII.) London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1908.

In these works, the second of which is intended to be supplementary to the first, Mr. Keith deals comprehensively and exhaustively with the Āraṇyakas or "Forest-portions" attached to the two Brāhmaṇas of the Rīg-Veda — the Āitareya and the Śāṅkhāyana or Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇas. He has edited with great skill and judgment the text of the whole of the Āitareya Āraṇyaka and of all that portion of the Śāṅkhāyana which was previously unpublished, viz. adhyāyas vii–xv, while he has fully translated and most carefully elucidated both of these obscure and difficult treatises. The task which he has thus successfully accomplished was one which demanded a combination of profound learning with critical ability, and also, it may be added, an unusual degree of patience.

In regard to the definition of the term "Āraṇyaka" and the original purport of the compositions so styled, two somewhat different views are held by scholars. Some, like Mr. Keith, suppose that the Āraṇyakas were intended to teach that mystical interpretation of the sacrificial ritual which, being regarded as too sacred for the common ear, was communicated to the elect in the solitude of the jungle (*aranye*). Other scholars, like Professor Deussen, hold that the Āraṇyakas were specially designed for the Brāhmaṇa in the third stage of his spiritual advancement,

when, after having fulfilled the duties of student and householder, he became a recluse (*aranya-vāsin* or *vānaprastha*) as a preparation for the fourth stage, in which, abandoning all contact with the world and with the religion of works, he devoted the remainder of his life solely to contemplation on the Supreme Soul, the Ātman. That the treatises, which specially deal with the doctrine of the Ātman, and are, therefore, particularly appropriate to this final stage, are the Upaniṣads, all authorities agree. The only debatable question is whether or not the Āraṇyakas properly so called and the Upaniṣads, which are usually embedded in them or appended to them, were definitely intended for two distinct classes of Brāhmins in two distinct stages of religious progress. If so, we must admit that these two classes of documents differ essentially in kind, and we must conclude that a less advanced philosophical position in any particular Āraṇyaka is not necessarily a sign of its earlier date when compared with any particular Upaniṣad. If not, we may readily assent to the guiding principle which Mr. Keith lays down, viz., that, in comparing these documents generally, we must take them as we find them, apart from any prepossessions of our own as to their character, and apart also from the manifest prepossessions of the commentators, Śaṅkara and the others. "All that can be done now," he says (Ait. Ār., p. 40), "is to take the Upaniṣads [a term which he uses to include a work which some other scholars would call an Āraṇyaka] and endeavour to extract what seems to be the most natural meaning from the actual words."

Here the fundamental difficulty lies in the fact that it is not always easy to distinguish between an Āraṇyaka and an Upaniṣad—between a work which is predominantly occupied with the mystic significance of the ritual and one which is predominantly purely theosophic in character; and this difficulty is explained by another fact, viz. that

the third stage of a Brāhman's career was in its very nature transitional—it was especially intended to bridge over the gulf which separates a religion of works (*karma*) from a religion of pure knowledge (*jñāna*). As Mr. Keith well remarks (Ait. Ār., p. 15), "No doubt the tendency was for the secret explanation to grow independent of the ritual until the stage is reached where the Āraṇyaka passes into the Upaniṣad."

Now in the Aitareya and Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyakas there are included certain treatises which are universally regarded as Upaniṣads. Aitareya Āraṇyaka, ii, 4–6, constitutes the Aitareya Upaniṣad. Adhyāyas iii–vi of the Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka form the Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad, while adhyāya ix consists of a portion of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. The title Upaniṣad is also given to a mystical work on the Saṃhitā, Pada, and Krama texts of the Rig-Veda—the so-called Saṃhitopaniṣad—which appears in different versions both in the Aitareya, book iii, and in the Śāṅkhāyana, adhyāyas vii and viii. There remains a section of the Aitareya Āraṇyaka, ii, 1–3, which Mr. Keith, in this respect following Max Müller, classes as an Upaniṣad, but which Professor Deussen regards as "ein wirkliches Āraṇyakam, bestimmt, den im Walde nicht mehr ausführbaren Kultus durch die Meditation über denselben zu ersetzen" (*Sechzig Upanishad's*, p. 13). This difference of opinion involves a completely different attitude on the part of these two authorities in regard to the position which this document (Ait. Ār., ii, 1–3) should be supposed to occupy in the history of Indian thought. Comparing its tenets with those of the Aitareya Upaniṣad (= Ār., ii, 4–6), which immediately follows it, and with those of other Upaniṣads, Mr. Keith shows that they contain no trace of certain doctrines concerning the Ātman which are characteristic of the earlier Upaniṣads, and therefore has no hesitation in concluding that "Aitareya Āraṇyaka, ii, 1–3, which forms

a unity, is the oldest Upaniṣad extant" (Ait. Ār., p. 43). At the same time, he fully admits that it "is intended in some degree to supersede sacrifice, or rather while assuming sacrifice to explain it mystically, the mystic meaning being the essential part"; a fact which led Professor Deussen to classify it definitely as an Āraṇyaka, and therefore to put it out of comparison, so far as any consideration of philosophical standpoint is concerned, with Upaniṣads strictly so called.

For the present, then, opinions will remain divided as to the validity of Mr. Keith's views in regard to this particular point. His main conclusions as to the relative dates of the two great divisions of the Aitareya Āraṇyaka, viz. books i-iii and iv, v, and of the two Āraṇyakas generally when compared with each other, will probably meet with fuller acceptance. He gives good reasons for believing that on the whole the Aitareya is earlier than the Śāṅkhāyana, and that the first three books of the Aitareya are considerably older than the last two. As concerns this latter question, his careful examination of the evidence afforded by the language and the employment of the tenses is particularly interesting and satisfactory. After a thoroughly well-informed discussion of the chronological questions connected with this period of Sanskrit literature, he comes to the conclusion that the first three books of the Aitareya Āraṇyaka must date from the period between 700 B.C. and 550 B.C., and that there is no reason to doubt the traditional attribution of books iv and v respectively to Āśvalāyana and Śaunaka, both of whom probably flourished about 500 or 450 B.C.

The contents of these two Āraṇyakas, as is the case, indeed, with the literature of this period generally, are of the most varied character and of the most unequal value. They are characterized by a simplicity which is sometimes beautiful but more often puerile, combined with a mysticism which occasionally seems to reflect the

awe felt by early thinkers in the presence of the Unknown, but which more frequently appears to us utterly perverse and irrational. For example, we find in Ait. Ār., ii, 3, 3, a passage beginning *Sa eṣa puruṣaḥ samudraḥ*, which compares man to the ocean, that eternal emblem of unsatisfied desire, and in a few short sentences describes his restless ambition in a somewhat striking manner—"whatsoever he gaineth, beyond that doth he strive," etc.; but the section in which this passage occurs is immediately followed by one which Mr. Keith, with some justice, stigmatizes as "unusually foolish" (Ait. Ār., p. 218, n. 1). Again, the observation that "A child when it first speaks utters the word of one or two syllables, *tata* or *tāta*", may be generally true; but that it does so because Prajāpati "uttered this as the first word" is the statement of a mystic, while the asserted connexion of this early form of speech with the Sanskrit pronoun *tad*, "this," is that of a primitive philologist (Ait. Ār., i, 3, 3, p. 181). In the same way it may be that "in sleep a man breathes *bhūr bhūḥ*"; but it does not necessarily follow that he does so because he is thus reproducing the Sanskrit root-noun which signifies "being" (ibid., i, 8, p. 210); although, in regard to this question, it must be remembered that in quite modern times certain of those philosophers who seek to pierce beyond the phenomena of language in their quest to discover its sources have seriously maintained that the root *bhū-* may have been intended originally to represent the actual sound of breathing.

Ait. Ār., ii, 3, 8, contains certain *triṣṭubh* verses which appear to summarize the substance of the preceding prose portions, after the manner of the *gāthās* in many Pali works. Mr. Keith is probably correct in supposing that, like the *gāthās*, these verses are older than the corresponding prose, which should thus be regarded as an amplification of their subject-matter. These verses are, as Mr. Keith points out, somewhat irregular and decidedly

ancient in their form. It may be observed, however, that one of the supposed irregularities (v. p. 223, n. 1) disappears on examination. The last line of verse 4 is printed as

*svargaṃ lokam apyeti vidvān,*

but when read in accordance with the ordinary principles of Vedic prosody it would be

*suargaṃ lokam apieti vidvān,*

a *tristubh* of normal form. The other irregularity referred to in the same note (on the assumption that “1” in “the first verse of 1” is a misprint for “3”) is

*yad vāca om iti yacca neti,*

a ten-syllable line as it stands. This irregularity must probably be accepted, unless, indeed, we may suppose that the syllable *om*, which is undoubtedly *pluta* in the Brāhmaṇas, can be scanned as a dissyllable—

*yad vāca ā3um iti yacca neti.*

The historical importance of the Saṃhitā Upaniṣad, which has already been mentioned as occurring in both Āraṇyakas, lies chiefly in the fact that, as Max Müller first pointed out in his edition of the Rig-Veda Prātiśākhya, it presupposes at this early date (700–550 B.C.) a familiar acquaintance with the three *pāthas* of the Rig-Veda. It also contains incidentally some interesting glimpses of the progress of early grammatical study. But as for its contents—surely they must plumb the very lowest abyss of human imbecility! The text of this production, as it appears in the Śāṅkhāyana especially, is in many places corrupt, and the sense—if, indeed, one may use the word at all in this connexion—is often obscure. If the Saṃhitā “Upaniṣad” is thus irksome and wearisome to the reader, what, indeed, must it have been to the editor and translator!

Another subject which occupies considerable portions of both Āraṇyakas (Ait., books i and v ; Śāṅkh., adhyāyas i, ii)

is the Mahāvratā ceremonial, which is interesting as preserving, long after they had ceased to be significant, many traces of a primitive nature-worship which find their counterparts in the folk-lore and the observances of uncivilized man in very diverse parts of the world. To the discussion and explanation of this ceremonial Mr. Keith devotes the appendix added to his translation of the Śāṅkhāyana. He concludes that, in its origin, "the Mahāvratā is a ritual of the Winter solstice, and that it combines within itself the characteristics of a spell to produce the heat of the sun and the fall of rain, so as to bring about fertility for the land, while more directly still it is designed to stimulate human and animal productivity" (Śāṅkh. Ār., p. 85).

Mr. Keith's volumes suggest so many points of interest that it is difficult for a reviewer to know where to stop. But this notice, long as it is, must not conclude without mention of what many scholars will regard as the most characteristic and the most important feature of Mr. Keith's work—the extraordinarily full notes which accompany his translation of the Aitareya. In these the subject-matter and the language of the two Āraṇyakas are illustrated and elucidated with a profusion of varied learning which is truly marvellous. Some of these notes deal with special points almost in the manner of an excursus, and sum up all the evidence which can be brought to bear on difficult questions in a concise form which makes them exceedingly valuable for reference. Many of the difficulties which fill later Vedic works of this kind must remain unsolved or only partly solved for the present; and after the scholar has done his best with the material at his disposal, he must often conclude with Mr. Keith, "This may be correct, but it is very obscure" (Ait. Ār., p. 184, n. 1). It would certainly not be easy to name anyone in recent years who has done more to dispel this obscurity than Mr. Keith; and if he has not always

succeeded, he may solace himself with a text taken from Aitareya Āraṇyaka, ii, 4, 3—*Parokṣapriyā iva hi devāḥ*, "For the gods love mystery."

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RESEARCHES ON PTOLEMY'S GEOGRAPHY OF EASTERN ASIA (FURTHER INDIA AND INDO-MALAY PENINSULA).

By Colonel G. E. GERINI, M.R.A.S. London: Royal Asiatic Society and Royal Geographical Society, 1909.

It is impossible, within the limits of space here available, to do full justice to a work of nearly one thousand pages teeming with innumerable matters of detail. Colonel Gerini's monograph, besides discussing the Ptolemaic geography of the region specified in the title, deals at great length with a number of problems of its historical geography. It contains a vast amount of material drawn from the most diverse sources, many of which are quite inaccessible to the ordinary reader, and will therefore be of great utility as a work of reference and a storehouse of learning on the matters to which it refers. In this respect its usefulness is much enhanced by the excellent index which has been provided. Indeed, without the index we should have considerable difficulty in finding our way through the book, the more so as it includes a long list of Addenda and Corrigenda containing much important material that has been made available during the several years that elapsed while the work was passing through the press.

Any criticisms that I may venture to offer must therefore be read as subject to what has just been said. The book, as is but natural in a work of its kind, offers an immense number of points for criticism. Indeed, one would like to see a series of articles dealing *seriatim* with all the many different issues that it raises. I cannot, of course, attempt anything of the sort; and I am somewhat