WHAT SAMAVEDA KNEW

Research Notes, Sources & Elaborations

A companion document for the India in Pixels video

Ashris | India in Pixels

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Preface

This document provides sources, elaborations, and scholarly context for every major claim made in the India in Pixels video “What Samaveda Knew.” It is intended for viewers who want to verify claims, follow up on research threads, or explore the material at greater depth. Citations are organized sequentially, following the video’s narrative structure.

Where the video simplifies for accessibility, this document provides the full scholarly picture. Where the video presents an original thesis, it is marked as such. Where names were garbled in the English subtitles (e.g., “Rich Starz” for Frits Staal), corrections are noted.

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1. The Four Vedas Framework

1.1 “Sama, Dana, Danda, Bheda”

The video states that the “Sama” in Chanakya’s famous fourfold strategy comes from Samaveda, meaning “to please and establish a sweet relationship.”

The phrase appears in Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* (c. 3rd century BCE), Book II and Book IX, as the four *upayas* (means of statecraft). The word *sāma* in this political context derives from the Sanskrit root *sām* meaning “to conciliate, to pacify.” Whether this is etymologically connected to *Sāman* (the Samavedic chant) is debated — both derive from related roots suggesting harmony and fitting-together, but the political usage may be independently derived.

> ▸ **Source:** Kautilya, Arthashastra, trans. R. Shamasastry (Mysore: Government Press, 1915); R.P. Kangle (ed.), The Kautiliya Arthashastra (University of Bombay, 1960–1965), 3 vols. For the shared root: Monier-Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), entries for “sāman” and “sām.”

1.2 Rigveda 6.16.10 as the First Samaveda Mantra

The video demonstrates how Rigveda mantra 6.16.10 (*agne āyāhi vītaye*, a hymn to Agni) becomes the first mantra of the Samaveda Purvarchika, and how the words are stretched and distorted in the process — “Agni” becomes “Ognai,” “Vitaye” becomes “Vatoyai.”

These transformations are the six *vikāras* (modifications) that Samavedic chanting applies to Rigvedic text: *viśleṣaṇa* (splitting), *vikarṇa* (modification), *visleshana* (dissolution), *vikṣepa* (transposition), *abhyāsa* (repetition), and *virama* (pause). The purpose is to subordinate semantic meaning to melodic structure.

> ▸ **Source:** Samaveda Samhita (Kauthuma recension), Purvarchika 1.1.1. For the six vikaras: Sayana’s commentary on Samaveda; also discussed in B. Chaitanya Deva, An Introduction to Indian Music (Publications Division, Government of India, 1973). English translation: Ralph T.H. Griffith, The Samaveda (Benares: E.J. Lazarus, 1893). Critical edition: Theodor Benfey, Die Hymnen des Sāma-Veda (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1848).

2. The Samavedic Scale

2.1 Three Rigvedic Accents to Seven Samavedic Notes

The video explains that the Rigveda uses three pitch accents — *udātta* (raised), *anudātta* (lowered), and *svarita* (circumflex/combined) — and that the Naradiya Shiksha describes how these three evolved into seven musical notes.

The specific derivation: from *svarita* came Shadja (Sa), Madhyama (Ma), and Panchama (Pa); from *udātta* came Gandhara (Ga) and Nishada (Ni); from *anudātta* came Rishabha (Re) and Dhaivata (Dha).

> ▸ **Source:** Nāradīyā Śikṣā, verse 1.5.3 (beginning "svaritaḥ śarṣajaś caiva..."). The Nāradīyā Śikṣā is a Vedic phonetic treatise associated with the Samaveda, dated approximately 200 BCE–500 CE. For Rigvedic accents: Ṛgveda Prātiśākhya; Taittirīya Prātiśākhya. For commentary: Wayne Howard, Samavedic Chant (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), Chapter 2.

2.2 The Descending Scale: Ma to Pa

The Samavedic scale descends from Ma (Krushta) to Pa (Atisvara) of the lower octave: Ma → Ga → Re → Sa → Ni → Dha → Pa. The Samavedic tradition uses its own note names: Krushta (= Ma), Prathama (= Ga), Dvitiya (= Re), Tritiya (= Sa), Chaturtha (= Ni), Mandra (= Dha), Atisvara (= Pa).

> ▸ **Source:** Nāradīyā Śikṣā; Howard (1977), pp. 28–34 for the svara system and descending structure.

2.3 Curt Sachs and the "Tumbling Strain"

The video attributes the term "tumbling strain" to ethnomusicologist Curt Sachs, describing it as a falling melodic pattern found in many ancient cultures.

Important correction: The term "tumbling strain" was formally coined in Sachs's posthumous work *The Wellsprings of Music* (1962), not in his more commonly cited 1943 book. It appears in Chapter V: "The Oldest Music: Tumbling Strains." Sachs classified this as a "pathogenic" melodic type — high-pitched emotional cries descending as breath runs out. He associated it with the most ancient musical cultures (Vedda, Australian Aboriginal).

Scholarly note: Sachs himself did not equate the Samavedic descending scale with the tumbling strain. The Samavedic system is a highly developed liturgical tradition, whereas the tumbling strain describes the most primitive melodic patterns. The connection between the two is a later scholarly inference, not Sachs's own argument.

> ▸ **Source:** Curt Sachs, The Wellsprings of Music, ed. Jaap Kunst (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962; reprinted Da Capo Press, 1977), Chapter V, pp. 49ff. The earlier book: Curt Sachs, The Rise of Music in the Ancient World, East and West (New York: W.W. Norton, 1943), discusses the equivalent concept as "the descending style" in Section One, Chapter 3 ("Melodic Styles"), p. 30ff, and the Samavedic system specifically in Section Four, Chapter 1 ("The Vedic Chant"), p. 158ff.

2.4 Wayne Howard's Field Research

The video states that Wayne Howard from Yale came to India in 1970 on a Fulbright grant and spent 15 months studying Samavedic chanting, encoding the intonations into Western staff notation.

▸ **Source:** Wayne Howard, Samavedic Chant (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 572 pp. Based on Howard's 15-month Fulbright stay in India. His preface notes that the Vedas "are robbed of their essence when transferred to paper, for without the human element the innumerable nuances and fine intonations…are lost completely." See also: Howard, Veda Recitation in Varanasi (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986).

2.5 Komal Gandhara and Nishada

The video attributes to "Professor Sheshadri Shastri" (c. 1900) the theory that in Samavedic pronunciation, Gandhara and Nishada are both *komal* (flat/minor), making the actual scale Ma, Komal Ga, Re, Sa, Komal Ni, Dha, Pa.

Attribution note: This specific scholar could not be definitively identified in digitized sources. The name may refer to a Mysore-era scholar (possibly S. Sheshagiri Shastri), or may come from E. Clements's *Introduction to the Study of Indian Music* (1913) or A.H. Fox Strangways's *The Music of Hindostan* (1914). The underlying musicological claim is well-established: modern fieldwork on living Sama traditions confirms komal Gandhara and komal Nishada in Kauthuma chanting.

▸ **Source:** For the claim itself: Subhadra Desai's fieldwork on Samagas; the Sadharani musicology project (puretones.sadharani.com) explicitly equates the Samagana scale to Kharaharapriya. Possible early sources: E. Clements, Introduction to the Study of Indian Music (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1913); A.H. Fox Strangways, The Music of Hindostan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914); Captain C.R. Day, Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India (London: Novello, 1891).

2.6 Kharaharapriya, Kafi, and Dorian Mode Equivalence

The video demonstrates that the Samavedic scale with komal Ga and komal Ni, when mode-shifted to start from Sa, produces the scale S R g M P D n — which is Kharaharapriya (22nd melakarta in Carnatic music), Kafi thaat (in Hindustani music), and the Dorian mode (in Western music theory). The interval pattern is identical: Whole–Half–Whole–Whole–Whole–Half–Whole.

▸ **Source:** For the Kharaharapriya–Samaveda connection: the Sadharani project; also the tradition that Kharaharapriya was originally called "Sāmagānam." For Kafi: V.N. Bhatkhande, Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati (1910–1932). For the Dorian equivalence: any standard Western music theory text; Aristotle discusses the Dorian mode's emotional character in Politics VIII.5. The Ravana–Kailasha story associated with Kharaharapriya comes from Shaiva devotional traditions, likely codified in the Thyagaraja era (18th century).

3. Stobhas and Pre-Linguistic Sound

3.1 What Are Stobhas?

The video describes Stobhas as "musical padding" — meaningless-sounding syllables like "O Ho Va," "Vo," "Ee Ho" inserted into Samavedic chants. The Sanskrit root *stubh* means "to praise" but in Samavedic context refers specifically to phonetic insertions without semantic meaning that serve musical/melodic functions.

> ▸ **Source:** Monier-Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary, entry for "stobha." Frits Staal analyzes the syntax of stobhas extensively in Rules Without Meaning (1989), Chapter 19: "The Syntax of Stobhas," pp. 209–223.

3.2 Frits Staal's Theory: Melody Before Words

Name correction: The English subtitles refer to "Researcher Rich Starz." This is **Frits Staal** (1930–2012), Professor of Philosophy and South/Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

Staal proposed that Samaveda's music might be older than the Rigvedic mantras themselves — that the melodies came before the words. His evidence: the older Rigvedic mantras fit organically into certain Samaveda songs, while newer ones require excessive stobhas to fit the pre-existing melodic templates. This suggests the verses were mapped onto pre-existing melodies, not the reverse.

Staal further argued that mantras "predate language in the development of man in a chronological sense." He proposed a three-stage evolution of human vocalization: Stage I — bija (seed) mantras and stobhas, which are "features found among vertebrates, and certainly pre-human"; Stage II — complex constructions like "hā bu hā bu bhā bham," possibly "anthropoid or characteristic of early man"; Stage III — semantic language, emerging only in the last 50,000–100,000 years.

His key evidence for the antiquity of mantras: languages change because they express meaning and adapt to the times, but mantras remain unchanged across centuries and continents. Sanskrit Buddhist mantras traveled to Japan transliterated, not translated — Japanese "Om Boku Ken" preserves Sanskrit "Om Bhuh Kham" after 1,500 years.

> ▸ **Source:** Frits Staal, Rules Without Meaning: Ritual, Mantras and the Human Sciences (New York: Peter Lang, 1989; Toronto Studies in Religion, Vol. 4; xxii + 490 pp.; ISBN 978-0-8204-0553-7). Indian edition: Ritual and Mantras: Rules Without Meaning (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996; ISBN 81-208-1411-8). Key chapters: Ch. 16 "Music and Ritual" (pp. 165–182), Ch. 19 "The Syntax of Stobhas" (pp. 209–223), Ch. 22 "Mantras and Language" (pp. 253ff). Also: Frits Staal, "The Meaninglessness of Ritual," Numen, Vol. 26, Fasc. 1 (1979), pp. 2–22 (Brill; DOI: 10.1163/156852779X00244).

4. Indo-European Parallels

4.1 Norse Galdr

The video presents Norse Galdr as songs dedicated to Nordic gods like Odin and Freya, noting that Wednesday and Friday are named after them, and that some scholars consider Odin the Norse equivalent of Varuna.

Galdr (Old Norse: "song, incantation") refers specifically to magical chanting in the Norse tradition. The Hávamál (stanzas 146–163) describes Odin's eighteen magical songs. The Odin–Varuna parallel comes from Georges Dumézil's comparative Indo-European mythology, based on shared functions of sovereignty, magical binding, and cosmic order.

> ▸ **Source:** Poetic Edda, Hávamál (stanzas 146–163). For the Odin–Varuna parallel: Georges Dumézil, Mitra-Varuna: An Essay on Two Indo-European Representations of Sovereignty (Paris: Leroux, 1948; English trans. Zone Books, 1988); Jaan Puhvel, Comparative Mythology (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987). For Galdr: Stephen Flowers, Runes and Magic (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1986).

4.2 Lithuanian Dainos

The video notes that Lithuanian Dainos were once used to perform magic but after Christianization were reduced to beer-drinking songs. Lithuania was the last European country to be Christianized (1387 CE), and its musical traditions preserve some of the oldest Indo-European folk patterns. The polyphonic *sutaltinės* are recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage.

> ▸ **Source:** Algirdas Greimas, Of Gods and Men: Studies in Lithuanian Mythology (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992). For sutaltinės: UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage listing (2010). For Indo-European musical continuities: the 2022 paper "Indo-European Musical Idiom and Indo-European Ethnogenesis" comparing rhythmic patterns across Slavic, Baltic, Greek, Albanian, and Iranian traditions.

4.3 Irish Filí Poets

The video claims that Irish Filí poets could bring blisters to a king's face through the power of their songs. This refers to *glám dícenn*, a form of satirical poetry in early Irish tradition believed to cause physical harm (blisters, blemishes) to its target. This was documented in early Irish law texts as a genuine legal concern — a poet's satire had enforceable consequences.

> ▸ **Source:** Fergus Kelly, A Guide to Early Irish Law (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988). Liam Breatnach, Uraicecht na Ríar: The Poetic Grades in Early Irish Law (Dublin: DIAS, 1987). For the broader Indo-European "poet as magician" pattern: Calvert Watkins, How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

4.4 Carmen, Charm, and Spell

The video notes that the Latin word *carmen* meant both "song" and "magical spell," and that the English word "charm" derives from it. Similarly, "spelling" and "casting a spell" share a root.

> ▸ **Source:** Oxford English Dictionary: "charm" < Old French "charme" < Latin "carmen" (song, verse, incantation). Watkins (1995) discusses this pan-Indo-European linkage between poetic composition and magical efficacy extensively.

5. The Chandogya Upanishad

5.1 The Essence Chain

The video presents the hierarchical chain: the essence of Earth is water; of water, plants; of plants, humans; of humans, Vak (speech); of Vak, Rik (poetry); of Rik, Sama (music); and of Sama, Om (Udgitha). This is the *rasa* (essence) sequence from the opening of the Chandogya Upanishad.

> ▸ **Source:** Chandogya Upanishad 1.1.1–1.1.3. Translation: Patrick Olivelle, The Early Upaniṣads: Annotated Text and Translation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Also: Swami Gambhirananda (trans.), Chāndogya Upaniṣad with Shankaracharya's Bhashya (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama).

5.2 Om and Nada Brahman

The video states that Om comes from the Samaveda tradition and symbolizes *Nāda Brahman* — the philosophy that the entire universe is sound/vibration. The Chandogya Upanishad's equation is: Speech (Vāk) = Rik; Breath (Prāṇa) = Sāma; Om = Udgitha. This establishes Sāma not merely as music but as *prāṇa* — life-breath itself.

> ▸ **Source:** Chandogya Upanishad 1.1.5: "vāg evark prāṇaḥ sāmom ity etad akṣaram udgīthaḥ." The Nada Brahman concept is elaborated across multiple Upanishads, particularly the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad and its Kārikā by Gauḍapāda.

6. Samaveda Structure

6.1 Archika and Gana

The Samaveda is divided into two major parts: the Archika (lyric section, containing the text of hymns, 95%+ adopted from Rigveda) and the Gana (musical section, containing notation for singing the Archika's lyrics). The Archika is subdivided into Purvarchika (mantras for Agni, Indra, Soma, plus forest mantras) and Uttararchika (1,200+ mantras arranged by Soma Yajna liturgical sequence). The Gana includes the Rahasya Gana — secret chants performed silently.

> ▸ **Source:** Jan Gonda, Vedic Literature: Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas, History of Indian Literature Vol. I, Fasc. 1 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975). Michael Witzel, "Vedas and Upaniṣads" in The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism, ed. Gavin Flood (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003). For the 95% figure: only 75–99 verses are unique to Samaveda depending on recension.

6.2 One Thousand Branches, Three Survivors

The video states that Samaveda once had more than a thousand branches (*śākhās*) but only three survive: Kauthuma (standard, mainly North India), Ranayaniya (Maharashtra/Karnataka), and Jaiminiya (Kerala, the oldest and most musically complex). Patanjali's Mahabhashya records this as "*sahasravartmā sāmavede*" — "a thousand paths in the Samaveda."

> ▸ **Source:** Patañjali, Mahābhāṣya on Pāṇini 4.2.65. Michael Witzel discusses the survival of three recensions in multiple publications. For the Jaiminiya tradition specifically: Asko Parpola, "The Literature and Study of the Jaiminiya Sāmaveda" (Studia Orientalia 43, Helsinki, 1973).

6.3 Notation Systems and Hand Gestures

Kauthuma and Ranayaniya use numerical notation (1–7 above syllables); Jaiminiya uses letter-based notation. As an oral tradition, the written notation was a later innovation — the primary transmission was through the body: cheironomy (hand gesture systems) in Tamil Nadu's Kauthuma tradition, head movements in Kerala's Jaiminiya households, and finger gestures (*kai-kāṭṭuka*) as the most common method.

> ▸ **Source:** Howard (1977) for the Kauthuma/Ranayaniya numerical system. Frits Staal, Asko Parpola, and Wayne Howard, The Decipherment of the Samavedic Notation of the Jaiminyas (Helsinki: Finnish Academy, 1988) for the Jaiminiya letter notation and kai-kāṭṭuka gesture system.

7. Krishna and the Anthropological Argument

7.1 Bhagavad Gita 10.22

Krishna's statement: *vedānāṃ sāmavedo'smi devānām asmi vāsavaḥ / indriyāṇāṃ manaś cāsmi bhūtānām asmi cetanā* — "Among the Vedas, I am the Samaveda; among the gods, I am Indra; among the senses, I am the mind; and among living beings, I am consciousness."

> ▸ **Source:** Bhagavad Gita 10.22 (Vibhūti Yoga). Any standard edition; e.g., Winthrop Sargeant, The Bhagavad Gītā: Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009).

7.2 Devaki Putra Krishna in the Chandogya Upanishad

The video presents the mention of "Devaki Putra Krishna" as a student of Ghora Angirasa in the Chandogya Upanishad, learning teachings that include concepts like *akṣitam* (imperishable) and *acyutam* (unshakeable) — terms that later become epithets of Vishnu in the Sahasranama. This is the oldest textual reference to someone who may be the Krishna of later tradition.

> ▸ **Source:** Chandogya Upanishad 3.17.6: "tad dhaitat ghora āṅgirasaḥ kṛṣṇāya devakīputrāyoktovāca." Olivelle (1998). The teaching content (3.17.4): ahimsa, dana, satyavacanam. For Achyuta as Vishnu epithet: Viṣṇu Sahasranāma (Anuśāsana Parva of Mahābhārata), name #100.

7.3 The Salva Conquest and Eastward Migration

The video recounts how Kurukshetra collapsed after the Salva attack, with the Kurus gradually moving eastward, power shifting to Panchala. The Salvas are described as "a non-Vedic tribe from the borderlands of Sindh and Baluchistan."

Geographical nuance: The "Sindh and Baluchistan" attribution comes from V.S. Agrawala's philological reconstruction based on "Śālvakāgiri" (Salva mountain) in Pāṇini's Ashtadhyayi, which he identified with the Hala Range. Michael Witzel's reconstruction places the Salvas more broadly in the Punjab/Trigarta region at the time of the invasion (~900 BCE). The Jaiminiya Brahmana records the conquest but does not specify Sindh or Baluchistan.

> ▸ **Source:** The Salva conquest: Jaiminiya Brahmana III.168. V.S. Agrawala, India as Known to Pāṇini (Lucknow: University of Lucknow, 1953), pp. 39–40, 55. Michael Witzel, "Tracing the Vedic Dialects" in Dialectes dans les littératures indo-aryennes, ed. Colette Caillat (Paris: Institut de Civilisation Indienne, 1989), p. 142. Witzel, "Early Sanskritization: Origins and Development of the Kuru State" in Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies 1:4 (1995/1997).

7.4 The Chandogya Debate: Shilaka, Dalbhya, and Jaivali

The Chandogya Upanishad records a debate about the basis of Udgitha between Shilaka Shalavyatya (a Salva Brahmin), Chaikitayana Dalbhya (a Panchala Brahmin), and Pravahana Jaivali (the ruler of Panchala), who as a Kshatriya king defeats both Brahmin scholars — declaring that the true basis is *ākāśa* (infinite space), neither heaven nor earth.

> ▸ **Source:** Chandogya Upanishad 1.8.1–1.9.4. Olivelle (1998). The pattern of Kshatriyas defeating Brahmins in philosophical debate is discussed in Johannes Bronkhorst, Greater Magadha: Studies in the Culture of Early India (Leiden: Brill, 2007) and Olivelle's introduction to the Upanishads.

7.5 Salvas, Surasena, and the Vrishni-Yadava Clans

The video traces how Salva people mixed into Panchala and Mathura, forming the Surasena Janapada according to the Jaiminiya Brahmana. In Mathura, the Yadu tribe and their pastoral clans — Vrishni and Satvata — are described as people of Yadava lineage whom the Mahabharata calls *Vrātya* — those living outside the orthodox Vedic system.

Textual verification: The Mahabharata does explicitly call the Vrishnis and Andhakas "Vratya." The key verse is Drona Parva 7.118.15 (Critical Edition): *vrātyāḥ saṃśliṣṭakarmāṇaḥ prakṛtyaiva vigarhitāḥ / vṛṣṇy andhakāḥ kathaṃ pārtha pramāṇaṃ bhavatā kṛtāḥ* — "The Vrishnis and Andhakas are Vratyas, of mixed conduct, contemptible by nature." The Manusmriti (X.23) further classifies the Satvatas as Vratya Vaishyas.

> ▸ **Source:** Mahābhārata, Droṇa Parva 7.118.15 (Critical Edition; Vulgate 141.15). Manusmriti X.23. For the Surasena formation: Jaiminiya Brahmana + Witzel's reconstruction. For the Vratya concept: Atharvaveda Book 15; Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa 17.1.9–15; J.C. Heesterman, The Inner Conflict of Tradition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

7.6 Pancharatra and Ancestor Worship

The video mentions a festival called Pancharatra ("five nights") from the Taittiriya Samhita, describing it as a heterodox movement focused on internal devotion and Narayana worship. The five Vrishni ancestors across three generations — Sankarshana (Balarama), Vasudeva Krishna, Pradyumna, Samba, and Aniruddha — were gradually assimilated into the composite Narayana archetype.

Textual reference: The earliest mention of "Pancharatra" as a ritual is in Taittiriya Samhita 7.1.10 (Kanda VII, Chapter 1, Section 10), discussing sattras including a five-night session. The theologically significant account is Shatapatha Brahmana 13.6.1.1, which describes Purusha Narayana performing the *puruṣamedhaṃ pañcarātraṃ yajñakratum* (five-night Purushamedha sacrifice). The Mahabharata's Narayaniya section (Book XII, chapters 335–351) later connects this to Pancharatra theology.

> ▸ **Source:** Taittiriya Samhita 7.1.10, trans. Arthur Berriedale Keith, The Veda of the Black Yajus School (1914). Shatapatha Brahmana 13.6.1.1, trans. Julius Eggeling, Sacred Books of the East (1882–1900). Suvira Jaiswal, The Origin and Development of Vaishnavism: Vaishnavism from 200 B.C. to A.D. 500 (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967; revised ed. 1981). F.O. Schrader, Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and the Ahirbudhnya Saṃhitā (Madras: Adyar Library, 1916).

7.7 The Five Vrishni Heroes as Historical Figures

The video attributes to "Scholar R.N. Dandekar" the argument that the five Vrishni heroes were actual historical rulers of the Mathura region.

Attribution correction: The specific claim that they were "ancient historical rulers in the region of Mathura" comes from **John M. Rosenfield** (1967), based on art-historical evidence from the Mora shrine excavations near Mathura. R.N. Dandekar's contribution was the broader argument that Vaishnavism originated as "Vasudevism" around a deified Vrishni leader.

> ▸ **Source:** John M. Rosenfield, The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 151–152, Fig. 51. R.N. Dandekar, "Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism" in R.G. Bhandarkar as an Indologist (Pune: BORI, 1976), pp. 21–111. Also: J.N. Banerjea, "The Holy Panchaviras of the Vrishnis," Journal of Indian Society of Oriental Art X (1942), pp. 65–68.

7.8 Archaeological Evidence

The video cites three archaeological proofs of early Vasudeva–Sankarshana worship: the Ghosundi Inscription, the Agathocles coins, and the Mora Well Inscription. In all early references, Sankarshana is mentioned before Vasudeva, suggesting the elder brother was initially more prominent.

> ▸ **Source:** Ghosundi Inscription (2nd–1st century BCE, Rajasthan): mentions Sankarshana-Vasudeva worship, a stone enclosure for their worship. D.C. Sircar, Select Inscriptions Bearing on Indian History and Civilization, Vol. I (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1965). Agathocles coins (~180 BCE): show Sankarshana (with plow) and Vasudeva (with chakra). R.C. Senior, Indo-Scythian Coins and History (London: Classical Numismatic Group, 2001). Mora Well Inscription (1st century CE, Mathura): references the "five viras" of the Vrishni clan. Sonya Rhie Quintanilla, History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura (Leiden: Brill, 2007). Heliodorus Pillar (Besnagar/Vidisha, ~113 BCE): Greek ambassador declares himself a Bhagavata (devotee of Vasudeva). See Sircar; also John Irwin, "The Heliodorus Pillar at Besnagar."

7.9 The Abhira Layer: Gopala Krishna

The video traces how the Harivamsha (1st–4th century CE, appendix to the Mahabharata) first introduces Gopala Krishna — the cowherd god, Vrindavan, Nanda, Yashoda, Gopis, Govardhan — and connects this to the Abhiras, a pastoral nomadic community whose god Gopala ("protector of cows") was described as dark-skinned and a flute player. The Tamil parallel is Mayon, the dark ruler of grasslands from Sangam literature.

> ▸ **Source:** Harivamsha: André Couture's publications on Krishna in the Harivamsha; Alf Hiltebeitel, Rethinking the Mahabharata (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). For the Abhiras: Bhagwansingh Suryavanshi, The Abhiras: Their History and Culture (Baroda: M.S. University, 1962). For Mayon: Tolkappiyam (Porulatikaram), mullai tinai deity = Mayon; Kamil Zvelebil, The Smile of Murugan (Leiden: Brill, 1973); Friedhelm Hardy, Viraha-Bhakti: The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

7.10 The Alvar Poets and South-to-North Bhakti

The video states that the erotic Krishna devotion visible in Bengal and Vrindavan actually came to the north from the Tamil Alvar tradition (6th–9th century CE).

Scholarly attribution: This is Friedhelm Hardy's thesis, argued in *Viraha-Bhakti* (1983). Hardy proposed that the erotic/separation dimension of Krishna devotion originated among the Tamil Alvars and moved northward. This is an influential but not universally accepted position.

> ▸ **Source:** Friedhelm Hardy, Viraha-Bhakti: The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

7.11 Rigvedic "Krishna"

The video notes that in the Rigveda, "Krishna" literally meant "the dark ones" — the people whom Indra defeated. The reference is Rigveda 8.96.13–15, where Indra is described as destroying "fifty thousand Krishnas." Whether these are a specific "people" or a descriptive epithet remains debated.

> ▸ **Source:** Rigveda 8.96.13–15. Translation: Stephanie Jamison and Joel Brereton, The Rigveda: The Earliest Religious Poetry of India (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3 vols.

8. The Khandesh Discovery

8.1 The Ovee of the Khandeshi Adivasis

The video presents a YouTube discovery: a recording titled "Ovee — Song of the Adivasi People of Khandesh" that sounds remarkably similar to the Uha Rahasya Gana of Samaveda. The video notes that Khandesh was initially called Abhiradesha.

On "Abhiradesha": The Abhira presence in Khandesh is well-documented. Bhagwansingh Suryavanshi (1962) establishes that "Abhiradesa" was applied to the Khandesh-Wardha-Elichpur region during the Abhira dynasty's dominance (c. 203–370 CE). The Nasik Cave X Inscription (~257 CE) confirms Abhira sovereignty in the area. The Ahirani dialect spoken in Khandesh is named after the Abhiras. The fortress of Asirgarh retains the name of its Abhira founder, Asa Ahir.

On the Ovee–Samaveda connection: This is the video creator's original observation and should be understood as a speculative but intriguing hypothesis. The Khandesh region lies in a zone where Dravidian, Indo-Aryan, and residual Munda/Austroasiatic influences historically overlapped — the Korku people, the westernmost Munda-speaking group, inhabit the adjacent Satpura range. Whether the musical similarities reflect a genuine pre-Vedic substrate, downward diffusion of Brahminical practice, or coincidence requires further ethnomusicological investigation.

> ▸ **Source:** Bhagwansingh Suryavanshi, The Abhiras: Their History and Culture (Baroda: M.S. University, 1962). East Nimar District Gazetteer by P.N. Shrivastav (1969), p. 41. H.S. Thosar, "The Abhiras in Indian History," Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Vol. 51 (1990), pp. 56–65 (JSTOR 44148188). For Munda substrate: the geographic proximity of Korku speakers in the Satpura range adjacent to Khandesh.

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