Jaiminiyasāma - Origin, Structure, Accentuation, Oral Gāna
Tradition and Commentaries

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Origin

According to the tradition, Bhagavān Vedavyāsa compiled and edited the Vedamantras dividing them into four, Ṛk, Yajus, Sāma and Atharva. Before that, we get the names of many seers who composed the hymns like Viśvāmitra, Vasiṣṭha and Vāmadeva. It was left to Parāśaravyāsa or Vedavyāsa to arrange the hymns in a systematic manner for the benefit of the posterity. Accordingly he taught them to five of his students - Paila (Ṛgveda), Vaiśampāyana (Yajus), Jaimini (Sāma), Subantu (Atharva) and Romaharṣaṇa (Itihāsa and Purāṇa). They transmitted this knowledge to their disciples who, in turn, enriched them with their interpretations and commentaries. Thus the origin of Sāmaveda as a separate Veda as we get it now, can be attributed to Vyāsa and his disciple Jaimini. Vyāsa got the name 'Vedavyāsa' because it was he who codified, edited and divided the Vedas into four.

Meaning of the word 'Sāma'

Generally, the word 'Sāma' means 'Stuti' or 'musical composition in Stuti form'. Thus it is clear that the Sāmaveda has much relation to music. Scholars have explained the word 'Sāma' based on different derivative meanings. According to one opinion, the word Sāma has derived from the root 'ṣa' meaning 'to destroy' (षो अन्तर्कर्मणि). Thus it means that the chanting of the Veda 'destroys all evils and sins'. Pāṇini derives the word from the root 'sām' meaning 'to sooth or give comfort' (साम्

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It is meant here that through the melodies of music, the Veda, while chanting or when hearing, sooths the heart or gives comforts of all kind to the mind. Another derivation is from the root ‘syati’ which means that it destroys all worries by its musical melody (स्यति चिंतनाति दुःख गैयत्वात्, स्यति खण्डयति दुःखानि येन तत्). Some give the meaning ‘sorrow’ or ‘pain’ to the root ‘syati’ with the hint that it is very difficult or painful to learn सामवेद (स्यति दुःखयति दुरस्थैयत्वात). The word also means that the gods are pleased by hearing the chanting of Śāma (सामयति देवान् अनेन).

The word 'Śāma' is the combination of the words 'sā' and 'ama'. This is referred to in Aitareyabrāhmaṇa (12. 12), Atharvaveda (14. 2. 71) and Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad (1.3.22). According to Sāyānabhaṣya, 'sā' refers to the Mantras or Ēks and 'ama' refers to the Svaras or accents while the Ēks are chanted.

In many contexts in Ṛgveda, the word Śāma is referred to:

अद्विगरसं सामभि स्तूयमानः। (1.107.2)
सामगा इव गायत्रज्व त्रेष्टमञ्जः। (2.43.1)
उदगाते...साम गायसिः। (2.43.2)
शुद्धेन सामना। (8.84.7)
इन्द्राय बृहत् साम गायत। (8.87.1)
अद्विगरसो न सामभिः। (10.78.5)

Samhitā and recensions

According to Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali, Sāmaveda had one thousand recensions (सात्साहस्रस्य सामवेदोः). Sāmaveda having one thousand Śākhās is referred to in Viṣṇupurāṇa (स्वधातस्याचार्यते) and Caraṇavyūha (तत्र सामवेदस्य शास्त्राय समासारं) also. In Caraṇavyūha, among the one thousand Śākhās, Rāṇāyaṇīya, Sātyamukhya, Kālāpa, Mahākālāpa, Kauthūma and Lāngalika are referred to by their names. The sub-divisions of the Śākhās of Kauthūma, six in
number, are also referred to in some texts which are Sārāyaṇīya, Vātarāyaṇīya, Vaidhṛta, Prācīna, Taijasa and Aniṣṭaka. In the text Sāmatarpaṇavidhi, names of thirteen Śākhās of Sāmaveda are given which are Rāṇāyaṇīya, Śātyamugrya, Vyāsa, Bhāguri, Auluṇḍi, Gaulguli, Bhānumāna, Aupammanyava, Kārāṇi, Maśakagārgya, Vārṣagavya, Kuthuma and Śālihotra (Sāmaveda with Hindi commentary, Damodar Satvalekar, Swadhyayamandal, Surat, 1963, Bhūmikā, p. 7). It this way there are various references getting regarding the Śākhās of Sāmaveda.

Among these, only three, Jaiminīya, Kauthūma and Rāṇāyaṇīya are preserved. Puṣpasūtra, a Prātiśākhya text of Sāmaveda, refers two more Śākhās of it as current, namely Kālabavi and Śātyāyani, but the continuation of which has been lost, it seems. (Puṣpasūtra, 8.8.28-29). Kauthūma and Rāṇāyaṇīya are current even now in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra and Bengal. Kauthūma is otherwise known as Cchandoga and the other name of Jaiminīya is Talavakāra. There is no much textual variation regarding Kauthūma and Rāṇāyaṇīya Śākhās, but there are differences in accents while chanting.

Compared to Kauthūma and Rāṇāyaṇīya, Jaiminīyaśākhā is very different in the arrangement of the text, sequence of R̄ks, division of chapters and chanting. Jaiminīyaśākhā has two main divisions, the one practiced by the Namboothiris of Kerala and the other practiced by Tamil Brāhmaṇas. Namboothiri Jaiminīya is now prevelant in the village Panjil in Trissur District in Kerala. Five Namboothiri families, Muṭṭattukāṭṭil, Nelliṅkāṭṭil, Perumaṅnāṭ, Koraṭṭikkara and Toṭṭam, preserved the tradition till recent times. But it is in the state of extinction now, as the tradition is being discontinued due to various reasons and is difficult to revamp again. Jaiminīyasāma of Tamil Brāhmaṇa tradition is more vogue and many are
practicing it even now. There is a Gurukula running for Jaiminīyasāma of Tamil
tradition at Tanjavoor in Tamil Nadu under the Guru Makarabhushanam Iyankar
and one at the village Kodunthirappully near Palakkad in Kerala under the Guru
Tiruvenketanatha Sharma.

In Viṣṇupurāṇa, there is a reference to the Śākhās and Ācāryas of Sāmaveda
which is as follows (Amśa 3, Addhyāya 6, Śloka 1-8):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{सामवेदतरोश्चक्षः: व्यासशिष्यस्स: जैमिनः:} & \\
\text{क्रमेण येन मैत्रेय: बिभेद: शृणु: तन्मः:} & \\
\text{सुमन्वस्तस्य पुरोहितै: सुकर्मस्याययमुख्यु:} & \\
\text{अधीतवन्तौ चैकेकां संहितां तो महामति:} & \\
\text{सहस्रसंहितामेव सुकर्मा तत्सुतस्ततः} & \\
\text{चकार तं च तच्छिष्यो जगहतान्त महावती:} & \\
\text{हिरण्यनामः: कोसत्य: पौषिण्जितिस्व: द्विजोऽतमः} & \\
\text{उद्वैयससामगः: शिष्यः: तस्य पञ्चशतं स्मृताः} & \\
\text{हिरण्यनाभातात्यसंहिताः येद्विजोऽतमः} & \\
\text{गृहीतास्तेभि चौवन्ये पण्डिते: प्राच्यसामगः} & \\
\text{लोकाकिर्तिविधिमिश्रं कल्पीवन् लांकुगलिस्तथा} & \\
\text{पौषिण्जिशिष्यास्तेभमेव: संहिताः: बहुलीकृताः} & \\
\text{हिरण्यनाभाशिष्यस्तु: चतुर्विश्वसंहिताः} & \\
\text{प्रोवाच कृतनामासौ: शिष्णेयस्य महामुनी:} & \\
\text{तेश्चापि सामवेदोसत्रो: शाखामिबहुलीकृत:} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

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In the Introduction to Śatapathabrāhmaṇa, reference to the Śākhā of
Sāmaveda is given. According to that, there are two lineage for the Śākhā of
Sāmaveda called Brahmasampradāya and Ādiyasampradāya. The Ācāryas under
each are listed there as follows:
Brahmasampradāya

Jaimini

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sumantu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sutvan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukarman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pauṣyañji

Kauśikahiranyanabhān

Lokākṣi

Kuthumi

Kuśīti

Lāṅgali

(24 disciples)

Saumitrīsthandhi-Rasapārasan Pārasārana Bhāgavatti Tejasvi

putraraṇāyaṇīyan

1. Rājañ

2. Mahāvīryan

3. Pañcaman

4. Vāhanan

5. Tālakan

6. Pāṇḍakān

7. Kālikan

8. Rājakān

9. Gautaman

10. Ājābastan

11. Somarājan

12. Prṣṭhaghnān

13. Parikṣṭiṇ

14. Ulūkhalan

15. Vaiśiālan

16. Vaiśiālan

17. Aṅgulīyan

18. Kauśikan

19. Sāli

20. Maṇjari

21. Satyan

22. Kāpīyan

23. Kānikan

24. Parāśaran
Adityasampradāya

Yogīśvarājñānvalkyan

Sāmaśravakuthumi

Rasapārasan  Pārāśaran  Bhāgavitti  Tejasvi

Āsurāyaṇan

Vaiśākhi

Prācīnayogaputrapatañjali

Lāṅgali

Bhāluki  Kāmahāni  Śālihotran  Jaimini  Lobhagāmi

Kaṇḍan  Kolahan

The Kauthūma recension also has two branches, Prācīnakaithūma and Navīnakauthūma. The former is also called Paribhāṣāpāṭha which is not preserved now. There were scholars in Prācīnakaithūma in the village Putukkode near Palakkad in Kerala. They were the descendents of the Kauthūmaśākhā Brahmins of Maharashtra. For some reasons, historical, social and cultural, they happened to get settled in Putukkode village under Palakkad kings and they preserved the Prācīnakaithūma with its pristine purity. Pandit Gopala Vadhyar was the last scholar in the tradition who passed away some years ago without having any
disciples to continue the tradition. An audio/video cassette of the Prācīnakaṭhūma chanting of Puthukkode Gopala Vadhyar only is now available as an example of the tradition. In the meantime, the Kauthūma style of Maharashtra and other places underwent many changes, which is called Navīnakaṭhūma. This is now practiced in the Gurukulas in the states like Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra. (For more details of the Prācīnakaṭhūma tradition of Puthukkode village, vide the article 'Vedic Studies in Kerala', Dr. K. G. Paulose, Kadavallur Anyonyam Silver Jubilee Smaranika, Kadavallur Anyonya Parishath, Kadavallur, Trissur Dist., Kerala, Nov. 2014, pp. 193-199)

**Structure of the text and division of chapters**

The structure of the text and division of chapters of Kauthūma and Rāṇāyaṇīya recensions are almost similar. The text in these recensions are divided into three namely Pūrvārcika or Cchandārcika, Mahānāmnyārcika and Uttarārcika. Pūrvārcika is again divided into four Kāṇḍas according to the deities invoked and praised namely Āgneya, Aindra, Pavamāna and Āraṇya. Uttarārcika is designed codifying the Ṛks according to the rituals related to the performance of Yāgas. The Ṛks in the Uttarārcika are arranged as trios or Ṭṛcas. There are only ten Ṛks in the Mahānāmnyārcika which is found in between Pūrvārcika and Uttarārcika.

Each Kāṇḍa in the Pūrvārcika of Kauthūma and Rāṇāyaṇīya recensions is again divided into Prapāṭhaka, Ardhaprapāṭhaka and Daśati (collection of ten Ṛks). In the Pūrvārcika there are 640 Mantras included in four Kāṇḍas. These Mantras are distributed in six Prapāṭhakas, thirteen Ardhaprapāṭhakas and sixty four Daśatis. Ten Mantras of Mahānāmnyārcika is attached to the Pūrvārcika as another Daśati. Uttarārcika is also divided into Prapāṭhakas, Ardhaprapāṭhakas, Śūktas and Ṛks. Daśati type of division is not found in Uttarārcika. There are total
1225 Ēks in Uttarār̥cika which are distributed in nine Prapāṭhakas and twenty two Ardhaprapāṭhakas.

The total number of Mantras in Kauthūma-Rāṇāyaṇīya recensions becomes 1875 as follows:

- Mantras in Āgneya, Aindra and Pavamāna Kāṇḍas: 585
- Mantras in Āraṇyakāṇḍa: 55
- Mantras in Mahānāmyār̥cika: 10
- Mantras in Uttarār̥cika: 1225
- Total Mantras: 1875

In the Gānas of Kauthūma recensions, there are total 2722 Gānas (1197 Grāmageyagānas, 294 Āraṇyageyagānas, 1026 Īhagānas and 205 Īhyagānas) (Vide Śāmaveda with Hindi Commentary, Ed. by Damodar Sattvalekkar, Swadhyayamandal, Surath, 1963, p. 10).

Compared to the Kauthūma-Rāṇāyaṇīya recensions, Jaiminīyasāma recension contains 1698 Ēks or Mantras in total.

These Ēks are distributed in five Kāṇḍas in 112 Adhyāyas. The Kāṇḍas in Jaiminīya recension are Āgneya, Aindra, Pavamāna, Dvādaśāha and Uttara. First three Kāṇḍas contain Ēks praising the deities Agni, Indra and Pavamāna respectively. The Mantras in the Kāṇḍas four and five are related to various Yāga rituals. The Mantras distributed in the Kāṇḍas and Adhyāyas of Jaiminīya recension are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kāṇḍas</th>
<th>Adhyāyas</th>
<th>Mantras or Ēks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Āgneya</td>
<td>12 (1-12)</td>
<td>116 (1-116)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Aindra</td>
<td>36 (13-48)</td>
<td>352 (117-468)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Pavamāna</td>
<td>11 (49-59)</td>
<td>119 (469-587)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dvādaśāha</td>
<td>47 (60-106)</td>
<td>757 (588-1344)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Uttara</td>
<td>06 (107-112)</td>
<td>354 (1345-1698)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dr. Raghuvira has edited and published *Jaiminīyasāmaveda* from Lahore in 1938. But the arrangement of the text and the arrangement of Mantras of the Jaiminīyasāma of Kerala Namboothiris have some differences when compared to the Jaiminīyasāma edited and published by Dr. Raghuvira. The Jaiminīya recension of Kerala Namboothiris was not printed till very recent times. It was remaining in transcript form in the collection of the Sāma Panditsof Panjal village of Kerala. Dr. K. A. Ravindran brought out the first edition of the Jaiminīyasāma of Kerala Namboothiris in Malayalam script with exhaustive study and introduction in Malayalam from Panchangam Pustakasala, Kunnamkulam, Trissur Dist, Kerala, in 2007. Later it was published from Centre for Vedic Studies, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, Kerala, jointly edited by Dr. C. M. Neelakandhan and Dr. K. A. Ravindran in 2014. The edition contains the text in Nāgari script and English transliteration and simple English translation of the Mantras. Dr. K. A. Ravindran has edited the text of *Keralāyajaiminīyasāmaveda* with Ārcika, Sāma and Candrāsāma portions in two volumes as part of a project of National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM), IGNCA, New Delhi which was also published from NMM, New Delhi, in 2014.

**Oral Gāna tradition**

The oral Gāna tradition of *Sāmaveda* is very unique, elaborate and musical. The oral chanting methods slightly changes with each of the existing Śākhās, Jaiminīya, Kauthūma and Rāṇāyaṇīya. Again, the chanting tradition and the Svaras and the peculiarities of accents change according to each region. Kerala Namboothiris have a particular way of chanting of *Sāmaveda* which is not found in other places. Similarly Jaiminīya of Tamil Nadu tradition is again different in the style of chanting. The same Jaiminīya tradition of Tamil Brahmins settled in Kerala at Koduntirappully village near Palakkad has minor differences from that
of the Jaiminiya tradition of Tamil Brahmins settled in Tamil Nadu. Regional
cultures, social environments, historical aspects, accentuation, food habits and the
like surely influence the method of articulation of letters and words which is
invariably found in the chanting tradition of Sāmaveda also. The Prācīnakaṁthūma
retaining its original tradition in its pristine purity in the Puthukkode village near
Palakkad and the same subjected to change in Maharashtra and other regions, as
noted above, are the best examples for these tendencies.

But the common and most important factor related to the Gāna tradition of
Sāmaveda in general is invariably found in all these Śākhās in all parts of India
in all its stages of development and evolution. This is its close relationship with
the music tradition of India, especially classical music. All the seven Svaras of
classical music are found and used in its primitive form in Sāma chanting. Krūṣṭa,
Prathama, Dvīṭīya, Trīṭīya, Caturtha, Mandra and Atisvara are the seven Svaras
used in Sāma chanting. Krūṣṭa is the Svara in the highest pitch. Trīṭīyasvarā is
considered the basic Svara (Ādhārasvara) and it is also known as Dhṛtapracaya.
Nārādiyaśāksā states that the seven Svaras of Sāma, Prathama, Dvīṭīya, Trīṭīya,
Caturtha, Mandra (Paṁcama), Krūṣṭa and Atisvara and respectively the seven
Svaras of classical music, Madhyama, Gāndhāra, Rṣabha, Saḍja, Dhaivata, Niśāda
and Paṁcama.

प्रथमश्च द्वितीयश्च तृतीयोऽथ चतुर्थकः।
मन्त्रः क्रुष्टो ह्यतिस्वारः एतान् कुर्वत्ति सामगः॥

(Prapāṭhaka I, Khaṇḍa 1, Sloka 12)

यः सामगानाः प्रथमः स वेणोमेध्यमः स्वरः।
यो द्वितीयः स गाम्याः तृतीयस्तुःश्च स्मृतः॥
चतुर्थः षड्जः इत्यादूः पञ्चमो धैवतो भवेत्।
षष्ठो निषादो विज्ञेयः सप्तमः पञ्चमः स्मृतः॥

(Prapāṭhaka I, Khaṇḍa 5, Sloka 1, 2)
Thus the oral Gāna tradition of Sāma chanting is related to classical music in many ways.

Close relationship of Sāma chanting with music is highlighted by many earlier scholars in their authoritative statements. Some examples are given here.

सामवेदी गीतमेव च (Nātyaśāstram)
सामवेदात स्वरो जात: स्वरेम्यो ग्रामसंभवः (Bṛhaddeśī of Mataṅga)
सामवेदादिदं गीतं संज्ञांह पितामहः (Saṅgītaratnākara of Śārīgadeva)
सप्तस्वरास्तु गीयन्ते सामविभिस्मागैर्बुधः (Māṇḍūkyaśikṣā)

It is taking into consideration this musical importance of Sāmaveda that in Bhagavadgītā Lord Kṛṣṇa identifies himself with Sāmaveda among the four Vedas (वेदान्ता सामवेदोस्मि).

Commentaries and editions

Earlier commentators of Sāmaveda before Śāyaṇa, like Mādhava, Bharatavāmi and Guṇaviṣṇu are referred to by different Ācāryas in various texts. But such commentaries are not getting now. Like for other Vedas Śāyaṇa has written commentary on Sāmaveda also (for Kauthūma recension). Mainly based on Śāyaṇa, many commentaries and translations were written for Sāmaveda both by Eastern and Western scholars in 19th and 20th centuries which is continuing even now. Commentary on Sāmaveda in English was written by Dr. Steevanson which was published by Prof. Wilson in 1842. In 1848, Prof. Benfy published Sāmaveda with the first English translation in verse. Based on this, Prof. Griffith also wrote an English translation in verse for Sāmaveda.

Among the total number of Ṛks in Sāmaveda, except more than one hundred, are those found in Ṛgveda. Dr. K. A. Ravindran in this work Sāmavedadarpaṇam has given in detail the Ṛks found in both the Jaiminīya and Kauthūma recensions of Sāmaveda, that are not found in Ṛgveda with their Malayalam translation.
(Anubandham I, pp. 62-86). Because most of the Ṛks of Sāmaveda are those found in Ṛgveda, the commentaries, translations and studies on the Ṛgveda, especially of the Ṛks in it found in Sāmaveda, can also be made use for their study and analysis. The editions and studies on Sāmaveda that contain commentaries, studies and translations, are listed here.

1. *Sāmavedabhāṣyam*, with the text of Sāma and Hindi commentary named Bhagavatī by Paramahamsa Jagadīśvarānandasarasvati, Samskar Prakasan, Delhi, 1996.


10. *Jaiminīyasa-sāmaveda*, with text only, Dr. Raghuvira, Lahore, 1938.


13. *Jaiminīyasāmaveda of Kerala Namboothiri Tradition*, with text in Nāgari script and transliteration and simple translation in English, jointly edited by Dr. C. M. Neelakandhan and Dr. K. A. Ravindran, Centre for Vedic Studies, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, Kerala, 2014.


The list is not exhaustive. All translations and studies that are published in different regional languages have not been included in the list.

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