

**Samvāda as a Literary and Philosophical Genre:
An Overlooked Model for Public Debate and Conflict Resolution**

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The meaning of *saṃvāda* (which may well describe what we are gathered here to do today) has the usual delights of Sanskrit lexicography, albeit in a milder form. The Brāhmaṇas use it to mean “bargain.” The Dharma Sūtras use it to mean conversation, discussion, or dialogue which are the word’s more “common” meaning. In the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *saṃvāda* means an account, incident story. *Mahābhārata* continues in this semantic range, only with the added connotation of dispute, ironically enough, in the *Śanti Parvan*. In *Mīmāṃsā*, it means its opposite, “agreement,” or “accord”; so too in the *Tantravārtika* (1.2.22; 1.2.47) and the Jain text of the *Prabandhacintāmani* (52.4).

In addition to being a word, *saṃvāda* also seems to function as a discrete, if not strictly bounded, genre. We hear the term *saṃvāda* used all the time in reference to the Gītā, where it is described as a *saṃvāda* between Nara and Narayana, as well as Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa. The term is used by the Anukramaṇīs and other late Vedic texts to describe certain Vedic hymns. It is used in the introduction (*Ādi Parvan*) of the *Mahābhārata* to name certain dialogues, such as that harmonious exchange between Draupadī and Kṛṣṇa’s wife, Satyabhāmā, or the rather angry and heated one between Karṇa and *before the battle. It is also used by Saṅkara to name certain dialogues in

the Upaniṣads; fact, it is used by the Upaniṣads themselves to name certain dialogues between teacher and pupil within its own tradition.

The brief examples I will be using here are named as *saṃvāda* by early and classical Hindu texts themselves, and thus might constitute what we call an indigenous genre. Certainly *saṃvāda* does not have a tradition of criticism behind it as *kāvya* does, or as classical schools of philosophy do. But one might suggest here that it is never too late to start one.

I want to add a note here about multiplicity of meanings. I am following Elizarenkova's helpful treatment of polysemy in the *Ṛg Veda*, articulated in her 1995 work, *Language and Style of the Vedic Ṛṣis*. In her chapter on vocabulary, she builds upon a basic insight of Renou's about the ambiguity of vocabulary in the *Ṛg Veda*, and argues that certain words have "converse" meanings, depending upon their context. The word *pr̥ṣṭhā*, "back" for instance, can mean a physical back, but it can also mean a ridge, as in a ridge of a mountain, or the vault, as in the vault of a sky. Thus, depending on the context, the "back" of something can also mean the "top" of something, such as when we look at a ridge or a vault. (This is also called semantic bifurcation.) She also argues this case for certain verbs, whose meaning changes depending upon whether it is the gods or the worshipers who are the subjects of the verb. What is more, as in the case of "back" above, the primary meanings are usually implied, or somehow bound up with, the secondary meanings in various creative ways. Thus, for Elizarenkova, polysemy is non-accidental; rather it is a change of meaning

depending upon context.

So too, I think it prudent to assume that the various, “converse” meanings of *saṃvāda*, might imply each other in various creative ways. We might take its primary meaning to mean “speech together”, but its various secondary meanings--dispute, agreement, accord, acrimonious or harmonious dialogue--as implying each other in the complex category that is *saṃvāda*.

Let us turn now to look at some examples before putting them in a larger, analytic frame of conflict mediation, which I hope to do at the end of the paper.

Let's begin with Viśvāmitra's dialogue with the rivers, one of about three or four Vedic hymns called by the various Anukramaṇīs and other indices a *saṃvāda*.

This dialogue is an old and very creative hymn. As the story goes, RV 3.33 delights in the play between the life-giving waters and the ambitious ṛṣi. Viśvāmitra, with Sudās, as the family priest, was returning home with a great deal of wealth when he came to the Vipāś and Śutudrī. The rivers are so swollen they are uncrossable.

Viśvāmitra begins by praising the rivers, comparing them to cows, and mothers, (1-3) The rivers ask him what he wants (4) and he asks them to stop their crossing for a moment (5). They speak of their channels dug by Indra when he slew the dragon, of Savitṛ impelling them (6). Viśvāmitra praises Indra (7), and the rivers remind him to remember his speech (8). Viśvāmitra asks them to bow down as he has to come from afar with wagon and chariot (9). The rivers acquiesce, like a mother nursing her child or a maiden bending to embrace a man (10). Viśvāmitra promises them, and asks that

the Bharatas and other armies be allowed to pass (12-13). He then blesses them; “let your waves so flow that the pin of the yoke may be above their waters, leave them exempt from misfortune or defect, showing no increase” (13).

Here, we have a dialogue that involves the interest of the *ṛṣi* in crossing the river. He praises the river in many different ways in the first few verses, and when asked by the rivers to state his interest, he does so clearly in verse 5. The rivers state their own interests in being part of the gods' plan, particularly Indra and Savitri in verse 5 and 6. Viśvāmitra states his own shared interest in Indra's favor by praising him in verse 7. The *ṛṣi* finally persuades them when he reminds them of the distance he has traveled, and the rivers acquiesce. A very important note here: the situation is not resolved momentarily, though, but seemingly a negotiation for all time: the rivers ask him to remember his speech, and Viśvāmitra asks them to be equally accommodating to other people who wish to cross, such as the accompanying Bhārata army. Finally, the accord is sealed with a blessing from Viśvāmitra.

The next *saṃvāda*, or dialogue, is a wonderful one from the Upaniṣads (*Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 4.41-19). Gārgya Bālāki, a well traveled and wise man, is visiting King Ajātaśatru, wishing to give him a formulation of Brahman. Ajātaśatru is thrilled, promising him a thousand cows and the title of Janaka by the people. Bālāki begins by saying, “It is that person in the sun that I venerate.” Ajātaśatru replies, “ Don't vie with me in a discussion *saṃvāda* about him!” (*Maitasminsamvādayiṣṭāḥ!*) I honor him only as the head of all beings.” Bālāki tries again, “It is that person in the moon that I honor.

Ajāśatru replies, with the same words, *Maitasminsamvādayiṣṭāḥ!* Don't vie with me into a discussion about him. The moon is only Soma. And so the *saṃvāda* goes, with Bālāki trying each option—the person in the lightning, the person in the thunder, the wind, space, fire, waters, in the mirror, shadow, echo, sound, sleeping, in the body, in the right eye, in the left eye. And with each of them, Ajāśatru responds with a description of the limited nature of that “person,” saying, “I venerate him only as the X or the Y element.” Ajāśatru finally ends his responses to Bālāki's formulations with, *Nu*, is that all? And goes on to say, “For no real purpose you have dragged me into a *saṃvāda* with you, telling me you can have a formulation of truth. The maker of all of those “persons”—that is whom you should seek to know.” When Bālāki then offers him firewood, intending to become his pupil, he refuses to become Bālāki's teacher, saying that it is not proper for a *kṣatriya* to be the teacher of a brahmin. However, Ajāśatru does go on to give him further teachings, just so that he can see the teaching clearly. The teaching is about the *atman* behind all the other *atmans*, which consists of wisdom (*prajñā*).

This conversation, too, is not some chance encounter, but rather a negotiation, in which there are several issues at immediately stake, thrown on the table to be resolved: Bālāki's reputation as a wise person and a teacher; the nature of Brahman itself, and Bālāki's formulation of it. Ajāśatru in turn wants nothing of it. He doesn't want each “person” that Bālāki introduces into the conversation to be part of the conversation at all. It is ironic that, like it or not, Ajāśatru has created a *saṃvāda* in his not wanting

to have a *saṃvāda*. And thus, like Viśvāmitra's dialogue with the rivers, the ending, or resolution, also has a somewhat permanent quality to it: *you* tell me what the real teaching is, says Bālāki, and so the king does.

Let us turn now to our third example of *saṃvāda*, the colloquy of Draupadī and Satyabhāmā, also known as Satyā (*Vana Parvan* 3.(38) 221-223). Kṛṣṇa has come to visit with his wife, Satyabhāmā, as they are dwelling in the forest. The visit occurs after the adventures of Arjuna with Indra, and begins with reports on the doings of relatives. The sage Mārkaṇḍeya comes to visit, and launches on a series of discourses about the nature of time and the cycles of time, the *yugas*, and many other stories. In the midst of Mārkaṇḍeya and the Pāṇḍavas' discourse, Draupadī and Satyabhāmā retire to the back rooms, old friends who need to catch up. Satyabhāmā wants to know, truly, how Draupadī can keep the favor of her husbands, as she clearly has done. Has she followed a vow, done austerities? Has she found a spell, or herbs, or roots, or drug? Satyabhāmā asks Draupadī to tell her the secret of her sexual power, so that Kṛṣṇa may be under her spell as well.

Draupadī responds by telling Satyabhāmā that the question does not become her as a wife of Kṛṣṇa. She goes on to say that spells, roots, drugs, are the ways of a wanton woman, Such methods in effect kill him by making him ill or leprous or dumb, blind, or deaf. The truth is, Draupadī continues, that she serves her husbands without regard for herself, keeping her storehouses clean, making sure they are clean and comfortable when they come in from the fields, slow to anger: "I wait on my meek

enough, truthful enough and virtuous enough husbands as they were furious snakes.”* Her law rests on her husband; he is the path and nothing else. She knows the names of her thousands of guests, the name, the figure and the meals of all their slavegirls; she honored the eight thousand Brahman-disputing brahmins with the first serving. Being the first to wake up and the last to lay down–this is her charm, she ends her reply to Satyabhāmā. Satyabhāmā then apologizes, and asks her forgiveness, for such questions, for is it not the way with women friends to speak freely in jest?* Draupadī then responds with a long versified reply: reiterating the values of *strīdharmā*, of keeping good company, of worshiping one’s husband while wearing all the fineries of womanhood. Satyabhāmā then leaves with Kṛṣṇa, reassuring Draupadī not to fret, nor to lie awake at night, for a woman as good as her will surely win earth. “I shall, daughter of Drupada, see the earth rest on Yudhisthira.” (3[30]224.5-10).*

This is a fascinating *saṃvāda* in many ways, and more complex than we have time to go into at this point. But several issues need to be raised: first, at stake here is Satyabhāmā wish to have Draupadī’s secret for her own, as she is Kṛṣṇa’s chief queen.

Her status as chief wife amongst other wives is in converse relationship to Draupadī’s status as sole wife amongst many husbands. Draupadī’s response is what we might call “high *strīdharmā*”–that is, a long and rich illustration of the concept. She begins with images of murderous men and women who might use poisons or charms, as Satyabhāmā suggests, and then in contrast, continues with the tiny details of behavior

that constitute the really effective control over husbands: avoid laughing when there is no joke; do not tarry long in the privy or in the gardens; be a constant presence at the new and full moon offerings, next to the milk dish; bathe, dress, and feed Kuntī; know the guests and the stables and the household details inside out. Draupadī's response is a poetic litany of self sacrifice–this is the true charm (3.223.1-12).

The seal of the conversation comprises the end of the *saṃvāda*, where Satyabhāmā comforts Draupadī, predicting victory for her god-like husbands. A woman of her good qualities cannot have trouble for long; those who mocked her will go to the land of Yama. Satyabhāmā ends by reassuring Draupadī that her sons by all the Pāṇḍava brothers are happily watched over by Kṛṣṇa's wives, who love them as she does.

One final short example of *saṃvāda*, from the Purāṇas, is worth thinking through here. It occurs in the *Vayu Purāṇa*, in a version of the Satī-Dakṣa story given there. Satī is angry upon hearing that her father Dakṣa had invited all his daughters over to his home, with their husbands, with the exception of her, the most excellent oldest. (1.30.43-44) Dakṣa has done this because of his hatred of Satī's husband, Śīva, who does not behave in any way like a son-in-law, and refuses to bow to him. He explains to Satī why he has committed this insult, as the text glosses, "with deluded mind." (47-50). Then Satī declares to her father: "Since you insult me, I who am pure, cast off this body (51). She then declares that, in her future births, she will attain the status of Śīva's wife alone. (53) With her self in yogic concentration, she keeps the *Agneyi Dhāraṇa*

(fire prayer) with herself. As a result, fire comes out of all the limbs of her body, and thus blown by the wind, she is reduced to ashes. (54)

While there is not a peaceful solution to this *saṃvāda*, as in the others, there is a familiar pattern. Satī declares her interests, and Dakṣa responds with his. The resolution of Satī's anger is in direct response to the self-delusion of Dakṣa. She refuses to inhabit her body, which is born of Dakṣa. And all future bodies will be attached to Śiva. Like the three previous dialogues, this one ends with a statement about the way things ought to be, the rightness of a particular resolution. Not here that it is not harmony, but resolution, that is the issue.

The value of these *saṃvādas* can be assessed, of course, as a compositional device—to move an Epic or Purāṇic plot along; to provide an occasion for the praise of a *deva* or *ṛṣi* that may be used in a ritual environment, as we know is the case with the *aśvamedha*; to provide the frame for the gaining of Upaniṣadic wisdom, and so on. Yet here I want to remark that their general pattern resembles many contemporary perspectives of conflict negotiation. (Fisher, 1986; Lederach 1999; Shock-Shank and Ressler, 1999; Kraybill; Frazer-Evans, and Evans 2001).

The theories of conflict negotiation are as varied as the meanings of *saṃvād*—arbitration, litigation, mediation, both binding and non-binding, and so on. But the basics of conflict negotiation involves a *structured* conversation, much like *saṃvāda*. These consist of four distinct phases, none of which must be passed over, but worked through in clear and conscientious progression. The first phase is the statement of

interests—where each party articulates what is at stake in their own view of the conflict. The second is accounting—where each party gives a full account of the conflict, its history and how the impasse arose. The third is exploration of options to resolve the issue. Here, the goal is not to take irreversible positions prematurely. Rather, it is to give all possibilities free reign—all options are explored and imagined, no matter how far-fetched. (A typical pragmatic example that conflict negotiators use is, “Sure I could give you \$1million for that house, or I could give you \$1. Neither possibility is condemned, just put on the table as an imaginative possibility.)

Finally, a resolution is agreed upon based on a narrowing down of the options imagined. The resolution includes both a way to alleviate damage, and a code of conduct for the future. It should be stressed here that the resolution is NOT necessarily a reconciliation, but rather an agreement of what an appropriate response to the situation should be, both in terms of past, present, and future. One university mediation involved the two young men involved agreeing to leave the room if the other entered it, or cross to the other side of the street if the other was on the same sidewalk. This was, of course, not at all a harmonious reconciliation, but rather its opposite. But the two young men came up with it themselves, and stuck to the letter of their agreement until graduation. It was not a reconciliation, but it was a resolution.

In reading them through, it struck me forcefully that all of these *saṃvādas* contain some approximation of these elements in varying degrees—that there is a family resemblance between recent procedures of conflict mediation and the procedures

outlined above. All four *saṃvādas* consist of an initial statement of what is at stake: Viśvāmitra needing to cross, and the rivers needing to run their course; Bālāki's needing to prove his knowledge of Brahman and Ajātaśatru's needing to show the higher knowledge; Satyabhāmā's interest in finding out Draupadī's secret, and Draupadī's proving herself a model of woman restraint and suffering; Satī's interest in being included as the oldest sister in the family, and Dakṣa's need to complete the counter-insult to Śiva.

Each *saṃvāda*, too, contains a narration of past action. In the Vedic hymn, the rivers mention their past associations with Indra and Savitṛ. The *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* stresses Bālāki's reputation as a wise and well traveled brahmin. The *Mahābhārata* focuses on Draupadī's past harmony with her husbands before launching into the reasons for it. Finally, in the *Vayu Purāṇa*, Śiva's insults to Dakṣa are narrated as the reason for the present impasse.

Most compellingly, we see rich illustrations of possible solutions to the tension in each *saṃvāda*, what conflict mediators would call exploring options. The rivers give descriptions of what their cooperation might look like. Bālāki with infinite patience and tolerance for insult, continues to suggest what the "person" might look like and where he might reside. Draupadī poetically describes various wifely responses to all manner of domestic situations. Satī declares taking leave of her body as the daughter of Dakṣa is one possible response to this insult.

Not all of these solutions are the ones arrived at by the interlocutors, nor are

they all explored in a non-judgmental, accepting way that conflict negotiators in the 1970s, 80's, and 90's would advocate. Nonetheless, possible responses are stated and explored in the Sanskrit *saṃvādas*, and explored richly. I will return to this point below.

Finally, the resolution of the *saṃvāda* involves a statement, or program, for future action. The rivers accept and promise future cooperation with those who wish to cross, such as the Bhārata armies. Ajātaśatru ends the colloquy with a supreme teaching, even as he acknowledges that he should not as a *kṣatriya*, be the teacher. Satyabhāmā reassures Draupadī, and even predicts victory after she apologizes for her impertinence. Finally, Satī predict that in all future lives, she will always be the wife of Śiva, even as she abandons her earthly body in fire.

As noted of the conflict mediations above, not all *saṃvāda* resolutions are peaceful or harmonious. Certainly, the *Vayu Purāṇa's* is not. Rather, it is the opposite: a resolution that will have repercussions of a cosmic nature, where the karmic working out of Satī's actions alone will provide the resolution to the conflict. Nor are all resolutions definite; certainly in the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* dialogue, the teaching is clear, but the ultimate relationship between Bālāki and Ajātaśatru is not. In the *Mahābhārata*, Draupadī' and Satyabhāmā's relationship is reconciled after minor tension, but the outcome of the Pāṇḍavas' exile is not.

It should be clear by now that my intention is not to say that *saṃvādas* existed as some kind of proto-theory of conflict meditation before Westerners got to it. Such a statement would be biased, ignorant, and incorrect. And I certainly hope we avoid

such statements at this conference, as they only sow the seeds of distortion we are trying to combat. As I have written and argued elsewhere, the terms “Indian” and “Western” are now frequently used in deterministic, biased ways masking as political correctness, and they should be avoided whenever possible.

Rather I want to argue that *saṃvāda* shares a great deal with conflict mediation theories about *structured conversation as the best response to disagreement*. And they are indigenous to classical Indian literature, and might well be of use as a resource for certain negotiations in the future. As I see it, *saṃvādas* differ from *pūrvapakṣa/siddhanta* kinds of situations in that they arise not out of intellectual argument, or philosophical need, but rather out of all too human situations: the unfordability of a river; the longing to be the wisest teacher; the wish to be the best wife of a charmed husband; anger at an existentially deep insult. It goes without saying that this, too, is the case with conflict negotiation.

In the last two decades, Indian leaders and thinkers have looked models of Indian, or more specifically, “Hindu” identity. We see the search in the iconization of Sanskrit, the revision of the high school curriculum; the debate over scholarly research and who might be allowed to come into the country to do what project; the reassertion of the meaning of Rāma, the meaning of *yajña* or *yatra*. But we might also look for classical examples of pluralism. India could become a world example of successful, plural co-existence of ethnicities and religions, and it possesses a wealth of indigenous resources to think these issues through. Classical Sanskrit humanists such as C. Kunhan

Raja began this project, in the service of a Gandhian view of what was possible for India. Even in his 90's Dandekar continues to mine Sanskrit for models of human behavior that cross disciplinary and ethnic lines. Gandhi himself used the Gītā, the most obvious and well known *saṃvāda*, as his most inspirational classical text.

Indeed, there is one aspect of *saṃvāda* that would make a particular contribution to contemporary situations. Most of the dialogues examined above are imaginatively rich in exploring options to resolve a conflict—richer than most contemporary conflict meditation theories would have it. Draupadī's speech is perhaps the best example of such narrative detail—where, as an exploration of the possibilities of harmonious living with her husband, she specifies even such details as developing a knowledge of her guests' harem's jewelry and garments. Others, too, exhibit imaginative richness: In the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*, Ajātaśatru's specificity of how each “person” should be venerated is remarkable.

To be sure, theories of conflict negotiation make sure that the “account of the conflict” portion of the conversation, as well as the “exploring options” portion, is thorough. However, contemporary theories do not raise these parts of the conversation to the level of an art form in themselves as the *saṃvādas* clearly do. Thus, the narrative richness, and the almost poetic, contemplative quality of these parts of the dialogue might well be something helpful for contemporary mediators. Taking the time to formulate narratives well, as well as to explore options in a responsible, and creative way, is a clear strength of the Indian genre.

Moreover, *saṃvāda* is a pan-Indian concept, occurring in Buddhist, Jain and many other brahminical texts. The study of the word/genre will lend a whole new energy to the conversation across traditions. Finally, as Vidyut Aklujkar has noted (*Manushi* 125, p.5n5), there is a small thread of women's dialogues called *saṃvāda* which we would do well to look at. It may constitute an intriguing moment in Indian literary history.

Saṃvāda is only one among many such indigenous genres that might be utilized in a pluralist democratic society as a way of thinking from the past that might help us in the future. As recent theologians and philosophers have also argued of David Hume's *Dialogues*, *saṃvāda*'s dialogical nature means that, if it is used as a kind of hermeneutic, the risks of essentialism as well as ethnic and religious prejudice are less. Moreover, it can provide a kind of poetic and classical example of a progressive attitude toward problem-solving in many human situations. *Saṃvāda* could act as a kind of imaginative map, an encouragement toward openness and the negotiation of difference. Whatever the culture or religious tradition, literature's inspiration and contribution should be exactly that.

Handout

Dialogue Between Viśvāmitra and the Rivers: RV 3.33

Viśvāmitra:

1. Rushing from the heart of the mountains, eager as two mares with reins loosened, contending, like two bright mother cows (*gaveva śubhre mātara*) who lick, the Vipās and the Śutudrī flow quickly with milk.

2. Impelled by Indra, whom you ask to push you, you move like chariots to the ocean. Flowing together, swelling with your waves, bright streams, each of you seeks the other.

3. To the most maternal river (*sindhuṃ māṛtamām*) I went, to the auspicious, wide Vipās. Like cows licking their calf, the two flow onward to their common home together.

The Rivers:

4. We two who rise and swell with billowy waters move forward to the home which god has made us. Our waters cannot be stopped when urged to motion. What does the sage want, calling to the rivers? (*Kim yur vipro nadyo johavīti*)

Viśvāmitra:

5. Wait a little at my request, in order to gather Soma; rest, waters of truth, a moment in your journey. With powerful prayer asking favor, Kusika's son has called to the river.

The Rivers:

6. Indra who wields the thunderbolt dug our channels: he killed Vṛtra, who blocked our currents. The divine Savitṛ the lovely-handed led us, and at his command we flow expanded.

7. That heroic deed of Indra must be praised for ever; he tore Ahi into pieces. He destroyed the obstructions with his thunderbolt, and the waters flowed in the directions they desired.

8. Never forget your word, one who sings praises (*etad vaco jarita māpi mṛṣṭā*), nor the words of future ages. In your compositions, singer, show us your compassion. Do not demean us amongst humans. Let there be honor to you!

Viśvāmitra:

9. Listen quickly, sisters, to the ṛṣi who comes to you from far away with car and wagon. Bow down low; be easy to cross. Stay, rivers, with your floods below our axles.

The Rivers:

10. We will listen to your words, singer. With wagon and chariot from far away you come. I bow down to you, like a woman nursing, like a maiden bending to embrace her lover.

Viśvāmitra:

11. As soon as the Bhāratas have crossed you (*yad aṅga tvā bhāratāḥ samtareyuḥ*), let the warrior band, urged on by Indra, pass. Then let your streams flow on in rapid

motion. I ask your favor, you who are worthy of our honor.

12. The Bhāratas, crossed over, seeking cattle. The sage won the favor of the Rivers. Swell with your billows, hurrying, pouring out wealth. Fill your channels fully, and roll swiftly onward.

13. So let your wave leave the axle-pins free, and you, o waters, leave the traces full; And never may the pair of streams, harmless and without fault, become empty.

Dialogue Between Bālāki and Ajātaśatru *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 4.1-20

4.1. Gārgya Bālāki established as learned and widely traveled; once visited Ajātaśatru, king of Kaśī, wished to tell of Brahman. (*brahma te brāvaṇīti*) Ajātaśatru replies: we'll give you a thousand cows. People will want to hear such a speech, saying here's a Janaka! (*Etasyām vāci janako janaka iti vā u janā dhāvanti*)

4.2. All the various resources for Brahman are then stated: the greatness in the sun; the food in the moon; the radiance in the lightning; the sound in the thunder, and so on—for both heavenly and earthly spheres.

4.3 Bālāki then said: It is that person in the sun that I venerate. (*Evaiṣa āditye puruṣas tam evāham upāsa iti.*) Ajātaśatru replied: Don't vie with me in a discussion about him! I venerate him only as the most eminent of all beings, as their head. Anyone who venerates him in this way will become the most eminent of all beings, he will become their head. *Taṃ hovācājātaśatru mā maitasmin samvādayiṣṭāḥ! Atiṣṭāḥsarveśāṃ bhūtānām mūrdheti vā aham etam upāsa iti. Sa yo haitam evam upāste ' tiṣṭāḥ sarveśāṃ bhūtānām mūrdhā bhavati.*

4.4-18. This same procedure is repeated, with each element of veneration Bālāki suggests only being, in Ajātaśatru's view, a very essential part of Brahman, but not the whole of it.

4.19-20. Bālāki falls silent; Ajātaśatru asks if that is all, and Bālāki replies, yes. Ajātaśatru then says, "Truly, do not vie with me in a discussion for no purpose, saying, "Let me tell you a formulation of Brahman." It is the one who is the creator of the person who have talked about, whose creation they are, that one should seek to know. (*Mṛṣā vai khalu mā samvādayiṣṭā, brahma te bravaṇīti yo vai bālāka eteṣāṃ puruṣāṇām kartā yasya vai tat karma sa vai veditavya iti.*)

Bālāki comes with firewood, to be taken as the king's pupil; the king says that it is *pratiloma* for a king to be a teacher of a Brahmin, but invites him to come along, wanting to make sure that Bālāki perceives it clearly (*ehi -- tv eva tvā jñāpayiṣāmi.*) He then delivers a teaching about the Hitā, or veins, that become unified with breath, sight, hearing and so on. The *ātman* consists of intelligence, and penetrates all things. The other *ātman*s cling to the larger *ātman*, consisting of intelligence, like a people to their chieftan. When Indra knew this, he conquered the self and all beings.

Dialogue Between Draupadī and Satyabhāmā *Vana Parvan* 3.222-4

222.1-57. Kṛṣṇa's wife Satyabhāmā retires with Draupadī as the Pāṇḍavas discourse goes on. Satyabhāmā is curious as to how Draupadī keeps the attention of her husbands. How do you conduct yourself? She asks (*kena Draupadī vṛttena; pāṇḍavān upatiṣṭhati.*) (4a) "How are they under your influence, and how are they never angry with you, lovely one?" (*Katham ca vaśagās tubhyāṃ na kupyanti ca te śubhe*)(4c). She wonders whether it is a prayer, or a fire oblation, or a drug, a special bath, a mantra, herbs..."Tell me the great mystery of your power, so that through it, my Kṛṣṇa is eternally well-disposed to me." (*mama āvakṣva pāñcālī yaśasyaṃ bhagaved enam, yena kṛṣṇe bhaven nityaṃ mama kṛṣṇa vaśānugaḥ*)(7).

Draupadī begins her answer by telling Satyabhāmā that such methods are the ways of untruthful women, literally, "without *sat*" (*asatstriṇām samācāram*) (9a). She goes on to launch a long reply, which includes the fact that such spells are ineffective, if not murderous (8-17); that selfless timely service, without misinterpretation of a gesture or a wrong word, a clear storeroom and palace, agreeability, directness, little time in the privy or in the gardens (17-32); she has learned from her mother-in-law Kuntī—the various kinds of sacrifices, presence at the new and full moon sacrifice (32-34). Draupadī's law rests on her husbands; they are the God and the path, and she never eats more or speaks more than they. She waits on and is obedient to Kuntī (35-40); Draupadī then narrates the ways in which she waited on the guests of the palaces; ascetics who ate on golden plates; Kaunteya's hundred thousand slave girls, all of whose jewelry, ornaments and dresses she knew (40-48); she tackled the management of the household, the cowherds, the shepherds, the accounts of the treasury. Draupadī endures hunger and thirst, and the first to wake up, the last to lie down. Such conduct is her charm (*saṃvananam*); yes, she knows how to put a charm on her husbands, and no she does not practice the ways of untruth. (56-57).

Satyabhāmā then replies with honor to Draupadī, who has exemplified the law (*dharmacārini*). I am with you, Pāñcālī Yājnaseni, forgive me; for it is the way among women friends to speak loosely and laughingly (*abhipannāsmi pāñcālī yājnaseni kṣamasva me--kāmākāraḥ sakhinām hi sopahāsaṃ prabhāṣitum*).

223.1-12. Draupadī responds by a final poetic reply, extolling the virtues of obedient married life, declaring that there is no god like a husband, thus Kṛṣṇa should be worshiped by Satyabhāmā with all her heart; the chores should be done by her as a gesture of love; his friends invited to meals; she must keep company with the highest of women and wear the best of clothing as she is serving him (223.1-12).

224.1-14. As Satyabhāmā leaves Draupadī, she reassures her that no woman who is as ethical and righteous as she will find trouble for long (4-5). Her husbands will enjoy the earth, their lives no longer troubled by discord. The earth will rest on Yudhiṣṭhira, and the arrogant ones, the ones who did her ill, will lose their pride and depart for Yama's domain (5-9). All of her sons are happy, loved by Kṛṣṇa's wives, and

they are receiving tender care and good instruction (10-14). She and Kṛṣṇa depart.

Dialogue Between Dakṣa and Satī *Vayu Purāṇa* 30.40-44.

40-42. Because Śiva never bowed to his father in law, Dakṣa, he invited seven out of eight of his daughters, along with their husbands, to his home. He did not invite Satī out of hatred for Śiva. Satī goes to her father's house in order to inquire.

44-45ab. Satī speaks to Dakṣa: How have you dishonored me in this horrible deed, by giving greater honor to your younger daughters? I am the best and eldest daughter. It is not worthy of you to be rude to me.

45cd-48: You are the best of my daughters, and are always worthy of my respect. Their husbands, too are always worthy of my respect. They are better in qualities and more deserving than Śiva. They are good ascetics, absorbed in Brahman, pious and great Yogins: Vasiṣṭha, Pulastya, Aṅgiras, Pulaha, Kratu, Bhṛgu and Marici are very great.

49-50. Śiva, however, is my enemy. But you are his heart and soul, and he yours. You are devoted to him! Therefore I do not honor and welcome you. Dakṣa said this with a deluded mind—thus incurring a curse on himself and the great ṛṣis he mentioned.

51. Spoken to in this way, Satī was infuriated and said, “Since you insult me, even as I have been pure in my speech, mind and acts, I throw away this body, which was born of you, Father.”

52. Then, dejected and angered by the insult, the goddess Satī bowed to Śiva in her mind, and spoke:

53. I have not been deluded and have remained pious; wherever I am reborn in through another shining body, I will gain the status of the pious wife of Śiva and Śiva only.

54. She sat there with her self in yogic concentration. In her mind, she kept the powerful fire prayer (*āgeneyī dhāraṇā*).

55. Because of the powerful fire prayer, fire burst out of all the limbs of her body and was blown by the wind. It reduced her to ashes.