HISTORY OF SANSKRIT LITERATURE

B.A. SANSKRIT

I SEMESTER

COMPLEMENTARY COURSE

(2011 Admission)

Based on
A SHORT HISTORY OF SANSKRIT LITERATURE

By T.K. RAMACHANDRA IYER

UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

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MODULE I
INTRODUCTION

Sanskrit is the name of the language that was spoken by the seers (manthradushtaaro munayah) of ancient India who have expressed their knowledge, wisdom and thoughts in that language. It is believed to be the language of the Gods revealed to and spoken by the sages-“Samskrutham naama devi vak anvakhyaathaa maharshibhih”. It is called Sanskrit-refined because it was regulated by the strict rules of grammar and was used in that refined form by the learned and highly cultured people from very early times. It was in this language the great religious and secular literature of Bharathavarsha (India) was recorded from the pre-historic times up to about 1100 A.D. From about 400 B.C, Praakrutabhaasha which was spoken by a large section of the people become a literary language and many works were written in that language, mostly by Buddhist and Jains.

It is rather a difficult task to fix, with any amount of correctness, the dates of ancient Indian authors and works particularly the Veda which are believed to have been revealed to the great sages of old. Sanskrit authors in general nothing or very little about themselves and hence our knowledge of the personal history of even the great poets like Valmiki, Vyasa and Kalidasa is very meager. A few authors like Bana, Bhavabhoothi, Sree Harsha etc…. have furnished some information about themselves and a few authors, and that helps in fixing the chronology of some poets and works. External evidences such as inscriptions and records of foreign visitors like Hiueng Tsang and Itsing also help in fixing the dates of some. With these and also with the help of some internal evidences, it is only possible just to point out the approximate periods to which most of the works and authors belonged.

The History of Sanskrit Literature falls into two main periods---(1) The Vedic Period & (2) The Classical Period. The Vedic Period which perhaps began as early as 4000 or 3000 B.C. The Classical Period which had its beginning at about 600 B.C., went concurrently with the last stage of the Vedic Period and Practically ended at about 1100 A.D. In a sense, it can be said that the Classical period as extended upto modern times since many works in almost all branches of learning have been written even after 1100 A.D up to this day though these are mostly in the form of interpretation and criticism of the earlier works.

The period of transition from the vedic to the classical literature(between 800 & 200 B.C.) was marked by the development of a distinct class of literature known as the Sutra Literature. To this period also belonged many of the Puranas and the earliest works on Scientific Literature(Sastrani). Thus, strictly speaking, the period from 800 to 200 B.C., can be termed as the period of Sutras and Puranas. Most of the early works on Sastras are in Sutra form. The History of Sanskrit Literature, therefore, can be said to consist of three periods.-

(1) The Vedic Period. from 3000 B.C. to 600 B.C.
(2) Sutra Period. From 800 B.C. to 200 B.C.
(3) Classical Period. From 600 B.C.to 1100 A.D. Or up to the modern times.

The Sanskrit language also, like the literature composed in it, falls into two main divisions-(1) The Vedic Sanskrit & (2) The Classical Sanskrit. Within the Vedic language itself. Several stages of development can be found. After undergoing several changes the vedic language finally merged itself into the classical Sanskrit. Though there is much
difference between the Vedic and Classical Sanskrit, the phonetic conditions are practically the same. As regards the
difference, many old words are lost and new words have come in. Some words have changed their meaning and new
derivations have been introduced. Differences can be seen in grammatical forms too. We have in the Vedas *Karnebhihi* for classical *Kanah*, *Devaasah* for *Devaah* etc… The process of introducing new derivations and new
words continued for a long period until it was stopped by the great grammarian Panini (in about 600 B.C) who wrote
a complete grammar for the language laying down rules for the derivation of each and every word in Sanskrit and
prevented the introducing of new words by giving a full list of Roots and Nouns. Even after Panini, some changes
occur which were regularised by *Vararuchi* in his *Vartikas* and finally by *Patanjali* who wrote the great *Vyakarana
Maha Bhashyam*. Any violation of the rules as laid down by *Patanjali* was regarded as a grammatical error and
hence the Sanskrit Language has remained in same without any change from the date of *Patanjali* (about 250 B.C.)
up to this day.

THE VEDIC PERIOD 3000 B.C to 600 B.C

The Vedas are the earliest literary productions preserved in any branch of the Indo-European family. The vedic
literature is distinguished by refinement and beauty of thought and the skill in the handling of language and metre. It
is mostly religious in its content and form. Derived from the root vid ‘to know’, the word veda means sacred lore or
that from which knowledge is got. The Vedas are four in number (1) *Rig Veda* (2) *Sama Veda* (3) *Yajur Veda* (4)
*Atharva Veda*. According to another division based on the form, *Vedas* are spoken as three- *Thravyi*. In this
classification portions of the Vedas which are in the form of verses are called *Rik*, those in prose are called *Yajus*
and those that are set to Music and are meant to be sung in sacrifices are called *Sama*. Strictly speaking *Rik* means
laudatory stanza mainly in praise of Gods. *Saman* means propitiation (by chants) and *Yajus* means Sacrificial prayer
or worship.

Three clear stages of development can be noticed in the vedic literature though the orthodox Hindus believe the
Vedas are *Anadi* and *Apaurusheya*.The first stage of development in represented by the *Samhitha* portions of the
Vedas, the second stage by the *Brahmana* portions and the third by the *Upanishads*. In the first stage represented
by the *Rik Samhitha*,the literature was creative in spirit and highly poetic in form. The second stage represented by the
*Brahmanas*,mainly concerned with elaborate rituals and has little creative spirit in it in the last stage represented
by the *Upanishads*,the Vedic literature became theologically speculative in character.

Lyric poetry attained a high stage of development even in very early period of the vedic literature. The whole of Rik
*Samhitha* is an example of excellent Lyric poetry. In the later period represented by the *Samhitha* of *Yajur Veda* and
the *Brahmanas*, some advance was made towards the formation of a literary prose style which, however, did not
attain a high level of development.

The Samhitha portion of the Vedas mostly consist of *Riks-Manthras* which are to be recited various sacrifices. The
*Brahmanas* contain explanation of the *Mantra* and practical direction for the conduct of sacrifices. They further
explain the duties to be performed by the four priests (*Ritvijah*) (1) *Hota*, The *Rigvedin*,(2) *Udgata* The *Samavedin*
(3) *Adharyu*-The *Yajurvedin* and (4) *Brahma*-The *Atharvavedin*, and also explain the mutual relationship of the
Manthras and the ceremonial as well as their symbolical meaning. Each veda has one or more Brahmana attached to it and there are many interesting legends and striking thoughts recorded in them.

Aranyakas are a further development of the vedic literature which occupy a place at the end of the Brahmanas. They contain instructions for the meditation of mystic symbols which, owing to their superior mystic sanctity, are intended to be communicated to the pupil by the teacher in the solitude of the forest they are meant for the use of pious men who have retired to the forest and no longer perform sacrifices. Hence this portion is called Aranyakam. The Upanishads which are devoted entirely two theological and philosophical speculations on the nature of things, mark the last stage in the development of vedic literature. Since they occupy a place at the end of the Vedas, they are collectively known as the vedanta literature. From the nature of the subject matter dealt with, the samhita and Brahmana portions together are known as Karmakanda since they are mainly concerned with sacrifices and other rituals (Karma). The Aranyakas are known as Upasana Kanda and the Upanishads as jnana Kanda.

The Samhitha, Brahmana, Aranyaka & Upanishad represent four stages of development of the vedic literature in the same order. The Samhitas are collections of Hymns grouped and arranged into a single book with a purpose. They contain hymns which were composed in different periods by different sages. Different stages can be noticed even in the compilation of one particular Samhitha. The RigSamhitha which is the oldest of the samhitas is divided into Mandalas of which Mandalas two to seven appear to be the earliest collections. The Mandalas one and ten are the latest additions as determined from the nature of the subject matter and language.

During the period of Rigsamhitha, the central place of Aryan culture and civilization was the North-Western part of India-the banks of the great river Indus and its tributers. By the time of the Yjurveda and Brahmanas the Aryans had come to the country called Kurukshethra from where the Brahmanic religion and social systems developed and spread to the Videha and Panchala countries and gradually to other parts of India. By the time of the Upanishads, The Aryan culture and civilization had spread all over Aryavartha-the vast country between the Vindhyas and the Himalayas. During the classical period they were introduced to the south and soon spread all over India.
MODULE II

THE RIG VEDA

The Rig Samhitha consists of a collection of Hymns (Sookthaani) containing a little over ten thousand verses (Richah) which are skillfully composed in praise of the ritual deities like Agni, Soma, Maruth, Indra, Varuna etc…It further contains a few marriage philosophical and funeral hymns as well as some magic songs and secular hymns. The authorship of the various hymns is attributed to the great seers (Manthradrushtaaarah) like Grutsamathah, Viswamithra, Vamadeve, Athri, Bharadwaja and Vasishtha who are mentioned in them. The Rig Samhitha is divided into ten sections called Mandalas. There is also another division of the same Samhitha into eight sections called Ashtakaah. The Rig Samhitha contains the earliest hymns of the Vedic literature which must have been composed before 3000 B.C. according to Lokamanya Tilak and many other Indian scholars, while Macdonell and other western scholars assign them to a period of about 1500 B.C.

Originally there were five recensions (Saakhaah) of the Rigveda Samhitha which were-(1) Shaakala, (2) Baashkala, (3) Aashwalayana, (4) Saankhyayana & (5) Mandukeya. Of these only the first, the Samhitha of the Sakala Sakha is now available. Two Brahmanas- (1) The Aithareya Brahmana & (2) Kausheetaki Brahmana which is also known as Sankhyaana Brahmana-are attached to the Rigveda. The former consists of 40 chapters while the later has only 30 chapters. The Aithareyaaranyakam of 18 chapters is attached to the Aithareya Brahmanam and the Aithareya Upanishad forms the last part of this Aranyakam. To the Kausheetaki Brahmana is attached the Kausheetaki Aranyaka of 15 chapters which includes the Kausheetaki Upanishad.

SAMAVEDA

The Samaveda is closely connected with the Rigveda since the major portion of it consists of Rigs (Stanzas) taken from the Rigveda, chiefly from the 8th & 9th Mandalas. Out of a total of 1549 stanzas, only 75 are new. All others are from the Rigveda. These are distributed in two books called Archikas- (1) The Purvarchikam & (2) Uthararchikam. The verses in Samaveda differ from those of the Rigveda only in the way of marking the accent. These are intended to be sung by the Udgathru priests at the Somayaga. These stanzas assume their proper character of musical Samans only in the various song-books called Gaanam. These books give the rules for prolongation, repetition and interpolation of syllables necessary in singing.

Originally the Samaveda Samhitha is said to have had 1000 recensions (Sakha) but only three of them (1) Ranaayaneeya Sakha, (2) Kautuma Sakha, (3) Jaimineeya or Thalavakara Sakha are now preserved. The Samhithas of Ranyaeeeya and Jaimineeya are available in full while in the Samhitha of Kautuma, all except the 7th Prapataaka is lost. To the Jaimineeya or Thalavakara school is attached the Brahmana of that name and the Upanishadbrahmana included in this Brahmana is the Aranyaka of this recension. The brief but very important Kenopanishad forms part of this Thalavakaarabrahmanam. There is another prominent Brahmana of the Samaveda called Panchavimsabrahmana which consists of 25 chapters. It is also known as Taandyabrahmana or Prautabrahmana. This is concerned with the Soma sacrifices in general and also contains many legends. Another Brahmana attached to the Tandya school of Samaveda is the Chandogyabrahmanam, the major portion of which is
the Chandogyopanishad which is considered to be the most important of the Upanishads. The first section of this Brahma is the Aranyaka of the Tandya recension.

**YAJURVEDA**

The Yajurveda comprises hymns mostly taken from the Rig-Veda, original prose formulas, and also explanations of the Rigvedic hymns from the ritualistic aspect. Therefore this veda is partly in prose and partly in verse. Originally the veda is said to have had more than 100 recensions most of which are now lost.

The Yajurveda has come down to us in two branches-(1). The Krishnayajurveda and(2).The Shuklayajurveda. The former school came to be called Krishna (black) because the contents are not well arranged and the sacrificial formulas are intermingled to a certain extent, with their explanations. The later school came to be called Shukla (white) because the hymns are well arranged and the sacrificial formulas are not mixed up with the explanation of the hymns. The Samhitas of both branches deals with many important rituals such as the new-moon and full-moon sacrifices (Dasapoornamaasao), the Soma sacrifice, the construction of fire altar and also Vajapeya, Rajasuya, Ashwamedha, Sarvamedha and other sacrifices.

The Krishnayajurvedasamhitha which appears to be earlier than the Samhitha of Shuklayajurveda has 3 well preserved recensions viz- (1) Kaatakasamhitha, (2) Maithraayanisamhitha which was earlier known as Kaalaapasamhitha,&(3)Taithireeyasamhitha. There is one more recension of this veda viz- Kapishtalakatasamhitha which is available only in fragments. The Taitireeya recension has two schools that of (1) Aapasthamba & (2) Hiranyakesin. To the Taitireeyasamhitha which consists of seven books (Kandas) sub-divided into 44 lessons, is attached the Taitireeyabrahmanam in three books. The Taitireeyaaranyakam forms a supplement to this Brahmana and the last four sections of this Aranyakam constitute the two Upanishads the Taitireeya & the Mahanarayana or Yajniki Upanishad.

The other three recensions of the Yajurveda which are collectively known as the Charaka school have no separate Brahmanas. The prose portions of the Maitraayanisamhitha constitute its Brahmana and the Maitraayaneeya or Maitri Upanishad is attached to this Samhitha. As for the Kataka recension, the Brahmana is found included in the Taitireeyabrahmana and two Upanishads the Kata & Shwetashwatara are attached to it.

The Samhitha of the Shuklayajurveda is known as Vajasaneyisamhitha. It is said to have been revealed by the Sun in the form of a horse to Yjnavalkyah, the great sage who propitiated the Sun God by penance and got the Shuklayajurveda from Him. The Samhitha has two recensions the Kaarva and the Maadhayandina. Which are almost identical in their subject matter and the arrangement of the subject matter. To this Shuklayajurveda is attached the Shatapathebrahmanam of 100 chapters. This Brahmana also has two recensions, the Kanwa and the Maadhayandina. From the historical point of view the Sathapathabrahmana is the most important vedic text, next to the Rigvedasamhitha. The most interesting legend of the deluge in which Manu came into possession of a little fish which asked him to rear it and promised to save him from the coming flood is told here in detail. The stories of Urvasi & Pururavas and of Bharata, the son of Sakunthala & Dushyantha are also found here. This also mentions Janamejaya, the celebrated king of the Kurus and gives geographical data pertaining to the spread of Brahmanical system to the various parts of India.
The concluding chapters of the Sathapatha-brahmana constitute the Brihadaranyakopanishad, the longest and one of the most important of the Upanishads. The very small but important Isopanishad also belongs to this veda and forms the concluding part of the Vajasaneyi Samhitha itself.

ATHARVAVEDA

The Atharvaveda also called Atharvaangirasa is not so much concerned with sacrificial matters as the other three Vedas. It is more a heterogeneous collection of spells which teach sorcery directed against hostile agencies such as diseases, noxious animals, demons, enemies etc. It also contains spells of an auspicious character such as charms to secure harmony in family and village life, reconciliation of enemies, long life, health, prosperity etc. Thus it has a double aspect, being meant to appease and bless as well as to curse. The Atharvaveda is said to be very important to the kings since it contains spells that would bring success in war and diplomacy.

The Samhitha of Atharvaveda is preserved in two recensions (1) the Saunaka & (2) Pippalada. The Saunakasakha is better known than the latter. The Samhitha of Saunakasakha contains 730 hymns and about 6000 stanzas divided into 20 books. Some 1200 stanzas are derived from the Rig-Veda. To this veda is attached the Gopathabrahmanam which does not have any direct connection with the Samhitha. The main motive of this Brahma seems to be the glorification of the Atharvaveda and the fourth priest Brahma. This veda does not have any Aranyaka.

Many Upanishads are attributed to Atharvaveda but the oldest and most important of the Atharvan Upanishads are the Prasna, Mundaka, & Mandukya Upanishads. The Prasnopanishad belongs to the Pippalada recension. It is so called because it treats six main points of the Vedantha doctrine in the form of six questions addressed by six students to the sage Pippalada and his answers thereon. The Mundaka derives its name from being the Upanishad of the tonsured (Munda)-an association of the ascetics who shaved their heads. This is one of the most popular of the Upanishads. The Mandukya is a very small Upanishad in prose. Though it bears the name of a Rigvedic school, it is reckoned among the Upanishads of the Atharvaveda. It explains the sacred syllable śr̥ as the symbolic expression of the Universe and Brahman.
MODULE III

THE DATE OF THE VEDAS

According to Balagangadhara Tilak and some other Indian scholars, the age of the Vedas has to be divided into four periods:

1. The first period beginning from about 6000 B.C. and extending up to 4000 B.C. was the age of the most ancient hymns and some prose sections which are in the form of praise of favorite Gods.

2. The period between 4000 B.C. and 2500 B.C. was the age when most of the ritual Manthras of the Rig-Veda were composed and the old and new hymns were arranged into Samhitha form. The earlier portions of Sama and Yajurveda Samhithas too can be assigned to this period.

3. The third period between 2500 B.C. and 1400 B.C. was the time of great rituals when the two important Brahmanas of the Yajurveda –the Taitireeya and Sathapatha Brahmana and the later portions of the Yajurveda Samhithas came into being. To this period can be assigned the earlier portions of the Atharvaveda Samhitha and some other Brahmans. Some of the earlier Upanishads too must have come into existence during this period.

4. The last division of the vedic period beginning from 1400 B.C and coming down to 500 B.C. saw the birth of the later Aranyakas and Upanishads as well as Srautha & Grihya Sutras. To this period can be assigned a major portion of the Sutra literature and the earliest epic poems like Ramayana and the earlier stage of the Mahabharatha.

According to A.A. Macdonell and other western scholars, the vedic period begins from about 1500 B.C. and ends in about 600 B.C. In a sense it can be said to extend up to 200 B.C. since most of the later Upanishads were composed during the Sutra period.

Orthodox Hindus consider the whole of the vedic literature from the Samhithas to the Upanishads as revealed texts and not composed by human beings. Hence they are regarded as sacred books whose authority is supreme. The Sutras and other Smrithis of human authorship are not related on a par with the Vedas though many of them are a continuation of the vedic texts.

THE SUTRA PERIOD (800 B.C to 200 B.C)

In the last stage of the vedic period and also during the period immediately following it, there came into being a distinct type of literature known as Sutras which treated a large number of subjects connected with the Vedas. The growing mass of details in rituals and customs preserved in the Brahmanas and in floating tradition imposed too great a burden on the memory of the priests that there was a pressing need to give them a systematic
shape and compress them within a small compass. This need gave rise to the Sutra style which is so compressed that the wording of the most laconic telegram would often appear diffuse compared with it. The Srauta Sutras are really a continuation of the ritual side of the Brahmans but they are not regarded as part of revelation and no sacred character is attributed to them.

**MODULE IV**

**THE VEDANGAS**

The whole body of Sutra works that deal with subjects pertaining to the Vedas and can be regarded as vedic supplants, are divided into six classes known as Vedangas. They are-

1. **Siksha** or Phonetics.
2. **Vyakaranam** or Grammar.
3. **Chandas** or Metre.
4. **Niruktam** or Etymology.
5. **Kalpa** or Religious Practice.
6. **Jyotisha** or Astronomy.

Kalpa:- The origin of Kalpa is to be traced to the Brahmans. The long and tedious explanations of the ritualistic formulas in the Brahmans could not be remembered at the time of performance of the sacred rites. Hence the Sutra style was adopted for treating this subject.

The subject matter of the Kalpa Sutras is classified under four heads-(1) Srautha, (2) Grihya, (3) Dharma, & (4) Sulba Sutras. The Srautha Sutras treat the worship of the three fires, the performance of Dasapoornamaasa, the different Soma sacrifices etc. The Grihya Sutras deal with the ceremonies from Garbhaadhaana to Upanayana,, the duties of the three casts (Traivarnika) as Brahmachari and Grihastha, the duties of a teacher, of a pupil, the marriage customs, the Panchamahaayajna, funeral ceremonies and so many other things that are to be performed by a Grihastha. The Dharmasutras deal with law, religion, custom & usage, the duties of the four castes and the orders (Ashrama) in life. These come under the classification of Smrithi, i.e., the literature based on tradition as opposed to the Srautha and Grihya Sutras which are based on Sruthi-revelation. The Sulba Sutras are practical manuals giving the measurements necessary for the construction of the Vedi, of the altars and so forth. They show an advanced knowledge of geometry and constitute the oldest Indian mathematical works.
Each Kalpasutra is attached to a particular Veda. To the Rigveda is attached two Kalpasutras—(1) Sankhaayana Kalpasutra connected with Sankhaayana Brahmanam and (2) the Ashvalaayana Kalpasutra related to the Athareyya Brahmanam. Both Srautha and Grihya Sutras are combined in these two Kalpa Sutras. In addition to these there is one Sambhava Grihyasutra which belongs to the Kausheetaki Brahmanam of the Rigveda.

To the Samaveda there are four Srauthasutras—(1) the Masaka Kalpasutra also called Arsheya Kalpm, (2) Laadyaayana Srauthasutra—the two kalpas belong to the Panchavinsha Brahmana. The third Srauthasutra of Samaveda is (3) Draahyaayanasutra which is connected with the Ranaayani Sakha. (4) The JaimineeyaSakha has the Srautha and Grihyasutra of the same name. The chief Grihyasutra of the Samaveda is the Gobhilagrihyasutram which is the one of the oldest, completest and most interesting work of this class. It seems to have been used both by the Ranaayaneeya & Jaimineeya schools.

There are many Kalpasutras attached to the Krishnayajurveda of which the Kalpasutras of Apastambha and Baudhayana, both are attached to the Taithireeyasakha are the most important. Each of is complete in its own tradition and contains all the four branches - the Srautha, Grihya, Dharma, & Sulba Sutras. There is also the Kalpasutra of Hiranya kesin, an off shoot of Apastambha, which contains the Srautha & Grihya Sutras of that branch. The Dharmasutras of this author do not differ much from those of Apastambha. There are also the Manavasrauthasutra belonging to Krishnayajurveda Maitrayaneeyaa Sakha and the Vaikhaana Srauthasutra attached to the Krishnayajurvedataitireeyasakha.

To the Suklayajurveda belong the Srautha & Sulba Sutras of Katayayana and the Grihyasutra of Paraskara. The Paraskaragrihyasutra is also called Vajasaneyagrihyasutram. The Srauthasutra of Katayayana strictly follows the sacrificial order of the Sathapathabrahmana.

To the Atharvaveda the Vaitaanasutram is the Srauthasutram. Usually the Grihyasutra Presupposes Srauthasutram, but in the case of Vaitaanasutram, the order is reversed. It is dependent on the Grihyasutram. To the Atharvaveda is attached the important Kausikagrihyasutra. It is not a mere Grihyasutra. Besides giving the important rules of the domestic ritual, it deals with the magical and other practices especially connected with Atharvaveda.

We have already mentioned that the Kalpasutras of Apastambha and Bodhayana are complete with their Dharmasutram & Sulbasutram. The Kalpasutra of Hiranya kesin also contains Dharmasutra which differs little from the sutras of Apastambha. The dharmasutras of Apastambha & Bodhayana contain all matters that are accepted to be dealt with in Dharmasutra and in that sense they are complete works. There is another important Dharmasutra of Gautama which does not form part of any Kalpm. At one time it must have been connected with a Vedic school, most probably to the to the Ranaayaneeyaa branch of the Samaveda. Though the work of Gautama is entitled Dharmasastraham, it is in style and character, a regular Dharmasutra. This is perhaps the oldest Dharmasutra since even the Dharmasutra of Baudhayana contains passages borrowed from this. Another Dharmasutra belonging to the Vedic period is the Dharmasatra of Vasishta in 30 chapters. The prose aphorisms of this book are intermingled with verse, the archaic Trishtup metre being frequently employed instead of the later sloka metre of Manu and others. There is another Manavadharmasatra known from quotations only. The later works on Dharmasatra such as the Law books (Smrithi) of Manu, Yajnavalkya and others are the continuation and further development of the earlier Dharmasutras of the Vedic period.

SIKSHA-the Taithireeyaantaranya already mentions Siksha a subject which even then dealt with letters, accents, quantity pronunciation and euphonic rules. “Sikshaan vyaakhyasyaamaha”.. There are a large number of works bearing the little Siksha which are short manuals containing directions of Vedic recitation and correct pronunciation. Yajnavalkyasiksha, Vaasishti siksha, Katyaayani siksha, Paraasari siksha, Naradi siksha,
Saunakeeya siksha, Gautami siksha, and Panineeya siksha are some of the prominent siksha works. All these are later supplements to vedic literature.

The treatises really representative of vedic phonetics are the Pratisakhyas which are directly connected with the Samhitha and the Padapata of the Vedas and their object is to determine the relation of these to each other. The Pratisakhyyaani as their name implies, were each connected with a particular recension (Sakha) of the veda. To the Sakalasakha of the Rigveda is attached the Rigveda pratisakhyam of Saunaka. To the Madhyandina recension of the Suklayajurveda is attached the Vajasaneyi pratisakhyasutram of Kathayana. The Taitireeya pratisakhy of unknown author belongs to the Taitireyasakha of the Krishnayajurveda, to the Samaveda belong the Samavedapratisakhyam, pushpasutram and the Panchavidasutram. To the Saunakasakha of Atharvaveda belongs the Atharvavedapratisakhyam in four chapters which is more grammatical than the other works of this class. These Pratisakhyas have exercised their influence on the growth of grammatical studies of the later period.

VYAKARANAM- The reading and understanding of the Vedas required a correct idea of the use of words in their proper senses. Hence grammatical studies which had their origin in the Pratisakhyas developed into a separate supplement of the Vedas. Yaska mentions a Northern and an Eastern school of grammar and refers to many early grammarians among whom Sakatayana, Gargya and Sakalya are the most important. It was Sakatayana who expounded the theory of the verbal origin of nouns and the whole system of Panini is based on that theory. Panini also refers too many earlier grammarians whose works are not now available. The earliest text on grammar now available is the Ashtadhyayi of Panini which deals with the grammar of the Vedic language as well as the spoken language—Bhasha. Coming to be regarded as an infallible authority, Panini superseded all his predecessors whose works have consequently perished. The Ashtadhyayi of Panini with the Varthika of Vararuchi and the Mahabhashyam of Patanjali dominate the subsequent literature. Though belonging to the middle of the Sutra period the Ashtadhyayi must be regarded as the starting point of the Post-Vedic age.

According to tradition quoted in Laghutrimunikalpataru, the Vyakaranas are nine in number :-

“एन्द्रे चान्द्रे काशकृ×इन कौमारं शाकटायनम्
सारस्वतं चामिशलं शाकलं पाणिनीयकम्”

Patanjali has stressed the need for the study of Vyakarana and has mentioned many purposes—
“"स्योहागमलध्वसन्देहा प्रयोजनम"......"तरस्मात् अन्धेयं व्याकरणं" (पतंजलि).”

Since the protection of the Vedas is an important function of grammar, it is rightly treated as a Vedanga. The Indians can feel justly proud of their grammarians because the results achieved by them are profound and unsurpassed. Prof. A. A. MacDonnell says—“The Sanskrit grammarians of India were the first to analyse word forms, to recognize the difference between root and suffix, to determine the function of suffixes, and on the whole to elaborate a grammatical system so accurate and complete as to be unparalleled in any other country”.

History of Sanskrit Literature
NIRUKTHAM---- The Nirukta represents the early attempts made to interpret the Vedas. "निरूच्यते निर्शेषण उपदिश्यते निर्विचनविधवा तत्तद्वर्धोधाय पदजातं यत्र तत्त निरुक्तः."

The earliest Niruktha text now available is the work of Yaska, who being earlier than Panini has to be assigned to a period before 800 B.C. Yaska refers to some earlier works of Nirukta by Aupamanyava, Audumbaraayana, Gaargya, Gaalava etc.. which were `not even available to him. The Niruktha explains words selected from the Vedas which were grouped into three classes- (1) The Naighandukakanda, containing a list of words which are synonyms, (2) Naigamakanda, containing a list of ambiguous and difficult words, (3) Daivathakanda, containing a list of names of deities occupying the sky, earth and heaven. Yaska had such a collection before him and he wrote his commentary on it. Both that list of words as well as Yaska’s commentary are called Niruktham. That collection of Vedic words in three groups is also collectively known as Nighandu.

CHANDAS: - Chandas or prosody deals with Vedic metres and the rules applicable to them. Since Manthras are set in metre, their correct pronunciation requires knowledge of their metre. The last three Patalas of the Rigvedaprathisakhyam and the Nidaanasuthram belonging to the Samaveda deal with the nature and rules of Vedic metres. The Chandasutra of Pingala is a well known work on metre which deals with Vedic metre and also Post-Vedic prosody.

JYOTHISHAM:- The sacrifices and other rituals are to be performed on days and hours fixed after calculating the movements of the sun and the moon. Jyothisha was accepted as a Vedanga to satisfy this need. The four Vedas had their separate Jyothisha but that of Samaveda is now lost. The Jyothisha of Rigveda is called Archajyothisham which consists of 36 verses. The Yajushajyothisham of 39 verses is attached to the Yajurveda. The Atharvanajyothisham is attached to the Atharvaveda has 162 verses. All these three works are attributed to one author called Lgagha. A work of unknown authorship called Jyothishavedanga is now available. It has 43 verses attached to the Yajurveda and 36 verses attached to the Rigveda. The Jyotisasthra of the post-Vedic period is a continuation and development of Vedangajyothisham.

Apart from the above six Vedangas, there are the Anukramanis or Vedic indexes, which give lists of the hymns, the authors, the metres and the deities in the order in which they occur in the various Samhitahas. There are Padanukramani, Aarshaanukramani, Devathanukramani and Sarvaanukramani. There are also the Parisishtas which are supplements to the Sutras, and the Prayogas and paddhathis which describe the function of the priests etc. All these are the products of the Sutra period and form part of the vedic literature.

To the Sutra period also belong the early works of the Post Vedic Sastras-mostly written in the Sutra style such as the Nyaya Sutras of Gauthama, the Vaiseshika sutras of Kanada, the Mimamsa sutras of Jaimini, the Shareeraka sutras of Badarayana, the Yoga sutras of Patanjali, the Natyasasthra of Bharathamuni and also the two great epic poems- The Ramayana and the Mahabharatha as well as the major portion of Purana literature. Some of the early works of the Upavedas- the Ayurveda, Gandharvaveda, Dhanurveda and Arthasastra also belong to this period.